

The Second World War – and VE Day

1939

In 1939 Europe looked like this map on the left.

After the First World War 1914 – 1918 lots of people just wanted peace but some people didn't, they didn't like the new Europe or Peace and they wanted another war.



During the 1930's Adolf Hitler was elected to be in charge of Germany. He wanted Germany to be the most powerful country in Europe and he started to plan for war including having big military parades to show how strong Germany was. The German government were called the Nazis.



At the start of September 1939 Germany invaded the country of Poland with its Air Force and its Army.



Other countries respond

- Britain and France were both allies (friends) of Poland and had promised to help protect it. All three countries had promised to protect each other.
- Britain and France declared that they were at war with Germany to try and stop it from doing more damage in Poland but it was too late and Germany took over half of Poland.



Britain got ready for war and lots of children were evacuated to the countryside in case Nazi Germany attacked just as it had in Poland.

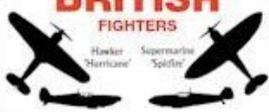
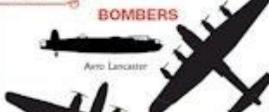
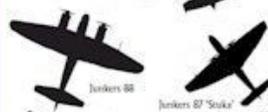
British Troops (soldiers) were sent to France to help there.

Now all men in Britain aged 18 to 41 had to join the forces unless they were in special jobs (e.g. miners, and doctors) and women would also have to join up to be in the forces.

PUBLIC WARNING

The public are advised to familiarise themselves with the appearance of British and German Aeroplanes so that they may not be alarmed by British aircraft and may take shelter if German aircraft appear. **Should hostile aircraft be seen, take shelter immediately** in the nearest available shelter. Remain there until the aircraft have left the vicinity: do not stand about in crowds and do not touch unexploded bombs.

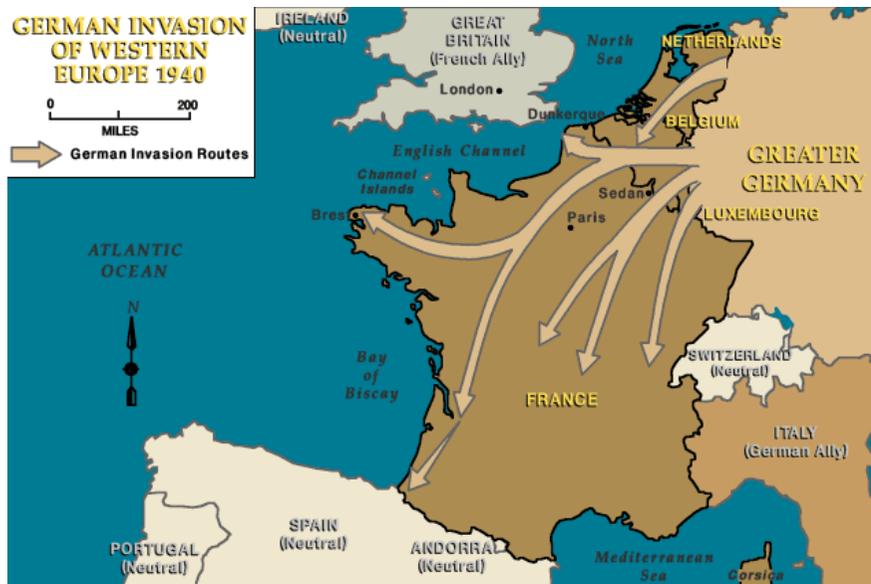
In the event of HOSTILE aircraft being seen in country districts the nearest Naval, Military or Police authorities should, if possible, be advised immediately by telephone of the time of appearance, the direction of flight and number of aircraft.

GERMAN FIGHTERS	BRITISH FIGHTERS
 Messerschmitt 109 Messerschmitt 107	 Hawker Hurricane Supermarine Spitfire
<small>Note specially the shape of the wing tips and position of engines.</small>	
BOMBERS	BOMBERS
 Heinkel 111 Dornier 217	 Avro Lancaster Vickers-Armstrong 'Wellington'
 Junkers 88 Junkers 52 'Stuka'	 Bristol Beaufighter Handley-Page 'Halifax'

During World War II, Britain warned all men and women to help with the war. One of several posters, this one is one of the first to keep the war alive. The government used propaganda posters, rallies, films and radio broadcasts to get its message across to the public. These were put up in shops and other venues, around buildings, on buses and other public places.



April 1940



- In April 1940 Germany attacked most of the countries in Western Europe.
- This included countries that were neutral (had agreed not to go to war and did not have very big armies).
- None of the countries were able to stop the German air force and its army.

British troops

- The British troops in France had to try and get back to Britain very quickly and they were rescued by the Royal Navy and lots of small British fishing boats in something called the Dunkirk evacuation.
- Britain also brought some of the French forces with them and they would stay in Britain ready to fight in the future.



In July 1940 Nazi Germany planned to attack Britain



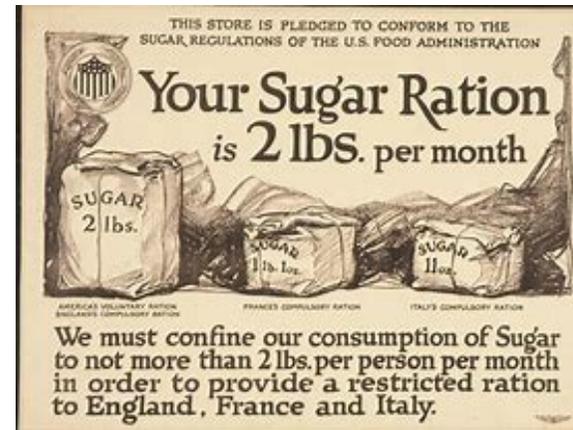
- Men and women of the Royal Air Force had to stop the invasion.
- It was called the Battle of Britain.
- As well as pilots from Britain lots of pilots from the other European countries who had been beaten by Germany got to Britain to help fight in the Air Battle.



- The Battle of Britain started 10 July 1940 and didn't finish until September 1940 – hundreds of people were killed but they RAF managed to stop the Germans from being able to invade Britain. Germany now began to bomb British cities and towns – called the Blitz – to try and make the people want to give up.



- Life in Britain became very hard.
- Children were often sent to live away from the cities – as evacuees.
- Food and clothes were all rationed – that meant you were only allowed to have certain things and only a certain amount. Sweets were rationed and became quite rare.



- In the countries that were occupied by Nazi Germany (that means taken over and now run by the Germans) life was even harder. Cities were destroyed and people could be put in prison for very little reason.



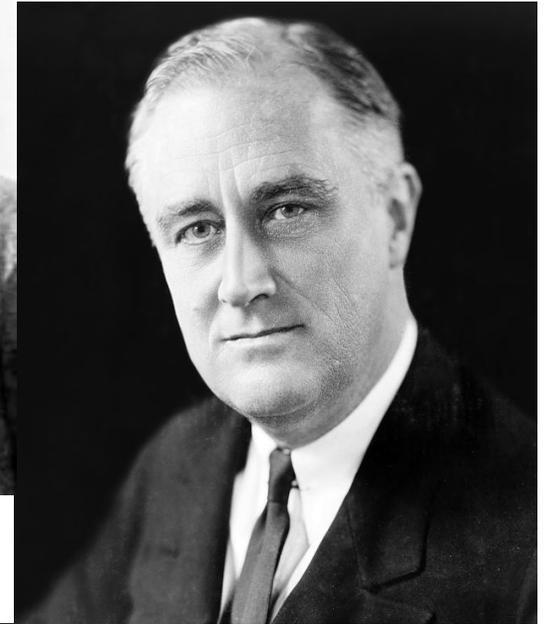
- In summer 1941 Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union in the Eastern Part of Europe.



- In December 1941 Japan an ally or friends of Germany attacked the United States of America.



Britain led by Winston Churchill (at the top), United States of America led by F.D. Roosevelt (in the middle) and The USSR – Soviet Union led by Joseph Stalin (at the bottom) all agreed to work together to stop Nazi Germany, Japan and their Allies and to free the countries that they had invaded.



World War II in Europe 1939–1941



Over the next few years the fighting would take place all over the world on land and sea. Many people were killed and injured.



HMS Royal Sovereign (Courtesy: Maritime Quest)

On the Home Front

- At home in Britain lots of people were involved with war work. This included working in ammunition factories, joining the land army so that people could eat and agreeing to restrictions on what they could and couldn't do.
- British towns and cities were still being bombed – this is Coventry cathedral after it had been hit by a bomb

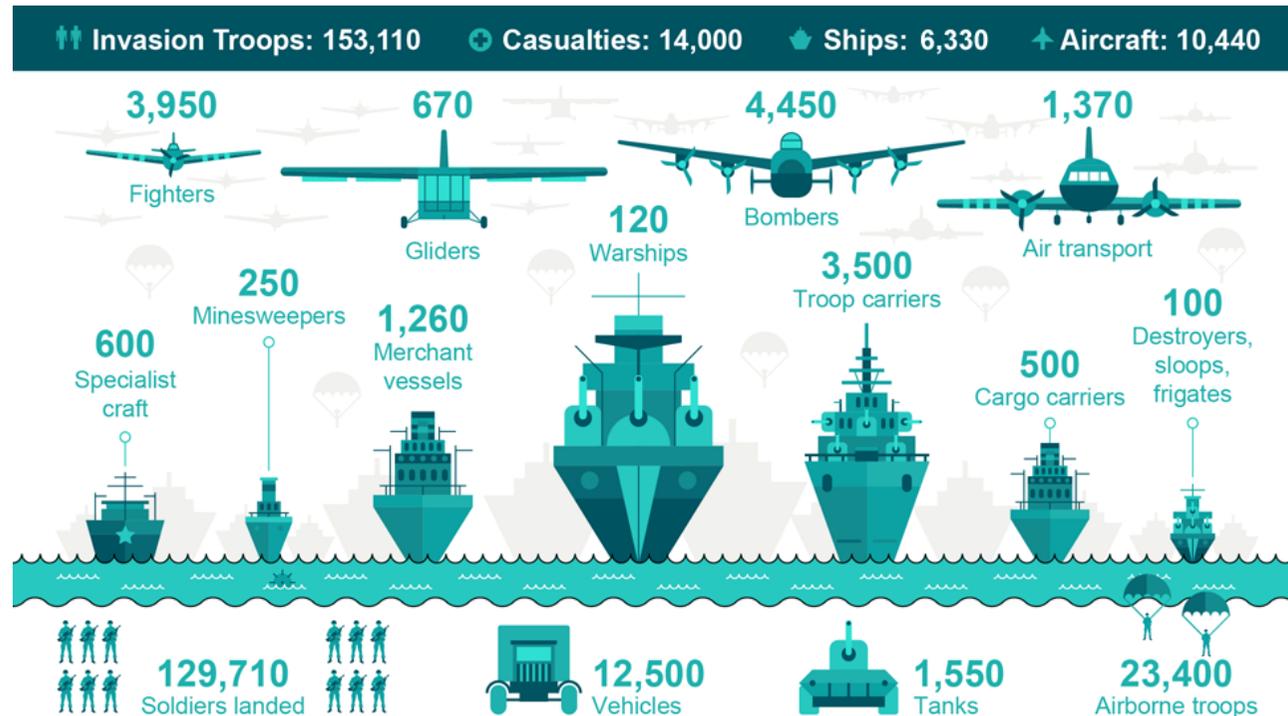


1944

- In 1944 Britain and her Allies began to turn the war and battle in South East Asia at Kohima were successful.
- The Allies were able to attack Italy and then land an invasion into France (known as D-Day) to defeat the Germans there and to start to liberate the people in those countries.



The D-Day invasion was the largest amphibious invasion in history. Britain, The United States, Canada and France led the attack and they were supported by troops from all over the world especially free Polish troops and those from other occupied countries.



1945

- The Allied troops continued to fight the German forces across Europe from the East and the West.



- The Allied leaders met at a place called Yalta and agreed to ensure that the countries of Europe freed from Germany could be free and hold elections.
- They also agreed that the had to totally defeat Germany and occupy it.



April and May 1945

In April the Allied forces were fighting in Germany itself.
The German leader refused to give in and decided to kill himself.



Eventually the German generals agreed to surrender and to stop fighting.
The next day it was announced that the war in Europe was over.

8 May 1945 became VE Day



VE Day celebrations



The British Channel Islands were formally liberated on VE Day, 8th May 1945



VE Day celebrations



Children out celebrating at VE Day parties



The Royal family and Prime Minister Winston Churchill on the Balcony of Buckingham Palace



VE Day parties often took place in the streets



The Telegraph

After VE Day

- Rationing would still continue.
- Men would still have to serve in the forces.
- Restrictions would still be in place.
- But no one needed worry about fighting or being bombed anymore in Europe.
- It would be another 3 months until the war finished totally when Japan surrendered.