

On September 1, 1939 Germany **invaded** Poland and World War II began. At the same time the Soviet Union **attacked** Poland from the east. It was **divided up** among the countries before the **Allies** were able to help.

Germany's **attack** was carried out with fast **tanks** and **troops** that were **supported** by warplanes. Because the German army moved very quickly this phase of the war was called "Blitzkrieg".

In the following spring Germany **invaded** Norway and Denmark. Both countries were **occupied** by the German army by June. On May 10, 1940 Hitler's **troops invaded** the Low Countries- Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg and days later they **surrendered**.

In the middle of May German **soldiers** crossed into France and by June 14 the Germans had entered Paris. On June 22 France **signed a peace agreement** with Germany. German **forces** then **occupied** northern France and the Atlantic coast. A new **government** that was friendly to the Germans was formed in Vichy. On the other side General Charles de Gaulle **escaped** to Great Britain and started his free French **movement**. In a radio **broadcasts** he **urged** the French people to fight against the Germans.

THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

Hitler next wanted to **invade** the island of Great Britain. He **attacked** the British Air Force in order to control the skies over the island. It was history's first **major air battle**.

In June 1940, the German Luftwaffe began bombing **airfields** and other **targets** in southern England. German warplanes **attacked** from airports in France. At the end of the **battle** the British had shot down about 1700 German planes. Hitler saw that he could not **defeat** England's air force so he gave up his idea of **invading** Britain. **Instead** he sent the Luftwaffe to bomb British cities and towns. In London alone, more than 12,000 **civilians** were killed.

WORDS

- **airfield** = a smaller airport where military planes take off and land
- **Allies** = the countries that fought against Germany in the Second World War
- **attack** = to start using bombs and guns against an enemy in a war
- **battle** = a fight between armies in a war
- **broadcast** = here: to send a message over the radio
- **civilian** = a person who is not a soldier in a war
- **defeat** = to win against
- **divide up** = to give a part of something to two or more countries
- **escape** = to get away
- **forces** = soldiers
- **government** = the group of people who rule a country
- **instead** = in something's place
- **invade** = to take control of a country by sending an army into it

- **major** = big, important
- **movement** = group of people who believe the same things and have the same ideas
- **occupy** = to enter a country with soldiers and stay there and control it for a longer time
- **peace** = opposite of "war"
- **peace agreement** = when two people, groups or countries promise not to attack each other
- **sign** = to write your name on a document
- **soldiers** = people who fight for a country in a war
- **support** = help
- **surrender** = give up
- **tank** = a heavy military car that moves on a metal belt. It has a large gun on its top
- **target** = object you want to attack
- **troops** = soldiers
- **urge** = persuade, to ask someone to do something