

Tessa Catto contributes the memories of her late husband William Leslie Catto

This piece was written by my husband William Leslie Catto for my grandson's school project. My husband had lived in Duffus near Lossiemouth, Moray.

'My brother **Gordon** (born 1929) saw a German Dornier 17 bomber, possibly in 1941, flying very high in the sky probably photographing the nearby RAF airfields of Lossiemouth and Kinloss. Several Hurricanes started to chase it and knowing that the east coast was heavily defended it headed west and was shot down and landed in the sea.

The first German plane to be brought down in Britain hit the Lammermuir Hills near Humber in East Lothian. It was machine gunned by Spitfires of 602 (City of Edinburgh) and 603 (City of Glasgow) Squadrons.

My brother **Alex** was a medical student staying in a rented flat in Marchmont Crescent, Edinburgh along with another medical student (who later trained as an RAF pilot in South Africa). They heard the unusual engine noise of an aircraft – went out through a glass door and opened the outside door. A bomb blew a 4' crater in the middle of the road and threw both of them back along the corridor. The windows of about eight flats were blown in because several gas mains were burst, and all were evacuated.

I remember that clothes were rationed until 1948.

In 1941, my brother **Eoin** (aged 20) joined the LDV (Local Defence Volunteers), later called the Home Guard, got a top priority phone call. Every farmer with a phone had to report to the nearest village of Rose Isle with a shotgun. Those farmers with no phone had to be contacted immediately and given the same orders. As they merged into the village, along with others who had no weapons were issued with pikes which were long metal tubes with a bayonet welded on at one end. Orders were given to stop every car and check passengers. Three red rockets could be clearly seen as confirmation that the Germans had invaded Britain. Several hours later they were told to go home. On the South east coast of England a false alarm had started a chain of events to inform all coastal LDV lookouts via bonfires, rockets (fired in groups of three) that the Germans had invaded.

My brother Eoin continued his university studies and was commissioned 18 months later. He trained African soldiers in the Kings African Rifles and fought in Burma.'

As of September 2018 Eoin is nearly 97, Alex is 95 and Gordon is 89.

Mrs Tessa Catto
November 2018