

Section 094

Summary

The 2nd/4th Battalion

In this section we summarise the activities of the second line territorial battalion during WW1

The 2nd/4th Bn was established in September 1914 to accommodate territorials who had not signed for overseas duties plus the large number of new recruits who were flooding to the colours. Under their first CO, Col Lionel Hanbury, they set up camp at his own Hitcham Farm in Buckinghamshire. They moved to Northampton 1/2/1915 for further training and then to Chelmsford 3/4/15 to join 184th Brigade.

Their first duties were involved in guarding the Essex marshes and watching out for Zeppelins based in the Burnham on Crouch area. They moved to similar duties at Gateshead on 11/1/16 and then back to Mersea Island On 25/3/16.

In May 1916 they moved to Ludgershall on Salisbury Plain to await shipment to France which was reached on the 27/5/16. They suffered their first casualty at Laventie on the 8th June. Their first action was a raid at Ferme du Bois 13/7/16. This was close to the Belgian border and well away from the Somme fighting. They moved south to the Somme on 19th November 1916 but took almost no part in that battle.

Their next action was at Bihecourt-Pinne Copse on 2/4/17 and the summer was filled with training and trench duties, gradually moving back northwards. On the 22nd August they began their part in the 3rd Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) with an attack on the enemy defences SE of St Julien. The next few months were spent in the unremitting mud and carnage of Flanders.

They moved back south to take part in the Battle of Cambrai on the 27th November 1917 but their participation was quite marginal.

They were part of the resistance to the German Spring Offensive of 21st March 1918 losing

their CO, Lt Col Dimmer VC, MC on the 22nd. The next few days they fought a valiant retreat until they were withdrawn on the 30th March.

From August to November 1918 they were part of the final British offensive which eventually forced the Germans to seek an Armistice. They finished the war at Sepmeries.

They stayed around the Cambrai/Arras area until May 1919 when they were sent to Egypt to guard Turkish POWs and help deal with civil unrest. They were disbanded there 25th September 1919 with most of the men transferring either to the 1/6th Glosters or the 1/8th Hampshires.

The colours which had presented to them in France on the 6th January 1919 were returned to Reading and were deposited in Barclays Bank 6/1/1920 for safe keeping.