

Staff Quartermaster Sergeant Maurice William Hobson

On Sunday 23rd April 1916, St George's Day, Maurice was serving with the Queens Own Worcester Hussars. He was part of a squadron of men sent to protect a detachment of Royal Engineers on a well-digging operation at the oasis at Oghratina in Egypt. At dawn they found themselves attacked by an overwhelming force of Ottoman soldiers. Only four officers and forty-two other ranks survived. Maurice was not among them. He was just twenty-seven years of age.

The Hobson family originated from Leeds. Maurice's grandfather ran an estate agency business there and his father, George, on leaving school became an 'inspector of agents' for a local Assurance Company.ⁱ In 1881, George married a local girl Jessie Pattison.ⁱⁱ Having secured a senior position with the National Provident Institution around 1887ⁱⁱⁱ the family relocated to Birmingham. The 1891 census records George and Jessie and their four children living at 'Southfield' Ascot Road, Moseley. The family were comfortably off and could afford to engage the services of a nurse for Maurice who had been born in 1889, and was now two years old, together with a general domestic servant.



From the age of twelve, Maurice attended King Edward's High School, New Street (see left^{iv}) where he remained until 1905.^v In 1910, tragedy struck the family when Maurice's mother died, aged only fifty-six years of age.^{vi} A year later, the 1911 census records the family living at 'Bowness', 12 Grove Avenue, Moseley and Maurice employed as a commercial traveller for a brass founder Bach & Co, Coleshill Street, Birmingham.

The Hobson and Bach families

would have known each other before Maurice became employed at Bach & Co as they attended the same church. According to Edward Bach's sister, Elsie Mary, Maurice and Edward "did everything together".^{vii} They both joined the Worcester Yeomanry where Edward spent his time looking after the horses.

Staff Quartermaster Sergeant Maurice Hobson *Evening Despatch* 15th August 1916





Edward Bach (see left^{viii}) worked at his father's business for three years after leaving school but was intent on being a doctor. In 1907 he realised his ambition to become a doctor, studying initially at Birmingham University, but completing his studies in London where he matriculated in 1912.^{ix}

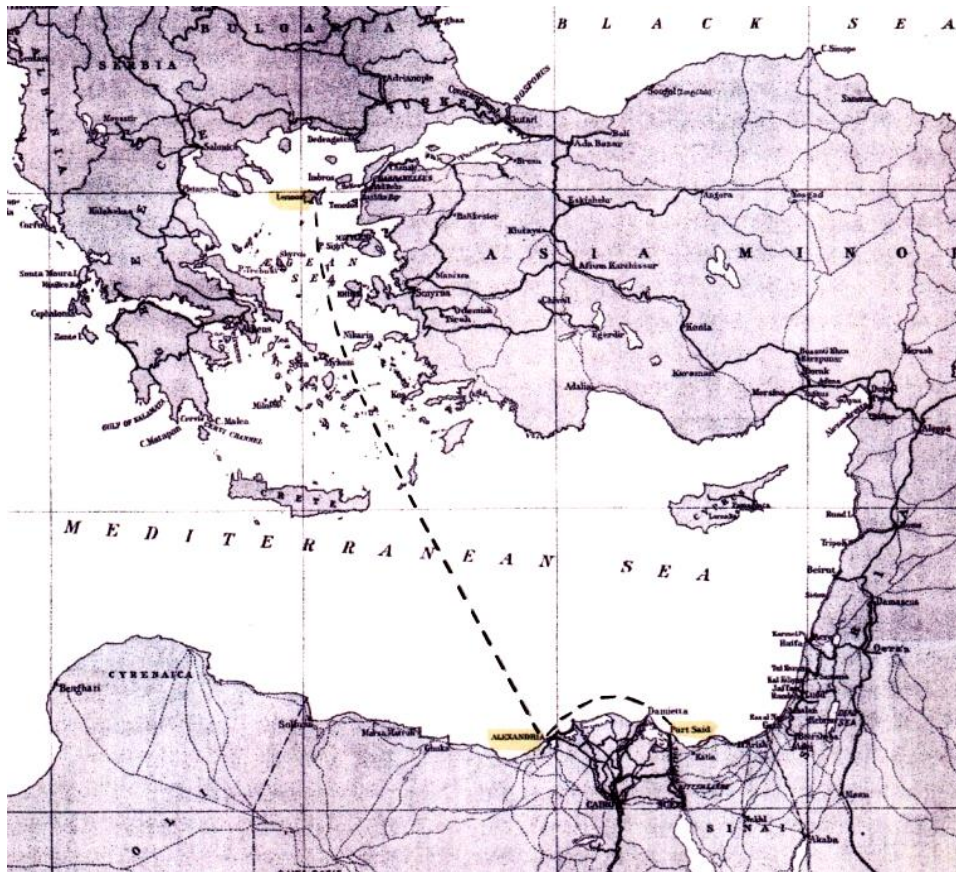
Elsie Mary was 'unofficially engaged' to Maurice for several years, and Edward's brother Charles married Maurice's sister Jessie.

Maurice joined the Territorial Force of the Worcester Yeomanry as a Signaller Sergeant, No 1504, most likely as part of the 'B' Squadron based at Camp Hill.^x In 1914, at the outbreak of war, the Worcester Yeomanry (also known as The Queens Own Worcestershire Hussars) were mobilised and after a period of training, Staff Quartermaster Sergeant M Hobson, No 325015, (see previous page^{xi}) sailed from Avonmouth on 11th April 1915 for Egypt disembarking at Alexandria thirteen days later.^{xii} From there, Maurice went with his regiment to the Dardenelles, landing in Suvla Bay on 18th August and took part in the attack on Chocolate Hill and 'Hill 112' three days later.^{xiii}

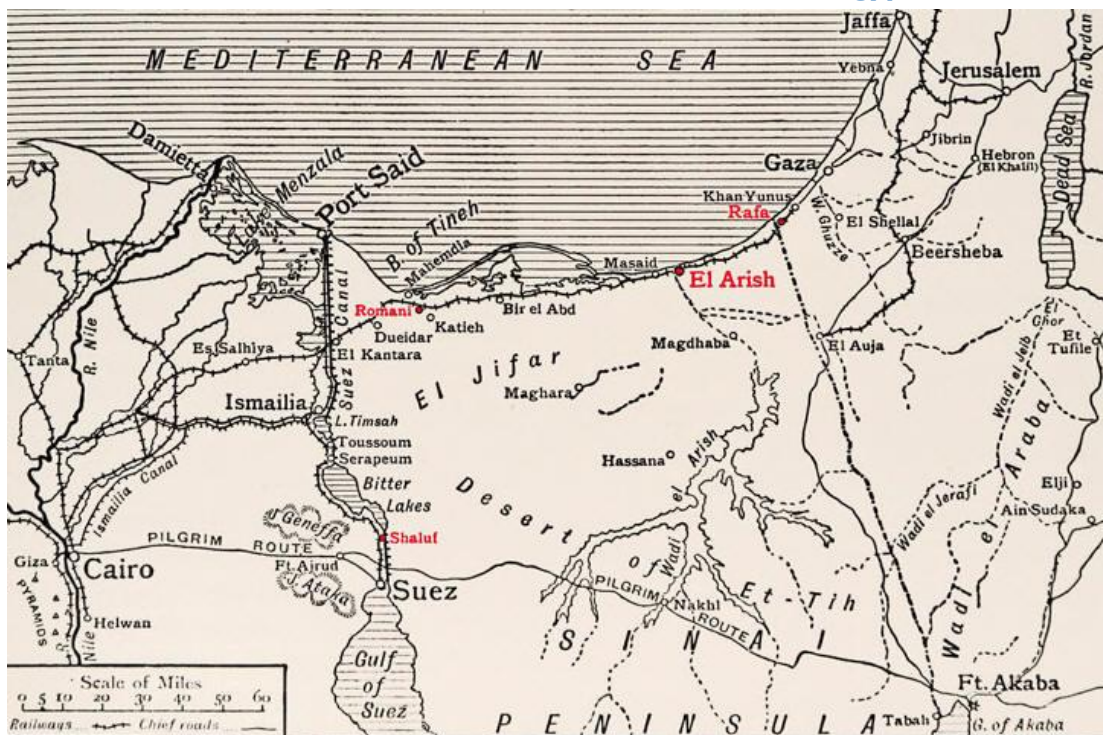


Map 1: Location of Suvla Bay, Chocolate Hill and Green Hill in the Dardanelles

In early September severe sickness together with battle casualties resulted in the temporary merger of the Worcester Yeomanry with 1/1st Gloucestershire and 1/1st Warwickshire Yeomanry to form the 1st South Midlands Regiment, 1st Composite Mounted Brigade. Trench warfare continued in the Green Hill and Chocolate Hill sector until the 31st October when they were evacuated to Mudros returning to Egypt by the end of December at the end of the Gallipoli Campaign.^{xiv}



Map 2:
The relative positions of Mudros on the island on Lemnos opposite the Dardanelles, Port Said and Alexandria both in Egypt



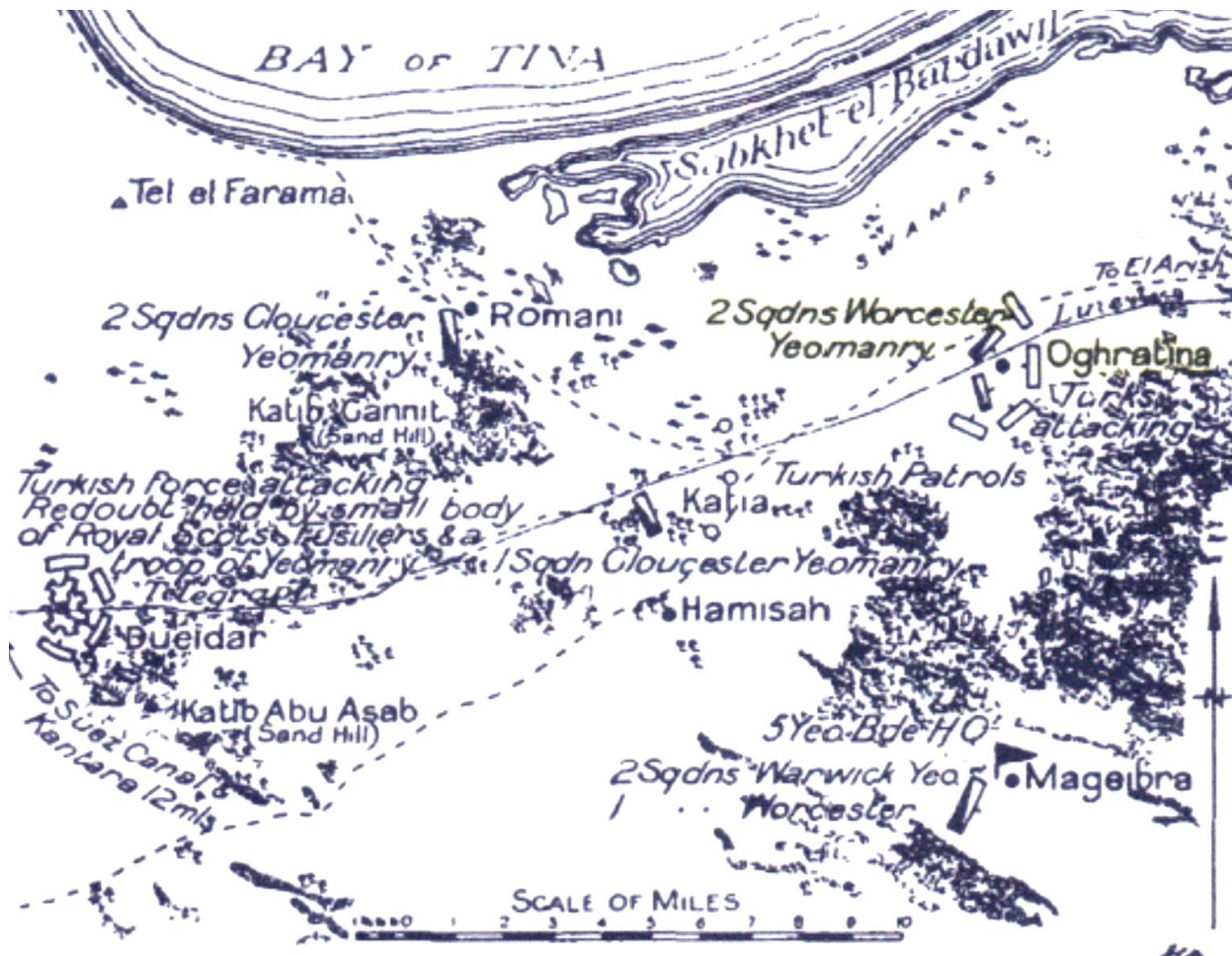
Map 3: Map showing the Suez Canal and Katia

In January 1916, the Regiment was brought up to strength again with fresh troops from England and retitled the 5th Mounted Brigade. The conclusion of the Gallipoli Campaign gave both the Turks and the British large numbers of troops to redeploy. The British decided to move their Suez Canal defences from positions on the canal eastwards to the Sinai Desert. The task of the 5th Mounted Brigade was to patrol the whole Katia area against attack from the Ottoman forces led by Kress von Kressenstein from the west.



Map 4: Map showing the location of Oghratina relative to Katia

The Sunday morning of the 23rd April, found the 5th Mounted Brigade dispersed over a wide area. At Oghratina there were two squadrons Worcester Hussars (less one troop), with four officers and 60 other ranks of the 2/2nd Lowland Field Company Royal Engineers. These squadrons stood to at 04.00 in dense sea fog, which was common at that time of the year. The sound of pumps operating wells was heard 500 yards away to their south west and on investigation, some 60 Ottoman soldiers were discovered and surprised, the British causing them heavy casualties. In following up their retreat, the yeomanry were met with very heavy rifle fire from a much larger force and by 05.15 the whole camp was assaulted in overwhelming strength of around 3000 Turkish soldiers with a machine gun battery of 12 guns.^{xv} Although the commander of the Yeomanry had orders to retire if attacked, he could not leave the dismounted engineers. After resisting for over two hours, at 07.45 eleven yeomanry officers and 135 other ranks were casualties of which Maurice was one. The survivors, four officers and forty-two other ranks surrendered.^{xvi}



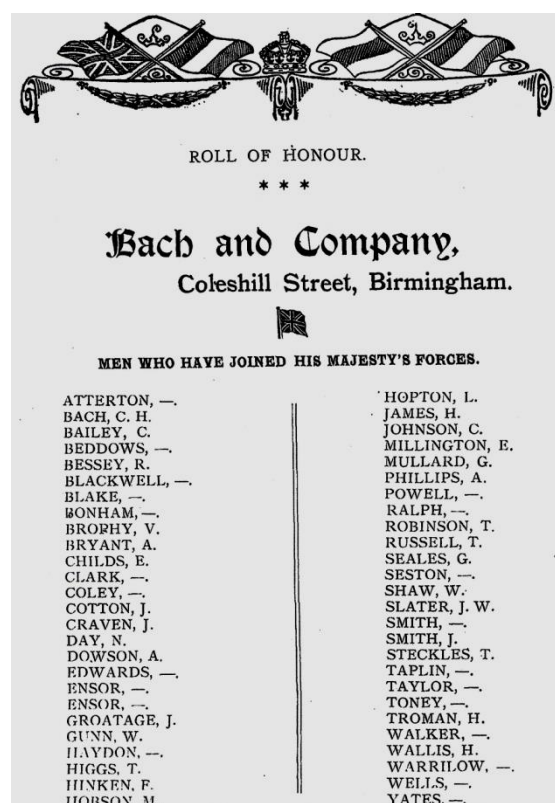
Map 5: Map showing the location of the Worcester Yeomanry at Oghratina on 23rd April 1916

Maurice is commemorated in the Jerusalem Memorial, a mile north of the city walls.^{xvii}



Figure 1: Jerusalem Memorial, one mile north from the city walls

It would have been a terrible shock and loss for both families when Maurice was killed. Elsie did not marry for many years but eventually settled with Clifford Haydon (another Bach family friend from the cricket club).^{xviii}



Before the war, Bach and Co, brass founders, produced items for general plumbers and builders as well as brass faucets for petrol cans, motor fittings and radiator parts but when war was declared they turned their production to producing fittings for the war effort: Brass fuse sockets, plugs, and adapters, brass fittings for aero engines and tanks, brass faucets for petrol cans, filling plugs for H.E. bombs and fittings and bungs for Admiralty drums. The firm employed 97 men, and 36 women.^{xix}

Figure 2:
WW1 Roll of Honour for Bach & Co with
'Hobson M.' recorded on it.

Maurice's friend, Dr Edward Bach, became dissatisfied with the way doctors were expected to concentrate on diseases and ignore the whole person. He aspired to a more holistic approach to medicine. In 1930, he gave up his lucrative Harley Street practice and left London to devote the rest of his life to the new system of medicine that he was sure could be found in nature. A year after announcing that his search for remedies was complete, Dr. Bach passed away peacefully on the evening of November 27th, 1936. He left behind him a system of medicine that is used all over the world.

To learn more of Dr Bach's publications on his flower remedy system read:

The Bach Flower Remedies, published 1996
Bach Flower Essences Family Book , published 1996
Heal Thyself, published 1982
The Essential Writings of Dr. Edward Bach, published 2005
The Twelve Healers and Other Remedies, published 2004

There is also an article on the life of Dr Edward Bach on the Moseley Society website at <https://moseley-society.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Dr-Edward-Bach.pdf>

**Researched and written by Edwina Rees, Moseley Society Local History Group
 updated with information by Jan Stewart relating to the Bach and Hobson families**

Footnotes

- i 1861, 1871, 1881 England, Wales & Scotland Census
- ii England & Wales marriages 1837 – 2008, Leeds, 1881, volume 9B, page 524
- iii England, Wales & Scotland Census 1891
- iv Robert Kirkup Dent - *The Making of Birmingham: Being a History of the Rise and Growth of the Midland Metropolis*, Published by J. L. Allday
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Edward%27s_School,_Birmingham#/media/File:KES_Free_Grammar_School_Charles_Barry.jpg
- v Service Record of King Edwards School (1914 – 1919)
Midlands Historical Data
- vi England & Wales deaths 1837 – 2007, Kings Norton, 1910, volume 6C, page 165
- vii Information from Gregory Vlamis and Jan Stewart
- viii The Bach Centre
<https://www.bachcentre.com/en/about-us/history/dr-bach/>
- ix Dr Edward Bach, an article by Hilde Smith for the Moseley Society
- x *Evening Despatch*, 15th August 1916
The Long, Long Trail: The Worcester Yeomanry
<http://www.1914-1918.net/worcsyeo.htm>
British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index Cards 1914 – 1920
- xi *Evening Despatch*, 15th August 1916
- xii British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index Cards 1914 – 1920
- xiii The Long, Long Trail: The Worcester Yeomanry
<http://www.1914-1918.net/worcsyeo.htm>
- xiv See vii
- xv The Worcestershire World War 100
<http://www.ww1worcestershire.co.uk/news/2016/04/qatia-100-they-shall-not-grow-old/>
- xvi Falls, Cyril; G. MacMunn (1930). *Military Operations Egypt & Palestine: From the Outbreak of War With Germany to June 1917*. Official History of the Great War Based on Official Documents by Direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Volume 1. London, p 163
Gullett, Henry S. (1941). *The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine, 1914–1918*. Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918. Volume VII (11th ed.). Canberra: Australian War Memorial, p 83 -84
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Katia

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- xvii Commonwealth War Graves Commission
<http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/1645612/HOBSON,%20MAURICE%20WILLIAM>
- xviii Information from Gregory Vlamis and Jan Stewart.
- xix Grace's Guide to British Industrial History
https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/1918_Directory_of_Manufacturers_in_Engineering_and_Allied_Trades:_Company_B

Illustrations

- Figure 1 Commonwealth War Graves Commission
<http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/1645612/HOBSON,%20MAURICE%20WILLIAM>
- Figure 2: WW1 Roll of Honour for Bach & Co with 'Hobson M.' recorded on it.

Maps

- Map 1 Suvla Bay Map
<http://i32.photobucket.com/albums/d42/thedards/SuvlaMap.jpg>
- Map 2 Mediterranean Map
<https://peterhbiles.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/map-eastern-med-marked1.jpg>
- Map 3 Map of Northern Egypt
<http://www.ewhurstfallen.co.uk/Men%20WW1/Page%20Edwin/Edwin%20F%20Page.htm>
- Map 4 Map of Katia and the Romani area Butcher, R
C - Based on map in "The Times History of the War" Volume X, page 392, published 1917.
- Map 5 Map showing positions of the 5th Mounted Brigade on 23 April 1916 Gullett, Henry
S. (1984) *The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine, 1914–1918* (Volume VII of the
Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918). Published by the University of
Queensland