

Stamford in the Second World War

The Home Guard

The Home Guard was formed because there was a real risk of invasion by the enemy. Most able-bodied men were already in the forces and those left were either too young, too old, unfit or in reserved occupations, those jobs vital to the war effort.

Those who did volunteer were expected to fight an invasion of crack German troops with nothing more than a collection of old shotguns, pieces of gas pipe, broom handles and sticks with knives tied on the end instead of bayonets. The government expected 150,000 men nationwide to join but within the first month, 750,000 had volunteered.

By the end of June 1940, the total had exceeded one million and this number did not fall until they were stood down in December 1944 although the Home Guard was not actually disbanded until 31st December 1945.

Stamford had 250 men, 116 rifles and 22 machine guns. HQ was the Drill Hall, St Peter's St.



Stamford HomeGuard - Stamford Electric Ltd.

Men aged 17 to 65 years could join, although the age limits were not strictly enforced. One platoon had a fourteen year old and three men in their eighties enrolled in it. Service was unpaid (although out-of-pocket expenses could be claimed) but gave a chance for older or inexperienced soldiers to support the war effort.

The objective of the Home Guard was to delay an invasion force long enough for the regular army to form a front line from which the enemy could be repelled.

The force relied on makeshift kit and equipment at the outset but were eventually issued with proper uniforms and conventional weapons.

