

**RECORD OF THE 7TH (SERVICE) BATTALION
FOR 1914-15.
BASED ON EXTRACTS FROM THE REGIMENTAL CHRONICLES.**

1914

The Battalion was formed at Cowley Barracks, Oxford, of newly enlisted recruits; and on the 26th September 1914 Lieut.-Colonel R. G. H. Hughes (who formerly commanded the 52nd Light Infantry) took over command and proceeded with the Battalion by rail to Sherrington Camp, Codford St. Mary, for training.

Strength: 11 officers, 1 warrant officer, 33 N.C.O.'s, and 607 privates.

September 30th.—Major F. J. Newton-King (formerly 43rd Light Infantry), with 2 officers, 17 N.C.O.'s, and 350 privates, joined the Battalion in camp.

Total strength of the Battalion : 1,022 of all ranks.

These were formed into 4 Companies, commanded as follows :—

A Company.—Captain R. M. Logan (late 1st Battalion).

B Company.—Captain G. E. Harcourt.

C Company.—Lieut. C. Wheeler.

D Company—Major F. J. Newton-King (late 1st Battalion).

The Battalion now formed part of the 78th Infantry Brigade, 26th Division, 3rd New Army, and during the next few weeks the N.C.O.'s and men were clothed in such old uniforms as could be supplied by old clothing contractors. Khaki was impossible to obtain, and the uniforms were mostly of blue serge, with an obsolete pattern service cap. There were no badges; so, in order to identify battalions of the 78th Brigade, patches of buff, blue, white, and green were sewn on the left upper arm, the 7th Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry wearing green.

Arms, accoutrements, and equipment were not yet available for issue.

Training proceeded with vigour as long as the fine weather lasted, but towards the end of October rain set in. when the camping ground became a sea of mud, which practically stopped all useful work.

November 12th.—On this date the Battalion moved into billets at Oxford, being accommodated at first in New College, Balliol College, Keble College, and the Corn Exchange. Later, billets were taken up in private dwelling-houses in High Street, Longwall Street, and Walton Street, Battalion Headquarters being at No. 3 Wellington Square, and the Officers' Mess at Keble College, where also most of the officers were billeted.

From this time until the following spring the training of the Battalion was carried out principally in the University Parks, Wytham Park, and on Shotover Hill

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The Battalion continued to occupy billets in Oxford throughout the winter.

January 21st.—Lieut.-Colonel R. G. H. Hughes having resigned on account of ill-health, Major F. J. Newton-King was promoted Lieut.-Colonel to command the Battalion.

April 2nd.—Leather equipment was issued to the Battalion.

April 28th.—The Battalion moved into huts at Fovant Camp, near Salisbury, joining up with the remainder of the Brigade for Brigade Training.

The 78th Infantry Brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General E. D'A. Thomas, was composed of the following battalions :—

9th (Service) Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment,

11th (Service) Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment.

7th (Service) Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.

7th (Service) Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment.

During the Battalion's period of training the men were encouraged to take part in athletic sports, and several open events were won by them.

At Stamford Bridge the 7th Battalion won the Seven Mile Marathon Race (for teams of 12) in Marching Order, and was second in the Open Relay Race. It won the 78th Brigade Relay Race on two occasions.

July 20th.—The Battalion marched to huts at Sandhills Camp, near Longbridge Deverill, for divisional training and musketry, the 26th Division being now commanded by Major-General Mackenzie-Kennedy, C.B.

July 25th.—The new rifle (R.S.M.L.E. Mark III) was issued to the Battalion, which had previously been training with the D.P. Rifle (L.M.M.).