

are in Albury to hear comparatively little. Mother rang up later in the morning to say that the bomb had been taken out of our field after considerable difficulty. Then I received Colonel Estridge's congratulations on our escape. He said if any of the three bombs had gone off, it would have exploded the others, and Weston Yard and probably our own house would have been flat. Had tea with mother in Guildford and then went with her and Ray to see the film *North West Mounted Police*.¹¹¹ Inspected the bomb crater and nurse's cottage when I got back. Best news of the day – we have annihilated an enemy convoy off Sicily, five supply ships and three destroyers with the loss of one destroyer of ours. A great battle in Greece is raging. There have been severe enemy losses at Tobruk, which still holds fast.

Friday, 18 April. Rather a busy day with people wanting to be billeted from London. Settled a very nice family of Mrs. Lampson's in Ripley. Had to cope with Mrs. Coolin's mother who wanted to come down with two daughters and grandchildren and the entire staff from a sub-post office. Left about 5 as I could bear the day no longer. News from Greece very serious. We have withdrawn our line under heavy pressure. Jack arrived for dinner in the new car, which had not been bombed. He said that the Government offices in the Adelphi [*on Embankment*], which were no worse damaged than Shell Mex House, closed down on Thursday. Stewarts & Lloyds of course continued working.

Saturday, 19 April. The Greek Prime Minister has died; we have sent troops to Basra; our line in Greece is unbroken; we are holding firm in Libya. This is the war news. The personal news is a very busy morning at Millmead. Vital problems to ask Mr. Lockwood, who eluded me. Just as I was leaving the office the Pocklington family came in. They called on me yesterday to ask for unfurnished rooms, which I could not provide; they went back to London and found the walls of their house had caved in and it was uninhabitable. So they came straight down to me. Dorothy King-Church came to the rescue and organised that they should go to the Grays for the afternoon while we found a billet. I took their case and wraps back in my car. Arriving very late for lunch, I hurried out of the car slamming the doors to lock behind me. I must have forgotten to put it in gear for it started moving. I couldn't unlock the door to stop it, and gradually gathering momentum it rolled down the drive, I scrabbling at it in a vain attempt to stop it and shouting at the top of my voice. It sped across the street – mercifully clear; it seemed to take an interminable time to cross the road. There was a crash as it burst through the fence and a wild splash as it landed in the stream. I fetched mother, the servants came out, and hurriedly putting on shorts, I plunged into the stream to rescue the evacuees' luggage. The mud was so deep I had to spring on the bonnet of the car and somehow force the door open to get in and hand out the things to Joan, who joined the bathing party. Then later a breakdown gang with a crane pulled it out before an admiring audience. The car appeared little the worse. Rest of the afternoon spent in washing and ironing the evacuees' clothing, in putting them in billets in the village and in gardening with Jack.

¹¹¹ Directed by Cecil B. DeMille, 1940, with Gary Cooper.



Helen Lloyd's car mishap, April 1941 (Frank Elston)

Sunday, 20 April. Took a child from the County Hospital to Long Acre, Angus coming with me as escort. Gardened with Jack, tea at the Warrens and a walk. We are still retreating in Greece, have withstood another onslaught at Tobruk. There was another heavy raid on London last night. We heard a few machines over in the early part of the evening, but no continuous drone as we had done last Wednesday.

Monday, 21 April. What a day, practically no pause in a working day of 11½ hours! Monday morning started well by a woman arriving in our office with two children of three and five, telling us that she was going into hospital in London that afternoon and asking us to take the children. Sent the little boy to Haslemere and the girl to Pilgrim Wood and organised a billet for them both next Saturday. The Warrens caused some trouble with two boys with impetigo and two more too naughty to be kept. They had stolen petrol and lit a fire with it under the squash court verandah! A boy of 14, who had left school, was dumped on Mrs. Elme after the last bombing; a query as to how he should be billeted; it was settled that he must attend school until he gets a job. Several refugees to be billeted and a real German Jew refugee wanting to park her baby, a child mislaid in hospital having to be hurried to Long Acre, and another arriving from London to be taken out to Send. Then a Welfare meeting at Albury and a Homeless meeting at Compton. Retreating in Greece, holding fast in Libya.

Tuesday, 22 April. Heavy attacks are battered against our new line in Greece. In Libya the navy has bombarded Tripoli and we brought down four out of five troop carrying