

## Section 157

### The Other Battalions

# The Machine Gun Corps

## The Corps

The Corps was an independent unit, established in October 1915 (disbanded in July 1922) to Concentrate Vickers machine guns. (Before this date, each infantry battalion had a machine gun section of trained specialist gunners).

Initially, a Machine Gun company was attached to an infantry brigade, and took its number. Therefore, the 35th Brigade's Machine Gun company was 35 Company, MGC. When the Corps was set up, machine gun sections of infantry battalions were amalgamated and transferred to the Corps in France (this was because, understandably, the BEF's commanders did not wish to have their MG support removed whilst gunners were returned to the UK to train). The infantry battalions had their Vickers replaced with an increased establishment of Lewis guns. So, the gunners did not return to Battalions, and became members of the Corps.

Initially at least, MGC men were not volunteers. Later in the War, there were direct entrants to the Corps (both officers and soldiers) and they would count as 'volunteers', as they elected - or were selected - to enter the Corps. Entry qualifications were quite tough; physical strength to carry the gun, and a mechanical or mathematical aptitude of a high standard.

## The ex-Royal Berkshire Companies

The companies to which Royal Berkshiresmen were transferred were:-

<i>Former Bn</i>	<i>New Company</i>
1	99th
2	25th
1st/4th	145th
2nd/4th	184th
5th	35th
6th	53rd
7th	78th
8th	1st