

William Edward Brown PHILLIPS

Rifleman 473911, 12th Battalion, London Regiment (The Rangers)

Died September 8th 1917, aged 37

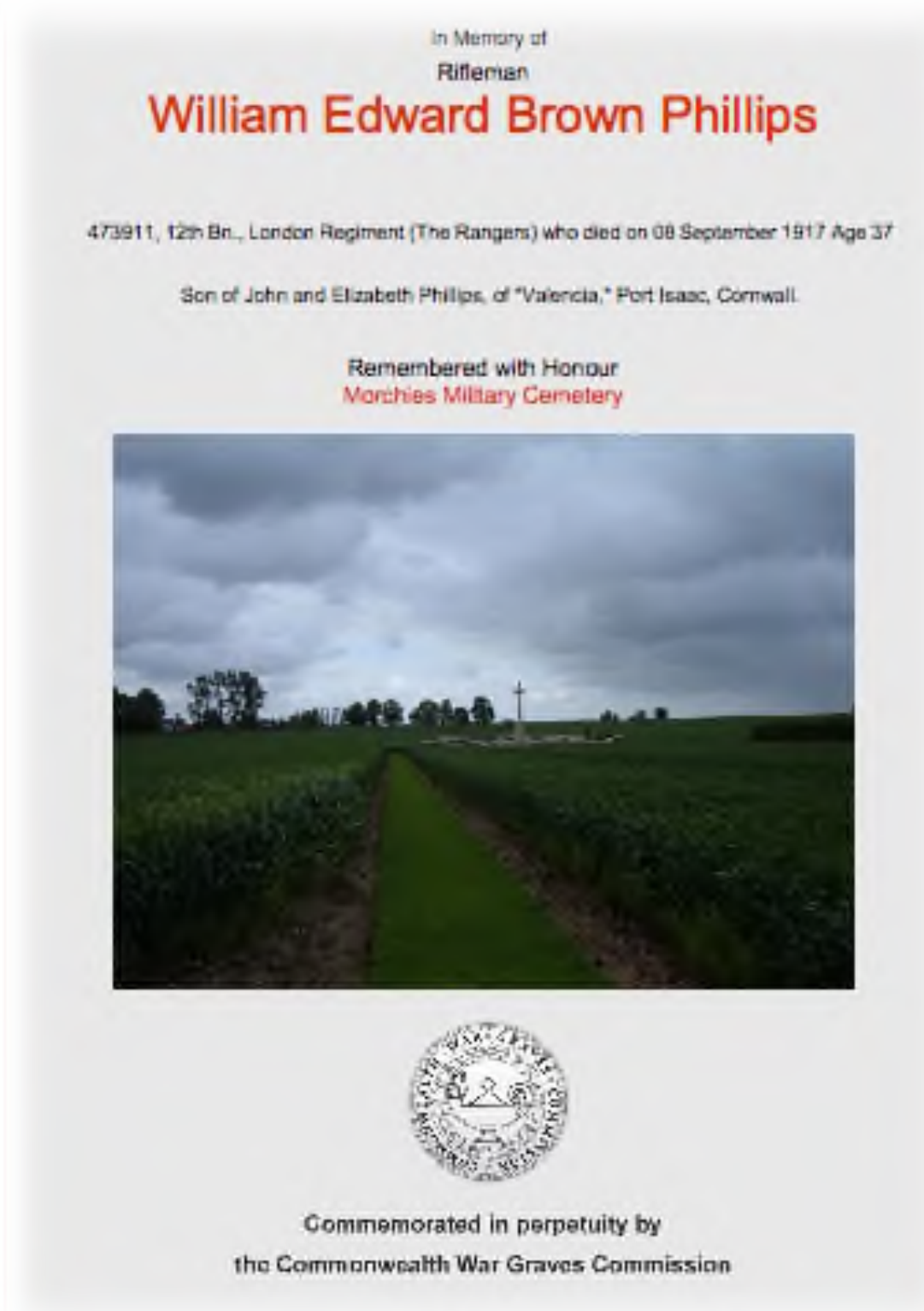
Memorial at Morchies Military Cemetery, Morchies, France

William Edward Brown Phillips was born in 1880 to John and Eliza Phillips in Port Isaac. John was a mariner born c1862. He was at sea on the 1891 census night, so Eliza (born c1863) was looking after the four children; William (10), Mabel (8), Ernest (5) and Lizzie (1). In 1901 William had moved to London, where he was a boarder in Camberwell. His occupation was a draper's assistant. In 1911, he was in a different boarding house only a few hundred yards away. Here his occupation is given as a warehouseman for a wholesale drapers. At this time, a young *Thomas Carew Mitchell* was a drapers assistant in London living in the communal dormitory of the wholesale drapers Bradbury, Greatorex & Co. Ltd. Put together, this strongly suggests William was also working for Bradbury Greatorex (*Camberwell is on the line to Blackfriars Station, only a few hundred yards from their warehouse*), and perhaps he got Thomas his job there.

William originally joined the 1/21st (County of London) Battalion (First Surrey Rifles), which was formed at the outbreak of war. It was in the UK until late June 1916, as part of the 60th (2/2nd London) Division, when it transferred to France. The passing of the Military Service Act in early 1916 deemed all men to have agreed to serve overseas, which is undoubtedly why this division was able to be moved to France in June. In November 1916 it was transferred to Salonika in Greece where it fought the Bulgarian army in the Battle of Doiran (about 30 miles north of Salonika) between April 24th and May 9th. Things did not go well for the British, who were defeated by the Bulgarian Army under General Vazov with enormous casualties, one particular location being referred to by the soldiers as the 'Valley of Death'. In June the 60th was reorganised for transfer to Egypt.

It is not known if William was involved in the Greek campaign, since at some time he transferred to the 12th Battalion, London Regiment (The Rangers). In 1917 this was in 168th Brigade as part of 58th (2/1st London) Division. That year the 58th fought in the pursuit of the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line in March, the Battle of Bullecourt and the actions of the Hindenburg Line in May and June. William was killed September 8th 1917 at a time when no major battles were being fought in this sector. There would have been daily bombardments by the Germans at this time, and snipers were ever active.

Rifleman William Edward Brown Phillips is buried in Morchies Military Cemetery, about 5 miles south east of Arras. Morchies is one of the smaller military cemeteries in this area with 163 graves.



The memorial to William Edward Brown Phillips in St Endellion Churchyard

Sources

The London Regiments: <http://www.1914-1918.net/london.htm>

Battle of Dorian: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Doiran_\(1917\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Doiran_(1917))

58th (2/1st London) Division: <http://www.1914-1918.net/58div.htm>