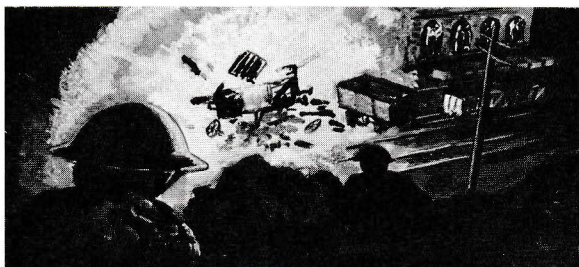


'Unfortunately my wife did not know where I was. My brother died during my Balmoral guard and so tight was the security that the news did not reach me until after his burial.'

Back in the North East his group continued with their night training. Each patrol was armed with a specially-built, high-powered .22 rifle with telescopic sights. Their familiarity with this weapon was awesome. 'Each man was trained to hit a man directly in the eye in darkness.' The weapon was silenced and a near-miss in war conditions would have spelled disaster. It had to be a direct, quick-killing shot—it there was doubt, the men had to use their Fairbairn daggers for a silent kill. Former patrol members today can still demonstrate the knifing methods used. They were also taught killing karate-type blows.

Their effectiveness was fully demonstrated during a mock raid on Acklington airfield when the patrols broke silently through the prepared defences, over-powered the guards, and within a couple of hours demonstrated their ability to blow up every installation and aircraft on the field. 'It was a terrible night—we were all soaked to the skin within minutes—but we got through unseen. I was with my second-in-command and together I recall sneaking up on a guard who was just walking round and round a plane on the runway. I grabbed him behind the neck and told him: 'Move and you're . . . dead.' We tied him up then went around the planes chalking swastikas everywhere to prove we could have put them out of action. Meanwhile, the rest of the men were chalking swastikas over the main buildings.

'At one point, just for fun, we set off a flare, then climbed the roof of the main building and watched the guards running about. Towards daylight the two of us gave ourselves up and were taken to the guardroom. Another couple of my chaps were there, so to avoid boredom we shoved a guard into the toilet. We then told the other guard—on duty with bayonet and loaded rifle—that his mate had disappeared into the toilet and



hadn't emerged. He went to look and we bundled him inside, too, and went off to cause a bit more bother.'

Mr Hall recalled that they were years of 'great fun' but the strain of the early days proved testing. 'The worst part was not being able to tell families what we were doing. And, of course, during the time when invasion was a real possibility, there was the worry of what would happen to our families after we went to earth and started to fight. I had one sergeant at Stobswood, for instance, who had seven children. I used to worry particularly about him.'

Preparations made for the threatened invasion in the



1st October, 1944.

Major R.C. HALL

The G.O.C.-in-C, Scottish Command has received a letter from Colonel The Hon. Sir Piers-Legh, Equerry-in-Waiting to H.M. The King, of which the following is an extract:—

"The King has commanded me to convey an expression of his appreciation of the manner in which Auxiliary Units detachments carried out their duties whilst His Majesty was in residence at Balmoral Castle.

This has afforded The King much gratification and He would be grateful if you would inform all concerned."

Colonel
Commander,
Auxiliary Units.

c/o G.P.O.,
Highworth, Wilts.

The letter acknowledging Mr Hall's service as Royal Guard at Balmoral

North East were extensive, and only now have come to light. In the mid-Northumberland area, the resistance men secretly earmarked for destruction key points on railway lines and bridges. On one secret manoeuvre they even blew up colliery railway wagons to give practical effect to their knowledge. 'It caused quite a bit of bother—no one knew, of course, that we were responsible.'

The bridge carrying the main line through Percy Woods, near Morpeth, had a stone removed ready for an explosive charge. Potential supply routes for an invading force were reconnoitred and made ready for blowing-up; railway points were examined and made ready for sabotage. 'We would have made things damned awkward for Jerry,' said Mr Hall.

Today he lives a life of quiet retirement among the roses in his extensive gardens.

He has a constant reminder of his days as a resistance leader in the North East. He had a finger and thumb blown off when demonstrating explosives to his men in the 1940's. His other hand still bears the 1914-18 war wounds.

Adapted from 'The Secret Army' by Eric Forster, published in the Newcastle Evening Chronicle.

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The venue for Cricket Club year the wea wind occasio dance moven periods of pl

Liverpool and evenly match

Manchester's Bradley (22) and steadily against kept down the s time Manchester durable John H skipper, well valuable 63, en at 139 for 9. F took 4 wickets 1 for 30, Kerr 2 1 for 16.

With two Liverpool receive when Harnden score at 1. How Richardson (32) McEntyre (20) hopes although lost in attempts

The final over Dawson together for a win. Ivan took Dawson's replacement, G ball for a single face the bowling wide: Murray e caught by Joul Dewdney came add to the score

A Wilkinson ball po Johnson's off-stump

