Ted Paxton Hethe Home Guard Jan 2003 Track 14



-I moved to Hethe from London when I was six in 1930 for health

reasons. I left school, Christmas 1939 when I was 14 at Ch………s .1939. I worked on a farm at Hethe Brede for a few years, then moved to another home at Monks House. I joined the army in 1944 and went to the Royal Artillery.

- I was in the HG from 1941 to 1944. We went on guard during the summer in the ……. We had a rifle and bayonet but no ammunition. I don’t know what chance we would have had if ever they attacked us.

-When they first formed the HG it was as the LDV. My old mate Mr. Batts went to the Police station and he volunteered to be one of them. They used to go out with shotguns at night or anything. They took the mickey out of the LDV and called it the ‘Look Duck and Vanish’ After that they called it the Home Guard and it was in the HG when I was in it. It was just a saying ‘Look Duck and Vanish’.

-We used to patrol at night but what use we could we have been? We hadn’t got any ammunition, only your rifle and bayonet.

-The commanding Officer in the Bicester area was Charlie Gander. The officer who came with us, but didn’t do any training with us, was Thornton, he was a school teacher who lived in Maxbury(?). In Hethe we had a Colonel Mostyn. I remember when the HG finished at the end of the war we had a big celebration and he got up and said “I hope this carries on every year until there is only one man standing”. We only had that once, pity really as we thought we were going to get together every year.

-I was in the ARP before I went into the HG as a messenger. I was only 14 at the time. I used to blow a whistle when there was an air raid about to come on. I was a runner in the ARP. Dewer-Harrison was more or less in charge of us. When we had a mock attack, I was the runner so I had to go with him. Some chaps were down by the pig stys on the farm, it was supposed to be a gas attack so went down there with our gas masks on. He had to take his off so he could write a message for me to take back. He had a rattle which he would swing round

-We used to go on parade every Sunday from 10:00 to 12:00 up at S..se.well Park. We used to have drill and marching. In the later part of the time we went to Blenheim Park to practice throwing real grenades (Mills Bombs) on the range up there. We had proper tutors with us from the army.

-We used to have our firing range down at the old pit, the old dump by (?) it’s overgrown now. One old chap, who had been in the Great War, Henry Harris, was my mate. We had target practice shooting at a target up at the bank. They used to call him ‘Otter’ The old Sergeant said to him “Where did that one go then Otter?” “I don’t know Sir but it left this end alright!” We had another Officer from Fringford called Chinnery who was down there one day and our Sergeant, Tommy Allen, he used to have a bicycle shop in the village, said “Would you like to have a go sir?” “Oh no” was the reply “it would hurt my shoulder too much”. Mr Chinnery was an older man who was getting on a bit.

-The cap badge was the old Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry badge with the bugle on. I went in the HG about 1942 and I had a uniform and everything. I was in the ARP until I was old enough to join the HG. I was 16 then because they wouldn’t let you in the HG until you were a certain age.

-Each village had its own HG and we looked after Hethe Handwich(?) came in with Hethe Fringford was only a mile away and I was a runner for that as well to start off with. I had to take a message up to them at Fringford to the G…ys turn across the main road. We had to defend Stratton Audley and the RAF camp at Bicester. One old bloke, Billy Elderfield, he had big hands and was a wonderful watch mender. He had all sorts of guns, like blunderbusses in his old shop. I went up there and took this message. The Sergeant said “Ah boy we’re going to raid Stratton and have all their batter (Yorkshire) puddings!” You had to have a bit of humour to keep things going.

-I used to work on the farm at M..nk Home, when I was in the HG. I went up there one morning and had to look at the sheep. In the field there were 3 small bomb craters but not one of the sheep had been killed.

-I used to work for an old Cavalry man who had served in the First World War. He used to call us ‘Laddie’ and was too old to be called up. He always said that if the Germans invaded that he would shoot himself.

-We had a Lewis gun in Hethe, a machine gun with a round drum of ammunition on the top. We only had ammunition when we went to the firing range. We didn’t have any when we went out at night.

-We didn’t have much to do with the officers. They would come round every so often. The NCOs were okay because they were local blokes that we knew anyway. I think the Sergeant chose who the Corporals were. There weren’t many with military experience. There were only two people in our section that had anything to do with the army. A chap called Charlie Evans who was *Colonel Mostyn’s* batman during the First World War he was his groom in the finish and my mate Henry Harris. They wanted Charlie Evans to be the Sergeant but he didn’t want to do it. Henry Harris didn’t want to be a Sergeant so they made him a Corporal. There was a farmer’s son Fred Hawkins who was also a Corporal. Bill Stanbrook was a Corporal. I felt sorry for him because he had a stammer and couldn’t always get the words out. It was all pretty chummy. We used to go in the pub and have a drink afterwards at the Whitmore Arms (?) We used to have a game of cards when we were waiting to go on duty.

-Our HQ was in the village hall, the big house right opposite the church. It’s still there and is now a private dwelling. When I was younger I had a dance band who used to play in there. John Dewer-Harrison who used to own it gave it to the village. That’s where we used to have our meeting at night. It was a three storey building there was a fair sized lawn at the back.

-There weren’t any pill-boxes around here. The nearest was at Bicester Aerodrome. We used to have Nissen huts alongside the road with ammunition stored in them.

-On parade one day Arthur Hodges said to Freddie Bateman who had been in the Great War and was wearing his medals, “The medals you are wearing you can get them at Woolworths” …”I know you can buy them but you can’t earn them in Woolworths!” was the reply.

Photograph.

-Dennis Bowers. He use to work at M…K s Home (house) where I worked before. He was in the Airborne Pegasus Bridge Gliders. When he came back he worked for Dick Wise, the builder, as the ground foreman.

-Henry Harris was in the Great War. He was a Corporal.

-Charlie Evans was Col. Mostyn’s batman in the First World War.

-Cyril Batts was a mechanic after the war

-Tommy Allen was the Sgt in charge of us

-Bill Winning

-David Chapman. He was something to do with the council and trained the football team after the war

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