

## Section 097

# Summary

## The 7th Battalion

*In this section we summarise the activities of the 7th Battalion in WW1*

The 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion were formed in August 1914 and in their early training were working very close with the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion in and around Reading.

The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Battalions spent the months of September to November at Codford and Sutton Veney engaged on training and returned to Reading in late November where they were equipped. In early May 1915 the 7th went to Fovant near Salisbury to join 78th Brigade where at last they got khaki uniforms (previously they were wearing blue post office uniforms as these were all that had been available) On 21st July the 78th Brigade moved to Sandhill Camp near Warminster to join 26th Division and on 15th September they embarked for France.

In France the 7th were attached to other units for familiarisation at Ailly sur Somme and Aubigny but on the 9th November they were posted to Salonika and departed from Marseilles 11th November on the MT Arcadian. They reached Alexandria on the 18th and Salonika on the 24th.

At first they stayed in Salonika mostly route marching to keep warm but on the 1st December they went to Lembet and then Latina to dig trenches to fortify the line from Laina to Tumba which they were defending against the Bulgars. They finished the defensive line in May 1916 when they moved to Redan Camp where most of the men caught either dysentery or Malaria or both.

On the 22nd July they started a march north to take over lines between Lake Doiran and the River Vardar which had been held by the French.

The next few months were spent on patrols and capturing hills one by one with the odd raid on the Bulgar lines to capture prisoners. It was not until April 1917 that they began serious offensives.

In November 1917 they were engaged on building a railway while being withdrawn to Divisional Reserve - through the winter of 1917/18 they were battling against malaria and blizzards which made life pretty unpleasant for all concerned.

In Spring 1918 they returned to the front and on the 22nd September the great advance began. By September 30th the Bulgars had surrendered and the 7th were advancing towards Sofia as part of the Army of occupation. However on the 15th October they were diverted to Mustafa Pasha and Adrianople and on to Rustchuk on the Danube where the influenza epidemic struck.

Later they went to Batum and Tiflis and finally to Constantinople where they were mostly demobilised. A cadre returned to Reading on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 1919 to lay up the Colours at St Giles Church. The battalion was finally technically merged with a Glosters battalion and absorbed into the 8<sup>th</sup> Ox and Bucks LI in November 1919