I was eight years old when the Germans arrived, and I can remember the day they arrived as if it were yesterday. We lived near the airport and the German aircraft were circling the airport for a while, and my mother said, “We can't stay here; we're too close to the airport, so we'll go down and hide under some trees.”

So we went down this lane and hid under some trees because we didn't know if the Germans were going to bomb the airport. Two days earlier they'd bombed the harbour where several people were killed. So in the end, it was a question of safety I suppose; my mother felt it was too dangerous to stay near the airport.

Anyway, we stayed out there for a while, when all of a sudden we saw the planes land on the airport. Within half an hour, I'd say, we looked up the lane and at the top of Farras Hill, there was a German officer up there, talking to one of our neighbours!

So our mother said, “Well, not much point staying under these trees now, we might just as well go and see what he wants. They're obviously not going to bomb now that they've landed.”

So, up the lane we went, and we saw this German officer who had his revolver in his hand. There were several soldiers around, also with their rifles at the ready, and he was asking our neighbour if he knew where the telecommunications centre was between here and the UK. Someone says, “Oh, it's a few miles down the road.”

So, without “by your leave”, or “do you mind?” this officer sent one of his soldiers into our yard, which was alongside, and picked up our brand new Hillman Minx that had hardly been run in, and the last we saw of this car for five years was these Germans driving down the hill!

So that was that. As I say, that's as if it was yesterday. To make matters worse, not long after, there was a knock on our door, and German soldiers were there, with rifles in hand again saying “We want your house now. You have two days to leave. Collect all your furniture, and away you go.” So that was that. So, my early introduction to the German occupation wasn't a very happy one, to say the least.

WW2 People's War is an online archive of wartime memories contributed by members of the public and gathered by the BBC. The archive can be found at bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar. Fred Galliene WW2 People’s War.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/70/a3992970.shtml>