

West Sussex Gazette 10th December 1914 page 8

SHOREHAM TRAINING CAMP.

Continuous wet weather made it imperative, for the health of the soldiers, that tent life should be abandoned at the Shoreham training camp, even though the wooden "huts" were not completed. For some time before the Queen's, the Buffs, and the Fusiliers were billeted out in Worthing, as reported last week, the Oxen field had been a quagmire. Officers were reported to have been seen there with sea boots on. A week or two ago it was explained to a visitor to the camp that the only way for men to keep their feet in the Oxen field was for a considerable body to go arm-in-arm. If the human chain were long enough, disaster might thus be dodged. Yet the men took things cheerfully. All the same, those moved to Worthing are understood to appreciate the change highly, notwithstanding that they have daily been turning out in drenching rain for parade and drill and to take advantage of the ambulance and other classes provided for them. Most of all, perhaps, have the soldiers appreciated the enthusiasm with which religious bodies and private residents have endeavoured to provide for their recreation and amusement. At Worthing, for instance, the Congregationalists have placed at the soldiers' disposal a large lecture hall and two adjoining rooms, attached to their church, where the men can play billiards, bagatelle, and cards; a piano is there and impromptu concerts are frequent, and there is a reading and writing room, where everything the most exacting correspondent could require is found, except perhaps, the postage stamps. Shoreham itself, of course, is a soldiers' town now, where the men from the camp are given welcome to private residences in a remarkable degree. During the last week it was decided that all tents should be given up. As many men as could were moved to the wooden buildings on the slope of the Downs. Others were billeted out in Shoreham and elsewhere—some appear to have gone to Hove. It may be that some weeks of the New Year will have passed before the whole of the battalions will be gathered together in the new timber town. A good many old soldiers, by the way, are not enamoured by the idea of living in wooden "huts." Even the best of such buildings, they say, are but draughty makeshifts compared with a good waterproof tent. The difficulty, with such weather as we have been experiencing of late, is to ensure the waterproof tent. With pools of mud all around and the rain tumbling down in sheets, much discomfort is possible in the best of tents, especially if you happen to have a frisky tent-mate who cannot keep his fingers from the canvas. One result of the billeting out of a number of regiments was that the military sports at the Aerodrome, which took place on Saturday after being twice postponed through bad weather, were robbed of a good deal of their interest. The championship seven-mile walk was won by Lance-Corp. Underwood, of the Essex Regiment, with other Essex men second and third; the three-quarter mile running championship went to Private A. W. Smith, East Surrey; the hurdles to Private W. H. Wilkinson, 13th Middlesex, who is a member of the Bury Athletic Club; the high jump to Private Porter, 13th Middlesex, and the long jump to Lance Corp. Page, East Surrey, who cleared 19ft. 4in. The Norfolks won the tug-of-war. Lady Ramsey, wife of the Major-General in command of the camp, presented the prizes; but entries were so much affected by the scattering of the battalions about the district that in one race there were only half as many competitors as there were prizes offered.