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EXPANSION OF THE BRITISH INFANTRY DIVISION DURING WORLD WAR I

This article presents the process of expanding the British infantry during the First World War. Upon entry into the war, the United Kingdom had a well-armed and trained, but a small professional army, supported by the Territorial Forces, which in turn were poorly trained and had obsolete equipment. The realities of the Western Front forced the British state leadership to a significant expansion of the armed forces. It was a difficult and complicated process, and also very specific, because the model of organization of the British Army was significantly different from the continental solutions. This article gives an overview of the issues, which due to its nature, requires further study.

Key words: the British Army, World War I, British infantry, infantry division.

Introduction. On the eve of World War I, the British Army had organization considerably differs from the continental patterns. European powers based their forces on numerous armies, which were based of soldiers undergoing compulsory military service, usually lasting 2–3 years. The defense of a vast colonial empire was ensured by relatively small, professional land army (Regular Army). Defense of the British Isles was support by the Territorial Forces, having, as the name indicates, the nature of the formation of territorial defense [9, p. 3–14]. The first months of the war showed that in order to have a measurable impact on the course of events and to contribute to the victory over the Central Powers was necessary to significantly increase military effort by Britain.

It turned out that the use of the existing system allowed only marginally increase the number of British troops on the Western Front. It became necessary to create a new organizational solutions, allowing for the creation of a mass

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army, similar in size to the army, which had a continental powers. Expanding their armed forces, the British were, however, far from copying foreign models, trying to create solutions that better suit their own, specific political and social determinants. A prime example of the reluctance to transfer European models accounted for suspending the introduction general military duty up to 1916 years. Instead expanded rapidly army had continued to rely on the voluntary service.

Huge losses and less and less enthusiasm for military service eventually forced the government to introduce conscription. But it was no longer serve the creation of new units, but supplementing existing branches. This text aims to present the most important stages of development of the British infantry divisions in the first 2 years of the war, when to the first six infantry divisions, existing in August 1914, joined dozens of subsequent created almost from scratch. It was an extraordinary organizational effort, and the process takes place in extremely difficult conditions, and not without its faults. However, this does not diminish its success, and shows the great commitment of British society in his country's war effort.

The British Army on the eve of the outbreak of war. Before the war, the British Empire, covering a quarter of the globe, which has a population of 20% of all inhabitants of the earth, possessed a small regular army, numbering approx. 250 thousand. people (148 battalions). Of these, approx. half (73 battalions) was scattered on the garrisons guarding the British possessions, while the rest (75 battalions) was on the British Isles. To this must be added the 9 battalions of the Guard, stationed in London. These were: three Grenadier Guards, three Coldstream Guards, two Scots Guards and one Irish Guards (at that time there no existed the Welsh Guards, that was established in 1915 year) [7, p. 19]. Recruitment to the regular army was voluntary. Volunteers undertook to serve lasting 7 years, of which the first two years he spent in the metropolis going training, followed by 3–5 years of getting into one of the overseas garrisons. After serving this period, the soldiers passed in reserve (Army Reserve), where they remained for the next 5 years. At the outbreak of the war the army

reserve consisted of approx. 150 thousand people. Regular army could also draw from the so-called complement. Special Provisions (Special Token). It was composed of people who, in return for a small monthly salary, committed themselves that during the war join the army. They underwent a brief, lasting six months training and then returning to civilian life. Special reserve was not numerous and consisted of approx. 65 thousand people.

Regular army was small, in addition, much of it was in distant garrisons, and could not be quickly moved to Europe. A not herd instinctive feature of the British Army was the lack of extensive high tactical units. The various garrisons guarding the empire were very small, and usually consisted of one, sometimes several battalions which had individual subunits arranged in distant locations.

Signed before the war, the British-French agreements oblige British government to send expeditionary forces on the continent. Therefore, the regular battalions located on the British Isles were organized into six infantry divisions, numbered 1–6 [6, p. 82–87]. After the war broke out, they were immediately mobilized and in August sent to the continent.

In the composition these infantry divisions were 72 of 84 infantry battalions, which at that time were the British Isles. In addition, 5 more were sent to France to secure communication lines of expeditionary forces. As a result on the British Isles leaving only seven regular infantry battalions that could be used as a strategic reserve needed for use in a critical situation.

In parallel with the preparation to send regular troops to the continent continued mobilization of Territorial Forces. They were relatively numerous, considering the British conditions, because it consisted of 14 infantry divisions, nominally counting approx. 320 thousand. people (in practice, only 270 thousand.). In contrast to the regular army territorial divisions have names derived from places forming, namely: 1. London 2. London, Home Counties, Wessex, East Anglian, South Midland North Midland, Welsh, West Lancashire, East Lancashire, West Riding, Northumbrian, Lowlands, Highlands. Initially it was planned that the territorial divisions will be on

the front only to the creation of the so-called. Kitchener's New Army, but in practice until the end of the war, most of them remained at the front. Thus, in May 1915 year beside names began assign them numbers from 42 (East Lancashire) to 56 (1. London) [12, pp. 13–14].

Fighting value of these troops was initially quite low. People serving in them passed the training, and then periodically have been called to exercise, and during the war were mobilized, with the exception that only permitted to serve on the British Isles, in units designed to defend against the invading (Home duties). Soldiers serving in the Territorial Force could agree to serve overseas, then, if necessary, were transferred into regular units, eg. as a supplement or the whole units were send to support the regular forces. However, before the war, only 17.5 thousand people (approx. 7%) declared such readiness [11, p. 15–19]. It is true that after the outbreak of the war, nearly 90% of them spontaneously signed a consent to service overseas, but because of the poor training of soldiers and deficiencies in weaponry, it was needed at least 6 months to prepare them to fight (Territorial Forces played important role in the early stages of the war, as dozens of battalions were sent to the colonies, making it possible to release from the garrison tasks battalions of regular army, so that they can return to the metropolis, becoming a base for a few new divisions (which will be discussed later).

Another problem associated with the functioning of the Territorial Force was the fact that they are not subject direct to the leadership of the army, but local associations in each counties. This resulted in a number of logistical problems related to the daily functioning of the units. They were not so severe as territorial divisions stationed on the British Isles, but after sending them to the main land and join to the of expeditionary forces those difficulties could significantly aggravate [8, p. 38-52].

At the end of this threads worth saying a few words about the level of training of British soldiers. Generally looking, he was very uneven. The highest level presented, of course, regular army soldiers, especially those who served in the colonies, because they had already had several years of

service. Slightly worse presented to the regular army soldiers stationed in the British Isles, most of which was just starting the service and had had at most a few months' training. Only a small part of this group were soldiers who finished their contracts and returned from the colonies before being released into the reserve. During the war quickly grew losses troops sent to the front. They also were replenished very uneven human material. On the one hand, regular reserve soldiers were very well trained, and left the ranks not earlier than five years before, so their acclimatization to the branches was rather simple. However, approx. 1/3 of these reserves was a special reserve, which consisted of soldiers who have only a six-month training, and their fighting value was initially relatively low. The very low level of training presented territorial forces soldiers who have done only a few weeks' training every year. Of this 'training' was more like a picnic or camping among neighbors than real exercise, therefore before sending it to the front it was necessary several months of additional training to territorial units obtain real combat value [9, p. 4–9].

Expansion of the British infantry divisions. Secretary of War (the Secretary of State of War) Lord Horatio Kitchener, was one of few who predicted that the war began in mid-1914 would last longer than a few months. What more he was of the view that afterwards the ability to decide on the conditions posed defeated will depend directly on the contribution in the victory. That is why from the first day of the war proceeded to vigorous measures to increase the military potential of the British Empire and its involvement in activities on the continent.

First reached for the forces scattered throughout the vast empire, where there were 73 battalions of infantry, composed of well-trained soldiers. On 5th August gave the order to withdraw these battalions, whose absence would cause a reduction in the safety of British possessions. In their place were sent battalions of Territorial Forces, which, although presented a much smaller value, could successfully implement the tasks of garrison. 29 battalions returned from India, 3 from Burma, 5 out of Egypt and the same number

from Malta, 4 from South Africa, 2 from Hong Kong and the same amount from Gibraltar, one from Tiensin, Singapore, Bermuda, Guernsey, Aden and Mauritius. As you can see to the metropolis were brought 2/3 from battalions, which before the war secured the most important possessions of the empire.

Returning battalions were fully completed, trained and armed. That is why it was possible almost immediately use the min battle. Lord Kitchener was of the opinion that instead of directing to fight small units, a much better option was to send the forces that are likely to play a significant role in the arrival on the front. Therefore, the incoming battalions organized in more divisions. The first battalions returned from the Mediterranean Sea. At the turn of August and September they have created 7th ID, which was almost immediately sent to the continent. In October, 1914 was organized 8th ID of battalions from India, Aden, Egypt and South Africa [7, p. 27–31].

Another battalions returning to the British Isles was intended to be used as the basis for the so-called Kitchener's New Army, whose formation at that time began (More on this topic later on). However, huge losses and critical situation at the front caused that it was decided to use them to create the next 3 infantry divisions, which had strengthened BEF. Thus, in late November and early December 27th ID was founded in December 28th ID, and in early 1915 years 29th ID. These 3 divisions, although included in the Regular Army, received such high numbers, as previously initiated the creation of divisions numbered from 9 to 26, which belonged to the first 3 groups of the New Army.

To end the thread for the old, regular British army and its development, it is worth mentioning one division. Before the war, the British Foot Guard consisted of 9 battalions. 6 from them were line up to the first two divisions sent to France. Another two were in the 7th ID sent soon in their footsteps. In the country stayed only one 3rd battalion of the Cold stream Guards. In addition to the branches existed before the war, as part of the mobilization the Guards regiments formed three more battalions (These were the Cold stream, Grenadier, and the Irish Guards). In addition, in mid-1915 years was created

for the first time in the history the battalion of Welsh Guards. At this point, the number of Guards battalions rose to 13 (9 pre war battalions, 3 newly created as part of the mobilization and the newly formed Welsh). At this point came the idea of grouping all the Guards battalions in one division and the creation of an elite tactical unit. Organization of Guards Division took place in Saint Omer in August 1915 year. Place of withdrawn Guards battalions in the regular divisions took new subdivisions, formed from volunteers [5, p. 26–35].

But it was the end expansion capabilities British forces on the basis of pre-war structure. As a result, it was necessary to take steps to create a new frame work allowing for significant expansion of ground troops, mostly infantry. Thus, as early as 6 August 1914. British Parliament passed a law according to which regular army was to be increased by an additional half a million people. According to the assumptions, to join the army could draw volunteers between 19 and 30 years of age, who commit themselves to the service lasting three years or until the end of the war.

It is worth noting that, in accordance with the applicable rules, any increase in the army was carried out by the Territorial Force. But Lord Kitchener insisted that the volunteers were sent directly to the regular army. He believed that only it had the appropriate infrastructure, personnel and resources for rapid development of the armed forces. Moreover, he feared the difficulties associated with limited service in the territorial units only to defend the British Isles. Time has shown that this issue was mistaken, because the vast majority of soldiers serving in the territorial units agreed to serve overseas, but at the beginning of the war could not be sure. Finally, not without significance was the fact that the regular army directly subject to the Ministry of War, the territorial units were overseen by territorial associations of counties, and Secretary of War wanted to have direct control over the forces created [8, p. 38–52].

On the 8th August 1914 on the streets and in the press began to appear imposters with the image of Kitchener and the famous slogan "Your king and homeland needs you." The answer did not take long to wait. Tens of thousands of young men reported to the points recruiting, and within a few days

of enlisted «first hundred thousand». Until the end of September the number of applicants exceeded the expected half a million, and by the end of the year reached almost 1.2 million, and by the end 1915 years reported another million volunteers. It was a unimaginable success.

Rapid in flux of volunteers caused that on August 21 the order was issued of the organization of the first 6 divisions of the so called «New Army», known in short as «a K1 series». New divisions were given sequence number safter existing at the time regular divisions, namely 9–14. An increasing stream of volunteers caused that on 11 September 1914 were Issued instructions of an organization of divisions of series K 2, which received the numbers 15–20. At the end of this month it was decided to start an organization of divisions of 3rd series, assigning them numbers 21–26. Divisions Series K 3 no longer receive numbers next to names that because of the very uneven distribution of the population of the British Isles, not all counties have managed to collect an adequate number of people willing to serve. Therefore, while creating divisions in this series simply used battalions from different regions, guided simply the availability of troops and not by territorial.

On 8 October 1914 it was issued the order of forming the fourth series of divisions that have received the numbers 30-35 (As we remember, the numbers 27–29 have received divisions organized with the regular army battalions withdrawn from over seas garrisons, hence the lack of continuity in the numbering of the new army divisions). However, in March 1915 on the eve of dispatch of the first units of the new army on the front, divisions of fourth series have been disbanded, the brigades transformed into training centers, and individual battalions were reformed in reserve units. This action was the result of past experience. The war lasted for over half a year and it turned out British troops were losing an average of 20 thousand soldiers per month. So if the new divisions was to be able to maintain combat readiness for a long time, it was necessary to prepare for them relatively numerous reserves.

After the outbreak of war in addition to the central military administration, local authorities have also begun action to create new volunteer battalions. They were of ten supported

by local entrepreneurs, local authorities or associations. There were also some units formed from representatives of various professions, students of one school or even players of the sport discipline. They have passed into history as the «pals battalions» [1, p. 13–15; 4, p. 1–8]. For example, the 18th battalion Middlesex Regiment consisted of miners, and the 17th and 23rd battalion of this regiment of the football players, railway workers formed a 17th battalion of the Northumbrian Fusiliers, textiles workers became members of 21st battalion West Yorkshire, traders from Glasgow joined the 17th battalion Highland Light Infantry, of the London bankers recruited a 26th battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. These are just some examples of "branch" battalions. Apart from them, several dozen battalions consisting of residents of a particular city, which enlisted all, regardless of social status, wealth, nationality or religion.

For the first few months of operation they have not undergone the Ministry of War, but at the end of 1914 years Lord Kitchener decided to incorporate them into the structure of the army. In formal terms, they were assigned to the local regiments. In December 1915, a part of the battalions came into the series K5, creating divisions numbered 37–42 [3, p. 18–22]. In April 1915 following the termination of a series of K4, they have received their numbers and have passed to the fourth group. At the same time the other battalion recreated fifth group arranging new divisions numbered from 36 to 41 [7, p. 76–84].

The creation in mid-1915 the fifth and final series of the New Army divisions not completed the process of expansion of the British infantry. At this point, it consisted of 12 regular divisions, division of the guard, a new army 30 divisions and 14 territorial divisions. Systematically, along with achieving combat readiness they were sent to the front, mainly to France. This included the territorial divisions, whose task initially was to protect the southern and eastern coast. Although the risk of invasion was relatively low, however it was not possible to leave the areas without any cover.

It was therefore decided to set up a second-line territorial divisions, which are literally a copy of thee existing tactical units. Thus, in August 1915 was created divisions numbered from 57 to 69 (Further more, the second division from Wessex

received already number 45, when went to India together with two other first line divisions. In mid-1916 years 63rd ID (Northumbrian) was dissolved and its number received Royal Naval Division (RND), which at that time was transferred from the Royal Navy to the Army) [2, p. 13-19]. Divisions of the second line fairly quickly achieved full staffing personnel, although it happened that in less populated areas (eg. In Scotland) appeared short ages (On the other hand, in some areas still were available surpluses. That was the case, among others, in London, whose inhabitants were famous for the tradition of service in the territorial units. During the entire war in the territorial units served more than 450 thousand residents of the capital. From this city came every seventh territorial soldier). In contrast, the big problem, which strongly affected the decrease in the value of these divisions was the lack of commanding personnel. Serious short comings also related to equipment, especially weapons. Therefore, the formation and training of the sedivisions has progressed slowly, and it was only in mid-1916 years, when some of them could be sent to the front. The rest of them, because of the need to systematically send additions to divisions of first line, failed to reachfull combat readiness. For this reason, only half of the second line of the territorial divisions took part in the fighting, and mainly in the last year of the war. In place of second-line divisions sent to the front for medbattalions of the third line, but they acted only a straining centers for the reserves. Did not create third line divisions, and later in the war battalions of third lines reformed to reserve battalions.

In later years no longer created more new divisions, focusing its efforts on making additions, especially during the Battle of the Somme, in which British forces have suffered huge losses. Only at the end of 1916 years organized 3 divisions numbered 71, 72 and 73. They were established on the basis of 3 brigades obtained from the disbanded 63rdID, which complemented by different individual battalions still located in the British Isles. Together with the territorial divisions of the second line, which failed to fully complete its composition, played defensive task on the islands. Also proposed to create another, 70th ID, but the plan have not been achieved. Moreover,

in Egypt we created two new divisions. 18 Yeomanry regiments that were fighting dismounted at Gallipoli Peninsula, has been reorganized into 12 infantry battalions, and have created 74th ID, which for the preservation of cavalry tradition was given the name «Yeomanry». While of the 4 Indian battalions defending the Suez Canal and 8 battalions from two territorial divisions sent at the end of 1914 years to India created 75th ID [7, p. 140–142].

Conclusions. Described above, of necessity in outline, the process of expanding British infantry divisions shows an example of unprecedented organizational effort. Having in August 1914 only six infantry divisions at the end of the war the United Kingdom had 75 infantry divisions, from which 80 % were at the front. In 1914 the British forces in France were only a small part of the Allied forces, and could not play a decisive role in the fighting. Over time, however, along with sending to the front next divisions, the importance of the British Army grew steadily, and at the end of the war it represented a significant force that eventually played a very important role in the defeat of the German army. This was possible only thanks to the huge organizational effort of the British political and military leadership. This allowed not only victoriously end the war, but also helped Great Britain to get a decisive voice when the post-war order in Europe and World was decided.

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Коженъовскі П.
РОЗБУДОВА БРИТАНСЬКОЇ ПІХОТИ У РОКИ ПЕРШОЇ СВИТОВОЇ ВІЙНИ

У статті йдеться про процес розширення британської піхоти під час Першої світової війни. На момент вступу у війну, Збройні сили Великобританії були добре озброєні і навчені, але з невеликою професійною армією, за підтримки територіальних військ, які в свою чергу були погано навчені і мали застаріле обладнання. Реалії Західного фронту спонукали британське державне керівництво до значного розширення збройних сил. Це був важкий і складний процес, сповнений особливостей, оскільки модель організації британської армії значно відрізняється від континентальних рішень. Ця стаття дає огляд питань, які в силу своєї природи, вимагатимуть подальшого вивчення.

Ключові слова: британська армія, Перша світова війна, британська піхота, стрілецька дивізія.

Коженъовский П.
УВЕЛИЧЕНИЕ БРИТАНСКОЙ ПЕХОТЫ В ГОДЫ ПЕРВОЙ МИРОВОЙ ВОЙНЫ

В статье изучается процесс количественного расширения британской пехоты во время Первой мировой войны. На момент вступления в войну вооружённые силы Великобритании были хорошо вооружены и обучены, но с небольшой профессиональной армией при поддержке территориальных войск, которые в свою очередь были плохо обучены и имели устаревшее вооружение. Реалии Западного фронта вынудили британское государственное руководство к расширению вооружённых сил. Это был важный и сложный процесс, со своими особенностями, поскольку модель организации британской армии существенно отличалась от континентальных аналогов. В статье содержится обзор проблем требующих дальнейшего изучения.

Ключевые слова: британская армия, Первая мировая война, британская пехота, стрелковая дивизия.