

WAR ROOMS

Across the street from St. James Park in London, a nondescript staircase descends beneath the streets of Westminster. A passerby might mistake it for a Tube station, were it not for the sign overhead. Its modest appearance belies its significance to the history of Great Britain, and indeed the world.

Descend those stairs and you travel back in time. Crinkled maps of Europe plaster the pale walls, while sheaves of yellowed papers and brightly colored rotary phones cover the tables. The rooms appear exactly as they did when British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill used them to lead the war effort against Nazi Germany.

The War Rooms are a hallowed place. When I visited after graduating from the U.S. Air Force Academy, I passed through each room in reverent silence. I could only imagine what Winston Churchill felt during those long years, carrying the weight of western civilization on his shoulders.

In one of the final rooms, just before returning to a world of busy Londoners and dazzling sunlight, a visitor to the War Rooms comes across this quote:

I felt as if... all my life had been but a preparation for this hour and for this trial.

Emotion overcame me. I was young, fresh out of the Academy,

EATING GLASS



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Through Failure and Renewal*

MARK D. JACOBSEN



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