

THE  
NATIONAL  
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# Home Front 1939-1945 (part one)

How did Britain fight the war at home?

Key Stages 3-5 | Second World War 1939-1945  
Themed collection

# Introduction

The purpose of this document collection is to allow students and teachers to develop their own questions and lines of historical enquiry on the political and social aspects of the Home Front, 1939-1945. The documents themselves are arranged according to theme, so that sources are grouped together rather than following a strict chronological order.

Suitable for:

KS 3-5

Time period:

Second World War

## Connections to curriculum:

### **Key Stage Four**

Edexcel GCSE History:

- C 1900– present: Warfare and British society in the modern era
- Experience of war: The impact of war on civilians, including recruitment and the organisation of a Home Front during Second World Wars. Government use of censorship and propaganda in wartime.
- The historic environment: London and the Second World War, 1939–45

OCR GCSE History:

- The First and Second World Wars: the beginnings of ‘total war’, including the impact on people’s lives, increased state power and the changing relationship between the state and the people.

### **Key Stage Five**

AQA GCE History:

- The People’s War and Peace, 1939–1951
- The social and cultural impact of ‘total’ war: conscription; women and children; civil liberties and restrictions; propaganda; the Blitz; plans for reconstruction including Beveridge and the Butler Act; policies of post-war Labour government, including the creation of the NHS and medical advances.

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## Teacher's notes

To accompany both part one and [two](#) of the Home Front document collections, we have linked to [a collection of original films<sup>1</sup>](#) from the Imperial War Museum about life on the Home Front. We provide questions on these films and there is also a task outlined below:

Watch a film and discuss/answer the questions:

- Select 3 to 5 documents from either Home Front collection to show how they can be used to support the message and content of one or more of the films.
- Write a report/record a video to explain your choice of documents.
- What are the advantages of using public information films like these with document sources as evidence for life on the Home Front?

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/home-front-1939-1945-film-sources-2/>

There are **four themes** covered in this collection (**Part 1**). We have provided questions/tasks for some of the sources in each theme. Please note that there are not questions for every source, except for those indicated in these notes. Some questions however link to other referenced sources in the collection for learners to explore at the same time. The questions can also be found on the relevant source pages for convenience with additional notes to provide context.

### 1. Preparations for war: blackouts; gas raids and masks; internment; the Home Guard.

Poster: Warning about the dangers of the Blackout, 1939. Catalogue ref: INF 3/290

- What was the blackout?
- How does the poster use language and image to persuade people to be careful in the blackout?
- Why do you think the government produced the poster?
- What is the connection between the poster and the notes for a debate in the House of Commons on blackout accidents, January 1940, Catalogue ref: MT 55/296?
- Can you find a source which shows some people objected to the blackout?
- Why do you think the government kept a complaint about the blackout on file?

## Teacher's notes

Gas Raid quiz to be placed in newspapers by the government, 1941. Catalogue ref: HO 186/2247

- Why do you think this 'Gas Quiz' was placed in newspapers?
- Do you think it is more or less effective than the instructions for what to do in a gas attack printed in Sunday newspapers, May 1941? Catalogue ref: HO 186/2247
- Can you find a document which explains why the government wanted to prepare the country for potential gas attacks?

Document: Instructions about internees in the event of war, 1938. Catalogue ref: HO 144/21256

- What were immigration officers told to do concerning Germans living in Britain if war was declared?
- Why did the government make these plans?
- Read the appeal for Eduard Ries. Why was he interned? Do you think the panel was correct to continue his detention? See the appeal document: Catalogue ref: HO 214/26?

Document: Cabinet report on the forming of the British Home Guard. Catalogue ref: CAB 106/1189

- What was the Home Guard?
- How and when did the government form the Home Guard?
- Why do you think that the government found radio broadcasting so effective during wartime?
- Why do you think so many people wanted to be in the Home Guard?
- Why were there problems in supplying guns to the Home Guard according to this document: Catalogue ref: CAB 65/7/170)
- Do you think the Home Guard had a value other than defending Britain?

## 2. Evacuation of children

Document: Government Evacuation Scheme: Ministry of Health Memorandum, 1939. Catalogue ref: ED 138/48

## Teacher's notes

- Why did the British government want city children to leave their homes in 1939?

Document: London County Council Study of Evacuation 1940. Catalogue ref: ED 138/49

- How was evacuation organised?
- What problems emerged with evacuation by 1940?

Poster: Children are safer in the country. Catalogue ref: INF 13/171

- Why do you think the government produced this poster?
- How does the poster use language and image to persuade people to evacuate their children?

Photograph: CORB children to New Zealand, 1940-1. Catalogue ref: DO 131/15

- Find out more about the Children's Overseas Reception Board set up to evacuate children abroad.

Poster: Caring for evacuees. Catalogue ref: INF 13/171/7

- How does the poster use language and image to persuade women to volunteer and help in child evacuation?
- How does the poster try to 'persuade' families to support evacuation?

## 3. The Blitz: air raid precautions, shelters, Bethnal Green tube shelter disaster.

German Air Attacks on England, 8 August 1940 – 10 September 1940. Catalogue ref: AIR 2/7355

- Where were German attacks made in the first phase of the Blitz or bombing campaign against Britain?
- Which British cities were to be attacked as part of the 'Moonlight Sonata' German bombing campaign? Catalogue ref: AIR 2/5238

## Teacher's notes

- What were the aims of the British counter plan called 'Cold Water'. Can you guess why it was called this? Catalogue ref: AIR 2/5238
- Take a look at the photograph showing bomb damage Catalogue ref: HO 197/28. How could photographs like this be used to persuade people to use public shelters?
- What does this photograph reveal about the nature of bombing raids?

Diagram: 'How to put up your Morrison Shelter'. Catalogue ref: HO 186/580

- Can you explain how the Morrison shelter worked?
- Compare this to the Anderson shelter 'Diagram of how to construct an Anderson Shelter', Catalogue ref: ZPER 34/196).
- According to Jenny Fleming in her letter addressed to Herbert Morrison what were the problems of public shelters, 1940? Catalogue ref: HO 207/783
- Do you think Herbert Morrison would have responded to this letter?
- Could the government have done anything to improve public shelters?

Document extracts: the Bethnal Green Tube Shelter Disaster Inquiry Report. Catalogue ref: CAB 66/35

- What were the main conclusions in the report about the causes of this Bethnal Green tube disaster?
- Why do you think this document is titled 'Most Secret' to be kept under lock and key?
- Why did the War Cabinet decide not to publish the full findings about the Bethnal Green Tube Shelter disaster, Catalogue ref: CAB 65/34
- What did they fear would happen if the Germans found out about it?
- What statement did they make in the House of Commons about the disaster?

## 4. The Empire Home Front

Photographs: Women at work in the Empire. Catalogue ref: CO 875/15/12

- What does this source reveal about the contribution of the British Empire to the war effort?
- What raw materials did Britain use from the empire during the Second World War, see Diagram: Catalogue ref: CO 875/15/12/f46
- How did Indian men support the Home front? See Poster: On War Work in Britain, Catalogue ref: INF 2/11 (5)

## Teacher's notes

- How did Indian women contribute in civil defence? See Poster: On War Work in Britain  
Catalogue ref: INF 2/11 (3)
- Look at the diagram showing local defence forces within the British Empire. What does this document reveal about the role of local defences in the Second World War?  
Catalogue ref: CO 875/15/12/f34

Students could work with a group of sources or source type on a certain theme or linked themes. The documents should offer them a chance to develop their powers of evaluation and analysis and support their course work. Alternatively, teachers may wish to use the collection to develop their own resources or encourage students to 'curate' their own 'exhibition' of the most significant sources on the topic.

Please note that content in this themed collection has been redeveloped from content in our [Home Front 1939-1945](#) focussed topic website which has been archived as the interactive parts no longer work.

## External links

- For further sources search [the collections at the Imperial War Museum](#)<sup>1</sup>
- Find a wealth of [visual material on the Art of War](#)<sup>2</sup>
- Find out more about [life on the Home front from National Museum of Scotland](#)<sup>3</sup>
- [National Archives blog on civilian honours during Second World War](#)<sup>4</sup>
- [National Archives blog on the Home Guard](#)<sup>5</sup>
- [National Archives blog on women in Second World War art](#)<sup>6</sup>
- [National Archives blog on the Beveridge Report 1942 and foundation of the Welfare state](#)<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/art-war/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/stories/scottish-history-and-archaeology/second-world-war/sections/home-front>

<sup>4</sup> <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/rewarding-gallantry-on-the-home-front-civilian-honours-in-the-second-world-war/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/the-home-guard/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/women-in-second-world-war-art/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/beveridge-report-foundations-welfare-state/>

## Background

### Home Front 1939-1945: Fighting the war at home.

The Second World War has justifiably earned the name a 'People's War' as it involved citizens not just the military.

As soon as war was declared on 3 September, 1939 the British government's first priority was to 'get the children away' from industrial areas, overcrowded cities and anywhere that was expected to be among the first targets for German air raids.

Local authorities implemented the plan at once. Mothers could take babies and young children with them, while school age children assembled in their school playgrounds to be marched to the nearest train station accompanied by teachers and volunteers. Children had a luggage label pinned to their coats with their names and destination. On arrival in rural areas – deemed safer from air raids – the children piled out and were met by a crowd of locals who had agreed with the billeting officer to take in evacuees. They walked around picking which child they wanted to take home: pretty little girls were soon chosen while farmers were on the look-out for strong lads to help with the harvest – one child recalled it being like a cattle market.

Evacuation was never compulsory so it presented a dilemma for parents: Should they send their children away to live with strangers for an undetermined length of time, or keep them at home where they might be killed in an air raid? Some children enjoyed being away from home – with space to kick a ball and explore the countryside – while some cried themselves to sleep every night.

When people were asked what they hated most about the war, for most it was the blackout. The government thinking that German technology was more advanced than it in fact was, ordered that no light that might attract attention from the German bombers must show. The blackout lasted from sunset to dawn. During those hours, shops, factories and office buildings had to turn off their lights – while householders were told to use special black out material to replace their curtains, but that was expensive and shops soon sold out. A cheaper option was to paint windows black or, as a last resort, to nail cardboard to the window frames.

Policemen and volunteer Air Raid Protection (ARP) officers would patrol city streets to ensure that regulations were being observed to the letter. If they detected a sliver of light coming from a house, they seemed to rather enjoy bellowing 'Put that light out!'

## Background

Transgressors were likely to be fined up to two pounds for a first offence or up to £50 pounds if you were a repeat offender.

People found it possible to cook by candlelight but reading a book, knitting, attempting to do a jigsaw or tackling a crossword puzzle was impossible. If it was depressing to be indoors, it was hazardous to venture out as street lights had been dimmed, and even if you could buy the batteries for a torch the beam could only be directed at the ground. People bumped into each other, into pillar boxes or walls. Some were so disoriented that they were unable to find their own front door. And you took your life in your hands if you tried to cross the road as car head lights were dimmed, or covered with a sock.

All that summer what George Orwell described as 'nuisance raids' during the day became a regular occurrence, but on 7th September 1940 the war took an ominous turn with the first of 57 consecutive nights of bombing and the start of the 'Blitz'. When the air raid warning sounded at 8 pm and people took shelter in either Anderson shelters, which were provided by the government and free to most of the population who had their own garden. It was not until nearly the end of the war that Morrison shelters were used. These were heavy iron constructions which sheltered people without an outdoor space.

London docks and warehouses were demolished by the bombing. Firemen struggled for days to extinguish the flames, whilst many commodities, like sugar, burned furiously. The people had little choice but to take refuge nightly in underground stations, yet the casualties remained high, with the air raids killing over 43,000 civilians, and seriously wounding 139,000 more.

Britain, however was not the only country to suffer from bombing raids and the threat of invasion during the Second World War. Countries in Britain's overseas empire came under attack, for example Malta and Australia. As well as making a massive contribution to the allied army and providing resources, the colonial empire protected itself at home with local defence forces and other organisations such as Air Raid Precautions units.

**Juliet Gardiner, author: 'The Thirties'; 'Wartime Britain'; 'Joining the Dots: A Woman in Her Time'.**

## Poster: Warning about the dangers of the Blackout, 1939.

Catalogue ref: INF 3/290



## Poster: Warning about the dangers of the Blackout, 1939.

Catalogue ref: INF 3/290

The Blackout was introduced in September 1939. It was to stop light on the ground showing enemy aircraft which areas to bomb. Special Air Raid Wardens patrolled the streets after dark to make sure that no lights could be seen from houses. People took a long time getting used to the Blackout. Pillar-boxes were painted yellow, white stripes were painted on the roads and on lamp-posts. Blackout curtains were made to stop light escaping from windows in ordinary houses.

### Transcript

'Until your eyes get used to the darkness, take it easy. Look out in the blackout.'

## Notes for a debate in the House of Commons on Blackout accidents, January 1940. Catalogue ref: MT 55/296.

NOTES FOR A DEBATE ON ROAD ACCIDENTS.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

23rd January, 1940.

2. By far the greater part of the fatal accidents take place during the "black-out". Figures were obtained specially for October, November and December to show the number of persons killed during the "hours of darkness" (i.e. the "black-out") and are as follows:-

|          | <u>Hours of<br/>Darkness.</u> | <u>"Other"<br/>hours.</u> | <u>Total.</u> |
|----------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| October  | 564                           | 355                       | 919           |
| November | 674                           | 252                       | 926           |
| December | 896                           | 260                       | 1,156         |

The "black-out" casualties increase as the days grow shorter.

## Notes for a debate in the House of Commons on Blackout accidents, January 1940. Catalogue ref: MT 55/296.

Even though steps were taken to make the streets safe, without proper lighting thousands of people died in accidents during the blackout before the bombing even started.

### Transcript

#### NOTES FOR A DEBATE ON ROAD ACCIDENTS

#### HOUSE OF COMMONS

23rd January, 1940

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The "black-out" casualties increase as the days grow shorter.

# Leaflets returned to the Government by people protesting about the Blackout, 1939. Catalogue ref: HO 186/115

~~NEVER TRY TO LIFT THE MASK OFF UPWARDS OR BY PULLING THE CONTAINER OR THE EDGE OF THE RUBBER AT THE CHIN.~~

To prevent the window from misting over when the mask is worn, wet the end of a finger and rub it on a piece of toilet soap. Then rub the finger all over the inside of the window so as to leave a thin film of soap.

### ~~PUTTING YOUR MASK AWAY~~

After the mask has been used you will find that it is wet on the inside with moisture from the breath. This should be wiped off with a soft dry cloth and the mask allowed to dry before it is put away in its box. Do not try to dry it by applying heat.

The contents of the container do not deteriorate either with age or with wearing the mask when gas is not present. But if you suspect any flaw in your gas mask you should inform your local air raid warden.

It is a good thing to get out your gas mask occasionally and put it on, so as to get used to wearing it, and if you take the simple precautions set out above you will have the it is always ready for your protection.

### ~~MASKING YOUR WINDOWS~~

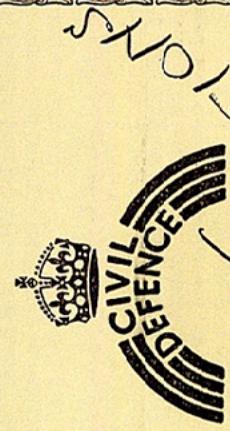
In war, one of our great protections against the dangers of air attack after daylight would be the "black-out." On the outbreak of hostilities all external lights and street lighting would be totally extinguished so as to give hostile aircraft no indication as to their whereabouts. But this will not be fully effective unless you do your part, and see to it that no lighting in the house where you live is visible from the outside. The motto for safety will be "Keep it dark!"

Every occupier of rooms, house or flat would be responsible for darkening his own lights. Lights in the halls or on the staircases of blocks of flats or dwellings would be the responsibility of the landlord or owner.

Of course, the most convenient way of shutting in the light is to use close fitting blinds. These can be of any thick, dark coloured material such as dark blue or black or dark green glazed Holland, Lancaster or Italian Cloth.

If you cannot manage this, you could obscure your windows by fixing up sheets of black paper or thick dark brown paper mounted on battens.

No use to us we refuse to  
assess in war & war preparation  
Family man taught to



## ~~YOUR GAS MASK~~ ~~How to keep it and How to Use it~~ ~~MASKING YOUR~~ ~~WINDOWS~~

PUBLIC INFORMATION  
LEAFLET NO. 2

Read this and  
keep it carefully.  
You may need it.

Issued from the Lord Privy Seal's Office July, 1939

## Leaflets returned to the Government by people protesting about the Blackout, 1939. Catalogue ref: HO 186/115

This information leaflet about how to use gas masks and black out windows has been written on and returned to the government. What message is the person trying to send the government?

### Transcript

Handwriting across the leaflet reads:

"No use to us we refuse to assist in war or war preparation. Family man Leigh on Sea"

"We are helping peace preparations"

"We refuse war we demand peace"

# Secret War Cabinet document on the Blackout in the rest of Western Europe, 1940. Catalogue Ref: CAB 21/1093.

(THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT).

S E C R E T .

19/4/9/1.

COPY NO. 10

3RD SEPTEMBER, 1940.

WAR CABINET.

BLACK-OUT COMMITTEE.

STREET LIGHTING IN WESTERN EUROPE

(Note by Intelligence Branch,  
Ministry of Home Security).



## GERMANY.

Generally speaking the black-out in German towns is more severe than in London. Only guide lights at street intersections which are carefully screened and lights, also screened, to mark obstructions are allowed. No shop window lighting is permitted.

It was reported in May that some street lighting was permitted in towns in Bohemia and Polish Upper Silesia, until an air raid warning was sounded. This was probably due to fear of subversive activities being carried on by Poles and Czechs in the black-out, as well as to the belief that these remoter territories were safe from air attack.

The general standard of black-out as regards private houses was enforced much more strictly during exercises before the war in Germany, than it is in this country even at the present time.

## CONCLUSION.

With the exception of France, where the view was taken that no concealment measures could prevent German pilots finding the larger cities, and elaborate preparations had been made in peace-time to enable street lighting to be cut off from a central point by means of relays without interfering with house lighting, the restriction of street and shop lighting in European countries is, in the main, rather more severe than in the United Kingdom. The German system of a permanent black-out from dusk to dawn is believed to have been strictly enforced in the countries now occupied by them, except in certain parts of Poland and Czechoslovakia where there are special reasons for a modification of this policy.

# Secret War Cabinet document on the Blackout in the rest of Western Europe, 1940. Catalogue Ref: CAB 21/1093.

## Transcript

(THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT).  
SECRET.

19/4/9/1. COPY NO.10  
3RD SEPTEMBER, 1940.

WAR CABINET.  
BLACK-OUT COMMITTEE

STREET LIGHTING IN WESTERN EUROPE  
(Note by Intelligence Branch, Ministry of Home Security).

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# Instructions on what to do in a gas attack. This information was placed in Sunday newspapers, May 1941. Catalogue Ref: HO 186/2247

**WAR GAS**

OFFICIAL INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF HOME SECURITY

**IF THE GAS RATTLES SOUND**

Put on mask, holding your breath until mask is in position. Turn up collar. Put on gloves or keep hands in pockets. Take cover in nearest building quickly. Put up umbrella if you have one.

**IF YOU GET GASSED**  
*by Vapour Gases*

1. Keep your mask on even if you feel discomfort.
2. If discomfort continues, go to First Aid Post.

*by Liquid or Blister Gas*

1. Dab, but *don't rub* the splash with your handkerchief. Then destroy the handkerchief.
2. Rub No. 2 Ointment well into place (buy a 6d. jar now from any chemist). In an emergency, chemists will supply Bleach Cream free.
3. If you can't get the Ointment or Cream within 5 minutes, wash the affected place with soap and warm water.
4. Take off *at once* any garment splashed with gas.

**HOW TO PUT ON YOUR MASK**

1. Hold your breath.
2. Hold mask in front of face, thumbs inside straps.
3. Thrust chin well forward into mask. Pull straps as far over head as they will go.
4. Run finger round face-piece taking care head-straps are not twisted.

**MAKE SURE IT FITS**

See that the rubber fits snugly at sides of jaw and under chin. The head straps should be adjusted to hold the mask firmly. To test for fit, hold a piece of paper to end of mask and breathe in. The paper should stick.

**ALWAYS HAVE  
YOUR GAS MASK  
WITH YOU - DAY AND NIGHT.  
LEARN TO PUT IT ON QUICKLY**

## Instructions on what to do in a gas attack. This information was placed in Sunday newspapers, May 1941. Catalogue Ref: HO 186/2247

By September 1939 nearly everybody in the country had been issued with a gas mask (38 million). People were instructed to carry their gas masks at all times in case of attack. Adults had masks that looked like a pig-snout and the children's were soon given nicknames such as Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. Even babies had gas masks that they could be placed inside.

### Transcript

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ALWAYS HAVE YOUR GAS MASK WITH YOU – DAY AND NIGHT. LEARN TO PUT IT ON QUICKLY.

## Gas Raid quiz to be placed in newspapers by the government, 1941.

Catalogue Ref: HO 186/2247

**Gas Raid Quiz .... No. 19**

WHAT CAN YOU DO  
IF YOU GET  
**MUSTARD GAS**  
ON YOUR BARE HAND?

ANSWER: YOU MUST ACT AT ONCE. DAB OFF THE LIQUID WITH A RAG AND RUB NO. 2 OINTMENT WELL INTO THE PLACE. GET A POT (PRICE 6d.) FROM YOUR CHEMIST NOW - IT WILL KEEP. IF YOU WAIT TILL EVERYONE ELSE IS BUYING IT, SUPPLIES MAY RUN SHORT.

IF YOU HAVE FALSE TEETH, SHOULD YOU WEAR YOUR DENTURES WHEN YOU PUT ON YOUR MASK?  
YES! IF YOU DON'T YOUR MASK MAY NOT FIT PROPERLY, AND A PERFECT FIT IS ESSENTIAL.

THIS SPACE IS PRESENTED BY WHITBREAD & CO. LTD.

15pt-1—R Mackesons Daily Express w/c 24 Nov. 1941 3 x 3½ Final proof R 1239

|    |               |        |   |   |      |   |
|----|---------------|--------|---|---|------|---|
| 11 | "             | Mail   | " | 1 | Dec. | " |
|    | "             | Herald | " | 8 | "    | " |
| 6  | Provs         | "      | " | 1 | "    | " |
| 4  | Scots Provs   | "      | " | 1 | "    | " |
| 6  | Kent Weeklies | "      | " | 5 | "    | " |

## Gas Raid quiz to be placed in newspapers by the government, 1941.

Catalogue Ref: HO 186/2247

The British feared that the Germans would use gas, probably launched from aeroplanes or boats. Gas had been used on the battlefields during the First World War with terrible results but had not been used on civilian populations. Lots of work places had tests where members of staff had to wear a mask while working for 15 minutes or more and schools held frequent practices. In the end gas was never used against the British, so the effectiveness of the preparations was never tested.

### Transcript

Gas Raid Quiz... No. 19

What can you do if you get mustard gas on your bare hand?

Answer: You must act at once. Dab off the liquid with a rag and rub No. 2 ointment well into the place. Get a pot (price 6d.) from your chemist now – it will keep. If you wait till everyone else is buying it, supplies may run short.

If you have false teeth, should you wear your dentures when you put on your mask? Yes! If you don't your mask may not fit properly, and a perfect fit is essential.

## Look before you sleep poster, (undated).

Catalogue Ref: EXT 1/116



## Look before you sleep poster, (undated).

Catalogue Ref: EXT 1/116

This government poster was a clever visual way of reminding people about their air raid precautions at night time. The image and use of language work well with the play on words with 'Look before you sleep' instead of - 'Look before you leap'!

### Transcript

Look before you sleep

All windows and inner doors open?

Water in buckets?

Sand in buckets?

Gas mask, clothes and torch handy?

Good night!

# Report on German planes potentially carrying gas, 1940.

Catalogue ref: CAB 120/777

P.M/66

GAS.

1. A report has been received from an observation station near Deal that last week two white German seaplanes marked with a red cross cruised slowly backwards and forwards within a very close distance of the coast.

One was shot down by the R.A.F. the other was circled by our fighters but was allowed to get away unmolested.

2. From Intelligence reports we are threatened by large concentrations of gas.

3. There appears to be only two methods by which gas could be satisfactorily released:-

- (a). By boats and ships from the sea.
- (b). From Aeroplanes.

4. The first method is feasible, ships, barges, and craft of all kinds could be used, and given suitable weather, could be sailed over during the night and left stranded on our shores emitting gas.

5. The German success with a gas cloud in 1915 may well influence them.

6. The idea of putting gas and gas emitting apparatus in Red Cross Ships or aeroplanes would also be in keeping with their sense of humour.

7. It is believed that the above may be an imminent menace.

8. To be forewarned would be to be forearmed and it is suggested that if a gas cloud was experienced on our shores here at the present moment the result might be serious. If troops and civilians were warned at once of this possibility the surprise element would be countered and the defeat of the ruse possible.

9. It is however submitted that gas proof rooms (not necessarily in bomb proof shelters) should as far as possible be at once constructed in any area where such an attack is possible.

10. If there is a fear of such German attack it is of course essential that all ships or aeroplanes, hospitals or otherwise should be sunk as far as possible from these shores.

18 - 7 - 40

*C. H. Kitchener*

Lt. Colonel, R.A.  
Commanding 56th. Heavy Regiment, R.A.

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Catalogue ref: CAB 120/777

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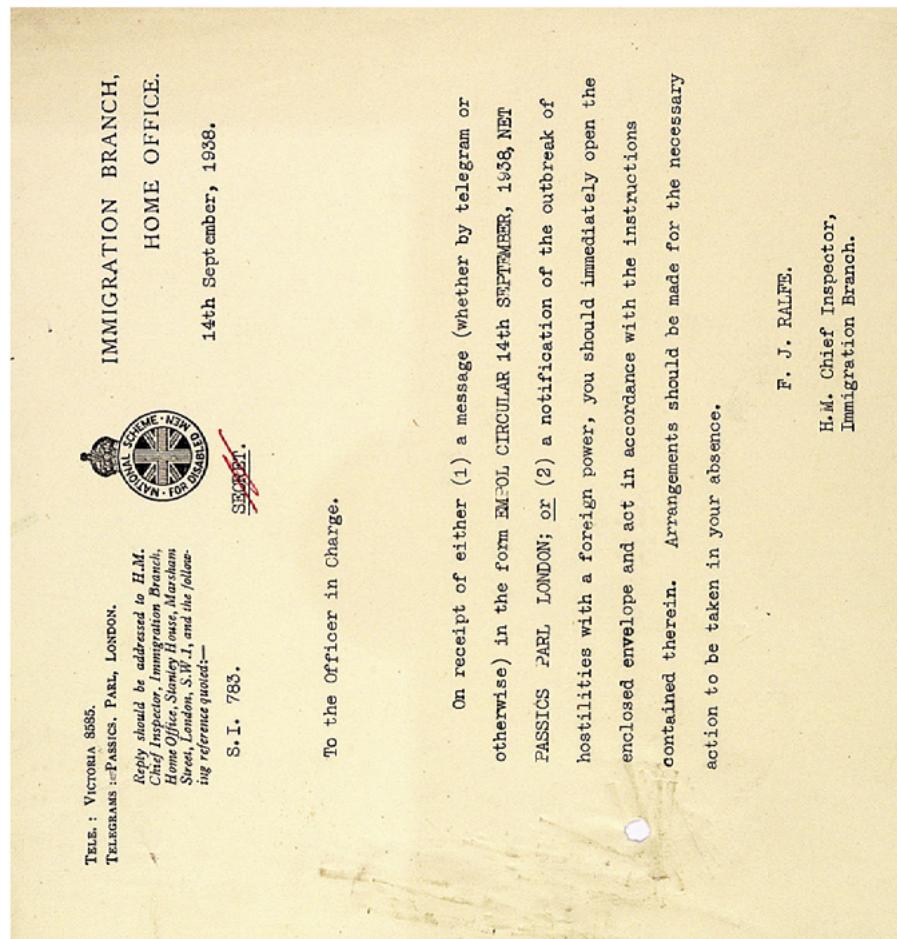
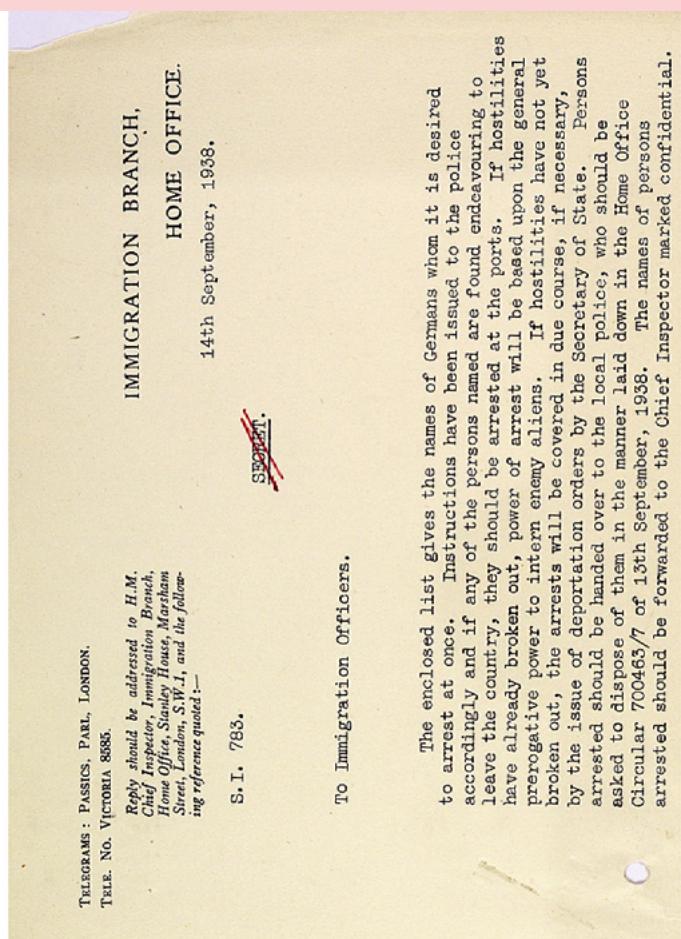
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# Instructions about internees in the event of war, 1938.

Catalogue Ref: HO 144/21256



# Instructions about internees in the event of war, 1938.

Catalogue Ref: HO 144/21256

As the fear of invasion grew anyone in Britain who was German, Austrian or Italian was interned. This meant that they were put in prison because the government was very worried that foreigners from a country Britain was at war with might tell the enemy about troop movements or send them important industrial information. Many were refugees who had come to Britain because Hitler had threatened to kill them or put them in concentration camps.

## Transcript

IMMIGRATION BRANCH,  
HOME OFFICE.

14th September, 1938.

To the Officer in Charge.

On receipt of either (1) a message (whether by telegram or otherwise) in the form EMPOL CIRCULAR 14th SEPTEMBER, 1938, NET PASSICS PARL LONDON; or (2) a notification of the outbreak of hostilities with a foreign power, you should immediately open the enclosed envelope and act in accordance with the instructions contained therein.

Arrangements should be made for the necessary action to be taken in your absence.

F. J. RALFE

H.M. Chief Inspector,  
Immigration Branch

...

To Immigration Officers,

## Instructions about internees in the event of war, 1938.

Catalogue Ref: HO 144/21256

The enclosed list gives the names of Germans whom it is desired to arrest at once. Instructions have been issued to the police accordingly and if any of the persons named are found endeavouring to leave the country, they should be arrested at the ports. If hostilities have already broken out, power of arrest will be based upon the general prerogative power to intern enemy aliens. If hostilities have not yet broken out, the arrests will be covered in due course, if necessary, by the issue of deportation orders by the Secretary of State. Persons arrested should be handed over to the local police, who should be asked to dispose of them in the manner laid down in the Home Office Circular 700463/7 of 13th September, 1938. The names of persons arrested should be forwarded to the Chief Inspector marked confidential.

## Photograph of a kindergarten (class for young children) in an internment camp, 1940. Catalogue Ref: HO 213/1053



WOMEN'S CAMP. THE KINDERGARTEN.

## Photograph of a kindergarten (class for young children) in an internment camp, 1940. Catalogue Ref: HO 213/1053

Over 8,000 people were interned and, of these, about 5,000, including women and young children, were sent to Port Erin and Port St Mary on the Isle of Man. They were held in crowded housing and separated from the rest of the island by barbed wire fencing. As the war progressed, the government released many of the internees who were judged not to be a threat back to their homes but some spent the whole war behind wire.

### Transcript

WOMEN'S CAMP. THE KINDERGARTEN.

## Appeal decision for German internee wanting to be released, 1941.

Catalogue Ref: HO 214/26

33

COPY.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>ISLE OF MAN.</b>  |  |
| SEARCHED..... SERIALIZED..... INDEXED.....                                   |  |
| APPEAL DECISION.   |  |
| (1) Surname (block capitals) RIES.   |  |
| Given names (middle name if any) JAMES EDWARD                                |  |
| Other names (if any) JAMES EDWARD EDUARD                                     |  |
| Title (if any) MR  |  |
| Date of birth (if known) 21.2.12.  |  |
| Place of birth Voeerde, in Jutland   |  |
| Nationality German   |  |
| (4) Police Regn. Cert. No. 769304. Home Office reference, if known. R.14397. |  |
| Special Procedure Card No. if known.   |  |
| (5) Address 21, Grayskott Road, Battersea.                                   |  |
| (6) Normal Occupation Manufacturer (Steel and Bakelite)                      |  |

## Reasons for Decision:

(7) Present Occupation as above.

(8) Decision of Tribunal Left subject to 6A & 19A. Pending

(9) Decision of Advisory Committee: Left subject to 6A & 9A.

Signature of Tribunalist, N.L. Macaskie, M.A., to be notified. (8)

This man is a German and an Aryan. His wife, Ilse REIS, is half-Jewish, her father being a Jew. The man tells us that he joined the Jugend Deutsche Order when he was 16 in the year 1928, and he remained a member of this Order, which we understand was opposed to Nazism and Communism, until June, 1933 when it was dissolved by the Nazis. Owing to the fact, as he says, that he was the manager of his father's bakelite manufacturing business, and that his father was ill, and that it had become a matter of remark that none of the employees of the business had manifested their loyalty to the Nazi cause, he joined the Storm Troopers in January 1934, for motives of police but not of conviction. He remained a Storm Trooper until May, /1938

## Appeal decision for German internee wanting to be released, 1941.

Catalogue Ref: HO 214/26

### Transcript

ISLE OF MAN

APPEAL DECISION

(1) Surname (block capitals) RIES

Forenames Eduard

Alias \_ \_ \_ \_

(2) Date and place of birth 21.2.12. Voerde.

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(4) Police Regn.Cert.No. 769304. Home Office reference, if known. R.14397.

Special Procedure Card Number, if known.

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Classified "B".

Signature of Tribunal N.L. Macaskie

# Cabinet report on the forming of the British Home Guard, 1940.

Catalogue Ref: CAB 106/1189

12

## Birth of the Home Guard May 14, 1940

It was on the evening of May 14th, 1940 that the Right Honorable Anthony Eden, M.C., the then Secretary of State for War, broadcast an address to the British people. He said in part, -

"I want to speak to you tonight about a form of warfare which the Germans have been employing so extensively against Holland and Belgium ..... We are going to ask you to help in a manner which I know will be welcome to thousands of you. The Government has received inquiries from all over the Kingdom from men who wish to do something for the defense of the country. Now is your opportunity. We want large numbers of such men ..... between the ages of 17 and 65 to come forward now and offer their services. The name of the new Force will be Local Defense Volunteers. In order to volunteer what you have to do is to give in your name at your local police station ...."

The result of the broadcast was electrifying.

By May 20th in a period of only six days, 250,000 volunteers had come forward.

By the middle of July in 1940 the Force had reached the figure of 1,300,000 volunteers.

By the middle of November, the Home Guard numbered 1,700,000.

## Cabinet report on the forming of the British Home Guard, 1940.

Catalogue Ref: CAB 106/1189

When the British and French armies were defeated in France by the Germans in May 1940 the future was bleak. Britain was the last big country in Europe still fighting Hitler and faced the real threat of an invasion from the Germans across the sea from France.

The British army had been badly weakened by the defeat in France so the government quickly set up a volunteer army to make Britain harder to invade. This was originally called the Local Defence Volunteers but was later known as the Home Guard. It was sometimes nicknamed 'Dad's army' because it was made up of volunteers who were too old to serve in the regular army.

### Transcript

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## Problems with supplying guns to the Home Guard, June 1940.

Catalogue Ref: CAB 65/7/170

The Local  
Defence  
Volunteers.

- (5) There had been a good deal of criticism both in the press and among Members of Parliament of the lack of organisation and discipline among the L.D.V's. It was no doubt difficult to reach a very high standard with men who gave part-time service only, on an unpaid basis. On the other hand, the L.D.V's. were now some 500,000 strong and most of them were very keen.

There was also a very widespread demand from men of all ages to be allowed to serve in the armed forces or at least to be given weapons in order to defend their homes. This demand could not be ignored.

*The Secretary of State for War* described certain steps which he was taking to meet this situation. The organisation of the L.D.V's. had now become too heavy a task to impose on the existing staffs of the Home Defence Forces. It was proposed to reorganise them under separate Central and Local Commanders of their own. The whole organisation would, however, remain under the orders of General Ironside. In order to assist in training, full-time permanent instructors would be taken on. Further assistance in training would be given by drawing on the Officers' Emergency Reserve. (This had originally consisted of 11,000 ex-Officers, of whom some 3,000 had not yet been found posts.)

- (6) The Secretary of State said that the L.D.V's. were at the moment largely a "broomstick" Army. Rifles were being provided for them as quickly as possible. We had a supply of rifles which had been kept in store since the last war, and which were now being reconditioned. Another 500,000 rifles were ready to leave the United States. According to the original intention, these would have been divided equally between this country and France, but arrangements were now being made which would ensure that the whole consignment came to us.

Rifles from the  
United States of  
America.

*The Prime Minister* emphasised the importance of getting these rifles shipped at the earliest possible moment. Nothing must be left undone to get these rifles as quickly as possible.

## Cabinet report on the forming of the British Home Guard, 1940.

Catalogue Ref: CAB 106/1189

Hundreds of thousands of men joined the Home Guard in the summer of 1940 and served through the war. The force had some problems to begin with because they did not have proper weapons or uniforms. Despite this they began training to resist an enemy invasion and soon became a familiar sight around the country performing a number of roles. Although it was expected, the Germans did not try to invade, so the Home Guard never faced an invading force and the question remains about how they would have fought.

### Transcript

The Local Defence Volunteers.

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## 'Children are safer in the country' poster (undated).

Catalogue Ref: INF 13/171



**CHILDREN**  
are safer in the country  
. . . leave them there

## 'Children are safer in the country' poster (undated).

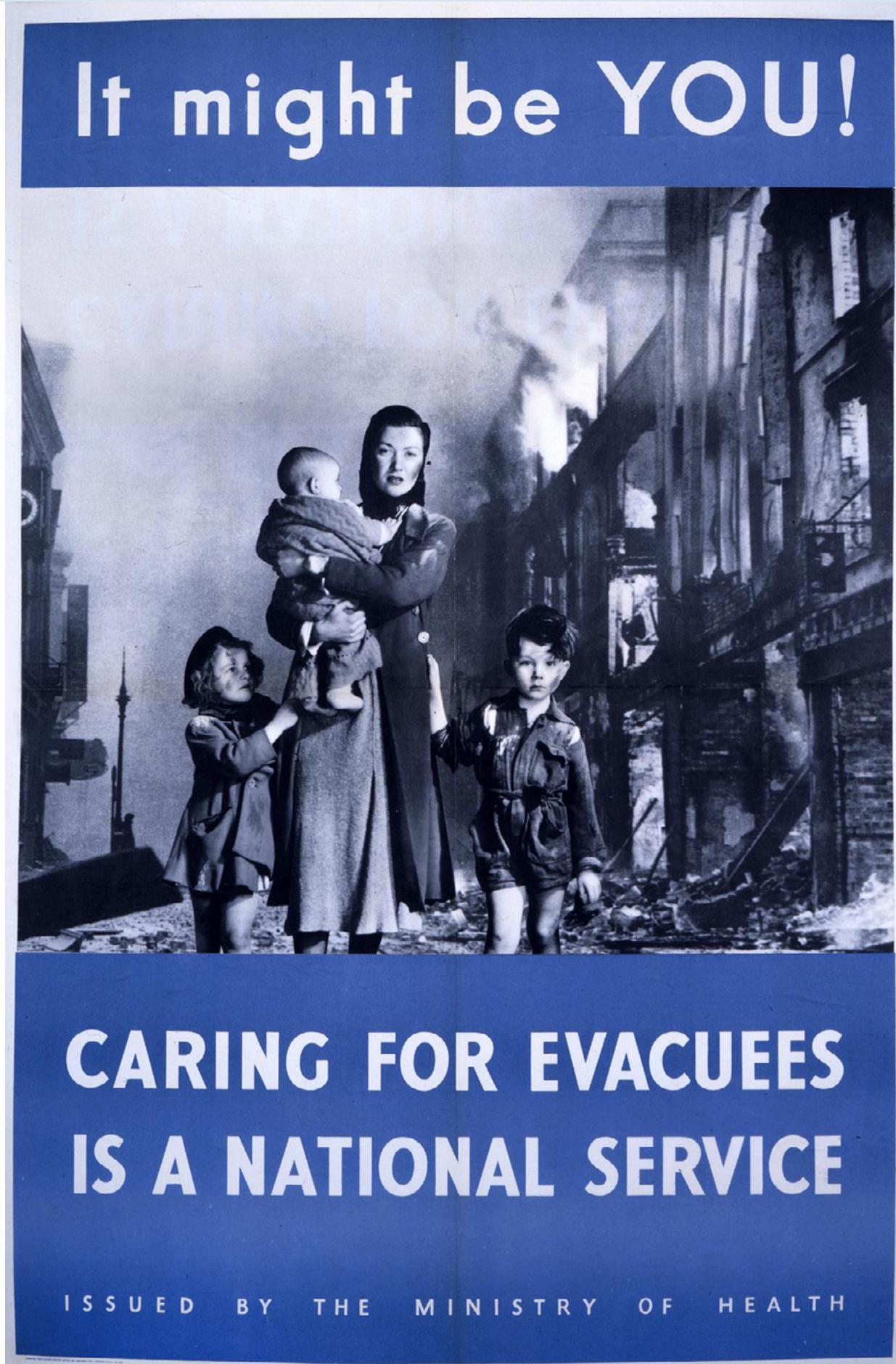
Catalogue Ref: INF 13/171

Evacuation took place in several waves. On 1 September 1939, when Germany invaded Poland and two days before the British declaration of war, children were evacuated. In three days 1.5 million evacuees were sent to rural locations considered to be safe.

### Transcript

CHILDREN are safer in the country... leave them there

Poster: 'It might be you: Caring for evacuees is a National Service', 1939-1945. Catalogue Ref: INF 13/171/7



## Poster: 'It might be you: Caring for evacuees is a National Service', 1939-1945. Catalogue Ref: INF 13/171/7

### Transcript

It might be YOU!

Caring for evacuees is a national service

Issued by the Ministry of Health

**Ministry of Health Memorandum Government Evacuation Scheme,  
1939. Catalogue Ref: ED 138/48**

**Memo. Ev. 4**

**GOVERNMENT EVACUATION SCHEME  
MEMORANDUM.**

4. The objective has been therefore to provide facilities for the removal from certain large crowded areas, in which the effects of air attack would be most serious, of certain groups of people whose removal is desirable on both national and humanitarian grounds, and to transfer them to districts where the primary purpose of dispersal can be achieved. This has involved an order of priority as regards both the classes of persons to be transferred and the towns to be evacuated, and the provisional allocation of other districts as receiving areas.

19617

A 2

*Priority classes.*

5. The classes of persons to whom priority is to be given under the Government Scheme are:—

- (1) school children in organised units in charge of their teachers;
- (2) children of pre-school age accompanied by their mothers or other persons responsible for looking after them;
- (3) expectant mothers;
- (4) the adult blind and cripple population so far as removal may be feasible.

The information to be given should include information as to the points of assembly and the amount and kind of hand luggage which can be conveyed. A full list should include the child's gas mask, a change of underclothing, night-clothes, house-shoes or plimsolls, spare stockings or socks, a toothbrush, comb, towel and handkerchiefs, a warm coat or mackintosh, and a packet of food for the day. The children should be sent away wearing their thickest and warmest footwear.

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# London County Council Study of Evacuation, 1940.

Catalogue Ref: ED 138/49

## (2) The Evacuation of September, 1939.

The order for evacuation to commence was received at County Hall at 11.7 a.m. on Thursday, 31st August, and was immediately circulated by an agreed system of "signals". The operation commenced promptly the next morning.

The parties travelling by rail assembled at 1,589 points and passed through controls to one or other of 168 entraining stations. Eleven exchange stations were used in the transfer of parties from the London Passenger Transport Board system to the main line railways. The parties detrained at 271 stations in the reception area. It was early realised that the expected numbers of evacuees were not being realised and the operations were speeded up so that they were practically completed on the third day, a day earlier than had been originally intended. A grand total of more than 600,000 were evacuated without a mishap or a casualty. This total included 9,500 in 300 special parties of handicapped and nursery children who travelled by road all the way to their wide-spread destinations on the first day, and 3,823 women within one month of confinement and 2,068 blind adults who travelled similarly by road on the second day. The official figures showed that about one half of the people catered for had taken advantage of the facilities offered. The Minister of Health expressed his warm personal thanks and congratulations to the Council on the efficiency of the operation.

The main evacuation was followed by supplemental evacuation which dragged on into the early part of 1940. This was subjected to many delays due almost entirely to the inability or unwillingness of reception authorities to provide billets for sizable groups of children seeking to join their own school parties. About 7,500 children were taken into the appropriate reception areas and another 8,000 remained unevacuated for some months as the requisite billets were not forthcoming.

# London County Council Study of Evacuation, 1940.

Catalogue Ref: ED 138/49

This source provides detail on how evacuation was organised and who was evacuated as part of the process.

## Transcript

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## CORB children to New Zealand, 1940-1.

Catalogue Ref: DO 131/15



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Catalogue Ref: DO 131/15

The Children's Overseas Reception Board (CORB) was a British government sponsored organisation. The CORB evacuated 2,664 British children from England to escape enemy bombing during July and September 1940. The children were sent mainly to the four Dominion countries, Canada 1,532, Australia 577, New Zealand 202 and South Africa 353.

Public support for overseas evacuation grew. At first the government accepted the idea. It was believed that children moved overseas would be safer and that moving children would reduce the numbers to be fed in Britain, an "island fortress" under siege. However the government changed its view as passenger ships were needed to move troops, internees and prisoners. Warships could not be spared for escort duties, as they were required to defend Britain's seas and shores against invasion. The government began to discourage support for overseas evacuation.

A German U-boat torpedoed one ship carrying British children, the SS Volendam, on 30 August 1940; fortunately, all passengers were rescued. When a U-boat sank the 'City of Benares' on 17 September 1940, 77 children and over 200 adults perished, and the government suspended the overseas evacuation scheme but allowed private overseas evacuation to continue. During the war, approximately 3,000 children were officially evacuated overseas. Parents sent some 10,000 other children overseas privately. This is a very small figure when compared to the huge numbers of children evacuated to the countryside within Britain.

## Photograph showing bomb damage, (undated).

Catalogue Ref: HO 197/28



## Beware of the butterfly bomb poster, 1942-1944.

Catalogue Ref: INF 2/73 (51)

# BEWARE OF THE **BUTTERFLY BOMB**



ACTUAL SIZE

The enemy 4lb. anti-personnel bomb may be used in a variety of colours, but it is usually yellow, black, or green-grey. These are three positions in which it has been found.



Hanging through ceiling by its wings



Bomb half buried in grass or hedges



Bomb on floor; wings caught in ceiling

## DON'T TOUCH IT

THE SLIGHTEST VIBRATION MAY SET IT OFF

## TELL a WARDEN or the POLICE AT ONCE

## KEEP AWAY

IT WILL KILL UP TO 60 YDS. POSSIBLY EVEN 100 YDS.

## Beware of the butterfly bomb poster, 1942-1944.

Catalogue Ref: INF 2/73 (51)

Butterfly Bombs used were by the German Luftwaffe during the Second World War. They were so named because the thin cylindrical metal outer shell which opened when the bomb was dropped gave it the superficial appearance of a butterfly. Butterfly bombs were first used against Ipswich in 1940, but were also dropped on Kingston upon Hull, Grimsby and Cleethorpes in June 1943.

### Transcript

BEWARE OF THE BUTTERFLY BOMB

DON'T TOUCH IT - THE SLIGHTEST VIBRATION MAY SET IT OFF

TELL A WARDEN OR THE POLICE AT ONCE

KEEP AWAY - IT WILL KILL UP TO 60 YDS. POSSIBLY EVEN 100 YDS.

The enemy 4lb. anti-personnel bomb may be used in a variety of colours, but it is usually yellow, black or green-grey. These are three positions in which it has been found.

# German Air Attacks on England, 8 August 1940 -10 September 1940.

Catalogue Ref: AIR 2/7355

IP

SECRET

From: Headquarters, No. 11 Group.  
 To: Headquarters, Fighter Command.  
 Ref: 11G/S.493.  
 Date: 12th September, 1940.

## GERMAN AIR ATTACKS ON ENGLAND - 8TH AUG. - 10TH SEPT.

As directed in your letter FC/S.21069/Air, dated 6th September, 1940, I have to submit the following brief report on operations in No. 11 Group area since the German offensive began on August 8th, 1940. As the battle still continues unabated by day, and has increased greatly in intensity by night, neither I nor any of my Staff have opportunity to write a lengthy report.

2. The appended report covers the period from 8th August to 10th September, during which there were three distinct phases in which the enemy altered his plan and tactics. The first phase was from 8th August to 18th August, and the second phase was from 19th August to 5th September. The 6th September began a third phase, which is now occupying all my Group's attention by day and by night.

### FIRST PHASE - 8th August to 18th August, 1940:

#### Enemy Strategy:

3. Bombing attacks were directed against the following objectives:-

- (a) Shipping and ports on the South-East and South coast, between North Foreland and Portland.
- (b) Massed attacks against Portland and Portsmouth.
- (c) Attacks on fighter aerodromes on the coast, followed by Bomber Command and Coastal Command aerodromes on the coast.
- (d) Towards the end of this period, comparatively light attacks were pressed inland by day to various objectives.

#### Results of Air Combat:

13. Results were satisfactory, the proportion of enemy shot down to our own losses being about four to one, slightly below the average when fighting over France. As much of this fighting took place over the sea, casualties were higher than they would have been if the fighting had been over land. The results of air combat were good because the enemy fighters were frequently too high to protect their bombers. Moreover, the JU.87 proved an easy prey to both Hurricanes and Spitfires.

CONT'D. PAGE 3.

#### Conclusion:

14. It would appear that our fighter defences proved too good for the enemy, because on August 18th the Germans withdrew their dive bombers, JU.87s, and there was a break of five days in intensive operations.

# German Air Attacks on England, 8 August 1940 -10 September 1940.

Catalogue Ref: AIR 2/7355

After the fall of France, Germany prepared to invade Britain in June 1940. The plan was to destroy the British air force and stop it sinking the ships that would carry German soldiers across the Channel. Bombing raids on Britain started in July. In August the German air force concentrated its attack upon airfields, aircraft factories and radar stations. The Royal Air Force fought back in what was later known as the Battle of Britain. The attack later switched to other targets, such as docks, factories and railways. As most of these targets were in cities and towns, many bombs fell upon streets and houses, killing people and destroying property.

On 7 September 1940, 300 German bombers raided the London docks until May 1941. Other cities and towns were also heavily bombed, including Swansea, Cardiff, Bristol, Southampton, Plymouth, Birmingham, Coventry and Liverpool. From October 5, the German raids took place at night and the British defences of anti-aircraft guns and night fighters could not stop them. The Blitz ended in mid-May 1941, when much of the German air force was sent east to prepare for the invasion of Russia. The immediate threat of a German invasion of Britain was over, although bombing was to continue at less intensive levels in 1942 and 1943.

## Transcript

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14. It would appear that our fighter defences proved too good for the enemy, because on August 18th the Germans withdrew their dive bombers, JU.87s, and there was a break of five days in intensive operations.

# "Moonlight Sonata" and Operation "Cold Water" October-November 1940. Catalogue Ref: AIR 2/5238

~~SECRET~~

Note on German Operation "MOONLIGHT SONATA", and Counter-plan "COLD WATER".

Intelligence.

On the 11th November it was reported that a Prisoner of War, in conversation with a room mate, said that a colossal raid had been planned to take place between the 15th to 20th November, at the full moon, and that Coventry and Birmingham would be the towns attacked. Every bomber in the Luftwaffe would take part, and workmen's dwellings would be methodically attacked in order to undermine the working classes, who were believed to be near revolt. The prisoner thought that every Knickebein route would be used.

2. On the same day information was received from another source that the Germans were planning a gigantic raid under the code name "Moonlight Sonata".

3. On the 12th November Air Intelligence was able to amplify this information sufficiently to confirm that a heavy scale attack was probable at the full moon; that the Knickebein / V.H.F. beams (River Group) would be employed; that Air Fleets 2 and 3, together with KG-100 (amounting to some 1,800 first line aircraft) would be participating; and that the operation would be undertaken in 3 phases; and that there were 3 target areas which were alternatives. Finally, the Commander-in-Chief of the G.A.F. would be controlling the operation in person.

Air Staff Counter-Plan.

4. On receiving the above information the Air Staff issued a counter-plan (code name "Cold Water"), the principal features of which were:-

- (a) Continuous watch on German radio activity, and maximum radio interference with enemy navigational beams and beacons;
- (b) Security patrols by Bomber aircraft over the German aerodromes occupied by Air Fleets 2 and 3;
- (c) A heavy scale of attack on the aerodromes at Vannes and St. Leger used by the specialist beam flyers of KG-100.
- (d) A special bombing attack on the Knickebein and V.H.F. beam transmitters near Cherbourg by aircraft flying up the beams and dropping sticks of bombs in the silent zone, which has been discovered immediately above the transmitters;
- (e) A heavy bombing attack on a selected city in Germany;
- (f) The maximum scale of night fighter and anti-aircraft artillery to be concentrated against the enemy raiders.

5. The operation orders to implement this plan were issued at 0300 hrs. on the 14th November.

## “Moonlight Sonata” and Operation “Cold Water” October-November 1940. Catalogue Ref: AIR 2/5238

There were German plans for a massive bombing raid on Britain in November 1940 at the full moon. Read how the British government responded.

### Transcript

MOST SECRET

Note on German Operation “Moonlight Sonata”, and Counter Plan “Cold Water”.

#### Intelligence

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## Extract from War Cabinet Minutes concerning civil defence, November 1939. Catalogue Ref: CAB 65/2

**Civil Defence  
Measures.**  
**State of Public  
Opinion.**

2. The War Cabinet had before them a Report by the Civil Defence Committee on the State of Public Opinion as regards Civil Defence Measures (W.P. (G.) (39) 159).

*The Secretary of State for Home Affairs* said that the members of the Civil Defence Committee were concerned at the increasing tendency, reflected in the Press, to regard the Government's policy in regard to Civil Defence measures as unnecessary and even to take the line that there would be no air raids and that the sooner life could return to normal the better. The Committee therefore

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suggested that the hypothesis on which the Government's policy had been based, should be reviewed by the Chiefs of Staff, so that the Government could then announce that they had reviewed their Civil Defence Plans as a whole, and that an examination of all the factors involved led to the conclusion that there was no case for modifying the policy previously adopted.

They had also in mind that some Civil Defence plans, *e.g.*, the provision of hospital beds and fire-fighting arrangements, were based on a quantitative calculation as to the possible results of air raids, and that it might be useful to have an up-to-date calculation on these points.

*The Secretary of State for Air* said that the Air Staff agreed with the Report of the Civil Defence Committee. Nothing had yet happened to give any adequate grounds for modifying the assumptions made before the war. There had so far been no experience in dealing with heavy sustained air attacks on the scale previously envisaged, and, if attacks took place, there was no assurance that they could be completely prevented, especially if they took place at night. They fully realised that the precautions were a great burden on the country, but their existence might be one of the reasons why heavy attacks had not materialised, and it would, in their view, be a grave mistake to relax them. They considered it very important that steps should be taken to counter the spirit of false optimism, as suggested by the Civil Defence Committee, and that the Press should be induced not to give the impression that the defences were perfectly capable of dealing with the much heavier attacks which might yet eventuate.

## Extract from War Cabinet Minutes concerning civil defence, November 1939. Catalogue Ref: CAB 65/2

By 1935, British officials were discussing air raid precautions. Little was done, though, until the crisis of 1938, when many European countries were alarmed by Germany's behaviour towards Czechoslovakia. In Britain there was panic as people were afraid of bombing attacks. Evacuation plans were hastily announced; anti-aircraft guns were set up; and deep trenches were dug in London parks to serve as air raid shelters. The crisis ended after talks in Munich but it had shown that British civil defence was weak. One result of the crisis was the fast development of air raid precautions (A.R.P.) under the leadership of Sir John Anderson. Spending on A.R.P. rose from £9.5 million in 1937-38 to £51 million in 1939-40.

### Transcript

Civil Defence Measures.

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The Secretary of State for Home Affairs said that the members of the Civil Defence Committee were concerned at the increasing tendency, reflected in the Press, to regard the Government's policy in regard to Civil Defence measures as unnecessary and even to take the line that there would be no air raids and that the sooner life could return to normal the better. The Committee therefore suggested that the hypothesis on which the Government's policy had been based, should be reviewed by the Chiefs of Staff, so that the Government could then announce that they had reviewed their Civil Defence Plans as a whole, and that an examination of all the factors involved led to the conclusion that there was no case for modifying the policy previously adopted.

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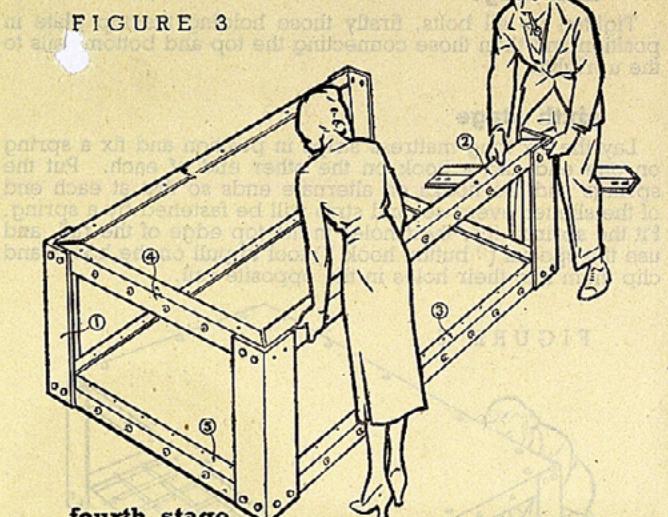
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## Extract from War Cabinet Minutes concerning civil defence, November 1939. Catalogue Ref: CAB 65/2

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# Extract from How to put up your Morrison Shelter.

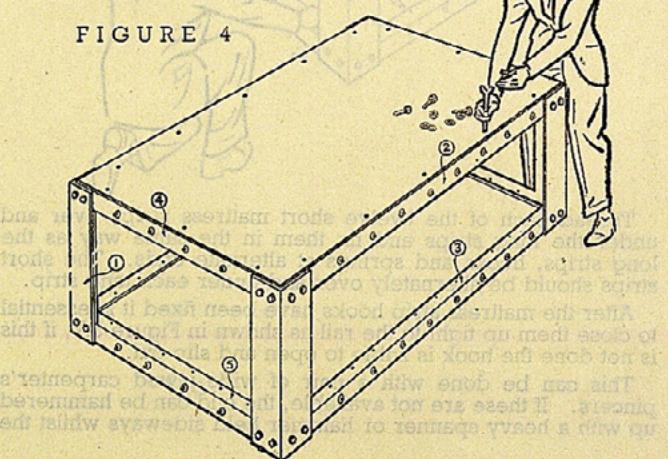
Catalogue Ref: HO 186/580



**fourth stage**

Put the top plate on the shelter. Use the lever provided so as to make the holes in the top plate fit exactly over the holes in the rails; as each one fits into place bolt it loosely with the 16 smaller bolts, with bolt head on top.

**FIGURE 4**

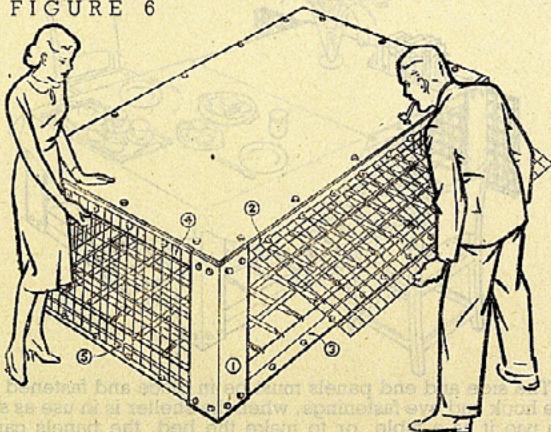


## seventh stage

Put the side and end panels over the studs.

Get inside just before the last one is put into place, and fix the four hook-and-eye fastenings as shown in Figure 7. You

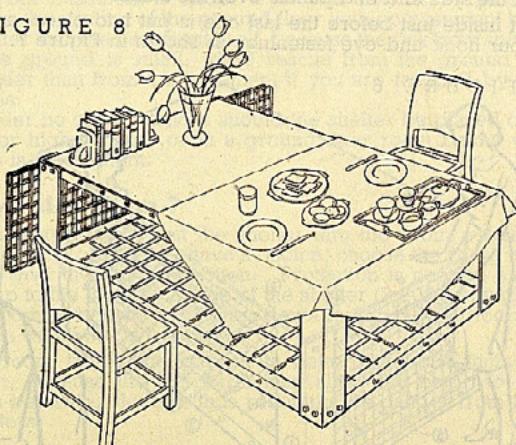
**FIGURE 6**



will notice in the illustration that the eyepiece is fastened to the last wire of the end covering; the hook-piece, however, is

## How to Use the Shelter as a Table

**FIGURE 8**



The side and end panels must be in place and fastened with the hook and eye fastenings, when the shelter is in use as such. To use it as a table, or to make the bed, the panels can be removed.

## Extract from How to put up your Morrison Shelter.

Catalogue Ref: HO 186/580

Experts said that bombing would kill hundreds of thousands of people. So new plans were made for mass evacuation, the construction of large public shelters, and the erection of small units in private gardens ("Anderson" shelters) and inside houses ("Morrison" shelters). Although the War began in September 1939, bombing of Britain did not start immediately. People developed a false sense of security and were not keen to have shelters. Once heavy bombing began, from the summer of 1940 onwards, shelters became more popular.

### Transcript

FIGURE 3

fourth stage

Put the top plate on the shelter. Use the lever provided so as to make the holes in the top plate fit exactly over the holes in the rails; as each one fits into place bolt it loosely with the 16 smaller bolts, with bolt head on top.

FIGURE 4

FIGURE 6

seventh stage

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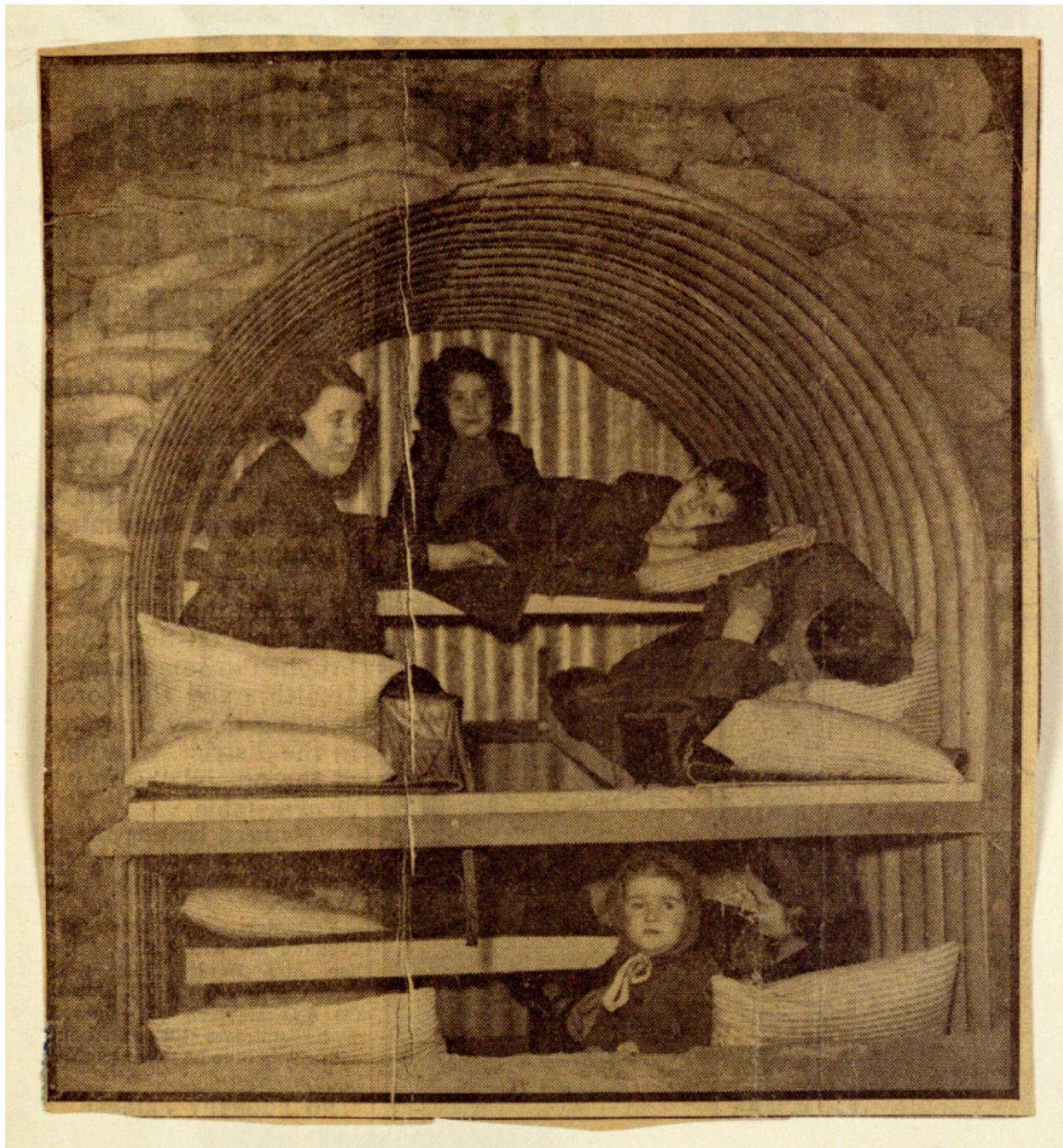
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## Photograph inside an Anderson Shelter, 1941-1943.

Catalogue Ref: HO 207/469



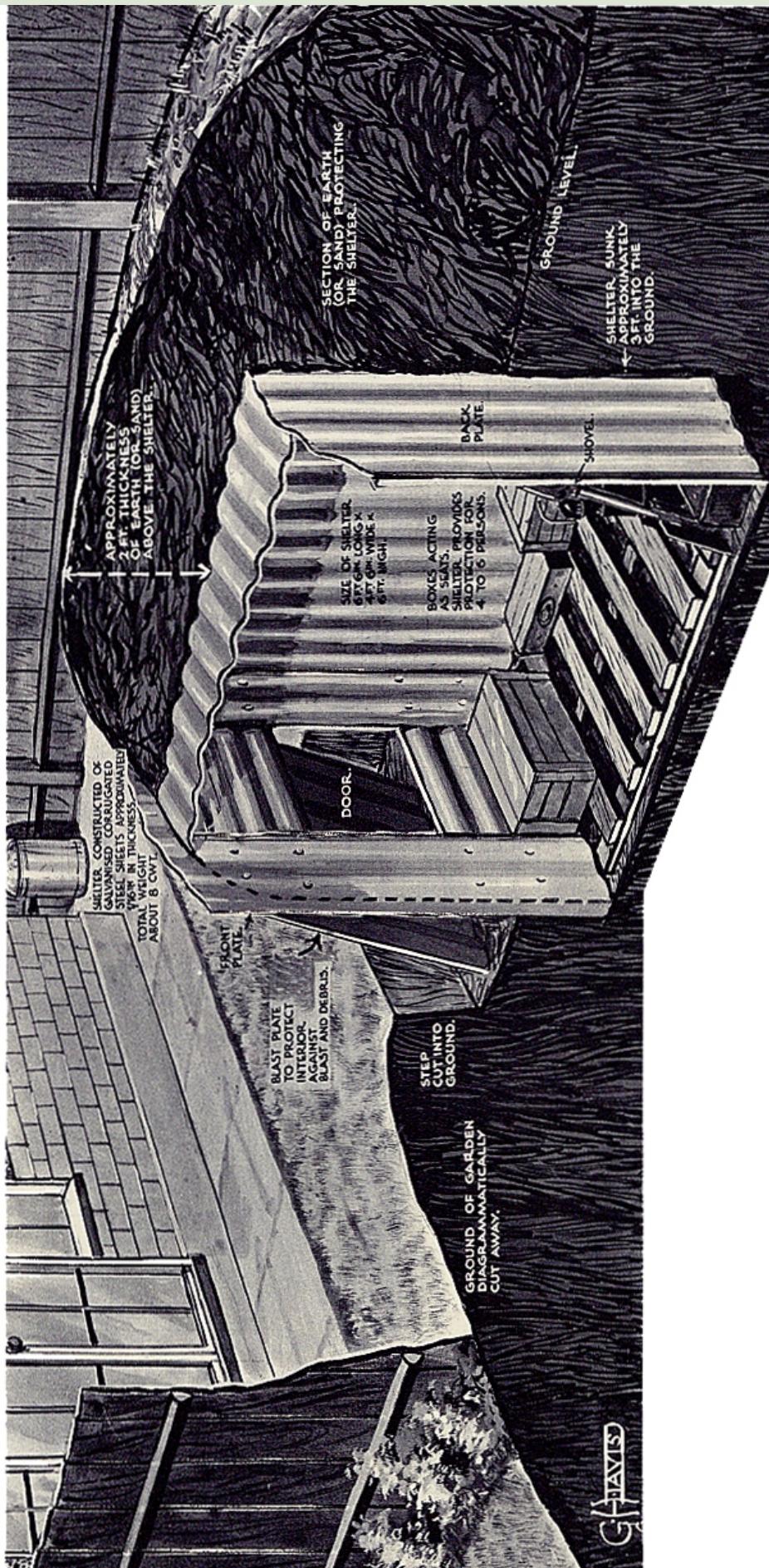
## Photograph inside an Anderson Shelter, 1941-1943.

Catalogue Ref: HO 207/469

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# Diagram of how to construct an Anderson Shelter.

Catalogue Ref: ZPER 34/196



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### Transcript of captions

Shelter constructed of galvanised corrugated steel sheets approximately 1/16 th in thickness. Total weight about 8 cwt.

Front Plate.

Blast Plate to protect interior against blast and debris.

Step cut into ground.

Ground of garden diagrammatically cut away.

Door.

Approximately 2 ft. thickness of earth (or sand) above the shelter.

Size of shelter 6ft 6in long x 4ft 6in wide x 6ft high.

Boxes acting as seats. Shelter provides protection for 4 to 6 persons.

Back Plate.

Shovel.

## Diagram of how to construct an Anderson Shelter.

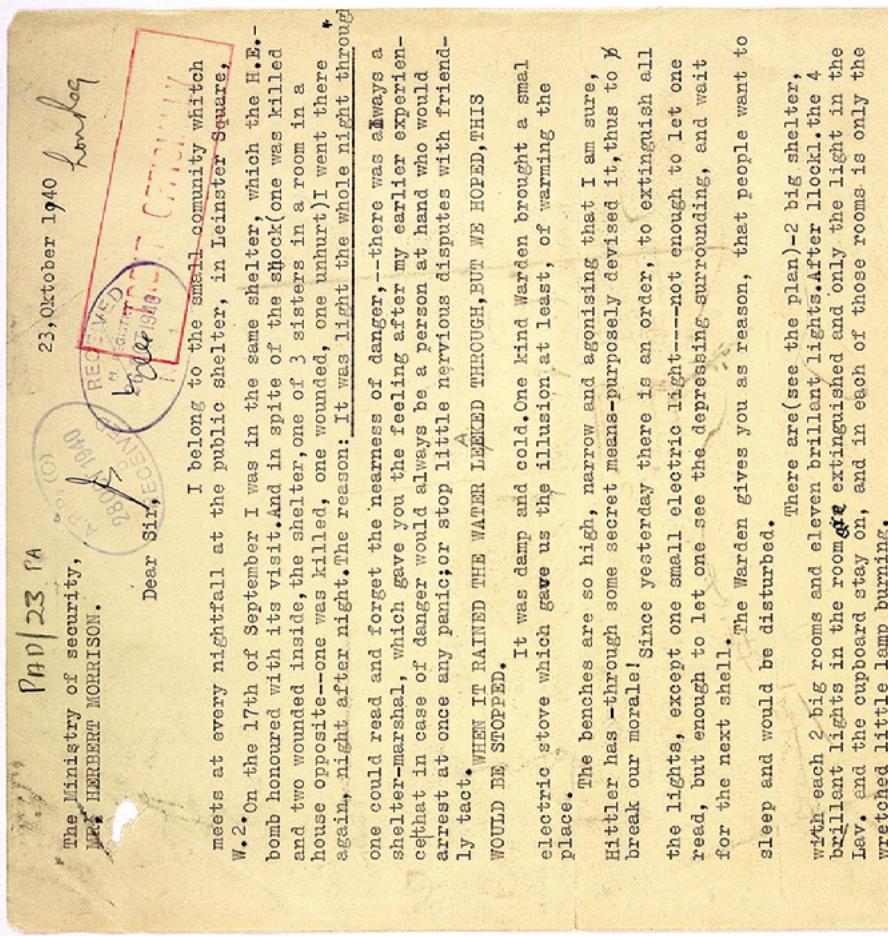
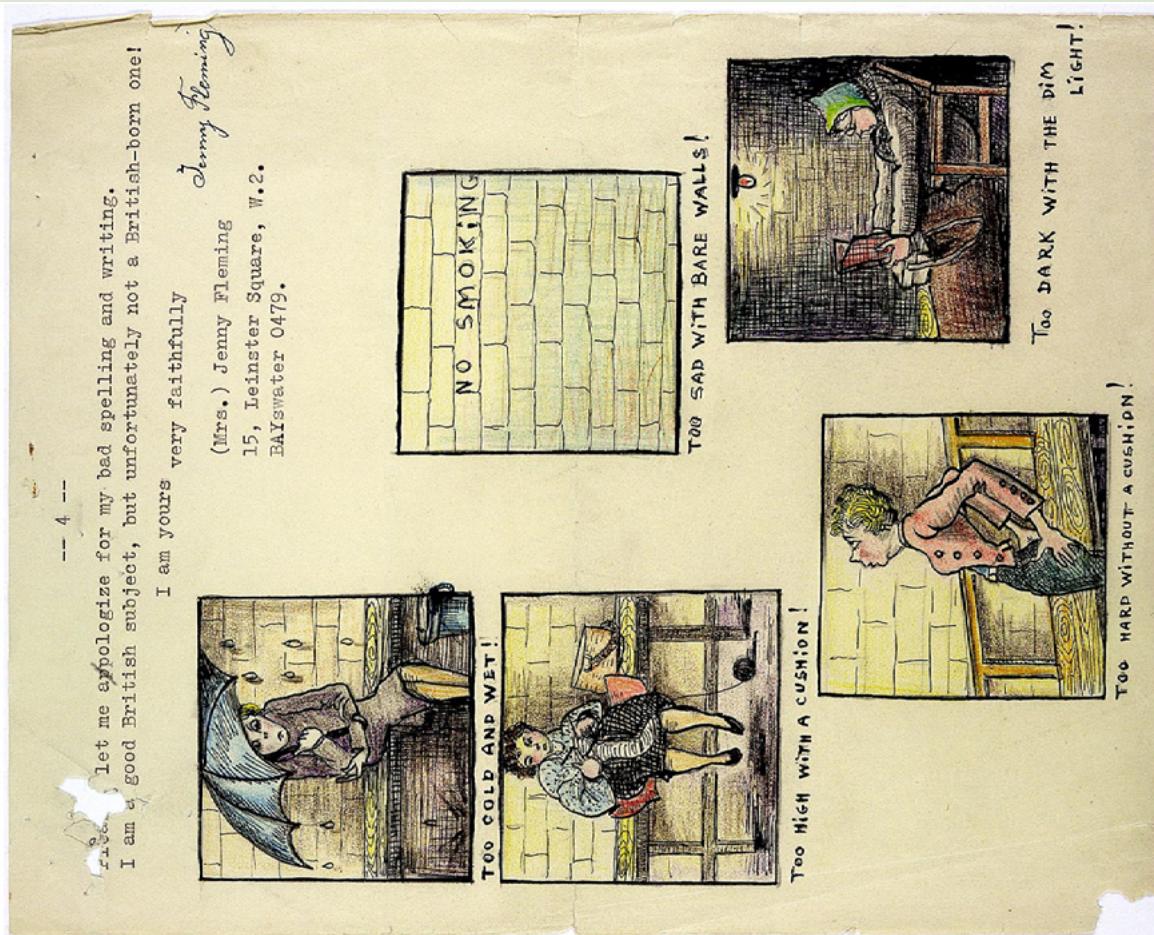
Catalogue Ref: ZPER 34/196

Section of earth (or sand) protecting the shelter.

Ground level.

Shelter sunk approximately 3 ft into the ground.

# Letter from Jenny Fleming about problems with public shelters addressed to Herbert Morrison, 23 October. Catalogue Ref: HO 207/783



## Letter from Jenny Fleming about problems with public shelters addressed to Herbert Morrison, 23 October. Catalogue Ref: HO 207/783

### Transcript

23 October 1940

The Ministry of security  
MR HERBERT MORRISON

Dear Sir,

I belong to the small community which meets at every nightfall at the public shelter, in Leinster Square, W.2.

On the 17th of September I was in the same shelter, which the H.E.-bomb honoured with its visit. And in spite of the shock (one was killed and two wounded inside, the shelter, one of 3 sisters in a room in a house opposite- one was killed, one wounded, one unhurt) I went there again, night after night. The reason: It was light the whole night through.

One could read and forget the nearness of danger, – there was always a shelter-marshall, which gave you the feeling after my earlier experience that in case of danger would always be a person at hand who would arrest at once any panic; or stop little nervous disputes with friendly tact.

WHEN IT RAINED THE WATER LEAKED THROUGH, BUT WE HOPED, THIS WOULD BE STOPPED.

It was damp and cold. One kind Warden brought a small electric stove which gave us the illusion at least, of warming the place.

The benches are so high, narrow and agonising that I am sure, Hitler has – though some secret means – purposely devised it, thus to break our morale!

Since yesterday there is an order, to extinguish all the lights, except one small electric light – not enough to let one read, but enough to let one see the depressing surrounding, and wait for the next shell.

## Letter from Jenny Fleming about problems with public shelters addressed to Herbert Morrison, 23 October. Catalogue Ref: HO 207/783

The Warden gives you as reason, that people want to sleep and would be disturbed.

There are (see the plan) – 2 big shelter, with each 2 big rooms and eleven brilliant lights. After llockl. the 4 brilliant lights in the room are extinguished and only the light in the Lav. and the cupboard stay on, and in each of those rooms is only the wretched little lamp burning.

....

Please let me apologise for my bad spelling and writing. I am a good British subject, but unfortunately not a British-born one!

I am yours  
Very faithfully  
(Mrs.) Jenny Fleming

15, Leinster Square, W.2.  
Bayswater 0479.

[Illustration of frowning woman sitting on a wet bench holding an umbrella:]  
TOO COLD AND WET!

[Illustration of frowning woman knitting while sitting on a cushion on a wooden bench:]  
TOO HIGH WITH A CUSHION!

[Illustration of a woman clutching her lower back:]  
TOO HARD WITHOUT A CUSHION!

[Illustration of a brick wall with 'NO SMOKING' written on it:]  
TOO SAD WITH BARE WALLS!

[Illustration of someone reading in a dark room under a small lightbulb:]  
TOO DARK WITH THE DIM LIGHT!

## Extract from War Cabinet Minutes referring to the Bethnal Green Tube Shelter disaster, 1943. Catalogue Ref: CAB 65/34

**Civil Defence.**

Bethnal Green  
Tube Shelter  
Disaster.

Report by  
Mr. Dunne.  
(Previous

Reference:  
W.M. (43) 38th  
Conclusions,  
Minute 4.)

6. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security (W.P. (43) 137) covering the draft of a White Paper summarising the conclusions of the Enquiry held by Mr. Laurence Dunne into the disaster at a tube shelter in Bethnal Green on the 3rd March.

Doubt was expressed as to the expediency of publishing a summary of Mr. Dunne's findings.

*The Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security* said that he had stated in the House of Commons on the 10th March that, subject to security considerations, the conclusions would be published. At the time of the disaster there had been considerable public feeling, particularly among people living in the neighbourhood, and there had been some dissatisfaction that the Enquiry should be held in private. Pressure for a Public Enquiry had been resisted on the basis that, subject to security considerations, the findings would be published, and, if it were now decided that Mr. Dunne's conclusions should not be announced, it would be generally assumed that there was something to hide.

In discussion, there was strong support for the view that the publication of the proposed White Paper would give the incident a disproportionate importance, and might encourage the enemy to make further nuisance raids.

The view of the War Cabinet was that it would be preferable if the Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security, instead of publishing a summary of the conclusions in a White Paper, made a short oral statement in the House of Commons. Points to be included in such a statement would be that Mr. Dunne's report had been received and considered; that certain suggestions had been made for modifications of existing arrangements which might reduce the risk of a further disaster of this kind, and that action was already being taken to introduce these modifications, not only at this shelter, but at similar shelters elsewhere; and that there was no evidence whatever for the suggestion that the disaster was due to Jewish or Fascist elements among the people taking refuge in the shelter.

## Extract from War Cabinet Minutes referring to the Bethnal Green Tube Shelter disaster, 1943. Catalogue Ref: CAB 65/34

Railway arches and basements were also used and, in London, people slept at night in the Underground Stations and tunnels. The shelters – big and small – saved the lives of very many people, but there were deaths when large bombs fell directly on shelters. In some cases, many people were killed at once – for example, 64 died at Balham Underground Station when it took a direct hit on 15 October 1940.

### Transcript

Civil Defence.

Bethnal Green Tube Shelter Disaster.

Report by Mr. Dunne.

(Previous Reference: W.M. (43) 38th Conclusions, Minute 4.)

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# Extracts from the Bethnal Green Tube Shelter Disaster Inquiry Report, 1943. Catalogue Ref: CAB 66/35

**THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT**

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*Printed for the War Cabinet. April 1943.*

**MOST SECRET.**

**Copy No. 33**

**W.P. (43) 187.**

*April 3, 1943.*

### **TO BE KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY**

**It is requested that special care may be taken to ensure the secrecy of this document**

**WAR CABINET.**

**TUBE SHELTER INQUIRY.**

**REPORT BY MR. DUNNE.**

**MEMORANDUM BY THE HOME SECRETARY AND MINISTER OF HOME SECURITY.**

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3

**DRAFT WHITE PAPER.**

**TUBE SHELTER INQUIRY.**

**CONCLUSIONS OF MR. LAURENCE DUNNE, M.C.,  
METROPOLITAN MAGISTRATE.**

### **2. Contributory Causes of the Disaster.**

- (i) A marked popular preference in favour of deep-shelter as opposed to other types, even though much more easily reached.
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- (iii) A wholesome respect for the dangerous splinters from our own anti-aircraft barrage.
- (iv) An imperfect knowledge of the nature and appearance of various anti-aircraft devices now in use.

## Extracts from the Bethnal Green Tube Shelter Disaster Inquiry Report, 1943. Catalogue Ref: CAB 66/35

By the end of the War, German bombing had killed just over 60,000 people in Britain.

### Transcript

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Printed for the War Cabinet. April 1943

MOST SECRET

W.P. (43) 137.

April 3, 1943.

TO BE KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY

It is requested that special care may be taken to ensure the secrecy of this document

WAR CABINET.

THE SHELTER INQUIRY.

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MEMORANDUM BY THE HOME SECRETARY AND MINISTER OF HOME SECURITY.

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**'On War Work in Britain number 3: Indians in Civil Defence' poster,  
1942-1944. Catalogue Ref: INF 2/11 (3)**



ON WAR WORK IN BRITAIN: No. 3



FOR VICTORY

**INDIANS  
IN CIVIL  
DEFENCE**

Mr. Dorai Ross, one-time merchant and rubber-planter in the Straits Settlements, was in London when war broke out. Immediately he set about forming an Ambulance Service composed of Indians living in London. One hundred Indians of various religions and castes, and of different callings, including doctors and barristers, joined the unit. During the London Blitz, Auxiliary Ambulance Station 50, Indian Section, proved itself to be one of the most efficient units in Great Britain. Above are two Indian ladies of this unit, dressed for immediate action.

## 'On War Work in Britain number 3: Indians in Civil Defence' poster, 1942-1944. Catalogue Ref: INF 2/11 (3)

This poster is part of publicity material created for India and Burma during the war. It shows two women of Indian heritage from the Auxiliary Ambulance Station 50, Indian Section, which played a vital role in civil defence during the London Blitz.

### Transcript

On War Work In Britain: No. 3

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# On War Work in Britain: Aircraft workers from India: 1942-1944.

Catalogue Ref: INF 2/11 (5)



ON WAR WORK IN BRITAIN: No. 5



## AIRCRAFT WORKERS FROM INDIA

Mr. G. Mustaja, a trainee from the North-West frontier, is working in an English aircraft factory, learning aircraft maintenance. Like hundreds of other young Indians, Mr. Mustaja came to Britain under the industrial training scheme organised by the Ministry of Labour. When fully trained he will return to India where the war-time expansion of industry has been enormous. India's shipbuilding yards are working to full capacity; over fifty varieties of motor vehicles are being produced in the country. Ordnance factories have stepped up production and new records have been set up in the iron, steel, coal, and paper industries.

# On War Work in Britain: Aircraft workers from India: 1942-1944.

Catalogue Ref: INF 2/11 (5)

This poster is part of publicity material created for India and Burma during the war. It shows a trainee of Indian heritage who has joined an industrial training scheme organised by the Ministry of Labour to make aircraft in Britain.

## Transcript

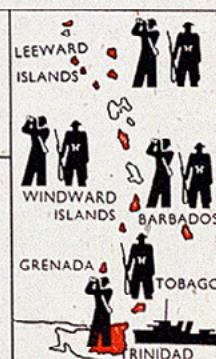
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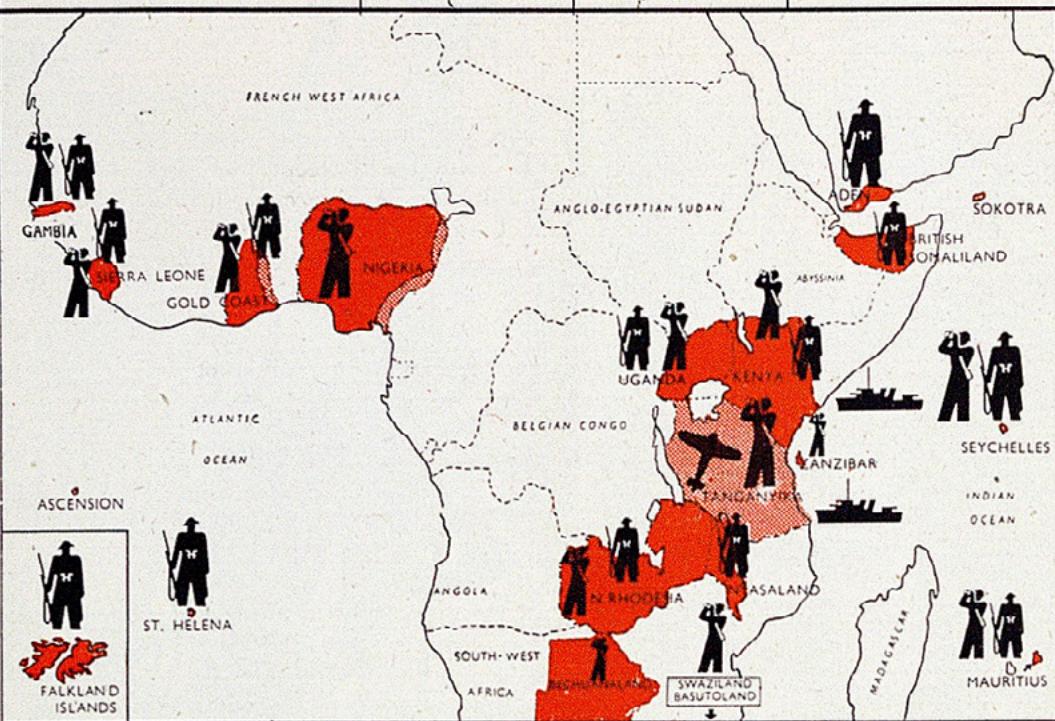
**Extract from a Colonial Office pamphlet: 'Colonies and the War: Sixty Million of Us', 1943. Catalogue Ref: CO 875/15/12/f34**

***Local Defence Forces  
on Guard throughout the Colonial Empire***



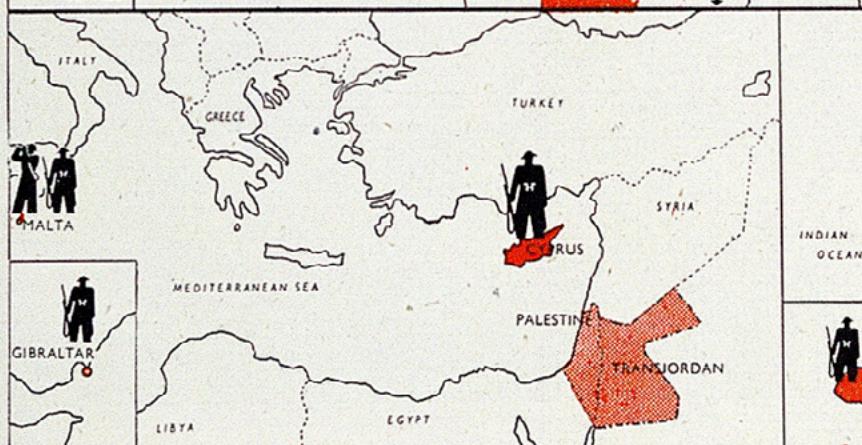
**BERMUDA  
WEST INDIES  
CENTRAL AND  
SOUTH AMERICA**

From Bermuda in the north down to British Guiana on the mainland of South America is a string of British territories which guard the Atlantic approaches to the Panama Canal, one of the focal points of Anglo-American sea power.



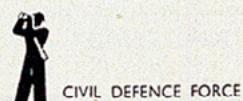
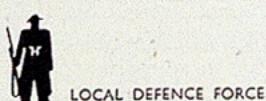
**EAST, WEST  
AND  
CENTRAL AFRICA**

Nigeria and the other territories of British West Africa have become an essential half-way house on the sea-air supply routes linking Britain and the United States with the Middle East. Similarly, the territories of British East Africa form a link between the Union of South Africa and the Mediterranean front, and guard the East African coast fronting the Indian Ocean. Here, Allied sea power will be essential in future attacks upon the Japanese.



**MEDITERRANEAN  
AND CEYLON**

Gibraltar, Malta and Cyprus, hard-pressed points of defence when our hold on the Mediterranean was precarious, are springboards for attack against Germany's "European fortress." Ceylon, a vital strategic point, faces Japan in the East.



## Extract from a Colonial Office pamphlet: 'Colonies and the War: Sixty Million of Us', 1943. Catalogue Ref: CO 875/15/12/f34

Other countries suffered from bombing raids and the threat of invasion during the Second World War. Many countries of the Colonial Empire at that time and other nations associated with the Allies came under attack.

One of the first countries to experience heavy bombing was Malta, a British colony. The Italians and Germans wanted to stop the island from being used as a military base by the Allied powers and started a bombing campaign in 1940. As a tribute to its bravery, the King awarded the George Cross to Malta in 1942.

Australia also came under attack from Japan. In February 1942 a force led by Vice-Admiral Kondo attacked the port of Darwin. As a result of attacks like these, many countries thought they could be invaded. To protect themselves they set up local defence forces and other organisations such as Air Raid Precautions units.

### Transcript

Local Defence Forces on Guard throughout the Colonial Empire

Bermuda West Indies Central and South America

From Bermuda in the north down to British Guiana on the mainland of South America is a string of British territories which guard the Atlantic approaches to the Panama Canal, one of the focal points of Anglo-American sea power.

East, West and Central Africa

Nigeria and the other territories of British West Africa have become an essential half-way house on the sea-air supply routes linking Britain and the United States with the Middle East. Similarly, the territories of British East Africa form a link between the Union of South Africa and the Mediterranean front, and guard the East African coast fronting the Indian Ocean. Here, Allied sea power will be essential in future attacks upon the Japanese.

Mediterranean and Ceylon

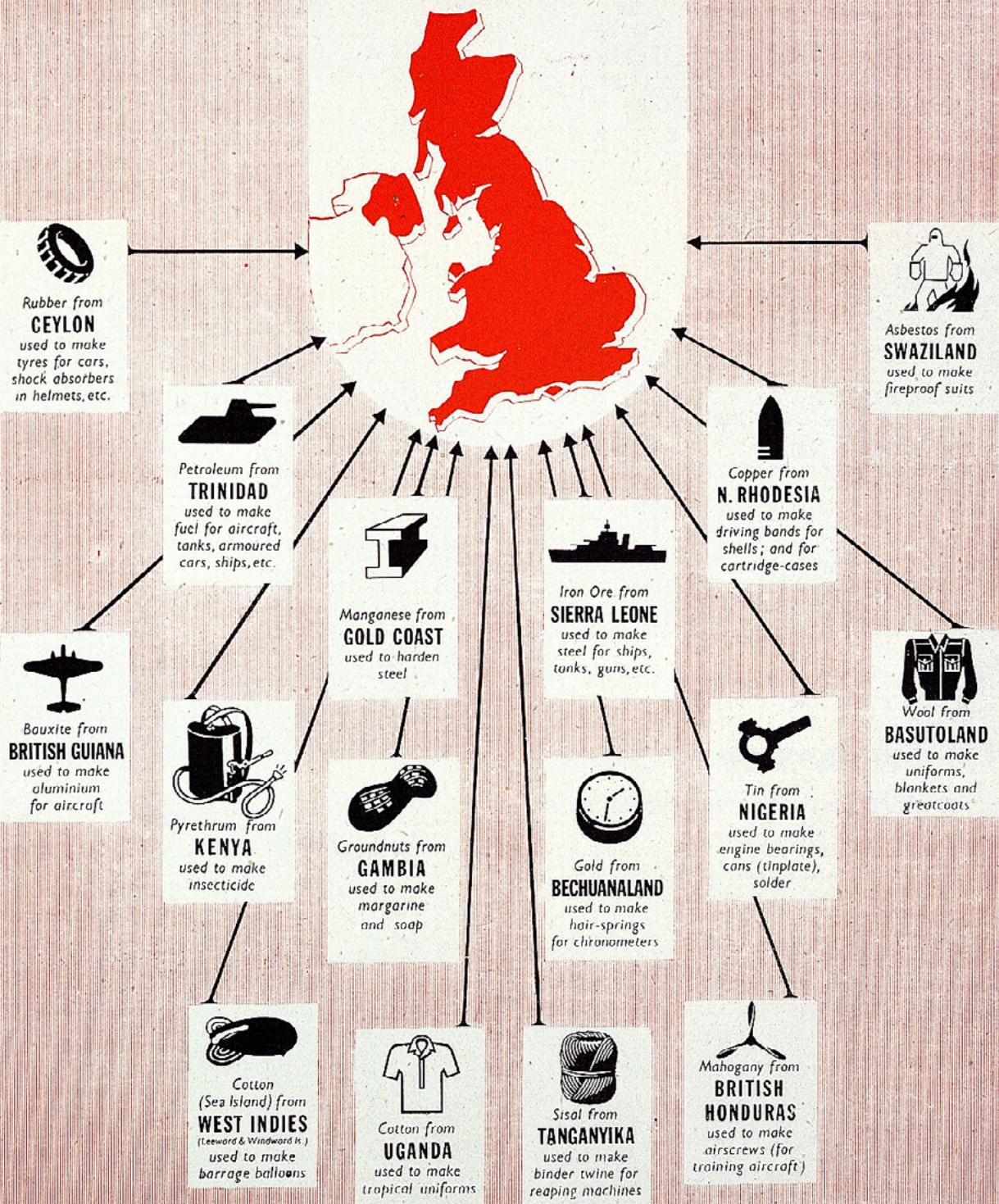
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**Extract from a Colonial Office pamphlet: 'Colonies and the War: Sixty Million of Us', 1943. Catalogue Ref: CO 875/15/12/f34**

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*Important Raw Materials from the Colonial Empire*



## Extract from a Colonial Office pamphlet: 'Colonies and the War: Sixty Million of Us', 1943. Catalogue Ref: CO 875/15/12/f34

Extract from a Colonial Office pamphlet (1943) called 'Colonies and the War: Sixty Million of Us' which shows a diagram illustrating the vast supply of raw materials from the colonies provided as part of the war effort. However, the diagram does not include statistics for the huge contribution also made by these countries in terms in the armed services as part of the war effort.

### Transcript

Important Raw Materials from the Colonial Empire

Rubber from CEYLON used to make tyres for cars, shock absorbers in helmets, etc.

Petroleum from TRINIDAD used to make fuel for aircraft, tanks, armoured cars, ships, etc.

Bauxite from BRITISH GUIANA used to make aluminium for aircraft

Pyrethrum from KENYA used to make insecticide

Manganese from GOLD COAST used to harden steel

Groundnuts from GAMBIA used to make margarine and soap

Cotton (Sea Island) from WEST INDIES (Leeward and Windward Is.) used to make barrage balloons

Cotton from UGANDA used to make tropical uniforms

Iron Ore from SIERRA LEONE used to make steel for ships, tanks, guns, etc.

Gold from BECHUANALAND used to make hair-springs for chronometers

Sisal from TANGANYIKA used to make binder twine for reaping machines

## Extract from a Colonial Office pamphlet: 'Colonies and the War: Sixty Million of Us', 1943. Catalogue Ref: CO 875/15/12/f34

Mahogany from BRITISH HONDURAS used to make airscrews (for training aircraft)

Tin from NIGERIA used to make engine bearings, cans (tinplate), solder

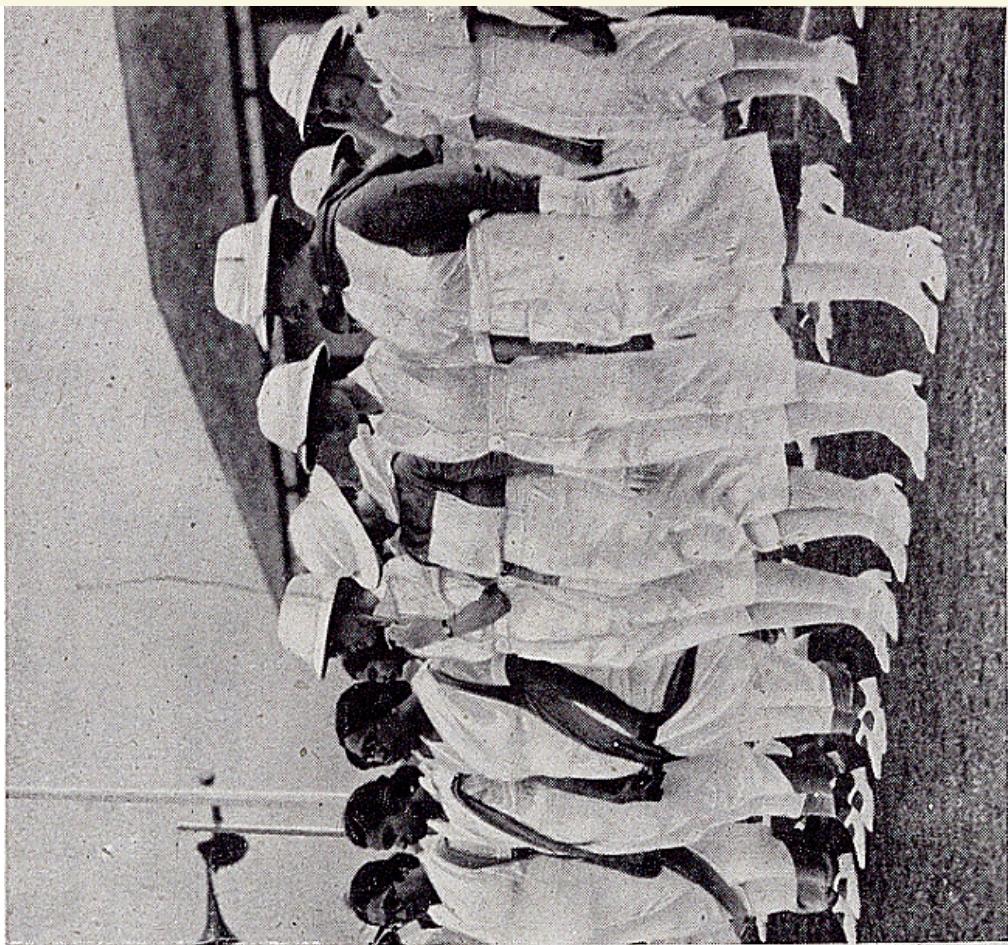
Copper from N. RHODESIA used to make driving bands for shells; and for cartridge-cases

Wool from BASUTOLAND used to make uniforms, blankets and greatcoats

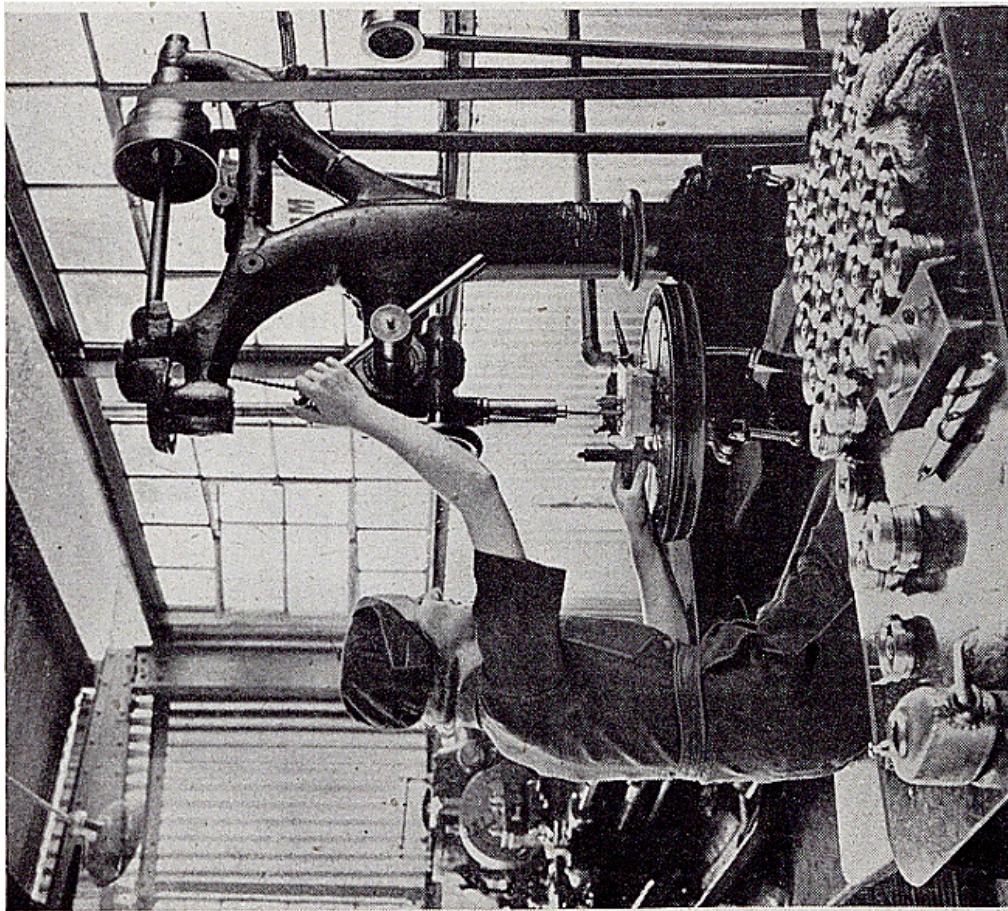
Asbestos from SWAZILAND used to make fireproof suits

## Photographs entitled 'Women at work in the Empire', 1943.

Catalogue Ref: CO 875/15/12



The Ceylon Police Corps of the St. John Ambulance Brigade have a special nursing division attached to them. The nursing division is shown here on parade.



Women in Northern Rhodesia are now making munitions in the shops of the great copper mines. These include gun parts and shell and cartridge cases.

## Photographs entitled 'Women at work in the Empire', 1943.

Catalogue Ref: CO 875/15/12

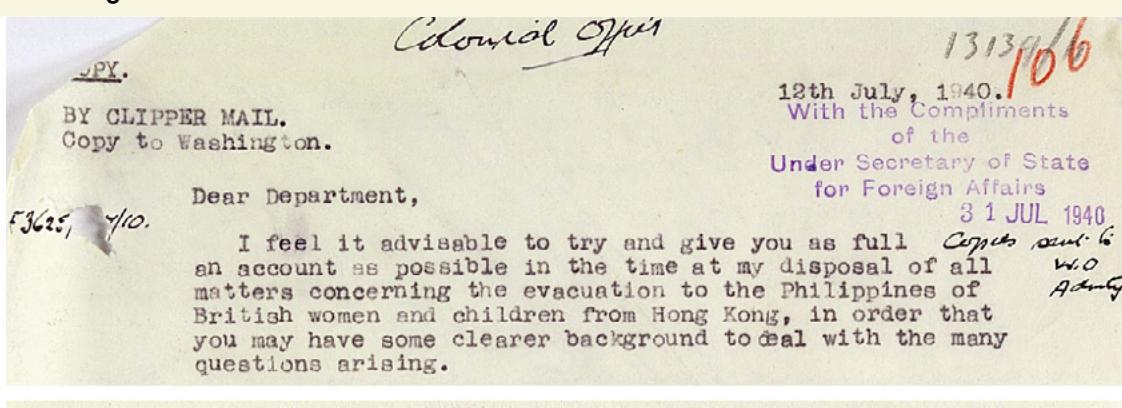
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The Ceylon Police Corps of the St. John Ambulance Brigade have a special nursing division attached to them. The nursing division is shown here on parade.

## Extract from an official report on the evacuation from Hong Kong, 1940. Catalogue Ref: CO 323/1808/6



10. After nearly six hours in a small launch outside the harbour, we were finally able to board the "Empress of Japan" where we found absolute confusion. Some evacuees were berthed in cabins, but the majority were accommodated on camp-cots placed close to one another in the decks and halls. The purser's staff had done their best to prepare an alphabetical nominal roll from the confusing, separate and incomplete lists furnished by the military and naval authorities. Even the signed lists to be furnished to the Philippine authorities in lieu of passports and to secure exemption from head-tax payment were inaccurate and incomplete and not arranged alphabetically.

11. The ship finally docked about 1 p.m. instead of at 9 a.m. as had been confidently expected. Attempts were made to discover the officers' wives and families in order to send them to Baguio and these were disembarked first, but it was not until 3 p.m. that the special train was able to leave with the result that the tired women and children did not reach Baguio until 11 p.m. or get finally accommodated until 1 a.m. (I would remark that Baguio is about 130 miles distant from Manila and that the final 25 miles up the mountain is accomplished by motor bus). I would especially mention in this connection Mrs. G.C. Agnew, the wife of a British resident, who was in charge of the train, and to whose untiring efforts the party owes much for the arrangements for the women and children's comfort on the long tiring journey. On arrival at Baguio the evacuees, after warm food and drink were taken to the accommodation prepared for them by the Red Cross in hotels, private houses, schools etcetera. These arrangements were in charge of Mrs. Jarrett, an American resident who is the Red Cross representative at Baguio, and Mrs. Myers, a Red Cross assistant who was sent up specially to take charge there. I would also mention Mr. W.E. Little, the sole British resident, who has acted as my representative there and done his utmost for the care and comfort of the evacuees.

19. About ten large buildings in Fort McKinley have been given over entirely to the accommodation of evacuees, and an officer, Major Tow, placed in command. General Pratt and his staff are however constant visitors. Full medical attention is given and any sick are removed to the military hospital. The kitchen is staffed by army cooks; a second kitchen has been arranged solely to cater for the babies and young children, and American army cooks prepare baby food according to regimes laid down by the medical officers; the food is served to the babies by Red Cross nurses. Everything that could be done for the comfort and health and well-being of the evacuees has been done and the only complaint I have heard from evacuees, who are otherwise most appreciative of the work of the United States army, is the necessary lack of privacy in the dormitories. I cannot speak too highly of General Pratt, who has thrown himself heart and soul into the task of caring for the Hong Kong British evacuees. Colonel Baehr, his chief of staff, and Lieutenant Colonel Carr, Assistant Chief of Staff for Personnel and Supply, have been in charge of arrangements, but all officers and their wives have assisted in making the lot of the evacuees as comfortable as possible.

## Extract from an official report on the evacuation from Hong Kong, 1940. Catalogue Ref: CO 323/1808/6

In July 1940, as the threat of a Japanese invasion intensified, more than 3,000 British women and children were evacuated from Hong Kong and shipped to Australia, via Manila in the Philippines. In addition, over 9,000 people were evacuated from Malaya. Very few of the evacuees from the colonies were sent to Britain. Most were sent to other nearby colonies and dominions such as Australia, New Zealand, India and South Africa. It was thought that this was much safer than travelling to Britain and allowed the ships to be used to move troops.

### Transcript

12th July, 1940.

With the Compliments of the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs 31 Jul 1940

COPY.

BY CLIPPER MAIL.

Copy to Washington.

Dear Department,

I feel it advisable to try and give you as full an account as possible in the time at my disposal of all matters concerning the evacuation to the Philippines of British women and children from Hong Kong, in order that you may have some clearer background to deal with the many questions arising.

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## Why do our hyperlinks come with footnotes?

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Our Online Workshops allow our Education Officers to teach through your projector, leading discussions and guiding students through activities based around original documents. All you need is a computer with a projector, webcam and microphone. We'll arrange a test call before your session to check the tech is working.

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