

The Queen and I have seen many of the places here which have been most heavily bombed and many of the people who have suffered and are suffering most. Our hearts are with them to-night. Their courage and cheerfulness, their faith in their country's cause and final victory are an inspiration to the rest of us to persevere.

To the men and women who carry on the work of air raids precautions services I should like to say a special word of gratitude. The devotion of these civilian workers, firemen, salvage men and many others in the face of grave and constant danger has won a new renown for the British name.

Partners of Armed Forces

These men and women are worthy partners of our armed forces and our police, of the navy, once more as so often our sure shield, and the merchant navy, of the army and the home guard, alert and eager to repel any invader, and of the air force, whose exploits are the wonder of the world.

To-night indeed we are a nation on guard and in the line. Each task, each bit of duty done, however simple and domestic it may be, is part of our war work. It takes rank with the sailor's duty, the soldier's and airman's duty. The men and women in the factories or on the railways who work on regardless of danger, though the sirens have sounded, maintaining all the services and necessities of our common life and keeping the fighting line well supplied with weapons, earn their place among the heroes of this war.

No less honour is due to all those, who night after night uncomplainingly endure discomfort, hardship and peril in their homes and shelters.

Many and glorious are the deeds of gallantry done during these perilous and famous days. In order that they should be worthily and promptly recognized I have decided to create at once a new mark of honour for men and women in all walks of civilian life. I propose to give my name to this new distinction, which will consist of the George Cross, ranking next to the Victoria Cross, and the George Medal for wider distribution.

As we look around us we see on every side that in the hour of her trial the Mother City of the British Commonwealth is proving herself to be built as a city that is at unity with itself. It is not the walls that make the city but the people who live within them. The walls of London may be battered but the spirit of the Londoner stands resolute and undismayed.

As in London, so throughout Great Britain, buildings rich in beauty and historic interest may be wantonly attacked. Humbler houses, no less