

Peter Lewis

Selecting Soldiers for Patrols

You tended to choose the blokes you knew wouldn't let you down. You didn't want somebody who was going to be coughing all over the place or somebody who was a little bit dim, because some of them were a little bit dim compared to others, and so you picked your best men. You'd want somebody who was pretty bright and pretty quick, to react quickly in a situation. Somebody who you knew you could rely on to do what he was told to do quickly and without any argument or anything, and who had good reactions, that was basically it. And, of course, who was good with weapons whatever it may be, whether it was a Bren gun or a Thompson sub machine-gun or a rifle. But you very soon were able to spot. I mean I'm not going to say that there were any blokes in my platoon or my company who were a dead loss, there weren't, but there was a hard core of them who were really very good at everything they did.