

DOP/01/007

Hawtin Munday
Born February 1894

- 010 Joining up. Old school mate Sid Carroll. Territorials called up day or two in front of rest. He and mate stood together on Sunday evening. War started on previous Tuesday, decided they'd join up.

- 018 He was a butcher, HM a coach body maker. Went to Aylesbury to join up, wanted to be in Res. Recruiting office was "stacked out" in Temple square. Waited and waited, had a few drinks. Eventually came back, square still crowded, back for another drink, then back again. Went through and joined. Formed up in sections under lance-corporal. Marched around Aylesbury and billeted in civilian premises. He was at "Saracens Head" – a little drunk as not used to it. In morning Sid not there, Lance Corporal collected them and took them to do training. Asked Corporal if in RE's – no – Bucks Territorials.

- 041 Wanted to join up – taught it at school – history and geography proved "Britannia Rules Waves", "Sun never sets on the British Empire". Big King Dicks" – taught you practically owned the world. Aged 20 – no steady girlfriend at time. Their mates had joined Territorials before war – then he and Sid sent to join them – a real laugh "We've got you now" – glad they did – own schoolmates.

- 061 No fear – a novelty, looked forward to it. Everyone had to leave Wolverton anyway when 21 after serving apprenticeship, going to war seemed "magnificent" – eager to get there to see what it was like. School history had helped this. No slightest fear about being killed – never entered your head, no thought of it.

- 070 General opinion – had to go quick unless it all finished. As a youth couldn't picture any country with army big enough to defeat the British – two or three months only.

- 078 Parents accepted it. People joined up so quickly that conscription not needed. Parents didn't encourage or discourage, didn't query his decision. Went only ten days after War broke out.

- 087 He and Sid went by train to Aylesbury. A few weeks' training at Aylesbury – about a month. Fitted with uniforms – transferred to main Bucks Battalion in training at Chelmsford – there you "joined the regiment".

- 097 Early training – marching drill, musketry drill – in civilian clothes for about three weeks. All types of people there – people from farms with muffler and old slouch hat, dressed up to nines in pin stripe trousers – youth right from rich to poor – all together – all keen to go abroad.

- 114 Had only been away before on weekend athletic meetings and never went for holiday. Main holidays for youth were joining T.A. having fortnights training away each year.

- 121 Went by train to Chelmsford – but thinks that original Territorials called up a few days earlier, marched most of way, via Dunstable.
- 127 From Bradwell – Joe Scragg, Fatty Odell, Sid Carroll, Arthur Baxter, Tommy Barton.
- 139 At Chelmsford, billeted (20,000) 48th Division in private houses. HM – billeted near “Three Cups” pub – sat there every night playing cards. Can’t remember playing cards is Bradwell. Mainly pontoon and Solo Whist.
- 150 Training fairly tough. After month- realised going to have army discipline. If mate a lance-corporal couldn’t say “All right, Joe” had to be “All right Lance Corporal”. Remembers Alf Dixon of Wolverton being made L.C. Couldn’t call him by Christian name otherwise on a charge.
- 170 Tommy Barton, small chap very easily upset. Form up in two lines for route march. Number along 1-2 1-2. Their party used to get in second row so that odd numbers took two paces back and one to the right. Tommy with ten – always so that he had odd number. Route march lasted 10-15 miles. Always arranged it so that Tommy had to march in the gutter-cobblestones etc. Tommy used to say “I don’t know every time we go I seem to get in the gutter”. Every so often going through village would have to “march to attention” – no speaking. Tommy in gutter, every little way would get out of step. Sergeant would call to him, “Barton get in step” Tommy grumbled. Rest would bait him “Tommy I wouldn’t allow him to talk to you like that”. Tommy said “No I won’t” “Barton get in step” “Bugger you”, “Take his name”. At night, pack drill and confined to barracks. Pack drill, full pack and rifles, hours of drill – marching double marching etc. Reist would lean on railings laughing and waving at Tommy. After pack drill would be dismissed then Sergeant Major would say “About turn, double march” and make them run round parade ground just when they thought they’d finished.
- 231 Training very hard but young and it didn’t hurt too much. Tough, real tough, Twenty mile route marches. Water bottle full, got thirsty. Not allowed to touch the water. Tested it afterwards to check whether you’d had any.
- 259 Training there from October to 29th March 1915. Wrote Will when got paybook when went aboard. Can’t remember writing Will, only next of kin – wrote ‘Mother’.
- 273 Had one leave before he went for a fortnight “Embarkation leave”. Main bunch of friends had joined up. Very quiet in Bradwell – no pleasure at all. Only elderly in pubs. Certain proportion in reserved occupations – on military work. Prominent people wangled it so sons stayed behind – a lot of jealousy.
- 326 If girls saw young chap of military age wandering around wondered why they weren’t in war. Later when he’d come out of hospital wounded came home on leave before convalescing. Took Mum to see the “Byng Boys” at Northampton Rep. In Northampton had civvy clothes on, on corner of Gold St. bunch of girls, one gave him white feather. HM’s other went off deep and saying not only had he joined, but that he was now home wounded. Girls made “a hell of a fuss”. July-aug. 1915. A young man was supposed to join up and that was the attitude.

- 369 On embarkation leave parents proud of him. Main battle of Mons had been fought by then. Only had battles that had been organised for weeks and weeks beforehand.
- 420 No concern by parents even after hearing about first battles.
- 435 For a few weeks beforehand at Chelmsford. All was rumours about when they were leaving clues like examinations, extra strong route marching and mostly obviously – an inspection of the Division by King George V only a few weeks before they went. Then embarkation leave.

Side Two

- 003 No rumours about where going – obviously going to France.
- 010 Went on 29th March 1915. HM's battalion day before the 28th the transport went horse-drawn. Marvellous send-off. streets packed with people. Many had married Chelmsford girls. Went to Folkestone. Crossed Channel to Boulogne at night. Arrived early hours of morning marched through streets. French people opened bedroom windows and cheered. marched to hill outside, covered in tents. Everybody there "was all expectation" – eager. Nobody went abroad in those days – marvellous. Only language seemed different, not people. Language was fascinating in those days only Englishmen in England. "French" girls seemed different, spoke different, you stood looking at them with your mouth open.
- 047 Reckons their transport people had been day before and put tents up. Stayed in camp for two days, moved to front – about twenty miles march from rail head. Went to village and slept in old barns. Marching on cobbled streets – hell for feet. Next day could hear rumble of guns – seemed fascinating to young chaps. fleeing "We're getting near it" – excitement "Where are we going?".
- 079 Germans must have broken into Armentieres and been forced out. A mile or two out on road, told them road they were going on was road first Territorials ever to go to France (London Scottish) and held Germans and stopped them.
- 087 Sent up for gunfire baptism – a hell of a waste. first casualty of Bucks battalion. Taken up in chain and formation. Germans started shelling shells very high. One chap had piece hit him – carried into monastery where he died. Billy Holland from Newport Pagnell. Went into reserve trenches and stayed there a day – not front line – about half a mile back.
- 121 First impressions – excitement. Death of Holland make you realise there was a war. No fear or shell shock shown in baptism. Began to realise then what it was all about. Next night taken into front line – the real thing.
- 140 Daren't show your head. If you wanted to see no-mans land – your trench, barbed wire, no-mans' land, land barbed wire German trench. A quick look and down if not snipers rifle set along line, between sandbags, each covering about 100 yds.

- 156 Trenches about six foot across, six foot deep. Fire step make of sand bags. Parapets made of sand bags. stood on sand bags to fire. Two hours on duty.
- 178 "Sandbagging". During day, shelling – would blow lump of barbed wire and sandbags away. At night would get out of back of trench, fill sandbags and put them back where holes. sandbags from where cut and dugout. Cut in back of trench, top covered with corrugated iron and sandbags on top. Often got hit filling sandbags.
- 206 In winter sloshing along with mud over boot tops.
- 210 Few days at Armentieres – nothing much happened. Ten marched to Plug Street Wood. Large wood. Trenches several fields away. Wood, British side. 48th Territorial Division took over from regular army unit.
- 231 HM made a Lance-Corporal there. Lost stripes two or three times "I sewed them on with butter, they slid off".
- 248 Several weeks in wood 4/5 days in front line trench – would move out of it, no clothes off, no proper sleep. Two hours on, four off day and night. After four or five days another company would relieve you. (At night) Sections is wood – "Regent Street", "Oxford Street", "The Mall" trees that had been nearly blown down, so that regiments knew where they were. Quite a few trees still there but with their tops nearly blown off. Rested in wood – each regiment had its own little graveyard. Several days rest then back to trenches. After short time came out for proper rest – village seven or eight miles behind lines. there you celebrated. Paid, and every house a café. There you had eggs, chips, champagne and vin blanc and got drunk. Perhaps out for a week or fortnight, officers took turns and went off to Paris.
- 320 People lived normal lives in village. no prostitutes in this village. Chaps used to have a bit of fun with the girls – prostitutes were in places like Rouen and Le Havre. Used to have sing-song one or two good singers – Phil Wills form Wolverton. Sang songs that made you cry "Mother Macree", The Mountains of Mourne". Old time ballads. Phil Wills could play banjo.
- 374 Slept – Barns, Officers – farmhouses. Laid heaps in straw. Had to sleep even there with arm through rifle sling. Old lanterns hanging in barn – singing there.
- 401 Dead wrapped in blanket. strange feeling – bits of brook through wood. footpaths were duckboards. always had to pass Bucks graveyard on way to front line. Went at night. Had a funny feeling as you went by, looked at it and thought "Oh blimey I wonder if I shall be in there next time". just wooden cross there.
- 431 Never took no more notice of that than if it was a cat – reaction to person close to you dying there. "You're not human beings you know, I'm certain you're not". Anybody that died you said "Oh ah oh blimey, he's got it has he?" Even your own mates. You took it for granted that that was it. It happened so much you thought you could be the next one. No emotion.