

Section 117 Training in England

7th Battalion August 1914 to 15th September 1915

Formation

The 7th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment was formed at Reading in August 1914 as a unit of Lord Kitchener's 3rd Army. The men were drawn from all parts of England, chiefly the Midlands with a large proportion of Berkshire men. No. 16 Platoon was almost entirely Welsh - chiefly miners.

Getting Equipped September 1914 to May 1915

For its early days it became closely associated with the 8th Battalion, almost to the extent that they could be regarded as one double-sized battalion.

After a short time at Reading, the battalion went to Codford and Sutton Veney in the Salisbury district, returning to Reading about November 1914. At Reading it was gradually equipped, except for rifles. It used "Drill Purposes" rifles till four or five weeks before it went abroad. Here it remained training and organizing till early in May 1915.

Fovant May to July 1915

It then moved to huts at Fovant near Salisbury. Here it was with the 78th Brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General D'Arcy Thomas. At Fovant, khaki uniform was issued, and there was much hard drilling and training, including more advanced training than had been possible at Reading.

Sandhill Camp 21st July to 15th September 1915

About the 21st July 1915 the battalion moved to Sandhill Camp No.14 at Longbridge Deverill, near Warminster, where it found the rest of the 26th Division commanded by Major-General Mackenzie Kennedy. With the division a more advanced course of training was undertaken, and, rifles having now been issued, a musketry course was fired.

The battalion now proceeded to France with the rest of the division. On the 15th September 1915 it embarked at Southampton for Havre, which was reached on the 20th.

The Officers

The officers who were with the 7th at this time were the following:

- Lieut.-Colonel* R. E. T. Bray [BR0014] (Commanding).
- Majors:* J. J. O. B. Sexton [SE0003] (Second-in-command). H. B. Morony. [MO0016]
- Captains:* L. Marton. [MA0033] T. Close [CL0015]. R. B. Gillespie [GI0004]. J.M. Eldridge [EL0009] (Adjutant). T.H. Gill GI0010
W.P. Collins [CO0042]. J.O. Hilling [HI0016]. S.A. Pike [PI0003].
- Lieutenants:* T. V. Booth-Jones [BO0016] (Transport Officer). S.H. Troup [TR0007]. R.A. B. Chancellor [CH0003].
C.E. B. Rogers [RO0007]. E.B. Matthews [MA0002]. H.J. C. Neobard [NE0003]. G.W. R. Bray [BR0013].
E.W. Ravenshear [RA0006] (Machine gun Officer).
- Second-Lieutenants:* H. A. L. Donkin [DO0001]. H.C. Elphick [EL0010]. J. Butler [BU0035]. C.E. Brown [BR0043]. G.F. Bate [BA0051].
P.H. Williams [WI0017] (Signalling Officer). J.B. Marks [MA0035]. A.K. Barrett [BA0074]. H.D. Mosley [MO0007].
- Medical Officer:* Lieut. M. Bryce [BR0036].
- Quartermaster:* Honry.-Lieut. G. Casey [CA0030].