National Museum of Flight Scotland

Second World War Meet the Pilot

Things for your pupils to do after watching the digital schools session.

These resources are still under development and so have not been through our usual design process. If you have any suggestions on how these activities could be improved please email: a.love-rodgers@nms.ac.uk.

To find out more go to: https://www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/stories/scottish-history-and-archaeology/second-world-war/

Investigating the Second World War: Asking Questions

Just as detectives investigate incidents that happen today by interviewing witnesses, we can also find out about the Second World War by talking to people who lived through it.

When?
The Second World War broke out on 1 September 1939 and ended on 2 September 1945.

Can you calculate (to the nearest year) what age someone would be today if they were born at the beginning of the war? 2021–1939 =

_____

Can you calculate (to the nearest year) what age someone would be today if they were born at the end of the war: 2021–1945 =

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Do you know anyone you could question who is this age or older? Perhaps it's

a family member, a family friend or neighbour. Even if you don't know someone that age, perhaps an older person you know remembers speaking to someone who told them about what happened during the war. They could tell you what they remember too.

Make sure you check with your parents/guardians that it is OK to speak to them.

There are more 'w' words which we can use in questions to find out what it was like. Write down as many questions as you can beginning with;

What?   Where?   Who?   Why?

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Investigating the Second World War: War Memorials

There are over 80,000 war memorials in the UK. Most villages, towns and cities have one in a public park, a churchyard or on the main street. These can be statues, large stone blocks or crosses designed to remind us of the people from that area who died serving in the armed forces. The people's names are written on the monument.

Dunbar War Memorial.

Do you know where your local war memorial is?

Use this link to search for your nearest one to you:
www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/search/

Ask your parent or guardian to walk with you to your nearest war memorial. When you get there look at the writing on it:

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Are the people listed on it just from the Second World War or are they from other wars as well?

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Does it tell you whether the people listed were in the Army, Royal Air Force or Royal Navy?

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Do you know anyone who has the same name as the people on the war memorial?

_____

Are there any carved pictures or statues as part of the memorial? What are they of?

_____

Investigating the Second World War: What is left behind?

There are few places in Scotland that were not changed by the Second World War. The threat of aerial attack, coastal invasion and supply shortages meant that changes had to be made in the use of land and resources for defence and survival.

Requisitioning

Buildings and fields were taken over by the armed forces for use as airfields, barracks complexes and offices. This was called *requisitioning*.

Forests were felled for the wood and large country estate houses were turned into for training centres and places for soldiers to live. Even iron railings and gates in our villages, towns and cities were cut out and melted down for use in armaments.

Construction

New defences had to be assembled very quickly with limited resources. Inexpensive materials like corrugated iron, concrete and brick were used. These structures were not expected to be needed for very long so were not designed to be long lasting or nice to look at. Concrete blocks, called tank traps, were built on beaches to stop vehicles arriving by boat.

Coastal defences

Where you live can you see anywhere that railings have been taken down just leaving metal stumps?

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If you are able to visit a beach are there any concrete blocks left over from the war?

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Are there any unusual and old structures made from brick or concrete that may have been used during the war?

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Look on a map or aerial photograph of your area on Google, are there any straight roads in fields that could be runways? Think of the picture of RAF East Fortune in the digital session.

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Draw your village/town/city and mark the areas you think would be most at risk from attack in a time of war. Show how you might protect them.

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Find out what remains in your area by searching: https://www.tracesofwar.com

Cover illustration by Dawson Creative.