

THESE MEN FIRE THE GUNS

Since the outbreak of war A.A. gunners in the British Isles have shot down more than 600 enemy planes.

Accurate gunfire has smashed up mass formations, throwing the raiders off their lines of bomb release and sending hundreds of them limping away full of ugly holes where shell splinters had found their mark.

Who are these front line defenders of our cities? What kind of men are these gunners who, long before the sirens go, are at their posts waiting for the order to fire?

Here are six of them, taken at random from the batteries defending London.

Bombardier George Gallacher used to work for a grain merchant in Helensburgh. Before he joined the Territorials early in 1939 he had never travelled further than Edinburgh. He was 19 then.

Now this gay hearted young Scotsman is in charge of a 4.5" and looked upon as one of the best "Nos. 1" in his battery.

George Gallacher soon realised that a first class gunner must keep himself fit. He has always taken P.T. seriously, and his keenness has been rewarded with the coveted crossed swords of an instructor.

Ever since he was a kid George has been a talented yodeller. He was only nine when he made his first big hit touring the Helensburgh district. Now he is one of the star turns at battery concerts.

Bombardier James Colquhoun Buchanan McOrist was born in Perthshire on the 16th May, 1900. In World War 1 he joined the Gordon Highlanders, going over to France with them in 1918.

After demobilisation he went to St. Andrew's University where he became a Fellow of the Institute of Chemistry.

In 1924 McOrist went out to India as an analytical chemist and immediately joined the Punjab Horse. The 1927 Amanullah riots saw him in action on the North-West Frontier.

Three years later he went to Kenya and bought a cattle farm. Luck wasn't with him, however, and he lost everything owing to cattle disease. So he went on to Patagonia where his qualifications as a chemist soon found him a job. But before long his thirst for adventure caught hold of him again and, buying two horses for thirty dollars apiece, he rode all the way to Buenos Aires.

No sooner had McOrist arrived in Buenos Aires than the Gran Chaco War broke out. He immediately joined up in the Paraguayan Cavalry and quickly rose to the rank of Captain drawing £60 a month.

When the present war was declared, McOrist was back in London as a chemist. He at once put on uniform again and now as a No. 1 on a 4.5" he is at his happiest and best.

/Gunner William

Gunner William Arnold is a Shoreditch man. He was born on the 20th February, 1907, and has lived and worked there all his life. Before joining up he was a market porter at Spitalfields. Aeroplanes have always been his hobby. He never missed a year of the Hendon Air Display. When he joined the A.A. his value as a spotter was obvious. Arnold is the kind of man who in all weathers is watching out for the approach of enemy planes.

Twenty-years old Gunner John Joseph Deering comes from Ulster. He got his first job when he was fourteen milking cows on a farm for 5/- a week. After three years milking he decided he wanted to see more of the world. Over in England he found work at a Northampton cold storage depot.

His job was to load and unlad meat carcasses weighing up to 2 cwt. On his days off life was rather lonely for him and his only excitement was going up to London, Coventry or Birmingham to look at the sights.

Now that John Deering is a gunner he finds stacking and loading rounds of ammunition weighing 84 lbs. is child's play compared to a meat carcass.

Gunner Edward George Hailstone was born in Mitcham three months before the outbreak of the last war. After leaving school he drifted from one job to another. He was a garage hand, plumber's assistant and paint sprayer. None of these jobs excited him. Army life, however, has given him new interests. The fresh air, good food and regular living of A.A. life have resulted in his putting on a stone in weight. Strong, tough and alert, he is now typical of the men who shoot the Huns out of the skies.

Lance Bombardier Edgar Leonard Allen is a Cockney. At the age of fourteen he became an apprentice machine minder at Waterlow's printing works. There he stayed until at the age of 28 he joined the A.A. His love and knowledge of machines made him an obvious limber gunner. The great pride he takes in cleaning, polishing and lubricating his gun have won the admiration of the whole battery.

These are the men who fire the guns. There are thousands more like them, doing a noisy job with quiet efficiency. Next time you hear the sirens think of these men who will be at their posts ready to send death to the Hun.

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WAR OFFICE