

# TEWKESBURY AT WAR 1914-1918

## September 2015 Anniversary of the *Battle of Loos* Two Firsts: Volunteers in Battle v Germans & British use of Gas

**689 Tewkesbury men** responded to Lord Kitchener's famous appeal - and some of them joined the **10th Gloucesters**. They trained to be soldiers over one year - partly on Salisbury Plain but managed to spend the winter lodging in Cheltenham.

However, in August 1915 the battalion was sent to France - and given just 6 weeks of trench hardening. They were thrown into the **Battle of Loos**, one of the first volunteer battalions to be part of a '**Big Push**'.

The war had not 'ended by Christmas' and both sides were desperate to end the stalemate of Trench Warfare.

The **Fighting 10th** was at least teamed with the very experienced Regular **1st Gloucesters**, who had fought during the epic battles of **Mons, Marne, Aisne** and **Ypres I**.

The battle was ill-prepared - in the wrong place and with a shortage of shells. **Gas** was used as an experiment. On 25 September the **10th** lost **459 men**: from Tewkesbury: **T Hall, J A Simms, E Nunney, C Wagstaff** and 45 year old teacher, **A. Harrison**.

The Germans counter-attacked and this time Regulars lost their lives: **E Rice, T New** and **A Didcote**. By 13 October the battle petered out in failure - the British C-in-C was sacked.

**Had lessons been learned?**

*John Dixon*