



ELLESMERE PORT WAR MEMORIAL PROJECT

THE DODD BROTHERS

Family background

The Dodd family of Ellesmere Port was another of those local families that saw practically all of their sons sign up for active service. Either eight or nine passed through the recruiting office – the precise number remains unknown as documents have not survived – but this was a phenomenal commitment to the war effort and the call for volunteers. Head of the household was their father, John James Dodd, a Londoner, and a painter and decorator who had come to Ellesmere Port in 1894 after meeting his Yorkshire born wife Jemima Shaw in Liverpool. He had moved to Liverpool c.1874 from London, where his father was a journeyman butcher/cattle seller in Shoreditch, and came north to the busy port hoping for a life at sea. He was working as a mariner in 1881, but meeting Jemima seems to have put paid to that. Living in the cramped dockland of Toxteth, they married in St.James' Church nearby on 11 April 1881, but then moved to Grove Street, Huddersfield, Jemima's home town, where her widowed mother was living in 20 Manchester Road. Three sons were born during their short time in Huddersfield; Gerald J.H. Dodd in 1882, Maurice Francis Dodd in 1885, and Norman Charles Dodd in 1887, while father James found work as a signwriter.

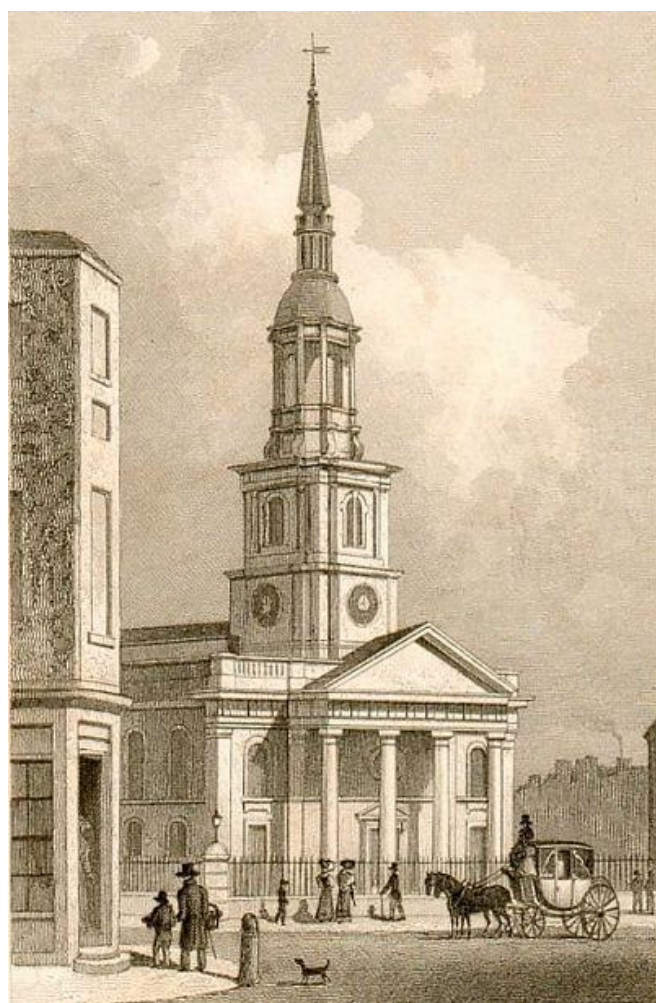
The following year they returned to Liverpool and moved into a terraced house in 101 Mill Street, back in the local area where they had first met (coincidentally, ancestors of the author were living a few doors down, and like John Dodd were house painters. Maybe they knew each other.). Further additions to the family followed; Cyril in 1888, Alice in 1889, Clarence Dyson in 1891, and John James junior in 1893, before another move in 1894, this time to Great Sutton near the growing canal town of Ellesmere Port, John senior possibly being attracted by the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal and the increase in house building. Two more sons followed, Harold Douglas in 1895 and **Alexander Alfred** on 12 March 1896. By 1901, the family had moved into one of the new terraced houses in 6 Stanley Road near the docks, John still working as a house painter. (The whole east side of the street, including no.6, was demolished to make way for the M53).

By 1911, the family had moved into 17 Oak Street (which was also a casualty of motorway construction), adjacent to Stanley Road. Gerald had married Bessie Irving, a girl from Hull, and with their infant daughter were living in 2 Nelson Road, which ran into Oak Street. Gerald, after learning his trade with his father, was now working independently as a House Painter. Maurice had also moved out and was living in the next street in 37 Lime Street, also working as a painter and decorator. He had married Elizabeth, a local girl and they had a 3 year old daughter, Alice.

The rest of the Dodd brothers were still at home in 1911 – Norman was a plumber, Cyril in the Iron Works, Clarence an Overseers Clerk, John James a miller in the adjacent Flour Mill, Harold a shunter's clerk for the L.& N.W.R. on the docks, and young **Alexander Alfred** still at school and about to start helping his father in the family business.

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BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of <i>St. Leonard Shoreditch</i> in the County of <i>Middlesex</i> in the Year 1857									
When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parents Name.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.			
When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Christian.	Surname.	Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.			
1857 May 3 No. 488.	George	Thomas	Booby	19 1/2 Wellington St.	Lincl. Merchant	P. J. Hutchinson	1857 May 29	1857 May 11	1857 May 11
May 5 No. 489.	Rose	William	Bell	19 Aldgate St.	Printer	P. J. Hutchinson	1857 May 2	1857 May 7	1857 May 7
May 3 No. 491.	Leison	Thomas	Harrold	10 Aldgate St. Horseguard	Planter	P. J. Hutchinson	1857 May 8	1857 May 8	1857 May 8
May 3 No. 492.	Charlotte	John	Prigby	17 Rear Yard	Master	P. J. Hutchinson	1857 May 14	1857 May 5	1857 May 5
May 3 No. 493.	Elizabeth	John	Glinne	3 Mind. Street	Usher	P. J. Hutchinson	1857 May 22	1857 May 12	1857 May 12
May 3 No. 494.	Henry	George	Boyer	79 Phillip	Porter	P. J. Hutchinson	1857 May 9	1857 May 2	1857 May 2
May 3 No. 495.	Mary Ann	James	Harrold	6 Wood's Ber.	Chai. Merchant	P. J. Hutchinson	1857 May 21	1857 May 21	1857 May 21
May 3 No. 496.	Helena	James	Harrold	6 Wood's Ber.	Chai. Merchant	P. J. Hutchinson	1857 May 7	1857 May 7	1857 May 7

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When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Christian.	Surname.	Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.			
1857 May 3 No. 497.	Philip	James	Harrold	8 Aldgate St.	Porter	P. J. Hutchinson	1857 May 11	1857 May 11	1857 May 11
May 3 No. 498.	Mary Jane	Thomas	Symons	8 8 Aldgate	Draper	P. J. Hutchinson	1857 May 7	1857 May 7	1857 May 7
May 3 No. 499.	Henry	Thomas	Harrold	11 Aldgate	Chai. Merchant	P. J. Hutchinson	1857 May 8	1857 May 8	1857 May 8
May 3 No. 500.	Mary Ann	John	Prigby	17 Rear Yard	Master	P. J. Hutchinson	1857 May 14	1857 May 5	1857 May 5
May 3 No. 501.	Elizabeth	John	Glinne	3 Mind. Street	Usher	P. J. Hutchinson	1857 May 22	1857 May 12	1857 May 12
May 3 No. 502.	John	James	Harrold	6 Wood's Ber.	Chai. Merchant	P. J. Hutchinson	1857 May 21	1857 May 21	1857 May 21
May 3 No. 503.	Angela	James	Harrold	6 Wood's Ber.	Chai. Merchant	P. J. Hutchinson	1857 May 21	1857 May 21	1857 May 21
May 3 No. 504.	Lucy	James	Harrold	6 Wood's Ber.	Chai. Merchant	P. J. Hutchinson	1857 May 7	1857 May 7	1857 May 7



The baptism record (bottom right) of John James Dodd, 3 May 1857, in St Leonard's, Shoreditch, London, who was baptised on the same day with his younger brother Angel.

1881. Marriage solemnized at St James Church in the Parish of Walton on the Hill in the County of Lancaster

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
227	April 11 th	John James Fitzclarence Dodd	25	Bachelor	None	131 Beaufort Street	John James Dodd	Cattle Dealer
	1881	Jemima Shaw	25	Spinster		by Chester Street	James Shaw	Foreman

Married in the Church of St James according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by Richard Smith or after Same by me, J. D. Lovell

This Marriage was solemnized between us, John James Fitzclarence Dodd in the Presence of us, Richard Smith Jemima Shaw Elizabeth Steele



Marriage entry of John James Dodd and Jemima Shaw in St James' Church, Toxteth. James was living in Beaufort Street, *above left* (to the left side of the photograph), and Jemima in Chester Street (*above right*).

They left Liverpool for Huddersfield to be closer to Jemima's mother (who was living at 20 Manchester Road, *left*). They moved into a house on Grove Street. Maurice was born at that time in 1885 (*below*).

BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of Huddersfield in the County of York in the year One thousand eight hundred and eighty Six

When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parents' Names.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
1886 6th January 12 noon No. 265 1885	Maurice Francis Son of	John James Fitzclarence & Jemima	Dodd	Grove street	Sign Writer	John Dunton



***Stanley Road looking towards Upper Mersey Street (today, Grace Street).
No.6 is at the far end on the left.***

Below, the same view today with the M53 on the left



Gerald Dodd's home

2 Nelson Street



Maurice's home

37 Lime Street (brown door)

**John James junior's house
1 Stanley Road
(below)**



The coming of war

Gerald had been in the army before the war as he was called up as a Reservist in August 1914. He rejoined the Royal Army Medical Corps as a Private, but soon began to rise through the ranks.

1262 Private Harold Douglas Dodd, who had moved to the Imperial Flour Mill by 1914, had previously signed up for the territorials and was also called up as soon as the war began. He volunteered for the Welsh Border Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance in the Royal Army Medical Corps. The youngest of the brothers, Alexander, volunteered for the King's Liverpool Regiment and was enlisted into the 18th Battalion, one of the four City Old Pals. He was just eighteen.

Newspapers later report that in addition to Alexander, by the beginning of 1916, there were three brothers serving in France, one in England and two more attested by January 1916. Two of the three in France were obviously the aforementioned Gerald and Harold. But despite extensive research, it has not been possible to identify which brother was where. The records for each of the men no longer exist. Nevertheless, seven of the eight brothers had enlisted by 1916, and the eighth probably followed later that year through conscription.

In summary, the brothers were;

- **Sergeant Major / First Class Warrant Officer Gerald J.H. Dodd , (former Reserve) R.A.M.C. (1882-1947)**
- **1262 Private Harold Douglas Dodd, Welsh Border Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance, R.A.M.C. (1895-1974)**
- **24649 Private Alexander Alfred Dodd 18th Battalion, King's Liverpool Regiment (1896-1915)**
- **Maurice Francis Dodd (1885-1960)**
- **Norman Charles Dodd (1887-1963)**
- **Cyril Dodd (1888-1949)**
- **Clarence Dyson Dodd (1891-1956)**
- **John James (1893-1941)**

Also added to this list should be **William Crawshaw** – he was recorded as a ‘visitor’ in the Dodd household on their 1911 census, but he was, in fact, the future husband of the Dodd's only daughter Alice. Born in Birkenhead, he worked as a policeman, before leaving to become a steward in the County Court. They married on 15 June 1911 in Christchurch, the parish church of Ellesmere Port, and moved into an adjacent house in 117 Church Street. They had two children before the war, John James on 19 June 1912, and Evelyn on 19 January 1914. He attested on 11 December 1915, and was put in the Army Reserve, before being called up the following year on 17 June, when he was posted to the 3rd Battalion, Cheshire Regiment. He wasn't discharged until February 1919, and by then Alice had moved back with her parents, unable to maintain their Church Street home alone, but at least her husband had survived the war.



Oak Street (now demolished)



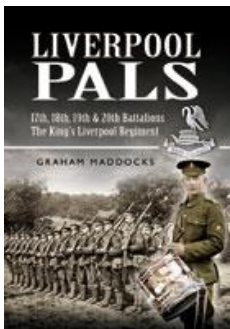
Christchurch, parish church of Ellesmere Port

24649 Private Alexander Alfred Dodd 18th Battalion, King's Liverpool Regiment

Officially the Liverpool Pals were named the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th Service Battalions of the King's, but to many they were known as the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Pals. The Liverpool Pals Regiments were the first of all the Pal's Battalions to be formed inspired other towns to follow Liverpool's lead and form their own Pals regiments. They were also the last to be stood down. They would later take all their objectives on the first day of the Somme, continue through that Somme campaign into the winter of 1916, into the Battle of Arras, the muddy hell of Passchendaele in 1917, and the desperate defence against the German offensive of March 1918.



After Alexander had volunteered for the King's Liverpool Regiment on 6 January 1915 and was enlisted into the 18th Battalion, and he moved to Hooton Park Racecourse in South Wirral on 23 September. This was only a couple of miles north of his home, so he could easily visit his family during leave. Lord Derby had secured the services of several sergeants of the Grenadier Guard Reserve after a special recruiting mission to London, who were deployed to bring the Pals Regiments into fighting shape, training the men in army discipline, foot-drill and musketry, although it would be a few weeks before they all had regular uniforms and rifles.



We had about a week's rest before being summoned to Sefton Park for drilling, then we went from there to Hooton Park. We were under the grandstand. I went through two suits because we didn't get our uniforms until the end of October, and then they gave us all one pound allowance for wear and tear and two pairs of shoes and boots.

17121 Private W Gregory, 18th Btn KLR
(from *Liverpool Pals* Graham Maddock p38).



On 3 December 1914 the 18th Battalion left Hooton Park for good, and joined the rest of the Pals at Knowsley Hall. On 29 January 1915, purpose built accommodation had also been completed for the 20th on the Knowsley Estate, enabling all four battalions to complete their training together as a brigade.

(left: Practicing trench construction on the Knowsley Estate)

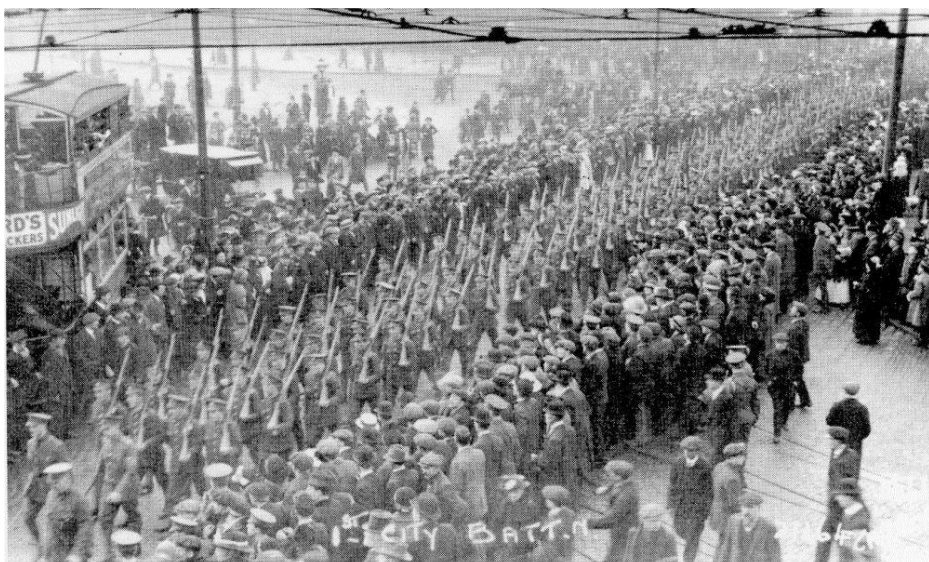
At the end of April 1915 orders finally came to move out, and all four city battalions were entrained for Grantham on Friday 30 April, where the 12,000 strong Pals were quartered in a camp on the Belton Park Estate.

(Right: The 17th Battalion marching through Liverpool)

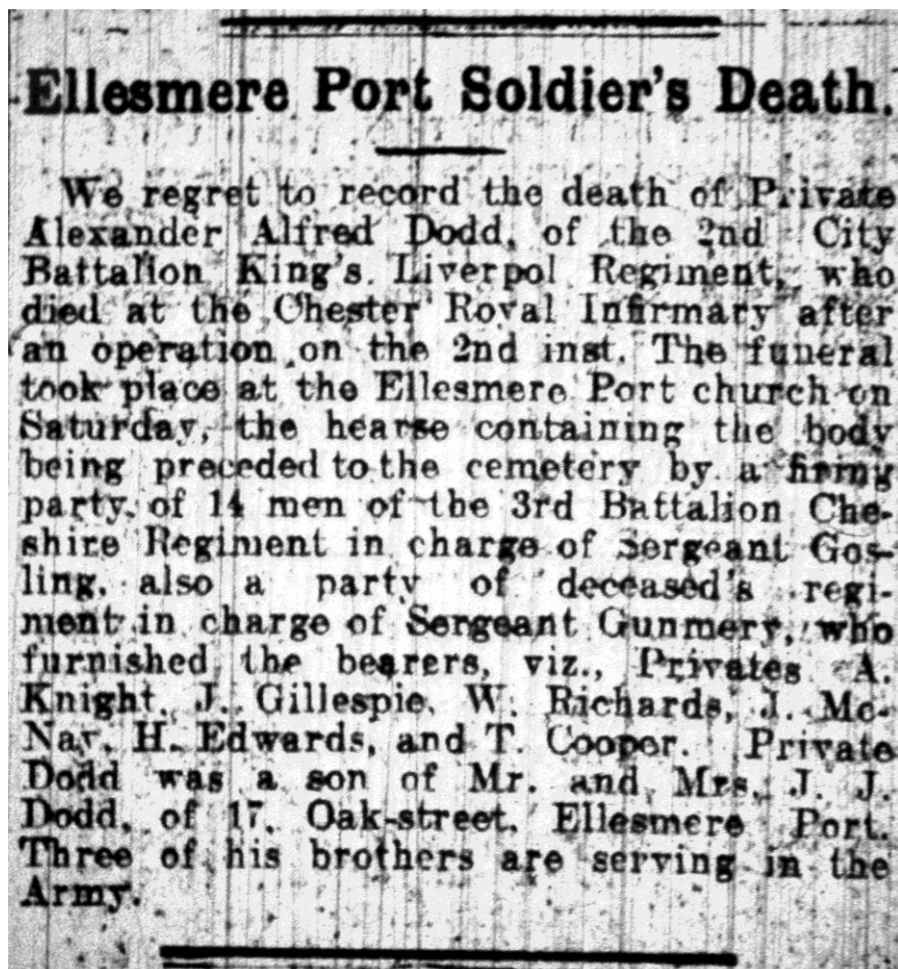
After 4 months of further rigorous training, the War Office formally took the Pals over as fully trained and equipped units of the British Army. It was a year to the day when Lord Derby had first raised the Pals.

On 31 August 1915, they began to move out to Larkhill at Salisbury Plain, to join other regular units and practice large scale manoeuvres.

Just after a year to get all the units disciplined, trained and battle ready, the Pals finally began to move across the Channel to Boulogne on 7 November 1915, with the 17th as the senior battalion leaving first.



However, young Alexander Alfred Dodd was not with them. Some time during his training in early 1915 he became ill and was returned home to Chester Infirmary for an operation. He did not pull through and died on 2 June 1915. He was buried with full military honours in the local parish cemetery in Christchurch, Ellesmere Port. He was aged only nineteen, the youngest of the Dodds.



*Birkenhead News and
Wirral General
Advertiser 9 June 1915*

As a soldier of the Liverpool Pals, Alexander's name is also recorded in the Liverpool Town Hall – 'Hall of Remembrance', in honour of the King's Liverpool Regiment, plus the memorial volume in Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, and on the memorial wall in the Museum of Liverpool on the Pier Head.

He is also mentioned by name in Graham Maddock's excellent book on the Liverpool Pals as being one of only six Pals to die during the period of training.

Christchurch, Ellesmere Port Parish Church Cemetery



**40103 First Class Warrant Officer Gerald John. H. Dodd, C.de G.,
Royal Army Medical Corps**

As a reservist, Gerald was in a position to be sent over to the Front immediately, but he did not go until 31 July 1915, probably because he was involved in the training of new recruits. After serving several months in France he was honoured by the French for bravery. He was awarded the Croix-de-Guerre (*Cross of war* - see 'Medals and Honours' on the website menu for further information about WW1 awards) for which he had the further honour to have it presented by General Petain, the Lion of Verdun and French national hero, who would later be Premier during WWII. Nothing further is known of his war record, but Gerald survived the war and returned to his wife and children in Ellesmere Port after discharge. He passed away in 1947.



**Ellesmere Port Soldier
Honoured.**

Sergt.-Major and First-class Warrant Officer Gerald J. H. Dodd, one of Ellesmere Port's many fighters, has been honoured with a French decoration in recognition of his devotion to duty and gallantry at Verdun. He is a married man, the son of Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Dodd.

Formerly a soldier, he emerged from his reserve and re-joined the R.A.M.C. as a private, and proof of his remarkable promotion is furnished in the fact that before his uniform was served out to him he was made sergeant. He quickly became quartermaster-sergeant, then sergeant-major, and has also been further promoted to first-class warrant officer. A well-known local footballer, Dodd is well-liked, and he cherishes the French honour all the more by reason of the fact that it was personally bestowed upon him by the great General Petain, commanding at Verdun. The decoration is the Croix-de-Guerre, which is tantamount to the British D.C.M.

*Birkenhead News and
Wirral General Advertiser
24 May 1916*

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
DODD	R.A.M.C.	Sgt. Major	40103
G. J. H.		No 1st	

Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	Ramc/101	347	7467
BRITISH	"		
15 STAR	RAMC/1A	1	
Theatre of War first served in	(1) France		
Date of entry therein	31. 7. 15.		

K. 1380.

Medal Cards:

Above – Warrant Officer First Class Gerald J.H.Dodd,
below; Harold Douglas Dodd, which also records his 'Mentioned in Despatches'.

DODD. H.D. No. 1262. Private

Welsh Border Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance
Royal Army Medical Corps (T.F.)

M.I.D.

L.G. 1.1.16
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1262 Private Harold Douglas Dodd

Welsh Border Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps

Harold was born in Great Sutton in 1895 after the family had moved to South Wirral from Liverpool. After he left school he began work with the London & North Western Railway as a shunter's clerk, but soon moved to the Imperial Flour Mill by 1914. He had also previously signed up for the territorials and was also called up as soon as the war began. He volunteered for the Welsh Border Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance in the Royal Army Medical Corps. In 1916 he was honoured by being Mentioned in Despatches;

MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES PORT MAN HONOURED

We are pleased to announce that an Ellesmere Port man's name appears in the list of those mentioned in despatched and published in our last issue. It is Harold D Dodd, 1262 Welsh Border Mounted Brigade. He formerly worked for the Imperial Flour Mills and joined the Territorial Forces afterwards volunteering for active service. He left Ellesmere Port a month after the war started and has had some exciting experiences in France. He wrote to his parents a short time ago stating he had been mentioned in despatches, together with an officer, a sergeant-major and two men from Hereford. Private Dodd states that the honour is conferred for attending wounded soldiers under very heavy fire.

The Dodd family has a fine record for war service. Three sons are in France, and one in England, all serving their country, and the two at home both have attested. We heartily congratulate Private Dodd upon the honour conferred upon him. His brother, Sergeant-Major Dodd, visited the Port a few weeks ago, and has seen some heavy fighting.

Chester Observer 15 January 1916



There is a possibility that he was posted to Palestine. A letter was received by the local press naming one of the men out there as Herbert A Dodd, of the Welsh Border Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps. Due to lack of surviving evidence it has not been possible to verify his actual identity.

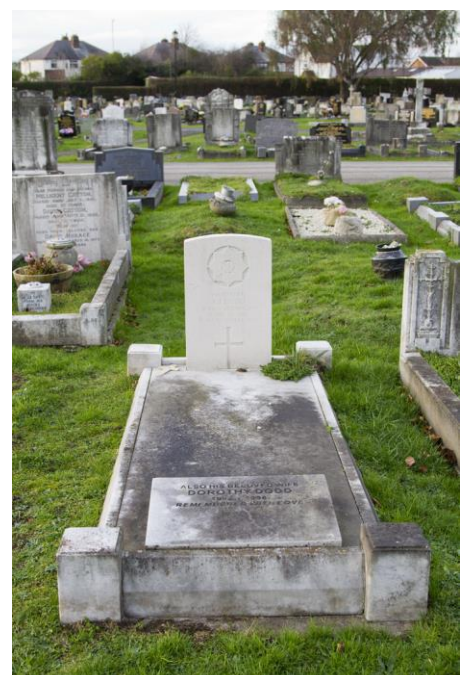
(The letter is available for download on the Dodd Brothers web page where this history was accessed).

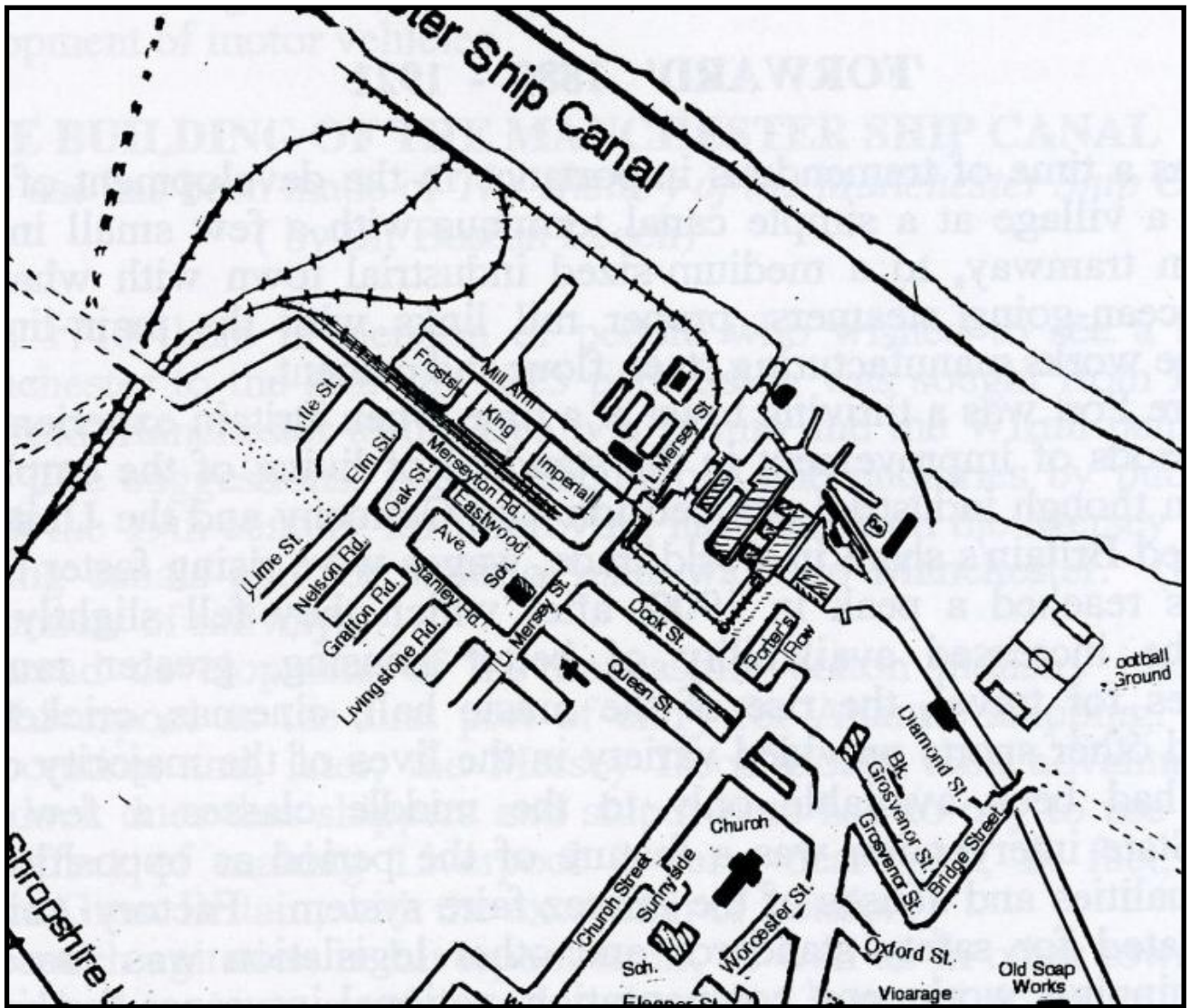
Harold Douglas Dodd came through the war, married in 1922 and continued to live in the Port. He passed away in 1974 aged seventy nine.

John James Dodd

Born in 1893 in Liverpool. John worked as a Miller in the adjacent flour mill, but as he was aged 21 in 1914 it is likely he volunteered for war service. His war record is still unknown due to the lack of surviving documents, which also applies to his brothers below. He came through the war, married Dorothy, and moved into 1 Stanley Road, directly across the road from the former Dodd family home.

However, when the Second World War began, at the age of 46, John volunteered for the 20th Cheshire Battalion Home Guard. He was rushed to Winwick Hospital near Warrington for emergency treatment, but died on 16 November 1941. It is not known at present if this was directly related to his military service. Nevertheless, it is likely, as he was buried in a Commonwealth War Grave in Overpool Cemetery, Ellesmere Port.





Map of Ellesmere Port 1910 showing the tight-knit community around the docks and ship canal.
 All the roads where the Dodd family lived at this time can be seen on this map.
 John James Dodd junior worked at the Imperial Flour Mill (map centre, and below far right).



The war record of the remaining brothers is yet to be discovered, despite extensive research.

All survived the war and returned to their family in Ellesmere Port;

- **Maurice Francis Dodd (1885-1960)**
- **Norman Charles Dodd (1887-1963)**
- **Cyril Dodd (1888-1949)**
- **Clarence Dyson Dodd (1891-1956)**

**Researched and written
by
Mike Royden**

www.roydenhistory.co.uk