

Richard Henry Ruddell

Born Clerkenwell, London, Q2, 1887
Gunner 40845

Died North Russia, 26 July 1919, aged 31
444 Battery, Royal Field Artillery

Richard Henry Ruddell is commemorated on the supplementary panel to Dawlish War Memorial and his widow lived at 1 Commercial Road, Dawlish. He was born, however, in London. His great grandfather was a bootmaker who had been born in Southampton ca 1791 and married Elizabeth, born 1784 in East Malling, Kent. In 1851, the census shows them living at 58 Amelia Street, Newington, Surrey, with two children, James, born in Newington ca 1827 and an engineer, and Richard born ca 1829 also working as a bootmaker.

Young Richard Ruddell married Caroline Ross on 28 July 1851 in Lambeth, Surrey and they soon started a family. Baptism records exist in St Mary, Newington for:

Richard Thomas Ruddell,	bapt 6 June 1852, and born on 15 May 1852	
James Charles Ruddell,	bapt 12 Feb'y 1854	22 Jan'y 1854
Eliza Mary Ruddell	bapt 5 Nov 1861	15 Oct 1861
Charles George Ruddell	bapt 19 April 1863	1 April 1863

In 1871 Richard Ruddell was a master Boot Maker, aged 42 and he and Caroline lived at 4 Amelia Street, Newington, with five children:

James, 17, Caroline, 15, Henry, 12, Frederick, 11, and Eliza, 9.

In 1875 James Charles Ruddell married Sarah Margaret Hughes on Christmas Day in St Mary's Newington, Southwark. He was shown as a 'Carman'

In 1881 James and Sarah Ruddell lived at 4 St John Square, Clerkenwell with two children

James, 4, a son
Sarah, 1, a daughter

Their father was shown as a cab driver.

The baptism of Sarah Margaret Caroline Ruddell took place at St John, Clerkenwell on 25 May 1879.

In 1891 the family appear in the census at 14 Jerusalem Court, Clerkenwell

James,	37, Head	Carman railway
Sarah,	37, wife	
James	14, son	errand boy
Sarah	11, dau	scholar
John	8, son	
Sophia	6, dau	
Richard	4, son	(GRO birth ref 1887, Q2, Holborn, London, Vol 1b, p 692)
Florence	1, dau	

Other baptisms have been found for two of the children on 9 January 1898 at St John, Clerkenwell when the family address was 22 Aylesbury Place:

Florence Maud Ruddell born 20 Jan'y 1890
Alice Louisa Ruddell 23 July 1896

James Charles Ruddell died in the 4th Quarter of 1900, aged 47 (GRO ref 1900, Oct-Dec, Holborn, vol 1b, p 406.)

Richard Ruddell had been employed as a groom when enlisted in the Army in London on 12 October 1914 and was passed fit for service in the Royal Regiment of Artillery. The Statement of

Service shows that he joined at Aberdeen. After a period of training he was posted on 6 January 1915 to the 78th Brigade, R.F.A.

He served with "D" Battery until 13 May 1915 when he was posted to "C" battery. This appears to have been a Reserve Brigade, but it was posted to France on 12 July 1915. He was reported absent without leave on 19 June 1915 for six days, but must have been granted leave to marry in September. He had leave again from 3 October to 17 October 1918 before returning to France. His war service lasted until 15 April 1919 when he embarked at Dunkirk for the dispersal centre at Fovant, on Salisbury Plain.

Richard Ruddell had married Elsie Louisa Adams at the Register Office, Exeter on 11 September 1915. Elsie had been born in Plymouth and in 1911 was living at 76 Abbotsbury Road, Newton Abbot.

They had their first child Herbert Richard Frederick John Ruddell on 30 June 1917 at Dawlish. A second child Sadie Ethel Ruddell was born on 11 August 1919, also at Dawlish. When Richard returned home they were at 1 Commercial Road, Dawlish.

It may be imagined that the numbers of returning servicemen put pressure on work vacancies and that prospects for work as a groom were poor, not only because so many horses had been taken to war, but also from the increasing use of motor cars and lorries. Recruiting began for the North Russia Expeditionary Force and Richard enlisted for One Year's Service at Exeter on 20 May.

Richard was at home from 20 May 1919 to 2 July, when he boarded a ship for a nine day passage to North Russia. They landed on 11 July and on the 16 July at Archangel Gunner Ruddell was disciplined for 'neglect of duty' for which he was awarded 11 days 'confined to barracks'. At that time he was part of 444 Battery, R.F.A.

The record file shows that on 29 July a report was sent by Captain Woodward of the VOLOGDA Force that "No 40845. Driver Ruddell R. was accidentally killed by a rifle shot on July 26th. 1919. He was buried in the British Cemetery OBOZERSKAYE today July 27th.1919.

Court of Enquiry has been held and proceedings would reach G. H. Q. through the usual channels."

There does not appear to be a copy of the Court of Enquiry findings on the soldier's military record, but further searches at Kew may reveal the information about the circumstances of the accident.

North Russia Expedition

A newspaper article, ca 1953, was written by Noel Monks on the North Russian Campaign. "They called it " Churchill's War," "The Great Russian Gamble," and "Whitehalls Folly."

More than 600 British and Commonwealth soldiers were killed and wounded there, but it rated only as a sideshow with the War Office. No official history was ever written of it, no medals or stars were struck. Not even a ribbon- was issued. In cash, it cost Britain £49,631,000.

The war? The North Russian campaign, May 1918 to October 1919, and if we who were in Burma thought we were tough and the situation confused, then a book published today ("Archangel 1918-1919" by Lord Ironside) should make us feel lucky. It is written by the man most competent to write about that, at the time, hotly controversial expedition, Field-Marshal Lord Ironside of Archangel, who was the C-in-C.

And the passing of 34 years does not lessen the interest of that great soldier's story, for it is told for the first time. (*in 1953*)

Winston Churchill was the War Secretary, aged 45, when Lieut.-Colonel Edmund Ironside, known throughout the Army as " Tiny " because of his immense size, was called to London from the Front in France In September 1918. "I was told I had been selected to go as Chief of the General Staff to the C.-in-C. of the Allied Forces, North Russia, whose headquarters were in Archangel." The last words of the Sir Henry Wilson, were to remain imprinted on my mind : 'Your business in North Russia is to hold the fort until the local Russians can take the field. You are to prepare for a winter campaign. No joke that.' "

Within two weeks of landing at Archangel Ironside found himself acting C.-in-C. because General Poole, who led the expedition that had landed several months previously, went on what he said would be a month's leave. He never came back, and the giant 38-year-old man from the Western Front, whose very name, let alone his physique, inspired confidence, found himself in complete charge of a force of soldiers engaged on a two-war front - a civil war and a war against Germany.

For whatever the criticism of our landing in North Russia, the idea, like the Dardanelles, was a good one. It was hoped to relieve the pressure on the Western Front, and, but for the collapse of the Russian armies, it might have succeeded.

Lenin's signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with the Germans on March 3, 1918, had a disastrous effect on Allied strategy.

Ironside inherited anything but an orderly, cut-and-dried theatre of operations. Indeed, his great heart must have missed a few beats after his first thorough investigation of the situation. "The coming winter campaign might have daunted anyone. We were proposing to occupy a great area with very few troops, none of whom had any experience of Arctic weather, with the sole exception of the Canadians. "There were no troops trained to run on skis or snow shoes, and it was now too late to train them. "The whole country was one vast forest, a swamp in early and late summer, deep in snow in winter. "There were no roads, so that mechanical transport could not be used, but countless tracks led in every direction, and no existing maps showed where they ran."

In the spring of 1919, when the Siberian forces of Admiral Koltchak (*Kolchak's Siberian forces were decisively defeated in the summer of 1919*) failed to make the hoped-for junction with Ironside's forces near Koltas, on the River Dvina, the usefulness of the Allied force in Archangel as far as stabilising the North Russian Government was concerned was at an end. Evacuation, often hinted at, became a certainty.

With a lesser man than Ironside in command the Archangel adventure might have ended in catastrophe for the 13,000 British, 4,000 American, and 2,000 French troops in his care. Home again from Archangel, Ironside, 38, reported to the War Office expecting, at least, a pat on the back.

Instead, he was put on half-pay and reverted to his Army rank of colonel - but only for a while. When Lord Rawlinson's dispatches for North Russia (he had carried out the evacuation) were published Ironside was promoted to major-general for services in the field.

Which probably explains why he took Archangel for his title.

Peacemakers, Six months that Changed the World by Margaret Macmillan.

"After the Armistice with Germany there was the unresolved question of the position of Russia. Following the Revolution of 1917, the Bolsheviks had concluded a treaty between Russia and Germany, but this took no account of the Allied armies on the Western Front. The Armistice of 11 November 1918 led to the Paris Peace Conference in December and January between Clemenceau for France, Lloyd George for Britain, Orlando for Italy and Wilson for USA, but there was no Russian representative.

Russia was still unstable with White Russian armies fighting the Bolshevik force and the leaders of the Peace Conference could not agree who and how to approach the Russians. Churchill was for a significant force to be sent to support the White Russian armies and a small force was landed at Murmansk in Northern Russia. This was still engaged against the Bolsheviks when the Peace Conference in Paris invited representatives of the two main White Russian armies and the Bolsheviks to meet and agree representation on the Princes islands (Prinkipo) in the Sea of Marmara.

By mid-April Admiral Kolchak had struck against a wide front and managed to push the Bolsheviks back out of 300,000 square kilometres of territory. One force moved north towards Archangel and managed to link up with a small advance guard from a beleaguered White Russian and British force. The Bolsheviks had three times the manpower and most of Russia's armaments factories.

By 23 May 1919 the Allies decided to extend partial recognition to Kolchak's government, but this was the moment when that declaration was almost certainly too late. By late June, Red armies had broken through Kolchak's centre and the Whites were falling back. The Peace Conference was drawing to a close and the Germans were about to sign the Treaty of Versailles. There was no time to do anything more about Russia. The blockade against the Bolsheviks remained in force but Britain and France abandoned Kolchak as a lost cause. (He was shot in February 1920) In January 1921 the European Allies agreed to end military intervention and abandon their blockade."

Dawlish War memorial inscription (supplementary panel, west face) :

RUDDLE. R.H. PTE. R. FIELD ARTILLERY (*Note incorrect spelling of surname, and rank*)

Commonwealth War Graves entry: Ruddell, Driver. R. 40845 443rd Battery, Royal Field Artillery, 26 July 1919, age 31.

Son of Henry and Sarah Ruddell of Islington, London, Husband of Elsie Ruddell of 1 Commercial Road, Dawlish. Buried at Obozerskaya Burial Ground, Sp Memorial B 119

Last known address: 1 Commercial Road, Dawlish

Next of kin: Elsie Louisa Ruddell, wife

References:

Naval History Net – Russian campaign

Free BMD refs

Refs from subscription websites:

UK, British Army WW1 Service Records 1914-1920

UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War.

Census data