

Richard Douglas Sandford



By Hannah Dunn-Coleman

Who is Richard Douglas Sandford?

Rank: Lieutenant

Date of Birth: 11/05/1891

Date of Death: 23/11/1918 ✓

Age: 27

Regiment/Service: Royal Navy HM Submarine C3 ✓

Awards: V C ✓

Grave Reference: J. U. 709. ✓

Cemetery: ESTON CEMETERY ✓

Richard Douglas Sandford grew up in Exeter ✓ with his father and 8 other brothers and sisters. He signed up for the royal navy division at Clifton College 1904. ✓



✓ good evidence

Family History and Childhood

Richard's father Ernest Grey Sandford was born in Dunchurch, Warwickshire. He then married Ethel Maria Poole in Somerset March 1875.

Richard's first six brothers and sisters were born in Landkey. Then the next two were born in Cornwood before they had Richard in Exeter.

Richard's father then became Archdeacon of Exeter in 1888-1909.

Richard's father died in 1910 as a noble father of important and well known children.



His Experience in the War

Richard Douglas Sandford signed up for the Royal Navy in 1904. After many years as a sea man he then decided to volunteer for the submarine division. He was accepted at the age of 25 and just after a year later he was Lieutenant of the HMS C3 (which was an older submarine.)

Richard was sent out to Zeebrugge on the coast of Belgium, because many German submarines were based there so it would be an essential place to attack, as it would take away most of the submarines in the English Channel.

The attack was planned for the 22 or 23 April 1918. On the 23 April the attack was launched, the ships went and started a distraction while HMS C3 (led by Lieutenant Richard Douglas Sandford) filled with 5 tons of explosives placed himself right under the main bridge. The crew then had a matter of minutes to escape from the submarine. Luckily only 3 of the crew including Richard were badly injured; it was a successful mission for Lieutenant Richard and his crew.

PLAN D'ATTAQUE DE ZEEBRUGGE



Richard Douglas Sanford's Death

Richard died later that day in hospital due to the wounds from the explosion. After his death the London Gazette mentioned him in its July paper saying he had won the greatest honor of the Victoria Cross! *At the front it says he died in November 1918?*

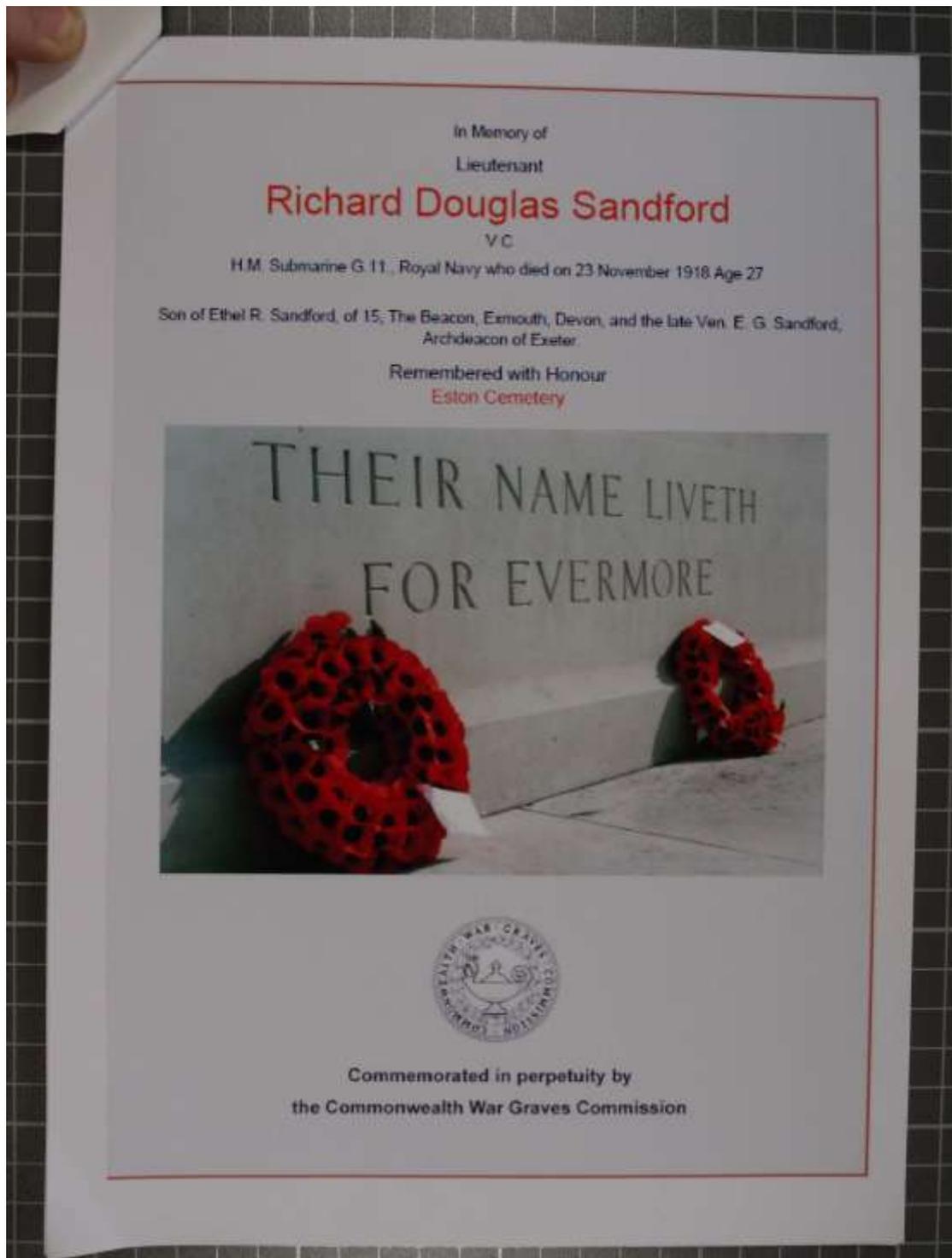
How did he get the Victoria Cross?

The speech given when receiving the Victoria Cross was ...

'Lieutenant Richard Douglas Sandford, R.N, for most conspicuous gallantry. This officer was in command of Submarine C.3, and most skilfully placed that vessel in between the piles of the viaduct before lighting his fuse and abandoning her. He eagerly undertook this hazardous enterprise, although, well aware (as were all his crew) that if the means of rescue failed and he or any of his crew were in the water at the moment of the explosion, they would be killed outright by the force of such explosion. Yet Lieutenant Sandford disdained to use the gyro steering, which would have enabled him and his crew to abandon the submarine at a safe distance, and preferred to make sure, as far as was humanly possible, of the accomplishment of his duty.'

Excellent quote





Conclusion!

I chose my soldier (Richard Douglas Sandford) because I like finding out information on Tommy's who were in the Royal Navy, especially submarine leaders as it is not something you hear about or learn about every day. "Richard Douglas went into battle because they wanted to cut off the German submarines in the English Chanel." This is useful because it tells us that at that time Germans had occupied the Northern area of the English Channel. This is reliable information as it was produced at the time of the war; also it was produced so that the men of the Navy would know why they were going to war. This information also fits with the original plan of the raid as it was based in the north of the English Channel.

There were many difficulties when researching someone from the navy as most of the information which is most useful you either have to pay for or they just don't have it. One of the websites which would have been great use to me was: <http://www.1914-1918.net/> but unfortunately the Royal Navy didn't have battalions so that was no use. Luckily I managed to overcome that loss because his father was the Archdeacon of Exeter so that brought a lot of info on his family and early childhood. I also managed to overcome this problem because he had won a Victoria Cross therefore giving him more websites which would explain his submarine number, what he did and how he got the Victoria Cross. This project made me realise how many people died in battles in World war one and also how so many people had to give up their lives to save others. Overall this project has given me a real insight to someone's real experience of the war.

The websites I used were:

Google maps
Richard Douglas Sandford VC - Devon Heritage
The Sandford Family of Devon
Exeter Memories - Lieutenant Sandford - Exeter History
Cwgc,
The London gazette,

