

THE HEREFORDSHIRE REGIMENT

Their First World War 'Story' – May 1915

The 'Bigger' Picture International intrigue and positioning continues:

Italy denounces the Triple Alliance. Italian Premier, tenders his resignation. 23rd - Italian Government orders Mobilisation and declares war against Austria. 28th - Germany severs diplomatic relations with Italy.

British Foreign Minister (Sir E Grey) gives conditional guarantee to Serbian Minister of eventual cession of Bosnia and Herzegovina with 'wide access to the Adriatic'.

Japan presents ultimatum to China demanding territorial concessions - Chinese Government yield to Japanese demands. Treaties signed between China and Japan concerning Shantung Province and South Manchuria and Inner Mongolia.

Entente Governments declare that they will hold Turkish Ministers personally responsible for the Armenian massacres.

President Wilson, in a speech, defines United States policy in regard to the 'Lusitania' outrage.

Naval Convention signed between Great Britain, France, and Italy.

The Home Front

25th - Coalition Ministry formed in Great Britain by Mr Asquith.

31st - First German airship raid on London area.

Lord Fisher, First Sea Lord, Great Britain tenders his resignation; Mr Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, Great Britain, resigns. Mr Arthur Balfour appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir Henry Jackson appointed First Sea Lord.

The upper recruiting age was raised from 38 to 40.

22nd - The worst Rail disaster to occur ever in Britain happened at Quintinshill near Gretna Green, Dumfriesshire, Scotland, an intermediate signal box with passing loops on each side on the Caledonian Railway Main Line linking Glasgow and Carlisle (now part of the West Coast Main Line). The crash, which involved five trains, killed a probable 226 and injured 246 and remains the worst rail crash in the United Kingdom in terms of loss of life. Those killed were mainly Territorial soldiers from the 1/7th (Leith) Battalion, the Royal Scots heading for Gallipoli. The precise number of dead was never established with confidence as the roll list of the regiment was destroyed by the fire, gas from the lighting system of the old wooden carriages of the troop train having ignited, starting a fire which soon engulfed the three passenger trains and also two goods trains standing on nearby passing loops.

The Western Front

The leading division of the British New Armies leaves England for France

Battles of Ypres continues until 25th.

Battle of St Julien.

Battle of Frezenberg.

9th - Allied Spring Offensive begins: Battle of Aubers Ridge; Second Battle of Artois.

Battle of Festubert.

Battle of Bellewaerde Ridge (Ypres).

Other Fronts

EASTERN FRONT

Austro-German Spring Offensive in Galicia: Battle of Gorlice-Tarnow begins
Eastern Libau (Baltic Provinces) taken by German forces.

BALKANS

Valona (Albania) formally occupied by Italian forces

ITALIAN FRONT

Italian forces cross Austrian frontier
Italian fleet commences operations in the Adriatic. British squadron joins Italian fleet in the Adriatic.
Italian Government announce blockade of Austro-Hungarian coast.

CASPIAN SEA

Russian Expeditionary Force to West Persia.

CAUCASUS FRONT

Battle of Dilman (North Persia).
Van (Armenia) taken by Russian forces.
Urmia (North Persia) retaken by Russian forces

SOUTH WEST AFRICA

Windhuk (German South-West Africa) occupied by South African Northern Force.

WEST AFRICA

Siege of Garua (Cameroons) begins

EAST AFRICA

British command of the Lake Nyassa secured.

THE DARDANELLES

The 2 landing areas in the South about Cape Helles and on the West Coast at ANZAC Cove continued to be held in spite of fierce Turkish opposition, and increasingly difficult and insanitary conditions; supplies continue to cause challenges.

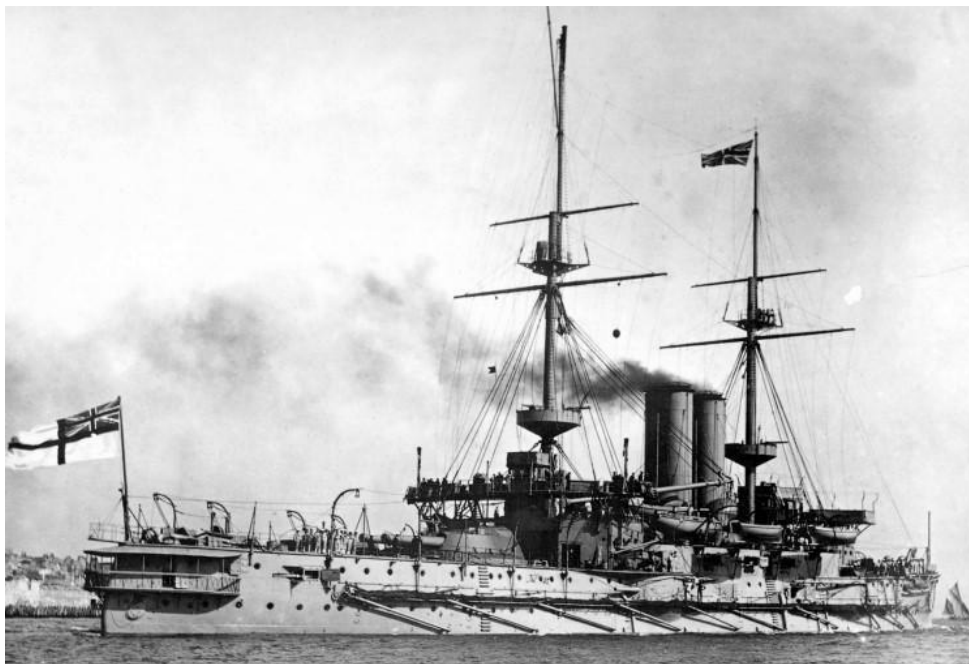
Revd O Creighton, a Chaplain with 29th Div at Helles wrote – ‘The Turkish positions only get stronger every day they are well armed, well led, brave and numerous’.

Joseph Murray, Hood Bn, Royal Naval Div, also at Helles wrote – ‘As one opens a tin of jam, the flies are so thick that they are squashed in the process; one never sees the jam; one can only ever see a blue/black mixture of sticky, sickly flies. They drink the sweat of our bodies and our lips and eyes are always covered in them’.

6th – 8th: Second Battle of Krithia (42 East Lancs Div); Krithia is not taken.

HMS Goliath sunk by three torpedoes from the Turkish destroyer *Muavenet-i-Millet*.

Canopus-class, 14,300t, 1898, 4-12in/12-6in/12-12pdr/4-18in tt, 18 kts, c750 crew, Pennant No.N.54, Capt Thomas Shelford. French forces under heavy attack inland of S-Beach, night of 12th/13th, Goliath and Cornwallis providing gunfire support, both anchored in exposed position in Morto Bay off Seddul Bahr village, Cornwallis astern of Goliath, destroyers Beagle, Bulldog, Pincher, Scorpion, Wolverine on patrol, night very dark, foggy around midnight, attacks were suspected. Turkish destroyer Muavenet-i-Millet, partly German-manned and commanded by Lt-Cdr Rudolph Firlé came down the Dardanelles, avoided Bulldog and Beagle around 0100, spotted the battleships and came round Eski Hissarlik Point under De Totts battery, challenged by Goliath at 0115 but steamed ahead and fired all three torpedo tubes as Goliath opened fire, one torpedo hit abreast fore turret, a second by the foremost funnel, and the third near after turret, ship immediately began listing badly to port and soon on beam ends, turned turtle, floated for a few minutes, then went down bow first; 505 lives lost - 20 officers including her Captain, 479 ratings, 4 canteen staff, 2 ratings DOW (180 survivors). Wolverine and Scorpion tried to cut off the torpedo boat as it headed back up the Straits but failed.



HMS Goliath

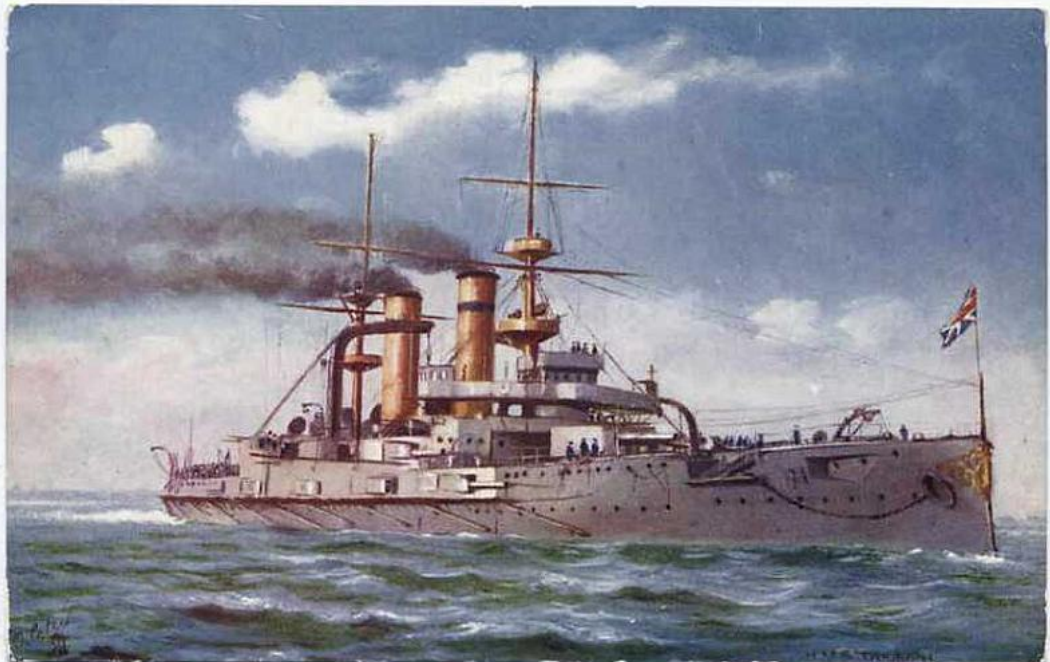
25th - The German submarine *U21*, under the command of Lieutenant Commander Otto Herring, torpedoed and sank the battleship *HMS Triumph* acting as the ship guarding the ship to shore transports off Anzac Cove.

*Swiftsure-class, 11,985t, launched 1903, purchased by Admiralty before completion, 4-10in/14-7.5in/14-14pdr/2-18in tt, 20kts, c700 crew, providing gunfire support for ANZAC beachhead, under way off Gaba Tepe with nets down, light guns manned and watertight doors closed, destroyer *Chelmer* patrolling round her at 15kts. Periscope sighted at 1225 on *Triumph's* starboard beam, *Chelmer* dashed for it, *Triumph* started firing but a minute later a torpedo fired by *U21* passed through the nets and hit her, almost immediately took on 10° list and continued to heel over, *Chelmer* came under her stern walk to take off a large number of men, capsized 10min after being hit, floated bottom-up for 30min then sank bow first just NW of Gaba Tepe off Ari Burnu/Anzac Cove. The scene was apparently so dramatic and unexpected, ANZAC and Turkish troops reportedly stopped fighting and stood to watch her end; 3 officers, 52 ratings lost (500 survivors).*

General William Birdwood, commander of the ANZAC Corps, wrote that the *Triumph* 'suddenly turned just like a fish diving, and went straight to the bottom. It was really rather an awful sight and most solemn'.

After the sinking of the *Triumph*, with the U-boat threat, continuous battleship support was no longer possible, a severe blow to the ANZACs and Admiral Sir John de Roebuck recalled the British battleships to the comparative safety of Mudros harbour. British war correspondent Compton Mackenzie wrote:

The sense of abandonment was acute ... every man had paused to stare at the unfamiliar emptiness of the water ... it is certain that the Royal Navy has never executed a more demoralising manoeuvre in the whole of its history.



HMS Triumph

27th - U21 torpedoed and sank the battleship HMS *Majestic* as the ship guarded the ship to shore transports off 'W' Beach, Helles. Forty-nine sailors went down with the ship.

U21 torpedoed and sank the transport *Tiger* which had been disguised to look like a battle cruiser

U-BOAT WARFARE

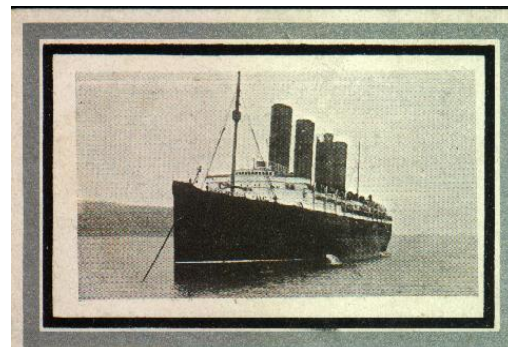
German U Boat operations were having a considerable impact on Allied operations and morale.

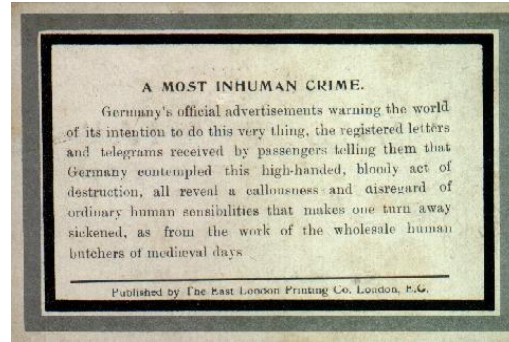
S.S. *Gulflight* torpedoed without warning: damaged, but reaches port. First United States ship attacked by German submarine.

7th - SS *Lusitania* sunk by German submarine leading to outrage in America and being a significant factor in bringing America into the war on the side of the Allies.

The *Lusitania* was torpedoed on Friday, 7th May 1915, 8 miles from Old Head of Kinsale, 12 miles west of Queenstown. She belonged to the Cunard Co, had a displacement of 45,000 tons, length 790 feet, breadth 88 feet, depth 60 feet. Built by John Brown & Co, on the Clyde, launched 1906, and made her maiden trip September 1907. She held the record for the fastest crossings from Liverpool to New York and from Liverpool to New York and back. Properly called the 'Pride of the Atlantic'.

About 2 to 2-15 pm the periscope of a submarine was observed, and without any warning two torpedoes were fired at the ill-fated liner, one struck the bow and the other burst in the engine room. The explosions were terrific. In a few minutes there was a heavy list forward, preventing the launching of some of the lifeboats. About twenty minutes after being torpedoed, The *Lusitania* sank bow first, nearly swamping several of the boats by the suction. All passengers were hurried forward while officers and crew stuck to the ship. Immediately after her SOS wireless was received, every tug, boat and trawler were despatched to the scene of the awful catastrophe, arriving about two hours after the disappearance of the liner. They rescued the survivors, many of whom died while being conveyed to the shore from exposure and shock. Although about 700 were saved, the remainder amounting to about 1,500 were lost.





MERCHANT SHIPPING

British, Allied and Neutral ships lost to enemy submarines, mines and cruisers etc in the month - 71 ships of 121,000 tons gross

The 'Herefords'

Captan Mortlock continued as the Officer Commanding the Depot at Hereford, which is now responsible for recruiting and administering recruits and soldiers due discharge. Additionally the Depot is to carry out recruit training and only trained soldiers are to be posted to the 1st or 2nd Battalions. In some areas the Depot is referred to as the 3rd Line (not 3rd Battalion). The Depot was inspected by General McKinnon, General Officer Commanding (GOC) whose HQs were in Chester and was 'favourably impressed'.

Recruiting continues and numbers are up on those of a few month ago. Amongst the recruits are:

3796 Pte Pryce BOWEN age 19 from Prestiegne

3843 Pte Isiah LANE from Ledbury who in 1918 was to be awarded the Military Medal.

3740 Pte Albert LEWIS from Kington

3717 Pte William LAWRENCE age 29 from Hereford

3725 Pte Arthur CHANDLER age 38 from Pembridge – he was subsequently discharged in October 1915 as being unfit.

(8-22-27) W1217-2-28 2/12 H.W.V. (Rev. 14-1) Army Form E 501.

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

ATTESTATION OF
No. 3725 Name Arthur James Chandler 12 Herfordshire Regt.

Questions to be put to the Recruit before Enlistment.

1. What is your Name and Address? Arthur James Chandler
West Street, Pimlico,
London W.C.2.

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) in the County of Herefordshire?

3. Have you received a notice calling the facilities you are offering by enlisting, and do you understand them?

4. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in the Royal Navy, the Army, the Royal Air Force, 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 one, and, if discharged, cause of discharge.

5. Are you a British Subject?

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.

Arthur James Chandler solemnly declares that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements made.

Arthur James Chandler SIGNATURE OF RECRUIT.
John Bethell Sq^r Signature of Witness.

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY RECRUIT ON ATTESTATION.
Arthur James Chandler 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.
H. C. Green Price 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 Pimlico on this 16th day of May 1915 H. C. Green Price (Signature of Justice of the Peace, Officer, or other person authorized to attest Recruits).

If any alteration is required on this page of the Attestation Form of the Form should be returned to make it and filled the Recruit should, if possible, obtain a copy of the Declaration on Army Form E 501A. The Recruit should, if possible, obtain a copy of the Declaration on Army Form E 501A. The Recruit should, if possible, obtain a copy of the Declaration on Army Form E 501A.

Application for Discharge of a Recruit not likely to become an Efficient Soldier.

1. If passed by an examining medical officer, rejected by an approving officer.
2. If considered unfit for service within three months of enlistment.
3. If a non-European soldier of troops in the Colonies is considered unlikely to become an efficient soldier.

This form will be accompanied by the Recruit's Attestation.

3rd Line Depot
Regiment The Herfordshire Regiment
No. 3725 Name Arthur James Chandler
Date of Attestation 16. 5. 15
Age 38 years, - days.
Height 5 feet, 6 inches.
Weight 1 lbs.
Chest Measurement: Girth when fully expanded 37 1/2 inches.
Range of expansion 2 1/2 inches.
Passed at Beaufort Recruiting Area or Station.
Medically examined by S. M. Gonnell - Hamilton.
Approved by Capt. H. Matlock.

Cause of objection to be fully stated here
Large Nerve
Does not work
Obese
See by M. J. N.
C. J. P.

Robert L. Lane Signature of Medical Officer.

Remarks by Officer transmitting the Return.
Quite unfit for any hard work.

3rd LINE DEPOT THE HERFORDSHIRE REGT.
Date 31 AUG 1915
Station Beaufort
W. J. P. H. H. H. Signature of Commanding Officer.



The enlistment and discharge papers of 3725 Pte Arthur Chandler.

The Enlistment papers were witnessed by Sgt Bethell – as seen in the photograph to the left in 1924.

Discharges also continued – mainly from those who were found to be unfit for military service; these included:

1640 Pte William WEAVER of Yarkhill.

109 Drummer Joseph FAULKNER age 19, from Hereford; he had enlisted in The Herefords on formation in 1908. He went on to re-enlist for further service.

3357 Pte James BOUCHER from Hereford, he had previous service in the KSLI and had enlisted in April 1915. It is probable he was a recruit for the Supernumerary Company.

A Drumhead service was held on Castle Green and the band of the 2nd Battalion played; many local people also attended. The Chaplain (Rev'd Pope) preached a 'forceful sermon',



The Volunteer Training Corps (VTC) continued to grow and train, over the Whit weekend they took part in a 'scheme' around Dinedor; the theme was that a German Force had landed about Chepstow and seized Monmouth and Ross and were threatening Hereford. Hereford VTC was to 'throw out' an outpost line about Dinedor Hill. Some troops marched to Dinedor others went by train from Barrs Court station to Holme Lacey station. Each platoon (30(ish) men) were to carry 12 rifles and each man was to have 5 rounds of blank ammunition.

In Hereford 3 Platoon undertook their first training in trench digging at Westfields – this seemed to attract the interest of the townsfolk!



The government continued to be concerned about the effect alcohol was having on war production, both in efficiency and safety and further restrictions were introduced. Orders were published in Hereford that soldiers in uniform were only to be served alcohol between the hours 1200 and 2100hrs.

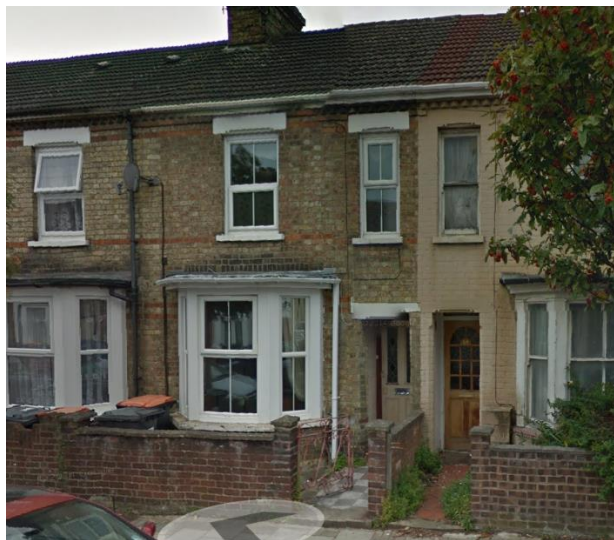
1st Battalion

WAR Clifton Commissioned Second Lieutenant; also Ptes MC Bennett and GL Wallis from Berkshire Yeomanry, EAE Llewellyn from 5 London Field Ambulance and JLR Paulson from 5 Glosters.

The Battalion moved from Newmarket to Bedford, via St Neots as indicated in the diaries of Ptes Bauser and Pritchard. Moves to Rushden and Newton Ferrers soon followed. Probably due to these moves there was little reported in the County's newspapers.

4 May	Marched to Cambridge en route to Bedford.
5 May	Marched on to St Neots - 19 1/2 miles very hot, close and thundery - making it a hard days work.
6 May	Tramped to Bedford - 12 miles. Billeted at 46 Marlboro Rd with Billie
11 May	Promoted LCPL
13 May	Moved by Route March to Irchester. Billeted with Billie, Doug, Frank and Eddie Fletcher at Melbourne School Rd
15 May	Received letter dated 12 from War Office gazetting me as 2Lt in 9 KSLI. Travelled to Birmingham stayed in Queens Hotel
16 May	Arrived Hereford 2.30pm. Changed into plain clothes

18 May	Travelled to Bedford Reported to Lt Col St Aulyn at 'dancing' academy
19 May	Commenced training course
22 May	Married at Bedford by special licence to Gwendoline Kate Morgan of Hereford



46 Marlborough Road 2015

Pte Pritchard's diary:

May	3	Cambridge	
May	4	St. Nests	
May	5	Bedford	Marched
May	13	Rushden	

The following are a series of photographs of Rushden from 2413 Private John Stephens from Hereford. Pte Stephens went on to serve at Gallipoli, the Middle East and France with the Regiment.

The group of soldiers appear to be at a 'flag day', they were possibly billeted in the houses behind them and from the next photograph it can be seen that this is Wellingboro Road.

The Church and school, as large buildings were probably used as lecture rooms and the Royal Theatre was no doubt frequented by men of the Herefords!



Private Stephens



WELLINBORO RD RUSHDEN (N° 150)



NO 33 WESLEYAN CHURCH RUSHDEN





The following photographs from 869 Drummer George Foster show:

- The Drums and Bugles of the 1st Battalion at Rushden.
- Dmr Foster with the Drums and Bugles at annual camp in 1913 at Porthcawl.

Dmr Foster had joined the Herefords in early 1910; he went on to serve in Gallipoli and the Herefordshire Home Guard in World War Two. He was awarded the Territorial Force Efficiency Medal.



2nd Battalion

The long awaited move took place and the 2nd Battalion left Aberystwyth for Northampton; A & B Companies lead by the band left by train about midnight and C & D Companies about an hour later. It was reported in the Hereford Journal that 'despite the hour a considerable number of townspeople turned out to bid goodbye'; each member of the Battalion was given a packet of cigarettes as a gift from the town. The Battalion arrived in Northampton about 0800hrs moved to their billets and were then given the rest of the morning 'free' – there was then 'drill' in the afternoon. 'The men are delighted for a change of scene and the new order of things is generally appreciated'.

The Journal further reports 'Paddy' the Battalion mascot, does not seem to appreciate the change; he looks very crestfallen'.

Paddy remained the Battalion mascot as indicated in the picture to the right taken in 1916.



On the 27th May Battalion Orders gave notice of a temporary move to North London District 'The Battalion will be billeted with subsistence the advance party under 2Lt Phillips with Sgt Gagg (A Coy), Sgt Wood (B Coy), Sgt Hicks (C Coy), Sgt Morling (D Coy) will depart on Friday 28th May. The Bn will entrain under Field Conditions only taking necessary equipment, arms and 100 rounds per man. Kit bags will be stored 2Lt Cope will remain in charge in Northampton sick and light duty men will remain behind.' The Battalion was expected to be away for 2 or 3 weeks and then return to Northampton.



Stephen Gagg and his 6 sons at Annual Camp in 1906 or 1907. Presumably Sgt Gagg (as mentioned) is one of the sons.

Whilst billeted in private houses in Northampton, food was provided centrally by the Army and delivered to each billet 'the men did not like the idea of Army rations after the good fare at Aberystwyth!'. The Battalion and individuals soon settled down, many missed their walks along the sea front but enjoyed exploring the new town and appreciated that any route march did not now start with a sharp uphill march away from the sea.



St Katherine's Church was adopted by the Battalion as 'their' Church and services were held here most Sundays.