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**THE TERRITORIAL FORCE IN STAFFORDSHIRE
1908-1915**

by

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INTRODUCTION

When the Territorial Force came into being on 1 April 1908, the new organisation was very different from what Richard Burdon Haldane, the Secretary of State for War, had originally planned when he embarked on his reform of the auxiliary forces in 1906. Ian Beckett concluded that when the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act was passed on 2 August 1907, Haldane was, “*forced to settle for the lowest denominator of practical political attainment rather than the grander design*”.¹ Historians generally agree that political and economic pressures, in particular with regard to the Territorial Force, compromised Haldane’s concept of the force as part of a ‘real national army’, and that his overall scheme was ambitious and unrealistic in the first place.

As well as political opposition and economic constraints, the new force also had to contend with the generally low opinion held by many sections of the public for the army in general. As John Bourne asserts “*Respectable working-class families remained appalled by the idea of having a son who had ‘gone for a soldier’*”.² Even serving on part-time basis, according to Edward Spiers, “*had a distinctly limited appeal*”.³ Sections of the Regular Army were also hostile towards the force, and the National Service League, with Lord Roberts as their president, advocated compulsory national service and felt that the Territorial Force was ineffective and inadequate for the tasks required of it.

¹ I.F.W. Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), p. 213

² J. Bourne, “The British Working Man in Arms”, in H. Cecil and P.H. Liddle (eds.), *Facing Armageddon* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), p. 340

³ E.M. Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914* (London: Longman, 1980), p. 280

It is acknowledged that recruitment and the maintenance of the strength of the Territorial Force were of major concern to military authorities between April 1908 and the outbreak of war in August 1914. It is also evident from the statistics relating to recruitment and retention that the Territorial Force concept had failed to galvanise wide-scale support nationally. As Edward Spiers contends, the Territorial Force; “*would remain a source of controversy in pre-war Britain, neither entirely accepted nor fully supported as a national institution.*”⁴ Ian Beckett supports this conclusion. He emphasises that while the structure of the Haldane’s conception of the Territorial Force was an improvement on that of the Volunteer Force it replaced, the organisation had been; “*fatally weakened from the beginning by his political expediency*”.⁵ The Territorial Force that formed on 1 April 1908 had an establishment of 302,199 men, only a third of the size originally envisaged, and less than 38.5 per cent of the membership of the Volunteer Force it replaced had transferred to the new organisation by the end of the year.⁶ The total strength of the force reached its peak in 1909 of 270,041 serving members, but this had decreased to 245,779 by September 1913.⁷ On the outbreak of the Great War, nationally at least, only 0.63 per cent of the male population of the British Isles were members of the Territorial Force.⁸

These factors in turn damaged the status of the Territorial Force as an instrument by which the army could be expanded in wartime. The Earl Kitchener of Khartoum, who was appointed Secretary of State for War on 5 August 1914, decided against using the existing framework of Territorial Force units and the resources of the County

⁴ E.M. Speirs, *Haldane: An Army Reformer* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1980), p. 199

⁵ Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition*, p. 222

⁶ M.D. Blanch, ‘Nation, Empire and the Birmingham Working Class 1899-1914’, Unpublished Ph D thesis, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 263

⁷ I.F.W. Beckett, “The Territorial Force”, in I. F. W. Beckett and K. Simpson, (eds.), *A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in The First World War* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1985), p. 128

⁸ *ibid*, p. 129

Associations as a means of increasing the size of Britain's land forces. Instead, he decided to raise an entirely new force of 100,000 men to support the Regular Army, with three further appeals for recruits being made during the remainder of 1914. This prejudice had detrimental consequences for recruiting for Territorial Force units that would continue until the abolition of direct enlistments into the Force in December 1915. Recruitment for the Territorial Force remained quite separate from that for the Regular Army during this period, with the two factions maintaining their own recruiting offices and staff. This unnecessary duplication of effort was particularly damaging to the Territorial Force as the County Territorial Force Associations lacked the experience and resources to cope with large numbers of recruits. Unlike their regular counterparts, Territorial Force units had no central regimental depot to despatch volunteers once they had enlisted, so consequently often had to rely on the charity of local landowners to provide accommodation for their recruits.

Another impediment to the effectiveness of the Territorial Force was the conditions of service under which soldiers enlisted. The primary wartime role of the Territorial Force was home defence. Individuals could volunteer to serve overseas under the terms of the Imperial Service Obligation. Prior to August 1914, just over 18,000 members of the Territorial Force had volunteered to serve overseas as part of this scheme, a fraction of the organisation's total strength.⁹

However, the responses of individual County Associations to the issues linked with recruitment for the Territorial Force and the effectiveness of their policies did vary considerably. As Peter Dennis emphasises, the Territorial Force was a *“local*

⁹ *ibid*, p. 130

organisation, subject to local conditions and community support that varied throughout the country.”¹⁰

Using Staffordshire as a case study, this survey will investigate how the County Territorial Force Association dealt with recruitment and the measures it employed to maintain the strength of the units for which it was responsible. The period covered by the study will encompass the formation of Territorial Force in Staffordshire in April 1908 up until December 1915, when direct enlistments to the Territorial Force were discontinued shortly before the introduction of the Military Service Act in January 1916.

The rationale for electing to concentrate on the Territorial Force in Staffordshire is that the county’s auxiliary forces are particularly under-researched in comparison to those from other parts of the country. This may stem from the fragmentary nature of primary source material available for researchers. For example, Staffordshire Record Office holds the Minute Books for meetings of the County Association but these only survive from 1924. Fortunately, full transcripts of the meetings of the County Territorial Force Association for the period under study were published in the “Military Intelligence” column of the *Staffordshire Advertiser*. These include a wealth of material relating to the administration of the units under their control. More importantly, the reports also contain regular returns of unit strengths, as well as data on recruitment and retention that has not been preserved elsewhere.

¹⁰ P. Dennis, *The Territorial Army* (Woodbridge: The Royal Historical Society and The Boydell Press, 1987), p. 1

Chapter 1 considers the impact of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act on the auxiliary forces in Staffordshire. Particular reference will be made to how the County Territorial Force Association dealt with the challenge of generating interest in the concept of the Territorial Force, from the months leading up its creation in April 1908 until the eve of the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914. Although the functions and responsibilities of the Association will be outlined, the main focus of the chapter will be on its role in recruitment and encouraging support for the Territorial Force in the county in the face of criticism from various quarters, such as the local committee of the National Service League. The methods employed by Staffordshire's Territorial Force Association in enticing potential recruits to join local units will be examined. The composition of the committee of the County Association will also be investigated to determine how influential members were in securing favourable support for serving Territorials from employers in Staffordshire.

As well as co-ordinating recruiting for the Territorial Force, the County Association later became involved with administering the creation of the Territorial Reserve and Veteran Reserve, (titled National Reserve from August 1911), in Staffordshire. The effectiveness of the efforts to popularise and obtain recruits for these organisations will be explored. The role of the Territorial Force Association in recruiting for the county's Voluntary Aid Detachments will also be considered, as will the extent of their involvement with cadet units.

The close-knit atmosphere of Territorial units, a product of the localised nature of the recruiting process, is a characteristic that has been alluded to by several military

historians.¹¹ Another facet to Territorial service was how leisure activities were incorporated into the activities of a unit, often as an added inducement for potential recruits. In the case of Territorial units in Staffordshire, these activities included company social clubs, annual dinners and participation in skill at arms competitions. These traits had their origins in Volunteer Force and those members who transferred to the Territorial Force passed on these characteristics to the new units.

Chapter 2 examines these characteristics with regard to Territorial Force units in Staffordshire from their formation in April 1908 until August 1914. Returns of unit strengths at a sub-unit level have been utilised to determine if the popularity of the Territorial Force deviated between certain areas. Biographical information on officers and other ranks that served during this period has also been included to illustrate the social backgrounds of members of the Territorial Force in Staffordshire, in order to assess how local industries and hierarchies were reflected in the composition of a unit.

The immense challenges encountered by the Territorial Force Association in Staffordshire following the declaration of war on 4 August 1914 are considered in Chapter 3. This investigates how the Territorial Force Association approached the issue of recruitment during the period between the embodiment of the Territorial Force on 5 August 1914 until the abolition of direct voluntary enlistments in December 1915. The expansion of Territorial Force units in the county as a result of the requirements of wartime, including the formation of the First, Second and Third Line units that took place during this period, imposed a severe strain on the resources

¹¹ G.D. Sheffield, "Officer-Man Relations, Discipline and Morale in the British Army in the Great War", in H. Cecil & P.H. Liddle (eds.), *Facing Armageddon* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), p. 414 and J.G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 42

of the County Territorial Force Association. How the Staffordshire coped with these demands, as well as the initiatives employed to generate recruits in the face of competition from the Regular and New Armies, are assessed. The level of response within the county to the appeals for recruits for the Territorial Force and patterns of enlistment are issues that are discussed within the chapter. Maintaining an adequate flow of recruits was a serious problem encountered once the initial “rush to the colours” had faded. In April 1915, the situation was so acute that the Staffordshire’s Territorial Force Association was the first to press for the introduction of conscription. The reasons why the county’s Association decided that voluntary enlistments would no longer satisfy the demands of the Territorial Force units under its control are also investigated.

What impact wartime recruiting conditions had on character and composition of Territorial Force units from Staffordshire are themes that are investigated in Chapter 4. A multibiographical approach will again be used to exemplify any differences between the social backgrounds of pre-war members of Territorial Force units and those men who had volunteered after the outbreak of hostilities. A notable recruiting initiative adopted by the Territorial Force Association in Staffordshire was the creation of “Non-Manual” sections within the county’s four infantry battalions, and the impact this had on the composition of those units is also explored. Particularly useful in illustrating the evolution of Staffordshire’s Territorial units following the outbreak of war are the two Territorial Infantry battalions that were produced shortly after the end of the Great War. Both works contain valuable anecdotal information relating to recruitment. The *War History of the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment (T.F.)*, (London, 1924), was compiled by a committee of officers from the battalion

and contains much useful material relating to the training and expansion of the 6th Battalion following the outbreak of war, including extracts from letters and diaries written at the time. Lieutenant Walter Meakin adopted a similar approach when he compiled material for his work, *The 5th North Staffords and the North Midland Territorials (46th and 59th Divisions) 1914-1919*. Meakin had joined the 5th Battalion in September 1914 as a Private before being commissioned later on during the war. Both histories give an account of mobilisation, the expansion of their respective battalions in September 1914 following the request for to volunteer for overseas service, and the raising of the second and third line units and have proved to be illuminating in showing how these changes impinged on the “family” nature of a Territorial unit.

By March 1915 the majority of the First-Line Territorial units from Staffordshire had arrived in France, mainly with 46th (North Midland) Division, the first complete Territorial Force formation to be committed to operations on the Western Front. Chapter 5 assesses how the localised nature of Territorial recruitment affected the morale of a unit once it was on active service. The impact of operational conditions on the character of Staffordshire Territorial units and how officers and other ranks interacted due to the nature of active service are all investigated. First-hand accounts are used to illustrate how soldiers interacted, how they perceived the composition of a unit and structure, and if their descriptions agree with the assertion that Territorial Force units did indeed have a distinct culture and character when compared to Regular and New Army units.

It is intended that this study will provide a clearer picture of aspects of Territorial Force recruitment when applied to the experiences of one county's units. It is also hoped that this research will contribute to the wider debate regarding recruitment and social composition of the Territorial Force prior to the outbreak of the Great War and during the first year of the conflict.

Chapter One

THE STAFFORDSHIRE TERRITORIAL FORCE ASSOCIATION 1908-14

For good or evil – we hope for the former – the Volunteer Force in this county ceased to exist on Tuesday and is replaced by the Territorial Army (sic), which came into being the following day.

Staffordshire Advertiser, 4 April 1908

The Territorial and Reserve Forces Act had been passed on 2 August 1907, and the formation of the Territorial Force on 1 April 1908 was part of a wider series of reforms of both the regular army and the auxiliary forces instigated by Richard Burdon Haldane, who had been appointed Secretary of State for War in January 1906 shortly after Campbell-Bannerman's Liberal Government had taken power. The impetus for these reforms, although geared towards making the regular and auxiliary forces better prepared for future conflict, was also determined by the need of the Liberal government to increase spending on social welfare by making substantial savings from the Army and Navy Estimates.

This chapter will assess the implications of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act on the auxiliary forces in Staffordshire and how the newly created County Territorial Force Association dealt with the challenge of generating support for the Territorial Force in the months leading up to April 1908 and in the subsequent years until August 1914. The composition of the committee of the Territorial Force Association in Staffordshire will be examined, with particular reference to the links members had to local industry and the influence this had on recruiting. As well as recruiting for the Territorial Force, the Association later became involved with administering the

raising of the Territorial Reserve and Veteran Reserve (titled National Reserve from August 1911) and the effectiveness of their efforts to popularise and obtain recruits for these organisations will be explored. The role of the Territorial Force Association in recruiting for the Voluntary Aid Detachments will also be considered, as will the extent of the involvement with cadet units in the county.

Haldane was not the first to consider reorganising the auxiliary forces. It was broadly acknowledged that the Militia, Imperial Yeomanry and Volunteer Force did not have the training or command structures to function effectively as home defence troops, let alone provide a basis for expanding the regular army in wartime. The urgent need for reforms had been made evident by the bitter experiences of the fighting against the Boer republics in South Africa and a Royal Commission, chaired by Lord Elgin, was created shortly after the conclusion of hostilities to digest the lessons. The army as a whole had performed poorly during the three years of conflict, but a significant issue was the incapacity of the existing second-line forces to provide an efficient means of expansion for the army. The findings of the Norfolk Commission, set up in 1903 at the suggestion of the then Secretary of State for War, St John Brodrick, to examine the military effectiveness of the Militia and Volunteers, confirmed that the auxiliary forces would be unable to offer effective opposition against regular troops and in their present state could not be used as a means of expanding the army in wartime.¹² Although the Norfolk Commission had proposed reorganisations to the structure of the auxiliary forces, the most controversial suggestion made by members of the commission was that the only way of defeating any invading army would be to raise an army by conscription. Hugh Arnold-Foster, Brodrick's successor, had tried to

¹² I.F.W. Beckett, 'The Territorial Force', in I.F.W. Beckett & K. Simpson (eds.), *A Nation in Arms* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), p. 128

introduce radical reforms of the army in an effort to reduce costs, including proposing to cut the Volunteer Force nationally from a strength of 346,000 men to 200,000. This particular proposal generated a great deal of opposition from Members of Parliament with connections to the Volunteers.¹³ Arnold-Foster was unable to bring his plan into effect as Campbell-Bannerman's Liberals defeated the Conservative government at the General Election of January 1906.

The reforms that Haldane proposed were driven by his grander concept that any new second-line force would be 'a Hegelian Army', a means by which the nation would be educated in its military responsibilities.¹⁴ Space precludes a detailed discourse of the political wrangles that Haldane was embroiled in between taking office in January 1906 and his announcement to Parliament in February 1907 of his intended reform of the second-line forces, but this period was punctuated with protracted negotiations and compromises in order to obtain support for his proposals. One of the many obstacles that he had to negotiate was the potential hostility of officers of the Yeomanry and Volunteer Force towards the proposals. As Edward Spiers notes:

*As any proposed reforms might also encroach on the proprietorial notions of local commanding officers, the minister would have to negotiate with these officers, aware that their display of political 'muscle' had thwarted his predecessors.*¹⁵

This factor was important because in order for the proposed reforms to be successful, support for the scheme had to be gained from the senior officers of the Imperial Yeomanry, the Volunteer Force and from the Lords-Lieutenant, who were

¹³ W. Bennett, *Absent-Minded Beggars: Yeomanry and Volunteers in the Boer War* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 1999), p. 220

¹⁴ P. Dennis, *The Territorial Army 1907-1940* (Woodbridge: The Royal Historical Society and The Boydell Press, 1987), p. 5

¹⁵ E.M. Spiers, *Haldane: An Army Reformer* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1980), p. 92

traditionally in titular command of local auxiliary forces in their counties. Haldane's proposals therefore included the establishment of local bodies to administer the new units of the Territorial Force. The "County Associations" was the designation given to the new bodies, apparently decided upon by Haldane, "*because that is a good term invented by Oliver Cromwell*".¹⁶ As well as the responsibilities of financial and civil control of the units under their jurisdiction, the Associations would have the task of generating positive interest in the concept of the Territorial Force at a local level. The Volunteer Force had received annual grants from the government with commanding officers having the responsibility for financial management of their units. This function would be undertaken by the County Associations, thereby relieving what had been a considerable burden for unit commanders. The County Associations would also act as the intermediary between the military and civil authorities in their areas regarding matters concerning the Territorial Force. Unlike the Volunteer Force, over which the War Office had little control, the Army would direct the organisation and training of the new force.

The Lords-Lieutenant would retain their previous affiliation with the auxiliaries by holding the post of President within the new County Associations. Haldane's intention in creating these bodies was, according to Peter Dennis, "*to win over the 'natural leaders' in each county, in the hope that their support and participation would in time bring in wider support at a local level*".¹⁷ The members of the County Associations would also have the requisite knowledge of their areas that any centralised administrative body would lack. When Haldane had initially proposed the establishment of the County Associations, he had wished that a significant proportion

¹⁶ A.V. Sellwood, *The Saturday Night Soldiers* (London: Wolfe Publishing, 1966), p. 14

¹⁷ Dennis, *Territorial Army*, p. 14

of the members would be elected to their posts in order to involve the civil population with the affairs of the Territorial Force. In the face of considerable opposition from the Volunteer Force lobby in both Houses of Parliament, he was compelled to reduce the number of civil representatives and increase the number of Military members of the County Associations, thereby minimising the input that the public would have in the affairs of their local Territorial Force units. Even before the County Associations came into being, Haldane's intention that the civilian population would have significant involvement with the Territorial Force, the concept that the force would be a truly "National Army", was compromised.

Following the Royal Assent being given to the Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill on 2 August 1907, Haldane sent formal invitations to all Lords-Lieutenant to become presidents of the new County Associations. The initial response from the Lords-Lieutenant was not universally positive and Haldane was eventually compelled to ask King Edward VII to intervene in gaining their support. At an impressive ceremony held at Buckingham Palace on 26 October 1907, the King made it clear to all the assembled Lords-Lieutenant that he personally expected their support for the new Territorial Force and it was their efforts that would ultimately determine whether the scheme would succeed or fail.¹⁸ The Lords-Lieutenant complied with the King's request and soon began the process of creating the County Associations.

The responsibility of forming the County Territorial Force Association for Staffordshire lay with the Lord-Lieutenant, William Heneage Legge, 6th Earl of Dartmouth. The first meeting of Staffordshire's County Territorial Force Association

¹⁸ Spiers, *Haldane*, pp. 161-62

was held at Stafford on 23 November 1907 at Stafford. The first committee consisted of the President, Lord Dartmouth, who also acted as Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, 52 Ordinary Members, 33 Representatives and 19 Co-opted Members, who included two employers' representatives and two who acted for workers' interests.¹⁹ The interests of the military units, local councils, employers and their employees would therefore be represented in the new organisation. Further sub-committees responsible for managing the finances of the units under its control, providing clothing and equipment and maintaining accommodation and training facilities were created from the membership of the Association. The Organisation Committee of the Association was responsible for administering recruiting and dealing with manpower matters. The committee usually held four meetings during the year in order to discuss the various issues of concern to the Territorial Force units in the county. The original Minute Books for the Territorial Force Association in Staffordshire for this period have not survived in the County's Record Office. Fortunately, the proceedings of these meetings were printed in the *Staffordshire Advertiser* and from these reports some appreciation of the difficult task set for the Territorial Force Association can be gained.

The composition of Staffordshire's Territorial Force Association was to change periodically between November 1907 and August 1914, as members resigned or died in office and were replaced. Those men appointed to hold positions on the committee were able to use their influence in county circles, particularly in generating positive support for the Territorial Force with employers. The 31 members listed as attending the meeting of the County Territorial Force Association at Stafford on 26 January

¹⁹ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 30 November 1907

1909 provide an insight into the backgrounds of the men appointed to sit on the committee.

As well as Lord Dartmouth one other peer, Lord Hatherton, served on the committee as the representative from Staffordshire County Council. In addition to Lieutenant-Colonel Wilkinson, the Vice-Chairman, and the Association's Secretary, Captain Wheeler, the fourteen military members present at the meeting not only represented a cross-section of the county's Territorial Force units but were also prominent figures in civil life. Colonel W.W. Dobson, the Honorary Colonel of the 5th Battalion, North Staffordshire Regiment, was the Managing Director of Parker's Burslem Brewery, and a local Magistrate who had also served as the Mayor of Burslem. Lieutenant-Colonel T.F. Waterhouse, the commanding officer of the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment, was a solicitor by profession and had his practice in Wolverhampton. Colonel Waterhouse had joined the 3rd Volunteer Battalion of The South Staffordshire Regiment in 1889 as a Second-Lieutenant. His service with the unit was initially with "G" Company at Bilston. He was promoted to the rank of Captain in 1892, and became a Major in 1906. He became the first commanding officer of the 6th Battalion on the creation of the Territorial Force in April 1908, a post he held until he resigned his commission in 1913.²⁰ Three councillors were present: H. Langley Browne representing West Bromwich; A. Baldwin Bantock representing Wolverhampton; and Cecil Wedgwood representing Hanley.

A father and son were also present at this meeting. Major W.E. Harrison served as a military member owing to his appointment as officer commanding the 2nd North

²⁰ National Archives of the UK (NA): PRO WO 374/72099, Personal record of Lieutenant-Colonel T.F. Waterhouse

Midland Field Company, Royal Engineers, while his father, Captain W. B. Harrison, who owned the Cannock Chase Colliery Company and had served with the Volunteers, was a co-opted member until his death in March 1912. The ten co-opted members at the meeting included Colonel F.D. Mort, the proprietor of the *Staffordshire Advertiser* newspaper, and H. Bamford, whose family owned the Leighton Ironworks near Uttoxeter. Colonel Mort's involvement with the Territorial Force Association proved to be particularly useful in publicising the Territorial Force throughout the county. Not only did his newspaper print regular reports on the activities of Territorial Force units and the Territorial Force Association but he also wrote and published a booklet in 1909: *The History of the Volunteer Force of Staffordshire 1859 –1908 and the Staffordshire Territorial Force 1908*. Primarily a propaganda piece extolling the virtues of the Territorials, the booklet described the history of the county's auxiliary units from the formation of the Volunteer Force in 1859 and highlighted the continuity between the old Volunteers and the new Territorial Force. The booklet served as a useful tool in promoting the new force to potential recruits and the wider public in the county.²¹

The main issue discussed at the first meeting of the County Territorial Force Association in November 1907 had been how to convince existing members of the Yeomanry and Volunteer Force to transfer over to the Territorial Force and encourage new recruits to join. It was reported in the *Staffordshire Advertiser* that Lord Dartmouth:

... lay great stress in his speech upon the necessity of every interest, class, and section of the county to be represented, and there is no doubt that the general

²¹ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 30 January 1909

*recognition of this principle the ultimate success of the scheme will greatly depend.*²²

Shortly after the County Territorial Association had held its inaugural meeting, the officers of the Staffordshire Volunteer Infantry Brigade met on 11 December 1907 at the Drill Hall in Wolverhampton, where an outline of the changes in the terms of service was given by Captain L.H. Thornton, the Brigade Major. The assembled officers then discussed the new requirements and were reported as being generally positive in their assessment of the proposed scheme.²³

The task of explaining the new conditions of service of the Territorial Force to the serving yeomen and volunteers fell to the unit commanders. December was traditionally the month when the annual prize-giving dinners were held and these occasions provided an opportunity for the officers to brief their men on the new requirements. Haldane himself gave a speech at the annual prize-giving dinner for the artillery volunteers held at The Victoria Hall in Hanley on 16 December 1907. The raising of the Territorial Force was also a subject for public debates. On 10 December 1907, the Unionist Debating Society held a meeting at Burton-on-Trent to discuss “The Territorial Forces of the County”. Sir Reginald Hardy Bt., a former commanding officer of The Staffordshire Yeomanry, spoke in favour of the force but qualified his support by stating that the new organisation lacked resources and the failure to recruit sufficient numbers would inevitably lead to conscription, which he referred to as

²² *ibid*, 30 November 1907

²³ *ibid*, 14 December 1907

“ugly”. He concluded that success would depend on the zeal of the County Association.²⁴

On 13 February 1908 the County Territorial Force Association met at the County Council Buildings to discuss the locations of the new units of the Territorial Force. The North Midland Division, which was to have its headquarters at Lichfield, was one of fourteen infantry divisions that would be created from the Territorial Force and Staffordshire would provide a third of the infantry strength of the formation, together with the bulk of the support arms and services. The Staffordshire Yeomanry would be combined with regiments from Leicestershire and Lincolnshire to form the North Midland Mounted Brigade, one of fourteen such formations that would also be created at the same time. In order to provide the North Midland Division with its required support arms, several changes were proposed to the existing units of Volunteer Force. Two field brigades of artillery would be formed. “No.1 Brigade” would be based on the two existing batteries at Shelton, with the third battery to form at Leek by converting “I” Company of the 1st Volunteer Battalion of the North Staffordshire Regiment. “No. 2 Brigade” would be formed in the south of the county, with the battery locations at Hednesford or Brierley Hill, Wolverhampton and Brownhills respectively. Two Field Companies of Royal Engineers would be created by the conversion of the Smethwick companies of the 1st Volunteer Battalion of the South Staffordshire Regiment and a new company with divided between Wolverhampton and Stafford. A Telegraph Company would be formed at Stoke. Two Army Service Corps companies were proposed to be formed at Handsworth and Burton-on-Trent, while a Field Ambulance unit would be raised from the Bearer

²⁴ op cit

Company at Wolverhampton. The five infantry battalions of the Staffordshire Volunteer Infantry Brigade would be reduced to four.²⁵ The total establishment for the Territorial Force in Staffordshire was set at 246 officers and 7,241 other ranks.²⁶ Some of the proposed unit locations were to change prior to the formation of the Territorial Force two months later, but the manpower requirement remained unaltered.

With the date of the disbandment of the Volunteer Force fast approaching, Lord Dartmouth and senior officers made a determined attempt to encourage support for the Territorial Force around the county. This final effort was particularly focused on those units of the Volunteer Force that would be disbanded and converted to other roles. A farewell dinner was held at the Drill Hall in West Bromwich on 25th March 1908 to mark the disbandment of “E” and “K” Companies of the 1st Volunteer Battalion of The South Staffordshire Regiment, while a similar occasion took place at Brierley Hill for the members of “C” Company. Both detachments were to be converted to batteries of field artillery. During his address at the dinner at West Bromwich, Lord Dartmouth was reported to have been frustrated that:

*The War Office thought the conditions of service should not be made public except to the members of the County Associations, and that, he thought, was the wrong way of popularising the movement. There was no need for such secrecy.*²⁷

Recruiting for the Territorial Force began in earnest on 1 April 1908. An early assessment recorded in the *Staffordshire Advertiser* concluded that initial reports indicated that the process was proceeding satisfactorily.²⁸ Of major concern for the Territorial Force Association in Staffordshire regarding recruiting during this period

²⁵ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 15 February 1908

²⁶ *ibid*, 1 March 1908

²⁷ *ibid*, 28 March 1908

²⁸ *ibid*, 4 April 1908

was the retention of former members of the Volunteer Force. During 1908 the establishment of the Territorial Force units in the county had been adjusted to 228 Officers and 6,598 Other Ranks and by 31 October, when the Territorial Force Association submitted the first return of strength, there were 165 Officers and 5,925 men serving.²⁹

This successful start for the Territorial Force in Staffordshire was made in the face of detractors from various quarters. The military effectiveness of the Territorial Force as a whole was frequently criticised in Parliament and the national newspapers. These sustained attacks were particularly worrying for members of County Territorial Force Associations as they would be detrimental to recruiting. In response to attacks made on the Territorial Force in the national press, Lord Dartmouth felt compelled to protest in August 1908 that:

*There has been so much criticism of this unfortunate body; so many speeches have been made in Parliament and out; so many letters have been magnifying its defects, criticising its author, and minimising its results, that the wonder is not that so few men have joined, but that any have been found to come in at all.*³⁰

The main opponents to the concept of the Territorial Force were the members of the National Service League. Formed in 1902, the League was critical of the structure and strength of the Territorials as an adequate for home defence and in particular the reliance on voluntary enlistments to maintain its strength. The League therefore maintained that compulsory military service was the only means by which an effective force for home defence could be raised. The public profile of the organisation was further enhanced by having Lord Roberts, the last Commander-in-

²⁹ *ibid*, 7 November 1908

³⁰ *The Times*, 20 August 1908

Chief of the British Army, as its President, a role he had accepted in 1905.³¹ At first, the criticism of the Territorials was muted, especially as there was a significant minority of serving Territorial Force officers who were members of the organisation at that time. Nevertheless, as Spiers concludes, this opposition became more hostile from 1913, when disillusionment became more noticeable amongst members of the Force nationally.³²

The situation in Staffordshire appears to have been different, however. The National Service League became active in Staffordshire during early 1909. One of the first meetings was held at Wolverhampton Town Hall on 21 April. A contemporary news report of the proceedings provides an interesting insight into the social backgrounds of the organisation's supporters. According to Ian Beckett, the membership of the National Service League was "*noticeably more anglican than nonconformist and more Unionist than Liberal*".³³ This statement is borne out when examining the backgrounds of those reported to have been in attendance. The meeting was presided over by Colonel T.E. Hickman, who was the Honorary Colonel of the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment, while the committee consisted of local figures from industry, Anglican clergy and civic life in the town. It is also notable that three serving Territorial Force officers were also in attendance; Lieutenant-Colonel Waterhouse, Major Leveson-Gower and Captain H. Taylor.³⁴

The first meeting of the county's branch of the National Service League was held at Stafford in September 1910. By this time the organisation of the League in the county

³¹ Dennis, *Territorial Army*, pp. 17-24

³² Spiers, *Haldane*, p. 176

³³ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, p. 219

³⁴ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 24 April 1909

had been placed on a more formal footing and consisted of six “divisions” covering Lichfield, Leek, The Potteries, Stafford, Walsall and Wolverhampton with a membership of 1,008 subscribers and a further 1,500 “adherents”.³⁵ Again, the composition of the county committee of the League consisted of influential figures in Staffordshire’s civic and industrial elite. The Earl of Harrowby was elected as the President of the League, while the seven Vice-Presidents were drawn from the gentry (Lord Wolverhampton, the Marquis of Anglesey and Lord Hatherton), retired military officers (Major-General T. Philips and Colonel Hickman), and industry figures (Cecil Wedgwood and Sir Thomas Salt). Hatherton and Wedgwood, who was also the serving Mayor of Stoke-on-Trent, were also members of the County Territorial Force Association. Wedgwood’s conflict of interests may have led him to temper any criticism of the Territorials during this first meeting, as he stated that, while he was opposed to relying on voluntary enlistments as a means of maintaining their strength, the Territorial Force provided “*a very good skeleton upon which they must proceed to put on a clothing of flesh*”.³⁶

Although support for the National Service League in Staffordshire was small, the organisation was still able to enlist significant national figures to forward their cause at public meetings. On 21 October 1910, Lord Curzon spoke at The Victoria Hall, Hanley, on “Home Defence” on behalf of the League. However, the reaction of the audience towards his remarks, particularly when the subject of the Territorial Force being used against strikers during industrial disputes was raised, was particularly hostile. The meeting soon turned into farce and Lord Curzon was jeered by some spectators. Cecil Wedgwood was so incensed that he intervened to ask the spectators

³⁵ *ibid*, 17 September 1910

³⁶ *op cit*

why Lord Curzon received such a negative response when a previous speaker at the Hall, Kier Hardie, had been listened to in polite silence.³⁷ Whether the reaction of the audience at this meeting was a reflection of hostility towards the overt militarism of the National Service League and its aims is difficult to assess, but this episode certainly illustrates that the ideas proposed by the organisation were not universally supported.

The National Service League in Staffordshire was to remain very much a fringe interest group. Although on a national level the League may have become more vocal in its opposition to the Territorials during the previous year, by 1914 the county's branch was in a state of decline. The National Service League in Staffordshire had held no meetings since 1911 and The Earl of Harrowby had been replaced as President by Lord Hatherton, who in turn was replaced by Lord Charnwood in early 1914. At a sparsely-attended meeting held in Stafford on 9 May 1914, it was reported that while the membership of the League in the county stood at 4,501, subscriptions were down and moves were being made to amalgamate the county's branch with that in Birmingham.³⁸

What impact the activities of the National Service League in Staffordshire had on Territorial Force recruitment is difficult to assess. While there is at least one instance of agents of the League actively hampering recruiting in one area by recommending men not to join the Territorial Force, no evidence has come to light of any such incident occurring in Staffordshire.³⁹ Nevertheless, it appears unlikely that the stand

³⁷ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 22 October 1910

³⁸ *ibid*, 16 May 1914

³⁹ Spiers, *Haldane*, p. 176

made by the National Service League had any real influence on potential recruits in the county.

A significant factor in the success of recruiting for the Territorial Force in Staffordshire was the support elicited by the county's Territorial Force Association from local employers. This support manifested itself in several forms. During the months prior to the creation of the Territorial Force, individual business owners offered their support by offering to raise units from their employees. The 2nd North Midland Field Company, Royal Engineers, owed its existence to the support of Captain W.B. Harrison, the owner of The Cannock Chase Colliery Company, who not only offered to raise the new unit from his employees but also offered his family's ancestral home, Norton Hall in Norton Canes, to the Territorial Force Association for use as its Drill Hall.⁴⁰ A similar offer was made by Dudley Docker, the owner of the Patent Shaft and Axle-Tree Works in Wednesbury, who had proposed to raise a battery of Heavy Artillery from his employees and to provide the facilities for the new unit on his premises.⁴¹ From November 1908, at the instigation of Mr E.J. Wood, half of "D" Company of the 6th Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment was recruited from employees of the Patent Axle Box and Foundry Works in Wednesfield after the unit had experienced difficulties in recruiting sufficient men from its usual location at Willenhall.⁴² Employers were also vital in allowing their workers time off to attend annual camp. "F" Company of the 5th Battalion, North Staffordshire Regiment, which

⁴⁰ R. Knowles, 'The History of the Norton Territorials – 2nd North Midland Field Company, Royal Engineers', *The Norton Canes Historical Society Journal* (1978-79), pp. 6-7

⁴¹ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 14 December 1907. The detachment raised at the Patent Shaft and Axle-Tree Works did not form part of a Staffordshire Territorial Force unit, but instead became a component of The South Midland (Warwickshire) Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery. The headquarters of this unit, together with half of its strength, were recruited from workers at the Metropolitan Works at Saltley in Birmingham, which was also owned by Dudley Docker. The remainder of the battery and its ammunition column were based in Wednesbury (R. Westlake, *The Territorial Force 1914* (Newport: Ray Westlake Military Books, 1988), p. 27)

⁴² *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 5 March 1910

was located at Stone, was particularly fortunate in obtaining support from local employers. Two major manufacturing businesses in the area, Hill & Sons at Spot Acre and Bostock & Sons shoe factory, allowed their workers to attend the full two-week period of annual camp. The employees of Bostocks had actually been paid a third of their wages if they had attended the second week.⁴³ The companies of the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, based at Burton-on-Trent, were also strongly supported by virtue of having two of the directors of the Bass, Ratcliff and Gretton Brewery, Colonel J. Gretton and Lieutenant-Colonel R.F. Ratcliff, as the battalion's commanding officers during this period.⁴⁴

Although some larger employers gave significant support to the Territorial Force in Staffordshire, Territorials employed by smaller commercial concerns did not receive the same generous treatment. As Beckett observes, some employers could not afford the luxury of granting workers time off to attend the full two weeks of camp.⁴⁵ Providing serving Territorials and their employers some financial incentives for their continued support were issues that Territorial Force Associations lobbied the War Office to address as this factor had an impact on recruitment and retention of men for the force. One particular concern was the lack of any insurance scheme for men serving with the Territorial Force. Major H.W. Hind, the officer commanding The North Midland Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery, had proposed to his men in December 1908 that they should volunteer for Special Service in order to qualify for an extra 10s payment for attending camp and use this money to provide themselves

⁴³ *ibid*, 9 October 1909

⁴⁴ C.C. Owen, *The Greatest Brewery in the World" – A History of Bass, Ratcliff and Gretton* (Chesterfield: Derbyshire Records Society, 1992), p. 139

⁴⁵ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, p. 218

with insurance.⁴⁶ The idea of some sort of insurance arrangement for Territorial Force members had been prompted by the case of Gunner Stone, a London Territorial, who had died while at camp at Bulford in August 1909. The situation of his widow and children prompted one officer, Captain Larking of the 23rd Battalion, The London Regiment, to suggest that the Government should establish a contributory insurance scheme to ensure that the families of married Territorials would be provided for if they were killed or injured while on duty. This idea found support from the Territorial Force Association in Staffordshire, with Lieutenant-Colonel P. Leveson-Gower making a further suggestion that some sort of public subscription or taxation should be introduced to provide for serving Territorials.⁴⁷ A separation allowance for married Territorials and Non-Commissioned Officers was introduced in 1912 but proved to be only partially successful as it was only awarded to men who attended the full period of camp. Similarly, when the National Insurance Act came into force in 1911, serving Territorials found that deductions were made from their pay not only for their contributions but for those of their employers as well, an anomaly that continued until 1913.

Matters had come to a head by November 1913 when a deputation from the Council of County Territorial Associations visited the Prime Minister, Asquith, to propose that the contributions of serving Territorials and their employers should be paid from public funds and that employers should be rewarded by having £30 deducted from their income tax for every Territorial soldier they employed.⁴⁸ These proposals were strongly supported by the committee of the Staffordshire Territorial Force Association. In response to an enquiry from the War Office regarding the attitude of

⁴⁶ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 2 January 1909

⁴⁷ *ibid*, 1 January 1910

⁴⁸ Dennis, *Territorial Army*, p. 27

employers in Staffordshire, Lord Dartmouth replied that while recruiting in the county had been successful and that the majority of employers were “*tolerably favourable*” regarding their workers serving in the Territorial Force, this support was not universal as there was no material encouragement offered to allow their employees to attend the full period of annual camp.⁴⁹ As Beckett points out, the members of the Territorial Force were “*civilians first and soldiers second*” and the failure of the War Office in providing adequate compensations in terms of financial benefits often proved detrimental to recruitment and retention.⁵⁰ The issue of finances was not the only one with which the members of the Territorial Force Association in Staffordshire expressed their frustration with the War Office and its dealings with matters concerning the Territorial Force. At the Association’s meeting at Stafford on 26 July 1910, Lord Dartmouth attacked the Army Council for its lack of support for the Territorial Force Associations, particularly concerning the lack of understanding of local issues that impacted on the function of the Territorial Force. This resolution was seconded by Lieutenant-Colonel Waterhouse, who concluded that unless the level of support for the Territorial Force provided by the War Office improved, the whole scheme was doomed to failure.⁵¹

Maintaining the strength and efficiency of Territorial Force units in Staffordshire was a constant concern for the Organisation sub-committee of the County Association. At a meeting held at Stafford on 8 November 1910, the Territorial Force Association proposed that the 6th Staffordshire Field Battery of 2nd North Midland Field Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, be relocated from Brierley Hill to Stafford. The reason given at the meeting for the proposed move was that Brierley Hill was a poor location for an

⁴⁹ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 23 May 1914

⁵⁰ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, p. 288

⁵¹ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 30 July 1910

artillery unit to be based as there were no suitable exercise grounds for the battery to carry out training within four miles of the unit's drill hall. The new battery at Stafford would have suitable training facilities close by and a new drill hall would be built at the Siemens Works in the town to accommodate the guns and equipment. Colonel C.E. Goulburn, the Commander Royal Artillery of the North Midland Division, wanted the new battery at Stafford to be operational by the 1911 training season. Lieutenant-Colonel Leveson-Gower, the commanding officer of the 2nd North Midland Field Brigade, added that the officers of the battery at Brierley Hill had been unable to keep close supervision of the men serving with the unit and training and discipline had suffered. The proposal met with opposition from several quarters within the Territorial Force. Lieutenant-Colonel Ratcliff initially objected to the move, as two companies of the 6th Battalion, North Staffordshire Regiment were located at Stafford. He moderated his opposition when it was proposed that while one company at Stafford would disband, the other would be retained and "G" Company, which recruited at Lichfield and Uttoxeter, would be split to form two new companies. However, Ratcliff still expressed his concern that many of the Territorials in Stafford would not transfer to the new battery and that the officers and men should be consulted before the Territorial Force Association agreed to any disbandments.⁵² Brierley Hill Urban Council organised a meeting on 14 November 1910 to register their displeasure at the proposal. Councillor W.H. Smith protested that his council were not asked by the Territorial Force Association to assist with the provision of training facilities and that he would send a telegram to the Secretary of State for War to complain about the decision to move the battery.⁵³ In spite of the protests the Territorial Force Association carried out the reorganisation and 6th Staffordshire

⁵² *ibid*, 12 November 1910

⁵³ *ibid*, 19 November 1910

Battery relocated to Stafford in early 1911 as planned. After serving for two years as artillerymen, the Territorials at Brierley Hill reverted to infantry and became “E” Company of the 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment.

In contrast to the generally satisfactory recruiting situation of the Territorial Force in the county, the formation of the Territorial Force Reserve in Staffordshire was not as successful. The initial proposal to form a Territorial Force Reserve had been made by Haldane in December 1908 to cater for former members of the Volunteer Force (and Territorials once their period of enlistment had expired) who, while unwilling to re-engage in the Territorial Force, would be ready to be recalled for duty in the event of an emergency.⁵⁴ The formation of the Territorial Force Reserve was discussed at the Territorial Force Association meeting held at Stafford on 2 November 1909. Colonel Dobson recommended that the County Association should support the scheme, but wished that some sort of uniform or badge be provided for members of the Territorial Force Reserve.⁵⁵ Recruiting was opened for the Territorial Force Reserve in late March 1910, with the reserve being split into three sections; the Territorial Force Reserve, the Technical Reserve and the Veteran Reserve. Men were allowed to enlist in the Territorial Force Reserve for a period of up to four years and could attend drills and camp with the permission of the commanding officer of their local unit. One unit, the North Midland Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance based at Handsworth, already had a reserve element in place. In March 1909, the unit had managed to recruit 33 per cent over its establishment and was ordered by the Territorial Force Association to transfer its surplus manpower to the Territorial Force Special Reserve.⁵⁶ The initiative failed to attract large numbers of recruits and by late July 1910, the Territorial Force

⁵⁴ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, p. 222

⁵⁵ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 6 November 1909

⁵⁶ *ibid*, 3 April 1909 and 17 December 1910

Reserve numbered just twelve members. The Veteran Reserve, which was open to former members of the Regular Army as well as the Volunteer Force, consisted of only four other ranks. It is not surprising that the Organisation Committee of the Territorial Force Association decided that an increased effort was required to publicise the conditions of service to potential recruits in the local press.⁵⁷ By 1 October 1910, the Veteran Reserve had increased to six officers and seven other ranks, but this figure was still well below expectations.⁵⁸

In August 1911 the Veterans Reserve was re-titled as the National Reserve and from this time the recruiting situation for this group in Staffordshire improved. New regulations were introduced for the National Reserve in November of the same year. The National Reserve was now to be divided into three classes for registration purposes; Class 1 would consist of officers and other ranks fit to join any unit for active service, Class 2 was made up of officers and men able to undertake garrison duties, while those men categorised as Class 3 were not able to fulfil the requirements for the other two classifications but were willing to serve in some capacity. Members of the National Reserve in Staffordshire were also allowed by the Territorial Force Association to use Drill Halls for meetings and rifle ranges. By January 1914 the National Reserve in Staffordshire consisted of 3,831 officers and men. The classifications of the men of the county's National Reserve at this time were: Class 1, 520; Class 2, 903; Class 3, 592; and 1,816 with no classification but registered as members.⁵⁹ By late July 1914, the strength of the National Reserve in Staffordshire had increased slightly to 3,977 officers and men.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ *ibid*, 26 July 1910

⁵⁸ *ibid*, 24 October 1910

⁵⁹ *ibid*, 24 January 1914

⁶⁰ *ibid*, 1 August 1914

The encouragement of uniformed youth organisations to affiliate with the Territorial Force Associations also proved to be problematic. When Haldane had originally embarked on his reforms in 1906, he had envisaged that the County Territorial Force Associations would promote military training for young boys with the intention that many of them would join the Territorial Force when they were old enough. Owing to political opposition Haldane was forced to modify this proposal during 1907, with the Territorial Force Associations only able to sponsor cadet corps through non-public funds.⁶¹ Attempts to compel the Boy Scouts and Boys Brigade to become affiliated with Territorial Force Associations in 1910 also proved to be unsuccessful. The cadet detachments that were raised in Staffordshire were therefore reliant on the efforts of a few individuals than financial support from the Territorial Force Association and the War Office.

The experience of the cadet contingent based at Brierley Hill was typical. Formed in April 1910 by Lieutenant Frank Dudley, the unit was the first to be raised in Staffordshire. During the early months of its existence, the cadets relied on private subscriptions to provide the contingent with uniforms and even after the corps gained official recognition from the War Office in July 1910, the annual grant of £5 per annum had to be supplemented from non-public sources.⁶² Despite the constraints imposed on the Territorial Force Association with regards to financing the county's cadet corps, members of the Association in Staffordshire did realise that the detachments required more official recognition. In January 1914 Captain G.A. Anson recommended to the committee that a Colonel-Commandant be appointed to be

⁶¹ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, p. 215

⁶² *Tipton Herald*, 20 February 1915

responsible for the cadet units in Staffordshire.⁶³ Although there was no official connection between the Boy Scouts and the Territorial Force Association in Staffordshire, Lord Dartmouth fulfilled the role of the movement's President in the county while Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Smith Hill Child, the commanding officer of the 2nd North Midland Field Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, served as Assistant County Commissioner.⁶⁴

The Territorial Force Association also became involved with the creation of Voluntary Aid Detachments in the county. Responsibility for the raising of the V.A.D contingents in the county was given to the Red Cross Society. A link with the Territorial Force Association was maintained as the Honorary Secretary of the Red Cross in the county, Major W. Moat, was a serving officer of the Staffordshire Yeomanry and a military member of the Territorial Force Association. At the Territorial Force Association meeting held on 10th May 1910, it was decided that a county committee was to be formed from members of the Territorial Force Association, The Red Cross and the St. John Ambulance Brigade. Lady Dartmouth was appointed to act as the committee's President. For the purposes of administration, the county was divided into petty-sessional areas, under the control of a vice-president, with these areas being split into "townships", with a "township leader" responsible for organising the local detachments in their area. In order to publicise the V.A.D scheme, ten meetings had been organised and some 12,600 pamphlets

⁶³ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 31 January 1914. The cadet contingents recognised by the Staffordshire County Territorial Force Association at this time were the Brierley Hill Cadet Corps (affiliated to the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment) and 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th Lichfield Cadet Battalions of the Church Lads Brigade (R. Westlake, *A Register of Territorial Force Cadet Units 1910-1922* (Wembley: Ray Westlake Military Books, 1984), p. 10 & p. 35)

⁶⁴ *ibid*, 21 March 1914

produced for distribution.⁶⁵ The first Voluntary Aid Detachment in the county was formed in Smethwick in June 1910, but by November of the same year it was reported that considerable problems had been experience with forming detachments and that improved co-ordination between the Territorial Force Association, The Red Cross and The St. John Ambulance Brigade was required if the scheme was to be successful.⁶⁶ By 1914, however, every large town in Staffordshire had an established Voluntary Aid Detachment.

The units of the Territorial Force in Staffordshire remained relatively well-recruited right up to the outbreak of war in 1914. The main reason for this success was through the efforts of the County Territorial Force Association to popularise the force from its inception and to secure the support of several principal employers in the county. During the period between April 1908 and August 1914, the county's units managed to achieve over 97 per cent of their establishment in four years and were fully manned in one year.⁶⁷ The manning levels achieved in Staffordshire were in stark contrast with the situation in other parts of the country, where other units struggled to recruit. During the same period, the strength of the Territorial Force nationally reached its peak in 1909 of 270,041 serving members, but this had decreased to 245,779 by September 1913.⁶⁸ This decline was mirrored in the recruiting returns of Autumn 1913, with Staffordshire's units dropping to a strength of 89.98 per cent of their establishment. By March 1914 this figure had risen to 95.44 per cent, with the

⁶⁵ *ibid*, 14 May 1910

⁶⁶ *ibid*, 12 November 1910

⁶⁷ *ibid*, 23 May 1914

⁶⁸ Beckett, 'The Territorial Force', p. 128

Staffordshire Territorial Force Association having the best-recruited units in the country.⁶⁹

Other aspects of the Association's recruiting activities, especially the failure of the Territorial Reserve to achieve anything like a satisfactory strength, reflected the experience of other Territorial Force Associations around the country. The members of the Association committee in Staffordshire also criticised the War Office for making the task of providing effective management to their local units more difficult, particularly in relation to issues such as terms of service and allowances that had an impact on recruitment and retention. In spite of these trials the County Territorial Force Association of Staffordshire was comparatively successful in its role with the result that the Territorial Force units of the county were virtually up to strength on the outbreak of the Great War.

⁶⁹ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 18 April 1914

Chapter Two

THE TERRITORIAL FORCE UNITS OF STAFFORDSHIRE 1908-14

There was a strong tradition of amateur military service in Staffordshire and it was from the existing framework of the Volunteer Force that the new Territorial Force units would be created. The Staffordshire Yeomanry (Queen's Own Royal Regiment) had been in existence since July 1794, and was one of the first yeomanry units to be organised on a regimental basis from the outset.⁷⁰ The Volunteer Force units in the county had their origins in the Rifle Volunteer Corps that had been created between 1859 and 1861 as a response to the perceived threat of invasion from France. The first unit to be formed was the 1st Handsworth Corps, which was accepted for service on 13 August 1859. Two further units, formed at Longton and Hanley, were accepted the following month and by December 1860, the Rifle Volunteers in Staffordshire consisted of forty units distributed around the county, as well as a volunteer Artillery Corps established at Etruria.⁷¹ In the years that followed, the Rifle Volunteers were organised into battalions and in 1883 were affiliated as Volunteer Battalions of the two regular county regiments of infantry. From 1888, the Staffordshire Volunteer Infantry Brigade was formed, with the county being one of the few in the country to have all of its Volunteer Force units under the command of a single brigade. Both the Yeomanry and the Volunteer Force had provided contingents for service in South Africa between 1900 and 1902. The Staffordshire Yeomanry had raised two companies, the 6th and 106th, which served with the 4th Battalion, Imperial Yeomanry.

⁷⁰ R.J. Smith & C.R. Coogan, *The Uniforms of the British Yeomanry Force 1794-1914: Staffordshire Yeomanry* (Aldershot: The Army Museums Ogilby Trust, 1993), frontispiece

⁷¹ Anon, *The Military Forces of Staffordshire in the Nineteenth Century* (Stafford: The Staffordshire Advertiser, 1901), pp. 27-29

The infantry contributed Volunteer Service Companies, three from the South Staffordshire units and two from the North Staffordshire battalions, to serve with the regular battalions of the regiments deployed in South Africa.⁷²

By 1907 the volunteer forces in Staffordshire consisted of five battalions of infantry and a bearer company of the Royal Army Medical Corps, which formed the Staffordshire Volunteer Infantry Brigade, two batteries of field artillery forming part of the Shropshire and Staffordshire Artillery Volunteers and the Staffordshire Yeomanry. The Yeomanry had its headquarters at Lichfield, with four squadrons based at various locations around the county. The five infantry battalions were also spread across the county. Three of the battalions were affiliated to the South Staffordshire Regiment. The 1st Volunteer Battalion had its headquarters in Smethwick and consisted of ten companies, including one of cyclists. The 2nd Volunteer Battalion was based at Walsall and had nine companies recruited from the town and surrounding district. The 3rd Volunteer Battalion had eight companies located in and around Wolverhampton. The other two battalions were affiliated to the North Staffordshire Regiment. The 1st Volunteer Battalion had its headquarters in Stoke-on-Trent, with thirteen companies located around the Potteries and North Staffordshire, from where the artillery batteries, based at Shelton, also drew their recruits. The 2nd Volunteer Battalion was located at Burton-on-Trent and had nine companies distributed in towns in the east of the county.⁷³

⁷² W. Bennett, *Absent-Minded Beggars: Yeomanry and Volunteers in the Boer War* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword, 1999), pp. 229-34 and G. Rosignoli & Captain J.R. Whitehouse, *The Staffords 1881-1978* (Farnham: Rosignoli, 1978), p. 6

⁷³ F.D. Mort, *History of the Volunteer Force of Staffordshire 1859 –1908 and the Staffordshire Territorial Force 1908* (Stafford: J. & C. Mort Ltd., 1909), pp. 2-3

The formation of the Territorial Force in April 1908 significantly altered the constitution of the auxiliary units in Staffordshire. The reforms had a major impact on the five infantry battalions that constituted the Staffordshire Brigade. As a consequence of the Staffordshire Territorial Force Association's decision to raise four battalions each consisting of eight companies, the 1st Volunteer Battalion of The South Staffordshire Regiment together with five of the companies then constituting the 1st Volunteer Battalion of The North Staffordshire Regiment would be disbanded or re-rolled to fulfil the requirements for field artillery and engineers. The proposed disbandment of the South Staffordshire battalion, the senior volunteer unit in the county, was "regretted" by the majority of the serving members of the battalion and many senior members of the Volunteer Force including the Lord Dartmouth, who was the battalion's Honorary Colonel.⁷⁴ The response of the officers and men to the news of the battalion's impending disbandment appears to have been muted, although the members of the Handsworth Company marked the passing of the unit by firing a volley of blanks over a coffin at the Town Hall. This reaction was in stark contrast to the response of members of another unit, the 1st Volunteer Battalion of The Royal Sussex Regiment, who on being informed that their unit was to be converted to artillery had stood down *en masse*.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that several volunteers who were serving with these units decided that they would not transfer to the new Territorial Force on its formation.

The impact of the changes was not lessened for men serving with units that would essentially remain unchanged by the creation of the Territorial Force. The main concerns for members of the yeomanry and the volunteers were the changes to their

⁷⁴ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 15 February 1908

⁷⁵ R. Westlake, *The Territorial Battalions – A Pictorial History 1859-1985* (Tunbridge Wells: Spellmount, 1985), p. 33

conditions of service. The conditions of service for the new Territorial Force, set out in the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act, contained a number of changes from those of the Volunteer Force and Yeomanry. New recruits for the Territorial Force would enlist for a period of four years but were allowed to terminate their engagement on giving three months notice and on payment of £5, unless they chose to enlist into the Regular Army when this requirement was waived. Serving members of the Volunteer Force were allowed to transfer to the Territorials on a short one-year engagement but if they chose to continue their service would have to re-enlist for four years. Territorials would be subject to Military Law and any offences they had committed while on duty would be punishable under King's Regulations. Officers and other ranks were also required to attend weekly drill nights and also an annual camp that would last between 8 and 15 days. Unlike the Volunteers, members of the Territorial Force would be paid for their attendance at camp.⁷⁶ Members of the Territorial Force were liable, on embodiment, to serve anywhere in the United Kingdom in an emergency. Individuals would also be able to volunteer for additional service. Those men who had volunteered for the Special Service Section could be called out on duty in a national emergency even if the Territorial Force had not been embodied. Territorials could also volunteer to serve overseas, an arrangement that from 1910 became known as the "Imperial Service Obligation". Those men who had signed to undertake overseas service could only do so with their unit and could not be drafted to any other formation unless they had given their permission.⁷⁷ The unit commanders therefore attempted to alleviate the suspicion of the Volunteers towards the new conditions of service in order to ensure that the majority of them would transfer to the Territorial Force from April 1908. At the prize-giving dinner for "I" Company of the

⁷⁶ I.F.W. Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), p. 214

⁷⁷ R. Westlake, *British Territorial Units 1914-18* (London: Osprey, 1991), pp. 1-2

1st Volunteer Battalion of The North Staffordshire Regiment, held at Leek on 6th December 1907, Major B. Wardle was reported to have provided a novel explanation to the assembled volunteers:

*... had been somewhat scared that the strength of the volunteers would suffer, but now they found it much like the old system . It was like turning a brick over to see if anything was wrong with the making, but it was the same old brick.*⁷⁸

On the formation of the Territorial Force in April 1908, the numbers of former Volunteers who chose to re-enlist into the new force was a cause of concern to unit commanders. Members of the Volunteer Force did not have to re-engage immediately into the Territorial Force and were allowed until 30 June 1908 to decide whether they would enlist into the Territorials and accept the new terms of service.⁷⁹ From the available data concerning enlistments for the four infantry battalions of the Staffordshire Brigade, the number of former Volunteers choosing to transfer to the Territorial Force varied considerably between different units. The 5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, formed from the old 1st Volunteer Battalion, recorded the best retention figures amongst the infantry battalions, with 605 other ranks re-enlisting by June 1908, this number increasing to 657 by the end of July.⁸⁰ In contrast to the relatively positive response from the volunteers in the Potteries, the number of Volunteer Force men who chose to transfer to the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment based at Wolverhampton was disappointing. By June 1908, only 332 former members of the 3rd Volunteer Battalion had re-engaged and this total had only increased by 50 men by the end of the following month.⁸¹ Of the former Volunteers who had transferred to the Territorial Force, many had chosen to enlist for a period of one year only. In one unit, the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire

⁷⁸ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 14 December 1907

⁷⁹ *ibid*

⁸⁰ *ibid*, 20 June 1908 and 1 August 1908

⁸¹ *op cit*

Regiment, the gravity of the situation was such that the Adjutant, Captain Fox, held a meeting at the Drill Hall at Burton-on-Trent to try and persuade the old volunteers to extend their period of service. The results of this meeting were less than satisfactory. Of the 240 men who had enlisted for one year, only 43 decided to extend their engagement.⁸²

Significant numbers of new recruits were therefore required to bring the infantry up to strength. From the returns made by the four infantry battalions during June 1908, 936 new recruits had joined the four infantry battalions, a figure that had increased to 1,502 by late July 1908.⁸³ In spite of obtaining 504 new recruits by the end of July 1908, the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment remained under-strength and Lieutenant-Colonel Waterhouse, the commanding officer, was compelled to widen the units' recruiting area. On 3 November 1908 a meeting was held at Wednesfield to raise a detachment of 60 men in the town. In addition to the Wednesfield contingent, which eventually formed part of "C" Company, further detachments were proposed for Codsall, Tettenhall Wood and Penn.⁸⁴ In spite of these early difficulties, the four infantry battalions of the Staffordshire Brigade were only eleven officers and 93 other ranks short of the Brigade's establishment of 116 Officers and 3,920 men by May 1909.⁸⁵ The success of the infantry's recruiting was further confirmed when all four battalions of the Staffordshire Brigade were chosen to be among the 108 Territorial Force infantry units presented with colours by King Edward VII at Windsor in June 1909.⁸⁶

⁸² *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 31 October 1908

⁸³ *ibid*, 20 June 1908 and 1 August 1908

⁸⁴ *ibid*, 7 November 1908

⁸⁵ *ibid*, 5 June 1909

⁸⁶ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, p. 221

Recruiting for the two Field Brigades of the Royal Field Artillery in Staffordshire also proved to be more successful in the north of the county than the south. The 1st North Midland Field Brigade⁸⁷ was fortunate in already having members of the two batteries of the Shropshire and Staffordshire Volunteer Artillery available to transfer to the Territorial Force. In addition to the 192 former volunteer gunners who re-enlisted, a further 85 recruits were obtained for the two batteries and the ammunition column based at Shelton.⁸⁸ The recruiting situation in Leek, where the 3rd Staffordshire Battery was formed from the former "I" Company of the 1st Volunteer Battalion, North Staffordshire Regiment, was not as buoyant. Of the 120 officers and men serving with the Company on the disbandment of the Volunteer Force, only 53 transferred to the new unit but a further 70 recruits had been obtained to replace the men who had not re-engaged.⁸⁹ Recruiting for the 2nd North Midland Brigade also met with mixed results. The 4th Staffordshire Battery was raised in Wolverhampton and like the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment experienced similar problems trying to obtain recruits in the town. By early June 1908, the battery had only managed to recruit to half of its strength, requiring a further 75 men to complete its establishment. The 5th Staffordshire Battery at West Bromwich was also labouring to recruit up to its establishment, requiring 82 men to complete its complement. The situation at West Bromwich was compounded by the lack of former members of the two companies of the disbanded 1st Volunteer Battalion of The South Staffordshire Regiment choosing to transfer to the new unit.⁹⁰ This was in stark contrast to the

⁸⁷ The original designations for the two Field Brigades of Royal Field Artillery formed in Staffordshire were the 1st and 2nd North Midland Field Brigades. However, in September 1908 it was found that the Field Artillery Brigade recruited in Lincolnshire had seniority over the Staffordshire units, having been formed before the Artillery Volunteers at Etruria in 1860. As a consequence, the units were redesignated as the 2nd and the 3rd North Midland Field Brigades.

⁸⁸ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 6 June 1908

⁸⁹ J.E. Blore & J.R. Sherratt, *"Over There" - A Commemorative History of the Old Leek Battery*, (Leek: Martin Publicity, 1991), p. 6

⁹⁰ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 6 June 1908

excellent recruiting at Brierley Hill, where “C” Company of the 1st Volunteer Battalion had been based prior to the unit’s disbandment. The 6th Staffordshire Battery had reached its establishment of 140 other ranks by late May 1908 and only required two officers to be fully manned.⁹¹

Other elements of the Territorial Force in Staffordshire were entirely new units and therefore could not rely on former Volunteers to provide an experienced cadre on which to build. To overcome this problem the officer commanding the 2nd North Midland Field Company, Royal Engineers, Major William Harrison, began his recruiting among the employees of his family’s collieries. Among the first men who joined the Company were miners employed at the Cathedral and Grove Pits at Brownhills. Harrison also used the novel technique of ensuring that any men seeking work at one of his collieries would only be employed on condition that they enlisted in the Territorials.⁹² Recruiting for the Company proved to be sufficiently successful that by the time the unit attended its first camp at Towyn that August it was able to send three officers and 105 other ranks.⁹³ The formation of another new unit, The North Midland Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery based at Hartshill, proved to be very successful. Recruiting for the new Battery opened on 15 June 1908 and by 22 July the unit was at full strength, consisting of six officers and 208 other ranks.⁹⁴

Since their inception, the Yeomanry and the Volunteer Force had drawn its officers the gentry and the middle class. This precedent was established early in the histories of the Yeomanry and Volunteer Force as the Lord-Lieutenant originally granted

⁹¹ *ibid*, 23 May 1908

⁹² R. Knowles, ‘The History of the Norton Territorials – 2nd North Midland Field Company, Royal Engineers’, *The Norton Canes Historical Society Journal* (1978-79), p. 7

⁹³ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 8 August 1908

⁹⁴ *ibid*

commissions to suitable candidates. Beckett argues that for officers holding a commission in either the Yeomanry or Volunteer Force often seen as a means of social advancement, a means of gaining an introduction to the county social scene for men who had recently moved to an area, and for those officers from established local families as a means of exercising their traditional leadership role.⁹⁵ The returns made to the War Office on 31 October 1907 listed 133 officers (excluding the Brigade staff and unit adjutants drawn from the Regular Army) as serving with the various units of the Volunteer Force in Staffordshire, with a further twenty officers serving with the Staffordshire Yeomanry.⁹⁶ On the creation of the Territorial Force, officers were predominantly drawn from the landowning, business and professional classes, with many of the senior officers holding influential civic appointments. Many of the officers of the Territorial Force had been educated at public or grammar schools and some had studied at university. With their connections to local industry, were also able to use these links to facilitate the recruitment of their employees and a number of examples can be found among the men who held commissions in Territorial Force units during this period.

The 6th Battalion The North Staffordshire Regiment had close links with the brewing industry in Burton-on-Trent, with the majority of the officers and men serving with the three companies based in the town working for Bass, Ratcliff and Gretton and other major brewers. John Gretton had been the commanding officer of the 2nd Volunteer Battalion and was a director of the Bass, Ratcliff and Gretton Brewery and had been the Unionist Member of Parliament for the Derbyshire Southern

⁹⁵ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, p. 288. It is also interesting to note that Lord Darmouth's eldest son, Viscount Lewisham, held a commission in The Staffordshire Yeomanry at this time (P.K. Kemp, *The Staffordshire Yeomanry (Q.O.R.R.) in the First and Second World Wars 1914-1918 and 1939-1945* (Aldershot: Gale and Polden Ltd., 1950) p. 3)

⁹⁶ Mort, *Volunteer Force of Staffordshire*, pp. 2-3

constituency between 1895 and 1906, being re-elected in June 1907. Gretton's connection with the battalion had started in March 1887, when he was commissioned as a Second-Lieutenant serving with "C" Company at Tamworth. He assumed command of the battalion in June 1900 and remained in charge of the 6th Battalion until November 1909. Gretton transferred to the Territorial Force Reserve in March 1910.⁹⁷ Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Frederick Ratcliff, Gretton's successor, was born at Burton-on-Trent in 1867 and educated at Rossall School and Cambridge University. He was also a director of the Bass, Ratcliff and Gretton brewery and had been the Unionist Member of Parliament for Burton-on-Trent since 1900. Ratcliff had been commissioned in the 2nd Volunteer Battalion on 19 March 1887 as a Second-Lieutenant serving with "B" Company at Burton. He was appointed an Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel on 21 September 1907.⁹⁸

A number of solicitors served as officers with Territorial Force units in the county during this period. In addition to Lieutenant-Colonel Waterhouse of the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment, the commanding officer of the 5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel John Hall Knight V.D., also came from the legal profession. Knight had held this appointment from the battalion's formation in April 1908. He was born in Newcastle-under-Lyme in 1865 and was educated at the town's High School and at Rugby. He qualified as a solicitor in 1888 and became a partner in the family law practice in 1894. Knight was clerk to the Newcastle Borough Magistrates between 1898 and 1902, and was secretary of the North Staffordshire Employers Insurance Committee. He had joined the 1st Volunteer

⁹⁷ C.C. Owen, *The Greatest Brewery in the World* – A History of Bass, Ratcliff and Gretton (Chesterfield: Derbyshire Records Society, 1992), p. 139 and Museum of the Staffordshire Regiment (MSR): The History of 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, Volume 2 - Nominal Roll of Officers

⁹⁸ *ibid*

Battalion of the North Staffords in 1883, and became a Captain in 1889, taking command of "E" Company in Stoke. Knight was promoted to the rank of Major in 1901 and Lieutenant-Colonel and Honorary Colonel in 1908. He was also a holder of the Volunteer Decoration.⁹⁹ Lieutenant Arthur Cresswell, who served with "C" Company of the 6th Battalion of the South Staffordshire Regiment at Wolverhampton, worked as a solicitor for the Underhill, Thornycroft and Smith practice in the town. Educated at Wolverhampton Grammar School, Cresswell had been commissioned in the 2nd Volunteer Battalion in 1906 and transferred to the Territorial Force in 1908. He served with the 6th Battalion until 1910 when he transferred to the Territorial Force Reserve.¹⁰⁰ Another solicitor, Major W.F. Challinor, served as the officer commanding the 5th Staffordshire Battery at Leek from the unit's formation in April 1908.¹⁰¹

Other officers came from families with industrial and manufacturing interests. The detachment of the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment based at Uttoxeter had a close association with the Bamford family and the Leighton Iron Works. Two members of the family, Lieutenants Harold and Oswald Bamford, served as officers with the detachment at Uttoxeter until April 1914 when they resigned their commissions due to work commitments. Both men had been educated at Stonyhurst College.¹⁰² Captain Reginald Tavenor Johnson of the 5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, was a director of his family's pottery business in Hanley. Johnson had been commissioned into the 1st Volunteer Battalion of the North

⁹⁹ National Archives of the UK (NA): PRO WO 374/40105, personal record of Lieutenant-Colonel J.H. Knight and *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 23 October 1915

¹⁰⁰ *Express and Star*, 19 October 1915

¹⁰¹ Blore & Sherratt, "Over There", p. 6

¹⁰² MSR: The History of 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, Volume 2 and *Uttoxeter Advertiser*, 23 October 1915

Staffords in 1898 and had seen service in South Africa with the 1st Volunteer Service Company.¹⁰³ Another officer of the 5th Battalion, Lieutenant Harold Ridgway, worked for his father at the Bedford Works at Hanley. He was also the nephew of the battalion's Honorary Colonel, Colonel Dobson. Lieutenant Ridgway had originally been commissioned into the 1st Volunteer Battalion in 1906.¹⁰⁴

Attracting suitable candidates to fill officer vacancies within Staffordshire Territorial units was a perennial problem for units. The returns sent to the War Office by the Staffordshire Territorial Force Association show that there was a significant shortfall in officers within units in the county. In October 1908 there were only 165 officers recorded as serving with the county's Territorial Force, a considerable disparity when compared to the required establishment of 228.¹⁰⁵ In July 1910 Lord Dartmouth expressed his concern that there was still a shortfall of some 32 officers and that additional efforts were required to improve on this situation.¹⁰⁶ The shortage of officers among the Territorial Force units in Staffordshire produced some radical remedies, and on occasions outright nepotism, in order to fill the vacancies.

On the formation of the 2nd North Midland Field Company, Royal Engineers, in April 1908, the three officers appointed to serve with the unit had no previous military experience but all had connections with Captain W.B. Harrison, who had agreed to raise the Company for the Territorial Force Association. Captain Harrison's son William filled the role of officer commanding the new company and was immediately

¹⁰³ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 23 October 1915

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 7 November 1908

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, 30 July 1910

appointed to the rank of Major despite having no previous military experience.¹⁰⁷ The company's second-in-command, James Selby Gardner, was clerk to the Penkridge Petty Sessional Magistrates and secretary to the Cannock Coalowners Association. He was commissioned on 14 April 1908 as a Captain but again had not previously served with the Volunteer Force.¹⁰⁸ Second-Lieutenant Christopher Hatton, who had his commission confirmed on the same date as Gardner, was employed as a manager at Great Wyrley Colliery, which was owned by the Harrison family.¹⁰⁹

Another rapid elevation to command occurred on the resignation of Lieutenant-Colonel H.E. Bishop, the commanding officer of the 2nd North Midland Field Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, in February 1910. His replacement was Sir Smith Hill Child. He had originally been commissioned as a Second-Lieutenant in The Royal Scots in October 1899, transferring to the Irish Guards in July 1901. He was promoted to Lieutenant in March 1902 and transferred with that rank to the Reserve of Officers in 1909. On his appointment to command the 2nd North Midland Field Brigade, Hill Child was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel in preference to a candidate drawn from one of the three battery commanders.¹¹⁰

New candidates for Territorial Force commissions continued to be recruited from prominent local families and many of the new Second-Lieutenants had gained some basic military knowledge at their schools through the Junior Division of the Officer Training Corps. Second-Lieutenant Alan Edward Green was commissioned in the 5th Battalion of The South Staffordshire Regiment in April 1914 and served with "F"

¹⁰⁷ Knowles, 'The History of the Norton Territorials', p. 7

¹⁰⁸ NA: PRO WO 374/26444, personal record of Major J.S. Gardner

¹⁰⁹ *Cannock Advertiser*, 8 January 1916

¹¹⁰ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 19 February 1910

Company in Hednesford, where he was an articled pupil to a mining engineer. Green was born at Houghton in Huntingdonshire in 1895 and was educated at King's College Choir School in Cambridge and at Felsted School, where he was a member of the Officer Training Corps.¹¹¹ Patrick Eliot Welchman joined the 2nd North Midland Field Company, Royal Engineers as a Second-Lieutenant in March 1913. The son a Surgeon and former Mayor of Lichfield, he had been a member of the Officer Training Corps at the King's School in Canterbury and at the time he was commissioned was employed at Lloyds Bank at Lichfield.¹¹²

The social composition of the rank and file of the Territorial Force had significantly changed from that of the old Rifle Volunteer Corps. Initially, the Rifle Volunteers were mainly from the middle-classes who were able to finance the purchase of their own uniforms and equipment. Members of the first unit of Rifle Volunteers formed in Staffordshire at Handsworth were recorded as having subscribed £500 towards the cost of uniforms and accoutrements in the weeks prior to the unit being accepted for service, while several businessmen in Wolverhampton offered to equip some of their workers at their own expense.¹¹³ This situation had altered by the 1900s, as Volunteer units became reliant on finding the majority of their recruits among the skilled working class, particularly in those areas that were heavily industrialised.

While there are no detailed statistics available for the social composition of the volunteer units in Staffordshire, Michael Blanch described the members of 1st Volunteer Battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment in 1903, which recruited in

¹¹¹ NA: PRO WO 374/28874, personal record of Second-Lieutenant A.E. Green

¹¹² NA: PRO WO 339/62819, personal record of Captain P.E. Welchman and *Lichfield Mercury*, 26 November 1915

¹¹³ *The Military Forces of Staffordshire in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 27-8

Birmingham, as consisting of 12.8 per cent unskilled working class, 43.8 per cent wealthier working class and 11.4 per cent lower middle class.¹¹⁴ Hugh Cunningham estimated that nationally only 25 per cent of the members of the Volunteer Force nationally were drawn from the non-skilled working class.¹¹⁵ The absence of any detailed data regarding the social backgrounds of men serving with the Territorial Force in Staffordshire makes any direct comparison with the figures offered by Blanch and Cunningham impossible. It is probable that the units in the county were reliant on large numbers of skilled and unskilled working class recruits to join, particularly as the majority of the sub-units of the Territorial Force in Staffordshire were concentrated in the more densely populated industrial areas in the north and south of the county. Men also tended to enlist at the drill hall closest to their home. For example, approximately a third of the members of the 3rd Staffordshire Battery at Leek lived within half a mile of the unit's drill hall.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless there were exceptions to this situation. Two members of the Uttoxeter detachment of the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, Privates Jordon and Hall, were compelled to make a twenty mile round trip by bicycle from their homes at Oakamoor in order to attend weekly drill.¹¹⁷

Several examples of the type of industries prevalent in a unit's recruiting area can be found among the occupations of men who served with the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment during this period. Corporal John Brindley was a member of "A" Company at Burton-on-Trent and like many of his comrades worked at the Bass

¹¹⁴ M.D. Blanch, 'Nation, Empire and the Birmingham Working Class 1899-1914', Unpublished Ph D thesis, University of Birmingham, 1975, p. 248

¹¹⁵ H. Cunningham, cited by E.M. Spiers, *Haldane: an Army Reformer* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1980), p. 92

¹¹⁶ Blore & Sherratt, "*Over There*", p. 6

¹¹⁷ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 17 September 1910

Brewery, where he was employed as a clerk. He had joined the battalion in 1896 and had served during the Boer War with the 1st Volunteer Service Company.¹¹⁸ The two companies of the battalion located in Stafford found most their recruits from the shoe manufacturing businesses in the town. Private Arthur Burghall, who had joined the battalion in 1910, worked at the Hollin's shoe factory. Arthur's younger brother Harold, who joined "F" Company in January 1914, was also employed at the same firm.¹¹⁹ Many of the men serving with "C" Company at Tamworth and "D" Company based in Rugeley worked for the local collieries. Among these was Corporal Thomas Harper. Corporal Harper had been a member of "C" Company at Tamworth since 1895 and was employed as a miner at the Pooley Hall Colliery at Polesworth. He had also seen service in South Africa with the 1st Volunteer Service Company between 1900-01. Harper had re-engaged in the Territorial Force on 25 June 1908 and was appointed Lance-Sergeant in July 1911.¹²⁰

The reliance on recruits from the mining communities around the 2nd North Midland Field Company's drill hall in Norton Canes is particularly notable. Among the first recruits to join the Company was Sapper Ernest Lester. Lester was 26 years old at the time of his enlistment and was employed as an electrician at the Aldridge Colliery.¹²¹ Another early recruit was an eighteen- year-old miner, Driver Wilfred Rose, who worked at the Conduit Colliery at Norton Canes.¹²² One of the Company's Sergeants, Harold Harrison, was employed as the sales manager to the Cannock Chase Colliery Company.¹²³ This link was continued among later recruits for the unit. Albert Morris,

¹¹⁸ *ibid*, 30 October 1915

¹¹⁹ *Express and Star*, 22 April 1915

¹²⁰ *Tamworth Herald*, 8 May 1915

¹²¹ *Walsall Observer*, 22 January 1916

¹²² *ibid*, 30 November 1918

¹²³ Knowles, 'The History of the Norton Territorials', p. 8

who lived at Heath Hayes and was employed at the Conduit Colliery, enlisted in 1910 and in the following year won the Company Cup for marksmanship.¹²⁴ Two brothers serving with the Mounted Section of the Company, William and Alfred Yates, also worked at the Conduit Colliery. Not only were the two brothers members of the Territorial Force, but their father William served as a Colour-Sergeant with “F” Company of the 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment at Hednesford, having first joined the unit in 1883.¹²⁵

The reasons behind individuals decided to join the Territorials were many and varied. Some of the motivating factors for enlisting have been identified by Edward Spiers, who states that deciding factors ranged from patriotism to the desire to join friends and workmates in social and recreational activities.¹²⁶ This was in spite of the generally low opinion of the army held by many sections of the public.¹²⁷ Even serving on part-time basis, according to Spiers, ‘*had a distinctly limited appeal*’.¹²⁸ Appeals to the patriotic sentiments of potential recruits figured prominently in the speeches made at recruiting meetings. At a smoking concert held at the 5th Staffordshire Battery’s drill hall at West Bromwich in April 1910 the unit’s commander, Captain H. Ely, emphasised that it was a man’s patriotic duty to defend his country and serving with the Territorials was the best means of exercising his citizenship.¹²⁹ The importance of providing facilities for social activities at unit drill halls was also considered to be an inducement to recruits and a means of retaining

¹²⁴ *Walsall Observer*, 8 May 1915

¹²⁵ Mrs B. Parsonage: Alfred Yates, Papers.

¹²⁶ E.M. Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914* (London: Longman, 1980), p. 280

¹²⁷ J. Bourne, ‘The British Working Man in Arms’, in H. Cecil & P.H. Liddle (eds.), *Facing Armageddon* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), p. 340: ‘*Respectable working-class families remained appalled by the idea of having a son who had “gone for a soldier”.*’

¹²⁸ Spiers, *Army and Society*, p.280

¹²⁹ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 16 April 1910

men once they had enlisted into a unit. The Territorial Force carried on the tradition established early in the existence of Volunteer units of “*providing an institution within which a man could pursue any number of leisure activities*”.¹³⁰ Territorial units in Staffordshire were able to offer various activities in addition to the annual training requirements. At Burslem, “C” Company of the 5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment had a long-established social club for its members.¹³¹ The annual prize-giving dinners held during December were also a key event in the social calendar of Territorial units, with the officers subscribing to the trophies and medals awarded to the men for shooting. Shooting had been an important activity since the formation of the Rifle Volunteers, and the Territorial Force maintained close links with the Staffordshire Rifle Association, which had been created in 1860. Sporting activities were also organised. The 2nd North Midland Field Company held annual sports days opposite the Hussey Arms public house at Brownhills and in 1912 the unit’s tug-of-war team reached the finals of the Army Championship and competed at the Army and Navy Tournament at Olympia, where they achieved second place.¹³² The 3rd Staffordshire Battery at Leek even formed a team to play in the district’s football league for the 1913-14 Season.¹³³

The issue of full dress uniforms enhanced the appearance of the Territorials and was intended to act as an inducement for potential recruits. In addition to the full dress uniform, drab service dress was worn for training and drill nights. To provide for the free issue of uniform to serving Territorials, the Territorial Force Association was

¹³⁰ H. Cunningham, cited by J.G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 42

¹³¹ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 22 December 1908

¹³² Knowles, ‘The History of the Norton Territorials’, p. 11

¹³³ Blore & Sherratt, “*Over There*”, p. 30

provided with a clothing allowance of £3.10s for each man.¹³⁴ However, when gunners of the 3rd North Midland Field Brigade, Royal Field Artillery were ordered to pay 8/6d for boots to wear with their walking out dress, Lieutenant-Colonel Leveson-Gower complained to the Territorial Force Association that this charge was a serious grievance among the ranks and that his battery commanders were worried that the issue would seriously affect recruiting.¹³⁵

Although the social aspects of service with Territorial units were encouraged, the primary reason for their existence was to train for war. In order for a man to be passed as 'efficient', he was obliged to attend a minimum of forty drill periods during their first year as a recruit and twenty for the subsequent years of their engagement. In addition to drill, Territorials were also expected to attend annual camp. However, not all Territorials from Staffordshire were able to attend the full fifteen days of camp owing to work commitments. For example, when the Staffordshire units (less artillery) that formed part of the North Midland Division held their annual camp at Hindlow in 1910, 3,721 men were able to attend the first week, but this figure had dropped to 2,697 by the second week.¹³⁶ Men were also required to pass the annual Standard Musketry Test. The standard of training of the Territorial Force was often criticised in the national press, particularly the standard and proficiency of the artillery units. Nevertheless, Staffordshire Territorial Force units did take their training seriously. In 1909, of the 988 members of the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment eligible to take the Standard Musketry Test, 976 men - 99.6 per cent - passed. This was a considerable achievement as the average pass rate

¹³⁴ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 7 March 1908

¹³⁵ *ibid*, 14 May 1910

¹³⁶ *ibid*, 13 August 1910

recorded for Territorial Force units at this time was 70.34 per cent.¹³⁷ In August 1910, The North Midland Heavy Battery team, led by Lieutenant W.M. Lovatt, won the annual King's Cup gunnery competition for Territorial Heavy batteries at Okehampton.¹³⁸ The Staffordshire Yeomanry also displayed considerable martial skill during manoeuvres with Regular cavalry at Towcester in 1913. During one encounter with troops from the 12th Lancers the Yeomanry emerged as the victors. The Lancer's squadron commander, not recognising Lieutenant-Colonel Wright-Boycott as an auxiliary officer, congratulated his soldiers' performance with; "*thank God it wasn't the Yeomanry*".¹³⁹

In order to assist with the training of the Territorials, the Regular Army supplied officers to act as unit Adjutants and Non-Commissioned Officers who served as Permanent Staff Instructors for each Company, Battery and Squadron. The role of the Regular staff was to provide administrative and training support and impart their experience of full-time soldiering to the enthusiastic but undertrained part-timers. The 6th Battalion The South Staffordshire Regiment had three Adjutants for the period between the unit's creation in April 1908 and August 1914. Curiously, no officer from a regular battalion of the South Staffordshire Regiment was appointed to serve as Adjutant to the unit during this time. The first incumbent was Captain J. Kelly DSO, Wiltshire Regiment, who had been the Adjutant of the 3rd Volunteer Battalion prior to the formation of the Territorial Force. Lieutenant Allan Humphrey Harden replaced Kelly in October 1908. Harden had been commissioned from the Militia in January 1901 into the 2nd Battalion, The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and

¹³⁷ *ibid*, 30 October 1909

¹³⁸ *ibid*, 27 August 1910

¹³⁹ Kemp, *The Staffordshire Yeomanry (Q.O.R.R.) in the First and Second World Wars*, p. 1

was promoted to the rank of Captain in January 1910.¹⁴⁰ In October 1912, Harden was posted back to his battalion and was replaced by Captain Charles William Gordon from the Black Watch. Gordon had also originally received a commission in the Militia and had joined his regiment's 2nd Battalion shortly before their departure for South Africa in 1899. As well as seeing active service during the Boer War, Gordon had also spent several years in India before being posted home to take up his appointment as Adjutant to the 6th Battalion of The South Staffordshire Regiment.¹⁴¹ The Territorial officers of the battalion noted the contrast between Gordon's personality and Captain Harden's:

*Gordon was a Black Watch officer and a keen disciplinarian, but had not the expansively friendly character of his predecessor. He was reserved, distant, even cold: almost he seemed to have been specially constituted for the task of converting a group of cheerful, good fellows (officers and men) into a steel machine of war.*¹⁴²

The Non-Commissioned Officers who were posted to Territorial Force units as Permanent Staff Instructors were long-serving soldiers with extensive service experience. Company-Quartermaster-Sergeant Herbert Shergold was appointed as one of two Permanent Staff for 2nd North Midland Field Company, Royal Engineers at Norton Canes in late 1908. He had joined the Royal Engineers in 1884 as a Boy Trumpeter and had seen active service in South Africa. Prior to his posting to Staffordshire, Shergold had performed a similar role with the Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers and on his arrival at Norton Canes was given the responsibility of

¹⁴⁰ Lieutenant-Colonel A.F. Mockler-Ferryman (ed), *The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry Chronicle 1913* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1914), p. 180

¹⁴¹ F. Davies & G. Maddocks, *Blood Red Tabs – General Officer Casualties of the Great War, 1914-1918* (London: Leo Cooper, 1995), p. 65. Gordon eventually attained the rank of Brigadier-General and was killed on 23 July 1917 while in command of 123rd Infantry Brigade, 41st Division.

¹⁴² A Committee of Officers, *The War History of the Sixth South Staffordshire Regiment (T.F.)*, (London: Heinemann, 1924), p. 13

training the drivers of the Mounted Section of the Company in their duties.¹⁴³ Another regular soldier who served with the Territorials during this period was Squadron-Sergeant-Major Joseph Wilton, who was attached to “A” Squadron of The Staffordshire Yeomanry at Lichfield from July 1907 until his death in March 1910. He had enlisted into the 20th Hussars in 1890 and had served with the regiment in India and South Africa before taking up his appointment with the Yeomanry. Wilton was one of five Permanent Staff who served with the Yeomanry, the regiment having a regular Regimental Sergeant-Major and one Squadron-Sergeant-Major serving with the four squadrons of the regiment.¹⁴⁴

The efforts of the Permanent Staff Instructors in providing valuable training support for the Territorials were certainly valued by the members of the units in Staffordshire. The county’s Territorial Force Association had sanctioned an extra payment of 1s. a day for Permanent Staff in November 1908 to reward them for maintaining the arms and equipment held at the unit Drill Halls as the committee felt that their pay was inadequate considering their extra responsibilities.¹⁴⁵ Further gestures of appreciation were often given to Permanent Staff once their period of attachment finished. On being posted back to the 1st Battalion at Aldershot, Colour-Sergeant Blurton received a purse of gold sovereigns subscribed to by members of “G” Company of the 5th Battalion, North Staffordshire Regiment after serving with the company for four years as its instructor.¹⁴⁶ However, not all of the men posted to the Territorial units as Permanent Staff were the paragons of soldierly virtue that they should have been. In 1908 one company commander complained to the Territorial Force Association that

¹⁴³ *Cannock Chase Courier*, 23 January 1915

¹⁴⁴ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 2 April 1910

¹⁴⁵ *ibid*, 3 November 1908

¹⁴⁶ *ibid*, 9 January 1909

he wanted his Permanent Staff Instructor returned to his unit immediately as he was insubordinate and often drunk while on duty.¹⁴⁷

Obtaining recruits to replace those men who had decided not to re-engage had been a perennial issue for commanders of the Volunteers and the Yeomanry and remained so for units of the Territorial Force. This problem was exacerbated as the main source of recruits for the rank and file of the Territorials in Staffordshire came from industrial working class backgrounds. Working class men tended to marry at a young age and found that serving with the Territorials interfered with family commitments. Similarly, many Territorials found that the requirements for attendance at drill and annual camp were a burden on both their time and their pockets that they could not afford. The 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment, in particular, experienced difficulties in keeping their companies at Walsall up to strength. Although the battalion had been very successful in its efforts to obtain recruits during 1908 the commanding officer, Colonel S.R. Williamson, was concerned that the battalion would not be able to maintain four companies as they had only managed to obtain 402 recruits against a target of 480.¹⁴⁸ This situation persisted and by early 1911, one of the companies in Walsall was disbanded and was replaced by a new company located at Brierley Hill. Other companies of the battalion were more satisfactorily recruited. In 1912, "F" Company at Hednesford was the strongest company of the battalion with 145 other ranks recorded as serving with the unit. During the following year this total had increased to 151 and included 56 new recruits to replace the men who had not re-engaged. Captain William Burnett, the company commander, attributed this accomplishment to the willingness of miners from the

¹⁴⁷ *ibid*, 3 November 1908

¹⁴⁸ *ibid*, 6 February 1909

local collieries around the town and at nearby Cannock to serve with the Territorial Force. Another factor that assisted the satisfactory recruiting situation of the company was the payment of a bounty of 1/6d to each Territorial who brought a potential recruit to the drill hall. In spite of being a fruitful recruiting area, Captain Burnett was reported to have been frustrated that he was not allowed to recruit over the established strength permitted for the company at Hednesford although he could have easily done so.¹⁴⁹

One method employed by Territorial units to attract recruits was public displays and parades. In February 1909, six hundred officers and men of the 5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment carried out a twelve mile march through the Potteries from their headquarters at Shelton. Led by the battalion's band and bugles, the procession was reported to have been most impressive to the bystanders on the route:

*Much interest was taken in the march throughout the route, and no doubt it is felt that the patriotic feeling awakened in the district will have an excellent effect on recruiting.*¹⁵⁰

In March 1914, stimulated by the need to make up a shortfall of 200 men in their strength, the 5th Battalion undertook another route march around the Potteries. Two of the battalion's ammunition wagons accompanied the column, bearing banners proclaiming: "The Country asks you young men to join the Territorials", and handbills were also distributed along the route.¹⁵¹

The nominal rolls for five companies of the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment for the first half of 1914 have survived and provide a valuable insight into

¹⁴⁹ *ibid*, 14 March 1914

¹⁵⁰ *ibid*, 27 February 1909

¹⁵¹ *ibid*, 21 March 1914

the length of service of members of the unit at this time.¹⁵² These books, more properly known as the Army Book 220, were kept at the company Drill Halls and recorded several important details that were required for the general administration of a unit. By using the data preserved in the nominal rolls for “E” Company, which had its Drill Hall at Lichfield, the composition of a typical Territorial Force sub-unit in Staffordshire can be assessed.

The names of two officers and 91 other ranks are recorded in the nominal roll for “E” Company. The Company’s Officer Commanding, Captain Cedric Longstaff, had held the appointment since January 1909, having previously serving with the 2nd Volunteer Battalion of the East Surrey Regiment.¹⁵³ His junior officer, Second-Lieutenant John Masfen Stack, had served with the Company since being commissioned in February 1908, shortly before the creation of the Territorial Force.¹⁵⁴ Of the ten men serving with the Company in 1914 who had enlisted during 1908, six had been members of the Volunteer Force and had re-engaged on the creation of the Territorial Force. The man with the longest continuous service with the Company was 426 Lance-Sergeant R. Roberts, who had originally joined in 1885. It is noticeable, however, that over two-thirds of the members of the unit had less than four years service. Seven men are noted as having left the Company during the first half of 1914. Three men left on the expiration of their four-year engagement and chose not to re-enlist. Two others joined other units, one on transferring to a Territorial Force unit in Birmingham and one enlisting into the Special Reserve. Private P.E. Smith left the Company after seven

¹⁵² The books were recently discovered on the closure of the Drill Hall of “A” Company, 3rd (Volunteer) Battalion, The Staffordshire Regiment at Tamworth following the company’s disbandment in 1999. The records that have survived are those for “A”, “B”, “E”, “F” and “G” Companies. These are now kept in the archives of the Museum of The Staffordshire Regiment (MSR) at Lichfield.

¹⁵³ MSR: The History of The 6th Battalion, North Staffordshire Regiment, Volume 2

¹⁵⁴ NA: PRO WO 374/64697, personal record of Captain J.M. Stack and The History of the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, Volume 2

months service on joining the Royal Navy. The seventh man to depart from the Company during this period was Sergeant A.V. Rockingham, who died on 18 February 1914. The situation in “E” Company reflected the Territorial Force nationally, with around 80 per cent of serving Territorials having less than four years service at this time.¹⁵⁵ Table 2.1 illustrates the length of service of the men serving in the ranks of “E” Company at this time:

Table 2.1: Year of Enlistment of Other Ranks serving with “E” Company, 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment during Spring 1914

Year of Enlistment	Number of Men
1908	10
1909	6
1910	6
1911	8
1912	19
1913	21
1914	21

Source: AB 220, “E” Company, 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment (Museum of The Staffordshire Regiment).

The recruits who joined the Territorial Force in the county had also become younger. The average age of the 156 recruits who joined the 3rd Volunteer Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment in 1907 was recorded as being 24.¹⁵⁶ By 1914 this situation had altered considerably. Table 2.2 outlines the information recorded for 85 of the 91 men serving with “E” Company of the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment at the time of their enlistment. Of the recruits who had joined “E” Company of the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment during 1913 and 1914, 24

¹⁵⁵ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, pp. 221-22

¹⁵⁶ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 14 December 1907

soldiers were still under nineteen by August 1914 and were therefore unable to meet the minimum age requirement for active service.¹⁵⁷ This situation mirrored the national trend prevalent within the Territorial Force, which by 1913 contained around 40,000 members under the age of nineteen.¹⁵⁸

Table 2.2: Age on Enlistment of Other Ranks serving with “E” Company, 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment during Spring 1914.

	Year of Enlistment							Total
	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	
								Age on Enlistment
17	2	1	3	3	9	10	12	40
18	1	1	1	3	4	5	3	18
19	-	1	-	1	2	3	1	8
20	1	-	1	-	2	1	4	10
21	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
22	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2
23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
24	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	3
25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
26	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
27	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	2

Source: AB 220, “E” Company, 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment (Museum of The Staffordshire Regiment).

By August 1914 the Territorial Force units in Staffordshire had developed their own identities and characters. Although there was a constant turnover among the ranks, there were sufficient numbers of “old hands” available to induct the new, and often youthful, recruits in the traditions and culture of their unit. The composition of the Territorial Force units in Staffordshire also closely reflected the industries in which the officers and men were employed. As a result of this common bond, the ‘family’ spirit often identified as a trait of Territorial Force units in general is evident. Sheffield attributes this to a number of factors, including, “*the social composition of the ranks and the officer corps, and the practical difficulties involved in enforcing*

¹⁵⁷ MSR: AB 220, “E” Company, 6th Battalion, North Staffordshire Regiment

¹⁵⁸ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, p. 222

strict discipline on a part-time amateur army, produced a style of officer-man relations and discipline very different from the Regular varieties.”¹⁵⁹ This essential difference has been attributed to “*the importation of civilian structures of authority*” within units of the Territorial Force.¹⁶⁰

On 1 August 1914 most of the Territorial Force units of Staffordshire were preparing to depart for their annual camp. Events in continental Europe resulted in the cancellation of the camp the following day. The early return of the Territorial Force units from camp generated a great deal of excited interest among the civil population of the towns and villages around Staffordshire. In Wolverhampton, the men of the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment arrived back from St Asaph early on the morning of 4 August 1914. As they marched through the streets to their Drill Hall at Stafford Street, their route was lined with crowds of people.¹⁶¹ These scenes were repeated at Norton Canes, where the 2nd North Midland Field Company had their drill hall. Early on the morning of 4 August, the men of the Company arrived at Brownhills Railway Station to be greeted and cheered by relatives and friends. Led by their band, the Company marched down Watling Street and marched into Norton Canes at 5 o’clock. The men then made their way to the Railway Tavern, where they gratefully received a pint of beer, and were surrounded by excited villagers.¹⁶² After their arrival back at their drill halls, the Territorials were dismissed and returned to their homes but were warned to be prepared to receive further orders. The men did not have to wait for long. At 7 o’clock that evening, every drill hall in the county had received a telegram from the War Office instructing them to mobilise.

¹⁵⁹ G.D. Sheffield, ‘Officer-Man Relations, Discipline and Morale in the British Army in the Great War’, in H. Cecil & P.H. Liddle (eds.), *Facing Armageddon* (London: Leo Cooper, 1996), p. 414

¹⁶⁰ Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture*, p. 42

¹⁶¹ *Express and Star*, 5 August 1914

¹⁶² Knowles, ‘The History of the Norton Territorials’, p. 12

Chapter Three

RECRUITING FOR THE TERRITORIAL FORCE IN WARTIME AUGUST 1914-DECEMBER 1915

The issues faced by Territorial Force Associations with recruiting during the period between the outbreak of war in August 1914 and the first moves towards conscription with the introduction of the “Derby Scheme” in November 1915 have received scant attention from the majority of historians. With the exception of the published work of Ian Beckett and Peter Dennis, the problems affecting individual County Territorial Force Associations with regard to recruiting for their local units have not been addressed at any great length.¹⁶³ Recruitment for the Territorial Force during this period was quite separate from that for the Regular and “New Armies”, and this is not generally taken into account in many studies dealing with voluntary recruitment in mainland Britain during the first year of the Great War.

The intention of this chapter is to examine the recruiting situation faced by the County Territorial Force Association in Staffordshire from the period when the Territorial Force was embodied for war service on 5 August 1914, until the abolition of direct enlistment into the Territorials and the introduction of the “Derby Scheme” at the end of 1915. This will include an assessment of the general recruiting situation in Staffordshire during the period and an analysis of the effectiveness of the methods employed by the County Territorial Force Association and local voluntary recruiting bodies to gain recruits for the Territorial Force. The expansion of the Territorial

¹⁶³ I.F.W. Beckett, ‘The Territorial Force’, in I. F. W. Beckett and K. Simpson (eds.), *A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in The First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), pp. 128-63; ‘War and Economies’, in I.F.W. Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 226-44; and P. Dennis, *The Territorial Army 1907-1940* (Woodbridge: The Royal Historical Society and The Boydell Press, 1987), pp. 30-37

Force, first sanctioned in September 1914, and the impact this had on recruiting will receive particular attention. As the war progressed, the problems of maintaining an adequate flow of recruits led to the Staffordshire Territorial Force Association being the first to press for the introduction of conscription in April 1915, and the reasons why the committee made this recommendation will be explored.¹⁶⁴

The Staffordshire Territorial Force Association held an emergency meeting at Stafford on 5 August. Among several issues discussed at this meeting was the possibility of increasing the size of the Territorial Force in the county in light of the embodiment of the units for Home Service. Among the many ideas proposed was a suggestion from Lord Charnwood to create an organisation to give remedial military training to recruits, with a secondary role as an emergency reserve. Lieutenant-Colonel T.F. Waterhouse, the former Commanding Officer of the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment, made a further recommendation of raising a “reserve division” for the Territorial Force and that he felt that, in Wolverhampton at least, this could be achieved at short notice by enlisting members of the National Reserve and new volunteers. Lord Dartmouth pointed out that the Territorial Force Association did not have the authority to raise any additional units unless given permission to do so by the War Office. Members of the National Reserve and the minuscule Territorial Force Reserve would meet any manpower requirements for the county’s units. Nevertheless, it was agreed by members of the Territorial Force Association to forward a proposal to the War Office that, in light of the large number of potential recruits in the larger

¹⁶⁴ Beckett, ‘The Territorial Force’, p. 139

industrial centres, the Territorial Force units in the county should be allowed to enlist these men and give them basic military training at unit drill halls.¹⁶⁵

Any moves proposed by the County Territorial Force Associations towards expanding the numbers of the Territorial Force were initially staunchly opposed with the appointment of The Earl Kitchener of Khartoum as Secretary of State for War on 5 August 1914. Having spent most of his career overseas, Kitchener did not have any real understanding of the Territorial Force and was sceptical of the military worth, reputedly referring to it as a 'Town clerks' army'. Instead of using the existing framework of Territorial Force units and the resources of the County Associations as a means of expanding the army, a function that Haldane had originally envisaged the force as performing in wartime, Kitchener decided instead to raise an entirely new force of 100,000 men to support the Regular Army. Three further appeals for recruits were made by Kitchener during the remainder of 1914. This had a damaging effect on Territorial Force recruitment that would persist until the introduction of the Derby Scheme in November 1915, and the abolition a month later of direct enlistment into the Territorial Force. Beckett argues that by restricting recruitment for the Territorial Force in the early days of the war, potential recruits were more likely to enlist into a 'New Army' unit as this option appeared more attractive, and that Kitchener's decision "*militated against its recruitment*".¹⁶⁶ This duplication of recruiting efforts, and the resulting conflicts over limited resources, was particularly damaging to the Territorial Force as County Territorial Force Associations lacked the experience in dealing with large numbers of recruits.

¹⁶⁵ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 8 August 1914

¹⁶⁶ Beckett, 'The Territorial Force', p. 129

Kitchener's outright hostility towards the Territorial Force and his reluctance to use the organisation as a framework on which to expand the army meant that the County Territorial Force Associations were initially unable to tap into this initial "rush to the colours" for recruits. Kitchener's preference was to concentrate recruiting efforts towards his "New Armies" in the early weeks of the war, with Territorial Force units only being permitted to recruit up to their peacetime establishment. Nonetheless, Kitchener was not reluctant to use the local influence of the Territorial Force Associations to aid him in achieving his initial recruiting target. On 7 August, the War Office had issued a circular to all Lords-Lieutenant requesting their support:

*It is intended to enlist as soon as possible 100,000 men, and I would ask you to use your great local influence and that of the Territorial Associations to secure these necessary recruits as soon as possible.*¹⁶⁷

In common with the other Presidents of the Territorial Force Associations, Lord Dartmouth complied with this directive and made a public appeal for recruits within days:

*As Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire, I have received an appeal from the Secretary of State at War (sic) asking for help in raising 100,000 men to form an addition to the British Army. The Territorial Force in Staffordshire is practically complete in Officers and Men. The County of Stafford has always been in the front in every patriotic movement. I now ask that the whole County, while still giving its support to the Territorial Force, be devoted to secure a prompt response to the Government's appeal...*¹⁶⁸

With the restriction of being able to recruit only up to their peacetime establishment and the resources of the county's Territorial Force Association diverted towards supporting the "New Army", Territorial Force units in Staffordshire initially limited their appeal for men with previous military experience to enlist. One example was an

¹⁶⁷ *Manchester Guardian*, 10 August 1914, cited by J.M. Osborne, *The Voluntary Recruiting Movement in Britain 1914-16* (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1982), p. 11

¹⁶⁸ *Tamworth Herald*, 12 August 1914

appeal for 100 trained men who had served with either the Regular Army, reserves or Territorial Force to report to the Drill Hall at Stafford Street in Wolverhampton on 7 August to re-enlist for the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment.¹⁶⁹ Major A. Griffiths, the officer in charge of the depot of the 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment at Walsall, made a similar request in the local press, which reported that around 30 former Volunteers and time-expired Territorials had already re-enlisted and had been sent to the battalion, which was then at its mobilisation station in Burton-on-Trent.¹⁷⁰ For those units reliant on horse transport, the Yeomanry, the branches of Artillery and the Royal Engineers, appeals were made for recruits with specialist trades to enlist, including one such advertisement that appeared in the *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel* for saddlers, grooms and farriers to join the 2nd North Midland Field Brigade, Royal Field Artillery at Shelton.¹⁷¹

An important factor that must be considered with regard to the recruiting requirements for the Territorial Force were the conditions of service under which pre-war members served. The period of engagement in peacetime had been for four years, but on the outbreak of hostilities this was extended automatically to five years. In addition, the primary role of the Territorial Force was that of home defence and consequently not liable for service overseas. Individuals could volunteer to do so in wartime under the terms of the Imperial Service Obligation. Prior to the outbreak of war, only around 18,000 members of the force nationally had volunteered to serve overseas if required.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ *Express and Star*, 6 August 1914

¹⁷⁰ *Walsall Observer*, 15 August 1914

¹⁷¹ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 7 August 1914

¹⁷² According to Sir James E. Edmonds, *Military Operations: France and Belgium 1914, Vol II* (London: Macmillan, 1925), pp.2-3, the figure was 17,621, but Beckett, ('The Territorial Force', p.130) records the number at 18,683 as of 1 July 1914

On 10 August 1914 the War Office had requested units of the Territorial Force to volunteer for Imperial Service, and from the evidence contained in the published histories and contemporary newspaper reports, the commanding officers of those from Staffordshire immediately accepted. Lieutenant-Colonel J.H. Knight of the 5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment received the telegram from the War Office on 11 August, while his unit had halted at Checkley en route to their war station at Burton-on-Trent, and immediately responded. He received a further telegram accepting his offer when the battalion finished their day's march at Uttoxeter.¹⁷³

As pointed out by Beckett, the enthusiasm of commanding officers to volunteer the services of their units for overseas service was not necessarily universal, and the individual soldiers ultimately decided if they would sign for "Imperial Service".¹⁷⁴ On 21 August, those units in which at least 80 per cent of their members had volunteered were allowed to recruit up to their war establishment, but by 31 August this requirement was reduced to 60 per cent.¹⁷⁵ It has proved difficult to determine the level of response across all of the Territorial Force units in Staffordshire to the requests to volunteer for overseas service except for isolated examples. Contemporary newspaper reports are generally positive in their descriptions of the response of Territorials serving with Staffordshire units to the call to volunteer for overseas service, but provide little evidence to make conclusions regarding the overall response of the county's Territorials to the request. Unit histories are also vague in their

¹⁷³ W. Meakin, *The 5th North Staffords and the North Midland Territorials 1914-1919* (Longton: Hughes & Harber, 1920), p. 11

¹⁷⁴ Beckett, 'The Territorial Force', pp. 133-134

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p. 133

descriptions of the subject. The authors of the *War History of the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment* blandly recorded that when members of the unit were asked to sign on for “Imperial Service” at Luton in September 1914:

*Every man in his turn, and in full knowledge of what he was doing, destroyed the old contract, whereby his services were limited to home defence, and signed the new one, whereby he might be called upon to serve the whole world over.*¹⁷⁶

More information is available on the level of response within individual sub-units. Within days of the initial War Office appeal, 40 officers and men of the 110 serving with “B” Squadron of The Staffordshire Yeomanry had volunteered, just over third of the total strength.¹⁷⁷ By early September, it was reported that 75 per cent of the members of the Wednesbury-based “H” Company of the 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment had signed the Imperial Service Obligation.¹⁷⁸ Another report noted that 75 per cent of the men serving with the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment had volunteered for Imperial Service by early September 1914 and that one detachment, “C” Company based at Tamworth, had three officers and 104 other ranks volunteer to serve overseas by late September 1914.¹⁷⁹ A nominal roll for the 2nd North Midland Field Company, Royal Engineers, published in early October 1914 while the unit was stationed at Luton, does provide a more detailed breakdown of the situation as regards one Territorial Force contingent from Staffordshire. The wartime establishment of a Divisional Field Company was set at six officers and 211 other ranks.¹⁸⁰ Of the 269 other ranks listed as serving with the company at the time, 208 had volunteered for Imperial Service. By analysing the

¹⁷⁶A Committee of Officers, *The War History of the Sixth South Staffordshire Regiment (T.F.)*, (London: Heinemann, 1924), p. 3

¹⁷⁷ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 15 August 1914

¹⁷⁸ *ibid*, 12 September 1914

¹⁷⁹ *Tamworth Herald*, 5 & 26 September 1914

¹⁸⁰ S. Bull, *World War One: British Army* (London: Brassey’s, 1998), p. 133

regimental numbers of the men listed on the roll and comparing known dates of enlistment, 123 pre-war members of the unit had volunteered for overseas service as opposed to 57 who had not, although some of these men are known to have subsequently served overseas. Ten Officers are also listed but the nominal roll does not specify which of them had volunteered for service overseas or had opted to remain at home, although all but one are known to have served overseas at some point during the war.¹⁸¹ It is probable that the other units had similar ratios of those serving who had undertaken the Imperial Service Obligation and those who had not, but in the absence of detailed data it is difficult to make any solid conclusions regarding the level of response for the whole of the Territorial Force in Staffordshire, or if there were any local variations between units, as indicated by Beckett with reference to discrepancies between companies recruited from certain occupations.¹⁸²

The outcome of this process was that in order for the Imperial Service contingents to be fully manned, new recruits would have to be found to replace the men who remained at home. The process of separating the Home Service men from the remainder who had volunteered for Imperial Service began in early September 1914 and in the case of the infantry battalions, the men detached accounted for around a quarter of a battalion's establishment. The 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment were recorded to have sent away a detachment to Dunstable consisting of seven officers and around two hundred men, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel H. Taylor.¹⁸³ The 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment sent 250 men back to Walsall on 5 September. Of those soldiers returned, 65 were either under or over-age, while 70 men had failed to reach the medical requirements. The

¹⁸¹ *Lichfield Mercury*, 9 October 1914

¹⁸² Beckett, 'The Territorial Force', p. 133

¹⁸³ *The War History of the Sixth South Staffordshire Regiment (T.F.)*, p. 141

remainder of the contingent were men who had refused to volunteer for overseas service, although 15 later changed their mind and were posted back to the main unit at Luton six days later.¹⁸⁴ A detachment of some 200 men of the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment had also been sent back to Burton-on-Trent on 5 September. As well as being separated from their comrades serving with the “Imperial Service” units, they were also deprived of much of their equipment and were even made to give up their khaki service dress and don scarlet full-dress tunics instead.¹⁸⁵ Some of the men who had originally opted for Home Service would eventually decide to volunteer to serve overseas, and no doubt treating them in this manner influenced their decision. Even after the declaration of war, recruits still had the option of enlisting for home service only in Territorial Force units and this situation that was not resolved until the abolition of home service enlistments in March 1915. There is evidence that this anomaly did prove attractive to some recruits for Territorial Force units in Staffordshire. In December 1914 one non-military member of the Territorial Force Association, Molyneux Seel, felt obliged to complain to Major Green, the Recruiting Officer at Stafford, that recruiting for one home service unit, the Reserve Regiment of The Staffordshire Yeomanry, was bringing in all eligible recruits to the detriment of the Imperial Service units.¹⁸⁶

The need to replace the home-service men with volunteers who had undertaken to serve overseas was therefore acute. The first response by the Territorial Force units was to despatch officers of those units based at their war stations back to their home drill halls to organise recruiting meetings to fill the vacancies. The level of success

¹⁸⁴ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 12 September 1914

¹⁸⁵ *ibid*, 12 September 1914 and *Tamworth Herald*, 28 November 1914

¹⁸⁶ Staffordshire Record Office (SRO): Ingestre Estate Papers, D240/E/R/3/85, Letter dated 11 December 1914

varied. Captain John Jenkinson, the Officer Commanding “C” Company, 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, organised a meeting at the drill hall in Tamworth on 1 September 1914 in order to recruit trained men for overseas service only. He required fifty recruits, but of eighty men in the audience only 22 signed up.¹⁸⁷ More successful results were obtained by Captain Sidney Lord of “D” Company of the 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment at a recruiting meeting held at Bloxwich Public Hall. He had thirty vacancies in his company and was reported to have obtained “around 30 men” as a result of his efforts.¹⁸⁸

The need to resort to these ad-hoc recruiting methods highlights the inadequacy of the facilities available to enlist and process volunteers for the Territorial Force in the early weeks of the war. In common with the rest of the Territorial Force, the responsibility for recruiting policy and advertising for the Territorial Force in Staffordshire lay with the Recruiting Sub-Committee of the County Territorial Force Association. Enlistment of recruits took place at each unit’s Drill Hall and was usually handled by the regular Permanent Staff Instructor based there. The recruiting situation for the Territorial Force in Staffordshire in the months preceding the outbreak of the war had been much healthier than in other parts of the country. The annual returns made by the Staffordshire Territorial Force Association in April 1914 stated that the county’s units were manned to 95.44 per cent of their required establishment.¹⁸⁹ The outbreak of war found the recruiting structure of the Territorial Force inadequately equipped to deal with the increased number of recruits they would have to deal with.

¹⁸⁷ *Tamworth Herald*, 5 September 1914

¹⁸⁸ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 12 September 1914

¹⁸⁹ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 18 April 1914

In contrast, the recruiting infrastructure for the Regular Army in Staffordshire, although under-resourced, was at least formally organised. The system employed by the Regular Army had been instituted in the 1870s following the army reforms instituted by Edward Cardwell.¹⁹⁰ In the case of Staffordshire, the county came under Number 6 District of Northern Command, with the county divided into four areas for recruiting purposes. Two of the major industrial centres, Stoke-on-Trent and Wolverhampton, had been designated as recruiting areas by the War Office for the peacetime regular army, with the remainder of the county divided into two Regimental Districts: 38th Regimental District covering the South Staffordshire Regiment's traditional recruiting area, and the 64th Regimental District that encompassed North and East Staffordshire and served The North Staffordshire Regiment. The four recruiting areas therefore already had long-established offices and recruiting staff with the experience and the personnel able to deal with processing recruits. Similarly, both of the county's infantry regiments had depots at Whittington Barracks, near Lichfield, where Regular Army recruits could be sent following their attestation. The Territorial Force in the county had no such luxuries and was therefore forced to improvise.

Following the departure of the Territorial Force units to their war stations, depots and recruiting offices were initially established at the main Drill Halls where unit headquarters had been located, with smaller recruiting offices opened at the outlying sub-unit drill halls as staff became available. The recruiting staff posted to the smaller drill halls, such as Hednesford, found themselves responsible for enlistments for the Regular Army as well as the Territorial Force. At Burton-on-Trent recruiting for both

¹⁹⁰ The Regular Army recruiting structure is discussed in detail by Osborne, *The Voluntary Recruiting Movement in Britain 1914-16*, pp. 3-9

branches was carried out at the Drill Hall until the Regular Army recruiting staff established a separate office in the High Street of the town.¹⁹¹ Retired officers who had previously served with the Volunteer Force or Territorials were re-commissioned in order to fill the posts of recruiting officers, but some men would find themselves employed as recruiters with very little experience or training. In October 1914 Second-Lieutenant Philip Highfield-Jones, a recently commissioned subaltern in the Reserve Battalion of the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment, found himself seconded on recruiting duties at the unit's main Drill Hall at Stafford Street in Wolverhampton. He recollected that he was in direct competition not only with the Regular Army Recruiting Office in Broad Street, which employed a recruiting sergeant who was paid a bonus for every man who enlisted there, but also with the recruiting staff of the 3rd North Midland Field Ambulance, who shared the Drill Hall with the infantry. While Highfield-Jones had his office located in the Officer's Mess, the Field Ambulance recruiting office was positioned on the ground floor and was therefore able to purloin recruits when they first entered the building. As a result, he reckoned that he was lucky if he was able to secure forty recruits during one day's duty. Highfield-Jones served alone in this capacity until a recruiting sergeant was appointed to assist him at the Drill Hall in February 1915.¹⁹²

The inadequate recruiting infrastructure available to the Territorial Force was further pressured once the formation of "Reserve" units began in September 1914. Authorisation was first issued on 21 August 1914 to form duplicate reserve units to cater for those men who had opted to remain on home service, these being transferred and their places in the 'Imperial Service' units being taken by new recruits who had

¹⁹¹ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 12 September 1914

¹⁹² Museum of The Staffordshire Regiment (MSR): Philip Highfield-Jones, Memoirs, pp. 5-7

volunteered for overseas service. Reserve contingents would be formed only when the “Imperial Service” units had reached their war establishment. The Reserve Battalions were to act as reception units for new recruits and to provide drafts for the Imperial Service units. Cadres of officers and senior non-commissioned officers were sent from the main units to establish the headquarters for the new contingents. The lack of suitable accommodation for the new units compelled the Territorial Force Association to seek the permission of supportive local landowners to use the grounds of several estates around the county. Two examples were the headquarters staff for the Reserve Battalion of the 5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, who established themselves at Butterton Hall near Newcastle-under-Lyme, while that of the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment used Himley Hall, near Dudley, as their base.¹⁹³ The lack of trained officers and non-commissioned officers required to administer and train the new recruits brought a number of old soldiers out of retirement. Major H. Twentyman, who was appointed to command the Reserve Battalion of the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment, was a former Volunteer Force officer called from retirement and had resigned his commission in 1908. His two senior warrant officers, Sergeant-Major Leek and Regimental-Sergeant-Major Allen, were both retired regular soldiers.¹⁹⁴

In order to obtain the required recruits, the local press was again used to advertise for the new battalions, one such appeal for the Reserve Battalion of the 6th South Staffordshire Regiment being an example:

The 6th South Staffords have been accepted for Active Service and require 500 men to complete their service companies. Age 18-35. Usual rates of pay and

¹⁹³ Meakin, *The 5th North Staffords and the North Midland Territorials 1914-1919*, pp. 70-71 and *The War History of the Sixth South Staffordshire Regiment*, pp. 141-42

¹⁹⁴ *The War History of the Sixth South Staffordshire Regiment*, pp. 141-42

*separation allowances for married women and children. Recruits will be organised, completely equipped, and partially trained at Wolverhampton before being sent to their Regiment. They will not be sent to Barracks.*¹⁹⁵

In tandem with the efforts made by the Territorial units themselves, several individuals and organisations offered their time and money to assist in the recruiting effort, “*whether asked to do so by the War Office or not*”.¹⁹⁶ A number of local recruiting campaigns were undertaken on behalf of the Territorials in Staffordshire, some of which identified the recruits as members of particular contingents within those units. One notable recruiting initiative that was to benefit the Territorial Force infantry units in Staffordshire was the specific targeting of middle class recruits to enlist in separate companies within the battalions. The idea imitated the recruiting campaigns in several industrial centres, such as Liverpool, Manchester and London, to form specific battalions composed of recruits from clerical and professional backgrounds as part of the “New Army”. A number of similar schemes were employed throughout the county. The first such appeal was launched in Wolverhampton on 29 August 1914 by the *Express and Star* newspaper, announcing the formation of “special service companies” of the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment to accommodate these recruits. The newspaper also acted as collecting agent for the new companies, inviting suitable candidates to submit their names and particulars, which were subsequently published. On 4 September, the first contingent of “Non-Manuals” were paraded outside the offices of the *Express and Star* in Queen’s Street before marching to the Town Hall where they were medically examined and attested.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ *Midland Evening News*, 1 September 1914

¹⁹⁶ Osborne, *Voluntary Recruiting Movement in Britain*, p. 13

¹⁹⁷ *Express and Star*, 5 September 1914

Mirroring the initiative that been launched in Birmingham to form a “City Battalion” from middle class recruits, a rival recruiting drive was launched in early September 1914 by the Mayor of West Bromwich, Councillor C.B. Bache. He proposed the formation of a “Mayor’s Battalion” from non-manual workers living in West Bromwich, Wednesbury and Walsall. Concern was raised that Councillor Bache’s appeal would divert recruits from the *Express and Star* scheme and he was compelled to clarify his intentions:

*To remove any misapprehensions I beg to say that it is proposed to raise a non-manual battalion for West Bromwich, Walsall and Wednesbury, in addition to the company of Territorials which is joining the 6th South Staffordshires, and who need not be non-manual workers.*¹⁹⁸

This initiative failed to gain the sanction of the War Office and the proposed battalion was never formed. Some of the 110 men who had responded to Bache’s request did eventually enlist in the “Non-Manual” section of the 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment. In addition to the men who had originally signed for the “Mayor’s Battalion”, the 5th Battalion also had a significant contingent formed from former pupils of the Queen Mary’s Grammar School in Walsall who had enlisted in the battalion. The calibre of these recruits impressed Lieutenant-Colonel Fiddian Green, who had taken charge of the Reserve Battalion, as in an address to the Walsall Chamber of Commerce in October 1914 he expressed a preference to enlisting “Non-Manuals” over those men employed in the metalwork and leather industries in the town who were now engaged in war work.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ *West Bromwich Free Press*, 4 September 1914

¹⁹⁹ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 10 October 1914

A similar contingent of “Non-Manuals” was formed within the 5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment and included a large group of old boys of the Newcastle High School.²⁰⁰ Colonel W.W. Dobson, the Honorary Colonel of the battalion, started this initiative by enlisting a group of 24 former pupils who had served with the Officers Training Corps on 27 August 1914.²⁰¹ By the following week, this contingent had increased to fifty men, with the Headmaster, F. Harrison, acting as recruiting agent.²⁰² A smaller “Pals” detachment, consisting of fifteen men recruited from the clerical staff of Siemens in Stafford, also joined the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment at this time.²⁰³

Other Territorial Force contingents relied on the efforts of patriotic individuals to act as recruiting agents. In Tamworth, Richard Tolson, owner of the Bleach Works at Fazeley, was asked by Captain John Jenkinson to undertake the collection of the names of potential recruits for the local detachment of the 6th Battalion. Edward Hammersley, a former Quartermaster-Sergeant with the North Staffordshire Regiment who had retired after 22 years service in 1912, assisted Tolson with drilling the recruits he had collected, combining his duties with being landlord of the George Inn until his death from Bright’s disease on 13 October 1914. After the death of Hammersley, another Fazeley man, Basil Green, stepped in to canvass former members of the company to re-enlist. Green himself was to join the 6th Battalion as a private in October 1914.²⁰⁴ A similar initiative was undertaken by Richard Sparling Harding, the captain of Knypersley Cricket Club, who was “given a commission” to

²⁰⁰ Meakin, *The 5th North Staffords and the North Midland Territorials 1914-1919*, p. 11

²⁰¹ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 5 September 1914

²⁰² *ibid*, 12 September 1914

²⁰³ *ibid*, 5 September 1914

²⁰⁴ *Tamworth Herald*, 29 August 1914 and 31 October 1914

enlist 75 men for the Reserve Battalion of the 5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment.²⁰⁵

The requirements of the Reserve contingents for recruits necessitated the expansion of the catchment areas for the infantry units of the Territorial Force in Staffordshire in order to complete their establishment. In October 1914, a new recruiting office was opened at Old Hill in order to enlist recruits to form a “Rowley Regis Company” for the Reserve Battalion of the 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment. On 12 October, the first day that the office was open for business, over eighty recruits had enlisted into the company, this first contingent becoming known in the local press as “The Gallant Eighty”.²⁰⁶ The same unit benefited from yet another recruiting initiative launched by Councillor Bache in West Bromwich, which had previously been the preserve of the local Territorial Force Royal Field Artillery battery. A recruiting rally was held on 24 October at The Hawthorns, the home ground of West Bromwich Albion, following a match against Bolton Wanderers. The intention was to form an “Albion Company” from supporters and local footballers that would serve together with the Reserve Battalion. The appeal met with some success and, by the following Tuesday, it was reported that 42 men had put their names forward and were being sent to Walsall to be attested.²⁰⁷

The response of potential recruits for the new Reserve units of the Territorial Force during the first week of September 1914 was promising. At the drill hall in Burton-on-Trent, Captain E.H. Tomlinson was reported to have processed 120 recruits for the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment in the space of 24 hours on 1

²⁰⁵ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 12 September 1914

²⁰⁶ *County Express*, 17 October 1914

²⁰⁷ *West Bromwich Free Press*, 30 October 1914

September 1914 and by the following day, after the arrival of a further batch of recruits from Uttoxeter, 145 men were despatched to the battalion at Luton.²⁰⁸ Meanwhile, the 5th South Staffordshire Regiment had managed to enlist 500 men during the period between 5 August and 11 September 1914.²⁰⁹ The early “rush to the colours” experienced at the drill halls was unable to sustain its momentum as the war progressed. The flow of recruits had dried to such an extent that when the recruiting office of the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment at Burton-on-Trent attested 32 recruits during a two day period in November 1914, the staff there considered it to have been a “boom”.²¹⁰

Periodic appeals for recruits were made in the local press for men to join the reserve units in order to replace those men posted to the Imperial Service units. Major Meakin, the officer commanding the 5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment depot at Shelton, made on such appeal for 150 men to enlist to replace the same number who had been posted to join the service battalion at Luton.²¹¹ In November 1914 a county-wide appeal was made on behalf of the 2nd North Midland Field Company, which had relied on recruits from the mining communities that surrounded its drill hall at Norton Canes, for skilled artisans such as bricklayers, carpenters, saddlers and wheelwrights to enlist.²¹² A further recruiting effort was mounted on behalf of the North Midland Divisional Royal Engineers in the Potteries in April 1915. This initial campaign netted thirty recruits to add to the 70 men then reported to already be in training at the Royal Engineers depot in Smethwick.²¹³ The recruits

²⁰⁸ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 5 September 1914

²⁰⁹ *ibid*, 12 September 1914

²¹⁰ *ibid*, 14 November 1914

²¹¹ *ibid*, 7 November 1914

²¹² *ibid*, 21 November 1914

²¹³ *Smethwick Telephone*, 10 April 1915

were not all exclusively for the Territorial Force Field Companies however, as Smethwick was also used as a collection point for men enlisting into the recently-formed Tunnelling Companies, as the traditional recruiting areas used by the Territorials encompassed several of the coalfields of South Staffordshire. However, the centralising of the recruit processing for the Royal Engineers was also the cause of protest. In August 1915, at a meeting of the Parish Council of Cheslyn Hay, the Parish Clerk, A.E. Hawkins, protested that about half the 220 men who had enlisted into the army had joined the Royal Engineers, but because that had been attested at Smethwick, their enlistments would not count towards Staffordshire's recruiting returns.²¹⁴ The Earl of Dartmouth had already raised this issue at the House of Lords two months previously when he protested that, although Territorial Force enlistments at Smethwick and nearby Handsworth were included in the Staffordshire returns, the figures for recruits enlisting for the regular army were added to those of neighbouring Warwickshire.²¹⁵

Further problems were experienced when the Reserve Regiment of The Staffordshire Yeomanry was formed. Although authorisation for the formation of the unit was received in September 1914, it was not until late into the following month that the first appeal for recruits was made. When Major Lovelace Stamer eventually made his appeal for recruits, not only did he need 300 men to bring the Reserve regiment up to establishment, but also 100 men were urgently required for the Service Regiment stationed at Diss.²¹⁶ This delay was later attributed to a lack of recruits from agricultural backgrounds with the experience of riding and caring for horses and as a result recruits from all occupations were accepted. In response to criticism from

²¹⁴ *Lichfield Mercury*, 20 August 1915

²¹⁵ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 26 June 1915

²¹⁶ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 24 October 1914

Colonel P.R.S. Churchward, the Officer Commanding No. 6 District, who requested that only experienced riders should be recruited for mounted units, Lord Dartmouth replied that the recruiting of such men would continue as they could be trained.²¹⁷ Despite the problems experienced with obtaining suitable recruits for the regiment, the Reserve regiment of the Staffordshire Yeomanry was only 42 men below establishment by 31 January 1915.²¹⁸

By Lord Dartmouth's own admission, the creation of the Reserve units for the Territorial Force in the county had imposed a heavy burden on the limited resources of the Territorial Force Association, but between 10 August and 30 November 1914, 6,691 recruits had joined Territorial Force units in Staffordshire, nearly doubling the peacetime establishment of the units located in the county. Some 19,668 recruits for the Regular Army had enlisted from the county during the same period.²¹⁹

From November 1914 the members of the Territorial Force Association found themselves not only directing recruitment policy for the Territorials but also became increasingly involved in co-ordinating recruiting for the Regular Army throughout Staffordshire. This involvement developed as a response to the rise in voluntary recruiting committees organised in the various towns throughout Staffordshire during September and October 1914 in which members of the Territorial Force Association became engaged in a civic capacity. One such organisation was the Central Recruiting Committee established in Wolverhampton in October 1914, at the instigation of

²¹⁷ *ibid*, 26 December 1914

²¹⁸ *Tamworth Herald*, 6 February 1915

²¹⁹ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 26 December 1914. These figures also include recruits for the Service Battalions raised in the county, as well as enlistments for other regiments and Corps. During the period 5 August to 30 November 1914, the South and North Staffordshire Regiments had each formed five Service Battalions, numbered 7th-11th.

Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor of the Reserve Battalion of the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment. The composition of the committee was similar to that of the County Territorial Force Association, with the Mayor of the town acting as Chairman and representatives drawn from military and business interests. The task of the Central Committee was to co-ordinate recruiting policy and advertising, with smaller local committees located in the surrounding districts.²²⁰ Other recruiting committees were organised by political parties and Boards of Guardians. However, what these committees lacked was a central administrative body that could co-ordinate their efforts. In Leek separate recruiting committees were established by the town's Board of Guardians, political parties and Chamber of Commerce, with the result that considerable duplication of efforts was experienced.²²¹ During the late Autumn of 1914, the Territorial Force Association in Staffordshire gradually began to undertake the role of co-ordinating recruitment, but this had more to do with the fact that it was the only such body with an established organisation rather than by design.

On 10 November 1914, at the Territorial Force Association meeting held in Stafford, the committee members discussed the recruiting scheme issued by the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee in London for the county. The members of the Territorial Force Association unanimously pledged to support the scheme and approved the establishment of a central committee for Staffordshire to put the recruiting scheme into operation. The information contained in the circular issued by the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee stated that the main efforts of Staffordshire's committee were to be directed towards recruiting for the Regular Army, and that it would:

²²⁰ *Express and Star*, 28 October 1914

²²¹ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 26 December 1914

*... raise, feed, house, clothe, pay and drill such numbers of men as the Officer Commanding No. 6 District is ordered to furnish for the Service Battalions of the North and South Staffordshire Regiments, and to assist the Territorial Battalions of those Regiments, should they desire it, to obtain recruits.*²²²

The Staffordshire Territorial Force Association soon established a consultative committee and this body held its first meeting on 21 December 1914. The members of the committee were drawn from existing members of the Association, with Lord Dartmouth acting as its president. One of the items discussed during this first meeting that had relevance to Territorial Force recruitment was contained in a letter written by Colonel Churchward to Major Wheeler, Secretary of the Territorial Force Association. Churchward's criticisms regarding the acceptance of recruits who had enlisted for home only received a vigorous rebuttal from Lord Dartmouth, who stated that while every encouragement would be given to men to volunteer for service overseas, the primary role of the Territorial Force was home defence, and therefore recruits would still be allowed to choose between the two terms of service.²²³

From early 1915 a further increase in recruiting activities for the Territorial Force was necessitated on authorisation being received to raise third-line units for Territorial units in Staffordshire. Anticipating the commencement of the recruiting for the new units, one commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel A.J. Hall of the Reserve (titled 2/5th from February 1915) Battalion of the 5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, made an appeal for 350 men to enlist at Shelton Drill Hall as he had received authorisation to increase the strength of the battalion by 30 per cent in preparation.²²⁴ The methods employed in recruiting men for the new Third-Line units of the Territorial Force had not changed significantly from those used to raise the

²²² *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 14 November 1914

²²³ *ibid*, 26 December 1914

²²⁴ *ibid*, 23 January 1915

Reserve units in September 1914. The recruiting campaign carried out for the 3/5th North Staffordshire Regiment in the Potteries serves as an interesting example of how the Territorials still relied on their own efforts to secure recruits. One important factor in raising the profile of the unit was the character of the commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel A.E. Blizzard, a well-known figure in the area, having served with the Volunteers and Territorials for thirty years. By imposing his personality on the campaign the battalion soon became known as “Blizzard’s Battalion” in the local press.²²⁵ The battalion began recruiting in March 1915 by carrying out a series of route marches around the district from their tented camp in Hanley Park and at the conclusion of each march, refreshments were provided for the soldiers while recruiting staff and doctors were available to attest and examine the potential recruits who had followed the column on its route. A song was even composed extolling the virtues of Colonel Blizzard and his men, and this was performed at one recruiting rally at The Victoria Hall in Hanley.²²⁶

In addition to the increased recruiting efforts required to raise the new Third-Line units, the need to maintain an adequate flow of recruits for Staffordshire’s Territorial Force units became more immediate with the departure in early March 1915 of the North Midland Division, (titled 46th Division from 12 May), for service in France. Despite the increased demand for recruits for the Territorial Force, no co-ordinated effort was made by the Staffordshire Central Recruiting Committee on their behalf. Therefore, the Territorials were still reliant on local committees, such as one established in Rugeley in May 1915 in order to enlist recruits specifically for the 6th

²²⁵ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 17 April 1915

²²⁶ *ibid*, 29 May 1915

North Staffordshire Regiment.²²⁷ Another appeal was made by the Territorial Force Association in July 1915 on behalf of the 6th South Staffordshire Regiment, 6th North Staffordshire Regiment and Royal Engineers. The need for recruits for the 6th North Staffordshire Regiment was mentioned as being particularly urgent, with 247 men required for the 1/6th and 2/6th Battalions and 730 men for the 3/6th Battalion.²²⁸

The realisation that the piecemeal recruiting efforts employed in Staffordshire had not maintained an adequate flow of recruits led to the Staffordshire Territorial Force Association being the first in the country to advocate conscription, a move that had been resisted in peacetime. At the meeting held in Stafford on 11 May 1915 the recruiting situation in the county was discussed in great detail, not only with regard to the Territorial Force but for the Regular Army as well, reflecting how involved the Association had become in general recruiting issues. By 1 May 1915 the total number of men who had enlisted in Staffordshire was stated as 49,597, as shown in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1: Enlistments in Staffordshire for the Regular Army and Territorial Force between 5 August 1914 and 1 May 1915

Recruiting Area	Regular Army	Territorial Force
Stoke on Trent	15,440	5,522
64th Regimental District	5,384	2,419
Wolverhampton	9,489	4,307
38th Regimental District	7,036*	

***Regular and Territorial recruits not distinguished**

Source: Staffordshire Territorial Force Association – Minutes of Meeting 11 May 1915 (Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel, 15 May 1915)

²²⁷ *ibid*, 15 May 1915

²²⁸ *Tamworth Herald*, 24 July 1915

However, of the 196,150 men reckoned to be eligible to serve, only around 25 per cent had actually enlisted. The committee of the Territorial Force Association, on being presented with these figures, concluded that the limits of voluntary enlistment had nearly been reached in the county and concluded that conscription was inevitable if manpower requirements were to be met. The committee also proposed that recruiting for the Regular Army and Territorial Force should be carried out by the same recruiting office, as the Territorial Force recruiting staff had neither the experience nor the facilities available to their regular counterparts.²²⁹

The situation predicted by the committee of the Staffordshire Territorial Force Association in April 1915 had become reality by late 1915. In November 1915 the Derby Scheme had been introduced as a precursor to the introduction of conscription with the passing of the first of the Military Service Acts in January 1916. Direct enlistments into the Territorial Force ceased from 11 December 1915, except for specialist trades, with the result that all new recruits enlisted for general service and therefore did not have the option of home service available to them as the earlier volunteers for the Territorial Force had done.²³⁰ As a result of the cessation of direct enlistments to the Territorial Force, the Territorial Force Association in Staffordshire, in common with the other Associations throughout the country, were no longer responsible for recruiting other than maintaining their interests in the local recruiting committees.

²²⁹ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 15 May 1915

²³⁰ Beckett, *Amateur Military Tradition*, pp. 230-31

The experience of Staffordshire's Territorial Force Association with regard to recruiting during the first year of the Great War had much in common with the Associations throughout the country. Kitchener's decision during the early days of the war to raise a separate "New Army" had a negative effect on recruiting for the Territorials in the county, which based on the available data were just under half of the total enlistments in Staffordshire, a similar trend to the nationwide recruiting figures up to December 1915 when direct Territorial Force enlistments ceased.²³¹ The maintenance of separate recruiting offices for the Regular Army and Territorial Force also hindered the Territorials, who lacked the knowledge, facilities and staff to deal with large numbers of recruits. Unlike other Territorial Force Associations the authorities in Staffordshire were able to recruit sufficient men and provide reinforcements for their units on the Western Front without serious difficulty. Nevertheless, the members of the Territorial Force Association in Staffordshire were the first to push for conscription, the issue that many of them had fought so fervently against in the years before the outbreak of the war. In spite of the problems they faced, the Territorial Force Association in Staffordshire reacted competently to the challenges of recruiting and expanding the units under their jurisdiction.

²³¹ *ibid*, p. 230

Chapter Four

WARTIME RECRUITS FOR THE TERRITORIAL FORCE IN STAFFORDSHIRE AUGUST 1914-DECEMBER 1915

The men who responded to the appeals made for recruits to join Territorial Force units from August 1914 were drawn from a variety of backgrounds. This aspect was emphasised in the civilian clothing of the new recruits as they were mustered prior to joining their units. In September 1914 a report in the *Staffordshire Advertiser* recorded this contrast in the first draft of recruits for the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment as it marched to Burton-on-Trent Railway Station to commence their journey to Luton. Among the 145 men who made up this contingent were young bank clerks dressed in suits and straw boaters and brewery workers clad in their overalls.²³² Once in uniform such social distinctions amongst the rank and file were removed on the surface but this concealed the diverse backgrounds and occupations that these soldiers had followed in peacetime.

Having explored the recruiting initiatives implemented by the Territorial Force Association in Staffordshire, this chapter will investigate the backgrounds of officers and men who joined Staffordshire's Territorial Force units as a result of these appeals. The methodological approach that will be used to achieve this will be multibiography. By examining the biographical details of individual recruits who enlisted in Staffordshire units, a clearer understanding of the social background, occupations and ages of the men who joined during this period can be made. This information will also be used to determine whether the social composition of the officers and other ranks

²³² *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 5 September 1914

altered significantly as a result of recruiting campaigns carried out on behalf of the Territorial Force in Staffordshire.

Before considering the social backgrounds of the men who joined the Territorial Force in Staffordshire after the outbreak of the war, some mention must be made regarding the available sources from which the biographical details have been collated. Information regarding the social backgrounds of the officers and men accepted into the Territorial Force at this time is far from comprehensive due to the disparity in the surviving records. Service records for officers were first released for public examination at the Public Record Office in January 1998 and those for the majority of the men commissioned after the outbreak of the war have survived. The amount of information preserved within these records varies considerably but most contain the officers' Army Form E536, which all candidates for commissions in Territorial Force were required to complete. These forms are particularly useful as their contents include details of the candidate's education, age on application and any previous service with other units, including Officer Training Corps. Copies of birth certificates are also sometimes included within the files. The records available for the rank and file are more fragmentary. Some individual service records for men who enlisted in the Territorial Force in Staffordshire are held at the Public Record Office but are by no means comprehensive. Only around 40 percent of the total service documents of other ranks that served with all branches of the Army have been preserved, the remainder having been destroyed during a German air raid in 1940. A complete nominal roll does survive for the 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment that lists the men who served overseas with the unit from March 1915, while less complete lists exist for the 1/5th and 1/6th Battalions of The North

Staffordshire Regiment. Three nominal rolls have been located in local newspapers printed in September 1914 that list those serving with two companies of the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment and the 2nd North Midland Field Company, Royal Engineers. Although these rolls are useful in determining if a man served with a particular unit, they unfortunately do not include information on the occupations of those men on their enlistment. In the absence of comprehensive records, reports printed in the local newspapers during the period have proved to be a valuable resource as biographical details are often included in casualty reports and articles regarding the activities of local soldiers.

With the Territorial Force initially restricted in recruiting only to bring their units up to their establishments, the early appeals made in the press expressed a preference for men with previous military experience to come forward. As the Territorial Force Reserve in the county was pitifully small, Staffordshire units were therefore unable to rely on this source to complete their establishment. Nevertheless, it is notable that several time-expired Territorials did come forward in the first weeks of the war to re-enlist in their former units. A.P.G. Stone was one such man. He had originally joined the 2nd Volunteer Battalion of The North Staffordshire Regiment at Burton-on-Trent on 21 March 1908, shortly before its dissolution on the creation of the Territorial Force. On the formation of the 6th Battalion, Stone re-engaged under the new Territorial Force terms of service on 8 April 1908. After his initial four-year engagement had expired, Stone re-enlisted for a further one-year term in March 1912 and was appointed to Lance-Corporal two months later before being discharged as time-expired on 30 March 1913. On 5 August 1914, he presented himself at the Drill Hall at Burton-on-Trent and re-enlisted, being restored to his previous status of

Lance-Corporal on the same day.²³³ Thomas Adams was one of the employees of the Harrison's Brownhills Colliery who formed the bulk of the early recruits for the 2nd North Midland Field Company in 1908. Like Stone, Harrison had also served for five years with the Company but had been discharged on the expiration of his engagement in 1913. Adams also chose to rejoin his former unit on the outbreak of war and enlisted at Norton Canes on 4 August 1914.²³⁴ Several members of the National Reserve in Staffordshire were also accepted to serve with Territorial Force units at this time. One of them was thirty-seven year old James Fradley, who was a member of the National Reserve detachment at Uttoxeter. He enlisted in the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment in late August 1914. Fradley had been a member of the Volunteer Force and had seen active service in South Africa.²³⁵

Some ex-Territorials returned from other parts of the country specifically to rejoin their old units. Ernest Thomas had served with the 5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment for four years before the war. He had been employed at the Electricity Works at Burslem but had left the Potteries to work in Sheffield. Thomas rejoined his old unit as a Private in September 1914 and was posted to the Reserve Battalion at Butterton Hall. He was later transferred to the 1/5th Battalion and went to France in March 1915 as a Corporal.²³⁶ Private John Henry Ford had previously served with the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment at Burton-on-Trent for five years until he moved to Birmingham, being employed at the Kynoch Works at Witton in early 1914. Ford did not re-enlist immediately following the outbreak of the

²³³ Museum of The Staffordshire Regiment (MSR): History of The 6th Battalion, North Staffordshire Regiment, Volume 2 – Nominal Roll of Warrant Officers and Sergeants 1914-18

²³⁴ *Walsall Observer*, 22 April 1916

²³⁵ *Uttoxeter Advertiser*, 27 October 1915

²³⁶ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 6 November 1915

war but did eventually decide to return to Burton-on-Trent to do so, being attested on 5 January 1915.²³⁷

Former officers who had resigned the commissions or had transferred to the Territorial Force Reserve also returned to their units. Captain James Selby Gardner, who had left the 2nd North Midland Field Company, Royal Engineers in December 1912, was reappointed on 5 September 1914. Gardner was later promoted to Major in January 1915 on his appointment to command the newly formed 2/1st North Midland Field Company.²³⁸ Lieutenant-Colonel T.F. Waterhouse, who had resigned from commanding the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment in 1913, replaced Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor in command of the Service Battalion in September 1914. He would take this unit, by then re-designated the 1/6th Battalion, to France in March 1915.²³⁹

Although a number of former Territorials did respond to the call to re-enlist, the overwhelming majority of the recruits accepted by the Territorial Force in Staffordshire did not have any previous military experience, as did the bulk of the men who flocked to enlist in the weeks following the declaration of war. Patriotism, a sense of doing one's duty and the encouragement of friends and family have all been identified by historians as common reasons for men deciding to enlist. Dewey also makes the observation that recruits were often young, and that the willingness of

²³⁷ Marquis de Ruvigny (ed.), *The Roll of Honour: a biographical record of members of His Majesty's Naval and Military Forces who fell in the Great War* (2 v, London: Naval & Military Press, 1986 reprint), p. 122

²³⁸ NA: PRO WO 374/26444, personal record of Major J.S. Gardner

²³⁹ NA: PRO WO 374/72099, personal record of Lieutenant-Colonel T.F. Waterhouse

workers to volunteer was not necessarily determined by unemployment or low wages, and that some men joining the army would actually incur financial hardship.²⁴⁰

In August 1914, Philip Highfield-Jones was working as a trainee solicitor in Wolverhampton. He recalled his motivations for enlisting:

*From the first day of the war, people who considered themselves fit (mentally) began to try and get commissions. I have often wondered why people went into the Army. Just a few, I suppose, went in because they liked excitement. I believe that the majority of officers, at any rate, went in because it was the thing to do. I am afraid that was my reason.*²⁴¹

Similarly, the opportunity for adventure and a release from the drudgery of their employment prompted other men to make the decision to enlist. Harold Goldstraw recalled that he decided to join the 3rd Staffordshire Battery at Leek after being told of the virtues of service with the Territorials by a friend serving with the Battery. This proposition seemed more agreeable to him than having to make deliveries for the butchers' shop where he worked. His reasons to enlist also encouraged another man employed at the shop, Leonard Stockton, to make the same decision.²⁴² There are other instances of groups of friends who enlisted in the same Territorial unit. Ten members of the Forsbrook Church Lads' Brigade detachment were reported to have travelled to Shelton in order to join the 5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment in early September 1914.²⁴³ A similar group, consisting of five members of

²⁴⁰ P.E. Dewey, 'Military recruiting and the British Labour Force during the First World War'. *Historical Journal*, 27 (1984), p. 206

²⁴¹ MSR: Philip Highfield-Jones, *Memoirs*, p. 3

²⁴² J.E. Blore & J.R. Sherratt, *"Over There" - A Commemorative History of the Old Leek Battery* (Leek: Martin Publicity, 1991), p. 34

²⁴³ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 12 September 1914

the 2nd Burslem Troop of Boy Scouts, are also known to have joined the battalion at this time.²⁴⁴

What is more difficult to quantify are the reasons why individuals decided to opt to join a Territorial Force unit instead of enlisting at one of the Regular Army recruiting offices. Unlike the units of the “New Armies”, the Territorial Force had a well-developed sense of identity that had been built up in the years since their formation in April 1908. Potential recruits, though they may not have been attracted to joining the Territorials in peacetime, were at least aware of the existence of their local units. These men probably had knowledge of men from their workplace who were already members. In addition to these aspects, the early recruits accepted during August 1914 were at least assured that they would be more likely to be issued with uniforms and equipment, unlike their compatriots who opted to join “New Army” units. Another factor that might have been influential was that some men had friends and relations who were already serving with the Territorial Force. The desire for brothers to serve together is apparent from examples found within Staffordshire units. Private Herbert Marler, who was employed at the Marston, Thompson and Evershed’s brewery at Burton-on-Trent, had been a member of “B” Company of the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment since March 1912. He was to be joined by his younger brother Arthur, who enlisted into the same battalion in November 1914.²⁴⁵ Probably the most noteworthy examples are the five Stringer brothers who served together with the 2nd North Midland Field Company, Royal Engineers. Three of the brothers were serving with the unit at the time it was mobilised. Sergeant George Stringer had been one of the first recruits accepted into the Company on its formation in April 1908. In

²⁴⁴ *ibid*, 29 May 1915

²⁴⁵ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 6 November 1915

subsequent years, he had been joined by three of his brothers, Asher, John and Robert. Asher Stringer had joined the Company in 1909 but at the end of his four-year engagement did not re-enlist. On the outbreak of war, Asher decided to rejoin the Company and a fifth brother, James, also enlisted on 6 September 1914.²⁴⁶

The early recruits accepted by Territorial Force units in Staffordshire during the first months of the war had much in common with their pre-war counterparts. It is noticeable that some care appears to have been taken that those men rewarded with commissions came from the same background as the officers they would be joining, primarily middle-class and at least educated at either Grammar or Public School. Some initial military training with of Officer Training Corps, either with the Junior Division at school or with the Senior Division at University, are common to all of the early candidate. Family connections with the business and political life of the county may also have proved influential in determining a successful application for a commission and the influence of unit commanding officers in the selection process can also be detected.

The first wartime commissions for Territorial Force units in Staffordshire were gazetted on 25 August 1914.²⁴⁷ Second-Lieutenant Harold Ostcliffe Beaufort was among this first group and joined the 6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment. He was twenty years old and had been a pupil at Wellington College. Beaufort had also studied at the University of Birmingham and while there was a member of the University's Officer Training Corps. His father was the managing director of Elliot & Fry and owned houses in London and Birmingham but Harold did have a connection

²⁴⁶ *Lichfield Mercury*, 9 October 1914 and *Walsall Observer*, 11 August 1917 & 13 April 1918

²⁴⁷ *London Gazette*, 26 August 1914, pp. 6705-6706

with Staffordshire through his mother whose family lived in Hammerwich, a village outside Lichfield.²⁴⁸ John Barnabas Hutton was gazetted as a Second-Lieutenant in the 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment on the same date as Beaufort. The third son of the manager of the Russell Engineering Works in Walsall, Hutton was also employed at the firm prior to his commissioning. He had been educated at Malvern College and also taken a BSc in Engineering at the University of Birmingham. Hutton had also been a member of the Birmingham University Officer Training Corps.²⁴⁹ Another son of a prominent Walsall figure, Percival Slater, was also commissioned on 26 August, although his appointment was with the 6th Battalion at Wolverhampton. He was the son of Councillor S.M. Slater and had been studying at Exeter College, Oxford at the outbreak of the war. Slater had also been a member of his University's Officer Training Corps, where he had been in charge of the Signals Section. Not surprisingly, shortly after he joined his unit, Slater was appointed Battalion Signal Officer and would proceed with the 1/6th Battalion to France in this capacity in March 1915.²⁵⁰

The formation of Reserve units from September 1914 increased the requirement for officers and many of the men who were accepted came from Staffordshire families. Philip Highfield-Jones recorded that his quest to obtain a commission began on 26 September 1914 when he travelled from his home at Wolverhampton for an interview board at Stafford with members of the Territorial Force Association. The outcome of this meeting did not initially appear positive, as he was told that there were no vacancies for officers but would be welcome to join the other ranks. However, three

²⁴⁸ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 30 October 1915 and *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 6 November 1915

²⁴⁹ NA: PRO WO 374/36097, personal file of Lieutenant J.B. Hutton and *Walsall Observer*, 23 October 1915

²⁵⁰ *Walsall Observer*, 23 October 1915

days after his interview at Stafford Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor, the commanding officer of the Reserve Battalion of the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment, visited Highfield-Jones at his home and offered him a commission in the new unit. He began his duties with the battalion on 1 October, as the recruiting officer at the 6th Battalion's drill hall at Wolverhampton.²⁵¹ Gavin Tennison Royle Knowles, the son of a prominent Wednesbury foundry owner, was gazetted as a Second-Lieutenant in the Reserve Battalion of the 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment on 14 October 1914. Knowles had been educated at Rossall and while attending that school had been a member of the Officer Cadet Corps.²⁵²

Most of the wartime recruits who enlisted in Staffordshire's Territorial Force units were very similar in age and occupations to their pre-war counterparts and this helped to ease the process of assimilating them into the units. The recruits accepted for service with the 5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment included miners, pottery workers and men employed in metalwork industries, all types of employment already represented among the pre-war members of the battalion. George William Sterndale Sherratt was one of the many pottery employees who joined the battalion. A twenty-one year old potters thrower, Sherratt enlisted at Hanley Drill Hall on 13 August 1914 and immediately volunteered for overseas service.²⁵³ Private Harry Rogers, who joined the Reserve Battalion in September 1914, was employed as a kilnsman at the Grimwades Pottery. Another worker at Grimwades, Harold Hanley, left his job as a warehouseman at the firm during October 1914 in order to enlist.²⁵⁴ The recruits obtained at a rally held in Uttoxeter on 31 August 1914 for the 6th

²⁵¹ MSR: Highfield-Jones, *Memoirs*, pp. 5-7

²⁵² NA: PRO WO 374/48257, personal record of Lieutenant G.T.R. Knowles

²⁵³ NA: PRO WO 374/62014, personal record of Lieutenant G.W.S. Sherratt

²⁵⁴ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 30 October 1915 & 6 November 1915

Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment also came from similar backgrounds to the pre-war members of the town's Territorial contingent. In peacetime, "G" Company had been reliant on men employed at the Leighton Ironworks and agricultural workers to provide a significant proportion of the unit's manpower. The volunteers who came forward that day were very much of the same stock. Private Herbert Richardson had been employed as a clerk at the Leighton Ironworks, while Private William Tyson worked for the Bamford family as a gardener. Private Bertram Taft, who was only aged sixteen at the time of his enlistment, was a booking clerk at the town's railway station and Private J. Rose worked at Uttoxeter's gas works.²⁵⁵ Recruits from the working-class would continue to provide the majority of the manpower for the county's Territorial Force during this period and the localised nature of the recruiting process also ensured that most of the men would serve with comrades from the same area once they were posted to their respective units.

There is evidence that Staffordshire Territorial Force units accepted a large number of men who were under nineteen years old, the minimum age requirement for troops to be sent on active service. This continued the trend prevalent prior to the war in that recruits aged seventeen and eighteen had been allowed enlist in the Territorials. Although it is possible that some of the soldiers concerned may have lied about their age at the time of their enlistment, it is also likely that unit commanders were well aware of the youth of some of their soldiers and they were authorised to proceed on active service during 1915. There are several examples of very young soldiers to be found among the men who served with the 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment on the Western Front during 1915. Private John Thomas Johnson enlisted in

²⁵⁵ *Uttoxeter Advertiser*, 27 October 1915 & 3 November 1915

the 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment in October 1914. Employed as an assistant gardener by West Bromwich Corporation, Johnson was only sixteen years old but gave his age as nineteen when he was attested. According to a contemporary newspaper report, his motivation for giving the recruiting office false particulars was his desire to follow his father and elder brother into the army.²⁵⁶ Another sixteen year old, Private Sidney Hill, also joined the battalion during October 1914. Prior to his enlistment, Hill had worked at a brickyard in Aldridge. He proceeded to France with the 1/5th Battalion in March 1915 and served with “B” Company.²⁵⁷ Private Harry Rochford was fifteen years old who enlisted at Walsall around the same time as Hill. Private Rochford was posted to “C” Company of the battalion and acted as an officer’s servant to Second-Lieutenant Frederick Wilkinson. After celebrating his sixteenth birthday in the line, he was later wounded on 22 April 1915 while on duty in the trenches in front of the village of Wulverghem in Belgium.²⁵⁸ Private Alfred Butterworth was aged sixteen and a half when attested at the recruiting office at Old Hill on 1 January 1915. A foundry worker at the Colonial Works in Cradley Heath, he joined the 1/5th Battalion at Ouderdom in Belgium with the 3rd Reinforcement on 20 August 1915 and was posted to 13 Platoon of “D” Company. Private Butterworth was to serve with the battalion for barely seven weeks before he was listed as missing presumed killed in action following the action at the Hohenzollern Redoubt on 13 October 1915.²⁵⁹

Although the localised nature of Territorial Force recruitment during this period ensured that most of the men who joined came from the same areas and backgrounds

²⁵⁶ *West Bromwich Free Press*, 26 November 1915

²⁵⁷ *Walsall Observer*, 6 November 1915

²⁵⁸ *ibid*, 8 May 1915

²⁵⁹ *County Express*, 18 December 1915

as their pre-war predecessors, a number of changes did occur during the early months of the war. The decision made in November 1914 to accept recruits from all over Staffordshire had a profound impact on the composition of the Field Companies of Royal Engineers. By the time the 1/2nd North Midland Field Company embarked for service in France in March 1915, the strength of the unit not only included men from its usual recruiting area of the Cannock Chase coalfields, but also soldiers from Smethwick and North Staffordshire. By November 1915, the drafts received by the unit had altered its composition to such an extent that one member of the Company wrote that the unit consisted of “*about half North Staffordshire and the other South Staffordshire lads*”.²⁶⁰

Another change that had an impact on the composition of Staffordshire’s Territorial Force units was the increase in the numbers of officers and men who came from outside the county. Although these men formed a tiny minority of the total strength of the units during this period, their presence does indicate the beginning of the erosion of the close local affiliations that earlier recruits had with both their unit and their comrades. This dilution of the “Territorial” nature of the units did not have a major impact on Staffordshire units until the end of direct enlistments into the Territorial Force at the end of 1915, and its effect on the First-Line units did not become noticeable until the Summer of 1916 in the composition of the drafts received in France. One early example was Private Joseph Page, who was living at Llandore in Glamorgan at the time of his enlistment into the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment at Wolverhampton in September 1914.²⁶¹ Howard Stott lived and worked in Birmingham but rather than join one of that city’s units he journeyed to Brierley Hill

²⁶⁰ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 20 November 1915

²⁶¹ Anon, *Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919: Part 42 – The South Staffordshire Regiment* (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1921), p. 42

in October 1914 and enlisted into the 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment.²⁶² There are also instances of men joining Staffordshire units while they were stationed at Luton during the Autumn of 1914. George Coote and Nathaniel Fowler both enlisted into the 2nd North Midland Field Company at Limbury in late September 1914. Fowler lived at Legrave, a village close to Luton, but Coote had come from further afield, residing in Hoxton at the time of his enlistment. Why these two men decided to join a Staffordshire unit is unrecorded, but both would later lose their lives with the Company during 1915.²⁶³

The pressing need for junior officers to fill vacancies in their units encouraged the Staffordshire Territorial Force Association to consider candidates from outside of the county. Hugh Parr was gazetted as a Second-Lieutenant in the Reserve Battalion of the 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment in November 1914. A master at Clifton College near Bristol, Parr had also been the officer commanding the school's Officer Cadet Corps prior to volunteering for general service.²⁶⁴ Second-Lieutenant Andrew Stewart Fox was commissioned in the 2/6th Battalion of The North Staffordshire Regiment on 20 March 1915. The eldest son of a doctor, Fox had been educated at Harrow and had also graduated from Pembroke College, Cambridge. At the outbreak of the war, he was a medical student in London and was already serving with a Royal Army Medical Corps unit of the Territorial Force.²⁶⁵ Another man who received a wartime commission was Second-Lieutenant Walter Nelson, who was posted to the 1/6th Battalion of The South Staffordshire Regiment in August 1915. At forty-five, he was much older than the other subalterns and had an unusual career

²⁶² *County Express*, 26 June 1915

²⁶³ *Lichfield Mercury*, 9 October 1914 and Anon, *Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919: Part 4 - The Corps of Royal Engineers* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1921), p. 40 & p. 63

²⁶⁴ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 22 May 1915

²⁶⁵ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 6 November 1915

prior to joining the battalion. A native of Warwick, Nelson had been living and working in Paris when war broke out. He had joined the French Foreign Legion and fought with them for several months in the Argonne before transferring to the British Army. The authors of the 6th Battalion's history were to recall that his:

*... hatred of everything German was relentless. Lord Kitchener's general request had been the sole cause of his being taken out of the Legion Etrangere, and nothing had delayed his coming out to the front again except the slow grinding of the War Office mills.*²⁶⁶

In the case of the 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment, more senior ranks were posted into the unit from other sources. When Lieutenant-Colonel C. Fiddian Green transferred to the Reserve Battalion on its formation in September 1914, his replacement was Lieutenant-Colonel A.R. Crawley. He was posted to the Service Battalion from the Reserve of Officers, having served with the Grenadier Guards for twenty-three years before his retirement, including active service during the Suakin expedition in 1885 and in South Africa.²⁶⁷ Crawley remained in command of the unit until February 1915, by which time it had been re-designated the 1/5th Battalion. His replacement was Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Richmond Raymer, who was born on 1 November 1870 and had been educated at Farnham Grammar School. After leaving school Raymer went on to study at Trinity College in Dublin. His first experience of active service in the army was during the Boer War, where he served with the 1st Battalion, The Leicestershire Regiment and later received the Queen's South Africa Medal with five clasps. Raymer later transferred to the Royal Jersey Light Infantry as a Captain with the 2nd or East Battalion in 1904. At the outbreak of war, Raymer was a master at the Clifton College and transferred to the 5th Battalion, The South

²⁶⁶ *The War History of the Sixth South Staffordshire Regiment*, p. 80

²⁶⁷ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 10 October 1914

Staffordshire Regiment in October 1914 with the rank of Major. He was appointed as a Temporary Lieutenant-Colonel in February 1915, on taking over from Colonel Crawley.²⁶⁸

The decision to create specific detachments recruited from “Non-Manual” workers in Staffordshire from September 1914 was to have a significant impact on the composition of the infantry battalions. The influx of middle-class recruits who joined the infantry battalions as a result of these recruiting campaigns brought in men from social backgrounds that had been under-represented in the pre-war Territorial Force in Staffordshire. Unlike the “class-corps” that existed within the London Regiment, such as the 5th (City of London) Battalion of The London Regiment (The London Rifle Brigade), units in Staffordshire had been recruited primarily from the working class. Further understanding of the social composition of these “Non-Manuals” contingents can be gained on examining the occupations of the men who enlisted as a result of these appeals. What is evident from the information preserved in surviving army records and contemporary newspaper reports is that most of the men had been educated at grammar schools or technical colleges and were employed as office workers or skilled artisans.

The “Non-Manuals” who joined the 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment were recruited as a result of two different initiatives. A contingent of former pupils of the Queen Mary’s Grammar School had enlisted at Walsall during September 1914. John Shipley was one such recruit. Nineteen years old when he enlisted, Shipley was promoted to Corporal while on active service with the 1/5th Battalion and was

²⁶⁸ NA: PRO WO 374/56417, personal record of Lieutenant-Colonel R.R. Raymer and *London Gazette*, 14 December 1914, p. 10678 & 10 March 1915, p. 2472

recommended to receive a commission.²⁶⁹ Private Sydney Richards, who came from West Bromwich and was employed as a clerk before the war, had originally put his name forward for the proposed “Mayor’s Battalion”. On the failure of this initiative, he enlisted at Walsall on 9 September 1914 and was posted to the Reserve Battalion, transferred to the Service Battalion on 14 November.²⁷⁰ Private Herbert Green had been another West Bromwich man who had initially volunteered for the “Mayor’s Battalion”. Prior to his enlistment, Green worked as a clerk at a metalwork factory in Birmingham.²⁷¹ Arthur Motterham joined the 5th Battalion at Walsall on 4 September. A twenty-three year old draughtsman employed at the Patent Shaft and Axle Tree Works at Wednesbury, Motterham had previously served for four years with the South Midland Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery. Arthur’s younger brother Harold also joined the 5th Battalion at the same time.²⁷² Sydney Richards and the two Motterham brothers would later serve together with the 1/5th Battalion’s Machine Gun Section. Leslie Gardner Shaw joined the 5th Battalion on 21 September 1914 at Walsall. The son of a hardware merchant in Wolverhampton, Shaw had been educated at the Wolverhampton Grammar School and Sedburgh School in Yorkshire, where he had been a member of the school’s Cadet Corps. He had also spent two years at the University of Birmingham. No doubt as a result of his experience as a cadet, Shaw was promoted to Corporal five days after his enlistment and transferred to the Service Battalion on 30 November 1914.²⁷³

The predominance of young clerks is evident among the men who answered the appeal printed in the *Express and Star* on 29 August 1914 for the 6th Battalion, The

²⁶⁹ *Walsall Observer*, 23 October 1915

²⁷⁰ NA: PRO WO 339/91934, personal record of Second-Lieutenant S. Richards

²⁷¹ *West Bromwich Free Press*, 3 September 1915

²⁷² NA: PRO WO 374/49311, personal record of Second-Lieutenant A. Motterham

²⁷³ NA: PRO WO 374/61711, personal record of Second-Lieutenant L.G. Shaw

South Staffordshire Regiment. The eighth man to sign his name on the newspaper's roll of honour was Private Godfrey Ricketts. A nineteen year old from the Heath Town district of Wolverhampton, Ricketts had worked as a clerk at the Gibbon's engineering works in the town.²⁷⁴ Private Ronald Lerry was employed on the literary staff of the *Express and Star* and while on active service with the 1/6th Battalion wrote several letters to the newspaper relating his experiences at the front.²⁷⁵ Private Bernard Tandy worked as a clerk at the Gough, Allen and Co. solicitors practice in Wolverhampton.²⁷⁶

Tom Vincent Dann had enlisted at the Drill Hall in Wolverhampton two days before the main contingent of "Non-Manuals" but his surviving army records show that he was also an atypical recruit. Born in Bedford in 1886, at twenty-eight he was slightly older than the majority of the young clerical workers who formed the contingent. At the time of his enlistment, Dann was employed as a gas engineer and draughtsman at the Gibbons Engineering Works in Dudley. He also had previous experience of military service having been a member of his school Officer Training Corps in Bedford and had served for three years with the Eastern Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps. Dann's maturity, previous military experience and evident ability contributed to his rapid promotion through the ranks. On the day of his enlistment he had been appointed Lance-Corporal and by February 1915 was further elevated to Lance-Sergeant. Within a few days of the 1/6th

²⁷⁴ *Express and Star*, 22 April 1915

²⁷⁵ *ibid*, 30 October 1915

²⁷⁶ *West Bromwich Free Press*, 12 November 1915

Battalion's arrival in France, Dann was appointed as the Acting Company-Sergeant-Major to "A" Company.²⁷⁷

A number of young teachers were also found among the "Non-Manual" contingents of the two South Staffordshire battalions. One of these was Private Archibald Marr, who came from the Whitmore Reans district of Wolverhampton, and was one of the early recruits for the 6th Battalion's "Non-Manual" section.²⁷⁸ Private Cyril Taylor had been due to enroll at Satley Teacher Training College when war broke out, having previously been employed as a student teacher at Netherton Council School where his father was the headmaster. Taylor made several attempts to enlist but had been rejected because of his poor eyesight. His perseverance was to pay off however and he was eventually accepted for service at Wolverhampton in late September 1914.²⁷⁹ Two teachers employed by the Brierley Hill Church of England Schools, Hubert Benton and William Stevens, joined the 5th Battalion together at Brierley Hill in September 1914 and later went to France with "A" Company of the 1/5th Battalion in March 1915. Both men would become casualties within weeks of their arrival on the continent. Private Benton was severely wounded on 13 April and died of his injuries while being operated on at the battalion's Regimental Aid Post. Sergeant Stevens was wounded fourteen days later and was eventually evacuated to England.²⁸⁰

The detachment of old boys of Newcastle High School who were recruited for the 5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment during September 1914 had similar occupations to their "Non-Manual" comrades in the South Staffordshire battalions.

²⁷⁷ NA: PRO WO 374/17799, personal record of Second-Lieutenant T.V. Dann and *Tipton Herald*, 30 October 1915

²⁷⁸ *Express and Star*, 28 October 1915

²⁷⁹ *Tipton Herald*, 23 October 1915

²⁸⁰ *County Express*, 24 April 1915 & 8 May 1915

Ralph Twist Snape was twenty-three years old at the time of his enlistment and worked as an architect for a firm part-owned by his father in Newcastle-under-Lyme.²⁸¹ Arthur Ellis, a farmer from Alsager, enlisted on 2 September 1914 and was posted to the Reserve Battalion at Butterton Hall. He later transferred to the 1/5th Battalion and landed with them in France in March 1915. Three of his brothers were later commissioned, including his elder brother Phillip who obtained a commission in the 3/5th Battalion of The North Staffordshire Regiment on its formation in the Spring of 1915.²⁸² Another former pupil of Newcastle High School who joined the 5th Battalion around the same time as Ellis was Private Harry Tudor, who came from Leek and had been employed as a clerk at Park's Bank in the town prior to his enlistment.²⁸³

The middle-class origins of the "Non-Manuals" meant that several of their number would be commissioned in the early months of the war. Of the twelve men who were gazetted as Second-Lieutenants in the Reserve Battalion of the 5th North Staffordshire Regiment on 15 September 1914, six were already serving with the unit in the ranks.²⁸⁴ However, these six new subalterns were from prominent families in the county and therefore met the social and educational standards expected of potential officers. Amongst these were Percy Mellor and Frank Mayer. Both men had served with their school Officer Training Corps, Mellor having been a pupil at Newcastle High School, while Mayer had reached the rank of Sergeant with the Clifton College corps. Percy Mellor was a trainee solicitor articled to the Clerk of Newcastle Town Council when he had enlisted as a Private on 2 September 1914 with the contingent of

²⁸¹ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 23 October 1915

²⁸² *ibid*, 30 October 1915

²⁸³ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 6 November 1915

²⁸⁴ *ibid*, 31 October 1914

former pupils of Newcastle High School. A factor that may have had some influence in his obtaining his commission was that his former employer, Captain J. Griffith, also happened to be an officer in the 5th Battalion.²⁸⁵ Frank Mayer had joined the Reserve Battalion on the same date as Mellor. He was also from a legal background, having been a partner in a solicitors practice in Burslem.²⁸⁶ A later appointee, Nigel Bishop, had been educated at Rugby but also initially joined the 5th Battalion as a Private. He had been employed in his family's business, the Bishop and Stonier Pottery in Stafford Street, Hanley prior to his enlistment in September 1914. He was appointed as a Second-Lieutenant in the Reserve Battalion on 3 November of that year. Bishop remained with this unit until he was eventually posted to France to join the 1/5th Battalion in July 1915.²⁸⁷ George Wade, like Bishop, also worked for his father at the family's pottery business at Burslem prior to his enlistment as a Private in the 5th Battalion. After serving for three months in the ranks, Wade was eventually commissioned on 24 November 1914 and was posted to the Reserve Battalion of the 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment. He remained in England until late October 1915 when he was dispatched to France to join the 1/5th Battalion.²⁸⁸ John Edward Kenneth Bache, though not a member of one of the Staffordshire battalions, was serving as a Lance-Corporal in the 10th Battalion, The Lincolnshire Regiment when his commission in the 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment was gazetted on 17 December 1914. His brother, Councillor C.B. Bache, was the Mayor of West Bromwich and had been instrumental in trying to raise the "Mayor's Battalion" three months earlier.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁵ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 13 November 1915

²⁸⁶ *ibid*, 23 October 1915

²⁸⁷ *op cit*

²⁸⁸ MSR: Nominal Roll of the 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment 1914-1918

²⁸⁹ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 26 December 1914

After initially concentrating at Burton-on-Trent, the Staffordshire units that formed part of the North Midland Division moved to Luton during the second week in August. The North Midland Division was to remain in the Luton area for three months and combined training with its home defence role guarding the northern approaches of London against possible German invasion. In November 1914, the Staffordshire units made another move to billets around Saffron Walden. When the new recruits reached their respective units and commenced their training, they found themselves in an unfamiliar environment. The billeting arrangements were to provide many men with an uncomfortable introduction to life in the army, as recalled in a despatch by the “pressman” serving with the 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment:

I well remember the first night I spent with my comrades. We recruits had gone down to Luton in the afternoon, and were put in Mount Tabor Primitive Methodist Schoolroom. We had to find the best sleeping places we could – naturally the first-comers had not taken the worst places; that is scarcely the Army way. I was trying to lie down in a pew, and thinking what would happen if I turned over, for another man was on the floor, when a real good fellow from Bloxwich said “Come in with us chum and share this extra blanket”...This kindness is the spirit of the true “Tommy Atkins”, and true soldier spirit is not lacking in us.²⁹⁰

The men who were posted directly to the Service units to replace the pre-war Territorials unavailable for overseas service were soon engaged in carrying out physical training, route marches and firing the musketry course. At least the recruits who were posted straight to the Service units received a full issue of uniform and equipment. The situation was very different for the men who joined the Reserve units forming in Staffordshire during 1914. The authors of *The War History of the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment* recorded that the men of the Reserve

²⁹⁰ *Walsall Observer*, 26 December 1914

Battalion at Himley that uniforms and equipment only reached the unit in small quantities during the first weeks of its existence and that the early guards mounted around their base were armed only with wooden poles.²⁹¹

For the working-class recruits serving with men who had worked at the same colliery, factory or foundry, the task of assimilation with the pre-war Territorials was made less difficult due to their shared backgrounds and interests. One aspect of the experience of these middle-class recruits that has proved more difficult to determine is how their relationships with Territorials from working-class backgrounds. Gary Sheffield observes that in a few units, the experiences of middle-class soldiers who served in the same platoons with men whom they regarded as their social inferiors were not usually positive, as their manners and conduct were entirely alien to them.²⁹²

When the “Non-Manuals” who had joined the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment eventually found themselves posted to the Service Battalion at Luton, this contrast manifested itself in their manners and speech, as one unidentified officer noted:

Meanwhile we watch with interest the effect of our recruits upon the mass. You will remember that these recruits come from all classes, and the presence of the so-called non-manual is clearly marked in the daily conversation overheard. Thus, among the good old ‘B’ Company type you will hear; ‘Ere, Bill, where’s me pull-through? ‘I ain’t seen yer ruddy pull-through.’ ‘You’m a liar: you’ve bin and took it.’ ‘Get off with yer, I ain’t. If yer want a ruddy pull-through, why don’t you pinch Joe’s ruddy pull-through? ‘E’s away on guard.’ In ‘H’ Company, as now constituted, it runs: ‘Angus, have you seen my pull-through anywhere?’ ‘No, Gerald, I have not’. ‘You are sure you haven’t taken it by mistake?’ ‘I assure you I have not. But if you want a pull-through, I am sure Clement would not mind your borrowing his temporarily.’²⁹³

²⁹¹ *The War History of the Sixth South Staffordshire Regiment*, p. 142

²⁹² G.D. Sheffield, “‘A very good type of Londoner and a very good type of Colonial’: Officer –Man Relations and Discipline in the 22nd Royal Fusiliers 1914-18”, in B. Bond *et al*, ‘*Look to Your Front*’ – *Studies in the First World War by The British Commission for Military History* (Spellmount: Staplehurst, 1999), p.138

²⁹³ *The War History of the Sixth South Staffordshire Regiment (T.F.)*, p. 7

Within the 6th Battalion of The South Staffordshire Regiment, at least, the “Non-Manual” contingent appears to have been concentrated within a single company. Initially, the men were posted to “H” Company, which in peacetime had been located at Tettenhall. On the reorganisation of the Territorial Force infantry battalions to four companies in January 1915, “H” Company was combined with “A” Company and it was with the new “A” Company of the 1/6th Battalion that the “Non-Manuals” were eventually to serve while on active service on the continent. The situation within the other battalions of the Staffordshire Brigade is more difficult to ascertain. The evidence available from the surviving nominal roll for the 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment shows that the men known to have been “Non-Manual” recruits were distributed between all four companies, but whether they were segregated into separate platoons remains unclear.²⁹⁴

Irrespective of their social backgrounds, all of the new recruits soon developed a sense of pride in their units. The growth of this “esprit de corps” was an important part of ensuring that the more recent members of the Territorial units were initiated into the customs and characteristics that had evolved since their formation in 1908. For example, if a unit carried out a route march and had fewer men fall out than the other units taking part, this was taken as proof of their superior spirit and teamwork. Encouraging healthy competition between other units and even individual elements of the same unit assisted in this process. Sport, and in particular football, was the main means by which this healthy rivalry was enhanced. While stationed in Essex, the commander of the North Midland Division, Major-General The Hon. E.J. Montagu-

²⁹⁴ MSR: Nominal Roll of The 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment

Stuart-Wortley, supplied to silver cup to be competed for by the units under his command. According to Lieutenant Walter Meakin, the historian of the 5th Battalion of The North Staffordshire Regiment and who had himself been a “Non-Manual” recruit in 1914, his battalion performed particularly well in this competition and “*the other units of the Division quickly learned that the “Potters” knew something about the game of football*”.²⁹⁵ The social activities that had been a facet of Territorial soldiering in peacetime were also encouraged. The Town Hall of Saffron Walden was used by the battalions of the Staffordshire Brigade as a venue for entertainments. The performers were drawn from the four units of the Brigade and as the “pressman” of the 5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment observed:

*With so many men drawn from different walks of life, this is no difficult matter. Rather in making the selection from the array of talent at disposal does the difficulty come in. Expert pianists, good baritones and tenors, really funny humorists (this is not necessarily adjective, for some of the alleged humorists could not raise a smile on the face of a laughing hyena, even with the aid of a tickler), whistlers – the 6th North have a bugler who is a really wonderful ‘siffleur’ – men who give “The Night Watchman’s Story” and other character sketches as if to the manner born – there are some of the men upon each of the battalions are able to call.*²⁹⁶

In February 1915 the North Midland Division received definite orders to proceed to France to join the British Expeditionary Force. Throughout their time in Luton and Essex, the Territorials from Staffordshire had been given orders to prepare for such a journey before but these had all been cancelled. On 19 February the entire North Midland Division paraded for King George V at Great Hallingbury Park, near Bishop's Stortford, in bitterly cold weather. The inspection had an added significance, as the Division was the first complete Territorial Force Division to be ordered to move to France.

²⁹⁵ Meakin, *The 5th North Staffords and the North Midland Territorials 1914-1919*, p. 13

²⁹⁶ *Walsall Observer*, 2 January 1915

By the time the North Midland Division was ordered to proceed to France to join the British Expeditionary Force, the pre-war Territorials and wartime recruits had melded together in the units. As the authors of *The War History of the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment* recalled, the 1/6th Battalion had changed considerably since mobilisation:

The Battalion was very different from that which marched forth from Wolverhampton, in August, or even from Luton, in November 1914. The unit which entrained on March 1st at Audley End station for Southampton was no territorial 'lot' going to camp, but a quasi-regular battalion "proceeding" to destination.²⁹⁷

The Territorial Force units from Staffordshire had experienced significant changes in their composition in the months preceding their departure for France. Not only had Staffordshire's units doubled in size but the significant proportion of the recruits who enlisted in the ranks of the four infantry battalions came from the middle-class. The inclusion of the "Non-Manual" element perhaps brought Staffordshire's infantry closer to the Haldane's original ideal of 'a Hegelian Army' in which all sections of society were represented. Although some changes had been encountered in the social backgrounds of the recruits the "Territorial" character of the units had been maintained during the recruiting process. The maintenance of separate recruiting depots, Second-Line and Third-Line units ensured that a recruit would be retained within the Territorial Force and would serve with men from the same area. This situation would continue until direct enlistments to the Territorial Force were abolished in December 1915. Only the Royal Engineers adopted a centralised depot system for their Territorial recruits in Staffordshire. As a consequence of the widening

²⁹⁷ *The War History of the Sixth South Staffordshire Regiment*, p. 19

of the recruiting area for these units to encompass the whole county, the composition of the units did alter after the outbreak of the war. Nevertheless, the wartime recruits accepted into Staffordshire's Territorial Force between August 1914 and December 1915 were still predominantly from the traditional industries from which the county's units had drawn their recruits in peacetime.

Chapter Five

STAFFORDSHIRE'S TERRITORIALS ON ACTIVE SERVICE MARCH –DECEMBER 1915

The arrival in France of Staffordshire's Territorial Force units during the first months of 1915 marked the beginning of another period of transition for the officers and men. Since the outbreak of the war in August 1914 the units had undergone many fundamental changes while preparing for their deployment, not only with the creation of First-Line contingents for operations overseas but also the absorption of recruits to replace those men unavailable for active service. Few of the officers and men had any direct experience of conflict. Those who did would find that the type of warfare they had come across in South Africa with the Volunteer Service Companies fifteen years before bore no relation to what they would endure in the coming months.

The impact of war service on individual units and the experiences of the officers and men serving with them have been the subject of a number of studies by historians in recent years. Ian Beckett argues that this is an important development, as "*no unit was the same and that the individual's experience consequently varied enormously.*"²⁹⁸ A soldier's impressions of active service were moulded within the limited confines of his battalion, battery or company and were determined by the nature of the operations in which that unit was then engaged. The geographic composition of a particular unit, as well as the social and educational backgrounds of officers and the other ranks, would all have an influence on how active service was perceived. This chapter will therefore examine whether the localised character of Territorial recruitment affected the morale of a unit once it was on active service and if this had an impact on how

²⁹⁸ I.F.W. Beckett, "Revisiting the Old Front Line – the historiography of the Great War Since 1984", 'Stand To!' *The Journal of The Western Front Association*, 43 (April 1995), p. 11

units coped with the strains of war. The relationship between officers and other ranks will be assessed to see if this altered from the pattern that had been established before the war. These aspects will be investigated by using a variety of sources. First-hand accounts will be used to illustrate how the men concerned interacted with other members of their unit and if their descriptions agree with the notion that Territorial Force units did indeed have a different ethos and sense of cohesiveness from their regular counterparts. The impact of casualties, and how this altered the composition of a unit, will also be analysed with particular reference being made to the activities of Staffordshire units during their first experience of an offensive operation in 46th Division's assault on the Hohenzollern Redoubt on 13 October 1915.

The majority of the First-Line Territorial units from Staffordshire were destined to serve on the Western Front with the North Midland Division (46th (North Midland) Division from 12 May 1915) which landed at Le Havre during a two week period between the last week of February and the first week of March 1915.²⁹⁹ Although they were by no means the first Territorials to land on the continent, the North Midland Division was the first complete Territorial Force formation to be committed to the British Expeditionary Force on the Western Front. Their arrival was heralded by a signal sent to Field Marshal Sir John French, Commander-in-Chief of the British

²⁹⁹ The 1/1st Staffordshire Yeomanry and 1/1st North Midland Mounted Field Ambulance did not form part of the North Midland Division and remained in England for over a year after their mobilisation. In September 1914, the two units were despatched with the 1st North Midland Mounted Brigade to Diss in Norfolk, where they carried out patrols along the coast, watching for the approach of any German raiding force. During the summer of 1915, the Yeomanry were deprived of their horses and began training in an infantry role until their mounts were restored to them in September. The two Staffordshire units embarked at Southampton on 27 October and were originally destined to join the forces then arriving at Salonika until these orders were changed during the voyage. The Staffordshire Yeomanry and 1st/1st North Midland Mounted Field Ambulance eventually disembarked at Alexandria on 9 November 1915 and would remain in the Middle East until the end of the war – P.K. Kemp, *The Staffordshire Yeomanry (Q.O.R.R.) in the First and Second World Wars 1914-1918 and 1939-1945* (Aldershot: Gale & Polden Ltd., 1950) pp. 4-10; E.A. James, *British Regiments, 1914-18* (London: Sampson Books Ltd., 1978), p. 28 and *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 2 October 1915.

Expeditionary Force, by Lord Kitchener, who hoped that the division would “...maintain the reputation it has started”.³⁰⁰ However, these were not the first representatives of the county’s part-time soldiery to reach France. The 1/1st North Midland Field Company, Royal Engineers had preceded the main body by a few weeks. Detached from the North Midland Division, the Company embarked for France in January 1915 with 28th Division, a formation composed mainly of regular troops withdrawn from garrison duties in India and other outposts of Empire. During their first weeks at the front 1/1st North Midland Field Company suffered forty casualties through enemy action and sickness. The first man of the unit to die on active service, Sapper Alfred Redding, succumbed to pneumonia in hospital at St Omer on 2 April 1915. The Company eventually returned to the North Midland Division from 28th Division in early April 1915.³⁰¹ Another Staffordshire unit, the 1/1st North Midland (Staffordshire) Heavy Battery, would eventually leave the North Midland Division on 18 April 1915 to join 13th Heavy Brigade, Royal Garrison Artillery, a formation under the direct control of Second Army.³⁰²

Unlike some of the Territorial formations that followed them, the North Midlanders were not committed to a major operation until taking part in the final phase of the Battle of Loos in October 1915. As the authors of one unit history sardonically remarked, 46th Division found itself employed “*rather thereabouts than there when the big engagements took place*”.³⁰³ Although space precludes the inclusion of a

³⁰⁰ J.E. Blore & J.R. Sherratt, *“Over There” - A Commemorative History of the Old Leek Battery*, (Leek: Martin Publicity, 1991) p. 66

³⁰¹ National Archives of the UK (NA): PRO WO 95/2676, War Diary, 1/1st North Midland Field Company, Royal Engineers and *Smethwick Telephone*, 10 April 1915

³⁰² NA: PRO WO 95/472, War Diary, 1/1st North Midland (Staffordshire) Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery.

³⁰³ A Committee of Officers, *The War History of the Sixth South Staffordshire Regiment (T.F.)* (London: Heinemann, 1924), p. 44

detailed narrative concerning the activities of Staffordshire Territorial units during this period, some mention must be made of the areas in which they served as this had a bearing on the conditions under which they functioned. In order to prepare the new arrivals for conditions in the front line, the Territorials of the Staffordshire Brigade were sent forward to join the regular 6th Division in the trenches in front of Armentieres. The attachment lasted for five days from 20 March. This period of “trench instruction” was a vital part of acclimatising the officers and men of the Brigade in the routines associated with occupying a section of the front.³⁰⁴ Companies were deployed alongside regular troops and were given training in situ on the many tasks they would be required to perform such as carrying out wiring and listening patrols in “No-Man’s Land” and digging and repairing trenches.³⁰⁵

From the first days of April 1915 until the end of June, The North Midland Division was deployed in the line facing the Germans entrenched on the Messines Ridge. The Staffordshire Brigade (re-titled 137th Infantry Brigade on 12 May 1915) was allocated a frontage of approximately 2,000 yards on the southern portion of the North Midland Division’s area of responsibility in front of the village of Wulverghem. The Brigade billets in the rear area were near the village of Neuve Eglise. The 1/5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment was the first battalion of the Staffordshire Brigade to take over the line from the units of 28th Division with the 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment joining them on the following evening.³⁰⁶ The Wulverghem

³⁰⁴ The 6th Division was used on several occasions during 1915 to provide induction training to new formations arriving on the Western Front, acting in the same capacity to 48th (South Midland) Division in April, 9th (Scottish) Division in May and 12th (Eastern) Division in June.

³⁰⁵ *The War History of the Sixth South Staffordshire Regiment*, pp. 29-30 and Meakin, *The 5th North Staffords and the North Midland Territorials 1914-1919* (Longton: Hughes & Harber, 1920), pp. 15-16

³⁰⁶ NA: PRO WO 95/2685, War Diary, 1/5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment; NA: PRO WO 95/2686, War Diary, 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment, and Meakin, *The 5th North Staffords and the North Midland Territorials 1914-1919*, p. 16

sector was considered to be relatively tranquil and was therefore a more satisfactory sector in which to deploy inexperienced troops. This perception of the area being moderately passive does seem to be borne out in some letters written by soldiers while serving there. Second-Lieutenant C. Ashford, 1/6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment, recorded that; *“Life in S.P. 4 is gloriously lazy...”*.³⁰⁷ Corporal Sydney Norton of the 1/6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, wrote:

*Where we are it's just on a ridge and you can see for miles around. The country begins to look beautiful bar the houses and churches which are in ruins and we can see more with our powerful glasses. It was that quiet at times you wouldn't think there was a war on...*³⁰⁸

After being relieved by 149th Brigade of 50th (Northumbrian) Division at Wulverghem during the final days of June 1915, the Staffordshire Territorials of 46th Division moved north towards Ypres in preparation to take over a new section of the front line. With their billets situated some distance behind the lines near the village of Ouderdom, and latterly at Dickesbusch, the Staffordshire Brigade was initially deployed in Armagh and Sanctuary Woods before moving to the Hill 60 Sector in the middle of July 1915. The Ypres Salient was considerably more active and this is again intimated in soldier's accounts. Private Ronald Lerry of the 1/6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment, described Hill 60 as *“a hot spot”*, while Private George Sherratt, 1/5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, wrote: *“It is fighting up here, and our other place was quite a holiday compared to this”*.³⁰⁹ The experience of artillerymen, providing fire support behind the lines, was different from the

³⁰⁷ *The War History of the Sixth South Staffordshire Regiment*, p.37. S.P. 4 (Strong Point 4) was a fortified redoubt that provided accommodation for a platoon of infantry, as well as a machine gun post, behind the front line trenches. S.P.4, which was located near North Midland Farm, near the Wulverghem-Messines Road.

³⁰⁸ Museum of The Staffordshire Regiment (MSR): Corporal S. Norton, letter dated 14 May 1915

³⁰⁹ *Express and Star*, 12 August 1915 and Meakin, *The 5th North Staffords and the North Midland Territorials 1914-1919*, p. 25

infantrymen. One member of 1/6th Staffordshire Battery described how men were able to construct “*little gardens*” around their gun positions while located close to Kemmel in April 1915.³¹⁰

There is no doubt from evidence available in contemporary accounts that some Staffordshire Territorials found active service a mentally trying experience. The War Dairy of the 1/6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment records that during their tour of duty in the line at Wulverghem between 16-20 May, the Battalion had suffered two killed and three wounded. All the injured men had self-inflicted wounds.³¹¹ While serving at Hill 60, Private Sherratt wrote in August 1915 that: “*Nearly everybody is complaining of nerves – a lot are being sent to hospital*”.³¹² The diary kept by Private Sydney Richards, who served with the Machine Gun Section of the 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment, provides an insight into how he felt when he found himself under fire.³¹³ At Wulverghem on 31 May, he wrote: “*Had a piece of shell dropped very near me. A miss is as good as a mile*”, while in the line at Hill 60 on 19 July, his entry recorded:

*Our Engineers discovered a mine. They were all day withdrawing the charge. We had to stand to all day, guns ready for action. Anything but nice waiting to be blown up.*³¹⁴

Individual reactions to these situations may have varied, but descriptions written by officers and other ranks of Staffordshire Territorial units appear to conform to the assessment that British troops coped with their experiences with stoicism and

³¹⁰ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 8 May 1915

³¹¹ NA: PRO WO 95/2685, War Diary, 1/6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment

³¹² Meakin, *The 5th North Staffords and the North Midland Territorials 1914-1919*, p. 27

³¹³ Mr R. Richards: Private S. Richards, Diary

³¹⁴ *ibid.*

‘bloody-mindedness’ in the face of adversity.³¹⁵ Nevertheless, on active service the importance of the regimental system increased as a means of sustaining operational cohesiveness and maintaining morale. As Tony Ashworth argues, the unit in which a man served often became a substitute family, a community to which a soldier developed a sense of belonging.³¹⁶ This is strongly supported in the accounts written by Staffordshire Territorials when referring to their experiences. Several strands of association can be detected in these descriptions. Although the Territorial infantry battalions had been reorganised from eight companies to four to conform to the structure of their regular counterparts, it is noticeable that many pre-war Territorials still identified themselves as being members of a particular town’s contingent. Sergeant G.C. Norton, 1/6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, still referred to himself as being a member of the “Tamworth Company” even though “C” Company in which he served was at this time composed not only of men from his home town but also of members of the former “E” Company from Lichfield and wartime recruits from the Burton-upon-Trent area.³¹⁷ Similarly, Major William Burnett recounted his satisfaction when his soldiers from Hednesford serving with the 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment were complemented by staff officers for the speed and skill with which they dug trenches, many of the men from the area having been miners in peacetime and therefore particularly adept in this task.³¹⁸ Another demonstration of this local identification was evident during 46th Division’s assault on the Hohenzollern Redoubt on 13 October. Private Thomas

³¹⁵P.H. Liddle, “British Loyalties: The Evidence of an Archive”, in H. Cecil & P. H. Liddle (eds.), *Facing Armageddon – The First World War Experienced* (London, Leo Cooper, 1996), pp. 524-25 and J. Baynes, *Morale: A Study of Men and Courage* (2nd edn. New York, Avery Publishing Group Inc., 1988), p. 98

³¹⁶T. Ashworth, *Trench Warfare 1914-1918 – The Live and Let Live System* (London: Macmillan, 1980), p. 8

³¹⁷*Tamworth Herald*, 8 May 1915

³¹⁸*Cannock Advertiser*, 10 April 1915

Whitehouse described in a letter to his parents how men of the 1/5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment shouted “Potters For Ever!” as they scrambled up to begin the attack.³¹⁹ This clannish attitude was not confined to the pre-war Territorials. Members of the “Non-Manual” contingents that served with the infantry battalions still maintained this distinction and referred to themselves as such in correspondence published in local newspapers.³²⁰

Soldiers also consciously identified themselves as members of the Territorial Force. Ian Beckett makes the point that the relationships between Territorials and Regular other ranks during this period were generally cordial, but that there was some resentment and friction when members of “New Army” units began to arrive on the Western Front from May 1915.³²¹ *The War History of the Sixth Battalion of The South Staffordshire Regiment* provides two instances that lend support to this contention. The members of the 1/6th Battalion were treated with “*welcome and care*” by officers and men of the 1st Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment and 3rd Battalion, The Rifle Brigade when they were attached for “trench instruction” in March 1915. The 1/6th Battalion performed the same function for troops of the “New Army” from 14th (Light) Division in June while in the Wulverghem sector. When a German prisoner described the South Staffordshires as “*fiends incarnate*”, this was swiftly conveyed to the new arrivals.³²² Individual soldiers also expressed their resentment of the low opinion held amongst civilians of the Territorial Force. Private Harold Hawkswood, 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment, felt

³¹⁹ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 23 October 1915

³²⁰ *Express and Star*, 24 April 1915

³²¹ I.F.W. Beckett, “The Territorial Force”, in I.F.W. Beckett & K. Simpson (eds.), *A Nation in Arms* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), p. 140

³²² *The War History of the Sixth South Staffordshire Regiment (T.F.)*, pp. 29-30 & p.54

vindicated following an inspection by Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Ferguson, commander of II Corps, on 24 June 1915:

*The General commanding the Army Corps to which we are attached has given us a fine name, and it is especially pleasing as we are 'only Terriers', 'Saturday Afternoon Terriers' we were called in England, but when a Major-General (sic) comes specially to complement us on the way we have worked in the trenches and held the portion of the line allotted to us, it is time these people apologised.*³²³

Nonetheless, although soldiers serving with Staffordshire Territorial units made these distinctions the unifying focus of their loyalty, which conformed to traits shared with their Regular and “New Army” counterparts, was to their particular Battalion, Field Company or Battery. After experiencing a particularly heavy bombardment in their trenches at Hill 60 on 17 September, the conduct of his comrades in the 1/5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment prompted Private George Sherratt to write:

*Although I am one of them, and I ought not to say it, the 5th have proved to be equal to any British troops sent out here... I am proud of the 5th and proud to belong to it.*³²⁴

The exigencies of trench warfare led to the creation of dedicated sub-units to perform particular tasks as dictated by the nature of the operations. These detachments often developed a distinct character and this can be discerned from evidence relating to two specialist units formed from Staffordshire Territorials. Men of the Brigade began to train as “bombers” from late March 1915 and a Brigade Bombing Officer was appointed to direct their tuition. Private Arthur Dean of the 1/5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, was one of the early trainees. In a letter to his family dated 31 March, Dean described his duties:

³²³ *County Express*, 10 July 1915

³²⁴ Meakin, *The 5th North Staffords and the North Midland Territorials 1914-1919*, p. 28

*Our job is to work along a captured trench and drive the enemy out by throwing these bombs, two of us going ahead of the throwers with fixed bayonets to finish off any who may survive the effects of the bomb. Also, in case of attack, we hurl bombs into the middle of the enemy. The rest amuse themselves with telling us how risky the work is, but it no worse than any other infantry work.*³²⁵

The danger of these primitive grenades was brought home to the men of the Brigade when Lieutenant Leonard Joynson, 1/6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment, recently appointed as Brigade Bombing Officer, was killed by a grenade that exploded during a demonstration at Neuve Eglise.³²⁶ During the summer of 1915 the bombers were issued with a red-flamed grenade cloth arm badge to indicate their specialist status within the battalion. Further refinements were made to the organisation of the detachments and by October 1915 each battalion had formed a 'platoon' of bombers, consisting of a Battalion Bombing Officer, one Sergeant and 32 other ranks. For the assault on the Hohenzollern Redoubt, the four battalions of 137th Brigade were organised into eight separate "bombing parties", numbered 1 to 8, to take part in the operation.³²⁷

Another specialist unit created as a result of a particular operational requirement was the Brigade Mining Section. British counter-mining operations had commenced shortly before the Staffordshire Brigade's arrival in the Wulverghem sector in April 1915, where the recently formed 172nd Tunnelling Company of the Royal Engineers were active near Kruisstraat Cabaret and Boyles Farm.³²⁸ The resources of the tunnellers were stretched and therefore reinforcements were urgently required.

³²⁵ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 17 April 1915

³²⁶ *The War History of the Sixth South Staffordshire Regiment (T.F.)*, pp. 46-47

³²⁷ NA: PRO WO 95/2683, War Diary 137th Brigade, 137th Brigade Operation Order 22, 11 October 1915

³²⁸ NA: PRO WO 95/244, War Diary 172nd Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers

Potential recruits were not difficult to find, as many of the men serving with the Brigade had been miners in the coalfields of Staffordshire before the outbreak of war. For example, one officer and forty-two other ranks of the 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment are known to have served either with the Brigade Mining Section or on the strength of Tunnelling Companies of the Royal Engineers during the period between April and October 1915.³²⁹ Members of the Brigade Mining Section also seem to have adopted the title “Sapper” in place of their normal infantry rank of Private to reflect their new role, often referring to themselves as such in several letters published in local newspapers during this period.³³⁰ When the 46th Division moved to the Ypres Salient in July 1915, the Brigade Mining Section continued to support the Royal Engineers Tunnelling Companies working with 175th Tunnelling Company under Hill 60. The Brigade Mining Section was involved in defensive mining operations only, mainly exploding camoflets under German tunnels to cause them to collapse. These subterranean activities were particularly hazardous and as a result of their bravery during operations, eight members of the Brigade Mining Section were subsequently awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.³³¹

The encouragement of sporting activities as a means of fostering ‘esprit-de-corps’ during training has already been highlighted in Chapter 4, but it is evident that these

³²⁹ MSR: Nominal Roll, 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment

³³⁰ *Tamworth Herald*, 8 May 1915 and *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 15 May 1915

³³¹ *London Gazette*, 30 June 1915. The citation for the awards was common to all of the recipients: *"For conspicuous courage and devotion to duty on 28th (sic) April 1915, near Kemmel, when he took his turn with a few others in entering a mine gallery to rescue comrades who had been overcome by gas. The rescuing party persevered till all had been saved."* Six members of the Brigade Mining Section were decorated: 2682 Private E. Langford of the 1/6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment; 3889 Private George Bennett and 2885 Private L. Landon of the 1/5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment; and 1301 Private Roland Hill, 1826 Private Arthur Storer and 2283 Private Albert Thomas Weston of the 1/6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment & *London Gazette*, 9 October 1915. The awards were made to 350 Sergeant Frank Wallbank and 1206 Lance-Corporal J. Cronise, both of whom served with the 1/6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment. They were decorated for their efforts in trying to rescue tunnellers overcome by carbon-monoxide fumes in a gallery under Hill 60 on 10 September. Sergeant Wallbank was later killed during the assault on the Hohenzollern Redoubt on 13 October, while Cronise was wounded in the same action.

inter-unit competitions continued on active service when operational commitments permitted. These activities also helped to provide a means of excitement for soldiers and at least some escape from their environment.³³² Based on the evidence contained in soldiers' letters and diaries, football was by far the most popular sport amongst the Staffordshire Territorials, and this perhaps reflects the predominantly working class backgrounds of the rank and file. Fixtures were keenly contested between various units, as testified in several 'match reports' that were printed in newspapers back in Staffordshire, such as the detailed account a match played at Neuve Eglise between 1/2nd North Midland Field Company and the Staffordshire Brigade Band, which the Royal Engineers won by three goals to nil.³³³ Inter-unit rivalry during these contests could be particularly intense. At a match played at Rue de Lillers on 23 October between the 1/2nd and 2nd/1st North Midland Field Companies, one Sapper was injured and was carried from the field on a stretcher.³³⁴ Cricket also seems to have been played during the summer of 1915. Again, these matches usually took the form of inter-unit competitions, such as a match played at Poperinghe in June between 1/2nd and 1/3rd Staffordshire Batteries of 1/2nd North Midland Field Brigade.³³⁵

Another important means by which morale was maintained was the regular receipt of communications from home. As John Bourne asserts, the regular receipt of mail, local newspapers and parcels of comforts were of great consequence to the soldiers at the

³³² J.G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 94

³³³ *Cannock Advertiser*, 8 May 1915

³³⁴ NA: PRO WO 95/2678, War Diary, 2/1st North Midland Field Company, Royal Engineers

³³⁵ *Leek Times*, 22 June 1915

front.³³⁶ The arrival of post from home was keenly awaited, as indicated by Private Leonard Dyke of the 1/5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, who wrote:

*We have parcels brought up to us in the trenches and you may be sure that we are always eager to see Fred (who is our postman) shortly after dusk.*³³⁷

It was not only the families of the soldiers that sent parcels. Several “comfort funds” were established in order to send items to Staffordshire Territorial units. The *Express and Star* newspaper offices in Wolverhampton, in conjunction with a local factory owner, J. Burns Dumbell, organised a scheme to send parcels specifically to members of Territorial units that recruited within the town. Contributors were warned that their donations should not exceed seven pounds in weight, contain perishable items or alcohol.³³⁸ Men of the 1/2nd North Midland Field Company, Royal Engineers benefited from the efforts of three young women from Brownhills who collected 500 cigarettes for local men serving with the unit.³³⁹ The same Company was also sent a phonograph in December 1915, purchased with the proceeds of a collection organised by Norton Canes Parish Council.³⁴⁰ The receipt of comforts provided by the communities from which the Territorials were drawn appears to have been a source of reassurance to the men serving at the front and evidence from letters written to local newspapers to thank those who had provided the items appear to support this. However, some men, like Corporal Sydney Norton of the 1/6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, felt the need to complain about the perceived lack of support from their home town:

³³⁶ J. Bourne, “The British Working Man in Arms”, in H. Cecil & P.H. Liddle (eds.), *Facing Armageddon*, (London: Pen & Sword, 1996), p. 339

³³⁷ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 1 May 1915

³³⁸ *Express and Star*, 23 April 1915

³³⁹ *Lichfield Mercury*, 15 October 1915

³⁴⁰ *ibid*, 24 December 1915

*I think Tamworth people are a miserable lot. Since we have been in this country have not received a single thing not even a Herald. I don't know what we should have done if it wasn't for the Lichfield people. They are sending something almost every week from Lichfield towns-folk. They send books and papers and footballs, mouth organs etc.*³⁴¹

Officers played a key role in fostering and sustaining the regimental system, in particular how they interacted with the rank and file. The character of the officer in command of an infantry battalion, artillery brigade or field company, often dictated the tenor to which the unit operated, with a benevolent figure considered to be desirable.³⁴² Within Staffordshire's Territorial units, a number of the unit commanders can be ascribed qualities that fit this description. All but one of the unit commanders were pre-war Territorial officers from the county, the exception being Lieutenant-Colonel Raymer of the 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment.³⁴³ Lieutenant-Colonel Knight of the 1/5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment appears to have particularly engendered the respect and admiration of the men of his battalion.³⁴⁴ In a letter to his parents, Private J. Hancock wrote: "*the officers are "Bricks", especially Col. Knight. He is a fine man, and as brave as a lion.*"³⁴⁵ It is noticeable during this early period of the war that replacement unit commanders were drawn from Territorial units, which no doubt assisted in maintaining continuity. Lieutenant-Colonel John Gretton, the Commanding Officer of the 1/6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, was evacuated suffering from "eye strain" in early May 1915. Gretton's replacement was Lieutenant-Colonel R.F. Ratcliff, who had commanded the unit before the war and returned to

³⁴¹ MSR: Corporal S. Norton, letter dated 11 April 1915

³⁴² G.D. Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches: Officer-Man Relations, Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the era of the First World War*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 95-96

³⁴³ R.E. Priestley, *Breaking the Hindenburg Line - The History of 46th (North Midland) Division* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1919), pp. 177-79 – Order of Battle for the North Midland Division, 28 February 1915

³⁴⁴ Meakin, *The 5th North Staffords and the North Midland Territorials 1914-1919*, p. 16

³⁴⁵ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 13 November 1915

take over the unit on 13 May.³⁴⁶ When Lieutenant-Colonel Waterhouse of the 1/6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment was wounded while carrying out a reconnaissance at Vermelles on 7 October, the impact this would have on his battalion, which was preparing to make their attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt, was considered serious enough to warrant the attention of Major-General E.J. Montagu Stuart-Wortley, the General Officer Commanding 46th Division. He personally visited the unit, as Private Ronald Lerry recalled:

*At first news was prevalent that he had died, but the General Officer Commanding came and told us to the contrary, at the same time expressing his confidence in Major Law, which was in accord with his own feelings. The General Officer Commanding paid a high tribute to Colonel Waterhouse, and said he was one of the keenest colonels in the division on leading his battalion.*³⁴⁷

Likewise, following the death of Lieutenant-Colonel Knight in the attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt, he was replaced by another Territorial officer, Major William Burnett of the 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment.³⁴⁸

The notable exception to this policy was perceptible when a new commander for the Staffordshire Brigade was required in April 1915, after Brigadier-General Walter Bromilow was invalided back to the United Kingdom because of illness. Bromilow was not a part-time soldier but a regular who was originally commissioned in The Royal Dublin Fusiliers in 1884. He had been in command of the brigade since October 1912 after a short period on half-pay. In common with all Colonels commanding Territorial Brigades, Bromilow was appointed Acting Brigadier-General

³⁴⁶ NA: PRO WO 95/2685, War Diary, 1/6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment

³⁴⁷ *Express and Star*, 30 October 1915. Waterhouse was evacuated to 6th Casualty Clearing Station at Lillers and required surgery on his wounds, which resulted in him losing an eye.

³⁴⁸ NA: PRO WO 374/11044, personal record of Lieutenant-Colonel W. Burnett

on the outbreak of the war.³⁴⁹ His replacement was Brigadier-General Edward Feetham, who had formerly been the Commanding Officer of 2nd Battalion, The Royal Berkshire Regiment. He had been serving on the Western Front since 5 November 1914 and had commanded his battalion during the Battle of Neuve Chapelle in March 1915.³⁵⁰ Feetham appears to have been a respected rather than a popular figure, Lieutenant Ashworth describing him as “*Nemesis in a brass hat*”.³⁵¹ No Territorial Force officer seems to have been considered for the post, perhaps confirming Ian Beckett’s assessment of Regular Army officer’s prejudice toward auxiliary officers and to appointing them in senior staff roles.³⁵²

Regular army officers were made particularly aware that the welfare of their men was their paramount concern but Gary Sheffield comments that this notion was not second nature to officers in some Territorial units but became more prominent once they embarked on active service.³⁵³ Within Staffordshire units at least, there was a definite “paternalism” shown by officers towards their men and this manifested itself in several ways. Lieutenant-Colonel Knight made an appeal via the *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel* for foodstuffs to be sent to his battalion as “*I am now supplying these things to a small extent from money we have saved, but it is nearly exhausted*”.³⁵⁴ This duty of care was particularly noticeable if an officer had known an individual soldier as a pre-war member of the Territorial Force, even extending to the families of men killed while on active service. Private Daniel Seabury of the 1/5th Battalion, The South

³⁴⁹ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 26 December 1914

³⁵⁰ F. Davies & G. Maddocks, *Blood Red Tabs – General Officer Casualties of the Great War, 1914-1918*, (London: Leo Cooper, 1995), pp. 57-58

³⁵¹ *The War History of the Sixth South Staffordshire Regiment (T.F.)*, p. 37

³⁵² Beckett, “The Territorial Force”, p. 141

³⁵³ J. Baynes, *Morale: A Study of Men and Courage*, pp. 120-121 and Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, p. 159

³⁵⁴ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 17 April 1915

Staffordshire Regiment was killed by a sniper while serving in the Wulverghem sector on 7 June 1915. He was a widower and his four children were left orphaned as a result of his death. In a letter to Seabury's parents, Major William Burnett, who had known him for several years, wrote:

*I hope the people at home will make provision for his children, so that they may be brought up to earn an honest living, and to follow their father, who gave his all for his country.*³⁵⁵

Captain Leslie Cozens, an officer of the same battalion, also took an active interest in the welfare of the children of men from his company who had been killed. While on leave in England, he arranged for the eldest son of Corporal George Howard, who had died in April, to be accepted by Wolverhampton Orphanage.³⁵⁶

The evidence that has been found in the accounts of other ranks relating to their officers is overwhelmingly uncritical. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that several men held unfavourable opinions of certain officers based on how they acted towards an individual soldier and their conduct in action. The references that are extant conform to Gary Sheffield's observation that officers were viewed by other ranks with deference, though respect had to be earned.³⁵⁷ For pre-war Territorials, this relationship had already developed in peacetime, in some cases at work as well as at the Drill Hall. In his letters to his wife, Corporal Sydney Norton makes several references to his company commander, Captain John Jenkinson, particularly regarding his health.³⁵⁸ Private Herbert Richardson, 1/6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment, wrote that he was recognised and greeted warmly by his employer, Captain Oswald Bamford, when the latter joined the unit in August

³⁵⁵ *Cannock Advertiser*, 19 June 1915

³⁵⁶ *Walsall Observer*, 23 October 1915

³⁵⁷ Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, p. 103

³⁵⁸ MSR: Corporal S. Norton, letters dated 29 July 1915 & 29 August 1915

1915.³⁵⁹ The courage of officers under fire was also remarked upon by other ranks. During the attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt on 13 October 1915, Private Ronald Lerry recalled that: “*I noticed our officer, Mr. Yeatman, very coolly light a cigarette as we lay down during the advance*”.³⁶⁰ Older non-commissioned officers would also demonstrate their own paternalistic esteem towards young platoon officers. This relationship is borne out in a letter written to the father of Second-Lieutenant Sidney Allday by Company-Quartermaster-Sergeant Herbert Bird. Allday served with the 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment and had been killed during the attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt:

*He was respected and worshipped by the N.C.O.'s and men of his platoon, and their first thought after the attack were for their dear young leader; they thought of him not only as their officer but as a comrade, and they say that he cannot be replaced. I was his Colour-Sergeant when he joined at Brierley Hill and I am the only N.C.O. left with the company who was mobilised. Naturally I feel his loss very much...*³⁶¹

Territorial Force units were often looked upon by their Regular Army counterparts as appearing to be more relaxed in their attitude towards discipline in the field, again a factor often dictated by the attitude of the unit commander. This approach extended to how efforts were made within these units to enforce, as Gary Sheffield contends “*parade-ground smartness on active service*”.³⁶² Photographic evidence available on the 1/6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment indicates that in that unit at least, maintaining a smart appearance in the line was not of paramount importance. One photograph taken of Lieutenant-Colonel Waterhouse taken during the Summer of 1915 shows him wearing an ill-fitting service dress tunic and a battered cap, which

³⁵⁹ *Uttoxeter Advertiser*, 27 October 1915

³⁶⁰ *Express and Star*, 23 October 1915

³⁶¹ *County Express*, 20 November 1915. Sidney Allday was 19 years old at the time of his death, while Bird was an experienced non-commissioned officer who had served in the Volunteers and Territorials since 1898 and had seen active service during the Boer War.

³⁶² Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, pp. 155-56

may have been an indication of his attitude towards ‘bull’.³⁶³ Nevertheless, soldiers were subjected to regular inspections when at their rest billets, as the diary of Private Richards frequently testifies.³⁶⁴ Private Richards’ commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Raymer, was not a Territorial officer from Staffordshire and his attitude to discipline does seem to have followed a more ‘regular’ style than that adopted by his colleagues. It is also interesting to note that while the other battalion commanders appointed Territorial officers in place of their regular adjutants when they were posted from the unit, Raymer had a regular officer, Captain Lamond of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Scots, as a replacement.³⁶⁵

There are also several examples to be found among the accounts written by officers and other ranks of Staffordshire units that support Gary Sheffield’s observation that non-commissioned officers of the Territorial Force had a different style of maintaining discipline.³⁶⁶ This did not mean that troops were allowed to disregard the authority of commissioned and non-commissioned officers. Corporal Sydney Norton described in a letter to his wife how he exerted discipline while in charge of a working party behind the line near Wulverghem in April 1915. Norton’s fatigue detachment was tasked with burying the corpses of dead farm animals that lay in the fields behind the front line. On encountering the bodies of French and British soldiers killed months earlier, some of his men became unsteady and Norton felt compelled to adopt a stern approach in order to finish the task:

I had to tell them that they had got to do it or get shot at dawn. I loaded my rifle that was enough. Of course I was only pulling their leg. As I have said

³⁶³ MSR: Photograph Album, 1/6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment 1914-16

³⁶⁴ S. Richards, Diary

³⁶⁵ MSR: Nominal Roll, 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment

³⁶⁶ Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, pp. 120-21 & p. 157

*you don't have to show any sympathy out here. When you are put a job to do its (sic) got to be done without any back chat.*³⁶⁷

Evidence of the number and severity of punishments given to men of Staffordshire Territorial units on the Western Front during this period has not survived among unit records therefore making it difficult to make any evaluation with regard to their disciplinary records compared with other formations. There is some information on soldiers who received more severe penalties contained in the Nominal Roll of the 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment. During this period, three soldiers who were sentenced to punishment by Field General Courts Martial. Private W.G. Bird was sentenced to death on 18 May 1915 after he was discovered asleep on sentry duty, but this penalty was later commuted to two years hard labour. On 25 September, Private B. Taylor was returned to the battalion to await court martial after being absent without leave from the 2/5th Battalion, having been posted to that unit from Belgium in April. Private J.T. Lawley was sent back to England on the same day to be sentenced, although his misdemeanour was not recorded.³⁶⁸

Being confined to static trench warfare for a prolonged period did not preclude Staffordshire's Territorials from experiencing casualties as a result of omnipresent threats posed by snipers, artillery bombardment or the explosion of mines underneath their trenches. Within hours of relieving the 1st Battalion, The York and Lancaster Regiment on 1 April, the 1/5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment suffered its first fatality when Private Arthur Podmore was shot in the head by a sniper and had suffered casualties of two killed and eight wounded by the end of their first four days

³⁶⁷ MSR: Corporal S. Norton, Letter dated 11 April 1915

³⁶⁸ MSR: Nominal Roll, 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment

tour of duty.³⁶⁹ The other three infantry battalions suffered a similar scale of casualties. During the first six months of their active service on the Western Front, 137th Brigade as a whole had the relatively small number of eleven officers and 240 other ranks killed, died of wounds or as a result of illness.³⁷⁰ Although, as J.G. Fuller argued, casualties cannot solely be considered as a factor that had a defining effect on the overall morale of a particular unit, they did have an impact on their composition as wartime recruits replaced experience pre-war Territorials.³⁷¹ Single incidents proved particularly devastating, especially as units were still at this time composed of men drawn from the same area. When a shell burst over A5 Support Trench in the Armagh Wood sector on 11 July, this caused 6 casualties amongst the men of “D” Company of the 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment, all of whom were pre-war Territorials from Bloxwich.³⁷² However, it was not only pre-war soldiers whose numbers were diminishing. Between March and September 1915 among other ranks of the 1/6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment there were 268 casualties, of whom 100 were pre-war Territorials but the remainder had enlisted after 5 August 1914.³⁷³ Table 5.1 illustrates the losses sustained by the 1/5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment during one month’s service in the Hill 60 sector, and these figures are testament to the constant drain on manpower experienced by units during static operations:

³⁶⁹ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 17 April 1915

³⁷⁰ These numbers are based on data drawn from the following sources: Anon.; *Officers Died in the Great War*, (London: HMSO, 1919); Anon.; *Soldiers Died in the Great War*, (London: HMSO, 1921) Part 42: The South Staffordshire Regiment & Part 60: The Prince of Wales’s (North Staffordshire Regiment)

³⁷¹ Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture*, p. 30

³⁷² NA: PRO WO95/2686, *Walsall Observer*, 24 July 1915 and *Walsall Advertiser*, 31 July 1915

³⁷³ MSR: History of the 6th North Staffords, Volume 2

Table 5.1: Casualties suffered by 1/5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment during August 1915

Week-Ending	Killed	Wounded	Sick	Total
7th August	2	24	24	50
15th August	5	8	26	39
22nd August	4	20	18	42
30th August	0	10	22	32

Source: War Diary, 1/5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment WO 95/2685

The War Diary and the Nominal Roll for the 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment provides detailed information regarding the number of drafts received by the unit throughout 1915. During this period, a total of thirteen drafts were received by the 1/5th Battalion from the Territorial Base Depot at Rouen, having been first despatched to France by the 2/5th Battalion at Luton, and latterly by the 3/5th Battalion at Belton Park. The strength of the drafts received by the unit was determined by the nature of the operations they were involved in. While the Battalion engaged in static operations in the line at Wulverghem and Hill 60 only three drafts were posted to the replace men who had become casualties. Prior to taking part in the attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt, the 1/5th Battalion received a further draft on 7 October. However, as a result of the casualties suffered by the unit in their first major action, this naturally increased the demand for reinforcements. Unfortunately not all the strengths for these drafts have been recorded, but three, (the 10th, 11th and 12th), that were received by the 1/5th Battalion in a four-week period during November and December totalled 68 officers and men.³⁷⁴ Gary Sheffield argues that the experience of pre-war Territorial soldiering, coupled with localised recruitment, produced cohesion within these units but often remained a “*closed corporation*” to men who did not come from the same background or area.³⁷⁵ During this period of the war, the

³⁷⁴ NA: PRO WO95/2686 and MSR, Nominal Roll, 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment

³⁷⁵ Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, p. 156

reinforcements posted to the First-Line units were still predominantly from Staffordshire and all had enlisted directly into the Territorial Force. Nevertheless, drafts had begun to have an impact not only on the composition but also on the sense of ‘community’ of a unit. As the history of one battalion noted, “*the process of infiltration was beginning*”.³⁷⁶

Similarly, the turnover of officers within the 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment provides more evidence of the changes in personnel experienced by the unit. Thirty-two officers had originally arrived with the unit at Le Havre in March 1915. During the period between 3 March and 30 September, when the unit was deployed in the Hill 60 sector, 43 officers would serve with the battalion. Table 5.2 illustrates what happened to the officers concerned:

Table 5.2: Officers serving with the 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment during the period 3 March–30 September 1915.

Officers on strength 3 March 1915:	32	
Killed in Action:	1	
Wounded:	4	2 returned to duty in August
To England (Sick):	4	
To England (Posted):	5	
Detached Duty:	2	1 to Brigade Machine-Gun Officer 1 to Brigade Mining Section
Returned to Unit:	1	Medical Officer – posted back to 1/3rd N. M. Field Ambulance
Officers received by 1/5th Battalion:	11	
Posted from 2/5th Battalion:	8	1 Wounded 31 August 1915 1 Posted to HQ V Corps July 1915
Commissioned in the Field:	1	
Posted from 1/3rd N.M. Field Ambulance:	1	Medical Officer
Posted from 2nd Bn The Royal Scots:	1	Adjutant

Sources: War Diary, 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment (WO 95/2686) Nominal Roll, 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment (Museum of The Staffordshire Regiment).

³⁷⁶ *The War History of the Sixth South Staffordshire Regiment (T.F.)*, p. 75

While the vast majority of the replacement officers came from the Second and Third Line units based in England, a few “Non-Manuals” received commissions in the field once Staffordshire units reached the Western Front in 1915. Company-Sergeant-Major Tom Dann was promoted to the commissioned ranks of the 1/6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment on 24 August 1915, while his battalion was operating in the Hill 60 sector. The newly appointed Second-Lieutenant Dann was then posted to 3 Platoon of “A” Company.³⁷⁷ Fredrick Illiff, was also commissioned at the same time as Dann. Aged thirty-one at the time of his enlistment in September 1914, Illiff came from Burton-on-Trent but worked as a manager at a gear-cutting firm in Wolverhampton. After his commission was confirmed, Second-Lieutenant Illiff became the platoon commander with “C” Company of the 1/6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment.³⁷⁸ Corporal Leslie Shaw, who was serving with the 1/5th Battalion of The South Staffordshire Regiment, was another “Non-Manual” who was rewarded with a commission in August 1915. His appointment was endorsed on 4 August and he returned to his former comrades of “D” Company as a platoon commander.³⁷⁹

Although Staffordshire’s Territorial units had already experienced the slow erosion of their pre-war character, it was not until October 1915 that this process was accelerated as a result of 46th Division being tasked to recapture the Hohenzollern Redoubt. The operation itself was a failure, the Official History reckoning that, “*the fighting on the 13th-14th October had not improved the general situation in any way and had brought*

³⁷⁷ NA: PRO WO 374/17799, personal record of Second-Lieutenant T.V. Dann and *Tipton Herald*, 30 October 1915

³⁷⁸ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 30 October 1915

³⁷⁹ NA: PRO WO 374/61711, personal record of Second-Lieutenant L.G. Shaw

nothing but useless slaughter of infantry...”³⁸⁰ For Staffordshire’s Territorial units, the attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt was to prove a disaster in several ways. None of 137th Brigade’s objectives had been captured, the assault having been halted almost as soon as it had begun by a combination of concentrated artillery and machine gun fire.³⁸¹ The 46th Division had 180 Officers and 3,583 Other Ranks killed, wounded and missing between 13 and 15 October, with 137th Brigade’s casualties totalling 68 Officers and 1,478 Other Ranks.³⁸²

The casualties suffered by Staffordshire’s Territorial Force units during their attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt had ravaged the ranks. All of the infantry battalions suffered heavy casualties, with the 1/5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment having the highest number of all of the units of 46th Division. Of over 700 officers and men that entered the line on the night of 12 October, scarcely two hundred returned from the trenches when the battalion was relieved.³⁸³ The 1/2nd North Midland Field Company had two sections supporting the 137th Brigade during the assault and suffered casualties of two officers and 27 other ranks killed, wounded and missing. The attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt would prove the bloodiest action that the

³⁸⁰ J.E. Edmonds, *Official History of the War: Military Operations in France and Flanders – 1915, Volume Two* (Macmillan, 1928), p. 388

³⁸¹ NA: PRO WO95/2662 War Diary, 46th (North Midland) Division, *Report on the Operations of the 46th Division, October 13th and 14th 1915*

³⁸² Edmonds, *Official History of the War: Military Operations in France and Flanders – 1915, Volume Two*, p. 387. The breakdown of casualties between the four infantry battalions was:

	Officers	Other Ranks
1/5 th South Staffordshire:	13	306
1/6 th South Staffordshire:	18	389
1/5 th North Staffordshire:	20	485

1/6th North Staffordshire: 17 298

³⁸³ Meakin, *The 5th North Staffords and the North Midland Territorials 1914-1919*, p. 40

Company was to experience during the entire war.³⁸⁴ Sergeant G.C. Norton described the situation in the 1/6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment in a letter to his brother, Sydney Norton:

Our Battalion lost heavily. I was the only Sergt. that came out without a scratch. In fact all the Officers and N.C.O.'s suffered a lot. There were only three officers, with the Colonel and the Adjutant, came out of it. Sergt. Copeland, Sergt. Hair, Sergt. Cutler, Sergt. Stone were killed and others wounded - yourself, Platts, Austin, Kenney, Hammond, Watts, Shirley, Cpl. Burrows, Clements, Littleford, Cronise - I cannot remember them all. Smalner Smith has died of his wound, also Mason. You will be surprised to see the list of the lot. We had a roll call the next morning. I shall never forget it - the strengths were 'A' Company - 90, 'B' - 92, 'C' - 112, 'D' - 114."³⁸⁵

The impact the large number of losses suffered by Staffordshire Territorials is apparent when reading the reports printed in the regional press. The localised nature of recruitment was also reflected in the casualty returns. Based on information contained in the relevant volumes of *Soldiers Died in the Great War* and nominal rolls, it is clear that the vast majority of the fatalities amongst other ranks originated from Staffordshire, as Table 5.3 illustrates:

³⁸⁴ NA: PRO WO 95/2677, War Diary, 1/2nd North Midland Field Company, Royal Engineers

³⁸⁵ MSR: Sergeant G.C. Norton, Letter dated 30 October 1915

Table 5.3: Area of Domicile of the Fatalities among Other Ranks in Territorial Units from Staffordshire as a result of Operations at the Hohenzollern Redoubt:

	Staffordshire	Non-Staffordshire
1/5 th South Staffordshire:	97	3
1/6 th South Staffordshire:	117	7
1/5 th North Staffordshire:	220	10
1/6 th North Staffordshire:	92	5
1/1 st N.M. Field Coy. R.E.:	4	1
1/2 nd N.M. Field Coy. R.E.:	11	1
1/3 rd N.M. Field Ambulance:	0	1
1/3 rd N.M. Field Bde. R.F.A.:	1	0

Sources: Anon, *Soldiers Died in the Great War*, (London, HMSO, 1921), Parts 2&3: The Royal Regiment of Artillery; Part 4: The Corps of Royal Engineers; Part 42: The South Staffordshire Regiment; Part 60: The Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment) & Part 75: The Royal Army Medical Corps; Nominal Rolls for the 1/5th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment, 1/5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment and 1/6th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment & Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Figures also include those men who were wounded during the period 13 – 15 October 1915 and subsequently died of their wounds.

The reconstruction process was swift enough to allow the Staffordshire units of 46th Division to re-enter the line by the beginning of November 1915 without having to resort to temporary amalgamations, as had occurred with several Territorial Force battalions following the Second Battle of Ypres.³⁸⁶ On receiving the news of the losses, a draft of 130 soldiers was directly sent from the Territorial Base Depot at Rouen to replace the losses sustained by the 1/5th Battalion, The North Staffordshire Regiment.³⁸⁷ Their 3/5th Battalion based at Belton Park also immediately despatched a draft of 18 Officers and 250 Other Ranks to Rouen as replacements.³⁸⁸ Although drafts soon brought units back up to strength, it can be detected in that many survivors felt that the losses sustained had changed their unit irrevocably. The authors of one

³⁸⁶ For example, the 1/6th and 1/8th Battalions of The Durham Light Infantry were amalgamated on 8th June 1915 as the 6th/8th Composite Battalion and were not reconstituted as separate units until 11th August. Similarly, the three battalions of The Monmouthshire Regiment had suffered severe casualties and were amalgamated into a composite battalion in May 1915. The 1/2nd Battalion was able to resume its individual identity on 23rd July. The 1/1st and 1/3rd Battalions did not reform until 11th August (S.G.P. Ward, *Faithful: The Story of The Durham Light Infantry* (London: Thomas Nelson & Son Ltd., 1962) pp. 352-53 and L. Hughes & J. Dixon, *"Surrender be Damned" – A History of the 1/1st Battalion The Monmouthshire Regiment 1914-18* (Caerphilly: Cwm Press, 1995) pp. 85-92)

³⁸⁷ *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 13 November 1915

³⁸⁸ Meakin, *The 5th North Staffords and the North Midland Territorials 1914-1919*, p. 42

unit history made the telling observation that the casualties suffered by the Territorials had been devastating and “*a valuable fighting force received a blow from which it was destined to recover but slowly*”.³⁸⁹ Although the drafts received by those units following the attack were still “Territorial” with regard to their terms of enlistment and their regional origin, they were to all intents and purposes wartime recruits who did not possess some of the traits that had been developed within those units in peacetime. This inevitably led to the erosion of the distinctive character and ethos that had been developed from the creation of the Territorial Force in April 1908. This process was accelerated on the abolition of direct recruitment to the Territorial Force on 11 December 1915, although Staffordshire units did not begin to receive soldiers who had enlisted for “General Service” until July 1916, following their involvement in the operations around the Gommecourt salient.

The experience of Staffordshire’s Territorial Force units mirrors that of the vast majority of other units committed to the Western Front during this period. From the evidence contained in the extant letters and diaries, many of the more generic characteristics ascribed to Territorial Force units, in relation to attitudes towards discipline and officer-man relations, are prevalent. The maintenance of the regimental system, and the retention of the close local affinities helped to allow Staffordshire units to retain their distinct “Territorial” ethos in the field, although casualties had begun to diminish the numbers of men who had experience of the pre-war culture of those units. The major turning point as far as Staffordshire Territorial units were concerned was their attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt on 13 October 1915. The large scale of the casualties suffered by the infantry in particular does seem to have

³⁸⁹ *The War History of the 6th Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment (T.F.)*, p. 97

had a major impact on the “community” of those units. Following the assault on the Hohenzollern Redoubt, Lord Dartmouth wrote to Major-General E.J. Montagu Stuart-Wortley to praise the efforts of the Staffordshire Territorials:

*As chairman for the County Territorial Force Association, and speaking on their behalf, as one who, through ill report and good report, has never doubted the possibilities of the Territorial Force when their opportunity came, let me say that we are proud today to find that the Force we helped to raise has more than justified our most sanguine expectations.*³⁹⁰

³⁹⁰ *Walsall Observer*, 30 October 1915

CONCLUSION

During the period covered by this study the issues that affected the County Territorial Force Association in Staffordshire and the units they administered reflected the general experience of the majority of auxiliary forces created under Haldane's reforms. Prior to the outbreak of the Great War the County Territorial Force Association, under the leadership of Lord Dartmouth, was reasonably successful in promoting the concept of the Territorial Force. Staffordshire already had a strong tradition of supporting auxiliary forces and this enabled the creation of the Territorial Force to be much less traumatic when compared to the experience of other County Associations. The manning levels of Territorial Force units in Staffordshire were sustained at a reasonable degree during the period between April 1908 and August 1914, with the overall strength regularly achieving over 90 per cent of their establishment.³⁹¹ A key element that enabled units to maintain their strength was the support garnered from employers in the county, with several leading figures in the county's industrial life being particularly active in their support of the Territorial Force, especially in raising new units amongst their employees.³⁹² Nevertheless, the County Association also experienced problems, such as the disappointment of the Territorial Reserve initiative, as well as frustration in their dealings with the War Office regarding issues such as allowances and terms of service that had an impact on recruitment and retention.

Similarly, the experiences of the county's Territorial Force Association during the first year of the Great War had much in common with other Associations. Lord

³⁹¹ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 23 May 1914

³⁹² R. Knowles, 'The History of the Norton Territorials – 2nd North Midland Field Company, Royal Engineers', *The Norton Canes Historical Society Journal* (1978-79), p. 7 and *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 14 December 1907 & 5 March 1910

Kitchener's decision to create a separate "New Army" instead of using the Territorial Force as a means of expansion "*militated against its recruitment*".³⁹³ This situation is supported by the recruiting figures in Staffordshire, where just over a third of recruits were direct enlistments to the Territorial Force.³⁹⁴ This ratio reflects the nationwide recruiting figures up to December 1915 when direct Territorial Force enlistments ceased.³⁹⁵ The Territorial Force were also compelled to make their own arrangements to enlist and process recruits while at the same time the County Territorial Force Association was still expected to support general recruiting initiatives in Staffordshire from which their units would not benefit. That the Territorial Force Association in Staffordshire was the first to push for conscription, the issue that the majority had opposed in peacetime, shows that the members were realistic enough to realise that this duplication of effort was damaging and unable to sustain the requirements for manpower that war on an industrial scale demanded.

The general failure of Haldane's concept that the Territorial Force would be a 'real national army' in which all classes would be represented is also reflected in the social composition of the units in Staffordshire. In peacetime, officers continued to come from the landowning, business and professional classes and public or grammar school educations. The rank and file within Staffordshire units were predominantly working class and their employment closely reflected the types of manufacturing associated with their hometowns. The locations of the unit drill halls in the industrial centres to the north and south of the county also resulted in units being heavily dependent on attracting working class recruits. Similarly, the evidence available on the ages and

³⁹³ I.F.W. Beckett, 'The Territorial Force', in I.F.W. Beckett & K. Simpson (eds.), *A Nation in Arms* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), p. 129

³⁹⁴ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 26 December 1914 and *Staffordshire Weekly Sentinel*, 15 May 1915

³⁹⁵ *ibid*, p. 230

length of service of pre-war Territorials in the county conforms to national trends.³⁹⁶ Not until after the outbreak of war in August 1914, with the inclusion of “Non-Manual” contingents, did the social composition of Staffordshire’s Territorial infantry units achieve anything close to Haldane’s original ideal of ‘a Hegelian Army’. Nevertheless, post-war recruits to the ranks of Staffordshire’s Territorial Force units principally came from working class backgrounds. Officers commissioned into Staffordshire units during the early period of the war also came from similar backgrounds to their pre-war counterparts. Even those men who were awarded commissions from the ranks still conformed to these social and educational characteristics. Though there were certain changes in the social backgrounds of the recruits, the “Territorial” character of Staffordshire units was preserved during the recruiting process during this period. Separate recruiting depots, Second-Line and Third-Line units ensured that soldiers would be kept within the Territorial Force. Correspondingly, although the proportion of men who enlisted in Staffordshire units came from outside of the county did increase the vast majority of recruits still came from the same towns as their pre-war colleagues. This situation would continue until direct enlistments to the Territorial Force were abolished in December 1915.

It is also clear from the available evidence that the localised nature of Territorial recruitment, coupled with the close association between the industries in which the officers and men were employed and the Territorial Force, resulted in Staffordshire units developing a particularly strong cohesiveness. Leisure activities in particular seem to have been encouraged in Staffordshire units as a means of developing this bond and also of providing opportunities for social gatherings. These characteristics

³⁹⁶ I.F.W. Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition 1558-1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 221-22

had already been developed in Volunteer Force units in the county and were continued on the formation of the Territorial Force. These traditions were upheld following the declaration of war in August 1914, with wartime recruits being absorbed relatively smoothly within units. Once deployed to the Western Front in March 1915, the retention of a distinct “Territorial” ethos in the field developed an increased importance. Inevitably, casualties did have an impact on the composition of Staffordshire’s Territorial Force units. As a result of their attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt on 13 October 1915, the large number of casualties sustained by Staffordshire units does appear to have been the start of a steady erosion of these core values, a process that would be hastened on the abolition of direct recruitment to the Territorial Force on 11 December 1915.

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