

*This story was sent to me by Robertsbridge resident, Len Woodgate. It makes an amusing story now but must have been pretty alarming at the time. However, it also reminds us of the many Canadian troops, and other nationalities, who were based in and around our village in preparation for the subsequent invasion of Europe in 1944. Many, of course, subsequently lost their lives in those battles and we owe them a great deal – Ed.*

During World War 2 many Canadian Army troops were stationed locally and were occasionally involved with the local Home Guard in exercises in and around Robertsbridge. On one of these the target for the Canadians was the local Telephone Exchange at the top of George Hill (now the site of Orchard Flats).

It was just after noon on a Sunday, a Canadian sergeant involved in the exercise was coming down the steps from the High Bank outside the United Reform Church when he tripped and fell down the steps. For some unknown reason the Thompson Sub Machine he was armed with was loaded with LIVE ammunition!



As he fell, the gun fired a stream of 45 calibre bullets across the top of Station Road. The building on the corner, now occupied by Senlac Veterinary Services, was at that time a branch of Barclay's Bank and had large frosted glass windows at the front and sides, with a large wooden door across the corner and it was badly damaged by the bullets, as also was the first cottage on the left in Station Road.

The old lady who lived there, Mrs Glyde, who in those days sold the Sunday Newspapers from her front room, had a large over-mantle mirror on the wall behind her which was shattered by the bullets. Strangely enough she was very deaf, and was not aware of what had happened!!

If it had happened a little sooner, the men of the village who usually met on that corner waiting for the White Horse Inn to open, would have been caught in the stream of bullets.

Who said beer is bad for you!!