

1937 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE
2nd Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY

SUMMARY OF SECOND BATTALION DIARY 1937

January 1st — The Regiment took part in the Brigade Parade for Proclamation Day. The Army Commander expressed his pleasure at the Regiment's steadiness, March Past, and Arms Drill.

January 7th — A draft of 13 left for England, for transfer to the Army Reserve.

January 8th — A draft of 35 under 2nd Lieut. F. R. C. Bray arrived from England.

January 20th-21st — Regimental Rifle Meeting. Winner of Commanding Officer's Watch: C.Q.M.S. Calver.

January 25th-26th and 30th — Regimental Individual and Team Sports. Victor Ludorum: Sjt. Philpin. Winners of Team Sports: Headquarter Wing.

January 29th — Funeral of the late Civil Surgeon, Major G. H. Fitzgerald. The Regiment provided the customary escort of 200 men and Firing Party etc.

February 6th — Bareilly Week Polo Tournament started.

February 14th — The Regiment was beaten in the final of the Infantry Polo Tournament by the Royal Scots — five goals to four, after extra time. Eleven teams entered.

February 22nd-26th — The Regiment carried out a Mobilization Test, culminating in a parade of all ranks as for marching out of barracks on the day of entrainment. 2nd Lieut. F. R. C. Bray promoted Lieutenant (*London Gazette*, February 2nd, 1937).

February 27th — A.D.V.S. inspected all animals of the Regiment.

March 1st — The Brigade Commander (8th Infantry (Bareilly) Brigade) Brigadier A. K. Hay, D.S.O., O.B.E., carried out his Annual Inspection of the Regiment, followed by the presentation of the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal to Quartermaster-Serjeant S. C. Holyoake. Major H. E. F. Smyth, M.C., joined on Posting.

March 12th — Inspection by the Eastern Command Inspector of Educational Training, Lieut.-Colonel A. C. T. White, V.C., M.C.

March 15th — 2nd Lieut. R. J. Henderson, U.L.I.A., proceeded to join 2/11 Sikh Regiment at Bannu, on completion of his one year's attachment with the Regiment.

March 18th — 2nd Lieut. D. H. Weymouth and H. T. Addams-Williams, U.L.I.A., proceeded to join 1/8 Gurkha Rifles at Shillong and Skinner's Horse at Risalpur respectively, after completing their one year's attachment with the Regiment.

March 19th — 2nd Lieut. K. W. W. Duncan, U.L.I.A., proceeded to join 3/18 Royal Garhwal Rifles, at Lansdowne, after completing his one year's attachment with the Regiment.

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March 29th-30th — Fire Orders Competition. Won by number 9 platoon, C Coy.

April 1st. —Report received from A.D.V.S. Eastern Command consequent on his inspection on February 27th:

Condition of Chargers: Good.

Condition of Mules: Excellent.

Hygiene of Stables: Excellent.

The following Unattached List Army Officers arrived for their one year's attachment with the Regiment: 2nd Lieut. D. M. Amooore, 2nd Lieut. W. M. Amooore.

Second Hill Party left for Chaubattia under command of Captain J. E. D. Kilburn. Composition: 'S' Company and Signallers.

April 2nd—Pte. Grocutt ('A' Company) admitted to C.M.H., Muttra, with suspected cholera.

Precautionary measures taken throughout the Regiment.

April 3rd — The following Unattached List Indian Army Officers arrived for their one year's attachment to the Regiment: 2nd Lieut. A. D. Tatham-Warter, 2nd Lieut. J. A. Parker.

Pte. Grocutt placed on dangerously ill list, disease confirmed as cholera.

April 9th — Pte. Grocutt reported progressing satisfactorily. No further cases, and precautionary measures cancelled.

April 15th — Lieut. R. E. F. T. Barry and a guard from C Company of 30 men left for Kala Dhongi to mount guard on H.E. the Viceroy (Marquess of Linlithgow) at his shooting party.

April 16th — Capt. M. M. A. R. West proceeded on leave to U.K. for two months.

April 20th — Families left for Landour.

April 23rd— The Regiment prepared to adopt intensified Mountain Warfare Training owing to the situation on the Frontier.

April 24th — Orders for the wearing of Short Puttees issued. These to be taken into use on May 3rd.

April 28th — An intensive programme issued and an explanatory conference held.

April 29th — Viceroy's guard returned.

April 30th — Red Flashes with embroidered White Bugle Horns taken into wear on the left side of the Pith Hat and sewn on to the puggaree.

The Silver Bugle Horn now worn only on the Wolsey helmet which is worn on ceremonial parades.

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May 2nd — Cpl. Phillips's case began in the City Magistrate's Court — causing death by Negligence.

Veterinary Officer inspects all animals.

Two cases of malaria reported.

May 10th — 2nd Lieut. M. J. St. Aubyn obtained a D on a Local Transport course.

May 12th — Coronation Day — Strong as possible Church Parade at 0700 Hrs.

May 14th — Brigade withdrawal sand-table exercises on Mountain Warfare.

The Regiment's proposed move to Multan 1937-38 cancelled.

May 20th — Long cadre commenced.

May 22nd — The Commanding Officer inspected all chargers.

Captain L. R. Randall returned from the Hill Detachment at Chaubattia.

Captain L. W. Giles, M.C., and Captain W. G. Clarke proceeded on two months' leave to Ranikhet.

Intensive Training ceased on May 16th.

New programme of ordinary work issued with 2 days a week allotted to Mountain Warfare.

May 23rd — Films of the Frontier and tactical methods in Frontier Warfare shown to all officers and N.C.O.s by Brigadier Mainwaring from Delhi.

May 24th — Inspection of all animals by the Veterinary Officer in Charge of 7th and 8th Infantry Brigades.

May 25th — Regiment visited by the District Commander, Major-General R. J. Collins, while practising Mountain Warfare.

May 30th — R.Q.M.S. P. J. Barlow, M.M., left to take up the appointment of Quartermaster Serjeant at the Staff College, Quetta. He had 25 years service in the Regiment.

June 6th — Fire in 'B' Company's Office about 11 p.m. Little damage was done. Largely old files and filing boxes. Extinguished in twenty minutes.

June 7th — Practice Brigade Parade for King's Birthday Parade.

Captain J. B. Jarvis admitted to Hospital.

June 9th — King's Birthday Parade.

A Pagal Gymkhana was held in the evening.

June 11th — Orders received that Major W. L. Barnard would be attached to Meerut District H.Q., as 'Attached Officer', A. & Q., Branches for a period of more than three months on return from leave.

June 18th — Waterloo Day observed as a Holiday. Aquatic sports held.

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June 28th — Following officers posted from Home Battalion, to join during the first half of the Trooping Season 1937-38. Lieut.-Colonel R. J. Brett, D.S.O., Captain the Hon. C. B. A. Bernard, Captain J. P. A. G. Graham, 2nd Lieut. R. Hornsby-Wright. Intensive Training for Mountain Warfare suspended after duration of nine weeks. Lieut.-Colonel J. J. Powell proceeded on three months' leave in United Kingdom. The Command of the Regiment devolves on Major H. E. F. Smyth, M.C.

July 7th — Annual Inspection of D.A.D.O.S., who reported 'Very Good'. Congratulatory letter received from Brigade Commander.

July 9th — First Hill Party arrived back in Bareilly from Chaubattia. (Composition: S Company and Signallers).

July 11th — Second Hill Party left Bareilly for Chaubattia under command of Captain J. B. Jarvis (Composition: ^CA' Company and Band).

July 17th — Commanding Officer's kit inspection of 'C' Company.

July 18th — Lieut. T. G. D. Rowley took over the duties of acting S.S.O. during absence on leave of Lieut. F. W. Lowndes-Stone-Norton.

July 19th — During this week a series of military films were shown to the Regiment in the Regimental Theatre.

July 23rd — Coronation Medals presented to recipients present in Station by the Commanding Officer at a Regimental Parade.

August 3rd — Inspection of animals by Veterinary Officer, 7th and 8th Infantry Brigades.

August 9th — Inspection of scientific instruments by Ordnance Mechanical Expert.

August 14th — Commanding Officer's kit inspection of the hill detachment at Chaubattia.

August 16th — Major H. E. F. Smyth, M.C., proceeded on three weeks' leave. The Command of the Regiment devolved on Captain L. W. Giles, M.C.

August 21st — The Regiment played the Welch Regiment in the 2nd round of the Cawnpore Rugby Cup. Lost 20—3.

August 23rd— The Adjutant-General (India) Lieut.-Col. Sir John E. S. Baird, K.C.B., K.B.E., C.M.G., D.S.O., visited Bareilly. Owing to a breakdown on the railway he could only stay three hours. He visited one of the new type dining-halls and kitchens in barracks.

August 31st — Camouflage tests for machine guns, light machine guns, and range takers, were held by 8th Infantry Brigade.

September 7th — Major H. E. F. Smyth, M.C., returned from leave and assumed Command of the Regiment.

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September 13th — Separation allowance to be admissible to other ranks whose families are away in the hills.

September 17th—18th — Annual classification of Signallers.
Result of Reading Test was:—99.405 per cent. All 47 candidates passed. Report of classifying officer:—Very Good.

September 20th — Non-commissioned officers Promotion examination started.

September 20th—21st — Company Gymnastic and Physical Training Competition.
Result: — 1st B Company; 2nd C Company; 3rd S Company.

September 22nd — The Regiment to move to Ahmednagar in the 1938-1939 Trooping Season.

September 27th — Collective Training Season started.
C and S Companies begin Section and Platoon Training.

October 2nd—Company Commanders and Major H. E. F. Smyth, M.C., went to Roorkee for a three days' reconnaissance of the Camp Training Areas.

October 10th — The Second Hill Party, consisting of A Company and Details of HQ, Wing, returned from Chaubattia.

October 11th — Bareilly Week started.
The Regiment beat the nth Field Brigade Royal Artillery in the Polo Tournament.
B Company begins Section and Platoon Training.

October 12th — A Company begins Section and Platoon Training.

October 13th — The Regiment beaten by the 14/20th Hussars in the Polo Tournament.

October 15th — The Regiment beat the “Scraps” in the Polo Tournament.

October 16th — Commanding Officer's kit inspection of the Indian Platoon.

October 17th — The first Church Parade since the hot weather started.

October 23rd — Eastern Command Air Co-Operation exercise begins at Bareilly.
All Ranks Dance — a farewell to all ranks proceeding home this trooping season.

October 24th — Advance party for camp departed.

October 25th — Draft of 64 other ranks left for transfer to Army Reserve.

October 27th — Lieut.-Col. J. J. Powell returned from leave and resumed Command of the Regiment.

October 29th — Regiment proceeded to Roorkee by train.

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October 30th — Regiment marched to Kheri Camp from Roorkee Station (18 miles).

November 1st — Company training starts.

November 6th—13th — Companies moved to Field Firing Camp at Sakrauda, spent four days there, and returned to Kheri.

November 15th — Inter-Company exercise. A and B Companies.

November 18th — Inter-Company exercise. A and C Companies.

November 22nd — Battalion Training starts.

November 28th — Cross-Country race. Team race won by A Company and Individual by Sjt. Briggs.

December 1st — A.M.G.C. Part V. The Regiment was in defence.

December 5th — Tug-of-War won by C Company.

December 6th — Capt. J. P. A. G. Graham, 2nd Lieut. R. Hornsby-Wright and a draft of 70 arrived at Bareilly from England.

December 8th — 2nd Lieut. R. Hornsby-Wright arrived in Kheri Camp.

December 10th — Inter-Battalion exercise with 2/3 G.R., 1st Rajindra Lancers, 84th and 85th Field Batteries, R.A.

December 16th—17th — Inter-Brigade exercise with 7th Infantry Brigade.

December 19th — S Company and HQ, Wing marched to Roorkee and entrained for Bareilly.

A, B and C Companies proceeded by lorry to Gurkhamtser where they camped for the night.

December 20th — Both parties arrived at Bareilly.

December 23rd — Lieut.-Col. R. J. Brett, D.S.O., and 2nd Lieut. M. H. Mulholland arrived from England.

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SECOND BATTALION LETTER

Dear Editor,

Our third year in Bareilly was remarkable chiefly for the various alarms and excursions about our potential move to the frontier. Excitement rose to fever pitch in May and June when all hot weather precautions were thrown to the wind (metaphorically of course, as the weather was unutterably hot and still) and we demonstrated our superiority of mind over matter by running up and down imaginary mountains, hiding behind imaginary rocks and building imaginary picquets. Everybody worked astonishingly hard and most of us were quite disappointed when we failed to go to the frontier at the end of it all. One result of the scare was that the Regiment started to wear short putties, as apparently if a man hurries up and down precipices with long putties on, his legs go bad on him from lack of circulation. Also officers started to wear the Mills pattern web equipment instead of our leather belt, and the majority were delighted with the change,

It seems very odd that nobody in India ever seems prepared for a show on the frontier. Every two or three years something boils up there and the army in India 'spins' madly and we all practise picquetting. Why do not we practise frontier warfare every year, since it is by far the most probable type of warfare in which we shall have to indulge? As it is we practise the 'big battalion' stuff, preparing, we are told, to fight a first or second class European power, presumably without tanks, armoured cars, aeroplanes, anti-aircraft guns, anti-tank weapons, or any form of mechanization. It is all very mysterious.

In April the Viceroy had a week's shooting and fishing camp at Kaladhungi, about sixty miles from Bareilly, and we provided a guard for him under Barry. The guard distinguished themselves by catching many bigger and better fish than the Viceroy — it was not revealed until afterwards, however, that they used their mosquito nets instead of a line.

Camp was a rather lengthy affair of seven weeks, but everybody seemed to enjoy it and undoubtedly it did the Regiment a lot of good. The camp itself was at Kehri, near Roorkee, and was next door to where the Regiment camped in 1926. It was a very pleasant place but rather low down with the result that we got very damp and cold at night and there was a lot of 'tummy' trouble in consequence.

Owing to the abolition of 'holding', about three hundred and twenty men went home during the year instead of the usual one hundred and sixty. This meant that we were terribly below strength during camp, some platoons going out only twelve strong.

We had some fun with the new system of reporting to inspecting officers during training. The idea is that one goes up to any likely looking higher commander during a battle and says "I am Lieut. Snodgrass of the 52nd Light Infantry. On my right are the Ghurkas and on my left the Jats. I am going to attack, etc. etc." The Quartermaster however won the day, by walking up to a General, who was inspecting the camp, and saying to him: "I am the Quartermaster of the 2nd Battalion The Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. On my right is the Jemadar Sweeper, on my left the Pioneer Serjeant. I am now going to look at a drain."

Our Part V exercise consisted of digging and wiring a defensive position all day and night and repelling a counter attack next morning, and on the whole the Regiment did very well.

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We had a very good inter-battalion exercise against the 2/3rd Ghurkas. We had two squadrons of Rajindra Lancers on our side. They are part of the Patiala state forces and really very good. They gave a great display of *Ventre a terre* galloping and light brigade charging.

The final exercise was an inter-brigade one with the 7th Brigade from Dehra Dun. It started, for us, with a forced march to reach a bridge before the enemy, developing into an attack, followed by night outposts. The next day the fog of war came down and completely bewildered the two rival commanders who ordered marches and counter marches but could not find the enemy.

The Regiment, we were told, had done exceedingly well throughout.

All training in 1937 was noteworthy for the numerous experiments in camouflage which were tried out. Some of us walked about with greenery in our hats in an effort to emulate Macduff in Birnham wood. Others wore their hats on back to front which made the enemy think we were retreating. Others wrapped themselves and their machine-guns in voluminous nets, which were all right until the gun went wrong or one of the firers got cramp. Then struggling salmon were not in it.

We were also made to experiment with a "new" method of carrying equipment. Actually the 43rd carried out similar experiments when they were at Shorncliffe but nobody bothered about that in India. The big idea is that the water bottle is carried on the top of the pack, and that nothing dangles below the waist. Every time a man lay down to fire, his water bottle hit him the most terrible blow on the back of the skull. Luckily the water bottle was then tilted the wrong way so that water leaked over the wretched man's neck and revived him.

We were told that Ahmednagar was to be our next station but rumour has lately changed this to Secunderabad, so we will make no comment yet.

As regards sport our best effort was to reach the final of the Infantry Polo Tournament, in which we lost after extra time to the Royal Scots.

Hole Randall left us in June to go to the Depot but when he got there he decided to pack up altogether, and so we lose another stalwart. We miss his famous puns. Billy Barnard, Jeeves Bayley and Jack Theobalds have all gone to the 43rd, and Rupert Brett and Jimmy Graham came out to take their place. Bill Smyth arrived early in the year, but we are afraid he will soon disappear to the Staff.

We have now started on our fourth and last year in Bareilly, a pleasant but aggressively dull place.

Yours,
52nd.