



All about

# LITTLEHAMPTON AT WAR

@LittlehamptonMuseum





# All about Littlehampton at War

## @Littlehampton Museum

This pack looks at the impact of World War Two in Littlehampton. World War Two was a world event that affected the lives of everyone. It lasted from 1939 to 1945. Life during World War Two was very difficult, many people went away to fight whilst others did their bit on the Home Front. Littlehampton became the front line as the enemy progressed across Europe. Many soldiers were stationed within the town and the beach was closed off with barbed wire.

### In this pack:

1. Life on the Home Front
2. Activity Suggestions
3. Object Highlights
4. Notes for photo cards
5. Photo cards
6. Oral history quote cards





# WWII: LIFE ON THE HOME FRONT

When Britain declared war on Germany in 1939, life would not be the same for the people of Great Britain. A lot of young men were called up to fight, whilst others volunteered. Many other men and women volunteered to help the war effort in other ways. Those that were left behind had to “keep calm and carry on”.

## **Evacuation**

When War was declared it was decided that many of the major towns and cities were not safe and children were sent away for safety. This was called Evacuation. To start with many children from London were sent to Littlehampton as seaside towns were thought to be much safer than cities, which might be bombed. As the war progressed all the children were then evacuated out of Littlehampton to the countryside as Littlehampton had become a potential target for the enemy.

## **Air Raid Precautions (ARP)**

Just like in many other towns and cities, Littlehampton’s local authority set up an Air Raid Precautions committee whose job it was to make sure the town was prepared for potential air raids. During an air raid the enemy may drop bombs from aeroplanes, so it was important to be prepared. Bomb shelters were built in the town and many people had their own within their houses and gardens. Each person was able to collect a gas mask to wear in case of a gas attack.

Some people within the town volunteered to be Air Raid Wardens. It was a Wardens job to know the streets in their area, and the people living in them so they could help them if there was an emergency. They also made sure that everyone obeyed the rules.

All houses had to make sure that no light was visible from their windows at night. This was called the blackout and was to make sure that enemy planes could not see where to drop their bombs. When enemy planes were seen flying overhead air raid sirens would sound warning the people of Littlehampton to seek shelter. Even schools had their own air raid shelters and children had to practice lining up to enter the shelters.

## **The Home Guard**

Many people volunteered to help with Civil Defence. These volunteers helped to protect the town in a number of ways. Some people volunteered in jobs that would normally be done by those away at war, some helped with the air raid precautions or were volunteer firefighters. There was also a group called the Home Guard. The Home Guard aimed to protect the town if the enemy made it to Britain. It would be their job to protect the people of the town and to slow the enemy down to give the British Army more time to fight back.

## **Rationing**

Food became scarce during the war and to ensure that everyone got the food that they needed the Government introduced rationing. Individuals were given Ration Books which contained vouchers that could be exchanged for portions of food such as meat, eggs and sugar. People were encouraged to grow their own food in their garden.

## **A frontline town**

Littlehampton became a base for many members of the military including forces from other countries such as Canada and America, who were fighting alongside the British. Tanks were regularly seen being driven up and down the roads and the soldiers became a part of Littlehampton life, many school children looked forward to seeing the soldiers in the hope of getting some sweet treats!

## **VE Day**

The war lasted six years, which was much longer than anyone expected. When it was finally announced that the war was over the whole country celebrated. This was called Victory in Europe, or VE day. In Littlehampton bunting was put up and flags hung and street parties were held. The celebrations went on for weeks with parties and parades being held for both adults and children. Although the war was not completely over as it was not until September 1945 that Japan surrendered, this was called VJ day (Victory over Japan). These two days marked the end of the fighting and meant that those who were away fighting for their country would soon be coming home.

# TERMS USED

**Air raid:** an attack by armed enemy aeroplanes, usually dropping bombs on towns, cities and military targets.

**Civil Defence:** The Civil Defence Service was a volunteer organisation in Great Britain during World War II. They undertook duties such as first aid, fire fighting, air raid wardens and rescue.

**Rations:** Rationing was a means of ensuring the fair distribution of food during the War and afterwards too. It began with petrol and later included other goods such as butter, sugar and bacon.

**Gas Mask:** a protective mask used to cover a person's face as a defence against poison gas.

**Morrison Shelter:** a movable air-raid shelter, shaped like a table and used indoors.

**Anderson Shelter:** a small prefabricated air-raid shelter consisting of an arch of corrugated metal and designed to be partly buried in people's gardens and covered with earth for protection.

**The Home Front:** A term often used to describe the people who stayed at home and worked whilst the country's soldiers were fighting in a war in a another country .



Image: Morrison Shelter (Copyright Imperial War Museum)



Image: Anderson Shelter  
(Copyright Imperial War Museum)





## ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- **Exploring Objects** - Take a look at the object highlight sheets included and explore the discussion questions for each object.
- **Historic Photographs** - Take a look at the photocards and explore the following questions:
  - Write down three things that this image can tell us
  - Write down three questions you want to ask about it
  - Describe the image, what can you see?
- **Creative Writing** - Imagine you have been evacuated to Littlehampton at the start of World War Two. Write a letter home to your grown ups telling them about your trip to Littlehampton and all about where you are staying.
- **Design your own museum display** –Now you have learnt about World War Two, using the objects featured in the object highlights, the photo cards and your own imagination, design your own display case telling to story of Littlehampton at War (template included).

# EXPLORING OBJECTS

All the objects featured here are part of the Museum's Collection, some of them are on display whilst some of them are kept safe in store.

Explore each object asking questions as you go along.

## Questions to answer:

What do you think it was used for?

What do you think it is made of?

What story can this object tell?

Would we use an object like this today?

Who do you think used this object?

## Object No.1: Air Raid Precautions First Aid Kit



# EXPLORING OBJECTS

**Object No.2: Hand Crank Air Raid Siren.**





# EXPLORING OBJECTS

**Object No.3: A small wooden tank.**

**Note: Part of a set of small wooden toys found in the Canadian soldiers base in Littlehampton. Small wooden toys were sometimes used by the military for planning.**



# EXPLORING OBJECTS

**Object No.4: A gas mask in a cardboard box with string attached.**



# EXPLORING OBJECTS

**Object No.5: A tin helmet.**

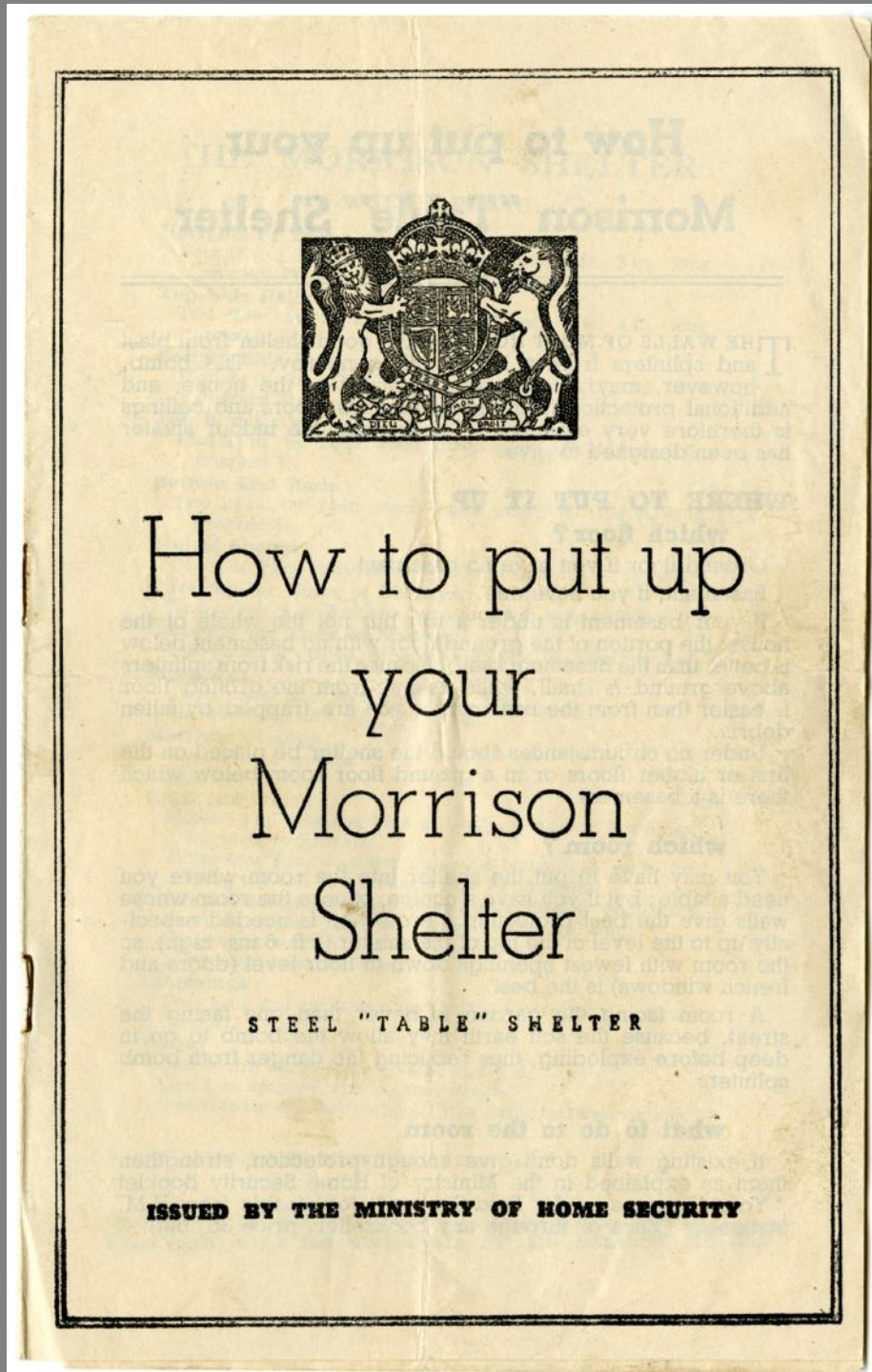
**Take a look at the photo cards to see one being worn.**





# EXPLORING OBJECTS

## Object No.6: Public Information Leaflet.



# EXPLORING OBJECTS

## Object No.7: Ration Booklets

| PAGE 12       |               |               |               | GENERAL R.B. 1 (4)   |                      |                      |                      | PAGE 13                         |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| COOKING FATS  |               |               |               | BUTTER AND MARGARINE |                      |                      |                      | Holder's Surname <u>GRIFFIN</u> |
| <del>34</del> |               |               |               | <del>26</del>        |                      |                      |                      | Other Names <u>S. THOMAS</u>    |
| COOKING FATS  |               |               |               | BUTTER AND MARGARINE |                      |                      |                      | Address <u>GRAYSWOOD</u>        |
| 33            |               |               |               | <del>25</del>        |                      |                      |                      | <u>LANSDOWNE RD.</u>            |
| COOKING FATS  | COOKING FATS  | COOKING FATS  | COOKING FATS  | BUTTER AND MARGARINE | BUTTER AND MARGARINE | BUTTER AND MARGARINE | BUTTER AND MARGARINE |                                 |
| <del>32</del> | <del>40</del> | <del>46</del> | <del>52</del> | <del>24</del>        | <del>18</del>        | <del>12</del>        | <del>6</del>         |                                 |
| COOKING FATS  | COOKING FATS  | COOKING FATS  | COOKING FATS  | BUTTER AND MARGARINE | BUTTER AND MARGARINE | BUTTER AND MARGARINE | BUTTER AND MARGARINE |                                 |
| <del>31</del> | <del>39</del> | <del>45</del> | <del>51</del> | <del>23</del>        | <del>17</del>        | <del>11</del>        | <del>5</del>         |                                 |
| COOKING FATS  | COOKING FATS  | COOKING FATS  | COOKING FATS  | BUTTER AND MARGARINE | BUTTER AND MARGARINE | BUTTER AND MARGARINE | BUTTER AND MARGARINE |                                 |
| <del>30</del> | <del>38</del> | <del>44</del> | <del>50</del> | <del>22</del>        | <del>16</del>        | <del>10</del>        | <del>4</del>         |                                 |
| COOKING FATS  | COOKING FATS  | COOKING FATS  | COOKING FATS  | BUTTER AND MARGARINE | BUTTER AND MARGARINE | BUTTER AND MARGARINE | BUTTER AND MARGARINE |                                 |
| <del>29</del> | <del>37</del> | <del>43</del> | <del>49</del> | <del>21</del>        | <del>15</del>        | <del>9</del>         | <del>3</del>         |                                 |
| COOKING FATS  | COOKING FATS  | COOKING FATS  | COOKING FATS  | BUTTER AND MARGARINE | BUTTER AND MARGARINE | BUTTER AND MARGARINE | BUTTER AND MARGARINE |                                 |
| <del>28</del> | <del>36</del> | <del>42</del> | <del>48</del> | <del>20</del>        | <del>14</del>        | <del>8</del>         | <del>2</del>         |                                 |
| COOKING FATS  | COOKING FATS  | COOKING FATS  | COOKING FATS  | BUTTER AND MARGARINE | BUTTER AND MARGARINE | BUTTER AND MARGARINE | BUTTER AND MARGARINE |                                 |
| <del>27</del> | <del>35</del> |               |               |                      |                      |                      |                      |                                 |

ON HIS MAJESTY'S  
SERVICE.

Consumer's Name GRANT, LETTY

Address 130a Wick Street  
Wick.  
LITTLEHAMPTON  
PO. 100.

DATE OF ISSUE  
**8 JUL 1940**

Serial Number of Book.  
044995

HORNCHURCH  
FOOD OFFICE.  
R.B. 1. [General]

22 SEP 1940  
SP 46 400

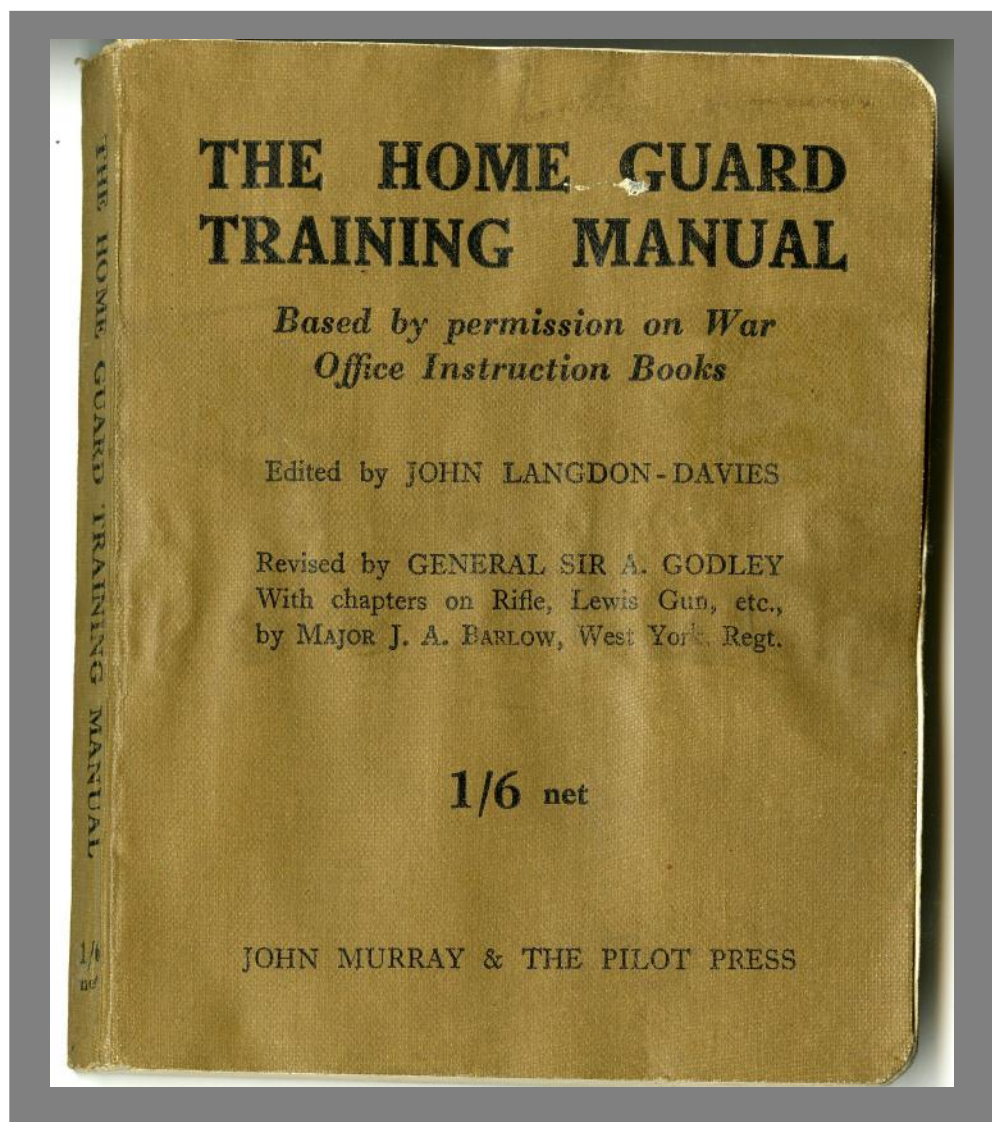
57-2

OPEN CAREFULLY



# EXPLORING OBJECTS

## Object No.8: The Home Guard Training Manual





# PHOTO CARDS

You can use these photo cards in anyway you like to help support your learning. They could be used to aid creative writing or just used for visual evidence of life during WWII. We suggest studying the images and analysing what you see. Why not ask the following questions for each image:

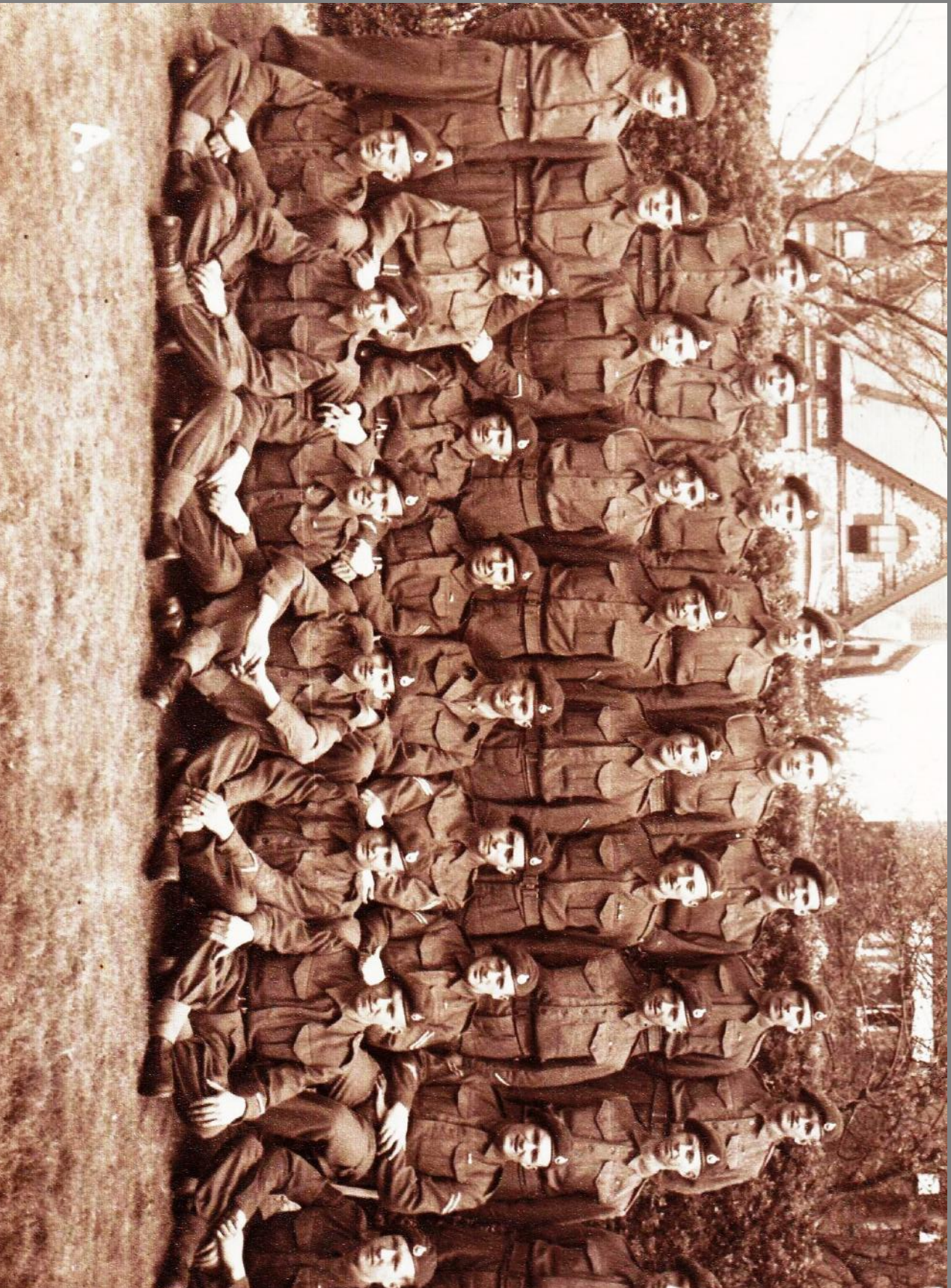
- ⇒ Write down three things that this image can tell us.
- ⇒ Write down three questions you want to ask about it.
- ⇒ Describe the image, what can you see?

A full description of each image is given below:

1. A black and white image of Mr Robinson wearing his Air Raid Warden tin helmet.
2. A group photograph of X Troop of the 30th Assault Unit. A naval commando unit stationed at Littlehampton, 1944.
3. Evacuees from London arriving in Littlehampton, 1939.
4. Members of Littlehampton Home Guard practicing attack manoeuvres on the sports field.
5. A parade for War Weapons Week, on Beach Road, Littlehampton, 1940.
6. Students from Rosemead School stand in front of a bomb crater in the school grounds, following a bad air raid on Littlehampton.
7. Bomb damage on Pier Road following the worst air raid Littlehampton had faced, 1941.
8. Two Canadian Soldiers stood outside the Manor House (now the Museum) in Littlehampton, 1941.
9. A VE day party in Littlehampton, May 1945.
10. A map of Littlehampton showing the locations of bomb damage as a result of air raids during World War Two.

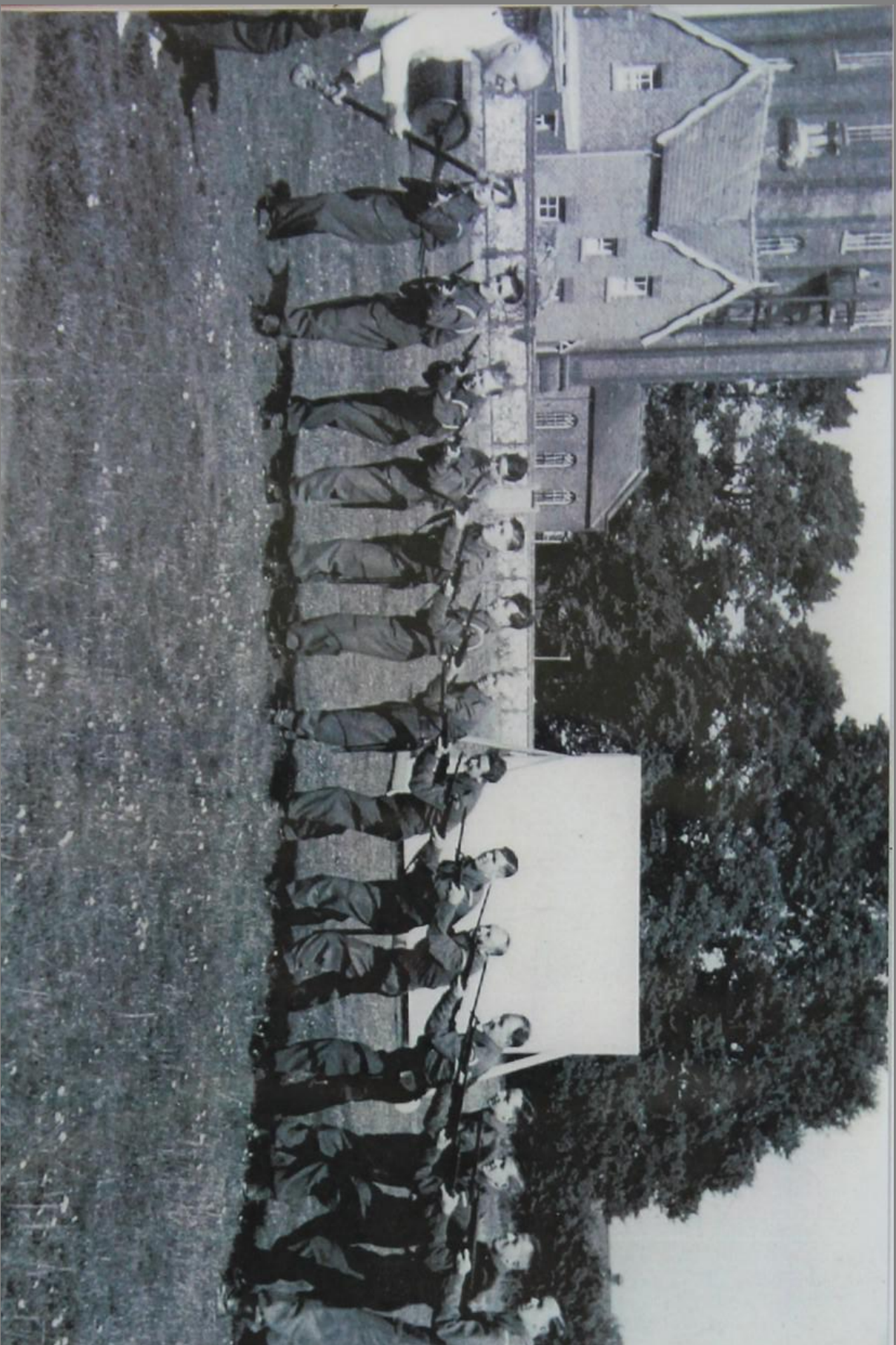












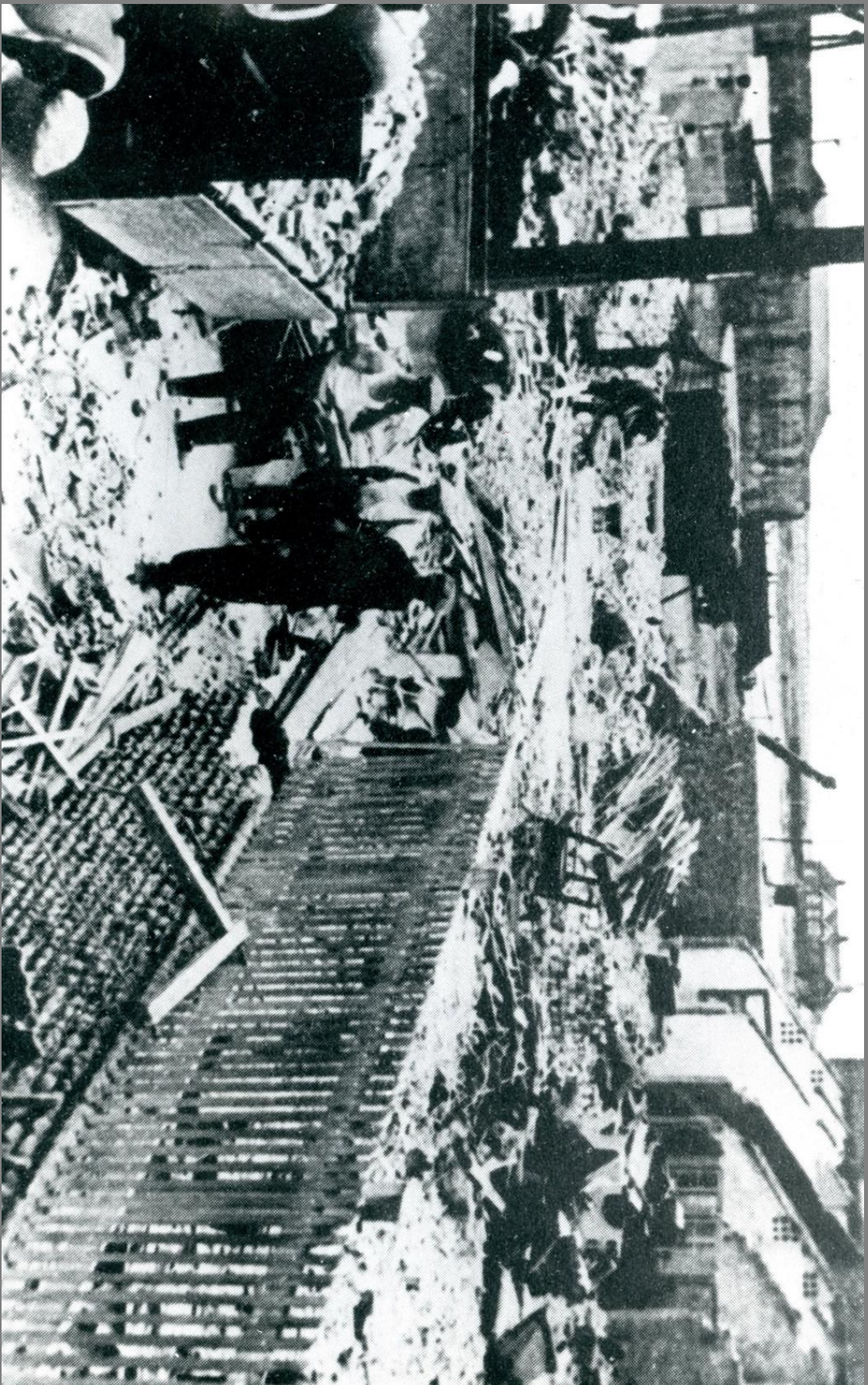






















PRICE 2d.]

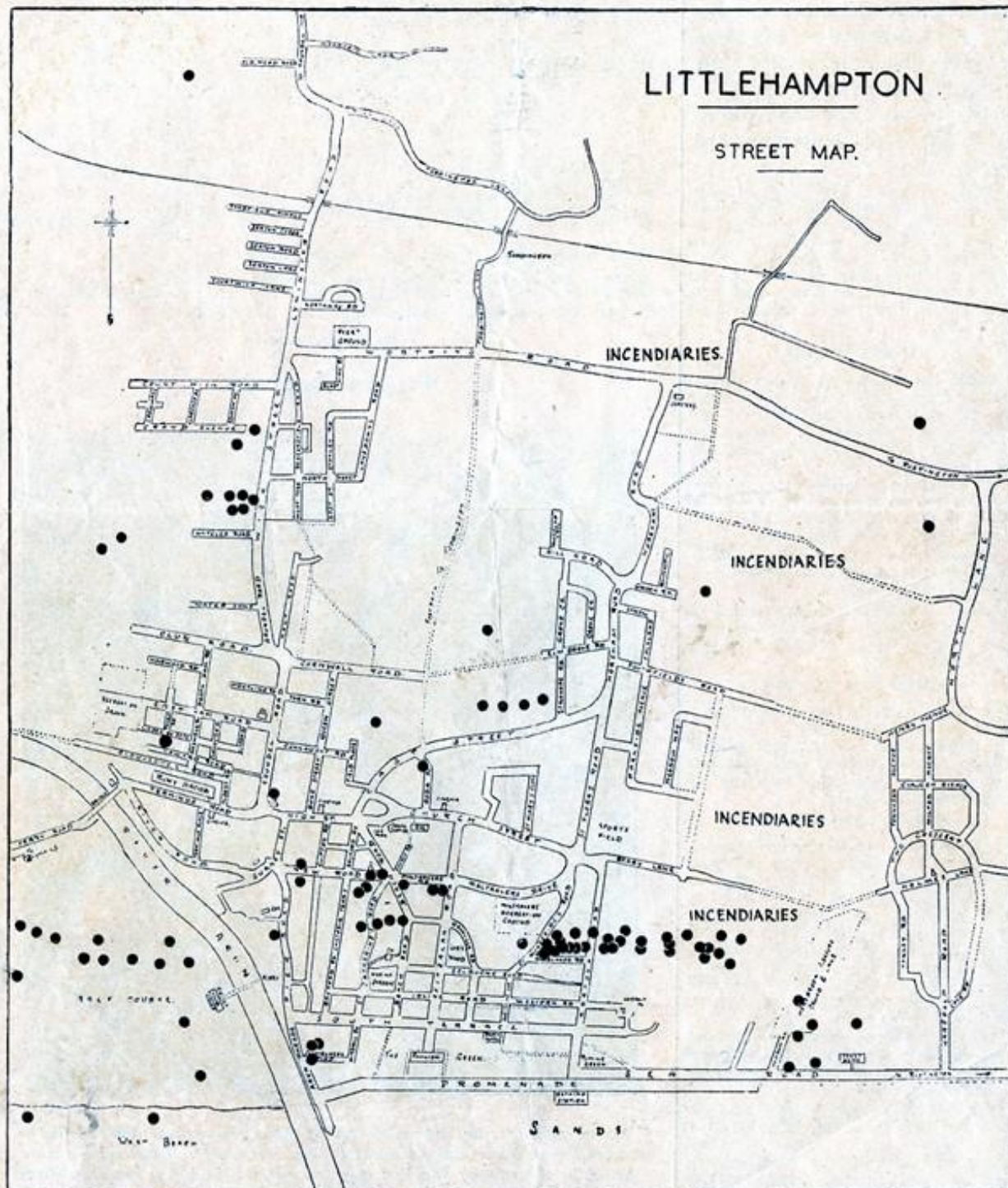
Reprinted from

# Littlehampton Gazette

NOVEMBER  
10th, 1944.

## AIR RAIDS ON LITTLEHAMPTON

Official Map And Figures of Every Incident



P.T.O.

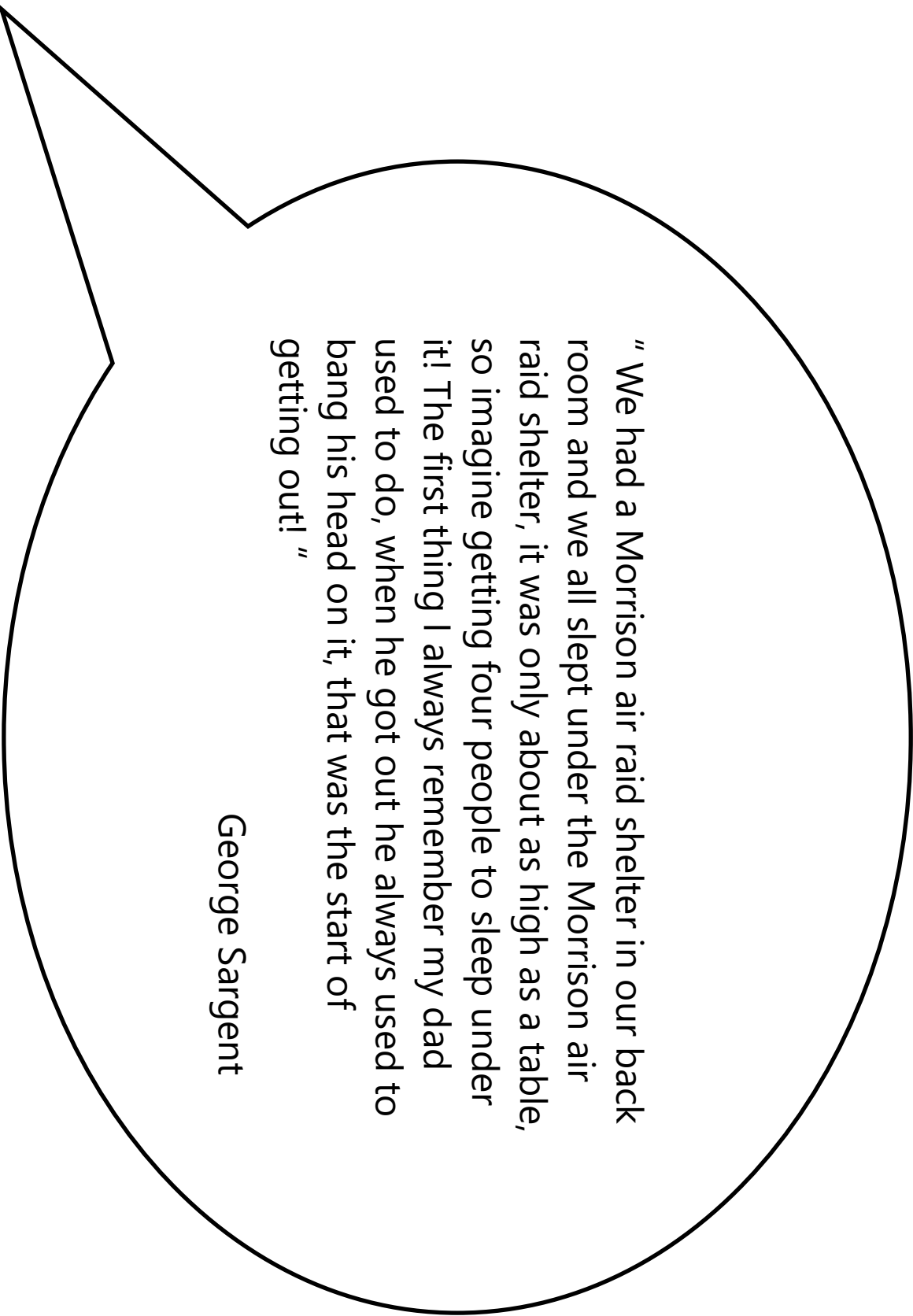


# QUOTE CARDS

These quotes are taken from interviews with local residents, conducted in the 1980's by Littlehampton Museum

"During the early part of the war there were a lot of hit and run raids on the South of England very early part of the war, and more often than not if the German bombers came over, if they had any bombs left they just dropped them on the south coast before they legged it back to Germany."

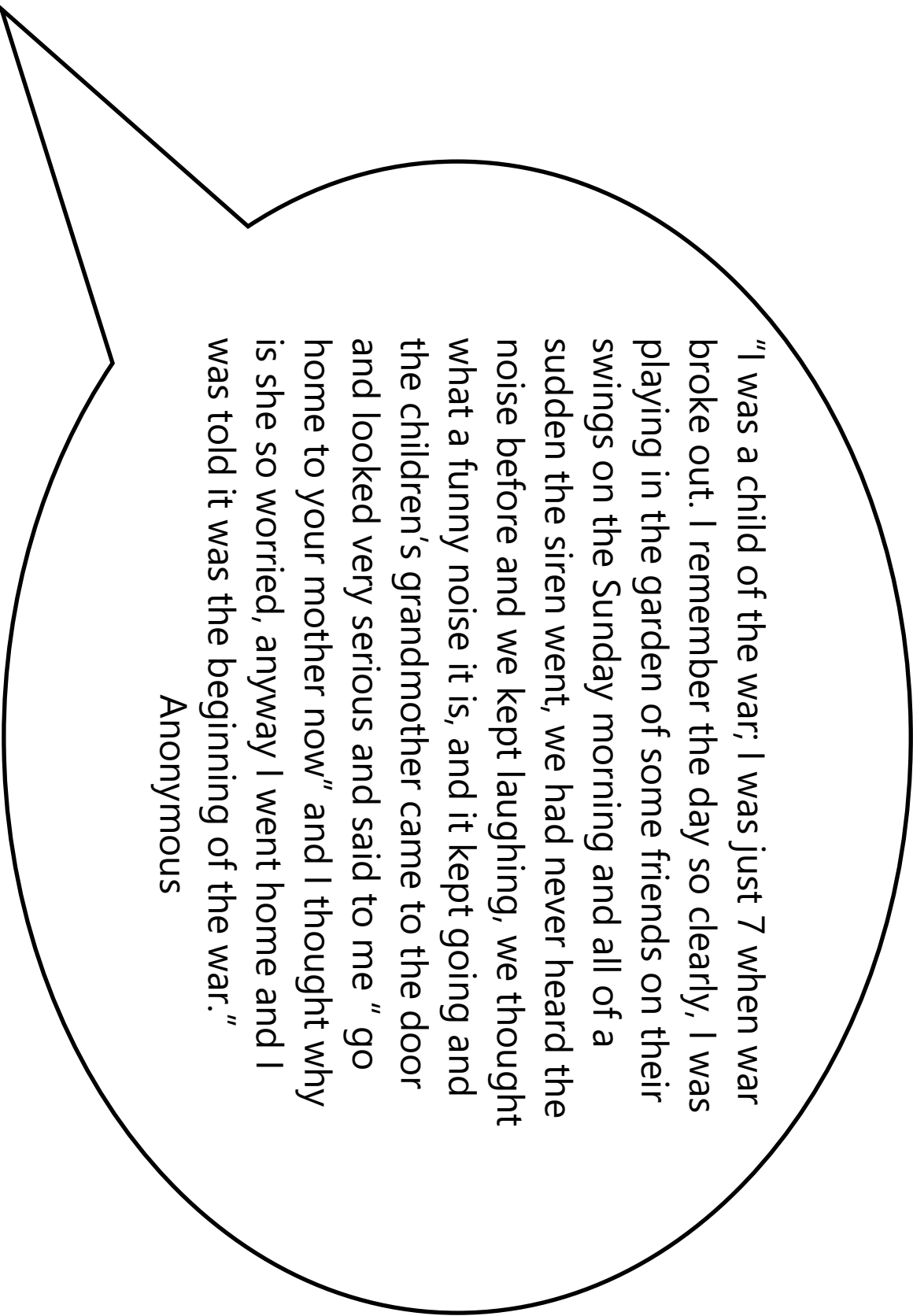
John Coles



" We had a Morrison air raid shelter in our back room and we all slept under the Morrison air raid shelter, it was only about as high as a table, so imagine getting four people to sleep under it! The first thing I always remember my dad used to do, when he got out he always used to bang his head on it, that was the start of getting out! "

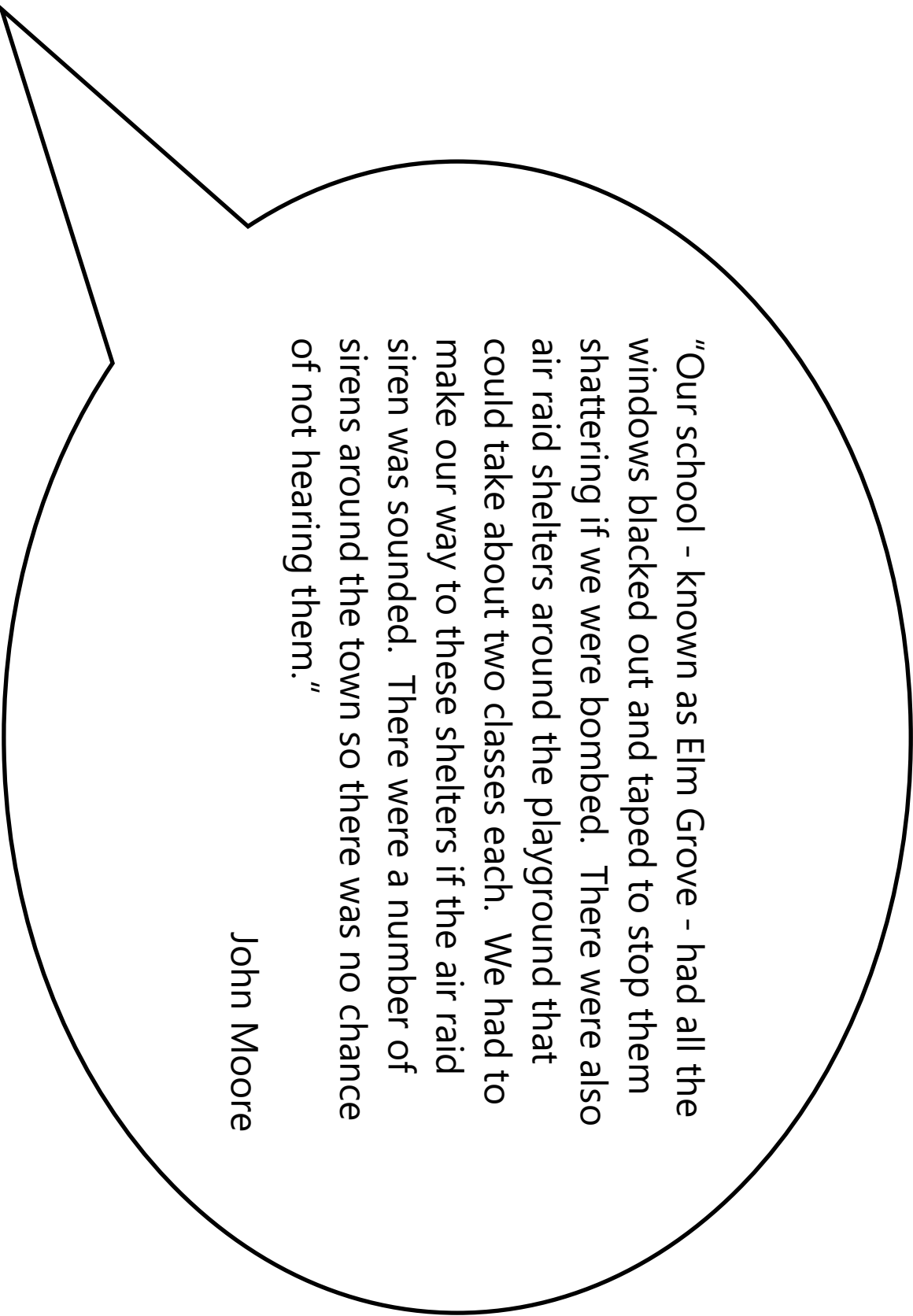
George Sargent





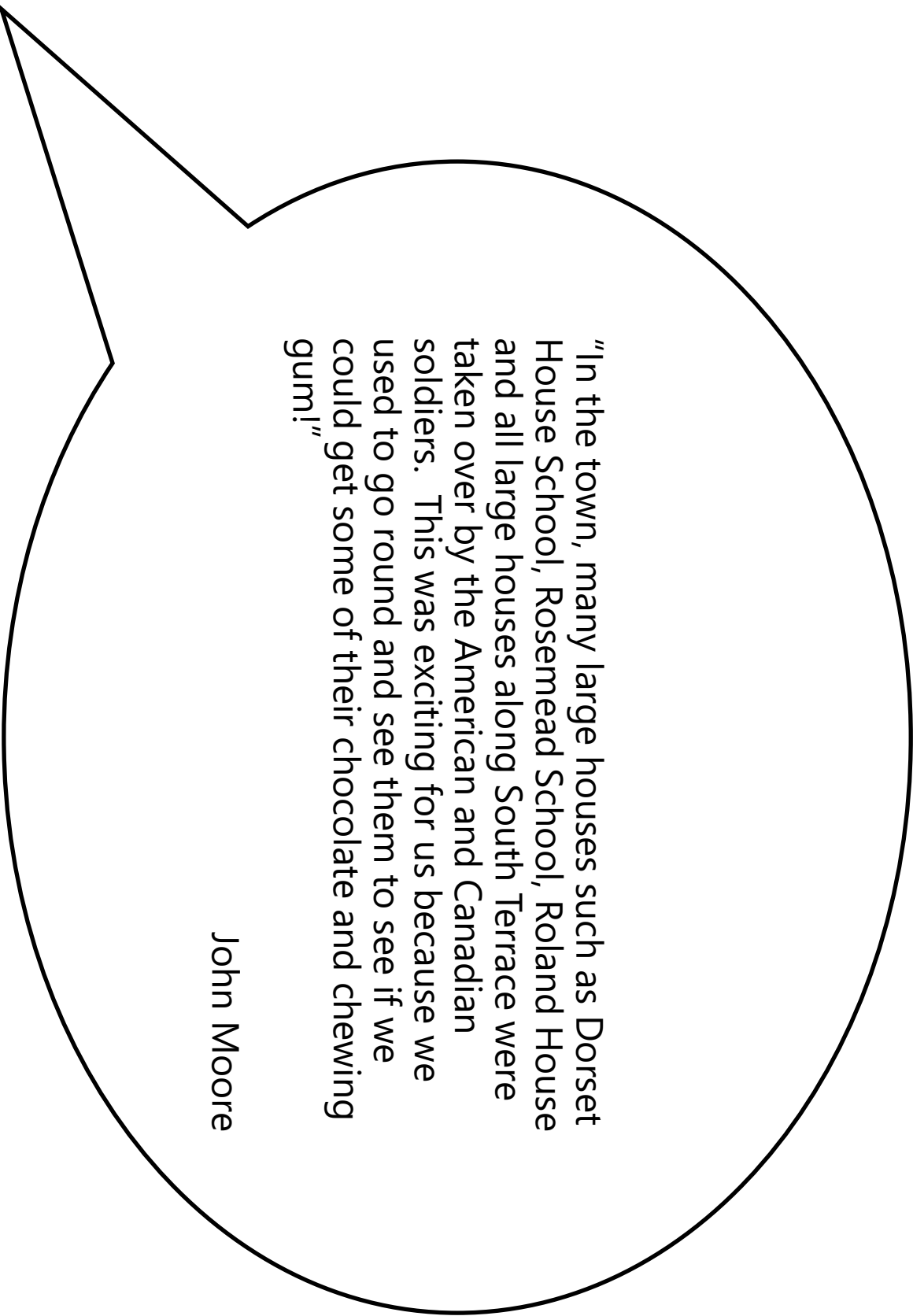
"I was a child of the war; I was just 7 when war broke out. I remember the day so clearly, I was playing in the garden of some friends on their swings on the Sunday morning and all of a sudden the siren went, we had never heard the noise before and we kept laughing, we thought what a funny noise it is, and it kept going and the children's grandmother came to the door and looked very serious and said to me " go home to your mother now" and I thought why is she so worried, anyway I went home and I was told it was the beginning of the war."

Anonymous



"Our school - known as Elm Grove - had all the windows blacked out and taped to stop them shattering if we were bombed. There were also air raid shelters around the playground that could take about two classes each. We had to make our way to these shelters if the air raid siren was sounded. There were a number of sirens around the town so there was no chance of not hearing them."

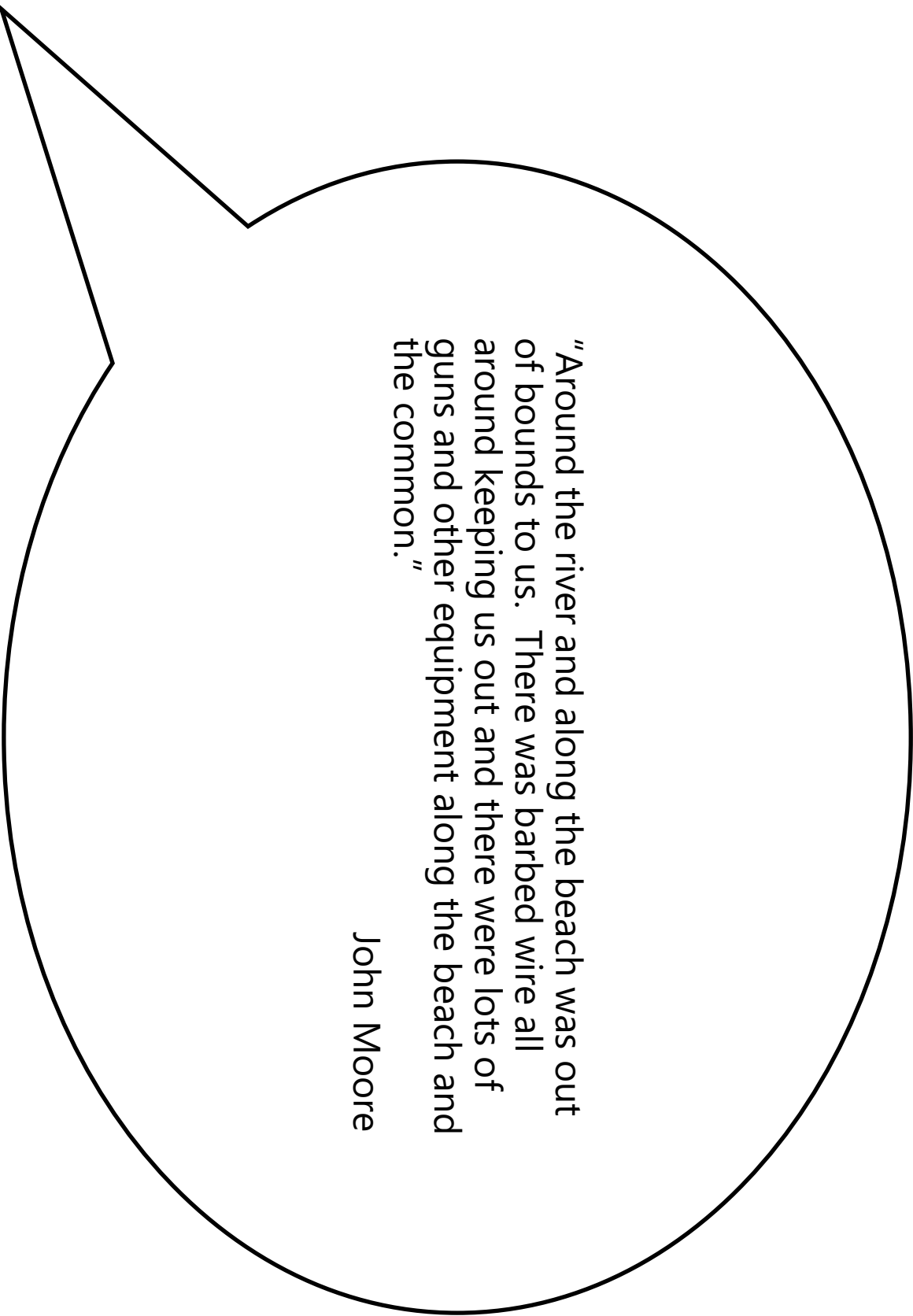
John Moore



"In the town, many large houses such as Dorset House School, Rosemead School, Roland House and all large houses along South Terrace were taken over by the American and Canadian soldiers. This was exciting for us because we used to go round and see them to see if we could get some of their chocolate and chewing gum!"

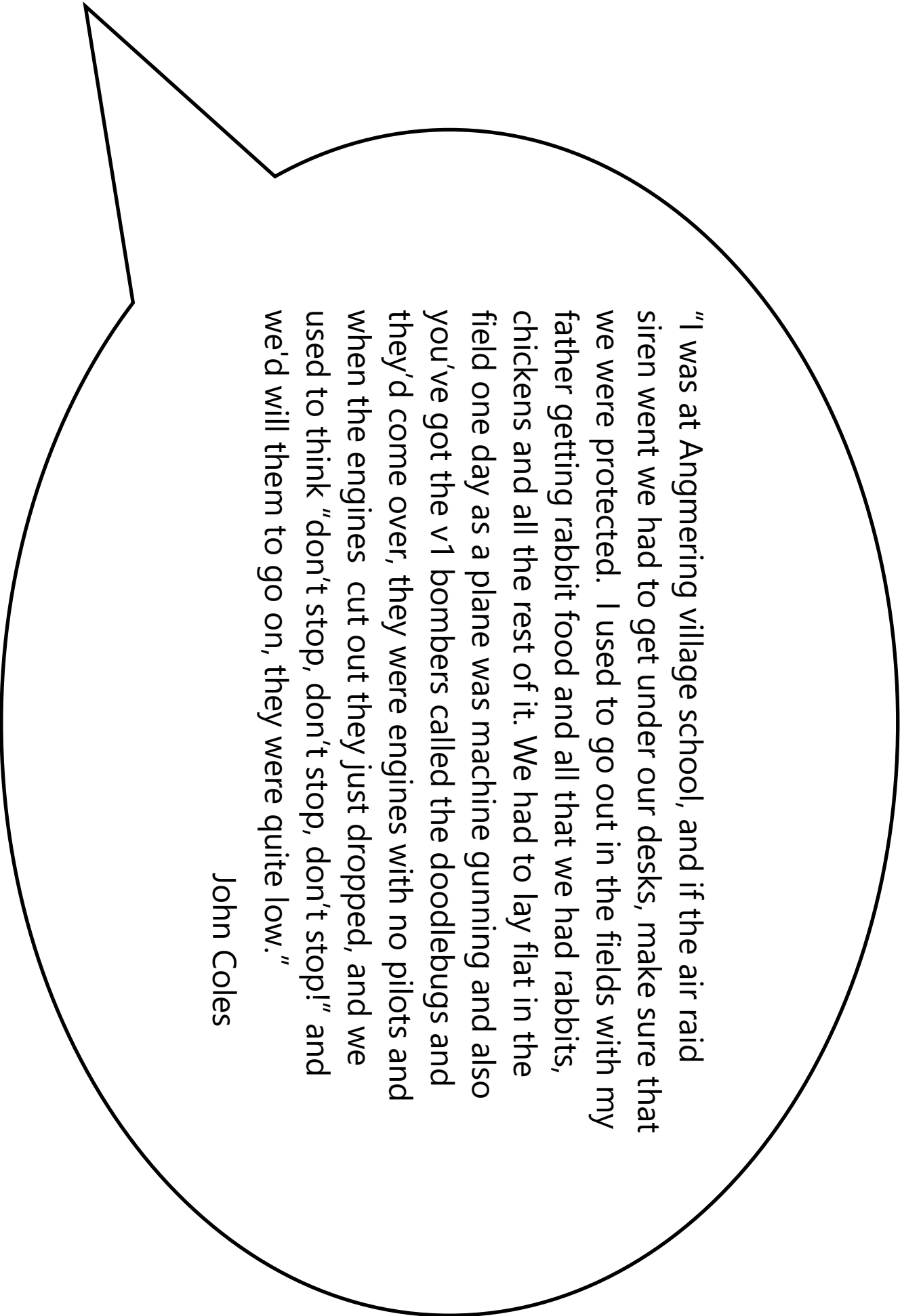
John Moore





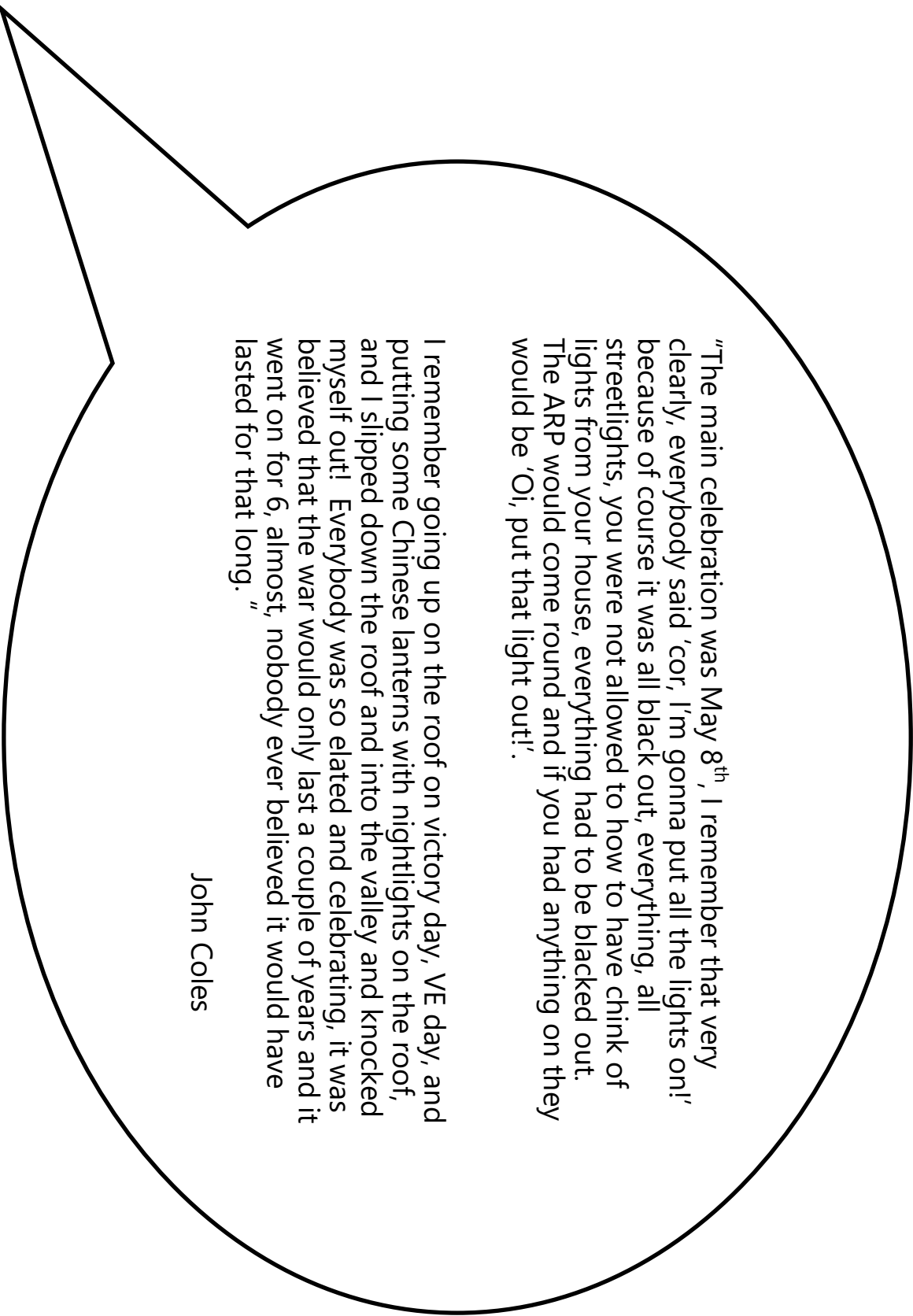
"Around the river and along the beach was out of bounds to us. There was barbed wire all around keeping us out and there were lots of guns and other equipment along the beach and the common."

John Moore



"I was at Angmering village school, and if the air raid siren went we had to get under our desks, make sure that we were protected. I used to go out in the fields with my father getting rabbit food and all that we had rabbits, chickens and all the rest of it. We had to lay flat in the field one day as a plane was machine gunning and also you've got the v1 bombers called the doodlebugs and they'd come over, they were engines with no pilots and when the engines cut out they just dropped, and we used to think "don't stop, don't stop, don't stop!" and we'd will them to go on, they were quite low."

John Coles

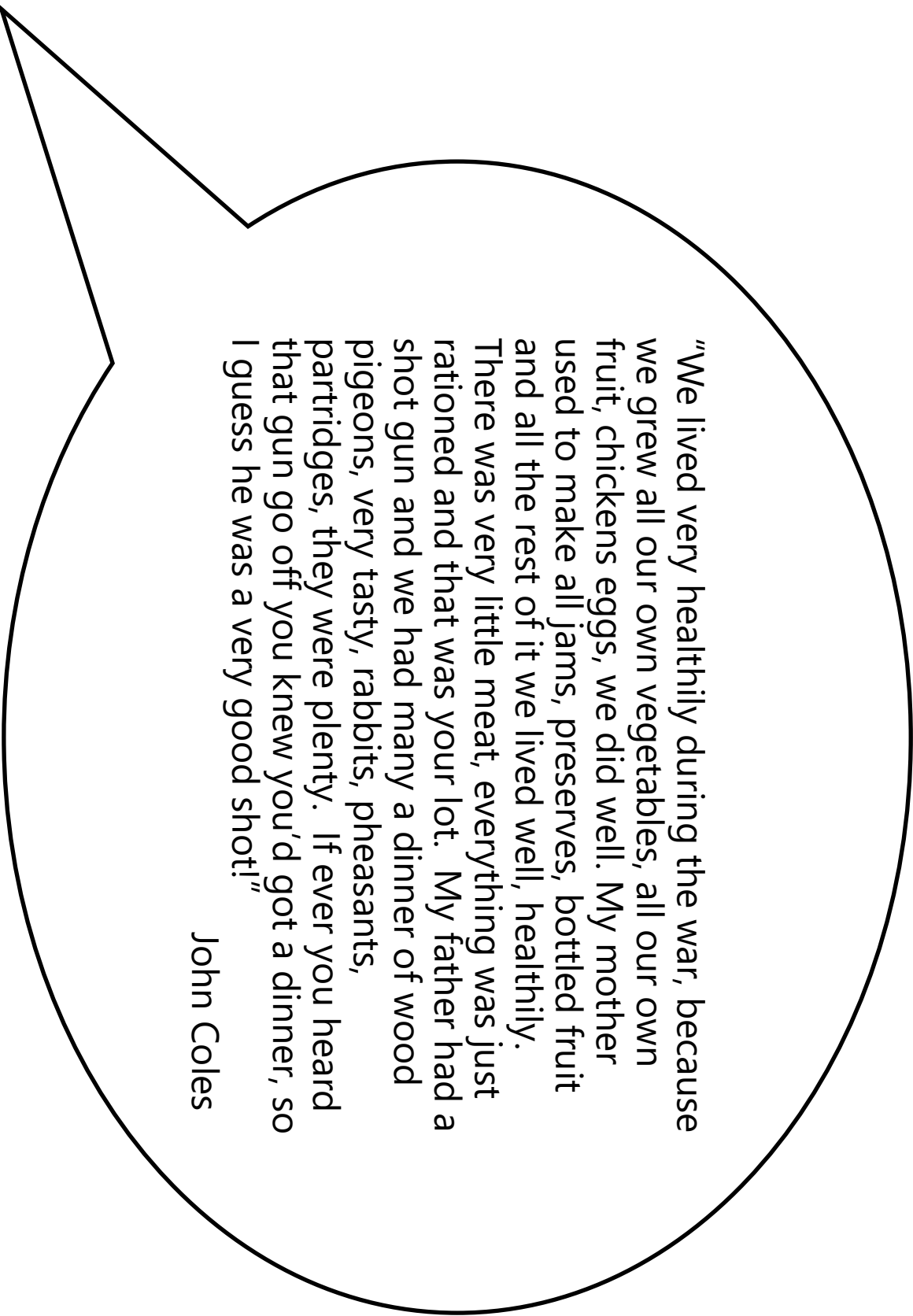


"The main celebration was May 8<sup>th</sup>, I remember that very clearly, everybody said 'cor, I'm gonna put all the lights on!' because of course it was all black out, everything, all streetlights, you were not allowed to how to have chink of lights from your house, everything had to be blacked out. The ARP would come round and if you had anything on they would be 'Oi, put that light out!'.

I remember going up on the roof on victory day, VE day, and putting some Chinese lanterns with nightlights on the roof, and I slipped down the roof and into the valley and knocked myself out! Everybody was so elated and celebrating, it was believed that the war would only last a couple of years and it went on for 6, almost, nobody ever believed it would have lasted for that long. "

John Coles

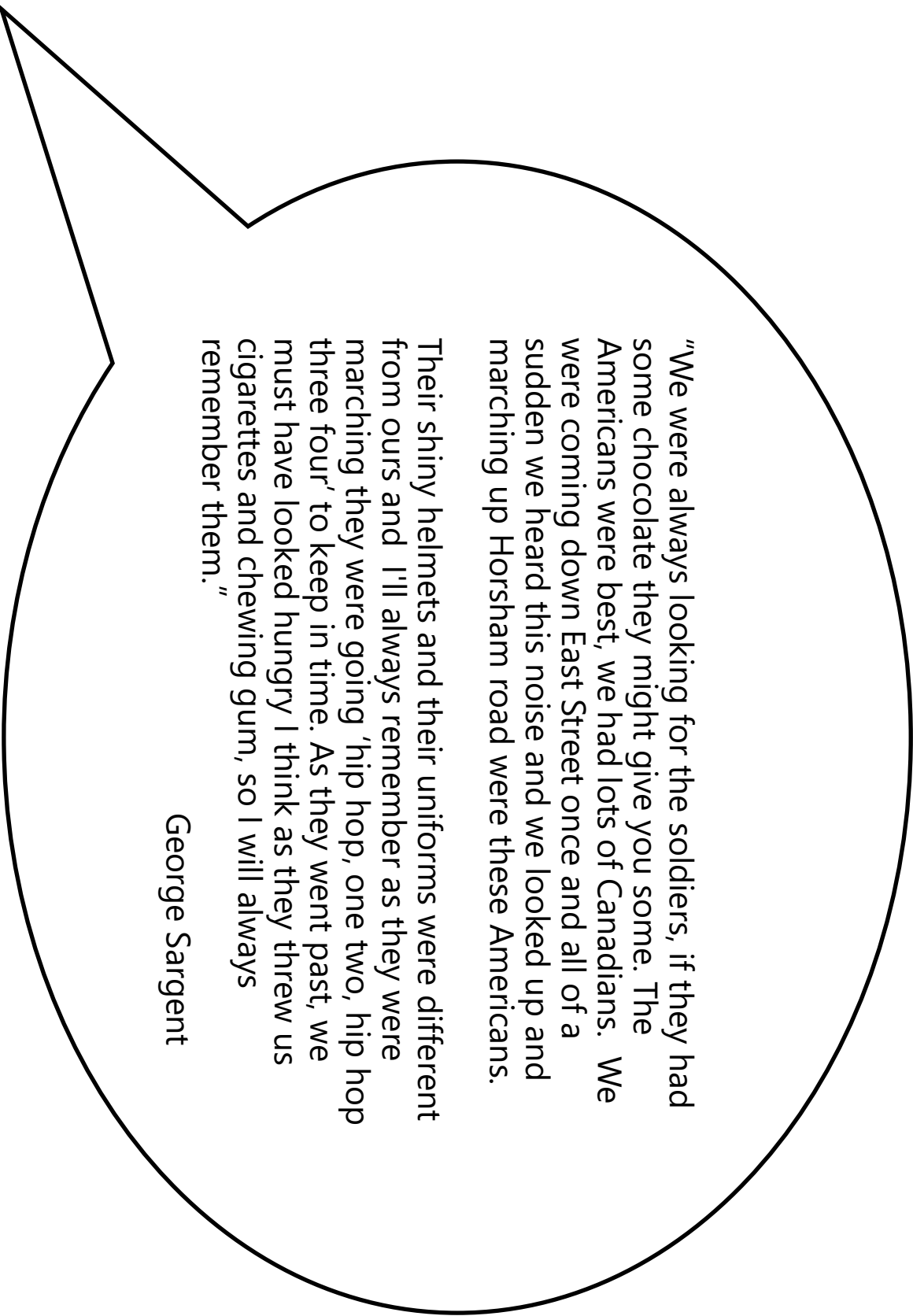




"We lived very healthily during the war, because we grew all our own vegetables, all our own fruit, chickens eggs, we did well. My mother used to make all jams, preserves, bottled fruit and all the rest of it we lived well, healthily.

There was very little meat, everything was just rationed and that was your lot. My father had a shot gun and we had many a dinner of wood pigeons, very tasty, rabbits, pheasants, partridges, they were plenty. If ever you heard that gun go off you knew you'd got a dinner, so I guess he was a very good shot!"

John Coles



"We were always looking for the soldiers, if they had some chocolate they might give you some. The Americans were best, we had lots of Canadians. We were coming down East Street once and all of a sudden we heard this noise and we looked up and marching up Horsham road were these Americans.

Their shiny helmets and their uniforms were different from ours and I'll always remember as they were marching they were going 'hip hop, one two, hip hop three four' to keep in time. As they went past, we must have looked hungry I think as they threw us cigarettes and chewing gum, so I will always remember them."

George Sargent

# DESIGN YOUR OWN MUSEUM DISPLAY

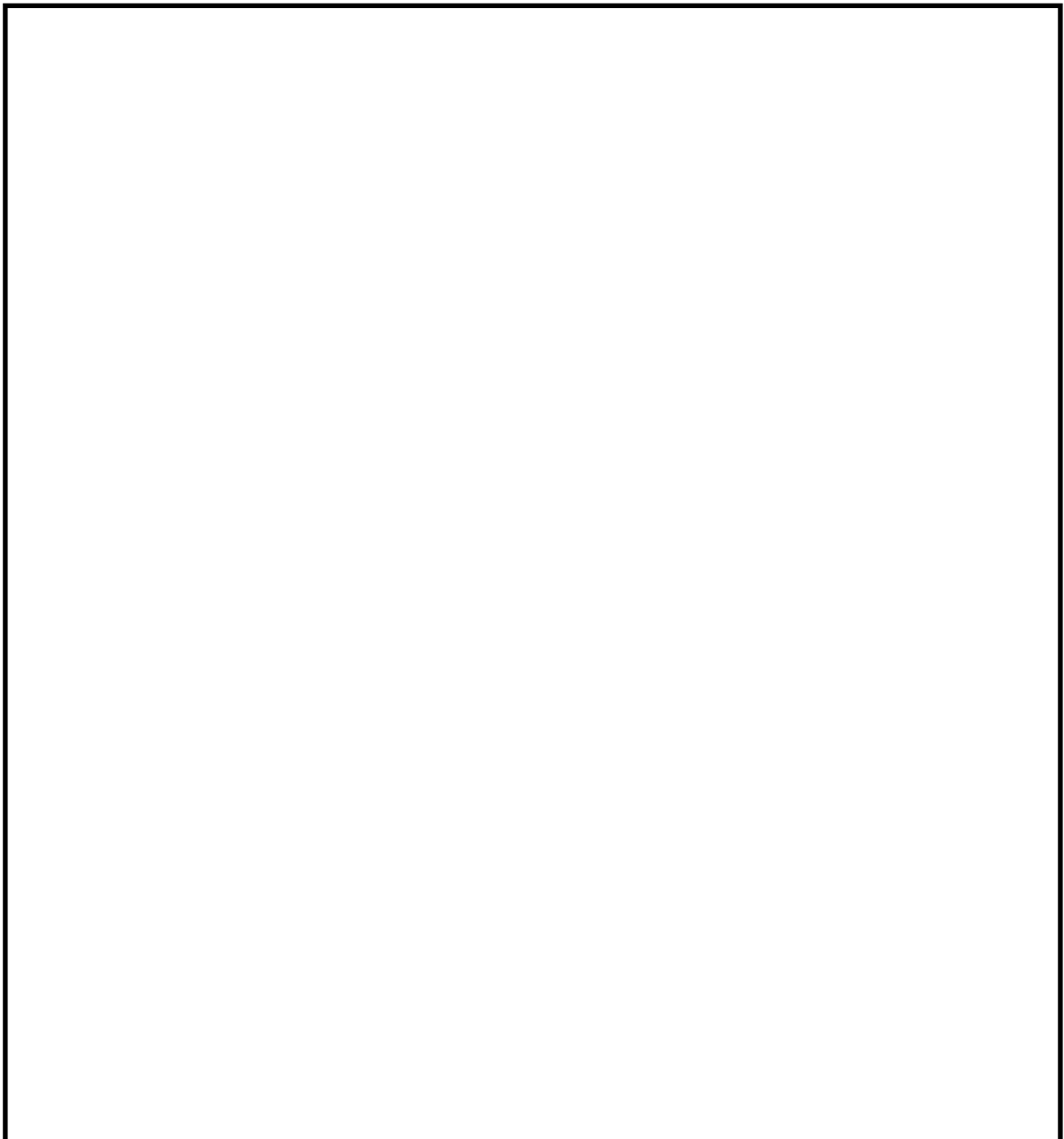
See below for examples of WWII objects on display in the Museum. Use the template below to draw your own display of items which tell the story of Life on the Home Front.





# **DESIGN YOUR OWN MUSEUM DISPLAY**

Use the template below to draw your own display of items which tell the story of Life on the Home Front.





Littlehampton Museum, Manor House,  
Church Street, Littlehampton, West Sussex,  
BN17 5EW. 01903 738100.

[littlehamptonmuseum.co.uk](http://littlehamptonmuseum.co.uk)  
[museum@littlehampton-tc.gov.uk](mailto:museum@littlehampton-tc.gov.uk)

