

War Diary
240th (1st/1st South Midland) Brigade R.F.A. (T.F.)
48th (South Midland Division)

Year 1914.

Bristol. Aug 4th . At 8.45 pm. Order to Mobilizes was received from 'General Warwick'

All notices to join posted by midnight.

5th. Prior to the order to mobilise being received a large number of all the members of the Brigade offered themselves for re-enlistment.

8th. Brigade left for Devonport.

Devonport. 10th. Orders received to call for volunteers for foreign service.
30 officers, 7 permanent staff and 260 men sent in their names.

Extract from London Gazette dated 29-8-14.

Captain V. A. Hillman to be seconded.

Captain C. W. Todd to be captain.

Mr. Escourt, C. K. S. Metford, A. E. Hopkins, H P. Lane,

J.B. Fullerton, G.S. James to be Lieutenants.

Sept. 4th. Recruits enlisted up to 9.pm. – 280.

Recruiting stopped until further orders.

Medical inspection of Volunteers for foreign service.

Result 20 officers and 340 O.R.'s. Passed fit out of 23 officers and 368 O.R.'s.

Officers unfit:- Major R. L. Austin, Lt. Metford and Lt. G. S. James.

11th.

Capt. C. W. Todd posted to command 1st. Battery, vice Major R.

Austin posted to command Reserve Unit.

Capt. V. A. Hillman posted to command Amm: Col: vice,

Capt. C. W. Todd.

Devonport.

Sept. 19th.

2nd Lt. W. A. Todd and 2nd Lt. M.E. Todd joined for duty pending Gazetting.

Crownhill.

Oct. 8th. Brigade moved under canvas at Crownhill.

28th. Capt. E. J. Dunscombe, Lt. C. K. S. Metford, and Lt. G. S. James left the Brigade to join reserve Brigade at Bristol.

2nd/Lt. Croom - Johnson joined pending Gazetting.

29th.

2nd/Lt. A C. Fish joined pending gazetting.

30th. Major Austin left to command Reserve Brigade at Bristol.

- October 14th. Major Austin, Lts. James and Metford rejoined from Bristol.
20th. Brigade moved to Chelmsford. (Broomfield).
- Chelmsford. 24th. Capt. C.W. Todd promoted Major to command 1st. Battery.
(Broomfield) Lt. A. E. Stone promoted captain and posted to 1st. Battery.
27th. Lt. Taynton. Joined.
- Nov. 27th. 2nd Lts. W. A. and M. E. Todd gazetted from 9-9-14.
2nd Lt. Harrison. appointed 19-11-14.
2nd Lt. Lindrea appointed 20-11-14.
2nd Lt. Fisher appointed 20-11-14.
- Dec. 2nd. 2nd Lt. Harrison and Lindrea joined for duty.
7th. Capt. Burbidge proceeded to join Divisional Amm: Column.
23rd. Lt.-Colonel F. K. S. Metford transferred to T. F. reserve.

Year 1915.

War diary for the period Jan - Feb 1915. It is not available. Brigade was stationed at Broomfield during the period in question.

Broomfield.

- March. 9th. W. F. Ridler from 5th Gloucestershire Regiment:-
To be 2nd Lt: from the 6/3/15. W. H. Lanham to be 2nd Lt. 7/3/15.
- 28th. Brigade entrained for Southampton.
- 29th. Detrained at Southampton, and embarked on city of Lucknow and Huanchaco.
- 30th. Arrived at Havre at 8.30 pm.
- 31st. Arrived at Abbeville, at 10-15 am.
Arrived at HAZEBRUCK at 6 p.m.
- April. 2nd. Visited H.Q. R.A. 5th Div and 4th Div., and returned to select positions and observing station's for the Brigade.
- 6th. 1st Battery registered points in Sector 'B' from :-
Messines - Rossignold rd. to Messines - Wulvergham Rd.
Their line was obtained from the map and worked out dead time.
At noon 3rd Battery registered Sector 'A'.
Fuzes erratic especially in latter cases of though carefully checked by an officer.
At 2-30 p.m. 1st Battery registered sector 'A' observing from burntout - dugout.
3rd. battery reported in action.
2nd. Battery had already registered at 11-30 a.m. on 5th April.
- 10th. At 10a.m. 1st battery searched for a battery reported by plane N of Messines.
Enemy replied with 40x 4.3s shell around LEUWICK FARM.
Little or no damage.
- 11th. At 10-30 a.m. 3rd Battery fired , fuzes better but still unsatisfactory.
Many English aeroplanes about and rumours of 1 German, the first, German planes never seen around here. 2x German Stationary

balloons up but at very long range over 1000x.

12th. Between 10-45 and 12-15p.m. German shelled PETITE POINT, and then searched and increased till 1 shell fell in 2 no 2 horse lines.
At 5.10 p.m. 3rd Battery fired.
This fire caused retaliating fire which did some damage, and we stopped.
It is thought that the guns firing on us to-day are on motors.

27th. General Butler visited positions in the morning.
2nd Battery tried to register BELHEEM FM. None observed. English planes chased German and drove him home, but not before he had dropped 2 x Green lights over our trenches.
Reconnaissance of G.H.Q. positions with Bde Major (Major A. Murry - Smith..

May 8th.

Demonstration on front of Division, between 11-30 and 12 - 30 fired 12 rds per Battery and 60 rds between 6 and 7p.m.
The real work was done SOUTH near FESTUBERT apparently.
Our infantry continued firing during the night.

15th. At 11a.m. Germans shelled our trenches. We replied every time they stopped. 9rds (6 Blind) into village N.E.

16th. At noon retaliated with 12 rds opposite trench No 70. 8 rds into village.

31st. 3rd Battery observing station selected on 55.

The Shell we have are very old, mostly made 1900-01.
Fuzes are dated 1901- 02. and Cartridges 1899 - 1901.
Occasionally we find shell of 1906.

June 5th. The Germans have recently bought up some new guns on this front at least 2 x 5.9 Hows: and the French 47 guns these have been recognized but not as yet located.

In the afternoon they put 7, 4 – 2s. into 3rd battery positions.

One hit a dugout and splinters hit a wagon, but otherwise no damage.

They then set fire to a farm in front of the battery but it cost them between 80 - 100 shells.

26th. Handed over to the 2nd Canadians Bde R.F.A. and marched to OUTTERSTEENE.

27th. Lt. A.C.R. Croom – Johnson left to take command of a T.M. Battery.

July 11th. 2nd Lt. B. G. James left for attachment to the R.F.C.

FERFAY.

15th. Lieut. W. A. Todd posted to 2nd Battery from Amm Col.

This Division now belongs to 4th Corps, 1st Army, together with 1st. Division and 27th Div.

20th arrived at MONDICOURT by train.

SAILLY.

31st. Bde less 3rd Battery left THIEVRES for SAILLY.
Bde H.Q. at COLINCAMPS, all battery positions about ½ way between COLINCAMPS and HEBUTERNE.

We are now Brigaded with 144th Infantry Bde.
Batteries in position by 11. p.m. Splendid positions, very well dug in by French 51st Regt: from whom we took over.

Aug 5th. It is such a treat having 18prs. They are shooting splendidly and fuzes are quite good. We know that we can hit what we try to.
The Infantry remarked on the good shooting and have twice asked for retribution each occasion expressing satisfaction.

20th. Germans shelled the Central observing station with field guns in the morning.
Flashes were observed at a bearing of 93° but Major Todd, who saw them is of the opinion that they are "Puff's".
A field gun battery has come into action E. of SERRE WOOD, and probably the "Puff's" are a blind for this new position.
The sausage has changed it's position further South bearing 104°g.
Both above bearings from Central c 34 c 2-9.

22nd. At 11.30 3rd battery dispersed 2x working parties just South of .872.

23rd. Balloon up all day German fired frequently 2 or 3 rds on to infantry who were visible going to and fro for the Bde relief.
Fire was directed by Sausage.
At 11.30p.m. the infantry called on 3rd Battery to fire on working party at pt. 301.
3rd Battery have a gun out today. It was taken out during the night and is in action in a crop of clover. It is a "piece de service" and would retaliate whether the sausage was up or not, 30 rds are dumped.
We can't spare more on an allowance of 62 per Bty, per week.

24th. Lt A.G. Alexander to 1st Battery, Lt.'s Pulford - Guild to 2nd Battery and Lt. Webster to 3rd battery attached for 14 days instruction.

28th. 1st Battery began registration of it's new zone. Observing station is by the cemetery in HEBUERNE.
So that the observer is almost at right angles to his line of fire which takes the trenches almost in enfilade.

It is excellent for observing for range but difficult for line, and it was found necessary to have an observer at central to assist in the latter.

30th. At 8.45a.m. a German up E. of SERRA for 5 minutes.
New work at 3 of :863 located. Men working driven off by 1st Battery.
At 9.40 a.m. balloon up 16 L.W's. during morning on CARRIERE.
In the afternoon they put up more up ?. at 8 p.m. 3rd Battery called on to

engage relief in communication trench's : 374.

2nd Lt s. F. Fullerton and W.F. Ridler joined Amm : Col : from England.

31st. Balloon up to - day, Germans shelled our trenches opposite 1st Battery who retaliated successfully, German guns appear to be 4 - 2s. They also shelled CARRIERA again with Little Willies. Infantry called 1st battery and 4 rds were fired at 2.30 p.m.

31st contd:

Very quite in our sector during afternoon In evening a bluster of Red Lights at 8.15 p.m. and 11.36 p.m. but nothing noted afterwards.

Sept 1st. Balloon up at 7.15 a.m. down at 12.30 p.m. it seems certain that a 8" How has just come up against us.

2nd. At 3.30 p.m. smoke from 2 trains seen in ACHIET - LE - PETIT. German transport and 44 working parties loading up wagons seen W. of same village.

3rd. Intermittent shelling of our trenches and CARRIERA. At 2.25 p.m. 2nd Battery engaged working party successfully and later 3rd Battery retaliated for 20 Little Willies.

5th. At 8.30 a.m. 3rd battery retaliated by request of infantry with 6 rds, hostile fire appeared to come from :909 N. E. of SERRE.

9th. 2nd Lts. Ellerton and Ridler attached to 3rd and 1st battery respectively.

10th. Hostile planes very active this morning, 3 over at once. Ammunition Column moved to AUTHIE.

12th. 3rd Battery retaliated on trenches opposite Trench 28 by request of infantry. Intermittent shelling in afternoon round Battery positions. 2nd Battery successfully engaged working party.

15th. Germans shelled this village from 12.55 p.m. 1.55 p.m. we retaliated on PUISIEUX and they stopped. They put 6 more in at 5.30 p.m. but did no damage.

17th. 20 - 30 15 pdrs put into village at 5.15 p.m. We retaliated on PUISIEUX and the How's: on GOMMECOURT WOOD. Germans stopped but then turn a 9 c. m. battery on 1st and 3rd battery positions. No damage.

19th. Germans did a good deal more shelling then usual but nevertheless it was very indiscriminate.

21st. Shelled PUISIEUX 60 rds. Germans retaliated on village at 6 p.m. with 40 rds. 2nd Lt. J.D. Challen attached from 155th Bde R.F.A.

24th. 2nd Battery cut wire successfully, 120 rds range 2800. Wire was well enfiladed and was very old wire.

At 4.30 p.m. 2nd Battery co-operated with 4th S.M. Bde R.F.A. firing 40 rds on LA LOUVIER FM.

25th. At noon 2nd Battery fired 157 rds shrapnel and 25 H.E. in wire cutting. The wire at this point is about 100 to 150 yards deep in heavy coils. Patrols report that it is not barbed., and is very thick Some of it is as thick as one's little finger.

The wire is undoubtedly cut, but the lane does not reach up to the desired point. It will require much more attention it should be noted that the best results on this were reported as being obtained using H.E.

- 26th. 2nd Lt. G.H. Bland from 3rd line attached to A.C.
 30th. From 1 p.m. to 1.20 p.m. Heavy bombardment of the whole front line, support and communication trenches, some 100 to 150 shells of all calibre coming over.
 It is possibly to find out what has become of our artillery during the last few days.
 No reply was made.

Oct 1st.

- Reported that the whole of the wire at point 863 (K17 b 17) and part of the wire at (17 d 2½) had been repaired.
 Capt. C.E. Boyce R.F.A. who for the nearly 4 years has held the post of Adjutant of the Brigade left to take up duty with the 15th Division.
- 3rd. Two German parties seen repairing front line trench., we did not fire.
 Capt. G.R. Benson R.F.A. arrived and took up duties of Adjutant.
- 4th. 77c.m. gun dropped 10 shells in HEBUTERNE and 3 shells on 2nd Battery O.P. at CARRIERA also 3 shells near Central (*Trench in front line*) in the Afternoon more intermittent German shelling. We did not fire.
 Several signs of movement.
- 5th. A Few rounds on HEBUTERNE.
- 17th. At 11.35 a.m. the bde fired 27rds on to Cross roads about L14 c 58 N. of PUISIEUX. This must have annoyed the Germans as they proceeded to put about 300rds on SAILLY and SAILLY. All calibres 4 men wounded in HEBUTERNE reported 3 killed and many injured in SAILLY.
 Bde fired 26 rds into PUISIEUXA and so did our other guns, but it did not check the bombardment.
- 18th. Between 9.30 and 10.30 a.m. Germans shelled HEBUTERNE and trenches 21 to 32 with heavy hows: and 2nd Battery O.P. with field guns we fired 12rds in support of the infantry.
 At 12.15. p.m. The Germans shelled out troops with Minenwerfer 5 -9 and 8.2 Hows (1st appearance here) about 350 rds. There and in Hebuterne trench 32. was completely blotted out but only one infantry officer and one man killed was killed. Many were wounded.
 We replied at 3.25 p.m. with 56 rds.
 On the German front line from K11 d 20 to K17 d 41. and in K23 b. other Bde's and our heavies and infantry co-operated, also an aeroplane.
 Plane saw hundreds of black objects, suggested to be Gas Cylinders in the German front line, pointing towards our line.
 They were five or six feet apart, and stretched side by side from GOMM COURT to BEAUMONT HAMEL.
 Prepared for gas attack, 2nd Battery kept Germans, opposite our ruined trench 32 busy with bursts of fire from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- 19th. Quite all morning, Infantry carried out relief's to - day.
 144th Infantry Bde replace 145th Bde.
 In the afternoon the Germans continued bombing ruined trench 32 with 8.2" Hows: and T.M. about 16 shell, as well as scattering a few field gun shell in our observing station.
 At 3.30 p.m. 1st Battery discovered German artillery officers quarters in

front of trench K17 b 1680 and shelled them.