

# WORLD WAR II

## The Sides

The Allies  
Great Britain  
France  
Russia  
South Africa  
Australia  
New Zealand  
Canada  
America

Axis countries  
(the enemy)  
Germany  
Italy  
Japan

It seems rather unbalanced when looked at this way, but at the very beginning of the war it was very different.

### 1939- Black future

Things started badly and by 1940 the Germans had ousted British troops from France who quickly surrendered. (*se rendre*)



Nevertheless the Brits were united as never before, largely due to Churchill's speeches.

It didn't take long before everyone had taken sides and the fighting had spread all over the world. Hitler had conquered most of Europe and was concentrating on Egypt and the western deserts.

### 1941- America joins in

One of the great turning points had been when the Japanese attacked and destroyed a large part of the American fleet at Pearl Harbour. Suddenly everything looked very different.

### The Royal Air Force



A Spitfire in flight

On our side we had the amazing (*étonnant*) little Spitfires and Hurricanes, but they were greatly outnumbered by the Messerschmitts and Stukas of the German air force which was called the Luftwaffe.



Hurricane

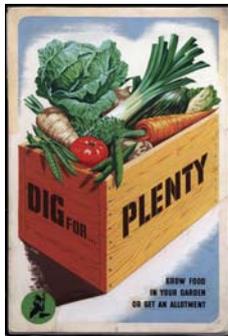
## Invasion



At one stage it looked very likely that we might be invaded for the first time since William the Conqueror in 1066.

It was just as well (*c'était aussi bien*) the German troopers didn't get to Britain, as all we had to stop them was our funny little Home Guards. These were volunteer 'soldiers', usually of advanced years, whose job was to protect our women, children and pets with not much more than garden tools.

### England digs in



When it looked as if the German invasion was imminent, the bombing raids became as regular as milk deliveries.

Those that didn't have backyards (*arrière cours*), ran into communal shelters (*abris*) as soon as they heard the air raid sirens. These terrible sirens made such a horrible noise, that they were almost as frightening (*effrayant*) as the raids themselves.

City children were evacuated to stay with their country cousins.

Food, clothes and petrol were rationed and luxuries like fruit, chocolate and nylon stockings were not to be seen again for years.

### The bombing

Thousands of homes, and the people in them, were destroyed by the appalling (*épouvantable*) night bombing raids, but the British refused to give in.

Towards the end of the war the Germans developed the most hateful weapon that had ever been seen. It was a petrol-driven guided missile called a V1 (later V2), launched from somewhere in Holland.

Everyone was terrified of them.



### 1944- Victory

France was liberated in 1944. The war was over. Good and triumphed over evil.