

Buckinghamshire: A Military History

by

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Chapter Seven: 1899-1914

It is usually suggested that British society was much more militarised by the end of the nineteenth century than at mid-century. This still did not amount to overt militarism. The period between 1899 and 1914 was certainly marked by a significant debate on the nature of 'a nation in arms' following perceived failures on the part of the army in the South African War. As a result, the auxiliary forces were transformed, but with particular consequences for their future role when an even greater challenge arose in 1914.

A number of factors are held to have contributed to the greater sense of militarism and the conditioning of society for wartime challenges. The old fears of invasion had not disappeared amid continuing disputes between War Office and Admiralty over its likelihood, and the continued appearance of popular invasion literature from George Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking* (1871) to William Le Queux's *The Invasion of 1910* (1906). More invasion scares occurred in 1871, 1882, and 1888. The existence and visibility of militia, yeomanry and volunteers had contributed to the popularisation of military values. So had mid-century ideals of the 'Christian Hero', and even a militarisation of Nonconformist values through the harnessing of patriotic and moral values to volunteering and the youth movements that emerged from the volunteers in the 1880s such as the Boys' Brigades. The cult of athleticism and of muscular Christianity increasingly prevalent in public schools and popular literature also fuelled militarisation. So did the concepts of Social Darwinism that led to significant fears of physical deterioration among the urban population. Indeed, the early defeats of the South African War brought new emphasis on preparing youth for imperial service, the Boys Scouts in 1907 but one manifestation. Military drill became popular in Board schools, whilst new pressure groups such as the National Service League, formed in 1902 to argue for the introduction of a form of military conscription, were also active.

Beyond the classroom and adolescence, British society was increasingly literate following the changes of the 1870 Education Act. Patterns of consumption were being transformed by new methods of production, distribution, marketing and advertising, in which Empire proved a versatile device for product promotion.¹ Popular culture became a vehicle for dominant ideas, of which Empire was one such idea.² Imperialism was deeply imbedded in society even before the growth of the 'new journalism' associated with the appearance of cheap mass circulation daily newspapers such as *The Daily Mail* in the 1890s.³

Popular culture rationalised imperial violence as necessary, or undertaken for noble, moral and humanitarian reasons. It romanticised violence despite the supposed distaste for war and for the common soldier. Military and civic spectacle; music hall; theatre and other forms of commercial entertainment; commemorative bric-a-brac; toy soldiers; and a wide variety of print media including sheet music, match box covers, cigarette cards and postcards: all added to war's impact. It amounted to what has been characterised as a 'pleasure culture of war'.⁴

¹ Berny Sèbe, *Heroic Imperialists in Africa: The Promotion of British and French Colonial Heroes, 1870-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 116-20.

² John Mackenzie, 'Passion or Indifference: Popular Imperialism in Britain, Continuities and Discontinuities over Two Centuries', in John Mackenzie (ed.) *European Empires and the People: Popular Responses to Imperialism in France, Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, and Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 57-89.

³ Andrew Thompson, *Imperial Britain: The Empire in British Politics, c. 1880-1932* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2000), 36.

⁴ Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994), 3-5; Kenneth Brown, 'Modelling for War: Toy Soldiers in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain', *Journal of Social History* 24 (1990), 237-54.

The South African War was to enhance all these features of British society. Ten million ‘patriotic buttons; had been sold by June 1900 alone, the most popular featuring Robert Baden-Powell (four million), Sir Redvers Buller (1.2 million), Sir George White (a million), and Lord Roberts (750,000). Three entirely new illustrated periodicals were launched: *The Sphere*, *The Spear*, and *King* whilst the *United Service Magazine* had already reviewed 27 books on the war before the end of 1900.⁵ As already shown in previous chapters, there had been plenty of military spectacle and civic display provided by the auxiliaries in Bucks before 1899 but, in common with other parts of the country, the development of the local press, increasing civic identity and popular local patriotism elevated such display to new heights.⁶

A relatively small proportion of the United Kingdom’s male population was actively involved in the auxiliary forces at any one time, but the cumulative effect of participation certainly led to increased familiarity with military values. In terms of numbers, the regular army stood at 234,963 men in 1899, with 24,128 army reservists. Behind them there were 102,122 militiamen, 10,114 yeomen, and 230,963 volunteers.⁷ It has been suggested that, in 1898, some 22.42 per cent of the entire male population of the United Kingdom and Ireland aged between 17 and 40 had some current or previous military or quasi-military experience. During the South African War itself, new quasi-military youth organisations emerged including the Lads Drill Association, and the Boys Empire League. National Rifle Clubs were also stimulated by the war. In all,

⁵ Ian Beckett, ‘Britain’s Imperial War: A Question of Totality?’ *Joernaal vir Eietydse Geskiedenis* 25 (2000), 1-22.

⁶ Brad Beaven, ‘The Provincial Press, Civic Ceremony and the Citizen-Soldier during the Boer War, 1899-1902: A Study of Local Patriotism’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 37 (2009), 207-28.

⁷ Stephen Miller, *Volunteers in the Veld: Britain’s Citizen Soldiers and the South African War, 1899-1902* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 49.

perhaps 14.2 per cent of the male population of the United Kingdom between the age of 18 and 40 was in uniform during the war, whilst 41 per cent of all male adolescents may have belonged to some form of youth organisation by 1914.⁸

When war broke out between Britain and the two Boer republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State in October 1899, it was not anticipated that any potential reserves of military experience within the civilian population would be required. Rather than costing the British government no more than £10 million for a three or four month campaign utilising a maximum 75,000 regulars, as originally expected, the war lasted 32 months and cost £230 million. In the end, Britain and the Empire fielded 448,000 men and also employed conceivably as many of the 120,000 Africans, of whom 30,000 were armed. All this was required to overcome what amounted to a handful of farmers, for the Boers never fielded more than about 42,000 men and, following the defeat of the main Boer field army in February 1900, never more than about 9,000 on commando. The expenditure represented 14.4 per cent of net national income, a proportionate cost exceeding that of the first eight months of the Great War, which represented only 12.6 per cent of net national income. It put an additional £160 million on the National Debt, its highest point since 1867, and increased government expenditure as a proportion of GNP from 9 per cent in 1890 to 15

⁸ Michael Blanch, 'British Society and the War', in Philip Warwick and S. B. Spies (eds), *The South African War* (London: Longmans, 1980), 210-38, at 229; idem, 'Imperialism, Nationalism and Organised Youth', in J. Clarke, C. Critcher and R. Johnson (eds), *Working Class Culture* (London: Hutchinson, 1979), pp. 103-20; Ian Beckett, 'The Nation in Arms', in Ian F. W. Beckett and Keith Simpson, (eds), *A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), pp. 1-36, at pp. 5-7.

per cent. The army estimates peaked at £92.3 million in 1902, and still came in at £69.4 million in 1903.⁹

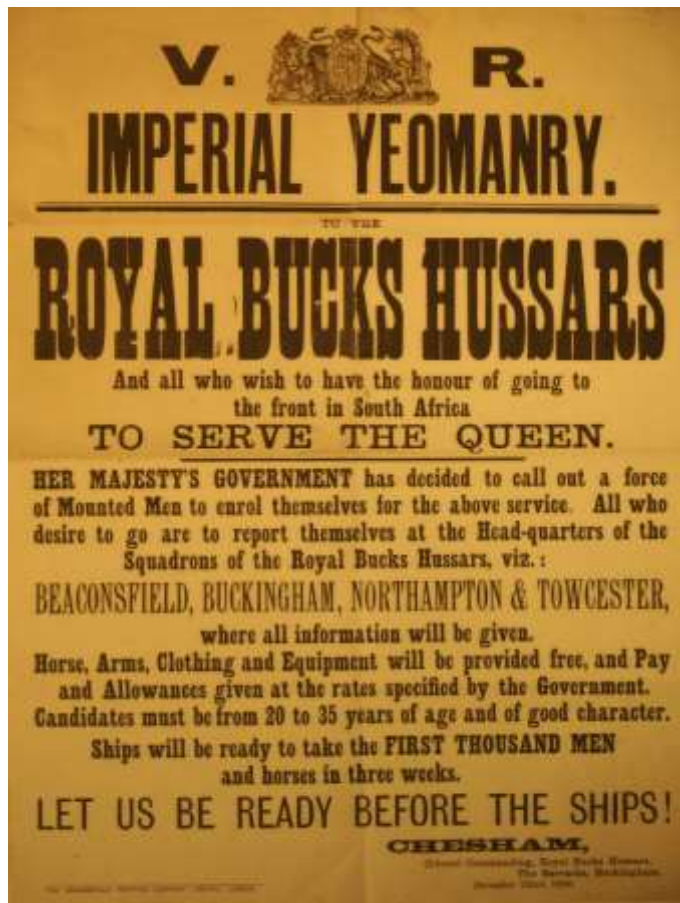
The government had constantly delayed reinforcing the garrison in South Africa in the expectation that war would not result from its deteriorating relationship with the Boer leadership. Mobilisation, including the militia reserve, was only ordered on 7 October 1899, just four days before the Boers invaded both Natal and Cape Colony. Immediate offers by volunteer officers to raise volunteer service companies or complete service units were declined. Admittedly, there were legal difficulties in utilising the domestic auxiliaries, but no regulars believed they would be needed. A total of 18 militia battalions were embodied on 3 November 1899, with three more on 4 November, and another eight on 23 November, all to release regulars for South Africa.¹⁰ Militia service was intended to be confined to overseas garrisons.

All changed with the astonishing series of defeats at Stormberg (10 December), Magersfontein (11 December), and Colenso (15 December): 'Black Week'. The militia was now invited to go to South Africa itself, the legislation having been amended in 1898 to allow for up to one year's service. In all, 59 militia battalions totalling 45,566 officers and men eventually served in South Africa. In addition, five battalions went to Malta, three to St Helena, and one to Egypt so that over 65,000 militiamen served overseas. The remaining battalions, all also embodied, served in the United Kingdom, this not requiring additional legislation as it had been legal since 1859. In addition to militia reservists, of

⁹ Beckett, 'Britain's Imperial War', 4-5; Geoffrey Searle, 'National Efficiency and the Lessons of the War', in David Omissi and Andrew Thompson (eds), *The Impact of the South African War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 194-214, at pp. 204-05; Bill Nasson, *The South African War, 1899-1902* (London: Arnold, 1999), pp. 68-71.

¹⁰ Stoneman, 'Reformed British Militia', 203.

whom 13,598 served with the regulars, a total of 74,217 militiamen also enlisted in the army during the war.¹¹ Naturally enough most were working class men.



Lord Chesham's appeal for volunteers for the Imperial Yeomanry, 22 December 1899 [BA]

There were early scenes of popular enthusiasm when army reservists left High Wycombe on 7 December 1899. The RBKOM assembled for permanent service under the command of the Earl of Orkney at Wycombe on 16 January 1900. It was one of the battalions selected to go to Ireland, with Irish regiments, in turn, coming to the mainland, amid lingering fears of political unrest in Ireland.¹²

¹¹ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 200-01.

¹² Stoneman, 'Reformed British Militia', 217.

Countess Carrington - Carrington had been elevated to an earldom in 1895, and would be created Marquess of Lincolnshire in 1912 - entertained all to breakfast in a marquee on the barrack square with coffee, beef, ham, and bread and butter all available. Seen off by the regimental band, the men proceeded to Milford Haven for transit to Cork.¹³

The Earl of Orkney had appealed to employers to co-operate and called on the county generally to support dependants. One initiative organised by the honorary colonel, Caulfeild Pratt, was to provide for coal, wives being directed to send their names, addresses and number of children to their nearest coal merchant.¹⁴ Of 500 men in the battalion, only 450 were needed so it was intended that any married men facing difficulties could remain at Wycombe.¹⁵ Arrangements had been made for the accommodation of the RBKOM at Limerick with Orkney himself apparently outlaying some of the expense. Then, with just 48 hours to go, the War Office directed the regiment to Buttevant in County Cork. Carrington chose the public reception for the men of the 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers from Wycombe and Slough going to join the volunteer service company of the 1st Oxfordshire Light Infantry to complain that Buttevant was 'a place he had never heard of in his life'. He expressed his need to speak out as it would have been 'cowardly' to do otherwise when both he and his father had commanded the regiment.¹⁶ By contrast, the vicar of Wycombe, the Rev. Edward Domett Shaw, later first (Suffragan) Bishop of Buckingham, who knew

¹³ *South Bucks Standard*, 19 Jan. 1900.

¹⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 13 Jan., 17 and 24 Feb. 1900; *Buckingham Express*, 13 Jan. 1900.

¹⁵ *South Bucks Standard*, 5 Jan. 1900; *Bucks Herald*, 18 Dec. 1899.

¹⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 20 Jan. 1900; *Buckingham Express*, 20 Jan. 1900.

the area, suggested Buttevant was ‘not a half bad place’. ¹⁷ One impact of the move to Ireland was the shortage of farm labour in the county. ¹⁸

With large numbers of men at Buttevant, including several militia regiments, there was a constant concern to maintain sanitary conditions. Men were warned not to empty tea leaves and other refuse in ablution rooms, or to throw blacking tins or jam pickle bottles about the camp. Men were also cautioned against excessive use of water in barracks. The garrison school was opened daily in the afternoon and on three nights a week, whilst there was also a coffee bar. ¹⁹ There were complaints, however, as to the quantity and quality of rations. ²⁰

Whilst at Buttevant, Private Henry Hannaford was found drowned in the River Lee, but no explanation could be discerned as he had simply failed to return to barracks one evening. Hannaford was still in uniform, which suggested he was not a deserter and, in any case, he would not have been pronounced so until 21 days had elapsed from the date of his absence. One man was also severely punished for striking a superior. ²¹

Route marches were a frequent occurrence at Buttevant, whilst some men were also sent on machine gun courses at Cork. Subsequently, the battalion moved to Kilworth Camp near Mallow in County Cork on 2 May 1900 for musketry training under canvas. It was an area, like Buttevant, noted for wet weather. ²² As in the case of Buttevant, dry and wet canteens and coffee bars were open daily, but there were two cases of unauthorised absence. Another man was

¹⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 20 Jan. 1900.

¹⁸ *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 21 July 1900.

¹⁹ TNA, WO 68/248, Orders, 27 Jan., 9 Apl., and 8 May 1900; WO 68/253, Orders, 26, 27 and 29 Jan. 1900.

²⁰ TNA, WO 68/248, Orders, 20 and 28 Feb. 1900.

²¹ *South Bucks Standard*, 27 Apl. 1900; TNA, WO 68/254, Order, 7 Apl. 1900.

²² *Bucks Herald*, 5 May and 25 Aug. 1900.

punished for losing equipment.²³ Most of the Bucks newspapers reprinted a piece from the *Cork Constitution* extolling the good behaviour of the men whilst at Buttevant and the virtues of Orkney, who ‘knew how to temper leniency with strict military order, and his purse was always open for the benefit and enjoyment of the men’, as well as treating local tradesmen fairly.²⁴

In August 1900 some 140 men returned to Wycombe on an extended furlough of unspecified length, representing about half of the battalion remaining in Ireland since drafts had gone to South Africa.²⁵ The RBKOM then returned to Buttevant from Kilworth on 4 October 1900 before vacating the barracks to return to England on 30 October.



RBKOM Officers photographed at Buttevant before leaving with a draft for South Africa [BA]

²³ TNA, WO 68/254, Orders, 13 Aug. 1900.

²⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 19 May 1900; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 26 May 1900; *South Bucks Standard*, 11 May 1900.

²⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 25 Aug. 1900; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 1 Sept. 1900.

A total of 184 RBKOM officers and men were drafted to South Africa, the first draft of 116 men including three officers as early as 5 February 1900, each receiving a pipe and a pound of tobacco from Lord Rothschild.²⁶ Smaller drafts went off in March, April, June, August and September 1900.²⁷ Some of those invalided from South Africa returned to Kilworth in September 1900, and new recruits also arrived regularly. Thirteen Bucks militiamen died on active service: one in action, ten from enteric, one from pneumonia, and one from inflammation of the kidneys.²⁸ Some newspapers reported in August 1900 that the men at Kilworth had all volunteered for service in China, where the Boxer Rebellion had broken out with the European legations in Peking under siege, but this remained unconfirmed.²⁹

Most of the men on furlough were not recalled since the RBKOM returned to Bucks on 1 November 1900, again via Milford Haven, about 210 strong. The exception was a party of 11 men recalled in September for a draft to South Africa. As the *South Bucks Standard* noted, there was ‘not a vestige of the scenes which were witnessed on previous similar occasions in the early part of the year’.³⁰ After a delay for bad weather in the Irish Sea that had led to them missing a train from Oxford, the men arrived later in the morning than expected and marched to the barracks amid a large crowd. They were again given

²⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 10 Feb. 1900; *South Bucks Standard*, 19 Sept. 1902; TNA, WO 68/253, Orders, 29 Jan., and 5 Feb. 1900.

²⁷ TNA, WO 68/254, Orders, 31 Mar., 28 Apl., 28 June, and 20 Aug. 1900.

²⁸ TNA, WO 68/248, List of Casualties, 19 May 1903.

²⁹ *Chesham Examiner*, 3 Aug. 1900; *South Bucks Standard*, 27 July 1900.

³⁰ *South Bucks Standard*, 14 Sept. 1900.

breakfast by Countess Carrington before departing to their homes with Orkney urging them to do so quietly.³¹

It was initially expected that the RBKOM would not be called out for annual training in 1901, but this was not the case, the regiment going to Aldershot.³²

The Bucks Chamber of Agriculture made known its displeasure at the regiment being likely to be called out between 15 June and 31 August. There was even more unhappiness when the annual training at Churn in 1902 was brought forward to 9 June from 5 July and again brought forward at Bisley in the following year.³³

Meanwhile, the men were invited to volunteer for South Africa as drafts to the 1st Oxfordshire Light Infantry in January 1901, although it is not clear how many did so.³⁴ Five men returned time expired from South Africa in July 1901, the *South Bucks Standard* securing an interview with Private Ralph Cross, son of the landlord of the *Bird in Hand* at West Wycombe.³⁵ Then 75 returned from South Africa on 16 August 1902 to be met by a large crowd at Wycombe on the following day, but without the festivities accorded the yeomen and volunteers in Wycombe earlier that summer. The *Bucks Herald* felt they had been ‘allowed to come home without the least recognition whatever’ and deserved better. At least Private Caudrey received a lively welcome in Wendover.³⁶

³¹ *South Bucks Standard*, 11 May, 2 Nov., and 28 Dec. 1900; *Bucks Herald*, 3 Nov. 1900; *Chesham Examiner*, 9 Nov. 1900.

³² *Bucks Herald*, 1 Dec. 1900; *Chesham Examiner*, 7 June 1901.

³³ *Bucks Herald*, 8 June 1901; 1 and 22 Mar., and 14 June 1902.

³⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 19 Jan. 1901; *Chesham Examiner*, 25 Jan. 1901; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 19 Jan. 1901.

³⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 13 July 1901; *South Bucks Standard*, 12 July 1901.

³⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 23 and 30 Aug. 1902; *South Bucks Standard*, 22 Aug. 1902.

Orkney presented those who had served in South Africa with their medals at Wycombe on 17 September 1902. It was one of his last acts as commanding officer as he resigned in January 1903 to be succeeded by Lieutenant Colonel William Terry of High Wycombe, whose family had acquired properties in the town just after the end of the Napoleonic Wars as well as in Fulham in the 1840s.³⁷

As for the volunteer force's contributions to the war, the army's commander-in-chief, Field Marshal Lord Wolseley, had considered using them even before 'Black Week'. Offers had been made by two London regiments in July and August 1899, and were renewed in October. An offer by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Alfred Newton, to raise the 1st City of London Imperial Volunteers was made on 15 December. The Secretary of State for War, the Marquess of Lansdowne, was minded to accept as there was 'some advantage in affording an outlet to public feeling' in the wake of the defeats of 'Black Week'.³⁸

Newton, therefore, was allowed to proceed, with his formal offer to raise what was now called the City Imperial Volunteers (CIV) accepted on 20 December. Two officers were seconded by the War Office to settle any problems that arose, namely the Inspector General of Auxiliary Forces, Major General Alfred Turner, and Wolseley's volunteer ADC, Major Thomas Fremantle (later 3rd Lord Cottesloe) of the 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers.

The CIV - an infantry battalion, two mounted infantry companies, and an artillery battery - was enlisted for a year or the duration from 53 different (mostly London) volunteer units. About 40 per cent of the total were lower-middle class or artisans, clerks the largest single occupational category. It was

³⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 20 Sept. 1902; 24 Jan. 1903; Douglas Fraser, 'The Terry Family and High Wycombe', *High Wycombe Society Newsletter* 185 (2017) 8-9.

³⁸ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 201.

embarked in three contingents in January 1900 and, with a draft in July 1900, eventually provided 1,739 officers and men for service in South Africa.

The War Office now acted to utilise the rest of the volunteer force. On 2 January 1900 approval was given for raising 66 volunteer service companies and 66 'waiting companies', each to consist of 116 men, to be attached to regular battalions in South Africa. Again enlisted for one year or the duration, the men were temporarily transferred to the army reserve. They must be aged between 20 and 35, physically fit, of good character, preferably unmarried or childless widowers, first class shots, and certified efficient for the last two years. A special grant of £9 was offered to corps in order to equip these volunteering, all continuing to earn the capitation grant for their units as supernumeraries. Volunteer engineers and medical staff were invited to enlist subsequently. Further calls for service companies were made in January 1901 and January 1902. In all over 19,000 volunteers inclusive of the CIV served in South Africa. Many more who volunteered were rejected on medical grounds or because they had not attained the efficiency standard. The volunteer force itself also saw a net gain of over 19,000 men between October 1899 and March 1900 while some 7,000 enlisted in the regular army.³⁹ The volunteers tended to be from the lower middle and artisan classes, but were remarkably heterogeneous in composition.

The 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers was requested to find at least 60 men for a composite service company to be attached to the 1st Oxfordshire Light Infantry. Many, however, were physically unfit for active service, Alfred Gilbey estimating this applied to half the regiment.⁴⁰ It was suggested that ten men from the 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers had come forward for every place in the

³⁹ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 202; idem, *Riflemen Form*, 214.

⁴⁰ BA, T/A 5/17, Gilbey Mss, IV, 1.

service company, including the whole of the bearer company.⁴¹ The response, however, varied from company to company. Some 72 from the 151 men of the Wolverton Detachment, including the entire Maxim Gun section, volunteered for active service on 31 January 1900, and the remaining 79 for garrison duty: 11 from the 72 failed the medical. At Aylesbury only eight men initially volunteered for active service, although the remaining 40 or so men present at a meeting in County Hall opted for garrison duty. At a similar meeting at the Bucks Auction Mart in Wycombe, 29 men came forward. At Buckingham 25 men from 'C' Company volunteered for active service and 75 for garrison duty. There were also good responses from the companies at Marlow and Slough, 27 coming forward at the latter. Initially, therefore, it was announced that only single men would be considered.⁴²

An interim selection was made of 58 men from the Bucks volunteers with 15 reserves in the event of men failing the medical. In the case of Slough, for example, 11 of the eventual 27 volunteers were accepted, but two were rejected on medical grounds with three reserves sent, of whom one was also then rejected.⁴³ In the event, 72 officers and men came from Bucks for the original service company with 42 from Oxfordshire to make up the first 114 men, this rising ultimately to 89 men from the 1st Bucks RVC and just 44 from Oxfordshire: five each came from Aylesbury (one from the printing works) and Buckingham; 12 from Slough including Lieutenant C. A. Barron of Taplow House; and 27 from Wolverton as well as Lieutenant Lionel Hawkins. Hawkins was the managing director of McCorquodale's, the Wolverton printers that had

⁴¹ *Belfast News-letter*, 23 Dec. 1899.

⁴² *Bucks Herald*, 23 and 30 Dec. 1899; *Bucks Standard*, 30 Dec. 1899; 6 and 20 Jan. 1900; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 30 Dec. 1899; *Buckingham Express*, 23 and 30 Dec. 1899; 6 Jan. 1900; *South Bucks Standard*, 10 Nov. and 22 Dec. 1899; 5 and 19 Jan. 1900.

⁴³ *Bucks Herald*, 13 and 27 Jan. 1900.

been established in the town since 1878. Hawkins resided at Calverton Limes, Stony Stratford.

Walter Carlile of Gayhurst, MP for North Bucks from 1895 to 1906, and a former subaltern in the RBH, offered his services to the 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers and was assigned to the Wolverton Detachment with a direct commission as major.⁴⁴ Rather similarly, William H. Grenfell (later Lord Desborough) of Taplow Court, who would succeed Lord Curzon as Conservative MP for South Bucks in 1900, also offered his services and was similarly directly commissioned as a major. Having formerly stood unsuccessfully as a Liberal candidate for the constituency in 1886, Gilbey declined to stand against Grenfell and actively supported him against his pacifist opponent, John Thomas.⁴⁵ Representing the regiment, Grenfell won the epee competition at the Royal Tournament in both 1904 and 1906.⁴⁶

Direct commissions were also given to Dr Humphrey Wheeler of High Wycombe and Charles E. Cobb of Aylesbury. Cobb, from the Bucks and Oxon. Bank, resided at the Friarage on Rickford's Hill in Aylesbury and played minor county cricket for Bucks, often as captain.⁴⁷ The 34 year old Charles Gray, a keen hunting man and gentleman stock breeder who had built The Firs at Whitchurch for himself in 1897, was a lieutenant in the 1st Bucks RVC. He was not chosen so he enlisted in the 38th Company of the Imperial Yeomanry as a

⁴⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 30 Dec. 1899; 20 and 27 Jan. 1900; *Bucks Standard*, 30 Dec. 1899; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 3 and 10 Feb. 1900; Augustus Mockler-Ferryman, *The Oxfordshire Light Infantry in South Africa, 1900-901* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1901), 93.

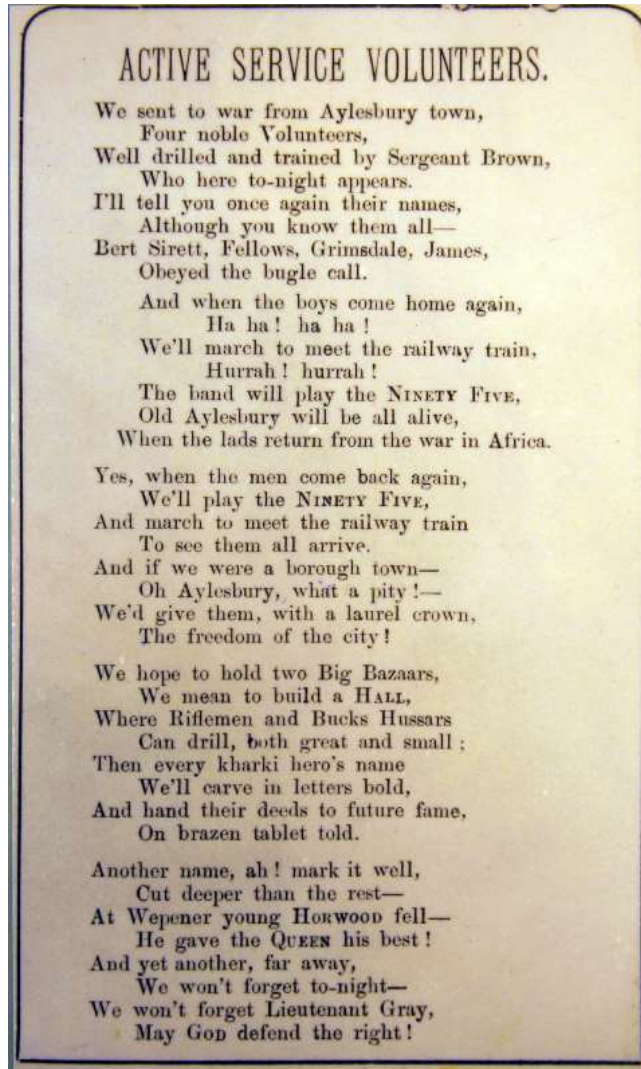
⁴⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 3 Feb. 1900; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 17 Feb. 1900; BA, T/A 5/17, Gilbey Mss, VI, 6.

⁴⁶ Binns, *Story of Royal Tournament*, 130.

⁴⁷ *South Bucks Standard*, 9 Feb. 1900.

trooper.⁴⁸ Alfred Rogers recorded that Gray ‘could not do much’ when entering the ring during a boxing competition on the SS *Norman* en route to South Africa.

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Poem celebrating the service of four Aylesbury men in the volunteer service company but with a reference to the death of Percival Horwood, and to the service of Charles Gray of Whitchurch [BA]

Rather similarly, Lieutenant Percival Horwood, son of the Aylesbury solicitor who had once commanded the volunteer corps there, Thomas Horwood, also went out to South Africa having resigned the volunteer commission he had held

⁴⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 23 Dec. 1899; *Buckingham Express*, 10 Feb. 1900.

⁴⁹ BA, T/A 3/143, Rogers Letter, 23 Feb. 1900.

since 1895 to do so. Serving with the Cape Mounted Rifles, Horwood was killed at Wepener in May 1900. One of the Aylesbury members of the volunteer active service company, John Prothero penned a poetic tribute to Horwood that was widely circulated.⁵⁰

The Wolverton men in particular got an enthusiastic send-off to Oxford on 16 January. The Superintendent of the Carriage Works, C. A. Park, guaranteed that their jobs would be kept open for them. As the result of fellow workmen raising £2.10s.3d, three men from the Body Shop each received a sweater, a quarter lb. of tobacco, 50 cigarettes, a pouch, a briar pipe, and 5s.9d cash. A trooper from the RBH going out with the Imperial Yeomanry got a one pound tin of tobacco, 200 cigarettes, a pipe and a cigarette holder from the Stores and Office Staff.⁵¹ The LNWR gave all members of the Wolverton Detachment four hours off work to see their colleagues depart.⁵²

The other contingents left for Oxford on 17 January but they were then released on leave from Oxford, enabling more celebratory send-offs in February.⁵³

There was a separate send off at *The Cock* in Stony Stratford on 3 March 1900 for five men from the Stony Stratford Bearer Section who had responded to a parallel call for volunteers from the Bearer Company of the Home Counties Volunteer Brigade. In all, 37 members volunteered, of whom eight failed the medical, with four over age. Three were not regarded as efficient and seven withdrew. Five of the remaining 15 were then selected.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ BA, D/FR/A 77, Prothero, 'Active Service Volunteers'; *Bucks Herald*, 18 Dec. 1899; *Buckingham Express*, 5 May 1900

⁵¹ *Bucks Standard*, 20 Jan. 1900.

⁵² *Buckingham Express*, 20 Jan. 1900.

⁵³ *Bucks Herald*, 24 Feb., and 3 Mar. 1900; *Buckingham Express*, 27 Jan. 1900.

⁵⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 10 Mar. 1900; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 10 Mar. 1900.

The service company embarked for South Africa in the *Tintagel Castle* on 10 March 1900. Privates Ralph Pollard and Harry Edmunds, both of Buckingham, recorded a reasonable voyage to the Cape, but disembarkation at East London was rough.⁵⁵ ‘Father Neptune’ came on board with his ‘wife and train’ as the ship crossed the Equator.⁵⁶ The 1st OLI had been present at the last significant pitched battle of the war when the Boer field army was cornered and compelled to surrender at Paardeburg on 27 February 1900. After Paardeburg, the British marched towards Bloemfontein, the capital of the Free State. It fell on 13 March as did Pretoria, capital of the Transvaal, on 5 June 1900. Already, however, back on 17 March 1900 younger Boer leaders had resolved to continue the war as a guerrilla struggle. That phase was not concluded until the Boers came to terms at Vereeniging on 31 May 1902.

Joining the battalion, the service company was employed with Major General Knox’s column seeking out the Boer leader, Christiaan de Wet, between August and October 1900. It was followed by a relatively static period around Heilbron from October to December 1900. More column duty was undertaken in February and March 1901, with clearing of civilians and livestock south and south west of Heilbronn.⁵⁷ There were few skirmishes and disease was a far greater danger than the Boers. In all, 24 men attached to the 1st Oxfordshire Light Infantry died on active service, including the 13 from the RBKOM already mentioned. Five Bucks Rifle Volunteers also died in South Africa with the OLI: Privates Rupert Bowles (Heilbron, April 1901), L. N. Coulton (Kroonstad, December 1901), John Gould (Sterkstroom, April 1900), Charles Hobbs (Kroonstad, July 1900), and George Turton (Kroonstad, January 1902).

⁵⁵ *Buckingham Express*, 5 May 1900.

⁵⁶ *South Bucks Standard*, 4 May 1900.

⁵⁷ Mockler-Ferryman, *Oxfordshire Light Infantry*, 104-13, 261-68.

Four of them died from enteritis and Gould from diabetes, although dysentery was reported. A memorial stone was put up to Hobbs, who came from Eton, at Kroonstad.⁵⁸

A third expedient after the militia and the volunteer service companies was the raising of the Imperial Yeomanry. Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Lucas of the Loyal Suffolk Hussars approached the War Office in October 1899, but his suggestion that the yeomanry be used in South Africa fell on deaf ears. Lucas renewed the suggestion on 14 November but it was again rejected on 28 November.

Following Colenso, however, the commander-in-chief in South Africa, General Sir Redvers Buller, called for mounted infantry as a means of countering Boer mobility. On 18 December, therefore, the 5th Earl of Lonsdale of the Westmorland and Cumberland Yeomanry and Lord Chesham of the RBH offered to raise 2,300 men for service in South Africa at their own expense. Wolseley was not in favour as he had previously suggested a hand-picked force of 1,000 men in ten companies drawn only from the yeomanry. Wolseley believed trained men accustomed to discipline would always be preferable to those 'recruited from the highways & byways' even if the existing yeomanry could not be entirely dismissed as undisciplined and untrained.⁵⁹ The Under Secretary of State for War, George Wyndham, however, was himself a Wiltshire yeoman. The Mobilisation Board resolved to accept the offer on 18 December.⁶⁰ Wyndham established the Imperial Yeomanry Committee on 19 December including Lucas, Chesham and Viscount Valentia of the Oxfordshire Yeomanry. It was formally constituted by the War Office on 4 January 1900.

⁵⁸ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 27 Oct. 1900; *South Bucks Standard*, 4 May 1900.

⁵⁹ Keith Surridge, 'Lansdowne at the War Office', in John Gooch (ed.), *The Boer War Direction, Experience and Image* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 21-40, at 32.

⁶⁰ TNA, WO 32/7869, Proceedings of Army Board for Mobilisation Purposes, 18 Dec. 1899.

The formation of the force was announced on 24 December, with approval by royal warrant on 2 January 1900.

Wyndham does not appear to have expected any more than the 2,300 men suggested by Lonsdale and Chesham, but the response was far greater. Indeed, only about a third of the Imperial Yeomanry was to be drawn from the domestic yeomanry. As mounted infantry, they were to be organised in companies, squadrons and battalions. Men were to be between 20 and 35, and of good character, and would serve for one year or the duration. The committee had a free hand and a capitation grant of £25 (later £35) was offered for each man for clothing and equipment, and £40 for a horse. Large sums, however, were raised by individuals in support of local companies, and by a central fund administered by the Imperial Yeomanry Committee, the latter raising over £66,000.⁶¹ In all, 10,242 men were enrolled in three contingents.

In Bucks the Bucks County Fund raised £4,259.16s.0d for equipping the Imperial Yeomanry, and a further £968.12s.6d for the volunteer service company. The prominence given to each donor implied perhaps an element of shaming as the fund steadily grew, Rothschild alone providing £2,000 in two instalments.⁶² The RBH opened its own fund for widows and orphans to be passed on to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association (SSFA), whilst a fund was also started for army reservists in Aylesbury under the auspices of SSFA.⁶³ Lord Annaly and his wife donated £100 to the *Daily Telegraph* Shilling Fund. The *Chesham Examiner* organised its own shilling fund amounting to £58.15s.6d, the proceeds then being donated to the *Daily*

⁶¹ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 202-03; Hay, *Yeomanry Cavalry*, 201.

⁶² *Bucks Herald*, 6, 20 and 27 Jan. 1900; 10 and 24 Feb., and 17 Mar. 1900; *North Bucks Times*, 20 and 27 Jan. 1900; 10 Feb. 1900.

⁶³ *Bucks Herald*, 4 and 18 Nov, and 2 and 9 Dec. 1899; *Buckingham Express*, 2 Dec. 1899.

Telegraph fund, whilst the Wycombe volunteers raised £104.15s.0d.⁶⁴ In January 1901 every man from the 37th and 38th (Royal Buicks Hussars) Companies serving in South Africa received the gift of a sovereign from Leopold de Rothschild.⁶⁵ The *Daily Telegraph* Shilling Fund, of course, was headed by the newspaper's proprietor, Sir Edward Lawson, raised to the peerage as 1st Lord Burnham in 1903 and whose son, William Lawson was to lead the 38th (Royal Bucks Hussars) Company of the Imperial Yeomanry in South Africa. It was the most successful of all the war charities, raising over £264,000 in conjunction with *The Scotsman* by January 1903.⁶⁶

Other local fund raising efforts included the Darktown Charity Organisation at Wolverton, the *Buckingham Express* Relief Fund for the wives and families of North Bucks reservists, and village committees of the Transvaal War Fund such as that at Whitchurch, where 152 individuals subscribed £11.0s.3d.⁶⁷ The Darktown organisation was a 'nigger minstrel' troupe with the addition of decorated carts, clowns, a tin kettle band, and 'giants'. It held carnivals in Newport Pagnell, Stantonbury, Stony Stratford and Wolverton.⁶⁸ A collection at Drayton Parslow raised £2.12s.9d for the War Relief Fund, whilst Hanslope and Castlethorpe raised £15.18s.9d for SSFA.⁶⁹ At Wycombe, the Children's

⁶⁴ *Buckingham Express*, 4 Nov. 1899; *Chesham Examiner*, 16 Feb. 1900; *South Bucks Standard*, 29 Dec. 1899.

⁶⁵ BA, T/A 3/174, Rogers Letter, 31 Jan. 1901.

⁶⁶ Eliza Riedi, "'Our Soldiers' Widows': Charity, British War Widows and the South African War (1899-1902)", *War in History* 28 (2021), 46-70.

⁶⁷ BA, D33/26, *Buckingham Express* Relief Fund, 21 Oct. 1899; Wilson, *Chronicles of Whitchurch*, 65.

⁶⁸ Markham, *Milton Keynes*, II, 257-58.

⁶⁹ *Buckingham Express*, 20 Jan. 1900.

War Fund raised £8.7s.3¼d from the National School and Mrs Woods School.

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The North Bucks Soldiers' Families Fund announced it would pay 10s.0d a week for every wife and 1s.6d a week for every child up to a combined total of 15s.0d for all from the 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers who might be called for service at home or abroad. The fund initially supported 50 men, but 11 of them were then looked after by the LNWR as its employees. It was wound up in February 1901, with all remaining funds going to SSFA.⁷¹

It was not expected that the war would last beyond a year, hence the initial terms set for militia, volunteers, and imperial yeomanry. In the case of the imperial yeomanry some restlessness was apparent as a year's service approached, and it was felt inadvisable to hold them longer despite the theoretical right to hold them for the duration. The Hon. William Lawson, later 3rd Lord Burnham, recognised the problem, writing in February 1901 that there seemed to be little being achieved other than seizing livestock at the cost of losing good men to 'nasty sniping'. The men would 'not serve forever' and Chesham seemed powerless to help: 'many of them are, or will be, utterly ruined, all small farmers and tradesmen in country towns especially'.⁷²

Only 655 men (6.4 per cent) re-enlisted nationwide and a separate second contingent of 16,597 'new yeomanry' was raised in January 1901.⁷³ There was an added incentive of pay of 5s.0d a day compared to the 1s.3d per day earned by the first contingent, which naturally led to some resentment on the part of the

⁷⁰ *South Bucks Standard*, 16 Feb. 1900; *Bucks Standard*, 6 Jan. 1900.

⁷¹ *Bucks Standard*, 30 Dec. 1899; *Bucks Herald*, 10 Feb. 1900; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 2 Mar. 1901; *North Bucks Times*, 10 Feb. 1900.

⁷² BA, T/A 3/532, Lawson to Syb, 1 Feb. 1901.

⁷³ Hay, *Yeomanry Cavalry*, 175.

latter. Colonial troops also received 5s.0d a day.⁷⁴ The second contingent was not trained until it reached South Africa in April 1901, which proved unsatisfactory. Thus, a third contingent of 7,239 men was raised afresh in January 1902 and was trained at Aldershot, Edinburgh and the Curragh. The war ended in May 1902 before they could take any active part.



The 37th (Royal Bucks Hussars) Company, Imperial Yeomanry at Buckingham, January 1900 [BMMT]

Initially, many imperial yeomen were middle class and from traditional yeomanry sources. A total of 34 members of the House of Lords and House of Commons joined the new force. The Imperial Yeomanry Committee, however, selected only four yeomanry officers to command the planned 20 battalions, the remainder being regulars. The four yeomen, including Chesham who was appointed to command the 10th Battalion, were former regulars. The 37th and 38th Companies of Chesham's 10th Battalion were raised nominally from the RRB. The middle class component declined in the second and third contingents.

⁷⁴ BA, T/A 3/169 and 178, Rogers Letters, 20 Dec. 1900, and 27 Mar. 1901.

Those who re-enlisted in the 38th Company referred to the newcomers as ‘yeomanry militia’. ⁷⁵

Chesham claimed that 75 per cent of the second contingent had never sat on a horse before they got to South Africa. ⁷⁶ Chesham was appointed to command a yeomanry brigade in March 1900 and then as Inspector General of the Imperial Yeomanry in South Africa in October 1900. He told the future Field Marshal Lord Birdwood, then a staff officer on Kitchener’s staff, that on one occasion he saw a yeoman leading a horse two days in succession. Chesham assumed the horse had a sore back and went to congratulate the man on his horsemastership. The man said there was nothing wrong with the horse, but he had lost his left stirrup leather: ‘Chesham, astonished, said “Well, mount on the other side, then!” - to receive the incredulous cockney retort, “Get along with you! Why, if I did that I’d be facing the wrong way!”’ ⁷⁷

William Lawson likewise thought little of the second contingent, suggesting they were not as keen as the first contingent and would need at least three months’ training: ‘good chaps, but rare food for the Boers, cannot ride, certainly not shoot, or look after their horses’. ⁷⁸ Harry Hunter, who served in the 37th Company, likewise suggested few in the second contingent could ride, noting

⁷⁵ BA T/A 3/20 (b); Private Collection, John Brown, ‘A Rough Sketch of the South African War as Experienced by the Undersigned in the 10th Regiment, Imperial Yeomanry from January 1900 to June 1901’, 142.

⁷⁶ Chesham evidence, 20 Nov. 1902, Mins of Evidence taken before the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa, *HCCP* 1903 [C.1791], I, para. 6731, 287-88.

⁷⁷ Field Marshal Lord Birdwood, *Khaki and Gown: An Autobiography* (London: Ward, Locke, 1941), 119.

⁷⁸ BA, T/A 3/532, Lawson to Syb, 11 Apl. 1901.

also in April 1901 that they had yet to learn that, if they stole a horse from someone else, then they would need to alter its appearance.⁷⁹

The Gipps committee on the second contingent suggested too high a standard had been expected of ‘comparatively untrained civilians’ and this was broadly agreed by the post-war Elgin Commission.⁸⁰ Assigned to help instruct the new men before his own departure for home, Arthur Arnold found them mostly from London and ‘rather a rough lot, very different to the old yeomanry as hardly any of them can ride’. Arnold’s captain called them ‘his freaks’.⁸¹ A 23 year-old farmer’s son from Deenethorpe in Northamptonshire, Arnold served in the Northampton Squadron of the RBH, and enlisted in the 37th Company. Like most of the squadron, he transferred to the new Northamptonshire Yeomanry in 1902.

Those applying for commissions in the second contingent were often accepted without references being adequately checked.⁸² Over 1,000 men from the second contingent were sent home, with militia and volunteer officers also pressed to fill the many commissioned vacancies that arose. The volunteer special service companies were all meant to be efficient marksmen, but the requirement for the domestic yeomanry was of a lower standard and, in any case, it was not rigorously applied. The Hon. Sidney Peel, a barrister who enlisted in the 40th (Oxfordshire) Company of the 10th Battalion suggested no more than five or six men in his company ‘had ever shot at anything else than a target or at uncertain ranges; most had never fired a rifle before in their lives’.

⁷⁹ Harry Hunter, *Twelve Months with the Imperial Yeomanry in South Africa by one of Lord Chesham’s Brigade* (Whitehaven: Whitehaven News, n. d. [1901]), 55.

⁸⁰ Miller, *Volunteers on the Veld*, 158, 166-67.

⁸¹ David Arnold (ed.), *Arthur: Man of Letters* (Typescript, 2017), 23: Letter, 18 Apl. 1901.

⁸² Will Bennett, *Absent-Minded Beggars: Yeomanry and Volunteers in the Boer War* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 1999), 178-81; Hay, *Yeomanry Cavalry*, 199.

He also suggested that the one drill quickly mastered was ‘standing at ease and standing easy’. ⁸³ The 39th Company that completed the 10th Battalion was nominally recruited from Berkshire.

As the middle class departed so more working class men - skilled and unskilled - took their place. It is suggested that only 18.3 per cent of the Imperial Yeomanry’s three contingents were pre-war yeomen. ⁸⁴ It was once claimed on the basis of evidence from the Fifehire coal field that there was a correlation between trade depression and enlistment in the Imperial Yeomanry. It was also suggested that based on one sample of attestation forms, 58 per cent of the force as a whole had working class occupations, although the largest single working-class group - labourers - representing 7.1 per cent of the total were only the fifth largest category behind commercial and clerical occupations (11.4 per cent), skilled artisans (8.9 per cent), grooms and servants (8.5 per cent), and farmers (8 per cent). ⁸⁵

However, such doubts expressed on the appeal of patriotism to those coming forward for the Imperial Yeomanry have been set aside by re-evaluation. Not only did the working class respond positively to the war in terms of recruitment - not all those who volunteered were accepted, notably on physical grounds - but also in enthusiastic celebrations for auxiliaries setting off to or returning from the war. Monocausal explanations of motivation to enlist are hazardous. Patriotism was certainly the most significant cause for many, if not all. ⁸⁶ Some

⁸³ The Hon. Sidney Peel, *Trooper 8008 I.Y.* (London: Edward Arnold, 1901), 6-7.

⁸⁴ Hay, *Yeomanry Cavalry*, 173.

⁸⁵ Richard Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 200-01, 214-16.

⁸⁶ Stephen Miller, ‘The South African War’, in Beckett (ed.), *Citizen Soldiers and Empire*, 155-70, at 161; idem, *Volunteers on the Veld*, 74-76; idem, ‘In Support of the “Imperial

were attracted by the opportunities to remain in South Africa as members of the South African Constabulary or settlers: 14 per cent of Scottish Imperial Yeomen did so.⁸⁷

More careful sampling has revealed a different picture than once suggested. One small sample of 525 men from 18 different companies in the first contingent suggests 25 per cent of the first contingent were farmers with 13 per cent tradesmen associated with horses. This is broadly similar to other more impressionistic conclusions.⁸⁸ A larger sample of 2,965 men from all three contingents suggests 50 per cent middle class and 30 per cent working class in the first contingent, with 60 per cent of the total from urban areas. The second contingent saw a reduction in the number from agricultural professions to 12.5 per cent, and a considerable drop in middle class participation. Some 66 per cent were now working class, but only two per cent were unemployed. Over 75 per cent of the third contingent was working class.⁸⁹

The 37th Squadron was raised at Buckingham under Captain Walter de Winton whilst the 38th was raised at High Wycombe under Captain the Hon. William Lawson. Both de Winton and Lawson were former regulars, de Winton with the Life Guards and Lawson with the Scots Guards. Originally from Maesllwch Castle in Radnorshire, de Winton had served in the RBH since 1893.

Addressing the 37th Squadron, de Winton proclaimed, 'I'll play up to you but, by Jove, you must play up to me as well. I want no rot.'⁹⁰ A. J. de Winton of

Mission": Volunteering for the South African War, 1899-1902', *Journal of Military History* 69 (2005), 691-711.

⁸⁷ E. W. McFarland, 'Empire-enlarging Genius: Scottish Imperial Yeomanry Volunteers in the Boer War', *War in History* 13 (2006), 299-328; Hay, *Yeomanry Cavalry*, 185-88.

⁸⁸ Miller, *Volunteers on the Veld*, 67-68, 80; Bennett, *Absent-Minded Beggars*, 174-76.

⁸⁹ Hay, *Yeomanry Cavalry*, 173, 178-82, 252-54.

⁹⁰ Gaskell, *With Methuen*, 7.

Upton Park, presumably Walter's brother, was an officer in 1st Bucks RVC commanding the Slough Company until succeeded by Barron in March 1902.⁹¹ Walter de Winton resigned his RBH Commission in 1904.



Walter de Winton [BMMT]

Trooper of the 38th (RBH) Company [BMMT]

One who applied to Chesham for a commission in the Imperial Yeomanry was none other than Winston Churchill, who wrote to Chesham on 6 October 1899. On his way to South Africa as a war correspondent, Churchill was offered a commission in the Lancashire Hussars Companies. Writing from Cairo, he promptly requested Chesham to tear up his application. Ironically, Churchill had previously disparaged yeomanry and was later commissioned in the Oxfordshire Hussars.⁹²

⁹¹ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 1 Mar. 1902.

⁹² Randolph S. Churchill, *Winston S. Churchill: Companion Volume I Part II, 1896-1900* (London: Heinemann, 1967), 925-26, 1053, 1056-57.

Chesham's recruiting appeal - 'Let us be ready before the ships' - was widely circulated, welcoming men between 20 and 35 years of age to come into squadron headquarters at Beaconsfield, Buckingham, Northampton, and Towcester (3rd Squadron). [BA, T/A 3/20a.] The existence of the two Northamptonshire squadrons from 1895 onwards has resulted in some of the extant accounts of the 37th and 38th Squadrons being penned by Northamptonshire men.

Richard Spencer Britten was a 21 year-old farmer's son from Great Billing. H. S. Gaskell, a medical student at Edinburgh and in the university volunteer corps had been rejected as medically unfit to join a volunteer service company attached to the Royal Scots, but rode to Buckingham from his home in Peterborough to enlist in the 37th Company. Gaskell characterised the squadron as 'the better sort of farmers, horse-dealers, etc., many of whom already belonged to the existing corps of Bucks Yeomanry with one or two tradesmen and grooms, and a sprinkling of public school and University men, among whom I discovered three men who had been with me at Haileybury'. In the event, Gaskell was sent to Wycombe to join the 38th.⁹³ There are also extant accounts and correspondence by Alfred Rogers, a 24 year-old farmer's son originally from Thornton and now residing at The Mill, Stony Stratford and working as a miller in the family concern; John Brown, a gentleman from Marsh Gibbon in the 38th; and, as already noted, Arthur Arnold. An ostler from Chalfont St Giles, Trooper J. Neville, also left brief diary notes. William Lawson commanding the 38th also wrote home regularly from South Africa.

A bill poster from Northampton in the 37th, Alfred Smith, had a memoir printed in Preston in 1905. No copy has been located. He had been a member of Lord Annaly's squadron before the war and was captured, but escaped at Rustenberg

⁹³ H. S. Gaskell, *With Lord Methuen in South Africa* (London: Henry Drane, 1906), 7.

on 27 September 1900. Smith was then wounded at Uitvalskop in January 1901, being treated in the Imperial Yeomanry Hospital at Deelfontein before being discharged at home in April 1901.⁹⁴ Another privately printed memoir was that of Harry Hunter, originally from Whitehaven. As already indicated, Hunter served in the 37th Company but, as one of a draft, did not reach South Africa until May 1900.

A total of 50 from 104 men from the Towcester Squadron commanded by Captain the Hon. Edward Douglas-Pennant, Unionist MP for South Northamptonshire from 1895 to 1900 and later 3rd Lord Penrhyn, and 45 men from the 3rd Lord Annaly's Northampton Squadron had volunteered by 23 December. Annaly had been promoted captain in 1896: he would transfer to the new Northamptonshire Yeomanry in 1902. Lionel Walter Rothschild, who had been elected as Liberal Unionist MP for Mid Bucks in a by-election in January 1899, also volunteered, but was rejected as too heavy. Annaly and Douglas-Pennant similarly volunteered to go to South Africa, but the latter was rejected on medical grounds. Some 80 men from the 4th Squadron at High Wycombe had also volunteered by the end of December.⁹⁵

The men for de Winton's company were sworn in at Buckingham on 31 December 1899 when, despite fog and rain, men descended on the town by 'train, saddle, trap, and bicycle'. In addition to medical inspection, some men were given a riding test over hurdles in a field next to the barracks. Lawson's company was sworn in on 3 January 1900 in the Wellington Room of the Red Lion Hotel at Wycombe by Coningsby Disraeli, Disraeli's nephew, who had inherited Hughenden and was Conservative MP for Altrincham from 1892 to

⁹⁴ Alfred G. T. Smith, *With the 10th Regiment Imperial Yeomanry* (Preston: Herald Printing Works, 1905).

⁹⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 30 Nov. 1899; *Buckingham Express*, 23 Dec. 1899; 6 Jan. 1900; *South Bucks Standard*, 22 and 29 Dec. 1899; *North Bucks Times*, 6 Jan. 1900.

1906. Coningsby Disraeli himself was commissioned in the RBH in April 1900, later commanding the Aylesbury Squadron, the NCOs of which he entertained at Hughenden in November 1912.⁹⁶ He also presented the regiment with a celebrated horse-drawn mobile cooker with three ovens, the 'Dizzy'. The chief borough magistrate, Deacon, complained later that Disraeli as a county justice had presided over the proceedings when it should have been himself.⁹⁷ Of 63 men present, 60 were chosen: one was unfit and the other two required better references. The auxiliaries still meant trade for also present in the room behind a screen were representatives of two Wycombe tailors and three Wycombe bootmakers. Khaki and Bedford cord had been acquired; two thirds of the clothing would be provided by Messrs. T. & J. Hull, and the rest by Messrs. Pearce, Son & Co. Of the bootmakers - John Busby, C. Bridger and T. H. Eggleton - the latter soon took out a series of advertisements proclaiming his services.⁹⁸ Rather similarly, Rogers & Sons advertised regularly their contract with the RBH for forage at camp.⁹⁹

De Winton's company was fully assembled at Buckingham on 6 January with 40 or so men sent to Wycombe to help complete Lawson's company, which assembled there on 8 January 1900.¹⁰⁰ Daily drills took place at Buckingham with marches in Stowe Park. All at Buckingham departed for Windsor on 22 January to be accommodated at Spital Cavalry Barracks.¹⁰¹

All those going out with the imperial yeomanry and volunteers were inundated with gifts. Each man received a pipe and a pound of tobacco from Miss

⁹⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 6 Jan. 1900; 23 Nov. 1912; *South Bucks Standard*, 21 Nov. 1912.

⁹⁷ *South Bucks Standard*, 26 Jan. 1900.

⁹⁸ *South Bucks Standard*, 5 Jan., and 2, 9, 16 and 23 Mar. 1900.

⁹⁹ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 26 May and 2 June 1900.

¹⁰⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 13 Jan. 1900; *Buckingham Express*, 6 Jan. 1900.

¹⁰¹ *Bucks Herald*, 27 Jan. 1900; *Buckingham Express*, 20 Jan. 1900.

Rothschild, whilst Lady Duncombe's appeal brought in 26 woollen caps from Little Brickhill. Volunteers received an aluminium flask from Lord Addington and a New Testament from Lady Addington.¹⁰² The men from Aylesbury received a hastily prepared address from the Urban District Council as they left the town on 8 January. Trooper G. Clarke, a builder from Westbury, received a pair of field glasses after a collection in his village.¹⁰³

Lady Addington and Alfred Gilbey's wife organised comforts for the volunteer service company, each man receiving a silver mounted pipe, a pouch, and ½ lb. of tobacco. In addition, each man received a tin of chocolate and a pair of leather laces. The appeal continued to flourish, with a new appeal to replenish stocks in December 1901. Indeed, in September 1902, Mrs Gilbey announced that a total of 75 parcels had been sent out to the volunteers in South Africa with 2,316 separate articles including cholera belts, balaclavas, socks, mufflers, towels, housewives, handkerchiefs, paper, envelopes, and note books. An additional 50 parcels had also been consigned through the fund by relatives of those serving. Among those responding to Mrs Gilbey's appeal were Mrs Martyn of Aston Abbots, Mrs Gunn of Aylesbury, and Percival Horwood's mother.¹⁰⁴

McCorquodale's provided Hawkins with a tent bed and each of its four employees going with him got a Mappin & Webb knife, and a sovereign.¹⁰⁵ Trooper Arthur Williams, a farmer from Monks Risborough, and Trooper Chilton from Princes Risborough both received a watch. All from Marlow were intended to be given an initialled pipe and a ½ lb. tin of tobacco although, in the

¹⁰² *Bucks Herald*, 6 Jan. and 3 Mar. 1900; *Buckingham Express*, 20 Jan. 1900.

¹⁰³ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 3 Feb. 1900.

¹⁰⁴ *Buckingham Express*, 20 Jan. 1900; 14 Dec. 1901; *Bucks Herald*, 10 and 24 Mar. 1900, and 27 Sept. 1902; BA, T/A 5/17, Gilbey Mss, IV, 5.

¹⁰⁵ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 10 Feb. 1900.

end, they got £5 each, as had Marlow volunteers for the service company. Lawson's men also each received an embossed leather writing case.¹⁰⁶ Imperial yeomen and volunteers for the service company from Buckingham received a farewell dinner, as did yeomen from Waddesdon at the Five Arrows Hotel and those at Wycombe in the Red Lion.¹⁰⁷

The 10th Battalion with the addition of a Middlesex company was inspected by the Prince of Wales at Albany Barracks in Regent's Park on 26 January 1900. Among those presented was Patrick Campbell from Streatham, the estranged husband of the actress, Mrs [Beatrice] Patrick Campbell, who was classed as a gentleman on his enlistment form.¹⁰⁸ After various farewells, they sailed on 11 February 1900, Lawson's company taking along a spaniel, 'Titch', that somehow attached itself and was given a regimental number. 'Titch' was killed by a shell in August 1900.¹⁰⁹



William Lawson (right) at the head of the 10th Battalion, Imperial Yeomanry [BMMT]

¹⁰⁶ *South Bucks Standard*, 2 and 16 Feb., and 13 Apl. 1900.

¹⁰⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 13, 20 and 27 Jan. 1900.

¹⁰⁸ *Daily News*, 27 Jan. 1900; *Buckingham Express*, 3 Feb. 1900; *South Bucks Standard*, 2 Feb. 1900; BA, T/A 3/20.

¹⁰⁹ *South Bucks Standard*, 16 Feb. 1900; Gaskell, *With Methuen*, 186.

Table 7:1 Social Composition of Bucks Companies, Imperial Yeomanry

	37 th	38 th	%	56 th	57 th	%
Gentlemen	5	11	6.3%	-	4	1.5%
Farmers and Sons	46	29	29.6%	7	9	6.1%
Professions	11	8	7.5%	12	12	9.2%
Trades	15	25	15.8%	32	33	25.0%
Clerks	3	9	4.7%	16	11	10.3%
Crafts	19	16	13.8%	10	18	10.7%
Skilled Manual	16	16	12.6%	22	30	20.0%
Unskilled Manual	2	3	0.1%	7	11	6.9%
Occupation recorded as None or Nil	5	10	5.9%	5	2	2.6%
Unknown	1	4		4	5	
Total	122	131		125	135	

Source: BA, T/A 3/20; TNA, WO 128.

Kipling's poem, 'The Absent-Minded Beggar', which launched the successful *Daily Mail* public appeal to provide for soldiers and their dependents, used a particular repeated allusion to the composition of the army in South Africa, as in the third stanza:

Duke's job - cook's job – gardener, baronet, groom
Mews or palace or paper-shop, there's someone gone away!
Each of 'em doing his country's work
(and who's to look after the room?)

The considerable range of occupations in the Bucks Imperial Yeomanry companies certainly bore this out, although there were distinct differences between the initial 37th and 38th Companies and the 56th and 57th Companies of the 15th Battalion, which were nominally raised subsequently from the RBH at the end of January 1900. In all, six officers and 119 men from the RBH were accepted from those who had volunteered, serving primarily in the 37th and 38th Companies. A total of 153 men from the four companies had Bucks addresses (37 per cent) with many of those from Northamptonshire being members of the RBH.¹¹⁰

The largest group in the 37th and 38th Companies comprised farmers and farmer's sons (29.6 per cent) but, in keeping with the general pattern of the yeomanry of old, tradesmen and craftsmen with an emphasis on horse trades also figured. The 57th and 58th Companies had fewer farmers, more clerks and significantly more skilled (20 per cent) and even unskilled (6.9 per cent) manual workers. The diversity was illustrated by the inclusion of a gold miner, a florist, two tram drivers, a billiard marker, and a tripe dresser. Two men simply recorded their occupation as 'The Stage' (Reginald Courtney) and 'Literature' (Richard Foster), although neither appears to have been well known. After the war, Courtney occasionally appeared in comedy sketches with Kitty Clover's Comedy Co, for which he was business manager.¹¹¹ Walter Radford from Manchester described himself as a professional cricketer, and was the professional for Colne in the Lancashire League. Blair Swannell, a farmer's son from Weston Underwood, played rugby for Northampton, and went on the British Isles tour to Australia in 1899. He played again for the British Isles in

¹¹⁰ BA, T/A 3/20.

¹¹¹ *The Stage*, 28 July 1904; 1 March 1906.

1904 and, after emigrating, for Australia: he was killed serving with the Australians on Gallipoli in 1915.¹¹²

Many photographs of the 37th Company were taken by Henry Pelham Lee, who went on to become a leading motor engineer and founder of Coventry Climax Engines. Britten compiled a photograph album, as did Charles Linnell, a farmer and builder from Silverstone, who also kept a diary, and Alfred Smith.¹¹³



Boxing Match on board SS Norman en route for the Cape [BMMT]

¹¹² BA, T/A 3/20.

¹¹³ BA, TA 65/2014 [BMMT 661] for Smith's album. Linnell's diary and album are in a private collection.

Those volunteering for the 56th and 57th Companies were again tested over hurdles when enrolled at Buckingham on 31 January 1900.¹¹⁴ They were also enthusiastically seen off, the 57th Company from Wycombe on 10 February after a smoking concert in the Red Lion Hotel the night before, an early breakfast in the Auction Mart and a torchlight procession to the Station.¹¹⁵ The 56th sailed from Liverpool on the SS *Hilarius* on 13 March, whilst the 57th sailed three days later on RMS *Tagus*. The first draft of 48 reinforcements for all four Bucks companies was called for in March 1900, and departed on 14 April.¹¹⁶

Tired as he was of the war and, although he had turned down offers of a regular commission, Britten took a commission in the 38th Company after his first term of service expired.¹¹⁷ He found the third contingent men at Aldershot steadily improved with home training, although only two per cent could ride at first.¹¹⁸ It is likely, therefore, that they would have been rather more successful than the second contingent had they reached South Africa. Britten went back to South Africa, and finally returned home in September 1902, about half of his company deciding to stay in the police or to find work in the mines.¹¹⁹ Just as Britten had taken a commission so, too, did Edward Murray, who had also joined as a trooper in 1899. A stock broker with previous service in the 17th Lancers, Murray rose in just two years to lieutenant colonel commanding the 10th Battalion at war's end, winning the DSO.¹²⁰ Recalled to the RBH in 1914, and

¹¹⁴ *Buckingham Express*, 3 Feb. 1900.

¹¹⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 17 Feb. 1900.

¹¹⁶ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 17 Mar. 1900; *Bucks Herald*, 24 Mar. 1900; *Buckingham Express*, 24 Mar. 1900; *South Bucks Standard*, 20 Apr. 1900.

¹¹⁷ NAM, 7812-34-1, Letter, 2 Sept. 1900; -2, Letter, 2 Dec. 1900.

¹¹⁸ Bennett, *Absent-Minded Beggars*, 201.

¹¹⁹ BA, T/A 3/532, Britten to Lawson, 29 Aug. 1902.

¹²⁰ BA, T/A, 3/532, Murray to Lawson, 30 June and 11 Aug. 1901; 5 Apr. and 27 Aug. 1902.

now living at Penn, the then Major Britten died of disease in August 1918 while Deputy Assistant Director of Remounts at Fifth Army HQ.

Together with Countess Howe, Lady Chesham established the 500-bed Imperial Yeomanry Hospital at Deelfontein near De Aa, some 500 miles north of Cape Town, £127,000 having been raised for it in just four months. Another £15,000 was subscribed to open a new hospital at Pretoria in August 1900, the Deelfontein site being sold to the government.¹²¹ Aylesbury, Beaconsfield and Chesham all sponsored beds at £50 a time at the Deelfontein site. So did the Grenfell and Astor families and Lady Boston, the fund in the south of the county overseen by Lady Boston and Alfred Gilbey's wife.¹²² Disease was a particular problem in South Africa, enteric breaking out at Bloemfontein almost as soon as the British entered it in March 1900. Of the 22,000 British war dead, 16,000 were victims of disease.

The experience of warfare was novel not least the sudden transition both mental and physical from civilian to military life. Being shipped out to South Africa was a long and gruelling experience in itself for many despite the entertainments provided such as games, sports and concerts. The 37th and 38th went out on the SS *Norman* from Southampton as second-class passengers. Snow was falling as they sailed and it proved the roughest passage of the Bay of Biscay that the crew had encountered in 19 previous trips. One man who broke his leg had to be left at Madeira.¹²³ Alfred Rogers wrote pointedly from the 'black hole' on the transport.¹²⁴ Trooper E. J. Bunting, a Newport Pagnell butcher, recorded mountainous seas, with three out of every four men seasick

¹²¹ Bennett, *Absent-Minded Beggars*, 134, 140.

¹²² *Chesham Examiner*, 2 Feb. 1900; *Bucks Herald*, 10 Feb. 1900; *South Bucks Standard*, 19 Jan., and 23 Feb. 1900.

¹²³ Linnell Diary, 10 Feb. 1900.

¹²⁴ BA, T/A 3/142, Rogers Letter, 23 Feb. 1900.

and the men so tightly packed in their berths ‘as almost to be able to touch each other’. Trooper George Wheeler, son of Wycombe’s brewery owner, also wrote of the voyage, although only the barest details were released to the press.¹²⁵ Also aboard the *Norman*, Britten noted that fighting for the country ‘sounds fine until you start on the job’.¹²⁶ At least, as recorded by Sergeant H. J. Cox from Wycombe, matters were enlivened by a young lady on board selling kisses for the *Daily Telegraph* Shilling Fund at 2s.6d a time.¹²⁷

The men witnessed a dance for the first class passengers after they passed Tenerife, and Chesham conducted a Sunday service off Cape Verde on 18 February. One soldier was hospitalised on board with mumps.¹²⁸ They reached the Cape to hear rockets and guns being fired to celebrate the relief of Kimberley. Lawson’s Company was first disembarked, and then re-embarked for East London in the *Norman* only to be disembarked once more, and then re-embarked in the SS *Dictator* for East London after all.¹²⁹ Fortunately, the voyage out of the 56th Company in the *Hilarius* was much quieter than that of the 37th and 38th Companies, the Cape being reached on 10 April. So was that of the 57th Company on the *Tagus*.¹³⁰ Voyaging out on the *Tintagel Castle*, the volunteer service company also had a good passage through Biscay.¹³¹

¹²⁵ *Bucks Standard*, 3 Mar. 1900; *South Bucks Standard*, 2 Mar. 1900.

¹²⁶ Miller, *Volunteers on the Veld*, 89.

¹²⁷ *South Bucks Standard*, 6 Apl. 1900.

¹²⁸ Linnell diary, 18 Feb. 1900.

¹²⁹ *South Bucks Standard*, 30 Mar. 1900; David Arnold, ‘Arthur: A Man of Letters’, Typescript, 2017, 12, Letter of Arthur Arnold, 2 Mar. 1900; BA, T/A 3/145 and 146, Rogers Letters, 2 and 9 Mar. 1900.

¹³⁰ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 31 Mar. 1900; *Buckingham Express*, 9 Feb. 1901; *South Bucks Standard*, 16 Mar. 1900; *Bucks Herald*, 14 Apl. 1900.

¹³¹ *South Bucks Standard*, 30 Mar. 1900.

Initially, on disembarkation the imperial yeomanry battalions of the first contingent passed through Maitland Camp outside Cape Town, with its constant storms, its flies, and its unsanitary conditions. Once joining the field force, there was certainly discomfort and privation, but also long periods of boredom punctuated by action on only rare occasions. One such occasion was the action of the 10th Battalion at Boshof on 5 April 1900. The 10th and 15th Battalions were among four attached to Lord Methuen's 1st Division at Kimberley.

Methuen was more prepared than some regulars to see the auxiliaries in action and, acting on the left flank of the British advance towards Bloemfontein, ordered the battalion to attack a small Boer commando that had stood to fight at Boshof some 33 miles north east of Kimberley. This was atypical because the commando was largely composed of foreign volunteers serving with the Boers under the command of the former French colonel, George, Comte de Villebois-Mareuil who had been tasked with blowing up the railway bridge over the Modder to cut the supply line to Kimberley. The 25 or so Boers holding one kopje retreated at once, but the 100 or so foreigners - French, Belgian, Dutch German, Italian and Russian - under Villebois-Mareuil remained on an adjacent kopje. After some four hours, with Villebois-Mareuil dead, his force surrendered. The commando suffered 10 dead and 11 wounded, with a further 51 captured. According to a member of Methuen's staff, many of the prisoners 'had the most immoral and disgusting photographs in their inside pockets'.¹³² The prisoners included a Dutchman, Count Pierre de Breda; A. C. Vin Marseten, a resident of Sumatra in the Dutch East Indies; and Russian, calling himself Prince Bagratian of Tiflis, whom Lawson believed to be a Polish Jew from Hornditch.¹³³

¹³² Nini Murray-Philipson (ed.), *Colonel Standfast: The Memoirs of W. A. Tilney, 1868-1947* (Norwich: Michael Russell, 2001), 74.

¹³³ BA, T/A 3/532, Lawson to Syb, 9 Apl. 1900.

Gaskell recalled the chaotic excitement when Methuen's orders were received:

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The three squadrons of Yeomanry immediately turned out, and then ensued the most appalling "rush" I ever had the misfortune to be in. All the horses were out grazing, over a mile away, and we had to run out for them. I couldn't find mine so I seized another whose I don't know. We galloped them back to camp with only the halters, hurled the saddles on, flung the accoutrements on ourselves, and dashed on to parade in record time.'

Some of the men dismounted once they came under fire, requiring an advance of about 1,000 yards in the open.¹³⁵ Others had ridden around the Boer flank and then dismounted. One man in four was detached to hold the horses.¹³⁶

Trooper Frank Pratt from Northall wrote, 'I can tell you I felt a bit funny at first, but as we advanced it all passed away, and when we made the final charge you should have heard the cheering'. Pratt concluded that they could hold their own against any number of Boers 'but I shall not be sorry when it is all over'.¹³⁷

Likewise, Quartermaster Sergeant W. J. Gough, a Buckingham farmer with 37th Company recorded, 'My first impression of being under fire was that you don't realise they are shooting at you until you see someone roll over alongside you.'

¹³⁸ Britten noted, 'There is no great sport in fighting but we enjoyed that immensely.'¹³⁹

That night, all were soaked by rain amid a thunderstorm which made it difficult to see. As Trooper Harry Baker of the 37th Company, a commercial agent from

¹³⁴ Gaskell, *With Methuen*, 56.

¹³⁵ Peel, *Trooper 8008*, 33-34.

¹³⁶ BA, T/A 3/148, Rogers Letter, 10 Apl. 1900.

¹³⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 9 June 1900; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 9 June 1900.

¹³⁸ *Buckingham Express*, 5 May 1900.

¹³⁹ NAM, 7812-34-1, Diary, 9 Apl. 1900.

Daventry, wrote, ‘Every minute or so down would go horse and rider, in most cases the fault of holes made by ant bears, which are so prevalent on the veldt and so dangerous to horsemen riding over it after dark’. Baker himself was unseated twice.¹⁴⁰ The men of the 38th Company had to sleep in a pigeon loft, Trooper Casewell of Chesham longing for a pot of butter in the Crown and a cup of cocoa in the Dunlop Restaurant.¹⁴¹

The Imperial Yeomanry had three dead and eight wounded. The 34 year-old Sergeant Patrick Campbell of the 37th Company was killed - shot through the head - the other two dead being Captain Cecil Boyle from the 40th Company, and Lieutenant Arthur Williams from 10th (Sherwood Rangers) Company of the 3rd Battalion, who was killed when some Boers hoisted a white flag.¹⁴² One of those wounded was Sergeant Major Charles Cole, the RSM of the RBH, who was hit in the shoulder.¹⁴³

Campbell and the others including Villebois-Mareuil were buried at Boshof, Methuen having a headstone erected to the Frenchman. Lawson, who believed that Methuen should have dislodged the Boers with artillery rather than undertaken an assault, found the occasion not to his taste: ‘All the Froggies cried and one made a speech at the funeral. Adieu, mon General, etc. and Methuen shook hands with him, God knows why, as they ought all to have been shot.’¹⁴⁴ Chesham brought the Frenchman’s horse back to England. In a rather quixotic gesture, its heart and ceremonial trappings were buried on the village green at Latimer in 1911 next to the war memorial to the men from the village who served in South Africa. Lawson believed Chesham to be ‘rather an old

¹⁴⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 26 May 1900.

¹⁴¹ *Chesham Examiner*, 1 June 1900.

¹⁴² *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, 14 Apl. 1900.

¹⁴³ BA, T/A 3/148 and 155, Rogers Letters, 10 Apl., and 20 June 1900.

¹⁴⁴ BA, T/A 3/532, Lawson to Syb, 9 Apl. 1900.

woman about the soldiers, fussy and faddy'. Generally, Lawson had not expected much of his fellow officers other than de Winton, who had an 'impossible temper'. Chesham, he found, indecisive.¹⁴⁵



Sergeant Patrick Campbell's grave at Boshof [BMMT]



Another Boshof grave: that of Sergeant Edwin Bennett of 37th (RBH) Company, who died of disease, May 1900 [BMMT]

¹⁴⁵ BA, T/A 3/532, Lawson to Syb, 13 and 21 Feb. 1900; Lawson to 'Cov', 24 Apl. 1900.

The 57th Company of 15th Battalion was one of four attached to a column commanded by Major General Arthur Paget that came into action at Bakenkop near Bethlehem in the Orange Free State on 3 July 1900. A pre-war yeoman and Tyneside engineer, John White of the 57th Company complained that the yeomen were being used to draw fire, especially when it came under the command of Major General Hector Macdonald who preferred to save his ‘Scotch lads’. ¹⁴⁶

Rather more typical was the long march undertaken by the 10th Battalion as part of Methuen’s force in February 1901 from the Transvaal into Bechuanaland and back. The march included occasional skirmishes as at Hartebeestfontein on 19 February 1901 when the 10th Battalion successfully cleared the road to Klerksdorp of Boers led by the noted guerrilla leader, Koos de la Rey. In a sharp running engagement, the 10th suffered four dead and 16 wounded whilst killing 18 Boers. ¹⁴⁷ A compensation was that Hartebeestfontein proved ‘a place of milk and honey’ surrounded by orchards. ¹⁴⁸

Earlier, when the 37th arrived at Mafeking in August 1900 they had covered an average 23 miles a day over eight days. Some 40 per cent of the men were walking after their mounts had died or been destroyed. Having had to shoot his horse, Rogers spent six days on foot, covering about 80 miles. In any case, to spare the horses as much as possible, the men walked for 20 minutes in every hour. ¹⁴⁹ Rather similarly, Harry Hunter, who recorded 70 horses having to be shot, went through three horses and was on foot for four days, walking 18 miles

¹⁴⁶ NAM, 2002-11-732-2, White to Mother, 26 Aug. 1900.

¹⁴⁷ Brown, ‘Rough Sketch’, 91-94; BA, T/A 3/532, Conop to Lawson, 20 Feb. 1901; Butler to Lawson, 20 Feb. 1901; Lawson to Syb, 21 Feb. 1901; T/A 3/175, Rogers Letter, 20 Feb. 1901.

¹⁴⁸ Hunter, *Twelve Months*, 48.

¹⁴⁹ BA, T/A 3/149 and 158, Rogers Letters, n. d. [April or May 1900] and 28 Aug. 1900.

on one occasion.¹⁵⁰ Throughout the war, British ‘horsemastership’ was woeful. Over 326,000 horses and over 51,000 mules perished.¹⁵¹

Increasingly, however, the Imperial Yeomanry was engaged in the often casual brutality of the guerrilla war, destroying homes, crops and livestock, and moving civilians into the internment camps whilst always under the threat of attack. As John Brown of the 38th Company recorded on 9 July 1900,¹⁵²

The enemy is now wearing our uniform which puts us to great disadvantage and is contrary to civilised warfare. We loot and kill anything we see now, whether it be sheep, pigs or poultry and most acceptable they are too, to help out with the scanty war rations. If we are fired upon from a farmhouse we burn the house down.

Britten also wrote on 20 August 1900, ‘We practically live on loot now.’¹⁵³ Neville of 38th Company recorded looting three sheep in June 1900 and bringing them back to camp at Heilbron to eat. Boer wagons and other equipment were also seized and destroyed on a number of occasions as well as farms burned.¹⁵⁴ White of 57th Company found it heart breaking to turn out women and children and burn their farms.¹⁵⁵ Similarly, when 20 Boer wagons were captured in September 1900, Hunter ‘felt sorry for the women, poor things, to stand and see their trumpery treasures turned ruthlessly upside down, and such as took the

¹⁵⁰ Hunter, *Twelve Months*, 23.

¹⁵¹ Stephen Badsey, ‘Mounted Combat in the Second Boer War’, *Sandhurst Journal of Military Studies* 2 (1991), 11-28; Sandra Swart, ‘Horses in the South African War, 1899-1902’, *Society and Animals* 18 (2010), 348-66.

¹⁵² Brown, ‘Rough Sketch’, 17.

¹⁵³ NAM, 7812-34-1, Letter, 20 Aug. 1900.

¹⁵⁴ NAM, 1992-07-76, Neville Diary, 21 June, 29 July, and 26 Aug. 1900.

¹⁵⁵ NAM, 2002-11-732-3, White to Mother, 19 Sept. 1900.

looter's fancy taken for, it maybe, some sweetheart at home; made many of them weep, and one could hardly put up with it'. ¹⁵⁶

It is clear from Lawson's papers that the men kept up their spirits with frequent improvised concerts of song and recitation as at Zeerust on 21 November 1900, and at Lichtenberg on 18 December 1900. ¹⁵⁷ Despite their travails, a few were prepared to stay on in South Africa, 22 men opting to apply to join the new South African Constabulary. ¹⁵⁸ John Brown applied first to join the Johannesburg Mounted Police and then the new civil service for the occupied Boer republics, but was not accepted for either. ¹⁵⁹

The experience of the volunteer service company was very similar. Private Thomas Grimsdale of Aylesbury recorded, 'This life is different to volunteering at camp - trench digging and lying in them all night till daybreak.' For Private Edmunds of Buckingham it was a case of drill, fatigues, outpost duty and marches with a great deal of sickness. He and others from Buckingham were late on parade on one occasion, his punishment being an hour's pack drill. ¹⁶⁰ Private H. Goodwin from Windsor, a member of the Slough Company wrote, 'We are digging trenches all day, and have to lie in them all night: so we don't get much time to sleep, nor do anything else.' The country was grand in its way but he 'would not exchange our little green island home for all of it - it is too dreary'. ¹⁶¹ Private Pollard wrote about the excessive camp prices when rations

¹⁵⁶ Hunter, *Twelve Months*, 29-30.

¹⁵⁷ BA, T/A 3/532.

¹⁵⁸ Gaskell, *With Methuen*, 131; BA, T/A 3/532, Lawson to Syb, 10 July 1900.

¹⁵⁹ Brown, 'Rough Sketch', 165, 169-70.

¹⁶⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 2 and 30 June 1900.

¹⁶¹ *South Bucks Standard*, 11 May 1900.

were short: sugar at 1s.0d a lb. and bacon at 2s.0d a lb. He did not even fire his first shot until October.¹⁶²

At least the Bucks men all received a half pint bottle of port between four men in April 1901 courtesy of Alfred Gilbey. Private Edmunds meanwhile wrote in March 1901 that they had burned 200-300 farms, bringing in Boer civilians and thousands of cattle and horses.¹⁶³ Lionel Hawkins wrote of the rain and the particular difficulties of handling ox transport. He remarked on his return that active service 'was full of monotony and drudgery, and the keeping of the lines of communication was very hard work and frightfully monotonous and wearisome. They had also to garrison the towns, which was quite as hard; and to be constantly building, repairing, and improving entrenchments.' The Boers were rarely seen and one three-day reconnaissance had turned into one of eight weeks.¹⁶⁴ It was not much different for those who went out with the second volunteer contingent. Sergeant F. K. Holtom from Wycombe wrote in September 1901 of the men's ragged appearance like 'bricklayers' labourers'.

¹⁶⁵

In terms of military achievement, the contribution of the auxiliaries was hardly decisive with most only reaching South Africa after the war had become a guerrilla struggle. Yet they did fulfil the supporting role essential to wearing down the resistance of the remaining Boer commandos in the field. With British tactics becoming more systematic once Lord Kitchener succeeded Lord Roberts in command in December 1900, the auxiliaries helped burn farms, destroy crops, seize livestock, remove women and children to 'concentration' camps, and also participated in the 'drives' across the veldt forcing the Boers back on

¹⁶² *Buckingham Express*, 25 Aug., and 10 Nov. 1900.

¹⁶³ *Buckingham Express*, 25 Aug. and 10 Nov. 1900; 23 Mar. and 4 May 1901.

¹⁶⁴ *South Bucks Standard*, 12 Oct. 1900; *Bucks Standard*, 25 May 1901.

¹⁶⁵ *South Bucks Standard*, 13 Sept. 1901.

lines of blockhouses and barbed wire and thereby reducing their mobility. On occasions, discipline was undoubtedly tested.¹⁶⁶

A degree of disillusionment was perceived among some auxiliaries both with seemingly endless routine duties of line, camp and piquet guard duties, and also with the tasks they were required to perform in clearing the veldt. Endless fatiguing marches did not help morale when the enemy was so often elusive.¹⁶⁷ As recorded in the brief diary entries of Trooper Neville of the 38th Company, much time was spent on escorting convoys with occasional skirmishes with Boers, who invariably fled when attacked.¹⁶⁸ As Lawson noted on one occasion, most of the time the men never knew where or when they would be going next.¹⁶⁹ As Peel also suggested, no one wanted an army of amateur strategists ‘but there is a great difference between that and keeping the soldiers and even the regimental officers in complete ignorance of what is going on and what has been going on’.¹⁷⁰ Mail, too, could be infrequent. An envelope of a letter sent home by Rogers in November 1900 bears the stamp, ‘Recovered from mails looted by the enemy.’¹⁷¹

It was not what most had signed up for or expected, hence the readiness of most to go home after the year’s term of service expired. Trooper Clarke of Buckingham, who went down with dysentery, described the hot days and cold nights on the veldt and the lack of hedges, trees and ‘fine crops’: ‘I would not

¹⁶⁶ Stephen Miller, ‘Duty or Crime? Defining Acceptable Behaviour in the British Army in South Africa, 1899-1902’, *Journal of British Studies* 49 (2010), 311-31

¹⁶⁷ Stephen Miller, ‘Slogging across the Veldt: British Volunteers and the Guerrilla Phase of the South African War, 1899-1902’, *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 84 (2006), 158-74.

¹⁶⁸ NAM, 1992-07-76, Neville Diary, 20 Apl. 1900.

¹⁶⁹ BA, T/A 3/532, Lawson to Syb, 5 Apl. 1900.

¹⁷⁰ Peel, *Trooper 8008*, 122-23.

¹⁷¹ BA, T/A 3/188.

stay here for a fortune, and I think most of those who came out with the idea of staying here changed their story, and want to see dear old England again.’¹⁷²

Chesham’s popularity waned as he was less and less seen, and as it was felt he had made too many unfulfilled promises.¹⁷³

Hunter’s letters reveal increasing discontent. When men were asked to volunteer to stay on for an additional three months at 10s.0d a day in November 1900, only seven did so. When the offer was changed to two more years at only 2s.0d a day, Hunter doubted if even five per cent would stay on.¹⁷⁴ Hunter also recorded a near mutiny in the 37th and 38th Companies in April 1901 when the men were directed on yet another trek when expecting to be withdrawn to garrison duty at Warrenton. They refused to go and were unmoved by Lawson’s mixture of threats and coaxing. Methuen then promised they would leave for home by the end of May, so they agreed to join the column.¹⁷⁵

Certainly, far fewer men were forthcoming from Bucks for the second contingent in January 1901: 14 men at Aylesbury, 14 or 15 at Bletchley, and just six or seven at Buckingham. Initially, 18 men came forward at Wycombe, but the War Office was so tardy in responding that eight dropped out. The degree of support was also less, the ten men from Wycombe receiving only £2 compared to the £3 for each of those in 1900.¹⁷⁶ Fewer still came forward from Bucks for the third contingent in January 1902, although at least two who had previously served in South Africa - one with the 10th Battalion and one with the

¹⁷² *Buckingham Express*, 18 Aug. 1900; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 18 Aug. 1900.

¹⁷³ BA, T/A 3/169 and 183, Rogers Letters, 20 Dec. 1900, and 24 Apl. 1901.

¹⁷⁴ Hunter, *Twelve Months*, 37.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 57.

¹⁷⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 19 and 26 Jan., and 6 Apl. 1901; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 19 Jan. 1901; *South Bucks Standard*, 1 Mar. 1901.

volunteer service company - did enlist.¹⁷⁷ Only seven men came forward at Wolverton - one was rejected medically - and only eight from Wycombe, of whom four did not meet the required standard.¹⁷⁸

By 1902 most volunteer service companies were manning the blockhouses but, as they were still attached to regular battalions, they were held in greater esteem than militia or imperial yeomanry. Regulars like Roberts tended to see most value in the effect military experience would have on the auxiliaries at home.¹⁷⁹ The militia had been on lines of communication from the beginning, whilst the Imperial Yeomanry attracted increasing criticism. The militia role in South Africa was more active than usually suggested with frequent small scale action in defence of lines of communication, and a mounted infantry role for some. In all, 175 militia officers and men were killed in action, and 402 wounded.¹⁸⁰ Nonetheless, the popular depiction of the militia was not noticeably different after the war than that before it.¹⁸¹

The Imperial Yeomanry's reputation suffered from disasters such as that at Lindley on 31 May 1900 when the largely Irish 13th Battalion was surrounded and forced to surrender: the 530 prisoners included four peers.¹⁸² The 10th and 15th Battalions were in the force sent to try and reach Lindley in time, although

¹⁷⁷ *Buckingham Express*, 11 Jan. 1902.

¹⁷⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 25 Jan. 1902; *Bucks Standard*, 17 Jan., 8 Feb., and 22 Mar. 1902.

¹⁷⁹ Beckett, *Riflemen Form*, 217-18.

¹⁸⁰ Stoneman, 'Reformed British Militia', 184, 208.

¹⁸¹ Mark Bennett, 'Portrayals of the British Militia, 1852-1916', *Historical Research* 91 (2008), 333-52, at 346-47.

¹⁸² Keith Jeffery, 'The Irish Soldier in the Boer War', in John Gooch (ed.), *The Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 141-51, at 147-48; Bennett, *Absent-Minded Beggars*, 110-22.

the men had no idea of the reason for their advance towards the town.¹⁸³ Britten wrote that ‘several of us had our helmets ventilated’.¹⁸⁴ Gaskell commented that ‘we were getting a little tired of rushing off to extricate people from the hole into which they had got themselves’, recording that they were now the ‘Beecham’s Pill Column’ as they ‘relieved without pain’.¹⁸⁵ The surrender of another British force with yeomen and irregular colonial contingents led by Lieutenant General Lord Methuen at Tweebosch on 7 March 1902 was also held against the Imperial Yeomanry.

The Imperial Yeomanry’s 3,093 casualties during the war were also relatively high (29.8 per cent). Of the volunteer service companies, 122 were killed, wounded, or died of disease, with a further 1,309 invalided and another 963 men lost for a variety of reasons, representing an overall wastage rate of 16 per cent.¹⁸⁶ Nonetheless, over 100,000 militiamen, volunteers and imperial yeomen had served in South Africa, together with over 29,000 citizen soldiers from Australia, Canada and New Zealand.¹⁸⁷

The local reception for returning auxiliaries was all that could have been hoped for, the enthusiasm matching that when they first embarked. Celebration had also attended the relief of Mafeking in May 1900, coinciding with the annual camp of the RBH at Buckingham that enabled suitable celebration in a number of towns to which detachments were despatched. The church bells were rung in Buckingham and the volunteer company fired volleys of 50 rounds. A

¹⁸³ NAM, 2002-11-732-1, White to Mother, 4 June 1900; 1992-07-76, Neville Diary, 1 June 1900.

¹⁸⁴ NAM, 7812-34-1, Letter, 4 June 1900.

¹⁸⁵ Peel, *Trooper 8008*, 79-80; *Buckingham Express*, 9 Feb. 1901; Gaskell, *With Methuen*, 101.

¹⁸⁶ Hay, *Yeomanry Cavalry*, 173; Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 205.

¹⁸⁷ Miller, ‘South African War’, 157.

thanksgiving service was then held on 20 May. Verney estate workers were given a holiday at Middle Claydon, whilst flags were hung out in Winslow and the bells rung at Padbury, Gawcott, and Radclive-cum-Chackmore. When Pretoria fell in June, the RBH were still in camp and fired off 140 rounds from the Maxim.¹⁸⁸ At Wolverton the LNWR workers streamed out of the works on Saturday 19 May to parade through the streets with a huge bonfire lit later on Stapley Hill. Work was again suspended for celebrations on Monday 21 May.¹⁸⁹ The 1900 RBH camp was curiously the very first which the regiment spent entirely under canvas. It was also for 28 days rather than 14, but it was made clear that those attaining the required standards within 14 days would not be compelled to remain.¹⁹⁰

There had also been welcomes for individuals returning from South Africa such as Sergeant Charles Parsons, the former RSM of the RBH, who was invalided home from the 57th Company with rheumatism in October 1900. He returned to the post kept open for him as mace bearer of the borough of Buckingham.¹⁹¹ By contrast, Trooper Neville of the 38th Company was invalided home in November 1900 but posted in December to join an Imperial Yeomanry Provisional Battalion at Shorncliffe, although he did not go back to South Africa.¹⁹²

The *South Bucks Standard* appears to have taken a much closer interest in Wycombe servicemen than other county newspapers in something of a precursor to the reporting from the front in the Great War. Group photographs

¹⁸⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 26 May 1900; *Chesham Examiner*, 15 June 1900; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 26 May 1900; *Buckingham Express*, 16 June 1900.

¹⁸⁹ *Bucks Standard*, 26 May 1900.

¹⁹⁰ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 19 May 1900; *South Bucks Standard*, 27 Apr. 1900.

¹⁹¹ *Bucks Herald*, 27 Oct. 1900.

¹⁹² NAM, 1992-07-76, Neville Diary, 27 Nov., and 20 Dec. 1900.

appeared, for example, of all those enlisted in Lawson's company in February 1900, as well as one sent by Trooper E. Norman, a West Wycombe butcher, cutting up meat in South Africa: sadly, he died of enteric in early 1901. All three Wycombe-born men who had joined the CIV were also pictured on their return in November 1900, including the mayor's son, Hearn Birch. There were also interviews (and photographs) with Trooper Arthur Moxham, an architect from High Wycombe, of the 38th Company when he returned in January 1901 following an eye infection caused by a mosquito bite, and Trooper George James, son of the Earl of Buckinghamshire's steward on the Great Hampden Estate. Similarly, Trooper Arthur Williams was photographed on his return to Princes Risborough in February 1901 after suffering rheumatism and veldt sores. So were Troopers Hearn from Buckingham, R Cutler, a smith from West Wycombe, and W. Redding of Abbey Barn Farm, Daws Hill on their return invalided in March 1901.¹⁹³

The first men to return en masse were those of the service company, reaching Southampton on 17 May 1901 having sailed from the Cape on the SS *Lake Erie* on 23 April. Since the men had been retained in South Africa longer than originally expected, Colonel Strachan of the 43rd Regimental District had appealed to employers back in January to continue to keep places open for them.¹⁹⁴ The *South Bucks Standard* proclaimed the event as 'of an absolutely unique character, the memory of which is not likely to be blotted out for very many years to come'. The lavish decorations in every street in Wycombe for the men's arrival on 18 May were painstakingly described.¹⁹⁵ The *South Bucks Standard* issued a special illustrated commemorative supplement on 24 May.

¹⁹³ *South Bucks Standard*, 2 Feb., 25 May and 2 Nov. 1900; 11 Jan., 1 Feb., 15 Mar. and 5 Apl. 1901.

¹⁹⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 5 Jan. 1901.

¹⁹⁵ *South Bucks Standard*, 24 May 1901; *Bucks Herald*, 25 May 1901.



Celebratory returns at High Wycombe: The Imperial Yeomanry, 17 June 1901 (Top) and the Volunteer Service Company, 18 May 1901 (Bottom) [High Wycombe Mus

Such was the demand that it had sold out by 1600 hours, and it proved impossible to cope with the deluge of requests for a reprinting after production problems.¹⁹⁶

The four men from Aylesbury each received a silver tea pot given by an anonymous donor in a reception in the town on 18 May 1901 with an address from a special platform in the Market Square. They were then escorted to their homes by the Town and Printing Works bands, the celebrations having been organised by the 'Patriotic Rejoicings Committee'.¹⁹⁷ Those from Slough were equally honoured on 18 May, whilst Marlow held a joint dinner for all its returned reservists, volunteers and imperial yeomen on 24 June.¹⁹⁸ The Buckingham men went directly back to the town from Oxford on 17 May and received a welcome there of 'unbounded enthusiasm' before then going to Wycombe on the following day. They also received a formal dinner on 21 May.¹⁹⁹ H. J. Cox, a High Wycombe hairdresser and tobacconist, thanked his former customers for their support during his absence, expressing the hope in an advertisement in the local press that they would continue their custom now he had returned.²⁰⁰ At least one of the Wycombe contingent, Frank Boreham, a chair maker from Terriers, received a silver presentation cigarette case from subscribers in Wycombe and its neighbourhood.²⁰¹

Following the Wycombe reception, the Wolverton men finally reached Wolverton at 1830 hours on 18 May. A procession was formed and there was a

¹⁹⁶ *South Bucks Standard*, 24 May 1901.

¹⁹⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 28 Dec. 1901.

¹⁹⁸ *South Bucks Standard*, 24 May and 14 June 1901.

¹⁹⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 25 May 1901; *Bucks Standard*, 18 May 1901; *Buckingham Express*, 25 May 1901.

²⁰⁰ *South Bucks Standard*, 24 and 31 May 1901.

²⁰¹ BMMT 768/2.

church service followed by an address by Park, and a march to Stantonbury. All had been arranged by separate Address, Reception, Decoration, Finance and Catering committees. A public dinner was then given the men in the Omnibus Shop of the Carriage Works on 23 May. A song, 'The Volunteers' Welcome' had been composed by Walter Carlile with music by the Rev. G. F. Sams of Emberton. According to the *Bucks Standard*, 'Seldom, if ever we believe, has Wolverton exhibited a greater display of decorations, and never have the inhabitants exhibited a more patriotic feeling.'²⁰² All the Bucks volunteers were then presented with their war medals at Wooburn Park by General Sir George Higginson on 14 September 1901.²⁰³

The members of the 37th and 38th Companies returned to Southampton from South Africa on 16 June 1901 having embarked on the *Tintagel Castle* on 25 May. Having forgotten perhaps how it had characterised the welcome for the volunteers as a thoroughly unique occasion, the *South Bucks Standard* again lovingly catalogued every street decoration. It suggested the occasion was such that 'the remembrance of it will linger in the minds of those who had the good fortune to be present as an experience well-nigh unique in the annals of a country town'.²⁰⁴ The official county reception at Daws Hill Park in Wycombe on 17 June 1901 began with the men met by the band of the Scots Guards and so many people that Lord Rothschild abandoned any attempt to address the men at the station. A thanksgiving service was followed by 'a sumptuous' luncheon provided by J. Lysons & Co. with the army's former CinC, HRH Prince George, Duke of Cambridge as principal guest. Lawson, who had succeeded to the command of the 10th Battalion when Chesham became Inspector General of

²⁰² *Bucks Standard*, 25 May and 8 June 1901.

²⁰³ *Bucks Herald*, 7 Sept. 1901.

²⁰⁴ *South Bucks Standard*, 21 June 1901.

the Imperial Yeomanry as a whole gave a brief account of the battalion's service.

Men from Buckingham then went on there for a reception whilst many individuals received their own village welcomes such as Troopers L. R. Brocklebank, a clergyman's son and F. Richardson at Chesham, Dumbarton at Amersham, S. J. Deyus at Fenny Stratford, G. Harris, a farmer, at Woolstone, W. Walker, a wheeler, at Ellesborough, F. Chilton, a brewer, at Princes Risborough, W. Pitcher, a farmer, at Kimble, Strong at Waddesdon, Hughes and J. Woodford, a farmer, at Stone, and Trooper G. Hughes with Corporal J. F. Hadland, both farmers, at Tingewick. Lawson went on for a reception at Beaconsfield.²⁰⁵

Charles Gray was met at the foot of Whitchurch Hill on 17 June and drawn up it in a carriage pulled by 20 villagers. He received a silver salver outside his home, and that evening 'a huge bonfire was lighted in the Butts'. Seven others from the village had also served - one with the RBKOM - and they received watches and chains together with a booklet entitled 'Victory' on 24 September 1902. Gray had contributed to the village fund for these gifts but died from 'an incurable malady' in August 1902.²⁰⁶

As they were not really regarded as wholly Buckinghamshire men, the 56th and 57th Companies had a still formal but less rapturous reception at Buckingham on 25 June. There were just 76 men present.²⁰⁷ As with the 37th and 38th

²⁰⁵ BA, T/A 3/20c, Official Programme of County Reception, 17 June 1901; *Bucks Herald*, 22 June and 28 Dec. 1901; *Buckingham Express*, 22 June 1901; *Chesham Examiner*, 14 and 21 June 1901; *Bucks Standard*, 22 and 29 June, and 6 July 1901; *North Bucks Times*, 22 June 1901.

²⁰⁶ Wilson, *Chronicles of Whitchurch*, 67; Ian F. W. Beckett, *Whitchurch, the Fallen and the First World War* (Penzance: Privately printed, 2019), 5-6.

²⁰⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 29 June 1901; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 29 June 1901.

companies, individuals received their own welcome such as that accorded Sergeant Webb, a machinist, at Wicken. The 18 year old Trumpeter Frank Downing of London Road, Stony Stratford, son of the RBH quartermaster farrier sergeant, had won the DCM after rescuing a colleague whose horse had been shot. He was met by a huge crowd at Stony Stratford with band, clergy and the Church Lad's Brigade, and a suitable speech by Dr W. H. Bull, who commanded the Bearer Company.²⁰⁸ Downing and his brother were chosen subsequently to represent the RBH at the Army Pageant in London in 1910.²⁰⁹

Lord Chesham had a formal reception at Buckingham in Castle Field Park on 24 or 25 July, where he received a sword of honour and an address. The total cost of Chesham's reception came to £900.14s.1d, but £932.13.6d was raised in subscriptions and ticket sales so that the balance of £31.19s.5d was given to the County War Memorial Fund.²¹⁰ The regulars of the 1st Oxfordshire Light Infantry were given a reception in Aylesbury on 16 October 1902. Another reward was that de Winton, Lieutenant John Grenfell and 31 other ranks from the RBH - mostly those who had gone to South Africa - were chosen to take part in the intended coronation procession for King Edward VII, with 120 men also to escort the King from Slough to Windsor after the ceremony.²¹¹ The King's appendicitis, however, led to the postponement of the coronation until August.

²⁰⁸ Markham, *History of Milton Keynes*, II, 256; *Buckingham Express*, 8 Dec. 1900, and 9 Feb. 1901; *Bucks Standard*, 29 June and 6 July 1901. Downing's DCM is in the BMMT collection as BMMT 471.

²⁰⁹ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 18 June 1910.

²¹⁰ *Buckingham Express*, 27 July 1901; *South Bucks Standard*, 26 July 1901; *Chesham Examiner*, 2 Aug. 1901; *Bucks Standard*, 17 Aug. 1901.

²¹¹ *Buckingham Express*, 21 and 28 June 1902.

Thereafter, annual ‘Boshof’ reunion dinners of the 37th and 38th Companies were held, heralding the kind of Old Comrades’ Associations (OCAs) more associated with the Great War. Initially held in London, they usually took place in Aylesbury, being revived in 1922 after the Great War with the last seemingly in 1933.²¹² A more lasting tribute was the battle honour, ‘South Africa 1900-1901’ awarded the RBH.

The welcome home given the second contingent of imperial yeomanry on its return was far more muted. In Aylesbury the Chairman of the Urban District Council (UDC) hastily arranged a welcome for four men on June 1902 after the Patriotic Rejoicings Committee declined to do so. One correspondent complained that the committee was ‘formed for the purpose of fanning the flame of war, and now wished to drop out of it’.²¹³ The committee had been established in September 1900 as an offshoot of the Vale of Aylesbury Patriotic Club. The latter was formed on 16 March 1900 with Alfred de Rothschild as president, John Langston, a draper, as honorary secretary and Tom Dredge, a canal clerk, as assistant honorary secretary. A prominent member was the publisher of the *Bucks Herald*, G. T. de Fraine. A joint committee from the club and the UDC set up in October 1900 then met at Church House in Aylesbury on 2 January 1901 under the chairmanship of Edward Mackrill, an electrical engineer, to plan for the welcome home of the first volunteer service contingent, and for peace celebrations.

The prolongation of the war led to meetings being deferred, but, as previously indicated, the Patriotic Rejoicings Committee planned the welcome home for the four Aylesbury volunteers in May 1901. It chose not to repeat the events for

²¹² *Buckingham Express*, 18 Apl. 1908; 1 June 1912; *Bucks Herald*, 9 Apl. 1910; 8 Apl. 1911; 1 June 1912; 11 Apl. 1914; 15 Apl. 1922; 17 May 1924; 17 Apl. 1926; 6 Apl. 1928; 26 Apl. 1929; 24 Apl. 1931; 15 Apl. 1932; 14 Apl. 1933.

²¹³ *Bucks Herald*, 14 June 1902.

the Imperial Yeomanry in view of the extent of the celebrations planned for Wycombe. With Dredge now secretary, and a grocer and UDC councillor, Cecil Boughton, now chairman, the committee again considered peace celebrations on June 1901, but then dissolved in October 1901. It was not, therefore, in any position to organise any welcome home for the second contingent nine months later.²¹⁴

High Wycombe at least provided some welcome for their men from the second volunteer contingent in June 1902, but only four of the ten were present: one had died in South Africa, one was sick, one was unavoidably detained there, and three had missed the boat home.²¹⁵ A late celebration was the dinner given to all yeomen and volunteers who had served in South Africa, including the bearer company, at Stony Stratford Parish Room on 29 July 1902. An even later dinner was that held for returned Flackwell Heath regulars, reservists, and volunteers in September 1902.²¹⁶

South Africa was the first war in which it became customary to commemorate ordinary fallen soldiers by name. In that, as in so many other aspects, it was a real precursor of the Great War.²¹⁷

The South African War Memorial on Coombe Hill was first conceived by the Bucks Quarter Sessions in August 1901, erected on land donated by Bertram Frankland-Russell-Astley of Chequers. The grey Aberdeen granite obelisk

²¹⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 8 Sept., and 3 Nov. 1900; 5 Jan., 2 Mar., 25 May, 15 and 29 June 1901; 1 Mar. and 7 June 1902.

²¹⁵ *South Bucks Standard*, 13 and 20 June 1902.

²¹⁶ *Buckingham Express*, 2 Aug. 1902; *South Bucks Standard*, 3 Sept. 1902.

²¹⁷ Ian Beckett, 'Military Commemoration in Britain: A Pre-History', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 92 (2014), pp. 147-59; Mark Connelly and Peter Donaldson, 'South Africa War (1899-1902) Memorials in Britain: A Case Study of Memorialisation in London and Kent', *War & Society* 29 (2010), 20-46.

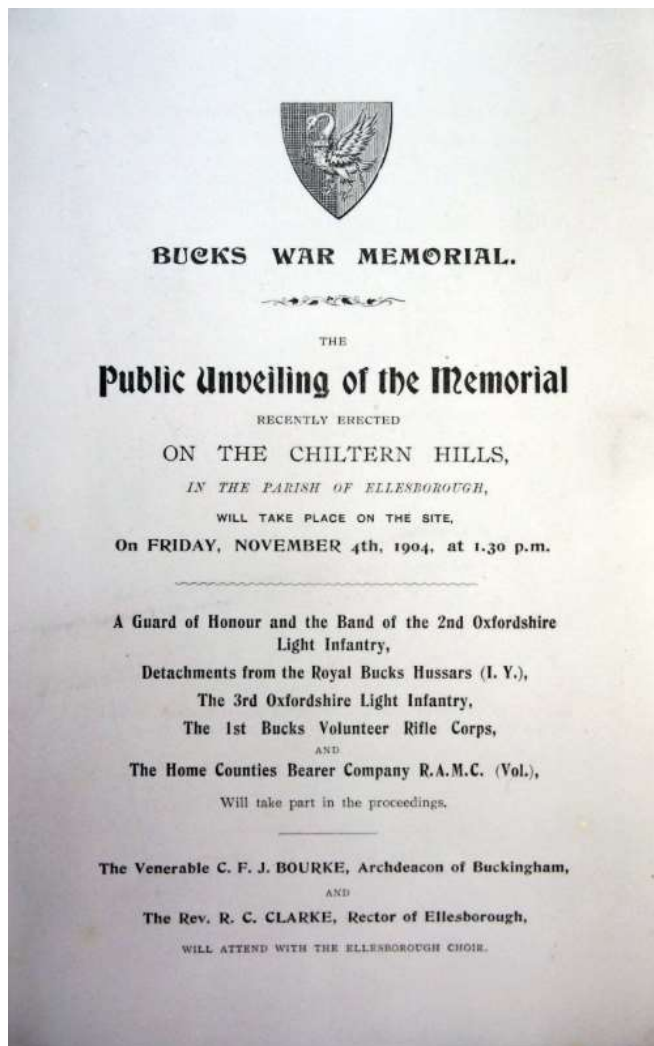
erected by Messrs. Whitehead & Sons of Kennington Oval cost £1,345.8s.9d, and was unveiled on 4 November 1904.²¹⁸ It bore the names of 148 Bucks men (one more name was added in 1960) including 26 Bucks yeomen from the 37th, 38th, 56th and 57th Companies, 12 Bucks militiamen, and five Bucks rifle volunteers. Six other men had served with other Imperial Yeomanry companies. As secretary to the Lord Lieutenant's Committee, the Aylesbury solicitor and Deputy Clerk of the Peace, Lionel Crouch circulated all parish councils requesting returns of war dead on 10 August 1901. By October 1902 some 80 names had been submitted - of whom 54 had died of disease - with 65 parishes providing a nil return, itself indicative of the relative lack of impact of the fallen compared to what was to come in the Great War.²¹⁹ The names were widely circulated in the press in December 1902 in order to ensure all had been correctly included.²²⁰

When the monument was nearing completion in October 1903, it was thought too late in the year for any unveiling ceremony. Frankland-Russell-Astley then died in the spring of 1904. There were also concerns that the site was too far from any convenient railway station to have a formal unveiling, and that the cost of any ceremony would go beyond the amount publically subscribed for the monument as a whole. Amid widespread protest, a ceremony was then arranged after Lord Rothschild paid the additional amount required to complete the monument, and Carrington paid the amount needed to cover the costs of a ceremony. In the absence of an ailing Rothschild, Lord Cottesloe unveiled the monument in a suitable ceremony, as already stated, on 4 November 1904.

²¹⁸ BA, Q/Uncat/D/2; Sir James Gildea, *For Remembrance and in Honour of Those Who Lost Their Lives in the South African War, 1899-1902* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1911), 13; *Bucks Herald*, 2 July 1904.

²¹⁹ BA, Q/Uncat/D/4.

²²⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 6 and 27 Dec. 1902; *South Bucks Standard*, 12 Dec. 1902.



Unveiling Coombe Hill, 4 November 1904: Programme (Top) [BA] and Image [BMMT]

Yeomen present were treated to dinner at the Red Lion in Wendover by Harry Lawson, whilst militia and volunteers were entertained at Wendover Station.²²¹ The monument was destroyed by a lightning strike on 28/29 January 1938, but reconstructed the same year. The original bronze tablet was stolen in 1972 and initially replaced in stone, with an additional nine names added. There was further lightning damage in the 1990s with additional conductors placed to provide protection. The memorial was renovated with funds raised by an appeal committee. A new bronze tablet - with corrections and two additional names - was unveiled and the monument rededicated on 21 October 2010.

The Latimer memorial mentioned previously had the names of 128 men who served in South Africa in 36 different units, of whom one officer and 15 other ranks failed to return. The officer was Chesham's son, the Hon. Charles Cavendish, who had served in the ranks of the RBH from 1895 to 1898 before attending Sandhurst and being commissioned in the 17th Lancers. He was killed at Diamond Hill in June 1900. It was unveiled by Lady Chesham in 1904.²²²

In addition there was a memorial tablet to William Berry of the 7th (Leicestershire) Company, Imperial Yeomanry erected by his parents in All Saints, High Wycombe, and one for Fred Dancer, a 21 year old farmer's son, in St Edmund's, Maids Moreton. Dancer, from 37th Company and a member of the RBH for three years, died of enteric in November 1900: there had been a moving memorial service in Maids Moreton at the time.²²³

Although not on the scale of the Great War, the deaths of local men were noted in the press, as in the case of Trooper Charles Bennett also of the 37th Company,

²²¹ *Bucks Herald*, 24 Oct. 1903; 2 and 30 July, and 12 Nov. 1904; *Chesham Examiner*, 11 Nov. 1904.

²²² Gildea, *For Remembrance*, 170.

²²³ *Bucks Herald*, 10 and 24 Nov. 1900; *Buckingham Express*, 24 Nov. 1900.

and another former RBH member, who had a memorial service at Whittlebury in July 1900. Charles Hobbs of Eton from the volunteer service company, who similarly died of enteric, had a memorial service at Slough on 29 July 1900.²²⁴ Sergeant Edwin Bennett of the 37th, who died of disease in May 1900 and is buried at Boshof next to Patrick Campbell, is commemorated by a plaque at Wicken in Northamptonshire.

The men of the volunteer service company who had gone to South Africa were all recorded on a copper plaque set up at Gilbey's suggestion near the entrance of County Hall in Aylesbury. It was resolved in 1904 to allow it to weather rather than be polished.²²⁵ Walter Carlile wanted a similar plaque for the yeomen, but this idea was not taken forward.²²⁶ Another plaque listing 34 members of the Wolverton Detachment who had gone out with the active service company was unveiled in the entrance hall of the Art and Science Institute in July 1903, whilst Private Gould subsequently received his own memorial plaque in St George's Church in November 1909. The Wolverton men also held annual reunion dinners.²²⁷

There was also a tablet on Slough Public Hall for all volunteers and yeomen who went out from Slough, which was erected in August 1900. The new drill hall also had memorial plaques to Privates Hobbs and Turton, who had died in South Africa, unveiled in May 1902.²²⁸

²²⁴ *Buckingham Express*, 14 July 1900; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 4 Aug. 1900.

²²⁵ *South Bucks Standard*, 16 Mar. 1900; *Bucks Herald*, 22 Nov. and 27 Dec. 1902; 2 July 1904.

²²⁶ *Buckingham Express*, 24 Mar. 1900; *South Bucks Standard*, 6 Apr. 1900.

²²⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 25 July 1903; *Bucks Standard*, 25 July 1903 and 16 Mar. 1907; *Buckingham Express*, 25 July 1903; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 27 Nov. 1909.

²²⁸ *South Bucks Standard*, 17 Aug. 1900; 23 May 1902.

The remaining £64.19s.5d left after the final accounts were settled for the various welcome events at Wycombe was devoted partly to providing 41 local servicemen with a silver cigarette case, but primarily to providing a plaque in All Saints Church to those local regulars, reservists, militiamen, yeomen and volunteers who had fallen. This was unveiled by Harry Lawson on 26 May 1903.²²⁹ A further memorial tablet to the 19 men from Marlow (one of whom died) who served with the Imperial Yeomanry and Volunteer Active Service Company was unveiled on the front wall of the Territorial Headquarters in August 1909.²³⁰

In a sense one later memorial also reflected the memory of the war for Lord Chesham's neck was broken when his horse fell during a meeting of the Pytchley Hunt near Daventry on 14 November 1907. Harry Lawson at once called on the men of the RBH to subscribe for a suitable memorial, £171.17s.6d being raised by February 1908. Lord Rothschild proposed a county memorial in January 1908 and other funds were raised by the 'Londonderry House' Committee of Chesham's friends, former members of the Imperial Yeomanry, the Cavalry Club, the Pytchley Hunt, and the Bicester and Warden Hill Hunt. In all, six memorials were erected: a 'Queen Catherine Cross' near the Pytchley's stables at Brixworth; a Celtic Cross at the spot where Chesham died near Daventry, also the work of the Pytchley Hunt; plaques in the Guards Chapel and at Latimer; a memorial in Stratton Audley Church placed by the Bicester and Warden Hill Hunt; and the statue in Aylesbury Market Place designed by Edward Maufe, later known for his work on Guildford Cathedral, and unveiled

²²⁹ *South Bucks Standard*, 24 Oct. and 7 Nov. 1902.

²³⁰ *South Bucks Standard*, 27 Aug. 1909.

by Field Marshal Lord Roberts on 14 July 1910 amid significant ceremonial including the presence of 250 men from the RBH.²³¹



Men from the Royal Bucks Hussars in front of Chesham's statue in Aylesbury, c. 1912 [BMMT]

The Under Secretary of State, Wyndham had acknowledged in the House of Commons on 12 February 1900 that the volunteer force was now the main defence against invasion in the absence of the regular army. As already indicated, volunteer recruitment soared and the government also responded to pressure from county councils including Middlesex and Bucks to expand the force by up to 1,000 men per battalion. Following the Middlesex example, and Thomas Fremantle's contact with the former, Bucks County Council created a Home Defence Committee. It met for the first time on 15 March 1900 to examine the provision of ranges and to raise three new companies for the 1st

²³¹ *Bucks Herald*, 16 Nov. 1907; 29 Feb., 10 and 17 Oct. 1908; 27 Feb. 1909; 11 June 1909; and 16 July 1910; *Bucks Examiner*, 6 and 12 Dec. 1907; 21 and 28 Feb. 1908; 27 Feb. 1909; 15 July 1910; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 22 Feb. 1908; 9 July 1910.

Bucks Rifle Volunteers at Chesham, Olney and Fenny Stratford.²³² Existing ranges were available at Great Kimble, Marlow, Stowe, Wolverton, and Wycombe Marsh, with the Eton RVC using Chalvey, but only that at Wolverton was within close proximity to a railway station. The Chesham effort was recognition that there had been Chesham men in the past in the Middlesex Volunteers. So far as Chesham was concerned, there was some expectation that a town of 9,000 inhabitants could find enough of the ‘intelligent artisan class’ for a company, but it was not to be.²³³ There was an initial meeting at Olney on 14 May 1900 but, again, nothing transpired.²³⁴ Additionally, there was some suggestion of a naval volunteer unit on the Thames, but this also went no further.²³⁵

It was also decided that the 1st Bucks RV required a cyclist section of 115 all ranks, of which 25 men each would be recruited in Slough, Wycombe and Wolverton, 15 from Buckingham, 10 each from Aylesbury and Marlow, and three from Slough.²³⁶ Cyclists appeared to be few in numbers.²³⁷ Subsequently, however, there were some successful exercises by over 120 volunteer cyclists from Bucks and Oxfordshire on Whit Monday in May 1902. The Bucks cyclists were defending a ‘line of blockhouses’ along the railway line from Quainton Road to Aylesbury and from Aylesbury through Princes Risborough to Thame.

²³² BA, D/FR 169, Middlesex resolutions, 21 Dec. 1899, and circular, 3 and 9 Jan. 1900; Mosley to Fremantle, 12 Jan. 1900; Bucks Home Defence Committee Mins., 15 Mar. 1900.

²³³ *Chesham Examiner*, 19 Jan. and 16 Feb. 1900.

²³⁴ *Buckingham Express*, 19 May 1900.

²³⁵ BA, D/FR 169, Parry to Fremantle, 16 Feb. 1900.

²³⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 3 and 10 Feb. and 31 Mar. 1900; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 10 and 17 Mar. 1900.

²³⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 2 June 1900.

The Oxfordshire cyclists attacked from the direction of Oakley. Following the exercise all repaired to the Wheat Sheaf in Risborough.²³⁸

In the event, only a new company at Fenny Stratford emerged in April 1900. It had been first mooted in 1891. It was under the command of John Chadwick, a surveyor to the Fenny Stratford UDC who had former served in the Hampshire volunteers. Following an initial meeting in the Schoolroom on 30 January 1900, 45 men came forward by May, and 90 by October. A fund was then opened for equipment and provision of a rifle range, the first drill taking place in the Vicarage Paddock at Fenny Stratford. A grand concert was held in the town hall to raise funds in November 1900. As the *Bucks Standard* noted, ‘The patriotism of the County of Bucks is being manifested most loyally, for whether contributing its volunteers for the front, providing articles for the use of our soldiers, or raising money for military equipment, the spirit and the desire to do something tangible is ever present.’ The company was then officially designated as I (Bletchley) Company.²³⁹

This was despite the opposition of Alfred Leon of Bletchley Park, a pacifist, who refused to help, the Duke of Bedford also refusing to give land for a range as he did not believe volunteers useful.²⁴⁰ A range was found at Newton Longville.²⁴¹ The Bletchley Company endured until the new Territorial battalion was established in 1908. The 1st Bucks RVC as a whole increased its strength from 704 men to 1,107 in 1899, although falling slightly to 925 in

²³⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 31 May 1902; *South Bucks Standard*, 23 May 1902.

²³⁹ *Bucks Standard*, 3 Feb., 5 May, 20 Oct. and 17 Nov. 1900; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 3 Feb. 7 Apl., and 24 Nov. 1900; *Bucks Herald*, 14 Apl. 1900; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 14 Apl. 1900; *North Bucks Times*, 12 Sept. 1891; 3, and 10 Mar., and 14 Apl. 1900.

²⁴⁰ BA, T/A 5/17, Gilbey Mss, IV, 5.

²⁴¹ *North Bucks Times*, 1 Aug. 1903.

1901.²⁴² One new officer gazetted in January 1900 was Emeric George Bayard Wace from Calverton (Manor) House near Stony Stratford. Wace who was educated at the Royal Grammar School, Shrewsbury and St John's College, Cambridge became the junior officer in the Wolverton Detachment. Promoted lieutenant and newly appointed a master at Queen Elizabeth School, High Barnet in May 1901, however, Wace died suddenly of pneumonia in June 1901.

Lord Addington was obliged to reapply for command of the 1st Bucks under new tenure regulations in October 1899, but chose to resign in March 1900 and was succeeded by Alfred Gilbey.²⁴³ Home duty continued much as before with the Bucks volunteers camping at Shorncliffe in 1900, the experience marred by arduous work and failings in supplying the rations. The camp was for 21 days with the War Office demanding that at least half the men attend for 14 days. There was a large scale field day at Addington Park in June 1901, with the annual camp then taking place at Aldershot in August. At the latter, the 1st Bucks RVC was clothed in the new drab serge uniform and slouch hat and, as the first unit to be so equipped, was inspected by the CinC, Field Marshal Lord Roberts.²⁴⁴ The 1902 camp took place on Salisbury Plain.²⁴⁵ A meeting was held at Winslow in October 1902 to try and revive the volunteers there, but was not successful.²⁴⁶

With the support of Carrington in the Lords and Walter Carlile in the Commons, the Home Defence Committee also pressed the education authorities to instigate

²⁴² *South Bucks Standard*, 28 Dec. 1900; *Bucks Herald*, 17 Aug. 1901.

²⁴³ *Bucks Herald*, 28 Oct. 1899; *Buckingham Express*, 31 Mar. 1900.

²⁴⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 7 July, 11 Aug., and 1 Sept. 1900; 29 June 1901; *Bucks Standard*, 18 Aug. 1900; 27 July and 10 Aug. 1901; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 27 July and 10 Aug. 1901; *South Bucks Standard*, 16 Aug. 1901; BA, T/A 5/17, Gilbey Mss, IX, 1-2.

²⁴⁵ *Buckingham Express*, 9 Aug. 1902.

²⁴⁶ *Buckingham Express*, 11 Oct. 1902.

more drill in schools. It also urged the War Office to restore the county regiment lost in 1881, by which was meant the 14th Foot that had become The West Yorkshire Regiment.²⁴⁷ A county regiment had become a significant issue since the possibility of losing the militia depot to Oxford had arisen earlier in the year. In December 1899 complaints were again being aired in the press that, given the official title of 3rd Battalion, Oxfordshire Light Infantry for the RBKOM, there was no regular Buckinghamshire regiment in the Army List. Indeed, only the RBH still had an official county title since the militia and volunteer battalions had been nominally made battalions of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry.²⁴⁸

The County Council held a special meeting to endorse the idea of a county regiment on 21 March 1900, Rothschild as lord lieutenant being tasked with raising the issue with government. Aylesbury was touted as an ideal military centre by the UDC with four railways lines converging there, 64 trains a day, and a site for a rifle range within ten minutes of the main station. It was pointed out that Bucks had a population of over 186,000 and had no county regiment whereas Bedfordshire with a population of only 160,000 did.²⁴⁹ The County Council initiative was supported by all the local councils; the Board of Guardians; nearly all magistrates; and the county's three MPs - Carlile for North Bucks, Lionel Walter Rothschild for Mid Bucks, and Viscount Curzon for South Bucks.²⁵⁰ The *Bucks Standard* intoned that it would be ungracious for the request to be refused: 'We scarcely think the Government or the War Office

²⁴⁷ BA, D/FR 169, Home Defence Committee Mins., 15 Mar. 1900; *Bucks Herald*, 24 Mar. 1900.

²⁴⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 9 Dec. 1899; *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 9 and 16 Dec. 1899.

²⁴⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 24 Mar., and 7 Apr. 1900; *North Bucks Times*, 24 Mar. 1900.

²⁵⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 7 Apr. 1900.

will be so inconsiderate or so apathetic as to ignore the wishes and the sincerity of so loyal and patriotic a petition.’²⁵¹

The former Under Secretary of State at the War Office, St John Brodrick, merely said other counties were also pressing for the same, and it would be considered. Carlile was told by George Wyndham that new battalions had already been decided and would be added only to existing regiments. There was some alarm when it seemed the yeomanry brigade headquarters might be moved from Buckingham to Oxford as this suggested that the county was not being taken seriously. The Secretary of State for War, the Marquess of Lansdowne - soon to be replaced by Brodrick - declined to receive a deputation on the issue of a new Bucks regiment until Carrington raised the issue in the Lords.

Lansdowne’s reply to Carrington’s request was a little more encouraging in that he indicated he might consider amending the title of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry to the Bucks and Oxfordshire Light infantry or vice versa.²⁵² No more was heard of the proposal, leading the *Buckingham Express* to surmise it had been forgotten.²⁵³

Later in September 1902, Orkney stated correctly that the fall in the RBKOM’s numbers from 800 men back in the 1880s to barely 400 had influenced the War Office not only in suggesting that the county could not sustain a regular regiment, but also in it not being selected for service in South Africa.

Employers were not supporting the regiment, although he acknowledged that the periods chosen for annual training in recent years had become increasingly

²⁵¹ *Bucks Standard*, 7 Apl. 1900.

²⁵² *Bucks Herald*, 21 Apl., and 12 May 1900; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 12 May 1900; *Bucks Standard*, 7 Apl. 1900; *South Bucks Standard*, 27 Apl. and 11 May 1900.

²⁵³ *Buckingham Express*, 20 Oct. 1900.

awkward for those in agriculture.²⁵⁴ Indeed, the choice of those to go to South Africa had been determined by numbers, but also a concern to ensure a geographical spread to ease the burden on employment sectors.²⁵⁵ The relatively small size of the RBKOM would continue to be of significance, a War Office committee recommending in 1902 that the regiment be reduced from eight to six companies in recognition of its low strength.²⁵⁶

Rifle clubs were also formed during the war, largely as a result of a speech by the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, to the Primrose League in May 1900. Some volunteers regarded them as potential competition, whilst those calling for conscription also opposed them. Many were designed to appeal to the working class. One at Iver was raised by Tonman Mosley, later Lord Anslow, of Bangors Park. Others emerged at Amersham, Buckingham, Burnham, Datchet, Eton Wick, Great Missenden, The Lee, and Tingewick.²⁵⁷ Clubs were also attached to the volunteer companies at Wycombe and Marlow.²⁵⁸ The Home Defence Committee decreed that a club would only receive support from the County Rifle Association if it prohibited anyone between 18 and 35 joining unless they had served in the militia or volunteers and had been efficient. Mosley was also wary of any political connection such as that with the Primrose League, arguing

²⁵⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 20 Sept. and 23 Dec. 1899; *South Bucks Standard*, 19 Sept. 1902; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 3 Jan. 1903.

²⁵⁵ Stoneman, 'Reformed British Militia', 204-05; *Bucks Herald*, 23 Dec. 1899.

²⁵⁶ TNA, WO 33/249, Committee on the Reorganisation of the Militia, Artillery and Infantry, 1902.

²⁵⁷ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 17 Mar. 1900; *Buckingham Express*, 11 Aug. 1900; *Bucks Herald*, 28 Dec. 1901; *Chesham Examiner*, 11 Apl. 1902; *Bucks Standard*, 30 Aug. 1902; *South Bucks Standard*, 11 July 1902 and 4 Dec. 1903; BA, D/FR 169, Mosley to Fremantle, 12 Jan. 1900.

²⁵⁸ *South Bucks Standard*, 12 Jan., 12 Oct. and 7 Dec. 1900; 5 Dec. 1902; *Bucks Herald*, 6 Dec. 1902.

that radicals ‘who may develop into excellent rifle shots’ might also become involved. It was pointed out at Buckingham in 1903 that such club rules deterred younger men who wanted to shoot, but did not care to join the auxiliaries.²⁵⁹

The committee also addressed itself generally to the issue of rifle ranges and the possibility of establishing a new central county range. The existing range at Buckingham was four miles from the town whilst the Wolverton Detachment of the Rifle Volunteers used Stantonbury. The Slough company had no range of its own and used that of the Eton corps at Chalvey since a range used by a number of London corps at Wraysbury was overcrowded and expensive to hire. There were also the existing ranges at Wycombe Marsh and at Great Kimble but the increasing range of modern rifles posed significant problems, the longest at Chalvey enabling a maximum range of 770 yards. The latter was also close to the rail line between Slough and Windsor and any proposed extension at Wycombe Marsh would intersect the rail line between Wycombe and Beaconsfield.²⁶⁰ An extension at Kimble seemed the best option despite concerns over the direction of prevailing winds and sites were identified at Brimmers Farm and Culverton Farm both in the ownership of Merton College, Oxford but with much of the proposed are owned by the Earl of Buckinghamshire. In the event nothing transpired.²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ BA, D/FR 169, Home Defence Committee mins., 30 Mar. 1900; Mosley to Fremantle, 13 May 1900; *Buckingham Express*, 31 Jan. 1903

²⁶⁰ BA, T/A 1/29, Hooker to Crouch, 17 Mar. 1900; de Winton to Crouch, 19 Mar. 1900; Wheeler to Crouch, 23 Mar. 1900, Williams to Crouch, 26 Mar. 1900; Cobb to Crouch, 28 Mar. 1900.

²⁶¹ BA, T/A 1/29, Report on Princes Risborough range, 8 Aug. 1900; Report of Home Defence Committee, 1 Nov. 1900.

The question was revived in 1908. The Earl of Buckinghamshire had allowed the Princes Risborough rifle club to establish a small range at the back of Whiteleaf Cross in 1907 and was prepared to allow an extension of the main range at Kimble subject to the agreement of his trustees.²⁶² No satisfactory solution to finding a range suitable for modern weapons was ever found,²⁶³ although Kimble continued to be used as a range until the 1970s.

In practice the clubs did not divert funding from the volunteers. In February 1900 a range of concessions to the volunteers was announced including the opportunity to gain a limited number of regular commissions, support for regimental transport, a volunteer reserve, and additional allowances for month-long emergency camps of exercise. Such an increased commitment was problematic, allowances being granted if 50 per cent of a unit was prepared to camp for 14 days: 179 volunteer battalions did so, whilst a few managed the whole 28 days.²⁶⁴ A new Volunteer Reserve would be comprised of officers under the age of 62 and other ranks under the age of 55 who had been efficient in at least six of the last ten years.²⁶⁵ Fremantle and another officer was despatched to Switzerland to investigate the use and utility of shorter rifle ranges. Later, Fremantle became second private secretary to his cousin and Lansdowne's successor as Secretary of State for War, Brodrick.²⁶⁶

In May 1900 legislation was also introduced to enable the volunteers to be called out in cases of imminent national danger or great emergency, and to permit volunteers to enter agreements to serve anywhere without the need for a

²⁶² BA, T/A 1/29, Buckinghamshire to Day, 13 Nov., and 21 Dec. 1908; Day to Buckinghamshire, 4 and 31 Dec. 1908.

²⁶³ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 47; BA, T/A, 1/3, CTAFM Mins., 1 July 1963.

²⁶⁴ Beckett, *Riflemen Form*, 220.

²⁶⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 12 May 1900.

²⁶⁶ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 15 Dec. 1900.

royal proclamation. It had to be modified in order to meet parliamentary opposition, the version passed in August 1900 only permitting volunteers to undertake to do garrison service in specified places in Britain. In December 1900, Brodrick also tried to introduce compulsory annual camps of at least six days' duration with none allowed to miss camp in two consecutive years, as well as additional drill and musketry requirements. This, too, was watered down in the face of opposition to allow exemption from camps in special circumstances if additional drills were undertaken, but still with no corps allowed to avoid camp for two consecutive years.²⁶⁷

Lansdowne had contemplated making the militia automatically liable to overseas service and abolishing the existing militia reserve since it served the army, and replacing it with a new militia reserve solely for the militia.²⁶⁸

Brodrick saw some role for the auxiliaries in his wider army reform scheme, by which six large army corps were to be established: volunteers would be invited to contribute 25 battalions to the scheme, the militia 37 battalions, and the yeomanry six regiments - all to the fourth, fifth and sixth corps intended for home defence. Following Lansdowne's lead, the existing militia reserve would be replaced with one for the militia alone. Joining the 'field army', however, would require additional liabilities such as a 13 day annual camp for the volunteers. Recruiting dropped dramatically even though Brodrick's scheme foundered amid parliamentary opposition.²⁶⁹

The 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers accepted an invitation in August 1903 to join the field army and fill a vacancy but only after Gilbey had approached the LNWR

²⁶⁷ Beckett, *Riflemen Form*, 222-24.

²⁶⁸ Stoneman, 'Reformed British Militia', 223.

²⁶⁹ L. J. Satre, 'St John Brodrick and Army Reform, 1901-03', *Journal of British Studies* 15 (1976), 117-39.

chairman, Lord Stalbridge, to ascertain if he would support the initiative.²⁷⁰ Accordingly, the 1st Bucks joined the 23rd Field Army Brigade alongside the 2nd London RVC, the 12th Middlesex (Civil Service) RVC, and the 16th Middlesex (London Irish) RVC.²⁷¹ Having camped with the South Midland Brigade at Shorncliffe in 1903, its annual camps with the Field Army Brigade were at Sway in 1904 and 1905 and at Shorncliffe in 1906. The latter saw the Wolverton Detachment arrive in ‘an absolutely new corridor train’ provided by the LNWR and too long to be easily accommodated by the platform at the local station.²⁷² It proved the last Field Army Brigade camp, the scheme being suspended with the fall of the Conservative government.



The 1st Bucks RVC at Sway, 1905 in the new khaki service dress [BMMT]

²⁷⁰ BA, T/A 5/17, Gilbey Mss, XI, 2; *Buckingham Express*, 23 Jan. 1904; *South Bucks Standard*, 9 Dec. 1904; *Bucks Advertiser*, 3 Dec. 1904.

²⁷¹ BA, T/A 5/16.

²⁷² *Buckingham Advertiser*, 11 Aug. 1906.

The 1st Bucks returned to the South Midland Brigade, camping at Beaulieu in 1907, where the attractions included a promenade concert and a lawn dance in the park's illuminated grounds.²⁷³ Other than the change in status, volunteer activities continued much as before with regimental field days as at Bourne End in July 1903, annual church parades, 'smokers', annual dinners, and annual prize distribution.²⁷⁴ Slightly more unusual were 'torchlight tattoos' held by the Wolverton Detachment in November 1905 and October 1906 in aid of the Wolverton Winter Relief Fund.²⁷⁵

One major change that did occur, however, derived from new legislation for militia and yeomanry in April 1901, which finally replaced that regulating the yeomanry since 1804. It followed the work of a committee on the organisation, arms and equipment of the yeomanry established under the chairmanship of Lord Harris of the Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles, who had acted as the Imperial Yeomanry's Assistant Adjutant General. Harris, who drew on a report by Lucas on the raising of the Imperial Yeomanry, reported in March 1901.²⁷⁶ The entire force would now be known as Imperial Yeomanry. It would now be subject to the same conditions as the militia in terms of liability to be called out for national emergencies. Annual yeomanry training would now be for 18 days, of which 14 were obligatory, whilst yeomen who enlisted after August 1901 would also serve for three years although they could purchase an earlier discharge. Efficient men coming to camp with their own horse would receive £5 with troopers receiving £4.13s.6d at the end of the camp, the cost of messing

²⁷³ *Bucks Herald*, 18 Aug. 1906; 4 May and 3 Aug 1907; BA, T/A 5/12, Order Book, 9 Aug. 1907.

²⁷⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 4 July 1903; 30 July 1904; 25 Feb., 4 Mar., and 5 Aug. 1905; 7 Dec. 1907; *Bucks Standard*, 3 Aug. 1907; *South Bucks Standard*, 15 Dec. 1905.

²⁷⁵ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 20 Oct. 1906.

²⁷⁶ The Lucas report [HCCP 1902 [Cd. 803] was only published after that of Harris [HCCP 1901 [Cd. 466].

being £2.19s.8d. A four squadron organisation was laid down with regular adjutants returned to the force and some increased allowances. Each regiment would go under canvas for its annual training. A yeomanry reserve was also established and a militia reserve that would now serve the militia rather than the army. The RBH were now officially the Bucks Imperial Yeomanry but clung to the title of RBH and were generally characterised in the press as the Royal Bucks Hussars Imperial Yeomanry.²⁷⁷ Lord Chesham was appointed Inspector General of the force in Britain ranking as major general in April 1902.

Eighteen new yeomanry regiments were formed, most in counties where they had previously existed, but also entirely new urban creations, Harris having identified urban areas as largely untapped by the yeomanry. The establishment of the new Northamptonshire Yeomanry had a particular impact on Bucks when many of those who had served in South Africa appeared reluctant to re-engage as they believed they ‘have done their share, especially those who left their farms and business and were amongst the first to go out’.²⁷⁸ Annaly’s Northampton Squadron with around 120-130 men would certainly be lost, although there were hopes that Douglas-Pennant’s Towcester Squadron might remain. There was an expectation that new men might be found from Newport Pagnell, Slough and Wycombe. Emphasis was placed on daily camp pay of 5s.6d for privates and marching allowances to camp such as a day’s pay for anyone travelling 20 miles or under.²⁷⁹ The new 2nd Squadron was established at Stony Stratford, with the new 3rd Squadron at Aylesbury. Lionel Walter Rothschild proved a popular choice as squadron leader at Aylesbury, whilst Harry Lawson remained in command of the 4th Squadron at Wycombe. There

²⁷⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 4 and 25 May 1901; *South Bucks Standard*, 16 May 1902.

²⁷⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 28 Sept. 1901; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 28 Sept. 1901.

²⁷⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 11 and 18 Jan., and 22 Feb. 1902; *Chesham Examiner*, 17 Jan. 1902; *South Bucks Standard*, 28 Feb. 1902.

was a determined attempt to recruit more men in Slough with 40 men also forthcoming at Wycombe in January 1902.²⁸⁰



Men from the Wycombe Squadron, RBH, c. 1907 [BMMT]

In the event, it was decided to form a new 1st Squadron at Chesham, particularly in the light of the lack of a volunteer company there. Command was given to Captain Philip Perceval of Cedar Lawn, Tingewick despite his ties more to the north of the county. A personal friend of King Edward VII, a member of the Royal Yacht Club, and regarded as one of the greatest helmsman of his generation, Perceval inherited the Hunloke estate at Wingerworth Hall in Derbyshire through his mother in 1904. Consequently, he changed his surname to Hunloke in 1905. He remained in command of the Chesham squadron until

²⁸⁰ *South Bucks Standard*, 26 Dec. 1902.

1907, resigning his commission in the following year. The squadron was officially launched with a banquet in Chesham Town Hall on 1 January 1903, catering provided by Sergeant Major Lewis, proprietor of the Gold Ball Inn. It had already reached the strength of 120 by May 1903.²⁸¹ As with the other squadrons, an annual dinner was to become a regular feature. The 2nd Squadron event was invariably at the Cock Inn, Stony Stratford, with the 3rd Squadron in County Hall.

Publicity given to the regimental prize winners from the Chesham Squadron in 1910, however, led to complaints in the *Bucks Examiner* that none were Chesham men. It was suggested that it would be better characterised as the ‘St John’s Wood Squadron’ given the number of ‘strangers’, local men allegedly being passed over for promotion and recruits brought by local NCOs rejected. Even catering for the annual dinner was given to London firms.²⁸² It is not possible to substantiate the claims, which were not repeated, but it was generally acknowledged that there were at least 40-50 London-based civil servants in the regiment in May 1903.²⁸³

Having camped at Buckingham again in 1901, the RBH went to Broughton outside Aylesbury in 1902 with a sham fight against the Hertfordshire Yeomanry taking place at Marsworth and other activities in Pendley Park near Tring, where the regiment was inspected by Lord Roberts.²⁸⁴ One unexpected occurrence was a suspected small pox case involving Corporal Chapman from

²⁸¹ *Bucks Herald*, 10 Jan. 1903; 25 Mar. 1905; *Chesham Examiner*, 15 May 1903; *Buckingham Express*, 12 Jan. 1907; 28 Nov. 1908; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 8 June 1907.

²⁸² *Bucks Examiner*, 21 Oct., and 4 and 25 Nov. 1910.

²⁸³ *South Bucks Standard*, 22 May 1903.

²⁸⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 15 and 22 Mar., and 31 May 1902; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 22 Feb., and 8 and 15 Mar. 1902; BA, T/A 3/36, Proof of Benson Freeman article, ‘The Royal Bucks Hussars Imperial Yeomanry’.

Thornborough, there having been an outbreak in London. Those sharing the tent with Chapman, at least one of whom - Sergeant Feathers - came from Whaddon, were vaccinated at once and placed themselves in voluntary quarantine. Yet, Winslow RDC accused them of gross negligence in subsequently returning to their villages and walking around freely. The military authorities regarded the accusation as 'preposterous'. In any case, Chapman proved to have chicken pox.

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Recruiting went well, however, the RBH only 85 short of its establishment by January 1903. By January 1904 it was 28 men over its establishment of 596 all ranks, with further recruitment stopped by the Army Council.²⁸⁶ The annual training took place in Daws Hill Park, Wycombe in 1903 with the usual mix of drills, field days, military tournament and 'mimic warfare'. The regiment returned to Stowe under canvas in 1904, one of the old six-pounders being brought out to stand outside the officer's mess accompanied by two Maxims.²⁸⁷ The RBH returned to Stowe again in 1905 before returning to Daws Hill Park in 1906, and again assembling at Stowe in 1907. Generally, about half the men were able to find their own horses or borrow them from family or friends. A total of 209 horses were hired in 1903, and 202 in 1904.²⁸⁸

Annual prize shooting and the annual ball continued much as before. To a greater extent than prior to the South African War, the regiment also put on military tournaments of varying scale not only at annual camp but also at other local events. These included tournaments at Fenny Stratford in July 1904; the

²⁸⁵ *Chesham Examiner*, 6 June 1902; *Buckingham Express*, 7 June 1902; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 12 July 1902.

²⁸⁶ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 3 Jan. 1903; 12 Mar. 1904; *Bucks Herald*, 9 Jan. 1904.

²⁸⁷ *South Bucks Standard*, 22 May 1903; *Buckingham Express*, 14 May 1904; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 27 May 1905.

²⁸⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 20 Feb. 1904; 1 Apr. 1905.

Amersham Oddfellows' and Foresters' Fete, Horticultural and Poultry Show in August 1905; the Fire Brigade holiday event at Stony Stratford in September 1905; and the Chiltern Hills Agricultural Association annual shows at Halton in August 1906 and August 1907. An 'ever popular Balaclava melee' was the usual climax.²⁸⁹ The 4th County of London Imperial Yeomanry (King's Colonials), formed from men of the Dominions resident in the capital, camped at Latimer in August 1903 and at Stowe in August 1906. The RBH provided an 'enemy' for them on the former occasion, and sent men to compete against them in trials of skill on the latter.²⁹⁰

Following the experience in South Africa, a mounted infantry role was now to be encouraged with khaki field uniforms and machine gun sections for each regiment. Yeomanry officers were generally able to frustrate change: the bayonet introduced in 1903 was abandoned in 1908 and the sword - for which Chesham had argued passionately as Inspector General at a meeting of the Army Council in October 1904 - was restored for war mobilisation in 1913.²⁹¹ The debate reflected that in the cavalry as a whole. The actual yeomanry role for the future remained undefined. Harry Lawson presented the RBH with eight cycles and one motor cycle in 1903, four cycles for each squadron with the motor cycle for headquarters. He also provided the regiment with three heliographs in 1905.²⁹² Lawson also developed what he called a 'pick and

²⁸⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 28 May and 23 July 1904; 25 Aug. 1906; 24 Aug. 1907; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 23 July 1904 and 9 Sept. 1905; *Bucks Standard*, 9 Sept. 1905; *South Bucks Standard*, 18 Aug. 1905.

²⁹⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 22 Aug. 1903; 4 August 1906; *Buckingham Express*, 11 Aug. 1906.

²⁹¹ Hay, *Yeomanry Cavalry*, 236-37.

²⁹² *Chesham Examiner*, 11 Dec. 1903; *Buckingham Express*, 11 Nov. 1905.

shovel' battery, namely four sets of entrenching tools carried in paniers on horse cradles.²⁹³

As Brodrick grappled with finding support for his reforms, the failures in South Africa brought a major enquiry touching on the performance of the auxiliary forces. The Elgin Commission on the wider conduct of the war reported in July 1903, whilst a Royal Commission on the Militia and Volunteers chaired by the Duke of Norfolk was appointed in March 1903. Many believed that the latter was an attempt to muzzle discussion of volunteer grievances arising from Brodrick's policies. The War Office intention as the deliberations of the Norfolk commission got underway in May 1903 was that commissioners should recommend a minimum term of volunteer service, a minimum standard of efficiency, and a wider scheme for the auxiliary forces.

The War Office could not agree with the Admiralty as to the likelihood of invasion and any resulting indication of the required numbers of auxiliaries. Moreover, the newly established Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) declined to reveal its own conclusions, leaving the commission to decide between the wholly approximate figures of 264,000 and 300,000 auxiliaries suggested respectively as a guide by the Director of Military Intelligence and the CID. No regular witnesses believed that the auxiliaries were capable of resisting invasion alone and even those from the militia and volunteers had similar doubts. On 20 May 1904, therefore, the commission's report declared that neither militia nor volunteers were fit to take the field. In line with the majority of witnesses, the commissioners concluded that only conscription for home defence would serve.

Alfred Gilbey appeared before the Norfolk Commission as a witness on 19 November 1903. He considered his regiment well able to meet regular standards

²⁹³ *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 May 1906.

after 14 days' training since his artisans were quick to learn, but no more commitment could be expected of them, even 14 days having to be agreed with the LNWR. Chair makers and employees of the LNWR made up half his strength. No married officers had been permitted to go to South Africa, although many had volunteered. He revealed that of 29 officers, 19 were public school educated with 12 from Eton alone. The main difficulty was finding sufficient drill sergeants for outlying rural areas, and this applied even to Beaconsfield. Gilbey did not support conscription.²⁹⁴

The commission also heard from Major Annesley Somerville of the 2nd Bucks (Eton College) RVC on 18 November 1903. The Eton corps had had some success in that of those on the roll in 1900, 117 had gone on to hold commissions in the auxiliary forces, although the increase in strength from war enthusiasm had waned quickly. A mathematics teacher and later to be Conservative MP for Windsor from 1922 to 1942 - knighted in 1939 - Somerville suggested that games would be more beneficial than volunteering.²⁹⁵ The commission's statistical appendices recorded that in terms of actual as opposed to the established strength, the ratio of auxiliary forces to total male population in the 1901 census for Bucks was 35.4 per 10,000 for the RBKOM, 140.9 per 10,000 for the Bucks Volunteers, and 58.1 per 210,000 for the RBH. The overall county ratio was 365.1 per 10,000 of total male population.²⁹⁶

Fremantle agreed with much of the report such as brigade training including 14 day camps, but was not in favour of conscription unless there was no

²⁹⁴ HCCP 1904 [C. 2062], 430-34.

²⁹⁵ HCCP 1904 [C. 2062], 407-10.

²⁹⁶ HCCP 1904 [C. 2064], 68-69.

alternative. That alternative, however, he believed to be a fully formed home defence army.²⁹⁷

By this time Brodrick had been transferred to the India Office and the abrasive Hugh Arnold-Forster had succeeded him at the War Office. Brodrick had introduced short service enlistment, which had created a problem with respect to finding drafts for regiments serving in India, the defence of which had become a priority for the CID. Arnold-Foster's solution was to have long and short service armies serving simultaneously. He proposed to place 30 militia battalions in the home-service army, disband another 34, and maintain a further 60 separate from the scheme. The volunteers, meanwhile, would be reduced, and also divided into two classes of efficiency. The yeomanry was to be left alone with the exception of reducing regimental establishments from 596 all ranks as set in 1901 to 476 all ranks.²⁹⁸

The militia was 39,000 short of its establishment with 42 per cent of the rank and file with less than two years' service, and 73 per cent under the age of 20.

²⁹⁹ A third was likely to enlist into the line each year (of whom 20 per cent would desert) and a quarter to be discharged before completing the term of service.³⁰⁰ In 1903 over 33,000 officers and men had not attended camp albeit that many battalions returning from South Africa were excused attendance, but

²⁹⁷ BA, D/FR 165, Notes on Norfolk Commission and draft letter to *Wolverton Express*, 18 June, 1904, and another to an unnamed journal, 30 June 1904.

²⁹⁸ Timothy Bowman and Mark Connelly, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training and Deploying the British Army, 1902-14* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 134-35; Gilks, 'Volunteer Cavalry', 376-77.

²⁹⁹ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 210.

³⁰⁰ Peter Dennis, *The Territorial Army, 1907-40* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press for Royal Historical Society, 1987), 8.

the number missing camp was still over 9,000 in 1907.³⁰¹ The militia, however, retained significant support not only among county magnates but also from two leading militiamen in the cabinet in the persons of the Lord Privy Seal, Viscount Cranborne, soon to succeed his father as 4th Marquess of Salisbury, and the First Lord of the Admiralty, the 2nd Earl of Selborne. Two previous Secretaries of State - Brodrick and Lansdowne - whose work Arnold-Forster was reversing also sat in the cabinet. In the face of such opposition, Arnold-Forster was unable to carry his militia reforms into fruition, not least as the CID endorsed a plan in January 1905 by the Prime Minister, Arthur Balfour, to utilise 80 militia battalions as the main home defence army.

Volunteer MPs, meanwhile, had considerable strength in the House of Commons and fought hard against Arnold-Forster's volunteer proposals. Given that the CID had now concluded invasion improbable, Arnold-Forster considered that the volunteers could be reduced from 364,000 to 200,000 men, with anticipated field strength of 180,000, of whom 60,000 would be required to meet higher efficiency conditions. Arnold-Forster rejected the Norfolk recommendation of conscription and, with volunteer opposition clear, also backtracked on the idea for two classes. However, he intended to effect a reduction to 230,000 men by raising physical requirements and amalgamating or abolishing inefficient units, albeit that allowances for camping would be increased.³⁰²

An ambiguously worded circular in June 1905 appeared to suggest that a much more severe medical examination would be introduced, although the intention was to discover how many volunteers might be fit for overseas service. It was

³⁰¹ Bowman and Connelly, *Edwardian Army*, 112, 116.

³⁰² Ian F. W. Beckett, 'Arnold-Forster and the Volunteers', in Ian F. W. Beckett and John Gooch (eds), *Politicians and Defence: Studies in the Formulation of British Defence Policy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), 47-68.

immediately withdrawn in July, but it did not end parliamentary criticism. Outside of Westminster there was less opposition, with over 187,000 volunteers offering themselves for medical examination, with 84 per cent declared fit. In November 1905 it was announced by way of concession that the capitation grant would be adjusted so that two guineas would be given to those camping for 15 days, £1.18s.0d for eight days, and £1 for non-campers. In addition, volunteer brigades would be reorganised and an experimental division established.³⁰³ In December, however, the government lost the general election, the new Liberal government cancelling the experimental divisional as well as a field artillery experiment that Arnold-Forster had announced in late November. On the eve of change, the 1st Bucks RVC mustered 23 officers and 808 other ranks on 1 November 1907 with eight permanent staff. A total of 226 were under the age of 20 (26.9 per cent) and 363 had less than three years' service (43.2 per cent).³⁰⁴

The new Liberal Secretary of State for War was Richard Burdon Haldane. Rather like Cardwell, Haldane's primary aim was to reduce substantially the estimates. Placing a £28 million ceiling upon expenditure deemed acceptable to a majority in cabinet and among Haldane's parliamentary colleagues required a means of reorganising existing resources to meet a range of commitments at home and abroad. The much vaunted expeditionary force of six regular infantry divisions was determined simply by what troops were available in Great Britain with eight 'surplus' regular battalions to be swept away. Despite Haldane's later claims, the scheme was certainly not designed to meet any specific

³⁰³ Beckett, *Riflemen Form*, 242-46.

³⁰⁴ BA, D/FR/A 77.

strategic threat and a continental commitment. Indeed, it was based on Indian divisional scales.³⁰⁵

Haldane had a wider design to create, as he put it in February 1906, a ‘real national army, formed by the people’.³⁰⁶ A new unity of army and people would be established through the medium of the Territorial Force to absorb and improve upon the existing auxiliary forces. As the scheme evolved, County Territorial Associations (CTAs) would raise, administer and supply the Territorials, and also promote military values through drill and physical exercise in schools, cadet units, and rifle clubs. CTAs would have an elective element so that county and borough councils as well as lords lieutenant and traditional military elites would be represented. Lords lieutenant would retain the right of nomination to first commissions and, in many cases, also become presidents of CTAs, the selection of presidents, chairmen and vice-chairmen being in the hands of the War Office. A distinctive British ‘nation in arms’ would emerge very different from that resulting from the conscript systems of the great European powers. Moreover, the estimates for the auxiliaries would be reduced from £4.4 million annually to £2.8 million.

In some ways the Territorials represented the fulfilment of older schemes by some Victorian rifle volunteers, who had advocated a genuine reserve army. Territorials would have a four year’ term of service terminable on three months’ notice on penalty of a fine, with the provision to re-engage for a further four years, and the ability to enlist in the army at any time. There would be a liability of between eight and 15 days’ annual camp with pay, and a permanent subordination to military law. In the event of embodiment upon imminent

³⁰⁵ John Gooch, ‘Haldane and the “National Army”’, in Beckett and Gooch (eds), *Politicians and Defence*, 69-86, at 76.

³⁰⁶ Edward Spiers, *Haldane: An Army Reformer* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1980), 95.

national danger or grave emergency, Territorials would serve an additional year beyond the expiry of the term of enlistment, embodied service to be anywhere in the United Kingdom. Territorials would have no role in aid of the civil power, but could combine to use their military knowledge under common law and use arms in defence of their armouries. While relieving commanding officers of financial burdens, CTAs, would ensure the centralisation of authority with the War Office firmly in control of training and command.

Command would be divorced from administration, a point not lost on volunteer commanding officers who viewed it as a considerable diminution of their powers with government funding to be channelled through the CTAs also eroding their former considerable financial independence. The Territorials would have full supporting services including field artillery and new units such as a Territorial ASC, RAMC, and AVC. Crucially, in the original concept, they would be the means of supporting and expanding the army in war. They would garrison naval ports, replace regular garrisons, defend the country against hostile raids, and after six months' mobilisation training would be ready to go overseas. Haldane also hoped that between a sixth and a quarter of Territorials would volunteer for such overseas service in advance.

In the event, significant compromises were made in the face of opposition from within Haldane's own party. In March 1907 the emphasis was switched from an overseas role to home defence only. CTA financial assistance to cadets was also dropped, although they could help cadets from private funds. The elective element disappeared and CTA financial powers almost went the same way. Labour representatives, therefore, were not often to feature on CTAs as Haldane had planned, not least as trades unions opposed the creation of the force.

Businessmen were frequently appointed or co-opted since the attitude of employers to the force was crucial, not least on the commitment to the annual

15 day camp. In February 1909 Bucks County Council passed three resolutions whereby Territorials were to be given preference in administrative appointments in the council, all Territorials who were BCC employees were to be given full opportunities to fulfil all drill and camping requirements, and employers who favoured Territorials were to be given preferential treatment in council tenders. Arthur Lazenby Liberty of The Lee and of the London department store was not in favour of some employers being able to profit when he believed all should be motivated by patriotism, but the resolution was passed unanimously.³⁰⁷

Yet in March 1909, the County Education Committee refused to undertake to allow time off in May to one RBH officer and another employee who wished to enlist in the regiment.³⁰⁸ At least, it agreed to allow the Territorials to use school premises for drill at reduced or even remitted charge.³⁰⁹ Subsequently, the committee did agree to allow its employees to attend camp in 1910.³¹⁰

Often, businessmen criticised the War Office's methods, disputes between CTAs and the military authorities adding to the difficulties faced in winning public support for the Territorials.³¹¹ In reality, parliamentary opposition was negligible, primarily because Haldane secured Conservative/Unionist support by excluding the militia from the Territorial Force. It had been intended originally to utilise over 30,000 militiamen in the proposed expeditionary force, and to reserve 56,000 more as reinforcing drafts for the latter. In the event, militia colonels declined to enter either the army or the Territorials in the course of meetings of a so-called 'Duma' of auxiliary forces representatives with

³⁰⁷ *South Bucks Standard*, 12 Feb. 1909; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 13 Feb. 1909.

³⁰⁸ *Bucks Examiner*, 26 Mar. 1909; *South Bucks Standard*, 19 Mar. 1909.

³⁰⁹ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 22 May 1909; *South Bucks Standard*, 21 May 1909.

³¹⁰ BA, T/A 1/1, CTA, Mins., 7 July 1910.

³¹¹ K. W. Mitchinson, *England's Last Hope: The Territorial Force, 1908-14* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 3.

whom Haldane negotiated in May and June 1906, and in separate militia meetings convened in June and the early autumn.



Captain C. A. Barron and the new TF Army Service Corps detachment at Taplow, c. 1910 [BMMT]

Consequently, in October 1906, Haldane resolved to abolish the militia altogether and replace it with 74 draft finding Special Reserve battalions linked to the 74 pairs of linked regular battalions. The Special Reserve would also be available for home defence. Special Reserve personnel would serve six years with an initial six months' basic training followed by three or four weeks' annual training. Command would be held by the Special Reserve of Officers, a section of the existing Reserve of Officers.³¹² Those who chose not to transfer from militia to special reserve would be allowed to serve out their militia term of service: 636 militiamen and 64 militia reservists were still doing so

³¹² K. W. Mitchinson, *Defending Albion: Britain's Home Army, 1908-19* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 5-6.

nationwide in January 1913.³¹³ With 74 militia battalions being converted to Special Reserve battalions and 15 (plus 12 in Ireland) retained as 'Extra Reserve' battalions available for immediate reinforcement of the army, 23 would be slated for disbandment, these being those weakest in numbers.³¹⁴ That included the RBKOM despite its seniority to the existing 4th Battalion, Oxfordshire Light Infantry, which would be retained as the new 3rd Battalion, OLI.

In the case of the RBKOM, determined efforts had been made by the new regular adjutant from the Oxfordshire Light Infantry, Charles Cobb - not to be confused with Charles E. Cobb of the 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers - to improve recruitment. By March 1903 strength had fallen to 386 all ranks when the establishment was 902, although it had sent 254 men to the line in the last year.³¹⁵ In August 1903 Cobb appealed through the county press to employers to take on men unemployed after the return of the regiment from that year's annual training at Bisley. Drawing attention to Cobb's appeal, the *Bucks Herald* added the call to all those 'who require helpers in farm, fold, field, stable, or garden, or anywhere else'. Cobb also issued a pamphlet on the regiment's history that outlined the terms of service as well producing coloured billboards showing the uniforms of 1793 and 1903 that were widely circulated. By March 1904, 114 new recruits had been found in the last five months and, although another 400 were still needed, there was some optimism that the threat of extinction had been staved off. The regiment remained short of officers, especially captains.³¹⁶

³¹³ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 217.

³¹⁴ Stoneman, 'Reformed British Militia', 242-43.

³¹⁵ *Chesham Examiner*, 13 Mar. 1903; *South Bucks Standard*, 27 Mar. 1903.

³¹⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 1 Aug. 1903; 5 Dec. 1903; 31 Mar. 1906; *South Bucks Standard*, 31 July 1903; 25 Mar., and 15 July 1904; 3 Feb. 1905; *North Bucks Times*, 5 Dec. 1903; *Chesham*

Initially the RBKOM was one of 19 battalions chosen in August 1906 for an experimental scheme whereby recruits would now be trained for six months rather than 49 days, and do so in winter when employment was less available. The training would also take place at Wycombe rather than Oxford. It was acknowledged that periods of unemployment would vary across the country and taking up the winter training option was actually optional for seven of the battalions, including the RBKOM, who usually held recruit training immediately before the annual training. In the event, the scheme, which was due to start in September 1906, was never implemented.³¹⁷

Having trained on Salisbury Plain in 1906 what proved to be the last annual training took place at Gosport in May 1907. Rumours of the amalgamation of the 3rd and 4th Battalions, OLI began to circulate in August 1907, the decision on disbandment of the RBKOM being issued by the War Office on 23 December. There was predictable outrage, the *Bucks Herald* opining on 4 January 1908 that Bucks ‘feels strongly that no other county in England of its size and importance will be left under the Army Scheme in a similar position of isolation’. It returned to the attack a week later, disbandment being ‘an important crisis in our county history, and we ought not to allow our historic name to be blotted out altogether from the National Records without a determined effort to arrest so calamitous an action’.³¹⁸ Lord Burnham ensured that the *Daily Telegraph* supported the protests.

Examiner, 4 Dec. 1903 *Buckingham Express*, 5 Dec. 1903; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 31 Mar. 1906.

³¹⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 11 Aug., and 10 Nov. 1906; *Bucks Examiner*, 10 Aug. 1906; *Buckingham Express*, 11 Aug. 1906; *South Bucks Standard*, 13 July and 3 Aug. 1906; *North Bucks Times*, 1 Sept. 1906.

³¹⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 24 Aug. 1907; 4 and 11 Jan. 1908; *Buckingham Express*, 31 Aug. 1907.

A public meeting was convened in High Wycombe's Guildhall by the mayor, Robert Wood, on 8 January followed by a full-scale county meeting at Aylesbury chaired by Lord Rothschild on 14 January 1908.³¹⁹ There was much emphasis at the latter on the RBKOM being older than the Oxfordshire militia. Henry Bulstrode and 1642 were freely bandied about whereas, supposedly, the Oxfordshire dated only from 1771. Of course, the origin of both regiments extended back to 1558, although the old official order of precedence then rendered obsolete by the adoption of territorialisation in 1881 had placed Bucks 35th and Oxfordshire 51st based on the formation of the New Militia after 1757. One evidently confused speaker even came up bizarrely with 1240 as the true origin of the Bucks militia. It was also pointed out that the RBKOM had now recovered to a total strength of 610 all ranks compared to 337 in the Oxfordshire. The apparent incompatibility of the decision with the battalion's selection for the experimental winter training was also emphasised.³²⁰

A strange assortment of organisations added their protest including the Vale of Aylesbury Quoit Club, the White Hart Market Ordinary annual dinner, and the Winslow Shire Horse Society.³²¹ The first resolution of the new Bucks CTA on 10 January 1908 chaired by Tonman Mosley also entered a 'most emphatic protest against the disbandment of the old and valued militia of which the County is so justly proud'. At its second meeting, it demanded the addition of Buckinghamshire to the Oxfordshire Light Infantry.³²² There was some hope that, at the very least, the RKOM would be preserved as an Extra Reserve Battalion.

³¹⁹ BA, D/FR/A 77, Proposed Resolutions for County Meeting, 14 Jan. 1908.

³²⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 18 Jan. 1908; *Buckingham Express*, 18 Jan. 1908; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 18 Jan. 1908; *South Bucks Standard*, 10 Jan. 1908; *North Bucks Times*, 11 Jan. 1908.

³²¹ *Bucks Herald*, 25 Jan., and 1 Feb. 1908.

³²² BA, T/A 1/1, Mins, 10 Jan., and 6 Feb. 1908; T/A 1/27, James to Haldane, 15 Jan. 1908; James to Ward, 8 Feb. 1908; *Bucks Examiner*, 17 Jan. 1908.

Bucks sent a delegation to Haldane and the Army Council on 22 January 1908. Led by Rothschild, it included Frederick Verney, elected Liberal MP for North Bucks in 1906, when he had defeated Thomas Fremantle, doing so again in the first 1910 election; Arnold Herbert, who had won South Bucks for the Liberals in 1906; Charles Cripps (later 1st Lord Parmoor) of Frieth, the former Conservative MP for Stroud and now prospective candidate for South Bucks, whose son Seddon Cripps, Herbert had defeated; Tonman Mosley; the High Sheriff, Lieutenant Colonel Peter Giles of Bletchley; the Wycombe mayor, Wood; and the chairman of Aylesbury RDC. They were joined after the meeting had begun by Carrington and William Terry. Alongside the Bucks delegation were those from Cambridgeshire, Carnarvonshire, Montgomeryshire, and the North Riding.

Apart from those arguments already made at the county meeting, Wood pointed out that the government's lease on Wycombe barracks had another 77 years to run and that its annual rental was £272. In reply it was emphasised that sustainability was the rationale for disbandment, although it was indicated that consideration would be given to preserving titles and traditions in some measure within the Territorial Force.³²³ Cripps had already made much of his opposition to disbandment in a series of Conservative political meetings at venues such as Burnham, Hambleden, and Tylers Green. As Liberal MPs, Verney and Herbert were somewhat inhibited, but did voice their concerns at what Herbert termed the end of 'the only link possessed by the County of Buckingham with the Regular Forces'. Verney wrote privately to Haldane asking for consideration for the seniority of the regiment and the sustained energy of local patriotism.

³²³ *Bucks Herald*, 25 Jan; 8 Feb., and 4 July 1908; *South Bucks Standard*, 24 Jan. 1908.

Haldane, however, had already stated of the RBKOM, 'I wish the making of omelettes did not involve the breaking of eggs - but it does.'³²⁴

There was no prospect of changing Haldane's mind and disbandment was confirmed by the War Office on 1 February 1908.³²⁵ The regimental band performed its last engagement at the Vale of Aylesbury Hunt Steeplechases on 2 April. Officers had a farewell dinner at the Falcon Hotel in Wycombe on 1 April.³²⁶ Some certainly transferred including Major Francis Bernard of Chearsley Hill, who had served in the RBH from 1889 to 1894, and in the 18th Middlesex RVC from 1902 to 1905 before appointment as major in the RBKOM in 1905. Bernard was the defeated Conservative candidate for North Bucks in the second 1910 election.³²⁷

Speaking on his new army scheme at Wolverton on 3 April 1908, Haldane chose not to refer to the disbandment but Tonman Mosley pointedly did. The Hon. Thomas Fremantle, who had succeeded Gilbey in command of the 1st Bucks RVC in 1906 and now commanded the new Territorial battalion, suggested that relatively few of the villages in the county were likely to find recruits as agricultural labourers were no longer interested given the demise of the militia. Alfred Gilbey made much the same point in a speech at Wooburn in February 1909, suggesting disbandment had had a serious impact on the success of the Territorial Force in the county.³²⁸

³²⁴ *South Bucks Standard*, 10 and 17 Jan. 1908; Bodleian, Lincolnshire Mss, 1145/ 4 and 5, Haldane to Verney, 11 Jan. 1908; Verney to Haldane, 14 Jan. 1908.

³²⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 8 Feb. 1908; *Buckingham Express*, 15 Feb. 1908; *South Bucks Standard*, 7 Feb. 1908.

³²⁶ *Buckingham Express*, 4 Apl. 1908; *South Bucks Standard*, 3 Apl. 1908.

³²⁷ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 9 Apl. 1910.

³²⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 11 Apl. 1908; *Buckingham Express*, 11 Apl. 1908; *Bucks Standard*, 4 Apl. 1908; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 6 Feb. 1909.

The RBKOM permanent staff vacated the barracks at Wycombe by the end of June with a sale by auction of the furniture, fittings and utensils of the officer's mess on 1 July.³²⁹ The RBKOM formally ceased to exist on 31 July 1908. The old pre-1869 regimental Colours kept at Wycombe Abbey had been laid up in All Saints Church in June 1904. Those presented by the Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos in 1869 now joined them on 1 July 1908.³³⁰ Various treasures of the regiment including its silver had been displayed in Aylesbury museum for the Bucks Archaeological Society's jubilee in July 1905. The items were then offered to the society for its museum in July 1908 but this was not taken up.³³¹

In all, from the 560 men serving in the RBKOM on 1 April 1908, 243 joined the Special Reserve, 86 chose to see out their militia term of service, and 161 took a free discharge.³³² Those who had chosen to transfer assembled at Cowley on 18 May 1908 as the new 3rd Battalion proceeded to Gosport for training.³³³

For a time Haldane toyed with the idea of two classes of yeomanry with only some - 'special squadrons' - intended to support the expeditionary force in the field, but this was abandoned in March 1908. In the end, just three yeomanry regiments - the North Irish Horse, the South Irish Horse, and the London-based King Edward's Horse (formerly the King's Colonials), all recent creations -

³²⁹ *South Bucks Standard*, 22 May and 12 June 1908.

³³⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 4 June 1904; 4 July 1908; *Bucks Examiner*, 10 July 1908; *South Bucks Standard*, 3 July 1908.

³³¹ *Bucks Herald*, 8 July 1905; *South Bucks Standard*, 7 July 1905; 11 July 1908; *Bucks Examiner*, 24 July 1908; *Buckingham Express*, 25 July 1908. In reality, all the items passed instead to the CTA and the OBLI and, ultimately to the Bucks Military Museum Trust.

³³² Stoneman, 'Reformed British Militia', 275.

³³³ *Bucks Examiner*, 24 Apl. 1908.

joined the Special Reserve with 55 regiments remaining yeomanry within the Territorial Force.³³⁴

Like Arnold-Forster before him, Haldane largely left the yeomanry untouched with the exception of reviving yeomanry brigades.³³⁵ Harry Lawson had attended a conference of yeomanry officers in September 1906 at which the possibility of liability to overseas service was discussed. He was also a member of the subsequent yeomanry officers' committee, representing southern units. Pointedly, he remarked that no commanding officer wished to be controlled by a 'popularly elected committee'. In the event, as already indicated, both overseas service and elected CTAs fell in the course of the progress of the legislation through parliament.³³⁶ Volunteer opposition was less because so many Volunteer MPs had lost their seats in the election.³³⁷

The Territorial Force, therefore, would incorporate only the yeomanry and volunteers. There would be 42 infantry brigades organised in 14 infantry divisions, with full supporting artillery and supply services, and 14 mounted brigades, the whole amounting to 314,094 officers and men. Without the militia's manpower, this was an ambitious target, even if all volunteers and yeomen chose to enlist. The target set for the new officer training corps (OTC), which would incorporate university and public school cadet corps, was equally ambitious.

With the passing of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act in August 1907, the date set for the Territorial Force to come into existence was 1 April 1908. Only

³³⁴ Hay, *Yeomanry Cavalry*, 223-30, 238.

³³⁵ Bowman and Connelly, *Edwardian Army*, 135.

³³⁶ BA, D 206/7, Yeomanry conferences, 6 Sept. 1906, 16 Apl. and 12-13 Nov. 1907.

³³⁷ Beckett, *Riflemen Form*, 250.

144, 620 auxiliaries had transferred by June 1908.³³⁸ The number of volunteers in particular had declined rapidly and, overall, less than 40 per cent of existing volunteers and yeomen transferred to the Territorials. Existing volunteers and yeomen were given the opportunity to enlist for four, three, or two years or one year only until June 1908: less than a third of the new Territorials signed on for the full four years. The permitted age range for enlistment was 17-35, but Haldane's public preference for men under 24 deterred older auxiliaries. Those aged over 45, or 55 in the case of NCOs, were not permitted to transfer from the volunteers. Clearly, too, Territorial commitments were greater than those of the volunteers and yeomen with attendance required at a minimum of 40 recruit drill periods in the first year, as well as attending eight of the full 15 days' camp. Thereafter, there were to be 20 drill periods annually and the full 15 days' camp.

One partial victory for the county was the compromise that resulted from the alarm at the attempt to name the new Territorial infantry battalion as the 5th Battalion, Oxfordshire Light Infantry. The pressure succeeded, and in April 1908 it was announced that the new battalion would be the Buckinghamshire Battalion.³³⁹ Then, on 16 October 1908, the regular regiment itself became the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.³⁴⁰

The new CTAs were constituted on a model War Office scheme. The size of CTA membership and the number of sub-committees depended upon the number of units to be administered. In turn, the number and type of Territorial units in any given county was determined by the War Office on the basis of one

³³⁸ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 217.

³³⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 4 Apl. 1908; *Buckingham Express*, 4 Apl. 1908.

³⁴⁰ *Bucks Examiner*, 23 Oct. 1908; *Bucks Herald*, 24 Oct. 1908; *Buckingham Express*, 24 Oct. 1908.

Territorial per 112 of total population according to the 1901 census.³⁴¹ Half of the members were intended to be military representatives drawn from serving or former officers of the auxiliary forces, the latter with at least 15 years' experience. The remaining half would represent local councils or be co-opted.

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As constituted on 31 December 1907, the Bucks CTA had the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Rothschild, as President with Tonman Mosley, the Chairman of the County Council, as chairman, and Lord Dalmeny, later 6th Earl of Rosebery, MP for Edinburghshire (Midlothian) as vice-chairman. Field Marshal Lord Grenfell had declined the chairmanship so soon after his retirement from the army.³⁴³ The military representatives from the yeomanry were Coningsby Disraeli; Cecil Grenfell; Harry Lawson; and William Levi of Woughton House. The volunteers were represented by Surgeon-Colonel W. H. Bull, Thomas Fremantle; Herbert Williams; Francis Wethered; and Major R. S. de Havilland of the 2nd Eton College Volunteers. Former yeomen were Lionel Rothschild and Veterinary Surgeon George Lepper, with Lord Addington and Alfred Gilbey as former volunteers. There were four nominated County Councillors - the vice-chairman, Daniel Clarke of Castle House Hill, Wycombe, a solicitor and twice mayor of the town; the 7th Earl of Buckinghamshire of Hampden House, who would become Honorary Colonel of the 4th Battalion, Oxfordshire Light Infantry; Major George Green of Chetwode Priory; and the managing director of the Aylesbury Brewery Company, Councillor Frank Higgens of Sandhill, Winslow.

At the first meeting of the CTA on 10 January 1908, five additional members were co-opted to complete the complement, namely the 2nd Lord Lawrence of

³⁴¹ Ian F. W. Beckett, *Territorials: A Century of Service* (Plymouth: DRA Publishing for TA 100, 2008), 44.

³⁴² Mitchinson, *England's Last Hope*, 8-9.

³⁴³ BA T/A 1/60, Draft of *Citizen Soldiers of Bucks*, 27

Chetwode Manor; a former regular, and High Sheriff in 1906, Colonel Philip Pope of The Grange, Datchet; William Lowndes of The Bury, Chesham; a foreman at the LNWR Carriage Works, Walter Biddis of Wolverton; and Alderman Robert Wood of Sawpit House, another solicitor and the current mayor of High Wycombe.³⁴⁴ Only Higgens, Lawson, Wethered, and Williams could be regarded as in business: Higgens and Wethered both brewers; Williams now Outdoor Assistant at the LNWR Carriage Works; and Lawson as proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph*. Only Lawson, Higgens and Wethered were employers. Only Biddis was a labour representative, and he had been a Colour Sergeant in the Volunteers' Wolverton Detachment.

Technically, CTAs were to be reconstituted after two years with military representatives no longer approved by the War Office, and co-opted members to seek re-election should they wish. In practice, little changed with the desire to ensure continuity other than where members chose to resign.³⁴⁵ All should have been replaced after seven years, but this was deemed impossible in the midst of war in 1915.³⁴⁶ Most decisions were taken by a General Purposes Committee to which other committees reported: those in Bucks were the Finance, Horse Supply, Contracts, and Mobilisation committees, with local advisory committees for recruiting. Initially, full CTA meetings were held quarterly, but from 1911 there were three meetings per annum, usually at the Judges' Lodgings in Aylesbury. The General Purposes Committee and the Finance Committee met monthly and the others as required.³⁴⁷ An additional committee was then appointed to undertake a census of motor vehicles in the county in 1909. The CTA secretary was regarded as a key appointment, although the War

³⁴⁴ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 40-41. Swann wrongly lists Biddis as Biddle.

³⁴⁵ Mitchinson, *England's Last Hope*, 11.

³⁴⁶ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 41.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 42.

Office declined to allow CTAs to pay a salary of more than ten per cent of an association's administration grant unless approved by the Army Council: grants were divided into administration, rent, clothing, and travelling. Generally, grants were not as generous as previously, and CTAs found much reason to complain of War Office bureaucracy. Rather similarly, the War Office often disputed the number, remuneration, allowances and accommodation for any permanent staff such as instructors or quartermasters.³⁴⁸

The local advisory committees set up in early 1909 comprised representatives of urban, rural and borough councils as appropriate, representatives of the CTA, and a number of others. More often than not these were locally resident retired regulars such as Sir George Higginson at Marlow, but also prominent individuals such as Lord Desborough at Beaconsfield, James Elliman at Slough; the Earl of Buckinghamshire at Chesham, and the Marquess of Lincolnshire at Wycombe. Ten committees were established at Aylesbury; Beaconsfield, Burnham and Taplow; Bletchley; Buckingham; Chesham; Marlow; Slough; Winslow; Wolverton and Stony Stratford; and Wycombe.³⁴⁹ By 1913, the Beaconsfield, Burnham and Taplow Committee had 18 members each; Chesham and Amersham, ten; Marlow, eleven; Slough, 13; and Wycombe, 14.

³⁵⁰ The establishment of that at Chesham was problematic at first for several urban district councillors objected to the county council's resolutions favouring preferential employment treatment for Territorials, sending a letter of protest before agreeing to appoint any representatives to the advisory committee.³⁵¹

Initially, Julian James, the Aylesbury solicitor and Clerk to the Lieutenancy, acted as the Bucks CTA secretary until April 1908 when a former regular in the

³⁴⁸ Mitchinson, *England's Last Hope*, 22-26, 43-51.

³⁴⁹ BA, T/A 1/22, Annual Report, 1909-10.

³⁵⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 13 Mar. 1909; *South Bucks Standard*, 12 and 19 Mar. 1909; 27 Nov. 1913.

³⁵¹ *Bucks Herald*, 3 Apr. 1909.

8th Hussars, Major Lincoln Sandwith from Aynho, was appointed. There had been many applications.³⁵² One was from the former regular adjutant of the 1st Bucks RVC from 1904 to 1907, Sir Charles Cuyler, who had been compelled to retire from the army amid severe financial pressures after a broker had defrauded the family of £4,500.³⁵³ Cuyler found employment as secretary to the Maidenhead Golf Club. Sandwith, formerly brigade adjutant with the RBH had stood unsuccessfully as Unionist candidate for East Tyrone in the 1900 election. Sandwith, who had also briefly commanded the 15th Battalion, IY in South Africa before returning to the RBH adjutancy in December 1900, resigned after four months for a better paid appointment as Superintendent of the Midland Railway Company Police. He was succeeded as secretary by another former regular, Colonel John Day.³⁵⁴

The War Office had refused to allow Bucks to pay up to £200 per annum to a secretary, restricting the salary to £50-60.³⁵⁵ Day was recalled to service in 1914 and replaced in November 1914 by Major General John Christopher Swann, who had served recently, but none too successfully, in the campaign against the ‘Mad Mullah’ in Somaliland in 1902-04.³⁵⁶ Swann was given £175 per annum compared to the £150 paid Day, but as a wartime measure this was increased to £250 per annum.³⁵⁷ Julian James, meanwhile, filled the vacancy on

³⁵² BA, D/HJ/1/55, James to Fremantle, 15 Nov. 1907.

³⁵³ BA, D/FR/A 76, Cuyler to Fremantle, 6 June 1907.

³⁵⁴ BA, T/A 1/60, Draft of *Citizen Soldiers of Bucks*, 27.

³⁵⁵ BA, T/A 1/27, Ward to James, 29 Feb. 1908.

³⁵⁶ Ian F. W. Beckett, *Johnnie Gough VC: A Biography of Brigadier General Sir John Edmond Gough* (London: Tom Donovan, 1989), 90-107.

³⁵⁷ BA, T/A 1/60, Draft of *Citizen Soldiers of Bucks*, 27; T/A 1/60, Finance Committee Mins., 3 Sept. 1914.

the CTA as a county council representative when Mosley was elevated to chairman of the association.³⁵⁸

Existing drill halls and premises were inherited by CTAs, but often resulted in disputes over rentals whilst they were not necessarily in the right place for the new units being formed. Yeomanry House at Buckingham was leased from Harry Lawson, who had acquired it previously, as headquarters for the Royal Bucks Hussars with the Buckingham Company of the new Bucks Battalion in a building in Market Square. A new headquarters for the CTA was acquired in Aylesbury's Market Square and the old Church House in Temple Square leased for 21 years from Bedford's Charity for the Bucks Battalion. The latter was opened by Lord Rothschild in December 1909.³⁵⁹ The CTA had to agree that the premises would not be used by victuallers, publicans, tallow chandlers, tallow melters, soap makers, brewers, distillers, butchers, or founders.³⁶⁰ The Marlow Drill Hall built by the Wethereds in 1889 and the drill hall built for the Slough Volunteers by James Elliman were taken over by the CTA. The Wycombe militia barracks was leased from the War Office for nine years in 1909 for use by the Wycombe Detachment of the Bucks Battalion with most CTA stores kept at Wycombe. New facilities at the barracks including a club were opened in February 1911.³⁶¹

One setback was the complete destruction of the old rifle butts at Wycombe Marsh, which had been in use for 30 years, by arson in May 1912, for which George Stone, a former Territorial, of Lane End was prosecuted. Ironically, there had been a dispute three years earlier as to whether the land in question could be transferred to the CTA for wider county use when it had been leased

³⁵⁸ *Buckingham Express*, 18 Apl. 1908.

³⁵⁹ BA, T/A 1/50; *Bucks Herald*, 18 Dec. 1909.

³⁶⁰ BA, T/A 1/50, Lease, 23 Oct. 1909.

³⁶¹ *Bucks Herald*, 11 Feb. 1911.

previously at a beneficial rate specifically to the commanding officer of the Wycombe volunteers.³⁶² Generally, as well as the increased range of rifles, difficulties were encountered in extending piped water supplies to suitable range sites, as well as from the abundance of new housing, and more railway lines.³⁶³

James Elliman, who had been a volunteer in his youth, had put up £1,000 for the Slough Drill Hall and Club in November 1899. A public meeting in July 1900 to progress the project was accompanied by the decision to erect the tablet honouring all those from Slough who had gone to South Africa as yeomen or volunteers. This was suggested by, and largely paid for by, Elliman and placed in the vestibule of the Public Hall for public inspection.³⁶⁴ By 1901 the cost of the drill hall had reached £4,487 with Elliman again providing much of the funding for he believed that only a strong volunteer force could prevent the introduction of conscription. The new facilities opened on 20 May 1902. The lease stated that if in the future there was no volunteer or military organisation in Slough the building would pass to the District Council to be applied to 'some non-partisan form of mental and physical improvement of the inhabitants of the town'.³⁶⁵ Elliman established a trust which included two Slough NCOs - John Atkins and William Fussell - as well as himself. He resigned as a trustee in 1909.³⁶⁶ Elliman's contributions to Slough were substantial, including funds for the extension of St Mary's Church and donating the land and funds for laying

³⁶² *Bucks Herald*, 11 May 1912; *South Bucks Standard*, 16 July 1909; *North Bucks Times*, 11 May 1912; BA, D/FR/A 76, Reynolds and Vernon to Fremantle, 19 and 23 Apr. 1907; D/FR/A 79, Vernon to *South Bucks Standard*, 15 July 1909.

³⁶³ BA, T/A 1/60, Draft of *Citizen Soldiers of Bucks*, 85.

³⁶⁴ *South Bucks Standard*, 17 Aug. 1900.

³⁶⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 11 Nov. 1899; 21 July 1900; 30 Mar. 1901; *Buckingham Express*, 30 Nov. 1901; *Buckingham Express*, 24 May 1902; *South Bucks Standard*, 23 May 1902.

³⁶⁶ BA, T/A 1/49, Conveyance, 21 Jan. 1902; trust deeds of 28 May 1907, 17 Oct. 1908, and 28 July 1913.

out the Salt Hill Playing Fields. Subsequently, he moved to Hove, dying there in 1924.

The LNWR continued to provide accommodation for the Wolverton Company, which now absorbed that from Bletchley. The new RAMC Mounted Field Ambulance had its headquarters at the Cock Inn in Stony Stratford and, later, also had use of a room lent by Messrs. E. H. Roberts of Deanshanger Iron Works.³⁶⁷ The new South Midland Brigade Company of the Army Service Corps was accommodated at the Dumb Bell Inn at Taplow pending negotiations with Lord Desborough for use of land close to the railway station.

The War Office could make difficulties over new drill halls and provision of new or improved facilities within drill halls.³⁶⁸ In Bucks, the CTA built new drill halls adjacent to the railway station in Bath Road, Taplow (1911), at Bellingdon Road, Chesham (1914), and at the junction of Stantonbury Road and Haversham Road in Wolverton (1914). Chesham Drill Hall was opened on 24 January 1914 and Wolverton on 13 June 1914, the latter site purchased from the Radcliffe Trustees for £60.³⁶⁹ Grants, loans and mortgages were generally secured from the Public Works Loan Commissioners (PWLC), who credited the CTAs with the sums required to acquire and build premises. The land at Chesham was acquired for £650 from Alfred Gee of Hill Farm, the PWLC advancing £3,773 for the erection of the headquarters in four instalments. Similarly, an initial mortgage of £2,985 was agreed for the construction of the premises at Wolverton by Messrs. Archer & Sons, the total cost of which was to amount to £3,025. A delay then pushed up the architects' fees, the final cost

³⁶⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 28 Nov. 1911.

³⁶⁸ Mitchinson, *England's Last Hope*, 34-43.

³⁶⁹ BA, T/A 1/30; 1/32; 1/51; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 20 June 1914; *Bucks Examiner*, 19 July 1912; 30 Jan. 1914..

covered by the PWLC being £3,132.³⁷⁰ The Taplow site was purchased from the Great Western Railway, £3,773 being advanced by the PWLC for acquisition and construction.³⁷¹

At that point a new drill hall for the Mounted Field Ambulance at Stony Stratford was also under consideration and a 1.3 acre site had been obtained for £175 through an agreement with the Radcliffe Trustees and the Governors of St Bartholomew's Hospital.³⁷² As the unit was not continued after 1918, it was sold off to Arthur Baxter for £150 in July 1921 and the proceeds re-credited to the War Office.³⁷³ Drill halls were primarily important for the kind of recreational facilities they provided, a club atmosphere being seen as part and parcel of assisting both recruitment and also retention, whilst helping to build unit cohesion and morale.³⁷⁴

Meetings were held to explain the new conditions of service in the Territorial Force as at Wolverton's Science and Art Institute on 5 February 1908 and at Buckingham on 20 March 1908.³⁷⁵ There were many difficulties in establishing the new supporting units as well as in taking over the property and buildings of some of the former volunteer companies. Purely local factors were of considerable account, the attitudes of employers and local authorities being important. At Wolverton, sufficient sets of the new 'walking out' uniform had still not been forthcoming by July 1909. Herbert Williams feared this would

³⁷⁰ BA, T/A 1/16; T/A 1/31; T/A 1/32, T/A 1/51.

³⁷¹ BA, T/A 1/30.

³⁷² BA, T/A 1/16, Deed of Conveyance, 14 May 1914.

³⁷³ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 47; BA, T/A 1/16.

³⁷⁴ K. W. Mitchinson, *The Territorial Force at War, 1914-16* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 15-16.

³⁷⁵ BA, D/FR/A 77, Williams to Fremantle, 28 Jan. 1908; *Buckingham Express*, 13, 20 and 28 Mar. 1908.

have a detrimental impact on his men.³⁷⁶ There were fears, too, that Bedfordshire might be ‘poaching’ men at Olney.³⁷⁷ At Winslow men were wary of enlisting until travelling allowances were clarified.³⁷⁸

There was a perception, too, that men at Wing and Waddesdon would not be forthcoming through the lack of rail connections. Whilst Leopold de Rothschild and especially his wife, Marie, at Ascott were firm supporters, an additional difficulty at Waddesdon was the perceived anti-military attitude of Alice de Rothschild, who had inherited Waddesdon Manor from her brother in 1898.³⁷⁹

Fremantle apologised for the lack of officers attending a brigade staff tour in October 1909, pointing out that five of his officers were ‘busy professional men’ whilst five lieutenants were also away on business or studying, as were four second lieutenants.³⁸⁰ An embarrassment, albeit a hangover from the rifle volunteers, was the charge brought against a sergeant instructor from Wolverton named William Franklin for forgery and fraud whilst acting for the Buckingham Company. Franklin had embezzled £10.13s.9d that should have been paid for work on the rifle range, for which he received two months imprisonment. An appeal was made by his vicar as his wife and ten children would be destitute in his absence.³⁸¹

³⁷⁶ BA, D/FR/A 79, Williams to Fremantle, 20 July 1909.

³⁷⁷ BA, D/FR/A 79, Mosley to Fremantle, 22 May 1909.

³⁷⁸ BA, D/FR/A 77, Hooker to Fremantle, 24 Mar. 1908.

³⁷⁹ BA, T/A 1/26, Fremantle to Crouch, 21 Sept. 1908; Fremantle to Christie-Miller, 1 June 1909; Mosley to Fremantle, 20 May 1909; Fremantle to Mrs de Rothschild, 1 June 1909; D/FR/A 79, Christie-Miller to Fremantle, 21 May 1909.

³⁸⁰ BA, T/A 1/26, Fremantle to OC, Brigade, 19 Oct. 1909.

³⁸¹ BA, D/FR/A 78, Henley to Fremantle, 26 Nov., and 9 Dec. 1908; Harrett to Fremantle, 12 Dec. 1908; Fremantle to Day, 18 Dec. 1908; *Bucks Herald*, 6 Dec. 1908; *Buckingham Express*, 28 Nov., 5 and 12 Dec. 1908.

The entirely new RAMC Mounted Field Ambulance at Stony Stratford and the South Midland Brigade Company, ASC at Taplow needed to be raised.

Fremantle believed that converting the old bearer detachment into a mounted field ambulance added to the difficulties of finding infantry recruits in the north of the county.³⁸² The ASC Company was partly enlisted from former volunteer cyclists from both Bucks and Berkshire, although it should have confined its recruitment to Taplow and Burnham.³⁸³ It was commanded by Barron, who had been with the active service company in South Africa. Both drew recruits from the infantry as a result of better camp pay and a more attractive uniform. Fremantle refused to allow it to recruit in Slough because the Slough Company was not full, although the company commander at Slough, J. C. Barrett, did not believe the ASC was hurting his recruitment as much as the lack of separation allowances for camp.³⁸⁴

Walter Biddis strongly urged changing the Bucks Battalion uniform to scarlet, but this was decisively rejected by the men and, in any case, could not be afforded. The matter was simply deferred by the CTA General Purposes Committee.³⁸⁵ Generally, the yeomanry fared better than the infantry in getting men to transfer, and would bear a proportionally smaller percentage of the shortfall on establishments.³⁸⁶

³⁸² BA, D/FR/A 77, Fremantle to Cave, 26 Jan. 1908.

³⁸³ Walter Richards, *His Majesty's Territorial Army* 4 vols. (London: Virtue & Co., [1910]), I, 67-71.

³⁸⁴ BA, D/FR/A 78, Williams to Fremantle, 14 Oct. 1908; Fremantle to Day, 16 Oct. 1908; Fremantle to Serocold, 16 Oct. 1908; D/FR/A 77, Barrett to Fremantle, 26 Jan. 1908; T/A 1/26, Fremantle to Barrett, 16 Oct. 1908; D/FR/A 78, Cuyler to Fremantle, 2 Sept. 1908.

³⁸⁵ BA, D/FR/A 78, Note by Fremantle, Oct. 1908; Mins. of General Purposes Committee, 4 Dec. 1908; Wethered to Fremantle, 9 Dec. 1908; Mosley to Fremantle, 15 Dec. 1908.

³⁸⁶ Hay, *Yeomanry Cavalry*, 239-40.

One casualty of the changes was the Wolverton Detachment's band, it being suggested that it could become a town band instead. In May 1907 the 'united' band of the 1st Bucks RVC had won both first prizes at a band contest involving ten other civilian bands from Bucks, Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire.³⁸⁷ The Bletchley Company was also disbanded to fit the new eight company structure.³⁸⁸ Subsequently, the proposed division of the new Bucks Battalion band between Aylesbury and Wolverton caused friction, with Fremantle fearing men at Aylesbury were not re-engaging as a result.³⁸⁹

The last parades of the 1st Bucks RVC took place in March 1908, that at Wolverton attended by 100 former members.³⁹⁰ Many of its officers did transfer to the new Bucks Battalion including Herbert Williams, now living at Simpson and who was to succeed Fremantle in command in August 1911; Lionel Hawkins; and three members of the Wethered family.³⁹¹ The issue needed to be handled sensitively so far as other ranks were concerned as it was feared cliques might form and men be influenced by others. It was recommended, therefore, that men be mustered on parade and simply asked whether they would transfer or not with no discussion allowed.³⁹²

The establishment of the Bucks units was set at 25 officers and 449 men for the RBH; 28 officers and 978 men for the Bucks Battalion; 4 officers and 97 men for the ASC Company; and 6 officers and 103 men for the RAMC Mounted Field Ambulance. Those willing to transfer at once to the Territorial Force

³⁸⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 22 Feb. 1908; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 4 May 1907.

³⁸⁸ BA, D/FR/A 77, Fremantle to Cave, 23 Feb. 1908; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 12 Oct. 1907 and 11 Apl. 1908.

³⁸⁹ BA, T/A 1/26, Fremantle to Williams, 11 and 15 Mar. 1909.

³⁹⁰ *Bucks Standard*, 4 Apl. 1908; *Buckingham Express*, 4 Apl. 1908.

³⁹¹ *Bucks Herald*, 26 Set. 1908.

³⁹² BA, D/FR/A 78, Henley to Fremantle, Jan. 1909.

amounted to 1,013 all ranks: 23 officers and 409 men of the RBH; 21 officers and 475 men from the 1st Bucks RVC; one officer and 37 men to the ASC from the former Bucks and Berks cyclists; and one officer and 46 men from the former Bearer Company for the RAMC.³⁹³ Bucks did not face some of the problems encountered elsewhere of absorbing a number of units into a reduced establishment, or making arrangements to reorganise units spread across county boundaries.

By the end of the first year, Bucks had done reasonably well, the RBH, ASC and the Field Ambulance all being complete in March 1909. The Bucks Battalion was a different story, being short of six officers and 262 other ranks.

³⁹⁴ Fremantle had appealed to his men in February 1908 suggesting changes ‘always bring disturbance and difficulties in some degree but in the present case these relate to minor matters and afford no reason why the battalion should not give full support to the efforts of the Bucks County Association to provide its full proportion of efficient men for the Home Defence Army’.³⁹⁵ Tonman Mosley appealed to all urban and rural district councils to help recruitment.³⁹⁶

By 1910 the battalion still remained short of four officers but had improved with only 86 more men required.³⁹⁷ This largely remained the pattern with the RBH, ASC and Field Ambulance always complete or nearly so but the Bucks Battalion struggling to find its full establishment, the figures being reported almost weekly in the local press. Gilbey blamed the new regulations and the

³⁹³ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 43-44.

³⁹⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 16 Jan., and 6, 13 and 27 Mar. 1909.

³⁹⁵ BA, T/A 5/12, Order, 25 Feb. 1908.

³⁹⁶ BA, D/FR/A 78, Mosley draft appeal, 24 Dec. 1908; *South Bucks Standard*, 1 and 8 Jan. 1909; *Bucks Herald*, 2 and 16 Jan., and 27 Mar. 1909; *Bucks Standard*, 16 Jan. 1909; *Buckingham Express*, 23 and 30 Jan. 1909; *North Bucks Times*, 16 Jan. 1909.

³⁹⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 6 Aug. 1910.

lower camp allowances compared to those in the 'Field Army'. It was 'unreasonable to suppose that men of the artisan class, of which the Territorials are composed, can afford to give up a fortnight of the year without some financial compensation'.³⁹⁸

Various initiatives were attempted such as a 'march out' by the Aylesbury Company to Bierton in April 1909, and an Empire Day parade in the following month.³⁹⁹ The Wycombe Detachment also held a recruiting 'march out' to West Wycombe on 11 May 1908 with the combined bands from the Aylesbury Company and the Detachment entertaining an estimated crowd of 7-8,000 at two concerts in Daws Hill Park on 26 July that year.⁴⁰⁰ Another recruiting march around Wycombe taking in Bradenham, Naphill, Hughenden, and Downley took place in February 1909 with public meetings at Wooburn in April, and in Wycombe Town Hall in April 1909. At the latter, which was poorly attended, several former volunteers did come forward 'but the appeal for recruits amongst the civilians in the audience did not meet with a single person'. One suggestion made was that whilst chair making had once been piece work, machines now required men in constant attendance. A meeting at Marlow brought in 19 men in May, and 13 were found at Wooburn, a smoking concert cum recruiting meeting at Wycombe Town Hall on 8 May 1909 being billed as 'Wycombe's Last Chance'. Whilst not reported in the press, remarks by Arthur Vernon suggesting that one sergeant had been dismissed by his employer for attending a parade prior to the concert was refuted by that employer, the furniture manufacturer, Cecil Smith, as a fabrication since he had always

³⁹⁸ *South Bucks Standard*, 12 Feb. 1909; BA, T/A 5/17, Gilbey Mss, XIII, 5.

³⁹⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 3 Apl., and 29 May 1909.

⁴⁰⁰ *South Bucks Standard*, 15 May and 31 July 1908.

employed volunteers.⁴⁰¹ In February 1910 recruiting advertisements were regularly placed in the *South Bucks Standard*, whilst the Wycombe Advisory Committee appealed to all local employers to allow men to attend the annual training that year.⁴⁰²

Presentation of the new Territorial Long Service Medal to 11 men at Wolverton - all of whom naturally had previous volunteer service - was made much of on 27 April 1909, the Wolverton Detachment doing well in adding 111 recruits to the 114 men who had transferred from the volunteers.⁴⁰³

Frank Higgins and the Buckingham Company commander, John Henry Hooker, managing director of Messrs. Thew, Hooker & Gilbey, the milk factory in Chandos Road, addressed a public meeting at the Bell Hotel in Winslow on 4 May 1909 to appeal for recruits. Hooker had helped found the Condensed Peptonised Milk Company at Verney Junction in 1884, which then moved to Buckingham in 1892, becoming Thew, Gilbey & Hooker in 1906. Norman McCorquodale of Winslow House and the Wolverton printers, also attended, and 17 recruits were attested, being signed on whilst the rest of the audience heard renditions of 'The Village Pump', 'Too-ro-ool de aye', and 'The Farmer's Boy'.⁴⁰⁴ Hooker and his lieutenant, V. Howard, undertook a full programme of meetings to drum up recruits including at Padbury, Tingewick and Swanbourne. These resulted respectively in three, 13 and 10 recruits.⁴⁰⁵ Hooker and Frank

⁴⁰¹ *South Bucks Standard*, 5 Mar., 23 and 30 Apl., and 14 and 21 May 1909; *Bucks Herald*, 24 Apl. 1909.

⁴⁰² *South Bucks Standard*, 11 Feb., and 22 July 1910.

⁴⁰³ *Buckingham Express*, 1 May 1909.

⁴⁰⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 8 May 1909; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 8 May 1909; 19 Dec. 1936.

⁴⁰⁵ *Buckingham Express*, 15 May and 12 June 1909; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 12 June 1909.

Higgins tried again in Buckingham in January 1910, having found 81 recruits for the Buckingham Company in 1909.⁴⁰⁶

Fremantle, however, was always wary of accepting any men for the sake of numbers, writing to Mosley in December 1908 that the speeches at one meeting at Aylesbury had been seemingly addressed entirely to three men at the back of the hall who were the ‘wrong type’. He would not willingly lower the class or intelligence of his men.⁴⁰⁷ In November 1909 a ‘grand exhibition of animated pictures’ was put on in Aylesbury Town Hall, this cinematic extravaganza with piano accompaniment including such shorts as ‘A Day with the Territorials in Camp’, ‘The Review of the Fleet in the Solent’, and ‘Work of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry Corps of Lady Nurses’. Intended to ‘promote further interest in Britain’s second line of defence’, according to the *Bucks Herald*, ‘the monotony of the animated scenes’ was interposed with songs.⁴⁰⁸

In April 1910 Tonman Mosley wrote to all local advisory committees indicating that Fremantle wanted to train up the previous year’s recruits properly rather than embark on a new full scale recruiting effort, but the committees were urged to promote a Territorial Sports Day at Church Mead, Datchet in June as a means of demonstrating the recreational opportunities available.⁴⁰⁹ In December 1911 it was suggested by Francis Wethered that young women were partly responsible for failure in recruitment as they should refuse to associate with men who were not Territorials. The *North Bucks Times* commented on

⁴⁰⁶ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 1 Jan. 1910.

⁴⁰⁷ BA, T/A 1/26, Fremantle to Mosley, 18 Dec. 1908; D/FR/A 78, Fremantle to Day, 18 Dec. 1908.

⁴⁰⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 6 and 13 Nov. 1909.

⁴⁰⁹ BA, T/A 1/26, Fremantle to Mosley, 16 June 1909; *Buckingham Express*, 30 Apl. 1910.

Wethered's appeal that 'young ladies with a "bottom drawer" getting full will not take that notice of it they should'.⁴¹⁰

The key periods for recruitment were 1909, when those who had transferred on the one year option might choose not to re-engage, and 1912-13, when those who had signed on for four years might choose not to re-enlist. Overall, Bucks reached 87 per cent of its establishment in October 1912, representing 0.73 per cent of its population as recorded in the 1911 census compared to the 0.84 per cent that would have been represented by a full establishment.⁴¹¹ By October 1913, despite finding 137 recruits in the course of the year, the Bucks Battalion had actually fallen back, short of six officers and 349 men.⁴¹²

Fines for leaving the Territorial Force were fixed by CTAs rather than the War Office. Most prosecuted those failing to reach efficiency by not attending the required drills or camp, but recourse to the courts was problematic.⁴¹³

Territorial service required some dedication such as that of Captain Geoffrey Christie-Miller of Christys' Hats, from a Britwell family but who actually lived at Nantwich in Cheshire. He travelled regularly down from Stockport by train on Wednesday evenings and at weekends when commanding the Aylesbury Company from 1907 to 1912. He had no sight in one eye as a result of childhood chicken pox.⁴¹⁴ As in the case of the auxiliaries in the past, Territorial officers had many out-of-pocket expenses not covered by pay and allowances.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹⁰ *North Bucks Times*, 30 Dec. 1911.

⁴¹¹ BA, T/A 1/1, Mins of the Annual Meeting of the Council of CTAs, 14 Apl. 1913.

⁴¹² *Bucks Herald*, 6 Dec. 1913; *South Bucks Standard*, 27 Nov. 1913.

⁴¹³ Mitchinson, *England's Last Hope*, 65-68.

⁴¹⁴ Imperial War Museum (hereafter IWM), 80/32/1, Christie-Miller Mss; *Bucks Herald*, 14 Feb. 1936.

⁴¹⁵ Bowman and Connelly, *Edwardian Army*, 128.

The initial eight companies of the Bucks Battalion were at Marlow ('A'), High Wycombe ('B' and 'H'), Buckingham ('C'), Aylesbury ('D'), Slough ('E'), and Wolverton ('F' and 'G'). 'A' and 'B' Companies were the weakest in May 1909.⁴¹⁶ Despite some misgivings that it might cause problems if attached to the Aylesbury Company, a new section for the Bucks Battalion was raised at Wing, the initiative that of the Rev. H. Cuthbertson and John Tarver, the Rothschild estate agent at Ascott. The first meeting was held in Wing Hall on 11 June when 20 men came forward. Leopold de Rothschild agreed to pay for an instructor to travel regularly to Wing from Aylesbury.⁴¹⁷

With a fall in numbers at Aylesbury by 1912, Lionel Crouch, who commanded the Aylesbury Company and was promoted to captain in August 1912, also devoted particular time to a new section at Chesham, 55 men being recruited by June 1912 and 160 by February 1913. He also made an effort to find men at Quainton.⁴¹⁸ Originally, starting up at Chesham was seen as a fall back if numbers were not forthcoming at Wycombe, but this was not the case. Thus, beginning the section was delayed until the CTA provisionally accepted the request of the Chesham local advisory committee to try to raise a company in January 1910, albeit not actually authorising the effort until January 1911.⁴¹⁹

A summary of the age and service of the 839 officers, permanent staff and other ranks of the 1st Bucks RVC on 1 November 1907 recorded 226 men under the

⁴¹⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 29 May 1909; *Bucks Examiner*, 14 May 1909.

⁴¹⁷ BA, D/FR/A 79, Hooker to Fremantle, 21 May 1909; Christie-Miller to Fremantle, 2, 11 and 20 June 1909; Mosley to Fremantle, 17 June 1909; *Buckingham Express*, 19 June 1909.

⁴¹⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 8 June and 16 Dec. 1912; *Bucks Examiner*, 9 Feb. and 7 June 1912; 7 Feb. 1913.

⁴¹⁹ BA, D/FR/A 79, Mins of General Purposes Committee, 30 Apr. 1909; Mosley to Fremantle, 20 May 1909; Reynolds to Fremantle, 12 June 1909; T/A 1/4, Mins of General Purposes Committee, 6 Jan. 1910 and 20 Jan. 1911.

age of 20 (26.9 per cent), 398 between 20 and 30 (47.4 per cent), 164 between 30 and 40 (19.5 per cent), and 61 over 40 (7.2 per cent). A total of 106 (12.6 per cent) had less than a year's service, 404 (48.1 per cent) had two to five years' service, 175 (20.8 per cent) had 5-10 years' service, 66 (7.8 per cent) had 10-15 years' service, 39 (4.6 per cent) had 15-20 years' service, and 49 (5.8 per cent) over 20 years' service.⁴²⁰ Earlier in July 1907, it was noted that 256 among the other ranks were married, and another 22 were substantially supporting a household.⁴²¹

A roll of the other ranks of the new Bucks Battalion in April 1908 reveals an average age of 26 years and average service of 5.5 years. The battalion was overwhelmingly dependent upon skilled manual workers with 147 employees of the LNWR (29.8 per cent), 74 connected to the furniture trade at Wycombe (15 per cent), 20 from the printing trade, of whom 16 worked for Hazell, Watson & Viney in Aylesbury, and 83 others. The 53 in unskilled manual occupations is suggestive of the relative decline in social stature compared to the old 1st Bucks Rifle Volunteers, albeit that all were in employment.⁴²²



Maxim Gun Section of the RBH, Stowe, 1912 [BMMT]

⁴²⁰ BA, D/FR/A 77.

⁴²¹ BA, D/FR/A 76, Return, July 1907.

⁴²² BA, T/A 6/1.

Table 7.2 Bucks Battalion, April 1908

Professions	10	2.0%
Trades	25	5.0%
Clerks	23	4.6%
Craftsmen	54	10.9%
LNWR Employees	147	29.8%
Chairmakers	74	15.0%
Printing Trade	20	4.0%
Skilled Manual	83	16.8%
Unskilled Manual	53	10.7%
Unknown	3	
Total	492	

Source: BA, T/A 6/1

A muster roll of those joining the Aylesbury Company between 1909 and May 1914 and its attached Chesham Detachment from February 1912 to March 1914 demonstrates the consistency of the reliance upon skilled and unskilled manual workers. As might be expected, the average age of recruits dropped significantly to 18.3 years at Aylesbury and 19.9 years at Chesham. The number of men from Hazells and the other Aylesbury printing works, Hunt Barnard, which had been established in 1898, increased significantly with 22.4 per cent of all recruits. Meanwhile, at Chesham, the boot trade provided 35.0 per cent of all recruits, suggesting that the Territorials were able to sweep up many of those who had previously been attracted to the county's militia.⁴²³

⁴²³ BA, T/A 6/2.

Table 7.3: ‘D’ Company, Bucks Battalion Recruits, 1909-14

Recruits	Aylesbury 1909-14		Chesham 1912-14	
Professions	4	2.3%	1	0.1%
Trades	25	14.7%	9	9.2%
Clerks	20	11.8%	4	4.1%
Craftsmen	12	7.1%	12	12.3%
Printing Trade	38	22.4%	1	0.1%
Boot Trade	-	-	34	35.0%
Skilled Manual	28	16.5%	14	14.4%
Unskilled Manual	41	14.2%	22	22.6%
Unknown	1		-	
Total	169		97	

Source: BA, T/A 6/2

The first annual brigade training for the Bucks Battalion was at Swanage in August 1908 for the first week followed by the second week on Salisbury Plain.

⁴²⁴ The location was again Beaulieu Park in 1909, at which an unfortunate new recruit from Wycombe, Private Hunt, drowned bathing in the river. ⁴²⁵

In 1910 the South Midland Brigade was selected to participate in the autumn manoeuvres on Salisbury Plain, Tonman Mosley appealing especially to employers to enable the battalion to appear in what strength it had. ⁴²⁶ Fremantle was fearful that the change to the usual summer date might have such an adverse

⁴²⁴ *Bucks Examiner*, 31 July 1908; *Buckingham Express*, 1 Aug. 1908.

⁴²⁵ *Buckingham Express*, 14 Aug. 1909; *South Bucks Standard*, 20 Aug. 1909.

⁴²⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 27 Aug. 1910; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 3 Sept. 1910.

impact on the LNWR employees that it might endanger the existence of the Wolverton Detachment.⁴²⁷ He had pointed out two years previously that even a week's change had consequences: 'The chairmakers and those employed in the Railway Carriage Works have little difficulty in getting away the week after Bank Holiday, but whereas that is a slack week for them, the week before is one of the busiest in the year.' Such a change would reduce the number in camp by half.⁴²⁸ In the event, 620 men attended camp in the first week, and 580 in the second.⁴²⁹

In 1911 the annual camp was at West Lulworth, and in 1912 at The Bustard Camp on Salisbury Plain, resulting in another appeal to employers in November 1911.⁴³⁰ A detachment formed part of a composite battalion from the South Midland Infantry Brigade at the coronation in June 1911.⁴³¹

There were also battalion weekend camps at Chequers in August 1910, Stowe in June 1911, and Bradenham in May 1913.⁴³² The camp at Chequers, courtesy of Arthur Lee MP, was used as an experiment in combining concentration by motor car as well as train. Lionel Walter Rothschild was able to provide transport for 30 men. Sir Samuel Scott from Westbury, the Conservative MP for Marylebone West from 1898 to 1918 and for St Marylebone from 1918 to 1922, found cars for 12 men. Walter Carlile drove five men to the camp himself whilst cars were also provided by 12 other individuals including Waldorf (later 2nd Viscount) Astor, Unionist MP for Plymouth from 1910 to 1918 and for Plymouth Sutton from 1918 to 1919, and who had been presented with the Cliveden estate as a wedding gift by

⁴²⁷ BA, T/A 1/26, Fremantle to Cave, 22 Nov. 1909.

⁴²⁸ BA, D/FR/A 76, Fremantle to Cave, 8 Aug. 1907; D/FR/A 78, Williams to Fremantle, 6 Aug. 1907.

⁴²⁹ BA, T/A 1/1, Mins., 6 Oct. 1910; *Buckingham Express*, 15 Oct. 1910..

⁴³⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 28 Nov. 1911.

⁴³¹ BA, T/A 5/12.

⁴³² *Bucks Examiner*, 5 Aug. 1910; *Bucks Herald*, 10 June 1911; 17 May 1913; BA, T/A 5/12.

his father in 1906. Herbert Williams chose to march his Maxim Gun Detachment the 26 miles from Wolverton.⁴³³



Bucks Battalion Cookhouse at Shorncliffe, 1913 [BMMT]

No battalion weekend camp was held in 1912, company camps being substituted. The Buckingham Company camped at Wicken, and the Wolverton Detachment at Deanshanger.⁴³⁴ Another enterprising innovation was a night operation around Beaconsfield by the Wycombe Detachment in opposition to the 9th (County of London) Battalion, London Regiment (Queen Victoria's) in October 1910.⁴³⁵ The 1913 training was at Shorncliffe. That in 1914 was due to be held at Marlow from 2 to 16 August, with the town intending to put on a regatta for the troops on 8 August. Francis Wethered had succeeded Herbert Williams in command on 18 April 1914.⁴³⁶ Wethered had the men practising chorus singing by July, as he

⁴³³ *Bucks Examiner*, 5 Aug. 1910; *Buckingham Express*, 6 Aug 1910.

⁴³⁴ *Buckingham Express*, 22 June 1912.

⁴³⁵ *South Bucks Standard*, 21 Oct. 1910.

⁴³⁶ *Bucks Examiner*, 17 July 1914.

believed this helped men keep pace on the march as well as providing a stimulus.

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Many CTAs purchased some horses, but paid a retaining fee to contractors for hire. The Bucks Horse Supply Committee was one of those that undertook a horse census, its members being Lord Dalmeny, William Levi, Harry Lawson, Cecil Grenfell, George Green, and Veterinary Major George Lepper from Walton Street in Aylesbury and the long serving veterinary officer of the RBH.

⁴³⁸ The War Office Remount Department took over the responsibility of purchasing horses on mobilisation in 1909, but in January 1910 CTAs were made responsible for verifying the registration of horses undertaken by county police forces not only for the Territorial Force but for the army as a whole. Protests at the additional work resulted in the Remount Department taking back the duty in 1911. ⁴³⁹ By May 1913 as a result of its efforts, Bucks had determined that the county had 2,039 riding horses, 1,826 light draught horses, 1,935 heavy draught horses, and 239 ponies. ⁴⁴⁰

In terms of uniforms, the expectation was that CTAs would provide two per man, either both of service dress or, alternatively, one each of service dress and ‘walking out’ or undress uniform. ⁴⁴¹ The RBH retained its existing full and undress uniforms, and the Bucks Battalion the full dress of the Volunteers alongside khaki service dress, although the latter had to be altered from the pattern adopted in 1901. The RAMC and ASC had to be clothed anew. ⁴⁴² In

⁴³⁷ *North Bucks Times*, 25 July 1914. Copies of Bucks Battalion Chants are to be found in BA, T/A 6/47.

⁴³⁸ BA, T/A 1/9, Mins. of Horse Supply Committee, 19 May 1909.

⁴³⁹ Mitchinson, *England's Last Hope*, 92-99.

⁴⁴⁰ BA, T/A 1/9.

⁴⁴¹ Mitchinson, *England's Last Hope*, 125.

⁴⁴² Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 44-45.

common with other CTAs, contracts for clothing, webbing and other equipment, and boots were generally awarded locally and carefully managed given the inadequacy of grants. Bandsmen were now all supposed to be serving Territorials.⁴⁴³

CTAs pressed for further rewards to be offered to Territorials and employers alike. Separation allowance had been raised by the CTA General Purposes Committee from the beginning.⁴⁴⁴ Day reported to the War Office in November 1911 that what was required were separation allowances for all married men in camp, a £1 bounty to all in camp for the full 15 days, recognition such as jury exemption for co-operative employers, and appropriate allowances to allow the establishment of cyclist sections.⁴⁴⁵ In January 1912 the CTA was represented at a meeting at Oxford that pressed again for separation allowances, the £1 bounty, jury exemption and income tax rebate for helpful employers. It was also suggested that motor road patrols be established in rural areas, together with heavy traction engine and even aviation sections. Given the problems in some rural areas, sanction for half companies was suggested in urban areas with better rail connections such as Bletchley and Chesham.⁴⁴⁶

In the following year, the CTA arranged a meeting with the Director General of the Territorial Force, Major General Edward Bethune, at Wycombe on 14 November 1913.⁴⁴⁷ Mosley praised local employers for their co-operation, but urged the now familiar further concessions of preferential government contracts, tax rebates, and jury exemption. Mosley re-iterated the requests for separation allowances to any married men attending camp even if not for the full 15 days

⁴⁴³ Mitchinson, *England's Last Hope*, 144.

⁴⁴⁴ BA, T/A 1/4, Min s., 19 June 1908.

⁴⁴⁵ TNA, WO 32/6602, Day to War Office, 9 Nov. 1911.

⁴⁴⁶ BA, T/A 1/1, CTA Mins., 7 Mar. 1912.

⁴⁴⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 23 Nov. 1913; BA, T/A 1/4.

given that men might lose a second week's wages. Men should also not be obliged to pay national insurance stamps whilst in camp. Motor patrols and a heavy tractor reserve were also again suggested since 'we had some young men who were very interested in that work and who might have been useful'. Horse supply was also a concern since the army would requisition for its own use in the event of mobilisation. Generally, too, more money was needed for a second khaki uniform, for the National Reserve, Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs) and cadets.⁴⁴⁸

Mosley had previously suggested giving Territorials a badge or ribbon to wear when in mufti to advertise their commitment to country, but also preferential old age pension rates.⁴⁴⁹ This followed earlier resolutions passed by the CTAs of Essex and the West Riding airing Territorial grievances and delegations to the prime minister, Asquith, and Haldane's successor as Secretary of State of War, Jack Seely. The Bucks CTA, indeed, took an active role in the Council of CTAs.⁴⁵⁰ Bethune, however, could offer little hope of change.

Women's support was thought important and separation allowances for married men and NCOs for a full 15-day camp were introduced in 1912. In 1913 men in camp were also relieved of paying under the 1911 national insurance legislation their own and employers' contributions. There were also demands for higher separation allowances, jury exemption, income tax rebates for co-operative employees, and an annual bounty. The government would go no further than agreeing in March 1914 to a £1 bounty for those men camping for the full 15 days.

⁴⁴⁸ BA, T/A 1/4, Mins. of Conference, 14 Nov. 1913; *Bucks Herald*, 29 Nov. 1913.

⁴⁴⁹ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 11 Apr. 1908.

⁴⁵⁰ Mitchinson, *England's Last Hope*, 170-76; Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 27-28; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 22 Nov. 1913; *Bucks Herald*, 29 Nov. 1913.

Seaside camps proved popular, but did not offer the best training opportunities and in February 1912 the Army Council restricted units to one such seaside camp every three years. It was difficult enough to agree dates and locations of annual camps but even more so in the case of brigade camps given the negotiation required not only between CTAs but also with differing employers. Divisional camps were next to impossible. The responsibility for brigade offices was often a bone of contention, as in March 1913 when, having agreed on a reduced scale of payments to brigade majors with Oxfordshire and Berkshire, Bucks pulled out of the agreement altogether and declined to pay a share to the particular ire of the Oxfordshire CTA.⁴⁵¹ Much regular criticism was based on camp performance. Whilst the culmination of a year's training, it was likely to include not only many new recruits but also those who had missed drills.⁴⁵²

Turning to the RBH, its property including uniforms of the RBH was valued and formally transferred to the CTA on 14 May 1908.⁴⁵³ After training at Stowe in 1908 and at Ascott, Wing in 1909, yeomanry brigade camps for the South Midland Mounted Brigade, including the RBH, took place on Salisbury Plain in 1910 with the brigade manoeuvring against the 1st South West Mounted Brigade.⁴⁵⁴ As in former days, local contractors did well from such annual camps. In 1908 all wine, spirits, beer, mineral water, groceries, bread, and vegetables as well as cycle hire and photographic and haircutting services were supplied by Buckingham contractors. In 1909 contracts were given to businesses from Aylesbury, Buckingham, Leighton Buzzard, Wing, and Winslow.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵¹ Mitchinson, *England's Last Hope*, 148.

⁴⁵² Mitchinson, *Territorial Force at War*, 13.

⁴⁵³ *Buckingham Express*, 16 May 1908; *South Bucks Standard*, 22 May 1908.

⁴⁵⁴ Bowman and Connelly, *Edwardian Army*, 138.

⁴⁵⁵ *Buckingham Express*, 11 Apr. 1908; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 16 May 1908; 24 Apr. 1909.

The brigade training in 1911 was at Blenheim, the Duke of Marlborough commanding the Oxfordshire Yeomanry. It included a review by King Manoel of Portugal.⁴⁵⁶ The RBH returned to Stowe in 1912 and 1913. In May and June 1914 it was once more on Salisbury Plain. A new fundraising exercise appears to have been whist drives as at Buckingham in December 1913 and February 1914.⁴⁵⁷ In other respects, little had really changed for the yeomanry. A detachment greeted King George V at Slough in June 1911 and escorted him to Windsor. Something a little different in the way of tournaments was wrestling on horseback between a team from the RBH and one from the 2nd Life Guards at the Agricultural Show at Tring Park in August 1913.⁴⁵⁸ Annual events continued, the annual banquet and prize giving of 'D' Squadron in Chesham Town Hall taking place on 22 January 1914.⁴⁵⁹ The regiment was scheduled to undertake a small military display at the Winslow Flower Show over the 1914 August Bank Holiday weekend. Other events were to intervene.⁴⁶⁰

The RBH had become an exceedingly wealthy regiment and arguably more exclusive in terms of its officers after 1902 than previously. Rothschilds, Lawsons and Grenfells were especially prominent. Following the service of the 1st Lord Rothschild, his son, Lionel Water Rothschild, later 2nd Lord Rothschild, finally retired from the regiment in 1909, having returned as previously noted in 1895. His cousins, Lionel Nathan de Rothschild, Evelyn Achille de Rothschild and Anthony Gustav de Rothschild, all of Ascott House, Wing entered the regiment, the latter in 1911. Their cousin, the Hon. Neil Primrose, second son of Lord Rosebery and Hannah Rothschild of Mentmore, also joined in 1909.

⁴⁵⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 10 June 1911; BA, T/A 3/38/2.

⁴⁵⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 26 Dec. 1912; 6 Feb. 1914.

⁴⁵⁸ *South Bucks Standard*, 14 Aug. 1913.

⁴⁵⁹ BA, AR 68/2021 [BMMT 741].

⁴⁶⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 18 July 1914.

Primrose was Liberal MP for North Cambridgeshire from 1910 until his death in 1917. He was briefly Under Secretary of State at the Foreign Office in 1915; and then Liberal Chief Whip in 1916 alternating parliamentary and active service. Primrose's intimate friend, Thomas 'Tommy' Agar-Robartes, Liberal MP briefly for Bodmin in 1906 before unseated by a petition, and then for Mid-Cornwall (St Austell) from 1908 until his death in 1915, also joined the RBH in August 1914.

Agar-Robartes transferred to the Coldstream Guards in January 1915. Primrose was detached from the RBH as a press officer with the Indian Corps on the Western Front from September 1914 to January 1915, and this was a factor in Agar-Robartes' transfer. Primrose, however, was recalled to political duties in January 1915, and Agar-Robartes was mortally wounded in September. His death deeply affected Primrose.⁴⁶¹

Originally from Cornwall, Pascoe Grenfell had entered partnership with the Williams family in the Temple Mills at Marlow in the 1790s, purchasing Taplow House in 1794. His grandson purchased Taplow Court in 1852, and it was inherited by his great grandson, William H. Grenfell in 1867 whilst the latter's cousin, Francis (later Field Marshal Lord) Grenfell settled at Butlers Court at Beaconsfield in 1895. Another cousin Pascoe Du Pré Grenfell had inherited Wilton Park, Beaconsfield in 1887. As already indicated William Henry Grenfell joined the 1st Bucks RVC during the South African War, before resigning his commission in October 1906. Elevated to the peerage as Lord Desborough in 1905, he would become a leading proponent of the Volunteer Training Corps in the Great War, in which two of his sons, Julian Grenfell VC and Gerald 'Billy' Grenfell were killed. Pascoe Du Pré Grenfell had nine sons,

⁴⁶¹ Martin Gibson, *Captain Neil Primrose MP, 1882-1917* (Wisbech: Wisbech Society and Preservation Trust, 2015); idem, *The Primrose Path: The Gilded Life of Lord Rosebery's Favourite Son* (London: Arum Press, 2020), 145-46, 170-74.

of whom one was killed in the Sudan in 1898 and the twins, Francis Octavius Grenfell VC and Riversdale 'Rivvy' Grenfell in the Great War. 'Rivvy' joined the RBH in 1904 but volunteered into the 9th Lancers in 1914, being killed in September of that year. His older brother, Arthur Morton Grenfell, was also in the RBH, being promoted captain in September 1908 and major in June 1912, and also transferring to the 9th Lancers in 1914.

Meanwhile two other brothers, Cecil Grenfell and John Pascoe Grenfell continued to serve in the RBH, the former promoted to lieutenant colonel commanding as Harry Lawson's successor in October 1913. The latter was promoted to major in May 1908. Cecil Grenfell, who married a daughter of the Duke of Marlborough, had gone out to South Africa as one of Lawson's subalterns in 1900, but returned home in March when his wife was pregnant. A City broker, Cecil Grenfell was also a noted rider, having ridden as an amateur in the 1896 Grand National.⁴⁶²

Harry Lawson, who was commissioned into the RBH in 1883, commanded the regiment from October 1902 to 1913 - his command was twice extended - and would command the 3/1st RBH in the Great War. When Lord Chesham went to South Africa, the command of the RBH passed to James Hatfeild Harter of Cranfield Court, Bedfordshire in January 1900. Harter, who had been commissioned in the regiment in 1875, resigned in September 1902. He was succeeded by Alfred Loder, who had joined in 1881. In turn Loder, who now lived at Aldwickbury in Hertfordshire, unexpectedly resigned after only a

⁴⁶² Ian F. W. Beckett, 'The Grenfells: A Buckinghamshire Military Family', *Bugle & Sabre* 10 (2017), 7-13; *Buckingham Express*, 30 Mar. 1912.

month. Harry Lawson therefore took command, Chesham having become Honorary Colonel in March 1902.⁴⁶³



Officers of the RBH on Salisbury Plain, June 1914 [BMMT]

Lawson was Liberal MP for East St Pancras from 1885 to 1892 and Cirencester from 1893 to 1895 and then Unionist MP for Tower Hamlets (Mile End) from 1905 to 1906 and from 1910 to 1916. He also represented Whitechapel on London County Council from 1897 to 1904, and was Mayor of Stepney from

⁴⁶³ *Bucks Herald*, 27 Sept., 4 and 18 Oct. 1902; *Bucks Standard*, 29 Mar. 1902; *South Bucks Standard*, 3 and 17 Oct. 1902.

1907 to 1909. He commanded a composite yeomanry contingent at the 1911 coronation.⁴⁶⁴ Such was his long service that his farewell address to the regiment at Stowe on 23 May 1913 taken from the *Buckingham Advertiser* was printed as a leaflet.⁴⁶⁵ Lawson succeeded his father as 2nd Lord Burnham in 1916. As already noted, his brother, William Lawson, later 3rd Lord Burnham, had commanded the 38th Company of the Imperial Yeomanry, and would return to command the 2/1st RBH in 1914. William Lawson's son, Frederick Lawson, later 4th Lord Burnham, was commissioned into the RBH in 1910.

The Hon. Fred Cripps, later 3rd Lord Parmoor, a stockbroker and close friend of Neil Primrose from Parmoor House at Frieth, was commissioned into the RBH in 1904. Fred Lawson later described Cripps as having 'a fine mind which he rarely applied to anything but pleasure and an immensely attractive personality'.⁴⁶⁶ Cripps recalled one night whilst the regiment was brigaded at Blenheim when he played *chemin de fer* with Primrose, Evelyn de Rothschild and two officers of the Oxfordshire Yeomanry, Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, and the celebrated barrister, F. E. Smith, later Lord Birkenhead. Churchill and Smith lost £1,000 between them.⁴⁶⁷

Cripps described his own troop as 'largely composed of personal friends from the villages round and about Parmoor and some of the sons of my father's tenants'. His fellow squadron officers were Cecil Grenfell, 'Rivvy' Grenfell, Fred Lawson, and the banker, Rex Benson. Subsequently, they were joined by John Crocker Bulteel, later an innovative Clerk of the Course at Ascot for 25 years.⁴⁶⁸ Earlier when the RBH had been camped at Ludgershall on Salisbury

⁴⁶⁴ *Buckingham Express*, 6 May 1911.

⁴⁶⁵ BA, T/A 3/40; D 206/8.

⁴⁶⁶ Colonel the Hon. Fred Cripps, *Life's A Gamble* (London; Odhams Ltd, 1957), 9.

⁴⁶⁷ Cripps, *Life's A Gamble*, 64.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 62.

Plain in June 1910, Churchill had been knocked to the ground by an unnamed RBH officer in an impromptu boxing match for a wager.⁴⁶⁹ Yet another wealthy officer was George Warren Swire of John Swire and Sons, the Hong Kong and China trading and shipping company. Swire joined the regiment in 1907.

In part, activities such as those of the yeomanry hinting more of social than military priorities added to the difficulties of the Territorials. Not only did Territorials perceive that they were inadequately remunerated and rewarded, but it was also the case that they resented the sustained attacks they suffered, not least from regulars. Regulars pointed to failures to reach the over ambitious manpower targets, and ridiculed the ability of Territorials to operate field artillery. Few regulars willingly accepted command of, or staff posts in, Territorial brigades and divisions.⁴⁷⁰ In 1912, the GOC of Southern Command, Sir Charles Douglas displayed little confidence in the South Midland Division, of which the Bucks Battalion was part despite it being closer to full establishment than any other except the North Midland Division.⁴⁷¹ In 1910 the Oxfordshire and Bucks Light Infantry formed an Old Comrades Dining Club, but Territorials and former auxiliaries were only permitted to join if they had seen service in South Africa.⁴⁷² Training standards, musketry attainments, camp attendance, and the high annual wastage rate of 12.5 per cent all came under scrutiny. No mobilisation scheme existed until 1912 with CTAs supposed to provide various necessities including supplies of forage in advance without

⁴⁶⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 25 June 1910.

⁴⁷⁰ Mitchinson, *Territorial Force at War*, 18-20.

⁴⁷¹ K. W. Mitchinson, *The 48th (South Midland) Division, 1908-19* (Solihull: Helion, 2017), 25-26, 28.

⁴⁷² French, *Military Identities*, 227.

mobilisation grants being available up front.⁴⁷³ One of the divisional concentration areas for the Central Force in the event of invasion was Bletchley.

Two years later, Territorials were still equipped with outdated Long Lee Enfield rifles, and obsolescent 15-pounder artillery and 4.5” howitzers. Horses were especially hard to obtain for artillery and supporting services, many being hired or borrowed from farmers or breweries with inevitably variations in horse quality and little continuity in training. An infantry battalion needed 74, a field ambulance 70, and a yeomanry regiment 423.⁴⁷⁴ It was costly and sometimes difficult to find the required number for camps, especially if the degree of horsemastership was inadequate, and the animals returned to their owners in poor condition.⁴⁷⁵

For the camp at Wing in 1909, which was visited by Haldane, Cecil Grenfell chose to march the Wycombe Squadron there to test the endurance of both private and hired horses. It was a distance of 27 miles completed with just one halt at Wendover for lunch: those at outlying communities such as Marlow and Wooburn had closer to 35 miles to march.⁴⁷⁶ There were also other field days as in April 1912 when the Aylesbury Squadron was successfully delayed by the Buckingham Squadron at Whitchurch, Oving and Grandborough in an attempt to escort a ‘convoy’ to Winslow.⁴⁷⁷

Given the doubts as to Territorial capabilities, the CID recommended in both October 1908 and April 1914 that two regular divisions be held back from the expeditionary force to guard against enemy raids after mobilisation. During the deliberations of the CID invasion enquiry in 1914, the Chief of the Imperial

⁴⁷³ Mitchinson, *England's Last Hope*, 176-80.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid, 93; idem, *48th Division*, 21.

⁴⁷⁵ Mitchinson, *England's Last Hope*, 75-79.

⁴⁷⁶ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 15 May 1909.

⁴⁷⁷ *Buckingham Express*, 27 Apl. 1912.

General Staff, Sir John French, stated bluntly that it was ‘generally accepted that one regular soldier was equal to three Territorials’.⁴⁷⁸ Wider criticism came from military and civilian advocates of conscription including pressure groups like the National Service League (NSL) who saw the Territorials as the last obstacle to its introduction.⁴⁷⁹

In Bucks the NSL was organised by a former major of the RBKOM who had also been Controller of the Household for Earl Grey when Governor General of Canada, G. F. Paske. Paske arranged a meeting of the new county branch in the Small Hall at Buckingham on the afternoon of 20 March 1909, coinciding with a public meeting in the Town Hall that same evening to explain the Territorial system. Paske’s invited speaker, Sir James Bourdillon, former Lieutenant Governor of Bengal and Resident at Mysore, spoke for over an hour. The commander of the Buckingham Company, John Henry Hooker, and his lieutenant, Howard, were both present (as they had been at the earlier meeting), but did not speak.⁴⁸⁰ Fremantle later defended the Bucks Branch, indicating that it had generally helped Territorial recruiting in the county.⁴⁸¹

Even the Army Council called for some form of conscription in April 1913. Although the evidence for any real popular support for conscription was lacking, the campaign undoubtedly damaged the Territorials. Indeed, ten CTAs themselves supported conscription with a further 17 backing a thinly veiled recommendation for compulsion at the Council of CTAs in January 1913. The

⁴⁷⁸ David Morgan-Owen, *The Fear of Invasion: Strategy, Politics and British War Planning, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 211.

⁴⁷⁹ Michael Allison, ‘The National Service League Issue, 1899-1914’, Unpub. PhD, London, 1975), 200-42.

⁴⁸⁰ *Bucks Examiner*, 25 Feb. 1908; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 6 Feb., and 27 Mar. 1909; *Bucks Herald*, 24 Sept. 1910.

⁴⁸¹ *South Bucks Standard*, 11 Jan. 1912.

conscriptionist cause also took heart from forms of universal military training introduced into Natal in 1903, and in both Australia and New Zealand in 1909.

⁴⁸² The political left, too, was hostile to Territorials and some uniformed youth groups such as the Boys Brigades rejected affiliation. So did the Boy Scouts even though Robert Baden-Powell became GOC of the Northumbrian Territorial Division in 1908. ⁴⁸³

Territorials benefitted to some degree from a renewed invasion scare in 1909, which pushed national numbers up by 30,000 in just seven weeks. ⁴⁸⁴ The *Daily Mail*, for example, suggested there were 350,000 German spies and fifth columnists in Britain. A recruiting booth was set up in its London theatre during the production of a popular invasion play, Guy du Maurier's 'An Englishman's Home'. ⁴⁸⁵ King Edward VII also encouraged the force by meeting lords lieutenant to indicate his support for the Territorials in October 1907, and by presenting Colours to 108 Territorial battalions at a ceremony at Windsor on 19 June 1909. The King's support was especially mentioned by Lord Rothschild when chairing a public meeting at County Hall in Aylesbury on 6 December 1907 to initiate the creation of the Bucks CTA. ⁴⁸⁶

Nonetheless, the Territorial Force declined in strength from 268,776 officers and men in June 1909 to 245,779 in September 1913, over 64,000 short of establishment. Of 114,000 Territorials, 63,000 (55 per cent) had not re-engaged

⁴⁸² Beckett, 'Introduction', in Beckett (ed.), *Citizen Soldiers and Empire*, 1-21, at 19-20.

⁴⁸³ Allen Warren, 'Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the Scout Movement and Citizen Training in Great Britain, 1900-20', *English Historical Review* 101 (1986), 376-98. See the subsequent debate between Warren, John Springhall and Anne Summers in *English Historical Review* 102 (1987), 934-50.

⁴⁸⁴ Mitchinson, *England's Last Hope*, 59.

⁴⁸⁵ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 221; idem, *Territorials*, 3, 349; Edward Spiers, *The Army and Society, 1815-1914* (London: Longman, 1980), 279.

⁴⁸⁶ *Bucks Herald*, 14 Dec. 1907.

on the expiry of their initial term of service in 1912-13, and a further 46,000 had re-engaged for no more than two years (40.3 per cent).⁴⁸⁷ Consequently, 80 per cent of the Territorial Force had less than four years' service. Permitted to enlist at 17, many Territorials - over a third - were under the age of 19 at which overseas service was possible.⁴⁸⁸ A third had failed the modest musketry requirement in 1910 of firing 23 rounds and, in 1912, only 155,000 had camped for 15 days with over 6,000 entirely absent. Under what had become known as the Imperial Service Obligation (ISO) in 1910, by September 1913 only 1,090 officers and 17,788 men - barely seven per cent - had agreed in advance to serve overseas if required.⁴⁸⁹

As with the establishment shortfall, the yeomanry performed proportionally better in terms of acceptance of the ISO, with the Northumberland Hussars one of just five complete pre-war imperial service units.⁴⁹⁰ The Bucks CTA had passed a resolution in April 1910 strongly disapproving of the ISO on the grounds that the Territorial Force had been raised specifically for home service: introducing such a new condition would introduce an invidious distinction between men.⁴⁹¹

Of 18,000 young men in the OTC, only 283 had joined the regular army, and less than seven per cent of the Territorial Force as a whole did so annually.⁴⁹² In Bucks, an OTC (Junior Division) was formed at Wycombe Royal Grammar School and cadet companies at Aylesbury Grammar School and Slough Secondary School, although numbers were small at Wycombe. In the case of

⁴⁸⁷ Mitchinson, *Defending Albion*, 49.

⁴⁸⁸ Dennis, *Territorial Army*, 24.

⁴⁸⁹ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 221-22.

⁴⁹⁰ Hay, *Yeomanry Cavalry*, 239-40.

⁴⁹¹ BA, T/A 1/1, Minutes, 7 Apl. 1910.

⁴⁹² Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 222.

Aylesbury Grammar School, pressure came from the parents and 20 boys signed up at once, 40 boys being enrolled in 1914. The War Office supplied old rifles and carbines for drill purposes @ 1s.6d each.⁴⁹³

The 4th (Eton College) Volunteer Battalion, Oxfordshire Light Infantry as it had been designated in 1887 had reverted to the title of 2nd Bucks (Eton College) Rifle Volunteers in 1902, a move much welcomed in Bucks in view of the significance placed on units with a county designation.⁴⁹⁴ It now transferred to the OTC (Junior Division) as the Eton College OTC on 25 September 1908. Unusually, since the Eton corps had always carried Colours, it was permitted to continue to do so by King George V in 1911: he presented new Colours in 1930.

The OTC was not administered by the CTA but direct by the War Office with grants based on efficiency: £2 per cadet in the Senior Division based in universities and £1 in the Junior Division if 50 per cent attended camp. CTAs could establish reserve funds to assist the cadets. Those in the Junior Division could attain 'Certificate A' qualifying them for commissions in the Special Reserve and Territorial Force with reduced probation and no initial examination. 'Certificate B' from the Senior Division opened opportunities for regular commissions.⁴⁹⁵ The 3rd and 5th Oxford Cadet Battalions of the Church

⁴⁹³ *Bucks Examiner*, 17 Dec. 1909; Leslie Ashford and Christopher Haworth, *The History of Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe, 1562-1962* (High Wycombe: Royal Grammar School, 1962), 72-76; William Mead, *Aylesbury Grammar School, 1598-1988: A Commemorative Volume* (Brill: Peterhouse Press, 1998), 57-58.

⁴⁹⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 18 Jan. 1902; *Chesham Examiner*, 24 Jan. 1902.

⁴⁹⁵ Bowman and Connelly, *Edwardian Army*, 140; L. J. Collins, *Cadets: The Impact of War on the Cadet Movement* (Oldham: Jade Publishing, 2001), 18-21; John Sainsbury, *Hertfordshire's Army Cadets* (Welwyn: Hart Books, 2010), 6-12.

Lads Brigade - together comprising seven companies - were administered by the Bucks CTA, although formally affiliated to the King's Royal Rifle Corps.⁴⁹⁶

The Special Reserve, meanwhile, which Haldane had also seen as a means of offering a means of unemployment relief in winter months, attracted only 60 per cent of militiamen in 1908 despite a £2 bounty. It was generally between 16 and 18 per cent short of establishment. In March 1914, it was over 13,000 men short of establishment and 29 per cent of its strength was under 20 years of age.⁴⁹⁷

The artificial boost given to numbers in 1911 by allowing former regulars to be borne on the rolls meant little when such men had obligations to rejoin the regular army in the event of mobilisation.⁴⁹⁸ Many also left the Special Reserve to enlist in the army before completing the initial six months' training and, in any case, as all recruits were enlisted for general service they might not be posted to their linked regular battalions on mobilisation. The establishment of the Extra Reserve was also increased in 1911 in the hopes of attracting former regulars from a Veteran Reserve of men who had completed their obligation to the Army Reserve.⁴⁹⁹

Additionally, a Territorial Reserve was established in 1909 with anyone who had served at least one term in the Territorial Force eligible to enlist for between one and four years and to be able to attend Territorial drills and camps with the permission of commanding officers. The establishment was set at a third that of the existing Territorial unit establishment, Tonman Mosley circulating the county in December 1909 to indicate this would amount to 558 men in Bucks.

⁴⁹⁶ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 48.

⁴⁹⁷ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 222; Spiers, *Army and Society*, 279; Stoneman, 'Reformed British Militia', 248-49.

⁴⁹⁸ Bowman and Connelly, *Edwardian Army*, 121.

⁴⁹⁹ Mitchinson, *Defending Albion*, 13-17.

⁵⁰⁰ The Territorial Reserve failed everywhere miserably, as did the Territorial Technical Reserve of specialists in areas such as telecommunications and railways.

At least one successful innovation was the augmentation of the Territorial Force by the Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs), which became part of the Territorial Technical Reserve. VADs embraced some 26,000 women by 1912, but few of the men that Haldane had envisaged. ⁵⁰¹ Tonman Mosley called for the county's nurses to be registered as a preliminary to ascertaining those that might join the Territorial Force Nursing Service when addressing the first annual general meeting of the Bucks Nursing Association on 3 May 1909. Field Marshal Lord Grenfell then hosted a meeting at his London home on 15 November 1909, at which representatives of the CTA, Red Cross Society, St John's Ambulance Association, and the Bucks Nursing Association agreed to establish an organising committee to form VADs under the chairmanship of Dr J. C. Baker of Aylesbury. No less than 39 locations through the county were suggested as centres for nursing instruction. Lord Rothschild chaired the formal meeting at Aylesbury on 16 December 1909 to carry the measures into effect.

⁵⁰² The Aylesbury VAD, however, was not formed until March 1910. There were 28 VAD detachments (nine male and 19 female) in Bucks by 1914, with 788 personnel under the command of Colonel E. A. Burrows of Long Crendon as county director. ⁵⁰³ The VAD at Slough experimented for potential future need by laying out an entire hospital at Upton Park in October 1912. ⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰⁰ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 15 Jan. 1910; *South Bucks Standard*, 14 Jan. 1910.

⁵⁰¹ Mitchinson, *Defending Albion*, 19-21.

⁵⁰² *Bucks Herald*, 8 May, 13 and 20 Nov., and 18 Dec. 1909; 12 Mar. 1910; *Bucks Examiner*, 21 May and 24 Dec. 1900; *Buckingham Express*, 27 Nov. 1909.

⁵⁰³ Swann, *Citizen Soldiers*, 49; *Bucks Advertiser*, 16 Nov. 1912.

⁵⁰⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 2 Nov. 1912.

The Corps of Guides was another concept initiated in 1910, but it was greeted with scepticism by the military authorities. Nonetheless, a small corps of guides was formed in Bucks by Lieutenant Colonel William Levi after an appeal by Tonman Mosley for support in January 1913.⁵⁰⁵ Guides had to become acquainted with all roads and paths in their parishes and for five miles around it; all rivers, streams and canals; the nature of the countryside including woods; all farms, crops and livestock; and all sources of potential supplies.⁵⁰⁶ It was intended that the guides should be those not otherwise serving in the Territorials. Thus, the well-known 86 year-old Wycombe huntsman, Jack Westrup, readily agreed to join but then died in February 1913.⁵⁰⁷ The corps performed scouting tasks during the 1913 army manoeuvres in the county.⁵⁰⁸

The concept of a Veteran Reserve from 1910 onwards was more successful despite offering ‘no social advantage, no opportunity to camp or drill and not even a promise of royal patronage’.⁵⁰⁹ It was an idea of the proprietor of *The Spectator*, John St Loe Strachey, who was especially active in promoting it in Surrey. The Veteran Reserve was open to anyone over 45 with any kind of military service who could help plug vacancies in the Territorials on mobilisation by performing sedentary duties or assisting in guarding ‘vulnerable points’ such as bridges, tunnels, and gas works. Renamed the National Reserve in August 1911, it totalled 190,836 men by January 1913 despite the War Office repeatedly refusing to issue uniforms or weapons for practice. Members received no allowances and paid all their own expenses. Conceivably 70 per cent of National Reservists were former volunteers. Categorised into three

⁵⁰⁵ *South Bucks Standard*, 9 Jan. 1913; *Bucks Herald*, 11 Jan. 1913; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 11 Jan. 1913.

⁵⁰⁶ BA, D 105/165, papers issued to Henry Turnham, Five Arrows Hotel, Waddesdon.

⁵⁰⁷ *South Bucks Standard*, 27 Feb. 1913.

⁵⁰⁸ *South Bucks Standard*, 9 Oct. 1913.

⁵⁰⁹ Mitchinson, *Defending Albion*, 22.

classes in 1913, only about 14,000 were Class I men deemed fit enough for active service at home and abroad with around 46,000 in Class II fit for active service at home in fixed positions or administrative duties. The remainder in Class III were either unwilling to accept obligations, or physically incapable of doing so.⁵¹⁰

A meeting to explain the National Reserve was held in Aylesbury in June 1912, badges having been presented to almost 100 men at Buckingham by Lord Addington on 12 November 1911 on the same day as the annual church service for the new mayor. The first county commandant was Field Marshal Lord Grenfell but he relinquished command after moving out of the county in 1912, at which time he was succeeded by Major General Sir Reginald Talbot, the former Governor of Victoria, who resided at Medmenham.⁵¹¹ There were companies at Amersham and Chesham, Aylesbury (four), Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross, Buckingham, Fenny Stratford and Bletchley, Marlow, Newport Pagnell and Olney, Wolverton and Stony Stratford, and Wycombe. They were arranged in a three battalion organisation for North Bucks, Mid Bucks, and South Bucks.⁵¹²

It was taken very seriously with parades as in Aylesbury in July 1913, the four Aylesbury companies being inspected on the Market Square by Talbot in August 1913, with suitable martial music from the Printing Works Band.⁵¹³ In Bucks, there were 57 officers and 1,614 men in the National Reserve by November 1913, but only six officers and a single man in the Territorial

⁵¹⁰ Ibid, 22-33.

⁵¹¹ *Buckingham Express*, 11 and 18 Nov. 1911; 22 June and 16 Nov. 1912; *Bucks Advertiser*, 23 Dec. 1912; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 6 Dec. 1913; *South Bucks Standard*, 21 Nov. 1912.

⁵¹² *Bucks Herald*, 14 June 1913; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 14 June 1913.

⁵¹³ *Bucks Herald*, 5 and 12 July, and 9 Aug. 1913.

Reserve.⁵¹⁴ It was reported in February 1914 that two officers and 210 men from the Bucks National Reserve had volunteered for any duties in a national emergency, whilst 15 officers and 453 men were willing to undertake any home service duties required of them.⁵¹⁵ There was also a Bucks squadron of the Legion of Frontiersmen, based at the Swan Hotel at Wycombe, whose activities were advertised alongside those of the Territorials and National Reserve, its commanding officer being a former volunteer, Richard Graefe, the town's mayor from 1911 to 1913.⁵¹⁶ Formed in December 1904, the Legion of Frontiersmen was intended to be a kind of proto-field intelligence organisation throughout the empire.

It should be noted that, in addition, to the visibility of Territorials, the regular army also came more to the attention of the county than hitherto from large-scale manoeuvres in the immediate pre-war period. An innovative camp of exercise was held at Chobham in 1853, and Aldershot was purchased as a major training base between 1854 and 1861, but there were then no more manoeuvres in Britain between 1853 and 1871, or between 1875 and 1890. The Military Manoeuvres Act (1897) prohibited any disturbance of antiquarian remains, places of historic interest or exceptional beauty, which severely impacted on any entrenchments although the Military Land Act (1892) allowed for the purchase of 40,000 acres on Salisbury Plain, which acquisition began in 1897.

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The first manoeuvres on the newly acquired land took place in 1898, but it was the South African War that provided the stimulus for increased attention to their

⁵¹⁴ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 6 Dec. 1913; *Bucks Herald*, 6 Dec. 1912; 22 Nov. 1913.

⁵¹⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 7 Feb. 1914.

⁵¹⁶ *South Bucks Standard*, 23 May and 5 Sept. 1912; 12 June 1913.

⁵¹⁷ D. M. Leeson, 'Playing at War: The British Military Manoeuvres of 1898', *War in History* 15 (2008), 432-61.

value. Salisbury Plain was the centre for those in 1905, 1906, 1907 and 1910. The areas used extended into Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire in 1903; Essex in 1904 for a simulated amphibious landing; Hampshire in 1908; Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, and Oxfordshire in 1909; Cambridgeshire and Suffolk in 1912; and Northamptonshire and Bucks in 1913.⁵¹⁸ There were also smaller scale annual manoeuvres such as those by the Aldershot Command.

Aldershot Command manoeuvres took place in Bucks in both 1905 and 1907. Those in September 1905 saw a detachment from the RBH acting as scouts for the 1st Division when it crossed the Thames valley between Bourne End and Henley. The idea was for the defence to hold a six-mile line along the Chilterns against a supposed invasion force coming from the north-west of over 270,000 men. Whilst over 5,400 men, 1,283 horses, 44 guns and 250 wagons were detailed for the defence, the opposing force consisted of just a few men. Camps were established at West Wycombe, Little Marlow, and Medmenham. It was deemed that, whilst the first enemy attack had failed, the position was then outflanked but heavy rain led to the abandonment of a planned retirement. Subsequently, the defenders crossed a pontoon bridge at Marlow - although it had to be lifted to allow passage of one of Salters' steam passenger launches - in pursuit of a supposed enemy advance towards London, but heavy mist precluded further action. Marlow saw a 'battle' on 27 September, the booming of heavy guns making 'many of the old Marlow houses shake'. Local contractors did well, supplying the camp at West Wycombe with 21 tons of wood, 16,200 lbs. of meat, and 15,396 lbs. of oats. Generally, the troops were well behaved but, on the weekend of 23-24 September, troops were confined to the immediate vicinity of the camp at West Wycombe and descended in large numbers on the village's five licensed premises. Drinks ran dry and there was

⁵¹⁸ Simon Batten, *Futile Exercise? The British Army's Preparations for War, 1902-14* (Warwick: Helion, 2018), 23-24.

considerable damage to glasses, mugs and furniture at the George and Dragon and the Black Boy. A leg of mutton was stolen from the George and Dragon and a fire started in the Black Boy's tap room.⁵¹⁹



Postcard showing scenes from the 1907 manoeuvres in Bucks [BMMT]

In September 1907 three officers and 60 men of the RBH formed part of the attacking 'Red Force' based at Addington Park', the defending 'Blue Force' camped at Shardeloes, Hartwell Park, and Prebendal Farm, Aylesbury. Local suppliers again did well. Three Aylesbury firms provided 13,000 2lb loaves with Aylesbury Brewery Company supplying the beer. 'Blue Force' put Whitchurch and Oving into a state of defence with Quainton designated as a 'keep', a captive observation balloon tethered on Pitchcott Hill: 'The roads were

⁵¹⁹ *Bucks Herald*, 23 Sept. 1905; *South Bucks Standard*, 15 and 29 Sept. 1905.

all guarded, and the troops lay hidden behind the hedgerows, all ready for the enemy.’⁵²⁰

In the major army manoeuvres in 1913, held from 22 to 26 September, the CIGS, Field Marshal Sir John French, led ‘Brown’ force of over 38,000 men against an opposing ‘White’ force of over 7,000 men including yeomanry from the London and North Midland Brigades and Territorial cyclists commanded by Major General Charles Monro. French, who had married a daughter of Richard Selby-Lowndes of Bletchley, and rented a cottage on the Hanslope estate for many years, established his headquarters at Hanslope Park, the home of his wife’s sister. A grand military tournament was held at Wolverton Park, preliminary divisional training taking place around Wolverton and Stony Stratford after the arrival of the first troops on 29 August. Some troops were also accommodated in Halton Park, whilst those based at Aldershot moved up through Marlow and Henley, crossing the Thames on pontoon bridges.

‘Brown’ force advanced through north Bucks on 21 September with ‘action’ at Buckingham, Fenny Stratford, Mursley, Swanbourne, Thornton, and Winslow.

⁵²¹ There was even ‘action’ between an unarmed dirigible and two unarmed aircraft over Great Missenden, the manoeuvres being the first occasion on which Halton became associated with the Royal Flying Corps with aircraft also stationed at Saunderton. ‘Brown’ force then pursued ‘White’ force into Northamptonshire from 22 September onwards.⁵²²

⁵²⁰ *Bucks Herald*, 14 and 21 Sept. 1907; *Bucks Examiner*, 27 Sept. 1907; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 14 and 21 Sept. 1907; *South Bucks Standard*, 20 Sept. 1907; Wilson, *Chronicles of Whitchurch*, 68-69.

⁵²¹ Batten, *Futile Exercise*, 139-41.

⁵²² Batten, *Futile Exercise*, 140-41; Francis Hanford, *First Landing: The Story of the First Arrival of Aircraft on the Halton Estate* (Halton: Trenchard Museum, 2014); David Scott and

It was a novel experience for many, the arrival of the 2nd Seaforth Highlanders in Wolverton on 29 August being greeted with particular enthusiasm by the women employed at McCorquodale's. According to the *Wolverton Express*, Wolverton seemed transformed into a garrison town on a bank holiday with 'swarms' massing 'along the thoroughfares'.⁵²³ The RBH also took part, operating with the 19th Territorial Division.⁵²⁴



Troops in Winslow, 23 September 1913 during the manoeuvres in Bucks [Winslow Local History Society]

One slightly odd occurrence in October 1913 was a controversy in Chesham. The UDC first sought a visit from the 2nd Battalion, OBLI when it proposed to

Ian Simmons, *High Wycombe's Contribution to Aviation* (High Wycombe: Privately published, 2008), 13-14.

⁵²³ *Wolverton Express*, 5 Sept. 1913; *North Bucks Times*, 27 Sept. 1913; John Sunderland and Margaret Webb, *All The Business of War: The British Army Exercise of 1913, the British Expeditionary Force and the Great War* 2nd edn. (Newbury: Privately printed, 2013), 24-28; Chrismus Parsons, 'The 1913 Manoeuvres', *Milton Keynes Journal* 2 (1973), 39-43.

⁵²⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 20 Sept. 1913.

march through the county on its way back from Aldershot after that year's autumn manoeuvres, and then refused to countenance the visit on a Sunday. It led to a particularly angry public meeting on 1 October at the Skating Rink attended by an estimated 800 people, who believed the council was showing disloyalty to King and Army. A resolution was passed censuring the council. There was a further noisy meeting of the council on 8 October at which one councillor, Ralph Howard, was roundly denounced by his own brother.⁵²⁵

By 1914 the Territorial Force had fallen a long way short of Haldane's concept, fatally weakened from the start by optimistic forecasts and political expediency. In 1903 the auxiliary forces had represented 3.6 per cent of the male population, but in April 1913 the Territorials represented only 0.63 per cent of the male population of the United Kingdom.⁵²⁶ It offered better organisation than the auxiliaries of old and was much stronger in terms of supporting services. Unfortunately, its perceived weaknesses undermined its ability and status as a means to expand the army in time of war.

⁵²⁵ *Bucks Herald*, 23 Aug., and 4 and 18 Oct. 1913; *Bucks Examiner*, 8 Aug., 5 Sept., and 10 Oct. 1913.

⁵²⁶ Ian F. W. Beckett, 'The Territorial Force', in Beckett and Simpson (eds), *Nation in Arms*, 128-63, at 129.