

Buckinghamshire: A Military History

by

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Chapter Nine: 1919-1945

At war's end in 1918, the Territorial Force did not seem to fit War Office perceptions of post-war needs. The empire had been expanded to its greatest extent through the acquisition of German colonies and parts of the Ottoman Empire. There were also occupation duties and an emerging military crisis in Ireland as well as nationalist risings in India and parts of Africa and the Middle East. On the other hand, there were the contradictory impulses of the economic costs of the war and pressures to demobilise millions of wartime servicemen. Yet, the Territorials seemed superfluous when there was no risk of invasion and they could not be deployed realistically to imperial garrisons. By adopting the Ten Year Rule in August 1919 the Cabinet signalled the assumption that there would be no major war in the immediate future: it was renewed annually until abandoned in March 1932. Moreover, in 1922 the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) recognised that only a comprehensive mobilisation of resources would enable the country to survive any new large-scale conflict. In the following year, its manpower sub-committee resolved on conscription as the fundamental principle for such a major war.

Given the scenarios, the Territorials could realistically perform a role only in what might be termed as medium-sized conflicts falling short of a major war for which the re-introduction of conscription would be required. Nonetheless, the War Office felt Territorials could still be a functioning reserve and it could readily utilise former Territorials in a war role. In fact, there was a tendency throughout the inter-war period for the Territorials to 'be caught between three roles: Haldane's 'Hegelian' army, in which the Territorials were the link between the regular army and society; home defence; and the reserve for the

regulars'.¹ There was no other available mechanism as a framework for future wartime expansion.² Even that would need greater legislative flexibility on the key wartime issues of obligation for general service and unit integrity. After their wartime experiences, Territorials might be in no mood to concede on such issues but, as a result, the War Office was always bound to regard the force as expendable at a time of financial retrenchment. In January 1918, when disbanding second line units, the War Office had declined to guarantee that they would be reconstituted after the war. There was growing pressure to reveal official thinking before wartime Territorials lost interest in continuing their service but, with the opposition of his military advisers to considering the Territorials before regular requirements, Winston Churchill, appointed Secretary of State for War and Air in January 1919, agreed to establish wider military needs before deciding policy. He was resistant, however, to the General Staff's insistence on a general service obligation.³ Nonetheless, it was clear that a general service obligation would be a key War Office principle and on 21 February 1919 it issued a defence of its wartime drafting policy: military necessity had had to prevail over territorial integrity.

The difficulty was to find some form of compromise obligation acceptable to Territorials but sufficiently flexible to allow for overseas deployment. In March 1919 a sub-committee chaired by the Adjutant General, Sir George Milne, recommended that Territorials be liable for general service once conscription was re-introduced. Territorials could proceed overseas in their own units but

¹ Hew Strachan, 'The Territorial Army and National Defence', in Keith Neilson and Greg Kennedy (eds), *The British Way in Warfare: Power and the International System, 1856-1956 - Essays in Honour of David French* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 159-78, at 173.

² Alexander Oates, 'Pinchbeck Regulars? The Role and Organisation of the Territorial Army, 1919-40', Unpub. DPhil., Oxford, 2016, 25-30.

³ *Ibid*, 32-34.

there could be no further guarantee of integrity thereafter. Better pay and allowances would compensate for the loss of unit integrity. Churchill outlined the proposals on 1 April 1919 and announced that brigade command would be opened immediately to suitably qualified Territorials in an organisation that would resurrect the pre-war structure of 14 infantry divisions and 13 mounted brigades. He also promised to meet Territorial representatives when the terms of service had been decided. When he did so in May 1919 nothing had actually been decided and the Cabinet debated but then delayed a decision until 27 January 1920.⁴ In the meantime the Territorial Force was officially disembodied on 2 May 1919. CTAs continued to press their wartime grievances and many, including Bucks, supported a resolution in November 1919 that the DGTF be made a member of the Army Council.⁵ It was to take another 19 years for this to be accepted.

On 30 January 1920 Churchill announced that recruiting would begin anew on 1 February. The term of service was to be for four years with provision for re-engagement to the age of 40 (50 for NCOs) for between one and four years. Those aged under 35 would be liable to overseas service after army reservists had been called out by proclamation of imminent danger or great emergency and provided parliament had further legislated to authorise such overseas deployment. Crucially, Churchill also promised that unit integrity would be maintained in wartime. In effect, what became known as ‘the pledge’ so qualified the principle of general service as to prevent the War Office either using Territorials in the kind of medium-scale crises that appeared their only likely employment, or from drafting their manpower where it was needed. From

⁴ Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 44-50, 54-59; idem, ‘The Reconstitution of the Territorial Force, 1918-20’, in Adrian Preston and Peter Dennis (eds), *Swords and Covenants* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), 190-215.

⁵ BA, T/A 1/1, CTA Mins., 6 Nov. 1919.

the point of view of the War Office, this did not come cheap since Churchill offered a £5 annual bounty for those completing a maximum of 50 drills, attending 15 days' camp, and firing an annual musketry course: recruits could receive up to £4.⁶

The issue of the pledge was to dominate the relationship between War Office and Territorials throughout the inter-war period.⁷ There was nothing logically to determine that a Territorial should not be as good a soldier as anyone else after appropriate training and they had often made a conscious decision to commit to service in peacetime in advance of others. Regulars, however, continued to misunderstand the limitations imposed by civil employment and gave little thought to Territorial susceptibilities. Equally, Territorials failed to recognise that jealously-preserved safeguards were no longer viable in modern war and that, faced with increasing financial retrenchment the War Office was bound to give priority to the regular army. But, as the military theorist and military correspondent successively of *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*, Basil Liddell Hart, put it, Territorials would prove 'one of the hardiest of British plants' as they would operate in 'financially stony soil, without even being watered by moral encouragement'.⁸

In reality, the Territorial interest in parliament was almost as entrenched as those of the auxiliary forces of old. At least the War Office promised the revival of the Special Reserve, 74 battalions of which were now renamed 'militia'. In passing, it might be noted that the Territorial Army and Militia Act of 1921 that established a Territorial Army and the new militia replaced all surviving older

⁶ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 245.

⁷ Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 124-46.

⁸ Beckett, *Territorials*, 94.

legislation on the statute book relating to the local militia (1812), volunteers (1863), and imperial yeomanry (1901). The legislation coming into effect on 1 October 1921 officially brought the Territorial Army (TA) into existence. In the event, no effort was made to revive the militia and its function was absorbed by the Supplementary Reserve in August 1924. The latter was intended to provide emergency technical support but on such favourable conditions in terms of commitment and pecuniary reward that it undermined recruiting for specialist Territorial units.⁹

So far as the reconstitution of the Territorials was concerned, post-war wages were initially relatively high so that the bounty was not as generous as it seemed to the War Office and 50 drills appeared onerous to many would-be recruits.¹⁰ Lingering distrust of the War Office did not help, not least in those counties from which the 44th (Home Counties) and 45th (2nd Wessex) Divisions had been recruited since they had languished in India throughout the war and into 1919 despite all promises to the contrary.¹¹ The delay in announcing policy had a detrimental effect and, not unnaturally, many men had no particular wish to get back into uniform so soon. Almost half of all those recruited in the first eight months of the new scheme chose not to go to camp in 1920 and many CTAs did not organise one for that very reason.

There was also resentment in some counties at Churchill's other significant decision in January 1920 on the future of the 55 existing regiments of yeomanry. Three conferences on the future of the yeomanry were held in February and March 1920 at which some regiments were more ready to convert

⁹ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 246; Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 162-63.

¹⁰ Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 60-61.

¹¹ See Peter Stanley, *Terriers in India: British Territorials, 1914-19* (Warwick: Helion & Co., 2018).

to other arms than others, especially as the establishment for some of the other new roles was notably lower than that of a yeomanry regiment. Some argued to enter the Special Reserve. The War Office envisaged only ten regiments remaining in a mounted role. Change was also to affect the 31 regular cavalry regiments with four disbanded and 15 amalgamated in 1922. Churchill vacillated on the yeomanry at one point, suggesting survival in a mounted role might depend upon recruitment and, at another, allowing 14 regiments to remain mounted for up to two years before conversion.¹² Over the period of 1920-21, 34 yeomanry regiments converted to new roles such as armoured car companies of the Tank Corps - the first cavalry units to be mechanised - a signals regiment, and field brigades (later field regiments) of the Royal Artillery. Only 14 regiments - those initially allowed to delay conversion - were retained in a mounted role, six of them now allocated to regular brigades rather than to the TA. Ironically, four of these surviving mounted regiments had only performed in a dismounted role for the entire period of the Great War. Two of the 1901 yeomanry creations, the Lovat Scouts and Scottish Horse, also survived as mounted 'scouts'. Five regiments disappeared, one by amalgamation, and one by absorption into an infantry battalion, with three disappearing albeit that one of these remained in the Army List until 1924 in effective suspension. Some 20 infantry battalions were also converted to new roles with 20 disbanded or amalgamated.

The Bucks Territorials had actually begun recruiting again in July 1919 on the assumption of reconstitution, advertisements being placed in the press throughout August and September. Only those with wartime service would be accepted with the requirement set at a two-year term and home service only

¹² George Hay, 'The Yeomanry Cavalry and the Reconstitution of the Territorial Army', *War in History* 23 (2016), 36-54.

unless new military service legislation was enacted otherwise. There would also be no summer camps in 1919.¹³ This pre-empted the national decision on reconstitution, Bucks urging subsequently that appointment of officers and permanent staff be agreed as soon as possible.¹⁴ The wartime terms of the CTA chairman and members expired on 3 October 1919 and Tonman Mosley, now Lord Anslow, decided to retire. The new chairman was Thomas Fremantle, who had succeeded as 3rd Lord Cottesloe in 1918. Cottesloe stood down as CTA chairman in 1935 to be succeeded briefly by John, 4th Lord Chesham, who remained in post for only a year.¹⁵

The Bucks CTA urged retention of rural yeomanry in September 1919 and vigorously protested when the fate of the Royal Bucks Hussars became known in February 1920. Initially, the Royal Bucks Hussars had carried on much as usual with Fred Cripps as commanding officer and Fred Lawson as second in command. Three squadrons at Buckingham, Aylesbury and Wycombe were commanded respectively by Richard Manning, Anthony de Rothschild, and Crocker Bulteel.¹⁶ They even went to camp at Stowe in both 1920 and 1921. Whilst one of the oldest yeomanry regiments, the disruption of official service between 1827 and 1830 had left the RBH only 21st in precedence and it was the ‘senior’ 14 regiments that remained horsed. In March 1920 Cripps recommended to the CTA that the apparent War Office offer to delay matters for two years be accepted in the hope that this would prove longer.¹⁷

¹³ *Bucks Herald*, 9, 23 and 24 Aug., 6 and 13 Sept. 1940; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 12 July and 23 Aug. 1919.

¹⁴ BA, T/A 1/4, Mins., General Purposes Committee, 4 Sept. 1919; 5 and 12 Feb. 1920.

¹⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 18 Oct. 1935; 2 Oct. 1936.

¹⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 5 Mar. 1921.

¹⁷ BA, T/A 1/1, CTA Mins., 25 Mar. 1920; *Bucks Herald*, 3 Apr. 1920; 1 Jan. 1921.

Opposition proved fruitless and in March 1921 it was decided that the Bucks would be combined with the Berkshire Yeomanry as 99th (Bucks and Berks Yeomanry) Field Brigade, RFA. Two batteries were to be found in each county. After discussion between Fred Cripps and Lewis Reynolds, it was decided that 393 (RBY) Battery would be raised at Aylesbury, Buckingham, Newport Pagnell, and Wing under the command of Major Sir Everard Pauncefort-Duncombe with 394 (RBY) Battery at High Wycombe, Chesham, Slough, and Taplow under Major Fred Lawson. Wolverton was excluded as the yeomanry had more traditional links with Newport Pagnell and Reynolds believed potential recruits at Newport Pagnell would be deterred from joining the TA altogether if compelled to go to Wolverton.¹⁸ Various dates have been given for the actual amalgamation, including both 29 April and also 22 June 1921, but a circular announcing the amalgamation was only issued in Bucks from RBH headquarters in August 1921.¹⁹

The Field Brigade headquarters was established in Aylesbury and, initially, a regular, Lieutenant Colonel the Hon. D. A. Forbes, appointed to command. He was succeeded in 1925 by Lieutenant Colonel C. T. J. G. Walmesley. The South Midland Mounted Field Ambulance was not reconstituted and the RASC Company was abolished when the number of companies in the South Midland Divisional Train was reduced, despite initially recruiting well. Many of the recruits, therefore, formed a section of 394 Battery at Taplow. The Chesham and Wing sections of the Brigade, however, were soon discontinued.²⁰ The end of separate designations for field and garrison artillery in 1924 did not materially affect the 99th Field Brigade and it remained a field brigade until the

¹⁸ BA, T/A 1/4, General Purposes Committee Mins., 25 May 1921; T/A 1/67, Titles, Dec. 1922.

¹⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 20 Aug. 1921.

²⁰ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 160-61; *Bucks Herald*, 20 Aug. 1921.

title of field regiment was substituted officially for field brigade in November 1938.²¹

The diary of George Eaton, who joined the 99th in October 1922 for four years' service, shows regular attendance on two evenings a week for dismounted drills and gun drills with occasional lectures. He acted regularly as a linesman for football matches and as an official at boxing tournaments. Inter alia, his diary also shows the ways in which sport continued to make the army generally familiar. Aylesbury United FC played the Welsh Guards in April 1922 whilst the annual match between the army and RAF was also staged on the Printing Works Ground at Aylesbury that same year. Church parades were held regularly at Buckingham, with the men travelling by lorry, a battery sergeant major sounding stage coach calls as they travelled through Whitchurch and Winslow. Eaton also took part in the Wembley Pageant of Empire in 1924 but chose not to re-engage although he did apply unsuccessfully for a commission in the Supplementary Reserve that year and volunteered for service during the General Strike in 1926 and for service with the British Gendarmerie Mission in Albania in 1927.²²

Weekly orders for 393 Battery tend to confirm a fairly mundane routine of meetings on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings for laying gun drill, harness fitting, mounted parade drill, and recruit drill. Only mounted parade was in drill dress, the rest in plain clothes.²³ The 99th did reasonably well in

²¹ John Sainsbury, *The Hertfordshire Yeomanry Regiments, Royal Artillery: The Field Regiments, 1920-46* (Welwyn: Hart Books, 1999), 6.

²² BA, AR 87/2004 (BMMT 516), Eaton Diary of 393 Battery; Helian Demiri, 'The British Gendarmerie Mission in Albania, 1925-38', *European Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 4 (2018), 167-73.

²³ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 5 June 1926.

attracting men from the Slough Trading Estate since those with a more mechanical interest as well as architects, surveyors, and junior accountants found the mathematical aspect of artillery work interesting. It was more difficult in the agricultural north of the county.²⁴

Unfortunately, too, Fred Cripps was lost to the TA in 1922 as a result of being arrested when an Indian bank connected to his firm of Boulton Brothers failed. He was acquitted of all charges but did not return to the TA despite efforts by Thomas Fremantle, now 3rd Lord Cottesloe, to have him reinstated in 1928.²⁵

With problems in hiring draught animals for camp, the CTA purchased 20 horses for the Field Brigade in 1924, allocating them to 394 Battery since it was easier to board out the horses with bailees in Taplow and Wycombe than at Aylesbury. Under what was termed the Horse Scheme, the horses were then available to be hired out to farmers or others for local work other than during the annual camp and occasional evening drills. The CTA paid an annual insurance premium of £4 but it was expected that those hiring them would keep them in good condition.²⁶ Unfortunately, few of the horses were used to working in teams and at the camp at Okehampton in 1924 regular regiments had to be persuaded to take the guns to and from the ranges.²⁷ The 99th was horse drawn until 1926 when Fordson 'tractors' were first introduced, initially just one per battery with the regiment not fully mechanised until 1932. The War Office turned down a scheme put forward by Bucks in 1927 as too costly, declining to provide more than one tractor when the CTA wanted four. Initially,

²⁴ Author interview with Christopher Hanbury, 22 July 1980.

²⁵ BA, D/HJ/1/56.

²⁶ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 161; *Bucks Herald*, 5 Jan. 1924.

²⁷ BA, AR 96/2018 [BMMT 730/11], Outline History; AR 87/2004 [BMMT 516], Eaton Diary, 3 May 1922, and 31 May 1923.

therefore, the CTA advertised for offers of light or medium six-wheeled tractors that it could hire for camp.²⁸



The Bucks Battalion en route to the Isle of Wight Camp, 1930 [BMMT]

The CTA had purchased two six-wheelers by 1930 and these were used not only for the 99th Field Brigade but then also, as the dates permitted, despatched to the Bucks Battalion for the second week of its camp that year on the Isle of Wight.

²⁹ A photograph survives of the horses being towed in a barge behind the steamer taking the battalion across the Solent. 393 Battery was armed with 18-pounders and 394 Battery with 4.5” howitzers, both Berkshire batteries having 18-pounders.³⁰ Usually, TA batteries were equipped with Morris-Commercial six-wheeled field artillery tractors (actually trucks). The TA did not generally

²⁸ BA, D/FR/A/80, Min., 20 Dec. 1927; D/FR/A/81, CTA Mins., 7 Nov. 1928; T/A 1/5, Mins., Business and Finance, 25 Sept. 1930; *Bucks Herald*, 5 Feb. 1927.

²⁹ *Bucks Examiner*, 22 Aug. 1930.

³⁰ Author interview with Christopher Hanbury, 22 July 1980.

receive the multi-purpose 25-pounder gun/howitzer or the four-wheel drive 'Quad' to replace the trucks until 1941.³¹ The last few horses were sold off at the end of 1932 with a staff car purchased for each battery instead.³²

The officers of the Bucks Battalion also required horses when at camp, these being usually hunters hired from Mrs Terry's Riding School and Livery Stables at Quarrendon. Some horses hired by the Bucks Battalion were sold off by their owners after camp.³³ Basil Liddell Hart, then military correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, visited the 99th at Okehampton in August 1933, suggesting that both the handling of tractors and guns and also the standard of gunnery was good.³⁴

The War Office was never going to agree to a new county regiment separate from that of Oxfordshire as proposed by the CTA General Purposes Committee on 2 January 1919.³⁵ Instead, the reconstituted Bucks Battalion was located at High Wycombe and Marlow ('A' Company), Aylesbury and Chesham ('B' Company, Slough ('C' Company), and Buckingham and Wolverton ('D' Company). Meetings were held to explain the new arrangements as at Chesham in April and at Buckingham in May 1920.³⁶ A total of 285 men camped at Swanage in 1920 although it was suggested that this was more of a reunion than a working camp. Daily activities would end at 12.30 to enable men to go to the

³¹ Sainsbury, *Hertfordshire Yeomanry Regiments*, 17-20.

³² BA, AR 96/2018 [BMMT 730/11], Outline History.

³³ Nigel Viney to author, 28 Mar. 2006; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 16 Aug. 1924; *Bucks Herald*, 24 Aug. 1928.

³⁴ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 12 Aug. 1933.

³⁵ BA, D206/16.

³⁶ *Bucks Examiner*, 23 Apl. 1920; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 29 May 1920.

seaside.³⁷ As in the case of the yeomanry, weekly orders do not suggest particular excitement. In June 1926 'B' Company at Aylesbury had a parade in drill order on Tuesday evening, attested recruits on Wednesday evening, and held a drill for trained men and recruits on Thursday evening.³⁸ Chesham was seen as problematical as being somewhat parochial as well as strongly nonconformist in religious convictions. The chairmen of the UDC, for example, would never attend the company's annual church parade there. There was no attempt to recruit in Newport Pagnell for reasons that remain unclear: not a single recruit was found there in 1928.³⁹ In 1929 the battalion was organised into three rifle companies and a machine gun company, the latter being discontinued when 145 Brigade was reorganised in October 1938.⁴⁰

Lewis Reynolds remained in command until 1922, at which point he was succeeded by Guy Crouch, who became Clerk of the Peace in 1924. Crouch stepped down from command in 1926 to be succeeded by Philip Hall from Hazelmere with Oscar Viney then commanding the battalion from 1930 to 1934. Alexander 'Den' Burnett-Brown from Beaconsfield, who had been commissioned in the 1/1st Bucks Battalion in September 1914, reaching the rank of captain before going home wounded in June 1916 succeeded to the command in 1934. He was to take the battalion to France in 1940.

In reconstituting the TA, Churchill failed to deliver on the recommendation of Milne's committee that employers be legally obliged to grant privileges such as

³⁷ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 24 July and 7 Aug. 1920.

³⁸ *Bucks Examiner*, 18 June 1926.

³⁹ Author interview with Elliott Viney, 24 July 1980; author interview with J. Owen Jones, 6 Oct. 1980; *Bucks Examiner*, 16 Mar. 1928.

⁴⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 15 Nov. 1929; BA, T/A 1/7, CTA Mins., Finance and General Purposes Committee, 13 Oct. 1938.

allowed camp attendance. It would have created difficulties for small employers and it was never enacted. Similarly, a call for a 'King's Roll' of co-operative employers as a means of awarding preferential government contracts was impracticable. CTAs, therefore, had to find other means of encouraging support from employers, particularly once rising unemployment deterred men from risking jobs and they absented themselves from camp. Most CTAs had liaison committees but not all firms were prepared to help. Local authority response also varied with Labour-controlled authorities hostile even as late as 1937 and 1938. Labour governments in 1924 and 1930 also cut funding for cadets. Concessions by employers to Territorials, however, could create resentment amongst other employees.⁴¹

To a degree hostility reflected wider anti-militarism within society although this should not be exaggerated. In May 1924 Swann received a letter from a Marlow farmer who rented land to the CTA. He was receiving complaints from the public about musketry practice on Sundays. Swan noted,

I am not sure whether he refers to their religious principles or to the disturbance of the Sunday afternoon sleep following the extra heavy midday meal. Of course, if the objections are on religious grounds, there is a possibility of a reaction averse to recruiting. At the same time it seems unfortunate that men who are anxious to do their duty to the state and qualify for defence, should be handicapped by puritanical prejudice.⁴²

In assessing anti-militarism, one aspect of the post-war period that has tended to be overlooked is the flourishing of Old Comrades' Associations (OCAs). In

⁴¹ Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 173-74.

⁴² BA, T/A 1/15, Swann to Cottesloe, 29 May 1924.

part, with regimental journals and regimental histories of the Great War, they assisted the closer identification of Territorials with county regiments although the number of regulars with direct experience of the Territorials fell significantly by the late 1920s and older antagonisms resurfaced. They also helped represent and offer a sense of social identity, often drawing on a wide social base and, at the very least, offering annual gatherings if not always other regular branch participatory activities.⁴³ Men were also able to find appropriate recognition for wartime service through purchasing the regimental histories as well as attending the gatherings of old comrades.⁴⁴

Special memorial services were held for all the fallen from the Bucks Territorials and all others from the county in all parishes on 6 April 1919 at the request of the Bishop of Buckingham and by arrangement with the CTA.⁴⁵ A war memorial was unveiled in St Mary's at Aylesbury to the 2/1st Bucks Battalion on 30 October 1920. The Marquess of Lincolnshire unveiled that to the 2/1st Bucks and it was dedicated by the Bishop of Buckingham, Edward Shaw. Lincolnshire's son, Viscount Wendover, had been killed in 1915 and

⁴³ French, *Military Identities*, 228-31; Eleanor O'Keefe, 'The Social Reality of the British Army in Inter-war Britain', in Kevin Linch and Matthew Lord (eds), *Redcoats to Tommies: The Experience of the British Soldier from the Eighteenth Century* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2021), 231-52.

⁴⁴ Keith Grieves, 'Making Sense of the Great War: Regimental Histories, 1918-23', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 69 (1991), 6-15; idem, 'Remembering an Ill-fated Venture: The 4th Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment at Suvla Bay and its Legacy, 1915-39', in Jenny Macleod (ed.), *Gallipoli: Making History* (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 110-24; Helen McCartney, 'Interpreting Unit Histories: Gallipoli and After', in *ibid*, 125-35; Dan Todman, *The First World War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon, 2005), 187-90.

⁴⁵ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 29 Mar., and 12 Apl. 1919; *Bucks Examiner*, 28 Mar. 1919.

three of Shaw's four sons had also died in the war.⁴⁶ The north aisle of St Mary's was also renovated with an altar and plaque for the 1/1st Bucks Battalion unveiled on 29 July 1922. A War Memorial Committee for the 1/1st Bucks Battalion had been formed in October 1921, the initial plan for the memorial at one point being inadvertently left in the cloakroom at the Café Royal in London. A Portland Stone tablet was designed by Esmond Burton, above an oak altar in the North Chapel. Above the altar were hung three flags which were used successively to mark battalion headquarters during the war. The cost of the Regimental Chapel was £194.9s.2d., which paid for the Memorial Tablet, the oak altar table and embroidered hangings, a Crucifix, altar candlesticks, clerical fees, and a Persian rug from Liberty's in Regent Street, London which cost £7.10s. The fittings, which were undertaken by Messrs. Webster & Cannon, were designed by Clement Skilveck. The funds were raised by donations within the Buckinghamshire Battalion. The Chapel was unveiled by the Honorary Colonel Lord Cottesloe and dedicated by Bishop Shaw, now Archdeacon of Oxford.⁴⁷

A plaque for the Wolverton men of the Bucks Battalions was unveiled in the drill hall by Lord Cottesloe there on 13 December 1924.⁴⁸ The memorial to the 1/1st Royal Bucks Hussars was unveiled by the wartime commander of the 2nd Mounted Division, Sir William Peyton, in the presence of over 1,100 people at Saints Peter & Paul at Buckingham on 22 January 1928. A separate memorial

⁴⁶ BA, T/A 1/14; *Bucks Herald*, 6 Nov. 1920; 31 Dec. 1921; 5 Aug. 1922; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 5 Aug., and 5 Nov 1921.

⁴⁷ BA, T/A 6/25.

⁴⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 20 Dec. 1924; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 20 Dec. 1924.

for the adjutant, Charles Bennett, lost with the *Leasowe Castle*, had been unveiled in July 1926.⁴⁹

Philip Wright's history, *The First Buckinghamshire Battalion, 1914-18* was published, inevitably by Hazells, in 1920. One anonymous correspondent in the *Bucks Examiner* would complain in July 1919 that there was indifference to the tragic anniversary of Fromelles,⁵⁰ but in February 1919 an illuminated commemorative record of the 2/1st Bucks Battalion, prepared by Ivor Stewart-Liberty, had been presented to the CTA by Anslow, plain copies being made available to the public for 2s.0d in aid of the Battalion Benevolent Fund. Subsequently, Swann's soft-back history, *The 2nd Bucks Battalion* was published in 1929.⁵¹ Swann's history of the CTA and its units, *Citizen Soldiers of Buckinghamshire* was published by Hazells for the CTA in 1930.⁵² Both battalions were represented on the OBLI Regimental Battle Honours Committee in 1935, Reynolds acting for the 1/1st Bucks and Christie-Miller for the 2/1st. Naturally enough, both battalions corresponded with the Historical Section of the CID tasked with creating the Official History of the War.⁵³

All Bucks Territorials were invited to a dinner at the TA Club in Church Street, Aylesbury in September 1919, the second reunion for the 1/1st Bucks then

⁴⁹ BA, T/A 3/53A/45; *Bucks Advertiser*, 28 Jan. 1928; *Bucks Standard*, 28 Jan. 1928; *Bucks Herald*, 31 July 1926.

⁵⁰ *Bucks Examiner*, 18 July 1919.

⁵¹ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 25 Jan., and 1 and 15 Feb. 1919; *Bucks Herald*, 29 Mar. 1919; 26 June 1920. The date of 1929 for Swann's history of the 2nd Bucks is that attributed by the British Library.

⁵² *Bucks Herald*, 19 Sept. 1930.

⁵³ BA, T/A 6/28, Burnett-Brown to Clare, 1 Feb. 1935; Dixon to Viney, 8 Aug. 1934.

taking place in London in June 1920.⁵⁴ Thereafter, there was an annual reunion dinner following a commemorative church service in St Mary's in Aylesbury. No less than 77 new members enrolled in 1925-26. The Bucks Battalion OCA itself was only formed in December 1923 with branches at Aylesbury, Buckingham, Marlow, Slough, Wolverton, and Wycombe albeit that the latter branch had formed at a meeting in Church House on 28 September 1923. Initially, it had been hoped to form additional branches at Burnham, Chesham, and Newport Pagnell. Honorary members would pay an annual subscription of a guinea and ordinary members 1s.0d. The object of the OCA as outlined by the constitution drawn up by the wartime quartermaster of the 1/1st Bucks Battalion, Captain Edward Nichol, who became the first secretary, was to promote comradeship, hold an annual reunion, and provide for those in distressed circumstances and for dependants of those who had lost their lives. In theory, membership was also open to old members of the 1st Bucks RVC, the pre-war Bucks Battalion, and all three wartime battalions. By February 1924 there were 491 members with a new branch formed at Bletchley, and 607 by July. The Wycombe Branch mustered 168 members in December 1925 but was down to 125 in December 1926 with numbers lapsing after two years' unpaid subscriptions. In addition, 20 members had not yet paid their subscriptions for 1926. Wolverton Branch had a sudden drop in numbers in 1924 but was revived in 1925 before another drop in 1928.⁵⁵ Interestingly, the Wycombe Branch resolved in January 1924 that the OCA should not be used for any recruiting purposes although individuals could encourage recruitment to the TA.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 26 June 1920; 8 Jan. 1921.

⁵⁵ BA, T/A 6/26, OCA Mins., 1 Dec. 1923, 23 Feb. and 12 July 1924; AR 91/2015, Mins. of High Wycombe Branch, 28 Sept. 1923, 21 Dec. 1926; Misc. correspondence of Wycombe Branch, OCA constitution, Jan. 1924; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 14 July 1923; 11 Apl. 1925; 15 Jan. 1927; 24 Mar. 1928; *Bucks Herald*, 20 Mar. 1926.

⁵⁶ BA, AR 91/2015, Mins. Wycombe Branch, 29 Jan. 1924.

The main Bucks Battalion OCA tried to promote a battlefield tour to the Western Front to take place in 1926, 1927, 1935, and 1937 but there was not sufficient interest. That proposed in 1927 was dropped due to the ‘industrial situation’.⁵⁷ However, the Wolverton Branch took some 60 members on an Easter pilgrimage to Ypres, the Somme, and Arras in 1936. Earlier, in 1930 the OCA had visited Chelmsford to renew links made when the battalion was billeted there.⁵⁸ Jewish members also attended annual reunions on occasions.⁵⁹ At High Wycombe, where the Branch operated from the club in the former Barracks, there were regular smoking concerts but the committee mostly discussed wreath laying on Armistice Day and county and branch reunion arrangements. The OCA reached a total of 1,225 members in January 1930 and made a number of grants to widows from 1926 onwards, using the Birchall Fund.⁶⁰

Attendances at the 2/1st Bucks Battalion reunion dinners, which began in 1919, were generally good, 150 attending in 1927, 230 in 1932, and 235 in 1938. Officers would separately dine in London, often at the Trocadero, before the church service and luncheon for the other members in Aylesbury.⁶¹ The point was re-iterated in 1926 that the Bucks Battalion OCA was open to all former

⁵⁷ BA, T/A 626, OCA Mins., 31 Jan. 1925, 20 Nov. 1926, 16 Mar. 1935, 20 Mar. 1937.

⁵⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 17 Apl. 1936; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 12 July 1930; 23 Mar. 1935; T/A 3/497 has photographs of the 1936 pilgrimage.

⁵⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 16 Oct. 1936, 15 Oct. 1937.

⁶⁰ BA, T/A 6/26, OCA Mins., 13 Feb. 1926, 21 Nov. 1928; AR 91/2015, Mins. of High Wycombe Branch, 31 Oct. 1927, 11 May 1928.

⁶¹ IWM, Christie-Miller Mss, Doc 4776 [80/32/2]; *Bucks Herald*, 4 Nov. 1932; 18 Nov. 1938; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 8 Nov. 1924; 7 Nov. 1925; 10 Nov. 1928; 8 Nov. 1930 5 Nov. 1932.

members of the 2/1st and 3/1st Bucks Battalions as well as those who had served since the war but it would appear that the veterans of the 1/1st and 2/1st still kept their distance.⁶² A wartime member of the VTC at Wolverton applied to join the 1/1st Bucks OCA in 1931 but was turned down.⁶³

The proposed Royal Bucks Hussars OCA held a subscription dinner at Buckingham on 18 December 1919.⁶⁴ There was a delay for it was only initially established on 3 November 1923 and not formally constituted until 1925. The Royal Bucks Hussars Association was open not only to all those from the three wartime regiments but also those who had served in the 37th and 38th Companies of the Imperial Yeomanry as well as current members of 393 and 394 Batteries. It also intended to raise funds for the memorial unveiled in 1928.⁶⁵ Between 1923 and 1930 there were 491 members paying an annual subscription of 3s.6d.⁶⁶ There were two meetings a year including an annual reunion dinner, these held initially in London rather than the county such as that 1923 at the Crown and Sceptre, Shepherd's Bush and those in 1927 and 1929 at the Hotel Great Central. In the 1930s, however, they tended to be at the Crown in Aylesbury.⁶⁷ At first the association did not have a charitable function but this was changed in 1926 so that financial assistance could be granted to former members of the regiment.⁶⁸ A wreath was usually provided for the annual

⁶² *Bucks Herald*, 16 Oct. 1936.

⁶³ BA, T/A 6/26, OCA Mins., 7 Feb. 1931.

⁶⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 27 Dec. 1919.

⁶⁵ BA, D206/21; *Bucks Herald*, 27 June 1925; 8 May 1931; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 27 June and 24 Oct. 1925.

⁶⁶ BA, T/A 3/53.

⁶⁷ BA, T/A 3/53A/42; T/A 3/55/43; *Bucks Herald*, 11 Dec. 1926; 23 Nov. 1928; 15 Nov. 1929; 29 Aug. 1930; 17 May 1935.

⁶⁸ BA, T/A 3/56/7, Note of OCA Status, 1970.

commemoration service at the Cenotaph in Whitehall.⁶⁹ Rather than a dinner, the 2/1st Royal Bucks Hussars opted for a smoking concert by way of reunion in 1921 before being absorbed in the Royal Bucks Hussars Association.⁷⁰

Whilst OCAs catered to past memory, the present was focussed on the need for recruits. Unfortunately, there were many distractions for would-be recruits. Labels such as ‘Saturday Night Soldiers’ reflected older disparagement of auxiliaries but Lord Raglan was probably more correct in July 1925 in suggesting that the real enemies of the TA were ‘women, trade unions, and motor bicycles’.⁷¹ Other popular pastimes such as increasing cinema attendance also hit the TA. Financial difficulties threatened the attractions offered by the TA of recreational facilities in drill halls and annual camps at the seaside. Larger employers rivalled the TA in many respects in terms of (usually better) facilities but recruitment invariably increased prior to coastal camps. Men could often arrange for families to holiday nearby as it was the only opportunity for such an annual break. There was disquiet, therefore, when the War Office appeared to counsel cancellation of camps in 1921 due to transport difficulties as a result of the industrial unrest that year. A great deal of opposition was also voiced at the decision of a number of CTAs led by Staffordshire to cancel camps in 1926 on similar grounds.⁷² The cancellation of all camps was accepted amid the serious financial crisis of 1932.

In 1926 Guy Crouch remarked at the annual dinner of the Aylesbury Company that the men of the Bucks Battalion would be opposed to a third inland camp in

⁶⁹ BA, T/A 3/53A/3, Bill, 12 Nov. 1928.

⁷⁰ BA, D206/21.

⁷¹ Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 147.

⁷² *Ibid*, 106-08.

five years.⁷³ Certainly, the battalion welcomed seaside camps.⁷⁴ Thus there were seaside camps at Weymouth (1923, 1925, 1935), Brook on the Isle of Wight (1930), Swanage (1920, 1928, 1931), and Porthcawl (1937). Out-county inland venues were Fort Widley at Portsmouth (1921), Bulford (1922, 1938), The Bustard on Salisbury Plain (1924), Chiseldon (1927), Windmill Hill near Ludgershall (1933, 1936), and Marlborough (1934). Westhorpe Park at Little Marlow was a ‘recruiting camp’ in 1926, Guy Crouch having suggested this as a means of the county being able to see the whole battalion together.⁷⁵

As the first camp in the county since 1893 (save for the curtailed one at Bovington in 1914), it was hoped that Westhorpe Park would attract many spectators.⁷⁶ Guy Crouch appealed for the public to attend and it was widely seen as intended ‘to make the Territorial Army more popular and to induce young men to join up and take part in training’. Only just over 400 men were in camp but there was a good turn out by the public. Not quite comprehending brigade requirements, the *Bucks Examiner* suggested that the next camp in 1927 be held at Aston Clinton Park and that in 1928 in the north of the country.⁷⁷ The camp should have been at Whittingdon near Cheltenham in 1929 but a water shortage there resulted in a switch once more to Westhorpe Park at Little Marlow.⁷⁸ A voluntary camp was then held at Marlow in 1932. The last pre-war summer camp was held at Lavant near Chichester in August 1939. In addition, there were weekend camps, those at Whitsun being reasonably popular. Thus, the Bucks Battalion met at Wolverton in 1930 and 1931 and at

⁷³ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 27 Feb. 1926.

⁷⁴ Author interview with Reg Francis, 12 Aug. 1980.

⁷⁵ BA, T/A 1/1, CTA Mins., 30 July 1925.

⁷⁶ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 24 July 1926.

⁷⁷ *Bucks Examiner*, 23 and 27 Aug. 1926.

⁷⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 2 Aug. 1929; *Bucks Examiner*, 2 Aug. 1929.

Cowley in 1933 when ten officers and 172 other ranks were present. It met at Oxford in 1937. Similarly, 393 Battery went to the Grange at Bletchley in 1934.

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Following the two initial camps at Stowe, what was now 99th Field Brigade held camps at Bulford (1922), Okehampton (1924, 1926, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1933, and 1937), Swanage (1925), Weymouth (1929), a voluntary camp at Aldershot (1932), Corfe (1934), and West Down on Salisbury Plain (1935). 99th Field Regiment held camps at Budleigh Salterton (1938), and Chiseldon (1939).

There were also camps in both counties - Medmenham (1923, 1936), Hurley on Thames (1927), and Wyfold Court near Reading (1931). The latter site was vacant pending its sale as a 'mental deficiency centre'.⁸⁰ It might be noted that something of the yeomanry spirit was maintained through mounted sports to which spectators were invited. At Wyfold, for example, these included jumping competitions, an alarm race, horseback wrestling, and that old pre-1914 favourite, the 'Balaclava melee'. The 10th Hussars also put on an 'activity ride'.

⁸¹ There were 'mechanised sports' at the 1939 camp including motor cycle cross-country races and 'mechanised relay races'.⁸²

Camps were certainly seen as a significant attraction although one of the Bucks Battalion bandsmen from Wycombe also recalled that the pair of boots issued to Territorials attracted men in the furniture trade as they were ideal for work on concrete factory floors.⁸³ Attending camp involved costs to individuals despite

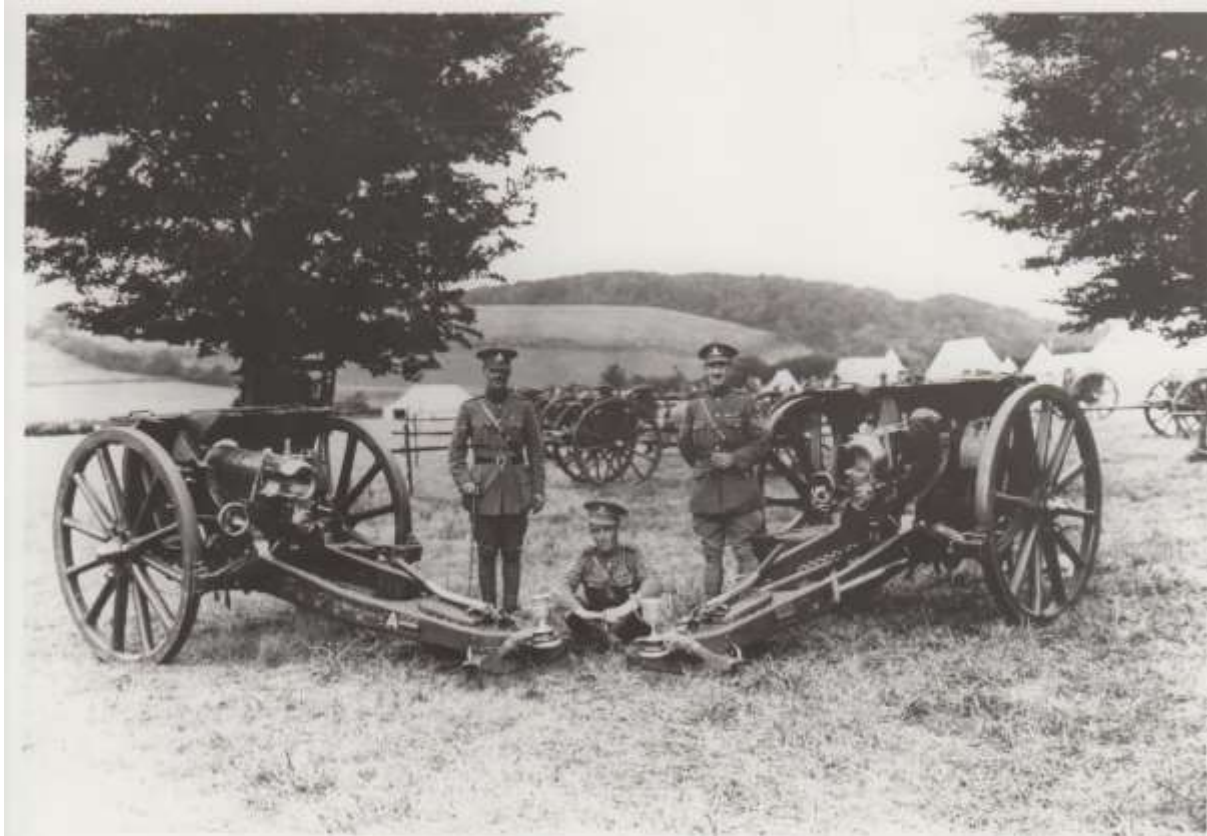
⁷⁹ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 7 June 1930; 30 May 1931; 17 June 1933; 26 May 1934; *Bucks Advertiser*, 9 June 1933; BA, AR 56/2007 [BMMT 560/1], Viney Diary, 18 May 1937.

⁸⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 14 Aug. 1931.

⁸¹ *Bucks Herald*, 17 July 1931.

⁸² *Buckingham Advertiser*, 19 Aug. 1939.

⁸³ Author interview with R. G. Davies, 16 July 1984.



99th Field Brigade at Medmenham, 1923 [BMMT]

the regular army rates of pay granted in 1920. It was not until March 1936 that married men under 26 received separation allowances despite CTAs pointing out that additional costs would be minimal. Bucks had called for adequate separation allowances without age restrictions in order to attract younger married men as early as 1921.⁸⁴ Until this was agreed, some wives had sought relief and had been turned down by local authorities who argued it was a government responsibility. Unemployed Territorials were also refused camp benefits until May 1936 and their annual bounties and proficiency grants were not exempted from means testing until 1934. The War Office had no sympathy for unemployed Territorials, refusing a request by 16 CTAs in May 1934 to allow the free issue of shirts and socks at camp by indicating that all men should

⁸⁴ BA, T/A 1/1, CTA Mins., 24 Mar. 1921; Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 248.

provide their own. Despite this, recruiting held up remarkably well in areas of significant unemployment such as the north, Wales and Scotland.⁸⁵

There is mixed evidence on the impact of unemployment on the TA in Bucks. Recollections suggest there was relatively little unemployment in Bucks so it had no discernible impact on recruiting.⁸⁶ On the other hand, CTA annual reports show concern at unemployment hitting recruitment in 1921-22 and 1922-23.⁸⁷ Wolverton was a difficult area for recruiting in 1924-25 and the north remained poor for recruits in 1928-29. It was also remarked in November 1930 that some Wolverton Territorials had lost their jobs although they were urged not to lose heart. It was suggested, too, that unemployment at Wycombe - over 1,600 were on the unemployment register there - had deterred men from joining the 99th Field Brigade in 1931.⁸⁸ In any case, it is clear that, despite recruiting campaigns and local press coverage, most men were simply brought in by their friends.

Beyond the annual camp, CTAs had to find other ways of encouraging recruiting. Public entertainment was still a routine part of recruiting efforts as was the pull of comradeship, the latter often encouraged by 'bringing money'. Territorial buildings, however, were often in poor repair until new accommodation standards were agreed in 1937. Financial reductions hit at grants, activities and equipment, the War Office taking its cue from the perceived lack of purpose of the TA. Amid the Geddes Committee's cuts in March 1922 the abolition of some Territorial divisions was contemplated.

⁸⁵ Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 159-60.

⁸⁶ Author interviews with Christopher Hanbury, 22 July 1980; Elliott Viney, 24 July 1980; Reg Francis, 12 Aug. 1980; J. Owen Jones, 6 Oct. 1980.

⁸⁷ BA, T/A 1/22, CTA Annual reports.

⁸⁸ BA, T/A 1/22 and 1/23, CTA Annual reports; *Bucks Herald*, 14 Nov. 1930; 11 Mar. 1932.

Instead, establishments were cut at all levels with the annual bounty reduced to £3 for trained men and £2.10s.0d for recruits, and officers' allowances also reduced. Naturally enough, in the face of retrenchment the priority for War Office and General Staff was the preservation of the regular army but the General Staff still favoured trying to preserve a balanced force and wanted cuts applied logically. The TA could not fulfil any of the roles envisaged in finding overseas garrisons, furnishing reinforcements, or playing a role in maintaining internal order whilst home defence was inconceivable in the absence of threat.

Reductions, however, had to be managed. The difficulty was that views on what was essential differed widely.⁸⁹ The Cabinet at the time accepted that the cuts to the army as a whole had gone too far but there were further reductions in February 1926. This time, Territorial training, building and clothing grants were trimmed and five per cent of any accumulated surpluses surrendered. Some CTAs had managed to build reserves from block grants since they had a fair degree of discretion within such broad headings as clothing and buildings.⁹⁰ Bucks, for example, had created a 'Cookers Fund' by investing compensation paid by the War Office for taking two field cookers originally gifted to the Bucks Battalion in 1914.⁹¹ The Treasury saw surpluses as unnecessary. As indicated earlier, some camps were cancelled by the War Office in 1926 and yet more savings were demanded in February 1927. It was suggested that establishments be reduced again, the two London divisions being amalgamated, travel grants reduced and all bounties cancelled for new recruits or those re-engaging after 1 March that year. Outrage on the part of CTAs, who had not

⁸⁹ Oates, 'Pinchbeck Regulars', 58-69.

⁹⁰ Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 87-88.

⁹¹ BA, T/A 1/1, CTA Mins., 24 Mar. 1927.

been consulted, led to the War Office dropping further cuts in establishments and offering a proficiency grant of £1.10s.0d in lieu of bounties.⁹²

The War Office did not believe that it should allow CTAs to dictate policy and there was concern that the CTAs had wanted cuts from the training grants rather than from their administrative costs.⁹³ But there were yet more cuts to officers' allowances in 1930, recruitment was limited in 1931, and the camps cancelled in 1932.⁹⁴ In Bucks, as previously related, a voluntary week's camp for the Bucks Battalion was hastily arranged at Marlow with men attending without pay, the original idea being to hold it at Kimble. The 99th Field Brigade undertook the week's voluntary camp also previously mentioned at Aldershot, using regular barracks.⁹⁵

Bucks did manage to acquire a new headquarters drill hall for the CTA in Oxford Road, Aylesbury in 1934, albeit not without a struggle. The old George Hotel in the Market Square had been purchased in 1920 from Lloyds Bank for £7,500 and opened as the headquarters in March 1922. The neighbouring George Bodega was then purchased from Aylesbury Brewery Company for £3,500.⁹⁶ The George had been on the market for 18 months prior to the CTA acquiring it following the death of its previous owner, Thomas Seaton.⁹⁷ The lease on Temple Square, which still had nine years to run, was surrendered on

⁹² Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 111-20; BA, T/A 1/1, CTA Mins., 24 and 29 Mar. 1927; D/FR/A/80, CTA to War Office, 29 Mar. 1927; D/FR/A/82, Report on Deputation to Secretary of State for War, 1 Jan. 1927.

⁹³ Oates, 'Pinchbeck Regulars', 81-86.

⁹⁴ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 248-49.

⁹⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 27 Nov. 1931; 19 Aug. 1932.

⁹⁶ BA, T/A 1/16; T/A 1/53.

⁹⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 30 Oct. 1920; 8 Jan. 1921; BA, T/A 1/54.

10 September 1921.⁹⁸ The War Office quibbled over the cost of acquiring the George until the Marquess of Lincolnshire offered to buy the property and lease it back to the CTA at which point a grant of £10,000 - the cost for the site was £7,500 - was forthcoming just before financial retrenchment began to impact on the TA. There was room for the TA Club with two billiard rooms, a bar, a card room, and a reading room, this being opened by Lord Cottesloe on 29 July 1921. The rest of the building was opened by Lincolnshire on 25 February 1922.⁹⁹ The CTA had recouped some money by selling off the former drill hall erected on land in Exchange Street, Aylesbury back in July 1914 to the Salvation Army for £450 in February 1920.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, the part of the drill hall site at Chesham previously used by the yeomanry was leased to the St John's Ambulance Brigade for seven years in May 1929.¹⁰¹ The latter did not prove to be good tenants so that there was opposition to allowing the Order to use the building again in 1945.¹⁰²

In time, the George proved too cramped with space for drilling inadequate although the War Office queried why a new one was necessary when the George had been proclaimed 'most suitable' and in a 'commanding position' just twelve years previously.¹⁰³ The War Office made it clear that they would expect at least £14,000 for the combined premises at the George and Bodega. A potential buyer, Mr Adams, offered £12,500, which was reluctantly accepted

⁹⁸ BA, T/A 1/16.

⁹⁹ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 161-62; *Bucks Herald*, 15 Jan. 1921; 4 Mar. 1922; *Bucks Examiner*, 29 July 1921; 3 Mar. 1922.

¹⁰⁰ BA, T/A 1/16; T/A 1.52.

¹⁰¹ BA, T/A 1/51.

¹⁰² BA, T/A 1/2, CTA Mins., 8 Feb. 1945.

¹⁰³ BA, T/A 1/, War Office to CTA, 30 June 1932; T/A 1/37, DGTA to Sedgwick, 30 June 1932.

when he declined to raise it to at least £12,700. At that point a new potential London purchaser appeared and offered £13,250. The CTA did not know the identity of the London purchaser and recommended going with Adams but, feeling that the War Office should not have accepted another offer at such a late stage, Adams withdrew his. Accordingly, the George and George Bodega were sold to Premier Shop Premises for £13,250 and a new site in Oxford Road originally on offer for £1,200 obtained for £1,155 from its owners, Miss Marshall and Mrs Hanford, both of 11 Marble Arch, London.¹⁰⁴

The sale was completed in April 1934 although the TA continued to occupy the George until the new drill hall, designed by Charles Wright of Temple Square, was ready. It was opened on 13 June 1935 by the DGTA, Lieutenant General Sir Charles Bonham Carter. The new building could allow PT classes, dances and sports like badminton in a way that the concrete floor in the George could not.¹⁰⁵ Some additional frontage on the 'Parkway' in Oxford Road was acquired from David Estates in 1935 but there were issues of children playing on it and damaging fencing as well as rubbish being dumped. Additionally, horses being grazed on the land at the back by a former tenant were damaging fencing on adjacent land.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ BA, T/A 1/37, Sedgwick to Ward, 1 and 2 Feb. 1934; War Office to Sedgwick, 3 and 6 Feb. 1934; Sedgwick to War Office, 9 Feb. 1934; Adams to War Office, 10 Feb. 1934; Crouch to Sedgwick, 20 Feb. 1934; T/A 1/57 Conveyance, 27 Feb. 1934.

¹⁰⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 6 Apl. 1934; 14 June 1935; 14 Feb. 1936; *Bucks Examiner*, 6 and 13 Apl. 1934; BA, T/A 1/54.

¹⁰⁶ BA, T/A 1/38, Sedgwick to Crookes, 21 Sept., and 28 Oct. 1935; Crookes to Sedgwick, 2 Nov. 1935; T/A 1/39, Sedgwick to Messrs. Blakeney, 25 Sept. 1935; Sedgwick to Crookes, 14 and 20 Aug. 1936.

The CTA informed the War Office in August 1934 that it attributed a reduction in recruiting at Marlow to poor accommodation.¹⁰⁷ An attempt was made to create more space at Marlow but expansion ran into the objections of the Trustees of the Marlow Institute. They insisted that use of the land being suggested for a new miniature rifle range was precluded by the trust deed that specified it could not be used for political or sectarian purposes but only for the enjoyment, benefit and recreation of the town's inhabitants.¹⁰⁸ In any case, the War Office declined to finance a new drill hall when the strength of the unit at Marlow had dropped to 18 and there was seemingly no prospect of recruiting the half company that would alone justify the expense.¹⁰⁹ Expansion of the drill hall was dropped, there seeming to be no one in Marlow able to take on the task of finding more recruits.¹¹⁰

The old militia barracks at Wycombe were left vacant in March 1919, parts then being unilaterally occupied by ex-servicemen in September 1920 with the mayor blaming the War Office for delaying any decision and the police also regarding it as a War Office matter.¹¹¹ The foundation stone for the War Memorial Hospital was laid in March 1922 off Loakes Hill next to the football ground used by Wycombe Wanderers since 1895. Beyond it was the barracks and Loakes House, the former dower house for Wycombe Abbey. Consideration as to the future of the barracks began in 1926, purchase of Loakes House being one possibility. Other sites in Wycombe were also considered for a new drill hall including a wartime aircraft factory engineering shop and a disused chair

¹⁰⁷ BA, T/A 1/36, Sedgwick to War Office, 23 Aug. 1934.

¹⁰⁸ BA, T/A 1/36, Cottesloe to Spearing, 4 Feb. 1930; Spearing to Cottesloe, 6 Feb. 1930.

¹⁰⁹ BA, T/A 1/36, WO to Sedgwick, 22 Nov. 1934; Sedgwick to WO, 28 Nov. 1934; DGTA to Sedgwick, 11 Dec. 1934; Sedgwick to WO, 17 Dec, 1934.

¹¹⁰ BA, T/A 1/36, Sedgwick to Wills, 7 Jan. 1935; Wills to Sedgwick, 4 Feb. 1935.

¹¹¹ *Bucks Herald*, 18 Sept. 1920; *Bucks Examiner*, 24 Sept. 1919.

factory but all would cost more than using the barracks.¹¹² As previously indicated, the barracks had been leased by the War Office for the use of the Bucks Battalion in 1909 for nine years although other parts of the site had been leased for 99 years. It had been utilised by the Royal Artillery during the war. The War Office did not appreciate that the lease of the main barracks had run out in June 1918. The Marquess of Lincolnshire, however, was prepared to offer a new lease on that part of the site being used on a temporary basis by the CTA. This was despite the value of the site, estimated at £3,080, when building land was in high demand.¹¹³

Accordingly, a new 50-year lease was signed in December 1926 and re-iterated in December 1927, covering the barracks, former militia hospital, and other huts and store rooms on the barrack square for a rental of £57 per annum with a further agreement between the CTA and the Wycombe Corporation in October 1928. It was acknowledged by Lincolnshire's heir, his brother, Rupert, 4th Lord Carrington, in February 1929.¹¹⁴ The War Office quibbled at an estimated cost of construction of a small drill hall, declining to offer a loan from the Public Works Loan Commissioners for more than £3,700 and then reducing this to the £3,080 market value of the site.¹¹⁵ The new drill hall was opened in 1928. The former permanent instructor's cottage was used by the Home Guard in the

¹¹² BA, T/A 1/12, Wycombe Barracks Sub-Committee Mins., 17 Nov. 1926 and 5 July 1927; T/A 1/35, Messrs. Harnett Rafferty to Sedgwick, 15 Nov. 1926; Sedgwick to GOC, 48th Division, 15 Oct. 1926.

¹¹³ BA, T/A 1/35, Lincolnshire to Sedgwick, 4 May 1926; Carter Jonas to Sedgwick, 30 July 1927; Lincolnshire to Sedgwick, 10 Sept. 1926; Vernon & Son valuation, 11 Dec. 1928.

¹¹⁴ BA, T/A 1/35, Lease, 25 Dec. 1926 and 21 Dec. 1927; Agreement with Mayor and Corporation, 26 Oct. 1928; T/A 1/56, Lease, 18 Feb. 1929.

¹¹⁵ BA, T/A 1/35, WO to Sedgwick, 24 Jan. 1928, and 26 Jan. 1929; T/A 1/56, Agreement of Bucks CTA and PWLC, 15 Apl. 1929.

Second World War.¹¹⁶ In the end most of the barracks were demolished to make way for the extension of the War Memorial Hospital, which also took over the football ground. A length of wall, and part of a barrack block remain in Barrack Road.

Yeomanry House at Buckingham was still being rented and a seven-year lease was also taken out on the Shambles in Market Hill in March 1922.¹¹⁷ Through the initiative of Lieutenant Colonel John Whiteley, a new drill hall was built and opened in Water Eaton Road in Bletchley in February 1937 for 393 Battery and rented out to the War Office. Having stood unsuccessfully for the Conservatives in Birmingham in 1929, Whiteley, who had retired from the army in 1926, was elected MP for Buckingham in 1937 following George Bowyer's elevation to the peerage. A former regular with the Royal Artillery and The Life Guards, Whiteley had joined the yeomanry in 1928 and took command of 393 Battery in 1932.¹¹⁸ A lecture to Great Horwood WI on the history of the Royal Bucks Hussars by a Mr Dickenson in March 1938 was illustrated by films of the annual camps taken by Whiteley.¹¹⁹ At the end of 1937, a new 'gun park' was projected for 394 Battery at Taplow and a drill station for the Bucks Battalion at Wooburn, the latter opened in February 1938. There was also the prospect of new facilities at Buckingham although it was recognised that Bletchley was now far more promising for yeomanry recruits.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ BA, T/A 1/7, Mins., Finance and General Purposes, 5 Nov. 1942.

¹¹⁷ BA, T/A 1/16; T/A 1/51; T/A 1/55.

¹¹⁸ BA, T/A 1/17, Lease of Yeomanry Hall, Bletchley, 28 May 1927; *Bucks Herald*, 6 May 1932; 19 Feb. 1937; 21 Jan. 1938; *Bucks Examiner*, 19 Feb. 1937; *Bletchley and District Gazette*, 20 Feb. 1937.

¹¹⁹ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 12 Mar. 1938.

¹²⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 26 Nov. 1937; 21 Jan. 1938; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 29 Oct. 1938; BA, T/A 6/23, Photographs of opening of Wooburn Drill Hall, 12 Feb. 1938.

A return to 'walking out dress' as an additional attraction was supported by the CTA but rejected by the Army Council on financial grounds although, in 1924, it became possible to provide full dress for the Bucks Battalion band and money was then apparently found by the CTA for the whole battalion to don full dress on ceremonial occasions.¹²¹ This does not seem to have been followed through, however, as the band and bugles donned busbies for the first time since 1914 only in 1932.¹²² By March 1937 Bucks had an accumulated clothing surplus of just below the TA average.¹²³ By March 1938, its surplus had increased by £114 to reach £2,228.¹²⁴

Lincolnshire retired as Lord Lieutenant in 1923 to be succeeded by Cottesloe. Swann retired as CTA secretary in February 1926 and was succeeded by Lieutenant Colonel Francis Sedgwick, no less than 200 applications being received.¹²⁵ A suggestion by Fred Lawson, who was to take command of the 99th Field Brigade in 1930, to sponsor a recruiting film was rejected in July 1927 on the grounds that the money would be better spent on recreational facilities. Sedgwick, a former regular in the Royal Artillery, who settled at Haddenham, had been far from impressed by a War Office film intended to assist recruiting in November 1925.¹²⁶ A new drill hall with better facilities was finally opened in Marlow in 1935. Lawson also wrote three articles for the *Daily Telegraph* in 1936 on how the TA might be made more attractive. They followed familiar lines: more imaginative training, earlier camps rather than

¹²¹ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 162.

¹²² *Bucks Examiner*, 29 July 1932.

¹²³ G. R. Codrington, *The Territorial Army* (London: Sifton Praed, 1938), 124-25.

¹²⁴ BA, TA 1/68.

¹²⁵ BA, T/A 1/60, Draft History, 270.

¹²⁶ BA, T/A 1/1, CTA Mins., 19 Nov. 1925; 21 July 1927.

those at peak times for employers, recognition for employers, more resources, and more financial rewards. He again suggested the medium of film be used for recruiting.¹²⁷ As it happened, the Bucks CTA changed its mind, advocating showing film of annual camps as a draw in November 1934 as part of a campaign.¹²⁸

TA clubs in the drill halls were always a draw. The annual subscription for the Aylesbury club when the drill hall was in the George was just 1s.0d.¹²⁹ There were rifle clubs for Aylesbury Town, Burnham and District, Slough and District, and High Wycombe and District, whilst the Bucks CRA also continued throughout the inter-war years, mostly using Kimble Range for its annual competitions for the Astor, Anslow, Lazenby Liberty, General Swann, and Talbot Cups. Somewhat embarrassingly, the Bucks Battalion came last in the County Challenge Cup in June 1929.¹³⁰

A survey of recruiting was carried out for the CTA between November 1934 and February 1935 by Wallace Devereux, the managing director of High Duty Alloys, which opened on the Slough Trading Estate in 1927. Devereux concluded that clubs, camps, and sport were the major attractions offered by the TA but camps were too long at 14 days from the perspective of employers, with the second week especially problematic. Ten drills for trained men and 20 for

¹²⁷ *Daily Telegraph*, 17, 19 and 21 Mar. 1936.

¹²⁸ BA, D/FR/A/81, Mins., of CTA Mobilisation and Recruiting Committee, 23 Nov. 1934.

¹²⁹ Author interviews with Elliott Viney, 24 July 1980; Reg Francis, 12 Aug. 1980; J. Owen Jones, 6 Oct. 1980.

¹³⁰ BA, D/FR 161/5/1, Sedgwick to Cottesloe, 8 July 1927; 161/4/16 List of Competition Cups, 1 Dec. 1928; 161/4/18, Results of Open Meeting, 2 and 9 June 1929.

trained artillerymen was not a problem.¹³¹ At the very moment that Devereux was tasked with starting his study, the CTA regretfully noted that Lady Leon, widow of Sir Herbert Leon of Bletchley Park, had refused to allow her gardener to attend camp.¹³²

As early as June 1920 the Bucks CTA sought concessions from employers on the second week's camp, eliciting some favourable responses. Hazells and Hunt Barnard in Aylesbury both agreed to top up the second week's camp allowances to the equivalent of a week's pay. Bucks County Council and both McCorquodales and also the LNWR at Wolverton similarly agreed to offer the second week's pay if spent in camp. Messrs. Wethereds and the Town Council at Marlow agreed to the second week's pay plus an addition £1 grant. Wolverton and Eton RDCs equally agreed to 'added holiday facilities'. Somewhat more ambiguously, Aylesbury Town Council indicated it would support recruiting 'as far as possible' while Horlick's Malted Milk Company at Slough, Peters' Engineering Works also at Slough, and Rust & Radcliffe (estate agents) of Chesham would support recruiting. Not one of the 60 employers approached at Wycombe, however, bothered to reply. Some other concerns were co-operative including the Soho Mills at Wooburn, and Bells' Asbestos on Slough Trading Estate. In the case of the Soho Mills of Messrs. Thomas and Green Ltd, the Bucks Battalion was allowed to drill in the recreation room once a week from September 1926.¹³³ It should be noted in passing that the Trading

¹³¹ BA, T/A 1/1, CTA Mins., 23 Nov. 1934 ;T/A 1/6, Finance Committee Mins., 12 Dec. 1934; D/FR/A/81, Devereux to Cottesloe, 12 Dec. 1934.

¹³² BA, T/A 1/1, CTA Mins., 23 Nov. 1934.

¹³³ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 19 June 1920; BA, T/A 1/4, General Purposes Committee Mins., 10 June 1920; 28 Oct. 1926; T/A 1/34, J. R. Sedgwick to J. B. Sedgwick, 18 Sept. 1926 and reply, 20 Sept. 1926; Author interviews with Christopher Hanbury, 22 July 1980; Reg Francis, 12 Aug. 1980

Estate had opened in 1925 in land previously requisitioned as the government's Motor Repair Department in 1918 and then sold off to the Slough Trading Company for £7 million in April 1920.¹³⁴ A new drill station was opened at Wooburn in February 1928. It was used by the HQ Company of the 4th Battalion, Bucks Home Guard in the Second World War.¹³⁵

Aylesbury firms and tradesmen provided prizes for the annual shooting competitions - notably the Business Houses Competition - at Kimble such as Aylesbury Brewery Company, Jenns & Sons (furniture); Freeman, Hardy & Willis (shoes); North & Randall (mineral water); Thrashers (outfitters), Spraggs (tailors and outfitters); MacFisheries; Boots Cash Chemists; Foster Brothers (outfitters); Jones & Cocks (hardware), and Dukes (opticians). Wethereds Brewery and Wheelers Brewery from High Wycombe also contributed prizes. Hazells was a model employer, not only granting two weeks' holiday pay but also giving a £1 grant towards every married employee's camping expenses. The firm's silver band was virtually duplicated in the Bucks Battalion.¹³⁶ Hazells also had around 40 men including Raymond Hazell in 393 Battery in 1927.¹³⁷ Bifurcated Rivets also agreed to allow its employees to attend a second week's camp from 1937 onwards.¹³⁸

In May 1936 on behalf of the CTA, Lord Chesham wrote to the Secretary of State for War, Lord Derby, on what the government could do to improve

¹³⁴ Maxwell Fraser, *The History of Slough* (Slough: Slough Corporation, 1993), 109.

¹³⁵ BA, T/A 1/34, Brown to Watson, 12 Jan. 1938.

¹³⁶ Author interviews with Elliott Viney, 24 July 1980; Reg Francis, 12 Aug. 1980; J. Owen Jones, 6 Oct. 1980; *Bucks Herald*, 14 Nov. 1925; *Bucks Advertiser*, 27 Nov. 1926, 31 Oct. 1930.

¹³⁷ *Hazells*, 48-49.

¹³⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 22 Jan., and 12 Mar. 1937.

recruiting. To create a psychological change and overcome trade union hostility, he suggested that the prime minister make more public references to the TA with much more promotion of the force through such means as engendering as much attention to the TA Association Football Challenge Cup Final as that accorded to the regular army's football competition. Training had to be more in tune with that of the regulars rather than dull and second-rate. 'Stunts' did not attract recruits and there needed to be better use of the medium of the cinema whilst camps had begun to lose their appeal through overcrowding in poor tents. There should be far better recreational facilities to attract the working class. But there also had to be better allowances, a smarter 'walking out dress', and tax concessions for employers allowing men to attend camp.¹³⁹

Back in March 1921, after Lewis Reynolds had reported that the LNWR was discharging young employees, the CTA had urged the company to give favourable consideration to those in the TA over others.¹⁴⁰ It was routinely suggested much as in the past that young men and employers alike could only benefit from the mental and physical fitness and self-discipline offered by the TA.¹⁴¹ Of course, the TA continued to offer a certain degree of local entertainment as in the case of Princess May's visit to Marlow in July 1926 to celebrate the grant of Court Garden Estate to the 100-year old General Sir George Higginson and his simultaneous gift of the property to the town as Higginson Park. The Duke of York visited Aylesbury in July 1928 to open the extension to the Royal Bucks Hospital whilst there was also a guard of honour from 393 Battery for Lord Burnham when he opened the Trades and Industrial Exhibition during Aylesbury Civic Week that same month. The Bucks Battalion

¹³⁹ BA, T/A 1/7, Chesham to Derby, 11 May 1936.

¹⁴⁰ BA, T/A 1/1, CTA Mins., 24 March 1921.

¹⁴¹ *Bucks Herald*, 22 May and 19 June 1931; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 28 Mar. 1931.

fired a *feu de joie* in Aylesbury to celebrate King George V's jubilee in May 1935. A detachment also helped line the route at Windsor for the King's funeral in January 1936. Another feu de joie greeted the accession of George VI in May 1937, the Bucks Battalion also providing a detachment for London duty.¹⁴²



The Bucks Battalion on parade for the visit of the Duke of York to Aylesbury, 2 July 1928 [BMMT]

Unsurprisingly, despite all efforts, the TA fell consistently short of its establishment. In March 1922 the Bucks Battalion took two Aylesbury men to petty sessions for not completing the prescribed obligations. One had attended only ten drills from the 50 due for a new recruit in two years, and had not qualified for musketry or attended camp. The other, a trained man, had attended only four of his 20 drills although he had attended camp once. The first claimed

¹⁴² *Bucks Herald*, 6 and 10 July 1926; 31 Jan. 1936; 14 May 1937; *Bucks Advertiser*, 10 Mar. 1935; 19 Mar. 1937; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 27 Mar. 1937.

that his father had opposed him joining and, in any case, he worked at weekends, and late on weekday evenings. The second, an assistant to the town clerk, claimed his duties prevented attendance when only 22 of the 60 opportunities available to attend coincided with council meetings. Both were fined £2 as an example.¹⁴³ Another prosecution of a Buckingham man for non-appearance at camp was heard at Stony Stratford in January 1924 but he was only made to pay costs as the magistrates were not satisfied with the presentation of the case. Two more men were fined for not returning uniform and equipment after not re-engaging.¹⁴⁴

In 1922 the TA as a whole numbered only 136,600 officers and men when the establishment was 216,041. Even when the establishment had been trimmed to 184,161 in 1926, the TA could muster only 148,742.¹⁴⁵ The nadir of 128,757 was reached in October 1932. CTAs became obsessed with numbers to the extent that some units inflated camp attendance for the purposes of *The Daily Telegraph* Cup competition in 1934.¹⁴⁶

Basil Liddell Hart claimed that TA officers and members of CTAs were social climbers but there was actually a deficiency of 1,055 officers (including doctors and chaplains) in 1933. Uniform and other costs were often high and there were limited clothing and travel allowances available.¹⁴⁷ It was assumed that the

¹⁴³ *Bucks Herald*, 25 Mar. 1922; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 25 Mar. 1922; *Bucks Examiner*, 24 Mar. 1922; *Bucks Advertiser*, 25 Mar. 1922.

¹⁴⁴ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 26 Jan. 1924.

¹⁴⁵ Brian Bond, *British Military Policy between the Two World Wars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 27.

¹⁴⁶ Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 150-52.

¹⁴⁷ Peter Dennis, 'The County Associations and the Territorial Army', *Army Quarterly and Defence Journal* 109 (1979), 210-19.

OTC would supply the deficit in war, the regulations changing in 1933 to encourage TA and OTC to train together. Finding officers was a constant problem, Elliott Viney joining the Bucks Battalion in 1932 and finding himself a major at only 25.¹⁴⁸ His father, Oscar Viney, who commanded the battalion from 1930 and 1934, never found it possible to have a family holiday for the period of his command.¹⁴⁹ Although from Aylesbury, Viney was sent to the Wycombe Company in 1932. Elliott Viney's three brothers also served in the 1st Bucks Battalion, Lawrence being commissioned in March 1939, Nigel in July 1941, and Richard in February 1944. Lawrence, who reached the rank of major, transferred to the Glider Pilot Regiment in January 1942 but suffered a bad injury and returned to the battalion in September 1943. Nigel, who also reached the rank of major, transferred to the Somaliland Scouts in October 1942. Richard, who reached the rank of captain and won the MC, transferred to the Gordon Highlanders in August 1944 and then to the 2nd Devonshire Regiment in October 1945. He was killed in a climbing accident after the war.

Owen Jones, a solicitor from Parrott & Coales in Aylesbury, took over at Wolverton in 1935 when there was no one else available as he was then working at Northampton.¹⁵⁰ Jones was brought in by his fellow solicitor, Ronald Sale of Horwood & James, and the 99th Field Regiment also relied on personal approaches, many knowing each other from London employment.¹⁵¹ It was often remarked just how many solicitors became officers in the Bucks Battalion, the Aylesbury Company commander in the late 1920s being Godfrey Parrott of Parrott & Coales.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Author interview with Elliott Viney, 24 July 1980.

¹⁴⁹ Viney, 'Reminiscences', 109-10.

¹⁵⁰ Author interview with J. Owen Jones, 6 Oct. 1980.

¹⁵¹ Author interview with Christopher Hanbury, 22 July 1980.

¹⁵² *Bucks Herald*, 14 Feb. 1936.

By 1936 camps appeared to be losing their attraction although sport remained important throughout the inter-war period and to a far greater extent than before 1914.¹⁵³ Territorials had teams in the Aylesbury and District Football League, the Billiards League, the Bucks Amateur Athletics Association, and even the Aylesbury and District Table Tennis League. Through the TA Club, there were also annual boxing tournaments.¹⁵⁴ In March 1926 there was an accusation against the TA Club on the part of the Literary Institute team in the Aylesbury Borough Billiards League but it was resolved that the Territorials' 'unsportsmanlike' behaviour was due to a misunderstanding of the league rules.¹⁵⁵ Tennis was introduced at the George as a recruiting draw in 1924.¹⁵⁶ For Raymond 'Tich' Rayner from Aylesbury, who worked in the building trade and joined in 1935, boxing was a big draw.¹⁵⁷

The Bucks Battalion in particular accrued prestige from winning the 48th Division (South Midland) Football Cup for five years in succession between 1930-31 and 1935-36, and making five appearances in the final of the TA Association Football Challenge Cup. It won in 1931/32 and 1935/36 but lost in 1936/37, 1937/38, and 1938/39. The CSM, Pat Badrick, was captain of

¹⁵³ BA, T/A 1/7, Mins., CTA to Derby, 11 May 1936.

¹⁵⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 30 July 1921; 3 Feb., and 14 Apl. 1923; 23 Mar. 1928; 25 Jan., and 15 Mar. 1929; 23 Jan. 1923; 14 Oct. 1932; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 26 Jan. 1929; 8 Feb. 1930; *Bucks Advertiser*, 9 June and 15 Dec. 1933; 18 Oct. 1935.

¹⁵⁵ *Bucks Advertiser*, 6 Mar. 1926.

¹⁵⁶ BA, T/A 1/15, Swann to Cottesloe, 21 Jan. 1924.

¹⁵⁷ IWM, 27350, Sound Interview with 'Tich' Rayner, 5 Apl. 2005.

Wycombe Wanderers.¹⁵⁸ Hazells usually provided the home pitch for the Bucks Battalion although one was hired at Wooburn in the 1936-37 season: there was a feeling that the CTA should find a dedicated ground.¹⁵⁹ On mobilisation in September 1939, there were 55 Hazells employees serving in either the Bucks Battalion or the 99th Field Regiment.¹⁶⁰

The TA, therefore, was certainly seen locally. The local press printed the weekly battalion and battery orders gratis throughout the inter-war period, and there were the annual church parades and annual battalion and battery dinners much as before 1914. 393 Battery tended to hold its dinners at the King's Head in Aylesbury and 394 Battery at Sheriff's Restaurant in Wycombe. The TA was a ubiquitous presence at the unveiling of local war memorials in the immediate aftermath of the war and then at annual commemoration of Armistice Day.¹⁶¹ There were also attempts to bring in recruits with smoking concerts.¹⁶²

In 1925 with the Bucks Battalion at only 70 per cent of establishment, there was a major effort to compensate for those who had not re-engaged, the net loss being 76 men although recruiting had held up in Marlow and Wycombe.¹⁶³ 'B' Company, for example, tried a recruiting march in Aylesbury in December

¹⁵⁸ BA, AR 6/2002 [BMMT 496/3]; AR 110/2007 [BMMT 583], *Memoirs of Ken Bateman*, 1; AR6/2002 [BMMT 495/3]; *Bucks Herald*, 9 Dec. 1932; 24 Apl. 1936; 30 Apl. 1937; 29 Apl. 1938; 28 Apl. 1939; *Bucks Examiner*, 15 Apl. 1938.

¹⁵⁹ BA, T/A 1/7, Mins., Finance and General Purposes, 5 Mar. 1936.

¹⁶⁰ Ralph Hazell (ed.), *With the Colours*, 1939-45 (Aylesbury: Hazell, Watson & Viney, 1946), Frontispiece.

¹⁶¹ *Bucks Herald*, 30 July 1921; 11 and 17 Feb. 1922; 14 Nov. 1925; 30 Nov. 1928; 15 Nov. 1929; 12 Dec. 1930; 11 Mar. 1932.

¹⁶² *Bucks Herald*, 1 Mar. 1924.

¹⁶³ BA, T/A 1/22, CTA Annual reports.

1925. A torchlight display in June 1926 assisted recruiting in the south of the county. A recruiting campaign was launched in Aylesbury in March 1927 and another at Wycombe in March 1935 following a special meeting in the Red Lion chaired by Cottesloe to discuss the problem. The *Bucks Examiner's* solution was a motor cycle contingent.¹⁶⁴

Cottesloe's appeal to the press in late 1934 was drafted by the CTA, the campaign intended to emphasise the attractions of camps, sport, clubs, and social attractions combined with approaches to employers, who would be invited by Devereux for luncheon in Aylesbury and Wycombe.¹⁶⁵ Cottesloe duly presided over the employers' lunch in the Red Lion at Wycombe in March 1935, those present agreeing to encourage enlistment.¹⁶⁶ It had not helped that the new paintwork at the Wycombe drill hall had been 'plastered' with recruiting posters for the regulars, to which the CTA duly objected.¹⁶⁷ One suggestion by a Loudwater resident to improve recruitment by raising a new mounted unit was politely brushed off as no longer relevant to modern conditions.¹⁶⁸

393 Battery assisted in organising a 'carnival dance' at Buckingham for armistice week in 1924, a reminder that greater solemnity did not overtake annual commemoration until the following year when the 'Victory Ball' at the Albert Hall was cancelled and then replaced in 1926 with a requiem that merged

¹⁶⁴ BA, T/A 1/23, CTA Annual reports.] *Bucks Herald*, 4 Apl. 1925; 5 Mar. 1927; 29 Mar. 1935; *Bucks Examiner*, 4 Dec. 1925; 15 Mar. 1935.

¹⁶⁵ BA, D/FR/A/81, Mins., CTA Mobilisation and Recruiting Committee, 23 Nov. 1934; T/A 1/1, CTA Mins., 22 Feb. 1935.

¹⁶⁶ *Bucks Advertiser*, 29 Mar. 1935.

¹⁶⁷ BA, D/FR/A/81, Sedgwick to Cottesloe, 23 July 1934.

¹⁶⁸ BA, D/FR/A/81, Chilton to Cottesloe, 30 Sept. 1933.

into the first Festival of Remembrance in 1927. That year 393 had a Shrove Tuesday dance at Buckingham.¹⁶⁹ A new departure for 393 Battery in 1933 was a public ball at Aylesbury in the hope of obtaining more men by highlighting the ‘social side’ of the TA but also ‘keeping up spirits’ at such a difficult time for recruiting. It became an annual event.¹⁷⁰ A torchlight display of drill manoeuvres with electric lanterns ended the Chesham Hospital Carnival in September 1934 whilst a military tattoo was put on in Victoria Park as part of the Mayor’s Carnival Week in Aylesbury in July 1935 drawing over 2,000 spectators.¹⁷¹ Though aimed more at potential officers, the 99th Field Brigade also held point to point races.¹⁷²

In compiling his report for the CTA, Devereux had canvassed his own work force: ‘I suppose it is as representative of its class as it could be hoped to obtain; and I have been struck with the indifference and the antipathy of the men towards the Territorial Army. I am sure that very few enlistments could be made from other works under the present conditions.’¹⁷³ The Bucks TA was only at 50 per cent of establishment in 1922. In 1923 the Bucks Battalion had just 14 officers and 424 other ranks and was short of seven officers and 213 men. 393 and 394 Batteries had 12 officers and 176 other ranks and were short of 40 men. In 1924, the total of 715 Bucks Territorials represented only 0.62 per cent of the county’s male population.¹⁷⁴ Recruiting in the north of the county was

¹⁶⁹ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 15 Nov. 1924; 5 Mar. 1927; Ian F. W. Beckett, *The Great War, 1914-18* 2nd edn. (Harlow: Pearson Educational, 2007), 607.

¹⁷⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 20 Jan. 1933; 16 Feb. 1934; 18 Jan. 1935.

¹⁷¹ *Bucks Examiner*, 21 Sept. 1934; *Bucks Herald*, 2 Aug. 1935.

¹⁷² *Bucks Herald*, 21 Mar. 1930, 27 Mar. 1931.

¹⁷³ BA, 1/6, Finance Committee Mins., 12 Dec. 1934.

¹⁷⁴ BA, T/A 1/4, Mins., General Purposes Committee, 25 Jan. 1923; T/A 1/15, War Office circular, 18 Apl. 1924.

particularly bad that year, many men not choosing to re-engage after the expiry of the initial four-year term (three in the case of former Defence Force personnel). Although recruiting was generally better in the south, Taplow was described as ‘drying up’ in 1926-27 and the Bucks Battalion machine gun platoon had to be moved to Wycombe.¹⁷⁵

The 99th Field Brigade did not appear to mind the loss of horses, the CTA secretary, Sedgewick, noting in September 1926 that ‘I should think the bodies of the Grenvilles will turn in their graves.’¹⁷⁶ In any case, as noted in February 1937 the regiment were now ‘engineering men’ rather than farmers, 394 Battery drawing many recruits from the Slough Trading Estate. Only 370 men attended the Bucks Battalion camp in 1928 as they could not get leave.¹⁷⁷ In 1931 the Bucks Battalion was short of five officers and 132 other ranks whilst the 99th Field Brigade with a far smaller establishment lacked one officer and 34 men for the two Bucks batteries.¹⁷⁸ In the end, of course, it was the increasing international tensions that remedied the recruiting deficit.

A number of CTAs recognised increasingly that ‘the pledge’ required revision to justify the TA’s continued existence. In 1921 Geddes had recommended that the TA take on an anti-aircraft role and the War Office had already decided to form two TA anti-aircraft divisions. Lack of funding meant this had a low priority and only four anti-aircraft brigades were formed for the defence of London. In 1923 the Steel-Bartholomew Plan suggested all anti-aircraft defence be vested in the TA but nothing was done until two more brigades were raised by conversion for the defence of Plymouth and Portsmouth in 1932. Air attack,

¹⁷⁵ BA, T/A 1/22 and 1/23, CTA Annual reports.

¹⁷⁶ BA, D/FR/A/80, Sedgewick to Cottesloe, 8 Sept. 1926.

¹⁷⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 10 Aug. 1928.

¹⁷⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 27 Mar., and 10 July 1931.

however, was taking on a more prominent role in the national consciousness and the new Chiefs of Staff Sub-committee of the CID reduced coastal defence to a minimum in December 1923. The scale of any potential invasion was reduced to just a raid by 2,000 men in 1929. Coastal defence was handed to the TA in 1932 but neither this nor an anti-aircraft role answered what might be done with the larger number of Territorials not required for either.¹⁷⁹

Churchill had contemplated a TA role in aid of the civil power but it was considered too controversial, Haldane having ruled it out before the war as a concession to the labour movement. Recruiting for the Supplementary Reserve was hindered by the possibility that it might be used in strikebreaking and the War Office was reluctant to see military personnel involved in industrial disturbances. During the 1919 rail strike, the War Office proposed a 'citizen guard' rather than the Home Office preference for a permanent force of special constabulary. The strike had ended before any such force was raised. Amid demobilisation, Churchill was reluctant to guarantee that Territorials would not be employed in aid of the civil power and in June 1920 it was claimed that safeguards were adequate. The miners' strike and lock out raised fears of a wider general strike in 1921 but the War Office still opposed using Territorials. On 8 April, therefore, army reserves were called out and it was announced that an armed Defence Force would be raised for 90 days' service in support of the police but under army command. Territorials were invited to enlist and the force would be based in TA premises and organised by TA staff and officers. Territorials, however, were obliged to resign from the TA in order to join the

¹⁷⁹ Beckett, *Territorials*, 113-15.

Defence Force albeit that they would be automatically readmitted after 90 days and it would be counted towards TA obligations.¹⁸⁰

Some restlessness was evident among reservists who were stood down on 24 May 1921 but the Defence Force was a great success. At least 40,000 men enrolled by 13 April and possibly twice that many by the time it was stood down. Many in regular employment did not enlist and many in the force, as in the TA, were probably unemployed including the possibility that some were men on strike. Just over 25,000 Territorials enlisted, comprising less than a third of the Defence Force. Moreover, of these, only just over 18,000 rejoined the TA although approximately 8,800 DF personnel who had not been in the TA chose then to enlist although they not always proved to be the best of recruits.¹⁸¹



Officers of the Bucks Battalion of the Defence Force at Didcot, May 1921
[BMMT]

¹⁸⁰ Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 65-85; idem, 'The Territorial Army in Aid of the Civil Power in Britain, 1919-26', *Journal of Contemporary History* 16 (1981), 705-24.

¹⁸¹ Oates, 'Pinchbeck Regulars', 258.

The strike disrupted plans for the first summer camps since formal reconstitution, that of the Bucks Yeomanry being delayed for three weeks.

Lincolnshire set up an emergency committee to organise food control and other non-military or police matters on 11 April. A Bucks Battalion of the Defence Force was raised on 12 April and 259 men served at Didcot from 13 April to 5 July 1921 under the command of Reynolds with Lieutenant Colonel Geoffry Christie-Miller returning from the Territorial Reserve as temporary major and second in command. A depot was also formed under Fred Lawson. The personnel left Aylesbury in scenes reminiscent of 1914. Ian Hay, author of a celebrated wartime book on the Kitchener volunteers, *The First Hundred Thousand* (1916), penned a pamphlet for the Board of Trade, 'The New Hundred Thousand' lauding the Defence Force as a 'living symbol of the relentless common sense of the British people' which would compel the 'apostles of revolution' to 'take their pigs to another market'. In reality it proved a 'long hot summer under canvas'. The chief object of officers' attention was the regular disappearance of the mess sergeant to Epsom, Newbury and Ascot races. Some farmers were angered that contracted horses had been demanded for both the Defence Force and then annual camps but the War Office made it clear that there would be no recompense.¹⁸²

Whilst it seemed to have no effect on the acceptability or otherwise of the TA within the labour movement, the War Office had doubts on the utility of the Defence Force. It also considered that the influx of non-territorials had been

¹⁸² Viney, 'Reminiscences', 111-12; IWM, Christie-Miller Mss, Doc. 4776 [80/32/2], certificate of service signed by Reynolds, 12 Aug. 1921; *Bucks Herald*, 16 Apl. 1921; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 16 Apl. and 13 Aug 1921; Author interview with J. Stammers, 25 Nov. 1980; *Aberdeen Journal*, 19 Apl. 1921.

damaging. In 1932, therefore, the military authorities supported legislation making permanent the 1914 arrangements whereby special constables could be sworn in during ‘any immediately apprehended disturbance’.¹⁸³ Consequently, in the May 1926 general strike a total of 226,000 special constables and a 300,000 strong Civil Constabulary Reserve (CCR) were raised under Home Office control. Churchill, now Chancellor of the Exchequer, wanted to use the TA but this was rejected. The CCR, however, again used TA premises and organisation although with the proviso that non-Territorials would be transferred to the special constabulary if the TA was embodied. Recruiting for the CCR began on 10 May but was suspended on 12 May, the strike being called off three days later. Some 18,400 men had enlisted in this short period, about 8,800 of them Territorials.¹⁸⁴

In Bucks the CTA’s Standing Joint Committee, chaired by Walter Carlile, decided on Monday 10 May to raise four companies but soon decided that the organisation should correspond to the county’s six police divisions. The CTA Secretary, Sedgwick, was designated as District Adviser with Ivor Stewart-Liberty and Lieutenant Colonel J. W. Hely-Hutchinson as staff officers. Major Frank Watson was nominated to handle matters at Aylesbury, Major Philip Hall at Wycombe, Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General Sir) Richard Howard-Vyse at Slough, Lieutenant Colonel F. E.C. Lewis at Chesham, Major B. G. K. Joliffe at Buckingham, and Lieutenant Commander A. K. Polhill at Newport Pagnell. In all some 14 serving TA officers and nine other former officers assisted in raising the CCR and 150 constables were enrolled before the stop

¹⁸³ Keith Jeffery and Peter Hennessy, *States of Emergency* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), 75.

¹⁸⁴ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 252; Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 80-84; Keith Jeffery, ‘The British Army and Security, 1919-39’, *Historical Journal* 24 (1981), 377-97; Oates, ‘Pinchbeck Regulars’, 261.

order was received at 1400 hours on Wednesday 12 May 1926. It was confidently expected that the intended 1,600 men would have been enrolled by the end of the week had it continued. The Special Constabulary attracted an additional 3,570 men.¹⁸⁵ There were some disturbances at Wolverton and New Bradwell and there had been fewer CCR recruits in the north of the county, but only 28 individuals were subsequently brought to petty sessions.¹⁸⁶ Edward Nichol, who was still secretary of the OCA, circulated its members on his own initiative to suggest that its members come forward for the CCR but the necessity to have volunteers vouched for by a serving Territorial led to the idea being dropped.¹⁸⁷

The CCR drew some hostility in London but it was deemed a success, the War Office being relieved to push the responsibility to the Home Office. Discussion on a permanent CCR scheme was completed in 1932, but it was finally decided in May 1939 that the TA could not be used as part of any CCR as a result of their now enhanced responsibilities: it had already been agreed in 1936 that no Territorial in an anti-aircraft unit could be used. The whole concept of the CCR was finally abandoned in November 1945.¹⁸⁸

Meanwhile, debate on the pledge was increasing. The General Staff favoured remodelling the TA for a possible imperial role since the ability to produce an expeditionary force, for example, in the case of conflict with Russia over

¹⁸⁵ BA, D/FR/A/92, War Office to Cottesloe, 8 May 1926; T/A 1/4, General Purposes Committee Mins., 15 July 1926; BC /2/5, Police Report, 29 June 1926; *Bucks Free Press*, 7 May 1926; *Bucks Herald*, 22 May 1926; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 22 May 1926.

¹⁸⁶ BA, BC/2/5, Police report, 29 June 1926; T/A 1/1 CTA Mins., 15 July 1926; D/FR/A/92, Calloway to Chief Constable, 11 and 13 May 1926; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 22 May 1926.

¹⁸⁷ BA, T/A 6/26, OCA Mins., 26 June 1926.

¹⁸⁸ Jeffery, 'British Army and Security', 396-97; Oates, 'Pinchbeck Regulars', 264-70.

Afghanistan, depended on the availability of the Territorials but this could not be reconciled with the constraints of the pledge.¹⁸⁹ Bucks declined to support Viscount Cobham of the Worcestershire CTA's proposals in 1928 to co-ordinate regular and TA depots and to end the TA role in recruitment in the belief that recruitment must be controlled locally.¹⁹⁰ It may be relevant that Cobham was an enthusiastic supporter of the abolition of the pledge but it was re-iterated in 1928. In May 1931 the Stephens committee recommended that it be abolished so that the TA could provide an immediate reinforcement of eight infantry divisions and a cavalry brigade for any expeditionary force outside Europe. The Earl of Derby, as well as Cobham, offered support for the idea but there was considerable opposition in the Council of CTAs led by the Earl of Scarborough, the former wartime DGTF and long-serving chairman of the West Riding CTA. Since the annual camps had just been cancelled, it was clear that they must be restored if the CTAs were to come on board. Given that the War Office could make no guarantees in view of the financial situation, any revision was abandoned. Bucks was among a number of counties urging that another condition for abolition of the pledge was that any papers Territorials signed should include a guarantee that the TA would not be used as drafts and any wartime transfers to other units would only be countenanced as an extreme military necessity and be regarded as temporary.¹⁹¹

With public finances improving, the War Office tried again in February 1933, suggesting the pledge be withdrawn from new recruits without affecting the rights of existing Territorials or those re-engaging. CTAs found this more acceptable and all but five voted for abolition for all Territorials in May 1933.

¹⁸⁹ Oates, 'Pinchbeck Regulars', 74-75, 88-90.

¹⁹⁰ BA, D/FR/A/80, Sedgwick to Cottesloe, 24 Apl., and 8 May 1928.

¹⁹¹ BA, T/A 1/1, CTA Mins., 7 July 1932; Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 144.

The War Office decided to keep only to their original scheme and withdraw it from new recruits with effect from 1 May 1934. Foolishly, however, it communicated with a CTA not represented on the Council of CTAs to give an assurance of maintaining unit integrity with men only proceeding overseas with their own units. It had then really to guarantee the right to all and, rather than submit to further negotiations, settled on a general service liability but dropped the matter of unit integrity once more.

At least one major issue had been resolved and a corner had been turned in terms of the TA's military acceptability. It coincided with the deterioration of the international situation. The Ten Year Rule was abandoned in March 1932 and the Cabinet agreed to establish a CID Defence Requirements Subcommittee (DRC) in November 1933. The first DRC report in February 1934 declared the defence of the Low Countries central to that of Britain and recommended provision of an expeditionary force. Only the TA could reinforce such an expeditionary force and the DRC proposed spending £250,000 per annum on the TA for modernisation for five years. Its third report in November 1935 called for an expenditure of £26 million on the TA to enable it to reinforce the expeditionary force in three four-division contingents at intervals of four, six and eight months after mobilisation.¹⁹² Unfortunately, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Neville Chamberlain, declined to accept the recommendations, favouring an enhanced TA role only in anti-aircraft defence. Consequently, only £50,000 per annum was allocated to the TA as a result of the first report and there was only minor adjustment to grants such as extending separation allowances. Even less was derived from the third report, with only £250,000 to be spent on the TA each year. The usual assumption is that the primary debate over rearmament surrounded the preparation of an expeditionary force when the

¹⁹² Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 253; Bond, *British Military Policy*, 221.

real point of contention between the General Staff and the government was the extent to which the TA would be an effective reserve that could be mobilised.

Chamberlain's intervention meant that the TA would be the biggest loser from the DRC debate. Additionally, however, there were still differences within the War Office on how the TA might be improved for its possible war role.¹⁹³

Alfred Duff Cooper, who became Secretary of State for War in November 1935, did his best, restoring the bounty to its 1920 level in March 1936, increasing the proficiency grant to £3, and adding allowances of £1.10s.0d and 10s.0d respectively for additional drills and weapons training.¹⁹⁴ Restoration of the bounty was certainly an issue in Bucks and its restoration was welcomed although it was also pointed out that, in effect, the CTA received only 15s.9d per man per annum towards equipment.¹⁹⁵ Recruiting began to show an upward trend from 1935-36 onwards.¹⁹⁶

The Cabinet had not actually ruled out the TA reinforcing an expeditionary force and it was implied that modernisation would proceed once the regular army had been re-equipped. Duff Cooper pressed for modernisation to start in December 1936 and, as a compromise, the Minister for Co-ordination of Defence, Sir Thomas Inskip, suggested spreading equipment across the TA so that it could be pooled in an emergency to equip one or two divisions.

Chamberlain, who had once remarked in December 1936 that he would not equip the TA 'for the trenches', would not even accept modernisation of four TA divisions by April 1941. His accession to the premiership in May 1937 only

¹⁹³ Oates, 'Pinchbeck Regulars', 98-102, 129-30.

¹⁹⁴ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 253-54.

¹⁹⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 20 Dec. 1935; 14 Feb., and 20 Mar. 1936; *Bucks Advertiser*, 20 Dec. 1935.

¹⁹⁶ BA, T/A 1/23, CTA Annual reports.

increased the obstacles faced by the TA.¹⁹⁷ Duff Cooper was removed from the War Office with Leslie Hore-Belisha installed to confine the army and TA alike to Chamberlain's concept of a strictly limited continental commitment although the War Office tended to view this as likely to be temporary and thus did not prevent planning for a wider role.¹⁹⁸

Hore-Belisha was prepared to equip four TA divisions to reinforce the expeditionary force but this was opposed by the Treasury and priority was given to anti-aircraft defence. The proposed conversion of two TA divisions to anti-aircraft defence back in 1921 was finally partially applied in December 1935 with battalions from the 47th (2nd London) and 56th (1st London) Divisions converted into a Southern AA Division and the rest merged into a single London division: a second was reformed in 1938. In 1937 the 46th (North Midland) Division became the 2nd (Northern) AA Division. The number of AA divisions was expanded to seven in 1939 and Light Anti-Aircrafts (LAA) Regiments also established.¹⁹⁹

The review of policy undertaken by Hore-Belisha and Inskip between December 1937 and February 1938 saw a proposal to convert three more TA divisions to the anti-aircraft role and to use others to keep order in the aftermath of the anticipated massed aerial bombardment of Britain.²⁰⁰ The rest of the TA, including three motorised divisions - the 50th, 55th and 56th - and a new TA armoured division would be used as reinforcements for an expeditionary force. The expeditionary force itself was for deployment to an 'eastern theatre' - presumably Egypt - rather than the continent. Home defence, however, was the

¹⁹⁷ Bond, *British Military Policy*, 238-41.

¹⁹⁸ Oates, 'Pinchbeck Regulars', 171-72.

¹⁹⁹ Beckett, *Territorials*, 113-15; Oates, 'Pinchbeck Regulars', 291-321.

²⁰⁰ Bond, *British Military Policy*, 264-65.

main TA priority, the DGTA being brought onto the Army Council and a Territorial being appointed Deputy DGTA with the rank of major general. Plans were also considered to simplify TA administration with responsibility for travelling grants taken from CTAs and given to district commands.

Churchill had promised upon reconstitution that Territorials would achieve higher commands but as late as 1936 only eight of 50 TA brigades were commanded by Territorials. The old regular prejudice survived, regulars serving as adjutant to TA units receiving less pay than their counterparts in regular units. Hore-Belisha did increase the number of Territorials in brigade commands to ten in mid-1938 with an implicit assumption that there would be 14 by the end of the year. In October 1937 the first Territorial was appointed to command a division (56th) although he did not do so until early 1938. The Staff College was also opened to TA candidates in 1938 as the Imperial Defence College had been the previous year. Few had the opportunity before the war began, only two TA officers attending the IDC. Equally, if TA officers had little exposure to higher training, regulars had little contact with the TA.²⁰¹

The overall limited army role envisaged by Hore-Belisha and Inskip had not changed. Increasing tensions such as the *Anschluss* in March 1938, however, triggered new interest in home defence and in the TA. Anti-aircraft units drew more and more recruits in 1937 and 1938 assisted by a Gaumont-British recruiting film, *The Gap*, released in April 1937, but they often demanded better facilities, better equipment, and better instruction. A degree of friction between new and older Territorials was marked by the circulation of a War Office

²⁰¹ Edward Smalley, *The British Expeditionary Force* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 189-90, 196-97.

memorandum in June 1938 drawing attention to critical comment on instruction standards by recruits to a London anti-aircraft battery.²⁰²

With 77,000 enlistments in the year, TA strength reached over 200,000 by December 1938.²⁰³ So many new recruits, however, was potentially disruptive of manpower planning: 12,000 Territorials were to be returned to industry in the first three months of the Second World War. Only in January 1939 was direction given by government in terms of a national service scheme, by which time the TA was competing with the new Air Raid Protection Service (ARP). There were renewed efforts to recruit men in Bucks, 393 Battery being considered weak and the Bucks Battalion still the weakest in 145 Brigade despite being stronger than at any time since 1918.²⁰⁴ In May 1938, for example, the Aylesbury Odeon cinema put on the film ‘Territorial Cavalcade’ for a recruiting week and, in July, it was noted that an exceptionally large crowd watched the annual church parade of ‘B’ Company in Aylesbury.²⁰⁵ In February 1939 there were no vacancies in the 99th Field Brigade and the Bucks Battalion was only 55 short. By March, it was only 15 short of the permitted 20 per cent over establishment.²⁰⁶

In September 1938 the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) - the ‘Lady Territorials’ as the press had it - was also created for women to perform non-combatant roles. CTAs were invited to nominate county commandants. Whilst affiliated to the TA and attending summer camps in 1939, however, the ATS was not strictly part of the TA: it received full military status as part of the army

²⁰² Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 215-19, 234-35.

²⁰³ Beckett, *Territorials*, 106.

²⁰⁴ BA, T/A 1/7, CTA Mins., 7 Apl. 1938.

²⁰⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 27 May and 29 July 1938.

²⁰⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 10 Feb., and 31 Mar. 1939.

in April 1941.²⁰⁷ A Bucks ATS was formed in October 1938, recruitment beginning in November 1938 with the first drill on 3 December.²⁰⁸ Mrs Dacre, wife of the Air Commodore at RAF Halton, was appointed Senior Commandant although Lady Chesham was anxious for the role.²⁰⁹ As such, Mrs Dacre became the first woman to attend a meeting of the CTA. Five ATS companies were formed in Bucks, two of which were intended solely to work for the RAF, with a total intended establishment of 180. Some former ex-servicewomen joined including Mrs Leslie Ferguson, wife of the vicar of Chetwode, who had served in the WRAF at the end of the Great War, and Mrs Alpine, reputed to be the first lady ambulance driver in France in 1915. In February 1939 the Air Ministry assumed control of dedicated RAF companies and it was feared that both of the Bucks companies would be discontinued. Mrs Dacre particularly felt upset after her hard work and the CTA protested to the Air Ministry.²¹⁰

The Dacre issue plus a controversy over the county archivist almost led to a vote of no confidence in the Clerk of the Peace, Guy Crouch, who was then also acting temporarily as CTA Chairman.²¹¹ In the event, one company was retained, the ATS as a whole having recruited 80 members by that time. This was despite the women receiving only 10s.0d a year and no travel expenses when it was costing anything between 3s.6d and 5s.0d a week for them to get to Aylesbury from Chesham or Wycombe by bus. By July 1939, the ATS needed only 15 more recruits.²¹²

²⁰⁷ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 17 Dec. 1928; Beckett, *Territorials*, 106-07.

²⁰⁸ BA, D-X 916.

²⁰⁹ BA, D/FR 161/17/9, Watson to Cottesloe, 30 Sept. 1938.

²¹⁰ BA, D/FR 161/2/2/3, Watson to Cottesloe, 2 Feb. 1939.

²¹¹ BA, D/FR 161/2/8/1, Watson to Cottesloe, 3 Aug. 1939.

²¹² *Bucks Herald*, 11 Nov., 12 Dec. 1938; 3 Feb., and 14 Apl. 1939; *Bucks Examiner*, 10 Feb., and 7 July 1939.

The Munich crisis in September 1938 stimulated yet more recruitment, the Treasury agreeing to allow units to recruit between 10 and 30 per cent over establishment. On 26 September the first of 58,000 Territorials were mobilised for anti-aircraft defence and coastal defences were also manned. The TA was stood down on 14 October by which time the lack of equipment had proven acute with two regular anti-aircraft regiments drafted in to bolster London's defences. Hore-Belisha was pressed to explain the deficiencies, attention to which had been drawn by Churchill's son-in-law, Duncan Sandys MP, who was a second lieutenant in a London anti-aircraft battery. It is less often noted that a significant role in the 'Sandys affair' was played by Whiteley, who actually asked the first question in the Commons on 17 May 1938, which was then followed by Sandys' supplementary. Sandys and Whiteley again co-ordinated their questions on 24 May.²¹³

Munich exposed other problems for no TA division had full equipment and none could be expected to take the field for at least eight months after any mobilisation.²¹⁴ Under French pressure, limited liability was abandoned and Hore-Belisha proposed in December 1938 that four TA divisions would now be prepared to reinforce the expeditionary force between four and six months after mobilisation with the remainder to be properly equipped for training. The Cabinet accepted this on 22 February 1939. When presenting the estimates on 8 March Hore-Belisha announced that the number of TA anti-aircraft divisions would be raised from five to seven, and the ultimate aim would be for the TA to find nine infantry divisions, a motorised division, an armoured division, and two cavalry brigades for the field force.²¹⁵

²¹³ J. Paul Harris, 'The "Sandys Storm": The Politics of British Air Defence in 1938', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 62 (1989), 318-36, at 326.

²¹⁴ Bond, *British Military Policy*, 288.

²¹⁵ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 256-57; Bond, *British Military Policy*, 298-300.

On 15 March 1939 German troops occupied what remained of Czechoslovakia, bringing in more TA recruits, fresh French demands, and a press campaign for the re-introduction of conscription. Conscription remained anathema to Labour and the union movement and Chamberlain rejected it but, desperate to make some gesture, he grabbed at Hore-Belisha's spur of the moment suggestion on 28 March of doubling the TA. Hore-Belisha realised the difficulties at once but Chamberlain eagerly accepted it and on 29 March it was announced that the peacetime establishment of 130,000 would be made up to the wartime establishment of 170,000 then doubled.²¹⁶ The Treasury pointed out that apart from the costs and the problem of recruitment, the additional men had no immediate value. They would take 12-18 months to train, and could probably not even be equipped. In a sense, the doubling of the TA brought forward the concept of a greater wartime mobilisation but it was clearly a political rather than a military decision. It was also the case that the TA had become sufficiently popular that it was often turning down recruits. The 48th Division, for example, was at 93.9 per cent of its enhanced establishment in October 1938, the 565 men attending the Bucks Battalion camp at Bulford that summer a post-war record. It culminated in a march past the DGTA.²¹⁷ An equal political gesture on 31 March was Chamberlain's guarantee to Poland.

No one had consulted the government's military advisers on the effect of doubling the TA but it did enable the War Office finally to bury the pledge. CTAs had effectively agreed to abolition in June 1938 provided pre-1933 Territorials were allowed to re-engage on the new terms and the military

²¹⁶ Bond, *British Military Policy*, 305; Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 239-43.

²¹⁷ Oates, 'Pinchbeck Regulars', 196-98, 201; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 13 Aug. 1939; BA, AR 56/2007 [BMMT 560/1], Viney Diary, 31 July to 9 Aug. 1938.

authorities promised not to use Territorial as drafts unless unavoidable. Confusion had reigned over whether any change could be made without fully consulting those affected. The War Office was now prepared to allow a discharge to those not prepared to accept general service and, on 29 March, a special meeting of the Council of CTAs agreed to abolition of the pledge. It also agreed that Territorials be asked to sign their assent to an agreement already put to the anti-aircraft and coast defence units to come out in an emergency prior to formal TA embodiment.²¹⁸

Chamberlain believed that Territorials could continue their civil employment by day and man anti-aircraft batteries at night for anything up to six months.²¹⁹ Given the unrealistic nature of his assumption, he was compelled to accept a limited measure of conscription so that reservists and Territorials could become trained. On 26 April 1939 new legislation enabled the government to call out the TA and reservists without declaration of a state of emergency. A parallel Military Training Act re-introduced conscription, calling up 250,000 ‘militiamen’ from among those aged 20 for six months’ training. It would be followed by a three-year TA liability. Of these 80,000 would be trained to take over anti-aircraft defences with an initial 35,000 ‘militiamen’ due to arrive at units on 15 July 1939. In its way, the call up of the ‘militiamen’ was a negation of promises made that the TA would be the basis of wartime expansion. It was also an indictment of the ability of the TA to meet the wartime requirements, albeit that Hore-Belisha portrayed the militiamen as ‘holding the fort’ until the TA was ready. In reality, the call up disrupted training for regulars and TA alike.²²⁰

²¹⁸ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 257.

²¹⁹ Bond, *British Military Policy*, 309.

²²⁰ Oates, ‘Pinchbeck Regulars’, 333-37.

Doubling the TA was difficult enough but the return of conscription, albeit initially limited, brought manifold problems in terms of lack of resources. Moreover, the government and War Office chose to conciliate the public to the re-introduction of conscription in what was still peace-time by giving priority to the new militiamen. No one had actually issued any detailed guidance on how the TA would be expanded and units followed their own plans for ‘duplication’.

Bucks had seen significant increases in recruiting in 1938 and in November 1938 it formed the 251st AA Battery at Slough, which was considered the best area for recruiting.²²¹ The secretary to the CRA, Philip Hall, former CO of the Bucks Battalion, became ill at this point. Cecil ‘Patsy’ Pallett had expressed an interest in being assistant secretary in July 1936 and now acted temporarily in Hall’s stead as acting secretary, continuing subsequently as assistant secretary until the outbreak of war. It was thought particularly necessary, however, to have an experienced hand to oversee the formation of the Slough AA Battery and the completion of the drill hall alterations at Marlow. As a result, Sedgwick was drafted back in until Hall recovered.²²² The 251st, commanded by the Hon. John Fremantle (later 4th Lord Cottesloe), needed only three more officers and 25 more men to complete establishment by February 1939 and was inundated with applications for commissions.²²³ There was some initial concern that it might compete with the Bucks Battalion in Slough and the yeomanry battery at Taplow. It was considered, therefore, best to base it at Langley but a site was

²²¹ BA, T/A 1/7, CTA Mins., 14 July 1938.

²²² BA, T/A 1/7, CTA Mins., 30 July 1936 and 14 July 1938; D/FR 161/1/16, Watson to Cottesloe, 15 July 1938.

²²³ *Bucks Herald*, 10 Feb. 1939; *Bucks Examiner*, 16 Dec. 1938; 10 Feb. and 28 Apl. 1939.

then chosen on the Uxbridge Road with temporary accommodation in a factory on the Trading Estate.²²⁴

The 251st served as part of 80th HAA (Berks, Bucks, & Oxon) Regiment (35th AA Brigade) in defence of Portsmouth during the Blitz from 1940 to 1941 before leaving AA Command in July 1941 as an independent battery. Briefly attached to 131st (Mixed) HAA Regiment with ATS personnel between September and October 1941, it was again designated an all-male unit in War Office Reserve but was sent to West Africa Command in December 1941, where it remained until 1944.

There were new efforts to find the men needed for the duplicated units. Both 393 Battery and 'B' Company of the Bucks Battalion put on training demonstrations in Aylesbury on 19 April 1939, the former showing off its new artillery tractors and the latter its Bren Gun carrier. The Drill Hall was open for new recruits until midnight on 26 April, enrolling 30-40 men while the TA, ATS, and ARP all had stalls in the Odeon for 'national service week' in May coinciding with the film, 'It's in the Air'. At that stage, the Bucks Battalion already had 1,054 of the 1,260 men it needed and the 99th Field Regiment 515 of the 549 men required.²²⁵ It was not all plain sailing, Michael Beaumont MP and Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher pointing out that only six men had come forward at Chilton and farmers seemed to be discouraging recruitment. It was indicated that many young men had left the land and Aubrey-Fletcher later conceded that he had generalised from a specific case. The local NFU, however, complained that the camp dates set for August 1939 were particularly

²²⁴ BA, T/A 1/7, Finance and General Purposes, 14 July, 8 Sept., and 3 Nov. 1938; T/A 1/17; D/FR 161/1/17/1, Watson to Cottesloe, 9 Aug. 1938.

²²⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 21 and 28 Apl., and 12 May 1939; *Bucks Examiner*, 28 Apl. 1939.

inconvenient.²²⁶ Generally, the response to doubling the TA was excellent, the Chesham Detachment expanding from 35 to 73 in May 1939. Indeed, in May the new 99th (RBY) Field Regiment and the 1st and 2nd Bucks Battalions were full: 850 men had been found in just six weeks.²²⁷

Irrespective of the plentiful recruits now coming forward, duplication brought many problems. In the case of the 99th (Bucks and Berks Yeomanry) Field Regiment, the division into the 99th (Royal Bucks Yeomanry) Field Regiment and 145th (Berks Yeomanry) Field Regiment resulted in the new commanding officers cutting cards for which received most of the guns and equipment since there was only enough for one. The War Office was unamused but, according to William Lawson, later 5th Lord Burnham, who joined 394 Battery in May 1939, they would not 'take on' the second-in-command, John Whiteley, MP.²²⁸ It might be added that Whiteley's second in command and then successor in 393 Battery, Michael Beaumont, a former Guardsman, had been a notoriously right-wing Conservative MP for Aylesbury from 1929 to 1938: he resigned his commission from ill health in January 1940.²²⁹ Nonetheless, the split with the Berkshires went well, both regiments being in camp together in August 1939, 99th Field Regiment managing to offload one ineffective officer on the Berks.²³⁰

²²⁶ *Bucks Examiner*, 28 Apl. and 26 May 1939.

²²⁷ *Bucks Examiner*, 12 and 26 May 1939; BA, T/A 1/7, Mins., Finance and General Purposes, 14 July 1938.

²²⁸ Steve White (ed.), *More Wartime Memories of the men who served with the 99th (RBY) Field Regiment TA* (Leicester: Privately printed, 1993), 6.

²²⁹ Richard Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right: British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany, 1933-39* (London: Faber & Faber, 1998), 54, 318, 324.

²³⁰ BA, D/FR 161/2/8/2 and 3, Watson to Cottesloe, 16 and 23 Aug. 1939.

The Field Brigade had been commanded successively from 1933 to 1938 by two Berkshire men, Lieutenant Colonels H. P. Crossland and W. H. Crossland. Command of the new single Bucks regiment now went to Lieutenant Colonel Frank Watson, a former regular, who had previously commanded 393 Battery from 1925 to 1932 before succeeding Lord Chesham as CTA Chairman in 1936. Watson, who lived at Glebe House, Dinton, returned to active command after securing Cottesloe's agreement to vacating the chairmanship of the CTA.²³¹ Watson's acting replacement as chairman was Guy Crouch with Sir Everard Pauncefort-Duncombe then succeeding to the temporary post in November 1943. Watson returned to his role as CTA chairman in 1946 although Sir Richard Howard-Vyse was also a candidate.²³² Whiteley became Watson's second in command with 'A' Troop located at Aylesbury, Bletchley and Buckingham, and 'B' and 'C' troops at Taplow and the Chalfonts.²³³ Recruiting displays were held at both Buckingham and Winslow in May 1939 with a 4.5" howitzer displayed.²³⁴

The Bucks Battalion was split, with the Aylesbury, Amersham, and Wolverton companies designated the nucleus of the 1st Bucks Battalion and the Marlow, Slough, and Wycombe companies the nucleus of a 2nd Bucks Battalion on 1 June 1939. In an echo of the past, it was noted that many men from Chesham preferred to enlist in the Royal Engineers or the Middlesex Regiment, which had units at Harrow, rather than in Bucks.²³⁵ Recruiting meetings for the 2nd

²³¹ BA, D/FR 161/2/5/2, Watson to Cottesloe, Apl. 1939; 161/2/43/1, Watson to Cottesloe, 9 Nov. 1942.

²³² BA, D/FR 161/3/14/1, Duncombe to Cottesloe, 11 Feb. 1946.

²³³ *Bucks Herald*, 17 Mar. 1933; 2 Oct. 1936; 3 Mar. 1939; 5 and 12 May 1939; 11 Aug. 1939; BA T/A 1/7, CTA Mins., 4 Nov. 1943.

²³⁴ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 13 May 1939; *Bucks Herald*, 12 May 1939.

²³⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 31 Mar. 1939.

Bucks were arranged in Aylesbury and Slough.²³⁶ In many cases, new officers commissioned in the two Bucks Battalions in the course of 1939 did not receive their actual parchment commissions through the ‘exigencies of war’, 14 such parchments eventually being gifted to the Bucks Military Museum Trust by the MOD in 1996. They included those of Second Lieutenant Martin Preston, a nephew of the writer Robert Graves, who was commissioned on 30 June 1939 and killed at Hazebrouck in May 1940, and three survivors of the Hazebrouck battle, Hugh Saunders, John Viccars and Michael Sherwell, who won the MC there.²³⁷

At least, unlike 1914, the TA was not being entirely bypassed since the militiamen would pass to the TA in due course. The TA was also attracting plenty of recruits, possibly some of them wishing to avoid serving in the new militia and preferring to sign up with friends to what for the time being remained a voluntary and part-time commitment. The legislation only came into effect on 26 May 1939 and it exempted men who had enlisted in any of the reserve forces before 27 April. Some of those joining the 1st Bucks Battalion were sufficiently promising for a platoon at Aylesbury to be formed of potential candidates for commission: most had gone to Officer Cadet Training Units (OCTUs) by January 1940.²³⁸ Ronald Sale had anticipated expansion in establishing this platoon but it did lead to a degree of tension with talk of ‘Sale’s Snobs’.²³⁹ Some 80,000 men had joined the TA by the end of April 1939 and older men coming forward between the ages of 45 and 55 were

²³⁶ BA, D/FR 161/2/5/1, Watson to Cottesloe, 1 Apl. 1939.

²³⁷ BA, T/A 6/100/1-14.

²³⁸ J. E. H. Neville (ed.), *The Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry War Chronicle, 1939-45* 4 vols. (Aldershot: Gale and Polden, 1949-54), I, 25-26; author interview with J. Owen Jones, 6 Oct. 1980.

²³⁹ BA, AR 23/2019 [BMMT 732/1], Elliott Viney Notebook compiled whilst a POW.

directed to the National Defence Companies (later Home Defence Battalions) to guard vulnerable points.

A putative TA Defence Corps Reserve formed in 1927 had been renamed the Royal Defence Corps in 1934 in a revival of the Great War force for those over 45 with the intention that it guard vulnerable points in war. The scheme was a total failure so it was replaced with the National Defence Companies (NDC) in 1936. These had also failed and were 2,000 under the 8,500 establishment in 1939. As a result of its failure and the Home Office demands that the TA assist in the event of heavy air attack, guarding vulnerable points as well as civil defence tasks became a role for second line TA units in 1939.²⁴⁰ In Bucks, there was expectation of enrolling at least 40 men in the NDC, the only duties being to report once a year and to be ready to be called up in an emergency. They would be entitled to use the TA Clubs at their local drill halls. Sir Everard Pauncefort-Duncombe was appointed Commandant in September 1936. The three platoons of the Bucks National Defence Company were still short of four officers and 107 men in May 1939, and by July it had received only 57 applications, and only 27 of them actually came forward to attest.²⁴¹

None of the problems had been resolved when war was declared. TA anti-aircraft and coastal defence units were called up on 21 August, the NDC on 25 and 26 August, reservists on 31 August and the rest of the TA on 1 September 1939. Within weeks, however, the TA had really ceased to exist for the Armed Forces (Conditions of Service) Act established a single national army with TA

²⁴⁰ S. Paul Mackenzie, *The Home Guard: A Military and Political History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 16; Oates, 'Pinchbeck Regulars', 270-76.

²⁴¹ BA, T/A 1/7, Mins., Finance and General Purposes, 8 June 1939; *Bucks Herald*, 25 Sept. 1936; 5 May and 7 July 1939; *Bucks Examiner*, 25 Sept. 1936; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 13 May 1939; *Bucks Examiner*, 7 July 1939.

status suspended for the duration and all remaining restrictions on general service and transfer removed so that men could be posted where required. Further legislation extended all terms of service also for the duration. To the anger of many TA officers, they were directed to remove the 'T's from their uniforms.²⁴²

The 1939 legislation suspended TA commissions so wartime officers received 'emergency' commissions in the army as a whole rather than in specific units. After the immediate commissioning of those qualified through OTC or TA qualification certificates, service in the ranks was a prerequisite. The OTC was renamed as the Junior Training Corps in 1940 and its function taken over by wartime OCTUs. All wartime promotion was temporary with no opportunity for advancement or reversion at war's end for wartime officers when regulars would retain wartime rank. By October 1941 there were 136,500 officers in the army as a whole but, back in 1939, there had been only 13,800 regular officers, the increase coming from TA officers, reservists and wartime commissions.²⁴³ Many, however, believed that major was probably the highest rank to which any TA officer could aspire.²⁴⁴ A review of the policy in June 1944 found there were 17,213 pre-war TA officers in the army, of whom 1,394 were POWs, and 752 unemployed. Currently, only 90 TA substantive lieutenant colonels and 38 colonels held higher acting or temporary rank with 195 lieutenant colonels, 38 colonels and one major general holding appointments in their actual rank. 'Time

²⁴² Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 256.

²⁴³ Jonathan Fennell, *Fighting the People's War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 228.

²⁴⁴ Jeremy Crang, *The British Army and the People's War, 1939-45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 52-53.

promotion' was introduced in October 1944 to allow advancement but did not take effect until May 1945.²⁴⁵

It was noticeable that of those TA officers employed in October 1944, only 1,554 had risen above the rank of major. Only 36 held the rank of brigadier, seven that of major general, and only one - a substantive colonel - that of lieutenant general. Of 160 major generals who commanded divisions in North Africa, Italy and North-West Europe between 1940 and 1945, only three were Territorials. Indeed, the Army Council consciously started to replace TA commanding officers with regulars in March 1940, removing 253 by October 1941 compared to the removal of just 72 regulars. In April 1941 it was also decreed that any TA battalion should have at least five regular officers in addition to the commanding officer and quartermaster.²⁴⁶ Ralph Symonds, who had served with the 2/1st Bucks Battalion in the Great War, was replaced as CO of the 4th OBLI in March 1940. One of the few commanding officers remaining in 48th Division in April 1941, Ronald Sale of the 1st Bucks Battalion, noted 'there is a very definite set against Territorial officers... I have sensed a feeling of hostility for some weeks on the part of the higher command'. He expected to be replaced and, the last of the Territorial commanding officers in 48th Division, he was posted to the 5th OBLI under a regular commanding officer in Northern Ireland on 3 May. He was then unexpectedly posted back to command the 1st Bucks Battalion on 19 December 1942 when his regular successor, James 'Dusty' Dunbar Kilburn, characterised as 'a real Colonel Blimp type', went to the Staff College.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Beckett, *Territorials*, 122-23.

²⁴⁶ Beckett, *Territorials*, 123; TNA, WO 163/252.

²⁴⁷ BA, AR 110/2007 (BMMT 579), Sale to wife, 5, 12 and 16 Apl., 3 May 1941; 19 Dec. 1942 AR 4/2013 [BMMT 639/1], Memoir by Nigel Viney, 27 Jan. 2008; BMMT 778, Carr, *Wartime Memories*, 43-44.

At least Kilburn recognised the value of allowing the battalion to continue to wear its black rifle buttons, Cottesloe writing to him that it was a symbol of a county unit that had ‘never been willing to appear as a sort of illegitimate child of Oxfordshire’.²⁴⁸ The OBLI depot at Cowley had long queried the wearing of rifle buttons. Lieutenant Colonel G. E. Whittall commanding the Regimental Infantry Training Centre there was inclined to leave the battalion alone when the issue came up in January 1941 despite the problem of sending officers to it when its buttons, badges, and drill differed from the remainder of the OBLI.²⁴⁹ The wearing of a different regimental flash on the sleeve was also questioned. In the end, Bucks won the ‘Battle of the Buttons’, the War Office ruling that no change should be imposed after Cottesloe visited the Under Secretary of State for War, Lord Croft.²⁵⁰ The Central Ordnance Depot then created problems over the supply of sleeve flashes, Cottesloe again contacting Croft.²⁵¹ Indeed, Cottesloe took the opportunity to impress on Croft that the Bucks Battalions should be treated no differently from The Cambridgeshire Regiment, The Herefordshire Regiment, and The Hertfordshire Regiment, all of which retained their individual identities as Territorial formations.²⁵²

Regulars still harboured the perception that TA training had been little more than a veneer with weekend and summer camps often devoted to unit and sub-unit training with few battalion or brigade exercises so that Territorials had even

²⁴⁸ BA, T/A 6/32, Kilburn to Cottesloe, 26 Aug. 1943; Cottesloe to Kilburn, 28 Aug. 1943.

²⁴⁹ BA, T/A 6/33, Whittall to Hall, 13 Jan. 1941; Crouch to Whittall, 18 Jan. 1941; Crouch to Cottesloe, 19 Jan. 1941; Sale to Cottesloe, 22 Jan. 1941.

²⁵⁰ BA, T/A 6/33, Sale to Cottesloe, 22 Jan. 1941; Croft to Cottesloe, 5 Feb. 1941; Sale to Cottesloe, 19 Feb. 1941.

²⁵¹ BA, T/A 6/33, Sale to Cottesloe, 3 Mar. 1941; Cottesloe to Croft, 8 Mar. 1941.

²⁵² BA, T/A 6/33, Cottesloe to Croft, 11 Mar. 1941.

less experience of combined arms practice than the regulars. There was no actual attempt to centralise training on the part of the War Office until 1934 and training of officers remained the responsibility of regimental commanding officers. Much depended, therefore, on the commanding officer. In theory regular officers were trained for two ranks above their current appointments but TA officers only for their actual appointments. TA officers could attend short courses at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst but commanding officers had not been required to attend a senior officers' school and the only training for most senior TA officers had been in TEWTs (Tactical Exercises without Troops). Promotion had been by seniority within the regiment as in the regular army. The shortage of officers was compounded by the fact that, irrespective of their quality, they had had little practise in command given the failures of TA recruiting generally until 1938. The TA knew little of combined arms training.²⁵³ In writing for the *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution* in 1932, Philip Hall had commented on the training problems deriving from scattered units and different levels of enthusiasm and knowledge among officers.²⁵⁴

Doubling the TA had not helped with a shortage of instructors so that Territorials had as much or as little training as the rest of the army. Moreover, they began from a weaker position and were required to go overseas earlier than any pre-war expectations. They also had to maintain efficiency while forming duplicate units and absorbing new recruits to bring them to war establishment.

²⁵³ Oates, 'Pinchbeck Regulars', 142-46; David French, *Raising Churchill's Army: The British Army and the War against Germany, 1919-45* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 54, 62-63, 172.

²⁵⁴ Captain Philip Hall, 'The Training of Junior Leaders in a County TA Battalion', *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution* 67 (1392), 586-88.

²⁵⁵ The inequality in training extended to one training memorandum in June 1938 being distributed down to all regular lieutenant colonels but only down to TA brigadiers. Once in France, the degree of training depended upon battalion commanding officers and upon the interest of divisional commanders; there were few additional training opportunities. In April 1940, the commander of the BEF, Lord Gort, feared the TA formations could only perform static roles. Three of the TA divisions in France - 12th, 23rd and 46th - were only meant to be labour units and remained under-equipped and untrained, only to be thrown into the fighting and almost entirely destroyed in support of the French south of the perimeter forming around Dunkirk. ²⁵⁶ Nonetheless, some TA officers proved especially effective in assisting the preparation of a new army after the setbacks of 1940 such as Captain (later Major) Lionel Wigram in pioneering battle schools and Lieutenant Colonel Stewart Blacker in pioneering new weapons such as the PIAT.

Immediately before the war, with the doubling of the TA but not yet full conscription, Territorials accounted for just under half the army's manpower. ²⁵⁷ In an attempt to bolster TA formations, there was much cross posting and unit interchange not only between first and second line TA formations but between TA and regulars. Some 11,000 'immatures' under age for overseas service were sent back from TA divisions intended for reinforcement of the BEF to AA Command in October 1939. In all, 40,000 men were sent back from the first line including older soldiers. In the case of the 99th Field Regiment, these older men included a battery sergeant major who had been a regular in the Great War and a

²⁵⁵ David French, 'Big Wars and Small Wars between the Wars, 1919-39', in Hew Strachan (ed.), *Big Wars and Small Wars: The British Army and the Lessons of War in the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 2006), 36-53, at 48.

²⁵⁶ Smalley, *British Expeditionary Force*, 43, 56-57, 71-76; Beckett, *Territorials*, 154.

²⁵⁷ Oates, 'Pinchbeck Regulars', 240.

battery quartermaster sergeant who had charged at El Mughar.²⁵⁸ Those in reserved occupations - some 9-10,500 men were also weeded out. Those sent back from the first line were replaced by reservists, Territorials from units designated as second line in the doubling exercise, and conscripts. In some cases, it could change the nature of a unit significantly, although 48th Division expressed itself satisfied with its replacements.²⁵⁹

Most TA divisions received one regular battalion per brigade with regular divisions receiving between one and three TA battalions in return. Thus, the 99th (Royal Bucks Yeomanry) Field Regiment replaced 18th Field Regiment RA in 2nd Division with the latter posted to 48th (South Midland) Division. Equally, 145 Brigade of 48th Division lost the 4th Royal Berkshires to 3rd Division and was replaced by 2nd Battalion, The Gloucester Regiment from that division. TA divisions benefitted from the arrival of regular battalions but regular divisions were not keen on accepting TA battalions and, in some cases, they proved a weak link in the 1940 campaign.²⁶⁰

Three TA divisions including the 48th Division arrived in France in January and February 1940, the 48th being the first to do so. The 1st Bucks Battalion had undertaken company and platoon exercises in England since mobilisation with precisely one battalion, one brigade, and one divisional exercise, the latter at Snap Common near Marlborough, predicated on practising the rotation of brigades into a simulated trench system. In the whole period between September 1939 and May 1940, 48th Division had just six weeks' actual training.²⁶¹ The 1st Bucks Battalion had mobilised in Aylesbury on 28 August, where it was

²⁵⁸ White (ed.), *More Wartime Memories*, 10.

²⁵⁹ Oates, 'Pinchbeck Regulars', 224.

²⁶⁰ Smalley, *British Expeditionary Force*, 168-69.

²⁶¹ Oates, 'Pinchbeck Regulars', 229.

billeted, before moving to Newbury racecourse on 4 September 1939 and remaining there until going overseas on 17 January 1940. The officers were quartered in the jockeys' dormitories and the public grand stand, with other ranks in the loose boxes - ten men to each sleeping on paillasses on trestles with poor lighting and only one gas stove per box. Burnett-Brown as CO in the stable manager's quarters. The tote buildings were used as dining halls. It was suggested that the only Army Form in the Orderly Room plentifully available was 'that of a soldier's voluntary allotment to an unmarried wife'.²⁶²

Medical inspection resulted in several men posted out. One CSM, Spittles, an excellent shot, was found to be blind in one eye. With some officers such as Owen Jones being posted to other duties, three NCOs received immediate commissions in October. One replacement apparition sent from the Supplementary Reserve - short and stout, and sporting a 'Nazi-moustache' - Lieutenant R. S. Pitt-Kethley appeared wearing a major's crowns, a glengarry he called his 'cheese-cutter', and a pair of tartan trews of his own design that the War Office had allowed him to wear when recruiting and administering cadets in London. He was told to remove his major's crowns at once. He also had the strange habit of rising daily at 0600 hours to consume pork pies from a paper bag. Incapable of issuing an order and the despair of RSM Albert 'Scatty' Hawtin, Pitt-Kethley was dispatched as surplus to requirements before the battalion went overseas. He was then to be seen cycling in Amersham once more displaying his major's crowns and wearing his glengarry and trews.²⁶³

²⁶² Neville (ed.), *War Chronicle*, I, 24; BA, AR 110/2007 [BMMT 583], Ken Bateman Memoirs, 2; BMMT 778, Harry Carr, *Wartime Memories*, 5-6; BMMT 782, Jack Cheshire Notes, 2-3; ; Royal Archives (hereafter RA), MDKDH/ARMFOR/11/4, Burnett-Brown to Lady Brecknock, 17 Sept. 1939. Quotations from the Royal Archives appear by permission of His Majesty King Charles III.

²⁶³ BMMT 782, Cheshire Notes, 3; BA, AR 23/2019 [BMMT 732/1], Viney Notebook.

RSM Hawtin, and one of the CSMs, Norton, were both regulars. One man who failed to report on mobilisation was found by the police and rejoined the battalion, whilst another was declared a deserter.²⁶⁴ A total of 127 men under the age of 19 were sent back to the 2nd Bucks Battalion in exchange for older men.²⁶⁵ By December 279 men had been transferred into the battalion from the Infantry Training Centres of the Somerset Light Infantry, Northamptonshire Regiment, and OBLI, leading to even more cramped accommodation at Newbury. As a result, ‘C’ Company was moved to Greenham Lodge and ‘D’ Company to Hambridge Farm. On 11 January 1940 Private Silvey, who had previously said ‘he wasn’t going to France as he had been there on a holiday and didn’t like the place’, jumped naked except for his boots into a canal. He was removed to hospital.²⁶⁶ There were a number of other minor disciplinary offences, usually recorded simply as ‘misconduct’.²⁶⁷

Training took place on Greenham Common with route marches of increasing distance instituted every Friday. Invariably, the battalion band would meet the men about a mile from camp at the end of the marches.²⁶⁸ Older officers found this particularly challenging as did Hawtin, who ‘had a degree of “Pes Cavus” and long marching was an agony to him, his feet sweaty and blistered’.²⁶⁹ The

²⁶⁴ BA T/A 6/15, Orders, 29 Sept. 1939.

²⁶⁵ BA, T/A 6/15, Daily Orders, 22 Sept. 1939.

²⁶⁶ BMMT 782, Cheshire Notes, 5; TNA, WO 167/804 War Diary, 11 Jan. 1940.

²⁶⁷ See, for example, BA, T/A 6/15, Note, 10 Jan. 1940.

²⁶⁸ BA, AR 65/2014 [BMMT 651/1], Memoir of Sergeant Leslie Phipps.

²⁶⁹ Trevor Gibbens, *Captivity: Trevor Gibbens’ Experiences as a POW in Germany, 1940-45* (Privately published, n. d.), 6-7. Pes cavus is a foot with an abnormally high plantar longitudinal arch, those with it placing too much weight and stress on the ball and heel of the foot whilst standing and/or walking.

only range available was at Churn and, with ammunition short, no company was able to make more than one visit.²⁷⁰ Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA) shows and sport enlivened the routine and, each weekend, a special train was run from Newbury to Aylesbury via High Wycombe to allow regular leave. Men were also allowed into Newbury, some of the band playing with the town band two evenings a week. The battalion band also gave concerts outside the front entrance of the racecourse, a number of the bandsmen being from the Hazells band, which had attracted good players from around the country in peacetime. A café known as ‘Aggies’ in Newbury High Street was particularly favoured by the men. Church parades were held in the Racecourse Grand Stand. Most of the battalion embarked at Southampton for Le Havre on RMS *Duke of Argyll* and a former Isle of Man packet boat, the carrier platoon and motor transport section being routed from Bristol to Nantes. Rumours had reached the battalion of the poor state of the 2nd Bucks and this appeared justified when the latter was encountered at Southampton.²⁷¹

Once in France the battalion was mostly employed preparing defences and repairing roads around Wahagnies in the coal mining area between Douai and Lille in bitter winter weather. They also constructed pillboxes on the ‘Gort Line’ and dug anti-tank ditches once it began to thaw.²⁷² Only one day a week was devoted to training with four days on construction and repair. Route marches also continued. As a result, whilst the battalion was now physically fit,

²⁷⁰ Neville (ed.), *War Chronicle*, I, 45.

²⁷¹ BA, AR 23/2019 [BMMT 732/1], Viney Notebook; BMMT 778, Carr, *Wartime Memories*, 10-13; BMMT 782, Cheshire notes, 6; Atkins notes, 1.

²⁷² IWM, 27350, Sound Interview with Tich Raymer, 5 Apl. 2005; Peter Constable (1940) in Felix Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War, 1939-45: Seventeen Buckinghamshire Territorial Riflemen’s Personal Experiences* [copy is held in IWM, Doc. 6083]; *Clive Le Never Foster, 1917-84: Memories of Family Life* (Privately published, 1995), 9 [copy in BA, T/A 6/99].

weapons skills remained limited.²⁷³ Some men - three per company - were able to attend concerts by ENSA and five went to football and rugby matches between Britain and France in Paris. Some trips were also made to Vimy Ridge and other Great War battlefields. Elliott Viney's company got four tickets for a show that turned out to feature George Formby. The entire company saw a production of Emlyn Williams's play, 'Night Must Fall', while others saw a show with Jack Hylton and some of the cast of 'Band Waggon', at which Gracie Fields made a surprise appearance. The men were billeted in schools, empty factories and private houses: the headquarters' company was in a disused brewery. A good relationship was enjoyed with the Wahagnies villagers, which would be renewed after the war. The band would play a concert of light music for the villagers after the fortnightly Sunday service and, on occasion, would give a demonstration of marching at the light infantry 146 paces to the minute. Weekly bathing parades were held in the showers of the local coal pits. 'D' Company was billeted in La Neuville, about two miles from Wahagnies, where there was an estaminet with poor beer and the locals engaging in cockfighting on Sunday afternoons.²⁷⁴

The weather proved a constant trial. Captain Brian Dowling, paying his company in the open because it was warmer outside in the weak sun than inside, found the ink froze in his pen. Water wagons froze regularly. The officer's mess

²⁷³ TNA, WO 167/804, War Diary, 24 Jan., and 4 Apl. 1940.

²⁷⁴ IWM, 6806, Sound Interview with Elliott Viney, 13 May 1983; Hazell (ed.), *With the Colours*, July 1940, 2; BA, AR 13/2016 [BMMT 670/1], Second World War Experience Centre Sound Interview with John Brown, 29 Dec. 2010; AR 4/2013 [BMMT 618], Elliott Viney to parents, 25 Feb., 7 Mar. and Apl. 1940; Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum (hereafter SOFO), 3543, 12/4/MS/7, Account of Bernard Hardacre; RA, MDKDH/ARMFOR/11/7, Sale to Lady Herbert, 7 Feb. 1940; BMMT 778, Carr, *Wartime Memories*, 16-20; BMMT 782, Atkins notes, 1.

waiter, Private F. Bull, put his dentures in a mug of water before retiring for the night and found them completely frozen in the morning.²⁷⁵ Soap froze on the face before it could be shaved off and boots froze to the floor overnight.²⁷⁶ There had been an outbreak of German measles at Newbury and this was followed by cases of cerebro-spinal fever in France.²⁷⁷ Matters were cheered by the arrival of a parcel for every man from the Battalion OCA with chocolate, chewing gum, razor blades, handkerchief, stationery and pencils, whilst the Aylesbury Company received a 'fine' Dundee cake from the town mayor.²⁷⁸

The 1st Bucks had to absorb a draft of 100 men in April 1940 from the Essex Regiment, mostly 'militiamen' with only six months' training. There were not even enough battalion badges available for all who were those posted in.²⁷⁹ There was little practice ammunition and officers and men alike were inexperienced although Elliott Viney had attended a course at Sandhurst in July 1939 involving sand table exercises and TEWTs.²⁸⁰ The battalion had only received its first Bren Gun carrier at the Lavant camp in August 1939 whilst the anti-tank platoon had no anti-tank weapons. Initially, each company had only one Bren Gun, one 2" mortar, one Boys anti-tank rifle, one carrier, and four

²⁷⁵ BMMT 782, Cheshire Notes, 7; Neville (ed.), *War Chronicle*, I, 72.

²⁷⁶ George Burfoot (1940), in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*; IWM, 7279, Sound Interview with Jack Henshaw and George Davess, 1983; BA, AR 13/2016 [BMMT 670/1], Second World War Experience Centre Sound Interview with John Brown, 29 Dec. 2010.

²⁷⁷ Gibbens, *Captivity*, 8.

²⁷⁸ BA, AR 110/2007 (BMMT 579), Sale to wife, 28 Mar. 1940; BMMT 782, Cheshire Notes, 8-9; Atkins to wife. n. d. [Dec. 1939].

²⁷⁹ TNA, WO 167/804, War Diary, 25 Apl. 1940; BA, T/A 1/7, Mins. CTA General Purposes, 14 Mar. 1940.

²⁸⁰ BA, AR 56/2007 [BMMT 560/1], Viney Diary, 11-12 July 1939.

trucks. Officers received no revolvers until May 1940.²⁸¹ Lavant had not offered an adequate preparation. The troops there were divided into trained and untrained groups but without sufficient instructors to handle the numbers involved whilst officers were separated from their men to attend different courses. Training in how to lay anti-tank mines was undertaken with simply a drawing of a mine.²⁸² Matters were not much better in France. Private Jack Collins recalled exercises for which no thunder-flashes or blanks were available so Acting Captain Hugh Saunders of ‘D’ Company ‘jumped about striking matches, shouting “Bang, you are all dead”, to which we were quite happy to be out of it and back in billets’.²⁸³



*The last peacetime camp of the Bucks Battalion at Lavant, August 1939
[BMMT]*

²⁸¹ Author interview with Elliott Viney, 24 July 1980; IWM, 6806, Sound Interview with Elliott Viney, 13 May 1983.

²⁸² BA, AR 23/2019 [BMMT 732/1], Viney Notebook.

²⁸³ Ian Watson, ‘A Study of the Experiences and Perceptions held by the Soldiers of the 1st Bucks Battalion, 1940’, Unpub. MA dissertation, London, 1998), 6, quoting Jack Collins (1940) in IWM, Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*.

TA discipline generally was good and the 1st Bucks was one of 59 battalions in the BEF without a single court martial whilst in France. Indeed, generally, pre-war Territorials were good material with more intelligence than many ordinary regulars and just as aware - if not more so - of a regiment's traditions.²⁸⁴

In the case of 99th (RBY) Field Regiment, initial concentration was with 48th Division around Newbury at Benham Park, Bradfords Farm, Stockcross, and Speen. According to Ronald Jelbart, who was articled to Chesham UDC and had joined 393 Battery in 1938, the men were sent to Newbury in a fleet of coaches, singing a song to the tune of 'Anchors Away':²⁸⁵

We are the three nine three marching along
We are the boys from Bucks and this is just our marching song
We joined the Royal Bucks Yeomanry to fight for yours and mine
And when we get to Germany we'll hang old Hitler
Hang him on the Siegfried Line.

The regiment crossed to France with 48th Division but then joined 2nd Division on 1 February 1940. Quads had been received before embarkation but the armament remained 18-pounders and 4.5" howitzers.

Like the Bucks Battalion, much of the men's time was spent in the bitter winter weather digging defences that would never be used. Second Lieutenant (later Sir) John Moreton, son of the vicar of St George the Martyr, Wolverton and later to become a distinguished diplomat and ambassador, found his fellow

²⁸⁴ Smalley, *British Expeditionary Force*, 151; IWM 6806, Sound Interview with Elliott Viney, 13 May 1983; 4896, Sound Interview with George Soane, 9 June 1981.

²⁸⁵ BA, AR 56/2007 [BMMT 556], Ronald Jelbart, *An Immature's Story* (2002), 18-19.

officers ‘more and more trying’. As a whole ‘at their worst they are blasé, rich and sophisticated, interested only in the senses and material values; at their best they are cultivated in a queer way and genuinely keen for the well-being of their men’.²⁸⁶

By May 1940 there were eight TA divisions among the 13 of the BEF, another having already been committed to the Norway campaign. Despite the manifold disadvantages, the TA still offered stubborn defence in the face of the German offensive beginning on 10 May 1940.

After training around Bapaume in the spring, the 99th moved forward with 2nd Division to the Ottenbourg area in Belgium. When the first withdrawal was ordered on 15 May the Quads were too far back and nine of the guns of 393 Battery had to be abandoned.²⁸⁷ There were no HE shells and no armour piercing shells with which to engage German tanks, the shells available being filled with lead shot set in resin.²⁸⁸ Moves had to be by night to avoid bombing and, as Moreton recalled, ‘There was very little sleep and an accumulated weariness.’²⁸⁹ The 99th found itself supporting 6 Brigade on several occasions over the next few days with a number of men becoming casualties, ‘D’ Troop of 393 Battery suffering badly from air attack on 16 May. A stand was made first on the line of the Escaut Canal on 20 May. As a result, 393 Battery had only three guns left and 394 battery was also ‘much depleted’.²⁹⁰ A crucial action was fought at St Venant on the La Bassée Canal on 27 May 1940, the 99th

²⁸⁶ BA, AR 56/2015 (BMMT 586), Moreton Diary, 27 Mar. 1940.

²⁸⁷ Steve White (ed.) *Strike Home: The Royal Bucks Yeomanry, 1794-1967* (Leicester: Privately printed, 1992), 16-17, 20; BA, AR 56/2015, Moreton Diary, 16 May 1940.

²⁸⁸ BA, AR 28/2009 [BMMT 597], *Memoirs of Norman Dubber*, 8.

²⁸⁹ White (ed.), *Strike Home*, 21.

²⁹⁰ White (ed.), *More Wartime Memories*, 16.

assisting the 1st Royal Berkshires in holding the village of Haverskerque long enough to enable the rest of the brigade to withdraw over a canal bridge but there were heavy casualties in 'E' Troop of 394 Battery with others taken prisoner. The guns had taken on German tanks over open sights and what remained of 393 Battery acted as a rear-guard in the Forest of Nieppe. As Moreton recorded, the infantry had been 'cut to pieces'.²⁹¹ In the case of the 1st Royal Berkshires, only seven officers and 67 men were to return to England.

On 29 May - to their surprise as they were not aware of the overall situation - the survivors of the 99th were ordered to Dunkirk with non-essential vehicles and some guns to be destroyed. A few of the guns that were not destroyed were then turned over to 46th Division at La Panne with some of the men including Moreton remaining with them until these guns were also disabled on 31 May. Some 20 members of the regiment were killed in the Dunkirk campaign. By the end of July 1940, 40 men were still unaccounted for although it was known that six others were POWs.²⁹² Although the 99th was not subjected to as great a pressure as the 1st Bucks Battalion, the regiment still faced the disruption of movement and frequent loss of cohesion amongst the floods of civilian refugees. Norman Dubber, an employee of Barclays Bank at Buckingham who had joined in 1938, was with a group of ten men that lost its transport. With no maps, they made their way to Dunkirk on foot, where they fortuitously found their troop commander, Lieutenant Bill Ross-Lowe on the beach.²⁹³ Jim Lawrence, a Hazells' employee who was captured, managed to escape in January 1945, fighting for four days with Czech partisans in Prague in May 1945. He was the last of the Hazells POWs to get back to England.²⁹⁴

²⁹¹ BA, AR 56/2015, Moreton Diary, 27 May 1940.

²⁹² BA, D/FR 161/2/26/2, Watson to Cottesloe, 31 July 1940.

²⁹³ BA, AR 28/2009 [BMMT 597], Memoir of Norman Dubber, 7-14.

²⁹⁴ Hazell (ed.), *With the Colours*, Aug. 1946.

Succeeding Walmesley in 1929, Fred Lawson had continued to command the 99th Field Brigade until 1933. In 1936 he was appointed CRA to 48th Division with the rank of brigadier. In 1939 he deployed to France. It was a source of sorrow to him that the 99th Field Regiment was then transferred to 2nd Division without him. As CRA he was not required to produce a fire plan until the retirement to the Escaut as there had been no action on the lines previously held on the Dyle, Seine, and Dendre. Even Lawson had little idea of what was happening elsewhere and was particularly surprised to be told at one point that he was commanding 'X' Force. As he wrote later, 'Naming forces after individual commanders or by letters is the first sign of dissolution in an army. If I had known then what I have learned since about these shot-gun christenings, I should have felt unhappy.'²⁹⁵ The very next day 'X' Force was dissolved and Lawson was ordered to rejoin 48th Division headquarters at Bergues without any role as command of the artillery had now been devolved to brigade level. Lawson and his staff were then 'lent' to III Corps and he was ordered to hold the canal line on the Dunkirk perimeter from Bergues to Nieuport with his headquarters at Furnes.

Lawson was responsible for posting what troops were already in the area and filling out the defence line as more men arrived. His improvised force of artillerymen and engineers fighting as infantry crucially pushed back the Germans from Nieuport on 28 May, winning enough time for elements from II Corps to reach and consolidate the perimeter. Fred's son, William of 99th Field Regiment met his father by chance as he came into the perimeter: 'He had not chosen badly for his walk to the beach, having his troop gunsights, the battery

²⁹⁵ BA, T/A 3/522; Draft of Lord Burnham, 'One Man's Dunkirk', 20 Mar. 1961: later reproduced in three parts in *Daily Telegraph*, May 1965.

chronometer and three bottles of whisky.’²⁹⁶ William Lawson was posted to the Scots Guards in June 1941 while Fred Lawson was promoted to major general in February 1941 and commanded the Yorkshire County Division of home defence formations before becoming director of public relations at the War Office from 1943 to 1945. Fred succeeded as 4th Lord Burnham in 1943 and William as 5th Lord Burnham in 1963.

As for the 1st Bucks Battalion, three days’ anti-paratrooper training was given before the battalion moved into Belgium on 14 May 1940 and took up a position close to the battlefield of Waterloo. One 3” mortar was placed at the base of one of the memorials. Another 2” mortar had been issued without a firing pin.²⁹⁷ The first man killed (by bombing) on 16 May and buried in Waterloo Communal Cemetery was the popular Arthur Charles ‘Charlie’ Hammond, a 24 year old newly married man from Longwick, who had regularly entertained his colleagues with ‘rustic songs’ in dialect.²⁹⁸ Withdrawal began three days later with seven successive positions being dug and then abandoned. An estimated 71 miles were covered in the first 48 hours, the retreat often interrupted by air attack with no rations issued for three days and men scrounging what they could from the fields or deserted shops.²⁹⁹ Men frequently got separated. Gerald Norman, for example, got separated from the battalion near Seclin and, coming across 143 Brigade, never managed to rejoin the Bucks. Harry Carr, one of the bandmen but seconded to the pioneer platoon as a carpenter, also got separated

²⁹⁶ BA, T/A 3/522, Burnham, ‘One Man’s Dunkirk’.

²⁹⁷ Watson, ‘Experiences and Perceptions’, 7-8.

²⁹⁸ BA, AR 56/2007 [BMMT 558], Memoir of Robert Matthews; AR 13/2016 [BMMT 670/1], Second World War Experience Centre Sound Interview with John Brown, 29 Dec. 2010; BMMT 778, Carr, *Wartime Memories*, 23.

²⁹⁹ George Burfoot (1940), in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*; Watson, ‘Experiences and Perceptions’, 18-19.

with two others and was unable to rejoin. They made their way to Dunkirk via Lille with a RASC company.³⁰⁰ Little information was available as to wider events, Major Elliott Viney relying on a three-day old copy of *The Daily Telegraph* he had come across.³⁰¹ Jack Collins recalled the retreat as a dream of ‘marching - hunger - digging in - leaving - marching again - deathly tired’.³⁰²

Throughout, the battalion’s movements were hampered by the large number of civilian refugees crowding the roads, mixing with assorted military transport and marching troops. There were also frequent air raids.³⁰³ On 18 May whilst Major Brian Heyworth was seeking orders from brigade headquarters, Elliott Viney took some of the companies across country and down lanes and by-ways, which proved successful in getting them to a new position around Hattendries and Ath. Later that night, however, orders came to pull back again to Lesdain on the line of the Escaut Canal. Transport became available in the early hours of 19 May after five hours’ marching although the last three miles to Lesdain was again marched. At least the practice marches since mobilisation had been useful preparation but movement across country was difficult and men were tired, thirsty and hungry. As Jack Cheshire put it, ‘there was a feeling of being chased’.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁰ IWM, Doc. 25808, Diary of Gerald Norman; BMMT 778, Carr, *Wartime Memories*, 24-27.

³⁰¹ BA, AR 56/2007 [BMMT 558], Memoir of Robert Matthews; IWM, 6806, Sound Interview with Elliott Viney, 13 May 1983; Watson, ‘Experiences and Perceptions’, 18-19.

³⁰² Jack Collins (1940) in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*.

³⁰³ Gibbens, *Captivity*, 16-17; BMMT 782, Cheshire notes, 10-12.

³⁰⁴ BMMT 782, Cheshire notes, 13-14.



Sergeant Disbury of 1st Bucks Battalion bargaining with local traders at La Neuville, 11 May 1940 [BMMT]

‘Den’ Burnett-Brown soon proved unequal to the rigours of campaigning. Indecisive and having gone down with flu on 31 December 1939 and then sick with feverish bronchitis and gout on 24 January, he went home in February 1940.³⁰⁵ Major Ronald Sale, whose family had moved to Aylesbury in 1917, was educated at Berkhamsted School before being articled in 1927. A keen participant in the Wendover Players’ amateur dramatic group, he had originally been commissioned in the 5th OBLI in 1923, but transferred to the Bucks Battalion. He was appointed as acting commander on 2 February 1940.³⁰⁶ Sale was told on 27 March that Burnett-Brown would not return, and he would be confirmed in command.³⁰⁷ It was

³⁰⁵ BA, AR 4/2013 [BMMT 618], Elliott Viney to parents, 26 Jan. 1940; AR 23/2019 [BMMT 732/1], Viney Notebook; Gibbens, *Captivity*, 12; RA, MDKDH/ARMFOR/11/7, Sale to Lady Herbert, 7 Feb. 1940..

³⁰⁶ *Bucks Examiner*, 9 June 1933.

³⁰⁷ BA, AR 110/2007 [BMMT 579], Sale to wife, 28 Mar. 1940.

generally seen that the battalion improved markedly under Sale, who had the men on 30-mile route marches - 'Agony Friday' - every week.³⁰⁸

Hearing that Lt Colonel Philip Eliot, son of the Bishop of Buckingham and commander of the Slough Company in the 1920s, had been replaced in command of the 2nd Bucks Battalion by a regular, Sale wrote that TA commanding officers 'are falling "as thick as leaves in Vallombrosa"'. Three days later, the battalion lost its record as the only one in the division without a regular officer as two arrived in quick succession.³⁰⁹ By profession, Eliot was a brewer. Allegedly, the brigadier asked him if he would employ a man without training in the brewery trade after the war and, when Eliot said no, the brigadier remarked that he would then understand why he was being replaced by a regular.³¹⁰

Eliot's successor, Colonel Philip Booth, was 'the worst type of regular officer who completely despises the TA, its officers and all its ways and takes no pains to conceal the fact'.³¹¹ On meeting Booth for the first time, Eliot seemed to think the latter a 'good fellow', but it became apparent that Booth had no sympathy with Bucks customs and tried to abolish them.³¹²

³⁰⁸ Author interview with R. G. Davies, 16 July 1984.

³⁰⁹ BA, AR 110/2007 [BMMT 579], Sale to wife, 15 Apl. 1940. The allusion is to the line in Milton's *Paradise Lost*: 'thick as the autumnal leaves that strow the brooks in Vallombrosa'. Vallombrosa was the Benedictine abbey at Regello in Tuscany at which Pope Urban II preached to launch the First Crusade in 1096.

³¹⁰ Herbert Raggett (1940) in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*.

³¹¹ BA, AR 110/2007 [BMMT 579], Sale to wife, 3 Aug. 1940.

³¹² BA, BA, D/FR 161/2/22/1, Eliot to Cottesloe, n. d.; T/A 6/33, Crouch to Cottesloe, 19 Jan. 1941.

Burnett-Brown then unexpectedly returned to the 1st Bucks on 20 April 1940 having ‘pulled strings at home’.³¹³ Sale received only three hours’ notice of Burnett-Brown’s return and his own demotion and was sent on a senior officer’s course at Devizes on 25 April, thus missing the 1940 campaign. The adjutant, James Ritchie recorded in the war diary that Sale’s departure was ‘a great loss to the Bn. and universally regretted’.³¹⁴ Geoffrey Rowe, who would be killed in May, wrote to Sale that ‘the situation is quite beyond words’.³¹⁵ Rowe, a banker, had raised a new platoon at Olney when the battalion was doubled. Characterised as a ‘dapper little man’ but distinctly middle-aged, he found the retreat particularly trying.³¹⁶ Burnett-Brown broke down again and was rendered speechless in the early hours of 17 May 1940. He remained for a few days but did not command again.³¹⁷

Temporary command went to Acting Major Brian Heyworth, a 33 year old Treasury solicitor from Beaconsfield. He had previously served with the 4/5th East Lancashires before moving south and transferring to the Bucks in 1936. Heyworth had been commanding ‘D’ Company while Acting Major Elliott Viney, who commanded ‘B’ Company, was senior to Heyworth by virtue of one day’s TA service but younger. Burnett-Brown had favoured Heyworth for promotion to acting major in January 1940 ahead of Viney as

³¹³ BA, AR 110/2007 [BMMT 579], Sale to wife, 20 Apl. 1940.

³¹⁴ TNA, WO 167/804, War Diary, 25 Apl. 1940.

³¹⁵ BA, AR 110/2007 [BMMT 579], Sale to wife, 9 May 1940.

³¹⁶ Author interview with J. Owen Jones, 6 Oct. 1980; BA, AR 65/2014 [BMMT 651/1], Memoir of Leslie Phipps; John Blatch (1940), in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*.

³¹⁷ TNA, WO 167/804, War Diary, 17 May 1940; BA, AR 6/2002 [BMMT 495/4]; AR 105/2011 [BMMT 619], Account of Brigadier the Hon. Nigel Fitzroy Somerset, 17 May 1940 [also in IWM, Doc 2302 [86/19/1].

he believed Heyworth abler and had trained his company well.³¹⁸ On the other hand, Ronald Sale had the greatest confidence in Viney.³¹⁹ Clearly, there were significant tensions between Heyworth and Viney.

Viney had been second in command of the Wycombe company under Horace Parshall, who on one occasion told Princess Marina that Wycombe was a ‘dirty city’. Viney had given some thought to the practicalities of company command but, when transferred to command ‘B’ Company at Aylesbury on duplication, found vested interests in the company and the TA club ‘very seriously entrenched’. The pace of events, however, enabled change and ‘stripes came fluttering down, despite all protests’. Company accounts were properly audited and CSM Norton compelled to sort out years of accumulated correspondence. What Viney later characterised as ‘some hoarier leeches’ were removed although some including ‘the most painful eyesore’ - a sergeant who was both milkman and bookies’ runner - initially managed to evade removal as little could be proved against him. Another sergeant, eventually sent back to Cowley, was a ‘jackass’. The Bugle Major, who could not write and could barely read, and about whom suspicions were harboured with respect to young boys in the band although no parents complained, also survived as he had some success as a recruiter. Over 150 new recruits had to be absorbed and RSM Hawtin had to struggle with vast amounts of paper.³²⁰

Handing over the Wycombe Company to Heyworth in 1939, Viney found the latter pedantic in the extreme with a ‘precise and card-indexed mind’. A

³¹⁸ Michael Heyworth, *Hazebrouck, 1940* (Privately published: 2004), 37-38. Heyworth’s letters to his wife, on which this booklet is based, are in IWM, Doc. 9988.

³¹⁹ BA, AR 110/2007 [BMMT 57], Sale to wife, 15 Oct. 1939.

³²⁰ BA, AR 23/2019 [BMMT 732/1], Viney Notebook.

flurry of paper followed Viney to Aylesbury on deficiencies in the number of rifle pull-throughs and boots. The then adjutant told Viney that Heyworth need only state that he was generally satisfied on hand-over and had no need to account for every item. Sent an ‘airy’ letter by Viney in this regard, a ‘stern reply’ from Heyworth reported that the company bicycle had two spokes missing from its rear wheel and no complete bicycle pump! Amid the frenzied activity upon mobilisation in September 1939, Heyworth telephoned to enquire as to the correct length of the tape holding an identity disc: ‘A strangled voice replied, “just long enough to hang yourself - good bye”.’ It would appear that Heyworth was aloof from the officer’s mess. Of the last mess party at the end of the last pre-war camp at Lavant, Viney recorded laconically that, after the last bawdy song had been sung and Lawrence Viney had been carried out unconscious from colliding with a tent pole, ‘one lighted tent still marked the spot where Heyworth was struggling with his pay-lists’.³²¹

John Viccars, commissioned into the battalion in June 1939, originally took over the mortar platoon from James Ritchie, but was then transferred to ‘B’ Company. He found Viney a ‘difficult character, who had had too much power in Aylesbury before the war’. Having said that, through the close family connection with the battalion, Viney was bound to have a certain sense of ownership although Viney himself recorded that it was disadvantageous that he knew the Hazells men in the company ‘almost too well’. When Lawrence Viney was invalided in April 1940, Viccars took over the Carrier Platoon.³²² When Trevor Gibbens, a Scot and later a

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² BA, AR 68/2021 [BMMT 745], Ingram Murray interview with John Viccars, 20 Jan. 2009; BA, AR 23/2019 [BMMT 732/1], Viney Notebook.

distinguished professor of forensic psychiatry, was posted in as medical officer in 1939, he noted that the battalion ‘was a close-knit group, many officers and men coming from around Aylesbury and the big printing company there, others from banks and offices and solicitors, etc.’. Gibbens felt his acceptance depended not on his medical skills but on ‘whether I was a civilised person who would fit in’. He felt it was useful that the popular chaplain, Ronnie Dix, was a son of his own local vicar. He thought Viney ‘an extremely steady and respected officer’.³²³ Dix, formerly the priest in charge at Beaconsfield, had managed to get arrested as a spy when the battalion was at Newbury.³²⁴

Heyworth recognised on 31 March 1940 that, under Sale, ‘the tone and efficiency of the officers and of the battalion generally has improved enormously and everyone would be disgruntled if Den came back’. As already related, Burnett-Brown duly reappeared on 20 April.³²⁵ The other two company commanders with Viney and Heyworth were Captain Horace Parshall (‘A’ Company), who was invalided in January 1940, and Captain Alan Collin (‘C’ Company). The adjutant, Captain James Ritchie, a chartered accountant and Deputy Secretary to the Bankers’ Clearing House, had married into the Wethered family and was commissioned in the Bucks Battalion in 1938.³²⁶ Ritchie had taken command of the mortar platoon at Marlow and became adjutant when the regular incumbent was declared medically unfit.³²⁷ Parshall was replaced by Brian Dowling whilst Hugh

³²³ Gibbens, *Captivity*, 5, 21.

³²⁴ BA, AR23/2019 [BMMT 732/1], Viney Notebook.

³²⁵ Heyworth, *Hazebrouck*, 83, 111-12; TNA, WO 167/804, War Diary, 20 Apl. 1940.

³²⁶ Belinda Norman-Butler, *James* (Newport: Hunnyhill Publications, 1997), 7.

³²⁷ BA, AR 23/2019 [BMMT 732/2] has Ritchie’s Platoon Roll Book, 1939.

Saunders stepped up to command 'D' Company in April 1940 after Captain Richard Brocklehurst went sick. The only regular was Rupert Barry, who arrived in April 1940 to succeed Collin. At Halle during the retreat Barry 'stood calmly lighting his pipe as shells fell around him'.³²⁸

On 20 May 1940, the battalion had its first rest in over a fortnight, the Great War veteran quartermaster, Captain 'Patsy' Pallett, managing to procure around a hundred eight-pound tins of biscuit from a factory in Lille, whilst the transport officer, Captain Bligh Mason, found a bottle of beer for each man and three dozen bottles of champagne. It was the first time two meals had been served in a single day for a week. Mail and newspapers also arrived. The following day also proved relatively quiet. Barry's 'C' Company was sent to advance with bayonets fixed under cover of mortar fire towards a force that had crossed the Escaut Canal but the Germans withdrew. On 22 May the battalion was shelled intermittently until around 1800. The rifle companies were ordered to move to a position on the 'Gort Line' - the defences constructed during the Phoney War - at Rumeigies, the transport with ammunition supplies and the support weapons being directed to follow a different route. Fortunately, the rifle companies and support echelon managed to meet up by chance in patchy mist. Leaving the Lesdain area, the battalion managed to collect a herd of about 60 cows that were driven along by Gibbens and his stretcher bearers and which provided much needed food.³²⁹

The battalion was relieved at Rumeigies by some French formations on 23 May and ordered back to Nomain. It was the seventh position the battalion had dug and then ordered to abandon. As the battalion retired, Viney spent much of his time trying to retain discipline as some of the men 'just didn't know what was

³²⁸ George Burfoot (1940) in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*.

³²⁹ Norman-Butler, *James*, 18; BMMT 782, Cheshire notes, 14-16.

happening and were ready to throw their hands in'. Quite fortuitously, Viney came across a battalion leave party by the side of the road.³³⁰ 145 Brigade received orders to move to Calais on 23 May, which was already under attack from the Germans although no one in the brigade was aware of this. The movement was supposed to begin at 2130 hours on 24 May but was delayed by late arrival of transport.

The orders had also now changed, with the destination Cassel. The vehicle convoy reached Bailleul at about 0300 on 25 May when the 1st Bucks was detached to defend Hazebrouck simply because it was the rear battalion in the line of march at that point with the other two battalions from 145 Brigade sent to Cassel and Ledringhem.³³¹ The newly promoted Brigadier the Hon. Nigel 'Slasher' Fitzroy Somerset, previously commanding the 2nd Gloucesters, had little more knowledge of wider events until 28 May. He assumed that, as 'Wood Force' was supposed to be holding Hazebrouck, the Bucks would come under Colonel John Wood's command. In the event, whilst Wood, Gort's Deputy Director of Artillery, had selected defensive positions and had them shown to Heyworth, he left between 1400 and 1800 on 26 May, 'Wood Force' having been dissolved. Somerset later suggested that he would not have sent the Bucks if he had known Wood would not be in command. He had intended to put the 2nd Gloucesters in Hazebrouck and the Bucks and the 4th OBLI in Cassel but it was not practicable to do other than detach the Bucks.³³²

³³⁰ IWM, 6906, Sound Interview with Elliott Viney, 13 May 1983; BMMT 782, Cheshire notes, 15-16; Atkins notes, 4..

³³¹ IWM, Doc. 2302 [86/19/1], Somerset Mss, Diary, 26 May 1940.

³³² BA, AR 105/2011 [BMMT 619] [also in IWM, Doc. 2302 [86/19/1], Somerset Account, 26 May 1940, and Elliott Viney Account, July 1940; 6806, Sound Interview with Elliott Viney, 13 May 1983.

It was also only on 28 May that Major General Andrew ‘Bulgy’ Thorne commanding 48th Division was made aware of the decision to evacuate the BEF. Many from ‘A’ Company had got lost on 16/17 May and one platoon never rejoined but the defence of Hazebrouck would be assisted by eight 25-pounder guns from 391 and 392 Batteries of 98th (Surrey and Sussex Yeomanry) Field Regiment under the command of Lieutenant Colonel George Ledingham, five or six 2-pounder anti-tank guns from 223 Battery of 56th (The King’s Own) Anti-Tank Regiment, a battery of 21 HAA Regiment, a troop of 1 LAA Regiment, a troop of 173 LAA Battery, a platoon of the 145 Brigade Anti-Tank Company with 25mm Hotchkiss guns under Sergeant Ken Trussel of the 1st Bucks, and No. 2 Section of 226 Field Company, RE. There were some old French and Belgian tanks in the town but in such bad repair that they were simply used as road-blocks. Elements of 44th Division were in the outskirts.

GHQ was leaving Hazebrouck as the battalion deployed at about 1000 on 25 May, the large amounts of confidential files including Lord Gort’s complete order of battle left behind in the railway station being burned by the Bucks. Gibbens saw GHQ kitchen staff ‘in white chef’s hats emerging and leaping into their vans, disappearing up the road as fast as they could drive; not accompanied by jeers exactly, but by the quiet contempt (very good for morale) of our chaps who knew the orders were not to retreat’. Elliott Viney came across a Coldstreamer he knew who asked him if he would bring along Lord Cowdray’s valise in due course when the Bucks left the town as he did not have enough room for it in his car: Captain Lord Cowdray of 98th Field Regiment had been severely wounded and was to lose his arm.³³³

³³³ Gibbens, *Captivity*, 18-19; IWM, 6806, Sound Interview with Elliott Viney, 13 May 1983; BA, AR 56/2007 [BMMT 558], Memoir of Robert Matthews; AR 105/2011 [BMMT 619] and IWM, Doc. 2302 [86/19/1], Somerset Account, 27 May 1940; SOFO, Account of George Davess.

Stragglers and odds and sods - orderlies and so on - from GHQ often had no weapons and could contribute little to the defence, although some 40 Territorial machine gunners from the 4th Cheshire Machine Gun Battalion were added to those elements of 'A' Company that had rejoined. Around 50 men of a leave party from 6th York and Lancaster Regiment were also deployed and even those without formed units could be motivated by officers or good NCOs to make themselves useful. Many, however, were without rifles and were given hand grenades and axes. Heyworth was given a single map and found his officers so exhausted that they could not keep awake during his initial briefing. Viney later said that he had only about six hours' sleep in the last 120 hours before being captured whilst the common theme of recollections was being too tired to think of panic.³³⁴



Ruins of the Fondation Warein Orphanage, Hazebrouck after the battle [BMMT]

³³⁴ Peter Constable (1940) in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*; IWM, 6806, Sound Interview with Elliott Viney, 13 May 1983; author interview with Elliott Viney, 24 July 1980; Watson, 'Experiences and Perceptions', 27.

The town was too large to be defended by a single battalion and was surrounded largely by open country, the only real obstacle being the local canal and the embankment and cutting in the northern part of the town carrying the main railway line to Calais. The only option was to defend the edges of the town with isolated company strength positions. Most of the anti-tank guns were placed to the west as that and the north were the directions most open for tanks, with the field guns sent to the west and south. 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies were deployed around the perimeter with 'A' Company in reserve with the transport section in a large convent school - the Institut St Jacques, which had been briefly the location of GHQ - and battalion headquarters in the Fondation Warein Orphanage opposite. The orphans were evacuating the Orphanage as the battalion arrived but other civilians took shelter in its cellars.³³⁵ 'B' Company defended the north and north-west of the town, 'C' Company the south-west, and 'D' Company the west. Some of the 'A' echelon transport remained with companies, but most appears to have been stationed at a linen factory whilst the 'B' echelon transport was put in the town square. The Carrier Platoon was initially sent forward on 26 May, but ran into German tanks and those left were then used as anti-tank obstacles around the Orphanage. Somerset visited Heyworth briefly at about 1800 on 26 May and on the following day tried to get 44th Division to send assistance.

The general German advance had been halted on 24 May 1940 to enable the infantry to catch up with the Panzer divisions that had far outstripped them and the supply network. The advance resumed on 26 May. The Germans believed GHQ still to be in Hazebrouck and an attack developed at 0900 on 27 May, that on 'C' and 'D' Companies increasing in strength around 1200 hours. Those

³³⁵ BA, AR 56/2007 [BMMT 558], Memoir of Robert Matthews; Patrick Hegarty (1940) in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*.

formations involved were 8 *Panzer* Division and part of the motorised infantry of the SS *Verfügungs* Division, approaching initially from the west and south. Reporting to Second Lieutenant David Stebbings, the battalion intelligence officer, that he had seen thousands of Germans advancing, Private Ernest Cooper was asked exactly how many, to which he replied that he had not stopped to count them.³³⁶ Four of the 25-pounders were put out of action or disabled during the course of the day with the rest pulled out between 1900 and 2100 hours. Bombing and artillery and mortar fire caused significant casualties. Hugh Saunders of 'D' Company recalled that whilst his men were awaiting the attack from a large force of armoured vehicles approaching from the direction of St Omer, the battalion water truck arrived to fill up empty water bottles: 'The arrival was unhappily the signal for the commencement of the attack and, hardly had [the truck] stopped outside the gate than an enemy tank rushed up from the area of Le Cinq Rues and, with a carefully aimed shot hit the water cart straight in the [water] tank.'³³⁷ Saunders' No. 18 Platoon under Second Lieutenant Tom Garside appears to have withdrawn almost at once from a farmhouse on the extreme west of the defences.³³⁸

'C' Company, whose headquarters was in the grounds of an electricity works, managed to put five light tanks out of action, but was steadily cut off and was directed to retreat through 'A' Company around 1600. Few made it. 'B' Company with oddments sent from the reserve tried to support 'D' Company but by 1900 communications were becoming increasingly difficult. The intelligence section's observation post in the St Eloi church tower had also been abandoned under shell fire at about 1530. The battalion had no radios and

³³⁶ BA, AR 91/2015, High Wycombe Branch OCA Mins, 28 Jan. 2000.

³³⁷ Jerry Murland, *Cassel and Hazebrouck 1940* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2017), 88.

³³⁸ *Ibid*, 146-47.

communication was by runner. A message using Morse - speech was no longer possible - managed to get through to brigade at Cassel, which indicated at about 2115 that 44th Division would attempt to break through from the south although this never materialised. ³³⁹

At around 2030 the Germans broke through 'D' Company, cutting it off from the rest of the battalion and also isolating headquarters. Some tried to stop the German tanks with grenades aimed at dislodging their tracks. Primarily, however, the men had really only their rifles as the battalion was critically short of mortar rounds. The Boys anti-tank rifle was not only cumbersome with heavy recoil but also ineffective unless used at short range and at the right penetrative angle. ³⁴⁰ Ammunition generally was not plentiful, the cooks of the 'B' Echelon having only ten rounds each. ³⁴¹ Improvised barricades of trucks, furniture, and packing cases could not realistically stop tanks. As noted by Second Lieutenant Amyst Lee, who had been holding a cottage beside the railway embankment and had managed to find ginger cake for his hungry men, they could only pick

³³⁹ Neville (ed.), *War Chronicle*, I, 144-45; BA, AR 56/2007 [BMMT 558], Memoir of Robert Matthews; AR 13/2016 [BMMT 670/1], Second World War Experience Centre Sound Interview with John Brown, 29 Dec. 2010.

³⁴⁰ Patrick Hegarty (1940) in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*; IWM, Doc. 6806, Sound Interview with Elliott Viney; 27350, Sound Interview with Tich Rayner, 5 Apl. 2005; BA, AR 68/2021 [BMMT 745], Ingram Murray interview with John Viccars, 20 Jan. 2009; Watson, 'Experiences and Perceptions', 21-22; AR 56/2007 [BMMT 558], Memoir of Robert Matthews; AR 105/2011 [BMMT 619] also IWM, Doc 2302 [86/19/1], Elliot Viney Account, July 1940; Dale Clarke, *Britain's Final Defence: Arming the Home Guard, 1940-44* (Stroud: History Press, 2016), 196-99; Ingram Murray, 'The Wider Picture: The Bucks Battalion and Dunkirk', *Bugle & Sabre* 2 (2008), 45-49; *Buckinghamshire in World War II* Video (1995), Interview with Stan Styles

³⁴¹ SOFO, Account of George Davess.

off motor cyclists and infantry and were forced to withdraw as soon as the tanks gained the railway track.³⁴²

At nightfall on 27 May, Heyworth from the Orphanage tried to establish contact with 'B' Company and the B echelon transport. Second Lieutenant Martin Preston was killed by a burst from a tank's machine gun whilst trying to get to the transport in the main square. David Stebbings, son of the manager of Barclays Bank in Aylesbury and himself an articled clerk who would qualify as a solicitor whilst a POW, found 'B' Company had been forced to abandon its positions and managed to return to report to Heyworth. With the Germans pushing through the gaps in the defences, Saunders, who compiled the war diary in August 1940 from what could be discerned from the survivors, called a conference of 'D' Company's NCOs and then ordered his men to leave in parties of six or seven and try to make their way towards the coast. The first left at about 2215 hours but soon returned saying it was not possible. A vote was taken to try again. Saunders himself led out the last group of six men.³⁴³ Second Lieutenant Michael Sherwell's group was trapped in houses by machine gun and sniper fire. Sherwell received the MC for going out in the street to shoot several snipers, allowing his men to withdraw to the village of La Motte three miles to the south. Other scattered parties also made their escape, 'Patsy' Pallett and Bligh Mason, organising drivers, cooks and others from the 'B' Echelon into a rear guard. What remained of 'C' Company, whom Barry had also instructed try to get away in small groups seem to have been captured at about 2130.

³⁴² Richard Collier, *The Sands of Dunkirk* 4th edn. (London: Fontana/Collins, 1974), 72.

³⁴³ TNA, WO 167/804, Saunders report, 9 Aug. 1940; BA, AR 6/2002 [BMMT 495/4]; Jack Collins (1940) in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*.

The ‘keep’ in the Orphanage was cut off with around 150 men and it was clear once Stebbings returned that they were the only organised party remaining. Morale remained astonishingly high despite the exhaustion and the critical situation, Viney handing out cigars he had received at Lesdain. He spent some time talking to the mortally wounded Private Sydney Grimmer, who had worked for Hazells in the Machine Department.³⁴⁴

Tanks, mortars and artillery continued to pound the convent, the wounded having been placed in the cellars. By 1300 on 28 May the Orphanage was under direct fire from tanks, RSM Hawtin managing to disable one by dropping a grenade into the open turret from an upstairs window. By 1430 ammunition was in short supply and Heyworth and Viney agreed that they would try to break out that night. When Gibbens said he would stay with the wounded, it was decided to continue to resist. Private Perkins of ‘D’ Company, who had been sent to the Orphanage for orders and then got trapped there, recalled Heyworth ‘throwing hand grenades out of every window’.³⁴⁵

At about 1630, Heyworth was killed by a sniper while crossing the street from the orphanage to the Institut St Jacques to see if that could be used as a headquarters although it would have been impossible to move the wounded there. His last conversation with Elliott Viney had been about the ethics of eventual surrender, which he was unwilling to contemplate.³⁴⁶ With ammunition now exhausted, Viney more realistically directed the 100 or so remaining defenders of the Orphanage to fix bayonets and take to the garden. One group under Viney climbed into a house at one of the corners of the garden

³⁴⁴ Collier, *Sands of Dunkirk*, 72.

³⁴⁵ Gibbens, *Captivity*, 22; Heyworth, *Hazebrouck*, 178; SOFO, Account of George Davess.

³⁴⁶ Heyworth, *Hazebrouck*, 221; SOFO 3543, Murray to Stanley, 26 Nov. 2004.

but it was seen by a passing German and stick grenades were thrown into the building, one being thrown back by Private Hewes who thereby saved many lives. Viney, who spoke German, took the decision to surrender at about 1800, tying a white handkerchief on the end of a rifle. Private Perkins recalled ‘a terrible ringing in my head’ from the grenades. The Orphanage was now on fire and the Germans assisted Gibbens in getting some of the wounded - perhaps two thirds from the 100 or so - at least from the cellar before the building completely collapsed. Some men did escape but many were caught elsewhere in the town or over the next few days. Lined up, most expected to be shot out of hand.³⁴⁷ One of those captured, Bull, the mess waiter had been captured by the Turks at Kut in 1916 and so became a POW for the second time. Viney remembered Bull making him a mug of tea whilst the Orphanage was under heavy shelling whilst Gibbens described him as a ‘wonderful fellow, completely poker-faced, unmoved by shot and shell - the perfect middle-aged butler’. Gibbens recalled Bull appearing to give him tea and said, ‘I’ve made you an Omelette, Sir.’³⁴⁸



POWs from the 1st Bucks Battalion being marched away from Hazebrouck [BMMT]

³⁴⁷ Patrick Hegarty (1940) in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*; BA, AR 105/2011 [BMMT 619], also IWM, Doc. 2302 [86/19/1], Elliott Viney Account, July 1940; AR 68/2021 [BMMT 745], Ingram Murray interview with Viccars, 20 Jan. 2009; AR 56/2007 [BMMT558], Memoir of Robert Matthews; Gibbens, *Captivity*, 22-23; SOFO 3543, Account of Bernard Hardacre.

³⁴⁸ Author interview with Elliott Viney, 24 July 1980; Gibbens, *Captivity*, 20.

James Ritchie had told Sergeant Cox that he would attempt to escape but he was never seen again, his death only confirmed in May 1941. Originally buried by local French civilians with 14 others found in the Orphanage, Ritchie's body was moved with the others by the Germans to the town cemetery in 1941. The Germans declined to bury the British dead or to collect identity tags so the French entered the building once the ruins had cooled down. The body of a medical orderly was found with his arms outstretched over a patient trying to protect the man from the collapsing beam that killed them both. Ritchie's belongings were returned to his parents by the Frenchman who buried him when they visited Hazebrouck in 1946. Ritchie's daughter had been born in September 1940, three months after his death.³⁴⁹ Pallett meanwhile managed to withdraw his party of about 40 men to La Motte, where they joined men from the Royal West Kents and drove off one German attack with bayonets, before then withdrawing after dark on 28 May and managing to reach Dunkirk.³⁵⁰ Pallett won the MC and Lance Sergeant Cuthbert the MM.

A German radio broadcast on 30 May 1940 recorded that the 'defenders of Hazebrouck not only delayed the advance but resisted in a manner truly worthy of the highest traditions of the British Army'.³⁵¹ Similarly, a letter written by Leutnant Werner Petri of *Panzer-Pionier Bataillon 59* of 8 *Panzer* Division on 31 May described 'tenacious' defence of hedgerows around the town and roadblocks within it by 'elite troops'. Of the Orphanage he wrote of bringing up two assault guns and a heavy field howitzer to fire directly on the building:³⁵²

³⁴⁹ Norman-Butler, *James*, 21, 34-35.

³⁵⁰ IWM, Christie-Miller Mss, Doc. 4776 [80/32/2], Unsigned and undated account of Pallett's escape from Hazebrouck.

³⁵¹ Neville (ed.), *War Chronicle*, I, 149; IWM, Doc. 2302 [86/19/1], Somerset Mss, Extract from German Broadcast, 3 June 1940.

³⁵² BA, AR 68/2021 [BMMT 746], Letter of Leutnant Petri, 31 May 1940.

The English clung to every tree, every room, every brick. The fighting inside the great building - the town's Orphanage - was the fiercest I have experienced so far. Fighting from room to room with grenades and bundled charges. It finally ended when the great staircase and the whole floor of a great hall in the lower storey caved in, burying a part of the garrison in the cellars... I will send you an English cap of the Buckingham regiment. The English soldiers fight like lions, they are our toughest foe...

In the campaign as a whole, from 66,426 casualties suffered by the BEF, 41,567 were captured. The BEF was out-maneuvred and out-thought rather than out-fought by the Germans with surrender not a sign of poor morale but invariably a disciplined decision:³⁵³

Lacking a coherent doctrine of warfare, and of what was expected of officers and men, lacking the tools to compete effectively and an effective command, control, communications and intelligence capability, most units of the BEF took a pragmatic approach to combat. They fought as effectively as they could for as long as they could, but then accepted the bitter humiliation of surrender.

For some time it was by no means clear how many casualties had been sustained. On 14 June 1940 it was thought at least 11 men had been killed, with 31 known to be wounded (of whom two were known to be POWs), with 380 missing, of whom at least 180 were known to be POWs. Subsequently, a further

³⁵³ Mark Connelly and Walter Miller, 'The BEF and the Issue of Surrender on the Western Front in 1940', *War in History* 11 (2004), 424-41, at 441.

four men were listed as dead and two escaped.³⁵⁴ On that day, 11 officers and 251 men had so far rejoined the battalion. It finally transpired that, in all, 54 members of the 1st Bucks Battalion were killed in the course of the fighting in May 1940 - 37 of them on 27 and 28 May - with a further 11 dying in captivity. Around 200-250 were captured.³⁵⁵ Five officers had been killed. Heyworth, Ritchie, Preston, and Rowe were killed at Hazebrouck. Captain E. A. W. B. 'Roger' Dixie, who had been posted away from the battalion to the brigade anti-tank company and then attached to the 4th OBLI, was killed at Cassel. Ten officers were captured. By July about 350 men had been reunited with the battalion.³⁵⁶ A total of 21 men from the Bucks are buried at Hazebrouck including Heyworth, Ritchie, and Preston, with four more in cemeteries close by: a further 14 are commemorated on the Dunkirk Memorial to the Missing.

Of the other defenders, 98 Field Regiment, 21st HAA, and 226 Field Company all withdrew on 27 May but the men of the Bucks platoon from 145 Brigade Anti-Tank Company were all killed or captured.³⁵⁷ One group headed to the south west, one of them on the run for three months before finally being captured.³⁵⁸ Private Perkins managed eventually to escape through Spain, and Gibraltar reaching England in June 1941.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁴ BA, T/A 6/15, Casualty Return, 14 June 1940.

³⁵⁵ Brian Bond, 'The British Field Force in France and Belgium, 1939-40', in Paul Addison and Angus Calder (eds), *Time to Kill: The Soldier's Experience of War in the West, 1939-45* (London: Pimlico, 1997), 40-49, at 44.

³⁵⁶ BA, D/FR 161/2/26/1, Sale to Cottesloe, 22 July 1940.

³⁵⁷ BA, AR 105/2011 [BMMT 619], also IWM, Doc. 2302 [86/19/1], Viney Account, July 1940 with added note, 11 Nov. 1941. In captivity, Somerset had collected reports from other captured officers from 145 Brigade.

³⁵⁸ Peter Constable (1940) in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*.

³⁵⁹ Heyworth, *Hazebrouck*, 175.

Lieutenant Clive Le Neve Foster of 'B' Company, a solicitor educated at Shrewsbury School who had joined the battalion in 1938, went into action directly returning from leave and was still wearing his golfing shoes when evacuated from Dunkirk. Elliott Viney had characterised him as a 'very silent wraith in a cloth cap', who had always appeared at training nights seemingly driving a different car.³⁶⁰ Foster had not managed to re-join the battalion until 23 May being appointed second in command of 'B' Company to Captain John Kaye as Viney had moved up to second in command to Heyworth. At about 2000 hours on 27 May he helped bring an anti-tank gun back across the railway line only to find the company had withdrawn. With three other men - one of whom was subsequently fatally wounded - he remained behind the railway embankment until dark. They then joined some gunners with whom he got away to be attached with other stragglers from 48th Division to the 2nd Royal Sussex Regiment. Foster met up with Hugh Saunders at Dunkirk. John Brown, a builder from Aylesbury, also got away with some gunners. Second Lieutenant William Marshall slipped away with eight men from the station hotel, where he had managed to scrub his teeth in the hotel's champagne. Sergeant Frederick Larkin also managed to get away, being told to head north and that the password was 'Beer and Skittles'.³⁶¹ George Burfoot, who had been wounded in head, arm and leg at Hazebrouck, was put on a lorry that managed to reach Dunkirk but the first aid post was then overrun by the Germans and he was captured.³⁶² Peter Constable escaped with three others but two soon got separated and, having mingled with refugees, he and his companion wandered

³⁶⁰ BA, AR23/2019 [BMMT 732/1], Viney Notebook.

³⁶¹ *Le Neve Foster*, 29-40; Peter Constable (1940), in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*; BA, AR 13/2016 [BMMT 670/2], Second World War Experience Centre Sound Interview with John Brown, 29 Dec.2010; Collier, *Sands of Dunkirk*, 73.

³⁶² George Burfoot (1940) in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*.

aimlessly before being apprehended.³⁶³ Second Lieutenants John Viccars and Sandy Powell both managed to evade capture for about twelve days before being captured.³⁶⁴

The remainder of 145 Brigade at Cassel was also overrun, orders to withdraw not getting through due to the breakdown of communications and the inability of liaison officers to reach the town either on foot or by staff car. Similarly, orders to the Bucks Battalion to withdraw never reached them.³⁶⁵ Whilst a POW, Brigadier Fitzroy Somerset unburdened himself, 'I realised we were the Joe Soaps of Dunkirk, that we were being sacrificed so that as many British and French as possible could get away and get all the kudos. I felt very bitter.'³⁶⁶

One of those taken with the entire brigade staff near Cassel was Sergeant George Soane of Princes Risborough, who worked in the Mycology Section of the Forest Products Research Laboratory and who had been seconded from the battalion to brigade headquarters as chief clerk. Like many of the battalion he was sent to a POW camp at Thorn in Poland, mostly being used as a farm labourer.³⁶⁷ CQSM Wilfred Headdon, a former regular who had been the battalion's PSI at High Wycombe in the 1920s before retiring in 1930 to work for the Bucks CTA, re-enlisted in 1939. He was also sent initially to Thorn, one of 21 men from the battalion kept in a cattle truck with 33 men from other units

³⁶³ Peter Constable (1940), in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*.

³⁶⁴ Murland, *Cassel and Hazebrouck*, 106.

³⁶⁵ Smalley, *British Expeditionary Force*, 126; IWM, 6806, Sound Interview with Elliott Viney, 13 May 1983.

³⁶⁶ IWM, Doc. 2302 [86/19/1].

³⁶⁷ IWM, 4896, Sound Interview with George Soane, 9 June 1981; Doc. 11402 [P435], Soane Diary of POW experiences.

for 44 hours. Headdon worked on farms and, later, in a nicotine factory.³⁶⁸ Others were initially held at a prison in Doullens, Robert Matthews getting separated there from others from the battalion and ending up at Stalag VIII B at Lamsdorf in Poland. On being taken, Matthews remarked, ‘We were so tired, we didn’t care if they’d mowed us down. We’d reached the end of the line.’³⁶⁹ Others to arrive at Lamsdorf were Patrick Hegarty and Sergeant Leslie Phipps of ‘C’ Company, a civil servant in the Forest Products Research laboratory (Chemical Section), who lived at Princes Risborough. Phipps was trapped in the upper room of a chateau’s stables with Rupert Barry and eight or so others after breaking out.³⁷⁰

News of who had been killed or been captured came in only slowly over the following months.³⁷¹ Ten of the battalion’s POWs returned to England in a repatriation deal in October 1943.³⁷² Non-combatant troops, members of the medical corps or chaplains, together with seriously sick and wounded combatants, were all eligible for exchange and repatriation.³⁷³ Photographs of graffiti found on brickwork at a former POW camp at Kandrin-Cosel in Poland

³⁶⁸ BA, T/A 6/85, Headdon Mss.

³⁶⁹ BA, AR 56/2007 [BMMT558], Memoir of Robert Matthews.

³⁷⁰ BA, AR 65/2014 [BMMT 651/1], Memoir of Leslie Phipps, 15.

³⁷¹ *Bucks Advertiser*, 21 and 28 June, 5, 12, 19 and 26 July, 2, 9 AND 23 Aug., and 20 Dec. 1940 ; BA, AR 110/2007 (BMMT 579), Sale to wife, 7 June, 26 July, 10 Aug., 8 Sept., 12 Oct., 9 Nov.1940; 25 Jan., 1 Feb. 1941; 14 Mar. 1942; BA, T/A 6/17, Orders, 20 Oct. 1941; D/FR 161/2/26/1, Sale to Cottesloe, 22 July 1940.

³⁷² BA, AR 110/2007 (BMMT 579), Sale to wife BA, AR 110/2007 [BMMT 579], Sale to wife, 1 Oct. 1943.

³⁷³ Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely, ‘British Prisoners-of-War: From Resilience to Psychological Vulnerability: Reality or Perception’, *Twentieth Century British History* 21 (2010), 163-83.

in 2011 included some by Private Eric Turner from Wexham near Slough.³⁷⁴ Most of the Bucks Battalion POWs, indeed, ended at camps in Poland such as Private Harry ‘Spud’ Durley from Whitchurch. Durley escaped when his group of POWs was marched westwards to escape the Russian advance in early 1945. He and another POW were hidden by a Czech civilian for over two months until they were able to emerge when the area was occupied by Russian forces.³⁷⁵ Rupert Barry ended up in Colditz while the regular RSM, ‘Scatty’ Hawtin, escaped from Thorn and made it to Scotland via Sweden with the help of the Polish resistance in 21 days. David Stebbings escaped from his prison camp but was recaptured. Similarly, Gibbens escaped from Egendorf in October 1942 but was also recaptured.



German POW Card for Harry Durley of the 1st Bucks Battalion [TNA]

³⁷⁴ IWM, Doc. DC 690.

³⁷⁵ TNA, WO 416/106/134; *Bucks Advertiser*, 28 Dec. 1951.

Elliott Viney was held successively at *Oflag VIIC* in Bavaria, *Oflag VIB* in Westphalia and, finally, *Oflag VIIIB* at Eichstatt in Franconia. He managed to send a number of letters back to Hazells during the course of his imprisonment. One printed in *With the Colours* in April 1941 indicated that his camp housed some 1,200 captive officers. Rations comprised a mug of coffee at 0730 hours, a bowl of soup and four boiled potatoes at 1100, and the same at 1600. A brown loaf was issued every five days, a tablespoon of jam and a small cheese on Sundays, and an ounce of margarine or dripping twice a week. The camp had an orchestra and Viney acted as camp librarian with another officer. He reported the outstanding performances of two of the Hazells' men in France of which he had knowledge but did not know what had happened to others who remained missing.³⁷⁶ A year later, not much had changed. Lunch was a bowl of soup; there was a fifth of a loaf every five days, and a daily issue of margarine, treacle or *wurst*. Roll call was at 0930 and Viney spent an hour in the library each morning. Lunch was eaten in relays between 1100 and 1400 and he had now formed a printing group to produce a camp newsletter.³⁷⁷

More privileges were enjoyed by the officers after a year but these were curtailed after D-Day, with work parties only allowed out of camp to cut wood, tend an outside vegetable garden, and produce the monthly newsletter. They had formed, however, an Antiquarian Society, to which Viney had lectured on 'Wilkes and Liberty'.³⁷⁸ A notebook kept by Viney has extensive notes and commentary on his wide range of reading whilst a POW.³⁷⁹ Like most of the other Bucks POWs he was marched westwards in 1945 ahead of the advancing Russians, the column unfortunately strafed by American aircraft. Viney's group

³⁷⁶ Hazell (ed.), *With the Colours*, Apl. 1941, 4, 20.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid*, Apl. 1942, 3; July 1942, 17.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid*, Oct. 1944, 4; July 1945, 11-12.

³⁷⁹ BA, AR 68/2021 [BMMT 752].

met American troops on 29 April 1945. On 8 May he found himself at Waterloo where the battalion had been five years previously.³⁸⁰ On the release of the Hazebrouck POWs in 1945, a DSO, MC, DCM, four MMs, and 11 mentions in despatches were awarded for its defence.³⁸¹ Ironically, some of those who were imprisoned found themselves flown back in 1945 to airfields at Oakley and Wing.

The Bucks POWs were lucky. Over 90 men from the 2nd Royal Warwicks, the regular battalion serving with 144 Brigade in 48th Division, were those massacred by the Waffen-SS at Wormhout on 28 May 1940.

Just as in the Great War, CTAs were left with little function beyond welfare once the 1939 legislation forged a single national army.³⁸² Heyworth recorded ‘the most terrific influx of “comforts”’ in 11 large boxes for the 1st Bucks in March 1940 including mittens, scarves and woollen helmets.³⁸³ In fact, Bucks was one of the few counties to establish a troop welfare committee at an early stage, Guy Crouch calling for one in November 1939 and Lord Cottesloe asking Lady Chesham to organise it in May 1940. Initially designated Lady Chesham’s Free Wool and Comfort Fund, it was then renamed the Bucks Welfare Fund for Troops.³⁸⁴ Reflective of those taken captive from the Bucks Battalion and the

³⁸⁰ Elliott Viney, *The Last 35 Days* (Privately printed, n. d. [2001]). Copies are to be found in BA, AR 8/2001 [BMMT 482/3] and AR 4/2013 [BMMT639/3].

³⁸¹ BA, T/A 1/2, CTA Mins., 1 Nov. 1945.

³⁸² BA, T/A 1/7, CTA Duties, 7 Sept. 1939.

³⁸³ Heyworth, *Hazebrouck*, 57.

³⁸⁴ BA, D/FR 161/2/15/1, Crouch to local press editors, 13 Nov. 1939; University of Reading Library, Astor Mss, 1066/1/655. Lady Chesham to Astor, 28 May 1940; BA, T/A 1/10, Report of Social Welfare Committee, 19 Sept. 1940; T/A 1/7, Mins., Finance and General Purposes, 9 Nov. 1939.

99th Field Brigade as well as other Bucks men captured in 1940 and subsequently, there were 660 POWs on the books in December 1941. In the six months to November 1941 serving Bucks men had also received 17 wireless sets, 156 indoor games, 76 dart boards, 204 football outfits, two medicine balls, and 1,913 knitted garments.³⁸⁵ Over 100,000 garments had been distributed by 1943-44 with a wartime total of over 125,000.³⁸⁶

The 1st Bucks was also the beneficiary of the proceeds of the Aylesbury and District contribution to Salute the Soldier Week in 1944.³⁸⁷ This was one of a series of national war savings campaigns, namely War Weapons Week in May 1941, Warship Week in March 1942, Wings for Victory Week in May 1943, and Salute the Soldier Week in May 1944. The intention was to set targets for investments in National Defence Securities, National Savings certificates, War Bonds and gifts. Usually, districts and communities received commemorative plaques for their efforts, although it does not appear that many survive in the county. The Amersham and District plaque for Warship Week is in Amersham Museum and another in Beaconsfield Town Hall.

A similar fund raising effort was made with respect to the band instruments buried by the 1st Bucks Battalion during the retreat to Dunkirk. When the battalion left Wahagnies on 14 May, 13 of the instruments were hidden by the elderly French landlady of Corporal Stan Fowler from Waddesdon, who played the cornet. The remainder were in a brigade dump destroyed by the Germans, who executed 17 civilians when they entered Wahagnies on 28 May 1940.

³⁸⁵ BA, T/A 1/10, Report, 30 Nov. 1941; Mins., Troop Welfare Committee, 4 Dec. 1941.

³⁸⁶ BA, T/A 1/24, CTA Annual reports.

³⁸⁷ RA, MDKDH/ARMFOR/11/22, Lowther to Mrs Patterson, 11 Mar. 1944.

Initially, the band was reformed with some old instruments that were so patched up that they were known as the 'Bucks Brass and Solder Band'.³⁸⁸

Cottesloe announced an appeal for £350 to purchase new instruments in October 1941, the possibility of funding instruments for the 2nd Bucks Battalion then being added. Administered by Guy Crouch, by November a total of £104.1s.10 had been raised when £450 was needed for the two bands. The directors of Hazells had subscribed £13.3s.6d whilst whist drives in the Victoria Club in Aylesbury's Kingsbury Square had raised £5.12s.6d. There was a dance at the Bull's Head on 17 December while Whitchurch firemen donated £5 from a dance in which funds were also raised for the Fire Brigade Union's Widows and Orphans Fund. Another dance was held at Swanbourne on 12 December 1941 and a concert at Hazells Club on 4 January 1942. Aylesbury Property Protection Association contributed and there were collections in the Linslade and Marlow UDC areas and the Wycombe RDC and UDC areas. By the end of the month enough had been found for the 1st Battalion to receive £301.7s.6d plus £30 for silver plating the new bugles, with the remaining £9.8s.0d reserved for the 2nd Bucks Battalion should it decide to raise a band although this now seemed unlikely.³⁸⁹

The now Sergeant Fowler returned to Wahagnies on 3 October 1944 and collected the 13 band instruments still in their original cases from his former landlady. She had kept them hidden under the cellar floorboards from the Germans, who had searched her house for weapons. The instruments were

³⁸⁸ Hazell (ed.), *With the Colours*, Feb. 1943, 4-5; BMMT 778, Carr, *Wartime Memories*, 58-60.

³⁸⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 24 Oct., 21 Nov., 12 and 19 Dec. 1941; 9 and 23 Jan. 1942; *Bucks Advertiser*, 17 Oct. 1941; author interview with Reg Francis, 12 Aug. 1980; BA, T/A 1/10, Mins. Troops Welfare Committee, 2 Oct. 1941.

returned to Aylesbury Drill Hall and were played by the 431 LAA Band when the Buckinghamshire Battalion's Honorary Colonel, H.R.H. Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent, visited the Bucks Battalion OCA in 1956 with four of the 1940 Bucks Battalion Wahagnies bandsmen still on parade with the Band. A 1st Bucks Battalion trombone from Wahagnies is in the BMMT collection having been found in use by the British Legion Band in Oxford in 2007.³⁹⁰

Princess Marina had been unexpectedly appointed Honorary Colonel of the Bucks Battalion by the King on 11 May 1938 when Lord Cottesloe already held the appointment. Marina had married Prince George, Duke of Kent in 1934, the couple moving to Coppins, the former home of Princess Victoria, at Iver in 1935.³⁹¹ The King had agreed to the appointment in March 1937. In terms of the usual procedure, the request should normally have come initially from the battalion through Cottesloe. It may well be the case, however, that the initiative was that of the Lord Lieutenant.³⁹² The Princess inspected the 1st Bucks at Newbury on 29 September 1939, the RSM running along behind the ranks 'directing the spontaneous enthusiasm'.³⁹³ The Princess had sat for a portrait of her as Honorary Colonel by the society artist, William Hamilton Mitchell Acton, the younger brother of Harold Acton. It was commissioned by Major R. O. Spence of the 4th Battalion, OBLI, who had earlier commissioned a portrait of his grandfather, Lord North, as Honorary Colonel of that battalion and now

³⁹⁰ TNA, WO 171/1269, War Dairy, 3 Oct. 1944; TNA, WO 171/1269, War Dairy, 3 Oct. 1944; BA, AR 56/2007 [BMMT 576/4], Unknown writer to Lloyd, 23 Nov. 1966; BMMT 672.

³⁹¹ Author interview with Elliott Viney, 24 July 1980.

³⁹² RA, MDKDH/ARMFOR/11/2, Wigram to Duke of Kent, 12 Mar. 1937.

³⁹³ BA, AR 4/2013 [BMMT 618], Elliott Viney to parents, 1 Oct. 1939; John Horwood (1939) in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*; RA, MDKDH/ARMFOR/11/4, Burnett Brown to Lady Brecknock, 17 Sept. 1939; 11/5, Cottesloe to Lady Herbert, 30 Nov. 1939.

wished to present one of the Princess to the Bucks Battalion. It was completed in June 1939 and Spence hoped it could be presented to the battalion for



1st Bucks Battalion passing in review before Princess Marina at Newbury, 29 September 1939 [BMMT]

hanging in the Drill Hall in Aylesbury in November 1939. This did not happen, however, and Acton died on active service in 1945. His parents then presented the portrait, which seems to have remained in his studio throughout the war, to the Bucks Battalion in his memory in December 1946 albeit that the battalion's future was then uncertain.³⁹⁴

The expulsion of the BEF from the continent and the defeat of France raised the old threat of invasion and administration of the new Local Defence Volunteers (LDV) were vested in the CTAs on 30 June 1940 when many secretaries had been called back to other duties. Eleven were able to return but, characteristically, the Treasury declined to offer financial assistance on the grounds they had done so voluntarily. It was suggested in 1941 that hard pressed CTA staffs be given civil OBEs but this was rejected on the grounds

³⁹⁴ RA, MDKDH/ARMTOR/11/6, Spence to Lady in Waiting, 17 Nov. 1939; 11/60, Cottesloe to Herbert, 5 Dec. 1946; 11/ 61, Herbert to Cottesloe, 10 Dec. 1946. The portrait is in the BMMT collection as BMMT 718.

that those working for defence departments were not entitled to civil decorations.



Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent, Honorary Colonel of the Bucks Battalion by William Hamilton Mitchell Acton, 1939 [BMMT]

CTAs also remained nominally responsible for cadets. There were eight school cadet corps in the county in 1918. The Aylesbury Grammar School Cadet Corps had 12 members in the ‘Old Boys’ Section’ and 48 in the ‘School Section’ that year. Meeting after school on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and again in Saturdays, drill and musketry was interspersed with farm work. Following the excitement of Armistice Day, the pattern of drill was resumed in 1919 with the added role, if parents agreed, of boys doing four hours’ duty every other day during the rail strike. George Eaton duly volunteered and was told to wait for

orders ‘but nobody came and nothing happened’.³⁹⁵ The corps was officially attached to the 1st Cadet Battalion, OBLI on 7 February 1920 but it made little difference to the usual round of drill, rifle practice and flag waving. In terms of the latter the corps was on duty holding back crowds in Kingsbury Square when Aylesbury received its presentation tank on 24 March 1920 as a mark of its contribution to the war effort in selling war bonds and war savings certificates. There was a field day involving a practise attack after a march to Princes Risborough in April 1920. The school had a rifle range and drill was undertaken on the school field.³⁹⁶ It is suggested that the AGS cadet corps was disbanded the same year but it appears to have survived into the 1920s.³⁹⁷

The Aylesbury tank blew up when being dismantled in June 1929 to make way for a new bus station. It had been forgotten that it still had fuel on board and the two men cutting it up with acetylene torches were both badly injured. Another tank presented to High Wycombe was positioned outside the Royal Grammar School but cut up for scrap in November 1930, the proceeds being used to create a scholarship in memory of Second Lieutenant Frederick Youens, an ex-pupil who had won the VC posthumously serving with the 13th Battalion, The Durham Light Infantry in July 1917. Interestingly, there was some resistance within the county to the appeal for funds as Youens had not served in a Bucks unit and was not well-known. It was suggested that the school would do better to rely on his relatives, school fellows, and friends than on any county initiative.

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³⁹⁵ BA, AR 87/2004 (BMMT 516), Eaton Cadet Corps Diary, 4 Oct. 1919.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 29 Apl. 1920.

³⁹⁷ Mead, *Aylesbury Grammar School*, 58.

³⁹⁸ BA, D/FR 159/2/22/1, Redhead to Cottesloe, 26 Sept. 1930; 159/2/22/1, RGS Youens Appeal, 12 Sept. 1930.

The War Office handed administration of cadets to the CTAs in 1923 at which point 31 CTAs resolved not to continue army cadet units. The War Office resumed administrative responsibility in April 1942 but with what was now named the Army Cadet Force (ACF) being affiliated to the TA.³⁹⁹ Those units formed since 1939 such as that at Slough Grammar School became part of the 1st Cadet Battalion, OBLI on 15 January 1942. Nine cadet units had been formed in Bucks by June 1942 based at Aylesbury, Bletchley, Chesham and Amersham, High Wycombe, Slough Grammar School, Slough Youth Centre, Manor Park in Slough, Stony Stratford, and Taplow. In Slough alone there were around 500 cadets by February 1943, a special matinee to raise funds being held at the Adelphi Cinema with the artistes expected to appear including George Formby, Hermione Gingold, Patricia Burke, Heddle Nash, [Edward] Stanelli, and the Band of the Life Guards.⁴⁰⁰ By 1943 there were some 220,000 boys serving nationwide in either the ACF or the Junior Training Corps.⁴⁰¹

In 1937 it had been assumed that only an enemy raid on Britain was a possibility and, for all that the Chamberlain government had focused on home defence in terms of the aerial threat, the assessment had not changed. A former DGTF, General Sir Walter Kirke, was appointed CinC, Home Forces on 3 September 1939 but his task was to dispatch new troops as they were trained to reinforce the BEF. Recalled to government as First Lord of the Admiralty, Churchill voiced some fears. Somewhat reluctantly, Kirke prepared the 'Julius Caesar' plan in November 1939 to meet a possible invasion threat from 19,000 German parachute and glider or transport-borne troops in support of an amphibious landing of up to 30,000 men around Harwich or the Humber.

³⁹⁹ Beckett, *Territorials*, 130.

⁴⁰⁰ BA, T/A 8/13/5.

⁴⁰¹ Collins, *Cadets*, 49, 85-86; John Sainsbury, *Hertfordshire's Army Cadets* (Welwyn: Hart Books, 2010), 19-26, 117-40.

Despite few trained troops being available with some first-line TA divisions already earmarked for France, it was assumed only seven divisions would be required to expel the invaders and there were currently 14 divisions in some form of readiness. As it happened, the German Navy undertook some planning in November 1939 but the studies were shelved in January 1940. The possibility of attempting an invasion was only revived in Berlin on 21 May 1940 and it was only on 16 July that Hitler's directive No. 16 established the preconditions required, including elimination of the RAF's capabilities. Such preconditions were never met and an initial decision to attempt a landing on 15 September 1940 was first postponed to 21 September and, then on 12 October, until 1941. Some German planning resumed in the spring of 1941 and there is some evidence that a second operation was contemplated in July 1941 but the notice required was set at eight months in September 1941, and then at 12 months in March 1942.⁴⁰²

Whatever the disagreements within the German armed forces, there was a capability of launching an invasion attempt on ten days' notice in late September 1940 albeit at great hazard. British military planners were slow to understand the threat, still considering only raids a possibility as late as 10 May 1940.⁴⁰³ That same day, the German offensive opened in the West with the

⁴⁰² Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 265; John Gooch, *The Prospect of War: Studies in British Defence Policy, 1847-1942* (London: Frank Cass, 30-31. For wider discussion of German invasion plans in 1940, see from a large literature, Ronald Wheatley, *Operation Sea Lion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958); Walter Ansel, *Hitler Confronts England* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1960); and Peter Schenk, *Invasion of England 1940: The Planning of Operation Sealion* (Conway Maritime, Press 1990).

⁴⁰³ D. J. Newbold, 'British Planning and Preparations to Resist Invasion on Land, September 1939 to September 1940', Unpub. PhD, London, 1988, 84.

effective use of airborne forces, which had been already utilised in the earlier invasion of Norway in April 1940.

Various proposals had surfaced to revive auxiliary forces for home defence in addition to the TA. On 8 October 1939 Churchill suggested a 500,000 strong 'home guard' of men aged over 40. Some planning had also taken place in the War Office in November 1939 following an approach from Essex, the plans based on the model of the VTC.⁴⁰⁴ One quasi-military group - the 'Much Marcle Warriors' - had also been formed by Lady Helena Gleichen near Ross on Wye in March 1940. New impetus, however, came from the evidence of German airborne operations in Norway, the Air Ministry already voicing concern on 10 May. The threat from 'Fifth Columnists' was also highlighted in the press, which called for some form of local forces. The British Legion annual conference likewise suggested such forces and a number of similar proposals emanated from several counties.⁴⁰⁵ Fearing un-coordinated private initiatives and civilians taking matters into their own hands hunting 'Fifth Columnists' or even parachutists with shotguns and goodness knows what else, over the next three days, agreement was reached in the War Office on a new static guard force. It was done so hastily that much was to be improvised.⁴⁰⁶

Kirke intended to broadcast an appeal on 13 or 14 May but, in the event, it was the new Secretary of State for War in Churchill's coalition government, Anthony Eden, who went on the air immediately after the BBC 9 p.m. news on 14 May 1940. Any man aged between 17 and 65 with a knowledge of firearms and 'capable of free movement' could register with the police to join the Local

⁴⁰⁴ TNA, CAB 106/118, Memo by Lord Chobham, 9 Mar. 1945.

⁴⁰⁵ Mackenzie, *Home Guard*, 25-27

⁴⁰⁶ S. Paul Mackenzie, 'Citizens in Arms: The Home Guard and the Internal Security of the United Kingdom, 1940-41', *Intelligence and National Security* 6 (1991), 548-72.

Defence Volunteers (LDV). The very name of the LDV, said Eden, ‘describes its duties in three words’.⁴⁰⁷

Men were registering almost as soon as Eden had finished speaking. At Haddenham, 158 men registered in the first 24 hours for what would become



D (Wendover) Company, 1st Battalion, Bucks Home Guard, 1940 of whom only the front rank appear to have rifles [BMMT]

‘A’ Company of the 4th Bucks HG Battalion: the total was 360 by mid-July. At Marlow a queue had formed within two hours of the broadcast. An Eton College Anti-Parachutist Observer Corps seems to have formed on 15 May.⁴⁰⁸ A total of 31 men had enlisted in Wolverton by 25 July.⁴⁰⁹ There were 4,076 men

⁴⁰⁷ For the full text of Eden’s broadcast, see D. C. Combie, *A History of the 5th (Bideford) Battalion, Devon Home Guard* (Bristol: Burleigh Press, 1946), 9-10.

⁴⁰⁸ *Four Chevrons: The Story of ‘A’ Company. 4th Bucks Battalion Home Guard, 1940-44* (Princes Risborough: privately printed, n. d. [1945]), 2; L. W. Kentish, *Bux 4: Records and Reminiscences of the 4th Buckinghamshire Battalion Home Guard* (London: Privately printed, n. d. [1946]), 66-67, 81; Makenzie, *Home Guard*, 34.

⁴⁰⁹ BA, DC 12/27/1, ‘Landing of Enemy Aircraft Volunteers’.

registered in Bucks by 17 May, 5,560 by 24 May, and 18,665 by August 1940.

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Interestingly, there were a few areas where it was suggested response had been poor. Brigadier General (Ret'd) B. F. Widdrington from what would become the 3rd Battalion claimed some villages were hanging back in a letter to the press in early June with only four men coming forward at Preston Bissett although 12 had been at an initial meeting. On the other hand, the response from the Claydons and Calvert was very good. There was a good response at Winslow and 20 men came forward at Swanbourne after a meeting on 23 May.⁴¹¹

Possibly 400,000 men as a whole registered in Britain by the end of May 1940. Kirke's successor, General Sir Edmund Ironside, gave a figure of 471,000 on 10 June 1940. The War Office had anticipated about 150,000 men might come forward - 500,000 at most thought the Under Secretary of State for War, Lord Croft - but it is generally accepted that the Home Guard reached about 1.4 million by the end of June 1940 and 1.7 million by March 1941.⁴¹² The new title was imposed by Churchill on 23 July 1940 despite Eden's wishes, the latter opposing it not least because a million LDV arm bands had been issued from 22 May 1940.⁴¹³ Undoubtedly, Churchill saw the rhetorical and cultural significance, and the resonance of 'home' in national defence.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 17 May 1940; *Bucks Advertiser*, 24 May 1940; *Bucks Examiner*, 24 May 1940; BA, T/A 1/7, Mins., Finance and General Purposes, 8 Aug. 1940.

⁴¹¹ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 8 and 22 June 1940; *Bucks Herald*, 24 May 1940.

⁴¹² S. Paul Mackenzie, 'The British Home Guard, 1940-44', in Addison and Calder (eds), *Time to Kill*, 50-59, at 53.

⁴¹³ Norman Longmate, *The Real Dad's Army* (London: Arrow, 1974), 25.

Much misconception surrounded the LDV and Home Guard even in 1940 with confused and invariably inappropriate historical analogies bandied about freely. The Under Secretary of State for War, Sir Edward Grigg - he held the post jointly with Croft - likened the Home Guards to the yeomanry of the Napoleonic era while Charles Graves's semi-official history published in 1943 referred to the 'levee en masse' of 1803 and to a whole miscellany of dates - 1545, 1588, 1642, 1667, 1719, 1759, 1794, 1803, 1859 and 1914 - at least a few of which had some relevance. A Ministry of Information pamphlet in the same year evoked the example of a mysterious 'volunteer militia when Napoleon threatened invasion' in apparent ignorance of the militia and local militia ballots. Later historians betrayed similar unfamiliarity, the official historian of civil defence citing the doubtful analogy of the abortive Shelburne circular of 1782 as a precedent for the ARP and one social history referring to the militia musters of 1545, which had no significance for the overall development of the auxiliary forces.⁴¹⁵ Much has been made, too, of the uniqueness of the so-called 'housemaid's clause' enabling a Home Guard to resign on 14 days' notice between August 1940 and February 1942⁴¹⁶ but, of course, that dated from the 1804 volunteer legislation. Some contemporary wartime popular publications at least, notably John Radnor's *It All Happened Before* published in 1945, did

⁴¹⁴ Penny Summerfield and Corinna Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence: Men, Woman and the Home Guard in the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 10-11.

⁴¹⁵ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 4-5; Charles Graves, *The Home Guard of Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 1943), 19, 114-20; Ministry of Information, *The Home Guard of Britain* (London: HMSO, 1943), 7.

⁴¹⁶ Longmate, *Real Dad's Army*, 22.

trace the continuity of the amateur military tradition although even he did not mention the most relevant parallel of all, namely the VTC of the Great War.⁴¹⁷

The call up of younger men to the army reduced Home Guard strength to around 1.3 million by February 1942 but the introduction of conscription established a ceiling of 1.8 million in June 1942. Peak strength in March 1943 was about 1.7 million, a number still maintained as late as September 1944.⁴¹⁸

In Bucks, the peak number was 19,816 men in May 1943.⁴¹⁹

War Office administration was slow to catch up with the mushrooming of the LDV and, in addition to the many retired officers serving in units, at least 95 MPs and 17 peers also registered, creating a lobby certainly as powerful as that posed by the parliamentary representatives of the auxiliaries in the past.⁴²⁰



Amersham Home Guards, 5th Battalion Bucks Home Guard, 1943 [IWM]

⁴¹⁷ Jack Werner, *We Laughed at Boney* (London; W. H. Allen & Co., n. d. [1943]); John Radnor, *It All Happened Before: The Home Guard through the Ages* (London: George Harrap & Co., 1945).

⁴¹⁸ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 266-67.

⁴¹⁹ BA, T/A 1/24, CTA Annual Report, 1950-51.

⁴²⁰ Mackenzie, *Home Guard*, 38-39.

An organising meeting was held in Aylesbury on 19 May 1940 and formal county titles were accorded to the new formations on 3 August 1940 with Bucks eventually producing 13 battalions. The first seven battalions coinciding with county police divisions were the 1st (Aylesbury), 2nd (Bletchley), 3rd (Buckingham), 4th (Marlow), 5th (Beaconsfield), 6th (Taplow), and 7th (High Wycombe) Battalions. Three more were created from within the 6th Battalion in November 1940: the 8th (Slough Trading Estate), 9th (Slough Borough) and 10th (Langley) Battalions. The 11th (Amersham) Battalion was formed from the 5th Battalion in 1942; the 12th (Winslow) Battalion in October 1942; and 13th (Hawker Aircraft Factory) Battalion from the 10th in 1943. From time to time company boundaries were also changed as in the case of the 1st, 2nd and 4th Battalions in 1942. In the case of the latter, however, it was claimed that the men of ‘A’ (Hughenden) Platoon had no conception of the existence of the battalion until May 1942.⁴²¹ Whitchurch, for example, was initially in the 1st Battalion but then moved to the 2nd Battalion in mid-1942, and from there to the 12th Battalion in October 1942.

The 6th Battalion was disbanded in 1942 since most of its remaining men, as well as some from the 8th, 9th and 10th Battalions were transferred to the 101st (Bucks Home Guard) Rocket AA (or ‘Z’) Battery at Slough in June 1942 and the 71st (Bucks and Berks) HAA Battery with 3.7” guns, also at Slough on 20 November 1942. At Farnham Royal, 26 men from ‘B’ Company of the 6th Battalion transferred to the 101st Battery on the Wexham Road, which was commanded by Major G. S. Deakin.⁴²² Z batteries fired 3” rockets (each 6’4” long) from single and then twin-barrelled projectors and, from 1941, from nine-

⁴²¹ Kentish, *Bux 4*, 59.

⁴²² D 113/77, Eric Basden memoir.

barrelled projectors. They were able to reach a height of 18,500' at 1,500' per second and carried a 4.25 lb. warhead detonated by air pressure and then proximity fuses.⁴²³

Slough was also the location of 28 heavy anti-aircraft guns deployed by 1st AA Division for the defence of London.⁴²⁴ There was also a LAA Troop in the 13th Battalion. Training for the 71st HAA Battery took place at Datchet and Uxbridge on Sundays and in the week at St George's Hall and the Pearless Restaurant in Slough. Some additional firing courses were held in 1943 at Hayling Island and Shoreham.⁴²⁵ Slough had been of concern due to the restrictions placed by the nature of men's employment at the Trading Estate, the battery being short of 348 men at one point in June 1943. It was still short of 308 men in November.⁴²⁶

Overall command of the Bucks Home Guard was vested in Colonel Philip Hall. Hall commanded the Bucks Zone (later the Bucks Sub-Area and Bucks Sub-District) until February 1942. He was finding Home Guard duties in addition to his CTA responsibilities too onerous and handed over the Home Guard to Colonel George Ledingham, the former commander of 98th Field Regiment at Hazebrouck, whose headquarters was established in Walton House in Aylesbury.⁴²⁷

⁴²³ Brian Osborne, *The People's Army: Home Guard in Scotland, 1940-44* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2009), 171.

⁴²⁴ Basil Collier, *The Defence of the United Kingdom* (London: HMSO, 1957), 448, 479.

⁴²⁵ IWM, K14256, Account of 71st HAA Battery by Major J. B. S. Bourne May, 29 Nov. 1944.

⁴²⁶ TNA, WO 199/355, DGHG to GHQ, Home Forces, 2 June 1943.

⁴²⁷ BA, D/FR 161/2/43/1, Watson to Cottesloe, 9 Nov. 1942; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 25 May 1940.

Initially, the War Office envisaged a purely limited and static role with an emphasis upon observation of potential landings, hence the early epithet of ‘Look, Duck and Vanish’, manning road blocks, and guarding vulnerable points. It was not a role that accorded with the sentiments of the LDV or its more vociferous representatives. Kirke always assumed that regulars would operate in a mobile role but Ironside abandoned this on 25 June 1940 in favour of maintaining a coastal ‘crust’ of second-line TA formations backed by the ‘GHQ Line’ of 2,500 pillboxes. Many of these were to be manned by the LDV, whom Ironside thought could offer a more active role by denying the invader mobility. Retaining mobile reserves well behind the GHQ Line did not inspire confidence and, in turn, Ironside was replaced by General Sir Alan Brooke on 20 July 1940. Brooke put the emphasis on holding the coast in greater strength with mobile reserves much closer to the beaches. It was assumed the Germans might employ up to 200,000 men in any invasion attempt. The return of the BEF from all parts of France by 22 June, albeit desperately short of the equipment lost in the campaign, improved the manpower problem but it still necessitated breaking up several TA and other divisions in June and July 1940. Whilst Brooke agreed with Ironside that the Home Guard could play a more active role, the regulars had priority in terms of equipment

Not unexpectedly, weapons were in particularly short supply. Only 94,000 rifles could be made available to the Home Guard by 1 June 1940 and units were left to their own devices. By July there were still only 495,000 .303 rifles for 1.4 million men in the Home Guard.⁴²⁸ On 28 May 1940 what was to become ‘C’ Company of the 1st Battalion, Bucks Home Guard possessed 27 .303 rifles, seven 2.2” rifles, and 50 shotguns for 286 men split between Ellesborough,

⁴²⁸ Clarke, *Britain’s Final Defence*, 74.

Prestwood, The Lee, Stoke Mandeville, Great Missenden, and Aston Clinton.⁴²⁹ The same battalion's 'D' Company managed to get Messrs. Holland & Holland's last 23 cartridges for a 500-bore elephant gun it had acquired.⁴³⁰ On 20 May the 1st Battalion as a whole received just 75 rifles, of which 30 were allocated to the defence of Aylesbury, and three to each of 15 villages.⁴³¹ One early Bucks LDV had a 'boar-spear' 'with which he was wont to hopefully prod the bramble patches and potentially concealing undergrowth'.⁴³²

At Farnham Royal, what was to become 'B' Company of the 6th Battalion had just eight rifles and three shot guns on 28 May but, by 29 June, had accumulated 100 rounds of .22 small bore ammunition from the Slough miniature rifle range, 145 rounds of .303 ammunition, and 36 12-bore shotgun cartridges. A total of 20 Ross rifles were received on 28 July. For patrol on 14 July one section of 11 men were given just 10 rounds each to be returned and recorded at its end. No grenades were issued until January 1941.⁴³³ Whitchurch received two 12-bore shot guns 'not suitable for lethal bullets' on 29 June together with 50 rounds of birdshot cartridges and 50 rounds of No. 5 cartridges (usually used for partridge and other game). On 18 July 1940 the platoon finally received 20 .303 rifles with 400 rounds. The village defence plan in January 1941 still envisaged issuing the 24 men available with just ten rounds each to man five posts.⁴³⁴

⁴²⁹ BA, T/A 8/7/1/1, Report, 28 May 1940.

⁴³⁰ BA, T/A 8/7/1/1 Fellowes to Foley, 30 May 1940.

⁴³¹ BA, T/A 8/7/1/1, Edwards to Foley, 20 May 1940.

⁴³² Longmate, *Real Dad's Army*, 65.

⁴³³ BA, D 113/1, Log Book, Farnham Royal Company, 29 June and 14 July 1940; 113/67, Record of 6th Battalion; 113/77, Eric Basden memoir.

⁴³⁴ BA, T/A 8/7/11/1, Olliver to Edwards, 29 June and 18 July 1940; 24 Jan. 1941.

As late as August 1941 the Amersham Company in 5th Battalion had just 325 rifles for 970 men (33.5 per cent). Its commander, Gordon Marston, pointed out that this was roughly equivalent to Chesham, which had 173 rifles for 520 men (33.2 per cent), Beaconsfield, which had 175 rifles for 530 men (33 per cent), and Denham, which had 100 rifles for 300 men (33.3 per cent). However, it took no account of the greater strength at Amersham. Marston, who failed to persuade the authorities to allow him to visit Leningrad to see how the Russians dealt with tanks, was equally annoyed that he could not procure a tank for his company.⁴³⁵ At Bletchley a small quantity of 12 bore No. 5 and No. 6 cartridges, some 12 bore lethal bullets, and .22 cartridges were made available in July 1940 but .303 rifles in the ratio of one for every three men with 20 rounds per rifle were not issued until 11 September. Additional rifles sufficient to arm one in five men became available on 26 September.⁴³⁶

Equipment steadily improved. 'A' Company of the 4th Battalion received 205 Canadian Ross rifles in August 1940, followed by four Browning automatic rifles in September, two Lewis guns in February 1941, 17 Thompson sub-machine guns and two Northover Projectors in August 1941, Sten guns in July 1942, and a Blacker Bombard spigot-mortar in February 1943. Similarly, eight of the unpopular denim suits arrived in May 1940 and battledress in January 1941 although not enough was available for all recruits until 1944.⁴³⁷ Of denim, Leonard Kentish of the 4th Battalion recalled,⁴³⁸

⁴³⁵ Amersham Museum, Marston Mss, Marston to Urquhart, 14 Aug. 1941; Marston to Gibson, 27 Aug., and 7 Oct. 1941.

⁴³⁶ IWM, Doc. 22105 [MISC 299 (3953)], Bletchley Platoon Orders, 4 July 1940; Bletchley Company Orders, 5 and 26 September 1940.

⁴³⁷ *Four Chevrons*, 8-11.

⁴³⁸ Kentish, *Bux 4*, 19.

If a prize had been offered for the designer of garments that would caricature the human form and present it in its sloppiest and most slovenly aspect, the artist who conceived the Home Guard denim was a class apart. Though marked with different size numbers, it was always a toss-up whether a man resembled an expectant mother or an attenuated scarecrow.

At Bletchley, platoons were asked to list the quantity of battledress required in November 1940 but in January 1941 lots had to be drawn by 2nd Battalion to determine in which order the eight companies would actually receive it: Winslow came first in the draw and Newport Pagnell last.⁴³⁹

In the Iver Heath platoon, originally formed in the 6th Battalion and later transferred to the 10th Battalion, the first LDV arm bands were made from Great War puttees sewn with white tape. The Trust has an armband from what is most likely the Hambledon Platoon in the 4th Battalion made from an upholsterer's webbing strap.⁴⁴⁰ The first official armbands obtained by the 4th Battalion from 22 May onwards had LDV in black stencilled on white material. As there were not enough, the commanding officer, Henry Beaumont of States House, Medmenham, obtained a private supply but these were soon replaced by khaki stencilled in black.⁴⁴¹ At Eton, the OTC provided musketry instruction to the local platoon on its own DP (Drill Pattern) rifles.⁴⁴² By the time of the disbandment of the 6th Battalion in 1942, the Farnham Royal Company had two strong points, two spigot mortar points, a keep in a disused gravel pit, 14

⁴³⁹ IWM, Doc. 22105 [MISC 299 (3953)], Bletchley Company Orders, 15 Nov. 1940; 2nd Battalion Orders, 8 Jan. 1941.

⁴⁴⁰ Graves, *Home Guard*, 191; BMMT 778.

⁴⁴¹ Kentish, *Bux 4*, 19.

⁴⁴² Graves, *Home Guard*, 65.

machine gun posts, four observation posts, and five intended road blocks.⁴⁴³ Road blocks had to be capable of stopping a ten-ton lorry at full speed and, as a result, the recommended depth was specified as 40” if earth, 9-14” if brick, 18” if sand bags, 30” if loose sand, and 60” if clay.⁴⁴⁴ In terms of transport, the 8th Battalion based in Ipswich Road on the Slough Trading Estate had acquired seven motor cars and nine motor cycles by 1944.⁴⁴⁵

Some misconceptions have arisen from the arming of the Home Guard with the .303 Canadian Ross and the .300 American M1917 rifle as well as the Lewis Gun as Great War-vintage weapons but then so was the standard Short Magazine Lee-Enfield of the British army. The Home Guard tended to demand weapons used by the army but, in many respects, the M1917 was a better rifle than the SMLE whilst the Lewis Gun was still perfectly serviceable and particularly effective as an anti-aircraft weapon.⁴⁴⁶ The Northover projector and the Blacker bombard were new, improvised weapons developed by a Home Guard and a TA officer respectively to plug the gap in weaponry and both were also used by the army. The No 74 ST (Sticky Tape) Grenade or Sticky Bomb was developed like the Blacker Bombard at The Firs in Whitchurch and was issued to the Home Guard on Churchill’s insistence despite the objections of the Board of Ordnance. However, the Sticky Bomb was also used by the army.⁴⁴⁷ So-called ‘pikes’ were issued to units in the autumn of 1941 but they were met with such hostility that few were actually distributed, echoing the reception of pikes by

⁴⁴³ BA, D 113/77, Eric Basden memoir.

⁴⁴⁴ IWM, Doc. 22105 [MISC 299 (3953)], Bletchley Platoon Orders, 4 July 1940.

⁴⁴⁵ BA, T/A 8/3, Vehicle Returns.

⁴⁴⁶ Clarke, *Britain’s Final Defence*, 68-90, 113-16, 235-40.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 149-51, 160-70.

volunteers in 1803.⁴⁴⁸ In the 4th Bucks Battalion, they never went beyond the headquarters store.⁴⁴⁹ It is often forgotten that ‘pikes’ were also issued to AA Command.⁴⁵⁰

The greatest period of danger was that in which the LDV was least well equipped but there was an enthusiastic response to the notorious invasion scare on Saturday 7 September 1940. As a result of the lack of any intermediate stage of alert, the code word ‘Cromwell’ was issued at 2007 hours in many eastern and southern areas and church bells rung. The latter was a prescribed warning device from June 1940 to April 1943. The Germans had bombed London for the first time that day and the real apprehensions justified raising the threat level of awareness. At 1045 on Sunday 8 September Brooke informed northern, southern and western areas that the alert had been issued to them for information only. The degree of alertness was reduced at 2300 hours although it remained technically in place until 19 September. Brooke at once introduced new procedures, whereby bells should only be rung if an individual Home Guard commander personally witnessed the arrival of at least 25 German paratroopers.⁴⁵¹

An interim ‘Stand To’ was issued for regulars but not the Home Guard on 22-23 September. The Home Guard was then stood down for the winter on 27 October 1940. No such high alert stage would ever be issued again, the German invasion of Russia in June 1941 making any invasion less and less likely. In the case of the 1st Bucks Battalion, they received the warning in

⁴⁴⁸ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 268; Fortescue, *County Lieutenancies*, 89-90.

⁴⁴⁹ Kentish, *Bux 4*, 32.

⁴⁵⁰ Clarke, *Britain's Final Defence*, 87-88.

⁴⁵¹ Collier, *Defence of the United Kingdom*, 224; Newbold, ‘British Planning’, 370-78; BA, T/A 8/7/1/2 Order, 9 Sept. 1940; D 113/75, 6th Battalion Order, 9 Sept. 1940.

Wiltshire at 2145 on 7 September with reports on the following day that enemy agents had landed by boat and parachute at 0155. As it happened, there had been the so-called ‘Panic Sunday’ in Bucks on 7 July 1940 when a number of roadblocks were hastily erected.⁴⁵²

On 7 September, two Home Guardsmen on duty outside the Black Horse pub at Great Missenden halted a fire engine and demanded a password. The reply, ‘London’s burning, mates. That’s our password. Come on Bill, let her go, and make ‘em jump for it.’ A naval officer, who was also stopped, complained that it was the third time he had been stopped since leaving Aylesbury.⁴⁵³ At Olney the message received was for all Home Guardsmen to turn out and have road barriers ready but no church bells were to be sounded unless it was clear that an invasion had begun. Watch was kept from 0300 to 0800 and, thereafter, men were on half an hour’s notice of readiness.⁴⁵⁴ Generally, it was emphasised in June that the ringing of one church bell in response to the sighting of enemy parachutists was not to be repeated by any other churches in case it confused troops responding to the alarm. In the wake of the panic in Bucks the order was re-issued on 9 September, with no bell to be rung unless at least 25 parachutists had been seen. For good measure, it had been emphasised in August that no aircraft should be fired upon unless it had committed a hostile act or been clearly identified as an enemy machine.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵² Kentish, *Bux 4*, 10.

⁴⁵³ Longmate, *Real Dad’s Army*, 44-45.

⁴⁵⁴ BA, D-X 1302, Note on 7 Sept. 1940.

⁴⁵⁵ IWM, Doc. 22105 [MISC 299 (3953), Bletchley Platoon Orders, 21 June 1940; 2nd Battalion Orders, 9 Sept. 1940; Company Orders, 22 August 1940.

The South Midlands Area had helpfully advised the Bucks Zone on 18 May 1940 that ‘German parachutists are desperate men between the ages of 17 and 50 - fanatics’.⁴⁵⁶ Further advice forthcoming from the Air Ministry on 6 June was that such paratroopers might be disguised as ‘British troops, clergymen, nuns, ordinary civilians, etc.’⁴⁵⁷ The local press helpfully described what was known of German parachutists’ methods.⁴⁵⁸ The crucial hours were thought to be from three hours before to three hours after sunrise, hence the ‘dusk to dawn’ patrols. The first such patrol went out at Farnham Royal on 28 May 1940, patrolling possible landing grounds on Burnham Grove Estate and to the north of the Slough Trading Estate.⁴⁵⁹ At Langley, patrols in June 1940 were mounted from 2100 to 2300 hours and from 0330 to 0530, the routes chosen by the men themselves but with instructions to cover all open ground.⁴⁶⁰ In the case of the 1st Battalion, which had a mounted section to patrol the Wendover/Kimble/Prestwood area, patrol activity continued until October 1940.⁴⁶¹ There was something of a loss of interest over the winter of 1940-41 as danger receded, the lack of interest in detaining bailed out German airmen in the southern region leading the commanding officer of the 4th Bucks Battalion to tell his men, ‘After all the trouble they take to come over and bail out, it is not right for anyone to totally disregard them.’⁴⁶²

‘Anti-tank islands’ and ‘centres of resistance’ remained a feature of local defence plans until the possibility of any armoured attack was ruled out in May

⁴⁵⁶ BA, T/A 8/7/1/1, Notes on South Midlands Area conference, 18 May 1940.

⁴⁵⁷ BA, T/A 8/7/1/1, Air Ministry note, 6 June 1940.

⁴⁵⁸ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 25 May 1940.

⁴⁵⁹ BA, D/113/67, Basden Mss, Record of 6th Battalion.

⁴⁶⁰ BA, T/A 8/13, Patrol Notebook, 7 June 1940.

⁴⁶¹ BA, T/A 8/7/1/2, Foley note, 25 July 1940; T/A 8/7/2/3, Foley note, 3 Oct. 1940.

⁴⁶² Kentish, *Bux* 4, 23.

1942. Zone Operational Instructions in January 1941 designated Aylesbury, Bletchley, Buckingham, Newport Pagnell, Slough, and Wycombe as such locations. In the case of Aylesbury, just 549 men were available to defend the town although another 150 were being formed in two factory units. The County Offices was designated as the 'keep' with the reserve in the drill hall. Ten outer and ten inner road blocks were intended with observation posts in St Mary's, the Royal Bucks Hospital, and the Bifurcated Rivets works. Firearms available were supplemented by Mills bombs and Molotov cocktails. If the town fell then the survivors would try to make it (depending upon their location) to Hartwell House, Stoke Mandeville Church, or Green Park Hotel in Aston Clinton.⁴⁶³ Night guards were maintained from May 1940 onwards with beds, mattresses and blankets provided in the Town Hall.⁴⁶⁴ Back in 1941 one proposal to create an anti-tank trap in Farnham Royal by using dummy concrete posts to force tanks into a lane off the main road was thought unlikely to succeed.⁴⁶⁵

Bucks remained geographically important and it was a priority to keep open the 'main route' from Buckingham through Fenny Stratford to Woburn, the defence of which was entrusted to the 2nd and 3rd Bucks Battalions with garrisons allocated to every town and village on and up to two miles from the road.⁴⁶⁶ Parachute or glider attack upon airfields, vulnerable points, and communications was still a possibility. Bucks not only had 12 wartime airfields but over 20 designated major vulnerable points including repeater stations,

⁴⁶³ BA, T/A 8/7/3/5, Operational Instructions, 15 Jan. 1941; T/A 8/7/12, Zone Orders, 2 Jan. 1941; 8/7/13, Aylesbury Defence Scheme, 3 Sept. 1944; 8/7/14, Aylesbury Defence Scheme, 7 Nov. 1941; MB 3/9/1, Aylesbury War Book.

⁴⁶⁴ BA, MB 3/10/5/178, Crookes to Edwards, 20 May 1940; Edwards to Crookes, 13 July 1940.

⁴⁶⁵ BA, D 113/67, OC, 6th Battalion to OC, B Company, 17 May 1941.

⁴⁶⁶ TNA, WO 166/6726, War Diary, Bucks Sub-Area, 2 Apl. 1942.

water and electricity works, Martin-Baker Aircraft at Denham, the Hawker Aircraft Factory at Langley, ICI Paints at Slough and, of course, Chequers, Bomber Command Headquarters at Naphill, and Bletchley Park. In 1944 there were also 94 minor designated vulnerable points whilst, in the event of invasion, 113 factories had been listed for immobilisation.⁴⁶⁷ In the 1st Battalion area alone, there were 92 petrol pumps that had to be immobilised. In May 1940 the Aylesbury platoons also had to undertake a guard of the Chiltern Hills Spring Water Company works at Dancers End and Buckland with Hertfordshire men taking on the company works at Wigginton. Night guards were also requested in Aylesbury for Hills & Partridge Flour Mill, the Fire Brigade headquarters in Bourbon Street, and the Auxiliary Fire Station in Buckingham Street.⁴⁶⁸



*Aylesbury Town
Defence Scheme, 7
November 1941
[BA]*

⁴⁶⁷ TNA, WO 166/6726, War Diary, Bucks Sub-Area, 20 Aug., and 30 Dec. 1942; BA, T/A 8/7/12, Zone Orders, 2 Jan. 1941; 8/7/13, List of VPs, 24 June 1944.

⁴⁶⁸ BA, MB 3/10/5/178, Redhead to Edwards, 22 May 1940; Ivatts to Crookes, 28 May 1940; Farquharson to Ministry of Food, 25 May 1940.

Bucks had many wartime establishments including the Home Office Research and Experiment Branch at Princes Risborough; the SOE Training Schools at Fawley Court and Chicheley Hall; the SOE Signals Station at Grendon Hall; the RAF Photographic Reconnaissance Unit at Danesfield House, Medmenham; the RAF Mapmaking Centre at Hughenden Manor; the POW Interrogation Centres at Wilton Park and Latimer House; MI9 also at Wilton; MD1 ('Winston Churchill's Toyshop') at The Firs at Whitchurch; and the Home Guard Training Centre at Hedgerley Park.⁴⁶⁹ Outstations of the Bletchley Park operation were at Gayhurst, Hanslope Park (Radio Security Service), Little Horwood, and Whaddon Hall (Special Communication Unit) with radio stations at Fenny Stratford, Gawcott, and Wavendon Towers. The Abbey at Aston Abbots became the wartime seat of the Czech government in exile while the Polish head of state, General Sikorski, was housed at Iver Grove. Wycombe Abbey was the headquarters of the 8th USAAF. National treasures were stored at Fawley Court, Hall Barn at Beaconsfield, Princes Risborough Manor, and West Wycombe Park. Burnham Beeches was taken over by the War Office in September 1940 as a major vehicle depot, some 19,000 vehicles being stored there at peak, many of which were destined to be used for D-Day and the campaign in North-West Europe. The woods were partially re-opened to civilians in June 1946, requiring much remedial repair work.⁴⁷⁰

Not all vulnerable points were a Home Guard responsibility since Chequers, Bletchley Park, Bomber Command, and RAF stations such as Halton and Wing

⁴⁶⁹ Ian Beckett, *Whitchurch, The Fallen and the Second World War* (Privately printed, 2022), 25-38; IWM, LBY K.91/736, Home Guard X Zone, *Hedgerley Park Training Establishment* (n. d.). See also *The Secret County: Buckinghamshire Reflects on WWII* (Bletchley Park: Maybe Magazine for the British Legion, 2016).

⁴⁷⁰ BA, D113/69, Eliot to Basden, 19 Feb. 1946; *Slough Observer*, 25 Jan. 1946; *Windsor Express*, 29 Oct. 1948; D113/70, Note by Basden on visit to Burnham Beeches, 30 Apl. 1946.

had their own allocated troops. Initially, over 40 civilian instructors from Halton were members of various surrounding platoons but a Halton defence group was formed independent of the Home Guard in March 1941.⁴⁷¹ The Home Guard, however, would come to the relief of such major vulnerable points if necessary. ‘F’ (Walters Ash Relief Column) Company from the 4th Battalion was earmarked to assist Bomber Command.⁴⁷² Similarly, ‘M’ Company of the 1st Battalion would assist Chequers. Apart from its regular troops, Bletchley Park had its own internal Home Guard, as did The Firs in Whitchurch, which was impressively armed given that the establishment developed weapons. The Home Guard patrol and defence map for Bletchley Park shows that the external observation outposts and defensive positions of the 2nd Battalion extended well beyond the perimeter of the park.⁴⁷³

Within Bletchley Park was the entirely separate ‘L’ Company commanded in the rank of major by Frank ‘Peter’ Lucas, a Cambridge classicist attached to ‘Hut 3’, who had been commissioned in the 7th (Service) Battalion, Queen’s Own Royal West Kent Regiment in the Great War and then served in the Intelligence Corps. Other members included the linguist and poet, Henry Reed, perhaps best known for ‘The Naming of Parts’ about musketry practice, and, briefly, Alan Turing. Another anomaly was the Aylesbury Post Office Section nominally part of the 10th Berkshire Battalion but under command of the 1st Bucks for the purpose of defending Aylesbury. On one occasion, Hedgerley Park range hosted the ‘Waterhouse Cup’ for the best platoon in the Post Office Home Guard, Glasgow overcoming Bournemouth, Chester, and St Albans in the

⁴⁷¹ BA, T/A 8/7/3/6, Note, 6 Mar. 1941; T/A 8/7/4/7, Dave to Foley, 20 May 1941; T/A 8/7/4/8, Foley to Platoons, 15 July 1941.

⁴⁷² Kentish, *Bux* 4, 74, 89-91.

⁴⁷³ Lee Jarman, ‘Defending Bletchley’, in *Secret County*, 22-25.

final.⁴⁷⁴ The 10th Battalion formed 'F' Reinforcement Company in March 1944 for possible use at Tilbury in the event of a German spoiling raid in the run up to D-Day.⁴⁷⁵

There was some disagreement among military authorities on how far the Home Guard should have a more mobile role as its capabilities increased.⁴⁷⁶ Its weaponry was ever more substantial and training at a new peak. Churchill and others were still keen to emphasise that the force was needed, not least as it suited allied strategy to portray it as a fighting force to reinforce the impression that there might be a cross-Channel invasion to open the 'second front' against Germany in 1943. Mollifying Home Guard susceptibilities also led to the rejection of a proposal to reduce the number of clothing coupons granted men on the grounds that they received free uniforms.⁴⁷⁷ By November 1943, however, the Home Guard's operational instructions were geared only to preventing armed sabotage.⁴⁷⁸

The local Invasion Committees set up to safeguard essential supplies in August and September 1941 also largely ceased to function by June 1943 although they were not finally stood down until November 1944. Each was to prepare War Books detailing how they would provide a messenger service; electricity, water, sewage, food supplies, medical facilities, decontamination squads, and accommodation for casualties. In the event of an invasion, they would be required to help the police and military as well as attending to the needs of the civil population. The policy, as explained in posters issued in each community,

⁴⁷⁴ IWM, HU 81069.

⁴⁷⁵ BA, T/A 8/13, Notes on 10th Battalion History.

⁴⁷⁶ Mackenzie, *Home Guard*, 112-16.

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 135-36, 138-42.

⁴⁷⁸ BA, T/A 8/7/14, Bucks Sub-district to Battalions, 5 Nov. 1943.

was one of standing firm and preventing refugees from blocking routes. The committees varied in composition.⁴⁷⁹ The scale of planning, however, is perhaps illustrated by the 7th Earl of Orkney, who lived at The Tythe House in Stewkley, taking in on the local committee's behalf, 600 tins of biscuits, 50 cases of canned corned beef, 30 cases of canned beans, 22 cases of sugar, 13 cases of condensed milk, 15 cases of margarine, and ten chests of tea as emergency supplies. The committee had earlier requested 210 tons of coal and 500 gallons of paraffin oil.⁴⁸⁰ At Fawley, enquiries were made to stock biscuits from Messrs. Huntley & Palmer at Reading and compressed yeast from the Army and Navy Stores in London as well as to the possibility of repairing the old village well.⁴⁸¹

The committee at Aylesbury chaired by the mayor had 23 members compared to that at Wendover chaired by the ARP Head Warden with 13 other members, and that at Farnham Royal with ten.⁴⁸² Beaconsfield had 11 members, the chairman and vice chairman - W. E. Vare and Admiral F. Graham - being also respectively chairman and vice chairman of the UDC.⁴⁸³ At Stewkley there

⁴⁷⁹ BA, MB 3/9/1 Aylesbury War Book; T/A 8/7/18, Wendover War Book, 20 Aug. 1942; D-X 136, Great and Little Kimble Invasion Committee; PR 202/30/6/1, Swanbourne Invasion Committee, Crouch to Jones, 2 Aug. 1941; Jones circular, 23 Aug. 1941; D-X 1175/6.

⁴⁸⁰ BA, PR 193/29/9, Stewkley Invasion Committee Mins., 29 Sept. 1941; 1 Mar. 1943. For correspondence on food stocks laid in by the Medmenham Invasion Committee, see BA, D-X 1175/3 and 4, Papers of Mrs S. L. Morris, who was the sub-postmistress.

⁴⁸¹ BA, AR1/1993/235, Mins. of Fawley Local Emergency Committee, 6 and 20 Oct. 1941.

⁴⁸² BA, MB 3/9/1 Aylesbury War Book; T/A 8/7/18, Wendover War Book, 20 Aug. 1942; Report on Aston Clinton Defence Committee, Apl. 1942; D 113/73, Farnham Royal Invasion Committee; D 113/96 Iver Invasion Committee. It has not been possible to consult the papers of the Fawley Invasion Committee, BA, AR 1/93 these being retained currently at an inaccessible store.

⁴⁸³ BA, AR 105/74/46/19, Beaconsfield Invasion Committee War Book, 23 Mar. 1942.

were ten members, each of whom nominated a deputy in the event of not being able to attend a meeting. Meetings were held in the Village Hall with the headquarters in a room at the school.⁴⁸⁴ At Medmenham, there were just four members, John Nye of the ARP acting as chairman, with Sergeant Ewers of the Home Guard, Sergeant Daniels of the Bucks Police, and Mrs S. L. Morris as Food Organiser.⁴⁸⁵ Fawley had six members, elected by a public meeting at Sunny Close on 29 September 1941.⁴⁸⁶ At Iver there were eight members. The Battle Headquarters was in the Tower Arms, Richings Park. Curiously the Iver War Book was only completed in September 1944. It was not perhaps surprising therefore that the Chairman, Eric Basden, a technical entomologist, complained to the police that the standard invasion notice had disappeared from Antony's Dairy in August 1944 since he believed the risk from flying bombs might still disrupt food supplies.⁴⁸⁷

The local Home Guard commanders were always members of the Invasion Committees. In one exercise in 1941, the commander of the Flackwell Heath platoon co-located with the Invasion Committee in a pub. He declined to move despite the 'noise of battle' from Loudwater and 'although warned by the Umpire that the enemy would shortly overrun the village, insisted on obeying the orders of the Higher Command and remained with his beer'.⁴⁸⁸ At Stewkley, the original 'keep' in the Home Guard defence plan was in the Village Hall but the latter's trustees then nominated it as a rest centre, compelling the Home Guard to move the last redoubt to the Old Swan Inn.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁴ BA, PR 193/29/9, Stewkley Invasion Committee Mins., 29 Sept. 1941, 7 Apl. 1942.

⁴⁸⁵ BA, D-X 1175/2.

⁴⁸⁶ BA, AR1/1993/235, Fawley Local Emergency Committee Mins., 29 Sept. 1941.

⁴⁸⁷ BA, D 11/96, Basden to Smith, 30 Aug. 1944.

⁴⁸⁸ Kentish, *Bux* 4, 16.

⁴⁸⁹ BA, PR 193/29/9, Stewkley Invasion Committee Mins., 19 May 1942.

At Chesham, Councillor Geoffrey Bell, a War Office civil servant, who chaired the Invasion Committee, complained bitterly that Major A. M. Melville of the 5th Battalion ignored the Urban District Council and had tried to requisition rooms in Amy Hill House designated as a sick bay for evacuees. Both Ledingham in Aylesbury and the GOC of the East Central District, Major General L. H. R. Finch, were called upon to get Melville to co-operate more with the Invasion Committee.⁴⁹⁰

Plans were updated in 1944 lest the Germans attempt spoiling raids following D-Day. Night guards were to be placed on five vulnerable points - Bletchley Railway Communications Centre, Gerrards Cross Railway Control Centre, Hawkers Factory, Marlow Bridge, and Wolverton Railway Communications Centre. Inlying battle platoons at instant readiness would be maintained every night at Amersham, Aylesbury, Bradenham Hall, Calvert, Chesham, Gibson's Factory at Wycombe, Hawkers at Langley, Taplow Drill Hall, and Wolverton. Mobile reserves were to be concentrated at Aylesbury, Bradenham Hall, Calvert, Hawkers at Langley, Seer Green, Taplow, Wolverton, and Wycombe.

⁴⁹¹ The 10th Battalion at Langley maintained night guards of one officer and four ORs from each platoon between 2200 and 0600 hours with a relief every two hours. Few incidents were reported beyond passing flying bombs or distant explosions although in May 1944 all were ordered to look out for two suspicious individuals in uniform - possibly deserters or enemy agents - in a vehicle last seen in Worcester.⁴⁹²

⁴⁹⁰ BA, DC 16/10/2, Bell to Finch, 30 Apl. 1942; Bell to Melville, 3 May 1942; Ledingham to Bell, 20 May 1942; Bell to Ledingham, 24 May 1942.

⁴⁹¹ TNA, WO 166/14478, War Diary, Bucks Sub Area, 28 Apl., and 25 May 1944.

⁴⁹² BA, T/A 8/13/6, No 2 Platoon Night Section reports, 29 Apl. to 6 June 1944; 8/13/7, Standing Orders, 8 June to 18 Aug. 1944.

At one point earlier, probably on 26 October 1942 when bombs hit Langley, one of the 10th Battalion's platoons 'without apparent effort, accommodated, fed and slept in their guardroom approximately 250 mothers and children turned out of their homes through time bombs. Half a dozen tired men of the night guard received and fed the refugees out of their rations, and then with umbrella and bowler hat went to town to do a "day's work".'⁴⁹³

The advance from Normandy, however, eradicated all risk by the autumn of 1944. It was announced on 6 September 1944 that operational duties were suspended with parades to be on a voluntary basis only. The King signed a written message of thanks for service - largely drafted by Churchill - on 14 November 1944 and also broadcast on 3 December. The Home Guard was formally stood down on 31 December 1944.

The Home Guard has a particular popular image arising largely from the success of the BBC comedy series, 'Dad's Army', first broadcast in 1969.⁴⁹⁴ Interestingly, Chalfont St Giles High Street stood in for 'Warmington-on-Sea' in the 1971 film version, scenes being shot in the village in August 1970.⁴⁹⁵ The series has some validity in terms of highlighting the age and previous military experience of many LDV in May 1940 since the upper age limit of 65 was widely ignored. It was claimed in 1945 that 75 per cent of the Home Guard were ex-servicemen.⁴⁹⁶ In reality, the percentage was usually far smaller. The Stoke Mandeville Platoon of 'D' Company, 1st Battalion reported only 23 per cent ex-servicemen on 25 May 1940 although 70 per cent had some knowledge

⁴⁹³ Graves, *Home Guard*, 191.

⁴⁹⁴ Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence*, 170-204.

⁴⁹⁵ *Bucks Examiner*, 21 Aug. 1970.

⁴⁹⁶ John Brophy, *Britain's Home Guard: A Character Study* (London: Harrap, 1945), 19.

of firearms.⁴⁹⁷ ‘D’ Company of the 4th Battalion at Marlow had 142 ex-servicemen and 59 men with some knowledge of firearms but 57 without any knowledge.⁴⁹⁸ One unnamed platoon eulogised by a reporter from the *Bucks Herald* who spent an evening on duty with them in September 1940 suggested 60 per cent were ex-servicemen.⁴⁹⁹ A random sample of 900 men enlisted in Bucks in 1940-41 yields only 35.8 per cent with previous military knowledge and an average age of 35 years.⁵⁰⁰ There were restrictions, the County Zone Commander advising all battalion commanders on 16 June 1940, that no ‘pigeon fanciers’ were to be enlisted without authority.⁵⁰¹ Equally, aliens also required permission although there was certainly one former Czech army colonel enrolled who was now employed as a factory hand at Slough.⁵⁰²

Younger men were called up progressively, 60 per cent of the 180,000 men who left the Home Guard in 1941 being conscripted.⁵⁰³ Aubrey Newell, for example, an apprentice joiner from High Wycombe and son of a Great War NCO in the 1/1st Royal Bucks Hussars, joined the 7th Battalion as an 18 year old in 1941. Although in a reserved occupation, he enlisted in the Royal Marines as soon as he could in 1942.⁵⁰⁴ Between 1941 and 1944, the 10th Battalion sent

⁴⁹⁷ BA, T/A 8/7/1/1, Goldringham to Foley, 23 May 1940.

⁴⁹⁸ Kentish, *Bux* 4, 81.

⁴⁹⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 20 Sept. 1940.

⁵⁰⁰ MOD, Home Guard Enlistment Papers, Boxes 1252-1311. The Home Guard Enlistment papers are beginning to appear at TNA as WO 409 but, thus far, only those for County Durham have been digitised. It seems unlikely that those for Bucks will be available anytime soon. The author was given privileged access to sample the 60 boxes relating to Bucks in the 1980s.

⁵⁰¹ BA, T/A 8/7/1/1, Hall to Commandants, 16 June 1940.

⁵⁰² MOD, Home Guard Enlistment Papers, Box 1279.

⁵⁰³ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 269.

⁵⁰⁴ IWM, 20601, Sound Interview with Aubrey Newell, 9 Sept. 2000.

317 men into the armed forces.⁵⁰⁵ Equally, the battalion was admonished in June 1942 for recruiting boys under 17 years of age, all of whom were to be sent to cadet units forthwith.⁵⁰⁶

The changes did not increase the preponderance of older men for those conscripted were replaced by 17 year-olds. Under the terms of national service legislation in November 1941, not only was service in the Home Guard itself subject to compulsion but a firm upper age limit was also imposed with effect from 16 February 1942 although a few were allowed to serve on beyond it. All existing Home Guardsmen were given the opportunity of resigning rather than accept the new conditions but those under 51 who did so could still be directed back into the force. In practice, resignations were restricted to those aged over 65. An effective age limit of 40 was also introduced for those serving in anti-aircraft batteries, a role established for the Home Guard in April 1942. The net result was an erosion of older men. Indeed, in July 1942 it was reported that some 400 under aged boys had lied about their age to join the Bucks Home Guard since the introduction of compulsion.⁵⁰⁷ A second sample of 600 men enlisted into the Bucks Home Guard between 1942 and 1944 indicates an average age of 32.6 years and only 15 per cent with previous military experience.⁵⁰⁸ By 1943 the average age of the whole force was under 30.⁵⁰⁹

The surviving Company Roll Book for 'F' Company of the 7th Battalion at High Wycombe listing all enrolments between 1940 and 1944 shows a degree of variation from the samples. The previous military experience of those enlisted

⁵⁰⁵ BA, T/A 8/13/5, List of Men sent to HM Forces.

⁵⁰⁶ BA, T/A 8/13, Circular by Allan, 11 June 1942.

⁵⁰⁷ *Bucks Advertiser*, 24 July 1942.

⁵⁰⁸ MOD, Home Guard Enlistment Papers, Boxes 1252-1311.

⁵⁰⁹ Graves, *Home Guard*, 168.

in 1940 is slightly higher than the sample average but that for 1943 substantially so. The same is true of the average of those enrolled in the company in 1943 reflecting perhaps the enrolment of skilled men who had previously been exempted from service albeit that the oldest wartime recruit was a 59 year old grocer without previous military experience enrolled in 1943 (Table 9.1).⁵¹⁰

Table 9.1 Previous Military Service and Average Age of ‘F’ Company, 7th Battalion Bucks Home Guard, 1940-44

	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	Not Given	Total
Total	38	10	30	75	10	3	166
Previous Military Service	21 (55.2%)	2 (20%)	-	23 (30.6%)	1 (10%)	-	48 (28.9%)
Average Age	41.5	26.2	28.9	41.1	25.3	-	32.6

Source: BA, AR 56/2007 [BMMT 564/1]

Compulsory direction was not suspended until September 1944 and from April 1943 onwards there was also provision for directing ‘nominated women’ between 18 and 65 into supporting roles in the force such as clerical, driving and catering duties. This regulated an unofficial practice that had already arisen but such ‘nominated women’ were actually volunteers who were not exempted thereby from direction into other full or part-time roles. ‘A’ Company of the 4th Battalion had 70 unofficial ‘Women Volunteer Observers’ by the autumn of

⁵¹⁰ For the wartime aircraft industry, see Scott and Simmons, *High Wycombe’s Contribution to Aviation*, 42-51.

1940, who helped maintain a 24 hour presence at nine observation posts.⁵¹¹ One young woman from Beaconsfield later recalled women undertaking unofficial observer patrols there in 1940.⁵¹² Although not a ‘nominated woman’, Mrs J. L. Coales was presented by the officers, NCOs and men of ‘D’ (Wolverton) Company of the 2nd Battalion with a special framed certificate of thanks to in 1945 for all her ‘kind and cheerful work towards the well-being of all ranks’.⁵¹³



*Men from the Beaconsfield Home Guard outside the Crown at Penn, c. 1943
[BMMT]*

There had been much opposition to women participating in the Home Guard but there was constant pressure on the part of prominent women, notably Dr Edith

⁵¹¹ *Four Chevrons*, 5.

⁵¹² IWM, 17426, Interview with Patricia Crampton, 1997.

⁵¹³ BA, AR 39/2017 [BMMT 716].

Summerskill. By 1944 there were approximately 32,000 nominated women but this actually fell well short of the 80,000 ceiling set. Nominated women were not uniformed, paid or armed.⁵¹⁴ A rather more conventional female role was fulfilled by the Chesham Home Guard Comfort Fund, led by Lady Pender, a minute book of which surfaced in 1970. The first meeting was held at Bury Farm on 9 October 1940. A sum of £120 was raised and by Christmas the members had knitted 138 pullovers, 197 pairs of socks, 206 pairs of gloves, and 191 scarves and helmets.⁵¹⁵

Further to the ‘Dad’s Army’ image, the more absurd aspects of the LDV and Home Guard were treated by contemporaries in much the same way that the auxiliaries in the past had so often been ridiculed. ‘Look, Duck and Vanish’, ‘Last Desperate Venture’ and ‘Long Dentured Veterans’ were supplemented by cartoons in *Punch* and the monologues of the popular comedian, Robb Wilton.⁵¹⁶ The relatively few memoirs for Bucks tend to recall the farcical. A then boy at Beaconsfield recalled, for example, an exercise against men from the Black Watch in which he and his friends were able to signal to the Home Guard when they spotted the ‘enemy’.⁵¹⁷ In an exercise at Lacey Green as an alternative to grenades, one farmer employed addled goose eggs, which were not appreciated by the ‘enemy’.⁵¹⁸ A young Home Guardsman from Weston Turville - the headquarters was in the former chauffeur’s quarters over a double garage of a

⁵¹⁴ Mackenzie, *Home Guard*, 147; Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence*, 73-80.

⁵¹⁵ *Bucks Examiner*, 29 May 1970.

⁵¹⁶ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 270-71; Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence*, 104-39, 226-32.

⁵¹⁷ <http://www.staffshomeguard.co.uk/DotherReminiscencesOtherstaddshgA-E.htm#buck>.
Account by Bob Sutton.

⁵¹⁸ <https://www.laceygreen.com/Sections/History/Homeguard.html>.

country house next to the Five Bells - recalled a favourite night patrolling area around the local reservoir, allowing a swim on warm summer evenings, and through orchards from which fruit was regularly purloined.⁵¹⁹

There were clashes on occasions between Home Guard and the ARP as at Great Missenden in September 1941 when a Home Guard cautioned the Chief Warden for leaving his car unlocked and not immobilised outside the ARP centre.⁵²⁰ In 1942, however, wardens were given weapons training by the Home Guard.⁵²¹ The Iver Platoon was accused of illegally enrolling ARP members in June 1942 but responded that no warden had been induced, enticed, or asked to join: the three that had been enrolled had not revealed they were in the ARP.⁵²² On the other hand, the co-operation of the Home Guard with civil defence services in Amersham was praised in 1940.⁵²³

The Missenden platoon commander noted in August 1940 that there was ‘an undoubted tendency among LDV once they got a little authority on a road to make full use of it’ after they had prevented police and ARP from reaching a bomb scene at Ballinger.⁵²⁴ There was an altercation between ‘D’ Company of the 1st Battalion and Benskins Brewery in 1941 after the landlord at the Bernard Arms at Great Kimble was ‘heard to say that those present were more like Boy

⁵¹⁹ A 7802660, Ken Rawlinson on the BBCWW2 Peoples’ War – <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar>

⁵²⁰ BA, T/A 8/7/5/9, Foley to Southern, 17 and 22 Sept. 1941; Southern to Foley, 22 Sept. 1941.

⁵²¹ BA, T/A 8/13/5, Crowley to Harding, 22 Mar. 1942.

⁵²² BA, T/A 8/13, Henderson to OC, ‘A’ Coy, 10 June 1942.

⁵²³ Amersham Museum, Marston Mss, Beachcroft to Marston, 25 Nov. 1940.

⁵²⁴ BA, T/A 8/7/1/2, Goldringham to Foley, 8 Aug. 1940.

Scouts than Home Guards, or some such phrase of that kind'.⁵²⁵ At Amersham, the company commander apologised for an unauthorised bomb practice - presumably with grenades - disturbing one complainant's husband between 7 and 8 p.m. one evening.⁵²⁶

The early LDV certainly tended to be over-zealous in hunting for 'fifth columnists' and there were a number of fatalities when motorists failed to stop. Upon instituting 'motor patrols' on 26 June 1940, by which was meant stopping cars, the Bletchley Platoon of the 2nd Battalion was strictly cautioned in the light of two fatal accidents that had already occurred in the county that the police must be in charge. The instruction was repeated to the Bletchley Company on 22 August and 12 September.⁵²⁷ At Wolverton, one driver was lucky to escape a bullet that went through the car, getting stuck in the front windscreen wiper.⁵²⁸ The 'first blood' drawn by the 4th Battalion in early June 1940 was a soldier returning late to barracks one evening with two others forced to skid off the road by a bullet through a car's back window: 'A neat round hole in the glass at the back of the car showed where the bullet had entered, passing between the heads of the two on the backseat, removing the cap of the driver and breaking the skin down the whole length of the parting of his hair, finally passing out through the windscreen.' It was the 'first rifle practice that two LDVs had indulged in since the War of 1914-18'.⁵²⁹ In February 1941, however, the 1st

⁵²⁵ BA, T/A 8/7/3/6, Foley to Secretary, Benskins Brewery, 17 Mar. and 29 Apl. 1941.

⁵²⁶ Amersham Museum, Marston Mss, Marston to Palmer, 23 July 1941.

⁵²⁷ IWM, Doc. 22105 [MISC 299 (3953)], Platoon Orders, 26 June 1940; Company Orders, 22 Aug., and 12 Sept. 1940.

⁵²⁸ IWM, 7300, Sound Interview with Douglas Dytham, 1983.

⁵²⁹ Kentish, *Bux 4*, 9.

Battalion was commended for arresting three youths who had absconded from an approved school.⁵³⁰

In other respects, the Home Guard operated much like any other of the auxiliary forces of the past. At Wolverton route marches were always headed by the unit's band, led somewhat ironically by a gifted musician from the Wolverton Works - actually a special constable - who was given a uniform for such occasions.⁵³¹ There were football competitions, and smoking concerts. Rather as in the case of previous auxiliary forces, there were musketry competitions as in 1943 when No 2 Platoon in 7th Battalion won the platoon competition medal.⁵³²

The magazine of No. 1 Platoon in 'D' Company of the 1st Battalion at Wendover carried gardening hints, cooking recipes, and quizzes. Nonetheless, there were also the parades, and lectures on such topics as aircraft development, fire-fighting, and the Russo-Finnish War.⁵³³ In addition, there were the exercises such as that against regular troops in March 1941 and one against other platoons, characterised as the 'Battle of Wendover':⁵³⁴

T'was on a Sunday morning, one day not long ago,
When the brave lads of the Home Guard met with a deadly foe
They came from Aston Clinton, from Turville and from Stoke
And Lee sent their stalwarts, and Prestwood, too, their folk;
They crept towards our village - the station was their aim,

⁵³⁰ BA, T/A 8/7/3/5, Cleary to Hall, 5 Feb. 1941.

⁵³¹ IWM, 7300, Sound Interview with Douglas Dytham, 1983.

⁵³² BMMT 568.

⁵³³ IWM, LBY E. 61704 has the first three issues of *The Wender Watch* for Feb., Mar., and Apl. 1941.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid*, Feb. 1941.

But they'd never met our smart platoon, who saw their little game.

Many of the relentlessly anecdotal post-war unit histories also played upon the more farcical side of the Home Guard in contradiction to the prospect that they would have had to fight in earnest in the summer of 1940. Some on the political left also saw the Home Guard as a kind of people's militia whilst even more radical attitudes were held by those who had been involved in the Spanish Civil War and now offered their services in training the Home Guard in guerrilla warfare. To a degree, hopes of a political awakening arising from the Home Guard could not have been realistically entertained by the radicals if it had not been for the fact that the authorities themselves seemingly embraced an overtly democratic aspect of the Home Guard. Initial volunteers required the endorsement of two householders or a magistrate in order to be registered by the police and there were fears of admitting those who were politically suspect (including potential IRA member) or aliens.⁵³⁵ But an Army Council Instruction on 15 August 1940 chose to emphasise that the force was based on equality of service and status. There were initially no formal military ranks but titles such as zone commander and volunteer instead, none of which carried military status. Home Guard appointments conferred no disciplinary powers and, as already indicated, Home Guardsmen had the right to resign on 14 days' notice until the 'housemaid's clause' was swept away in February 1942.⁵³⁶

With continuing fears that the Germans would treat the Home Guard as mere *franc-tireurs*, the King's commission was extended to Home Guard officers in February 1941, and backdated to November 1940, but still conferred no power of summary punishment. It was also made clear in November 1940 when the

⁵³⁵ Summerfield and Peniston-Bird, *Contesting Home Defence*, 30-37.

⁵³⁶ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 270-73.

decision was first announced that it was not intended that commissions would destroy the character of the force since no ‘political, business nor social affiliations are to be regarded as conducing in themselves to fitness for command’.⁵³⁷ Those leaving the force had to revert to the rank of private before doing so although, later, those over 65 could retire in their commissioned rank whilst not carrying it into civil life. The lowest rank of volunteer was not retitled private until February 1942. Officers were also denied first class rail travel in 1941 to preserve the democratic air albeit also saving money. One Home Guardsman recalled being given 3d for each bicycle journey from Hedgerley to duty at Gerrard’s Cross.⁵³⁸

Wartime film and publications equally played on the democratic ideal and, again, many post-war unit histories tended to emphasise it although George Orwell, a perceptive observer, also noted what he termed ‘blimpocracy’ so that it was a people’s army officered by ‘blimps’, all initial appointments resting in the hands of the Lords Lieutenant.⁵³⁹ The character, ‘Colonel Blimp’, was the invention of the cartoonist David Low in the *Evening Standard* in 1934. It came to represent the supposed reactionary conservatism of army high command as depicted in the controversial 1943 Powell and Pressburger film, *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp*.⁵⁴⁰

In Bucks, in 1941 the ten battalions were all commanded by men with military experience. Lieutenant Colonels H. M. Edwards (1st Battalion), and W. Gibson

⁵³⁷ Graves, *Home Guard*, 117.

⁵³⁸ *Buckinghamshire in World War II* Video (1995), Interview with Ray Cox. Cox also got into trouble for using his Sten Gun to hunt for rabbits.

⁵³⁹ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 275-76.

⁵⁴⁰ James Chapman, ‘The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp Reconsidered’, *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* 15 (1995), 19-36.

(5th Battalion) had both commanded Kitchener service battalions in the Great War. Lieutenant Colonels Henry Beaumont (4th Battalion), L. M. Wilson (8th Battalion), W. H. Lewis (9th Battalion), and H. R. D. Harding (10th Battalion) were former regulars. Former Territorials commanded the rest: Sir Everard Pauncefort-Duncombe, (2nd Battalion), R. Haworth (3rd Battalion), Lewis Reynolds (7th Battalion), and S. W. Ashwarden (6th Battalion). Subsequently, the 2nd Battalion was commanded by R. E. Hagley, the 3rd by A. E. Impey, the 7th by C. C. Strong, the 8th by T. L. Wakley, and the 10th by Walter Corfield, a poultry farmer from Iver Heath. Strong and Corfield were certainly former officers.

Lieutenant Colonels Guy Crouch and Oscar Viney both served in the 1st Battalion as major and captain respectively. Oscar Viney took over the Bierton Platoon in the 1st Battalion as the old regular first put in charge rarely strayed far from the Red Lion and the men had done little more than put a guard on the church tower. Viney at once instituted night patrols and went out to check that duties were being done. Sitting in the Bulls' Head in Aylesbury one lunchtime, Philip Hall overheard two men complaining, 'We have got a terror, the b... never goes to bed.' The Red Lion was not a satisfactory headquarters and Viney had to requisition a large room in the local doctor's house when he refused to let the platoon make use of it. One compensation was that the platoon included the local poacher, who kept Viney supplied with hare and partridge.⁵⁴¹

Lieutenant General Harold Blount of Woughton, a former Royal Marine, took over the command of the Bletchley Platoon in June 1940; this being designated a company in the following month. Major General A. B. Clifford was a lieutenant in the 3rd Battalion and Major General Sir Richard Howard-Vyse a

⁵⁴¹ Viney, 'Reminiscences', 124-25.

major in the 9th Battalion before commanding the 10th Battalion in 1942. The Duke of Richmond and Gordon was a second lieutenant in the 4th Battalion. Brigadier-General John Micklem, who had commanded the 4th Tank Brigade in 1918, took over the Whitchurch platoon in 1941 as a lieutenant while General Sir George Barrow was simply a private at The Lee. Also resident at The Lee was the industrialist, Sir Bernard Docker, who was threatened with a court appearance for refusing to pay rates. Docker claimed that the Home Guard had requisitioned his house when he was still living there and, indeed, he commanded the local platoon.⁵⁴²

Another former regular in the Royal Fusiliers, Leonard Kentish of Great Kingshill, succeeded Beaumont in command of the 4th Battalion in August 1942. Kentish had formerly lived in Hughenden and, after 1918, had been contemptuous of 'Bucks Colonels' like his landlord, Coningsby Disraeli. It was ironic, then, that he effectively became one himself.⁵⁴³ Micklem became commander of the 12th Battalion in 1942 whilst the 11th was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Gordon Marston and the 13th by Lieutenant Colonel P. W. S. Bulman. As already indicated, Marston from Chenies Manor, who had been awarded the DSO and MC in the Great War, had begun as commander of the Amersham Company. Co-founder of an electrical company in Amersham, he then founded Minerva Mouldings in 1944.

An anonymous correspondent, 'Perturbed', complained to the *Bucks Examiner* about the nature of LDV leadership in June 1940 but the editor explained that this came under the censorship regulations and would not be printed: the writer

⁵⁴² BA, T/A 8/7/4/8, Note, 25 July 1941.

⁵⁴³ B. L. Kentish, *To The Cottage Born* (Typescript, 1980). Kentish had corresponded with the Official Historian, Brigadier James Edmonds on operations on the Somme in November 1916 – see TNA, CAB 45/135.

must address his concerns to the leadership.⁵⁴⁴ Not all commanders, however, were necessarily socially or militarily prominent citizens. Micklem had succeeded Charles Bernard Olliver at Whitchurch. Olliver ran a poultry business at Oving and had had a quite extraordinary career. As a young merchant seaman he had been taken prisoner by a German commerce raider that sank his ship in 1914. Set ashore on Tenerife he had served in the Royal Navy and then, in 1925, was awarded the BEM when the airship *R-33* on which he was a rigger had broken its moorings in a fierce gale and the skeleton crew managed to bring it back from the Dutch coast after 28 hours. In 1926-27 he accompanied the Great War cinematographer Geoffrey Malins, on his round the world motorcycle trip before working for ten years in Australia. In August 1941 and at the age of 47 Olliver resigned from the Home Guard to go back to sea: he was killed when his oil tanker hit a mine off Harwich in September 1941.⁵⁴⁵

The commander of 'A' (Stony Stratford) Company in the 2nd Battalion was a corn merchant but James Knight had also represented Britain in the cycle team at the 1924 Paris Olympics. The Lacey Green Platoon in 'A' Company of 4th Battalion was commanded by the landlord of the Pink & Lily, although he was a former soldier. At Olney the commander was the manager of Barclays Bank, W. J. F. Austin.⁵⁴⁶ At Aston Clinton, the men were initially allowed to choose their NCOs. Malcolm Dunbar, who had served in the VTC, was chosen as sergeant so he was told later because of his monocle: 'It's that monocle of yours - they thought you were a b---dy old colonel from the Boer War.'⁵⁴⁷ In 'B' (Wycombe County) Company of the 4th Battalion, the Wooburn section was initially commanded by the curate; the Flackwell Heath section by the furniture

⁵⁴⁴ *Bucks Examiner*, 21 June 1940.

⁵⁴⁵ Beckett, *Whitchurch, Fallen and Second World War*, 66-69.

⁵⁴⁶ BA, D-X 1302.

⁵⁴⁷ BA, D-X 916, Dunbar Mss.

manufacturer, E. C. Gomme; the Loudwater section by the manager of the Wycombe Marsh paper mills; the Hughenden section by an architect; and the Hazlemere section by a solicitor.⁵⁴⁸

Not all placed in command proved satisfactory. At Denham, the solicitor, V. E. A. Smith, who had reached the rank of major in the 5th Battalion, received a letter of no confidence from his officers in February 1943. They demanded that he arrange for a meeting between them and the battalion commanding officer to discuss his inefficiency ‘and to stress their belief that this complaint is largely, if not wholly, attributable to yourself’. During Smith’s four-week absence, esprit de corps had risen appreciably with the men showing new enthusiasm for training.⁵⁴⁹ It is not clear if Smith survived in his command.

In reality, the Home Guard could not have been formed so quickly without the input of traditional elites although it was also attended by increasing bureaucracy. In April 1942, for example, a company commander in the 4th Bucks Battalion received full instructions on the burial of ‘Mohammedan’ personnel.⁵⁵⁰ The War Office had not intended to revive the CTAs but they had to be pressed into service to assist with the administration of the Home Guard on 30 May 1940. From 24 June CTAs were authorised to appoint administrative assistants for battalions with a grant of £300 per annum, as well as receiving an annual capitation grant for each man. The Home Guard was affiliated to county regiments in August.

⁵⁴⁸ Kentish, *Bux 4*, 71.

⁵⁴⁹ BA, D-X 1035/3, Mehan to Smith, 16 Feb. 1943.

⁵⁵⁰ Kentish, *Bux 4*, 25.

The introduction of compulsion on 26 March 1942 did bring a change in the ethos of the Home Guard. Rather as in the case of the tribunal men and the VTC in the Great War, there were complaints when local appeal boards did not enforce their powers of direction. It has been calculated that of 946,000 directions between January 1942 and September 1944 only half were ever enforced to the benefit of the Home Guard.⁵⁵¹ On the other hand, commanding officers were reminded in January 1943 that Home Guard duties were undertaken in a man's spare time and discretion should be shown to those working long hours. In November 1943 these were defined as 60 hours a week inclusive of overtime but exclusive of meal breaks and travel. In May 1943 it was also noted that commanding officers were using their power to refuse directed men to a greater extent than had been envisaged. Particular problems were experienced in anti-aircraft batteries since shift workers were often being directed into them by the Ministry of Manpower and National Service. Moreover, when a shortage of anti-aircraft personnel resulted in general service battalions being required to fill quotas, they often sent their worst men. Local Home Guard manpower boards were established to adjudicate on conflicting demands only in January 1944.

As with the VTC the possibility arose of men being prosecuted for not fulfilling duties. In May 1940 ten hours per week had been suggested as a basic requirement. With compulsion, those unwilling to undertake a maximum of 48 hours' duty in a four-week period faced a £10 fine or a month's imprisonment. Battalions had to face the prospect of undertaking prosecutions at least of persistent offenders. There were cases brought to court in the 6th Bucks HG Battalion in November 1942, May 1943 and January 1944.⁵⁵² There were three

⁵⁵¹ Longmate, *Real Dad's Army*, 60.

⁵⁵² D 113/77, Eric Basden memoir.

cases in the 1st Battalion in September 1943. At one Winslow petty sessions in June 1944, four cases relating to the 3rd and 12th Battalions were heard at the same sitting.⁵⁵³ In September 1943 Guy Crouch of the 1st Battalion claimed concessions granted to agricultural workers during harvest time were being abused by non-agriculturalists.⁵⁵⁴

Agricultural areas often faced difficulties but the Home Guard was far from just the force of the countryside as was suggested by much contemporary comment, which was redolent with a rustic and pastoral imagery of oak, elm, cow-byres and village cricket. It paid only lip service to the realities of a largely urban and industrial force.⁵⁵⁵ One contemporary film, *Went the Day Well* (1942), which posited a German invasion attempt defeated by the inhabitants of a typical rural village was filmed at Turville, later a favoured post-war location for many films and television shows such as *The Vicar of Dibley*. The County Council allowed the addition of a shop, house, pump, and porch for location filming in May and June 1942 provided they were removed within two months.⁵⁵⁶ Rural areas were initially those most vulnerable to parachute attack but industrial concerns made a significant contribution from the beginning.

Occupations were not given on enlistment forms until 1942, which makes comparison between earlier and later periods, problematic but the sample of 600 Bucks personnel between 1942 and 1944 show 50.6 per cent in skilled industrial manual occupations with 14.5 per cent in unskilled industrial occupations, followed by professional men (9.4%) and agricultural workers (7.7%).⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵³ BA, T/A 8/7/12, Order, 1 June 1944.

⁵⁵⁴ BA, T/A 8/7/10/3, Crouch circular, 6 Sept. 1943.

⁵⁵⁵ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 278.

⁵⁵⁶ Penelope Houston, *Well Went the Day?* (London: BFI Publishing, 1992), 50.

⁵⁵⁷ MOD, Home Guard Enlistment Forms, Boxes 1252-1311.

Likewise the Roll Book of 'F' Company in the 7th Battalion has few recorded occupations for those enrolled in 1940 but the preponderance of skilled manual workers enrolled in 1942 and 1943 is abundantly clear (Table 9.2).⁵⁵⁸ It reflects the influence of the wartime High Wycombe aircraft industry - not least production of the wooden elements of the airframe of the De Haviland Mosquito.

Table 9.2 Occupations of 'F' Company, 7th Battalion Bucks Home Guard, 1940-44

	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	Not Given	Total
Professions	2	-	-	12	-	-	14 (8.4%)
Clerks	1	-	-	5	2	-	8 (4.8%)
Tradesmen		-	2	10	2	-	14 (8.4%)
Skilled Manual Workers	5	6	25	43	4	2	85 (51.2%)
Unskilled Manual Workers	1		2	5	1	-	9(5.4%)
Not Given	29	4	1	-	1	1	36
Total	38	10	30	75	10	3	166

Source: BA, AR 56/2007 [BMMT 564/1]

⁵⁵⁸ BA, AR 56/2007 [BMMT 564/1].

In 1940, industrial concerns throughout the county had raised platoons. In the 1st Battalion there were platoons from Hazells, Hunt Barnard, Northern Dairies, Nestles, Hills and Partridge, and Bifurcated Rivets.⁵⁵⁹ Over 40 per cent of the Great Missenden Platoon in the 1st Battalion comprised employees of the National Employers Mutual and General Insurance Company, under the command of Captain D. D. Goldingham.⁵⁶⁰ The civil engineers, Wimpey & Co. had constructed a hutted camp at Denham for its head office staff as war approached, to which they moved in September 1939. A Wimpey LDV platoon was formed from younger employees in 5th Battalion and, armed initially with pickaxe handles they patrolled the local golf course.⁵⁶¹ The 4th Battalion had a contingent raised for the defence of Jackson's Mill at Bourne End, which supplied fibre mill boards, whilst the whole 6th Battalion and its successors were heavily dependent on the Slough Trading Estate. Initially, the London, Midland and Scottish Railway, which had absorbed the LNWR in 1923, formed first a separate platoon and then a separate company of the 2nd Battalion. Subsequently, it formed a substantial contingent of the 12th Battalion.

The 13th Battalion was entirely raised from Hawkers. By contrast, all boys over 17 from Stowe OTC were included in the 3rd Battalion and boys from Eton OTC in the 6th Battalion. The Bourbon Tower at Stowe, which had been uninhabited since 1921, was again used as a military installation, serving as an observation post whilst battle training was held in the park by the Buckingham platoon. The school biology teacher, Bruce Barr, taught unarmed combat. Part of the Stowe grounds was used for 21 Ammunition Sub Depot (later the Buckingham Central

⁵⁵⁹ Hazell (ed.), *With the Colours*, Apl. 1941, 6.

⁵⁶⁰ BA, T/A 8/7/2/3, Goldingham to Foley, 22 Oct. 1940.

⁵⁶¹ Richard Sampson to author, 1 Aug. 1987.

Ammunition Depot) from September 1942, an RAOC camp being established at Tingewick.⁵⁶² Lewis Reynolds enrolled the captain of the Combined Cadet Force at Wycombe RGS to be chief instructor of the 7th Battalion.⁵⁶³

Urban units had greater access to convenient premises and were able to organise entertainment akin to that of earlier auxiliary forces. The drawback of many specific factory units, however, was that they were concerned only with the defence of their own premises and could not be fully utilised for wider defence purposes. They were brought into local defence schemes in due course but factories under the management of the Ministry of Aircraft Production remained exempted from local plans and were also authorised to raise their own light anti-aircraft batteries in 1942. Given the difficulty of accommodating essential war production within the Home Guard framework, most ‘whole-timers’ were the unemployed. A subsistence allowance of 1s.6d was introduced in August 1940 for five hours’ continuous duty and 3s.0d for ten hours. This was changed in 1942 to 3s.0d for eight hours and 4s.6d for 15 hours.⁵⁶⁴

Yet despite the difficulties, the Home Guard achieved a great deal and became a more important component of home defence in time. Like the VTC, Home Guard service companies undertook full-time duty on the coast on a rota basis from the autumn of 1943 onwards. In the case of Bucks, the 1st Battalion sent five officers and 48 men for duty at St Lawrence Bay in Essex in August 1944 before being relieved by a similar contingent from the 3rd Battalion.⁵⁶⁵ At least one officer from the 5th Battalion, Harold Gower, who lived initially at

⁵⁶² Alasdair Macdonald, *Stowe: House and School* (Ipswich and London: Cowell, 1951), 66; A2160433 Roy Norris on BBC WW2 Peoples’ War - www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar

⁵⁶³ Ashford and Haworth (eds), *History of Royal Grammar School*, 103-07.

⁵⁶⁴ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 279-80.

⁵⁶⁵ BA, T/A 8/7/18, Rouse to Edwards, 1 Sept. 1944.

Amersham and then Little Missenden and worked in London, accompanied one of the ‘mobile’ companies to the coast.⁵⁶⁶

Motor transport companies were formed in May 1941, Bucks raising the 2003rd (Bucks) Home Guard Mechanised Transport Company in 1943 under Major F. W. Tillion. Such companies used requisitioned civilian transport and, in theory, were to be deployed anywhere in the country if required. In January 1944 the 2003rd was placed in the East Central Home Guard Transport Column intended to provide a reserve capability in case of rail breakdowns and to transport ammunition, supplies and stores between depots and ports in preparation for D-Day.⁵⁶⁷ There were eventually 145,000 men in anti-aircraft batteries, 7,000 in coastal artillery batteries, and 7,000 in bomb disposal squads. The 71st Battery at Slough brought down one flying bomb on 15 June 1944, firing in all 146 rounds between January and July 1944.⁵⁶⁸ As a militarily efficient military force by 1943-44, the Home Guard was fulfilling a wide variety of important military roles that took the need for its continued existence well beyond any mere propaganda role, which had undoubtedly been highly important for public opinion in face of real threat in 1940.⁵⁶⁹

The Home Guard also provided cover for the ‘auxiliary units’ formed in July 1940 to undertake guerrilla action against any invaders. In the course of the war, 1,206 members of the Home Guard were killed or died from injuries from enemy action, primarily in aerial defence. In all 137 gallantry awards were

⁵⁶⁶ IWM, 10966, Sound Interview with Harold Gower, 23 Oct. 1989.

⁵⁶⁷ L. B. Whittaker, *Stand Down* (Newport: Ray Westlake Military Books, 1990), 18.

⁵⁶⁸ IWM, Doc. K14256.

⁵⁶⁹ Craig Armstrong, ‘Tyneside’s Home Guard Units: An Able Body of Men’ *Contemporary British History* 22 (2008), 257-78; David Yelton, ‘British Public Opinion, the Home Guard, and the Defence of Great Britain, 1940-44’, *Journal of Military History* 58 (1994), 461-80.

made including two George Crosses. On Stand Down, the Bucks Home Guard received two OBE, six MBEs, and four BEMs.⁵⁷⁰ Seven members were picked to represent the county at the Victory Parade in London in June 1946.

It might also be noted that compared to the Victorian rifle volunteers and the VTC, a substantially larger proportion of the adult male population not otherwise serving in the forces, police or civil defence - about one in five men not otherwise engaged - served in the Home Guard.⁵⁷¹ In common with other auxiliary forces, the manner of the Home Guard's stand down was resented as not sufficiently recognising the services rendered. The second in command (Major Harold Morton, a stock broker), and platoon commanders (Lieutenants R. P. Higgins and C. W. Sparkes) of the 12th Battalion, however, were permitted to accept Czech decorations for their wartime duty in helping guard President Edvard Beneš and his exiled government at the Abbey in Aston Abbots.⁵⁷² The seat of the government, The Abbey, was Morton's previous home.

For those who had served, there was post-war comradeship in reunions. The Bucks Territorial anti-aircraft units, for example, had their own ex-servicemen's association although the annual meeting of representatives of the Bucks branches of the British Legion decided against admitting former Home Guardsmen in November 1970 by 21 votes to 20.⁵⁷³ The Chesham and District Branch of the Home Guard Old Comrades' Association was particularly strong, claiming in 1959 to be the only remaining branch not just in the county but also in the country: it was still active in 1965, at which point it was ejected from the

⁵⁷⁰ BA, T/A 1/2, CTA Mins., 8 Feb. 1945.

⁵⁷¹ Mackenzie, *Home Guard*, 175.

⁵⁷² BA, AR 56/2007 [BMMT 569], Light to Longman, 15 May 1945; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 23 Feb. 1946.

⁵⁷³ *Bucks Herald*, 9 Apl. 1948; *Bucks Examiner*, 27 Nov. 1970.

Chesham Drill Hall as the War Office was disposing of it. At Amersham the 'Five Club' formed by members of No 5 Platoon, 'A' Company of the 11th Battalion was still going strong in 1969. The 'Fencibles' cricket team at Amersham Common still active in 1966 had also been started originally during the war by members of the 11th Battalion.⁵⁷⁴

Reunions were also held by various components of the 1st Battalion: Nos. 2 and 3 Platoons of 'A' Company, No. 4 Platoon of 'D' Company, and the Mobile Company. Former members of No 4 Platoon of 'D' Company from Stoke Mandeville and Weston Turville even organised a day's outing to Brighton in August 1946. The Amersham and Great Missenden companies of 5th Battalion made an effort to attract new members in November 1953.⁵⁷⁵ The 7th Battalion also had reunion dinners, beginning with a 'Stand Down' Dinner in December 1944.⁵⁷⁶ 'D' Company of the 1st Battalion at Aston Clinton set up its own Home Guard OCA in December 1944 with a .22 rifle club and initial activities including an 'At Home' for wives, and a village gymkhana. It endured until wound up in June 1961.⁵⁷⁷

As the Home Guard began to consolidate after Dunkirk, there was almost constant change for the TA. Formations were broken up or reconstituted, and innumerable specialist units also created. Of 22 TA divisions existing during the war, nine were broken up - the first three in June and July 1940 - amid increasing manpower shortages. Effectively, 48th Division ceased to exist as a

⁵⁷⁴ *Bucks Examiner*, 12 Dec. 1958; 25 Dec. 1959; 5 Nov. 1965; 24 June and 7 July 1966; 12 Dec. 1969.

⁵⁷⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 2 Aug., and 20 Dec 1946; 28 Feb. 1947; 15 Dec. 1950; 20 Nov. 1953.

⁵⁷⁶ BA, AR 56/2007 [BMMT 564/2-3], Menu Cards, 'F' Coy, 7th Battalion Stand Down Dinner, 15 Dec. 1944; 'E' Coy, 7th Battalion Reunion Dinner, 9 Apl. 1949.

⁵⁷⁷ BA, D-X 1369/1-3; *Bucks Herald*, 23 Feb. 1945.

first line formation in 1942 with many units transferred. No pre-war units were actually disbanded but went into ‘suspended animation’ although, in the case of artillery units, a distinction was made between batteries and regiments so that batteries were disbanded but regiments were retained albeit in suspended animation.⁵⁷⁸

Within the regular 2nd Division, the 99th Field Regiment was safe from discontinuance. John Moreton had found himself sent to Porthcawl from Dover on evacuation from Dunkirk but was ordered north on 8 June as the regiment was reconstituted in the East Riding, stationed at Bridlington and Filey. The regiment was responsible for 32 miles of coast by the end of July 1940.

‘Covetous’ eyes had been directed towards its officers and some were soon transferred elsewhere whilst about half of the men were no longer from Bucks.

⁵⁷⁹ It stayed in Yorkshire (apart from exercises) until moving to Tewkesbury on 3 December 1941. Whilst the regiment was there, the wing of a large swan on the White Swan was removed. After the war, it regularly appeared at regimental reunions.⁵⁸⁰

Prior to embarkation with the rest of 2nd Division for India in March 1942 there were inspections by Churchill on 28 March and by King George VI on 1 April. With the regiment divided into ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’ Batteries in June 1940, one battery was rearmed with two 25-pounders in July 1940, the other two retaining 4.5” howitzers. Some personnel including Captain H. St Leger Grenfell, Lieutenant Edmund de Rothschild, and Second Lieutenant Ralph Verney were exchanged with the regular 10th Field Regiment in 2nd Division. Rothschild had

⁵⁷⁸ Beckett, *Territorials*, 139.

⁵⁷⁹ BA, D/FR 161/2/26/2, Watson to Cottesloe, 31 July 1940.

⁵⁸⁰ White (ed.), *More Wartime Memories*, 35; BA, AR 28/2009 [BMMT 597], Memoirs of Norman Dubber.

missed the regiment's 1940 campaign as he had been invalided home with a near fatal blood infection in January 1940. He was ordered up to rejoin in Belgium but was unable to do in the chaos of the retreat, being assigned to 110th Field Regiment in August 1940.⁵⁸¹

The 99th Field Regiment's 'A', 'B' and 'C' batteries were re-designated 393, 394 and 472 Field Batteries on 1 February 1941. In May, Watson relinquished command, which was assumed by John Whiteley, MP. Whiteley was killed subsequently on 4 July 1943 in the same aircraft crash as the Polish general Sikorski while taking off from Gibraltar. Christopher Lionel Hanbury of Hitcham House succeeded Whiteley as second-in-command. Among other officers joining in 1941 was Second Lieutenant Hugh Montefiore, later ordained in 1949 and to become Bishop of Birmingham in 1978. Montefiore recalled that the regiment was still a wealthy one 'particularly strong on beer, with a Tetley, a Hanbury, and a Watney [Bryan Bonsor of Liscombe Park]'.⁵⁸² Arthur Stewart-Liberty also served with the 99th throughout the war. The 2nd Division had expected to go to Madagascar but the first party of the 99th landed at Bombay on 3 June 1942. The division had sailed in a major convoy with 20 troop ships starting from the Clyde, Liverpool, Avonmouth, Swansea and Newport, calling in at Freetown and Cape Town en route.⁵⁸³

Training was undertaken around Ahmednagar and Poona and in the Deccan. It was a very different experience for the men. Bombardier Wright, a former Hazells' employee, reported that, 'Everything out here is different - the many

⁵⁸¹ White (ed.), *More Wartime Memories*, 26; TBA, WO 166/1519, War Diary, 13 Aug. 1940.

⁵⁸² White (ed.), *Strike Home*, 111.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid*, 33.

sects and creeds, the dress, half ancient and half modern, and the bullock carts that have not changed since, I suppose, Biblical times.’⁵⁸⁴

With Hanbury posted to GHQ India, and Whiteley appointed CRA of 36th Indian Division, command was assumed in August 1942 by the regular brigade major from 2nd Division, Lieutenant Colonel Mark Maunsell with Leonard Tetley as second-in-command. 393 Battery received 3.7” pack howitzers - Kipling’s famous ‘screw guns’ - whilst 472, which had initially had older Mark I 18-pounders, had 25-pounders. 394 Battery certainly trained in the course of 1943 on self-propelled Priests - a 105mm gun mounted on a Grant tank chassis - but did not use them in Burma. All batteries used the 25-pounder in the last stage of the advance into Burma in 1944-45.

In January 1943, under Maunsell’s command, 393 and 472 Batteries, the latter less one troop, were committed to support 6 Brigade in the Arakan, while 394 Battery and the other 472 troop remained in India with Hanbury. The operation was a first venture back into Burma following the British retreat from the country that had ended in March 1942. The intention was to regain Akyab. 6 Brigade had been given amphibious training for a seaborne assault on Akyab but, in the event, it was sent overland to Donbaik to give additional support to 14th Indian Division. Batteries and troops were detached in support of various elements at different times. Sickness rates from malaria were high in the paddy fields interspersed with low hills and bamboo thickets whilst jungle sores took a long time to heal. Those evacuated took at least a week to be returned to India.⁵⁸⁵ The operations against well-fortified Japanese positions such as ‘Sugar Five’ - artillery fire was often ineffective - were both unsuccessful and costly. At one

⁵⁸⁴ Hazell (ed.), *With the Colours*, Dec. 1942, 5.

⁵⁸⁵ White (ed.), *More Wartime Memories*, 54-55.

point 6 Brigade headquarters was overrun on 5 April and its brigadier, Ronald Cavendish, killed when he deliberately called down artillery fire on his own position.

The Arakan effort was closed down in May 1943, the 99th being reunited at Ahmednagar in June 1943. So many of those who had returned from the Arakan, however, were suffering such recurring malarial attacks that the whole regiment was sent to the Mahableshwar hill station for intensive treatment with quinine.⁵⁸⁶ Maunsell returned to the staff in March 1944. Subsequently, he was appointed Chief of Staff to the Allied Control Commission for French Indochina in 1945. He was present when Lieutenant General Takazō Numata, Chief of Staff of Japanese Southern Army and the representative of Field Marshal County Terauchi, surrendered Japanese forces at Rangoon in August 1945. At Numata's request his sword was presented to Maunsell, who gifted it to the Bucks CTA in April 1946.⁵⁸⁷

Reunited, the regiment underwent jungle training at Belgaum as William Slim's 14th Army was carefully prepared for another advance. In March 1944 the Japanese advanced themselves throwing 100,000 men at the frontier stations of Imphal and Kohima in Assam. Kohima was held by a TA battalion, the 4th Royal West Kents, and elements of the Assam Rifles, the Shere Regiment and the Burma Rifles. 2nd Division was moved to the relief of Kohima and to open the road to Imphal, which was being supplied by air. 6 Brigade broke through to Kohima between 18 and 20 April, a grim struggle ensuing for the surrounding jungle-clad hills and ridges whilst at Kohima itself only the width of the former District Commissioner's tennis court separated the British and Japanese positions. The stench of death was overwhelming with bodies from both sides lying unburied in scenes reminiscent of the worst of the trenches of the Great

⁵⁸⁶ White (ed.), *Strike Home*, 109.

⁵⁸⁷ The sword is in the BMMT collection as BMMT 234.

War. 6 Brigade undertook a major offensive on 4-7 May, the Japanese pulling back after a 64-day battle, which cost British and Indian forces over 4,000 casualties and the Japanese over 7,000. Adding to the misery was the cold wet weather.



Garrison Hill at Kohima, June 1944 [BMMT]

Lieutenant Colonel John James, who had assumed command of the 99th on 26 March 1944, was mortally wounded by a sniper on 4 May, Tetley taking over. Captain Richard Boyd-Thomson from Soulbury was wounded on a patrol which had to abandon him on 3 May and he was later found hacked to pieces.⁵⁸⁸ Firing was often over open sights and less than 2,000 yards from the Japanese whilst the forward artillery observation posts were invariably involved in the hand to hand fighting. On 28 April Moreton was wounded leading a party of the 99th to clear a platoon position the Japanese had overrun on Garrison Hill, for

⁵⁸⁸ White (ed.), *More Wartime Memories*, 77-78.

which he received an immediate MC.⁵⁸⁹ Captain (soon to be Major) Bryan Bonsor also won the MC for his gallantry and leadership, Moreton recalling that Bonsor was invariably seen in green corduroy trousers: ‘But he was not really casual, it was just that he made as few concessions as he could to the war and the army, and he refused to modify his personal standards of dress and comfort more than was necessary. Anyway he was a cheering sight just now, full of his usual self-confidence and completely unperturbed.’ Bonsor’s MC was awarded for action on 13 May during an attack on the District Commissioner’s Bungalow, in which a 3.7” howitzer was brought up to fire directly at the Japanese position at 200 yards.⁵⁹⁰



393 Battery manhandling its 3.7” howitzers on the ‘road to Imphal’, June 1944 [BMMT]

⁵⁸⁹ White (ed.), *Strike Home*, 69.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 71, 127.

2nd Division opened the Imphal road on 22 June and the 99th supported further operations until withdrawn for rest and training in August 1944. Returning to



*393 Battery, 99th Field Regiment Crossing the Irrawaddy, February 1945
[BMMT]*

the front, the 99th supported Slim's advance into Burma, crossing the Chindwin on 21 December 1944 and the Irrawaddy on 24 February 1945, which was the last occasion on which the 2nd Division's artillery was concentrated.⁵⁹¹

It was expected that there would be a combined operation aimed at Rangoon with 2nd Division concentrated at Calcutta in April 1945 but it was not required, the former falling to 26th Indian Division. With most of the regiment expected to be released for home in the autumn of 1945 there was concern that it might be designated as a depot unit and lose its Bucks identity. As honorary colonel, Sir Richard Howard-Vyse was tasked with trying to ensure the Bucks identity

⁵⁹¹ Ibid, 95.

remained.⁵⁹² In the event, the 99th remained at Secunderabad, many men finally returning to England in November 1945 to receive an official welcome at Aylesbury.⁵⁹³ A small cadre, however, remained in India on internal security duties until the regiment passed into suspended animation in August 1946 with the guns and some personnel sent to 208th (later 72nd) Field Regiment. The 99th won seven MCs, and seven MMs during the war with 34 members mentioned in despatches, and Whiteley awarded a military OBE.⁵⁹⁴

The 1st Bucks Battalion had a more transitory existence. It was reconstituted at Hereford with Ronald Sale posted back as commanding officer on 24 June 1940. Captain Pallett was initially made temporary CO on 12 June and Captain R. K. Stevens the following day when Pallett was made Quartermaster of 145 Brigade.⁵⁹⁵ Much of the 2nd Echelon had remained at Margate during the 1940 campaign and its records were invaluable in determining who had survived the campaign.⁵⁹⁶ Somewhat bizarrely, Sale was shown in the Army List as never having reverted to major at all and having held his rank as lieutenant colonel since 27 April. Yet, he was only re-posted as lieutenant colonel on 18 July. A large draft of 375 men was received from the 50th Somerset Light Infantry and the Infantry Training Centre at Taunton so that two-thirds of the men were no longer from Bucks by August 1940. Those from Bucks found the Somerset

⁵⁹² BA, T/A 1/2, CTA Mins, 12 July and 1 Nov. 1945.

⁵⁹³ *Bucks Herald*, 14 Dec. 1945.

⁵⁹⁴ White (ed.), *Strike Home*, 122-23; idem, *More Wartime Memories*, 94.

⁵⁹⁵ BA, AR 110/2007 (BMMT 579), Sale to wife, 3 Aug. 1940; T/A 6/16, Regt. Orders, 12, 13 and 24 June, and 18 July 1940.

⁵⁹⁶ BA, AR 110/2007, Memoir of Ken Bateman.

dialect almost impenetrable.⁵⁹⁷ The battalion was cheered to receive a message from Princess Marina, who especially mentioned the performances of Pallatt and Sherwell at Hazebrouck.⁵⁹⁸

After a brief stay at Melksham in Wiltshire, anti-invasion duty followed in Devon at Okehampton, Uffculme, Ashburton, and Newton Abbot although the battalion also provided platoons for fire-watching at Torquay and digging defences at Plymouth. Torquay at least provided relaxation from training. Finding it too dull, two officers and 80 men volunteered for service in East Africa in August 1940, a call having come for volunteers as well as those with any knowledge of African languages.⁵⁹⁹ For entertainment, there were film shows at nearby Denby camp, those in November 1940 including Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in 'Carefree' and 'A Damsel in Distress', the Marx Brothers in 'Room Service', 'Old Mother Riley', and the westerns, 'Man of Conquest' and 'Destry Rides Again'. Men were allowed to attend a grand military ball in Torquay that same month, whilst the battalion band - reconstituted in October 1940 - entertained the inhabitants of Ashburton and evacuee children at Ashburton in December 1940, and also performed at Buckfastleigh and Newton Abbot. On one occasion it played in Dartmoor Prison alongside the prison band. They also formed a dance band that was soon in much demand.⁶⁰⁰ Princess Marina inspected the battalion at Denbury on 21 August 1941, the march past

⁵⁹⁷ BA, T/A 1/7 CTA Mins., 8 Aug. 1940; D/FR 161/2/26/1, Sale to Cottesloe, 22 July 1940; 161/28/2, Cottesloe report on visit to 1st Bucks, 31 July to 1 Aug. 1940; BMMT 778, Carr, *Wartime Memories*, 31.

⁵⁹⁸ RA, MDKDH/ARMPFOR/11/9, Lady Herbert to Cottesloe, 16 Aug. 1940; 11/10, Cottesloe to Lady Herbert, 20 Aug. 1940; 11/12, Sale to Lady Herbert, 26 Aug. 1940

⁵⁹⁹ TNA, WO 166/54162, War Diary, 15 Aug. 1940; BA, T/A 6/16, Orders, 14 Aug. 1940.

⁶⁰⁰ BA, T/A 6/16, Orders; BMMT 778, Carr, *Wartime Memories*, 34-36.

being led by Dunbar Kilburn mounted on a horse.⁶⁰¹ A number of men married women from Devon.

Exercise BUMPER in September 1941, which also involved 9th Infantry Division and all the available armour in Britain, led to the replacement of the 48th Division commander, Major General Roderic Petre. The battalion then moved to Brigg in Lincolnshire in November 1941, where there was a routine of hard and cold lifting of root crops and sending drafts to units elsewhere. The band was again in demand and also participated in the national war savings campaigns.⁶⁰² Postings to other Lincolnshire locations followed including Louth and Woodhall Spa. There was general gloom when it was announced on 9 June 1942 that 48th Division and the battalion would not be included in any future cross-Channel invasion and would stay in Lincolnshire for at least nine months. As a result of the anticipated additional drafting, Dunbar Kilburn decided to stop calling for volunteers and to introduce compulsory transfer drawing on companies in turn until each was exhausted but excluding company headquarters and senior NCOs. New incoming drafts would be posted to the exhausted companies so that a constant standard of training could be maintained. Then, in August there was an outbreak of gingivitis due to vitamin deficiency.⁶⁰³

When Sale resumed command in December 1942 the battalion was in Suffolk. On 12 December, just before the effective end of 48th Division and its conversion into a permanent training role, the battalion was moved into 163

⁶⁰¹ BA, T/A 6/32, Marina to Kilburn, 2 Apl. 1941; Neville (ed.), *War Chronicle*, II, 223-24; RA, MDKDH/ARMFOR/11/19, Orders, 14 Aug. 1941.

⁶⁰² BA, AR 4/2013 [BMMT 639/1], Memoir of Nigel Viney, 27 Jan. 2008; BMMT 778, Carr, *Wartime Memories*, 47.

⁶⁰³ TNA, WO 161/8827, War Diary. See also RA, MDKDH/ARMFOR/11/21, Dunbar Kilburn to Lady Herbert, 3 Jan. 1943.

Brigade in 54th Division. It had been nominated on 3 December by the GOC of Northern Command, Lieutenant General Ralph Eastwood, the former Inspector General of the Home Guard, who had inspected the battalion on 30 October. 163 Brigade was then in Suffolk. The prospect for survival looked grim with many officers seeking transfer elsewhere, until, in March 1943, the battalion was selected by the chief umpire on Exercise SPARTAN, Major General Michael Barker, who commanded 54th Division, as the infantry component of No 6 Beach Group. The influence of Lord Cottesloe at the War Office may also have contributed.⁶⁰⁴ The battalion formally left 54th Division on 30 May 1943. As Sale remarked, ‘We now have a seat in the stalls.’⁶⁰⁵

Beach Groups were intended to facilitate the landing of men, vehicles and supplies across open beaches as well as organising the clearing of mines and obstacles, and the organisation and defence of beach sectors for the Normandy landings. According to W. S. Scull, who joined the battalion in March 1943, it was ‘a posh sounding name for a bunch of labourers’.⁶⁰⁶ Training followed at Gailies Camp near Troon in Scotland and then Ayr Racecourse where men slept in the stands. Once more, the band and the dance band were in great demand. From the former spa at Strathpeffer there was further training on the Clyde and Argyllshire sea lochs, half the battalion being billeted in the Highland Hotel, and the other half in the Ben Wyvis Hotel. When not training, there was some entertainment available in Dingwall but Inverness was just too far away to be easily reached.⁶⁰⁷ More training exercises were held on beaches in South Wales

⁶⁰⁴ Nigel Viney to author, 27 Oct. 2008.

⁶⁰⁵ BA, AR 110/2007 [BMMT 583], Ken Bateman Memoir, 8.

⁶⁰⁶ IWM, Doc. 14898, Memoir of W. S. Scull, 4.

⁶⁰⁷ *Le Neve Foster*, 43-45; IWM, Doc. 14898, Memoir of W. S. Scull, 1; BMMT 778, Carr, *Wartime Memories*, 52-53.

and in Hampshire. After a return to Ayr in September 1943 for further exercises, the battalion moved to Petworth in May 1944 ahead of D-Day.

Commanded by a lieutenant colonel, a beach group had an establishment of 121 officers and 2,781 other ranks. The infantry component made up about a quarter of the Beach Group's strength. The remainder comprised a military landing officer's party, and groups from the RE (field company, port operating company, stores section, and mechanical equipment platoon), RASC (petrol depot, general transport company, and detail issue depot), RAMC (two field dressing stations, two field surgical sections, field transfusion unit, and field hygiene section), RAOC (ordnance beach detachment), REME (beach recovery section), RMP (provost company), Pioneer Corps (two companies), RAF (beach section, beach balloon flight), RN (beach signal section), and RM (commando). An AA Regiment was attached but not under command. There were over 200 vehicles including bulldozers and cranes.⁶⁰⁸

Ronald Sale was amused at a review of the Beach Group by the Duke of Gloucester in April 1943 when the Bucks band struck up the battalion light infantry march after 'all the "heavy" stuff was ponderously played by a rather reedy band leaving 1 Bucks alone on the square. The last "flat foot" disappeared, my band and bugles struck up & the Bn rattled past the saluting base at 160 to the minute.'⁶⁰⁹ The Group was separately inspected by General

⁶⁰⁸ Nigel Sale, 'The 1st Buckinghamshire Battalion as 6th Beach Group, 1943-44', *Bugle & Sabre* 8 (2015), 45-55; George Elliott, *The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry: Regimental History, 1741-1966* 2 vols. (Winchester: The Royal Green Jackets (Rifles) Museum Trust, 2022), II, 196-209).

⁶⁰⁹ BA, AR 110/2007 (BMMT 579], Sale to wife, 22 Apl. 1943.

Eisenhower and King George VI in May 1944. Eisenhower spoke of the importance of rifle pits, a term not used in the British army.⁶¹⁰

On 28 November 1943 the battalion was moved into 3rd Division and wore its divisional shoulder flash until shortly before D-Day when it donned the Beach Group flash. As it happened, No 6 Beach Group was then allocated to support 3rd Division's landing on SWORD Beach, embarking at Southsea and Gosport. It came ashore on Roger Beach opposite La Brèche on the second tide on 6 June 1944 at about 1700 hours after No 5 Beach Group had landed in the first wave. The intention was for the two beach groups together to facilitate the landing of two divisions in the first 48 hours, and to maintain them ashore with up to 4,000 tons of stores per day within 101st Beach Sub-Area. The commanding officer of No 5 Group was killed so Sale took command of both groups. Casualties were sustained when landing craft lost their way or lowered ramps too soon in a considerable swell. The first man off the ramp of one of the battalion's landing craft, carrying 80 lbs of equipment, simply disappeared into five feet of water and was drowned.⁶¹¹

The beach itself presented a chaotic scene of wrecked landing craft and vehicles, and of dead bodies.⁶¹² The battalion's six anti-tank guns, 3" mortars, and carriers were used wherever needed to assist the advance off the beach whilst defensive positions were prepared to guard the supply dumps. Men were being employed in small groups. Sale was severely wounded in the stomach by a shell fragment on 8 June trying to pull ammunition from a burning sector dump. It had been set alight by a lone German aircraft crashing towards the sea

⁶¹⁰ SOFO 3543, 12/4/MS/7, Account of Walter Day.

⁶¹¹ *Le Neve Foster*, 11; SOFO 3596, Map of Roger Beach, 6 June 1944.

⁶¹² W. L. Binns (1944) in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*.



No 6 Beach Group digging in on Queen Beach near La Brèche, SWORD, 7 June 1944 [IWM]

that had jettisoned a single bomb on a DUKW, the explosion of which ignited the dump. About half the dump was saved and Sale received the George Medal although he was also reduced in rank to substantive major despite having commanded a brigade-size force for 18 months. He was succeeded by Major E. A. ‘Peter’ Carse, pre-war commander of the Chesham Detachment, who was awarded the MBE for the same recovery efforts. The beach role had ceased by 22 June and the battalion moved inland to defend the Ouistreham locks, having initially moved off the beach towards the Caen Canal to clear houses. Carse had had some difficulties with the anti-militarist outlook of many in Chesham before the war and, according to Elliott Viney, was an ideal staff officer ‘being conceited, talkative and instinctively disliked by the troops’.⁶¹³

⁶¹³ BA, AR 23/2019 [BMMT 732/1], Viney Notebook.

The Beach Group was formally dissolved on 10 July although insignia were not removed from battledress and vehicles until 1 August. Once more, it seemed the battalion faced extinction. Carse, who had tried to get an interview with Montgomery as CinC of 21st Army Group, managed initially to get the battalion attached for administrative purposes to the First Canadian Army and to the 6th Airborne Division for operational purposes. Carse was informed in a personal letter from Montgomery on 14 July 1944 that the battalion would be reduced in order to reinforce the 51st Highland Division.⁶¹⁴ Many went to the 1st and 5/7th Gordon Highlanders, and 5th Seaforth Highlanders, one platoon going to the 1st Gordons under the command of Richard Viney.⁶¹⁵ Others went to 1/4th KOYLI in 49th Division. It was disappointing when Montgomery had promised to respect regimental associations and when it was discovered that drafts from the battalion in No 5 Beach Group, 5th The Kings Regiment (Liverpool), which was also being reduced, were going to 1 OBLI. Cottesloe and the CTA had waged a continuous battle to preserve the county units.

Not only did Cottesloe act, as already indicated, on the issues of badges, buttons and distinctions in 1941, he also protested vigorously when disbandment was mooted in July 1944. This time an appeal to Lord Croft did not work although the latter suggested dissolution was only a temporary measure being applied to many Territorial units. Cottesloe contacted Princess Marina on 23 July. Whilst the Princess could not properly intervene in a purely military decision, the Military Secretary at the War Office was asked for an official letter explaining the circumstances behind the decision. Her private secretary suggested that this was especially required in the light of the recent disbandment of the 2nd Bucks,

⁶¹⁴ BA, AR 9/2015 [BMMT 671/1], Montgomery to Crease, 14 July 1944; RA, MDKDH/ARMPFOR/11/25, Carse to Cottesloe, 18 July 1944..

⁶¹⁵ BA, T/A 3/121, Memoir of Jack Cheshire, 1984; IWM, Doc. 14898, Memoir of W. S. Scull, 6; www.bbc.co.uk/portent/WW2peopleswar/stories, Account of Norman Searle.

of which more will be said later. In the event, this request elicited a reply from the Adjutant General, Sir Ronald Adam, who responded at length to indicate that no pre-war TA battalion would be disbanded and what was intended was suspended animation. A postscript in Adam's own hand stated that, whilst Montgomery had considerable liberty in choosing which battalions had to be broken up, he was told to take into account all relevant factors including regimental tradition. In the event, the decision was amended to the battalion being reduced to cadre in August. Cottesloe felt that the county had been treated with 'an undeserved want of consideration' and that it would have an adverse impact. He admitted that reduction to cadre was not the same as disbandment but it was still regrettable. It was certainly believed in the battalion and by Cottesloe that it was the appeal to the Duchess that had staved off complete disbandment.⁶¹⁶

Just after the battalion band had performed on 26 July, the Germans lobbed two shells into the theatre. Reduction to cadre was completed on 27 August 1944. Just nine officers and 72 other ranks remained after the transfers. Drafts of questionable quality - 'category men' - including men unfit for physical work and 'bomb-happies' replaced those men being posted elsewhere from 12 August onwards. What was left of the unit was committed to routine guard duties in Brussels in October 1944 although this included dealing with unrest, the black market, crime, deserters and prisons. It was noted that those incapable of

⁶¹⁶ BA, T/A, 6/33, Crouch to Herbert, 25 Aug. 1944; Cottesloe to Hall, 25 Aug. 1944; Boehm to Cottesloe, 30 Aug. 1944; Croft to Cottesloe, 1 and 7 Sept. 1944; RA, MDKDH/ARMPFOR/11/24, Cottesloe to Herbert, 23 July 1944; 11/26, Herbert to Cottesloe, 24 July 1944; 11/28, Herbert to Military Secretary, 24 July 1944; 11/29, Adam to Herbert, 7.1944; 11/31, Cottesloe to Herbert, 25 Aug. 1944; 11/33, Cottesloe to Herbert, 2 Sept. 1944; 11/35, Cottesloe to Herbert, 4 Sept. 1944; 11/36 Boehm to Cottesloe, 30 Aug. 1944; 11/37, Herbert to Cottesloe, 13 Sept. 1944; 11/38, Cottesloe to Herbert, 12 Sept. 1944.

marching somehow always managed to play football ⁶¹⁷ A composite company was sent to hold part of the line opposite the Scheldt estuary on 31 December 1944 under the command of NO 4 Special Service Commando Brigade. Carse was wounded by shellfire on 3 August and was succeeded by Major Hugo Boehm. Carse returned to action subsequently with the 1st South Lancashires as a company commander as there were no more senior posts available and was killed in February 1945. ⁶¹⁸ Clive Le Neve Foster became Boehm's second-in-command.

The now Lieutenant Colonel Boehm, who had revived the battalion band, managed to persuade the authorities to send the battalion some 'A1' men and to weed out the undesirables. On 27 February 1945 it was designated a 'T' or Target Force Battalion as was 5th The King's Regiment (Liverpool). Based on the model of the ambiguously named Royal Marines 30 Assault Unit in the Mediterranean and 'S' (Specialist) Forces deployed in Italy and Tunisia, T Force was tasked with seizing and holding installations of special military and civil interest such as factories, experimental establishments, laboratories, radar stations, secret weapons testing facilities, and launch sites. ⁶¹⁹ The Americans had established similar forces for the North-west Europe campaign in July 1944 but 21st Army Group did not do so until early 1945 despite the directive of Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) of July 1944, largely due to initial manpower shortages. Teams were improvised for work in

⁶¹⁷ Neville, *War Chronicle*, IV, 144-154; RA, MDKDH/ARMFOR/11/36, Boehm to Cottesloe, 30 Aug. 1944.BA, AR 68/2021 [BMMT 745], Account by W. L. Binns, Feb. 1986.

⁶¹⁸ BA, T/A 1/2, CTA Mins., 3 May 1945.

⁶¹⁹ Ingram Murray, "'Warlike Stores and Booty': The 1st Buckinghamshire Battalion and T Force, 1945-46", *Bugle & Sabre* 13 (2020) 43-49.

Paris, Rouen, and Brussels as they were liberated.⁶²⁰ T Force units were intended to be highly mobile and capable of operating in small sub-divisions.

At short notice, 'B' and 'D' companies of the 1st Bucks under Le Neve Foster were sent to join the 5th King's in the British Second Army sector while 'A' and 'C' companies operated with the Canadian First Army. Amid the chaos of dissolving German resistance, T Force detachments with their attached expert civilian (albeit uniformed) investigators were often in advance of other troops or close behind the leading elements in the race to secure civil and military technologies, and the scientists responsible for their development. T Force included pioneer and bomb disposal companies as well as document teams and interpreters. T Force was often the first to enter towns and was able to acquire German civilian vehicles to increase their mobility. Once an area was deemed clear by T Force, assessors would be sent by the Combined Intelligence Objectives Sub-committee, which had prepared the 'black lists' of targets for the Combined Chiefs of Staff and for SHAEF. T Force units often faced a hostile reception and came under fire.

'B' and 'D' companies were attached to the Ninth US Army on 11 April 1944 for the move into Hanover where targets secured included a plant specialising in infra-red technology, and the aviation scientist, Dr Max Kramer. The headquarters of *Wehrkreis* (Military District) XI was captured intact. They then went on to Bremen, seizing 16 new U-boats and a destroyer in the Deschimag U-boat assembly yard. Targets of interest secured also included the factory at Celle producing Focke-Wulf aircraft engines. The laboratory of an expert on centrifuges, Dr Wilhelm Groth, was discovered concealed in a silk factory at

⁶²⁰ TNA, FO 1031/49.

Celle. Groth himself was detained and sent to England for interrogation. The final targets were Cuxhaven and Wesermünde.⁶²¹



Bucks Battalion 'T' Force at the liberation of Delft, 8 May 1945 [BMMT]

'C' Company, meanwhile, entered Meppen on 9 April, taking the Krupps testing ground including various prototype guns. 'A' and 'C' Companies were then the first T Force units to enter the Netherlands on 7 May with a detachment under Captain 'Trooper' Lowe being the very first allied troops into Rotterdam. On 8 May 1945 a group from the pioneer and signal platoons under Lowe were the first to liberate Delft, receiving the official welcome intended for the commander of 1st Canadian Division. With Lowe somewhat embarrassed, they managed to slip away. Taking up residence in a building on the outskirts of Delft, they were able to feed dozens of starving children. Feted by students and teenagers, they decided against going to take the radar installation that was the

⁶²¹ Sean Longden, *T Force: The Race for Nazi War Secrets* (London: Constable, 2009), 82-85, 93-95, 120-24.

actual target until the following day.⁶²² At Norden they took Lord Haw Haw's transmitter station.⁶²³

By June 1945 the T Forces of 21st Army Group had removed over 1,000 tons of captured equipment. The battalion's companies were reunited at Menden in the Ruhr on 7 June 1945, undertaking a sweep of the area to ascertain whether anything had been missed by the American T Force teams. The role for the 1st Bucks continued until the spring of 1946, the battalion then being detached from T Force but leaving behind a nucleus to form No 1 T Force, whose work continued with the added impetus of securing equipment and scientists before the Russians could do so as the relationship between the allies deteriorated. It might be added that the British teams were sometimes in competition with American and French teams and even those deployed by other British and allied agencies such as the Enemy Equipment Intelligence Service, as well as the Alsos Mission, which was investigating the German nuclear weapons programme.

One who remained with T Force was a young linguist educated at Rugby, Michael Howard, who arrived to join the 1st Bucks in March 1946 from OCTU and 27 Greenjacket Holding Unit. He recalled that about half the officers were from the OBLI but those who were not had retained their own regimental badges. Howard became the new unit's intelligence officer, being kept back by the Bucks' commanding officer, John Nicol, from the detachments as Nicol wanted an additional bridge player to make up a four. Howard's intelligence section comprised five NCOs and two riflemen from the 1st Bucks, who also

⁶²² BA, AR 68/2021 [BMMT 747/1], Account by Harry Carr; BMMT 778, Carr, *Wartime Memories*, 55-58; BMMT 782, Further account by Harry Carr.

⁶²³ Longden, *T Force*, 181-86.

remained when the battalion was mustered out of T Force on 23 April 1946. With Howard placed in command of the signal and support platoon, what was now designated from 30 April onwards as No 1 T Force, operated in the Ruhr.

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Nicol had been happy to see the battalion detached from 'T' Force as he wanted to get it back to being an infantry battalion. The battalion was moved into 54th Division close to the Elbe and Nicol strived to inject a sense of regimental traditions through courses for the NCOs although his officers came from 16 different regiments and most of the men had been posted in from other units as others were demobilised. The 1st Bucks Battalion then passed into suspended animation at Ghent in June 1946 and was 'wound up' on 7 August 1946. Pending any decision on the future of the TA, nothing could be realistically done.⁶²⁵

The 2nd Bucks Battalion, meanwhile, had remained in the county until January 1940. Initially, it was billeted in the south with headquarters at Latimer House and detachments at Misbourne House in Chalfont St Giles, the Bell House Hotel near Beaconsfield, Churchmead House in Datchet, and a house opposite the 'Green Man' in Farnham Royal although this latter group then moved to Slough Church Hall. Subsequently, two companies were sent to replace regulars guarding Didcot, and some to guard RAF Benson. In December 1939 'C' Company spent Christmas guarding German naval POWs at Ascot, being billeted in the winter quarters of Bertram Mills Circus. In January the battalion

⁶²⁴ Longden, *T Force*, 274-76; Michael Howard, *Otherwise Occupied: Letters Home from the Ruins of Nazi Germany* (Tiverton: Old Street Publishing, 2010), 26, 32-33, 75-77; IWM, 31405, Sound Interview with Michael Howard, 5 Aug. 2008.

⁶²⁵ RA, MDKDH/ARMPFOR/11/44, Nicol to Cottesloe, 20 Apl. 1946; 11/45, Cottesloe to Herbert, 8 May 1946; 11/49, Cottesloe to Herbert, 18 July 1946.

moved to Shirley Schools in order to guard Southampton Docks, seeing off the 1st Bucks to France. In May 1940 they went to Hayling Island as part of the Portsmouth Garrison Reserve.⁶²⁶ 61st Division was one of those then allocated to provide potential aid to the civil power in the Midlands in the event of an invasion.⁶²⁷

In November 1939 Christie-Miller presented the battalion's then commanding officer, Philip Eliot, with seven telescopes as the officers lacked binoculars. Six of these had been given to the officers of the 2/1st Bucks by the 2nd Lord Cottesloe in 1914 before being returned to Thomas Fremantle, 3rd Lord Cottesloe in 1919.⁶²⁸

In June 1940 having been warned for service in 'a tropical country',⁶²⁹ 2nd Bucks was moved to Northern Ireland, stationed successively at Ballymena, Ballycastle, Limavady, Enniskillen, and Castledown.⁶³⁰ One unfortunate episode in February 1941 was the loss of the three men drowned and eight injured when a vehicle skidded on black ice into a stream.⁶³¹ The despatch of the 61st Division to Northern Ireland was intended to free up the 53rd Division for possible mobile operations in Eire should the Germans land there. The 61st took part in a divisional exercise in front of King George VI in June 1942.⁶³²

⁶²⁶ George Burfoot (1939), Edgar Cook (1939), Jack Collins (1939), Arthur Deverill (1939), Felix Hodson (1939), Patrick Hegarty (1939), and Eric Maundrill (1939), in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*; Neville (ed.), *War Chronicle*, II, 76.

⁶²⁷ Beckett, *Territorials*, 128.

⁶²⁸ IWM, Christie-Miller Mss, Doc. 4776 [80/32/2], Eliot to Christie-Miller, 15 Nov. 1939; BA, D/FR 161/2/12, Stewart-Liberty to Christie-Miller, Nov. 1939.

⁶²⁹ TNA, WO 166/4163, War Diary, 11 June 1940; Neville, *War Chronicle*, II, 76.

⁶³⁰ S. Jakeman (1940) and Herbert Raggett (1940), in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*.

⁶³¹ Herbert Raggett (1941), in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*.

⁶³² TNA, WO 161/8828, War Diary, 26 June 1942.

The unsympathetic Philip Booth departed in February 1941 for another appointment and was succeeded by Lieutenant Colonel E. C. Richards from the 1st OBLI. It was generally held that the battalion reached a new peak of efficiency under Richards.⁶³³

The 2nd Bucks returned to England in February 1943. It took part in the major Home Guard BUZZ II exercise whilst at Great Missenden in March 1943. Such exercises had become typical Home Guard fare by this time, involving as they did regulars as well.⁶³⁴ The post-war verses of S. L. Miller, who served in 'E' Company of the 7th Bucks Battalion of the Home Guard, lampooned the BUZZ exercises as well as the two 'battles' of Gerrards Cross in 1944.⁶³⁵

On 15 May 1943 the 2nd Bucks was visited at the Piperswood Camp near Little Missenden by Princess Marina, who still wore black in mourning for the death of her husband, the Duke of Kent, in an air crash in August 1942. She sat for photographs with former and serving officers, members of the OCA, and serving sergeants, as well as seeing demonstrations of a rifle platoon assault, a rifle platoon dug in for defence, and firing of mortars, anti-tank guns and the Sten Gun.⁶³⁶

⁶³³ Herbert Raggett (1941) and Eric Warburton (1943) in Hodson (ed.) *Tides of War*.

⁶³⁴ *Four Chevrons*, 15-16.

⁶³⁵ S. L. Miller, *Old Buck: A Memento for 'E' Company 7th Buckinghamshire Battalion Home Guard* (High Wycombe: Privately printed, n. d. [1945]), 23-27. The verses were produced in a limited edition of 200 copies.

⁶³⁶ Edgar Cook (1941) in Hodson (ed.), *Tides of War*; TNA, WO 166/4163, War Diary, 25 July 1941; WO 166/10802, War Diary, 15 May 1943; RA, MDKDH/ARMFOR/10/10, Cottesloe to Lady in Waiting, 15 Apl. 1943; 10/17 Orders, 4 May 1943; 10/20, Richards to Herbert, 29 Aug. 1943.



Princess Marina firing a Sten Gun on her visit to the 2nd Bucks Battalion, 15 May 1943 [BMMT]

As with the 1st Bucks Battalion, Princess Marina and Cottesloe were jointly appointed Honorary Colonels of the 2nd Bucks Battalion in July 1941. The War Office had indicated a willingness to consider this back in August 1939 but the application made by Philip Eliot in November 1939 had been somehow mislaid and had to be resubmitted through Lord Cottesloe in March 1941.⁶³⁷ The battalion stayed in the county until moving to Kent in October 1943. Successive

⁶³⁷ RA, MDKDH/ARMFOR/11/5, Cottesloe to Lady Herbert, 30 Nov. 1939; MDKDH/ARMFOR/10/3, Giffard to Lady Brecknock, 18 Aug. 1939; 10/4, Cottesloe to Lady Brecknock, 25 Apl. 1941; 10/6, Cottesloe to Lady Brecknock, 25 Apl. 1941; 10/7, WO to Bovering, 26 Apl. 1941; 10/9, Note on HM's informal agreement to appointment, 9 July 1941.

service followed at Dover, Broadstairs, and Winchelsea with a large number of men drafted for service overseas in March 1944.⁶³⁸

Uncertainty over the battalion's future had arisen in September 1943 with Brigadier Francis Hawkins of 184 Brigade alerting Princess Marina in confidence to its likely demise with imminent relegation from 'almost the top' of the list for active service to beach defence in home forces. Hawkins was refused permission by 'higher authority' to discuss the issue formally. It was made clear to him that, whilst the Princess was concerned, she could not intervene in military decisions. Richards was trying to see General Sir Bernard Paget, then commanding 21st Army Group. Richards also floated the idea of changing the title of the Buckinghamshire Battalions to The Buckinghamshire Rifles (Duchess of Kent's) as a means of providing the Princess with a greater pretext to intervene but he was informed that this, too, was not a matter for her.⁶³⁹ In June 1944 came the news that the 2nd Bucks would be disbanded but it was concluded by Cottesloe that nothing would be achieved by raising any objection. The Princess, who had not been informed of the decision, agreed. In his defence of the reduction of the 1st Bucks, mentioned earlier, the Adjutant General, Adam, indicated that 27 battalions had been broken up and, whilst this included two OBLI battalions, six OBLI battalions remained in the order of battle.⁶⁴⁰ The battalion was disbanded on 6 July 1944 with personnel sent to the

⁶³⁸ TNA, WO 161/15081, War Diary, 23 Mar. 1944.

⁶³⁹ RA, MDKDH/ARMPFOR/10/22, Hawkins to Princess Marina, 30 Sept. 1943; 10/23 Herbert to Hawkins, 5 Oct. 1943; 10/24 Hawkins to Herbert, 9 Oct. 1943; 10/25, Richards to Herbert, 10 Oct. 1943; 10/26, Herbert to Hawkins, 13 Oct. 1943; 10/27, Herbert to Hawkins, 13 Oct. 1943; 10/28, Herbert to Warren, 5 Oct. 1943.

⁶⁴⁰ RA, MDKDH/ARMPFOR/10/29, Cottesloe to Herbert, 5 June 1944; 10/30, Cottesloe to Hanbury Williams, 5 June 1944; 10/31, Herbert to Cottesloe, 7 June 1944; 11/29, Adam to Herbert, 7.1944.

4th OBLI and the 6th Royal Berkshires, a decision met with dismay when it appeared at that moment that the 1st Bucks was also likely to disappear. Indeed, the end of the 2nd Bucks added considerable urgency to the subsequent attempt to save the 1st Bucks that same month.

Overall, Territorials fought in all theatres with nine divisions involved in the 1940 campaign, one in Norway, four in North Africa, two in Sicily, one in Burma, and eight in North-West Europe after June 1944. One was also lost at Singapore in 1942. Some formations even saw action against Jewish Terrorists in Palestine and Indonesian nationalists in the Dutch East Indies in 1945-46. Territorials won 17 VCs in the course of the war. As in 1919, however, it was not clear in 1945 quite what the future held for the Territorials.