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The Cross of Sacrifice
Imphal War Cemetery
With the poppy wreaths laid in memory of
Major Hugh WALKER and Major 'Sandy' LAMBERT

A CONCISE BIOGRAPHY OF:

MAJOR GENERAL E. A. E. TREMLETT

A concise biography of Major General Erroll Arthur Edwin TREMLETT, C.B., T.D., *g.*, who served in the British Army from 1914 until 1946. During the Second World War, he was one of the foremost anti-aircraft commanders in the British Army.

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A Concise Biography of Major General E. A. E. TREMLETT

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Major General Erroll Arthur Edwin TREMLETT, C.B., T.D., g



Above: A portrait of Major General Errol TREMLETT taken in 1944.

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<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw220663/Erroll-Arthur-Edwin-Tremlett>

Introduction

Major General Erroll Arthur Edwin TREMLETT, C.B., T.D., *g.*,¹ was an officer in the British Army between 1914 and 1946, although he resigned from the Regular Army in 1939 and served throughout the Second World War as a Territorial Army officer.

His life is an interesting story of a boy placed into the care of relatives at an early age, who then ended up in Christ's Hospital School in London for destitute boys. Although he wished to pursue a career in the Army, his poor academic achievements ruled that out. Leaving school aged sixteen years, he was unsettled and within a year, he had travelled to Canada alone and without means.

The major event in his life came with the outbreak of the Great War. He returned to England and was accepted as an officer in 1914. He served throughout the First World War, but then like so many officers of this period, his career progressed very slowly through the 1930's. Believing that another war was unlikely after the Munich agreement, he resigned his commission, but was granted a commission in the Territorial Army. During the Second World War, he rose in prominence to become one of the foremost commanders of anti-aircraft formations in the British Army. He commanded the brigades that were responsible for countering the threat caused by the V1 flying bombs in 1944 and 1945, raising their effectiveness to a high level.

Family Background and Early Life

Erroll Arthur Edwin TREMLETT was born on 22 December 1893 in London. He was the youngest son of Colonel Edmund John TREMLETT, an officer in the Royal Artillery. His mother was Mary Janet Augusta SIMKINS, the daughter of William Lacam SIMKINS and Belinda Isabella BLAKE. She married Colonel Edmond Howard GORGES in 1865 and had children from that marriage. She divorced her first husband and married Edmund TREMLETT in 1879, and had issue from this marriage as well. He had two older brothers, Alan and Laurie, and an elder sister, Violet.²

When TREMLETT was born, his father was already fifty-six years of age. His father died on 28 June 1903, when Erroll was just nine years' old. When Errol was born, the family were living in Knightsbridge in London, but they moved to Cheltenham before moving back to London to live at 24, Woodstock Road, Bedford Park in west London. Errol's father died when the family were living back in London.

Bedford Park was a new, 'garden' town built in west London. Erroll's two brothers were both involved in the financial industry. Alan was a stockbroker and Laurie was a banker. Violet married a German banker after the First World War and went to live in Germany.

¹ For a portrait of Major General TREMLETT taken in 1944, please see:

<http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw220663/Erroll-Arthur-Edwin-Tremlett>

² It is not clear from his own autobiography whether both of his brothers and his sister were full siblings or half siblings. TREMLETT refers to both terms in describing them in his book.

At about the age of six years, TREMLETT went to live with his father's sister Georgina SQUIRE, and her husband the Reverend Graham SQUIRE.³ The Reverend SQUIRE was the Vicar of Sunningwell in Berkshire. The SQUIRE's formally adopted TREMLETT, who was sent to school at Ardingly in Sussex. It is clear from his autobiography that this was not a happy time for the young TREMLETT. For various unstated reasons, the adoption failed. As a consequence, the SQUIRE's stopped paying for his schooling, which meant that TREMLETT had to leave there. He was pragmatic about leaving Ardingly, as he was not happy there and in some ways it was a relief to leave.

TREMLETT was then sent to the Bluecoat School, otherwise known as Christ's Hospital in Greyfriars in London. Established in 1552 in Greyfriars, it specialised in schooling boys from poor and destitute families. TREMLETT received a King's nomination to attend the school. It was a very tough existence for TREMLETT and the other boys. He states that the 'masters were wholly undesirable and the food by ordinary standards shocking'. Supper was just two biscuits. The boys were marched everywhere in fours, with discipline very strict, but at least it was an education. Unless a boy was exceptionally gifted, he was required to leave on reaching sixteen years' of age. TREMLETT did not shine and struggled with his learning.

He wanted to join the Army, but his poor educational achievement ruled this out. On leaving Christ's Hospital school, TREMLETT was placed with at a stockbroker's office, but he did not settle and hated the office. With little future in the United Kingdom, TREMLETT spoke to one of his brothers who bought him a second class boat ticket for Canada and gave him £10 in cash for him to live on during the journey and on arrival in Canada. He was aged just seventeen years when he left the United Kingdom bound for a new life abroad. TREMLETT's brother had given him introductions to a friend who lived in Duck Lake in north Saskatchewan. On his arrival, TREMLETT found this place to be 'very isolated', but started work as a hired hand on a farm. There were in effect no neighbours, with the nearest town of Skipton being over ten miles away. He couldn't settle, so left the farm and moved to the town of Prince Albert with just \$30 in his pocket and with no personal possessions.

When he arrived at Prince Albert, he found a room in a house in which to lodge in. The house was full of bugs, being very dirty and run-down. TREMLETT got a job with a timber firm as a timber checker. Not long after his arrival, he went down with dysentery and became quite ill.

When he recovered, TREMLETT was offered a job as a ferryman on a cable ferry across the Saskatchewan River. He had to pull the ferry across the river manually by use of the cable, but if the cable was broken or snagged, he had to row passengers across the river. The ferry was owned by the RANDALL family, with whom he went to live while he worked for them.

³ TREMLETT suggests he was sent to live with the SQUIRE family when he was aged about six years of age. He does not state why he went to live with them, but he does not mention his mother until after he returned from Canada. His father would have been aged about sixty-two years of age, dying four years later, so his father's ill health may have been an issue.

On the move again soon, TREMLETT left to go and live with a bachelor called Guy COATES. He learned to play poker and also to ride a horse, both skills being useful for later life. He did not stay long, building his own homestead in the wilderness. He lived by trapping animals and shooting game. To supplement his living, he helped out occasionally on local farms. But again loneliness for this young man became an issue, so TREMLETT went to live in the city of Edmonton. Although he lived in the city, TREMLETT would return to his cabin on regular occasions to go hunting, shooting and fishing; all pursuits he enjoyed.

First World War

In August 1914, war erupted in Europe between the United Kingdom, France and Russia against the Central Powers (Germany and Austro-Hungary). Although he was many miles away from the conflict, like many young men, TREMLETT felt he should return to the United Kingdom. In October 1914, just short of his twenty-first birthday, TREMLETT sailed for England. On his return, he went to see his mother who was still living in Bedford Park, London. Keen to serve his country, a cousin of TREMLETT's introduced him to a friend of his who worked in the War Office. TREMLETT went to the War Office and managed to obtain an interview. There was no selection procedure as many would recognise today, the interview was straightforward and TREMLETT was accepted for military service as an officer.

TREMLETT went to an Officer Cadet Training Corps unit as a Cadet. The course was only a couple of months in duration, with him passing out and being commissioned in the rank of Second Lieutenant (on probation) in the Royal Field Artillery (Special Reserve) on 16 December 1914.⁴ He joined a field brigade in the United Kingdom, which was sent to France arriving on 26 March 1915. On arrival in France, several newly arrived units and men from the 28th Division and 32nd Division were exchanged between the 5th Division, which had been part of the original British Expeditionary Force sent to France in August and September 1914. It is believed that TREMLETT transferred to an artillery unit within the 5th Division.

Just to the south of the Belgian town of Ypres, was a feature that was known as 'Hill 60'. The Germany Army captured the hill in their 1914 offensive. The French had made preparations to raid the hill, but these evolved into a decision to capture the hill by the British. The British 5th Division took over responsibility for this attack, which began on 17 April 1915

The British gained control of the hill quickly and with few casualties, but had created a problem by forming a salient into German territory. Fighting continued through April, with the hill being subjected to regular and intense bombardments. The Ypres salient became the scene of much fighting in the next few years, with Hill 60 becoming synonymous with death and destruction.

⁴ In his autobiography, TREMLETT gives the date of his commission as 14 December 1914, the date of 16 December is taken from the London Gazette.

Having applied for a Regular commission in the British Army, TREMLETT was granted such a commission with effect from 30 January 1916; his seniority dating from 16 September 1915 (service number 13234). He had served one year and forty-five days in the Special Reserve, so the boy who wanted to join the Army, but had been unable to do so due to his poor academic attainment, now through the fortunes of war found himself a Regular Army officer in the British Army. TREMLETT must have impressed his senior officers with his leadership as in order to gain a commission in this manner under Paragraph 3 of Army Order 333 of 1915, a person had to be nominated by their commanding officer, who then supported their application.

During the fighting around Ypres, TREMLETT was wounded. He left France on 31 August 1916 for a period of leave in the United Kingdom to recuperate. He returned to France on 30 April 1917. TREMLETT was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant on 1 July 1917, and on 17 of that month, he was appointed an adjutant for an artillery field brigade. An Adjutant (who usually held the rank of Captain) was the commanding officer's senior staff officer. He was responsible to the commanding officer for the organization, administration and discipline of the battalion. In the field, he was also the battalion operations officer, responsible for drafting daily orders and the writing of the battalion war diary. His operational functions were

- To record the Commanding Officers verbal orders and in writing;
- To implement the Commanding Officers orders, plans and policies;
- To organise the battalion office.

In this last function, he was assisted by the serjeant clerk and two clerks. When the commanding officer attended order groups at brigade headquarters, or held his own order groups the adjutant would usually attend. The adjutant would also usually accompany the commanding officer on visits to the batteries and other units

TREMLETT held the role as adjutant until 13 February 1919. Having commenced the appointment in the rank of Lieutenant, he was promoted to the rank of Acting Captain with effect from the 3rd August 1917, ie, within one month of taking up his new role. When hostilities ceased on 11 November 1918, TREMLETT continued in his role as adjutant with his unit in France. For his war services, he was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and Victory Medal. He was Mentioned in Dispatches on 21 May 1918.

Between the Wars

Shortly after the war ended, TREMLETT relinquished his post of adjutant for one artillery unit on 13 February 1919, probably as that unit demobilised, only to be appointed as the adjutant of another artillery unit on 18 March 1919. He did not remain in post for long, as he was successful in his request to attend the Equitation Course at Weedon in 1920. At this time, horses were a fundamental and integral part of the British Army. Not only were they used by the cavalry, but the artillery used them to pull some of their guns and they pulled supply waggons. However, the horse was an important facet of the life of most officers in the British Army. Senior officers used them to ride out on exercises and on inspections, but they were also used by officers for recreational purposes. Many officers hunted and played polo, with an officer's ability as a horseman a key indicator of their social standing within their regiment.

The course at Weedon last a full year. Each student rode for five hours every working day, and often at weekends. With his previous experience of riding in Canada as a young man, TREMLETT thoroughly enjoyed this course and impressed with his riding skills. He described the course as 'Great fun!'

On successful completion of his course, TREMLETT was posted to the Riding Establishment of the Royal Horse Artillery. This was a much sought after posting, with most artillery officers keen to obtain their 'jacket' by being posted to the elite element of the Royal Regiment of Artillery. The Riding Establishment was located at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich in south-east London. TREMLETT's 'job' was to teach the cadets at Woolwich to ride. There was also the opportunity for involvement in many sports. TREMLETT played polo at least three afternoons each week and also went hunting with the Woolwich Drag Hunt. It was while he was based at Woolwich that TREMLETT started to play cricket, which was to become such an important part of his life.

Eventually, it was time for TREMLETT to leave Woolwich, and he was given a posting as Assistant Adjutant to the 5th Brigade, Royal Horse Artillery based at Aldershot. His commanding officer was Lieutenant Colonel A. A. GOSHEN, D.S.O.**, an officer with an extremely distinguished record from the First World War. TREMLETT became good friends with his Colonel, whom he respected greatly. His two best friends were fellow subalterns, Hugh ROSSITER and Herbert LUMSDEN. Both later transferred to the 12th Lancers, with LUMSDEN reaching the rank of Lieutenant General, only to lose his life in a kamikaze attack while on-board a U.S. battleship with General McARTHUR in the South-West Pacific in 1945.

TREMLETT and his fellow subalterns saw Aldershot as a 'heavenly place', a paradise for unmarried or young married officers. For the officers based in a garrison, there was an Officers' Club, with a ballroom where frequent dances took place. In the Club there were reading rooms, a card room, sixteen tennis courts and a cricket ground. The duties of a young officer were not onerous, with great store made on an officer's social and sporting standing.

From Aldershot, TREMLETT was posted to 'O' Troop of the Royal Horse Artillery, also known as the 'Rocket Troop'. This unit was based at the artillery barracks at St. John's Wood, in north London, not far from Lord's Cricket Ground. This troop were still issued with horses, and undertook the ceremonial duties required of the Royal Horse Artillery in London. They fired salutes from their guns in Hyde Park and St. James' Park in Central London, and the troop took part in the Royal Tournament, where the riding display of the Royal Horse Artillery was then as it is now a major attraction for the visiting dignitaries and public alike.

By now, TREMLETT had spent thirteen years as a subaltern. Promotion was slow in the British Army between the wars, a period of austerity in the economy. He was thirty-four years of age and the realities of Army life were becoming apparent. TREMLETT was generally older than his contemporaries, because he had joined the Army aged twenty-one years, when they usually had joined as a cadet aged eighteen years. This meant his seniority within the Royal Regiment of Artillery suffered, with younger men above him in the Army List being promoted ahead of him.

Nevertheless, TREMLETT was appointed the Adjutant of the 85th (East Anglian) Field Brigade, Royal Artillery, a Territorial Army unit based at Artillery House, The Green, Stratford in east London. He was granted the rank of Temporary Captain, but retained the pay and allowances of a Lieutenant, and assumed the post on 21 January 1927. All the officers in each Territorial Army unit were themselves members of the Territorial Army (ie, part time soldiers), but each unit had an adjutant who was a Regular (ie, full time) soldier. The adjutant had a similar role to that in a Regular Army unit, but in addition acted as the Senior Permanent Staff Officer, advising the commanding officer on military matters, and commanding the small Permanent Staff contingent attached to that unit. TREMLETT relinquished the appointment of adjutant on 26 January 1931, on completion of the usual four years in this role, and returned to Regimental duties. On 28 July 1928, TREMLETT was promoted to the rank of Captain. So far, his career had been one of steady progression, which under the circumstances of the period, was as good as could be expected.

The next significant event in TREMLETT's career was when he was selected to attend the Gunnery Staff Course. As its name implies, this course was a key step in the career of any officer in the Royal Regiment of Artillery. The 'long' course that TREMLETT attended commenced on 19 September 1932, with four and half months at the Military College of Science. Here the students were taught the theories of wireless, optics, electricity and ballistics. Next, the students went to Woolwich Arsenal, where they learned about the workings of guns. This was followed by a period at the School of Anti-Aircraft and Coast Defence at Shoeburyness in Essex. Finally, the students completed the year-long course with attendance at the School of Artillery at Larkhill on Salisbury Plain, where there became acquainted with all aspects of field artillery. On successful completion of the course, the students were qualified as Instructors in Gunnery.

On 24 September 1934, TREMLETT took up an appointment as Captain, Instructor in Gunnery at Southern Command in the United Kingdom. This role required him to visit the artillery units within the command to both instruct them on gunnery issues, but also to inspect and report on their effectiveness. TREMLETT relinquished this role on 31 December 1936.

On 1 July 1937, TREMLETT was promoted to the rank of Major. He was now aged forty-three years and had twenty-three years' service. The age limit for retirement in the rank of Major was then fifty years' of age, and TREMLETT doubted that he would be promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel before he became due for retirement. At the time of his promotion to the rank of Major, TREMLETT was serving with a mechanised battery on the North-West Frontier of India. He wrote to the AG6 department of the Adjutant-General's Branch of the War Office to enquire about his prospects. In reply, he was told that he was 'unlikely to come up for consideration' until he was forty-nine years' of age, or he would be required to retire on reaching fifty years; of age.

Then in September 1938, there was the Munich Crisis. This is when Germany annexed the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia, but an agreement was reached between Germany, Italy, France and United Kingdom that avoided war and led to the famous phrase of 'peace in our time'. Many people, including TREMLETT genuinely believed this to be the case, as the events of September 1939 were then in the future and unknown.

The build up towards the Second World War was ironically a period when several Army officers were forced to retire or resigned their commissions. There were major grievances about Army pensions, with the War Office blaming the Treasury, and the Treasury blaming the War Office. Feeling that the likelihood of war was significantly reduced, TREMLETT decided to resign his commission, which took effect on 1 January 1939, however, he was asked by the War Office to take a commission in the Territorial Army (T.A.). This he agreed to do, so on the same day he retired as a Regular Army officer, he was granted a commission in the T.A. in the rank of Lieutenant Colonel (Major, retired pay) (Reserve of Officers). He was tasked with raising the 21st Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment in the north-west of England.

The headquarters of his new regiment was based in Liverpool. There were five batteries, the:

- 67th Battery based at Bromborough, Cheshire;
- 68th Battery at Ellesmere Port, Cheshire;
- 69th Battery at Northwich, Cheshire;
- 80th Battery in Kearsley, Manchester;
- 136th Battery in Shropshire and Crewe.

The Second World War

As war approached, the Territorial Army was mobilised on 24^h August 1939, with TREMLETT ensuring his regiment was ready for the expected German air attacks. It was just as well that these did not transpire as predicted, as there was grave shortage of the 40 mm Bofors guns that were due to equip the light anti-aircraft regiments. Most were equipped with machine guns of First World War vintage, until the supply of the Bofors guns improved in late 1940 and early 1941.

TREMLETT was well regarded, so when Major General Hugh MARTIN was appointed the Major General Anti-Aircraft of the British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.) in January 1940, he was keen to bring TREMLETT over to France as one of his regimental commanders. He was appointed to command the 54th (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. This regiment was formed in November 1938, by the conversion of the 9th Bn. The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. The Headquarters and 160th Batteries were based at Dumbarton Castle, the 161st Battery at Alexandria (in Glasgow) and 162nd at Clydebank. It went to France with the B.E.F. to come under command of III Corps.

The fortunes of fate are such that history could be so different with just small changes. Had TREMLETT not been transferred to France, he could have suffered the fate of his soldiers from the 21st Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. Now comprising the 48th, 69th and 79th Light Anti-Aircraft Batteries, and under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Martin SAUNDERS, the regiment was ordered to deploy overseas to the Middle East. They left the U.K. in December 1941, but were diverted en-route to the Far East. As they approached Singapore, Japan entered the war by invading Malaya. The convoy with the 21st L.A.A. Regiment on board was diverted to Java. The men of the regiment were captured with the surrender of Java in March 1943, then being subjugated to two and half years in captivity under the Japanese.

The 54th L.A.A. Regiment was evacuated from Dunkirk, and on its return to the U.K., it was sent to Manchester to rest and refit. This left TREMLETT ideally placed when a vacancy arose as the anti-aircraft brigade commander for Manchester. On 15 November 1940, TREMLETT was promoted to the rank of Acting Brigadier (and Acting Colonel) on being appointed the Commanding Officer of the 44th Anti-Aircraft Brigade, based in Manchester. As such, he was responsible for the air defences for the city of Manchester and surrounding localities. He had under command just four regiments, namely:

- 98th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery;
- 115th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery;
- 54th (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery;
- 76th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery.

Between 7 September 1940 and 16 May 1941, there were three major night time raids on Manchester, when five-hundred and seventy-eight tons of bombs were dropped. TREMLETT's remit as brigade commander was not an easy one. His command was geographical, with the

regiments, batteries and troops spread across a wide area. There was a shortage of equipment for the batteries, with accommodation for the soldiers sparse and often inadequate.

Moral amongst the men of Anti-Aircraft Command during this period was not good, so it was incumbent on leaders such as TREMLETT to try to improve the conditions for his troops and to raise morale. On 15 May 1941, TREMLETT was promoted to the rank of Temporary Brigadier and Temporary Colonel.

The next appointment for TREMLETT came when he was chosen to replace Major General Langley BROWNING as the General Officer Commanding the 10th Anti-Aircraft Division. He was promoted to the rank of Acting Major General on 14 February 1942 on taking up his new appointment. The division was responsible for the air defences of Yorkshire and the Humber estuary, with the divisional headquarters located in York. TREMLETT had three brigades under his command, which were the:

31st Anti-Aircraft Brigade

38th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery;
71st Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery;
43rd (Duke of Wellington's) Searchlight Regiment, Royal Artillery;
49th (The West Yorkshire Regiment) Searchlight Regiment, Royal Artillery;
54th (Durham Light Infantry) Searchlight Regiment, Royal Artillery;

39th Anti-Aircraft Brigade

62nd (Northumbrian) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery;
91st Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery;
39th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery;
40th (The Sherwood Foresters) Searchlight Regiment, Royal Artillery;
46th (The Lincolnshire Regiment) Searchlight Regiment, Royal Artillery;
84th Searchlight Regiment, Royal Artillery;

62nd Anti-Aircraft Brigade

75th (Home Counties) (Cinque Ports) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery;
96th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery;
117th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery;
59th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery;

Divisional Troops

10th Anti-Aircraft Divisional Signals, Royal Corps of Signals

As can be seen, the three brigades covered a considerable geographical area, resulting in much travelling for TREMLETT to visit all his units. By 1942, the scale of the Luftwaffe activity over the United Kingdom had declined, but some raids continued, increasingly hit and run attacks on coastal towns and night time raids.

One of the challenges was to maintain effectiveness and efficiency of units who had long periods of inactivity, but then were confronted by intense bursts of gunfire.

General PILE, the General Officer Commanding Anti-Aircraft Command, decided that by mid-1942 the structure of his command was not efficient. The command was part of the Air Defence of Great Britain, a combined organisation with Fighter Command of the Royal Air Force. Despite working closely with Fighter Command, the organisations were not coterminous. In addition, there were two layers of command between the General Headquarters and brigades in the form of corps and divisions, whereas there was only one in the Royal Air Forces, namely groups.

PILE agreed a new structure whereby the three corps headquarters and twelve divisional headquarters were to be abolished to be replaced by seven groups. This reorganisation took effect on 1 October 1942, releasing three Lieutenant Generals and five Major Generals.

London Air Defence Commander

TREMLETT was fortunate in that he was given command of the 1st Anti-Aircraft Group. This key formation was responsible for the London Inner Artillery Zone, covering the capital city. His headquarters was located at 23, Knightsbridge in central London, with his Gun Operations Room being located at Brompton Road tube station. His command also covered Windsor Castle and the Prime Minister's residence of Chequers. Under command of the 1st Anti-Aircraft Group were the 26th Anti-Aircraft Brigade (Brigadier S. K. THORBURN) covering the north of the River Thames; the 49th Anti-Aircraft Brigade (Brigadier K. A. HOLMES-TARN) covering the outer areas of north London (eg, Stanmore and Uxbridge), as well as Windsor Castle; and the 48th Anti-Aircraft Brigade (Brigadier H. C. MURGATROYD) covering south of the River Thames. When Brigadier MURGATROYD fell ill in late 1942, he was replaced by Brigadier W. H. G. ROGERS.

Covering such a politically and economically important area was bound to bring its issues for Major General TREMLETT to deal with. One of the most interesting arose when a crane hoisting an anti-aircraft gun into the back of Number 10 Downing Street broke down, leaving the gun swinging in mid-air. The Prime Minister Winston CHURCHILL was soon on the phone instructing TREMLETT to 'take the damn thing away' immediately as it was disturbing a cabinet meeting. Due to the importance and visibility of the 1st Anti-Aircraft Group, TREMLETT had to manage several visits by V.I.Ps. to anti-aircraft units in the London area.

By the time TREMLETT assume command of the air defences for London, the main blitz on London had died down, but still German air-raids continued. Overnight 17 to 18 January 1943, some seventy Luftwaffe aircraft bombed the city causing many casualties. On 20 June 1943, TREMLETT had the area of his command extended, to take in the 28th Anti-Aircraft Brigade (Brigadier H. H. C. CHRISTIE) that covered the Thames and Medway Rivers and the 37th Anti-Aircraft Brigade (Brigadier L. C. M. PEROWNE).

The number of air-raids remained steady, but Anti-Aircraft Command had come a long way in the past three years. The guns were improved, with power loading, and the radar and direction finding arrangements were far superior, so when what turned out to be the last daylight raid over London took place on 9 July 1943 by four Dornier 217 bombers, two were shot down by anti-aircraft fire. In late 1943, there was an increase in Luftwaffe activity. There was a night time raid overnight 7 and 8 October 1943, and then between 17 and 24 October 1943, London was attacked every night.

Anti-Aircraft Command was at the forefront of innovative schemes in respect of personnel management. Women were introduced into mixed anti-aircraft units, and then when additional personnel were required, Home Guard men were recruited into anti-aircraft units on a part-time or shift basis.

Due to some tensions within his command, Major General TREMLETT and General PILE organised for all five-thousand men and women from the 1st Anti-Aircraft Group to attend the Royal Albert Hall where the two senior officers addressed them about the need for more flexible and inclusive working arrangements. An additional issue was the increasing number of United States Armed Forces personnel now stationed in the U.K. This included an anti-aircraft artillery element, which had to be integrated into the air defences of London and South-East of England. One way that TREMLETT found worked well was to arrange for games of baseball to be played between U.S. and British troops.

Flying Bomb Defence Commander

Then, on 13 June 1944, the first V1 flying bomb British airspace. The War Cabinet had been aware of the increasing threat from these unguided missiles through Allied intelligence sources. General PILE responded by redeploying his limited resources to meet the new threat. Anti-Aircraft Command had recently lost no less than a third of its strength that had transferred to the 21st Army Group for the invasion of France with effect from March 1944.

Major General TREMLETT, the G.O.C. 1st Anti-Aircraft Group and Major General WHITTAKER, G.O.C. 2nd Anti-Aircraft Group meet with General PILE to discuss the new arrangements. In consequence, many regiments were moved and guns redeployed to new locations. TREMLETT gained two new brigades, the 56th Anti-Aircraft Brigade (Brigadier V. C. GREEN) and the 68th Anti-Aircraft Brigade (Brigadier H. H. C. CHRISTIE), and some R.A.F. Regiment anti-aircraft units were allocated to the 1st Anti-Aircraft Group. The V1 flying bombs now came in waves, between 7 and 22 July 1944, one-thousand and seventy-one V1's were plotted heading towards England, of which five-hundred and nine fell in London.

As the Allies pushed the German Army back into the Netherlands and Germany, the main route used by the V1s was over the North Sea and across the Essex coastline en-route to London. To meet this, General PILE created a new anti-aircraft group. Designated as the 9th Anti-Aircraft

Group, Major General TREMLETT was given command of this key formation. He assumed command on 1 November 1944, with his headquarters at Kirkee Barracks, Colchester. Major General REYNOLDS moved from Bristol to take over command of the 1st Anti-Aircraft Group. Major General TREMLETT had a large command, with seven brigades forming the group. These were the:

- 5th Anti-Aircraft Brigade – Brigadier G. R. ROWBOTHAM, C.B.E.;
- 28th Anti-Aircraft Brigade – Brigadier D. S. H. WOODWARD;
- 37th Anti-Aircraft Brigade – Brigadier D. A. LEARMONT, C.B.E.;
- 40th Anti-Aircraft Brigade – Brigadier V. R. KROHN, C.B.E., M.C., T.D.;
- 57th Anti-Aircraft Brigade – Brigadier B. C. COOKE, C.B.E., T.D.;
- 102nd Anti-Aircraft Brigade – Brigadier T. C. HARRISON, C.B.E.;
- 56th Anti-Aircraft Brigade – Brigadier V. C. GREEN, C.B.E.

In order to get the guns into the right places, new anti-aircraft sites had to be constructed. This involved about one-thousand, eight-hundred skilled men, and about seven-thousand unskilled labourers. Apart from the gun pits, accommodation and other ancillary work was required. Fifty-thousand lorry loads of hard core, mainly rubble from bomb damaged areas of London, was used in order to construct the roadways necessary for the group. While all this was going on, consideration had to be given to the welfare of the personnel, on top of which there was a major flu outbreak.

The key outcome was that Anti-Aircraft Command became increasingly proficient at destroying the V1 flying bombs. Between August 1944 to March 1945, the rate of success rose from 18% to 68% by the end. Of the five-hundred and seventy-eight flying bombs that crossed the coastline, no less than three-hundred and ninety-five were shot down or destroyed. The V1 was followed by the V2, a much more sophisticated and dangerous missile, which because of its trajectory, was extremely difficult to destroy in flight. Fortunately, the Allied forces were by now advancing into Germany, with an end to hostilities in May 1945.

Post Second World War and Retirement

With the end of the Second World War, the 9th Anti-Aircraft Group disbanded. Major General TREMLETT was posted to be the G.O.C. of the 2nd Anti-Aircraft Group, with the main task now demobilisation and the transition to a peacetime establishment. Being in the Reserve of Officers, Major General TREMLETT was released from service in the British Army, and with effect from 20 July 1946, having exceeded the age limit for liability to recall, he ceased to belong the Reserve of Officers. His service was recognised by the award of a Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath (C.B.) in the New Year's Honours List on 1 January 1944. On 28 May 1948, TREMLETT was awarded the Territorial Army Efficiency Medal (T.D.) for nine years' service in the Territorial Army, which he had joined on resigning from a Regular Commission back in

TREMLETT was a long standing sportsman. Mention has been made of his love of horse riding, hunting and playing polo, but he was an accomplished cricketer as well. Incredibly, he was still playing into his eighties, for a team called the Devonshire Dumplings. His cricket career started in the Royal Artillery in 1921. In 1927 he played for the Army, and then two years later he played for the Marylebone Cricket Club, better known as the M.C.C.. He played for them only twice over the five seasons, from 1929 until 1934. TREMLETT was a Right-hand batsman and Right-arm medium pace bowler of average ability.

TREMLETT married Dorothy Mary TREMLETT, who died after him in 1984. They had one daughter, Elizabeth Mary TREMLETT, who was born in 1931. She married a David Lyon FELLOWES in 1955. Major General Erroll Arthur Edwin TREMLETT, C.B., T.D., *g.* died on 24 December 1982, aged eighty-nine years. He is buried in St. Andrew's Church, in Kenn, Devon.



Above – The grave of Major General TREMLETT in St. Andrew's churchyard, Kenn, near Exeter in Devon.

Courtesy of: https://images.findagrave.com/photos/2012/293/99248194_135075731217.jpg

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