



Diary of W.F Rainsford



c. March 1919, Photograph of R.S.M Rainsford (on the left), 2nd Battalion, The Royal Sussex Regiment, at Witterschlick, while serving with the British Army of the Rhine: R.S.R
PH 2149

By Megan Davies



This unique diary written retrospectively by Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) William Frederick Rainsford describes his experiences of life in the First World War. We assume that he used his wartime diaries to remind himself of numbers, events, dates and his involvements as a soldier. This project will particularly focus on his accounts of the First Battle of Ypres and the First Battle of the Aisne. However, he kept this diary and his life in World War One private for understandable reasons. Thus very little was known about Rainsford at the start of the project; the information I have discovered has been unearthed with the help of one of his surviving daughter's, people involved with administrating the project, and other documents in the West Sussex Record Office.

I am a student at the University of Chichester studying History and English, and as a part of my degree I had the opportunity in my second year to take on a work placement for one semester. There were a variety of work places to choose from, giving those who obtained this valuable opportunity an insight into the world of work and the possible careers we could pursue after graduation. Out of the available places I chose West Sussex County Council Library Service as it had a unique project attached to it, which I was eager to be a part of; a wonderfully interesting opportunity that also demonstrated a career option that I had not yet considered.

As mentioned, this particular workplace offered a very unique project to me and four other students at the university. It is so unlike anything else because it is in association with the 'West Sussex & the Great War' project, meaning it is an entirely brand new distinctive development which marks the centenary of World War One in 2014. The role expected of us five students in the task was to pick a 'case study' of an individual involved in the Great War which especially intrigued us (there was a list to choose from). We then had to carry out research into the individual/s lifetime and their experiences and influences in the First World War. This research was carried out in the West Sussex Record Office, Chichester as it possesses very useful documents which refer to the Royal Sussex Regiment (RSR). They also have access to 'findmypast.com' and 'ancestry.co.uk', as well as holding the actual documents we five students were primarily working on (in my case, Rainsford's diary).

After some time I chose the retrospective diary of William Frederick Rainsford from the list of potential case studies. I was informed that this diary outlined his life during the Great War, including his experiences as a wartime soldier, and that it had never been studied in detail before. This tiny amount of information I was provided with (compared to that of the



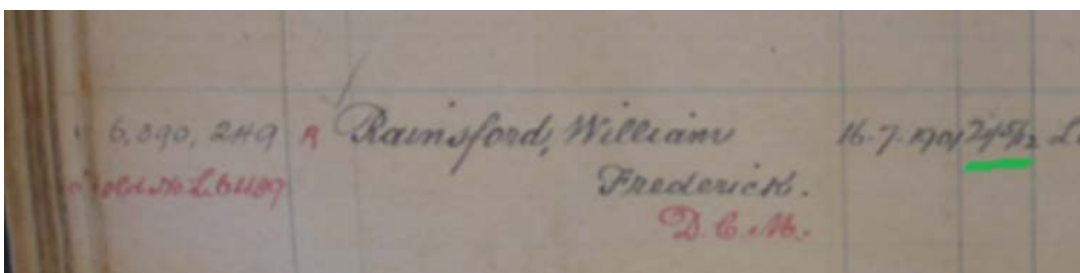
other descriptions on the list) really enticed me, encouraging me to grasp this unseen historical document and begin unearthing the life of this mysterious, unknown soldier.

I could not wait to start 'digging' into the diary, especially being the first to study it in detail and research the man himself. Abandoning the lecture theatre and academic books for four hours a week, I felt like a 'hands on' historian being trusted with this fragile diary and other delicate documents too. I was discovering information about Rainsford's life for myself, both within the diary and other sources. I felt enormously privileged to have been trusted with this responsibility, as well as delving into a piece of history (small as it may be) that had not yet been explored.

The main sources I used to support my exploration into Rainsford's life include the diary itself, a phone interview with Mrs Dark (his only surviving child), the Enlistment Book, Medal Rolls Index Card and the Battalion War Diary.

Rainsford's background.

An exact date or place of birth for Rainsford has not been confirmed, but a possible match from the January Quarter of 1880 in the registration district of St Giles, Londonⁱ is the most likely one found. This complies with his daughter's assertion that he joined the army at the age of twenty one in 1901. This information can be established in the 'Enlistment' column of the Attestation book which clearly states his age when he signed up to the British Army. The green line in the picture here shows his age (21 years and five months old in 1901). Thus we can presume he was born around 1880.



RSR AR 13904 Enlistment Book

Rainsford's beginning is a humble one being a son of a stable boy named Charles (Charlie) Rainsford and a housemaid, Elizabeth Grace Vincent, both working in a Gloucestershire manor house. Charlie and Elizabeth left Gloucestershire and moved to London, presumably because of Elizabeth's pregnancy. As you can see from the possible match of information below, they married in Middlesex at St John's, Drury Lane in 1879, Charlie aged 26 and Elizabeth 22:ⁱⁱ



Page 125.

1879. Marriage solemnized at *the Parish Church in the Parish of St John's Fyfe Lane in the County of Middlesex*

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
249	October 13 th	Charles Rainsford	26	Bachelor	Carmen	18 th Trury Lane	William Frederik Rainsford	Commission Agent
		Elizabeth Grace Vincent	22	Spinster	—	20 St Martin's Lane	Alfred Vincent Vincent	Hair-dresser

Ancestry Library: AncestryLibrary.com- London, England, Marriages and Banns.

Rainsford continued to live in St Giles, London as shown below from the 1891 census for England.ⁱⁱⁱ Also in the 1901 English census his father is shown to still be living in St Giles in London,^{iv} increasing the reliability of the other sources showing that his upbringing was in this area.

1891 England Census about William Rainsford

Name:	William Rainsford [William Rainsford]
Age:	11
Estimated Birth Year:	abt 1880
Relation:	Son
Father's Name:	Charles Rainsford
Mother's Name:	Elizabeth Rainsford
Gender:	Male
Where born:	St Giles, London, England
Civil Parish:	St Giles in the Fields
Ecclesiastical parish:	St Giles in the Fields
County/Island:	London
Country:	England

Ancestry Library: AncestryLibrary.com- 1891 England Census

Little is known about his childhood experiences, his daughter knew he was a labourer before joining the British Army,^v which is also noted in the Enlistment Register.^{vi}

Although we know Rainsford grew up in the St Giles area of London and met his wife in Northern Ireland,^{vii} it was very difficult to determine why he moved into the county of West Sussex later on. From the Irish Civil Registration Marriage Index of 1845-1958 below, we can see that Rainsford and Florence McCord were married in 1913 in Belfast.^{viii}



Ireland, Civil Registration Marriages Index, 1845-1958

Name:	William Rainsford
Date of Registration:	Jan-Feb-Mar 1913
Registration District:	Belfast
Volume:	1
Page Number:	393
FHL Film Number:	101262
Records on Page:	Name
	→ Florence McCord

Ireland Civil Registration Marriages Index, 1845-1958

From the information present we can presume that the Woking based battalion^{ix} he was a part of (which is not far from London) was in the Royal Sussex Regiment, thus encouraging him to move closer to the Sussex region after the Great War. This evidence can possibly be improved (if it really is Rainsford) with the presence of the 1911 Irish census. This is because the stamp where Rainsford's name is recorded states he was a part of the "2nd Bn. Royal Sussex Regiment" at the age of thirty one.^x

Thus although this evidence is proven to be associated with Rainsford, the similarities between documents certainly increases the reliability of these sources.

Background of the military he was involved with.

The Royal Sussex Regiment was established in 1701,^{xi} and (as previously mentioned) Rainsford's military career in the regiment pre-1914 was very busy. He was involved in issues abroad: India (11 February 1902-11 December 1902), Malta (18 June 1904-28 May 1905) and Crete (29 May 1905)^{xii}. Thus he was an experienced soldier pre 1914. He fought as a part of the second battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment which came about in 1881 when the 35th and 107th Regiments were reconstructed into the first and second battalions of the Royal Sussex Regiment.^{xiii}

Before war was declared in 1914 Rainsford was already working in the second battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment as a soldier, based in Woking.^{xiv} However, when war broke out in August 1914 he notes that the battalion at Woking formed a part of the "second brigade of the first division" where they received commands to mobilize for war on the 5 August 1914, leaving on the 11 August for France.^{xv}

His main achievements.



A huge number of medals were awarded in the First World War for bravery and exceptional service. From the information found Rainsford was awarded four medals; the 1914 Star (Mons Star), The British War Medal 1914-1920, The Victory Medal 1914-1919,^{xvi} and the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM).^{xvii}

The 1914 Star which is commonly known as the 'Mons Star' was awarded to soldiers (like Rainsford) who served in the First World War on the Western Front during the time opening of it (4 August 1914-22 November 1914). It was also only given to those who were working in close proximity to the enemy, not those in the rear. Specifically the clasp of the medal signifies it was awarded only to those 'under fire'. Thus Rainsford was awarded this medal for being under close attack from the enemy and being involved straight away with the first parts of the Great War.

The British War Medal was the most commonly issued war medal. This is because it was awarded to those who left their native country to fight abroad; thus Rainsford qualified for the medal as he was in France from 1914. Those who "served in the main theatres of war"^{xviii} and those who left their home country for service in the Great War received this medal.^{xix}

The Victory Medal would have been given to all those who fought in "the main theatres of war", (thus including Rainsford). Also, people may have received this particular medal because it automatically arrived along with The British War Medal (see above paragraph).^{xx}

Rainsford's most notable medal (and probably the one he was most proud of) was The Distinguished Conduct Medal. It was awarded to recognise acts of bravery by those who were non-commissioned officers. A most esteemed medal to receive, it is generally considered that only the Victoria Cross is deemed higher in prestige. I managed to uncover the precise reason as to why Rainsford was awarded this medal in particular, as stated in *The Records of Awards and Decorations 1914-1918* document:

"For conspicuous good work throughout the campaign. He has never missed a day's work and by his fine and cheery example has done invaluable work in training...and keeping up the spirit and discipline of the Battalion." (London Gazette dated 20 June 1916)^{xxi}

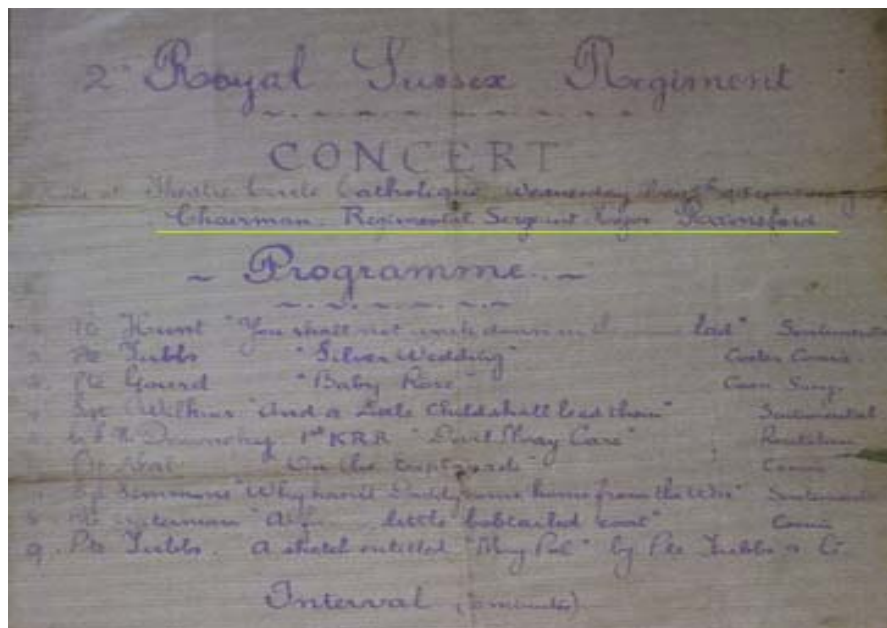
In *The Royal Sussex Regiment Military Honours and Awards 1864-1920* Rainsford is noted for his achievement in gaining the Distinguished Conduct Medal with only one other being awarded it at the same time.^{xxii} Therefore the medals Rainsford has been awarded reflect his outstanding gallant and commendable actions in the First World War.



In addition to the medals awarded, the Medal Index Card also states that before he was given the title of Regimental Sergeant Major he was a Company Sergeant Major (CSM).^{xxiii} His promotion to Regimental Sergeant Major would have entitled him to be involved with the Battalion headquarters, rather than the Company headquarters as he would have been as a Company Sergeant Major. Moreover there was only one position for a Regimental Sergeant Major, making it the highest rank a non-commissioned soldier could achieve.^{xxiv}

Unfortunately it has proved especially difficult to understand the exact reasoning for Rainsford's promotion from Company Sergeant Major to Regimental Sergeant Major. This is because the whereabouts of Rainsford's military record sheet describing his promotions is unknown. It is possible that it was destroyed or severely damaged during the Blitz when the warehouse containing World War One records was hit by bombs. Additionally, because Rainsford continued with the army after the First World War, it is likely that the Ministry of Defence still possesses his records. So, as a presumption, it is highly possible that he was promoted due to his good work, devotion and bravery he displayed.

However, the programme of a concert in 1915 that the Second Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment put on indicates when Rainsford may have been promoted. As you can see below Rainsford was the Chairman of this concert and he has the title 'Regimental Sergeant Major' (see writing above the green line). Therefore he must have been promoted in 1914 or 1915.^{xxv}



RSR MS 2/72 Concert Programme 1915

Background of British involvement with the Ypres and the Aisne.



As already noted, I am going to concentrate on Rainsford's own account of the First Battle of Ypres and the First Battle of the Aisne at the beginning of the war as the diary is quite long and these were two very famous and influential events of World War One. The battles will be looked at in more detail a little later, but firstly here are brief explanations of why the British Expeditionary Forces (BEF) and the Allies became involved with these areas in particular.

The First Battle of the Aisne (September 1914) arose due to the German's stopping their retreat into France after the First Battle of the Marne.^{xxvi xxvii} This soon caused the First Battle of the Aisne due to the German's stopping their departure after the First Battle of the Marne. Allied armies found the German's north of the river Aisne on a high plateau (called the Chemin des Dames). The allies discovered that the German defences were far greater, prompting both sides to begin digging; thence starting the trench warfare on the Western Front.

Ypres was important in the First World War because the Germans and the British Allies clashed on the Menin road (which goes through Ypres), during the 'race to the sea'^{xxviii} (control of the Channel coast)^{xxix} in October 1914; thus sparking the First Battle of Ypres.

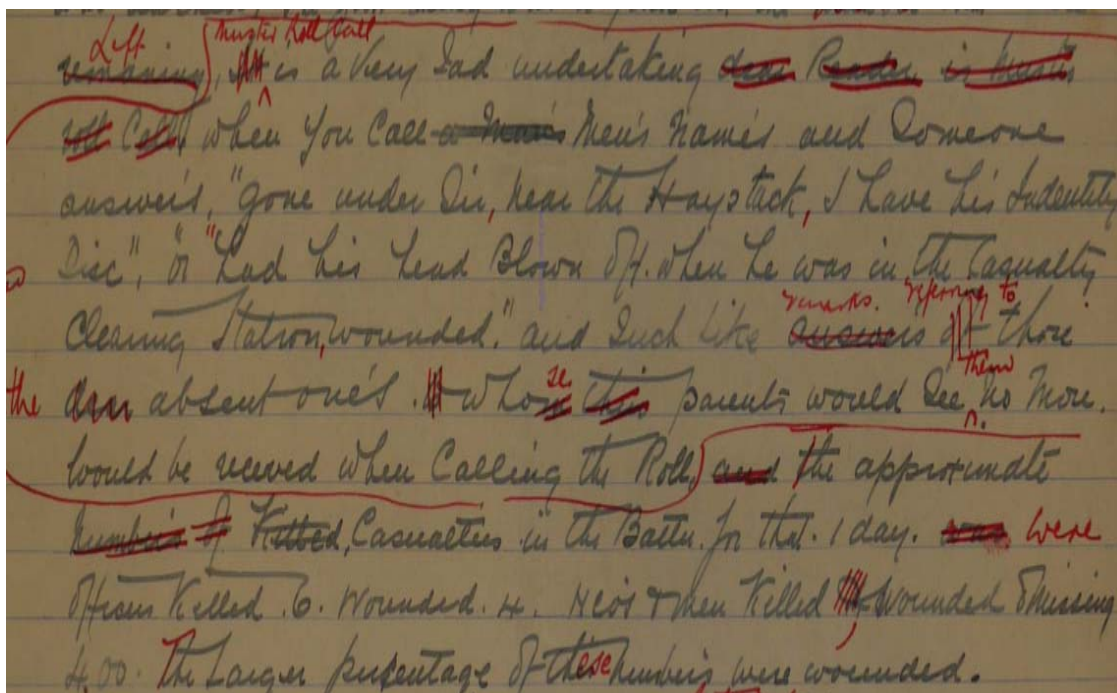
Rainsford's experiences of the First Battles of the Aisne and Ypres.

The information below has been extracted from both Rainsford's diary and the Second Battalion War Diary. I shall concentrate on Rainsford's own personal experiences of the battles.

The First Battle of the Aisne.

Rainsford begins by explaining that on 13 September 1914 the battalion was "most disagreeably surprised"^{xxx} as they moved towards the Aisne and saw the highly explosive "Jack Johnsons...which was a nickname given to eight inch high explosive shell...".^{xxxi} He also notes that they knew when entering the battle that this was their "first experience of artillery heavier than our own", emphasising the disadvantage the British were at. He then goes on to state that they continued into a small village near the river where cook brought them "a steaming hot pot of tea"^{xxxii} before their advance into battle the next day.

From here Rainsford describes the battle between the British and German forces, although he does not clearly detail the dates unlike the battalion war diary. He mostly includes his personal experiences. For example, one night when the battalion was attempting to get as much sleep as possible before a heavy day approaching them, Rainsford was awoken by the "ration bloke"^{xxxiii} giving him various orders. The first thing he had to do was to find as many of the men in the battalion that he could, and then carry out a muster roll call. Rainsford describes his sorrow whenever this task was carried out below:



WSRO Acc 15444 p. 13 (Transcription 1 in appendix)

The Battalion War Diary additionally states that on the first day the battalion succeeded in "capturing 250 German prisoners"^{xxxiv} and similarly Rainsford also noted that "prisoners began to come in".^{xxxv}

The heavy combat is highlighted in both diaries, the battalion diary stating on 18 September that "as usual, the Artillery Bombardment recommenced at dawn, and continued throughout the day."^{xxxvi} Thus the huge amount of men lost (see the above extract for some figures after the first day at the Aisne) was due to this extremely fierce battleground.

Rainsford names some of those who lost their lives in this battle, describing their sportsmanship and comradeship. One man (Lt. Col. E ?) is described as a "highly respected gentleman...commanding the Btn who was killed by a German Sniper. As a sportsman and soldier he was incomparable in the eyes of all officers..."^{xxxvii}, evidently a great loss for the battalion.

Both accounts describe the amount of bombardment they received, which appeared to last from dawn till dusk every day, resulting in huge losses. Despite this however, the British are recorded as retaliating well regardless of the high quality performance and machinery of the enemy. For instance, the Battalion War Diary mentions on 7 October 1914 "the enemy's machine guns opened a heavy fire on some dummy trenches that had been constructed."^{xxxviii}

Notwithstanding the severe and accurate German warfare, the Second Battalion was commended for its resilience and bravery in the First Battle of the Aisne. Rainsford refers to a particularly praiseworthy letter from Field Marshal Sir John French which included the below comments about the battalion's highly skilled work:



all the Regiments comprising the Expeditionary Force bear
 on their Colours Emblems and Names which constantly
 remind them of Glorious Victories achieved by them in
 the past. I have the most complete Confidence that these
 Regiments, as they stand today in close proximity to the Enemy,
 will not only uphold the magnificent traditions of former
 days, but will add fresh laurels to their Standards.
 I cannot convey what I feel with regard to the conduct of
 the troops under my Command better than by expressing
 my conviction that they have justified that Confidence well
 and nobly.

(6) That Confidence is everywhere endorsed by their fellow-
 Countrymen; and, whatever may be before the British
 Army in France, I am sure they will continue to follow
 the same glorious path till final and complete Victory
 is attained.

Signed J. D. P. French. Field Marshal
 C. in C. H. B. F. 13

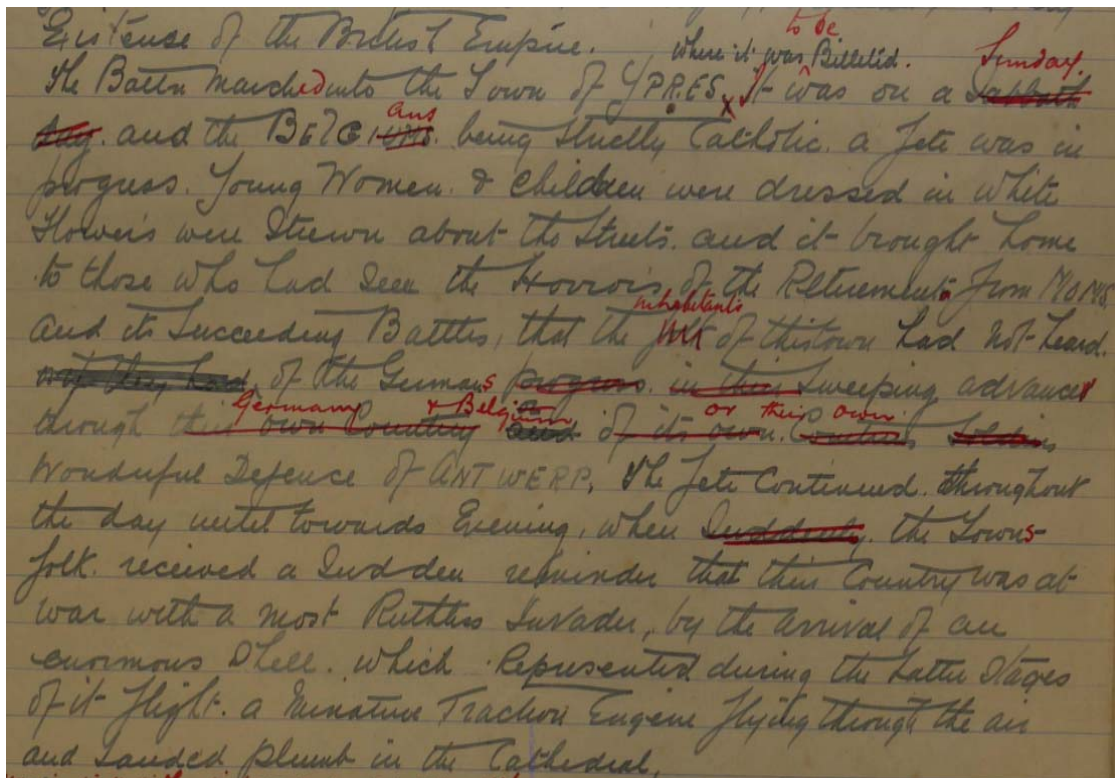
WSRO Acc 15444 p.13 (Transcription 2 in Appendix)

This demonstrates the faith and content the higher authorities felt toward the work of the second battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment. Evidently Rainsford (and many others I am sure) was immensely proud to have received this letter and to have been a part of the battalion.

On 15 October 1914 the battalion followed instructions to move on from the Aisne and only days later they were involved with the First Battle of Ypres.

The First Battle of Ypres.

10 days after the second battalion left the first Battle of the Aisne^{xxxix} they reached Ypres, ready to embark on another highly influential battle of the First World War. According to the Battalion War Diary they began to move into Ypres on 25 October 1914.^{xi} Rainsford's initial impression on Ypres is a calm one until the German's intervene:



WSRO Acc 15444 p.15 (Transcription 3 in Appendix)

Just after Rainsford describes this setting he states that "This evening is vividly impressed on my memory",^{xli} making it a haunting recollection. Settings like these often imprinted on soldiers minds because of their association with home and the unsettling images of innocent civilians in immense sudden danger.

Both diaries note the battalion's movements into various wooded areas such as "Chateau' wood"^{xlii} and "Pheasant wood",^{xliii} although neither of the diaries significantly cross reference this information.

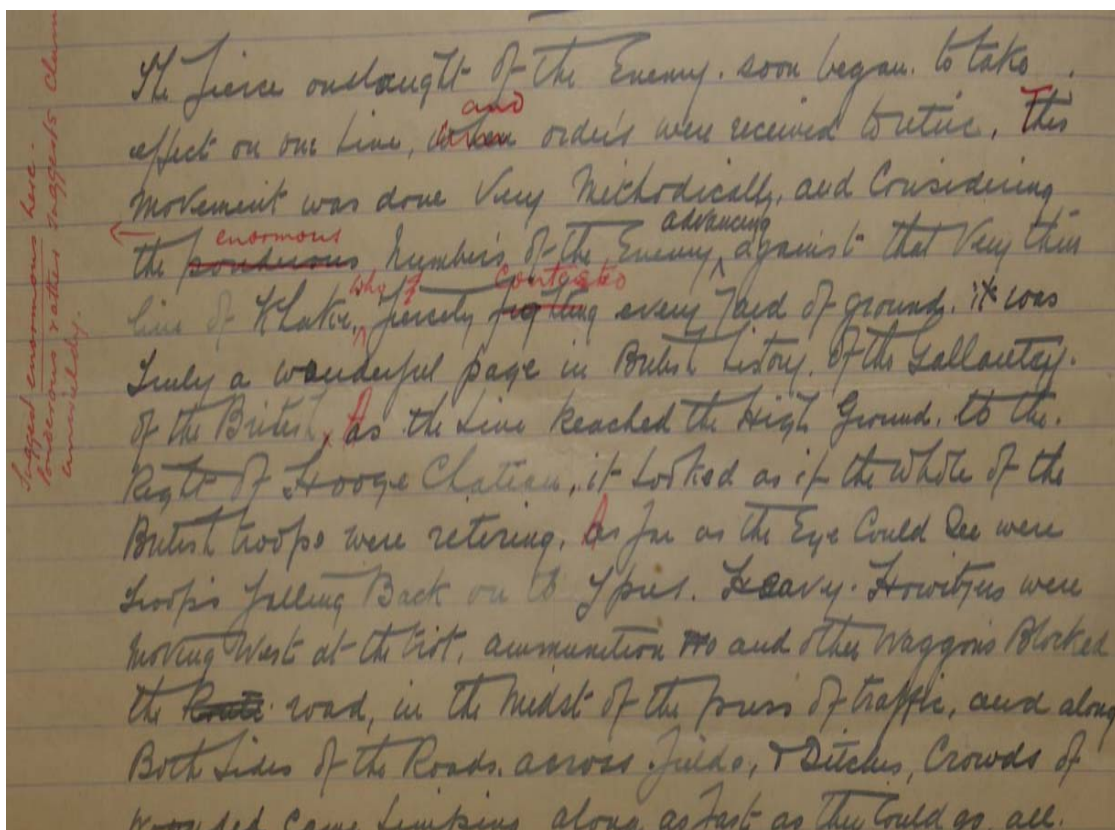
A huge number of lives were lost in the battalion; however it is difficult to decipher an exact amount because the diaries do not give precise numbers throughout. However, Rainsford does note that due to "severe bombardment of the wood" there was a "great number of casualties";^{xliv} the battalion's numbers being "reduced to approximately 300" from over 1,000 on only the fourth day of occupation.^{xlv}

The most significant cross-reference of the two diaries I discovered was one of importance. On 29 October 1914, still in Chateau Wood, the Battalion War Diary states that "an attack was made all along our line",^{xlvi} where according to Rainsford they were digging a new trench line.^{xlvii} Both diaries refer to their exact location on this day - the crossroads of the "Ypres- Menin road".^{xlviii}

This day was particularly harsh on the British troops, and the Battalion War Diary notes that they "received valuable information the night before from a spy who must have been a German staff- he foretold that this



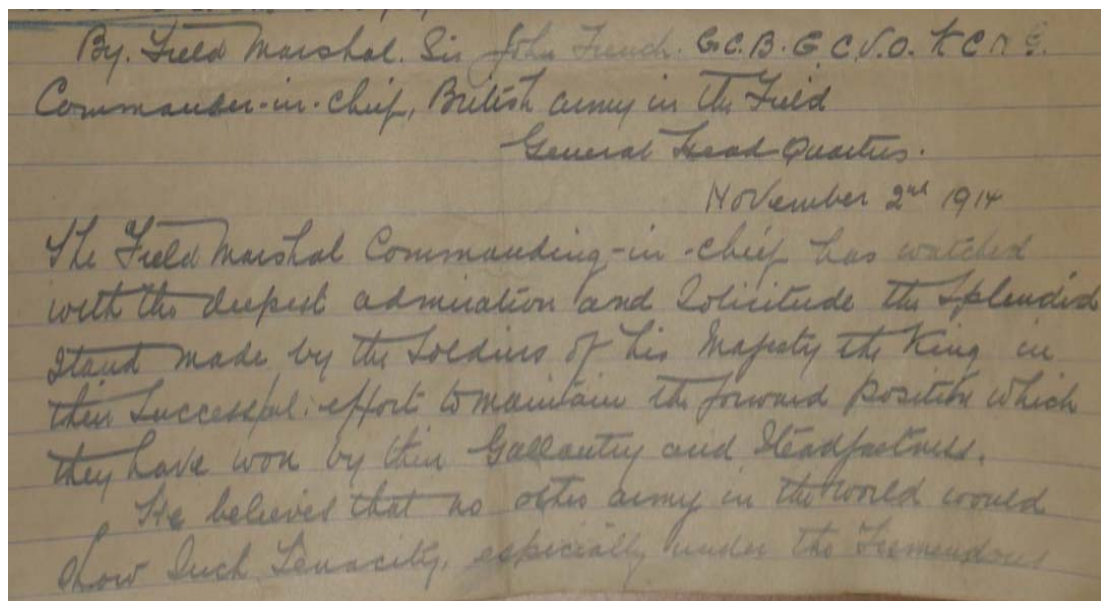
attack would be made" on the crossroads.^{xlix} This information was correct and Rainsford describes his involvements that day below:



WSRO Acc 15444 p. 18 (Transcription 4 in Appendix)

Clearly this was a day memorable for its harshness. Rainsford states that "the sight of the battlefield as we advanced was one which could never be forgotten" on this "awful day".^{li} "The piles of dead which lay in the sides of the roads and blood was everywhere..."^{lii}

Rainsford's reflects the bravery of the men, despite the horrors: "The enemy was very persistent in his attacks but thanks to the...pluck of the men...no impression was made."^{liii} Moreover, similar to my earlier reference in the First Battle of the Aisne section, Field Marshall Sir John French wrote another commendable letter to the Second Battalion. Here, on 2 November 1914 (only a week after they began their time in Ypres) is an extract of his letter:



WSRO Acc 15444 p.19 (Transcription 5 in Appendix)

Due to the gallant work by the Second Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment, they gained the nickname 'The Iron Regiment' from German prisoners during the First Battle of Ypres. Again this reflects the hard work displayed in Rainsford's diary of both himself and the battalion as a whole. They clearly worked very well together; a strong, committed battalion.^{liv}

Conclusions.

Rainsford's life after World War One.

Even though I have only concentrated on the initial battles of the Great War in 1914, Rainsford continued throughout the War and survived, returning to Great Britain in 1919.

Mrs Dark (his daughter) informed me that he married her Northern Irish mother,^{lv} Florence McCord before the First World War in Belfast, 5 February 1913. Three children were born only a few years later: His first child Frederick William was born 2 March 1914 in Woking, his second child was born 5 September 1916 in Belfast and his last child, with whom I have had the pleasure of speaking with, was born 27 December 1922 in Chichester.^{lvi lvii}

Mrs Dark stated that the family moved to Horsham when she was ten years old (1930), where they settled. During the 1920's and 1930's Rainsford undertook a variety of jobs, but when war broke out for a second time in 1939, he continued to be a member of the British Army, and survived World War Two. According to Mrs Dark, he did not want to go back to war.^{lviii}

He was now a Lieutenant and enlisted in Aldershot, where he was stationed. He was given command over Dutch soldiers from Dunkirk, and stayed in the army until 1945, when he was a Lieutenant Colonel. Due to his promotions, his family were entitled to a batman who would act as a



servant, doing numerous chores which she said her Mother was delighted with!^{lix}

His daughter told me that he never spoke of the First World War, as many soldiers did not. Despite his bravery, medals and promotional achievements, it was a horrific time of haunting memories and loss which I am sure he would rather leave in the past.

Mrs Dark informed me that he passed away at the admirable age of eighty four.

My experience with the diary, other sources and the record office.

At first I found it extremely difficult reading the handwriting on the various sources, but with time it got slightly easier (please forgive me for any spelling or word mistakes). However, the help with the handwriting barriers was very helpful from the staff, fellow students and others in the West Sussex Record Office.

Additionally I found 'findmypast.com' and 'ancestry.co.uk' difficult to use at first and it was especially frustrating when there were minimal results for Rainsford's documents. This is because documents were damaged during the Blitz, and the Ministry of Defence still retains some military documents, as mentioned above. These issues made Mrs Dark a very valuable source for understanding Rainsford's lifetime.

Overall I found the initial experience of the record office very daunting as I had never been in such an environment before, but with the supportive staff I found it much easier and soon felt at ease with the procedures. Generally the West Sussex Record Office and Worthing Library staff were all extremely helpful throughout the work placement, as well as Mrs Dark.

I very much enjoyed this experience; the record office was a relaxed environment to work where I soon understood the protocol, and the diary was a pleasure to work with. I am very pleased I chose this project in particular because it really is so unique and I am satisfied with my achievements in the short time I had allocated to undertake the research.

I interviewed Mrs Dark over the telephone, which I found to be an enjoyable, relaxed experience, finding it easy to write down the information I needed. It was a pleasure to speak with her, making the diary even more personal and real. Again I am very thankful for her help in enlightening me on her father's life; I just hope she likes this project I have collaborated, and that it does him justice.

Lastly, I would like to thank Rainsford for producing this diary in the first place. It has been a wonderful experience which I feel immensely proud to have been a part of, working with such a personal part of the First World War. From Rainsford's diary we can see that he was gallant, grateful towards his comrades and respectful; overall he was undoubtedly a remarkable man.



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- ⁱ Ancestry Library: AncestryLibrary.com- England and Wales Birth Index 1837-1915
- ⁱⁱ Ancestry Library: AncestryLibrary.com- London, England, Marriages and Banns
- ⁱⁱⁱ Ancestry Library: AncestryLibrary.com- 1891 England Census
- ^{iv} Ancestry Library: AncestryLibrary.com- 1901 England Census
- ^v Telephone interview with Mrs Dark
- ^{vi} RSR AR 13904 Enlistment Book
- ^{vii} Telephone interview with Mrs Dark
- ^{viii} Ancestry Library: AncestryLibrary.com- Ireland Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1845-1958
- ^{ix} RSR AR 13904 (see above)
- ^x Form. H.- Return of Military, R.I. Constabulary or Metropolitan Police in Barracks, Irish 1911 Census.
- ^{xi} The National Archives: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/records.aspx?cat=182-rsr&cid=-1#1>
- ^{xii} RSR AR 13904 (see above)
- ^{xiii} The National Archives: (see above)
- ^{xiv} WSRO Acc 15444 RSM Rainsford Diary (WW1 2nd Bn) p.1
- ^{xv} WSRO Acc 15444 (see above) p.1
- ^{xvi} Ancestry Library: AncestryLibrary.com – British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920
- ^{xvii} RSR MS 2/67 Record of Awards and Decorations 1914-1918
- ^{xviii} The Long, Long Trail: www.1914-1918.net/grandad/themedals.htm
- ^{xix} The Long, Long Trail: (see above)
- ^{xx} The Long, Long Trail: (see above)
- ^{xxi} RSR MS 2/67 (see above)
- ^{xxii} Rm 55 ShA7: Buckman. R, *Royal Sussex Regiment Military Honours and Awards Vol 1: 1864-1920* (England: HB, 2001) p.46
- ^{xxiii} British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920 (see above)
- ^{xxiv} The Long, Long Trail: (see above)
- ^{xxv} RSR MS 2/72 Concert Programme 1915
- ^{xxvi} Battle of the Aisne: Holmes. R, Singleton. C, Jones. S, *The Oxford Companion to Military History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)
- ^{xxvii} The First Battle of the Aisne: <http://www.firstworldwar.com/atoz/racetothesea.htm>
- ^{xxviii} Battle of the Ypres: Holmes. R, Singleton. C, Jones. S, *The Oxford Companion to Military History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)
- ^{xxix} Race to the Sea: <http://www.firstworldwar.com/atoz/racetothesea.htm>
- ^{xxx} WSRO Acc 15444 (see above) p.7
- ^{xxxi} WSRO Acc 15444 (see above) p.7
- ^{xxxii} WSRO Acc 15444 (see above) p.7
- ^{xxxiii} WSRO Acc 15444 (see above) p.10
- ^{xxxiv} RSR 2/57: 2 August 1914- 12 April 1919. Typescript copy of the official War Diary of the 2nd battalion, The Royal Sussex Regiment 14 September 1914
- ^{xxxv} WSRO Acc 15444 (see above) p.8
- ^{xxxvi} RSR 2/57 (see above) 15 September 1914
- ^{xxxvii} WSRO Acc 15444 (see above) p.8
- ^{xxxviii} RSR 2/57 (see above) 7 October 1914
- ^{xxxix} RSR 2/57 (see above) YPRES 25 October 1914
- ^{xl} RSR 2/57 (see above) YPRES 25 October 1914
- ^{xli} WSRO Acc 15444 p.15
- ^{xlii} RSR 2/57 (see above) YPRES 27 October 1914
- ^{xliii} WSRO Acc 15444 p.15
- ^{xliv} WSRO Acc 15444 p.16
- ^{xliv} WSRO Acc 15444 p.17
- ^{xlvi} RSR 2/57 (see above) YPRES 29 October 1914
- ^{xlvii} WSRO Acc 15444 p.17
- ^{xlviii} WSRO Acc 15444 p.17
- ^{xlix} RSR 2/57 (see above) YPRES 29 October 1914
- ^l WSRO Acc 15444 p. 18
- ^{li} WSRO Acc 15444 p. 19
- ^{lii} WSRO Acc 15444 p. 19
- ^{liii} WSRO Acc 15444 p. 16



^{liv}The Royal Sussex Regiment:

http://www.royalsussex.org.uk/RSLHG_Regimental_history.htm

^{lv} Telephone interview with Mrs Dark

^{lvi} Telephone interview with Mrs Dark

^{lvii} RSR AR 13904 (see above)

^{lviii} Telephone interview with Mrs Dark

^{lix} Telephone interview with Mrs Dark



Transcriptions appendix.

Transcription 1 WSRO Acc 15444 p. 13:

Muster Roll Call is a very sad undertaking when you call men's names and someone answer's "gone under sir, near the haystack, I have his Identity Disc", or "had his head blown off when he was in the casualty clearing station, wounded". And such like remarks referring to those the absent one's whose parents would see them no more would be received when calling the Roll. The approximate casualties in the Bttn in that one day were officers killed. 6. Wounded. 4. Neo's [?] and men killed, wounded and missing 4.00. The larger percentage of these numbers were wounded.

Transcription 2 WSRO Acc 15444 p.13:

...all the regiments comprising the expeditionary force bear on their colour's emblem's and names which constantly remind them of glorious victories achieved by them in the past. I have the most complete confidence that those regiments, as they stand today in close proximity to the enemy, will not only uphold the magnificent tradition of former days, but will add fresh laurels to their standards. I cannot convey what I feel with regard to the conduct of the troops under my command better than by expressing my conviction that they have justified that confidence well and nobly.

(6) That confidence is everywhere endorsed by thin [?] fellow-countrymen's. and, whatever may be before the British army in France, I am sure they will continue to follow the same glorious path till final and complete victory is attained.

Sgnd. JDP Freud/I[?] Field Marshall
C.J. Chief the British Ex. Force in the Field.

Transcription 3 WSRO Acc 15444 p.15:

The Bttn marched into the town of Ypres where it was to be Billitid. It was on a Sunday and the Belgians being strictly Catholic, a fete was in progress. Young women and children were dressed in white. Flowers were strewn about the streets and it bought home to those who had seen the horrors of the retirement from Mons and its succeeding Battles. That the inhabitants of this town had not heard of the Germans sweeping advance through Germany and Belgium or their own wonderful defence of Antwerp. The fete continued throughout the day until towards evening, when the townsfolk received a sudden reminder that this country was at war with a most ruthless invader. By the arrival of an enormous shell, this represented during the latter stages of its flight, a miniature traction engine flying through the air and landed plumb in the Cathedral.

Transcription 4 WSRO Acc 15444 p. 18:

The fierce onslaught of the enemy soon began to take effect on our line and orders were received to retire. This movement was done very methodically, and considering the enormous (suggest enormous here.



Ponderous rather suggests clumsy and unwieldy) numbers of the enemy advancing against that very thin line of Klake[?] who fiercely contested to every yard of ground. It was truly a wonderful page in British history of the gallantry of the British, as the line reached the high ground. To the right of Stooge Chateau, it looked as if the whole of the British troops were retiring. As far as the eye could see were troops falling back on to Ypres. Heavy Howitzers were moving west at the...[?] ammunition, and the wagon's blocked the road in the midst of the...[?]of traffic, and along both lines of the roads across fields, and ditches, crowds of wounded came limping along as fast as they could go.

Transcription 5 WSRO Acc 15444 p.19:

By Field Marshall Sir John French G.C.B.G.C.V.O.KENE[?] Commander in Chief, British Army in the Field General Headquarters.

2 November 1914

The Field Marshall Commanding-in-Chief has watched with the deepest admiration and solitude the splendid stand made by the...[?] of His Majesty the King in this successful effort to maintain the forward position which they have won by thin[?] gallantry and steadfastness.

He believed that no other army in the world would show such tenacity, especially under the tremendous...



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