Serjeant
Ernest Mitchell

By Chloé Hoskins
90

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February 1883. He [...] dren called Rosaline,
Dorothy and Lil[...] the first world war
when he was 3[...] 1916, at the age of 33.
Below [...] is a s[...] tree.

COME ON BOYS
FOLLOW THE FLAG!

TOGETHER WE W[...]

Ernest Mitchell   Rosaline Mitchell

Chloé Hoskins (me)

YOU

Serjeant Ernest Mitchell

Ernest Mitchell was son of James Mitchell, of 32 spencer road, Highgate, London; husband of Rosaline Mitchell of 30 carlton road, Kentish town, London. He was born in 1883 and grew up in number 6 charlton kings Road, Kentish Town. His specific birth date is: 2nd Febuary 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 this is a small part of his family tree.

Ernest Mitchell — Rosaline Mitchell

Harry Merrit — Lily-May Mitchell

Bernard Merritt — Thelma Language

Darren Hoskins — Anette Hoskins

Chloé Hoskins (me)
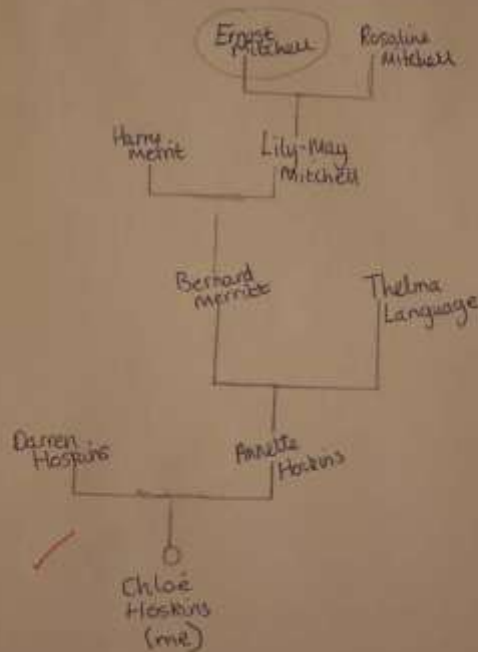
6.CHARLTON KINGS ROAD.KENTISH TOWN LONDON.

Birthplace of E.Mitchell 2nd Febuary 1883.

photo taken August 1989.

Regiments, Battalions & Battles

Ernest Mitchell started off war life in the second Battalion, The Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment. Very soon after he signed up, Mitchell's Battalion was sent to fight in WWI's first major battle - The battle of Mons. Unlike later trench warfare battles, Mons was a battle of movement. It began on 23rd August 1914. Once the troops arrived in Belgium, they were put under command by Field-Marshall Sir John French. The German cavalry patrols 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 Mons-Condé Canal, in attempt to stop the famous 'Schlieffen' plan. The Germans took victory, claiming the capture of Mons. The Brits 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, Royal Warwickshire regiment for the remains 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 minor role in the Loos Battle. In Late June / early July, the 11th Battalion was getting ready to fight at one of the biggest battles of WWI - The Somme. On the 1st July, 1916 the battle started. It suffered grievous losses, over 20,000 British soldiers died, on the first day. However, Serjeant Ernest Mitchell was still alive. The Battalion was ordered to leave later that day. Where the Battalion went for 2 days, I do not know, but on 8th July 1916, they were ordered to re-join the Somme. By noon, they had proceeded to front line. On 9th July, the position was heavily attacked by shell fire, horrible amounts were fired. From the 11th Battalion, 10 men died and 86 were wounded. Serjeant 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, for Passchendaele Ridge. In November they went to Northern Italy to assist the Italians in their struggle against German/Austrian troops and won. In October, 1918 the battalion returned to France to fight in the final offensive.

Sgt.E.MITCHELL with unknown Officer in trenches.

Ernest is the man on the left, in the White coat.
partial evidence

Weapons

Weapons like guns and cannons 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 Gewehr', the most popular in France was 'Label'. For the British troops, the Lee-Enfield gun was the most used. It can aim accurately from 600m away but could still kill someone from over 1,600m 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 sergeant, Ernest Mitchell would have probaly worked one. Tanks were built to withstand war conditions. They were good for shooting and attacking the enimies. however they could not cross trenches. Planes were used for the first time in WW1, they were good for bombing & spying. Fights between two planes were known as 'dogfights'. Gas was a way of killing mas amounts of men. Chlorine gas causes a burning sensation in the throat & chest. Chlorine gas causes painful death- you suffocate. The main gas used was mustard gas. It was fired into trenches in shells. Effects include: vomiting; blistering skin; sore eyes; external and internal bleeding. Death can take up to 5 whole weeks.

good explanation

The Lee-Enfield gun

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, in Somme, battles were fought →

Uniform

Because Ernest Mitchell was transferred a little way into the war, he would have worn two slightly different uniforms. The Queens 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 has 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 jacket + trousers itchy, causing sores and pains. Below is a picture of the kit similar to what Ernest would have had.

Did you research his sergeants stripes or the badges of both regiments?
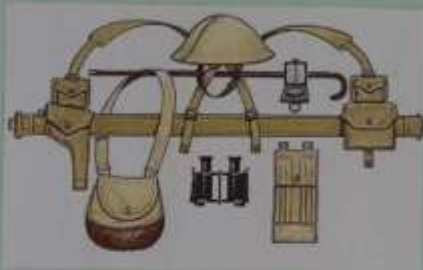

↖ kit

↖ The Typical British Soldier

Trench Warfare

The loss of life is one of the most memorable and tragic aspects of WW1. However, closly behind, the quality of life in trenches was very horrible. Trenches were dug about 4-6 pot deep to home, protect and try to keep the soldiers safe during an attack. They were generally dug in zig-zag shapes to stop a bomb if to get into a trench, spreading throughout the whole trench, wiping out all of 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 land between both front lines is called no-mans-land. However, life in trenches was not as nice as most people hoped.

Men had to share their food, beds and lifes 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 wasn't helped when rain came. Dead bodies surround them, with the smell lingering over them constantly. It was very hard to sleep with the earbursting 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 WW1.

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.
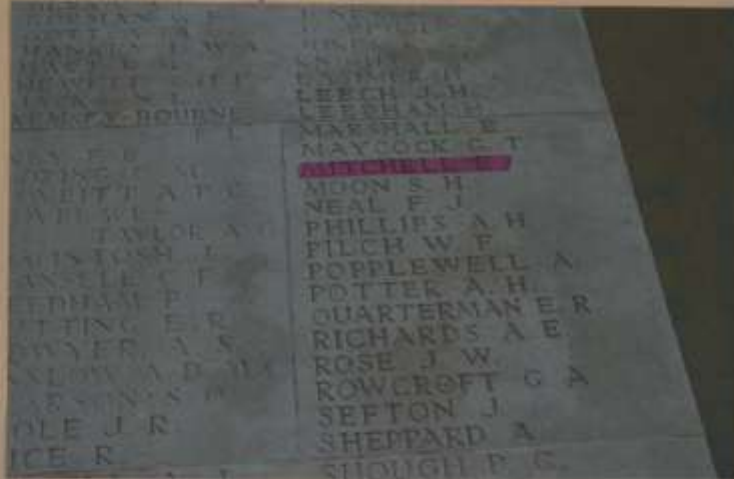
The picture I took of the memorial in France, with Ernest's name on it.

Thiepval Memorial, somme

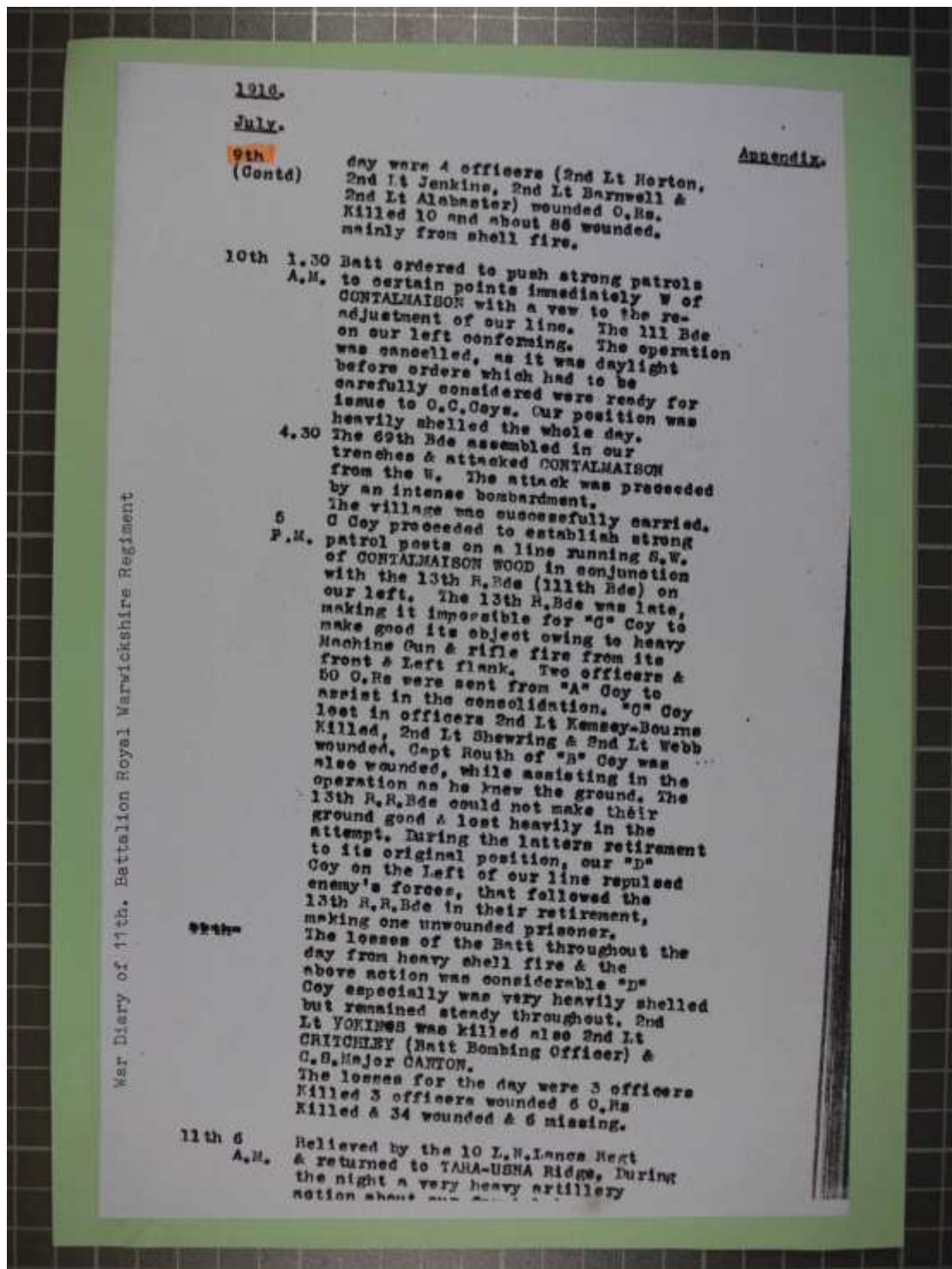His name is in the memorial book at St Marys church, Warwick

I took this photo at Thiepval grave, Somme, when I visited France.

Ernest Mitchell's medals

In total, Mitchell was awarded three medals for his achievements in the war. Here are the pictures of them:
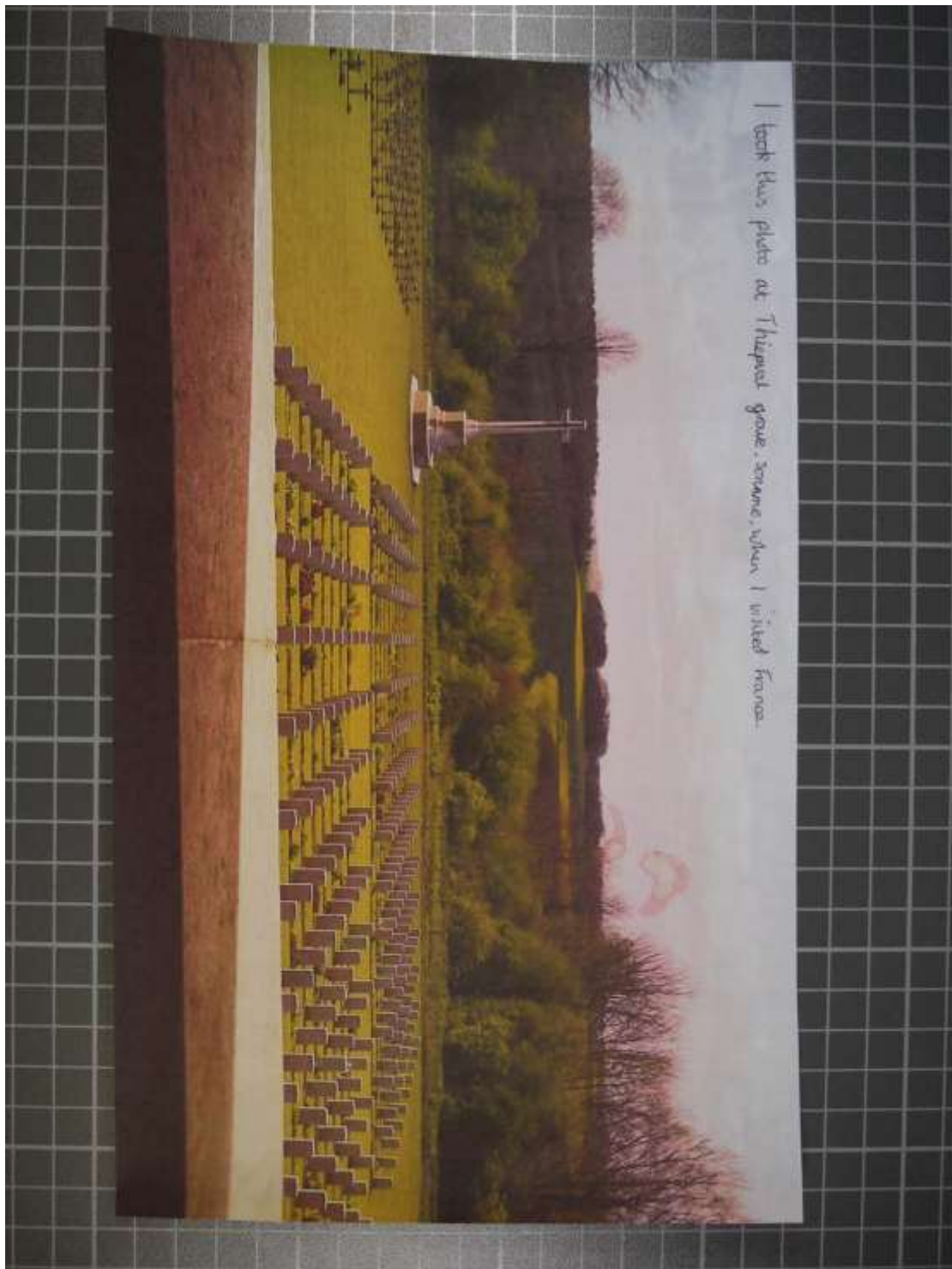
War Diary of 11th. Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment

1916.

July.

9th (Contd) — Appendix.

day were 4 officers (2nd Lt Horton, 2nd Lt Jenkins, 2nd Lt Barnwell & 2nd Lt Alabaster) wounded O.Rs. Killed 10 and about 86 wounded, mainly from shell fire.

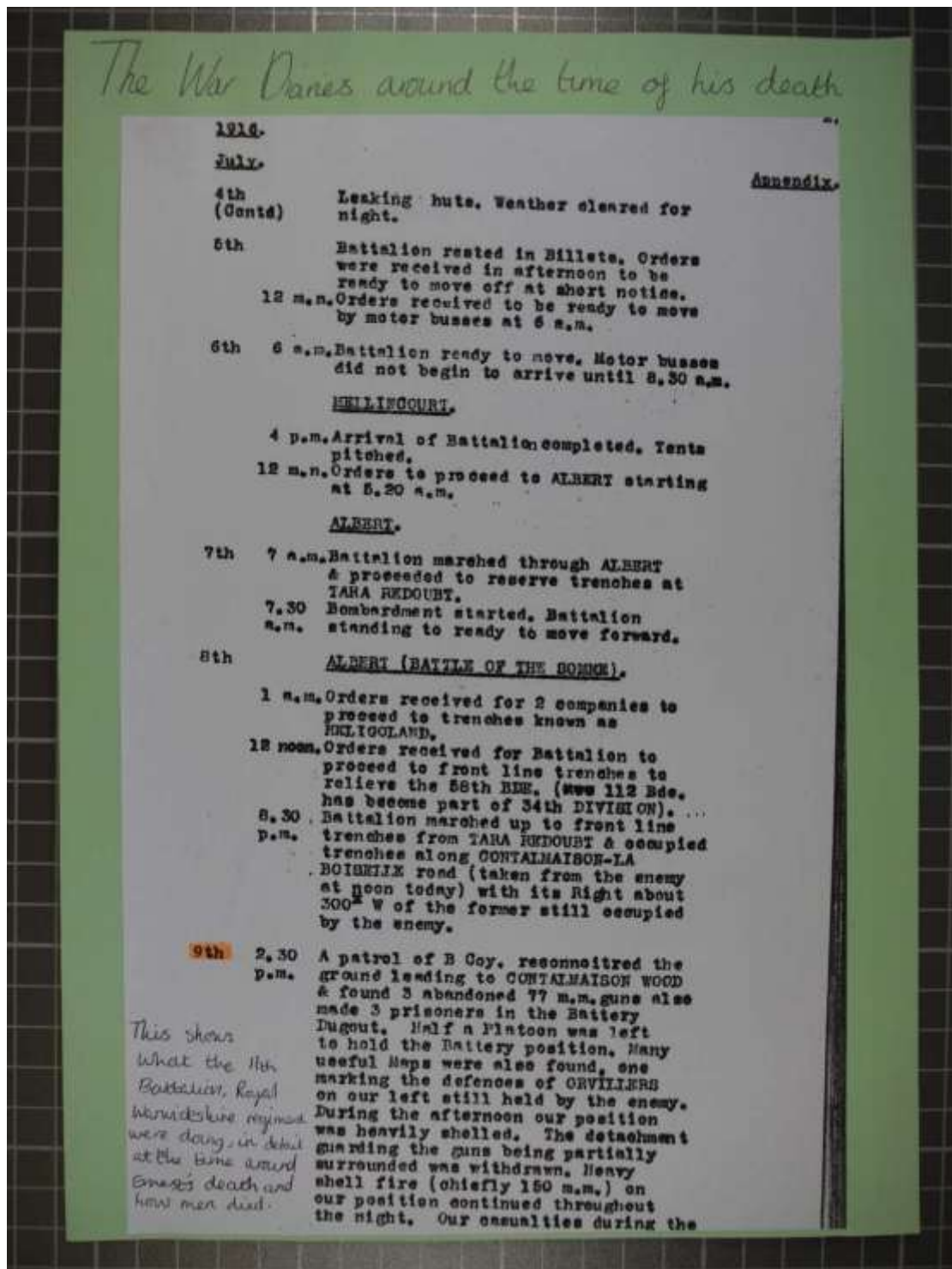**10th 1.30 A.M.** Batt ordered to push strong patrols to certain points immediately W of CONTALMAISON with a vew to the re-adjustment of our line. The 111 Bde on our left conforming. The operation was cancelled, as it was daylight before orders which had to be carefully considered were ready for issue to O.C.Coys. Our position was heavily shelled the whole day.

4.30 The 69th Bde assembled in our trenches & attacked CONTALMAISON from the W. The attack was proceeded by an intense bombardment. The village was successfully carried.

5 P.M. C Coy proceeded to establish strong patrol posts on a line running S.W. of CONTALMAISON WOOD in conjunction with the 13th R.Bde (111th Bde) on our left. The 13th R.Bde was late, making it impossible for "C" Coy to make good its object owing to heavy Machine Gun & rifle fire from its front & Left flank. Two officers & 50 O.Rs were sent from "A" Coy to assist in the consolidation. "C" Coy lost in officers 2nd Lt Kemsey-Bourne Killed, 2nd Lt Shewring & 2nd Lt Webb wounded. Capt Routh of "B" Coy was also wounded, while assisting in the operation as he knew the ground. The 13th R.R.Bde could not make their ground good & lost heavily in the attempt. During the latters retirement to its original position, our "D" Coy on the Left of our line repulsed enemy's forces, that followed the 13th R.R.Bde in their retirement, making one unwounded prisoner.

The losses of the Batt throughout the day from heavy shell fire & the above action was considerable "D" Coy especially was very heavily shelled but remained steady throughout. 2nd Lt YOKINES was killed also 2nd Lt CRITCHLEY (Batt Bombing Officer) & C.S.Major CANTON. The losses for the day were 3 officers Killed 3 officers wounded 6 O.Rs Killed & 34 wounded & 6 missing.

11th 6 A.M. Relieved by the 10 L.N.Lancs Regt & returned to TARA-USNA Ridge. During the night a very heavy artillery action about ...

The War Diaries around the time of his death

1916.

July.

4th
(Contd) Leaking huts. Weather cleared for night.

5th Battalion rested in Billets. Orders were received in afternoon to be ready to move off at short notice.
12 m.n. 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.

MILLENCOURT.

4 p.m. Arrival of Battalion completed. Tents pitched.
12 m.n. Orders to proceed to ALBERT starting at 5.20 a.m.

ALBERT.

7th 7 a.m. Battalion marched through ALBERT & proceeded to reserve trenches at TARA REDOUBT.
7.30 a.m. Bombardment started. Battalion standing to ready to move forward.

8th **ALBERT (BATTLE OF THE SOMME).**

1 a.m. Orders received for 2 companies to proceed to trenches known as HELIGOLAND.
12 noon. Orders received for Battalion to proceed to front line trenches to relieve the 58th BDE. (who 112 Bde. has become part of 34th DIVISION). ...
8.30 p.m. Battalion marched up to front line trenches from TARA REDOUBT & occupied trenches along CONTALMAISON-LA BOISELLE road (taken from the enemy at noon today) with its Right about 300° W of the former still occupied by the enemy.

9th 2.30 p.m. A patrol of B Coy. reconnoitred the ground leading to CONTALMAISON WOOD & found 3 abandoned 77 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 ORVILLERS 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

This shows what the 11th Battalion, Royal Warwickshire regiment were doing, in detail at the time around Ernest's death and how men died.

Conclusion

I chose to research Sergeant Ernest Mitchell because he is my great 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 log of them:

The Long, long trail
CWGC website
"The Mitchells Families"
Google Maps
Imperial War Museum

BBC Bitesize
national Archives
google Images
birminghamhistory.co.uk
WWW. royalsussex.co.uk

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 aswell, to read through the books about WWI. I found the website 'Long Long Trail' very useful because it has lots of facts about the battalions, regiments ect. It also had information about life in the trenches and maps. I think it is reliable because all the information is correct and it explains 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 neatly. I overcame these by carrying on looking even if information wasn't easy to find. I would get get there in the end. And I kept my project neat by focusing, spending time to do it properly and trying to be as clever as I could with layout. I found this project very enjoyable because I found out lots about my ancestor! I have learnt loads about WWI, 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. ☺ That's nice to hear!