



THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR II ON IRELAND, NORTH AND SOUTH

CHRONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

1939 AD



1939

World War II began
Southern Ireland declared neutrality
Northern Ireland involved in World War II
Irish Republican Army (IRA) raid on Irish army magazine in Phoenix Park, Dublin

1940 AD

1940
James Craig, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, died
J.M. Andrews became Prime Minister
German bombing of Campile, Co. Wexford, three people killed



1941 AD

1941
Bombing of Belfast, 7–8 April, 15–16 April, 4–5 May and 5–6 May 1941

Bombing of North Strand, Dublin, 31 May, 1941
Irish Shipping set up



1942 AD

1943
Basil Brooke became Prime Minister of Northern Ireland

1944 AD

1945 AD
World War II ended

L.O. 2.8
The Nature of History: 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11
CBA1
CBA2

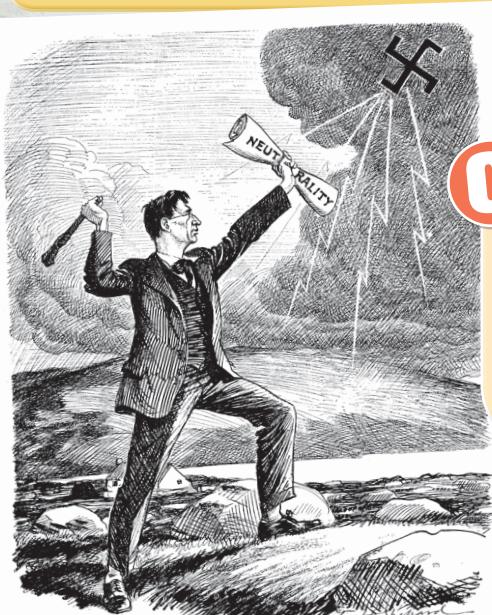
You will learn to ...

- ① Describe the impact of World War II on the lives of people in the South of Ireland
- ② Describe the impact of World War II on the lives of people in the North of Ireland
- ③ Explore the Nature of History



KEY WORDS

- | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| • Neutrality | • Emergency | • Rationing |
| • Shortages | • Blitz | • Source |
| • Evidence | • Fact | • Opinion |
| • Primary | • Secondary | • Biased |
| • Objective | | |



Q

British cartoon on Irish neutrality:
what is the message of the cartoon? Is it in favour of Irish neutrality?

Life in Southern Ireland during World War II

Ireland in 1939

When World War II broke out in September, 1939, the South of Ireland (also called Éire) was part of the British Commonwealth. However, in the years since independence was achieved, the South of Ireland had won greater freedom from Britain.

Éamon de Valera was Taoiseach, and a new Constitution for the country had been established in 1937. This made the country a republic in all but name.

Neutral or not

When war broke out in September, 1939, the South of Ireland declared itself **neutral**. This meant that the South of Ireland would not fight in the war and would not support either side. This showed how **independent** the country was now. The South of Ireland also favoured **neutrality** because:

- Northern Ireland was still part of the United Kingdom
- Ireland was too weak to fight stronger countries

Speaking in the Dáil in September, 1939, de Valera said, '*The government stands before you as the guardians of the interest of our people, and it is to guard those interests as best we can that we are proposing to follow the policy of neutrality.*'



PROFILE – ÉAMON DE VALERA, TAOISEACH

- De Valera was born in New York but grew up in Bruree, Co. Limerick.
- He took part in the 1916 Rising as commander of Boland's Mills.
- He opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921–22.
- He founded Fianna Fáil and became head of government in 1932.
- He led the country for the next 16 years, including as Taoiseach during World War II.
- He was elected President of Ireland in 1959.



IRELAND NEUTRAL

Oireachtas Is Unanimous For Emergency Measures

GERMANY'S NEUTRALITY ATTITUDE TO IRELAND

MR. DE VALERA intimated to Press representatives while the Dáil was in session yesterday morning that the German Minister had called on him on Thursday last and informed him of Germany's peaceful attitude towards Ireland and said that if Germany were engaged in a European war the German Government would respect Ireland's neutrality, provided it was adhered to.

Mr. de Valera replied that the Irish Government wished to remain at peace with Germany, as with all other Powers, and referred to a statement published in the Press on February 20 last, that the aim of Government policy was to maintain and preserve Ire-

MINISTERS TAKE OVER NEW DUTIES

THE Taoiseach announced last night a reorganisation of the Government as follows:—

Minister for Supplies—Sean Lemass.
Minister for Co-ordination of Military and Civil Defence—Mr. Frank Aiken.
Minister for Industry and Commerce—Thomas O'Dwyer.
Minister for Defence—Mr. Oscar Traynor.
Minister for Lands and Posts and Telegraphs—Mr. Gerald Boland.
Minister of Local Government and Ministry of Education—Tom Taniste.

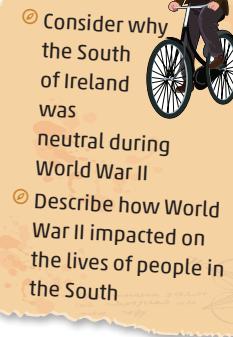
THE Government intended to pursue its policy of keeping the country out of war, the Taoiseach informed the Oireachtas on Saturday, when a special session of the Dáil and Seanad passed, without division, all stages of the First Amendment of the Constitution Bill and the Emergency Powers Bill. Resolutions were passed declaring a state of national emergency. The Bills were later signed by the President.

Both Houses sat until early yesterday morning to get the measures through. The Seanad adjourned sine die at 4.45 a.m. and the Dáil at 5, until October 18.

Mr. de Valera said that so long as the country or any part of

1. In the main story, what measures (laws) did the Oireachtas (parliament, Dáil and Seanad) pass?
2. How long did the Dáil and Seanad sit to get the measures through?
3. Did any person vote against declaring 'a state of national emergency'?
4. Is this a **primary** or a **secondary** source?
5. Would you consider the reporting to be **biased** or **objective**? Explain your answers using evidence from the newspaper.

A report from *The Irish Press* newspaper



Neutrality in action

The government passed the Emergency Powers Act, which gave it great power to control the country. The 'Emergency' was the word used to describe the situation in the South of Ireland during World War II.

The government also built up the defence forces, in case the South of Ireland was invaded during the war. These were increased from about 20,000 to almost 250,000 part-time and full-time soldiers. The Irish government also censored radio and newspaper reports, to maintain a neutral position.



A ration book

clothes, footwear and petrol had to be introduced because of the shortages. Coupons from ration books were exchanged for goods in the shops.

Ireland had surplus food, but some foods had to be imported. A series of compulsory tillage orders were enacted to increase the growing of crops such as wheat. However, there were still shortages, which could not be made up by imports.

People overcame the shortages by other means.

Tea leaves were used over and over again. Bread was baked using Irish wheat, and some people called it 'black bread'. Goods could always be bought on the 'black market', but they were very expensive.



Gas inspectors (or glimmer men) checked out the use of gas in houses. What does this cartoon say about the attitude of people to the glimmer men?



Seán Lemass, Minister for Supplies

Fuel shortages

Electricity and gas were also rationed. Inspectors called 'glimmer men' called to houses to ensure that people were not using the little gas that was left in the pipes. Very little coal was imported from England, so turf replaced coal as a fuel. The trains had to use turf instead of coal. Because of this, the train journey from Cork to Dublin often took fourteen hours. Many people went off to the bog to cut their own turf for home.

Factories had to lay off workers. Agriculture was hit due to shortage of fertilisers. The lack of jobs caused heavy emigration. Thousands of both men and women workers went to Britain to work in the war industries. Thousands more joined the British army, navy and airforce. Added to the 20,000 Irishmen in the British army at the beginning of the war, there were 110,000 volunteers during the war. There were 66,000 volunteers from the South of Ireland, and 64,000 volunteers from Northern Ireland. About 7,500 of those died in the war. There were nine Irish winners of the Victoria Cross, including one from Northern Ireland.

The war had little direct impact on the lives of the people of the South. It was bombed on a number of occasions by German planes. The most serious bombing was in the North Strand in Dublin in May 1941, when 34 people were killed.

Curragh camp

During the war, some British, American and German planes lost their way and crash-landed in the South. Some of the pilots died in the crashes, some survived.

The government decided that since the country was neutral, servicemen from countries involved in the war who ended up in the South would be interned for the war. These were held in the Curragh camp in separate detention centres, in corrugated iron huts.

The atmosphere in the camps was very relaxed and German prisoners could go on trips in the locality or to Dublin. Some studied in Trinity College, and married Irish women. In 1943, the Allied airmen were moved elsewhere, and were secretly freed. After the war, the German internees were sent back to Germany.

The IRA members were also held in a separate camp in the Curragh. The IRA wanted to use the war to invade Northern Ireland. They raided the government magazine in the Phoenix Park in 1939 and took 1 million rounds of ammunition, which was later recovered. De Valera arrested and imprisoned IRA leaders in the Curragh; some were executed, and some died on hunger strike.

RESULTS	
Kerry	1 goal 5 points
Galway	7 points
Attendance	45,512
Receipts	£3,540

High Commissioner, who was accompanied by Mrs. Kearney, told an *Irish Independent* representative: "I think it was a wonderful game. But the Minor Hurling match between Cork and Antrim took my fancy. It was the first time I had seen a hurling match."

Mr. P. McNamee, President of the GAA, paid a visit to Mr. W. Dillon, captain of the Kerry team, referred to Irish, in the game as "champions". He congratulated Kerry on having won the All-Ireland championship, and paid a tribute to the splendid stand made by Galway."

MEDALS PRESENTED
At a reception and cocktail to the

Bill Dillon, Kerry captain, with the Championship cup at Croke Park.
Irish Independent Photo (R.)

Fuel shortages and travel restrictions affected attendances at GAA matches. However, All-Ireland finals in hurling and football were held each year during the war. This is a report from the *Irish Independent* on Monday 8 September 1941, on the All-Ireland Football Final.

Why did people cycle to see the All-Ireland final that year?



The Merchant Navy: Irish ships kept the supply lines open by importing badly needed goods. The ships had ÉIRE printed in very large letters and marked the colours of the Irish flag on the sides of the ships. However, this did not always save them from being targeted. Sixteen Irish merchant ships were sunk during World War II. This led to the loss of 149 men killed and 32 men wounded. These men are commemorated in a monument at City Quay, Dublin.



Analysing Sources

The impact of World War II

HISTORICAL JUDGEMENT

Ballincollig, near Cork city, had a population of 252 in the 1930s. The village experienced the impact of the war, either through its barracks, which was re-opened, or through the lives of its people.

The experiences of Ballincollig reflect the lives of most people in other parts of the South of Ireland during World War II.

The army and the emergency

Q Source 1

Ballincollig was very important during the Second World War because many soldiers were based at Murphy Barracks. The barracks had been burned in 1921 (during the Irish Civil War), but it was rebuilt at the start of the Emergency. By 1941, there were up to 1,000 men stationed in the barracks. In June 1940, enrolment began for the **Local Security Forces** (LSF). This was an auxiliary force to help out the regular army. By 1941, the LSF were organised into about 120 groups in the Cork area. Mr Murphy (a resident) said they did their training with mock weapons in the grounds of Blarney Castle, but later they were supplied with real guns, heavy coats and gaiters. Mr Murphy remembers driving posts into the ground in the flat fields where the Community School and Scoil Barra (primary school) are now. They were to prevent German planes from landing there. Some men from Ballincollig went to England to get a job and many Irishmen joined the British Army.

Q Source 2



The Irish army on manoeuvres near Ballincollig during World War II (Cork Examiner)



- According to Source 1, what important **role** did the Irish army play in World War II?
- Where did the **LSF** do their training? What training did they do?
- What happened to those that were **unemployed**?
- What oral sources were used in Source 1?
- What do the **photographs** tell you about the manoeuvres conducted by the Irish army during World War II? What is noticeable about the **helmets** of the soldiers? Explain your answers by using evidence from the sources.



Analysing Sources

Lives of the people

Q Source 3

Life of the people

Rations

People we interviewed told us that the war did not change their lives a great deal. Some foods were scarce; so were clothes, soap, polish and fuel. When the war started, some foods and fuel were **rationed**. People wrote away to the Department of Supplies for a **ration card**. They only got two ounces of tea per week. Mr Tanner had a mill for grinding wheat to keep his family supplied with bread. Irish wheat was only good for the brown coloured loaf which was not very tasty. Drink was also rationed. Some people were tricked into buying very expensive tea on the '**black market**', only to find it half-full with sawdust. Others claimed allowances for family members who were no longer at home. But mostly the ration system worked well. Some foods were scarce for a year or so after the war, but eventually they became available again.

Fuel

Because of shipping difficulties, [Ireland] could not get in fuel supplies. Petrol was rationed very early on, and people got coupons for each month. Mr Tanner told us they had to use the horse and trailer when the month's allowance was gone [for delivering milk to Cork city].

But most people did not have cars anyway, so it made **little difference** to them. Everyone had a bicycle, and often cycled long journeys.

Coal was also scarce, so a big effort went into **turf cutting**. Miss Judge remembered they bought part of a bog, and brought home turf in a horse and cart. The Army was sent out to harvest turf, but some soldiers did not like the work.

News

People often listened to news on the **radio**, because there was no television then. Often people, especially fathers, would go to Mary O'Connell's pub to listen to matches, games and news. The news would have reports of the war and songs to keep people entertained. Speeches were made by Éamon de Valera who was Taoiseach. People were told how Germany saw the war when they listened to **Lord Haw-Haw**. He came on the radio nearly every night and began with 'Germany calling, Germany calling'.

Social life

People told us that they could still go out and enjoy themselves during the war. They were not afraid of bombs or anything like that. They did not travel very far to dances or games – very few people had cars and there was very little petrol for those who had. Most people cycled to the dances, and to the hurling and football matches.

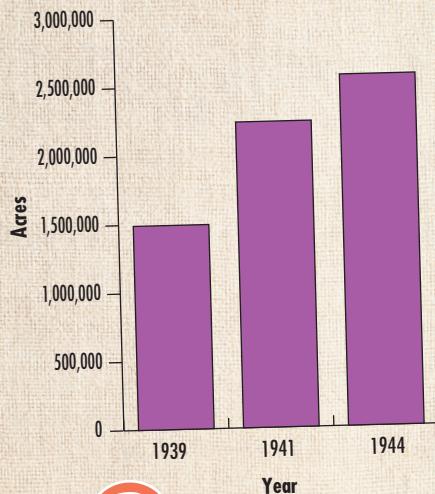
(Source: Fifth Class, Scoil Barra, *The War Years: An Account of the Emergency in Ballincollig and District [1939–45]*, in *Times Past, Journal of the Ballincollig Community School Local History Society [1990–91]*)



1. Did people think that the war had a great **impact** on their lives?
2. How was **rationing** organised?
3. How did the people try to overcome the **shortages**?
4. Did shortages end when the war ended?
5. Did petrol rationing have a large impact?
6. How did people overcome the shortages of coal?
7. What role did the radio play in World War II in the South of Ireland?
8. **Investigate** who Lord Haw-Haw was.
9. Did the war have a large impact on social activities?
10. What is your **overall impression** of life in the South of Ireland during World War II?
11. What **evidence** is there that much of the research for this project was based on **oral history**?
12. What are the **strengths** and **weaknesses** of oral history as a source (see p. 336)?
13. How would you **overcome** any of these weaknesses when you are researching? Explain your answers using evidence from the sources.

Q**Source 4**

Land under tillage (ploughed) in the South of Ireland (acres)

**Q****Source 5**

Falling imports to Ireland

	Jan to March, 1939	Jan to March, 1941	Percentage fall
Wheat	86,668	16,394	81
Fruit and vegetables	16,946	3,766	78
Fertilisers	77,706	4,354	94
Timber	448,806	139,336	69

(Source: History Ireland)

Q

Does the information in these sources (4 to 6) support the evidence about life in Ireland in Source 3? Explain your answer by referring to all the sources.

Q**Source 6**

Food consumption in calories, per head of population

Year	Ireland	Britain	Germany
1934–38	3,109	3,042	2,921
1946–47	3,059	2,854	1,980

Oral history

Strengths and Weaknesses of Oral History

Records feelings and atmosphere of the time

Provides eyewitness accounts of various events

Adds to other sources, photos, public records, etc.

Emails, telephones may make some written records scarce

Records life of ordinary people

Records life of women, minorities and the not-famous

Records aspects of life not in official records

Views and opinions can be biased

Can have faulty memory

Should be checked against other types of sources

Limited to one lifetime

Limited to modern history

Could be jumbled up accounts of what happened

Reliability can be questioned if recording done long after events

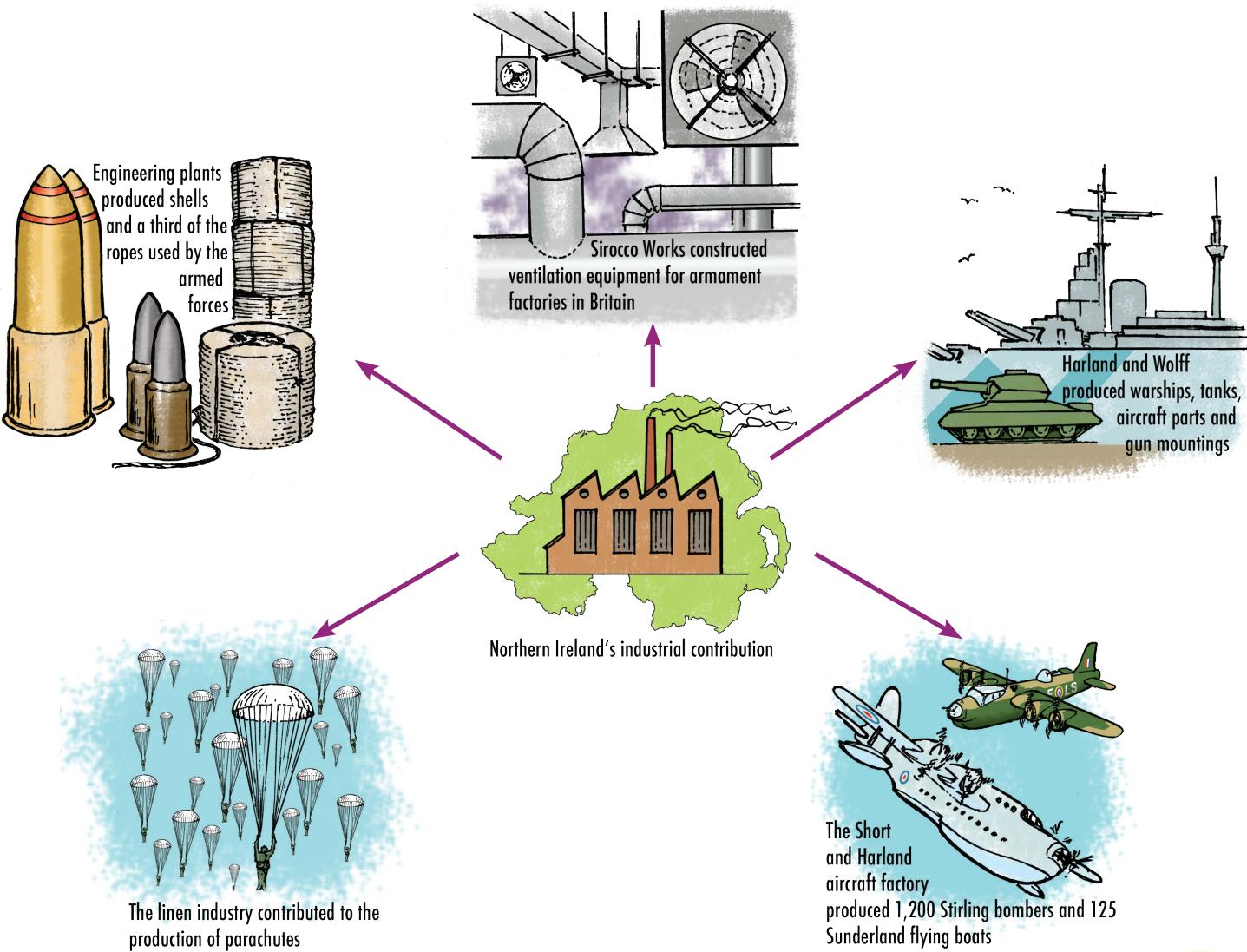
Life in Northern Ireland during World War II

Crucial role of the North

In Northern Ireland, the story was different to the South. Northern Ireland, as part of the United Kingdom, took an active part in the war. Even though conscription (compulsory enlistment in the army) was not enforced in Northern Ireland because of nationalist objections there, rationing was. Moreover, the German occupation of France and the neutrality of Southern Ireland meant that Northern Ireland played a crucial role in World War II.

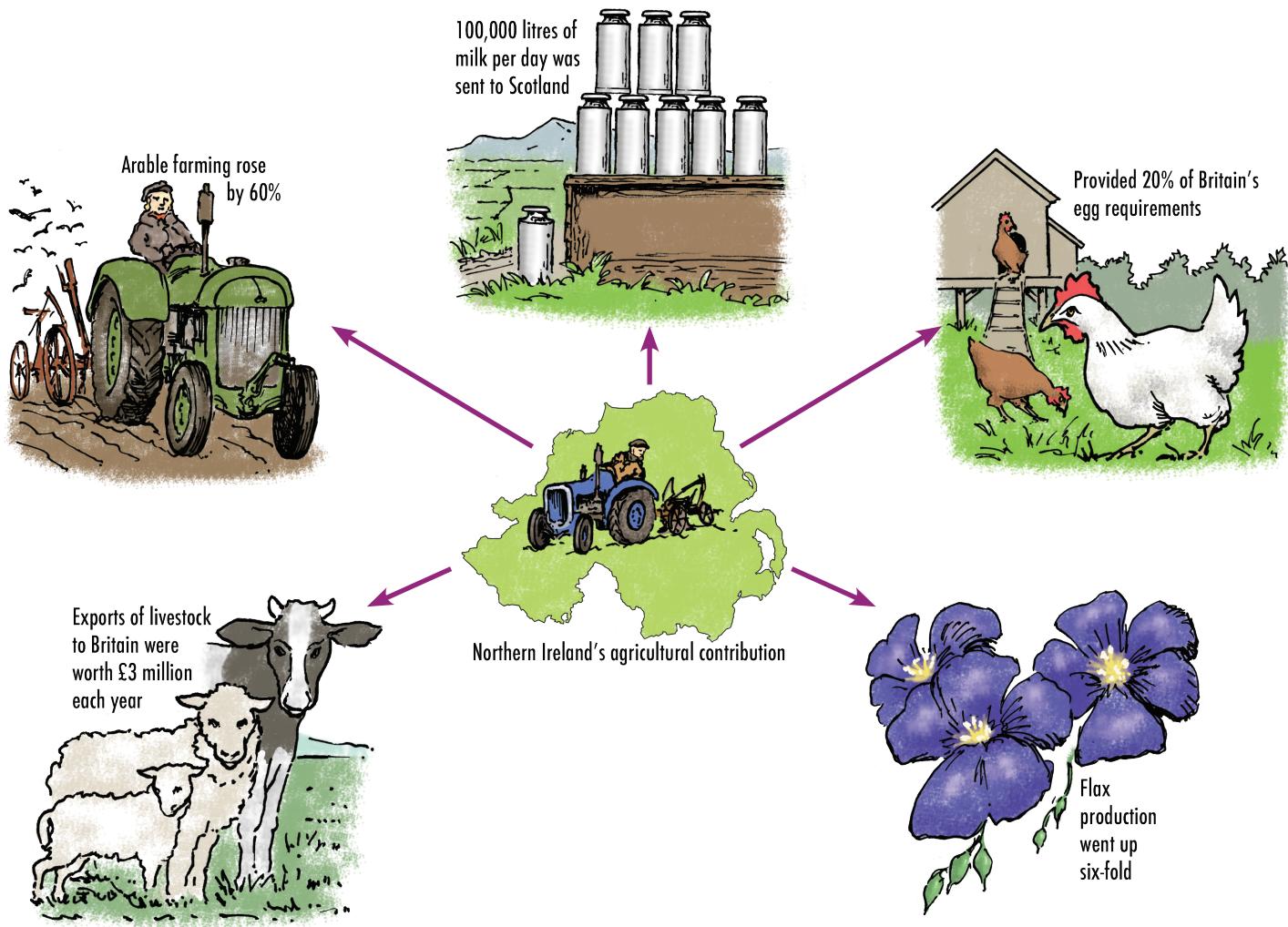
Planes based in Northern Ireland were used to patrol the North Atlantic and look for German U-boats and to protect convoys bringing supplies to Britain and Northern Ireland.

When the United States joined the war in December 1941, Northern Ireland became an important base for American troops. At one time, 120,000 American sailors and airmen were based in the country. Some were manning ships to protect the Atlantic trade, while others were preparing for D-Day.



Describe the impact of World War II on life in Northern Ireland





The North's industries

Northern Ireland's **industries** grew, so unemployment fell from pre-war levels of 25% to 5% during the war. Warships and merchant ships were built at **Harland and Wolff**, over 1,600 aircraft were built by **Shorts**. Tanks, parachutes, rope and shells were all produced for the war effort.

The North's **farmers** also prospered. They received guaranteed prices for their food on the British market. Food was shipped from Belfast port to Britain every day, as compulsory tillage orders increased the acreage under flax, oats and potatoes.

Northern Ireland's contribution to World War II

Historian Thomas Hennessy said, '*Northern Ireland's main contribution came in the areas of food production and munitions. Farmers provided Britain with £3 million worth of cattle and sheep per year, 20% of home-produced eggs and 25,000 gallons of liquid milk in four out of six wartime winters. Belfast's shipyards produced 140 warships, 123 merchant ships and repaired 3,000 ships. Munitions producers manufactured 75 million shells, 180 million incendiary bullets, 50,000 bayonets, and a variety of other military material. ... Northern Ireland's only Victoria Cross was won by James Magennis, a Belfast Catholic in the Royal Navy, in July 1945.*'

Belfast attacked – the Belfast Blitz

Belfast was poorly defended during the war, with only 22 anti-aircraft batteries, no searchlights and no night fighters to guard it. It was an easy target for German bombers. The Northern government thought Belfast was too far away from Germany.

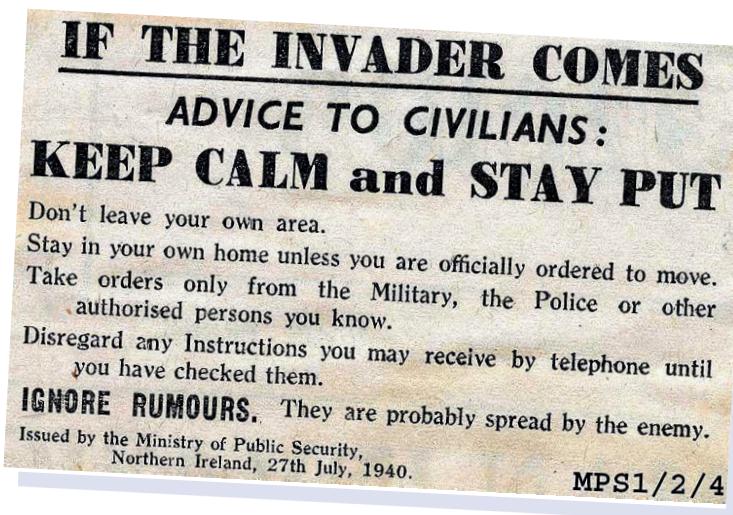
The city and its industries were heavily attacked **four times** in April and May, 1941, during the **Belfast Blitz**. In all, over 1,100 people were killed in these attacks.

Half the houses of the city were destroyed, leaving thousands homeless and also showing the great poverty in the working-class areas of Belfast. On two occasions the Southern government sent **fire brigades** to Belfast to help the people there.

As a result of the raids, thousands of people left the city, some to the South of Ireland, most to towns outside of Belfast. Also thousands left each night to shelter in the surrounding countryside until morning.



James Magennis, VC



What do you think of the advice given in this poster 'IF THE INVADER COMES'?

VE-Day

Victory in Europe Day was celebrated in the streets of Belfast and elsewhere in Northern Ireland.

In Dublin, Trinity College students celebrated the victory of the Allies in Europe. However, they provoked a **counter-demonstration** by UCD students who took exception to the way the Trinity College students flew flags from the roof of the university building – they had placed the Irish flag lowest of the flags hoisted on the mast.



Analysing Sources

The Belfast Blitz

JOB OF THE HISTORIAN

Q Source 1

On the Easter Tuesday we had all spent the day at the zoo, nice afternoon. I can remember going to bed about nine o'clock and being wakened by the sound of sirens and grandfather shouting. Tremendous noise and explosion and a couple of ceilings came down and we went out downstairs through the shop (shoemakers), where the whole front of the shop disappeared virtually. We ran to the air raid shelter in Hillman Street. The smell and the noises. I was only out in the open for five minutes running from the house to the shelter but felt a whole multitude of emotions especially seeing St James Church in flames. Luckily we all got across and had shoes on because there was glass everywhere. St James Church was just a mass of flames and the school was also on fire.

When we got into the shelter there were about fifty people there already on seats all round the walls and people started to sing 'Run Rabbit Run'. There were maybe ten to fifteen children in the shelter and the adults were trying to put on a good face for the children and keep the spirits up.

(Ken Stanley, Antrim Road, Belfast quoted in Stephen Douds, *The Belfast Blitz, The People's Story* [2011])



- Is there **evidence** in Source 1 to suggest that some aspects of life in Belfast were normal before the raid?
- How serious a danger were the Stanley family in during the bombing?
- What 'smell' and what 'noise' do you think he was referring to?
- Why did the crowd in the shelter sing 'Run Rabbit Run'?
- How badly damaged was Belfast, according to the report in the Northern Whig in Source 2?
- How **objective** is the reporting in this newspaper?
- Based on the **evidence** in this **chapter**, would the Germans consider they were justified in bombing Belfast?
- Select **one fact** and **one opinion** from any of the sources.



Go onto YouTube and look up 'Southern Ireland during World War 2'.

Visit ...

Soldiers and Chiefs, National Museum, Collins Barracks, Dublin
The Ulster Museum and the Northern Ireland War Memorial Museum, to learn more about the impact of the war on Belfast



Who are the experts on the impact of World War II on Irish life?

Q Source 2



INVESTIGATING A REPOSITORY OF HISTORICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE IMPACT OF WW II ON LIFE IN IRELAND

The Second World War and Northern Ireland,

www.secondworldwarni.org

The Second World War in Northern Ireland,

www2ni.webs.com

Northern Ireland and World War II,

www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/zgrkmsg/revision/4

The Emergency,

www.museum.ie

▶ Preparing for CBA1

A project related to an aspect of the history of your locality or place (or personal/family history)

LOCAL PROJECTS FROM THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR II ON IRELAND

- An Allied or German plane crashes in your locality
- An army barracks in your locality
- How your local newspaper reported on life in Ireland during World War II
- A German bombing in your locality
- An Irish Victoria Cross recipient of World War II from your locality
- Turf cutting in your locality during World War II

Your locality can include your county

▶ Preparing for CBA2

A project on the life and experiences of a person of historical interest

PERSONS OF INTEREST FROM IRELAND DURING WORLD WAR II

- Éamon de Valera
- Basil Brookeborough
- Paddy Finucane (RAF)

- Seán Lemass
- James Magennis
- Ettie Steinberg

- James Craig
- Lord Haw-Haw
- Mary Elmes

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Web Resources and Reading

Focus Task

Historical investigation

Investigate Foreign Aircraft Landings in Ireland during World War II

- www.ww2irishaviation.com

Or investigate Irish shipping losses during World War II

- www.irishships.com/memorial_to_the_irish_seamen.html
- www.lugnad.ie/irish-wwii-losses/

