

THOMAS MARSHALL DALE (1904-07) and his alias Max Henderson

John Bridges (S57-66), now living back in Framlingham, is much involved with local history and picked up on the article in the 2012 Yearbook about the mystery surrounding Thomas Marshall Dale. The following is the fascinating information unearthed, for which John would like Evelyn Empson and her son to get the credit.

Thomas Marshall Dale, served under an alias (Private M. Henderson) in WW1 as 75601 in the 1st/1st /Dorset Yeomanry, (Queen's Own). He was born 27 July 1893 at Plomesgate, Suffolk and died 23 August 1918 in Palestine, age 25 years, and is commemorated at the Ramleh War Cemetery (Israel), at grave/memorial reference AA.22.

He was the son of Tom and Esther Tane Dale. In the 1901 census, he was 7 years old, and had a brother Benjamin, aged 4 yrs. They lived at Market Hill, Framlingham. Their mother, Esther Tane Dale had already died as Tom Dale is shown as a widower – his occupation, a builder and employer. Hannah Dale, widow, aged 63 was living with the family, plus two servants.

By the age of 19 years (1911 census), Thomas was serving in the Royal Navy in China and the East Indies, under his own name, as a Stoker, 1st Class. His official regimental number on HMS Highflyer was K.4152. He was awarded medal number 2069 whilst serving on this ship, the Naval General Service Medal (1909-1920 UK Naval and Medal Roll) with clasp for the Persian Gulf.

In the list of medals awarded for HMS Highflyer all others on the page have a record of when and where the medal was awarded - except for T.H. Dale. That column is blank in his case. He was around 20 yrs when awarded the clasp to the medal.

In 1911, father Tom Dale has a large shop on Market Hill, Framlingham showing that there are 2 males and 3 females resident there that year.

No evidence of why his son chose to enlist in the Dorset Yeomanry as Pte M Henderson could be found or any evidence of when he completed his service in the Royal Navy, but the clasp appears to have been awarded in 1913 in Persia for campaign service there. This means he left the Navy shortly before or during the onset of WW1 to enlist in the army.

CWGC have him as Pte M Henderson (Alias) and also as under his real name of Pte Thomas Marshall Dale. Also confusing is the fact that in the Framlingham Weekly News 26.10.1918 headed "Private Thomas Marshall Dale - news was received from a comrade, that Marshall Dale, elder son of Mr Tom Dale, had fallen in Palestine". This was weeks after his death, and his father had not yet been officially notified. (The comrade who sent the news obviously knew him by his real name.)

After carefully examining HMS "Highflyer" medal awards for Stoker 1st Class T. M. Dale and especially the column left blank for when earned medals were delivered or sent for him, it was noticed in the preceding column headed "Clasp for Persian Gulf 1909-1914", the comment "Run. 9.11.1913", whilst serving with the Royal Navy still. It therefore appears he deserted on 9th November 1913 (Naval term "Run").

This explains why he used an assumed name when enlisting for the Great War- as on his Attestation papers there is always the question "Have you ever served previously in HM Forces?" If he declared he had, then detention and possibly imprisonment would have followed. It is not necessarily certain he had been a "bad boy" when he decided to desert - possibly something like sea-sickness - but without examining the Naval records for the time, we shall not know the reason.

After much searching, and allowing for the mis-reading by Ancestry of medal roll index cards, I have finally found Max Henderson (called Neosc Henderson!) No. 75601 Private in the Dorset Yeomanry and Cavalry of Hussars (this under a regiment description of where he served in the Egyptian Theatre, of "Household Cavalry and Cavalry of the Line (including Yeomanry and Imperial Camel Corps") and the Battalion is described as "Dorset (Queen's Own) Yeomanry"! Sometimes they were on horseback and sometimes on foot. Many of the battles were defeats for the British, especially at Gaza.



Under "UK Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1918" Ancestry have found that when Max Henderson enlisted, he gave his birthplace as Ladysmith B.C. (which I take to be British Columbia, Canada) and gives as his residence Ladysmith B.C. He actually enlisted as Max Henderson in London, and was awarded two medals, the Victory and British, before he died of wounds in Palestine. Everything else is the same - his date of death, and regimental number etc.

Unfortunately after looking at thousands of records of WW1 soldiers joining up, his enlistment papers have not survived the fire or bombing, which would have answered a lot of questions.

Below is a photo of his name, which has now been added to the Chapel Memorial.



Peter Gasgoine-Lockwood (R57-64) has managed to obtain a photo of his memorial at the Ramleh War Cemetery in Israel and this clearly shows both names.



Evelyn Empson was in touch again in September 2013 with a photo of him on horseback, most probably taken in New Orleans, USA between 1914-17 after he had "jumped ship" in British Columbia. At the time he was employed as a foreman for a shipping line, transporting horses and mules to Southampton, England just prior to the outbreak of WW1.

