

**WAR DIARY OF F SQUADRON NORTH IRISH HORSE<sup>1</sup>  
16 NOVEMBER 1915 TO 30 JUNE 1916**

**Divisional Mounted Troops 33<sup>rd</sup> Division<sup>2</sup>**

**November 1915**

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| 16 | 9.30am. Left Netheravon and entrained at Amesbury. Arrived Southampton 3.30pm. Four horses cast and changed. Embarked <i>Western Miller</i> sailed 5pm.   |
| 17 | 6am. Arrived [Le] Havre. Disembarked. All well. No casualties. Full complement men and horses. Ordered to No.2 Camp. Arrived 3pm. Men in tents. Very cold. Received orders to entrain November 18 <sup>th</sup> , destination unknown.                        |
| 18 | 10am. Left No.2 Camp Havre. Entrained 12 midday. Left Havre 3pm. Long slow journey, three hours late. Given no time to feed or water horses - had to feed in the train.   |
| 19 | 1pm. Arrived Thiennes. Detrained. All well. Arrived Morbecque 4pm. Billeted in four farms. Fairly comfortable.  |
| 20 | Morbecque. Visited Headquarters 33 <sup>rd</sup> Division. Sent groom for General London's horse.   |
| 21 | Morbecque. Met Major General Gough at lunch, our Corps Commander.   |
| 22 | 11am. Squadron inspected by General Gough. All well. Very cold.<br>2pm. Received orders to get ready to move.   |
| 23 | 9am. Proceeded by march route to near Busnes. Arrived at 1.30pm. Had to leave one horse with fever on the way. March held up at Thiennes by Lahore Division. (...?) billets near Busnes at Le Cornet Bourdois. Reported arrival to 33 <sup>rd</sup> Division. |
| 24 | Routine duties.   |
| 25 | Routine duties.   |
| 26 | Reconnaissance in direction of Ham.   |

<sup>1</sup> Official War Diaries (Ref. WO 95/2413, 95/874) signed by **Major Richard Griffith Oliver Bramston-Newman**, Officer Commanding F Squadron, North Irish Horse (later Lieutenant Colonel, attached to the Labour Corps).

<sup>2</sup> The 33<sup>rd</sup> Division was part of the Fourth New Army. Its infantry comprised the 98<sup>th</sup> Brigade (18, 19, 20 and 21 Royal Fusiliers [1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Public Schools]), the 99<sup>th</sup> Brigade (17, 22, 23 and 24 Royal Fusiliers [Empire, Kensington, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Sportsman]), and the 100<sup>th</sup> Brigade (13 Essex [West Ham], 16 Middlesex [Public Schools], 17 Middlesex [1<sup>st</sup> Football] and 16 King's Royal Rifle Corps [Church Lads]). On 1 July 1915 the Division began to assemble at Clipstone Camp (Notts) and by the 13<sup>th</sup> all the infantry concentrated there. On 3 August the Division started to move to Bulford, Perham Down, and Tidworth. Between 5-10 August the divisional artillery arrived and on 10 August the concentration of the Division on Salisbury Plain was complete. On 4 November the Division was ordered to prepare to move to France. Four days later Her Majesty the Queen inspected the Division at Figheldean Down. Entrainment began in 12 November.

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| 27                   | Route march. Coming back did night march. No men fell out. Ten miles.  |
| 28                   | Divine Service. General London was present.  |
| 29                   | Road reconnaissance. Report sent to General Staff Officer 33 <sup>rd</sup> Division. Orders received to move to Le Cauroy.   |
| 30                   | Moved by march route to Le Cauroy. Arrived 1pm. Billets fair.  |
| <b>December 1915</b> |  |
| 1                    | Le Cauroy. Routine duties.   |
| 2                    | Routine duties.  |
| 3                    | Horse inspection Assistant Director Veterinary Services.   |
| 4                    | Road reconnaissance of all routes to concentration area at Gorre.  |
| 5                    | Routine duties. Drawing material for building stables.   |
| 6                    | Routine duties.  |
| 7                    | Reconnaissance in direction of St Venaut.  |
| 8                    | Routine duties.  |
| 9                    | Routine duties and lecture on trench discipline.   |
| 10                   | Orders received to move on 12 <sup>th</sup> to Cantraine. <sup>3</sup>   |
| 11                   | Routine duties.  |
| 12                   | Proceeded by march route to Cantrainne, arriving about midday. Billets reasonable and most of the horses under cover. Came through big floods but all the transport was safely got in. |
| 13                   | Three Officers and five Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) proceeded to Cavalry School at Busnes.  |
| 14-18                | Routine duties. Mainly improvement of billets and drawing (mine?) earth for horse (standings?).  |
| 19                   | –  |
| 20                   | Routine duties.  |
| 21                   | Marching out parade. Squadron ready with (1 <sup>st</sup> ?) line transport at 11am (Two (horses?)).   |
| 22                   | Routine duties.  |
| 23                   | Combined scheme with Cyclists.   |
| 24                   | Routine duties.  |

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<sup>3</sup> Canteraine

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| 25                   | Church parade.  |
| 26                   | Routine duties.   |
| 27                   | Routine duties.   |
| 28                   | Troop schemes.  |
| 29                   | Routine duties.   |
| 30                   | Proceeded by march route to Beauvry at 10.30am, arriving Beauvry 2.30pm. Took over camp from South Irish Horse.   |
| 31                   | Routine duties cleaning up camp etc.  |
| <b>January 1916</b>  |   |
| 1                    | Routine duties.   |
| 2                    | Church parade.  |
| 3-8                  | Routine duties. Musketry.   |
| 9-10                 | –   |
| 11-17                | Trenches, Sector Z.0. No casualties.  |
| 18                   | Routine duties.   |
| 19                   | Routine duties.   |
| 20                   | Eighty-one remounts arrived.  |
| 21                   | Allotted remounts. Routine duties.  |
| 22                   | Routine duties.   |
| 23                   | Church parade.  |
| 24                   | Routine duties.   |
| 25-29                | [25-29 January] Squadron ready [to] move [at] short notice.<br>[25-27 January] Routine duties.<br>[28 January] Squadron drill.<br>[29 January] Troop drill. |
| 30                   | Church parade.  |
| 31                   | Troop drill.  |
| <b>February 1916</b> |   |

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| 1                 | Troop drill.   |
| 2                 | Routine duties.  |
| 3                 | Squadron field day.  |
| 4                 | Routine duties.  |
| 5                 | One Sergeant and six men special reconnaissance duty Z.1 trenches.                         |
| 6                 | Routine duties.  |
| 7                 | Troop reconnaissance.  |
| 8                 | Routine duties.  |
| 9                 | Lecture etc.   |
| 10                | Divisional field day.  |
| 11                | Guides to trenches.  |
| 12-13             | Guides to trenches. Fresh patrol of one Sergeant six men to Z.1 sector.                    |
| 14                | Guides to trenches by night. Church parade.  |
| 15                | Guides to trenches individually.   |
| 16                | Routine orders. Lecture.   |
| 17                | Divisional field day.  |
| 18                | Routine duties. Guides to trenches. Night training.  |
| 19                | Troop training.  |
| 20                | Routine duties.  |
| 21-24             | Forty men two Officers as working party carrying wire to second line trenches.             |
| 25                | Routine duties.  |
| 26                | Routine duties. Lecture.   |
| 27                | Routine duties. Twelve men detached for work under Assistant Provost Marshall till 1/3/16. |
| 28                | Routine duties.  |
| 29                | Squadron training.   |
| <b>March 1916</b> |  |
| 1                 | Trench fatigue. Inspection. Take helmets.  |

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| 2  | Trench fatigue.                              |
| 3  | Training trench guides.                      |
| 4  | Trench fatigue.                              |
| 5  | Routine duties.                              |
| 6  | Routine duties.                              |
| 7  | Routine duties.                              |
| 8  | Horse inspection.                            |
| 9  | Field day. General Service Staff.            |
| 10 | Routine duties.                              |
| 11 | Routine duties.                              |
| 12 | Kit inspection. Fifty-five remounts arrived. |
| 13 | Field day.                                   |
| 14 | Bathing parade.                              |
| 15 | Routine duties. Inspection smoke helmets.    |
| 16 | Field day.                                   |
| 17 | Routine duties.                              |
| 18 | Field day.                                   |
| 19 | Church parade.                               |
| 20 | Routine duties.                              |
| 21 | Routine duties.                              |
| 22 | Routine duties. Inspection smoke helmets.    |
| 23 | Routine duties.                              |
| 24 | Field day.                                   |
| 25 | Routine duties.                              |
| 26 | Routine duties.                              |
| 27 | Bathing parade.                              |
| 28 | Field day.                                   |
| 29 | Routine duties.                              |

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| 30                | Field day.  |
| 31                | Routine duties.   |
| <b>April 1916</b> |   |
| 1                 | Exercise. Riding drill. Sword drill.                                  |
| 2                 | Church parade.  |
| 3                 | Squadron drill.   |
| 4                 | Squadron drill. Inspection by Assistant Director Veterinary Services. |
| 5                 | Routine duties.   |
| 6                 | Reconnaissance in direction of Arras.                                 |
| 7                 | Routine duties.   |
| 8                 | Squadron drill. Kit inspection.                                       |
| 9                 | Church parade.  |
| 10                | Squadron drill.   |
| 11                | Routine duties.   |
| 12                | Riding school. Bathing parade.  |
| 13                | Practice ceremonial parade.   |
| 14                | Ceremonial parade Bethune.  |
| 15                | Routine duties.   |
| 16-17             | Digging party 40 trenches.  |
| 18                | Routine duties.   |
| 19                | Squadron proceeds by march route to Coyecque. <sup>4</sup>            |
| 20                | Squadron proceeds by march route to Isques.                           |
| 21                | Routine duties.   |
| 22                | Squadron drill and lecture.   |
| 23                | Routine duties.   |

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<sup>4</sup> Coyecques.

F Squadron joins 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division for training.

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| 24 | Field day. Lecture.       |
| 25 | Drill and lecture.        |
| 26 | Advance guard scheme.     |
| 27 | Advance guard scheme.     |
| 28 | Seizing of positions.     |
| 29 | Protection while at rest. |
| 30 | Church parade.            |

### Divisional Mounted Troops 49<sup>th</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> Divisions

#### May 1916

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 1  | Squadron at Isques near Boulogne attached 1 <sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division for training. Advanced and rearguards practiced. Three Divisions. |
| 2  | Routine duties. Lecture pioneering.  |
| 3  | Night concentration march. Lecture from C.R.A [Commander Royal Artillery?].  |
| 4  | Parade drill Hardelot sands. Lecture patrolling.   |
| 5  | Scheme against Cavalry Brigade. Lecture.   |
| 6  | Scheme against 2 Squadrons.  |
| 7  | Routine duties. Church parade.   |
| 8  | Routine duties.  |
| 9  | Regimental drill.  |
| 10 | Scheme.  |
| 11 | Routine duties. Lecture.   |
| 12 | Proceeded by march route to Maresquel.   |
| 13 | Proceeded by march route to Mont Chel. <sup>5</sup>  |
| 14 | Proceeded by march route to Lavigogne. <sup>6</sup> Billets very moderate.   |
| 15 | Routine duties.  |

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<sup>5</sup> Probably Machiel.

<sup>6</sup> La Vicogne.

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| 16  | Changed billets to Vert Galand. <sup>7</sup>   |
| 17  | Saddle inspection.   |
| 18  | Troop drill.   |
| 19  | Horseshow 49 <sup>th</sup> Division.   |
| 20  | Squadron proceeded by march route to Senlis <sup>8</sup> to join 32 <sup>nd</sup> Division.  |
| 21  | Routine duties. <sup>9</sup>   |
| 22  | Digging party for Corps cables 50 men to trenches.   |
| 23  | Digging trenches.  |
| 24  | Digging trenches.  |
| 25  | Digging trenches. 4 <sup>th</sup> Army order that Squadron is to be known as 'B' Squadron instead of 'F' Squadron.                         |
| 26  | Digging trenches. Established an observation post in the trenches under Lieutenant Lowe <sup>10</sup> and Sergeant Brunson <sup>11</sup> . |
| 27  | Digging trenches.  |
| 28  | Digging trenches.  |
| 29  | Digging trenches.  |
| 30  | Digging trenches. Received 2 Hotchkiss guns. Class formed under Lieutenant Lowe.   |
| 31  | Digging trenches.  |
| <b>Divisional Mounted Troops 32<sup>nd</sup> Division, then part 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment North Irish Horse, X Corps Cavalry</b> |  |
| <b>June 1916</b>  |  |
| 1   | Senlis. Digging party, trenches Aveluy. Army scheme.   |
| 2   | Digging party, trenches Aveluy.  |

<sup>7</sup> Vert Galant.

F Squadron joins 49<sup>th</sup> (West Riding) Division.

<sup>8</sup> Senlis-le-Sec.

<sup>9</sup> F Squadron joins 32<sup>nd</sup> Division.

<sup>10</sup> Possibly **Second Lieutenant Arthur Noel Vernon Hill-Lowe**, who arrived in France with F Squadron on 18 November 1915. He had been with the Malay States Volunteer Rifles and King Edward's Horse. He later became Lieutenant.

<sup>11</sup> Either No.1225 **Private Sydney Brunson** (NIH), later Sergeant in the Royal Engineers, or No.1252 **Albert Brunson** (NIH), later of the Corps of Hussars.

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| 3                | Digging party, trenches. Guides instruction of NCOs.                           |
| 4                | Digging party, trenches. Inspection equipment.                                 |
| 5                | Digging party, trenches. Inspection helmets smoke.                             |
| 6                | Divisional scheme. Bathing parade.   |
| 7                | Divisional scheme.   |
| 8                | Divisional scheme.   |
| 9                | Trench party.  |
| 10               | Divisional observation post relieved.  |
| 11               | Trench party.  |
| 12               | Squadron scheme.   |
| 13               | Saddle inspection. Trench party.   |
| 14               | Routine duties.  |
| 15               | Troop schemes.   |
| 16               | Trench party.  |
| 17               | Trench party.  |
| 18               | Trench party.  |
| 19               | 32 <sup>nd</sup> Divisional scheme. Two troops to Toutencourt to join X Corps. |
| 20               | Horse inspection.  |
| 21 <sup>12</sup> | Two troops Divisional scheme.  |
| 22               | Routine duties.  |
| 23               | Routine duties. <sup>13</sup>  |

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<sup>12</sup> On this day, B and C Squadrons and the Service Squadron of the 6<sup>th</sup> (Inniskilling) Dragoons from the 36<sup>th</sup> Division become the 2<sup>nd</sup> North Irish Horse at Toutencourt as the X Corps Cavalry Regiment. The Regiment is attached to the 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division. The 36<sup>rd</sup> (Ulster) Division comprised the 107<sup>th</sup> Brigade (8, 9, 10 and 15 Royal Irish Rifles [East, West, South and North Belfast Volunteers]), the 108<sup>th</sup> Brigade (11, 12, 13 Royal Irish Rifles, 9 Royal Irish Fusiliers [South Antrim, Central Antrim, Down, and County Armagh Volunteers]), and the 109<sup>th</sup> Brigade (9, 10, 11 Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers [Tyrone, Derry, Donegal and Fermanagh Volunteers], 14 Royal Irish Rifles [Young Citizens Volunteers of Belfast]). On 27 April 1915 the Division was allocated to the Fifth New Army. In July the Division left Ireland and concentrated at Seaford. On 26 September it began its move to France and by 9 October concentration was completed around Flesselles.

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| 24 | Squadron scheme.  |
| 25 | Routine duties.   |
| 26 | Return to Senlis. |
| 27 | Routine duties.   |
| 28 | Routine duties.   |
| 29 | Trench party.     |
| 30 | Trench party.     |

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<sup>13</sup> Killed in action this day **Private William James Finlay** (1657), shown in some references as being from B Squadron. Finlay, aged 19 years, was born at Malta. When he enlisted in Antrim he was a resident of Belfast. He was the son of William James and Marela Concetta Finlay, of 28 Glenallen Street, Belfast. He is buried at Foncquevillers Military Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France (Grave location I.E.11). Note: Finlay's medal card shows he also served with the Corps of Hussars, and that his medal entitlement did not include the 1914-15 Star – in other words, he arrived in France in 1916.