

FOREWARD

Brief History of 3rd (Cirencester) Battalion Gloucestershire Home Guard 1940-1945

FORWARD

Cirencester 27.5.45.

This does not pretend to be a complete history of all the activities of the Battalion which it has been an honour to command for three years, but a record of some of its achievements during a very strenuous time. Many of the tactical exercises and schemes carried out during the four years are not even referred to, this is not on account of their lack of merit, some were Napoleonic in design, if not always so in execution, but simply on account of lack of space and shortage of paper.

It was our misfortune that we never went into action against the enemy; this History would have been more interesting had we been given the opportunity, like some other Battalions, whose ACK-ACK batteries had the chance to have a crack at the Hun.

BRIAN W. ROBINSON.

On 15th May 1940, the day after Mr Eden's appeal for volunteers to defend England the L.D.V. came into being.

General Sir Reginald Stephens, K.C.B., was appointed Zone Commander of the County of Gloucestershire (except Bristol) and sent for Major Dugdale D.S.O., M.V.O., M.C., and asked him to raise the L.D.V. in the Police District of Cirencester.

There was to be a Platoon H.Q. wherever there was stationed a Police Sergeant and a Section where a Constable was in charge; this arrangement was carried out as far as possible until some of the Platoons became Companies, which they very soon did.

So vast was this Area that it was decided in July 1940 to transfer the Platoons at Bourton-on-the-Water, Moreton-in-Marsh, Campden and Stow-on-the-Wold to a separate Command under Lieutenant Colonel E.P. Brassey, D.S.O. These Platoons were then made into Companies to form a Battalion, to be known as the 2nd Battalion Gloucestershire Home Guard. Similarly the Cirencester Company was formed into a Battalion of Six Companies as under

Northleach Company afterwards known as A Company
Birdlip Company afterwards known as B Company
Cirencester Company afterwards known as C Company
Sapperton Company afterwards known as D Company
Tetbury Company afterwards known as E Company
Fairford Company afterwards known as F Company

Shortly afterwards the Maintenance Unit at Kemble Aerodrome formed a Platoon which soon blossomed into a Company later to be known as 'G' Company this making a Battalion of 7 Companies with a total strength of nearly 3,000.

The Cirencester Battalion then became known as the 3rd Battalion Gloucestershire Home Guard, officers were appointed to Commissions, and Major J.G. Dugdale was appointed Lieutenant Colonel to command the Battalion on 1.2.41. Lieutenant Colonel Dugdale continued in command until he retired under the age limit on 31.3.42, when Lieutenant Colonel B.W. Robinson M.C., assumed command, a post which he still continues to hold (February 1945).

ACTIONS AND FALSE ALARMS

Unlike some other Home Guard Battalions in Gloucestershire the 3rd Battalion had no A.A. Batteries as part of its establishment, therefore it never went into action against the enemy, but two minor scares

disturbed its serenity. One was news of a reported attempt at invasion by the enemy on 7.9.40. when a general "Stand To" was ordered followed by "Stand Down" 7 hours later.

The speed with which the Companies assumed their Battle stations was astonishing and practically 100% attendance was reported.

The other disturbance was caused by a false alarm of an enemy parachute landing and the alarm sounded, and the bells of Cirencester Church were rung; the mistake was soon discovered and peace descended on Cirencester once more, although it was difficult to communicate the news to the bell ringer who had locked the doors at the bottom of the bell tower "just in case! "

In spite of the fact that the Battalion was not called upon to go into action during all its active life of 4 ½ years it is all the more creditable that the original keenness of officers and other ranks never evaporated.

A/T ISLAND [anti tank island]

In addition to commanding the 3rd Battalion Gloucestershire Home Guard the O.C. was also appointed Town Defence Commander of Cirencester. This appointment involved commanding all of the Forces which might at any time be within the Perimeter Defences of Cirencester (with the exception of the Field Army) until relieved by a superior Officer, under orders from G.O.C. (South Midland District).

In the case of a threatened attack a Force of some 750 - 1000 officers and other ranks from O.C.T.U. at Shrivenham were to be placed at the disposal of the Town Defence Commander and were to come under that Officers orders.

More than once some portion of this Force took part in Exercises to test the previously arranged dispositions around the Town's perimeter.

Lt. Col. Dugdale, ably assisted by Major G.B. Champion as Staff Officer, took great pains in constructing the defences of Cirencester into 3 lines, in depth, The Red or outpost line, The Black or main line, and finally the Green Line which was sited to defend the heart of the Town thereby denying the use of the vital junctions of roads to the enemy.

The defence consisted of Anti-Tank ditches, Dragons teeth and steel rails, and the main defence line followed roughly the course of the Waterways and Railways around Cirencester. Brigadier V.M.C. Napier, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. succeeded Major Champion as Staff Officer to the Town Defence Commander on Lieutenant Colonel Dugdale's retirement and had great difficulty in fitting the scheme to the Troops available, as by this time there were practically no Regular Troops in the vicinity, so all but the Green line was left undefended, until re-enforcements should arrive. It is interesting to note that in several places the ancient fortifications made by the Romans during their occupation of CORINIUM were used.

ARMS AND EQUIPMENT

For the first two years of its existence the Battalion was decidedly short of arms, only one man in three being armed with a Rifle the remainder having to rely on shotguns, the now famous "Croft pikes, the 36 Hand Grenade as well as an assortment of grenades of varying danger to the enemy and the thrower. In the Autumn of 1941 the Spigot Mortar and Smith Gun made their appearance and considerably added to the firepower of the Battalion, at any rate, in Defence.

Late in 1942 and early in 1943 saw the arrival of the Sten gun in large quantities thereby depriving the Home Guard of his favourite "grouch" that he had no personal weapon.

It is sad to relate that the ammunition for the above mentioned was not so rapid in making its appearance, with the result that it was very difficult to train the men in the use of the Sten.

When once the stream of clothing and equipment was released the stream became a flood causing some difficulty in finding suitable accommodation wherein to house it all, and transport to distribute the items to the 50 or more Platoons.

FIELD FIRING

We were lucky in having a first rate Field Firing Range at Barnsley Wold kindly provided by Southern Command though not of course for the exclusive use of the Home Guard!

The first attempt at a highly specialised exercise was in Spring 1942 when the O.C. Denbies Travelling Wing formed a demonstration Platoon of Officers and N.C.O.s undergoing the Weekly Course of Instruction.

After several rehearsals, and false starts, Major Warden licked the Platoon into shape, and the resulting demonstration was most valuable, and if it accomplished nothing else it showed all ranks how ignorant they were of this form of training, and the consequent improvement shown when the Platoon Field Firing Competition took place for Colonel C.E. Turner's Cup the following Autumn, was most marked.

Owing to that tiresome animal the cow requiring milking twice and in some case, three times, a day it was extremely difficult, if not impossible for a Platoon Commander to get 100% attendance of his men for practice on any given day.

This undoubtedly the reason the Battalion was never able to win the Inter Battalion Field Firing Competition although they were very near the money in 1943 and 1944.

Colonel G.V. Hill D.S.O. Training Officer 1st -2nd Battalion was responsible for arranging the first Field Firing Competition and thanks to his energy and knowledge of the difficult part of training, these contests were most interesting and also popular with the men.

SCHOOLS OF INSTRUCTION

Early in Summer 1940 a Zone School was started in Cheltenham by Colonel Norris Commander 1st (Cheltenham) Battalion Gloucestershire Home Guard.

Instructors were drawn by selection, from each Battalion and the subjects embraced were Squad Drill, Rifle and Bayonets, Light automatics and machine guns.

This school proved invaluable in teaching the Junior N.C.O.s how to instruct, and some 120 N.C.O.s passed through it.

At a later date various Home Guard and Army schools of Instruction were formed to which a large number of Officers and N.C.O.s went, with great advantage to themselves, and also to the Platoons.

The Home Guard School at Denbies near Dorking, which also included a Travelling Wing, was a first class establishment catering mostly for those wishing to learn minor tactics, though weapons training was also included, especially in the early days.

The Southern Command Weapons Training School at Woolacomb, confined its teaching to all types of weapons in use from time to time by the Home Guard, and proved a great success. All who attended Courses, and they were many from the Battalion were agreed upon this.

A Battalion Cadre Training was inaugurated by the Adjutant, Captain C.S. Macnab, at Barnsley Park in the Autumn of 1943 and proved a great success. Some 150 Officers and other ranks went through Weekend courses there and it only ceased to exist owing to the premises being taken for the U.S. Forces.

EXERCISES

Many exercises and tactical schemes were held within the Battalion area, the two most interesting of which were Exercise 'Corinium' and Exercise 'Chaos'. The former was devised to test the defences of the Anti-Tank Island of Cirencester and the forces at the disposal of the Town Defence Commander of Cirencester were reinforced by the addition of the 1st Battalion Gloucestershire Home Guard, No.220 Company Pioneer Corps and the Staging Unit Rover Camp. The enemy were composed of units of the 3rd Battalion Gloucestershire Home Guard, and it is interesting to note that the defences of the town held good. Exercise 'Chaos' was for the purpose of testing the administrative arrangements for feeding and general maintenance of all the personnel of the 3rd Battalion Gloucestershire Home Guard and involved a 24 hour mobilisation of the whole Battalion. Everything worked very smoothly and all were agreed that the scale of rations was more than ample.

PARADES

The parade on the third Anniversary of the formation of the Home Guard was held on 16th May 1943, and took place on Barton Recreation Ground a thousand strong, and after inspection by General Sir S.R. Stephens K.G.B. marched through the town past the inspecting officer in the Market Place. A demonstration of Home Guard weapons, etc., was given by Battalion Headquarters Signals, and 'C' Company on Cirencester Grammar School playing field, and was witnessed by a large crowd from Cirencester.

STAND-DOWN PARADE

This was held on the Abbey cricket ground, Cirencester, on 3.12.44 and was honoured by the presence of the Gloucestershire Sub District Commander, Colonel K.W. Dunn, C.B.E. and also by the Home Guard Adviser, Colonel C.E. Turner, C.B.E., D.S.O. the latter addressed the parade among other speakers. After a short service conducted by Canon Sutch, Vicar of Cirencester, followed by a short address, the Battalion marched past the Battalion Commander to the Band of R.A.F. South Cerney. The parade numbered over 1000 strong and included some ex-members of the Home Guard. Marches played by the band included " Auld Lang Syne" . The following Honours were awarded to the Battalion

M.B.E.

MAJOR J.C.TABOR, T.D.

Commander in Chief Certificates

Lieutenant L.G. ROBERTS
R.S.M. H.R. CHANDLER
W.O. (2) C.S.M. R.W. COWBURN
W.O (2) C.S.M. W.E. HOWARD
COLOUR SERGEANT H.C. BRICE
SERGEANT C.B. JENKS
SERGEANT W. DAY
SERGEANT R.W. DUTFIELD
SERGEANT A.E. MATTHEWS
SERGEANT F.J. FREEMAN
SERGEANT A.C. HARRIS
SERGEANT E.R. WEST
PRIVATE J. BUTTON

COMPETITIONS

Winners of the Inter-Battalion Rifle Competition 29.10.44. following composed the team.

2nd Lieut. F.R.WHITE	E. COMPANY
Private COOK	E. COMPANY
Private M.A.SAGE	E. COMPANY
R.Q.M.S. COOK	Battalion Headquarters
Sergeant G.WOOD	A. COMPANY
Private C.J. ROBERTS	B. COMPANY

The Inter Platoon Field Firing Competition for Colonel C.E. Turner's Cup was won :-
1942 Daglingworth Platoon B Company commanded by Lieut. Newton

1943 No.43 Platoon D Company commanded by Lieut. Shufflebotham

P.O.W. FUND GLOUCESTERSHIRE REGIMENT

The magnificent total of £326-16s-7d was reached by the Battalion in voluntary contributions to this best of good causes.

A SHORT HISTORY OF 'D' COMPANY

In the original L.D.V. days the Sapperton Company first comprised only the police area of Sapperton including the villages of Sapperton, Frampton Mansel, Coates and Tarlton under the command of Major J.C. Tabor. It was at first under Tetbury Company.

Very early the Kemble Police area viz Kemble, Ewen, Poole Keynes and Somerford Keynes were added to the Sapperton Company with Lieutenant Abel-Smith as Platoon Commander who later joined the R.A.F. At the end of August 1940, Captain Swanwick joined the Company as 2nd in Command on being invalided out of the Army. Later the South Cerney Platoon was transferred from the Fairford Company to the Sapperton Company with Lieutenant Anderson as Platoon Commander. The Company also included a Railway Section of some 20 all ranks, under Lieutenant Feldwick the Stationmaster at Kemble Station.

So when the Company was completed it was constituted as follows.

Company Headquarters Trewsbury, Coates
Company Commander Major **J.C.** Tabor
2nd in Command Captain **F.B.** Swanwick

No 40 (Coates) Platoon H.Q. Coates Village Hall
 Platoon Commander Capt. Swanwick
No 41 (Kemble)Platoon H.Q. Kemble Village Hall
 Platoon Commander Lt. W.M. Tomlinson
No 42 (South Cerney) Platoon H.Q. South Cerney
 Guard Room (South Cerney
 Manor stables)
 Platoon Commander Lt. J.M. Shufflebotham
 C.S.M. F. Fawcett M.C.

In the early days the operational role of the Company was primarily observation and patrolling of the considerable, and very sparsely populated area surrounding the R.A.F. stations at Kemble and Aston Down. O.P.s were established on Kemble Church Tower, Coates Church Tower and at points in the neighbourhood of Sapperton and Beacon Farm. Close liaison was kept with the L.D.A.s at these stations and later with South Cerney. Later the role became more defence in depth of these R.A.F. stations, and many tactical exercises were held to practice the role.

In the early days roadblocks were established to block all roads leading into and out of the several villages in the Company area, and men were detailed to man them. When the role of the Home Guard was changed to holding defended localities, defended localities were established at Tarlton, Kemble and South Cerney and tactical exercises were held by night and day to practice the holding of the localities. Many tactical exercises were also held to practice patrolling and attacks by fighting patrols, in more open country, and the whole Company acquired considerable proficiency.

As regards rifle shooting and bombing practice -.22 ranges were established close to each village for their own sections, and open ranges at Kemble and Sapperton. The Sapperton range was developed with four firing points and targets and markers trench, and was used as a Company Range used by all platoons, and very successful Field Firing Competitions were held there. A bombing range was made at Sapperton, and other platoons used the bombing ranges at Kemble and South Cerney R.A.F. Stations.

In September 1943 No 43 (Mobile) platoon under Lt. Shufflebotham won the Battalion Field Firing Competition at Birdlip, and the cu~ was presented by the Zone Commander.

Commencing on 'D Day for a period of 12 weeks 'D' and 'C' Companies had to find a guard, alternate weeks, consisting 2 Senior N.C.O.s , 20 N.C.O.s and men to guard both ends of Sapperton tunnel from an hour before sunset to an hour after sunrise. Patrols went through the tunnel and over the top to guard against sabotage, collecting the parties from scattered villages, ensuring the necessary safety precautions in going through the tunnel, rations etc. entailed a considerable amount of organisation. All ranks appreciated the importance of the duty, and guards all mounted punctually in spite of the long hours of work and little time to get their suppers and change, and except in two cases, when they had not been clearly warned, there were no absentees!

When the Companies became known by letters instead of the names of villages or towns Sapperton became 'D' Company.

In September 1943 Major J.C. Tabor had retired on account of age and Major F.R. Swanwick assumed Command of the Company with Captain G.D. Anderson as 2nd in Command, Lieutenant Rawlings taking command of No 40 (Coates) Platoon. C.S.M. E. Fawcett resigned in 1943 his place was taken by C.S.M. W.R. Giles.

Instructions throughout was done almost entirely by Officers and N.C.O.s of each platoon, many of whom attended the various courses available; Sergeant Newson came from time to time to assist, and R.S.M. A.W. Goulder was good enough to come over from Cheltenham from time to time to inspire some additional enthusiasm.

Major Tabor was awarded the M.B.E. on his retirement from Command of the Company.

'E' COMPANY TETBURY ANALYSIS OF NOMINAL ROLL

TOTAL STRENGTH 31.12.44 (Volunteers and Directed men)	330
VOLUNTEERS STILL ON STRENGTH 31.12.44	230
DIRECTED MEN STILL ON STRENGTH 31.12.44	100

VOLUNTEERS

TOTAL NUMBER ENROLLED BEFORE 11.11.42	441
TO H.M. FORCES INCLUDING M.N.	95
TRANSFERS TO OTHER HOME GUARD UNITS	26
LEFT DISTRICT 20	
RESIGNED, STRUCK OFF, DISCHARGED AND DECEASED ETC.	70
NUMBER ENROLLED	1940 SILL ON STRENGTH (L.D.V.s) 140
	1941 21
	1942 BEFORE 11.11.42 69

SPECIAL PARADES

42 Warships Week Company Parade and a Guard of Honour for H.M. Queen Mary
 8.5.43 Wings for Victory Company Parade and a Guard placed on Exhibition Plane each night.
 3.6.44 Salute the Soldier Week Company Parade
 4.6.44 Home Guard Anniversary Parade Most of the Platoons paraded at their own Churches.
 26.11.44 GLOUCESTERSHIRE HOME GUARD PARADE AT GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL.
 A Detachment of N.C.O.s and men under Lt. F.W.G. Mayes
 3.12.44 BATTALION STAND DOWN PARADE AT THE ABBEY CIRENCESTER. A large muster of Officers and Other Ranks paraded under the Company Commander, Major F.A. Mitchell M.C., T.D.

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'E' COMPANY TETBURY HONOURS

The following Officers and N.C.O.s were awarded
 CERTIFICATES OF GOOD SERVICE

Lieutenant L.G. Rogers
 C.S.M. C.F.W. Cox
 Sergeant W.E. Day
 Sergeant E.N. West

One A (Lt T.A. Mitchell) and several B certificates were obtained by Officers and N.C.O.s on Denbies courses. A Platoon from this Company (54 Platoon Long Newton and Lieutenant L.G. Rogers) was chosen by the Battalion to demonstrate PLATOON BATTLE PRACTICE at Barnsley Ranges on 30/8/44

MUSKETRY

Shooting was carried out nearly every Sunday morning at 100, 200, and 300 yards range on the Company's Range at Bowldown. 'E' Company were the winners of the Battalion Inter Company Rifle Competition at Barnsley 15/10/44.

Five men out of eight shot in the Battalion Team in the Inter Battalion Shooting Competition at Sneedham Green 29/10/44.

'E' Company were 3rd in the BATTALION INTER-PLATOON FIELD FIRING COMPETITION FOR THE GROUP COMMAND CUP 29/8/43.

'E' Company were 3rd in the MOBILE PLATOON EXERCISE AT Barnsley Wold 30/5/43.

51 Platoon Tetbury 'B' won the Company Inter Platoon Rifle Match 8 a side 25/6/44

52 Platoon Cherrington won the Company Inter Platoon Rifle match 4 a side.

“G” COMPANY 3RD BATTALION GLOUCESTERSHIRE HOME GUARD RAF KEMBLE

In order to comply with Air Ministry policy for the defence of Airfields, the Local Defence Adviser at R.A.F. Kemble requested in August 1941 that a unit of Home Guard be formed from amongst the civilians of No.5 M.U. Authority being given, the first 100 members were enrolled by 17th September 1941 as a Platoon of the Sapperton Company of the Cirencester Battalion Home Guard.

At the time the defence of the airfield was vested in the ground staff of the R.A.F. and a detachment of the 110th Pioneers. The Home Guard were allotted scouting and patrolling duties in the defence.

The early training of the personnel was placed in the care of the O.C. 110th Pioneers Detachment under the supervision of the L.D.A. Later the Pioneers were replaced by a flight of the R.A.F. Regiment who cooperated in the training of the Company.

After the initial training had been completed sanction was obtained to enrol a further 100 men and the platoons were raised to Company status and became known as 'G' Company 3rd Gloucestershire Home Guard in June 1942.

A section of the perimeter defence of the airfield was now the responsibility of the Company.

The R.A.F. Regiment was withdrawn in May 1943 and the ceiling strength of the Company was raised to 250 to enable it to take an ever-increasing part in the Defence of the Airfield. Extra posts and duties allotted meant the forming of a section to man six 'Smith' Guns and another section to take over 5 'Twin-Browning' ant-aircraft guns. About June 1944 the 'Smith' guns were withdrawn and this section was being trained in the use of 'two pounder' guns at the time of Stand Down.

Details of the Company defence roll will be found in the R.A.F. Station Kemble Station Standing Orders Section II Part 1, Defence.

In order to carry out the duties allotted to it the Company was administered as follows.

No 70 Platoon was made responsible for the defence of No 1 Defence locality.

No 71 Platoon was made responsible for the defence of No 4 Defence locality.

No 72 Platoon was divided into two "Battle" Platoons for mobile duties as and where required by the Station Commander.

No 73 Platoon contained Headquarters details, Q.M. Stores, Signals, Sub Artillery and Stretcher Bearer Section.

Fuller details are to be found in the 'G' Company Standing Orders,

All Officers and most of the Non Commissioned Officers attended one or more of the Home Guard Training Courses, enabling the Company to become practically self-supporting in the matter of Training Instructors.

The No 1 of each anti-aircraft gun team attended the R.A.F. one-day course, and rehearsed anti-aircraft fire in a swivel gun turret.

At the time of the 'Stand Down' the strength of the Company was 230 officers and other ranks.

The personnel of the Company consisted of Staff, Tradesmen and labourers of No 5 M.U. This factor was of great use in detailing the members for their different duties. For example it was found that wireless electrical mechanics were well advanced in training as signallers; first aid attendants could immediately take charge of stretcher bearer parties; armourers, who all day long were handling Browning guns in aircraft, needed only gun drill and range practice.

The R.A.F. Regiment built an excellent firing range, with firing points at 100, 200 and 300 yards, in a field immediately adjoining the Airfield. This was always at the disposal of the Company and full use

was made of it. The Company also erected in this field a regulation bombing bay and, with the exception of the very latest recruits, all members had thrown live grenades after suitable instruction.

Liaison was kept up with 'B' Company, 2nd Wiltshire Home Guard and 'D' Company 3rd Battalion Gloucestershire Home Guard in order that the fullest co-operation could be obtained from these neighbouring Home Guard units in the case of an emergency.

Major Robert Whitton was the Platoon and later first Company Commander, from 21st November 1941, to 23 August 1943, when his civilian duties took him away from Kemble Airfield.

Captain Ray Boyfield commanded the Company from 24th August 1942, to 12th April 1943 when the Air Ministry also required his services elsewhere.

Extracts from the Supplement to the London Gazette of Friday 28.5.43 published 2.6.43.

"The Commander in Chief Home Forces, is pleased to approve of the award of Certificates for good service to the following officers and other ranks of the Home Guard:

W.O.II (C.S.M.) Robert Watson Cowburn, Gloucestershire Home Guard.

During the whole period of its existence the Company Headquarters was situated at the Headquarters building of No 5 M.U. Kemble.

In October 1943, a sub unit of No 5 M.U. was opened at Barnsley Park, near Cirencester and a detachment of this Company shared with the ground staff of the R.A.F. there, the duty of protecting the landing strip from hostile aircraft. The strength of the detachment varied from time to time, averaging about 12 other ranks, and were in the charge of Sergeant H.H. Beaman. The detachment was regularly visited by the Company Commander and different instructors for the various phases of training.

NOTES FROM COMPANIES "I LIKE TO REMEMBER" AN "OLD' UN LOOKS BACK"

Neither records nor statistics can ever begin to give any adequate impression of the emergence and growth of a Battalion of the Home Guard in a rural area.

They are but the dry bones, lacking flesh to give them shape and the breadth, which imbues life. They give no hint of the pangs, which attended our birth, of our growing pains, or of the same lusty manhood to which we attained.

But the lurid anxieties, cares and urgencies which beset our early days -these give life. And now that time has mellowed them to a not unpleasant tinge, so that they impinge but softly on the mind, I like to remember:

The desperate drive of the first emergency, when all must be completed and ready in 36 hours.

The knife-rest roadblocks, followed by every form of other block: the more permanent the greater the wish to put it somewhere -else the moment the cement had set. Stop lines, anti-tank islands, points of resistance, village defences -always considered and worked out on the bitterest of winter days. Those charming Staff Officers of the early days who inspected our defences, always armed to the teeth the only arms we had ever seen. The long unarmed dusk and dawn observations the alarms from captive balloons gone astray and haycocks frisked by freaks of wind into the skies.

The issue of one rifle per 200 men and the immediate discovery by the powers that were that it was not the rifle they meant to issue, and it must at once be changed- changed again. The issue of pikes and life preservers, followed by endless processions by every known -or, rather, unknown -form of arm; automatics, sub-artillery and bombs galore. The musketry; no ammunition and the shooting of that on ranges not keeping it for the Hun. The first denims- and the charming effect they gave when tried out by the more elderly members in their family circles.

The Officers, N.C.O.s and men. What pleasant contacts and friendships have been established. The never-ending changing roll of the Home Guard. How we missed those promising recruits-proved to have attained the age of 75 next birthday when the unfortunate age limit came in. Those grand old men who could not be induced to forego the old "Sentry go" and down the village street opposite then Headquarters, when, if they should have been hiding in a bush with blackened faces. Perish the thought!

Those field days -and those ploughs -and those pow-wows. What grand fellows they were in those voluntary days to turn up at all, and milk as well! Those demonstrations, when the watching crowds effectually hid the demonstrators from view, and farming talk became the order of the day.

But all these things belong to the early days. Contemplating them now, one is amazed at the great efficiency achieved before the Stand Down. When the battalions were very efficient indeed and the Home Guard was a real force. All thanks are due of course to higher authority for the supply of ammunition and equipment as soon as this was possible and for all the help given by courses and travelling wings. All that increased year by year and made the improvement possible. But surely a word must be said for the long suffering Platoon Commanders over all the years for, having borne the brunt of the work, he should share the credit for success; for the loyal few in the Platoon who never "carted" him, though this soldiering was on the top of their daily work and that work was becoming harder year by year; and for the N.C.O.s and Officers who, by attending many courses, provided a number of first-rate instructors in every sort of weapon and duty which might well be the envy of regular battalions. May all these friendly contacts established in the Home Guard in the war years remain with us in the future!

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