

My Memories of WWII

As I approach my 77th birthday, I find myself **reminiscing** about the past. Daydreaming about days long gone – happy days, sad days and far too many difficult days. My memory isn't what it was though. Some memories appear quite distant and foggy, whilst others are clear and detailed, as if they had only happened yesterday. I recall my childhood as a **predominantly** happy time, however, there was a period of great darkness which I will carry with me until the day I die.

My family were quite poor but we were happy. Tommy was the eldest; a whopping 8 years older than me. He was my hero, someone to look up to and **aspire** to be like. Then there was the ever so sensible Sylvia; she was 2½ years older than me and considered it her responsibility to keep me out of trouble. Then there was me, Jimmy, the **runt** of the litter they called me because I was so much smaller than the other two. What I lacked in size though, I made up for in speed and **cunning**. I got up to all sorts of mischief but my Ma would always forgive me in the end. She had a real soft spot for me she did. I do miss her so, even now, after all these years. Pa on the other hand, he didn't stand for any of my nonsense. If he caught me misbehaving then it would be a clip round the ear (if I was lucky) and I'd be sent to my room with no supper. I never stayed there though. As soon as the coast was clear, I'd be out of my bedroom window and off down the street to find my best mate Charlie.

My carefree childhood came to an abrupt end though on the 3rd September, 1939. Our Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, declared war on Germany. Trouble had been brewing for some time. I had occasionally heard Ma and Pa talking in hushed voices, thinking that we couldn't hear or understand. It would take until the October of 1939, for the reality of the war to really hit home. Pa and Tommy **enlisted** in the army. Tommy had just turned 18 years old, so he was required to fight for his country. In my **naivety**, I was desperate to go with them, so I had tried to enlist too. I was sent away with a flea in my ear for having wasted the Officer's time.

Those of us who were left at home had to cope the best we could. Ma would go out to work each day to make aircraft parts for the war effort, whilst Sylvia and I did our best to help with chores around the house. Unfortunately, we still had to go to school each day. Many lessons were replaced with drills, so we knew what to do in the event of an air raid or gas attack. Our gas masks had to be with us always, which was a real nuisance.

We lived on the outskirts of Liverpool, and the city was often **subjected** to nightly bombings. The windows in our house were covered in paper tape and blackout curtains. The tape was to stop the glass shattering if a bomb landed nearby. Charlie and I had seen every single window in one street shattered into thousands of pieces from the force of a blast. We were told that enemy aircraft would be on the lookout for the light coming from our homes, cars and street lamps. They used the light as a target when dropping their bombs. It was **crucial** that no chinks of light escaped from our homes at night. This meant that the streets were pitch black, providing plenty of opportunities for Charlie and I to commit our **misdemeanours**. Unfortunately, the bossy ARP Warden, who patrolled the streets at night, would often catch us by the scruff of the neck and frogmarch us home again.

Sometimes, when I sit quietly at night, I think that I can still hear the terrible wail of the air raid siren, even after all these years. It would sound in the dead of night and Ma would drag me and Sylvia out to the Anderson Shelter we had built in the back garden. I **loathed** it in there. It was damp and cold, especially during the winter. Ma made sure that we had blankets and essential supplies but it was so uncomfortable and impossible to sleep on those hard wooden benches. Not that sleep was a real option. We would sit there quietly, listening to the sound of the planes and waiting for the gut wrenching explosions as bombs rained down on the city, wondering if the next one would land on our heads. Finally, the air raid siren would sound again to tell us that it was safe to return to our homes. We would **traipse** wearily back to our beds, anticipating the horrors which would greet us the following morning.

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My Memories of WWII – Y5m/Y6s (Black) – Text

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We occasionally got letters from Pa and Tommy. They had been sent to fight in North Africa. The letters were always upbeat, with the occasional **gripe** about the heat or an Officer. They never talked about the fighting. I could only imagine what horrors they faced on a daily basis. Then, one day during the summer of 1940, we got a different sort of letter. It was a **telegram**. The postman delivered it along with the rest of the mail, but he and Ma knew that this was something very different. She didn't open it immediately, she just sat at the kitchen table with tears rolling down her cheeks. Sylvia and I had just stood there waiting, knowing **instinctively** that the contents of the telegram was something to dread. We were right. Pa wasn't coming home.

Ma was never quite the same after that. She would often cry at night, when she thought we couldn't hear her. She would cry for the loss of Pa and for the safe return of Tommy. Sylvia tried her best to keep the house going and to keep me out of trouble. That was an impossible task though, as Charlie and I had discovered that bomb sites could make **exceptional** playgrounds. After each nightly raid, we would scramble over the rubble, looking for empty shell cases. Sylvia would scold me terribly if ever she caught me, threatening to tell Ma and warning me again about the danger of unexploded bombs. It always fell on deaf ears though.

By the end of 1940, our lives were to change again. The government had been working hard to **evacuate** children from the cities. Liverpool was no longer considered to be safe. Fortunately, Ma had a sister who lived in Wales. She had arranged for Sylvia and I to go and stay with Auntie Annie, as it was thought that we would be much safer there. Other children weren't quite so lucky. They were being evacuated too, but they had no idea who they were going to live with. Ma couldn't come with us; her work in the factory was just too important. I can still remember every detail of our goodbye. She had taken us both to the train station; each of us with a small suitcase, a sandwich and a label pinned to our coat displaying our name and the address of Auntie Annie. Ma hugged us tightly before **bustling** us onto the train. She stood waving on the platform until our train had **lumbered** out of sight. I am not ashamed to admit that tears rolled freely down my cheeks as I feared that I would never see her again.

Life in the Welsh countryside turned out to be quite good fun. Auntie Annie lived on a farm. Her husband, Jeffery, had been enlisted too, so she was having to work **exceedingly** hard to keep the farm going. I had never seen **livestock** before, so I had been a little bit wary at first but it wasn't long before I was willingly collecting eggs and helping Tess, the sheepdog, round up the flock from the hillside. Ma would visit us once a month and we would spend a glorious weekend together; it was easy to forget the war which was still raging all around us. It would break my heart when it was time to say goodbye again and I would count down the days until her next visit. She was still receiving letters from Tommy and I would pray each night that he would stay safe and return home to us.

Finally, on the 8th May, 1945, the allies accepted Germany's surrender and Winston Churchill announced VE Day (Victory in Europe Day). We were finally allowed home and there were parties all over Britain as people celebrated the end of the war and the return of loved ones. Tommy also returned home. He had been a fresh faced 18 year old when he left, so we could be forgiven for not recognising the **prematurely** aged, war weary face that stood before us at the train station.

So, as I approach my 77th birthday, I am not disheartened about being yet another year older. I do not moan about my aching muscles, my grey hair or my wrinkles. Instead, I remember those who were never given the opportunity to grow old. Those who were never given the chance to chase their dreams; to live their lives. I consider it my duty to make the most of everyday, as I am one of the lucky ones and for that I am **eternally** thankful.

What type of writing is this?

Identify FOUR features of this genre.

What event is Tommy about to celebrate in paragraph 1?

Find and copy a word or phrase which suggests that Jimmy was small for his age.

Which TWO punishments would Pa dish out to Jimmy?

Why did the older Jimmy think that he had been ‘naive’ for wanting to enlist in the army?

Why do you think Jimmy wanted to enlist, even though he wasn’t old enough?

Look at the paragraph beginning: *Ma was never quite the same after that.* FIND and COPY ONE word that means the same as ‘climb’.

Look at the paragraph beginning: *We lived on the outskirts of Liverpool...* What is the main purpose of this paragraph?

Write down TWO things that you are told about the Anderson shelter.

What evidence in the text is there to suggest that Jimmy was enjoying his time in Wales?

Identify TWO things Jimmy and Sylvia took with them to Wales.

'...*Winston Churchill announced VE Day (Victory in Europe Day).*' What is the purpose of the brackets in this sentence?

Look at the final paragraph. Do you think Jimmy is sad about getting older? Give evidence from the text to support your answer.

My Memories of WWII – Vocab1

Write the definitions for each of these words.

reminiscing _____

predominantly _____

aspire _____

runt _____

cunning _____

enlisted _____

naivety _____

subjected _____

crucial _____

misdemeanour _____

loathed _____

traipse _____

gripe _____

telegram _____

instinctively _____

exceptional _____

evacuate _____

bustling _____

lumbered _____

exceedingly _____

livestock _____

prematurely _____

eternally _____

Task A

Unscramble the letters below to find a word which relates to the text. Write the word underneath.

eaveuce

teegamrl

neilts

riaftcra

Task B

Join these words together to make a compound word.

black

ground

common

side

under

ship

country

board

battle

out

wash

wealth

Challenge

There is a spelling mistake in each of the sentences below. Underline the error and write the correct spelling on the line.

- The Anderson shelter was spacious enough to accomodate ten people. _____
- The Doctor will be avalable all morning. _____
- That soldier looked very familar to me. _____
- The air raid sounded frequentley throughout the night. _____
- The woman was desperete to find her cat after the nightly bombings. _____
- During WWII, families had to grow vegetables in their back gardens. _____
- Unfortunately, our neighbors house had been destroyed by the bomb. _____

Task A

Choose the correct homophone from the brackets to complete these sentences.

- The soldier received a _____ (medal/meddle) for his bravery.
- The government gave people _____ (advise/advice) on what to do during an air raid.
- The Queen, who drove trucks during WWII, does not require a driving _____
(licence/license) .
- I need to _____ (practice/practise) how to put a gas mask on.

Task B

Now identify the adverbs in these sentences.

- Our hearts beat quickly at the sound of the plane.
- People raced frantically towards the Anderson shelter.
- The evacuees waited nervously for their host family to collect them.
- We often collected empty shells from the rubble.
- We closed the blackout blinds nightly, to prevent the light being spotted by planes.

Challenge

In each of these sentences, underline an example of the word in brackets.

- The fearless soldier marched towards the enemy. (adjective)
- Tommy was enlisted at the age of eighteen. (proper noun)
- The children waited patiently at the train station. (verb)
- Jimmy and Sylvia took the train to Wales. (preposition)
- The air raid siren sounded noisily. (adverb)
- Jimmy climbed out of the window. (common noun)

My Memories of WWII – Oral Teacher Questions

What type of writing is this? **An autobiography**

Identify **FOUR** features of this genre. **Acceptable answers could include: first person, past tense, chronological order, dates, facts, locations, family details, thoughts and feelings, anecdotes, beliefs and values, emotive language and sequencing vocabulary.**

What event is Tommy about to celebrate in paragraph 1? **His 77th birthday**

Find and copy a word or phrase which suggests that Jimmy was small for his age. **He was described as being ‘the runt of the litter’.**

Which **TWO** punishments would Pa dish out to Jimmy? **He would get a clip round the ear and sent to his room with no supper.**

Why did the older Jimmy think that he had been ‘naive’ for wanting to enlist in the army? **The word naive means to show a lack of experience or wisdom. Jimmy demonstrated his lack of wisdom when he wanted to enlist. He didn’t think about what it would be like to fight in a war.**

Why do you think Jimmy wanted to enlist, even though he wasn’t old enough? **We know that Jimmy thought his brother was a hero and he wanted to be like him and that included following him to war. Also, his father was going too, so Jimmy would have been the only male left at home.**

Look at the paragraph beginning: *Ma was never quite the same after that.* **FIND and COPY ONE** word that means the same as ‘climb’. **Scramble**

Look at the paragraph beginning: *We lived on the outskirts of Liverpool...* What is the main purpose of this paragraph? **The paragraph tells us about what life was like during the air raids.**

Write down **TWO** things that you are told about the Anderson shelter. **Answers could include: they went there during an air raid, it was in the back garden, it was damp and cold in the winter, mum kept blankets and supplies in there, it contained hard, wooden benches.**

What evidence in the text is there to suggest that Jimmy was enjoying his time in Wales? **He was willingly collecting eggs and rounding up the sheep. He was enjoying his mothers visits and it was easy for him to forget that the war was still happening.**

Identify **TWO** things Jimmy and Sylvia took with them to Wales. **Answers could include: a small suitcase, a sandwich, a label displaying their name and the address of Aunty Annie.**

‘...*Winston Churchill announced VE Day (Victory in Europe Day).*’ What is the purpose of the brackets in this sentence? **They are used to tell us what the acronym VE stands for.**

Look at the final paragraph. Do you think Jimmy is sad about getting older? Give evidence from the text to support your answer. **No, Jimmy isn’t sad about getting older. We know this because he said that he didn’t moan about his achy muscles, grey hair or wrinkles because he had been given the chance to grow old, unlike many during the war. He was thankful.**

Write the definitions for each of these words.

reminiscing – to spend time enjoying the recollection of past events

predominantly – mainly

aspire – direct one's hopes or ambitions towards achieving something

runt – an animal that is smaller than average

cunning – achieving a goal by deceit

enlisted – to enrol or to be enrolled in the army

naivety – lack of experience, wisdom or judgement

subjected – forced to undergo a particular experience

crucial – critical in the success or failures of something

misdemeanour – a minor wrongdoing

loathed – to feel intense dislike for something

traipse – walk or move wearily or reluctantly

gripe – to grumble about something

telegram – a message sent by telegraph and then delivered in written or printed form

instinctively – without conscious thought

exceptional – unusual

evacuate – remove someone from a place of danger to a safe place

bustling – to move in an energetic manner

lumbered – to move in a slow and heavy way

exceedingly - extremely

livestock – farm animals regarded as an asset

prematurely – ahead of time

eternally – in a way that lasts forever

Task A

Unscramble the letters below to find a word which relates to the text. Write the word underneath.

eaveuce

teegamrl

neilts

riaftcra

evacuee

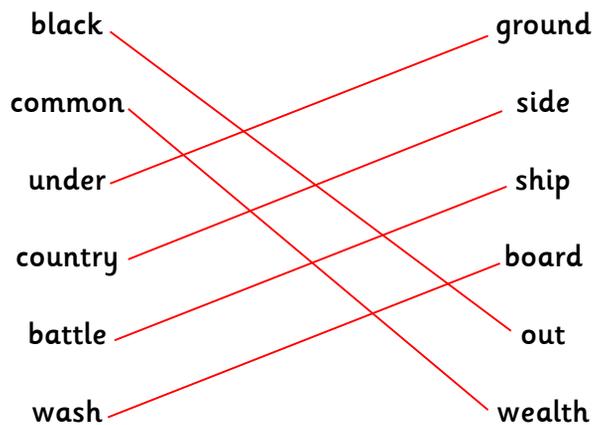
telegram

enlist

aircraft

Task B

Join these words together to make a compound word.



Challenge

There is a spelling mistake in each of the sentences below. Underline the error and write the correct spelling on the line.

- The Anderson shelter was spacious enough to accomodate ten people. accommodate
- The Doctor will be avable all morning. available
- That soldier looked very familiar to me. familiar
- The air raid sounded frequentley throughout the night. frequently
- The woman was desperete to find her cat after the nightly bombings. desperate
- During WWII, families had to grow vegetables in their back gardens. vegetables
- Unfortunately, our neighbors house had been destroyed by the bomb. neighbours

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Choose the correct homophone from the brackets to complete these sentences.

- The soldier received a **medal** (medal/meddle) for his bravery.
- The government gave people **advice** (advise/advice) on what to do during an air raid.
- The Queen, who drove trucks during WWII, does not require a driving **licence** (licence/license) .
- I need to **practise** (practice/practise) how to put a gas mask on.

Task B

Now identify the adverbs in these sentences.

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- The evacuees waited **nervously** for their host family to collect them.
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- Jimmy climbed out of the **window**. (common noun)