

WORLD WAR II NEWSPAPER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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---3rd September 1939---



**THIS COUNTRY IS AT
WAR WITH GERMANY**

Germany invades Poland

2 September 1939

THE German invasion of Poland began yesterday

Just before dawn, German tanks, infantry and cavalry entered Polish territory on several fronts with five armies and a total of 1.5 million troops. Planes from the Luftwaffe (German Air Force) began bombing several cities at 9am, including a continuous attack on the capital, Warsaw. There are thought to be many people hurt.

Communications out of Poland have been cut since noon yesterday, but it is believed that German planes have been raiding the country in squadrons of 50 every half hour. Heavy fighting has also been reported along the border with East Prussia, a territory that belongs to Germany but is separated from the mainland by Poland.

Poland has done nothing to provoke the German attack. There was a report broadcast on German radio that claimed Polish troops attacked a radio station in the border town of Gleiwitz and took over broadcasts. However, it has been suggested the German claims are false and were made up so it looked like Poland deserved the invasion.

The German leader, Adolf Hitler, wants the city of Danzig, which became a part of Poland after the First World War, to be German once more. He also wants the 'Polish Corridor', a stretch of territory that leads to the Baltic Sea. The attack on Poland follows Germany's invasion of the Czech regions Bohemia and Moravia in March, which meant the end of the nation state of Czechoslovakia.

The British parliament met yesterday evening, and the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, told MPs that Britain and France had warned Berlin that, unless they



German troops enter Poland after a 'blitzkrieg' (lightning war) which swept into Poland on 1 September

got out of Poland quickly, Britain and France would be at war with Germany.

Mr. Chamberlain also extended the ages for military service meaning everyone from 18 to 41 has to join up.

In a day of fast-moving developments, the President of the United States, Mr. Franklin Roosevelt, has sent an urgent appeal to the governments of Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Poland asking them to say they won't launch air raid attacks on civilians. The British Ambassador to the US welcomed the "moving appeal" of the President.

We are at war



Sir Winston Churchill (right), leaves the Admiralty in London with his secretary for a meeting of the war cabinet at 10 Downing Street

4 September 1939

BRITAIN and France are at war with Germany.

The British deadline for the withdrawal of German troops from Poland expired at 11am yesterday morning. The Prime Minister made the announcement in a radio broadcast at 11.15am.

He said: "You can imagine what a bitter blow it is to me that all my long struggle to win peace has failed. Yet I cannot believe that there is anything more or anything different that I could have done."

France declared war at 5pm, following the passing of their deadline to the Germans.

Britain has to support Poland following the

Anglo-Polish military alliance, signed a little over a month ago. The alliance came after the German invasion of Czechoslovakia, and promised that the British and French would protect Poland. A similar promise was given to Greece and Romania in April, following Italy's invasion of Albania.

A British War Cabinet of nine members has been created. Two new Ministers have been added: Winston Churchill becomes First Lord of the Admiralty, a post he held during World War One, and Lord Hankey joins, too.

The King broadcast a message yesterday.

He said: "In this grave hour, perhaps the most fateful in our history, I send to every household of my peoples... this message. For the second time in the lives of most of us we are at war. The task will be hard. There may be dark days ahead and war can no longer be confined to the battlefield."

In another important development yesterday, the British Board of Trade said it is now against the law for any Briton to do any business with the enemy.

Evacuation of children begins

1 September 1939

THE evacuation of three million children and adults from cities to countryside towns and villages begins today.

The decision to start was taken yesterday by the Prime Minister, following discussions with the Minister of Health and the President of the Board of Education. Less than 20 hours after the decision was taken, the first children were leaving their schools in the East End of London.

Around three million schoolchildren, mothers with toddlers, pregnant women, disabled and blind people should be evacuated as soon as this coming Monday 4 September. Homeowners in the countryside are taking in the evacuees. The Government says the move is just to be on the safe side and shouldn't last long.

All routes into London from the countryside were closed this morning, as they became one-way roads to make the evacuation from the city easier. Groups of children from individual schools began to get together at 6am this morning to travel by underground, bus and coach. Rehearsals took place three days ago.

Railway and bus services in and out of London have been cut back to make room for the evacuating children and adults. The Government has asked people to keep away from railways, bus stops and main roads as much as possible.

Most children in London schools do not know where exactly they will end up in the countryside. Parents will be told by postcard once the children arrive. All evacuees will get rations to last them two days once they arrive at their evacuation homes.



Schoolchildren crowd Ealing Broadway Station in London, ready to be evacuated to the country

British ship torpedoed

4 September 1939

THE ocean liner SS Athenia, which was carrying 1,400 people, was torpedoed yesterday 200 miles west of the Hebrides.

The 13,500-ton ship was sunk by a German u-boat in the area. It is thought that the commander of the vessel thought the liner was an armoured cruiser. Around 100 passengers and 19 crew members are thought to have died, including 28 Americans. The USA has not entered the war so far and says it has no plans to do so for now.

The Athenia left Glasgow on 1 September, stopping at Liverpool the day before yesterday on its way to Montreal, Canada. Around 300 Americans are believed to have been on board. Two torpedoes were fired at around 7.40pm last night: the first struck the ship and exploded, while the second missed. Reports suggest a third torpedo was fired later but also missed.

The attack brings back memories of u-boat warfare in British waters during World War One, when the Germans thought ocean liners were fair targets for attack. However, at the time of going to press, it wasn't known if this attack is the beginning of a new u-boat war around Britain or if the cruise liner was mistaken for a military vessel.



Survivors from the bombed ship SS Athenia are helped to safety by a soldier

Women's land army returns

2 June 1939

THE Women's Land Army, which provided enormous help with the war effort during 1914-1918, is being formed again.

With Europe on a knife-edge because of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy's plans to invade and take over other countries, the British government has restored the "Land Girls", as they were known before.

During World War One, more than 100,000 members of the Women's Land Army worked on farms and fields around the country, taking over the work of the men who were called up to fight in the conflict.

This time, the Land Girls will be led by Lady Gertrude Denman, who was approached last year to begin making plans for organisation and recruitment. Women from all over the country are welcome to apply – payment will be 28 shillings a week.

Their work will be essential if Britain gets involved in a full-scale war, as food supplies could be cut by farmers being sent to fight, and limits on food imports from overseas.



Two Land Army girls carry pitchforks while looking after their carhorse