

On the 19th February it was decided that the London Defences should be handed over to me, and on 26th February it was further decided that I should be responsible for the whole of the Anti-Aircraft Land Defences of the United Kingdom.

Previous to this I had given considerable attention to the subject of Anti-Aircraft Defence, and I submitted a scheme for consideration, which was approved and has been carried out.

During the winter there was little hostile activity in this direction, but since I assumed charge of these Defences enemy airships and aeroplanes have invaded the country whenever conditions have admitted.

The numbers of airships taking part in a raid have varied considerably. On April 3rd only one was engaged, whilst in the raid of September 2nd-3rd not less than 12 ships are believed to have taken part.

In all, nineteen raids have been made by German airships and seventeen attacks have been made by aeroplanes.

The damage done has been comparatively small, and nothing of any military importance has been effected.

Taken as a whole, the defensive measures have been successful. In very few cases have the enemy reached their objective. They have been turned, driven off, seriously damaged by gunfire, and attacked with great success by aeroplanes. Seven have been brought down, either as the result of gunfire or aeroplane attack, or of both combined.

The work of the Royal Flying Corps and of the Gun and Light Detachments, including the Royal Naval Anti-Aircraft Corps, has been arduous and has shown consistent improvement; the guns and lights have been effectively handled, and the Pilots of the Royal Flying Corps have shown both skill and daring. All are deserving of high praise.

Close co-operation with the Navy has been maintained, and the R.N.A.S., by their constant and arduous patrol work on the coast and overseas, have shared in successful attacks on the enemy.

5. The work of training troops for overseas, both drafts and new units, imposes a great and

continuous strain on the Staffs, on the Schools, and on the Reserve Formations.

All have responded loyally to the demands made on them, and I consider special credit is due to those Officers and N.C.O.'s who, with little previous military knowledge, have become most efficient Instructors and have thus liberated a great number of Officers and N.C.O.'s for duty overseas.

The country owes a special debt of gratitude to a great number of senior retired Officers who—although by their age and services they had earned an honourable rest—came forward to perform whatever duties might be required of them until serving Officers were available to take their places.

I desire here to place on record my appreciation of the valuable help in training matters that I have consistently received from the departments of the War Office concerned.

6. I am forwarding a list of those whose services are, in my opinion, deserving of special consideration, but I am anxious to acknowledge in this despatch my deep indebtedness for the valuable assistance I have received throughout from—

Major-General F. C. Shaw, C.B., Major-General, Gen. Staff.

Brevet Colonel (temp. Br.-Gen.) H. C. Lowther, C.V.O., C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., Brig.-General, Gen. Staff.

Colonel (temp. Maj.-General) H. A. L. Tagart, C.B., D.S.O., late 15th Hussars, Deputy Adj. and Qr.-Mr.-General.

Colonel Sir D. F. R. Dawson, G.C.V.O., C.M.G., Inspector of Vulnerable Points, and largely instrumental in organising the Volunteer Forces.

I have the honour to be

Your Lordship's obedient Servant,

FRENCH, Field-Marshal,

Commanding-in-Chief, Home Forces.

The Secretary of State for War,
War Office.