

LONDON AND THE BLITZ



QUIZ

1. Why was Germany angry at the outcomes of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919? Give three reasons to support your answer.

i) _____

ii) _____

iii) _____

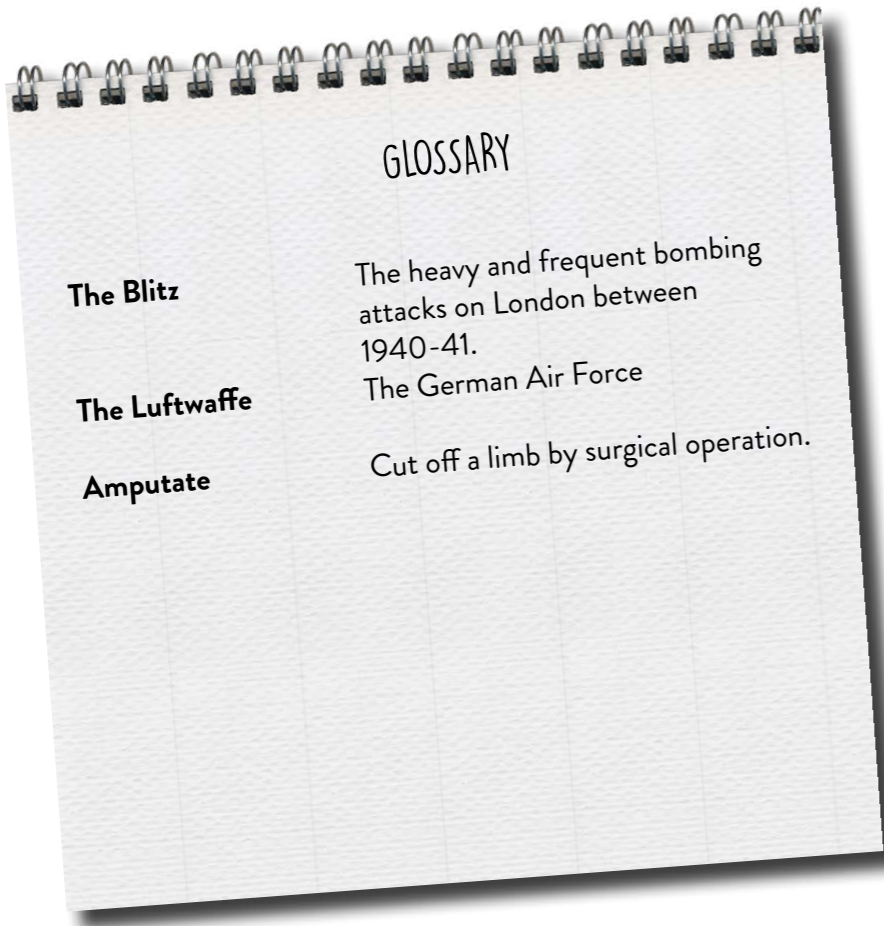
2. Why did France want Germany's penalty to be the most severe during the treaty talks?

3. Who used anger and resentment in Germany to his favour when rising to power in the early 1930s?

4. How was Hitler able to convince crowds of people to support his cause?

- ☐ a) He had been a soldier in WW1
- ☐ b) He was a brilliant public speaker
- ☐ c) He was a German patriot and loved his country

5. Which action, initiated by Adolf Hitler, caused Word War II to break out?



GLOSSARY

The Blitz

The heavy and frequent bombing attacks on London between 1940-41.

The Luftwaffe

The German Air Force

Amputate

Cut off a limb by surgical operation.



THE BLITZ IN LONDON

For 9 months, all throughout the day and night, London and other cities around the UK sustained frequent bombing attacks from German forces, known as the Luftwaffe. These attacks were almost continuous from September 1940 until May 1941. As well as cities, industrial areas and ports were also bombed in an attempt to disrupt trade routes and impact negatively on the economy. By the end of these bombing attacks, which are known as 'The Blitz', one third of London was destroyed.

Why London?

It was very dangerous living in a large city during the war as cities were often targets of enemy aircrafts that flew over at night dropping bombs. London, being the capital city of Britain, was a target for German troops.

The East End of London was the first to be hit at 4:56pm on September 7th 1940. German bombers flew over the English Channel and dropped over 250 tonnes of explosive devices, destroying everything in their path.

Over 350 bombers flew over the English Channel and dropped over 300 tonnes of explosives onto the London docks and the streets of the East End of London.

This attack began suddenly after a change in tactics from the Luftwaffe. They acknowledged that bombing cities would cause much more damage than their previous British Air Force base targets. Their change of plan cost the lives of 2,000 British civilians just on the first night of the Blitz. It is believed that, in total, there were 32,000 fatalities during the Blitz with another 87,000 civilians being seriously injured.



September 9th, 1940 and 2016. Images show bomb damaged street then and now. © Getty Images



DID YOU KNOW?

'Blitz' is short for the German word 'Blitzkrieg' which means 'lightning war'.



AIR RAIDS

Air raids

Most air raids happened at night, when people were at their least suspecting. As bombings became more and more frequent, air raid sirens sounded which warned the public of potential air raid strikes. During the Blitz, these sirens became a relatively normal part of daily life.



Video 1:

<http://bit.ly/2wZi7Al>

Video 2:

<http://bit.ly/3b1Pg dq>

Video 2:

<http://bit.ly/2x3C09o>

SOMETIMES, AIR RAID STRIKES WOULD HAPPEN WHEN NO ALERTS HAD SOUNDED.

What did the sirens sound like?

The sirens made loud, continuous noises and were placed in different parts of towns and cities. The sounds for an 'alert' and an 'all clear' were different. Alert: The pitch rose and fell alternatively All clear : A continuous sound at the same pitch, lasting approximately two minutes.

Let's listen to the two sirens.

How do you think the alert siren would make people feel?

How do you think the all clear siren would make people feel?

Air raid shelters

When civilians in London heard the air raid sirens wailing, they dashed to their nearest shelter. There were three main types of shelter.

Anderson Shelters

Named after John Anderson who was Home Secretary at the time. These shelters were made from straight and curved corrugated steel panels that were bolted together. The curved panels, which were bolted at the top, formed the body of the shelters, while the straight panels were at either side. These shelters were partially buried underground and had concrete floors. They could hold up to 6 people.



An Anderson Shelter © IWM

Brick-built Shelters

These shelters had reinforced concrete roofs and were often built in backyards and gardens. Sometimes, they were partially below ground.



An example of an out door brick-built shelter © BBC

Morrison Shelters

These shelters were named after Herbert Morrison, who was the Minister of Home Security. They were indoor steel 'table' shelters and were mainly for use inside houses. The steel top served as a table and there were mesh panels around each of the four sides. There was an entry door in one of these panels.



A Morrison Shelter © IWM

Public Morrison shelters were usually made out of bricks and had concrete roofs. Many schools had Morrison shelters inbuilt during the Second World War.

Deep Ground Air Raid Shelters

Domestic air raid shelters were the first port of call for many families when they heard the air raid sirens sounding. As the bombings became more frequent, many Londoners decided to camp out in Underground stations. By buying an Underground ticket, they were able to stay below ground until the air raids had ceased. At first the government were opposed to civilians using these shelters. As time went on, however, they provided basic toilets and bedding so that families could take shelter in stations.

The image to the left shows children being taught at Elephant and Castle station during an air raid attack.



© IWM

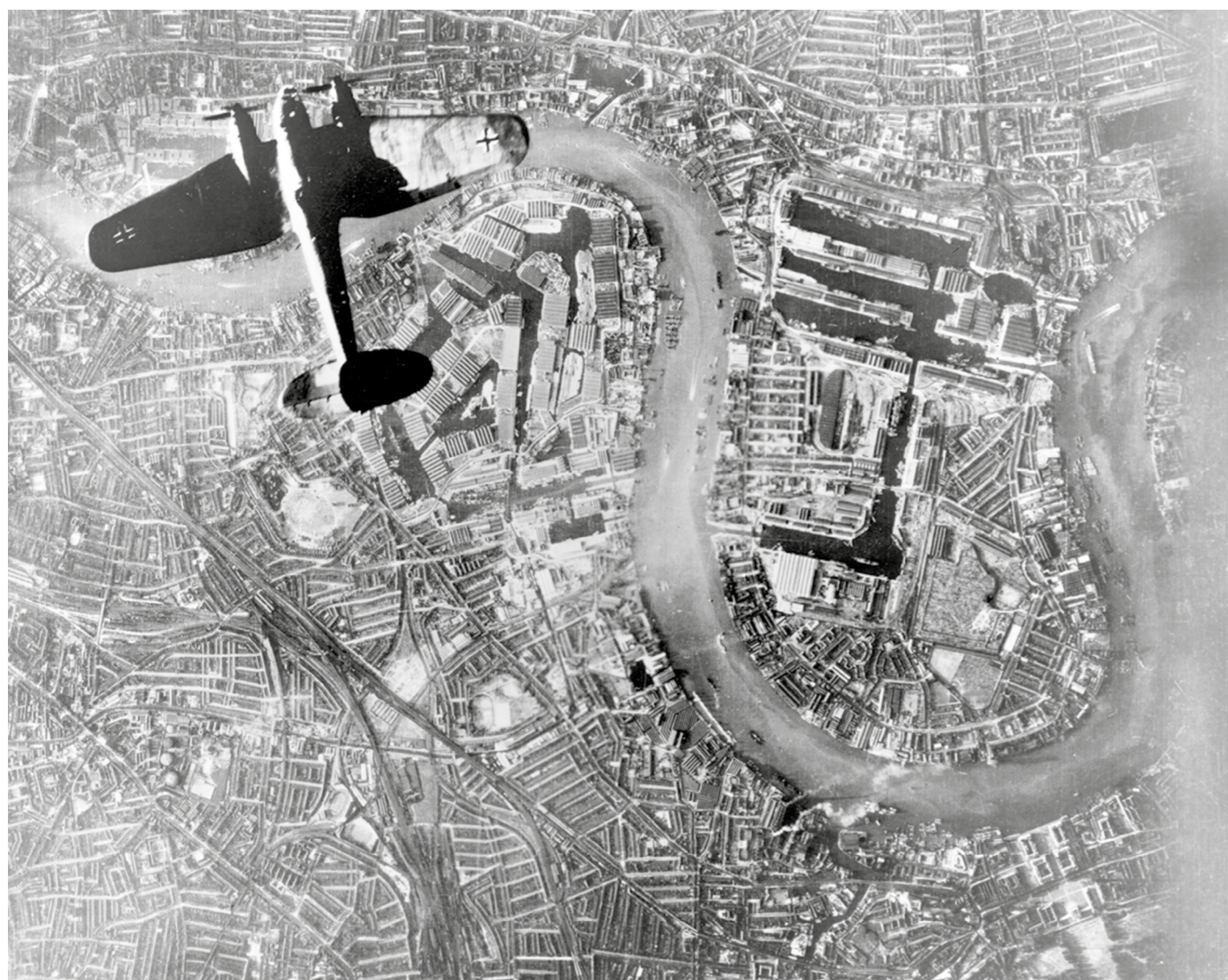


THE BLITZ IN BERMONDSEY AND BOROUGH

The docklands in Rotherhithe and the factories in Bermondsey, Southwark made this area a huge target for the Luftwaffe during the bombing raids of World War II. From October 7, 1940 to June 6, 1941, there were 1651 bombs dropped on Southwark, plus another 20 parachute mines which were equally devastating. Bermondsey especially was shattered by the weeks of onslaught, experiencing 395 air raids in the last three months of 1940 alone.

On the very first night of the Blitz (September 7th), bombs fell on Southwark Park Road and the present-day site of Harris Academy. The pupils were evacuated and the site was used as a base by emergency services.

The nature of the soil in Bermondsey contributed to the widespread devastation in this area. It was very difficult to build deep, safe shelters and this meant that the makeshift shelters that had been built were often overcrowded.



© IWM



OVERALL BOMB DAMAGE AND REBUILDING

Many buildings, including The Great Synagogue of London and the City of London Lying-In Hospital were obliterated during the Blitz in London.

Amazingly, the intimidating structure of St Paul's Cathedral survived during the Blitz. The image below shows St Paul's Cathedral standing amidst scenes of devastation in London in 1941.



© Herbert Mason

CAN YOU LOCATE ANY FAMILIAR LANDMARKS ON THE PHOTOGRAPH ABOVE?