

World War II – Part 1

Background

Today we will look at early military developments in the Second World War.

We will start with the German invasion of Poland. This is an important event because it is the immediate cause of the Second World War in Europe.

After the invasion of Poland, Britain and France were at war with Germany.

The swift defeat of Poland also shows the importance of Blitzkrieg and the Nazi-Soviet Pact.

After a short period called the Phoney War, Hitler attacked Norway and Denmark.

What happened next shocked the world. Hitler attacked Western Europe, and crushed the French Army.

Northern France was placed under German occupation, and southern France became a client state called Vichy France.

France was soundly defeated. But, the defeat of France revealed a fundamental weakness in Nazi Germany.

Hitler took a personal interest in military strategy, and often pulled rank.

Against the advice of his General Staff, Hitler's command allowed the British Expeditionary Force to escape from Dunkirk.

Next was the Battle of Britain . . . code named Operation Sealion.

Things were going well for German Bomber Command, until Hitler made another critical mistake.

With the defensive capability of the Royal Air Force almost destroyed, Hitler ordered bombing raids on British cities.

The RAF lived to fight another day, and slowly they started to make ground against the German Bombers.

Great Britain remained independent!

British independence was a problem, but it was not fatal to Nazi Germany.

Operation Barbarossa . . . the invasion of the Soviet Union would eventually prove fatal.

In the frozen fields of the Soviet Union, the undefeated German Army would grind to a stop.

In the deserts of North Africa, the Axis would suffer its first real defeat!

Assignment

Your mission is to gather information about World War II from the invasion of Poland to the Allied victory in North Africa.

Step 1 – Read each section in your *Student Workbook*.

Step 2 – Take notes, focussing on the specifics in your Prescribed Learning Outcomes.