



# Aftermath

The occupation left behind many physical and emotional scars.

Clearing-up operations took many months. All the German troops became prisoners of war. Mines, guns and other defences were removed but most of the concrete fortifications were too large to destroy. Homes were repaired or rebuilt and the economy put on the road to recovery.

A huge tax on profits accrued during the Occupation dealt with profiteers and accusations of civilian collaboration and German war crimes were investigated by the Army Civil Affairs Unit in 1945 and 1946. Lack of firm evidence meant that no cases were ever brought to trial.

Many Islanders felt let down by Britain, and certainly the performance of the Government in 1940 had not been impressive. Sadly it had been virtually impossible during the war for Britain to let the Islands know that they were not forgotten and that people were keen to help.

Fairly or unfairly, Guernsey's Administration was blamed for much of the wartime hardship. The States, as early as October 1943, began to consider its role after the war, and in July 1945 constitutional changes were introduced.

Germans who were once soldiers in Guernsey now visit as friends. The fortifications have become historic sites. But memories of the darker and lighter sides of life under occupation still linger among those experienced it.



The Gouffre Hotel, like many Guernsey buildings, derelict after the Occupation. Photographed by W.J. Webb in 1949.



July 1945. German ammunition is disposed of in Grande Havre.

Evacuees returning to Guernsey photographed on Crewe railway station during the summer of 1945. Photograph by courtesy of J. Laine

