

Doodlebugs?

Yes, Virginia, there really were Doodlebugs.

Want More Info?

Wonderful World War II stories are at www.bbc.co.uk/history, the web site of the British Broadcasting Company.

About the Author

Inez is one of the children mentioned in the baby MAHALI[™] story [The Night You Were Born](#), Christina and the mmm MAHALI[™] story, [Let Us Eat Cake](#). The Mum mentioned here, is the same special woman who shared her stories with MyMahali.com.

Inez, who has lived in the US since 1963, returns to England often. When there, she stays in the same home where the front door had been blown half way up the stairs.

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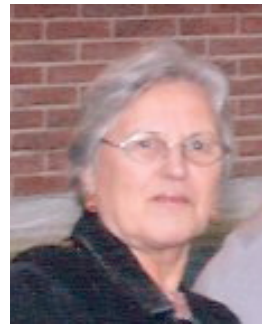
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THE DOODLEBUG

Inez Kirby Lockhart

The author remembers the bombing of London during World War II.



It was a beautiful June day in England – a perfect summer day. But, it was 1944 and we were at war with Germany.

My father, answering a mysterious coded instruction on the radio, was in Portsmouth ferrying supplies on a small ship to the flotilla of the D-Day invasion. Before leaving, he urged my mother to have the children sleep in the shelter, because the German V1 doodlebug rockets had random targets. Like sardines in a can my brother, three sisters and I slept in the Morrison shelter, an indoor shelter built with reinforced steel like a large table, with springs for a mattress and chicken wire round three sides. The fourth was open to the room where my mother slept on a divan.

That night, Mum checked on her five sleeping children and went to bed. As she dozed, Mum heard the ominous rumbling engine of a doodlebug. Unlike the others, the engine stopped. There was an ear-splitting whistling. Thinking “this is ours”, she jumped into the shelter on top of us.

My memory is of glass and curtains blasting across the room and plaster and lathes smashing from the ceiling onto the divan where Mum would have been sleeping and the top of the shelter, intense, ear-splitting noise, followed by an eerie quiet.

Tipping one of its stubby wings against a chimney, the rocket had fallen around the corner from us, totally destroyed six homes, killed eleven people and injured many more.

It was exciting for us children; we all wanted to go to the lavatory. Part of the fun was stepping over the front door, which had been blown half way up the stairs.

Morning and again a lovely day. Outside in our small square of houses, young boys and old men were covering the roofs, which had lost all their tiles, with tarpaulin. Windows, all shattered, were being boarded up. The street was full of fire equipment and ambulances.

We were taken to a local church hall where a disaster center had been set up. Excitedly, we ate cereal, a luxury we hadn't had since before the war, with cold milk, another delight in the summer and real oranges. We wanted to be bombed out every day!

My father came home that evening. Years later, another beautiful June day on a beach in New Jersey, I asked him why he had returned that particular day. He said that he had awoken in the night with an overpowering feeling that his family was in danger and had requested a day off to come and see us. He arrived to a cordoned off area of chaos and disaster; but was relieved and happy to find us all alive and unhurt.

It is only in retrospect, as an adult, that the full impact of that night returns to me with the horror I did not feel as a child. Over 60 years later, when I hear a small plane overhead, its engine throbbing, my mind returns for a moment to the night we were bombed out.