

Corporal Howard Ernest Mortiboys

Howard's grandfather was James Frederick Mortiboys, born on 22nd February 1830. He was not baptised, however, until 21st November 1849 at St Martin's, then the parish church for Birmingham, near where the family were living at the time, in Ickniel Street West, Ladywood, Birmingham. ⁱ

No. 21	James Frederick	Thomas		Ickniel Street West	Shoe maker	Gravel
No. 120	Born Feb 22 1830	Frances	Mortiboy			

Figure 1: Baptismal record of James Frederick Mortiboys

James' parent's, Thomas, a shoe maker, and Frances (née Harrison,ⁱⁱ known as Fanny) had four children: Emma and Thomas born in 1824 and 1826 respectively, Eliza born in 1828 (she died in hospital in 1839 aged 11 years) and lastly James. In 1841 the family were registered apart at two separate addresses, Thomas senior, a shoe maker, and Thomas junior were living in West Heath, Birmingham. Fanny was with Emma and James at the home of Job Jordan in Granville Street (off Broad Street) in the centre of Birmingham, where she was a cook.

West Heath	Henry Turner	3			g
	Thomas Mortiboys	40		Shoe Maker	g
	Thomas do	14			g
	William Beaufort	20		F S	g
Granville St	Job Jordan	30		Lab	mo
	Fanny Mortiboys	35		Cook	mo
	Emma do	17		F S	g
	James do	11			g

Figure 2: 1841 census for Thomas and his son in West Heath (top) and Fanny, Emma and James at the residence of Job Jordan (below)

In the 1851 census James and his brother Thomas were living at No 6 Ickniel Port Street, Ladywood. Thomas like his father was a shoe makes but James was a carriage handle maker.

The following year, on 5th July 1852, James married Sarah Brookes at Saint Bartholomew's church, Edgbaston, Birmingham. James' occupation on his marriage certificate was recorded as a 'chaser' someone who decorates metal by engraving or embossing.ⁱⁱⁱ

Ten years later, in 1861, the census recorded James, a 'heraldic chaser', and Sarah with a family of four children at 19 Edward Street, Ladywood, Birmingham. Their children, Sarah Ann, Louisa, Josiah and Frederick James were born in 1854, 1855, 1857 and 1859 respectively. Sadly, James and Sarah's second son, Frederick, died aged five.

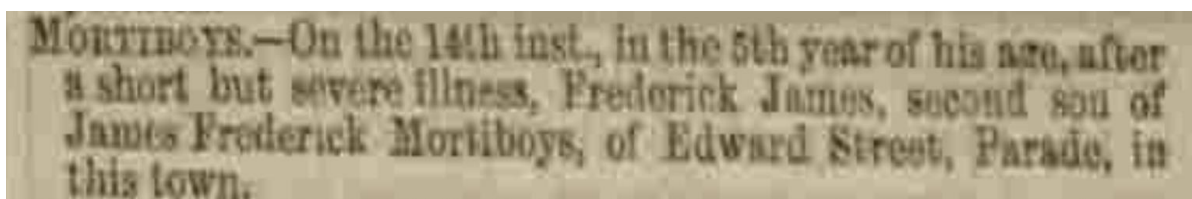


Figure 3: Birmingham Daily Gazette, 18th January 1864

By 1871, James had set himself up as a pawnbroker. The family lived and worked at 96 Sherlock Street, Highgate, Birmingham. Four further children had been born since the last census: Arthur George, Harry, Walter James and William in 1862, 1864, 1867 and 1870 respectively.^{iv} James and Sarah's last child, Alfred Ernest, was born in 1872. The family continued to live at 96 Sherlock Street, until they moved across the road to No 215 around 1882. ^v When James died on 11th October 1888, Sarah continued the business with the help of her sons.

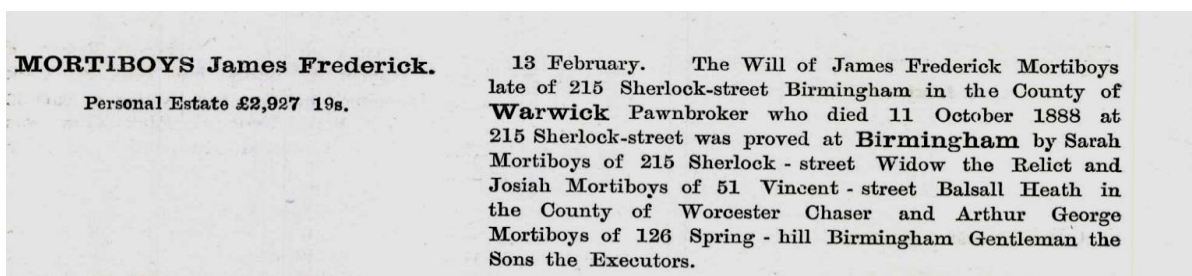


Figure 4: Probate record 1889, of James Frederick Mortiboy

Sarah's youngest son, Alfred Ernest, married Elizabeth Ada Whitehouse in the summer of 1897 in Chester. In 1898 while living at 215 Sherlock Street, their first child Howard Ernest was born. He was baptised on 1st January 1899 at St Mary's and St Ambrose church, Edgbaston.^{vi}

The 1901 census recorded Alfred as a 'pawnbroker' by occupation. The family had moved to 117 Alexander Road, Edgbaston and employed a general servant, Maria Wiles.

By 1911, Alfred had expanded the business to include drapery and moved away from the city centre to 16 Trafalgar Road, Moseley. The family had grown to three children with the birth of Kenneth Brittain Mortiboys and Kathleen Ada Mortiboys in 1904 and 1909 respectively. The household included a housemaid and a general servant.

The eldest child, Howard, was privately educated before he was admitted to King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys in January 1909 at the age of eleven. He remained there until 30th July 1914. On leaving school Howard worked as a salesman in his father's business.^{vii}



Figure 5 : King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys, now a community centre

When war was declared on 4th August 1914, Howard was only fifteen years old and too young to enlist, but on 2nd April 1917, after his eighteenth birthday, he enrolled in the Territorial Reserve Battalion as a Private No 7/14206.^{viii}

In 1918, after a period of training, and having attained the age of nineteen when he could officially serve abroad, Howard was sent to serve in the 1st Battalion, Duke of Cornwall Light Infantry (DCLI) in France as an acting Lance Corporal. He was given a new Army No 41284.^{ix}

The DCLI had just returned from Italy in order to bolster the defences after the Allied lines had been broken in the German Spring Offensive, commencing with Operation Michael on 21st April 1918.

Over the next months the battalion as part of the 5th Division, 95th Infantry Brigade was involved in the drive to push the Germans back to the Hindenburg Line.

On 27/28th September 1918 the 5th Division captured Beaucamp, and, with the 42nd Division, cleared the Beaucamp Ridge, which runs north-eastwards towards Marcoing.

The following day, 29th September, the advance continued. The 1st DCLI, assembled on the Surrey Road at 1.30 am ready for the 3.30 am attack to commence. The objective was the La Vacquerie road. After the initial barrage, the battalion advanced, but they found themselves up against heavy machine gun fire which held up progress. At day break the battalion took stock and made contact with their left and right flanks. The line commenced to move forward again at 2 pm. Eventually after clearing the last of the enemy defences, new positions were established on the south-west edge of La Vacquerie.^x

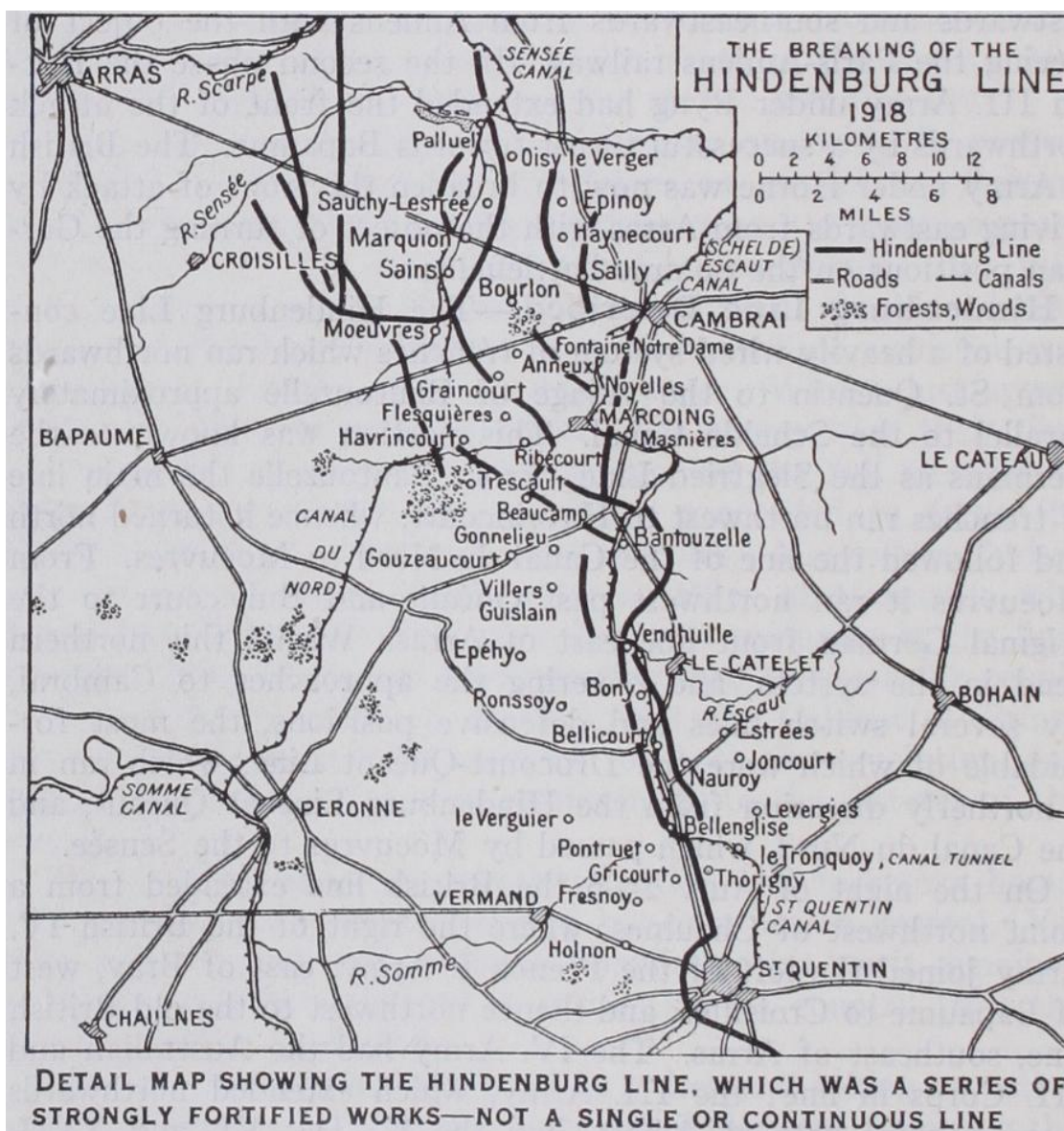


Figure 6: Map showing the location of Beaucamp and Marcoing (centre of map)

During the fighting over 100 prisoners were taken mostly of Machine Gun Companies. Casualties included two officers killed and two wounded and seventy-five other ranks (OR's). One of those OR's wounded on the day was Howard.^{xi} He died ten days later in the 11th Stationary Hospital located at Rouen, aged nineteen. He was buried at St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen. Howard is also commemorated at St Mary's Church, Moseley and is on the Roll of Service at King Edward VI Camp Hill School and the Roll of Honour at Birmingham Hall of memory.



Figure 7
 (Above) St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen
 (Left) St Mary's Church, Moseley WW1 memorial
 (Right) Obituary for Howard's father, 1960
 (Below) Roll of Service, King Edward VI Camp Hill School

MR. A. E. MORTIBOYS

The funeral will take place at Robin Hood Crematorium to-morrow of Mr. Alfred Ernest Mortiboy's, of St. Bernards Road, Olton, who died at his son's home in Westbourne Road, Olton, on Saturday.

Mr. Mortiboy's, who was 88, was the head of a family drapery business which was established in Sherlock Street, Birmingham, and which had to move during the last war to Stratford Road, Sparkbrook, when the premises were bombed. Until two weeks ago he had taken a keen interest in the business.

Since 1902 Mr. Mortiboy's had been a member of the Moseley and Balsall Heath Institute, and for many years he had been a vice-president. His son, Mr. Kenneth Mortiboy's, was its secretary for some years.

He was regarded as an expert on Birmingham and its history and once wrote a series of articles for the *Birmingham Weekly Post* on the subject.

His wife died 18 months ago and he leaves a married son and daughter. His son resigned recently as the director of Solihull Society of Arts drama section.

ROLL OF SERVICE 19

Date at School.	Name.	Rank.	Regiment, etc.
1906-1908	MILLER, C. W.	Lieutenant	.. 11th Batt. West Yorks. Regt. Killed—June, 1917
1902-1907	MILLS, F. L.	Lieutenant	.. Northumberland Fusiliers (M.C. & Bar)
1899-1902	MILLS, H. G.	Sergeant	.. Royal Engineers
1909-1914	MILLS, S. A.	Signaller	.. Royal Navy Killed—February, 1918
1906-1908	MILLWARD, T. Army Service Corps
1907-1912	MOODY, P. B. 3rd King's Own Hussars
1910-1914	MOORE, W. A. C. Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve
1907-1912	MOORES, C. L.	Lieutenant	.. South Staffordshire Regt.
1906-1910	MORETON, B. T. W.	Corporal	.. Warwickshire Yeomanry
1908-1912	MORETON, R. D.	Private	.. Machine Gun Corps (Cavalry)
1902-1905	MORETON, R. F. V.	Sergeant	.. 3rd Sth. Midland Royal Field Artillery
1903-1907	MOREY, S. K.	Lieutenant	.. South Staffordshire Regt.
1906-1909	MORGAN, B. G.	Lieutenant	.. Royal Field Artillery
1905-1908	MORRIS, H.	Corporal	.. 14th Batt. Royal Warwick Regt. (M.M.)
1909-1914	MORRIS, L. J. Royal Naval Air Service (Wireless)
1909-1914	MORTIBOYS, H. E. Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry Killed—9th October, 1918. France

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Endnotes

- i Birmingham, England, Church of England Baptisms, 1813-1912
- ii Warwickshire, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1910, Marriage of Thomas Mortiboy to Frances Harrison 11th August 1823, Solihull
- iii Birmingham, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1937
- iv England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915
- v Kelly's Directory of Birmingham 1882
- vi Birmingham, England, Church of England Baptisms, 1813-1912
- vii *Birmingham Mail* 16 October 1918
King Edward School, Edgbaston archives, archivist Alison Wheatley
Family Tree of Alistair John Bulloch, Ancestry
- viii Soldiers Died In The Great War 1914-1919
- ix The *Birmingham Mail*, 16th October 1918 reported that Howard had been in France for 6 months. Counting back from October 1918, April would have been the time he arrived in France
- x National Archives War Diary for DCLI, W0 95-1578-2-2, August 1918 to September 1918, p 40-50
National Archives War Diary for DCLI, W0 95-1578-3, October 1918 to December, p 52
- xi See x

Illustrations

Figure 1 Church of England Baptisms, 1813-1912

Figure 2 1841 census

Figure 3 Birmingham Daily Gazette, 18th January 1864

Figure 4 National Probate Calendar, 1889

Figure 5 Camp Hill

<https://billdargue.jimdo.com/placenames-gazetteer-a-to-y/places-c/camp-hill/>

Figure 6 Battles of Hindenburg Line

<http://gluedideas.com/Encyclopedia-Britannica-Volume-11-Part-2-Gunnery-Hydroxylamine/Battles-of-Hindenburg-Line.html>

Figure 7 Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Camp Hill Old Edwardians Magazine, Issue 61, 1922

Birmingham Daily Post, 27th September 1960