

TERRITORIAL ARMY (NORTHERN IRELAND)

In the United Kingdom House of Commons at a commons sitting on the 2nd March 1937;

Sir Hugh O'Neill asked the Secretary of State for war whether he had considered the possibility of raising units for the Territorial Army in Northern Ireland.

The Secretary of State for War (Mr Duff Cooper) replied;

It is proposed for form a Territorial Army and Air Force Association for the County of Antrim and to entrust it with the responsibility for raising and administrating certain units of Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers required for manning of coast defences at Belfast, together with an Auxiliary Air Force Squadron which will be formed by conversion of the Ulster Special Reserve Squadron. I am glad to announce that Viscount Massereene and Ferrand, Lord Lieutenant of the County, has consented to be president. I hope that the Association will be formed in the near future, and that recruiting for the units in question will start immediately.

GREY POINT BATTERY

HISTORY OF THE 188th (ANTRIM) HEAVY BATTERY ROYAL ARTILLERY (TERRITORIAL ARMY)

Early in the year 1937, it was decided to raise Territorial units in Northern Ireland and the County Antrim Territorial Army and Air Force Association was formed, with the Lord Lieutenant of Co. Antrim – Lieutenant Colonel the Rt. Hon Viscount Massereene and Ferrard D.S.O., as President. The other original members were –

Chairman	-	Captain D.C. Lindsay
Vice-Chairman	-	Captain A. O’N.C. Chichester M.C.
Military Members	-	Colonel E.R.Charley C.B.E.
	-	Major F. G. Hill O.B.E.
	-	Captain J.R.A. McFerran
	-	Lt. Colonel O.B. Graham D.S.O.
	-	Captain J. Maynard Sinclair
Air Force Members	-	Flight-Lt. L.R. Briggs (late R.A.F.)
	-	Major R.G. Heyn O.B.E.
Other Members	-	St. Clair Dobbs Esq., D.L. (Antrim County Council)
	-	Lt. Commander R.M. Harcourt (Belfast Corporation)
	-	Professor Gregg Wilson O.B.E. D.Sc.(Queens University)
Co-opted Members	-	Major W.J. English V.C.
	-	Captain J.D. Nicholl O.B.E., M.C.
Secretary	-	Major H.C. Randall (late the Cheshire Regiment)

8th June 1937

On June 8th 1937, the Association were requested by the War Office to form two units, the first Territorial units ever to be formed in Ireland, namely the 188th (Antrim) Heavy Battery, Royal Artillery (T.A.) and the Antrim (Fortress) company, Royal Engineers (T.A.).

During the summer and autumn of 1937 the formation of the two units proceeded.

The establishment of the 188th (Antrim) Heavy Battery Royal Artillery (TA) (hereafter referred to as “the Battery”) was fixed at 6 officers and 179 other ranks (not to include the Adjutant and Permanent Staff Instructor).

On April 1937, Sergeant C.C. Clark, Royal Artillery was posted to the Battery as P.S.I. and arrived in Belfast on 16th April 1937.

OFFICERS

On May 7th 1937, Lt. Colonel C.B. Graham , D.S.O. Reserve of Officers, late the Rifle Brigade of Garnerville House, Strandtown, Co. Down, a director of the York Street Flax Spinning Company was gazetted Major, Royal Artillery (TA) and posted to command the 188th (Antrim) Heavy Battery Royal Artillery (TA).

About the same date Sgt C.C. Clark, Royal Artillery from Lough Swilly Defences was posted to the Battery as P.S.I.

On June 25th 1937 Captain John Natthew Blakiston-Houston (late 11th Hussars(Prince Albert’s Own)) of Roddens, Ballywalter, Co. Down was gazetted Captain R.A.(TA) and posted to the Battery.

During the months of June, July and August 1937, about 67 applications for T.A.. Commissions were received by the Secretary of the Co. Antrim T.A. & A.F. Association. As the total number of officers required were only 12 (6 in the Battery and 6 in the Royal Engineers Company) a selection Board was formed consisting of –

Lt. Col O.S. Graham D.S.O.	President
Captain J. Maynard Sinclair	(C.O. Fortress Company)
Fl. Lt. L.R. Briggs	(C.O. A.A.F. Squadron)

The Board interviewed a large number of candidates for commissions and finally the following gentlemen were selected as the original four subaltern officers of the Battery –

1. Samuel Alexander Johnston TOPPIN
Director of Philip Johnston & Sons Ltd, Jennymount Mills, Belfast
2. Michael Henry MARSHAM

- Land and Estate Agent, Shane's Castle, Co. Antrim.
3. Edgar Donald Reid SHEARER.
St. Elmo, Brookhall, Londonderry (an Irish Soccer International)
 4. Thomas Fitzpatrick COOKE.
Caw House, Londonderry – Director of J. Christy Ltd, Millers & Merchants.

On August 1st 1937 – B.Q.M.S. Martin McMinn (Pensioner late R.A.) was appointed B.Q.M.S. of the Battery.

Applications forms for these gentlemen to be gazetted as 2nd Lieutenants Royal Artillery (TA) were forwarded through H.Q. Northern Ireland District to the War Office in September and October 1937.

On September 1st 1937 Major Daniel McVicker, M.C. R.A.M.C. (Retired) was gazetted Major R.A.M.C. (TA) and posted to the Battery as Medical Officer.

On August 14th 1937, Lt. Colonel the Rt. Hon Viscount Massereene and Ferrand D.S.O. was appointed Honorary Colonel of the Battery.

Recruiting for the Battery was started on August 7th 1937 – a certain number of recruiting posters were displayed outside the Drill Hall (32 Great Victoria Street) which was then in process of being fitted up, and in other places. The response was quite remarkable, the first recruiting night a crowd of between three and four hundred men assembled inside and outside the drill hall. Each recruit (or would-be recruit) was required to fill up a form giving his age, occupation and previous record and was interviewed by the Adjutant. Some of the recruits (including the majority of those who had previously served as N.C.O.'s in the Army) were also interviewed by the Commanding Officer. Many of the original applicants for enlistment were not considered suitable and were not accepted.

The first batch of 16 recruits (including six men who had previously served in the Army as N.C.O.'s) was enlisted on August 17th 1937. They were all personally seen by the Commanding Officer, examined and passed medically fit by Major McVicker and attested by the Adjutant.

During the remainder of the month of August and during September and October, further batches of recruits were enlisted, and by October 15th 1937, the strength of the Battery was one hundred and five (105) men.

On September 14th a Cadre Class, consisting of 15 of the recruits (who were considered likely to make N.C.O.'s) nearly all of whom had previously served in the Army, was formed. This class drilled on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday nights from 7:30 to 9:30pm under the Adjutant and P.S.I. Some visits were also paid to Grey Point Battery on Sunday mornings for instructional purposes.

On October 13th 1937 the men of the Cadre class were given temporary promotion, 4 sergeants, 4 Lance Sergeants, 4 Bombardiers and 3 Lance Bombardiers being made (all temporary).

The four temporary Sergeants were appointed No. 1 of sub-sections as follows –

A Sub Section	Sgt J.F.L. Harvey
B Sub Section	Sgt A. McConnell
C Sub Section	Sgt John Stuart
D Sub Section	Sgt F.W.R. Allen

On Tuesday October 19th 1937, the entire Battery assembled in the Drill Hall (32 Great Victoria Street, Belfast) and after an address by the Commanding Officer (Lt. Colonel O.B. Graham D.S.O.) the men were sorted out into the four sub-sections (A,B,C & D) under the numbers I have mentioned above. On this occasion 104 N.C.O.'s and men were present (out of the total strength of 105) and the one absentee was unable to attend owing to a telegram that his father was seriously ill in Scotland.

On October 29th 1937 the four gentlemen mentioned, Messrs Toppin, Marsham, Shearer and Cooke, were gazetted to the Battery as 2nd Lieutenants Royal Artillery (TA) their seniority (in the above order) dating from 22nd October 1937. On November 1st 1937, the total strength of the Battery was 6 Officers and 114 N.C.O.'s and men (not including the Adjutant and P.S.I.)

The Battery did not take part in any ceremonies connected with Armistice Day – November 11th 1937; no drills took place on 11th November 1937. During October, November and December 1937 regular evening lectures and drills were held at 32 Great Victoria Street, consisting chiefly of foot drills, gun drill, gas training etc. Sub-sections drilled as follows; A and B on Mondays and Wednesdays, C and D on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the Cadre class of N.C.O.'s on Fridays. Some instructions visits were also paid to Grey Point Fort Battery on Sunday mornings, chiefly by the Cadre class and a few others (volunteers).

The strength of the Battery on the 30th November 1937 was 6 officers and 124 N.C.O.'s and men (not including the Adjutant and P.S.I.)

A laying class and Range finding /D.R.F. class was started on 6th December 1937. The London Gazette for December 7th 1937 contained the announcement that Major Daniel McVicker, M.C., R.A.M.C. (TA), the Battery Medical Officer, was promoted to Lieut-Colonel R.A.M.C. (TA) as from November 6th 1937.

During the Christmas and New Year holiday period no drills took place from Friday December 7th 1937 until Monday January 3rd 1938, but the recreation room in the drill hall was kept open on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays for billiards, table tennis etc.

December 31st 1937 strength of Battery 6 Officers and 135 other ranks/ establishment 6 Officers and 179 other ranks.

Honorary Colonel	Colonel the Rt. Hon Viscount Massereene & Farrand D.S.O.
Commanding Officer	Lt. Colonel O.B. Graham, D.S.O.
Battery Captain	Capt. J.M. Blakiston-Houston
Subalterns	2 nd Lt S.A.J. Toppin
	2 nd Lt M.H. Marsham

	2 nd Lt E.D.R. Shearer
	2 nd Lt T.F. Cooke
Adjutant	Major R.L. Carew R.A. (Rtd)
P.S.I.	Sgt (a/B.S.M.) C.C. Clark R.A.
B.Q.M.S.	Martin McMinn R.A. (Rtd)
Medical Officer	Lt. Colonel Daniel McVicker M.C., R.A.M.C. (TA)

1938

Drills were resumed after the Christmas recess, on January 3rd 1938.

As before the Right Section (A & B Sub) on Mondays and Wednesdays and the Left Section (C & D Sub) on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The N.C.O.'s Cadre Class on Fridays. An N.C.O. examination (written and practical) was held on 14th January 1938. The results were most encouraging.

On 24th January 1938 Sgt Backwell commenced Duty as a second P.S.I. (sanctioned by the War Office for three years), having arrived from Scotland Defences on 21st January 1938.

Captain C.V. Jones Royal Artillery (T) of the Lancs and Cheshire Heavy Brigade Royal Artillery (TA) who had been transferred to Belfast late in 1937 as Assistant Manager of the Belfast Steamship Company Ltd. was attached to the Battery as from January 1st 1938. This Officer took charge of the Officer's Mess, Sergeant's Mess and Canteen on 25th January 1938.

The following permanent promotions were made by the Commanding Officer early in February to date from the 15th January 1938.

To be B.S.M.	J.F.L. Harvey
To be Sergeants	A. McConnell (No.1 "B" Sub Section)
	John Stuart (No.1 "C" Sub Section)
	F.W.R. Allen (No.1 "D" Sub Section)
	J.A. Hughes (No.1 "A" Sub Section)
	W.H. Stroud
	G.E. Stewart
To be Bombardiers (L/Sgts)	R.M. Nesbitt,
	R.N. Crossland
	Thomas Hill
	H. Kitson
	H.McC Gray
To be Bombardiers	Alexander McKay
	T.A. Gray
	Cyril Fox
	E.T. Allen
	Harold Young
To be Lance-Bombardiers	Alfred Richards **

Henry Officer **
W. Curry
W.H. Black
N. Macklin
J. Bell
J. Petticrew
G.G. Rodgers
H. Irvine
** To remain temporary Bombardiers

On Friday 25th February 1938 the Battery held its first “social function” a smoking concert in the Drill Hall, 32 Great Victoria Street, Belfast. The following Officers were present, Capt. C.V. Jones R.A. (TA), 2nd Lieutenants Toppin, Marsham, Shearer and Cooke and Major R.L. Carew (Adjutant) also about 70 N.C.O.’s and men. B.S.M. Harvey was an excellent Chairman and it was a most enjoyable evening. Colonel Graham was unavoidably absent.

On Wednesday evening 8th March 1938, the C.R.A. Western Command, Colonel M.E. Mascal, D.S.O., O.B.E., Royal Artillery visited the Drill Hall, saw the Left Section of the Battery on parade and at gun drill. He said we “had a good show running” and was struck by the smart appearance of the men. The strength of the Battery was 6 Officers and 145 N.C.O.’s and men, not including the permanent staff.

On 9th March 1938 a letter was received from Captain J.M. Blakiston-Houston Royal Artillery (T) applying to resign his commission in the T.A. This was forwarded to N.I.D.

On Saturday March 12th 2nd Lieutenant M.H. Marsham Royal Artillery (T), acting B.S.M. Clark and 15 Territorial N.C.O.’s of the Battery proceeded to Shoeburyness for a fortnight’s Gunnery Course. The party (which was accompanied by the Adjutant as far as Shoeburyness) had quite a send-off from Belfast. The N.C.O.’s were Sergeant Allen, Stuart, Hughes and Stewart. L/Sgts Nesbitt, Hill and Kitson. Bombardiers Fox, A. McKay, T.A. Gray. Lance-Bombardiers H. Curry, J. Bell, G.G. Rodgers, H. Irvine and W.H. Black.

The party returned to Belfast on Saturday March 26th 1938, they very much enjoyed the course and the authorities at the Coast Artillery School were much impressed by their keenness and good turn-out.

On Friday night April 1st 1938 the combined Sergeants Mess of the Battery and the Antrim(Fortress) Company Royal Artillery (TA) held its first smoking concert which was a great success.

On the night of April 12th representatives of the local press, The Belfast Newsletter, Belfast Telegraph and Northern Whig visited the Drill Hall.

On April 20th 1938, Captain J. M. Blakiston-Houston’s resignation of his commission in the Battery was gazetted.

On the evening of Tuesday May 3rd 1938, the retiring G.O.C.N.I. District, Major General Sir James Cooke-Collis K.B.E., paid a farewell visit to the Battery. In the course of conversation he said that "at there are no regular Gunners stationed at Belfast, it ought not to be a saluting station". On May 3rd 1938 Captain Charles Victor Jones Royal Artillery (T) of the Lancashire and Cheshire Heavy Brigade Royal Artillery (TA) was transferred to this Battery, Vice-Captain J.M. Blakiston-Houston, as from April 20th 1938. This officer was already attached to the Battery, being in Belfast.

On May 12th at 8:30pm. The Director-General of the Territorial Army, General Sir Walter M.St.G.Kirke M.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.C. (Colonel Commandant Royal Artillery) visited the Drill Hall and inspected the Left Section of the Battery on parade and at gun drill in gas respirators. He was accompanied by the new G.O.C. Northern Ireland District, Major General R.V. Pollock, C.B.E., D.S.C. and Staff Officers. He said the Battery was a "good show". The Battery was at that time at full establishment. – 6 Officers and 179 N.C.O's and men (not including permanent staff).

The first week end "camp" of the Battery was held on Saturday and Sunday May 14th & 15th. The Battery assembled at the Drill Hall, 32 Great Victoria Street, Belfast at 3:00pm on Saturday 14th, preceded by buses to Holywood Barracks, where, after carrying out a foot drill parade and going through the gas chamber, they spent the night. On Sunday 15th, in the morning a gun drill parade was carried out at Grey Point and after dinner in Holywood Barracks the unit returned to Belfast and dispersed.

The following were present;

- Lt. Colonel C.B. Graham, D.S.O. (Commanding Officer)
- Major R.L. Carew (Adjutant)
- Captain C.V. Jones
- 2nd Lt. E.D.R. Shearer, T.F. Cooke.
- B.S.M. Harvey, B.Q.M.S. McMinn,
- Assistant B.S.M. Clark and Sgt Backwell (P.S.I.'s)
- 8 Sergeants and 108 junior N.C.O.'s and Gunners

First Annual Camp June 5th – 19th 1938

The first annual camp of the Battery was held at Grey Point Fort from Sunday June the 5th to June the 19th 1938.

An Advance Party of nine gunners under Bombardier McKay proceeded to Grey Point on Wednesday June 1st as part of the combined Advance Party of the two units – 188th Battery and Antrim (Fortress) Company Royal Engineers (TA) under C.Q.M.S. Hurst Royal Engineers (T).

As the camp was to be handed over to the Lancs and Cheshire Heavy Brigade Royal Artillery (TA) the Battery & A (F) Company were allowed the tentage for the a/m brigade. This meant that both units got considerably more tentage than they were entitled to by regulations but threw more work on the advance party whose duty it was to pitch the tents. This work was done during practically continuous rain and wind which at times rose to gale force. In spite of these adverse conditions the tents were very well pitched and the only mishap was the ridge pole of one store tent which was broken by a gust of wind.

The Advance Party were catered for very satisfactory by the Sandes soldiers Home (from Holywood Barracks).

On Sunday 5th June 1938 the Battery assembled at 9:00am at the Drill Hall, 32 Great Victoria Street, Belfast and proceeded by road, in six buses hired from the Northern Ireland Road Transport Board and two 3 ton lorries, to Grey Point Fort, the move was combined with that of the Antrim (Fortress) Company Royal Engineers (TA).

Indeed throughout camp, the two units "mucked in" together as regards all arrangements – Officers Mess, Sgts Mess, Men's Messing, etc. The Officer Commanding Battery Lt. Col. O.B. Graham, D.S.O. acted as Camp Commandant and Battery Adjutant, Major R.L. Carew, Royal Artillery, as Camp Adjutant in addition to his other duties.

The first week of the camp was devoted to Battery drill, laying and range-finding, also signalling and foot drill.

On Friday June 10th a manning exercise was carried out, in combination with the Antrim (Fortress) Company Royal Artillery (TA), Grey Point Fort being manned by the Right Section and Kilroot Battery by the Left Section of the Battery.

The G.O.C. N.I. District – Major General R.V. Pollock, C.B.E, D.S.O., and the C.R.A. Western Command – Colonel M.E. Mascall, D.S.O., O.B.E., visited both units during the manning exercise and appeared to be impressed with the keenness of all ranks.

On Saturday 11th June 1938 in the morning a sub-section competition (in marching drill, turn-out and gun drill) was carried out for a silver cup presented by Lt. Colonel O.B. Graham, D.S.O., this was won by the A Sub-Section. In the afternoon a combined athletic sports meeting of the Battery and the Antrim (Fortress) Company Royal Engineers (TA) was held. In spite of the very wet weather this event went off very successfully. The sports were organised by a committee, the principal members of which were – 2nd Lt's R.A.S Brene, Royal Artillery (T), E.D.R. Shearer, Royal Artillery (T), B.S.M. J.F.L. Harvey and others.

The Band of the Royal Ulster Constabulary played at the Sports and also at the guest night in the Officers Mess (of the combined units) that evening, and was greatly appreciated.

On Sunday June 12th 1938 a parade service (for all denominations except Roman Catholics) was held in camp by the Rev. C.I. Peacocked (Rector of Dundela parish). The R.U.C. Band played at this service and for a short time afterwards. All Officers of both units and about 140 N.C.O's and men of the Battery and about 40 of the Fortress Company were present at the service, also the C.R.A Colonel Mascall.

During the second week of camp, practice was carried out with 1" and 3pr S.C.

On Monday June 13th 1938 the Right Section fired 1" A.R. And on Tuesday June 14th 1938 the Left Section did so, both day by day. On Wednesday and Thursday respectively, the Right and Left Sections carried out both day and night practice with 3pr S.G. Day series were carried out by Case II (D.R.F.) and Auto-sights. All night series were carried out by Auto-lights.

On Wednesday morning June 15th once Case II series was taken by Lt. Colonel O.B. Graham, D.S.O., all the remaining series were taken by the four subaltern officers. Layers were numbered and were changed round between each series. All series were carried out in accordance with a target (representing a destroyer) towed by the War Department vessel "Sir Robert Whigham". Major L.R. Sulverswell, M.C., Royal Artillery acted as Director of Practice and Lieutenant I.V. Dykes Royal Artillery as Range Officer. The C.R.A. – Colonel Mascall witnessed every series.

On Friday June 17th 1938 the layers and range tankers were classified by Captain T.A. McLoughlin, Royal Artillery (T) and 2nd Lieutenant K.A. Marsham, Royal Artillery (T) assisted by B.Q.M.S. (I.C.) Bridge, B.Q.M.S. (I.C.) Carlow.

22 layers and 9 range tankers passed the test successfully. In the afternoon a comic football match between the officers and sergeants was won by the officers by one goal (probably off side!!) to nil.

After tea a sherry party was held at the Adjutant's house and in the evening a guest night in the Officers Mess at which the following, inter alia, were present –

Major General R.V. Pollock G.O.C. Northern Ireland District

Lt. Colonel R.L. Hobday, D.S.O., G.S.O.2, Northern Ireland District

Lt. Colonel the Viscount Bangor (late) Royal Artillery

Captain J.M. Blakiston-Houston (late Captain 188th Heavy Battery Royal Artillery (TA)

Saturday June 18th 1938 the Lancashire & Cheshire Brigade arrived around 9:30am in fifteen buses and two ten-ton Lorries. The Battery returned to Belfast in these buses, a small rear party under the Adjutant and B.Q.M.S. remaining to load up the transport on arrival.

The Battery de-bussed at the County Down Railway Station, formed up and marches through the streets of Belfast to the drill hall, 32 Great Victoria Street, Belfast. After partaking of refreshments and handing in great coats, overalls, etc., the personnel dispersed to their homes.

Thus ended the first Camp of the 188th (Antrim) Heavy Battery Royal Artillery (TA)

PRESENT AT CAMP – 5TH - 19TH JUNE 1938

OFFICERS

Lt Colonel O.B. Graham D.S.C.

Commanding Officer & Camp Commandant

Major R.L. Carew R.A. (Retd)

Adjutant & Camp Adjutant

Capt. C.V. Jones, R.A. (T)

Left camp 15.6.1938

2nd Lt. S.A.J. Toppin R.A. (T)

Right Section Commander

2nd Lt. M.E. Marsham R.A.

2nd Lt. E.D.R. Shearer R.A.

Left Section Commander

2nd Lt. T.F. Cooke

Lt. Colonel D.McVickers M.C., R.A.M.C (T) Medical Officer
Capt. T.A. McLoughlin (Lancs & Cheshire Heavy Brigade R.A. (TA) attached

PERMANENT STAFF

Asst B.S.M. C.C. Clark and Sgt H.G. Backwell, R.A.	
Battery Sgt Major	J.F. Harvey
Battery Q.M.S.	McMinn
No.1 A Sub Section	Sgt Hughes
No.1 B Sub Section	Sgt McConnell
No.1 C Sub Section	Sgt John Stuart
No.1 D Sub Section	Sgt G.S. Stewart
N.C.O. in command Signallers	M.W. Stroud

A total of 152 NCO's and men completed the whole camp and 6 NCO's and men attended for shorter periods, the establishment being now 164 NCO's and men. All Officers, except Capt. Jones who was suddenly called away by his firm, Coast Lines Ltd, about half-way through camp, attended for the full period.

Both the G.O.C. and the C.R.A. expressed themselves as pleased with the Battery's training and shooting at camp. The weather was vile to start with (wind and rain squalls) but improved as the camp went on.

There were several humorous incidents during camp – salutes with spoons, sticks etc. in the right hand.

One NCO appeared to have an inflated idea as to the amount of "Bisto" required for the troops messing.

The keenness displayed by all ranks was most refreshing and a great encouragement to the Permanent Staff Instructors.

The following helped with the training and / or administration, etc. and were most useful and helpful.

Captain H.A. Houndsell, R.A.	Captain I.G. Western Command
Captain R.A. King R.A.	Adjutant R.A. Northern Ireland District
Lieutenant I.V. Dykes R.A.	As Range Officer
Lieutenant W.T. Brierly, D.C.M. R.A.	Armaments Officer R.A. N.I.D.
Master Gunner Day	
B.Q.M.S's (I.G.) Budge and Carlow	
Cook-Sgt Peet Lancashire Regiment	

During the night series on Wednesday and Thursday, June 15th and 16th the searchlights were very efficiently handled by the Antrim (Fortress) Company Royal Engineers (TA) commanded by Capt. J. Maynard R.E. (T). Thanks were also due to Lt. Colonel Sir Charles Wickham (I.G.) and Mr R.D. Harrison (City Commissioner) for the R.U.C. Band on June 11th and 12th.

On September 1st 1938 the responsibility for manning the Coast Defence guns at Kilroot and Grey Point Batteries was transferred from 178th Heavy Battery Lancs & Cheshire Heavy Brigade Royal Artillery (TA) to the 188th (Antrim) Heavy Battery Royal Artillery (TA). At the same time the responsibility for the searchlights was transferred to the Antrim (Fortress) Company Royal Engineers (TA) thus putting the Coast Defence of Belfast on mobilization in the hands of its own local Territorial troops.

On September 5th 1938 in connection with Belfast civic Week (celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of Belfast becoming a City) a parade of Imperial Service units was held. The parade formed up in May's Market at 8:00pm, marched past the Lord Mayor Belfast (who took the salute) at the City Hall and back via Castle Junction and Victoria Street to May's Market.

2nd Lieutenant M.H. Marsham and 90 N.CO.'s and men of the Battery took part in the parade and their marching was favourably commented on by the Officer Commanding Troops Belfast, Lt. Colonel G.S. Breirs, D.S.O. commanding 1st Battalion The Welsh Regiment. AS complimentary letter (on behalf of the Lord Mayor and Civic Week committee) was afterwards received from Captain (District Inspector) Morrison, R.U.C. who organised the parade.

EMERGENCY 1938

On September 26th 1938, the Battery was embodied and ordered to man the defences of Belfast Lough. The order was received at 32 Great Victoria Street about 3.30pm on September 26th 1938. All ranks were ordered to report at the Drill Hall as soon as possible and the Battery concentrated at Grey Point on the night of the 26th and morning of the 27th, proceeding in buses and lorries. During the night 26th and 27th most of the men (less two detachments on duty in the port) were billeted in the Church Hall (of St. Johns Church, Helens Bay) which is within a quarter of a mile of Grey Point, by arrangement with the Rev. Canon Capsey, the rector.

On September 27th the Left Section under the command of Lieutenants Shearer and Cooke, proceeded in buses and Lorries to Kilroot and the N.C.O.'s and men of the Right Section proceeded to pitch tents at Grey Point.

On Sunday October 2nd 1938 a voluntary service was held at Grey Point by Rev. C.I. Peacocke (Rector of Dundela). As the Emergency became less acute so men were allowed to proceed on leave at 24 hours' notice. A similar service was held at Kilroot by Rev. J. Richardson and Rev. R.J. Wilson. The weather became very unpleasant on Sunday night and by the morning of Monday 3rd October many of the tents had been blown down. On October 4th fifty per cent of the men were sent on leave and on October 6th, the whole unit returned to Belfast by buses and Lorries, all tentage etc. being returned to Ordnance. The final move was carried out most expeditiously, the transport arrived at Grey Point at about 2.45pm and by 6.10pm the camp was clear. There was practically no sickness during the embodiment and in spite of the unpleasant weather the health and spirits of the troops remained excellent throughout. The Battery was complimented on its mobilization by the General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland District and by the Governor of Northern Ireland.

Just after the Emergency, authority was received to recruit the Battery up to 20 per cent over establishment.

EMERGENCY 1938

OFFICERS

Commanding Officer	Lt. Colonel O.B. Graham D.S.O.	Grey Point
Adjutant	Major R. L. Carew R.A.	Grey Point
Right Section Cmdr.	2 nd Lieut. S.A.J. Toppin, R.A, (T)	Grey Point
	2 nd Lieut. M.A. Marsham	Grey Point
Battery Captain	Capt. C.V. Jones	Kilroot Officer Commanding
Left Section Cmdr.	2 nd Lieut. E.D.R. Shearer	Kilroot
	2 nd Lieut. T.F. Cooke	Kilroot
B.S.M. Harvey		Grey Point
B.Q.M.S. McMinn		Grey Point
No. 1 A Sub Section	Sgt J.A. Hughes	Grey Point
No. 1 B Sub Section	Sgt McConnell	Grey Point
No. 1 C Sub Section	Sgt J.A. Stuart*	Kilroot
No. 1 D Sub Section	Sgt G.C. Stewart	Kilroot
P.S.I.'s	Asst B.S.M. Clark R.A.*	Grey Point
	B.S.M. Miles R.A.*	Kilroot

- Sgt Stuart did very well as acting B.S.M. at Kilroot
- Asst B.S.M. Clark did excellent work in command of Battery Officer and of messing at Grey Point.
- B.S.M. Miles did very good work as Camp Quarter Master Messing at Kilroot.

On 19th October 1938, Bertrand Dawson Cotton was commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant Royal Artillery (TA) and posted to the Battery.

On the 29th October 1938 Bombardier Stott and two gunners proceeded on a week's Q.F. Course at the Coast Artillery School, Shoeburyness.

Sgt J.A. Hughes and L/Sgt Kitson attended a Q.F. Course at the Coast Artillery School, Shoeburyness from November 7th to Nov 12th 1938.

A Battery "Smoker" was held in the drill hall on November 18th. About 90 N.C.O's and men were present and it was a very enjoyable evening.

1939

28th January 1939, 2nd Lieutenant S.A.J. Toppin R.A.(T) promoted to Captain (L.G. 34597 of 10th March 1939.

Drills were resumed after the Christmas and New Year holidays on 9th January 1939.

Major R.L.W Carew resigned his commission in the T.A. and vacated his appointment as Adjutant of the Battery (D.R.O 67 of 31st January 1939)

Captain I.V. Dykes, R.A. took over as acting Adjutant of the Battery (D.R.O. 157 of 7th February 1939)

On 15th February 1938 William Kenneth Harbinson commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant R.A. (T) and posted to the Battery. (L.G. No. 34598 of 14th February 1939)

1st April 1939 Lieutenant J.A. Nelson R.A. appointed Adjutant.

22nd & 23rd April 1939 the Battery proceeded to Grey Point for a weekend camp and fired its allotment – 1 x sub calibre ammunition. Major Patchell I.G. Western Command came over and remained until 1st May 1939.

29th & 30th April 1939 the Battery proceeded to Grey Point and carried out its annual manning exercise, Brigadier Mascall retiring C.R.A. Western Command, came over for the last time.

30th April 1939 2nd Lieutenant M.H. Marsham and 2nd Lieutenant E.D.R. Shearer promoted to Lieutenant.

16th May 1939 Lieutenant J.A. Nelson R.A. appointed temporary Captain in T.A. while fulfilling present appointment (pay and all; as a Lieut.)

19th May 1939 W.M. Mackean appointed 2nd Lieutenant in the Battery.

4th to 18th June 1939, Annual Camp at Grey Point, Helens Bay. This camp was noticeable for the reason that it was the first occasion on which the Battery fired full calibre ammunition.

24th August 1939 proceeded to man War Stations at Grey Point And Kilroot.

3rd September 1939 – Embodiment.