

## Shipton Home Guard



Two of the most important photographs in the History Society's archives are separate, large format, professional portraits of the Home Guard of Shipton and Milton taken seventy years ago and complete with names. Alan Vickers took a long look at the Shipton picture with Gordon Duester, who knew all the men on the photograph and whose father is included among them. Gordon has a remarkable memory for the people and events in the village at that time but he craves indulgence if he has got any detail wrong - he is sure there is somebody out there who can and will put him right! If you can add any more information, please let us know.

*Back row from the left.*

**Pte F. Hammett** – Came to Shipton to manage Hathaway's shop. Lived at the shop. Left the village once his period as manager was over which was usual at the time. His boss is in the front row as the Platoon commander.

**Pte W. R. (Bill) Kimber** – Worked in the Carpentry Shop at Groves. Brought up in a house on the A361 to the right after turning out of Fiddler's Hill. Had two daughters and a son. Was also a member of the Observer Corps during the War spending nights spotting enemy planes at the top of the Hill on the Chipping Norton Road where the telephone mast now stands. Father of Margaret Mix.

*The photograph was probably taken on the drive near Lodge Cottage in April 1945*



- Pte F.J. Rathband** – Also worked for Groves but with horse trains bringing large tree trunks to the timber yard. Lived on Fiddler’s Hill in one of the houses overlooking the allotments
- Pte R. (Bob) Barrett** – the youngest person on the photograph and the only one still with us today. Bob had a smallholding at the Judd’s Grave junction on the Leaffield Road. He married a Hayward daughter from Court Farm and later farmed in Ascott at Fernhill Farm where his son Charlie carries on the business today.
- Pte R. Rawlins** – painter and decorator from Milton, father to Roger who became Managing Director of Groves and uncle to John Rawlins.
- Pte M.H. (Martin) Cox** – A self-employed agricultural contractor. Lived in the last house on Chapel Lane which was split with his brother (see below).
- Pte G.J. (Jim) Slatter** – Lived in one of the cottages behind the Red Horse. Worked in the first tillyard run by Ted Coombes near to the Lamb. Very involved with the Cricket Club. Like many of Groves workers, transferred to de Havilland’s at Witney during the war to build Mosquitos and eventually moved to Bampton.
- Pte J.C. Gooding** – Also worked in Groves carpentry shop. Lived in Meadow Lane. Had one daughter, who married Cyril Dangerfield.

*Continued on page 25*

**Pte H.M.Cox** – brother to Martin with whom he shared a house in Chapel Lane. Worked at A.V.Fitt and Son, Fordson tractor dealers in Great Tew as a service engineer.

**Pte T.J. (Tom) Souch** – Worked for the railway at Shipton in charge of the shunting bay. Lived at the Links opposite to the old Hathaway Stores. His son, Terry, was later to become Chairman of Shipton Parish Council.

**Pte Charles “Dink” Duester** – Born and bred in Shipton, living at first in a house in the Leafield Road. Later had a house on Fiddler’s Hill where his son, Gordon, spent his childhood. Worked in Ted Coombe’s tillyard as a machinist and later moved to de Havilland.

#### *Middle Row*

**L/Cpl L. (Les) Case** – Before he married, lived on Fiddler’s Hill close to the entrance to Simon’s Lane. After he married, moved to St Michael’s Close. Worked on the land for Mr Wells of Milton. Then went to Matthews Mill for the rest of his working life.

**L/Cpl N.F. (Norris or Norrie) Stoter** – Family came from East Hendred in 1935. His parents lived at the Buildings off the Burford Road where he and his father worked for Percy Holloway (former tenant of Grove Farm). He and his wife Rose lived in Blenheim Cottages. Later worked for West Oxfordshire Council and lived in 5 Mount Pleasant Terrace, which they purchased from Captain Hathaway, his commanding officer here.

**Corporal A.C. Pittaway** – A stone mason originally from Taynton. Married Shepherd Faulkner’s daughter. Lived in Mount Pleasant terraced cottages.

**Pte P.C. (Ken) Bick** – One of two brothers, who bought Lane House Farm from the Dangerfields.

**Pte F.A. Barrett** – Worked on a farm in Milton for Mr Ridley. Lived in a cottage rented from Matthews Mill opposite Bradley’s Garage on Station Road. Eventually went to work for Smiths in Witney. No relation to Bob Barrett.

**Pte A.J. (Arthur) Simms** - lived at Littlestock beyond the brook on the Oxfordshire Way. Worked for Groves bringing in tree trunks with a steam lorry.

**Pte F.T.Preece** – One of two Jewish brothers who owned a general hardware store in Milton, near the present Library. Used to tear tickets at the Shipton Cinema.

**Pte F.C.Pratley** – Worked for Percy Holloway at Grove Farm. Lived at the start of the Swinbrook

Road. Brother-in-law to Min Pratley. Eventually worked for Smiths in Witney.

**Pte A. Pittaway** – A carter at Pascoe’s farm, now Coldstone Farm, before it was taken over by the Hartleys. Lived in the farm cottages where Doreen Barnes, our publisher, was born (now a single house occupied by the Hartleys). Moved to St Michael’s when Les Barnes became the tractor driver for the Hartleys. No relation to A.C. Pittaway.

**Pte G.R.(George) Bradley** – Brother to Reg Bradley who owned the garage. Had his own transport business and eventually concentrated on making deliveries for Matthews Mill. Lived in a house on Station Road.

#### *Front Row*

**Cpl A.E.Oliver** – Had the adjacent smallholding to Bob Barrett at Judd’s Grave. These were provided after the First World War for returning soldiers. Father of Alan Oliver and Grandfather to Adrian Oliver, the builder.

**Cpl G.F. (George) Clifford** – Lived with his sister, Dot, at Wayside, a house opposite where the School now stands. He was the right-hand man to Pratt and Haynes, the coal and agricultural merchants who had an office in the house. Dot was a bell ringer at Shipton Church and ran the Boys Brigade.

**Sgt. F.A.(Fred) Dore** – Painter and decorator. Lived in Chapel Lane next to Bill Kimber

**Lieut J.R. Hathaway** – Owned the store in Shipton and also owned the Mount Pleasant Terrace.

**Cpl E.J.James** – Worked for Mrs Hall at the Court as a cowman. Lived in Blenheim Cottages.

**L/Cpl G.W.Shayler** – Worked as a ganger on the railway. Father of Gordon Shayler and lived in the cottage behind the Red Horse where Gordon lived until recently.

**L/Cpl A.L.Barnes** – Worked on Pascoe’s farm and became tractor driver and relief milkman for the Hartleys when they took the farm over. Moved into the farm cottage formerly occupied by Pte Pittaway. Father of Doreen Barnes, publisher of the Wychwood.

The members of Shipton’s own Dad’s Army represented a wide range of ages. Many were members because they were in reserved occupations. The importance of farming and Grove’s plus the tillyards (which really grew from the availability of Groves’s trained workforce) shines through. We hope to look at the Milton photograph in a future issue.