

1939 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE
1st Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY

FIRST BATTALION LETTER

Dear Editor,

Things that happened before September 1st seem very remote, and your demand for material for the 1939 issue of the CHRONICLE has caught me a trifle off my balance; however I will do my best to recall a few of the Regimental happenings that occurred before the August crisis blossomed forth into full flower. I will endeavour as far as is possible to make no mention of events that have occurred since September 1st.

To begin with Colonel A. C. M. Paris, left us on May 1st to take over command of the Infantry Brigade at Secunderabad. He is now a Brigadier, and though we were naturally sorry that he left us before completing his full tenure of command we can truthfully say that we should very much like to be one of the Regiments in his Brigade. May I take this opportunity of wishing him, on behalf of all ranks, the very best of luck. Although it is unpleasant to part with an old friend it is equally pleasant to greet a new one, and we were all pleased to welcome our new Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Colonel E. H. Whitfeld as his successor. In spite of the fact that he commanded this until after the outbreak of war, in the rank, and with the pay of a mere Major, he may rest assured that he is not, like the old prophet, without honour in his own country.

'Shiny' Horley sprang a surprise on us by suddenly announcing that he intended to become a Lieut.-Colonel in command of a Gunner Militia Training Unit in the West Country. We wish him the best of luck and devoutly hope that his prodigies will shoot at the enemy with unerring accuracy. Joe Jarvis took over command of the Regimental Depot when Shiny left.

Harbottle and Wrottesley left us to join the 52nd about August 1st, and Bartlett and Favell had a shock when they were told on August 28th that they were to sail from some mysterious port in the North of England on September 1st. I hope they all arrived safely. We were pleased to welcome Ingham, Pulteney and Bartlett from Sandhurst and Favell from Cambridge. They all joined the Regiment during the summer, though the two latter were not with us for long before suddenly receiving their notice to proceed abroad.

The Baron has come back to us from his War in Spain full of strange oaths and modern instances and we trust untainted by the virus of Communism. Perhaps he sees himself as the Voroshiloff of the Union of British Soviet Republics. Mogg and Stancomb left us to become assistant Adjutants of the 4th and Bucks Bns., and when the proposed expansion of the Territorial Army actually took place, they both became Adjutants of the 2nd Line Bns. Harbottle was doing the same job with the Welch Regiment up to the time that he went abroad.

John Mogg and Jock Ducat-Hammersley both managed to get themselves married during the summer, and although I said that I was not going to refer to the War in this letter, I must add that we are glad to say that only one officer, to wit David Stancomb, caught war fever and did likewise.

Most of our activities in the soldiering line were directed to preparing ourselves for manoeuvres in Kent and Yorkshire. As the Regiment had not had any opportunity to play at war for some time owing to duties in London, etc., we were all looking forward to them very much.

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Unfortunately Hitler intervened, and after an arduous M.T. move down to Kent, we only had about three days there before we were suddenly recalled to Colchester, the resulting M.T. move, being even more arduous than the first. Needless to say we never got to Yorkshire at all.

Sport, I hope, will be more adequately dealt with elsewhere. Briefly we won the Garrison Cross Country Run, were second in the Eastern Command which qualified us to run in the Army finals, which we did, but without success; we were also second in the Garrison Athletic Meeting, and were knocked out in the Second Round of the Army Hockey Competition by the Lancashire Fusiliers.

The Regimental Syndicate managed to collect about 25 per cent of the partridges that they ought to have done, but enjoyed themselves just the same. A fair amount of hunting and point to point racing was done, and the Regimental Race was won by one of our chargers, 'Brown Sugar IV, ridden by David Stancomb. Wykeham managed to sign on as a member of the crew of the good ship *Thalassa* for the Fastnet Race and our other sailors duly sailed round and into the mud at West Mersea in the Sprites.

The Government had a scheme by which retired officers of certain categories could volunteer for a fortnight's training. We had a good response to this call to duty in spite of the fact that the officers concerned were to pay their railway fare home. We were all just as disappointed as we know they must have been, when the scheme fell through, but again thanks to Hitler we got them in the end. It is an ill wind — but you know the rest.

I hope, Mr. Editor, that you will excuse this extremely brief record of our activities, which incidently is the last I shall have the pleasure of writing for you, and blame Hitler rather than me. I hope also that my successor will be in a better position to recount our doings next year, than I, and indeed, most of us are at the moment.

Yours sincerely,
43rd.