

# British Journal for Military History

Volume 10, Issue 1, March 2024

---

Casualties of War: 1/1 Bucks Battalion, 1915-1919

**Ian Beckett & Timothy Bowman**

---

**ISSN:** 2057-0422

**Date of Publication:** 22 March 2024

**Citation:** Ian Beckett & Timothy Bowman, 'Casualties of War: 1/1 Bucks Battalion, 1915-1919', *British Journal for Military History*, 10.1 (2024), pp. 105-132.

[www.bjmh.org.uk](http://www.bjmh.org.uk)

---



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.



The BJMH is produced with the support of **Goldsmiths**  
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

# Casualties of War: I/1 Bucks Battalion, 1915-1919

IAN BECKETT & TIMOTHY BOWMAN\*

University of Kent, UK

Email: [I.Beckett@kent.ac.uk](mailto:I.Beckett@kent.ac.uk) and [T.Bowman@kent.ac.uk](mailto:T.Bowman@kent.ac.uk)

## ABSTRACT

*The handful of surviving British army 'casualty books' from the Great War are not only a unique source for quantifying the wartime integrity of units but also of answering such additional questions as the incidence and type of disciplinary offences. Equally, the extent of disease and illness can also be determined as well as leave policies and the impact on battalions of secondments, temporary attachments and attendance at training courses. An analysis of the casualty books of I/1 Bucks Battalion whilst serving on the Western Front and in Italy provide a microcosm of the internal dynamics of a wartime battalion.*

## Introduction

It has long been the contention of one of the authors of this paper that no single battalion in the British army during the First World War was quite like any other, and that generalising the serviceman's experience of war between 1914 and 1918 is exceptionally difficult since the conditioning of men would depend to a large extent on the unit in which they served.<sup>1</sup> In itself, this is a subjective judgement dependent upon familiarity with diaries and memoirs and some fine studies of individual units but there is invariably an absence of evidence in the form of readily available detailed data on the internal dynamics of units. Trawling through surviving (and incomplete) personnel files in the UK National Archives (Folders WO 363 and 364) for even one unit would be an impossible undertaking. However, there are some other surviving

---

\*Prof. Ian F. W. Beckett is Honorary Professor of Military History and Dr Timothy Bowman is Reader in Military History in the School of History, University of Kent.

The Casualties of War project for the digitalisation of the Casualty Books of the I/1 Bucks Battalion was made possible by funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council through the 'Gateways to the First World War' Engagement Centre at the University of Kent.

DOI: [10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v10i1.1779](https://doi.org/10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v10i1.1779)

<sup>1</sup>Ian Beckett, 'The British Army, 1914-18: The Illusion of Change', in John Turner (ed.), *Britain and the First World War*, (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), pp. 99-116 (p. 109).

sources for a few units that can begin to make meaningful comparisons possible. These are battalion 'casualty books' in which each entry records full details of an individual's period in the battalion, including leave and training, wounds and illnesses, transfers, and disciplinary record. Where individuals were killed, there is often also a map reference for the original grave or location of the body, including for many of those whose body was subsequently lost. The significance of this information can be readily imagined. It is a far more complete source than the material so imaginatively mined for prosopographic studies of Irish formations.<sup>2</sup>

What follows, therefore, is an examination of the casualty books of one Territorial Force battalion that served on the Western Front and in Italy between 1915 and 1918, namely 1/1 Buckinghamshire Battalion of The Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (OBLI). The changing composition of the battalion with the influx of drafts from other units after heavy casualties in 1916 and 1917 can be readily quantified. The disciplinary entries similarly enable a complete picture to be drawn of the incidence and type of disciplinary offences, and the sentences imposed. Equally, the type of disease and illness can also be determined. This adds significantly to studies on wartime medicine, and on the relationship between British soldiers and French and Belgian civilians.<sup>3</sup>

Following a discussion of the general historiography of the Territorial Force and of the nature of the casualty books and the questions they raise and answer, the paper turns to the initial recruitment of the battalion before offering a detailed analysis of the process of change. This is then further explored through discussion of the contribution to change of issues other than battle casualties such as leave, attachment, illness, and unauthorised absence, which also raises the matter of discipline. At each stage, the evidence is related to the wider historiography. A conclusion is then drawn on the value of the casualty books and the scope for further analysis and comparison.

## **Historiography**

The historiography of the Territorial Force has been transformed in recent years. The initial focus was on the evolution of the Haldane reforms and the weaknesses of the

---

<sup>2</sup>Richard S. Grayson, *Belfast Boys: How Unionists and Nationalists Fought and Died Together in the First World War*, (London: Continuum, Books, 2009); Richard S. Grayson, 'Military History from the Street: New Methods for Researching First World War Service in the British Military', *War in History* 21 (2014), pp. 465-495; Stephen Sandford, *Neither Unionist Nor Nationalist: The 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division in the Great War* (Newbridge: Irish Academic Press, 2014).

<sup>3</sup>Mark Harrison, *The Medical War: British Military Medicine in the First World War*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Craig Gibson, *Behind The Front: British Soldier and French Civilians, 1914-18*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

## CASUALTIES OF WAR: I/I BUCKS BATTALION 1915-1919

resulting Territorial county structure between 1908 and 1914.<sup>4</sup> A part-time force intended to bridge the perceived gap between army and society was undermined by political compromises. The latter led both to an emphasis upon home defence rather than the means to expand the army in the event of war and also to the removal of any elective element on the County Territorial Associations (CTAs). Territorials came under sustained assault from those regular soldiers who had little confidence in the military efficiency of amateurs, from those advocating some form of conscription, and from the political left. The force was 63,000 short of its establishment of 314,000 in January 1914. A mere 1,090 officers and 17,788 other ranks had taken the so-called Imperial Service Obligation (ISO) by volunteering for overseas service in the event of war. In any case, with Territorial enlistment permitted at the age of 17, 40,000 were under the age of 19 at which overseas service was legally permissible. A third of the force had failed the modest musketry requirements and, in 1912, only 155,000 men had undertaken the full 15 days' annual camp.<sup>5</sup>

A tentative framework was previously advanced subsequently for the examination of the Territorial experience during the Great War.<sup>6</sup> This pointed to the detrimental impact in August 1914 of the decision of the new Secretary of State for War, Field Marshal Lord Kitchener, to ignore CTAs as a means of wartime expansion for the army. Kitchener's reasoning embraced the legal difficulties relating to the ISO as well as to the inability to transfer Territorials between units, or to amalgamate or disband Territorial units. His concern extended to the age profile of the Territorial Force, the ability of men to seek discharge at the end of their pre-war term of service, and the continued ability of Territorials to enlist for home service only. Nonetheless, there was a degree of prejudice against amateur soldiers and local political influences whilst Kitchener was also fearful of the possibility of German invasion, against which the Territorials were the principal defence. Consequently, there was unnecessary duplication of effort in raising Kitchener's 'New Armies' simultaneously with an expansion of the Territorial Force.

The issue of the ISO and the degree of county integrity of wartime Territorial formations as casualties mounted has remained central to subsequent enquiry. Detailed studies demonstrate that the extent to which Territorials resisted

---

<sup>4</sup>Edward Spiers, *Haldane: An Army Reformer*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1980); Peter Dennis, *The Territorial Army, 1907-40*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press for Royal Historical Society, 1987).

<sup>5</sup>Ian Beckett, *Territorials: A Century of Service*, (Plymouth: DRA Publishing for the MOD, 2008), pp. 39-40.

<sup>6</sup>Ian Beckett, 'The Territorial Force', in Ian Beckett and Keith Simpson (eds), *The Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in the First World War*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), pp. 127-164.

'nationalisation' of the army varied considerably.<sup>7</sup> Further studies have analysed pre-war administrative failings and also suggested that the Territorials proved receptive to innovation, capable of initiative, and highly resilient. It is implied that the Territorial Force reached its 'apogee' on the Somme, and thereafter being largely indistinguishable from regular or New Army formations.<sup>8</sup>

Such aspects as morale and discipline that pertain particularly to the perceived character of the Territorial Force similarly reflect the wider number of studies of these aspects of the Great War experience.<sup>9</sup> Generally, there has been increasing emphasis upon the experience of individual formations at both divisional and battalion level.<sup>10</sup>

It is in this context that an analysis of the 'Casualty Books' of 1/1 Buckinghamshire Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry is so valuable. The four volumes constitute a complete source for the 2,906 other ranks and 139 officers (excluding two medical officers and a chaplain) who served in this First Line Territorial Battalion overseas between 1915 and 1919.<sup>11</sup> The Territorial Force was expanded in August 1914 with CTAs authorised to raise new units to replace those volunteering for overseas service, the former being 'first line' and the latter 'second line'. In November 1914 further 'third line' units were raised as first line units proceeded overseas and for all that had not already done so in March 1915. The nomenclature of 1/1, 2/1 and 3/1 battalions was adopted in January 1915. Thus, the pre-war Buckinghamshire Battalion became 1/1 Bucks, the second raised in September 1914

---

<sup>7</sup>K. W. Mitchinson, *Gentlemen and Officers: The Impact of War on a Territorial Regiment*, (London: Imperial War Museum, 1995); Jill Knight, *The Civil Service Rifles in the Great War*, (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2004); Helen McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers: The Liverpool Territorials in the First World War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Thomas Thorpe, 'The Extent, Nature and Impact of Military Group Cohesion in London Regiment Infantry Battalions during the Great War', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Kings College, London, 2016; James Kitchen, *The British Imperial Army in the Middle East: Morale and Identity in the Sinai and Palestine Campaigns, 1916-18*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 123-150.

<sup>8</sup>K. W. Mitchinson, *England's Last Hope: The Territorial Force, 1908-14*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2008); K. W. Mitchinson, *The Territorial Force at War, 1914-16*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>9</sup>Timothy Bowman, *Irish Regiments in the Great War: Discipline and Morale*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003); Alex Watson, *Enduring the Great War: Combat, Morale and Collapse in the German and British Armies, 1914-18*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>10</sup>See, for example, Mark Connelly, *Steady the Buffs: A Regiment, A Region and the Great War*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>11</sup>Buckinghamshire Archives (hereafter BA) T/A 6/11-14, Casualty Books.

## CASUALTIES OF WAR: 1/1 BUCKS BATTALION 1915-1919

became 2/1 Bucks, and the third battalion raised in March 1915 became 3/1 Bucks. The second and third line battalions were intended initially to provide reinforcing drafts for the first and second lines respectively although, ultimately most second line battalions went overseas in their own right. 1/1 Bucks served with 145 Brigade of 48 (South Midland) Division on the Western Front from March 1915 to November 1917, and then in Italy from November 1917 to February 1919.<sup>12</sup>

Casualty books have also survived for two regular battalions – 1 Somerset Light Infantry (SLI) and 1 Royal Welsh Fusiliers (RWF) – and another Territorial battalion, the 1/6 Kings (Liverpool Regiment).<sup>13</sup> Together with those of 1/1 Bucks Battalion, these have been sampled for a valuable recent thesis by Thomas Davies on the army's reinforcement system during the First World War.<sup>14</sup> In each case, Davies took a sample of soldiers with surnames from A to G. This enables a good indicative degree of comparison in terms of drafting policy and the implications for battalion identity, the overall sample being 6,560 men or around a third of those in the four casualty books. Understandably, there may be anomalies. The first draft of 'strangers' received by 1/1 Bucks in August 1916, for example, was from 1/1 Huntingdonshire Cyclists. All the latter bore surnames with letters between S and W, which suggests something of the allocation process of the Hunts Cyclists within 48 (South Midland) Division.

What are described as casualty books also exist for two other Territorial regiments – 1/5 Suffolk Regiment and 1/1 Dorset Yeomanry.<sup>15</sup> What is described as a casualty and sickness ledger exists for 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9 Battalions of the Norfolk Regiment – the latter three all Kitchener service battalions – and catalogues the POW, casualty, sickness, and hospitalisation status of some 15,000 men. These sources, however, do not appear to go further in terms of recording the additional details contained in the 1/1 Bucks casualty books.<sup>16</sup> None have been found for any Scottish unit. For reasons of space and because few other surviving casualty books include them, data for officers has been omitted from this analysis.

---

<sup>12</sup>For 48 Division, see K. W. Mitchinson, *The 48<sup>th</sup> (South Midland) Division, 1908-19* (Solihull: Helion, 2017).

<sup>13</sup>Somerset Archive DD/SLI/9/4; Royal Welsh Fusiliers Museum, TRWFM 276; Liverpool Maritime Museum, KRO, K2/1.

<sup>14</sup>Thomas Davies, 'Reinforcement Policy and Practice in the British and Dominion Forces during the First World War', Unpublished PhD Thesis University of Kent, 2023.

<sup>15</sup>Suffolk Record Office GB554/H/2/1; Dorset History Centre D/DOY/A/5/1-2.

<sup>16</sup>Norfolk Museums Collection NWHRM 6752.

## **Enlistment and Recruitment in 1/1 Bucks Battalion**

The antecedent pre-1908 Bucks rifle volunteer battalion had become increasingly dependent for its recruits upon Aylesbury printers, High Wycombe chair-makers, and the employees of the London and North Western Railway Company (LNWR) Carriage Works at Wolverton.<sup>17</sup> There were difficulties in establishing the county's new Territorial units in 1908, not least resentment at the abolition of the Royal Bucks King's Own Militia, which prompted a sufficiently vigorous public campaign for the War Office to concede the renaming of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry as the OBLI.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, rather than becoming 5 Battalion, OBLI – the Oxfordshire volunteers being 4 Battalion – the new infantry battalion became the Buckinghamshire Battalion, OBLI. A total of 1,013 men transferred to the Territorial Force from the existing Bucks volunteers and yeomanry units.

The combined establishment of the new Territorial units – the Bucks Battalion, the Royal Bucks Hussars, the 2 South Midland Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance, and the South Midland Brigade Company, Army Service Corps (ASC) – was 1,642. Bucks units reached 93 per cent of establishment in 1909 although this fell to 83 per cent when men were required to re-engage following the end of the initial four-year term of engagement in 1912. The Territorial Reserve stood at only six officers and one man in 1914, although the National Reserve mustered 64 officers and 1,660 ORs.<sup>19</sup>

In common with other Territorial units, the Bucks Battalion was recalled from annual summer camp as the crisis in Europe deepened. The ISO request was put to men on 11 August 1914. Initially, only 553 men took the ISO although the number rose to 600 by the following day. Those who did so were unequally distributed with 70 from the 75 men of the Aylesbury Company and 24 out of 32 from the Chesham Detachment doing so. All 27 members of the band declined. In all, approximately 240 men including many older NCOs declined the ISO.<sup>20</sup> They were separated from the battalion at Chelmsford, stripped of weapons and equipment and returned to Aylesbury to form a nucleus for the 2/1 Bucks Battalion. Labelled 'Never Dies' by the commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Francis Wethered, they were, as suggested by Geoffry Christie-

---

<sup>17</sup>Ian Beckett, *Call to Arms: Buckinghamshire's Citizen Soldiers*, (Buckingham: Barracuda, 1985), pp. 43-58; Ian Beckett, 'The Local Community and the Amateur Military Tradition: A Case Study of Victorian Buckinghamshire', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 59 (1981), pp. 95-110, 161-170.

<sup>18</sup>BA Fremantle Add Mss, D/FR/A/77, Resolutions for public meeting at Aylesbury, 14 Jan. 1908; T/A 1/27, CTA Letter Book, James to Haldane, 15 Jan. 1908.

<sup>19</sup>Ian Beckett, 'The Local Community and the Great War: Aspects of Military Participation', *Records of Bucks* 20 (1978), pp. 503-515.

<sup>20</sup>*Bucks Free Press*, 21 Aug. 1914; Lionel Crouch, *Duty and Service: Letters from the Front* (Aylesbury: Privately printed, 1917), pp. 24-25; Viney, 'Reminiscences', pp. 70-74.

## CASUALTIES OF WAR: 1/1 BUCKS BATTALION 1915-1919

Miller of 2/1 Bucks 'not treated by either officers or men in the manner contemplated by the King's regulations'.<sup>21</sup> The relationship between the two battalions was permanently soured and not improved when 2/1 Bucks refused to send any experienced NCOs to 1/1 in March 1915 in return for men left behind when the latter proceeded overseas.

When 2/1 Bucks was asked in turn to take ISO in April 1915, all but 140 men did so, those not doing so being elderly or unfit. All but one of member of the band now volunteered. Those not taking the ISO were sent back to 3/1 Bucks, the third line battalion formed in March 1915. Fifty others sent back had not been encouraged to volunteer but 35 of these were then sent back to 2/1 Bucks from 3/1 in the first draft.<sup>22</sup>

The number declining to take the ISO in 1/4 OBLI appears to have been about 42 per cent but, overall, about 20 per cent of the men of the 48 Division declined to take the obligation. Generally, there were significant tensions between first and second line units arising from the ISO and the reluctance of the second line units to accept older home service men and to lose their own younger and fitter men.<sup>23</sup>

Additional significant factors with regard to the pre-war Territorial legislation was the ability of men to enlist for home service only until March 1915, while pre-war Territorials could and did seek their discharge at the end of their original four-year term of service until May 1916. There were 82,588 home servicemen still borne on Territorial returns in August 1915. Over 159,000 pre-war Territorials would have been entitled to discharge between 1914 and 1917 under normal peacetime conditions, albeit that this was extended automatically by one year on the outbreak of war. Those who chose to re-engage received a month's furlough and a bounty. Under the first Military Service Act of January 1916, all Territorials under 41 years of age had until 2 March 1916 to take the ISO, resign (if officers) or be discharged (ORs) and thus become liable to conscription. Those compulsorily retained thereafter were given a month's furlough where possible. After 11 December 1915 no more direct recruiting was permitted into the Territorial Force except for a few specified units.

---

<sup>21</sup>Imperial War Museum (hereinafter IWM) Christie-Miller Mss, 80/32/1, Vol. 1, pp. 26-29.

<sup>22</sup>BA D/X 780/29, Diary of Charles Phipps, 28 May 1915; IWM Christie-Miller Mss, 80/32/1, Vol 1, pp. 66-68, p. 78, p. 81; author interviews with J. Stammers, A. Seymour and J. Tranter, 25 Nov. 1980.

<sup>23</sup>Ian Beckett, 'The Territorial Force in the Great War', in Peter Liddle (ed.), *Home Fires and Foreign Fields: British Social and Military Experience in the First World War*, (London: Brassey's, 1985), pp. 21-38 (p. 23); Mitchinson, *48<sup>th</sup> Division*, pp. 36-38.



Yet a further legislative difficulty was that the form that Territorials signed in assenting to overseas service specified they would remain with their own unit and could not be subsequently transferred to another. Amalgamating or disbanding Territorial units was theoretically illegal. Following the failure of legislation in April 1915, a new form to permit transfer was issued in May 1915 to all new recruits, as well as to all who had already signified assent. It was said by the influential Lord Derby to be 'murdering' Territorial recruitment.<sup>24</sup> In the event, clauses were included in the Military Service Act of May 1916 to remove the anomaly. Temporary amalgamations of many Territorial units took place in the wake of heavy casualties in 1915, and became more permanent in 1916, whilst second line Territorial units took the brunt of reductions on the reorganisation of the BEF amid the general manpower shortages in early 1918.

The 1/1 Bucks Casualty Books are not helpful with regard to the ISO since no individuals' details are recorded prior to embarkation in March 1915. They do provide evidence of those re-engaging at the end of their term of service and those prepared to go home time-expired even in the knowledge that conscription had been introduced. A total of 40 men re-engaged between April 1915 and June 1916. In that same period, 97 chose to go home, the first as early as July 1915. Thus, of those eligible, 70.8 per cent chose to exercise the option to go home. Two of those who chose to go time-expired were winners of gallantry awards, Lance Corporal Gostelow having been awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) in January 1916, and Corporal Smewin the Military Medal (MM) in March 1916. Four men who had been the subject of disciplinary proceedings also chose to go although, equally, two others re-engaged, one later killed and the other sent home with serious wounds. The first man to be retained compulsorily was in June 1916 and, in all, 72 men were so retained by the end of the war.

In August 1914 any men or recruits under the age of 19 were automatically sent to 2/1 Bucks. All those who were fit and aged over 19 were then sent from 2/1 Bucks as a draft in March 1915 to help complete 1/1 Bucks on embarkation.<sup>25</sup> It is impossible to gauge the numbers enlisting underage nationally and attempts to quantify the extent of such recruitment are unconvincing.<sup>26</sup> In the case of the Bucks, just 23 men were sent home under age, ten of them prior to June 1915. The longest had served almost five months with the battalion before being sent home in February 1916. Another sent home after less than a month at the front in February 1916 had actually been in uniform

---

<sup>24</sup>Randolph Churchill, *Lord Derby: King of Lancashire*, (London: Heinemann, 1959), pp. 185-86.

<sup>25</sup>IWM Christie-Miller Mss, 80/32/1, Vol. 1, pp. 2-3, 46.

<sup>26</sup>Richard van Emden, *Boy Soldiers of the Great War 2<sup>nd</sup> edn.*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2012); John Oakes, *Kitchener's Lost Boys: From the Playing Fields to the Killing Fields*, (Stroud: History Press, 2009).

## CASUALTIES OF WAR: 1/1 BUCKS BATTALION 1915-1919

since July 1915. It suggests that under-age enlistment was not as widespread as supposed. A total of 27 men were either commissioned into other units or went to commissioning cadet units. Whilst dealing with the question of young soldiers in general for his thesis, Davies did not interrogate his sample from casualty books to enable a comparison to be made between 1/1 Bucks, 1 SLI, 1 RWF and 1/6 Kings.<sup>27</sup>

One aspect that should be emphasised is the level of Jewish recruitment. The wealthy Rothschild banking family had long been associated with the Royal Buckinghamshire Hussars. The *Jewish World* reported in August 1915 that Lionel de Rothschild had recruited over 40 young Jews for the Royal Bucks Hussars, Bucks Battalions, and 2 South Midland Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance. In November it carried an advertisement for the newly opened Rothschild recruiting office in London. *The British Jewry Book of Honour* yields 109 Jews who served in the Bucks Battalions including two officers.<sup>28</sup> The editor, Rev. Michael Adler, recorded in his diary on 11 August 1916 that he had met 'a party of fifty newly-arrived Jewish soldiers belonging to the 1/1st Bucks Battalion' outside Bouzincourt on the Somme and conducted a brief service.<sup>29</sup> A total of 27 of those listed in *The British Jewry Book of Honour* appear to have served in 2/1 Bucks and three in 3/1 Bucks, while 79 served in 1/1 Bucks. At least 14 died serving with 1/1 Bucks and 10 with 2/1 Bucks.<sup>30</sup> The majority of the Jewish soldiers arrived after the first heavy losses on the Somme. Through recording the ultimate destination of Jewish recruits, *The British Jewry Book of Honour* misses that most of those in 1/1 Bucks came from 3/1 Bucks. Hawtin Mundy, a LNWR apprentice, who enlisted in 1/1 Bucks, was sent to 3/1 Bucks to recover from wounds in May 1915. He recorded later of the 3/1st that 'they was nearly all of them Jewish chaps'.<sup>31</sup> Davies suggests that, not unexpectedly, 1/1 Bucks received more recruits from London over time than 1 SLI, 1 RWF and 1/6 Kings. The level of Jewish recruitment from London clearly added to such a trend.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup>Davies, 'Reinforcement Policy', pp. 198-199.

<sup>28</sup>Michael Adler (ed.), *British Jewry Book of Honour*, (London: Caxton Publishing Co., 1922), pp. 334-337.

<sup>29</sup>Justin Cavernelis-Frost, "There are three types of men": Lionel de Rothschild and the Jewish War Services Committee, 1915-19', *Rothschild Archives Review of the Year 2013-2014*, pp. 36-44 (p. 41).

<sup>30</sup>Harold Pollins, 'Jews in the British Army in the First World War', *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 37 (1995), pp. 100-111; Harold Pollins, 'The Rothschilds as Recruiters for Buckinghamshire in the First World War', *Bulletin of the Military Historical Society* 50 (1999), pp. 196-205.

<sup>31</sup>Hawtin Mundy, *No Heroes, No Cowards*, (Milton Keynes: The People's Press, 1981), p. 26.

<sup>32</sup>Davies, 'Reinforcement Policy', pp. 160-61.

In keeping with the legislative difficulties and the retrospective authorisation for transfers between units, there were just 24 prior to June 1916: 13 of them went to the Brigade Machine Gun Company whilst five were transferred to the Ministry of Munitions at home as well as one sent home on compassionate grounds. Of the remainder, three went to the Royal Engineers, one to the Royal Flying Corps, and one for unknown reasons to 10 (Service) Battalion, The Lincolnshire Regiment – the ‘Grimsby Chums’. Thereafter, transfers were frequent with a wartime total of 185 men transferred up to January 1919. In addition, 41 men were posted directly elsewhere after recovering from wounds or injury on the Somme in July 1916. This was probably regarded as acceptable since 40 of them went to 2/1 Bucks, the other individual to the Royal Engineers. These men are counted as not returning through wounds or injury rather than as transfers in Table I (all tables shown at the end of this article).

### **Patterns of Change: Battle Casualties**

The degree of change in 1/1 Bucks Battalion is easily traced in Table I. It is convenient to see the battalion’s war experience as comprising three periods of relative stability (March 1915 to June 1916, September 1916 to June 1917, and September 1917 to November 1917) interspersed with two short and intense phases of operations (July to August 1916, and July to August 1917). The period from September 1917 onwards is divided by the battalion’s departure for the Italian front at the end of November 1917, justifiable in terms of the very different conditions then experienced. The two intense periods are defined by the Somme and Third Ypres. Even then, the most significant casualties occurred around Oivillers and Pozières on the Somme between 21 and 24 July 1916, which cost 242 casualties, and at St Julien on 16 August 1917 during that part of Third Ypres classified as the Battle of Langemarck, which cost 291 casualties.

Proceeding overseas on 30 March 1915, the battalion occupied an acknowledged quiet sector at Hébuterne between July 1915 and July 1916. Embarkation strength was 30 officers and 916 other ranks.<sup>33</sup> Five men went sick on 3 April but the first casualty was Private Holland mortally wounded by shell fire on 8 April 1915 when the battalion was under instruction in the trenches. Holding the line from July 1915 to June 1916 involved considerable work to improve insanitary and waterlogged French trenches, the demands from the Royal Engineers for labour being reflected in the Casualty Books. Raiding as opposed to patrols into No Man’s Land remained novel and experimental.<sup>34</sup> The Bucks mounted only a dozen significant fighting patrols or raids, the largest on 1 April 1916 by two officers and 25 Other Ranks (ORs), which cost

---

<sup>33</sup>The UK National Archives (hereinafter) TNA WO 95/2763/2.

<sup>34</sup>Mitchinson, *48<sup>th</sup> Division*, p. 72.

## CASUALTIES OF WAR: 1/1 BUCKS BATTALION 1915-1919

four dead and two wounded.<sup>35</sup> Raids were intended to harass the enemy whilst instructing men in new, or honing existing, military skills. Patrols achieved the same object but with the additional purpose of acquiring useful intelligence.<sup>36</sup>

Infantry fatalities for 48 Division between March 1915 and June 1916 have been estimated at just 567. These were light when 46 (North Midland) Division had suffered over 3,700 casualties on a single day at Loos in October 1915, 50 (Northumbrian) Division had also suffered over 3,700 casualties at Second Ypres in April 1915, and 47 (1/2 London) Division over 2,300 at Festubert in May 1915.<sup>37</sup> For the Bucks the total loss in its first fifteen months of active service between April 1915 and June 1916 amounted to 37 killed, 15 died of wounds, one missing, and 192 wounded, of whom 79 did not return to the battalion. Apart from an initial cluster of 12 fatalities (including four died of wounds) in May 1915, there were only five fatalities (including four died of wounds) between June 1915 and January 1916. Most of the 12 fatalities in February 1916 occurred as a result of a single shelling incident on 10 February whilst 23 casualties in May 1916 again came from shelling on 15 May 1916. Thirteen of the wounds were accidental as was one death, Bugler Ridgway being killed in bomb throwing practice on 31 May 1915.

The rate of change did not substantially accelerate until July 1916. It is still the case that adding those who chose to go home time-expired, those transferred and those commissioned to the fatalities, non-returning casualties and injuries, 416 men were lost to the battalion prior to July 1916 – a third of embarkation strength. There were reinforcing drafts totalling 410 men between June 1915 and June 1916, the first significant draft of 99 men arriving in June 1915 followed by 110 in February 1916, 125 in March 1916, and 63 in May 1916. Typically, these men, as well as those wounded returning from treatment in England, passed through base depots and entrenching battalions before reaching the Bucks whilst those with less serious wounds often passed through convalescent or rest camps before rejoining. Although the casualty books do not record the source of drafts prior to the Somme, it can be assumed that most were from 2/1 or 3/1 Bucks. Most second line Territorial units were required to be reduced in September 1915 to 22 officers and 600 ORs with the remainder drafted overseas or, if unfit, to the third line.<sup>38</sup> The battalion history records the first

---

<sup>35</sup>P. L. Wright, *The First Bucks Battalion*, (Aylesbury: Hazell, Watson & Viney, 1920), 222-23; Crouch, *Duty and Service*, pp. 99-102.

<sup>36</sup>For discussion on the utility or otherwise of raids, see Connelly, *Steady the Buffs*, pp. 72-92; Mike Senior, *Haking: A Dutiful Soldier – Lt. General Sir Richard Haking, XI Corps Commander, A Study in Corps Command*, (Barnsley: Pen & Swords, 2012), pp. 7-8.

<sup>37</sup>Mitchinson, *48<sup>th</sup> Division*, p. 82.

<sup>38</sup>Major General J. C. Swann, *Citizen Soldiers of Bucks, 1795-1926*, (Aylesbury: Hazell, Watson & Viney, 1930), p. 137.

draft of 97 'strangers' as those arriving mostly from I/I Hunts Cyclists in August 1916 although at least these were Territorials.<sup>39</sup> In fact, there were 357 new arrivals in July and August, 92 of them from the Hunts Cyclists.

Between September 1916 and June 1917 another 563 men were lost to the battalion from all causes. Increasingly, drafts were to be from specified units, and, in each case, they were 'compulsorily transferred'. Those drafted from specified units amounted to 174 in July and August 1917 and another 278 in September 1917. Of those arriving in July 1917, a total of 30 came from 4 Devon Reserve Battalion and 93 from I Battalion, The Hampshire Regiment. In September, 52 men arrived from I Battalion, The Royal Berkshire Regiment, and 225 from the ASC Motor Transport. Significantly, from September 1917 onwards only nine men arrived in the I/I Bucks without being drafted from a specific unit. Private Darbyshire, conscripted in May 1917, arrived at 55 Infantry Base Depot on 14 September and was initially slated for I Royal Berkshires, only to be transferred to the Bucks 'of which I had never heard' on 29 September.<sup>40</sup> Many new arrivals became casualties almost at once in both 1916 and 1917. Generally, the initial drafts to the division were trained and fit but those arriving subsequently were not always well received.<sup>41</sup> This can be borne out by the disciplinary statistics for the battalion as suggested below.

Since the casualty books provide no indication of a soldier's origin other than by regiment, it is *Soldiers Died in the Great War* that provides a rough indication of geographical change. In 1915, some 65% of the battalion's dead originated in Bucks parishes, and 70 per cent among those lost in 1916. In 1917, the percentage from Bucks parishes declined to 34 per cent, rising marginally to 38 per cent among the dead of 1918. This cannot be precise since losses may have fallen disproportionately within battalions, but it is persuasive in its implications.<sup>42</sup> Studies focussing on Western Command have suggested that its Territorial units maintained significant homogeneity throughout the war despite casualties. If not from the same regiment, replacements were from the same region with real efforts made to ensure this was so.<sup>43</sup> It has also been suggested that regional identity remained strong in 54 (East Anglian) Division in the Middle East but, by contrast, a London identity was far less important than other

---

<sup>39</sup>Wright, *Bucks*, p. 36.

<sup>40</sup>BA, T/A 6/13, Casualty Book; D-X 1253, Darbyshire Diary.

<sup>41</sup>Mitchinson, *48<sup>th</sup> Division*, pp. 103-104. For a wider analysis of training standards, see Davies, 'Reinforcement Policy', pp. 322-361.

<sup>42</sup>*Soldiers Died in the Great War*, (London: HMSO, 1921), Pt 47, and pp. 53-63.

<sup>43</sup>McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers*, p. 71; Alison Hine, 'The Provision and Management of Casualty replacements for British Infantry Units on the Western Front during the First World War', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2015, pp. 197, 204-05, 216-21, 286-91; Mitchinson, *Territorial Force at War*, pp. 205-207.

## CASUALTIES OF WAR: 1/1 BUCKS BATTALION 1915-1919

modes of group cohesion in 56 (1<sup>st</sup> London) Division.<sup>44</sup> Scottish Command, too, was able to maintain the essential Scottish nature of 51 (Highland) and 52 (Lowland) Divisions although identity was greatly diluted in 1917 and 1918: recruitment then reflected a greater Scottish rather than a greater British identity.<sup>45</sup>

Generally, the reinforcement policy relating to the Territorial Force – as established in terms of the first, second and third lines in 1914-15 – was far more logical than the haphazard evolution of a system for the New Armies. The identity of New Army units was diluted even before significant casualties occurred, although the War Office did attempt to maintain regimental and regional identities before and after the introduction of the centralised Training Reserve in September 1916.<sup>46</sup>

Buckinghamshire was placed in District 7 of Southern Command. Of those specific units identified as providing drafts, Devon fell within District 8 of Southern Command, Berkshire and Hampshire were split between Southern Command and Aldershot Command. Huntingdonshire was in Eastern Command. It might be argued, therefore, that units in Southern Command were not treated as generously in replacement terms as those in Western or Scottish Command.

In his thesis, Davies has undertaken additional research on individuals' identities from the census and other biographical sources. This suggests that there was a growth in regional if not local identity in 1916-17 within 1 SLI, 1 RWF, and 1/6 Kings compared to a decline in 1/1 Bucks. His sample of surnames A – G suggests 86.8% of reinforcements were from Bucks in 1915, 42.6% in 1916, and only 8.2% in 1917. He also suggests that whereas 90.5% of reinforcements for 1/1 Bucks came from Southern Command in 1915, this declined to 47.3% in 1917. He postulates that 1/1 Bucks was less able to transition from a local to a regional identity than the other three battalions, primarily through the relatively small size of the county.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup>Kitchen, *British Imperial Army*, pp. 123-50; Thorpe, 'Military Group Cohesion', p. 185, pp. 205-06.

<sup>45</sup>Craig French, 'The 51<sup>st</sup> (Highland) Division during the First World War', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow, 2006, pp. 88-141, esp. pp. 140-41; Christopher Forrest, 'The 52<sup>nd</sup> (Lowland) Division in the Great War, 1914-18', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Salford, 2012. French relies largely on *Soldiers Died* to establish identity.

<sup>46</sup>Thomas Davies, 'Sustaining Britain's First "Citizen Army": The Creation and Evolution of the Reinforcement Policy for Kitchener's New Armies, 1914-16', *British Journal for Military History* 8 (2022), pp. 20-39.

<sup>47</sup>Davies, 'Reinforcement Policy', pp. 156-165.

The scale of casualties on the Somme and at Third Ypres that necessitated these drafts is readily apparent. In terms of total loss to the battalion, there were 408 battle casualties in July and August 1916, and then another 296 in July and August 1917. If those wounded who returned subsequently to the battalion are also taken into account (Table 2) then the total of casualties rises to 616 and 394 respectively. The casualty rate was never so great again. Divisional casualties as a whole were surprisingly light both during the Austro-Hungarian offensive on the Italian front in June 1918 despite the division's line being broken, and again during the allied offensive in October 1918.<sup>48</sup>

The reductions in brigade strength implemented on the Western Front in the spring of 1918 were enacted in Italy in September 1918. 1/5 Gloucesters was selected for reduction in 145 Brigade, its personnel absorbed into 25 Division. It is suggested that each of the remaining battalions received drafts of 200-300 men.<sup>49</sup> In the case of the Bucks, there were just 10 men drafted to the battalion between November 1917 and June 1918, one of them from the Chinese Labour Corps. Another 22 arrived from 4 and 12 Battalions, The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry in September 1918 but 71 men from 12 Battalion, The Durham Light Infantry in October 1918, with 40 from the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC), and three from 9 Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment with an additional two men from the RAMC in November. The overall total of 148 is far less than might be assumed. Davies considers the draft from the Durham Light Infantry comprised 38.6% of those received in 1918 based on those with surnames A – G. The reality was that the Durham draft represented 51.4% of those arriving in 1918 and 47.9% of those arriving whilst the battalion was in Italy.<sup>50</sup>

Taking the war as a whole, drafts kept pace with casualties. It should be noted that Tables 2-6 reflect totals that conceal the extent to which individuals were wounded, became ill, went on leave or attended courses more than once.

Injuries – contusions, fractures, incisions, sprains, etc. – were never more than a minor factor. Much more will be said of illness below but it can be noted that it has been suggested that the ratio of fatalities to wounded, sick and injured in 48 Division was generally in the ratio of 4.5 per each fatality.<sup>51</sup> For the war as a whole, the Bucks suffered 564 fatalities (579 less the 15 missing who proved eventually to be POWs) but 4,277 wounded, sick or injured: a significantly higher ratio of 7.5 per each fatality.

---

<sup>48</sup>Mitchinson, *48<sup>th</sup> Division*, pp. 218-219.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid*, pp. 236-237.

<sup>50</sup>Davies, 'Reinforcement Policy', pp. 255-256.

<sup>51</sup>Mitchinson, *48<sup>th</sup> Division*, p. 192.

## CASUALTIES OF WAR: 1/1 BUCKS BATTALION 1915-1919

### **Patterns of Change: Non-battle Factors**

Soldiers did not spend their entire service in the front line. Charles Carrington recorded of his service in 1/5 Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment in 48 Division in 1916 that he spent 65 days in the front line, 36 days in close support to the front line, 120 days in reserve, 73 days at rest behind the lines, and the remaining 72 days variously on leave, sick, travelling or attending courses.<sup>52</sup> Between April 1915 and June 1916, the Bucks spent 121 days in the line or in support (32.5%), five days training, 15 days entirely on working parties, 15 days on the move, and 216 days in billets (58%) but with substantial numbers of men detached on working parties or in training and few complete days of rest.

Temporary attachments and courses also took men away from the battalion. In all, 215 men were sent on temporary attachments prior to June 1916, while 150 went on courses. Most attachments were to the Royal Engineers (presumably on working parties), the Brigade Machine Gun Company, and the Trench Mortar Battery although some were detached as batmen or officers' servants. One man in January 1916 temporarily joined the divisional concert party. Other attachments were to the Horse Transport Depot and to the Salvage Company. Many courses are simply listed as army, corps, divisional or brigade schools of instruction, but specific courses concerned the use of machine guns (21), trench mortars (20), and gas (16). No less than 61 men attended 'grenadier' courses in August and September 1915. One man was sent on a cold (horse) shoeing course in January 1916.

This pattern was maintained throughout the war although, understandably, attachments and courses were far fewer in the periods of intense operations. Following the Somme there was now emphasis on the use of the Lewis Gun (39) and on various aspects of sniping (9) with five men sent on a Stokes Mortar course in December 1916. The attachments were enormously varied including some to the staffs of town majors, POW companies, as batmen and officers' servants, and one as a butcher's assistant. In the spring of 1917 army, corps, divisional and brigade schools predominated in terms of courses although 25 men were despatched to a musketry course in June 1917. The period in Italy was especially noted for men on attachments (470) and on courses (240). There appears to have been inventiveness in keeping the men occupied. Attachments included the Sanitation Section, the Divisional Baths, the Divisional Burial Party, the Divisional Soup Kitchen, Traffic and Road Control, POW Companies, the Censor's staff, the Corps Cloth Exchange, the Corps Laundry, Field Bakeries, and an Aircraft Park. One man was assigned in July 1918 to accompany the war artist Sir William Orpen whilst he was in Italy. Courses in Italy were also more varied with the usual arms schools supplemented by attendances at cookery, pack

---

<sup>52</sup>Charles Edmonds [sc. Carrington], *A Subaltern's War*, (London: Peter Davies, 1929), p. 120.



transport and farrier schools and on contact aeroplane, power buzzer and pigeon-man's courses.

Those who returned to the battalions after wounds, especially if the wound had been sufficiently serious for treatment in England, could often be absent for some months. Based on the sample of those with surnames A – G, Davies finds that 1/1 Bucks were more reliant upon what he terms 'recycled' reinforcements than 1 SLI, 1 RWF, and 1/6 Kings Liverpool. Whilst his figures do not represent the whole – he counts 293 returning wounded compared to the actual figure of 649 – this is probably broadly true.<sup>53</sup>

There was also the question of leave. As suggested earlier, those who re-engaged and those compulsorily retained were entitled to a month's furlough. Both seven and eight day leaves were granted between April 1915 and June 1916 but eight days became more common from December 1915. In all, 86 men were on leave in both November and December 1915, with 100 on leave in January 1916. By the autumn of 1916 ten days was the standard leave period but, occasionally, leave was extended for personal circumstances such as family illness. Once in Italy there were extensive leave periods granted, generally for 15 days to enable men to reach England. A few visits were permitted to Venice for 24 or 48 hours in January 1919. As with wounds, attachments and courses, some individuals had more than one leave, especially if they were long-term members of the battalion. In one case leave was declined in September 1918 to Private Goldsmith, one of those drafted in from the ASC, as he had been given extended leave in December 1917 during his wife's illness: there were now 200 men ahead of him in the queue, of whom 30 had not been home for 18 months.<sup>54</sup> As shown in Table 2, the number of absences on courses, attachment or leave amounted to 3,337 over the course of the war, to which can be added 784 absences from injury and wounds.

Illness was the most significant factor in absences with the periods between April 1915 and June 1916 and between December 1917 and January 1919 the most significant (Table 3). There were 244 cases of influenza between April 1915 and June 1916 and 34 cases of German measles or measles. Influenza – also known in Italy as 'mountain fever' – accounted for 103 cases in June 1918 alone, the outbreak in Italy incapacitating at least 30 per cent of 48 Division at the moment that the Austro-Hungarians launched their major attack.<sup>55</sup> Skin diseases such as scabies, impetigo, boils and eczema were a continual feature while dental caries and other dental problems also recurred, the

---

<sup>53</sup>Davies, 'Reinforcement Policy', pp. 298-300.

<sup>54</sup>IWM, Reynolds Mss, 74/136/1, Letter 8 Sept. 1918.

<sup>55</sup> Mitchinson, *48<sup>th</sup> Division*, 209; G. H. Barnett, *With the 48<sup>th</sup> Division in Italy* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1923), p. 64; TNA CAB 45/74, Airedale to Edmonds, 6 June 1944. .

## CASUALTIES OF WAR: I/1 BUCKS BATTALION 1915-1919

imperfect knowledge of a hearty diet contributing to poor dental health.<sup>56</sup> Recording of illness was not always definitive, many fevers being recorded as kinds of pyrexia while inter-connected tissue (ICT) was a generic description for problems with muscles and arm and leg joints. What is especially noticeable is the dramatic increase in venereal diseases in Italy. Generally, British hospital admissions for venereal cases in 1918 were higher in Italy (41.8 per 1,000 men) than on the Western Front (32.4 per 1,000).<sup>57</sup> Although it has been suggested that malaria was a problem in Italy, only one man was so diagnosed in the Bucks in May 1918. Other illnesses are not as statistically apparent as those catalogued in Table 3 but they covered an extraordinary variety of complaints: abscesses, inflammations, varicose veins, piles, rheumatism (25), hernia (22), and even diphtheria (11).

The increased incidence of venereal cases in Italy raises the question of discipline. Regulars tended to accuse the Territorials of lax discipline without real comprehension of the dynamics of the force. Certainly, there was a different ethos deriving originally from the idea that volunteer officers and men might be social equals although this now tended to apply only in more exclusive London 'class corps'.<sup>58</sup>

The Casualty Books record 303 separate disciplinary offences between March 1915 and January 1919 (Table 4). A total of 242 were single offences committed by individuals with 18 men each committing two offences, two men (Summers and Paige) committing three offences, three men (Lawton, Moffatt and Novels) committing four offences, and one serial offender (Christie) committing seven offences. Lawton was an original member of the battalion whilst Novels was an early draft in July 1915, presumably from 2/1 or 3/1 Bucks. Paige and Summers were both drafted from 1 Hants in July 1917. Moffatt and Christie arrived from the ASC in September 1917.

Davies notes in his thesis that Private Dearness drafted in from the ASC in October 1917 felt sufficient loyalty to I/1 Bucks to refuse to receive his war medals if they were marked as ASC. This is suggested as an indication of the battalion being more accommodating to newcomers.<sup>59</sup> Nonetheless, the arrival of the ASC personnel coincided with a major increase in crime in the battalion. Some 20 offences were committed by former members of 1 Hants but, with the added impact of the frequency of offences by Moffatt and Christie, the ASC accounted for 54 separate offences, representing 31.7% of all military crimes committed after September 1917. It is also

---

<sup>56</sup>Rachel Duffett, *The Stomach for Fighting: Food and the Soldiers of the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), p. 231.

<sup>57</sup>John Dillon, *Allies are a tiresome lot: The British Army in Italy in the First World War* (Solihull: Helion, 2015), pp. 74, 91-93.

<sup>58</sup>Meaning the more socially exclusive London units.

<sup>59</sup>Davies, 'Reinforcement Policy', p. 261, quoting Dearness' file in TNA WO 363.

clear that, after the initial bedding down of the battalion in terms of the disciplinary requirements of front line service between March 1915 and June 1916 (30.0% of the total), the majority of offences occurred after September 1917 (56.1%) with 47.8% of all wartime offences occurring in Italy.

Absence (usually from billets or parades), and disobedience or insolence (usually to NCOs) were the most common offences: both increased dramatically in Italy (Table 5). Field Punishment No. 1 (FPI) – men being fettered to a fixed object such as a gun wheel or a post for up to two hours per day – and Field Punishment No. 2 (FP2) – men being placed in fetters but not tied to a fixed object – were the most significant punishments. Increasingly, loss of pay was also applied. The use of the latter in Italy compared to Field Punishment accords with the hypothesis of increasing adoption of ‘pious perjury’ in 1917-18 and, especially so, on the Italian Front.<sup>60</sup> There was no consistent pattern with regard to the application of Field Punishment and clearly much depended upon judgement of the seriousness of the offence. Generally, FPI was applied for 7 days (10 cases), 14 days (15 cases) or 28 days (25 cases) whereas FP2 was generally applied for 7 days (28 cases) or 14 days (24 cases).

Field General Courts Martial (FGCM) were utilised for the most serious cases but they did not always result in severe sentences (Table 6). In all, there were 26 by January 1919, of which eight resulted in FPI, one in FP2, and four in reductions in rank. Thirteen resulted in sentences of hard labour but in one case all charges were dropped subsequently. In other cases, sentences were commuted. The initial seven cases of hard labour between March 1915 and June 1916, four of them in August 1915 suggest examples being made. Privates Stratford and White were convicted for sleeping on sentry duty: no further cases occurred. Stratford received 12 months’ hard labour and White six months but neither completed their sentences, both being released upon re-engagement. Privates French and Tandy received six months’ hard labour for drunkenness and disobedience respectively, but the former had his sentence commuted to three months FPI whilst Tandy’s sentence was suspended and then remitted upon reconsideration. The future serial offender Lawton received two years hard labour in September 1915 for insubordinate language but this was reduced to one year and then commuted to three months FPI. The only other soldiers sentenced to hard labour between March 1915 and June 1916 were Privates James and Stevens for drunkenness in November 1915. Both received 90 days hard labour but Stevens’s

---

<sup>60</sup>Gerald Oram, ‘Pious Perjury: Discipline and Morale in the British Forces in Italy, 1917-18’, *War in History* 9 (2002), pp. 412-430; David Englander, ‘Discipline and Morale in the British Army, 1917-18’, in John Horne (ed.), *State, Society and Mobilisation in Europe during the First World War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 132-136; Thorpe, ‘Military Group Cohesion’, pp. 139-160, p. 238.

## CASUALTIES OF WAR: I/I BUCKS BATTALION 1915-1919

sentence was commuted to 60 days FPI while James had his sentence remitted and went home time-expired in March 1916.

As with FPI and FP2 sentences, consistency is not always apparent from the sentences applied, indicating differing judgements. Nonetheless, there is logic in the two cases of absence from the trenches in December 1916. Private Moseley was absent for 47 hours and Burns for 77 hours, accounting for the more severe sentence handed the latter. In the case of James, his absence for nine hours from a carrying party whilst attached to the Trench Mortar Battery on 16 August 1917 resulted in his detention awaiting trial on 23-24 August and his conviction on 25 August. Four days later before he could start his sentence, he was killed in action, hence the conviction being overturned. Presumably, Private Bernstein initially received a slightly harsher sentence in the following month for being absent from a company attack and absent for just over ten hours: both James and Bernstein were detained by Military Police. The most serious case of all was that of Private Griffith, who was charged with desertion for absenting himself from signaller duty for a trench raid and being absent for 12 hours. Why the sentence was then suspended is not clear. His further absence from the trenches for another nine hours until arrested then resulted in him serving 90 days' FPI.

Of those sent before FGCM, Munday was killed in 1916 and both Moseley and Novels were sent back to England after serious wounds. Among the serial offenders, Paige was also killed. One early offender, Company Sergeant Major (CSM) Bishop, who received a reprimand for allowing sentries to sleep in June 1915, went on to win the DCM and the Croix de Guerre. Even the incorrigible rogue, Christie, had one of his sentences in May 1918 remitted for gallantry in action. Odell, who received three months FPI for breach of censorship regulations in October 1915 had his sentence remitted to two months for good work on patrol: subsequently, he won the MM in Italy. It might be added as a counterweight to indiscipline, that other ranks were awarded four Military Crosses (MM), 21 DCMs, 75 MMs (two with a bar), 7 Meritorious Service Medals (MSM), 20 mentions in despatches (one individual twice), and 12 foreign decorations.<sup>61</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel Lewis Reynolds's letter books reveal some indication of his attitude towards indiscipline after taking command of the battalion in June 1916. He was conscious of the inexperience of NCOs in two of the cases that went to FGCM. Sergeant Smith failed to place Private McPherson under arrest for drunkenness sooner than was the case in December 1917 and before McPherson threatened him. Smith was reprimanded although it went unrecorded in the casualty book.<sup>62</sup> Similarly in

---

<sup>61</sup>Wright, *Bucks*, pp. 176-178.

<sup>62</sup>IWM, Reynolds Mss, 74/136/1, 22 Dec. 1917.

March 1918, Lance Corporal Goodway was unaware that he should have placed Trott under close arrest for swearing at him and had not immediately informed CSM Loveday.<sup>63</sup> Trott had form, having received 14 days FPI for obscene language towards an NCO in November 1917. Reviewing the cases of Corporal Wallace and Privates Ashley and Chaplin in July 1918, Reynolds was not altogether happy with the evidence of them threatening the Military Police, commenting that the latter's general attitude 'is a direct cause of crime in some instances'. Reynolds thought Wallace to be generally reliable. Whilst all three had admitted being in an out of bounds café, he believed them when they said they had gone to buy leather polish and were not aware the premises was also a café. One of the military policemen who corroborated the testimony of others had not even been present.<sup>64</sup> Unsurprisingly, the casualty books show all three receiving only severe reprimands.

With the armistice in Italy signed on 4 November 1918, news of that on the Western Front seven days later was met 'with no very great excitement'.<sup>65</sup> 1/7 Royal Warwicks was selected to remain in Italy and 1/6 Gloucesters sent to be part of the Allied Control Force in Albania, hence the 92 men sent to the former and 16 to the latter by the Bucks in February and March 1919. One man, Colour Sergeant Pallett, had engaged as a regular for 21 years in September 1918 and was retained for the Army of Occupation in February 1919. Pallett was later commissioned and, as Captain Quartermaster, was one of the few officers of 1 Bucks Battalion to escape from the destruction of the battalion at Hazebrouck in May 1940: he was awarded the MC for extricating the 'B Echelon' after it was cut off.

Amid the routine training and frequent sports, 34 men found themselves on attachments in February, many at Labour or POW camps, some on the Leave Train and two men operating the cinema of 1/4 Battalion, OBLI. There was also the death of Private Thompson from injuries sustained in an unspecified fatal shooting incident at Cherbourg in February 1919 for which a court of enquiry was instituted. Thompson had rejoined the battalion from leave in January 1919 and had been retained for further service and was presumably on his way back to England. There were a few disciplinary offences in February and March 1918. Two men lost pay for absence in February with another awarded seven days FP2 for deficiencies in the kitchen wagon on the troop train and absence from duty at the kitchen. There were two further FGCM, Private May, formerly of the ASC, receiving six months hard labour for disobeying commands whilst attached to the laundry, and Private Wardell receiving 30 days FPI in March for negligently discharging a pistol and wounding an Italian civilian. As men were

---

<sup>63</sup>Ibid, 30 Mar. 1918.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid, 3 Jul. 1918.

<sup>65</sup>TNA WO 95/4251.

## CASUALTIES OF WAR: 1/1 BUCKS BATTALION 1915-1919

transferred or demobilised, the battalion dwindled to a cadre of five officers and 50 men with its last parade in Italy on 23 March 1919. The cadre reached Aylesbury on 31 March 1919.

### **Conclusion**

What then can be deduced from the Bucks Battalion Casualty Books? Change was constant even without the heavier losses resulting from intensive operational periods, those wounded or falling ill increasingly less likely to return to the Bucks. Temporary attachment, courses and leave periods took large numbers away from the battalion during less intensive operational periods but the extent of illness was even more significant. Influenza was the predominant illness and made its presence felt long before the outbreak usually associated with the 1918-19 pandemic. Drafts, which invariably kept pace with losses, increasingly came from non-Bucks units. New arrivals in 1917 posed greater disciplinary challenges, coinciding with general deterioration of discipline in Italy, by which time there was also less willingness to inflict severer forms of punishment. Nonetheless, overall, the disciplinary record was good.

The data provides hard evidence to back up general suppositions within the wider historiography relating to reinforcement policy in general and its impact on regional and group identity within the army. It points in particular to the relative failure of Southern Command to maintain regional identity compared to Western and Scottish Commands. It accords well with the study of so far undertaken of three other surviving casualty books. It gives concrete support to the notion of greater leniency with regard to discipline being extended in Italy. Particular aspects of the battalion's experience were somewhat unique such as the degree of Jewish recruitment but, generally, the study offers further important findings on issues specific to the Territorial Force as a whole, not least the impact of the Imperial Service Obligation and other legislative limitations relating to Territorial service. It also offers clues *inter alia* as to the real incidence of under-age recruitment in 1914.

The 1/1 Bucks Battalion looked very different in 1919 than that which had embarked in 1915. In this respect, it provides a microcosm of the internal dynamics of a Great War battalion. This should provide a basis for the wider analysis of the full scope of other surviving casualty books as yet not analysed. Such a full comparison can provide further hard data to show how far any single battalion was like another.

**Tables**

Changes in Personnel	Mar 1915 to Jun 1916	July 1916 to Aug 1916	Sept 1916 to Jun 1917	July 1917 to Aug 1917	Sept 1917 to Nov 1917	Dec 1917 to Jan 1919	Totals
Killed	37	62	56	69	18	27	269
Missing	1	61	3	44	5	9	123
Died of Wounds	15	23	14	11	7	2	72
Died	-	1	4	1	-	9	15
Wounded and did not return	79	261	74	172	32	78	696
Injured and did not return	9	5	5	5	2	3	29
Illness and did not return	137	29	146	19	53	68	452
Time-expired	97	-	-	-	-	-	97
Under Age	10	3	9	-	1	-	23
Commission	7	-	12	2	3	3	27
Transfer Out	24	41	19	10	29	62	185
Total Lost	416	486	342	333	150	261	1988
Drafts In	410	357	563	194	313	153	1990

**Table 1: Changes in OR – Personnel**

CASUALTIES OF WAR: 1/1 BUCKS BATTALION 1915-1919

Absences	Mar 1915 to Jun 1916	July 1916 to Aug 1916	Sept 1916 to Jun 1917	July 1917 to Aug 1917	Sept 1917 to Nov 1917	Dec 1917 to Jan 1919	Totals
Illness and rejoined	881	126	422	62	118	707	2316
Injury and rejoined	50	9	19	4	8	45	135
Wounded & returned	113	208	78	98	24	128	649
Attachments	215	14	176	49	45	470	969
Leave Periods	511	11	222	73	231	554	1602
Courses	150	22	238	32	84	240	766
Total	1920	390	1155	318	510	2144	6437

**Table 2: OR Absences**



Illnesses	Mar 1915 to June 1916	July 1916 to Aug 1916	Sept 1916 to Jun 1917	July 1917 to Aug 1917	Sept 1917 to Nov 1917	Dec 1917 to Jan 1919	Total
All Illness	1018	155	568	81	171	775	2768
Influenza	244	18	24	-	-	143	429
German Measles/ Measles	32	1	9	-	-	-	42
Fevers/ Pyrexia	20	46	146	7	31	77	327
ICT	38	21	82	20	49	66	276
Scabies/Boils /Eczema/ Impetigo	94	12	87	5	21	104	323
Dental Problems	85	1	4	1	3	14	108
Diarrhoea/ Dysentery/ Enteric	12	-	30	4	8	65	119
Synovitis	22	1	16	1	-	6	46
Myalgia	18	1	14	4	1	10	48
Tonsillitis	12	3	18	3	1	14	41
Venereal	6	1	6	2	3	46	64

**Table 3: OR Illnesses**

CASUALTIES OF WAR: 1/1 BUCKS BATTALION 1915-1919

Punishments	Mar 1915 to Jun 1916	July 1916 to Aug 1916	Sept 1916 to Jun 1917	July 1917 to Aug 1917	Sept 1917 to Nov 1917	Dec 1917 to Jan 1919	Total
Field Punishment No. 1 (FGCM)	26 (2)	2	5 (1)	1	5	39 (5)	78 (8)
Field Punishment No. 2 (FGCM)	38	4	7	5 (1)	5	34	93 (1)
Hard Labour (FGCM)	7 (7)	-	2 (2)	1 (1)	1 (1)	2 (2)	13 (13)
Reduction in Rank (FGCM)	10	1	4 (1)	1 (1)	2	10 (2)	28 (4)
Loss of Pay	9	3	6	-	12	49	79
Reprimand	1	-	-	-	-	11	12
Total	91 (9)	10	24 (4)	8 (3)	25 (1)	145 (9)	303 (26)

**Table 4: OR Punishments**

Offences	Mar 1915 to Jun 1916	July 1916 to Aug 1916	Sept 1916 to Jun 1917	July 1917 to Aug 1917	Sept 1917 to Nov 1917	Dec 1917 to Jan 1919	Total
Absence (FGCM)	6	-	7 (2)	1 (1)	12 (1)	73 (2)	99 (6)
Censorship Offences (FGCM)	1 (1)	-	1	-	2	-	4 (1)
Disobedience/ Insolence (FGCM)	32 (2)	7	7	4 (1)	6	37 (3)	93 (6)
Disturbance/ Fighting (FGCM)	7	-	1	-	-	3	11
Drunkenness (FGCM)	4 (4)	-	1 (1)	1	1	14 (1)	21 (6)
Gambling (FGCM)	8	3	-	-	-	2 (1)	13 (1)
Neglect of Duty/Loss of Equipment etc (FGCM)	27	-	6	1	4	10 (2)	48 (2)
Leave Offences (FGCM)	2	-	-	1 (1)	-	6	9 (1)
Self-inflicted Wound (FGCM)	-	-	1 (1)	-	-	-	1 (1)
Sleeping on Sentry (FGCM)	2 (2)	-	-	-	-	-	2 (2)
Theft (FGCM)	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Total	91 (9)	10	24 (4)	8 (3)	25 (1)	145 (9)	303 (26)

**Table 5: OR Offences**

## CASUALTIES OF WAR: 1/1 BUCKS BATTALION 1915-1919

Name	Date	Offence	Sentence	Outcome
A.G. Munday	July 1915	Drunkenness	FPI 3 months	Served
G. French	Aug 1915	Drunkenness	HL 6 months	Committed to FPI 3 months
F. J. Stratford	Aug 1915	Sleeping on Sentry	HL 12 months	Remainder Suspended on re-engagement Jan 1916
H. A. Tandy	Aug 1915	Disobedience	HL 6 months	Remitted
E. White	Aug 1915	Sleeping on Sentry	HL 12 months	Remainder suspended on re-engagement Mar 1916
T. Lawton	Sept 1915	Disobedience and Insubordinate Language	HL 24 months	Remitted to HL 12 months then commuted to FPI 3 months
G H Odell	Oct 1915	Breach of censorship	FPI 3 months	Remitted after two months for good work on patrol
F. W. James	Nov 1915	Drunkenness	HL 90 days	Served
H. Stevens	Nov 1915	Drunkenness	HL 90 days	Committed to FPI 60 days
G. Pykett	Nov 1916	Drunkenness	Reduced in Rank	-
E. J. Moseley	Dec 1916	Absence from Trenches	FPI 3 months	Committed to FPI 1 month
H. H. Burns	Dec 1916	Absence from Trenches	HL 6 months	Served
D. Novels	June 1917	Self-inflicted wound and negligence	HL 24 months	Committed to FPI 90 days
J. Mortimer	July 1917	Disobedience	FP2 28 days	Served
A. Stokes	Aug 1917	Forging leave pass	Reduced in Rank	-
A.J.James	Aug 1917	Absence from carrying party	HL 9 months	Cleared of conviction
M. Bernstein	Sept 1917	Absence from attack	HL 12 months	Suspended and Remitted

E. C. Marshall	Dec 1917	Gambling and Obscene Language	FPI 56 days	Served
J. McPherson	Dec 1917	Disobedience and Threatening Superior	HL 12 months	Commutated to FPI 90 days
A.W. McLaren	Dec 1917	Disobedience	FPI 90 days	Served
W. Christie	Feb 1918	Drunkenness	FPI 70 days	Served
F. Trott	Mar 1918	Disobedience and Threatening Superior	FPI 90 days	Served
A.G. Holyoake	May 1918	Neglecting to post sentries	Reduced in Rank	-
J. F. J. Griffith	Aug 1918	Desertion from duty during raiding party	HL 7 years	Suspended
J. F. J. Griffith	Oct 1918	Absence from trenches	FPI 90 days	Served
C.W. Stevens	Oct 1918	Neglecting to relieve sentries	Reduced in rank	-

**Table 6: OR Field General Courts Martial**