

YVONNE HARLAND

Air raids

This is the little ditty my sister and I were taught at the beginning of the War.

"Wavering sound, go to ground,
Steady blast, raid has passed."

It refers, of course, to the air raid sirens. There was no question of evacuation. My parents wanted us close to them, and we needed to know what the sirens meant.

My father had a shelter built in the back garden. Not for his family was he putting up an Anderson shelter. The concrete was so thick, it's probably still there. It had a pump to keep it dry. It was fully equipped with bunk beds, food, water and a first aid kit. We even had a little portable loo area. There was a large family lived next door, and I remember they had an indoor shelter, they had a huge kitchen, and this shelter just about filled the room. It was like a huge metal table, a big ugly thing.

Family at war

We had three older sisters and a brother. One was in the W.A.A.F, one was in the A.T.S. and my brother, as a tugboat man was in the Royal Navy. The eldest girl was married with a young family. Thankfully, they all came through the War safely, but we did lose a family member. My brother in law was killed after his plane crash landed whilst coming in to land near Thornaby on August 2nd 1940. Harold was awarded the D.F.C. posthumously because he lost his life trying in vain to rescue one on his crew members.

My father was in the police force, he was an alien's officer so was out a lot. He also did air raid duties, and taught basic German to the Civil Defence volunteers. Mam did her bit, and helped to set up the community kitchens.

School

School for me, went on pretty much as normal, except for the time that incendiary bombs fell in the school gardens, and it was closed for a short time. No dodging lessons though, we had classes in a lady's house in Lambton Road. I remember feeling sad when my favourite teacher went to war.

My last memory of the war is the day my dad brought home a couple of bananas and I was allowed to take one school. It was passed around the class for everyone to have a feel.