

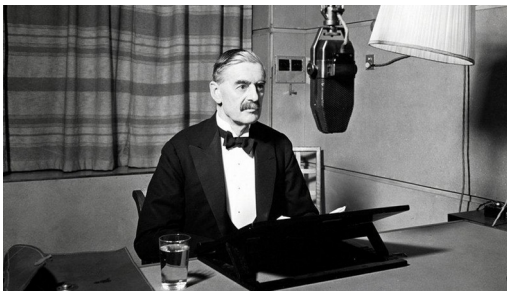


Joan's Memories of WWII

Wartime memories of Joan



- Joan was seven when war broke out.
- She lived about ten miles from London, but soon after the outbreak moved for a while to her grandparents in the Kent countryside, before moving back home.
- Her wartime experiences were typical of many young children.
- Joan, is the mother of Four Horseshoes licensee, Jan Holden.



3rd September 1939



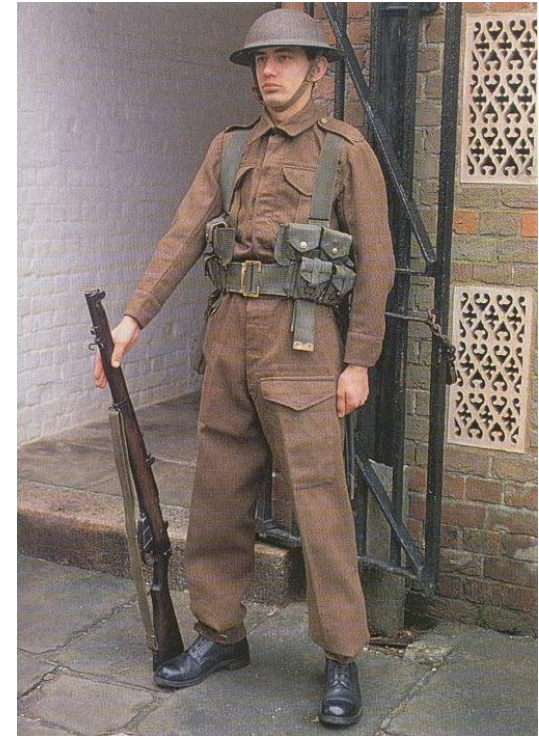
- It was a warm sunny day when we heard the announcement on the wireless that we were at war with Germany.
- It was so so quiet for a Sunday; no one mowing their lawn; no one talking over a garden fence; but then the Air Raid Siren sounded, the first of many many times.
- I didn't understand but knew it was very serious as the grown-ups were looking unhappy and sad.



Who goes there?



- Father was in the Territorial Army but by then had been called-up and was away at a camp in a very cold and damp hut with other soldiers.
- They were on guard duty one cold, dark and misty night when they heard some coughing. So, they issued the challenge "Halt! Who goes there?". There was no reply.
- Had the Germans landed on the nearby beaches? No! When morning came and the mist lifted they saw a flock of sheep in the next field!
- We saw father only very occasionally during the war.



The Air Raid



- The Air Raid shelter was on my father's lovely lawn: corrugated iron with concrete poured over, although some had just soil and sandbags. We had candles for lighting and slept on bunks.
- One night a large bomb landed at the end of the street but didn't explode.
- The Air Raid Warden knocked on the shelter door and told us to get out as quickly as we could.
- It was very scary and noisy with searchlights moving backwards and forwards and guns firing in the nearby park at the German planes.



The Air Raid – what next?



- We were taken to the village hall where we sat all night on hard benches.
- The very kind WVS ladies gave us tea (very strong in thick white cups) and biscuits (like square dog biscuits) which I couldn't bear to eat.
- I kept crying. I had left my precious teddy behind. He had button eyes and didn't have much fur, but I loved him!
- Mother had to ask the Air Raid Warden if she could go back home to collect our dog which had been shut in for three days and she collected teddy.
- Next day we went to live with my grandparents in Kent.



A missing Gas Mask



- I loved living with my grandparents but had a two mile walk there and back to the village school.
- One morning on arriving I realised that I had lost my gas mask in its cardboard box, which we always hung on our shoulders with a piece of string.
- This was SERIOUS! We had to have it with us – ALWAYS!
- Eventually I found it where I had been picking Rosehips.



At School



- Our exercise books were old. When we finished them we had to turn them upside down and wrote between the lines.
- When the air raid siren sounded we went into a brick built shelter and sat on wooden forms. Lessons continued – spelling each others' names, animals and flowers.



- There were evacuee children from London. They were living with strangers and some were home sick. But they soon settled down and we became friends.

In the Playground

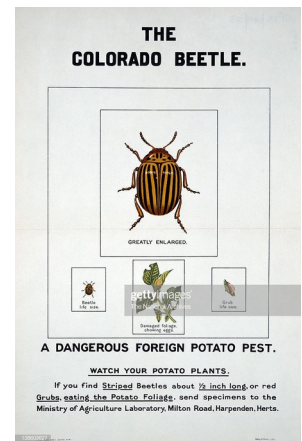
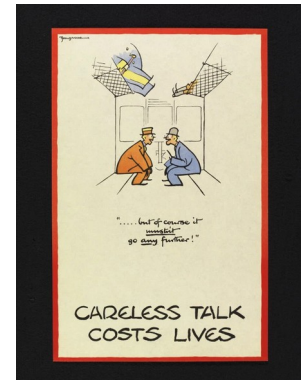


- We often saw the Spitfires fighting in the blue sky – silver dots weaving about and you could hear the drone of their engines.
- Sometimes we saw a parachute floating down a long way away.
- Some nights, after bombing raids over London, we would see the red glow in the sky from the enormous fires.



The Village General Store

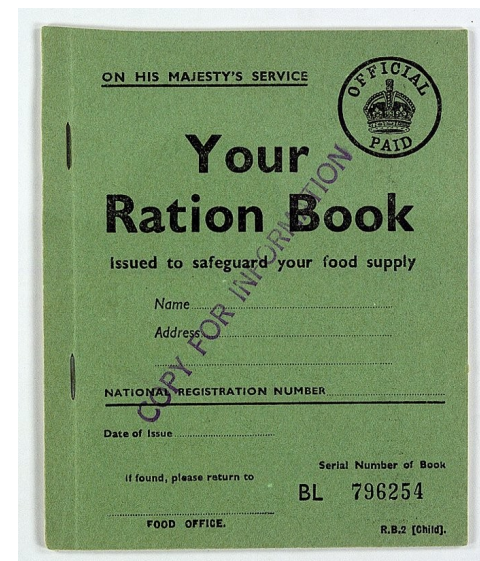
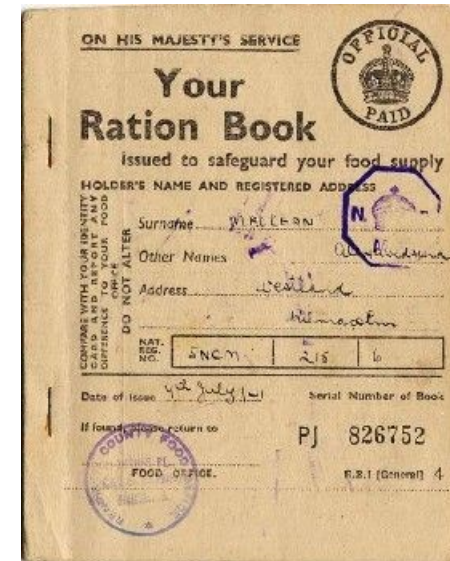
- The door went 'ping' when it was opened. The shop had a nice comfy smell.
- On the right, the Post Office, with posters:
"Dangerous talk costs lives" meaning that spies might be somewhere listening; identifying the Colorado Beetle; "Always remember to have your identity card and gas mask"; "Buy savings stamps".
- On the left, Groceries, where much was kept in sacks and measured out in metal scoops.
- In the middle, Hardware and lots more.



Rationing



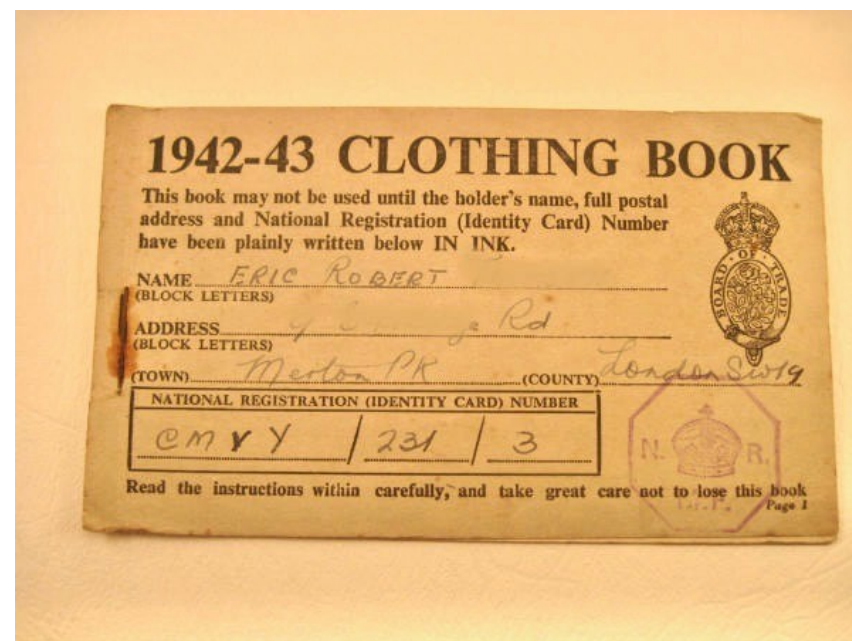
- Everyone had a ration book for food and sweets – green for children.
- Clothing and shoes were also rationed and had to last a long time – make do and mend.
- Fruit was very scarce but there were plenty of vegetables grown by our farmers and on allotments, some which were set up in the London parks.
- If word went round about a greengrocer having oranges we would race there and then wait for two hours for just two oranges per ration book. We never had bananas.



Typical Adult Weekly Ration



- Bacon & Ham 4 oz
- Other meat 1s 2d (6p)
(equivalent to 2 chops)
- Butter 2 oz
- Cheese 2 oz
- Margarine 4 oz
- Cooking fat 4 oz
- Milk 3 pints
- Sugar 8 oz
- Preserves 1 lb
every 2 months

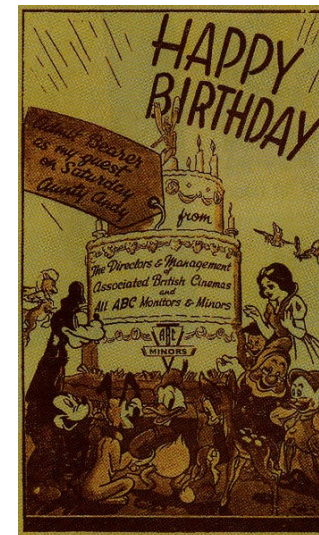


- Tea 2 oz
- Eggs 1 fresh egg
(plus allowance of dried egg)
- Sweets 12 oz
every 4 weeks

Back Home



- After a while we returned home. Every one behaved normally, going to the shelters only when the siren went off.
- School was as normal. Brownies and Guides started up again.
- We went to Saturday morning pictures, 6d to see Cartoons, Comedies, and Cowboys & Indians.



Flying Bombs



- In June 1944 the V1 Flying bombs started to come over, day and night. They were black rockets with fire propelling them at the back and very noisy. We prayed that the fire would not cut out and the rocket drop on us.
- One day this happened but the rocket went a little further dropping on a row of houses. It was a Saturday lunch time when most people were at home.



A Baby Sister



- My sister was born in July 1944 and Mother was given an enormous gas mask for her.
- I went to see them in hospital.
- New born babies were kept in a large white linen cupboard in which there were little cots, four to a shelf. The doors were slightly closed to protect them from any shattered glass or debris.
- At home, at any sign of danger, Mother would put my sister in a laundry basket so she could get to the shelter quickly.



Silent Rockets



- About that time the V2 silent rockets appeared – the Doodle Bugs.
- There would be an enormous explosion when they landed.
- Children would run to where they were and watch the rescue services climbing over great mounds of rubble of destroyed houses looking for survivors. It was all very sad.
- One day high up one shattered. Pieces of metal were falling everywhere. We had to rush to the shelters.



VE Day



- On 8th May 1945 peace was declared.
- No more bombs or fighting. We could sleep peacefully in our beds.
- Bonfires were lit: dancing in the streets: street parties for children.
- Food and clothes rationing continued for some years. There were shortages of everything.
- Father was demobbed before Christmas. He came in, threw his cap in the air – he was safely home again...

