Hope, Heroes and the Home Front

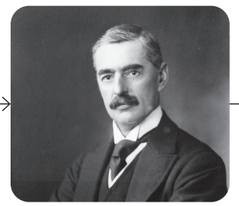
The Second World War

The Second World War lasted from 1939 to 1945. On one side were countries including Germany, Italy and Japan. On the other side were countries including Britain, France, the Soviet Union and the USA. After six years of fighting, Germany surrendered on the 8th May 1945 bringing the war in Europe to an end. Japan surrendered on the 15th August 1945 which ended the Second World War.

Key events in Britain



1 September 1939
Evacuation begins



3 September 1939
Britain enters the war



8 January 1940
Rationing begins



10 July 1940
Battle of Britain begins



7 September 1940
The Blitz begins



8 May 1945
VE Day

Battle of Britain



The Battle of Britain started in July 1940 and lasted for many months. The German air force bombed Britain in an attempt to destroy Britain's Royal Air Force. They needed to do this so they could invade Britain by sea. However, the Royal Air Force shot down many German planes and stopped Hitler's planned invasion of Britain.

During the Battle of Britain, Prime Minister Winston Churchill made a famous speech where he said, '*Never was so much owed by so many to so few*'.

Evacuation

By the summer of 1939, it seemed certain that Britain would go to war. The Government was worried that cities might be targeted by bombing raids. So, they 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 went to live with other families who looked after them until the war ended.





The power of persuasion

Persuasive posters were used to encourage people to do what the government wanted, such as carry a gas mask, grow vegetables, make or mend clothes and evacuate children from the cities to the countryside. Many posters also featured bias and propaganda by presenting one-sided information to make readers think in a certain way.







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, from 7th September 1940 to 11th May 1941, killed thousands of people and destroyed many homes and cities. Many lives were affected, but people experienced the Blitz in different ways depending on their age, where they lived and the jobs they did.

Taking shelter

People needed to take shelter during the Blitz. Many people went into underground stations and cellers. Others built air raid shelters, called Anderson shelters, in their gardens. These were made from corrugated steel panels with soil spread over the top. Some people, who didn't have gardens, made a Morrison shelter inside their homes. This shelter looked like a steel table with wire mesh around the sides.





Anderson shelter

The home front

People who helped the war effort at home rather than going to fight were known as the home front. People volunteered for different roles and worked as nurses, fire fighters and air raid wardens.







VE Day

Victory in Europe Day (VE Day) was celebrated on the 8th May 1946. People went into the streets singing and dancing and bonfires were lit in the streets. Yet many people's feelings were bittersweet. They were happy that the war was over and they had survived, but many had lost a lot, including their homes, their health, family members and friends.



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