

## Emile Audrain's early Army days (1911-1914)

**Introduction:** It is generally accepted today that the Hampshire Regiment (and its successor regiments) is recognised as Jersey's 'county regiment'. There is an argument to support this given that the survivors of the Jersey Overseas Company were transferred to the Hampshires from the Royal Irish Rifles at the beginning of 1918, and then in 1939, a contingent of Jersey's Militia forming part of that Regiment's 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

However, data appears to indicate that, certainly in the years leading up to the Great War, there was a greater number of men who had left the Island to join the Dorsetshire Regiment as opposed to the Hampshire Regiment. One such young man was Emile Alexandre Audrain who had been born in St Helier on the 28<sup>th</sup> March, 1894, the third child of Pierre Marie Audrain and his wife Amelia Valerie du Feu. We do find him living with his parents in Dorset Street in 1901, and in 1911 at 7 Providence Street in St Helier with his now widowed father.

**Depot Days:** But what of his military service record? Virtually nothing in terms of his service papers is available on Ancestry and Find My Past, and it is likely that either, they were part of the 'burnt' records, or, since he served beyond the Great War, they may be retained by the Army Personnel Centre in Glasgow. However, there is some help at hand with the photograph below.



It shows Emile (with the red cross on his chest!) with his fellow Jerseyman, Henry Foard Werry, with the badges of the Dorsetshire Regiment clearly visible on the caps and collars. As to their regimental numbers, Henry had been allotted 9219, Emile 9220. Henry's record has survived, and it is probably safe to assume that it can be also used as a template for Emile's early service for part of the time. Both young men attested at the end of August, 1911, and a week later would take the mail-boat service from Jersey to Weymouth.

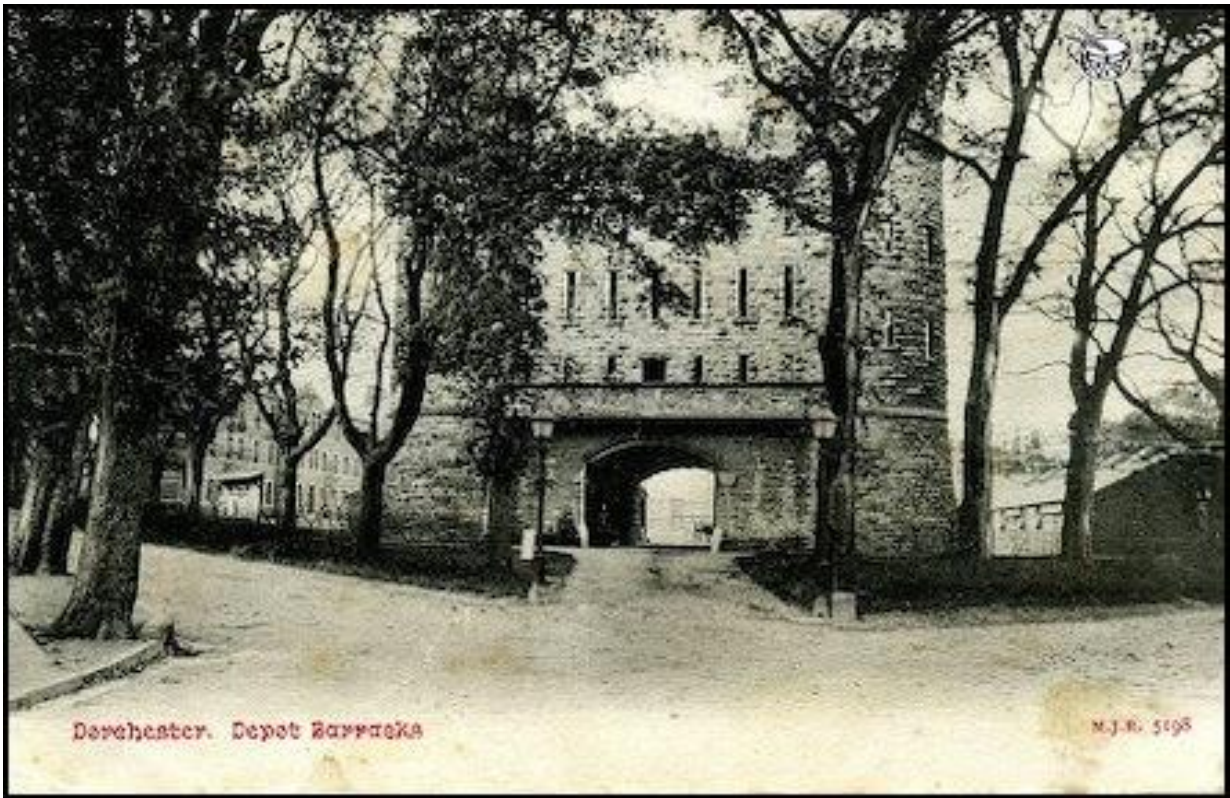
A mere few hours after docking they would enter the imposing gates of the Dorsetshire Regiment's Depot at Dorchester.

The Depot (on the next page) would be the men's home for the next three months where they would be issued with bedding, uniforms and equipment. Long hours of drill, training and cleaning would be the order of the day, save on Sundays when they would just attend Church Parade having cleaned their uniforms, and if they were allowed, to go walking out in Dorchester.

**Drafted Out:** On the 7<sup>th</sup> December, 1911 they, along with others of their intake, would be posted out to the Dorsetshire Regiment's 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, then based at Blackdown Camp in Hampshire. It is probably at this stage that Emile applied to become a Drummer. In January, 1913, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion moved to Belfast, where they would be found at the outset of the Great War.

However, before that momentous event, Henry and Emile would go their separate ways.

As a general principle, infantry Regiments each had two Battalions, one as the 'Home' Battalion, the other as the 'Overseas' Battalion. The requirement was for the 'Overseas' Battalion to be kept up to its manpower establishment, whilst the 'Home' Battalion was responsible for providing the annual drafts to replace those men overseas who were reaching the end of their service. Men, who had completed their service with the colours and were now on the reserve, would be recalled to bring the 'Home' Battalion up to its manpower establishment in times of emergency.



**The Dorsetshire Regimental Depot at Dorchester c.1900  
(Today, The Keep is the home of the excellent Regimental Museum)**

Thus, Henry found himself on the draft being sent to the Regiment's 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion that was stationed in Poona, India on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 1913. Sadly, he would later die of malaria having been taken Prisoner of War following the Siege of Kut in 1916.



One might think that Emile had avoided Henry's fate by joining the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion's Corps of Drums, pictured above, along with Emile who is second from the right (One presumes that the three in the centre were kneeling or seated, and not that short!). But that can never be foreseen and in any

case, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, and Emile, would be very much in the thick of it out in France, the year following Henry's departure for sunnier climes.

**Mobilisation:** War Diaries do not normally go into great detail concerning the most junior of soldiers, at least, not unless something out of the ordinary had occurred, such as the award of a medal. However, they can give an indication of where a man might have been whilst he had been serving with a Battalion. But, it is not foolproof, and of course, had an individual been wounded and was moved backwards along the chain of medical facilities for treatment, no Battalion could account for a man's location at any given time. Thus, although much of Emile's story henceforth is War Diary based, Emile kept a diary and would also buy postcards!

The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Dorsetshire Regiment received the order at 5.39 p.m. on the 4<sup>th</sup> August, 1914 that they were to mobilise the following day.

The next ten days proved to be hectic for the Battalion. As early as 7.30 a.m. on the 6<sup>th</sup> August, just over a 100 Officers and Other Ranks arrived in Belfast from Dorchester to help bring the strength to its wartime establishment, the 7<sup>th</sup> saw another 440 men to be followed on the 8<sup>th</sup> with a further 60 Regulars and Reservists. The CO could report that his Battalion was up to its establishment to the next higher formation in the chain of command, HQ, 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade, on the 9<sup>th</sup> August, with some 200 recruits and men medically unfit to go overseas to remain behind. Meanwhile medical examinations were carried out, route marches, training and field firing exercises were also conducted, whilst kit in the shape of the men's spare khaki uniform and pair of boots was withdrawn in accordance with War Office instructions. In fairness, the War Office would compensate the men subsequently. The Battalion's last full day in Belfast, the 13<sup>th</sup> August, would see it attending a Divine Service in the city's Cathedral.

All in all, this period would have been one of confusion, orders and counter-orders, punctuated by equal measures of frustration and excitement, and a feeling that this was what joining the Army had all been about. It would be difficult to say exactly what Emile was up to at this particular time, but as a very junior Drummer, he would have been caught up in the general hub-bub of a Battalion suddenly on the move to war.

**Deployment:** On the 14<sup>th</sup> August, 1914 the Battalion would embark at Belfast on board the SS Antony (a Booth's Line ship that would be sunk in March, 1917 with the loss of 55 lives). The Battalion's transport would be loaded first starting at 8.00 a.m., a task hindered somewhat by the fact that only one crane and two horse cradles were available. The men followed at 1.30 p.m, and the ship was able to set sail at 3.25 p.m.



A smooth passage followed, with much of the time spent on cleaning and inspecting weapons and personal kit, lectures, and grabbing as much rest as possible whilst the going was good.

Docking at Le Havre at 4.00 p.m. two days later, disembarkation was the reverse process, and with some of the same problems experienced at Belfast, not least the single crane, insufficiently strong enough to take the heavy wagons!

By 8.00 p.m. the Battalion had formed up and marched off to the Rest Camp which was reached two hours later. The transport would follow that evening, but then being hindered by another Battalion's movements, would not show until the following afternoon!

The following evening, the Dorsetshire Regiment's 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division commanded by Major-General Sir Charles Fergusson, boarded railway wagons at Le Havre and journeyed overnight via Rouen, and a cup of coffee at 4.30 a.m., to Le Cateau. From there, the entire Battalion marched to Ors, arriving there at 5.50 p.m. on the 18<sup>th</sup>, where they were to be billeted. Picquets were now mounted at key points, given the possibility of German cavalry units roaming the surrounding French countryside.

The march to war now seemed leisurely with the Battalion enjoying their billets in Ors for the next few days, but, at 03.30 a.m. on the 21<sup>st</sup> August, it marched out in the general direction of the enemy, covering 15 miles to reach Gommegnies and another night in billets. This was to be the start of many days of foot-slogging for the Battalion, but before leaving Ors however, the drums and other instruments would now be left in storage, thereby lightening the drummers' load.

**Enemy Encounters:** Further foot-slogging followed the next day, with Battalion crossing into Belgium and reaching their billets at Dour, which lay about 10 miles to the south-west of Mons. At midday on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August, the Battalion was ordered to send two companies to dig in at Wasmes. Later, advised that 3<sup>rd</sup> Division were withdrawing from Mons, the Battalion, with the other three Battalions of 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade were to take up a blocking position that allowed for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division to pass through. Then at about 5.10 pm., the Germans started shelling and about twenty minutes later, German scouting parties were spotted about 1000 yards in front of Dorsetshires' positions. For Emile, and many of his fellow soldiers, this was their first taste of modern warfare, although there were no casualties on this day.

That all changed on the 24<sup>th</sup>, with the Battalion now more heavily engaged in a fighting withdrawal, and in part were losing contact with the other Battalions on other side, while the Dorsetshires' themselves still had their companies spread out. The War Diary notes that the First Line Transport was ambushed, yet thanks to the Transport Officer, a Lt Margetts who made good use of his revolver although wounded in the shoulder, all carts were saved except for an ammunition cart. The withdrawal that day, which saw the Battalion go through Blaugies and on to Saint Waast Lez Bavay where they bivouacked the night, was at a cost of 134 casualties to the Battalion, with 12 men being killed.

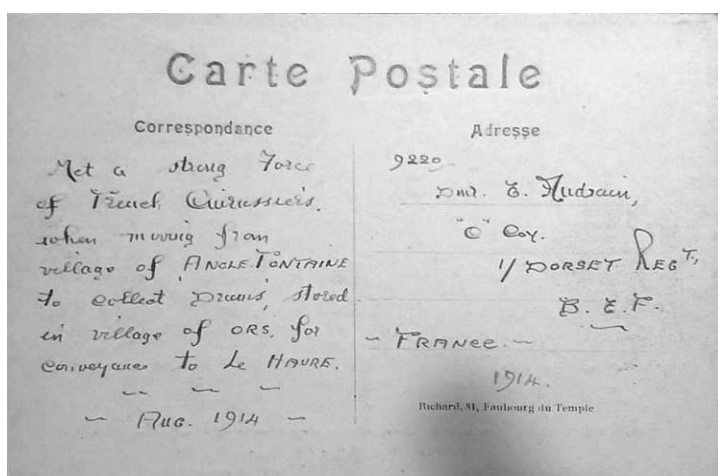
Emile Audrain was keeping his diary, and for that day he noted some of the events:

- *The Battalion came into action at 3.15 a.m. with murderous artillery fire seeing the trenches being shelled.*
- *The village was set on fire and a temporary hospital collapsed causing the wounded to be evacuated.*
- *At noon the Battalion received orders for an immediate general retirement.*
- *The Battalion's machine guns put up a deadly fire, and this was mentioned in despatches.*
- *The Transport was heavily shelled during a temporary halt, and German cavalry appeared.*
- *Lt Margetts was wounded and a Sgt Kelly was killed.*
- *Loss of an ammunition cart and a supply wagon containing the day's rations.*
- *15<sup>th</sup> Brigade's Commander, General Count Gleichen leads his Brigade away from a village to avoid encirclement.*
- *Total casualties were about 150 killed, wounded and missing.*

There is a reasonable degree of correlation between the two accounts, however it is unclear as to how contemporaneous Emile's account was, given the reference to the machine guns' 'mention in despatches'.

**A Musical Interlude:** At 2.00 a.m. on the 25<sup>th</sup>, the Battalion again set out on its retirement, via Bavay (Bavai), and along the old Roman road (today's D932) that runs alongside the Fôret de Mormal, to Le Cateau. Twelve hours later they reached Troisvilles, where they were to bivouac for another night. It was during this march that Emile, surely with a few of his fellow Drummers, was sent off on an errand, for his diary entry on that day notes:

*Sent at 12.00 p.m. by Lieutenant-Colonel LJ Bols, CO of the Battalion to Ors to fetch drums, flutes, etc which had been left there on the advance, and to have them conveyed as far back as Le Cateau where I was to meet the Battalion.*



*Met a strong force of French Cuirassiers when moving from village of ANGLEFONTAINE [sic] to collect 'Drums' stored in the village of ORS for conveyance to LE HAVRE.*

The diary entry can be complemented by the postcard above indicating that Emile parted from the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion at Englefontaine (the correct spelling of the village's name) and headed off to Ors. Whilst the card and the details on the reverse are not contemporaneous, meeting 'a strong force of French Cuirassiers' would have been most likely, given that General Sordet's French Cavalry Corps was in the area and would also be involved in the Battle of Le Cateau the following day.

That Emile was diverted to collect the drums in such a manner may seem odd, given that many Battalions were streaming back before the advancing Germans. But these drums represented a

Regiment's prestige in the absence of the 'Colours'. Yet, a comparatively junior soldier would have required a written order from the CO to help him discharge his task in the general situation that existed. Emile successfully discharged his task in collecting the drums, for his diary entry continues:

*Rapid advance of the enemy. Arrived at Le Cateau about 3.00 p.m. on Hospital Train. No signs of the Battalion so took drums as far as Busigny, proceeded to Engineers HQ to report and advised to take drums back to St Quentin, arriving there about 10.30 p.m.*

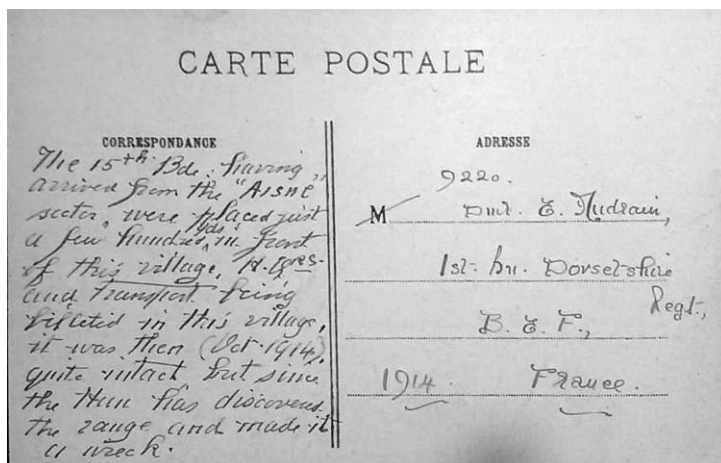
By the time that Emile had arrived at Le Cateau, the Battalion was in position in Troisvilles, 3-4 miles to the west, and such was the confusion, no one at Le Cateau was in a position to know where the Battalion was. Given that the distance between Le Cateau and St Quentin is about 21 miles, Emile and the others, now encumbered with their instruments must have marched at a rather brisk pace. But then the enemy were advancing rapidly behind them, or so it was thought!

**Retirement:** Meanwhile, the next day would see the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion engaged in the Battle of Le Cateau where two German Divisions would attack the 5<sup>th</sup> Division deployed to the west of the town. The Dorsetshires were not greatly pressed, and would commence retirement, under fire, from about 4.20 p.m and would be billeted at Genève, albeit uncomfortably, given that their supplies had not reached them. Their casualties for the 26<sup>th</sup> August were mercifully light with 35 men wounded or missing. Then the following morning at 3.00 a.m., the Battalion set out for Ollezy, first passing through Estrees and Bellenglise, before stopping at St Quentin at 1.00 p.m. for an hour's break where some food could be had. It had departed well before the incident widely known as the 'Surrender at St Quentin' had arisen.

St Quentin was a magnet for much of the British Expeditionary Force. Some units had arrived in reasonably good order whilst other units were turning up in dribs and drabs. Many footsore soldiers just arrived on their own. One can assume that Emile and the others were now reunited with the Battalion, although what eventually happened to the drums is, at present, unclear.

Largely untroubled by the Germans, the Battalion would now continue with its retirement until the 5<sup>th</sup> September, 1914 when it was billeted in a chateau's stables at Gagny in the eastern suburbs of Paris. There it would receive its first reinforcements of ninety men, and the welcome orders that at last, after ten days of marching away from contact with the enemy, it would be resuming the offensive on the following day at 5.00 a.m. Duly setting out at that time on the 6<sup>th</sup>, that and the next two days would see the Battalion move eastwards until it reached its billets at Charnesseuil at around 6.30 p.m. on the 8<sup>th</sup> September. Whilst heavy firing had been heard to the Battalion's left and right for those three days, it had not been disturbed by the Germans, save for a brief encounter with a patrol that had fired a few desultory shots before quickly leaving the scene.

**About Turn:** Continuing its advance, the Battalion would cross the Marne on the 9<sup>th</sup>, and, when attempting to take a Battery position, would suffer a further 46 casualties, 9 of whom were killed or later died of their wounds. However, the next few days they continued with the indications of a hurried departure having been made by the Germans who were very conspicuous by their absence. Crossing the Aisne by raft in the evening of the 12<sup>th</sup> September, the Battalion, having taken part in the Battle of the Marne would now continue forward to take part in the Battle of the Aisne. But by this time, the Germans having hold of the higher ground, had dug in, and within a few days from there, a continuous line of trenches would spread northwards and south. During the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> September, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion took 47 casualties, two of whom were killed, while a further four were reported missing. Then, for three weeks from the 16<sup>th</sup> September, when the Dorsetshires left the Aisne sector, no casualties were reported, not even of men who were being hospitalised for ailments. During this period, the Battalion shuttled in and out of the trenches, stayed in its billets, prepared and repaired the defences and kept equipment clean.



The 15<sup>th</sup> Bde, having arrived from the 'Aisne' sector, were placed just a few hundred yards in front of this village, HQrs and Transport being billeted in this village, it was then (Oct 1914) quite intact but since, the Hun has discovered the range and made it a wreck.

As implied in Emile's postcard above, the Dorsetshires left the Aisne Sector for the village of Cuinchy, this taking place on the 7<sup>th</sup> October. The Battalion went via Compiègne, where they boarded a train that was to take them to Abbeville via Amiens. Some confusion reigned when on reaching their destination, the Railway Transport Officer ordered them back down the line to Pont Remy, only to be ordered forward again by another RTO to what was the correct destination. However, this proved impossible, and so everyone got off at Pont Remy, an exercise completed at around 2.00 a.m. on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**La Bassée:** The Battalion set off about an hour later and spent that, and the next three days, on the march save for one stretch when the Battalion boarded London omnibuses that had been provided to carry them part of the way. At 7.00 p.m. on the 11<sup>th</sup> October, the Battalion reached that night's billets in a Béthune street.

The following is a transcript of the War Diary for the 12<sup>th</sup> October. (It originally featured in an article 'William Stephens – An Old Contemptible at 18' from CIGWSG Journal 29).

*'At ? am. Bn marched with 15<sup>th</sup> Bde via Gorre towards Festubert. Bn halted on Rue de Béthune owing to shell fire and then moved south to Canal, thence along Canal towpath to Pont Fixé 'A' and 'D' Coys were ordered to occupy positions south & north of the bridge, 'A' Coy being on the*

south and 'D' Coy on the north. One machine gun was placed on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of a big unfinished factory just north of the canal bank.

There was no immediate German advance but the machine gun in the factory opened on Germans debouching from brickfields near 'H' of Cuinchy. The German firing line was checked by this fire. Later a movement of Germans was detected just south of 'U' of Guinchy but their advance presented a good target to the machine gun and the Germans fell back.

At 4 pm (about). Objective: La Bassée. General advance of Dorsets ordered in conjunction with French on right and 1/Bedford Regt on the left, 'A' Coy moving on south bank of the canal and 'D' Coy on the north bank forming the firing line, 'B' and 'C' Coys being in reserve. The machine gun was ordered to support the attack.

'A' Coy moved up the south bank under cover of high bank and did not come under fire from Cuinchy (although held by the enemy) and subsequently inflicted severe loss on Germans north of Cuinchy. Meanwhile, 'A' Coy advancing from the factory towards a small farm about 200 yards east of it came under heavy fire from crossfire from snipers on the high canal bank (south side) and suffered casualties. Major Roper was killed at this farm about 4.30 pm.

Attack had made excellent progress and a line had been established from La Bassée Canal to large farm north of Givenchy.

Dispositions for night: 'B' and 'C' Coys entrenched on rise upon which above-mentioned farm stood. 'A' Coy withdrawn to Pont Fixé and with 'D' Coy and Bn HdQrs billeted there.

Casualties: 11 Killed, 30 Wounded, 2 Missing.'

(As an aside, it is of interest to note that some locations were referred to by giving a bearing from a letter in a village name (e.g. 'detected just south of 'U' of Guinchy'). The maps at this time were French and largely of the Napoleonic period. Later, the maps produced by the British would introduce a grid referencing system similar to the one that is used on today's Ordnance Survey maps.)

The attack was to continue the following day, and the War Diary recorded the events as transcribed below:

05.30 a.m. In accordance with Bde orders, Bn moved at 5.30 a.m. as follows: Firing Line 'B' and 'C' Coy, Support 'D' Coy, Reserve 'A' Coy. The machine gun was in position in house on north bank of canal near I of Pont Fixe. Advance was slow in order to give units on right and left time to get up in line.

07.20 a.m. Report to Bde that Bn had reached line 200 yds east of track running south from E of Givenchy and that advance had been checked to enable Bns on right and left to come up into line. Also that there appeared to be little opposition in front. Situation remained the same until 09.00 a.m.: the village of Cuinchy on south bank of canal being not cleared of the enemy.

09.10 a.m. OC Dorsets reported situation to Bde stating Bn position was the same as reported at 07.20 a.m.

11.20 a.m. Enemy shelled Bn very heavily from north easterly direction.

12.00 noon Hostile machine gun opened heavily enfilade fire at short range on our right flank near canal bank. 'B' Coy commenced to withdraw as their right was exposed.



12.30 p.m. OC Dorsets reported situation and asked for artillery support. Enemy's artillery and machine gun fire increased in volume and firing line gradually fell back on trenches occupied by support.

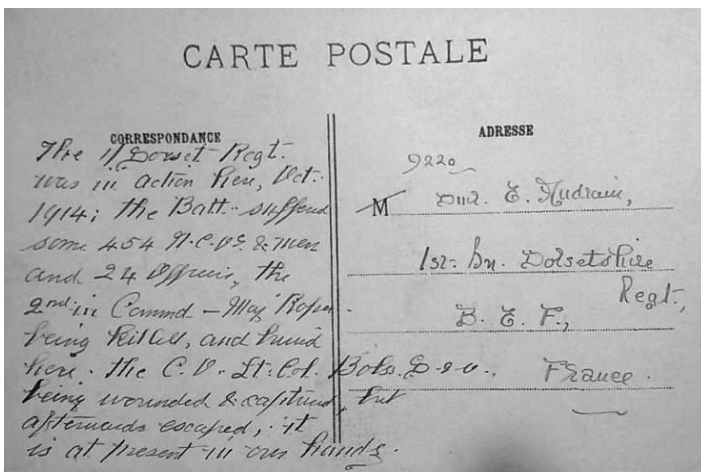
12.45 p.m. Major Saunders sent to dispose reserve company and to inform artillery commander of situation.

01.45 p.m. Germans advanced from east end of Givenchy, some carrying lances. About 250 suddenly appeared from the left rear of 'C' Coy. These were mistaken for French cavalry and fire was not opened on them. About a Battalion appeared 900yds from left of 'C' Coy. As soon as it was seen that these were Germans, fire was opened on them. The Germans advanced holding up their either one or two hands. This was taken as a sign of surrender and some men left the trench to go towards the Germans who then closed in rapidly, driving in our men and enfilading the trench. The position of remaining lines now became untenable. Lt-Col Bols and Lt and Adjt Pitt remained to the last in the trench in which they had been all day. Lt-Col Bols was severely wounded in attempting to get away and Lt Pitt was killed. The retirement was skillfully covered by the Reserve Company ('A' Coy) under Capt WAC Fraser who in turn retired to a position in buildings about Pont Fixé and a new line was established from Pont Fixé to factory, the line being there being continued by 2 Coys, 1<sup>st</sup> Devons along Pont Fixé-Festubert Road. Enemy made two attacks on 'A' Coy and Devon Coys during the night but were repulsed.

*Casualties: 51 Killed, 152 Wounded, 210 Missing.'*

Emile's postcard overleaf showing the ruins of Givenchy below reflects some of that and the previous day's fighting. He writes of 478 casualties whereas the War Diary lists 456. Either way, the number represented almost 50% of the Battalion's wartime establishment. Emile would have thus had an even chance of being a casualty. And, four Jerseymen would be killed over those two days.





The 1/Dorset Regt was in action here, Oct 1914; the Batt suffered some 454 NCOs & men and 24 Officers, the 2<sup>nd</sup> in Comm - Maj Roper being killed, and buried here. The CO, Lt Col Bols, DSO, being wounded & captured, but afterwards escaped, it is at present in our hands.

In the postcard above, Emile mentions the CO being wounded and captured. In the War Diary's Remarks column it noted that, 'Colonel Bols was taken prisoner by the Germans who told him to wait for the ambulance. He waited till dusk and then returned to our lines!' Clearly, German ambulances were less frequent than were London omnibuses!

Waking up on the morning of the 14<sup>th</sup> October, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion's situation was that 'A' Company was holding its position in buildings at Pont Fixé, and such were the heavy casualties from the previous two days, 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies had been reformed into a single Composite Company, and were placed half a mile along the north bank of the La Bassée Canal. The casualties were mercifully light at three wounded that day, even though German shell continued. However, on the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup>, respite came with the Battalion being relieved and returning to billets. The respite was brief, and on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Battalion was in trenches at Violaines taking over 100 casualties amongst the officers and men, namely 7 killed, 24 wounded and 111 missing.

For the rest of October, the Dorsetshires alternated from billets to moves, to Festubert, Neuve Chapelle and Strazeele. Although the titles of battles would not be determined until much later, in fact by Whitehall's Battles Nomenclature Committee in 1922, they had fought through the Battle of La Bassée (officially 10<sup>th</sup> October to 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 1914), itself part of the wider Battle of First Ypres.

**Quiet days:** The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was taken by omnibus to Neuve Eglise, on the 1<sup>st</sup> November, and were in trenches in Ploegsteert Wood, having marched there the following day. By this time, the BEF's 84 Battalions had suffered considerably in terms of its casualties, and only nine could be categorised as being at 'Medium' strength, a definition that meant that they had between 300 and 450 men.

Reading through the Battalion's War Diary for this period, it is clear that there were no reinforcements coming through. Many of those previously recorded as missing would not return either, for they were dead, and the lesser category of 'Weak' might have applied.

Although the Germans had one last serious attempt at taking Ypres in November, the sector that contained Ploegsteert Wood was comparatively quiet. But still they prodded and poked, and regularly threw a few shells towards the British. The Battalion moved from trench to billet and then back again, while it is disconcerting to read an entry, 'Quiet day, one killed, two wounded'. Throughout November and December, the Dorsetshires averaged one casualty per day. In late December, they marched into Bailleul, and spent New Year's Eve and a well-deserved rest in billets. We will leave them there for now, as we will Emile Audrain who would be one of a small band who left Belfast in 1914 and who made it through the war relatively unscathed.

**Fermata:** Emile Audrain would continue soldiering through the next four years of the Great War and beyond, reaching the rank of Company Sergeant Major, and being assigned a new regimental number, 5719140, before retiring from the Army on the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1933.

Having seen so many of his comrades in arms die, he would also suffer the loss of his older brother, Ernest Peter, who died in 1920, as a result of his war service, and who would be buried in Higher Broughton, Manchester (see the JROH).

Looking back to the events of 1914, it does seem as if Emile lived a charmed life. His Battalion had gone 'through the mill' with the retreat from Mons, fighting on the Marne and the Aisne, and then following this all up at La Bassée and the Ypres stretch of the line. At 20 years of age, he had already endured much.

At the time of the German Occupation, Emile, was living in St Brelade. He died in 1983.



**Author's Notes:** The end of 1914 has been a convenient point at which to pause, particularly since there is no material that is immediately available in Emile's handwriting that could be used at the present time. To work through the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion's War Diary would add little of value as the History of the Dorsetshire Regiment 1914-19 is widely on sale!

As most will know, the War Diaries of most British units are readily available via the National Archive's website. In the case of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Dorsetshire Regiment, the references are:

- WO 95/1572/2 covering the period 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1914 to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1915, when the Battalion formed part of 5<sup>th</sup> Division.
- WO 95/2392/1 covering the period 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1916 to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1919, when the Battalion formed part of 32<sup>nd</sup> Division.

**Acknowledgements:** The three postcards were the catalyst for this article, with the images very kindly coming from a 'non-traditional' source, namely from a gentleman in Italy, who we thank, by the name of Luca Ciceri who lives about 20 miles south west of Milan, having acquired them on E-Bay.

**Postscript:** It does appear that Luca Ciceri's three cards are part of a wider collection that Emile would assemble. Since this article was completed, CIGWSG member, Jason Cronin, has recently acquired another 50 cards, which will shortly be evaluated. Emile's diary is understood to be in the possession of the Regimental Museum.