



Above: 31 Division Sports Day on October 21st, 1915. Here the 'Pals' cross-country run team, mostly Burnley Lad's Club members, line up for the start. Far right: A card posted to Miss Ada Woods from 'Will' (surname unknown) November 1915.

in,' had everyone on parade. Col. Rickman was a stickler for discipline and transgressors were 'for it.' Specialists marched off to their own jobs and the Bandsmen became stretcher-bearers. The Sanitary Squad enjoyed their buckets and spades. The Water-Cart team — what they did nobody really knew and were best left alone with their tanks of water and tins of chloride of lime. The Lewis-gunners and signallers were rather high-brow — they were 'brainworkers' and dignity was the acquisition. In contrast were we burly Bombers, housed in two separate huts, whether for our own welfare or the peace of mind of the rest is not known. The Police under 'Ow'd Nick' were near the general factotums, the Pioneers. Hidden away in nooks and crannies were the Officers servants, Mess waiters, Grooms, Cobblers, Tailors, Orderly Room staff and sometimes Detention men and Prisoners. Dinner was usually a big meal, then training until tea at five. Then the evening off unless there were manoeuvres or guard duty."

Although the Battalion Concert Party and Glee Club entertained in the Y.M.C.A., and the Regimental Band gave regular concerts, inter-Battalion and inter-Brigade sporting rivalries were still encouraged. The tempo of training contrasted greatly with anything before. Manoeuvres and field exercises came before all else as 31 Division made its final preparations for active service in the last four months of 1915.

New, tough, instructors fresh from the trenches of France appeared and training became more relevant to battle conditions. Crowded days were spent digging trenches and laying

barbed wire. The bombers practised clearing 'enemy' trenches with the new Mills bomb. Lewis gunners learned just how many different ways a Lewis gun could jam in action (reputed to be twenty seven). Battalion, Brigade and Divisional manoeuvres tested the organisational skills of transport, cook-house and signal sections. Ten days training at Hurdcott contrasted completely with the same period at Rugeley (see Appendix 2 (b)). 'Bloody miles from anywhere' or not, after a strenuous day in the field Hurdcott felt like home to everyone.

A Soldier's Letter to his SWEETHEART.

From At FOVANT.



MIZPAH.

"May the LORD watch between thee and me when we are absent one from another"

Sweetheart, when the day's work is over.
And from drilling I am free;
Sitting alone on the hillside,
My thoughts are ALL of thee.
I'm not much good with a pen, dear,
For the gun is now my line;
So I send you Fond Love by this Postcard,
As I thought perhaps you might pine.
When Old England's Cry for soldiers,
Sounded through our dear homeland;
'Twas Duty's Call—and I obeyed it,
I knew that you would understand.
As I sit here fondly dreaming,
I picture your sweet dear face;
Helping, cheering on the weary,
Round about the dear old place.
Our "Boys" are doing well, dear,
And it's "rumoured" we're soon to go;
With your sweet face to cheer me.