

**ST JAMES CHURCH TAUNTON**

**WORLD WAR 1 MEMORIAL PROJECT**

# **Herbert Summerhayes**

**Name:** Herbert Summerhayes

**Rank:** Private

**Service Number:** 241788

**Regiment:** Somerset Light Infantry

**Battalion/Unit number:** 1/5<sup>th</sup> Battalion

**Date/year of Birth:** Not known

**Place of Birth:** Taunton

**Place of Residence:** 12 Roughmoor Cottages Taunton

**Date of Death:** 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1917

**Place of Death:** Egypt

**Burial/Memorial:** Jerusalem War Cemetery

It has not been possible to establish the detailed identity of Herbert Summerhayes, within Taunton from the records available. We know that he was living in Taunton at Roughmoor cottages in 1914, however there is no family there at the time of the 1911 census. There are numerous several Summerhayes families but none it seems have a son called Herbert living in 1914. However there is an association with St. James Church as "Bertie Summerhayes" is on the church Roll of Honour and marked as one who died.

We know from enlistment records and War Grave information that Herbert enlisted in the 1/5<sup>th</sup> Somerset Light Infantry and that he served in Egypt. Although the record states that he served 3 years 1 month, he did not have the 1915 star so it is unlikely that he served overseas until 1916.

His battalion (1/5<sup>th</sup>) were in Bombay from November 1914 to May 1917 when they landed in Suez, Egypt. Here they reformed as part of the 75<sup>th</sup> Brigade and fought alongside Gurkha/Indian troops in Palestine against the Turks.

At the outbreak of the First World War, Palestine (now Israel) was part of the Turkish Empire and it was not entered by Allied forces until December 1916. The advance to Jerusalem took a further year. As Herbert is commemorated in the Jerusalem Cemetery it is likely that he was involved in the Egyptian Expeditionary Force that finally drove the Turks from Jerusalem, although he died before the final surrender in December 1917. He and three others from Taunton, Harry Palmer, Ernest Gibbs and Frederick Pooledied on the same day and it is likely that they fought during the battle to take the village of Nebi Samwil (Samuel's Tomb) three miles north of Jerusalem.