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**[021 The Surrey Musters and Home Defence in Albury from Elizabethan Times to 1945 by Mrs Anne Patterson](#)**

**Albury Village Hall, 21 March 1984.**

**59 minutes.**

# THE SURREY MUSTERS & HOME DEFENCE - ALBURY

## Sources -

Surrey Archaeological Collections ) Surrey Room,  
Vol. XVI 'Loseley Papers' ) Guildford Library

Hume's History of England

Maurois' History of England

Second World War - Winston Churchill

The Defenders - Geoffrey Cousins

The Imperial War Museum

The National Army Museum

Surrey Advertiser Archives

Guide Book (c. 1880)

Personal recollections of - Miss Lloyd, Mr Instone Gallop,  
Mr G. Cleverly, Mr V. Woods,  
Mr Day, Mr J. Browne and others.

By Anne Patterson

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THE SURREY MUSTERS & HOME DEFENCE IN ALBURY  
FROM ELIZABETHAN TIMES TO 1945

For nearly five hundred years after the Norman Conquest, England had no real need of defence against foreign invasion. However, when Mary Tudor married Philip of Spain all that was changed and, as soon as Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, steps were taken to put the country into a state of readiness, to meet the threat of Spanish invasion. There was, of course, no standing army. Which brings us to the first musters.

The word 'muster' in the meaning of 'an assemblage of soldiers' dates from 1450. In mediaeval times the feudal lords could be called out, when needed, with their retainers; and in the 1300s various people were "obliged to send recruits of men-at-arms, archers and hoblers" to the army. (Hume 1, 238). The musters may have had their origins in these customs.

Of course, I couldn't rest until I had found out what a hobler was: it turns out to be 'one bound to keep a horse, or hobby, for military service.'

In the mid-16th century, then, Muster Commissioners were appointed for every county, whose duty it was to make lists of available men who could be called upon in an emergency. There are records of a muster in Shere in 1573, but the earliest Albury muster we could find evidence for was in 1583, by which time the whole country was really alarmed by the apparently imminent danger of invasion from Spain. In December of that year, as recorded in "Schedule of the numbers of men to be put in readiness, for the general protection of the country against invasion", Surrey raised 2,000 men.

In London in 1587, the age-range for muster-men was 17 to 60 years, so it is reasonable to suppose that that is what it was for Surrey in 1583. I do not know what the population of Albury was then - it was 510 in 1801 when the first official census was taken (Miss Lloyd) but the men of Albury mustered in 1583/4 numbered 49, a great many for a small community.

They are listed as Pikemen, Billmen, Archers and Gunners. The Gunners and Pikemen are simply "selected" but among the Billmen and Archers a distinction creeps in - they are either "of the 2nd Sorte" or "of the Beste sorte". One can understand Archers being divided according to skill, but a Bill was a kind of battle-axe requiring one supposes only a certain strength. Perhaps the "Billmen of the 2nd Sorte" were the boys of 17; or those 60-year-olds.

It is exciting to find in that muster-roll of exactly 400 years ago many names still familiar in Albury, such as Risbridger, Arrow, Shurlocke, Hampshire and Chennell. Their Christian names are also of interest, for 45 of the men share only 8 names - George, Edward, Thomas, Richard, William, John, Henry and Robert. Twelve of them were named John.

All the men of Surrey were called to muster "in various appointed places" at the beginning of January 1584, in accordance with the direction - "A view is to be made of the state of the men and their armour and furniture, and the defects supplied" (The Book of Reckoning - Hougham)

Blackheath and Wotton Hundreds - which included Albury - mustered at Shere on the first Wednesday of January 1584. One can imagine the scene: Albury's 49 men no doubt 'fell in' on the village green outside the old Parish Church, with their Pikes, their Bills, their Bows and their Guns and then marched along the Old Road by

the stream, to Shere. The actual site of the muster is not known, but it may well have been the meadow by the stream, where Lower Street now is, as this was where Shere's annual Fair is supposed to have been held.

In April 1584 a Captain John Shute was named Muster Master responsible for the training of the men of Surrey. He was allowed for his expenses 15 shillings a day, which must have been a good sum in those times.

Orders (dated 1585) lay down that the training should continue "the shot to be trained twice every summer, on some holidays, in the afternoon, allowing each harquebusier 1 lb of powder. The first day they are to be employed in shooting at a mark, the second day in skirmishing , etc." "Some of the trained shot to be put on horseback, and their callivers"(which were an unsatisfactory kind of light musket) "to be turned to muskets".

Dated 16th April, 1586 a letter from the Privy Council to the Earl of Derby, relating to training in the County of Chester, contains instructions which doubtless applied equally to the other counties:

The soldiers appointed to be trained "should be selected and chosen from gentlemen's, farmer's and yeomen's sons being of good behaviour and able to bear the charge of their own diets for the six days of their training." If an allowance did have to be made to any of them, it was to be "not more than 8d a day, the ordinary pay of a common soldier in Her Majesty's present services beyond the seas." In an enclosed note, "the charge for their furniture" is set down as "3 lbs of powder for each man for the six days, and no more, because the first three days of the training is appointed to be only with false fires, to assure their eyes to the use of the harquebus."

Elizabethan thrift is apparent in the following passage from the same document -: "Wages will NOT be given to Captains and Officers, as you are to make choice of principal knights and gentlemen, who, for their own reputations, this service being for the defence of their own country and habitations, would not look for any gold or pay; and considering the charge of the Muster Men is borne by the Queen."

The instructions continue:- "It is also thought meet that the Muster Master himself shall take view of the whole bands at least two several times; which may very well be done on some holiday in the afternoon, after Common prayer, but not on the Sabbath day."

The men chosen were to be "fit and able", and the instructions add "It is not meant that the service of any person whatsoever shall be excuse ..... to be exempt or spared, if otherwise thought fit." No reserved occupations in those days.

In 1587 the Lords of the Privy Council appear to have had several invasion scares: in the Acts of the Privy Council for that year there is a memorandum of a letter to Her Majesty's Lieutenants, to hold themselves in readiness to receive the enemy, addressed (amongst others) to Lord Howard of Effingham, Her Majesty's Lieutenant of the County of Surrey; in another letter, apprehensions are expressed that the enemy may land on the coasts of Dorset, Devon or Cornwall.

Which brings us to 1588 and, to set the scene, a resounding passage from the Loseley Papers - : "What a crisis for England's monarch and England's church was the year 1588! The unquenchable light of the Gospel Religion, cherished by its mild disciple Edward VI, and obstructed by the sanguinary bigotry of Mary, had again burst forth with overpowering effulgence under the auspices of her

successor Elizabeth, that truly English lion-hearted Queen.

Confident in the goodness of her cause, secure in the love of her Protestant people, she despised, crushed, and dissipated by the force of her political character all treason secret or avowed, and held on her royal course of government in that unruffled firmness and self-possession well expressed by her favourite motto 'Semper Eadem'. As I have looked it up, I am able to tell you that Semper Eadem translates as "Always the same" or I suppose Constant.

There are many detailed accounts of the mighty Armada: one speaks of "130 ships, 32,000 men, provisioned and appointed with due proportion of warlike stores and arms ..... and flat-bottomed boats for carrying over shallows, horses." These formidable preparations were all too well known of at home, and also that the Spanish "elated with vain hopes" had christened their new navy 'The Invincible Armada' (Loseley Papers). Nor were the spiritual thunders of the Vatican silent at this time, for the Pope gave his blessing to the enterprise and prepared to excommunicate Elizabeth and all her nobles.

In England, by the 29th May, depots of powder, match, etc. were established in the principal towns of maritime counties. Sir Francis Walsingham seems to have directed the military measures adopted at this juncture. Under his signature were issued orders "for putting in strength the powers of the realm". (Loseley 294) All able persons were to be mustered and trained, under skilful muster masters, to marching and the use of weapons. The number of infantry required for Surrey was 2,000 - shot 400, bows 600, pikes 400, bills 600. Of the shot the strongest and squarest men were to exercise musquets, the (least) strong and most nimble arquebuses. The characteristic economy of Walsingham is evinced in the

provision that the training should be performed with the least possible expense of powder.

In June it was announced to the Lords Lieutenant that "the Spanish Navy was abroad upon the seas, and gone to the coast of Biscay," and that invasion was feared. In consequence, all gentlemen in each county who were captains and "leaders of men" were required in "no wise to be absent out of the shire", and to see that the trained bands were ready to serve at an hour's warning. I am sure you will all know how that warning was given, but it was exciting to find evidence of it - : For the Shere Muster of 1584, and for subsequent ones, there are orders that "care be had of watching the beacon ....." (The Book of Reckoning) The beacon they watched must have been the one on St Martha's Hill where, a 19th century Guide Book (owned by Jack Browne) tells us - : "In olden days at the north-east angle of the (chapel) tower, a fire-pan was affixed for the purpose of kindling a beacon whenever it was necessary to give signal of National danger ..... and was made use of when the Spanish Armada threatened this country."

Macaulay wrote some verses on this subject. I don't suppose they would feature in anyone's anthology of 100 best poems, but they do give a vivid picture of the sighting of the great fleet by a merchant-ship; of her dash for home to raise the alarm; of church bells ringing and posts spurring inland with the news, while far out at sea the Spaniards saw "from every English shire, cape upon cape in endless range, those twinkling points of fire" which were the lighted beacons. These roused the men of every town and village, who caught up their pikes and guns and flags and hastened to the assembling place.



So the country was called to arms. The invaders were expected to land in Essex this time, and an army met at Tilbury to face them, under the command of the Earl of Leicester. As he was "Lieutenant General over all the men of the Queen's armies in the South parts" and as his 11,000 foot-soldiers came out of the counties, why shouldn't we suppose that some of our Albury men were there, camped at Tilbury when the Queen appeared among them on horseback "the more to excite the martial spirit of the nation". (Hume) In her famous speech to her soldiers, she professed her intention "Herself to lead them into the field, and rather to perish in battle than to survive the ruin and slavery of her people". Her spirited behaviour, we are told, "revived the admiration of the soldiery" and "an attachment to her person became a kind of enthusiasm among them, that they asked each other, whether any Englishman could be induced, by any dangers, to relinquish the defence of their glorious Queen".

In the same speech, Elizabeth assured her armies that "they deserved rewards", and promised "on the word of a Prince" that these should be paid. Nevertheless, immediately after the defeat of the Armada, orders were given for the sending back of the footmen to their counties, on account of the difficulty of providing them with victuals and lodging.

The danger was over for the moment, but the musters continued. The next one in Albury that we know of was in 1596. For that year there exists just a roll of muster-men - 38 this time. Again the names of Risbridger, Arrow and Hampshire appear and also "Henry Chennel of Farlie" and "William Shurlock under the Hill".

Mustermen were the fore-runners of the Militia, a word first

used in the 1590s. (Cousins) It seems that 'mustermen' and 'militia' were both used, but the Civil Wars of the 1640s saw the end of the real spare-time soldiers - the 'trained bands' or mustermen, for that was when the standing army began to be formed.

The Militia, however, was remodelled at this time (Hume) and two acts were passed for that purpose. They laid down that "every man worth £500 per annum in landed property ..... was to 'find' one horseman, properly clothed, equipped and paid, whenever required for duty. Those whose landed property was worth more than £50 but less than £500 had to keep one infantryman in the same way.

Smaller property holders clubbed together to equip either a horseman or a foot-soldier.

These acts were in a way regularising ancient practice. Persons of standing had always been liable to supply arms, and one of the earliest documents relating to Albury among the Loseley Papers is a list of such persons for 1573/4, headed by "Alice Polsted, widow." Also there is a record of "The Persons to find Armes" in Albury for 1684 - once more we find the names of Risbridger and Chennell, serving as 'Souldiers' as well as Finding Armes. William Risbridger and William Chennell, it seems, were rich enough to equip a foot-soldier apiece; John Risbridger clubbed together with John Rance (of Shere) : the proportions are meticulously noted - John Risbridger to bear 4/5ths and John Rance 1/5th of the expense. That year, St Martha on the Hill found arms for, and mustered, one solitary foot-soldier.

In the same year, that is, 1684, the following was sent to the High Constables of the Hundred of Blackheath -

'These are in His Majesty's name, to will and require you forthwith, upon sight thereof, to issue forth your warrants, to the

petty Constables and Tythingmen of the several parishes and places within your Hundred, requiring them to find foot souldiers and Arms in the Company of Captaine Austen, that they send in their Souldiers, with their Arms compleatly Fixed and Furnished, and Red Coates, to be and appeare att Guldeford upon Friday next, being the Three and Twentieth day of May, by eight of the clock in the Forenoone, there to be mustered and exercised ..... and hereof fail not"

Signed - William More and George Woodruffe

The Militia at that time trained for 14 days every year. (Hume)  
It was not universally popular as this rather unkind verse by Dryden shows :-

The country rings around with loud alarms,

And raw in fields the rude militia swarms;

Of seeming arms they make a short essay

Then hasten to be Drunk, the business of the day.

However, by most people the Militia was considered a sure defence, and when Louis XIV refused to join Holland in an invasion attempt, it was in large part due to his respect for the English Militia.

Service in the Militia was decided by ballot, and it was possible to send a substitute, as our Parish records show: -

In 1793, the Vestry Meeting authorised payments of Allowances, to be made to one Sarah Hack, wife of the substitute for William Gadd, "called into actual service."

While on the subject of Parish records I must mention another document from the Loseley papers, referring to expenses incurred in "keeping ..... of such men as were pressed to goe as souldiers and chargeable to the Parish of Aldberye" It is thought to date from 1624 and is signed by the Constable of Albury, another Risbridger. In the Parish Records for the year 1810 are two documents -

The first is a certificate, dated 11 June, from Head Quarters, Guildford, and signed by "Lt Col Commandant - G Holme Sumner". It reads -

"This is to certify that Chas Shepherd Private ballotted to serve in the LOCAL MILITIA for the Parish of ALBURY in the County of Surrey; has served in the Second Surrey Local Regiment, under my command, twenty days."

This certificate has a particular interest, as the Local Militia was a very short-lived affair. Formed in 1808 it was disbanded in 1816, and was in fact never re-formed. The other, or County, Militia to which the 2nd document refers, carried on as a Reserve force into modern times, and eventually its units became attached to Regular Army regiments. This 2nd document is a directive, sent by the deputy Lieutenants of Surrey, to the "Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of the Parish of Albury". It refers to Richard Pink, of Albury, who had been 'chosen by lot to serve in the Militia'. Instead, he had provided a substitute, and as the substitute had served for over a month, and as Richard Pink himself was not possessed of Lands, Goods or Money to the Value of £500, he was entitled to be paid the sum of £16, out of a special Parish rate levied for the purpose. And a Rate Book for this special rate, though for an earlier year (1805) is in our Parish Records.

By 1859 the nationalism of Napoleon III had aroused fears in England. Political unrest had been growing on the continent where the French and the Prussians had powerful, well-trained armies. Military efficiency was detested in England and the size and strength of the army had been seriously run down since the Crimean War. Eventually, however, it was decided that the militia would have to be strengthened and the Volunteer Rifles was formed.

In 1864 a camp for them was set up on Blackheath and on Easter Monday of that year was held the Volunteer Review, which was to make Blackheath known beyond Surrey for the first time, for the Review attracted much notice. There were pictures in the Graphic and in the Illustrated London News. Even Punch had a cartoon showing a Volunteer returning home all tattered and torn. The operation was on a considerable scale, with a grandstand on Rosemary Hill and an area set aside for public refreshment booths. Spectators were supposed to watch from a line near Littleford Lane, while the attacking troops advanced from the direction of Albury, and the defenders formed up just to the east of what is now the cricket ground. Contemporary prints (belonging to Mr Waddilove) show a smartly turned out and disciplined force deployed in the straight lines and squares successful at Waterloo nearly half a century earlier.

Martin Tupper's daughter Margaret wrote a poem commemorating the event. I must quote a line or two to give you an idea of it :-

Today on Surrey's broad Blackheath  
Is heard a martial tramp;  
Today its waving firs beneath  
Is pitched the tented camp.

The Volunteers came, she says, from 'Sherborne - Merrow Down - St Martha - Ewhurst - Holmbury - Leath - ' and to judge from the following verse, must have enjoyed themselves :-

But here today no blood-stained earth  
Shall witness to the fray  
For all is joyfulness and mirth  
And pleasant holiday.;

Margaret Tupper does not mention, though, that the proceedings eventually got somewhat out-of-hand. The Rev W Earle was shot by a portion of ramrod and died. And there were a number of other accidents, mostly caused by the public encroaching between the two sides.

It is worth remembering that the Territorials were originally called Volunteer Rifles.

THE BOER WAR (Oct 1899 - May 1902) has nothing whatever to do with Home Defence, but as I got three personal recollections of it I am determined to include them: -

Mr Vic Woods remembered two small gas balloons floating over Albury with the faces and names of the two Boer Generals - Kruger and Krengele - on them. One actually came to earth on Albury Heath. Mr Instone Gallup remembers being taken as a very young child to Nine Elms Station to see the City Imperial Volunteers entrain on their way to South Africa. He was so impressed by the magnificence of their slouch hats that he determined then and there to join them as soon as he was old enough.

By a strange coincidence, Mr Cleverly's memory was of the return of the CIVs : his uncle had served in the Bicycle Section, and he was taken to watch them march, complete with bicycles, through the City of London.

Miss Lloyd told me that Mr (later Sir) Jocelyn Bray served as a very young man in South Africa, and was in fact the only local man to become a Boer prisoner. A triumphal arch was erected, near the Drummond Arms, to welcome the men home at the end of the war, and there is a picture of it, (lent by Mrs Wales)

## 1914 - 1918

The two great wars are well within living memory of course, and as a result, I have been told many stories of such interest that although it means departing from the theme of Home Defence I feel I must include them.

For instance, I did not know that Albury had its own VC. Captain Theodore Wright (57th Field Company) of the Royal Engineers who lived at Talgai on Albury Heath, won what must have been almost the first VC of the war, on 23 August 1914, for blowing up two bridges on the Mons-Conde canal, in the face of the heaviest enemy fire. Almost exactly a month later he undertook a similar mission, for which some people think he should have been awarded a bar to his VC; sadly, this time he was killed in the accomplishing of it. One of his sisters, Emily, married into the Heath family.

In 1914 - 1918 Chilworth Gunpowder works were still in operation and were in fact enlarged during that time. They were guarded always by ex-servicemen, known as 'Old Sweats'

The father of Mr Vic Woods, Frank, was then running Woods' yard (eventually I believe with the help of only two men, one 70 and one 80 years old). The Yard made drying trays for the Gunpowdeer Works, which had to be specially constructed, using only brass nails so there would be no danger of a spark. When Mr Woods was telling me of this, he said :- "There are still some of them about in the village, in use as fruit and vegetable trays - I think Mr Marchant has one." Of course I went straight round to Mr Marchant who without a moment's hesitation turned out his shallots and lent me his tray. (And eight years ago I was able to display it, but now I gather it is

built in to the greenhouse of Mr Marchant's son in Farley Green: but anyway, it still survives and we know where it is)

A great drama in 1915 was a Zeppelin raid, aimed most probably at the Gunpowder Works. Mr Day and Mr Wood remembered it well. It was a moonlit autumn night when the Zeppelin appeared from the direction of Newlands Corner, travelling towards Guildford: they say it made a great noise, sounding like a traction engine. They heard its bombs falling - they fell near St Catherine's - and then watched while it went on, to disappear from sight over the Hurtwood.

Mrs Howe also remembered the Zeppelin: she saw it over Albury, very low and flying slowly. The shepherd, Mr Morgan, who lived in Weston Yard, collected everyone from the Yard and took them to what he considered safety - a moveable shepherds' hut standing in the middle of Ten Acre Field. There was room inside only for the women and children; the men had to get underneath the hut. Mrs Howe herself refused to go, not liking to wake her children. She said "She would rather they died in their beds than in the middle of The Ten Acre".

It was thought that the Germans had mistaken the ruin of St Catherine's for St Martha's church, which they were presumed to be using as a mark to guide them to the Gunpowder Works. So it was decided to camouflage St Martha's. Scaffolding was erected around it, and the Estate woodmen felled Scotch firs and piled them against the scaffolding until the little church was completely covered. Also for the protection of the Gunpowder Works, an Anti-Aircraft gun was set up in 1914 in the field opposite Guildford Lane Cottages and must have been among the first in the country.

Then there is the story of the Red Cross Tree: in 1916, the Red Cross wrote to many landowners requesting that they sell a tree and



give the proceeds to the Red Cross. The Duke of Northumberland, then of course the owner of Albury Park, received such a letter and selected a tree. For some reason, it was not felled at the time, although it was marked with a red cross to show that it had been chosen. After the war, the Society again wrote, asking what had become of their tree? The new duke, however, decided he did not want to part with it; instead, he had it valued - at £25 - , sent that sum to the Red Cross, and kept the tree, which still stands. It is an oak, close to the cedar of Lebanon just off the public footpath, and the Committee (of the History Society) was hoping to get a red cross painted on it again.

The Red Cross had hospitals in the area: one was at Clandon Park, and one at what is now Newlands Corner Hotel, but was then the home of Mr St Leo Strachey. The first gas cases to be brought home were nursed at Clandon Park. The trains carrying the wounded came straight from the coast on the Gomshall - Chilworth line to Guildford station, and thence by ambulance to the hospitals, where local Red Cross volunteers were at hand to carry them in. Among these were Frank Woods and Edward Browne (Mr Jack Browne's father). News of the arrival of a train of wounded would be brought, by bicycle mostly, to Mr Metcalfe who was locally in charge of the Red Cross and who lived at Woodside, Albury Heath. He would go round to tell the others, who got themselves to the hospitals 'as best they could', generally on foot.

Mrs Stevens, of the Drummond Arms, got up a concert party to entertain the wounded, which performed on many occasions, and Miss Grace Browne, as she then was, and Mr Day were both members of it. Some of the larger Albury houses took in Red Cross convalescent cases. Among these were Weston House, then occupied by the Rev.

Gay, and Postford House, belonging to Colonel Logan. One of the Postford House convalescents was Mr Jack McCann. After the war he settled in Albury and he was the model for the kneeling figure on the War Memorial in the Church, which was designed by Mr Metcalfe.

Home Defence: in the early days of the war Mr Martin, then the Agent, collected volunteers from among the men too young or too old for the Forces, to guard the Railway bridges. Those of them, such as Mr Day, who belonged to the Rifle Club, had their sporting rifles; Mr Woods and his father guarded Brook railway bridge armed with walking sticks and a truncheon. At one stage a recruiting march was held, led by the Albury Brass and Reed Band. It began in Albury and went by way of Sherborne, Shere and Gomshall Lane to Burrows Cross and back by Hook Land and Shere Heath to finish on Albury Heath: quite a march for those over military age; Mr Woods remembered that by the end the younger men were 3-400 yards ahead of the rest.

The bridges were guarded round the clock; Mr Day and a companion were responsible for the one in Birmingham Lane and he recalled one alarm: at that time there was a shepherd, Joe Spires, living in Postford Cottages. One dark night there was a fearful rumpus in the lane and Mr Day was preparing himself for anything when he heard a voice saying - "Don't shoot, you blighters" (blighters wasn't actually the word he used) : "don't shoot, 'tis only old Joe Spires going home from the pub." "We couldn't have shot if we'd wanted to" Mr Day said, "too doubled up laughing."

The Territorials were founded in 1905 by Viscount Haldane, then War Minister "For Home Service, to protect the shores of England" and only if they volunteered for it were they to be sent on service abroad. Originally they were called Volunteer Rifles and

wore black buttons like the Rifle Regiments. Miss Lloyd remembered a review of the Territorials by Lord Roberts, which took place at Newlands Corner before the war, probably in the early summer of 1914.

When war broke out, the 'Terriers' were put on a war footing or "embodied" as the phrase was. The local regiment was the 5th Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment (Territorial). Local members included Mr Edmund Bray, Mr Robin Barclay, Mr John Mercer of White Lane, Mr Geoffrey Cleverly, and Mr Tom Gostling who was the bugler. Although the last two were not then living in Albury, they all served together as the companies from Albury, Shere, Farnham and Ripley were combined.

Two days after the outbreak of war, Mr Cleverly bicycled into Guildford to enlist. The battalion's war station was at Maidstone, but during August they moved to Canterbury, marching all the way with an overnight stop at Charing.

In October they were posted overseas, to India, to relieve the Regular Army there for service in France. In fact they were the only Territorials actually to become part of the Indian Army. On 29th October, their troop train passed through Dorking and Guildford, and at both stations there was a 15 minute stop so that friends and relatives could say goodbye. (Eight years ago there were in the audience some of the people who were on Dorking station to meet that train.)

The 5th Queen's later served in Mesopotamia, and the battalion as such did not get home until just before Christmas 1919. Students, however, and among them Mr Cleverly, got priority release; but, coming home in ones and twos, no triumphal arches or special welcomes: Mr Cleverly, after a 7-day train journey via Taranto, was

finally "disembodied" at Wimbledon in March 1919. From there he caught a commuters' train to Horsley and then walked home.

There was, in the Great War, an equivalent of the 1939-45 Home Guard: several of the people I talked to remembered it - Miss Lloyd's father was a member - but for details I went to the Imperial War museum.

The force was called the Volunteer Training Corps and was formed almost unofficially in 1914. At first the men were distinguished only by red armbands, or brassards, with GR stamped on them, and the Corps as a whole was not taken very seriously; for instance, those armbands caused them to be known, though only by bad spellers I would think, as The Gorgeous Wrecks. An alternative nickname was Old Teddies, meaning greybeards. However, later on they were treated with more respect. Regulations were drawn up for them (1916) and they were issued with uniforms. It was thought that it would interfere with recruiting for the Regular Army if the Corps wore 'the magic khaki', nor were they allowed wool, which was very scarce at the time, so the uniform they finally had was made of grey-green rainproof drill. A Royal Academician with the resounding name of Solomon J Solomon designed a badge to be awarded to those of them who had completed 40 drills. After the Armistice they were disbanded and in 1919, I'm glad to say, received a letter from the King, thanking them for their years of public-spirited effort.

1939 - 1945

Early in the war, when the Auxilliary Territorial Service (now the WRACS) was formed, our local recruits were quartered in Stoughton Barracks. The living conditions were terrible, and Helen, Duchess of Northumberland, felt so sorry for the girls that she ordered and gave to each of them, a Hot Water Bottle.

Brook Huts were built to house an Anti-Aircraft unit; at the end of the war the unit left behind, only lightly buried, some phosphorous bombs, which caused a great stir when they were discovered in 1957 by workmen erecting poles to carry electricity from Brook to Albury School: the police and bomb-disposal squad were called in, and the area isolated until the danger had been removed.

Mr & Mrs Cleverly bought Farley Lodge early in 1940; there was not much competition for possession of it, because in the next field a Searchlight Unit was stationed, so the house was floodlit practically every night. There was a good plum harvest that year, and the Cleverlys gave the Searchlight crew the freedom of their orchard. One night, a stick of bombs fell over Foxholes Wood, Broomfields and the field where the searchlight was. Next morning, when asked "How it had been?" one of the crew was heard to mutter "What with the bombs and Mrs Cleverly's plums, we never stopped all night."

It is worth mentioning the other bombs that fell on Albury: incidentally, as there was then an Arms Depot in the woods between Albury and Effingham, it is supposed that that was the target. In the raids, luckily no one was hurt, though I believe there were a few bovine casualties. Some Incendiaries fell on Albury Heath, put out

by the Home Guard, and early in 1941 a stick of bombs was dropped in Weston Lodge field, one actually going through the roof of Nurse Truscott's house and finally landing by her bed. Fortunately none of those bombs exploded, but everyone living in Weston Yard had to be evacuated in the middle of the night. Miss Lloyd, as WVS Organiser, set up a temporary Rest Centre in the Village Hall. But she told me that the evacuees - Mr and Mrs Howick, Mr and Mrs Clarke, Mr and Mrs Saunders, Jillests, Bates etc - were all much more competent than she in brewing tea and making up beds on the floor, and they soon packed her off home.

Later in the war a 'doodlebug' fell in the Weston Woods, but mercifully just on the north side of the ridge. Still, practically every house in the village had at least one window shattered. The church suffered most, some six or seven windows being damaged beyond repair.

One other event of note before we come to the Home Guard was that in 1944 General (as he then was) Montgomery came to review some of the troops who took part in the D-Day landings; and he reviewed them on Albury Heath.

The Home Guard was raised early in 1940, when a recruiting speech by Winston Churchill brought immediate response. "All over the country" we are told "in every town and village, bands of determined men came together, armed with shotguns, sporting rifles, clubs, even with pikes and spears." (The Second World War, Churchill) In Albury, men volunteered at the Policeman's Cottage, many the very next day, commuters stopping in on their way to Clandon Station. Sometimes there was a queue of cars, so keen were men to join.

All than summer, when the threat of invasion hung over England, an extraordinary spirit prevailed in the Home Guard. The Albury contingent, like others, included men from every walk of life - among them for instance some with Army experience, a gardener and a future High Court Judge. But every difference was sunk in their common purpose: it was never spoken of, but was found on reflection to be the really memorable feature of the Home Guard. Churchill placed the utmost reliance on them; in a letter written in May 1940 he says :- "The Home Guard would DEVOUR an invading army, although" he added "He hoped to drown the bulk of the invaders in the salt sea."

The rough scheme of defence against invasion was this: some of the Home Guard were to be concentrated on the probable invasion beaches, to fight where they stood; behind them were anti-tank obstacles, manned by Home Guard, running down the east centre of the country, to protect London and the great industrial centres. And finally the main reserves, such as in Albury, for counter-offensive action.

In 1940 the church bells were silent; they were to be rung only as a signal of invasion. After one incident when, owing to a misunderstanding, the Home Guard in some parts of the country were called out by the ringing of the bells, the orders were changed - "Bells were to be rung only by the order of a Home Guard who had HIMSELF seen as many as 25 parachutists landing." Luckily it never happened, imagine trying to decide whether there were 25 or only 24 as one watched them coming down.

Mr MacIndoe was Officer Commanding the Albury Home Guard, and Mr Philip Draper the second-in-command. They stood guard at the Old Pavilion, sleeping on the floor when not on duty. They were

armed at first mainly with shotguns, but as well with any weapon they could find, including pitchforks. Eventually rifles arrived, in a special convoy from the USA, and were distributed to the Home Guard who, as Churchill remarked "would take a lot of killing before they gave them up"

Once again Brook Railway Bridge was guarded; apart from anything else, it was feared the Irish might attempt sabotage. The drill was that men on guard of course had their rifles loaded and at the ready, with more ammunition in pouches. At the end of guard duty, the Home Guard returned to the Pavilion, where they immediately unloaded. Once, someone absent-mindedly snapped his trigger before unloading; the bullet missed the next man by a whisker and lodged in the Pavilion roof. Another near-accident occurred when the unit was practising throwing Mills bombs in Albury sandpits. One man, having pulled the pin out, suddenly lost his nerve and froze, still holding the bomb, while the others ran like mad in all directions. Fortunately he recovered in time and threw it from him, but it was a near thing.

The Home Guard worked and trained hard all through the war; at first they were all volunteers but later included conscripts. I'm sure they were often tired and cold and fed up, but I was not told of it. I was told mainly of the amusing things that happened. Here are a few of them :-

At one stage, the Home Guard were ordered to stop and search all vehicles; the first along was the Tilly bus driven, of course, by Jim Hatcher. "Who? ME?" he said when ordered to halt. He didn't take very kindly to the search, and neither did the driver of the next car - Dr Stent on an urgent case.



Standing sentry on Albury Heath one night a Home Guard saw a shadowy figure approaching. Three commands to HALT! bringing no response, he appealed to his sergeant - "What on earth do I do now?" "Shoot" said the sergeant. The sentry somehow couldn't bring himself to do it, and just as well, as the shadowy figure turned out to be Mr Metcalfe, who happened to be rather deaf, walking peacefully home to Woodside. Mr Metcalfe, incidentally, instructed the Home Guard in First Aid.

Only on a Home Guard exercise could a soldier enter into an argument with the adjudicator as to whether he was really dead, or only wounded, having been shot by the opposition. The argument stood him in good stead, as while it was going on he continued to signal the enemy position back to his HQ.

And only a Home Guard, scouting through the bracken after the enemy (in this case the Shamley Green Platoon) could meet his own two children, out with their nurse, and have his position given away by their delighted cries of "Hello, Daddy"

That's about it, but I would like to end by reading the citation, signed by King George VIth and presented to every Home Guard at the end of the war. It sounds as if it was composed by Churchill, and is timeless, so that it could have been written for any of those other Home Forces - Territorials, Volunteers or Militia, right back to the Tudor Mustermen ;-

In the years when our Country was in mortal danger,

*A Man of Albury* .

gave generously of his time and powers, to make himself ready for her defence by force of arms, and with his life if need be.