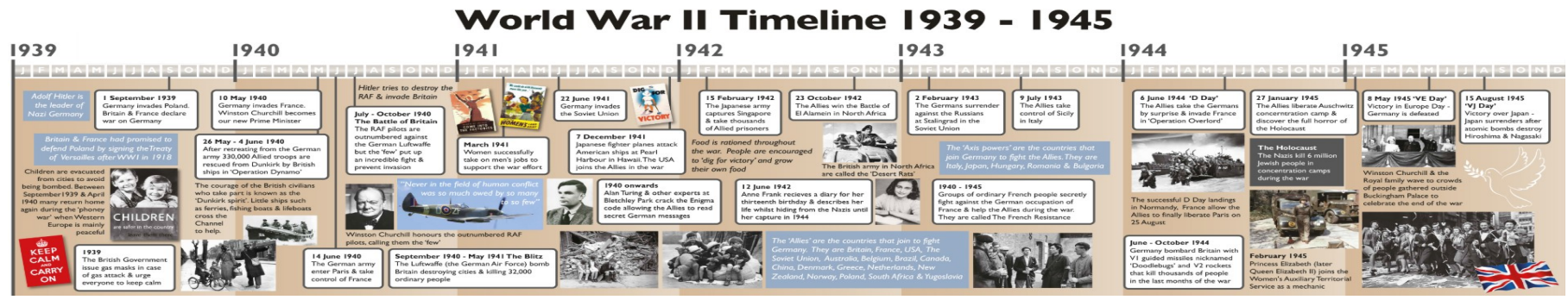


100% Sheet

The World at War: Was Britain's greatest contribution to World War 2 "to survive"?

Timeline

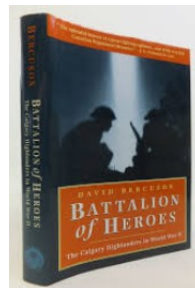


Background information

World War II was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945. The vast majority of the world's countries formed two opposing military alliances: the Allies and the Axis. A state of total war emerged, directly involving more than 100 million people from more than 30 countries. World War II was the deadliest conflict in history, marked by 70 to 85 million fatalities

Secondary interpretation/ debate about period

"Although the United States played the dominant role, all three major Allied countries were necessary to victory in Europe. **The most important contribution made by Britain was to survive Hitler's onslaught in 1940. Had the British failed to hold off the Nazis, the Second World War would have taken a far different turn.** Britain also played key roles in North Africa and the Mediterranean. The Soviet Union suffered greatly. But the Soviets killed far more German soldiers than rest of the Allies together. It was American industrial power, however, that proved crucial in the balance. American factories turned out more airplanes, tanks, ships and shells than Britain and the USSR combined, allowing the Americans to defeat Japan virtually singlehanded and play a huge role in the victory over Nazi Germany." David J. Bercuson



Key knowledge 1:

What was life like in Britain during World War 2?

- On the Home Front, thousands of people were evacuated from major centres of population across Britain as a result of Germany's Blitzkrieg bombing tactics
- As a result of the German's U-Boat activity, rationing took place, putting heavy demands on people

Key knowledge 2:

How did Britain help the Axis powers win World War 2?

- In June 1940 at Dunkirk, the British managed to evacuate 340,000 men suffering heavy casualties from the Luftwaffe - a humiliating defeat, or example of bulldog spirit?
- At Bletchley Park, codebreakers cracked the Enigma code, enabling the decoding of German messages
- Numerous battles took place ('Battle of Britain', 'Barbarossa', 'Stalingrad'), eventually leading to the USSR wearing down the German army, helped by Axis aid
- The USA entered the war after Pearl Harbour, defeating the Japanese with the use of the first Atomic bomb