

STEPNEY'S SUNDAY BOMB

A relic of the 1941 blitz, a three-thousand pounder is discovered seven years after, buried in a Stepney back garden. Thirty feet underground, Sappers test the unexploded bomb for signs of life, and the great lift is on. The mid-morning Sabbath calm of the East End preparing its Sunday lunch is rudely disturbed as 1,000 neighbouring families are evacuated to a safe distance. Everyone gets marching orders, stretcher cases included.

Roads up, traffic stilled, the Royal Engineers' Number 2 Bomb Disposal Squad get down to the dangerous part of removing Britain's second biggest unexploded bomb. Using compressors, Sappers drill round the fuse like burglars breaking into a safe packed with dynamite. Pathé cameraman, Kenneth Gordon, stayed behind to record the scene.

After ninety minutes, Major Stanley Knight, the G.C., picks out the fuse - and everyone breathes again. Its teeth drawn, the ghost that Hitler sent to haunt the peace of a Sunday lunch, is hauled out of harm's way. A brave deed, that made a tenpenny joint seem a banquet - even if lunch was a few minutes late.