



Age	Name: 2/Lt Robert Douglas FRENCH LON TF: 1/6th (City of London) Bn (Rifles)	
	Parents:	Dr Robert Houle FRENCH (born 25 Sep 1866 in New Barnet, MDX, ENG - died 23 Feb 1922 in North Finchley, Middlesex) and Dolina MACLEAY (born about 1877 in Scotland - died in 1953 in Spilsby Reg. District, Lincolnshire)
~18	Life Range	Abt Dec 1897-15 Sep 1916
	Marriage Status:	This person had no relationships and no children
~32	25 Sep 1866	Birth of Father: Dr Robert Houle FRENCH (born 25 Sep 1866 in New Barnet, MDX, ENG - died 23 Feb 1922 in North Finchley, Middlesex). In New Barnet, MDX, ENG.
~20	Abt 1877	Birth of Mother: Dolina MACLEAY (born about 1877 in Scotland - died in 1953 in Spilsby Reg. District, Lincolnshire). In Scotland.
~0	Abt Dec 1897	Birth: North Finchley, Middlesex.
~4	1901	Census: Finchley, MDX, ENG. At 2 Mossbank: FRENCH , Robert H., 34, Surgeon, born New Barnet, Hertfordshire Dolina, 24, born Scotland Robert D. , 3, born North Finchley, Middlesex Edna M., 8 months, born North Finchley, Middlesex (Plus a visitor, Amy Tyrer?, and 3 servants) [Class: RG13; Piece: 1233; Folio: 68; Page: 9.]
~14	1911	Census: Epsom, SRY, ENG. At Epsom College Public School: FRENCH, Robert , 13, Boarder, born Finchley, Middlesex (Parents) At Moss Bank, North Finchley: FRENCH, Robert Houle, 44, General Practitioner, born New Barnet, Hertfordshire Dolina, 33, (married 14 years; 3 children all living), born Ross Shire, N.B. Edna Mildred, 10, born Finchley, Middlesex Alistair Reginald, 6, born Finchley, Middlesex (Plus a visitor, Margaret Headington, and 3 servants) [RG14PN7165 RG78PN352 RD131 SD3 ED7 SN141]
~18	3 Dec 1915	Commission:
~18	27 May 1916	Overseas:
~18	15 Sep 1916	Death: France.
		Burial: Thiepval Memorial.
~18	29 Nov 1916	Times Biography:
~19	1 Dec 1916	Obituary: Ross-shire Journal. LIEUT. R. DOUGLAS FRENCH, LONDON REGIMENT 2nd Lieutenant R. Douglas French, London Regiment, who was killed in action on September 15th whilst bravely leading his men, was the eldest son of Dr and Mrs French of Moss Bank, North Finchley, and a grandson of Mr Hay Mackenzie Macleay, Riverbank House, Conon Bridge. Eighteen years of age, he was educated at Epsom College, and a first year student at the London Hospital where he did much good work. He was in the O.T.C. London University, and in October 1915 got his

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commission in the London Regiment and went out to France in May 1916, spending most of his time in the trenches. He had a very strong sense of duty, and was always cheerful and bright. Writing to his true pal and old school fellow, Lieut Oates, he said: "This is my last letter before the great day, it is an experience of a lifetime, and one feels it is nice to be British, and be free. Those who have fallen and gone from this earth fighting for the old country are still in England. If you go out and see what a fine country we have and compare it with poor wounded France. And if they had not died we should not have it."

His Colonel writes: "I can assure you of my great regret, for your son was a promising young soldier, and the battalion could ill spare him, and he fell in a most gallant assault in the German line." The O.C. of his company wrote: "It is with the deepest regret I have to inform you of the death of your son in the great advance of the 15th inst. He died bravely leading his men, by whom he was much admired, which was shown by the fact that two men went through grave risks and even lost their lives in trying to save him. He was indeed a brave fellow, and we shall all miss him. Please accept my sincerest sympathy, and trust that the knowledge that he died like a man for his country may in some short measure lessen your great sorrow. His men write of him: "He was a true English gentleman, a great lover of England and duty, always thinking of others happiness, and to be anywhere near him was to know real happiness. A baby in years, but a man in heart and purpose, and he died a 'real little hero'."

Lieut. French was a keen sportsman, a lover of music, he played and sang well; and his love of home and his parents was very great. Everyone, old and young, rich and poor, loved Douglas, and he will be sadly missed.

The Rev the headmaster of Epsom College writes of him: "You know how I honoured your dear son. If a headmaster could have favourites Douglas would be among the first. If only I had such a boy myself. Shall I bid you hope. It is not needed, and if it is too late to hope in that way, what death could a boy die to match the glory and pride of such an hour. We have always been proud of him and his memory lives here, and will live. He cannot have any real regret unless you sorrow more than he could wish."

Through the good work of the Red Cross Dr French has been able to interview some of the men who were present on the day of the battle, and who are now wounded, and in hospital, and they told him that Lieut. French was wounded, but as he was the only officer of the Company left to carry on, he had his wounds dressed, and said: "Boys, you all have mothers we must think of the women and children of England and go on and win. So come on, boys, let's turn them out." Whilst the objective was being taken Lieut. French was shot dead by machine gun fire.

Dr and Mrs French have had no official notice from the War Office, only that he is missing. It is through the British Red Cross, 18 Carlton House Terrace, SW, that they were able to get information, and for the benefit of others they would like it known the wonderful work that is being done by the British Red Cross and Order of St John. If anyone wishes to pay tribute to this little hero son, what he would wish would be for them to help the Red Cross with funds for their most noble work.

A photo of 2/Lieut. French appears today.

http://www.rossandcromartyheritage.org/communit/p37/ht/rs/WW1%20Records/WR_pages_F/War_records_F16.html

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27 Apr 1922

Probate:

(Father).

... of Moss Bank Nether-street North Finchley, Middlesex ... to Dolina

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	French widow. £3,101.
	Personal File: No file.
	OTC: SNR: London University.
	Father's Occupation: MED: SURGEON. M.B.U. Durh., 1889; M.R.C.S. Eng., 1891; L.R.C.P. Lond., 1891. [UK Medical Registers, 1859-1959] At one time he carried on practice in partnership with Henry Charles BURY, the partnership was dissolved in 1901. [LG]
	School: Epsom College.
	Higher Education: LONDON: University Hospital.
	Occupation: MED: Medical Student. First Year.
	CWGC Register: 6th Btn London Regiment (City of London Rifles) Son of Dr. and Mrs. R. H. French, of "Moss Bank", Nether St., North Finchley, London.
	Siblings: Edna Mildred FRENCH , born abt 1900 No sign of her after the 1911 Census. Alistair Reginald FRENCH , born 1904, died 1966, Brighton Flying Officer Medical Branch RAF (23073); promoted Flight Lieutenant 2 May 1930 (LG 6 May 1930); promoted Temp. Squadron Leader 10 Jun 1941 (LG); Wing Commander by 1943. Married Ruth Kate MATHIAS, 1933 Grappenhall, Cheshire. UK Medical Register: R.A.F. Medical Service; Registered 25 May 1926, ENG; M.R.C.S. Eng., 1926; L.R.C.P. Lond., 1926. Hon. Secretary Metropolitan Counties Branch B.M.A. 1947; Secretary Medical Protection Society 1956. Several articles/letters in the British Medical Journal. Obituary Nov 1966 attached. A son Alistair John Vincent Houle FRENCH born Brentford 1934, M.B., B.S. 1957 U. Lond. He is still listed with the General Medical Council but not registered.
	Next of Kin: (Mother). Mrs R. H. French, Moss Bank, Nether Street, N. Finchley, N12
	General Notes: His Death Plaque sold at auction in 2011.