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AN EAST GRINSTEAD MAN AT THE WAR.

The following extracts are from letters written by Private Charles H. Mitchell, of the 2nd Royal Sussex Regiment. He is a son of Mr. George Mitchell, of 7, Church-street, East Grinstead, and was a Reservist at the outbreak of the war. In a letter, dated the 1st inst., Private Mitchell writes as follows:—

"Well, I have been with the regiment a little more than a month, and, as you will see, was posted to the same Company as Bill ("D" Company); in fact, we are in the same section, so we are side by side in the trenches, or anywhere else we may happen to be. We have been together in a few hot corners, some of which we never expected to get out of with a whole skin, but we have been extremely fortunate up to date. Last Sunday we got a little bit away from each other and of course Bill got into mischief, as I was not there to look after him. A shell burst just at the back of his trench and peppered his hand with powder and little bits of flint, so I have had to nurse him and bandage him up, but the hand is pretty well all right again now, but you can guess it was a bit sore at first.

"I expect you have seen by the papers that the regiment have been in the thick of it, and we have had to pay pretty heavy for it. Of course a lot of the wounded will be fit for service again in a month or two, but I am sorry to say that a lot will never fire another shot. Our first real engagement was on the 10th of September, when the regiment was acting as advance guard for the main body. We started away just before dawn from our camp, and I should think it was about an hour after dawn when we encountered the enemy. They were on the opposite side of a valley, and as we came over the brow of the hill they opened on us with a storm or rifle fire and shrapnel from about 900 yards. We had no cover whatever and we lay there from 20 minutes to half an hour. I thought we were laying there a week. Then we got the order to retire back behind the ridge. We lost three officers and about 100 men killed and wounded in that half hour, so you can guess it was just a wee bit warm.

"We did not do much after that till Monday, the 14th, when we again started before dawn, and we soon found the enemy; then the rumpus started, and we had the hottest time I have ever had in my life, nor do I want any more days like that one. . . . (Here the censor has apparently been at work.) . . . and their officers were wounded, and God knows how many rank and file went down. Anyhow, we drove the Germans back and held them there for eight days, when we were relieved by a regiment fresh from England, and they gave us a couple of days' rest, but we are back in the firing line now. General French complimented the regiment on the way it took the position and held it, so you can guess we did a bit of good work for once in our lives. I cannot tell you all I should like to, as I know it would never reach you."

In another letter of the same date to his mother Private Mitchell mentions as to the scarcity of notepaper, &c., as follows:—

"You will see how I am handicapped for writing material. This is a letter written from — to my chum. I have written to them on the back of their letter to me. I hope you are not worrying too much, as it will not help matters worrying, and if it pleases God I shall be with you all before very long. I have received one letter from you, mother, where you said that the socks were returned to you. I should be very pleased of them now, as these I have had on over a month and they are not too clean, so if you could send them, also some plain postcards or paper and envelopes, and some tobacco and cigarette papers, with a box of matches in one corner, then I should be landed again."