

1926 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE
1st Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY
SUMMARY OF FIRST BATTALION DIARY

January 4.—Regiment less "B" and "C" Companies entrained for Langenschwalbach from Cologne, arrived 3.35 a.m., 5th.

January 8.—Lieut.-General Sir J. P. de Cane, G.O.C.-in-C. Rhine Army, visited the Regiment in its new quarters.

January 13.—" B " and " C " Companies arrived at Petain Barracks, Wiesbaden.

January 21.—Lieut. J. L. Stebbing reposted to the Regiment on vacating Special Appointment at G.H.Q., B.A.O.R. Authority: W.O.L. P/I4743/4 (A.G. 2 (o)) dated January 15, 1926.

January 25.—2nd Lieut, the Hon. C. B. A. Bernard proceeded to the Machine Gun School, Netheravon, to attend the 18th Qualifying Course commencing on February 3, 1927.

February 3.—"B" Company arrived from Wiesbaden, and took over "Craufurd" Barracks.

February 15.—Regiment included in congratulatory order to the Rhine Army by the Secretary of State for War, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the efficient manner in which the Cologne Zone was evacuated.

February 23.—Lieut. C. W. P. Branson and 24 other ranks took over the High Commissioner's Guard, Coblenz.

March 5.—2nd Lieuts. T. G. D. Rowley and G. W. Lathbury joined the Regiment on first appointment, and were posted to "B" and "D" Companies respectively.

March 15.—Lieut. S. C. P. Slattery proceeded to the Small Arms School, Hythe, to attend the L.Q.9 commencing on March 15.

March 16.—Lieut. A. B. Hamilton proceeded to the Small Arms School, Hythe, to attend the L.Q.9 commencing on March 15, 1926.

March 18.—Colonel-Commandant H. K. Bethell, C.B., C.B.E., C.V.O., D.S.O., Commanding 2nd Rhine Brigade, inspected the Regiment in barracks.

March 21.—2nd Lieut. E. G. C. Clarke attached from 4th Battalion (T.A.) whilst undergoing a course of instruction from March 22, 1926, to April 17, 1927.

March 29.—2nd Lieut. J. H. H. Coombes, Royal Guernsey Light Infantry, attached to the battalion whilst undergoing a course of instruction from March 28, 1926, to April 20, 1926.

April 6.—Regimental Drill Memorandum, revised March 1926, issued.

April 10.—"C" Company arrived from detachment at Wiesbaden.

April 12.—Information received that Captain G. F. Plowden, M.C., had qualified at the Senior Officers' Course, Small Arms School.

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April 15.—Regiment placed Third in Rhine Army Cross-Country run. Lieut. J. P. A. G. Graham was first man home.

April 25.—Captain C. J. Eyston appointed Company Commander at the Boys' Technical School, Chepstow.

April 27.—Major J. J. Powell terminated one year's course at the R.A.F. Staff College, and was reposted to the Regiment. Authority: W.O.L, P/1010/6 (A.G.2 (0)) dated March 25, 1926,

May 3.—Information received that 2nd Lieut, the Hon. C. B. A. Bernard had qualified at the Machine Gun School.

May 4.—Colonel H. A. Ferrer, C.B.E., Inspector of Remounts, inspected the Transport. The Headquarter Wing was divided into "X" and "Y" Companies for Sports.

June 4.—The King's Birthday Parade, postponed from the 3rd, owing to rain, was carried out in Wiesbaden. The Regiment was represented by 5 officers and 142 other ranks under the command of Captain E. A. Packe, M.B.E., D.F.C.

June 5.—Lieut, the Hon. H. W. Amherst and 23 other ranks took over the High Commissioner's Guard, Coblenz.

June 7.—Lieut. L. R. Randall proceeded to the Depot for a tour of duty vice Lieut. R. H. Doyne, whose tour of duty expired on May 15, 1926.

June 11.—Lieut. J. L. Stebbing embarked for Iraq on being seconded to the Iraq Levies.

June 24.—Captain C. G. B. Stevens attached to G.H.Q. as A.D.C. (temporary) to the G.O.C-in-C

June 28.—Lieut. R. H. Doyne joined the battalion on completing a tour of duty at the Depot.

July 1.—Captain L. W. Giles, M.C., joined from 2nd Battalion on promotion, and was posted to "A" Company.

July 2.—The Regiment was visited by Lieut.-General Sir David Campbell, K.C.B., Military Secretary.

Information received that Lieuts. S. C. P. Slattery, and Hamilton passed the Small Arms School.

July 22.—Lieut. S. C. P. Slattery promoted Captain Was posted to the 52nd on promotion but exchanged with Captain W. A. R. Ames. Authority: W.O.L, P/12068/2 (A.G. 2 (0)) dated September 7, 1926.

July 26.—2nd Lieut. P. C. Boileau, Oxford University O.T.C., attached to the Battalion whilst attending a course of instruction from July 26, 1926 to September 6, 1926.

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September 1.—2nd Lieut. R. H. Cooke and 20 other ranks took over the Guard of the High Commissioner, Coblenz.

September 4.—The Regiment carried out a Test March of 15 miles, which was won by "A" Company.

September 6.—The Regiment marched to Bermbach (18 1/2 miles) for Brigade Training.

September 11.—Bandmaster E. Smith appointed Quartermaster. Authority: W.O.L. P/35931/1 (A.G.2(0)) dated September 15, 1926.

September 21.—The Brigade Commander inspected the Regiment in Marching Order.

September 22.—The Regiment marched to Gorsroth for Inter-Brigade Training.

September 27.—The Regiment formed part of 1st (Rhine) Division for Army Manoeuvres, which lasted till the 30th.

A march of 17 miles was carried out on the night 27-28. A special congratulatory order was received later from the Brigade Commander on the spirit and behaviour of the troops during manoeuvres.

October 1.—2nd Lieuts. J. S. R. Edmunds and H. J. C. Ducat-Hamersley joined from R.M.C., Sandhurst, and 2nd Lieut. P. C. Boileau from Oxford University O.T.C., were posted to the Regiment on first appointment, and were posted to "A" and "C" Companies respectively.

October 22.—Captain and Brevet-Major R. J. Brett, D.S.O., joined on vacating the appointment of Brigade Major, 10th Infantry Brigade, Shorncliffe.

October 30.—Captain and Brevet-Major R. J. Brett, D.S.O., took over the duties of Adjutant from Captain H. E. F. Smyth, M.C., who had completed his tenure of the appointment.

November 3.—The Annual Inspection of the Regiment was carried out by the Brigade Commander.

November 11.—The Regiment sent a detachment of 4 officers, 179 other ranks, and the band, commanded by Major J. J. Powell, to take part in the Armistice parade at Wiesbaden.

November 22.—The Inspector of Educational Training, Colonel A. C. Johnston, D.S.O., M.C., visited the Regiment.

November 27.—Captain E. L. O. Baddeley joined for duty after a period of attachment to the R.A.F., and was posted to "B" Company.

December 12.—Indian Draft of 131 other ranks, and 13 waiting men proceeded to the Depot for furlough pending embarkation.

Colonel A. G. Bayley, C.B.E., D.S.O., proceeded on leave. Major J. J. Powell assumed temporary command of the Regiment.

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FIRST BATTALION LETTER, 1926

DEAR MR EDITOR,

The beginning of January found us all packing up and getting ready to say good-bye to Cologne. We cannot say that we did so with regret. Split up as we were in Zugweg and Ulrich Gasse barracks combined with long periods in Camp, the conditions were not calculated to facilitate the organisation of the various activities in which the battalion was always anxious to take part.

Moreover, although everything in Cologne was very well organised as regards facilities for sport and games, money being no object when the Army of Occupation first arrived in 1919, yet distances were very great and that combined with our being constantly split up, made us look forward to our move to the Wiesbaden area, where we fondly hoped that all these inconveniences would be things of the past.

As we had been somewhat unfortunate as regards our barracks in Cologne, we had been promised that we should be allotted a good station in the new area. After one or two changes, it was decided that we should go to Langenschwalbach about 10 miles N.W. of Wiesbaden, but in spite of all reconnaissances it was discovered that the place would not take the whole battalion. There was a nice new Sanatorium which had never been occupied which would take headquarters and two companies, but beyond that there was no other suitable accommodation. The buildings which had been occupied by the French were quite impossible, so as a start we were ordered to send Bailie's and Plowden's companies on detachment to Wiesbaden until such time as we could fix up other accommodation in Langenschwalbach.

The great move took place on January 4, Stevens in charge of an advanced party having gone on ahead to get the place ready for us. We arrived at daybreak on the 5th to find everything prepared for us, and a local hotel, the Victoria, requisitioned for use as the Officers' Mess.

It was a change. Instead, of finding ourselves in the middle of a large industrial city, we were now isolated in a small German village miles away from anywhere, situated some thousand feet up in the Taunus Mountains. It was country indeed. But Langenschwalbach is a summer watering resort and in January, when all the hotels are closed, it did not look exactly an exciting neighbourhood. But everyone was full of hope. Surely in this country there would be ample opportunities for sport; also rumours of ski-ing, skating, and tobogganing all helped to make us contented with our lot.

Once settled in, we were of course visited by the powers that be. The Commander-in-Chief came, as did also the Brigade Commander, the Chief Engineer, the Chief Medical Officer, and a host of others, all intent on trying to find out how we could fit the battalion into a building that would only hold Headquarters and two companies. It was no use, it could not be done. There was, however, a partially completed building in the Sanatorium and the problem was: Would the Germans complete the building according to their original design which would enable the whole battalion to be accommodated. It was a question of money, and even now—December—the question is still being discussed and no decision arrived at.

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The trying point, so far as that policy was concerned, was that the authorities were not prepared to spend money on our accommodation, so long as there was a chance of the Germans carrying out their scheme. That has been our great difficulty all along. But we had an excellent Engineer officer in Gates who was not afraid to accept responsibility, and who got busy with the local School House and Rath House, had them "gassed" repainted and made habitable for Bailie's Company who joined us on February 3.

Authority then came for money to be spent in making the attics in the Sanatorium into barrack rooms, this enabled Plowden's Company to come in from Wiesbaden, so that the whole battalion was concentrated by the middle of April. But the problem of accommodation is still with us—and is likely to continue so. It was only in November that we managed to get reasonable accommodation put up for our transport, which up till then had been housed a mile and a half away near the railway station in some wretched ruins. We are still fighting for dining halls, and live in hopes that before we leave something may be done in the matter. Even if we don't get the benefit of it, we hope they will be ready for our successors.

Now while this question of accommodation was being fought, we had to find out the training possibilities of the neighbourhood. In this, however, we were not rushed, as our first consideration was one of rifle ranges. There was an excellent range built by the French about three miles away, but unfortunately it was laid out for metres, and only had a maximum range of 400 metres. We had to increase it from six to eight targets, destroy all the French firing points and make fresh ones to suit our present Weapon Training Course. This kept every man in the battalion busy right up to the time shooting commenced.

But as regards training areas we very soon discovered that the possibilities were nil. The country is extremely hilly, mostly wooded, and any open space is under cultivation and cannot be crossed until after the crops have been cut. About ten miles away there is a government plot of rough country just large enough for one company to train on. This however has to meet the requirements of the whole Brigade. So companies are hard put to it to carry out their preliminary training, being for the most part confined to the roads. For this reason Company Training was deferred until after Musketry had been completed, but even then they were considerably handicapped by the crops being only partly gathered in. It was really not until brigade training started, that the country was in a fit state to carry out training. Even then there were large tracts of country devoted to roots which were placed "out of bounds" to our troops. But in September, when the crops have been cut, the country is an excellent one for the training of a Brigade, as the country, with its large features and extensive woods, affords great opportunities for the handling of such a force. But for the handling of smaller units the features are too big and tend to make the operations unreal and very wearisome.

While during the summer months most of our time was taken up with Musketry, as will be seen from various articles sent in to the CHRONICLE, there was time for tennis, cricket, racing, golf and dancing. There is also polo at Wiesbaden, but as that takes place some six miles the far side of Wiesbaden, up-to-date we have not competed.

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During the summer months at Langenschwalbach there is plenty going on to keep everyone busy, both officers and men. It is during the winter months that conditions become difficult, especially as regards games for the men. One is entirely dependent on one's own amusements. We have only one small football ground on which we have already spent between two and three hundred pounds to make it playable. Even now it has been described as "a morass after rain, and a cement-like agglomeration of hard boulders during frost." Under such conditions it is hardly to be wondered at if the battalion are somewhat handicapped when we come to competing with other regiments more favourably placed.

But it is hoped that this will be our last winter in the Taunus Mountains. If the Rhine reliefs are carried out according to programme, by the time this letter appears in print, our future destination ought to have appeared in Army Orders. Let us hope it will be some good station in England.