

William Mitchell, MM

Regimental No. 195577

RECORD	DATE	LOCATION	UNIT	DIRECT TRANSLATION	REMARKS
Embarked	15th July 1916	Halifax, Canada	93rd OS Battalion	As record indicated	He embarked from Halifax on the 15th July 1916
Disembarked	25th July 1916	Liverpool, UK	93rd OS Battalion	As record indicated	Arrival in England with the 93rd Overseas Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force. Arrived in Liverpool on the 25th July 1916 aboard the SS Empress of Britain.
To be A/Sgt on arrival in England	25th July 1916	Otterpool, UK	93rd OS Battalion	To be Acting Sergeant on arrival in England	As the record says. Men were promoted to "Acting" ranks for various reasons. In an "Acting" rank, a man was usually NOT paid as a Sgt, but of the rank previous BUT in this case he also received pay of a Sgt. Acting ranks were used to see if they could do the job, BEFORE being confirmed in the rank (sort of like a probation).
Appointed A/Sgt, with pay	25th July 1916	Otterpool, UK	93rd OS Battalion	Appointed Acting Sergeant with pay	Also, in a Battalion, there were only allowed so many of each rank, so if they wanted to reward a man, but there was no "position" in the Battalion for him to go into, they made him "acting", until a position became open (usually the next battle)
Reduced to Ranks. Disobedience, Insolence to a N.C.O	22nd Aug 1916	Otterpool, UK	93rd OS Battalion	As the record says	William was reduced in rank to Private, for disobedience and insolence, which could mean he "talked back or disagreed" with a higher Non Commissioned Officer. As an Acting NCO, he didn't receive field punishment (which was quite brutal at the time) but just reduced in rank. There is a discrepancy in the two records here, one says he "reverts to ranks", and the other says "reduced to ranks".
Transferred to 39th Battalion	6th Oct 1916	W Sandling,, UK	93rd OS Battalion to 39th Battalion	Transferred to 39th Battalion, located at West Sandling	The 93rd Battalion was disbanded and most of the men were moved to the 39th Reserve Battalion. This Battalion was a Reserve Battalion which "feed" troops to front line Battalions. It was located at West Sandling, UK.
Taken on Strength 39th Bn	6th Oct 1916	W Sandling, UK	39th Battalion	Taken on Strength 39th Battalion	When a man or officer "joined" a new unit officially, he was "TOS = taken on strength". When he left a unit for another permanent job, he was SOS = Struck off Strength.
SOS to 6th Reserve Battalion	4 Jan 1917	W. Sandling, UK	39th Battalion to 6th Reserve Battalion	Struck off Strength to the 6th Reserve Battalion	The 39th Battalion was "disbanded" and most of the men moved to the 6th Reserve Battalion. Again this battalion was used to "feed" men to front line Battalions. The 6th Reserve Battalion trained men for the 2nd, 21st, 38th, and PPCLI Battalion's on the front lines.
Transferred to 6th Reserve Battalion					

Taken on Strength 6th Reserve Battalion	4 Jan 1917	W. Sandling, UK	6th Reserve Battalion	Taken on Strength 6th Reserve Battalion	He arrived in Shorncliffe, at his new Battalion.
Appointed A/L Corporal	5 Jan 1917	E. Sandling, UK	6th Reserve Battalion	Appointed Acting Lance Corporal	Appointed Acting Lance Corporal.
Reverts to permanent grade of Private at own request	16 May 1917	Seaford, UK	6th Reserve Battalion	Reverts to permanent grade of Private at own request	My "suspicion" is that he volunteered to be reduced in Rank, in order that he would be allowed to join a Front Line unit. This was very common in WW1, as front line units wanted Privates, NOT NCO's. Also, front line units preferred to promote men from its ranks, and did not often take NCO's from the Reserves, hence his request to "revert to ranks" as a Private.
Drafted to 2 Battalion SOS Proc O/Seas to 2nd Battalion	17 May 1917	Seaford, UK	6th Reserve Battalion to 2nd OS Battalion	Drafted to 2nd Battalion, located at Seaford Stuck off Strength Proceeds Overseas to 2nd Battalion	He now is moved to the 2nd OS Battalion, which was a front line Battalion. The 2nd OS Battalion was part of the 1st Infantry Brigade, 1st Canadian Infantry Division, Canadian Corp. Seaford was the Battalions "depot" in England, and men joined the unit there, and then moved to join the front line unit in France or Belgium.
Arrived CBD	18 May 1917	France	CBD	Arrived Canadian Base Depot	These were large camps in France etc, that they men were sent to, then forwarded on to there units.
Left CBD for 2nd Battalion	21st May 1917	France	2nd Battalion	Left Canadian Base Depot for 2nd Battalion	
Arrived 2nd Battalion	23rd May 1917	Field	2nd Battalion	Arrived 2nd Battalion	Field - means wherever the Battalion was on the Front Lines at that time.
Appointed Lance Corporal Vice 403453 L/Cpl JK Hallwood (Reverted)	18 July 1917	Field	2nd Battalion	Appointed Lance Corporal Vice 403453 Lance Corporal J.K. Hallwood (Reverted)	He was appointed a Lance Corporal, to replace a L/Cpl J.K. Hallwood, who chose to revert to a lower rank. This is unusual to have another person "names" in his records.
Adm No 2 Can Fl Amb	25 Aug 1917	Field	EOR	Admitted to No 2 Canadian Field Ambulance	He was admitted to a Field Hospital for a Myopia examination. Myopia is the medical term for "nearsightedness". So he was sent back for an eye site check. The medical services had various "stages" of treatment. His first stop, when sick or wounded, would be a RAP (Regimental Aid Post) who would stick a band aid on him and send him further. A Field Ambulance was a "field hospital", not far behind the front lines (still within Enemy Artillery range) and treated as many soldiers as they could, sent them back to battle, or tried to stabilize the wounded and then sent further back. EOR means "Eastern Ontario Regiment" (which was the 2nd Battalion).
Dis to duty ex above	26 Aug 1917	Field	EOR	Discharged to duty from No 2 Canadian Field Ambulance	He was released from hospital and sent back to his unit.

Rejoined from Hosp	26 Aug 1917	Field	2nd Battalion	Rejoined from Hospital	
Attd to Can Corps School as Instructor	19 Feb 1918		2nd Battalion	Attached to Canadian Corps School as Instructor	NOTE: He remained “on strength” of the 2nd Battalion, he was “lent” to the Canadian Corp School. The Canadian Corp School was a large “training establishment” behind the lines that was used to train new troops, and give refresher training to Front Line Battalions.
SOS on transfer to Instructors Pool (Canadian Corps)	19 Feb 1918	Field	EOR Deport to Can Corp School	Struck off Strength on transfer to Instructors Pool (Canadian Corp)	He has now been sent to the Canadian Corp School as an instructor.
TOS on transfer from 2nd Bttn	20 Feb 1918	Field	Can Corps	Taken on Strength on transfer from 2nd Battalion	Arrived at Canadian Corp School as an instructor.
Appointed A/Sgt with pay	20 Feb 1918	Field	Can Corps	As it Says	
Granted 14 days Leave	4 Mar 1918	UK	Can Corps Infantry School	As it says	He was granted 14 days leave in England.
Rejoined from Leave	18 Mar 1918	Field	Can Corps Infantry School	As it says	
Ceases to hold appointment of A/Sgt on return to 2nd Bttn	12 Apr 1918	Field	Can Corps School to 2nd Battalion	Ceases to hold appointment of Acting Sergeant on return to 2nd Battalion	
SOS Instructors Pool (CC) on transfer to 2nd Battn	12 Apr 1918	Field	Can Corps	Struck off Strength Instructors Pool (Canadian Corp) on transfer to 2nd Battalion	He has now been transferred back to the 2nd Battalion.
Taken on Strength on transfer from Instructors Pool (CC)	13 Apr 1918	Field	2nd Battalion	As it says	He has now arrived back at the 2nd Battalion’s Depot.
Joined	18 Apr 1918	Field	2nd Battalion	As it says	He has now rejoined the Battalion in the “Field” (in France/Belgium).
Awarded Military Medal	12 Mar 1918	Field	2nd Battalion	As it says	London Gazette 30573 dated 12/3/18.

Eye Exam	27 Jun 1918	Field	2nd Battalion to 3 CFA	As it says	He has been sent to No 3 Canadian Field Ambulance (hospital) for any eye exam.
Discrd ? Duty	30 Jun 1918	Field	3 CFA	Discharged to Duty	Leaves the Field Ambulance to return to the 2nd Battalion.
From Hosp	2 July 1918	Field	2nd Battalion	From Hospital	Arrived back at 2nd Battalion.
Defect vision	8 July 1918	Field	2nd Canadian Field Ambulance	Defective Vision	
do (means same as record above)	14 July 1918	Field	3rd Canadian Field Ambulance	Defective Vision	
Arrived for Board	15 July 1918	Field	Canadian Infantry Base Depot	as it says	His vision is thought to be so impaired that a Medical Board is convened to rule on his medical status.
? T B Oculist	17 July 1918	Field	Canadian Infantry Base Depot	?? Oculist	An Oculist was a medical person who specializes in eye issues (like today's optometrist or othomologist).
Classified B1 and Transferred to Cdn Labour Pool	24 July 1918	Field	CIBD	Classified B1 and Transferred to Canadian Labour Pool	For some medical reasons (VISION) he was classified B1. This meant he could no longer server in a Front Line unit. Men who were classified B1, where then sent to a "Labour Pool", and used for various tasks behind the lines, such as instructing, repairing roads, railways, running supplies, etc., etc. CIBD = Canadian Infantry Base Depot
TOS Can Lab Pool from 2nd Bn To Be Temp attached CIBD for training of Cdn personnel	25 July 1918	Field	CIBD	Taken on Strength Canadian Labour Pool from 2nd Battalion to Be temporally attached to Canadian Infantry Base Depot for training of Canadian Personnel	He has been "lent" as an infantry instructor to the Canadian Infantry Base Depot. This was a large unit responsible for training of Canadian infantry troops.
Supy Atthd	21 July 1918	Field	CIBD	? Attached	
Attached to 1st Army Corps School B1	16 Sept 1918	Field	CIBD	Attached to 1st Army Corp School, B1	He has now been "lent" to the 1st Army Corp School, again another organization responsible for training of ALL Army troops (British, Canadian, Australian, etc.).
Trans to England and posted to East Ont Reg Dep Witley	31 Dec 1918	Witley, UK	EOR Depot	Transferred to England and posted to Eastern Ontario Regiment Depot	Transferred to England to the Regimental Depot (where 2nd Battalion reinforcements arrive).

Attchd from EOR D (from France)	4 Jan 1919	Bordon, UK	Comp Bde	Attached from Ontario (from France)	Eastern Depot	Comp Bde - Composite Brigade.
SOS to CEF Canada Sailing 17	15 Feb 1919	UK		Struck off Canadian Force Canada, Sailing 17	Strength to Expeditionary	He returned to Canada on the Lapland. Embarked Liverpool on 20 Feb 1919. Disembarked Halifax.
SOS on Demob KO 1420 Med unfit	28 Mar 1919	Kingston, Ontario	District Depot #3	Struck of Demobilization, #1420, Medically Unfit	Strength on Kings Orders	He has official left the Canadian Army

This document was created by Lieutenant Barry Miller, Canadian Army, retired, using copies of William Mitchell's original service records. Upon its completion, the author was asked if any impressions about William Mitchell developed over the course of transcribing his service records. The following was his answer.

First, it still is a little puzzling to me that in a short time in the Army, he rose up in rank to Sgt so quickly. Normally this is NOT done, unless the man had previous military experience, so I still wonder if your grandfather had Brit Army experience (even in the Militia) before emigrating to Canada. BUT having said that, there are such a thing as "natural born leaders", and your grandfather may have been one of those men, someone the officer's look at and see he is a Leader, and the man himself may have "strived" to be a leader and requested leadership positions.

Second, his "reduction by own request" in rank shows that he WANTED to be in the fight. Yes, he was doing his bit training, but he got tired of seeing all the men, march thru his camp, and he wasn't getting that chance to fight, so he voluntarily took the reductions so that he could fight, like he signed up for.

Third, early in his records (22 Aug 1916), one records says he was "reduced in rank for insubordination" (and then quote the 2 incidents) and then the second record for the same date says he was "reverts to ranks".....I believe the FIRST record to be correct,

why, because I think after he won the MM, a clerk who may have been looking at his records prior to the records going up to HQ's (the man's records where sent up, when recommended for a medal) may have decided to "clean up" the records a bit so HQ's just saw "reverted to ranks", NOT that he had been disciplined in the past. Having said that, your grandfather, as you said, seemed to have a mind of his own (as you said a tough old bird) and wasn't afraid to tell a "fellow" NCO (as he was an Acting Sgt at the time) what he thought of something, and the other NCO went "crying" to the RSM and said "Sgt Mitchell won't listen to me and he told me to f%\$ off"my opinion only.

The eye issues, I think your grandfather "fought" this recommendation for a long time. You can see he was sent back and forth from the Front lines, and finally the Army convened a Board to rule on his vision. I think he wanted to stay at the front, with the troops, but they finally overruled him and then because of his experience, used him as a Training NCO for new troops.....why do I say this, because of his MM citation, your grandfather wasn't afraid to take charge and get the job done, even under fire, so I don't think he wanted to leave the front.....and (I cheated a little here) I've already looked at his military records for WW2, and he WANTED to go to fight, and even VOLUNTEERED for the Pacific Force that was being formed (but they turned him down), so he was a brave man, wanting to do his duty.....my opinion.