

The Second World War: 1939–1945

The fire service had an important role in the Second World War. This is because the war came to the homefront when cities, including London, were attacked from the air. This was known as 'The Blitz'. The word Blitz comes from the German word 'Blitzkrieg' which means 'lightning war'. The bombs destroyed homes and caused lots of fires.



Auxiliary Fire Service

London Fire Brigade needed more firefighters to help tackle fires during the Blitz. These firefighters joined the Auxiliary Fire Service.



Look at this picture of wartime firefighters. Draw a picture of the type of helmet they are wearing



did you know?

During quiet times firefighters collected scrap materials and made toys for children that had lost their homes.



Women firefighters

Many men went away to fight in the Second World War and so lots of women joined the fire service to help drive fire engines and answer emergency telephone calls.

did you know?

Gillian Tanner won a George Medal for bravery for driving lorries full of petrol to refuel fire engines.

Messenger boys

Boys that were 16 years old could also join the fire brigade during the war. They were called messengers because they cycled from one group of firefighters to another to let them know where the fires were and if people needed help.

- What did the messengers use to travel from one fire to another? Circle the right answer.

bike

car

lorry

skateboard



Fire engines

The Auxiliary Fire Service also needed lots more fire engines to help stop the fires. Some of these were towed by London taxis.



Many of the fire engines were painted grey so they were not seen as easily as the red fire engines.

- Why do you think they would need to be hidden? Tick the right answer.

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To pump water

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To hide them from enemy bombers

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To hide them from the firefighters