Reply 28/9/84 Ref. D/NHB(L) 3/3/415AD

Naval History Library
Ministry of Defence, Room 2502
Empress State Building
Lillie Road
London SW6 1TR

Thank you for your letter of 24 June concerning "Luffitt Sailor"

Unfortunately I am unable to help with your enquiry and can only suggest that you contact a local history society; your local library should be able to give you an address and may also be able to suggest general books on the history of Devon which would be of interest.

I am sorry you have had to wait so long for such an unhelpful reply.

H P White

9-89 letter to Naval Librarian Plymouth 6/11/84

Memories of a local tale were revived recently when I received an enquiry about my local researches on my parish of Luffitt.

I will enclose a copy of my further enquiries which has been sent in turn to the Editor of "Navy News" at Portsmouth, and also to the Naval Library in London to whom I was referred.

Neither of these sources was able to help and the librarian in London suggested I pursue more local records.

I therefore made enquiries at the West-country Studies dept. adjoining the record office in Exeter, and was instructed to write to the Naval Dept. at Plymouth Library.

Would you be able to tell me please

if you have any recorded material which might throw light on fighting by sailors in this area about 5 miles north of Honiton, or if you know of any other source which might prove helpful.

I have been collecting information about my parish for over 30 years as and when my busy farming life has permitted, in the hope that others may benefit, and about 200 typed pages are already deposited at Devon Record Office.

I hope you may be able to offer some advice.

J R Elliott Area Librarian
West Devon Area
Central Library
Drake Circus
Plymouth PL4 8AL

HW/SR

Reply 11/12/84

Thank you for your letter concerning the Luppitt Sailors.

My staff in both the Local History and Naval History Libraries have checked indexes to material in the collections but unfortunately found no reference at all to sailors fighting in some sort of battle at Luppitt. The library in Honiton was contacted in case the staff who obviously have local knowledge, could help.

Although Luppitt Harbour had been heard of, nobody could help with your query.

I can only suggest that you contact a local newspaper and ask if an article could be printed about the legend. Perhaps a local person may come forward who can help you.

"What am I" Rhyme teasers!

(a) Around the rick, around the rick;
And there I met my uncle Dick;
I took off his head, and sucked his blood,
And left his body standing.

(b) ~~Neck like an apple,~~
Head like an apple,
Neck like a swan,
Back like a greyhound,
And three legs to stand.

(c) Four stiff standers,
Four millianders,
Two lookers,
Two crookers,
And a whip-a-tail.

Answers on page 24.

A flea and a fly in a flue;
The flea said, 'What shall we do?'
The fly said, 'Let us flee';
The flea said, 'Let us fly';
So they flew, those two, from the flue.

Source not remembered

When the Last Great Scorer,
Comes to write against your name;
He'll count not whether You won, or lost,
But how you played the Game.

3H

See Vol III P. 87.

Home Guard

Pamphlet 3/3/85

A note on the 19th (Seaton) Battalion Home Guard Devonshire Regiment

By Lt-Colonel J V Ramsden C.M.G. D.S.O.

Formation.

1940 Local Defence Volunteers

See Vol IV P 68

On May 19th, 1940, Mr. Eden, Secretary of State for War, Broadcast an appeal to the country to immediately form Units of Local Defence Volunteers to resist a possible invasion by the Germans, who were then advancing rapidly through France and Belgium.

Next morning, Lord Sidmouth, as Chairman of the Honiton Rural District Council, called a meeting of retired regular officers resident in the neighbourhood, with the chairman of the local branch of the British Legion to organise the recruitment of volunteers.

Honiton

Arrangements were made to form a Honiton Company with Platoons at Broadhembury, Upottery, Honiton and Yeniton.

Sentry posts were placed at night in or near most villages, and a mounted patrol was arranged for Gittisham Common.

Seaton

Similar action had been taken at Seaton and anti-tank obstacles were placed along the promenade.

Outlying platoons were formed at: Rousdon. Colyton. Branscombe.

Axminster.

Similar action was taken at Axminster, a Company being formed with Platoons at Axminster. Uplyme. Yarcombe Kilmington, Chardstock. Hawkchurch.

Armament

A broadcast appeal to the civilian population to lend shotguns and other weapons brought a large response, and great numbers were sent in to local police stations. Till June these formed the only armament of the L.D.V., but in that month a large consignment of ·300 rifles with a small amount of ammunition was received from the U.S.A. and these were at once distributed to the L.D.V. along the south coast.

L.D.V.

Unfortunately, ammunition was so scarce that rifle practice was not possible.

Mills grenades were issued at an early date, with discharger cups for attachment to rifles. Several other patterns of H.E. and incendiary grenades and "Sticky Bombs" for attacking tanks, were issued from time to time.

Browning automatic rifles, and Sten sub-machine guns were added later, and later Bren, Lewis, Vickers and Browning light machine guns became part of the normal equipment.

Heavy Weapons

Spigot mortars, with anti-tank bombs, Northover projectors, Smith guns, 2 pr anti-tank guns and even a flame

thrower, were gradually issued.

From 1942 onwards increasing supplies of all sorts of ammunition rendered further musketry training possible, and great efforts were made to lay the foundation of a sound training in musketry, with good success

Rifle range

Rifle Ranges

The existing rifle ranges of the Devon Territorial Association were used, with a bombing range west of Morgan hayes ~~beach~~

Later a new rifle range with attached bombing range was constructed by "E" Company at Yarcombe.

Practice with heavy mortars was carried out at Dunscombe, near Salcombe Regis.

Higher Grouping

In the early stages, an East Devon group was formed, including the units from Exeter to the Dorset border. The original Honiton Battalion proved too large for a single command, and the personnel were distributed into the 19th (Seaton) Battalion and the Clyst Battalion, under a group Commander.

With the increasing demand of the Regular Army for drafts for foreign service, the importance of the L.D.V. increased and their name was changed to the Home Guard.

Home Guard

Name change 23/7/1940 L.D.V from 19/5/1940

From February 1942, service for all men in civilian employment between the ages of 18 and 55 became compulsory, and these were directed by the Ministry of Labour to the Home Guard, whose strength was

greatly increased.

As a result, the numbers of the original "B" and "C" Companies became too large for convenient command.

"E" Company was therefore formed from the Platoons in the Dalwood — Yarcombe — Stockland area, previously belonging to "B" Company, and from the Platoon of "C" Company in Uplottery.

"D" Company was formed from the Platoons of "C" Company in the Broadhembury and Luppitt Areas.

Luppitt

East Devon Sector

To achieve the highest possible standard of efficiency, Home Guard Battalions were now grouped under "Sectors" of usually six Battalions.

The "East Devon Sector" was accordingly formed in December 1942, under the command of Lt-General E. Osborne C.B. D.S.O. with Headquarters at Honiton.

Training and Operational Role

Up to the time of the formation of the East Devon Sector there had existed no uniform policy of training, nor clear definition of the operational role of the Home Guard in the event of an invasion of the country.

After the formation of this "Sector" training was greatly improved and intensified, and a welcome degree of standardisation introduced, which facilitated administration.

The Sector now laid down clearly the duties of the Home Guard in the event of enemy attack.

It was laid down that the force should

hold and defend to the last defended areas and strong points in or near its own towns and villages.

Besides providing for the garrisons of these strong points, and crews for the heavy weapons, the personnel of the locality were also trained to act as mobile fighting patrols.

Exercises on these lines were constantly carried out, and included arrangements for the feeding of the force in case it was called to "Action Stations"

Operational Period

1944 In March, 1944. as preparations for the invasion of Europe by the Allied Powers approached completion, it became known that the responsibility for the defence of England would devolve on the Home Guard.

Special duties were accordingly allocated to the Battalions along the South Coast.

19th (Seaton) Battalion Home Guard

In the case of the 19th Battalion these duties consisted of:—

1 Providing guards on approaches to the beaches to prevent the landing of enemy agents. These guards were all found by "A" Company at Seaton.

Each guard, of which seven men were posted each night, consisted of an N.C.O. and six men, providing one double sentry on the path to the beach.

2 Guarding the Honiton Tunnel on the Southern Railway Line.

See P43 & IV 216 Tunnel

A Battle Platoon with telephonists, runners, and first aid party, were posted at each end of the tunnel every night.

In case of serious attack by a force landed by parachute, battle positions were entrenched at either end of the tunnel, and double lines of field telephone wire were laid to connect the Platoon Headquarters.

Reserves were arranged both from the U.S.A. troops in Heathfield Camp and from the Home Guard in Honiton.

Altogether this duty required 76 officers and men each night, found from "B" "C" "D" and "E" Companies.

These duties were commenced on April 24th and ceased on July 10th, a period of 77 days with a total of over 11,000 attendances.

Stand Down

The Battalion finally "Stood Down" on December 3rd 1945, religious services being held in Honiton, Axminster and Seaton.

1945

Appendix A list of Battalion Commanders 5
Staff from Regular Forces. 2
"A.B.C.D.E." Company Commanders 12
Officers 118

40

see page 74

Rifle Register

No 4 (Luffitt) Platoon, "D" Company

Sten guns issued to N.C.O's

Cpl	Braddick	A.
"	Braddick	F.
L. Cpl.	Corrick	A.W.
Sgt.	Crabb	A.J.
Cpl	Ewins	S.C.
"	Fone	D.
"	Manley	E.
"	Martin	T.P.
Sgt.	Perkins	W.
"	Sage	J.

E.Y. Rifles with discharger cups issued to

Clark A
Godfrey D.P.
Hancock W.
Larcombe J.
Rome E.
Wright A.

Walden 28/10/44

I still hold the receipt from Dimond & Co of Honiton for Printing 1 Address to Lt Walden (in gold) £1:0:0

See page 88-89

This was presented to our Platoon Commander in gratitude for and in memory of our period in the Home Guard by its members.

I have one given to me. It contains a list of 64 names

original framed held by Mrs John Dowles.