

1921 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE
1st Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY

SUMMARY OF FIRST BATTALION DIARY.

January 1.—Lieut. B. Burt-Smith, M.C., joined the Battalion, and was posted to "D" Company.

January 8.—Five officers and 80 other ranks engaged in blocking a large tract of country south of Limerick, which was driven for rebels. All men of military age were collected, but no dangerous characters discovered. Patrol of "A" Company, under Lieut. Packe, searched houses near Cratloe and found two or three wanted men.

January 17.—Lieut. J. L. Choate admitted to hospital with a view to being invalided, owing to wounds.

January 20.—An escort of sixteen men, under Lieut. Herbage, R.F.A., and Lieut. L. R. Randall, proceeded to England on board H.M.S. *Leamington* and H.M.S. *Mistley* in charge of 58 rebel prisoners. Orders received for mess kit to be taken into use again.

January 25.—"C" Company relieved "A" Company at Tulla, Co. Clare.

January 29.—Information received that Lieut. A. Bennett, M.B.E., had been re-posted to the Battalion on ceasing to be seconded for duty with Royal Corps of Signals. Eight other ranks arrived from the Regimental Depot.

February 1.—Information was received that the wearing of swords by officers had been re-introduced.

February 4.—Six officers and 60 other ranks were engaged in burning houses as an official reprisal for a very serious ambush of police at Dromkeen.

February 8.—Information was received that 2nd Lieut. J. L. Stebbing was posted to the Battalion on first appointment from R.M.C. Sandhurst.

February 11.—Major G. E. Whittall, M.C., was appointed Special Staff Officer, Grade B.B., with Special Elements Turkish Forces (1.1.21).

Information was received that Lieut. D. S. Newton-King had obtained an Instructor's Certificate at Army Signal Training Centre.

February 13.—Six officers and no other ranks were employed on driving a large tract of country near Bruree. Eleven wanted rebels were captured.

February 15.—Nine officers and no other ranks from Limerick and two officers and twenty other ranks from Tulla were employed on rounding up Cratloe Woods. Result, nil.

February 17.—Three officers and 28 other ranks searched Glenstall Woods, south-east of Newport, for rebels; nothing was discovered.

Captain W. E. C. Terry appointed Temporary D.A.Q.M.G. Sixth Division, and seconded (1.12.20).

1921 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE
1st Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY

February 22.—Pte. Williams (5373002), Pte. Walker (5374675) and Pte. Morgan (5374617) found murdered by Sinn Feiners at Woodford, Co. Galway. Captain G. Naylor, M.C., took over command of "D" Company from Captain D. Murphy.

February 28.—2nd Lieut. J. L. Stebbing joined for duty, and was posted to "D" Company.

March 4.—Seventy other ranks, due for discharge on 31.3.22, left the Battalion on 28 days' furlough pending discharge on completion of two years' re-enlistment service.

March 7.—Area patrols ordered to be out in the streets between 4 p.m., and curfew to protect men walking out. It was presumed that, after the murder of the Mayor of Limerick, rebels would ascribe murder to Crown Forces and commit reprisals.

March 8.—A party of 90 other ranks, under Major Weatherby, D.S.O., surrounded and cut off part of Limerick, which was searched without avail.

March 9.—Captain D. Murphy and 50 other ranks, "B" and "D" Companies, proceeded to Tulla to hold the workhouse during the absence of "C" Company, detailed for a drive on the 10th. This party returned the following day.

March 19.—"D" Company took over detachment at Newport from "B" Company.

March 22.—"B" Company relieved "C" Company on detachment at Tulla.

April 6.—Information received that Lieut. J. L. Choate had been placed on half-pay (1.4.21).

April 9.—In consequence of rebel bomb attack on John Street Police Barracks, official reprisals were carried out, several houses being burnt. One hundred other ranks of the regiment furnished patrols and piquets for this area.

April 16.—Lieut. J. S. Fenwick resigned his commission. Musketry Table "A" commenced.

April 18.—"C" Company took over Newport detachment from "D" Company; the garrison of the Gaol (one platoon) taken over by Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

April 19.—Seventy other ranks, under Captain Blagrove, carried out a round-up and drive near Bunratty, on main Ennis Road. Nothing of importance found.

April 27.—Lieut. J. L. Choate resigned his commission.

Order of Merit of Companies in Musketry for 1920-21.—First, "C" Company, 122.7; Second, "A" Company, 120.9; Third, "B" Company, 120; Fourth, "D" Company, 115.9.

May 15.—Lieut. W. T. Trengrouse in an ambush near Newport. District Inspector Biggs, R.I.C., and a lady in the car were killed.

1921 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE
1st Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY

May 20.—One sergeant, one corporal and three men arrived from the Depot.

May 24.—Captain D. Murphy resigned his commission.

May 31.—Lieut. W. T. Trengrouse left the regiment on resignation (1.6.21).
Lieut. K. A. Herbage, R.F.A., ceased to be attached to the Regiment, and left for duty in West Africa under Colonial Office.

June 3.—Fifty other ranks "D" Company, under Lieut. B. Burt-Smith, M.C., proceeded to Tulla to garrison workhouse during absence of "B" Company, carrying out a large drive under orders of Galway Brigade: June 5 to 10.

June 8.—Major G. E. Whittall, M.C., seconded for duty with Special Elements, Turkish Forces (5.2.21). "B" Company carried out a minor operation in connection with Galway Brigade operations at Goolreagh Bog, rounding up 150 men, six of whom were known bad rebels.

June 11.—Lieut. C. B. Crawford promoted Captain and re-posted to the Battalion.

June 13.—Party of "D" Company returned from Tulla.

June 14.—Lieut. E. A. Packe, D.F.C., and 50 other ranks surrounded and searched country south-west of Newmarket-on-Fergus, without result.
Captain C. B. Crawford was posted to the Battalion on promotion.

June 21.—Lieut. D. J. L. Lethbridge resigned his commission. Lieut. H. E. F. Smyth, M.C., was promoted Captain (5.3.21).

June 23.—Lieut. J. E. H. Neville, M.C., proceeded to Education Course at Newmarket.
Lieut. A. B. Hamilton proceeded to Machine Gun Course at Seaford.

June 28.—A patrol of the Regiment, under Lieut. R. C. Warren, M.C., was ambushed at Fortaine Cross, near Tulla, Co. Clare, at 02.30 hours on return from lying up for rebels damaging roads. Lieut. Warren was dangerously wounded in the stomach, and Pte. Conway (5375228) and Pte. Hoare (5374290) both wounded in the leg. They were brought into Limerick Hospital. Assistance was sent out from Tulla workhouse and the neighbouring country searched immediately after the ambush, but no sign of the rebels could be found. Lieut. Warren died of his wounds at 21.30 hours.

June 30.—Lieut. K. S. Wootten, on ceasing to be employed on Army Gymnastic Staff, cross-posted to 2nd Battalion and struck off the strength of the 1st Battalion.

The following Educational Certificates have been gained by the Battalion from January 1, 1920, to date, when the old system was abolished: Second Class, 1920, 102; 1921, 152. Total, 254. Third Class, 1920, 201; 1921, 99. Total, 300.

July 1.—The body of Lieut. R. C. Warren, M.C., was despatched to England for burial, being taken to the station by a large party of the Battalion and from the garrison.
Captain H. E. F. Smyth, M.C., was posted to the Battalion on promotion *vice* Captain C. B. Crawford posted to 2nd Battalion.

1921 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE
1st Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY

July 2.—Round up and search of Park Village and east end of Limerick for arms by a party of the Battalion under Captain Blagrove; nothing discovered.

July 3.—One platoon, "D" Company, under 2nd Lieut. J. L. Stebbing, proceeded to Tulla in relief of " B " Company, which returned to Limerick in the evening. The remainder of "D" Company to proceed by march route to-morrow.

July 8.—Strong parties of the Battalion employed on protecting the railway line between Sixmile Bridge and Limerick while Auxiliary Police were moving from Killaloe to Ennis.

July 11.—"D" Company left Tulla by march route for Limerick at 02.00 hours on being relieved by one company of 3rd Royal Fusiliers. A Truce between the Government and Sinn Fein commenced at 12.00 hours. During this Truce all searches and other military activities of an offensive nature were in abeyance.

July 12.—"D" Company reached Limerick at 10.00 hours and were billeted in the Technical Institute.

July 16.—2nd Lieut. J. B. Jarvis promoted Lieutenant.

July 19.—Information received that 2nd Lieut. E. T. A. Lumby is permitted to resign his commission.

The platoon on detachment at Newport returned to Limerick on relief by one company 1st Highland Light Infantry.

July 26.—Lieut. H. F. Parham, R.F.A., proceeded to G.H.Q. Dublin for duty, and struck off the strength.

July 29.—Captain C. R. C. Boyle, D.S.O., posted to the Battalion.

August 3.—Lieut.-General Sir Peter Strickland, Commanding 6th Division, inspected the barracks of the Battalion.

August 15.—Colonel-Commandant A. R. Cameron, C.B., C.M.G., Commanding 18th Infantry Brigade, inspected the Battalion on annual inspection. He inspected "B" Company in field work and saw the books of the Battalion.

August 17.—Captain C. R. C. Boyle, D.S.O., joined the Battalion, and was posted to "A" Company.

August 21.—Lieut. A. B. Hamilton returned from Seaford, having qualified at a Machine Gun Course.

September 1.—2nd Lieut. E. A. Oakeley proceeded to Carrickfergus to attend a Hygiene Course.,

September 5.—Lieut. J. E. H. Neville, M.C., returned from Newmarket, having qualified in an Educational Course.

1921 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE
1st Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY

September 21.—Nine other ranks arrived from Regimental Depot on posting to the Battalion.

September 23.—2nd Lieut. E. A. Oakeley returned from Carrickfergus, having qualified at & Hygiene Course.

October 7.—One platoon "A" Company, under Lieut. C. A. Sawyer, proceeded to Cork to take over guard duties at Government House. One platoon "C" Company, under 2nd Lieut. M. H. S. Last, proceeded to Kilrush to take over detachment from 2nd Royal Scots.

Major A. E. Sanderson, D.S.O., proceeded to Hythe to attend a Lewis Gun Course.

October 14.—2nd Lieut. J. L. Stebbing returned from a two months' course of instruction in transport duties with Royal Artillery Mounted Rifles at Ballyvonare.

October 17.—Lieut. E. A. Packe, D.F.C., attended a course in Intelligence Duties at Chester.

Major-General A. R. Cameron, C.B., C.M.G., on giving up command of 18th Infantry Brigade, sent the following farewell letter to the Commanding Officer:—

"I write to say how much obliged I am to you and your Battalion for what they have done and the spirit they have shown during these times."

October 22.—Twenty-one Sergeants from 2nd Battalion came over from Tipperary to spend the day.

Classification of Regimental Signallers, who were all classified First Class, with an aggregate of 99.74 per cent.

November 8.—The detachment from Kilrush, under 2nd Lieut. M. H. S. Last, returned.

November 12.—General Rt. Hon. Sir C. F. N. Macready, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., Commanding-in-Chief in Ireland, visited the barracks of the Battalion.

November 28.—Captain G. Naylor, M.C., proceeded on leave pending posting to the Regimental Depot for a tour of duty.

December 2.—Lieut. S. C. P. Slattery proceeded to Hythe for a four-day Conference on Weapon Training.

December 30.—Captain J. W. Meade rejoined the Battalion on completion of a tour of duty at the Regimental Depot, and was posted to "B" Company.

December 31.—Captain H. E. F. Smyth, M.C., cross-posted to "D" Company.

1921 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE
1st Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY

THE 43RD IN IRELAND.

THE following are the experiences of the war in Ireland by one of the rank, by whom the brunt was borne—the Platoon Commander :—

His not to care two pins.
His but to harry Sinns.
Into the Crossley went
He and six others.

The life of a regiment stationed in Ireland used to be a pleasant one. Hunting, shooting, fishing, and all the other amusements which help to make life easy were to be had in abundance, and the local inhabitants were chiefly noticeable for their civility, love of sport, whisky, and dirt. But for the last three or four years things have changed, gradually but surely.

After the 1916 Rebellion the country quietened down, until her young men had forgotten how unpleasant anything like a real war really is. After a moderate interval a general lawlessness became evident, but the I.R.A. was considered a sort of Black-Hand business, which could never amount to much, and was regarded as more of a joke than anything else. After a short time the Regiment moved from Cork to Ballyvonare, and thence to an assorted collection of buildings in Limerick, sardonically referred to as "barracks," each company being in a different building.

Training was carried out as far as was possible, but the increasing demand for every conceivable kind of escort and patrol, including that delectable sport known as the bicycle patrol, soon made it impossible to do very much.

The most celebrated event of the summer of 1920 was "Black-and-Tan" Sunday, which fell due in August. Each side learnt a lesson that day. We learnt that the Black-Hand, though none the less childish, needed serious watching. The Black-Hand learnt that the Black-and-Tans were not going to allow liberties to be taken with them. The actual events of the Sabbath were not very alarming. Certain officers, who were due to proceed on leave that day, did so in jeopardy of their lives ; but, except for that and in spite of quite heavy firing, the only casualty was "Tate Clock" which was shot for not holding up its hands. Yet a detachment of the Regiment was sent out to prevent the entire town from being burnt. Curfew was introduced the following night, and vast armies of men, arrayed in the panoply of war, escorted at the appointed hour the unclean natives to their more uncleanly homes, and then all was quiet.

What was known as "City Blocks" came into vogue about this time; the idea being to place men all round the city, so that no one could leave or enter without being examined. On one occasion, when a particularly cowardly murder had been committed in the north, and the assassins were seen to make off in a Ford car, blocks were put down right across Ireland, and every car was duly stopped and scrutinized. At the end of three days the blocks were taken off, since it had been discovered that the police had found the car two hours after the murder.

1921 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE
1st Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY

It was not until the Regiment took over Tulla for the second time that we began to realize the rudiments of how to cope with the natives. Tulla is a village in Co. Clare, about twenty miles from Limerick, and to its workhouse each company came in turn for a tour of duty. The workhouse was decrepit and dirty; the local natives were also dirty, and a very great deal might be written about them, for the district was very large, and the Regiment's tour of duty became a kaleidoscope of tragedy and comedy.

One soon learnt that the charming civility and friendliness that one met with everywhere was but a cloak to the most cowardly brutality imaginable, and that the peasants' ability in lying was only impaired by their inability to lie convincingly.

On one occasion a car was held up by a culvert, which had been blown up, making a healthy six-foot crater in the road. About ten yards away dwelt an old man, with his wife and family; they were interrogated. He said that it was done during the night, but he could not say at what time, because he was asleep. Meanwhile his entire family kept up a ceaseless clamour, like a Greek chorus, calling on the many Saints of the Catholic Church to witness to the veracity, innocence, and general worthiness of the old man's character.

The work at Tulla was hard, but interesting; the day's work starting any time of the day or night, and ending any time the next day or night.

It consisted of searching houses and districts for arms, men on the run, and documents. It was seldom that anything was found, but the mere fact of being about all over the district at any time of day or night made it difficult for the various gangs to collect and act.

Many local friendships were formed with people, some loyal, others whose desire was to stand well with the party in power. One very loyal old lady sent up a bottle of priceless old brown sherry for the Officers and a bundle of books for the sentry to read.

One old priest, who loudly protested his loyalty, came over to the mess when "C" Company was in power, bearing in his hand a particularly seditious Lenten pastoral which had been issued by his Bishop with orders to read it from the pulpit. He arrived breathing fire and slaughter, and demanding that every man, woman, and child should be slain and every house razed to the ground for twenty miles round Tulla. The consumption, however, of two and a half decanters of port was as oil to the troubled waters, and after having sung a song, he was escorted to the gate where he espied an ass-cart laden with washing. This he promptly commandeered, rightly doubting his own powers of motion, and was with difficulty placed thereon; then, beating the donkey without ceasing with his umbrella, he departed at a brisk canter.

The same priest came into Limerick and walked into the orderly room where he cornered the Commanding Officer and talked rapidly and painfully on the situation in general for a quarter of an hour then producing a handful of raisins from his pocket he solemnly poured out a little heap on the Commanding Officer's table, and another on that of the Adjutant before he went away.

1921 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE
1st Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY

The only other regular detachment the Regiment found was at Newport, about eight miles from Limerick, in County Tipperary. It was smaller than that of Tulla, being only a platoon. It was nothing more than a reinforcement to the Royal Irish Constabulary detachment there.

In Limerick the majority of the patrols were done on foot, and large numbers of men were employed every night, equipped in fighting order, and wearing ammunition boots which allowed them to be heard several streets away. Train escorts to Cork and other places were furnished, as was also a crew for a "Tactical" Crossley. This was a Crossley tender fitted with seats facing outwards, with no tailboard or wind screen, and with the biggest local murderer handcuffed to the side. The crew consisted of an officer and six other ranks, armed with a Lewis-gun, rifles, and rifle-grenades. Their duty was to travel in front of anybody who wished to go from one place to another by road, and to be the first to fall into any booby trap which the thoughtful natives might have planned for the travelling celebrity of the moment.

At one time road-cutting became a serious nuisance, until the Royal Engineers contrived a large wooden sleeper shaved down at each end, one of which was carried on every car, and with its assistance almost any trench could be successfully negotiated. Tree felling and walls built across the road were removed by the simple means of collecting every able-bodied man in the neighbourhood and watching them do it.

From the foregoing it will be seen that large numbers of men were required to carry on at all, and that under the existing conditions musketry was an impossibility. It was therefore decided to divide Limerick City and its immediate neighbourhood in two parts, the Regiment being allotted one and the Royal Welch Fusiliers the other, each being responsible for the safety, order, and well-being of their respective areas. The ordinary nightly patrols were abolished, and "21 Platoon" came into being, consisting of 2 officers and 30 picked other ranks, who were struck off all duties. These were referred to by the men as the C.I.D., and by the officers as the "Bolsheviks." They were responsible for the safety of the main streets, and for the enforcing of Curfew, and the general behaviour of the citizens; they also guarded the tennis club on three days in the week. After Curfew they raided likely places and houses, varying the programme as much as they were able.

On occasions bombs were thrown at unarmed R.I.C. constables in an unsavoury part of the town, and on one evening a R.I.C. patrol was fired at when crossing Sarsfield Bridge at about 7.45. It is worthy of note that five minutes after this outrage the streets were flooded with troops, the men in all sorts of garbs, and the officers in the weirdest assortment of dress imaginable. Some in flannels, some in mess kit, one officer at the head of a gallant body of men was decked out in blue trousers, khaki jacket, with white tie and collar under a khaki cap; but every one was armed. There were no casualties to the Crown Forces, but one civilian was killed and five wounded. This loss, and the subsequent Curfew at 8 p.m. for a fortnight of that sweltering summer, went a very long way towards convincing the townsfolk that lawlessness did not pay. The dead civilian (one Dan McNamara of Park) was laid low, while running, by a magnificent shot from a '32 automatic pistol at a range of 40 yards. He was an evil bird and quite easily spared. After this outbreak the town was quiet and well-behaved until the Truce.

1921 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE
1st Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY

After the Truce well-known murderers daily paraded the streets in hastily-made uniforms, and all the terms of the Truce were broken one after the other.

Officers still had to walk about armed, but were able to go farther afield, and altogether life was easier. Somehow, the most striking thing about the Truce was to see the Regiment march to church the first Sunday, not only without advance and rear-guards, but even without rifles.

Now that the Irish dare not shoot at even the most defenceless member of the Crown Forces, they have begun to commit murder amongst themselves (the local name for it is fighting). Sinn Fein has now died, and in its place have sprung up no fewer than five different parties, who solemnly parade the streets by day and shoot each other's womenfolk and aged men by night.

Such is the state of this country, in which at one time all looked forward to doing some peacetime soldiering and to enjoy the pleasures of which our predecessors have told us. But, alas, it appears that few of us will ever see the country again in its old happy and contented state which prevailed before pedagogues and demagogues ever gained the ear of a pleasure and sport-loving people!