

**1939 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE**  
**2nd Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY**

**SUMMARY OF SECOND BATTALION DIARY 1939**

*January 1st* — Strength of the Regiment

Officers	31
Warrant Officers	7
Colour Serjeants	5
Serjeants	28
Corporals	43
Buglers	16
Privates	552
Boys	10
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>692</u></b>

*January 2nd*— Brigade Proclamation Parade.

*January 3rd* — Veterinary Inspection of all animals.

Capt. Clifton and Lieut. Hare left for Khanpur, near Delhi, to act as picture painters for the Artillery practice camp.

*January 4th* — Intelligence Serjeant and 4 men of the Intelligence Section started an eight-day course under the Brigade Intelligence Officer. The remainder of the class consisted of 4 Indian Other Ranks 2nd Sikhs Frontier Force Regiment.

Regimental Rifle Meeting (Individual Day). Commanding Officer's watch won by PL Sjt. Major Blackall.

*January 5th* — Regimental Rifle Meeting (Team Day).

Annual party for the married families.

*January 7th* — All Ranks Dance.

*January 8th* — An eight weeks' weapon training cadre started, for 40 N.C.O.s.

*January 14th* — Regtl. Sjt. Major F. S. Soanes left Bareilly on being posted to the Regtl Depot, after 18 years with the 2nd Bn in India.

*January 17th* — 2nd Lieut. T. C. Spencer-Smith and Regtl. Sjt. Major J. E. Dilley arrived from England on posting to the 2nd Bn.

A composite company under Major S. C. P. Slattery took part in an internal security exercise with the nth/18th Royal Garhwal Rifles.

*January 18th* — A draft of 17 for transfer to the Army Reserve left Bareilly for England. .

*January 24th* — Communal riots in Bareilly City. The City Column stood to until further notice. All ranks confined to barracks.

*January 25th* — City Column stood down at 6p.m, No further rioting reported in Bareilly City.

*January 30th-31st* — Regimental Individual Sports. Bandsman Longley won the Victor Ludorum Cup. He also beat the record in the long jump with 21 ft. 4 in.

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*February 1st* — A draft of 12 men for transfer to the Army Reserve left Bareilly for England.

*February 2nd* — A draft of 9 men for transfer to the Army Reserve left Bareilly for England.

*February 4th* — Regimental Teams Sports. Won by H.Q. Company "A".  
A draft of 21 men for transfer to the Army Reserve left Bareilly for England.

*February 6th* — Bareilly Polo week started.

*February 7th* — The Quartermaster-General in India visited Bareilly and looked at a few buildings in Barracks.

H.E. the Viceroy presented new Colours to the 2nd Bn. F.F. Regiment (2nd Sikhs) on the Maidan.

*February 8th* — Veterinary Officer inspected all animals.  
The Regimental A Team lost 3-2 to the Cameronians in the semi final of the Infantry Polo Tournament.  
The Regimental B Team won 7-5 against the Remnants in the Bareilly Polo Tournament.

*February 9th* — The Regimental Boxing Team lost 20-13 against the Royal Fusiliers in the Army Team Boxing Championships.

*February 10th* — The 2/2 Gurkhas beat the Cameronians in the final of the Infantry Polo Tournament.

The Regimental B Team lost 4 1/2-4 in the final of the Bareilly Polo Tournament.

*February 11th* — Major J. P. A. G. Graham was injured riding in Lucknow Races and admitted to the British Military Hospital, Lucknow.

*February 13th* — The C.C.M.A. started his annual inspection of all arms.  
Dinner party in the Officers Mess. The guests included the Battery Commander, Superintendent of Police and Officers of the 11/18th Royal Garhwal Rifles.

*February 15th* — The Regiment took part in a Brigade Demonstration March through Bareilly City.

*February 16th* — C.C.M.A.'s Inspection continued.

*February 17th* — A.R.A. Team left for Meerut.

*February 20th* — Lieut. J. H. Hare took over the duties of Adjutant from Capt. M. M. Alston-Roberts-West.

*February 21st* — Dinner party in the Officers' Mess. The Officers 2nd Sikhs, 12th Frontier Force Regiment, dined.

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*February 24th* — Inspection of the Regiment's technical instruments by the O.M.E.

*February 25th* — A garden competition was held for barrack gardens.  
The Officers played the Corporals at cricket and won by 132 runs.  
An All Ranks Dance was held in the evening.  
The A.R.A. team returned.

*February 26th* — All Ranks confined to Cantonments on account of Moharram.

*February 27th* — Mess Dinner party. Among the guests were the Army Commander, General Sir Douglas Baird; and the Brigade Major, Major R. A. Wimberley, 9th Jats.

Results of A.R.A. at Meerut —Central Meeting:

*Northern Command Cup (L.M.G.)—*

Class 'A' Pair

P.S.M. Calvert & Sgt. Blyth 13th

*Eastern Command Cup (L.M.G.)—*

Class B Pair

Cpl. Elsbury Cpl. Vickery 16th

*Roupell Cup—*

Unplaced

*Birdwood Vase—*

4th

P.S.M. Blackall 124

P.S.M. Calver 102

L.-Cpl. Dennis 100

Pte. Edwards 105

*Army Hundred (Individual)—*P.S.M. Blackall 2nd

*King's Medal—*P.S.M. Blackall 3rd

*British Army Championships—*P.S.M. Blackall 2nd

*Class 2 W.O.s and Sjts.—*P.S.M. Blackall 1st

*Carnatic Memorial Gold Cup.—*

5th

Aggregate of all matches

*February 28th* — Major S. C. P. Slattery and his Company Letter C were called out at 0130 hrs to quell disturbances at Budaun. On arrival by M.T. the town was found to be quiet. The detachment returned on March 1st. They were billeted in the Police Lines.

The band of the Regiment played the 2nd Sikhs 12th Frontier Force Regiment to the station on their leaving their camp on the Maidan and the Brigade, for the Frontier.

Practice parade for the annual inspection.

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*March 1st* — Annual Inspection by Brigadier F. V. B. Witts, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C.

*March 3rd*— 1130 hrs. Veterinary Officer i/c 7 & 8 Inf. Bdes. inspected all animals.

*March 4th* — The Officers played the Corporals at Hockey.

*March 6th* —An N.C.O.'s promotion examination was held.  
Lieut. J. Granville left for home on 8 months' leave.

*March 7th* — A draft of 32 men left Bareilly for the United Kingdom on transfer to the reserve.  
Individual Boxing was held.

*March 8th* — Eastern Command Internal Security Exercise began and lasted until March 10th. For the Regiment, this exercise demanded a continual supply of mobile columns for Budaun, Philibit and elsewhere.

*March 11th* — 2nd Lieut. Hari Singh, S.L.I.L.F., left on posting to 5th/8th Punjab Regiment.

*March 14th* — Inter-Company Boxing began.  
Fire Order competition began (2 days). This was won by L.-Cpl. Turner of D Company who dropped only four marks out of 250.

*March 16th* — A Section Leaders' course for L.-Cpls. under Major J. E. D. Kilburn began.

*March 17th* — Advanced Hill Party left for Chaubattia.

*March 19th* — A draft of 109 Privates under C.S.M. Bowen and Sjt. Bourne arrived from U.K.  
Lieut.-Colonel R. J. Brett, D.S.O., went to Lansdowne on inspection duty as Brigadier.

*March 20th* — 2nd Lieut. T. C. Spencer-Smith attended an Intelligence Course at Eastern Command H.Q. until March 31st.

*March 22nd* — All animals inspected by the A.D.V.S., Col. Godwin and the Remount Officer, Col. Hutton. Both expressed themselves as very pleased with what they saw.

*March 23rd*—The Commanding Officer inspected the draft and talked to them afterwards.

*March 24th* — The Regiment gave an Anti-Tank Rifle demonstration to the Station.  
The families of other ranks detailed to quarters at Landour left for the Hills.

*March 25th* — An All Ranks Dance was held in the Regimental Theatre.  
2nd Lieut. A. H. Campbell, U.L.I.A., left to join Probyn's Horse.

*March 28th* — The Supply Officer, Bareilly, inspected ration stands and stores.

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*March 31st* — Buglers classified.

L.-Cpl. Hughes became Commanding Officer's Bugler.

*April 1st* — The first Hill Party, consisting of D Company, Band and some details left for Chaubattia Hill Depot.

*April 3rd* — A Company started firing their annual course.  
The families for Pachmarhi Families Station left.

*April 8th* — Information received that 4 N.C.O.s were to be sent home as permanent staff instructors to the new 2nd line Territorial Army Battalions.  
Captain T. G. D. Rowley to be seconded in the D.M.T.'s branch A.H.Q., (India).

*April 11th* — A dinner party was held in the mess. The following attended:  
Brigadier F. V. B. Witts, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. Comdg. 8 Inf. Bde.;  
Lieut.-Colonel W. V. McCalmont, 10th Bn. 4th/9th Regts.,  
Major J. S. Elliott, M.C., 84 Fd. Bty.  
Major J. P. A. G. Graham left for England on 6 months' sick leave.

*April 27th* — All available Officers fired their revolver course.  
The 1st M.T. course began at 2nd M.A.U. Lines.

*April 29th* — A Company finished firing their annual course.

*May 1st* — 1st Drill and Anti-Gas Cadre began.  
Lieut. P. G. F. Young joined on posting from the 43rd.

*May 2nd* — Discussion, Palestine Campaign. This was part of the Officers Individual Training Programme.

*May 6th* — A Company Commanders' conference was held to discuss the rules for Proficiency Pay for the year 1939-40.

*May 9th* — Visit to the city under the guidance of the Superintendent Police, Bareilly, for instruction in Internal Security duties. All Officers, W.O.s, Sjts. and L.-Sjts. attended.  
Major J. E. D. Kilburn left for England on 7 months' leave prior to posting to the Home Establishment.  
In view of the tense international situation, he took with him the Officers' Mess collection of medals for deposit at a bank in Oxford.

*May 12th* — 1st Platoon Commanders' course under Major L. W. Giles, M.C.

*May 20th* — Lieut. R. R. F. T. Barry and Lieut. G. N. A. Astley-Cooper returned from leave in England.  
The Commanding Officer inspected the last draft's clothing.  
All Officers attended a lecture by Major B. S. Hey, 10th Bn. 4th/9th Regts on the battle of Gaza.

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*May 22nd*— 1st Hill party returned from Chaubattia.

2nd Hill Party consisting of C Company, Carrier Platoon and some Buglers left for Chaubattia.

The Band remained in the Hills.

*May 25th*—2nd Platoon Commanders' course began under Major L. W. Giles, M.C.

*May 26th* — Information received that the Regiment were to find the following ranks to train the Militia in England.

W.O. II	1
W.O. III	1
C.Q.M. Sjts.	2
Sjts	6
Cpls.	4
Signal Sjts.	1
Signal LCpl.	1
L.-Cpls.	5
Cooks (Pte.)	1

*May 27th*— 1st M.T. Course ended.

Major T. E. Withington, A.F.C., left for Chaubattia.

*June 1st* —A bill for the conscription of all able bodied men between the ages of 20 and 21 years passed through Parliament and became law.

D.A.D.O.S. inspected the Regiment. General Remarks — Very Good.

*June 5th*—2nd Drill and Anti-Gas Cadre began.

*June 6th*—All Officers who had not passed their promotion examination to Major, wrote a paper on the Geography of the North-West Frontier — set by the Commanding Officer.

*June 7th*—A Practice Parade for the King's Birthday was held by the Commanding Officer.

*June 8th* — King's Birthday.

A parade was held in front of Orderly Room.

The 84th Fd. Bty. R.A. fired a salute in connection with the parade.

*June 9th* — A 2nd Class Certificate practical Map Reading examination was held.

The Regiment had 32 candidates.

*June 12th*—Brigadier T. J. Ponting, Officer Commanding Meerut District visited the Regiment.

*June 13th*—Major R. H. Doyne gave a lecture to all officers on the international situation.

*June 17th* — Holiday and Waterloo Day celebrations. Aquatic sports in the morning; free cinema for the garrison in the evening. A Ball was held by the detachment at Chaubattia.

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*June 20th* — Lieut.-Colonel R. J. Brett, D.S.O., gave a lecture on effect of topography on strategy in N.W.F.

*July 13th* — C Company and Band rejoined from Chaubattia.  
Information received that the Regiment had won the Machine Gun (India) Cup.

*July 19th* — B Company moved to Kailana.

*July 22nd*— Information received that Major T. E. Withington, A.F.C., had been selected as Assistant Military Attache in Paris and was to go home at once.

*July 25th* — 'Organization of a Gas Decontamination Centre' Demonstration for all Officers and N.C.O.s.  
The Officers gave a cocktail party to the station in the evening.

*July 27th* — Lieut.-Colonel R. J. Brett, D.S.O., interviewed all personnel going home to train the Militia.

The Regiment found the following:

W.O. II	1
W.O. III	1
C.Q.M. Sjts.	2
Sjts	6
Cpls.	4
Signal Sjts.	1
Signal Cpls.	1
L.-Cpls.	5
Cooks (Pte.)	1

The above sailed from Bombay on July 31st on H.M.T. *Lancashire*, the families following on August 7th in S.S. *Voltaire*.

*July 28th* - Lieut.-Colonel R. J. Brett, D.S.O., left for England, on two months' leave.

*July 31st* —Major T. E. Withington, A.F.C., sailed from Bombay.

*August 1st* — Major S. C. P. Slattery lectured to the Officers on the opening phases of the Palestine Campaign.

*August 6th* — A draft from the 43rd of 1 Sjt., 1 CpL, and 77 other ranks arrived in Bareilly.  
The Regiment beat Delhi at Delhi in the Cawnpore Rugby Football Cup by 3 points to nil.

*August 15th*— The Brigade Veterinary Officer inspected all animals.  
The Regiment were beaten by the Welch Regiment 8—3 in the 2nd round of the Cawnpore Cup.

*August 16th*—C and D Companies competed in the Gymnastic Competition.

*August 17th* — A and H.Q. Companies Gymnastic Competition.

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*August 23rd* — A Company fired the A.R.A. Match — India Cup.

*August 29th* — B Company returned from Kailana.

*August 30th* — The fourth Hill Party left for Kailana.

*September 2nd* — Cable received from Lieut.-Colonel R. J. Brett, D.S.O., saying that he, Captain M. M. A.-R.-West and Lieut. J. Granville were returning from leave.

*September 3rd* — War declared against Germany.  
All ranks recalled from leave.



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**SECOND BATTALION LETTER**

Dear Editor,

I have no idea what material you require for the CHRONICLE for this glorious year of 1939, and to tell you the truth I am in no fit state to provide it. You will agree with me that it is difficult enough to take up a pen in the days of Peace and now in War it is harder still— (actually this is a very blunt pencil).

Of course, no one in Mhow or in India for that matter, would think there was a war. The Stationery Office seems to think there is something happening, hence my pencil. Perhaps this economy may help to win the war. Let us hope so as it doesn't help me to write this letter as much as it should.

Before going any further, I would like to draw your attention to a most admirable article on the experiences of an Officer of the Regiment returning to India in the first convoy that sailed after war had been declared. This, I'm afraid, is the only topical note we can strike for the present.

Having been stationed in Bareilly for five years where we had been brought up to believe that the Regiment was an integral part of India's external war effort, we found to our dismay that the Chatfield Commission, in re-organizing (and perhaps you will agree that the re-organization was timely) the ponderous problem of India's Military Defence, decided that the British Regiment in Bareilly would become internal security troops. We still had hopes that war would not break out till we reached Khartoum in November, but again we were to be disappointed and as a sop to our feelings the powers that be sent us to Mhow and here we are, or some of us anyway. The remainder are at Ahmedabad or employed all over the Southern Command.

Mhow is a pleasant place if you can except our barracks, which is difficult, as they are prominently situated on the highest bump in a rather bumpy place. This is fortunate in another way as many erring souls have found their way home when map and compass have failed them. Practically, as barracks they are almost beyond hope and aesthetically, quite appalling.

We hunt with the local hounds and the other day we were regaled by the sight of a gentleman evidently quite prepared to hunt with the top flight of the Pytchley. We find, of course, the hour rather trying as hounds move off just before dawn and some of us find it a little difficult to curtail the revels of a Saturday night.

We have found at last a place where people play Polo rather worse than we do and about a week ago we carried off a very large cup, a relic no doubt of the day when Mhow was a fashionable resort for Cavalry. We have had ourselves well photographed and you may be fortunate enough to have a copy sent to you. Our large handicap was most useful.

Pigsticking is possible and combined with shooting in the local native states will keep us amused for as long as we are confined in India.

There are rumours that few of us will see 1941 in India. The drain is beginning gently but will perhaps increase in rapidity.

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The Fifty-Second will continue in name and that perhaps is all that matters, but as you will agree, Mr. Editor, it is a sorry prospect for a Regiment with our traditions to be left in India when the Forty-Third is up and doing (or likely to be doing in the near future).

Before I stop, I should like to say how sorry we were to say good-bye to Colonel and Mrs. Brett. They meant a great deal to us. Their hospitality was unbounded and their energy most refreshing. I think we can say that few Commanding Officers have done so much as he had to deserve their promotion or to carry on the great traditions in which he had been brought up.

Yours ever,  
52nd.