

Transcript of Video Clip with Spencer Netherstreet

I joined the Home Guard, there, that was where I learnt to really be a soldier. God, dear, oh, dear. They – we were very well equipped cos the Royal Berkshire Regiment's rump was still left at the Brock Barracks at Reading and they managed to get all sorts of equipment that the Home Guard elsewhere rarely saw. I don't know why but we had the first delivery of Tommy guns so by the time I was eighteen or just reached my eighteenth birthday I could fire a Browning machinegun and could strip it and knock it down. A Tommy gun which always fired up left, they were no good at all really and a Ross rifle, a wonderful Canadian thing with a round circular sight which you couldn't miss with, magnificent thing. The only trouble was it had three hundred – 300 calibre whereas all our rifles were 303s [laughs] so it meant you had to carry an extra bandoleer if you were going to be issued with these Ross rifles. And the joy, of course, the Vickers water-cooled machinegun which there was only one. I'm not sure whether anybody else in the country had one of these. But I learned to fire that on the Aberfield Range and I thought, you know, you ripped the thing, you see, aimed up on the target and rounded across like that but you don't with a machinegun, apparently, this one you had to attack with the heel of your hand. So, of course, my shots were going all over the place.