



A Child's War

What do I need to know?

Key dates:

1934

19th August - Adolf Hitler became leader of Germany.

1939

1st September - Hitler's troops invaded Poland.

1940

8th January - Rationing starts.

7th September - The beginning of the Blitz.

1941

11th May - The Blitz ends.

7th December - Japan bombs Pearl Harbour in Hawaii.

1944

6th June - D Day.

1945

7th May - Germany surrenders and the Second World War in Europe ends.

15th August - Japan surrenders and the Second World War ends.



The Second World War

The Second World War lasted from 1939 to 1945. On one side were the Axis Powers (including Germany, Italy and Japan). On the other side were the Allied Powers (including Britain, France, the Soviet Union and the USA). After six years of fighting, the Allied Powers won. Children, as well as adults, were affected by the war.

Propaganda

Posters, radio, films and newspapers were used during the war to keep up people's spirits, celebrate Allied victories and make fun of the enemy. This was known as propaganda. It was used to persuade people to do what the government wanted, such as carry gas masks, grow vegetables, make or mend clothes and evacuate children from cities to the countryside.

Key Leaders

Allied Leaders

Winston Churchill - Prime Minister of Great Britain.

Charles de Gaulle - President of France.

Joseph Stalin - Leader of the Soviet Union.

Franklin D. Roosevelt - President of the United States.

Axis Leaders

Adolf Hitler - Leader of Germany.

Benito Mussolini - Prime Minister of Italy.

Michinomiya Hirohito - Emperor of Japan.

The Blitz

The intense and sudden bombing of British cities was called the Blitz. Sirens were sounded in the streets to warn civilians that bombers were coming. To escape the bombs, people went into air raid shelters. Weeks of sustained bombing raids killed thousands of people and destroyed many homes and cities.



Evacuation

During the war, German planes dropped bombs on British cities in an attempt to destroy factories, docklands and airfields but homes and schools were also hit. The government decided to evacuate children from the cities, where they might be in danger, to the countryside where they would be safer. Children, who were evacuated, were called evacuees. They travelled to live with other families who looked after them until the end of the war.

Glossary

Allied Powers - Countries (e.g. Britain) that united to fight the Axis Powers.

Axis Powers - Countries (e.g. Germany) that united to fight the Allied Powers.

Evacuee - A child or vulnerable adult who was sent away from the city to live in the countryside with another family.

Propaganda - Biased news, media or communication that influenced people's opinions.

Rationing - Limiting supply of food, clothes and other goods to prevent shortages.

Treaty of Versailles - A peace treaty signed in 1919 that punished Germany for the First World War.