

28th March 1978

After reading your letter in the Evening Post of Friday, 17th March, I made a mental trip down memory lane.

I was a member of the Regiment which followed the 76th some time in 1941. You will appreciate that it is now some 37 years ago, and all is not as clear as it might be.

It was in February, 1942 that I was posted to 133 (Mixed) Heavy A A Regiment R A, with Headquarters at Burwalls, Clifton. This was a large house just off the Somerset end of the Suspension Bridge, and at that time belonged to the Wills family. We were part of 46th A A Brigade, with Headquarters at Deer Park, Durdham Down.

Four Batterys, 451, 462, 463 and 472 made up 133 Regiment, and at the time I joined them, Bristol sites Nos 1 to 8 were manned. Details as under: (ATS of course played an active part in manning)

No	Site	Battery
No 1	Lodge Farm (Overlooking Portishead) This site was also used as a local Practice Camp	463
2	Portbury (BHQ)	463
3	Markham Farm, Easton in Gordano (BHQ)	462
4	St George's Wharf	462
5	Cribb's Causeway (BHQ)	451
6	Westbury (Close to Eastfield Road)	451
7	Rookingham (BHQ I think)	472
8	Pilning	472

I seem to recollect that there were eight other sites, and would hazard a guess that these would have been:

- No 9 Almondsbury
- 10 Brickfields (Winterbourne)
- 11 Henham (I am not quite certain of this)
- 12 Whitchurch (Close to the old aerodrome)
- 13 Purdown (At one time manned by 133 units)
- 14 Rodway (Likewise manned by 133)
- Chew (This could have been Pagan's Hill)
- Earth (I am not too clear on this, but the name still rings a bell in my memory)

Butcombe does not click with me, but I am open to correction. It is also possible that there was a site at Bedminster, but again I am a bit hazy about this.

During my time with 462 Battery, I did have occasional contact with 9th A A 'Z' Regiment, R.A. I think there ^{were} three Batterys, 141, 142 and 143. Two sites I remember were Abbots Leigh and Brislington, but the third one eludes me.

Your mention of Searchlights, conjured up the 2nd Searchlight Regiment, R.A. but I don't remember where H.Q. was based. I think two of their sites would have been Failand and Bedminster - there were undoubtedly others, which I cannot recollect.

At some time (it might have been 1944) 90 cm. Searchlights were installed on certain sites, and Bristol 3 (Easton in Gordano) was one of them. These were manned by us, and not by a S/L unit.

The nerve control centre for Bristol area was known as GOR (Gun Operations Room), and this was housed in the T A Barracks on Horfield Common (Not the old barracks).

In case you are wondering what A A 'Z' Regiments were, I will elucidate. They manned devices known as "3 inch U P Projectors." These devices fired in rapid succession a series of rocket propelled missiles - U P means unrotated projectile - this differs from normal A A missiles to which a spin is imparted by the rifled barrel.

It was policy to move units about, and 133 did operate from sites other than 1 to 8.

At the back of my mind, another unit, the 59th H A A Regiment keeps popping up, and I have a feeling that this was possibly a mobile outfit, who shared manning of Bristol sites with 133 Regiment.

Another Mixed Regiment came into the area in 1944, and this was I think 150 (Mixed) Hy A A Regiment - one Battery registers with me as 670.

During my spell of service with 133 Regiment, we were moved to Plymouth and back again. When the V.I launchings began to escalate, our guns were uprooted and dispatched to the East Coast - Thames Estuary area. Shortly the Regiment was moved to the Humber Estuary manning sites against the V.I's. Then came 'D' Day and most of sites were un-manned.

I can with some clarity recall the equipment with ^{which} the sites were equipped, and if you think it might be of use, please let me know, and I will commit it to paper for you.

You could of course try H.Q. Southern Command, Salisbury for confirmation or additional information - by now it should be regarded as "unclassified".

If you think I can help you further, please ask. I do hope that the foregoing will be assistance in your project.

Yours faithfully,

C. A. Gallagher.

A A EQUIPMENT ON SITE

(This was held against A F G 1098 (ADGB) and was regularly accounted for)

GUNS

4 originally installed, later increased to 6

O Q F 3.7" A A Mk II (Ordnance Quick Firing)

First supplied with No 9 Fuse Setting Machine.
Prior to this fuses had to set by hand with a special fuse-setting key.
Guns were also fitted with Magslip Dials for Bearing, Elevation and Fuse

The guns were modified by removing the No 9 FSM and fitting a Molins No 11 Fuse Setter and Loader. This reduced the manpower required to operate the gun. The Mark number was then up dated to IIA. Later, R 37 Remote Control Gear was fitted - this reduced further the manning required, as bearing and elevation layers were no longer required. A further up dating of the mark number raised it to IIC

FIRE CONTROL EQUIPMENT

Plotter A A Mk I - this was on a two wheeled trailer, with canvas cover, and was operated by ATS personnel, in conjunction with

Predictor A A No 2 Mk 2 (Sperry) (It is possible that early on some sites were equipped with No 1 Predictors by Vickers.) Power source was from a 24 volt Battery of high Amp hour capacity, through a Rotary Converter, which converted the DC to AC at 50 volts and 50 cps (Hz modern)

With the introduction of Remote Control Gear, greater accuracy was necessary, and the first American equipment arrived, designated

Directors M 8 - this was electronic.

One component unit was very large, and required 8/10 men to move it. Auxiliary units were VDU (Visual display unit), PPI (Plan Position Indicator) and TRI (Target Rate Indicator) plus a transformer to reduce electric supply to 115 Volts, as most American equipment operates at 110/115 V on 60 cps.

The colony of cables was unbelievable - these came into the Command Post, and special ducts had to be cut to accommodate them.

RADAR

GL Mk I was the original equipment, followed by GL Mk II (This comprised a Tx and Rx - Transmitter & Receiver) and it was about this time the horizontal wire netting structure was installed - it was known as "The Mat" and help signal reflection, and reduction of spurious echoes.

RADAR (Contd)

Radar No 3 Mk 2 replaced the GL Mk II, and this in turn gave way to Radar No 3 Mk 7 - with the latter a "putter on" was needed, and this took the form of Canadian Radar No 4 Mk 6.

Radar No 3 had a single paraboloid rotating above the cabin, but No 4 Mk 6 had a long horizontal antennae, which likewise rotated continuously. Possible targets picked up by the No 4 were passed to Radar No 3, and pin pointing was then achieved.

This information was fed automatically to the Director M 8 and thence to the Remote Control Gear on the Guns - Selsyn drives were much in evidence to control the hydraulic motors on the guns.

The crowning achievement in Radar came with the American SCR 584 (Radar No 3 Mk 5). This had a single paraboloid antennae and swept continuously until a target was located, when it would lock on and follow. It was very accurate and required no "putter on". In the case of low flying aircraft, it could more effectively track than the other types.

Whilst we certainly had SCR 584 on the East Coast sites, I am not certain we had them in Bristol. Incidentally all were mobile but "jacked" for operational purposes.

GENERATORS

Power for the GL Mk I and Mk II was from a single phase AC Generator (240 Volts) by Listers of Dursley. (15 KVA) A similar generator of 17 KVA 3 phase supplied the Radar No 3 Mk 2 and 7, whilst the Canadian and American types of Radar were supplied from Caterpillar Generators of possibly 19/22 KVA. All these were mobile on 2 wheeled trailers. They all had stabilising jacks when in use.

30 KVA Generators (24 kW) at 240 volts supplied the Remote Control Gear motors - these were 3 phase motors - supply being 240 volts between phases (Domestic supply is 240 volts between phase and neutral) Only 3 wires were needed for this Delta arrangement.

Makes, were Paxman, Gardner, Maudsley, etc. and all were static installations, being housed in Nissen Huts

SPOTTING AND OPTICAL EQUIPMENT

A Height and Rangefinder No 3 Mk IV was sited quite close to the Command Post, and in the early days readings were called out for feeding into the Predictor. Some sites had "Goertz" instruments.

For identifying aircraft, all sites had Telescopes, ~~Identification~~ Identification A A Mk III. Both instruments remained on site even when the advanced equipment was installed.

High definition Binoculars, No 5 Mk 2 were provided (Ross)

COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT

Megaphones were used in the early days from the Command Post to the Guns, and were retained for emergency.

Initially, Wireless Sets W/T No 17 were used, and later type R 109 superseded the 17's. There could have been an even later type, but I can't quite recollect. All were battery powered.

Telephones Field, types 'L' and 'F' were in general use, and of course each site had a GPO line - BHQ had small exchange with 4 extensions.

Direct Line from GOR to Site was in the Command Post

As matter of interest, Markham (Easton in Gordano) was Pill 31309 and St George's Wharf was Pill 31311

SEARCHLIGHTS

For a short time some sites were equipped with 90 cm Searchlights. This came in a lorry, and the Light Projector was removed for operational use. Power came from the 'built in DC generator' of the vehicle. I think ours was a Tilling-Stevens.

SMALL ARMS

Rifles .303" (SMLE) were part of our equipment, but only a small number was held. At some time I seem to remember an exchange for .300" types. Revolvers .38" and .455" were also part of the establishment.

Light Machine Guns defended the sites from low flying Aircraft - there was strict control on use.

Some rifles were withdrawn, and the 9 mm Sten Gun made its appearance. It had a high rate of fire, but was not very accurate, and there was some trouble with jamming.

L A A Equipment

40 mm Bofors Guns were deployed on some sites, and I seem to remember we had to carry a spare barrel.

AMMUNITION

3.7" Ammunition was held on site, and replenished by RASC from a local EAD (Emergency Ammunition Depot) Keynsham would have been our EAD

It was not armed on arrival, and fuses, types 207 and 208 were fitted prior to use.

For 'V' I missiles, the type of fuse was known as a "Proximity fuse" which is self explanatory

Shell propellant was type RDX, and later modified to NF (Flashless)

Warheads were armed with TNT

Muzzle velocity was 3,200 ft per sec, and at Maximum elevation ceiling was some 30,000 feet.

SITE STORAGE

Small magazines with steel doors held supplies in the Gun Pits.

Bulk supply was in the site magazine - concrete structure, largely below ground, with ramp at each end for vehioular access. Heavy steel doors were fitted to the compartments.

TRANSPORT

2 Motor Cycles (Dispatch riders) (Ariel, AJS, Matchless)
2 Utility Vans (Austin - Hillman etc)
2 - 15 cwt Lorries - Ours were Guy Ants, which later were replaced by Bedfords.

RHQ had a 3 ton lorry which provided service to each Battery in turn

There was a garage with inspectipn pit on BHQ site, and minor repairs and servicing were carried out under the guidance of the MT Sgt. Ours was garage owner, and he was a top grade engineer.

GUN STORES

This was a brick building with large doors. Spares were held, and also the tools for daily alignment of the Guns - these were two items known as "Bushes, Chamber, and Bushes, Muzzle - part nos AN 86 and AN 87 under section M.2 of the VAO3 (Vocabulary of Army Ordnance Stores)

There was also a Battery Charger of 1,260 watts output. All site batteries were charged on this equipment.

WORKSHOPS

There was A REME establishment at Burnett, adjacent to AAOD Burnett, and our repair indents (A F G 1045) were submitted to them. Gun barrel inspection requisitions (A F G 875) were submitted to them.

There was of course a regular system of equipment inspection by REME, and it was unit responsibility to take appropriate action on receipt of reports.

27 Command Workshops at Warminster and
28 Command Workshops at Hilsea, Portsmouth
provided back up service when repairs were beyond local REME capabilities

REME Workshops at Cricklade seems to ring a bell in my memory, but I am open to correction

SUPPLIES & SERVICES

- C O D Donnington Salop - Guns, Radar, F.C. Equipment
- C O D Weedon Northants - Small arms and ammunition
- C A D Bramley Hants - Major supply source for AA Ammunition
- © O D Chilwell Netts - Vehicles and Trailers
Ashchurch Glos " "
- C O D Bicester - M T Spares
- C O D Didcot Berks - Clothing, Non-technical stores (consumable and others) - Webbing equipment Camp Equipment, etc. They also supplied the local Ordnance Depots - but supplied direct to units if not readily available locally.
- O O Axbridge (Ordnance Sub Depot) Clothing, Webbing, consumable stores, and non-technical stores
It was located at Notting Hill, Upper Weare, Som.
At a later time it was turned into an AAOD, and its original role was taken over by Bridgwater.
- AAOD Burnett - Spares of a technical nature were available from here, and possibly items in transit for units from CODs
- AAOD Cullumpton Devon As above, but did not usually supply Bristol sites

Returned Stores Depots were located at:
Tuffley Lane, Gloucester
Shepton Mallet, Som
Highbridge, Som
Langford, (this was closed down and activities transferred)
They dealt with clothing, and non-technical stores

SUPPLIES & SERVICES (Contd)

Technical stores and ammunition were usually returned to point of origin under special instructions from RAOC

Stationery came from HMSO office against unit demand. Typewriters I believe were under control of Brigade HQ

Laundry and Boot repairs were sub-contracted locally, although some units had a "cobbler", as did 462 Battery

Rations were in general organised through NAAFI and RASC Local Depots were at Langford (until closed) and Freshford, Bath

Site Building maintenance was the responsibility of the DCRE (Deputy Commander Royal Engineers). There was an office at 212 (I think the number is right) Redland Road, and demands for assistance brought a visit from the Clerk of Works (Civilian)

Barrack Stores, Bedding, Fuel etc were on supply from Officer i/c Barracks at Horfield Barracks (The old one) At the time the Barrack Warden was Mr A H Dowling, and he had two assistants - Mr P Whitton (Stores) and Paddy whose surname escapes me at the moment - he was the Fuel and Light Accountant. These two latter were usually present when sites were handed over between units or vacated.

Transport over and above unit capability was requisitioned from RASC - local Camp was at Rockhill, Keynsham

retrol & Lub Oils were RASC supply - we operated a locally requisitioned Petrol Pump at top of Harberfield Hill.

TRAINING UNITS

Horfield Barracks

Physical training and assault courses organised from here

Donniford Camp, Watchet, Som

Radar Training School

Chepstow Mon

Fitters training

Aborfield, Berks

Fitters courses

Manorbier, South Wales

A A Gunnery Training

Ty-Croes - Anglesey

A A (Firing) Practice Camp

ADMIN CHAIN

A A Command H Q (A D G B) was I seem to
recollect with Fighter Command, Uxbridge

5th A A Division - Reading I believe was HQ,
although indents were locally to Horfield
Barracks for authorisation

46th A A Bridge - Deer Park, Durdham Downs

RHQ 133 (Mixed) Hy. A. A. Regiment, R. A.
Burwalls, Clifton

We were also subject to control from
Southern Command, with Headquarters at Wilton,
Salisbury.

Regimental Paymaster was at Leicester and

Officer i/c Records at Rugby

PERSONNEL

(These I do remember)

RHQ

Lieut-Col. R H C Herron **F D**
 Capt S J Yeates - Adjutant (He is now dead)
 Lieut Murphy (Quartermaster) On posting succeeded by
 Major F W Grogan
 Lieut Armstrong (RAEC I think)

RSM Scanlon (Some doubt here)
 Sgt F Booth (RAEC)
 Sgt R Mann (Dicky) (P T Instructor)
 Sgt T J Nutter - Admin Clerk Orderly Room
 (Tommy Nutter still lives in Bristol and
 I made contact with him a couple of week ago)

Bdr Beacham (MT Fitter)

Gnr W Williams (Driver)

462 Battery

Army

Major Gibson, succeeded by
 Major G A Bilsland
 Capt Armitage, succeeded by
 Capt H J Botten (Married AT'S subaltern
 in unit)
 Capt R S Lockey Posted and succeeded by
 Capt Worrall
 Lieut A K Foster (Ken - native of Goole)
 Lieut L Waller
 Lieut A Morae
 2/Lieut Johns (Cornishman)

BSM Gray - succeeded by
 BSM Stimson (WO II)
 BQMS C A Gallagher
 Sgt S E Cleaver (Orderly Room Clerk)
 Sgt W Robson (MT fitter & controller)
 Sgt Dadds
 Sgt Dadswell
 Sgt D Feeney
 Sgt J Stokes (Jim)
 Sgt Warwick
 Sgt Watts
 Bdr Dawos (Rations)
 L/Bdr E E Nash (Storeman)
 Bdr E C Hailey - Gunfitter & gun stores
 Gnr F Beck (DR)
 Benham
 Cuthbert (Driver)
 E Davenport (BC's driver)
 R Errington (Cobbler)
 Gordon
 Madden

ATS

J/Cdr M Allen
 J/Cdr McLeod (Canadian)
 Sub A Walker (Lived with
 parents at
 Failand)
 Sub P Wilkes (Penny)
 Sub ?? Married Capt Botten
 CSM C Nott (Claris) (WO II)
 Sgt M Hughes (Bobbie)
 Sgt A Hogg
 Sgt Stanford (Radar)
 Sgt Barber (Radar)
 Sgt P Flynn
 Cpl P Jones - Admin clerk
 L/Cpl Hilton
 Pte M Bartlett - clerk
 Pte Cox
 Pte E Evenett (Batwoman)
 Pte E Large (clerk)
 Pte Moffatt
 Pte S Stone (Sybil)
 Pte Vaughan (Driver)
 Pte M Williams (Driver)

Gnr Marshall
 Martin
 Sealey (DR)
 Vidler
 Weller
 Widdows