

6th Battalion marching down St Michael's Hill on 10 August 1914 (Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum)



The 6th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment

The 6th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment was a Territorial Unit formed in 1908. Its headquarters was at the top of St Michael's Hill, where St Michael's Hospital is today.

It was made up of Bristol boys and men who worked in local businesses during the day, but in their spare time, they attended parades and learnt how to march and use a rifle. Some learnt to play instruments like the bugle and drums. The Battalion also went away on weekend and summer camps to further learn the art of soldiering.

The Battalion returned early from its Minehead camp on 3 August 1914; the day before Britain declared war on Germany. Most of the part-time soldiers joined up to serve full-time. Aided by a recruitment campaign,

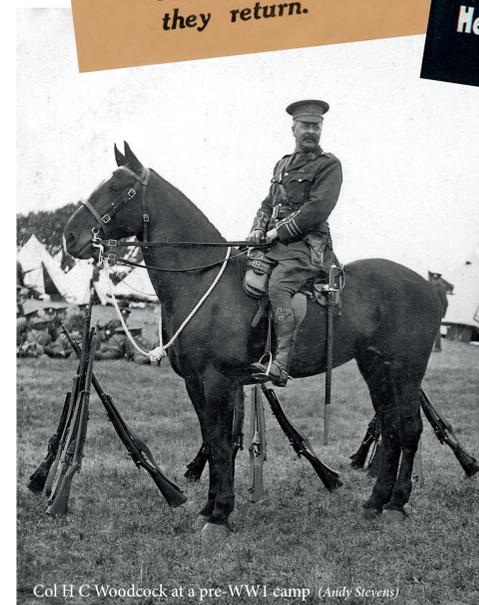
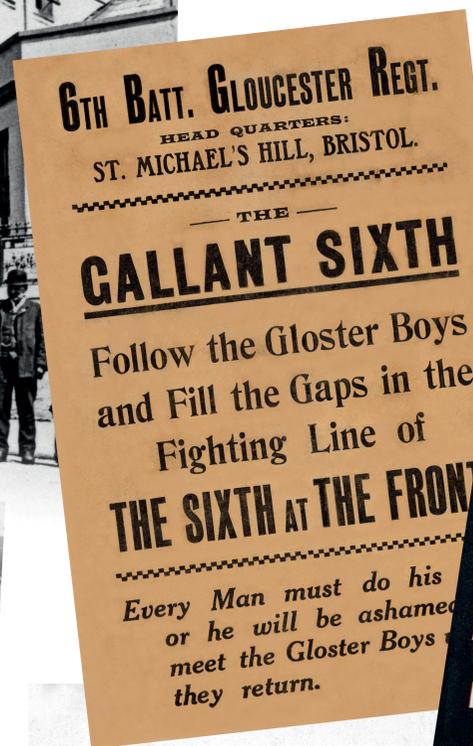
around 1,000 men left Bristol for Essex for war training a week later.

The Battalion spent the next seven months undergoing intensive training at Little Baddow, before on 31 March 1915, it left for France – travelling by ship from Folkestone to Boulogne. Their 'baptism of fire' was in the trenches at Ploegsteert Wood in Belgium in April 1915. This is where it suffered its first casualties in the war with 96 men killed or wounded in six weeks of action.

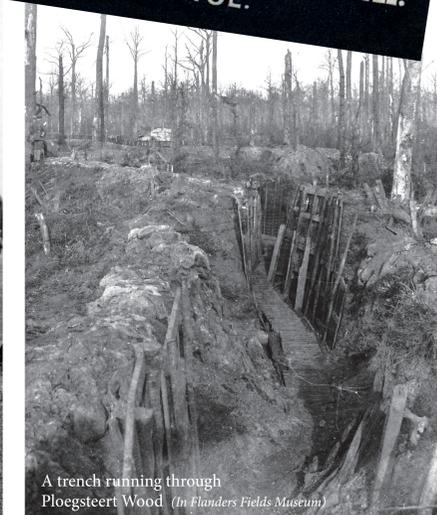
A "Home Service" or "Second Line" battalion was formed. This was designated the 2/6th Battalion which eventually went to France in May 1916. A 3/6th (Reserve) Battalion did not go overseas.



6th Gloucesters at a pre-WWI camp with George Pine DCM standing third left (Robin Pine)



Col H C Woodcock at a pre-WWI camp (Andy Stevens)



A trench running through Ploegsteert Wood (In Flanders Fields Museum)



Left: 6th Battalion headquarters at the top of St Michael's Hill
Right: Training in Little Baddow



One of the British military cemeteries in Ploegsteert Wood

