

**RECORD OF THE 4TH (T.F.) BATTALION
FOR 1914-1915.
EXTRACTED FROM THE REGIMENTAL CHRONICLES OF
THE OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY**

The 4th Battalion went into camp for its annual training at Marlow on Sunday, 2nd August, leaving Oxford about midday, and picking up detachments at stations on the line. Next morning, between 2.30 and 3 o'clock, to every one's surprise, Reveille sounded, and orders were issued for the Battalion to parade and return to Oxford. By 9 a.m. headquarters were reached, and three hours later the men were dismissed, with orders to hold themselves in readiness to mobilize at a moment's notice.

The order for the mobilization of the Territorials reached Oxford at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, 4th August, and the men assembled at headquarters at 7 next morning, when they were told off to their respective billets in the following colleges: Christ Church, New College, Keble, and Balliol. By the evening of the 5th August, therefore, the Battalion was completely mobilized and ready to move if required. Matters were made easier for a rapid mobilization by its having come at the moment at which the Battalion had assembled for its annual training; and billeting was simplified by the fact that it was vacation time and the colleges empty.

August. 6th.—The Colours of the Battalion were deposited in Christ Church Cathedral, being taken from headquarters by Lieuts. Vyner and Grisewood, with a Colour party of three Sergeants. They were received by the Dean of Christ Church, who delivered a short Address, the ceremony concluding with special prayers.

August 7th-8th.—Various parades and drills were held.

August 9th.—(Sunday.) Parade Services were held in the morning for D and A Companies at New College, for B and H at Keble, and C, E, F and G Companies at Christ Church Cathedral. In the evening the Battalion left Oxford, marching to the station by Companies, and entraining between 7 p.m. and 11 p.m. for Swindon.

The Peace Headquarters of the various Companies are as follows :

A, B, and H Companies, City of Oxford;
D Company, Henley and Culham ;
C, G, E, F, Banbury, Witney, and Chipping Norton.

Early in September upwards of 80 per cent, of the men having volunteered for Foreign Service, the Battalion became a Foreign Service Battalion; and a recruiting campaign, carried out in the county, soon produced the requisite number of men to bring it up to war strength.

The training of the Battalion at Writtle Camp, near Chelmsford, was now in full swing, and a Reserve Battalion was established, under the command of Colonel Ames, with headquarters at Exeter College, Oxford, the men being billeted, some at their homes in the City, and others in various colleges.

By the end of September the strength of the original Battalion had reached 1,300, but the surplus men were shortly afterwards transferred to the Reserve Battalion, which soon had a strength of over 500.

On the 14th October the Foreign Service Battalion paraded in full marching order, with, the remainder of the South Midland Division, in Hylands Park, for inspection by His Majesty the King.

During the last week of October the Home Service men were transferred to the Reserve Battalion at Oxford.

In order to improve the physique of the men, all spare time during the winter was set aside for football, hockey, cross-country running, boxing, etc.

RECORD OF THE 4TH (T.F.) BATTALION FOR 1914-1915.

The first cross-country run of the season was held on the 29th November, when about 800 men started. The Companies finished in the following order : F, H, C, G, A, D, B, E, and the individual winners were Private Peddar (D), 1st; Private Atkins (D), 2nd; Private Grant (G), 3rd; Lance-Corporal Webb (G), 4th

In the Brigade run at the end of December the 4th Battalion was placed third, although they had the first man home, and four men in the first seven. The race was won by the 4th R. Berks, with the Bucks Battalion second.

In December Colonel Stockton gave up command of the Battalion, and was succeeded by Colonel Schofield, when Captain R. R. S. Rowell was promoted Major.

1915.

In January the Battalion adopted the Four-Company organization, and thus came into line with Regular and New Army Battalions, the change being brought about as follows :—

A and B Companies became A Company (Captain Conybeare).

C and G became B (Captain Fortescue).

F and H became C (Captain Rose).

D and E became D (Captain Hadden).

During this month Brigade Training commenced, and great strides were made with the General Course of Musketry and night-entrenching.

Early in February General Sir Ian Hamilton inspected the South Midland Division, which was now approaching the end of its training at home. The following Infantry belonged to the Division :—

Warwickshire Infantry Brigade.—5th, 6th, 7th, 8th R. Warwicks.

Gloucester and Worcester Infantry Brigade.—4th and 6th Gloucesters; 7th and 8th Worcesters.

South Midland Infantry Brigade.—5th Gloucesters; 4th Oxford and Bucks; Bucks Battalion, Oxford and Bucks; 4th R. Berks.

**RECORD OF THE 4TH (T.F.) BATTALION
FOR 1914-1915.**

**1/4TH (T.F.) BATTALION ON ACTIVE SERVICE IN FRANCE AND FLANDERS.
MARCH-JULY 1915.**

Regimental Diary.

March 27th. — Orders received that Transport, 2 officers, and 84 other ranks would entrain for embarkation at 6.35 a.m. tomorrow, and that the Battalion would entrain at Chelmsford in two detachments, the first at 6.35 p.m., the second at 7.5 p.m. on March 29th for embarkation.

March 28th.—Transport paraded, under Lieut. Long, at 3.45, marched from Writtle to Chelmsford, where it entrained at 6.35 a.m.

March 29th.—The Battalion marched from Writtle to Chelmsford, entrained in accordance with the above orders, and embarked at Folkestone on S.S. "Onward" at 11 p.m. Disembarked at Boulogne a little after midnight and went into Rest Camp.

March 30th.—At 11.15 a.m. marched to Pont de Briques Station and entrained for St. Orner at 1.15. Detrained at Cassel at 6.50 p.m. Our transport were on the same train, having come from Havre, where they had disembarked. Marched from Cassel to Steenvoorde (6 ½ miles), and billeted late at night in scattered farms.

April 2nd.—The Battalion, as part of the Brigade, was inspected by Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien.

April 4th.—Marched from Steenvoorde at 1.40 p.m., following the 5th Glosters. Passing through Eecke, Caestre, and Fletre, arrived at Moolenacher (8 miles) at 4.45 p.m., and went into billets in farms.

April 6th.—(Moolenacher.) Company Training; also training of 2nd Reserve Machine-gun Section and Range Finders continued.

April 7th.—The Battalion paraded at 2 p.m., joined the Brigade at the crossroads one mile west of Bailleul, and marched via Bailleul to one mile short of Nieppe. Got into billets at Oosthove Farm about 7 p.m.—very crowded. The Battalion is to be attached to the East Lancashire and London Rifle Brigade for instruction in trench work.

April 8th.—A Company on fatigue in Ploegsteert Wood. Remaining companies under instruction in the morning. A Company and Machine-gun Section went into trenches, attached to E. Lincs D Company night work in Ploegsteert Wood. (Popularly known as "Plug Street,")

April 9th.—Duties similar to yesterday, companies relieving one another

April 10th.—Trench instruction continued.
C and D Companies in the trenches.

April 11th.—Trench instruction continued.
1 man killed.

April 12th.—The Battalion marched from Oosthove, at 8.45 a.m., to new billets one mile south of Bailleul Station.

April 13th.—Bomb-throwing instruction.

April 14th.—Orders received that the Brigade would take over trenches from the 11th Infantry Brigade. The Battalion is to be in reserve at Nieppe.

**RECORD OF THE 4TH (T.F.) BATTALION
FOR 1914-1915.**

April 15th.—Marched to billets at Nieppe and Pont de Nieppe.

April 16th.—Major Ovey, with 1 officer and 2 N.C.O.'s per company, were attached to the 7th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, to become acquainted with trenches and act as guides.

April 17th.—Marched from Nieppe to Romarin, arriving at 10.30 a.m. Thence marched to the Piggery (T. 24. d. Sheet 28, Map 1/40000) At night we took over trenches from the 5th Glosters and 7th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. The South Midland Division is now holding the line from the Warnave River to the Messines-Wulverghem Road. Gloster and Worcester Brigade, Right Sector; South Midland Brigade, Centre Sector; Warwick Brigade, Left Sector. The Battalion took over two machine-guns from the R Berks.

April 18th.—The section held by the Battalion is named Prowse Corner. Received orders that we would be relieved tomorrow by the R. Berks, and would then take over support trenches held by the Bucks Battalion. At work on communication trenches and dug-outs. A little sniping.

April 19th.—In the evening we were relieved by the 4th Berks, and moved to the support line. Nearly the whole Battalion on fatigue at night. One man wounded.

April 20th.—Most of the Battalion on fatigue day and night.

April 21st.—Fatigues on 2nd Line by day, and on 1st Line by night.

April 23rd.—The Battalion relieved the 4th Berks in Prowse Point Section of trenches.

B Company in Oxford Trench;

D Company in Argyll and Sutherland Trenches; Lieut.

Pickford's Platoon of C Company in Berkshire Trench;

2nd Lieut. Craig's Platoon of C Company in support in Park Avenue Dug-outs;

A Company and Regimental H.Q. at the Piggery;

2 platoons of C Company at Grande Manque Farm.

April 24th.—2nd Lieut. Edmund's Platoon took over huts and dug-outs just south of Prowse Point from the Glosters, but as there was not room for the whole platoon, part went into Berkshire Trench.

Information received that Lieut.-Colonel Schofield has been appointed to command No. 8 Infantry Depot at Havre. Major R. L. Ovey assumed command of the Battalion.

April 25th.—Lieut.-Colonel Schofield left the Battalion, to take up his appointment. Our section of trenches was extended towards the right, and a platoon of C Company took over a new trench known as Grouse Butt.

April 26th.—Very quiet in the trenches.

April 27th.—A man of B Company was killed. The Battalion was relieved by the 4th Berks, and moved to billets at Romarin.

Information received at 10.30 p.m. that the line held by the Brigade had been redistributed, and that the Battalion would take over the portion of line held by the 8th Worcesters from the right of the Bucks Battalion to German House, with two companies holding this line, one at Hunterston South, and one at Ploegsteert.

**RECORD OF THE 4TH (T.F.) BATTALION
FOR 1914-1915.**

April 28th.—At 1 p.m. the Battalion took over the above trenches in Ploegsteert Wood. The Brigade area is now divided into three sections, viz.,
Right Section, Birdcage;
Centre Section, St. Ives;
Left Section, Prowse Point.

April 29th.—Our present line forms a sort of horse-shoe. Two men were wounded today.

April 30th.—About 30 shells fell near Battalion H.Q., but did no damage.

May 1st.—In the afternoon Essex Farm was set on fire, and it proved impossible to put the fire out. The enemy shelled the wood heavily; 2 men wounded.
Information received that Captain Dugmore has been appointed to command the Battalion

May 2nd.—A quiet day in the trenches, but a good deal of firing at night.

May 3rd.—Very little shelling today, and a quieter night.

May 4th.—A certain amount of shelling.

Orders received that all ranks are to wear a respirator on the forehead when sleeping in the front line trenches.
Lieut. G. K. Rose wounded.

May 5th.—Wet and hot. Fired trench-mortars and rifle-grenades ; enemy replied with the same and some heavy shells; 1 man wounded.

May 6th.—A few shells round Rifle House; 1 man wounded.

May 9th - Our machine-guns were laid to bear on the roads in squares U. 22. a. b., U. 23. a. b., U. 16, U. 17.; also bursts of rifle fire were brought to bear on the same squares.

8 a.m.—Infantry rifle-grenade and mortar fire, accompanied by bursts of rifle and machine-gun fire opened.

8.15 a.m.—Orders received that in addition to the above squares, burst of rifle and machine-gun fire were to be brought to bear on the La Basseville-Pont Rouge Road, and bridges over the River Lys.

10.30 a.m.—Three minutes' burst of rapid infantry fire. Enemy replied with rifle-grenades; 2 men in A Company wounded, one of whom died shortly afterwards.

11.30 a.m.—Artillery opened slow fire all along the Divisional line.

1 p.m.—Machine-gun fire on enemy's support and communication trenches.

3.30p.m.—Trench-mortar and rifle-grenade fire. Enemy replied with rifle-grenades.

4.30p.m.—Telephone wire cut in C Company's communication trench.

5p.m.—Lance-Corporal Liebermann and Private Senior went up to examine the telephone wires, found them cut in three places, and mended them under rather hot rifle-grenade fire.

6p.m.—Slow fire and artillery fire all long the line. Very noisy.

7.30p.m.—Onward through the night bursts of machine-gun fire and rifle fire on communication trenches and roads behind enemy's position. Battalion H.Q. had a very quiet time. No shells came anywhere near.

The casualties in the Battalion during the day were 1 killed and 3 wounded.

May 10th.—Weather very hot. Quiet day. A few shells in Ploegsteert. Nothing happened in the line. Reliefs carried out, one platoon of A Company going into tents at Hunterston South.

**RECORD OF THE 4TH (T.F.) BATTALION
FOR 1914-1915.**

May 11th.—Lieut.-Colonel Dugmore joined and took over command of the Battalion. A quiet day. The mountain battery mounted a gun in No. 31 Trench, to knock down a tower in the German trenches. Captain D. M. Rose wounded. Captain Dashwood took over command of his Company (B).

May 12th.—At 3.30 a.m. the mountain gun opened and knocked down the tower. Machine-guns and Trench No. 32 also kept up rapid fire on the same point. Enemy replied with rifle-grenades, one landing in No. 31 Trench.

Casualties.—Captain E. G. Dashwood killed; 2nd Lieut. Cranmer and 3 men wounded. Captain Conybeare transferred to the command of B Company.

May 13th.—The Germans started at 4.20 a.m. on a rather severe "morning hate," with mortars, rifle-grenades, and shrapnel, chiefly on the 6th Glosters on our right, accompanied by machine-gun and rifle fire. It lasted about 20 minutes but did no harm. The day passed quietly. At about 4.30 p.m. four shrapnel came over our support trenches and wounded 2 men filling sandbags.

The following telegram was received from the Brigade :—

"The Corps Commander has directed that his appreciation of the work carried out yesterday morning be conveyed to your unit. He considers that work of this character goes far to enable us to obtain that moral superiority over the enemy which alone will enable us to bring the war to a successful conclusion."

May 14th.—A quiet night, but very wet. Ploegsteert Wood in a dreadfully messy condition. Reliefs carried out. B Company to camp and D to huts.

May 15th.—Quiet day in trenches; 1 man wounded (slightly).

May 16th.—Owing to the success of the 1st Army, orders were issued that sniping was to be particularly active today. The enemy made very little reply. A few rifle-grenades were fired, but no damage done. No. 31 Trench replied with rifle-grenades, several of which fell in the enemy's trench.

May 23rd.—At 3.30 a.m. our Field Artillery shelled Birdcage with 150 shells, preceded by 5 minutes' rapid fire and machine-gun fire from our trenches. The enemy replied with shrapnel and H.E. Four large shells came over Battalion H.Q., at least "Black Marias," and possibly bigger.

One man killed and 1 wounded.

At 11.15 p.m. the Germans started cheering, and stood on their parapet opposite the Bucks Battalion (St. Ives Section), who opened rapid. No. 32 Trench (C Company) took it up. and fired a lot of ammunition.

May 25th-26th.—Usual trench routine. Companies relieved.

May 27th.—Very hot. Although a quiet day, we had 1 man killed and 3 men wounded.

May 28th.—Hot, and comparatively quiet, except for sniping. 2nd Lieut. J. P. Hermon-Hodge killed, and 2 men wounded.

May 30th.—Very hot, but a quiet day.

C and A Companies relieved by D and B.

H.Q. moved back yesterday to west of Hunterston.

The sentry on the water-tank in Hunter's Avenue was wounded today.

May 31st.—Two platoons of a Battalion of the Cameronians (9th Division) were attached to us for trench instruction.

**RECORD OF THE 4TH (T.F.) BATTALION
FOR 1914-1915.**

June 1st.—(Ploegsteert.) Three men in C Company wounded.

June 2nd.—Orders received that only 2 platoons need occupy the Subsidiary Line at night.

June 3rd.—B and D Companies relieved A and C. One man of B Company was slightly wounded by a premature.

June 4th.—Still in Ploegsteert Wood. Very hot.

June 5th.—The R.E. Mining Officer reported Germans to be mining very close indeed to our mine under Birdcage, and that it might be necessary to fire our mine at any moment. We found a fatigue party to carry five tons of gunpowder from Essex Farm to the minehead. Several orders received during the night as to the procedure when the mine was fired. All men in the Subsidiary Line had to sleep in their boots, and as much noise as possible was to be made on the corduroy in rear of the fire trenches, to endeavour to persuade the enemy that reinforcements had come up to make an attack.

June 7th.—Orders received for the Battalion to move to billets in Pont de Nieppe; No. 32 Trench to be handed over to the Bucks Battalion, and No. 31 and huts to the 4th Glosters. The relief commenced at 3.30 p.m., and the last company reached billets by 9 p.m.

June 10th.—(Pont de Nieppe.) Very hot weather. Inspection by Major-General R. Fanshawe, C.B., D.S.O., now in command of the Division.

June 11th.—The Battalion took over trenches from the 5th R. Warwicks—trenches 36 to 40 and 61 to 63, including old Prowse Point section. A Company on the right; D on the left; H.Q. at Ash House.

June 12th.—Enemy very active sniping in the early morning, and he opened rapid fire for about 10 minutes. C and D Companies were shelled in the afternoon, and about a dozen "Willies" fell near H.Q.

June 13th.—Continuous shelling most of the day. D Company had two "White Hopes" in their trench, and one shrapnel wounded 6 men.

June 14th.—The enemy, at about 2.10 a.m., blew up a mine on our left—about Trench 24. D Company was shelled again this morning. One company of the 5th R. Berks (New Army) was attached to us for instruction.

June 15th.—The Battalion was relieved by the 4th R. Berks. D Company's relief was not completed until 11.15 p.m. A and B Companies moved, after dark, to relieve the two companies of the 4th Berks in the Subsidiary Line. One company is near La Plus Douce Farm, the other near Ash House, with a platoon at Hyde Park Corner in the daytime, as well as a section at Chateau La Hutte; the whole platoon moving up at night.

June 17th.—1 man was killed by a stray shot in the Subsidiary Line.

June 18th.—Very hot. A good deal of shelling on the trench line. A man in B Company was killed.

June 19th.—At Stand-to there was heavy shelling and rifle fire on Ploegsteert Wood. One man in D Company wounded. The Battalion was relieved by the 8th Worcesters, and went into huts between Romarin and Neuve Eglise, the Brigade going into Divisional Reserve.

**RECORD OF THE 4TH (T.F.) BATTALION
FOR 1914-1915.**

June 20th.—Very hot and fine. In the afternoon the Battalion practised the attack from trench to trench.

June 22nd.—Still in hutments in Divisional Reserve. Weather very hot. Company drill in the morning. In the afternoon the Battalion played the R.A.M.C. at cricket at Romarin. Score: 1/4th Oxfordshire, 94; R.A.M.C., 47.

June 23rd.—The Battalion ordered to be ready to turn out at half an hour's notice without transport.

June 24th.—Ordered to march in Brigade to Bailleul. Reached the starting point, where the Brigade concentrated, at 9.30 p.m.

June 25th.—Marched in Brigade from Bailleul to Vieux Berquin, arriving at about midnight.

June 26th.—Marched at 8.30 p.m. for billets in the vicinity of Gonnehem.

June 27th.—Reached Gonnehem, via Merville and Robecq, at 3.30 a.m. Distance about 15 miles. 7 men fell out. At 6.30 p.m. marched again, about 4 miles, to Allouagne. The Division now forms part of the IVth Corps, 1st Army.

June 28th-July 11th.—Remained at Allouagne training and resting, the Division being in Corps Reserve.

July 12th.—The Battalion moved to Noeux-les-Mines. Lieut. Vyner and 9 men were injured by an explosion during practice, and 1 man was killed.

July 13th-15th. -At Noeux-les-Mines furnishing digging parties in the second line. Bivouacked. Weather wet.

July 16th.—Marched in Brigade at 9 p.m. for Ames.

July 17th.—Arrived at Ames at 3.30 a.m. after a very wet march of 15 miles, particularly trying for the men who had formed the working parties during the previous day and the night before; 8 men fell out. The Brigade is to entrain tomorrow.

July 18th.—The Battalion marched from Ames to Berguette Station, 7 ½ miles. Very hot. Entrained and left Berguette at 4.11 p.m., arriving at Doullens at 9 p.m. Detrained and marched to billets at Terramesnil, 6 miles. Information received that the Division now forms part of the VIIth Corps, 3rd Army, the Corps consisting of the 4th, 48th, and a New Division, and that it would take over trenches from the French.

July 19th.—Marched at 4 p.m. to bivouac at Coigneux, 8 miles. Very hot.

July 20th.—Officers reconnoitred trenches near Hebuterne. At 7.30 p.m. the Battalion marched to take over trenches from the 21st French Territorial Infantry at Hebuterne. All four companies (finding their own supports) in the trenches, which are quite different from those which we have hitherto occupied, being trenches only and no breastworks. A maze of deep communication trenches. The relief was completed by 11 p.m.

July 21st.—Quiet day. Very hot. The Regimental Transport moved to Thievres. The 143rd Brigade relieved the French on our right.

**RECORD OF THE 4TH (T.F.) BATTALION
FOR 1914-1915.**

July 22nd.—A few shells fell on the village and behind company trenches; 1 man killed, and 1 wounded.

July 23rd.—A good deal of rain; trenches very wet and greasy.
Enemy shelled communication trench behind C Company at 9 a.m. otherwise a quiet day.

July 24th.—At about 4 p.m. there was intermittent shelling along the line and near communication trenches. In the evening the Battalion was relieved by the 4th R. Berks, and moved to billets in Hebuterne; 1 man wounded.

July 25th-27th.—The Battalion provided working parties in Hebuterne. In the event of attack two companies, under Major Ovey, are to hold the Redoubt.

July 28th.—The Battalion returned to the trenches, relieving the 4th R. Berks. Dispositions altered: 3 companies in front line, and 1 company in local reserve round Battalion-H.Q. Weather fine again.

July 29th.—Occasional shelling but no casualties.

July 30th.—Dispositions altered. The Brigade to form the garrison of Hebuterne, with 2 Battalions in trenches, 1 Battalion in Hebuterne, and 1 in Sailly.

We handed over trenches from Prat to the right of our line to the 144th Brigade, and took over the remainder of Trench Bataille, also Jena and Gudin from the 5th Glosters, having only 2 companies in the trenches, with 2 in local reserve (A in the village; B in dug-out near H.Q.).

One man killed.

July 31st.—(Hebuterne.) A good deal of shelling. The French Artillery moved away.

1/4TH BATTALION. CASUALTIES UP TO 31ST JULY 1915

Killed.

Captain E. G. Dashwood. 2nd Lieut. J. P. Hermon-Hodge. Lieut. C. J. S. Vyner.
And 11 N.C.O.'s and men.

Wounded.

2nd Lieut. J. E. A. Cranmer. Captain D. M. Rose. Lieut. G. K. Rose.
And 48 N.C.O.'s and men.