

Blitz Story - not so brave after all

It started as any other ordinary evening - if you could call bombings, air-raid sirens, rationing and devastation ordinary, that is. When the piercing wail of the air-raid sirens filled the skies, we knew exactly what to do. We may have been living through the Blitz, but for us, life was ordinary - we didn't know any different.

At five o'clock I stood at my window and watched the street below. The occasional car whizzed past and children clung to their mother's skirts as they rushed to be indoors before night shrouded the streets in its velvet blanket. Above the rooftops of the houses across the road, darkness seemed to rise in a fury. It quickly became apparent that it wasn't night that was approaching, but a thick, black smoke which rapidly filled the air and consumed everything within its reach. Fire. Burning. Something was wrong.

Before long, the sinister wail of air-raid sirens filled the air. How I hated that persistent, undulating sound which brought with it a hideous sense of foreboding. Every instance was a false alarm, like a naughty child banging on the door and running away - the bombs never fell near us. "I shan't take cover." I whispered to myself. "The smoke is from fire a long way from here. I'm safe. I shall watch and see what happens."

A cry interrupted my thoughts, "Lights out! Turn the lights out!" Across the street, curtains were pulled and lights extinguished. We were truly in darkness. I shivered in anticipation as I stood, watching, waiting to see what happened.

Searchlights scoured the sky for enemy planes, their beams stretching far into the blackness. Nothing, of course. "False alarm!" I shouted at them, "There's nothing there!" As the words left my mouth a shape emerged from the rooftops in front of me: a huge, winged monster, with a roar so loud and so deep that the windows rattled. Then another, and another and another. This was no false alarm! I stood, paralysed by fear, watching as enemy planes poured over the houses. Fire filled the sky. Crashes and booms accompanied violent explosions, resonating overhead.

"Thomas! Thomas!" Never had the frantic cry from my mother been so welcoming. Running to the door I whimpered back, "I'm coming Mother, I'm coming." One last glance at the window revealed an angry, red sky over the burning city. I turned and ran to the sanctuary of my mother's arms, safe at last.