

DOP/01/010

Hawtin Mundy
Born February 1894

- 014 Was one of wounded from 1st Battalion – sent to newly formed Battalion. In tent with other wounded – did no parades. Boxing ring in middle of camp. Most of recruits were from London area – Jewish. Battalion sponsored by Lord Rothschild and other Jews. younger men were from boxing clubs – including Jim Sullivan who'd fought Georges Carpentier at Madison Sq. Gardens.
- 035 Whilst others went on parade HM and other wounded lay in tent. Two specially remembered Cherry Hill and Charlie Watson – both “college types” – one an architect, the other an auctioneer.
- 045 Cherry challenged them to fight, “Will any of you And have a spar with me?”. you know proper top-notch, nice chap. And we said “Keep quiet” I said “Shut up”. So old Cherry went to go out the tent and he stepped right on my shin. I said “Oh blimey Cherry” I said, “All right” I said “I’ll come and have a do if you like”. So he says, “That’s all right”, he says “I won’t hurt you a bit”, he says, “I won’t hurt you”. I said “That’s all right Cherry” Well, I’d been training years as you know”.
- 054 He got a set of gloves and me and old Cherry went in the ring and oh, blimey, Cherry said he was a champion of his college, and I thought “Right.” It didn’t take long to find out. I got Cherry where I wanted him and after a little while his nose began to bleed, his lips were cut and were cut and we was only playing, not hitting hard, and old Cherry says “Bugger you” he said “you’re a pro” I said, “No, no, no”. So anyway he packed up and we went down. There was a long trough at the bottom of the field, at the park, all running water. We stripped out having a wash there and some bloke come and tapped me on the shoulder. He said “What’s your name?” I said “I told you, Corporal Mundy”. “All right”, he said, “Well what name do you use in the ring”? I said “None at all”, so he said “Well he said “Will you join our team?” I said, “I don’t know”. I says “Yeh all right, I will”. And that’s how it all began.
- 076 Trained with the boxers. Every Sunday let public in, had band playing and boxing exhibition matches.
- 088 HM won Welterweight Championship of the Southern Command.
- 095 Was made member of Military Police. Had to make sure town of High Wycombe was clear and pubs empty after 10.30 in the evening and there was no trouble in town.
- 105 HM used one pub – publican keen not to have any trouble he was asked to drop in half an hour before closing time never paid for beer. Pub cleared each time in orderly fashion.
- 113 Sunday morning duty as station was a favourite. Jews went to stalls in Whitechapel – Jews at camp had stalls there. Used to go to station without passes Had to go past police. I used to say “got your pass?” “Yeh Used to show it me, a bit of clean paper

with half a dollar on, see. "All right, carry straight on". Away they went. Used to make more money there than we did in wages. Sunday mornings. Yeh, nice job that was. Picked the toughest for the Military Police. Happy doing it. Got job recruiting in Wolverton area in 1915. No conscription

- 148 Started "Derby Scheme". Had to get recruits. Colonel sent him and Joe Cosby to his own area for about a month. Went round villages. Head Office at Wolverton – their office was a (Now) Register Office in Newport Pagnell.
- 166 Recruits filled in form "to be called up when they was needed" – "and if they didn't join they'd be called just the same when conscription come". Told them they'd get preferential treatment by signing – "all eyewash".
- 172 If recruits came to office to sign you could spend a shilling on each one – they didn't get a shilling. Took them to "The Ram" – gave them bread and cheese and half pint of beer (Landlord put pints behind bar, so that when HM and Joce C., wanted beer they had it free.
- 191 Went to farms they used to give one another away. "Go to so and so, their son, he ain't a –going. "Go and see him." Tipped off.
- 200 Tried to persuade the young men to sign up.
- 206 Didn't feel sorry for them. Thought "Serves you right".
- 215 Quiet difficult to get recruits, but knew underneath that they'd have to go. Went to see anybody. "The higher the class, the better we used to like it". –
- 235 Went to farm at Woolstone. Spoke to father – asked if son would sign form. Started making excuses – "couldn't spare him, etc. Got jar of whiskey and HM had some. Joe looking in at window watching him knock it back. "When we got back to Newport old Joe said, "Did you get him?; I said, "I'm buggerd if I know" But I had a load of whiskey"
- 250 Went everywhere on bike – allowed 1d a mile - had to check in to local post office. "We used to bike around".
- 266 At Crawley tipped off that many of local boys were to be at village hall in the evening. Joe went to Village Hall, HM had to go to phone HQ in Wolverton. When he got back near Village Hall we could hear a row. Joe was glad to see him. "They're going to throw me in the pond". Had started to tell them how nice it was in the army, then he'd lost his temper and said "You buggers ought to have been there long ago, no here". HM calmed them down.
- 300 Lived at home during this time. Remembers Johnny Burnham being under age when joining Bucks Battalion, but he can't remember signing up anybody under age.
- 325 Went back, joined them at Wycombe, then to Burnham on Sea, and then over again to France. Getting towards autumn 1915.

- 361 You had the feeling then, as near as I can remember now you sort of wanted to get back amongst your mates again, put it that way, because at this end, in England and when you came home on leave and all that sort of thing you see this end everybody was all gone and your proper mates that you'd been out there with early on, you wanted to get back and join them, see. Once you knew you'd got too got, you had a feeling "Oh blimey" it'll be all right now, back with me old mates again".
- 378 They were reinforcements for 1st Bucks Battalion – went to Burnham on Sea, then Southampton, Le Havre –then to Rouen. Palled up with Aylesbury chap, Sgt. "Rollo" Price.
- 442 Cold night, train pulled up behind the lines at Abbeville, lovely station all along platform emerged a long line of Salvation Army girls, dished them up with coffee and tea. Went up as near as possible to the Somme – at Hevertun.
- 475 Marched for about a day before meting up with old comrades.
- 479 Discipline of march was very strict. An hour's march and 10 minutes rest. transport went up a day ahead.
- 500 Met up with colleagues in a village in reserve. The cookers were there. Can't remember having no food in the trenches at all.
- 515 Went up to the front line after a day or so. HM wasn't n battle when he was wounded and the Germans were attacking British – made big attack in night. Big barrage – HM got hit in arm, piece smashed his rifle.
- 540 Officer close by – asked HM to take message back – 3 lines of trenches there – front, support and reserve – all the wires are down take a message back to the Signallers and tell them what the Germans have broken through on the right, but we're holding all right here".
- 562 HM went to Signallers and told them then went back to where M,O,. was. "Fatty" Odell there. "Oh hell, what you again". "Yeh I've got it again". "Oh, you lucky bugger, back home again.0000000" "Yeh, somebody's got to look after your girls as home".
- 580 Could hear shells dropping. "Sounded like footballs dropping on the ground". Heard gongs (by shell cases_) banging in front line – gas shells being sent over. A mile or 2 behind lines, "oh blimey, there was these chaps laying there on the grass, ice-frozen grass, laying on ground sheets, as yellow as a lemon with their tongues hanging out, gassed. They could never live. What a mess they was in".
- 630 No changes when he went back to France Examines just the same – eggs and chips and champagne. Every other house a pub – a red light outside some of them.
- 645 Went down with Rollo Price into Rouen one evening, had a few drinks. Said to Rollo "Shall we go and have a bit of a do? Rollo 6'2" tall, opened the door to brothel first, "he turned round" he knocked me out on the pavement, he said, "I ain;t going in There", I said, What the hell for?" Oh he said son as I opened the that door, sitting all round the

room they were gals there with nothing on, only a bit of curtain lace round em". And he shoved me out in the street and we never did go in". So we went and had some more beer".

700 When got back to old mates at the front, they all wanted to know what it was like at home, "how's things at Bradwell?" have you heard about so and so". They wanted to know about their own girls "so I assured them I looked after them nice and comfortable".

744 Thinks he was more nervous when he went back, "no I didn't like it, well nobody liked it. Was depth of winter at Somme then.

Side Two

000 Bitter cold at Somme, only had 1 day in front line, 1 day in second line, 1 day in reserves.

010 Issued with waders for the front line. People suffered from "trench feet" – several discharged to Bradwell with it – Sid Coles did. (HK – did he?) "I'd thought I'd got it – in fact I hoped I had it. One night on duty feet were numb, thought he had "frost-feet". Officer sent him to M.O. Brazier burning, rubbed fat on feet, that cured it. Those that had frost bite often lost toes.

070 Taken back, put into marquees, then put into ambulances and put on train at nearest railhead. Got off train and saw "Mauretania" lit up as a hospital ship.

120 Tried to get wounded over to England as soon as possible. Even though "walking wounded" he wasn't treated in France.

153 Asked him after arrival at Southampton which hospital he'd like to go to. He said "Northampton" – they sent him to Sheffield. There for 3 weeks. Had a "bit of fun with the gals".

162 Wore hospital blue and not allowed in pubs. Chap in next bed said his uncle had a pub in Sheffield, suggested a visit. Went round back – "ooh blimey didn't they dope us up", got back to hospital drunk, orderly "yanked me along like a baby" – took him to the toilet, set him on the pan, "Now drink this and don't you stop until it's empty" – glass full of warm water and salt. "Talk about a do, but it were a lovely cure".

193 90% of nurses were V.A.,D. nurses. 3500 beds in hospital – like a barracks. Went out with a nurse and got back too late. Had to report next morning to Chief Officer for telling off.

218 Discharged and then went to Sutton Coldfield for convalescence, then to Catterick. Had been passed "unfit for further active service" – C something – finished with the war, had to have home-based job. I thought "ooh hell, that's a terrible place".

- 240 As he was settling in a chap said "Hallo Bob, I am pleased to see you". HM denied he was Bob – then remembered when they'd asked him his name when boxing at High Wycombe, he'd thought "Oh hell, I ain't going to say "Hawtin", it sounds daft", so had given his name as Bob.
- 261 Had letter from mother saying "Come home at once, (brother George is on an overseas draft". Took it to the Capt ain to ask for a pass. He asked the Colonel who refused, "Course he can't, he's got to do his firing course". HM was a first class shot in 1914.
"I've been out there twice, I reckon I now how to fire a rifle now".
- 285 "Tell him I'll volunteer for the next draft abroad if he'll give me permission". Capt. Went and asked but Colonel still refused. HM had a telegram from his mother and said "Show him that, tell him I'll volunteer for anything". Colonel refused again. Capt. Said, "It's no good, he won't give you a pass". I thought "Bugger you".
- 300 Went to Orderly Room, got days orders, signed by the Colonel. Went to guardroom and got a mate, Dick Capel, to fiddle him a pass "Here you are but I didn't give it you". HM practised and then forged Colonel's signature. Went off to railway station, asked for ticket. Clerk asked why pass had no Orderly Room stamp. "Ooh I know all about that. I went to the Colonel, I said, "See this telegram, I said, I went to the Colonel and told him I wanted to get home quick and the Colonel signed the pass, he said, "Here you are, get away as quick as you can, you'll never catch that train". Given ticket to York.
- 333 Sat in train and it didn't move. Door opened a police Redcap asked for pass. "No orderly room stamp on it". Told him the same story, Away he went. Train did not go. Redcap came back with Sergeant who asked to see pass. "Come on out, come on out". Taken to cells of police station, and then taken to guardroom at camp – 6 or 7 waiting there.
- 378 Waited in cell. Soldier came in to clean it out. His old mate Vic Matthews. "Heard you was here, so I got a little bit of C.B. So I could come in and clean you out ... and I when I've made your bed, look under your blanket". Underneath was a packet of 5 Woodbines and a few matches. At night he smoked and blew the smoke down the air vent.
- 404 On Sunday was marched along in front of troops waiting to go to church, ""disgraced we was", "but that never upset me". Sergeant took them out on to the Moors and gave them a fag. HM got talking to the others – all desertion – all had got away from the area.
- 420 One Jew had been caught twice – both times in Whitechapel.
- 426 At court martial the Captain spoke up for him, "I knew this man on the Somme", "He was reliable, a good soldier".
- 437 Those on the court martial "looked at that old Colonel as if to say "why the hell didn't you let him got". Altered the charge to "attempted absence without leave" and forgery.

- 455 20,000 troops at Catterick. Mainly recruits there.
- 480 Had to do his firing course “and I never hit the target once” – didn’t intend hitting it. Had 10 days embarkation leave and didn’t want to go back. Mum was “worried to death”. George had been home waiting for him. “I AIN’T GOING TILL OUR “Awt comes” – Military Police came and fetched him. Mother worried – “what will the neighbours say?”
- 525 Mother had wanted George to see HM before going because! “When you went abroad in those days you had very little chance of coming back”.
- 535 Mother used to pray for them when away. Wrote to him and sent parcels.
- 547 Why so reluctant to go back. “You try and find somebody as wanted to go back that had been out there once, never mind twice. Did you want to go out there and die?”
- 560 When you know you’ve got to go, then you want to get back amongst your mates.
- 580 Impossible to describe feelings, “one day you’re happy, the next day you’re down and out”. When you got out there, you wanted the comfort of your mates and when you were with your mates you felt that much safer than when you were with someone else that might have been 10 times better than your mates. You had the comfort of your own friends around you”.
- 625 Went out with shipload of new recruits. Got to Le Havre. (Mentions mutiny against instructors). Calls instructors “yellow-bellies”. In large camp, there was a big field where the “yellow-bellies” instructed the recruits. “£None had been to the front”. Purpose of their instruction was “to make you mad and send you back to the front, because you was glad to get away from them.
- 696 A dozen or so taken to field each day to be frilled by instructor, and given lectures “which you knew all about”.