

**RECORD OF THE 1/4TH BATTALION.**  
**1st JULY 1916 to 30th JUNE 1917.**  
**EXTRACTED FROM THE REGIMENTAL CHRONICLES OF**  
**THE OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY**

**Summary of Battalion Diary.**

**July 1st.**—Marched in Brigade to Mailly-Maillet, starting at 10 a.m. Men in marching order, and all carrying two grenades and two sandbags apiece, while one platoon per company carried picks and shovel up to 50 p.c., and N.C.O.'s aeroplane flares, Very lights, etc.

Many checks and delays on the march, owing to convoys of ammunition cutting through the column.

The Brigade bivouacked at about 1 p.m. in a field behind a wood outside the village. Heavy shelling audible all day and into the night.

Many contradictory rumours circulated as to the progress of the fighting, but no official news.

Sleep rather disturbed by a 15-inch howitzer (about 400 yards away), which fired every half-hour throughout, the night.

The Brigade and the 144th Brigade were placed in Corps Reserve for the attack.

**July 2nd.**—At 7 a.m. a bulletin was received, from which it appears that while the French on the Somme and the southern corps of the 4th Army have made good progress, the northern corps of the 4th Army, including the VIIIth Corps, have made no progress.

At 9.30 a.m. the C.O. and Adjutant attended at Brigade H.Q., and were informed that the Brigade will attack tomorrow and capture the first three lines of German trenches north of the Ancre at dawn.

The C.O. and the Intelligence Officer (2nd Lieut. E. E. Smith) went off to Mesnil to reconnoitre the trenches from which the Brigade will attack.

At 5.30 p.m. orders for the attack were issued, and at 7 p.m. the Battalion moved off, followed by the Berks and Glosters.

Five per cent, of the men and all surplus officers (over 22 in number) were left behind in Mailly, where packs were also stacked.

The Battalion marched via Englebelmer and Martinsaart to Mesnil, which was reached at dusk.

A bombing party, under 2nd Lieut. Wrong, went with the R. Berks up to Hamel.

Heavy shrapnel burst over Mesnil, Mesnil lies opposite Thiepval, the attack on which on the 1st July failed. It was decided not to repeat the attack here for the present, but to gradually work round to the east of Thiepval, with the object of cutting it off.

one man wounded.

At 11.30p.m. Operation Orders were cancelled, and the Battalion moved back to bivouacs, arriving at about dawn (3rd).

**July 3rd.**—Resting at Mailly in morning. At 6 p.m. the Battalion marched with the two Brigades back to bivouacs at Couin, arriving at about 9 p.m.

**July 4th.**—The Battalion relieved the 1/7th Warwicks in G Sector of the Hebuterne trenches.

Relief complete by midnight. 1/5th Glosters on our left, 1/6th Glosters (144th Brigade, who relieved the 31st Division) on our right.

1 man wounded.

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**July 5th.**—There was a good deal of shelling and machine-gun fire on our part during the night, with the object of keeping open the gaps cut in the enemy's wire.

The state of the trenches is incredibly bad, especially on the right; they are quite as bad as in the depth of winter, except that they are now full of mud instead of water.

Orders received that the two companies in the front line are to be relieved daily by the two companies in Battalion Reserve, and that they are to take up all their rations overnight and act as if on outpost duty.

Casualties.—5 men wounded in the trenches, and 1 man killed and 2 men wounded while bringing up rations.

The whole Battalion hard at work pumping and cleaning up.

**July 6th.**—The 144th Brigade took over Trossachs Trench, so A Company was withdrawn to bivouacs south-west of Sailly.

Weather bad, and trenches filling up with water.

**July 7th.**—At 7.30 a.m. a smoke-cloud was discharged from the line of the battalions on our flanks with the object of drawing the enemy.

Unfortunately the wind changed and the cloud blew back over our own lines.

The enemy, however, started shelling vigorously, especially on the battalion on our right and on our right company.

Two of our men (Lewis-gunners) were wounded in Oxford Street.

**July 8th.**—The Battalion was relieved by the 1st Bucks Battalion of the Regiment.

During the relief the 56th Division, on our left, carried out a smoke demonstration.

Moved by Jena Track and Valley Road to bivouac between the Dell and Coigneur.

During the night (8th/9th) we supplied 430 men for carrying back gas cylinders from G Sector to Hebuterne.

**July 9th.**—Voluntary Church Service.

At night working parties for repair of trench bridges on the Plain.

**July 10-11th.**—On this night the Brigade dug a new trench in advance of H Sector, just north of G Sector. The Battalion dug the southern half of the fire-trench and the southern two communicators (Begeaud and Roualt). The working party consisted of 12 officers and 549 men, under Captain Pickford, and carried out the work successfully in a little under two hours, despite a good deal of enemy fire.

Casualties.—2 men killed and 7 wounded.

**July 11th-12th.**—C and D Companies employed at night in carrying up wire and pickets for the new trench and "dog-legging" in Vergingetorix.

Casualties.—1 man wounded.

**July 12th.**—At 4 a.m. the Battalion started for the trenches (G Sector, Hebuterne) to relieve the Bucks Battalion.

Relief complete by 7.30 a.m. Our artillery still fairly active, but enemy reply on the whole feeble.

The state of the trenches much improved since we were last in.

A and B Companies in fire-trench,

D in reserve,

C in the Dell. At night C Company employed in carrying up smoke-candles and bombs to front trenches, preparatory to our making a smoke demonstration.

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**July 13th.**—Not much enemy shelling. A programme of "considerable activity" was arranged for the night of 13th-14th.

About 10 p.m. the 4th Divisional Artillery on our right was active.

The 1/5th Glosters (on our right) attempted a raid.

**July 14th.**—At 3.10 a.m. smoke was discharged for half an hour all along the Divisional front.

At 3.15 a.m. our artillery opened on the front-line trenches, which provoked a very severe reply from the enemy, who opened with intense M.G. fire, and put up a terrific barrage with 15-cm. shells and trench-mortars along Jones and Caber trenches.

The derelict front line in front of Jones trench was also shelled with shrapnel, and there was some shelling on our left.

Our Lewis and machine guns were active throughout the day, and the men were ordered to show fixed bayonets over the top of the parapet.

This demonstration on the left was made in conjunction with the main assault being delivered to the south-east on this clay.

Active patrolling ordered.

We had one man wounded during the day.

**July 15th.**—Just before midnight (14th-15th) 2nd Lieut. Rawlinson took a patrol of 4 men out from Caber. At 12.10 a.m. bombs were heard. Shortly afterwards Captain Edmunds, who was going round his posts, had reported to him that whistling and cries for help had been heard. He immediately returned to Company H.Q. and collected a big party (including 2nd Lieut. Hutchins), which he took out to the spot from which the sounds seemed to come. The party found 2nd Lieut. Rawlinson terribly wounded in the stomach and Private W. A. Cox (dead) practically on the German wire near Hook, and succeeded in bringing them in in spite of enemy lights falling all around and shrapnel being fired on the party as they got back into the old front trench. 2nd Lieut. Rawlinson was able to give the following account:

He noticed a yellow light in the German trench, and lay down to listen (the party was in single file, and he was leading). On getting up again he received a bomb in the middle of the stomach, and was knocked over. Germans seemed to jump up from all around. He believes that two of his men were hustled away, whether wounded or not he could not say. One German cut off Private Cox's shoulder-straps, while another cut off his own revolver and started to search his pockets. The enemy were in a great hurry to get away. During this, 2nd Lieut. Rawlinson pretended to be dead, and when the enemy had gone he blew his whistle.

Though extremely seriously wounded 2nd Lieut. Rawlinson was evacuated to the Field Ambulance successfully.

In the evening the C.O. and Adjutant of the 10th Welsh Regiment visited us, with a view to relieving us tomorrow.

The 144th Brigade which was on our right has already been relieved and gone south together with the 143rd Brigade and the Bucks and Berks.

One of our aeroplanes came down just behind the Papin Ridge and drew a lot of enemy shelling.

**July 16th.**—The Battalion was relieved by the 10th Welsh Regiment, the first company arriving at 4.30 p.m., and the relief (except for Lewis-gunners) being complete by 7 p.m.

The Battalion moved into bivouacs between Couin and St. Leger, every one heartily glad to see the last of G Sector.

A Company had been sent up from Dell, to be attached for the night to the 10th Welsh, one of our sections going to each platoon of the Welsh.

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**July 17th.**—A Company rejoined at 9 a.m.

At 2 p.m. (having sent off the transport independently) the Battalion was conveyed in 36 lorries via Authie, Bus, Bertrancourt, Forceville, and Redauville, to Bouzincourt, which was reached about 4.45 p.m.

Much congestion of traffic on the road.

We occupied huts in orchards on the west side of the village, with the transport at Senlis.

Hear that the 143rd and 144th Brigades are holding Ovillers and the line in front of Pozieres.

**July 18th.**—At 7.10p.m. received orders to attack between Ovillers and Pozieres at 1.30 a.m. tomorrow.

At 8.15p.m. the first company moved off through Albert to the dump on the Albert-Bapaume Road (Usna Hill), where R.E. stores, extra ammunition, etc., were issued.

Companies then moved off up the Albert-Bapaume Road to get into position.

B Company on the left, C on the right in the front line, A in support, D in reserve.

**July 19th.**—At 1.30a.m. the attack was launched, but was held up.

At 3 a.m. a second attack was ordered, but was not practicable owing to the congestion in the trench rendering reorganization impossible.

At about 4.15 a.m. the Battalion was ordered to withdraw, which the state of the trench made a difficult operation.

By 8 a.m. the Battalion was clear of the trenches, reformed at the dump outside Albert, and moved to huts at Bouzincourt, where the surplus officers and 5 p.c. of the men had remained.

Casualties in the Battalion,—2nd Lieuts. Jefferson and Fenwick (attached from 5th Middlesex) wounded; other ranks, 99.

**July 20th.**—Resting.

Received orders that the attack would be resumed tonight, the Battalion in reserve.

At 11.45 p.m. the Battalion moved off, companies at 5 minutes interval, through Albert.

**July 21st.**—At 1.10 a.m. bivouacked in a field and in old gun-emplacements about a quarter of a mile outside Albert, just on the south-east side of the Albert-Bapaume Road:

At 6.30 a.m. received information that the attack had been unsuccessful.

The Bucks Battalion withdrew to bivouacs adjoining those occupied by us.

At night we furnished working parties.

**July 22nd.**—Informed that the attack would be resumed, and ordered to send an officer to reconnoitre the new trenches being dug by the Sussex.

At 2.30 p.m. orders for attack were issued to C.O.'s at a conference at Brigade H.Q. (Usna Redoubt).

At 9 p.m. the Battalion moved up to get into position.

The Australian Division, on our right, were attacking at about 10 p.m., and very heavy fighting appeared to be in progress.

**July 23rd.**—At 12.30 a.m. the Battalion attacked just east of Pozieres.

A Company on the left,

D on the right,

B in support,

C in reserve.

The objective on the left was reached almost at once; that on the right after a hard struggle.

At least two counter-attacks had to be repulsed.

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At 4 a.m. we were reinforced by two companies of the 4th Berks.

Heavy shelling all day, but no further attacks were delivered.

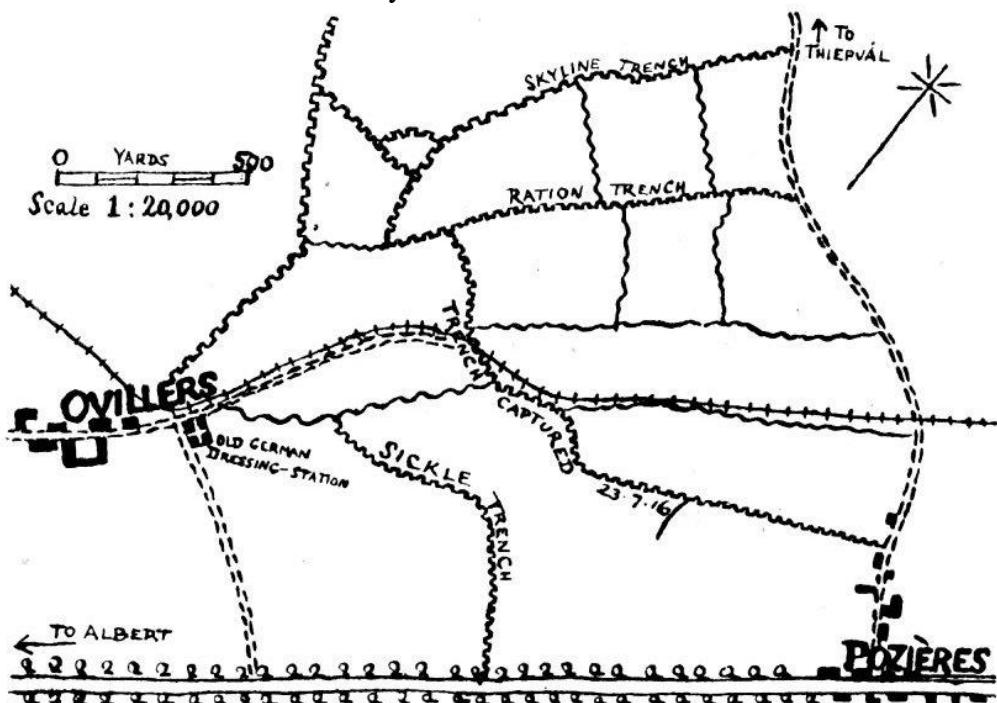
In the afternoon it became evident that the Battalion had suffered heavily, and at night we were relieved by the 1/5th Warwicks.

Relief complete by half an hour after midnight (23rd-24th).

**July, 24th.**—On relief, the Battalion moved to bivouacs in a field outside Albert.

Casualties.—Captain B. B. B. Brooks, missing, believed killed; Captain J. E. Blake, killed; Captain Edmunds, 2nd Lieuts. T. N. Hall, G. M. Frieake, E. E. Smith, F. E. Jones, F. C. Lay, S. Smith, M. Hutchins (5th Middlesex), wounded. Other ranks : 73 killed, many wounded.

The Battalion remained in bivouacs until after dinners, and then returned to huts at Bouzincourt via the track crossing the Ancre between Albert and Aveluy.



**July 25th-August 11th.**—This period was spent by the Battalion in rest and in moving about from place to place in rear of the fighting area, and on the 12th orders were received at Bouzincourt to go into the line to the east of Ovillers,

The following drafts joined: 15 men on the 27th July, 10 on the 29th, 160 on the 1st August, 5 on the 7th, and 58 on the 10th.

**August 12th.**—The Battalion received orders to move into the line to the east of Ovillers, in relief of two battalions of the 12th Division, tomorrow.

The C.O. and Adjutant made a reconnaissance of the line.

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**August 13th.**—At 3 a.m. the Battalion moved off from bivouacs by companies, and marched to the neighbourhood of Usna Redoubt, where it breakfasted.

At 7 a.m. moved on, and took over trenches from the 7th Norfolks on the right and 7th Essex on the left. The front line (Skyline Trench) had been taken over by these two battalions last night (13th-14th) with very little opposition.

Dispositions :

C Company, right front;

D, left front;

B, support;

A, reserve (with 2 platoons in Ovillers).

Very heavy shelling over the whole area all day, more especially on Skyline and Ration Trenches.

By the evening Skyline Trench had been obliterated, and C and D Companies had suffered heavy casualties, some, no doubt, caused by our own Heavies firing short.

Lieut. Wayman was reported missing, having been last seen going to the left of the line, presumably to make a reconnaissance.

About 9 p.m. enemy shelling became intense around Battalion H.Q., and all the telephone lines were cut. 2nd Lieut. Sherrington (in charge of D Company fire-trench) at this time detected signs of enemy movement, and sent back five messages, none of which, however, got through.

Shortly before 10 p.m. the enemy attacked our front and left flank with apparently two battalions.

Our centre, which was weakly held, was pierced.

On the left 2nd Lieut. Sherrington was in imminent danger of being cut off and captured, but he succeeded in extricating himself by good use of his Lewis-gun, when he took up a position in Ration Trench, and thereby secured our left flank.

On the right survivors of two platoons of C Company (under Sergeant Crowe) were cut off from all communication with the rest of the Battalion, but succeeded in holding out in Skyline Trench near Point 81. From this point bombing attacks were organized down the trench, with the assistance of the Anzacs, and this portion of the trench was held until two platoons of the 1/5th Glosters relieved the party next evening (14th).

A bombing attack was also organized from Ration Trench up the communication trench, and was led by 2nd Lieut. L. W. Hunter, who was unfortunately killed when close to Skyline Trench, where the attack was beaten back.

**August 14th.**—Owing to the length of line occupied and the casualties already sustained, no further counter-attack by the Battalion was practicable.

Three companies of the 4th Berks were sent up and counter-attacked without success about 5 a.m.

The line of Ration Trench was then held as the front line.

At 2 p.m. the Battalion was relieved by the 1/1st Bucks Battalion.

The companies had tea near Usna Redoubt, and then moved to trenches in the Albert-Bouzincourt line, where the Battalion bivouacked.

The Casualties in the Battalion during the 13th and 14th August were : Lieut. W. A. Wayman, missing; 2nd Lieut. L. W. Hunter, killed; Lieut. C. Lakin, 2nd Lieut., G. Pearson, 2nd Lieut. A. W. Carter (5th Middlesex), 2nd Lieut. J. King (6th Middlesex), wounded; and 147 N.C.O.'s and men killed, wounded, and missing.

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**August 15th** - Bad weather, and very little shelter for the men.

**August 16th**.—The Battalion relieved the 1/1st Bucks Battalion in the same sector of the line.  
Relief completed by 1 p.m.

Shelling not as severe as last time the Battalion was in, but fairly heavy all day.  
During the night we sent out several patrols to discover which trenches were being held by the enemy, and also to gain touch with the Anzacs, on our right.

**August 17th**.—The enemy's shelling moderated considerably early this morning, but at 9 p.m. it increased in intensity on Skyline and Ration Trenches, as well as on Third Avenue.

Between 9.45 p.m. and 10 p.m. enemy movement on our left front was suspected, and at 10.15 p.m. suspicion of an actual attack increased.

A barrage was asked for and immediately given.

A patrol (under 2nd Lieut. Thompson) sent out subsequently found that the suspicious trench had been badly knocked about by the barrage, and had been abandoned by the enemy.

Prisoners also stated that the enemy had intended to attack, but that our barrage had broken them up.

**August 18th**.—The Battalion was relieved by the 1/4th Berks at 7 a.m., and moved to Usna Redoubt and gun-pits in rear and beside the River Ancre.

Relief completed by 12 noon.

Casualties during the period 16th-18th August.—Captain H. H. Greenwell wounded (remained at duty); other ranks, 45 killed and wounded.

**August 19th**.—At 6.30 p.m. the Battalion moved to Bouzincourt, and got into billets by 9 p.m., two companies in huts on the Martinsart Road, the remainder in the village.

**August 21st**.—Company training in the morning.

At 3.30 p.m. ordered to be ready to move, in event of being required to support an attack by the 144th Brigade.

At 7.15 p.m. the Battalion moved to Ovillers Post, and reported to H.Q. 144th Brigade.

But the Battalion was not required, and so spent the night, two companies in Usna Redoubt, and the remainder in gun-pits in rear.

**August 22nd**.—In the morning the two companies in Usna Redoubt moved into gun-pits nearer the Ancre River.

**August 23rd**.—At 9 a.m. the Battalion moved up to the trenches north of Ovillers, and relieved the 1/7th Worcesters.

Relief completed by 12 noon, 143rd Brigade on our right, the Bucks Battalion on our left.

In front line A Company on the left; B on the right; C in support; D in reserve.

We had a bombing stop between 76 and 79.

At this point bombing was almost continuous, except when we were ordered to withdraw to enable our heavy artillery to bombard point 79.

About 30 yards of ground was gained, and our bomb-stop was pushed up to within 20 yards of point 79, but the actual trench junction could not be forced by direct bombing attack alone.

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At 3 p.m. the Bucks Battalion delivered an attack, while we were responsible for making close communication.

The first objective was trench 33-79; the second, 91. The attack was only partially successful.

From 9p.m. to 10.30p.m. the enemy's artillery was active, otherwise the shelling during the day was not very accurate.

At night our working parties were busy repairing trenches and digging a new trench from 48 towards 79.

**August 24th.**—We were in constant touch with the enemy near 79, but the general situation remained unaltered. Our companies relieved one another during the morning.

At 4 p.m. our artillery opened a bombardment preparatory to an attack by the 25th Division on Leipzig Salient on our left.

The assault was delivered at 4.1.0 p.m..

Plans had been made to take advantage of this to make an attack on point 79, with the assistance of five Stokes mortars.

This, however, had to be abandoned, as we were ordered by the Corps to withdraw our bombing-post, in order that the heavies might fire on 79.

At 5.10 p.m. there was considerable hostile shelling on our trenches, and during the night a good deal of shrapnel was fired over our front trenches, impeding our work of consolidation.

We arranged with the Bucks for a combined attack on 79 about midnight, but it had to be abandoned owing to enemy activity.

Patrols -reported that the enemy front-line trench is held in great strength.

**August 25th.**—At 5 a.m. a German prisoner (5th Grenadier Guards) was taken opposite our right company. His battalion had relieved during the night.

Some shelling, but otherwise a quiet day.

Company reliefs carried out.

The 1/5th Glosters relieved the 1/1st Bucks on our left.

Orders received that consolidation only was required, so no further attack was made on point 79.

From 10 to 11 p.m. hostile artillery was very active on our right front company, doing much damage to trenches round 48.

During the night our patrols got well up to trench 79-91, and reported enemy digging energetically, and the enemy apparently more in shell-holes in rear than in the actual trench.

**August 26th.**—The 1/4th Berks relieved the Battalion in the morning, and we moved into dug-outs in Ribble Street, near Ovillers Post.

Casualties during the period 23rd-26th August.—2nd Lieut. A. C. Thompson wounded; other ranks killed or wounded, 57.

**August 27th-September 30th.**—Out of the line until the 5th September, when the Battalion took over trenches east of Auchonvillers, and remained there until the 8th.

The remainder of the month was spent at various places, all spare time being devoted to training.

Drafts received in September amounted to 174 men.

**October.**—Throughout this month the Battalion was training and constantly moving quarters. Drafts to the number of 7 Officers and 100 men joined.

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**November 1st.**—C.O. and other officers reconnoitred support trenches between Martinpuich and Le Sars, preparatory to the Battalion moving in.

The Battalion marched at 12.30 p.m. via Albert and Fricourt to bivouacs in X.27.a. (Map 57.c., S.W. 10,000). Arrived at 4.30 p.m. Very wet and muddy.

**November 2nd.**—At 5 p.m. moved off by platoons to relieve the 6/7th R. Scots Fusiliers (45th Brigade, 15th Division) in the-support trenches.

The men carried next day's rations, and moved via Contalmaison (where tools were picked up), thence via tramway and corduroy track.

Relief completed by 10.45p.m.

Fine moonlight night.

1/5th Glosters in front line; ourselves in support; 1/4th Berks in reserve, round Martinpuich.

**November 3rd.**—Fine day.

Comparatively little shelling of Battalion area (support trenches between Le Sars and Martinpuich). Considerable work to be done in clearing up trenches, which are mostly quite impassable.

Accommodation also to be improved, as there are no dug-outs, only a few incomplete shafts hollowed out at the bottom.

The whole area is on the forward slope, and, consequently, parties are in full view when walking on the top, which is the only way of getting about.

Fortunately, so far the enemy has taken no advantage of this.

Rations were brought up by pack ponies to the junction of 26th Avenue with Mill Road.

At night we furnished a party to carry up rations to the 5th Glosters.

**November 4th.**—Morning much as yesterday, but Destremont Farm was shelled a good deal.

At 1.15p.m. our artillery put up an intense bombardment on the enemy front on our left for about ten minutes.

During the evening the command of the line was taken over by the 144th Infantry Brigade, to whom the Battalion was attached for all tactical purposes.

Between 9 p.m. 4th and 2 a.m. 5th November the Battalion relieved the 1/5th Gloucesters in the front line. Inexperienced guides made the relief take longer than it should have done.

**November 5th.**—The Battalion in the front line in front of Le Sars, as left front battalion.

The 144th Brigade is on our right, and the 44th Canadians (of the 4th Canadian Division) on our left.

The 50th Division (on the right of the 144th Brigade) attacked Butte de Warlencourt.

The attack appeared to be successful.

The enemy retaliated with 77 mm. and 15 cm. on the front and support lines and on Le Sars.

The Battalion had 6 men killed and 9 wounded.

During the day there was considerable intermittent hostile artillery activity, and enemy snipers were busy, on our left flank, enfilading Aqueduct Road.

This is troublesome, owing to the terrible state of the trenches.

Our support companies relieved the companies in the fire trenches.

Some useful patrol work was carried out at night.

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**November 6th.**—Enemy artillery unusually active.

Le Sars, Destrernont Farm, Aqueduct Road, and intervening ground well searched, especially during the afternoon, Company H.Q. in the front line receiving special attention.

Three German prisoners (64th R.I.R. Guards Division, Guards Reserve Corps) were captured opposite our left company, and sent to Brigade H.Q.

Casualty.—1 man wounded.

At night we were relieved by the 1/1st Bucks Battalion, the relief not being completed until after midnight. Companies moved back into trenches in the support area, previously occupied.

**November 7th.**—Quiet day.

Weather bad.

One platoon of each company engaged in carrying up rations to the Bucks after dark.

Casualties.—1 man killed, 5 men. wounded.

The Battalion was relieved by the 4th Berks by 8 p.m., when it moved into the Reserve Area round Martinpuich, occupying merely a disused water-logged trench.

**November 8th.**—The Battalion found large working parties, as well as ration-carrying and water parties.

**November 9th.**—As yesterday. Casualties.—6 men wounded.

**November 10th.**—Working party of 50 men by day.

All available details and 5 p.c. were brought up to Bazentin-le-Petit Wood, and a detachment (under an officer) from each company at Martinpuich was sent up.

This party worked hard all day, with the result that bivouacs for three companies were put up in the Wood (S.7.b. and d.), and small shelters for the fourth company (A) were erected in the trench running north-west from the north-west corner of the Wood.

This company (the Battalion Outpost Company) had a post on the ridge to watch the Divisional front. Casualty.—1 man wounded.

The Battalion was relieved by the 1/8th R. Warwicks, and on completion of the relief (7.45 p.m.) moved to the bivouacs and shelters mentioned above, Battalion H.Q. being at S.8.a.76, taken over from the 1/8th Worcesters.

**November 11th-30th.**—Behind the line furnishing working and carrying parties until the 15th, on which day became support battalion, and on the 17th took over front-line trenches in front of Le Sars, holding them for three days. Lieut R. St. G. Lake was killed on the 17th by a shell; Lieut. W. D. Scott was wounded on the 20th; and "during these days 9 men were killed and some 25 wounded.

The Battalion was out of the line until the 25th, and then returned to the trenches until the 29th, losing 1 man killed and 7 men wounded.

**December 1st-10th.**—In camps, furnishing working parties, etc.

**December 11th.**—The Battalion relieved the 1/4th R. Berks in the front line in front of Le Sars (left sector). The first company moved off at 3.45 p.m. Guides were at the corner of Gilbert Alley and Albert-Bapaume Road.

Rations for 24 hours, as well as gum-boots, were dumped at the same place.

The relief went well, and all companies were in position by 9.30 p.m.

The Bapaume Road was shelled during the relief and 2nd Lieut. Kirkwood and his servant were badly wounded.

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At 8.40p.m. an enemy patrol of 6 or 8 men approached the Chalk Pit from the N.N.W., and crawled to within 10 yards of our post before being seen.

They were driven off with bombs and rifles; but, unfortunately, the remainder of the post rushed out of their shelter and received bombs in their midst.

One man was killed. 5 men were wounded, and 2 were missing.

Our patrols were busy at night.

**December 12th.**—The rain of last night turned to snow and sleet and made trenches and tracks in a hopeless condition.

Companies at work all day clearing the trenches and shelters.

Enemy shelling not more active than usual.

2nd Lieut. Paxton spotted an enemy post about 150 yards from Scotland Trench, opposite the junction of that trench and Gilbert Alley.

Unfortunately, while doing so he was sniped, and wounded on the side of the head, but he carried on until the arrival of Major Rowell in the evening.

Patrols active at night; one patrol was fired on by a machine-gun, had two men wounded, and had to withdraw.

**December 13th.**—Rained all day.

Enemy shelling not particularly heavy.

A few gas-shells fell near Destremont Farm during the morning.

The Battalion was relieved by the 1/5th Glosters.

Complete by 9 p.m.

Returned to Scotts Redoubt South.

All in by midnight.

**December 14th.**—The Battalion moved to D Camp at Becourt between 11.15 a.m.. and 12 noon, and took over from the 7/8th K.O.S.B.

Camp consists of Nissen Huts, and is very comfortable, except for the mud.

**December 15th-31st.**—The Battalion remained in camp at Becourt until the 28th, when it moved to camp at Bresle.

The weather was cold, with snow and rain, but a good deal of training was carried out and working-parties kept busy.

During the month 243 men arrived in five drafts, and 2nd Lieuts. Millard and W. P. Powell rejoined the Battalion.

**1917.**

**January.**—From Bresle the Battalion moved by rail, on the 9th, through Amiens to Oisement, thence marching to Cerisy-Buleux, where training was continued until the 29th, when a move was made by rail to Hamel. A draft of 22 men arrived on the 29th.

**February.**—Training continued for the first few days, box respirators were issued, and the new French treatment for preventing trench-feet was carried out.

On the 7th the Battalion went into the trenches near Herbicourt and remained in the front line until the 13th, having 6 men wounded.

From the 13th to 17th in support position furnishing working parties, carrying parties, and patrols; 2nd Lieut. B. Vokes and one man were killed, and 8 men wounded.

**RECORD OF THE 1/4TH BATTALION.**  
**1st JULY 1916 to 30th JUNE 1917.**

From the 18th to 23rd the Battalion was training at Cappy, on the 24th returned to the support area, and next day into the front line opposite La Maisonette, where the Battalion remained three days, losing 2nd Lieut. W. H. Fleeming and 5 men wounded

**March.**—The Battalion went into the front line again on the 1st, and continued in and out of the trenches until the 20th.

During this period B and C Companies rehearsed a raid on dummy trenches, and carried it out successfully at La Maisonette on the 17th.

On the 20th the Battalion marched from Cappy to Peronne, and thence moved gradually forward in pursuit of the Germans to Tincourt and Marquaix.

During this month 3 men were killed, and Captain and Adjutant E. E. Bridges, 2nd Lieut. H. F. Pearson, and 13 other ranks wounded.

**April 3rd.**—The Battalion moved to Villers Faucon in relief of the 1/8th Worcesters, leaving Marquaix at 8.15 p.m.

C and D Companies took over positions in outpost line in front of Ronssoy. H.Q. and 2 platoons of D Company at St. Emilie.

**April 4th.**—A patrol from D Company (outpost on left) went out at 3.30 a.m. and did not return until after midday.

It had been compelled to shelter in a shell-hole owing to the light becoming too strong, and on making a dash for the outpost line one man was killed and another mortally wounded.

Other patrols from the outpost companies were fired on, and the outpost positions were shelled. B Company suffered casualties.

At 7 p.m. our artillery put a barrage on the enemy positions.

Patrols went out to ascertain whereabouts of enemy, but were very soon fired on.

C Company had 5 men hit and 1 man accidentally killed.

**April 5th.**—A and B Companies moved from Villers Faucon at 2.30 a.m. to take up a position for an attack on Ronssoy, in conjunction with the 1/4th Berks on our right and the 1/5th Glosters on our left.

At 4.45 the attack was launched and proved successful, with comparatively slight casualties.

We took a number of prisoners and two machine-guns.

At 7 a.m. Ronssoy was in our hands, and a position was taken up to the east of the village.

The enemy then shelled the place very heavily, but without causing casualties to the Battalion, as the men were clear of all buildings.

The work of consolidation of positions continued all day, and at night the Battalion was relieved, but not without mishap, for the enemy shelled with 5.9's, which caused some casualties, including 2nd Lieut. F. C. Lay and C.-S.-M. F. C. Wicks wounded.

Relief complete about midnight.

The Battalion at Villers Faucon.

Total casualties during the day.—9 other ranks killed; one officer and 23 other ranks wounded.

2nd Lieut. R. H. White awarded the Military Cross.

**April 7th-17th.**—Still moving forward after the Germans, the Battalion went into the outpost line in front of Ronssoy on the 15th.

Captain P. Pickford rejoined on the 7th, and on the 8th intimation was received that Captain G. H. Greenwell had been awarded the Military Cross.

**RECORD OF THE 1/4TH BATTALION.**  
**1st JULY 1916 to 30th JUNE 1917.**

**April 18th.**—A patrol of A Company worked towards Guillemont Farm and found it to be strongly held. D Company was ordered to attack the farm this night, but the order was afterwards cancelled and the attack postponed.

**April 19th.**—A patrol of A. Company again found Guillemont Farm strongly held, and enemy machine-guns on the ridge in front D Company ordered to make the attack at 7.30 p.m.; C Company in support; detachments of R.E. and 1/5th R. Sussex to assist to consolidate the position when captured.

In the afternoon there was artillery preparation.

At 7.30 p.m. D Company was in position in two lines with 5 paces interval.

When the ridge was reached heavy machine-gun fire was opened.

The lines moved on, the support platoons having reinforced so as to make one line.

The enemy was observed running out of rifle-pits north-west of the farm.

In spite of the enemy's heavy fire the advance continued.

When about 150 yards west of the farm the three left platoons reached slight cover, but the right platoon had lost touch.

It, however, reached a trench where it established itself, and eventually it obtained touch with the rest of the company.

The two centre platoons continued to suffer casualties from rifle and machine-gun fire, and the flank platoons were heavily shelled, so that it became impossible to maintain the advance.

It was now evident that the farm was strongly held, and as orders were received that not more than one company was to be engaged, there was no alternative but to withdraw, and this was ordered at 9.30 p.m.

A Company rendered considerable assistance by sending men to help the stretcher-bearers to bring in the wounded, and all were successfully evacuated.

The total Casualties in D Company were heavy.—2nd Lieut. D. W. Dinwoodie and 9 other ranks were killed; 3 men missing, and 46 wounded.

As soon as the survivors of D Company had withdrawn, the Battalion was relieved by the 1/8th Worcesters, and then proceeded to Hamel, via St. Emilie.

**April 20th.**—The last company reached Hamel at 7.15 a.m.

2nd Lieut. F. O. Townsend rejoined the Battalion; a reinforcement of 17 N.C.O.'s and men also arrived.

2nd Lieut. A. Allan awarded the Military Cross.

**April 21st—30th.**—At Hamel and in the vicinity, doing one tour of outpost duty.

On the 27th Major Schomberg left the Battalion to take up the command of the 1/6th Glosters.

**May 1st-18th.**—The Battalion moved gradually forward until it reached the outpost line at Hermies, whence Cambrai was visible in the distance.

**From Major P. Pickford's Account.**

Our lines here consisted of a series of disconnected fire-trenches, each capable of holding a post of a platoon in the front line, and a half-platoon in the support line.

No Man's Land varied greatly in width, and the enemy's position west of the Hindenburg Line differed from day to day.

The Canal du Nord ran through our lines on the right near Hermies, and at one time we held one end of a demolished bridge, while the enemy held the other some 20 yards away; the main Bapaume-Cambrai road ran through the left of our front north of Demicourt, and here patrols wandered nearly a mile before encountering the enemy.

**RECORD OF THE 1/4TH BATTALION.  
1st JULY 1916 to 30th JUNE 1917.**

Events in the line here were on the whole pleasant, but not very noteworthy.

The visor attachment to the steel helmet for protecting the eyes was issued and withdrawn within a week. Gas projectors were experimented with, and vast quantities of noxious vapours poured over enemy country without doing him much damage, as he nowhere held strongly a line which was so heavily protected by a canal and by three colossal belts of wire.

**Battalion Diary continued.**

**May 19th-24th.**-During this period patrols were active.

On the 21st a righting patrol of 28, under Lieut. Townsend, went out from C Company to establish a post astride the east bridgehead.

They proceeded in two waves, but, owing to the darkness, they experienced great difficulty in keeping touch, and, in addition, the enemy had laid "booby-traps," into which several of our men fell.

They reformed, however, and eventually located an enemy trench, from which they were met by very heavy rifle-fire.

This position they charged and carried with the bayonet, killing many of the enemy.

The retirement of the patrol was then effected under cover of the Lewis-gun Section, and the wounded were brought in.

During this Corporal Bannard distinguished himself in attempting to disperse two enemy patrols seen to be approaching from different directions.

Total Casualties during 20th and 21st.—3 killed, 2 wounded, 1 missing.

**May 25th-31st.**—Moved to Demicourt and Beaumetz, and on the 29th went into the trenches.

Casualties during May.—4 men killed, 6 men wounded, and 1 man missing.

**June.**—Nothing of note occurred in this month. The Battalion had two tours of duty in the left sector of the Hermies section (outpost line E. of Demicourt), but suffered only 3 casualties.

On the 6th Lieut.-Colonel R. Stephens (1st Battalion) arrived and took over the command from Major P. Pickford, who had been in temporary command during the absence, on sick leave, of Lieut.-Colonel A. J. N. Bartlett.

**RECORD OF THE 1/4TH BATTALION.  
1st JULY 1916 to 30th JUNE 1917.**

**CASUALTIES, 1/4TH BATTALION. 1st July 1916 to 30th June 1917.**

**Killed or Died of Wounds..**

2nd Lieut. G. M. Rawlinson.  
Captain J. E. Blake.  
Captain B. B. B. Brooks.  
2nd Lieut. C. M. Frieake.  
2nd Lieut. T. N. Hall.  
2nd Lieut. D. M. Hutchins (5th Middlesex).  
Captain W. A. Wayman.  
Lieut, C. Lakin.  
2nd Lieut. L. W. Hunter.  
Lieut. R. St. G. Lake.  
2nd Lieut. B. Vokes.  
2nd Lieut. D. W. Dinwoodie (8th Scottish Rifles).  
And 255 Other Ranks.

**Wounded.**

Captain E. E. Bridges.  
2nd Lieut. A. W. Carter (5th Middlesex).  
2nd Lieut. C. J. Fenwick (5th Middlesex).  
2nd Lieut. W. H. Fleeming.  
2nd Lieut. H. H. Jefferson.  
Lieut. J. V. King (6th Middlesex). .  
Lieut. A. M. Kirkwood (7th Scottish Rifles).  
2nd Lieut. F. C. Lay.  
2nd Lieut. H. R. Paxton (8th Scottish Rifles).  
2nd Lieut. G. E. Pearson.  
Lieut. H. F. Pearson.  
2nd Lieut. A. C. Thompson (5th Middlesex).

**Missing (Prisoners of War).** 11 Other Ranks, 5 of whom were wounded.

**RECORD OF THE 1/4TH BATTALION.  
1st JULY 1916 to 30th JUNE 1917.**

**HONOURS AND AWARDS.1 1/4TH Battalion, 1st July 1916 to 30th June 1917.**

**Distinguished Service Order.**

Major J. O. Summerhayes (R.A.M.C.).

**Military Cross.**

2nd Lieut. F. E. Jones.

The Rev. K. Jackson (C.F.).

2nd Lieut. C. E. R. Sherrington.

Captain F. B. Jones.

Captain E. E. Bridges.

Captain J. C. Coombes (attd. T.M.B.).

2nd Lieut. R. H. White (25th London Regt.).

Captain G. H. Greenwell.

2nd Lieut. A. Allan.

Lieut. T. R. Fortescue.

Brevet-Major. Captain (acting Lieut.-Colonel) A. J. N. Bartlett

**Mentioned in Dispatches.**

Lieut.-Colonel A. J. N. Bartlett.

Major and Quartermaster A. A. Bridgewater.

Major B. Long, M.C. (attd. M.G.C.).

Lieut. A. K. Gibson.

1744 Sergeant B. W. Fairman.

2488 Sergeant F. Newman.

200069 C.-S.-M. J. L. Garrott.

2000624 Sergeant C. H. Allsworth.

2000728 Lance-Corporal A. C. Caiger.

**Distinguished Conduct Medal.**

1440 Sergeant H. A. Clark.

1362 Sergeant L. Crowe.

2249 Corporal E. A. Mazey.

**Military Medal.**

1752 Sergeant H. Collier (attd. M.G.C.).

1794 Sergeant B. W. Fairman.

2488 Sergeant F. Newman.

2292 Sergeant J. Woolnough.

1671 Sergeant A. H. Wooton.

2346 Corporal G. W. Adkins (attd. T.M.B.).

1579 Lance-Corporal A. Admans.

1938 Lance-Corporal G. Ashplant.

201089 Lance-Corporal A. T. Turner.

1427 Bandsman T. Carter.

2674 Private J. H. Abraham.

1654C.-S.-M. J. T. Peet.

**RECORD OF THE 1/4TH BATTALION.  
1st JULY 1916 to 30th JUNE 1917.**

1776 Sergeant T. P. Barlow.  
201233 Lance-Corporal T. Ward.  
3530 Sergeant A. Enstone.  
1700 Corporal R. W. Stevens.  
1585 Lance-Corporal B. Harbod.  
2315 Lance-Corporal T. W. Hermon.  
3057 Private L. W. Hawkins.  
4262 Private A. Margetts.  
3616 Private F. G. Millin.  
3584 Private E. W. Thomas.  
2000335 Private T. H. Smith.  
203615 Private J. E. Godwin.  
2000735 Sergeant W. H. Mudge.  
201049 Lance-Sergeant A. C. H. Wiggins.  
200793 Lance-Corporal B. Batts.  
201785 Lance-Corporal W. N. Hobbs.  
200899 Lance-Corporal J. Upstone.  
200462 Lance-Corporal F. G. Wilson.  
.200482 Private J. T. White.  
200631 Sergeant H. A. Harris.  
201116 Corporal R. J. Collier.  
200602 Corporal G. Kimberley.  
200774 Lance-Corporal G. J. Leeds.  
201472 Private E. Ayres.  
201129 Private R. G. Chamings  
203383 Private A. W. May