

# **RECOLLECTIONS OF THE (GREAT) WAR**

## **By Captain H King, MC and Bar**

### **Seaforth Highlanders**

#### **Fruitless attempts to obtain a Commission**

At the outbreak of war, I was at Abington, where I was with Jas Thornborn of Maidencots, learning the management of a farm. But during the month of August, I returned home to Kilwinning for the purpose of ascertaining if it were possible to obtain a commission in our Local Territorial Battalion of the RSF. But, on making enquiries, I found that there were, at the moment, no vacancies. Nor was I able to obtain a commission in any of the Glasgow battalions, since all had a waiting list.

As there appeared to be no immediate prospect of obtaining a commission, and as I did not wish to join the ranks so long as any chance remained of obtaining a commission, I returned to Abington to await events.

Meanwhile, having written to the Adjutant of the RSF applying for a commission, I had received a reply stating that my name had been placed on the waiting list.

#### **The Inns of Court Officers Training Corps**

While at Abington I received information regarding the Inns of Court Officers Training Corps. Here was an opportunity of undergoing valuable training that would be of use when my turn came to join the RSF. Accordingly I wrote to the headquarters of the ICOTCI in London for Particulars and received various forms to fill up. It was necessary to obtain the signature of minister and JP's as to character etc.

I therefore left Abington for the second time, and returned to Kilwinning prior to proceeding to London.

#### **With the ICOTCI**

By the time it was October, I arrived in London, and was interviewed, medically examined and attested at the London headquarters of ICOTCI. I received my uniform and was ordered to parade for the first time next morning.

In all, I remained about one month at the London depot of ICOTCI during which time I was put through various preliminary training in squad drill, musketry, PT etc and attended various lectures.

While there, I was interviewed, along with several others, by Capt PI Warner with a view to obtaining an immediate commission. But I heard nothing more of this.

At the end of the month, I went to Berkhamsted, where the main body of the ICOTCI were training. I was posted to D Coy, which was under Capt Rufus Isaacs, son of the Lord Chief Justice. I was very fortunate in obtaining one of the best billets, at the house of Mrs Pakenham.

The training undergone here was very strenuous – more so than any I subsequently experienced. A normal day's programme was as follows:

7.00-7.30	PT
8.00	Breakfast
9.00-12.30	Parades, lectures etc
1.00	Lunch
2.00-4.00	Parades
4.30	Tea
6.00-7.00	Lecture
8.00	Dinner

Twice a week we had field days, lasting from 9am to 4pm, and once a week we had night operations. There was also a guard, and our turn came round about once a fortnight. We messed in a large shed in a timber yard. The food was quiet good, but plain. We certainly were not starved. Moreover, any amount of extras could be obtained from the canteen. On the whole we quite enjoyed ourselves at Berkamsted, though we had very little time to ourselves.

In January, I obtained leave, and while home, I contracted tonsillitis and obtained an extension of three weeks.

Shortly after I had returned to Berkhamsted, the Adjutant of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn Seaforth Highlanders arrived to interview any Scotsmen who wished to take a commission in the Seaforths. I applied, was interviewed, and ordered, along with two others, Graham and Mackenzie, to proceed to Cromarty. We were given a week in which to procure our kit.