

Corporal W. N. Slingsby (Home Guard)

Note: The following material has been extracted from our article "A Home Guard Scrapbook".

Norman Slingsby was a member of the local Home Guard unit.



Corporal Walter Norman Slingsby, 33rd West Riding (Skipton) Bn. Home Guard, died on 15th October 1942.

Accidents happen in war time too.

Two newspaper reports.

A HOME GUARD FATALITY

Inquiry Into Glusburn Accident

An inquest was held at the Keighley Police Station on Monday on Mr. Walter Norman Slingsby, aged 36, of Oakbank, Farnhill, a corporal in the Home Guard, who died in the Keighley and District Victoria Hospital on Thursday week after being admitted with injuries received by falling from a motor-lorry while on military duty. The Craven District Deputy Coroner (Mr. Hubert Wright) conducted the inquiry.

Evidence of identification was given by Mr. Leslie Slingsby, brother.

DOG IN THE ROAD

Mrs. G. Happs, of Sutton-in-Craven, said on Thursday week she was walking on the Keighley-Colne road through Glusburn. Within a few yards of the Glusburn Institute she observed a dog running across the road. At that moment a motor truck came into view, and, as it was passing her, the driver pulled up sharply to avoid the dog. As he did so a soldier fell from the vehicle. She thought he fell on his head. On speaking to him she received no reply.

The driver of the truck, Mr. H. C. Lofthouse, a sergeant in the Home Guard, who resides at Farnhill, said he was driving toward Cowling. He was seated on the driver's cab, and the only passenger, Mr. Slingsby, was seated in the body at the back.

IN HIS USUAL POSITION

Mr. Slingsby was sitting near an opening in the side of the body which served as exit and entrance for the passengers, and this place was Mr. Slingsby's usual position when not driving, because, as he was the second in command of the machine-gun section, he found he could issue his orders well from this seat.

Mr. Lofthouse said he was travelling at about 15 miles per hour, and had his side lights and his near side head lamp on, giving him a visibility of 30-35 yards. A few yards from Glusburn Institute he saw a dog run across the road just in front of the truck.

"I braked hard to avoid the dog, and Mr. Slingsby fell out through the opening. I stopped the vehicle, and found Mr. Slingsby with his head on the road and his feet on the kerb."

The Coroner: Is there no hand-rail in this truck?—
Witness: No.

If he had been seated in any other part of the truck he would not have fallen into the road?—No.

Mr. J. H. Sutcliffe, who appeared for the War Office, asked if anything similar to this tragic episode had occurred before with the lorry. Sergeant Lofthouse replied that it had not. Mr. Sutcliffe wished it to be made clear that this truck had not been supplied by the War Department, but that it was one converted by the company.

On returning a verdict of "Accidental death," the Deputy Coroner expressed his sorrow at the death of Mr. Slingsby, saying the Home Guard had lost a good member and Keighley had lost a fine citizen. So far as he could see there was no evidence of any negligence on the part of the driver.

THE FUNERAL

The funeral took place on Tuesday at the Kildwick Parish Church. The Rev. A. T. Walkden officiated at the church and at the graveside. The church was crowded, and many floral tributes were sent.

Organisations represented at the funeral were: Royal Yorkshire Lodge of Freemasons (No. 265), Judea Chapter (No. 265), the Keighley Lodge of Freemasons (No. 3,463), British Malleable Tube Fittings Association, the Keighlans, Keighley Boys' Grammar School Old Boys' Association, the Silsden Home Guard, the Midland Bank, Ltd., H. V. Robinson, Ltd., the Northern Fireplace Co., Ltd., John Smith, Ltd., Crane Works, Nicholson and West, Ltd. (Halifax), Timothy Hird and Sons, Ltd., Messrs. Weatherhead (solicitors), John Wilson (Steel), Ltd., Bacon and Coates, Ltd., Hartley's Malleable Fittings Co., Ltd., Charles Dale and Co., Ltd., J. W. Laycock, Ltd., Jonas Wells, Ltd., the foremen and staff Mutual Benefit Society, the employees of the firm of Walter Slingsby and Co., Ltd., and the Kildwick Albion Cricket Club, and members of the N.F.S.

Mr. Dick Hudson was the organist, and Major W. Turnbull, of the Home Guard, spoke a few words of praise. His comrades of the Home Guard were the pall bearers and led the cortège. E. Waterhouse and Sons, Ltd. (Keighley) were in charge of the funeral arrangements.

HOME GUARD DEATH
LATE MR. W. N.
SLINGSBY

"Accidental death" was the verdict at a Keighley inquest yesterday on Walter Norman Slingsby, aged 36, of Oakbank, Farnhill, a corporal in the Home Guard, who died in Keighley Hospital last Thursday night from injuries received in a fall from a motor-lorry in which he was travelling on military duty.

The driver, Sergeant H. C. Lofthouse, of Farnhill, said he was travelling at about 15 miles per hour towards Cowling. His lamps gave a visibility of 30-35 yards. Near Glusburn Institute a dog ran across the road, and to avoid hitting it he braked hard, and the deceased, his only passenger, must have fallen through the opening on the truck—which served as an entry or exit. Corporal Slingsby was sitting near this opening.

Mr. J. H. Sutcliffe, representing the War Office, wanted it to be made clear that this was not a truck provided by the War Department.

The Deputy Coroner (Mr. H. Wright) expressed his regret at the death of Mr. Slingsby. They had lost a very good citizen as well as a good member of the Home Guard.