

Transcript of Derrick Carnall Audio Clip

Very gruelling, started first parade twenty to eight in the morning and right till – bear in mind in January it was freezing cold, 1940 right till five o'clock and then very often you would have PT indoors or something indoors, one was in great big halls. Well, oh yeah, they didn't leave anything out. They were thorough because they were regular soldiers that trained us. We used to curse them cos they did put us through it but looking back you've got to be grateful, they prepared us for everything. I'll give a casing point they said when they gave us a rifle, they said, 'You never point that rifle at anybody, even if it's unloaded. The only time you point it at someone is if you're gonna kill them'. Now I never forgot that and I remember when – in Birmingham and the Blitz was on and I was on guard duty from ten till twelve and you have to – if someone comes you have to say, 'Halt, who goes there? Friend or foe?', and they say, 'Friend', and you say, 'Advance friend and be recognised'. They come forward and you let them by. A couple of these – our blokes came and they were taking the mickey out of me, you know, you know, muck about. Now I had the only rifle in the company that had a cut-off which is a clip that goes over the – ten rounds of ammunition so you pull the bolt back, you wouldn't get a cartridge out cos it's a cut-off – yeah, take the cut-off, very rare but I had the only one. So I pulled the bolt back and they said, 'Don't muck about, don't muck about, alright', and they came and as they advanced, I pointed the rifle down and pressed the trigger and damn it a bullet came out. It hit the ground, ricocheted between the pair of them and hit the wall and, of course, the sergeant came running out, a lovely bloke, and a couple of fellows and I said, 'It can't be my rifle'. He said, 'Give us here, quick' and what had happened I'd picked up my pals rifle, which hadn't got a cut-off. So I nearly shot one of me own blokes in 1940 [laughs]. But that shows you the training of pointing the rifle down the ground, very important. Something you never forget.