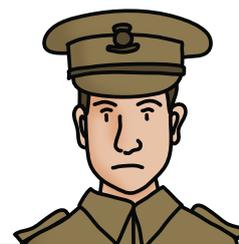




How did the World Wars impact Birkenhead?

The newspaper article describes the events surrounding an air raid on Morpeth Dock, Birkenhead. In particular, it focuses on the actions of local man, Norman Tunna.



DAILY NEWS

SATURDAY 25TH JANUARY 1941

SHUNTER SPRAYED LOAD OF HOT BOMBS, KNOCKED OFF INCENDIARIES

THIRTY – TWO – YEAR – OLD railway shunter Norman Tunna, of Birkenhead, was at work during a raid on the Liverpool port area when he discovered two incendiaries burning on an open waggonload of 250lb. Bombs which were covered only by a waterproof sheet.

He tore off the sheet, extinguished the incendiaries and removed them from the truck.

The top layer of these heavy explosives was hot and molten metal from one incendiary was falling on the bombs.

Today it is announced that Tunna has been awarded the George Cross for courage.

This is his own story of what happened when he leaped on to the munition waggon:



“Flames came from one waggon just after incendiaries had fallen. I rushed to the engine, got a bucket of water and threw it on the flames. Then I

raced to a signal box and got another bucket of water and a stirrup pump.

I took the waterproof sheet on the waggon and sprayed water on the bombs to cool them off and stop an explosion. I knew what would happen if they did explode.

Then I saw that the incendiary causing the flames was wedged between two of the bombs. It was still burning and the bombs were almost red hot.

I tried to get the incendiary loose with my hands. It was useless. Then I got my wooden shunting pole, knocked the incendiary free and shoved it off the waggon.

We really had no time to feel scared because of the excitement.”





How did the World Wars impact Birkenhead?

Newspaper Analysis

Use this mini glossary to help you understand the technical vocabulary used in the article.

Glossary

- George Cross** - The highest award for bravery given to civilians.
- incendiary** - A device designed to cause fires.
- shunter** - A person who had the job of connecting or disconnecting waggons from engines.
- shunting pole** - A pole used by the shunter.
- stirrup pump** - A handheld water pump used to put out small fires.
- waggon** - A cart that is pulled by an engine in a train.



Once you have made sense of the article, answer these questions in your own words.

What dangerous situation did Norman Tunna discover? What was the risk?

How did he prevent a disaster from occurring?





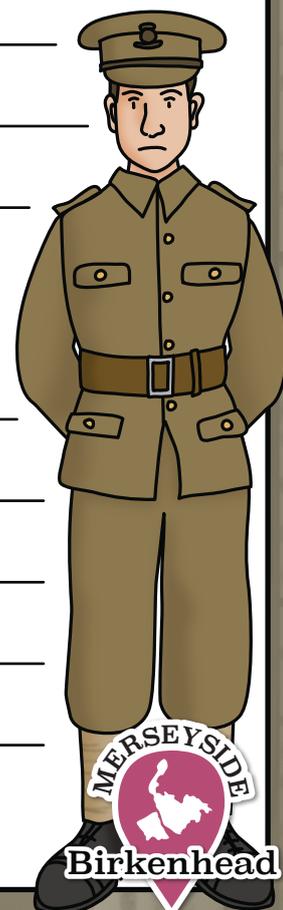
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Why was the air raid described as having taken place in the 'Liverpool port area' rather than giving its real location?

How do you think Norman Tunna felt?

How was his bravery recognised?

Is this newspaper article a reliable source?





How did the World Wars impact Birkenhead?

What dangerous situation did Norman Tunna discover? What was the risk?

Norman Tunna discovered that incendiaries, devices that are designed to start fires, had fallen into a waggon containing large bombs. There was a risk that the incendiaries could ignite the bombs, which would cause a large explosion and put lots of lives at risk.

How did he prevent a disaster from occurring?

Norman noticed flames coming from one of the waggons after the incendiaries had fallen. He took a bucket of water and doused the flames. He then ran to a signal box and got another bucket of water and a pump. He removed a waterproof sheet from the waggon and sprayed water on the bombs to cool them down. He then noticed that an incendiary device was wedged between the two bombs. It was still burning so he had to get it out. He tried to dislodge it with his hands but was not able to. Fortunately, he was able to knock it free with his shunting pole and he then shoved it off the waggon preventing a disaster.

Why was the air raid described as having taken place in the 'Liverpool port area' rather than giving its real location?

Newspapers had to be careful not to give away locations that German spies could read about. If the newspaper report made it clear that heavy explosives were stored at Morpeth Dock, it could have made it a target for further bombing raids.

How do you think Norman Tunna felt?

Norman Tunna said that they didn't have time to feel scared. He understood the danger he was in but had to act quickly and calmly to prevent a disaster from occurring.

How was his bravery recognised?

Norman Tunna was given the George Cross which was a medal given to members of the public when they displayed acts of bravery.

Is this newspaper article a reliable source?

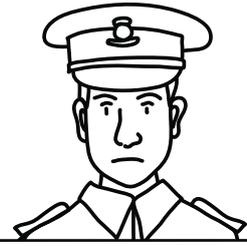
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Local History

Historic England and Teacher's Pet have come together to bring you a collection of free resources that you can use in your local history teaching.



Historic England



Teacher's Pet

Who are Teacher's Pet?

Teacher's Pet have been providing downloadable and playable educational content to early years and primary school teachers for over 14 years. We cover all areas of the curriculum and use a team of in-house teachers and designers to create engaging and memorable concepts, that the children will love.

Why local history?

At [Teacher's Pet](#) we want to empower primary school teachers by giving them the tools they need to deliver inspiring and thoughtful lessons about the local area and its history. We believe local history teaching has such an important part to play in a child's wellbeing – helping to give children a sense of pride in where they live.

Our Local History project is designed to provide teachers across the UK with everything they need to successfully carry out a full scheme of teaching about their local area, through key enquiry questions and source led activities.

Working with [Historic England](#) gives us access to archived maps and photos for resources and information from knowledgeable local historians, as well helping us to provide the content to you free of charge.

For more information about our Local History project or to find out more about Teacher's Pet Classroom Resources, please visit our website.