

History of the Home Guard

On 14 May 1940, Mr. Anthony Eden made an appeal 'to men aged between 17 and 65 who were not engaged in military service and who wished to do something for the defence of their country, to come forward and offer their services'. This led to the formation of Local Defence Volunteers (L.D.V.) whose main roles were observation, information and prevention of sabotage and catching of spies. In July 1940 at the behest of the new Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill, the Local Defence Volunteers were renamed the Home Guard. After D-Day and once the threat of invasion was no longer deemed to be credible, the Home Guard was stood down on 3 December 1944 and disbanded on 31 December 1945.

The Wiltshire Home Guard comprised 13 general service battalions, an anti-aircraft battery, and a motorised transport company.

Broad Town was in the 9TH BATTALION of the SWINDON DIVISION.

H COMPANY (Wootton Bassett)

Commander: Maj. J.M. Farrant, M.B.E.

Head Quarters: Wootton Bassett

PLATOONS

Wootton Bassett

Lyneham

Tockenham

Broad Town

Bushton

Clyffe Pypard

PLATOON COMMANDERS

Lt. F. W. Stratton

Lt. R.J. Miffln

Lt. C.G. Collett

Lt. R.C. Hicks

Lt. W.M Burbidge

2/Lt. J.E. Mapson

OFFICERS

Maj. J.M Farrant, M.B.E.

Lt. R.J. Maflln

Lt. F.W. Stratton

Lt. R.C. Hicks

Lt. C.G. Collett

2/Lt. J.E. Mapson

Lt. W.M. Burbidge

By kind permission of the Wiltshire Home Guard living History Group

<http://www.wiltshirehomeguard.co.uk/>



BROAD TOWN HOMEGUARD 1940-45.

HAROLD HACKER.	JOHN SHEPHARD.	PETE READE.	CHANDLER.	TOM TOPP.	REG ARCHER.	CHARLIE TOPP.	GEORGE ARCHER.	ERNIE BROOK.	JOHN DUNN.
		RALPH LAWERENCE.		CHARLIE TAYLOR.				<i>W. L. H. 12</i>	
	ARTHUR PICKET.	GORDON GANTLETT.		BOB HICKS.	WALTER HATHERALL.		BILL HACKER.		
					<i>(Wally)</i>				

Broad Town had its own Platoon as did the other surrounding villages of Clyffe Pypard, Bushton, Tockenham, Lyneham all answering to a higher HQ based on H Company in then Wootton Bassett. The Platoon would have consisted of a junior officer and approximately 30 soldiers ranging from 17-65year non enlisted men. Women were admitted after a while and trained with weapons but were kept to clerical and driving duties.

The role of the Home Guard was to try to slow down the advance of the enemy even by a few hours to give the regular troops time to regroup. They were also to defend key communication points, logistic stores and factories in rear areas against possible capture by invading paratroopers. Another key role was to maintain control of the civilian population, to “forestall panic and to prevent communication routes from being blocked by refugees to free the regular forces to fight the Germans”. The Home Guard continued to man roadblocks and guard the coastal areas of the United Kingdom and other important places such as airfields, factories and explosives stores until late 1944.

Chris Stuart