

We rose at 6.15 cleaned up and went on parade at 6.45. When I say we I mean C Company. A sergeant then marched us out and we did 15 mins running. Came back cleaned buttons clothes boots etc. and also swept floor of room which took us up to breakfast at 8.15. We then washed (no one washes before breakfast here) and paraded again at 8.45. The whole battalion then formed up in school yard and the O.C. then read us the sentence which one of the gaol birds had recd. He got 66 days detention and all pay stopped. That was for striking an N.C.O. I suppose this was done as

an example to us. Our sergeant (a brother of Dixon least he think man) then took the recruits to drill. We do all the drilling on a field a few minutes path from the school and its just like a ploughed field up to the ankles in mud. Medals from 9.0 till 12.30 with an hours Swedish at 10.30. All the newuns feel half dead when finished. Its the fields that does it. It wouldnt be so bad if it was flat but it has a pretty steep incline and when we double up and down 4 or 5 times we feel rather done up. We then come in for dinner at 1 pm. Its served out

practically the same as at the Drill Hall. Next parade at 1.45 and we had to stand and watch a Company Football Match all this afternoon at York Racecourse. Tea came after and then washing up etc. After that we are finished until 9.30 and lights out at 10.0.

TBB1/1/1/3

A two and a half page extract from a letter from Thomas Baker Brown to his father from a training camp in York, 8 December 1915.

He describes his daily duties, the punishment one of the soldiers received for striking a non-commissioned officer and watching a company football match.

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Thomas Baker Brown: The story of a First World War soldier from North Tyneside

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Key words:

“C” Company – a company was a group of about 200 soldiers, commanded by a Major or Captain. They were usually given a letter A-D, or W-Z or a number 1-4 as there were 4 companies in a Battalion.

Sergeant – an army officer who helped a Lieutenant or Second Lieutenant.

Battalion - a large group of about 1000 foot soldiers (infantry).

O.C.- short for Officer Commanding – the O.C. is person in charge of a company of soldiers.

Gaol bird – a criminal who has been in gaol (jail) or prison.

N.C.O. – a Non-Commissioned -Officer (a lower-ranking officer such as a sergeant).

Recruits – people who have recently joined the army are not yet fully trained.

Drill – practising and following orders about how to march and use weapons.

Swedish – a form of physical training that involved gymnastics style exercises including bending and stretching

Drill Hall – a building where soldiers practice and perform drill.

Questions:

What did Thomas have to do before he had his breakfast at the training camp?

Why does Thomas think they were all told about the punishment given to one of the recruits who had hit one of the officers?

Why were all the recruits really tired after drill?

Why do you think new recruits were made to watch and play football?