

The Home Guard was originally called the L.D.V. (Local Defence Volunteers), and was formed after the fall of France and the evacuation of Dunkirk. Horton had its own platoon. Some of the original members were W.M. Perfect (Farmer) Jim Calkeld (Postman) Chris Wiseman (Grocer and Newsgate), John Hazeltrie (Butcher) & F. Hodgson (Station Master). Many others joined at a later date.

At first, the only weapons available were the members own shot guns, and it was some time before a sufficient number of guns were supplied and ammunition to go with them.

The Home Guard spent two evenings a week training and sometimes Sunday morning as well. Training sessions covered rifle shooting and sometimes, on the old rifle range at Attercliffe above Settle, the use of automatic Sten guns, hand grenades and other small anti-personnel bombs.

Every night, from dawn to dusk, the Home Guard manned a hen hut, which was positioned on Moor Hill, on the Selside road. They were keeping a look out for parachutists, but it is difficult to see how they would have seen them in pitch darkness, in that vast area and with nothing more than a torch and a hurricane lantern for light!

One dark, cold night George Perfect, Beck Thompson, Tom Metcalfe and Ted Capstick, were guarding the bridge over the railway at Hebble Bridge, with strict instructions not to allow any traffic to cross. After two uneventful hours, a car approached and the driver identified himself as the referee supervising the exercise, and was allowed to proceed. Half way across, he stopped the car, pulled out a firework, and said that the bridge had been blown up and they were now all dead. Tom Metcalfe went home and

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The other three repaired to the pub. Soon, an officer arrived and demanded to know what they were doing there, and why they didn't answer him, to which Ted replied "Have you ever heard a bloody dead chap talk before?" The officer departed and left them to their socializing.

On another occasion the Home Guard were told that German parachutists had been dropped on the outskirts of Settle and were to make their way to Ribbleshead to blow up the viaduct. The Home Guard had to find them and stop them. It was actually a training exercise for a group of Commandos stationed locally. The Horton platoon mustered in the village hall, but their commander, Jimmy Calkeld, had hardly started to give them their orders when the door burst open and in rushed about ten Commandos, camouflaged from head to toe. They had stolen <sup>the bus</sup> a van from Jack Hartley, the butcher at Langcliffe and had overpowered the entire date before Horton Home Guard had even received their orders.

Home Guard weapons were sometimes used for unorthodox purposes. The Vicar, the Rev. Gordon Ken, had a large tree bole in the vicarage garden, and two members of the Home Guard offered to split it up for firewood. They mixed a sticky bomb, stuck it to the tree and ran for cover. After a few seconds the bomb exploded. On returning to the scene, very little damage had been done to the tree, but the black rod blown every pane of glass out of the vicarage windows.

Information supplied by George Perfect. ✓