

Buckinghamshire: A Military History

by

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Chapter Eight: 1914-1918

Once war was imminent in 1914, it is usually assumed that there was a readiness and even eagerness to accept its challenge amongst many of Europe's peoples. It was commonplace in Britain in the 1920s to stress the inevitability of war.¹ Such a reaction has been attributed to the incipient militarism of pre-war society fuelled by nationalism, imperialism and Social Darwinism. Yet, in the case of Britain, the public had little time in which to react to events, and the contribution of the popular mood to actual events in July and August 1914 was limited. There was no noticeable sense of impending foreign crisis in the British press until 29 July, attention having been fixed largely on the continuing Irish Home Rule crisis. The final descent into war unfolded over the Bank Holiday weekend, the news of the German ultimatum to Belgium reaching London on the morning of Bank Holiday Monday, 3 August. In any case, while British society might have been conditioned at various levels to accept military activity as either necessary or desirable, it was still the case that militarism existed only in 'very mild solution'.²

The regular army stood at 247,432 officers and men in August 1914, the addition of reservists (340,303) and the Territorial Force (245,779) bringing its total strength to 733,514.³ The greater proportion of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) would have to be found upon mobilisation from the reservists. Thereafter, the Territorials would be the means of expansion, but only if they

¹ Caroline Playne, *The Pre-War Mind in Britain: An Historical Review* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1928), 329-30.

² Michael Howard, 'Empire, Race and War in Pre-1914 Britain', *History Today* 31, 12 (1981), 4-11, at 10.

³ *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire in the Great War* (London: HMSO, 1922), 30, 364.

chose to take Imperial Service Obligation (ISO). In the meantime, seven of the 14 Territorial divisions would be allocated to local defence and seven to a central force poised to resist any invasion.

Whatever assumptions had been made prior to the war, however, all were set aside by the appointment of Field Marshal Kitchener as Secretary of State for War in August 1914. Kitchener had not served at home since 1883 and was wholly unfamiliar with any pre-war arrangements. He confused the Special Reserve with the National Reserve. The Unionist politician, Leo Amery, aptly described him as a ‘great improviser but also a great disorganiser’. This was particularly seen in Kitchener’s distaste for the Territorials, whom he told Sir Edward Grey were a ‘town clerk’s army’.⁴

Contemporaries suggested Kitchener’s view of ‘amateurs’ had been influenced by the experience of seeing ineffective French citizen armies during the Franco-Prussian War. He also distrusted the measure of independence enjoyed by CTAs and the potential for local nepotism in appointments. He told Violet Asquith that he preferred men with no military knowledge to those with ‘a smattering of the wrong thing’, and told Sir Charles Harris that ‘he could take no account of anything but regular soldiers’.⁵ His attitude effectively spelled the end of any pre-war plans to expand through the CTAs, as Kitchener resolved to raise his ‘Kitchener’ or ‘New’ Armies through the War Office. Briefly, under pressure of the recruits coming forward, the responsibility for housing and preliminary training of the New Armies was vested in a committee headed by the former

⁴ Leo Amery, *My Political Life* 3 vols. (London: Hutchinson, 1953-55), II, 23; Viscount Grey of Fallodon, *Twenty Five Years, 1892-1916* 2 vols. (London, 1925), II, 68.

⁵ Peter Simkins, *Kitchener’s Army: The Raising of the New Armies, 1914-16* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 41.

Secretary of State for War, Brodrick, raised to the peerage as Viscount (later Earl of) Midleton in 1907. Midleton turned to the CTAs but his committee was relieved of its duties on 7 September 1914 and invitations to the CTAs to help rescinded. The Bucks CTA indicated its willingness to help find alternative accommodation to relieve the pressure on the Oxford depot despite feeling that the competition for recruits had been unhelpful. The old militia barracks at Wycombe were opened accordingly for recruits to the New Armies. It was agreed to ask the local parliamentary constituency political party organisations for help, something that was already apparent through the creation of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee at national level.⁶

Nevertheless, there was more to Kitchener's reasoning than simple prejudice.⁷ There were no actual practical plans for expansion through the CTAs, and Kitchener believed they would be swamped by having to train and recruit simultaneously. Similarly, Kitchener was reluctant to put pressure on married men to volunteer for service abroad, the Territorials containing not only a high proportion of married men but also those underage for overseas service: Territorials could enlist at 17 compared to 18 in the regulars, with overseas service only being permitted at the age of 19. Some 40,000 Territorials were under the age of 19. Physical fitness was a factor and so, too, was perceived military deficiency. A third of the force had failed the modest musketry requirements and, in 1912, only 155,000 men had undertaken the full 15 days' annual camp. Territorial infantry still lacked the modern Short Lee Enfield rifle and Territorial artillery was still armed with obsolete 15-pounders and 5"

⁶ BA, T/A 1/13, Mins., Emergency Committee, 5 and 8 Sept. 1914.

⁷ Beckett, 'Territorial Force', 128-63.

howitzers.⁸ Moreover, most regular adjutants and instructors were withdrawn to staff the New Armies either immediately or after six months.⁹

The issue of the ISO was clearly a factor. On 10 August 1914 an invitation was extended to complete Territorial units to volunteer for overseas service and, on 21 August, units where 80 per cent had volunteered were authorised to recruit to war establishment: two or more units with less than the required percentage could combine to produce service units. The latter proved unattractive and, from 31 August, second line units could be raised where 60 per cent of the first line had volunteered, enabling the first line to be completed from the second, and to return to their home service men to the second line as a nucleus. The 60 per cent requirement was more realistic. While there is evidence to show that between 80 and 90 per cent of many units responded immediately to the call to go overseas, commitments made by some commanding officers proved highly optimistic.

On 21 September 1914 a general duplication of the Territorial first line was authorised and a third line established in November 1915 as first line units preceded overseas. This was extended to cover all units in March 1915. In effect, this substituted for the absence of any established Territorial reinforcement structure. It was successful in that 54.1 per cent of all Territorial second line units had reached at least 80 per cent of establishment by 5 December 1914 with a further 27.7 per cent of units reaching at least 60 per cent.¹⁰

⁸ Beckett, *Territorials*, 39-40.

⁹ Beckett, 'Territorial Force', 131.

¹⁰ TNA, WO 114/43.

The original designation of Imperial Service, First Reserve and Second Reserve units was changed in February 1915 to 1st, 2nd and 3rd Line units. The rather clumsy nomenclature of battalions to indicate the lines, viz. 1/1st, 2/1st and 3/1st had been prescribed a month earlier, while original 'territorial' designations of brigades and divisions were discontinued in May 1915 and numbers substituted. Thus, the South Midland Division became 48th (South Midland) Division and there were now the 1/1st, 2/1st and 3/1st Bucks Battalions, and the 1/1st, 2/1st and 3/1st Royal Bucks Hussars. The 2/1st Royal Bucks Hussars was constituted on 14 September 1914 under the command of William Lawson, and the 2/1st Bucks Battalion on 26 September under the command of Herbert Williams. Ivor Stewart-Liberty of The Lee, commissioned into the 2/1st Bucks after initially enlisting in the Queen's Westminster Rifles, seems to have disliked Herbert Williams as a Territorial 'dug out' and 'a "red-hot snob" of the most virulent kind' but this appears a minority view.¹¹



The Buckingham squadron of the Royal Bucks Hussars in Buckingham market Square, 10 August 1914 [BMMT]

¹¹ BA, T/A 3/500, 'Memoirs of a New Battalion', 1927.

The second in command of the 2/1st RBH was the former RSM, H. W. Haughton, who had been commissioned in the Imperial Yeomanry in South Africa.¹² Visiting Aylesbury and Buckingham in January 1915 Lieutenant General Sir Reginald Pole-Carew MP noted that Williams was a good CO but had ‘too many boys’ in his battalion whereas William Lawson’s men were ‘excellent’.¹³ The 3/1st RBH was commanded by Harry Lawson, and the 3/1st Bucks Battalion by Alfred Gilbey. The 3/1st Bucks Battalion remained in Aylesbury until August 1915 when it went to High Wycombe.¹⁴ In his capacity as Inspector of Administrative Services for Southern Command, Waldorf Astor received a report on the cooking arrangements of the 3/1st Bucks at Wycombe. It was short of cooks and dining tents and the cooking was far from satisfactory: it was recommended that three men be sent to the cookery school at Weymouth.¹⁵ The battalion was drilled on the Rye and in Daws Hill Park. Leaving Wycombe in January 1916, it spent a period at Burnham-on-Sea before being renamed 1st Reserve Bucks Battalion in April 1916 and then being absorbed into 4th Reserve Battalion, OBLI.¹⁶

The Bucks Battalion had left for its annual camp at Bovington Green, Marlow on Sunday 2 August 1914 but was then immediately sent back home on Bank Holiday Monday 3, with mobilisation ordered at 1830 on Tuesday 4 August. The battalion as well as the Royal Bucks Hussars then assembled at their

¹² *Bucks Herald*, 5 June 1931.

¹³ Cornwall Record Office, Pole-Carew Mss, CO/F9/2(ii), Notebook, Jan. 1915.

¹⁴ Crouch, Lionel Crouch, *Duty and Service: Letters from the Front* (Aylesbury: Privately printed, 1917), 63.

¹⁵ University of Reading Library, Astor Mss, 1066/1/618, Blackwell to Astor, 17 Aug. 1915.

¹⁶ *Bucks Free Press*, 21 Jan. 1916.

company and squadron headquarters early on Wednesday 5 August.¹⁷ The ISO request was put to the 1st Bucks Battalion on 11 August 1914, the battalion having moved to Cosham on mobilisation to dig trenches for the Portsmouth defences.



The 1/1st Bucks Battalion leaving Aylesbury for Summer Camp at Marlow, 2 August 1914 [BMMT]

Initially, only 553 men took the ISO although the number rose to 600 by the following day. Those who did so were unequally distributed with 70 from the 75 men of the Aylesbury Company and 24 out of 32 from the Company's Chesham Detachment doing so. All 27 members of the band declined and so did six officers including the elderly Major John Chadwick and Captain the Hon. J. G. Hubbard, later 3rd Lord Addington. Chadwick was posted as second in command of the 2/1st Bucks Battalion but left it for the 2nd Garrison Battalion,

¹⁷ *Bucks Free Press*, 7 Aug. 1914.

OBLI in April 1916. In all, therefore, approximately 240 men including many older NCOs declined the ISO.¹⁸ They were separated from the battalion at Chelmsford, stripped of weapons and equipment, and sent to dig trenches at Witham before returning to Aylesbury to form a nucleus for the 2/1st Bucks. Battalion.



Men of the 3/1st Bucks Battalion outside the Recruiting Office, Temple Square, Aylesbury, April to August 1915[BMMT]

Labelled 'Never Dies' by Francis Wethered, they were, as suggested by Geoffrey Christie-Miller of the 2/1st Bucks 'not treated by either officers or men in the manner contemplated by the King's regulations'. Having retired in 1912, Christie-Miller had been recalled from the Territorial Reserve to be second in

¹⁸ *Bucks Free Press*, 21 Aug. 1914; Crouch, *Duty and Service*, 24-25; BA, AR 28/2009 (BMMT 587), Oscar Viney, 'Reminiscences' (Typescript, 1960), 74.

command of the 2/1st Bucks in August 1914.¹⁹ Christie-Miller himself was recalled to the Colours in 1914 and joined the 2/1st Bucks Battalion as adjutant. Not all those with family responsibilities opted for home service, Gilbert Nash from High Wycombe readily doing so. Nash, who had three children, was constantly concerned that they had sufficient means and tried unsuccessfully to arrange a visit from his wife and eldest son to Chelmsford prior to embarkation. Nash was one of the very first deaths in France, dying of wounds on 9 May 1915.²⁰



Geoffrey Christie-Miller, 2/1st Bucks Battalion [BMMT]

¹⁹ Geoffrey Christie-Miller, *The 2nd Bucks Battalion: An Informal History* 4 vols. (Typescript, 1920), I, 26-29. All four volumes are preserved in the Christie-Miller Mss at the IWM as Doc. 4776 [80/32/1] whilst there are copies of the first two volumes in BA Local Studies Library. The author consulted the four volumes in August 1980 by courtesy of Colonel John Christie-Miller whilst they were still retained at his home in Gloucestershire.

²⁰ IWM, Doc. 12329 [P.329T], Nash letters.

The relationship between the two battalions was permanently soured and not improved when the 2/1st Bucks refused to send any experienced officers or NCOs to the 1/1st in March 1915 in return for men left behind when the latter proceeded overseas.²¹ The first and only wartime meeting between the battalions was at Road Camp, St Jan Ter Beizen on 15 September 1917 when the 1/1st beat the 2/1st by 3 goals to 2 at football.²² When the 2/1st Bucks was asked in turn to take ISO in April 1915, all but 140 men did so, those not doing so being elderly or unfit. All but one of member of the band now volunteered. Those not taking the ISO were sent back to the 3/1st Bucks, the third line battalion having been formed in March 1915, or in the case of the unfit to the 83rd Provisional Battalion (later designated the 10th OBLI in January 1917 for home service only). Fifty others sent back had not been encouraged to volunteer but 35 of these were then sent back to the 2/1st Bucks from 3/1st in the first draft as well as some officers who had not ‘pressed’ to volunteer. As Christie-Miller put it, those sent to the 3/1st were ‘a sprinkling of good men, a sprinkling of unfit, of men who were recovering from operations, and perhaps not unnaturally of men whom Company Commanders “could spare”’.²³

After the war the battalions kept separate Old Comrades’ Associations (OCAs), discouraging membership from any who had served briefly in one battalion before joining the other. There were also separate war memorials.²⁴ Another draft of 350 men sent to the 2/1st Bucks from the 3/1st just prior to its embarkation proved mostly unfit and 70 had to be ‘boarded out’. The shortfall

²¹ Christie-Miller, *2nd Bucks*, I, 79.

²² TNA, WO 95/2763, War Diary Entry, 15 Sept. 1917.

²³ Christie-Miller, *2nd Bucks*, I, 66-68, 78-81; BA, D/X 780/29, Diary of Charles Phipps, 28 May 1915.

²⁴ Author interviews with J. Stammers, A. Seymour and J. Tranter, 25 Nov. 1980.

had to be met from drafts from northern Territorials who arrived in ‘bad humour’ when they had expected to go to their own regiments.²⁵

The number declining to take the ISO in the 1/4th OBLI appears to have been about 42 per cent but, overall, about 20 per cent of the men of the 48th Division declined to take the obligation: the overall percentage of those signing was increased by greater uptake among the Warwickshire battalions. Generally, there were significant tensions between first and second line units arising from the ISO and the reluctance of the second line units to accept older home service men and to lose their own younger and fitter men.²⁶

By contrast, in the Royal Bucks Hussars, Fred Cripps, now commanding the Wycombe Squadron, had it drawn up in front of a wall in Daws Hill Park: ‘I addressed them, emphasising the gravity of the situation. Then I asked all those not wishing to volunteer for active service abroad to rein back two horses’ length. Obviously, no one was able to do this even if they had been so inclined. I was, therefore, able to inform my commanding officer that 100 per cent of the men under my command had volunteered for service abroad. There were subsequently, I think, two withdrawals!’²⁷

Generally, the 1/1st Royal Bucks Hussars does not seem to have had many difficulties with the ISO, ‘A’ Squadron providing some 80 men. Fred Lawson recalled in September 1915 that only one man in his troop had declined to go

²⁵ Christie-Miller, 2nd *Bucks*, I, 99; II, 124-25.

²⁶ Ian F. W. Beckett, ‘The Territorial Force in the Great War’, in Peter Liddle (ed.), *Home Fires and Foreign Fields: British Social and Military Experience in the First World War* (London: Brassey’s, 1985), 21-38, at 23; Mitchinson, 48th *Division*, 36-38.

²⁷ Cripps, *Life’s A Gamble*, 97.

overseas back in August 1914. Subsequently, 20 men went back to the 2/1st RBH in October 1914.²⁸

The Territorials often struggled to find the horses and horse-drawn vehicles required on mobilisation. 'A' Squadron of the 1/1st RBH could muster only two lorries and 'a farm cart or two' with harness 'mostly string'. Remounts received in October but were of poor quality and the regiment's horses were also affected by outbreaks of ringworm and strangles in November. In lieu of sufficient khaki, 'shoddy corduroy pants' were also issued.²⁹ Amongst other necessities, CTAs were obliged to find false teeth and spectacles if required.³⁰ The stores previously held at Wycombe were transferred on mobilisation to the Hazell, Watson & Viney recreation room in Castle Street, Aylesbury.³¹



Men from the 1/1st Royal Bucks Hussars in the King's Head Yard at Aylesbury, August 1914 [BMMT]

²⁸ BA, T/A 3/517, Fred Lawson to William Lawson, 8 Sept. 1915; AR 8/2001 (BMMT 474), *Notes on 'A' Squadron, Royal Bucks Hussars* (Privately printed: Dec. 1916), 4, 6-7.

²⁹ *Notes on 'A' Squadron*, 3, 7-8.

³⁰ Mitchinson, *Territorial Force at War*, 56.

³¹ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 46.

It was also the case that pre-war Territorials could and did enlist for home service only until March 1915, and pre-war Territorials could and did seek their discharge at the end of their original term of service until May 1916. There were 82,588 home servicemen still borne on Territorial returns in August 1915 and it would seem that about 42 per cent of all Territorial recruits had opted for home service between September and December 1914. The percentage varied from region to region with over 77 per cent of Territorials in Eastern Command not liable for overseas service between December 1914 and April 1915 presumably due to the local fear of invasion.³²

Over 159,000 pre-war Territorials would have been entitled to discharge between 1914 and 1917 under normal peacetime conditions. Those who chose to re-engage received a month's furlough and a bounty. Under the first Military Service Act of January 1916, all Territorials under 41 years of age had until 2 March 1916 to take the ISO, resign (if officers), or be discharged (ORs) and thus become liable to conscription. Those compulsorily retained thereafter were given a month's furlough where possible. Ironically, many of those opting for home service achieved faster promotion since they were more experienced than new recruits, leading to problems of seniority and resulting dissatisfaction when the latter arrived in units overseas. This was the case with two captains reaching the 2/1st Bucks Battalion in September 1917 with seniority over existing captains despite having never left England previously.³³ After 11 December 1915 no more direct recruiting was permitted into the Territorial Force except for a few specified units.

³² Beckett, 'Territorial Force', 135; Mitchinson, *England's Last Hope*, 232; TNA, WO 114/43 and 44.

³³ Christie-Miller, *2nd Bucks*, IV, 374.

In the 1/1st Bucks Battalion, a total of 40 men re-engaged between April 1915 and June 1916. In that same period, 97 chose to go home, the first as early as July 1915. Thus of those eligible, 70.8 per cent chose to exercise the option to go home. Several were older NCOs. Two of those who chose to go time-expired were also winners of gallantry awards, Lance Corporal G. Gostelow having been awarded the DCM in January 1916, and Corporal G. Smewin the MM in March 1916. Four men who had been the subject of disciplinary proceedings also chose to go although, equally, two others re-engaged, one later killed and the other sent home with serious wounds. The first man to be retained compulsorily was in June 1916 and, in all, 72 men were so retained by the end of the war.³⁴ It is clear that men also declined to re-engage in the 1/1st Royal Bucks Hussars. Fred Lawson complained in February 1916 that men aged 24-25 were leaving his squadron drawn by tales of ‘enormous wages to be gained and the soft jobs to be got at home’.³⁵

Yet a further legislative difficulty was that the form - E624 - that Territorials signed in assenting to overseas service specified they would remain with their own unit and could not be subsequently transferred to another. Amalgamating or disbanding Territorial units was also theoretically illegal. In January 1915, with casualties mounting and the New Armies not yet ready, CTAs were asked to seek volunteers willing to transfer to the Army Reserve. Kitchener had been minded in November 1914 to seek volunteers from Territorial first line units to fill vacancies in depleted battalions overseas but this had been opposed by Home Army commanders and the idea dropped. After new legislation in March and May 1915 all wartime regulars were liable to be transferred anywhere required but this was not applied to the Territorials. Following the failure of

³⁴ Crouch, *Duty and Service*, 84.

³⁵ BA, T/A 3/517, Fred Lawson to Harry Lawson, 19 Feb. 1916; 24 July 1917.

Territorial legislation in April 1915 which was dropped due to the considerable opposition, a new form - E624A - to permit transfer was issued in May 1915 to all new recruits as well as to all who had already signified assent. It was said by Lord Derby - the 'King of Lancashire' - to be 'murdering' Territorial recruitment.³⁶ As opposition increased, Kitchener withdrew the stipulation that all must sign both forms. As it happened, the Territorial legislation did not restrict the power of 'attachment' but the idea of new legislation was revived in April 1916.

Complaints from London units were aired in the House of Commons in March and April 1916 but clauses were then included in the Military Service Act of May 1916 to remove the anomaly.³⁷ Third rather than second line units became formally responsible for supplying drafts to first line units in March 1915 but there were insufficient trained men available. In June 1915, therefore, all trained men in second line units in excess of a total strength of 700 were made available for drafting to the first line, half being replaced from the third line. In July, the number to be retained by second line units was reduced to 600 with no replacement although the 2/1st Bucks Battalion did manage to keep more men on the strength through a degree of creativity.³⁸ Amid increasing evidence of the breaking down of the drafting system by 1916, a constant loss of trained personnel damaged the efficiency of second line Territorial units, which continued to have a poor reputation. It is a measure of the resentment that the War Office felt compelled to issue a detailed defence of its drafting policy in

³⁶ Randolph S. Churchill, *Lord Derby: King of Lancashire* (London: Heinemann, 1959), 185-86; Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 36.

³⁷ Beckett, 'Territorial Force', 136.

³⁸ Beckett, 'Territorial Force', 136-37; Christie-Miller, *2nd Bucks*, I, 99.

February 1919, pointing out not unreasonably that military necessity had had to prevail over the integrity of Territorial units.³⁹

Temporary amalgamations of many Territorial units took place in the wake of heavy casualties in 1915, and became more permanent in 1916, whilst second line Territorial units took the brunt of reductions on the reorganisation of the BEF amid the general manpower shortages in early 1918, leading to an increasing sense of powerlessness on the part of CTAs.⁴⁰ Thus, the 2/1st Bucks Battalion was reduced in February 1918.

The failure to utilise the CTAs clearly resulted in duplication of effort and competition, both in recruitment and in finding equipment, damaging to both Territorials and New Armies. It is difficult to assess how much the Territorial Force suffered from comparison with the New Armies. In a considered report in March 1925, on behalf of the Bucks CTA, Swann suggested there had been detriment to the Territorials through the belief the New Armies would see action before them. Additionally, the New Armies received better pay, and 'bringing money' stood at 5s.0d for regulars but only 1s.0d (later 2s.0d) for Territorials. Further difficulties had arisen from the training of the first line units outside the county - the 1/1st Royal Bucks Hussars at Churn and the 1/1st Bucks Battalion at Chelmsford - where facilities had been lacking. The Oxford depot, acting merely as a 'pillar box', had also been a poor advertisement for enlistment.⁴¹

Successive War Office restrictions were placed on Territorial recruiting with the cessation of yeomanry recruiting between June and September 1915. When voluntary direct enlistment in the Territorial Force ceased on 7 December 1915, some 725,842 men had enlisted in it, or approximately half the number enlisted

³⁹ Beckett, 'Territorial Force in Great War', 29.

⁴⁰ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 233.

⁴¹ BA, T/A 1/1, Swann to War Office, 13 Mar. 1925; T/A 1/1, CTA Mins., 12 Sept. 1914.

in the New Armies in the same period. Indeed, compared to 267 regular or reserve battalions, and 557 New Army battalions in existence during the war, there were 692 Territorial battalions.⁴² In all, the Territorials raised 29 infantry divisions - one of dismounted yeomanry - and five mounted divisions. Of the infantry divisions, 23 served overseas: ten solely on the Western Front (including 61st Division); four in the Mediterranean and Middle East as well as France and Belgium; four solely in the Mediterranean and Middle East; one in Ireland and then on the Western Front; one on the Western Front and then Italy (48th Division); one on the Western Front and then at Salonika and in Egypt; and three in India. Of the five mounted divisions, three served overseas: one served at Gallipoli and then in the Middle East (2nd Mounted Division); and two solely in the Middle East. The other three were all converted to cyclists and then broken up in 1916.⁴³

Having been compelled to compete with the War Office to equip their units in the summer and autumn of 1914, the power and function of CTAs were progressively reduced. This was despite there being little doubt that, despite the ever increasing avalanche of new paper work, they had been performing satisfactorily and could have met the challenge of expanding the army as a whole if given the responsibility.⁴⁴ The CTA Finance Committee admonished Harry Lawson for ordering 128 new uniforms for recruits to the Royal Bucks Hussars on 3 September 1914 at a cost of £937 without prior permission.⁴⁵ Yet the CTA took pride in the unequal comparison between the uniforms and equipment it had been able to find for the 2/1st Bucks Battalion - although

⁴² Beckett, 'Territorial Force', 132.

⁴³ Beckett, *Territorials*, 57-58; Beckett & Simpson (eds), *Nation in Arms*, 237.

⁴⁴ Mitchinson, *Territorial Force at War*, 47-48; idem, *England's Last Hope*, 229-31.

⁴⁵ BA, T/A 1/6, Finance Committee Mins., 3 Sept. 1914.

including DP rifles and captured Boer Mausers taken from the Eton OTC - and the plain clothes and dummy rifles of recruits at Oxford although the trousers were a different shade of khaki back and front. It had placed its own contracts with boot makers at Olney and Chesham, and for clothing at Wycombe. The Eton OTC also provided its regular NCO instructors to help train recruits.⁴⁶ The men of both 1/1st and 2/1st Bucks Battalions were equally proud of their equipment compared to what they saw of Kitchener recruits, those at Wycombe having to make do drilling with wooden rifles turned out quickly by the furniture trade.⁴⁷



2/1st Bucks Battalion digging trenches at Overstone, March 1915 [BMMT]

⁴⁶ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 53, 132-33; idem, *The 2nd Bucks Battalion, 1914-18* (Privately printed: n. d.), 4; BA, T/A 1/1, CTA Mins, 12 Sept. 1914 and 13 Mar. 1925; T/A 3/500, Stewart-Liberty, 'Memoirs of a New Battalion', 1927; *Bucks Herald*, 27 Oct. 1933.

⁴⁷ Author interview with J. Stammers, A. Seymour, and J. Tranter, 25 Nov. 1980.

The CTA was also quick to criticize what it saw as incompetence at Oxford. The former adjutant of the Bucks Battalion and candidate for Bucks CTA Secretary, Sir Charles Cuyler, was asked to explain on 14 November 1914 why Bucks men were apparently being sent to the Wiltshire Regiment. Cuyler, recalled from retirement to command the depot in August 1914, promised to try and place Bucks men where they wished.⁴⁸ Conversely, on 28 December one of the CTA Recruiting Committee's local agents complained to the Earl of Buckinghamshire that men from Holmer Green who wanted to join the Royal Artillery or Royal Engineers were being turned away at Oxford: 'it of course makes recruiting in this neighbourhood impossible as the men are only given passes to Oxford and do not care to pay their own fare and lose a day's work as well in going to London'.⁴⁹ By July 1915 the local recruiting committee at Great Missenden was recording that it could now accept men with hammer toes, varicose veins, slight cardiac irregularities, hernias, and trusses.⁵⁰

The CTA's Central Recruiting Committee resolved that all recruits in the county should be given the option of joining the Territorials or the regulars but without pressure being applied. It appointed sub-committees for North, Mid and South Bucks with additional local committees. Between 4 August 1914 and 20 June 1915 it recruited 3,291 men for the Territorials and 2,640 for the New Armies.⁵¹ Though far from accurate, the Bucks Roll of Honour produced in

⁴⁸ BA, T/A 1/13, Mins., Emergency Committee, 14 Nov. 1914; T/A 1/33, Cuyler to Earl of Buckinghamshire, 1 Jan. 1915.

⁴⁹ BA, T/A 1/33, Campbell to Buckinghamshire, 28 Dec. 1914.

⁵⁰ BA, T/A 71/1, Missenden Recruiting Sub-committee Mins., 30 July 1915.

⁵¹ BA, T/A 1/13, Mins., Recruiting Committee, 5 Nov. 1914 and 18 Jan. 1915; T/A 1/4, Mins., General Purposes Committee, 3 Sept. 1914; T/A 1/22, CTA Annual Report, 1914-15;

January 1918 suggested 19,450 men had enlisted prior to June 1916.⁵² That suggested an impressive enough response from a county with a total population of 219,000 in 1911 but the even more impressive reality was that over 44,000 names of servicemen from the county were recorded in the local wartime press. Over 8,400 names are recorded on the county's war memorials. Only Stoke Hammond was counted among the 50 or so 'thankful villages' in the country as a whole to which every man who had enlisted returned safe.⁵³

Responsibility for clothing and equipment was taken over by the War Office in May 1915 and in 1916 control was lost over the Territorial ASC and the National Reserve, the latter incorporated into the Royal Defence Corps. The Bucks CTA continued to try and ensure that Bucks men reached Bucks units but without much success. In April 1916 it protested at rumoured battlefield amalgamations. In October 1916 it complained that there was an attempt to foist OBLI badges on the 3/1st Bucks Battalion.⁵⁴ In March 1918 there was disquiet at the disbandment of the 2/1st Bucks Battalion and the CTA extracted a promise from the Adjutant General that a similar fate would not befall the 1/1st Bucks Battalion: it was 1/5th Gloucesters in 145 Brigade that were reduced in September 1918. Unsurprisingly, it demanded a new separate regiment in 1919 and a special letter officially recognising the services of the 2/1st Bucks

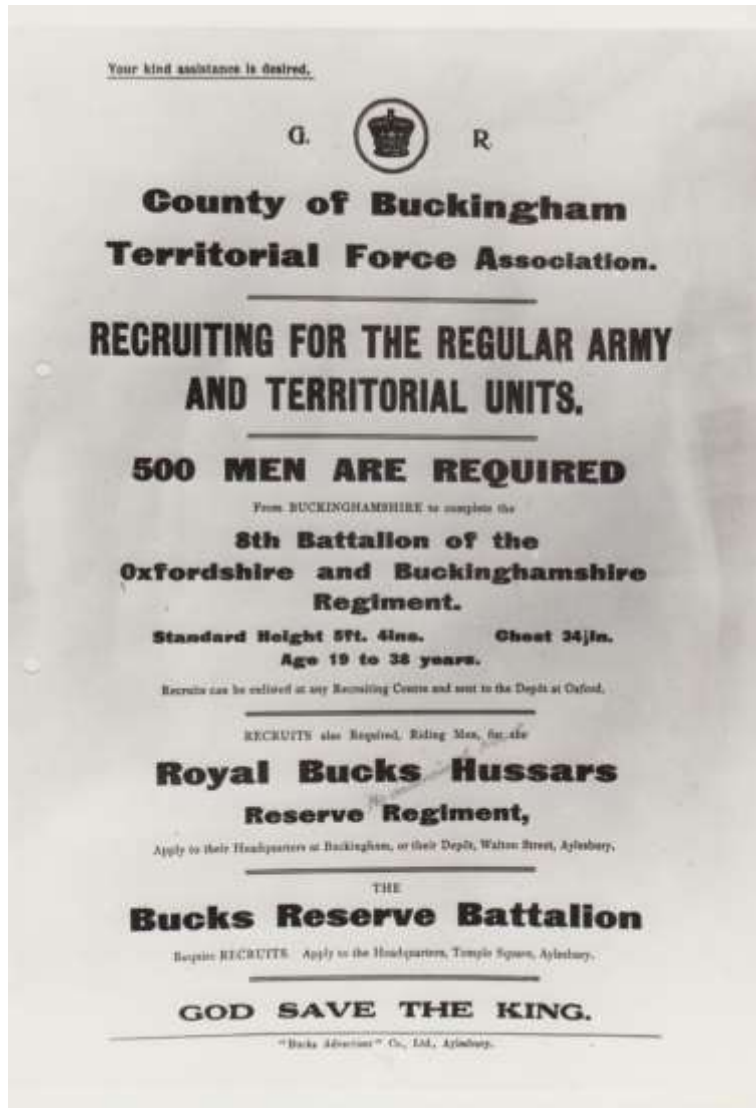
Old War Office Library, Misc. Letters, 576, Memo, 3 Feb. 1915; Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 52-53

⁵² BA, T/A 1/13, Mins., Recruiting Committee, 4 Nov. 1914; 18 Jan., 10 May, 12 Aug, 21 Oct., and 17 Nov. 1915; *Bucks Herald*, 5 Jan. 1918; T/A1/4, General Purposes Committee, 5 Jan. 1918.

⁵³ <http://buckinghamshireremembers.org.uk>.

⁵⁴ BA, T/A, 1/4 Mins., General Purposes Committee, 6 Apr, 4 and 5 Oct. 1916.

Battalion.⁵⁵ Moreover, in 1921 the CTA complained that the Imperial War Graves Commission was placing OBLI and not Bucks Battalion badges on some headstones.⁵⁶



Bucks Recruiting Poster, 1914 [BA]

⁵⁵ BA, T/A 1/1, CTA Mins., 7 Mar. 1918; T/A, 1/4, General Purposes Mins., 2 Jan. and 6 Feb. 1919; *ibid.*, Macdonogh to Lincolnshire, 23 Jan. 1919; IWM, Doc. 80/32/2, Christie-Miller Mss, WO to Bucks CTA, 23 Jan. 1919.

⁵⁶ BA, T/A 1/1, CTA Mins., 21 July 1921.

In November 1916 some of the responsibilities of the Director General of the Territorial Force (DGTF) were transferred to the Military Secretary. Fearing more dilution of statutory powers, the CTAs sent representatives to meet Derby, now Secretary of State for War, in January 1917. He denied that more powers would be curtailed but in March 1917 depots were centralised with many Territorial depots closed. Territorial record offices were also closed with all men passing to Territorial units receiving regular army numbers. A further deputation to Derby in October 1917 saw the CTAs save their administration of separation allowances and remaining depots given a stay of execution after a concerted effort by the Council of CTAs. Bucks passed a resolution opposing closure of the Aylesbury depot in October 1917 on the grounds of the ‘unique position of this County in respect to the Buckinghamshire Battalion, which alone of the battalions of the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry is a representative Buckinghamshire corps’.⁵⁷

CTAs were also able to continue to administer welfare funds but the only new responsibility was administering the new volunteer force from 1916 onwards.⁵⁸ Welfare in itself was a major undertaking and one readily supplemented by all manner of county and local effort from the Bucks Branch of the SSFA to the Bucks County Relief Committee, the Marlow National War Relief Committee, the Quainton General War Committee, the Chicheley War Working Party, and the Castlethorpe Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Comforts Committee. It was important as the War Office was slow to organise properly the payment of separation allowances in 1914 whilst subsequent efforts provided a comforting link between servicemen and their communities. Christmas gifts were a particular component as in the case of the 27 men from Tyringham who all received a

⁵⁷ BA, T/A 1/4, General Purposes Mins., 4 Oct. 1917.

⁵⁸ Beckett, ‘Territorial Force’, 139-40; Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 33.

shirt, socks, muffler, pipe, tobacco, cigarettes, chocolate, and plum pudding in December 1915. That same Christmas, The Lee sent 29 parcels of Christmas pudding, tins of cocoa and milk, tins of potted meat and cheese, Oxo cubes, chocolate cake, and cigarettes sent to men serving overseas and the 40 boxes of cigarettes sent to those serving at home. For Christmas 1916, Quainton spent £27.1s.0d on 103 parcels.⁵⁹

The CTA established an information bureau at 17 St Mary's Square, Aylesbury staffed entirely by women. Over £3,000 was received by the Territorial Units Comforts Fund Committee which operated until superseded by the Oxford-based Care Committee in early 1917. At the time, the Comforts Fund Committee was endeavouring to assist nine Bucks Territorial POWs held by the Turks. By the end of the war, there were 47 Bucks Territorial POWs in German or Turkish hands, two others having died in Turkish hands. Some 2,020 parcels were sent to POWs between January 1917 and June 1918 alone including 109 to Turkey.⁶⁰

One of the most significant additional factors in Kitchener's failure to utilise the Territorials overseas was preoccupation in 1914 with possible German invasion, against which the Territorials were the principal defence. Use of the Territorials to expand the BEF would disorganise the force for its home defence role, as its division into first line overseas and second line home service units was already judged to be doing in September 1914. Despite pre-war dismissal of invasion fears by the Admiralty, there were genuine fears following the German capture

⁵⁹ Ian F. W. Beckett, 'Buckinghamshire in the Great War: A Research Framework', *Records of Bucks* 57 (2017), 191-201; BA, PR 169/24/1, Mins. of Quainton General War Committee, 10 Apl. 1917; John Taylor, *Home Fires: Life in the North Bucks Towns and Villages during the First World War* (Southampton: Magic Flute, 2014), 267; Mike Senior, *No Finer Courage: A Village in the Great War* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2004), 50.

⁶⁰ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 54-55; BA, T/A 1/22, CTA Annual Report, 1917-18.

of Antwerp on 10 October. In any case, whatever the Navy professed in public, its own fears of German invasion were deep-seated. Plans for the destruction of the German High Seas Fleet in 1914 had a far lower priority than the defence of home waters in the calculation of most leading naval figures. The Admiralty had been always extremely sensitive to what revelations might come out of the invasion enquiries. Pre-war naval manoeuvres as well as the deliberations of the Fremantle Committee in 1907-08 had consistently revealed the vulnerability of the east coast to attack. The Navy deliberately deceived the CID and the politicians regarding its true fears.⁶¹

On 7 October 1914 the CID resolved to begin secret preparations to remove livestock, vehicles and petrol supplies from eastern counties. Kitchener expected the danger to continue until at least January 1915 and even Churchill and the First Sea Lord, Fisher, were alarmed. By 12 November 1914, there was some expectation of a German attempt on the east coast within the next six weeks, with a likely date assumed to be 20 November when moon and tides were right. Local emergency committees were hastily organised and their work publicised while fears were fanned by the press and cinematic epics such as the *Daily Express*-sponsored 'Wake Up' and new stories such as 'If England Were Invaded' by Le Queux and du Maurier.

Kitchener's scrapping of existing home defence plans had not materially contributed to home defence organisation, pre-war expectations of engaging an invading enemy inland being replaced by a concept of meeting an invasions on the beaches that had been consistently rejected by defence planners since the 1880s. Some 30,000 men, mostly Territorials, were spread accordingly along the east coast. The Admiralty chose not to disclose a German appreciation it had obtained that greatly exaggerated the strength of British defences, and fears

⁶¹ Morgan-Owen, *Fear of Invasion*, 170-77, 190-96, 205-08, 216-22.

were sustained by the press, and by the German bombardment of Scarborough and other northeast towns in December 1914. By January 1916 it was still believed that the Germans could land up to 160,000 men before the Royal Navy could intervene, the scale assumed by pre-war invasion enquiries being only 70,000 men. The scale was not reduced until December 1917, when it was set at 30,000, before a final adjustment down to 5,000 was made in September 1918.

⁶²

Although he had not originally expected to need to send Territorials abroad at an early stage, Kitchener was prepared to send the 42nd (East Lancashire) Division to Egypt in September 1914 and the 43rd (Wessex) Division to India in October to replace regulars recalled to Europe, the latter followed by the 44th (Home Counties) and 45th (2nd Wessex) Divisions to India in December. He was also eventually reluctantly persuaded to allow Territorials to ‘fill the gap’ in France and Flanders in the winter of 1914-15 before his New Armies were ready to do so. By the end of December 1914 some 33 Territorial units were in France and Flanders, including 22 infantry battalions. The total of battalions rose to 48 by February 1915, and the first complete division - the 46th (North Midland) Division - arrived that same month although it was generally considered less efficient than the 48th Division.⁶³ The first complete brigade - 149 (Northumberland) Brigade from 50th (Northumbrian) Division - went into action in April 1915.

When the Territorials reached the Western Front, there appears to have been little animosity with regulars at least among other ranks.⁶⁴ By contrast, there

⁶² Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 236-37.

⁶³ Mitchinson, *England's Last Hope*, 218; idem, *Territorial Force at War*, 62-63; idem, *48th Division*, 41-42.

⁶⁴ Mitchinson, *Territorial Force at War*, 87-88.

would be a degree of resentment between Territorials and the New Armies, the latter receiving more Christmas leave in December 1914 and, in many cases, receiving better equipment. Later on Gallipoli in September 1915, for example, an Irish officer in a New Army battalion, 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers, was critical of the training of the 1/1st Royal Bucks Hussars and their officers when they relieved his battalion in the trenches. Yet, he himself had no previous military experience, had only arrived in August 1915 and, in any case, was a constant critic of Territorials.⁶⁵

Friction also clearly existed between regular and Territorial officers. Haldane had promised that suitably qualified Territorials would be given higher commands. In 1914 no Territorial had commanded a division and there were only three Territorial infantry brigade commanders. Regulars had rarely sought to command Territorial divisions or brigades before the war and, of those divisional commanders in post in August 1914, all were in their 50s. Moreover, only six had held the post for more than two years.⁶⁶ Three years later, the Under Secretary of State for War, Ian Macpherson, stated that 18 Territorials had risen above the rank of lieutenant colonel at the front and three at home. He also claimed that the percentage of Territorial (19.6 per cent) and New Army (15.7 per cent) candidates taking up staff courses exceeded that of regulars (31.3 per cent) and dominion and other overseas (33.3 per cent) candidates. This was hardly encouraging given the declining number of regular officers and in January 1918 Derby argued that no talented men were overlooked: since 1914, a total of 1,973 Territorial and New Army officers had held AQ or QM staff appointments compared to 4,651 regulars. He also said that four Territorials had commanded divisions and 52 had commanded brigades, whilst 61 pre-war

⁶⁵ Richard Grayson (ed.), *The First World War Diary of Noël Drury, 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press for Army Records Society, 2022), 84-85.

⁶⁶ Mitchinson, *Territorial Force at War*, 19-20.

Territorial lieutenants had risen to lieutenant colonel. What he did not say was that most of the divisional and brigade commands had been only temporary appointments. Macpherson admitted in the following month that only 10 Territorials currently commanded brigades and, throughout the war to date, only three had become GSO1s.⁶⁷

In the case of 48th Division, only regulars commanded it and only regulars filled the appointments of GSO1, AAQMG, and BGRA. At first, the CRE was a Territorial but he was replaced shortly after the division reached France and no Territorial occupied it again until January 1918. Neither 143 nor 144 Brigades had any other than regular commanding officers. Whilst three Territorials commanded 145 Brigade at various times each was only a temporary appointment amounting to just 42 days between them: Lieutenant Colonel Lewis Reynolds of the 1/1st Bucks Battalion held the post for 15 days.⁶⁸

The division itself was fortunate in its divisional commander, the terminally ill Major General Henry Heath, appointed to the command in August 1914, being replaced by the immensely popular Sir Robert ‘Fanny’ Fanshawe in May 1915. Often appearing in front line trenches with an old raincoat over his rank badges, Fanshawe was known as the ‘chocolate soldier’ from his handing out of chocolate on visits to his men.⁶⁹ Some regulars believed Fanshawe was too familiar with the men and Fanshawe was unjustly removed after the 48th Division was briefly forced back on the Asiago in Italy on 15 June 1918. Fanshawe’s well practised concept of ‘elastic defence’ with well-located

⁶⁷ Beckett, ‘Territorial Force’, 141; *The Times*, 30 Jan. 1918.

⁶⁸ Beckett, ‘Territorial Force in Great War’, 30-31.

⁶⁹ Charles Edmonds [sc. Charles Carrington], *A Subaltern’s War* (London: Peter Davies, 1929), 115-16; E. Champion Vaughan, *Some Desperate Glory* (London: Frederick Warne, 1981), 78.

support battalions such as the 1/1st Bucks in the ‘Lemerle Switch’ was not that of his corps commander, the Earl of Cavan, who had advocated holding the front line in strength. Cavan was not thought to understand defence in depth but, in any case, may have felt even a short-term loss of the front line - there was no Austro-Hungarian breakthrough - undermined British military credibility when strenuous efforts were being made to persuade the Italians to accept more British military direction. Cavan’s chief of staff, Major General the Hon. J. F. Gathorne-Hardy also played a part in Fanshawe’s removal. The attack had occurred during Reynolds’ temporary command of 145 Brigade. The 1/1st Bucks received the news of Fanshawe’s removal ‘with the greatest dismay’.⁷⁰ Fanshawe was dismissed on 19 June. His successor, Harold Walker, who arrived on 4 July, was more demonstrative but equally effective.⁷¹



1/1st Bucks Battalion in trenches at Ploegsteert, June 1915 [BMMT]

⁷⁰ Beckett, ‘Territorial Force in Great War’, 31-32; P. L. Wright, *The First Bucks Battalion* (Aylesbury: Hazell, Watson & Viney, 1920), 114; Mitchinson, *48th Division*, 220-31; John Dillon, *Allies Are a Tiresome Lot: The British Army in Italy in the First World War* (Solihull: Helion, 2015), 161-64; George Cassar, *Forgotten Front: The British Campaign in Italy, 1917-18* (London: Hambledon, 1998), 162-64; TNA, CAB 45/84, Fanshawe to Edmonds, 19 June 1944; Carrington to Edmonds, 28 June 1944; Tomkinson to Edmonds, 3 July 1944; Author interview with Colonel Howard Green, 22 Feb. 1980.

⁷¹ Mitchinson, *Territorial Force at War*, 152.

Claude Doig, the elderly and lazy regular from the Seaforth Highlanders who took command of the 1/1st Bucks Battalion in January 1915 after Francis Wethered was deemed too unfit to take the battalion abroad - a frequent occurrence among veteran Territorial commanding officers - was according to Oscar Viney, surprised to find any Territorial officers to be 'gentlemen'.⁷² Wethered recovered sufficiently to be posted to command 1/6th Royal Warwicks in 143 Brigade in May 1915 but was invalided home wounded in April 1916.⁷³ Bizarrely, Doig had a riding accident in January 1916 breaking his collar bone and exactly the same fate befell his successor, Lionel Hawkins in June 1916, who broke his collar bone. Hawkins, of course, had been with the volunteer service company in South Africa. Another long-term Bucks Territorial, Lewis Leslie Clayton Reynolds - not to be confused with his father, Lewis W Reynolds, also a Wycombe doctor - then took command.⁷⁴ A Wycombe doctor with a rather aloof manner, Reynolds had a German wife, who experienced some hostility both in Wycombe and when she visited Reynolds at Chelmsford.⁷⁵

The officers of 184th Brigade in 61st (2nd South Midland) Division including the 2/1st Bucks Battalion believed that the failure of their first major operation at Fromelles in July 1916 was used as an excuse to remove the last remaining Territorials in brigade and divisional appointments. The regular staff were said to have 'gloried in their contempt' of Territorials. At one point whilst inspecting the battalion in 1917, Lieutenant General Sir Aylmer Hunter-Weston remarked

⁷² Viney, 'Reminiscences', 84.

⁷³ Mitchinson, *48th Division*, 52 is in error when suggesting Wethered was invalided home almost immediately after taking command of the 1/6th.

⁷⁴ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 94.

⁷⁵ Author interviews with J. Stammers, A Seymour and J Tranter, 25 Nov. 1980; Viney, 'Reminiscences', 87.

that ‘temporary officers not being accustomed to valets in private life did not know how to make use of their servants in the Army’. ⁷⁶ Territorial officers also received less pay and allowances and many Territorials felt it necessary to remove the Ts from their collars as it was seen as a badge of inferiority. ⁷⁷

Under pre-war regulations, Territorial officers also ranked junior in precedence to regulars of the same rank, including newly wartime commissioned officers of the New Armies. Ironically, the Territorials provided many such newly minted officers. A total of 27 men were either commissioned into other units or went to commissioning cadet units from the 1/1st Bucks Battalion after March 1915. ⁷⁸ Three of the original officer contingent took command of other battalions during the war, two became second in command of other battalions and four were to hold staff appointments. ⁷⁹ No less than 67 men from the 2/1st Royal Bucks Hussars were commissioned during the war while the 2/1st Bucks Battalion found around 30 men for wartime commissions from its other ranks. Christie-Miller went on to command the 2/5th Gloucesters in April 1918. ⁸⁰ In all, 60,863 new Territorial commissions were issued between 1914 and 1920 but only 335 Territorials were given permanent regular commissions. ⁸¹ The irony was that the Territorials provided large numbers of candidates for wartime commissions in the regulars and New Armies: the 1/28th London (Artists’

⁷⁶ Christie-Miller, *2nd Bucks*, II, 112, 122-24, 189; IV, 341-42.

⁷⁷ Beckett, ‘Territorial Force’, 142.

⁷⁸ BA, T/A 6/11-14.

⁷⁹ Wright, *First Bucks*, 120.

⁸⁰ BA, D206/13; Christie-Miller, *2nd Bucks*, IV.

⁸¹ Beckett, ‘Territorial Force’, 143.

Rifles) had over 10,000 men commissioned and the Inns of Court OTC over 11,000.⁸²

In any case, there was rapid change in all battalions under the pressure of mounting casualties. Increasingly, drafts were less likely to maintain territorial identity and it has been argued that the ‘genuine Territorial Force reached its apotheosis on the Somme’ in 1916.⁸³ Some Territorial units may have been able to resist ‘nationalisation’ to a greater extent than others but the drafting system was often quite arbitrary. Regimental identity remained strong in the 54th (East Anglian) Division) serving in the Middle East.⁸⁴ Studies focusing on Western Command have also suggested that its Territorial units maintained significant homogeneity throughout the war despite casualties since, if not from the same regiment, replacements were from the same region with real efforts made to ensure this was so.⁸⁵ Generally, the reinforcement policy relating to the Territorial Force - as established in terms of the first, second and third lines in 1914-15 - was far more logical than the haphazard evolution of a system for the New Armies. The identity of New Army units was diluted even before significant casualties occurred although the War Office did attempt to maintain

⁸² Beckett, *Territorials*, 72.

⁸³ Mitchinson, *Territorial Force at War*, 215; Beckett, ‘Territorial Force’, 146-48.

⁸⁴ James Kitchen, *The British Imperial Army in the Middle East; Morale and Identity in the Sinai and Palestine Campaigns, 1916-18* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 123-50.

⁸⁵ Helen McCartney, *Citizen Soldiers: The Liverpool Territorials in the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 71; Alison Hine, ‘The Provision and Management of Casualty replacements for British Infantry Units on the Western Front during the First World War’, Unpub. PhD, Birmingham, 2015, 197, 204-05, 216-21, 286-91; Mitchinson, *Territorial Force at War*, 205-07.

regimental and regional identities before and after the introduction of the centralised Training Reserve in September 1916.⁸⁶

Bucks was placed in District 7 of Southern Command, which was far more diverse than a Western Command dominated by Lancashire. Analysis of the 1/1st Bucks Battalion 'Casualty Books' shows that specific units identified as providing drafts came from Devon within District 8 of Southern Command; from Berkshire and Hampshire, which were split between Southern Command and Aldershot Command; and from Huntingdonshire in Eastern Command. It might be argued, therefore, that units in Southern Command were not treated as generously in replacement terms as those in Western Command. The situation in the Royal Bucks Hussars appears far more satisfactory. A nominal roll of 'A'; squadron of the 1/1st RBH got the entire period spent overseas from March 1915 shows that from the 356 other ranks who served with it, 70 (19.6 per cent) were drafted from the 2/1st RBH, 32 (8.9 per cent) from the 3/1st RBH and 37 (10.3 per cent) from the 3rd Reserve Cavalry into which the 3/1st RBH had been absorbed in 1917. Only 12 men (3.3 per cent) came from other regiments, seven of them from other yeomanry units including four from the Oxfordshire Yeomanry and one from the Berkshire Yeomanry. Only five were from regular units including, bizarrely, three from the Black Watch albeit that two of them were shoeing smiths. Of the 31 officers who served with 'A' Squadron, three came from the 2/1st RBH, two from the 3/1st RBH and six from other yeomanry regiments.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Thomas Davies, 'Sustaining Britain's First "Citizen Army": The Creation and Evolution of the Reinforcement Policy for Kitchener's New Armies, 1914-16', *British Journal for Military History* 8 (2022), 20-39.

⁸⁷ BA, D206/24.

It is impossible to generalise the experience of wartime servicemen. There was no one typical experience: no battalion was quite like any other. There was a constant change of personalities as men left units as casualties from battle or disease; went on leave, or on courses; or were drafted to other units. The Great War was not fought solely on the Western Front. It was not until 1917 that there were more British troops in France and Flanders than in the United Kingdom. Campaigning conditions on the Eastern Front, where the war was always more fluid, in Mesopotamia or East Africa, were quite different from those in France and Flanders. Even the Western Front was not a theatre of unrelieved terror, deprivation, disillusionment and futility. There were wide differences between different sectors from the flat waterlogged fields of Flanders to the rolling chalk downs of the Somme uplands. In any case, it was simply not the case that soldiers spent their entire service in the front line. The nature of modern warfare was also such that the ratio between combatant and non-combatant troops altered considerably during the war, as more and more men were required to supply the materials required to keep an army fighting.

It should not be supposed that a handful of sensitive intellectual or otherwise literary-minded wartime officers like Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen, and Robert Graves was in any way representative of the army as a whole. The British army was not one which universally carried Palgrave's *The Golden Treasury* in its knapsacks, let alone a literary agent's contract. It is assumed from the literary evidence that there was a universality of experience linking officers and men in a common community of spirit bred in the trenches: a 'war generation'. There was a wartime process of bonding but there were always differences between officers and men. While social divisions blurred as units were increasingly fed from the same pool of manpower, there still also remained a distinction between those who had volunteered and those who had been conscripted after 1916. While the war clearly exposed men to experiences

very different from those at home and broadened horizons, it could never sever the link of a mass citizen army with civilian life, nor could it eradicate the social or regional diversity that had existed in civilian society. The enormous volume of mail between front and home provided a vital bridge, so that it was more a question of interaction with home rather than the supposed alienation of separate spheres of 'home' and 'front'. The constant movement also limited separation during the war between front and home, as men went on leave, or were released to (or recalled from) war-related industries. Much provided behind the lines - the recreational facilities, concert parties, sports meetings and so on - was entirely familiar from peacetime popular culture.

Generally, a largely working class army was one in which men were used to subordination, tedium, hardship and, it must be said, premature death. Without minimising individual experiences, it could be argued that for those not physically or mentally maimed wartime service was not necessarily viewed negatively. Of course, men wanted to go home but the sense of victimhood with which Great War soldiers are often approached does them an immense disservice, just as does any concept that they believed themselves engaged in futile sacrifice in a war of 'lions led by donkeys', a phrase that dates back at least to the reign of William III.⁸⁸

In suggesting the nature of war experience the 'Casualty Books' of the 1/1st Bucks Battalion constitute a truly unique source for the 2,906 other ranks and 139 officers (excluding two medical officers and a chaplain) who served overseas between 1915 and 1919.⁸⁹ The battalion served with 145 Brigade of 48th (South Midland) Division on the Western Front from March 1915 to

⁸⁸ Ian F. W. Beckett, Timothy Bowman and Mark Connelly, *The British Army and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 135-69.

⁸⁹ BA, T/A 6/11-14.

November 1917, and then in Italy from November 1917 to February 1919. The division was dispatched to Italy together with the 5, 7th, 23rd and 43rd Divisions to shore up the Italian army after its defeat at the hands of German and Austro-Hungarian forces at Caporetto between 24 October and 19 November 1917. The Bucks was then chosen as the representative Territorial infantry battalion to receive one of the seven bronze commemorative medals awarded by the King of Italy on 28 March 1920.⁹⁰ It might be added that in addition to the battalion war diaries retained in the National Archives at Kew,⁹¹ there are also the order books of 'B' Company for 1915-16, a trench log for 'B' Company' for 1915, order books for 'C' Company from 1916 to 1918, and order books for two platoons within 'C' Company for 1915. These, however, do not add materially to the information available in the casualty books.⁹²

The eight pre-war companies were reorganised into four with 'A' Company from Marlow (formerly 'A') and Wycombe (formerly 'B') under Reynolds; 'B' from Aylesbury (formerly 'D') and Buckingham (formerly 'C') under Lionel Crouch; 'C' from Slough (formerly 'E') and Wolverton (formerly 'F') under George Bowyer of Weston Manor, Weston Underwood, the son of a former regular; and 'D' from Wolverton (formerly 'G') and Wycombe (formerly 'H') under Edward Birchall. George Bowyer (later 1st Lord Denham) was Conservative MP for Buckingham from 1918 to 1937. A noted philanthropist from Gloucestershire, Birchall had joined the so-called Agenda Club whilst at Oxford and was also a member of the Birmingham Civic Aid Society and the Guild of Help. He was commissioned in 1904, joining the Bucks Battalion in

⁹⁰ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 130-31; Wright, *First Bucks*, 215-16. The medal was set in a silver cigarette box in 1926 and is preserved in the BMMT collection as BMMT 545/69.

⁹¹ TNA, WO 95/2763, 4251.

⁹² BA, T/A 6/4-10.

1906. In 1914 he was working for the Juvenile Branch of the Labour Exchange under the Board of Trade, based in Bristol.⁹³

The Wolverton Detachment was late arriving at its designated mobilisation station of Cosham after being shunted overnight into a railway siding.

Meanwhile the Aylesbury Company's billets were split between a skating rink and a former butcher's shop.⁹⁴ After three days, the battalion was despatched to Swindon for a week's intensive training and then marched by stages to Chelmsford. There it spent the next seven months in training and in billets as part of the so-called Central Force before proceeding overseas. Private George Kent from Aston Abbots, for example, had three different billets at Chelmsford.⁹⁵ The usual routine at Chelmsford was 'Swedish drill' from 0630 to 0730 hours, followed by a battalion parade at 0900 and training until 1400. Company parades took place between 1530 and 1630 and there was also an hour's drill. Night operations were undertaken once a week.⁹⁶

The degree of change in the 1/1st Bucks Battalion is easily traced in Table 8.1. It is convenient to see the battalion's war experience as comprising three periods of relative stability (March 1915 to June 1916, September 1916 to June 1917, and September 1917 to November 1917) interspersed with two short and intense phases of operations (July to August 1916, and July to August 1917). The

⁹³ Ingram Murray, 'Edward Birchall DSO: Soldier and Philanthropist', *Bugle & Sabre* 9 (2016), 41-43.

⁹⁴ Wright, *First Bucks*, 2; Crouch, *Duty and Service*, 21; Augustus Mockler-Ferryman (ed.), *The Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry Chronicle, 1914-15* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode), 334.

⁹⁵ Peter Kent, *To the Front and Back: Four and a Half Years in the Life of an Infantryman* (Bletchley: Privately printed, 2007), 7.

⁹⁶ Ralph Hazell (ed.), *With the Colours, 1914-18* (Aylesbury: Hazell, Watson & Viney, 1919), 2, 16.

period from September 1917 onwards is divided by the battalion's departure for the Italian front at the end of November 1917, justifiable in terms of the very different conditions then experienced. The two intense periods are defined by the battles of the Somme and Third Ypres. Even then, the most significant casualties occurred on a few days - around Ovillers and Pozières on the Somme between 21 and 24 July 1916, which cost 242 casualties, and at St Julien on 16 August 1917 during that part of the Third Ypres campaign classified as the Battle of Langemarck, which cost 291 casualties.

In keeping with the legislative difficulties and the retrospective authorisation for transfers between units, there were just 24 prior to June 1916: 13 of them went to the Brigade Machine Gun Company whilst five men were transferred to the Ministry of Munitions at home as well as one sent home on compassionate grounds. Of the remainder, three went to the Royal Engineers, one to the Royal Flying Corps, and one for unknown reasons to the 10th (Service) Battalion, The Lincolnshire Regiment - the 'Grimsby Chums'. Thereafter, transfers were frequent with a wartime total of 185 men transferred up to January 1919. In addition, 41 men were posted directly elsewhere after recovering from wounds or injury on the Somme in July 1916. This was probably regarded as acceptable since 40 of them went to the 2/1st Bucks, the other individual to the Royal Engineers. These men are counted as not returning through wounds or injury rather than as transfers in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 Other Ranks: Changes in Personnel in 1/1st Bucks Battalion, 1915-19

Changes in Personnel	Mar 1915 to Jun 1916	July 1916 to Aug 1916	Sept 1916 to Jun 1917	July 1917 to Aug 1917	Sept 1917 to Nov 1917	Dec 1917 to Jan 1919	Totals
Killed	37	62	56	69	18	27	269
Missing	1	61	3	44	5	9	123
Died of Wounds	15	23	14	11	7	2	72
Died	-	1	4	1	-	9	15
Wounded and did not return	79	261	74	172	32	78	696
Injured and did not return	9	5	5	5	2	3	29
Illness and did not return	137	29	146	19	53	68	452
Time-expired	97	-	-	-	-	-	97
Under Age	10	3	9	-	1	-	23
Commission	7	-	12	2	3	3	27
Transfer Out	24	41	19	10	29	62	185
Total Lost	416	486	342	333	150	261	1988
Drafts In	410	357	563	194	313	153	1990

Source: BA, T/A 6/11-14

Proceeding overseas on 30 March 1915, the battalion occupied an acknowledged quiet sector at Hébuterne between July 1915 and July 1916, enabling it to become acclimatized to trench warfare. Initially, it was attached to units of the 4th Division in April 1915 around Ploegsteert. With ‘a live and let live’ system pertaining with the Saxons opposite, the battalion even had a trench

cow, one of only five mentioned in regimental accounts of the war. Captain Oscar Viney, the battalion intelligence officer, wrote in August 1915 that when the battalion first arrived there was still a shop selling tinned fruit in the village within 500 yards of the German front line. He reported in September that all the trench floors were comfortably bricked with bricks taken from the village ruins.

97



Officers of 'B' Company, 1/1st Bucks Battalion, May 1916. Back Row (left to right) Lieutenants Edwin Woollerton and John Rolleston. Front Row (left to right) Captains Lionel Crouch and Hugh Combs. Crouch was killed on 21 July

⁹⁷ Wright, *First Bucks*, 15-17; T. Ashworth, *Trench Warfare: The Live and Let Live System* (London: Macmillan, 1980), 131; Frederick Grisewood, *The World Goes By* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1952), 110; Hawtin Mundy, *No Heroes, No Cowards* (Milton Keynes: People's Press, 1981), 8-9; Hazell (ed.) *With the Colours*, 67.

1916 and Woollerton was wounded. Rolleston had been wounded five days earlier. [BMMT]

A typical entry in the 'B' Company Order Book for 17 December 1915 shows breakfast at 0715 and dinner at 1200 with working parties detailed to parade at 0815 and draw shovels, to work until 1145. All men would be treated with anti-frostbite grease before parading for trench duty at 1315. Instruction would be afforded to a company of the 18th King's Liverpool Regiment on the following day, these parties to be met at 1615 and guided forward.⁹⁸ As for trench duty itself, the trench log for 9-10 August 1915 recorded, 'A perfectly beastly nighty. Thunder - rain reduced the trenches to mere streams. Some had collapses of sides of trench in Murat and Marbot. Worked hard all night bailing. Thick mist after sunrise. Had to stand to until 8.15 a.m. Was able to inspect wire and to send out wiring party in daylight under cover of mist. Very quiet all night and all day. No shelling.'⁹⁹

Christmas Day 1915 was rather more lively and certainly saw no repetition of the 'truces' a year previously even in such a quiet sector: 'Xmas! Our artillery started as soon as it was light and strafed all day. Enemy retaliated in afternoon with 5.9s on Davout, Alesia and Tommy. One shell smashed wire in front of Davout badly. Another hit sentry group at head of Tommy. Fearful mess. 1 killed and 6 wounded. After 9 p.m. things quietened down. Cleared head of

⁹⁸ BA, T/A 6/5, 'B' Company Order Book, 17 Dec. 1915.

⁹⁹ BA, T/A 6/4, Trench Log, 'Right Company', 5 Aug. 1916. The trench names reflect that the sector had originally been French, Murat being one of Napoleon's marshals and Marbot a French general during the Napoleonic Wars.

Tommy. Replaced wire at Davout but had no stakes. At 11.30 rain began.
Heavy showers at intervals.’¹⁰⁰

The battalion’s embarkation strength was 30 officers and 916 other ranks.¹⁰¹
Five men went sick on 3 April but the first casualty was Private William Holland from Newport Pagnell, the son of Councillor Charles Holland. He was mortally wounded by a single high explosive shell fired on 8 April 1915 when the battalion was under instruction in the trenches, and digging communications trenches about 1,000 yards behind the front.¹⁰² The battalion had gone into the trenches by platoon.¹⁰³ Another early casualty, Alfred Hale, was mortally wounded by a sniper on 9 May although he did not die in a Nottingham hospital until 1 June: he received a full scale military funeral in High Wycombe on 5 June. Holding the line from July 1915 to June 1916 involved considerable work to improve former insanitary and waterlogged French trenches, the demands from the Royal Engineers for labour being reflected in the Casualty Books. Raiding as opposed to patrols into No Man’s Land remained novel and experimental.¹⁰⁴ The Bucks mounted only a dozen significant fighting patrols or raids, the largest on 1 April 1916 by two officers and 25 ORs, which cost four dead and two wounded with immediate awards of an MC, two DCMs, and a MM.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ BA, T/A6/4, Trench Log, ‘Right Company’, 25 Dec. 1915. Again, Davout was one of Napoleon’s marshals whilst Alesia was one of Caesar’s victories over the Gauls in 52 BC.

¹⁰¹ TNA, WO 95/2763/2.

¹⁰² *Bucks Standard*, 17 Apl. 1915; BA AR 68/2021 [BMMT 757/8], Birchall to Charles Holland, 9 April 1915.

¹⁰³ Hazell (ed.), *With the Colours*, 39.

¹⁰⁴ Mitchinson, *48th Division*, 70-81.

¹⁰⁵ Wright, *First Bucks*, 222-23; Crouch, *Duty and Service*, 92-94, 99-102.

Infantry fatalities for the whole division between March 1915 and June 1916 have been estimated at just 567.¹⁰⁶ For the 1/1st Bucks Battalion the total loss in its first fifteen months of active service between April 1915 and June 1916 amounted to 37 killed, 15 died of wounds, one missing, and 192 wounded, of whom 79 did not return to the battalion. Apart from an initial cluster of 12 fatalities (including four died of wounds) in May 1915, there were only five fatalities (including four died of wounds) between June 1915 and January 1916. Most of the 12 fatalities in February 1916 occurred as a result of a single shelling incident on 10 February while 23 casualties in May 1916 again came from shelling on 15 May 1916. Thirteen of the wounds were accidental as was one death, Bugler W. C. Ridgway being killed in bomb throwing practice on 31 May 1915. Ridgway was the first Aylesbury Territorial killed and also the first employee from Hazell, Watson & Viney, from whose Aylesbury and London works a total of 225 employees had enlisted by August 1915. Around 100 men from the Aylesbury factory were in the 1/1st Bucks Battalion when it embarked in March 1915 and, by the end of the war, 481 employees had enlisted.¹⁰⁷ Hazells ensured it kept in touch with its employees, Walter Hazell regularly sending letters to the firm's servicemen.¹⁰⁸ Ridgway's brother was also killed in March 1917.

¹⁰⁶ Mitchinson, *48th Division*, 82.

¹⁰⁷ Hazell (ed.), *With the Colours*, 50-51, 59; Viney, 'Reminiscences', 71; *Hazells: Being some account of provident and social institutions and a brief description of the work of Hazell, Watson, & Viney Ltd* 3rd edn. (London and Aylesbury: Hazell, Watson & Viney, 1927), 19.

¹⁰⁸ BA, T/A 8/10/1, Blake Mss, *Bits and Pieces* 3 (Dec. 1971), 11 reproduces one of Hazell's letters from 20 Oct. 1917.

The rate of change was not substantially accelerated until July 1916. The Somme, however, proved costly. 48th Division was in Corps reserve on 1 July 1916 less two Warwickshire battalions from 143 Brigade attached to 4th Division. The initial operations on 1 July enjoyed limited success south of the Somme and those north of the river were closed down after two weeks in an attempt to reinforce that success. The operations around Pozières were intended to secure the ridge on the Albert-Bapaume road in order to threaten German possession of Thiepval. Originally intended for 18 July, the main attack was postponed to 22-23 July. The plan called for the Australian 1st Division to attack Pozières from the south, while north of the Albert-Bapaume road, the 48th Division would attack the German trenches some 800 yards west of the village.

Starting at 0245 hours on 21 July, the 1/1st Bucks Battalion attacked on a two-company front led by Captain Noel 'Ribbons' Reid's 'A' Company on the left and Captain Gerald Jackson's 'C' Company on the right, with Captain Lionel Crouch's 'B' Company in immediate support. There was bright moonlight and it was clear from flares emanating from the German trenches that an attack was expected. The Germans were largely unaffected by the artillery bombardment and very few men managed to get forward. Crouch was killed as were three other officers and 49 other ranks whilst five officers and 96 other ranks were wounded.¹⁰⁹ Graham Greenwell of the 1/4th OBLI described Reid, who had already won the MC in January 1916 and received the DSO in August 1916, as 'absolutely fearless and always the cheeriest soul alive. He deserves any honour he gets.'¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Crouch, *Duty and Service*, 129-42.

¹¹⁰ Graham Greenwell, *An Infant in Arms: War Letters of a Company Officer, 1914-18* (London: Dickson & Thompson, 1935), 142.

Despite its losses, the 1/1st Bucks was ordered forward at 1500 on 22 July to a position behind Ovillers to support the main effort against Pozières. It was anticipated that the battalion would stay in reserve. While waiting, Oscar Viney, who had taken over 'B' Company, was called over by Reynolds who issued him with a 'severe reprimand'. Viney had been stopped by a policeman for riding a cycle without a rear light one evening in Andover whilst with the 3/1st Bucks Battalion recuperating from a twisted knee suffered in the trenches back in December 1915!¹¹¹ At 0300 on 23 July, following the failure of the 1/5th Gloucesters to gain their objective, the battalion was ordered to advance in order to secure the position of the 1/4th Royal Berkshires, which had been exposed to counter attack. The objective lay some 1200 yards short of the village and slightly to the north of the ground over which the battalion had attacked previously. Zero hour was fixed for 0630 on 23 July, leaving the battalion a very short time to cover two miles to the jumping off point, with little time to plan the attack, and only a ten-minute supporting bombardment.



The 1/1st Bucks at Pozières, 23 July 1916 by W. B. Wollen [NAM]

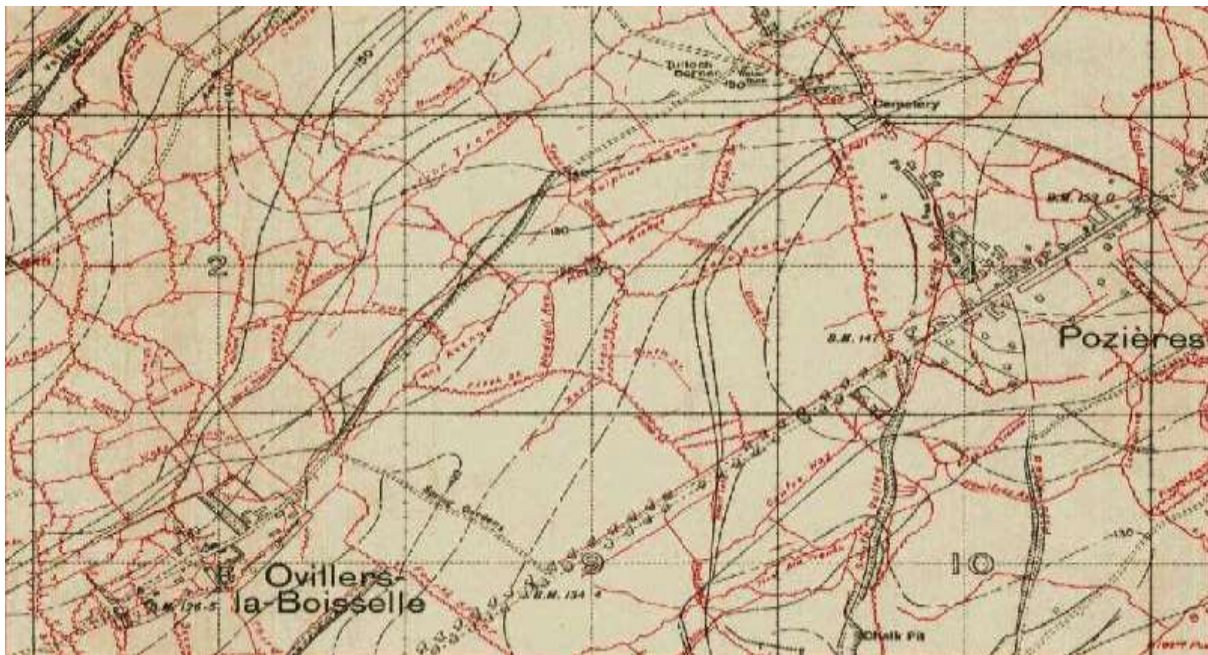
¹¹¹ Viney. 'Reminiscences', 90.

Viney's 'B' Company and Captain Edward Birchall's 'D' Company were to lead. Reynolds's orders to Birchall were to get as far forward as possible whilst the British bombardment was still taking place so that he must calculate 'how long it will take you to jump out of trench and assault in time to reach objective as barrage lifts'. Birchall chose to lead off when the bombardment had not quite lifted and, whilst 'D' Company reached the objective, Birchall's thigh was shattered by a British shell falling short. He was dragged back by his batman, Bugler Scragg. 'B' Company's forming up was also badly impeded by British shells falling short. Reynolds helped treat Birchall, who refused to be evacuated until the position was consolidated. Birchall appeared to be recovering but succumbed to haemorrhaging on 10 August. He was awarded the DSO whilst Scragg received the DCM.¹¹² Birchall's brother, Lt. Colonel A. P. D. Birchall of the Royal Fusiliers had been killed previously serving while attached to the 4th Canadians in April 1915. Another brother, Major (later Sir) John Birchall, would be Conservative MP for Leeds North East from 1918 to 1940.

Viney was also badly wounded, caught in the open by a bullet 'going in just above the right hip joint and coming out (by the grace of God) about an inch higher up, why I cannot think'. It had just missed the abdomen and Viney was 'marked with a red ticket (urgent) coming down'. It took him many hours, however, to reach safety. He lay in a communication trench for 11 hours before managing to crawl back. It was another five hours before a stretcher could be found and he reached the advanced dressing station only after another two hours. He reached the field ambulance after another three hours, to the auxiliary hospital after a further four hours and, finally, got to the Liverpool Merchants'

¹¹² BA, AR 68/2021 [BMMT 757/1], Account of Birchall's wounding; 757/48, Reynolds's orders to Birchall, 22 July 1916.

Hospital at Etaples 34 hours after he had been hit. He was transferred to Sussex Lodge in Regent's Park on 4 August 1916.¹¹³



Area of the 1/1st Bucks Battalion attacks, July 1916

Reid's 'A' Company was able to reinforce the position and it was held despite several German counter attacks until the battalion was relieved at midnight on 23 July. In the process, the battalion had sustained another 15 men killed or missing, and five officers and 68 men wounded. Birchall succumbed to his wounds on 10 August. Birchall left a legacy of £2,000 for the welfare of the battalion's widows and orphans and a further £1,000 to the Guild of Help, which was used to endow an annual lecture at the universities of Birmingham, London and Oxford, as well as towards the foundation of the National Council of Social Services, forerunner of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Hazell (ed.), *With the Colours*, 90.

¹¹⁴ BA, AR 68/2021 [BMMT 757/37-38], Epitome of Birchall's will.

The Australians subsequently secured the rest of the village, the Germans ceasing to attempt its recapture after 7 August.¹¹⁵ Through August the battalion was pressed by German counterattacks. The 20 men reported as missing during a bombardment on 15-16 August 1916 were 'so killed that no trace could be found of them'.¹¹⁶ More losses occurred in another attack between Ovillers and Thiepval on 23 August. A miserable winter followed withdrawal from the Somme before the battalion experienced a degree of more mobile warfare in following up the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line in April 1917.¹¹⁷

Adding those who chose to go home time-expired, those transferred and those commissioned to the fatalities, non-returning casualties and injuries, 416 men were lost to the battalion prior to July 1916, amounting to a third of the original strength upon embarkation (Tables 8.1). There were reinforcing drafts totalling 410 men between June 1915 and June 1916, the first significant draft of 99 men arriving in June 1915 followed by 110 in February 1916, 125 in March 1916, and 63 in May 1916. Typically, these men, as well as those wounded returning from treatment in England, passed through base depots and entrenching battalions before reaching the Bucks whilst those with less serious wounds often passed through convalescent or rest camps before re-joining. Although the casualty books do not record the source of drafts prior to the Somme, it can be assumed that most were from the 2/1st or 3/1st Bucks. Most second line Territorial units were required to be reduced in September 1915 to 22 officers and 600 ORs with the remainder drafted overseas or, if unfit, to the third line.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Viney, 'Reminiscences', 91-95; Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 95-99; Mockler-Ferryman (ed.), *OBLI Chronicle, 1916-17*, 428-29.

¹¹⁶ Wright, *First Bucks*, 40.

¹¹⁷ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 103-07.

¹¹⁸ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 137.

The battalion history records the first draft of 97 ‘strangers’ as those arriving mostly from the 1/1st Hunts Cyclists in August 1916 although at least these were Territorials.¹¹⁹ In fact, there were 357 new arrivals in July and August, 92 of them from the Hunts Cyclists. All the latter bore surnames with letters between S and W, which suggests something of the allocation process of the Hunts Cyclists within the division.

The 2/1st Bucks Battalion had a similar experience following the disaster at Fromelles on 19 July 1916. It might be noted that the heavy casualties of the 1/1st Bucks Battalion and that of the 2/1st both occurring in the period between 18 and 23 July 1916 had the same kind of effect locally as those suffered by the ‘Pals’ battalions of the New Armies from the North and Midlands on 1 July 1916. Initial training was undertaken in Aylesbury wherever ground was available including the cattle market, the grammar school field, the racecourse, and the printer’s field as well as in Hartwell Park. The battalion moved to billets in Northampton from Aylesbury on 1 February 1915, joining 184 Brigade of 61st (2nd South Midland) Division for a six weeks’ camp of instruction in Epping Forest and being reviewed with the rest of the division by Kitchener at Hylands Park on 6 August 1915. Japanese Arisaka rifles had now been supplied.¹²⁰ The officers, including three Wykehamists, two Etonians, and a Marlburian, had managed to enlist a foreman and a cook from Stewart’s celebrated cake shop in Bond Street as mess sergeant and mess cook respectively.¹²¹

Replacing the 1/1st Bucks Battalion in its Chelmsford billets, the 2/1st were part of the Third Home Defence Army, they were mostly employed digging trenches

¹¹⁹ Wright, *First Bucks*, 36.

¹²⁰ J. C. Swann, *The 2nd Bucks Battalion* (Privately printed: n. d. [1929]), 5.

¹²¹ BA, T/A 3/500, Stewart-Liberty, ‘Memoirs of a New Battalion’, 1927.

for the London defences and providing Zeppelin watching posts. Christie-Miller felt the inhabitants had become ‘sick’ of the presence of the 1/1st and were soon sick of the 2/1st Bucks so that when, in turn, they were followed by men from the (Lowland) Division) the inhabitants ‘either went to bed and locked the doors, or went to the seaside and left their homes “not available for billets”’.¹²² Back in October 1914 the Rev. Andrew Clark of Great Leighs recorded that the schoolmaster in Little Waltham had asked men of the 1/1st Bucks Battalion to promise not to do any damage to the hall before he would admit them. The unhelpful reply was, ‘If you don’t get out of that door, I will knock you and the door in.’¹²³ There seemed some prospect of being sent to Ireland at the time of the Easter Rising in Dublin but this did not transpire.¹²⁴ After inspection by the King on 5 May 1916 at Parkhouse Camp on Salisbury Plain, the 61st Division went overseas on 25 May 1916. It was brought up to strength by drafts from the third line, former home servicemen from provisional battalions, and Derbyites.¹²⁵ Familiarisation with the trenches was undertaken with units of the 38th (Welsh) Division. One of the battalion’s Wykehamists, Ashley ‘Budgie’ Cummins, who would marry Ivor Stewart-Liberty’s sister, penned a poem shortly before the battalion embarked, its last verse:¹²⁶

Then shall the Kaiser all aquake
 Spill o’er his Munich beer;
 And whisper with a voice ashake,

¹²² Christie-Miller, *2nd Bucks*, I, 48.

¹²³ James Munson (ed.), *Echoes of the Great War: The Diary of the Rev. Andrew Clark, 1914-1919* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 23.

¹²⁴ BA, D/X 780 /15, Phipps to mother, 2 May 1916.

¹²⁵ Mitchinson, *Territorial Force at War*, 204.

¹²⁶ Senior, *No Finer Courage*, 87.

The 2nd Bucks are here.

Fromelles was the first major action by any second line Territorial division and occurred after only two months in France. The attack at Fromelles was a diversionary operation to prevent German troops being moved south to the Somme. The operation was hurriedly planned and there was some discussion as to whether it should take place at all. The attack by 61st Division and the Australian 5th Division, over a frontage of 2½ miles, was intended to take the enemy front line and convince the Germans that a major offensive was taking place. The British and Australian positions were totally overlooked from the German-held Aubers Ridge and the Germans fully expected the attack.

The attack, originally planned for 17 July 1916, was postponed because of bad weather that hindered the artillery registration programme. An improvement in the weather enabled the attack to begin at 1800 hours on 19 July. Within half an hour it became clear that the attack would not succeed. The British and Australian artillery failed to destroy the well-constructed and long-established German defence system. Australian gunners had even dropped shells on the British front line, a bursting gas cylinder causing 78 casualties in the 2/1st Bucks even before the attack began. The assaulting British and Australians were met by heavy machine gun fire, particularly from two key defensive positions - the Sugar Loaf and the Wick Salient.

The 2/1st Bucks was directly opposite the Sugar Loaf and attacked on the left with the 2/4th Royal Berkshires to the right and the 2/4th Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry in reserve. In such low-lying ground, the British 'trenches' were actually sandbag breastworks whereas the German line was strengthened by concrete bunkers and projecting strongpoints based on ruined farm buildings such as the Sugar Loaf. It was intended to launch the attack from sally ports in the British line but it was immediately apparent that these were death traps.

Accordingly, Herbert Williams sent his leading companies out along the Rhondda Sap, a ditch blown 200 yards into No Man's Land, at 1740. The sap, however, was under German observation and Captain Ivor Stewart-Liberty's 'D' Company was mown down with just one man reaching the Sugar Loaf. Some of Captain Harold Church's 'A' Company including Church reached the Sugar Loaf but most were killed. Some from 'A' Company managed to escape to the Australians position to their left under the guidance of an officer of No. 3 Australian Tunnelling Company, Captain William Sanderson, who had shown Church the way through the saps and been next to him when he was killed. Captain H. S. G. Buckmaster's 'C' Company was unable to make any progress at all.

Only one officer of the three attacking companies emerged unscathed, Ivor Stewart-Liberty losing his leg and his brother-in-law, Charles Phipps, who had sought a transfer to the RFC, being killed.¹²⁷ Christie-Miller reported optimistically to Stewart-Liberty's wife that it was 'a severe wound but not dangerous'.¹²⁸ Phipps' father, Canon Constantine Phipps, was honorary chaplain to the 2/1st Bucks Battalion whilst Lionel Crouch's brother Guy, serving with the 1/1st Bucks was another son-in-law. Another of Phipps' sons, a regular officer, was to die from influenza in 1918. Another officer fatality was John Chadwick's son, Lieutenant Douglas Chadwick, who died of his wounds.

¹²⁷ BA, D/X 780/15 [also AR 39/2017 [BMMT 697/3]], Phipps to mother, 13 July 1916; 780/29, Phipps Diary, 9 July 1916; AR 4/2013 [BMMT 629], Bean to Sanderson, 19 Mar., and 6 July 1926.

¹²⁸ BA, D/X 780/84, Christie-Miller to Evelyn Stewart-Liberty, 20 July 1916.



Harold Church, 2/1st Bucks Battalion [BMMT]

At 1830, Williams was ordered to make another attack. It was impossible to persuade senior officers that there was nothing left with which to attack. Nonetheless, Williams cobbled together about 80 survivors and 40 men from the reserve 'B' Company with the intention of starting at 2100. The attack was then cancelled but the message never reached the Australian 15th Brigade, which went ahead unsupported with further disastrous consequences.

Those troops who crossed the German lines were marooned and had no alternative but to attempt to fight their way back to their own lines. Due to the failure to agree a truce, the wounded were left out for several days, leading to further deaths. The Australians suffered 5,533 casualties and the British 1,547. The Germans lost fewer than 2,000 and were able to consolidate their original front line but Fromelles did play a role in preventing some German reserves reaching the Somme. The 2/1st Bucks Battalion suffered 322 killed or wounded

from the 662 officers and men who participated in the operations on 18 and 19 July. Of these, seven officers and 127 other ranks were killed or missing. The bodies of 84 were never found. The Rue du Bois Cemetery behind the British



Fromelles, July 1916

lines has a mass grave that is thought to contain 52 bodies of men from the 2/1st Bucks. According to the Corps commander, Lieutenant General Sir Richard Haking, the 61st Division was ‘not sufficiently imbued with the offensive spirit to go in like one man at the appointed time’: 43 per cent of those committed to the attack became casualties.¹²⁹ Haking concluded that the attack (and the

¹²⁹ TNA, WO 95/3066, Entry, 19 July 1916; Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 139-42; idem, *2nd Bucks Battalion*, 10-13; Senior, *No Finer Courage*, 146-77; idem, *Haking: A Dutiful Soldier - Lieutenant General Sir Richard Haking, A Study in Corps Command* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2012), 108-42; Christie-Miller, *2nd Bucks*, II, 184-88; BA, AR 4/2013. See also David Craig: ‘The 61st Division had the reputation of being a poorly performing formation. How did it acquire this reputation and was it a justified?’ Unpub. Birmingham MA diss., 2016.

casualties) would have done the 5th Australian Division and the 61st Division ‘a great deal of good’.¹³⁰

The battalion had a ‘rocky’ time for some months after Fromelles.¹³¹ Another draft reaching the 2/1st Bucks Battalion in July 1917, just before what would be its second major attack, was ‘swept up from many places’ and low in efficiency and physique. When Christie-Miller returned to England to attend a staff course in January 1918 he was the only original officer remaining. The casualties on 22 August 1917 amounted to 11 officers and 338 other ranks from the 13 company officers and 637 other ranks that went into action.¹³²

After Fromelles, Williams was removed and sent to be Town Commandant of Arras. The commander of the 2/4th OBLI was also removed as was Brigadier General C. H. P. Carter of 184 Brigade although Christie-Miller suggested no one had had any confidence in Carter anyway. Indeed, at one parade back in England, Carter had asked one old soldier with the South Africa Medal from service with one of the Royal Bucks Hussars Companies in the Imperial Yeomanry if he had been wounded. The soldier said no, to which Carter replied, “‘You will be this time’, and walked off.’ Carter’s successor was Brigadier General ‘Bobby’ White, best known for his role in the abortive Jameson Raid in 1896.¹³³ The 2/1st Bucks Battalion recovered under the command of a Territorial, Lieutenant Colonel J. B. Muir from the 4/5th Black Watch (an amalgamation of the 1/4th and 1/5th Black Watch). Another significant figure in

¹³⁰ K. W. Mitchinson, *Of No Earthly Use: The 2nd Line Territorial Force Divisions and the Western Front* (Warwick: Helion, 2021), 74.

¹³¹ Christie-Miller, *2nd Bucks*, II, 206.

¹³² Swann, *2nd Bucks Battalion*, 15, 23, 25; Christie-Miller, *2nd Bucks*, IV, 319-20, 422.

¹³³ IWM, Doc. 4776 [80/32/2], Christie-Miller Mss, Sykes to Christie-Miller, 2 June 1959; Beckett, ‘Daring a Wrong Like This’, 3-9.

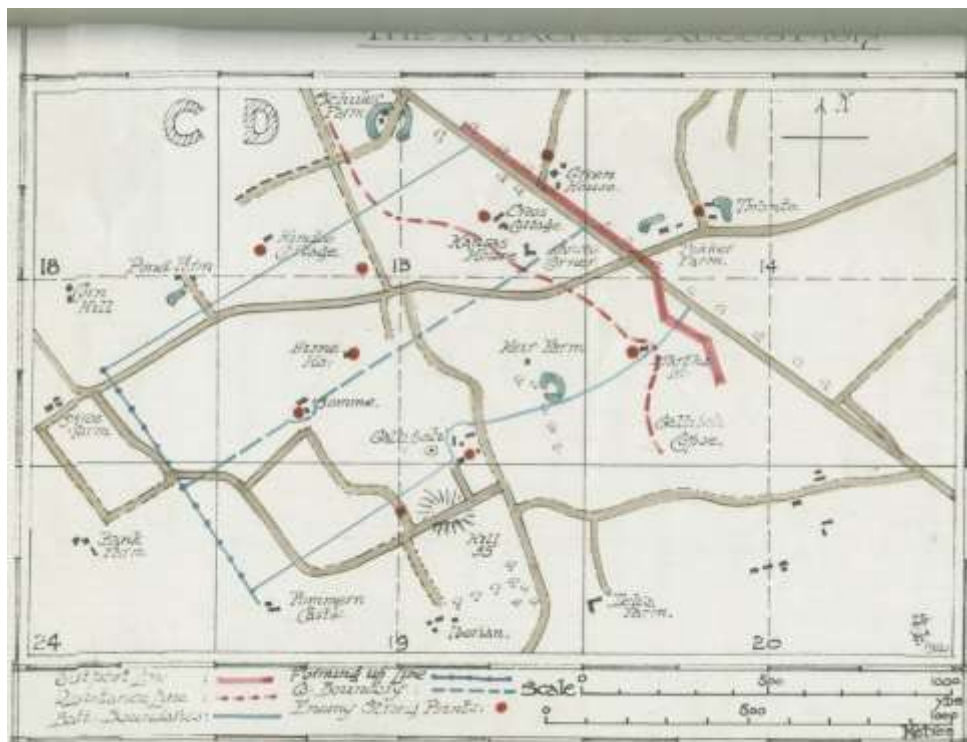
rebuilding morale was the battalion medical officer, Captain James Wilson, who created a concert party, 'The Black and Whites' and other entertainment for officers and men alike. Unfortunately, the immensely popular Wilson was mortally wounded by shellfire as the battalion was moving back to the front line on 20 August 1917.¹³⁴



The Lee, May 1915: Charles Phipps, 2/1st Bucks (Killed at Fromelles); Pownall Phipps, Reserve of Officers; Rev. Constantine Phipps, Hon. Chaplain, 2/1st Bucks Battalion; Lionel Crouch, 1/1st Bucks Battalion (Killed at Pozières); Guy Crouch, 1/1st Bucks Battalion; Ivor Stewart-Liberty, 2/1st Bucks Battalion (Severely wounded at Fromelles). [BMMT]

¹³⁴ Christie-Miller, 2nd Bucks, IV, 329, 333-34, 352-53; BA, AR 105/2011 (BMMT 620), *The Pilgrimage* (Privately printed and bound account of Wilson's death), circa 1930.

Wilson was hit as the battalion prepared for its significant actions since Fromelles. Indeed, the adjutant, Ralph Symonds, thought this the very worst aspect of the whole experience of the next few days.¹³⁵ On 22 August 1917 the 2/1st Bucks Battalion attacked around Wieltje during the Langemarck battle that also involved the 1/1st Bucks Battalion. The objective was the Kansas Cross-Winnipeg Road, dealing with seven German strongpoints, notably Aisne and Somme Farms. The bombardment commenced at 0445, the attacking waves hugging as closely as possible to the barrage. Despite heavy fire, Somme Farm and Aisne Farm were taken but the latter was soon recaptured by the Germans. Some of the Bucks reached their objectives but were cut off. Together with parties from the 2/5th Gloucesters the 2/1st Bucks dug in among the shell-holes. Artillery was called down to deal with German counter-attacks until the battalion was relieved on the night of the 23/24 August.



Area of 2/1st Bucks Battalion attack, 22 August 1917

¹³⁵ BA, AR 56/ 2015 (BMMT 678/10), Symonds to mother, 26 Aug. 1917.

The 2/1st Bucks went into battle with 13 officers and 637 ORs. Of these, 11 officers and 338 ORs became casualties. It transpired later that 19 of the missing - all wounded - had been taken prisoner. This was a greater loss than had been suffered at Fromelles on 18-19 July 1916. Christie-Miller described the first parade after the return to billets as ‘one of the saddest I have ever attended.’ ‘B’ Company was ‘fair sized’ and ‘C’ Company could muster two ‘fair’ platoons but the rest had only a handful of men left with hardly any NCOs and all the experienced officers ‘had gone’. ¹³⁶ Yet, the battalion war diary claimed on 22 August that the men remained so ‘excited and full of their experiences that the camp resounded with laughter as well into the morning’. ¹³⁷

The 2/1st Bucks moved to the Arras sector by stages but was reduced on 21 February 1918 amid the general reduction of battalions, its men employed as the 25th Entrenching Battalion near Nesle, which it helped defend during the German spring offensive. It was then absorbed into the 2/4th OBLI on 7 April 1918, the 61st Division having suffered heavy losses. ¹³⁸ It should be added that the Bucks first and second line ASC Companies served throughout with the 48th and 61st Divisional Trains. ¹³⁹

Between September 1916 and June 1917 another 563 men were lost to the 1/1st Bucks Battalion from all causes. Increasingly, drafts were to be from specified units and, in each case, the casualty book firmly stated that they were ‘compulsorily transferred’. Emblematic of the drafting policy was that drafts reaching the 1/4th Oxford and Bucks in November 1916 included many from the Royal Bucks Hussars, who according to Graham Greenwell, ‘were keen as

¹³⁶ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 151-54; Christie-Miller, *2nd Bucks*, IV, 356-64.

¹³⁷ TNA, WO 95/3066, Diary, 22 Aug. 1917.

¹³⁸ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 154-58; idem, *2nd Bucks Battalion*, 25-28.

¹³⁹ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 158.

mustard, very cheery, and have thoroughly brought back the old spirit'.¹⁴⁰ It is not clear why they were not sent to the 1/1st Bucks Battalion. It can be noted also that that the Birmingham-born Lance Corporal Alfred Wilcox of the 2/4th OBLI, who won the VC in September 1918, enlisted first in the 2/1st Royal Bucks Hussars before being drafted. Those drafted to the 1/1st Bucks from specified units amounted to 174 in July and August 1917 and another 278 in September 1917. Of those arriving in July 1917, a total of 30 came from the 4th Devon Reserve Battalion and 93 from the 1st Battalion, The Hampshire Regiment. In September, 52 arrived from the 1st Battalion, The Royal Berkshire Regiment, and 225 from the ASC Motor Transport. Significantly, from September 1917 onwards only nine men arrived in the 1/1st Bucks without being drafted from a specific unit. Private J. T. Darbyshire, conscripted in May 1917, arrived at the 55th Infantry Base Depot on 14 September and was initially slated for the 1st Royal Berkshire, only to be transferred to the Bucks 'of which I had never heard' on 29 September.¹⁴¹ Many new arrivals became casualties almost at once in both 1916 and 1917. Generally, the initial drafts to the division were trained and fit but those arriving subsequently were not always well received.¹⁴² This can be borne out by the disciplinary statistics for the battalion as suggested below.

48th Division was again in reserve at the start of the Third Battle of Ypres on 31 July 1917 but was moved up on 4 August. Three days later, 'D' Company headquarters, a platoon, and the regimental aid post were located in a captured German bunker known as Cheddar Villa, which still looms large by a farm on the side of the road from Ypres to St Julien. As it had been a German bunker the

¹⁴⁰ Mitchinson, *48th Division*, 129; Greenwell, *Infant in Arms*, 156.

¹⁴¹ BA, T/A 6/13 Casualty Book; D/X 1253, Darbyshire Diary.

¹⁴² Mitchinson, *48th Division*, 103-04.

entrance faced north. A shell burst passed directly through the entrance that evening, killing and wounding many men.¹⁴³ On 16 August, the battalion attacked high ground overlooking the valley of the Strombeek to the east of St. Julien. 1/1st Bucks was given two objectives and ordered to push an outpost line beyond the second along the road from Spot Farm - Springfield Farm - Langemarck Road. The German defences across the Steenbeek consisted of a complex of concrete blockhouses and strong points linked by trenches. Machine guns were sited both in the strong points and also in the blockhouses. Having moved forward by night under shellfire over duckboard tracks through the mud and shell holes, most of 'C' Company got lost. 'A' Company and 'B' Company led in two waves with 'D' Company following behind on the right. The rifle platoons were followed by mopping up parties of bombers - men loaded with grenades whose job it was to deal with dugouts and blockhouses bypassed by the leading waves.

H Hour was 0445. The first wave moved forward across footbridges over the Steenbeek, the second wave crossing afterwards. At H Hour the barrage crashed down 300yds ahead of the leading companies and then every five minutes shifted forward another 100yds. The ground was already very badly torn up by shellfire and sodden after several days' rain; the bad going meant that the troops picking their way across could not keep up with the barrage. The Germans emerged from their concrete shelters and opened fire with machine guns and rifles. The leading platoon of 'B' Company was annihilated but the leading elements of 'D' Company delivered a bayonet charge which turned the Germans out of the first line of block houses around Hillock Farm.

The survivors of 'B' and 'D' Companies were then reorganised and continued forward until their attack stalled against a pond and a further blockhouse about

¹⁴³ Wright, *First Bucks*, 73.

300yds northeast of St. Julien. 'A' Company made good progress at first but then came under fire from Hillock Farm, finally stalling when fired on from Triangle Farm and Maison du Hibou. Some of the right platoon of 'A' Company finally made it to their objective at Springfield Farm at about H + 2 only to be overrun by a German counter-attack.



The St Julien Sector, 1917

The survivors of the attack were sheltering in shell holes and captured blockhouses when at 1000 the Germans mounted a counter-attack. This and several more attempts were broken up. After dark, the isolated outposts forward of the Steenbeek were withdrawn as the state of the ground precluded digging. A patrol were sent out to check if Springfield Farm was still held by survivors but lost its way. The Germans appeared to have withdrawn to the line of the

Springfield Road.¹⁴⁴ The 291 casualties on a single day exceeded those across the four days of heaviest loss on the Somme. The divisional commander, Fanshawe, wrote rather significantly in his message after the action, 'It is not the mere capture of positions which is going to bring us the final victory, but the determined fighting, in spite of all difficulties, like that of the Bucks Battalion, which shows the enemy that he is beaten and cannot hope to beat us and must give in.'

Since the casualty books provide no indication of a soldier's origin other than by regiment, it is *Soldiers Died in the Great War* that provides a rough indication of geographical change. In 1915, some 65 per cent of the battalion's dead originated in Bucks parishes, and 70 per cent among those lost in 1916. In 1917, the percentage from Bucks parishes declined to 34 per cent, rising marginally to 38 per cent among the dead of 1918. For the 2/1st Bucks it is 68 per cent in 1916, 43 per cent on 1917 and 45 per cent in 1918. These cannot be precise since losses may have fallen disproportionately within battalions, but it is at least persuasive in its implications.¹⁴⁵ As an example of the difficulties of being precise, four of the five dead (80 per cent) suffered by the 2/1st Bucks in November and December 1917 were not from the county.¹⁴⁶

The scale of casualties on the Somme and at Third Ypres that necessitated reinforcing drafts is readily apparent. In terms of total loss to the battalion, there were 408 battle casualties in July and August 1916, and then another 296 in July and August 1917. If those wounded who returned subsequently to the battalion

¹⁴⁴ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 107-12; Wright, *First Bucks*, 74-80.

¹⁴⁵ *Soldiers Died in the Great War* (London: HMSO, 1921), Pt 47, 53-63, 75-76; Swann, *2nd Bucks Battalion*, 30-3; *A Record of the 2nd Bucks Battalion TF, 1914-18* (Chesham: n. d [1919]).

¹⁴⁶ Mitchinson, *Of No Earthly Use*, 286.

are also taken into account (Table 8.2) then the total of casualties rises to 616 and 394 respectively. The casualty rate was never so great again. The 1/1st Bucks arrived in Italy in 30 November 1917, serving first on the Piave front and then moving to the Asiago plateau in April 1918.

The battalion's first billets in Italy were 'bad, crowded and scattered. There were no shops. Footballs were scarce, and grounds still scarcer.' Yet, the village was surprisingly popular: 'It must surely have been those heavenly blue skies which entered into our souls and made us think so well of S. Croce.'¹⁴⁷ On 15 June 1918 the battalion was holding the 'Lemerle Switch' on the main line when the Austro-Hungarian forces opened a heavy bombardment at 0300. The trench lines were irregular amid the rocky and wooded terrain, making it difficult to see, and there was a thick mist. The 1/4th OBLI, and the 1/5th Gloucestershire Regiment in the outpost line were both forced back towards the main line, which the attack did not reach. Reynolds reported later that about 80 men from the 1/5th Gloucesters had been collected at the Lemerle Switch and 'sent forward again'. A general counter-attack restored the front in the early hours of 16 June, the 1/1st Bucks suffering eight dead and 42 wounded.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Wright, *First Bucks*, 95.

¹⁴⁸ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 115-20; Wright, *First Bucks*, 108-14; IWM, Doc. 7737 [84/136/1], Reynolds Mss, 'Brigade reports on the Austrian attack of 15 June'; Janet Witcomb, 'The 145th Brigade in Italy, 1917-19', *Bugle & Sabre* 10 (2017), 23-31; BA, D-X 1253, Darbyshire Diary, 15-18 June 1918.



Men of the 1/1st Bucks Battalion with Lewis Guns, Italy, early 1918 [BMMT]

Divisional casualties as a whole were surprisingly light despite the division's line being broken on 15 June, and the same was true of the allied offensive in October 1918.¹⁴⁹ Various raids were made on the Austro-Hungarian lines between August and October before the major allied offensive beginning on 31 October 1918 that proved the decisive breakthrough on the Italian front. On the night of 31 October-1 November the 1/1st Bucks Battalion attacked as part of the general allied offensive, helping to seize Mt. Catz, the advance sweeping down into the valleys beyond the Austro-Hungarian mountain-top positions. The battalion advanced 25 miles in just 14 hours, even mounting one section on

¹⁴⁹ Mitchinson, *48th Division*, 218-19.

captured horses as 'Reynolds' Cavalry. In all, the 48th Division took over 22,000 prisoners, 263 artillery guns and 165 howitzers.¹⁵⁰

The reductions in brigade strength implemented on the Western Front in the spring of 1918 reached also to Italy in September 1918. The 1/5th Gloucesters were selected for reduction in 145 Brigade, its personnel absorbed into the 25th Division. It is suggested that each of the remaining battalions received drafts of 200-300 men.¹⁵¹ In the case of the 1/1st Bucks, however, there were just 10 men drafted to the battalion between November 1917 and June 1918, one of them from the Chinese Labour Corps to take over the duties of a CSM. Another 22 arrived from the 4th and 12th Battalions, The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry in September 1918, and 71 men from the 12th Battalion, The Durham Light Infantry in October 1918, together with 40 from the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) and three from the 9th Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment. An additional two men from the RAMC arrived in November. The overall total of 148 is far less than has been suggested. Taking the war as a whole, the drafts kept pace with casualties. It should be noted, of course, that Tables 8.2-8.6 reflect totals that conceal the extent to which individuals were wounded, became ill, went on leave or attended courses more than once.

Injuries - contusions, fractures, incisions, sprains, etc. - were never more than a minor factor. Much more will be said of illness below but it can be noted that it has been suggested that the ratio of fatalities to wounded, sick and injured was generally in the ratio of 4.5 per each fatality.¹⁵² For the war as a whole, the 1/1st

¹⁵⁰ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 121-31; Wright, *First Bucks*, 115-34; Author interview with J. Stammers and A. Seymour, 25 Nov. 1980.

¹⁵¹ Mitchinson, *48th Division*, 236-37.

¹⁵² Mitchinson, *48th Division*, 192.

Bucks suffered 564 fatalities (579 less the 15 missing who proved eventually to be POWs) but 4,277 wounded, sick or injured: a significantly higher ratio of 7.5 per each fatality.

Soldiers did not spend their entire service in the front line. Charles Carrington recorded of his service in the 1/5th Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment in 48th Division in the course of 1916 that he spent 65 days in the front line, 36 days in close support to the front line, 120 days in reserve, 73 days at rest behind the lines, and the remaining 72 days variously on leave, sick, travelling or attending courses.¹⁵³ Between April 1915 and June 1916, the 1/1st Bucks spent 121 days in the line or in support (32.5 per cent), five days training, 15 days entirely on working parties, 15 days on the move, and 216 days in billets (58 per cent) but with substantial numbers of men detached on working parties or in training and few complete days of rest.

As for temporary attachments and courses, these also took men away from the battalion. In all, 215 men were sent on temporary attachments prior to June 1916, while 150 went on courses. Most attachments were to the Royal Engineers (presumably on working parties), the Brigade Machine Gun Company, to which 28 men were attached in January 1916, and the Trench Mortar Battery although a number were detached as batmen or officers' servants. One man in January 1916 temporarily joined the divisional concert party. Other attachments were to the Horse Transport Depot and to the Salvage Company. Many courses are simply listed as army, corps, divisional or brigade schools of instruction, but specific courses concerned the use of machine guns (21), trench mortars (20), and gas (16). No less than 61 men attended

¹⁵³ Edmonds [sc. Carrington], *Subaltern's War*, 120.

‘grenadier’ courses in August and September 1915. One man was sent on a cold shoeing course in January 1916.

This pattern was maintained throughout the war although, understandably, attachments and courses were far fewer in the periods of intense operations in 1916 and 1917. Following the Somme, there was some emphasis on the use of the Lewis Gun (39) and on various aspects of sniping (9) with five men sent on a Stokes Mortar course in December 1916. The attachments were enormously varied including some to the staffs of town majors, POW companies, as batmen and officers’ servants, and one as a butcher’s assistant. In the spring of 1917 army, corps, divisional and brigade schools predominated in terms of courses although 25 men were despatched to a musketry course in June 1917. The period in Italy between December 1917 and January 1919 was especially noted for men on attachments (470) and on courses (240). There appears to have been inventiveness in keeping the men occupied. Attachments included the Sanitation Section, the Divisional Baths, the Divisional Burial Party, the Divisional Soup Kitchen, Traffic and Road Control, POW Companies, the Censor’s staff, the Corps Cloth Exchange, the Corps Laundry, Field Bakeries, and an Aircraft Park. One man was assigned in July 1918 to accompany the war artist Sir William Orpen while he was in Italy. Courses in Italy were also a little more varied with the usual arms schools supplemented by attendances at cookery, pack transport and farrier schools, and on contact aeroplane, power buzzer and pigeon-man’s courses.

Those who returned to the battalions after wounds, especially if the wound had been sufficiently serious for treatment in England, could often be absent for some months. There was also the question of leave. As suggested earlier, those who re-engaged and those compulsorily retained were entitled to a month’s furlough. Both seven and eight day leaves were granted between April 1915 and

June 1916 but eight days became more common from December 1915. In all, 86 men were on leave in both November and December 1915, with 100 on leave in January 1916. By the autumn of 1916 ten days was the standard leave period but, occasionally, leave was extended for personal circumstances such as family illness. Once in Italy there were extensive leave periods granted, generally for 15 days to enable men to reach England. A few visits were permitted to Venice for 24 or 48 hours in January 1919. As with wounds, attachments and courses, some individuals had more than one leave, especially if they were long-term members of the battalion. In one case Lewis Reynolds declined to offer further leave to Private L. Goldsmith, one of those drafted in from the ASC, in September 1918 as he had been given extended leave in December 1917 during his wife's illness: there were now 200 men ahead of him in the queue, of whom 30 had not been home for 18 months.¹⁵⁴ As shown in Table 8.2, the number of absences on courses, attachment or leave amounted to 3,337 over the course of the war, to which can be added 784 absences from injury and wounds.

Illness was the most significant factor in absences with the periods between April 1915 and June 1916 and between December 1917 and January 1919 the most significant (Table 8.3). There were 244 cases of influenza between April 1915 and June 1916 and 34 cases of German measles or measles. Reynolds established an isolation camp but it was overwhelmed by the number of cases although he claimed that the condition of those returning to the battalion from the camp compared favourably with those returning subsequently from hospital.

¹⁵⁵ Influenza - sometimes also described as 'mountain fever' - accounted for 103 cases in June 1918 alone, the outbreak in Italy incapacitating at least 30 per cent

¹⁵⁴ IWM, Doc. 7737 [74/136/1], Reynolds Mss, Letter Book, 8 Sept. 1918.

¹⁵⁵ IWM, Doc. 7737 [84/136/1], Reynolds Mss, Letter Book, 2 July 1918.

Table 8.2 Other Ranks: Absences in the 1/1st Bucks Battalion, 1915-19

Absences	Mar 1915 to Jun 1916	July 1916 to Aug 1916	Sept 1916 to Jun 1917	July 1917 to Aug 1917	Sept 1917 to Nov 1917	Dec 1917 to Jan 1919	Totals
Illness and rejoined	881	126	422	62	118	707	2316
Injury and rejoined	50	9	19	4	8	45	135
Wounded and returned	113	208	78	98	24	128	649
Attachments	215	14	176	49	45	470	969
Leave Periods	511	11	222	73	231	554	1602
Courses	150	22	238	32	84	240	766
Total	1920	390	1155	318	510	2144	6437

Source: BA, T/A 6/11-14

of the 48th Division at the moment that the Austro-Hungarians launched their major attack.¹⁵⁶ At the moment of the offensive, only two officers of the divisional staff were fit for duty.¹⁵⁷ Skin diseases such as scabies, impetigo,

¹⁵⁶ Mitchinson, *48th Division*, 209; G. H. Barnett, *With the 48th Division in Italy* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1923), 64; TNA, CAB 45/84, Airedale to Edmonds, 6 June 1944.

¹⁵⁷ Greenwell, *Infant in Arms*, 262.

boils and eczema were a continual feature despite the best efforts of the division's sanitary section while dental caries and other dental problems also recurred, the imperfect knowledge of a healthy diet contributing to poor dental health.¹⁵⁸ There was also a spike in scabies in Italy.¹⁵⁹

Table 8.3 Other Ranks: Illnesses, 1/1st Bucks Battalion, 1915-19

Illnesses	Mar 1915 to June 1916	July 1916 to Aug 1916	Sept 1916 to Jun 1917	July 1917 to Aug 1917	Sept 1917 to Nov 1917	Dec 1917 to Jan 1919	Total
All Illness	1018	155	568	81	171	775	2768
Influenza	244	18	24	-	-	143	429
German Measles/Measles	32	1	9	-	-	-	42
Fevers/Pyrexia	20	46	146	7	31	77	327
ICT	38	21	82	20	49	66	276
Scabies/Boils/Eczema/ Impetigo	94	12	87	5	21	104	323
Dental Problems	85	1	4	1	3	14	108
Diarrhoea/Dysentery/ Enteric	12	-	30	4	8	65	119
Synovitis	22	1	16	1	-	6	46
Myalgia	18	1	14	4	1	10	48
Tonsillitis	12	3	18	3	1	14	41
Venereal	6	1	6	2	3	46	64

Source: BA, T/A 6/11-14.

¹⁵⁸ Mitchinson, *48th Division*, 63; Rachel Duffett, *The Stomach for Fighting: Food and the Soldiers of the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 231.

¹⁵⁹ BA, D/X 1253, Darbyshire Diary, Aug. 1918

Recording of illness was not always definitive, many fevers being recorded as kinds of pyrexia whilst inter-connected tissue (ICT) was a generic description for problems with muscles and joints in arms and legs. What is especially noticeable is the dramatic increase in venereal diseases in Italy. Brothels were plentiful.¹⁶⁰ Hospital admissions for venereal cases in 1918 were higher in Italy (41.8 per 1,000 men) than on the Western Front (32.4 per 1,000 men) although lower when only combat troops in forward areas were counted. It was also the case that more men contracted venereal diseases for the first time in Italy than in France.¹⁶¹ Although it has been suggested that malaria was a problem in Italy, only one man was so diagnosed in May 1918. Other illnesses are not as statistically apparent as those catalogued in Table 8.3 but they covered an extraordinary variety of complaints: abscesses, inflammations, varicose veins, piles, rheumatism (25), hernia (22), and even diphtheria (11).

The increased incidence of venereal cases in Italy raises the question of discipline. Regulars tended to accuse the Territorials of lax discipline without real comprehension of the dynamics of the force. It was generally believed that they had less recuperative powers than regulars and were more suited to static than mobile operations. Supposedly lax discipline was often cited although military crime was generally less in Territorial units.¹⁶² Of the 312 men executed under the provisions of the Army Act between August 1914 and March 1920, only ten were Territorials.¹⁶³ Certainly there was a different ethos

¹⁶⁰ Author interview with J. Stammers, 25 Nov. 1980

¹⁶¹ Dillon, *Allies*, 74, 91-93.

¹⁶² IWM, Doc. 4776 [0/32/2], Christie-Miller Mss, 85-86.

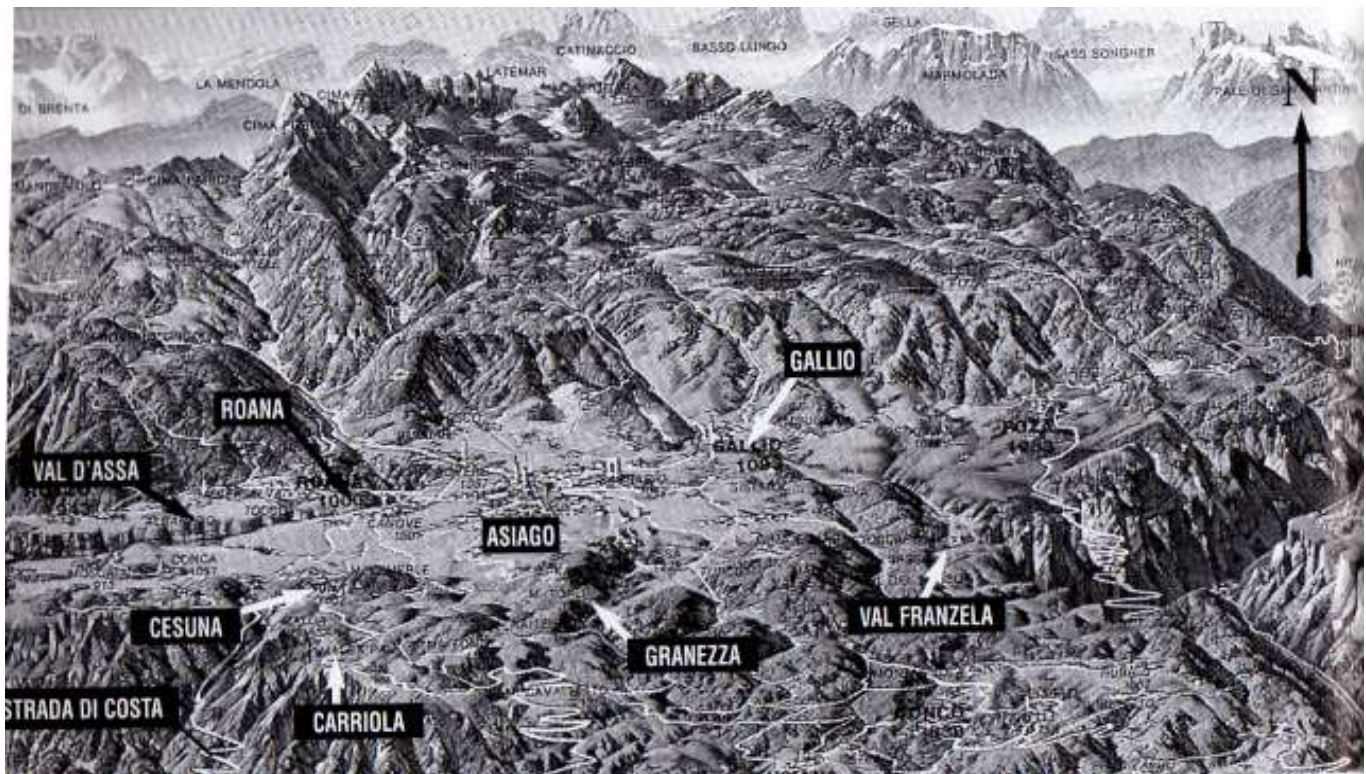
¹⁶³ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 235.

deriving originally from the idea that volunteer officers and men might be social equals although this now tended to apply only in more exclusive London 'class corps'. There were no death sentences passed on any member of the 1/1st Bucks Battalion although three were carried out in 48th Division: one soldier of the 1/5th Royal Warwicks in 143 Brigade was executed for desertion in the face of the enemy in July 1916; another - a conscript - from the same battalion for desertion in September 1917; and one from 1/4th Royal Berkshires in 145 Brigade for desertion in August 1916.¹⁶⁴

The Casualty Books record 303 separate disciplinary offences between March 1915 and January 1919 (Table 8.4). A total of 242 were single offences committed by individuals with 18 men each committing two offences, two men (H. Summers and F. Paige) committing three offences, three men (T. Lawton, W. Moffatt, and D. Novels) committing four offences, and one serial offender (W. Christie) committing seven offences. Lawton was an original member of the battalion while Novels was an early draftee in July 1915, presumably from the 2/1st or 3/1st Bucks. Paige and Summers were both drafted from the 1st Hants in July 1917, and Moffatt and Christie arrived from the ASC in September 1917. The arrival of the ASC personnel coincided with a major increase in crime in the battalion. Some 20 offences were committed by former members of the 1st Hants but, with the added impact of the frequency of offences by Moffatt and Christie, the ASC accounted for 54 separate offences, representing 31.7 per cent of all military crimes committed after September 1917. It is also clear that, after the initial bedding down of the battalion in terms of the disciplinary requirements of front line service between March 1915 and June 1916 (30.0 per cent of the total), the majority of offences occurred after September 1917 (56.1 per cent) with 47.8 per cent of all wartime offences occurring in Italy.

¹⁶⁴ Peter Caddick-Adams, *By God They Can Fight! A History of 143rd Infantry Brigade, 1908-95* (Shrewsbury: 143 (West Midlands) Brigade, 1995), 73-74.

Absence (usually from billets or parades), and disobedience or insolence (usually to NCOs) were the most common offences: both increased dramatically in Italy (Table 8.5). Field Punishment No. 1 (FP1) - men being fettered to a fixed object such as a gun wheel or a post for up to two hours per day - and Field Punishment No. 2 (FP2) - men being placed in fetters but not tied to a fixed object - were the most significant punishments. Increasingly, loss of pay was also applied. The use of the latter in Italy compared to Field Punishment accords with the hypothesis of increasing adoption of ‘pious perjury’ in 1917-18 and, especially, on the Italian Front.¹⁶⁵



The Italian Front

¹⁶⁵ Gerald Oram, *Pious Perjury: Discipline and Morale in the British Forces in Italy, 1917-18*, *War in History* 9 (2002), 412-30; David Englander, 'Discipline and Morale in the British Army, 1917-18', in John Horne (ed.), *State, Society and Mobilisation in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 132-36.

Table 8.4 Other Ranks: Punishments, 1/1st Bucks Battalion, 1914-19

Punishments	Mar 1915 to Jun 1916	July 1916 to Aug 1916	Sept 1916 to Jun 1917	July 1917 to Aug 1917	Sept 1917 to Nov 1917	Dec 1917 to Jan 1919	Total
Field Punishment No 1 (FGCM)	26 (2)	2	5 (1)	1	5	39 (5)	78 (8)
Field Punishment No 2 (FGCM)	38	4	7	5 (1)	5	34	93 (1)
Hard Labour (FGCM)	7 (7)	-	2 (2)	1 (1)	1 (1)	2 (2)	13 (13)
Reduction in Rank (FGCM)	10	1	4 (1)	1 (1)	2	10 (2)	28 (4)
Loss of Pay	9	3	6	-	12	49	79
Reprimand	1	-	-	-	-	11	12
Total	91 (9)	10	24 (4)	8 (3)	25 (1)	145 (9)	303 (26)

Source: BA, T/A 6/11-14

Table 8.5 Other Ranks: Offences, 1/1st Bucks Battalion, 1914-19

Offences	Mar 1915 to Jun 1916	July 1916 to Aug 1916	Sept 1916 to Jun 1917	July 1917 to Aug 1917	Sept 1917 to Nov 1917	Dec 1917 to Jan 1919	Total
Absence (FGCM)	6	-	7 (2)	1 (1)	12 (1)	73 (2)	99 (6)
Censorship Offences (FGCM)	1 (1)		1	-	2	-	4 (1)
Disobedience/Insolence (FGCM)	32 (2)	7	7	4 (1)	6	37 (3)	93 (6)
Disturbance/ Fighting	7	-	1	-	-	3	11
Drunkenness (FGCM)	4 (4)	-	1 (1)	1	1	14 (1)	21 (6)
Gambling (FGCM)	8	3	-	-	-	2 (1)	13 (1)
Neglect of Duty/ Loss of Equipment, etc. (FGCM)	27	-	6	1	4	10 (2)	48 (2)
Leave Offences (FGCM)	2	-	-	1 (1)	-	6	9 (1)
Self-inflicted Wound (FGCM)	-	-	1 (1)	-	-	-	1 (1)
Sleeping on Sentry (FGCM)	2 (2)	-	-	-	-	-	2 (2)
Theft	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Total	91 (9)	10	24 (4)	8 (3)	25 (1)	145 (9)	303 (26)

Source: BA, T/A 6/11-14.

There was no consistent pattern with regard to the application of Field Punishment and clearly much depended upon the judgement of the seriousness of the offence. Generally, FP1 was applied for 7 days (10 cases), 14 days (15 cases) or 28 days (25 cases) whereas FP2 was generally applied for 7 days (28 cases) or 14 days (24 cases). Field General Courts Martial (FGCM) were utilised for the most serious cases but they did not always result in severe sentences (Table 8.6). In all, there were 26 by January 1919, of which eight resulted in FP1, one in FP2, and four in reductions in rank. Thirteen resulted in sentences of hard labour but in one case all charges were dropped subsequently and in others sentences were commuted. George ‘Fatty’ Odell from Bradwell was given three months FP1 for breaching censorship rules in October 1915 having told ‘his girl’ where they were. Odell’s sentence was remitted after two months for good work on patrol and, later, he won the MM in Italy.¹⁶⁶ Odell, indeed, was widely admired for his courage by the Wolverton men in the battalion.¹⁶⁷

The initial seven cases of hard labour between March 1915 and June 1916, four of them in August 1915 suggest examples being made. The concentration in August might also suggest some slackness being detected after the arrival on the quiet sector at Hébuterne. Privates F. J. Stratford and E. White were convicted for sleeping on sentry duty: no further cases occurred. Stratford received 12 months’ hard labour and White six months. Neither completed their sentences, both being released upon re-engagement. Privates G. French and H. A. Tandy received six months’ hard labour for drunkenness and disobedience respectfully but the former had his sentence commuted to three months’ FP1 while Tandy’s

¹⁶⁶ Mundy, *No Heroes*, 33-34.

¹⁶⁷ Milton Keynes Living Archive, DOP/01/030, Sound Interview with Syd Carroll, Feb. 1981; DOP/01/026, Sound Interview with Sid Coles, 30 Jan. 1981. These interviews are also in IWM 6649 and 6656, Sound Interviews.

sentence was suspended and then remitted upon reconsideration. The future serial offender Lawton received two years' hard labour in September 1915 for insubordinate language but this was reduced to one year and then commuted to three months' FP1. The only other soldiers sentenced to hard labour between March 1915 and June 1916 were Privates F. W. James and H. Stevens for drunkenness in November 1915. Both received 90 days' hard labour but Stevens's sentence was commuted to 60 days' FP1 while James had his sentence remitted and went home time-expired in March 1916.

As with FP1 and FP2 sentences, consistency is not always apparent from the sentences applied, indicating differing judgements. Nonetheless, there is logic in the two cases of absence from the trenches in December 1916. E. J. Moseley was absent for 47 hours and H. H. Burns for 77 hours, accounting for the more severe sentence handed down to the latter. In the case of A. J. James, his absence for nine hours from a carrying party whilst attached to the Trench Mortar Battery on 16 August 1917 resulted in his detention awaiting trial on 23-24 August and his conviction on 25 August. Four days later, before he could start his sentence, he was killed in action, hence the conviction being overturned. Presumably, Private M. Bernstein initially received a slightly harsher sentence in the following month for being absent from a company attack and absent for just over ten hours: both James and Bernstein were detained by Military Police. The most serious case of all was that of Private J. F. J. Griffith, who was charged with desertion for absenting himself from signaller duty for a trench raid and being absent for 12 hours. Why the sentence was then suspended is not clear and his further absence from the trenches for another nine hours until arrested then resulted in him serving 90 days' FP1.

Of those sent before FGCM, Munday was killed in 1916 and both Moseley and Novels were sent back to England after serious wounds. Among the serial offenders, Paige was also killed. One early offender, CSM S. G. Bishop, who

received a reprimand for allowing sentries to sleep in June 1915, went on to win the DCM and the Croix de Guerre. Even the incorrigible rogue, Christie, had one of his sentences in May 1918 remitted for gallantry in action. It might be added as a counterweight to indiscipline, that other ranks were awarded four MCs, 21 DCMs, 75 MMs (two with a bar), 7 MSMs, 20 mentions in dispatches (one individual twice), and 12 foreign decorations.¹⁶⁸

Table 8.6 Other Ranks: Field General Courts Martial, 1/1st Bucks Battalion, 1914-19

Name	Date	Offence	Sentence	Outcome
A.G. Munday	July 1915	Drunkenness	FP1 3 months	Served
G. French	Aug 1915	Drunkenness	HL 6 months	Committed to FP1 3 months
F. J. Stratford	Aug 1915	Sleeping on Sentry	HL 12 months	Remainder Suspended on re- engagement Jan 1916
H. A. Tandy	Aug 1915	Disobedience	HL 6 months	Remitted
E. White	Aug 1915	Sleeping on Sentry	HL 12 months	Remainder suspended on re- engagement Mar 1916
T. Lawton	Sept 1915	Disobedience and	HL 24 months	Remitted to HL 12

¹⁶⁸ Wright, *First Bucks*, 176-78.

G. H. Odell	Oct 1915	Insubordinate Language Breach of Censorship	FP1 3 months	months then commuted to FP1 3 months Remitted after two months for good work on patrol
F. W. James	Nov 1915	Drunkenness	HL 90 days	Served
H. Stevens	Nov 1915	Drunkenness	HL 90 days	Commutated to FP1 60 days
G. Pykett	Nov 1916	Drunkenness	Reduced in Rank	-
E. J. Moseley	Dec 1916	Absence from Trenches	FP1 3 months	Commutated to FP1 1 month
H. H. Burns	Dec 1916	Absence from Trenches	HL 6 months	Served
D. Novels	June 1917	Self-inflicted wound and negligence	HL 24 months	Commutated to FP1 90 days
J. Mortimer	July 1917	Disobedience	FP2 28 days	Served
A. Stokes	Aug 1917	Forging leave pass	Reduced in Rank	-
A. J. James	Aug 1917	Absence from carrying party	HL 9 months	Cleared of conviction
M. Bernstein	Sept 1917	Absence from attack	HL 12 months	Suspended and Remitted
E. C. Marshall	Dec 1917	Gambling and	FP1 56 days	Served

		Obscene Language		
J. McPherson	Dec 1917	Disobedience and Threatening Superior	HL 12 months	Committed to FP1 90 days
A.W. McLaren	Dec 1917	Disobedience	FP1 90 days	Served
W. Christie	Feb 1918	Drunkenness	FP1 70 days	Served
F. Trott	Mar 1918	Disobedience and Threatening Superior	FP1 90 days	Served
A.G. Holyoake	May 1918	Neglecting to post sentries	Reduced in Rank	-
J. F. J. Griffith	Aug 1918	Desertion from duty during raiding party	HL 7 years	Suspended
J. F. J. Griffith	Oct 1918	Absence from trenches	FP1 90 days	Served
C.W. Stevens	Oct 1918	Neglecting to relieve sentries	Reduced in rank	-

Source: BA, T/A 6/11-14.

Christie-Miller suggested there was little crime in the 2/1st Bucks Battalion but that there were four habitual offenders.¹⁶⁹ The 2/1st Bucks' war diary only very

¹⁶⁹ Christie-Miller, *2nd Bucks*, I, 103-06.

occasionally gives the punishments awarded. Thus, on 13 April 1917, nine FP1 sentences are listed: ten days each for two men for dirty boots and being late on parade, and for improper remarks to a NCO; six days each for three men for losing a rifle, for being unshaven and improperly dressed on parade, and for being dirty on parade; three days each for two men for falling out of a march without permission, and for hesitating to obey a NCO; four days for trying to steal rations; and two days for losing army biscuit rations. On 13 September 1917 five days' FP1 was awarded for an improper remark to a NCO; and on 6 January 1918 one man received 10 days' FP1 for not complying with an order and for improper remarks, while two men were fined 12s.6d each for losing the cooking dixie.¹⁷⁰

Reynolds's letter books reveal some indication of his attitude towards indiscipline after taking command of the battalion in June 1916. He was conscious of the inexperience of NCOs in two of the cases that went to FGCM. Sergeant Smith failed to place McPherson under arrest for drunkenness sooner than was the case in December 1917 and before McPherson threatened him. Smith was reprimanded although it went unrecorded in the casualty book.¹⁷¹ Similarly in March 1918, Lance Corporal P. W. Goodway was unaware that he should have placed Trott under close arrest for swearing at him and he had not immediately informed CSM Loveday.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ TNA, WO 95/3066.

¹⁷¹ IWM, Doc. 7737 [74/136/1], Reynolds Mss Letter Book, 22 Dec. 1917.

¹⁷² IWM, Doc. 7737 [74/136/1], Reynolds Mss, Letter Book, 30 Mar. 1918.



Lieutenant Colonel Lewis Reynolds, 1/1st Bucks Battalion [BMMT]

Trott had form, having received 14 day's FP1 for obscene language towards an NCO in November 1917. Reviewing the cases of Corporal A. Wallace and Privates G. W. Ashley and F. E. Chaplin in July 1918, Reynolds was not altogether happy with the evidence of them threatening the Military Police,

commenting that the latter's general attitude 'is a direct cause of crime in some instances'. Reynolds thought Wallace to be generally reliable and, whilst all three had admitted being in an out of bounds café, he believed them when they said they had gone to buy leather polish and were not aware the premises was also a café. One of the military police who corroborated the testimony of others had not even been present.¹⁷³ Unsurprisingly, the casualty books show all three receiving only severe reprimands. In March 1918 Reynolds also investigated a reported assault on an Italian woman but as the perpetrator had left his bayonet and belt behind and no one in the battalion was short of either it was deemed to be another battalion to blame.¹⁷⁴

Of 30 officers who embarked with the 1/1st Bucks Battalion in March 1915, 14 were pre-war officers in the battalion and, therefore, familiar to many of the other ranks. The adjutant, Alfred 'Dodger' Bartlett was a pre-war regular but he was posted to the 3rd Army Infantry School in November 1914 before later taking command of the 1/4th OBLI in 145 Brigade in June 1916. Most were educated at public school: Edward Birchall, George Bowyer, and Rex Gregson-Ellis at Eton; Lionel Crouch and his brother, Guy, at Marlborough; Philip Hall at Malvern; and John Hill and Philip and Egerton 'Toddy' Wright at Winchester. Philip Wright, originally from Adlington in Lancashire, was adjutant from 1916 and 1917 and second in command in 1918, later compiling the battalion history. His brother 'Toddy' was attached to 145 Brigade for staff duties in June 1915 and did not return to the battalion. Further staff posts followed with VII Corps and 11th Division and he was killed serving as Brigade Major with the 6th Brigade in May 1918. An excellent cricketer, he had kept wicket for Winchester, Oxford and four times for Lancashire. Two other

¹⁷³ IWM, Doc. 7737 [74/136/1], Reynolds Mss, Letter Book, 3 Jul. 1918.

¹⁷⁴ IWM, Doc. 7737 [74/136/1], Reynolds Mss, Letter Book, 21 Mar. 1918.

brothers also served in the war, Geoffrey Wright in the RFA and Frank with the West Yorkshire Regiment, the latter being severely wounded and dying from the effects of his wounds in 1922.¹⁷⁵ Lieutenant (later Captain) Bernard ‘Pop’ Green served with the battalion until seconded to 145 Brigade Machine Gun Company in 1916. In the Second World War, he served as a Flight Lieutenant in the RAF Volunteer Reserve as an air gunner, being captured in July 1940 when his aircraft was shot down. Imprisoned in Stalag Luft III at Sagan, he was the 33rd and oldest (at 56) of the 76 men who got through the tunnel during the ‘Great Escape’ in March 1944. Soon recaptured, he was fortunate not to be among the 50 escapers murdered by the Gestapo, being one of the men returned to the camp.

Lewis Reynolds had been at Wycombe Royal Grammar School and Gerald Neave at Bedford Grammar School. Most, too, were professional men. The second in command, Lionel Hawkins, of course, was managing director of McCorquodale’s whilst Reynolds was a doctor. Oscar Viney from Hazell, Watson & Viney, the Aylesbury printers, had joined the battalion at Lionel Crouch’s invitation in January 1914. Arthur Vernon was an estate agent. Lionel and Guy Crouch were both solicitors with Lionel deputy clerk to the county council. George ‘Piggy’ Hobart-Hampden was also a solicitor; George Bowyer a lawyer; and Gerald Neave was a Ceylon tea planter. Rather similarly, as suggested earlier, the officers of the 2/1st Bucks had several officers educated at public schools Christie-Miller also spoke of an ‘Inns of Court contingent’ including Harold Church, a barrister and member of the Vintners Livery Company. Those who were legally qualified assisted a number of men drafted into the 2/1st Bucks from northern battalions in 1916 to obtain the month’s

¹⁷⁵ Henry Lowndes Wright, *Four Brothers and the World War: The Private Record of their Father for his Grandchildren* (Hove: Combridges, 1933).

furlough that had been denied them. Additionally, Church successfully defended one private accused of absence from parade by showing that his company had two separate parade locations and neither had been properly specified in orders. The reality was that they were only 20 yards apart¹⁷⁶ After the disaster at Fromelles, the 2/1st Bucks Battalion received 12 officers from the Manchester Regiment, of whom one lasted only just quarter of an hour's duty before being wounded, as well as five others from the Wiltshire Regiment although eventually it received five from the 3/1st Bucks Battalion.¹⁷⁷

The junior officers - ten of whom had joined the 1/1st Bucks in September 1914 - required what have been characterised as transactional rather than transformative skills since many of the other ranks remained pre-war Territorials linked intimately to their county community.¹⁷⁸ Only two of the 30 served with the battalion throughout the war, Reynolds being one and the other the quartermaster and former RSM, Edward Nicol, who was commissioned in January 1915. Of the remainder, four were killed or died of wounds; eight were wounded, five of whom returned at various times; two were invalided home; one was taken prisoner, and three moved to other duties. Of the original cohort, 13 were pre-war Territorials, nine had attended public school, and two grammar schools, while five were Oxbridge graduates. Eleven were employed in the professions and three in commerce.

Throughout the entire period of active service a total of 139 officers passed through the 1/1st Bucks Battalion.¹⁷⁹ As indicated in Table 8.7, a total of 16

¹⁷⁶ Christie-Miller, *2nd Bucks*, I, 6; Senior, *No Finer Courage*, 78.

¹⁷⁷ Christie-Miller, *2nd Bucks*, II, 196-99.

¹⁷⁸ Mitchinson, *Territorial Force at War*, 33, 35-36.

¹⁷⁹ Wright, *First Bucks*, 120, 179-96.

were killed, with two missing (one a prisoner), four died of wounds, and 38 wounded did not return to the battalion. As with other ranks, the more significant changes of personnel occurred with the casualties on the Somme and at Third Ypres: 20 officers were lost in July and August 1916 with another 17 lost in July and August 1917. Again officer replacements would not be from the county, the arrival of 13 officers from the Essex Regiment in September 1916 being, 'it must be admitted, something of a shock'.¹⁸⁰ A total of 31 more officers joined from the 9th Essex, 6th Buffs and 1st Artists Rifles in September 1917.

Reynolds frequently commented on his officers in his letter books. Captain Oscar Viney, for example, returned to the battalion in February 1917 but the severe abdominal wound he had sustained from shell splinters on 23 July 1916 was still discharging and he should not have been sent back at all. He was invalided home in March 1917. After hard service and many fighting patrols since July 1915 and shaken by a shell wound on 23 July 1916, Captain Ralph Young had lost his nerve by June 1917 and badly needed reassignment to the rear.¹⁸¹ Young's surviving letters certainly testify to the discomfort he had experienced after joining the battalion in July 1915, not least in the water-logged trenches in the winter of 1915-16.¹⁸²

Reynolds found replacement officers were of declining quality as the war progressed. A newly arrived 40 year old platoon commander, Lieutenant Francis Ollard, sent to the battalion in March 1917 was lacking in energy

¹⁸⁰ Wright, *First Bucks*, 46.

¹⁸¹ IWM, Doc.7737 [74/136/1], Reynolds Mss, Letter Books, 11 Apl., and 23 June 1917.

¹⁸² IWM, Doc. 20933 [14/15/1], 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

despite his coolness in action. Ollard was wounded in August 1917 and went subsequently to the 4th Reserve Battalion.¹⁸³ Two subalterns in March 1918,

Table 8.7 Officers: Changes in Personnel, 1/1st Bucks Battalion, 1914-19

Changes in Personnel	Mar 1915 to June 1916	July to Aug 1916	Sept 1916 to June 1917	July to Aug 1917	Sept 1917 to Nov 1917	Dec 1917 to Jan 1919	Totals
Killed	2	7	3	2	1	1	16
Missing	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
Died of Wounds	-	2	1	-	1	-	4
Wounded and did not return	5	8	6	10	2	7	38
Ill and did not return	4	1	6	1	3	1	16
Injured and did not return	2	-	1	-	-	1	4
Transfer Out	5	-	6	4	5	7	27
Total Lost	18	20	23	17	12	17	107
Drafts In	18	13	33	7	31	7	109

Source: BA, T/A 6/11-14

¹⁸³ IWM, Doc. 7737 [74/136/1], Reynolds Mss, Letter Books, 27 Jul. 1917 and 6 Apl. 1918.

Second Lieutenants Max Butlin and Vernon Cowlshaw, had had little command experience. The latter was eventually sent to the Intelligence Corps in September as he had shown no demonstrable powers of leadership.¹⁸⁴

Lieutenant Francis Passmore was involved in a range accident in July 1917 when Private F. J. Thompson was wounded while firing a revolver. Passmore had received little revolver instruction at his cadet unit although he went on to win the MC while Second Lieutenant Max Butlin also arrived in January 1918 without adequate training although he improved rapidly.¹⁸⁵ Between them, however, officers earned while with the battalion, 6 DSOs and two bars, 26 MCs and one bar, an OBE, five Italian decorations, and one French decoration.

¹⁸⁶

In terms of absences, illnesses peaked in the last period of December 1917 to January 1919, as did leave periods and attachments with the exception of the leaves granted between March 1915 and June 1916. It might be noted that the number of leave periods for officers were more generous than for other ranks. In keeping with the record of other ranks, venereal cases increased in Italy albeit that those of officers occurred after the armistice (Tables 8.8 and 8.9).

With the armistice in Italy signed on 4 November 1918, news of that on the Western Front seven days later was met ‘with no very great excitement’.¹⁸⁷ The 1/7th Royal Warwicks was selected to remain in Italy and the 1/6th Gloucesters

¹⁸⁴ IWM, Doc. 7737 [74/136/1], Reynolds Mss, Letter Books, 7 May and 25 Sept. 1918.

¹⁸⁵ IWM, Doc. 7737 [74/136/1], Reynolds Mss, Letter Books, 15 July 1917; 24 Mar., and 7 May 1918.

¹⁸⁶ Wright, *First Bucks*, 172-75.

¹⁸⁷ TNA, WO 95/4251, Entry, 11 Nov. 1918.

sent to be part of the Allied Control Force in Albania, hence the 92 men sent to the former and 16 to the latter by the Bucks in February and March 1919. These were all men enlisted after 1916 and were given the choice of battalion to which they were sent, with most choosing the Warwicks as they were staying in Italy and were now commanded by Philip Hall, a pre-war Bucks Territorial who had led 'C' Coy for two years.¹⁸⁸ One man, Colour Sergeant Cecil 'Patsy' Pallett, a decorator, engaged as a regular for 21 years in September 1918 and he was

Table 8.8 Officers: Absences, 1/1st Bucks battalion, 1914-19

Absences	Mar 1915 to Jun 1916	July to Aug 1916	Sept 1916 to Jun 1917	July to Aug 1917	Sept to Nov 1917	Dec 17 to Jan 1919	Totals
Illness and rejoined	14	1	10	-	-	21	46
Injured and rejoined	1	-	1	-	-	-	2
Wounded and rejoined	6	9	3	1	-	13	32
Attachments	17	3	20	6	7	43	96
Courses	24	3	29	3	8	26	93
Leave Period	77	2	28	5	13	52	177
Total	139	18	91	15	28	155	446

Sources: BA, T/A 6/11-14.

¹⁸⁸ Wright, *First Bucks*, 141-42.

Table 8.9 Officers: Illnesses, 1/1st Bucks Battalion, 1914-19

Illnesses	Mar 1915 to June 1916	July to Aug 1916	Sept 1916 to June 1917	July to Aug 1917	Sept to Nov 1917	Dec 1917 to Jan 1919	Totals
All Illness	18	2	16	1	3	22	62
Influenza	3	-	1	-	-	8	12
Measles/German Measles	3	-	-	-	-	-	3
Fevers/Pyrexia	1	1	2	-	2	1	7
ICT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Scabies/Boils/Eczema/ Impetigo	2	-	1	-	-	2	5
Dental Problems	2	-	-	-	-	2	4
Diarrhoea/Dysentery/ Enteric	1	-	1	-	1	1	4
Synovitis	1	-	-	1	-	-	2
Myalgia	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Tonsillitis	-	1	3	-	-	1	5
Venereal	1	-	1	-	-	3	5

Sources: BA, T/A 6/11-14

retained for the Army of Occupation in February 1919. Pallett was later commissioned and, as Captain Quartermaster, was one of the few officers of the 1st Bucks Battalion to escape from the destruction of the battalion at Hazebrouck in May 1940: he was awarded the MC for extricating the 'B Echelon' by leading a bayonet charge after it was cut off.

Amid the routine training and frequent sports, 34 men found themselves on attachments in February, many at Labour or POW camps, some on the Leave Train and two men operating the cinema of the 1/4th Battalion, OBLI. There was also the death of Private F. W. Thompson of High Wycombe from injuries sustained in an unspecified fatal shooting incident at Cherbourg in February 1919 for which a court of enquiry was instituted. Thompson had rejoined the battalion from leave in January 1919 and had been retained for further service, and was presumably on his way back to England. The regimental history claimed that although training was reduced (largely to drill) and sports increased, discipline got stricter after the armistice.¹⁸⁹ There were, however, few disciplinary offences in February and March 1918. Two men lost pay for absence in February with another awarded seven days' FP2 for deficiencies in the kitchen wagon on the troop train and absence from duty at the kitchen. There were two further FGCMs, Private C. W. May, formerly of the ASC, receiving six months' hard labour for disobeying commands whilst attached to the laundry, and Private E. J. Wardell receiving 30 days' FP1 in March for negligently discharging a pistol and wounding an Italian civilian. As men were transferred or demobilised, the battalion dwindled to a cadre of five officers and 50 men with its last parade in Italy on 23 March 1919. The cadre reached Aylesbury on Monday 31 March to a civic reception.¹⁹⁰

The 1/1st Bucks Battalion looked very different in 1919 from that which had embarked in 1915. Change was constant even without the heavier losses resulting from intensive operational periods, those wounded or falling ill increasingly less likely to return to the Bucks. Temporary attachment, courses and leave periods took large numbers away from the Bucks during less intensive

¹⁸⁹ Wright, *First Bucks*, 140-41.

¹⁹⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 5 Apl. 1919; *Bucks Advertiser*, 12 Apl. 1919.

operational periods but the extent of illness was even more significant. Influenza was the predominant illness and made its presence felt long before the outbreak usually associated with 1918-19. Drafts, which invariably kept pace with losses, increasingly came from non-Bucks units. New arrivals in 1917 posed greater disciplinary challenges, coinciding with general deterioration of discipline in Italy, by which time there was also less willingness to inflict severer forms of punishment. Nonetheless, overall, the disciplinary record was good.

As suggested by the 1/1st Bucks at least in terms of drafts arriving from elsewhere, there could be tensions. This also applied to relationships between ‘veterans’ and new arrivals and rivalries between men of the first and second lines when drafted to each other as well as in the initial reduction of pre-war yeomanry regiments from four to three squadrons and of infantry battalions from eight to four companies.

Such tensions were certainly apparent in the Royal Bucks Hussars, whose experience of the war differed markedly from the Bucks Battalions in serving mostly outside France. The four squadrons assembled at Aylesbury, Buckingham, Chesham and High Wycombe on 5 August 1914. Whilst the regimental headquarters was at Buckingham, a depot and recruiting office was opened at Lucas’s Pawnbrokers in Walton Street, Aylesbury. Medical inspections were held at the King’s Head for new recruits. As well as at the King’s Head, yeomen were also billeted at the Bull’s Head and the Crown. At Wycombe, squadron headquarters were established at the Red Lion Hotel. Men were billeted in the town, and horses obtained and stabled.

The regiment as a whole left for Reading on 11 and 12 August 1914, the four squadrons being reorganised into three. After ten days at Reading, the regiment moved with the 2nd South Midland Mounted Brigade to the east coast, billeted

first at Great Saxham then Brandon Park, Aylsham and Cromer before briefly returning to Churn and Steventon. After an expected summons to France did not materialise, the regiment was posted once more to the east coast, being billeted at Great Ryburgh and Whissonsett on 17 November 1915. There was some jealousy when the 1/1st Oxfordshire Yeomanry was posted to the Western Front as divisional cavalry in September 1914.¹⁹¹ According to Sir Everard Duncombe, the regiment managed to hide its best horses from Oxfordshire ‘press gangs’.¹⁹² Lionel Walter Rothschild presented the regiment with another maxim gun in November 1914.¹⁹³

Just as Tommy Agar-Robartes and ‘Rivvy’ Grenfell transferred from the regiment for active service elsewhere before it went overseas itself, so, too, did other officers. A former regular and a Bucks county cricketer, Sydney Fairbairn from Thame Park transferred to the Grenadier Guards after recovering from being wounded at Gallipoli.¹⁹⁴ Alexander Wernher from the wealthy family of Luton Hoo in Bedfordshire joined the regiment in November 1914, but transferred to the Welsh Guards, being killed in September 1916. A student at the Royal School of Mines, Kenneth Restall, enlisted in the regiment as a trooper in November 1914, but was commissioned almost immediately into the 12th Middlesex Regiment. He was also killed in September 1916.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ Cripps, *Life's A Gamble*, 99.

¹⁹² BA, AR 105/2011 [BMMT 608], Duncombe to Churchill, 5 Apl. 1955.

¹⁹³ BA, T/A 1/6, CTA Mins., 5 Nov. 1914.

¹⁹⁴ John Fairbairn, *Sydney Fairbairn: Letters and Diaries, 1915-24* (Bridport: Privately printed, 2005), 48.

¹⁹⁵ Alexander Pigott Wernher, 2nd Lieutenant, *The Welsh Guards who fell in action at Ginchy, France, September 10th, 1916* (Privately published memorial volume, n. d.); *With the 12th*

The 1/1st RBH went to Egypt from Avonmouth on 5 April 1915 undertaking troop and squadron training including night work in the desert, improving the riding skills of drafts from the 2/1st Bucks, and bringing the horses back to full health and fitness after the voyage out. Fortunately, only six horses had been lost on the voyage out compared to 25 in the 1/1st Berkshire Yeomanry and 30 in the 1/1st Dorset Yeomanry.¹⁹⁶ A list of 'A' Squadron in April 1915 offers a glimpse of the regiment at embarkation since it includes some details of occupations and when men had enlisted (Table 8.10). Of nine officers, only Fred Lawson and Anthony de Rothschild were pre-war Territorials, with one other commissioned in 1914 and the remainder all in 1915. Of the 159 NCOs and other ranks, only 14 (8.8 per cent) were pre-war yeomen while 61 had enlisted in 1914 (38.3 per cent), and 31 in 1915 (19.4 per cent): no date was given for the remaining 53 and it is likely that several were pre-war yeomen. The traditional preponderance of farmers was still marked in terms of wartime enlistment but tradesmen were also still prominent although, perhaps inevitably skilled and unskilled manual workers were more forthcoming than had been the case before the war.¹⁹⁷ Of those who embarked, 33 men were still with the regiment in November 1918.¹⁹⁸

Middlesex: Letters from Lieut. Kenneth Restall, 1915-16 (Drewett & Sons, memorial volume, 1917.

¹⁹⁶ BA, AR 8/2001 [BMMT 474], *Notes on 'A' Squadron*, 12-16; IWM, Duncombe Diary, Doc. 11863 [02/16/1], 29 July 1915; BA, T/A 3/517, Fred Lawson to William Lawson, 23 Apl. 1915.

¹⁹⁷ BA, D206/24.

¹⁹⁸ BA, D206/ 17, Liddington to Fred Lawson, 27 Apl. 1919; T/A 3/27.

Table 8.10: Occupations of ‘A’ Squadron, 1/1st Royal Bucks Hussars, April 1915

	Pre-war yeomen	1914 enlistments	1915 enlistments	Unknown enlistment date	Total
Independent	-	1	-	-	1 (0.6%)
Farmer	7	13	4	11	35 (22.0%)
Profession	1	5	2	4	12 (7.5%)
Clerk	1	6	6	6	19 (11.9%)
Trade	2	15	10	6	33 (20.7%)
Craft	1	3	3	3	10 (6.2%)
Skilled Manual	2	11	1	9	23 (14.4%)
Unskilled Manual	-	4	2	7	13 (8.1%)
Not Given	-	3	3	7	13
Total	14	61	31	53	159

Source: BA, D206/24

Early experiences in Egypt included policing and sport as well as training.¹⁹⁹

One sentry found asleep was given 78 days CB. John Grenfell reported, ‘he is a

¹⁹⁹ Fairbairn (ed.), *Sydney Fairbairn*, 6-7, 12, 16.

most respectable Buckinghamshire Farmer, so his family will be surprised to hear of his experiences in Egypt'.²⁰⁰

Sir Everard Duncombe and Fred Lawson were both sent to Gallipoli on 1 August to act as military landing officers. Fred Lawson was posted to Anzac Cove where they were 'clinging on by our eyelids to the top of a most damnable cliff'.²⁰¹ 'B' and 'C' squadrons followed dismounted to Gallipoli via Mudros on 13 August 1915, a much reduced and reorganised 'A' squadron remaining with all the horses in Egypt under Major Warren Swire. About 20-30 original men from 'A' squadron remained in Egypt and 100 or so from the other two squadrons but only 70 men were fit for duty. They were then reinforced by 170 men from the 2/1st and 3/1st RBH in September 1915. Some of these latter men were sent out to be part of a composite regiment to be sent to Salonika in October 1915 but this did not then happen.²⁰² Meanwhile 2nd Mounted Division was committed to extending the beachhead established by landing at Suvla Bay 6 August 1915, in itself intended to secure a new base area in order to support a series of offensives elsewhere on the peninsula, particularly that by the Anzacs at Sari Bair. The landing was largely unopposed and there is little doubt that the commander of the British IX Corps, Lieutenant General Sir Frederick Stopford, failed to seize the opportunity to consolidate the beachhead by pushing his troops inland to take the high ground at what became known as Chocolate and Scimitar Hills. As a result, the Turks were able to occupy the heights. A now familiar struggle for the heights ensued.

²⁰⁰ Queen Mary University Library (hereafter QMUL), Lyttelton Mss, PP5/GRE/28/3, John Grenfell to 'K', 22 May 1915.

²⁰¹ BA, T/A 3/517, Fred Lawson to Harry Lawson, 1 Aug. 1915; Fairbairn (ed.), *Sydney Fairbairn*, 29, 47.

²⁰² BA, AR 8/2001 [BMMT 474], *Notes on 'A' Squadron*, 17-19.

The planned assault on the high ground at Suvla Bay on 21 August 1915 involved the 11th and 29th Divisions in the lead, with the 2nd Mounted Division in reserve to the 29th Division. The yeomen moved up to the hill known as Lala Baba on the night of 20/21 August. The artillery bombardment opened at 1430 hours, the timing intended to take advantage of the sun in the west illuminating the Turkish positions and also handicapping Turks firing into the glare.

Unfortunately, there was a mist blurring the objectives and also providing a background to the attackers so far as the Turks were concerned. In addition, limited ammunition meant that the bombardment lasted only half an hour.

When the 29th Division could make no headway against Scimitar Hill, the yeomen were ordered to advance to their support at 1730 hours. The task of the 2nd Mounted Division, including the 1/1st Royal Bucks Hussars, was to advance across the dry and exposed Salt Lake to the low scrub beyond - now alight from artillery fire - and towards Chocolate and Scimitar Hills. Advancing in extended order, the men were an easy target for Turkish artillery. Many men halted under cover of Green Hill to the west of Scimitar Hill but Brigadier General Lord Longford commanding 2nd Mounted Brigade carrying a walking stick led a charge over Green and Chocolate Hills, up the summit of Scimitar Hill. As Fred Lawson wrote to his father, 'Longford knew where he wanted to get and walked straight there at the head of his Brigade under very heavy fire with his walking stick in his hand. He was told that the other Brigades would be there before him and he need not wait for them as they had a shorter way to go. In point of fact, only about two troops of them ever got beyond our advanced trenches.' In many cases, men who had been hit and were 'walking lame' got hit again.²⁰³

²⁰³ BA, T/A 3/517, Fred Lawson to William Lawson, 27 Sept. 1915.





Officers of the 2nd Mounted Brigade receiving their instructions for the attack, 21 August 1915 [NAM]



The view back across the Salt Lake from Chocolate Hill, 21 August 1915 [NAM]

After three attempts, the 2nd Mounted Brigade gained a foothold in the Turkish trenches but was driven out, retiring to a gully where they remained to cover the evacuation of the wounded. The brigade moved back to Chocolate Hill during the night. Longford was among those killed. Out of seven officers and 250 other ranks who participated, the 1/1st Royal Bucks Hussars had seven officers and 130 men hit. One officer and 32 men were killed, with four taken prisoner. The officer killed was Captain George Gardner, the regular adjutant who resided at Whitchurch, who had only joined in March 1914.²⁰⁴ Duncombe, who had seen something of the advance in the distance wrote, 'The whole division had bad luck, being shelled before they had a chance to fire a shot - however they did very well.'²⁰⁵

Fred Cripps was shot through the right knee and chest and was brought out by a lieutenant of the Westminster Dragoons 'staggering slowly arm-in-arm across the plain, outlined against the dust and smoke. Their progress seemed interminably slow, their chances of survival remote, and everyone's hopes were wrapped up in their fate; gradually they came nearer and, when at last they reached us, Cripps slowly produced a large cigar case from his pocket, took out a large cigar and it. Then a mighty cheer went up.'²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ TNA, WO 95/4293; Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 60-61; E. J. Hounslow, *Fighting for the Bucks: The History of the Royal Bucks Hussars, 1914-18* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2013), 48-60; Fairbairn (ed.), *Sydney Fairbairn*, 46, 48; Ian F. W. Beckett, *Whitchurch, The Fallen and the First World War* (Privately printed, 2018), 50-52.

²⁰⁵ IWM, Duncombe Diary, Doc. 11863 [02/16/1], 22 and 25 Aug. 1915.

²⁰⁶ Account from *Royal Armoured Corps Journal* quoted in Cripps, *Life's A Gamble*, 103.

Trooper Frank Lunnon was another of those wounded:²⁰⁷

My first recollection was seeing two Turks running for a trench about one hundred yards away. I dropped one and missed the other who got to his trench. I then realised there were lots of Turks the other side of a thick belt of scrub about thirty to forty yards off and you had to stand up to shoot at them. I emptied my magazine and sat down out of sight to reload. As I stood up again I saw a rifle pointing at me. I tried to get off the first shot but failed to do so. He broke my right arm. Very shortly afterwards a shell shattered my left elbow. When I came to, I heard an officer shout “Gentlemen we must retire”.

William St John re-visited Gallipoli in 1921 and went to Chocolate Hill:²⁰⁸

It gave me a decidedly queer feeling to find myself again on the identical spot where we assembled after crossing the Salt Lake. Very uncanny, and I could see the identical spot where we saw Fred Cripps come out of the burning bush to rejoin us after being wounded... I went step by step over the ground of our advance on the 21st. It was rather uncanny, how I found myself taking exactly the same line past the old gun position and dropping into the K.O.S.B. trenches at the same spot that Sergt. Timms came in. Then across the open and to the ditch where we got potted, and I swung up under cover of a bank, and, as I could now see very wisely, well under cover. There was the tree still seamed by bullets, where Terry was lying shot through the eye. No wonder we got it in the neck all that day. Every movement was well under rifle and machine gun fire ...Looking at it now, the wonder is that anyone ever reached there. And to hold Scimitar Hill

²⁰⁷ Frank Lunnon, ‘Memoirs of a Buckinghamshire Yeoman’, *The Gallipolian* 69 (1992), 11-13.

²⁰⁸ BA, D206/21, St John to Gadsden, 29 June 1921.

without W. Hill was impossible and I doubt whether that could be held without.

For reasons that remained uncertain, St John committed suicide in May 1931.

209

The regiment continued to hold trenches on Chocolate Hill before returning to Mudros on 1 November. It was a trying period, Fred Lawson overhearing one trooper remarking that he had enlisted to fight on a horse, not to spend 60 percent of this time as a navvy and 40 per cent as a mule.²¹⁰ In the campaign as a whole, a further eight men were killed or died of wounds, and six officers and 89 men were wounded or invalided. The officers wounded included Fred Cripps and Anthony de Rothschild whilst Evelyn de Rothschild, and Cecil and John Grenfell were both invalided. Cecil Grenfell was ‘an absolute wreck with rheumatism’. Fred Lawson, however, felt John Grenfell, who had remained on Lemnos, was something of a fraud as he had not been any more badly affected by dysentery than anyone else and ‘was not too bad to be smoking a large cigar as the hospital ship sailed out of Mudros’.²¹¹ Duncombe also went down with dysentery in September 1915 and was evacuated back to England.²¹²

Meanwhile, ‘A’ Squadron had been campaigning as part of a composite regiment against the Senussi (Sanusi) in the Western Desert. The Sanusiyya was a Sufi religious brotherhood active among the Cyrenaican Bedouin, which became an ally of the Ottoman Turks fighting initially against the Italians in

²⁰⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 22 May 1931.

²¹⁰ BA, T/A 3/517, Fred Lawson to Olive Lawson, 18 Oct. 1915.

²¹¹ BA, T/A 3/517, Fred Lawson to William Lawson, 27 Sept., and 12 Oct. 1915; Fred Lawson to Olive Lawson, 30 Sept. 1915; *Bucks Herald*, 18 Sept. 1915.

²¹² IWM, Duncombe Diary Doc. 11863 [02/16/1], 9 Nov. 1915; BA, T/A 3/517, Fred Lawson to Olive Lawson, 25 Oct. 1915.

Libya and then attempting incursions into British Egyptian territory. Some men from the 1/1st Bucks Hussars were also seconded to the 2nd Battalion, Imperial Camel Corps for the campaign.²¹³ 'A' Squadron was now joined by those returning from Gallipoli made back up to strength by new drafts from the 2/1st and 3/1st RBH, some of which had first gone to Lemnos but without being committed to Gallipoli. Neil Primrose had taken out one draft from the 3/1st RBH on 26 August 1915.²¹⁴ The whole regiment, now back under the command of Cecil Grenfell, took part in a number of operations around Matruh in December 1915 and January 1916.

The acerbic and, according to Fred Lawson 'poisonous', Warren Swire was appalled at Cecil Grenfell's return and refused to serve under him. Swire suggested that Grenfell 'was not exactly in front of his regiment the first time they went into action' on Gallipoli. Grenfell ordered Swire back to Cairo and he sought a transfer to the 2/1st RBH in the hope of returning at a later date. Swire believed the men felt equally about Grenfell but 'these Grenfells have too much influence with the Churchill crowd and hated as they are, they can still carry it off.' It was then alleged that Swire did not have the confidence of his subordinates, Swire blaming John Grenfell for taking his brother's side in the affair.²¹⁵

Swire's comment on Cecil Grenfell accords with others. Fred Lawson had not expected (or hoped) either Cecil or John Grenfell would return after Gallipoli and had castigated a letter of Cecil Grenfell appearing in the press about the

²¹³ Geoffrey Inchbald, *Imperial Camel Corps* (London: Johnson, 1970), 11, 23, 38.

²¹⁴ NAM, 1991-07-220, Bowyer Mss, 10-13; BA, T/A 3/41/1, Order Book, 3/1st RBH, 14 and 26 Aug. 1915; QMUL, Lyttelton Mss, PP5/GRE/29/1, Cecil Grenfell to Lola, 18 Dec. 1915.

²¹⁵ Swire Mss, Warren Swire to John Swire, 8 and 12 Dec. 1915, and 11 May 1916; BA, T/A 3/517, Fred Lawson to William Lawson, 5 Nov. 1915.

attack on 21 August when he did not know what had happened in the latter stages when he was not present.²¹⁶ A letter of 'The Elephant' (almost certainly Captain C. P. M. Weatherley) to William Lawson in January 1916 accusing Cecil Grenfell of leaving the scene when the regiment was fired on during operations against the Senussi in the Western Desert:²¹⁷

The C.O. did the usual thing... I don't know where he went to, but I was told he was sitting near the hospital wagon about 2,000 yards in the rear. Anyway he might have told me, as his second in command that he was going. He took d....d good care not to get within rifle shot the whole day, but sent us off in various directions.

It was 'a bad thing for a Regt. To have a C.O. who dare not lead it and in whom no one has confidence'. Grenfell was also addicted to burnishing stirrups and bits so that the 1/1st RBH appeared a 'regiment of heliographs'.²¹⁸ Grenfell also cultivated cliques so that 'Elephant' would be content 'if fate would only move to some other sphere of activity or usefulness our Saturn and his ring of satellites'.²¹⁹ Grenfell appeared an arch snob to Weatherley and he was especially angry by being moved from squadron command in favour of Neil Primrose when on leave. Grenfell wanted him sent back to the 2/1st RBH.²²⁰

There were certainly tensions between 'veterans' and new arrivals. Six officers were sent to the 1/1st RBH from the 2/1st in October 1915 to make good losses

²¹⁶ BA, T/A 3/517, Fred Lawson to Olive Lawson, 25 Oct. 1915; Fred Lawson to William Lawson, 25 Oct. 1915.

²¹⁷ BA, D206/13, 'Elephant' to William Lawson, 16 Jan. 1916.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ BA, D206/13, 'Elephant' to William Lawson, 21 Jan. 1916.

²²⁰ BA, T/A 3/517, 'Elephant' to William Lawson, 26 Apl. 1916.



*'Crocker' Bulteel's Charger being offloaded at Alexandria, Egypt, 1915
[BMMT]*

at Gallipoli including (Temporary) Major A. L. 'Joe' Birch and Weatherly.²²¹ While officers of the 1/1st RBH retained their seniority even if temporarily posted back to the 2/1st or 3/1st, those arriving from the 2/1st or 3/1st reverted to their previous rank. Cecil Grenfell's utter dislike for those for officers from the 2/1st and Swire in particular was coming down heavily on NCOs from the 2/1st RBH. He was being a 'swine' to Birch and the 2/1st officers would have much preferred Swire as commanding officer rather than Grenfell.²²² Technically, Birch was only a lieutenant but insisted on being treated as a major and thereby senior to long-term captains and subalterns, who refused to serve under him. Birch appeared to have an exaggerated sense of his own ability. If Birch was

²²¹ TNA, WO 95/5461.

²²² BA, D206/13, 'Elephant' to William Lawson, 16 Jan. 1916; T/A 3/517, Fred Lawson to Olive Lawson, 5 Nov. 1915; Fred Lawson to William Lawson, 11 Jan. 1916; Fred Lawson to Harry Lawson, 19 Feb. 1916; T/A, 1/1 CTA Mins., 5 July 1917.

pushed off to a staff job, they were prepared to serve under Weatherly when he was made up to a temporary majority.²²³ ‘Elephant’ (Weatherly) felt that Cecil Grenfell and Birch were determined to get rid of Swire whose departure was hastened by his writing to the brigade commander refusing to serve under Cecil Grenfell, leading him to be put under arrest.²²⁴ Swire did not return to the 2/1st RBH as he hoped but went to work in shipping control. As he had noted in December 1915 being head of the firm ‘is a bad place to learn subordination and obedience to incompetent fools, who aren’t even gentlemen’.²²⁵

Seniority issues persisted, Lieutenant Cyrus Perkins writing in August 1916 that ‘there is certain ill feeling here’ when he arrived with seniority over other subalterns. The son of a Canadian oil engineer, Cyrus Perkins was educated at Charterhouse. He was staying with school friends in Hull when the war broke out and immediately went up to London to enlist as a Royal Engineers motor cycle despatch rider. Subsequently, he obtained a commission as Second Lieutenant in the 7th Reserve Cavalry at Tidworth training alongside the 3/1st Royal Bucks Hussars. Anxious to see action, he applied to Lord Burnham to transfer and secured a promise he would be sent out with the first available reinforcing draft. He reached the 1/1st Royal Bucks Hussars on 27 May 1916 at the end of the campaign against the Senussi. He was briefly seconded to a brigade machine gun section in January 1917 but returned to the regiment in

²²³ BA, T/A 3/517, Fred Lawson to William Lawson, 11 Jan. 1916 and n. d.; D206/13, ‘Elephant’ to William Lawson, 16 Jan. 1916.

²²⁴ BA, D206/13, ‘Elephant’ to William Lawson, 16 Jan. 1916.

²²⁵ Swire Mss, Swire to Scott, 12 Dec. 1915.

March 1917. While commissioned in November 1914, he was then only given seniority from January 1916.²²⁶



Lieutenant Cyrus Perkins, 1917 [BMMT]

There was a sharp action at Wadi Majid near Matruh on Christmas Day.

Trooper (later Lieutenant) William Bowyer, a farmer's son from Essex who had been working in the City when he enlisted at the RBH's London recruiting office, recalled that Grenfell had wished all a Happy Christmas as they moved off at 0230 and, in the midst of the skirmishing, 'curiously enough we seemed to have a cessation midday for our Christmas dinner, bully [beef] and biscuits'. The Senussi were forced back, the regiment then having to return 15 miles in a steady downpour to reach Matruh: 'The ride seems interminable but eventually we get back to the beach at Matruh, feed, and have some very salt tea given out

²²⁶ BA, T/A 3/42/3, Orders, 5 May 1916; T/A 3/41, Record of Services of Officers and NCOs, 3/1st RBH; D206/25, Cyrus Perkins, 'With Horses to Jerusalem', typescript 7-8; AR 8/2001 (BMMT 473), Perkins to parents, 27 May and 3 Aug. 1916.

to us, which with biscuits forms our supper.’²²⁷ Anthony de Rothschild wrote to his father Leopold of the same action. The 1/1st RBH had tried to pursue the Senussi but could not get really close enough due to their own British artillery support:²²⁸

It was really a most remarkable sight, rather like bolting rats from a hole... It was too late, however, and there was no means of communication between the different units of our force, so it was impossible to round them all up as we were afraid of being left out there in that difficult country in the dark, so we came home... I see no end to these operations, as the enemy disperse as soon as any force is sent against them.

Following another indecisive action on 23 January 1916, Bowyer wrote,²²⁹

Owing to lack of water, food and ammunition, we are compelled to go back rather than forward, and so we slowly go back, taking our dead and wounded with us. We get soaked through just as we start, but this proves a blessing in disguise, as following the tracks of the artillery, we are able to drink the water collected in the ruts, and also even water our horses with surface water.’

The campaigning was particular hard on the horses, many ‘utterly knocked up and lame’.²³⁰

²²⁷ NAM, Bowyer Mss, 1991-07-220.

²²⁸ Gibson, *Neil Primrose*, 23.

²²⁹ NAM, 1991-07-220, Bowyer Mss.

²³⁰ BA, D206/13, ‘Elephant’ to William Lawson, 26 Jan. 1916.



The Turkish commander, Jaafa Pasha, captured, 26 February 1916 [BMMT]

The reconstituted 2nd Mounted Brigade then took part in further operations against the Senussi. Often the actions were indecisive, but the Turkish commander, Jaafa Pasha (Ja'far al-'Askari), was captured in one action at Agagia on 26 February.²³¹ Following a brief period of recuperation, the regiment was again deployed against the Senussi until October 1916. Now under the command of John Grenfell, the regiment moved to Palestine in February 1917 as part of 6th Mounted Brigade in the Imperial Mounted Division, taking part in the inconclusive first and second battles of Gaza.²³²

In January 1917, John Grenfell had sent a letter criticising the military capabilities of the brigade commander, Thomas Morton Pitt, to Harry Lawson, who had succeeded his father as Lord Burnham in January 1916. He had also sent a copy to his uncle, Field Marshal Lord Grenfell. John Grenfell was

²³¹ Hounslow, *Fighting for the Bucks*, 76-80.

²³² Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 62-65; Hounslow, *Fighting for the Bucks*, 88-94.

incensed by brigade headquarters leaving the scene rapidly when coming under fire and without issuing any orders. The letter was opened by the censor and Grenfell was court martialled in September 1917, receiving a severe reprimand and being sent home. The GOC Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EFF), General Sir Edmund Allenby, liked Grenfell but felt that ‘I could not retain as commanding a Regiment in my Army an officer who could write such a letter. The whole letter was improper; but I could have condoned all of it except for the writer’s criticism of his Brigadier, and his references to future operations in the Beersheeba area.’ Fred Cripps, who had acted as Grenfell’s ‘prisoner’s friend’ was given the command.²³³ Pitt, however, was removed from the brigade command. It was not Grenfell’s first indiscretion as he had written to Cripps’ father, Lord Parmoor, in April with fairly full details of the regiment’s action at Gaza, when Cripps had led a squadron counter-attack in support of the Berkshire Yeomanry after its commanding officer was wounded.²³⁴

The 6th Mounted Brigade became part of the Yeomanry Mounted Division of the Desert Mounted Corps in Allenby’s new offensive to outflank the Gaza line. With the advance of 52nd Division stalled in front of the Katrah-El Mughar Ridge by elements of the Turkish XXII Corps, 6th Mounted Brigade was ordered to attack the ridge running north-east from El Mughar on 13 November 1917. The 1/1st Dorset Yeomanry was to take the left of the ridge and the 1/1st RBH the right just north of the village, their objective extending some 1,200 yards in length. The 1/1st Berkshire Yeomanry was in reserve with the 17th Machine Gun Squadron supporting from the cover of the Wadi Rubin in which

²³³ TNA, WO 95/4506, Entry for 14 Sept. 1917; Cripps, *Life’s A Gamble*, 114-15; Matthew Hughes (ed.), *Allenby in Palestine: The Middle East Correspondence of Field Marshal Viscount Allenby, 1917-19* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing for Army Records Society, 2004), 88-89; BA, D206/25, Perkins, ‘With Horses to Jerusalem’, 2-3.

²³⁴ Parmoor Mss, Grenfell to Parmoor, 26 Apl. 1917.

the brigade was concentrated. The Berkshire Battery, Royal Horse Artillery was also able to support the charge.²³⁵

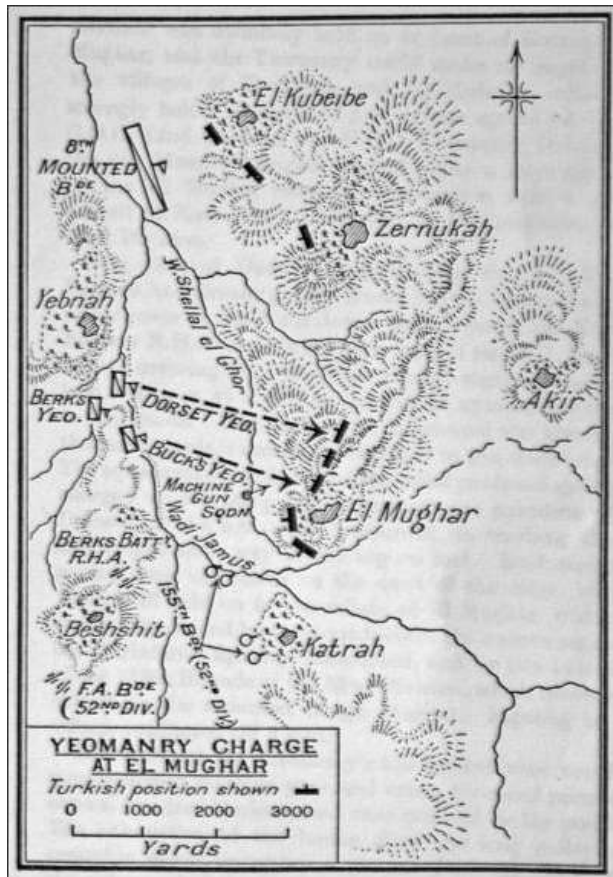
A preliminary reconnaissance was carried out by Cyrus Perkins. Of his reconnaissance to find cover for horses closer to the Turkish position, the later Official History recorded he ‘cantered up and down under a hail of machine gun fire which followed him as the spotlight follows a dancer on stage’.²³⁶ Having found no cover, Perkins was then ordered to find Fred Lawson and bring up the detached ‘A’ Squadron.

At 1500, the 1/1st RBH and the 1/1st Dorset Yeomanry charged some 4,500 yards over the open plain from the Wadi Jamus. The Bucks were led by ‘B’ Squadron in extended order under Captain John Crocker Bulteel, with ‘C’ Squadron under Captain the Hon. Neil Primrose and Major Evelyn de Rothschild about 200 yards behind. ‘A’ Squadron under Lieutenant Colonel the Hon. Fred Cripps and Major Fred Lawson brought up the rear in close formation. The first 2,000 yards were covered at the trot and, after crossing the small wadi previously reconnoitred by Perkins, the Bucks Hussars broke into a gallop with swords drawn. The Turkish infantry initially broke as ‘B’ Squadron rode into them but rallied when seeing how small the Bucks were. With mounted action on the rear slopes impossible, ‘A’ and ‘C’ Squadrons dismounted to complete the seizure of the ridge in hand to hand fighting by 1530. The Bucks and Dorsets together took 1,096 prisoners, two (or three) field guns and 14 (or 19) machine guns. Later in the evening, the 1/1st Berkshire

²³⁵ BA, T/A 3/48, *A Brief Record of the Advance of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force* (Cairo: Government Press, 1919), 47-49; T/A 3/47, *Account of 6th Mounted Brigade at El Mughar, Palestine* (Cairo: Government Press, 1918).

²³⁶ Sir George MacMunn and Cyril Falls, *Official History of the Great War: Military Operations Egypt and Palestine Vol. II, Pt. I* (London: HMSO, 1930), 168.

Yeomanry cleared the village, taking another 400 prisoners. It was estimated that the Turks had lost over 600 dead. El Mughar was last *British* cavalry charge although there were later charges in Syria in 1918 by an Indian regiment and by the Australian Light Horse.



El Mughar Ridge from the Wadi Jamus [BMMT]



Dead Horses after the Charge [BMMT]



After the Charge [BMMT]

Perkins described the sensation of the charge as being constantly hit in the face with a pillow from the blast of shells. He calculated his mare had covered over 7½ miles, much of it at the gallop with almost no break. As he wrote to his parents, ‘I tell you it’s the most exhilarating thing in the world - we went mad.’ He was fortunate to have only two men killed in his troop although, as it

happened, they were the only two who were married. His only wound was a nick on his bridle hand. The 'din was tremendous' and he recalled 'a petrified face a howl & as my sword came out hitting another over the back of the neck'.

²³⁷ Perkins was awarded the MC for his reconnaissance role at El Mughar and was promoted Captain in 1918. Perkins remained with the regiment until the end of the war. He then studied geology at Trinity College, Cambridge, becoming a business executive for General Motors (Romania) and then Rediffusion.

Captain J. D. Young wrote that men and horses 'were mad with excitement' while John Crocker Bulteel felt it had been 'an impossible place for them to attack without proper artillery preparation'. ²³⁸ William Bowyer described the ground as 'zipping and spluttering as the bullets hit it'. He was alongside Bulteel: 'I have never seen Captain Bulteel so excited, and we have some rare shooting at bodies of the Turks, running back out of the cactus gardens'. ²³⁹ Bulteel had earlier been characterised by John Grenfell as 'a first class fighting officer and consistently does well whenever he gets the chance'. ²⁴⁰

Fred Lawson recalled the mess cook with the pack mule taking part in the charge and Fred Cripps' horse 'jumping a wadi at the foot of the position clear from bank to bank, after 1,500 yards at top speed, and the wadi wide enough for everyone else to go down and through'. Cripps himself expressed surprise that his horse had cleared the wadi and suggested that if Turkish machine guns had

²³⁷ BA, D206/25, Perkins, 'With Horses to Jerusalem', 8-10; AR 8/2001 (BMMT 473), Perkins to parents, 16 Nov. 1917; Perkins to gather, 30 Dec. 1917.

²³⁸ *Evening Despatch*, 2 Jan. 1918; BA, D206/15, Bulteel to Burnham, 19 Dec. 1917.

²³⁹ NAM, 1991-07-220, Bowyer Mss, 70-73.

²⁴⁰ QMUL, Lyttelton Mss, PP5/GRE/28/3, John Grenfell to 'George', 5 Apl. 1917.



The Charge as painted by T. C. Dugdale [BMMT]



The Charge as painted by J. P. Beadle [BMMT]

been posted at the bottom of the ridge the charge would have been impossible. The defenders had fled as the Bucks charged: ‘Many of them were killed with the sword, and the rest of the Turkish division ran away as we got through.’²⁴¹

During the charge, Evelyn de Rothschild was mortally wounded, with three other officers wounded, six men killed, one missing believed killed and 44 wounded (some mortally). A total of 120 horses were also lost.²⁴²

Reduced to some 200 effectives, the regiment was in action again at Abu Shusheh on 15 November with Neil Primrose being killed. Cripps thought that Primrose had a touch of fever but he refused to rest. The Turks were again on a prominent ridge, this time too steep in places for horses so that they were being led. The men had dismounted to advance on foot when Primrose was hit through the head by machine gun fire from a cave.²⁴³ The men were then able to remount for the last few hundred yards, routing the Turks, killing 431 and taking 360 prisoners.

Primrose had rejoined the 1/1st RBH after parliamentary duties when it was on Mudros after withdrawal from Gallipoli and had then participated in the Senussi campaign, winning the MC. More parliamentary duty followed with Primrose briefly Parliamentary Military Secretary at the Ministry of Munitions and, equally briefly, Liberal Chief Whip before re-joining the regiment once more

²⁴¹ [Fred Lawson], ‘Beersheba, Beitunia, Bethhorn, Stopping at Bishops Stortford’, *Cavalry Journal* 27 (1937), 47-53, at 49; Cripps, *Life’s A Gamble*, 116-17; Author interview with James and Samuel Lawrence, 22 May 1981.

²⁴² Ian F. W. Beckett, ‘The Last Charge’, *Bugle & Sabre* 11 (2018), 14-22; idem, *The Last Charge* (Bucks Military Museum Trust Exhibition Booklet, 2017); Hounslow, *Fighting for the Bucks*, 115-26; BA, T/A 3/49 ‘Action of the 6th Mounted Brigade at El Mughar, 13 November 1917’.

²⁴³ Gibson, *Neil Primrose*, 26; idem, *Primrose Path*, 221.

from 3rd Reserve Cavalry Regiment in September 1917. His horse had been shot under him at El Mughar and Trooper Jim Lawrence had secured for him the horse of Evelyn de Rothschild's servant, who had been killed: the horse was from the Rothschild stables at Ascott.²⁴⁴ Primrose's elder brother, Lord Dalmeny, was on Allenby's staff and happened to come on a visit to the regiment just as his brother was being buried at Ramleh. Crocker Bulteel suggested Primrose's grave was on a hill 'on which are buried soldiers of every country who have ever fought here - Napoleon, Richard the Lionheart, Alexander the Great and here the sun stood still for Joshua'.²⁴⁵

In June 1918 the notorious Noel Pemberton Billing, Independent MP for East Hertfordshire, went on trial for libel after accusing the actress and exotic dancer, Maud Allen, of lesbianism. Pemberton Billing also alleged that the Germans had a list of 47,000 British men and women in a 'Black Book' open to blackmail for sexual depravity. Pemberton Billing was acquitted by the jury in a manifestation of the public concern with the supposed laxity of wartime sexual mores. His key witness was Mrs Ellen Villiers-Stuart. She claimed to have shared a taxi journey with Evelyn de Rothschild and Primrose, during which the former had shown her the actual book and the latter had said he was going to retire from the House of Commons in order to expose the German plot. She also alleged that Evelyn and Primrose had been 'murdered from the rear' during the actions at El Mughar and Abu Shusheh in order to silence them. Both men, of course, were safely dead.

Perkins described it as 'a disgusting allegation' and 'a filthy statement'.²⁴⁶ A letter from Fred Cripps to Lord Burnham was published in *The Times* on 7 June

²⁴⁴ Author interview with James and Samuel Lawrence, 22 May 1981.

²⁴⁵ QMUL, Lyttelton Mss, PP5/GRE/28/3, Bulteel to 'Juanita', 4 Feb. 1918.

²⁴⁶ BA, AR 8/2001 (BMMT 473), Perkins to parents, 5 and 8 June 1918.

1918 refuting the ‘foul suggestion against the honour of the regiment and of two of my brother officers’. ²⁴⁷ Tried for bigamy in September 1918, Mrs Villiers-Stuart admitted that she had concocted the whole story in collusion with Pemberton Billing, whose mistress she had become. She was sentenced to nine months’ hard labour.

The 1/1st Royal Bucks Hussars were attacked by the Turks at Beitunia on 20 November. The 6th Mounted Brigade was now operating as infantry in a mountainous area and holding a thinly manned front line with only some posts having machine guns. After repulsing numerous attacks, the brigade was forced back. On the following day, the brigade advanced once more but was again forced into holding a succession of posts amid torrential rain and freezing cold. The regiment was now down to 30 men per squadron and was withdrawn to Gaza for recuperation on 29 November. Fred Lawson reckoned that they were down to 30 men per squadron. The regiment was then withdrawn to Gaza for recuperation. ²⁴⁸ In March 1918, however, it was announced that the 1/1st RBH and the 1/1st Berkshire Yeomanry would be formed into a single machine gun battalion for service on the Western Front, it being decided to replace two regiments in the brigade with Indian cavalry regiments. It was an undoubted blow to a regiment that the brigade commander at El Mughar, Brigadier General (later Lieutenant General Sir) Charles Godwin, later characterised as the ‘most cavalry minded unit I ever had anything to do with’. ²⁴⁹

Fred Lawson remained initially as second in command of the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry but took command of the Middlesex Yeomanry. ²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ *The Times*, 7 June 1918.

²⁴⁸ Hounslow, *Fighting for the Bucks*, 132-33; Lawson, ‘Beersheba’, 50.

²⁴⁹ BA, D206/37, Godwin to Burnham, 29 Oct. 1947.

²⁵⁰ BA, T/A 3/517, Fred Lawson to Harry Lawson, 1 June 1918.

Returning to France on the Union Castle's SS *Leasowe Castle*, the regiment was torpedoed by *UB-51* at 0130 on 27 May 1918. Fortunately, only two men were lost. One was the adjutant, Charles Bennett, a wine merchant from Buckingham, who insisted on remaining on board until all his men had been got off but then sadly drowned.²⁵¹ In all, only 92 from the 3,300 passengers and crew aboard were lost largely due to the foresight of the captain, E. J. Holl, in rigorously exercising his crew in lifeboat drill although Holl himself was also among those lost. Bizarrely, the *Leasowe Castle* had been torpedoed once before in April 1917 but had managed to reach Gibraltar for repairs. William Bowyer recorded, 'Just for a moment there is a little confusion and then the ship's officers take charge and order all the boats to be lowered and the ropes thrown loose'.²⁵² All regimental records were lost, as was the celebrated horse and mule-drawn 'Dizzy' mobile cooker with three cauldrons originally gifted by Coningsby Disraeli.²⁵³

²⁵¹ BA, AR 13/2016 (BMMT 685), Bulteel to Mrs Bennett, 1 June 1918; Cripps to Mrs Bennett, 22 July 1918.

²⁵² NAM, 1991-07-220, Bowyer Mss, 94-95.

²⁵³ Hounslow, *Fighting for the Bucks*, 138-45; Cripps, *Life's A Gamble*, 97; BA, T/A 3/517, Fred Lawson to Harry Lawson, 1 June 1918; AR 9/2015 (BMMT 667/3), Admiralty report; Interview with Walter Hedges by J. E. Pemberton, 18 March 1974; Author interview with James and Samuel Lawrence, 22 May 1918; L. A. Haslett, 'Leasowe Castle: The Unlucky Ship', *Clansman* 48 (Apl. 1980), 28-29.



Some of those rescued from the Leasowe Castle [BMMT]

The 101st (Bucks and Berks) Battalion, Machine Gun Corps commanded by Fred Cripps was deployed to the Arras front in August 1918, ending the war close to Oudenarde, scene of one of the Duke of Marlborough's famous battles (1709), on the Scheldt.²⁵⁴ Cripps found the final engagements exhilarating but, like many others, expected the war to continue into 1919.²⁵⁵

To the regret of the RBH contingent they were not permitted to wear RBH badges.²⁵⁶ The cadre returned to Dover on 5 May 1919. When battle honours were officially awarded by the War Office in 1924 those of the Royal Bucks Hussars were Suvla, Scimitar Hill, Gallipoli 1915, Egypt 1915-17, Gaza, El

²⁵⁴ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 72-75.

²⁵⁵ IWM, Doc. 18091, Cripps to Lord Parmoor, 14 and 24 Oct. 1918.

²⁵⁶ BA, T/A 3/53A/1, Young to Burnham, 14 Mar. 1926.

Mughar, Nebi Samwil, and Palestine 1917-18 but also Arras 1918, Scarpe 1918, Courtrai, and Ypres 1918.²⁵⁷ The 2nd South Midland Mounted Field



Lieutenant Colonel the Hon. Fred Cripps, 1/1st Royal Bucks Hussars [BMMT]

²⁵⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 22 Mar. 1924.

Ambulance, meanwhile, had served on the Suez Canal and Aden before Gallipoli, the Western Desert, Palestine, and Syria.²⁵⁸

Turning to the New Armies and wartime recruits, their raising was almost entirely haphazard in the absence of any coherent manpower policy. Kitchener himself had no clear idea of how many men might be needed, and never articulated how he had discerned that the war would last at least three years. On 6 August 1914 Parliament was asked to sanction an immediate increase of 500,000 men, Kitchener making his appeal for the 'first 100,000' on 7 August. A figure of 70 divisions is usually cited as the ultimate intention but this was not adopted by a Cabinet sub-committee until August 1915, Kitchener having spoken of 30 divisions on 31 August 1914, 46-50 on 8 September 1914, and 60 in June 1915. It is usually suggested that the figure of 70 divisions was chosen for its approximation to the pre-war strength of the French and German armies at 62 and 87 infantry divisions respectively.²⁵⁹ The official figure was adjusted downwards to 62 divisions abroad and five at home in February 1916, and then to 57 abroad and 10 at home in April 1916. In terms of overall numbers, Parliament sanctioned a further 500,000 increase on 9 September 1914, another million on 12 November 1914, and an upper limit of four million men in December 1915. The figure was adjusted retrospectively, and for the last time, to five million in December 1916.

Between August 1914 and November 1918, 4,970,902 men were enlisted in the British army, of whom 2,466,719 were volunteers and 2,504,183 were enlisted after the introduction of conscription in January 1916. The latter figure,

²⁵⁸ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 78-90.

²⁵⁹ F. W. Perry, *The Commonwealth Armies: Manpower and Organisation in Two Worlds Wars* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 9.

however, includes those who enlisted in the regulars and the Territorials, as well as those attested under the Derby Scheme: actual conscripts brought in by the application of successive Military Service Acts numbered 1.3 million. With the existing forces in August 1914, that yielded a wartime total of 5,704,416 men in the army at one time or another, approximating to 22.1 per cent of the entire male population of the United Kingdom (thus including Ireland).²⁶⁰

The effort between 1914 and 1918 compares to 19.4 per cent of the male population serving in the armed forces as a whole during the Second World War (in which 4.6 million men served). Thus, with the possible exception of the almost 23 years of continuous warfare between December 1792 and June 1815, the Great War represents the greatest degree of military participation Britain ever experienced. Nonetheless, it needs to be recognised that roughly half the men of military age did not enlist, and roughly half of those who did serve spent half of the war as civilians.²⁶¹ To these figures can be added 2.8 million men from the empire. France, however, initially mobilised approximately 4.4 million men and eventually mobilised about 8.4 million, while Germany initially mobilised 5.2 million men and eventually mobilised 13.2 million.

The ‘rush to the colours’, however, was quite arbitrary, and the impact accordingly varied. Fifteen per cent of all wartime enlistments did indeed take place in the first two months of the war but the response was not immediate. It

²⁶⁰ *Statistics of the Military Effort*, 156-9, 363-64.

²⁶¹ Central Statistical Office, *Fighting with Figures: A Statistical Digest of the Second World War* (London, 1995), 38-39; M. Greenwood, ‘British Loss of Life in the Wars of 1794-1815 and 1914-18’, *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 105 (1942), 1-16; Laura Ugolini, *Civvies: Middle-class Men on the English Home Front, 1914-18* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 7.

has been almost precisely dated to the period between 25 August and 9 September 1914. Initial confusion was not assisted by a lack of news from France until the publication in *The Times* on 30 August of the sensational ‘Amiens despatch’ by Arthur Moore, accompanied by a telegram from Hamilton Fyfe of *The Daily Mail*, reporting the retreat from Mons. Moore’s earlier report on Mons, published on 25 August, had already been doctored by the head of the Press Bureau, F. E. Smith, to emphasise the need for recruits. German atrocity stories had also surfaced and on 24 August the highly influential Derby approached the War Office with a suggestion to raise ‘Pals’ battalions of men from the same communities, factories, and so on.

Together, these factors seem to have accounted for the great increase. Only 51,647 men had enlisted in Britain prior to 15 August 1914, but 174,901 were enlisted between 30 August and 5 September. A total of 179,680 men enlisted in the first week of September, with the 33,204 who enlisted on 3 September being the highest recorded for any single day, exceeding a year’s pre-war enlistment rate. The most fruitful recruiting period was over by 9 September as the news from France improved, and there were increasing rumours that recruits were suffering discomfort in improvised accommodation. It also appeared that men were no longer required, deferred enlistment having been introduced in view of the accommodation problems with men enlisted in the Reserve and sent home on 6d per diem. Since many had given up employment to enlist, the Prime Minister, Asquith was compelled to announce an increase to 3s.0d per diem to deferred entrants on 10 September. The War Office tried to regulate the flow on 11 September by arbitrary variations in physical requirements, raising the 5’ 3” height requirement set on 8 August to 5’ 6”, although the upper age limit was increased from 30 to 35. At least 10,000 men already enlisted were rejected on arrival at their units under the new regulations. On 23 October the War Office lowered the height requirement to 5’ 4” and extended the upper age limit to 38

or 45 for former servicemen. On 14 November it was dropped again to 5' 3" and to 5' 2" in July 1915 and the age limit extended to 40, but it was already apparent that the voluntary system was failing.

It is clear that the process of enlistment was exceedingly complex with wide regional and local variations. Of course, patriotism played its part and there was more than one kind of patriotism, deriving from a complex web of individual loyalties. Other factors were equally important. One was certainly family situation. Inefficiency by the War Office in paying out adequate separation allowances discouraged married men from enlisting. Equally, there were those only too glad to escape family or, indeed, humdrum routine. Studies show a particular link with employment. Possibly as many as 480,000 men lost their jobs in Britain by the end of August 1914. Many others were placed on half time in the prevailing economic uncertainty at the outbreak of war: in any case, autumn was a traditional time of lay-offs in agriculture and the building trade. Labour exchanges certainly encouraged enlistment. Significantly, enlistment dropped away rapidly once large government contracts were placed in the autumn for clothing, boots, munitions and other war essentials. The abundant harvest also impeded recruitment with farmers offering men incentives to remain on the land. On the other hand, Lord Burnham offered his estate workers what were regarded as illegal bonuses to enlist in the Royal Bucks Hussars. On 1 September Burnham let it be known that he would give £10 to all single and married men, to be paid in instalments to single men and to the wives of married men. The men would also all have their jobs kept open for them for their return.

262

²⁶² J. M. Osborne, *The Voluntary Recruiting Movement in Britain, 1914-16* (New York: Garland, 1982), 24-26; *Bucks Free Press*, 4 Sept. 1914.

Overall, the Board of Trade estimated that those on short time had declined from 26 per cent of the industrial labour force in September 1914 to only six per cent by February 1915. The response from industry also reflected the age structure of the labour force in differing sectors as well as purely local factors. As might be expected, young men tended generally to enlist before older men but there was also a direct correlation between age and enlistment.²⁶³ From the beginning, there was also a degree of protectionism for key workers such as railway men and Admiralty employees. Those employed directly by the War Office in the Royal Ordnance Factories and other key munitions plants were also badged from March 1915 although there was no legal means by which those badged could be prevented from enlisting.

Others enlisted under the peer influence of what has been called social inheritance, joining because their friends had done so. The most obvious manifestation of this was the success of the 'Pals' battalions, of which 115 were raised. Not all were necessarily easy to recruit, and there was effectively a class element to the Pals. Like the recognised Territorial 'class corps' such as the Inns of Court OTC (formerly 14th Middlesex Rifle Volunteers), the Artists' Rifles (28th London Regiment), and the London Rifle Brigade (5th London Regiment), which had always attracted more upper middle class recruits, it was a matter of 'less about who you served with, but much more obviously about who you didn't serve with'.²⁶⁴ Yet, it could equally be argued that Territorial units such as those in Bucks were just as locally based before becoming nationally orientated with the end of voluntary enlistment. No 'Pals' battalions were raised

²⁶³ Peter Dewey, 'Military Recruiting and the British Labour Force during the First World War', *Historical Journal* 27 (1984), 199-224, at 210-11.

²⁶⁴ Adrian Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 78.

in the county since it lacked larger industrial enterprises but there were five 'service' battalions of the OBLI: the 5th Battalion as part of the 'First Hundred Thousand' or First Kitchener Army ('K1') in August 1914, the 6th as part of 'K2' in September 1914, the 7th and 8th as part of 'K3' in September and October 1914, and the 9th as part of 'K4' in October 1914. The 5th and 6th Battalions served on the Western Front and the 7th and 8th at Salonika against the Bulgarian allies of Germany and Austria-Hungary. The 9th became a reserve training battalion in 1915. The 5th Battalion was commanded by the former regular adjutant of the RBKOM, Charles Cobb.²⁶⁵

Compared to the Bucks Battalions, the Royal Bucks Hussars was more cosmopolitan from the start. Of course, there were many pre-war members from the county and many more who then enlisted but the regiment had wider links. Through the Lawson connection, employees of the *Daily Telegraph* enlisted. Harry Lawson, Lord Burnham returned to command the 3/1st RBH on 11 March 1915 while his brother, William Lawson, was given command of the 2/1st RBH on 14 September 1914.²⁶⁶ The latter's son, Fred Lawson, later 4th Lord Burnham, was still serving with the 1/1st RBH when war broke out. Through racing connections, jockeys from Newmarket were also enlisted and a number of officers with racing connections such as 'Jack' Young, who became machine gun officer. It was said that the jockeys tended to ride up in the saddle when charging and had to be told to keep down. As well as in Buckingham, a recruiting office opened for the regiment at the headquarters of the 3rd County of London Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) in Henry Street, London. This brought in

²⁶⁵ Ian F. W. Beckett, 'The New Armies', *Bugle & Sabre* 8 (2015), 21-26.

²⁶⁶ BA, D206/11, Swann to Harry Lawson, 11 Mar. 1915; D206/13, Record of 2/1st RBH.

men from the City of London Mounted Police.²⁶⁷ Above all, there was the Rothschild connection, a recruiting office also being opened at their bank's headquarters in New Court in London's St Swithin's Lane. It brought Jewish recruits to the RBH and Bucks Battalions alike.

The *Jewish World* reported in August 1915 that Lionel de Rothschild had recruited over 40 young Jews for the Royal Bucks Hussars, Bucks Battalions, and 2nd South Midland Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance. In November it carried an advertisement for the Rothschild recruiting office in London, noting 'For some time past Major de Rothschild has been accepting recruits at New Court for the Royal Bucks Hussars and the Bucks Battalion.' *The British Jewry Book of Honour* yields 109 Jews who served in the Bucks Battalions including two officers - Second Lieutenant David Fallon, who won the MC, and Second Lieutenant Joseph Piperno.²⁶⁸ The editor, Rev. Michael Adler, recorded in his diary on 11 August 1916 that he had met 'a party of fifty newly-arrived Jewish soldiers belonging to the 1/1st Bucks Battalion' outside Bouzincourt on the Somme and conducted a brief service.²⁶⁹ A total of 27 of those listed in the *British Jewry Book of Honour* appear to have served in the 2/1st Bucks Battalion and three in the 3/1st Bucks, while 79 served in the 1/1st Bucks. At least 14 died serving with the 1/1st Bucks and ten with the 2/1st Bucks. Another 22 men who originally enlisted in the RBH at New Court were killed serving with the 2/4th

²⁶⁷ BA, D206/23, Record of 2/1st RBH; Author interview with J. M. Adams, 10 May 1985; author interview with James and Samuel Lawrence, 22 May 1981.

²⁶⁸ *Jewish World*, 4 Aug., and 24 Nov. 1915; Rev. Michael Adler (ed.), *British Jewry Book of Honour* (London: Caxton Publishing Co., 1922), 334-37.

²⁶⁹ Justin Cavernelis-Frost, "'There are three types of men': Lionel de Rothschild and the Jewish War Services Committee, 1915-19", *Rothschild Archives Review of the Year 2013-2014*, 36-44, at 41.

OBLI.²⁷⁰ Leave was granted to Jewish soldiers in the 3/1st RBH for the Jewish New Year in 1916 and a list of those who joined between April 1915 and November 1915 has 23 professing to the Jewish faith.²⁷¹



'Solly' Sniders of Stoke Newington, 1/1st Royal Bucks Hussars, killed 21 August 1915[BMMT]

²⁷⁰ Harold Pollins, 'Jews in the British Army in the First World War', *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 37 (1995), 100-11; idem, 'The Rothschilds as Recruiters for Buckinghamshire in the First World War', *Bulletin of the Military Historical Society* 50 (1999), 196-205; Pollins to Author, 2 July 1996.

²⁷¹ BA, T/A 3/42/4, Orders, 8 Sept. 1916; T/A 3/41/2, Records of Services of ORs, 3/1st RBH.

Hawtin Mundy, a LNWR coachbuilder's apprentice from New Bradwell who enlisted in the 1/1st Bucks Battalion, later recalled that when sent to the 3/1st Bucks Battalion while recuperating from a wound received in May 1915, 'they was nearly all of them Jewish chaps and also prominent London sporting people'.²⁷² The majority of the Jewish soldiers arrived in the 1/1st Bucks Battalion after the first heavy losses on the Somme and it is logical they would have served first in the 3/1st Bucks Battalion. Mundy claimed there were also 'sporting people' from a London boxing club that included Jim Sullivan, the former British middleweight champion, but it would appear that Sullivan served in the London Scottish. As for the Jewish recruits to the RBH, some served in Palestine, with Evelyn de Rothschild being mortally wounded at El Mughar on 13 November 1917. Julian Grenfell had written to his father, Desborough, in March 1915, 'Where are the Bucks Hussars, with all the long-nosed Grenfells and short-nosed Yidds'.²⁷³ When Cecil Grenfell went home from Gallipoli, there was a brief possibility that the second in command of the Berkshire Yeomanry, Jack Wigan, a former regular, might be appointed to command. According to Lieutenant Thurston Holland-Hibbert (later 4th Viscount Knutsford) of the 1/1st Hertfordshire Yeomanry, Wigan was told that he need not make up his mind at once and, 'If you take on the job you need not be circumcised.'²⁷⁴

There was a great deal of recruiting activity in Bucks in 1914 directed by Captain Leonard Green of Chetwode Priory such as the open air meeting at

²⁷² Mundy, *No Heroes*, 26.

²⁷³ Kate Thompson (ed.), *Julian Grenfell, Soldier and Poet: Letters and Diaries, 1910-15* (Hertfordshire Record Office, 2004), 274.

²⁷⁴ Herts Archives and Local Studies, DE/Yo/2/131, Diary of Thurston Holland-Hibbert, 15 July 1915. I owe this reference to Andrew French.

Chalfont St Giles in late August addressed by three worthies and entertained by the village band, which garnered ‘nearly forty of the right sort’.²⁷⁵ The County Organising Committee was established on 13 August 1914 to make arrangements for relief efforts as well as emergencies but also to oversee recruiting. In the same way, the Marlow War Relief Committee oversaw



Recruiting Poster, 1914 [BA]

²⁷⁵ BA, T/A 1/33, Gurney to Earl of Buckinghamshire, 31 Aug. 1914.

recruiting there.²⁷⁶ A total of 27 recruiting agents - all serving soldiers - were organised through the county, basing themselves at location such as the Queen's Hotel in Wing and the Institute at Burnham.²⁷⁷ Some clergymen such as the Rev. O. Jones at Grandborough and Rev. Guest at Stantonbury acted as agents for the Inns of Court ITC.²⁷⁸ John Henry Hooker operated the Bucks Battalion recruiting centre in Temple Square, where the recruit depot was under the command of Captain Sydney Vernon, Hooker having been adjudged unfit for overseas service.²⁷⁹ The upper room of a shed and a warehouse at the tannery in George Street were also rented as a lecture room and miniature rifle range for the Bucks Battalion.²⁸⁰ At Wycombe a recruiting office was opened in the Liberal Club opposite the station, 492 men enlisting there by 9 October.²⁸¹ There was also a Royal Navy recruiting office at 71 High Street, Aylesbury.²⁸²

As CRA secretary, Swann appeared at Amersham on 7 September, at Whitchurch on 11 September, and at Great Missenden on 10 September. At Amersham his speech was preceded by a procession headed by the National Reserve, Special Constables, Boy Scouts, Fire Brigade, the town band and some Scottish pipers sent from London: 55 enlisted.²⁸³ Other local meetings were held at villages such as Chalfont St Giles, Grandborough and Marsh Gibbon.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 15 and 29 Aug. 1914.

²⁷⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 29 Aug. 1914.

²⁷⁸ Guildhall Library, Ms 17686; *Bucks Standard*, 11 Mar. 1916.

²⁷⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 22 Aug. 1914; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 19 Dec. 1936.

²⁸⁰ BA, T/A 1/16, Agreement with Messrs. Tinnel, 21 Dec. 1914.

²⁸¹ *Bucks Free Press*, 21 Aug., 25 Sept., and 9 Oct. 1914; *Bucks Herald*, 22 Aug. 1914.

²⁸² *Bucks Herald*, 22 Aug. 1914.

²⁸³ *Bucks Herald*, 12 and 19 Sept. 1914; *Bucks Examiner*, 11 and 18 Sept. 1914.

²⁸⁴ *Bucks Examiner*, 4 Sept. 1914; *Bucks Herald*, 12 Sept. 1914.

A total of 362 recruits from Wolverton destined for the 5th (Service) Battalion, OBLI marched to the town station to catch a special train for Oxford mid-morning on 3 September, watched by the work force of the LNWR that had been given an hour off to see the departure. Some 50 of the men were sworn in before breakfast and another 150 in the hour and a half following. The LNWR also undertook as it had in 1899 to keep men's employment open for them, and it also intended to pay allowances to dependants in addition to government allowances.²⁸⁵ There were public meetings to recruit men for the Kitchener armies at Buckingham, Chesham, Marlow, Tylers Green and Wycombe.²⁸⁶ Another major meeting for the Kitchener armies took place in Slough Town Hall on 21 November 1914.²⁸⁷ What was a significant push in November and December also saw meetings at such varied locations as Dinton, Great Missenden, Thornborough, Tingewick, Weston Turville and Wycombe.²⁸⁸

Yet, as early as 28 August 1914 Philip Stevenson reported from Aston Sandford, 'The Bucks yokels are terribly hard to move. We are waking them up all we can but there is hardly anyone to help on this missionary work.'²⁸⁹ Stevenson intended to hold meetings at Cuddington and Haddenham on 1 September to strike a blow 'at the apathy and indifference and ignorance' hoping this might 'really open the floodgates to recruiting all round here'. It was reported that recruits were coming in slowly in many villages: at one unnamed

²⁸⁵ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 5 Sept. 1914.

²⁸⁶ *Bucks Free Press*, 21 and 28 Aug., and 11 Sept. 1914; *Bucks Examiner*, 21 Aug. 1914; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 19 Sept. 1914.

²⁸⁷ BA, D/X 1882/1; *Bucks Herald*, 28 Nov. 1914.

²⁸⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 7 and 21 Nov., and 12 and 19 Dec. 1914; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 14 Nov. 1914.

²⁸⁹ BA, T/A 7/1, Stevenson to Buckinghamshire, 28 Aug. 1914.

village 20 men had come forward at a recruiting meeting but, on the following day, the men's parents refused to allow their sons to be conveyed to Aylesbury so that only one recruit was obtained.²⁹⁰

On 5 November 1914 Cuyler reported the flow of recruits at Oxford had dropped from 200 to only 25 a day when at least another 500 from Bucks would be needed for the New Armies. Lincolnshire suggested raising a separate Buckinghamshire Regiment with a restored 'Royal' prefix with a 'Carrington Company' raised by himself, a 'Hampden Company' raised by the Earl of Buckinghamshire, and a 'Desborough Company' raised at Slough by Desborough. This was turned down but the CTA Recruiting Committee agreed to form three new sub-committees to comb the county more thoroughly.²⁹¹ It was thought that perhaps 2,000 Bucks men had gone up to London to enlist but there was no certainty in the figure.²⁹²

The Recruiting Committee calculated on 18 January 1915 that from a population of 107,000 there should be at least 25,000 men available but this included groups that would need to be excluded, namely employees of the LNWR, the foundries around Chesham, and the boot trade around Olney. It was also impossible to calculate how many men might have travelled to London to enlist. Thus far, 2,105 men had been enlisted for the New Armies up to October and 558 since. A further 2,358 had enlisted in the Territorials to October and 700 since. Of those going to the Territorials up to October, 138 had joined the ASC Company and 120 the South Midland Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance. Whilst this still only represented 20 per cent of those conceivably eligible, it was more than likely that the limit of voluntary enlistment had been reached.

²⁹⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 12 Sept. 1914.

²⁹¹ BA, T/A 1/13, Mins., Recruiting Committee, 5 Nov. 1914.

²⁹² *Bucks Herald*, 3 Oct. 1914.

Indeed, the Mid Bucks Sub-committee had already concluded this, believing no more men could be taken from agriculture.²⁹³

New ventures were undertaken including a march through the county by a ‘smart detachment’ including the band of the OBLI in May 1915 following the German torpedoing of the RMS *Lusitania*. The detachment camped at selected villages and towns, showing films. By 20 June 1915 it was reported that 2,640 men had now enlisted in the New Armies and 3,591 in the Territorials since August 1914 as well as 270 in the National Reserve. Of these, 1,163 had come in since 31 March.²⁹⁴ The National Reserve provided 31 officers for various wartime employments while 290 joined the regular army and 272 joined the Territorials, mostly in the Supernumerary Companies.²⁹⁵

In August 1915, however, it was concluded that public meetings were no longer bringing in recruits and men must be visited at work or even at home.²⁹⁶

Vigorous house to house visiting had begun in November 1914 and, in May 1915 this was supplemented by printing special window badges to be displayed by families where men had enlisted. By October, it was reported that 94 army badges and 40 navy badges were being displayed in Long Crendon.²⁹⁷

Publishing the names of those enlisting in the Special Constabulary had been introduced in September 1914 and in October 1915 Tonman Mosley suggested a Bucks Roll of Honour to record all who had enlisted. It was eventually

²⁹³ BA, T/A, 1/13, Mins., Recruiting Committee, 18 Jan. 1915; T/A 1/33, Mid Bucks Recruiting Sub-committee Mins., 16 Jan. 1915.

²⁹⁴ BA, T/A 1/13, Mins., Recruiting Committee, 10 May 1915; T/A 1/22, CTA Annual Report, 1914-15.

²⁹⁵ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 49.

²⁹⁶ BA, T/A 1/13, Mins., Recruiting Committee, 12 Aug. 1915.

²⁹⁷ BA, T/A 1/13, Mins., Recruiting Committee, 21 Oct. 1915.

presented to the Lord Lieutenant on 3 January 1918.²⁹⁸ Mosley received a peerage as Lord Anslow in 1916, Ivor Stewart-Liberty of the 2/1st Bucks Battalion expressing his surprise that a ‘silly ass’ should be so rewarded.²⁹⁹

As already indicated, there were no ‘Pals’ battalions raised in Bucks but the county was exposed at an early stage to the Kitchener Armies for the 21st Division, recruited mostly from Yorkshire, Durham, and Northumberland was billeted around Aylesbury and Tring in September 1914 before taking up tented accommodation at Halton, Alfred de Rothschild having offered its use to the War Office in early September. The 14th (Service) Battalion, Durham Light Infantry arrived in Aylesbury on 21 September before moving to Halton on 10 October. The 9th and 10th (Service) Battalions, The King’s Own Yorkshire Light Infantry arrived on 23 September and moved to Halton on 3 October 1914.

While the division was billeted in Aylesbury, buildings commandeered for use by the troops included the Friarage Hall, the Baptist Schoolroom in Walton Street, the Victoria Club in Kingsbury, and the Printing Works Institute. A major outbreak of meningitis and the bad weather creating ‘Halton in the mud’ compelled the dispersal of the troops to billets once more in November 1914 to await the construction of huts.³⁰⁰ The sanitary arrangements had also been especially poor with no system for draining sewage, which was dumped in fields at Weston Turville to the disgust of its inhabitants.³⁰¹ Kitchener visited Halton on 25 October 1914 and King George V visited the division at billets in Amersham and Great Missenden on 18 November 1914, the 13th (Service)

²⁹⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 5 Jan. 1918; BA, T/A1/4, General Purposes Mins., 5 Jan. 1918.

²⁹⁹ BA, D/X 780/66, Stewart-Liberty to Sir Arthur Stewart-Liberty, 9 June 1916.

³⁰⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 19 and 26 Sept., and 3 and 10 Oct. 1914.

³⁰¹ *Bucks Herald*, 24 Oct. 1914.

Battalion, King's Royal Rifle Corps lining the street at Great Missenden.³⁰²

The KRRC did not return to Halton but remained in Amersham until transferred to 37th Division on Salisbury Plain in April 1915. It appealed for local recruits to join in December 1914.³⁰³ The 21st Division moved back to Halton in April 1915 and stayed there until July.

Some units from 21st Division were also initially billeted at Wycombe - 13th (Service) Battalion, The Rifle Brigade, for example, was in the old Printing Works. Officers were quartered in the Red Lion and the Falcon Hotel. Billets



King George V at Great Missenden, 18 November 1914 [BA]

for the other ranks included the Town Hall. Battalion headquarters was subsequently transferred to the Saracen's Head Hotel. The 13th (Service) Battalion, The Rifle Brigade and the 14th (Service) Battalion, The Durham Light Infantry were back in Wycombe by 28 November, the divisional artillery having

³⁰² *Bucks Herald*, 21 Nov. 1914; *Bucks Examiner*, 20 Nov. 1914.

³⁰³ *Bucks Herald*, 26 Dec. 1914.

preceded them on 19 November.³⁰⁴ The battalions at Wycombe returned to Halton in April and May 1915 until despatched elsewhere prior to overseas deployment. Towns and villages became used to training marches and other activities, Royal Engineers from 21st Division erecting a number of practice bridges across the Chess at Chesham before returning to Halton in May 1915.

³⁰⁵ With the departure of the 21st Division's artillery in May 1915, Wycombe became the location of No 4 Reserve Brigade RFA Territorial Force and No 4 Territorial Force Artillery Training School for third line East Anglian and Home Counties units. As a noted marksman, Thomas Fremantle, who succeeded his father as 3rd Lord Cottesloe in 1918, helped train the 21st Division whilst it was at Halton.³⁰⁶ His eldest son, Halford Fremantle, was mortally wounded serving with the 1/5th OBLI in September 1915.³⁰⁷ One of Thomas's brothers, Walter Fremantle, served in the 2/1st Bucks Battalion but not overseas.

Halton meanwhile was used by a number of third line Territorial and other reserve units - particularly from East Anglia - from the autumn of 1915 onwards until the Royal Flying Corps took it over in 1916. Traces of practice trenches dug by troops at Halton remain within RAF Halton and Whiteleaf Woods and there are similar trenches in Pullingshill Wood outside Marlow.³⁰⁸ These were dug by the 3rd Grenadier Guards, who arrived in Marlow and camped at

³⁰⁴ *Bucks Free Press*, 20 and 27 Nov., and 4 and 11 Dec. 1914.

³⁰⁵ *Bucks Examiner*, 7 May 1915.

³⁰⁶ BA, D/FR/166/1-3.

³⁰⁷ BA, AR 4/2013; AR 65/2014.

³⁰⁸ Michael Farley, 'A Survey of Probable First World War Practice Trenches at Whiteleaf, Princes Risborough' (Unpub. Report, Bucks County Council, 1988); D. Dawson, 'First World War Practice Trenches in Pullingshill Wood, Marlow: An Interpretation and Evaluation', *Records of Bucks* 47 (2007), 179-90;
<http://www.raf.mod.uk/aboutus/restoredww1trenches.cfm>

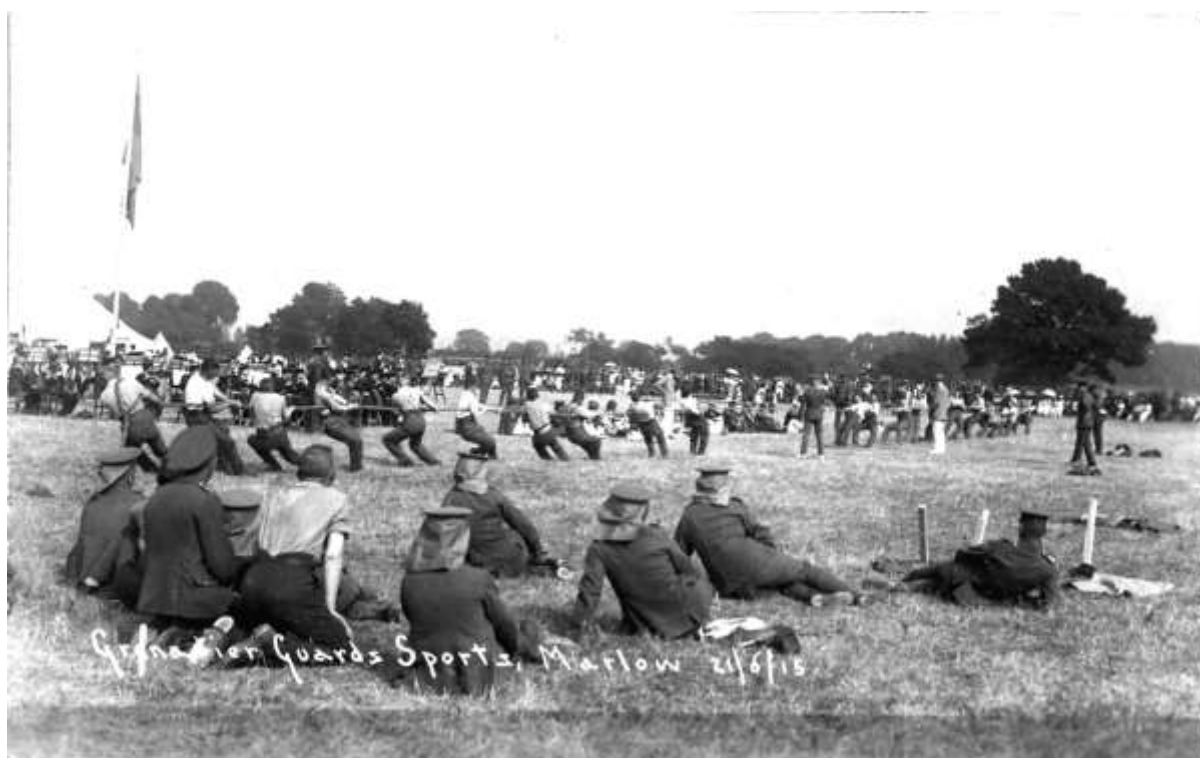
Bovingdon Green on 4 June 1915 to be followed by the 4th Grenadier Guards. The latter initially sent companies for two-three week periods before arriving as a whole on 14 July. The Guards proved popular as a source of entertainment until their departure for the Western Front in July. There was a sports day open



Arrival of 'B' and 'D' Companies, 14th (Service) Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers at Chesham, 4 May 1915. [BA]

to public audience on 21 June, which included a cricket match between the battalion and Borlase School, and a river sports day at the end of the month. General Sir George Higginson, long-time resident in Marlow and a former Grenadier, inspected 1,100 men of the battalion on his 89th birthday on Monday 21 June 1915.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁹ *Bucks Examiner*, 25 June 1915.



Grenadier Guardsmen enjoying sports at Marlow, 21 June 1915 [BA]

Sir George similarly inspected men from the 3rd/1st (Eastbourne), 3rd/2nd (Hastings) and 2nd/3rd (Brighton) Field Companies, Royal Engineers on his 90th birthday in 1916, the engineers having arrived in December 1915. The engineers, who were billeted in empty properties such as Spinfield, Sunny Bank, and the Old Cottage Hospital, were of particular help when the Marlow area was hit by severe floods and storms on 27/28 March 1916.³¹⁰ All had departed for the front by August 1916. The trench system in Pullingshill Wood was used subsequently by other units including the 2nd Battalion, The Welsh Guards between August and October 1915, and the 26th (Service) Battalion, The Royal Fusiliers between August and November 1915.

Staple Hall, Bletchley was requisitioned by the War Office in August 1914 and used initially for Territorial units with officers quartered in the hall itself. In

³¹⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 24 June 1916; Michael Eagleton and Ray Evans, *Marlow: A Fourth Trip Back in Time* (High Wycombe: Privately printed, 2009), 54, 58-59.

January 1915 Royal Engineers moved into Staple Hall and it became a signal training school. In 1917 it became a wireless depot. Elements of the 51st Highland Division were briefly billeted in Newport Pagnell in November and December 1914. The most lasting presence in Newport Pagnell was that of the Royal Engineers, a signal section arriving in December 1915 to camp at Bury Field. Thereafter, the Royal Engineers featured in much of the public entertainments and sport in the town. Various buildings were used by the troops including the old Masonic Hall over the Church Institute in Silver Street, which became a soldiers' recreation room; and the yard of the March of Intellect public house also in Silver Street, where a bathhouse was constructed.³¹¹ Other units would occasionally pass through the county such as the Territorials of the 1/2nd London Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery at Ivinghoe in February and March 1915. Men from the Norfolk Territorial Reserve Brigade were in Winslow in the spring and summer of 1915.



Halton Camp [BA]

³¹¹ John Taylor, *Newport Pagnell in the First World War* (Southampton: Magic Flute, 2014), 31, 56-57.

There were certainly some marriages between incoming servicemen and local women. Some 1/1st Bucks battalion men married Chelmsford girls.³¹² The same was true of the men of the 1/1st and 2/1st Royal Bucks Hussars in East Anglia over the respective winters of 1914-15 and 1915-16. The billets at Great Ryburgh were considered bad by 'A' Squadron of the 1/1st RBH as overcrowded - they included a ruined farm and a large cow shed - with long walks to stables and there was bad weather and influenza was prevalent. Periods were spent on haystacks and other tall buildings looking out for 'mythical enemy aeroplanes'. Measles broke out in March just before the regiment embarked, Sir Everard Duncombe's solution being to dose 'A' squadron three times a day for a week with cinnamon and washing twice a week with hot water and carbolic in an improvised bath in a stable.³¹³

The 2nd South Midland Division was on anti-invasion duties in Norfolk until proceeding overseas in March 1915. The 2/1st RBH remained in Buckingham in billets until May 1915 before moving to Churn and then successively to King's Lynn in June 1915, Upminster in April 1916, Thorndon Park near Brentwood in June 1916, and Much Hadham in October 1916 before returning to Thorndon in May 1917. Having been converted to cyclists in June 1917, it moved to Stanstead in October 1917 and to Ramsgate in February 1918 before being disbanded in Canterbury in March 1918.³¹⁴ When 2/1st RBH left Buckingham, the whole town turned out to see it off as well as the recruits of the 3/1st RBH: 'We, the nucleus of the third line, also line the street, a small percentage of us

³¹² Munday, *No Heroes*, 7.

³¹³ BA, AR 8/2001 [BMMT 474], *Notes on 'A' Squadron*, 9-12;
<http://standrewsgreatryburgh.org.uk/world-war-1-commemorations/not-on-the-roll-of-honour/ryburgh-and-the-royal-bucks-hussars.php>

³¹⁴ BA, D206/23, Record of 2/1st RBH.

mounted and in varied garb, breeches, puttees and or ordinary coats and caps being the most common'.³¹⁵ A report on the regiment's accommodation at Churn sent to Astor in May 1915 revealed a lack of bathing facilities and the need for a dry canteen as too much time was being spent trying to get supplies from local tradesmen. Wagons and harness had been offered by the Ordnance but no draught horses.³¹⁶



The 2/1st Royal Bucks Hussars in Buckingham, November 1914 [BMMT]

While at King's Lynn a number of men carved their names into the brickwork of the library tower being used as a zeppelin observation post. The adjutant, Lieutenant Albert Benedict, a well-known actor, also died while the 2/1st RBH was at King's Lynn.³¹⁷ The 2/1st RBH also stood guard over the remains of the Zeppelin L32 that was shot down near Great Burstead on the night of 23/24

³¹⁵ NAM, 1991-07-220, Bowyer Mss, 3.

³¹⁶ University of Reading Library, Astor Mss, 1066/1/624, Blackwell to Astor, 25 May 1915.

³¹⁷ Soldiers behind World War One graffiti in King's Lynn traced - BBC News (Nov. 2016); New King's Lynn exhibition will show the Scars of War (lynnnews.co.uk) (Oct. 2018).

September 1916. The bodies of the crew were collected and buried while those on guard were able to salvage various souvenirs such as pieces of aluminium and burnt canopy silk that they sold to the crowds of sightseers who they were keeping back from the site.³¹⁸

In the course of the war, 2,093 men passed through the 2/1st RBH including at least 500 soldiers too young for overseas service at various times. A total of 77 officers served with the regiment in addition to 50 officers attached temporarily for duty 'at rest' from the BEF. Drafts were set regularly to the 1/1st RBH, the largest the three officers and 129 other ranks in August 1915 as well as 267 men passed to the 3/1st RBH for varying reasons in April 1915 and another 118 in May 1915. In 1916, however, some drafts went to the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry and the 1st Life Guards.³¹⁹ In July 1917 Fred Lawson was complaining that the 1/1st RBH was now receiving men without regard to unit including an old soldier from the Connaught Rangers who could not ride and 'flung himself on his face' when he heard a shot fired two miles distant.³²⁰

As for the 3/1st RBH, men were still able to live at their own homes if living locally while the remainder were billeted throughout Buckingham.³²¹ Landladies had to present themselves in person at Yeomanry House to be paid

³¹⁸ Author interview with Len Burnham, 16 June 1980. An account by Charles Williams appears in Lyn Macdonald, *Somme* (London: Papermac edn., 1984), 300-01, although she erroneously describes Williams as being in the '1st Btn, RBH'. Her original interview with Williams is in IWM, 28072, Sound Interview with Charles Williams.

³¹⁹ BA, D206/23, Record of 2/1st RBH T/A 3/25, Orders, 3/1st RBH, 8 May 1915; AR 56/2007 [BMMT 551/4], Note by George Cubitt.

³²⁰ BA, T/A 3/517, Fred Lawson to Harry Lawson, 24 July 1917.

³²¹ BA, T/A 3/42/2 Orders, 3/1st RBH, 8 Dec. 1915.

every Friday. Trench digging took place in the Gravel Pits and much of the other training at Stowe. Morning parades were in the Market Square and in afternoons at Roger's Field. In May the Buckingham Conservative and Working Men's Club opened its doors to all members whilst men could also attend a gymkhana put on by Royal Horse Guards camped at Stowe. Having been inspected by Field Marshal Lord Grenfell at Buckingham on 2 July 1915, the 3/1st RBH was attached nominally in July 1915 to the 7th Reserve Cavalry Regiment at Tidworth with seven officers and 207 other ranks going there. All, however, did not move there until April 1916 just after the regiment had helped clear snow from the streets of Buckingham.³²²



3/1st Royal Bucks Hussars training at Buckingham, April 1915 [BMMT]

³²² BA, T/A 3/25, Orders, 10 May and 3 July 1915; T/A 3/42/2, Orders, 17 Dec. 1915; T/A 3/42/3, Orders, 8 and 19 Apr. 1916.

Discipline appeared generally good with occasional fines for absences.³²³ One deserter was apprehended in London and brought back to Buckingham in May 1915. Tried by court martial, he was found guilty of absence without leave rather than desertion and given 30 days' detention remitted to 15. Two others were absent in May, one given 7 days' CB (confined to barracks) with punishment drill and loss of four days' pay.³²⁴ One man was recorded as a deserter in October 1915 and another in December whilst one man proved to be a deserter from the 1/3rd London Regiment and was sent for court martial on January 1916 only to be returned to the RBH with his sentence remitted. Another deserted that same month.³²⁵

There were regular drafts to the 1/1st and 2/1st RBH. Throughout the summer of 1916 men were released temporarily to return to the county to undertake agricultural work and even in October 1916.³²⁶ Again there were a few disciplinary lapses at Tidworth with fines for absence and other unspecified offences.³²⁷ The most serious offence resulting in three days' CB was for three men improperly dressed while in Ludgershall and Tidworth.³²⁸

³²³ BA, T/A 3/42/1, Orders, 28 July and 19 Nov. 1915; T/A 3/42/2, Orders, 22 Dec. 1915, 23 Feb. 1916; T/A 3/42/3, Orders, 20 Mar. 1916.

³²⁴ BA, T/A 3/25, Orders, 18, 19, 24, 27 and 31 May, and 10 and 14 June 1915.

³²⁵ BA, T/A 3/42/1, Order, 24 Oct., and 20 Dec. 1915; T/A 3/42/2, Order, 7, 26 and 28 Jan. 1916.

³²⁶ BA, T/A 3/42/4, Orders, 19, 21 and 28 June; and 5, 15, 17 and 21 July 1916; 15 and 16 Aug. 1916; 10 Oct. 1916.

³²⁷ BA, T/A 3/42/4, Orders, 20 and 27 June; 10 Aug., 6, 14 and 19 Sept., and 4 Oct. 1916; AR 145/1999 (BMMT 421), Orders, 18 and 25 Oct. 1916.

³²⁸ BA, T/A 3/42/4, Orders, 11 July 1916.

The function of the 3/1st RBH, of course, was to send drafts to the 2/1st and, especially, the 1/1st RBH. Of the officers, a total of 36 served with the regiment of whom only Harry Lawson and the 51 year old former RSM and Imperial Yeomanry war veteran commissioned in 1915, C. W. Cole, were permanent fixtures with all the others lieutenants or second lieutenants. The average age excluding Lawson and Cole was 26.1. Ten of these were residents of the county while ten went to the 1/1st RBH, four to the 2/1st RBH, and seven to other regiments. One was declared unfit for service and another was struck off for absence without leave. A total of 199 NCOs also passed through the 3/1st RBH, of whom 21 went to the 1/1st RBH, four to the 2/1st RBH, two to the 3/1st Bucks Battalion, 42 to other units, three to cadet battalions, and 32 were commissioned.³²⁹

A total of 753 other ranks also passed through the 3/1st between April and November 1915. Their average age was 23.4 years, with 506 professing to be Anglicans (82.1 per cent), 73 nonconformists (11.8 per cent), 23 Jews (3.7 per cent) and 14 Catholics (2.2 per cent). In all, 491 men were posted: 170 to the 1/1st RBH, 73 to the 2/1st RBH, 164 to battalions of the OBLI, 16 to the 3/1st Bucks Battalion, 88 to other specified units and 80 in unspecified drafts. Thus, of those posted, 423 (71.5 per cent) went to Bucks or OBLI units. Eight men were commissioned, eight were discharged as unfit, seven discharged for other reasons, two went to munitions work, one to approved civil employment, one specifically as batman to Cecil Grenfell with the 1/1st RBH. Four deserted.³³⁰ Later, drafts of 175 men went to the 4th (Reserve) Battalion, OBLI in December 1916 and 42 to the 1/1st RBH in January 1917. Others went to the 5th Reserve

³²⁹ BA, T/A 3/41, Record of Services of Officers and NCOs, 3/1st RBH.

³³⁰ BA, T/A 3/41/2, Records of Services of ORs, 3/1st RBH.

Cavalry in February 1917.³³¹ The 7th Reserve Cavalry was then absorbed into 3rd Reserve Cavalry Regiment at Aldershot that same month, the thanks of Field Marshal Lord French for the 3/1st's services being conveyed to Lord Burnham.

332

A number of military hospitals were also established in the county. Chequers was opened in October 1914 by Sir Arthur and Lady Lee initially for wounded Belgian soldiers and then for British officers, while Cliveden was opened for Canadian soldiers by Waldorf Astor as the Duchess of Connaught's Red Cross Hospital (later Canadian No 15 General Hospital) in December 1914. The Langley Park Relief Hospital was opened by Lady Harvey for convalescent officers and there was also the Abbey Auxiliary Hospital at Tickford Abbey near Newport Pagnell. Other premises utilised included Queens Park School and a building at Rivets in Aylesbury; the VAD Hospital in the County High School for Girls at Wycombe; the Slough VAD Hospital at St Bernard's School; and Winslow VAD Hospital in the Elms. Offers to provide hospital accommodation were made but then withdrawn in the case of the Cedars at Denham and Tyringham House although the latter was then used for convalescent soldiers in 1915. Chalfont Park was used only briefly. There appears also to have been wartime hospitals at Bulstrode Park and Stoke Court.

333

Of course, a short war was anticipated. The reality was not only massive casualties, but also competing demands for manpower between the armed

³³¹ BA, AR 145/1999, Orders. 19 Dec. 1916, 9 Jan., and 8 Feb. 1917.

³³² BA, D206/15, Barry to Burnham, 3 Feb. 1917; Burnham to Barry, 10 Feb. 1917.

³³³ Beckett, 'Buckinghamshire in the Great War', 191-201; Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 49-50; Museum of the Order of St John, OJS/1/1/3/3, 4 and 6.

forces, industry and agriculture, as the conflict became one in which it was just as vital to out-produce as to out-fight the enemy. Not surprisingly, the manpower pool available rapidly declined, with ever more desperate efforts to comb out every possible fighting man from the civilian population. The effective limit of volunteers was reached by December 1915, by which time it was clear that conscription must follow through a process of exhaustion, exhortation having already reached what has been characterised as enlistment by insult. But conscription had long been an anathema in Britain, resulting in a long and agonised debate.

An initiative of the PRC, the Householders' Returns were a failure, only 3.6 million being returned from the eight million forms distributed. The formation of the coalition government in May 1915 substantially increased the likelihood of conscription since the Unionists generally favoured it. Neither Asquith nor Kitchener was convinced that the time for conscription had come, Kitchener fearing the potential decisiveness of the issue. A suggestion by Sir Ivor Herbert MP to register the manpower resources available was taken up by Lloyd George, the Unionists, and the Northcliffe press. The resulting National Registration Act of July 1915 was intended to ascertain the likely number of men and women available for war work. National Registration Day on Sunday 15 August 1915 required a massive voluntary effort on the part of some 40,000 canvassers to record information on all men and women between the ages of 15 and 65. It was not entirely successful. The calculation was that 5.1 million men of military age were not in the armed forces, of whom 2.1 million were single and 2.8 million married. Of the single men, just over 690,000 were in essential 'starred' occupations, leaving 1.4 million single men available for service. Unfortunately, however, this ignored those previously rejected for military service on grounds of physical fitness and who were now back in the potential recruitment pool, thereby overestimating the manpower available.

Kitchener pronounced the voluntary system all but dead but Asquith made one last attempt to retain it, appointing Derby, a conscriptionist, as Director General of Recruiting on 5 October 1915. Ten days later the Derby Scheme was announced whereby a canvass would be carried out based on the National Register. All those between 18 and 41 would be asked to attest their willingness to serve if called upon to do so. Single and married men would be classified separately, each divided into 23 age groups. Asquith duly promised in the House of Commons on 2 November that no married man would be called up before all single men had been taken. The end date of the canvass was extended from 30 November until 15 December 1915. In view of Asquith's pledge, it was not surprising that those married came forward in larger numbers than single men. Only 1.1 million out of 2.1 million single men considered available for service were prepared to attest willingly if called upon to do so, and only 318,533 of those willing were actually believed to be available: it had been expected that at the very least 500,000 men would be forthcoming. Of married men, 403,921 from 2.6 million were adjudged to be both willing and available.

The canvass by the Mid-Buckinghamshire Recruiting Sub-committee, organised by the local Liberal Party agent, Edward Lacey, reported on 16 December 1915 that 2,642 men had enlisted or attested a willingness to do so (46 per cent) but 1,485 were not considered to be available (28 per cent), and a further 1,521 had categorically refused to attest (26 per cent).³³⁴ Khaki armlets were issued to those attesting.³³⁵

³³⁴ Ian F. W. Beckett, 'The Local Community and the Great War: Aspects of Military Participation', *Records of Buckinghamshire* 20 (1978), 503-15, at 507; BA, T/A 1/33, Lacey to Buckinghamshire, 17 and 22 Nov., and 16 Dec. 1915; and 11 Jan. 1916.

³³⁵ *Bucks Free Press*, 7 Jan. 1916.

The results of the Derby Scheme finally forced Asquith's hands, the decision being taken on 28 December 1915 to conscript single men. Technically, the Military Service Act, given the royal assent on 27 January 1916 and, popularly known as the 'Bachelor's Bill', deemed all single men and childless widowers between the ages of 18 and 41 to have enlisted. The wide discrepancies in medical examination and the numerous exemptions granted by military service tribunals resulted in fewer men becoming available than anticipated.

Between 1 March 1916 and 31 March 1917, for example, only 371,500 men were compulsorily enlisted while some 779,936 were exempted. The attempt to call up married men who had attested under the Derby Scheme in contradiction to Asquith's pledge also led to increasing pressure, as did the Easter Rising in Dublin in April 1916, which required the diversion of yet more manpower to suppress. The Military Service Act (No 2), which received the royal assent on 25 May 1916, therefore extended conscription to all men between 18 and 41.

Backed by Lloyd George, Derby was now pressing for full labour conscription, the Ministry of Munitions suggesting it would need 250,000 to 300,000 more workers. In view of the calculation that there was a manpower deficit of 95,000 men and the army would need 940,000 men in 1917, Robertson and the other military members of the Army Council also demanded that the age for military and civil service be raised to 55. The manpower issue played no small part in generating the crisis that led to Asquith's downfall, David Lloyd George duly becoming prime minister on 7 December 1916. Conscription was progressively tightened.

The Military Service (Review of Exceptions) Act in April 1917 allowed for the combing out of more men from industry, agriculture and the mines, including

many previously judged unfit. Intended to remedy perceived deficiencies in army medical boards, the legislation produced 130,000 men in six weeks as a result of contentious re-examination of those previously exempted on medical grounds, those previously discharged from the army as unfit, and Territorials exempted from overseas service on physical grounds. The Military Service (Conventions with Allied States) Act in July 1917 allowed for the conscription of British subjects living abroad and of allied citizens living in Britain. The Military Service (No 1) Act in February 1918 removed any exemptions based on occupation.

The army's increasing shortages prompted the reduction ordered in the number of infantry divisions in the BEF and in the size of those divisions in January 1918. In all, 161 infantry battalions - many second line Territorial formations - were disbanded in the first two months of 1918. The German spring offensive beginning on 21 March 1918 then triggered the so far dormant provisions of the February legislation, cancelling the exemptions of all fit men under 23. The War Cabinet met on 23 March to consider emergency measures, and the resulting Military Service (No 2) Act in April 1918 extended the age range for call up to those between 18 and 50, and provided for the conscription of men up to the age of 56 if the need arose. The decision was also taken on 23 March to reduce the age at which overseas service could be undertaken from 19 to 18½, making 30,000 trained immediately available. Consideration had even been given to abolishing military service tribunals and to lowering the call-up age to 17. The April 1918 legislation also provided for the extension of conscription to Ireland, but this was never implemented.

In theory, conscription should have equalised the burden after 1916 but, as elsewhere, although 'universal', conscription was always selective in practice. There were always going to be men exempted by virtue of physical fitness,

occupation, or even nationality. Medical boards exempted over a million men in the last twelve months of the war when there was some pressure on doctors to lower rejection rates. It needs to be borne in mind that despite medical advances, 200 out of every 1,000 infants still failed to survive the first year of life in urban areas such as Birmingham, Blackburn, Dudley, Great Yarmouth, Salford, Sheffield, Wakefield, Wolverhampton, and York.³³⁶

Notwithstanding the doubtful nature of the Ministry of National Service medical statistics, it was calculated that of the 2.4 million men medically examined in 1917 and 1918, only 36 per cent of the male population of military age was physically fit for service overseas (Grade I), although a further 22.5 per cent was fit for garrison duties including labour and sedentary duties such as clerical duties or trades (Grade II), and 31.3 per cent for home duties including labour and sedentary work (Grade III), leaving 10.3 per cent totally unfit for military service of any kind (Grade IV). The army itself classified men into five classes (A, B, C, D and E), the first three each sub-divided into three or four classes: A corresponded to Grade I; B1 and C1 to Grade II; B2, B3, C2 and C3 to Grade III; and the remainder to Grade IV. The army received only 407,973 Category A men in 1917 out of 820,646 recruited. In 1918 372,330 men out of 493,462 were classed as Category A by the army but it became increasingly the case that Category B men were fed into front line units.

Rejection rates naturally reflected pre-war deprivation but, in part, there was also an application of suspect criteria as to what constituted fitness: physical ability was too readily equated with stature. Partly, there was also social

³³⁶ Jay Winter, 'Army and Society: The Demographic Context', in Beckett and Simpson (eds), *Nation in Arms*, 193-209.

prejudice. Jews and, especially, Russian Jews were automatically rejected as inferior. Approximately 120,000 of the 300,000 or so Jews in Britain in 1914 were those who had arrived from Russia since the 1880s, many fleeing conscription as much as pogroms. Understandably, Britain's wartime alliance with Tsarist Russia posed a dilemma for Jews generally. Lingering anti-Semitism was evidenced by frequent attacks on Jews and their property in the general anti-alien atmosphere of wartime Britain, and the perceived failure of foreign-born Jews to enlist generated more. Jews were often turned away from recruiting centres in 1914 for all that the Jewish recruitment Committee (later the Jewish War Service Committee) was encouraging enlistment.

It is difficult to determine the precise numbers of Jews who served, the *British Jewry Book of Honour*, published in 1922, being unreliable. Conceivably, about 41,000 Jews served in the British armed forces, perhaps 10,000 or so before the introduction of conscription, and including at least 1,140 who served as officers. It is suggested that 1,941 Jewish servicemen were killed: five certainly won the VC. If accurate, and all the figures may be an underestimate, approximately 13.8 per cent of the Jewish population served compared with Anglo-Jewry's 11.5 per cent share of the wider British population.³³⁷ As already indicated, the Royal Bucks Hussars and Bucks Battalions certainly welcomed Jewish recruits.

As for the military service tribunals that pronounced on claims for exemption from military service, they have often perceived to be unduly influenced by

³³⁷ Harold Pollins, 'Jews in the British Army in the First World War', *The Jewish Journal of Sociology* 37 (1995), 100-11; Barry A. Kosmin, Stanley Waterman and Nigel Grizzard, 'The Jewish Dead in the Great War as an Indicator for the Location, Size and Social Structure of Anglo-Jewry in 1914', *Immigrants and Minorities* 5 (1986), 181-92; Anne Lloyd, 'Between Integration and Separation: Jews and Military Service in World War I', *Jewish Culture and History* 12 (2010), 41-60.

military demands - a military representative was present at all hearings - and hostile to claims for exemption on the grounds of conscience. The 2,000 military service tribunals were organised in conformity with county, urban and rural district councils. Tribunals were established for the Derby Scheme but merely to process postponement applications from those who had voluntarily attested their willingness to serve. Although based on the Derby model, these new tribunals were very different. After the local rural and urban tribunals, decisions could be taken to county appeals tribunals or, beyond that, to the central tribunal in Westminster, where the final decision rested. Advice was received from the Local Government Board and amending legislation closed off avenues of interpretation over time. Not least, the tribunals had to take into account the frequent changes in the schedule of reserved occupations. But, in effect, they were 'sovereign entities, duty-bound to consider cases judiciously and impartially, but with no *de jure* obligation to answer for their decisions'.³³⁸

The tribunals were, again, the product of an extraordinary voluntary effort on the part of local notable figures, including trade unionists and women, sitting once and perhaps twice a week or more. Businessmen were usually members. With an absolute legal right to appeal, those conscripted could claim release from military service not just on the grounds of conscience, but also ill health, family commitments, or by reason of employment in key occupations. In fact, no less than 750,000 from the 1.2 million single men deemed to have enlisted appealed. Within the first month, almost 59,000 were exempted and only just under 26,000 sent to the army. Appeal rates remained strikingly high throughout the war. In addition, those already 'badged' by government departments were automatically judged exempt. By April 1917, for example, while 780,000 men

³³⁸ James McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals, 1916-18: 'A Very Much Abused Body of Men'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 4.

had been exempted by tribunals, a further 1.8 million had been exempted by other means.

An individual could represent himself or be represented by an employer, a relative or a solicitor: if unable to attend, he could submit his case in writing. The tribunals could either insist that the individual concerned join the armed forces, defer his entry, or they could exempt him. The precise meaning of the legislation was not always clear with regard to the conditions for ‘absolute’ exemption and tribunals applied widely differing standards.

Even those predisposed to view tribunals harshly through the prism of conscientious objection have acknowledged that proceedings were not as arbitrary as sometimes claimed and members were ‘civilian, middle class and public minded’.³³⁹ Conscientious objection, indeed, has received disproportionate attention considering that only 16,500 claims for exemption were made on such grounds. Whatever the perception, there was often a contradiction between tribunal rhetoric and the actual decision-making process, leading to inconsistency between contemporary perception of harshness and the reality. In reality, occupation was by far the most significant factor. By October 1918, by which time many grounds for exemption had been removed, there were still 2.5 million men in reserved occupations. Tribunals were ever mindful of local needs in terms of economic vitality, not least in rural areas, consciously mitigating national policy directives, and indulging in their own interpretation of economic interventionism. Perceptions of community and family needs were often prominent, Auckland Geddes as Minister of National Service complaining in July 1917 that ‘the present exemptions system is based almost entirely on

³³⁹ T. C. Kennedy, *The Hound of Conscience: A History of the No Conscription Fellowship, 1914-19* Fayetteville, AK: University of Arkansas Press, 1981), 91; John Rae, *Conscience and Politics: The British Government and the Conscientious Objector to Military Service, 1916-19* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 57.

individual or local considerations'.³⁴⁰ The whole system was rooted in locality, and thereby representative of a whole series of compromises between state and largely autonomous local communities and networks that characterised the war effort in such other areas as war charities, or the arrangements made for Belgian refugees.

All tribunals recognised the need to maintain production, be it industrial or agricultural. The shortage of agricultural workers was acute and the question of farmers' sons and the number of men required to run individual farms were particular issues. The official guidance issued in February 1917 was one skilled and able-bodied man for every team of plough horses, every 20 milk cows, every 50 head of stall or yard stock cattle, every 200 sheep on enclosed land, and every 800 sheep on mountain or hill pasturage. Mechanisation was accelerated after 1917 but skilled ploughmen and tractor drivers were still regarded as essential. At the same time, however, conceptions of masculinity such as in the exemption of men employed in intrinsically pre-war gendered occupations such as butchery and baking also played their part. Bakers worked in the early hours, and often half-stripped, while butchers invariably carried out their own slaughtering. Consequently, they were not seen as trades in which women could be employed as substitutes. Invariably, too, bakers or butchers were sole proprietors, such individuals as well as directing heads of small businesses active in the local economy presenting a particular dilemma to tribunals.

³⁴⁰ Gregory, *Last Great War*, 108; idem, 'Military Service Tribunals: Civil Society in Action, 1916-18', in José Harris (ed.), *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 177-90.

Following the results of the Derby Scheme, Tonman Mosley concluded the response was mostly creditable but in some districts in South Bucks ‘a considerable number of young men are still hanging back. They will surely come forward voluntarily sooner than be impressed under the new act?’³⁴¹ He was in error. By 22 January 1916 there had already been many claims for exemption as reported by Green, now employed as the War Office rather than the CTA recruiting officer. Between February and April 1916, there were 2,058 exemption claims: 1,271 were given temporary exemption, 137 conditional exemption, 110 absolute exemption, and 540 dismissed.³⁴² Green recognised, however, that agriculture was at risk, the Mid Bucks Advisory Committee tabling a resolution in May 1916 urging that no more unmarried men over 35 be taken from the land.³⁴³ In August Green advised the county’s tribunal military representatives not to press agricultural labourers given the approaching harvest.³⁴⁴

Between August and December 1916, Bucks tribunals considered 11,940 claims for exemption, of which 2,695 were refused, 645 adjourned, 477 starred, 261 given absolute exemption, 6,546 temporary exemption, 94 temporary final exemption, and 1,200 conditional exemption. There were wide variations in the pattern of decision-making. At Marlow, the tribunal rejected three-quarters of all claims by sole proprietors.³⁴⁵ Its members - a local businessman, a

³⁴¹ BA, T/A 7/25, Mosley to Earl of Buckinghamshire, 31 Jan. 1916.

³⁴² BA, T/A 7/25.

³⁴³ BA, T/A 7/25, Draft resolution, May 1916; Green to Military Representatives, 2 June 1916.

³⁴⁴ BA, T/A 7/25, Green to Military Representatives, 15 Aug. 1916.

³⁴⁵ Andy Ford, ‘Reluctant Recruits: Appeals against Military Conscription in Marlow, 1916-18’, *Records of Bucks* 56 (2016), 126-41, at 134.

journalist, a surgeon, a head brewer, a police officer, a whitesmith, a house painter, and a barrister acting as military representative - who met 39 times during the war showed more consideration to larger employers such as Wethered's brewery, which was engaged in munitions production from late 1915 onwards, and a construction firm. Nonetheless, 44 Wethered employees had enlisted by December 1915 with a further 21 attested under the Derby Scheme; 80 men and one woman subsequently appeared on the firm's roll of honour, four having been killed in action and four others dying on active service.³⁴⁶



Tonman Mosley, Lord Anslow (1850-1933), Chairman Bucks County Council, 1904-21

³⁴⁶ Martin Blunkell, Andy Ford, Mike Hyde and Jeff Wagland, 'From Beer to Bombs: Wethered's Brewery, Marlow during the First World War', *Records of Bucks* 57 (2017), 177-90.

Sir Reginald Talbot chaired the tribunal at Hambledon while a barrister, Aubrey Spencer, did so at Beaconsfield.³⁴⁷ Between January and April 1917 across the county's 22 tribunals the percentage of cases dismissed varied from 3.5 per cent at High Wycombe to 45 per cent at Marlow, with an average across the county of 19.4 per cent.³⁴⁸ It was alleged by tribunals in the south of Northamptonshire that the LNWR Works was a haven for 'shirkers' and skulkers' although it is difficult to substantiate this in view of the lack of any extensive surviving tribunal papers for Bucks.³⁴⁹ Both the Newport Pagnell RDC and UDC tribunals, however, passed resolutions in June 1916 decrying the number of single and even married men 'without responsibilities' remaining employed at Wolverton when there was such pressure on men with families and business responsibilities.³⁵⁰

Bletchley UDC Tribunal met on 45 occasions during the war at the Council Offices under the chairmanship of Stephen Jones, a farmer from Manor Farm, Bletchley. Its first military representative was Sir Herbert Leon, Bt. From its first working meeting on 17 January 1916 it had already heard 27 cases by 23 February and 110 by 29 June 1916.³⁵¹ Newport Pagnell UDC Tribunal, chaired by Orson Bull, a schoolmaster, met 44 times in the Council Offices during the war.³⁵² Newport Pagnell RDC Tribunal, on which both Walter Carlile and Sir Everard Duncombe acted as military representatives at various times, heard

³⁴⁷ *Bucks Free Press*, 3 Mar. 1916.

³⁴⁸ BA, T/A 7/24, Green to Buckinghamshire, 3 May 1917.

³⁴⁹ McDermott, *British Military Service Tribunals*, 28, 88, 172, 220.

³⁵⁰ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 3 June 1916.

³⁵¹ BA, DC 14/39/1, Bletchley Minute Book.

³⁵² BA, DC 13/39/4, Minute Book.

some 593 cases between December 1915 and October 1918. In October 1916 it conscripted only two out of 14 eligible men from the Olney boot manufacturers, Messrs. Cowley Ltd, as the firm was supplying boots to the Russian Army.³⁵³ At Eton, the RDC Tribunal, which met in the Workhouse Board Room in Slough, required monthly reports from employers of conscientious objectors to ensure the work done was satisfactory whilst it merely suggested that those conditionally exempted should consider drilling with the VTC. It had nine members led by Henry Allhusen of Stoke Court and met 68 times during the course of the war.³⁵⁴

The cumulative effect of the way in which conscription was applied meant that there was no material change in the social composition of the British army after 1916. The sampling surveys of the Board of Trade show each of the occupational sectors remained in approximately the same relationship to one another with regard to the proportion of manpower enlisted in 1918 as in 1916. Thus, the average sector enlistment rate in commerce was 41 per cent in July 1916, and 63 per cent in July 1918, while in transport it was 23 per cent in July 1916, and 38 per cent in July 1918. Variations within particular sectors such as manufacturing also remained unchanged. Thus, the British army was no more representative of society as a whole under conscription than it had been before its introduction.

The war obviously made a distinction between young and old or, more specifically, between those men eligible for military service and those either too old or too young to fight. The issue of under-age enlistment - technically, anyone under 19 - has attracted some attention from popular historians. The

³⁵³ BA, DC 13/39/43; Taylor, *Home Fires*, 224-25.

³⁵⁴ BA, DC 10/38/1.

only attempts to quantify the extent of such recruitment are unconvincing.³⁵⁵ In August 1914 any men or recruits under the age of 19 in the 1/1st Bucks Battalion were automatically sent to the 2/1st Bucks Battalion. All those who were fit and aged over 19 were then sent from the 2/1st Bucks as a draft in March 1915 to help complete the 1/1st on embarkation. Christie-Miller certainly suggested that of the ‘300 unruly boys’ enlisted at Aylesbury for the 2/1st Bucks, some were as young as 14½ but he did not suggest exactly how many were under 17.³⁵⁶ In the case of the 1/1st Bucks, just 23 men were sent home under age, ten of them prior to June 1915. The longest had served almost five months with the battalion before being sent home in February 1916. Another sent home after less than a month at the front in February 1916 had actually been in uniform since July 1915. It suggests that under-age enlistment was not as widespread as supposed.

Young soldiers certainly became part of the equation with respect to home defence and training units. Home service men were passed to 59 Provisional (later Home Service) Battalions after April 1915, these being designated for home defence duties in support of second line Territorial formations such as cyclist battalions already allocated for such a role. Equipment including modern weapons was again scarce and, in any case, men were posted in or out frequently.³⁵⁷ Third line Territorial units were re-designated as reserve battalions in 1916 to assist in training replacements for Territorial units in the same way that Special Reserve battalions were tasked with the same role for regular units. ‘K4’ was broken up in April 1915 into such training units to

³⁵⁵ Richard van Emden, *Boy Soldiers of the Great War* 2nd edn. (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 365; John Oakes, *Kitchener’s Lost Boys: From the Playing Fields to the Killing Fields* (Stroud: History Press, 2009), 27.

³⁵⁶ Christie-Miller, *2nd Bucks*, I, 2-3, 46.

³⁵⁷ Mitchinson, *Defending Albion*, 100-03.

prepare those destined for other New Army units. In September 1916 a new system of 112 Training Reserve (TR) Battalions came into being. In May 1917 fourteen TR battalions were designated as Young Soldier Battalions to deal with 18-year-old conscripts, who were then sent on to one of 28 Graduated Battalions before being posted to a Special Reserve or Territorial Reserve Battalion prior to going overseas at 19.

As for those over military age, the National Reserve was mobilised in August 1914 to supplement those available for static guard duties being undertaken by the Special Reserve. It had reached 200,000 men by 1912 but only 14,000 were judged fit for active service (Class I) and a further 46,000 for garrison service (Class II). While many fitter National Reservists enlisted in the Territorials or New Army in August 1914, a number of 'Protection Companies' were also deployed for static guard duties at 'vulnerable points' such as bridges, rail lines, and reservoirs. The authorities were reluctant to use non-Class I or II men on such tasks and the Class III men were largely ignored but many took their own initiative in mounting patrols. Indeed, the Bucks CTA was one of the first to organise Class III men in Protection Companies as early as 6 August 1914.³⁵⁸

In September 1914 Southern Command ordered such groups to stand down unless water companies or local corporations were prepared to pay men to undertake guard duties. The men, however, were reluctant to do so and some became the nucleus of the revived volunteer force although the War Office itself then recognised the utility of using National Reservists to ease the burden on Territorials attempting to reach efficiency. Bucks, for example, was asked to find three officers and 117 men for a railway protection company on October

³⁵⁸ BA, T/A 1/4, CTA Mins., 6 Aug. 1914.

1914 and resolved to try and use Class II men for the purpose.³⁵⁹ National Reserve armbands were issued but equipment was scarce. In March 1915 the Protection Companies were re-designated as Supernumerary Companies of the Territorial Force, while CTAs were also authorised to release Class III men to the Volunteer Training Corps (VTC), many having already joined the latter force. The Supernumerary Companies were reduced in strength in July 1915 with Class II men passed to seven new Territorial Provisional Battalions formed at Halton Camp for eventual service overseas.³⁶⁰ The Supernumerary Companies and so-called 'Observer Companies' were then formed into the Royal Defence Corps (RDC) in March 1916, to which the Graduated Battalions were also transferred in August 1917.

Additionally, men in lower medical categories were formed into Garrison Battalions in January 1916 and these, too, were transformed into RDC battalions in 1917. RDC duties included guarding the 100,000 prisoners of war in Britain. The Bucks CTA had believed there would be sufficient numbers available for the RDC despite fitter men having already been drafted and many Class III National Reservists having joined newly formed and attractively paid overseas labour companies.³⁶¹ Two Protection Companies had been formed in Bucks immediately for railway protection with a third then established in July 1915 to join a composite battalion to guard POWs at Alexandra Park. The three Bucks companies became 103, 108 and 115 Companies of the RDC.³⁶² Oddly

³⁵⁹ Mitchinson, *Defending Albion*, 78, 224 fn. 55; BA, T/A 1/4, CTA Mins., 8 Oct. 1914.

³⁶⁰ Mitchinson, *Defending Albion*, 118-19; Old War Office Library, 'Chronological Summary of Principal Changes in Organisation and Administration of the Territorial Force since Mobilisation' (War Office, 1918), 17.

³⁶¹ BA, T/A 1/1, CTA Mins., 4 Nov. 1915; Mitchinson, *Defending Albion*, 134.

³⁶² Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 49.

perhaps, Protection Companies from Norfolk were deployed to guard the railway viaduct and bridges at Wolverton.³⁶³

Almost as soon as the war began, unofficial and illegal groups of ‘town guards’ and ‘civic guards’ appeared in many areas through fears of possible German invasion of East Anglia including at Eton, Taplow, Wycombe and Wolverton, the latter formed by Walter Carlile and the secretary of the Tradesmen’s Association. At Wycombe some 60 men came forward at a public meeting called by the mayor but the opposition of the War Office to such groups led to the project being abandoned with the men encouraged to join the Special Constabulary instead. A similar proposal made at Marlow was simply deferred for further consideration. At Burnham the issue was devolved on 17 August 1914 to the local rifle club, which had 120 members by the end of the month. Beaconsfield had a ‘drill club’.³⁶⁴ At Winslow, there was a specific meeting to encourage recruits for ‘home defence’ on 3 September 1914 when 120 men came forward, men already having begun drilling under the instruction of Thomas Fremantle.³⁶⁵

On 6 August 1914 a letter to *The Times* from a Liberal member of London County Council, Percy Harris, suggested a London Defence Force be established. H. G. Wells and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle were also enthusiastic supporters of a new volunteer force. Three days after Harris’s letter, Lord

³⁶³ John Taylor, *Wolverton in the First World War* 2 vols. (Southampton: Magic Flute, 2014), I, 140-43.

³⁶⁴ *The Times*, 15 Aug. 1914; Central Association of Volunteer Regiments, *The Volunteer Force and the Volunteer Training Corps during the Great War* (London: P. S. King & Son, 1920), 2; *Bucks Herald*, 22 Aug. 1914; Taylor, *Wolverton*, I, 135-36; *Bucks Free Press*, 21 and 28 Aug., and 2 Oct. 1914; Marion Hill, *The Milton Keynes Book of Days of the Great War* (Wolverton: Milton Keynes Living Archive, 2014), 128.

³⁶⁵ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 5 Sept. 1914; *Bucks Herald*, 12 Sept. 1914..

Desborough agreed to become president of an organising committee. Groups were already drilling in Buckinghamshire, Lancashire, Oxfordshire, Surrey and Sussex, those in Bucks including men on Desborough's estate. Harris made a somewhat unhappy allusion to the Ulster Volunteer Force in his letter and the War Office promptly banned such groups. Following the intervention of General Sir O'Moore Creagh, Kitchener authorised the committee to instruct men not of military age in drill and musketry on 4 September.³⁶⁶ Debate ensued on how useful or otherwise volunteers might prove and whether arming civilians as irregulars was sensible or otherwise, the government coming to the position that it needed to appease growing public demands.³⁶⁷

With invasion fears increasing, the Northcliffe press urging a government response, and offers and requests for information flooding in, the committee transformed itself into the Central Association of Volunteer Training Corps, which received official status on 19 November 1914. It was stipulated that men of military age would not be enlisted unless they had 'genuine reasons' for not joining the army. Eligible volunteers should enlist in the army if required. No military ranks would be used but titles such as Commandant, Company Commander, Platoon Commander and Volunteer. No uniforms similar to that of regulars or Territorials would be worn although a grey-green Norfolk-style jacket was recommended and all would wear a 'GR' armlet. No expense should fall on the state, and a recognised military adviser would be appointed. Attendance at 40 one-hour drills and attainment of second-class musketry

³⁶⁶ Ian F. W. Beckett, 'Aspects of a Nation in Arms: Britain's Volunteer Training Corps in the Great War', *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire* 63 (1985), 27-39; John M. Osborne, 'Defining their Own Patriotism: British Volunteer Training Corps in the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History* 23 (1988), 59-75; Mitchinson, *Defending Albion*, 68-75; John Sainsbury, *Herts V.R.* (Welwyn: Hart Books, 2005), 1-28.

³⁶⁷ Mitchinson, *Defending Albion*, 88-91.

standard would qualify for an efficiency badge. Those not attending at least 12 drills in six months would be required to resign.³⁶⁸ The educated, professional middle classes were prominent, many corps being formed around golf clubs or larger City institutions. Small businessmen or shopkeepers in towns and villages formed additional corps. As in the rifle volunteers of old, some corps had membership subscriptions.³⁶⁹

The VTC attracted controversy, being accused of shielding men who might otherwise have enlisted, and was also ridiculed for its public image. Deriving from the 'GR' armband they initially wore, they were variously characterised as 'George's Wrecks', 'Gorgeous Wrecks' and 'Genuine Relics'.³⁷⁰



W. H. Grenfell, Lord Desborough (1855-1945)

³⁶⁸ TNA, WO 161/105; BA, T/A 7/3, Standing Orders, Bucks VTC, 26 Mar. 1915; T/A 7/27, Central Association Leaflet 1A, June 1915.

³⁶⁹ Mitchinson, *Defending Albion*, 111-12.

³⁷⁰ TNA, WO 161/105; WO 70/41, Volunteer Precedent Book, War Office Circulars, 19 Nov. 1914, and 17 Mar. 1915; BA, T/A 7/26.

Every Man must to-day honestly face the Question :

Am I a Shirker or am I doing my Share ?

In the outward peacefulness of our Country some of us almost forget that German hatred will spare no effort to destroy all that makes our lives worth living.

Every Man must do something to combat this terrible peril.

Let each one ask himself—WHAT CAN I DO ?

Every man who possibly can do so has a clear call to enlist in the Regular Army. A thousand extra men in Flanders will bring peace nearer than ten thousand at home.

Many, however, are disqualified by age or health for foreign service, while others are unable to enlist for genuine reasons as, for example, those whose departure from business would bring destitution to numbers of workpeople.

To those who, for good and sufficient reason, cannot join the Regular Army, the Bucks Volunteer Corps appeals.

Those under 38 years of age cannot, under the War Office ruling, be formally enrolled unless they agree in writing to enlist if, in the opinion of the competent Military Authority, they have not a genuine reason for not joining the Regular or Territorial Army.

[P.T.O.]

Handbill of the Gerrards Cross Company, 4th Battalion, Bucks VTC, 1915 [BA]

It was said that drill attendance suffered in the south of the county after publicity was given to an incident in London in which volunteers had been treated without respect.³⁷¹

The Marquess of Lincolnshire and Desborough made an effort to improve volunteer status (and legal protection in the event of invasion) with new regulating legislation but it ran out of parliamentary time in October 1915,

³⁷¹ BA, T/A 7/4, Brigade Orders, 10 Sept. 1915.

although there was also concern on the part of Unionists that it might provide some legal recognition for the Irish National Volunteers.³⁷² The provisions of the Volunteer Act of 1863 were then applied in lieu of new legislation in March 1916. The Central Association became one of Volunteer Regiments and an advisory council to the DGTF, whose staff Harris, now a Liberal MP, and Desborough - now designated Honorary Deputy Director of Volunteer Services - joined, with local administration devolved to CTAs. The Bucks CTA at once prepared mobilisation envelopes to be sent out in the event of an emergency.³⁷³ There were advantages from the 1863 legislation in that discipline could be imposed by fines recoverable under civil law, and in enabling officers to receive recognised commissions. Unfortunately, it also created an anomaly when military service tribunals began granting exemption from conscription if men joined the VTC for the old legislation allowed an individual to resign on 14 days' notice. There had also been a failure to appreciate that the 1863 legislation had been amended in terms of when the rifle volunteers could be called out for service resulting in a hasty qualification to emphasise its use only in the event of imminent danger rather than imminent national danger or great emergency.³⁷⁴

A new Volunteer Act given the Royal Assent on 22 December 1916 closed the resignation loophole, compelling men to serve for the duration and to undertake a statutory minimum number of 14 monthly drills until deemed efficient and then ten thereafter. The 'GR' armband could now be removed and 'Serge, Volunteer Force' uniform worn: a mixture of new and old wool in the normal army khaki shade. Six classes were established in January 1917. 'A', 'B' and

³⁷² William Butler, *The Irish Amateur Military Tradition, 1854-1992* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 31; *London Journal*, 18 Dec. 1915.

³⁷³ BA, T/A 1/13, Mins., Emergency Committee, 4 Aug. 1916.

³⁷⁴ Mitchinson, *Defending Albion*, 131.

‘C’ would be men over, of, and under, military age who could march at least five miles, see to shoot (with glasses if necessary), hear well, and be free of disease. ‘D’ men would be those unfit for active duties, who continued to be able to resign on 14 days’ notice; ‘P’ men would be those who were Special Constables; and ‘R’ men would be in those employed in key war work such as railwaymen who would probably not be available in any invasion. Men would be taught the elements of drill and musketry. Those deemed efficient in sections A and B - men above and of military age - would receive an annual £2 capitation grant for equipment. It was rarely enough and those of military age were often in protected occupations and unable to perform the drills required. The Board of Trade tried to gain total exemption for dock labour while the War Office agreed in 1917 that those involved in harvesting need only attend half the specified monthly drills between July and September. The ‘D’ class was abolished in December 1917 with those affected being required to agree to service for the duration and to a commitment to undertake drills by February 1918 or resign.

There was something of a conflict of interest between the Volunteers and the Special Constabulary, which had attracted many men in 1914, and performed similar duties in guarding key points, and with special tasks in handling the evacuation of refugees and livestock in the event of a German invasion.³⁷⁵ The volunteers argued that there was now no need for the Special Constabulary. Interestingly, J. L. Stewart of Manor House, Aylesbury, together with a bill poster and a printer had all been arrested in October 1914 for producing a poster criticising the Chief Constable, Major Otway Mayne, who had been a regular

³⁷⁵ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 240.

soldier in India and Burma, for appointing ‘manifestly unfit’ county notables to command the Specials.³⁷⁶

If the status of Volunteers who were also Special Constables resulted in friction with the police authorities, the arrival of ‘tribunal men’ also brought complaints from Volunteers that they were unwilling to complete drills but tribunals often resisted attempts to pursue defaulters. It was said that the Chesham tribunal was not ‘playing the game’.³⁷⁷ Moreover, after a dispute between the Board of Trade and Dundee volunteers trying to prosecute a docker who had refused to attend drills, immunity to prosecution was extended to all directed to the volunteers by tribunals in November 1917. Some volunteers believed that tribunals would call up eligible volunteers in preference to untrained men on the grounds that ‘a man who has leisure for volunteering can be spared from his civil occupation’.³⁷⁸ At Linslade the clerk to the tribunal suggested that men supposedly being sent to the volunteers were not actually serving.³⁷⁹ The 3rd Battalion complained to the Bletchley UDC Tribunal in March 1917 that men being sent to them were not attending drills.³⁸⁰ Meanwhile, the Eton RDC Tribunal was urged to specify exactly what conditions were required of those sent to the VTC.³⁸¹

In Bucks, a total of 4,120 men had been enrolled in the Special Constabulary by 23 September 1914 with 31 companies in towns and larger villages under distinguished ‘captains’ including Lord Addington, the Earl of Orkney, Lord

³⁷⁶ *Bucks Free Press*, 23 Oct. 1914.

³⁷⁷ BA, 7/20, Yates to Earl of Buckinghamshire, 3 Dec. 1917.

³⁷⁸ Beckett, ‘Aspects of Nation in Arms’, 34.

³⁷⁹ *North Bucks Times*, 14 Aug. 1917.

³⁸⁰ BA, DC 14/39/1, Mins., 8 Mar. 1917.

³⁸¹ BA, DC 10/38/1, Mins, 23 Nov. 1917.

Denbigh, the Earl of Buckinghamshire, Lincolnshire, and Sir George Higginson. They carried a warrant card and a night stick or truncheon. In the event of an invasion, they would have assisted in handling refugees and any livestock brought out of eastern counties.³⁸² The first meeting at Stony Stratford was on 12 August 1914, 64 men already having come forward. Patrols began at once and one cyclist who refused to stop when challenged at night near Wolverton on 9 September was upended by a night stick through his wheel. Motor car drivers' licences were also inspected at a road block on 22 November 1914.³⁸³ Gerald Caulfeild Pratt, son of Walter Caulfeild Pratt was first 'captain' at Oving and Whitchurch but then left to undertake remount work for the War Office.³⁸⁴ At Newport Pagnell, specials helped find billets for military units passing through and in November 1917 two specials apprehended two escaped German POWs from Husborne Crawley Camp in neighbouring Bedfordshire.

385

At Aston Sandford, Philip Stevenson regarded duties guarding tunnels, viaducts and bridges potentially dangerous if facing 'armed secret agents'. He had raised 40 men at Haddenham but felt this number 'ridiculously inadequate' although he careful to exclude 'anybody of an age or qualified to be a soldier'. He hoped planned meetings at Cuddington and Haddenham would strike a blow 'at the apathy and indifference and ignorance' and 'really open the floodgates to recruiting all round here'.³⁸⁶ There were spy scares, one bizarre rumour at

³⁸² BA, T/A 7/1, List of Special Constables, 23 Sept. 1914.

³⁸³ John Taylor, *Stony Stratford during the First World War* (Southampton: Magic Flute, 2014), 213-15.

³⁸⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 5 Sept. 1914.

³⁸⁵ Taylor, *Newport Pagnell*, 295.

³⁸⁶ BA, T/A 7/1, Stevenson to Buckinghamshire, 28 Aug. 1914.

Holmer Green in October 1914 being that an abandoned coal drilling site was a secret Zeppelin base.³⁸⁷ In October 1918, Special Constables at Burnham, Slough and Taplow, and members of the Royal Defence Corps from Farnham Royal were called out during a railway strike to maintain law and order and to guard food stocks.³⁸⁸



Prize winning musketry team from 4th Battalion, Bucks Volunteer Regiment, 1916 [BA]

The status of those specials who then joined the volunteers was not clear since Otway Mayne believed he had priority use in the event of an emergency,

³⁸⁷ Brett Holman, 'Constructing the Enemy Within: Rumours of Secret Gun Platforms and Zeppelin Bases in Britain, August to October 1914', *British Journal of Military History* 3, 2 (2017), 22-42; *Bucks Herald*, 24 Oct. 1914.

³⁸⁸ BA, BC/2/5, Bucks Constabulary Report, 22 Oct. 1918.

writing to the War Office for clarification in April 1916. In the following month, however, Kitchener resolved that the volunteers would take precedence.

³⁸⁹ The roll of the 3rd Bucks Volunteer Regiment for July to November 1916, for example, lists 171 volunteers (13.7 per cent) who were also specials.³⁹⁰ In March 1917 Mayne announced he would accept the resignations of specials who were also volunteers and in June it was then announced that a man could be either a volunteer or a special but not both.³⁹¹

Tribunals were aware of the unrealistic nature of some War Office demands with respect to military training when long hours were being worked in essential occupations. In November 1917 immunity from civil prosecution was extended to all those directed into the volunteer force by tribunals. By February 1918 from 285,000 Volunteers, 101,000 (35 per cent) were 'tribunal men', a proportion that increased to 44 per cent by the end of the war. From the point of view of the War Office, the Volunteers were simply shielding men from military service, the Adjutant General claiming in 1917 that 100,000 men had been lost to the army. In the course of 1917, it was agreed to reduce the volunteer force to 267,150 men in 274 battalions, with 38 battalions being reduced by amalgamation of weaker units and dismissal of the non-efficient.³⁹²

In Bucks Lord Rothschild had appealed for men to join proposed 'volunteer commandos' on 9 December 1914. It followed a meeting over which he had presided at Aylesbury two days earlier and the establishment of a committee

³⁸⁹ BA, T/A 7/14, Mayne to War Office, 29 April 1916; T/A 7/16, Lincolnshire to Earl of Buckinghamshire, 31 May 1916.

³⁹⁰ BA, T/A 7/7.

³⁹¹ BA, T/A 1/13, Mins. Recruiting Committee, 1 Mar. 1917; T/A 7/20, Bland to Buckinghamshire, 16 June 1917.

³⁹² Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 241.

comprising Lincolnshire, Desborough, Philip Pope, Wentworth Bowyer and Otway Mayne.³⁹³ Bowyer already led the local National Reserve and the local Special Constabulary. Three battalions were envisaged - a 3rd or Northern Battalion centred on Bletchley, Newport Pagnell, Stony Stratford, and Wolverton; a 2nd or Mid Bucks Battalion centred on Aylesbury, Chesham, Princes Risborough, Wendover, and Wing; and a 1st or Southern Battalion centred on Gerrards Cross, High Wycombe, and Slough. Rothschild would appoint officers in his capacity as Lord Lieutenant but no military titles would be used.³⁹⁴ If they wished, men could pay for the approved grey-green jacket at a cost of 30s.0d and could also buy a rifle for between £2.10s.0d and £3.³⁹⁵ Few took up the offer to buy their own rifles, only 35 men doing so in the 2nd Mid Bucks Battalion in the course of 1915.³⁹⁶ In the north of the county Sir Herbert Leon offered a rifle range at Denbigh in May 1915, and offered to provide a uniform to any volunteer attaining efficiency in musketry. At Bletchley, on the other hand, P. C. Lovett of Stoke Lodge called for funds for uniforms as the volunteers at Stony Stratford and Wolverton already had them.³⁹⁷

Lincolnshire became County Commandant with a county adjutant, latterly Reginald Cholmondeley. Bowyer commanded the 3rd North Bucks Battalion with Walter Carlile as second in command and William Trevor of Lathbury Park as adjutant. Carlile had taken a motor ambulance to France at his own

³⁹³ *Bucks Herald*, 12 Dec. 1914; Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 55-56; BA, T/A 7/2 and 7/16, Rothschild circular, 9 Dec. 1914.

³⁹⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 2 Jan. 1915; BA, T/A 7/3, Standing Orders of Bucks VTC, 26 Mar. 1915; T/A 7/4, Brigade Order Book, 14 May 1915; *Bucks Advertiser*, 15 May 1915; *Volunteer Training Corps Gazette*, 13 and 20 Nov. 1915.

³⁹⁵ BA, T/A 7/15.

³⁹⁶ BA, T/A 7/13.

³⁹⁷ *North Bucks Times*, 11 May, and 9 Nov. 1915.

expense in October 1914 and would also receive the OBE for his services in raising the special constabulary in the county. Subsequently Trevor took command of the battalion when Bowyer was requested to undertake duties for the War Office in August 1915. Trevor, who held a public meeting at Newport Pagnell Masonic Hall to seek recruits on 15 February 1915, had moved to Lathbury in 1893 to open a college tutoring candidates for commissions at Woolwich and Sandhurst.³⁹⁸

At Stony Stratford, there was a close connection to those who had originally enlisted as Special Constables so that William Parrott, Clerk to the District Council, was both ‘captain’ of the Special Constables and first company commander of the Stony Stratford and Wolverton VTC. When Parrott took an army commission in August 1915, he was succeeded as volunteer commander by the Conservative agent for North Bucks, Robert Neave with Alfred Abbott, the Wolverton RDC surveyor, commanding the Wolverton Platoon, and William Ray, Clerk of the Parish Council, commanding the Stony Stratford Platoon. The Newport Pagnell Platoon was commanded by John Butler, manager of Barclay & Co.’s bank.³⁹⁹ Neave gave up the command in October 1918 in order to enlist as a private in the Artists Rifles just two weeks before the armistice.⁴⁰⁰ Other meetings to begin the raising of the volunteers were held at Buckingham on 2 March 1915, where Green commanded the Company, and at Cuddington on 30 March.⁴⁰¹ There were volunteers at Bletchley organised by a

³⁹⁸ Taylor, *Newport Pagnell*, 27; idem, *Home Fires*, 153.

³⁹⁹ Taylor, *Stony Stratford*, 251-53; idem, *Newport Pagnell*, 28.

⁴⁰⁰ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 2 Nov. 1918.

⁴⁰¹ *Bucks Herald*, 6 Mar., and 10 Apl. 1915.

local defence committee as early as 9 August, with an estimated 130 at Winslow by early September.⁴⁰²

The 2nd Mid Bucks Battalion was commanded by the Earl of Buckinghamshire with Lionel Walter Rothschild, now 2nd Lord Rothschild, as second in command. Robert Thomas, the county surveyor, commanded the Aylesbury Company; Dr H. R. B. Hickman of White Hill House, the Chesham Company; Stratfold Read, a Bradenham farmer, commanded the Princes Risborough Company; Sir Alfred Goodson, President of the OTC Selection Board, the Wendover Company; and John Tarver, the Rothschild agent, Wing Company. Thomas was later acting adjutant of the battalion before his services were required by the War Office for road construction behind the lines on the Western Front in December 1916 at which point he was commissioned into the Royal Engineers.⁴⁰³ The subsequent appointment as adjutant of Captain Bridgman Bland, who had been invalided home from service with a battalion of the London Regiment, proved unfortunate. Far from well, Bland felt overworked and committed suicide in his Aylesbury lodgings in October 1917.⁴⁰⁴ The Leighton Buzzard detachment of the battalion formed a band of 12 pipers in September 1915 while the Wing Company acquired four drums and 12 flutes in January 1916, these being presented at a combined concert and dance in aid of funds in the Corn Exchange.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰² *North Bucks Times*, 15 Aug., and 5 Sept. 1914.

⁴⁰³ BA, T/A 7/14, Thomas to Buckinghamshire, 9 Dec. 1916; *Bucks Herald*, 10 Feb. 1917.

⁴⁰⁴ *Bucks Examiner*, 2 Nov. 1917.

⁴⁰⁵ *North Bucks Times*, 28 Sept. 1915; 25 Jan. 1916.

The first public meeting at Chesham Bois was on 29 October 1914, the first drill in ‘Mr Weller’s Field’ preceding it by three days.⁴⁰⁶ Hickman had served in both the Oxford University Volunteer Corps and as a lieutenant in the 1st Volunteer Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment).⁴⁰⁷ In an echo of the past, a recommendation to give a commission to one of the NCOs in the 2nd Battalion in 1917, Herbert Bentley, a Yorkshire-born school attendance officer from Aylesbury, was met with the comment that he ‘could not by any reading be classed as a gentleman’ and ‘the men in the ranks like to be led by such as can be’.⁴⁰⁸ The 1st South Bucks Battalion was commanded by Philip Pope until his death in May 1916 with W. Northcote Davis of Salt Hill House as second in command. When Davis was selected to command the new 4th Battalion, Annesley Somerville of Eton College, who had been commanding the Eton Company, became Pope’s deputy. Somerville then succeeded to the command of the 1st Battalion with Noel Bingley, a company director from Burnham, as his deputy.⁴⁰⁹

On 10 April 1915 it was decided to form that second southern battalion, the 1st taking in Burnham, Eton, Slough, Taplow and Wooburn Green, and the new 4th Battalion the Chalfonts, Gerrards Cross, Marlow, and Wycombe under the command of Davis with the Wycombe solicitor, Bernard Reynolds, as second in command.⁴¹⁰ Subsequently, when Davis resigned in June 1916, command

⁴⁰⁶ IWM, Doc. 12957 [MISC 240/3392], Chesham Company Mss, Drill Order, 26 Oct. 1914; Notice for Public Meeting, 29 Oct. 1914.

⁴⁰⁷ BA, T/A 7/17, Buckinghamshire to Swann, 16 Jan. 1917.

⁴⁰⁸ BA, T/A 7/20, Bland to Buckinghamshire, 25 June 1917.

⁴⁰⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 16 Jan., and 15 May 1915; 20 May and 8 July 1916.

⁴¹⁰ BA, T/A 7/4, Brigade Order Book, 10 Apl. 1915.

passed to Reynolds. Having been invalided home in 1916, Francis Wethered commanded the 3rd Battalion.⁴¹¹

All four battalions were affiliated to Desborough's Central Association. Financial support was provided by Lord Bolton, Lord Devonport, and Lord Hambledon as well as Lincolnshire, who succeeded Rothschild as Lord Lieutenant on the latter's death in March 1915. Lincolnshire's only son, Viscount Wendover, died of wounds while serving with the Royal Horse Guards in May 1915. Before his death, Rothschild combined with Waldorf Astor to provide £1,000 each for the purchase of 2,000 Snider and Martini rifles and 80,000 rounds of ammunition.⁴¹² These were outdated but still represented an acquisition of weapons before some Territorial or Kitchener battalions, the War Office moving to prohibit volunteers from acquiring service pattern rifles in August 1915 unless authorised by the GOC of the local district.⁴¹³

With the application of the old 1863 legislation in 1916 and the volunteers passing to the administration of the CTA, the services of the four Bucks battalions were formally offered and accepted on 20 June 1916, the nomenclature now being the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Battalions, Buckinghamshire Volunteer Regiment. The county volunteer executive committee passed a resolution requesting the prime minister to convey thanks to the King for the formal recognition.⁴¹⁴ The 1st and 4th Battalions were amalgamated in early 1918 with the headquarters of the 1st Battalion now at Slough. In July 1918 the battalions were restyled as the 3rd (formerly 1st Southern), 4th (formerly 2nd Mid

⁴¹¹ BA, T/A 7/30, Record of Service of William Roberts signed by Wethered.

⁴¹² *Volunteer Training Corps Gazette*, 5 Dec. 1914, and 20 Nov. 1915; *Bucks Free Press*, 27 Nov. 1914; *Bucks Herald*, 27 Feb. 1915 BA, T/A 1/60, Draft History, 115.

⁴¹³ Mitchinson, *Defending Albion*, 116.

⁴¹⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 25 Mar. 1916; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 8 July 1916.

Bucks) and 5th (formerly 3rd Northern) Volunteer Battalions, OBLI. Former regulars now commanded the 4th and 5th Battalions, the Earl of Buckinghamshire passing command of the former Mid Bucks Battalion to Lieutenant Colonel Michael Tighe of Loosley House, Princes Risborough, who had been associated originally with the National Reserve.⁴¹⁵

Following a Home Office circular to lords lieutenant in October 1914, elaborate plans were drawn up for local defence by the Bucks Central Organising Committee and Local Emergency Committees, and for coping with the anticipated influx of refugees and livestock removed from eastern counties in the event of invasion. The committees were authorised by the War Office on 6 October 1914, the intention also being to supervise the digging of any required defences by the civilian population, and to prevent alarm. Discreet and trustworthy individuals were also to be identified to carry out the various tasks.

⁴¹⁶

The Bucks Central Committee comprised Rothschild as Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Buckinghamshire, the High Sheriff (then Henry Turnor of Cholesbury), Walter Carlile, Desborough, Mosley, Julian James, Philip Pope, Swann, Otway Mayne, Colonel Alexander Finlay of Little Brickhill, and Wycombe's mayor (then John Gomm). The local committees were at Aylesbury, Buckingham, Chesham, High Wycombe County, High Wycombe Borough, Newport Pagnell, and Slough.⁴¹⁷ All arrangements were in place by May 1915. The roads to be reserved for military use were those from Newport Pagnell to Stony Stratford,

⁴¹⁵ BA, T/A 1/60, Draft History, 119; T/A 7/18, Buckinghamshire to his officers, 31 Oct. 1918.

⁴¹⁶ Mitchinson, *Defending Albion*, 86-87; Bodleian, Lincolnshire Mss, 1133/1, HO circular, Oct. 1914.

⁴¹⁷ Bodleian, Lincolnshire Mss, 1133/3; BA, T/A 7/2.

Watling Street, Akeman Street, the Bath Road, and the London to Oxford Road. It was still unclear, however, who would be responsible for feeding refugees or livestock. The committee did not as yet favour 'concentration camps' for refugees as opposed to distributing them between towns and villages and felt wholesale slaughter of cattle would be easier than finding fodder. There was also a need to ascertain the compensation arrangements for the removal of livestock and property, and the likely routes that would be used to evacuate livestock and people from the eastern counties.⁴¹⁸

By 15 June 1915 returns had been made of motor vehicles; motor cycles; location of petrol stocks; location of tools; garages; bicycle shops; flour mills; and granaries. Clergy would be sworn in as special constables to handle the refugees. Sealed packets had been issued to individuals to be opened on receipt of orders.⁴¹⁹ All cattle had to be given a recognised county brand to enable identification if removal was necessary.⁴²⁰ It was ascertained that the Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk factory at Aylesbury had 576,000 tins of milk in stock.⁴²¹

In the northern police division, Hanslope Park, Olney Park Farm, and Whaddon Park were designated for the collection of livestock, which would then be removed respectively to Salcey Forest, Whittlewood Forest, and Yardley Chase. Refugees would be housed in 'rest camps' - a term to be preferred to 'concentration camps' - at Bury Feld at Newport Pagnell and Woughton Green.

⁴¹⁸ BA, T/A 7/1, Mins. of Central Committee, 21 Dec. 1914 and 12 Feb. 1915; Bodleian, Lincolnshire Mss, 1133/4, Report on County Arrangements, 21 May 1916.

⁴¹⁹ BA, T/A 7/2, Home Office to Rothschild, Oct. 1914; Bodleian, Lincolnshire Mss, 1133/9, 10, 11 and 12.

⁴²⁰ BA, T/A 7/2, Mayne circular to Stockowners and Farmers, 26 Jan. 1915.

⁴²¹ BA, T/A 7/1, Mins of Central Committee, 21 Dec. 1914.

All hay, straw and wheat stocks were to be fired.⁴²² From the north western division stock would be collected at Shalstone Manor, Poundon, Boarstall, and Ickford with rest camps at Stowe, Long Crendon, Marsh Gibbon, and Brill. For the central division, livestock would be collected at Mentmore Park, Creslow Great Ground, Eythrope Park, and Chequers Park. In the south west division, stock would be collected at Skirmett, Town End, and Radnage; in the Chesham division at Hyde Heath, Hall Barn, and Shardeloes; in the Wycombe division at Aston Sandford, Church Hill, Fawley Deer Park, and Wycombe Recreation Ground; and in the Slough division at Stoke Park and Taplow Court. Other rest camps would be at Haddenham, Princes Risborough and Marlow.⁴²³ Whilst under police supervision the ‘rest camps’ were to be administered by local clergymen assisted by girl guides.⁴²⁴ The local emergency arrangements were tested from time to time as in Slough and Newport Pagnell in April and May 1917 respectively.⁴²⁵

In November 1915 the 1st Battalion stood at 687 men, the 2nd at 882, the 3rd at 563, and the 4th at 619, comprising 2,751 in total. The average age of 1,266 officers and men in the 3rd Bucks Volunteer Battalion between July and December 1916 was 36.6 years when 21 officers and 35 NCOs were taken into account although this varied from company to company with, for example. 33.2 years in ‘A’ Company (Brill/Buckingham); 32.3 years in ‘B’ Company (Emberton/Lavendon/Olney/Winslow); 33.4 years in ‘C’ Company (Chicheley/Great Linford/Milton Keynes/Newport Pagnell/North Crawley/Sherrington/Stoke Goldington/Woburn Sands) and 31.2 years in ‘D’

⁴²² BA, D-HJ/A/2/62; T/A 7/2.

⁴²³ BA, T/A 7/2, Instructions issued by Mayne, 15 June 1915.

⁴²⁴ BA, T/A 7/1, Report by Mosley, 21 May 1915.

⁴²⁵ BA, BC/2/2/5, Mayne report, 5 July 1917.

Company (Bletchley/Stony Stratford/Wolverton). Overall, 24.3 per cent were over military age (41) and 14.6 per cent under 20.

As might be expected there was a preponderance of men likely to be in reserved occupations such as trade (21.2 per cent) and agriculture (16.1 per cent), whilst those in manual occupations included 89 men from the Olney boot trade and 35 employees of the LNWR at Wolverton (Table 8.11) Between July and December 1916, a total of 130 men (10.4 per cent) were called up from the battalion while 84 men (6.7 per cent) enlisted of their own volition.⁴²⁶

Of the 987 men enrolled in the 2nd Mid Bucks Battalion between February and March 1916, a total of 169 enlisted (17.1 per cent) with four more called up under the Derby Scheme, four joining the National Reserve, two the police and five employed on war work (two in munitions, two on the railways, and one in the Farm Products Purchasing Committee). A total of 185 (18.7 per cent) claimed previous military experience but this included only 33 former regulars and 22 whose experience was confined to cadets (8), the Church Lads Brigade (8), OTCs (2), the Boys Brigade (1), the Boy Scouts (2) and the Ulster Volunteer Force (1).⁴²⁷

No occupations were recorded in the 2nd Battalion roll but there were four clergymen in the Wendover Company. However, a muster roll exists for the Chesham Bois and Amersham Company of the 2nd Battalion from June 1915 listing 118 men (Table 8.12). Of these 49 of military age had ‘genuine’

⁴²⁶ BA, T/A 7/7.

⁴²⁷ BA, T/A 7/13.

Table 8.11

Social Composition, 3rd Volunteer Battalion, July-December 1916

	NCOs	'A' Coy	'B' Coy	'C' Coy	'D' Coy	Total	
Farmers (Special Constables)	12 (2)	71 (17)	22 (6)	39 (6)	28 (5)	172 (36)	13.8%
Professions	5 (4)	22 (6)	13 (5)	12 (4)	13 (3)	65 (22)	5.2%
Trades	3 (1)	82 (9)	65 (17)	48 (6)	67 (12)	265 (45)	21.2%
Clerical/Service	3 (3)	46 (7)	21 (5)	22 (3)	21 (4)	113 (22)	9.0%
Skilled	5 (1)	38 (9)	30 (9)	19 (2)	26 (2)	118 (23)	9.4%
Manual (Agriculture)	5 (1)	57 (5)	31 (1)	82 (1)	26 (1)	201 (9)	16.1%
Manual (Industrial)	2 (1)	25 (1)	108 (7)	59 (1)	114 (2)	308 (12)	24.7%
[Boot Trade]	-	[1]	[84]	-	[4]	[89]	
[LNWR]	-	[1]	[1]	[2]	[31]	[35]	
Clergy	-	1 (1)	1 (1)	-	1	3 (2)	0.2%
Total	35 (13)	342 (55)	291 (51)	281 (23)	296 (29)	1245 (171)	

Source: BA, T/A 7/7

(sometimes overlapping) reasons for not enlisting: 34 were married; 13 were unfit for active service with one already rejected; two had been refused permission by their employers (the GPO and a bank) to enlist; and of the five who cited business reasons, one was a sole proprietor albeit an investment

banker whose staff had mostly enlisted. The latter was also one of those married. Another with more than one reason was C. Sandford Freeman, a 40 year old managing director from Chesham Bois, who was not only married with a family but had been rejected for enlistment as he had a hernia: he was also almost past military age. Freeman commanded the Chesham Platoon and then the Chesham and Amersham Company. A 30 year old water inspector, however, was struck off the roll as he would not provide a valid reason for failing to enlist.⁴²⁸

The average age of the Chesham Bois Platoon was 41.0 years and that of the Amersham Platoon 36.8 years. In terms of social composition, there were substantial proportions of professional men and tradesmen with notably more skilled and unskilled men at Amersham than at Chesham Bois. All three retired

Table 8.12 Occupations of the Chesham Bois and Amersham Company, 2nd Volunteer Battalion, June 1915

	Chesham Bois	Amersham	Total
Farmers	-	2	2 (1.6%)
Professions	20	16	36 (30.5%)
Clerical/Service	5	7	12 (10.1%)
Trades	14	15	29 (24.5%)
Skilled	3	11	14 (11.8%)
Unskilled Manual	6	13	19 (16.1%)
Retired	3	-	3 (2.5%)
Not Given	1	2	3
Total	52	66	118
Average Age	41.0	36.8	

Source: IWM, Doc. 12957 [MISC 240/3392]

⁴²⁸ IWM, Doc. 12957 [MISC 240/3392], Chesham Company Mss.

men at Chesham were also from the professions.

One noted volunteer in the Chesham Company was Dr James Gardner, who had stroked Cambridge in three consecutive University Boat Races, had been champion sculler of the Thames and English amateur champion, and was said to be one of the finest shots in England. A prominent Amersham freemason, a magistrate, chairman of the Amersham Patriotic Association, and a parish, district and county councillor for over 20 years, Gardner had organised the elaborate recruiting meeting at Amersham in September 1914.⁴²⁹ He became sergeant of the Amersham Platoon and then its commander.⁴³⁰ By June 1916 the Chesham Company had 195 men including a Princes Risborough section with a Pitstone section being formed by July.⁴³¹ At Wycombe, the headmaster of the Royal Grammar School, G. W. Arnison, who had once commanded a battery in the 1st East Riding RGA volunteers in the past became a captain in the 1st (South Bucks) Battalion.⁴³²

The response was somewhat uneven. At Gerrards Cross, a handbill with the provocative heading, ‘Am I a Shirker or am I doing my Share?’ was circulated, the detachment there numbering around 100 men when there was a stated need for at least 240. The first annual report issued in December 1915 indicated there had been 81 members on parade when inspected by Philip Pope on 28 March

⁴²⁹ *Bucks Examiner*, 11 Sept. 1914.

⁴³⁰ IWM, Doc. 12957 [MISC 240/3392], Chesham Company Mss, Freeman to Gardner, 27 June 1916; Hickman to Freeman, 22 Sept. 1916.

⁴³¹ IWM, Doc. 12957 [MISC 240/3392], Chesham Company Mss, Hickman to Freeman, 24 June 1916 and 11 July 1916.

⁴³² Ashford and Haworth (eds), *History of Royal Grammar School*, 72-76.

1915 although 25 had enlisted since in the regular army and all of military age had registered under the Derby Scheme.⁴³³

In offering his services in May 1915 the 70 year old Sir Launcelot Aubrey-Fletcher noted a lack of interest around Wendover, Ellesborough, Kimble, and Stoke Mandeville. In August Hickman complained that there were only a dozen or so loyal supporters at Chesham: 'The remainder if they do attend at all do so from inclination rather than duty: and the proportion of members to inhabitants is dismally small and disheartening to them.'⁴³⁴ At Hickman's last parade, only 39 from 67 members at Chesham had attended although 46 from 47 were present from Chesham Bois. Hickman also noted that few men attended bank Holiday parades and too many grumbled to the press about uniforms instead of doing their duty.⁴³⁵

By the following year, the Earl of Buckinghamshire, who commanded the 2nd Battalion, was receiving numerous reports of difficulties from his company and platoon commanders. At Wing, Tarver warned in July 1916 of problems in bringing scattered squads together from the surrounding villages, as well as too many men who were likely to be with the company for too short a time to be of value: 'In a company like mine there must always be, I fear, about one third of the strength behind the others in general efficiency.'⁴³⁶ The War Office also declined to pay any expenses.

⁴³³ BA, T/A 7/30, handbill; annual report, 31 Dec. 1915.

⁴³⁴ BA, T/A 7/15, Aubrey-Fletcher to Buckinghamshire, 17 May 1915; Hickman to Buckinghamshire, 3 Aug. 1915.

⁴³⁵ IWM, 12957 [MISC 240/3392], Chesham Company Mss, Hickman to Freeman, 2 June 1916.

⁴³⁶ BA, T/A 7/14, Tarver to Buckinghamshire, 24 July 1916.

In October 1916 Buckinghamshire doubted volunteers could complete 20 monthly drills in return for a capitation grant, suggesting instead 16 recruit drills and eight for trained men in towns, and eight recruit drills and four for trained men in villages. His acting adjutant, Thomas, agreed: ‘A farm labourer working seven days a week from early morning until late in the evening at a distance of several miles from the nearest drill centre could not possibly attend four or five nights a week nor could efficient instructors *unpaid* be found to drill them.’⁴³⁷ Buckinghamshire made much the same point with regard to night observation posts against air raids in February 1917: ‘Men at work all day are unable to properly take over night duty except in a few cases not can they afford to lose pay by leaving work early to get to their posts by 4 or 4.30 especially since no transport is allowed them, no blankets or mattresses at the post.’⁴³⁸ In November 1917, 194 men from the 2nd Mid Bucks Battalion had not completed the statutory five drills although this was better than the 254 missing them in September.⁴³⁹

The War Office declined to pay the transport and expenses of men taking up temporary guard duties. There was also a shortage of instructors, the War Office declining to allow the appointment of permanent staff.⁴⁴⁰ The level of statutory drills then introduced by the new legislation in December 1916, therefore, proved problematic.

In February 1917 Tarver reported it was impossible to meet the ten monthly drills for efficients with half his men employed in agriculture, the rest in trade

⁴³⁷ BA, T/A 7/14, Buckinghamshire to Swann, 24 Oct. 1916; Thomas to Buckinghamshire, 25 Oct. 1916.

⁴³⁸ BA, T/A 7/17, Buckinghamshire to Hickman, 14 Feb. 1917.

⁴³⁹ BA, T/A 7/18, Buckinghamshire to Hickman, 22 Nov. 1917.

⁴⁴⁰ BA, T/A 7/14, Trevor to Buckinghamshire, 8 Aug. 1916.

or business, and his detachments scattered 10-12 miles apart. His officers comprised a farmer, a vicar, a solicitor, and an estate manager who for want of petrol could not get around at all. In June he predicted 70 per cent would be unable to complete the minimum drills in hay time or harvest and in July those volunteers from 'A', 'B' and 'C' classes were all relieved from attending half if engaged in agriculture.⁴⁴¹

Apart from the problems of occupation and location, the uninspiring nature of volunteer duties may have played a part in declining interest as the prospect of invasion receded. A typical programme of training for the 2nd Battalion for June 1917 shows two hour sessions on Sundays from 1030 to 1230 and on Mondays and Thursdays from 1900 to 2100, split into (usually three) periods of musketry practice (nine), squad drills (seven), bombing (three), bombing (three), bayonet fighting (three), physical exercise (two), extended order (two), and outpost duty (one) with the addition of a lecture on 'The Attack'.⁴⁴² The 2nd Battalion was assigned to guard the LNWR line from the Hertfordshire boundary to Peterborough in the event of invasion with the 1st and 4th Battalions allotted to London District and, oddly, the 3rd Battalion to Northern Army. The railway would be protected by continuous patrolling, checking underneath bridges and sentries at tunnel mouths and signal boxes.⁴⁴³

There were occasional exercises as when the 2nd Battalion guarded POWs cutting wood at Windsor in April 1916, and guarded 19 miles of the Marylebone line in May 1916, and ammunition wagons at Leighton Buzzard in

⁴⁴¹ BA, T/A 7/10, Tarver to Buckinghamshire 24 Feb. 1917; T/A 7/20, Bland to Buckinghamshire, 18 June 1917; Cholmondely to Buckinghamshire, 6 July 1917.

⁴⁴² BA, T/A 7/20, Programme of work for June 1917.

⁴⁴³ BA, T/A 7/10, Command Orders, 28 Mar. 1917; T/A 7/29, Instructions to Captain Lord Rothschild, 1917.

August 1916.⁴⁴⁴ Events reminiscent of earlier Victorian times occurred from time to time. In July 1915, for example, the Aylesbury Company with added sections from Quainton and Waddesdon ‘attacked’ the Wing Company around Rowsham. In August 1915, however, the War Office declined to permit the Wycombe Company to hold a four day camp at Temple House in conjunction with the Gerrards Cross, Marlow, and Slough volunteers: a field day was substituted.⁴⁴⁵

The Gerrards Cross Detachment was initially commanded by Harold Moreland when formed on 25 November 1914 and, after his commissioning in the 10th South Staffordshire Regiment in December, by A. T. V. Robinson of Rondebosch in Bulstrode Way. Training took place in the Town Hall with No 1 Platoon on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, and No 2 Platoon on Mondays and Fridays. The nightly programme consisted of a 15-minute lecture or short instruction, followed by 50 minutes’ drill and an optional ten minutes’ physical training. A weekly parade was scheduled for Wednesday evenings whilst firing practice took place at a range at Bull Lane Railway Bridge on Saturdays, and ‘tactical marches’, scouting exercises, and attack exercises on Sunday afternoons. The detachment also used Bulstrode Park for training. It undertook three days’ training over the 1915 August Bank Holiday, and helped unload stores at Didcot Ordnance Depot in November and December 1915.⁴⁴⁶

A route march by the Stony Stratford Company culminated in a church service at Nash in July 1915 whilst drill and exercise in Buckingham in August was followed by a tea laid on in the Small Hall by the platoon commander,

⁴⁴⁴ BA, T/A 7/28, Buckinghamshire to Somerville, 27 Apl. and 12 May 1916; Somerville to Buckinghamshire, 2 May 1916; T/A 7/14, Order, 11 Aug. 1916.

⁴⁴⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 31 July, and 7 Aug. 1915.

⁴⁴⁶ BA, T/A 7/30, handbill; Annual Report, 31 Dec. 1915.

Alderman A. E. Rogers.⁴⁴⁷ There were also shooting competitions such as that held by the Chesham Company at Hyde Heath in July 1916 and at Great Missenden on October 1916.⁴⁴⁸

Observation posts were also manned at night for Zeppelin raids although there was an inspection by Field Marshal Lord French in November 1916. French later reviewed all three volunteer battalions at Hartwell Park on 22 September 1918 as part of the regiment's annual inspection.⁴⁴⁹ Volunteers from Bucks, Berkshire and Oxfordshire also spent many Sundays unloading trucks and shifting stores at Didcot.⁴⁵⁰

There was also the problem relating to 'tribunal men'. The Earl of Buckinghamshire had welcomed their arrival in June 1916 but it was soon found that their inclusion was lowering morale among the genuine volunteers. In January 1917, of the 990 men now serving with 2nd Battalion, 461 had been sent by tribunals (46.5 per cent). By April 1919, the 5th Volunteer Battalion, OBLI had 309 from 544 men sent from tribunals (56.8 per cent).⁴⁵¹ The Aylesbury Rural District Tribunal noted in December 1916 that a number of men from Whitchurch were not fulfilling the duties required of their conditional exemption because they felt they could not be expected to walk five miles to the

⁴⁴⁷ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 17 and 21 Aug. 1915.

⁴⁴⁸ *Bucks Examiner*, 28 July 1916; *Bucks Herald*, 14 Oct. 1916.

⁴⁴⁹ *Bucks Examiner*, 6 Sept. 1918; *Bucks Herald*, 28 Sept. 1918.

⁴⁵⁰ BA, T/A 7/14, Buckinghamshire to his battalion, 11 Nov. 1916; Central Association, *Volunteer Force*, 14-15.

⁴⁵¹ BA, T/A 1/60, Draft History, 118; T/A 7/23, Return of 2nd Battalion, 31 Jan. 1917; T/A 7/7, Return of 5th Vol. Batt., 30 Apl. 1919.

nearest drill: a volunteer section would be formed in the village to correct the difficulty.⁴⁵²

At Chesham, where the lack of interest had been noted by Hickman in 1915, R. E. Yates, the headmaster of Dr Challoner's Grammar School, suggested in December 1917 that Chesham had not wholeheartedly embraced the volunteers from the 'peculiarity' of its inhabitants and their jealousy at anything which had originated outside the town. One NCO had even suggested that absence at parades was due to the instructors being from Halton Camp. The UDC had refused to grant any financial assistance and the local tribunal declined to insist on men conditionally exempted joining the corps. Where they had made such a provision, they had not enforced it. Thus, when 'these two representative bodies both slight the Force, the rest of the town naturally takes little interest'.⁴⁵³ By April 1918 the *Bucks Examiner* was reporting that only 15 from 100 men had attended the last parade in Chesham and the local tribunal was still not taking its responsibilities seriously.⁴⁵⁴

Overall, the number of men in the 2nd Battalion not completing even five drills a month was never less than 142 between October 1917 and May 1918.⁴⁵⁵ Tarver complained in May 1918 that he rarely got more than 50 men at a parade since the new military service legislation had given men between 41 and 50 the opportunity to plead exemption and they had been the force's backbone. Generally, too, there was increased protection for those engaged in agriculture

⁴⁵² *Bucks Herald*, 23 Dec. 1916.

⁴⁵³ BA, T/A 7/20, Yates to Buckinghamshire, 3 Dec. 1917.

⁴⁵⁴ *Bucks Examiner*, 16 Aug. 1918.

⁴⁵⁵ BA, T/A 7/20.

and munitions work whilst physical standards were also raised. At war's end, the Bucks volunteers totalled 78 officers and 2,341 men.⁴⁵⁶

The Volunteers were not capable of replacing troops in home defence, as was proved by a confused affair originating in Kent in March 1917, which may have been either a planned test mobilisation or, more likely, a panic.⁴⁵⁷ The Director of Military Operations had pronounced in July 1917 that only 117 out of 312 battalions could be employed and the rest should be reduced. Of the 312, 84 were allocated to lines of communication in the event of an invasion, 71 to mobile defence, 70 to reserve, 45 to garrisons, and 42 to the London defences. The 1st and 4th Bucks Battalions were allocated to the London defences, the 2nd Bucks a part of the mobile defence force known as the Halton Park Composite Brigade, and the 3rd Battalion earmarked to reinforce 216 Brigade of 72nd (Home Service) Division.⁴⁵⁸ In 1916, the four battalions had 2,000 rifles available.⁴⁵⁹ In July 1917, however, for reasons not apparent the county was short of 1,600 rifles for its 2,877 men although it did have four Hotchkiss guns for each battalion.⁴⁶⁰

In a series of conferences between July and December 1917 the Director General of the Territorial Force and Volunteers, the Earl of Scarbrough, had argued successfully to retain 274 battalions by amalgamating weaker units and insisting on efficiency, hence the demise of the 4th Battalion in Bucks. French had sought compulsory seven day camps and even sought to abolish the word

⁴⁵⁶ BA, T/A 7/20, Tarver to Buckinghamshire, 25 May 1918; T/A 1/22, CTA Annual Report, 1917-18.

⁴⁵⁷ Mitchinson, *Defending Albion*, 157-58.

⁴⁵⁸ TNA, WO 32/5048.

⁴⁵⁹ Mitchinson, *Defending Albion*, 137.

⁴⁶⁰ BA, T/A 1/1, CTA Mins., 5 July 1917.

‘Volunteer’ as he believed home defence a duty for all.⁴⁶¹ Yet volunteers did useful service in guarding vulnerable points, manning anti-aircraft batteries and assisting the London Fire Brigade during air raids, digging the London defences, assisting with harvests, and providing transport for troops on leave or invalided home. In Bucks there was an anti-aircraft gun and light station partly manned by the 3rd Battalion at Gerrards Cross in 1916 whilst men from the 2nd Battalion at Chesham were invited to volunteer for anti-aircraft observation duties in January 1917, undertaking once a week either a shift from 6 p.m. to midnight or midnight to sunrise. Chesham United played football against men from the Anti-aircraft Corps in the vicinity in April 1918.⁴⁶² There was also an anti-aircraft gun station and light station at Bovington in 1917.⁴⁶³

Over 13,200 volunteers served in special service companies on the east coast in three-month tours to release more troops for the BEF between June and September 1918 although the War Office agreed a list of 16 industrial occupations that were barred from participation. A total of five officers and 63 men from Bucks under the command of Captain R. F. Lawson were attached to the 2/25th London Regiment at Wickham Market from 29 June to 28 September 1918 despite the hay harvest and the lack of casual labour that prevented many men being released for the duty.⁴⁶⁴ Some in the War Office had pressed for full mobilisation but this was impractical and, in any case, the experience of the

⁴⁶¹ Beckett, ‘Aspects of Nation in Arms’, 35, 37.

⁴⁶² BA, D-X 916, Dunbar account; *Bucks Examiner*, 5 Jan. 1917; 12 Apl., and 30 Aug. 1918.

⁴⁶³ BA, D-X 893/2, Wages Book for Construction at Bovington, 21 Dec 1917 to 4 Oct. 1918.

⁴⁶⁴ BA, T/A 1/60, Draft History 119; T/A 7/21, Orders, 29 June 1918, and Lawson report, 16 Oct. 1918; Taylor, *Wolverton*, I, 285; IWM, Doc. 12957 [MISC 240/3392], Lincolnshire circular to volunteers, 30 May 1918; *Bucks Herald*, 6 July 1918.

special service companies so far as others were concerned merely confirmed reservations as to the physical fitness and utility of the force as a whole.⁴⁶⁵



Gerrards Cross Anti-aircraft Station, 1916 [BMMT]

Probably over a million men passed through the volunteers, and the Central Association claimed over 2,000 had enlisted by the end of 1915 and 600 had attested under the Derby Scheme.⁴⁶⁶ The force withered away in suspended animation from 25 February 1919 onwards. Weekly orders were still being printed in the local press but usually indicating that there were none although,

⁴⁶⁵ Mitchinson, *Defending Albion*, 178-79, 188-89.

⁴⁶⁶ Beckett, 'Aspects of Nation in Arms', 36.

bizarrely, men were to report to receive new uniforms in June 1919.⁴⁶⁷ After some postponements, the force was formally disbanded in March 1920 although 18,500 men of the Motor Volunteer Corps, seen as useful for strikebreaking, were retained until March 1921. During the war itself, the Bucks motor volunteers had given regular ‘joy rides’ to wounded soldiers such as those from Wycombe to Cliveden in February 1916. The motor volunteers appear to have been associated primarily with High Wycombe under the command of Dr John Thomson Bell with some 20 cars.⁴⁶⁸ The only acknowledgement of the volunteers’ contribution was a letter of thanks from the King characterised by one recipient as ‘a lukewarm printed message of thanks signed in an unintelligible hand’. They were allowed to retain uniforms and officers were permitted to retain honorary ranks.⁴⁶⁹

The Territorial Force began to be disembodied in December 1918, the Army Council resolving that no special decoration would be awarded to those had had taken the ISO in 1914. It was assumed that disembodied Territorials would automatically receive any pensions due but the Ministry of Pensions had not been consulted and hastily authorised disembodiment as the equivalent of discharge for pension purposes.⁴⁷⁰ About 30,000 Territorials who had taken the ISO before 30 September 1914 but not then served overseas sufficiently early to qualify for the 1914 or 1914-15 Star received the Territorial War Medal. Recognition for those who had served only at home with another medal was proposed by a number of CTAs although opposed by others including Bucks: it

⁴⁶⁷ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 29 Mar., 10 May, and 7 June 1919.

⁴⁶⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 4 Dec. 1915; *Bucks Free Press*, 4 and 25 Feb. 1916.

⁴⁶⁹ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 243.

⁴⁷⁰ Beckett, ‘Territorial Force’, 151.

was rejected.⁴⁷¹ The Territorials did not fit easily into the War Office's perceptions of the post-war military situation since there seemed little prospect of invasion and part-time soldiers were unsuited to a garrison role in what was a greatly expanded empire with additional multiple occupation duties. Despite suffering 577,016 casualties in all theatres and winning 71 VCs, therefore, the future of the Territorial Force was uncertain.

⁴⁷¹ Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 51; BA, T/A 1/1, CTA Mins, 6 Nov. 1919.