

Warring Hearts Trilogy

Claire O'Neill is an American artist, and 20 years old in the autumn of 1940. The setting is London during the **Blitz** - and Claire finds herself in a war torn city, among the artists and literary bohemians and free thinkers. Richard Hart, an American who grew up in Hamburg, Germany, finds himself in London, after escaping the notorious Italian prison. Working with the British intelligence since 1937, he is weary of fighting the war, and wants nothing more than to forget, but finds it impossible in wartime.

During my research, I was astonished to realize how little I knew of the Blitz, and how close Hitler came to conquering this small island separated by a thin sliver of water called the English Channel.

The **Blitzkrieg** was in full force:

- By 1937, Hitler and his Nazi party began rearmament and preparation for war. Richard Hart leaves Hamburg for Italy, with his Italian lover. British Intelligence contacts him, and he begins his fight against fascism. For Claire O'Neill, living in San Francisco, the war rumblings heard from across the ocean is a distant echo. Claire dreams of becoming a famous artist, moving to New York and conquering the art world.
- Hitler's troops steam rolled over Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Norway and Luxembourg. On March 15, 1939, Czechoslovakia surrendered to Germany, and by September 1, 1939, the Nazis began their invasion of Poland. The Polish held off until surrendering in September 28, 1939. Britain and France declared war on

Long Strange Trip

My character, Kenneth Hailey, represents many of the young adults caught in the maelstrom of the 60's, bewildered, and wondering where they fit in between the flower children and the establishment? I missed the late 60's by a decade, my college years in the mid-70's, but my generation was greatly influenced by the counter-culture. My present social concerns and beliefs were molded by the civil rights movement, the anti-Vietnam protests and women's rights. My sister attended UC Berkeley during 1967, and I remember visiting her 'cool' apartment north of campus, fascinated with the hippies on Telegraph and the Haight, barely understanding what was behind the demonstrations on campus. All of this was very exciting to an twelve year old.

Recently, I traveled to Berkeley to photograph the campus and Telegraph Avenue. Surprisingly, little has changed, and the campus is like I'd remembered.

The blue and white awning of the Mediterranean Caffe is still in existence on Telegraph Avenue. This is the spot where Dr. Kenneth Hailey relaxes with his daily espresso doppio, and reads his daily newspaper:



The street and apartment complex where Kenneth lives is untouched by time. What amazed me, it is the same street my sister lived on, and I didn't realize it at the time. Kenneth lives on the top floor among the tree tops, which delights Rose:



Germany. Richard spends his time writing for the underground press, and training in secret warfare to slow down Mussolini's war preparations. Claire attends the San Francisco art academy, and counts the months until she can leave for New York. Concerned for what is happening in Europe, she pours over the newspapers to read about the distant war. Anxious to do her part, many of her friends believe the U.S. should stay out of the war. Isolationist organizations like America First pop up, led by influential heroes and politicians. FDR promises no one's son will fight overseas. But the rumblings get louder, and rumors of Nazi atrocities filter slowly across the Atlantic.

- France falls June 14, 1940. The image of Nazi troops goose-stepping through the Arc 'd Triumph is an image that stuns Claire's insulate world . When her father takes an assignment overseas, Claire begs to go with him. San Francisco no longer seems a place to experience life. She feels isolated and closed-in. In Italy, a betrayal sends Richard to the infamous Italian prison, nicknamed La Tomba - The Tomb. Few inmates leave this place alive.
- During June and July, the Luftwaffe creeps closer to London, bombing British radar stations, aircraft factories and airfields. Then on September 7, 1940, almost a year after England declared war on

I didn't get a chance to go to the Haight, but I've been there several times during my twenties, and lived in a Victorian up from Haight/Ashbury in my early thirties, before I met my husband and moved to San Diego. This is Rose's environment where she lives and plays.



photos from Ian and Manda on Tour and these photos are posted with Ian's permission.
http://ianandmanda.typepad.com/blog/2003/12/over_the_bridge.html



photo from Ian and Manda on Tour

Think of this as Rose's house, but painted in wild colors, and certainly more run down! Since the sixties, this area has been gentrified, and is very expensive.



<http://www.sixtiesphotos.com/about.html> - this is a terrific website of photographs taken during the sixties, many in 1967 and the Haight. Peruse the site to give you a feel for the setting and atmosphere of Long Strange Trip.

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Germany, the Luftwaffe drops bombs over the East End, killing over 400 citizens and injuring over 1600. The **London Blitz** is now in full force and lasts from September 1940 to May 1941. Routine bombs fall nightly, intermittent bombing using high explosives and incendiaries. *When Claire and her father, Jack O'Neill arrive in London, they find the city under the siege of the Nazi Luftwaffe (German Air Force). Richard is released from prison, thanks to the British, and is resting in London, under a doctor's supervision. This is where my story begins.*

On the Internet, I found interesting personal entries on the Blitz: 'the worst elements of the bombed streets were the rank smells and the rabid cats.' Imagine the air dusted with soot, cinder and lingering acidity of high explosives and leaking gas! 'Hordes of mad cats leapt and screeched, trying to find their old snug holes in the rubble of their owners' houses.'

By war's end:

- The Luftwaffe made approx. 127 large-scale raids
- 71 of these raids were targeted on London
- 2 millions houses were destroyed (60% in London)
- 60,000 civilians died, and 87,000 seriously wounded, of those killed, the majority lived in London
- Until half-way through the war, more women and children were killed than soldiers