

arrange a scheme which could use part time soldiers effectively.

Their terms of service provided that they should not perform more than 48 hours of training and duty in 28 days and in the event of raids taking place they could only volunteer for extra duty with the permission of their civil employers. It was impracticable to permit any of the major defences of the country to be manned on those terms, even if, as later occurred, the terms were somewhat modified.

14. It was at this time that we had been planning an extension of the anti-aircraft defences by the widespread introduction of Rocket Batteries; the supply of rocket weapons had now increased to the extent that demands for shipping had been met and a surplus was rapidly becoming available for home defence. Unlike other forms of defence the principle involved was simple and required no long and complex training. Rocket weapons appeared to be eminently suitable for operation by the Home Guard and I accordingly proposed the introduction of Home Guard Rocket Batteries. The proposal was approved and units began training immediately.

15. It was agreed that each man should be called upon one night in eight, so that where 178 men were required to keep a site in action on any one night, a total of 1,424 were necessary in order to permit full and continuous manning of the site. These figures will give some idea of the dimensions of the new project, but this was far from being the only difficulty. It was decided that a call for volunteers would be unsatisfactory because many would probably be young men who would shortly be lost under conscription. The responsibility for providing men therefore devolved upon the Ministry of Labour and they selected those who were not otherwise employed on any form of National Service.

16. Disciplinary control over members of the Home Guard was virtually impossible and it was an easy matter for those who were so inclined to evade all duty. It was due entirely to the service given by the unselfish that the Rocket Batteries became and remained a force which the German aircrews treated with the utmost respect.

17. Within a year the Ministry of Labour was showing signs of being unable to fulfil demands and men were transferred from Home Guard infantry battalions. The Home Guard infantry battalions, formed when invasion was an ever-present threat, contained all the keenest and most enthusiastic elements and whole units might have transferred to an anti-aircraft rôle. But, when called upon to give up men while retaining an infantry rôle, it was natural that they should allow only their least efficient members to transfer to the Rocket Batteries.

Arrangements were made whereby one or more Home Guard General Service Batteries were affiliated to the local AA Battery from which the latter could draw recruits. Those unsuitable for AA duty, due either to medical reasons or change of civilian employment, were drafted back to the Home Guard Battalion concerned.

18. In 1942 manpower pressure increased further. In July, 1942, the *ad hoc* sub-committee, charged with relating the requirements

and availability of equipments with the availability of manpower for anti-aircraft purposes throughout the world, allotted to Anti-Aircraft Command a ceiling of 264,000; in October, 1942, a reduction to 180,000 was suggested. By introducing what was termed "over-gunning" the ratio of men to guns in Heavy Anti-Aircraft units was further reduced. In places where guns were concentrated, batteries became responsible for more than the normal eight guns and the Home Guard were also introduced to Heavy anti-aircraft gunnery, taking over one or more guns under supervision of the local unit.

Where guns were scattered no over-gunning was possible. The effect in saving therefore became more pronounced as the defences increased and as more guns could be concentrated, rising from about 6 per cent. with 1,500 guns to 15 per cent. with 2,500. By this means the number of Heavy equipments in action was not reduced. Nor was it found necessary to reduce the number of Light guns in action, for the Home Guard took over the defences of certain factories and railways with these weapons and it was agreed that the R.A.F. Regiment should take over the defence of airfields.

19. Anti-Aircraft Command was at the same time largely absolved from the responsibility of holding and draft-finding, which had been such a burden hitherto, so that ultimately this 1942 cut was limited to ten searchlight batteries.

Cuts in Man-Power.

20. The size of this cut was, however, only kept within these limits by reducing the number of male Heavy anti-aircraft batteries from 92 to 64, that is, by replacing men with women in 28 batteries. I regarded 64 as the absolute minimum number of male batteries I should have, since there were certain commitments which I hoped not to have to ask mixed units to undertake. I still envisaged using male batteries only for emergency deployments and I had to retain some male batteries for training and holding purposes. Fortunately the threat of invasion had receded and I was now able to move mixed units into those south and south-eastern areas from which they had been previously excluded.

21. In September, 1943, the question, now a regular annual one, recurred again. An assessment of German air strength at this time led to the conclusion that certain risks might legitimately be taken in the way of considerably reducing the defences in some of the northern and western areas and cuts were made in all forms of defence, the manpower in Anti-Aircraft Command being reduced by 13,700.

22. In June, 1944, further cuts were suggested which had to be postponed because of the attacks by flying bombs; but in August, 1944, it was proposed to regard large areas of the country as probably immune from further attack and during September, 1944, I lost all Smoke Defences and 28 Searchlight batteries, followed in November, 1944, by 11 male and 101 Mixed Heavy batteries, 34 Light batteries and 14 more Searchlight batteries. Finally in January, 1945, I lost 6 male Heavy batteries, 35 Light batteries, 33 Searchlight batteries and at the same time the Home Guard Rocket