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Conditions in Great Britain, during World War II, were much more desperate than they were in America. During summer, children worked on farms and people grew crops anywhere they could find space. Still there was not enough food.

A British schoolboy describes the effects of rationing on school meals:

*... went from mediocre to unspeakable. We had mincemeat, potato or cabbage, some kind of milk pudding, a lot of stodge, with sauces that became more and more watery ... At one stage lunch consisted of rather watery soup, based on onions, followed by hunks of bread and cheese - that was our economy measure.*

*Good red meat, which was rationed rather strictly, we had twice a week ... One wag said that ... dried eggs, which were in plentiful supply, should be called dregs ... Sweets were rationed, the making of ice cream banned after 1942, on the grounds that ... it had no food value, and was a diversion of valuable resources.*

*All meat became very scarce ... So our diet became very monotonous. There were pies which were based on potato and carrot and - we thought it was sawdust - soya beans ...'*

David Howell (Quoted in Don't You Know There's A war On?: *The People's Voice* 1939-45 by Jonathan Croall - to be reissued in 2005)

In every country affected by the war, children had to deal with family separations, deaths of loved ones and the need to "make do and mend" clothes and toys. However, children in Britain had added burdens as they coped with evacuations, air raids, gas masks and destroyed homes.

Beginning on September 1st, 1939 (two days before war was declared), the British government began the largest mass evacuation of people in the country's history. To avoid the terror of Hitler's nightly bombing during "The London Blitz" (which began on September 7, 1940), evacuations continued.

It is estimated that parents sent about 800,000 schoolchildren into the British countryside. Children traveled by train (this BBC audio report covers the story of children departing Waterloo Station), often with their classmates and teachers. Another half-million young children, with their mothers, fled London.

It was an anguishing time for British civilians. Hermann Goering, Commander-in-Chief of Hitler's Luftwaffe (air force), believed that a powerful show of force - with intense, nightly bombings of London and other cities - would break the will of the British people. It had the opposite effect, strengthening their resolve to resist Germany.

On the other hand, devastation in Coventry - resulting from a massive ten-hour air attack on November 14-15, 1940 - caused utter despair among its residents. Worried that the BBC's national reporting of events in Coventry might cause despair throughout the country, the government considered taking over the BBC for a time. (They did not.)

The worst time of all, during the Battle of Britain, was the last night of the blitz. On May 10, 1941, about 3,000 Londoners died.

Although America did not experience homeland bombings like Britain did (this is an almshouse flattened on February 10, 1943), the U.S. still imposed certain blackout conditions. During 1942's All Star baseball game, on July 6th, the mayor of New York City allowed play to continue until the official blackout time of 9:30 p.m.

Not only did people have to deal with curfews, blackouts, and a lack of daily commodities, they had to put up with buying necessities where the family was registered. During the war, in other words, one did not shop at the most convenient grocery store!

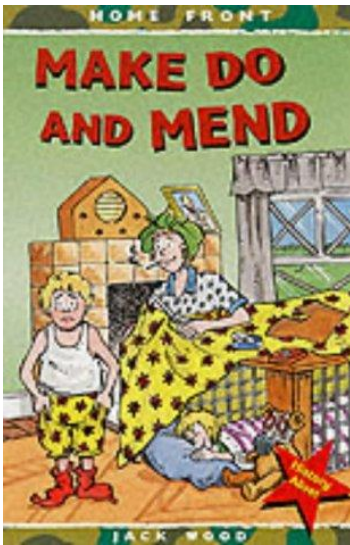
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/HARD-TIMES-Children-in-War>

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## Media Stream

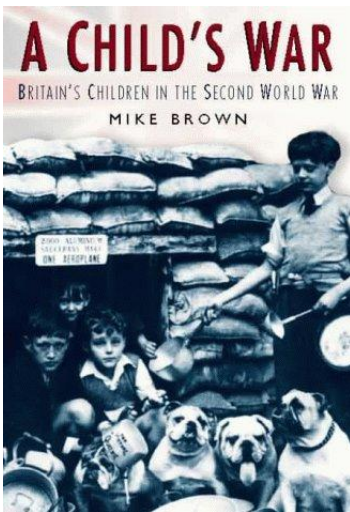


### Make Do and Mend - by Jack Wood

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### A Child's War - by Mike Brown

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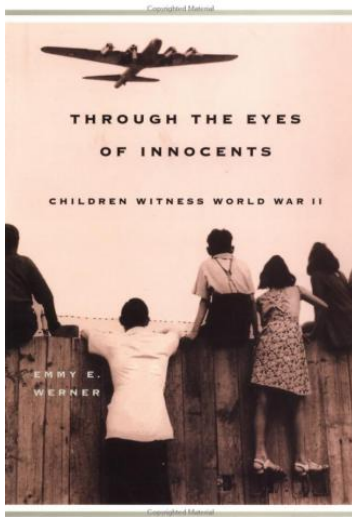
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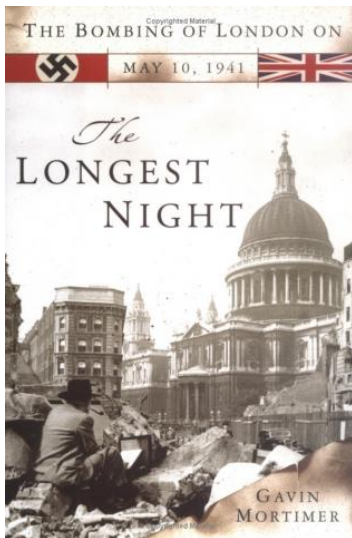


### Through the Eyes of Innocents - by Emmy E. Werner

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### The Longest Night - by Gavin Mortimer

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### Surveying the Bombing Damage

Image online, courtesy Imperial War Museum.

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### British Children - Evacuation During World War II

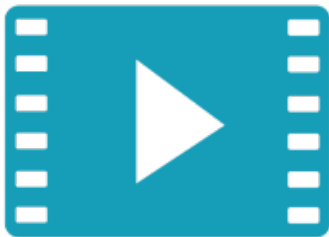
Clip, online courtesy Amyewer Channel at YouTube.

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### Battle of Britain - Death and Dogfights

Clip from "The Battle of Britain," a documentary of the London Blitz which began on September 7, 1940.



**Executive Producer:**

Guido Knopp

**Writer/Director:**

Ralf Piechowiak  
Alexander Berkel

Clip online, courtesy YouTube.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Battle-of-Britain-Death-and-Dogfights>

### Battle of Britain - Shelter in London's Underground

Clip from "The Battle of Britain," a documentary of the London Blitz which began on September 7, 1940.



**Executive Producer:**

Guido Knopp

**Writer/Director:**

Ralf Piechowiak  
Alexander Berkel

Clip online, courtesy YouTube.

PD

View this asset at:

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### Coventry - The Devastation Begins

Clip from the BBC's *Timewatch* - "Blitz: The Bombing of Coventry." Copyright, BBC, all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the program.

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