

Robert William Middleton was born on the 9th.December 1896 and was baptised in this Church on the 28th.February 1897.The Middleton family lived on Albury Heath.

Robert joined the 5th (Service) Battalion,The Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire Regiment).By the 17th.July 1915 the Battalion had arrived at Cape Helles on the Gallipoli Peninsular in Turkey.On the 8th. they took part in a night attack to capture a ridge of hills to assist the British landing at Sulva Bay.The following day they successfully attacked Sari Bair.The Turks counter attacked and the Battalion lost half its men.The Battalion reorganised and returned to trench warfare where the main enemy was dysentery and jaundice.

In January 1916 the Battalion left for Port Said,Egypt and in February they moved to Kuwait.In April they took part in the attempt to relieve Kut in Iraq without success-the garrison surrendering to the Turks.

At the beginning of 1917 the Battalion moved north crossing the Tigris river and on the 11th.March they were the first troops to enter Baghdad.

There were still 10,000 Turkish troops north of Baghdad and they were to be joined by another 15,000 being driven out of Iran by the Russians.The British launched the Samarrah Offensive on the 13th.March and by the 23rd.April had taken the town of Samarrah and its railway.British casualties were 18,000 injured or killed and a further 37,000 taken ill.

Robert Middleton died of his wounds on the 29th.April.He was aged 21.He is buried in North Gate War Cemetery,Baghdad.

1. Memorial

2. Baptismal Register

3. 1911 Census

4. Service Medal and Awards Roll

5. Army Register of Soldiers Effects

6. Note on the Samarrah Offensive

7. Note on the Wiltshire Regiment

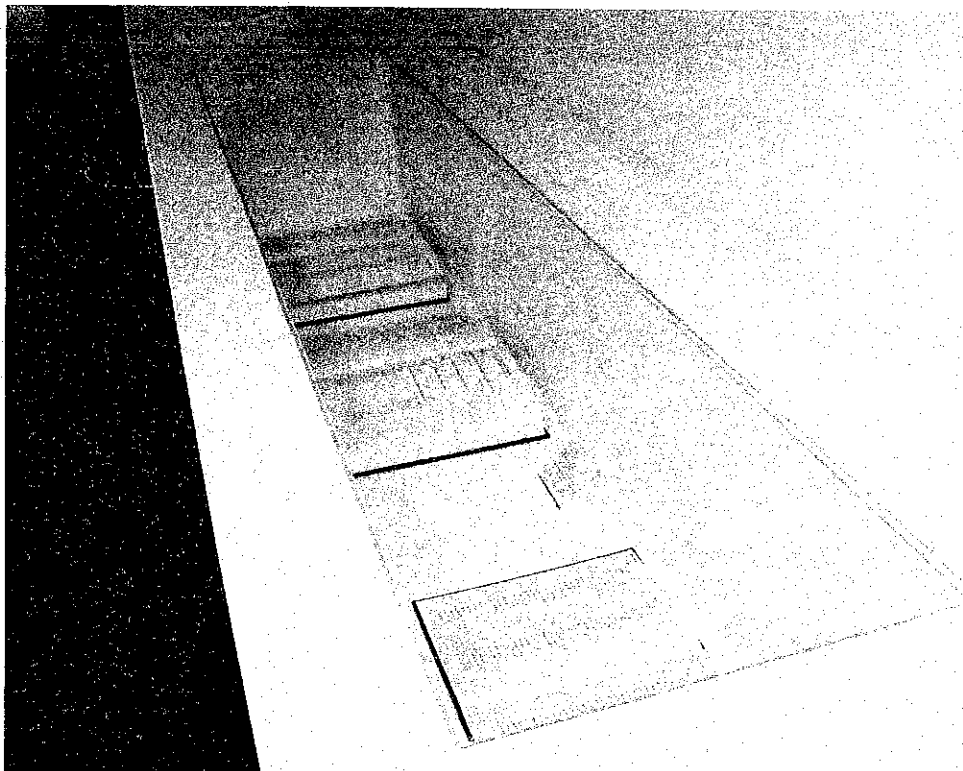
In Memory of

Private

R W Middleton

10885, 5th Bn., Wiltshire Regiment who died on 29 April 1917

Remembered with Honour
Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of Albury in the County of Surrey in the Year 1897

When Baptized	Child's Christian Name	Parents Name Christian Surname	Abode	Quality, Trade, or Profession	By whom the Ceremony was performed
1897 Jan. 31 No. 385.	William Thomas born June 13/96	William & Annie Maria Edgington	Albury	Labourer	<u>Evlyn Young</u>
Feb. 28 No. 386.	Robert William born Dec. 9. 96	William Buckley & Emma a	Middleton Albury	Gardener	R. J. Dundas
Feb. 28 No. 387.	Helen Dorothy born Jan. 6. 1897	John & Annie Dodsworth	Chelsea	Butcher	R. J. Dundas
Mar. 21 No. 388.	Percy Edmond born Jan. 25/97	Edmond & Rachel Ruddick	Albury	Labourer	R. J. Dundas
Apr. 2 No. 389.	Annie Dorothy born Feb. 23/97	James & Mary Ann West	Albury	Labourer	<u>Evlyn Young</u>
Apr. 4 No. 390.	Ernest Douglas born June 15. 1877	Cassie Carr	Hampshire near Carr	Working	R. J. Dundas
April 6 No. 391.	Denis Fern born Feb. 12. 1897	George Knight & Sarah Alice Ledger	Eastchurch	Blacksmith	R. J. Dundas
April 11 No. 392.	Margaret Annie born Jan. 20. 1897	Charles & Annie Cumber	Albury	Painter	R. J. Dundas

599 (B)

LUKE OF BIRNDAUGH'S (WILTSHIRE) REGIMENT OR CORPS.

SUPPLEMENTARY ROLL OF INDIVIDUALS entitled to the Victory Medal and/or British War Medal granted under Army Orders of 1919

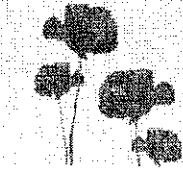
Regt. No.	Rank	NAME	In common with the Corps previously served with by each individual and Regt. No. shown, (the highest rank which he has held) for any period in a theatre of War, being a period during which he has been in the service of the Regiment or Corps which he is mentioned in the medal.	Theatres of war in which served	Clips awarded (to be left blank)	Record of disposal of decorations (a) Presented (b) Dispatched by Post (c) Taken into Stock	REMARKS
27965	Pte.	MIDDLETON Herbert	6th D. of Corn. L.I.				Class Z. 15.3.19.
			21400 Pte.				
9040	Pte.	MIDDLETON Hugh John	1st Wiltshire R.				D. of W. 6.4.16.
			9040 Pte.				
24890	Pte.	MIDDLETON Maurice	1st Wiltshire R.				
			24890 Pte.				
47894	Pte.	MIDDLETON Richard William	6th Wiltshire R.				Class Z. 21.3.19.
			47894 Pte.				
10885	Pte.	MIDDLETON Robert William	1st Wiltshire R.				D. of W. 28.4.17.
			10885 Pte.				
6113	Pte.	MIDDLETON William	1st Wiltshire R.				Discharged N.L.P.F. 10.5.19.
			6113 Pte.				
22544	Pte.	MIDDLETON William James	2nd Wiltshire R.				Class Z. 13.3.19.
			22544 Pte.				
3975	Pte.	MIDDLEWICK Edward	1st Wiltshire R.				Discharged Med. Unit. 22.3.15.
			3975 Pte.				
6307	Pte.	MIDDLEWINTER John	1st Wiltshire R.				Discharged N.L.P.F. 18.10.16.
			6307 Pte.				
10479	Pte.	MIDDLEWINTER Hubert George	1st Wiltshire R.				Discharged Surplus to Military Requirements 14.12.16.
			10479 Pte.				Pte. for

I certify that according to the Official Records the individuals named in this Roll are entitled to the Medal or Medals as detailed above.

Place: EXETER, Date: 22/3/19

Signature and rank of Officer certifying: [Signature] Captain

No. of Day in which entry	Serial No.	Regiment	Address from	Private's Name	Date of Death	CHILDREN		GRANDCHILDREN				No. of Day in which entry
						Private's Name	Date of Birth	Sex	Age	Sex	Age	
	409758	Sumner		6 th Wm 1459	24.4.1878	10	1	2	13 1/2	1	13 1/2	
	409759	Middleton		5 th Wm 10855	24.4.1878	10	5	7	16 1/2	1	16 1/2	
	409760	Fielding		5 th Wm 32940	14.4.1878	13	5	15	18 1/2	1	18 1/2	
	409761	Davis		5 th Wm 37296	30.4.1878	6	7	7	16 1/2	1	16 1/2	



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Battles - Samarrah Offensive, 1917

Fresh from his success in securing the fall of Baghdad, regional British Commander-in-Chief Sir Frederick Stanley Maude barely paused before launching an offensive further north to consolidate the new Anglo-Indian position at Baghdad, at present threatened by some 10,000 troops to the north of the city.

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Thus the Samarrah Offensive - incorporating the Battle of Istabulat - was launched with 45,000 frontline troops in mid-March 1917 and ran for approximately six weeks before operations were effectively called off until the autumn.

Maude's Turkish opposite, Khalil Pasha, possessed 10,000 troops to the north of Baghdad. He also relied upon imminent reinforcement by Ali Ishan Bey's 15,000 troops presently retreating from Persia at the hands of the Russians.

Maude determined that no further significant offensive could be considered until his Anglo-Indian force had seized control of the Samarrah railway, some 130km north of Baghdad.

In planning to capture Samarrah Maude devised a four-pronged plan: to initiate a series of small-scale attacks up the River Tigris; to prevent deliberate Turkish flooding of the plains around the Euphrates River; to prevent Ali Ishan Bey's force of 15,000 from rendezvousing with Khalil; and to conduct holding operations in the west.

In the event the Turks fought with tenacity against Maude's advance once it was underway. Operations began on 13 March - just two days after Baghdad itself fell to the British - with a successful raid on Turkish lines a little north of the city, obliging a Turkish 35km retreat to the junction of the rivers Tigris and Adhaim.

A little under a week later, on 19 March, Falluja was seized, crucially preventing the Turks from flooding the plains and significantly harassing the British advance.

Six days later however, on 25 March, an attempt to encircle Ali Ishan Bey's 15,000 men was emphatically repelled; the latter was able to move west to meet up with 5,000 Turkish troops at Dogameh sent down the Tigris to meet him. Maude's attempt to prevent the meeting - by despatching cavalry and launching infantry attacks upon Dogameh - was ultimately successful, if costly, Dogameh being taken on 31 March.

As a consequence of the action at Dogameh the Turkish defence fell back to the Tigris/Adhaim Rivers junction. The British, under General William Marshall (Maude's eventual successor as regional Commander-in-Chief following the latter's death in November 1917), promptly attacked the fresh Turkish position on 18 April (after a hasty detour to assist besieged cavalry at Shiala).

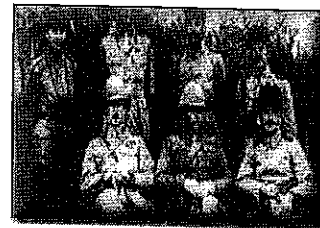
Having by now withdrawn a further 35km north to Istabulat, Khalil's force retired to formidable positions between the Tigris and the Al Jall Canal; the Samarrah railway itself lay in-between.

Undeterred by the scale of the task Maude continued with the offensive on 21 April, attacking at various points near to the river.

Heavy fighting saw some positions switch sides several times, until on the following morning the defending Turks retreated once again, this time to a ridge barely 10km from the railway. Casualties were roughly equal, at 2,000 apiece.

Continuing British attacks - and with more reserves on the way - persuaded the Turks to cede Samarrah on 23 April, leaving the town - and its railway - in British hands.

Successful in that it attained its aim the Samarrah Offensive nevertheless proved highly costly to the British. Casualties in the offensive as a whole were estimated at around 18,000, although a further 40,000 were lost to sickness.



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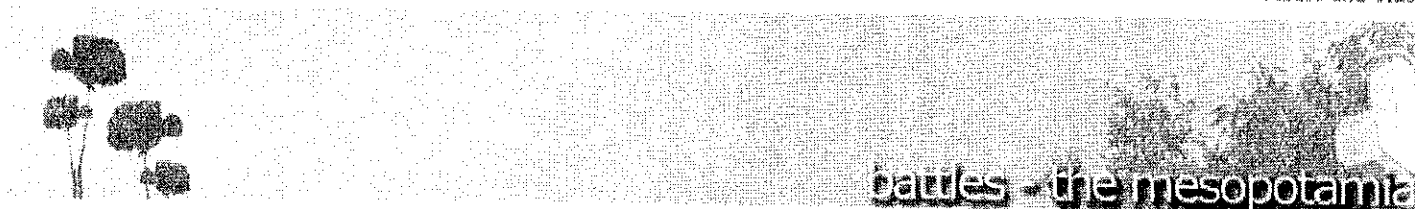
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Battles - The First Battle of Kut, 1916

The First Battle of Kut, begun on 5 April 1916, marked the final British attempt to relieve the Turkish siege of Sir Charles Townshend's beleaguered 10,000 troops garrisoned at Kut. Its failure sealed the fate of Townshend's force which, at last out of supplies, surrendered unconditionally to Turkish commander Khalil Pasha on 29 April 1916.

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In charge of the operation to conduct the relief was the newly arrived (and resolutely unpopular) British commander George Gorringe who took over from the recalled Sir Fenton Aylmer.

Gorringe's force was boosted by the recent arrival of Sir Frederick Maude's 13th Division. This brought his available strength up to around 30,000, a figure matched by Khalil's decision to draft up reserves from nearby Baghdad.

Gorringe decided to open the attack by sending Maude's men against the Hanna Defile once again, in spite of the earlier failure in storming the same position in January 1916. In the interim however Khalil had taken the opportunity of establishing two deep trench lines at Fallahiyeh and at Sannaiyat.

Attacking at dawn on 5 April Maude was surprised to discover the Turkish first line unoccupied. He therefore regrouped preparatory for a frontal assault upon Fallahiyeh that same evening. Fallahiyeh was duly taken following an advance across mud-soaked terrain, but at heavy cost.

Meanwhile a secondary attack along the other bank of the Tigris River encountered relatively light opposition. With Fallahiyeh secured reserve forces were set in place in readiness for a follow-up attack against Sannaiyat the next morning. Despite these early promising British successes casualties were nevertheless uncomfortably high: 2,000 on the first day alone.

Progress was much more difficult to come by on the following morning. Attack after attack upon Sannaiyat was repulsed over succeeding days. 1,200 British casualties were incurred alone on 6 April, with additional losses suffered the next day and on 9 April.

Frustrated in his attacks against Sannaiyat General Gorringe resolved therefore to switch the focus of his main attack to the other bank, against the Turk-held Bait Asia position. Heavy rainfall however hindered Gorringe's advance. Nevertheless forward Turk positions fell on 15 April with Bait Asia itself falling on 17 April at relatively light cost.

Khalil launched a determined counter-attack with 10,000 troops overnight against Bait Asia's Anglo-Indian forces but was ultimately thrown back. Khalil's force suffered a high percentage of casualties: 4,000; however the British loss of 1,600 troops made further progress along the bank virtually impossible.

Despite the absence of around 5,000 reserves en route to Gorringe from the British HQ at Basra, General Gorringe nevertheless launched a final attempt on 22 April, switching his focus back again to Sannaiyat.

Weakly composed however - the attack consisted of a single brigade preceded by the usual artillery bombardment (which as ever warned the Turks of impending attack) - it was repulsed after Khalil first evacuated his first two lines and then counter-attacked in force. A further 1,300 British casualties were suffered in this latest setback, bringing the overall total during relief operations to 23,000.

No further attempts at relief were made save for a final, desperate effort to send supplies through to Kut via an armoured supply ship, the *Julnar* (which also failed).

Accordingly Sir Charles Townshend, having consulted with higher authority, surrendered unconditionally on 29 April 1916 having failed to purchase parole for his 10,000 men with a £1 million offer.

It was the greatest humiliation to have befallen the British army in its history. For the Turks - and for Germany - it proved a significant morale booster, and undoubtedly weakened British influence in the Middle East.



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1st Battalion

In August 1914 the 1st Battalion were based at Tidworth and the 2nd Battalion at Gibraltar. The 4th (Territorial) Battalion were at their Annual Camp at Sling Plantation, on Salisbury Plain. On mobilization the 1st Battalion left for France on the 13 August, taking part in the battle of Mons 10 days later and followed by the retreat from Mons. The 'retreat' was a fighting withdrawal with a number of significant actions fought along that route. The battalion remained intact and ended the retreat on the outskirts of Paris. Once the line stabilized the battalion took part in the First Battle of Ypres, and Neuve Chapelle by which time they had lost 26 officers and 1000 men, the equivalent of a whole battalion. This was followed by trench duty at Hooge and then Kemmel where they remained for the remainder of the year.

2nd Battalion



Colonel Forbes and what remained of the 2nd Battalion after capture at Reutel October 1914

The 2nd Battalion mobilized on the 29th July 1914 when the 'Alarm in Fortress' was sounded in Gibraltar, sailing for England a month later. They landed at Zeebrugge as part of the 7th Division in October. Their initial deployment to defend Antwerp was abandoned after it was captured by the Germans. They redeployed to a position East of Ypres and very soon were in action at Reutel near Ypres. This first action for many was also their last as the battalion lost 450 men and 18 officers captured, 76 men and 7 officers were killed and 229 wounded after being assaulted by two complete German Regiments. After many other actions they ended 1914 in the line at Fleurbaix.

4th Battalion

The 4th Battalion mobilized and very quickly had sufficient men to form two battalions. The 1st/4th went to India in October 1914 to relieve regular battalions, followed quickly by the 2nd/4th. It was recognized nationally that the Army was far too small to meet the challenges ahead and under the leadership of Lord Kitchener, New Armies were raised. The County of Wiltshire quickly responded to the call.

5th & 6th (Service) Battalions

The 5th (Service) Battalion was raised at Assaye Barracks in Tidworth, August 1914. The numbers raised were too large so the 6th (Service) battalion was also raised from the 5th Battalion overspill of manpower.

7th (Service) Battalion

At the same time the 7th (Service) Battalion was raised at Marlborough by Lieutenant Colonel Rocks, a retired Wiltshire Regiment Officer.

1915 The First World War Continued

1st Battalion

The 1st Battalion spent the first few months on the Messines Ridge engaged in Trench warfare until March 1915. In March they took part in the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, followed by several more months in Trenches in the Dickebusch area. In June they took part in two attacks on the German Trench system round Hooge chateau, where the fighting was most severe. The next few months were spent in the trenches near Ypres, Hooge, alternating with rest periods in the ramparts at Ypres, itself under shell fire. In September they took part in a Major battle at Loos. In October together with the rest of their Brigade they were transferred to a New Army Formation, the 25th Division to provide experience. They spent the remainder of the year in the trenches at Ploegsteert Wood. Christmas dinner was not eaten until the 1st January 1916.

2nd Battalion

The 2nd Battalion started 1915 in the Fleurbaix area remaining in the waterlogged trenches when they were relieved by the Canadians in March. They were removed from the line to prepare for a major assault at Neuve Chapelle which started on the 9th of March. By the 14th March the battalion had suffered nearly 400 casualties. After a few days rest they returned to the line at Laventie where they resumed trench warfare. In May the battalion took part in the battle of Festubert where they suffered 158 casualties for one mile of ground taken. This was followed by a rest period in the Bethune area where they were reinforced. In June they were one of the leading battalions in the attack at Givenchy where after taking significant casualties the operation was cancelled. This was followed by many months of trench warfare in different sectors leading up to the Battle of Loos in September where their casualty figure was 400. Rest and reorganisation followed and in early December they were again redeployed to another Division, the 30th ending the year at Aulheux.

1st & 2nd/4th Battalions

The 1st/4th and 2nd/4th spent 1915 in India on Garrison duties, but did supply a number of men as reinforcements to front line battalions in other theatres of operations.

5th Battalion

In July 1915 the 5th (Service) Battalion set sail for the Dardanelles and by the 17th were all ashore at Cape Helles, on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Two days later they were in the trenches facing the Turkish Army. On the 6th August they took part in a night attack to capture a ridge of hills to assist the British landing at Suvle bay. The following day they took part in the attack at Sari Bair. This was a successful attack, but the response was fast and very violent. They were attacked by a Turkish Division led by Mustapha Kemal. The battalion was overrun with half the battalion never being seen again. The battalion was reorganised, returning to trench warfare with the main enemy being dysentery and jaundice. On the 18th December they embarked for Mudros returning ten days later in a blizzard, here they saw in 1916.

6th Battalion

The 6th (Service) Battalion embarked for France in July 1915 as part of the 19th Division. They initially were introduced to trench warfare in the Laventie and Festubert area with their first attack taking place at Loos in September. After this battle they returned to the trenches in the Neuve Chapelle area where they ended the year of 1915.

7th Battalion

The 7th (Service) Battalion after training embarked for France 1000 strong in September spending two months in the trenches. In November they sailed to Salonika where their first task was to assist in constructing defences. They were engaged in this task at the end of 1915.

1916 The First World War Continued

1st Battalion



1st Battalion crossing No Man's Land at Thiepval 1916

At the start of 1916 the 1st Battalion were in reserve at Papot. They remained here for three months when they went south spending three weeks near St Pol. After relieving the French at Vimy Ridge they spent two months engaged in trench warfare near La Targette. Unspectacular work but it still resulted in 82 casualties. In July the Battalion moved towards the Somme area. They did not take part in the attack on the 1st July but did go into action at Thiepval on the 4th. On the 22nd together with the 3rd Worcestershire Regiment they assaulted and captured the Leipzig Salient, including the



7th Battalion's Band marching through the village of Sherston on a recruiting drive

Hindenburg trench. They withstood a number of counter attacks by the Prussian Guards all of which were beaten off. Other attacks followed together with more time spent in the trenches. In October they moved north and took up a position in the Ploegstreert where they were at the end of the year.

2nd Battalion

The 2nd Battalion started 1916 in the area of Amiens. They remained in this general area reliving units in trenches and training for an offensive that was going to take place in July. On the 1st July they were in support in the area of Montauban, followed by two days of attacks. They remained in this area for most of July. On the 8th July they played a leading part in the attack on Trones Wood and at one point bayoneted their way through what remained of the German defenders in the wood. They suffered 240 casualties in this action but were awarded plus 23 decorations for gallantry. Further attacks followed in the Somme and Fiers areas and they ended the year just South of Arras.

1st/4th & 2nd/4th Battalions

The 1st/4th and 2nd/4th remained on Garrison duties in India.

5th Battalion

The 5th (Service) Battalion evacuated from Cape Helles in January going to Port Said where they were reinforced with 750 men. In February they went to Kuwait and in March to Amara via the Tigris River. They then relieved the Lahore Division south of Kut. In April they took part in the attempt to relieve Kut and attacked the Turkish Trenches at Hannah, followed by an attack on Sanna-I-Yat. All the efforts to relieve Kut failed and eventually the garrison was forced to surrender. *(Many men who had been transferred from the 1st and 2nd/4th Regiments in India were captured with units besieged in Kut)* May was spent in defensive positions after which they returned to the Amara area where they remained until the end of December when they crossed the Hai River ready to move North to Kut.

6th Battalion

At the start of the year the 6th (Service) Battalion were in the Neuve Chapelle area where they were engaged in trench warfare until April. After a period of strenuous training the battalion moved to Albert, on the River Somme in preparation for the forthcoming offensive. A week after the start of the Battle of the Somme they took part in the capture of La Boiselle, moving into Mametz Wood shortly after. At the end of August they were relieved in order to re-organize having suffered 380 casualties in two months. The rest of the year was spent in the line in the Kermel sector, and on the River Ancre. Here they ended the year.

7th Battalion

The 7th (Service) Battalion at the beginning of the year were continuing their work on the defences. At the end of July they took over the trenches near Kalinova from the French. In this position they repulsed a number of attacks by the Bulgars. At the end of October the Battalion moved to the area of Doiran where they reverted to trench warfare. They were at this location at the end of 1916.

1917 The First World War Continued

1st Battalion

The 1st Battalion started the year in the area of Ploegsteert, being relieved mid January for a fortnights hard training. In February they carried out a daring daylight raid in conjunction with the 10th Cheshire's. The raiders won six Military Medals. In late February they were relieved by New Zealand units, spending the next seven weeks training. This was required due the reorganization of all battalions whereby each platoon became self sufficient in terms of weapon capabilities. The Army was starting to move towards mobile tactics. In April they took over some trenches from the Australians near Ploegsteert. They went in and out of the lines until the 7th June when the battalion took part in the attack on Messines Ridge. Two days later after hard fighting they had taken 148 prisoners and 7 machine guns, but they had sustained 170 casualties. One of the officers being awarded the Military Cross in this action was Captain R Hayward (Later to win the Victoria Cross). This was a significant action because in taking this high ground it improved the situation in the Ypres salient, which had been overlooked by the Germans for most of the war. In July they moved to Ypres and had their first taste of mustard gas. At the end of July they took part in the attack on Westhoek Ridge remaining in the area under heavy shell fire until the 5th August. After a short rest they returned to the Ridge to support other units under pressure from the Germans. On the 10th September they moved south to join the First Army moving into the Givenchy Sector, near Bethune where they took up a position in October remaining for two months. At the beginning of December they were transferred once again, this time to the Third Army, to the Laquicourt Sector near Bapaume. They were at this location at the end of 1917.

2nd Battalion

The 2nd Battalion spent the first three months around Arras. On the 9th April they took part in the attack on the Hindenburg Line. Very few men reached the objective and those that did found that the German wire was undamaged. On the 11th April they came out of the line weaker by 16 officers and 363 other ranks. After ten days rest they returned for a further weeks fighting in the same area. They then spent a month training before a long march north to the area of Ypres. For most of July they were in training. On the 31st July they took part in the Third Battle of Ypres near Hooge. In Late August they relieved the Australians on the newly capture Messines Ridge. They remained here for three months digging deeper and taking part in many trench raids. In November they moved to the Gheluvelt area, where they ended the year of 1917.

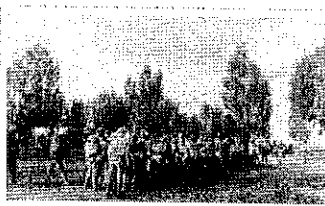
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1st/4th Battalion

In March 1917 the 1st/4th received orders and eventually left Bombay for Palestine and active service. After a long journey they joined the 75th Division in the trenches South of Turkish held Gaza. In November the battalion made their first attack in the third battle of Gaza capturing Outpost Hill, followed by Ali Muntar Hill and Fryers Hill. The Turks evacuated Gaza and were pursued towards Jerusalem with the battalion leading the pursuit. They were heavily committed during November with actions at El Mesmiyyeh and Kuryet-El-Enab just a few miles short of Jerusalem. The battalion were in reserve when Jerusalem was surrendered by the Turks. On the final day of 1917 the battalion was holding an outpost line at El Tirah.



1st/4th Battalion - Turkish prisoners at Wilhabura in Palestine in 1917/18

2nd/4th Battalion

The 2nd/4th remained in India and in March 1917 moved to the Allahabad Brigade in the 8th (Lucknow) Division.

5th Battalion

The 5th (Service) battalion were in action on the 25th January 1917 when they assaulted the Turkish front line, one flank of which rested on the Hai River which they had crossed only a month before. They took heavy casualties in this action.

On the 25th of February they crossed the River Tigris and by the end of the month after hard marching they were 40 miles short of Baghdad. On the 10th March they made a night river crossing over the Diala River establishing a bridgehead and taking 120 prisoners in the process. The way to Baghdad was open and the battalion was the first to enter the city. At the end of March the battalion advanced on Turkish positions 35 miles north of Baghdad near Daitawa. They sustained heavy casualties in this attack. In April and May they continued the advance up the line of the River Adhaim with contact being made with the Russians operating from the Caspian Sea. They then took up defensive positions between the rivers Tigris and Adhaim, East of Samara. In early December they advanced towards Kara Tepe, with the battalion pursuing the Turks through Sakaltutan Pass. They paused at this point and ended the year reorganizing and training.

6th Battalion

Early in 1917 the 6th (Service) Battalion were in the line at Hebuterne, near Thiepval, moving to the Ypres salient in April. In June they took part in the successful attack on Messines Ridge, gaining all their objectives. A period of trench warfare was followed by heavy fighting on the Passchendaele Ridge. On the 20th September they captured and held a position in front of Hellebeke Chateau. Casualties were heavy and the battalion was reinforced by 25 officers and 350 other ranks of the Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry, who had been dismounted. They became the 6th (Royal Wiltshire) Yeomanry Battalion. This arrangement worked well as many of the men in both units came from the same towns and villages in Wiltshire.

7th Battalion

The 7th (Service) Battalion started 1917 as they left the year before, in the trenches remaining there until April. On the night of the 24th April they launched an attack at the Grand Couronne, coming up against devastating fire and unbreached wire. 14 out of the 15 officers became casualties, together with about 300 other ranks. The companies came under the command of Warrant Officers and Sergeants and the situation was likened to the Battle of Ferozeshah in 1845. After this battle they were in the line at Popovo, and then Smol. At the beginning of July they resumed training, returning to the front line in August. The rest of the year was spent in Greece in the trenches with much patrolling.

1918 The First World War Continued

1st Battalion

The 1st Battalion started the year in the Laquicourt sector, North East of Bapaume remaining there for two months. On the 21st March 1918 they were in reserve at Achiet-Le-Grand when the German Army launched a major offensive. The battalion were in contact with the enemy for the next six days during which Captain Hayward MC won the Victoria Cross.

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Samarrah Offensive

The **Samarrah Offensive** (March 13 – April 23, 1917) was launched by the British against the Ottomans as part of the Mesopotamian Campaign in World War I.

After Baghdad fell to the British on March 11, 1917, there were still 10,000 Ottoman troops north of the city, led by Khalil Pasha, who could represent a threat to Anglo-Indian forces.

Furthermore, another 15,000 Ottomans under Ali Ihsan Bey were being driven out of Persia by the Russians, and were attempting at joining Khalil's forces in northern Iraq.

The British commander, Frederick Stanley Maude, decided that, in order to avert these threats, he had to take control of the Samarrah railroad, running 130 km (81 mi) north of Baghdad.

Operations began on March 13, carried forth by 45,000 British troops. On March 19, they conquered Fallujah, a crucial step toward the offensive's goal. The British continued their attacks until April 23, when the town of Samarrah and its railroad fell into their hands.

Although it achieved its aims, the Samarrah offensive cost the British about 18,000 casualties, a considerable price (plus another 38,000 who were taken ill).^[1]

Further reading

- Barker, A. J. *The Bastard War: The Mesopotamian Campaign of 1914–1918*. New York: Dial Press, 1967. OCLC 2118235 (https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/2118235)
- Tucker, Spencer C., ed. (2014). *World War I: The Definitive Encyclopedia and Document Collection - 5 volumes*. ABC-CLIO. ISBN 9781851099658.

Samarrah Offensive	
Part of the Mesopotamian Campaign of World War I	
Date	March 13 — April 23, 1917
Location	North of Baghdad, present-day Iraq
Result	British victory.
Belligerents	
 British Empire	 Ottoman Empire
▪ British India	
Commanders and leaders	
Frederick Stanley Maude	Khalil Pasha, Ali Ihsan Sâbis
Strength	
45,000	10,000 (Khalil), 15,000 (Ali Ishan)
Casualties and losses	
18,000 (+ 37,000 sick) ^[1]	15,000 ^[1]