

FORMATION OF THE HOMEGUARD, THORNTON, BRADFORD

Film ID: 1214 **Year:** 1939-1945

This film was made by an amateur filmmaker and member of the Bradford Cine Circle. It uses intertitles throughout to explain the purpose of the Home Guard and how they came into existence. The Home Guard was originally known as the Local Defence Volunteers and eventually took a much more active defence role during World War II.

Intertitle 'L.D.V. 1940-1944'.

The letters stand for Local Defence Volunteers, later to be known as the Home Guard; there was a nickname for these initials – 'Look, Duck and Vanish' as, at the outset, the unit were not expected to take part in fighting, but keep watch in their local areas for enemy invasion.

Intertitle '"A" Thornton Company'.

In a living room, a middle-aged couple are sitting down; he is reading a paper, whilst she sews. 'May 14th 1940. The Crisis'. He is reading the Picture Post: a picture of Winston Churchill is on the front. When he opens it, there is an article entitled 'Invasion'.

Intertitle 'The Germans Invade Belgium'.

The paper shows pictures of the country.

Intertitle 'France'.

More pages are turned; a photo shows one of Hitler's mass rallies.

Intertitle 'The Dutch Royal Family Flee to England'.

The man gets up and turns on the radio, and the couple listen.

Intertitle 'The 9pm News. Stand by for a special announcement.'

A man is seen making a speech; the intertitles explain the gist of the speech.

Intertitle 'We want men between the ages of 16 and 65 to come forward & offer their services now 'The name of the new force will be The Local Defence Volunteers.'.

The man in his living room then stands up.

Intertitle 'This is something I can do'.

Outside, he boards a double-decker bus and goes into a town centre. He walks down a street and enters a police station to sign up. Forms are filled in.

Intertitle 'The bell of this peaceful Church is the signal for invasion'.

The church is shown.

Intertitle 'Major Fenton appoints Coy. Commanders'.

In a room, two men talk and look at a map of the Bradford area. One of the men then goes into a chemist. Interior shots show him in a living room, talking to the chemist; they look at papers. Intermittently, the chemist goes into the shop to serve customers, before they carry on their discussion. They leave the shop together and get into a car.

Intertitle 'Capt. Durrant meets his Platoon Commanders'.

The men go to another man's house, and start to form a small company, who can be part of the LDV.

Intertitle 'The first Coy. Meeting'.

Many men in overcoats and hats meet outside a house.

Intertitle 'Lack of equipment does not damp our enthusiasm'.

Outside a redbrick warehouse, the men in their overcoats and hats line up. They hold wooden rifles, and start to do drill. A man instructs them. They wear the LDV armband. As they get into line, the leader shows them the correct way to hold their rifles and stand to attention, after this they march in lines.

Intertitle 'Patrols are sent out, & Observation Posts manned'.

In the open countryside, the men, still in plain clothes, start patrolling the hills; they hold their wooden rifles scanning the land, sometimes constructing hiding places by building small slate bunkers. Back on the road, two men walk to a stone fence, one holds a proper rifle, and they scan the area.

Intertitle 'The first issue of Rifles'.

Wooden boxes are carried out of a building by two men. They open them up and take out rifles from America. Other men come out of a building with their new guns. On the rooftop of the building, they talk; the town's buildings and chimneys can be seen in the background.

Intertitle 'The order is to Stop All Traffic'.

Home Guards are seen stopping a fire engine. Fire Brigade officers come out and talk to the Home Guard. A man in military uniform pulls up on a motorcycle and shows a member of the LDV his papers; the fire engine then pulls off. Two members of the LDV exit a public house named the White Horse Inn; more scenes then show them in groups of two walking down countryside lanes.

In a quick succession of scenes, the Home Guard defend various areas.

Intertitle 'The Isolation Hospital Post'.

A man on a bike pulls up to the hospital gate, shows the man guarding a pass, and enters.

Intertitle 'The Farrars Quarry Post' shows a stone building.

Intertitle 'The Snape House Post' members of the LDV stand in a group outside a house, whilst one gives them instructions; some walk off with rifles at their shoulders. From this post, much of the surrounding countryside can be seen as it is on a ridge. In a group, the men sit whilst being given a demonstration of how to use the rifles.

Intertitle 'Contact is made with The Observer Corps'.

At a field a man enters a gate walking up to meet another member of the LDV.

Intertitle 'The DR Section is inspected by Mr W Downs'.

In a room, a man is typing; outside a building, many of the LDV meet.

Intertitle 'LDV'. Intertitle 'Badge with the initials HG'.

The LDV has now officially changed its name to the Home Guard. A man in a uniform that is now much more like that of a regular soldier stands outside a building with his rifle, before marching off. The uniform signals that the Home Guard now have proper kit, and will be dressed in military clothes when on manoeuvres and exercises.

Intertitle 'Training'.

Men enter the Home Guard School of Instruction.

Intertitle 'Mr Lying Load'.

In a field, a man demonstrates different rifle techniques to some younger men. He shows them how to hold a rifle properly, as well as how to lie on the ground and aim the gun correctly.

Intertitle 'map reading at Storr Heights'.

A member of the Home Guard inspects a map, looking up to relate it to the surrounding countryside and housed area. At a fence, a man stands to attention; there is a sign saying 'Unexploded Bomb'. He protects the area before other members of the Guard arrive. Different conversations are had before they get to where the bomb is situated.

Intertitle 'Cadets and C.D. Wardens training under H.G. Instructors'.

Young teenagers stand and are shown how a rifle works. They then write notes outside on paper pads. Outside a building, Civil Defence Wardens in their blue uniforms and berets stand in formation, holding rifles, and do various training exercises in front of their instructor. They copy his actions, and he goes up and corrects any wrong positioning.

The instructor who first showed the middle aged men, at the start of the film, how to hold rifles and march, is now in uniform and demonstrates to the Civil Defence how to shoot with their rifles, before they go on to man a watch tower. In a large grass training area, firing practice commences. At one end, there is a ditch where members of the Guard man targets; at the other end of the field, the men lie on the ground, rifles at the ready; they fire their guns and reload.

In a town, a bus awaits, as the Home Guard climb aboard to go on manoeuvres. Each carries their gas mask box and rifle. The bus takes them into the countryside towards Oxenhope for their exercises. **They march through the countryside lanes before arriving at a camp where more firearms practice with machine guns is held on a firing range. An instructor oversees them. Men at the other side of the firing range point rise up cardboard targets for them to aim at.**

Intertitle 'The high spot of the day'.

Outside a public house called The Shoulder of Mutton, the men gather and pose before drinking pints of beer; they then walk off back to camp.

Intertitle 'Deep Lane Range'.

Men in ditches practice throwing grenades, whilst others fire guns. One soldier takes apart rifles whilst others learn to use theirs to fire small rockets. The exercises continue with the Guard trying out the different ammunition now available to them. The men are in camouflage, with foliage on their helmets, and they practice hiding in bushes, and how to crawl on the ground without being seen.

Intertitle 'The Company Signallers'.

A member of the Home Guard pulls up in a car in the countryside, gets out, and then sets about laying communication wires. A motorcycle transports different equipment around for the exercise such as radio transmitters, flags and reels of wire.

Intertitle 'HallaMoorRange'.

A bus takes the Guard to another site that has bunkers and trenches for them to practice throwing grenades; others continue rifle practice, working together to fire rocket guns that explode bushes.

Intertitle 'De-fusing unexploded bombs'.

Two men take different types of bombs out of casings before taking them apart, removing the fuse to make them safe.

A Home Guard member holds a Harvey Flame Thrower; a huge amount of fire pours from it and burns grass in the surrounding area.

Intertitle 'The Company Explosive Store'.

A door has the sign 'Explosives Danger Keep Out' on it.

Intertitle 'Demolition of unserviced ammunition'.

Different ammunition is exploded in bunkers for safety; wires and fuses are used, so that they can be triggered from far away.

Intertitle 'Lt. Col. C.H. Hodgson Presents the Bn. Efficiency Cup to Major Brown'.

Many members of the Home Guard are gathered whilst awards are given out.

Intertitle 'Lt. Col. C.H. Hodgson Presents Certificate of Merit to Sgt. J. Hargreaves'.

A Home Guard member is given a Certificate. In a town, a brass band plays; the men are in kilts; they go down a street.

Intertitle 'The Company Medical Officer'.

Members of the Home Guard stand around whilst a man explains how to bandage a wounded officer. After he is bandaged, they raise him up on a stretcher to carry him off.

In an office, a member of the Guard is at a desk, talking on the telephone. He fills in some paperwork. Other Guards come and talk to him whilst looking at various forms and maps.

Intertitle 'A field day at Hollins'

Home Guard march across a road. They are wearing macs and carrying rifles. They go into a wooded area, where they then precede to cook food in large pots, before eating. Some look and smile at the camera.

Intertitle 'Any complaints?'

They continue to queue and eat their rations.

A woman paints a poster that has the words 'Bradford Edge The Gap Victory £300,000 : Salute the Soldier Week 10 to 17 June'.

In town, bunting decorates the streets and a military parade takes place, led by a brass band.

Intertitle 'Bn. H.Q. introducing Lt. Col. C.H. Hodgson 7 Staff'.

The Home Guard stand together chatting in a semi-circle in winter; snow is on the ground around them. Lt. Col. C.H. Hodgson salutes before a brass band leads a march of Home Guard down a country lane. Lt. Col. C.H. Hodgson salutes as they pass.

Intertitle 'Hard work brings its just reward'.

Men gather, and silver cups are given to the different Home Guard companies; plaques and cups are placed on a small table.

Intertitle 'Ceremonial Parade of 3rd W.R.H.G. Manningham Park'. 'A' Thornton Coy. En route'.

A procession goes down a road into the park; a brass band plays.

Intertitle 'Col. G.E.M. Whittuck M.C. A.D.C Presents Certificate of Merit awarded by G.O.C. Northern Command to Sgt. Holdsworth'.

In the part, Sgt. Holdsworth accepts the award; members of the Home Guard are gathered around to watch.

Intertitle 'Takes the Salute'.

A march goes down a street with various members of the Guard. The public have gathered to watch as they pass. Men stand in a wooded area looking at a map. The following words appear over them as the closing title: 'Produced by 'A' Thornton Coy. Film Unit.'