

## THE HEREFORDSHIRE REGIMENT

### Their First World War 'Story' – July 1915

#### The 'Bigger' Picture

Sherif of Mecca opens direct negotiations with British Government for co-operation against the Turks  
Treaty of alliance signed at Sofia between Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, Germany, and Turkey. Albania to be ceded to Bulgaria in return for Bulgarian participation in war.  
British Government guarantee to Greece eventual cession of Mitylene by Turkey;  
Entente Governments warn Montenegro that they will not recognise her occupation of Albanian territory  
Establishment of the East Persia Cordon (Anglo-Russian)  
The Pope sends appeal for peace to belligerent Governments  
A Dominion Premier (Sir R. Borden, Canada) for the first time attends meeting of the British Cabinet.

#### The Home Front

Munitions of War Act, 1915, becomes law in Great Britain.  
Ministry of Munitions formed in Great Britain.  
National Registration Act (The Derby Scheme) becomes law in Great Britain

This act required that all men and women, between the ages of 15 and 65, register at their home address by 15 August 1915. Some 29 million forms were issued across England, Scotland and Wales. The completed forms were collected and compiled by the local authority. A summary of the register was passed to the Registrar General who compiled statistics.

A card index was created and sub divided in to single and married/widowed people: these groups were further divided by occupation (46 groups for men and 30 groups for women), and then further sub divided by age (8 groups for men and 6 for women) and then arranged alphabetically.

The final task involved the issuing of registration certificates to each person who had registered.

Results were available in mid September.

This was the pre cursor of conscription with the Government being able to determine the number of men (and women), how they were employed and their availability to support the war effort.

#### The Western Front

Operations continue

#### Other Fronts

##### EASTERN FRONT

Second Battle of Krasnik  
Great Austro-German Offensive on Eastern front begins.  
Ivangorod (Poland) invested by Austro-German forces

##### BALKANS

Durazzo (Albania) occupied by Serbian forces

#### ITALIAN FRONT

Second Battle of the Isonzo begins

#### SOUTH WEST AFRICA

Otavifontein (German South-West Africa) captured by South African forces  
German South-West Africa capitulates to General Botha

#### EAST AFRICA

German light cruiser Königsberg destroyed in Rufiji River by British monitors.  
Bukoba, on Victoria Nyanza (German East Africa), captured by British forces

#### ARABIA

Lahej (South Arabia) taken by Turkish forces

#### PERSIA

British residency at Bushire (South Persia) attacked by Tangistani tribesmen

#### MESOPOTAMIA

Nasiriya taken by British forces

#### THE DARDANELLES

Limited operations continue at Helles and ANZAC.

#### AT SEA

##### BALTIC

Naval action in the Baltic between Russian and German squadrons off Gottland. German minelayer Albatross driven ashore.

##### ADRIATIC

Italian cruiser Amalfi sunk by Austrian submarine in the Adriatic.



Pelagosa Island occupied by Italian forces

## MERCHANT SHIPPING

British, Allied and Neutral ships lost to enemy submarines, mines and cruisers etc in the month - 101 ships of 112,000 tons gross

### The 'Herefords'

The Privy Purse Office, Buckingham Palace sent letters to mothers with 5 sons (or more) serving in the Forces; this was to reward and acknowledge service and commitment and also to aid recruiting. The wording of the letter would be – *'Madam, I am commanded by the King to convey to you an expression of his Majesty's appreciation of the patriotic spirit which has prompted your 5 sons to give their services at the present time. The King was most gratified to hear of the manner in which they have so readily responded to the call of their Sovereign and their country. I am to express to you and them His Majesty's congratulations on having contributed on so full a measure to the great cause for which all the people of the British Empire are so bravely fighting'*.

One such letter was received by Mr & Mrs George Pritchard of Drybrook:



Sgt WC Pritchard went on to serve with The Kings Shropshire Light Infantry in France.

The Depot function of enlistments and discharges continued and included:

Enlistments:

3932 Pte William TANDY from Belmont

3937 Pte Edward Brown, age 34 from Eaton Bishop who had previously served with the Gloucestershire militia.

Enlistments were reduced but perhaps is a reflection of the need for labour on the land.

Discharges:

3405 Pte John Cole, age 43, unfit for further service.

3395 Pte Alfred Barney, age 40 from Hereford, an ex Regular who had served in India and South Africa, unfit for further service.

3424 Pte William Cook age 50 who had served 18 years with The Kings Shropshire Light Infantry

These older, ex regular soldiers has volunteered for service with the Supplementary company in Apr 1915.

*National Reserve.*  
Army Form E. 501.

**TERRITORIAL FORCE.**  
4 years' Service in the United Kingdom.

**ATTESTATION OF**

No. 3424 Name William Cook Corps Herefordshire Regt.

Questions to be put to the Recruit before Enlistment.

1. What is your Name and Address? 1. William Cook  
N. 6. Ross Road  
Hereford.
2. Are you willing to be attested for service in the Territorial Force for the term of 4 years (provided His Majesty should so long require your services) for the County of Herefordshire Regt. 2. Duration of War.
3. Have you received a notice stating the liabilities you are incurring by enlisting, and do you understand them? 3. Yes.
4. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in the Royal Navy, the Army, the Royal Marines, the Militia, the Special Reserve, the Territorial Force, the Imperial Yeomanry, the Volunteers, the Army Reserve, the Militia Reserve, or any Naval Reserve Force? If so, state which unit, and, if discharged, cause of discharge. 4. R.S.L.I. 18 years  
time captured.

Under the provisions of Sections 13 and 99 of the Army Act, if a person knowingly makes a false answer to any question contained in the attestation paper, he renders himself liable to punishment.

William Cook do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements made.

W. Cook SIGNATURE OF RECRUIT.  
Walter J. James Esq. Signature of Witness.

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY RECRUIT ON ATTESTATION.

William Cook swear by Almighty God, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs, and Successors, and that I will, as in duty bound, honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs, and Successors, in Person, Crown, and Dignity against all enemies, according to the conditions of my service.

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE OR ATTESTING OFFICER.

Henry Matthews do hereby certify, that, in my presence, all the foregoing Questions were put to the Recruit, above named, that the Answers written opposite to them are those which he gave to me, and that he has made and signed the Declaration, and taken the oath at Hereford on this 12 day of April 1915.

H. Matthews Esq. (Signature of Justice of the Peace, Officer, or other person authorised to attest Recruits.)

If any objection is required on this page of the Attestation, a Justice of the Peace should be requested to make it and initial the objection under Section 99 of the Army Act. The Recruit should, if he prefers it, countersign a copy of the Declaration on Army Form E. 501A. (Sign Secret Copy.)

Attestation paper of 3425 Pte W Cook

The training of the men was progressing and some 500 deployed by train to Abergavenny to undergo a period of 'advanced training' whilst living 'under canvas'. The following officers were with the troops: Officer Commanding, Capt Speer; Capt Smith, Lts Ahscroft, Burlton and Hamilton and 2Lts Bennett and Edwards; Lt Reeve had deployed with an advance party. The Hereford Times reported that 3 men missed the train and marched to Abergavenny arriving the next day!

The following photograph looks to have been taken on King George V playing field with Victoria Bridge and the Cathedral in the background.



The following enigmatic announcement appeared in the Hereford Times: *'A sensational rumour, which is causing anxiety to parents, concerning the 1st Herefords, has been circulated in the city and has caused several enquiries at the Police Station. There is no reason whatsoever to assume that the Herefords are other than 'safe and sound' and those who assist to circulate such rumours are deserving of the greatest censure'*. No details of the rumour are given but a week later the Hereford Times published a further slightly enigmatic rebuttal - In view of these *'silly rumours'* the mayor of Hereford requested that a cable he had received from Maj Carless be read out in the Cathedral and Churches throughout the county – the cable stated *'Greetings from Regiment. All Well. Regards Carless'*.

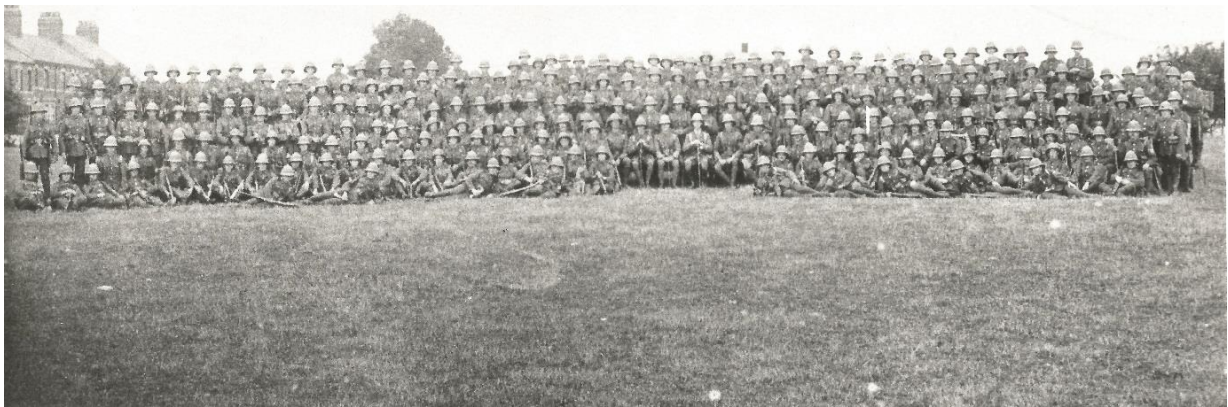


## 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion

The Battalion was warned for overseas service and Khaki Drill, or KD, the standard overseas uniform for warm climates was issued. Although the final destination was believed to be the Dardanelles, this was not confirmed; it was expected that a period of acclimatisation would be taken first.

The Lord Lieutenant, Sir John Cotterell launched an appeal for funds to equip the Battalion with mosquito nets and anti fly veils. The fund was to be administered by the Commanding Officer's wife; Mrs Mildred Drage. Any surplus funds would form a Troop's Comfort Fund.

The Commanding Officer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Lt Col WB Wood-Roe sent the following letter of greetings to the Commanding Officer of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Lt Col G Drage: *'On the eve of your departure for foreign service ..... to communicate to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion its hearty good wishes for the welfare and safe return of all ranks. .... the Honour of the Herefords is in the best keeping'*.



Members of The Hereford showing off their 'new' uniforms

The Officers also had a group photograph taken:

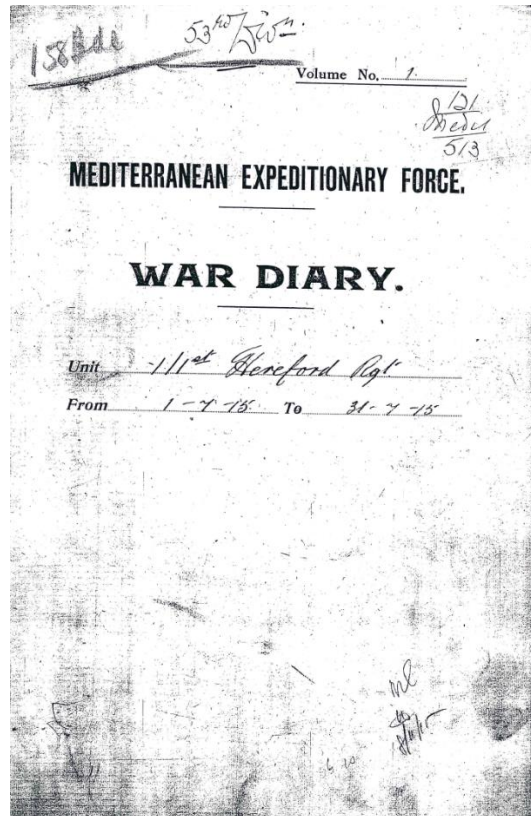


Front row (L to R): 2Lts WF Lloyd, Howell, Wilmot

Middle row: capts Barker, Nott (Adj), ETP Rogers, AV Holman, RG Yates, Lt Col G Drage, Maj WF Carless, Capt LI B Green, Surg Maj McMullan, Capt EA Capel.

Back row: QM Lt Roberts, Lt Whitehouse, Capt Lewis, Lt RC Bourne, RSM Millington, 2Lts Jackson-Taylor, Bierney, Lt Hamlen-Williams, Capt Sir Archer Croft, Lt Ashton, Lt GH Wallis, Lt Collins, 2Lt Carver, Lts GP Lloyd, Pilkington, LM Phillips

The Battalion now warned for overseas service started to write is 'War Diary' a document required by the War Department.





Original  
July 1915

A. G.'s OFFICE AT THE BASE  
 WAR DIARY 84. ECHELON, M. E. #1st Herefordshire Regt. T.F. Army Form C. 2118.  
 or 15 OCT 1915  
 INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY REGISTER.  
 (Brass heading not required) M. F. C.

158th Infantry Brigade  
53rd Division M.F.F. (1)

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Place	Date 1915	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
HEREFORD	1-15 July		Bn. engaged in Brigade Training. Fitting out for Mediterranean Expeditionary Force commenced on or about 12th July.	
"	15 July	2pm	H, Q and A and C Companies left by train for DEVONPORT followed at an hour's interval by B and D Coy.	
DEVONPORT	16 "	2AM	Battalion embarked in H.T.S. "Eurypides" for the MEDITERRANEAN.	
"	"	6pm	"Eurypides" sailed for the MEDITERRANEAN Troops on board 11st Herefords, 14th Cheshires, and 11st Welsh Field Ambulance (one Section) and a few details, O.C. Troops - Col LEVERSON CB RE. Slight Sea.	
CYPRUS	20 "	6pm	Arrived and Sailed for MALTA (7pm). Fine. Smooth Sea.	
AT SEA	21 "		Exercised "Fire" and "Collision" stations. Fine Sea Smooth.	
"	22 "			
"	23 "			
MALTA	24 "	6am	Arrived MALTA. Leave ashore granted to officers only until 10am. } Fine Sailed for ALEXANDRIA. } Sea Smooth.	
AT SEA	25 "		Exercised "Fire" and "Collision" stations	
"	26 "			
ALEXANDRIA	27 "	7am	Arrived ALEXANDRIA. Disembarked Sgt. Addis (Order Room Sgt) for duty at Base	
"	28 "		Disembarked Base details, and Base kits and all 1st line Transport Vehicles, 15 Col. G. DRAGE Troops, via Col LEVERSON disembarked LEVERSON Bn. exercised ashore in same morning	
"	29-30 "			
P. SAID	30 "	7pm	Sailed for P. SAID.	
"	31 "	7am	Arrived P. SAID.	

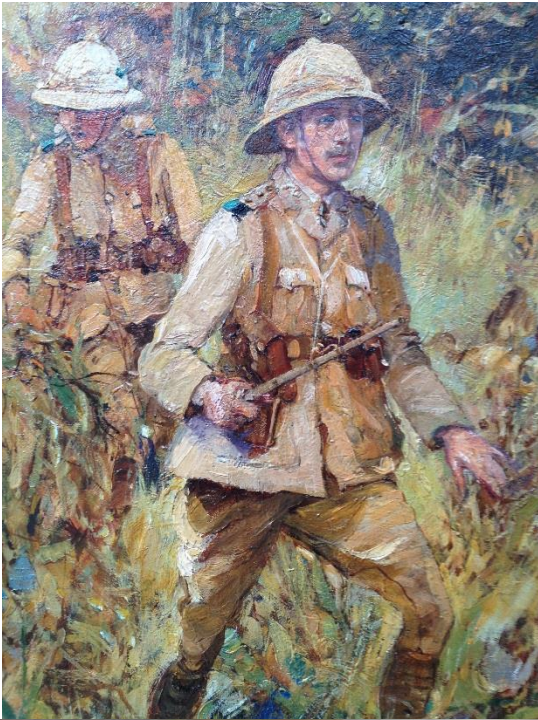
Note: The distinguishing mark of the Regt ordered to be worn by Brig. Gen. H. LLOYD was a strip of cloth 1" wide on each shoulder strap, half green, half black.  
 Col 11st Herefordshire Regt. T.F.

The distinguishing mark of the Malta Battalion is shown below on the helmet worn by 1698 LCpl FA Herbert at Suvla Bay.





The shoulder 'strap' identification is less clear; evidence exist of the 2 colours being worn 'vertically' and 'horizontally'.



Detail from the Charles Dixon painting 'Advance at Suvla' (hanging in the Drill Hall at Suvla Barracks) showing the identification shoulder strap being worn 'vertically'.



1894 Pte HJ Finch wearing the strap 'vertically'.



An unknown soldier of The Herefords wearing the strap 'horizontally'.

The Herefords had been well received in the Rushden and Irchester areas where they have been billeted. An account tells of the Battalion deploying to Doddington Range near Wellingboro' and not being able to shoot as the farmer was gathering hay on the range – The Herefords turned to and helped the farmer get his hay in, in record time!



The Signal Section taken in Irchester Summer 1914

On 16 Jul the Battalion sailed from Devonport (although some letters from soldiers, and accounts in local newspapers, say Avonmouth) bound for the Middle East. For many men this was their first time at sea – with the inevitable effects! 2109 Percy Pritchard later said:

On the first day out we went through the Bay of Biscay and we were all very ill; not helped by the cooks serving us boiled sausages for breakfast.

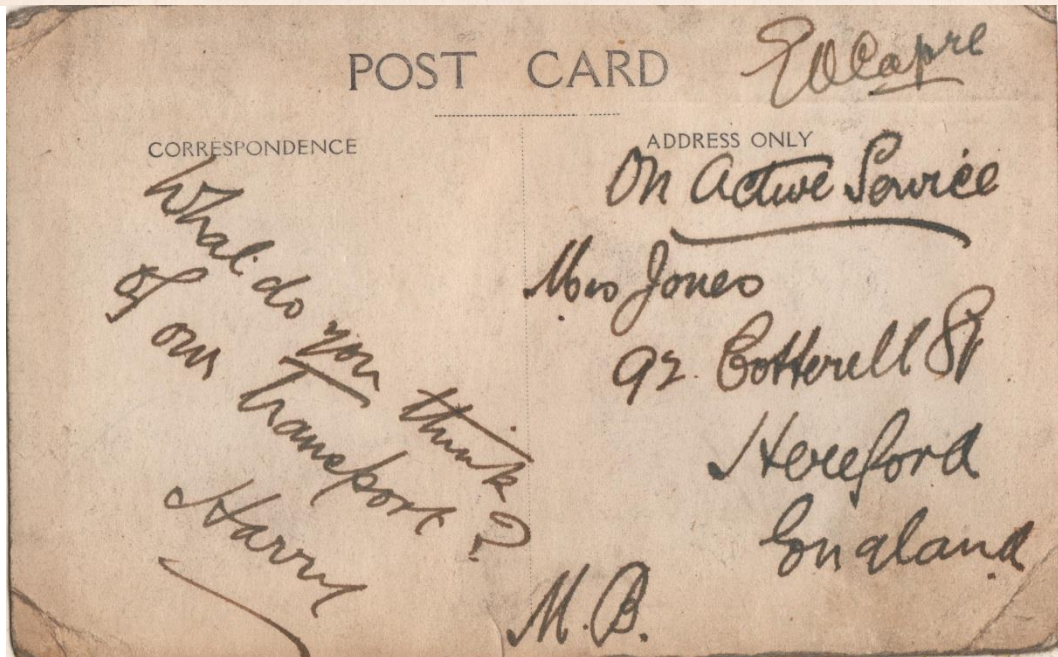
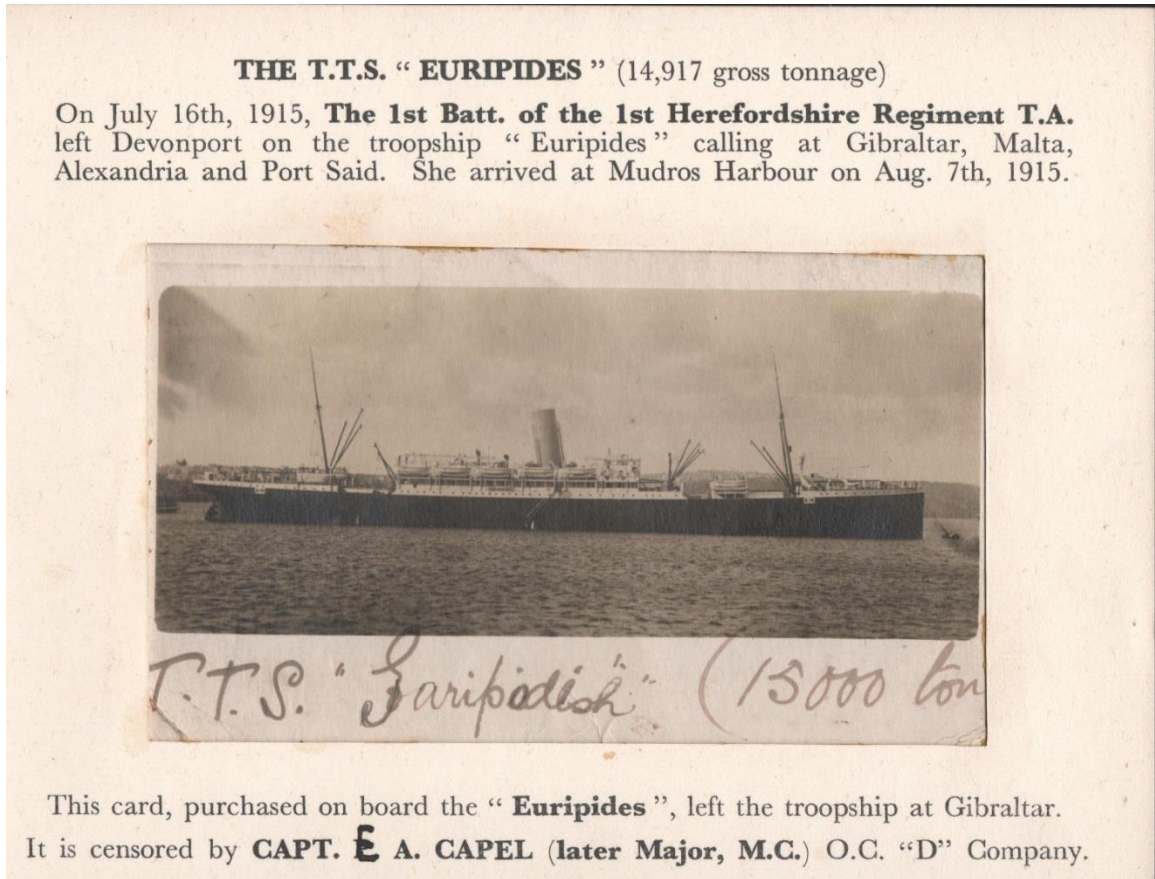
The Commanding Officer, Lt Col Drage wrote afterwards:

A breeze freshened to half a gale and its effects soon became apparent on the troop decks. After breakfast whole companies were lined up on the ship's side, apparently in contemplation; in reality suffering for the first time in their lives the effects of being rocked on the cradle of the deep. Only wane smiles and feeble laughter greeted the old gibe 'feeding the fishes my lads'. A large number of men had only recently been fitted with a certain ordnance store, whose nomenclature was probably – Denture, Army Pattern, Mark 1. The issue of this fitting, probably not too well adjusted to resentful gums, was essential to enable those with defective teeth to masticate the army ration of bully and biscuits, which for many a day was to be our unvarying diet after arrival on hostile shores. The loss of these dentures was no doubt a serious matter to anyone who had had a full extraction. On the other hand,



no one who did not have strong natural grinders could tackle that oven baked roof tile euphemistically called a biscuit unless it was reduced to something like a powder.

Some soldiers took the opportunity to send a postcard of the Euripides home, clearly enjoying the adventure.



On 31 July the Hereford Times published a list of soldiers of the Regiment who sailed for Gallipoli aboard the TS Euripedes. The 100% accuracy of the list is not guaranteed, it is possible that not all of those named did sail, and possible that some sailed that are not named, but the list is generally accurate. Whilst the list contains the names of those that sailed on 16 July, it is not a list of men that served at Suvla Bay. Some 250 men were disembarked in Egypt along with the Battalion's transport – many of the men were the transport 'detail'. Most, but not all of the 250 later went to Suvla Bay as reinforcements. The Battalion also received at least one reinforcement draft from UK during their time at Suvla Bay.

The Article accompanying the list sums up the situation well; of the 600 (ish) soldiers mobilised in August 1914, probably less than 250 remained in the ranks, the numbers being made up by keen, fit, young and able volunteers. The Herefords had received over 2000 volunteers between August and December 1914. The majority of the men sailing were under the age of 20, and the vast majority were Herefordshire men. Training had been hard (and perhaps unexciting) but was necessary to turn civilians into battle ready soldiers, and there had been frustrations about the Regiment not being sent to France, but all of that was now in the past and the Battalion was full of anticipation; for action and adventure.



**1<sup>ST</sup> HEREFORDS.**

**FULL LIST OF MEN  
SERVING ABROAD.**

**A KEEN BATTALION.**

"Hereford Times" Special.

We are this week able to give a full list of the names and addresses of the men serving with the 1st Herefordshire Regiment, now on foreign service. It is the latest obtainable, being made out up to July 16th of this year, and practically the whole battalion has arrived at its port of debarkation. A few men were left behind at the last moment, but our list is a complete roll of the troops chosen to proceed with the first batch. The home addresses are given together with the regimental numbers.

Those who knew the 1st Battalion when it left Hereford would hardly recognise it now. Men have left and others have joined in considerable numbers since the outbreak of war, until the establishment has been brought to perfection. The arduous training of the past eleven months has worked wonders. The men have been brought to a high standard of physical efficiency by their life in the open air and the vigorous courses of training that they have undergone, whilst in military efficiency they have improved to a remarkable extent.

The period devoted to training, especially in the early stages, is apt to dull men's keenness. "What's the good of this; why can't we learn to shoot?" they are sometimes led to ask. But as they get on they appreciate the fact that military efficiency does not merely mean being able to shoot—important as that is. The little things must be learnt with as much care as the big ones. The military machine is on all fours with an ordinary machine. The minor details are important in the making-up of the complete article, and to make a good soldier the closest attention must be paid to the training from beginning to end.

The 1st Herefordshire can be trusted to give a good account of themselves wherever they may be sent. They are a credit to the county, and their movements will be followed with interest by their relatives and friends at home. Altogether 27 officers and 967 men have departed from England, and about 140 men have been attached to the 2nd Battalion Herefordshire Regiment for the time being. They will form the first draft, and as other men are required they will in all probability be drawn from the 2nd Battalion.

Relatives and friends of the 1st Herefordshire will be pleased to hear that they are "All very well."

A cablegram to this effect was received by Lady Croft from Captain Sir Archer Croft this Wednesday morning. We understand the regiment has landed, but where, of course, for obvious reasons, we must not at present state.

An inquiry bureau for the use of relatives and friends of the men of the regiment now on active service will be open on Wednesdays and Saturdays, from 12 o'clock to 1 o'clock, at the County Court Offices, East Street, Hereford.

**THE ROLL.**

The following are the details of the roll:—

		<u>The Officers</u>	
Lt Col		Drage	G
Maj		Carless	WT
Surg Maj		McMullen	JN
Capt		Archer-Croft	H
Capt		Barker	FG
Capt		Capel	EA
Capt		Green	ALB
Capt		Holman	AV
Capt		Lewis	LW
Capt		Nott	FT
Capt		Rogers	ETP
Capt		Yates	RG
Lt		Bourne	RG
Lt		Carver	FT
Lt		Hamlen-Williams	D
Lt		Phillips	F
Lt		Pilkington	CEG
QM Lt		Roberts	RW
Lt		Sale	RC
Lt		Wallis	GL
Lt		Whitehouse	AGR
2Lt		Ashton	P
2Lt		Berney	GN
2Lt		Boulton	AH
2Lt		Boulton	RJ
2Lt		Collins	BS
2Lt		Jackson-Taylor	PS
2Lt		Levason	DGG
2Lt		Lloyd	GP
2Lt		Lloyd	WH
2Lt		Russell	ES
2Lt		Wilmot	E
2Lt		Wilson	LM
2Lt		Wilson	A

The Full List is reproduced and attached.

Some men started writing accounts, one was 1606 Sergeant John Colley; his account for July is reproduced below:

Jul 1915  (16 Jul 1916)	Although it is well over 12 months ago, I will try and write down from my memory the happenings and adventures which have occurred since leaving England for overseas. It was July 1915 that we suddenly heard rumours that we were shortly proceeding to Egypt. We had spent 6 glorious weeks at Irchester and on the day of our departure the streets of this small village were lined with crowds of well wishers, men, women and children, and many a tear was shed at the parting of soldiers and their friends, for strong had been the attachment between them. Everyone in the village had a holiday, children and most of the boot factories were closed. We struggled to the station about 2 o'clock in the afternoon and about an hour later our train steamed out of the station, to the cheers and wavings of our friends who had made our stay in Irchester a thing which can always be looked back upon with the greatest pleasure.
	It was rather a long train journey, it being nearly midnight by the time we arrived at the docks. We embarked straight away, but not to rest. Fatigue parties being wanted we fell in to load up our ammunition. As our arms were still very bad after recent vaccination, it was a great relief when this job was finished and we all managed to get a wee bit of sleep.
	We were up again early next morning and to our great delight there was very little work to be done. It was a very wet day, in fact I do not think it stopped raining until just before we sailed. Our departure from Devonport was a repetition of Irchester, only on a larger scale. All the boats in the harbour including one or two training ships, cheered us to the echo, and the engineers with their sirens made a noise sufficient to awaken the dead. As we stayed up on deck watching the shore of England rapidly disappear in the gloom, many of us wondered how long (if at all) it would be until we should see them again.
	Now we were well away and on returning to our sleeping quarters we found that hammocks and blankets were being given out and I was just in time to get these. Sleeping in hammocks was a new sensation for most of us, but the majority, I think slept well.
18 Jul 1915	The morning arrived and before long a few were suffering from Mal de Mer, I lasted until breakfast time only and then I joined the majority who were looking rather green. This was the first time I had suffered from sea sickness and I might say it was a horrible first at that. The sea was rough all day and most of us gave meals a miss for a while.
19 Jul 1915	Nothing now unusual occurred, the sea became calm and we were able to tread the decks in the manner of a sea going captain of 50 years experience. We rapidly settled down to our temporary nautical life doing a little physical drill during the day to keep us fit.
20 Jul 1915	We arrived at Gibraltar at about 6 o'clock. This was indeed a fine sight, and I saw for the first time the much talked about 'rock'. I can now quite believe anyone who says it is impregnable. Our stay there was very short and night was rapidly approaching when we entered on the second stage of our journey to Malta.
	We hugged the northern coast of Africa the whole of the next day, during this part of the journey we practiced 'Fire and Collision' drill and continued our physical training.
24 Jul 1915	About 4am those of us who were about early saw land just on the horizon and it was about 6 o'clock when we entered the Grand harbour at Malta. As soon as our boat (The Euripides) dropped anchor we had crowds of Maltese vendors with their cigarettes and silks striking bargains with the tommies. Some of our officers went ashore for an hour, but our stay here was of only short duration as we left again at 11 o'clock for Alexandria. The sea was calm, the weather excellent and one felt glad to be alive, how few of us expected what was to follow in less than a fortnight.
	Very little of importance happened in the next few days. All we did was to idle about the deck and get scorched by the sun.
27 Jul 1915	In the morning we entered the harbour of Alexandria and unloaded some military police, who had come from England with us. We stayed in the harbour all this day and contrary to expectations we did not disembark, but the next day the details and transport were unloaded.

28 Jul 1915	Battalion went for a short route march around, I should think, one of the worst quarters of Alexandria, and this march greatly enhanced my love for the country lanes and fields which we had just so recently seen at Irchester.
29 Jul 1915	In the evening our company went for a stroll through the town of Alexandria, and here we saw some of the Eastern customs, which we had often read and heard so much about.
30 Jul 1915	In evening sailed for Port Said. During this part of the journey I was found a job in the pantry; not a bad little job, but I have never sweated so much in all my life, as I did then.
31 Jul 1915	In morning we steamed into Part Said and dropped anchor in the harbour.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion remained in Northampton and spent most of their time at Physical Drill and Bayonet Fighting with 'attack practices'. They also fired their weapons at Lywell Range.

Towards the end of the month the Battalion moved to Bedford. The move was made on foot in the 'pouring rain', but the *'Battalion remained in high spirits, singing lustily as they passed through villages'*. The Battalion were generally billeted in large empty houses. On account of their wet condition and to ward off illness a ration of rum was authorised (and enjoyed by many) at the end of the march!

An unfortunate incident occurred before leaving Northampton when a car driven by Lt Cornwall and with Capt Carver and Lt Cresswell as passengers. Knocked down an 8 year old girl who had run into the road from behind a van; the girl later died.

The following appeared on Battalion Orders on 20 June: *'The Officer Commanding wishes to place on record his appreciation of the zeal displayed by 1916 Sgt T Evans, 2472 Pte WG Wainwright, 1580 Pte W Teale and 813 Pte W Jones in connection with the capture and conviction of an alien spy, Chief credit attaches to Pte Wainwright who first suspected the man in question and Pte Jones who effected his arrest'*. No further information is known.