Sergeant
Ernest Mitchell
By Chloé Hoskins 9D
Serjeant Ernest Mitchell

Ernest Mitchell
Highgate London
Kenedish lawn, London
6 chariton rings
February 1913
He married Dorothy and Lydia
when he was 33
Below he is a child

FOLLOW THE FLAG!

Come on Boys

Together we win

Chloe Hoskins
"You"

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Serjeant Ernest Mitchell

Ernest Mitchell was son of James Mitchell of 32 Spencer Road, Highgate, London; husband of Rosaline Mitchell of 30 Cadogan Road, Kenilworth, London. He was born in 1883 and grew up in number 6 Cheltenham Roads, Kenilworth Town. His special birth date is: 2nd February 1883. He married and had three children called Rosaline, Dorothy and Lily-May. He joined up for the first world war when he was 31 years old. He died in 1916, at the age of 33. Below is a small part of his family tree:

- Ernest Mitchell
- Rosaline Mitchell
  - Dorothy Mitchell
  - Lily-May Mitchell
    - Bernard Mitchell
  - Thelma Mitchell
    - Cheryl Mitchell (me)
6. Chartwell Kings Road, Kentish Town, London.

Birthplace of E. Mitchell 2nd February 1882.

Photo taken August 1969.

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Regiments, Battalions & Battles

Ernest Mitchell started off his life in the 2nd Battalion, the Queen’s Royal West Surrey Regiment. Very soon after he signed up, Mitchell’s Battalion was sent to fight in WW1’s first major battle - the battle of Mons. Unlike later French corps, battle Mons was a battle of movement.

It began on 23rd August 1914. Once the troops arrived in Belgium, they were placed under command of Field Marshall Sir John French. The German cavalry forces soon encountered the troops and the men started shooting.

The British troops were gradually pushed west. They started in front of Mons, positioned in a line along the Mon–Condé Canal, in an attempt to stop the famous “Schlieffen” plan. The Germans took victory, claiming the capture of Mons. The British lost around 1,600 men.

Once Mitchell’s battalion left Belgium, they were split up into different regiments and battalions. Mitchell was sent to join the 11th Battalion, Queen’s Royal West Surrey Regiment, for the remainder of his war experience.

Now, in the 11th Battalion, Mitchell was taken to France in the August of 1915. Within that month, they were engaged in a major battle in the Loos Battle. In late June, early July, the 11th Battalion was getting ready to fight in one of the biggest battles of WW1 - The Somme. On the 1st July 1916, the battle started. It suffered grievous losses, over 20,000 British soldiers died. However, Sergeant Ernest Mitchell was still alive. The Battalion was ordered to leave later that day. When the Battalion went for 2 days, the next day, on 7th July 1916, they were ordered to re-join the Somme. By noon, they had proceeded to front line. On the 7th July, the position was heavily attacked by shell fire, horrible amounts were fired. From the 11th Battalion, 10 men died and 28 were wounded. Sergeant Ernest Mitchell died age 33, on Sunday 9th July 1916, from heavy shell fire. The 11th Battalion continued fighting in the Somme, and were later sent to fight in the second battle of ypres in October 1917. From Passchendaele Ridge. In November, they went to Northern Italy to assist the Italians in their struggle against German/Austrian troops and were in October, 1918, the battalion returned to France to fight in the final offensive.
Weapons

Weapons like guns and canons played a huge part in the great war. Without them, the war would be totally pointless, very different. Nearly all infantry men used bolt-action rifles.

In Germany, the most popular gun was the Mauser rifle. The most popular in France was the Lebel. For the British troops, the Lee–Enfield gun was the most used. It can aim accurately from 600 m away but could still kill someone from over 1,400 m away. Machine guns were one of the best ways to kill and they did it fast. They had the fire power of 100 bolt-action rifles. As a consequence, Erich von Falkenhayn decided to built in trenches. They were good for shooting and attacking the enemies, however, they could not move freely.

Planes were used for the first time in WW1. They were good for bombing & spying. Fights between the planes were known as ‘dogfights’. Gas was a way of killing mass amount of men. Chlorine gas causes a burning sensation in the nose & throat. Chlorine gas causes painful death - you surprise. The main gas used was mustard gas. It was fired into trenches in shells. Effects include vomiting, blurring skin, sore eyes, external and internal bleeding. Death can take up to 91 days weeks.
What was the role of a Sergeant?

A sergeant is in command of about 30 men. Sometimes they were in charge of companies. They kept everyone relatively calm and kept control of their platoon.

A map of where Somme is located.

A map of where battles were fought.
Uniform

Because Ernest Mitchell was transferred a little way into the war, he would have worn the slightly different uniform. The Argyll Royal West Surrey regiment would have been equipped with a pair of binoculars, helmet, belt, jacket, trousers, long socks, heavy duty boots, gun, water bottle and emergency supplies. The same kit would have been given to him in the Royal Warwickshire regiment, but he would have probably been asked to keep the kit, just change the uniform. He would have also been given a gas mask to protect him from gas attacks. Even though the uniform was what he needed, in some cases the uniform was not quite protective enough. For example, the helmet didn’t do a very good job in protecting against shell fire, and bullets, and the pocket – trousers didn’t cause scums and pains. Below is a picture of the kit similar to what Ernest would have had:

Did you research his sergeant's stripes or the badges of both regiments?
Trench Warfare

The loss of life is one of the most memorable and tragic aspects of the Great War. However, closely behind, the quality of life in trenches was very horrible. Trenches were dug about 4–6 ft deep to house, protect and try to keep the soldiers safe during an attack. They were generally dug in zig-zag lines to stop a bomb if to get into a trench, spreading throughout the whole trench, tripping out all the soldiers. Both sides (Allies and Axis) would have had a front line, where most of the attacking comes from, highly dangerous. Then behind would be support lines and camps. The area between both front lines is called no man’s land. However, life in trenches was not as nice as most people hoped.

Men had to share their food, beds, and lives with rats. The mud was disgusting and caused thousands of men to catch trench-foot, a devastating disease that effects the foot, leading to huge sores, ulcers and amputation. This almost helped when rain came. Dead bodies surround them, with the smell lingering over them constantly. It was very hard to sleep with the everlasting sound of machine-guns all the time. In all, trench life was disgusting, dirty, very dangerous and life changing. It is one of the most awful thing about World War I.
Death Of Ernest Mitchell - 1916

Having served extremely well from 1914 at Mons, through several battles and tough conditions, Ernest passed away whilst fighting in the battle of Somme on the 9th July 1916, aged 33. He died from shell fire. The bravery, strength and courage of Mitchell, as well as every soldier, was outstanding. Whilst fighting in the war, he managed to be awarded a few medals. His name is on the memorial arch at Thiepval Memorial, France.

The picture I took of the memorial in France, with Ernest’s name on it.
His name is in the memorial book at St. Mary's Church, Warnford.
Ernest Mitchell's medals

In total, Mitchell was awarded these medals for his achievements in the war. Here are the pictures of them.
July
9th

(Contd)

10th At 1.30 batt ordered to push strong patrols
A, B, C to certain points immediately W of
CONTALMAISON with a view to the re-
adjustment of our line. The 111 R. R. S. on
our left confirming. The operation was
cancelled, as it was daylight before orders
which had to be

5 On 7th Coy proceeded to establish strong
P.K. posts on a line running S. W.
of CONTALMAISON wood in conjunction
with the 13th R. R. S. on
our left. The 2nd R. R. S. was

4.30 The 9th R. S. assembled in our

Our position was heavily shelled during the day.

11th 6

Believed by the 10 L. M. H. to return to
TAMI-IMA RIdge. During the night a very heavy artillery
nmine & 14 wounded & 2 missing.
Leaking huts. Weather cleared for night.

5th
Battalion rested in Billes. Orders were received in afternoon to be ready to move off at short notice. 12 m.t. Orders received to be ready to move by motor busses at 6 a.m.

6th
6 a.m. Battalion ready to move. Motor busses did not begin to arrive until 8.30 a.m.

BILLISBOURG
4 p.m. Arrival of Battalion completed. Tents pitched.

10 m.t. Orders to proceed to ALBERT starting at 8.30 a.m.

ALBERT
7th
7 a.m. Battalion marched through ALBERT & proceeded to reserve trenches at TAPA PEOUZ.

7.30 a.m. Boozardment started. Battalion standing to ready to move forward.

8th
BATTLE OF THE SOMME
1 a.m. Orders received for 2 companies to proceed to trenches known as BRIQUOT.

10 m.t. Orders received for Battalion to proceed to front line trenches to relieve the 50th Bn (Bn 112 Bde. has become part of 34th DIVClION). Bn marched up to front line trenches from TAPA PEOUZ & occupied trenches along CONTALMAISON-LA ROSSIGNOL road (taken from the enemy at noon to day) with its right about 200 of the former still occupied by the enemy.

9th
2.30 a.m.
A patrol of 3 Coy. reconnoitred the ground leading to CONTALMAISON WOOD & found 3 abandoned 7 m.m. guns also made 3 prisoners in the Battery Dugout. Half a Platoon was left to hold the Battery position. Many useful maps were also found, one marking the defences of CHILLERS on our left still held by the enemy. During the afternoon our position was heavily shelled. The detachment guarding the guns being partially surrounded was withdrawn. Heavy shell fire (chiefly 150 m.m.) on our position continued throughout the night. Our casualties during the
Conclusion

I chose to research Sergeant Ewart Mitchell because he is my great grandad. Furthermore, I was fascinated with finding out about him, where he served and what he accomplished; however, as this was such a big task, I had to use many websites to get information from. Here is my list of them:

- The long long trail
- CWGC website
- "The Mitchell Family"
- Google Maps
- Imperial war museum
- GB files
- National archives
- Google images
- Birmingham history.co.uk
- WW1 web resources online

I also got a lot of information from the War Diaries. I managed to get a copy of these because my Grandad had earlier applied for them. My Grandad also gave me a bit of background information about my soldier. I visited the library as well, to read through the books about him. I found the website "Long Long Trail" very useful because it has lots of facts about the battalions, regiments etc. It also had information about life in the trenches and maps. I think it is reliable because all the information is correct and is explained in detail. It is written by Chris Baker, a freelance military historian and founder of the great war forum. The difficulties with this project were finding out about the uniform and making sure I present it really accurately these by carrying on looking even if information wasn't easy to find. I would get stuck there in the end and that I kept my project neat by taking the time to do it properly and trying to be as clear as I could with layout. I found this project very enjoyable because I found out lots about my ancestor. I have learnt loads about WW1, including things like uniform, battles and reasons for the war. Overall, I have found this project hard work, but fun and beneficial! I am amazed with all that I found out about my soldier. It has been very useful for my research, presenting and history skills.

I would happily do it again! It’s nice to learn!