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I have a very clear recollection of the day I joined the 26th Mx. Cyclist Volunteers, in 1906, to become a Military Cyclist. I was there about 31 at the time, rather old for a start. But life was all so very dull and uneventful in the little village of Shepperton on Thames. I had been working as scenic artist for the Hepworth Film Coy., the first permanent scenic in that new industry, and little knew of where that action would lead me in after life, the interest and satisfaction to be doing something, however small, in military life, as my father and grandfather before and also my two brothers, then in the services, one in the Blues and the other in the Royal Marines, I followed the family tradition of several generations and was in my right place painting and soldiering, and have been that ever since. It is my life and it has been full of interest all those years, 54 of them and still going strong. I wanted to join the R.E.s as a regular soldier years before but was not up to their standard at that time of 5'9" and was very disappointed. I intended to enlist for the S.A. War and go out with my brother, but joined another army instead, the army of married men.

At that time the new Company E was being formed by Capt. Trapman, a most enterprising man, full of ideas and interest, and Cpl. Paget was also a recruit in the same section, Sgt. E. Smith was my sergeant and our first small parade was at Weybridge and we joined another small squad at Walton Bridge, all in uniform of the 26th Mx. except myself.

Off we went on a field training excursion somewhere in the Windsor Area, when it came on to rain heavily. By that time Sgt. Smith had become thoroughly fogged and lost his sense of direction and the whereabouts of the main body he had been ordered to join up with. Cease fire was about 4 o/c. Rendezvous was at Bagshot with the main body. I asked Sgt. Smith for his map and studied it a bit and decided whereabouts we might be and suggested carrying on to the next village and make enquiries. When at the next crossroads I spotted cycle tracks on the left of the road I estimated about 15 to 20. It could not be 15 to 20 civilians, so I advised carrying on the same any until we could check up for the correct position and decided they had passed on about 20 minutes before us. I was right and we joined the main body in a well filled pub near Bagshot Common.

That seemed to impress Sgt., Smith as being pretty good for a newly joined recruit so when I received my uniform it had one stripe on the sleeve at the same time, surely the first recruit to join as a fully-fledged L/C.

Soon after when the company filled up I was promoted to L/C Sergeant with my scout's badge up.

And so it happened that it became my lot to train the 26th Mx. in map reading and map making. The most impressive event I remember was when the Old 26 Mx. Cycle Volunteers was disbanded, I think in a field on the roadside near Reigate, and the 25th London Cyclist Btn. was brought into being, I cannot not remember the exact date, but that grand old soldier R.S.M. Charles Hurt and Col. Gilbertson Smith were there, the announcement was made with great feeling by Col. Gilbertson Smith at the handing over of the battalion he had created. I think the Beverley camp was the most interesting. I certainly had a lot to do as Scout Sergeant on that occasion.

The most important camp after that was that Stoody camp in Cambridgeshire, it was the toughest and most exciting, we were brigaded with regular troops, the Household Cavalry, Royal Horse Artillery and two or three cavalry regiments and an early reconnaissance balloon

(aircraft were not then invented) from which we received reports to deliver to the various unit commanders as they were dropped. Surely a trial for any troops as a proof of efficiency carried out under the eyes of the War Office Brasshats, and we, like another famous regiment "always got our man.

On that occasion I met my younger brother Cpl. Major B.H. Jones of the Blues and my cousin Essington Brown, riding master of another famous hussar regiment in the field, 11th Hussars.

At the general "Pow How" afterwards when Brasshats from the War Office and other regiments were there, Cpl. Ridout and myself were handed up in front of these regiments and commended by the G.O.C. for excellent scouting.

I must have looked particularly scruffy as I had just had a tooth extracted and my face was bloody and swollen. I had not had a wash or a shave for about 5 days and very little sleep either and was certainly hungry and dirty. But we proved the 25th London was the most mobile regiment at that time in the world though we only had a very few motor cycles in use, and as scouts unequalled. We could be depended on to find our way anywhere by night or day and above all were silent, whereas cavalry or motorized transport could be heard miles away by putting an ear to the ground, which proved very disconcerting to the regular troops. We could ride through the lines and at least I did whenever I wanted, without being seen. I once stood behind a big tree at the roadside with the enemy in front and behind me and those behind me passed so close that I could have touched them and not be seen. There were several other camps after that but none so large and exciting, but some members present will well remember the affair at Burning Gap when a cyclist patrol ran headlong into an advancing cavalry regiment on the top of Beachy Head and withdrew fighting to the little bridge below held by ourselves. For the camp at Rye I was not able to get leave from my firm as I was in the middle of an important film at the time, but it was all but completed by Aug. 4th, '14, when I was mobilized. It was momentous for me. I rode into Fulham House at 3.20 Aug 4th, '14 for regular service abroad, in fact I was the first man to come forward for foreign service and ultimately signed off Purfleet on Aug. 4th, '20 at precisely 3.20 p.m. 6 years later. But a most eventful six years.

When the 25th left for India, for certain good reasons I decided to apply for my commission. Permission to apply had been refused by Col. Churchill, though special requests for my services on three occasions and turned down by him for his own ends.

I ultimately joined the Royal Welsh Fusileers, being a Jones. I went through the usual cadet course. I was then 44, and became an instructor of topography, but passed quite a lot of my time with the revolver school finding that too easy a life, and became a crack revolver shot. I decided to apply for active service. Ultimately, after many vicissitudes in France and Italy, on the road to join the Notts & Verrey Reg., (The Sherwood Foresters), I found myself in Egypt. It was a new world to me in every way. I led a full life in regimental affairs and had ample time to paint in the wonderful East, specially Cairo and Palestine. Places full of colour and interest, I even have a few left now, but nowhere can I show them. I met Sgt. Freddy Woods in Suez and went with him as passenger on his qualifying flight, well to be remembered, and in the years that followed travelled nearly all over Egypt, parts of Sudan, Camel Corps Service with the Hedjas Army, both in Arabia and Palestine. Eventually returned to Cairo on leave when I was requested to join the R.A.O.C. as an Ordnance Officer. Here I found the work particularly interesting and rewarding and remained with that regiment in charge of

several large departments, covering almost the whole of Egypt, Arabia, Palestine and parts of Sudan I never saw personally, clothing, camp equipment, an immense organisation and a small engineering store. All very intricate and interesting, until I returned home at the end of July, 1920, signing off 3 p.m., 4th Aug. '20, just 6 years to the minute. But of this part of my services I could well write a book of where I went and who I met and other doings which are not of the 25 C. of L. interest, but I trust what I have written is of interest.

In the last war I joined the Ministry as a civilian instructor and did the work of a flight sergeant, served with them some four years at Kirkham Camp after having taken 25 years off my age, for which I was refused an O.A.P. and in disgust at my unfair treatment left England for the little island of St. Helena in the South Atlantic. I married a charming St. Helena Lady, I had never seen before who had the same name and initials as my first wife, F.B. Ward. We had ten happy years of married life, and at her death on June 20th, '59, I returned home, arriving in cold and snow which nearly killed me but not quite, I am not dead yet. I still paint my pictures of all sorts of places and things and put them in an exhibition for amusement which is not bad for 88, and I am now writing a book of my varied and interesting life for publication later on.

Capt. F. Oswell Jones.