

# Eagle Point Residents Recall Bombing of Coventry in 1940

Twenty years ago today the English industrial city of Coventry was nearly wiped off the map by a horde of German bombers. The raid aroused the wrath of free peoples around the world as no other act of World War II had done before.

For 11 solid hours, from dusk until dawn, waves upon waves of German planes bombed the city. Nothing was spared. Homes, hospitals, churches, schools—all were targets.

When the planes at last flew back to their bases in France, they left behind them some 2,000 dead, scores more injured and incredible destruction. They also left behind them a new word—Coventrated.

The bombing has not been forgotten, least of all by two persons now living in Eagle Point. Kenneth Nelmes and his sister, Mrs. Jack (Pauline) Medina, were among the 250,000 citizens of Coventry who took cover in basements and shelters away from the bombs on the night of Nov. 14, 1940.

Ken and his sister came to the United States in 1948. He is married, has six children, and is an ad compositor at the Mail Tribune. Mrs. Medina is a housewife.

**Returned From Store**  
Ken was 13 at the time of the raid on Coventry. He had just returned from a corner grocery store near his home, when the first of the bombs started to fall.

The raid came without warning, but the Nelmes family was nevertheless prepared. Having had prior experiences with lesser raids, the family of 15 were in the habit of spending their evening and

night hours in the basement of their three-story home. The basement doubled as an air-raid shelter. It was stocked with food and water and contained the family's beds during the war. When the first of the planes flew over the city the family was already in the basement.

**Enormous Explosions**  
Ken said they know from the start the raid would be a bad one because of the "enormous" explosions. All sizes and types of bombs were used in the raid. By Germany's own estimates the number of planes over the city at any one time was never less than 300.

All members of the Nelmes family came through the raid unscathed. Many of their friends and neighbors, however, were not quite so fortunate. Several of them were killed.

Although much of the surrounding area was destroyed, the Nelmes home was not seriously damaged. But, the store that Ken had left just 15 minutes earlier, was the site of a direct hit. Ken said both the store owner and his wife were among the dead.

Was the Nelmes family scared during the raid? Not particularly, according to Ken. Although they could tell at the beginning the raid would be far the worst, the family had become used to the many lesser raids and knew pretty much what to expect.

**Went To Bed**  
Ken himself went to bed promptly at 10 o'clock and slept through most of the raid. Recalling that night, Ken said "Everyone had the same feeling about the bombs. If your name is on it you'll get it; if it isn't—don't worry."

"We were nervous, sure, but not afraid. It was kind of like the feeling that one gets when he crosses a street during heavy traffic," Ken said. Most of the people were more scared for their friends and relatives than they were for themselves.

Ken thinks there are several reasons why the Germans mounted such a devastating attack against Coventry that night.

One is that the Germans were retaliating for an English raid several months earlier on the German city of Munich. Adolf Hitler had been in the midst of a speech at the time, and was probably not too happy about it, Ken said.

Another reason is that the Germans wanted to destroy the industrial potential of Coventry. Coventry was then, and still is, considered the "Detroit of England," as it is the center of English automobile production. Ken's father worked in the Humber Motor company plant.

**War Materials**  
At the time, however, these plants were turning out tanks and airplane parts for the war effort. In addition, much of the manufacture of war materials was being done on a lesser scale in homes and small shops scattered throughout the city.

"This would explain the indiscriminate bombing by the German planes," Ken said. In order to wipe out the war-making potential of the city they would have to wipe out the city itself.

The Germans nearly did wipe it out too—but not quite. Even while the bombs fell, the factories continued on their 24-hour-a-day production schedule. Only when a factory was rendered useless by the bombs would production stop.

Many persons were in the streets during the entire raid, helping in rescue operations and attempting to extinguish the many fires raging through the city. Ken's father and several of his older brothers were among them.

**Needed Water**  
When the bombs stopped, the city began rebuilding. The most immediate need was water. Mrs. Medina recalls that she and two other members of the family walked three miles to get water the next day. They carried it in a tub.

Again on April 8 and April 10, the Germans bombed the city with equal fervor. When the raids were over, Ken said, the only thing in Coventry that was not damaged or destroyed was the spirit of the people themselves. He said that no matter how bad things got, and they got pretty bad, the people of Coventry did not once even consider capitulating to the Germans.

Ken adds that this feeling was common throughout England. The destruction of the famed medieval cathedral at Coventry was one of the things which caused worldwide revulsion against the German raids. It has now been largely rebuilt, in part with donations from all parts of the world.

Many other cities in England, and elsewhere, were heavily bombed during the war, but the merciless destruction of Coventry has not been forgotten, least of all by its citizens and the two eyewitnesses living in Eagle Point.

**Eugene Man Heads Oregon Health Group**  
Dr. William Burke, director of Health and Physical Education for the Eugene public schools, was elected Saturday as president of the Oregon Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation at the association's annual convention.

Burke succeeds Dr. Hexter Turner, Mary Seymour, instructor of physical education at Oregon State, was chosen as president-elect for the coming year and will succeed Burke as state president next year.

**Dallas Boy Hurt By Homemade Bomb**  
Dallas — (UPI) — A 14-year-old Dallas boy suffered first and second degree burns when a home made bomb exploded in his pocket here Saturday.

The boy, Melvin Berg, was taken to a Dallas hospital where his condition was described as good. Authorities said the explosive was a mixture of black gun powder and speculated that the explosion was set off by body heat.

**TANNERY HEAD DIES**  
Newton, Mass. — (UPI) — Joseph Kaplan, 62, president of the Colonial Tanning Company of Boston, died Sunday.



**KENNEDY APPOINTEES**—President-elect John F. Kennedy has begun construction of his new administration by announcing that he will retain Allan V. Dulles, top center, as head of the Central Intelligence Agency and J. Edgar Hoover, top right, as director of the FBI. Also named were Ted Sorenson, top left, as special counsel to the president; Pierre Salinger, lower right, as press secretary, and Ken O'Donnell, lower center, as special assistant. Named also was Clark Clifford, lower left, who will work with President Eisenhower's people in coordinating plans for transfer of administration. (UPI Telephone)

## Kidnap-Killer of Girl, 14, Sought In Ohio, Indiana

Paulding, Ohio — (UPI) — Authorities in Ohio and Indiana today hunted for the "man in a big car" who kidnaped and killed a 14-year-old girl Sunday.

The only clues the officers had were provided by the 4-year-old sister of the victim. "It was a man in a big car who got my sister," sobbed little Sherrill Eagleson who was just beginning to realize the awful truth that her sister had been killed.

Sherrill and Nancy went to a movie Sunday afternoon while their parents were at work in this small northwestern Ohio village. Afterward they stopped at a restaurant for a soft drink and then started walking to their home five blocks away.

A man stopped his car and offered the girls a ride home but they refused. "A man in a big car grabbed my sister and shoved her into the car," the little girl told authorities.

Sherrill knew something was wrong and ran as fast as she could to the home of John Larson, a neighbor who often served as babysitter for the girls while their parents were at work.

Larson phoned Sheriff John Keller who mobilized all the officers he could in this village of 2,300 population near the Ohio-Indiana line. "It's three-man department, the village police and two highway patrolmen soon were combing the area."

**Chief of Police At Portland Dies**  
Portland — (UPI) — Portland Police Chief William J. Hilbruner, 50, died of a heart attack at his home Saturday night. Hilbruner, who would have completed 24 years with the Portland police department Thursday, was pronounced dead on arrival at Good Samaritan hospital.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday at St. Paul's Lutheran church. Hilbruner, born in Portland May 5, 1910, and appointed to the department in 1936, was named police chief Jan. 2, 1957, by Portland Mayor Terry Schunk.

He is survived by his widow, Margaret, and three children. Schunk named Deputy Chief Dave Johnson as the city's acting police chief.

**Portland Ice Show Attracts 119,592**  
Portland — (UPI) — The 60 performances of the Holiday on Ice show at Portland's new Memorial coliseum drew 119,592 persons, according to figures released Sunday.

The show opened Nov. 3 and closed Sunday. The 10-day show grossed \$306,917. The Columbia Basin Exhibition and Trade Fair, which also opened Nov. 3, drew 43,138 persons.

## Conference To Air Problem of Taxes

Salem — (UPI) — The State Tax commission said today that this year's biennial tax conference to acquaint Oregon lawmakers and others with current tax problems will be held Friday on the University of Oregon campus in Eugene.

Co-sponsors are the commission and the university's economics department. The sessions will be in the Erb Memorial Student Union. Speakers will include all three members of the tax commission, and Dr. William C. Jones, acting president of the university.

The afternoon will be devoted to a panel on "a tax program for Oregon for 1961," moderated by State Rep. Clarence Barton (D-Coquille) chairman of the legislative interim tax committee.

**Willamette University Dormitories Dedicated**  
Salem — (UPI) — Two new women's dormitories at Willamette university were dedicated Sunday. They are Emily J. York house and Lucy Anna Lee house.

York house was named after Willamette's first graduate, 101 years ago, and Lee house was named for the daughter of the school's founder, Jason Lee.

## Quotes From the News

**BY UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL**  
Hollywood — Negro entertainer Sammy Davis Jr., on his marriage to Swedish actress May Britt: "I'm silly happy."

Palm Beach, Fla. — President-elect Kennedy's press secretary, Pierre Salinger, on what Kennedy wants to meet with Vice President Richard M. Nixon: "First, the senator wants to congratulate the vice president on the campaign he conducted. And second, he wants to resume cordial relations which existed between them during their 14 years in Congress."

Hamilton, Ont. — Mrs. Alice Arbour, 84-year-old widow who forgot to bring her baseball bat to bed with her for the first time in four years and then found a burglar in her room: "I just let out a couple of screams and he ran like a deer."

Washington — Rep. Chester Bowles, (D-Conn.), recommending patience in American relations with Cuba: "I do not think the Cuban people threw off Spanish rule in 1899 only to accept Soviet rule in 1961."

## Father Drowns Trying To Save Boys in River

Oregon City — (UPI) — A father was drowned Sunday night while trying to save two boys stranded on an island in the Clackamas river a mile above Clackamas. The boys were rescued.

Sheriff's officers said Lawrence Johnson, Clackamas, was pulled under in the swift current of the rising river while towing one boy to safety with a rope.

The two boys were identified as Glen Johnson, 13, son of the missing man, and William Youngblood, 13, Olympia, Wash. **Search Resumes**

A search resumed at daylight today for Johnson's body. Sheriff's officers said it was called off Sunday night because of stormy conditions.

The two boys were trapped on the island when discovered by Johnson and Emil Youngblood, father of the other boy. Water had been released from dams upstream, causing the stream to rise.

**Swept Off Feet**  
Johnson got a rope and was pulling the Youngblood boy to shore when the current swept both off their feet. When officers arrived they told the Johnson boy to stay on the island. The Youngblood boy was found clinging to a tree limb.

Johnson and Youngblood were brothers-in-law. The Youngbloods were visiting over the week end.

## Parade Awards To Reservists, Crater

The Naval Reserve Electronics division Medford was judged the best in the Veterans' day parade Friday for the first place award of a \$50 savings bond, according to Charles J. Myers, parade chairman.

The second award of a \$25 savings bond will be awarded to Crater High school band. The Naval Reserve division, under the command of Lt. R. A. Schuchard, had about 35 reservists marching in the parade.

The parade contained approximately 50 units representing all branches of the armed services, veterans' organizations, marching bands, fraternal organizations and law agencies.

Judges for the event were County Judge Earl Miller and Commissioner Chester Wendt. Parade marshal was Maj. Gen. William F. Dean.

## Tourists, Industry Object of Promotion

Medford Chamber of Commerce will spend \$13,350 for advertising and promotion this year, according to a report from the research department of the Curtis Publishing company.

Oregon's state and municipal development organizations will spend a total of \$421,717 to attract vacationers and tourists.

Of the amount to be spent by the Medford chamber, \$6,840 will promote vacation and tourist trade and \$6,510 to attract industry. The Medford chamber is the only organization in the state which has budgeted funds to attract industry, the report shows.

The report stated that a fact not generally recognized by many persons is that tourist expenditures benefit virtually every segment of a community's economic life.

**HITLER AIDE DIES**  
Dusseldorf, Germany — (UPI) — Ernst Wilhelm Bohle, 57, organizer of Hitler's worldwide "Fifth Column," died here last week in obscurity, it was learned Sunday. The former SS general handled the job of turning overseas German communities into active Nazi spy and sabotage units during World War II.

## Miami Climate Declared Too Warm To Wear Clothes

Miami — (UPI) — Police Sgt. M. M. Ogle couldn't really be blamed if he did just that. Everyone else did. And brigadier E. E. Currey knew something was wrong because Saturday afternoon traffic was crawling instead of rushing across his drawbridge over the Miami river in the city's downtown section.

Currey stuck his head out of the tender's house to look for the bottleneck. He saw drivers and passengers, some of their heads out of car windows, looking toward the south end of the bridge.

Currey looked, too. A pretty young brunette, completely nude, was strolling toward him. Currey looked again to make sure, then ducked back inside the house and called police. They told him to stop the woman.

Currey stepped out on the bridge walkway and nervously approached her. "Say, girl, are you lost?" Currey asked. "Yes," she replied. "I'm looking for my hotel." "Say," Currey questioned, "did you lose your clothes?" "No," the woman said. "Why?"

Just then an approaching ship blew its horn for Currey to raise the bridge. He went back into the house for a moment and when he came out again the woman was sauntering down the north end of the bridge.

Two police squad cars, led by St. Ogle, arrived a few minutes later. They questioned Currey and others. One driver described the woman as "about 38-25-35" and he was sure of his description because he had gone around the block three times to be positive.

**To Hospital for Examination**  
Ogle and his men hurried on. They found the woman about two blocks from the bridge. Ogle enveloped her in a blanket, put her in the squad car and took her to Jackson Memorial hospital for examination.

Checking back, Ogle found the woman had started her stroll about a block south of the bridge. A waitress in a bar said the woman came in fully clothed and asked for a glass of water.

The woman took a pill, drank the water, and went into the ladies room. She came out nude and left the bar. Attendants at the hospital said the woman gave her name as "Mary" and her age as "16." She said she was from New Jersey. They quoted her as saying Miami "was just too hot to wear clothes."

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