

WAsc 1988

AA Defences
of Waltham Abbey
in WWI

ANTI-AIRCRAFT DEFENCES OF WALTHAM ABBEY IN WORLD WAR 1

The first British anti-aircraft guns (3" guns of the 20cwt type with a 360 degree traverse and 90 degree elevation) were authorised in March 1914. By August 1914 four had been delivered, which were installed at the four most important targets in order of priority:-

1. Admiralty magazine, Chattenden
2. Admiralty magazine, Lodge Hill, north of Chatham
3. Royal Gunpowder Factory, Waltham Abbey
4. powder magazines, Purfleet

By mid-1915 the Waltham Abbey gun had been supplemented by a 1 pounder "pom-pom", which is known to have seen action on at least two occasions:-

17 August 1915 - fired at german navy Zeppelin L10 which flew down the Lea Valley en route to bomb Walthamstow, Leyton, Leytonstone and Wanstead.

7 September 1915 - fired at german army Zeppelin LZ74 which had just bombed greenhouses at Cheshunt (possibly mistaking them for workshops?) and later dropped an incendiary in Fenchurch Street (the first bomb ever dropped on the City).

(The crew of this gun must have been unusually alert, as on both occasions this was the only gun that fired.)

Information from:-

HOGG, I. V. ; 1978; "Anti-aircraft - a history of air defence"; Macdonald and Jane's, London.

Elan - The Air Defence of Britain 1914-18
C. Cole E.F. Chepman

G. Wyatt
11/4/1995

Sutton Farm - Rainham

Bombs

- 5th Oct 1940 - No. 15 Cordite Stove (SS).
- 15th Nov 1940 - Parachute bomb on Millhead (last water mill destroyed).
- V2 fell on Highbridge Street.
- V2 near RDX plant south site.

- opportunistic bombing was less devastating than the two apparently -accidental explosions in early 1940.

18 January 1940 Cordite Mixing House (63).

20 April 1940 Cordite Mixing House (46).

- Reports at supp 5/752
- " " /753

(Explosion stimulated rebuilding in Breezeblock).

Defence of the factory:

to the west - pill boxes - one survives

to the south - Quinton Hill ring of pill boxes.

A/A defence at c. 1km distance.

Alan Williams turret to west of Grand Mag.

Octagonal emplacements - Mrs.Bellamy's.

Formally closed on 28th July 1945.

Reopened on 30th July 1945 as an experimental station of the Armament Research Department.