

# WORKING TOGETHER IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR



History, Literacy and Remembrance



Key Stage 3



**Session One**  
2 – 4 hours

*Polish Armed Forces  
Memorial*



In this session you will learn about the Second World War and the service and sacrifice given by people from Britain, the Commonwealth and Allied nations. People from across the world served alongside each other in defence of the values and freedoms we have today.

Follow these activities to learn about some of the people that served alongside each other and the sacrifices they made for their countries.

## First, watch a virtual tour of the Arboretum.

### Tour of the Arboretum

<https://youtu.be/V-7fE4yIWRg>

You have a short film to watch. This will take you to look at some of the memorials at the Arboretum that highlight the battles we will be looking at.

### The memorials you will visit are:

- **Polish Armed Forces Memorial**
- **Normandy Veterans**
- **Brigade of Gurkhas Memorial**

*Normandy  
Veterans*



*Brigade of Gurkhas  
Memorial*

**Here are some questions for you to answer after watching the film.**

What do the four figures on the Polish Armed Forces Memorial represent?

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The Poles were the fourth largest Allied force in Europe.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

Name four Allied countries that were involved in the Battle of Monte Cassino.

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What was the codename for the Allies' plan to invade northern Europe?

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What were the names of the five beaches of Normandy the Allied personnel landed on?

Pick the correct five answers

- |                               |                              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Arizona | <input type="radio"/> Gold   |
| <input type="radio"/> Ohio    | <input type="radio"/> Dagger |
| <input type="radio"/> Omaha   | <input type="radio"/> Jelly  |
| <input type="radio"/> Utah    | <input type="radio"/> Sword  |
| <input type="radio"/> Golf    | <input type="radio"/> Juno   |

How many Allied and Commonwealth countries collaborated on the Normandy operation?

Pick the correct answer

- ☐ 3
- ☐ 13
- ☐ 30
- ☐ 33

What is the name of one of the largest Allied force to serve in the Far East?

Pick the correct answer

- ☐ Fourth Army
- ☐ Fourteenth Army
- ☐ Fortieth Army

The design of the Gurkha Memorial is inspired by a chautara. What is a chautara?

Pick the correct answer

- ☐ A resting place for travellers on hillsides.
- ☐ A hotel for tourists climbing mountains.

Who were the Allies fighting in the Far East?

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## The Second World War

The Second World War took place between 1939 and 1945 and included countries from across the world. On the one side were the Allies which, at the beginning of the war, included Britain, France, and Poland as well as Commonwealth countries. Later in the war, more countries joined the Allies including the Soviet Union and the USA. On the other side, were the Axis Powers, led by Nazi Germany, Italy, and Japan. During the war other countries joined the Axis including Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria.

The Second World began in Europe on 1 September 1939 when Germany invaded Poland. It ended in 1945. In Europe the war ended on 8 May 1945 when Nazi Germany surrendered on a day known as Victory in Europe Day (VE Day). The conflict continued for another three months in the Far East until Victory over Japan Day (VJ Day) on 15 August 1945.

Over 6 million people from across the Commonwealth served alongside the Allies. People also contributed to the war effort in other ways, including as part of the resistance, finding information that could help the war effort and providing equipment.

In these activities you will learn about three pivotal events in the Second World War: D-Day, the Battle of Monte Cassino and the Battles of Kohima and Imphal. Each of these events required many countries to work together to turn the tide of the war.

**Name three countries that were part of the Allies.**

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**Name the three main Axis countries.**

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**Name two other countries that joined the Axis countries during the Second World War.**

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**What is important about 8 May 1945?**

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**What is this day known as?**

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**What is important about 15 August 1945?**

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**What is this day known as?**

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**How many people from pre-partition India served in the Second World War?**

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# D-Day and Operation Overlord

## Operation Overlord

Operation Overlord was the name given to the combined air, sea, and naval plan to invade mainland Europe and liberate France from Nazi occupation. The operation began on 6 June 1944, on a day known as D-Day.

It was the largest amphibious operation in history and involved the militaries of 13 nations and many others who worked together to secure victory.

On D-Day, 156,000 troops from Britain, the USA, Canada, and France were landed or parachuted into Normandy in France. Navies from six nations supported the invasion, and personnel from Australia, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, the Netherlands, Greece, New Zealand, Norway, Rhodesia, and Poland, amongst others, served as naval personnel, aircrew or in support and logistics.

It was not only people on the front line who enabled the success of the D-Day landings. Many other people assisted in roles behind the scenes, including inventors and the 8,000 women based at Bletchley Park, many of whom decoded enemy messages.

The operation was successful and by the end of August 1944, the German army was in full retreat from France (only part of Alsace Lorraine was to remain under German control until early 1945). On 25 August, Paris was liberated by the 2ème Division Blindée, commanded by General Philippe Leclerc of the Free French Army.

The success of D-Day was built on the many nations and peoples from across Britain, the Commonwealth and Allied nations whose ingenuity, courage and collaboration helped overcome the German army.

## The Secret Services

In the lead up to D-Day, Britain's secret services, MI5, MI6, the Government Code and Cypher School (renamed GCHQ during the war) and the Special Operations Executive (SOE) launched a number of operations to fool and interrupt German military planning. Their activity convinced Hitler that the Allied invasion would take place in either the Pas-de-Calais or in Norway. Meanwhile SOE Agents, many of whom were women, worked with the French Resistance to launch a series of sabotage missions all over northern France in the run up to D-Day.

## Case Studies

### Leon Gautier: Free French Commando, Free French Army

Many people who lived in countries occupied by German forces volunteered to serve alongside Britain and its allies, dedicated to freeing their homelands from Nazi control. The Free French Army was one group who served alongside the Allied nations.

Leon Gautier, a Free French Commando in the Free French Army, landed on Sword beach on D-Day. Gautier faced shells and bullets, being fired by the German forces, and had to run across a beach covered in landmines. Eventually, he and the Free French Army and their allies pushed back the German army.

*“Only 24 of us finished the campaign without being wounded, 24 out of 177. When you lose your friends, it’s very hard. I had a friend I knew since 1941. We went to the commandos together, did the training together, and when you lose them you’re heartbroken. I feel I did my job. My duty. That’s all.”*

Leon Gautier

### George Oliver: Pilot, Royal Australian Air Force

The boats and ships that landed on 6 June were accompanied by aircraft which played a crucial part in the landings. Piloting an aircraft was an extremely dangerous task and required a huge amount of bravery.

In the early hours of 6 June, George Oliver skilfully flew to France, navigating treacherous skies, and landed paratroopers in the country to aid the invasion<sup>1</sup>.

*“The butterflies disappeared as soon as I started the engines up, I was so absorbed with what I had to do that I felt ok.”*

George Oliver

What do you think was the main reason that the D-Day landings in Normandy were successful and why?

<sup>1</sup> Imperial War Museum Sound Archive [IWMSA], Ref: 28897, G.R. Oliver, Oral History (2006), (Extracts)