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**Title** 1943 Press Cuttings

**Source** Harrogate Advertiser

**KNARESBORO' SEAMAN COMMENDED  
30.01.1943**

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**DIED IN CONVOY BATTLE**

Notification of the posthumous commendation of Second Engineer John Erskine Wood, of the Merchant Navy, for courage and devotion to duty, has been received by his wife, who lives at 4 Alexandra Place, Scriven, Knaresborough.

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Second Engineer Wood, son of Mrs Wood and the late Mr W. Wood, of Mallorie Park Drive, Ripon, lost his life in an enemy attack on a convoy to Russia during the summer. When his ship was hit, he was severely wounded. His shipmates managed to get him on to a raft, but he died shortly afterwards. He was 47 years of age, and had been in the Merchant Navy for about 14 years. He served with the Royal Engineers during the last war, and was gassed and wounded.

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Mrs Wood has received the following letter from the Ministry of War Transport: "I am directed by the Minister of War Transport to inform you that he has learned that on his recommendation the Prime Minister has obtained the King's approval for the publication of the name of your husband, John Erskine Wood, in the "London Gazette," as commended for courage and devotion to duty when his ship was attacked by the enemy. I am to express Lord Leathers' pleasure at this mark of His Majesty's high appreciation, and his deep regret that your husband did not live to receive it."

**LOCAL ITEMS  
13.03.1943**

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Major L. B. Holliday, of Copgrove Hall, Burton Leonard, was on Thursday appointed Sheriff of Yorkshire, when the King held a Privy Council at Buckingham Palace. His Majesty, in accordance with traditional custom, indicated the new Sheriffs' names by pricking the scroll of three candidates from each county, with a steel bodkin. Major Holliday is founder and governing director of the firm of L. B. Holliday and Co., Ltd., aniline dye manufacturers, Huddersfield. He is well known as a huntsman, having been Master of the Derwent, Badsworth, Grove, and York and Ainsty (North) packs. In 1931 Major Holliday was President and chairman of the Council of the Yorkshire Agricultural Society, the annual show that year being in Huddersfield. During the last war he was mentioned in despatches whilst

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10 serving with the 5<sup>th</sup> Batt. The Duke of Wellington's Regiment. He also acted as A.P.M. to the 49<sup>th</sup> (West Riding) Division.

**WHEN THE L.D.V. WAS FORMED  
15.05.1943**

To-morrow's Demonstrations

To-morrow it will be exactly three years since the Local Defence Volunteers were formed in immediate response to Mr Anthony Eden's dramatic appeal made while our Forces were desperately defending a hundred miles of front in Belgium. The Prime Minister, who took a keen interest then, and suggested the change of title to Home guard, has directed that ceremonial parades shall be held throughout the country this Sunday.

It is a far cry from the days of the "parashots," when the Regular soldiers were short of weapons and all these enthusiasts had was a hastily-made collection of shot guns and arms of every description to help against the menace of invasion.

20 Now the organisation is a trained auxiliary and well-equipped with various modern guns, mortars and grenades undreamt of then. Nevertheless, two things remain constant, the threat of invasion which, although less menacing now, still has to be taken into consideration, and the spirit of the men, so well exemplified in that "finest hour" when volunteers rushed to answer Mr Eden's appeal.

Besides being a valuable arm of home defence, the Home Guard has become an effective training ground for men under military age, of whom many thousands have passed into the Forces, including several hundred from the local battalion, which is on show to the public to-morrow.

**To-morrow's Programme**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Batt. West Riding Home Guard (Harrogate) will demonstrate by Companies at various points. Machine-gun teams will demonstrate advanced drill and mounting and dismounting (mobile reinforcements) on West Park Stray from 10.30 to 11.30 a.m. From 11.15 a.m. to 12 on West Park Stray Signallers will give a display of radio-telephone and daylight lamp inter-communication. At 2.30 p.m. A, Company will march from Wayside to the Stray opposite Christ Church where they will give a display including arms drill, bayonet fighting, weapons drill, and gas drill through a smoke screen. D and E Companies will hold church parades at St. Mary's and St. Wilfrid's respectively, after which D Company will have a route march, and E Company a demonstration. G Company will hold a church parade at Christ Church, at 9.45 a.m. Parades and demonstrations will also be held at Killinghall and Huby.

## **HOME GUARD ANNIVERSARY**

**22.05.1943**

### **HARROGATE CELEBRATIONS**

10 On Sunday large crowds thoroughly enjoyed watching the displays by which Harrogate and district Home Guards celebrated their third anniversary. They saw a keen and soldierly smartness, but the most impressive feature was the wide range of the modern weapons with which they were equipped and the determined way in which they were handled.

In the morning Church parades were held at Christ Church, St Wilfrid's and St Mary's. In the afternoon there was a drumhead service at Killinghall. Parades, drill and displays were given by machine-gun teams, Signals, and "A", "B", "C", "D", "E" and "G" Companies.

20 Great interest was displayed in the exhibitions of the use of the Projector and the Bombard. The latter can be used effectively against tanks as well as personnel. The apparatus from which it is discharged is mobile and soon assembled, as could be seen in the quick work of the teams working it. The Projector is fired by means of a special fitting on a rifle. Blank charges added to the realism when this weapon was used, as also in the grenade throwing. Besides the grenade another weapon of the last war is still of great value. As was pointed out by the loudspeaker commentator, the bayonet is still a valuable weapon in the hands of a man trained to use it. The bayonet advance, where the men first crawled forward firing their rifles and then dashed with well-directed thrusts at the enemy, represented by straw-stuffed  
30 sacks, caused a thrill of excitement in the crowd.

### **Cartridge Placed in Fire**

**29.05.1943**

40 Three Knaresborough schoolchildren, two brothers aged 11 and 9 and a girl aged 11, were summoned for stealing three anti-tank rifle cartridges from a military establishment.

Inspector Smith said the offence came to light when the younger boy had to be attended by Dr G.C. Robinson, and later in hospital, for a leg injury, caused when one of the stolen cartridges was placed in a fire and exploded. It appeared that the children had entered a place in military occupation and taken the cartridges from a tea chest in which they had been placed while awaiting removal. Later, the boys made a fire in Frogmire Field and placed one of the cartridges in it. After the younger boy had been hurt, he told his mother the would had been caused by barged wire. The two remaining  
50 cartridges had been recovered, one from the girl and the other from a small

boy who had picked it up after the others had thrown it away. At the time of the theft, added the Inspector, the military unit was moving and the cartridges had been placed in the chest ready to be picked up by a lorry. There was a guard, but apparently the children got through it.

The children said they went out to pick primroses. There were some soldiers at the spot, but they went away.

10 The mothers complained that there had been neglect on the part of the military in leaving dangerous material lying about.

Inspector B. J. Green, Probation Officer, said the elder boy was committed to an approved school in March, and it would have been better if he had been sent then to a remand home while awaiting a vacancy. He was a danger to other children. The younger boy was on probation. The girl had not been in trouble before.

20 Inspector Smith said the elder boy was ordered in March to report to the police three times a day, but he had not been seen since the beginning of April.

The elder boy was sent to a remand home pending a vacancy being found in an approved school, and the parents were ordered to pay 5s costs. The younger boy was given a severe warning, and the parents were fined £1. The girl was bound over for a year, her mother being ordered to pay 5s costs. Mr Holmes said the magistrates were satisfied that the military had not taken sufficient care with the cartridges, which should not have been left where children could get to them, but that was no excuse for the children, who should not have been there at all.

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## **HOME GUARD IN TRAINING 05.06.1943**

### **Use of Modern Weapons**

40 At a special course for senior officers held at the West Riding District Home Guard Weapon Training School last week-end, Major-General P. J. Shears remarked that the school was unique in the country. It has the thoroughly practical function of training instructors to teach the large number of extremely modern weapons which the home Guard of to-day has to know how to use. The whole school is run by Home Guard members themselves, and they are all doing a full-time job as well.

50 Not only the weapons themselves, but also the technique of teaching them are taught by keen experts. About 140 students, officers and N.C.Os pass through this school every week. A large selection of the latest weapons is used. Last week-end they were on exhibition, but in the ordinary way they are no show pieces, but are actually handled by the instructors and the pupils, so that their mechanism and working become thoroughly familiar.

The coloured diagrams on the wall show all the details of the weapons. They are beautifully clear and have all been done at the school. After the weapons themselves have been handled and examined, these scale drawings enable a full picture of the mechanism to be carried in one's mind.

10 There are other diagrams on the wall. These explain, in easy non-technical language, how to use German weapons, and what ammunition will fit them. It is quite possible that weapons and ammunition might be dropped from planes, and if so, the home Guard will try and get there first and turn them against the enemy. Thus a Home Guard can learn how to use a German gun against its owners.

### **Grenades**

Anti-tank grenades are used by the Home Guard a good deal, and there were numerous specimens and fully explanatory diagrams. Indeed, the warm welcome which can be given to armoured forces is an outstanding feature. The Bren gun, the Boys anti-tank rifle, the Northover Projector and the Blacker 20 bombard, which can fire both anti-tank and anti-personnel shells, were on view.

There are, of course, numerous Sten guns and the Lewis and other machine guns are present in a form fully as modern as the weapons with newer names. The older personal weapons, the rifle and the bayonet, are in no way neglected. Thus the newest armour-piercing shells, the death-dealing Sten gun, and the classic weapons of the infantryman, are all ready to meet the Nazi hordes in the skilled hands of the Home Guard.

### **Tank Recognition**

30 It is not enough to learn to use the weapons if there is to be any doubt as to which is their target, and so tank-recognition of Allied and Axis tanks by means of scale models is a feature of the course.

We have heard a good deal of German and Italian mines and booby traps. They are on display here. But there is also a fine selection of our own, about which not so much has been heard. Thus our Home Guards discover both how 40 to use and how to avoid these dangerous weapons of delay.

They learn how to lay mines and how to lift them, how the fuses work, and the duties of all the troops concerned.

Thus trained instructors are continually passing out to the West Riding Home Guard. The purpose of last week-end's course was to show senior officers what their instructors were learning. They will now be able to judge how well they are applying the lessons.

50 Major-General Shears spoke on the subject of Senior officers and Training, and a senior officer gave a talk on Modern War. Major Rennie, of the

Northern Command Weapon Training School, spoke on "Weapon Training and Responsibility at progressive stages of training of the Home Guard."

### **Realistic Demonstration**

10 The officers saw a realistic demonstration of mines and booby traps given by Capt. Rodgers, R.E. Signals. They were themselves the victims, and light charges added realism to the lesson of what care the tired soldier must exercise when the enemy is gone. Capt. Macdonald gave a demonstration of training, and there was a display of bayonet fighting.

### **Two Schools**

It began in February, 1942, in a little room where an officer started teaching the 36 Grenade and the Northover Projector. By September, 1941, there were two schools. In June, 1942, they were amalgamated. Major L. A. Shaley, The Ridge, Follifoot, is second in command of the school and Chief Instructor.

20 Far from being an amateurish Cinderella of the Forces, the Home Guard is now a highly-trained auxiliary. War, however modern, is an art as well as a science. New weapons and methods do not entirely displace the old, but both the old and the new have to be amalgamated into that Protean technique, that artistry in selection from the background of a vast knowledge, which led to victory in the desert. Perhaps it is the exciting quest for this instinctively recognised perception which enables soldiers doing a full war job already to vast such an amount of detail that spare-time training does a full-time job. It is the men and their keenness in mastery which surpass the wonder at their incredible array of weapons.

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### **BOYS AND GIRLS FOR HARVEST 26.06.1943**

The West Riding is to have over 1,400 boys and girls to help with the harvest, for which 40 camps are to be provided. Girls, for the first time, will occupy some of the camps. The local arrangements, with site, period and school are:-

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Kirk Deighton – August 21-September 27, Crossley and Porter School, Halifax.

Kirk Deighton – October 16-October 30, Harrogate Girls' Technical School.

Littlethorpe – August 28-October 2, International Voluntary Service for Peace.

Littlethorpe – October 2-October 30, Wheelwright Girls' Grammar School, Dewsbury.

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Minskip – August 28-October 23, Roundhay High School, Leeds.

Congrove – August 28-September 25, Nether Edge Grammar School, Sheffield

Staveley – October 2-October 30, Keighley Girls' High School.

10 Knaresborough –August 16-September 18, Cockburn High School, Leeds; Belmont School (Girls), Harrogate (not camping); Elmwood Girls' School, Harrogate (not camping)

## 24 July 1943

### KNARESBOROUGH FIRST-AID SUCCESSES

20 All the Knaresborough Evening Institute students entered for the recent St John Ambulance first-aid examination passed. The results were:- Certificates. John R. Wood, Geoffrey C. Wood, Arthur Rogers, Mervyn R. Kuhnel, Edgar Tetley, Douglas Kitching. Vouchers. William Swires, Harry Herrington, Wilfred E. Day,. Medallion. Arthur Holmes. Labels. William R. Mosby, George H. Hallam. Gilbert A. Wakefield. Dr G. Holroyde was the examiner, and the course was given by Dr D. F. Dobson.

### JOTTINGS

23.10.1943

By "FREE LANCE"

30 Several men from Harrogate and district are among the British prisoners of war now being repatriated from Germany, and the news that the ships bringing the freed men back to this country had at last sailed from Sweden on Thursday morning, was received with great joy and relief by their relatives, who had earlier been informed by the War Office that the men's names were included in the lists of those to be exchanged. One of the wounded men coming home is Pte. Ronald Hartley (29), of the Green Howards, son of Mrs Harley, Eastville Terrace, New Park. He was taken prisoner in May, 1940, and lost an arm. Before the war, he was well known locally as an accordion player, and it is understood that he is still able, despite his loss, to play the  
40 instrument. Pte. Hartley was one of the men who was to have been repatriated under a previous exchange scheme, which was cancelled by the Germans. Another Harrogate man whose name has been given is L-Cpl. Jack Barnfield, R.A.M.C., of Leyland Road, who was captured in Belgium in May, 1940. Others who are understood to be on their way in the repatriation steamers are Sapper R. M. Dale Chapman, son of the Rev. J. F. Dale Chapman, Rector of Goldsborough, and Mrs Chapman; Pte. Geoffrey Cleasby, son of Mrs Cleasby, Park Avenue, Knaresborough; Driver Jack Nicholson, R.A.S.C., a former driver for the West Yorkshire Road Car Col, whose wife lives in Park Close, Knaresborough; and Pte. R. pollard,  
50 Middlesex Regt., son of Mr and Mrs R. H. Pollard, Hambleton Grove,

Knaresborough. The Rector of Goldsborough is chaplain of the Harrogate and Knaresborough P.O.W. clubs, and chairman of the Knaresborough club, of which Mrs Cleasby is hon. Secretary. There may be other local men returning, and relatives who have received intimation to this effect are asked to let us know, so that particulars may be published.

### **WarshipWeek & Wings for Victory 06.11.1943**

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Knaresborough folk seem to have had a very interesting afternoon on Saturday, when the exchange of Warship Week and Wings for Victory Week plaques took place. The occasion happily coincided with the return to the town of the four local prisoners of war repatriated from Germany, and advantage was taken of the opportunity to give them a real welcome home. Kilted pipers of a Scottish regiment played them through a cheering throng to the Town Hall, where the ceremony took place, and they were given places of honour at the gathering.

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Also present were officers and men from Knaresborough's corvette, H.M.S. Wallflower, which has been far from a "wallflower" on the Atlantic scene, but has been improving the shining hour by sinking a U-boat. The battle ensign she was flying at the time, tattered and stained, was presented to the town by one of the officers.

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The third of the fighting services, the R.A.F., was represented by a distinguished visitor in Squadron leader R. A. B. Learoyd, who was awarded the V.C. for one of the finest deeds of the war, the low-level bombing of the Dortmund-Ems Canal. Squadron Leader Learoyd presented the Wings for Victory plaque.

### **KNARESBORO PETTY SESSIONS 11.12.1943**

#### **Stolen Army Blankets**

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Edward Blackstone, retired mill worker, Knaresborough, pleaded guilty to receiving two Army blankets, valued at 27s.6d., the property of the War Department, knowing them to have been stolen.

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Supt. Cockroft said P. S. Goddard and P.C. Walker visited defendant's home on November 15<sup>th</sup>, while they were making enquiries about a number of Army blankets which were alleged to have been stolen. They noticed an army blanket on a rail near the door, and asked defendant to account for his possession of it. He said he had bought two from a soldier about a month before, and produced a second blanket from a cupboard. The soldier concerned had been dealt with by the military authorities. In a statement, defendant said a soldier whom he met in a public-house asked him if he would like to buy a couple of blankets. He went outside with the soldier, who

brought two blankets wrapped in a groundsheet from the Castle Yard. He bought them for 15s. He knew they were the property of the Army. He wished he had not bought them. When charged, defendant replied, "Well, I have e helped you all I can." Supt. Cockroft added that defendant had been quite frank, and the blankets had been recovered.

Defendant said he bought the blankets on the spur of the moment. He had not been well recently. His old-age pension had not yet come through, and his only income was from Public Assistance.

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A fine of 10s, with 15s costs, was imposed, to be paid at 2s. 6d. a week.

**KNARESBOROUGH  
P.O.W. BAZAAR  
25.12.1943**

**CHRISTMAS SALE RAISED £104**

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The net proceeds of the Christmas bazaar held in Scriven W.I. last week in aid of Knaresborough P.O.W. Club, amounted to £104. Thanks are expressed by Mrs Cleasby, hon. Secretary, to all helpers, especially Mrs Iveson and the children of Lynwood School for their performance, Miss Cresswell for the sale of cards and calendars, which realised £8. 4s. 10½d., Miss Anderson for the gift of a cloth, which produced £41. 16s., and Miss Howard for the gift of a bag. The committee also acknowledges with thanks a donation of £7. 10s. from Christ Spiritual Church.

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