



ELLESMERE PORT WAR MEMORIAL PROJECT

**9472 Private W. MANFORD D.C.M.
2nd South Staffordshire Regiment
Died of wounds 28 March 1918**

William Manford was born in Bilston in the industrial Black Country of the West Midlands in 1898. At the age of 14 in 1911 he was working as a moulder in the local iron foundry, before moving to Ellesmere Port to work in the Wolverhampton Iron Works. When war broke out his allegiance was still with his hometown, and he consequently signed on to the 2nd South Staffordshire Regiment. After formation of the regiment at Aldershot he was sent to France with the B.E.F. landing at Le Havre 13 August 1914 and were soon in action in Belgium in the Battle of Mons followed by the First Battle of Ypres.

In May 1915 the battalion had moved south to the French border where they took part in the Battle of Festubert, where the main fighting took place between 15th – 25th May 1915. The initial fighting involved a night attack on the 15th/16th May at 11.30pm when units of the 2nd Division attacked on a 1,300 yard front. Initially this was successful, and 300 yards of No Man's Land at Rue du Bois was crossed with few casualties.



However, by 12.45am, 2nd Division ordered a further bombardment as planned, to coincide with the attack to be made by 7th Division. The support battalions of 6th Brigade which included the 2nd Battalion South Staffordshire were unable to leave the British front trench to move up to the captured position due to heavy cross-fire from the area between the two Divisional attacks, which had not been suppressed by the bombardment. It was in this attack on 16th May 1915 at Rue du Bois, that William Manford was involved in heroic action,

ELLESMERE PORT SOLDIER'S D.C.M.

News has reached Ellesmere Port that Private W. Manford of the South Staffordshire Regiment, has been awarded the D.C.M. for gallantry at Rue de Bois. A machine gun team with one exception had been killed or wounded and Manford, who is only seventeen years of age, went back twice to bring up equipment, although himself wounded. He made another journey and was again wounded. His efforts, however, enabled the gun to be brought into action.

Birkenhead News 21 Aug 1915

The official citation read,

‘9472 Private W. Manford 2 Bn. For conspicuous gallantry on 16th May 1915 at Rue du Bois. When the men of a machine-gun team had, with one exception, been killed or wounded, Pte Manford went back twice under very heavy shell fire to carry up machine-gun equipment left by them, although he was himself wounded. He was wounded again on the third journey, but by his efforts he enabled the gun to be brought into action. 5 August 1915’

Distinguished Conduct Medal (D.C.M.) (Level 2 Gallantry Award)

Instituted on 4 December 1854, the D.C.M. was the first official medal award to recognise an act of gallantry in the field by a member of the armed forces who was below the rank of officer. It was the other ranks' equivalent of the Distinguished Service Order. The D.C.M. was awarded for gallantry in the field in the face of the enemy. Other ranks in the British Army and also non-commissioned ranks in Commonwealth Forces were eligible for this award. The reverse of the medal bears the inscription “For Distinguished Conduct in the Field”. A bar carrying the date of a subsequent deed could be added to the ribbon until 1916 when the bar was changed to a laurel wreath. A recipient of the award is entitled to use the letters D.C.M. after their name. The D.C.M. was discontinued as an award by the British Armed Forces in 1993, when the three awards of the D.S.O, the D.C.M. and the C.G.M. were replaced by the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross. The Conspicuous Gallantry Cross is now the second level gallantry award for all ranks of the British Armed Forces.

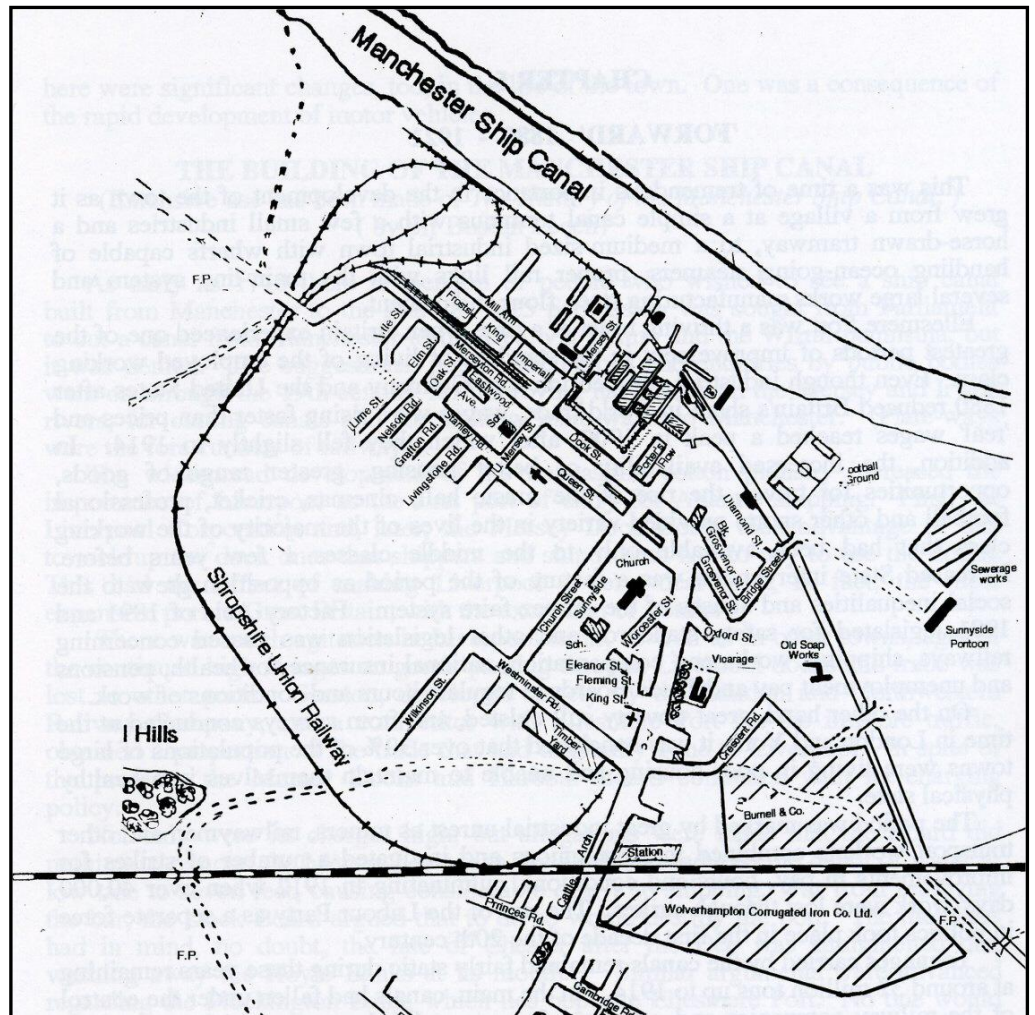
(Source: www.greatwar.co.uk/medals/ww1-gallantry-awards.htm#DCM)



12717 Lance Corporal W. MANFORD D.C.M. R.A.M.C.

After he recovered from his wounds he was assigned a new number, 12717, promoted to Lance Corporal and transferred to the R.A.M.C. probably as a stretcher bearer to his own battalion. During the defence of the German campaign Operation Michael, Lance-Corporal Manford suffered a gas attack and died of wounds on 28 March 1918 and was buried at Etaples Military Cemetery, France. He was aged twenty-one.

Right: The Wolverhampton Iron Works is at the bottom of the map. William Manford joined hundreds of migrants from the Black Country moving to Ellesmere Port to take up employment there.



Campaign :— B. E. F. 1914.

(A) Where decoration was earned.

(B) Present situation.

Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	Roll on which included (if any)
(A) MANFORD	2nd Bn S. Staffs	Pte	9472	F/2/5/65.*
(B) William	Ramc.		12878	2nd Bn S. Staffs

Action taken

ROYAL	ROLL 198 PAGE
VICTORY	Ramc/101/5103 79514
BRITISH	do do
STAR	C.447 65*

A/S

8/26 3/19
7/55

C/R. ipa. AS/Gen/5063.

Disembarkation
Date

12.8.14.

(6 34 46) W234—HP5590 500,000 4/19 HWV(P240) K608

[OVER.]

(432) Wt. 27169/7296 250M (8) 5/55 S.E.R. Ltd Gp. 647

No.	Corps	Name
9472	2/5 STAFFS	MANFORD
PTE	R.	W
Operations	Vol.	Page
DCM LG 5-8-1915		

File Nos. :—

A15-22

Medal Cards for William Manford

War Memorial

William was not recorded on the Ellesmere Port War Memorial. Like many other residents they had moved to the Port in the years just before the war from the Black Country to follow the move by the Wolverhampton Iron Works, and many certainly still looked at that area as being their true home. Furthermore, in many cases, immediate family were still living there, not just extended relatives. When the choice came of where the name of a lost loved one should be recorded, many opted for the memorial being erected in their original home town or village. Nevertheless, a great percentage were engraved on the Ellesmere Port Memorial. It must also be added that in quite a few cases, some men truly were forgotten, and fell somewhere between, being recorded on neither, as links with one home no longer existed and they may not have made enough ties or acquaintances in their new home to be remembered and recorded there.

In William's case his family were still in Bilston, and he was recorded on the memorial there.



WW1 Panels (*far right and far left*) on Bilston War Memorial.

Number of Schedule 136
(To be filled up by the Examiner
after collection.)

The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)		Total.		(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)	
I certify that—		Males.	Females.	Persons.	I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.
(1) All the ages on this Schedule are entered in the proper sex column. (2) I have counted the males and females in Columns 3 and 4 separately, and have compared their sum with the total number of persons. (3) After making the necessary corrections I have completed all entries on the Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous.	4 2 6	4	2	6	Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (House, Tenement, or Apartment). Grant the Kitchen as a room but do not count scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom; nor warehouse, office, shop. 3
Initials of Enumerator <i>jk</i>				Signature <i>Harold Mayfield</i> Postal Address <i>617 7th Ave. N. W. Bklyn.</i>	

Census 1911

NOTE—Draw your pen through such words of the headings as are inapplicable.

Census 1901



Etaples Military Cemetery

Researched and written

by

Mike Royden

www.roydenhistory.co.uk