

DEDICATION TO THE LIFE AND DEATH OF Lt RALPH. D. DOUGHTY. M.C.

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I have been very privileged as a Kivell family member to have seen and read the five war time diary's that my great, great uncle Lieutenant Ralph. Dorchel. Doughty. M.C. wrote entries in during his military service in World War One. And I hope that this commemoration story will pay full respect and honour the life that he lived both here in New Zealand as well as during his time spent in Australia, and then on to his military service for the A.I.F. (*Australian Imperial Force*).

One can only gain the utmost respect for every serviceman and servicewoman who is prepared to put themselves in harms way so that others may live without fear or tyranny, as Ralph did and who payed by making the ultimate sacrifice for his country, far, far away on the field of battle at Passchendaele.

Our families are also very privileged to have had Ralph Dorchel Doughty as a family member, and so fortunate that he had the inclination to take with him through his military service, a means to record his personal experience (writing material), and that he had had the fortitude and willingness to be able to make day by day entries in his diaries that so dramatically show the life of an artilleryman during WWI (as shown below) - and for this we will always be grateful.

So here's to it and may our little flutter which we are about to have tend in some way to weight his balance against His most Satanic Majesty THE KAISER. R.D.D.

Ralph's Family History

Ralph Doughty was born on the 1st October 1891 and was the youngest of eight children born to William and Susanna Doughty of Stratford, New Zealand. Ralph spent his early years growing up in Stratford and went through the public education system. A few years later, he went on to serve for 5 years in 'H' Battery for the New Zealand Field Artillery service, after which he then left at the completion of his service.

Ralph got his first job as a warehouseman in Stratford but he soon decided that when he was old enough he would travel to Australia to seek a job that was more rewarding and better paying - this he did in 1913 at the age 22.

Ralph gained residence in 'Craignathan', Hayes Street, Neutral Bay, New South Wales, but from here little else is known about what his life was like while living in Australia, things like whether he ever managed to get the job he went over the Tasman Sea for, or if he ever had a partner while staying in Australia.

It was not until Ralph entered the military service and records started to be kept that more information was gathered on his life. These military records that are shown below were obtained from both the [Australian National Archives](#) (with a total of 94 documents supplied) and from information that was gathered from the [A.I.F. project database](#). Ralph has also supplied his own record of his military service through the use of his day by day diaries. They show that his life in the service of the A.I.F. was a complete full and rewarding one.

Ralph's Personal WWI Diaries

Our family are one of the lucky ones that have in their possession five lovingly cherished war diaries that have been returned to us from the fields of battle and cover Ralph's day by day experiences as an artilleryman during his campaigns that started in Egypt on the 5th April, 1915 with his artillery training, then on to Gallipoli, France and Belgium, with his entries finishing on the 16th March, 1917.

These entries are written in indelible pencil and over the 93 years since they were placed onto paper they have faded slightly, so all of Ralph's thoughts and experiences had to be transcribed into a readable format before they were lost forever. This was done with care and respect by Jane Webster and Gary Danvers. During the transcription some words eluded the transcribers and these are indicated with or there were guesses

[Gilligan?]. With Ralph's own bracketed comments in round brackets (thus) and their explanations or expansions of his slang terms being indicated in a manner similar to the guesses but without the question mark [thus].

Ralph's diaries are also visually interesting to look at in that with diary one Ralph has cut some leather from a horse saddle to use as a protective cover; he has then placed a copper wire through the top of the note pad to bind it all together (still intact even today). Diaries two and three are small pocket note pads, that Ralph would have taken with him during a day's firing to make entries in while he was stationed at his battery gun. Diaries four and five are standard army issue (Field Service) Correspondence books (four having a hard cover, and five having a soft cover). Diary one, two and three were written in while Ralph served in the Gallipoli campaign and diaries four and five were written in during his training in Egypt and during his campaigns in France and Belgium, this being a total of 2 years 10 months and 42 days.

Personally I would like to think that Ralph may have had a sixth diary somewhere, as there is a gap between his last entry in his fifth diary to when he was wounded in action in Belgium (Passchendaele), this being a total of 3 months and 37 days. And if there was another diary I would also like to think that it was laid with him when interred at Coxyde Military Cemetery.

*Let those that come after see to it
that his name is not forgotten*

Ralph's Diary History

The fact that his five diaries made it back from the front lines of several campaigns is a miracle in itself but also of how the complete set of diaries came into the possession of our family is also a story to tell. This starts with my father as a small boy and this is his story below;

I seem to remember as a child looking at books and maps relating to the Gallipoli campaign and being told that we had a relative who served there (as many families did). Ralph's connection to me is that my maternal Grandmother was Ralph's sister; there were 4 sisters and two brothers in the family. Later in life I was given a leather covered diary (diary one) that recorded his campaign in Gallipoli. I was never aware of any other diaries until my father passed away. Then one day my mother said to me that as I had the leather bound diary that I had better have the others. She then gave me three more diaries written by Ralph during his service in World War One (these being diaries two, three and five).

Some years later, when as a member of the New Plymouth Returned Services Association I was told that there was a letter for me in our club letter rack. The lead up to this letter was that there had been a family reunion for the members of the Ward family (one of my grandmothers sisters had married a Ward).

Ralph Ward, who was named after Ralph Doughty, and who was later to be the N.P. R.S.A. President, had attended this reunion and had met Jane Webster (Ralph Ward's niece). Incredibly while speaking to Ralph Ward she had told him that she had in her possession another one of Ralph Doughty's diaries (diary four, the missing diary). She was told by Ralph Ward that there was a chap in New Plymouth (myself) who also had one. Contact was then made between Jane and myself and I was able to tell her that there was more than one diary. We arranged to get together in New Plymouth, and her diary slotted neatly into a gap between diary three and five.

We then arranged that I would take all the diaries to her place of work (the R.N.Z.A.F at Ohakea), where she was an N.C.O. in the Technical Wing. All the diaries were kept in the C.O.'s safe, causing much interest. And thanks to some great work by Jane Webster and Gary Danvers the whole set of five diaries were transcribed and typed up into a readable format.

Tony Kivell

Medals Awarded to Ralph Doughty throughout his campaigns

Ralph was awarded his Military Cross on the 8th May 1917, for his action at HERMIES (which is situated 16 km SE of Arras)

Lieutenant Ralph Dorchel DOUGHTY

Displayed conspicuous courage and initiative when working with the Right Battalion, 1st Australian Army Brigade F.O.O. for the 3rd (Army) F.A. Brigade. He was responsible for the successful employment of the Artillery on his flank at a crucial period of the operations, and did not hesitate to push out beyond the furthest point reached by our Infantry patrols in order to secure better facilities for our observation. There can be little doubt that it was to his devotion to duty and resource, that our line in front of HERMIES owed it immunity from counter-attack, during the whole day of attack.

Source: 'Commonwealth Gazette' Date: 11 October 1917

Ralph also was given, the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal, and the Victory Medal

Ralph's Promotions

Ralph's progress through the ranks started when he signed on as a bombardier on the 24th August 1914. During the Gallipoli campaign Ralph was appointed to Acting Corporal on the 20th June 1915, then to Provisional Corporal on the same day. On his arrival in Egypt Ralph was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant at Tel El Kebir (which is 110km NE of Cairo) on the 12th March 1916, and he was finally promoted to 1st Lieutenant on the 13th June 1916, when in action at Flanders Fields as shown below.

9th July 1916

R.O.O today. Went out exercising horses this morning. Afterwards jumped some of the horses. Several visits from Taubes today. The Colonel paid us a visit today and brought with him the news that my 2nd star has been confirmed. So from now on I hold the rank of a First Lieutenant. What a Dorg.

Ralph's Medical Records



Along with so many other servicemen at Gallipoli Ralph suffered from Pyrexia (severe fever) which can be contracted due to the several conditions, like the weather or the supply of food or drink. Ralph had to be evacuated back to a hospital ship and onto Lemnos Is to recover on the 27th July 1915. Ralph return to duty although not back to 100% on the 5th August 1915, when he landed back on W beach in the early hours of the morning, and had to get back into action later that same night.

He was again wounded in action in Flers, France on the 18th November 1916, when he was buried by a shell explosion and sustained a concussion blast in the head and an injury to the shoulder and was admitted to the 38th Casualty Clearing Station before being transferred to the Ambulance Train No 26 on the 19th November 1916, to be then admitted to No 8 General Hospital, Rouen where it was found he was suffering from Trench Feet which is an infection of the feet caused by cold, wet and insanitary conditions. From there he was transferred back to England on the 21st November 1916, and admitted to 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth on the 22nd November 1916 for recuperation.

After recovering from his injuries Ralph was discharged to No 1 Command Depot, Perham Downs on the 27th December 1916, and was marched out to the Reserve Brigade, Australian Artillery at

Heytesbury on the 21st January 1917, and preceded back overseas to France on the 31st January 1917. He rejoined the 9th Battery, 3rd Field Artillery Brigade on the 9th February 1917.

Ralph was again wounded in action at Passchendaele, Belgium, on the 23rd July 1917, when he sustained a gunshot wound to the abdomen and was admitted to the 91st Field Ambulance Station, this time lady luck

was not with him and he did not recover from his wounds and died two days later on the 25th July 1917, at the age of 26 and was Laid to Rest at Coxyde Military Cemetery (Plot I, Row F, Grave No 20), Belgium.

His Duty Done. (R.I.P.)

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