

**ST JAMES CHURCH TAUNTON**

**WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL PROJECT**

# Ralph Mitchell

**Name:** Ralph Mitchell

**Rank:** Private

**Service Number:** 242038

**Regiment:** Somerset Light Infantry

**Battalion/Unit number:** 2nd/4th Battalion

**Date/year of Birth:** c.1889

**Place of Birth:** Taunton

**Residence:** 24 East Reach (1911), 144 East Reach (when enlisted)

**Date of Death:** 10th March 1918

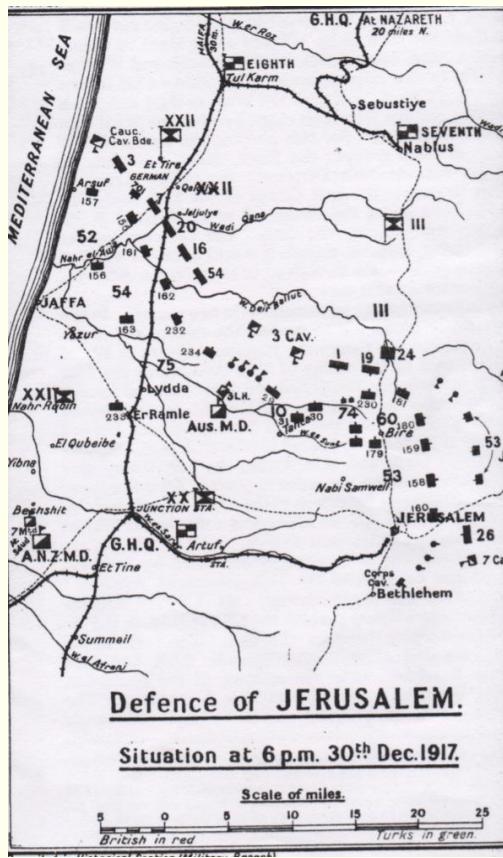
**Place of Death:** Wadi Deir Ballut, Palestine

**Burial/Memorial:** Basra

Ralph was the only son of Harry and Rhoda who owned a grocer's shop at 24 East Reach. When he left school he worked in the family business with his cousin Harold Ree and an apprentice Rowland Briggs. He had two sisters Ethel and Eveline.

Although his certificate on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission states that he was in the 1st/4th Battalion of the SLI, the Borough Muster Roll states he was in the 2nd/4th Battalion. The 2nd/4th is the more likely unit as it was attached to the 75th Division which was in battle in Mesopotamia the day that Ralph was killed in action. This would have been during the Battle of Tell Asur.

Tell Asur took place around 18 miles north west of Jerusalem and was a British Offensive against Ottoman forces in Palestine. Ralph's unit had to traverse a valley known as the Wadi Deir Ballut, advancing behind a creeping barrage of British artillery fire, with Ralph moving into an area just after it had been shelled and the artillery then firing just ahead of where his unit was marching. The advance began at 1400hrs on 10th March and the objective was secured by 1100hrs on 11th March, with 104 casualties sustained by the British infantry forces.



This map shows how the British Forces were organised for the defence of Jerusalem at the end of 1917. Ralph Mitchell was part of the 75th Division, which is stationed on the map around 15 miles west and five miles north of Jerusalem.