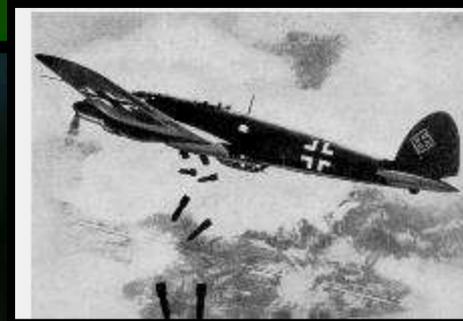
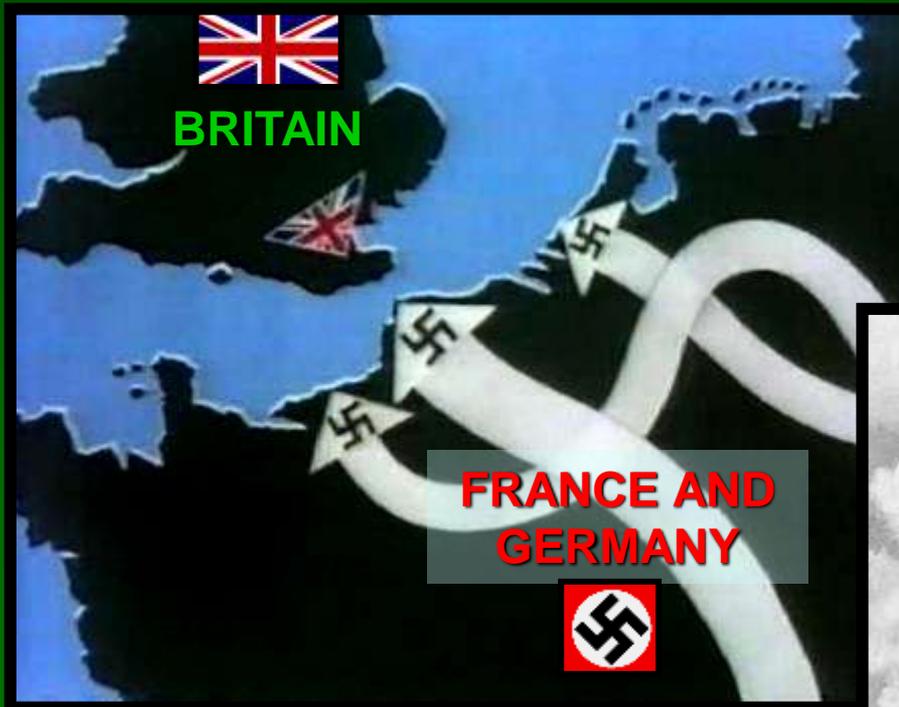


THE BLITZ

In **September 1940**, **Hitler** started the first part of his **planned invasion** of **Britain**.

He planned to **destroy** many of Britain's **cities**, including factories, shops, houses, and even people, by sending **thousands** of his **German bomber planes** to **bomb** the British cities.

He hoped this would make the **British people** so **miserable** they would **give up** the war and his German soldiers could **invade** and take **control** of **Britain**.



Hitler and his **German army** had already **invaded** many other countries in Europe; including **Poland**, **Holland**, **Czechoslovakia**, **Norway**, **Finland** and even **France**.

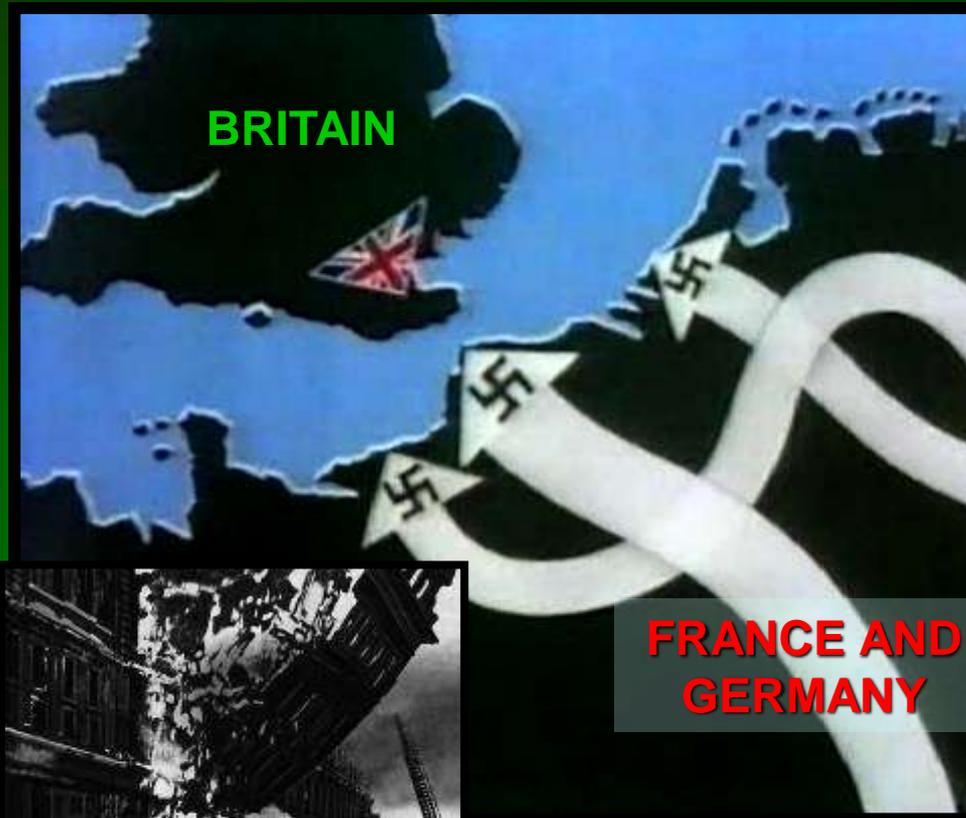
Hitler hated Britain. He hated Britain because **Britain** had **beaten Germany** in **World War 1** (1914 – 1918).

Hitler knew that **Britain** was one of the **strongest** countries in **Europe**, and if his German army successfully invaded Britain, no other country would wish to fight against Germany – Hitler would rule all of Europe!



But **Britain** was an **island, surrounded by sea**, and this meant that Hitler could not invade with his armies in the same way that he had invaded Holland and Poland and Norway.

So, for the **first time** ever, **thousands of German bomber planes** were used to drop hundreds of thousands of **explosive bombs** and **incendiary bombs** on the factories, shops, houses, and whole **cities of Britain**.



Germany sent **bomber** planes over to bomb British cities, but mainly **London**, the **capital city**, for nearly a whole **year**.

From October **1940** there were German **Blitz raids** every day for **57 days**.

Each time about **200 German bomber planes** would drop up to **50 bombs each**.

In total, more than **2,000,000 bombs** were dropped on **Britain during World War 2**.



German Bomber Planes



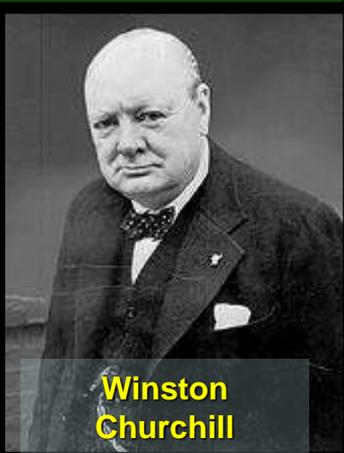
Blitzed London

Britain tried very hard to **stop** the German **bomber planes** from dropping their bombs.

Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, ordered special **fighter planes** to be built to **attack** the German **Bombers** and **defend British cities**.

These planes were called '**Spitfires**' and were some of the **fastest** and **best** war planes ever built.

They **stopped many German Bombers** from dropping their bombs, but in the end even the **Spitfires** couldn't stop **British cities being blown up**.



Winston Churchill



Spitfires attacking German Bombers over the English Coast



Spitfire



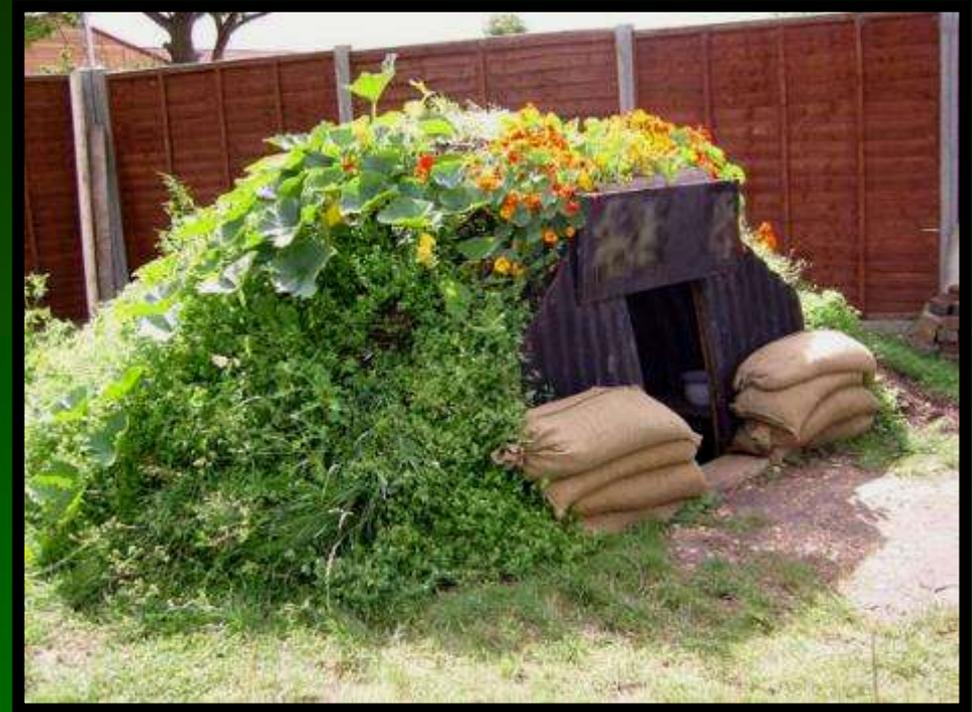
Bombed London



Spitfire

To help **British** people **protect themselves** against the German bombs, the British **Government** gave out **special bomb shelters** called '**Air-Raid Shelters**'. There were 2 main types of Air-Raid Shelters:

The Anderson Shelter – this was made from **corrugated iron sheets** and placed in the **garden**.



Families and their **neighbours** could **shelter** in it during a **German bombing raid**. The Anderson Shelter **protected** them from **flying bricks, wood and glass** if a building nearby was hit by a bomb and exploded. But the **shelter** could **not protect** them from a **direct hit from a bomb**.

Many families just put **benches** inside the Anderson Shelter; they could hold up to **12 seated people**.

But some families put **beds, cupboards and a stove** in their shelter to make it more **homely**.



These two photos show an **Anderson Shelter** with **beds, seating, stove, cupboards and paraffin lamps**.

The black and white photo was taken in **1941**. These children are clearly enjoying sleeping in the **Air Raid shelter**.

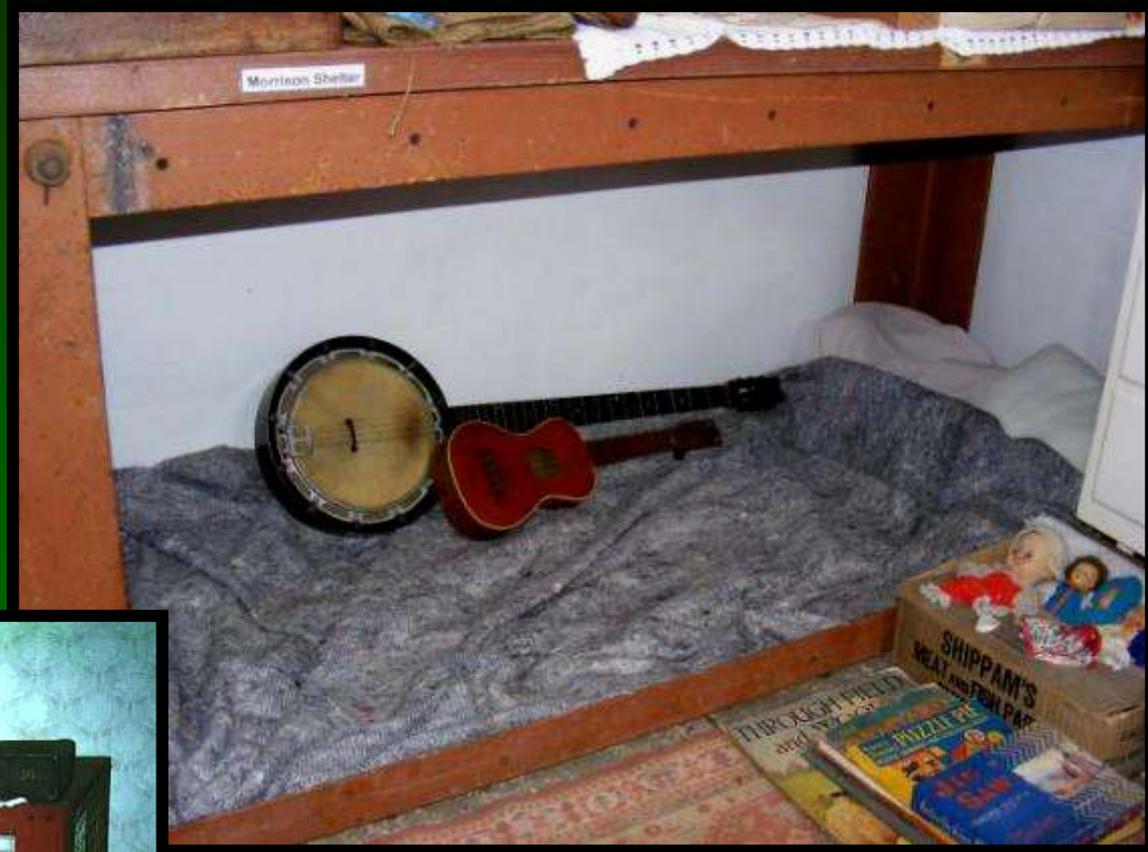
In summer many children would sleep in their **Anderson Shelter**; it was exciting and fun – and **frightening** when the bombs were dropping!

The second type of **Air Raid Shelter** was the **Morrison Shelter**. This was an **iron frame** with an iron roof on it that was placed **inside the house**. If there was an Air Raid, the family would all **climb inside the iron frame** and **shelter from falling bricks, wood and glass** if their house collapsed from a **bomb explosion**.

It would **not protect** the family if their house got a **direct hit from a bomb**.

Many families did not like using the Morrison Shelter; they found it **cramped and uncomfortable**.

As you can see in this photo, many families ended up using it as a **bed for children**

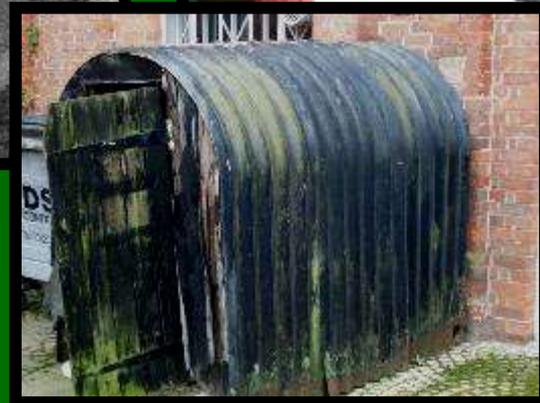


A Morrison Shelter

During **1940 – 1941** British people in London got **so used to the German bombing Raids day-after-day-after-day** that many of them stopped using the Air Raid shelters they were given.

Many people felt that they were **safer out in the street** during a bombing raid. They were away from the houses and buildings and they felt they could run away quickly if a bomb was dropping near to them.

By **1942 hardly anyone** used the **Air Raid shelters**. Many people turned their **Anderson Shelter** into a **Garden Shed**.



Every single **man, woman and child** was also given a **Gas Mask** at the beginning of the war in **1939**.

The **British Government** thought that if the **Germans attacked Britain** they would use **Gas bombs**. These bombs would **explode** and **release a poisonous gas**. People were given **gas masks** and **trained how to put them on quickly** and how to **carry-on with their work while wearing them**.



Children's 'Mickey Mouse' Gas Mask and box



A policeman hands out Gas Masks

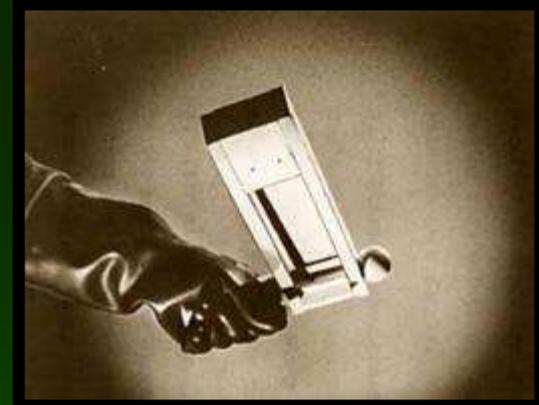


A child is fitted with a gas mask by an Air-Raid Warden

Children had to be taught how to put gas masks on quickly and how to breathe normally through them. They would have Gas Mask Training Sessions in school and then have to carry-on playing or having lessons wearing them so that they would get used to them.

How do you think it must have felt having to wear a rubber gas mask all the time?

But then the Germans never did use gas bombs – the gas masks were never needed !

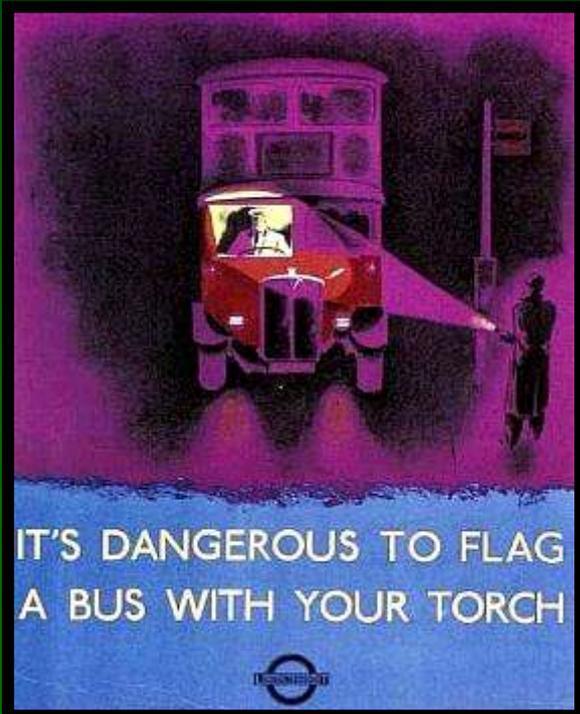
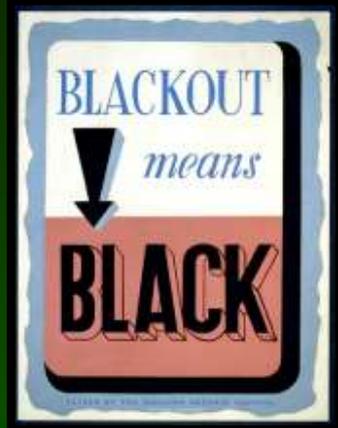


"If gas should be dropped during an enemy air raid, a special alarm will be sounded. Learn what gas alarm has been chosen for your community. It will be a hand rattle or hammering sound like the beating of a stick on a dishpan."



The **British Government** also had another clever way of making it **difficult** for the German bombers to **drop their bombs accurately** on British cities.

They had **THE BLACKOUT**.



Blackout Curtains

Many **German Bombing Raids** happened at **night**.
The **British** Government ordered that **all lights used at night had to be switched off or dimmed**.
That meant **all street lights, house lights, car lights, office and factory lights** had to be turned **off** or **dimmed**.
This would make it more **difficult for the German Bombers to see** where to drop their bombs at night, because all the **cities would look black** to them.



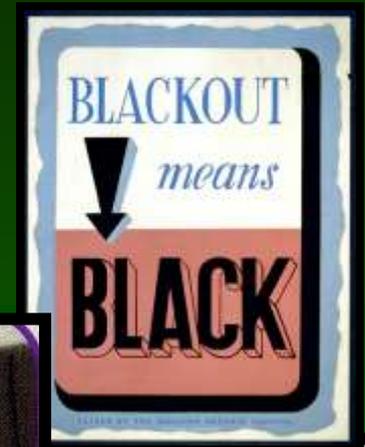
Every house in Britain had to **cover the glass** of its windows with **tape**, to stop the glass flying into the room if there was a nearby bomb explosion. They also had to **hang up thick, black curtains to block out all the light** from their house at night. **Posters** were put up **all over cities, towns and villages** telling people to always use their **blackout curtains at night**.



Taped window glass stops glass shattering in bomb explosion

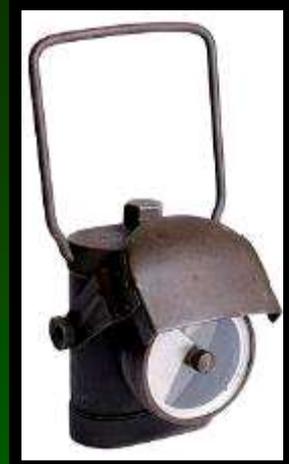
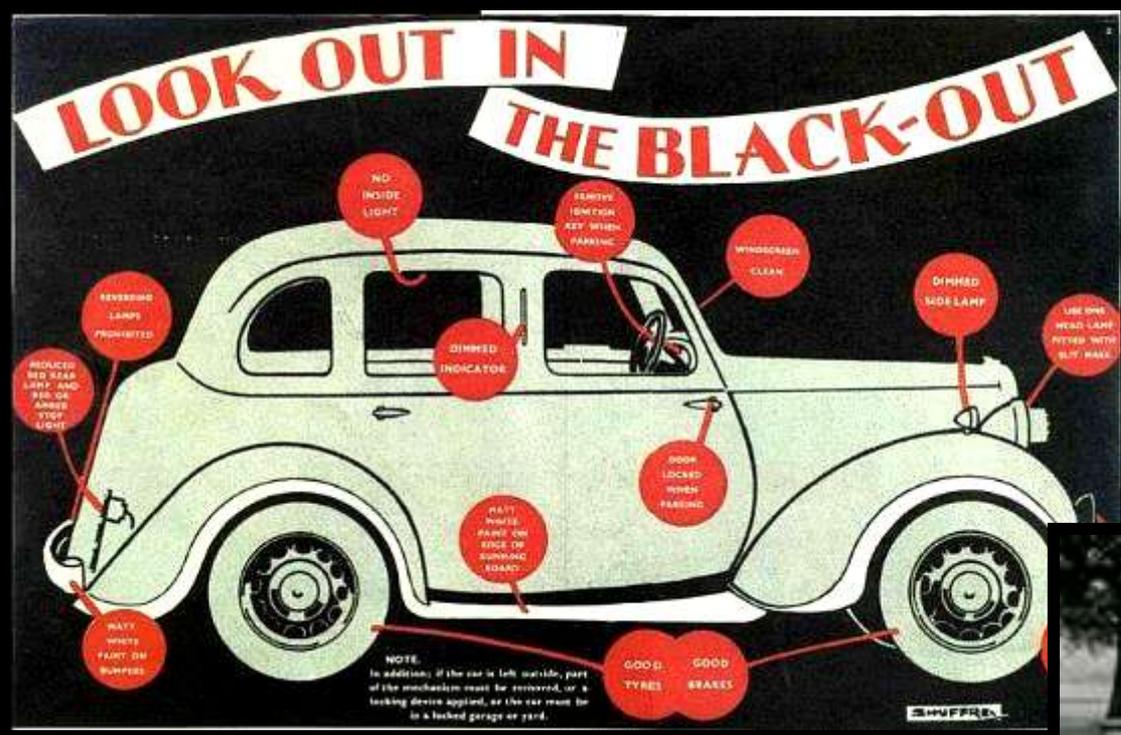


A family is visited by an Air-Raid Protection Officer to check their black-out curtains and their other Blitz preparations



VIEWMAGIC

Cars had have **covers fitted over their headlights** to dim them. They could not use their red brake lights at the back and they had to paint their **front and back bumpers white**. All **hand-held lamps and torches** had to have **covers** to **block light** travelling upwards and being **seen by German bomber** planes.



Hand-held lamp with Blackout cover



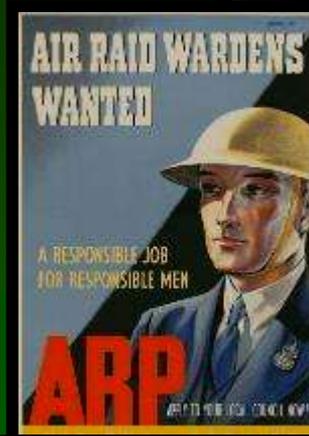
Metal car headlight Blackout cover



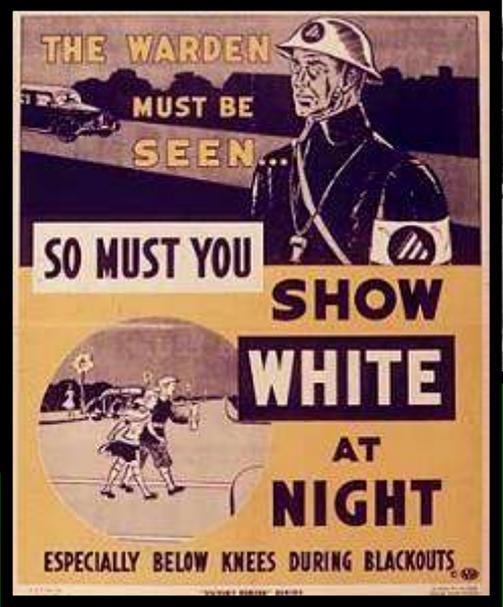
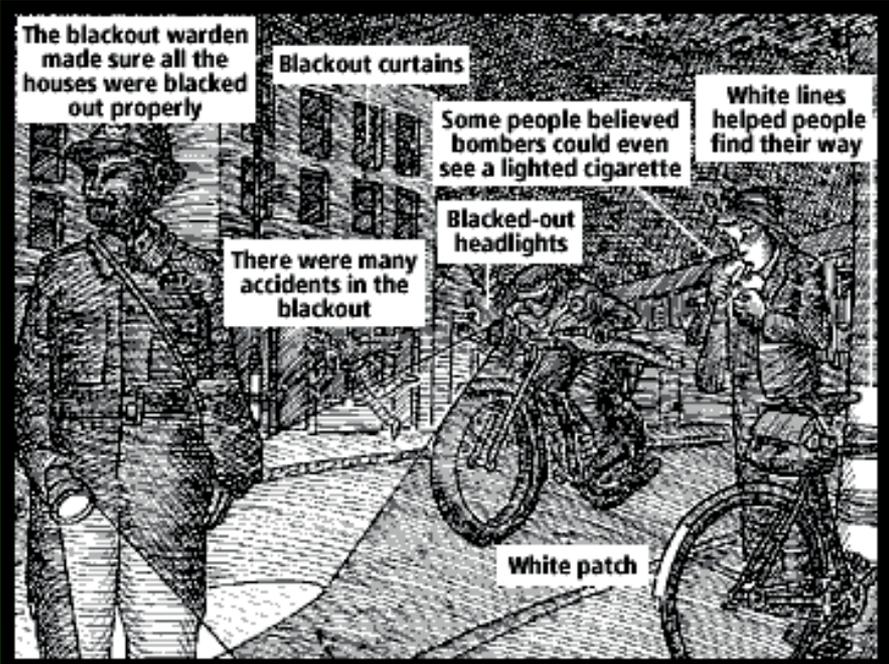
Air-Raid Wardens had a very important job to make sure that **British people** were as **safe** as possible from German bombing raids.

Their job included:

- **Looking out for German bombers.**
- **Sounding the Air-Raid Siren to warn people of a bombing raid.**

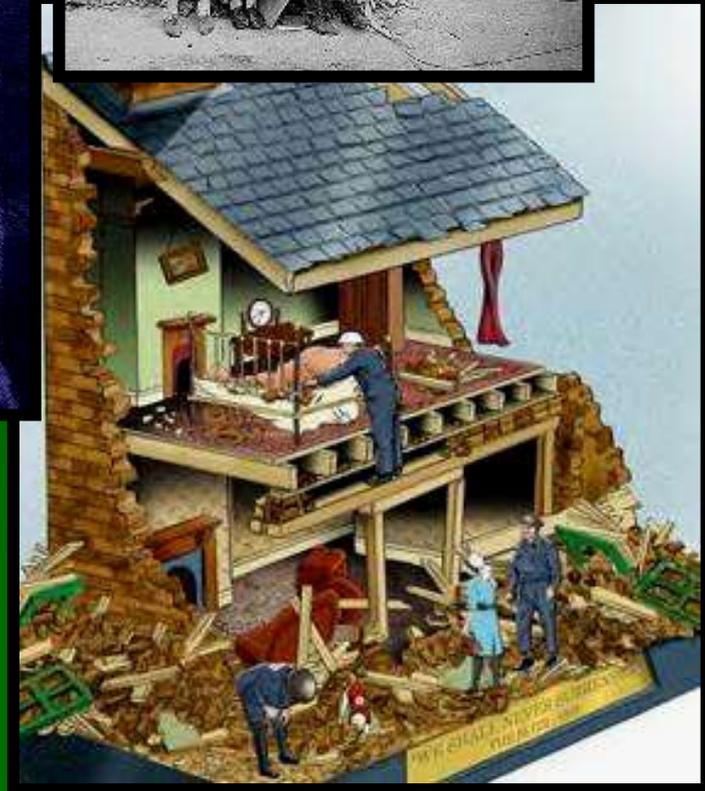


- **Setting the times** for people to use **blackout covers** on their cars and in homes.
- Making sure **everyone** was **using the Blackout**.
- Making sure **people walking and driving cars could see at night** without lights by **painting roadside trees with white stripes**.
- and making sure **people wore or carried something white** at night so that it would **reflect even the dimmest light**.



The **worst job** for the **Air-Raid Wardens** was **searching** through bombed buildings; hopefully **for survivors**, but mostly and sadly, **for bodies of people** who had been **killed by the bombs**.

Even though **many people were killed** in the bombing **raids**, **hardly any** of them were **children**.



Before the German **bombing raids** started in **1940** the British Government had ordered that as many **children** as possible were to be **sent to live away** from the **cities** – they were to be **EVACUATED**.

This **saved the lives of thousands of city children** – but what was it like for them to be sent away from their family to live with strangers in the countryside?



EVACUATED

