

# The Outbreak of the Second World War - A Scottish Perspective



On 3rd September 1939, the prime minister announced that Britain had declared war on Germany.

## **What was life like in Scotland before the Second World War?**

During the First World War, when shipbuilding, engineering works and coal mines were important in helping the war effort, Scotland played a key role in providing these things.

However, industries were not needed as much after the First World War and so unemployment and poverty in Scotland increased.

## **What was life like in Germany before the Second World War?**

In 1933, Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. People in Germany who were poor or did not have jobs blamed the government and many of them thought political parties like the Nazis would help them. Hitler was a brilliant speech-maker and he persuaded people to support him. The Nazis attacked anyone who was against Hitler.

## **What did Hitler want?**

Hitler wanted to take back land which had been taken from Germany at the end of the First World War. Hitler then went on to make demands for other territory in Europe that he wanted for Germany.



## **How did Scotland and the UK prepare for war?**

In Scotland and across the UK, volunteers were recruited for territorial army units, the fire brigade, air raid wardens as well as other community defence roles. Gas masks were given out and leaflets on what to do in an air raid were made.

## **The Outbreak of War**

On 1st September 1939, Germany invaded Poland. On 3rd September, the prime minister announced that Britain had declared war on Germany.

Around 100 000 Scots had been killed in the First World War. No one wanted another war but most people realised that Hitler had to be stopped.

## The Outbreak of the Second World War - A Scottish Perspective

### What happened after war had been declared?

Children were evacuated from Scottish cities and sent to live somewhere else to keep them safe. However, before long, many of these children returned home.



Rationing was introduced soon after the outbreak of war so that everyone could have basic food items such as bacon, butter, tea and sugar.

Men were told they had to fight in the war and do important jobs in mining and agriculture.

The beaches of the east coast of Scotland were set up with concrete barriers and mines to stop any invasion by boats from the sea.

A large part of Scotland's workforce was again put to work in factories, coal mines, engineering works and shipyards to help support the war effort. This work meant parts of Scotland were targets for German bombs.

### Attack at Scapa Flow

One of the first major events of the Second World War happened on the 14th October 1939 when a German U-boat torpedoed HMS Royal Oak in Scapa Flow off Orkney. A total of 883 men out of the 1219 crew died when the Royal Oak sank. The sinking of this ship made people in Scotland feel even worse about the war as it was so close to their homes.

This was only the beginning of a war that would last until 1945. Can you find out about other key topics from 1939 - 1945 that had an impact on Scotland? Some are listed here:

- Clydebank Blitz
- Bombing around Scotland
- The construction of the Churchill Barriers
- The capture of Rudolph Hess
- German spies captured in north-east Scotland
- The Shetland Bus missions
- Prisoners of war in Scotland
- Women's war effort in Scotland



# Questions

1. Who announced that Britain has declared war on Germany?

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2. When was this announcement made?

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3. During the First World War, why did Scotland have an important role?

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4. What had happened to workers in these industries after the First World War?

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5. List two of the preparations made for war.

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6. After war was declared, why were children evacuated from Scottish cities?

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7. Why was rationing introduced?

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8. One of the first major events of the Second World War happened in Orkney on the 14th October 1939. What happened and how do you think this news affected people?

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# Answers

1. Who announced that Britain has declared war on Germany?  
**The prime minister announced that Britain had declared war on Germany.**
2. When was this announcement made?  
**This announcement was made on 3rd September 1939.**
3. During the First World War, why did Scotland have an important role?  
**Scotland had an important role during the First World War because they built ships and their engineering works and coal mines provided important things for the war effort.**
4. What had happened to workers in these industries after the First World War?  
**After the First World War, industries weren't needed as much so many workers were unemployed and poverty increased.**
5. List two of the preparations made for war.  
**Various answers - Choose from: volunteers were recruited for territorial army units, the fire brigade, air raid wardens as well as other community defence roles. Gas masks were given out and leaflets on what to do in an air raid were made.**
6. After war was declared, why were children evacuated from Scottish cities?  
**Children were evacuated from Scottish cities to help keep them safe.**
7. Why was rationing introduced?  
**Rationing was introduced so that everyone could have basic food items such as bacon, butter, tea and sugar.**
8. One of the first major events of the Second World War happened in Orkney on the 14th October 1939. What happened and how do you think this news affected people?  
**A German U-boat torpedoed HMS Royal Oak in Scapa Flow off Orkney. A total of 883 men out of the 1219 crew died when the Royal Oak sank. Various answers, but may include that people felt even worse about the war because it had happened so close to their homes.**



# The Outbreak of the Second World War - A Scottish Perspective



On 3rd September 1939, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain announced to the listening public that Britain had declared war on Germany.

## What was life like in Scotland before the Second World War?

During the First World War, Scotland's shipbuilding, engineering works and coal mines had been the main supply source for the war. Clydeside, where many of the shipyards and factories were based, was known as the workshop of the world. However, the demand for munitions and ships dropped in the years following the First World War and unemployment and poverty in Scotland increased.

## What was life like in Germany before the Second World War?

In 1933, Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. The German people blamed the unemployment and poverty in Germany on their government and many turned to extremist political parties such as the Nazis. Hitler was a brilliant speech-maker and he persuaded people to support him. The Nazis attacked anyone who was against Hitler.



## What did Hitler want?

Hitler wanted to reclaim land which had been taken from Germany at the end of the First World War. Hitler then went on to make other demands on territory in Europe.

## How did Scotland and the UK prepare for war?

In Scotland and across the UK, volunteers were recruited for territorial army units, the fire brigade, air raid wardens as well as other community defence roles. Gas masks were given out and leaflets on what to do in an air raid were produced. Parks were also being turned into allotments to grow extra food.

## The Outbreak of War

On 1st September 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Two days later, on the 3rd September, the prime minister announced that Britain had declared war on Germany.

## The Outbreak of the Second World War - A Scottish Perspective

Around 100 000 Scots had been killed in the First World War. This had had a huge impact on many families. No one wanted another war but most people realised that Hitler had to be stopped.

### What happened after war had been declared?

Children were evacuated from Scottish cities for their own safety. However, before long, many children had returned home.

Rationing was introduced soon after the outbreak of war so that everyone could have basic food items such as bacon, butter, tea and sugar.

Men were called up to fight in the war and to work in essential industries like mining and agriculture.



The beaches of the east coast of Scotland were set up with concrete barriers and mines to stop any invasion from the sea.

A large part of Scotland's workforce was again employed in factories, coal mines, engineering works and shipyards to help support the war effort. The Clyde became Britain's main port during the Second World War. More than 100 000 men worked in the shipyards, building warships and aircraft carriers. These vital industries meant parts of Scotland were targets for German bombs. Later in the war, during Scotland's Blitz, hundreds of people were killed, injured and left homeless.



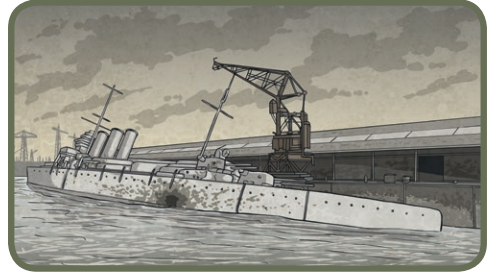
### Attack at Scapa Flow

One of the first major events of the Second World War happened on the 14th October 1939 when a German U-boat torpedoed HMS Royal Oak in Scapa Flow off Orkney. A total of 883 men out of the 1219 crew died when the Royal Oak sank. The sinking of this ship had a huge effect on wartime morale and brought the war very close to home.

This was only the beginning of a war that would last until 1945 and again impact the UK and Scotland. Can you find out about other key topics from 1939 - 1945 that had an impact on Scotland? Some are listed here:

## The Outbreak of the Second World War - A Scottish Perspective

- Clydebank Blitz
- Bombing around Scotland
- The construction of the Churchill Barriers
- The capture of Rudolph Hess
- German spies captured in north-east Scotland
- The Shetland Bus missions
- Prisoners of war in Scotland
- Women's war effort in Scotland



# Questions

1. Who announced that Britain had declared war on Germany and when?

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2. Why was there unemployment and poverty in Scotland in the years following the First World War?

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3. Why did the Nazis have support in Germany before the Second World War?

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4. What preparations were made in Scotland for war?

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5. Around 100 000 Scots had been killed in the First World War. How do you think people felt about the prospect of another war?

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6. Why were children evacuated from Scottish cities after war was declared and why do you think many returned home before long?

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# Questions

7. Why do you think rationing of food was important?

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8. Why were the beaches of the east coast of Scotland set up with concrete barriers and mines?

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9. What benefit for Scotland's workforce did the war give and what danger did this bring?

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10. What happened at Scapa Flow on the 14th October 1939 and how do you think this impacted on the people of Scotland?

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# Answers

1. Who announced that Britain had declared war on Germany and when?  
**On 3rd September 1939, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, announced to that Britain had declared war on Germany.**
2. Why was there unemployment and poverty in Scotland in the years following the First World War?  
**During the First World War Scotland's shipbuilding, engineering works and coal mines had been the main supply source for the war. However, the demand for munitions and ships dropped in the years following the First World War and unemployment and poverty in Scotland increased.**
3. Why did the Nazis have support in Germany before the Second World War?  
**The German people blamed the unemployment and poverty in Germany on their government and many turned to extremist political parties such as the Nazis. Hitler was a brilliant speech-maker and he persuaded people to support him. The Nazis attacked anyone who was against Hitler.**
4. What preparations were made in Scotland for war?  
**In Scotland volunteers were recruited for territorial army units, the fire brigade, air raid wardens as well as other community defence roles. Gas masks were given out and leaflets on what to do in an air raid were produced. Parks were also being turned into allotments to grow extra food.**
5. Around 100 000 Scots had been killed in the First World War. How do you think people felt about the prospect of another war?  
**Children's answers may vary.**
6. Why were children evacuated from Scottish cities after war was declared and why do you think many returned home before long?  
**Children were evacuated from Scottish cities for their own safety. Children's answers may vary.**
7. Why do you think rationing of food was important?  
**Rationing was introduced soon after the outbreak of war so that everyone could have basic food items. OPEN - various answers.**
8. Why were the beaches of the east coast of Scotland set up with concrete barriers and mines?  
**The beaches of the east coast of Scotland were set up with concrete barriers and mines to stop any invasion from the sea.**

# Answers

9. What benefit for Scotland's workforce did the war give and what danger did this bring?  
**A large part of Scotland's workforce was again employed in factories, coal mines, engineering works and shipyards to help support the war effort. The Clyde became Britain's main port during the Second World War. These vital industries meant parts of Scotland were targets for German bombs.**
10. What happened at Scapa Flow on the 14th October 1939 and how do you think this impacted on the people of Scotland?  
**A German U-boat torpedoed HMS Royal Oak in Scapa Flow off Orkney. A total of 883 men out of the 1219 crew died when the Royal Oak sank. The sinking of this ship had a huge effect on wartime morale and for the people of Scotland, it brought the war very close to home. Various answers.**

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On 3rd September 1939, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain announced to the listening public that Britain had declared war on Germany.

## What was life like in Scotland before the Second World War?

During the First World War, Scotland's shipbuilding, engineering works and coal mines had been the main supply source for the war effort. Clydeside, where many of the shipyards and factories were based, was known as the workshop of the world. However, the demand for munitions and ships dropped in the years following the First World War and unemployment and poverty in Scotland increased. Emigration also increased; countries like Canada and Australia attracted many Scots who were ready to make a new life and a fresh start.

## What was life like in Germany before the Second World War?

In 1933, Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. The German people blamed the unemployment and poverty in Germany on their government and many turned to extremist political parties such as the Nazis. People were also angry about how Germany had been punished after the First World War. Hitler was a brilliant speech-maker and he persuaded people to support him. The Nazis attacked anyone who was against Hitler.



## What did Hitler want?

In 1938, the British prime minister was negotiating with Hitler over part of Czechoslovakia, known as the Sudetenland. Hitler wanted to reclaim this area, which had been taken from Germany at the end of the First World War. Whilst these negotiations were going on, the British government started to prepare the nation for the possibility of another war. The negotiations fell short of a satisfactory settlement but the Czechoslovak leader agreed to Hitler's demands. Hitler then went on to make other demands on territory in Europe.

## How did Scotland and the UK prepare for war?

In Scotland and across the UK, volunteers were recruited for territorial army



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units, the fire brigade, air raid wardens as well as other important community defence roles. Gas masks were given out and leaflets on what to do in an air raid were produced. By the time war began in 1939, 1.5 million Anderson shelters had been given to people for their gardens. Parks were also being turned into allotments to grow extra food.

### The Outbreak of War

On 1st September 1939 Germany invaded Poland. The British ambassador in Berlin gave an ultimatum to the German government asking it to withdraw its troops. Two days later, on the 3rd September, the prime minister announced that Britain had declared war on Germany.

Around 100 000 Scots had been killed in the First World War. This had had a huge impact on many families and on Scottish society. No one wanted another war but most people realised that Hitler had to be stopped.

### What happened after war had been declared?

Children were evacuated from Scottish cities for their own safety. However, this was upsetting for all as it meant splitting up families and before long, many children had returned home.

Rationing was introduced soon after the outbreak of war so that everyone could have basic food items such as bacon, butter, tea and sugar. However, goods could still be bought on the black market for a price.



Men were called up to fight in the war and to work in essential industries like mining and agriculture.

The beaches of the east coast of Scotland were set up with concrete barriers and mines to stop any invasion from the sea.

Scotland's heavy industries had been boosted by the need to rearm in the run up to the Second World War and a large part of Scotland's workforce were again employed in factories, coal mines, engineering works and shipyards. The

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Clyde became Britain's main port during the Second World War. More than 100 000 men worked in the shipyards building warships and aircraft carriers. Workers in the Rolls Royce factory in Scotland built the Merlin engine which was used to power Spitfires. The ordnance factory at Bishopton in Renfrewshire manufactured explosives. These vital industries meant parts of Scotland were targets for German bombs. Later in the war, during Scotland's Blitz, hundreds of people were killed, injured and left homeless.

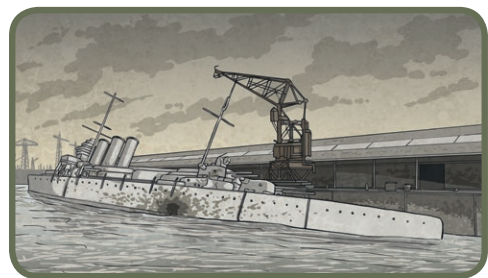
### Attack at Scapa Flow

One of the first major events of the Second World War happened on the 14th October 1939 when a German U-boat torpedoed the HMS Royal Oak in Scapa Flow off Orkney. A total of 883 men out of the 1219 crew died when the Royal Oak sank. The sinking of this ship had a huge effect on wartime morale and brought the war very close to home.

It was also in Orkney where the first British civilian of the Second World War died in an air raid. James Isbister lived near Stenness on Orkney. He was hit when a German bomber dumped its explosives after attempting a bombing raid on Scapa Flow.

This was only the beginning of a war that would last until 1945 and again impact the UK and Scotland. Can you find out about other key topics from 1939 - 1945 that had an impact on Scotland? Some are listed here:

- Clydebank Blitz
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# Questions

1. Who announced that Britain had declared war on Germany? When did they announce it?

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2. Why do you think, during the First World War, that Clydeside was known as the workshop of the world?

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3. Why was there unemployment and poverty in Scotland in the years following the First World War?

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4. Why do you think emigration from Scotland increased during these years?

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5. What did the people of Scotland and Germany have in common during the years between the First World War and the Second World War?

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6. How did the Nazis ensure support for Hitler?

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7. List five of the actions taken in Scotland in preparation for war and after war was declared.

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# Questions

8. Despite heavy losses in the First World War, why do you think Scottish people supported the outbreak of war?

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9. What benefit for Scotland's workforce did the war give and what danger did this bring?

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10. What happened at Scapa Flow on the 14th October 1939 and how do you think this impacted on the people of Scotland?

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# Answers

1. Who announced that Britain had declared war on Germany? When did they announce it?  
**On 3rd September 1939, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, announced that Britain had declared war on Germany. This was two days after Germany had invaded Poland.**
2. Why do you think, during the First World War, that Clydeside was known as the workshop of the world?  
**During the First World War, Scotland's shipbuilding, engineering works and coal mines had been the main supply source for the war and Clydeside was where many of the shipyards and factories were based.**
3. Why was there unemployment and poverty in Scotland in the years following the First World War?  
**The demand for munitions and ships dropped in the years following the First World War and unemployment and poverty in Scotland increased.**
4. Why do you think emigration from Scotland increased during these years?  
**Emigration increased because countries like Canada and Australia attracted many Scots who were ready to make a new life and a fresh start.**
5. What did the people of Scotland and Germany have in common during the years between the First World War and the Second World War?  
**The people of Scotland and Germany both suffered unemployment and poverty during the years between the First World War and the Second World War.**
6. How did the Nazis ensure support for Hitler?  
**The Nazis attacked anyone who was against Hitler.**
7. List five of the actions taken in Scotland in preparation for war and after war was declared.  
**Choose from:**  
**Volunteers were recruited for territorial army units, the fire brigade, air raid wardens as well as other community defence roles.**  
**Gas masks were given out.**  
**Anderson shelters were given to people for their gardens.**  
**Leaflets on what to do in an air raid were produced.**  
**Parks were turned into allotments to grow extra food.**
8. Despite heavy losses in the First World War, why do you think Scottish people supported the outbreak of war?  
**No one wanted another war but most people realised that Hitler had to be stopped.**

# Answers

9. What benefit for Scotland's workforce did the war give and what danger did this bring?  
**A large part of Scotland's workforce was again employed in factories, coal mines, engineering works and shipyards to help support the war effort. The Clyde became Britain's main port during the Second World War. These vital industries meant parts of Scotland were targets for German bombs.**
10. What happened at Scapa Flow on the 14th October 1939 and how do you think this impacted on the people of Scotland?  
**A German U-boat torpedoed HMS Royal Oak in Scapa Flow off Orkney. A total of 883 men out of the 1219 crew died when the Royal Oak sank. The sinking of this ship had a huge effect on wartime morale and for the people of Scotland, it brought the war very close to home. Explanations of the impact may vary.**