

1948 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE
1st Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY (43rd & 52nd)

SUMMARY OF THE FIRST BATTALION DIARY, 1948

January 1st — 2nd Lieut J. T. Rohill left on release. Capt H.J. W. Newton assumed command of A Company vice Major H. P. Patterson who reverted to the home establishment while attending the Tactical School, Devizes.

January 2nd — T/Lieut-Col S. H. Kent, O.B.E., joined the Regiment as second in command.

January 5th — Lieut P. St. J. C. Bavin left on release.

January 6th — Major A. C. Mason joined the Regiment and assumed the appointment of President of the Regimental Institute vice Capt R. J. L. King. Lieut A. L. Hills joined the Regiment on first posting and assumed command of Carrier Platoon.

January 19th — Lieut C. D. L. Brice (D.C.L.I.) joined the Regiment and posted to B Company.

January 23rd— Capt R. F. Fullick joined the Regiment and posted to C Company.

January 25th—Lieut M. C. Blake left on release.

January 29th — Bugler F. Knight appointed commanding officer's bugler.

January 30th — Lieut J. Withers left on release.

January 31st — Lieut N. Graham posted to No 3 Independent Signal Unit, Bad Oeynhausen. Major J. K. Judd left on release.

February 2nd — Capt P. W. B. Thompson promoted Major. Lieut I. R. C. Greenlees promoted acting captain.

February 5th — 2nd Lieut G. S. Clayton and 8 other ranks to Munsterlager to escort prisoners of war to United States Zone.

February 14th— Gapt J. Willey joined the Regiment and posted to A Company.

February 15th — Lieut The Hon. B. S. M. Bowyer and Lieut D. M. Colville left on release.

February 17th — Lieut P. S. Hayes assumed command of D Company in the absence of Major P. C. Thompson, M.C.

February 22nd— 2nd Lieuts D. A. Whipp and J. S. Eckford-Prossor joined the Regiment and posted to C and B Companies respectively.

March 6th — Lieut P. M. King left on release. Boxing: Regiment versus 1 Royal Norfolk Regiment in the Inter-Unit Boxing Finals in Bielefeld. Lost 8-4.

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March 10th — Major D. R. L. Bright rejoined the Regiment from the Staff and assumed command of C Company. Major J. A. Tresawna, D.S.O., joined the Regiment on first posting and assumed command of Support Company. Major P. G. Thompson reverted to the rank of captain on becoming surplus to establishment. Capt F. L. W. Coles reverted to the rank of Lieut on becoming surplus to establishment.

March 12th — Regimental Quartermaster Serjeant George posted to the Regimental Depot, Cowley Barracks, having completed Python Tour.

March 13th — Lieut N. A. W. Neville left on release.

March 14th — Lieut F. F. Ramsey left on release.

March 22nd — Lieut-Col S. H. Kent, O.B.E., relinquished rank of temporary lieutenant-colonel.

March 24th — Lieut R. S. B. Brocklehurst left on release.

March 26th — Lieuts G. G. J. Goodey, T. C. Perrins and 50 other ranks went to the United Kingdom for Freedom Ceremonies.

March 28th — Regimental Gymkhana held in Barracks.

April 1st— Capt D. E. J. Sweetzer, D.C.M., relinquished the rank of captain on becoming surplus to establishment. Capt R. S. C. Dowden assumed the appointment of Motor Transport Officer vice Lieut D. E. J. Sweetzer, D.G.M.

April 6th — Support Company disbanded on the implementation of the Lower Establishment.

April 10th — Capt T. Reynolds, M.C. (K.O.Y.L.I.), joined the Regiment and posted to A Company. Capt R. J. L. King relinquished the rank of captain on becoming surplus to establishment.

April 14th — Regimental property and officers mess silver and plate arrived at Hamburg.

April 16th — The Colonel of the Regiment, General Sir Bernard Paget, G.C.B., D.S.O., M.C., arrived at Luneburg for a three days' visit.

April 17th — The Colonel of the Regiment took the salute at a ceremonial parade during which he presented Military Medals to Ptes Day and Hastie.

April 19th — The Colonel of the Regiment left for the United Kingdom spending the night at Rhine Army Headquarters.

April 21st — Major J. R. P. Montgomery, M.C., joined the Regiment and assumed command of D Company. Capt P. G. Thompson, M.C., posted to HQ 31 Independent Infantry Brigade as staff captain. Major A. C. Mason relinquished the rank of major on becoming surplus to establishment.

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April 26th — 2nd Lieut J. R. Neville joined the Regiment on first posting and posted to A Company.

April 30th — A Company, C Company, specialists HQ Company and B Company Cadre left for Lopshorn Camp by rail.

May 3rd — Capt P. W. B. Thompson, M.C., left to assume the appointment of A.D.C. to G.O.C. Sudan District.

May 17th — A, B, C and HQ Companies returned from Lopshorn Training Camp.

May 18th — A.C.I. 368 received amalgamating the 43rd and the 52nd.

May 25th — Regimental Sports held at Luneburg. Major H. B. Landon, Capt M. E. K. Dixon, Lieuts T. C. Periam and F. B. Smith joined the Regiment. Major H. B. Landon relinquished the rank of major and Capt M. E. K. Dixon the rank of captain on becoming surplus to establishment.

May 29th — The first intake of National Service soldiers arrived and posted to B Company.

June 12th — Capts C. J. Lambert and H. B. Landon relinquished the rank of captain on becoming surplus to establishment. Capt H. McLean joined the Regiment and posted to C Company. The second intake of National Service soldiers arrived and posted to B Company.

June 16th — The Regiment were first in the Brigade Athletic Meeting held at Hanover.

June 21st-22nd — Regimental Rifle Meeting held at Luneburg.

July 1st — The third intake of National Service soldiers arrived and posted to B Company.

July 3rd— Capt D. H. Parker, M.C. joined the Regiment and posted to D Company.

July 8th — The Regiment were fifth in the British Army of the Rhine Athletic Meeting at Hanover,

July 15th — Lieut H. B. Landon posted to HQ, Hanover District as staff captain A (P.S.I.).

July 16th—*Capt* R. S. G. Dowden assumed command of HQ Company in the absence on leave of Major G. C. Rush.

July 19th — Major J. R. P. Montgomery, M.C. reassumed command of D Company on return from Tactical School, Warminster.

July 26th-28th — Brigade Rifle Meeting at Luneburg.

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July 31st — The Regiment less detachment proceeded to Lopshorn Training Camp by rail.

August 3rd— 2nd Lieuts J. B. Harvie and J. A. D. Lord promoted lieutenants. Lieut R. W. T. Osborne joined the Regiment and posted to D Company. Lieut J. M. Baird joined the Regiment and posted to B Company.

August 5th — Major H. P. Patterson assumed command of A Company on rejoining the Regiment from Tactical School, Devizes. 52nd Amalgamating Cadre joined the Regiment under command of Major H. P. Patterson. Major D. R. L. Bright relinquished the rank of major on becoming surplus to establishment.

August 15th — The Regiment returned to Luneburg from Camp.

August 17th-20th — The Regiment competed in the British Army of the Rhine Rifle Meeting at Sennelager.

August 22nd — The fourth intake of National Service soldiers arrived and posted to D Company.

August 26th — Capt H. J. W. Newton posted from the Regiment to assume the appointment of staff captain (A.L.O.)

August 28th — Lieut G. G. J. Goodey left for Economic Sub Commission, Berlin., seconded to Gurkhas and Capt D. H. L. Parker, M.C., posted to L.I. Brigade T.C.

September 3rd—Major J. D. Palmer posted to the Regiment as second in command.

September 4th — Lieut F. B. Smith joined the Regiment and posted to C Company. Major H. P. Patterson relinquished the rank of major on becoming surplus to establishment. The fifth intake of National Service soldiers arrived and posted to D Company.

September 14th- Lieut I. R. C. Greenlees posted to 3 Air Liaison Section, R.A.S.O. to assume appointment of GUI.

September 18th — 2nd Lieut W. S. C. Chevis joined the Regiment from the R.M.A. and posted to D Company. The sixth intake of National Service soldiers arrived and posted to D Company.

September 23rd — Regiment left Luneburg by rail.

September 24th — Regiment arrived at Gottingen.

October 9th — The seventh intake of National Service soldiers arrived and posted to D Company.

October 20th — Major S. H. Kent, O.B.E. left for War Office for appointment as G.S.O.2 Inter Service Planning Team.

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October 20th — Capt H. P. Patterson regranted the rank of temporary major.

October 23rd— The eighth intake of National Service soldiers arrived and posted to A Company.

October 28th — The Commanding Officer carried out an administrative inspection of all companies.

November 3rd — 2nd Lieut D. D. Wade joined the Regiment and posted to C Company.

November 6th — The ninth intake of National Service soldiers arrived and posted to A Company.

November 9th — Colour Serjeant W. J. Smith, D.C.M., late of the 43rd, awarded the Meritorious Service Medal.

November 19th — The Brigade Commander carried out his annual inspection of the Regiment. Capt D. R. L. Bright regranted the rank of temporary major.
Lieut M. R. Pennell joined the Regiment and posted to C Company.
The tenth intake of National Service soldiers arrived and posted to A Company.

December 18th — 2nd Lieut W. S. B. Rawlings joined the Regiment from the R.M.A. and posted to A Company.
The eleventh intake of National Service soldiers arrived and posted to A Company.

December 30th — Lieut A. L. Hills promoted temporary captain.

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FIRST BATTALION LETTER

Dear Editor,

As will be apparent from the Regimental letter of 1947, the year opened with the Regiment still in Luneburg, living under conditions which are common to any regiment of the British Army of the Rhine. Owing to the large number due to go on release during the first quarter of the year, it was quite out of the question to try to get down to real and progressive training. As a result, little was able to be accomplished during the period. However, rumours and directives from our higher formations indicated that we were to have a busy time in the future. It was soon confirmed that the Regiment was to train National Servicemen for their last eight months in the Army and plans were quickly put into operation for the reception of countless numbers of these young conscripts destined to become the backbone of the Territorial Army.

B Company was given the task of receiving the first of these intakes and of trying its hand at moulding them in a few months into experienced veterans. After a few weeks it became very apparent that there was first rate material for turning into keen candidates for the Territorial Army. Our fears of conscientious but seedy specimens of post-war Britain were knocked on the head from the start. It was found that the keenness shown by these National Service soldiers rose far above expectations and their physical fitness belied our preconceived ideas. So far everyone has given high praise to their efforts and our only regret is that they can stay with us such a short time. All companies except C Company have received one complete intake up to date. These men have taken part in all Regimental duties, games and what few operations there have been and have come out with flying colours.

National security prevents one from giving figures of the numbers received, but if the standard remains at its present high level there is nothing much the matter with England at the moment, at least where the individual is concerned.

When all is said and done, however, it-must be remembered that a great deal of praise is also due to the Regular officers, warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and men who form the training cadres and who carried out the task of instructing these young soldiers with such enthusiasm.

In April the Regiment was represented in the Freedom Parades at Oxford, Banbury and Aylesbury by a detachment of two officers and sixty other ranks who left Luneburg on March 25th. When selecting who should go the guiding rule was that they should be those who came from the counties of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, but consideration had also to be given to those who had fought with the Regiment in the war. It was no easy matter to make the final choice and many were disappointed after spending quite a considerable time in preparation and drill. From all accounts the detachment did well and it appeared that they all thoroughly enjoyed themselves. During May some of the few remaining trained soldiers in the Regiment were sent to Schleswig-Holstein to help the 3 Para Brigade (recently arrived from Palestine) with administrative duties. Then in June a similar party under Lieutenant Featherstone was sent to England to help the Territorial Army with administrative duties at their summer camps. On their return in September their efforts were highly praised by the War Office.

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BANBURY



THE COLOURS OF THE 52ND AND THE 4TH BN. T.A.

The Regiment had the honour of a visit from its Colonel, General Sir Bernard Paget, G.G.B., D.S.O., M.C., in May. Three very pleasant days were spent in taking him around and showing him our achievements and problems. A Ceremonial Parade was held at which he presented Military Medals to Privates Day and Hastie for gallant conduct in the field during the European campaign. A dinner party was held in the mess to which several distinguished guests came, among whom were Major-General G. Surtees, C.B., C.B.E., M.C., G.O.C. Hamburg District, and Brigadier H. W. W. Harris, D.S.O., Commander 4 AGRA. Visits were also paid to several of the Regimental families who kindly showed the Colonel their houses and talked to him about living conditions in BAOR. Unfortunately the visit was soon over and General Paget left by car for Bad Oeynhausen where he stayed as the guest of the Chief of Staff, Major-General Stratton.

In the past twelve months there has been a considerable turnover of officers. All five company commanders have changed and the strength of subalterns at one period decreased to an ominously low number. However, the R.M.A. are now turning out a few each year who, together with the Eaton Hall output, have helped to ease the situation which at one time gave serious concern. Major J. R. P. Montgomery, M.C., and Major D. R. L. Bright are back with the Regiment from staff employment, and Captain A. C. Mason has come from the 52nd Amalgamation Cadre. In addition Major L. G. Puttick, ex Gurkha Rifles, Major J. A. Tresawna, D.S.O., ex D.C.L.I, and Captain J. Willey from East Africa have joined on first posting to the Regiment as Regular officers.

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During the year the Regiment had two periods of training at the Rhine Army Training Centre. Both periods were spent at Lopshorn Camp. On the first occasion A and C Companies and TAC HQ, left on March 1st and stayed three weeks there. Most of the time was spent in field firing and a prodigious amount of ammunition of all kinds was expended. There were several exercises in conjunction with the Gunners and the Tanks, which proved instructive to all three arms. It is unfortunate that the distance between units makes it almost impossible to hold combined exercises of all arms except when units are concentrated at training camps. In August the Regiment departed by rail for a second spell, leaving in Luneburg only one company to administer the families and guard the barracks. Again the training was similar to the previous camp, but this time Regimental and Brigade schemes were carried out. The weather on the whole was most uncooperative and caused considerable trouble. A lot of time was spent on repairing the existing roads and tracks, which were in the main unmetalled and deep in mud. Great value was gained from this camp and the Regiment was able to overhaul its battle procedure, which had not been tested for a considerable period and thus find out where the weaknesses lay. On return from this camp Major Kent and his wife very kindly lent their house to the officers for a cocktail party held on the occasion of the reunion of members of the Light Infantry Club, serving in BAOR, during which a cricket match was played against the Rifle Brigade from Minden. The weather was perfect and the scene might well have been laid in England. All that was lacking was the village parson with his straw hat and the visit to the village pub afterwards. The result was a win on the second day for the Light Infantry Club, after a very good game. Considerable thanks are due to the Rifle Brigade for sending their team such a long distance, thus ensuring a successful meeting.

The Regiment had received warnings on not fewer than four occasions to move to four different places. In September definite news was received that we were to move to Gottingen, a university town on the southern border of the British Zone and adjoining both the American and the Russian Zones. The Regiment moved on September 27th by rail and arrived without mishap on the morning of the 28th. The band played the Regiment through the streets of the town and up a steep hill to the barracks in bright sunshine. The barracks had previously been occupied by the Norwegian Army and before them by some fifteen thousand Displaced Persons who had had no scruples about using the wood of the buildings for firewood. As a result, there was a tremendous amount of R.E. work to be done to get the place really comfortable. Certain blocks were at once earmarked for accommodation of families, and work on these is still in progress. Most of the Regiment appear to like the place despite a thirty-five minutes walk up the hill from the town. This hill under snow and ice conditions makes the movement of M.T. extremely hazardous unless the road surface is first well covered with gravel and ashes. The scenery is vastly superior to Luneburg and the barracks have an excellent view over the town and surrounding plain. The shooting and fishing in the neighbourhood are alleged to be good. Although there are few game birds, pig and buck are plentiful.

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One of our operational commitments at Gottingen is to patrol a sector of the Anglo-Russian zonal boundary. This is done in turn by companies sending a platoon out for two to three days at a time. In order to cover the area effectively a patrol has to be sent out each week. We are at a disadvantage because the Russians keep permanent posts all along their side of the boundary and also send out patrols more frequently than we are able to do. Furthermore they do not hesitate to cross into the British Zone especially at night when there is little opportunity of their being caught. Elsewhere an account is given of what happened when a corporal of the Regiment inadvertently crossed into the Russian Zone, and also the Russian version of the incident.

As the year drew to a close the Regiment underwent its annual inspection. Brigadier W. P. Oliver, C.B., O.B.E., and his staff spent November 19th looking somewhat briefly into the nooks and crannies of various departments and I think went away satisfied with what they saw and found.

Yours,
43rd/52nd