

Rushden Home Guard

The Rushden Home Guard was under the command of Captain 'Alf' (Afred Thomas) Rowley [No. 23], supported by Sergeant Harry Philips [No. 22].

Names and details remembered by Mr Edward Bygrave.



1. Percy Hills, Farm Labourer. Rushden.
2. Tom Chapman, Milkman. Rushden.
3. Herbert Norman, worked in Letchworth. Rushen.
4. Unknown.
5. Timmy Keep, Unknown. Redhill.
6. Ken Mynott, Farm Labourer. Wallington.
7. George Byatt, Local Road Sweep (including road ditches and hedge maintenance). Redhill.
8. Unknown.
9. Unknown.
10. Mr Mynott, Council Highways Maintenance, WWI veteran (father of the Mynott's in picture). Redhill.
11. Unknown.
12. Reg Mynott, Farm Labourer. Wallington.
13. Mr Bald, Retired. Wallington.
14. Unknown.
15. Ron Warner, Farm Labourer. Rushden, Southern Green.
16. Unknown.
17. Unknown.
18. Mr King, worked in Letchworth / Baldock. Wallington.
19. Leslie Mynott, Farm Labourer. Wallington.
20. Billy Storan, Chauffeur for Mr Fletcher, owner of Church Farm. Rushden.
21. Bill Brown, Factory Worker, Letchworth / Baldock. Rushden, Southern Green.
22. Harry Philips, Southern Green Farm Manager, WWI veteran. Rushden, Southern Green.

23. Alfred Thomas Rowley, Building Construction Firm & Farm owner. Rushden, Southern Green.
24. Mr Reinders, Car Salesman. Rushden.
25. Phil Warner, Plumber. Rushden, Southern Green.
26. Job Warner, Factory Worker Letchworth. Rushden, Southern Green.
27. Mr Nicholls, Chartered Accountant. Rushden, Southern Green.

The secret history of WWII's Rushden Searchlight.

Mr Edward Bygrave recalls in WWII that at the end of Treacle Lane, in a small field behind Park Cottage there was a mobile searchlight. The bomb craters in the nearby fields are a testament to an attempt by the Germans to knock it out.

In further discussion with my father, he said there was no gun emplacement at the searchlight site, nor were there any other searchlights elsewhere in the area, Baldock, Royston, Letchworth or Stevenage.

We concluded, based on what we now know of the strategic importance of Southern Green Farm as a way marker for the German bombers heading for the northern cities. This searchlight was used as a beacon to guide the RAF fighters to the German raiding aircraft.

German bombers over Rushden were common even in the daylight hours! My mother, Pamela (nee Rowley) Bygrave recalled she was standing in the front garden of Southern Green Farm, when a German bomber returning home from a raid, flew so low over the farm she could see the pilot and gunners staring back at her. Then the realisation they could have opened fire!