

<p>41.Osborne C S</p> <p>Born 1896 Mistley Enlisted Colchester 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1914</p>	<p><b>Claude Stanley Osborne</b></p> <p>King's Royal Rifle Corps 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion</p>	<p>Died of wounds 16<sup>th</sup> May 1915 Aged 18</p> <p>France</p> <p>Rifleman 11644</p>
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Sarah Ann Childs was originally from Wrabness and married William Osborne from Mistley in 1888. By 1891 they are living at 1 George's Terrance, Harwich Road, Mistley (opposite Mistley Fish & Chip shop) along with their first son William Frederick. Father is working at the Maltings as a Labourer. The couple's second son Percy John was born in late 1891, their third son **Claude Stanley Osborne** was born in 1896.

By 1901 **Claude** (then aged 5 years) and family are still living in Harwich Road. As well as the two older brothers he has a younger sister Daisy, 2 years of age. A few months later tragedy struck the family and Claude's mother Sarah Ann died, just 34 years old.

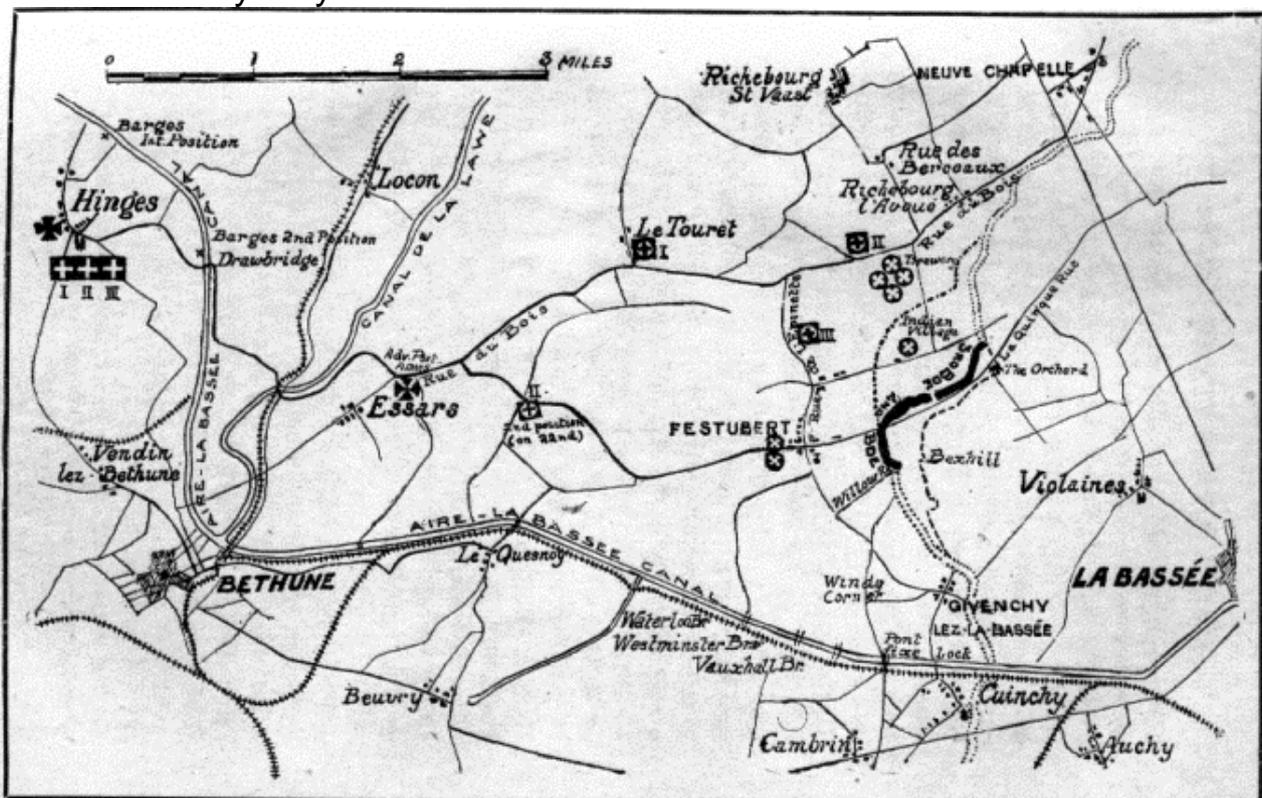
Father William met and married another local girl, Alice Maud Flatt in late 1902 and they started their own family. By 1911 the new couple are still living at 2 George's Terrance, with Percy working away as a ships mate. Claude at 15 years is working as a Shop Assistant, his sister Daisy (aged 12) is presumably at school. Also part of the household is Dorothy Flatt a 10 years old child born in Gt Bromley, along with children of the new family - Ellen (8yrs), Alice (6yrs), Florence (4yrs), Ethel Rose (3yrs) and Robert Ernest just 6 months old. Father William is still supporting them through his work at the Maltings.

**Claude** then switched from shop work and joined his father in the Maltings, for a while working for Messrs W. Brooks at the Edme Works in Mistley. On the 9<sup>th</sup> April 1913 at 18 years of age he signed up with the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion Essex Regiment (a Territorial unit) at Manningtree – Private 1744. He was attested by John M Heron the Captain at Manningtree (Major Heron died later at the battle for Gaza) His service with 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion Essex Regiment lasted for over a year.

Just before the war started, on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1914 Claude was declared fit for a full Army career by R M Erskine, the well known doctor practicing at Manningtree, and was transferred to the King's Royal Rifle Corps based at Winchester on the 27<sup>th</sup> June. He obtained a Swimming Certificate on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1914 and was finally posted abroad as a re-enforcement with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1915. His family would already been aware of the toll the war was taking, with Frederick Buck from next door having been

killed in September 1914. His new Battalion had been in the thick of the action having landed in France in August 1914, part of the 6th Brigade of the 2nd Division. They had lost over a thousand men during the First battle of Ypres, where three locals, William Cree, George Percy Holmes & Thomas Flurrie had also died.

During May 1915 preparations were made for the battle of Festubert, a small village in the Ypres Salient. This marked a significant step on the journey from the search for a breakthrough, to the war of attrition. It was preceded by a 60 hour artillery bombardment in which over 100,000 shells, but large parts of the German lines survived intact. Claude and the 1st Battalion of the King's Royal Rifle Corps took part in what was the first surprise night attack, of the war and at 11.30pm on the 15<sup>th</sup> May under a moonless sky they left their trenches and moved out into No Man's Land.



The initial advance, West of the cinder track running from Rue du Bois to Ferme du Bois, was completed with few casualties. Signallers who went with them took a telephone instrument and two motor lamps, paying out the wire as they went. If all else failed they had an electric torch to communicate their progress via Morse code. Having taken the enemies second line the torch light signalled the code 'KRB' back to commanders on the British lines. They occupied the German front and support trenches and begin to consolidate their position whilst waiting for a further support bombardment to take place. The failure of similar attacks on their left meant they were very exposed to machine gun fire. The bombardment took place

at 12.45 am on the 16<sup>th</sup> May which helped them hold their position but did not free up the reserve battalions to come across and support them. Despite constant enemy shelling the battalion held the captured trenches all day but could not be relieved until cover of darkness the following night. In all the British lost 16,648 casualties from the action. In the battalion 26 were killed, including several officers and Major G.C. Shakerley who led the assault. There were also 193 wounded and 88 missing. Amongst these was Claude Osborne who died of his wounds on the 16<sup>th</sup> May 1915, aged 18 years. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Le Touret Memorial in France.

Awarded the 1915 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal which, together with a Scroll, were sent to his father William Osborne on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1919 at 2 George's Terrace, Harwich Rd, Mistley.

His brother William Osborne served during the war with the Royal Fusiliers, survived and later married in London. Brother Percy John Osborne served at sea with the Merchant Navy and later worked with Trinity House in Yarmouth. The family had continued to expand with Sydney born in 1913, Alfred in 1916 and Victor just after the war (1919).



His stepmother Alice lived on at George's Terrace until she passed away on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 1961 leaving her estate to be managed by Claude's brother Leonard, who worked for a while on a farm but by then was a retired Sub Post Master and Sidney Arthur Osborne a works assistant.