

Churchill's secret army in the Scarborough area

Civilian volunteers that would have been part of the British Resistance in the event of a successful German invasion during WWII

In 1940 the prospect of a Nazi invasion was a very real one. Britain, having lost most of its military equipment in the Dunkirk evacuation, was to all pretence and purposes on its knees.

The Local Defence Volunteers (LDV), later renamed as the Home Guard had just been formed, famously armed with pitch forks and ancient weapons. However, a group of civilian volunteers were being gathered together to help resist the initial stages of any invasion.

The Auxiliary Units, were patrols of 6-8 men in reserved occupations or under or over the age to join the regular forces. They were formed into units the length of the country, from The Shetlands to Cornwall, along the east and south coasts, with the full support of Churchill. They were dug Operational Bases, underground bunkers where they would disappear to as soon as the invading forces entered their area. From there they would come out at night to cause as much chaos as possible. Destroying transport and transport routes, blowing up ammunition or food dumps, destroying airfields and causing as much disruption as possible to slow down the advance and give the regular forces time to recover and counter-attack. Their life expectancy was for just around a fortnight at most – essentially a suicide mission.

They were highly trained in sabotage and silent killing (some patrols had weapons to take out high ranking German officials and even British collaborators). Each man had to sign up the Official Secrets Act and told their nearest relatives and friends nothing of their role with most going to the grave without ever saying a word. They were usually men who knew the local countryside intimately, farmers, farm workers, gamekeepers and even poachers.

Now a group of volunteer researchers have found some evidence of such a group of civilian volunteers in the Scarborough area. Patrols have been identified in Flixton, Wold Newton and Kilham.

The names associated with the patrols in the Scarborough area are listed below with some of their dates of birth and even occupation:

Flixton:

Sgt William Found
Cpl Eric Barker
Pte Jack Rudd
Pte George Ellis
Pte Jack Stephenson
Pte George William Sellers
Pte John Oxendale Tindall

Wold Newton:

Sgt Louis Chapman (15/08/1892) – Farmer
Cpl Henry Streets (17/07/1914) – Farm Worker
Pte John Topham Elgey (19/05/1914) – Farmer
Pte Fred Sellers (28/09/1926) – Farm Worker
Pte Arthur William Sellers (31/08/1924) – Farm Worker

Kilham:

Sgt Harry Middlewood (03/05/1915) – Agricultural Worker
Cpl Leslie Robert Smith (23/02/1922) – Agricultural Worker
Pte Philip Lamplugh Wilson (15/09/1909) – Agricultural Worker
Pte Arthur H Carr (29/10/1921) – Agricultural Worker
Pte Donald Wilson (05/08/1908) – Agricultural Worker
Pte Douglas William Gray (13/11/1918) – Agricultural Worker

If there are any relatives of these men, people who remember playing in underground 'bunkers or shelters' as children, or any local rumours of secret wartime activity, we would love to hear from them.

If you do have any information, memories or knew any of the men listed please contact cartpress@gmail.com.

You can see what we know of other possible patrols in the local area here: <http://www.coleshillhouse.com/yorkshire-auxiliary-units-and-obs.php> if you have any information of Auxiliary Units members or their operational bases in these please also get in touch.

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