

WWII civilian casualty surveys

From crush syndrome to cake sales, splinter wounds to cinema attendance.

In 1939 the Oxford Extra-Mural Unit (OEMU) of the Ministry of Home Security was set up when the Ministry's Research and Experiments Department commissioned research from the Department of Anatomy, University of Oxford.

Discover the work of the Unit as they investigate the physiological effects of ground shock waves and blast. In addition to experimental work, they surveyed casualties in cities and towns across the UK.



The files cover the analysis of air-raid casualty data from a wide range of aspects, such as: the compilation of distance tables and standardised casualty rates; the calculation of risk of injury or death according to location within dwellings; the risks associated with burial and trapping by fallen debris; and the wounding power of a range of bombs.

There is a quantity of material relating to investigations of the effect of attacks by V-weapons on civilian morale. Over 2,000 essays record the experiences of Birmingham and Hull school children in air raids. The files also contain casualty report forms for many individual air raid casualties detailing their injuries and the treatment received, and correspondence with hospitals to which casualties were admitted.

The OEMU series forms part of the Zuckerman

Archives and is contained in 60 boxes. It is relevant to the study of anatomy, the effect of blast and trauma, wound ballistics, and the psychology of warfare.

and I went to Billingham
a village in (L) Lincolnshire
Every day planes used to come
over and dive, do acrobats
and just miss chimney pots.
One day my friends were in
a field and all of a sudden
an Hamden Bomber swooped over
so low to-wards us and we
all fell flat on the grass, and
we could see the pilot (laughed)
laughing. There were some bombs
dropped near our village. After
been there a year and some
months I came home for good
and nothing happened since,
except when a bomb fell in the
Boulevard and blew the kitchens
and back bedrooms away. One

Telegrams: Breadkeepa.

Telephone: Colwyn Bay 4201.

Any reply to this letter should quote reference.

Your Reference



MINISTRY OF FOOD

Bakery Division,

BRYN EURYN,
DINERTH ROAD, FILE B 47
COLWYN BAY,
DENBIGHSHIRE.

13th November, 1944.

SECRET

Dear Sir,

You wrote to Mr. Grant Lawson on October 31st, 1944, about bread consumption in the London area and he has asked me to reply to your letter.

I regret that it is not possible to give you all the information you ask for.

At the beginning of the war, bakers were not licensed and made no returns of production. From December 2nd, 1940 until October 18th, 1941, a temporary subsidy was paid to bakers who applied for it, but although the total number of bakers in the country was approximately 26,000, only some 6,000 applied for this temporary subsidy. From October 6th, 1941, the price of flour for bread making was raised from 25/6d. to 33/3d. per sack of 280 lb. and a rebate of 7/9d. was paid to all bakers with the exception of some 6,000 who, for one reason or another, did not claim the rebate. The 6,000 bakers were, generally speaking, small bakers who made a little bread in the form of rolls or who made speciality bread which they sold at relatively high prices. At that time, we started to obtain records of bread production. Subsidy was paid to about 20,000 bakers in Great Britain but the claim periods sometimes extended over eight weeks, whilst the examination of claim forms submitted takes time and, therefore, we obtain from bread subsidy returns, production records which are somewhat out of date. There is the further complication that many claim forms are filled in badly and some bakers neglect to make their claims when they should. The totals, therefore, have to be adjusted as late claims are passed for payment. It was not possible to make analyses of the claims for all periods because of the amount of work involved, but at intervals, the Bread Subsidy Branch submitted the claim forms

*1.e. some
20,000 bakers
received subsidy*

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/to the

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