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Speaker 1: [00:00:02](#) My name is Joe. John White. Well yeah. Were you born in 1920? When were you born? I was born in Brixton. It's my, um, I just heard of you. My daddy had been in the army in the 1914, 18 war in the terrible time in the trenches. And uh, some of my family had to be house in, uh, uh, one of the roads in Brixton and they had a fair flat. And so when he came out of the army, uh, that my mother and father moved in and I was born there.

Speaker 1: [00:00:38](#) What did you parents do for a living? Well, um, my father, first of all, got a job when he came out of the army working, uh, in a big place of makeup, making metal costings. But the 19, 26, you might've heard there was a great event called the general strike and he came out along with all his friends on strike, but when it finished, the, the, the firm wouldn't take him back. So he was unemployed for awhile and then he got a job with the water board and people who are now tens water and he used to go run checking on the water supply to different places. But sadly my father died when I was 13, so, and then my mother went out to work. Um, uh, she was mainly sort of doing domestic health in other people's houses. Describe what your local area was like for you as a child before the stops were about where I was living about the no go area.

Speaker 1: [00:01:47](#) Oh yes, yes. Righto. Okay. Yes, my parents and as I said, we're living in, we're in Brixton. And then we moved to a house in new cross, which is in the borough of debt, food and Grenage and they was restaurant on the corner from the old Millwall football ground. So as I grew up, I used to hear all the chairs and noise from, from Millwall and I went to school and in a big school, um, uh, not far away in broccoli, which is in South South East London. And, uh, I left there when I was 16, after I'd taken, what was this like GCSE then, uh, O levels and, uh, and then I went out to work from there.

Speaker 1: [00:02:34](#) How did your family feel when the war was declared? Well, there was only just a mine, my mother and myself, of course my daddy had, as I told you, I had died and I'm like everybody in the country, we were very well read and concerned about what was going to happen. The first thing I think I'd like to say to you is that we, I had grown up, I was born in 1918 and 1920. And as you know, the great war only finished in 1918. So when I grew up, I heard all the terrible stories of what war was like and all the suffering and the killing and the injuries and the thought that there might be another one coming was an, was an awful one. Uh, and uh, this is why the government got so concerned about the international situation. And I think I just thought to

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say a word here, you know, of course that there was an awful wicked man called, uh, dove Hitler who was in charge of a dictator in Germany.

Speaker 1: [00:03:42](#) And during the 1930s as I was growing up, he was building more and more, uh, guns and tanks and bombing aircraft. And, uh, we were all worried that a war was going to break out quite soon. So, uh, when he did come, we were all worrying that the same thing was going to happen to us as it happened to say, the people in Poland, whether they're capital city, you know, is Warsaw and the Nazis were their aircraft bombed it and smash it to pieces. And we thought that might be happening at any time. And that's why our government said, the first thing we've got to do is to protect our boys and girls from terrible bombing like that. And if war breaks out, we'll try to send them to a safe place, maybe out in the countryside, away from factories and things of that kind. And that's how all this big evacuation took place. And I believe you've heard all about, uh, what it was like for the children to, uh, to, to be evacuated. So, uh, uh, in the military too. I'll tell you about my, my phone, but I, I think I'll stop there cause I, I hope I've answered your question about how, how I and other people felt.

Speaker 1: [00:05:06](#) What did your parents do? Well then of course my daddy had died, but my mother just simply, um, worked in different places, um, uh, helping to make, um, food and bread and then, and things of that kind. So, um, uh, she, she was just simply doing old memory work to, uh, to keep things, I think keep, keeps things going. And of course it was very important to keep food Dwayne, because as you know, during the wall, we've a very short of food and in fact, can you tell me what, did everybody have to have to make sure they got enough food as special book quarter ration bulk? Well done. Yes. So my mother had Russia and I had one. And every time you went to buy something, you have to have it stamped or there were coupons that could be cut out. So it was a very good thing because it meant everybody was equal and it meant the people who had a lot of money couldn't go off and buy lots and lots of food and people who didn't have much money could cook, could be going shorter food. So that's how things worked out in the food line. Okay.

Speaker 2: [00:06:20](#) Yeah.

Speaker 1: [00:06:23](#) How did you find me? How did we prepare? Yes, right. Well, uh, first of all, w we didn't do a lot, but I think if I told you what happened to families near near me, the government knew that

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if a war broke out, there will be bombing. So they said to everybody, you must try to get bomb shelters. And so lots of people went into their garden and dug a big hole and the government gave them a two metal thing covers that they put in the ground. They were called Anderson shelters and they had little seats inside and if the air raid warning went them. But since my mother couldn't very well dig trenches and [inaudible] and also we lived in part of a house, we didn't um, uh, dig one in our garden, but other people next door to me had one. Otherwise, I think all we did was to get as the lecture survivor of tins of food in case for things became a, became short. But Oh yes. One more thing

Speaker 1: [00:07:43](#) we did, we became evening time and became dark. Could you tell me what everybody had to do with their houses? Well done. They had to have blackouts because if you're up in an airplane, I look at all the street lights have switched off. You, you can't see from one place to another buddies. If somebody leaves a light on in a house, you can see it for miles and so on. My mother got by the blackout curtains or some people used to get a frame of, of wood, uh, and then fixed black onto it. And then like your window up there, put it exactly inside the window so that no, I could come out. So that's a good question about preparation. So that was the kind of thing what we did.

Speaker 1: [00:08:35](#) In what ways did your life change when, right, well now we come onto the evacuation bit, don't we? As I said already, the government, you as everybody knew that if war broke out, we might have the same terrible conditions that people in like [inaudible] back here in Poland and others that have from the Nazis. So, um, we, um, it's, it can be your question again was I've just on the front of the bench where we wrapped around it. In what ways did your life change? Yes. Right? Yes it did. So everybody knew that they would have to change the way they lived. And so the government decided to evacuate us as, as many people as possible. And as I said earlier, the priority was the first thing was to evacuate poisoned NGOs. But then lots of, for instance, the BBC said it's very important if there is a war that no matter what happens, we've only, people must be able to get the news.

Speaker 1: [00:09:49](#) So the BBC moved out of Oxford circus where it is now and went out into the country somewhere. And I was with a very big firm, I'll show you the picture of the building, but later there were five fours in this, uh, this building. It was in the city of London near st Paul's cathedral, which I suspect you haul or

seen. Uh, and um, so there were several hundred people that's worked in this firm and they as you, I like your question, they were planning ahead and so they said, if war breaks out, we are going to evacuate the whole firm out to the countryside where it'd be safer. And it was a good job they did because when the war came and the Nazis bombed London and they dropped it, incendiary bombs, what were they for causing mass. Absolutely. Insanity means fire, doesn't it? And this big building where I used to work and all the hundreds of people with me was all burned right out. And I, I've got a picture to show you later of the building after it'd been blitzed as we, you know, we use the gentleman where were, when it was been bombed. Right. So, um, yes, you agree? There were so many interesting questions. I'm, I'm, I'm afraid I'm losing my thread. What was your last question?

Speaker 1: [00:11:21](#) Oh yes. Right. Okay. I was just about this evacuation business, right. So, uh, six months before September, 1939, my phone took over a big house in the country about a, about 30 miles from London and uh, got it all ready, uh, for, for us to move into a four cane. And when the war came, we got a message. Don't come into cheap side, get on the train or Paddington on out of the oven and go if it's a page called beckons field, which is out near high Wycombe in Buckinghamshire. Uh, and so we all moved in under uncle. She had to move all the type writers, only equipment and ledgers and books and things. So it was quite a big thing. Then of course, we all moved in to work in this house, but there's something else we had to think about where we were going to sleep and where were we going to eat. So the firm I was with went round the town and they said, would you accept some of our staff to come and live with you as lodges? You know, we use that word and we want people to stay in somebody else's house. And so when we arrived at the right yoga to go to this stage, you're going to go to this race. And I was um, I'm gonna stop for a moment. Feedback, this place beckons field is like many places around London.

Speaker 1: [00:13:02](#) It's got a number of very posh houses and the people there go down to the station every day and go into London to work called commuters. That's what you've heard that word. Yeah. And so we're where we were in back field, there was one part of the town with lovely big houses always standing by themselves and very rich people living there. And another part of the time where there was an ordinary it state of a council house is a bit like the ones round our school here. And I was sent to to lodge with a family who lived in the, on the estate. And I was very

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lucky because they were lovely people. They were ever so friendly. It was a nice as a mum and dad, and they had three children who are big younger than me. I was then 19 the oldest one I think was a was 12.

Speaker 1: [00:13:54](#) So I was sent to do this and I stayed there for, uh, until I'm just porting because I was only there for a year because then I had to go into, into the air force of, I went off for years. But because they was actually lovely, friendly people, I always kept in touch with them. And every time I went on leave during the war from the air force, I used to go down and see them. So it was very nice. But I think I might just tell you a little bit more. Some of the people in my office was sent to the posh part of town and they found it. They'd been used to living. Most of us sitting at home, we all sit around the table and have a meal and have talked to each other. And they got to the town and they had servants and you had to sit at the table.

Speaker 1: [00:14:54](#) First of all, you had to be on time for two for the meal. And then you sat there and waited until the seven came in and put the food on the table in front of you. And it was all very formal. You know the word, you know the P people. People weren't sort of easy with it when each other, and one lady, I know she was in the house and the the gentleman who owned it had been in the army. He'd been a Colonel, quite a high ranking officer. And he spoke to everybody as if he was still in the army. And it used to be this lady, I knew who you used to have a joke cause she, he used to say to 'em, Oh I save his problem. What time do you want prayed in the morning? Meaning what time do you got to be at work?

Speaker 1: [00:15:43](#) So I'm just telling you this to show that when I was evacuated, I had a quite different experience from some of my friends and I spent, you have found this when you've been talking to the people who were boys and girls and they're evacuated. Some people went to lovely to very friendly houses and were well looked after and some, some people went to houses where they, they weren't as kind of the nicest. We would hope. So I hope that's given you an idea of what it's like to be evacuated in that way. Is there another door? Any more questions?

Speaker 2: [00:16:19](#) Yeah, I would just say, um, yeah.

Speaker 1: [00:16:32](#) Oh, have the others got any more questions?

Speaker 2: [00:16:35](#) Um, how did, how did the,

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Speaker 1: [00:16:46](#) how did, Oh yeah, right. Yes. Well I've sort of touched it. I'd have her with Russian books. First of all, we all had to be very careful. We had to eat our every scrap and you couldn't leave anything on your plate. Uh, and it meant you didn't have much choice. For instance, since ships with fruit, like bananas, which come as you know, from the Caribbean, couldn't come across the ocean because of the danger of, of uh, of the, theU boats who find your Petos. Uh, there was very difficult fresh fruit and, um, there was many boys and girls when the war ended and they saw an orange, they didn't know what it was and they didn't know. They didn't know how to eat it. And some of them said, Oh, don't like that to cook because they didn't know you had to peel the lurch where you could eat it. So there was quite a shortage. And also as your ration book said, you could have two ounces of butter a week. I had a [inaudible] two ounces of corn beef. And so in fact, deep, do you ever watch dad's army on television? [inaudible] right, because I'm the Mr. Jones, the butcher, uh, when he's behind the counter and he's, and he's got the rash of books and he says, John, yes, you can have two ounces of, of, of core basis. We, so they were very, very short and similarly were tin tin goods. They were also very short indeed. But, and you just have to be very careful and make sure the you et up all the food that was put in front of you.

Speaker 3: [00:18:40](#) Can you tell us about any experiences of bombing you face? Um, can you tell us about any experiences of bobbing you faced

Speaker 1: [00:18:52](#) other than I think I see right now. That's a good question. [inaudible] first thing to say to you is the war lasted six years, sadly. And there were different sections of the war phases of the war. You've asked me about questions. What happened in September when war was declared in 30, 39 it was very, very strange because for months and months enough, nothing happened and people caught it. The phony war. Now that's an American slang. You know, who knows what phony means? Please. Nothing happens. Well in this case with a little bit more than that yesterday, no, not real. There's something made up. It's like, um, professor Mr. Trump keeps saying it's a, what? What's it, what's the word he uses fake news. Yeah. So there's right, so phony is like fake. Then suddenly in 1940 everything happened. The Nazis used all these thousands of tanks and aircraft.

Speaker 1: [00:20:10](#) They had to smash their way through Holland and Belgium, Bali, everybody as they went and then into France and they took over the whole of France. And as you probably know, a lot of

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our men, 300,000 down soldiers were caught in a trap on the coast of France or Belgium at a place called Dunkirk and we, and there was this famous story, which I think you must have heard from nodding your head about getting. Then as soon as I'd finished Hitler said, right now I'm going to invade England. But he knew that before he could do that, he had to knock out our air force and we had two of the best fighter planes in the world, Spitfires and hurricanes, and day after day he used to send over hundreds and hundreds of bombers to Bobo. All our athletes. There was one, the Croydon and NA where I lived in Southeast London.

Speaker 1: [00:21:11](#)

I looked out and there was scraped pounds of smoke going out when the Nazis were bombed, Croydon. So then, but he wasn't successful in looking at our air force, tried to send bombers over during the daytime. So he said, well I have to do at nighttime. So he then started suddenly was over every night and this was 1940 1941 which people often talk about the blitz. Yeah, I thought you went out. It's short for, it's a German word. It's short for Blitzkrieg, which we'd lightening war because the last, he said if we've got so many guns and tanks and aircraft we can smash our way through and get through. And Willy like lightly and Creek means war. And so for short, if it's any kind of war warfare or Bobby and we were talking about the blitz. So that went home and then Hitler of course had all the top ranking generals in charge of his army and his generals thought that hit the muscle he mad cause he then said, well we're going to invade Russia now. And so he had to get, take all as you know, Russia is to the East of Germany. So he had to move all these guns and aircraft across the years and then he had to attack rush. So as a result, he stopped bombing London and started bong, tried to, to bomb the, the Russians. So that was all the first part of the war.

Speaker 1: [00:22:52](#)

Hitler had some of the most brilliant scientists in the world. One of them was called their LA Von Brown. What was he good at? Yeah, it is absolutely well done. But he was excreted. So Hitler said, if we can't beat him with old Rebounderz, we'll have to do some special thing. So he got all your scientists together on one lot under their Navon said, right, we'll put a bomb on a rocket. And later in the war is what he did. But he also did something else. He said, if we could have a bomb that could go by itself and it wouldn't need anybody's back. So that was a, the bathrooms, you even know the word. If they were called backbones bones because made a terrible noise what it was, it

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was simply a big bomb out of a lack of stretcher. And on the back was like a motorbike engine.

Speaker 1: [00:23:55](#) Now you know you have some city people who zoomed around the street state at night making a terrible notes with their exhaust pipes. Well, if you can imagine that magnified about three times up in the air. So if, if we were here, you'd hearing this and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. I live in louder and louder and louder. And then when it stopped making a noise, everybody dive for cover because once the fuel in this flying bomb ran out, it crushed down to the ground through the force of gravity. And these were the flying bombs or bugs, bombs or some people hold them due to bugs. We heard that if I the old name, isn't it? Anyway, so that, so that was the next part. But first of all, let's get it in order. The flying bombs came first. And in fact, just to give you with a picture of it, we've now gone through the war to 1944. Can anybody tell me why 1941 speeds.

Speaker 1: [00:25:02](#) Sorry, say that again a bit louder, right? That's a very good way to describe yet. But most people, very old people say D data and they for short, right? So you, you've heard all about how though we had this enormous invasion. Thousands and thousands of, uh, of men went across through to normally, but the Americans at us and the POWs and everybody, uh, and happily we managed to land quite well and, and to get our troops, but that's what everybody had hoped. We was always not wonderful. We were starting to win the war. We've now invaded France and two weeks afterwards, people have [inaudible] in the middle of the night. And it was the flying bombs came and these went on for months and months and months. Uh, and as we've just said, there was no way all of 'em, all the, all heads, it was to point them in France towards London and give them enough petrol to run out after 80 miles or whatever.

Speaker 1: [00:26:12](#) And as soon as the power fin run, it wasn't Petro ran out, but the force of gravity, they, they, they crushed on now that's why we had quite a few bombs landing in this area because they came across the foot over GAT wick and over Croydon and they came to our first rise of land here, which goes up to the top here. And this is why if you go around our streets here, you will see lots of places where there's new houses built in there because the, these were the fine bonds. So bit more of the story. We've been talking about June, 1944 fatigue day. And as I said, we landed and fairly soon after we started to push the



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Nazis back until we managed to push them so far in out of outer Northern France, they weren't able to launch the buzz volumes anymore. The flying, flying bombs, the ones.

Speaker 1: [00:27:20](#) So we all sat back. The all right, the, all the bums are over now. I was in the air force at this time and I remember it was October, it was a Saturday afternoon and I thought it'd be a good chance nudge. And I love the bathrooms. We free our Baba. I was in the bath and I heard a terrible boom right in the distance. I thought whatever was that. Anyway, it turned out later, it was the first V two rocket when it landed in West London in a place called Chizik, which some of you might know. It's on the way to a two Heathrow's in there. And then after that we, we never knew when the, um, these rockets were going to land. Oh, go, go ahead please.

Speaker 3: [00:28:08](#) They, um, they went so fast, they, you couldn't even hear them

Speaker 1: [00:28:13](#) well done. I was just about to ask if you'd, you know this and you told me the answer. Well done. They went faster than the speed of sound. So you heard this terrible explosion and then about five or six seconds later

Speaker 3: [00:28:29](#) [inaudible]

Speaker 1: [00:28:31](#) but the nausea homies through the air, whereas normally you hear the noise or something coming and then, and then the actual thing, your rides. So they were very, very frightening. Uh, so I think I've given you a general internal picture, but if we wanted to expand a more we could anyway, let's cut back to the questions cause of the very good questions. Yes.

Speaker 3: [00:28:57](#) Um, can you tell us a bit about some general questions about the way we do general questions about evacuation? Awesome. Um, can you tell us a bit about the background to the plan to evacuate children and mothers with young children in the lead up to the war?

Speaker 1: [00:29:23](#) Oh, right, right. Yes. Well that's a a very good point too, to come back to uh, [inaudible] I think I've sort of just give you a rough idea at the beginning, but as I, this is why I went back earlier on to talk about the 1930s 36 37 38 and then every year we had a Hitler invading another country there. And it was an awful feeling because we give everybody, all of this is sure to be calm, be having another war after we've had a terrible war in 14, 18. Um, so this is why the government said we must make plans.

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We of course they were afraid if we started, everybody would rush to the railway stations and try and get out of London and they will be people fighting to get on trains. So they say we must get this order range. So they got all the list of schools and they, if they said right first, um, uh, primary, uh, there in Southwest London, so they had better get on trains, the going out to the Southwest, so maybe cutting junk shall be replaced.

Speaker 1: [00:30:36](#) So they must meet it at the school, go to Compton junction and they live, we'll send them out maybe near to maybe the Gatwick or somewhere like that out in the country. So this is why the government worked. We worked it all out where each school should go to. And they even used to go ahead and go to the local schools out in Souray and tens and not another and say would you be ready to fit in 200 boys and goes from first, um, primary in, in shooting. And this is why I suspect you heard that a number of the people you spoke to, the adults because they, they went to a school where they were evacuated. So I think that's about as much as I can tell you that we've got the, and of course you would have, they had all the things like him, everybody had to wear labels and had to have gas masks and all that kinds of thing. But I think you probably heard that from, uh, from all the, uh, well they all old ladies, uh, [inaudible] you spoke to her were that community that was a manageable, yes. Right. Okay. Any more questions? Yes.

Speaker 1: [00:32:01](#) JJ forcing people. Yeah, that's a very interesting, very good question. And I'm hesitating because I'm trying to think back to exactly what happened. I have a feeling that the government said everybody should do this, but I don't think they took any steps. They didn't sort of punish people, find them or anything. Some people said, Oh, we sort of say here is a family and know if we're going to get killed, we certainly get all kill, kill together. Uh, but most people just went along and uh, and of course they, they knew that the government was organizing it and that if, um, first down primary went to a village are how you would say [inaudible] sorry. Then they would be, in fact, the school I used to go to, which was in Southeast London, they took over a big country house, uh, down near Lingfield. And uh, they, uh, they had some big rooms and they converted them into, into classrooms.

Speaker 1: [00:33:22](#) And in the village there was a little local pub and they, they gave half of the, the, uh, area of the pub over to, to the school. So there's some of my friends who are younger than me, when when they, when they were evacuated, they used to go to

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school in the pub, which way them, the thought, they thought it was very amusing. But that's a very interesting question and it's something you might not do some research on yourselves, but I think we, I might just add to it. You remember going back a little long while we were talking about the first year of the war, which we said was, uh, a fake war, a phony war. As I said, for months and months, nothing happened, no bombing, no signs of, of the law Fafa and by German planes and swastikas. And so a lot of people said if we are stuck out in the middle of the country, we think we'll go back home. And so lots of people started to go back home. Then a year later when the bombing really started, the government had to organize a second evacuation. So some people were sent out to the country a second time. So, and I, I've got a feeling this also happened in 1944 when they, when the flying bomb started, there was a 30 like uation. So I hope that answers that bit of the question.

Speaker 2: [00:34:48](#) Mmm.

Speaker 1: [00:34:49](#) How were the host family selected to receive jewelry or, that's a good question. Well, the, the first answer is, I don't really know, but [inaudible] I do know that people, when they went round asking people, they wanted to find people who were pleased at the idea and said, Oh yes, we'd like to help people out. But there were some people who said, Oh no, I don't want all those kids from London got in my house had also, I must tell you this as well,

Speaker 1: [00:35:28](#) a lot of people in London, we lived, we lived in very poor conditions. We still had horrible pages. We called sums, which was, you heard about, I'm sure with the very poor housing and a lot of boys and girls grew up there. And for instance, none of the houses had bathrooms and so they weren't able to wash or shampoo their hair. And so many children before the war had nits in their hair. You know, we'd literally insects, Shiva doesn't nurse still come down the school sometimes to have a look at your hair? Usually when I was scoring, it just has to happen anyway. Never mind. So when some of the children from these very poor areas were sent to houses, not the ones that I told you about in Beckinsale very posh people, they people say, Oh, we don't want those, those children in our house.

Speaker 1: [00:36:28](#) So, uh, there was quite a difference in attitude and it was quite difficult for the government officials who were looking after this to, to choose the best places for people to go to. But that was a very interesting question to, to, to think about what kind of

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compensation did, Oh nah. In fact, I'm not sure. Well, at least, uh, I couldn't do a detail, but certainly the covenant had a certain, uh, published figures to say this is what we think is a fair amount. Uh, average is where I lived because it was because it was all organized by my firm and the government. My firm used to pay my family where I stayed so much a week, a Felicia bear, a larger Andrew, and to pay for my food and the government issued, I think we would say today guidelines to say as well that we ought to be one pound a week for a child or two pounds a week for a grownup or or, or whatever. But all I know is that the government had a sort of list of, of, of, of recommended prices. But um, w w whether they ever took people to court or find them if they didn't pay the amount of, I don't know. But that's a very interesting sideline on the, on the evacuation, isn't it?

Speaker 1: [00:38:11](#) Oh, well the first answer is I don't know, but I certainly know that the biggest capital cities were, so London was big. London was particularly important because London is much closer to Europe and to Germany than other cities. I don't think cities like Glasgow in Scotland had an evacuation plan. But I'm afraid this is a, an area that I, I don't know in detail, but certainly if I might just go out a bit a bit after Hitler, I'd be bombing London. And I told you he stopped because he was Bobby field in Russia. He then started to bomb a number of our other cities and he bombed Coventry on Bristol and Plymouth and places. And I, I think a number of people wanted to evacuate because I thought, Oh, we, it's the Nazis come back again. And Bush, you have more people killed. But I think it was just unluckily barks.

Speaker 1: [00:39:29](#) I'm the, I'm, I'm afraid that's one I can't give you a really full answer to all. But once again, I haven't any detailed knowledge, but I know for, it's, just to give you the example, my school was sent to Lingfield, uh, and I know that the, the headmaster, uh, was told about it in advance and he went down to the village and this, and he spoke to people such as the people who had a spare room in the pub. And the people who had that big, big house that they had let out. And uh, so, um, there was some preparation down there in, in that way. But I, from stories I've heard, and I don't know whether you heard this when you were talking to, to the, the other folk who were evacuated as children. There were places where the books, the plans to receive evacuations were not really very good or very well worked out.

Speaker 1: [00:40:41](#) And uh, I have her choice of when maybe a hundred boys and girls from a school arrived to maybe at the railway station and

there were people there waiting to take them, but only maybe 90 of them were taken off to homes and there were 10 boys and girls left. We'd know to look after them and they were sitting there with their labels cause you'd ever had labels with their names on Finney. Very sad. And in fact this happened to a famous television presenter, Mr. Ortiz, but you remember that the name might be [inaudible] but right. Yeah, that's right. Yes. And he spoke on television, very moving about how sad and, and, and miserable he thought because he thought he'd been forgotten. Nobody's going to look after him. So these were some of the little stories of about this big evacuation of the children that they came out. Okay.

Speaker 2: [00:41:44](#) Yeah.

Speaker 1: [00:41:52](#) Please tell us about your evacuation. Right. Well, I've told you quite a lot, haven't I? That I was a very nice family. Uh, and um, uh, it was one of the things as soon as I was put into this small town, which I I'd never seen before, do nothing about. So Elijah laid quite an active life in London for instance. And I was very active, fiddly in the Woodcroft folk though I hope you know about, which is a young people's organization. I used to be out camping and hiking with her with every weekend. And uh, and so, uh, I'm, I missed on all of that cause that wasn't going on where I was. And, um, uh, I, I've always, I would like to drop her an acting and I used to, I used to be in the company, we used to put on plays, but when you start a new section of your life as, as I did when I was evacuated, you have to adapt, you know, that word fit in with the new situation.

Speaker 1: [00:42:59](#) So with some friends and my work, we started up our own drama club and the village where the place where we were evacuated. So I went on actually even joy even when I was evacuated. But um, uh, it was, it was, if you, if you're in a town where you've never been before, you don't know where the shops are. You don't know where the library is, you don't know the low local things. And, uh, so this is why I was very fortunate to be with a very nice family. They were very helpful to me and you know, answer a lot of the questions I had and were very supportive to me as well. How did you feel about coming back to London

Speaker 1: [00:43:53](#) now? Do you mean when the war ended? When you came back? Yes. I'm going to take this into bits. First of all, very often at weekends when I was evacuated because I wasn't all that far from London, about 30 miles. I would sometimes get the train

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and go home and see my ma, my mother and see if she needed any help and so on. So, um, I got used to, to be in, in and out of London. And this is why I was, when the various kinds of bombing took place, I was sometimes in London, sometimes not. Uh, and I sort of kept in touch with my old friends, of course in London. But when, then I went into the air force and when I finished with the air force, I was what they called demobed. I've heard that, yeah, get mobilized. Uh, that's when I really came back to London and to my home.

Speaker 1: [00:44:58](#)

And of course the war had ended by then, so I just took up where I'd been before it got back to acting with the, and a and be active in all kinds of ways. So it was, uh, it was a great relief to me and to everybody to be able to get back to your own home after all the, the sufferings and the dangers of the war, you realize any changes. And if you did, how did, that's a very unusual question and it's quite difficult. But then the first thing is there were changes in my locality, which was, I lived on halfway down a Hill and at the top of the Hill, in fact, some of you might, there's a Hill called funny dog, kennel Hill, which runs down to East village. And right almost at the top there was a lovely house on, on a corner, bit like on the one on the corner of a, of a Whelan road.

Speaker 1: [00:46:10](#)

And the Nazi bombs had smashed this house in the house next door. Absolutely. So as you came down from the top of the Hill, there was this awful sight of this bombed house in front of you. So that was one of the changes and look was as I went around London and when I went up to central London and I saw what had happened to the city of London and to what happened to the old building that I was telling you about where I used to work all burned out. So these are some of the horrible changes now for the point of view. Others are changes. Uh, I don't think there's a lot else except to say that gradually the rations were increased and there was a little bit more food, but I suppose you've heard that sweets were rationed during the war, so you couldn't go into the shop and buy, borrow a chocolatier or liquor show, Soto or whatever. Um, and uh, the, uh, because the war went on so long and affected so many things, they didn't bring, it takes sweets off ration until eight years after the war ended because my children were born in 19 Milo when my little son was born in 1952, I couldn't, the number of the switches I could go by him was very limited because there were still in Russian. But when my daughter was born in 1953, everybody's salary, Reggie, by getting out by as many sweets as they wanted. So that was some of the changes.

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- Speaker 3: [00:47:59](#) This is about life off the wall. Um, how did you say a break VD,
- Speaker 1: [00:48:05](#) right. Well, I was in the air force then
- Speaker 1: [00:48:10](#) and I was based at a, at an airfield, which is no longer here because it was a, it was called already at Hinden. If you go to the Northern line from here, you go through London or Camden town and then out you go and you go to Henderson a and M had students on. Uh, and so I was able to get on the underground and get into Lambda quite easily. So when the day was declared with my, a lot of my friends from the airfield, we all went into London and I was what you've seen pictures of all dancing in the streets and doing a Congo and zone. And so I was, uh, I was all part of that. So it was just, just a general sort of, they're having a party in the streets.
- Speaker 2: [00:49:00](#) Yeah.
- Speaker 3: [00:49:05](#) Looking back, how do you think your experiences as an evacuee has affected your life?
- Speaker 1: [00:49:12](#) That's a very interesting question. How should I just have to think about that for a moment? The first thing is that it made me,
- Speaker 1: [00:49:25](#) I appreciate people who were kind like the family that I stayed with and uh, it made me realize that, um, one shouldn't be self centered and Sophie she missed for think about other people and to adjust to, to other people. And I think you'd also, because I've told you a bit about the difference between what it was like when the family I was evacuated with and the retired Colonel, I used to balk out military commands with the VBS. Uh, it showed him how it may be realized what differences there are in people and attitudes and society. So I think it may be a more broad minded person. And I think one more thing, I had to rely on myself much more. I mean, as soon as I arrived at the, I have to think about who's going to do my laundry and uh, and how, how am I going to get my things from the bank and, or all the kinds of things about personal living. So it made me realize that sun life was quite complicated. One, that one has a lot of things to, to do, but I think the broad minded bit is, is the most important one. How many more questions have we got?
- Speaker 1: [00:50:54](#) Oh, last one, right? Oh good. That we haven't covered that you'd like to send us. Say that again. Is there anything we haven't covered or you'd like to tell him? Well, I'm not sure. I

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think [inaudible] mr Rosenberg, everything. Think is there anything we ought to cover? If you don't mind, could you just do a very brief, just a [inaudible] of how the war and event evacuations happened? You had the phony ball bits. Yes. Just to recap this, the, the, the phases of the war, right? Yes. But this, this is a recap. So I the, some of the stuff I've touched on, but there's, you can put it all in the picture, right? Once again, as I've done several times, let's go back to the 1930s and [inaudible] our country. My dad's still there talking about what he was like in the trenches. He, by the way, he was a stretcher bearer, hoot, her first aid man, he used to carry the Interpol wounded men.

Speaker 1: [00:52:00](#) So all the thoughts in our minds and members were all vivid. All the suffering that went, went on and how concerned or worried we were that there was this Madmen Hitler, you know, starting it all over again. So that built up and had, as we've been talking about, and as it became more and more obvious that war was coming all through 1938 39 the government was doing all this, the plenty that we talked about planning the evacuation and so on. Then so September, 1939 so I was at, I'm just going back a little bit. I think I told you when I, yes. So yes, the week before the war broke out, our firm said, let's all evacuate now. So I was out in Buckinghamshire at this place on the day that the prime minister and I called mr Neville Chamberlain. I heard him on the, on the radio saying we, um, we are now as a state of war with Germany.

Speaker 1: [00:53:17](#) So that was September, 1939 I just, at that time, all the air raid sirens went off in London people. So all of those, it's going to start bombing a straight away. But it turned out it was a false alarm, but millions of people in London thought, Oh, we're going to be going straight away. But in fact, no bombs fell not to Christmas, not till March, not to. And then in may, as I've said earlier, May, 1940 Hitler did this in terrific attack. And within a couple of months, well, less than that, two months has smashed his way and conquered the whole of France, which meant Hitler now had all these aircraft lined up all along the French coast to attack us. So, and then he, he, he then started as I was, I was telling you to try and no hole all our aircraft out. And that was the battle of Britain, which is in the summer of 1940. Yes. Oh, Chad,

Speaker 4: [00:54:28](#) did they, uh, prepare the air force and then the land Amit and tanks and all that to uh, to defend?



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- Speaker 1: [00:54:40](#) Yeah. Sorry, say that again. It wasn't what you're about. They're citing a bit louder.
- Speaker 4: [00:54:45](#) If Germany tried to, um, attack the British army and beat
- Speaker 1: [00:54:52](#) no, they were already, they had the army all lined up and they had a huge barge. He's ready to put this up. Their soldiers in aim all along the channel kosher. We Kallai and D bear and the others. But they knew if they set out sail to try and do an invasion of us, our aircraft will be able to shoot them down and it wouldn't be successful. So Hitler said to this general girding who was head of the Nazi air force, get up. You've been tried to be how many wonderful bombers you've got destroyed the, the, the Royal air force in England. So that's why they attract away fields, including as I mentioned, Croydon, cause they were all South of the river. Uh, some of you might know Ken link the other side of Croton. There's a big airfield there and they, they, they attack that.
- Speaker 1: [00:55:49](#) But ah, Spitfires and hurricanes, we're so, we're so good. And the only man in the moon, they were partying but so brave. They shot down hundreds and hundreds of, uh, of, of, uh, of aircraft. And we won the battle of Britain. And that's why Winston Churchill talking about this years afterwards said, we, there are two things he said. First of all, he said about of our, it was our finest hour that we stood up against all these terrible Nazis. But also because there were only about three or 400 of these pilots do digital than arts is never was so many owed by. So many. Never was so much owed by so many. So just so few. And so people often talk about all these brave fighter pilots as the few, so this was 1940 then had to decide how I'm going to attack Russia.
- Speaker 1: [00:57:02](#) Sorry, could you talk to take care of Shan origins? Sorry, I bet you by, yes, it was such a good question. Sorry about that today. Right, so 1940, that was the, the, the um, the, but the battle of Britain, 1941, not very much happened except that Hitler invaded Russia. 1942, once again, there was fighting in all different parts of the world, but not much in this country. 90 43, very similar. 1944 was D day and Harvey a, D they been launched when the flying bombs that you've talked about so well, the beach one rockets started becoming over 1940, 44. We pushed the Nazis back and back till they were pushed back almost into Germany. And the flying bombs couldn't be launched from France to attack London. And as I said earlier, we

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were just thinking through I ourselves, Oh, that's the end of all the bombing.

Speaker 1: [00:58:16](#) And then that's, I told you I was in the bath later that year and her bang and it was the start of the rockets and they went on, let me say almost to the end of the war and I don't, I've got one very sad memory where I lived in Southeast London. We had a very good done soybean mouth nearby and on Saturday mornings I, my friends, we usually get up early, I'll go out and the weather was nice and quiet and have a lovely, lovely swim. And then on our way home we went on the main road and there was a big Baker shop and we used to go in and say, miss, have you got any slow cakes? And they had cakes that they'd made yesterday and it hadn't been sold. And we usually get a bag of these paid for about a penny each. It was the reason I'm telling you this story is this shop with next door to a great big room with and thinking about the, the V two rockets, um, destroys the vocals.

Speaker 1: [00:59:26](#) I think it must've been March. We were now coming to 1945 and nearly the end of the war. But although Hitler was, was nearly defeated, he still kept fighting and he still kept sending over rockets. And one Saturday morning he sent over what are their biggest rockets the van Von Brown had designed and it landed on this whoops, where the, where I used to go in and get my sweets at. Um, I think it was half past 10 on a Saturday morning. It was packed with people and it was one of the worst incidents of the war because several hundred people were killed and injured. And so I'm going into a bit of details with the story because I've tried to show you from 1930 line, even just before the war ended, there were still terrible things happening and uh, uh, such as the, as the rockets. So I hope that's given you, so when you're starting this in future, you can think, ah, yes. That, that was the phony war phase and that was the flying bombs. So that was the rockets and you got an idea. Last question.

Speaker 4: [01:00:41](#) Then at the end of the war, the war in the Pacific did it end. So American scientists, they um, they got, um, color atoms into it and bombed them to cities.

Speaker 1: [01:00:59](#) Alright, well done. Very good. Very good comment. I really ought to mention that didn't I? And in fact I'll just tell you a little bit more. So the war ended in may 45. Yep. And I remember I shared a room at the airfield with a lovely Scottish guy and um, we, um, we woke up and heard on the radio. I said, I go, Joel,

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we can congratulate ourselves. We looked through a European European war. He said, don't count your chicken, Susan. And we still got Japan. I went down to the bar and in our mess, uh, officer's mess. We were where we all live to that. And somebody as a joke, I'd put up behind the bar, a bowl hat, you know, what about a hat look, say it's all round, round, top. And people used to respectable. We've always used to wear them before the war.

Speaker 1: [01:02:05](#) Posh people wore top hats and people, I worked in the bank who used to wear a bowler hat rolled umbrella. They're all very smart. Anyway, somebody behind her bar, her put a bowler hat, which, which meant you were a civilian, not in the air force anymore. And they put a big notice up coming soon, question Mark there. In other words, it won't be long before you are civilian and putting on your board hat instead of all your blue air force uniform. And, um, then the next day somebody had brought in a big sun helmet that they used to wear in India called a pith helmet. Now put a big notice on it and said, Oh, are you sure? Because in other words, we thought after the war in Europe had finished and the day we've all be sent out because the Japanese war was still very long. But as you just described to us so well, the, um, the Americans had been, uh, doing research into bigger and bigger bombs and, uh, they had invented these, the atomic bomb and they dropped one on first one on Hiroshima.

Speaker 1: [01:03:27](#) And, uh, as I said to the Japanese, when you get in and there's no answer. So they talked to another one on Nagasaki and after that, the Japanese emperor who they all believe was appointed by God and couldn't, could never make a mistake, he decided that he couldn't have any more millions of people killed. And so he, and so quite soon after Hitler was defeated in may of 1945, the Japanese surrendered and the whole war ended in August 45, I think it must have been August. Yes. Cause I was with my friend jock that I roomed with in Glasgow and we went out to the biggest square. He God's go and celebrate with the party there, just as I had done it in Piccadilly for the day.