

A-3914-F/1/14 Army training

Summary

Arthur narrates his experience of army training which included completing physical tasks such as going through the obstacle course as fast as he could whilst avoiding barbed wire and swinging on ropes to cross over the other side. He also describes how a gas bomb was thrown into the air raid shelter that his cohort was sleeping in and they were locked in. Afterwards, he was sent to deliver a dispatch based on a map reference number which was actually the divisional army headquarters. Upon his return, the officer was very impressed with how fast he had been able to complete the task.

Transcription

AB: We had to go to another part where er some railway lines had been made into goal posts, and that railways were high up [speech unclear] and eh they were con- they were concreted in of course at bottom, and wielded in at tops to keep the top bar on but underneath were loads of er quails of barbed wire, circle of barbed wire all underneath. We had to go scrim at one side as fast as we could, and go across the top as fast as possible, and down the other side as fast as possible, then we had to eh go eh swinging on the rope to cross a wide stream of the other side and it-it had been raining heavy almost slid ourselves to death [speech unclear].

An eh when we'd done that we had to go back eh to brigade and then eh they put us in the, in the air raid shelter, one end the door were eh fastened at other one-one end, but unfastened at the other. Well, when it got to about 2 o'clock at morning, they threw a gas bomb in and shut door, fastened door so couldn't get out and I shouts "gas" straight away, and awakened them and none of us was prepared. Some of them were fast asleep, then they all, they all awakened when I shouted gas.

We went to whip us aspirator on, and then eh after so long they let us out and eh then when it got to about eh 2 o'clock at morning eh they said to me eh they gave me this map reference number and they said, "Deliver this, this dispatch to ss?? [word unclear] map reference," and when I got there it were divisional HQ, eh army. And eh had to sign a slip to say I'd taken it, the dispatch, before I set off. When I got down to take two, two slips with me, when I got to other end, they had to sign one and keep one, and sign other and give it me back, for-for me to prove that I'd taken it. When I got back, eh the eh officer said, "I thought you gone eh without dispatch," I said, "Yes I've been and come back." He said, "You can't have." I said, "I have, here's your...here's your, here's your little slip to prove it." He said, "If I sent anybody else they wouldn't have been back until tomorrow". [laughs]

[00:02:40]