



**Private 7392 Edward Bentley  
16<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Manchester Regiment**

**Killed in Action – 9<sup>th</sup> July 1916**

**Remembered on the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing (Pier 13A  
and 14C)**



I have used published accounts, National Archives records, Battalion War Diaries and my own personal library to piece together the World War 1 service record of Edward. Sadly, 60% of the soldiers' service records were destroyed by a German bomb during the Blitz in 1940. Edward's service record was one of those that did survive, although badly fire damaged.

### CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Number of Schedule 122  
(To be filled up by the Enumerator after collection.)

*Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.*

*The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.*

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family.	AGE (last Birthday and Sex)		PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE.				PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Person aged 15 years and upwards.				BIRTHPLACE of every person.				NATURALITY of every Person Foreign Country.	INFIRMITY.
		Male	Female	Single	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Profession, Trade, Manufacture, &c.	Industry or Service with which worker is connected.	Whether Employed, or Working on Own Account.	Whether Working at Home.	(1) If born in the United Kingdom, write the name of the County and Town or Parish.	(2) If born in any other part of the British Empire, write the name of the Proprietary Colony, the name of the Province or State.	(3) If born in a Foreign Country, write the name of the Country.	(4) If born at sea, write "At Sea."		
1 Edward Beattie	Head	25		Married	2	1	1	0	Woollen Knives & Giltware Case Rep.	Worker			Lambeth, London	Eng.			
2 Selina Beattie	Wife	28		Married	2	1	1	0	Woollen Knives & Giltware Case Rep.	Worker			18 Bond St. Bang.	Eng.			
3 Ellen Beattie	Daughter	1											Lewisburg	Eng.			
4																	
5																	
6																	
7																	
8																	
9																	
10																	
11																	
12																	
13																	
14																	
15																	

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

Totals	
Males	Female
1	2
3	

Initials of Enumerator: *W.L.*

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: *Edward Beattie*

Postal Address: *18 Bond St.*

4

Edward's Attestation Form reveals that he was 29 years old when he signed up and was living in Bury, married and working as a miller. It is dated 18<sup>th</sup> January 1915.

(2018) W 6321 Sub 1202 11/14 J F W 27  
Gen. No. 2340

**SHORT SERVICE.**  
(For the Duration of the War.)

**COPY.**

**ATTESTATION OF**

No. 7392 Name Edward Bentley Corps 6<sup>th</sup> Service Battalion

Questions to be put to the Recruit before enlistment.

1. What is your name?.....	1. <u>Edward Bentley</u>
2. What is your full Address?.....	2. <u>2nd Street, Bury, Lancs.</u>
3. Are you a British Subject?.....	3. <u>Yes</u>
4. What is your Age?.....	4. <u>29</u> Years..... <u>7</u> Months.
5. What is your Trade or Calling?.....	5. <u>Milling</u>
6. Are you Married?.....	6. <u>Yes</u>
7. Have you ever served in any branch of His Majesty's Force, naval or military, if so, which?.....	7. <u>No</u>
8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated?.....	8. <u>Yes</u>
9. Are you willing to be enlisted for General Service?.....	9. <u>Yes</u>
10. Did you receive a Notice, and do you understand its meaning, and who gave it to you?.....	10. <u>No</u> (Name <u>J. P. ...</u> Corps <u>...</u> )
11. Are you willing to serve upon the following conditions provided His Majesty should so long require your services?.....	11. <u>Yes</u>

For the duration of the War, at the end of which you will be discharged with all convenient speed. If employed with Hospitals, depots of Mounted Units, and as Clerks, etc., you may be retained after the termination of hostilities until your services can be spared, but such retention shall in no case exceed six months.

I, Edward Bentley do solemnly declare that the above made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements made.

Edward Bentley SIGNATURE OF RECRUIT  
J. P. ... SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY RECRUIT ON ATTESTATION.

I, Edward Bentley swear by Almighty God, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will, as in duty bound, honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown, and dignity against all enemies, and will serve and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE OR ATTESTING OFFICER.

The Recruit above named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.

The above questions were then read to the Recruit in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to on this 18th day of Jan 1915 at MANCHESTER

J. P. ... Signature of the Justice

Certificate of Approving Officer.

I certify that this Attestation of the above-named Recruit is correct, and properly filled up, and that the requirements of the Army Act have been complied with. I accordingly approve, and appoint him to the 6th Service Battalion

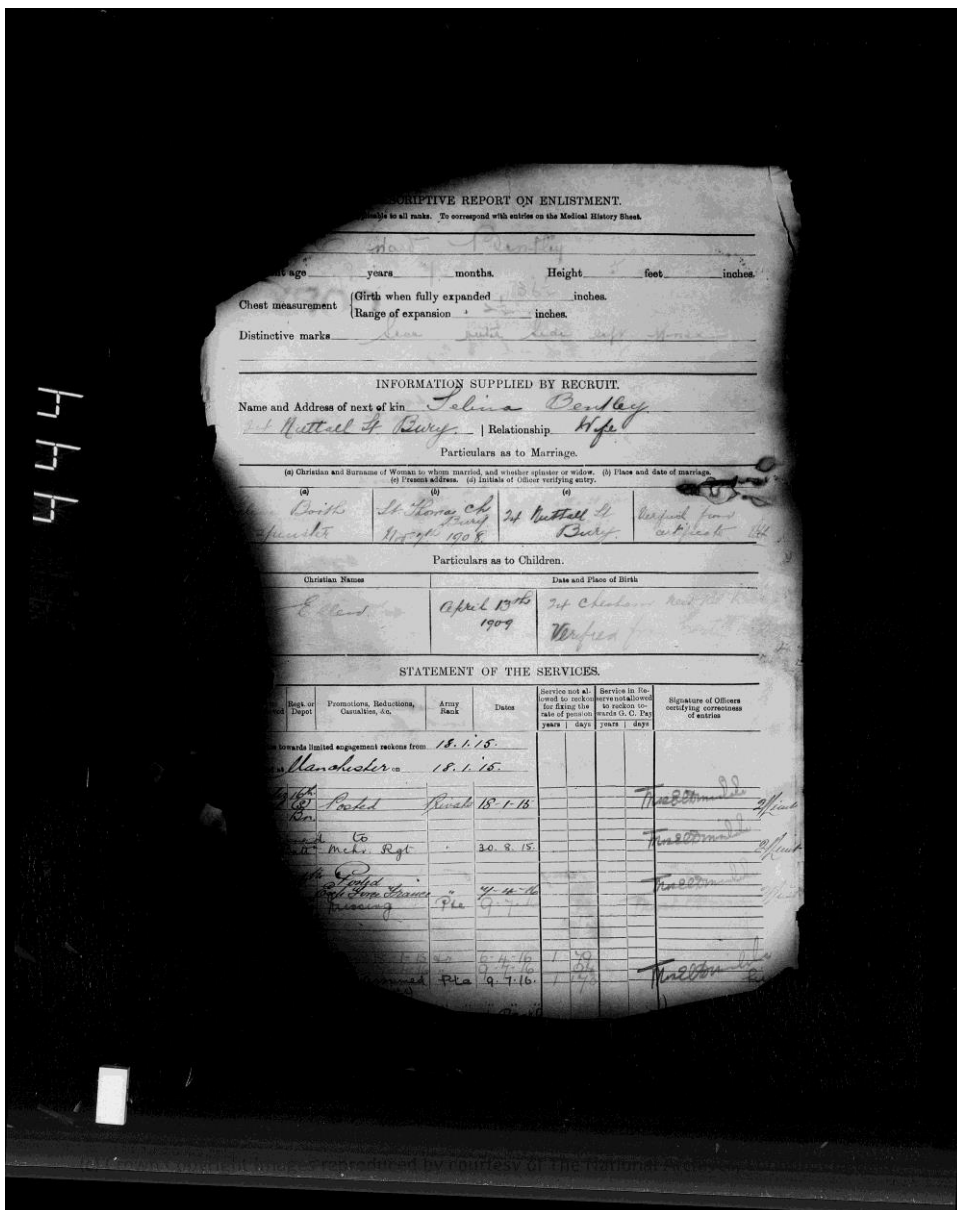
If enlisted by special authority, Army Form B. 203 (or other authority for the enlistment) will be attached to this certificate.

Date 18 Jan 1915 at MANCHESTER

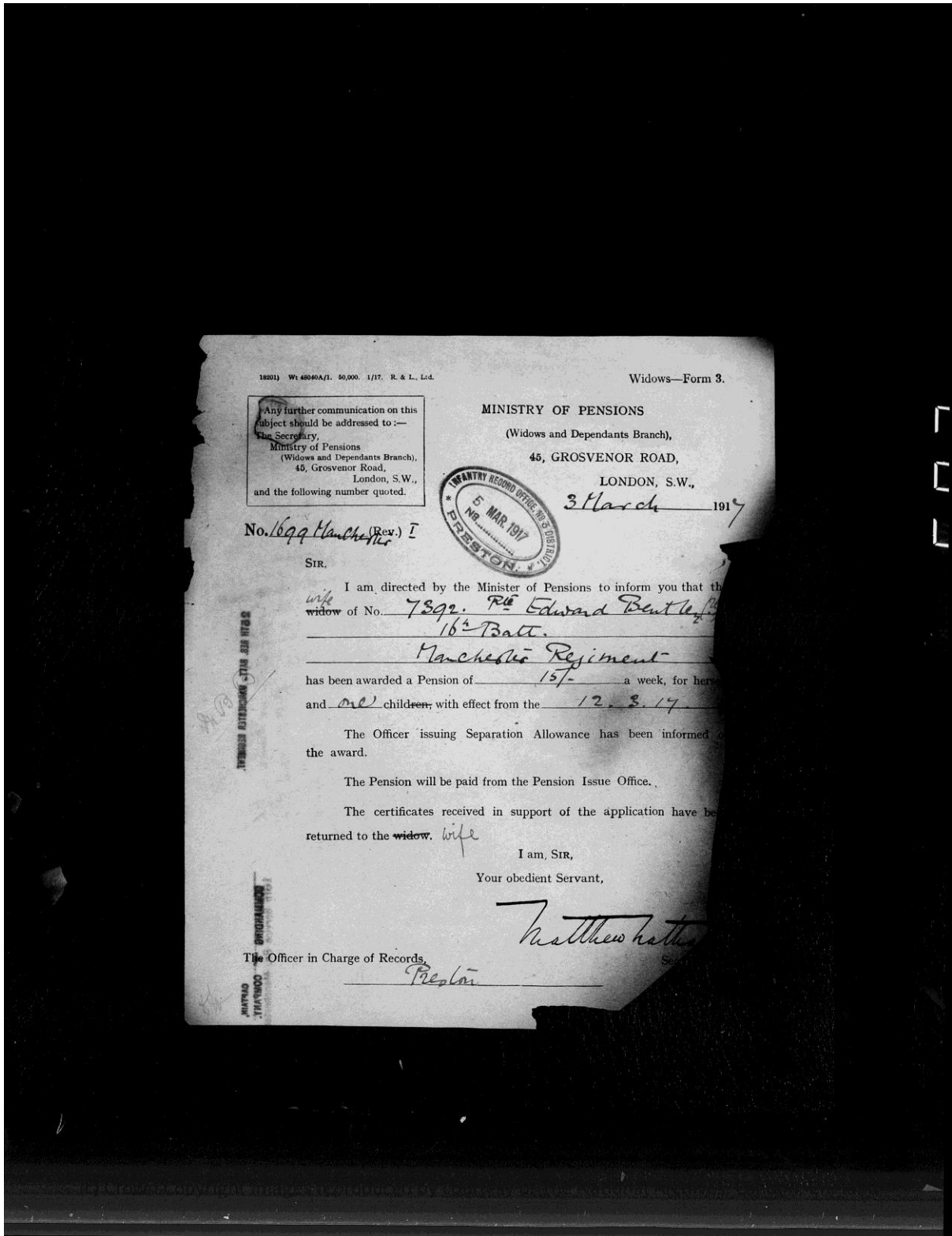
J. P. ... Signature of the Approving Officer

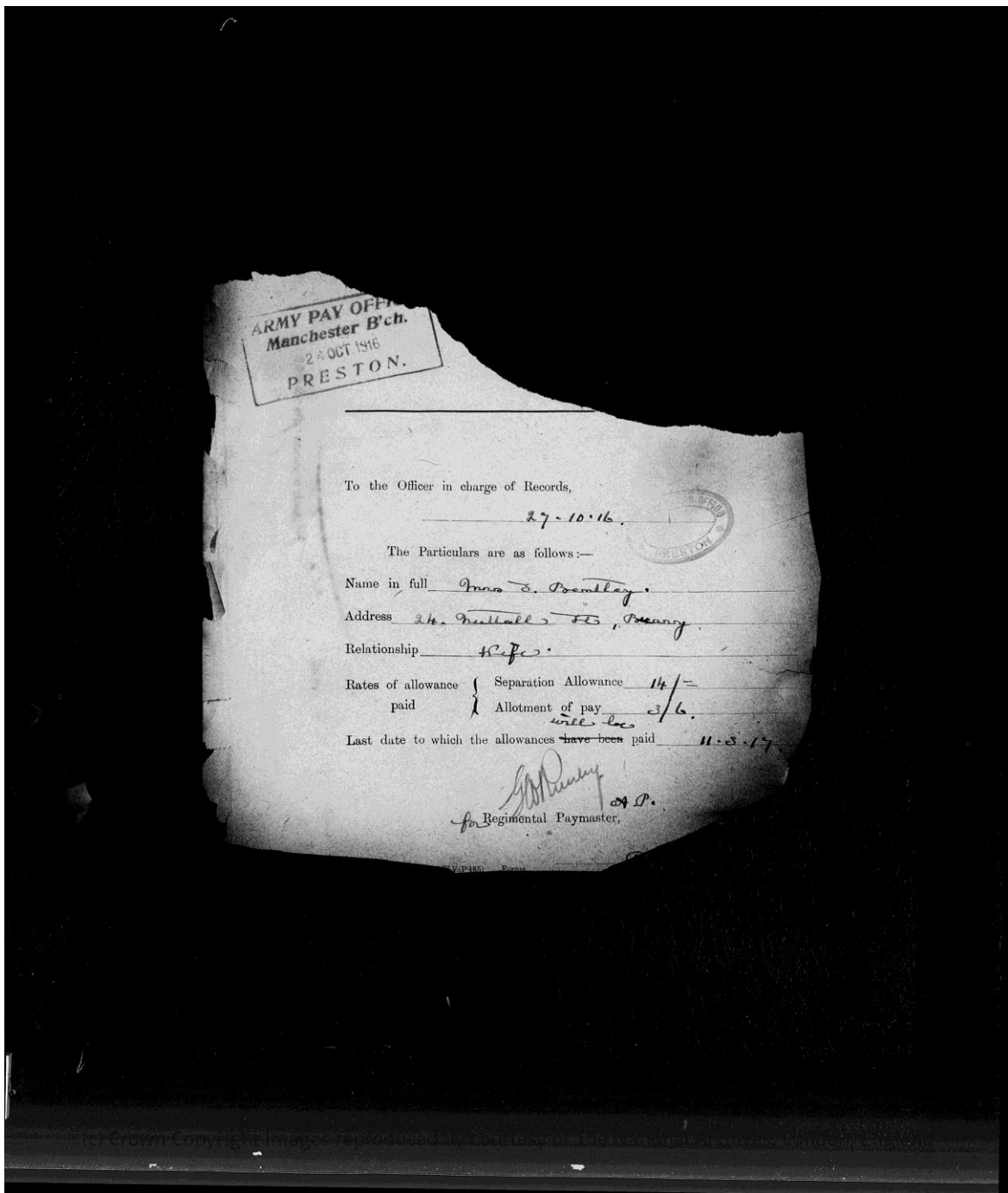
This document provides a physical description of Edward and shows was married to Selina in November 1908 and they had a child in April 1909. The dates suggest that Selina was pregnant when they married!

The form also reveals that Edward completed his basic training between January 1915 and August 1915. He was then posted to the Western Front on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1916. Finally, it reveals he went “missing” on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1916, the day the Battalion attacked the enemy within Trones Wood during the Battle of the Somme.



Selina was awarded a pension follow her husband's death:





ARMY PAY OFFICE  
Manchester B'ch.  
27 OCT 1916  
PRESTON.

To the Officer in charge of Records,

27-10-16.

The Particulars are as follows:—

Name in full Mrs. S. Bentley.

Address 24, Millhall St., Peasey.

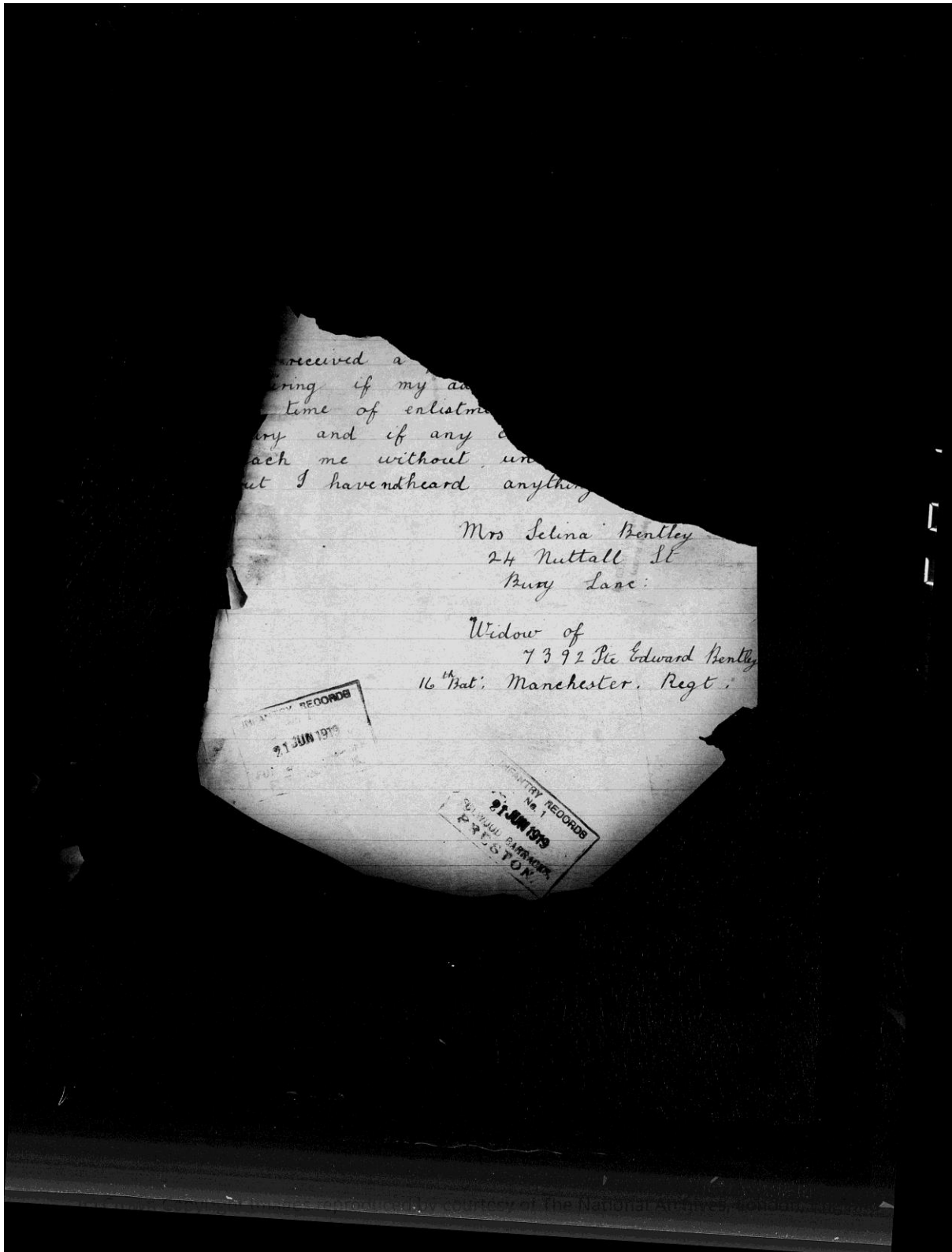
Relationship Wife.

Rates of allowance paid { Separation Allowance 14/-  
Allotment of pay 3/6.

Last date to which the allowances have been paid 11-8-17.

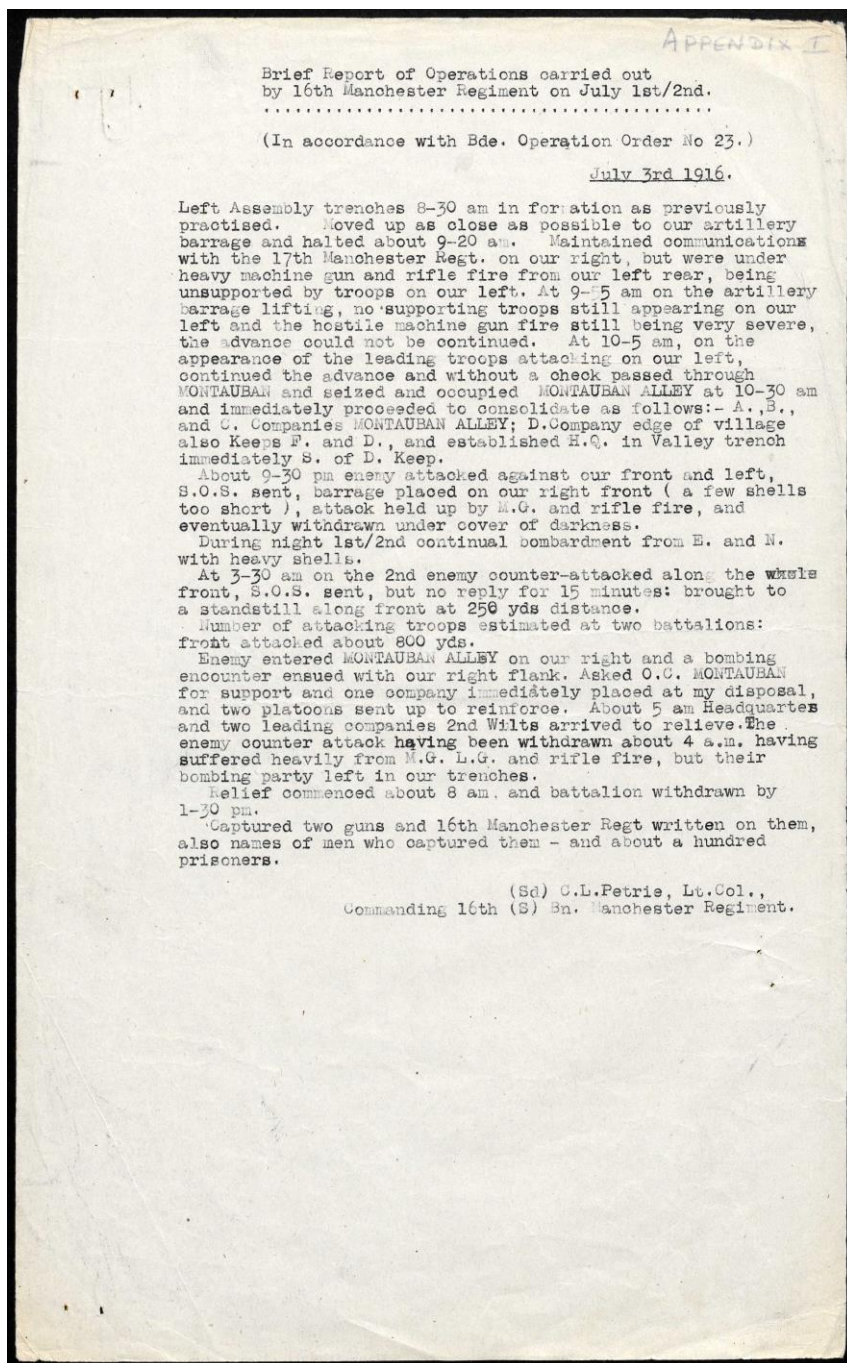
*[Signature]*  
for Regimental Paymaster.

Selina wrote a letter to the War Office in 1919 asking for more information about her husband.



So what happened to Edward during his time in France and on that fateful July day?

The Battle of the Somme began on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916 and the Battalion, full of volunteers, attacked German positions at Montauban in the south of the battlefield. Whilst the day is infamous because of the complete failure of the attack, the Manchester Pals achieved all of their objectives on this day. It was a brilliant attack. The Battalion Diary provides a comprehensive report:





The Battalion attacked from what was until that day a German trench called Train Alley.

The objective of the Battalion was Montauban Alley, an important trench about 200 yards in front of the village. After a cold night in the assembly trenches, the battalion moved off at 8.30am. They had to traverse 3,000 yards of shattered trenches and churned up ground, passing through the 21st Brigade who had already taken their objective. Held up at one point while the artillery barrage moved forward, they pressed on and poured into Montauban which was levelled by then, and on to Montauban alley.

Battalion HQ was established in the village and communications set up, A, B and C Companies consolidated the Alley, touch was obtained with the 17th on the right, but on the left the flank was open until late in the afternoon when 18th Division came up. The gun pits beyond the alley were rushed and the first three artillery pieces were taken in the battle of the Somme. By Midday the Germans had become to shell their positions. At 9.30pm the Germans launched their counter attack but by 10.15pm it was beaten off. The men stood to in their trenches all night and suffered through lack of water.

At 3.00am the second German counter attack started as long lines of grey figures advanced over the ridge. The Battalion responded with rapid and accurate rifle and Lewis gun fire, but there was only 150 troops manning the defence of a trench 1000 yards long and no means of contacting the artillery. Four waves of Germans were fought off but some got into the trench at the junction of the 16th and 17th battalions, bombers were sent forward to deal with them but the bombs had run out and a block was established in the trench to keep them back. At 2.30pm the battalion was relieved by the 2nd Wiltshire's, the ammunition they took back was one mills bomb and 300 rounds, but they had held the trench.

On their return to their trenches , the Padre asked for volunteers to bring in the wounded still laying out in No Mans' Land, the survivors, all exhausted, stood up to a man. What was left of the battalion was withdrawn to Happy Valley off the Bray to Albert Road where they stayed until the 8th when they returned to their old assembly trenches.

I took this photograph of the battlefield where they attacked on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916:



Artists' impression of the successful attack on Montauban:



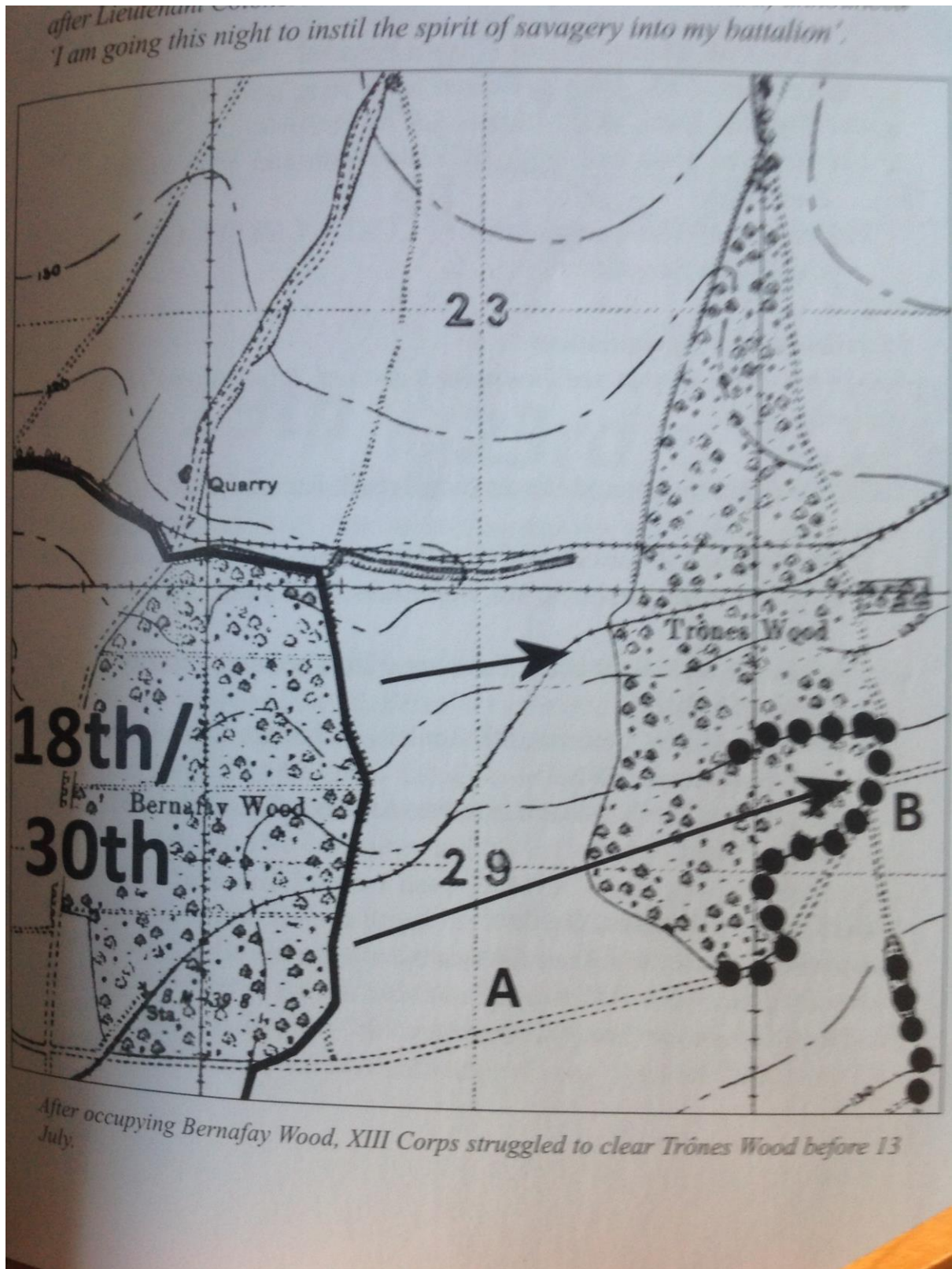
Memorial to the Liverpool and Manchester Pals who took Montauban on that day:



On the evening of 8<sup>th</sup> July 1916 the Battalion arrived in Cambridge Copse and was ordered to attack Trones Wood on the following day.

They suffered from artillery fire as they moved up to their jumping off position in a sunken road at 6.40pm. Despite heavy fire from shrapnel, high explosive and machine guns they managed to take the southern part of the wood with little loss and dug in 60 yards from the south western edge.

There were many casualties in the wood caused by snipers and also because some men got lost.



The Battalion Diary provides an hour by hour report on the fighting in Trones Wood:

16th (S) Bn Mchbr Coy. **WAR DIARY** or **INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.** Army Form C. 2118.  
Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II, and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.  
(Erase heading not required.) July - Page 2.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
MONTAUBAN AREA	July 9	2:30pm	<p>Word that 14th &amp; 15th Mchbr had withdrawn from TRONES WOOD.</p> <p>Received orders to move via GLATZ REDOUBT to SUNKEN ROAD, BRIGUETIERE from where both would attack &amp; occupy S &amp; S.W. part of TRONES WOOD.</p> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Coy with C.O. started out over via GLATZ REDOUBT &amp; worked up SUNKEN ROAD, the other 1<sup>st</sup> Coy followed from GLATZ REDOUBT &amp; CHINNEY TRENCH - All this movement under very heavy artillery fire.</p>	
		6:00pm	<p>Both forces up on SUNKEN RD to attack TRONES WOOD - 2 Coys in front line, 1 in support, 1 in Reserve - 2 paces interval, 100' between lines.</p> <p>Advance carried out under heavy fire of shrapnel, H.E. &amp; M.G.'s - Repulse of advance enabled both to avoid damage without much loss.</p> <p>Hostile M.G. fire ceased - both flanked.</p> <p>Both reached base TRONES ALLEY &amp; S.W. edge of TRONES WOOD - 1 Coy of 15th Mchbr was found in occupation of S. corner of wood supporting our right flank - Bounced up TRONES ALLEY to point S 29 B 76 - blocked this point &amp; retired - Standing patrol left up TRONES ALLEY just inside W edge of Wood.</p>	

2353 Wt. W.554/1454 700,000 5/15 D.D.&L. A.D.S.S./Forms/C. 2118.

16th (S) Bn Mchbr Coy. **WAR DIARY** or **INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.** Army Form C. 2118.  
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(Erase heading not required.) July - Page 3.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
BRIGUETIERE AREA	July 9		<p>2nd R.S.F. holding MALTZ HORN TRENCH - Southern portion of wood thickly entangled with fallen trees &amp; thorny undergrowth.</p> <p>Situation: HQ &amp; Reserve Coy in SUNKEN ROAD - 3 Coys along TRONES ALLEY &amp; S.W. edge of Wood.</p>	
		11:00pm	<p>Received orders from Brigade to clear TRONES WOOD Northwards before dawn - very urgent, success of operations depends on it - clear up situation &amp; dawn.</p> <p>3 Coys 16th Mchbr &amp; 1 Coy S.A. Inf. ordered to carry this out by vigorous patrolling up the Wood - Wood was so thick that this could not be done till daylight.</p>	
		10 12:50am	<p>1 Coy S.A. Inf. which was put under orders of O.C. 16th Mchbr left SUNKEN RD &amp; went to fill up gap between 16th Mchbr Right &amp; 2nd R.S.F. left in MALTZ HORN TRENCH.</p>	
		4:00am	<p>An Artillery barrage placed on N. end of Wood.</p>	
		5:00am	<p>S.A. Coy reported Wood clear of Germans - 4 M.G. sent up to assist in defence of Wood.</p>	
		5:30am	<p>Germans in occupied S. portion of Wood, partially cutting off some of our parties who are still missing.</p> <p>Reserve Coy sent up from SUNKEN RD. to drive Germans back from S. edge of Wood - Cleared S. edge of Wood &amp; re-occupied our trenches just outside Wood.</p>	

2353 Wt. W.554/1454 700,000 5/15 D.D.&L. A.D.S.S./Forms/C. 2118.

16 officers and 575 other ranks went into Trones Wood on that day.

8 officers and 181 other ranks became casualties, including an incredible 85 missing which included Edward. They were lost in the deep undergrowth and chaos of Trones Wood. The wood has never been cleared so Edward, and thousands of others, are probably still there.

**WAR DIARY**  
or  
**INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.**  
(Brevise heading not required.)

Army Form C. 2118.

JULY - PAGE 6.

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in P. S. Regs., Part II, and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

*16 Lt (S) Lt Alfred Rpt.*

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
ALCOVERT	July 11		<p>CASUALTIES during the TRONES WOOD action July 8-10</p> <p>Officers - Killed in action - <i>Lt Col E. H. K. SMITHERS.</i></p> <p>Wounded - <i>Capt J. J. PAYNE - Lt Col W. L. DAVIDSON - 2 Lt T. A. H. NASH</i> <i>2 Lt G. M. HARVEY - Capt W. ELSTON, slightly (and duty)</i></p> <p>Missing - <i>2 Lt E. W. VENNER - Lt Col J. M. OLLIVER (seriously wounded)</i></p> <p>O. R. Killed - <i>A/6201 C. S. M. ADAMSON, J. H. - A/6551 G. H. DENHURST -</i> <i>A/6555 Sgt H. A. HERTON - A/6526 Pte J. CLEGG.</i> <i>B/6670 Pte A. BRIGGS - B/6605 Pte H. DEAN - B/6511 Pte B. JOHNSON</i> <i>B/6514 Pte A. KILTING</i> <i>C/4610 Pte J. WILDE - C/1003 Pte E. T. HEWITT</i> <i>D/1115 C. S. M. HAWKINS - D/1266 Sgt F. H. TURNER - D/1574 Pte J. BOURNACAN</i> <i>D/1167 Pte R. HYDE - D/1215 Pte G. WILKINS.</i></p> <p>Wounded - <i>A Coy 19 - B Coy 22 - C Coy 23 - D Coy 17 - Total - 81</i></p> <p>Missing - <i>10 - 21 - 15 - 39 - 75</i></p> <p><i>300 - Marched to DORNCELETTINE morning of 9/11/16.</i></p>	

2353 Wk. W2544/1454 700,000 3/15 D. D. & L. A.D.S.S./Forms/C. 2118.

Trones Wood in 1916:



And the same scene a year later. Somewhere in the wood Edward's body remained:





In August 2015, I took this photograph of Trones Wood, where Edward killed:



I also took these photos in Trones Wood in January 2016:



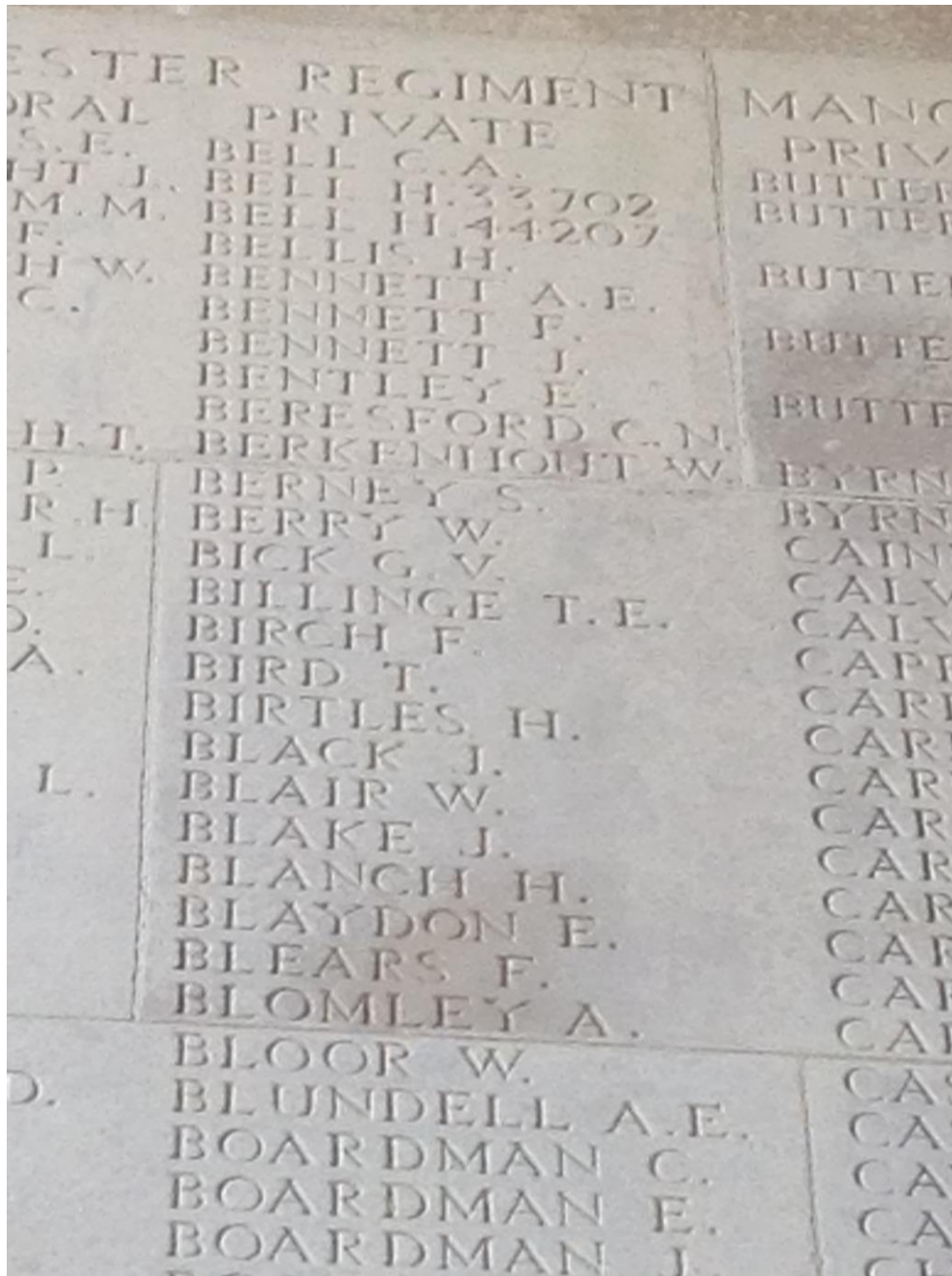


And this time after a storm in February 2017:





It was eventually established that 41 men of the Battalion were killed that day, including Edward. Such was the chaos that only 2 of them have a marked grave and they are buried in the nearby Bernafay Wood Cemetery. The other 39 have no known grave and are remembered on the Thiepval Memorial.



**Rest in peace Edward Bentley**

**Terry Whenham**

**February 2018**