

A SURREY MILITARY ASSESSMENT FOR 1805

WITH COMMENTARY BY

R. OFFOR

SURREY. At the General Quarter Sessions of the Peace of our Sovereign Lord the King, holden at *Saint Mary Newington*, in and for the County of *Surrey*, (by Adjournment) on THURSDAY, the 14th Day of *March*, 1805:

WHEREAS the Inspector-General of the Army of Reserve, in conformity to the Provisions of an Act of Parliament, passed in the last Session of Parliament, for establishing and maintaining a permanent additional Force for the Defence of the Realm, hath transmitted to this Court a Certificate of the Deficiencies and Vacancies that remain to be filled up in the Quota for this County, amounting in Number to One Thousand and Ten; AND WHEREAS, by the Provisions of the said Act, the Justices of the Peace, assembled at such General Quarter Sessions, are required to assess the Penalty of Twenty Pounds for each Private Man so certified to be deficient; NOW THIS COURT, in pursuance and by Virtue of the said Act of Parliament, doth hereby Rate and Assess upon each Town, Parish, and Place, within this County, the respective Sums hereinafter mentioned, being the due Proportion each Town, Parish, and Place, within this County, the respective Sums hereinafter mentioned, being the due Proportion each Town, Parish, and Place is liable to pay of the Sum of Twenty Thousand Two Hundred Pounds, the full Amount of the said Penalties.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Ash and Normandy	51	9	0	Clandon (West)	61	0	0
Albury	74	15	0	Clandon (East)	37	0	0
Alfold	12	9	0	Cranley	130	0	0
Ambledon	12	9	0	Dunsfold	67	11	0
Arlington	54	0	0	Elsted	53	16	0
Bramley	50	0	0	Peperharow	16	11	6
Chiddingfold	60	0	0	Ewhurst	111	0	0
Chert	48	17	0	Farnham	397	18	0
Compton	35	15	0	Frensham	38	0	0

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Godalming	416	19	0	Molesey (East)	1	15	0
Hascomb	13	16	0	Molesey (West)	1	11	8
Haslemere	25	12	0	Newdigate	1	6	8
Horsley (West)	28	4	0	Petersham	41	13	4
Horsley (East)	12	9	0	Richmond	135	15	0
Merow	11	3	0	Stoke Dawbernon	0	13	4
Wisley	3	6	0	Talworth	1	6	8
Ockham	62	6	0	Walton-upon Thames	65	10	0
Pirbright	44	18	0	Walton-upon-the-Hill	1	6	8
Puttenham	37	0	0	Weybridge	23	18	4
Seal and Tongham	35	15	0	Mortlake	251	9	0
Send and Ripley	92	5	0	Putney	112	19	0
Shalford	61	6	0	Wimbledon	57	14	0
Shere	136	7	0	Barnes	99	6	6
St. Martha	25	19	0	Merton	116	6	0
Wanborough	2	7	6	Battersea	651	10	0
St. Mary	97	14	0	Wandsworth	596	7	0
St. Nicholas	26	18	0	Roehampton	90	2	1
Stoke	30	3	0	Tooting	204	6	5
Trinity	75	1	0	Addington	28	17	6
Thursley	44	5	0	Chaldon	30	6	3
Windlesham	125	4	0	Coulsdon	39	3	9
Witley	126	17	0	Croydon	1028	6	3
Woking	114	2	0	Saundersstead	46	16	3
Wonersh	61	6	0	Moredon	52	18	9
Worplesdon	116	7	0	Cheam	78	10	0
Abinger	40	0	0	Sutton	95	13	9
Capel	100	0	0	Wallington	82	7	6
Dorking	340	0	0	Carshalton	118	18	9
Orkley	20	0	0	Beddington	98	10	0
Wootton	100	0	0	Mitcham	422	11	3
Byfleet	20	0	0	Lingfield	152	5	0
Chertsey	120	0	0	Horne	62	12	6
Egham	120	0	0	Tandridge	38	10	0
Frimley	40	0	0	Crowhurst	12	7	6
Horsell	40	0	0	Oxstead	105	6	3
Pyrford	20	0	0	Limpsfield	119	1	3
Thorpe	20	0	0	Godstone	113	11	3
Ashtead	1	15	0	Bletchingley	74	16	3
Banstead	7	5	0	Titsey	36	0	0
Bookham (Little)	18	4		Chelsham	22	3	9
Bookham (Great)	4	6	8	Warlingham	54	11	3
Chessington	0	16	8	Wooldingham	26	7	6
Cobham	46	13	4	Tatsfield	9	2	6
Cleygate	20	18	4	Farley	9	16	3
Cuddington	0	6	8	Catterham	12	11	3
Ditton (Long)	2	0	0	Buckland	16	13	9
Ditton (Thames)	24	0	0	Betchworth	147	11	3
Epsom	28	5	0	Charlwood	78	0	0
Effingham	23	0	0	Kingswood	31	17	6
Esher	24	11	8	Newdigate	28	18	9
Ewell	26	0	0	Leigh	61	10	0
Fitcham	1	13	4	Horley	69	13	9
Ham	23	1	8	Reigate (Borough)	126	15	0
Headley	1	18	4	Reigate (Foreign)	105	16	3
Kew	22	18	4	Chipstead	67	12	6
Kingston	98	6	8	Gatton	16	0	0
Leatherhead	44	1	8	Nutfield	31	17	6
Mickleham	0	15	0	Merstham	92	8	9
Maldon	1	11	8	Burstow	53	2	6

		£	s.	d.			£	s.	d.	
St. George,	} Southwark,	928	0	0	Camberwell . . .	544	16	6		
St. Saviour,		356	19	6	Rotherhithe . . .	477	8	6		
St. John,		489	10	0	Streatham . . .	325	4	0		
St. Thomas,		208	0	0	Clapham . . .	256	15	0		
St. Olave,		387	10	0	Bermondsey:					
Lambeth . . .		2135	10	0	(Land Side)	510	16	0		
Newington . . .	664	5	0	(Water Side)	327	18	0			
Christchurch . . .	911	6	0					838	14	0
Clink . . .	796	1	6							

BY THE COURT.

Lawson.

The document here transcribed has recently been acquired by Mr. J. Wilson Haffenden who has kindly agreed to its reproduction. It is in double foolscap of which the second leaf is blank. A leading authority on county history does not recall having seen such a return elsewhere.

The historical background is that most serious threat to the security of our island between the coming of the Armada and our own time, the invasion threat of Napoleon I in the heyday of his career from 1803 to 1805. The situation is well known to all, especially to those familiar with the Martello towers and the Hythe Military Canal of the south-east coast, but in fact the whole country was roused: hill-tops were everywhere crowned with beacons, and defence forces were enlisted in inland areas far removed from proximity to the Continent—the city of Leeds, for instance, raising a corps under its mayor, Benjamin Gott. A significant factor is that conscription for the regular army is no new feature of our own day, for the Act of Parliament which authorized this financial levy distinctly embodies the principle of compulsory service.

Information on the subject can be gained from the general histories of England for this period, but a good detailed account of the affair will be found in that somewhat unattractive manual of our early school days, J. Franck Bright's *History of England, Period III, 1689–1837, 1896*, from p. 1244 onwards. Élie Halévy (*A History of the English people in 1815*, Vol. 1, 1924) has also much information, and Clode (*Military forces of the Crown*, Vol. 2, Ch. 15, 1869) is our chief military authority. The Acts of Parliament involved are set out in the *Statutes at Large*.

The Peace of Amiens of 1802 was but an armed truce. The final and longest phase of the Napoleonic struggle opened with the declaration of war of May 18, 1803, during Addington's feeble administration which displaced Pitt's when the latter resigned owing to George III's opposition to Catholic emancipation. Addington passed a *Military Service Act* wherein attention was concentrated on raising a force of 70,000 militia and an "Army of Reserve" of 50,000 men, selected by ballot, to serve for four years; there was also an enrolment of 300,000 volunteers between the ages of seventeen and fifty-five. There followed the encampment

of the Grand Army at Boulogne and the equipment of flat-bottomed boats for invasion. A comparison with pre-1939 days may be read in Pitt's arraignment of the dilatoriness of the government. The terrible threat to national safety only twenty miles from our shores led Pitt, in the debate of April 23, 1804, to express a determined preference for the Army of Reserve as a reservoir for the regular army. Six days later Addington resigned and on May 10 Pitt formed an administration.

Despite derisive comments from the Opposition, Pitt had thoroughly aroused the national spirit; he resolved effectively to stimulate the recruitment of the regular army and to reduce in numbers the inefficient militia. Therefore on June 29, 1804, he passed the *Additional Forces Act* entitled "An Act for establishing and maintaining a permanent additional force for the defence of the realm, and to provide for his Majesty's regular forces; and for the gradual reduction of the militia of England" (*Statutes at Large*, 44 George III, cap. 56).

I quote the passages relating to the three south-eastern counties: "the quotas to be maintained and supplied in the manner directed by this Act by each of the several counties in England shall be as follows; that is to say

"For the county of *Kent* (exclusive of the Cinque Ports) one thousand seven hundred and twenty eight.

"For the county of *Surrey* one thousand seven hundred and eighty one.

"For the county of *Sussex*, exclusive of the Cinque Ports, one thousand and seventy,"

and so on for the remaining counties.

Reference is made to the Act passed in the previous Parliament to raise additional forces: the number deficient was to be ascertained by the clerks of general meetings to be held forthwith in each county. A series of forms, A to D, was issued for the use of the Inspector-General and of special meetings in each Lieutenancy for recording the names of men who had not served and had "paid penalties or found substitutes," and for the number and names of "men who have been enrolled for each of the divisions, parishes, and places" The same geographical terminology is employed in our document. Clerks were to be fined £20 for each offence of neglecting to return. Form D was a final statement of numbers and deficiencies, and there were provisions for constant re-examination in case of error.

The wording of the Act is obscure and the proposed machinery complicated, so it is perhaps better to use J. F. Bright's summary of the position. There was a deficiency in Addington's Army of Reserve, 9,000 out of the full complement of 50,000. On the other hand, the militia had too many men, 74,000 instead of 48,000, so it was to be reduced in number accordingly, and the original number of 48,000 together with the 9,000 not yet raised for the

Army of Reserve was to form an additional force from which 12,000 were to pass annually into the regular army. "Divisions, parishes, and places" were to be assessed at a certain number of men, and, if they failed to supply the quota, a moderate fine was to be imposed which was to be credited to the general recruiting fund. The men found were not obliged to serve abroad, but were to form second battalions to take the place of first battalions on foreign service. It was, however, imagined that there would be no difficulty in finding 12,000 for foreign service, although there was strong opposition to the principle involved, and the Bill was only carried by a majority of 40.

The financial position is described by Clode, *Military Forces*, Vol. 2, Ch. 15. By the 1803 measure each man chosen by ballot, had to serve or provide a substitute or pay £20, half to the parish half to the Receiver-General. Parishes were fined £20 for each man deficient. By our 1804 Act, the Reserve Army was to be recruited through parish officers. Clode states it increased the expense of recruiting by £14 for each man raised, £20 for each one not raised, so that it paid the parish to find anything short of £34 and was held to entail an unfair burden on the landed community.

On October 1, 1805, steps were taken for the payment of bounties to churchwardens for each man recruited, whilst the £20 fine was to be paid for each man not recruited. The Inspector-General was instructed to transmit to Justices in Quarter Sessions certificates of deficiencies and vacancies, and the Justices were to assess the penalty of £20 for each man so deficient, apportioned as to parishes and united parishes according to the Militia Act, the sums accruing to be applied towards the raising of men for the Additional Force. If the men were subsequently found, three-quarters of the amount was to go, under order of the Secretary at War, towards the discharge of any other fine. The poor rates were not involved, as there was a separate district and special rate according to poor relief regulations. The residue of the money in the case of unfit men or deserters went to the relief of the poor rate. The Court of Exchequer could fine delinquent justices.

In our document allocation according to "divisions, parishes and places" is illustrated: Chert (Churt) for instance is not a parish. Spelling of place-names is erratic. The complicated system of allowances is presumably responsible for the fact that only in column two from Abinger to Thorpe are the penalties multiples of £20. The grouping traverses the hundreds of Surrey from west to east, concluding with South London, Southwark being divided into its five parishes. Only Croydon, Lambeth, and the five parishes of Southwark have a fine exceeding £1,000. The name Guildford does not appear as such, but under the headings St. Mary, St. Nicholas, Stoke, Trinity.

With the victory of Trafalgar and Napoleon's consequent transference of his army south-eastwards to defeat Austria and Russia at Austerlitz, the invasion threat ceased. Any form of

compulsion in military service was never popular, whilst the landowner contended that he was charged £26 in order that the public purse to which he himself contributed might be spared £4. Pitt was dead. On May 23, 1806, Lord Grenville repealed the Act and relieved the counties of the fines for deficiencies then due from them.