

Buckinghamshire: A Military History

by

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Chapter Ten: Since 1945

In October 1948 there was a Royal Review by King George VI in Hyde Park, in which some 8,000 men of the reconstituted TA participated. It was, however, also the last major parade of the TA as an entirely volunteer organisation for ten years, illustrating the almost constant state of readjustment required of the Territorials in terms of role and organisation in the post-war years. Partly, the post-war story of the TA reflects constant change driven by frequently shifting perceptions of strategic need throughout the 'Cold War' and subsequent conflicts but also the often-uncertain state of the British economy. Certainly, the TA's post-war experience could not be divorced from the continuing retrenchment that affected the army as a whole but, initially, the lesson of the 1930s appeared to be that a large army with large reserves was necessary until global stability was assured.

The most immediate threat to Britain in 1946-47 was not initially seen as deriving from the Soviet Union's presence in Central and Eastern Europe, since it was assumed that the Soviets would not be ready to wage a large-scale conventional war until about 1957. More significant were not only immediate post-war occupation responsibilities in Germany, Austria, Italy, and the former Italian colony of Libya but also wider security concerns. Whilst Britain left the Indian sub-continent and Palestine in 1947, the Middle East remained a vital strategic area, and a presence in the Far East appeared essential for the security of the Commonwealth.

A decision to continue wartime conscription had been taken in October 1944 but it was felt necessary to demobilise actual wartime servicemen as soon as possible: men continued to be conscripted under wartime legislation until 31 December 1946, the final batch being demobilised in March 1949. Clearly, therefore, the substantial manpower demands would have to be satisfied,

notwithstanding increasing financial difficulty exacerbated by the withdrawal of US wartime economic support, with concomitant convertibility and balance of payments crises coinciding in July 1947. Retention of conscription in the form of national service, whilst unpopular with the public appeared a relatively cheap, if not always efficient, means of attempting to meet the manpower challenge. The decision to bring in new national service legislation, therefore, was announced in November 1946. Subsequently, the beginning of the Berlin Blockade in June 1948 heralded the deterioration of relations with the Soviet Union and suggested a major conflict potentially sooner than previously envisaged hastening British participation in what became the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in April 1949. The outbreak of the Malayan Emergency in June 1948 also signified the growing threat of (usually communist-inspired) nationalist insurgency in colonial and dependent territories.¹

The question of a reconstituted TA, therefore, became bound up in the issue of national service and, through integration into it the TA remained within the single national army concept. Under the National Service Act of 1947, national servicemen were initially to serve one year with the regulars and six years in the TA, although it was not intended to commence national service until 1 January 1949 with the first national servicemen not reaching TA units until the summer camps in 1950. Conscription itself was initially intended to endure only until 1954 with the assumption that, by then, greater stability and a reduction of commitments would enable an all-volunteer army to be revived. Under pressure from the Army Council and in the context of the increased threat perception, the National Service (Amendment) Act of 1948 changed this to 18 months with the regulars and five and a half years in the TA. The National Service (Military Forces) (Amendment) Regulations of 1950, issued against the background of

¹ Beckett, *Territorials*, 164-65.

the Korean War (1950-53), then amended this to two years with the army and three and a half years in the TA.

So far as the TA was concerned, the Council of Territorial Associations raised the future of the force with the Army Council in November 1945 but, at that stage, no firm decisions had been taken beyond continuing associations in their present form. It was suggested that, in the interim, units be kept together as clubs or voluntary associations until matters were decided. In fact, work on the outline of the post-war TA had begun within the War Office in May 1945 with a preliminary survey of the current status of pre-war units, whether active or in suspended animation. On 14 June 1945, in concluding that the post-war TA must be a properly balanced force and meet the needs of the active field force, the Army Council decided that it must ascertain the extent to which disbanding units might be acceptable. On 26 June 1946 the Army Council accepted that a reconstituted TA should be responsible for home defence, making good deficiencies in the field force, and providing the 'second line' as a basis for wartime expansion.²

Compared to the pre-war TA, although it would have a substantial anti-aircraft component, there would be new kinds of 'teeth' and support units that had not existed prior to 1939. The TA must also have a far higher state of readiness than previously. It was envisaged that 250,000 Territorials would be needed for anti-aircraft units, 50,000 to complete field force formations, and possibly 320,000 as a nucleus for wartime expansion on the assumption that there would be eight TA divisions in peace expanding to 24 in the event of war. This was almost three times the size of the TA at any time since 1908, hence the need for a substantial component of national servicemen. Since the first national servicemen would not be available to the TA until 1950 it was decided initially

² Ibid, 166.

to try and obtain 175,000 volunteers: 75,000 would be allocated to anti-aircraft units, 10,000 allocated for completing the active field force, and the remainder providing skeleton units for eight divisions. In effect, the TA would be in a state of limbo for some three years until the full impact of conscription was felt.

On 7 August 1946 the Army Council agreed on a provisional framework for two armoured divisions, six infantry divisions, three independent armoured brigades, three independent infantry brigades, a 'beach brigade', and a brigade group for Northern Ireland. The whole would be organised in three regional corps. It was decided to reopen recruiting for volunteers aged between 18 and 40 for a four year term of engagement on the assumption that 15-day camps could be held in 1947, with the other liabilities set at 34 compulsory training periods (12 of which could take the form of weekend camps) and up to 50 voluntary training periods.

In many respects, the policy to bring in national service had preceded any actual strategic decisions as to the deployment of the TA. Initially, since the main priority was the Middle East rather than Europe, four TA divisions were intended to be ready for that theatre within three months of any mobilisation. By November 1949, however, the Chiefs of Staff had concluded that two of the four TA divisions to be made available after mobilisation should be allocated to the defence of Europe. In an echo of the distrust of Territorial artillery prior to 1914, the Territorial armoured division was not intended to be among the first four mobilised.³ Montgomery, CIGS from 1946-48, had envisaged the TA as the basis of a national army but by May 1947 he recognised that it was short of men and equipment. Thus, 'a sense of humour will often be necessary, as is

³ Ibid, 167-68.

always the case'.⁴ By 1953 the TA had only 252,000 men from an establishment of 410,000.

The formal announcement of reconstitution was made on 19 November 1946. Those units in suspended animation were reactivated on 1 January 1947 although no personnel were assigned until commanding officers and permanent staff had been appointed in March and April 1947. There had been some concern in February that the original deadline of 1 April could not be met since only 29 associations had expressed the capability to be ready, the supply of recruiting forms and posters being delayed by the consequences of the national fuel crisis. Another older grievance also resurfaced in January 1947 with a demand from some quarters that Territorial officers be once more allowed to wear the pre-war 'T'. There was concern at potential differentiation between volunteers and national servicemen within the TA and a War Office circular on 26 March 1947 made it clear that the 'T' would not return. The policy was reiterated in March 1948 and again in May 1958.

Upon reconstitution, the Bucks county units were designated as 299 (RBY) Field Regiment replacing 99th Field Regiment, and 645 (Bucks) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment replacing the Bucks Battalion. There was considerable opposition within the Bucks CTA to the designation of the Bucks Battalion as anti-aircraft artillery, it being insisted that the unit must retain black buttons and its Bucks Battalion badge. It was clear the War Office would not relent and the CTA then attempted unsuccessfully to extract a promise that it would be reconstituted as infantry in the event of a general reformation of TA infantry.⁵ The supposed War Office 'consultation' with Sir Everard Pauncefort-Duncombe as acting Chairman of the CTA was a sham and, attending a meeting

⁴ David French, *Army, Empire and Cold War: The British Army and Military Policy, 1945-71* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 46-47.

⁵ BA, T/A 1/2, CTA Mins., 7 Nov. and 4 Dec. 1946.

at Eastern Command on 29 October 1946, Lord Cottesloe was informed that the battalion would become LAA. As in the efforts made to save the 1st and 2nd Bucks from disbandment in 1944, Cottesloe approached Princess Marina but, as before, the Princess could not properly intervene.⁶

Within 299 Field Regiment, now armed with 25-pounders and commanded by Leonard Tetley, batteries were allocated to Aylesbury (headquarters), Taplow/Marlow, and Buckingham/Bletchley. Lord Burnham returned to the regiment in the role of honorary colonel until 1953.⁷ 645 LAA, commanded by Hugo Boehm, had batteries armed with 40mm Standard Bofors anti-aircraft guns located at Aylesbury, Slough (headquarters), and High Wycombe/Wooburn/Chesham. The pre-war 251 AA Battery at Slough was no longer a responsibility of what was now designated (from March 1947) as the Bucks County Territorial and Auxiliary Forces Association (CTAFA): 480 HAA Regiment was reformed entirely in Berkshire. However, two new units were to be raised: 162 Independent Infantry Brigade Ordnance Field Park, RAOC at Newport Pagnell, and 56 Medium Workshop, REME at Slough. A WRAC unit was raised subsequently at Slough in 1952. The Association itself was to be chaired once more by Frank Watson.⁸ Watson was succeeded by Lionel Tetley in 1954.⁹ Philip Hall retired as secretary in 1951 and was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel D. L. C. Reynolds of the Welch Regiment, who was from Pembrokeshire. The CTAFA had anticipated many applicants and

⁶ RA, MDKDH/ARMPOR/11/56, Cottesloe to Herbert, 24 Oct. 1946; 11/57, Herbert to Cottesloe, 28 Oct. 1946; 11/58 Cottesloe to Herbert, 31 Oct. 1946.

⁷ BA, D206/37, War Office to Burnham, 8 Dec. 1953.

⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 21 Mar. 1947; 24 Dec. 1948; BA, T/A 1/24, Annual Reports, 1946-47 and 1947-48.

⁹ BA, D/FR 161/3/34/1, Watson to Cottesloe, 3 Jan. 1954.

urged the War Office to increase the annual salary from £700-800 to £800-1,000.¹⁰

Recruitment was opened on 1 April 1947 and a more concerted recruiting drive launched in May 1948 with frequent advertisements in the press. The advertisements stressed that the TA offered an ‘interesting pastime’ with extra pay, additional holidays granted by most employers to attend camp, clubs, sport and other social activities ‘such as dancing, whist drives, etc.’.¹¹ The attractiveness of whist drives was perhaps arguable. Initial recruitment was slow, a major publicity campaign in 1947 including posters, press and cinema advertisements, and appeals to employers bringing in just one man for 645 LAA.¹² Major Ralph Verney, who had been tasked with raising a battery for 299 in the north of the county, used the meeting of the Steeple Claydon and District Branch of the British Legion in June 1947 to advertise the revival. Verney stressed that the obligation was just the summer camp and 30 hours’ of drill, the latter requiring only 15 sessions per annum.¹³

Aylesbury RDC received the Association’s thanks in May 1947 for allowing employees to join and the Borough Council was similarly praised for permitting a demonstration of a 25-pounder by regulars from Colchester to take place on the Recreation Ground in July 1948.¹⁴ A concerted effort in the north of the county for 299 Field Regiment included recruiting drives at Bletchley on 26 October 1948 with another at Buckingham on the following day. There was an attempt in particular to draw previous members back into the TA. At

¹⁰ *Bucks Advertiser*, 27 Jan., 15 June, and 10 Nov. 1951.

¹¹ *Bucks Advertiser*, 4, 11 and 18 Oct. 1947; *Bucks Herald*, 7 and 21 May 1948; 6 and 13 Aug. 1948; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 1 Apl. 1948.

¹² BA, T/A 1/2, CTAFA Mins., 10 Nov. 1947.

¹³ *Bucks Advertiser*, 7 June 1947.

¹⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 30 May 1947; 16 July 1948.

Buckingham, where the TA had earlier had a recruiting stand during the Buckingham Show, the band of the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment played in the Market Square from 1200 to 1300, there was an exhibition of 25-pounders, and addresses at the Bull Ring by Sir Everard Pauncefort-Duncombe, Lionel Tetley, the Labour MP for Buckingham, Aidan Crawley, and the Prospective Conservative Candidate, Frank Markham, who would unseat Crawley in the 1951 general election. Previously, Markham had been a National Labour MP and, as it happened, Crawley was to return subsequently to the Commons as a Conservative. A. B. Clifford of Stowe School also addressed the meeting, emphasising that TA service enabled a man 'to lead an intelligently planned life'.¹⁵ A more general appeal was made at Wolverton in November 1948, the band of the Essex Regiment providing some concerts, including one in the Railway Works Canteen.¹⁶

Particular appeals were made to ex-servicemen as at Bletchley and Buckingham, recruitment being somewhat slow. In October 1948 299 Field Regiment had 11 officers but only 26 other ranks and needed another 71 other ranks at Aylesbury and 55 at Buckingham in some very specific roles such as fitters and battery surveyors. 645 LAA, meanwhile, had 13 officers and 41 other ranks and needed men in all categories to meet its establishment of 43 officers and 870 other ranks.¹⁷ Guy Crouch, who was to succeed Cottesloe as second honorary colonel of 645 LAA in 1951, felt that the demonstrations put on at Buckingham, Bletchley, and High Wycombe had done little good and one forthcoming at Slough would do no better. There had also been displays of uniforms in shop windows and the cinema foyer at Wycombe. He suggested that what was needed was 'the good-will of the women folk' and, therefore,

¹⁵ *Bucks Advertiser*, 11 Sept., and 23 and 30 Oct. 1948.

¹⁶ *Bucks Advertiser*, 27 Nov. 1948.

¹⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 8 and 22 Oct. 1948; BA, T/A 1/2, CTAFAs Mins., 8 Nov. 1948.

smoking concerts and dances might be the answer. Two dances in Aylesbury then had no result. Others suggested smaller displays at British Legion branches and agricultural shows. A 645 LAA band might be a draw but the War Office did not allow men to engage only as bandsmen.¹⁸

By March 1949, the Bucks Territorials stood at 48 officers and 214 other ranks. In March 1950 the total was 46 officers and 278 men. By November it was 55 officers and 299 men. Oddly, although Bucks had been transferred from Southern to Eastern Command, most of its units remained in Southern Command.¹⁹

Given the nature of the TA upon reconstitution, the emphasis was upon recruiting older men than had been the case before 1939. The preference now was for those with wartime experience who could act as leaders and instructors for national servicemen. Among inducements offered was a bounty free of income tax. Understandably, many wartime servicemen had no wish to come forward when they had so recently re-established themselves in civilian life and had experienced long separation from homes and families. Moreover, conditions were very different from those of the inter-war years since employment was fuller, wages better, and most families could now afford a summer holiday. The acquiescence of women for men fulfilling TA commitments remained especially important: many single Territorials left once they were married. With recruiting slow in the summer of 1947, consideration was given as to whether standing camps might be set up close to commercial holiday camps to facilitate easy contact between soldiers and their families. Some questioned, indeed, whether the whole idea of the summer camp was now out of date and might be replaced by more weekend camps. In June 1947,

¹⁸ BA, T/A 1/2, CTAFAs Mins. 8 Nov, 1948 and 19 July 1949.

¹⁹ Beckett, *Call to Arms*, 131; BA, T/A 1/24, Annual Reports, 1948-49, 1949-50; T/A 1/2, CTAFAs Mins., 6 Nov. 1950.

however, it was decided there could be no encouragement of 'Butlins' for the TA since this would erode proper training, and, in February 1948, it was also decided that dispensing with summer camp altogether would have no training benefits.²⁰

In the case of Bucks, 299 Field Regiment camped at Westdown on Salisbury Plain in 1949 while 645 LAA went to Cleve near Bude.²¹ Old echoes were raised in 1952, however, when the Bucks branch of the National Farmers Union complained that annual summer camp was interfering with harvest.²² It can be noted in passing that Medium Workshops did not have conventional annual camps but instead attended Command workshops.²³

One novel experience for 299 Field Regiment was to participate in Queen Elizabeth II's coronation on 2 June 1953, Captain Lawrence Verney and Lance Bombardier Brown taking part in the procession and a sergeant and two ORs in lining the route. The former were reminded that they would have to cover about 13 miles whilst the latter group would need to stand at attention for 45 minutes on end.²⁴ At least one Bucks Territorial, Corporal Tripp from New Bradwell, had also lined the route at the Royal Wedding of Princess Elizabeth in 1947.²⁵ The camp at Westdown in September 1955 was for 43rd Wessex Division as a whole, 294 (Dorset Yeomanry) Field Regiment and 296 (Devon Yeomanry) Field Regiment also participating.²⁶

²⁰ Beckett, *Territorials*, 170.

²¹ *Bucks Herald*, 27 May and 24 June 1949.

²² *Bucks Herald*, 14 Nov. 1952; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 25 Oct. 1952.

²³ *Bucks Herald*, 19 June 1954.

²⁴ BA, AR 35/2018 [BMMT 721/7], Orders, 23 Apl. 1953.

²⁵ *Bucks Advertiser*, 22 Nov. 1947.

²⁶ BA, AR 87/2004 [BMMT 521/1], Camp Orders, 1955.

Other activities mirrored older patterns. The TA Club in Aylesbury had reopened in December 1948 for the first time since 1939.²⁷ Regular appearances were also made at local events as in the past to attract men such as the demonstration by 645 LAA at RAF Halton's 'Battle of Britain Day' in September 1952.²⁸ Links were further emphasised when the Second World War memorial to 117 men of the 1st Bucks Battalion was unveiled by Princess Marina in St Mary's, Aylesbury on 11 November 1951. Consideration of changes to the battalion memorial chapel began in December 1947 with Webster & Cannon undertaking the changes, new candlesticks provided by Ivor Newton of Haddenham, and the costs partly met from the surplus of the wartime Bucks Welfare Fund for Troops as well as by contributions from OCA branches.²⁹ The memorial to the war dead of 99 Field Regiment was unveiled at Buckingham on 24 January 1954.³⁰

It became increasingly difficult to find sufficient volunteers generally, however, and a major national recruiting campaign was launched in October 1948. Other recruiting drives throughout the late 1940s and 1950s tended to emphasise challenge and adventure in training. Interestingly, a survey carried out in 1965 by consultants, Colman, Prentis and Varley, suggested TA social activities certainly promoted comradeship, but that derived from 'good, hard, interesting training is far more important'. Unfortunately, it concluded that what deterred men most was repetitive and uninteresting training on outdated equipment.³¹

²⁷ *Bucks Herald*, 24 Dec. 1948.

²⁸ *Bucks Herald*, 26 Sept. 1952.

²⁹ BA, AR 145/199 [BMMT 438/1]; T/A 6/25; *Bucks Herald*, 9 and 16 Nov. 1951; AR 91/2015, Wycombe OCA Branch Mins., 28 May 1951 and 31 Aug. 1952.

³⁰ BA, AR 56/2015 [BMMT 539/2].

³¹ Beckett, *Territorials*, 171.

One particular problem appeared to be that officers and soldiers might be out of pocket as a result of camp expenses. In January 1950, the Council of Territorial Associations commissioned a report from Brigadier R. Ashton Hamlyn, a chartered accountant, on possible remedies. Hamlyn concluded that, on average, soldiers were £8.18s.6d out of pocket at camp and recommended that an additional £4 be paid for each week's attendance so that an individual would receive £12 for one week and £16 for two weeks. He also suggested that officers should receive a similar bounty for camp attendance. Having mislaid the report for six months, the War Office was uncomfortable with 'awkward suggestions in regard to the recognition of loss of earnings', and the calculation that such a concessions would cost £240,000 in 1950-51 rising to £425,000 by 1954 if one in four national servicemen chose to join the TA. In the event a working party reporting in October 1950 found there was no case for offering any more money to other ranks but it did recommend offering an additional £5 to cover subalterns' expenses, as this would only cost £25,000 in 1951-52.³²

Dealing with national servicemen, who might or might not wish to be involved with the TA, provided a new challenge, requiring a very different approach. The advantage was full numbers but national servicemen could only really be made use of at annual camp and here their age, rank and potential experience of service in operational theatres might actually lead to them displacing volunteers in more interesting posts. Efforts were made to persuade national servicemen to sign on as volunteers but relatively few did so. Those who did join the TA were known as 'National Service Volunteers' until their part-time liability expired, at which point they became simply Volunteers. Those declining to join the TA were 'National Service Non-Volunteers'. In theory, national servicemen were assigned to a unit within travelling distance of their homes to facilitate attendance at evening and weekend training.

³² Ibid, 173.

An army operational research group report in early 1953, based on a survey of 982 men in 24 units, found that only between nine and 27 per cent were prepared to contemplate joining the TA, the average being 16 per cent. Much depended upon the approval or 'neutrality' of a wife - two-thirds of women appeared to disapprove of the TA - but the role of employers as so often in the past was also crucial. Men also considered what other opportunities for sport and social activities existed within their area. Travelling time to drill centres was not a particular issue but those living closest were likely to re-engage. Those who had no intention of joining the TA expressed dislike for the way TA commitments interfered with their leisure, conflict between work and such commitments, and the fear of loss of earnings.

The primary difficulty was that the TA was deprived of the 17-20 age-group whilst national servicemen were only liable to 60 days' training in their three and a half years (inclusive of the 15-day annual camp). Fines could be levied for non-attendance but, if days were missed, a national serviceman could opt to undertake four one-hour training periods in lieu. True volunteers were liable to 30 hours a year in addition to camp with a £12 bounty offered for an additional 30 hours' training. Liability for part-time training for national servicemen, however, effectively ceased in 1956 since it was reduced to just 20 days over three years, not much more than one camp in three and a half years, although men continued to be posted to TA units. In April 1957 the training liability for national servicemen ceased altogether, the smaller numbers attending camps immediately apparent.

The April 1957 Defence White Paper issued in the wake of the Suez affair, and in the belief that too large a share of GDP was being devoted to defence, placed the emphasis upon nuclear deterrence with a concomitant reduction in conventional forces. It signalled the end of national service as a whole, this being phased out from 1960 with the last national serviceman leaving the army

in May 1963 and, in theory, the TA in 1966. Since national servicemen represented over 60 per cent of the TA by 1960, this posed a significant new challenge.³³

In the case of 299 Field Regiment, 63 per cent were national servicemen in November 1952, the proportion in the batteries at Slough and Taplow rising to 71 per cent. 299 Field Regiment had 41 officers and 160 other ranks as genuine Territorial volunteers in 1957 but a further nine officers and 412 other ranks were national servicemen. As for 645 LAA (431 LAA from 1955), there were 14 officers and 67 other ranks as volunteers but 219 national servicemen.³⁴ Overall, Bucks TA units had 44 officers and 239 other ranks as volunteers in July 1953 with six officers and 273 additional national servicemen. In September 1955 there were 43 officers and 200 other ranks as volunteers and 12 officers and 281 other ranks as national servicemen. Territorial WRAC volunteers remained small in numbers: one officer and 12 other ranks in 1953, and two officers and 16 other ranks in 1955.³⁵

Some of these difficulties are apparent from 299 Field Regiment's annual camp reports. In August 1957 national servicemen did not come to camp at Westdown so not all guns could be manned and it was difficult to assess the training standard of the regiment as whole. In any case, much of the exercises took the form of higher formation training that was not always relevant to most of the men. In June 1958 there was a shortage of volunteers at Otterburn camp so only 10 of 24 guns could actually be manned. Otterburn was also a tented camp with inadequate mattresses so disgusting that the Quartermaster refused to accept them so paillasses were issued instead. The ablutions and showers proved adequate but there was no real drainage system and drains blocked after two

³³ Ibid, 173-74; Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 281.

³⁴ BA, T/A 1/3, CTAFA Mins., 2 Nov. 1955 and 4 Mar. 1957.

³⁵ *Bucks Advertiser*, 18 July 1953; 10 Sept. 1955.

days' rain. There were individual battery shoots, however, at Larkhill, Aldershot, and Camberley in the course of the year.

Castlemartin camp in July 1959 was altogether more successful although the many horseflies in the training areas were so vicious they did not encourage anyone remaining longer than needed. A civil defence camp rather than a gunnery camp was held at Pendell near Epsom in June 1960 while the May 1964 camp at Devizes, which was also devoted to civil defence, was very popular with the middle Saturday spent at the seaside as a day off despite the poor quality of the accommodation. The May 1962 camp was split between Westdown and Okehampton, the second week including a co-operation exercise with 129 Infantry Brigade. Attendance levels comprised 74 per cent of officers and 39 per cent of other ranks in 1959, and 64 per cent of officers and 79 per cent of other ranks in 1960, six officers being absent on a gunnery course.³⁶

The number of Bucks Territorials in all units was maintained at roughly the same level: 52 officers and 1,079 other ranks in August 1957, 65 officers and 1,069 other ranks in 1958-59, 63 officers and 1,091 other ranks in 1959-60. These figures, however, included national servicemen. Thus, with the end of national service commitment to the TA and the reorganisation of units, the total fell to 43 officers and 363 men in 1961.³⁷

In 1958 it was concluded that 'recruiting columns' were not effective and that there should be more static displays. Thus, in 1959 there was such a display in the foyer of the Granada cinema in Aylesbury for the showing of Kenneth

³⁶ BA, AR 56/2007 [BMMT 576/1], Annual Reports on Camp, 1957; 29 Aug. 1958; 17 Sept. 1959; 4 June 1960; 4 June 1962, June 1964; T/A 1/25, Annual Reports, 1957-58, 1958-59, 1960-61.

³⁷ BA, T/A 1/25, Annual Reports, 1957-58, 1958-59, 1960-61.

More's 'North West Frontier'.³⁸ Efforts were made in 1962-63, especially in Slough, with a dinner for industrialists and local employers organised by the High Sheriff, Gerald Mobbs of Slough Estates, whose son, Sir Nigel Mobbs would also be High Sheriff and then Lord Lieutenant from 1997 to 2005. There were also a number of dances, the net increase for the year being of the order of 100 men. There were further efforts in High Wycombe in 1963-64. In 1965-66, the Bucks total of Territorials was 31 officers and 384 men.³⁹ In Slough in May 1965 there was a football match between Territorials and Terry Downes' Personality XI, Downes having been world middleweight boxing champion in 1961-62. The match received good press coverage and attracted 400-500 spectators.⁴⁰ Whether it attracted any new recruits is another matter, this aspect going unreported.

Within a short time of reconstitution, it was concluded that anti-aircraft guns were of little utility in a missile age and, in 1950, a total of 43 of the 76 units removed from the TA order of battle were artillery although, in most cases, units reverted to previous roles rather than being disbanded. On 1 December 1954, it was announced that AA Command would be disbanded with effect from 10 March 1955. Conventional anti-aircraft units would only be retained for the defence of the field force, ports, bases, and vital targets. In all, over 90 units formerly part of AA Command or within the army groups were reduced by amalgamation - sometimes by multiple amalgamation - leaving four anti-aircraft brigades for home defence and three Army Groups, RA for support of the field force. The end of the coast artillery followed with effect from 31 October 1956,

³⁸ BA, T/A 1/8, CTAFA Finance and General Purposes Mins., 6 Oct. 1958; author recollection.

³⁹ BA, T/A 1/25, Annual Report, 1962-63, 1965-66; T/A 1/8, CTAFA Finance and General Purposes Mins., 5 Nov. 1962.

⁴⁰ BA, T/A 1/8, CTAFA Finance and General Purposes Mins., 31 May 1965.

with the removal of another 28 major TA units through disbandment, amalgamation or conversion, leaving just 89 field and LAA units for the field force. Some attempt was made to persuade TA officers from disbanding anti-aircraft and coastal units to join the so-called Mobile Defence Corps, nominally part of the Army Emergency Reserve (as the Supplementary Reserve had been renamed in 1952) intended to support civil agencies. The MDC itself, however, was then abolished in December 1958 since it was felt that the TA could assist Civil Defence without the need for any additional special organisation.

The changes affected Bucks substantially. In March 1950 the War Office planned to amalgamate 299 Field Regiment with 387 (Oxfordshire Yeomanry) Field Regiment with two batteries in Bucks - one battery less a troop at Aylesbury, the troop at Marlow, and the other battery at Taplow but with most of its personnel at Slough. It would mean the end of the Buckingham Troop. The intention was to ensure a unit capable of reaching 60 per cent of establishment and to maintain a variety of arms of service in each county so that national servicemen could be allocated more appropriately. However, whilst only one battery would be located in Oxfordshire so would the headquarters. This proved very unpopular in Bucks given the seniority of the Bucks Yeomanry over the Oxfordshire Yeomanry since it seemed likely the Bucks title and badges would disappear. Oxfordshire was also against any amalgamation, believing it could easily maintain two batteries but, in any case, insisting that Cowley would be the best headquarters for any amalgamated unit as it already housed a brigade headquarters. Bucks responded that it would be left without any headquarters of a fighting unit. A meeting at Southern Command in May 1950 failed to reach any compromise, both the location of headquarters and the title of any new regiment remaining contentious.⁴¹

⁴¹ BA, T/A 3/33, Mins. of meeting at Southern Command, 3 May 1950.

The War Office refused to reconsider its decision but did agree that the headquarters would remain in Bucks ‘for county and traditional reasons’.⁴² Various versions of the unit’s new title were put forward, the formula agreed in September 1951 being 299 (Bucks and Oxf Yeomanry) Field Regiment. If winning the seniority battle, however, Bucks initially lost its effort to retain the royal title despite trying to invoke the help of Winston Churchill as a former Oxfordshire Yeomanry officer and the latter’s honorary colonel. Somewhat surprisingly in view of the title borne by the regiment since the reconstitution of the TA after the Great War, the War Office maintained that battalions could have a royal title but not field regiments. It also claimed that it could not be adopted as a subsidiary title and that both regiments in the amalgamation would have had to bear a royal title to perpetuate it.⁴³ Hugh Vanderfelt, a stockbroker who had succeeded to the command of 299 Field Regiment in February 1950 - he had been with it throughout the war - reported some initial resentment at the amalgamation with the Oxfordshire Yeomanry but felt this had eroded after the first camp of the new unit in 1951.⁴⁴ Unit strength in March 1952 was 74 officers and 813 men but this included the company of the 4th OBLI at Wycombe.⁴⁵

Then, in 1952 with Churchill’s assistance, the royal title was restored with the unit now designated 299 (RBY & QOOH) Field Regiment with two batteries in

⁴² BA, T/A 3/33, WO to Southern Command, 14 July 1950; Southern Command to Bucks CTAFAs, 10 Aug. 1950.

⁴³ BA, T/A 3/33, Southern Command to Bucks CTAFAs, 25 Sept. 1951; D 206/37, War Office to Secretary, Bucks CTAFAs, 2 July 1951; Vanderfelt to Churchill and Burnham, 9 Aug 1951; War Office to Churchill, 2 Aug. 1951; Churchill’s private secretary to Vanderfelt, 9 Aug. 1951; T/A 1/2, CTAFAs Mins., 5 Nov., 1951; AR 56/2007 [BMMT 576/3], Churchill’s private secretary to Vanderfelt, 8 Jan. 1951.

⁴⁴ BA, D 206/37, Vanderfelt to Burnham, 8 June 1951.

⁴⁵ BA, T/A 1/15, Annual Report, 1951-52.

the county. Vanderfelt had been succeeded in command by Lieutenant Colonel J. F. Turill, a former Oxford yeoman, in September 1952. Lieutenant Colonel H. W. J. Morrell, also from Oxfordshire, took over in January 1953. In 1956 the Berkshire Yeomanry (345 Medium Regiment) was similarly absorbed in what became 299 (RBY, BY & QOOH) Field Regiment with only one battery in the county divided between Aylesbury, Marlow and Taplow.

The end of coastal and anti-aircraft units was accompanied by a general redistribution of artillery units. The Bucks CTAFAs were alarmed at the possibility of a new LAA unit covering Bucks, Berks, Oxon, and Surrey to be formed from the existing one HAA and two LAA regiments across the four counties. It seemed only one battery might be retained at Wycombe. The Lord Lieutenant, Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher, the 6th baronet, who had succeeded Cottesloe in 1954, wrote a personal letter to the Secretary of State but received a reply only from the Under Secretary of State. Brigadier Sir Henry Floyd, who had been the last wartime chief of staff to Eighth Army in 1944-45 and would succeed Aubrey-Fletcher as Lord Lieutenant in 1961, went to see the CIGS, Sir Gerald Templer. Nothing could be done and 645 LAA Regiment was re-designated as part of 431 LAA Regiment together with the former 480 (Berkshire) HAA Regiment and the former 536 (Surrey) LAA/Searchlight Regiment. 431 LAA's headquarters was now Reading, with 'P' Battery at High Wycombe and 'S' battery at Aylesbury/Chesham.⁴⁶

One curious anomaly was the revival of the Home Guard during the Korean War under the provisions of the Home Guard Act of April 1951. The idea had originated in the War Office three years earlier as a means of maintaining order, preventing sabotage and subversion, and defending against airborne or seaborne raids in any new conflict since the TA would be fully committed to reinforcing

⁴⁶ BA, T/A 1/3, CTAFAs Mins., 4 Jan., and 7 Mar. 1955, and 5 Mar. 1956; AR 96/2018 [BMMT 730/11], Outline History.

the regular army in Europe. There were doubts as to the efficacy of reviving the force in peacetime and fears that membership might need to be vetted for potential communist sympathisers.⁴⁷

It was intended to raise 170,000 men between the ages of 18 and 65 in approximately 1,000 cadre units on the basis of a two-year term of enlistment and a liability of 15 hours' training every three months. Resignation would be permitted on a month's notice. However, only 300 cadres of 100 men each were raised in November 1952 and recruiting for them was disappointing. CTAFAs were responsible for accommodating the new Home Guard. Expenditure on the force was then cut in 1954-55 at the same time that there were renewed attempts to bolster recruitment. The cadres were reduced in 1955, by which time only 37,000 men had been enrolled nationally.⁴⁸

It was effectively stood down in February 1956, the Army Council resolving in May 1957 that no further expenditure could be justified. The decision to disband the new Home Guard was announced on 26 June 1957 although the legislation was retained on the statute book until 1996. The force formally ceased to exist on 31 July 1957. A Home Service Force was raised for the defence of vulnerable points as a pilot scheme in September 1982 and expanded in January 1985 with an intention to recruit 4,500 men by 1990 in 47 infantry companies. Men aged between 20 and 55 with some form of military service would be accepted with a liability of six days' compulsory training per annum and up to four days' voluntary training. It was disbanded in 1992 after the

⁴⁷ Mackenzie, *Home Guard*, 158-61; John Sainsbury, *The Home Guard in Hertfordshire, 1952-57* (Welwyn: Hart Books, 2008), 5-16..

⁴⁸ Mackenzie, *Home Guard*, 172.

collapse of the Soviet Union and the communist bloc, having reached the strength of only 3,297.⁴⁹

In Bucks a nominal seven Home Guard battalions were raised in Aylesbury (1st), Chesham (5th), Newport Pagnell (2nd), Winslow (3rd), Wycombe (4th) and Slough (6th and 7th). A flat in Bayles House at Slough was leased for the 6th Battalion.⁵⁰ They were grouped in two sectors, the northern sector under the command of Brigadier E. G. Earle of Walton, Bletchley and the southern sector under Major General Lord Burnham. The 3rd (Winslow) Battalion was commanded by Brigadier Eric Paul of White House, Little Horwood with the 5th (Newport Pagnell) Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel M. H. S. Last. The appointment of a commander for the 4th Battalion was held up by the nominee's other reserve commitments.⁵¹

The Bucks units had reached about 50 per cent of intended strength by August 1952 - approximately 350 men - but recruitment was still judged particularly slow at Aylesbury and Wing in 1953. Weapons were still being issued in early 1953 and there were too few uniforms, Burnham and Earle both complaining that the force was under-funded.⁵² There was certainly some activity: success in a shooting competition for the 3rd Battalion in May 1952 and indoor exercises for it in February. There was also a joint anti-saboteur exercise between RAF Halton and the 5th Battalion in September 1955. The 3rd Battalion also held a social evening at the Folly Inn at Adstock in February 1953 whilst the Beaconsfield and Chesham companies invited former Home Guardsmen to join

⁴⁹ Beckett, *Territorials*, 212, 215.

⁵⁰ BA, T/A 1/18.

⁵¹ BA, T/A 1/25, Annual Reports, 1951-52, 1953-54; *Buckingham Advertiser*, 16 Feb. and 19 July 1952; *Bucks Herald*, 8 Feb., and 14 Mar. 1952.

⁵² *Bucks Herald*, 15 Aug. 1952; 6 Feb., and 10 July 1953.

them to see colour films of the wartime force.⁵³ With the force stood down in February 1956, the Lord Lieutenant, Aubrey-Fletcher, thanked those in Bucks for their service.⁵⁴

The Korean War also saw the government selectively recall up to 235,000 so-called 'Z Reservists', mostly former wartime servicemen, for 15 days' training, some 80,000 attending TA annual camps in 1951 and 1952. Bucks expected around 400 Z Reservists. Few, however, could be induced to join the TA permanently and in November 1952 there were just three officers and 97 other ranks serving in Bucks.⁵⁵

Upon reconstitution, the TA's role had been defined as providing a field force component for the army in either Europe or the Middle East, which implied being fully prepared to fight overseas in an emergency; providing anti-aircraft and coast defence for the UK; and supporting the Civil Defence organisation in the event of enemy air or nuclear attack. With the RAF now tasked with air defence and the Royal Navy and RAF together tasked with repelling any seaborne threat, a new appraisal was required. Moreover, by this time, it could be argued that reliance upon a manpower-heavy defence policy squeezed the resources available for new technologically advanced equipment. The army queried the prevailing assumption that a future war would be a nuclear one by raising the threat still posed by communism outside Europe and the possibility of 'broken-backed warfare', in which there would still be a period of conventional conflict even after an initial limited nuclear exchange. The TA role appeared inappropriate for both these circumstances, however, as well as any short-war scenarios short of nuclear confrontation. It was not just strategic

⁵³ *Buckingham Advertiser*, 31 May 1952; 28 Feb., and 20 Nov. 1953; *Bucks Herald*, 6 Dec. 1953; 30 Sept. 1955.

⁵⁴ *Bucks Herald*, 3 Feb. 1956.

⁵⁵ BA, T/A 1/3, CTAFA Mins., 7 Nov. 1952.

concerns, however, that informed the mood. The political and financial consequences of the Suez crisis of October 1956 then provided the strategic and economic impetus for substantial cuts, the Sandys White Paper heralding not only the end of national service but also the reduction of the regular army itself to 180,000, with the loss of 17 infantry battalions, seven armoured regiments, and 21 artillery units. Inevitably, therefore, the TA faced reductions.

It was announced in December 1955 that only two TA infantry divisions - 43rd (Wessex) and 53rd (Welsh) - two armoured brigades and a parachute brigade would be maintained at full-scale as reinforcement for NATO in defence of Western Europe. The eight other divisions and an independent infantry brigade would be reduced in establishment for home defence only. The Army Emergency Reserve also now had only a home defence role. It implied reduced equipment scales for the majority of the TA at a time when the availability of national servicemen was increasingly problematic and an uncertain role seemed unlikely to attract volunteers. Nonetheless, there was evidence of some increase in volunteer numbers, the number of Territorials with no previous military experience doubling from 7,000 in 1956 to 14,000 in 1957.⁵⁶

It was in these uncertain circumstances that the TA's Golden Jubilee was celebrated in 1958 with a Royal Review by the Queen Mother in Belfast on 10 May followed by thanksgiving services in Westminster Abbey and Westminster Cathedral on 21 June, and two further Royal Reviews by the Queen in Hyde Park on 22 June and at Edinburgh on 5 July. In Bucks there was a ball in Aylesbury Town Hall on 4 July with a display by the Unsworth Formation Dancing Team, and then on 6 July a thanksgiving service and march past. There was also an 'at home' at the Oxford Road drill hall including a display of uniforms, and afternoon tea. A strange assortment of uniforms was worn by

⁵⁶ Beckett, *Territorials*, 180.

various re-enactors including a mock up what purported to be a yeomanry uniform of 1794.⁵⁷ The public praise for the TA at the time of the Jubilee, not least by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, was to prove embarrassing to the government as more reductions were contemplated.

Following consideration by the Army Council and recommendations by the Fraser committee on the implications of the end of national service, the TA's role was further redefined with an announcement on 20 July 1960. The War Office had concluded in 1959 that there was no limited war role for the TA but it was deemed politically unacceptable to allow the TA to wither. Fraser argued that the TA remained a national institution that was both 'touchy' and politically entrenched. Indeed, in May 1960 the Secretary of State for War, Christopher Soames, resolved that 'it was not practical politics' to consider disbanding the TA altogether. When the Minister of Defence, Harold Watkinson, demanded an absolute limit on TA expenditure of £75 million over five years, Soames replied on 23 May that, 'The whole question boils down to this - how much can we knock the Territorial Army about and still keep it as a useful instrument or, indeed at all? Any successful volunteer movement must believe that its services are wanted. There is a limit beyond which I cannot go without general disintegration setting in.' Soames also pointed out that significant reduction would be politically embarrassing in the wake of the Jubilee. His successor, John Profumo promised the TA Advisory Council on 10 November 1960 that the TA would get 'as large a slice [of the cake] as we can afford'.⁵⁸

The TA's first task was now 'to fight the battle for survival' by assisting army and the civil power in the UK; secondly, to reinforce British Army of the Rhine (BAOR); and, lastly, provide a framework 'on which, in a period of rising

⁵⁷ BA, T/A 1/64; T/A 1/8, Mins., Finance and General Purposes, 3 Feb. 1958; AR56/2007 [BMMT 576/1], Events Record, 1958; AR 91/2015, Order of Service, 6 July 1958.

⁵⁸ Beckett, *Territorials*, 182.

tension, general preparations for war can be built up'. It was assumed that 6,000 Territorials would be required for UK air defence, 85,500 for support of the UK civil authorities, 40,000 for supporting the army in the UK, and only 18,500 for the reinforcement of BAOR. In line with the emphasis upon assisting Civil Defence, one annual camp in three would be devoted to training in detection of and protection against radiation, and rescue work in the event of nuclear attack. The TA would be re-equipped over five years with the 7.62 mm (FAL/FN) Self-Loading Rifle (although not the General Purpose Machine Gun), modern wireless sets, modern Scout cars, Saladdin armoured cars and ¼-ton trucks. This, however, would come at the cost of reducing establishment from 300,000 to 190,000. Moreover, notwithstanding the assumptions of Fraser's committee of the need for a force of 150,000 Territorials, only 123,000 (65 per cent of the new ceiling) would be actively recruited with the balance made up on mobilisation from the TA Reserve of men who had completed their term of engagement. The actual strength of TA's volunteers in July 1960 was some 120,000, a substantial increase from the 70,000 three years earlier.⁵⁹

Amalgamations followed as the new organisation came into effect on 1 May 1961, the Army Council having met for over nine hours in three different meetings to consider the 731 suggested changes to the new scheme received from associations and units. Overall, the ten TA divisional headquarters were merged with regular army districts, which were matched to Civil Defence Regions since it was intended to achieve 'continuity' between peace and war. The number of infantry brigades was reduced from 31 to 23, whilst the two armoured brigade headquarters were disbanded. Eighteen infantry battalions were reduced by means of amalgamation. In the case of artillery, only 26 field and 18 anti-aircraft regiments were retained with the addition of three independent batteries. Engineering field and works regiments were combined

⁵⁹ Ibid, 182-83.

into one large formation whilst other functions such as bomb disposal, survey, movement control, and postal communications remained within separate engineer units. The Royal Signals lost four major units. No Royal Armoured Corps (RAC) regiments were reduced but one armoured regiment and three armoured car regiments were converted to reconnaissance regiments.

The changes were often complex. The title of 299 Field Regiment was changed to 299 (RBY, QOOH & Berkshire) Field Regiment with the epithet 'Field' omitted from October 1961 to March 1963 when it was restored. Berkshire complained that the title should be 299 (RBY, QOOH & Berks Battery RHA) Field Regiment to reflect War Office approval of the 'R' (Berks and Farnham) Battery having been designated the Berks Battery, RHA, but this was not upheld.⁶⁰

With further reorganisation heralded in 1960, the preferred War Office solution was to amalgamate 299 Field Regiment with 431 LAA Regiment. There was opposition on the part of those from Bucks in 431 LAA although, according to Major R. W. Pugsley, opinion was divided. Older men at Aylesbury wanted to join 4 OBLI whereas younger men at Chesham not steeped in any prior connection to the Bucks Battalion were prepared to join 299. So far as Lieutenant Colonel G. A. Griffiths, the commanding officer of 431 LAA, was concerned, Lieutenant Colonel A. M. Nicholson, a Berkshire yeoman who had been commanding 299 Field Regiment since 1958, seemed only interested in a takeover rather than an amalgamation. Nicholson seemed unprepared to have a second in command from 431 LAA and the regiment seemed likely to continue to consider themselves as yeomen. Griffiths favoured joining 4 OBLI.⁶¹

⁶⁰ BA, T/A 1/43, Berks CTAFAs to Bucks and Oxon CTAFAs, 6 Mar. 1961.

⁶¹ BA, T/A 1/45, Pugsley to Griffiths, 24 Aug. 1960; Appreciation by Griffiths, Aug. 1960; Jones to Oxlade, 24 Aug. 1960; Oxlade to Southern Command, 5 Oct. 1960.

This suggestion had not arisen from either the Bucks or Oxfordshire CTAFAs but from the commanding officer of 4 OBLI, Lieutenant Colonel Graham Montague Jones, who wanted to bring the two Bucks batteries of 431 into his battalion, with a possible new company based on Bletchley and elements at Wolverton and Wooburn Green. In contradiction to Pugsley, Jones felt there was overwhelming support for this among all members of 431.⁶²

The 'traditions' of the Bucks Battalion had been supposedly handed to 'D' Company of the 4th Battalion, OBLI, which had been raised at Wycombe in March 1950 and badged as such since the Bucks elements of 431 LAA like 645 LAA before them wore the Bucks Battalion badge.⁶³ As with other units, it had recruited poorly initially with just 30 other ranks in May 1952 and, in March 1957 only six officers and nine volunteer other ranks with 141 national servicemen.⁶⁴ Slightly oddly, the entire Marsh Gibbon village band joined 4 OBLI in 1957.⁶⁵ The regulars of the OBLI became the 1st Battalion, The Green Jackets in 1958 and part of The Royal Green Jackets in 1966. 4 OBLI itself assumed the title of The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (TA) in 1959. It received the freedom of High Wycombe on 4 April 1962.

Jones's idea was superficially attractive as there were complaints of an unequal battalion distribution between Bucks and Oxfordshire. There were also potential problems from any amalgamation of 299 and 431, which would result in a widely scattered unit.⁶⁶ Allowing 431 LAA men to join the OBLI, however, would leave 299 Field Regiment short of men as it was likely to lose the

⁶² BA, T/A 1/45, Jones to Reynolds, 16 Aug. 1960; Jones to Griffiths, 17 Aug. 1960.

⁶³ BA, T/A 1/8, CTAFAs Mins., Finance and General Purposes, 30 Mar. 1950.

⁶⁴ BA, T/A 1/3, CTAFAs Mins., 4 Feb. 1952, and 4 March 1957.

⁶⁵ Elliott, *Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry Regimental History*, II, 360.

⁶⁶ BA, T/A 1/8, CTAFAs Finance and General Purposes Mins., 12 Sept., and 20 Oct. 1960.

Berkshire Yeomanry contingent.⁶⁷ The latter was an additional factor in the mix, the idea having emerged of the Berkshire batteries being detached from 299 Field Regiment and joining the Westminster Dragoons, although there was some opposition to this among the Berkshire men.⁶⁸ Berkshire 'R' Battery was duly amalgamated with the Westminster Dragoons in the Berkshire and Westminster Dragoons, Royal Armoured Corps in 1961, thus leaving 299 Field Regiment under strength.

Both Oxfordshire and Southern Command objected to adding the 431 LAA men to the OBLI (TA). In the event, following a meeting of all parties arranged by the Southern Command in September 1960, the amalgamation of 299 and 431 went ahead on 19 February 1961 despite fears in Bucks that this meant the end of the Bucks Battalion tradition.⁶⁹ The new 299 Field Regiment had its headquarters and a two-gun section of 'G' Battery at Aylesbury, with further two-gun sections of 'H' Battery at Chesham and Taplow, and 'R' Battery with the band at Wycombe. Former 431 men formed the new 'R' Battery at Wycombe and the band was also that of 431 LAA.⁷⁰ Training was split between Aylesbury, Chesham and Taplow with, for example, drills at Chesham on 16 May and 6 June 1961, at Aylesbury on 17 May and 7 June 1961, and at Taplow on 18 May and 8 June 1961.⁷¹ Batteries were also maintained at Reading ('A'), Oxford and Banbury ('B'), and Farnham ('Q').⁷² Nicholson was succeeded in

⁶⁷ BA, T/A 1/45, Reynolds to Southern Command, 4 Oct. 1960.

⁶⁸ BA, T/A 1/45, Note by Nicholson, Aug. 1960; Berkshire CTAFA to Southern Command, 20 Sept. 1960.

⁶⁹ BA, T/A 1/45, Baker to Tetley, 23 Sept. 1960; Tetley to Deakin, 21 Oct. 1960; TA 1/3, CTAFA Mins., 7 Nov. 1960; T/A 1/46, Nicholson to Reynolds, 10 Feb. 1961.

⁷⁰ BA, T/A 1/8, Mins., CTAFA Finance and General Purposes, 13 Feb. 1961; 1/46, Nicholson to Reynolds, 10 Feb. 1961; Southern Command to Bucks and Oxon. CTAFAs, 23 Jan. 1961.

⁷¹ BA, AR 87/2004 [BMMT 521/2], Battery Orders.

⁷² T/A 1/44, Johnson to Southern Command, 13 May 1961.

command by Lieutenant Colonel J. B. Johnson, another Berkshire yeoman. As indicated earlier, Berkshire remained in the regiment's sub-title given the battery at Reading despite the loss of 'R' (Berkshire Yeomanry) Battery.

The amalgamation of 299 Field Regiment and 431 LAA also gave the new unit three honorary colonels: Princess Marina from 431 LAA, Leonard Tetley from 299, and Churchill from the Oxfordshire Yeomanry. This was not without difficulties that had arisen at various points since 1945. The War Office had made Churchill's appointment *sine die* (literally 'without a day' - unlimited) in February 1950. The War Office had also decreed that where regiments were amalgamated, there should be only one honorary colonel and that the senior should take precedence with others' appointments regarded as in abeyance. With the absorption of the Oxfordshire Yeomanry by 299 Field Regiment, Churchill became senior honorary colonel and the Oxfordshire CTAFA took the view that the appointment of Lord Burnham was in abeyance. Burnham wrote to Churchill, who was a personal friend, offering to stand down but no reply was received and the War Office declined to intervene. In the meantime the Queen had invited Burnham to represent the regiment at Queen Mary's funeral in March 1953. The Bucks CTAFA suggested that Burnham be allowed to deputise if Churchill was unavailable, to which Oxfordshire then agreed.⁷³

With Burnham's retirement, the former commanding officer of the Berkshire Yeomanry, Brigadier W. H. Crosland, became the joint honorary colonel with Churchill in 1957, the Berkshire Yeomanry by then having been absorbed by

⁷³ BA, T/A 1/43, Vershoyle to Bucks CTAFA, 3 Feb. 1950; Oxon. CTAFA to Bucks CTAFA, 20 Apl. 1953; Watson to Thomson, 14 Sept. 1953; Thomson to Watson 18 Set. 1953.

299 Field Regiment. Lionel Tetley, by then Chairman of the Bucks CTAFAs, succeeded Crosland in October 1959.⁷⁴

The real complication arose when 431 LAA was amalgamated with 299 Field Regiment for the former already had two honorary colonels in Princess Marina and Colonel R. N. Guest, former honorary colonel of 480 HAA, who had succeeded Guy Crouch in the role when 645 and 480 had merged into 431 LAA Regiment. Initially, Lord Burnham had seemed a possible choice to succeed Cottesloe and act alongside Princess Marina but, of course, he was honorary colonel of 299 Field Regiment.⁷⁵ Guest yielded to Tetley and, although the War Office claimed royalty should not be a factor, it was still agreed that Princess Marina would continue, as would Churchill.⁷⁶ When Tetley retired in November 1964, he was replaced by Colonel John Thomson, chairman of the Oxfordshire CTAFAs. Churchill then died in January 1965, three officers and 18 other ranks from the regiment being on duty at his state funeral on 30 January.

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Ideas of increasing the profile of the OBLI (TA) in the county persisted with, at the very least, a desire for an additional company in the north of the county. Hugo Boehm suggested without success that the battalion title be changed. The most agreed was 'D' (Bucks) Company.⁷⁸ 'D' Company was now split between

⁷⁴ BA, T/A 1/43, Reynolds to Southern Command, 29 Jan. 1957; Nicholson to Bucks and Oxon. CTAFAs, 18 Aug. 1959; AR 56/2007 [BMMT 576/3], Churchill to 299 Regiment, 21 Aug. 1957.

⁷⁵ BA, D/FR 161/3/30/1 and 2, Boehm to Cottesloe, 20 Feb. 1951, and Cottesloe to Boehm, 23 Nov. 1951.

⁷⁶ BA, T/A 1/43, Hay to Crouch, 19 May 1955; War Office to Southern Command, 11 Aug. 1955; Southern Command to Berks, Bucks and Oxon CTAFAs, 6 Jan. 1961; Guest to Reynolds, 2 Mar. 1961; War Office to Nicholson, 17 May 1961.

⁷⁷ BA, AR 56/2007 [BMMT 576/5], Orders, 26 April 1965.

⁷⁸ BA, T/A 1/8 Finance and General Purposes Mins., 13 Feb. 1961 and 11 Feb. 1963.

Wycombe and Newport Pagnell, with a mortar platoon at Slough. By November 1962 there were eight officers and 43 other ranks at High Wycombe, two officers and 19 other ranks at Slough, and one officer and 32 other ranks at Newport Pagnell with claims that a full company could be raised at the latter. It was thought Bletchley was more promising as its population was rising rapidly. The former Lovat Bank building at Newport Pagnell had been acquired in 1954, and a new drill hall was opened in Belles Field in 1963.⁷⁹ By 1965 only Wolverton exceeded 65 per cent of its establishment in the battalion as a whole and little progress had been made at Slough despite its supposed potential. Of the battalion's 406-strong establishment, there were now 54 men at Wolverton, 28 at Wycombe, and 16 at Slough.⁸⁰ By March 1966, however, OBLI (TA) had only two officers and 82 other ranks in the county.⁸¹ That the Green Jackets had adopted rifle traditions in drill and dress made it easier for some to see the OBLI (TA) as still carrying the traditions of the Bucks Battalion but, after 1961, the latter was really no more.⁸² The OBLI was reduced to a company of the volunteer battalion of the Green Jackets at Oxford in 1967, the headquarters and two companies being located in London.

162 IIB Ordnance Field Park, which had spawned 57 Medium Workshop at Wolverton in 1951, became 54th Infantry Division Field Park in 1955 while 57 Medium Workshop also became 121 Transport Column, REME that same year. 56 Medium Workshop likewise became 50 Medium Workshop in 1960 and was transferred to Aldershot. 54th Infantry Division Ordnance Field Park changed

⁷⁹ BA, T/A 1/8, CTAFA Finance and General Purposes Mins., 11 Feb. 1963; T/A 1/18.

⁸⁰ BA, T/A 1/44, OC, OBLI (TA) to Bucks and Oxon CTAFAs, 26 April 1965.

⁸¹ BA, T/A 1/3, CTAFA Mins., 6 Nov. 1961, 26 Nov. 1962, 7 Mar. 1966.

⁸² BA, T/A 1/44, Reynolds to Southern Command, 14 Mar. 1961; Boehm to Reynolds, 4 Apl. 1961.

yet again in 1960 to No 1 Store Company, RAOC.⁸³ The Bucks CTAFA complained unsuccessfully that too small a proportion of the latter was retained at Newport Pagnell given its previous strength and the facilities available at the Lovat Bank.⁸⁴

A further measure under the provisions of the Army Reserve Act of April 1962 was to call out for up to six months in any twelve those volunteering to be immediately available for overseas service without recourse to proclamation in a new TA Emergency Reserve (TAER). Profumo suggested the TAER was for ‘the young man who is fit and adventure-minded, the man who is prepared to offer his service and training to help the British Army keep the peace in the world’. The so-called ‘Ever Readies’ received in return an additional annual £150 bounty and £50 upon call out. The intended strength of 15,000 was never attained, some 4,262 men having joining by October 1963 but the number dropped to 2,400 against a reduced establishment of 7,800 by 1968. The TAER would be the only part of the TA able to train abroad, the first members to do so going to Libya in March 1963 with 200 men going to the Far East later in the year.⁸⁵

The TAER bounty was thought inadequate and there was also employer resistance to the six months’ liability. With the regular army stretched by its commitments, a total of 175 reservists were called up on 14 April 1965 for service in the Middle East, Far East or Cyprus. Of these, 123 Ever Readies went to Aden, reinforcing a battalion required for the Radfan campaign that preceded the more general outbreak of insurgency in Aden itself. A total of 25 reservists

⁸³ Beckett, *Call to Arms*, 132.

⁸⁴ BA, T/A 1/45, Payne to HQ, RAOC, 28 July 1960; T/A 1/46, Southern Command to Bucks, Berks, and Hants CTAFAs, 22 Nov. 1960; Reynolds to Southern Command, 9 Feb. 1961.

⁸⁵ Beckett, *Territorials*, 186-87.

were subsequently called up for service on Cyprus and 21 for the Indonesian Confrontation in Borneo: 12 of these 36 reservists were Ever Readies. Major James Campbell of 299 Field Regiment served with a Royal Artillery unit during the Malaysian-Indonesian Confrontation.⁸⁶

Reorganisation in 1960 assumed a future cost of £135 million over five years including £22 million for re-equipment, a total questioned by the Treasury, which was not persuaded that the force had any real role. It was clear to most observers, indeed, that the TA was under-manned, under-funded, and under-equipped.

As a new Labour government took office in 1964, the strategic certainties of the Cold War remained constant but the pace of technological change had accelerated markedly with new weapons, new materials, new control systems and new methods of weapon delivery all contributing to a demand for new equipment and posing new managerial problems at the heart of defence. Labour had committed itself to pegging defence spending at £2,000 million at 1964 prices. As so often before, wider defence cuts augured ill for the TA and, although there were to be brief revivals in its fortunes over the next 28 years, the overall pattern was one of reduction.

In the midst of impending change 299 Field Regiment endeavoured to maintain its appeal. In July 1962, for example, an officer and nine other ranks spent two weeks attached to 24 (Missile) Regiment, RA in Germany.⁸⁷ There were also competitions unknown before the war, members taking part in the International Nijmegen Marches, covering 100 miles in four days while carrying 22 lbs. of

⁸⁶ BA, AR 4/2013 [BMMT 644], Campbell to Verney, 6 July 1965.

⁸⁷ *Bucks Examiner*, 6 July 1962.

equipment, for which medals were awarded.⁸⁸ There was a regimental ball at Claydon House in July 1965. That year's camp was a divisional camp for all the artillery units of 43 (Wessex) Division held at Westdown at Tilshead near Salisbury from 22 May to 5 June 1965. Of a full strength of 379 officers and men, 228 attended over the course of the camp (60.1 per cent) with 172 attending both weeks (45.3 per cent). Wives and families were invited to the sports day on 30 May. It was the first 'shooting' camp for two years and it was clear that there was anxiety over the future.⁸⁹

The following year's camp was at Sennybridge close to the Brecon Beacons between 21 May and 4 June 1966. Overall regimental strength had fallen to 348 officers and men, of whom 212 attended over the two weeks (60.9 per cent) with 140 managing both weeks (40.2 per cent). A small group from 24 (Missile) Regiment, RA, with which 299 had become affiliated, also attended from BAOR. The weather, however, was atrocious and a night operation on the Brecon Beacons was also 'interrupted by Druids'.⁹⁰ The 'last round' of 299 Field Regiment was fired on 2 June 1966.⁹¹ By this time, it was known that the regiment would be disbanded, something which dismayed Princess Marina.⁹² The return from camp, however, was followed through June by continued routine. 'Exercise Escape and Evasion' was held at Aylesbury and Taplow, signals courses at Taplow, current affairs sessions at Aylesbury and Taplow,

⁸⁸ *Bucks Examiner*, 21 Aug. 1964. The BMMT collection includes the Bronze Team Medallion won by 299 Field Regiment for the 1965 Nijmegen March as BMMT 577.

⁸⁹ BA, AR 96/2018 [BMMT 730/8], Report on Annual Camp, 1965.

⁹⁰ BA, AR 96/2018 [BMMT 730/8], Report on Annual Camp, 1 July 1966.

⁹¹ BMMT 643.

⁹² BA, AR 96/2018 [BMMT 730/8], Hay to Verney, 22 July 1966.

battery training at Stowe, and winching and wireless practise at Aylesbury and Taplow.⁹³

In the belief that it was difficult to envisage any conflict requiring large numbers of Territorials or in which the TA could be a basis for expansion, the government had signalled a major review on 29 July 1965. The TA role would now be to provide key individuals and a few units for immediate reinforcement of the army in a ‘come as you are’ limited war, which would offer no opportunities for large-scale reinforcement. A far-reaching reform plan had emerged from a controversial review of the TA’s role by the Committee on the Future of Army Reserves, which first met on 30 April 1965 to discuss the implications of the conclusions of the earlier Home Defence Review Committee, namely that the cost of the TA could not be justified.

The proposals were outlined in a White Paper on 15 December 1965. No more than 50,000 Territorials from the existing 107,000 would be retained, over half in support formations: 1,500 would be required in an ‘Ever Ready’ type role for logistic units, 11,000 would be required for logistic support of the Strategic Reserve in limited conflicts (which would require only two brigade groups at most), and 37,000 as reinforcements for BAOR in a more major crisis. Those brigades and divisions without a role upon mobilisation would be abolished. A total of 73 TA infantry battalions, 41 artillery regiments and 19 armoured regiments would go, leaving just thirteen infantry battalions, a single armoured regiment, a single parachute battalion, four artillery regiments, and the SAS units. The annual cost of the TA would be reduced from £38 million to £20 million.⁹⁴

⁹³ BA, AR 87/2004 [BMMT 517], Regimental Orders.

⁹⁴ Beckett, *Territorials*, 201-02.

There was considerable opposition, notably from the Council of Territorial Associations. The Council's Chairman, the 16th Duke of Norfolk, had not been consulted prior to the announcement in July 1965 and the Council's own proposals were ignored. The Council's stand was endorsed by the Conservatives, whose motion to reject the reforms was defeated by just one vote in the Commons on 16 December 1965. Six Field Marshals signed a letter condemning the proposals. Again, the overall reduction of the army needs to be borne in mind as the Wilson government's determination to reduce defence expenditure and the subsequent economic crises leading to devaluation of the pound in November 1967 prompted a withdrawal from bases east of Suez. A target was set of reducing the army from 60 to 50 battalions by 1968, a process accomplished largely by establishing new multi-battalion regiments.

In the face of the strategic and financial arguments, the TA's defence often rested on a perceived social role - the *Daily Telegraph* spoke of Territorials' sense of doing something 'acceptable and beneficial to the rest of the community' - and upon county traditions that had no resonance for Labour politicians.⁹⁵ A reporter from the *Bucks Examiner* who visited 299 Field Regiment during a weekend firing camp at Larkhill in October 1964 concluded with a familiar refrain: 'For the youth with grit and guts it is a tremendous adventure. It not only builds strength, but also strength of mind and character.'⁹⁶ A few concessions were made, it being announced in February 1966 that an additional 28,000 men would be retained in 87 'lightly armed units of infantry type', and a few signal units for home defence and in support of the civil authorities. It was also agreed to retain 'Territorial' in the title since the original intention had been to call the new organisation simply the Army Volunteer

⁹⁵ Ibid, 203.

⁹⁶ *Bucks Examiner*, 16 Oct. 1964.

Reserve. Thus the whole would now be termed the Territorial Army and Volunteer Reserve (TAVR), absorbing both TA and army reserves.⁹⁷

Under the Reserve Forces Act of 1966, and with effect from 1 April 1967, the TAVR would comprise four categories. TAVR 1 consisted of Ever Readies and other specialists now constituting the Special Army Volunteer Reserve. TAVR II, now regarded as ‘Volunteers’, consisted of units with a limited war or general war role that undertook to serve outside the UK upon embodiment. Equipped to regular army scales, they had a substantial training commitment. Rather than the former provision for calling out the TA by proclamation in the event of imminent national danger or great emergency, TAVR I would now be called out by ‘Queen’s Order’ when warlike operations were in preparation or progress, although only after full use had been made of regular reservists. TAVR II, however, could not be called out as individuals or selectively by unit. Distinction in TAVR II was also drawn between ‘independent’ units organised on a local basis and ‘sponsored’ units organised on a national basis, the latter being units of the RAC, RA, RE, Royal Signals, RASC, RAOC, REME, RAMC, RMP, RAPC, Royal Pioneer Corps, Intelligence Corps, and Army Catering Corps. Once trained, members of independent and sponsored units undertook 15 days’ continuous training (usually the annual camp) and an annual range course. In addition, whereas independent units were liable to between six and 12 out of camp days’ training at weekends in order to qualify for the bounty, members of sponsored units only undertook four out of camp days’ training. The training bounty was set at £20 (taxed) and the liability bounty at £60 (tax free).

TAVR III - ‘Territorials’ - comprised the home defence units with light equipment and a much reduced training commitment of just an eight-day camp,

⁹⁷ Beckett, *Territorials*, 203-04.

five days' out of camp training, and 27 drill periods. Moreover, TAVR III units were to be armed with the old .303-in. No 4 SM Lee Enfield and wear battledress while TAVR I and II received the 7.62 mm. Self-Loading Rifle and combat dress. Camps and some weekend training were unpaid, leaving it as a private venture. All permanent staff were withdrawn. TAVR IV was a miscellany of units such as elements of the Royal Signals, RE and RAOC, bands, and OTC. The latter were classed as TAVR IV (a), Training Corps at universities having become University Training Corps in 1948 and OTC once more in 1955.

So far as Bucks was concerned, there was no consultation, the CTAFAs feeling that whilst the government was paying lip service to the idea of improving youth morals, it was sweeping away the organisation best suited to offer character training. There was a determination, however, to secure Bucks representation when the Ministry of Defence seemed only to be considering a RCT squadron based at Slough.⁹⁸ Given the destruction of the TA, it had seemed immaterial whether the new creation should even have Territorial in the title.⁹⁹

In the event, in TAVR II, just two troops of 245 Mixed Heavy General Transport Petrol Squadron, Royal Corps of Transport were to be raised in Bucks with 299 Field Regiment replaced in TAVR III by a cadre formation with sub-units at Aylesbury and Bletchley. It was felt that Aylesbury could not be dispensed with, and the accommodation at Bletchley taken up in 1962 was too

⁹⁸ BA, T/A 1/3, CTAFAs Mins., 12 Aug. and 29 Nov. 1965, and 4 July 1966.

⁹⁹ BA, T/A 1/47, Joint Secretaries of Bucks and Oxon CTAFAs to all units, 5 Aug. 1965.

good to give up, so the presence at High Wycombe was ended, especially as it would need at least 80 men to justify a drill hall there.¹⁰⁰

It was recognised that 80 per cent of cadre members would be drawn from 299 Field Regiment and, indeed, it retained RBY badges until new ones were issued. CTAFAs recommendation was accepted and the new unit would be called The Buckinghamshire Regiment. It was suggested that the sub units be 'A' (RBY) Battery and 'B' (Bucks Battalion) Battery although, in the end, they became 'P' (RBY) and 'Q' (Bucks Rifles) Batteries.¹⁰¹ As well as 'P' Battery, the regimental headquarters and the signal platoon would be at Aylesbury, and 'Q' Battery and the pioneer troop at Bletchley. The MOD plan also meant the end of the OBLI (TA). This became the 4th (Volunteer) Battalion, Royal Green Jackets, which merged subsequently with The Queen's Royal Rifles and the London Rifle Brigade/Rangers to form 4th (Volunteer) Battalion, The Royal Green Jackets (4 RGJ).

The final parade of 121 Transport Column and the Bucks Company of OBLI (TA) at Wycombe took place in March 1967. A farewell dinner of 299 Field Regiment was held on 18 March and the final parade took place at Aylesbury on 19 March 1967 with 299 Field Regiment formally ceasing to exist on 31 March 1967. A loyal address was sent to the Queen. Its last commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel (later His Honour Sir) Lawrence Verney, who had succeeded Johnson in July 1964, became first (and last) commanding officer of

¹⁰⁰ BA, T/A 1/8, CTAFAs Finance and General Purposes Mins., 7 Feb., and 6 June 1966; T/A 1/11; T/A 1/44, Order of Battle of TAVR, 1 Oct. 1966.

¹⁰¹ BA, T/A 1/25, Annual Report, 1968; T/A 1/3, CTAFAs Mins., 4 July 1966 and 6 Mar. 1967; T/A 1/8, Finance and General Purposes Mins., 10 Oct. 1966; *Bucks Examiner*, 6 Dec. 1968.

The Buckinghamshire Regiment. The latter duly received the freedom of Aylesbury on 29 October 1967.¹⁰²

An effort was made to emphasise the traditions of the Royal Bucks Yeomanry and that the new regiment offered ‘real comradeship and social life’.¹⁰³ Whilst the new regiment would not have a band, Verney applied to the Charity Commission for it to retain the band instruments which were those purchased by county subscription in 1941-42 to replace those of the 1st Bucks Battalion lost at Hazebrouck.¹⁰⁴ Princess Marina consented to be Honorary Colonel, although she was unable to attend the freedom parade in Aylesbury.¹⁰⁵

The new regiment went into camp for the first time at Penhale near Newquay in Cornwall from 3 to 10 June 1967. Of its total strength of 138 officers and men, 94 attended (68.1 per cent), which was a larger proportion than had been the case in 1965 and 1966. The age range was also 17 to 49 and, notwithstanding the nominal battery organisation, the object was to learn basic infantry skills, which were entirely new to most. Despite bad weather, Lawrence Verney was pleased that an early camp had brought the men together.¹⁰⁶ In March 1967 Bucks TA units numbered 31 officers and 305 other ranks. At the last meeting of the CTAFAs in February 1968, however, The Buckinghamshire Regiment had

¹⁰² BA, D 206/38; AR 4/2013 [BMMT 642]; AR 35/2018 [BMMT 721/8; T/A 1/44, Regimental Orders, 27 Feb. 1967; AR 96/2018 [BMMT 730/9], Notification of Her Majesty’s acknowledgement of loyal address, 20 Mar. 1967; Reynolds to Verney, 22 Mar. 1967; Maxwell to Verney, 31 May 1967.

¹⁰³ BA, AR 96/2018 [BMMT 730/8], Recruiting Leaflet for the Buckinghamshire Regiment Slough Detachment.

¹⁰⁴ BA, AR 96/2018 [BMMT 730/9], Verney to Charity Commissioners, 7 Mar. 1967.

¹⁰⁵ BA, AR 96/2018 [BMMT 730/9], Hay to Verney, 20 Apl. 1967; Hay to Floyd, 29 Sept. 1967

¹⁰⁶ BA, AR 96/2018 [BMMT 730/8], Annual Camp Report, 14 July 1967.

a total strength of just 120.¹⁰⁷ The greatest post-war strength of Bucks units had been 98 officers and 1,660 other ranks in 1954-55.¹⁰⁸

The concept of county associations just survived extinction, a total of first 23 (subsequently reduced to 14) larger regional groupings - now to be Territorial and Army Volunteer Reserve Associations (TAVRAs) - only being retained, the Council of Territorial Associations successfully arguing that substituting enlarged district headquarters for associations would be more wasteful. In fact, the original idea had been to retain only six regional groupings. After some wartime mergers in 1943-44, amalgamation had again been suggested in 1950. The TA Advisory Committee accepted the need for grouping of associations in 1954 and the number had declined to 66 by February 1965, of which 36 had units below establishment. Bucks had opposed any grouping of associations in 1955.¹⁰⁹ This, however, was far more radical.

Under protest, Bucks employed a joint secretary with Oxfordshire from 1964 onwards, also arguing that the latter was claiming precedence in title when the Bucks Yeomanry was the senior of existing units. In any case, the new association title should follow alphabetical order.¹¹⁰ Now the Bucks Association was absorbed in the new Eastern Wessex TAVRA, which also included Berkshire, Dorset, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, and Oxfordshire. TAVRAs would no longer have an administrative function, being intended purely to maintain contact with local interests, especially employers and trades union. The sponsored units were administered through a series of Central Volunteer Headquarters (CVHQ). On dissolution, the remaining funds of the

¹⁰⁷ BA, T/A 1/3, CTAFAs Mins., 5 Feb. 1968.

¹⁰⁸ Beckett, *Call to Arms*, 132.

¹⁰⁹ BA, T/A 1/8, CTAFAs Finance and General Purpose Mins., 17 Oct. 1955.

¹¹⁰ BA, T/A 1/3, CTAFAs Mins., 18 Dec. 1961 and 6 July 1964; T/A 1/25, Annual Report, 1961-62, 1964-65.

Bucks Association were divided between the Bucks Battalion OCA (a third), the Royal Bucks Hussars Association (a third), the British Legion (a sixth), and SSAFA (a sixth).¹¹¹

Although technically most units were disbanded on 31 March 1967, in practice existing TA units were substantially reduced to sub-unit size and status when transferred to TAVR III. In January 1968 TAVR III was axed and Civil Defence was placed on a care and maintenance basis. Then, in November 1968, it was announced that the first two TAVR categories would be effectively merged with all liable to serve overseas upon embodiment though the training commitments varied. TAVR I and TAVR II would now be TAVR Group A and TAVR IV would be TAVR Group B. With the new organisation taking effect on 1 April 1969, all TAVR III units were formally disbanded although 90 former units were retained as cadres of eight officers and men within Group A units. Not surprisingly, overall numbers fell significantly from 116,500 in December 1964 to 54,800 by March 1968. In 1969 there were 945 personnel in TAVR I, 34,833 in TAVR II, 10,767 in TAVR III and 3,010 in TAVR IV, a total of 49,555 against an establishment of 61,000. Numbers went down further to 47,589 by March 1970.¹¹²

The Territorials were revived somewhat by the return of a Conservative government in 1970. It was announced in July that 10,000 men would be added to the TAVR in Group A to ‘make provision for an uncommitted reserve of formed units and men’ for NATO. The role generally was to provide a national reserve capable of reinforcing British forces in NATO, securing the home base, and providing a future means of expansion. A total of 20 new battalions were formed from April 1971, of which 15 were allocated to a ‘General Reserve’ and trained for home defence, the cadres retained in 1969 providing the nucleus of

¹¹¹ BA, T/A 6/101, Bucks Battalion OCA Central Executive Mins., 29 Apl. 1967.

¹¹² Beckett, *Territorials*, 206-07; idem, *Amateur Military Tradition*, 282.

companies in these battalions. The establishment remained at 74,000 but, in fact, strength was only about 54,000 at the time and it was increasingly difficult to persuade men to stay beyond two years. Moreover, General Reserve battalions retained a second-class air, having no anti-tank weapons or sustained-fire machine guns. In 1979, Mrs Thatcher's new government announced that the title of Territorial Army would be revived. In the event, it was not until 7 April 1982 under the provisions of the Reserve Forces Act of 1982 that this actually took effect, the earlier Reserve Forces Act in 1980 merely replacing surviving legislation from 1921 and consolidating the various reserve forces measures since the 1960s. Whilst the overall title had been revived, TA infantry units still continued to be styled 'Volunteer Battalions'.¹¹³

There was constant change thereafter, the TA's significance for government in the 1980s fading with the collapse of communism between 1989 and 1991, the 'peace dividend' seeing the TA's establishment reduced to 63,500 in December 1991 whilst the short-lived 'Home Defence Force' was disbanded. In the light of the First Gulf War (1990-91), when volunteers from the TA had been sought, the Reserve Forces Act of May 1996 included a new power to call out reserves in circumstances short of those required by a Queen's order, the TA's establishment having been reduced to 59,000 in 1994. TAVRAs also became Reserve Forces and Cadet Associations (RFCAs) in April 2000 with Eastern Wessex TAVRA merged with the former South East TAVRA as South East RFCA (SERFCA).

The 1996 legislation changed fundamentally the nature of the TA making it more akin to the militia than the volunteers of old and immediately raising questions as to the willingness of employers (and families) to accommodate such an increased commitment. The first recourse to the compulsory provisions

¹¹³ Beckett, *Territorials*, 210.

of the 1996 legislation came in 2002 for operations in Afghanistan and it was then invoked again in 2003 for the Second Gulf War, Territorials served as specialists but also in sub-units and composite companies akin to the special service companies of old. Although now recognised as the ‘reserve of first choice’ and a ‘tactical resource’ vital in filling specialist functions within a much reduced regular army, the TA faced further reductions in 2004-05.

At its centenary in 2008, the TA was under greater pressure from operational deployments than at any time since its creation outside of the world wars but, at the same time with a far smaller ‘footprint’ in society than ever before. New TA and Reserve Centres were invariably now on the peripheries of communities rather than at their centre. Weekly orders had not been published in the local press since 1945. The notion that the TAVR was a reserve for the army as a whole reflected the increasing emphasis upon integration between army and reserves entertained by the regular army since the 1960s. The architect of the cuts in 1967, Major General Michael (later Field Marshal Lord) Carver, had called for ‘one army’ and that had become increasingly a reality since 1992. Carver had wanted the TA renamed the Army Volunteer Reserve and, in 2014, just four years after the celebration of the TA’s centenary, the title was finally abandoned for that of Army Reserve.¹¹⁴

The steady loss of tradition and meaningful county connection was reflected in Bucks. The Buckinghamshire Regiment’s last camp was held jointly with 24 (Missile) Regiment in BAOR from 17 to 31 July 1970.¹¹⁵ The regiment was absorbed by 2 Wessex Regiment in 1971 thus ending any direct lineage with the yeomanry of the past. ‘B’ Company was located at Bletchley but moved to Reading and was then disbanded in 1986.¹¹⁶ No. 1 (Royal Bucks Yeomanry)

¹¹⁴ Ibid, *Territorials*, 211-18, 226-52.

¹¹⁵ BA, AR 4/2013 [BMMT 646/8], Orders.

¹¹⁶ BA, AR 6/2009 [BMM 601], Scrapbook of ‘B’ Company, 2 Wessex, 1971-73.

Signal Squadron, Royal Corps of Signals was established in 1996 with a troop at Water Eaton, Bletchley. It left Bletchley in 2014, severing any connection with the county. In 1999 No. 60 (Royal Bucks Hussars) Signal Squadron had its headquarters located in Aylesbury and a troop at Booker, occupying the new TA Centre (Viney House) at Aylesbury in 2005. Having received the freedom of Aylesbury on 22 June 2008,¹¹⁷ the unit was re-allocated to the East of England in 2006 losing any connection with the county. In 2014 the title of Royal Bucks Hussars was given to 710 Operational Hygiene Squadron, Royal Logistic Corps at Aylesbury, where it remains in 2023.

As indicated earlier, 4th Battalion, OBLI had become The OBLI, then 4th (Volunteer) Battalion, The Royal Green Jackets, and later the 5th (Volunteer) Battalion, RGJ. In 1999 5 RGJ was amalgamated with two other TA battalions as The Royal Rifle Volunteers with 'E' (RGJ) Company in Bucks. Meanwhile the RGJ became part of The Rifles in 2007 with the RRV becoming its 7th Battalion. 'E' Company was based at the new John Howard Barracks opened in Blakelands, Milton Keynes in June 2008 but left in 2014, 7 Rifles now maintaining only platoons at Aylesbury and Booker. Booker (now Youens House) is currently occupied in 2023 by 871 Postal and Courier Squadron, RLC; Water Eaton by part of 6 Military Intelligence Battalion; and John Howard Barracks by 678 (Rifles) Squadron, 6 Army Air Corps, which represented a 're-rolled' 'E' Company. It is clear that these are but shadows of the past.

Successor regular units to the former Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry periodically received and exercised their right of freedom of entry to towns in Bucks: 1st Green Jackets at High Wycombe in April 1962, the Royal Greenjackets at Aylesbury on 25 October 1998 and at Milton Keynes on 2 July

¹¹⁷ BA, AR 110/2017 [BMMT 714/14].

2000, the Rifles at Milton Keynes on 7 June 2008, and 7 Rifles at High Wycombe in June 2013.¹¹⁸ The 1st Battalion, OBLI also exercised its freedom rights in Aylesbury on 11 April 1948, the honour having been conferred in January.¹¹⁹ Any direct link to a proud county amateur military tradition, however, ended in 1971.

Through all the changes, OCAs continued to operate albeit with declining membership. No less than 27 Great War veterans attended the reunion service of the Royal Bucks Hussars Association at Buckingham in August 1964 for the war's 50th anniversary. Grants to surviving Great War widows were still being made as late as 1977.¹²⁰ The Bucks Battalion OCA resolved on a 'Hazebrouck Day' commemoration in March 1949 but this does not appear to have taken place although the High Wycombe Branch did arrange tours to France in 1957, 1962 and 1964 variously taking in Hazebrouck, Wahagnies, Ypres, and Pozières as well as visits to Ashburton in Devon in 1959, 1960, 1961 and 1965.¹²¹ Like the Royal Bucks Hussars Association, the Bucks Battalion OCA made regular grants and loans to members, including former POWs, and dependents although Wycombe voiced some dissatisfaction in 1948 with the slowness of the main association dealing with cases referred to Aylesbury. Wycombe dealt with over

¹¹⁸ BA, T/A 6/46; AR 110/2017 [BMMT 714/14]; AR 96/2018 [BMMT 730/14; AR 68/2021 [BMMT 748/2-5]; AR 91/2015, Programme for freedom parade, Milton Keynes, 7 June 2008.

¹¹⁹ BA, T/A 6/45; *Bucks Advertiser*, 17 Apl. 1948; RA, MDKDH/ARMFOR/12B/1, Cousins to Herbert, 14 Jan. 1948.

¹²⁰ BA, T/A 3/56/1/11, Reunion, 9 Aug. 1964; 3/56/7, Grants made 1969-77.

¹²¹ BA, T/A 6/26, OCA Mins., 12 Mar. 1949; AR 91/2015, Wycombe OCA Branch Mins., 5 May 1957; 26 Apl. 1959; 1 Apl. 1962.

40 cases in 1953 and 34 in 1957.¹²² The Aylesbury Branch of the Bucks Battalion OCA held Christmas parties for the children of members for some years but then resolved in 1953 to organise annual trips for all members instead to theatres, seaside and other tourist centres like the Cotswolds, and in 1974 and 1979 to Beating the Retreat ceremonies by the Light Division on Horse Guards Parade.¹²³ Similarly, Wycombe held social evenings, dances, Christmas draws, and whist drives, as well as providing a stall at the High Wycombe Show in 1958, 1959 and 1960. It provided a coach for those members wishing to attend the presentation of new Colours to 4th OBLI at Oxford in August 1954 and the TA Jubilee parade in Aylesbury in 1958.¹²⁴

As early as 1962, it was recognised that the Aylesbury Branch was ‘dying’ since it was held that Second World War servicemen had often left the battalion to go elsewhere or been drafted into it whereas the Great War veterans had had a special wartime bond emanating from the experience of the Western Front. Indeed, there had been no general welcome home for the Bucks Battalion in 1945 because men returned to the county in dribs and drabs and what remained of the regiment largely comprised non-Bucks men.¹²⁵ Rather than having all reunions in Aylesbury, the Bucks Battalion OCA Central Executive decided in

¹²² BA, T/A 6/26, OCA Mins., 29 Mar. 1953, 30 June 1956; T/A 6/95, Aylesbury OCA Branch Mins., 17 Jan. 1945; AR 91/2015, High Wycombe OCA Branch Mins., 25 Apl. 1948; 19 Feb. 1954, 29 Mar. 1958.

¹²³ BA, T/A 6/95, Aylesbury OCA Branch Mins., 12 Dec. 1946; 12 Sept. 1951; 25 Dec. 1953; 24 May 1957; 24 July 1958; 3 July 1959; 19 Aug. 1960; T/A 6/96, Aylesbury OCA Branch Mins., 3 Nov. 1961; 27 July 1963; 22 Jan. 1966; 1 July 1967; 20 May 1970; 5 July 1971; 21 July 1972; 2 Apl. 1974; 22 May 1975; 7 Oct. 1976; 10 Apl. 1979.

¹²⁴ B, AR 91/2015, Wycombe OCA Branch Mins., 30 May 1954; 27 Apl. 1958; 26 Apl. 1959.

¹²⁵ BA, T/A 6/96, Aylesbury OCA Branch Mins., 25 May 1962; RA, MDKDH/ARMPOR/11/39, Cottesloe to Herbert, 23 Dec. 1945.

1973 to meet at other locations such as Marlow and High Wycombe although numbers attending did not thereby increase significantly.¹²⁶

It was decided in 1964 to allow members of D Coy, 4th OBLI to join but there appeared to be a threat developing in 1961 from what was called the 2nd Bucks Battalion OCA, raising the spectre of the split occasioned by the Great War. In fact, most of the members of the new organisation also belonged to the main Bucks Battalion OCA and its renaming as the 2nd Bucks Friendly Association in 1962 took some of the heat out of the situation. Apparently, the Friendly Association was unaware that the main OCA was helping out former members of the 2nd Bucks from both world wars. In 1968 the 2nd Bucks Friendly Association had around 200 members, the Aylesbury Branch suggesting more be done to bring about an amalgamation. This did not occur, the 2nd Bucks organisation still existing in 1985.¹²⁷

Declining numbers meant declining income at a time when calls for grants to former members was increasing. The Birchall Fund was already running low by May 1961. The Aylesbury Branch of the Bucks Battalion OCA tried charity stalls and also sold Luton Sports Press football tickets, a 'pools' type game based upon score draws, but these were discontinued in 1990 as no longer generating sufficient income. Raffles were instituted instead. It had already been decided ten years earlier to give Christmas gifts only to surviving Great War veterans.¹²⁸ In view of the declining numbers, the final full scale reunion was held on 26 June 1999 since, in the previous year, only 33 of the 78 individuals present were actually Bucks Battalion veterans, the remainder all being guests

¹²⁶ BA, T/A 6/101, OCA Central Executive Mins., 4 Dec. 1973; 20 Feb. 1978.

¹²⁷ BA, T/A 6/96, Aylesbury OCA Branch Mins., 2 Sept 1967; 26 Oct. 1968; T/A 6/101, OCA Central Executive Mins., 13 May 1961; 24 Mar. 1962; 10 May 1964; 1 May 1969; 25 Feb. 1985.

¹²⁸ BA, T/A 6/102, Aylesbury OCA Branch Mins., 9 June 1980; 1 Feb. 1990.

or friends. It was no longer possible for the Aylesbury Branch to provide Christmas gifts for all widows by 2000 and, although the Central Executive took over responsibility for some of the payments, this support ceased in 2003. The branch then ceased any remaining annual payments of its own in 2005. There had been a trip to Hazebrouck in May 2000 and May 2004, and on 26 May 2007 surviving members of the Bucks Battalion OCA helped unveil a plaque at Hazebrouck on the former Orphanage. In February 2009 it was considered that too few members were left to sustain the Aylesbury Branch and it was amalgamated with the Aylesbury Branch of the Royal Green Jackets Association. With just three active members and one honorary member remaining, the High Wycombe Branch had already decided to wind up its affairs on 5 October 2008.¹²⁹

Whilst relating to servicemen from Bucks but not members of the Bucks Battalions or Royal Bucks Hussars, there were also four branches of the Old Contemptibles Association in the county at Aylesbury (formed in 1938), Wolverton (later the North Bucks Branch), Slough, and South Bucks.¹³⁰ The standard of one of the Aylesbury branch is laid up in St Mary's in Aylesbury. Similarly, after the Second World War there was a branch of the Dunkirk Veterans' Association in Aylesbury until at least 1995 although it laid up its standard at St Mary's in November 1989. It held annual dinner dances, and

¹²⁹ BA, AR 110/2007 [BMMT 583], Ken Bateman memoirs; SOFO, B20/6, Aylesbury Branch OCA Mins., 22 Feb 1999; 13 Nov. 2000; 12 May 2003; 7 Nov. 2005; 6 Aug. 2007; 9 Feb. 2009; AR 91/2015, Wycombe Branch OCA Mins., 28 Jan. 2000; 29 Oct. 2006, 5 Oct. 2008; Bateman to Collins, 31 July 2006; Reports of Central Executive, 7 Mar. 2004, 4 Mar. 2007, and 2 Mar. 2008.

¹³⁰ *Bucks Examiner*, 26 Sept. 1930; *Windsor, Slough and Eton Express*, 9 Jan. 1931 and 22 Dec. 1977; *Wolverton Express*, 30 Mar. and 22 June 1951, 20 Jan. 1961; *Bucks Herald*, 1 Apl. and 8 Nov. 1938, 28 Nov. 1941, 27 Oct. 1950; *The Old Contemptible*, 389 (June 1966), 398 (March 1967), and 502 (November 1970).

provided some welfare payments, extending to contributions to the Old Contemptibles Association. A significant event was the pilgrimage back to Dunkirk for the 35th anniversary in 1975. ¹³¹

Inevitably, the ranks of veterans thin. The last surviving British Great War combatant serviceman - a Royal Navy veteran - died in 2011, and the last surviving veteran of the Great War from any country - a member of the Women's Royal Air Force - in 2012. Second World War veterans - now in their late 90s - are fast disappearing. Equally, it is now over 50 years since the demise of the Buckinghamshire Regiment brought to an end Buckinghamshire's proud amateur military tradition of service to country and county. For these reasons, therefore, this history has concluded effectively with that regiment's disbandment in 1971.

¹³¹ BA, D-X 1451, Dunkirk Veterans' Association Mins., 2 Apl. 1989.