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Speaker 1: [00:00](#) What is your name?

Speaker 2: [00:02](#) My name is Katherine [inaudible], but everybody calls me kitty because it's shorter and that's where I answer to, or you call me kitty.

Speaker 1: [00:11](#) Okay. Kinsey, what year were you born?

Speaker 2: [00:15](#) I was born in the year 1930. September the first 1930.

Speaker 1: [00:21](#) So you were nine when the war started?

Speaker 2: [00:24](#) I was indeed. I was not just on that day. I was nine on that very day. What would the day I was evacuated. At least the war broke out on the 3rd of September. But we were evacuated on the first.

Speaker 1: [00:35](#) Why were you born?

Speaker 2: [00:37](#) I was born in Southeast London. Lambert's, uh, that's, um, a very sort of area where people do go to work and work very hard. Yes.

Speaker 1: [00:49](#) What did your parents do for a living?

Speaker 2: [00:52](#) My parents, um, my mother was a cleaner, she worked for a place called the war office in central London. She used to go out five o'clock in the morning and come back at eight to get us ready for school. And my father, he worked as a road sweeper, uh, for the city of London. He used to escape the, the city of London roads clean. He was a road sweeper so we had very little money coming in, but we were very happy.

Speaker 1: [01:20](#) Describe what your local area was like for you as a child before the war started.

Speaker 2: [01:25](#) I loved him. I love it. I love then and I love it now. Nobody had any money but everybody looked out, looked out for everybody. You all looked out for each other. I loved it then and I love it now. I don't live there now, but I go back there and it's just to have the fond memories.

Speaker 1: [01:42](#) How did you and your family feel when will was the cleanse?

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- Speaker 2: [01:47](#) I think we will know a little bit taken back. I remember listening to my mum and dad with their ears glued to divide the wireless we called it then, which is now called the radio. We never had televisions or anything like that phone, I don't know, phone or television in the house. And I remember that Jamie's [inaudible], we now we are now at war. And I remember my dad putting his hand to his forehead and looking quite worried and asked him, well, is war dad? And he said, no mind, nevermind. You're going on a trip, you're going on a trail, you're going to go away.
- Speaker 1: [02:20](#) What was it like to live in London when broke cow?
- Speaker 2: [02:24](#) Well I didn't answer. You live in London cause as soon as war broke out, we were evacuated. We were, we all went to school that day, just normal. And the teacher said, go home now you go back and we bring back with you in a case, uh, pajamas and things and different things she told us to bring back. And so when the war was on the actual beginning of the war, we were all away. But the, uh, for many months nothing happened in London. It was called the phony war, which would meant nothing happened. That was when we all came back again.
- Speaker 1: [02:59](#) What did your parents do during the wall?
- Speaker 2: [03:02](#) My mother continued her job as a cleaner in the war office and she also had a, although I was evacuated my two big sisters, cause we was five children now family. Although I was evacuated with my two big sisters, my mother still had two young boys, two little boys to look after. So she was looking after them. My dad joined the army so there was just my mom at home with her too with her two children, two boys, myself evacuated, my two big sisters. Hmm.
- Speaker 1: [03:34](#) How did you feel when your first, when you first found out that you were going to be a vet?
- Speaker 2: [03:39](#) Excited. Happy. We thought it was, I really thought we were going out for the day. I don't know what my sisters knew any better, but I thought it was gonna be a wonderful thing to go to school and see these big coach draw and we're all jumping on the coach and we're all singing. We are Londoners. We were all singing and so happy. Happy though. It was a day out.
- Speaker 1: [04:04](#) Tell us about the journey on your first evacuation.

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- Speaker 2: [04:07](#) Well, I first tobacco should we got to school as I told you. And then the, and then we all had to line up and all get on this coach. And then we got to a station, I can't remember the name of the station, I think it was Walter Waterloo. And um, they, uh, we boarded a train and I can recall looking across before we got on this train, hundreds of hundreds of children with their, not just my school. There are hundreds of other schools all getting on this train. And I remember looking across the st lots and lots of soldiers and, and I wonder where all these soldiers going. They were all going somewhere. I didn't know, but that was that.
- Speaker 1: [04:44](#) Okay. Will you have that QA sit with
- Speaker 2: [04:46](#) I will. As I mentioned before, uh, I was very fortunate. I was nine on that day, but I had two big sisters with me, one age 11 and one age 13. So I took comfort that they were there, but it didn't matter because as I said, we thought we were going for the to, I thought I was going for the day. So I was, I was closeted, really looked after with two big sisters.
- Speaker 1: [05:11](#) How did you feel when you last saw your parents when you were good and when the coach,
- Speaker 2: [05:15](#) I'm sorry, I didn't quite get that.
- Speaker 1: [05:17](#) How were you feeling when you last saw your parents when you were going on?
- Speaker 2: [05:20](#) Well, I'll tell you what happened. We got on the coach and we're all, as I said, very, very happy and that just happened to close. All the parents were there, but they were kept back behind a rail back. I couldn't get right close up. And I remember looking across just as a coach was going to pull out. And I remember seeing my mother wiping tears from her eyes. She had the baby, cause I had two young boys. One was a baby and one was, the other one was about five. And I remember him hanging on to her and uh, until you had a baby and I remember what in the eyes. And I turned to my sister and said, Oh, mom's crying. Why is mom crying? And she just nudged me and said, shop, be quiet and get on your way.
- Speaker 1: [06:05](#) Tell us about the things you took with me.
- Speaker 2: [06:08](#) The things we were told to take with us was a pair of pajamas and M and a underwear, change of underwear and um, no, no

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drink, no food. And um, I can't remember. I would say it was, we had had gas Masa coast cause when we got to the school we were issued with a little wooden box with a castle Hoskin side and we had a label. So they'd be the things we had with us. [inaudible] yeah, not much. Mine was my, myself and my two sisters. We couldn't afford suitcases. Some of the children had little suitcases that my mother had made our into a pillowcase and she'd made it us into, um, LA LA, LA sec, which everybody's wearing today, but it was a pillowcase.

- Speaker 1: [06:55](#) What were your feelings at first?
- Speaker 2: [06:58](#) What do you mean at first? When,
- Speaker 1: [07:01](#) when you at the countryside?
- Speaker 2: [07:04](#) Oh, I thought it was wonderful. I did think that. I just thought I'd never seen anything like it. I never seen it like it [inaudible] all that greenery. Although I lived at a place called Camberwell green, that's where I lived. Camberwell green. It was just a patch of grass. But there, there was fields, rivers, and then I loved it. I loved it. I loved the countryside. I didn't, not the place we were taken to, but I love the countryside. I still do. Yeah.
- Speaker 1: [07:31](#) Describe how you ended up where your first host family,
- Speaker 2: [07:36](#) how it was. We got [inaudible] uh, when we were told to get off the train, it was a place called EB switch and we were marched up to a school, local school and um, which was not like a school, not like this wonderful school you have here. It was just one big room. And how that had the children that had aligned down this side for four or five rows, nine to 10, seven to eight, five to six. And they had been rows all in one class, but they weren't there or we were told to March into this school, we March and just go. And we were told to stand around or stand around the school and stand up straight. And this is what we did. We stood up straight and waited like that and the teacher said, just stand up. And I said to my sister, I'm getting tired, I'm going to sit down.
- Speaker 2: [08:21](#) So I slid down, teacher said get up, stand up, stand up straight. And then shortly after that a whole crowd of women, men and women kind of in and they picked us off one by one. I'll tell you that one. I'll take that one. I'll take them one by one. We will, we would take it away to an unknown destination. We didn't know where we were going. My sisters and I were more or less

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left at the end because each time they picked one of us we said, no we have to stay together. My mother said we had to stay together before we left because we had one tin of toothpaste. My sister, my big sister had the toothpaste. So she said you can't set right cause she's got the tooth toothpaste and nobody has any toothpaste if you separate. So we kept insisting on staying together. But unfortunately someone eventually the teacher said, Oh you can't stay together. You must go. So my middle sister, the 11 year old was picked and off she went and I'm crying. I was saying, where's she going? And the teacher said, you'll see her tomorrow. But we didn't see her. We didn't see her for many, many months. We didn't know where she went.

Speaker 2: [09:26](#) Well, when on the first evacuation, cause we were evacuated three times. The first evacuation, we were taken to this huge amount of house, which was amazing. We thought, my God, this is lovely, was a huge garden. [inaudible] the garden the waded has. But when we go to the front of the house, she turned around and went round the back and she pointed to the basement. She said, your room is down there. Go down there. And so we went down to the space when there was a mattress on the floor and that was our bad. And that was our, our room. And the five o'clock, the next morning she shouted, house come up. We got up and she said, come up here, come up here. And we went up and she said to him this, she put in front of us a bowl of bread. And milk. That was our breakfast every day, old bread and milk and she said, my name's Rosie.

Speaker 2: [10:11](#) She said, I'm the maid here. She said, I didn't want you here but as you're here and I've got to look after you, you can help me in the kitchen and in front of us. She, she moved us along the tables and there was both masses and masses of silverware. We had to sit there and clean that silverware, silverware, I think at least one or two hours before we started school. She said you'd be going just hurry up or you'd be late for school and the first time in my life that I was glad to get to school. What was your house like? Which house where I lived, where I was evacuated to when I left, which house they would have the flat, the the house I left was a block of flats. I lived in a block of flats with a hundred other people.

Speaker 2: [10:56](#) We share the same shelter, but the house that I was evacuated to, as I just mentioned, the first evacuation was a huge amount of house, although we wouldn't have known because we never saw the load and lady of the house. We will left in the servant's

quarters. Yeah, the school was very primitive. Uh, they were, they had, there were nowhere near as forward as London children. And the teacher that said to us, she didn't really wasn't interested in teaching us at all because my sister and I was so to sit at the back of the class and we sat at the back of the class and all the time we were there, we kept putting our hand up. But she ignored us because her children or her children weren't up to the same educational standards as we were from London. And the children themselves kept calling us dirty names and they weren't happy that we were there. We were treated quite distantly and, and, and there'll be a cool, we called dirty evacuated. We say we won't be dirty because we didn't have a lot of clothes. We weren't, but we, we weren't dirty. But they called us dirty evacuated and they treated us the first time. The first evacuation was not a good experience. No, no way.

Speaker 1: [12:13](#) Tennis about some of your experiences in the countryside?

Speaker 2: [12:17](#) Well, we've spent most of our time looking for my sisters. I mentioned she was taken off somewhere and we hadn't seen her. We didn't see her for all the time we were evacuated. The first evacuation I, one day we came back from school after many months in that a Manor house and we found my mom sitting in the kitchen. She said, I'm taking you home. She said, Oh, we were so thrilled to be going home. So she said, I said, but you can't take us home. We haven't. My, my middle sister's name was Mary. We haven't found Mary. She said, I don't know what you're talking about. She said, I've been writing to you. I've been sending you letters to Rosa, the maid. She went over red and she said, well, I kept the letters. I didn't give them to them because it gave them something to do looking for her.

Speaker 2: [13:01](#) But my middle sister, when we went to fetch her to bring her home, she didn't want to come home. She was so happy where she was. The reason I mentioned this was although some Pilates as we call them, they were how they were called police where you will rehouse although some were badly treated, some are treated really, really well. We might assist them and sister at the station and she cried and cried that she was crying because she didn't want to come home. She was all dressed up looking good and uh, and she kept saying, I want to stay with my brother. That was the boy, the boy that she was, I'm the son of the [inaudible]. She was evacuated with and I said, you got two brothers at home. I don't know those brothers. She said she never wanted to come back.

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Speaker 1: [13:47](#) Tell us about any friends. Do you mean

Speaker 2: [13:50](#) we didn't make many friends. They were there. They didn't want to make friends. The children and the countryside didn't want to make friends. They, as I said, they consider we were dirty, dirty, evacuated.

Speaker 1: [14:02](#) What happened to your family in London while you are where at to the kind of tree sides?

Speaker 2: [14:09](#) Well, um, the first evacuation, nothing. And my dad joined the army as I, as I mentioned, he was in the army. Um, but um, on our second evacuation, cause we just got back because it was called the phony war. Nothing had happened. But as soon as we got back the blitz started. That was where the bombs would come down and I'm not, as I mentioned, I lived in a block of flats and we've shared a shelter with a hundred people that you had to run like crazy when the Asal reman you really had to run quickly. And so, um, my mom couldn't cope with all this and my two big sisters. Then by this time, I've got to the age of 14 when you started work at to 14. So she said, I can't cope with all this. She said you'll have to be evacuated and take my, one of my little brothers. So I was really evacuated a second time with the young, brought my young brother who was nearly seven by then, and he left behind my two big sisters or who started work and my baby brother. But we were evacuated just a very short time. The second time, just a few months when we were told we've got to go home.

Speaker 3: [15:20](#) [inaudible]

Speaker 2: [15:23](#) see. All right, so we've got to go home.

Speaker 3: [15:26](#) Okay. Um, I'm gonna say, so stop going to say

Speaker 1: [15:31](#) you like you're on a road. Do the session. You were talking about what happened to your family.

Speaker 2: [15:36](#) Yes. I take an evacuation who were there and um, segue to the second evacuation. The lady was very, very nice, but she was disabled. She had, she had, she actually only had one leg. She had a wooden leg, but should I say, although she was very, very kind, she gave us a good breakfast and she gave me a packet of sandwiches. She said, I don't want you back to the evening, but we were only there a short time, very short time when the, the woman came knocking on the door. It was called the women's

voluntary service. They were the women that picked you up from the station and put you in these different places. They were the WVS, they called them women. They wore green hat with the words WV S on there. That's how you knew that they were there for you. She knocks on the door and she said, you've got to go home.

Speaker 2: [16:18](#) We were, but I couldn't understand why we had to go home. This Billy and Billy, my brother, his name was Billy. Why are we going to go home? We're haven't done anything wrong. You'll find that when you get home. When we got home, um, my sister matters at the station we traveled to on our own and um, what's wrong? Why we had to come home. Don't worry about it. She said, come home. When I got there, my mother wasn't there. Nay. No, they've got my baby brother. His name was Charlie. Where's mom? I said, where's Charlie? She said he's not being very well. Mom's taking him to the hospital and then a couple of hours later my mother came back. I was already and she didn't have that baby brother with her. Where's Charlie? I said she cried and cried. My mother, she said he had caught what they called shelter, they'd call it then shelter cough. It caught this really bad pneumonia, a bad really bad cough from going down the Demp shelters. And when she got into the hospital they said it's whooping cough and he had this term and he died and he died in my mom's arms because of this really bad cough. It was called whooping cough, which is a thing that children don't have anymore because you're all immunized when your babies, but they weren't immunizations during the war.

Speaker 1: [17:29](#) Can you tell us about any times you saw communicated with your parents while you are away?

Speaker 2: [17:36](#) I'm sorry, I didn't quite get that.

Speaker 1: [17:38](#) Can you tell us about any times you saw or communicated with your parents while you were [inaudible]?

Speaker 2: [17:44](#) Ah, no. Yeah, there was no communication because the woman kept the letters as I've mentioned to you before. And then, um, the second time that no, there was no communication actually after that because my mother learned the lesson that she knew that the per first of woman, Rosie the maid, she kept the letter, she thought it was no point in sending letters because it wasn't going to happen. So there was no communication. Okay. I've told you about the first one and I've told you about the second

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one now and now we're back home again. And um, although we spent, I spent many, many, many nights under the shelter. Uh, then, then they started these new, the ones in [inaudible], they were pilotless planes and they would come across and you never knew they were coming. Cause I almost silent. I, my brother Billy, he was like seven height then and all these bombed out buildings around us.

Speaker 2: [18:45](#) Uh, he used to climb up and applying them and then they, it was so dangerous. And then when the, when it sirens, when we could never find where he was. And um, but I must tell you during this time, I used to collect from the bomb sites myself. Um, I was about your age and I would collect big planks of wood, chop them up into little steaks and I take them out into all of their families for to sell. And I made a lot of money. I gave it to my mum because that's in the army and she didn't have a lot of money and she was very pleased. So I was doing this, but mom said that this is this account, keep on with this, I don't know where you are and what you're up to, you'll have to go away again. So Billy and I were via evacuated for the third time and the third time was a place called Blackpool and it was absolutely amazing.

Speaker 2: [19:34](#) It was really lovely place. There was all, the front of the fan is wonderful. And then they had some went to was, it was lovely. And when the woman opened the door she said, hello is, come on in. There's just brilliant. I am a little brother. And she said, come on in. And we went and she said, your room is upstairs. Lovely room with a little mirror and jars of sweets because if there was a huge American base in Blackboard, that was a lots and lots of American soldiers based there. And so they used to come and visit the house quite a lot. But I was nearly four, I'm 13 and 80 14 and I'm thinking to myself, we were there quite a while, a few months, but then I'm thinking, I've got to go to work soon. This is my thoughts. And I'm, I don't know, I haven't had any schooling since I was nine.

Speaker 2: [20:22](#) No, not real schooling. And um, because in London the school was closed or because I did open a while, but when the sirens, when we all have to dash, so they decided not to open anymore and I thought to myself, and I'm nearly nearly 14 I've got to go to work. And I remember saying to one of these ladies, I asked them what they did and they said they, they looked after the American soldiers. So I thought, I'll do that. But my mother didn't like me. The idea of staying there, looking after the American soldiers. I loved it there. The American soldiers were

very generous. They gave a sweet some money and they even taught me to jive and I can jive really well. Now. Did you get that? So I had a wonderful time in Blackpool. I had a wonderful time, but my mother didn't, not the idea of me being there, uh, because it had a big American base. And then the house I lived in was, uh, was all women and she didn't like the idea of, she just didn't think it was the right place for me to be. So she came and picked me up and taught me how him, so that was the last evacuation? Yes.

Speaker 1: [21:29](#) What did you do when that was an average?

Speaker 2: [21:32](#) When there was an error, right. We would have to run down the shelter. We all had a lock, a little parcel ready in the house, in a flat. I lived in, we had a bottle of water and we had a jumper and I'm a comic. We used to, I used to take either a piano or a dandy. They were the comics of the day. I tell when we got down to shelter any other children we could swap comics and um, that's what, but as soon as I saw her and when, which was a noise, a horrible winding noise. Ooh. We all had to grab our own parcel and run down the shelters though that that was, that spent 52 nights down there at shelters, consecutive nights and every time you come up there was another building down in bound you today now when I, when I smell my mum mice vivid memories now or the smell when I smell of about a building that's been demolished, that's the first thing that comes back to me of those buildings all around us were demolished.

Speaker 2: [22:28](#) We came out from our flats on one occasion and we weren't able to get into our flat. They said you can't go into your flat because there's a USB that meant an unexploded bombs because they also dropped dropped bombs. It didn't explode at that time. So you know, exploded a different time. But they did fuse to the unexploded bomb and we were able to go back two days later. But we spent two days in what they called the rest center. But the main thing was lots of, funnily enough, lots and lots of people. It's weird as the bombs coming down and being killed with a bomb, lots of people got killed on the roads because of the blackout because you couldn't, uh, we had to black out all our windows and our calls used to have to have to have, uh, a black black, uh, a cover over the front of their lights. Even if you had a torch, which you really shouldn't have, you had to have a color of a torch and hold it right down. And there was these special men walking around. If you saw a chink of light for the curtain, he shot, put that light out, but that lighter.

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But there are many, many people killed on the roads because of the blackout.

Speaker 1: [23:40](#) What was it like when bombs were falling?

Speaker 2: [23:43](#) Well there were surrenders. Although when we went down the shelter, we were told to sing that we would have to sing us a sing top of our voices until it was too tired to sing. We stopped seeing him and fell asleep and down the show we had bunk beds, there was three bunks, three beds, a hundred of us. Then one shelter as a lot of people in one shelter, one entrance and one toilet. And so there was one person, they were mainly for the children and for um, uh, the elderly and uh, and um, so we, we weren't worried about that because we were at home when I lived at home. We didn't have a lot, but we had, we all slept in one bed anyway, so we all kept warm and that wasn't, so we'd come up in the morning and then go on with our business. Mom would go to work one to work and come back at eight o'clock. Dad wasn't there. My two big sisters, which got us just look after us. Yes.

Speaker 1: [24:38](#) Tell us about any friends of family who were injured during the war.

Speaker 2: [24:43](#) Right. I don't remember anyone being actually injured as such family, although I'd already lost my little brother because of the shelter cough. But, um, when I finally came back from a blackball when I was nearly 13, I was so happy. I recall looking up in my bedroom at my dad's suit. He had one suit, but when he came home on leave from the army he used to wear and I thought, how wonderful, I'm never going to be evacuated again because we knew that the Russians were coming one way. The Americans are coming. We knew from the radio or the wireless that we wouldn't in the war. And I knew that we weren't being evacuated anymore. And I remember looking out thinking how happy I was a dad to be home soon. I tell we had this letter from him saying that he's going to be home soon and take care of us.

Speaker 2: [25:34](#) And um, it just, it just a letter to all of us. It had in the corner, mom, Hettie, Mary, Billy, all of us, they put little cases by the side. Two weeks after we got that letter, we got a letter from the bore office saying, we're sorry to tell you it's out. We're shortage and film you that my mother got the letter, which she asked me to open, which was quite awful because she was getting the T ready. I remember she was getting the T ready and

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she asked me to open the door to open the letter and I had to read out to her. We are sorry to inform you the death of your husband on active surface. That was near the end of the war, nearly into the ball and dad had been killed out in a place called casino in Italy where 50 50 old thousand men lost their lives and that particular battle was totally unnecessary. I've learned since then that they, it was, they were trying to go up to a monastery in Italy, a casino, but that dad had been killed and then I looked up at that suit and I thought, my goodness, poor me. That's not coming home.

- Speaker 1: [26:37](#) What did you and your family do when you heard the [inaudible]?
- Speaker 2: [26:42](#) When we heard the bombs, we just had to talk. If it was a V one and a B twos, as I told you, they didn't give any air raid warning. You just walk, you just duck and hope it wasn't for you. Sadly, if you, if it was it was above you, it would come down at an angle. So you knew it wasn't for you and you could feel very bad, but you didn't feel bad that you knew somebody else's getting it but not true.
- Speaker 1: [27:06](#) What were your feelings when you came back to London after being evacuated?
- Speaker 2: [27:10](#) Happy. I was happy until we got the letter from the war office. Say that dad wasn't coming home, that he'd been killed and that took a different thing altogether because they were all lost. I remember, um, my mother having, my sisters were at work and she had to tell him as I came in, one by one, she had to tell them that's not coming back. That was quite a sad time.
- Speaker 1: [27:31](#) What were your feelings about your family?
- Speaker 2: [27:35](#) My family now. I'll tell him. My sister, the one that went to the really nice house now I'd already mentioned that didn't want to come back. She still didn't want to be with us during that time and so she pretended that she was 17 because during the war actually all women, young women had to do some sort of war service. If you, if you weren't married or didn't or if you didn't have any children, you had to do some sort of war work. Now, lots of women had to work in factories where at one time they were Bobby and making cars that had to go and work and make bombs. In fact, those NGOs used to be called the Canary, but girls eventually cause the, the, the work that the, the material that they were working on turn their skins yellow so they would

call the Canary goes or that had to join one of the forces. My sister joined what they called the land army. There was different forces. There was a women's air force, there was a Navy and there was a land army. My sister joined the land army. She remained there for three years and when she came back from that and on me after three years she immigrated to Australia. She did still didn't want to be with us, so basically I lost my sister. From that moment she was picked and went out to a different family.

- Speaker 1: [28:52](#) How have nothing changed while you were away?
- Speaker 2: [28:56](#) How hard London changed while you, well, there was a bomb sites everywhere. Everywhere you looked there was a bomb site. Half houses you'd look up and you'd say black curtains flying out, chairs and tables, obvious in the midair and [inaudible] and they've just bombed size everywhere. People didn't take it notice or they, they still went to work. They walked through the streets with all the rubble.
- Speaker 1: [29:24](#) How did your host family feel when you were leaving?
- Speaker 2: [29:30](#) I think the girl was the last evacuation where I, where I was with all the girls. They were quite sad, like hugged and kissed me and asked me to go back and see them, which many, many years. I did go back to Blackboard to see if I could see these NGOs and say, thank you for looking after me. Then when I got back there, the house to Blackpool, the house had been demolished and his place was a block of flats.
- Speaker 1: [29:58](#) They just stay in touch with venue of your host families?
- Speaker 2: [30:02](#) No, no. We weren't assigned to only the last one because the first one they didn't want to know anyway, and the second one the most when the ID was disabled, we didn't get and keep in touch with them. Now
- Speaker 1: [30:17](#) how did you celebrate the end of the wall?
- Speaker 2: [30:19](#) The end of the wall celebrations for everyone else was wonderful. I can recall sending in that same bedroom where my dad's suit was looking out the window in the block of flats. I lived in a court yard that had a huge long table and there was all these children having jelly and ice cream and lemonade and things that we hadn't seen for ages and ages and they're all having a wonderful time. But my, my mother said to me, I'm

looking out the window. She said, she said to me, I recall her saying, you're not going out there. We've got nothing to celebrate your dad. You lost your dad and your brother, but you've got nothing to celebrate. Now the reason I mentioned, which we didn't go out because I agree with her, there was no good me going out and saying how wonderful it was because it wasn't wonderful cause that wasn't coming back. Charlie boy, the baby brother, he's dead already. So, um, I remember that's uh, I want to say to you, although you might see wonderful thing people celebrating, there were thousands and thousands of people that I had taught in those families that didn't celebrate. Yeah.

Speaker 1: [31:23](#) Looking back, how do you think your experiences as an evacuee has affected your life?

Speaker 2: [31:30](#) It made me more strong. It made me more self sufficient and a Jessica Omega life because that's how it is. Life is, is that's how life is, be strong and, and that's how that made me stronger. Yeah. Made me a strong person. Yeah.

Speaker 1: [31:47](#) What are your strongest memories from the war?

Speaker 2: [31:51](#) I think from the war, I think the two, two main things I've already mentioned to you was losing my mind. A lovely baby brother who I adored. He had, it was so beautiful. And, and losing my dad, they were my strongest memories. I mean, losing someone is, is far more important than being evacuated. Yeah.

Speaker 3: [32:15](#) Okay. So that's gone through the questions. Is there anything for minis him? So we're all going to ask, but if you still answer towards Gabby, just for the consistency with the camera. So Johnny,

Speaker 1: [32:26](#) was there anything that you got and you made sure nothing happened to it and you kept it?

Speaker 2: [32:31](#) Yes. It was actually, he, yeah. Yeah, that was, that was when I was first evacuated, which was my birthday. I was handed this little present. My mother said he's a little present for you. And in this, in this wrapped up parcel was a pair of new pajamas and a, and uh, I'd never had new pajamas before because if you've got two big sisters, you never got anything new. You've got, you've got it all handed down. But these were my own pajamas and I looked at these pajamas and I also had a tiny cell celluloid. Lord, I don't know, it's a tiny, tiny doll, but it moved his arms

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and his legs and it had yellow painted hair. And I remember putting that little dowel on the window ledge that day and saying, I'm just paying out for telling her the doll. I've just got to have the dad back later. When I came back after many, many months, that little doll was still on the Twain tillage.

Speaker 3: [33:25](#) Hmm. And did you, did, did he ever feel that you, um, was left out,

Speaker 2: [33:36](#) eh, as an evacuated boy? I did at first word, what our main, my main worry was what's happening at home, what's happening to our mom. And of course, when the first evacuation, when we didn't hear anything, that was the main worry has, she's inserted this, are we going to stay here forever? Nobody come and collect us. So we did. I did feel a little bit deserted, but of course we didn't get the letters because you never gave them to us. Yeah. Any other question?

Speaker 3: [34:02](#) Yep. Um, do you think more people died in the blackout then? The real wall?

Speaker 2: [34:11](#) No more, but certainly half as many because it's, the blackouts were horrendous. I mean you had to have a special, my mom put blanket, old blanket and old blank gray blanket up at the windows and you had to have 'em all um, crisscross of, of uh, of um, tight Pisces over the window so that if there was a blast, the windows didn't come in and on you, they would just smash all the windows had Chris' courses on them and uh, but there were many, many people work out in the blackout. Yes.

Speaker 3: [34:48](#) Yes ma'am. If you could relive the wall, what advice would you give? If you could relive the worldwide vice? Would you get [inaudible]

Speaker 2: [34:59](#) keep strong. Just keep strong. And remember you came through another one, you came through, you can do it again and help help other people. That's what I think. You have to try and think. Think of other people when you, you know what they're going through.

Speaker 3: [35:17](#) Yeah. How did you feel knowing that your father was he gonna come back?

Speaker 2: [35:25](#) It was terrible blow to me that, that he wasn't coming home because being the youngest daughter, I must confess I was his favorite, although your door, but my baby brothers because

they, he had three and then he had two boys. It just one boy. So the, my, my baby brother, he had told him because he was a boy. You know your boy. I was the youngest daughter and uh, and uh, I was the one that tried to teach him to read him right before we went in the army because he couldn't meet all right. But I did with my sisters. We used to try to teach him to read and mind, which was wonderful because he was able to do, I was able to send us letters if we hadn't taught him how to read and write, he wouldn't be able to send us letters.

Speaker 3: [36:10](#) Do you want, just, just for the, could you say a bit about how much you know about how, how so do you know how it was organized in terms of how the families were found in the payment to them? Did you know about that? So

Speaker 2: [36:20](#) how the families were found. Yes, they, yeah. The host families had to take you. They, they were, they didn't have a choice. They were being paid to take you. But before the evacuees, as people had arrived, the local council of each area had been mounted, each house and said, you have room to spare or you have a bed to spare. And they, so they said, you can take one, you can take too big. So the host families, they were duty bound to take you, which didn't make it easy. Some of them were kind, but some of those that didn't want to have people in their house or not so kind and they were being paid for it. They were paying, being paid what was called shootings. I don't know what the equivalent is now, but they were being paid so much per child to have you there.

Speaker 3: [37:11](#) Hmm. How did you feel when you wasn't good enough for a day of what you was getting up for?

Speaker 2: [37:21](#) Well, it didn't hit me. It didn't Dawn on me at first, but I remember this journey was just amazing. I thought the journey, I've seen all these, all these fields and all these, all these trees and no people, no houses. I kept asking my sister, where are the houses and and also what those white dots out there. She said, if sheep have, you must have read that in your book. She said, he must've read that in his story book there are shaping cows. I said, Oh my God, what did I do? She said, well, cows give you milk. That was the end of that. I never drank any milk from then when I found out the meal come from cows, I'll never drink any milk after that. It's got to be Ticer and we'd be had ties up or orange juice. But actually during the rationing we also had a very heavy rationing period too that you had an each had a little book and if you were a grown up, you had a Brown book.

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- Speaker 2: [38:13](#) If you were um, teenage or [inaudible] or over five years old, you had a blue book and if you were a baby, you had a green book. This was a way of skimming your priority because some things like oranges and bananas never entered the country during the war. Very, very rarely because they were too busy bringing over people, soldiers and, and, and ships and planes were looking out for munitions. They didn't have an aim to bring over bananas. And I remember when I first had a banana, when I first got a banana, I see it with the skin on. I try to get through the skin because I didn't know you had to pay late. But with the green book, with the rationing, um, if as a baby, if there was a banana, if there bananas happened to be coming in the green grocers, you've got priority to have a, you've got one banana for the family or one orange. They were the mice. They were the things that are fruit that we didn't get. We all grew our own apples. But I do remember when I got to the country and I saw all these apples on the trees growing and I said to my sister, well are they, she said the apples, she said, my sister said to me, but you can't eat those because they're poisonous. You can only eat the apples. They're in the shops. She didn't, she didn't know. We didn't know apples grew on trees.
- Speaker 3: [39:34](#) Can I just ask you a quick one? Um, I guess this is a bit of just conjecture on your part. So you said that your, you saw your mom crying the first time you left and then you were back and then she was worried cause you offsetting the bits of wood. What do you think that decision was like for her then? She obviously wanted to keep her family close, but then to keep them safe, you had to send him away. If you could talk out, what do you think that was? You got any sense of how that will score
- Speaker 2: [39:58](#) for my mother? I can't get into my mother's head but I do know that uh, she didn't want, she really didn't want us to go because um, I'm only 13 but he's seven so we're quite both quite young and she, she especially him, especially Billy, but he was getting into all sorts of mischief. He was, he was as a seven year old boy, he was climbing up into bomb sites and, and also he was one away. And then when the siren, when she couldn't find him, she was all over the place trying to find him and the bombs started to come down and he would, he would just stroll along the street, walk along so well what's wrong? She said what's wrong? She dragged him in quickly and we'd run down the shelter. I think what happened was she couldn't cope with him basically. That's why she said, and I had to go away to look after

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him cause he couldn't get me. You won't be sending, if he was, nobody would take him on his own. He was too much trouble.

Speaker 3: [40:54](#) How did it, how did you feel knowing that your father or, um, I'm sorry, I didn't quite get that. How did you feel knowing that your phone would join the army?

Speaker 2: [41:09](#) Well, I didn't understand why he was going through, but that's particular, that battle only lasted a short time, but it was very, very intense. I didn't know how bad it was for him until, because he would write letters to us, which came in a little AMA or form telling us everything was wonderful. My mother used to send him the local pipe every day and he said, Oh, I've got your paper. I've got the Sunday papers. And we all enjoyed it and everything is fun. But it was just, we got this letter in AML form, which was how they came and lots of things we've rubbed out because people had gone through it, uh, to make sure that he didn't give anything away, any secrets where he was or anything. And, um, it was such a short time after that, between that letter saying that everything was wonderful, that we got the other letter to say that he'd been killed. So that that was a very heavy battle battle of casino. Totally unnecessary.

Speaker 3: [42:08](#) Hmm.

Speaker 2: [42:09](#) What happened was that they were trying to get up to this, it was a huge monastery, a top of a Hill, and they were trying to go up to this monastery where the Germans had the fault fault. They had a fault. They were just killing all the people. It wasn't just the British shoulders. They were all nationalities of that battle, uh, that fought in that battle. And then the Americans came in and they went round this, this casino, this big mountain. They went round it and then got into Rome first.

Speaker 3: [42:39](#) [inaudible]

Speaker 2: [42:41](#) yeah,

Speaker 2: [42:46](#) we didn't use the gas masks because there was no gas, but, and actually, um, the gas didn't mean anything to me because I wouldn't, thinking about gas, you know, we didn't even think that we would be guest, but we had to take it with us everywhere. But, um, no, uh, the boys, it was a boys that used to make the fun of the gas laws. They had all different times of gas mosque that had, um, gas Mohs with children, which looked like, um, Mickey mouse. They called them Mickey mouse gas

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miles. They had gas MAs for babies, which was like a huge, huge bed. You'd put the baby inside that gas mask and the other gas miles for us, older children and adults was like a little rubber mosque, black, ugly looking thing.