

Wartime West Sussex 1939 – 1945

AIR RAIDS - SHELTERS

Remembering air raids in Portsmouth

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By Gordon Shier

After the war started, everyone over 18 years was required to do National Service or join up. I volunteered to be a Bevin boy and went to Portsmouth for training as a sheet metal worker. Because of the heavy bombing in Portsmouth, half of my working week was spent in air raid shelters which were being built rapidly. These shelters were built of brick with a heavy concrete roof but it seemed they were not strong enough to withstand a bomb impact. There were several at the north end of Commercial Road and one night, one of my mates was killed in one. The walls of the shelter had been blown out and the walls collapsed. One luckier man was found alive after being trapped in an air pocket under a snooker table in a collapsed building near the station.

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