



# The Active Service of the 240 Brigade R.F.A. (T.)

*A short summary taken from a record  
kept in A/240.*

On Saturday, August 7th. 1914, the 1st South Midland Brigade R.F.A. (T) left Bristol for its first war stations at Plymouth and Crownhill. Later in the year, it was moved to the Broomfield area, where the final stages of training and equipping for Overseas Service took place.

At the end of March, 1915, the Brigade proceeded to France as a unit of the 48th (S.M.) Division, and on Easter Sunday, April 4th, went into action in Belgium at Neuve Eglise.

In July the Brigade moved south, and after a brief rest at Ferfay, entrained at Lillers for Thievres, and went into action on the plain bounded by the three villages, Hebuterne—Colincamps—Sailly-au-Bois.

1916.

Guns Hebuterne  
Guns Colincamps  
Guns Sailly  
Wagon f Authie  
Lines l Coigneux  
Guns Aveluy  
Guns Owillers  
Guns Mash Valley  
W.L. Bouzincourt  
Trek Ampliers  
Rest St. Ouen  
Guns Aveluy  
Guns Mesnil.

Guns Pozieres.  
W.L. Albert  
Trek Grincourt  
Guns Fonquevillers  
W.L. Gaudiempre.  
Trek Pas  
Trek Frohen-le-grand  
Trek Talmas  
Trek Behancourt  
Guns High Wood  
Guns Martinpuich  
W.L. Albert.  
Rest Behancourt.

The Brigade remained in the Hebuterne area until July 21st. 1916—twelve months to the day after it had arrived in that area.

The preliminary bombardment preceding the Somme Battle, when for the first time the establishment became 1,000 rounds per gun, was the first experience of prolonged, almost continuous firing.

On July 21st, the Brigade moved down to Albert to support the Divisional Infantry and, except for ten days of perfect rest at St. Ouen, remained in action there until October 1st.

Followed a brief return visit to the Fonquevillers-Hebuterne sector and then a return to the Somme mud-bath at the end of November—an unforgettable period in the Martinpuich area.

#### 1917.

Rest Corbie (Fouilloy)	W.L. Vlamertinghe
Guns Flaucourt	Rest Ochtezeele
W.L. Cappy.	Trek Watou
Trek Aizecourt	Guns Zonnebeke
Guns Venteux Copse	W.L. Vlamertinghe
W.L. Tincourt	W.L. Ypres.
Guns Villers Faucon	Trek Eecke.
W.L. Marquaix	Trek Morbecque
Guns St. Emilie.	Trek Gonahem
Guns Ronssoy	W.L. Ablain St. Nazaire
Trek Beaulencourt	Guns Petit Vimy
Guns Hermies	W.L. Neuville St. Vaast
W.L. Velu Wood	Trek Cambligeul
Rest Montauban	Entraining Aubigny, Tanque
Trek Engelbelmer	Savy.
Trek Sarton	
Trek Rebreuve	ITALY.
Trek Ramecourt (St. Pol).	Detraining Cerea, Bovolone.
Trek Amette	Trek Oppeano
Trek Aire	Trek Arcole
Trek Staples	Trek Pressana
Trek Godswearsald.	Trek Vincentino Noventa
Guns Ypres Canal Bank.	Trek Bastia
W.L. Peselhoek.	Trek Veggiano
Guns Hill Top Farm	Trek Presina

After rest at Behancourt, the Brigade trekked to Corbie, and on February 2nd relieved a French Brigade opposite Peronne.

On March 17th, the Germans were found to be retiring to the Hindenburg Line, and there followed some interesting days

and, incidentally, almost the only experience of anything approaching open warfare conditions. The advance over recaptured territory ended at Ronsoy, where the Germans made a determined stand at Gillemont Farm in front of the Hindenburg Line.

Then followed a move northwards to Hermies, opposite Havrincourt, followed by a short rest in the unsavoury neighbourhood of Montauban and a long trek up to the third battle of Ypres. From mid-July until October 13th, the Brigade was continuously in action, and suffered heavy casualties.

From Ypres a move was made to Vimy Ridge, where for a month the Brigade were in action in the Canadian area.

On November 21st, all batteries entrained for Italy and, after six wonderful days of travelling through France (including the Riviera) arrived in Northern Italy. The first few weeks were occupied in trekking under conditions, and in surroundings, that were full of interest and novelty.

#### 1918-19.

Trek	Poianella	Rest	Montecchio
Trek	San Donato	Guns	Asiago Plateau
Trek	Campigo	W.L.	Lugo
Trek	Porcellengo	W.L.	Preara
Trek	San Brigida	W.L.	Granezza
Trek	Torreselle	W.L.	Asiago (Rendela)
Calib.	Spresiano	Bde.	Val d'Assa
Guns	Arcole	Bde.	Pergine (Austrian Tyrol).
W.L.	Falze		
Guns	Sovilla		ARMISTICE.
W.L.	Camolo	Bde.	Asiago
Trek	Campigo	Bde.	Preara
Trek	Tremignon	Bde.	Montecchio Precalcino
Trek	Camisano	Bde.	St. Vito di Leguzzano
Rest	Montecchio Maggiore		

#### 1919

Guns	Asiago Plateau	Bde.	Tezze
W.L.	Fara	Cadre	Tavernelle.

In January, numerous reconnaissances in the mountains took place, and at the end of February the Brigade went into action for the first time since its arrival in Italy, on the Piave.

At the end of April, under snowy and wintry conditions, the Brigade relieved a 23rd Division unit and was in action on the fir-covered slopes of the mountains on the South of the Asiago Plateau.

With the exception of one brief interval on the plains in May, when the heat was almost tropical, the batteries remained in action on the Plateau until the end of the war.

June 15th, 1918, the date of the Austrian offensive, is an unforgettable day. The positions of two of the batteries were overrun by the enemy, but the ground, with guns intact, was re-taken within 24 hours. The sight of Beetle (the Austrian 17 inch gun) juggling simultaneously with three or four fir trees and a ton or so of mountain remains a vivid memory.

Large raids, involving battalions and sometimes an Infantry brigade, became almost nightly occurrences at the end of the summer, and towards the end of October the final offensive opened on the Piave.

There were only three British divisions left in Italy—7th, 23rd and 48th. The 7th and 23rd were moved to the Piave and the 48th took over the whole of the British front on the Plateau. On November 1st, the Austrians were in full flight and the 48th was the first division to occupy enemy soil in Western Europe, advancing up the Val d'Assa into the Trentino, the Brigade halting at Pergine at the Armistice, which took place on the Italian front at 3 p.m. on November 4th.

In an Order of the Day dated November 4th, 1918, Major General Sir H. B. Walker, K.C.B., D.S.O., commanding the 48th Division, wrote:—

"Your achievements during the last few days of the most profound military events deserve unstinted praise. After fourteen weeks of trench warfare and arduous work—chiefly by night . . . you have swept away the enemy rearguards and, acting as the vanguard of the Sixth Italian Army, you have advanced so rapidly and with such resolution that the retiring enemy had no time to reform, and have left over 20,000 prisoners, hundreds of guns and immeasurable booty in the hands of the Division . . . You can justly claim that the favourable situation of the Italian armies on this front at 15.00 hours to-day is largely due to your exertion and resolution.

As your Divisional Commander, I heartily thank you."

Demobilisation commenced in December, and at the end of March, 1919, the cadre entrained for England.