

Child Okeford Auxillary Unit

The Auxiliary Unit in the Second World War

In November's article about the Home Guard we mentioned the "Auxiliary Unit". The Auxiliary Units were a secret resistance network of highly trained volunteers prepared to be Britain's last ditch line of defence during World War Two.

They operated in a network of cells from hidden underground bases around the UK. The units were independent of the Home Guard and were "cherry picked" mainly from the Home Guard but also ARP (Air Raid Precautions Wardens), Observer Corp and recruited from reserved occupations such as game keeping and quarry workers. Apparently, when selecting initial patrol members, the Chief Constable of Dorset was asked the names of the really good poachers that they could not catch!

The Child Okeford Patrol was part of Dorset Group 5, Blandford, along with:

- [Hinton St Mary Patrol](#)
- [Leweston Patrol](#)
- [Motcombe Patrol](#)
- [Pimperne Patrol](#)
- [Plush Patrol](#)
- [Stourton Caundle Patrol](#)
- [Woodyates Patrol](#)

The area commander from 19th September 1940 to 3rd December 1944 was Major [Robert Gerald Hamilton Wilson](#).

The operational base or "Hide" is on private land in woodland on Hambledon Hill and comprised a Nissan hut sunk into the ground and completely covered. It had a concrete floor, 200 gallon water tank, living area, kitchen, toilets and was equipped with field telephones to observation posts. The unit became fully operational in 1941 and the patrol members received special training from Lord Lovat's No 4 Commando who were based in Dorset for a period.

The main military targets would have been the camp in Blandford and the railway through it. There were few targets in the immediate area of Child Okeford and it may be that the patrol was intended to disrupt German traffic on the narrow roads and especially negotiating Steepleton Bends.

Clearly it was essential that the Auxiliary Units were kept secret (even from their wives!) and it

was only in 1974 that details started to emerge. More information including photographs of the remains of the Hide taken in 2018 can be found on the excellent web site www.staybehinds.com.

I am indebted to John Pidgeon for his considerable help in putting this article together. If you have any stories about the Child Okeford Home Guard or Auxiliary Unit Patrols John (jcpidgeon@btinternet.com) and I would love to hear from you.

Auxiliary Unit: Dorset Group 5 Blandford, Child Okeford Patrol

Name Rank and DOB	Address and Occupation	Posted	
		from	until
Chambers, Sergeant Alfred Henry 25/01/1894	Gold Hill Cowman 1938 ARP (Air Raid Precautions) Warden	19 Jun 1940	03 Dec 1944
Arnold, Private Edward Morris 01/08/1902	1 The Hollow Gardener	Unknown	03 Dec 1944
Bee, Private Harry 19/11/1885	Bulls Cottage, Duck Street Cow and Poultry Man	19 Jun 1940	03 Dec 1944
Brown, Private Stanley Leonard 15/05/1900	Hayward Lane Heavy Worker, Avon & Stour Catchment Board	27 Feb 1942	03 Dec 1944
Cooper, Private Frederick George 24/01/1913	Gold Hill Baker (Journeyman)	09 Sep 1940	14 Apr 1943
		<i>Joined HM Forces</i>	
Eveleigh, Private Cyril Raymond 10/07/1926	Gold Hill Father, Baker	12 Oct 1942	17 Jul 1944
		<i>Joined HM Forces</i>	
Fudge, Private James Francis 19/01/1904	Shroton Common Butchers Roundsman	Unknown	03 Dec 1944
Richardson, Private Jack 13/05/1926	Chisel Cottage, Hanford Father, Farm Labourer	12 Oct 1942	11 Sep 1944
		<i>Joined HM Forces</i>	
Rogers, Private Samuel John White 29/11/1901	Kings Row Permanent Way Railway Worker	25 Jul 1941	14 Apr 1943
		<i>Joined HM Forces</i>	
Tuffin, Private Henry George 11/10/1913	Gold Hill Butchers Journeyman	06 Sep 1940	03 Dec 1944
Tulk, Private Harold Ernest 02/08/1915	Chisel Cottage, Hanford Estate Woodman	12 Nov 1941	03 Dec 1944

Please note: As mentioned, the “Hide” is on private land as is the Ice House we

mentioned in last month's article about The Home Guard. Please respect this privacy and do not be tempted to trespass to see either site.

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