Activity: Bombs and Bomber Boys: The Bombing of Britain and the American Friendly Invasion

Guiding questions:

- What were the roles of the American service members stationed in Great Britain prior to the Normandy invasion?
- What impact did the German Vengeance weapons have on the civilian population in Great Britain?

DEVELOPED BY AMANDA KORDELISKI

Grade Level(s): 6-8
Subject(s): Social Studies, English/Language Arts
Cemetery Connection: Cambridge American Cemetery, Normandy American Cemetery
Fallen Hero Connection: First Lieutenant Homer R. McClure, First Lieutenant Gale Bernard McGowan, First Lieutenant William Simmons
Overview

Students will investigate the role of American service members in Great Britain before the Normandy invasion and the impact the V-1 and V-2 vengeance weapons had upon the British civilians at the close of the war. Students will write from the perspective of either a British civilian enduring a bombing raid or an American pilot conducting a raid.

Historical Context

Between 1942 and 1944 over 1.4 million American service men were stationed and trained in Great Britain. These servicemen flew bombing missions to continental Europe and trained for the eventual invasion at Normandy. Many American servicemen lost their lives training for the invasion and flying bombing missions over the continent that played a vital role in the eventual Allied victory. American service members had to adjust to living in a country ravaged by war and facing great shortages of food and material goods. Shortly after the Normandy invasion, soldiers and civilians alike faced a new terror: the German Vengeance weapons. V-1 flying bombs, followed quickly by V-2 rockets, began a new wave of destruction and fear among the British people. As the Air War over Europe raged, aircrews operating from bases in England continued to fly missions. Many, like First Lieutenant Homer McClure of the 386th Bomber Group, never returned and are buried or memorialized at Cambridge American Cemetery.

Objectives

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to

• Understand the importance of the large number of Americans in Great Britain prior to the Normandy invasion;

• Describe the destruction in both life and property caused by bombing raids over Great Britain; and

• Analyze and describe the impact the “friendly invasion” had on British civilians.

“I became fascinated with the V-1 flying bombs after reading the books Code Name Verity and Rose Under Fire. As I researched my fallen hero and learned the details of his death, I also became interested in the Bomber Boys and the vast number of Americans stationed in Great Britain in the buildup to Normandy.”

—Amanda Kordeliski

Kordeliski is the librarian at Irving Middle School in Norman, Oklahoma.
Standards Connections

Connections to Common Core

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6-8.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Connections to C3 Framework

D2.His.1.6-8 Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.

D2.His.3.6-8 Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant.

D2.His.15.6-8 Evaluate the relative influence of various causes of events and developments in the past.

D3.3.6-8 Identify evidence that draws information from multiple sources to support claims, noting evidentiary limitations.

D4.3.6-8 Present adaptations of arguments and explanations on topics of interest to others to reach audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, and digital documentary).
Documents Used ★ indicates an ABMC source

Primary Sources
A Short Guide to Great Britain, 1943
U.S. War and Navy Departments

Secondary Sources
Americans in Great Britain Interactive ★
American Battle Monuments Commission
http://www.abmc.gov/sites/default/files/interactive/interactive_files/AGB_Web/

Battle of Britain Online Exhibit
Imperial War Museum
http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/battle-of-britain

Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial Visitor Brochure ★
American Battle Monuments Commission

Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial Visitor Book ★
American Battle Monuments Commission

“German V-Weapons: Desperate Measures”
National Museum of the U.S. Air Force

Kikuchi, Ian, “The Terrifying German Revenge Weapons of the Second World War”
Imperial War Museum
http://134.213.70.204/history/the-terrifying-german-revenge-weapons-of-the-second-world-war
Klier, Chester P, “Wednesday, January 26, 1944 - 386th Bomb Group, an Aborted Mission”

London Blitz Online Exhibit
Imperial War Museum
http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/the-blitz

First Lieutenant Homer R. McClure Fallen Hero Profile ★
American Battle Monuments Commission
http://abmceducation.org/understandingsacrifice/soldier/homer‐mcclure

First Lieutenant Gale B. McGowan Fallen Hero Profile ★
American Battle Monuments Commission
http://abmceducation.org/understandingsacrifice/soldier/gale‐mcgowan

First Lieutenant William Simmons Fallen Hero Profile ★
American Battle Monuments Commission
http://abmceducation.org/understandingsacrifice/soldier/william‐simmons

“The Sound of WWII Air Raid Sirens and V1 Flying Bomb”
BBC News


*World War II Interactive Timeline ★*
American Battle Monuments Commission

**Materials**

- Teacher computer access
- Student computer access for alternate activity or virtual post-it note site. Free virtual post-it sites include padlet.com and linoit.com.
- Paper or access to a word processing program for writing assignments
- Coordinate with your librarian to obtain at least one copy of *Rose Under Fire* (more copies will be needed if students are reading independently).
Lesson Preparation

• Turn on computer and load website with link to V-1 attack. Make sure speakers work.
• Gather sticky notes ready to hand out to students or a virtual sticky note website set up for use.
• Have computers available for students to explore the World War II Interactive Timeline.
• For background knowledge on these weapons, read Ian Kikuchi, “The Terrifying German Revenge Weapons of the Second World War” from the Imperial War Museum or “German V-Weapons: Desperate Measures” from the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force.

Procedure

Activity One: Air Raids (45 minutes)

• Turn out the lights and play the BBC clip of the air raid siren and V-1 Flying Bomb attack.
• Discuss how it would feel to be a Londoner during an air raid.
  ○ What would you worry about first?
  ○ What items would you always keep with you in case you lost your home?
  ○ How do citizens living in a country at war for years cope with constant bombing?
• Explore the Americans in Great Britain Interactive on the ABMC website. Have students write two questions they had while reading the information and two interesting facts they learned on sticky notes or a web-based note board to share with the class.

Activity Two: Fallen Heroes (45 minutes)

• Encourage students to explore ABMC’s World War II Interactive Timeline (enter the timeline, and then click on the 1943, Air Offensive - Europe tab) to learn more about the context of the air war in Europe.
• Read aloud the account of the American air campaign from Chester Klier on Wednesday, January 26, 1944.
• Invite students to explore the Fallen Hero narratives and documents for First Lieutenant Homer R. McClure, First Lieutenant Gale B. McGowan, and First Lieutenant William Simmons.
• Engage in a class discussion:
  ○ Do Americans remember and recognize the sacrifice of servicemen killed before the Normandy invasion differently than those killed after the June 6, 1944 landings? Why or why not? How can or should they be honored?

Activity Three: The Ethics of Bombing (45 minutes)

• Read pages 124-129 from Rose Under Fire. This excerpt describes the main character, Rose, an American POW at Ravensbrück, who realizes she is building V-1 Flying Bombs for the Germans and refuses to continue her assigned job.
Students can explore the ethics of Allied bombing of German factories where Allied prisoners of war are tasked with creating war material.

Students will debate two sides of the argument, one from the perspective of an Allied commander and the other from an Allied POW.

Assessment

- For this writing assessment, students can choose one of the following prompts:
  - Imagine you are a Londoner living through the bombings. Write a letter to your American cousin describing your daily routine and where you go, what you do during a bombing raid. How have the Americans changed your country? Remember to include historical details.
  - Write three journal entries of a United States pilot stationed in Britain. You are flying bombing missions to France and Holland and also training for the Normandy invasion. What is it like in a different country? How do the American living conditions compare to the British civilians conditions? What do you do in your free time? Why is your mission important?

- This assignment can be scored using the Final Project Rubric.

Methods for Extension

- Teachers can use the booklet, *A Short Guide to Great Britain*, and have students explore the hardships faced by both American servicemen and British citizens during the Friendly Invasion. The pamphlets are available in PDF form online or as a booklet from online bookstores.
- Students can research the Slapton Sands incident and investigate American non-combat casualties in Britain.
- Students can research the V-1 and V-2 Vengeance weapons
- Students can explore the Imperial War Museum online exhibit on the London Blitz and the Battle of Britain.
- The American Battle Monuments Commission maintains U.S. military cemeteries overseas. These cemeteries are permanent memorials to the fallen, but it is important that students know the stories of those who rest here. To learn more about the stories of some of the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice, visit www.abmceducation.org/understandingsacrifice/abmc-sites.

Adaptations

- Teachers can use the audiobook excerpt of the fictional accounts by Elizabeth Wein, *Rose Under Fire*, for English language learners, struggling readers and auditory learners.
- Teachers can use the ABMC Interactives that include subtitles and audio for accessibility.
## Americans in Britain Final Project Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Historical Accuracy</strong></td>
<td>All historical information appeared to be accurate and in chronological order</td>
<td>Almost all historical information appeared to be accurate and in chronological order</td>
<td>Most of the historical information was accurate and in chronological order</td>
<td>Very little of the historical information was accurate and/or in chronological order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge Gained</strong></td>
<td>Can clearly explain several ways in which his character “experienced” a bombing raid either as a civilian or pilot and the importance of those events in relation to the war.</td>
<td>Can clearly explain several ways in which his character “experienced” a bombing raid, either as a civilian or pilot event.</td>
<td>Can clearly explain one way in which his character “experienced” a bombing raid, either as civilian or pilot.</td>
<td>Cannot explain one way in which his character “experienced” a historical event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Journal entries/Letter can include primary source photographs of surroundings, aircraft. Sources are cited.</strong></td>
<td>Ideas were expressed in a clear and organized way. Student uses a historical photograph to illustrate the topic.</td>
<td>Ideas were expressed in a fairly clear manner but organization could have been better.</td>
<td>Ideas were somewhat organized, but were not very clear.</td>
<td>The letter/journal seemed to be a collection of unrelated sentences. It was very difficult to figure out what the letter was about.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Short Guide to Great Britain, 1943

U.S. War and Navy Departments
A Short Guide to Great Britain, 1943

U.S. War and Navy Departments

INTRODUCTION

YOU are going to Great Britain as part of an Allied offensive—to meet Hitler and beat him on his own grounds. For the time being you will be Britain's guest. The purpose of this guide is to start getting you acquainted with the British, their country, and their ways. America and Britain are allies. Hitler knows that. He knows that they are both powerful countries, tough and resolute. He knows that they, with the other United Nations, mean his crushing defeat at the end. So it is only common sense to understand that the first thing to do is to separate Britain and America and spread disquiet between them. If he can do that, his chance of winning might return.

No Time To Fight Old Wars. If you come from an Irish-American family, you may think of the Irish as peculiarly British. But we are not. We are Americans, and demand to be treated as such. We have fought against us in the American Revolution.
A Short Guide to Great Britain, 1943

U.S. War and Navy Departments

Don't Be a Show Off. The British dislike bragging and showing off. American ways and American soldiers pay are no highest in the world. When pay day comes, they would spend practice time learning your money according to American standards. They consider it a very smart, funny, or fancy for pocketing at it.

British Reserve Not Unfriendly. You detect every propagandist by denouncing all difference, by ignoring all, and trying to understand them all. The British are often more reserved in contact than we. On a small crowded island, where forty-five million people live, such man learns to guard his privacy carefully— and is equally careful not to invade another man's privacy.

A Short Guide to Great Britain, 1943

U.S. War and Navy Departments

Don't Be a Show Off. The British dislike bragging and showing off. American ways and American soldiers pay are no highest in the world. When pay day comes, they would spend practice time learning your money according to American standards. They consider it a very smart, funny, or fancy for pocketing at it.

British Reserve Not Unfriendly. You detect every propagandist by denouncing all difference, by ignoring all, and trying to understand them all. The British are often more reserved in contact than we. On a small crowded island, where forty-five million people live, such man learns to guard his privacy carefully—and is equally careful not to invade another man's privacy.

A Short Guide to Great Britain, 1943

U.S. War and Navy Departments

Don't Be a Show Off. The British dislike bragging and showing off. American ways and American soldiers pay are no highest in the world. When pay day comes, they would spend practice time learning your money according to American standards. They consider it a very smart, funny, or fancy for pocketing at it.

British Reserve Not Unfriendly. You detect every propagandist by denouncing all difference, by ignoring all, and trying to understand them all. The British are often more reserved in contact than we. On a small crowded island, where forty-five million people live, such man learns to guard his privacy carefully—and is equally careful not to invade another man's privacy.
you highly paid. They won’t think any better of you for throwing money around; they are more likely to feel that you haven’t learned the common-sense virtues of thrift. The British “Tommy” is apt to be specially touchy about the difference between his wages and yours. Keep this in mind. Use common sense and don’t rub him the wrong way.

You will find many things in Britain physically different from similar things in America. But there are also important similarities—our common speech, our common law, and our ideals of religious freedom were all brought from Britain when the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. Our ideas about political liberties are also British and parts of our own Bill of Rights were borrowed from the great charters of British liberty.

Remember that in America you like people to conduct themselves as we do, and to respect the same things. Try to do the same for the British and respect the things they treasure.

The British Are Tough. Don’t be misled by the British tendency to be soft-spoken and polite. If they need to be, they can be plenty tough. The English language didn’t spread across the oceans and over the mountains and jungles and swamps of the world because these people were pansy-waists.

Sixty thousand British civilians—men, women, and children—have died under bombs, and yet the morale of British is unbreakable and high. A nation doesn’t come through that, if it doesn’t have plain, common guts. The British are tough, strong people, and good allies. You won’t be able to tell the British much about “taking it.” They are not particularly interested in taking it any more. They are far more interested in getting together in solid friendship with us, so that we can all start dishing it out to Hitler.

The Country

You will find out right away that England is a small country, smaller than North Carolina or Iowa. The whole of Great Britain—that is England and Scotland and Wales together—is hardly bigger than Minnesota.
England’s largest river, the Thames (pronounced “Tems”) is no even as big as the Mississippi when it leaves Minnesota. No part of England is more than one hundred miles from the Sea.

If you are from Boston or Seattle the weather may remind you of home. If you you are from Arizona or North Dakota you will find it a little hard to get used to. At first you will probably no like the almost continual rains and mists and the absence of snow and crisp cold. Actually, the city of London has less rain for the whole year than many places in the United States, but the rain falls in frequent drizzles. Most people get used to the English climate eventually.

If you have a chance to travel about you will agree that no area of the same size in the United States has such a variety of scenery. At one end of the English channel there is a coast like that of Maine. At the other end are the great white chalk cliffs of Dover. The lands of South England and the Thames Valley are like farm or grazing lands of the eastern United States, while the lake country in the north of England and the highlands of Scotland are like the White Mountains of New Hampshire. In the east, where England bulges out toward Holland, the land is almost Dutch in appearance, low, flat, and marshy. The great wilc moors of Yorkshire in the north and Devon in the southwest will remind you of the Badlands of Dakota and Montana.

Age Instead of Size. On furlough you will probably go to the cities, where you will meet the Briton’s pride in age and tradition. You will find that the British care little about size, not having the “biggest” of many things as we do. For instance, London has no skyscrapers. Not because English architects couldn’t design one, but because London is built on swampy ground, not a rock like New York, and skyscrapers need something solid to rest their foundations on. In London they will point out to you buildings like Westminster Abbey, where England’s kings and greatest men are buried, and St. Paul’s Cathedral with its famous dome, and the Tower of London, which was built almost a thousand years ago. All of these buildings have played an important part in England’s history. They mean just as much to the British as Mount Vernon or Lincoln’s birthplace do to us.

The largest English cities are all located in the lowlands near the various seacoasts. (See the map in the center of this guide.) In the southeast, on the Thames, is London—which is the combined New York, Washington, and Chicago not only of England but of the far-flung British Empire. Greater London’s huge population of twelve million people is the size of Greater New York City and all its suburbs with the nearby New Jersey cities thrown in. It is also more than a quarter of the total population of the British Isles. The great “midland” manufacturing cities of Birmingham, Sheffield, and Coventry (some-
times called “the Detroit of Britain”) are located in the central part of England. Nearby on the west coast are the textile and shipping centers of Manchester and Liverpool. Further north, in Scotland, is the world’s leading shipbuilding center of Glasgow. On the east side of Scotland is the historic Scottish capital, Edinburgh, scene of the tales of Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson which many of you read in school. In southwest England at the broad mouth of the Severn is the great port of Bristol.

**Remember There’s a War On.** Britain may look a little shabby and grimy to you. The British people are anxious to have you know that you are not seeing their country at its best. There’s been a war on since 1939. The houses haven’t been painted because factories are not making paint—they’re making planes. The famous English gardens and parks are either unkempt because there are no men to take care of them, or they are being used to grow needed vegetables. British taxicabs look antique because Britain makes tanks for herself and Russia and hasn’t time to make new cars. British trains are cold because power is needed for industry, not for heating. There are no luxury dining cars on trains because total war effort has no place for such frills. The trains are unwashed and grimy because men and women are needed for more important work than car-washing. The British people are anxious for you to know that in normal times Britain looks much prettier, cleaner, neater.

**GOVERNMENT**

ALTHOUGH you’ll read in the papers about “lords” and “sirs,” England is still one of the great democracies and the cradle of many American liberties. Personal rule by the King has been dead in England for nearly a thousand years. Today the King reigns, but does not govern. The British people have great affection for their monarch but they have stripped him of practically all political power. It is well to remember this in your comings and goings about England. Be careful not to criticize the King. The British feel about that the way you would feel if anyone spoke against our country or our flag. Today’s King and Queen stick with the people through the blitzes and had their home bombed just like anyone else, and the people are proud of them.

**Britain the Cradle of Democracy.** Today the old power of the King has been shifted to Parliament, the Prime Minister, and his Cabinet. The British Parliament has been called the mother of parliaments, because almost all the representative bodies in the world have been copied from it. It is made up of two houses, the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The House of Commons is the most powerful group and is elected by all adult men and women in the country, much like our Congress. Today the House of Lords can do little more than add its approval to laws passed by the House of Commons. Many
of the “titles” held by the lords (such as “baron” and “duke” and “earl”) have been passed from father to son for hundreds of years. Others are granted in reward for outstanding achievement, much as American colleges and universities give honorary degrees to famous men and women. These customs may seem strange and old-fashioned, but they give the British the same feeling of security and comfort that many of us get from the familiar ritual of a church service.

The important thing to remember is that within this apparently old-fashioned framework the British enjoy a practical, working twentieth century democracy which is in some ways even more flexible and sensitive to the will of the people than our own.

THE PEOPLE—THEIR CUSTOMS AND MANNERS

THE BEST WAY to get on in Britain is very much the same as the best way to get on in America. The same sort of courtesy and decency and friendliness that go over big in America will go over big in Britain. The British have seen a good many Americans and they like Americans. They will like your frankness as long as it is friendly. They will expect you to be generous. They are not given to back-slapping and they are shy about showing their affections. But once they get to like you they make the best friends in the world.

In “getting along” the first important thing to remember is that the British are like the Americans in many ways—but not in all ways. You will quickly discover differences that seem confusing and even wrong. Like driving on the left side of the road, and having money based on an “impossible” accounting system, and drinking warm beer. But once you get used to things like that, you will realize that they belong to England just as baseball and jazz and coca-cola belong to us.

The British Like Sports. The British of all classes are enthusiastic about sports, both as amateurs and as spectators of professional sports. They love to shoot, they love to play games, they ride horses and bet on horse races, they fish. (But be careful where you hunt or fish. Fishing and hunting rights are often private property.)
A Short Guide to Great Britain, 1943

U.S. War and Navy Departments

The great "spectator" sports are football in the autumn and winter and cricket in the spring and summer. See a "match" in either of these sports whenever you get a chance. You will get a kick out of it—only for the difference. You will find all American sports.

Baseball is not as popular as it is in America,
A Short Guide to Great Britain, 1943

U.S. War and Navy Departments

You will be welcome in the British pubs as long as you remember one thing. The pub, is "the poor man's club", the neighborhood or village gathering place, where the men have come to see their friends, one another. If you want to join in on the fun, let them know you first (as they probably will). And if you are seated in the custom to stand and let someone else play. The British make much of Sunday. All the shops are closed, most of the restaurants are closed, and in the small towns there is not much to do. You had better not follow the example of the British. You will spend Sunday afternoon the British churches, particular the little village churches, are often very beautiful inside and out. Most of them are always open and if you feel like it, you must enter it. But do not walk in. Do not walk around if a service is going on. You will not be interested in getting to know your opposite number. The British soldier, the Tommy will not be interested in getting to know you.

Keep Out of Arguments. You can rob a Britisher the wrong way by telling them we came over and won the last one. Each nation did its share. But Britain remembers that nearly a million of her best manhood died in the last war. America lost 60,000 in action. Such arguments and the war debts along with them are dead issues. Nazi propaganda is impounding against the British people why they should fight to save Uncle Sam and his silver dollars. Don't play in Hitler's hands by mentioning war debts.
A Short Guide to Great Britain, 1943

U.S. War and Navy Departments

British railways have dinky freight cars (which they call "goods wagons") not because they don't know any better, Small cars allow quicker handling of freight at the thousands and thousands of small stations. British automobiles are little and low-powered. That's because all the gasoline has to be imported over thousands of miles of ocean.

British sailors have considerably front wheel drive. You'll understand why. The British don't know how to make a good cup of coffee. You don't know how to make a good cup of tea. The British are leisurely—but not really slow. Their crack trains hold world's speed records. A British ship held the trans-Atlantic record. A British car and a British driver set world's speed records in America. Do not be offended if Brits stick to national or regional colors as Americans do.

Neither do the British need to be told that their armies lost the first couple of rounds in the present war. We've lost a couple of rounds, ourselves, so do not start off by being critical of them and saying what the Yanks are going to do,

Look your head before you sound off and remember how long the British have held Hitler off without any help from anyone.

In the pubs you will hear a lot of Brits openly criticizing their government; and the conduct of the war. That isn't an occasion for you to put in your two cents worth. It is their business, not yours. You sometimes criticize members of your own family, but just an outsider doing the same is out of place, because the British system abiding citizen. It is just about the best there is. The British are just about the most law-abiding citizen in the world, because the British system of justice, robes, and magistrates in the whole of Great Britain in a year. That is, in a single large American city.

Once again: Look, listen, and learn. We do things differently between British and Americans. When you find out of wild Indians and Yankees. When you find that things, there is usually a good reason for them.
A Short Guide to Great Britain, 1943

U.S. War and Navy Departments
symbol as we do. But they pay more frequent respect to their national anthem. In peace or war “God Save the King” (to the same tune of our “America”) is played at the conclusion of all public gatherings such as theater performances. The British consider it bad form not to stand at attention, even if it means missing the last bus. If you are in a hurry, leave before the national anthem is played. That’s considered alright.

On the whole, British people—whether English, Scottish, or Welsh—are open and honest. If you are on furlough and puzzled about directions, money, or customs, most people will be anxious to help you as long as you speak first and without bluster. The best authority on all problems is the nearest “bobby” (policeman) in his steel helmet. British police are proud of being able to answer almost any question under the sun. They’re not in a hurry and they’ll take plenty of time to talk to you.

The British will welcome you as friends and allies. But remember that crossing the ocean doesn’t automatically make you a hero. There are housewives in aprons and youngsters in knee pants in Britain who have lived through more high explosives in air raids than many soldiers saw in first-class barrages in the last war.

BRITAIN AT WAR

AT HOME in America you were in a country at war. Since your ship left port, however, you have been in a war zone. You will find that all Britain is a war zone and has been since September 1939. All this has meant great changes in the British way of life.

Every light in England is blacked out every night and all night. Every highway signpost has come down and barrage balloons have gone up. Grazing land is now ploughed for wheat and flower beds turned into vegetable gardens. Britain’s peacetime army of a couple of hundred thousand has been expanded to over two million men. Everything from the biggest factory to the smallest village workshop is turning out something for the war, so that Britain can supply arms for herself, for India, Russia, and every front. Hundreds of thousands of women have gone to work in factories or joined the many military auxiliary forces. Old-time social distinctions are being forgotten as the sons of factory workers rise to be officers in the forces and the daughters of noblemen get jobs in munitions factories.

But more important than this is the effect of the war itself. The British have been bombed, night after night and month after month. Thousands of them have lost their houses, their possessions, their families. Gasoline, clothes, and railroad travel are hard to come by and incomes are cut by taxes to an extent we Americans have not even approached. One of the things the English always had enough of in the past was soap. Now it is so scarce that girls working in the factories often cannot
get the grease off their hands or out of their hair. And food is more strictly rationed than anything else.

The British Came Through. For many months the people of Britain have been doing without things which Americans take for granted. But you will find that shortages, discomforts, blackouts, and bombings have not made the British depressed. They have a new cheerfulness and a new determination born out of hard times and tough luck. After going through what they have been through it's only human nature that they should be more than ever determined to win.

You are coming to Britain from a country where your home is still safe, food is still plentiful, and lights are still burning. So it is doubly important for you to remember that the British soldiers and civilians have been living under a tremendous strain. It is always impolite to criticize your host. It is militarily stupid to insult your allies. So stop and think before you sound off about lukewarm beer, or cold boiled potatoes, or the way English cigarettes taste.

If British civilians look dowdy and badly dressed, it is not because they do not like good clothes or know how to wear them. All clothing is rationed and the British know that they help war production by wearing an old suit or dress until it cannot be patched any longer. Old clothes are “good form.”

One thing to be careful about—if you are invited into a British home and the host exhorts you to “eat up—there’s plenty on the table,” go easy. It may be the family’s rations for a whole week spread out to show their hospitality.

Waste Means Lives. It is always said that Americans throw more food into their garbage cans than any other country eats. It is true. We have always been a “producer” nation. Most British food is imported even in peacetimes, and for the last two years the British have been taught not to waste the things that their ships bring in from abroad. British seamen die getting those convoys through. The British have been taught this so thoroughly that they now know that gasoline and food represent the lives of merchant sailors. And when you burn gasoline needlessly, it will seem to them as if you are wasting the blood of those seamen—when you destroy or waste food you have wasted the life of another sailor.

British Women At War. A British woman officer or non-commissioned officer can—and often does—give orders to a man private. The men obey smartly and know it is no shame. For British women have proven themselves in this war. They have stuck to their posts near burning ammunition dumps, delivered messages after their motorcycles have been blasted from under them. They have pulled aviators from burning planes. They have died at
A Short Guide to Great Britain, 1943

U.S. War and Navy Departments
from slang, there are many words which have different meanings from the way we use them and many common objects have different names. For instance, instead of railroads, automobiles, and radios, the British will talk about railways, motorcars, and wireless sets. A railroad tie is a sleeper. A freight car is a goods wagon. A man who works on the roadbed is a navvy. A streetcar is a tram. Automobile lingo is just as different. A light truck is a lorry. The top of a car is the hood. What we call the hood (of the engine) is a bonnet. The fenders are wings. A wrench is a spanner. Gas is petrol—if there is any.

Your first furlough may find you in some small difficulties because of language difference. You will have to ask for shock suspenders to get garters and for braces instead of suspenders—if you need any. If you are standing in line to buy (book) a railroad ticket or a seat at the movies (cinema) you will be queuing (pronounced “cueing”) up before the booking office. If you want a beer quickly, you had better ask for the nearest pub. You will get your drugs at a chemist’s and your tobacco at a tobacconist, hardware at an ironmonger’s. If you are asked to visit somebody’s apartment, be or she will call it a flat.

A unit of money, not shown on the following page, which you will sometimes see advertised in the better scores is the guinea (pronounced “ginny” with the “g” hard as in “go”). It is worth 21 shillings, or one pound

---

**TABLE OF BRITISH CURRENCY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>British value</th>
<th>American value (approx.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3d.</td>
<td>farthing (rare)</td>
<td>1/4 penny</td>
<td>1/2 cent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3d.</td>
<td>halfpenny (“hay-p’ny”)</td>
<td>1/2 penny</td>
<td>1 cent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1d.</td>
<td>penny</td>
<td>1 penny</td>
<td>2 cents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3d.</td>
<td>threepence (“thrup’ny” or “thrup’ny bit”; rare)</td>
<td>3 pence</td>
<td>5 cents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Silver Coins**

| 3d.    | threepence (“thrup’ny” or “thrup’ny bit”; rare) | 3 pence       | 5 cents.                 |
| 6d.    | sixpence      | 6 pence       | 10 cents.                |
| 1s.    | shilling (or “bob”) | 12 pence     | 20 cents.                |
| 2s.    | florin (fairly rare) | 2 shillings  | 40 cents.                |
| 2s. 6d.| half crown (or “two-and-six”);    | 2 1/2 shillings | 50 cents.                |
| 5s.    | crown (rare)   | 5 shillings   | $1.00.                   |

**Paper Currency**

| 10s.   | 10-shilling note | 10 shillings (or 1/2 pound) | $2.00.                     |
| 1      | pound note      | 20 shillings               | $4.00.                     |
| 5      | 5-pound note    | 10 shillings               | $20.00.                    |
A Short Guide to Great Britain, 1943

U.S. War and Navy Departments

plus one shilling. There is no actual coin or bill of this value in use. It is merely a quotation of price.

A coin not shown in the above table is the gold sovereign, with a value of one pound. You will probably never see one and need not bother about it.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES: The measures of length and weight are almost the same as those used in America. The British customary inch, foot, yard, pint, quart, gallon, and so forth, are used. However, every gallon contains about one-fifth more liquid than the American gallon.

SOME IMPORTANT DOS AND DON'TS

BE FRIENDLY—but don't intrude anywhere it seems you are not wanted. You will find the British money system easier than you think. A little study beforehand on shipboard will make it still easier. Don't rush it. Play it with them. The can be a bit in need.

Don't go out of the bag. Or bluster; it won't work. Don't photocopy anything.

He's nothing. He's got his own direction and says, "We're off base. That's the time to pull in your ears, much. Otherwise you may get caught in their weekly routines.

It is always polite to criticize your host's cooking.
A Short Guide to Great Britain, 1943

U.S. War and Navy Departments
The British think so too

The idea of getting together with the British in solid friendship isn't a one-sided proposition. They, as well as we, believe in the necessity of being Allies in the truest meaning of the word if we are to dish 'it out in full measure to Hitler.

As a matter of fact, the British started the idea of providing soldiers with guide books to help them understand their Allies. The first RAF cadets to come to the United States for training were given a little book called "Notes for Your Guidance" which told them how to get along with Americans.

Then, too, the British Army Bureau of Current Affairs issued a bulletin, "Meet the Americans," to men in the army. For your information on how the British think about this subject, a part of that Bulletin is reproduced on the next page.
A Short Guide to Great Britain, 1943

U.S. War and Navy Departments
A Short Guide to Great Britain, 1943

U.S. War and Navy Departments

his young will do all they can to produce ill will between us. Our answer to that game is persistent, determined good will: the resolution to believe the best about people we don’t yet know. It should be a matter of personal mental discipline to adopt the attitude.

Respect: Toward individuals, we must show respect for positive achievement. We may dislike a man’s face or the cut of his clothes or his fashion in food—yet acknowledge him as a fine engineer or arbi-}

tect of a great building. Respect for American achievement, is one of the ways by which we shall prove to the world’s inventive wizards.

Patience: If you want someone’s friendship, don’t do anything on the spur of the moment. If a friend has a quarrel which you must try to


teach understanding. The first necessity is to be informed about each other, and to replace the films of misunderstanding with the facts one way and only one way—by seeking them in a spirit of
genuine interest.

Not even the most intensely nationalistic man or woman can resist that spirit. Ask a foreigner about his home town, what he likes to eat, where he works, what he does on Saturday, where he goes for his holidays, how his home
# A Short Guide to Great Britain, 1943

U.S. War and Navy Departments

## BRITISH OFFICERS’ INSIGNIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AIR FORCE</th>
<th>NAVY</th>
<th>ARMY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marshal of the Royal Air Force</td>
<td>Admiral of the Fleet</td>
<td>Field Marshal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Chief Marshal</td>
<td>Admiral</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Marshal</td>
<td>Vice-Admiral</td>
<td>Lieutenant General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Vice-Marshal</td>
<td>Rear Admiral</td>
<td>Major General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Commodore</td>
<td>Commodore</td>
<td>Brigadier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Captain</td>
<td>Captain</td>
<td>Colonel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wing Commander</td>
<td>Commander</td>
<td>Lieutenant Colonel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squadron Leader</td>
<td>Lieutenant Commander</td>
<td>Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight Lieutenant</td>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>Captain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flying Officer</td>
<td>Sub-Lieutenant</td>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Officer</td>
<td>Second Lieutenant</td>
<td>Second Lieutenant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Image of British officers' insignia chart]