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Jeremy Mitchell, *Shrapnel and Whizzbangs A Tommy in the Trenches 1914-18*, (The Memoir Club, 2008), ISBN: 978-1-84104-192-6. £12.95.

The British Special Brigade was formed to carry out chemical warfare operations following the German chlorine gas attack at Ypres in April 1915. Published diaries and memoirs of its personnel are extremely rare if not non-existent. In *Chemical Soldiers* (1992), Donald Richter drew on many unpublished accounts including the diary of the subject of this biography, G. O. Mitchell, which has been written by his son. Jeremy Mitchell has carried out much additional research to bulk out his account of his father's service, first in the ranks of 1/6th West Yorkshire Regiment and latterly in the Special Companies, Royal Engineers, in which he was eventually commissioned.

George Mitchell kept a detailed diary up to the time of the first British gas attack on 25 September 1915 and I would have liked to have seen the full text of this diary reproduced followed by explanatory notes to maintain the integrity of the primary source. Instead there are occasional diary extracts with much explanatory and contextual information much of which will be superfluous to BCMH members. The longest and most valuable diary extracts relate to the Battle of Loos. The recollections by a son of his father's descriptions of his war experiences add an interesting perspective.

Simon Jones

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