

# Wartime West Sussex 1939 - 1945: AIR RAIDS – ARP WARDENS

## ARP work in Worthing

Extracts from *Despatches from the Home Front, The War Diaries of Joan Strange 1939-1945* (Monarch Publications, 1989)

### 1939

**July 30<sup>th</sup>** To ARP Report Centre at the Town Hall at 5.30pm – I'm one of the volunteers who receive and pass on telephone messages when enemy aircraft are in the vicinity. A 'yellow' warning came through just after I went on duty. All clear came half an hour later. I was on duty again at five the next morning for three hours. Another yellow. Did a lot of knitting – so did Major Carlisle! He's deputy controller and looks very jolly.

**December 11<sup>th</sup>** A quiet night so we got good sleep at the Report Centre apart from snoring etc! Hitler has made a speech. He does not seem quite so confident!

### 1940

**October 8<sup>th</sup>** To the Report Centre as usual at 5.30. For a treat the ten of us had previously decided to have a hot supper sent in from a nearby café and it came at 6.50 – a jolly good mixed grill and all for 1/3d. We were all laughing and making a noise and suddenly we heard what we thought was someone tapping on the window but...it was bombs. We all shot out to the telephones and messages came in fast and furious – the Gas Works had been hit, houses in Park Road and Lyndhurst Road demolished, five people killed and several injured, some still feared trapped and so on. We worked hard till about 10pm when everything was in good order. Later we heard that a lone raider had appeared suddenly, dropped its load and in flying off in a westerly direction machine-gunned people walking in the road. I phoned up Mother and she was quite unperturbed and was playing picquet with Uncle Bert!

### 1941

**January 5<sup>th</sup>** ARP service at Holy Trinity. Hundreds of ARP workers gathered outside the Town Hall at two o'clock and we 'processed' to the church! There were the firemen of AFS, police and war emergency police, wardens, FAP people, Red Cross nurses, WVS, Report and Control Centre members (our people), Observer Corps, Rescue workers, Demolition squads, mortuary squad, the band of the Royal Scots Fusiliers and the Mayor and Corporation.

### 1943

**March 1<sup>st</sup>** A terrible tube shelter disaster in London - a woman stumbled and fell on the entrance stairs during an air raid and 178 people were crushed and suffocated. But where were the wardens and police?

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