France under Fire

“We request an immediate favor of you, to build a shelter for us women and small children, because we have absolutely no place to take refuge and we are terrified!” This French mother's petition sent to her mayor on the eve of Germany's 1940 invasion of France reveals civilians' security concerns unleashed by the Blitzkrieg fighting tactics of World War II. Unprepared for air warfare's assault on civilian psyches, French planners were among the first in history to respond to civilian security challenges posed by aerial bombardment. France under Fire offers a social, political, and military examination of the origins of the French refugee crisis of 1940, a mass displacement of 8 million civilians fleeing German combatants. Scattered throughout a divided France, refugees turned to German Occupation officials and Vichy administrators for relief and repatriation. Their solutions raised questions about occupying powers' obligations to civilians and elicited new definitions of refugees' rights.

Nicole Dombrowski Risser is Associate Professor of History at Towson University in Maryland. She is editor of Women and War in the Twentieth Century: Enlisted With or Without Consent (1998).
In recent years the field of modern history has been enriched by the exploration of two parallel histories. These are the social and cultural history of armed conflict, and the impact of military events on social and cultural history.

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France under Fire

*German Invasion, Civilian Flight, and Family Survival during World War II*

Nicole Dombrowski Risser
For Jim
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<tr>
<td>AN</td>
<td>Archives nationales de la France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADC</td>
<td>Archives départementales de la Corrèze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADM</td>
<td>Archives départementales de la Marne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMBG</td>
<td>Archives municipales de Brive-la-Gaillarde</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMVR</td>
<td>Archives municipales de la ville de Reims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDIC</td>
<td>Bibliothèque Documentaire Information Contemporaine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DGGFTO</td>
<td>Délégation générale du Gouvernement français pour les territoires occupés</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>internally displaced person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBF</td>
<td>Militärbefehlshaber in Frankreich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBH</td>
<td>German Military Administration in Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCF</td>
<td>Parti communiste français</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSF</td>
<td>Parti socialiste français</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PoW</td>
<td>prisoner of war</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTT</td>
<td>Poste télégraphe et téléphone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>Royal Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHAT</td>
<td>Service historique de l’armée de la terre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFOI</td>
<td>Section française de l’internationale d’ouvrière</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNCF</td>
<td>Société Nationale des Chemins de fer français (French National Railway)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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