

**1946 REGIMENTAL CHRONICLE**  
**1st Bn OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY**

**SUMMARY OF THE FIRST BATTALION DIARY 1946.**

*January 1st* — Regiment in Berlin.

*January 15th* — Visit by Major/General G. P. B. Roberts, C.B., D.S.O., M.C., commanding 7 Armoured Division.

*February 12th* — Major H. P. Patterson took over duty of 2nd i/c on the release of Major N. J. Callingham M.C.

*February 15th* — Regiment informed that it was to move to 13 Infantry Brigade of 5 Division.

*February 20th* — Address by Brigadier R. W. M. de Winton, D.S.O., commanding 13 Infantry Brigade.

*March 4th* — Advance Party moved to Seesen in the Harz Mountains.

*March 8th* — Main Body of Regiment moved to Seesen to join 13 Infantry Brigade.

*March 11th* — Rear Party moved to Seesen.

*March 14th* — Visit by Major/General R. A. Hull, C.B., D.S.O., commanding 5 Division.

*March 18th* — Address by Brigadier R. W. M. de Winton, D.S.O.

*April 3rd* — Major F. H. G. Higgins joined the Regiment and took over duties of 2nd i/c.

*April 6th* — S Coy won Regimental Gross Country Run.

*April 23rd*— Visit by Major/General R. A. Hull, C.B., D.S.O., to say good-bye on relinquishing command of 5 Division. Divisional Commander to be Major/ General P. G. S. Gregson-Ellis, C.B., O.B.E.

*April 27th*—Brigade Cross Country Run, won by 43rd.

*April 30th* — D Coy and Anti/Tank Platoon moved to Sarstedt on detachment. Major E. K. Judd, detachment commander.

*May 13th* —Visit by Lieut/General A. Galloway, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C., commanding 30 Corps.

*May 24th-25th* — A Coy won Regimental Athletics.

*June 2nd* - S Coy beat A Coy in final of 13 Brigade Inter-Coy Football Cup.

*June 4th* — D Coy and Anti/Tank Platoon returned from Sarstedt.

*June 13th*— 1 Worc R beat 43rd in final of 13 Brigade Boxing Competition.

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*June 17th* - 13 Brigade Inter-Unit Athletics, won

*June 21st-22nd* — 5 Division Inter-Unit Athletics, won by 43rd.

*June 27th* - 13 Brigade Inter-Unit Swimming, won by 43rd

*June 28th*— Visit by Major/General P. G. S. Gregson-Ellis, C.B., O.B.E., Commanding 5 Division.

*July 5th* — 5 Division Inter-Unit Swimming Championship won by 43rd.

*July 13th* — 43rd gain third place in 30 Corps Inter-Unit Athletics.

*July 17th* — Lieut/Col A. Clerke Brown left for SEAC. Major F. H. G. Higgins took over command.

*July 23rd* — 43rd gained second place in BAOR Inter-Unit Athletics.

*August 21st* — Regiment learned that it was moving, with 13 Brigade Group, to Trieste.

*August 30th* — Lieut/Col C. Clifton joined and assumed command. Advance party left for Treviso, prior to moving to Trieste.

*September 3rd*— Advance party arrived at Treviso.

*September 9th* — Main Body left for Treviso.

*September 13th* — Main Body arrived at Treviso. Advance Party left for Trieste.

*September 18th* — Main Body arrived at Trieste.

*September 19th* — Lieut K, Phillips, Pte Francis and Pte Vince killed in railway accident. Six other ranks injured,

*September 20th* — Lieut K. Phillips, Pte Francis and Pte Vince buried in Military Cemetery, Udine.

*September 25th* — Lieut/General Sir John Harding, K.C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C., Commanding 13 Corps, visited the Regiment.

*September 25th* — Rear Party left Seesen.

*September 29th* — Rear Party arrived Trieste.

*October 7th* — Capt H. J. W. Newton took over duties of Adjutant on release of Capt D. H. Maitland.

*October 12th* — Visit by Lieut/General Sir William Morgan, K.G.B., D.S.O., M.C., Commander in Chief CMF.

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*October 15th* — Visit by Major/General C. J. Loewen, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., Commanding 1 Armoured Division.

*October 19th* — Death of Major/General Sir John Hanbury-Williams, G.C.V.O., K.C.B., C.M.G., Colonel of the Regiment.

*November 4th* — Brigadier R. J. Brett, D.S.O., acting Colonel of the Regiment, arrived from the U.K. for a short visit.

*November 5th* — Colour Parade.

*November 7th-8th* — Brigade Rifle Meeting, won by 43rd.

*November 10th* — Departure for U.K. of Brigadier R. J. Brett, D.S.O.

*November 12th* — Lieut/Col C. Clifton departed to U.K. on leave, and Major F. H. G. Higgins assumed command.

*November 18th* — Major/General G. J. Loewen, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., accompanied by Brigade, Regimental and Battalion Commanders, visited the Regiment and inspected improvements made to Barrack Rooms.

*December 2nd* — A. Coy, with Anti/Tank Platoon, moved on detachment to Udine. Detachment Commander Major H. P. Patterson.

*December 12th* — Skeleton Battalion Exercise.

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**FIRST BATTALION LETTER**

Dear Editor,

This is the first post-war 43rd Letter designed to show you how and where the war left us, where we have come to and how we are shaping. Inevitably, I must say that had it not been for Fergus Higgins, who so sternly warned me that I have but until 1800 hrs tonight to complete this letter, it would never have been written. Paternal pressure must not be discounted either, and so we hope that having started things off this letter is going to come easier than I think it is.

Unfortunately I cannot say 'this last year at Colchester has been' this, that and the other. I start in Berlin and finish in Trieste. The 43rd becomes increasingly travelled, and the 52nd is probably saying it is not before time either. Frankly I think we are lucky; we could have sunk into such obscurity after the end of the war and so much could have gone wrong. Moves, good stations and two reorganizations on higher Age and Service Groups have kept up our interest and kept us young.

Berlin, where we went in November 1945, marked the end of the wartime 43rd. The Regiment there finally celebrated the end of the war, enjoyed a first class station, forgot the war and finished exhausted. Berlin was news at that time; people had not forgotten that it had been the army's goal for six years, and whether we viewed it in that light or not, it was an unforgettable place, from the centrally heated modern barracks to the miraculous welfare amenities in the ruined city.

Colonel Arthur Clerke Brown commanded, having come to us from G1 12 Corps in June 1945. Jim Callingham left us in February, to Henekey's, the wine firm's great gain and our great loss. Jim Callingham will always be remembered by C Coy which he commanded with such distinction for so long. Anyway, Pat Patterson found that he could become a regular, which he promptly did, and although Pat Watson went, some balance was maintained.

In late February, when it was very cold — and the Berlin winter is notoriously cold — we were shown a glimpse of our future. We were War Office Reserve in Berlin but the fact had not really been appreciated, but now it was brought home to us as we were to be transferred back to an Infantry Division which meant leaving Berlin, and we gathered soldiering was to be taken rather seriously again. Everybody was very apologetic and came and told us so, but there it was, we were to leave Berlin and that was that.

Our move took us to the Harz Mountains south of Hanover, where we settled into a small town in the foothills, Seesen. Skis were unpacked, christened and put away again, and sanitary areas cleaned. Guards went on, came off, and we were supposed to train. All a bit unsettling at first, but the future became clear as the spring got under way. They took our guards off us, and men were seen stalking over the hills in section formation or jogging round running tracks.

That was Seesen, a countryman's delight, the birthplace of Rhine Army's second best athletic team and the stamping ground of a very healthy, happy young Regiment. Fergus Higgins arrived to look after Jim Callingham's job as second in command and settled down very happily. By June the Regiment had very soon won the Brigade and Divisional athletics and swimming, including the Brigade cross country, which could not have put people in better heart.

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Training went on well, we did more than you would think, and eventually each company went to Paderborn, Europe's best training area, for a fortnight. Training was a joy there and of course there were only two to a tent and the Officers' Club was just down the road, so one realized life was getting back to pre-war.

A lot of shooting was done in the forest above Seesen, at boar and all varieties of deer, stag and boar. I say 'at boar' because our efforts were not crowned with any great success. Fergus Higgins never saw a boar, while I missed dozens, but I will tell more of that elsewhere. David Maitland shot a fine stag, which saved his Forstmeister from arrest I think, and we had a big Regimental shoot which produced a good lunch and no pig.

Then the Regiment came third in the Corps and second in the Rhine Army athletics, and Colonel Clerke Brown left us for Singapore, which may have been somebody's gain but was certainly our loss. We shall always remember him for the way he brought us from our wartime ways of June 1945 to virtually a peacetime Regiment as we are now. We owe to him our 1946 athletic team on which he lavished so much care and which was such an outstanding success. Colonel 'Boy' Clifton came to us from India then and is carrying on the good work of producing for you the 43rd everybody wants. Which turning point brings me back to this War Office Reserve business. Late August brought the news that we were off to CMF and soon that crystallized into Trieste, which sounded interesting enough and caused no great anxiety.

The move, of course, entailed a lot of work, and David Maitland produced some historic movement orders, appropriately entitled 'Hannibal'. The day came, feet were finally withdrawn from under numerous tables, foresters bidden farewell and thanked, many tears shed, and with essential and unessential baggage strewn across half Europe, we set off.

The journey was memorable for waterless trains, overcrowded carriages and magnificent scenery. Railway stations of five countries echoed to the Regimental call plus one or two 'Gs' as the Regiment, with thirty-five dogs, entrained and detrained endlessly. Our first stop in Italy was at Treviso, where we stayed a week drawing new equipment. It was a very trying week entailing as it did stopping and starting all over again, but gave all the Regiment a chance to visit Venice. Many later went back for a week's local leave at the Lido there, and for a few pounds disported themselves like pre-war millionaires.

Trieste saw us introduced to Khaki Drill for the last month of the summer, while we bathed and coped with seemingly endless administrative problems. Our barracks had been occupied by Italians, Germans, Yugoslavs, New Zealanders, Scotsmen, and Irishmen in that order; all had obviously had different ideas on what constituted home comforts.

Life here presents a few fairly minor difficulties, excluding the inevitable guards which are heavy in Trieste. In the first place the Italian does not build barracks like we do, and his national sport appears to be stealing vehicles or any accessory which might be lying handy.

Anyway we are kept very busy and are not afraid to let it be known that we like CMF very much, at least Fergus Higgins and I do, so I hope some influential person sees these lines and takes note. Trieste boasts probably the best food anybody has seen since before the war, and the shops are full of all those things nobody has been able to buy for six years or more. A dinner may cost you thirty shillings, and it often does, but we pay cheerfully.

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David Maitland, Adjutant for a year, left grasping his antlers firmly in his left hand in October. Henry Newton took over with such a high standard of staff duties to live up to his night's sleep has been ruined, so he has taken to riding before breakfast.

Mention should be made of our 'Bora', or Trieste's own particular gale which averages 80 mph, is generally just on freezing point and scatters window panes, jeeps and nerves with reckless abandon. Just now we have the Bora, and the frost it brings, to thank for cancelling one race meeting and one point to point and putting others in doubt. Aiello military race meetings have become big Regimental functions, we run the Brigade Commander's horse and two Regimental racehorses. Major Fergus Higgins, who owns and rides Storno, has had one good win and will win again. All ranks have been riding in draghunts and point to point meetings and the Regiment's fourteen horses have a busy life. Both officers and other ranks have been taught to ride, and the Regimental stables are an extremely healthy concern.

Christmas is now over and I am on to my target date December 31st, 1946. It was a good Christmas with the usual round of parties from the Officers' Divisional Ball to the Grooms party in the Sports Stores. President of Regimental Institutes Capt Dick King had his big week of the year and set a standard that may cause his successor much uneasiness.

As a last word I should like all those who have left us on release or posting to be remembered. The Regiment we run now is largely built on the foundations they laid, if they look after our civilian life as well as we shall try to look after their late Regiment, we shall be very grateful.

Yours, 43rd.