

Ernest BISHOP

Private 345295, 16th (Royal 1st Devon and Royal North Devon Yeomanry) Battalion, Devonshire Regiment
Died December 3rd 1917, aged 26

Memorial in Jerusalem War Cemetery, Jerusalem, Israel

Ernest Bishop was born in 1892 to Mark and Susan Bishop. In 1911 Mark (61) was a widower farming Tregaverne Farm, where Ernest and his elder sister Susan (26) were helping father. Also in the household was Mark's daughter Bessie Steer (37), together with his nephew Thomas Bishop (17), who was recorded as a general farm servant, his sister-in-law Ann Spriddell (71), living on private means, and a granddaughter Gwendoline May (6).

Ernest was 22 at the outbreak of war. D Squadron of the Royal 1st Devon Yeomanry was stationed at Bodmin, with detachments at Camelford and this may have been where he joined up. The Royal 1st Devon was stationed around Colchester until it left Liverpool on September 24th 1915 on the Titanic's sister ship, RMS Olympic, to take part in the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign. They arrived at Mudros on the island of Lemnos (see also *Thomas Oaten*) a week later, and landed at Gallipoli October 9th where they were put to work digging defensive ditches. In November it was right in the firing line, but was pulled out on December 19th.

The Royal 1st Devon was transferred to Alexandria at the end of December to man the Suez Canal defences as part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force facing the Ottoman Empire. On January 4th 1917 the regiment was merged with the Royal North Devon Yeomanry at Moascar, Ismailia, Egypt to form the 16th (Royal 1st Devon and Royal North Devon Yeomanry) Battalion, Devonshire Regiment, as part of the 229th Brigade in the 74th (Yeomanry) Division. The 74th took part in the Invasion of Palestine in 1917, including the second and third Battles of Gaza, the Battle of Beersheba and in December 1917 the Battle of Jerusalem.

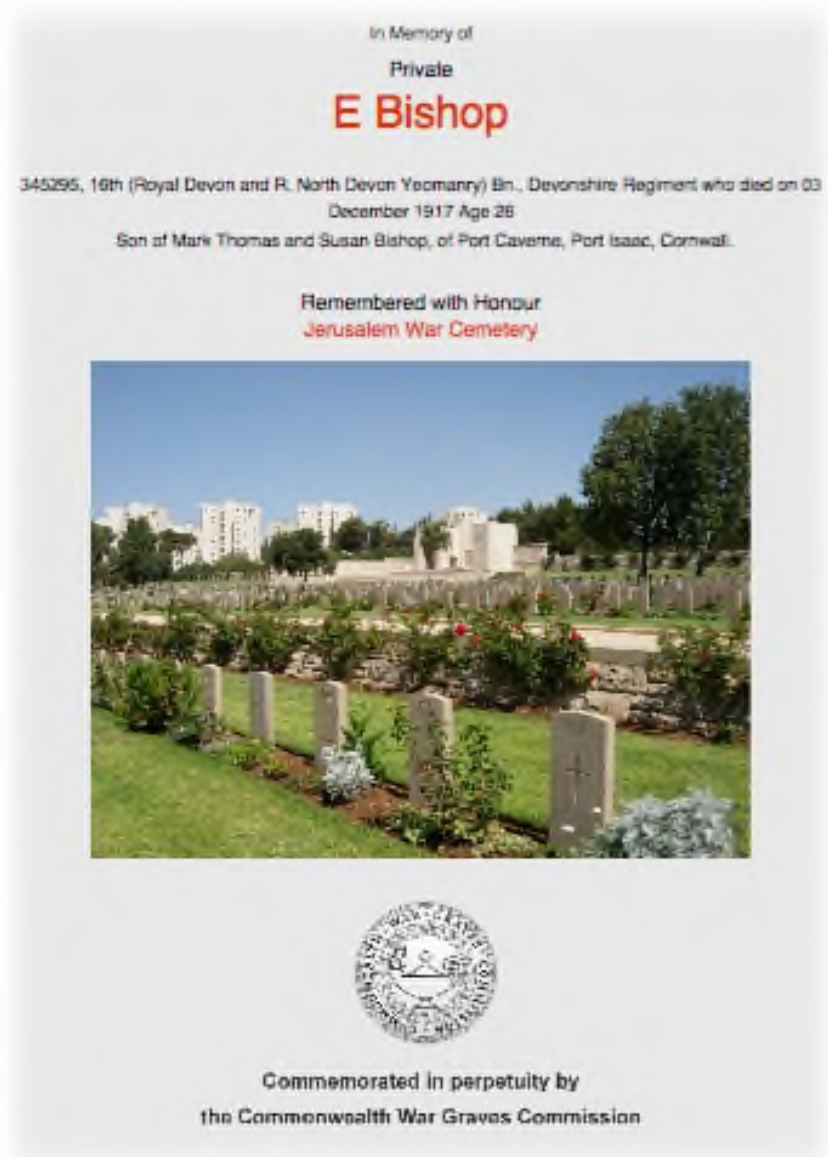
The final capture of Jerusalem started on December 1st. The 229th was part of the force that captured Beit Ur al-Fauqa, five miles north of Jerusalem, on December 3rd. The attack was launched from the head of the Wadi Zeit at 1am and by 3.30am the village had been captured, along with 17 prisoners and three machine guns. However, the position was impossible to hold, as it was overlooked by Ottoman positions on higher ground. Bombing and hand-to-hand fighting continued all morning, and the battalion withdrew, suffering 300 casualties, of which Ernest Bishop was one.

Private Ernest Bishop is buried in the Jerusalem War Cemetery.

Sources 1st Royal Devon Yeomanry: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_1st_Devon_Yeomanry
Battle of Jerusalem: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Jerusalem_\(1917\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Jerusalem_(1917))



Mountain Gun Battery near Beit Ur al-Fauqa
in November 1917



Ernest Bishop's Memorial Plaque

This is the memorial plaque issued to Ernest Bishop's next of kin after the war, and similar ones would have been sent to the next of kin in respect of all our casualties. The plaque is about 5 inches across, and was popularly known as the 'Dead Man's Penny' as it resembled the smaller penny coin then in circulation.

The final design was the result of a public competition involving over 800 entrants, and was won by the sculptor Edward Carter Preston, whose initials 'E Cr P' appear by the lion's front paw. The design consists of Britannia holding a trident and standing with a lion. In her outstretched arm she is holding an oak wreath above the tablet bearing the deceased's name. Two dolphins swim around Britannia to symbolize Britain's sea power. The legend reads 'HE DIED FOR FREEDOM AND HONOUR'. This had to be slightly redesigned when it was realised that there were female casualties and they needed to fit an 'S' in front of 'HE' for the very much small number of plaques (*less than 1500*) in respect of women killed. Below the main image is a second lion tearing apart the German eagle.

Plaques were still being made as late as the 1930s, as they were also issued in respect of those who died later from causes attributable to their service. A total of 1,355,000 plaques were issued, using around 450 tonnes of bronze. Two factories were involved in their manufacture, the Memorial Plaque Company in Acton, from early 1919 to December 1920, when all subsequent plaques were made at the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich. Ernest Bishop's was made at the Royal Arsenal as it has a number (*in this case 25 – possibly a die number*) between the lion's rear paw and its tail, and the normally plain back has their stamped monogram of the initials WA in a circle.

When the plaque arrived, it would have been in a simple cardboard sleeve, and accompanied by a letter from King George the Fifth as well as a memorial scroll. In common with many such plaques, these ephemeral accompaniments to Ernest Bishop's plaque are now lost, but these illustrate what they would have looked like.

Sources Memorial Plaque: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memorial_Plaque_\(medallion\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memorial_Plaque_(medallion))
History of the Memorial Plaque: <http://www.jackclegg3.webspace.virginmedia.com/Plaque-history.htm>
Ernest Bishop's Memorial Plaque: PISCES is very grateful to Janet Chadband for permission to photograph this memento to a brave man



Cardboard sleeve enclosing
the Memorial Plaque



I join with my grateful people
in sending you this memorial
of a brave life given for others
in the Great War.

George R. I.

Letter from King George V
and the Memorial Scroll



HE whom this scroll commemorates was numbered among those who, at the call of King and Country, left all that was dear to them, endured hardness, faced danger, and finally passed out of the sight of men by the path of duty and self-sacrifice, giving up their own lives that others might live in freedom. Let those who come after see to it that his name be not forgotten.

Pvt. Ernest Bishop
Devonshire Regiment

"Ernest Bishop was my Great Uncle. He was born in 1892 in Port Gaverne and the 1911 Census shows him living in Bodmin. His army number was 345295 and he was killed in Jerusalem in 1917 when he was just 26 years old.

He was the son of Mark Bishop and Susan (nee Spriddell) and brother of Annie Selway, Bessie Steer, Susan Hill, Mary Jane May and also Mark and John who both emigrated to South Africa."

Janet Chadband