

Private Harold Ostin Doody

Harold's grandfather was George Doody. He was born in Old Swinford, Stourbridge and baptised there on 15th February 1818. His parents were George (born 1792ⁱ), a tailor and Elizabeth.ⁱⁱ George followed in his father's footsteps and became a tailor and outfitter and built up a thriving business at 172-173 High Street, Stourbridge.ⁱⁱⁱ

On 25th January 1842, George married Eliza, daughter of Thomas Ostins at Clent, Worcestershire.^{iv}



Figure 1: George and Eliza Doody (nee Ostins)

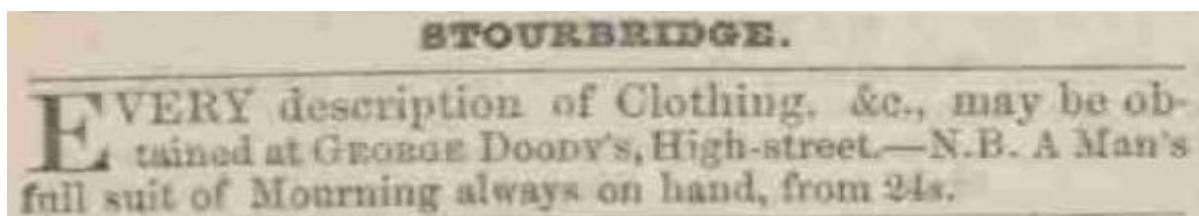


Figure 2: 1853 advertisement for George Doody's business in Stourbridge

In 1854 George was a victim of theft from his establishment when a moleskin jacket and forty-seven yards of cloth were stolen. Fortunately the thief Benjamin Andrews was apprehended and sentenced to three months hard labour.

STEALING A JACKET AT STOURBRIDGE.

Benjamin Andrews, miner, was charged with stealing a moleskin jacket, belonging to Mr. George Doody, at Stourbridge, on the 22nd of March last. Mr. Huddleston prosecuted and Mr. Selfe defended the prisoner. The jacket was hung outside the prosecutor's shop, and was taken by the prisoner, who subsequently offered it for sale at a public house in the town. He was found guilty. There were two other charges against the prisoner; one of stealing a smockfrock belonging to Peter Chance, and the other (against both the prisoner and a woman named Sarah Wall, with whom he cohabited) for stealing 47 yards of cloth, belonging to Mr. George Doody. On these charges, however, no evidence was offered.—The Court sentenced him to three months' hard labour.

Figure 3: Newspaper cutting reporting the theft from George's establishment in 1854

George and Eliza lived at 147 High Street, Stourbridge, with their eight children. In age order they were: Mary Jane (1843), Thomas Frederick (1844), George Walter (1847), Emma Eliza (1849), Caroline (1851), William Henry (1852), Edward Ostin (1854) and Ellen born in the autumn of 1847.^v A few months after the birth of Ellen, Eliza tragically died, aged only thirty-five years old on 3rd January 1858.^{vi}

With eight children between the ages of eleven years down to a babe in arms it is unsurprising that George quickly remarried. His second wife was Mary Ann Davies of Kinver, whom he married on 9th October 1858, the same year as his first wife's death. Mary gave birth to a daughter Annie the following year followed by four further children. Mary died on 16th July 1881, two years after her husband. George.^{vii}

George and Eliza's second eldest son George Walter Doody became a buyer of drapery on leaving school. He eventually became a commercial traveller in cotton goods.^{viii} In the course of his travels he met Eliza Jane Stapledon and, on 11th September 1872, they married in the Wesleyan Chapel in Barnstable, Devon.^{ix}

The 1881 census records George and Eliza living at 10 Hunters Lane in Aston, Birmingham with three children, Laura, Frank Stapledon and Harold Ostin born on 4th September 1873, 1875 and the autumn of 1880 respectively.

When Harold left school he became a draper's assistant before becoming a commercial traveller like his father and the representative of the Belfast firm of Messrs Ireland Bros, linen manufacturers, in the Midlands and the west of England.^x

In 1907, Harold married Euphemia, youngest daughter of James McIlroy, a provisions agent and his wife Margaret who lived at 32, Grove Avenue, Moseley. It is quite probable that they married at Oxford Road Baptist Church where Harold was a sidesman.^{xi} In the 1911 census the census records Harold and Euphemia living at 86, Oxford Road, Moseley.

Before joining the army Harold was an active member of the 3rd Battalion Warwickshire Volunteer Regiment. He enlisted in the Army Service Corps (ASC) sometime in 1916 as a private, No M/284568. He quite probably went to Egypt with the ASC in early 1917 in defence of the Suez Canal sector before he was transferred to the 1/4th Battalion Essex Regiment as Private, No 36971.

There is little information about the activities of the 1/4th Essex Regiment. They were part of the 161st (Essex) Brigade, 54th Division that, in early 1917, crossed the Sinai Desert to take part in the Palestine Campaign and the Battle of Gaza.

Initially in the first battle on 26 March 1917, the Brigade were in support, but towards the end of the day they were ordered to take Green Hill and, despite heavy fighting, the attack was a complete success and the brigade held the whole position by nightfall.

The Brigade was not heavily engaged during the Second Battle of Gaza (17-19 April) and was in divisional reserve. Most of its casualties were due to shellfire.

During the summer months of 1917, the 161st Brigade held the line without suffering any serious casualties.

By the end of October the Brigade was up to strength for the forthcoming Third Battle of Gaza from the 1st to 3rd November.

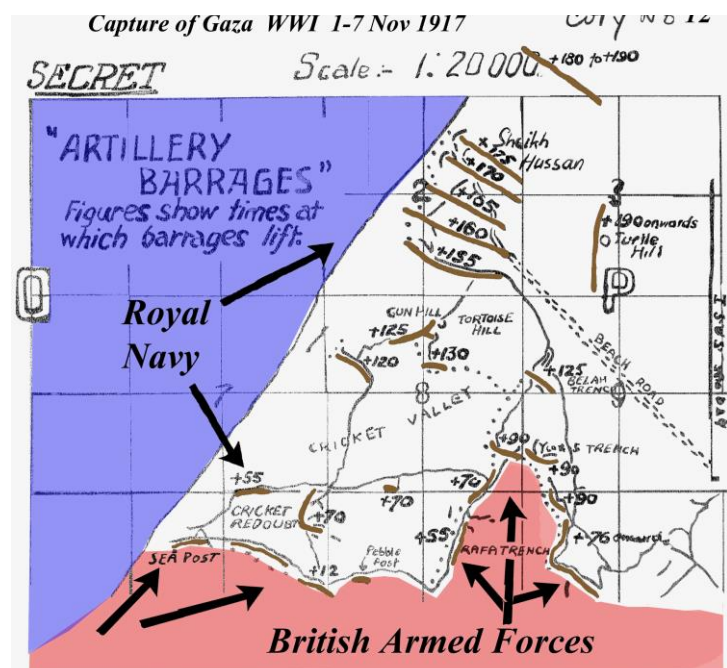


Figure 4: The Third Battle of Gaza (1-3 November

On the morning of 2nd November, the 54th Division put in a holding attack at the El Arish Redoubt. The fighting was confused, but the division took all its objectives. During the rapid pursuit of the Turks after the fall of Gaza, the 1/4th Essex Regiment assisted the Anzac Mounted Division. At some point during the action on 3rd November 1917, Harold was killed. He was buried in the Gaza War Cemetery.

Harold is also commemorated at St Mary's Church, the Baptist Church in Oxford Road (now the Calvary Church of God in Christ) and St Agnes Church, Moseley, Birmingham and is on the Roll of Honour at the Hall of Memory in Birmingham city centre. Harold was thirty-seven years old when he was killed in action



Figure 5:
 (Top left) Gaza War Cemetery
 (Top middle) St Agnes Church WW1 memorial
 (Top right) St Mary's Church WW1 memorial
 (Bottom left) Oxford Road Baptist Church memorial

Harold and Euphemia had two children, Harold Graham, born in 1910, and Bettina Margaret, born in 1913.

Harold's brother-in-law, Lieutenant, James Archibald McIlroy, graduated as a doctor at Birmingham University and was briefly a surgeon at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. In 1914, he along with Alexander Macklin were the two physicians assigned to the Shackleton Trans-Antarctic Expedition. He received the Silver Polar Medal for his duties. During WW1 he was badly wounded in Ypres.^{xii}

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Endnotes

- i England Births and Baptisms 1538-1975
- ii England Select Births and Baptisms 1538-1975
1841 census, Union Street, Old Swinford
- iii Post Office directory 1855
- iv England Marriages 1538-1973
- v BMD indexes and the cesuses for 1851 and 1861
- vi *Birmingham Journal*, 9th January 1858
- vii *Country Express*; Brierley Hill, Stourbridge, Kidderminster and Dudley News 16th July 1881
National Probate Calendar, 1858-1966
- viii 1871 census, George Walter Doody is living at Warwick House, New Street, Birmingham
- ix *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 16th September 1872
- x *Birmingham Daily Post*, 29th November 1917
- xi See x
- xii See x

Illustrations

Figure 1 Public members trees, Ancestry

Figure 2 *Worcester Chronicle and Provincial Railway Gazette*, 5th October 1853

Figure 3 *Berrow's Worcester Journal* 1st July 1854

Figure 4 Map of the Third Battle of Gaza
Denis Percy Frederick Tall's War
http://www.grahamtall.co.uk/family_history/Tall%20Family/Tall%20Family%20page%207.htm

Figure 5 Gaza War Cemetery
<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/1971962/gaza-war-cemetery>