

Content Warning/Disclaimer

This resource is designed to support teaching on or around the Second World War.

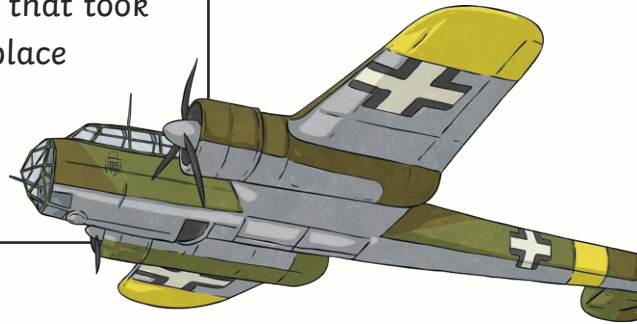
Some of the terms and images used have been included in this resource for contextual reasons, in order to highlight how this terminology was used at the time and that it is now considered inappropriate.

Please be aware that it may not be appropriate for the children in your class to freely research further into this topic due to the harrowing information and images freely available on the Internet.

Know your class: some content may be too upsetting for some children.

Life on the Front: Second World War Diaries

These two diary entries talk about major events that took place during the Second World War. One takes place on the home front just after the air raid on 29th December 1940. The other is written the night before D-Day.



30th December 1940

Dear Diary,

My ears are throbbing even though it has been silent for hours now. Last night, there was a **Luftwaffe** air raid. They began dropping many **incendiary** and explosive bombs around St Paul's Cathedral, trying to destroy it. Realising what was happening, I ran as fast as I could to the cathedral but it was not easy: the bombs were destroying buildings all around me.

Last year, I signed up as a member of the St Paul's Watch. We help protect the cathedral during air raids. Mr Allen organised the watch at the start of the war.

After arriving with only a few cuts and bruises, the other volunteers and I were split into groups and given our first duties. I was asked to be the first lookout so I grabbed my stirrup pump and climbed up through the dome to the **Stone Gallery**.

All around the roof, I could see orange glows appearing here and there as bombs landed. Dashing to and fro, members of the watch used their pumps to put out fires swiftly. I called them out until the end of my time as a lookout and then worked the roof myself and did my best to extinguish the flames. The raid lasted for hours and hours and a total of 28 bombs fell on the cathedral. But finally, it ended and we were able to determine if the cathedral had been damaged.

After all our hard work, St Paul's remained standing with minimal damage. Well done us! Unfortunately, the entire road between here and St Mary-le-Bow is completely destroyed. The Luftwaffe chose to attack at low tide when the volunteer firefighter's water supply from the Thames would be limited.

I've written enough for now. I must sleep and gain my strength before my next shift.

Terry



5th June 1944

Dear Diary,

Finally! After bad weather delays, we've been told the invasion of Normandy called Operation Overlord and our part of it, Operation Neptune, are to go ahead tomorrow!

We've been practising various drills in Scotland and the West Country for months now: drilling mock landings, troop transfers and efficient unloading of equipment. I'm positive that all of this hard work has prepared us to handle our **LST** expertly during the invasion.

After being told the good news, I wrote letters home and sat down to prepare one last time. My traitorous body is refusing to sleep due to excitement. It is important that we turn this conflict in our favour tomorrow. Before dawn, with the Moon and the tide in our favour, we shall not stop until we reach our landing point and deliver our equipment.

Until then, I must rest my eyes and body - even if sleep does not come.
Goodnight.

Ashley

Glossary

incendiary: A bomb designed to start fires.

LST: Landing ship tank - a ship capable of landing directly on a beach in order to unload vehicles and tanks.

Luftwaffe: The German Air Force.

Stone Gallery: The gallery above the Whispering Gallery in St Paul's dome.

Questions

1. How many bombs landed on the cathedral? Tick one.

- 28
- 30
- 12
- 27

2. Draw **four** lines and match each title to its description.

Luftwaffe

Operation Overlord

Operation Neptune

St Paul's Watch

The invasion of Normandy.

Ashley's part of the invasion.

The German Air Force

A group of volunteers who put out fires during air raids.

3. What did the volunteers of the St Paul's Watch use to put out fires?

4. Look at the fourth paragraph of Terry's diary entry. Find and copy one word that means the same as 'running very fast'.

5. Fill in the missing words.

Before dawn, with the Moon and the tide in our _____, we shall not stop until we reach our landing point and deliver our _____.

6. Why do you think Terry chose to volunteer for the St Paul's Watch?

7. Do you think both characters are proud of their jobs? Explain your answer.

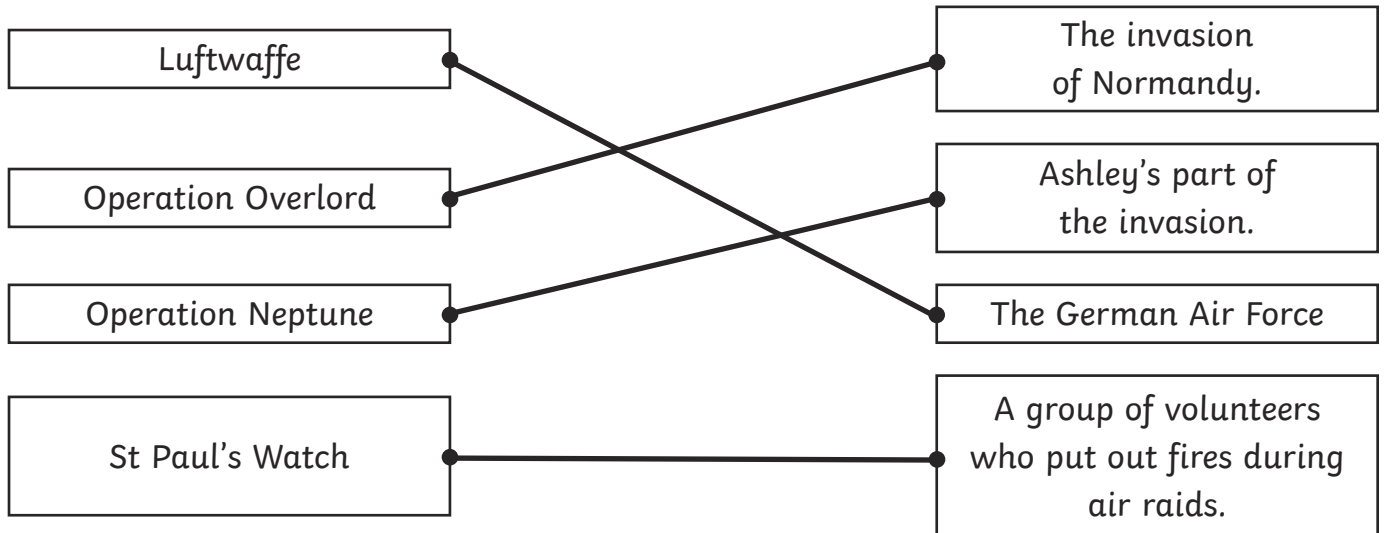
8. Summarise what happened to Terry or Ashley in 25 words or fewer.

Answers

1. How many bombs landed on the cathedral? Tick one.

- 28
- 30
- 12
- 27

2. Draw **four** lines and match each title to its description.



3. What did the volunteers of the St Paul's Watch use to put out fires?

The volunteers used stirrup pumps to put out fires.

4. Look at the fourth paragraph of Terry's diary entry. Find and copy one word that means the same as 'running very fast'.

dashing

5. Fill in the missing words.

Before dawn, with the Moon and the tide in our **favour**, we shall not stop until we reach our landing point and deliver our **equipment**.

6. Why do you think Terry chose to volunteer for the St Paul's Watch?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Terry feels St Paul's Cathedral is a very important building and that it needed to be protected from bombs and fire.

7. Do you think both characters are proud of their jobs? Explain your answer.

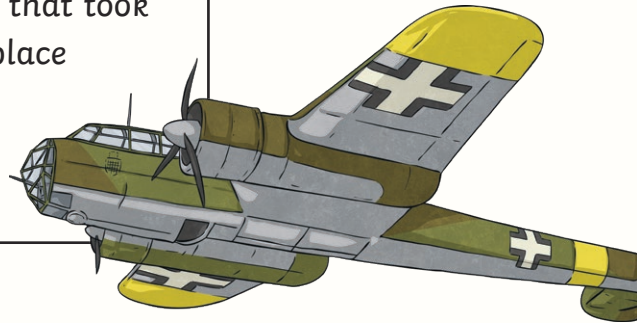
Pupils' own responses, such as: I think both characters are proud of their jobs because Terry uses phrases such as 'well done us' and 'all our hard work' and Ashley describes the invasion as important and that it must be successful.

8. Summarise what happened to Terry or Ashley in 25 words or fewer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: When bombs began falling near St Paul's, Terry ran and helped by calling out where fires were and by putting them out.

Life on the Front: Second World War Diaries

These two diary entries talk about major events that took place during the Second World War. One takes place on the home front just after the air raid on 29th December 1940. The other is written the night before D-Day.



30th December 1940

Dear Diary,

Last night was horrible! My hands are still shaking even though it has been silent for hours now. Around teatime, the **Luftwaffe** began dropping so many **incendiary** and explosive bombs around St Paul's Cathedral that the sky glowed as bright as daytime. I rushed as fast as I could to the cathedral to see how I could help but it was very dangerous: the bombs were striking buildings and rubble was falling all around me.

Being part of the cathedral community, I felt responsible for its safety. Eagerly, I signed up last year when Mr Allen appealed to the local community for volunteers to help protect the cathedral during the blackout. I've been a proud member of the St Paul's Watch ever since.

Finally, I arrived safely and Mr Allen himself split us into teams. Quickly, he assigned us our first duties. I was assigned the first lookout shift so I grabbed my stirrup pump and climbed up through the dome to the **Stone Gallery**. The narrow stairs near the top always make me nervous but I collected myself and stepped outside.

Despite the blackout, I could see orange glows appearing sporadically on the roof of the cathedral. As fast as they could, the watch rushed here and there with their pumps, putting out flames before they could build. I called them out from my perch until the end of my time as a lookout. Soon, I was assigned to the roof myself for a time and tried my hardest to put out flames that sprang up like strange weeds. The bombing continued relentlessly as we took breaks and changed shifts to ease aching muscles and frayed nerves. The raid lasted for hours and hours (28 bombs in total) but finally, it ended and we were able to determine if the cathedral had been damaged.

Thanks to our efforts, St Paul's remained mostly unscathed. However, the entire road between here and St Mary-le-Bow is completely destroyed. Purposely striking at low tide, the Luftwaffe chose to attack when the volunteer firefighter's water supply from the Thames would be limited.

That is all for now. I must rest before my next shift tonight in case they come back.

Terry



5th June 1944

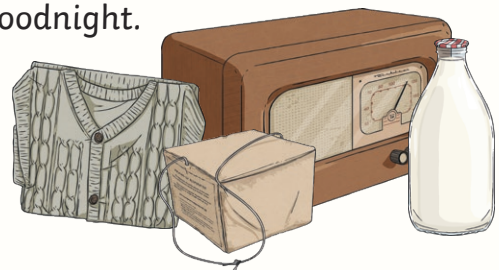
Dear Diary,

Normandy here we come! After all of the delays because of bad weather, we've been informed Operation Overlord and our part of it, Operation Neptune, are a go for tomorrow!

For some time now, we have been practising various drills in Scotland and the West Country: mock landings, troop transfer and efficient unloading of equipment. I'm positive that all of this hard work has trained us to manoeuvre our **LST** expertly. We will do our best to do our duty.

After our mission briefing, I wrote letters to my family and sat down with the rest of the crew to prepare one last time. Anticipation is causing my body to reject sleep. Everything depends on tomorrow's mission. We must turn this conflict in our favour. Before dawn, with the Moon and the tide working for us, we shall not stop until we reach our landing point, land our troops and equipment on the beach safely and stay close by to assist if needed. I will be no good tomorrow if I do not rest so now I will say goodnight.

Ashley



Glossary

incendiary: A bomb designed to start fires.

LST: Landing ship tank - a ship capable of landing directly on a beach in order to unload vehicles and tanks.

Luftwaffe: The German Air Force.

Stone Gallery: The gallery above the Whispering Gallery in St Paul's dome.

Questions

1. Who organised the St Paul's Watch? Tick one.

- Terry
- Ashley
- Normandy
- Mr Allen

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- Terry is selected to be the first lookout.
- Terry and the watch put out fires on the roof of St Paul's Cathedral.
- The Luftwaffe began an air raid around St Paul's Cathedral.
- Terry runs to St Paul's to help.

3. Fill in the missing words.

Eagerly, I signed up last year when Mr Allen _____ to the local _____ for volunteers to help protect the cathedral during the blackout. I've been a proud member of the St Paul's Watch ever since.

4. Look at the second paragraph of Ashley's diary entry. Find and copy one word that means the same as 'to steer or control'.

5. Where did Ashley practise for the upcoming invasion?

6. What do the two characters have in common? Explain your answer.

7. Do you think Terry and Ashley are brave? Explain your answer.

8. Do you think Ashley is going to do something important during the mission? Explain your answer.

9. Do you think what Terry is doing for St Paul's Cathedral is important? Explain your answer.

Answers

1. Who organised the St Paul's Watch? Tick one.

- Terry
- Ashley
- Normandy
- Mr Allen**

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- 3** Terry is selected to be the first lookout.
- 4** Terry and the watch put out fires on the roof of St Paul's Cathedral.
- 1** The Luftwaffe began an air raid around St Paul's Cathedral.
- 2** Terry runs to St Paul's to help.

3. Fill in the missing words.

Eagerly, I signed up last year when Mr Allen **appealed** to the local **community** for volunteers to help protect the cathedral during the blackout. I've been a proud member of the St Paul's Watch ever since.

4. Look at the second paragraph of Ashley's diary entry. Find and copy one word that means the same as 'to steer or control'.

manoeuvre

5. Where did Ashley practise for the upcoming invasion?

Ashley practised in the West Country and in Scotland.

6. What do the two characters have in common? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that both characters feel that they are doing their part to help with the war effort and are proud of it. I think they are both brave and excited about their jobs.

7. Do you think Terry and Ashley are brave? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Yes, I think both Ashley and Terry are brave because they put themselves in danger and try to make a difference during the war.

8. Do you think Ashley is going to do something important during the mission? Explain your answer.

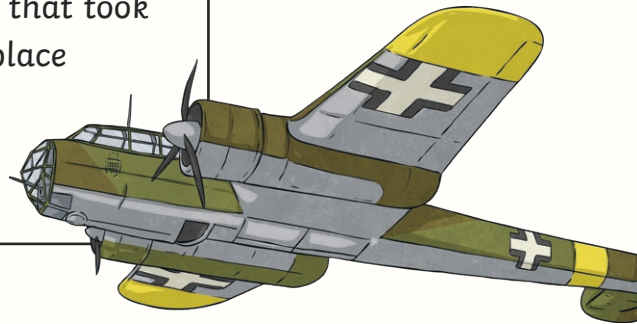
Pupils' own responses, such as: Yes because the text says he is going to be landing equipment and troops on the beach for the invasion. You can't have an invasion without troops and equipment.

9. Do you think what Terry is doing for St Paul's Cathedral is important? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Yes, St Paul's Cathedral is a very old building and important to many people in the UK. If it had been destroyed, it would have really made a lot of people think twice about fighting back in the war.

Life on the Front: Second World War Diaries

These two diary entries talk about major events that took place during the Second World War. One takes place on the home front just after the air raid on 29th December 1940. The other is written the night before D-Day.



30th December 1940

Dear Diary,

What a terrifying night! I'm still shaking even though it has been silent for hours now. Last night, around six in the evening, the Luftwaffe (the German Air Force) began dropping so many incendiary (a bomb designed to start fires) and explosive bombs around St Paul's Cathedral that I thought the sky itself was on fire. My shift with the St Paul's Watch was due to begin in three hours but I rushed as fast as I could to the cathedral to see how I could help. It was extremely dangerous: the bombs were striking buildings and rubble was falling all around me. I could feel the heat from the fires building but I continued running.

Living as close as I do to St Paul's, I felt it my duty to sign up last year when Mr Allen appealed to the local community for volunteers to help protect the cathedral during air raids. I've been a proud member of the watch ever since. Our months of training seemed arduous at the time but they definitely prepared us for last night's vicious onslaught.

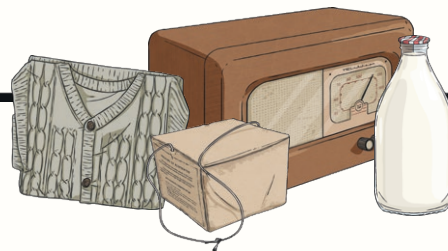
Once I arrived at the cathedral, Mr Allen himself split us into teams and assigned us areas of the roof to cover. Having been assigned the first lookout shift, I grabbed my stirrup pump and climbed up to the Stone Gallery at the base of the dome. The rickety, narrow stairs near the top always give me pause but I rallied myself and stepped outside.

As my eyes adjusted to the darkness, I could see orange glows appearing here and there on the great roof. Focused and determined, the Watch rushed to and fro with their pumps, putting out fires as I called them out from my perch. Shifts changed - I was assigned to the roof to give tired Watch members a break but the bombing continued relentlessly. It lasted for hours and hours (28 bombs in

total) and I felt my arms would fall off from exhaustion by the end. Finally, the sounds of plane engines and bombs falling ceased and we were soon able to assess the damage.

Thanks to our efforts, St Paul's remained standing and mostly unscathed. However, I'm afraid that the area around her wasn't so lucky as the entire route between here and the church of St Mary-le-Bow is completely destroyed. Choosing their time carefully, the Luftwaffe had struck at low tide which limited the volunteer firefighter's water supply and ability to put out fires quickly. It's a disaster but I know in my heart that we will overcome this.

Terry



5th June 1944

Dear Diary,

Tomorrow is the day. After all of the delays because of bad weather, we are finally going to invade the shores of Normandy. Operation Overlord and our part, Operation Neptune, are a go!

For weeks now, we have been practising various drills and strategies in Scotland and the West Country: mock landings, equipment and troop transfers and beach assault preparation. I'm confident that all of this hard work has trained us to manoeuvre our LST (landing ship tank - a ship capable of landing directly on a beach in order to unload vehicles and tanks) and make it through the worst.

Once our plan was confirmed, I wrote letters home and sat down with the rest of the crew to discuss our ship's part in tomorrow's invasion just one more time. There's nothing more I can do this evening except rest but sleep eludes me. The country, indeed the world, has been working towards this point since the war began. Anticipation is the true enemy of sleep for me, not the fear of what could happen. Everything depends on tomorrow's advance; even the Moon and the tide must cooperate for this to work. We have to make sure that we follow our training and our plan: do not hesitate until we reach our landing point, land our troops and equipment on the beach safely and stay close by to assist if needed. Even though I know it feels impossible, I must rest now so I can be at my best when we leave. Goodnight.

Ashley

Questions

1. Draw **four** lines and match each place to its description.

St Paul's Cathedral

Normandy

Scotland and the West Country

St Mary-le-Bow

The place where Ashley is going to invade.

The place where Ashley practised for Operation Overlord.

The place where Terry volunteers to help during air raids.

A church down the road from St Paul's Cathedral.

2. At what time did the air raid begin? Tick one.

- six in the morning
- six in the evening
- five in the morning
- five in the evening

3. What kind of pump did Terry use to put out fires?

4. Fill in the missing words.

As my eyes _____ to the darkness, I could see orange glows _____ here and there on the great roof.

5. Look at the second paragraph of Terry's diary entry. Find and copy one word that means the same as 'difficult and tiring'.

6. **Anticipation is the true enemy of sleep for me, not the fear of what could happen. Everything depends on tomorrow's advance; even the Moon and the tide must cooperate for this to work.**

What do you think this passage tells us about how Ashley is feeling?

7. What do you think Terry is going to write about next? Explain your answer.

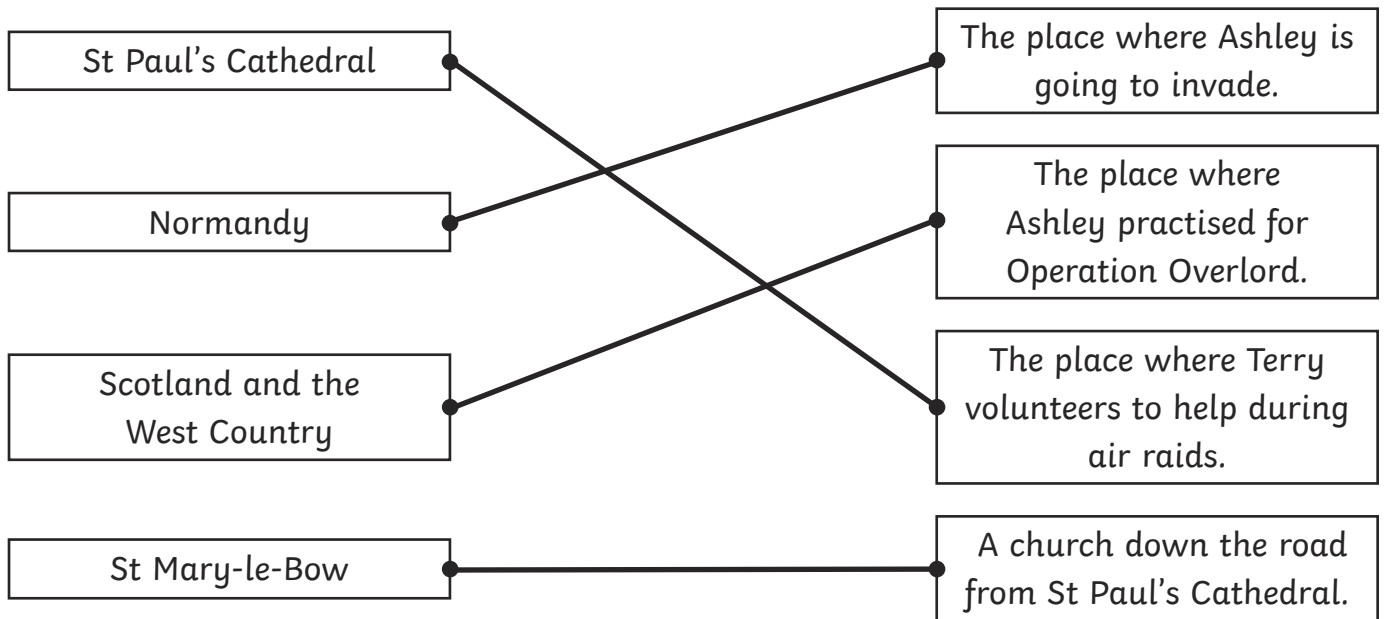
8. How are the two characters different? Explain your answer.

9. Why do you think the author has chosen to tell Terry and Ashley's stories as diary entries? Explain your answer.

10. Compare how Terry and Ashley are feeling in their diary entries. Explain your answer.

Answers

1. Draw **four** lines and match each place to its description.



2. At what time did the air raid begin? Tick one.

- six in the morning
- six in the evening**
- five in the morning
- five in the evening

3. What kind of pump did Terry use to put out fires?

Terry used a stirrup pump to put out fires.

4. Fill in the missing words.

As my eyes **adjusted** to the darkness, I could see orange glows **appearing** here and there on the great roof.

5. Look at the second paragraph of Terry's diary entry. Find and copy one word that means the same as 'difficult and tiring'.

arduous

6. **Anticipation is the true enemy of sleep for me, not the fear of what could happen. Everything depends on tomorrow's advance; even the Moon and the tide must cooperate for this to work.**

What do you think this passage tells us about how Ashley is feeling?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think it tells us that Ashley is feeling so excited about the invasion that sleep is not coming easily.

7. What do you think Terry is going to write about next? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Terry might write about the clean-up and repair after the air raid. Terry might even talk about how the buildings that were destroyed are being rebuilt or how the rubble is being cleared away.

8. How are the two characters different? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Terry is a volunteer and lives in London where St Paul's is. Ashley is enlisted on a ship, probably a part of the Royal Navy and he is about to go to Normandy to invade.

9. Why do you think the author has chosen to tell Terry and Ashley's stories as diary entries? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think the author has chosen to use diary entries because it allows the reader to really explore what the characters are feeling and thinking about the events happening around them.

10. Compare how Terry and Ashley are feeling in their diary entries. Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think both Terry and Ashley are excited about what has happened or is about to happen to them. I think Terry is more relieved because the air raid is over and Ashley is more anxious because the invasion is about to begin.