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**Strategic Bombing and Dresden Response**

About 9:30 PM the alarm was given. We children knew that sound and got up and dressed quickly, to hurry downstairs into our cellar which we used as an air raid shelter. My older sister and I carried my baby twin sisters, my mother carried a little suitcase and the bottles with milk for our babies. On the radio we heard with great horror the news: "Attention, a great air raid will corne over our town!" This news I will never forget.

Some minutes later we heard a horrible noise — the bombers. There were nonstop explosions. Our cellar was filled with fire and smoke and was damaged, the lights went out and wounded people shouted dreadfully. In great fear we struggled to leave this cellar. My mother and my older sister carried the big basket in which the twins were lain. With one hand I grasped my younger sister and with the other I grasped the coat of my mother.

We did not recognize our street any more. Fire, only fire wherever we looked. Our 4th floor did not exist anymore. The broken remains of our house were burning. On the streets there were burning vehicles and carts with refugees, people, horses, all of them screaming and shouting in fear of death. I saw hurt women, children, old people searching a way through ruins and flames.

We fled into another cellar overcrowded with injured and distraught men women and children shouting, crying and praying. No light except some electric torches. And then suddenly the second raid began. This shelter was hit too, and so we fled through cellar after cellar. Many, so many, desperate people came in from the streets. lt is not possible to describe! Explosion after explosion. It was beyond belief, worse than the blackest nightmare. So many people were horribly burnt and injured. lt became more and more difficult to breathe. lt was dark and all of us tried to leave this cellar with inconceivable panic. Dead and dying people were trampled upon, luggage was left or snatched up out of our hands by rescuers. The basket with our twins covered with wet cloths was snatched up out of my mother’s hands and we were pushed upstairs by the people behind us. We saw the burning street, the falling ruins and the terrible firestorm. My mother covered us with wet blankets and coats she found in a water tub.

We saw terrible things: cremated adults shrunk to the size of small children, pieces of arms and legs, dead people, whole families burnt to death, burning people ran to and fro, burnt coaches filled with civilian refugees, dead rescuers and soldiers, many were calling and looking for their children and families, and fire everywhere, everywhere fire, and all the time the hot wind of the firestorm threw people back into the burning houses they were trying to escape from.

I cannot forget these terrible details. I can never forget them.

1. Consider the class discussion on the rules of war, the video clip we viewed, and this eyewitness account. Do you believe the bombing of Dresden was a war crime? Why or why not? If so, who should be held accountable? (the Air force pilots, the military leaders, the President/Prime Minister, all of the above) Feel free to use the back of the paper.