

Written by John McDonald (18 June 2010)

When the East End docks area was under nightly bombing I arrived home on a 48 hour pass from the Army. I had reached Kings Cross station which was on fire and so had the long walk to Plaistow, E13, due to no buses running.

I eventually reached my home in Frank Street, Plaistow. Frank Street was a short street like many others in the area and most of the houses had a string through the front door for entering. On this particular night (about 2 am), the string was missing and so I climbed the corner shop gateway and made my way across garden fences to my house. The house and the air-raid shelter were empty with no sign of my mother and two sisters.

I then crossed the road to the corner pub (Army and Navy) and went through the same procedure until I reached my uncle's house (Matt Jasper). There I found him alone in his shelter with a bottle of whisky to keep him company.

At last I found out what had happened. The bombing had been so heavy day and night that Uncle Matt had rounded up all the women and children the day before and had taken about 14 of them to the village where his aunt lived in Abbots Langley, Herts. The people there were wonderful and several households took in various relatives where they remained for at least two years until the air-raids ceased. Some of them found work in the area and some travelled to the "City" daily.

Uncle Matt deserved a medal for his unofficial evacuation.