

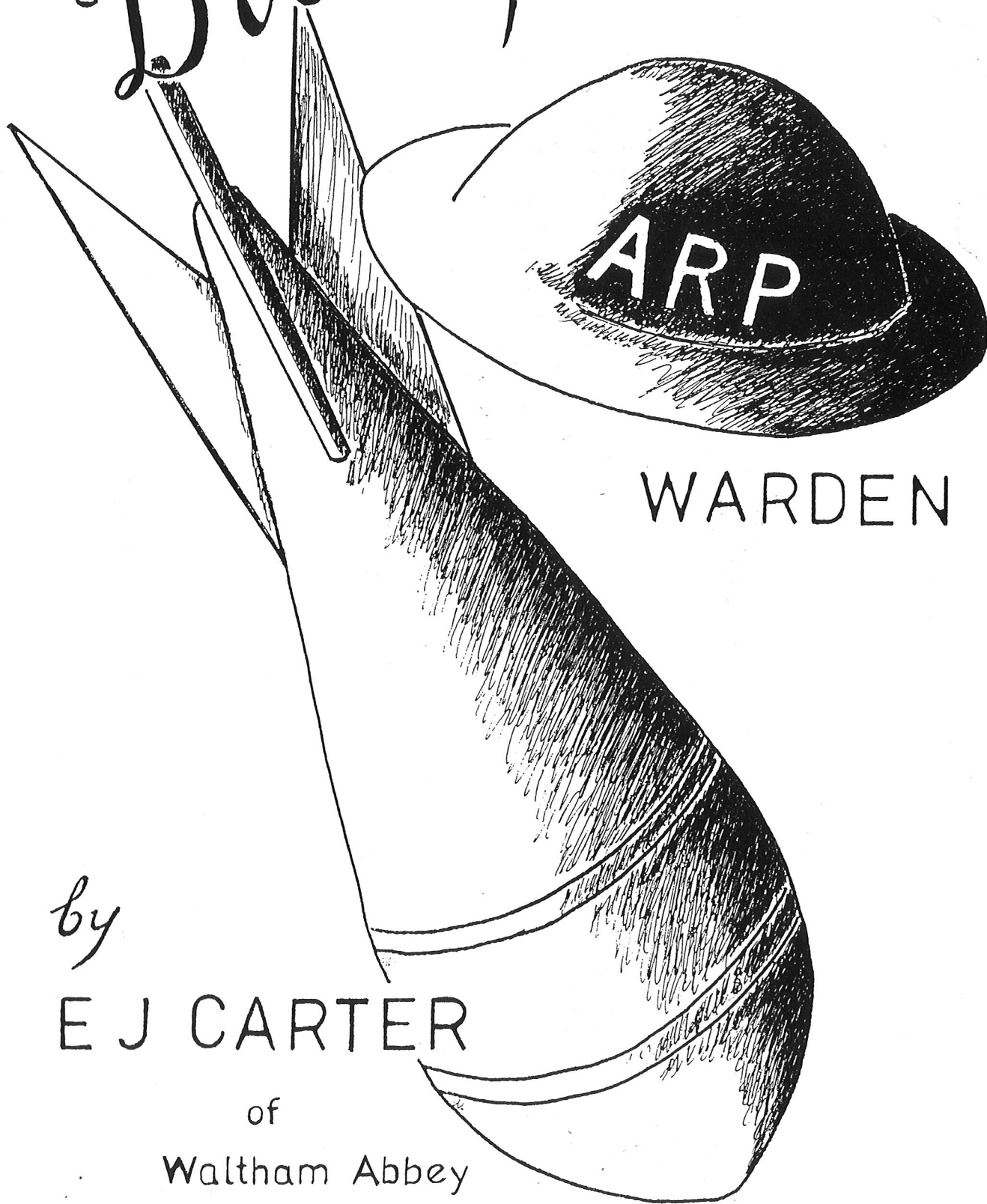
WASC 2206

Extract from  
The Diary of  
an Air Raid  
Warden, p37  
referring to  
VZ on South  
Site 7-2-1945

THE

Diary

OF AN



WARDEN

by

E J CARTER

of

Waltham Abbey



Edward J. Carter was born in Waltham Holy Cross in 1905 and attended the local Council School. He left at fourteen and started work for Jessop and Gough - the local solicitors, before moving to the Waltham Abbey Building Society. He became Secretary of the Society in 1937, a position he held until his retirement in 1969.

Ted Carter had a keen interest in local affairs. He was a founder member of the Lea Valley Photographic Society and its Secretary for over twenty years; Secretary of the Waltham Abbey Baptist Church for twenty-five years, and he became a Justice of the Peace in 1951. He was appointed Chief Warden for the Urban District of Waltham Holy Cross early in 1939.

This diary, typed at great speed with two fingers on a battered typewriter, was written purely for his own interest. He had no thoughts of publication, though he did remark when offering it to the Waltham Abbey Historical Society "somebody might find it interesting in years to come".

We hope that this publication of the diary, together with Ted's own photographs, will indeed prove interesting to those who lived through the War years in Waltham Abbey, and to the many for whom the Second World War is just hearsay.



ILL. WALTHAM CROSS 611.

R. CORDEROY,  
RAID PRECAUTIONS OFFICER

AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS DEPARTMENT.

26, Highbridge Street,  
Waltham Abbey,  
Essex.

28th. February ..... 1939

E. J. Carter, Esq.,  
5, Church Street,  
Waltham Abbey.

Dear Sir,


Appointment of Chief Warden

I have been empowered by the Urban District Council to offer you the appointment of Chief Warden for the Urban District of Waltham Holy Cross, (Essex County A.R.P. Sub-Area Waltham Holy Cross).

The Appointment is an Honorary one, but carries a mileage allowance for a car. The main duties will be the responsibility of the Wardens Organisation in this area. I shall be pleased to give you any further information I can.

I shall be grateful if you will give this offer your consideration and inform me of your decision in due course.

Yours faithfully,

  
A.R.P. Officer.

EXTRACTS FROM A CHIEF WARDEN'S DIARY

Note

These entries relate only to the period of the war which covered the Air Raids on Britain, and are concerned with the Warden's angle, during those raids, in Waltham Holy Cross.

The dates given refer to the night then commencing, thus 10th May 1942, relates to the night of 10th/11th May 1942.

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Friday August 2nd 1940

"Jerry" planes dropped leaflets "A Last Appeal to Reason, by Adolf Hitler", at Upshire tonight. Bound together in bundles, wrapped in brown paper, and supported by wooden slats and steel bands. One fell intact within the Epping area, and the other burst on impact in a field attached to Woodredon Farm. A substantial sum was raised for Red Cross funds by the sale of the said leaflets!

Friday August 23rd 1940

Siren "Red" at 1528 hrs. Gunfire heard and 'planes seen diving well over to the N/E (North Weald 'drome) and while watching from outside Town Hall, was very surprised to see a big formation of bombers appear from the West, fairly low, and flying steadily with the sun glinting on their wings. Gussed that there were about 30 of them. Amazing how everybody vanished! One brought down on Ponders End Sewage works, (Ju.88) and another (Me.110) in road near Southbury Road. The latter fell on some greenhouses and blew itself up with the bombs, which were still in the machine.

Friday August 30th 1940

Funny how things happen on a Friday! "Red" at 1637 hrs. Enemy 'planes seen in large numbers over to the south-east and a real dog-fight in progress. Saw one machine coming down, followed by a white billowing parachute. Strange how slowly they seem to fall when watched from a distance.

Tuesday September 3rd 1940

First H/E's fell on Waltham Abbey. Abbey Filling Station at bottom of Farm Hill hit and set ablaze, also Pan Britannica Industries in Sewardstone Road. Two very big fires, and a narrow escape for the A.4 Wardens. Several fire brigades from other Districts had to be brought in, some of them working from as far away as Sun Street. The large amount of chemicals in P.B.I. caused

not only a very big fire, but also several loud explosions. One very big bang went just as the Raiders Passed siren sounded. Three H/E's did the damage, blast from a "near-miss" causing the P.B.I. fire. Didn't get to bed all night, in fact did not go off duty till 0840 in the morning.

#### Saturday September 7th 1940

Visited scene of Ponders End crashes of the 23rd August and recovered some souvenirs. At 1658 hrs "Red" and more E/A seen very high. Heavy gunfire and dog-fights seen over towards S/E from A.R.P. Office. Fierce fires raged tonight over London way. Went on top of Church with Herbert and watched. Three separate glares each over Dockland, nearly 15 miles away could be clearly seen. Siren sounded again while "up top" so had to come down in a hurry.

#### Sunday September 8th 1940

Gigantic bomb crater found this morning in Wash's fields at Upshire. 66' diameter and about 30' deep. No damage done except pane of glass in a nearby caravan. Found very large piece of blue Kopfring.

#### Tuesday September 10th 1940

A.7 "got it" tonight. Eight H/E Bombs, three unexploded. Slight damage to houses and road near the New Road Estate but no casualties. One of the U.X.B. discovered in Ford's nursery while I was up inspecting the damage. A few panes of glass broken, and a roughish hole in the soft earth.

#### Wednesday September 18th 1940

Went out to Upshire tonight with the Police to investigate report of U.X.B. Quiet when started, but very lively later. Crept down Sun Street dodging into doorways whenever anything sounded too near. When we reached the field there seemed to be numerous "Jerries" over-head. Heavy barrage and searchlights, low cloud at the time. Several bombs heard coming down, and also red glares from oil bombs. Lots of very large fires and felt really scared. Great deal of "shrapnel" about, so took shelter under a tree. While there two more bombs came down with a fearful swishing, one landing in the next field, but both U.X.B. (as the following morning proved). Could see that there was a fire somewhat close, and ventured the opinion that it was Waltham Abbey. Police disagreed, and suggested Ponders End. Its position seemed to vary all the way home, but when we reached Farm Hill, could see that it was Waltham Abbey. A load of Incendiaries had started a good fire in the Gun-cotton store in the R.G.P.F. Large numbers of Incendiaries had fallen all round the Town, one falling in Highbridge Street, just outside the Wardens Post! Parachute mines fell in the area tonight, one exploding near Cashfield House, Sewardstonebury, and the other remaining U.X. at Lippitts Hill. Looked like a great black pillar box lying on its side.

Chilton and John Davies, both from B.1 Post, went bomb-hunting in their car when daylight dawned. It was a ramshackled old car anyway, and they gaily drove over the fields, when to their astonishment they came upon the mine, with its green 'chute spread over the ground. In their blessed ignorance of what it was and its potential dangers, they drove right up to it, and leaving the engine still running, hacked with a knife a portion of the parachute silk.

Lt. Blaney of the B.D.S. (later killed when a U.X.B. he was dealing with went off) came a day or two later and took out the fuse, and then left it. Admiralty Party refused to touch it, not knowing what Blaney had done, and in consequence it was left lying about for a week or two. Kids and the yokels then amused themselves by taking it to pieces. When the Admiralty did eventually remove it, there was not much left of it!

#### Thursday September 19th 1940

This morning went to Upshire with Casling to look at suspected U.X.B.'s. Apparently those that came down to scare me last night. Cecil and I must have looked pretty daft kneeling down over a wide hole in the ground solemnly discussing possibilities. Still, in doubt when we left, but if it is U.X. its a big one. We don't know enough about the job yet to be sure of ourselves.

#### Monday September 23rd 1940

Great scare tonight when at 2100 hrs reports came in of mines floating overhead. Certainly two things which looked like parachutes were drifting along, amid a terrific barrage. A.A. Battery claim to have destroyed one by gunfire. Don't think so myself, as P/M destroyed in the air would surely have scattered bits all over the place. Moreover the parachute is green, and would hardly be seen at night. Two mines did in fact come down at Cheshunt, at the time the "big bang" was heard.

#### Thursday September 26th 1940

Went at 2330 hrs with Farrow to see crater in Quinton Hill. Road completely blocked by lumps of clay, broken trees and wire and water. Large main broken and a regular torrent pouring down the hill. Farrow is a lousy night driver! Wanders all over the place.

#### Sunday September 29th 1940.

Went this morning with Farrow to see the U.X. paramine at Lodge Road Upshire which had fallen nearly a week earlier. Farrow found some interesting "bits" but I went one better and deliberately removed the brass shackle bolt from the inside of the mine. Felt an awful fool after I had done it, but got away with it. Never again!

Friday October 4th 1940

Afternoon. Visited Ponders End with Tom Spearman and Dave. Raid apparently in progress, but we had not heard the siren. Heard gunfire and suddenly saw a Ju 88 appear out of the clouds. Dodged about once or twice and then turned abruptly towards us and dived. Two bombs seen to fall from the machine to our right. Took a header into an Anderson and waited for the bump. Heard the whistle of the bombs which passed right over-head and landed in Southbury Road. One hit an Anderson shelter, wrecking it and throwing two large parts of it on to roof of a house 50 yards away. Apparently persons trapped in it, as Wardens, etc. dug frantically while Ambulance and S/P arrived. The second bomb was D/A and went off about 10 p.m. wrecking two more houses a little further away.

Saturday October 5th 1940

Several bombs in the Parish again tonight. At 2030 hrs heard the whistles as I was leaving Control, so went in again. Heard that there were two in Quinton Hill Factory, an oil bomb on the Waltham Marsh, a 250 kilo in Dunlops Sports Field, and one at Robin Hood P.H. blocking the road and bursting a water main.

Thursday October 10th 1940

Incendiary Bombs at Sewardstone. Only fire caused was at Balcony House, which was soon dealt with by Wardens and the occupiers. Large numbers in fields all round, and some of them still smouldering and glowing when we (Austin, Farrow and I) arrived there. Covered some of them with earth, but all we recovered was two sets of fins from the burnt out ash.

Friday October 11th 1940

Visited various localities to inspect bomb damage with Goulding this morning. Para-mines do an awful amount of damage.

Tuesday 15th October 1940

More parachute mines in the area tonight, and at daybreak went out to investigate. One had fallen in a boggy patch at the rear of the Royal Oak, High Beech, making a very muddy crater and piling up the blue coloured clay. The other was in the Forest just off the Wake Road opposite the Forest Keepers Cottages at the top of Woodredon Hill. Here the mine had apparently exploded on hitting the trees, as the crater caused was extremely shallow. Burnt and blackened trees lifted ugly bare stumps skywards.

From enquiries I found that one of the tail-bowls was reposing in a little clearing near the High Beech Church, but no trace could be found of the other. Presumably it had remained attached to the parachute, and had been blown to pieces.

Wednesday October 16th 1940

H/E bombs in the area again tonight. One 250 kilo on Rounton Road about Nos. 44-46 etc. Drove up by car as soon as I heard about it, and the rain poured down. An awful mess. Seemed to be six houses down, water and gas mains broken, road partially blocked, and over it all that strange smell which only an H/E can produce. A mixture of wetness, coal gas, brick-dust and burnt H/E producing a pungent sort of smell that one always remembers. Two women got out of house by Wardens and others, and a man trapped in what was left of the back addition bedroom. After scrambling through houses and over wreckage got to back of houses where the bomb had fallen in time to see Rescue Party and Wardens get him out. Gave a hand in shifting some of the wreckage (ruined a pair of gloves in so doing) and to our horror a further collapse of wall took place right on to man and rescuers. It looked an awful muddle, broken bedstead, bedding, bricks and mortar all jumbled together and all covered with a grey dust. Seemed hard to tell what was man and what was rubble. However he was got out and taken off in the Ambulance. Took a further walk round the gardens to the Anderson shelters to check up. All the Andersons were heaped with debris, with baffle walls pushed in by the blast towards the entrance. Got a request to help a woman out. Suffering from shock, she was in a rather bad way, but caught sight of another Warden and got him to help. Hauled her out like a winkle out of a shell, and in the pouring rain carried her bandy-chair fashion over the ruins to the nearest house it was possible to get through. In the darkness of the back room we sat her down in an armchair in the middle of the mess of plaster and glass while we got our breath back. Then out through the front of the house to a friend on the other side. Got her tucked up in bed with hot drink and hoped for the best. Returned in due course to Control soaked to the skin with perspiration and rain.

Friday October 18th 1940

Para-mines in the Forest again. Went before 0800 hrs to Wake Valley Road, where the largest of all craters has been formed. Said to be 88' feet across and 45' deep. Very few fragments about, and the assumption is that the parachute didn't function, and the mine penetrated deeply before exploding.

Sunday October 20th 1940

Visiting A.6 this evening, and received a report while there of H/E damage in roadway at Skilletts Hill, (had heard the bombs just a little earlier). Just about to start off when four more came down, so there was a dive to ground! Parker (A.7) rang up to say that they were on the A/A site at Galley Hill, so we went there instead. He was right, but not much damage done. While waiting outside the camp, two more "whistlers" came along, so we (Hale, Bishop and self) took headers into the ditch. Seem to remember that I ended face-up! Both bombs failed to go off and are apparently residing somewhere in the Abbey Fields. Got back to A.6 to find that odd I/B's had fallen at the Larsen Recreation Ground and at the rear of Broomstickhall Road. Arriving back at Control found reports of damage to road at top of Dawes Hill, with a motor car

in the crater! Leaving Control about midnight another bomb was heard falling so I "went to earth" outside the Public House at the top of the Romeland. What a night! About 50 bombs afterwards found in the parish.

Monday October 21st 1940

Went bomb-hunting this evening, after receiving a report from High Beech of a U.X.B. Escorted by a small boy, I ploughed through the mud in the fields opposite The Owl at Lippitts Hill. Found four bombs in one field which apparently fit on to the end of the Sewardstonebury string. Three gone off and one U.X. Exactly according to copy book, with a beautifully circular hole about 12" diameter going down on a slight angle for about 12 feet and then curling away under. Marks of the fins to be seen in the clay soil at the sides.

Parachute Mines

I find in the diary at this stage a list of para-mines known to have fallen. Here it is:-

18-9-40	Sewardstonebury	Tail-bowl b437 Red	Full moon.	16-9-40
18-9-40	Sewardstonebury	Tail-bowl d298 Red	U.X.	
21-9-40	Lodge Road	Tail-bowl d531 Red	U.X.	"
21-9-40	Lodge Road	Tail-bowl d515 Red		
15-10-40	Wake Arms	Tail-bowl Destroyed ?		
15-10-40	Royal Oak	Tail-bowl 19 Green	"	16-10-40
18-10-40	Lippitts Hill Lodge	Tail-bowl b385 Red	(paired with Loughton)	
15-11-40	Beech Hill Park	Tail-bowl Ld8 Red		
15-11-40	Avey Lane	Tail-bowl 354 Green		
15-11-40	R.G.P.F.	Tail-bowl 403 Green	(paired with Cheshunt)	
25-2-41	Breech Barnes Farm	Tail-bowl 2119 Green		
25-2-41	Breech Barnes Farm	Tail-bowl d440 Red		
19-4-41	Abbey Fields	Tail-bowl 3936 Green		
19-4-41	Romeland	Tail-bowl ?		

21-9-40 Mine in R.S.A.F. at bottom of Ordnance Road. This paired with one that came down in Enfield in Goat Lane, nearly two miles away. Said to have been hit by gunfire, and came down burning and did not explode.

Monday November 4th 1940

About 1930 hrs walking with Mrs.Porter to 5 Church Street, when just outside the Town Hall a heavy burst of gunfire greeted a 'plane coming in from the East. Then a noise like a 'bus coming round the corner, but which was really a bomb or two coming down fairly close. Shouted to Mrs.P. to get down and went on hands and knees outside the Town Hall and waited for the bump. The crash when it came was somewhat hefty. Apparently fell in gravel-pit up at Waltham Cross Station.

Tuesday November 5th 1940

At 0538 this morning several bombs were heard falling. Called in Control and found report of U.X.B. in garden in front of 120 Honey Lane. Others in "Imps" Sportsfield, Freeman's garden, The Common at end of Rounton Road and in fields behind Broomstickhall Road towards Galley Hill.

Some of the "explodeds" appear to be the thin case "blast" type.

Thursday November 7th 1940

An exciting trip in Farrow's car to Lippitts Hill tonight, to investigate an incident at the Gun site. An Ack Ack shell from another battery landed in a gun-pit and exploded there. Just enough moon to make awkward shadows, and as Mott Street was blocked by H/E damage had to go right round the Forest via Avey Lane. Windscreen fogged up with the cold, and plenty of activity to keep me on the alert all the time. Nearly turned over coming round the bend at Lippitts Hill Lodge.

Sunday November 10th 1940

"Bomb-hunting" this morning after a noisy night. Found 26 50-Kilo bombs in a line from Quinton Hill across Avey Lane to Mott Street and beyond. Various craters according to depth of penetration of bombs, and one U.X.B.

Friday November 15th 1940

Much excitement tonight. At about 8 p.m. returning home as it was my night "off", there was a blinding red flash followed by a crash, and a big rush of wind. Didn't realise what it was until the "duplicate" arrived. Dawned on me then that it was a couple of mines. Subsequent reports located them at the top of Avey Lane, and in Beech Hill Park. Constant stream of "Jerries" all evening from about 7 to 11 p.m. At 11 p.m. went over to A.3 and saw two more mines go off towards Chingford. In Control found more reports of mines, including one supposed to be U.X. at High Beech. After a lot of messing about, went to High Beech with Chapman, and found evacuation arrangements in hand. Went to investigate the "mine" (Police wouldn't come with me) at close quarters, and found that it was only the tail bowl with the rip cords still attached. What a sell!

While up there, called on Jerry Chilton, and standing outside his house, heard a 'plane coming down Epping way, with a screaming whine rising ever louder and louder and higher and higher.

Mines tonight at Waltham Abbey, Enfield, Loughton, Waltham Cross, to say nothing of more further afield.



Sunday December 8th 1940

Another hectic night. First call after the Alert was to Sewardstonebury where I/B's had fallen. Report had it that Carrolls Farm had caught it, so took the car out and picking up Jess and Walter, went to see. Farm quite O.K. but bombs all across West Essex Golf Club, some of them the explosive type.

Returning from Sewardstonebury reports arrived of Incendiaries at Volunteer and Honey Lane, so took Chapman out to investigate. Had heard that much larger I/B's had been used, but traces were of the normal type. While at Skilletts Hill Farm Jerry came over again, and put down more Incendiaries over towards Sewardstone. Could hear them swishing down and the popping cracks as they went off. The glare seemed quite close, so back we went to Sewardstone to Eddie Davies only to find that they were just out of our District.

Back again to the Volunteer to find Charlie Parish who took us to see the reputed 2-kilo bombs. Out in the middle of a field when a flare dropped towards the east just the other side of Woodredon Hill. The pale white glare outshone the watery moon, and gave quite an eerie light behind the clouds. Returned home and at 12-30 'phone rang to say that a Jerry 'plane had been brought down in the Forest near the Wake Arms, but it was pouring with rain, and I'd had about enough. At 3-30 a.m. 'phone went again, with an urgent call for assistance for the Wardens out at Upshire, where scores of Incendiaries had fallen setting fire to the Potteries. Gathered together some Wardens in A/G clothing (because of the rain) and set out in the pitch darkness, the moon having gone. All bombs out by the time we got there, and the Potteries blaze well doused. And so to bed again at 4-30.

Up early again the next morning and out to the scene of the crash. An awful muddy mess of clay and water and bits and pieces, smelling of oil and burning material. Lumps of metal strewn all over the place. Brought home a parachute, badly burned, of one of the unlucky ones.

Then went down to the Potteries, and had a look round where the bombs had fallen, and discovered quite a number unignited, duly bringing them home to be "doctored".

Then just to round things off, went up to Scotland Yard to argue with the P/W about warning sirens!! Particularly sirens that sounded the Raiders Passed, when they were definitely not passed!!

Wednesday March 19th 1941

Heavy blitz on London tonight. Watching the glare from fire out over to the South, when a further load of incendiaries came down. Their white glare suddenly changed to pink and red as something caught fire, and high up in the clear sky the vapour trails of aircraft were illuminated.

Friday March 21st 1941.

Mystery at Holyfield cleared up!! H.J.S. and I were right after all and it was an A.A. shell. Casling and B.D.S. both said Bomb but we differed. Oddly enough this had been down for some days, right outside F.l. post, and no-one had seen it, and a car had in fact been parked right over the hole.

Wednesday 16th April 1941

Heavy raid on London again tonight. Said to be the heaviest of the War so far; 450-500 Jerries in. On duty from 9-12 and went up on Church Tower to watch the fires, etc. Great display of search-lights and watched several bombs burst London way. Turned out again at 3.30 when 'planes were still going over.

Saturday April 19th 1941

"Alert" sounded soon after nine. Although officially "off" thought I would turn out. Walked over to A.3 and then on to Control, and heard two very heavy bangs that I thought might be H/E's over towards High Beech. Visited A.2 and got annoyed with the merry-makers coming in and out of the Drill Hall opposite while Jerry was overhead and a heavy barrage going. After calling for my cycle went down to see A.8, by which time the procession of 'planes indicated that London was getting it again. Sat talking to Elledge when a very loud wallop indicated that something was really near; a second or two after came the most appalling crash ever, and an awful sound of crashing glass and roof tiles. Post seemed to wobble in concert. Went outside where someone was yelling frantically for brandy, and the local residents were running into the shelters. Burst had appeared to be north of the Post, and I wondered if Sun Street had caught it. Tried to 'phone 2084 (home) but was told that the line had "just gone out of order"! Got on cycle to see what the trouble was, but had to walk before getting very far owing to the great quantities of broken glass all over the road. Met Windle in Market Square who didn't know where bomb was but told me his place was half down, and he "couldn't get in to 5 Church Street". Awful thoughts in my mind as I turned into Church Street. Church appeared to be O.K. and scrunching all over broken glass, etc., found the family all present and correct, though somewhat draughty owing to lack of windows.

On then to Control where exact location of bomb was not known, but was told that it was at the back of the Romeland. Went down to investigate and found bricks, tiles, slates, glass timber and rubbish all over everywhere. The shelter was filled with an excited noisy crowd, some of them pot-black from dust and soot. Prowled round to find the exact site of bomb, and decided from the large quantities of black mud thrown up, and the wide area affected, that a paramine was either in the Abbey Stream or the water-cress beds. Too dark and too awful underfoot to see exactly, but as the river seemed to be flowing normally came to the conclusion that it was water-cress beds. Tried then to arrange for some refreshments for the shelterers, but having left it to A.3 to see to, did not know the result.

Went then with Austin to see how Jack Chapman had fared, and found him minus all his windows, and most of his roof, with streaks of black mud across walls and ceilings. Meantime more Jerries kept coming in and barrage kept up its din.

Looking in at the Shelter again, found that several of the occupants would have to go to Rest Centre, and while back in Control the Vicar came in to see what R/C arrangements were being made. Offered to drive him in his car to make arrangements. First of all, however, gave him a hand in moving some stuff from the Vicarage (which was rather the worse for wear) to the Church. Took him up to Honeylands then, while the "Raiders Passed" and the "Alert"

sounded again in quick succession, and picking up Mrs. Courtney went back to Rest Centre (another cup of tea!) and via A.4, to Control. A final visit to the Rest Centre, and then back to A.9, with Jerries still around, although the Raiders Passed had gone. Then a little job to do in Control for a sailor delayed from rejoining his ship owing to the bombing, and then home to bed but not to sleep. Barrage was louder than ever again, and the absence of windows added to the noise. Turned out again at 5 a.m. to see what was going to happen about the clearing up. In the half-light of morning, the mess at the bottom of the Romeland looked eerie.

#### Sunday April 20th 1941

Morning. First trip was round the house to see what damage we had got. Mainly front door, windows, blinds, frames, curtains, etc. Arriving at the incident found that P/M was in watercress beds, and tons of wet black mud strewn everywhere. Severe damage to houses in Romeland particularly Abbey Cottages. The old Abbey Gateway had caught a packet, and was amazed that it had got off so lightly.

Then it was "pick and shovel" work for all Wardens available. Helped clear out Windle's shop first, and shifted loads of glass from Church Street.

Went into the Church and found horrible mess all over. Nearly all the black-outs down, and practically all the stained glass on the north side completely destroyed. Dust everywhere and lumps of masonry all over the floor. A very bad crack between the main structure and the ceiling of the north aisle where the whole roof had been drawn out about a foot. Vestry badly damaged through roof and ceiling and altogether a very sorry picture.

Took my camera up on top of Tower and got some shots of the damage and found that the roof of the Nave, Lady Chapel and Tower were all affected. Then a spot of work fixing a duty rota of Wardens to stand-by at Incident, and then some breakfast.

An odd thing happened during the night. After all the folk had been cleared away, the Warden on duty heard footsteps, and investigating found an elderly man searching in the ruins. Said that he had come for his eggs, which he had left in the copper! As the copper was in the most damaged house of the lot, the result of his search was problematical. Oddly enough the eggs were found and were not even cracked!

Then a trip to Enfield Highway to fetch G.P. Walker (builder), only to find he was already in Waltham Abbey.

I/B's reported at Claverhambury, but a visit there was fruitless, no trace whatever being found. On returning to Romeland found Mrs. Tuck (jnr) with reports of incendiaries at Pynest Green, so off we go again. Large numbers of them there, spreading from Pynest Green to Rushey Plain.

Further excitement when Casling reported news of an unignited parachute flare at Upshire, so in Vicars car again, went out to find it. Brought it back complete, on the back seat, with a police car bringing up the rear. Then news of a mysterious object stuck in the lawn of Farm Hill House. On digging it out found it to be a portion of one of the mines, which had been blown right over the houses to fall there.

What a week-end!

#### Friday May 9th 1941

Removed fuse (no.19) from the Parachute flare today, nothing having been heard of the B.D.S.

#### Saturday May 10th 1941

Siren at about 11 p.m. tonight, so visited all the Posts A.1 to A.11. Constant drone of aircraft, apparently both Jerries and our fighters. Gunfire heavy and many bursts in the brilliant moonlight. Watched Bullsmoor Lane guns from A.10 and they seemed to be much nearer than they really are. While at A.7 saw one Jerry brought down in flames; a ball of fire which swung about from side to side leaving a trail of sparks behind it. Then watched it take a final header to earth growing brighter all the time. Large fires burning Londonwards but seemed to be further west than the usual Dockland area.

#### Sunday morning, May 11th 1941

A huge cloud of billowed smoke many miles in extent, hangs over London this morning in a clear blue sky and bright sunshine.

#### Tuesday May 27th 1941

Decided, with H.J. Smith, to have another try to get the flare to pieces. Used the car jack, a hammer and a cricket stump, and after much pushing and levering and banging removed the fuse pocket. Found that it contained one candle only. Took it out and in handling the two rip cords, gave one a slight pull and off she went! The cord apparently is fastened to a small brass nipple at the end of the candle. The nipple contains a "flash" composition ignited by friction, and the pulling of the cord sets off the works! Although we heaped earth on to it, and poured water over it, nothing would put it out, and it burnt away to a small stump. Sorry about this as I wanted some photos of it. Found at the bottom of the container a number of felt pads, including a pair fastened together and in the middle of them the main charge used for blowing the contents out of the case. The flash from the fuse travels down a metal tube to a black powder composition which in turn explodes the H/E. A bit of a shock after the way we had been banging it about!

#### Thursday May 29th 1941

Thought I had better dispose of the H/E charge, so took it to the mine crater at the back of the Romeland and threw it in. To my horror it floated! However, by throwing stones at it, we got it back to land, and then pulled it to pieces and threw in the explosive (which was like solid mercury) separately. The felt pads we took back to A.3 to use as a tea-pot stand.

Tuesday July 28th 1942

An "alert" during the night, the first for many months. London's sirens sounded just after 0300 hrs and at 0307 local warnings went. Small amount of gunfire some distance off, but spread over quite a while. Puffs of shell burst seen all round the moon. All clear went at 0415 hrs.

Incidentally the B.D.S. are in the Parish again, digging out some of the "left overs".

Thursday July 30th 1942

Another night alarm. Sirens at 0141. On my way to Control, distant gunfire grew louder and local batteries joined in. Jerry came in low, and dropped something over in the Enfield direction. Got round to all Posts tonight except 7 and 11, and while at A.9 watched the new barrage. A whole mass of twinkling points of red light, like a new constellation of stars, suddenly appear covering a huge area. All clear at about 0415 hrs.

Saturday August 1st 1942

Lt. Armstrong of the B.D.S. engaged in recovering bombs U.X. in the locality. Attempts being made to recover the 250 Kg. from the wet ground at the back of the Wake Arms. Bomb was reached but condition of hole and the slipping timbers made further work unsafe, so a 50 Kg. recovered from somewhere else was primed (by filling the fuse pocket with guncotton, and by placing a slab of guncotton on the side of the bomb) and put down the hole to explode both. At a distance, "Button B" was pressed, and the earth shook, and there was a loud bang. All the effects went straight up into the air, and timbers sailed away over the trees. Unfortunately, the 250 wasn't having any, and only the 50 went off. Went and had a look at the hole, and could see the smoke and fumes still drifting lazily out of it.

August 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 1942

Attended a course in Bomb Recce at London Region. Capt. Price and Capt. Newitt instructors. Very interesting, with practical recce both by day and night.

Wednesday August 12th 1942

Went this afternoon to Pynest Green with Lt. Armstrong to see the "hole". Are now nearly 40 feet down, but believe to have located 1000 Kg. Hermann about ten feet offset. We were right after all, in our first reports 18 months ago, of a big U.X.B.! At any rate, something has been located which reacts when tapped with a long chisel. Took some photos at the bottom of the shaft, including a time exposure. When the shutter "buzzed" everybody gave a jump, but Armstrong who was prodding with the chisel, remarked "Its all right, its only that silly so-and-so taking more photographs".

Sunday August 16th 1942

Another visit with Armstrong and Arthur Jest to the bomb hole at Pynest Green. The bomb is now uncovered and is a 1000 Kg. Hermann. Turned right over and is resting with its nose upwards. No ladders there, so had to scramble down the shuttering. As it had poured with rain a few hours earlier, and the soil was clay, it was a slippy difficult job. Jest amused us on the "return journey" by climbing half-way up, and then failing to go back or forward, stuck like a fly on the side of a wall. Got in a fearful muddy mess!

Wednesday March 3rd 1943

A short sharp reprisal raid on London tonight. From about 8-10 p.m. Was staying down at Thorpe Bay, and the blighters came up in the Estuary. Very disconcerting as each and every one of them swooped down low over the coast to avoid the heavy barrage. Some bombs were dropped very near, including one which went down deeply in front of a house, and blew a camouflet in the small front garden. No blast or splinter effect, but the upward thrust of the earth pushed the front of the house right off. Looked at first sight like a big U.X.B.

Another alert at 4-30 a.m. next morning, until nearly 6 a.m. but no bombs that time.

Bombs also fell at Leigh and Hadleigh and bang on the railway line just outside Shenfield. A train coming along went head first into the crater, killing driver and fireman.

Hear they also had bombs at Waltham Abbey including I/B's all along the top of Farm Hill.

Wednesday June 23rd 1943

An interesting birthday morning! Sirens and bombs came together at 0311 hrs this morning and various Posts reported U.X.B. in the area. Tracked it down from three sides, so that it appeared to have been east of A.9, north of A.7 and south of Galley Hill gunsite. Enquiries during the night failed to get anything definite, but this morning at 9 a.m. discovered that a hole had been reported in Carabis' nursery at Pick Hill. Went up in car, and found a policeman there. Hole of entry 2'6" across alongside Nursery buildings, but earth had fallen in about five feet down. Proceeded with Ellis to arrange evacuation, and Ellis went off to Control to Report. Just after he had left Mrs. Pomfrett came along to tell me of another bomb, also U.X. This was in the hedge within 50 yards of A.7 Post, a beautiful shaft, 2'6" diameter for about 15 feet, before jinking off. Evacuation became more considerable than at first, and New Road traffic had to be stopped.

Wednesday June 30th 1943

Went to Pick Hill this morning to see the U.X.B. and found that one had been located and uncovered. Turned out to be a 250 Kilo S.C. and had turned completely over coming to rest with its nose in the air. A 25B fuse, so was probably a dud, or something went wrong when it was dropped. Top of hole of entry was about 41" diameter and the shaft about 30", slightly narrowing towards the bottom.

While the B.D.S. were hauling it out on rope slings, the bomb slipped and crashed down into the hole again, breaking timbers on its way.

Thursday July 1st 1943

Second of the Pick Hill bombs got out early this morning. Another 250 kg. S.C. This was about 19 feet down, the other one having been located at 14 feet.

Saturday January 29th 1944

A noisy night tonight. (Have been several lately) and siren went during the late evening. Something heard to fall in the Holyfield area, but extensive search the day after failed to reveal anything. Later on Sunday one half of a new type I/B Container 6' 4" long and 19" diameter was discovered in Knight's gravel pit. Painted fawn with red band round it, and marked AB 500-1. Heard later that this type container is also used for S.D.I.'s. Also a 50 Kg at Suntraps High Beech. Very small crater, only 9 feet across, and no trace of any others although there are rumours of more in the Forest. Had quite a busy day on the Sunday following as I was on Q.R.C.D. rota.

Friday February 4th 1944

An early "alert" at 0430 hrs this morning. Apparently a really determined attack. Several fires round about including one good big one towards the City. Went on top of our roof with Francis, and was it cold!

Friday February 18th 1944

A snorter tonight. Siren sounded just before 1 a.m. but didn't hear it. Guns woke me up so went over to A.3 to report. Remained there and saw the most amazing things. Fair number of Jerries coming in, with searchlights all over the sky. Low cloud and a biting wind. Barrage was very heavy. Saw string of orange flares towards London and then a couple of big bombs in the same direction.

A very strange blood red glow reflected from above the clouds over Cheshunt direction, and shortly after three big crimson flares burst through. Most uncanny of all was what seemed to be streams of liquid fire appearing out of the clouds. Would come without any warning, and had a definite trajectory forwards and downwards. Something like the golden rain of the old fireworks. A sight I shan't forget in a hurry, and a case of "wind-up" and wondering what was coming next.

Had an awful bump under the eye when I ran into a fire-watcher in the dark!

Two 1000 K.G.'s down at Holyfield (heard them coming while standing outside A.3) and one 50 Kg. at Upshire near Fernhall Farm. Hundreds of I/B's (S.N.I.B.) at Sewardstone where there are two AB 500-1 containers and one AB 1000-2. Scores of unignited bombs about.

Fuse in AB 500-1 is an 89B.

Sunday February 20th 1944

Another "do" tonight. Very noisy again. Some more liquid fire" in the distance and a thundering barrage. Two very large red flashes out in the east which seemed to spread upwards and outwards until half the "vault of heaven" was glowing red. These raids are different from the old blitz of 1940/41. Then a procession of Jerries would come in one after the other to an accompaniment of solid banging away by A/A guns. Now, the whole sky seems to seeth and boil with fire in every direction.

Tuesday February 22nd 1944

More bumps and bangs tonight and an amazing display of rocket shells. Like small bunches of red sparks they sail up into the sky almost slowly. Then a second or two after appears a whole constellation of flashing red smoky stars covering what must be a very large area.

Barrage very heavy, and as we stood in front of A.3, the blast made the tails of our coats to wave.

Noise too much to distinguish bombs, but we find (next morning) a bunch near the Robin Hood and Fairmead Bottom. Four big 250s very close together, and then a stick of 50s (of which we found seven) running back across the road into the Loughton area.

Thursday February 24th 1944

Siren again tonight at 2145, but guns going before the alert had finished. Heavy barrage again complete with rockets going up in their clusters of red sparks. Once or twice a 'plane got caught in the searchlights. An amazing number of flares which seemed to be above Tottenham or Edmonton. Started with about 7 or 8, and then more and more kept coming down until between 30 and 40 made the whole heaven glow like a gigantic fire.

Friday, February 25th 1944

Something of a mystery at Sudbury Farm today. Investigating a reported "hole" and found it to be 12 feet across and about 3 feet deep after allowing for the debris fallen back. Heavy blackening round the edges, and the lip of the crater lifted and cracked. In heavy clay with large lumps thrown up to 35 feet away. Yet five fragments recovered are obviously shell-splinters!

Saturday March 4th 1944

Dismantled an 89B fuse this morning. Delay action (clockwork), aerial combustion type. Clock will apparently delay up to 1½ minutes, there being a disc in place of the normal hands of a clock, a spring loaded catch riding round its rim until it comes opposite an opening cut in the disc. When the catch springs home, an arm pushes aside a retarder unit and allows a striker pin to fall and detonate a number 26 cap, thus firing a train of flash composition direct to the exploder itself. This type of fuse seems capable of various uses, and various methods of operation.

Tuesday March 14th 1944

Siren tonight about 10 p.m. and having a cold decided not to go out. However, such noise etc., that I wondered if I should get a call. At 11.10 heard such a weird sound of something descending that I rang up to enquire what had taken place. Heard of I/B's so got the car out and found that a load of incendiaries had fallen in Honey Lane, Patmore Road, Ruskin Avenue, Tennyson Avenue, etc. Quite a number of small fires in different houses, and a good blaze, with N.F.S. in attendance at Hubbards old property.

Two containers dropped, A.B.1000-1's holding S.N.I.B.s. and 1 Kilo's with explosive pellet in the tail. One container failed to open in the air and hit the front of the old Windmill House, almost demolishing it. All the bombs functioned when the case hit, and burned away for hours. (Note. During the whole of the next day the water in the crater seethed and bubbled with the heat from the buried burning bombs).

Wednesday March 22nd 1944

Siren just before 0100 hrs. Went over to A.3 amid a fair amount of noise. Saw Incendiaries come down to the south and reports indicated that Sewardstone had caught it. Also large column of white smoke and a fire out towards Monkams. Went to Control to find a report of Incendiaries near Fox and Hounds, Sewardstone, but from then on - no news. Took Francis in the car and went out to see what had happened. Quite an assortment! I/B's of three types, ordinary 1 Kilo, I.B.S.E.N.s and S.N.I.B.s. Gussed I.B.S.E.N.s had been used when Fireman handed me the remains of one which had a queer looking base plug.

Four casualties, telephone wires down, water main broken flooding the road, and H/E bombs. Had to come back by car to St. Aubyns to telephone for Services. Had a look round and found the explosive end of an IBSEN under a sand-bag, and still hot! Numerous reports of holes and one perfect miniature camouflet in garden of a house in Albion Terrace.

Got back to Control eventually about 0400 hrs, and after sending out messages to Wardens to report for search in the morning, went home for a rest. Up again at 0600 and went out again to Sewardstone. Lovely morning, sunshine and frost, and went round with Police to find two more H/Es, and lots and lots of entry holes of Ibsens. One complete Ibsen on the gun site. Dug one out of the pathway that we had been using the night before!

Returned home in a tearing hurry to meet the Wardens at 8 a.m. and got "pinched" for speeding along the Sewardstone Road. After breakfast called Mick Smith, and accompanied him to Monkams, where we found a stick of 6 Ph.I.B.s. All well down except one, and one hole was still popping and flaming just about four feet down. Also visited the crater made by an A.B.1000 container which didn't function properly, and exploded on impact. Hole about 15' deep and 20' across with I/Bs in various stages of damage all over the place.

Then back to Sewardstone where we recovered another complete Ibsen and started digging the others out. Eventually 60 or more were dug, and in every case the explosive portion of the bomb had functioned about 5 or 6 feet down, causing a camouflet up to three feet across.

Tuesday April 18th 1944

Siren at 1 a.m. Not having been fit again for the past week, did not go out. Amazing display of red and white flares right overhead indicated that we were for it! Never seen such a show at close quarters. Lots of bangs and bumps.

Turned out to be the heaviest ever night Waltham has had and included:-

- Holyfield Marsh 1 AB.1000 I/B container and 8 Ph.I.B.
- Waltham Marsh 1 AB.1000 container
- Upshire 3 500 KG H/Es at Crown Hill, severely damaging several houses, 8 Ph.I.B. at Volunteer, and 3 H/Es (one a 1000 Kg.U.X.) at the Volunteer right alongside the searchlight battery.
- Sewardstonebury 1 A.B.1000 container
- Forest Side 2 A.B. 5000 containers, and 1 A.B.1000 container
- Galley Hill 1 A.B.1000 container
- Crooked Mile 9 Ph.I.B.s
- Lippitts Hill 1 A.B.1000 container
- Harolds Park 3 flare cases

Only one casualty serious, 1 with slight burns, and no fires!

Friday April 21st 1944

Went with Smith and Colgate to Harolds Park Farm to clear up the "flare" business. One had functioned on impact leaving a burnt out case on the ground, but we recovered the fuse and pocket intact though rather blackened. No.2 was apparently still intact, but the fusepocket was loose, so Colgate held it steady while I took out the screws holding the locking ring and withdrew the fuse. Found that fuse had functioned, but that something had failed to ignite the flare. No.3 had suffered a bit and the fuse pocket had come right away. This was perfectly intact, and the fuse had not fired at all. Each fuse was slightly different, but all were 89 (c). Problem of what to do with the cases, and unburnt candles was solved by carefully placing them in the car and driving over to Sewardstone and dumping them in the gravel pits.

Monday June 26th 1944

For just over two weeks now Jerry has been sending us over a new type of nuisance. Pilotless aircraft, which after completing the journey for which they are designed, crash and blow up with the effects of a 1000 Kg.H.E. on the surface. They are jet-propelled and the noise made is quite different from an aero engine, and has a much deeper throb. After the engine stops there is a pause of a few seconds as the 'plane dives to earth and then an awful bang as it hits the ground and goes off. Several nights now passed have witnessed very long alerts, and the day-time, particularly if overclouded, is punctuated by sirens. It seems odd to have day-light alerts again.

Last night I stood-by with Francis at A.3 and heard about 20 of them drone their way in and explode. During the previous night one had landed in Baker Street Enfield.

Today, however, we got one! Dinner-time just about over and at 1340 hours a fairly loud bang put everybody on their toes. Not more than a couple of minutes after, possibly not so long, there was a fearful whack which rattled doors and windows. Running upstairs I could see the smoke rising, and guessed that it was at Sewardstone. Got car out and went to see, picking up Francis on the way. It had fallen in the paddock adjoining the Grange at Sewardstone, and had made a mess of the house. Not a door, a window, a curtain or a pane of glass or a ceiling was left intact. Furniture smashed and covered with plaster dust. A dozen or so fowls dead in the yard. Crater about 10' across by 4' deep round which were scattered countless bits and pieces of torn and twisted metal which had been the P.A. Gathered together lots of fragments, but nothing of much interest, all too blown about. The jet propulsion unit, smashed flat by the blast was still in the crater and it, and all the other pieces were almost too hot to touch.

Several more bangs in the distance while we were there, and one seemed to be coming very close while I was down talking to Harry Hawker. We got towards the nearest ditch, but the "fly" ended up some way off.

Job was cleared up very quickly, two casualties removed, and other arrangements put in hand within 40 minutes of the bomb falling.

Balaam's Nursery very badly damaged, glass and tomatoes all over the place.

Tuesday June 27th 1944

P.A.C. (officially called "Fly") in a field at the rear of Lancaster Cottages, Avey Lane. Difficult to locate but a nasty mess when found. Had fallen right on to some cattle sheltering in a corner from the rain. Three cows killed, and two so badly injured that they had to be destroyed and four others slightly injured. Heaps of mangled and twisted metal all over the fields. At about 1215 hours, another blighter came over, getting nearer and nearer. Parish was in my office and eventually it became so loud that I thought it must be one of our fighters. Terrific explosion when it did go off, and it seemed to be in A.1. Sector (Lea Road). However, it turned out to be in that direction, but in Ordnance Road, Enfield, at its junction with Chesterfield Road. Four fatal casualties, and one or two more injured.

Wednesday June 28th 1944

Went to Wake Arms this morning to locate a P.A.C. in the Forest. Rather elusive and eventually had to go back to D.2 to 'phone Control from there. While actually on the 'phone heard another near explosion which made walls and ceilings creak. Control told me it was Sewardstone again, so went out there picking up Warren and Wheeler. Mess just beyond Royal Oak P.H. One cottage completely wrecked as P.A.C. had fallen only a few yards from it. The only occupant, an elderly woman, had got out more or less unhurt, but considering the heap of bricks and rubble into which the house had disintegrated, it was amazing she was not killed. Bungalows nearby very badly damaged, and nursery greenhouses for some distance round just a tangle of broken wood and glass. Dirt all over the road, fire appliances everywhere, police cars, rescue vehicles, and ambulances all busy sorting themselves out. Set up a temporary I/O Post in the Car, pending later arrival of more Wardens when a nearby bungalow with a 'phone still in use was taken over. More P.A.C.'s came fairly close while still over there.

In the afternoon out again to Wake Arms and finally found the Forest incident. Apparently the "fly" had exploded on hitting the trees, as the crater was no bigger than a baby's cradle. Heaps of bits and pieces about including the propulsion unit complete, but badly buckled and twisted. Again while snooping round, with "Darkie" Smith, we heard another coming in, but he dropped while still a safe distance off, and seemed to be in the Chingford direction.

Friday June 30th 1944

Called out by Control at 0600 hrs this morning in connection with a message from Group concerning two missing "Flies". Known to have fallen at about 0200 hrs, no reports had been received of them. One was located on Chingford Plain about 400 yards to the rear of the Royal Forest Hotel. After a lot of 'phoning ascertained that the other was also just out of our area, in Epping between the Bell P.H. and Upshire.

Went to have a look at the Chingford one and was surprised by the size of the hole. The "fly" had dived well in, and had made a crater in clay about 30' across and 15' deep.

#### Sunday July 9th 1944

An alert during the afternoon (dull and raining again) and a few explosions in the distance.

Then heard a "buzz-buzz" getting quite close, so tried to get a view of it. The usual cut-out and a few seconds after a real wallop. Could see the smoke rising to indicate that Sewardstone had got it again. Went along in the car picking up Jess and Warren on the way, and found that it had dropped in Mott Street. Arrived there just as soon as the Ambulance with the I/O aboard. In the fields very near to our first U.X.Paramine. The usual small crater, and stink of H/E mixed with the rain. Metal was still hot to touch, but nothing interesting to be seen.

#### Wednesday July 12th 1944

Went with Francis this afternoon to the sites of the P.A.C.'s we've had already, to see if there were any fragments with traces of the cryptic German inscriptions thereon. Nothing to be found anywhere except scrap iron!!

While at John Davis's farm, out in the fields, could hear all sorts of 'planes and aero engines, and thought there seemed to be one in the vicinity. Then I saw one of our fighters from North Weald go haring across the sky low down in a south-westerly direction and thought it possible he was after something. However, while I watched him most intently, there came, to my astonishment, the usual "crump" of an explosion to the north, behind me! Saw the dark column of smoke going up, and located it at Galley Hill. A breathless run back across the fields to the 'phone, and a call to Control placed it at the "rear of Pick Hill". Returned to Waltham, and then out to Breech Barnes (which is very near Galley Hill anyway) to find hedge and grass on fire from an overhead cable which the explosion had severed, and a "short Circuit" had resulted.

"Fly" had fallen in a ditch, and had churned up the earth pretty well. Lumps and chunks lying about all over the place, and the remains of the jet-propulsion unit still in the crater, and still jolly hot.

Only damage to nearby nurseries, and bungalows, but no casualties.

#### Tuesday July 18th 1944

First siren (London) just after midnight but comparatively quiet, a few explosions in the distance. Stayed on at A.3 for about an hour and then returned home to get some sleep as nothing was happening locally. Local siren went at 0330, and hard on its heels two very loud explosions from P.A.C.'s quite near. A third one came

along then, and succeeded in putting the wind up folk. Made a real din and seemed to cut-out right over the Town. Fortunately it did not dive immediately, but glided on a bit further. Made a strange sound as of corrugated iron being shaken as it continued on its course. Landed not very far away actually, between Bullsmoor Lane and Park Lane, Waltham Cross. Counted about 12 near-ones, and several more a good way off. Then it quietened down and we stood around and talked while the pale light grew in the east and it became broad daylight. "Raiders passed" sounded at 0555 so home for a bit more sleep.

#### Wednesday July 19th 1944

Another "hot" night. I wonder if I can recall all that took place.

Local siren soon after midnight again and one or two explosions sufficiently near to rattle the windows as I hurriedly dressed. Reported at A.3 and was not there long when things livened up. First "doodle-bug" seen, came in low down almost due east to west; the searchlight screen seemed to be on the near side of him so that all that could be seen was the glare and glow of the propulsion unit. "Darkie" Smith's description as a "bonfire flying through the air" is very apt. Travelled at a good speed westward and disappeared behind the Town Hall. It cut out soon after and within seconds the Church windows rattled to the crash of the explosion. 'Phoned E.1 then and just missed the best (?) of the sight when a P.A.C. hit Tottenham Gas works smack on the largest gas-holder. Heard how many million cubic feet of gas went up, and could believe it in the dazzling glare and brilliant light that rose across the sky. Number three of the "near ones" came very soon after, this time much higher in the heavens and seemed almost to be coming up from behind the Church. First seen as a bright star, rushing ever nearer with the deep throated pulsing of the jet engine; then the searchlights caught him and he gleamed like a silver fish with a Chinese lantern in its tail as it tore across the sky going to the west. Should think he passed over somewhere between us and Sewardstone. By the sound he handed in Enfield somewhere. (Heard later that it was Enfield, in Ladysmith Road).

Quieter after that, so eventually went home to sleep. At 0445 another "wallop" came very near, followed at a long interval by the sound of the fire appliances going out. As that indicated a local job, I got up again and followed. Said to be at Mott Street, but in the "cold light of dawn", the Sewardstone Wardens said High Beech. Up Mott Street to High Beech, but all was quiet there. On then to E.1. where after a number of 'phone calls located the P.A.C. just over our boundary in the Loughton part of the Forest. What a sight as we drove through the Forest roads, rabbits all over the place; getting all worried at the sound of the car and rushing blindly away with white tails bobbing; zig-zagging crazily, and eventually diving headlong into the bushes. Rounded one corner and narrowly missed two full-grown deer standing aimlessly in the middle of the road. Total accumulated casualty roll for flying bombs is now 14,200 of which 3548 are fatal.

**Sunday July 24th 1944**

Again the siren sounded soon after midnight, followed by the three "near ones". The sound of the N.F.S. going out indicated that we had got something. Phoned Control and then D.2 and heard of damage in the "Volunteer" area. Quite a dark night when I got the car out and picked up Jess and Pop Warren from A.4. A "fatal casualty" in Honey Lane, when in the light of my headlamp I saw a "pussy" sitting in the road too late to take "avoiding action". On arrival at the "Volunteer" found the usual varied assortment of cars everywhere, and the usual stink of H/E, and the usual glass all over the roads. The "Woodbine" P.H. was in a mess with glass, broken bottles, "liquor" etc., all over the floor. Charlie Parish's house in a mess.

The remains of the jet propulsion unit lay alongside the road on the grass verge, just on the bend of the road round to Upshire. Walked along the Wood Green road towards Wylde Woods and Sudbury Farm and became acutely aware of an increasing smell! The same old earthy smell like stale mushrooms, the same old burnt H/E stink, but mixed up with it an overpowering odour of onions! On further investigation, it proved that the bomb had fallen in an onion bed, and onions and bits thereof were all over the place. Two casualties to be removed, and eight persons to be evacuated to the rest centre. N.F.S. vehicles arrived from all quarters, and got all over the place.

Arrived home at about 0200 hrs, but at 0500 another wallop fetched me out again, only to find that this time it was NOT ours!

**Monday July 25th 1944**

A bit earlier with the siren tonight, somewhere about 2330. Had not been at A.3 long when someone yelled "here he comes". Went out to the doorway, and saw him appear from the east, full, in the glare of a dozen searchlights. Body, wings and all glittered like silver and the flames from the exhaust stabbed in time to the deep throb of the engine. It hared across the sky to cut out way to the west and eventually exploded. Gussed that Goffs Oak was the recipient thereof! While watching that particular one, there was another yell to see one going east-west but right over in the north, so far over that only the exhaust could be seen like a red bright star above the horizon.

**Wednesday August 2nd 1944**

On "sleeping in" duty at A.3 again tonight. First siren about 2330 which lasted nearly 45 minutes and was punctuated by half a dozen or more distant explosions. Second alert about 0030 and lasted for many hours. A constant stream of doodle bugs way over towards London, but nothing whatever to see owing to low clouds, but a few flashes.

It's a tiring job, hanging about hour after weary hour, trying to fit a little sleep in somehow. Eventually it becomes impossible to remain awake, and one finds it easy to sleep on plain wooden forms, in deck-chairs (when they don't collapse as one did tonight) or even just sitting in a corner.



Training exercise



Mock evacuation - Greenfield Street





Gas Warning



Decontamination measures



Closing the street



L to R Mick Smith, Billy Francis and 'Pop' Warren  
debriefing in Sewardstone Street



PC 'Napper' Avis and Wardens Smith & Ellis at Pick Hill page 13



Listening in - Pynest Green page 13



Pynest Green UXB page 13



1000 kg Hermann recovered page 13



St. Leonards Road, Nazeing page 29



Incident Post at the Green Man page 28



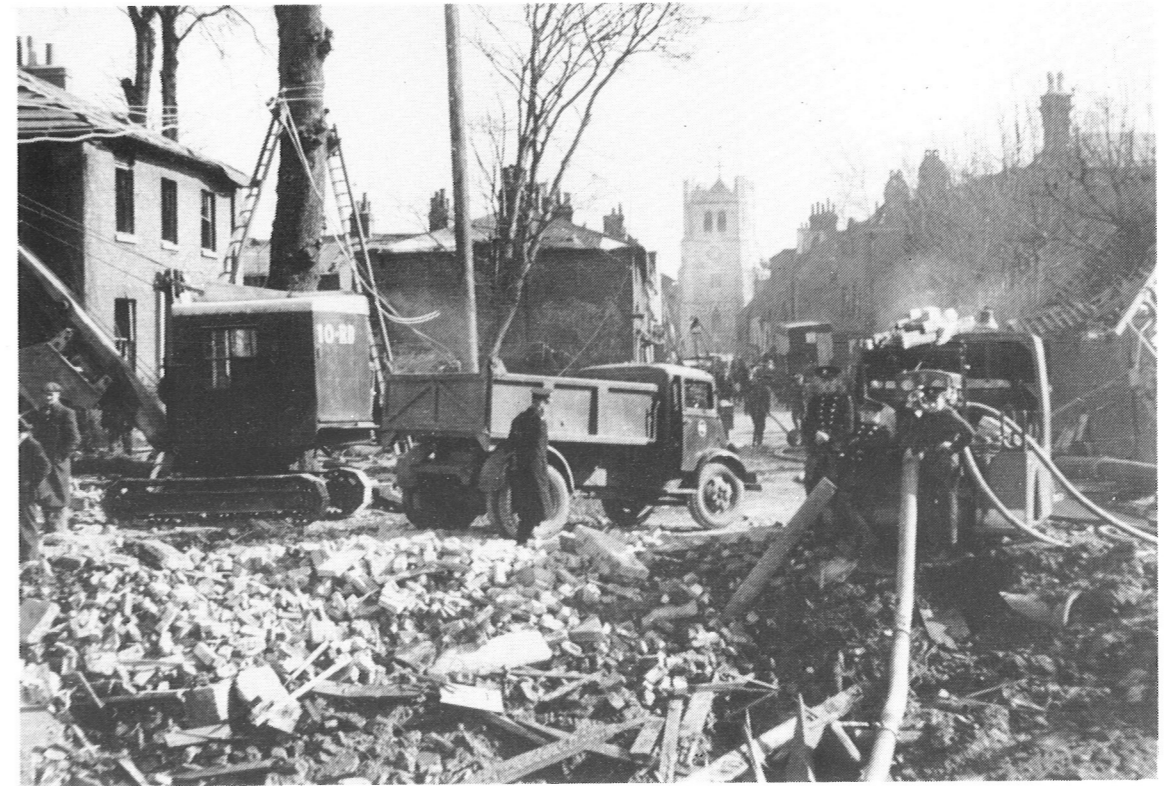
Tom Prior with incendiaries collected on his Sewardstone Nursery page 17



Jane Pomfrett, Clara Creagh, Kath Stewart, and at extreme right Bill Beanse at the Green Man Page 28



Clearing up at the Avey Lane Rocket Incident page 34



Highbridge Street - looking east page 40



Tail end of V2 Rocket (venturi) Fairmead Bottom page 31



Powder Mill Lane - Mobile Incident Control Post page 40



Highbridge Street - the water filled crater page 41



Highbridge Street - ruined factory page 42



Highbridge Street - the County Court page 41



Highbridge Street - the Ordnance Arms page 41



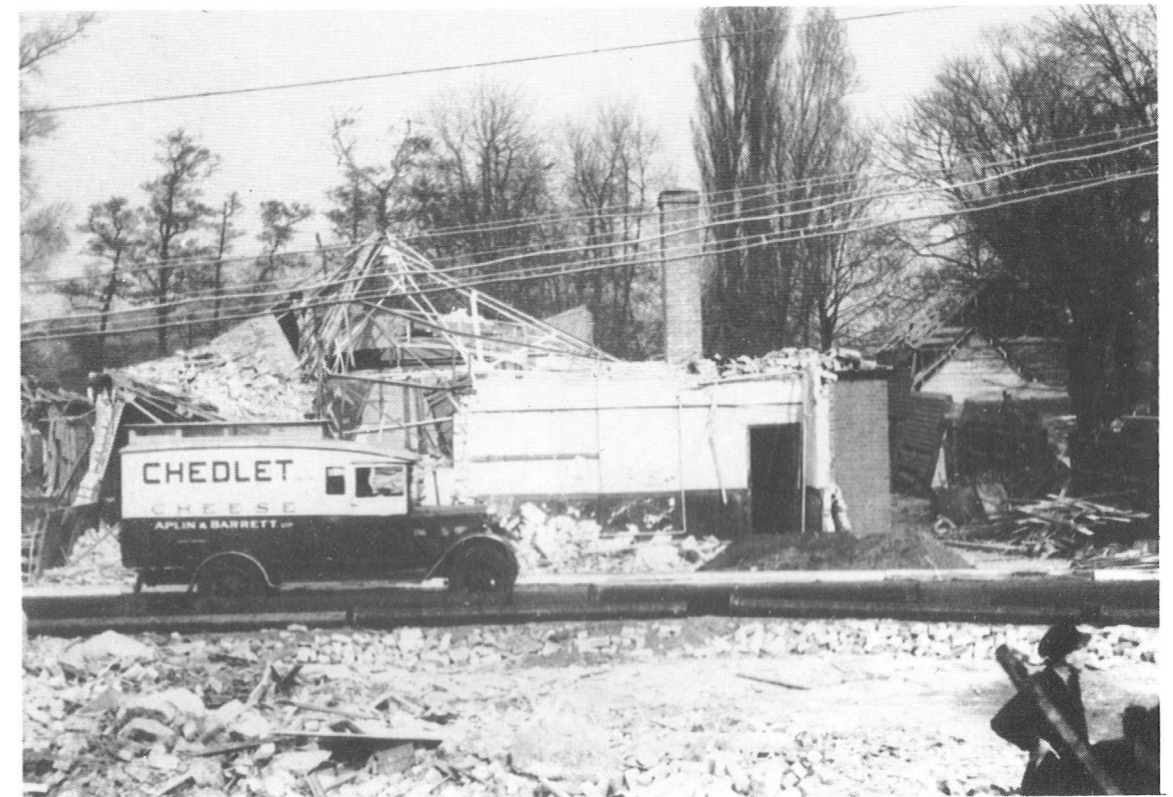
Highbridge Street - emergency repairs page 42



Highbridge Street - temporary roadway page 43



Highbridge Street - heavy machinery in use page 43



Highbridge Street - communications re-established page 43



Doris Gill being treated for minor injuries



Telephonist Mrs. Mason in the North Place Control Centre



Mick Smith with trophy



Control Centre Personnel  
 Back L to R Mr. Porter, Mrs. Bowring, Mr. Crocker, Mrs. Porter  
 Front L to R Peggy Avis, H.J. Chapman, Joyce Wiseman,  
 Archie Gomm, Mrs. Brown

Apparently London had a real bashing tonight in an attempt by Jerry to saturate the defences.

The PM in his speech today, tells us that about 5500 flying bombs have been launched against us, causing about 4000 fatal, and 14000 injured casualties.

#### Saturday August 5th 1944

A call from Control just before 0700 hrs this morning, reporting a suspected "fly" in Sewardstone or Chingford. Took Jess and Warren out and saw Warden Dear along by Albion Terrace, and he told me where it was. Went up the lane to Yardley Hill, and located the crater in a cornfield to the left, not far from Gilwell Farm. An assortment of scrap iron again, some quite hot. Jet propulsion unit buried in the crater this time, and round and near the edges some of the chisel edge wire cutter that Jerry is now fixing in the wings to sever balloon barrage cables.

While looking round the hole, heard a most awful bang which echoed and reverberated backwards and forwards between the hills. A crowd of 'planes going out when the explosion came, but few visible in the low clouds. On getting back to a 'phone I found that a Liberator had crashed and caught fire at Cheshunt, between Albury Ride and the Arterial Road. Seems that all the crew were killed, but not any civilians; only superficial damage but over a wide area.

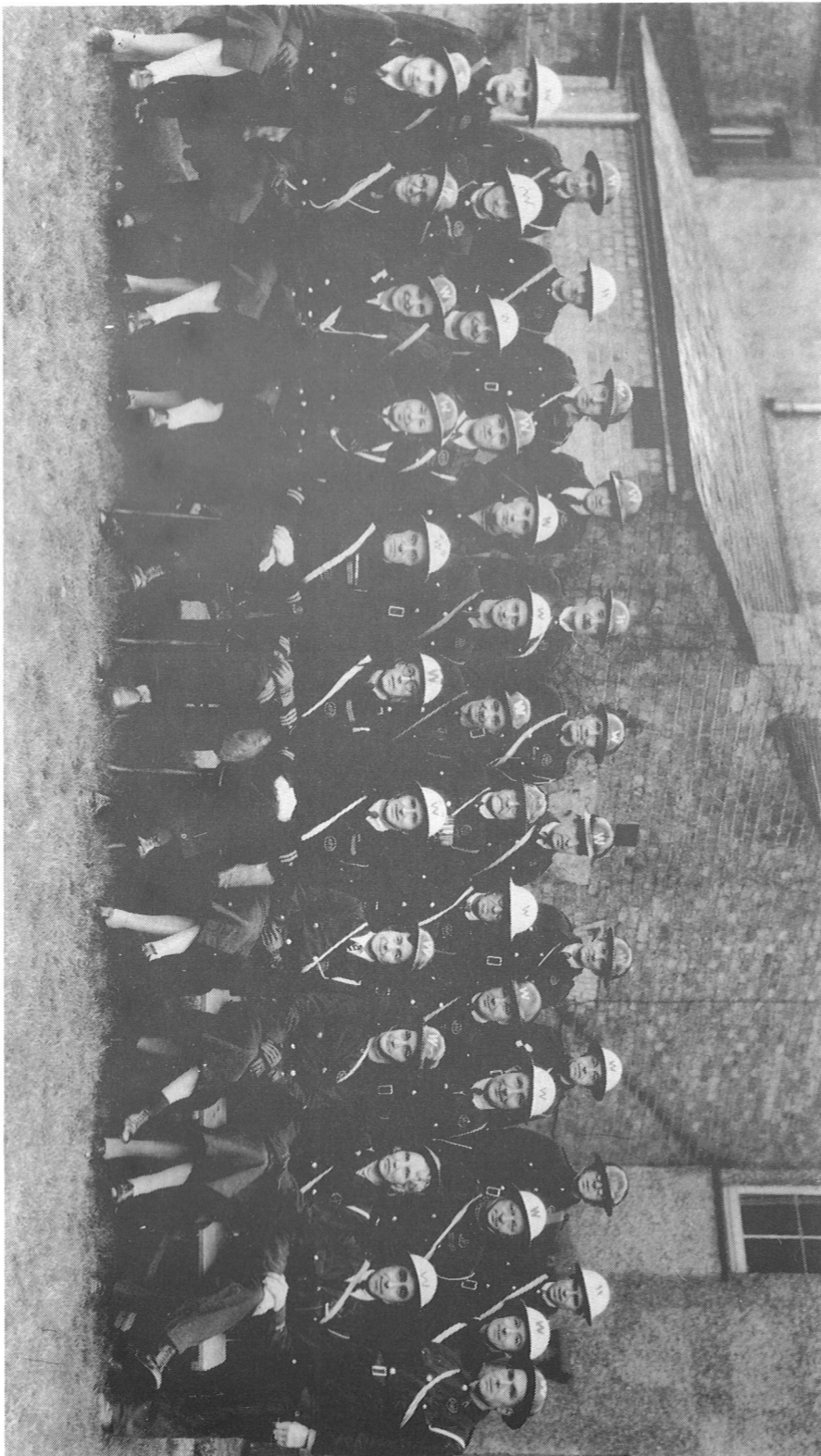
#### Monday August 14th 1944

Went on Church tower this evening to get some more dope for the spotters chart I am working on to help the N.F.S. locate the "flies". A most amazingly clear evening, out towards the S/W the dome of St. Pauls could be seen, the Savoy Cinema at Enfield a bit further west and nearer, and between the trees, the edge of King George Reservoir. Most amazing of all was the glimpse of the balloon barrage to the south and east of London. It seemed as though there were thousands in a cloud which extended for miles. they appeared to be very high.

On post duty later, for the night. At about 0200 hrs the siren roused us, and apart from a few bangs, the only excitement was one doodle bug not very far over, going westward with his bottom well alight.

#### Wednesday August 16th 1944

Siren at about 0935 this morning, so went to our roof-top with the kiddies and Mick Smith. Heard one getting nearer and nearer from the east, but could not see him as he was coming in out of the sun with the mist helping him to remain invisible. The mushroom cloud of brown smoke appeared some few seconds before the noise of the engine ceased and the explosion came with a vicious crack. My method of spotting gave the Wake Arms area, and a phone call to E.I. confirmed this. Took Mick, and Warren from A.4 and arrived on the scene close on the heels of the N.F.S. and long before our C/D



Wardens for the Urban District of Waltham Holy Cross

Back row:

Georgie Colgate, 'Wilkie' Windle, George Barnard, not known, Charlie Pierson, Albert Diprose, Robert Wood, Frank Bond, Walter Bird, Tom Prior, Bill Newton

Middle row:

'Wally' Mitchell, Charlie Parker, Ernie Bishop, Billy Francis, Horace Sainsbury, Archie Clark, not known, Mr. Thurley, Bill Beanse, Bill Leader, John Spurge, George Nielsen, Charlie Parrish, Harry Hawker

Front row:

Jane Pomfret, Jess Carter, Lily Welton, Edith Dutton, Mick Smith, Ted Carter, Ken Cuckow, Clara Creaght, Ruby Boyce, Iris Farnell, Horace Smith



services. Just to the right of the road at the top of Woodredon Hill almost opposite the keepers' cottages. Cable-cutter type again, and a fairly deep crater lined with the usual bits of fragmented metal. Mick found the remains of a clock mechanism which may possibly be connected with the delay-action self-destroying device. Minor damage to ceilings and windows in the Wake Arms area, but no casualties.

**Thursday August 17th 1944**

Today, at long last, I have seen a doodle-bug in daylight. A very good view too. After Rotary lunch I stayed behind to go to the Sports field in Albury Ride for a game of bowls. Soon after the game started the siren sounded, and not many minutes after someone (Charlie Baker I think) shouted "there he is". And there he was! Coming in straight and high from the south east. Looked just like a spitfire in the distance, but as he drew nearer and passed over, all the details could be seen, wings, tail jet-propulsion unit and all. Flames were stabbing out from his tail, against the dullish sky, and with his engine still booming he went into a gracefully sweeping curved dive to land behind the trees towards Goffs Oak. A few seconds after came the crump and a billowing mushroom of dark brown smoke. Afraid the game suffered rather in consequence of the interruption.

(Visiting the scene of the incident the following day, we found that it was Goffs Oak, right in the roadway itself, bringing down houses on both sides, and making an awful mess. Six persons were killed, and a number injured.

**Wednesday August 23rd 1944**

Visited Bomb Disposal training wing at Chelsea this evening to see the U.X. doodle-bug. Badly damaged by the crash, however, and not possible to find out much from it. General impression is of a roughly finished job, rather larger than one expects. Saw and handled one of the gyros quite a small affair only about 2½" across. The inner core of the gyro is quite heavy and has a number of portions cut away round its circumference (rather like a water wheel in effect) and is rotated by compressed air injected through the openings in the axle of the outer revolving portion.

There is a nasty bash on the flats just at the rear of the barracks. Got home just too late to see a few more flying bombs which appeared to go over in the Enfield direction.

Went on the roof to watch for doodles, but stayed to watch the sunset. A glorious flaming effect as the sun went down.

**Thursday August 24th 1944**

A terrible afternoon of pouring drenching rain that continued right into the night. Practically no visibility. An alert sounded in the early evening, and lasted for a very long time. When we had almost forgotten we were on "red", the bump came! The usual distant throb getting ever closer was absent, possibly on account of the rain, and the first we realised was a thunderous drumming

as the "bug" tore overhead, quite invisible in the thick rainclouds. When the cut-out came and was followed almost at once by the explosion, it seemed as though it was "in the next street" and windows and doors creaked protestingly. Then in a moment of silence soon after, the "all clear" sounded. Where was it? From the noise it had made, it seemed certain that it was "ours", but a number of enquiries failed to find it, except that its general direction was towards Waltham Cross. Eventually a telephone enquiry by Control located it in Holmwood Road, Enfield, near the "Gun and Magpie". In the pouring rain, I went over, Dave being very near there, and what an unholy mess! The bug had fallen in Holmwood Road, almost exactly on the houses on the righthand side, flanking the builder's yard.

A.R.P. vehicles, N.F.S. appliances, red lamped control cars, police, wardens, firemen, sightseers, all over the road. The roads and pavements a scrunching tinkling mass of broken glass, tiles, pieces of wood, corrugated iron, leaves, branches, and chunks of "doodle-bug". In the fading light, a broken gas main flared through the rain, hissing and sending little rivulets of fire along the ground. Wardens and firemen checked from house to house, water dripping from the helmets and coats. As each house was visited and the occupants found to be alright, a chalked "O.K." would appear on the wall.

An Anderson shelter, erected indoors leaned drunkenly sideways through the rubble of a smashed house that consisted only of a front door and half a passage way; gaunt tile-less rafters poked ugly bare fingers skywards, ambulances manouvered with difficulty along the debris strewn streets. From out of houses the occupants were already sweeping piles of broken glass and plaster, and here and there a casualty with blood stained bandages was carried out to a waiting ambulance. Dirt, muddle, a stink from leaking gas pipes, wet sodden leaves, the eerie light of the burning main, all combined to make a scene of tragedy in what had only a bare few minutes before been a quiet little side-street.

And it sticks in my mind, how the rain poured down against my glasses, distorting the scene and making it difficult to see.

The sirens wailed again before I left, but this time, all was quiet.

**Sunday August 27th 1944**

"Jerry" has broken a spell of 47 hours without flying bombs, this morning. It had been my turn at Post duty with Bill Newton, and at 0640 the sirens sounded again. The now familiar drone began faintly, and grew louder and louder till it became a thundering boom which seemed to come from all directions, and which made even solid brick walls to tremor and vibrate. In the early morning mist it was impossible to see, and I listened anxiously for the slight "revving-up" sound that precedes the cut-out. And then I saw him; at least I could only see a vague slight shape rushing through the mist, with a point of stabbing yellow flame that quickly vanished. He went right over in a N/W direction with the sound rapidly fading, and we waited in vain for the crash. Now, an odd thing has just occurred to me! It seems possible to hear the "bug" approaching for an appreciably longer time than when it is going away. In other words, while it is coming towards one, the distant sound seems to take quite a longish while to get louder and roar overhead but when it is going away the sound seems to die away much more rapidly.

30th August 1944

I see from official reports that flying bombs have up to date killed 5496 persons and seriously injured 16,628. Houses demolished number 22,762 and damaged 1,084,157.

Saturday 9th September 1944

So now what? Last evening at about 1845 hrs two large explosions heard, but apparently some distance off, though they shook doors and windows. In the garden picking apples when they occurred, and as it was somewhat overcast, I imagined the first one to be thunder so loud did it seem and so much did it rumble and echo. Mick Smith rang me up soon after to say that "something had gone off" over to the north east. This morning several yarns were current, and eventually a 'phone call to Parvills (Nazeing) located the explosion in the Epping Long Green area. The next thing I heard was that the N.F.S. had reinstated their Observation Post on the Church Tower, which had been taken off for the past week. Called at the A.R.P. Office and got Ellis to 'phone Epping Control who gave us the location at Rye Hill, and said that it "was something quite new".

Ellis took Mick and me out there, through Epping and Thornwood Common to a lane off to the west, and after crossing a ploughed field (meeting Capt. Martin the D.O.B.D. on the way, who wouldn't commit himself to what it was) found the crater in a small wood. At the scene of the incident we found Harris from Group 7, Smith the bomb recce man, and several others. Crater about 8' deep and 20' across and trees and shrubs all round just wiped out. No "large lumps" anywhere, but lots and lots of quite small fragments of metal. Some of the metal was of the alloy type found in the parachute mine, other was quite thin, and again other was thin sheet steel. There was a certain amount of heavy stuff resembling bomb casing, but not a lot of it.

Clearly not a "P.A.C." nor "Compo", nor ordinary bomb. Must be something out of the ordinary to attract all the "big noises". An odd feature is that no-one seems to have heard it coming. Smith told us that there was another at Chiswick. Its certainly a puzzle, and a bit disconcerting just as we had loosened up on Post manning etc.

Tuesday 12th September 1944

More of the "mysterious missiles" have fallen. Known locations are Rye Hill Epping, Magdalen Laver, Chiswick, Kew, Orpington and Dagenham. Went up, to see Bill Armstrong this evening, but not much information to be obtained. The missiles appear to be stratosphere-rocket-shells, possibly launched from Jutland or inside Germany itself. The terrific height and speed at which they travel makes them invisible and inaudible, and they apparently travel to earth considerably faster than their own sound. A rushing sound of their descent is said to be heard immediately after the explosion and merging with it to make a noise like thunder. Another possibility is that the explosive is contained within a liquid air jacket to prevent premature explosion during its passage through the air. Our intelligence seems to have slipped up as it had been authoritatively

stated that all launching sites had been destroyed. Size, shape, method of launching, method of propulsion, and everything else, is still not being divulged (even if known). The possible weight of explosive may be about equal to a two ton bomb.

Wednesday 13th September 1944

Went with Ellis to Dagenham this p.m. to see the effects of a "mysterious missile" among buildings. Not so bad as I had expected, and I thought not so bad as doodle-bug damage. School buildings wrecked and burnt and two brick built surface shelters completely demolished. They were not of the later reinforced type though. Damage to house property was fairly extensive (again not so extensive as flying-bomb), but not exceptionally severe. If these are the much vaunted V.2, the "Racketenflug", they are not so terrible in their effects as we had believed.

Thursday 14th September 1944

A loud explosion (another gas main!) at about 0500 hrs this morning. Fell at Walthamstow right alongside Group 7 HQ. Visited the scene this afternoon. Crater 25' deep filling with water from a broken main, right in the middle of the road. Gas and other services also affected. Transformer station on the left of the road (in the grounds of the new Town Hall) with walls sucked out and reinforced concrete roof curved down to the ground, all cracked and broken. Cranes and pneumatic drills worked on the broken concrete. An oval shaped crater, about 50' at its greatest length, and about 35' across. On the opposite side of the road from the transformer, a long shapeless heap of rubble and dust, was all that was left of a row of houses, - about eleven in all. Here and there an odd peice of wall stood dejectedly, and at one end a bedroom opened to the four winds retained its bed and bedding unmoved under its covering of dust.

The end house of the opposite row had had the whole of its side torn out, and inner walls pulled towards the bomb crater, windows leaned out into the roadway and a staircase led forlornly up to a wrecked bedroom.

Ross-Wyle estimated that about 20 houses will come down as a result of the missile. The extent of the damage is again not so great as flying-bomb, but much more violent at the scene of the incident. There is apparently greater penetration, and therefore greater earth movement.

Rescue and other workers were still hard at it, and cars of all sorts parked in the roads. The WVS mobile kitchen was doing great work. Visitors from all over the place had come to see the type of incident they might expect.

Tuesday 19th September 1944

Still no official instructions about V.2. No doubt remains that they are now being used over a fairly wide area of England. We reckon to hear at least one or two bangs during each day, all of them without any warning. I am told, however, that if one is

sufficiently near to the point of burst it is possible to hear a terrific swish just before impact. A very loud explosion took place last evening while up at the B.D.S. museum with Porter and Bill Armstrong.

I have just read a Press circular, which does definitely refer to the use of "rocket shells" by the enemy.

By the way - three (or possibly more) doodle-bugs came over last night, and weren't so very far away either! Didn't see anything myself, but I hear that they came in from the old direction.

#### Wednesday 20th September, 1944

A visit to Southend today, and by a set of fortunate circumstances, caught earlier trains and arrived home just in time to hear the sirens.

Although not officially on duty, went over to A.3 and signed on. One or two flashes presumed to be caused by doodle-bugs showed up to the south, and then ensued long silent lull. Getting weary with waiting for the "raiders past" when suddenly out of the east came the deep throbbing of a "late one". Running to the open ground at the rear of the Post I was just in time to see the "fiery tail" swing rapidly sideways and plunge headlong down against a pale white background of searchlights. It appeared to dive with engine full on, and then from behind the Church and trees rose a crimson red fan of light that wavered a second and was gone. Hard on its heels came a thumping crash which rattled and echoed, but somehow didn't seem so loud as expected. Then silence and anxious questions "where was it". I hazarded "Volunteer area" as it had appeared a fair way off as I watched it dive. D2 said "no, Honey Lane" and then as I phoned came the ringing and clatter as the N.F.S. turned out. Control said "Green Man area" and sending Francis to get the car ready, I collected another Warden and post-haste to the incident.

Dust and smoke still hung in the atmosphere, and lined along the road opposite Cobbins Brook were the vehicles picked out by their red rear lights.

Confusion reigned for a time, when it seemed that everyone was milling around in all directions. Converted my car into a control point and placed I/O lamp on top of it after turning into Eastbrook Road. Billie Francis took over as I/O and after a while things got sorted out, and I walked over the Recreation Ground to the crater. The bomb had fallen smack into Cobbins brook, bringing down a few tree branches, and damming the stream with clay, leaves and branches.

Houses along Honey Lane facing the Larsen Rec were in a sorry state and the damage extended in varying degrees up Eastbrook and Rounton Roads, Broomstickhall Road, Windmill Hill, Honey Lane, Ruskin Avenue, Patmore Road, and Tennyson Avenue. Rochford's Nursery suffered the loss of lots of glass.

All around was the tinkling of glass and the "smack" of tiles falling, and householders everywhere were busy sweeping glass and plaster into the roads. After the first few minutes, everything worked well, and the incident remained under control. The bomb fell at 2135 hours and by midnight all was nearly quiet again, and after

leaving Wardens to carry on during the night it was possible to get home to sleep.

#### Friday September 22nd 1944

Visiting the scene of the incident in daylight this morning, it was possible to get a better idea of what had happened. By great good fortune the fact of its falling into the brook itself, saved much damage, although about 400 houses are affected.

The siren howled again this evening at 2030 hrs, and two buzz-bombs came over almost together just as I got to the front door. In my haste I dropped my torch, and fumbled about in the darkness for it while the hammering throb of the engines sounded close overhead. Sounded too near to be pleasant, particularly with recollections of last night in my mind. Four came in all, one apparently from the north-east. Raid lasted just about half-an-hour.

#### Sunday November 12th 1944

At Service this morning, when at 1130 hrs a heavy explosion caused the north windows to creak. Thought it best to go and find out, so walked over to Control. Made numerous 'phone calls and ascertained that it was near Broxbourne 'drome in "St. Leonards Road". As St. Leonards Road is partly in our area, Mick Smith and I went over to see just where it was. We drove right round by the Nazeing school to approach the road from the north.

Numbers of people were congregating and on reaching the cross roads were told that we couldn't get down there as the road was blocked.

Leaving the car we walked the few hundred yards to the incident. Already large numbers of cars had arrived, including the N.F.S., and the Express Casualty Services.

With all the open fields nearby, the rocket had fallen in the one place where it could do most damage; clean in the middle of the road among the little community of houses there. As we walked to the scene, there came an impression of dirt and devastation, two gaunt chimney breasts pointing to the sky from mounds of rubble, where N.F.S., A.R.P. workers, and civilians worked, anxiously to trace casualties. Here and there rose the thin wisps of dirty smelling smoke from small fires caused by burning coals blown by the blast from the cottage fires. The crater yawned right across the road, huge boulders of clay mixed with pieces of the macadam surface, and here and there a lump of kerb stone. One side of the crater flamed from the escape of gas from the main which the explosion had shattered, while on the other side of the crater, a severed water main poured its contents into the gutters and the ditch.

There was no apparent control of the incident, and help obviously needed. Contacted Archer the local Warden, and through him, the Hoddesdon Controller, to offer assistance, and while Smith went off to help with the search for casualties, I went off to find a telephone to get help from Waltham Abbey. Succeeded in arranging for the Light and Heavy Rescue Parties to come (and later the Mobile

Canteen) and by arrangements with the Controller, walked down the road towards Waltham to meet them.

On the way, a forlorn little procession emerged from a badly wrecked bungalow; a mixed collection of bearers carrying a stretcher on which was a man, the blank greyness of his face indicating that he was beyond all help. A woman approached just then, and asked if there was anyone else in the bungalow, and on calling "anyone there" we heard a strange whimpering. By scrambling over broken furniture, and the remains of an outhouse, it was possible to get a look into the rear of the building, and there, on the floor a black spaniel cried in pain.

To our surprise, the Waltham mortuary van arrived on the scene, with Davies and Clarke, and after a word with me, reported to the Controller. Unfortunately there was work for them to do. Already four bodies had been found, and placed in a nearby cottage garden.

Waltham's services then arrived, and were soon at work on the incident, while I went off to find another job to do. The job I found was to help lead the mortuary van, and already the number of bodies had increased to six. One of them was a lad of about sixteen, and just as we were about to place him on the stretcher a young fellow of about eighteen arrived. He feared that it was his brother, and pulling back the blanket he took one look, and in a rather dry voice admitted that it was. What could one say to him? Sympathy would have broken him, and rather gruffly someone said "Pull yourself together chum". To add to his tragedy, he was still looking for his mother. We got all six on to the van, poor broken bodies; faces covered with dust and dirt, and hair tangled and matted with blood. One was a woman; one a man with one boot blown completely off, all of them unknown to me, and some still unidentified. They had laid there in the garden, with the dead and dying flowers of late Autumn around them, while just a few feet away a policeman sat on a box, and took charge, and counted the money and valuables brought over to him from the damaged buildings.

More and more services were arriving, and ambulances filling and departing. Helpful neighbours and A.R.P. workers brought out walking cases; faces white with shock under the dust of the explosion, thin trickles of blood running from cuts and scratches. Their world, in the midst of their preparations for their Sunday dinner, had suddenly vanished in a confusion of sound, dirt and violence, and they seemed rather pathetic and hopeless.

A stretcher is carried by, with a tiny child, not occupying one half of its length laid upon it; another is brought to the Ambulance with an elderly woman wrapped in blankets and wearing a large black hat at an awkward angle.

Mobile Canteens arrive, and begin their task of making endless cups of tea; piles of belongings, torn and dusty make their appearance, a broken lamp-shade, a bundle of old letters and photographs; spread in confusion are the dummy notes and counters of a game of "Monopoly". So it goes on.

A quick run home in the car to get something to eat, and to change into battledress, and on my return the Waltham Heavy Rescue are about to pull down a dangerous chimney stack. With a heavy rope round it, it sways backwards and forwards as the men heave on the rope, and with a crash of falling brickwork it suddenly heaves over to raise a cloud of choking dust and soot. I can't take photographs today, it is all too close and too tragic, and the very idea of it seems all wrong.

#### Monday 20th November, 1944

At about 20.50 hrs this evening another rocket exploded, and it was apparent from the noise that it was quite near. It seemed as if there were three distinct explosions followed by the usual rumbling. Rather difficult to locate at first, being given all sorts of directions ranging from north to south, but eventually Control informed me that Loughton had reported an "Aerial burst" somewhere over the Forest in their direction.

Just on 21.30 hrs when Control rang again to say that B.1 (High Beech Post) had reported an unexploded missile in the Fairmead Bottom Road, and "would I go and have a look at it". Arranged to pick up Mick Smith on the way, and drove out in the darkness to Webster's near High Beech Church. Webster drove us down to the Fairmead Road in his car, and a short walk of about a hundred yards brought us to the "object". It was absolutely as if H.G.Well's story of the "War of the Worlds" had come true, and here was a missile from Mars! In the dim light of our torches we could make out that its apparent length was about six feet with more out of sight where it was buried in the earth at the side of the roadway. One end was open and funnel shaped, and tapered slightly to a "waist", then it bulged out again to a sphere about 3' 6" in diameter and finally seemed to straighten out where it disappeared under the soil.

A few inches from the open end a bulge surrounded the entire circumference, and from it protruded six short vents rather like the exhaust pipes of a racing motor cycle, cut off short. From the spherical portion several pipes about one inch in diameter led back towards the funnel shaped open end. Just within the open end a line of open holes, very tiny, encircled the inner skin of the case, and from them towards the end were stains and marks as if a liquid had poured out. Down in the sphere were lumps of broken mechanism, and by sliding down half inside the thing we were able to reach them. Although it was over an hour since the missile fell, the metal was too hot to touch with the bare hand, and the heat inside almost overpowering.

We found one portion which was marked in English "Made in Germany" and also marked in French "Fabrique en Allemande". Had to wait about up there until the Police could arrive, and take charge of it so that there was no interference and no hindrance to traffic, and then home to bed at about 00.30 hrs the next morning.

Seem to have "debunked" the idea of portions of rocket being found with "frost" on them. Apparently large quantities of glass wool are used for insulating purposes, and this does closely resemble hoar frost.

#### Friday, 24th November, 1944

The loud explosion of a rocket at about 0800 hrs this morning made doors and windows rattle, and it was so loud that it was obviously "ours".

Reports gave it as an "aerial burst" over towards Holyfield, so with Smith, Francis and Colgate I went out there. Walked through Holyfield Hall Farm to the fields beyond and towards Langridge Farm, and found numerous parts strewn over the countryside. Men working at the gravel pits stated that a good deal had fallen into the water, and we found also that Cheshunt had received its share. Apparently it had

burst in the air above, and somewhat to the north-west of Holyfield Hall Farm.

Friday, 1st December, 1944

Another aerial burst at 0800 this morning. This time over Brimsdown/Sewardstone area, and metal strewn as far away as Enfield West on the one hand and High Beech on the other.

Wednesday, 27th December, 1944

The first rocket to be indisputably Waltham Abbey's fell this morning at about 0500. The now familiar double explosion roused me, but heard no services going out although it had seemed fairly close. Control later informed me that it was somewhere at Lippits Hill High Beech, and arrangements were made for a search party of Wardens to go out.

Located it near the rear of the Owl P.H. where superficial damage had been done to all the nearby houses, etc. A beastly morning of fog and frost with poor visibility. One large crater caused by the explosion of the war-head and two small ones where large pieces of mechanism had fallen. My theory was that the excessive cold arising from the ground frost caused the rocket, suddenly arriving from the stratosphere and being very hot, to burst (not explode). Or rather that the fuel tanks had burst and caused the disintegration (rather than shattering) of the main part of the rocket, as the fragments recovered were quite large and to a certain extent, intact. The war-head remaining in one piece, continued its journey and exploded on impact causing a crater about 25' x 15'.

Some of the parts recovered were interesting and included the peroxide tank, the permanganate tank, parts of the turbine and rotary pumps, several electric hydraulic motors, compressed air bottles, combustion chamber, etc.

The workmanship of the electric motors and the attached gear was excellent, and caused amazement at the quality of the work put into such unreliable weapons.

Tuesday, 2nd January, 1945

At 0920 hrs this morning a shattering explosion heralded the arrival of a Rocket, followed quickly by the usual second explosion and the long reverberation. It was obviously the nearest we've had so far, and I thought it just about at the back of the Church.

Phoned Control and was told "Swanfield Road, Waltham Cross". Took Francis and Windle up, visualising streets of collapsed houses. Swanfield Road alright, but not so the Brush Factory of Chadwick and Shapcott (at one time the timber yard of King and Scarborough's). It had fallen right on the boiler house and coal dump of this factory, and the majority of the buildings being only timber structures, complete wreckage had resulted. Fire was raging round the remains of the boiler house, where firemen, rescue workers and soldiers, tugged and heaved at the wreckage.

Helped load a stretcher on an Ambulance; some poor fellow with a face a mass of blood and black dirt, so far gone he could not

tell us his name or address. Casualties everywhere, cuts, bruises, blood and dirt.

Standing upon a box a woman clerk, herself cut and bleeding and dirty, called the roll and ticked off the names as the folk answered.

Round the entrance gates gathered the relatives anxious to know of their folk. Ambulances, Fire Appliances, Police, Wardens, milling around in the road. Road eventually closed and traffic diverted round York Road and into Swanfield Road.

The biggest, dirtiest incident I've been on so far; hear that casualties amount to five killed, and about 85 injured. Later figures gave 7 killed and 108 injured.

Monday, 8th January, 1945

At about 1120 this morning there sounded the usual wallop of a rocket, but it sounded so far off as to be nothing to do with Waltham Abbey. However, about half an hour later the N.F.S. went out, and enquiries elicited the reply "Duke of Wellington" High Beech.

Took one or two wardens and found on investigation that it was in the Forest about 100 yards to the rear of High Beech Church. Quite a large crater and all the silver birch trees torn and broken.

All the nearby houses with windows out and ceilings, etc., cracked, and a number of tiles off the roof of High Beech Church. The Church windows were all gone, and large patches of plaster were strewn over the aisles.

Sunday, 14th January, 1945

A succession of rockets all day today, some loud, others not so loud. Thought one at 1415 was not far away and turned out to be at Wormley Woods. Went on to the roof to see if I could spot any smoke, but nothing to be seen.

At about 1530 another even louder wallop sounded, and once more going to the roof saw the column of smoke rising from the Cheshunt area.

Told Control, and then watching out of the front window, saw Mr. Windle who told me that our Light Rescue had gone. Decided that if our services were moving, I would move too, so got the car out and went with Windle to Control. Found Mrs. Bird (telephonist) in a stew as she had just heard that the location was College Road and that her flat had been badly damaged.

On arriving there, found cars and other vehicles all over the place and large "Sunday afternoon" crowds of sightseers. Mrs. Bird's flat was certainly in a mess; in fact it was wrecked. Before I could get up the stairs, to which there was no front door, we had to remove loose debris, and then found that the stairs were without support on one side. Safe to traverse, however, and a dismal sight was at the top. Every room of the flat was confusion, dust, dirt, broken glass, and smashed furniture. Poor Mrs. B dissolved into tears, and no wonder. Actually the rocket had fallen in Bury Green Road, only about 50 yards from the flat.

Walls were levelled, the crater was rapidly filling from a broken main, and a terrific smell of gas indicated gas mains gone as well. The damage was concentrated around the junction of Cromwell Avenue, and College Road, and while no houses were absolutely flat, yet some were in a very bad shape. There did not appear to be an unusually large number of casualties, and as there were plenty of vehicles, and plenty of help, we returned after I had managed to get a couple of photographs.

#### Thursday, 23rd January, 1945

Still the "bumps" go on. While working in the box-room this morning a very loud one sounded, and this time we could hear the rushing noise for a second or two before the explosion. Reported as an aerial burst, and fragments were spread over the area between the Volunteer P.H. and the Upshire district. Found the venturi near the Volunteer, and the turbine motor in the next field. I must admit to being wrong about the "frost" being found on fragments. The turbine motor was literally covered with artificial frost, created by the sudden vaporising of the liquid oxygen.

Awful driving on the snow-bound glassy roads, and ploughing through the deep snow over the fields.

#### Wednesday, 24th January, 1945

More bumps. A real snorter just a few minutes after 0900 hrs, but as telephone wires were affected, and visibility very bad owing to fog and frost, took some little time to locate. Found eventually in a field off the Sewardstone Road just opposite Avey Lane. A large crater with lumps of earth thrown everywhere. Pieces of earth thrown on to the main road had frozen there in a short time, and needed hard work to shovel them off. the cottage at the end of Avey Lane was somewhat wrecked, with damage to nurseries, etc., nearby.

Came back from that one, and then went to Woodredon Farm to inspect "portions" found there. Nothing outstanding, but brought back one or two pieces. Had a skid and a smash into another car coming from the farm to the top of Woodredon Hill. Roads were hopeless again, and brakes had no effect whatever.

Shortly after, another terrific wallop, and in due course the N.F.S. reported it as at Gilwell Park. A trip there with a couple of Wardens, and found no rocket, but only large numbers of fire appliances. 'Phoning from G.1 Post to Control, found that it was Cambridge Arterial Road, right smack in the Crematorium grounds.

Then after dinner, Group 7 rang me up to take on the job of "official photographer", and go over to Wanstead! Visibility too awful, so put the trip off till tomorrow.

#### Thursday, 25th January, 1945

Went over to Woodford this morning to Cowslip Road (just off the Southen Arterial Road near the "Roundabout" (P.H.)). A shocking mess, with twenty-eight houses completely destroyed. Casualty roll about 20 fatal and about the same number seriously injured.

#### Monday, 29th January, 1945

Waltham Abbey got another this morning. About 0630 hrs the crash came, and located after a while on the Common at the end of Rounton Road. Still a hard frost everywhere, with thick snow, and a brilliant full moon. Extensive damage to house property in Rounton and Eastbrook Roads, Honey Lane, Broomstickhall Road, Paternoster Close, etc., but only one slight casualty.

Walking over the snow covered common to the crater, the effect was quite unusual. The ugly boulders of the "pile-up" stood out black against the snow and the moonlit sky-line. All round spread the dirty patch of burnt earth. From the depths of the crater (about 50 feet across) rose a steamy smoke, caused by the fact that the temperature of the lower earth was greater than the surrounding air), and coupled with the earthy-burnt-explosive smell that one always gets, somehow reminded me of the "mouth of Hell". Not that I've ever seen that delectable spot.

#### Wednesday, 31st January, 1945

Another "Group" job today, after having been twice postponed on account of awful weather.

Visited Grosvenor Road, and Neville Road, East Ham, and then on to Priory Road West Ham.

In the first incident a couple of rows of terrace houses and a school were involved (twenty-five killed here). Complete devastation where the rocket fell, and out of the spread of ruin, half a dozen Anderson shelters sprouted from the back gardens like ugly mushrooms.

Next one was in the main street, and shops, a cinema and a Church were involved. Huge girders lay around, some having been cut through by the oxy-acetylene apparatus, while in one ruin that was once a house, a very battered piano stuck out at an angle. Four killed.

Last one to be visited was right alongside the West Ham Football ground. Poor miserable, dirty little houses that had vanished in a sea of rubble. Twenty-nine killed, and over one hundred injured here, and not all the bodies recovered yet. Squads still worked on it, aided by a mobile crane. Small factories were involved, and here and there among the household wreckage, lay bits of machinery and tools. In the grounds of the Football Club, a dozen or more 'buses and green-line coaches stood with windows shattered, and bonnets torn off. A short little soldier of the Marines, grubbing about the wreckage of one of the houses, asked that something should be done about a dangerously leaning chimney breast, six of his relatives had been killed, while another tottery old fellow wondered where he could get a tarpaulin to cover his stripped roof.

Calling at the A.R.P. Headquarters a little later, a pathetic couple of women were identifying a few brick-dust covered handbags that had been found.

Thursday, 1st February, 1945

A 'phone call from Brewer at Group this morning, with the promise of a "hot" one. Took cameras, etc., and went to Walthamstow and then on to West Ham. Rocket had fallen in the area of small houses at the rear of the Town Hall and Police Station, not far from Stratford Market. The crater was in the middle of the roads, with the usual devastation all around. Small houses had vanished in a heap of brick dust and rubble, in which Rescue workers were digging for unrecovered casualties.

Householders were bravely clearing away glass and plaster from dreadfully damaged homes, homes that could only be pulled down and never repaired.

The searcher dogs arrived and were set to work to look for two women that were still under the wreckage, while everyone was cleared from the site except the dog's trainers (and myself - as photographer!) They found nothing while I was there, but both showed some excitement at one particular place.

Protruding from one side of the wreckage were a couple of rabbit hutches, and amid the dust and dirt, one "bunny" sat there quietly with his nose twitching.

Friday, 2nd February, 1945

Another sudden call to East Ham this afternoon, near the Town Hall there. Rocket had dropped at the rear of houses in Navarre Road, completely clearing three sides of a square block of homes. Everything and everybody was covered in red brick dust blown up by the eddying wind, and the houses on the side of the road opposite to the crater were split and shattered and seemed to lean away back from the force of the explosion.

Digging was still going on, and floodlights being erected so that work could continue after dark. Found an upstairs room where the whole front had been blown out which gave me a good field for taking the necessary "shots".

Saturday, 3rd February, 1945

Calling in Control Centre this morning, and loud explosion disturbed the peace at about 1135. 'Phones started to ring almost immediately with reports of damage at High Beech. Located the crater in the Forest opposite the Suntrap in Church Road. Huge trees were torn and uprooted, and one big branch of a beech tree dripped sap like a fractured water pipe where the explosion had torn it apart.

Only two slight casualties, but damage to houses, etc., all around Lippitts Hill.

Monday, 5th February, 1945

Listening to the 9 o'clock news this evening, when the wallop came. Fire engines going past indicated that it was "ours" and damage was reported in New Road. Rocket had fallen in Nursery ground at the rear of the Council Estate in the New Road. Three minor cases of cuts, and damage to windows, ceilings, etc., to all the nearby houses.

Wednesday, 7th February, 1945

Visited Endlebury Road, Chingford, and Snakes Lane, Woodford this morning to take Group photos. Chingford a nasty job, with several houses completely gone, and others so smashed and cracked as to be standing only with difficulty. Nothing much at Woodford, except a rather interesting wrecked Church.

Quietly typing in my office in the afternoon, when at 1555, an awful crack shook everything. Did not hear anything coming, although others did. Could see from the half-landing window, a great cloud of black smoke just beyond the houses towards the end of Sewardstone Street, so without waiting to telephone for location, got the car out and managed to beat the Fire Brigades to it! Went down Sun Street something like a Fire engine myself, with all the folk standing outside their shops with that obvious air of "something has happened". Up the Sewardstone Road, still ahead of the Fire Brigade, to the R.G.P.F. in Quinton Hill. A dense cloud of brown acid fumes was drifting heavily along, and it was obvious where the rocket had fallen.

Crowds of people and vehicles gathered rapidly, and without waiting for permission, I went straight in the factory gates. Found Arthur Jest there, and went right on to the scene of the damage. The rocket had just missed a "danger Building" containing some tons of H/E, and I wondered what the result would have been if it had not missed it! My face stung and pricked with the acid fumes still hanging in the air, and then I realised that I had gaily walked right into the Gunpowder Factory with cigarettes and matches in one pocket and a camera in the other! Luckily nobody thought to ask me if I had any "contraband" in my pockets!

Only three minor casualties, all dealt with by the Factory F.A.P. Extensive damage, though not serious, through Beechfield Walk, Denny Avenue, Woollard Street, Greenfield Street, Victoria Villas, Sewardstone Street, and here and there windows out in other parts of the Town.

One way and another, the last two weeks have been fairly busy!

Thursday, 8th February, 1945

Rocket in the Chingford Road this morning, in the region of Rowden Road etc. Called there in the afternoon at the request of Group to take the usual photographs. A big incident, and a nasty mess. Large crater in the road filled with water from fractured mains, trolley bus system out of order and buses diverted. About eight houses on each side of the road completely demolished, and no sign whatever of the public surface shelter which had received a direct hit.

Friday 9th February 1945

Ley Street, Ilford, today. L.R.R. on a garage right alongside the railway not many yards from Ilford Station. Cinema on the opposite side of the road with all its air purification plant in the roof exposed to the public gaze, and dangerous cracks right down the side wall. A garage occupied by the N.F.S. and a couple of small factories were simply tangles of twisted girders, while inside the garage lay a hopeless jumble of smashed motor cars and machinery.

Some little cottage property nearby had dissolved into heaps of brick rubble.

#### Saturday 10th February, 1945

Two incidents this afternoon. One at Silvertown, and the other at Leytonstone.

Took the family for a ride, and had to follow Harris's car through the maze of streets via West Ham to the docks. Bumped and jolted over the dockside roads, passing some big areas of damage on the way, many of them going right back to the 1940/41 blitz days. Reached at length the scene of the incident, where by amazing fortune, the rocket had landed smack on the bascule bridge carrying the main road over the entrance to the King George V dock. Gigantic lumps of concrete lay around, and the massively thick wrought iron of the bridge was all twisted and buckled. The rocket had demolished the power house beneath the bridge, killing three persons, and had lifted the end of the bridge itself right out of the concrete seating.

Many large vessels were in the dock and as the keen north wind whipped the great expanse of water into small waves, I wondered what the penalty was for taking photographs in such a prohibited area.

The Leytonstone job seemed tame afterwards, although it was pretty grim, with several houses demolished, and rescue workers still searching in one building for an unrecovered casualty.

#### Wednesday 14th February, 1945

A call to Queen Street West Ham (just off Maryland Point) this morning. More very old property, of the maisonette type, where the force of the explosion had crumbled bricks and mortar into a dust. Said to be about twenty or more houses completely demolished, but the whole area was such a "wipe-out" that it was most difficult to estimate just how many had gone.

A mobile crane was being used to shift the tons of debris, while large numbers of Rescue parties were still at work. Thirty people killed, and about eight more still missing. Just as I arrived, one of the bodies, a man, was found and brought out. Looked almost like a dummy, still and unnatural in its pose, and covered with a thick film of brick dust. One arm was raised over its face as though to protect it; he was placed on a stretcher and lumps of sacking dragged out of the nearby wreckage, used to cover him up.

A touch of unreality was provided by the rather crude mural paintings on the wall of a downstairs room, the blast had torn away the rear wall, and left the pictures exposed.

What an awful mess these rockets make in old built-up areas.

#### Monday 19th February, 1945

Another one for Waltham Abbey this morning at 0725 but fortunately out in the Forest. Three quite loud explosions between 0700 and 0800, and the middle one was ours. Fog very thick, but found two Wardens, Colgate and Warren, and drove through the Forest to Fairmead

Road. L.R.R. had fallen on the grass verge beside the road, about 200 yards north of Palmers Bridge. Road was completely blocked by clay, and the small stream at the side of the road was gaily flowing into the crater.

At 1600 hours in the afternoon Group rang me to go to Walthamstow. A very nasty incident in Blackhorse Lane, involving a Factory and a number of small houses. Gas main broken and alight, scores of rescue men man-handling the debris in their search for casualties. Mobile crane already at work, field telephone installed, the searcher dogs standing by, and in fact all the hundred and one things that go to make up a big incident. Said to be about 17 dead, and up to 20 still missing for whom search was going on. Located one, still alive, while I was there, and immediate shouts were made for cups of tea and the doctor. Thought the incident was being very well organised and handled.

#### Tuesday 20th February 1945

Having my after-dinner cigarette in the comfort of the armchair when at 1330 hours, the whole house seemed to tremble and shiver. For the moment could not think what it was, and then of course the bang came. Another L.R.R. Going upstairs could see the column of black smoke rising as though at the end of Monkswood Avenue, or towards Crooked Mile. Got the car out without waiting to telephone Control, and then got held up by slow traffic in Sun Street. Direction was obviously towards Broomstickhall Road, and picked up all the Wardens available at A.4. Found Francis with I/O Post established at A.6 Rocket in second field on left up Galley Hill Road, with three minor casualties, and superficial damage over a fairly wide area. Nursery property caught it again.

Another call from Group just after to go to Ilford. "Ilford Ltd." the photographic manufacturers had caught it right on the boiler house, with an amazing muddle of dirt, dust, bricks, iron girders, bent pipes and over all a horrible chemical smell. House property nearby in a bad state, with the party walls still standing in the majority of cases (being "end-on" to the blast effect). Three fatal casualties.

This thing is getting somewhat monotonous, as witness the lack of variety I seem to get in my notes!

#### Monday 5th March 1945

Mr. Churchill has said that "War is full of surprises - mostly unpleasant", and I'm inclined to agree. After all these many weeks, the sirens have been sounding with some frequency over the week-end. First one was in the early hours of Saturday morning (3rd March), and within ten minutes of the all-clear, a sudden crash announced the arrival of a nearby rocket. Returned home to bed but had not been there long when again the sirens sounded. A distant bump apparently caused by a flying-bomb.

To everyone's astonishment, the siren went again at 14.00 hours in the afternoon! Then came the sound of the doodle, apparently coming from the east, but in spite of the fact that it was broad daylight, we just could not see him. It was a bit cloudy and hazy, and he must have been flying rather high.



Going out to the Wake Arms in the later afternoon to confirm or otherwise, that the Rocket was in our area, when again the sirens went. Found that the L.R.R. was just our side of the boundary, and stayed at E.1 till the all clear sounded.

Siren again during Saturday/Sunday night, then again at 11.00 hours on Sunday morning, with a repetition at 12.00 hours. Just about 12.00 hours there was a bang from the North which was apparently another doodle. Yet another alert at 20.15 hours, but nothing to be heard.

By this morning, papers and radio are talking of the matter, and apparently piloted planes had been over as well!

Two more sirens during the morning, the second just after midday. Almost immediately the familiar thrumming engine sound was heard, and number one came in from east to west. He was very high, and I did not spot him (by hanging out of the A.R.P. Office window) until he was well over to the west and quite a small "blob in the sky. Number two was close on his heels, and this time I got a fine view from the A.R.P. Office yard. To me it seemed that he was flying faster and higher than during last Summer's attack, but the engine note was just as loud. Perhaps the reports from "neutral sources" that Jerry has improved on his V.I.s are correct.

If we get a combination of rockets, flying bombs, and ordinary bombers things will become somewhat hectic.

#### Wednesday, 7th March, 1945

On the telephone to Mick Smith about 5.00 p.m. this afternoon, discussing the Mobile Incident Control Post, when it happened! Without any warning a sudden awful shattering crash, that seemed to leave one stunned in a whirl of sound, and the 'phone went dead.

Out into the yard to get the car out, and a huge pall of black smoke was rising up just over to the westward while the air seemed thick with smell and dust. Stable doors jammed to begin with, broken glass strewn down the yard to the side gate, but getting out into the road, people were already running towards Highbridge Street.

Just ahead, apparently alongside the Home Guard drill hall, a dusty cloud was beginning to settle, while just to the left of the road, a column of broken flame shot up into the air.

Wardens were already on the spot and had established a Control Point at the top of Powder Mill Lane, traffic was being stopped by Bill Beanse at the top of the Romeland, glass, dirt and broken wood and tiles were all over the road. Already casualties were coming out, here was a man with a blood streaked face, over on the pavement opposite a woman sat and screamed with blood streaming from a number of cuts, and first-aiders rapidly putting on bandages.

After rigging up the blue I/O flag, and setting some of the rapidly arriving additional Wardens on to various jobs, I went and had a look at the damage. The column of flame came from a small car which, tangled and twisted stood just in front of the torn and heaped roadway where the crater had been formed.

Five and a half years of war, and Waltham Abbey gets a real packet, right in the one spot where it had always been dreaded. Our one and only main road, and link, was hit fair and square where it would hurt most. The crater stretched right across the road and beyond, taking into itself all the front of the Drill Hall on one side, and the fronts of the houses, on the other. Wardens Post A.2 had vanished completely, and the approximate position even could not be guessed under the piled up heap of rubble and dirt from the explosion. Gas mains were gone, all telephone communication through Waltham Cross Exchange, water pipes were severed, and the sewage pumping system for the western end of the Town affected. So terrific had been the flow of water from the broken mains that the crater, itself 75' in diameter, and probably at least half that in depth, was flooded to a level above that of the adjoining road. Here and there through the piled up earth of the crater lip, the water was seeping, flowing through the bricks and the rubble to form rapid little streams in the roadway.

This was going to make a difference in Highbridge Street; The County Court looked pretty grim, as also did the Almshouses. The next little block of property, from the Ordnance Arms eastwards to the Wardens Post was either completely wrecked or had vanished in a heap of debris. Across the water-filled crater the whole front of the Home Guard Drill Hall had collapsed in a heap of bricks and girders, while the other smaller huts in the same yard had become shapeless heaps of timber. The two large houses which stood on either side of the Drill Hall, were only open shells, with doors, ceilings, windows and frames, stairways, smashed into rubble.

Cheshunt A.R.P. Services came in quickly from the other side, and established a secondary Incident Officers Control point on the west side of the incident. Harris and Potter arrived from Group, followed shortly afterwards by the van with the searcher dogs.

Our new Control room was out of action as all telephone lines westward were gone completely, and shadow control in the Abbey crypt had to function as best it could on its Silverthorn and Loughton lines. The N.F.S. ran out emergency field telephones to link up Control Centre, with the Incident Officers Post on the east side of the incident where the mobile van had been sent and set up. Later, another extension line was run out to connect the east and west Incident Officers Posts.

The bodies of 2 children had been found by this time, and I watched the searcher dog looking for a third. With its trainer it sat crouched and tense on a heap of rubble, and giving it an encouraging pat the trainer led it off, and work started again.

Back at the east control point a lad came up with a report that a mans leg had been seen on the Town Mead, so taking the car and a couple of wardens I went to search. As we searched I half dreaded finding anything, but when we did, it wasn't so bad as I had expected. First there was a leg, with the foot complete and uninjured but the larger bones toward the knee showing horribly between the mangled flesh. A moment or two later another foot was found, with the shoe completely missing. Further search revealed pieces of a car, so we included in our collection a piece of a tyre and the brake and clutch pedals with the idea that it might be possible to identify the type of car. Then we heard that part of the engine was also available, and getting Frank Bond to inspect it, established the fact that it was a Bedford Lorry. Reporting the facts to the Inquiry Point (which the W.V.S. had set up in St.Kildas) and at Control, it was stated that Moss had been enquiring about one of his lorries which had been loading at Whitmetal Smelting Works (also severely damaged) at the time, and was now missing. The driver was a man named Ellis, and it appeared definite that this established identification. The third child's body was recovered, making the total of deaths four, and injured fifty-three.

With the approach of dark, acetylene lamps appeared on the scene, followed by a searchlight mounted on a lorry. In the strange light of the lamps work went on, as it was thought that one small child was still unaccounted for. It looked unreal in the purplish-white light of the searchlight and the redder glow of the portable lamps, while rescue men scrambled and shovelled at the dusty brickwork. Temporary "bridges" over the tangled debris of the road had been made by throwing down planks and timber beams, but an unwary step meant not only a twisted ankle but a bootful of wet sloppy mud.

After a number of telephone calls, we found that the missing child was alright, Chase Farm Hospital had got a small casualty, and after talking with the ward sister I found that it was the child we were wondering about. This meant that rescue work could stop for the night, and slowly things began to quieten down. Wardens were sent home to rest and report back at daylight; the searchlight went out and returned to Palmers Green; reinforcing casualty services sent by Group were dismissed; red and white lamps were put out to mark the obstructions and to indicate a pathway round the crater; the many members of the public drifted away, and the first hectic hours were over.

Incident Control points remained manned at both sides of the incident, and everything was dark and quiet. Dark except for the lamps which had been used, as all the street lamps were out, and quiet except for an occasional bang and rumble as distant rockets landed somewhere else.

With the dawn of the next morning, the incident came to life again; repair gangs came in from every direction, naval working parties arrived in charabancs, until Highbridge Street was busier than it had ever been before in all its long history, and cars and lorries jostled and bumped each other as they came and went.

As there was no gas anywhere, cooking was going to be a difficulty and arrangements had to be made to feed very nearly the whole Town. Cheshunt helped, so did Chigwell, meals were supplied in the Town Hall, and also out in the Hamlets, mobile Canteens did a roaring trade all day long.

About midday the Rescue party proceeded to demolish the Ordnance Arms, which, with a steel hawser round it collapsed into a heap of rubble in the middle of the road, throwing up a choking cloud of dust. Repair gangs from the Gas Company, the telephone people, and the Electric Company, started to dig their many little holes, and proceed to "put Waltham on the map again". Temporary telephone lines were run over the top of the crater, tied here and there to nearby trees. A bull-dozer started to shove the debris aside to form a temporary road-way, and at the same time fill up the crater, but after a while the driver taking perhaps too much of a risk went too near the crater's edge, and over it toppled into the hole to become bedded in the mud and rubble at the side.

Wardens had to man the Incident Inquiry Point owing to the calls on the W.V.S. for feeding arrangements, while Wardens had to be supplied to go round with a loud-speaker car to tell the folk where to get meals.

As the work went on, heaps of personal belongings dusty and torn and broken began to appear as the Rescue squads recovered them. Pathetic piles which not long before had represented peoples homes!

Towards the close of the second day, it appeared that we could manage with only one I/O Post, and the western one was closed down. To get the car we had been using for the purpose back to the Depot, I had to drive it all round Broxbourne and Nazeing to get to my destination - a journey of about ten miles to cover half a mile! Perhaps someone will wake up now to the sore necessity of a bye-pass road.

With the darkness, work stopped again, and it was possible to close down for the night the remaining I/O Post. After lighting up all the lamps again, and marking the various obstructions we "packed up", tired out after almost thirty hours of practically continuous work.

#### Friday, 9th March, 1945

Another incident today. Enjoying an "after lunch" laze in the armchair, when the bang came about 13.45 hours. Could see the column of smoke immediately I looked out of the window, over towards Sewardstone. Car refused to start to begin with or I should have been first on the spot, but as it was a rip-roaring procession of cars led by the Fire Brigade tore along the Sewardstone Road. The Rocket had landed in the field alongside Andrews' nursery just past Mott Street. Jack and Tom Prior were bandaging up someone as I arrived, and on looking found they had a woman there with a horrible wound in her back. Actually they were aware that their efforts were too late, but were doing it for the benefit of the husband, who had had a most amazing escape. When the rocket fell he and his wife were sawing wood, and apart from being blown over and bruised he was unhurt.

Another serious casualty with terrible leg wounds was taken away, but died on arrival at hospital. About eight other persons were injured to a minor degree.

Four houses opposite were turned inside out, and tiles and windows off over a considerable distance. Unfortunately telephone lines were still further complicated and broken and added to the disturbance of Wednesday, no communication was found at first with Control. As a result I had to exceed the speed limit to get back to Control with messages.

Left Francis as I/O to clear up the queries, and after arranging for mobile I.C.P. for the next day nothing more could be done.

Monday 12th March, 1945

A request from Group to go up, to the City to photograph the Farringdon Street incident. An awful mess where the rocket had fallen right into the Market, and penetrated to the railway loading bays underneath. Great lumps of concrete weighing tons were strewn in disorder, with three feet cast iron girders smashed down. Over 100 bodies recovered, and 38 still missing.

Just about midnight the 'phone rang, and though we had not heard it, there had been a wallop over in the Nazeing direction. Went out there in the car with Smith and Windle, and found an aerial burst just over our border into Nazeing. It was a cold, frosty night, and we had just a short look round the fields. In the light of our torches we picked up piece after piece of broken jagged metal. Apart from our voices, and the barking of a dog in the distance, it was perfectly quiet under the brilliant stars.

Friday 23rd March 1945

Just getting down into bed tonight at 23.30 hours, when there was an awful wallop that sounded very near. Black-out shutters in the office blew open, splitting a wooden bar in three places. Dressed in a hurry, and 'phoned Control, who stated that it was at "Sewardstone somewhere". Could hardly believe it was so far away, but got the car out and picked up Windle just outside. Seemed to be glass out here and there down Sun Street. Reached A.4 and picked up Wheeler and Francis, and got out to Sewardstone. We were the first to arrive from Waltham Abbey, and set up I/O Post with Francis in charge just opposite Butlers Drive.

Other Services began to arrive almost at once, and on making enquiries found that the rocket had fallen smack in the middle of the new roadway that leads from Sewardstone Road into the R.S.A.F. at Enfield Lock. No casualties anywhere, though a small bungalow at the bottom of Butlers Drive, and only about 100 yards from the crater was in an awful mess.

Sunday, 25th March, 1945

A noisy night! In twelve hours, from Sunday night to Monday morning, there were audible bangs at 22.35, 23.05, 23.41, 00.06, 04.03, 04.20, 04.45, 05.15, 09.05.

Thought the one at 23.05 was ours and began to get ready for it. Turned out to be at Enfield Highway, somewhere near Green Street, on a Council estate. Nine killed and forty injured, and severe damage to property. Then at 04.03 there seemed to be no doubt that it was ours. Not quite so loud as Friday night, but a real wallop. Endless telephone calls, eventually located it on the Marsh, somewhere near the end of Trinity Marsh Lane. Went along to Station Road about 05.15 with Smith and Colgate, and there were twelve fire appliances drawn up, with about 30-40 men all over the marsh, searching by the aid of hand-torches. Took about an hour and a half to find it, just over the boundary into Cheshunt parish, while if we could have had the searchlight at the Station switched on, we could have spotted it in ten minutes.

Wednesday 28th March, 1945

Siren this morning about 07.45, followed shortly after by the sound of a "doodle". By the noise of the engine it was not far away, but before we could get outside to see him, there was a bump not nearly so loud as expected. Almost immediately Control 'phoned that it was at Claverhambury. Took Smith and Francis and found it in one of the paddocks attached to the Claverhambury Kennels. Very slight damage round about, but quite a small crater. Apparently it had hit a tree and exploded almost before it reached the ground. A dirty wet overcast morning with poor visibility. The usual smell of burnt earth and hot metal. A type "C.C." fly, with the new plywood wings. The first "doodle" in the area since last September, and in daylight too!

Tuesday, 8th May, 1945

And this is the end! Our Claverhambury "doodle-bug" is the last, not only in W.H.X. but also in Group 7 and London Region. It was very nearly the last in England, but another on the following day had that distinction.

After a day or two of banner headlines in the papers, today is "VE" Day, and the War with Germany is over. The days (or nights!) of wailing sirens and hurried dressing to go over to the Post are finished with. It won't be necessary any longer to keep one ear cocked for a bang and a rumble of the nearby rockets, nor will there come any more calls from Group to go and take photographs. On the other hand, there will be no more interesting "bomb-hunting" expeditions, and no more gadgets to take to pieces! Life will lack that little zest!

Today has seen the town decked with flags and everybody on joyous holiday, while tonight the red glow of many bonfires brought back nostalgic memories of other red glows from a far more unfortunate cause. I burnt up several of my old incendiary bombs and other "combustible materials" to give the kids (and myself) a treat, and round about midnight went on to the roof to watch the searchlights. Last time I came on the roof in the middle of the night, was to watch the fires in London about fifteen months ago, but tonight hundreds of searchlights waved and flickered in the sky in an abandoned enjoyment.

Last night, with everyone almost knowing what the following day would bring forth, a last look-out of the bedroom window, showed a pair of bright searchlights out to the north, making a gigantic motionless "V" in the sky.

Tonight we retire to bed with blinds drawn and windows open, and distant voices and music drone on and on through the Spring night. And almost continuously a nightingale sings.

Sunday, 13th May, 1945

Thanksgiving service in the Abbey Church this afternoon, with a good muster of C/D, especially Wardens. All marched up to the Crooked Mile Depot afterwards, for a word of thanks from the Controller.

Sunday, 10th June, 1945

Today saw the official farewell to Civil Defence. Large contingents paraded in Hyde Park where the King took the Salute and March Past.

A poor day, rainy and dull, but am glad I went. Proceedings opened by Wing Commander Hodsell, then Sir Donald Somerville (the new Home Secretary). Mr. Herbert Morrison also said his piece.

Had the temerity to attach myself to the official Press photographers, and consequently got about the best view of the lot! Followed the Royal Party about as the inspection was made, and got several real close-up shots of them all.

Sir John Anderson, Sir Ernest Gowers, Admiral Evans, Arthur Howard, among the other "notabilities" present.

A fine march past, headed by N.F.S., then with Harris from Group 7 leading the Civil Defence contingent. Parade ended with all the usual C.D. vehicles including a massive mobile crane.

As the King said in his broadcast, it was "an end of an epoch" and one that we would not have missed for anything in the world.

*Edward Howard*  
*Chief Warden*  
*1939/45*

Abbreviations

A.A.	Anti-Aircraft
A.B.1000	Abwurf (throwaway) Behälter (container)
A.G.	Anti Gas
B.D.S.	Bomb Disposal Service
D.A.	Delayed Action
E.A.	Enemy Aircraft
H.E.	High Explosive
I.B.	Incendiary Bomb
IBSEN	Incendiary Bomb with Steel Explosive Nose 20-3/4" long
I.C.P.	Incident Control Post
I.O.	Incident Officer or Incident Office
J.U.88	Junkers 88
K.G.s	Kilograms
L.R.R.	Long Range Rocket (or V2)
N.F.S.	National Fire Service
P.A.C.	Pilotless Aircraft (or Doodlebug or V1)
P.H.I.B.	Phosphorus Incendiary Bomb
P.M.	Parachute Mine - 8'8" long - 1000 kg., 5'8" - 500 kg.
R.C.	Rest Centre
R.G.P.F.	Royal Gunpowder Factory
R.S.A.F.	Royal Small Arms Factory
S.C.	Sprengbombe - Cylindrische (general purpose thin-cased bomb)
S.D.	Sprengbombe - Dickwandig (thick-cased semi-armour piercing fragmentation bomb)
S.D.1	Anti Personnel Bomb - only 6½" long
S.N.I.B.	Steel Nosed Incendiary Bomb - 13½" long
S.P.	Stretcher Party

Location of the Wardens' Posts

- A1 Lea Road/Gordon Road junction
- A2 Highbridge Street
- A3 Beside Abbey Vicarage
- A4 Farm Hill / Sewardstone Road junction
- A5 Green Man Public House
- A6 Galley Hill / Broomstickhall Rd junction
- A7 Pick Hill / Upshire New Rd junction
- A8 Brooker Rd / Greenfield St junction
- A9 Harold Estate Crooked Mile
- A10 Possibly Honey Lane
- A11 Possibly Hawes Lane, Sewardstone
- B1 High Beech
- D2 Volunteer Public House
- E1 Wake Arms
- F1 Holyfield
- G1 Possibly Sewardstonebury

Bombs on Waltham Abbey

- 878 Siren "alerts"
- 444 High Explosive Bombs
- 22 Oil Incendiary Bombs
- 33 Phosphorus Incendiary Bombs
- 15 Parachute Mines
- 14 Flying Bombs ("Doodle-bugs")
- 16 Long Range Rockets
- 1 Crashed German 'Plane
- 30 Containers of 1 Kilo Incendiary Bombs
- 7 Fatal Casualties
- 35 persons injured and taken to hospital
- 125 persons injured and treated at F.A.P.
- 71 Dwelling houses destroyed



Incidents in Waltham Abbey Area 1940-1945

● High Explosive and Incendiary Bombs

▲ Long Range Rockets

★ Flying Bombs

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