

Draft Notes for Roy Douglas Male in Freshford Great War Heroic Dead.paw

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R D Male, Pte. Wiltshire reg. ¹

Ronald [sic] Male d. 13th Nov 1917, Jerusalem. ²

Roy Douglas Male b. March 1892 in Limpley Stoke, Wiltshire father Ronald James Henry Male ³ (1859-1947), mother Alice Mary Harris (1861-). ^{4,5}

1892 Birth of **Roy Douglas Male** registered Bradford on Avon. ⁶

1894 **Roy Douglas Male** bap. 7 Oct 1894 at St. Peter's Church, Freshford, Father Ronald, James Male occupation Carter, mother Alice Mary, abode Freshford. ⁷

1901 Census shows Ronald Male age 41 General Labourer b. Southsea, Hants living at Staples Hill, Westwood with wife Alice Male age 40 b. Southsea, Hants and children Blanche age 15 b. Turley, Wilts, George age 12 b. Southsea, Hants, **Roy** age 9 b. Limpley Stoke, Wilts, Edward age 6 b. Freshford, Somerset, Walter age 5 b. Freshford, Somerset, Ewart age 2, and Annie age 1 all b. Westwood, Wilts. ⁸

1911 Census shows Ronald J H Male age 51 Retired L [?labourer] Carrier General b. Southsea, Hants living at Avoncliff, Nr Bradford on Avon (4 Rooms) with wife Alice Mary Male age 50 married 30 yrs, b. Southsea, Hants (11 children born alive, 9 children living, 2 children who have died) and children Blanche age 25 Flock Mill b. Southsea, Hants, **Roy Douglas** age 19 Grocers Assistant b. Limpley Stoke, Wilts, Edward Thomas age 16 Baker b. Freshford, Somerset, Walter Lewin age 15 Cowman b. Freshford, Somerset, Ewart age 13 School, Annie age 11 School, and Jack age 4 all b. Westwood, Wilts. ⁹

1914-1918

Male, Roy D - Corps: Wilts R; Rank: Pte; Regt. No. 200441; do. Regt. No. x1955. Victory: Roll C1/102B16 Page 1951; British do.; T.F. War: Wilts R.TFM ¹⁰ Page 20. ¹¹

Roy Douglas Male, b. Limpley Stoke, Wilts., d. 13 Nov 1917, Egypt, Enlistment Place: Melksham, Wiltshire, Private Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire) Regiment 1st/4th (T.F.) Battalion. Reg.No. 200441 Killed in action, Egyptian Theatre. ¹²

1917 The Battle of Mughar Ridge

Having demolished the Turkish lines at the Third Battle of Gaza in late October/early November 1917 newly-installed British Commander-in-Chief Sir Edmund Allenby continued his autumn offensive en route to Jerusalem (and under instructions by Lloyd George to ensure its fall by Christmas) by dealing with the danger to his inland flank posed by the Turkish Seventh Army while simultaneously capturing the village of El Mughar. Led by Fevsi Pasha the Turkish Seventh Army had been dispatched across the desert by recently appointed Turkish regional commander Erich von Falkenhayn (the former German army Chief of Staff) in spite of advice to the contrary by his own staff officers. Allenby's response was to continue his assault on coastal positions defended by the Turkish Eighth Army under Kress von Kressenstein (the man who had earlier thrown back two earlier British assaults upon Gaza). He meanwhile instructed the Australian Mounted Division to guard his force's flank in what comprised a somewhat thin of defence. Consequently British infantry divisions launched an attack upon a ridge northwest of Junction Station (where the railway joined the Haifa-Jerusalem line) on 13 November 1917. Difficult terrain around El Mughar slowed the advance before a charge by 800 cavalry troops - assisted by artillery and machine gunnery - cleared El Mughar by evening. Some

1,400 Turkish troops had been lost during the encounter, set against 616 British losses. Next day British armoured cars entered Junction Station, succeeding in cutting off communication between the Turkish Seventh and Eighth Armies. Kressenstein's force was meanwhile pushed back beyond Jaffa. While the attack at El Mughar was being conducted the Australian Mounted Division had managed to slow the advance of the Turkish Seventh Army. Clearly seeking a breakthrough Fevsi's force succeeded in pushing the Australians back several kilometres but the Allied line nevertheless held. Fevsi finally determined to withdraw his army to cover the approaches to Jerusalem, which Allenby after a pause captured the following month.¹³

1917 Except from War Diary of 1/4th Bn Wiltshire Regiment for 13 Nov 1917. 13th. Bn moved to attack enemy, 1st objective EL RUSTINEH, 2nd objective EL MESMIYEH,¹⁴ 1/5th SLI participating in attack on EL MESMIYEH. The attack was carried out 2 Coys in firing line, 2 in reserve, EL RESTINEH found unoccupied. Whilst going through the village and taking up position on the far side, the Bn came under shell fire. At 1100hrs orders were received to attack EL MESMIYEH, Wilts on left, SLI on right. Advance was carried out in artillery formation sections in single file, very few losses sustained during advance of 2 miles under heavy shell fire. Cactus gardens W of EL MESMIYEH were seized by No 1 Coy, No 2 Coy and 1/5th SLI taking village. 2 Turkish Officers and about 50 OR and personel of 2 MG Sections were taken together with their MG's in cactus gardens and about 6 Turks killed. Bn then occupied the W and N edge of the garden, and improved communications by cutting roads between cactus fences. These roads proved very useful as the day went on. At about 1530 the Bn received orders to attack the heights N of EL MESMIYEH. These heights were occupied by the Turks at a distance of about 800* from position, numbering roughly 200 and falling S. They had 2 MG's in position, other Turks were facing W and SW of heights still further N. The attack commenced at 1600hrs, with 3 Coys in firing line and 1 Coy in reserve and 1 1/2 Coys SLI in echelon on left rear in support, these were under CAPT TIMMS and gave valuable support. As the Bn debouched from both sides of Cactus Gardens they came under heavy fire from Artillery, MG's and rifles. The ground was smooth and slope gentle, so that the attack was carried out very quickly and the losses all considered were not heavy. As the Bn attacked from S, 1/5th Devons attacked from W, as that very few Turks escaped unwounded. 3 MG's were taken and next day some 60 odd Turks buried. On arrival at crest Bn faced NE and came under very heavy shell fire and dug themselves in. Owing to failing light, and protection men were able to get from their entrenching tools and equipment which they put in front of them, comparatively few losses were sustained. With darkness the shelling ceased. Total casualties: 3 Officers wounded. 10 OR killed. 87 OR wounded.¹⁵

1917 **Male, Roy Douglas** Rank: Private; Service No.: 200441; Age: 25; Regiment: Wiltshire Regiment 1st/4th Bn.; Panel Reference: Panel 44; Memorial: Jerusalem Memorial.¹⁶ Son of Ronald and Alice Male of Shurnhold, Melksham, Wiltshire.¹⁷

¹ Plaque on Freshford Village war memorial sited on the village Tynning.

² Alan Dodge, *Freshford - History of a Somerset Village* (2000; reprint, Freshford Manor Bath Somerset: Freshford Publications, 2000)

³ England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index: 1837-1983 for Portsea Island for 1859 Oct-Nov-Dec Vol 2b Page 424.

⁴ England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index: 1837-1983 for Portsea Island for 1860 Oct-Nov-Dec Vol 2b Page 378.

⁵ Ancestry.co.uk Public Member Tree : Evans Family Tree owner Stephen Burraston.

⁶ England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index: 1837-1983 for Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire for Jan-Feb-Mar 1892 Vol 5a Page 129.

⁷ FreeREG <http://www.freereg.org.uk/> © 1998-2013 The website, its layout, search engine, and database

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⁸ 1901 England Census RG13/1934 Bradford on Avon, Bradford South Eastern 13 Folio 84 Page 6 Schedule 40.

⁹ 1911 England & Wales Census RG14/11987 Bradford on Avon, Bradford on Avon 17 Schedule 88.

¹⁰ The National Archives - WO 329/3266 - Wiltshire Regiment (Duke of Edinburgh's) medal roll. TFM/1-6. Pages 1-90. Territorial Force Medal.

¹¹ Ancestry.com. British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920. Original data: Army Medal Office. WWI Medal Index Cards. In the care of The Western Front Association website.

¹² Source Information: Military-Genealogy.com, comp. UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919. Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2008. Original data: British and Irish Military Databases. The Naval and Military Press Ltd.

¹³ <http://www.firstworldwar.com/battles/mugharridge.htm>

¹⁴ Probably Al-Masmiyya al-Kabira.

¹⁵ <http://www.thewardrobe.org.uk/research/war-diaries/detail/12604>

¹⁶ The **Jerusalem War Cemetery** was begun after the occupation of the city, with 270 burials. It was later enlarged to take graves from the battlefields and smaller cemeteries in the neighbourhood. There are now 2,514 Commonwealth burials of the First World War in the cemetery, 100 of them unidentified. It is 4.5 kilometres north of the walled city and is situated on the neck of land at the north end of the Mount of Olives, to the west of Mount Scopus. Within the cemetery stands the **Jerusalem Memorial**, commemorating 3,300 Commonwealth servicemen who died during the First World War in operations in Egypt or Palestine and who have no known grave.

¹⁷ Commonwealth War Graves Commission Casualty Details www.cwgc.org 1646275.