



## Chapter 24

### The Defence Line at Chilworth

In 1939 a defence line was built to protect London from invasion from the South in case of war. The North Downs was the obvious place for this defence line. In Chilworth the line started at The Tillingbourne and stretched up to the crest of the Downs. Tanks could only cross The Tillingbourne by road so that the road from Lockners Farm was protected by a concrete barrier. Steel girders could be dropped into slots in the concrete, thus blocking the road. You can see a similar structure in Blacksmith Lane. The house on the sharp bend still has loopholes, now blocked.

All the pillboxes that remain and those that were in the open were all camouflaged, usually made to look like haystacks or small barns. This was done with wooden frames covered with canvas and painted, some with thatched roofs. One looked like an old castle. The weakest point in the defence line would have been the A25 Road from Silent Pool to Newlands Corner as tanks could drive right through the defence line. Therefore at the point where the road climbs steeply up from Silent Pool and through a defile, concrete cylinders about 4 feet high and 2 feet in diameter with a lifting hook at the top, were left beside the road ready to block the road. A pillbox protected the defile and concrete pyramids about 3 feet high were placed in a line

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each side of the road to prevent tanks driving around it. A little further up where the road levels off before climbing up to Newlands Corner, was another defence work. This was a large anti-tank ditch, about 8 yards across and 45-degree sides dug at right angles across the road at the lower side. The upper slope was protected by concrete pyramids (Dragons teeth) again concrete cylinders were placed ready to block the road. A pillbox was built beside the road on the Newlands Corner side by the ditch. This was made to look like a filling station with a thatched roof and wood canvas side painted to look like the office. There were even real petrol pumps outside. I remember seeing this as I lived on Albury Heath in 1939 and the Farley Green bus used to go over Newlands Corner.

After the war, the road was straightened and the pillbox removed.

**The Newlands Corner GHQ Stop Line defences and decoy petrol station, described by Gerhard Höfner in One of the Lucky Ones**

*Rather than in 1939, defence line construction started in June 1940.*

Photographs by John Powell showing remains of dragon's teeth, concrete and GHQ Stop Line defences south of Newlands Corner in February 2021.







LIDAR shows the track of the wartime GHQ Stop Line tank ditch, running from Water Lane across fields to the pillbox and decoy petrol station on the A25 south of Newlands Corner (not covered by LIDAR).

South of these is the refilled sand quarry at Weston Wood, north east of Albury village.

