

**RECORD OF THE 2/4TH BATTALION.**  
**1st AUGUST 1915 to 30th JUNE 1916.**  
**EXTRACTED FROM THE REGIMENTAL CHRONICLES OF**  
**THE OXFORDSHIRE & BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY**

Colonel W. H. Ames gives the following brief account of the training of his Battalion during this period and of its subsequent arrival in France :—

From 1st August to 29th October 1915 the Battalion was under canvas at Broomfield, and carried out a strenuous course of training. One night each week was spent in entrenching practice at Chignal Smealy, and Brigade, Divisional, and Army manoeuvres were carried out.

In November an order was received to reduce the Battalion to a strength of 600 of all ranks, and the surplus were sent to the 3/4th Battalion. November and December were devoted to Individual Training.

**1916.**

Early in January the Battalion was brought up to full strength by a draft of recruits from the third line. These men had undergone no more than a month's training, and the Battalion was occupied in training them, as well as in perfecting the training of the men of longer service. During this month the command of the Division was taken over by Major-General Colin Mackenzie, C.B., and very shortly afterwards the whole Division moved to Salisbury Plain, where the Battalion occupied Parkhouse Huts. The new rifles were served out; a complete musketry course was fired; and training went on in bombing, bayonet-fighting, and trench routine, preparatory to proceeding overseas.

**FRANCE.**

About the beginning of May 1916 the Battalion, in Parkhouse Huts, Salisbury Plain, was brought up to war strength by drafts from the Liverpool Rifles, Welsh, Dorset, Cambridgeshire, and Herts Regiments of the Territorial Force, and on 25th May the Battalion embarked for France.

Safely arriving at Havre the next morning they marched to a rest camp. At 7 p.m. that evening the Battalion entrained, and arrived at Merville at 7.45 the next evening, and went into billets at Arrewage. After six days they moved up to Laventie, where they were attached to the 38th Division, 113th Brigade, for 8 days' instruction in the Fanquissart Section. During that period two raids were made by the Welsh troops, and the Battalion during its period of instruction had one man killed and 12 wounded. The report of the G.O.C. 38th Division on the Battalion was as follows : "All ranks showed exceptional interest and keenness to learn, and were well grounded before they came out to this country. The men were well disciplined and of good physique."

At the expiration of 8 days they returned to Arrewage for an 8-day rest, but within 24 hours were moved up to Laventie and went into support.

From 15th-21st June the Battalion was in the trenches in the Red House Sub-section of the Fanquissart section. During this period the 2/5 Gloster Regiment made a raid, and the Battalion assisted with rifle-grenades and demonstration.

June 21st-27th the Battalion was in support at Laventie, and on the 27th they returned to the front line. During this time Major D. M. Rose returned to England sick, and Captain Cuthbert became Adjutant.

On the evening of 28/29th the Battalion had to carry out its first raid. Captain Davenport's Company had been selected. The plan was to enter the enemy's trenches, and penetrate to his support line if possible. Two parties were to enter the trenches at points about 100 yards apart, and a third party was to act as reserve and rearguard. Considerable hindrance was experienced by two exceptionally dark nights immediately preceding the raid, which made it impossible to ascertain with certainty whether the wire had been properly cut.

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On the morning of the 28th Lieut. K. E. Brown and 2nd Lieut. W. H. Moberley went out each by himself to reconnoitre the gaps in the wire. 2nd Lieut. Moberley was hit by a sniper and lay for 9 hours in a shell-hole before he could get back to our lines just as the raid was going out.

Lieut. Brown remained out about 5 hours, and returned with the information that the wire at the left gap appeared to be sufficiently broken. In order to avoid the machine-gun fire with which the enemy always swept the top of the trenches at the hour fixed for zero, the various parties crept out into the No Man's Land and lay there for an hour. At zero they all advanced, but the wire was insufficiently cut. Lieut. Stockton, with the right party, under very heavy fire cast both right and left about 50 yards to try to find a gap, but did not succeed in doing so, and brought the right party back. 2nd Lieut. Zeder, in charge of the left party, got up to the wire but could not get through, and this party suffered severely as they came back, 2nd Lieut. Zeder being killed. The supporting party were also held up by uncut wire, and eventually returned to the trenches, having lost 8 killed and about 30 wounded, nearly all of whom were brought in. Sergeant Prentice, Corporal Brereton, and Private Gardner received the Military Medal for their actions during this raid, and the G.O.C. 61st Division wrote that he considered it had been carefully planned and gallantly carried out. The failure of the raid was due to the uncut wire.