

# Civil Defence

The Local Defence Volunteers (LDV) was an organisation which had been formed in response to the threat of German invasion. Unfortunately, these initials were sometimes interpreted as Look, Duck and Vanish, as initially, the men wore their own clothes and were armed with little more than broom handles and spades.

In May 1940 Winston Churchill changed the name of the LDV to the Home Guard. Members were at first issued with denim uniforms, which were later replaced by khaki uniforms. These new uniforms and associated equipment gave a more professional appearance.

Older men who had not been 'called up' for active service could join the Home Guard. The organisation was often referred to as 'Dad's Army', as the majority of the men were over the age of 50 and many had fought in the First World War. By 1942, it was made compulsory for all men aged between 18 and 51 who were not already serving, to join in areas where more recruits were needed.

Home Guard platoons were organised throughout Dacorum and there were observer posts at Kings Langley, Berkhamsted and Markyate. These posts monitored enemy aircraft and particularly looked out for parachutists, who may have signalled the beginning of an invasion.

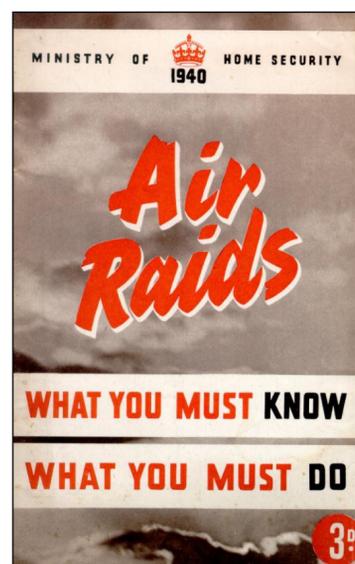
The ARP (Air Raid Precautions) Controller for the Borough of Hemel Hempstead was Mr Kirk. He reported that in six years, there had been a total of 828 air raid warnings during which 90 high explosive bombs and 350 incendiary bombs fell on the town.

Members of the John Dickinson Home Guard. (DACHT : 62.12.15)

This notice was issued by the Berkhamsted Urban District Council Air Raid Precautions Office. It contained practical information about dealing with Air Raids. (DACHT : 3912.12)



Fire watchers at Aspley Mills, Hemel Hempstead. (DACHT : 62.12.11)



(DACHT : BK 3912.12)

Map showing the various ARP districts of Berkhamsted. (DACHT : 2377)



Building air raid shelters between the John Dickinson Guildhouse and the railway. (DACHT : 62.12.3)

Members of Flamstead Home Guard, including Mr Smith the baker, who was also the Chief Warden. They are standing outside the Post Office, which had been protected with sandbags. (DACHT : 62.13.11)

Hemel Hempstead Red Cross during the Second World War. The wards of Ashridge emergency hospital were staffed by Red Cross personnel. (DACHT : 432.67.11)

## Extract from the Kings Langley ARP Log Book 2 April 1941

- 22.05 Post 21 Nash Mills report light showing during alert from top of Langley Hill.
- 22.06 Post 4 advised.
- 22.40 After visiting top of Langley Hill and thoroughly exploring, I could find no light visible, so contacted Observer Corps who said they had not seen any light during the last alert. Matter will be kept in mind.
- 23.00 Kings Langley siren - alert!
- 23.01 Fire Station phoned. Air Raid message - Red.
- 23.02 Fire Station phoned stating that during the past few days, Control Duty Wardens do not indicate who is answering the telephone - Will Wardens please note this and when answering the phone state - Kings Langley Control Centre. (: KISMS 2000.206)

Identity card of James Deacon, an Air Raid Warden in Berkhamsted. (DACHT : BK 7236)