

Working Together in the Second World War - Key Stage 3

Video Script

Memorials: Polish Forces Memorial, Normandy Veterans, Brigade of Gurkhas Memorial **Presenter:** Karen

With this tour, we are looking at 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.

We will be looking at three specific memorials, the Polish Forces Memorial, the Normandy Veterans Memorial and the Brigade of Gurkhas Memorial. At each of these memorials we will learn more about some of the different communities who worked together in the Second World War, in Europe and in the Far East.

The first memorial we are going to look at is the Polish Forces Memorial. This memorial commemorates the Polish men and women who lost their lives in the Second World War. The components of this memorial were made in Poland and then brought here for construction.

The four figures represent the Polish army, navy, air force and the underground movement and on top of them all is an eagle, the emblem for the Polish state. During the Second World War, the Poles were the fourth largest Allied force in Europe. Surrounding the central sculpture are a series of plaques, these describe the Polish contribution to the Second World War.

The Battle of Monte Cassino also known as the Battle for Rome, was one of the most important military operations in the Second World War. It was not just one battle but a series of military assaults by the Allies starting on 17 January 1944 and ending in late May 1944.

Nearly a quarter of a million Allied personnel fought in the battle, included people from Britain, the USA, Poland, India, Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and Morocco. Their collaboration led to one of the most important victories of the Second World War, which helped bring an end to the conflict. But there were 55,000 Allied casualties.



We are now at the Normandy Veterans memorial. The avenue of poplar trees, memorial plinth and the five stones are dedicated to all the men and women who took part in Operation Overlord in 1944.

Operation Overlord was the codename for the Allies' plan to invade mainland Europe which was occupied by Nazi Germany. The operation began on 6 June 1944, known as D-Day, when British, Allied and Commonwealth personnel landed on five beaches in Normandy.

The five boulders in the memorial are named after the beaches; Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword, and are arranged in the same order that they would be seen from the sea. The beaches were originally called Swordfish, Goldfish and Jellyfish, shortened to Sword, Gold and Jelly. Winston Churchill objected to the name saying he would not send men to die on a beach named 'Jellyfish', and the J became Juno.

It was the largest amphibious operation in history involving an armada of over 5,000 vessels and ships, 11,000 aeroplanes and over 130,000 ground troops. The operation required the collaboration of thirteen Allied nations and Commonwealth countries, as well as the assistances from tens of thousands of members of the French Resistance. The military was supported by people from a range of professions including meteorologists, scientists, and the GCHQ. Meanwhile, inventors had to invent new technologies, such as Mulberry Harbours and Hobart's Funnies, to enable the landings to happen.

The success of the operation required collaboration by people from across the world. It marked the beginning of the liberation of France and ultimately the end of the Second World War in Europe.

As well as being at war with Germany in Europe, in the Second World War, Britain and its Allies were also in conflict with Japan in the Far East.

One of largest forces to serve in the Far East was the Fourteenth Army, which was made up of over a million people from across the Commonwealth. The Fourteenth Army included over half a million people from pre-partition India alongside people from regions including Britain, East Africa, and West Africa.

Many Gurkhas also served in the Fourteenth Army. We are now standing at the Brigade of Gurkhas Memorial which remembers the service given by all who have served in Gurkha regiments since 1815, including in the Second World War. The design of the memorial is inspired by a chautara, a resting place for travellers on hillsides.



Serving in the Far East was extremely challenging. Soldiers had to live in difficult conditions and were caught in brutal combat with the Imperial Japanese Army. But, by working together, the people in the Fourteenth Army won some of the most difficult battles in the Second World War, such as the battles of Kohima and Imphal which took place between March and June 1944. The battles were a turning point in the Second World War. The Fourteenth Army had been able to stop the Imperial Japanese Army from progressing further into pre-partition India and instead were able to start pushing them back.

Over a year later, on 15 August 1945, the conflict with Japan came to an end thanks, in part, to the collaboration between people from across the Commonwealth and Allied nations who served alongside each other in the Fourteenth Army.

The Second World War would not have been won without all the support from all armies and Allies which eventually brought victory.

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WORKING TOGETHER IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR ANSWERS

Session One

Questions after watching the film.

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

The four figures represent the Polish army, navy, air force and the underground movement.

The Poles were the fourth largest Allied force in Europe.

True

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

Four from the following countries, Britain, the USA, Poland, India, Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and Morocco.

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

Operation Overlord

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

Omaha, Utah, Gold, Sword, Juno

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

13

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

Fourteenth Army

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

A resting place for travellers on hillsides.

Who were the Allies fighting in the Far East?

(Imperial) Japan

The Second World War

Name three countries that were part of the Allies.

Three countries from the following, Britain, France, Poland, Soviet Union, USA, Commonwealth Countries, Pre-partition India.

Name the three main Axis countries.

(Nazi) Germany, Italy, (Imperial) Japan

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

Choose two from the following, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria

What is important about 8 May 1945?

The war in Europe ended on this day.

What is this day known as?

It is known as Victory in Europe Day, or VEDay.

What is important about 15 August 1945?

The war in the Far East ended on this day.

What is this day known as?

It is known as Victory over Japan Day, or VJDay.

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

2.5 million.

D-Day and Operation Overlord

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

These are some of the answers that may have been written.

- The success of the day was largely due to the cooperation of the Allied nations involved.
- They planned the attack meticulously from all angles.
- Although the Germans thought there would be an attack, the Allied secret services launched a number of operations to fool the Germans into thinking the attack would come from somewhere else.
- The weather on the day of the attack had been very poor and the Germans did not think the Allies would attack, so they were caught off guard.

- The attack began when Allied planes and warships bombarded German positions along the coastline. This was to damage the defences making it easier for the troops to get ashore.
- On the day, planes and gliders dropped tens of thousands of Allied soldiers behind the German defences. They took control of important roads and bridges. This made it harder for the German army to rush extra men towards areas where the troops were landing.

Session Two

Battle of Monte Cassino

Michael Bondel

What nationality was Michael Bondel?

Polish

What did the soldiers have to carry in their backpacks?

Blankets, coats and personal equipment.

What happened when Michael and his fellow troops made their way up the narrow mountain path?

Nazi German mortar shells fell on them.

On 12 May, Michael advanced with the infantry. What were the signallers unable to carry? What situation did this put them in?

They could not carry arms / weapons. Because of this they went into battle unarmed.

News Report on the Battle of Monte Cassino

Write a news report the day after the Polish II Corps reached the monastery at Monte Cassino – 19 May 1945. The report should be formal and should include the following.

- a headline
- a sub heading
- a quote

The Fourteenth Army: Stories of Home Activity

People from different countries served alongside each other in the Fourteenth Army. Many people made new friends and learned a lot about each other's cultures and communities.

One of the following countries is to be chosen, Britain, pre-partition India, Nepal, Nigeria, East, Southern and West Africa

A piece of creative writing about one of the countries that was part of the Fourteenth Army.

The writing should include,

- A description of the country from the point of view of someone coming from there and serving in the Fourteenth Army.
- What was the country like?
- What would the person have been missing about their home?