

The King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment



The Great War 1914 - 1919



The 1st Battalion

The 1st Battalion was stationed at Dover when war broke out and it was mobilised on the 4th August 1914. The unit was rapidly made up to full strength with reservists who had been 'recalled to the colours' at the Depot in Lancaster. On the 22nd August they left for France and arrived in Boulogne the next day. Within three days the 1st Battalion was in action. The battalion joined the 12th Infantry Brigade and fought in the 4th

Division for most of the war. The battalion served on the Western Front in France and Belgium until the end of the war in 1918.

A total of 67 officers and 1,332 other ranks of the 1st Battalion were killed in action on the Western Front.

In addition to regular spells in the trenches, the 1st Battalion was involved in the following actions:

1914 - 1916

The Battle of Le Cateau (26th August 1914)

During the retreat from Mons the British turned and fought the German Army. This enabled the British to escape. The 1st King's Own suffered 400 casualties.

The Battles of the Marne and the Aisne (7th-15th September 1914)

During these two battles the battalion played its part in firstly stopping the German Army and then forcing it into retreat.

The 1st Battle of Ypres (19th October-22nd November 1914)

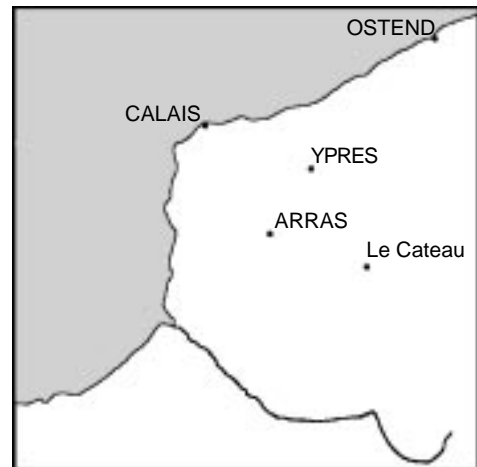
The men helped to stop the German attacks south of Ypres, around Ploegsteert.

The 2nd Battle of Ypres (22nd April-25th May 1915)

On 2nd May the battalion was gassed and 'every man was affected'. Again on 24th May they were gassed, the gas could be heard hissing from its cylinders in the German trenches.

The Battle of the Somme (1st July-16th November 1916)

On the 1st July the 1st King's Own took part in the failed attack on Serre. Their next attacks were made in October on Spectrum Trench. It was not until the 21st October, on a very cold day, that the battalion finally captured Spectrum trench.



The first gas helmets issued to the regiment, June 1915

1917 - 1918

The Battle of Arras (9th April-4th May 1917)

The 1st King's Own 'went over the top' three times during this battle. On the 11th they 'lost their barrage' and were stopped by German gunfire.

The 3rd Battle of Ypres (31st July-10th November 1917)

On both the 9th and 12th October the battalion made successful attacks. At Poelcappelle an advance of 700 yards was made.

The first Battle of Arras, 1918 (28th March 1918)

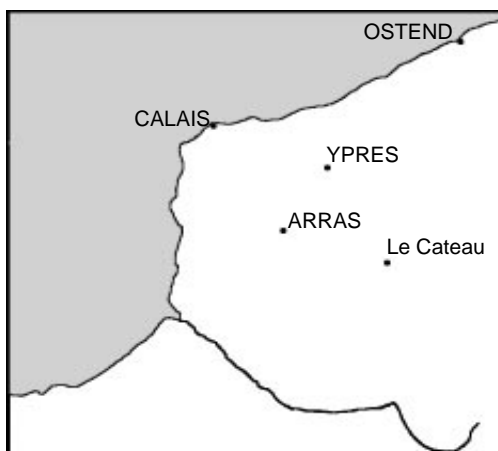
During the German March offensive of 1918, the 1st King's Own played a part in inflicting a decisive defeat on the German Army.

The Battle of the Drocourt-Queant Line (2nd-3rd September 1918)

Aided by only 50 tanks and against fierce opposition, Canadian and British troops stormed through this part of the 'Hindenburg Line'.

The Battle of Valenciennes (1st-2nd November 1918)

The men of the battalion seized the village of Presseau in house to house fighting against stubborn resistance.



Lieutenant-Colonel A. M. Dykes, who was killed whilst commanding the 1st Battalion at Haucourt near Le Cateau on 26 August 1914, within four days of arriving in France. The Battalion was caught in the open on a forward slope, with arms piled, by artillery and heavy machine-gun fire and suffered over 400 casualties. Lt-Col Dykes has no known grave and is commemorated on the La Ferte Memorial.



A group from A Company, 1st battalion, in their front line trench on Hawthorne Ridge near Beaumont Hamel, Somme, on 30 August 1915. The Battalion attacked the German front line in this area on 1 July 1916. Ten officers including Major Bromilow, the Commanding Officer, were killed and twelve wounded. There were 387 other ranks casualties out of the 507 who went over the top.