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DEDICATED TO
“THE PEOPLE’S ARMY”



H.M. The Queen with Lord Woolton at a communal centre.

BRITAIN AT WAR SERIES

CIVIL DEFENCE
IN WAR

By

MRS. ANTHONY BILLINGHAM
(Civil Defence Ambulance Service)

JOHN MURRAY & THE PILOT PRESS

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BRITAIN AT WAR SERIES
THE ROYAL NAVY AT WAR
THE BRITISH ARMY AT WAR
THE R.A.F. AT WAR
THE MERCHANT NAVY AT WAR
BRITISH WOMEN AT WAR
CIVIL DEFENCE IN WAR

A proportion of the profits are being devoted to the Lord Mayor's National Fund for Air Raid Distress

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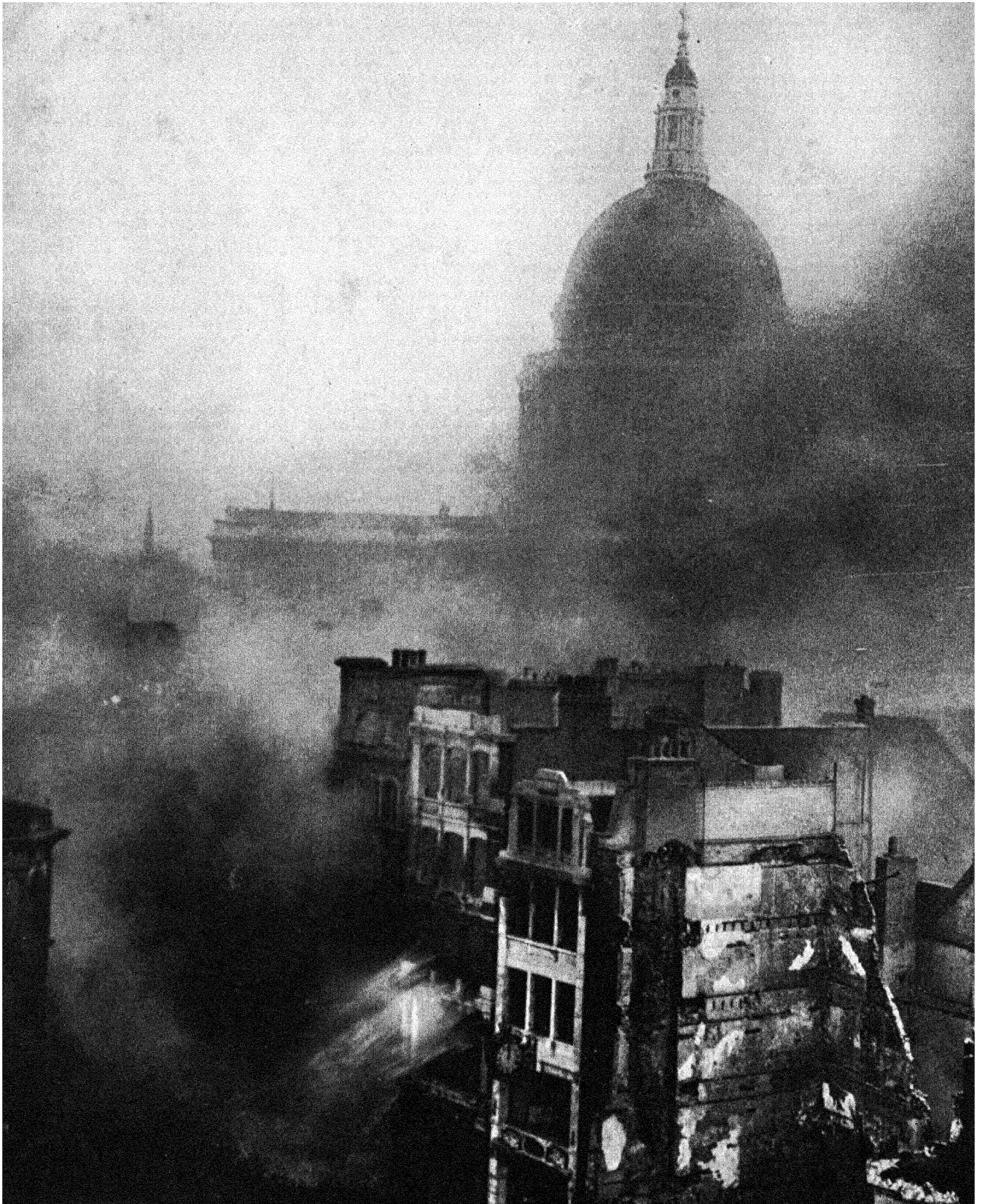


The Prime Minister acknowledges the great work of the Civil Defence Forces. A.F.S. women march past Mr. Churchill at the inspection of the Civil Defence Forces, Hyde Park, July 1941.

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The author wishes to acknowledge the help she has received from various Ministries and to Commanders of Civil Defence Services for information and photographs which appear in this book.



CIVIL DEFENCE: ITS HISTORY

The stand which the fighting forces of Britain have made in the face of the greatest adversities, many of which came as unexpected blows, such as the Fall of France and the D eb acle of Dunkirk, have aroused the well-earned and outspoken admiration of the world.

This gallant stand would not have been possible without the co-operation and whole-hearted support of the people at home. They have had the hardest task of all. Unlike our fighter pilots, our soldiers and our navy, the people of Britain have had to take the brunt of the Nazi "frightfulness" with no opportunity of striking back.

This is a new kind of war, which is waged just as much against the civilians as it is directed against opposing armed forces. Instead of receiving an order to "charge," the civilian has gone into action at the wail of the syren. Amidst the unutterable havoc which an air raid means, he has brought order out of confusion, saved lives and property, and when the danger of the moment has passed, returned to "that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call him."

Britain to-day has a civilian army that has been tried and baptized by fire. It is well-trained, extremely efficient, and two million strong.

Civil defence is an aftermath of the last war. It is an organization which arose from a committee formed to examine the question of defence against air attacks affecting the civilian population.

Britain was surprised, and not a little shocked, in 1917 to find that she was vulnerable to this danger, but it was not until 1929 that the Committee of Imperial Defence really got under way. The Disarmament Commission was in preparation, the German Air Force disbanded, and our own flying service in the process of reorganization. What then was to be done to protect the civil population from air raid dangers should hostilities ever recommence?

Sir John Anderson, then permanent Under-Secretary to the Home Office (the same man whose name will always be famous for the shelters which have saved so many lives to-day), added a committee representative of the various Ministries. The Air Force and the Treasury were represented in an advisory capacity, and Wing-Commander Eric John Hodsoll, C.B., R.A.F., was chosen as assistant secretary.

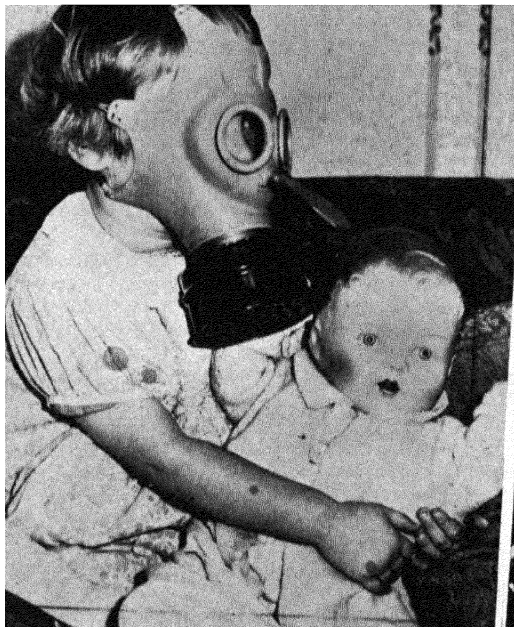
Wing-Commander Hodsoll, who to-day is Inspector-General of the Civil Defence Forces, has thus been with the organization from the first. A trained engineer and a pilot in the Royal Naval Air Service in the last war, he had passed the intervening years serving at a seaplane base in Egypt, studying at the Staff College at Camberley, and serving with the reorganized Air Force in India.

The atmosphere of red tape and musty books, coupled with the political decision that nothing regarding Civil Defence must be made public, almost smothered the infant A.R.P. at birth. In a representative's own words, they produced nothing but "a mountain of paper." All the conferences held with heads of docks, transport chiefs, and other experts had to be regarded as strictly confidential. The venture was purely academic. There was absolutely no way of "trying it on the dog," and as Germany had no air force at this time, the only yardstick by which they could measure possible danger was a hypothetical air attack by France.

So things continued until 1935, when Britain formed her rearmament programme. To the men who had been nursing the scheme for Civil Defence this was their chance. Rearmament meant the near possibility of another war. Another war meant air raids, and the need of protection for the people. The A.R.P. must become a reality, organized and publicized, and placed on a practical basis.

And late in the same year, backed by the official blessing of the Home Office, a force of experts, nine strong including messengers, moved into a small suite of rooms at the Institute of Mechanical Engineers in Princes Gate, London, under the command of Wing-Commander Hodson.

This was the corner-stone of the People's Army of to-day.



A child's gas-mask.



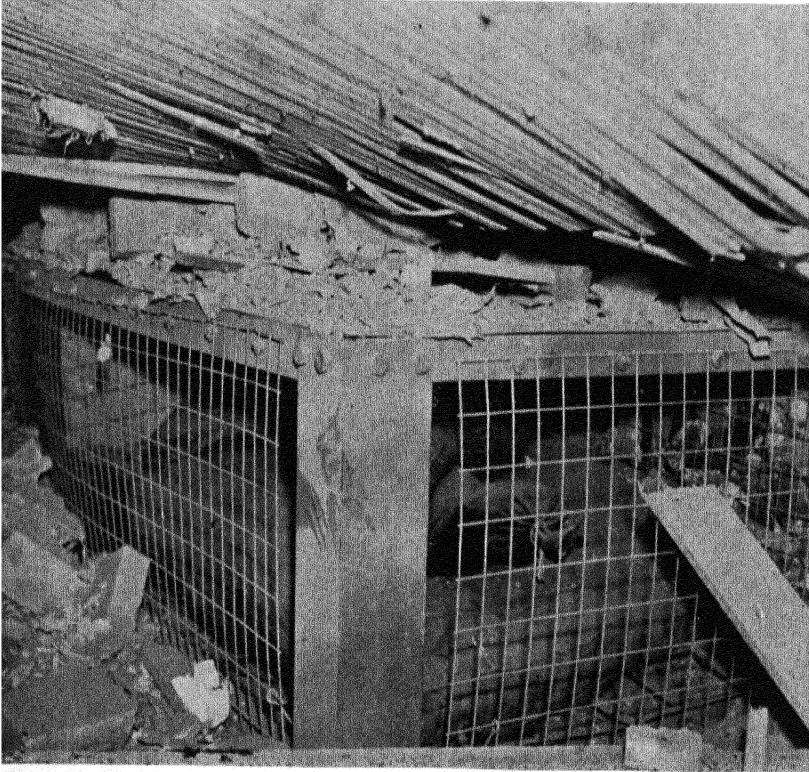
Girls making gas-masks in a factory.



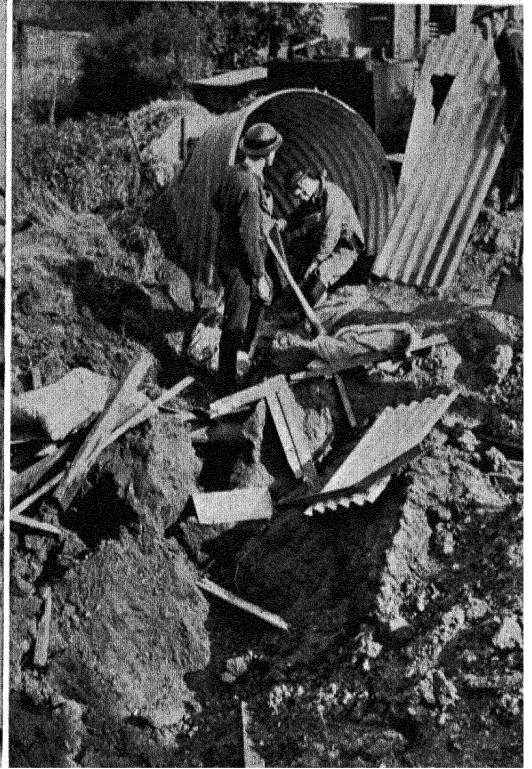
A gas-cleansing equipment practice in a decontamination station.

Much of the ensuing year was spent "getting down to brass tacks." Out of the aforesaid "mountain of paper," methods of finance and other matters of organization had to be devised. The first anti-gas school was opened at Falfield, in Gloucestershire, in April 1936, and at the end of the year a respirator factory was started in a converted cotton mill at Blackburn. The A.R.P. was then accused of being "gas-minded," and their colleagues looked upon them as a cross between harmless lunatics and scaremongers.

Their retort to this was that gas had been used by the Italians in their conquest of Abyssinia, it had been tried out in the undeclared war between China and Japan, and was being used with effect in the Spanish Civil War. They also expanded and opened another training school at Easingwold, Yorks, and extended their courses to include elementary training in fire prevention, including incendiaries and protection against high explosives.



A table-type indoor shelter supplied by the Government.



An Anderson air-raid shelter which saved the lives of three children when a house was wrecked.

In 1937 the Air Raid Precautions Act was passed, which made it obligatory for the local authorities of the British Isles to co-operate and set up an organization for building up A.R.P. in every district. Under this scheme County Borough and County Councils were ordered to submit plans to headquarters in London regarding measures to be taken in their own districts. Upon the approval of such plans, the Government agreed to make grants, ranging from 60 per cent. to 75 per cent., towards the cost of Civil Defence schemes, such grants to vary with the financial position of the authority concerned. It was also agreed that anti-gas clothing, respirators, and other specialized equipment would be supplied free.

This completed the groundwork, and gave the committee a basis upon which to work for expansion. The local authorities, being left with a percentage of the cost to meet, were "on their toes" to avoid waste. The country was divided into vulnerable areas, which were later changed when actual air-raid experience proved it necessary.* Each area was staffed with a paid personnel. A

* See map, page 16.

representative committee of experts, headed by Sir Arnold Wilson, was set up to experiment, and discover the effects of high explosives and other potential dangers. And so, slowly, the A.R.P. took shape, until the Munich crisis in September 1938, after which it developed into a full working organization.

In November of that year Sir John Anderson was appointed Lord Privy Seal and Minister for Civil Defence, the activities of which were extended to meet the increasingly dangerous situation. The tragic effects resulting from lack of preparedness against air-raid attacks on the Continent and in China added impetus to this movement. Sir John arranged for private air-raid shelters. Realistic exercises were held with sirens and under "black-out" conditions. Southampton had already been the scene of the first "black-out" trial in 1936. The experiments expanded in scope to include darkened traffic facilities, factory furnaces, and railways. It was also agreed that the fear of day raiders was more acute than that of night raiders, so a paid nucleus of men was organized to deal with this menace whilst the people went about their daily business.

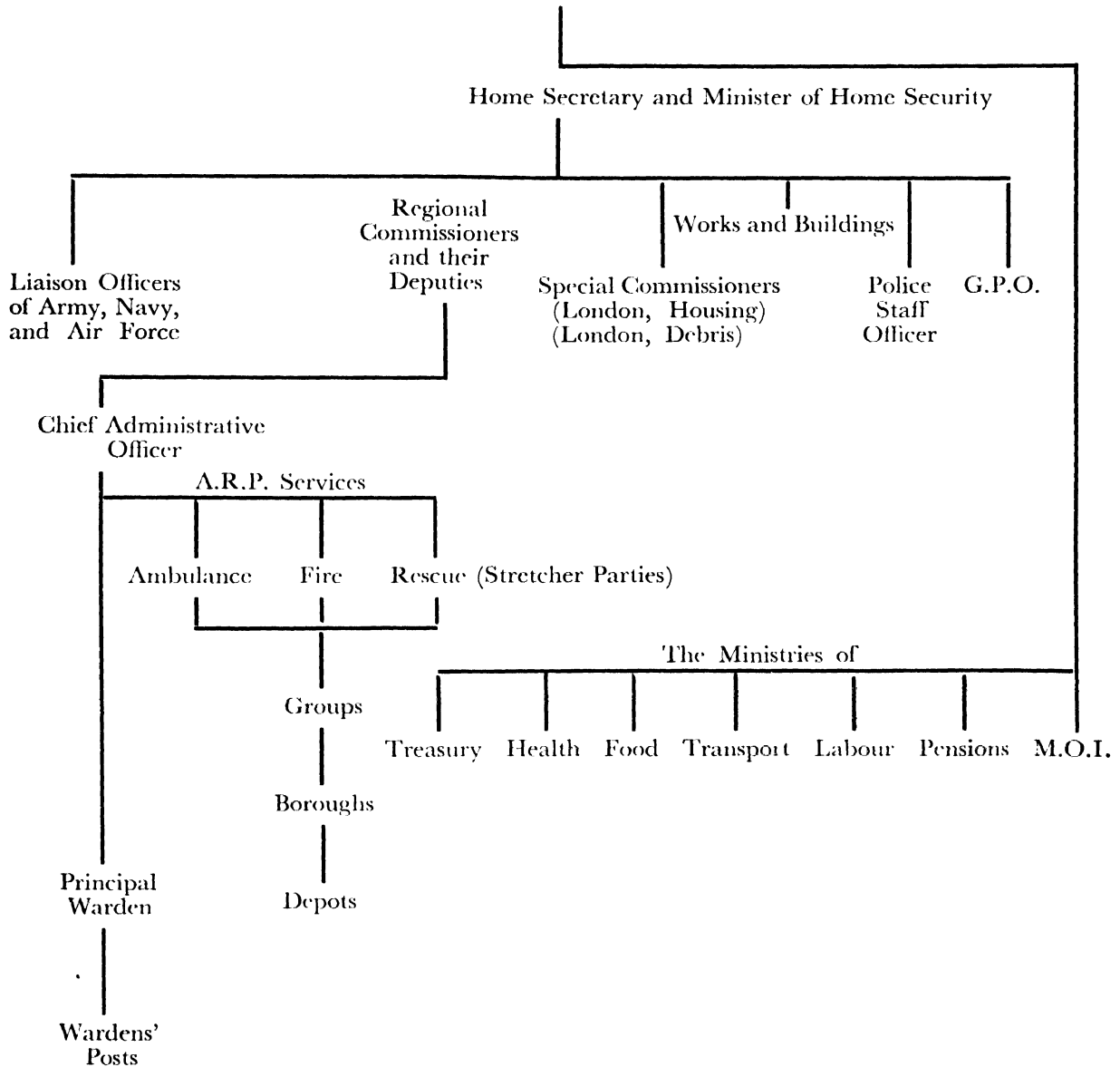
Local authorities livened up and co-operated with some enthusiasm. Volunteers came forward to help the few paid men. Ambulance and First Aid Services, which had been "standing by" at the Munich crisis, were ready for action. Plans for evacuation had been submitted by the Ministries of Health and Transport, and finally, in July 1939, the big Civil Defence Act was passed, placing the entire organization on a statutory basis.

The outbreak of war on September 3rd, 1939, found them ready for mobilization, but this was not the end of trouble for the A.R.P. The original nine members, greatly supplemented by this time, were still accused of scaremongering. Even after the war started, several boroughs openly mocked at air-raid precautions, and the suggestion of an attack on Britain was regarded as almost on a par with the rantings of a fifth columnist. The committee suffered from phases of concentration, when only one danger could be reviewed at a time. One period was devoted to gas, to the exclusion of all else; another time it was shelters, and nothing else mattered. Despite the continued exercises which were designed to accustom the people to A.R.P., there was a time of stagnation during the first winter of the war. The paid personnel was cut down, but they struggled on.

It was not until the fall of France, in the summer of 1940, that the man-in-the-street realized the possibility of attack and invasion, and then, with one accord, rushed to join the new army, which in time was to prove the backbone of civilian existence.

CIVIL DEFENCE COMMITTEE OF THE CABINET

(Chairman—Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security)





Admiral Sir Edward R. G. Evans, Joint Commissioner for Civil Defence, London, visits an operation centre.

REGIONAL ORGANIZATION

The sentry was an elderly member of the Home Guard, whose face was tanned, seamed, and trustworthy. He subjected first me, and then my pass, to a lengthy scrutiny, and extended an official book for my signature. I signed, and then we both paused, listening.

From high above us came the throbbing note of airplane motors. It was not the steady hum of our own machines, but the jerky cadence of a "Jerry"—the Germans put their motors out of "cinc" in an effort to throw off our sound detectors. The sentry and I grinned together, and I turned to enter the tunnel-like opening before me.

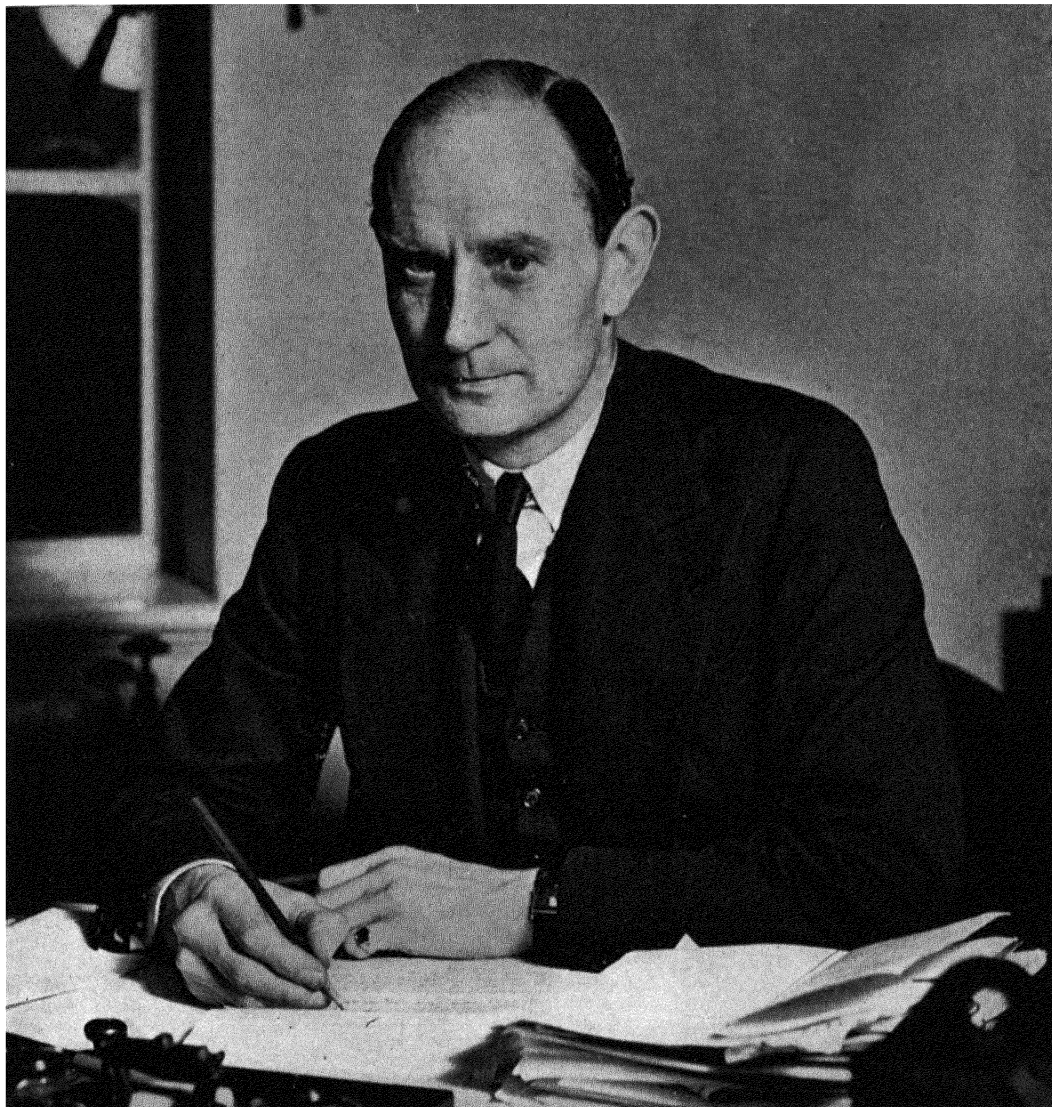
The passage had four smooth walls of concrete and sloped steadily downward. A flight of steps took me even lower, until the tunnel ended in a huge steel door. When it opened I saw that it was at least a foot thick. I was told that it was proof against gas, bombs, or shells—practically everything, in fact—as were the walls of the room in which I found myself.

CIVIL DEFENCE. REGIONAL ORGANISATION.



For I was in the Holy of Holies, the heart of Regional Control, the very secret operations room of a great city during an air raid. I was surprised, and a little disappointed. I don't know just what I had expected—noise, hurried activity, perhaps, but not this. Here everything was quiet. Voices were lowered. Telephones seemed to have muted tones, and there was a decided lack of excitement.

Men were busy placing coloured pins into huge wall maps. Coloured discs were moved from space to space, indicating the routes of ambulances and other



Wing-Commander Hodson, Inspector-General of the Civil Defence Forces.

units. In my mind's eye I could see the men and women I knew tearing through the darkened streets lighted by gunflashes and flares. I could see the rescue boys, begrimed and perspiring, digging like moles among shattered homes. Once the floor heaved slightly, and I looked up, startled. The Operations Officer smiled at me. "Rather close, that," he said. I had not realized it was a bomb. There was no sound!

Regional Control, which may be compared to divisional headquarters in an army, is responsible for the intricate working of Air Raid Precautions, and also through its various liaison officers for the "post blitz" operations by which we continue to live, eat, and do our jobs.

Britain is divided into twelve sectors,* each with its own Regional Control. London, which consists of nine groups covering seven hundred and fifty-five square miles, has, of necessity, a slightly different organization to that of the provinces, and has two operational centres, one the London Regional Control, and the other a general control centre, connecting with all outlying sectors and also with all the ministries which are concerned with Civil Defence.†

Regional Commissioners and their deputies are appointed directly by Royal Warrant, and although they did not take up their positions until after the declaration of war, several had been appointed at the time of the Munich crisis, and were ready to function upon call. Much care had been taken in selecting these officers, not only for their reliability, but for their technical knowledge in specialized fields. Even recently, some districts have been reinforced with extra Regional Commissioners, and in the London area two Special Commissioners are now in control of demolition and debris removal (Sir Warren Fisher, G.C.B., G.C.V.O.) and housing (Mr. H. U. Willink, K.C., M.P.).

Regional Headquarters numbers amongst its personnel representatives of the Ministries of Health, Food, Information, Labour, Pensions, and Transport. Liaison officers from the General Post Office, the various organizations dealing with works and buildings, the Army, Navy, and Air Force, a Regional Police Staff Officer, and a Regional Fire Officer and his staff. In the provinces, large towns are known as Scheme-making Authorities, and, although under Regional Control, they act on their own initiative as long as their resources will hold out. These authorities are sub-divided into Report Centres, their number depending on the population of the town and its vulnerability to air attack. Under these Report Centres are the wardens' posts, each of which covers a certain area, for which the warden in charge is directly responsible.

As soon as the "yellow," or warning signal, is flashed to the operations department, the A.R.P. services, under the command of the Chief Administrative Officer,‡ stand by for action. These include the wardens, fire department, ambulance services, and rescue squads. The post blitz forces, consisting of rest centres, evacuation, assistance, demolition, and repair, are represented at Regional Control by members of the ministries which deal with these subjects,

* See map.

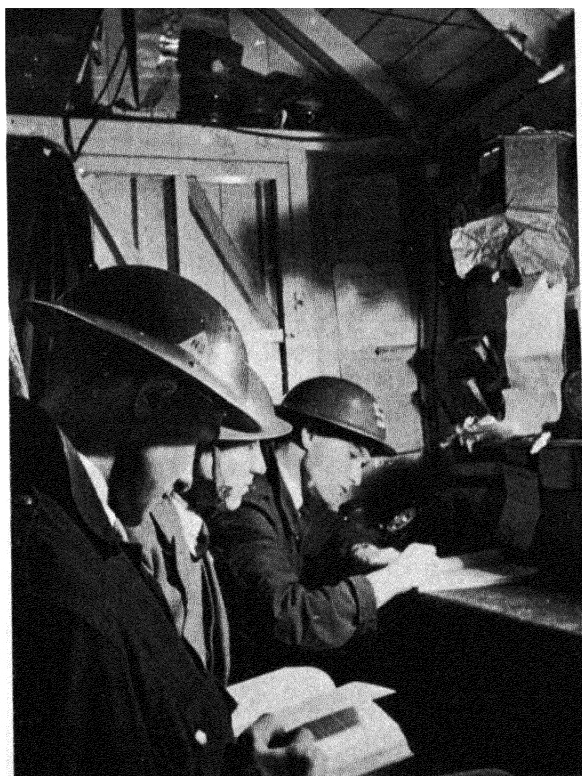
† See diagram.

‡ In the provinces he is known as the Principal Officer.

who are in direct touch with their own executives in Whitehall. But, should a crisis arise in which communication with Whitehall is impossible, these liaison officers act in direct co-operation with the Regional Commissioner of the sector affected, and are technically under his command.

It will thus be easily realized that Regional Commissioners are chosen not only for their ability, but for their tact and natural resourcefulness. They are, in fact, not only generals, but must be diplomats of the highest order, as the strength of their whole organization lies in the co-ordination between the various departments and the unassailable front which must prevail should they be thrown on their own resources.

The system of Regional Control is duplicated in a smaller way throughout the whole civilian army. Whereas Regional Control is comparative to divisional headquarters, so may boroughs and groups be likened to battalions and regiments. Each sub-control has a group co-ordinating officer, who can tell by a glance at his "tally board" how many units have gone out, where they are, and what service and personnel is engaged. As his operations staff reports the need for assistance, so he moves his parties around, and if a group centre is unable to cope with the incidents in its own area, he can, by a call to Regional



A wardens' post at a warehouse manned by boys in their teens.



A pavement sandbag for use in fires.

Headquarters, obtain assistance from another group. R.H.Q., after consulting its own, and fuller, tally board, decides which area is best in a position to rush assistance to the field, or whether they should call upon the reserves which are ready to move from certain stations.

One-third of the total parties available are considered as reserves, but to avoid congestion, these are not concentrated in any one area. At the order to "concentrate group reserves," one-third of the whole can be available immediately. On the other hand, they are so placed that any unit can move separately on emergency. All this has been carefully plotted since the bitter experience of the first raids of 1940, when the carefully arranged, academic plans proved inelastic.

Some control stations are far more closely guarded than others. I have visited one and been stopped by an armed sentry, whose orders are to shoot immediately if his challenge is not answered. I have passed through series of zigzagging blast walls, which have already shown their usefulness when half the building was destroyed and the operations room remained untouched. I have sat in a building beneath eight feet of reinforced concrete, fitted with huge auxiliary motors for air conditioning and lighting. I have seen lines of motor-and push-cycles ready to pick up communications when, or if, the lines fail. I have seen boys and girls, too young to join the army, who have already proved their mettle by dashing through a hail of bombs from one post to another, reporting fires, calling for rescue squads and ambulances, and waiting to guide the helpers to the incident.

Another Regional Headquarters is situated in an old-world town, which up to now has never had an alert. It is simply guarded by a local policeman, and approached through a glorious garden. A quiet, grey-haired man, with a firm handshake, showed me the operations department, a room gay with flowers in contrast to the numerous telephones and the intricate maps which line the walls. Little can be revealed now about this side of Civil Defence, but it can be told that every movement of the enemy for every second of the twenty-four hours is shown simultaneously in this, and in the twelve other secret headquarters, known only to those whose work lies within and beneath their walls.

Regional Control, Scheme-making Authorities, Report Centres, Group Controls, and wardens' posts are never without a full staff. Even during the weeks of lull from enemy activity the People's Army continues to grow. Men from the highest in command to the youngest messenger stand their watch. Beds are arranged below ground or in blast-and-splinter-proof shelters. Canteens work day and night. Repair men watch the buildings and think out improvements. Extra food and first-aid supplies are stored in safe places. New syren controls are tried out. Staff members go through "gas laundries," and learn to pursue their normal duties wearing a respirator. Code words are changed daily, and uniforms are being provided. Everything is ready, everyone is at his or her post, or, if on leave, knows exactly where to report.

In quiet country houses, under busy streets, in the grounds of century-old castles, the work goes on. Headquarters is ready to press the button, and to set in action the army with the hardest job of all—the army that waits.



Brick and concrete wardens' post with stirrup pumps.

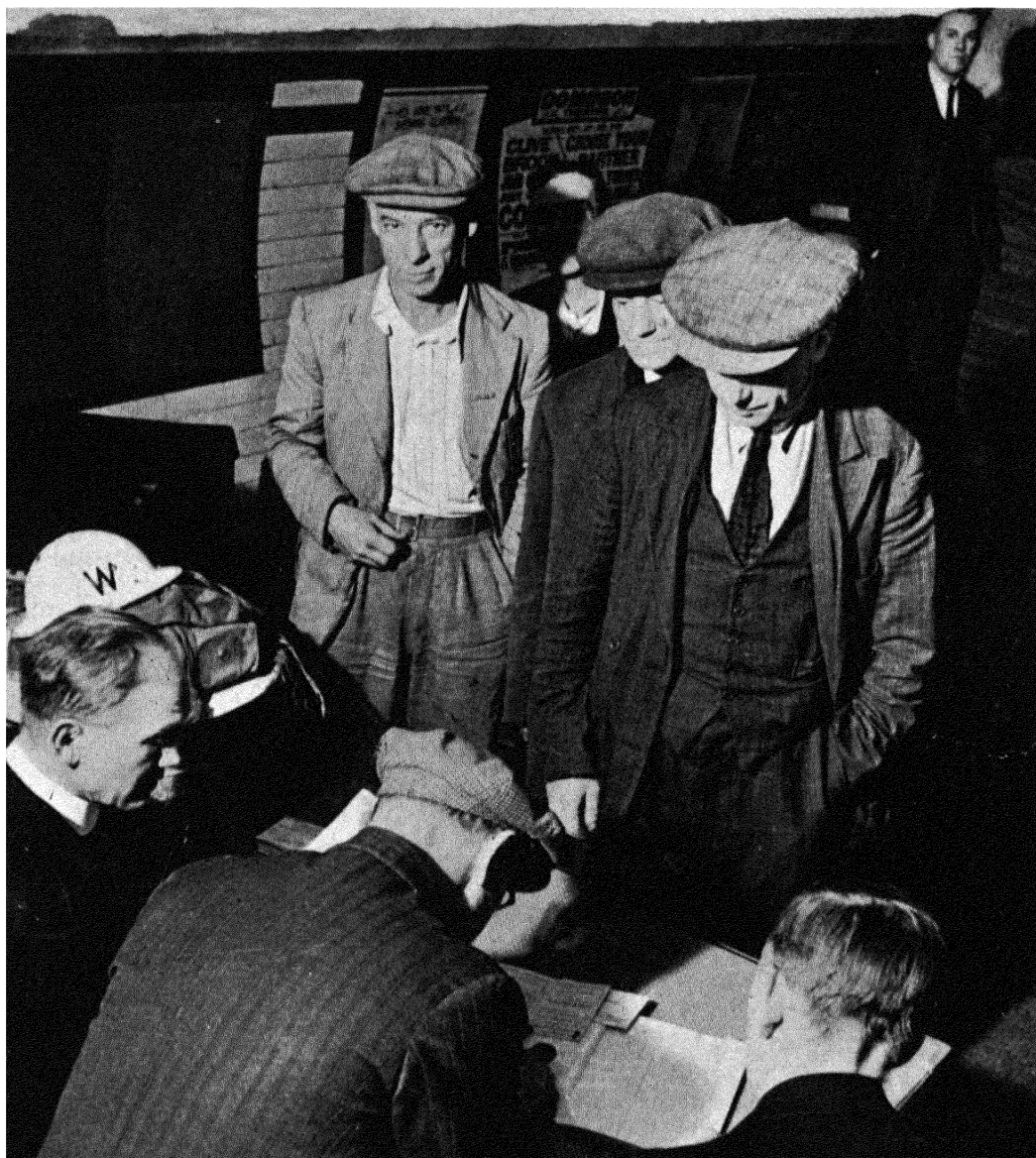
WARDENS

I have heard wardens variously described as the Civilian Army Police, and as the "father and mother of the sector," but I think the best description is that of the contact man between the people and the control. He is directly responsible for every one in his sector, for reporting incidents, and in the event of communications breaking down, can order out the A.R.P. services to his assistance and direct their movements.

All areas have a chief air-raid warden and his deputy, divisional wardens, group and sector wardens, and post wardens. The latter are housed in reinforced basements or blast-proof shelters equipped with telephones to the local control centre, and have, on an average, about five hundred people under their immediate care. In ordinary routine, they report damage to the control centre, stating whether people are trapped, whether there is damage to gas or water mains, what roads are open, what type of bomb is being used, and how much help is needed. Later, fuller reports are made, and log books are kept in all posts chronicling every bomb that is dropped, with its resultant damage, and thus compiling valuable blitz history for future precautions.

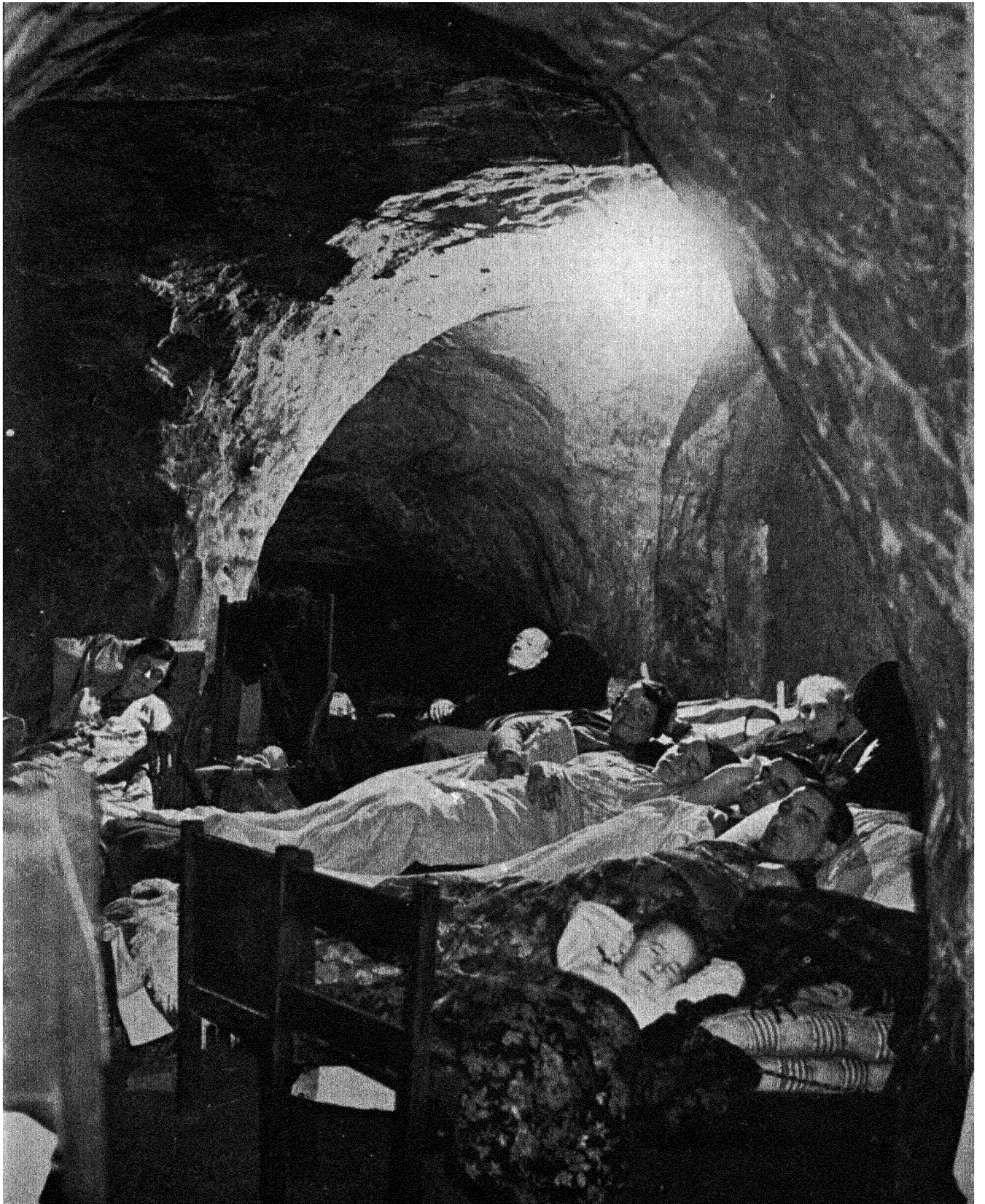
Wardens' posts are equipped also with stirrup pumps, fire-fighting apparatus, and first-aid boxes. The personnel know where to send people to shelters for rehousing, food, and water. They check respirators, find missing families, and stand by at "incidents," helping in the work of rescue until reinforcements arrive.

The immediate reporting of air-raid damage is the first duty of the wardens' service. On the warning of enemy action the forces divide, some to patrol their



Wardens issuing shelter tickets in an Underground Station.

Cave-dwellers on the south-east coast, where caves which once served for smugglers, and later as a tourist attraction, have been put to better use.



area, whilst others remain in the post to contact control. A force of messengers is always ready to relay to the next post in the case of a breakdown in communications. The wardens do not usually ask control to dispatch any particular service, but they can, if necessary, allocate rescue squads and ambulances as they think best. At an alarm call, an express party is sent out first, consisting of one ambulance, one stretcher party, and one sitting-case car. If the control officer thinks it advisable, according to the circumstances of the raid, he will order a rescue party to accompany the convoy. No party ever leaves its station until ordered by Central Control, even if a bomb falls, as one did recently, just outside the depot.

If serious damage or large numbers of casualties have occurred, an A.R.P. official, known as an incident officer, is dispatched to take control on the spot. This man is usually selected from the ranks of the district wardens. He carries a light blue flag, wears light blue shoulder tabs and a blue band on his helmet, and although he does not interfere with the work of the casualty parties, he is in a position to request more assistance if it is needed.

Although most of the senior wardens have been chosen from the ranks of town and borough officers, many are men who have been accorded a popular vote, backed by the civil authorities. The number of paid wardens varies from one-third, in some congested seaports, to as little as 2 per cent. in quiet villages in Wales. The wardens' service is one of the oldest in A.R.P. training, but thousands nowadays are voluntary workers, who, besides carrying on their own business, are part-timers, and always on the spot in an emergency.

Casualties among wardens have so far been greater than in any other branch of the service. In one South Coast town, four have been killed and four seriously wounded out of a post of ten men. They have also collected five medals for bravery, which is a high average in a service where nobody talks of their achievements, and decorations are considered the property of the community. One of the men when severely wounded in the stomach knew that he had less than two hours to live. He insisted on having a rough bandage wrapped round him and his stretcher being placed outside the post, and there, amidst a hail of incendiaries and high explosives, he calmly directed rescue work until he died. On the same night a young warden had his foot torn almost off by a bomb splinter. After being helped back into the post to await an ambulance, he tied the injured limb on to his ankle, and with a makeshift crutch staggered back to the street to assist in putting out fires and directing operations until the "all clear." Only then did he allow himself to collapse, and later had his leg amputated above the knee.

The story of the evacuation of the Isle of Dogs is one which should be honoured by the side of the miracle of Dunkirk. It is a tale of heroism that needs a chapter of its own.

During the terrible blitz of September 1940, the Surrey Docks, in London's river area, were badly damaged. These docks are almost enclosed at the lower end by a small, narrow island, once the port and homes of the captains in the

old days when wooden ships sailed to the port of London. Now it is a residential area for dock workers and their families, and was connected to the mainland by two bridges. Shortly after the raid started, one bridge was blown to bits, and soon the flaring debris and long tongues of flame reached across and ignited the little houses. More incendiaries and high explosives completed the work of destruction. The Women's Voluntary Service went into action with every vehicle they could muster, the London Auxiliary Ambulance sent their fleet of cars, but there were four thousand women and children to be moved, and only one narrow bridge remained. Momentarily the fires grew fiercer, and the cars made their way through sheets of flame and falling beams. The rescuers managed to concentrate the people in a large building at the peak of the island, and drivers made trip after trip through the holocaust. Some of the victims were taken off by fire boats and coastal patrol ships, but most came through to safety in a cavalcade of buses, police cars, dust carts, private motors, lorries, vegetable barrows, and even hearses. Everything on wheels was commandeered, and despite the machine-gunning of the bridge, not one soul of that four thousand was lost in the evacuation. Some women, with their heads wrapped in wet towels, raced with their children through the blazing streets, and two girls pushed a pram packed with babies until taken on board an ambulance.



A street warden looks at the sky as evening falls.

Sitting in a wardens' post, I have heard some of the most human stories of the blitz. There is the one about the old lady who refused to go down to a shelter. At last her family appealed to the warden. The eighty-year-old woman, when seen in her spotless bedroom, was still wearing the high-boned lace collar and cap of the Victorian era. "No, young man," she said, "I have lived here all my long and happy life, and I will not sleep out of my own bed. At night I get undressed, I read my chapter of the Bible and place the Good Book beside my candle. I then commend my soul to my Maker. I pull the covers up around me and fold my hands for sleep, but first I look up and say 'B—— you, Hitler, you can't disturb me'—and he doesn't."

There is another good story of the man whose family had an indoor shelter in their living-room. During a fierce raid he was sitting there with his wife and son when he heard a knocking on the house door. Warily he crept out, and crawled to the front. The street was a mass of flames and fallen debris. On the step was a small girl, aged four, who said, "I just came over to see if your Alfie had any comics to exchange!"

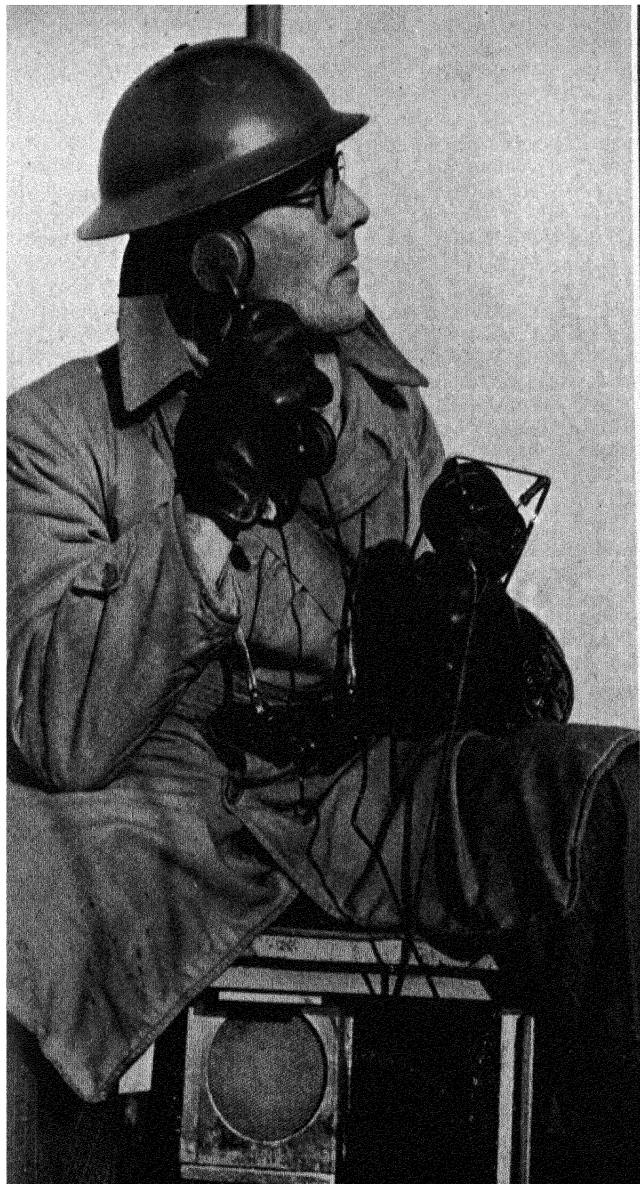
Wardens have another important line of duty, and that is the shelter service. Men and women are elected by popular vote to run a large shelter, often containing as many as a thousand people. Although, at the end of 1940, shelters were, for the most part, in terrible condition, now they are as well organized, and as comfortable, as homes. Canteens are set up, where food is provided at a little more than cost price. Cooking facilities and washing and sanitary arrangements have been made, and families have moved into their own groups, even putting up curtains to ensure privacy in their bunks. One large shelter is still gay with decorations of last Christmas, another has pictures on the walls, and flowers growing in pots. Children's toys are arranged neatly on the top of the blast walls, there are tubs for washing small garments, and each shelter has its family cat.

The most important thing, both during and after a blitz, is to keep the people occupied and normal, and in the new shelter in Bermondsey there is a theatre with dressing-rooms, a library, a sewing-room for women, and a hall for physical exercises. A volunteer shelter council deals with all complaints, amusements, and family matters.

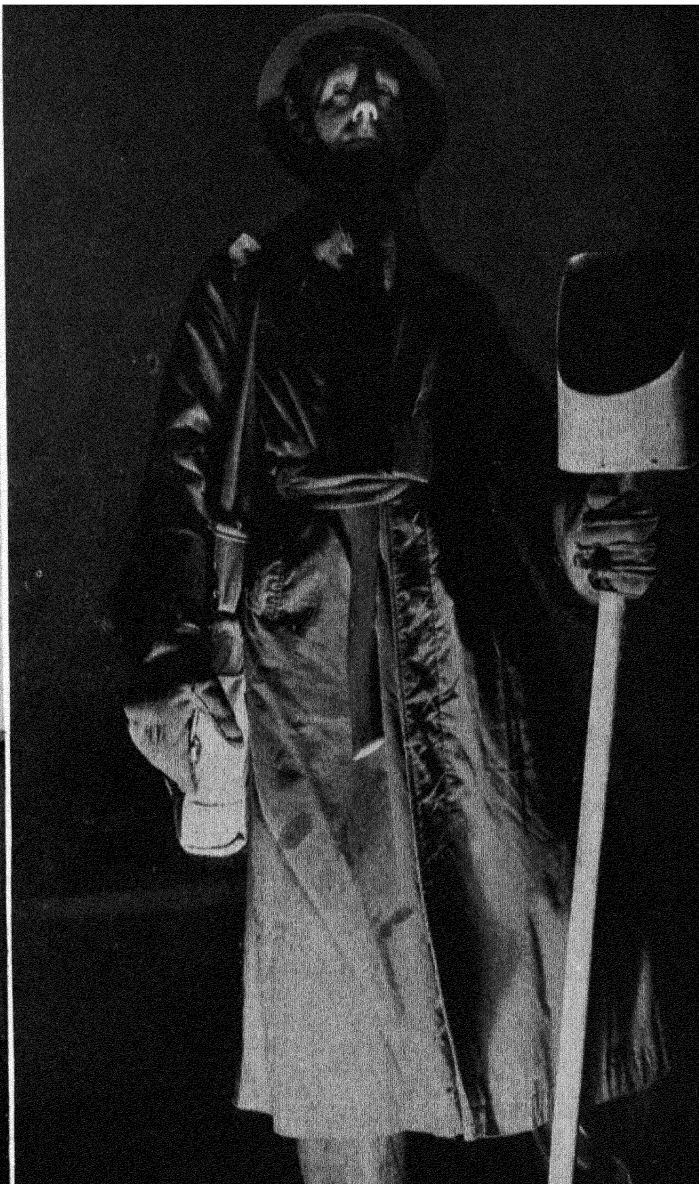
"The people trust us now," a warden told me. "They know that we know what to do. Even if they are still shocked by blast and noise, and white with dust, they will take a cup of hot tea from a mobile canteen and go where we tell them. Although they have to see the devastation of their homes and everything they hold dear, and although they know their men are fighting fires, or away in the armed forces, they know that through us they will find each other. The people now have put their whole being into the hands of Civil Defence." His tired eyes looked over a scene of still-smoking desolation that had once been trim homes. "When you have seen the dazed look on a woman's face become one of trust," he said, "then it is all worth while."

FIRE SERVICES

In January this year the Rt. Hon. HERBERT MORRISON made his stirring appeal to "Fall in, the Fire Bomb Fighters," and since then men, women, and even children have swarmed into the hazardous service of saving their homes



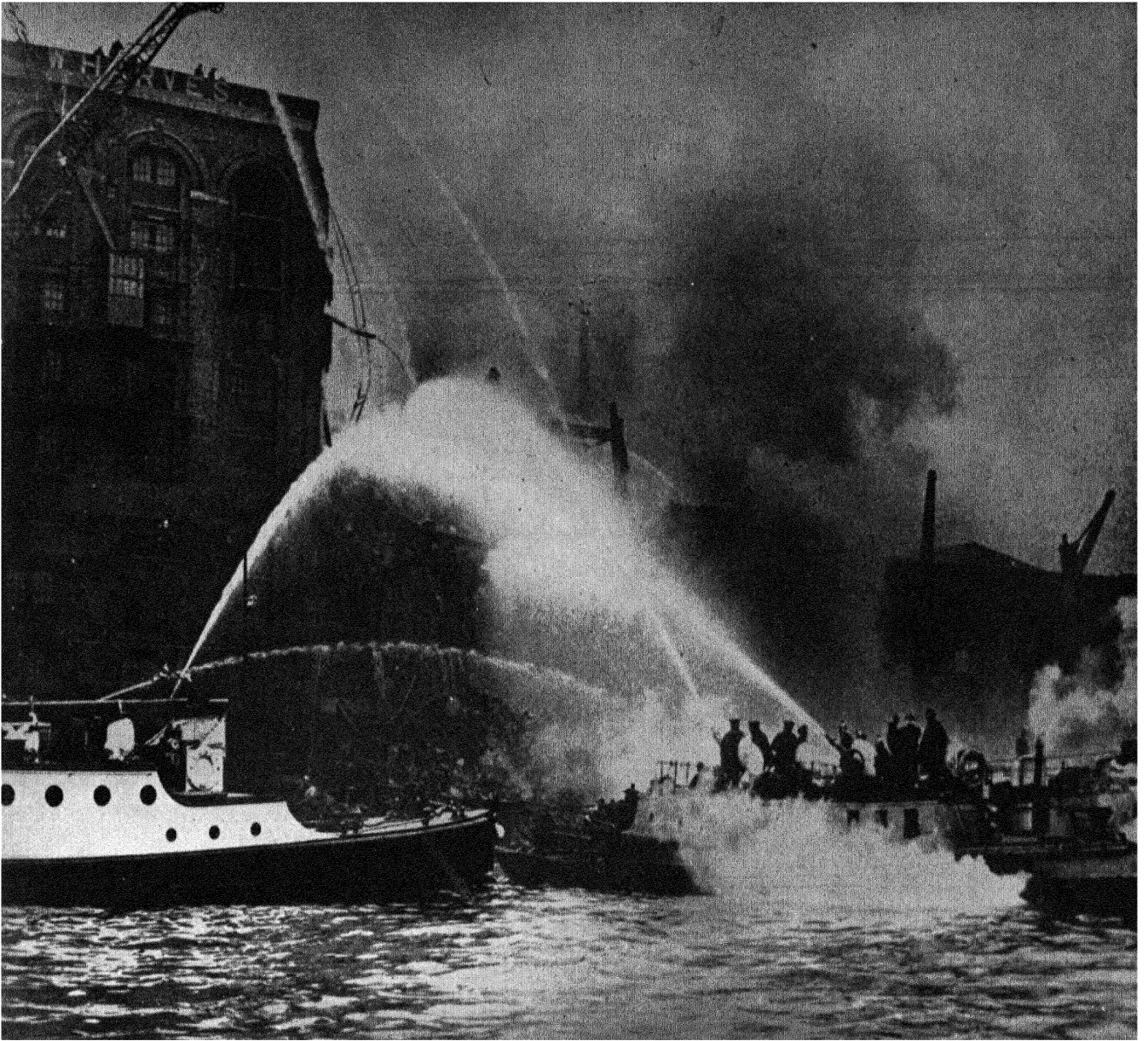
A roof-watcher on a factory.



A voluntary fire-watcher with his equipment.



Abandoned fire engines which were caught in a circle of fires.



A fire float at work from the Thames during one of the fire blitzes.



Fire-fighters on City roofs learning their ground.

from destruction by fire. It was only recently, however, that the fire department was reorganized to meet wartime conditions.

Under the old scheme there were some fourteen hundred local fire brigades in England and Wales. There will now be only thirty-two, plus extra ones in congested parts of the London area, and a special arrangement for Scotland. These will be divided between the twelve regional defence areas. As many as thirty-five to forty-five of the existing old brigades are incorporated in one of these new areas, manned by regular firemen and auxiliaries under the command of a Fire Force commander. The supervision of the fire forces in each Civil Defence region is in the hands of the Regional Commissioner, under the direction



**Firemen still at work after an all-night blitz,
with a gas main still unsubdued.**

of the Secretary of State. But subject to this supervision, the Fire Force commander will be in full administrative, executive, and operational control of his staff. Regional fire staff officers will have the assistance of technical officers for work such as water supplies, control of transport, communications, and stores. All Fire Force commanders are required to have had practical experience of fire fighting, either under war conditions or of the administration of fire brigades.

This new division of areas will not only make for increased efficiency and rapidity in the handling of reinforcements, but it will familiarize officers with the localities in which they operate, and will ensure the grouping of fire-fighting forces on the basis of strategical and technical requirements, instead of the necessity of keeping to the boundaries as prescribed by the local authorities.

Mobile divisions, which will be entirely self-contained both as regards fire-fighting equipment and transport for carrying baggage, gear, tents, telephones, and water-relaying units, are to be available whenever and wherever their services are required. They will be under the direction of Regional Headquarters

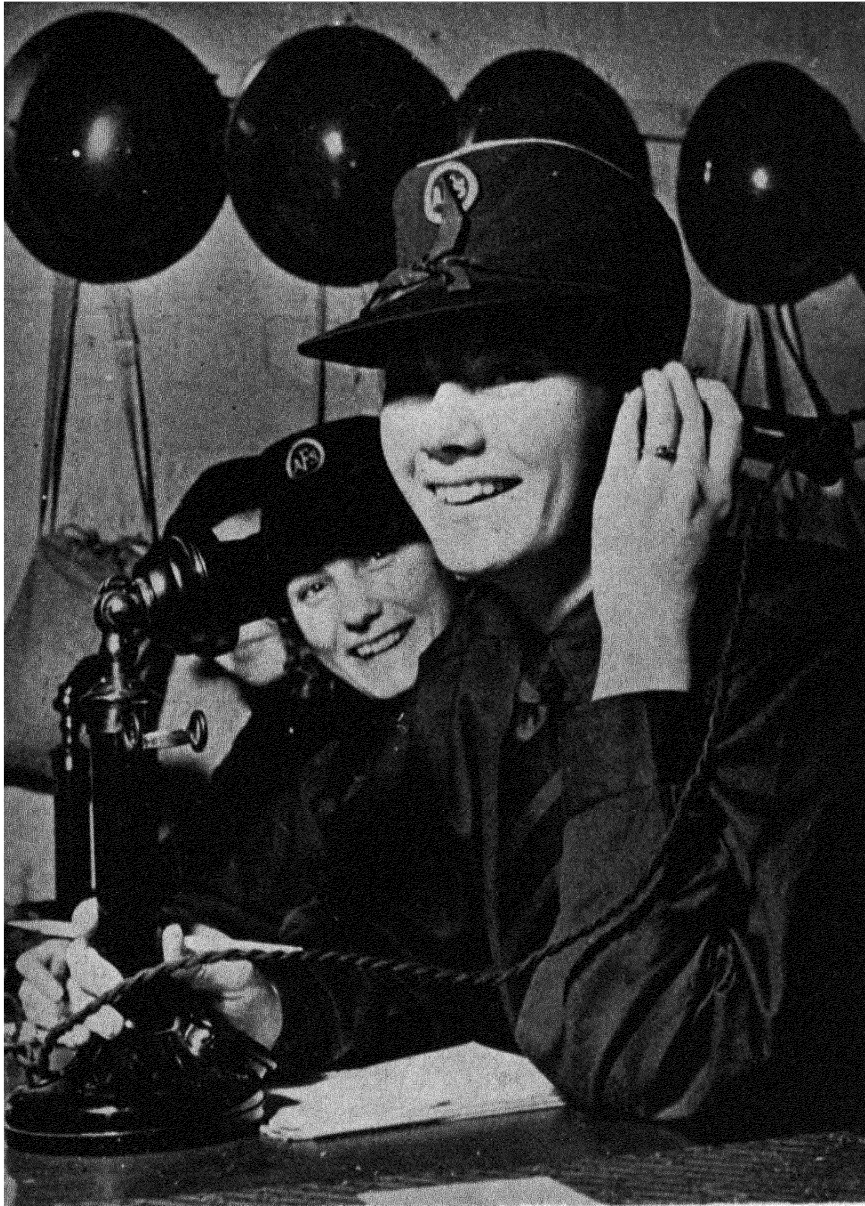
and the Central Fire Control Room, for use between one region and another. Thus, in whatever force another fire blitz strikes Britain, it is hoped there will be sufficient units available to be rushed to the scene of destruction without delay.

The fire control room at Regional Headquarters differs little from the operations room, except that the maps which decorate the walls deal chiefly with areas zoned according to their fire hazards. The tally board of fire control, instead of repair parties, rescue squads, and ambulances, has a complete record of fire-fighting appliances, such as foam—for oil fires, mobile water-carrying units, canteen vans, breathing apparatus, turn-table ladders, hose-laying lorries, escapes, and reinforcement of personnel. Each unit, as it moves to a conflagration, is shown on the tally board, and at a glance the fire control officer can tell where his force is concentrated, and from which district he can obtain reserves. In addition, there are huge pools of reserve equipment and men ready to leave on the word of command for any badly harried area.

Regional defence areas have necessarily different fire staffs, according to their population and occupations. A town with docks, warehouses, and factories is, of course, more protected than a quiet residential area. Some large cities have several divisions stationed within their boundaries, and other divisions and



An A.R.P. man brings some refreshment to the firemen.



Girls of the Auxiliary Fire Service, who man the telephones day and night.

columns are grouped round certain target areas. Roughly, the fire forces conform to the following plan:

Divisional officer, commanding one hundred pumps.

Column officer, fifty pumps.

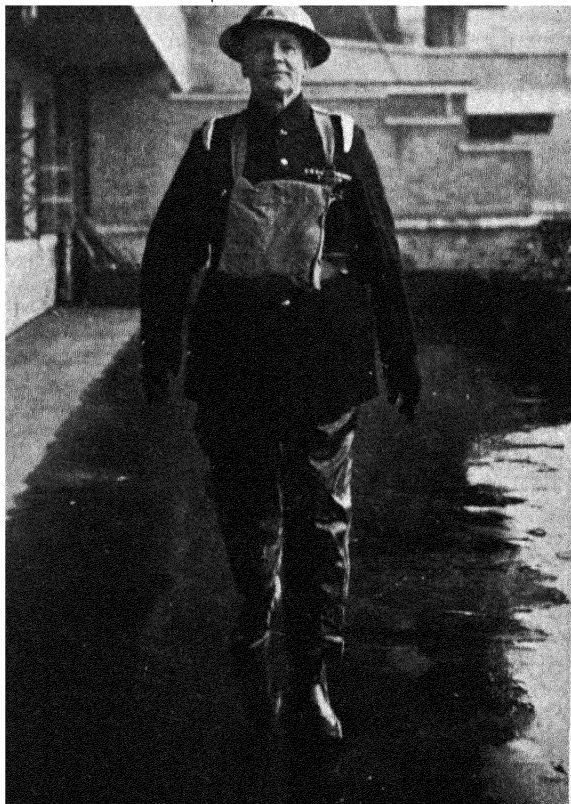
Company commander, ten pumps.

Section leader, five pumps.

Each pump crew has a leading fireman in charge.

Organized fire control does not in any way affect the necessity for fire watchers and fire parties to deal with fire bombs as they fall. These men and women, who have worked so faithfully and so well during the months of reorganization, are still the backbone of the fire-fighting forces. It is the men who voluntarily watch at night, smother incendiaries and work stirrup pumps who prevent a small fire becoming a holocaust.

In some districts it is now compulsory for all males between 18 and 60 with certain exceptions to fire-watch for so many hours a month. This is particularly necessary in commercial areas which are deserted at night. Terrible damage has already been done through the inefficiency and selfishness of property owners who have left town. These criminally thoughtless people have removed their own effects, locked their houses, and taken the keys, presumably to seek safety in the countryside. Valuable premises have been destroyed because one man would not co-operate with the authorities, and even to-day there are many important buildings in continual jeopardy because there is no law which forces absentee landlords to either protect their property, or to permit entry.



**Commander Firebrace, R.N. (retired), Chief of
the Fire Staff.**



Rescued after thirteen hours under the debris of her home.

RESCUE

Of the many highly specialized branches of Civil Defence, it must be conceded that the rescue squads require the most technical knowledge in the pursuit of their dangerous work. Not only must they be experts in construction work, but they must understand demolition, the shoring-up of buildings, tunnelling, and A.R.P. procedure. They must also know the rudiments of incendiary bomb control, the steps to take for protection against high explosives and time bombs besides gas and elementary first-aid training.

For the rescue squad is the men who are on the spot during the blitz, and sometimes even weeks after the blitz is forgotten and another one begun.

It was early in 1939 that the idea of rescue parties left paper and became a fact. The authorities had become very air-raid conscious, and it was pointed out that in the event of damage there would be not only the wounded to be rescued, but the forgotten dead. There was also the living population to protect from further harm from falling buildings, besides the fact that debris must be cleared so that life could go on.

Pioneers, police, and rescue workers, who have worked twenty-four hours to get at men and women trapped under a building.

Rescue parties were recruited from bricklayers, carpenters, plumbers, demolition men, riggers and steel workers, and representatives from the many affiliated building trades. They are variously controlled by the officers in charge of boroughs and councils, depending on their locale, but all come directly under Regional Command as one of the most important units of the People's Army.

Rescue parties vary in size depending on their area. London usually has ten men to a lorry, consisting of a leader, three skilled men, five labourers, and a driver. Many provincial towns, and some Metropolitan depots, still have parties of five equipped with a car and trailer carrying picks and shovels, blunt-pronged forks, ladders from fifty to eighty feet long, wire ropes, lumber jacks, suction apparatus, and many other technical devices. The men are also issued with dust goggles, nose pads, and rubber gloves—the latter, not only to be used against contamination by gas, but to be worn during the not infrequent task of removing the remains of bodies or those in an advanced stage of decomposition.

A priest helps rescue squad to clear away the bomb wreckage.



Rescue workers find a rabbit alive amongst the debris.







A worker burrows under the wreckage which at any moment may fall and crush him.

The job of the rescue squad is a hard one, for they are always to be found where the blitz is worst, working under a rain of bombs and shrapnel. They listen for the faintest murmur of sound, which may mean some poor soul is still entombed, and after hours of effort they often have to return to the surface with the dread report—all inside are dead.

They must brave the dangers of coal gas, sewer gas, and underground water. They must risk their own tunnelling falling about them. They often hang for hours upside down working to get someone clear of debris, or even administering morphia under the direction of a doctor, prior to performing an amputation necessary to release the entrapped victim.

Rescue work does not consist of blindly attacking a pile of debris with a pick or shovel, in fact much damage has been done by enthusiastic amateurs trying



to assist. The party leader must first gauge the original structure of the building, considering the possibilities of a basement shelter, and the angle of blast. Every possible source of information must be tapped. Wardens, neighbours, and those who have been injured, must give all the details they can of the number of possible victims and the locations of the shelters. A few minutes' questioning may save hours of labour, and thus save many lives. In one block of working men's flats in the East End of London, every person was saved simply because a plan of the building was quickly available, and the rescuers did not have to waste time digging through piles of rubble. Voids under demolished buildings must be reached without disturbing any unnecessary debris, as the weight of merely another few pounds may cause the remaining timbers to collapse. The extraction of a heavy girder can cause a whole building to cave in and bury its victims beyond hope.

For this reason schools have been established for the men of the rescue squads, and even experts are asked to attend courses to learn from another's experience how undermining and demolition can be avoided. They are taught technical details of tunnelling, construction, and of protecting themselves. They continue their first aid and gas examinations, and must learn all about decontamination, for they are the men who must be ready for anything at any time.

The duties of the rescue service, in order of priority, are as follows:

1. Rescue of living persons trapped.
2. Rescue of dead persons trapped.
3. Shoring-up of buildings dangerous to the public.
4. Temporary shoring of buildings to allow for the salvage of furniture or food.
5. Salvage of furniture if operational conditions permit.

This last duty is a matter for the decision of the local authority concerned.

It is a terrible moment in the comparative calm that follows a blitz when the rescue men call for silence. A warden, a policeman, or an incident officer will divert all traffic, order all motors to be silenced, and forbid anyone to smoke. The crouching men listen. Then one shakes his head. They dig again, and a slim fellow wriggles into the hole. The leader holds up his hand. Then at last comes a faint call, "as soft as the cooing of a dove," one rescue man told me. It is the first call for help. The young man struggles back, and with renewed zest the men get to work, one digging, one burrowing, and another shoring, and every so often they call for silence again to find out if that faint human sound is still coming through the tons of metal and timber.

It is nothing for these men to tunnel for hours to reach a trapped victim. Inch by inch, foot by foot, with gas mains exposed, the fear of fire, time bombs, and horrible death surrounding them. One young rescue man in Southampton told me of an old man who was reached after seventy-five hours of entombment.

“He was very brave,” he said. “I managed to get a little milk down to him through a tube, and he slept a bit, but while he was awake he liked to talk to me. Imagine me, hanging by my feet, cracking jokes with a fellow, and a tottering building over us both. Well, my ma always told me I must have been vaccinated with a gramophone needle.”

There is another story of a rescue man in London who saw the wall of a wardens’ post starting to crumble. He threw his body across the intervening



“Beauty,” a wire-haired terrier, used to search for other animals.

space so as to form an arch over the heads of the men standing below. They were all hopelessly buried, but their mates worked till dawn to get them out.

“We could hear them calling to us,” one of the men in the squad told me, “and Al, he laughed and said ‘Don’t hurry, boys, I’m not off till eight o’clock.’ That was the last thing he said. Then it was all quiet except for the telephone, and that rang, and rang, and rang.” The man stopped suddenly, and walked quickly away.



Park Crescent Terrace.

AMBULANCE AND FIRST AID

When the Emergency Hospital Service came into effect it was reckoned that about twenty-two thousand ambulances and about one hundred and fifty thousand drivers and attendants would be needed for the transportation of civilian casualties.

To-day, the number of ambulances is far in excess of this number, and every week convoys from America are bringing more. The old days of the "meat van" ambulance have passed, and although many stations are using converted private cars, there are hundreds of brand-new vehicles available for any area which is in need.

Ambulances come under the control of local boroughs and councils and the A.R.P. Whilst many civic authorities pay a small wage, three-quarters of the personnel are "whole-" or "part-time" volunteers, and even supply their own uniforms. They are required to have a working knowledge of first aid, sufficient to obtain a certificate and to be able to pass a gas course, which embraces knowledge of decontamination.



The ambulance workers on the spot.



A hospital train for moving patients from hospitals that have been bombed.

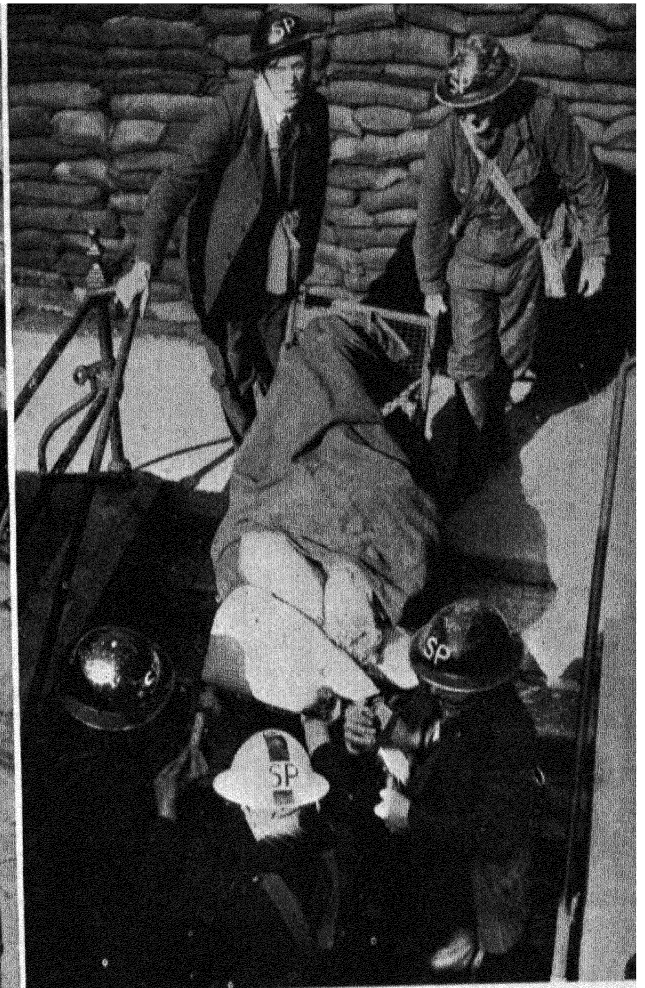
Ambulance drivers and attendants are not required to do more than "field" first-aid work, and their duty is to take their patients immediately to the nearest hospital in their district. No ambulance driver may take the responsibility of presuming death, but Heaven help the one who inadvertently takes a "D.O.A." into a busy hospital or casualty clearing station!

In the early days of the war, commercial vehicles were used to supplement the regular ambulances, and the van that delivered your groceries by day might just as easily be loaded with a grimmer cargo by night. Now each ambulance has its crew of at least two, its first-aid kit, its gas clothing, blankets, and stretchers properly fixed in their own racks. Units do not leave until ordered to do so through the A.R.P. control, but at the first warning of a "yellow" every driver and attendant is "standing by" in heavy rubber boots, tin hat, and gloves, with engines running, ready to snatch the flimsy white slip which tells them where they are needed. At least 80 per cent. of ambulance personnel are women.

London alone has more than one thousand ambulances and nine hundred sitting-case cars, not counting the London Auxiliary Ambulance Service, which is run by the London County Council in conjunction with Civil Defence. This service maintains huge stations and pools throughout Greater London, and in the larger stations medical units, rescue parties, stretcher parties, repair squads,



Casualty being conveyed from a hospital to a safe place in the country.



A.R.P. workers bring out an aged patient from a hospital that has been bombed.

and decontamination centres are included. The Red Cross, St. John Ambulance, and St. Andrew's of Scotland maintain first-aid posts throughout the metropolis and provinces.

A great number of ambulances are driven by members of the Women's Voluntary Service, the Mechanized Transport Corps, the Women's Legion, and the American Ambulance Transport Corps. The Friends' Ambulance Corps has done splendid work in all the worst blitzed areas. The American Ambulance of Great Britain maintains a fleet of two hundred and sixty motorized units distributed throughout the British Isles. The American Trailer Ambulance has given more than a hundred vehicles, and wherever the need is greatest there can always be found a unit painted the familiar khaki of the British-American Ambulance Corps.

A fleet of river steamers maintained by the Port of London Authority patrols the Thames from Tilbury to Chelsea. These boats can each accommodate a hundred patients, and are staffed by a doctor, two nursing sisters, six auxiliaries, four stretcher-bearers, and a captain and crew. They are usually tied up at strategic points, but always maintain a full head of steam, and have already distinguished themselves during raids. They are able to give full medical care even to operation cases, and their equipment includes stretchers of the navy type, which can be used to sling the wounded through small spaces in any position. The staff, who are mostly women, wear workmanlike blue jerseys and navy slacks, are trained to be able to abandon ship, even with a full load, within two minutes.



First aid by nurses in a tube station.

THE HOSPITALS

One of the most amazing—and fortunate—factors of the present war is the low casualty rate, which has been extremely marked, even during the worst periods of enemy air raids.

It was estimated by the Government that there were approximately six hundred thousand beds available in the civilian hospitals of England, Wales, and Scotland in peace-time, but the authorities were of the opinion that at least three hundred thousand beds should be available for civilian casualties as soon as was possible. This resolution became active in the Emergency Hospital Service, which was formed in 1938, and which is one of the few war services which has not been criticized by the public. To-day, it has more than one hundred and forty thousand extra beds available immediately for casualties, not counting accommodation in huts or the beds which are stored in depots for emergency use.

After the Munich crisis, medical men who had been through the last war decided that it was quite impossible to run civilian and military hospitals under separate units. In the first place, a huge civilian casualty list was generally expected during the first weeks of the war. Everyone knew that this was to be a war of the air, a war of nerves, and a war, therefore, which must be borne principally by the civilian population. Two months before war was declared, Dr. John Hebb was appointed Principal Adviser to this service. Sir John, as he has now become, had seen signal medical service in the last war, and had been Director-General of the Ministry of Pensions since 1919, and therefore was extremely familiar with all kinds of war ailments. He immediately collected his staff together, with the result that forty-eight hours after war was declared there were one hundred and eighty-seven thousand beds ready for military and civilian casualties.

During one of the worst London blitzes, I happened to be standing by the bed of a man who was too ill to be moved. The building rocked under the repeated concussions of high explosives and land mines. Almost delirious, he asked the sister if there was a Red Cross on the building. "No, thank God," she answered.

Sir John told me that it was agreed not to carry the Red Cross on any hospital during this war, because it had been proved before that the sign of mercy was invariably a target for the enemy. In England and Wales 10 per cent. of the hospitals have been hit, and many demolished. "Of course," as Sir John very fairly said, "you cannot protect a building," but what the Emergency Medical Service did was to protect their patients. Immediately the service came into effect it was decided to "freeze" a number of beds in each hospital; some of these were to be reserved for casualties, but two-thirds were to be kept open. Nothing was to be removed from "frozen" wards, but all patients who could reasonably be removed from the danger zone were taken to other hospitals



A busy night in the basement, where four operating tables are at work.

Stretcher cases are rushed to the surgery for preliminary examination.

Parts of Guy's Hospital have been demolished, but the hospital still carries on.

Nurses are seen making up bundles of clothing (much of which is received from America) for patients to be sent away.





or institutions on the outskirts of the towns concerned. This not only relieved the congestion, but eliminated the necessity of using wards on the higher floors of hospitals, and preserved the safety of a greater part of the personnel.

Three huge hospitals in course of construction before the war, as a part of the general civilian hospital scheme, now have a military unit. Thirty thousand beds were installed immediately, under Treasury sanction, for war casualties. Many public institutions, such as schools for the blind, and even mental homes, were taken over, and their patients sent to safer areas. Although the Ministry of Health has power to issue directions with regard to any hospital arrangements, it has been found preferable that there should be no interference by the departments in the internal administration of any hospital. If any one unit does not conform to a scheme which is considered necessary under emergency, an Act already in force can bring the rebel into line. This measure, however, has never been necessary.

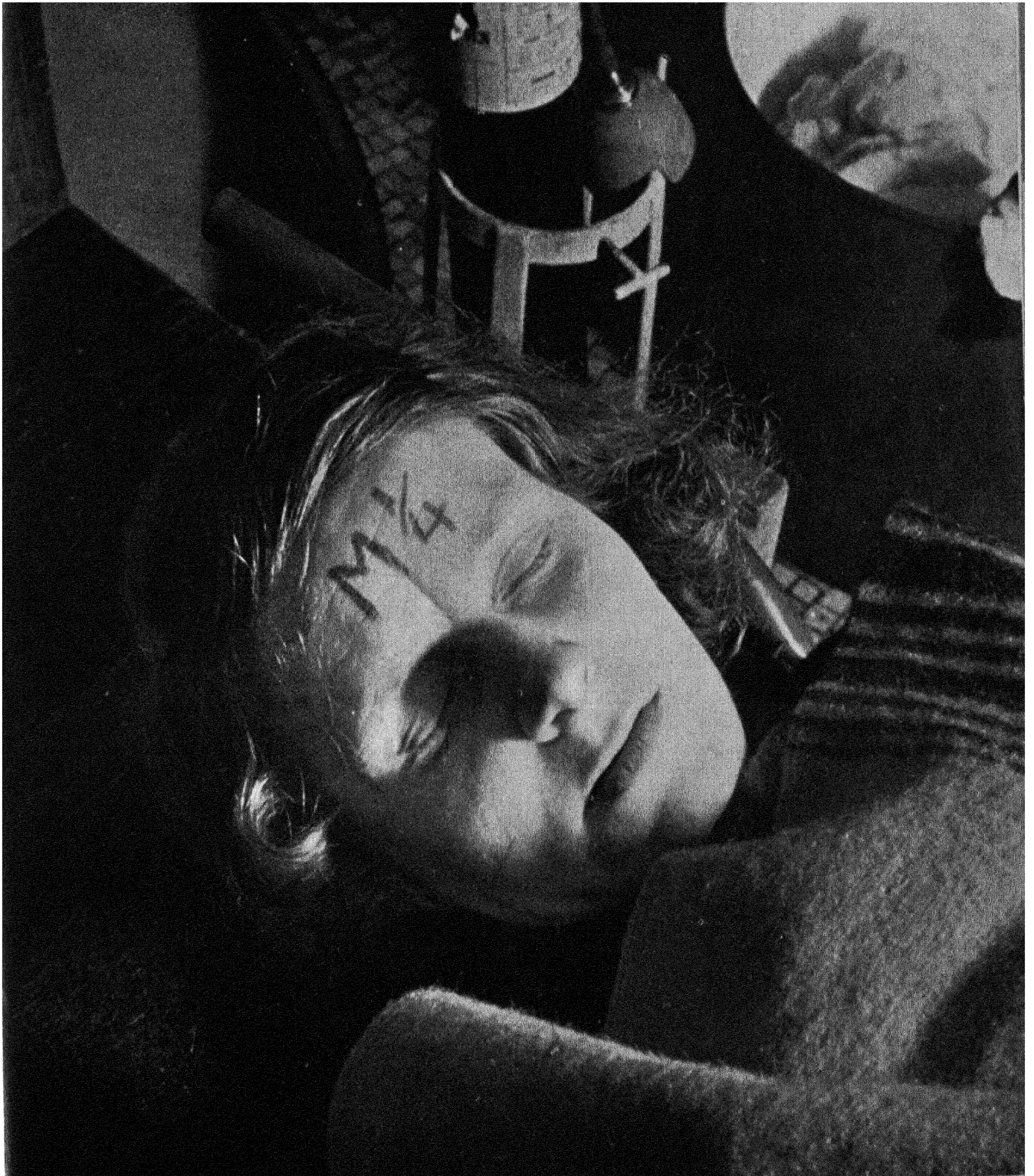
Up to May 1940, there had been less than six hundred service casualties reported; after that, including the convoys from France and training units in Britain, there were just over ten thousand in the first year of the war. In many cases hospitals had to reduce their staffs, or the members would ask permission to join other services where they might be of more use, and even after the 1940 blitz had started, hospitals found they were hardly used at all.

Another expected trouble was war neurosis. There has been none whatever among the civilian population of Britain. Further, to quote Sir John, "It is too late now, for the people have been through the worst. It is only natural that the population is shocked and upset after a serious air raid. Blast and concussion alone are responsible, but it has been proved time and time again that a cup of hot tea, and a return to their natural work or environment is all that is needed to bring them back to normal."

There are many centres with the services of eminent neurologists at their command ready and waiting for shock victims. There are wards devoted entirely to head wounds, chests, facial injuries, radiology, and orthopædic surgery. Every specialized branch of medicine is represented, and, in addition, the ordinary work of the civilian hospitals is being carried on uninterruptedly.

"Medicine is a matter of opinion," said Sir John, "and the most valuable part of a first-aid course is not learning what to do, but what you should not do."

He is entitled to this opinion, as the mobile units, which have done such splendid work in blitzed areas, are his "baby." Something had to be done to prevent the congestion of first-aid posts, and to assist small villages which caught an unexpected blitz. Mobile units, each carrying a doctor, a sister, and auxiliary nurses were fitted into the breach. These units vary from converted buses, in which operations can be performed, to mobile first-aid stations which can deal with any minor injury, and whose staff can, if necessary, take a patient into a building and perform a major operation with the instruments at their command.



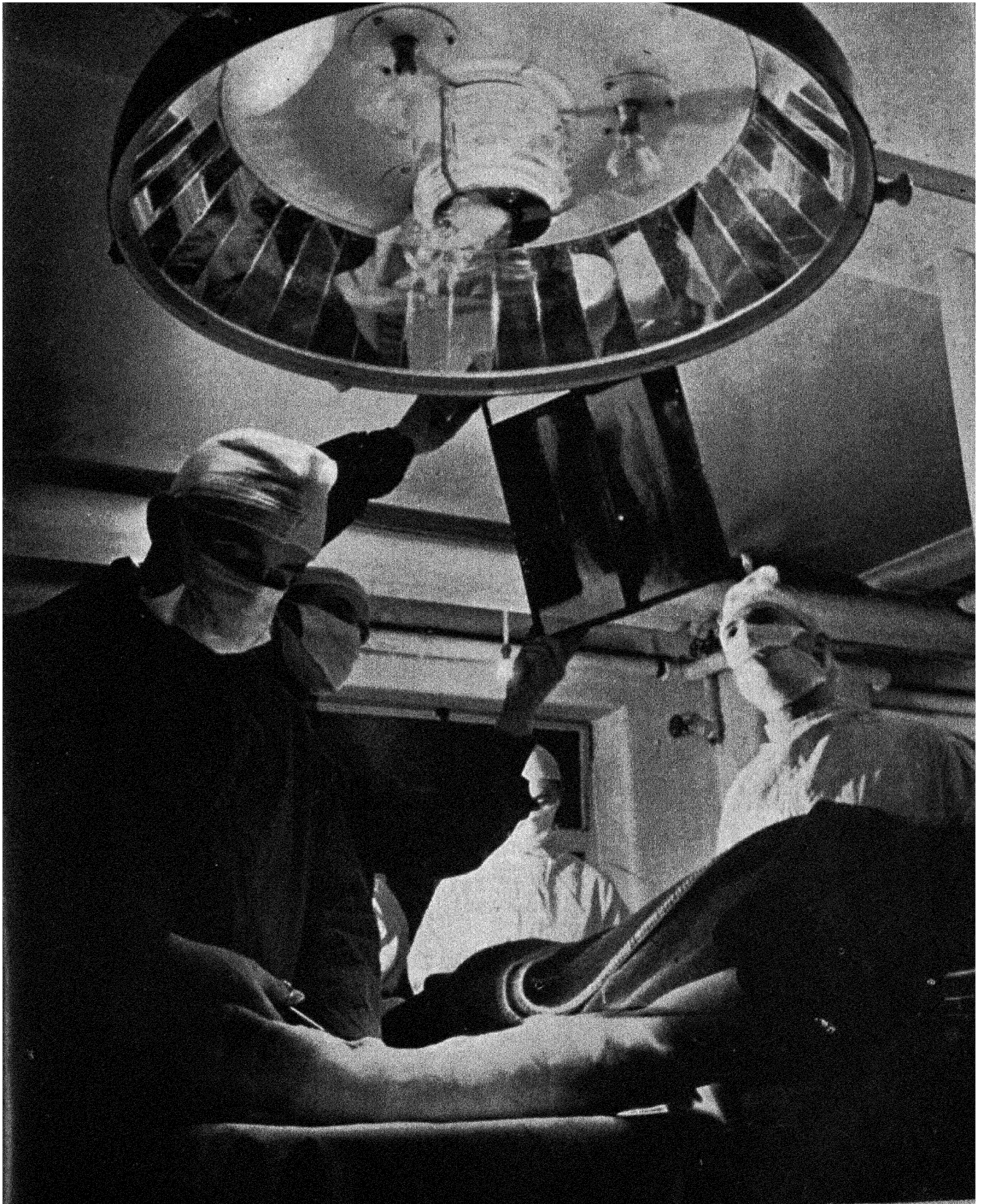
At Guy's Hospital: Patient has had $\frac{1}{2}$ grain of morphia.

Nurses and doctors from individual hospitals have performed many deeds of heroism during air raids. They have carried on their duties, including intricate operations, despite bombs falling all around. They have rescued patients from debris-strewn wards, and dug them from the ruins. They have, with their unflinching cheerfulness and courage, prevented panic when one hysterical patient might have affected the whole, and once when a shelter near a big London hospital was hit, the staff went out and worked for hours up to their waists in water, treating the injured and helping in the work of rescue, ignoring the presence of a time bomb, which blew up twenty minutes after they had left.

Besides the British hospitals, there are two fully-equipped American hospitals in service, one, the American Hospital in Britain, and the other, the Harvard Hospital, working in conjunction with the American Red Cross. These units are staffed and maintained entirely by American personnel and money, and are the nuclei of a huge hospital scheme for Britain, should it ever be needed.

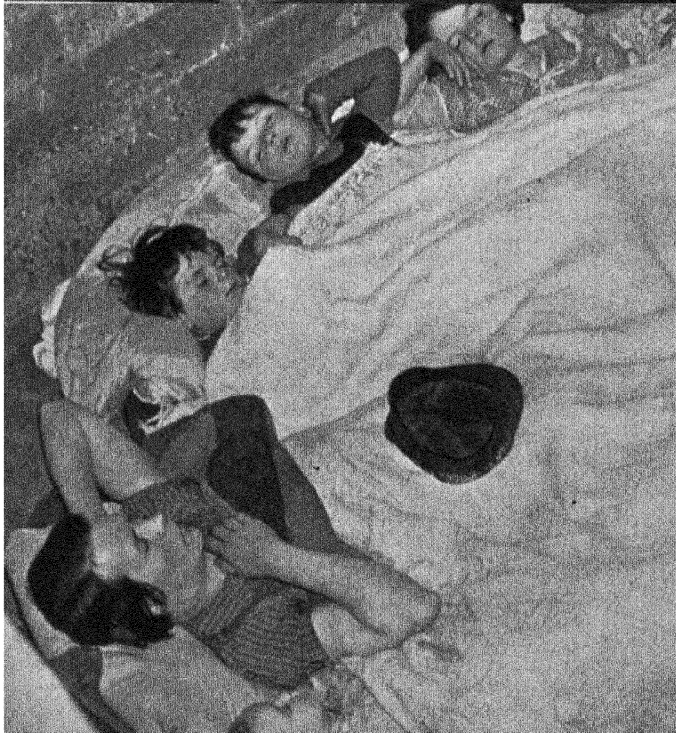
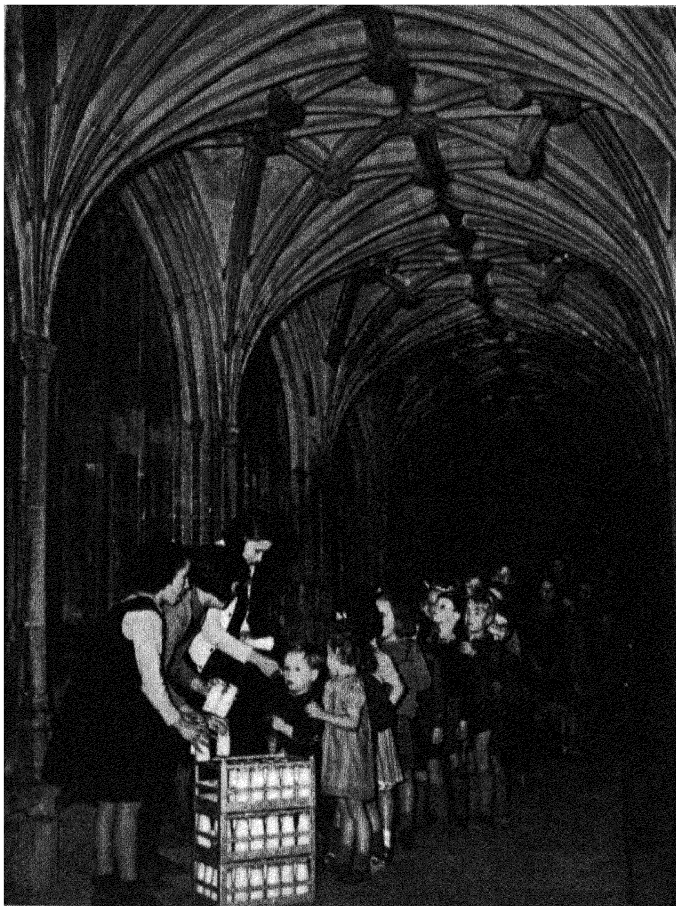


In a Children's Hospital.



School children from the City at Lacock Abbey, in Wiltshire, which is their temporary home.

Nine in a shelter under one counterpane.



AFTER-CARE AND EVACUATION

To Sheffield must go the credit for the organization of the "Come Right In" Society, although the idea is one which has been the aim of the Ministry of Health ever since the first air raid of the war.

If you have no friends who will open their doors to you in times of stress, then there are more than ten thousand rest centres in England and Wales, with accommodation for a million people, and they are open day and night.

The old British slogan, "If you want to know the way, ask a policeman" can be extended to "Ask the warden," for they know the location of the nearest rest centres in their area.

These centres are not meant as permanent homes, but as clearing-houses after a bad raid until people have had time to trace their relatives, discover the

Freddie Mauville, evacuated from Camden Town, where his home was bombed and his mother injured.





A party leaves for the country--parents and children together.

extent of the damage to their property, and, if circumstances are such that they cannot return home, arrangements can be made for them to be evacuated, either to the country or to one of the many temporary homes available. Many rest centres are set up in schools with science kitchens, in which case they are staffed with W.V.S. workers. Others are supplied with food from mobile kitchens, and each one has a bureau through which travel warrants can be issued, clothing distributed, and, of course, a first-aid post for minor injuries.

Information centres are organized by the Citizens' Advice Bureau, which informs people on almost any subject, from how to purify water to measures taken for obtaining relief after air-raid damage. Huge posters, issued by the Ministry of Health, appear immediately after a blitz, directing the public to rest and information centres, telling them where fresh water may be obtained, and even what necessities should be taken into a shelter.

While the bombs are still falling, the mobile food canteens and tea cars make their perilous way through the stricken streets, bringing comfort to the distressed areas. They are closely followed by the huge assortment of motorized units which have been introduced into modern warfare. There are dental units,

canteens, canning units, postal vans, and even laundry and shower-bath units amongst the motor services of the People's Army.

The washing units deserve some special mention, as they may be called upon to prove their value, not only as a cleansing unit, but as a decontamination centre. Soap companies have presented a number of mobile shower-baths, fully staffed and maintained, to the Civil Defence. They are composed of three portable tents, the centre one fitted with showers, and a huge water boiler on a truck. These travel to any area where the water supply has been affected, and offer the comfort of warmth and cleanliness to the populace. There is also a clothes-washing unit, which will take any bundles of clothing for bombed-out families, free of charge, and return them, dried, within a few hours. Already these mobile laundries have maintained a splendid service for Civil Defence workers and homeless families.

In addition to these many aids for the bombed areas, there are milk vans, food convoys (chief amongst which are the "Queen's Messengers"), and the familiar Salvation Army canteens, whose work in peace-time is as great as it is in war.



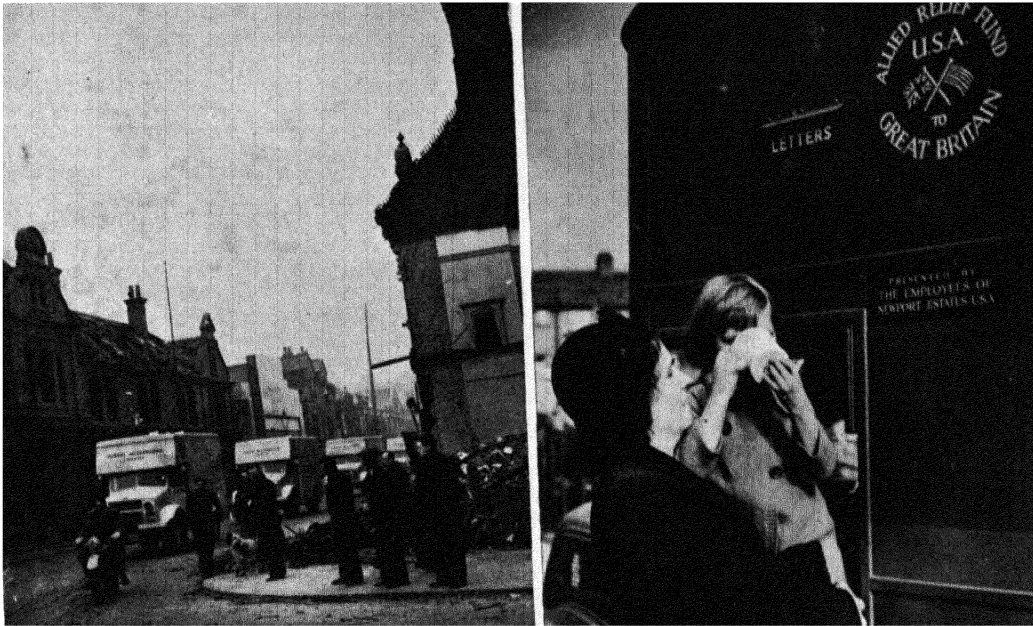
The police have the task of finding homes for many orphans from bombed homes.

Evacuation is not an aftermath of the first bombings, but a measure of security which was devised and put into effect long before hostilities began. Half the children of London had been sent away to schools and homes in the country before the first bomb fell, and more than one and a half millions, whose work or health made it unnecessary for them to live in the city, had been removed before war was declared. Maternity homes are maintained by the Government in safety zones, and many of the historic houses of Britain are open to evacuated mothers for pre-natal care and for rest after their babies are born.

Big schools have left their town premises, and many business concerns have rented country mansions, where they continue their work and maintain their staffs and their families. Huge areas, scheduled before the war, are devoted to evacuees, those who are living in private homes being allowed a billeting allowance for each adult and child. Fares and transportation are supplied by officers of the Public Assistance Authority, and clothing and effects lost by



Between air raids the children play.



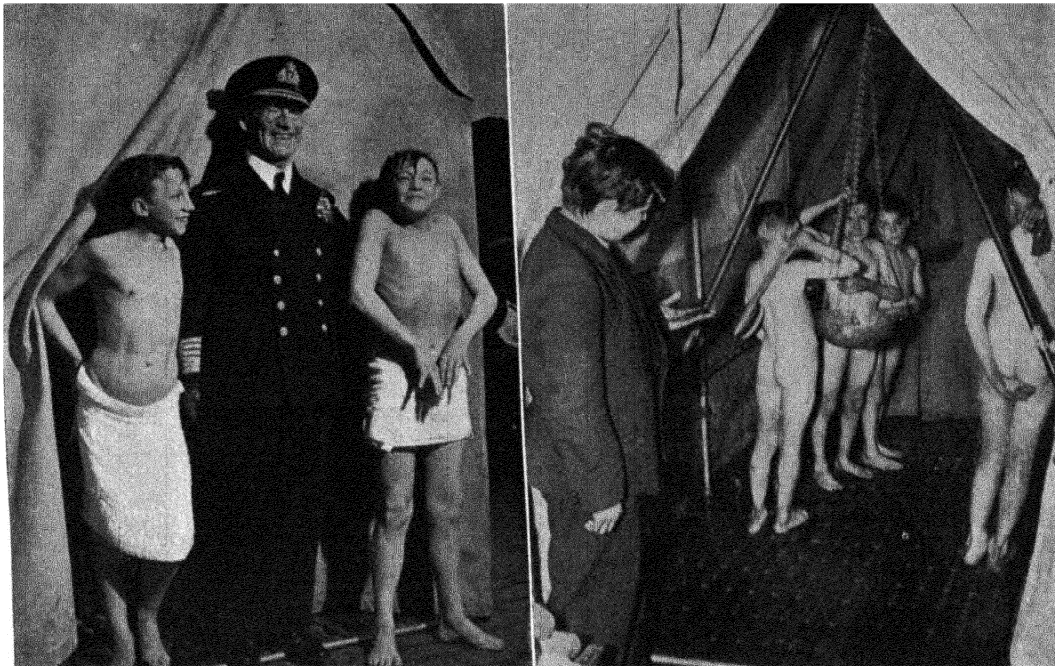
The Queen's Messenger Squad arrives at a canteen in an American canteen operating at Coventry. ravaged London area.



An emergency unit for washing clothes in badly damaged areas.



A food flying squad to relieve badly damaged areas on Merseyside.



A mobile washing unit for blitzed areas, with Admiral Sir Edward R. G. Evans, and two of the boys who have enjoyed their shower.

enemy action can be replaced, or money and coupons given to families in case of need.

Even furniture left behind receives care and protection, and is stored by the local authorities or sent to a new home. Of the many dwelling-houses which have suffered damage, 90 per cent. have been repaired, and made wind-and-weather-proof within a few days after the raid and their owners reinstalled in them.

Lord Horder, Consultant to the Government for Health, talks to children at a rest centre.



DEMOLITION AND REPAIR

Sir Warren Fisher, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., is a grey-haired, elderly gentleman whose forceful character is usually hidden behind a soft voice and charming manner. He is, however, a very firm gentleman. He has to be, for he has had to work much harder straightening London out than the enemy laboured to disorganize it. Sir Warren is the man who lifts the face of London. At the lift of a finger, fifty thousand workmen turn to this task under his direction.

At the end of September 1940, the Government looked upon the face of its towns and found some of them pretty badly battered. Perpetual raids by day had hindered the removal of debris, and the people struggling to work every morning, tired after nights of unrest, deserved something better, besides which the arteries of commerce had to be kept open. Life must carry on.

Sir Warren had been a Regional Commissioner in the north of England, and at first his rather rebel demands shocked Whitehall. But in the end he won. He asked for soldiers, and he got them, fourteen thousand of them, besides eleven thousand pioneers and a few thousand sappers. Under this military scheme he brought in Civil Defence, with such good effect that in July 1941 the last of the soldiers had left, and now the People's Army handles London town.

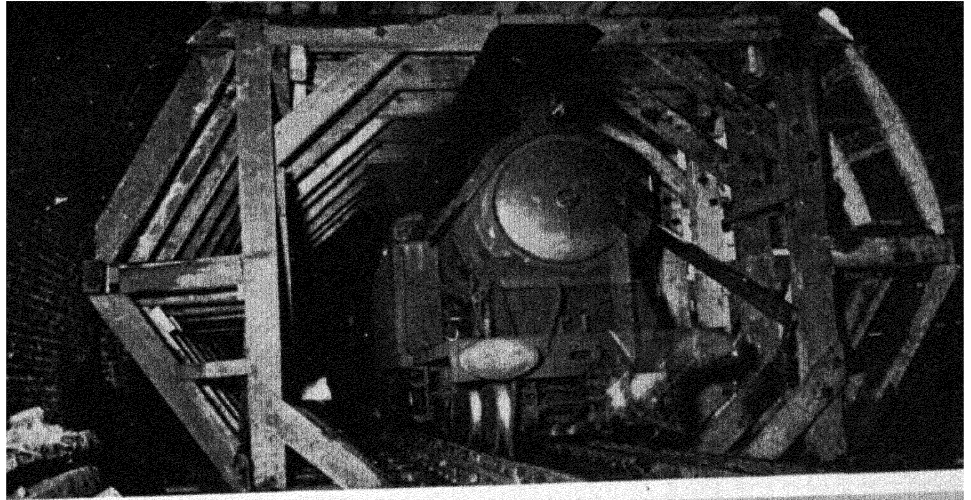
It is not easy to pull a huge city out of a blitz, but all the cities of Britain have done it, and within a few weeks managed to show a clean and smiling, if battered, front. Removal of debris does not just mean pushing girders and bricks away and dumping them somewhere else. It means salvaging every scrap of steel and every bit of material that may be useful in the future.

After the first raids, salvaged timber was left standing on vulnerable sites and became a serious fire hazard. Bricks, which had been stacked with much labour, would be flung pell-mell by blast, sometimes causing further destruction. All this had to be altered. Steel, so necessary for our many industries, must be saved.

It is estimated that there are between twenty and thirty million tons of useful salvage still to be recovered from London's blitzed areas. In the past three months salvage has risen from one thousand to twelve thousand tons a month, and by the end of the year will reach more than thirty thousand.

Although Sir Warren has a huge force under his direction, they are all skilled men from the various building trades, who work under their several contractors. The special commissioner is not concerned with the repair of damaged buildings, but only with the restoration of public utilities necessary to

First-aid repairs to a damaged tunnel on the L.N.E.R.

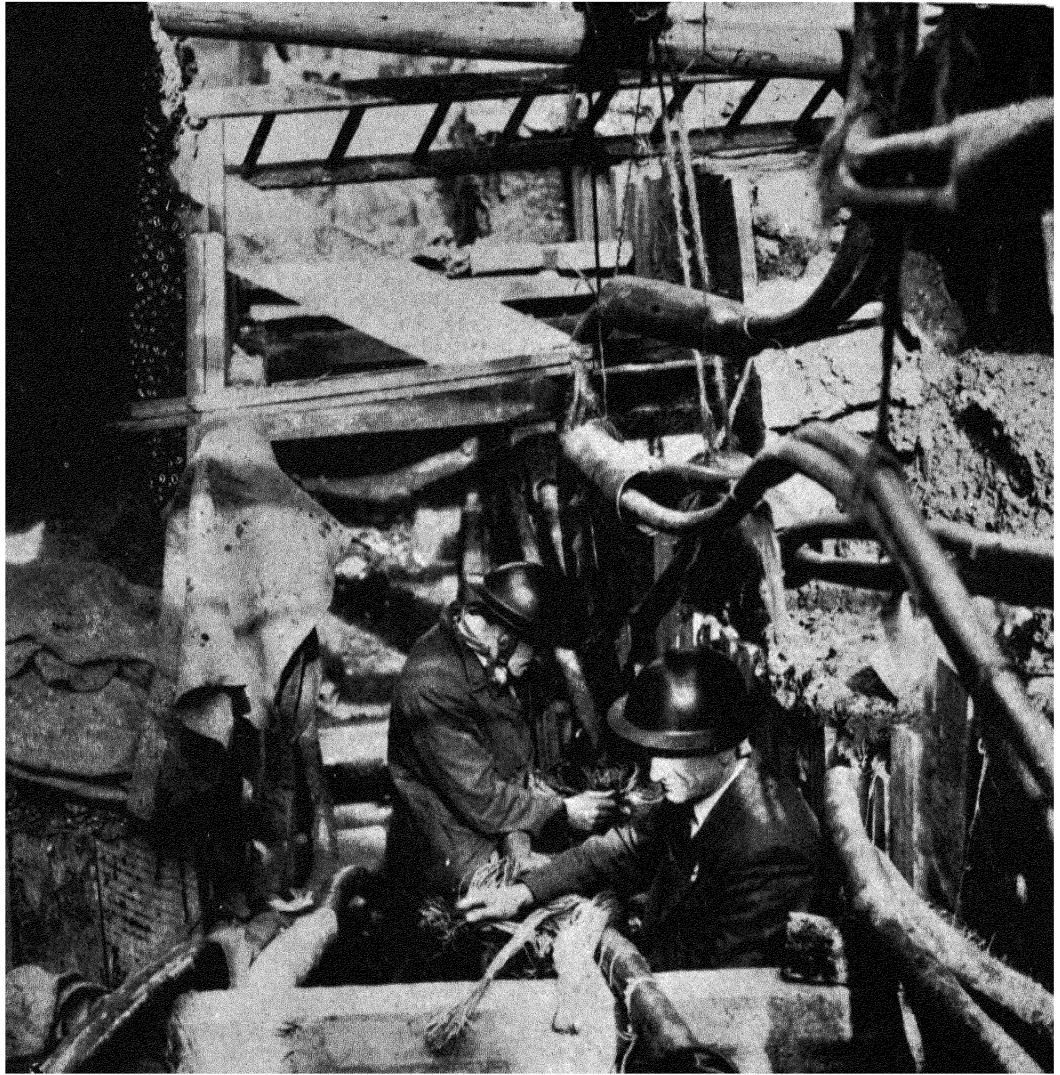


De-blitzing a railway. Trains will be running again the same day.



Post Office workers restoring the damaged telephone wires.





G.P.O. engineers at work far below ground.

the resumption of life. As an example of this, it may be said that less than 10 per cent. of the roads damaged by enemy activity are still affected, and only one priority road is still under repair. In one blitz alone, five hundred roads and two hundred and sixty telephone cables were damaged. Within a week there was transportation and emergency service on all these routes, in addition to the skeleton service which was working within a few hours of the "all clear."

Sir Warren gets much of his splendid co-operation by holding a “friendly conference” every few days with the liaison officers of all departments, including the rescue squad, the gas and light companies, the Water Board, the Transport Department, and the General Post Office, whether there is a raid or not. Thus the repair corps of the People’s Army is always ready for whatever may come.



A W.V.S. canteen serving the workers of a repair squad.



THE POLICE

In introducing the police force into Civil Defence, one must regard them as an army within an army. Although at one time they were considered to be beyond the scope of A.R.P., the police service, as a highly-trained force, must be one of the essential factors of the army of the people.

It has been said that there is no service so intimately linked with the people, and none so well able to gauge the pulse of the masses, as the British constabulary, and with their valuable co-operation and unfailing helpfulness, it is only natural that in time of stress the people will turn to the familiar blue uniform of "the Law."

The war has brought no changes in the organization of the police force. Many hundreds of police have joined the fighting forces, and to fill out the ranks an auxiliary force has been formed, consisting of first reserves, or pensioned men, war reservists, and special constables.

Of the latter there are two classes: the "full-timers," who in a very short time became fully incorporated into the police organization, and the "part-time" men, who are eager to parade at a station after their day's work is done ready to take on any job, however hazardous it may be. These men have already won the approval of their superiors and the friendship of their companions.

It is only natural that war conditions must bring huge, added work to the police. Regulations as to the lighting of vehicles, disordered conditions of life, and a hundred other matters, exclusive of raids, have increased their duties four-fold. The police must handle aliens, must deal with increased accidents, patrol the shelters, settle "black-out" questions, and curtail the activities of the less-desirable clubs, gambling-houses, and places of entertainment, which spring up like mushrooms during war-time.

The police have been taken even closer to the great heart of Britain for their work during air raids. It is well known that they have dug for buried victims with their bare hands, put out fires, applied first aid, escorted homeless men and women to shelters through burning, bomb-shattered streets, and generally taken over all the duties of A.R.P. until such time as the working units of the Civil Defence arrived on the spot.

The last two years have actually shown a decrease in indictable crimes, except in the case of looting, which comes strictly under a war heading. Looting is defined as meaning the removal of any property from a blitzed area by an unauthorized person, whether it is an article of great value or a paltry ball of twine. During some of the bad raids of 1940, especially during and after the destruction of Coventry, looting assumed such proportions that the death penalty was imposed. The Defence Regulation was made in July, 1940 - *i.e.*, before heavy raiding began anywhere. This sentence has not, so far, been carried out, but very severe sentences of imprisonment are invariably inflicted,

for the authorities are determined that this crime shall be curbed. In only 2 per cent. of the cases was the looted property valued at over £100, while 45 per cent. of the offenders were under twenty-one.

Another very important duty of the London police is the sounding of the air-raid warning. It can be easily realized that to indicate danger by a siren over the seven hundred square miles which comprise Greater London is no easy task. There are five hundred widely dispersed sirens, all of which work from a central signal within the period of two minutes.

One cannot leave the police force without a word on the splendid work being done by the women police. Here, again, there are several classifications: the ordinary women constables who are fully attested, entitling them to make arrests. This group is recruited from the regular force: the Women's Auxiliary Police Corps, which only operates in the provinces; and the non-attested auxiliaries, who are either "part" or "whole-time," and used to relieve the attested members by working as motor drivers, canteen servers, wireless and telephone operators, and in all office capacities. Many of the women police have been found invaluable in shelter work and in assisting the evacuees.

Almost one hundred members of the police force have been killed, and five hundred have been wounded, through enemy air activity. But nothing can disturb the staunch discipline of the "British Bobby." When a new London police station was demolished only three weeks after its official opening, a senior officer was surprised to find a detective-sergeant searching through piles of sodden property. Nothing but the concrete walls had escaped the blast. Asked what he was doing, he said, "I've got a case this afternoon, Sir, and there's a couple of exhibits somewhere in this heap. I must find them."

Downstairs, the communications room was a heap of wet rubble. Plaster lay knee-deep. Debris was piled up high, and water dripped disconsolately from the naked girders. Two officers, with earphones, were seated on upturned boxes, taking routine messages and enquiries, whilst a third was comforting an old lady whose dog had jumped out of the window in fright and run away.

ANIMALS

Throughout this war, in which so many nations and races are engaged, no mention has ever been made of any government concerning itself with the welfare of its animals other than those poor beasts which can be used for burden, or as food.

But the British love their animals, all of them, and it is only natural that the People's Army should have a Veterinary Corps. It is called "Narpac," the National A.R.P. Animals' Committee, and it has two functions.

Narpac cares for household animals, those poor little pals who so often get lost in the aftermath of a blitz, and are sorrowing just as much for their masters as their human friends are for them. Animals are registered and issued with an identity disc, and through this hundreds have already been saved. Narpac has welfare centres, first-aid posts, and a rescue service. They tend and shelter all lost animals for a certain length of time, depending on existing conditions, then, if unclaimed and no new home is available, the stray is mercifully put to sleep.

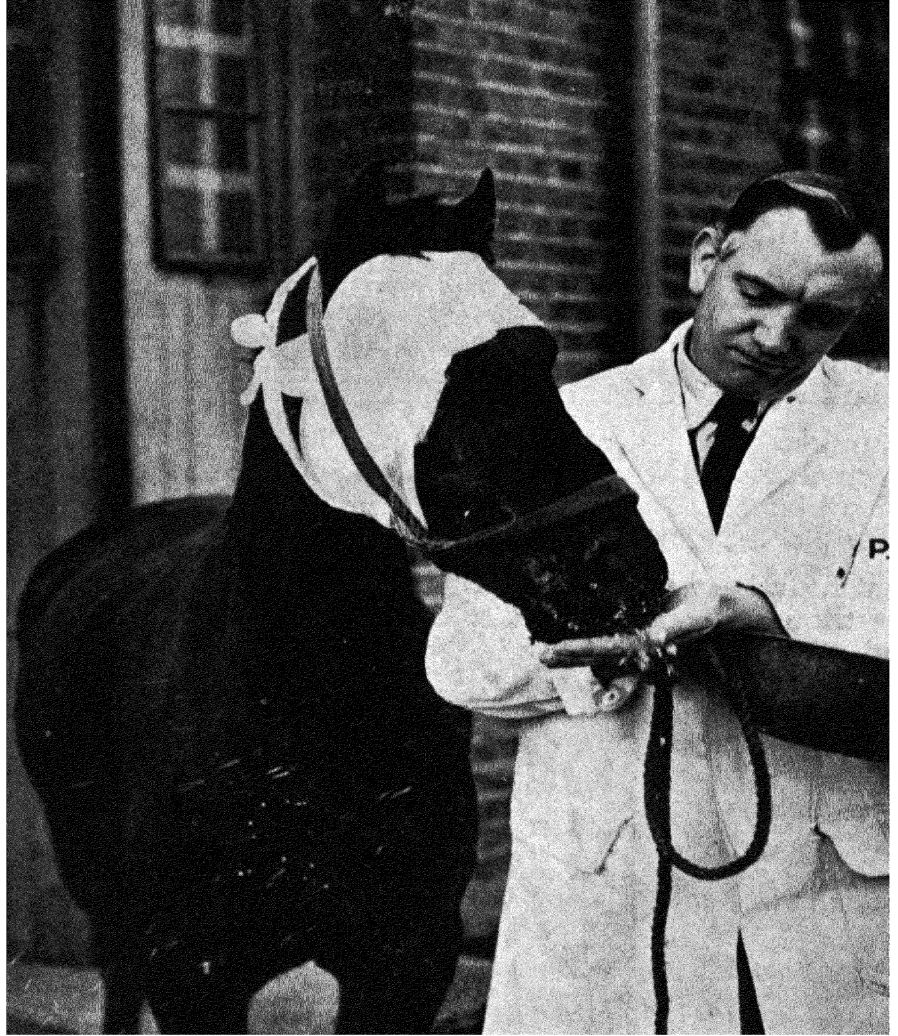
A great number of cats are kept to counteract the vermin problem. But all Narpac personnel are warned of the danger of contamination by animals, should we be subjected to attack by poison gas, in which event all animals in affected areas must be destroyed.

The second function of Narpac is the care of animals of economic value. A force of eight thousand animal stewards, mostly farmers and butchers, and a voluntary staff of veterinarians deal with the danger to live stock during a blitz. Their first duty is the removal of injured animals, and, if it is impossible to save their lives, the carcass must be salvaged for human consumption, which means immediate action, often under the most difficult conditions.

Of the several thousand casualties amongst economic animals, 16 per cent. have been treated and returned to stock, while 33 per cent. have been saved for food.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and other animal organizations, have ably assisted in the work of Narpac, which, like most A.R.P. projects, had its inception before the war.

Many private enterprises have given medals to animals for bravery, notably dogs, who have dug all night in ruined homes to release their canine pals. Animals have been buried for days, and recovered and shown no ill effects from their sad experiences.



An air-raid casualty at the P.D.S.A.

CONCLUSION

The People's Army is an army of equality, in which men and women, rich and poor, young and old, are working side by side.

There are men with ribbons from half-forgotten campaigns on their blue "battle-dress," and children too young for active service.

There are people whose physical defects bar them from the fighting forces.

The ranks are filled from every strata of society, for the People's Army is an army of true democracy. It is Britain.



Their Majesties the King and Queen at Buckingham Palace after a raid.



