

“The King of Kings Needs a Few Men”: British Saints during World War II

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“When I was in the military service during the First World War,” remembered Elder Marion G. Romney, “we were told that we were ‘making the world safe for democracy’; we were fighting a war to end all wars.”¹ Despite what they believed and what many taught, other wars would later envelop the world. In 1939 Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, on Church assignment in Europe, had visited England and other European Missions. He reminisced, “The great conflict of 1939–1945 . . . was not a new world war . . . but in reality a continuation of the same conflict which commenced in 1914. The spell of comparative peace during the twenty-five year period . . . was brought about simply because one side in the conflict became exhausted. . . . This period of time . . . was utilized by the central powers to . . . renew the [earlier] conflict.”² These subsequent wars were largely between the same adversarial groups but were considerably more costly than the earlier conflicts.

War clouds had gathered and dissipated in Europe several times before the actual conflicts that expanded into World War II commenced. During one period of relative peace, President Heber J. Grant visited England during the centennial celebration of the Church’s proselytizing presence in Great Britain. In one of several public addresses to the Saints, President Grant predicted, “A day will come when every missionary will be removed from the British Isles.”³

The German war machine under the young idealist Adolf Hitler invaded Austria in 1937, followed by Czechoslovakia in a bloodless takeover in 1938, and then in the early fall of 1939 threatened to crush Poland as it had done to earlier nations. Repeated negotiations that were meant to halt what seemed to some onlookers as imminent continental conflict went unheeded or were repeatedly broken.

By early September 1939, war clouds were again gathering. Church leaders in Salt Lake City began the evacuation of Latter-day Saint missionaries in Europe. The last elders from Czechoslovakia left Berlin and arrived in Copenhagen, Denmark,⁴ on the very day Great Britain and neighboring France declared war on Germany.⁵

Evacuation of Missionaries from the British Mission

On the same day that the nations of Britain and France declared war against Germany, the sister missionaries in England had already been gathered, instructed, and had departed for the United States aboard the SS *Manhattan*, along with Sister Zina C. Brown, the wife of President Hugh B. Brown. A directive was sent later that day to the missionaries of the British Mission to “report at once to London, preparatory to sailing”⁶ to America. Within three days, “practically all the Elders were in or around Ravenslea, [near London,] where from the fifth to the twelfth [of September] meetings were held each day, activities engaged in and instructions given,” and “arrangements were made for their sailing.”⁷ On September 12, an additional 112 of the missionaries returned to the United States, many of them to be transferred to other fields of labor.⁸

The departure of these missionaries left the mission president, Hugh B. Brown, and a handpicked staff of six elders to carry on the work previously accomplished by more than 125 souls. One of the first items of official business following the departure of the evacuated elders was to change the location of the British Mission office from 5 Gordon Square to 149 Nightingale Lane, S.W. 12. The change was in an attempt to avoid the potential of bombing should the conflict escalate to that level and to move the missionary personnel away from the most congested population centers. The concerns were well founded, and the inspiration to move the mission headquarters later proved to be warranted.

In October, nearly a month following the departure of the majority of missionaries, further instructions from the First Presidency of the Church to President Brown directed “the remaining missionaries to return home as soon as possible.”⁹ The British government had determined that “aliens, whose presence is not absolutely

essential in this country are required to leave because of possible complications.”¹⁰ At least a part of England’s concern, like that of other European countries, was that if the war continued to intensify and become full-fledged and drawn out, they didn’t want to account for additional individuals to feed and protect. To alleviate concerns and avoid panic, the First Presidency instructed missionary personnel “to return; ask no more but trust the leaders.”¹¹

Before his own departure from England and as one of his last official duties as mission president, President Brown announced that in his absence, a local district president, Andre K. Anastasiou, would be the acting mission president. The counselors who were chosen by him or were assigned to assist him in the acting mission presidency were E. James Hill as first counselor, whose assignment was to oversee the publication of the *Millennial Star*, and James R. Cunningham as second counselor, who was to serve as the mission Sunday School superintendent.¹²

President Andre K. Anastasiou

Andre Konstantin Anastasiou was born in Odessa, Russia. His mother, Euphimia Lamzin, was twice widowed. Consequently, Andre and his twin, Andrew, never knew their father, who was killed in a shipping accident three months before his sons were born. His mother’s third marriage was to a prosperous and kindhearted Greek merchant, hence Andre’s Greek name. Educated in private schools because his Greek name disallowed his enrollment in Russian schools, he learned French, German, Latin, and, of course, his native Russian. Andre ran away from home as a teenager not only to improve his social condition but also to find adventure and see the world.

He traveled as a stowaway to Belgium, where he landed during World War I, only to find the country occupied by the German army. “I knew that our escape, the way we planned to do it, was not exactly right, but we could not see any other way before us and my mind was firm to do this thing.”¹³

Born into a practicing Russian Orthodox home, he was raised to neither smoke nor drink (but later took up the habit), and his family had family prayers daily: a practice, he remembers, he “did not follow

. . . himself in exactness.”¹⁴ After relocating to Great Britain, he was introduced in his early twenties to the Latter-day Saints—a sect he claimed he had never heard of before—by Forrest Stuart from Montpelier, Idaho. Forrest was in England as a secretary to the president of a large firm and was instrumental in teaching and baptizing Andre. The separate nature of the Godhead and the Church’s resistance to infant baptism influenced Andre the most. When Andre confronted a Russian Orthodox priest with these concerns, he was told in each case, “This is a mystery and you must not discuss it!”¹⁵

Following his baptism, Andre was ordained an elder by Apostle George F. Richards and served a full-time, six-month mission in London, England. Blessed with the gift of oratory, leadership, and a knowledge of the workings of the kingdom, Andre defended the Church in public debate, personal interviews, and written response to negative newspaper articles. He wrote a pamphlet titled “Latter-day Saints and British Fairplay!” In the treatise he quoted extensively from experiences that led to his conversion to the Church and took on the local media’s biased editorials against Mormonism. In his publication, he quoted Charles Dickens, Sir Richard Burton, Bishop Daniel Tuttle, and the Honorable A. B. Carlton—all prominent British citizens, authors, church and government leaders who had made evenhanded or kind comments regarding the Church.

In 1922 Anastasiou married Marie Willoughby Mead and changed his career from medicine and education to sales. In 1926 Elder James E. Talmage assigned Anastasiou to translate the Book of Mormon into Russian. This project was completed in 1928. Acting as a branch president while war clouds gathered around the British Empire, President Anastasiou was approached by President Hugh B. Brown about leading the affairs of the mission in the absence of missionary personnel from America. President Brown indicated that he would visit with him again. In the meantime, President Brown “went up North to consult with some other brethren.” While talking to Elder George H. Bailey, a high priest and president of the Sheffield district, “Brother Bailey . . . said that my [Anastasiou’s] face came before him and he told President Brown” of the experience. President Bailey told President Brown, “You have a man in London to take your place [referring to Anastasiou]; and added his own sup-

port to this appointment." The appointment was later confirmed by a cablegram from the First Presidency.¹⁶

President Anastasiou served for the full four-and-one-half year absence of President Hugh B. Brown, although he did change counselors during that term. He was seen by Church leaders and many of his constituents as a fair, able administrator, and during his administration the Saints responded positively to his leadership. Examples of his leadership, experiences from his administration, and what he did following the war years will be cited throughout the remainder of this chapter.

Continuation of Missionary Service

Upon his departure from England, President Hugh B. Brown wrote a farewell letter to the British Saints. He bore a strong, fervent testimony of the Savior and of the restored gospel. He expressed his sadness at having to leave the Saints in such a condition and without a knowledge of what lay ahead. He counseled the Saints, "We leave in your hands the work of the Lord in this land. It is a serious responsibility to represent Him at any time and especially when in the midst of such conditions as prevail in the world today." President Brown continued, "In addition to the massed attacks which he [Satan] is making by enlisting whole nations in his cause, he will not overlook an opportunity to ensnare an individual."¹⁷

President Brown seemed particularly concerned about how missionary work would continue in the absence of over one hundred full-time missionaries. With many of the local men called into the military and others serving in additional war-related capacities at home, he had legitimate reasons for concern. The new acting mission presidency, however, was equal to the task and took on the challenge to ensure there was as little drop-off in missionary activity as possible. Without the availability of local British priesthood bearers, the female Church population attempted to take up some of the slack or fill the void created by the absence of the fighting men. Ironically, some of the earliest sister missionaries in this dispensation had been called to serve in Great Britain.¹⁸

Sister missionaries were the major force in preaching the gospel in Great Britain during the war years. They were called to serve on a temporary basis to assist others, or they were called as full-time missionaries for as long as they were able to serve. Even when finances were a concern for an individual, a benefactor—sometimes known to the sister, sometimes an anonymous donor—would assist the missionary. It was a constant struggle for the acting mission presidency to keep missionaries called and serving, but the work progressed unabated throughout the war.

Auxiliaries and Church Programs

In his departing letter to the British Saints, President Hugh B. Brown wrote, “The Lord will not ask anything of any one of you which you, with His aid, cannot accomplish.”¹⁹ The members in Great Britain seemed to take his concerns to heart. They served each other and not only maintained, but in some cases, improved and strengthened programs. A number of programs reflecting the specific wartime needs of the people were likewise inaugurated in the Church’s regular auxiliaries.

At the outset of the war, most of the Church’s auxiliary organizations had good attendance and were fully staffed, operating as well as possible without the leadership they had previously known. The Relief Society, for example, was not only functional but was so involved that it celebrated important events such as the anniversary of its organization in 1842 and other activities. The Relief Society was probably the most active, best staffed, and most needed of any of the Church’s auxiliaries in Britain. In 1941 the Relief Society’s statistics were reported as 1,075 meetings held for the previous year; 2,251 visits made by visiting teachers; 1,976 (presumably additional) visits made to the sick and homebound; 16 relief conferences held; and 367 families assisted. The membership of the Relief Society was further reported as 144 officers and 203 members, for a total of 347 sisters.²⁰

Perhaps the largest celebration of the Relief Society during the war years was the remembrance of the centennial of the organization of the Relief Society. One hundred years after the Relief Soci-

ety was organized in Nauvoo, Illinois, Latter-day Saint sisters in the midst of the war remembered and celebrated the occasion with the "unveiling ceremony of a picture . . . commemorating the Relief Society Centennial, 1842–1942" and a talk by President Norman B. Dunn, who paid tribute to the sisters "and to the refining effects of the Society."²¹

The Primary organization, on the other hand, was probably the least organized and poorest attended of the Church's auxiliaries. On Sunday, January 28, 1940, Sister Isabelle H. Maynard "was set apart by President Anastasiou as the new British Mission Primary Supervisor. Sister Maynard's ambition was to have a Primary Department in every branch of the Church in Great Britain."²² While this was an impressive objective, "from the monthly reports of the British Mission it was found that there are . . . only four Primaries recorded."²³

A major reason for the low attendance was that many Primary-aged children were taken from their homes, especially in the cities and areas most likely to be bombed, and transferred to places of safety. British children, including Latter-day Saint children, were sent to North America, where they were cared for in both private homes and other, larger-scale care facilities. One report noted, "Arrangements have been made by the Lethbridge Stake [Canada] Presidency to receive the LDS children evacuated from England."²⁴

At one point, the operation of transporting children to foreign shores was suspended because of "the grave dangers prevailing at sea." The operations ceased during the winter months when many attacks were reported in the shipping lanes, but noted that its "activities can be resumed as soon as favorable conditions permit."²⁵ Little was reported about the Primary organization or about the children during much of the war years. Toward the close of the conflict, however, a comment was included in the mission's history that undoubtedly represents many areas of the world embroiled in international conflict. "That square mile [of London] which comprises the actual city, is razed almost to the ground. . . . In the east end, children play on the ruins of their homes, indifferent as only children can be to the warning notices of falling masonry."²⁶

Genealogical work continued during the war years. In 1942, "the British Mission has received approval from the Genealogical Society

of Utah to print 10,000 family group sheets, 10,000 new temple sheets, [and] 5,000 pedigree charts.²⁷ This effort and expense, especially when sacred funds were scarce or were in demand elsewhere, represented the mission leadership's commitment to promote and encourage genealogy and other Church programs to the best of their ability. Individuals were called, including a member of the mission presidency, to supervise, educate, and encourage the Saints in the fulfillment of their genealogical responsibilities.

Frank Smith was employed in a mining industry near Doncaster. He left his employment with government permission to move to London and began work under the direction of the mission president "in a genealogy related area." Three decades later, Brother Smith immigrated to America, where he worked as "Supervisor of the Research Department" in the Church's Genealogical Society in Salt Lake City.²⁸

During the war years, travel was severely curtailed. Government bans, fuel and rubber shortages, decreased vehicles, blackouts, curfews, and other restrictions contributed to the increased difficulty for British auxiliary leaders to meet, encourage, train, and even replace leaders who moved or were otherwise unable to serve. Many of the branches carried on the best they could with the personnel they had. The Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association, Primary, Sunday School, Relief Society, and undoubtedly others were greatly affected by the nation's mobilization for war and afterwards by the restrictions placed upon the people when the war came to them. Despite the difficulties, one activity that did not cease was the missionary effort.

Missionary Work

There was never a time during the years of war in Great Britain when missionaries were not serving. After the general evacuation of missionaries in 1939 and after the last few staff missionaries departed in early 1940, local missionaries (especially the sisters) continued the Church's missionary efforts throughout the war until missionaries from America could return.

Following the war, President Anastasiou reported, "We called 101 full time missionaries and . . . 425 part-time missionaries."²⁹ In addition, a group called Home Missionaries lived at home but proselytized when they could. These local brothers and sisters were committed to serve at least five hours a week in addition to their full-time employment, Church service, family responsibilities, and other duties. Most of the missionaries who served did not have sufficient money of their own to serve, but money was miraculously provided for them. The acting mission president noted, "We went throughout the mission, in accordance with the wishes of the First Presidency. . . . We called young people to go on missions, saying to them: 'Brothers and Sisters, if you will answer the call of your brethren it makes no difference whether you have any means or not, the Lord will provide.'³⁰ Dozens of experiences illustrated how the necessary money was provided for those individuals willing to serve. One of the early members to respond to the appeal for missionaries was Andre K. Anastasiou Jr., son of the acting mission president. He was ordained an elder by his father "and set apart at the same time as a full-time missionary by Elder James R. Cunningham and assigned to labor in the Welsh District."³¹

On a visit to Scotland, President Anastasiou noted that he challenged Sister Isabell McDonald in the congregation to serve a full-time mission. At the time, she was caring for her deaf and mute mother. When Sister McDonald communicated the news of her call to her mother, her mother responded, "You go!" After the conference, Sister McDonald reported to the President, "I am willing to go . . . but I have no money!" President Anastasiou reassured her by saying, "Sister McDonald, the Lord will open the way." She was set apart as a missionary that evening. Two days later, when the President had returned to his office in London and opened the mail, he found a letter from one of the local elders who was serving in the military. The letter noted, "President, I would like to take care of a missionary [financially] for six months." The money was given to Sister McDonald, after which additional money was provided to allow her to stay longer.³² In another incident, "a statement was received from Messengers Midland Bank Trustee Company, Ltd., of Leeds, [which was] administering the estate of Sister Clara Sutcliffe."

Sister Sutcliffe had died, and “the balance of her estate had been left . . . to the Missionary work of the Church,” which amounted to 742 pounds.³³

Early in the war, various missionary funds were established in some of the branches and districts “to enable some members to fulfill missionary calls who are not able to support themselves financially.”³⁴ While it is not known how much money was raised in these independent funds, the local Saints were doing their part to assist others willing to serve but in need of assistance.

Elder Reginald R. Brown served as a full-time missionary, presumably before the war began. When told of the need for money for missionaries eager to serve but without the resources to do so, he generously contributed ten pounds toward the expense of every individual who volunteered at the local conference to serve a full-time mission. His generous offer illustrates the willingness of British Saints to contribute to wartime missionary efforts.³⁵

The mission’s publication, the *Millennial Star*, likewise assisted in fund-raising. In an effort referred to as the “Dime Fund,” the *Millennial Star* also collected money for a general missionary fund. It noted, “During this wartime and under present conditions this result was extremely heartening.”³⁶

Priesthood Leadership

One of the grave concerns of Church leaders both before and after the evacuation of full-time missionaries was the ability to keep the local branches, full-time missionaries, and all the auxiliary programs properly staffed. With the number of men and women needed in the war effort at home and those called away to battle on the continent, this was challenging.

Because all men in the British realm were eligible to serve their country, including priesthood leaders, a difficult question was how to keep the local units in operation. Of course, some branches were combined and others were dissolved, which helped somewhat with the manpower shortage, but this was only a temporary solution.

The acting presidency discussed the concerns and considered numerous possibilities. During World War I, the same question had

been presented to the government, but no answer had come before the end of the conflict. By then it was no longer an issue.³⁷ With the renewal of war, the need for an answer was becoming critical. The inspiration of how to proceed came through a letter from the branch president in Hull, President Eric Thorp. He wrote, "enquiring if our branch president should not have the same consideration and privileges as ministers of other Churches," which included exemptions for ministers from military service. As a result, President Anastasiou approached the War Office of the British Government in London: "I presented our case as to the status of priesthood members being called into military service facing our ministry on account of the war conditions." The president was respectfully received and courteously heard but was asked to return a week later.

When he returned, he was again received by the same officials, who had obviously done their homework by the appearance of the documents in front of them. Finally the official responded, "We have reviewed your case at some length as well as your application, . . . but in the present most unusual and critical times may I say that our country and people are engaged in a war . . . and His Majesty the King needs every man in a crucial struggle for our liberty."

With some deliberateness to emphasize his point, President Anastasiou candidly responded, "All of the eligible men of our church . . . who have been called up for military service, have answered the call, . . . for they are loyal subjects of His Majesty the King. . . . Do you not think," the president continued, "that the King of Kings needs a few men to carry on His work[?]"

The government official hearing the appeal paused and then noted, "You are right. How many men do you need?" The president could not say exactly and therefore offered to send a detailed list of the Church's leadership needs. That was acceptable, but then the government official asked, "What classifications do you have in the ministry of your church, or [what are] the orders among your clergy?" President Anastasiou explained, "We have two divisions of the Priesthood, . . . the higher called Melchizedek . . . and the lesser, the Aaronic."

The government's reply came within the week: "I am directed by His Majesty's secretary of war to inform you that men in major

. . . [ecclesiastical assignments] are exempt from military service and work of national importance.” Consequently, seven additional branches of the Church were opened.³⁸

With the newly gained exemption, changes were made allowing Latter-day Saint leaders more time to deal with Church concerns. Fred Laycock was a district president but was required to work six days a week as a mechanic in a field critical to the war effort.

He decided not to give up on this calling but rather try to find a job allowing the necessary time to serve. Initially, “he was rebuffed” by potential employers “and told that the only opportunities” for employment in his field would require him to work “seven days a week.” “He indicated that he would not and could not negotiate on Sunday work” and was therefore excused from the interview. As he left, he was abruptly called back because the interviewer had another idea. “Ultimately, he was hired in the same factory [to which he was applying], but in another sector, where he was hired as a supervisor in a mechanical, war related industry. He was hired to work six days per week, at a higher salary than the position he had applied for.”³⁹

Millennial Star

When American missionaries were pulled from Great Britain, the *Millennial Star* was the longest-running missionary periodical in the Church. Grave concerns were expressed by the departing President Brown and others whether the publication could continue under the difficulties, privations, and interruptions caused by war. Early after the evacuation, the First Presidency directed that the *Millennial Star* should “run weekly if possible.” To do so added pressure to the acting presidency because this would change the publication schedule from a monthly to a weekly periodical. One of the counselors in the presidency, James R. Cunningham, was left in charge. President Cunningham performed yeoman’s service to keep ahead of the publication deadlines. He worried about the publication’s circulation, costs, and supplies, as well as war conditions and other factors beyond his control. Ultimately, President Cunningham was unusually successful, despite the fact that he was doing alone what a staff of full-time elders had been responsible for before the Ameri-

can missionaries had been pulled out of Great Britain. Even before the last of the American elders had left the shores of Great Britain, the First Presidency warned, "The *Millennial Star* is to keep neutral and have no opinion on politics." The First Presidency then cautioned that "the Church would suffer if anything wrong were to be published."⁴⁰

On February 4, 1940, one of the first policy adjustments made by the new presidency dealt specifically with the *Millennial Star*. The presidency "decided to send the 'Millennial Star' free of charge to all the members of the church now in His Majesty's forces."⁴¹ If the mission was strapped for money before, this directive added to the financial burden of the mission, even if it was a correct and appropriate decision to make. More than three and a half months later, a rare but welcome cablegram arrived from the First Presidency of the Church containing a hearty "congratulations for one hundred years of the [publication] of the '*Millennial Star*.'" With it came the realization that in over one hundred years of publication, the Church's periodical in Great Britain had never missed an issue or number. This amazing publication record extended through the end of the war and beyond.

By the end of February 1942, a mission report concerning the publication of the *Millennial Star* indicated that "the publication shows a deficit of 663 pounds" for the calendar year 1941. "The major part of this deficit," it continued, "is due to increased costs and postage [including] printing, paper and envelopes." The acting presidency of the mission determined "to increase the Star's subscription to 2/6 per quarter with no deduction for half year or yearly subscriptions." Further, it was determined that "single copies are to be sold at 2 1/2 d each." The *Millennial Star* was to review the free circulation list periodically and "ask free subscribers to meet postage expenses." Despite the dismal and discouraging financial news, the mission reported that "the mission is self-supporting and the year 1941 showed an increase in tithes and offerings received."⁴²

The plan of the acting mission presidency must have worked because two months after the earlier negative financial news, the *Millennial Star* announced the publication of "a special edition of the *Millennial Star*, to encourage and develop the work of the

home missionaries in the British Mission.”⁴³ The special edition was published on April 16, 1942. Nearly a year later, another cost-saving maneuver was also adopted. “It was decided to discontinue publishing the Auxiliary material” for leaders of those programs throughout the mission. The auxiliaries, however, were not to go without instructional supplies because “the auxiliary guide will be issued monthly and distributed among the branches and districts” as a separate piece of instruction. Apparently not everyone who was receiving the *Millennial Star* was interested in or needed the supplemental information. This measure further reduced the size, weight, and costs.

In the fall of 1944, after the release of the acting mission presidency because President Brown had returned to his post as mission president, the *Star* reported, “A very young, very small Irish girl [Sister Edith Russell] carries on her shoulders the circulation of the *Millennial Star* . . . [because] there is no longer a man available to fill the role.” At this point, most of the men had been called into active service or other war-related activities. Therefore, Sister Russell became the first woman in the *Star*’s history to hold the position of editor.⁴⁴

Casualties and Collateral Damage among Latter-day Saints

Following President Brown’s return, Andre Anastasiou immigrated to America and subsequently spoke in the general conference of the Church. On Friday, the first day of general conference in October 1946, he reported on wartime conditions and members in England during World War II. “We were not unprepared,” he noted. “Every branch was self-administered and we began to take care of the sixty eight branches under our responsibility. While men clung to weapons, . . . some of us gave up our work and came and gave our full time to missionary work.”

He said that damage in Britain was severe and widespread. “London . . . and many other large cities were in danger of destruction. . . . Many people perished by day and by night. “We spent,” he remembered, “nearly two years in cellars and shelters, . . . but I am

grateful to say that not one Latter-day Saint perished in the destruction of the cities of Great Britain, not one!"⁴⁵

In a slight qualification, Elder Anastasiou noted, "We have defined some of our Church members as Saints, [some as] Aints, and [others as] Complaints. Among the Saints, we have not lost a single one. . . . We lost one family whose mother was a member of the Church but in name only. We never knew her, we learned of the destruction of herself, her children, her husband and their home by a bomb, and that was the first time we knew that she was a member of the Church." The woman "never came anywhere near the Church," and her death was reported by her aged father some distance away, who noted that "his daughter and her whole family had perished in one of the bombing raids upon London. But among faithful Latter-day Saints . . . we lost furniture, our windows, our doors, our ceilings but not a life."⁴⁶

The report of zero casualties in the British Mission, despite the fierce bombing that plagued the major cities during the war, duplicates a similar report of zero casualties among the British Saints during World War I. During the First World War, however, it was reported that sixty-five British Saints perished in military service. By comparison, twenty-three British Saints lost their lives in military service during World War II in hostile actions. The *Millennial Star* reported some of these losses by name and other periodicals and reports identified others.⁴⁷ A letter from army chaplain H. A. Perry notified mission leaders of the death and burial of Albert E. Collins. He was survived by his wife, who was "at present serving the church on a full-time mission."⁴⁸ Nearly a year later, another war casualty was reported: Sergeant Douglas Arthur Camm, a pilot in the Royal Air Force, was killed in action. "His body was sent to the home of his father, Elder George Camm . . . and on the 16th of September the funeral service was held."⁴⁹ He was a member of the Leeds Branch.

Another casualty to consider was Hugh C. Brown, the military son of absentee mission president Hugh B. Brown. Although Hugh C. was not a member of the British forces, he was certainly known to the British Saints. Hugh C. had served as a full-time missionary under his father in Britain immediately before the war. He

had been sent home with the general evacuation of missionaries, but he was determined to return to the people he loved and to serve them again in the capacity of a pilot in the Royal Air Force (RAF). Brown and other Americans, Latter-day Saints among them, joined a unique company of flyers within the British Air Force known as the American Eagle Squadron.

Hugh C. had served the British war effort since October 1941, and in March 1942 his parents in America received a telegram notifying them he was missing in action. His squadron leader wrote to his parents, "I would like to express my deepest sympathy . . . on your son being reported missing." The letter continued, "He was an extremely popular member of the squadron, and it is a great loss." The events of Hugh C.'s disappearance were given as follows: "On the morning of the 16th [of March] he was detailed for a low patrol over the North Sea with another pilot of this unit. Some seven miles after crossing the coast conditions became extremely hazy and your son's aircraft was lost in the haze at low altitude." He was called repeatedly, but when no one responded, "an intensive search was carried out both from the air and the sea, but revealed nothing. It is presumed that in the hazy conditions your son's aircraft struck the sea and disappeared. I feel that there is very little hope of your son being alive."⁵⁰

It should be noted that Hugh C. Brown was the twenty-seventh fatality among the twenty-nine Americans flyers who had joined the American Eagle Squadron. The remaining two men were also killed before a memorial service was held for Hugh C. Brown. His obituary, furnished by his squadron, noted that he "came to Britain the first time, an unpaid missionary of the Mormon Church. He returned the second time, a fighter pilot, 'to help preserve the Christian cause.' As long as there are such as he, his closing words will still hold true. 'With God's help we shall be free men always.'"⁵¹ A memorial service was held in Ravenslea, South London, on August 2, 1942. President Anastasiou conducted the service, and he and Sister Anastasiou "memorialized the fallen ex-missionary." At the service a touching tribute, written by the airman's father, President Brown, was read. President Brown longed to be with the Saints and was honored personally by the Saints' outpouring of love. He

concluded, "To the Saints in the mission I wish to return, You said, 'My duty is there.' My warning of danger I notice you spurn. You replied: 'Their danger I'll share.' First as an Elder with a message of love, You went on an errand of peace; And then as an Eagle defending the Dove, You have earned a double release. I put on my uniform—tunic and cap. And salute you, O brave son of mine! O'er the years that must follow, faith bridges the gap; Holy Father, not my will but thine."⁵²

The few casualties to servicemen and the virtually nonexistent fatalities among Latter-day Saint civilians were offset by the immense damage caused by the relentless bombing that occurred in many major British cities. The mission office at Gordon Square, as well as the president's quarters at Ravenslea, were badly damaged by enemy bombing raids. "The premises in London now being [untenable] through enemy actions, has necessitated the removal of the Mission Office to Birmingham." When the mission headquarters at "Ravenslea . . . became untenable, . . . the staff was housed in the front room of the Handsworth Chapel." As a result of close quarters and cramped living and working conditions, "there came to be manifested an almost unique spirit of unity and love. This caused President Brown to observe that never, even in the Tabernacle itself, has he felt so strongly the Spirit of God."⁵³

Further, several Church buildings and numerous residences of the members were damaged or destroyed. Through all of the destruction ran a thread of divine protection for the British Saints. "During an air raid in Lowestoft" early in the war, "twelve bombs were dropped, one of which fell on a garage adjoining our chapel, but did not explode. A second bomb fell in the rear [of the building] but that one did not explode."⁵⁴

Months later, "President P. L. Cookman of the Liverpool District reported that a heavy time-bomb imbedded itself in the ground adjoining the house of Brother J. E. Patey of the Liverpool Branch." The presence of the bomb, which could potentially explode at any moment, caused great "fear in the minds and hearts of those living close to the spot." President Patey, however, "called his family together and a prayer was offered asking the Lord to protect them and the Branch records kept in the house." Following the prayer,

he instructed his family to retire for the night and that all would be well. The following day, the Royal Engineers ordered an evacuation of one-half mile around the area. When permitted to return after the bomb had been disarmed and removed, President Patey was told that the bomb had been “in perfect order and the question was asked why it did not explode.”⁵⁵

On a military destroyer at sea, three bombs hit the same ship. Brother James Pickles reported, “One bomb penetrated the funnel, . . . another entered the engine room, and a third hit the forepart but not one of them exploded.” Several other ships in the same defense group were badly damaged by the raid, and dozens of men were killed while others were injured. “Everyone in the crew,” a long with Brother Pickles, “attributed their escape to the ‘Mormon boy.’ He had stood out to the crew earlier because of his example, which “earned him [their] respect and love and in the end the gratitude of the rest of the crew.”⁵⁶

A Slow Return to Normalcy

During his absence from the British Mission, President Hugh B. Brown moved several times to maintain his employment. Midway through the war and after America’s entry into the conflict, Elder Brown was called as the Church servicemen’s coordinator under the direction of Elder Harold B. Lee. After America’s entry in the war in December 1941, most Latter-day Saints involved in the war effort were Americans, and initially most of Elder Brown’s efforts were restricted to the United States. Elder Brown was given ten assistants, typically local priesthood leaders who assisted the Church’s servicemen in their specific geographical area. The ten men lived at home, worked at their regular jobs, but traveled widely to military bases scattered throughout the nation. They were assigned to visit the servicemen, to cheer them up in their absence from home, and to make certain they had contact with Church leaders and were receiving Church literature. Further, the coordinators attempted to encourage the fighting men to keep the commandments in their absence from home, family, and local Church leaders who knew them the best.⁵⁷ Gradually the program spread overseas, and when Presi-

dent Brown was allowed to return to Great Britain, servicemen's units were organized in Great Britain and other European areas as well. To oversee the needs of the Church's servicemen was an exhausting job, but not nearly as exhausting as trying to provide for their needs from across the Atlantic.

President Brown ultimately returned to England without his family to be president of the British Mission on March 29, 1944, after being absent for nearly four and a half years. Considering the extended absence, President Brown found the mission in an amazingly sound condition. "War had reduced the ranks of the local priesthood," he noted, "and lack of oversight from Church headquarters had made it easier for unorthodox ideas and procedures to take root."⁵⁸ The same kind of problems existed in other missions that had been cut off by time and distance from Church headquarters during wartime conditions.

President Anastasiou reported on his stewardship of presiding in the absence of the mission president that one of the great concerns during the war years was finances. "I was left a sum of about two hundred pounds sterling [about \$800], as mission funds." President Brown cautioned the acting president in 1940 "to go very carefully with that money, because 'you can't get any more.'"⁵⁹ A constant concern was how to raise funds for Church programs when the members were so personally financially strapped themselves. Throughout the war, President Anastasiou hated the thought of ever having to write Church headquarters for financial assistance.

Out of great concern for the acting president, President Anastasiou prayed fervently for direction with regard to the finances and fasted frequently. During one stretch of time he remembered fasting for thirty-five days, alternating fasting one day and eating the next. No specific inspiration came as a result of the fast, except that he should counsel the Saints to remember their baptismal covenants, which they were reminded of each time they partook of the sacrament. "The British Saints took the appeal to heart," President Anastasiou remembered, "and there was evidence of sustaining faith and effort on their part. The monthly reports . . . were most encouraging, and I was spared the necessity of writing for financial assistance from Church headquarters."⁶⁰

When President Brown returned and he received an account of the Church's financial standing near the end of the war, "there was a surplus of over \$80,000 in the mission funds." Much of this was not used for the mission for the duration of the war, but rather became a "small token toward the building of the temple in the British Isles," which was still more than fourteen years in the future, in 1958.⁶¹

President Anastasiou reported to President Brown their valiant efforts to continue missionary work during the war, saying, "We appealed to our 68 branches for local missionaries, and by the end of the first year we had almost 400 of them ranging in age from 17 to 75. They devoted an average of five hours a week to missionary labors in helping the branches and in preaching the gospel."⁶² While most of these were home missionaries, there were twelve full-time British missionaries who served.

At the end of President Anastasiou's tenure, "over 500 local missionaries had labored during the war years. In addition, 105 full-time missionaries had rendered fine service." One elder of the latter group served for three and one-half years. "Our baptisms [during the war years] were almost on a par with the pre-war record."⁶³

As President Brown resumed leadership, he inherited some problems resulting from the lack of direct priesthood supervision. These problems had to be overcome through instruction, closer supervision (which the interim presidency had been unable to do through no fault of their own), and encouragement through priesthood leadership and directives. An example of these problems included "factionalism and improper conduct." Very few converts were added to Church rolls during the war, and inactivity and the inability to visit the members regularly had claimed nearly six thousand members to varying levels of inactivity.⁶⁴ President Brown assessed the situation and began a missionwide tour to visit the Saints.

During his tour, President Brown sat on the edge of the cleared-off sacrament table in one of the chapels as he visited with some of the Saints. The members noticed his actions, which quelled a notion that a brass railing should be installed on the table to prevent inadvertent contact by unauthorized individuals. President Brown's

lesson was that the ordinance, not the furniture, was the most sacred part of the sacrament.

Unfortunately, President Brown was forced to return again to the United States because of illness and subsequent surgery. He convalesced for several weeks with his family before returning again to his mission duties.

On Tuesday, May 8, 1945, and before his second return to England, mission records report, "The world heard the joyful news of Germany's defeat. . . . Prayer and thanksgiving services were held in branches throughout the mission and in many cases parties for the children and celebrations for the adults were held on the following day."⁶⁵

President Brown returned again to his mission duties on May 22, 1945, and his wife and two of his daughters, Margaret and Carol, joined him.⁶⁶ Sister Zina Brown was called to "preside over the Relief Societies of the British Mission," while Margaret was "set apart as a missionary" and had "the unique distinction of being the first American missionary to return . . . since their general evacuation in 1939."⁶⁷

Another sign that normalcy was returning to the mission was the return of General Authorities and other mission leaders. In January 1946, "President and Sister Cornelius Zappey passed through London en route to preside over the Netherlands Mission." Within a week, "Elder Ezra Taft Benson, of the Council of the Twelve, who has been appointed President of the European Missions, arrived in England by plane."⁶⁸ On Sunday, February 24, "lady missionary Sister Clara Chidester, of Salt Lake City, arrived in the British Mission and was assigned to labor in the Mission office."⁶⁹

By May 1946 the *Millennial Star* noted, "The British Mission rejoices in the return of Missionaries . . . after an enforced absence of six years." Some missionaries had already arrived and more would "travel to England as soon as permission is given by the Government Authorities."⁷⁰

The changeover was completed with the replacement of President Brown on Friday, May 24, 1946. The London Branch prepared a farewell dinner for President and Sister Hugh B. Brown and a welcome for President and Sister Selvoy J. Boyer, because both couples

were in attendance. With the assignment of President Boyer, the transfer was complete, and the wartime experiences of World War II would soon become memories in a recovering nation.

Notes

1. Marion G. Romney, "The Price of Peace," in *Hope* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 184.

2. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1947), 2:126n4.

3. As quoted in Andre K. Anastasiou, in Conference Report, October 1946, 23. This prophecy of President Heber J. Grant seems to be a reiteration of a similar declaration made nearly a century before by early missionary Elder Heber C. Kimball.

4. Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, a member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles touring the European Mission and subsequently the Church leader on sight to oversee the missionary evacuation promised, "This war will not start until Brother [Wallace] Toronto and his missionaries arrive in this land of Denmark." The prophecy was literally fulfilled! (Martha Toronto Anderson, "A Cherry Tree behind the Iron Curtain: The Autobiography of Martha Toronto Anderson" [Salt Lake City: self-published, 1977], 32).

5. The British Mission Manuscript History for Saturday, September 2, 1939 records, "Because of the invasion of Poland by Germany, Premier Neville Chamberlain announced that England was in a state of war with Germany, and on the same date France made a similar declaration" (Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library).

6. British Mission Manuscript History, September 2, 1939, 1.

7. British Mission Manuscript History, September 2, 1939, 1.

8. British Mission Manuscript History, September 2, 1939, 1.

9. British Mission Manuscript History, January 8, 1940.

10. British Mission Manuscript History, January 8, 1940.

11. Letter from the First Presidency of the Church to departing missionaries and remaining members, as quoted in British Mission Manuscript History, Monday, January 8, 1940.

12. British Mission Quarterly Historical Report, January 10, 1940.

13. Andre K. Anastasiou, "Autobiography of Andre K. Anastasiou," MS 4646, 1–2, 1976, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

14. Anastasiou, "Autobiography," MS 4646, 1–2, Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

15. Anastasiou, "Autobiography," MS 4646, 1–2, Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

16. Anastasiou, “Autobiography,” 83–84.
17. Hugh B. Brown, *Millennial Star*, January 18, 1940, 41.
18. In 1889 Sisters Inez Knight and Lucy Jane “Jennie” Brimhall, both from Utah Valley in Utah Territory, were set apart as missionaries to the British Mission (see Andrew Jenson, “Church Chronology,” 218).
19. Hugh B. Brown, *Millennial Star*, January 18, 1940, 40.
20. *Millennial Star*, March 1941, 166.
21. Quarterly Historical Report, July 13, 1942.
22. *Millennial Star*, January 1940, 96.
23. Quarterly Historical Report, February 4, 1940.
24. Quarterly Historical Report, July 11, 1940.
25. Quarterly Historical Report, October 12, 1940.
26. Quarterly Historical Report, May 1, 1944.
27. Quarterly Historical Report, May 25, 1942.
28. Andre K. Anastasiou, “Experiences in the British Mission during World War II,” n.p.
29. Andre K. Anastasiou, in Conference Report, October 1946, 26–27.
30. Anastasiou, in Conference Report, October 1946, 27.
31. Quarterly Historical Report, June 16, 1941.
32. Anastasiou, in Conference Report, 27.
33. *Millennial Star*, January 16, 1943, 1.
34. Quarterly Historical Report, August 2, 1940.
35. Quarterly Historical Report, September 12, 1942.
36. *Millennial Star*, January 1940, 680.
37. “During the First World War . . . a test case had been tried in the British courts to determine whether an LDS branch president was entitled to ministerial exemption from war service. Although the case took nearly two years to work its way through the courts, the verdict had been in favour of the Church” (quoted in V. Ben Bloxham, *Truth Will Prevail: The Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles, 1837–1987* [Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1987], 368).
38. Andre K. Anastasiou, *Experiences in the British Mission during World War II*, MS 4646 2, Church Archives.
39. Anastasiou, *Experiences in the British Mission during World War II*.
40. British Mission Quarterly Historical Report, January 7, 1940.
41. British Mission Quarterly Historical Report, February 4, 1940.
42. In 1942 the deficit continued to climb to over seven hundred pounds. By 1943 the amount of indebtedness dropped to less than four hundred pounds and continued its positive drop through the end of the war. Much of the success was attributed to a further decision of the acting presidency to change the publications schedule from a weekly periodical to a monthly installment. Further, more emphasis was given to the publication in Church classes and meetings (see British Mission Quarterly Historical Report, February 28, 1942; December 5, 1943).
43. British Mission Quarterly Historical Report, April 7, 1942.

44. After the cessation of hostilities in Europe, Sister Russell became a correspondent to the Church Section of the *Deseret News*. She was released after twelve months from her unique and significant mission as editor of the *Millennial Star* in October 1944 (Manuscript History and Historical Reports, 1841–1971, British Mission, August 1944, Church Archives).

45. Anastasiou, in Conference Report, October 1946, 25–26.

46. Anastasiou, in Conference Report, October 1946, 25–26.

47. V. Ben Bloxham, *Truth Will Prevail*, 377.

48. Quarterly Historical Report, June 20, 1941.

49. *Millennial Star*, October 22, 1942, 684.

50. Eugene E. Campbell and Richard D. Poll, *Hugh B. Brown: His Life and Thought* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1978), 152–53.

51. Campbell and Poll, *Hugh B. Brown*, 153. In an interesting postscript another American Latter-day Saint Chesley Gordon Peterson joined the American Eagle Squadron on August 10, 1940, on his twentieth birthday. Peterson was from Santaquin, Utah, and earned significant respect in Britain during the same period as Hugh C. Brown. Peterson, a commander in another group, made “110 sweeps across the English Channel” prior to initial return to his home. He was also “credited with downing seven enemy planes and probably six more. For his achievements he was decorated by King George VI with the distinguished flying cross, [on] March 10, 1942 . . . [and] later received the coveted distinguished service order.” His recognition by the British crown was less than one week prior to Hugh C. Brown’s disappearance (“The Church Moves On,” *Improvement Era*, February 1943).

52. Campbell and Poll, *Hugh B. Brown*, 156–57. On May 12, 1986, a memorial to the American Eagle Squadron of World War II was dedicated in Grosvenor Square. The tribute reads, “They came not as warriors in search of conflict, but rather as crusaders in the cause of liberty. They became brothers in arms to their British colleagues.”

53. Manuscript History and Historical Reports, 1841–1971, British Mission, August 1944, Church Archives.

54. Quarterly Historical Report, July 2, 1940.

55. Quarterly Historical Report, October 7, 1940.

56. Quarterly Historical Report, September 1, 1940.

57. Those who are listed under the title of Servicemen’s Coordinators who assisted President Brown in his arduous assignment are Riley Gwynn, Washington DC; W. Wallace McBride, North and South Carolina; J. Orvall Ellsworth, Texas; W. Aird MacDonald, Northern California; Clifford L. Nielsen, Los Angeles; Willard Kimball, San Diego and Arizona; Harry Clarke, Western States; John Longsdon, Utah; James R. Boone, Southern States; Lt. Col. C. Clarence Neslen, Northwest Area (*Improvement Era*, May 1944, 252). A later publication identified that the number of coordinators was increased to fifteen individuals who assisted Elder Brown, but it did not identify the names of the additional five coordinators.

58. Campbell and Poll, *Hugh B. Brown*, 166.

59. Andre K. Anastasiou, “Survival of the British Mission during World War II,” *Improvement Era*, April 1969, 62. Following the end of the war in 1945, Presi-

dent Anastasiou emigrated from Great Britain to America on the advice of President Hugh B. Brown and worked for the Church in translation. Upon his arrival to the United States, he Americanized the spelling of his name to Anastasion and lived with his family in Bountiful, Utah. Later, he and his wife served yet another mission to France, completed significant translation projects for the Church, and died in Salt Lake City in the early 1950s.

60. Anastasion, "Survival of the British Mission," 63.

61. Anastasion, "Survival of the British Mission," 63.

62. Anastasion, "Survival of the British Mission," 60.

63. Anastasion, "Survival of the British Mission," 63.

64. Anastasion, "Survival of the British Mission," 63; Hugh B. Brown, 166.

65. Quarterly Historical Report, May 8, 1945.

66. *Millennial Star*, September 1945, 276.

67. *Millennial Star*, September 1945, 276.

68. Quarterly Historical Report, January 27; February 2, 1946.

69. Quarterly Historical Report, February 24, 1946

70. *Millennial Star*, April 1946, 116.

