The Somerset Light Infantry Prince Albert 1914-1919: A Glorious Tale of Heroism, Sacrifice, and Honorable Service

The History of the Somerset Light Infantry Prince Albert during the years of 1914 to 1919 is one that encapsulates the true spirit of bravery, sacrifice, and honor. Serving their country during the Great War, the soldiers of this regiment fought valiantly, enduring unimaginable hardships and displaying extraordinary courage on countless battlefields. This article delves deep into the glorious history of the Somerset Light Infantry Prince Albert, shedding light on their experiences, triumphs, and contributions during the tumultuous years of World War I.

The Somerset Light Infantry Prince Albert: A Brief Background

The Somerset Light Infantry, also known as the Prince Albert's Somerset Light Infantry, traces its origins back to the year 1685. Initially raised to suppress the Monmouth Rebellion in 1685, the regiment steadily grew in prominence and earned recognition for its exceptional service. Over the years, the soldiers of the Somerset Light Infantry Prince Albert proved their mettle in various conflicts and campaigns, cementing their reputation as valiant warriors.

With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the Somerset Light Infantry Prince Albert found themselves thrust into the heart of the conflict. From the trenches of the Western Front to the scorching deserts of Mesopotamia, these brave soldiers confronted the horrors of war head-on, displaying unwavering determination and resilience in the face of adversity.

HISTORY OF THE SOMERSET LIGHT INFANTRY (PRINCE ALBERT'S) 1914-1919 ((1914-1918))



by Everard Wyrall(Kindle Edition)

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Language	: English	
File size	: 12225 KB	
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled	
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Enhanced types	etting: Enabled	
Word Wise	: Enabled	
Print length	: 510 pages	



In the Trenches: Battling the Great War

The trenches of the Western Front became the epicenter of the conflict, where the Somerset Light Infantry Prince Albert fought alongside their comrades-inarms. Day after day, they endured the excruciating conditions, including constant shelling, mud-soaked trenches, and the ever-lurking threat of enemy attacks.

One of the most significant battles the regiment participated in during World War I was the Battle of the Somme in 1916. In this brutal battle, the Somerset Light Infantry Prince Albert faced unimaginable carnage as they fought to gain ground. Despite heavy casualties, their unwavering determination and valor proved pivotal in achieving critical objectives. The regiment's contributions during the Battle of the Somme earned them widespread recognition for their military prowess and dedication.

Following their success in the Battle of the Somme, the regiment was deployed to various other battlefields, including the Battle of Passchendaele in 1917 and the Spring Offensive in 1918. In each engagement, the Somerset Light Infantry Prince Albert showcased their exceptional skills, unwavering bravery, and unparalleled commitment to their cause.

The Great War's Forgotten Heroes: Mesopotamian Campaign

While the Western Front dominated much of the war's narrative, the Somerset Light Infantry Prince Albert fought on a different front, far away from the European theater of operations. In the scorching deserts of Mesopotamia, now modern-day Iraq, they played a crucial role in the British campaign against the Ottoman Empire.

The regiment contributed significantly to securing vital objectives, including the capture of Kut al Amara in 1917. The following year, they successfully fought off fierce Turkish counterattacks, honoring the lives lost by holding their ground and repelling the enemy forces. The soldiers of the Somerset Light Infantry Prince Albert endured extreme heat, scarcity of resources, and the challenges of a vastly different landscape, all while maintaining their unwavering commitment to their mission.

The Aftermath of the Great War and Legacy

As the Great War drew to a close in 1918, the Somerset Light Infantry Prince Albert had left an indelible mark on the history of warfare. The regiment had suffered immense losses, with countless soldiers paying the ultimate price for their service. Their sacrifices, bravery, and noble pursuit of peace left an enduring legacy that resonates to this day.

Following the end of World War I, the regiment continued to serve with distinction in various conflicts around the world, including the Second World War. For their exemplary service, the Somerset Light Infantry Prince Albert received numerous accolades, including the Victoria Cross, the highest honor bestowed upon extraordinary acts of valor. Today, the memory of the Somerset Light Infantry Prince Albert is honored through memorials, plaques, and the remembrance of their unparalleled dedication to their country. Their story serves as a testament to the bravery, selflessness, and unwavering resolve of the soldiers who fought during World War I.

The History of the Somerset Light Infantry Prince Albert from 1914 to 1919 stands as a stark reminder of the sacrifices made by countless soldiers during World War I. Their heroism, resilience, and unwavering commitment to their cause are etched into the annals of history. It is crucial that their bravery and sacrifice never be forgotten, ensuring that future generations recognize their contributions to shaping the world we live in today.



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On the outbreak of war the Somerset Light Infantry (Som LI) consisted of two Regular, one Special Reserve (3rd) and two Territorial battalions (4th and 5th). During the course of the war the two Territorial battalions each formed a second and third line battalion (2/4th, 3/4th, 2/5th and 3/5th), and in addition four Service

battalions (Kitchener) were raised, 6th to 9th, two Home Service battalions, 10th and 13th, and two more Territorial battalions, 11th and 12th. Finally a Garrison battalion was formed and sent to India in February 1917. Other Som LI battalions served on the Western Front, in Mesopotamia, India and Palestine; deaths totalled 4,760, of whom 269 were officers, and one VC was won (Pte T.H Sage, 8th Battalion). The 2nd Som LI was stationed in India throughout the war. In a footnote on page 1 of this history is a comment to the effect that the 2nd Battalion was unfortunately (my italics) one of these; in hindsight there are those who might think they were very lucky, their deaths totalled 43 compared with 1,315 of the 1st Battalion.

The 1st Battalion was in Colchester, part of 11th Brigade, 4th Division which arrived in France on 22 August 1914, in time to fight in the battle of Le Cateau during the retreat from Mons. It remained on the Western Front in that brigade and division throughout the war. 1/4th saw action in Mesopotamia, 2/4th joined 34th Division in France in July 1918, becoming divisional pioneer battalion. 1/5th went first to India but in May1917 it went to Palestine where it became part of the newly formed 75th Division. 2/5th went to India and stayed there, 6th, 7th and 8th Service Battalions all served on the Western front, the 9th became a Reserve battalion and remained in the UK along with the two Home Service battalions. The 11th also went to France, in May 1918, to the 59th Division while the 12th Battalion was converted from a yeomanry regiment (W Somerset) to infantry in Egypt in January 1917, part of 74th Division, with which it went to France in May 1918.

Herman Melville BARTLEBY & BENITO CERENO



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