Developed Design narrative: IWM Second World War Galleries 1930-1949

Outline narrative showing key historical messages by gallery/chapter/section

Opening threshold: **Second World War Galleries Intro Panel**

Message: The Second World War was the pivotal historical moment of the twentieth century. It was not one single event but the confluence of many simultaneous conflicts across the globe on land, in the air, across and beneath the sea. It unleashed violence, death and destruction on a scale never previously experienced and changed the lives of everyone.

Introduction: **The Coming of Total War** [film and graphic panel in gallery entrance]

**Question: What was ‘Total War’?**

Message: by the late 1930s the threat of costly, devastating global war hung over the world. People were afraid that this time Total War would be even more terrible than in 1914-18.

**Gallery One: Peace Lost**

**Question: Why was the peace of 1919 lost?**

Message: By the late 1930s the international peace established after the First World War was breaking down. Localised wars in Europe and Asia showed how brutal modern war could be. People around the world were increasingly worried about what lay ahead.

Primary messages:

1. In the 1930s the peace settlement of the First World War was overthrown.
2. The peace was broken by three authoritarian states – Germany, Italy and Japan – who were dissatisfied with the settlement of the First World War.
3. Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party represented a completely new type of threat to world peace.
4. Total War – feared by many – began to manifest itself.

Secondary messages:

1. Due to the aggression of Japan and Italy, war came to countries like China and Abyssinia long before 1939.
2. Democracies – represented by Britain, France and the USA – were outnumbered by authoritarian states.
3. France and Britain were forced to act together strategically and politically.

Tertiary messages:

1. Britain and France were imperial powers, who benefitted from ruling peoples all over the globe.
2. Europe was ideologically divided, with the extremes represented by the Fascist states on one hand and the Soviet Union on the other.

**Chapter 1.1 State of the Nations** [large graphic floor map of the world with a series of 8 ‘pins’ carrying succinct information]

Message: the leading players in the story of the Second World War all displayed a unique national character in the late 1930s that came to characterise and shape their role in the war once it had begun.

1.1.1 China: Struggling to establish a coherent sense of nationhood after a century of foreign domination – Looking for international support – Increasingly determined to resist Japanese attempts to take control

1.1.2 Japan: Extreme nationalism and military patriotism – Seeks to dominate surrounding countries in Asia – Undertakes brutal assaults on China

1.1.3 USA: Struggling to emerge from the shock of the Wall Street crash – Roosevelt’s ‘New Deal’ – isolationist instincts

1.1.4 USSR: The ultimate totalitarian state – rapid industrial progress – Famine and purges

1.1.5 Italy: Fascism established in the wake of the FWW – seeking to assert itself internationally

1.1.6 Germany: Establishment of the Nazi regime – overthrow of Versailles settlement – expanded across central Europe to create a unified German racial state

1.1.7 France: Politically divided – tied to Britain strategically – rules a huge empire

1.1.8 UK: Navigates between political extremes – seeks to maintain peace – rules a huge empire including a restive India

Chapter 1.2: Breaking the peace

Message: Unhappy for different reasons with the treaties that ended the First World War, during the 1930s Germany, Italy and Japan all turned to increasingly authoritarian regimes that followed policies of extreme nationalism and aggressive expansion. Seeking the rewards of empire, Japan and Italy launched unrestrained wars in China and Abyssinia. Aiming to create a unified German racial state in the centre of Europe, Germany re-armed and embarked on a policy of growing persecution of the Jews.

Section 1.2.1: Italy

Benito Mussolini, creator of the Italian Fascist party, had taken advantage of the chaotic state of Italian politics following the First World War, to make himself dictator, or *Duce*. He aimed to establish the empire which he believed to be Italy’s right as one of the victors of 1918. In 1935, brushing aside League of Nations sanctions, Italy invaded and conquered the independent African state of Abyssinia.

Section 1.2.2: Japan

The 1930s saw Japan in the grip of extreme nationalism. Its leaders believed that to control the raw materials it needed to be a Great Power Japan must build an empire. Ultra-nationalist Army officers launched military operations in China that brutally revealed the force of modern war. The Japanese government lacked the power to stop them. China was recovering from a century of Western economic exploitation and internal political divisions. It was unable to fully harness its resources to defend itself.

Section 1.2.3: Germany

In the mid-1930s a new threat to peace arose in the form of Nazi Germany. In 1933 the Nazi party turned Germany into a single-party state. Germany fell under the personal control of its *Führer* (leader) Adolf Hitler. Inspired by a vision of Germans as the world’s most vital ‘race’ and by a hatred of Jews, Hitler wanted to establish German world domination through war.

**Gallery Two: War Engulfs Europe**

**Question: Why did Total War spread across Europe?**

Key message: For almost two years, from 1938 to 1940, Germany appeared the driver of international events in Europe. As it continually defeated British and French attempts to contain its aggressive expansion, war spread across Europe.

**Chapter 2.3 Anything but war: appeasement and rearmament**

Message: The democracies, led by Britain, failed to understand the nature of the threat posed by Hitler and his resurgent Germany. Democratic Czechoslovakia paid the price, but pacifism now gave way to a reluctant determination to go to war if necessary.

Section 2.3.1 Appeasement and Munich crisis

Britain sought to prevent war by appeasing Hitler, allowing him to rebuild German military power. When Hitler framed his aggressive aims against Czechoslovakia as a wish to protect the German minority there, Britain and France compromised with him at the Czech’s expense. In sealing the agreement at Munich, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain became a hero for having saved peace.

Section 2.3.2 Kindertransport and Jewish refugees

With Hitler’s hold on Germany and Austria firmly established, and with increasing attacks on their rights, many Jews looked to emigrate. They were forced to leave with little or nothing, and most countries were reluctant to accept such penniless refugees. In 1938, as an emergency measure, Britain agreed to accept 10,000 unaccompanied child refugees.

Section 2.3.3 Britain prepares for war

As the threat posed by Germany grew, Britain’s programme of re-armament accelerated. The reintroduction of partial conscription in 1939 was seen as deeply symbolic. People showed surprising determination in the context of the predicted horrors of aerial attack. Their fears were partially allayed by the introduction of a welter of ARP measures.

Section 2.3.4 Germany prepares for war

In March 1939 Hitler ignored the Munich settlement and took control of Czechoslovakia. Poland now became the focus of his aggression. In August 1939 Hitler shocked the world by signing a pact with his fiercest rival, Josef Stalin, communist dictator of the Soviet Union. With the threat of the large Soviet Army removed, Hitler ignored British and French pledges to defend Poland and ordered the invasion of Poland.

**Chapter 2.1 Outbreak, 1939-40**

Message: Hitler’s attack on Poland in September 1939 forced Britain and France to declare war. But neither were prepared for a land offensive against Germany, so Poland received no direct military support. The failed Allied attempt to intervene when Germany attacked Norway in April 1940 brought Winston Churchill to power.

Section 2.1.1Poland torn apart

On 3 September 1939, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain announced that Britain was at war with Germany. To Hitler’s surprise, and to the horror of most Germans, Britain and France kept their promise to go to war if Germany invaded Poland. But the two allies did not have a plan for taking the war to Germany, leaving Hitler with a free hand in Poland. Poland’s large army was defeated as it was forced to face attacks from multiple directions.

Section 2.1.2The Bore War

Britain and France had planned for a defensive war, expecting Germany to collapse economically in an extended conflict. In France their armies remained static and made little effort to save Poland from defeat. For the Britain, and its soldiers in France, the winter of 1939-40 became the ‘Bore War’.

Britain set up a naval blockade to starve German of raw materials, while warding off German attempts to interrupt their own sea trade. The war at sea was placed in the hands of anti-appeasement Winston Churchill, and there was rejoicing when the German battleship *Graf Spee* was sunk.

Section 2.1.3 Finland and Norway

Stalin’s agreement with Hitler gave him a free hand in Eastern Europe. In November 1939 the world was outraged when the Soviet Union attacked neutral Finland. The Allies looked to use intervention in Finland as a cover for cutting vital iron ore supplies from Sweden to Germany. But Germany struck first and the Allied attempt to fight them in Norway was a chaotic failure. In Britain this setback brought Churchill to power.

**Chapter 2.2 The Fall of France**

Message: In spring 1940 Hitler adopted a high-risk strategy which succeeded beyond all expectation. While Germany became Europe’s dominant power, Britain was left with no continental foothold and its strategy in ruins.

Section 2.2.1 The invasion of the Low Countries and France

The German Army adopted a very risky plan to knock France out of the war. It succeeded because the Allies inadvertently played into its hands.

Section 2.2.2 Dunkirk

The German advance brought about the surrender of Holland and Belgium and many British and French soldiers surrounded. The evacuation at Dunkirk saved Britain’s Army from destruction against all odds.

Section 2.2.3 The Fall of France

Defeated in further hard fighting, a new French government, led by First World War hero Marshal Pétain, decided to capitulate. Much of France was occupied while Pétain led the authoritarian ‘Vichy’ government of the unoccupied zone. Britain’s strategy now lay in ruins, but it decided to fight on. This was one of the defining moments in British history.

**Gallery Three: The Battle for Britain**

**Question: How did Britain survive in 1940?**

Message: After the Fall of France Britain and Germany continued as the main protagonists in the war in northern Europe. Britain was forced to develop a new strategic outlook and plan to continue the war, drawing on support from its empire, the exiled forces from the countries captured by the Germans and increasingly the USA. Responding to the threat of invasion, Britain came under direct attack through the Blitz.

**Chapter 3.1 Battle of Britain and German Invasion Threat**

Message: Britain came close to being invaded in 1940 but was able to defend itself through the skilful use of its fighter aircraft in the Battle of Britain. German failure to achieve command of the skies over southern Britain meant the end of its invasion plans.

Section 3.1.1 Threat of German invasion

Despite a very real threat of German invasion, Britain’s decision to fight on was based on logic and confidence in its own strength. Recovering from its defeat in France, Britain effectively organised its defence while Churchill galvanized the British people to continue the fight.

Section 3.1.2 The Battle of Britain

The RAF’s Fighter Command achieved a narrow victory over the German Luftwaffe in the battle for control of the skies over Britain. Through several phases of the battle the Germans changed tactics which undermined their attempts and allowed Britain’s severely stretched defensives to prevail.

~~3.2 Moment in Time 2: summer 1940~~

**Chapter 3.5 The Fight Goes On**

Message: Having survived the threat of German invasion in 1940, Britain was bloodied but not beaten. With Nazi Germany in control of most of Europe, Britain looked for ways to hit back at its enemy through bombing and special operations. Its greatest minds set to work to crack Germany’s top secret communiques. And Allied POWs thought of ways to escape from boring and arduous captivity.

Section 3.5.1 – Strategic Bombing Campaign

1940-42 saw an intensification of the RAF bombing campaign through attacks on German targets including cities,. The RAF’s early strategic bombing (prior to first ‘1,000 bomber raid’) was ineffective, displaying huge issues with accuracy. The campaign was characterised by ruthless bombing, in deliberate attacks on civilian will/morale.

Section 3.5.2 – Taking the war to the Germans

In a substitute for a land-front against Germany, Britain looked for opportunities to hit back at the Germans, or to ‘set Europe ablaze’, in Churchill's words. SOE (Special Operations Executive) and the Commandos were both established, to carry out raids and operations on the continent. The gathering of intelligence in the war of secrets, particularly through the cracking of the Enigma cypher, proved vital.

Section 3.5.3 – Prisoners of war

For many soldiers taken prisoner at Dunkirk and elsewhere, 1940 marked the beginning of five years of captivity, characterised by boredom, hard work and privation. Captured aircrew and seamen began to swell the number of prisoners; there were some attempts to escape.

**Chapter 3.3 Britain ‘alone’?**

Message: Shocked by the loss of its powerful French ally, Britain found itself standing ‘alone’ in Western Europe. It now looked to the Empire for money, manpower and resources, and support from the remnants of allied armed forces from countries that had been overrun. Neutral America also allowed Britain to purchase war material and took an increasingly hostile attitude to Germany.

Section 3.3.1 Not Alone

Britain received material support from across the Empire, from its Allies exiled from Europe and from the United States. Britain was not ‘alone’.

Section 3.3.2 Together

As well as weapons and material support, men and women came to Britain to continue the fight against the Germans in Europe. They arrived as military units and individuals, bringing a diverse range of people to the British Isles.

**Chapter 3.4 Britain at War (Home Front) part I 1939-1941**

Message: War had an immediate impact on life in Britain. New wartime measures were introduced. People moved in millions around the country and fear of air raids deepened.

Section 3.4.2: Evacuation

The evacuation of children and some mothers from large cities began even before Britain’s declaration of war. Huge numbers of children were evacuated both in 1939 and again in 1940. This second wave of evacuation also took some children overseas.

Section 3.4.1: Wartime Measures

The outbreak of war in 1939 immediately affected life in Britain. Government controls spread, with rationing introduced along with measures to prepare for air raids and gas attacks. Security and state control increased with national registration and the internment of ‘enemy aliens’. War changed the way life was lived.

**Chapter 3.6 The Blitz**

Message: British civilians came under aerial attack from the Luftwaffe, which targeted key cities and areas of high population density. The raids caused widespread death and destruction and the British people had to find ways to survive bombing and to organise air raid precautions, response, rescue and first aid.

Section 3.6.1 Air Raid Precautions and Civil Defence organisations

Britain’s civil defence organisations rapidly expanded after the start of the war. More people volunteered for ARP and the auxiliary fire, ambulance and police services. The Blitz in 1940-41 tested these voluntary services but they generally proved robust at meeting the challenge.

Section 3.6.2 Britain under Attack

German air attacks switched to civilian targets in September 1940, undermined by lack of heavy bombers. The raids had a huge impact on the UK population’s morale. Civilians had to shelter and find ways to cope with life under aerial attack.

**Gallery Four: World War**

**Question: Why did the war turn global?**

Gallery message: In 1941 the war turned global. For Britain this was mainly through the battles fought around the Mediterranean and the Battle of the Atlantic. In Eastern Europe the German invasion of the USSR in June 1941 instantly changed the nature of the war. In Asia Japan set aside its long-running war with China and launched a rapid campaign to capture the European colonies of south-east Asia, pre-empted by a strike against the USA at Pearl Harbor which brought America into the war both in Asia and in Europe. By mid-1942 the Germans and the Japanese had conquered large areas of the world. Ultimate Allied victory seemed a long way off.

Primary messages:

1. In 1941 the Axis powers of Germany, Italy and Japan took the initiative in the war by launching aggressive, strategic attacks. By the end of 1942 they had successfully conquered large areas of the world.
2. The extension of the war in Europe and in Asia resulted in the creation of a strategic Alliance led by the USA, USSR and UK (‘the Big Three’) to fight and beat the Axis powers

Secondary messages:

1. The Axis attacks in 1941 made possible the central killing phases of the Holocaust
2. Britain needed to establish control of the Atlantic and defeat the German U-boat threat in order to import vital material and allow US strength to build up in Europe
3. By invading the USSR, Hitler began to follow one of his central war aims of destroying the Bolshevik regime

Tertiary messages:

1. Mussolini entered the war with the ambition of increasing Italy’s power and imperial status through a programme of conquest
2. At the end of 1941 Japan set aside its long war in China and launched a period of rapid, aggressive expansion across South-East Asia

**Chapter 4.1 War in the Desert, Mediterranean and Balkans 1940-1943**

Message: To maintain its links with the Empire, Britain needed to keep the Mediterranean open and secure its position in the Middle East. After early victories against Italy, British and Imperial forces suffered repeated set-backs, before finally emerging victorious at the Battle of El Alamein in October 1942.

Section 4.1.1 War of Empires

The outnumbered Western Desert Force saved Egypt by destroying Italy’s army in Libya. Meanwhile British Empire forces conquered the Italian East African Empire, liberating Ethiopia.

Section 4.1.2 Distractions: Greece and the Middle East

Britain was unable to consolidate its victories against Italy, being forced to disperse its forces to meet a German invasion of Greece and to forestall German moves in Iraq and Syria.

Section 4.1.3 Battle for the Mediterranean The aggressive strategy of Admiral Cunningham suppressed the threat of Italy’s navy, but British ships were still vulnerable to air and submarine attack. This was particularly the case as they rescued Allied troops from Crete and tried to force convoys through to beleaguered Malta.

Section 4.1.4 Desert War: Desert defeats and the Battles at Alamein – ‘the end of the beginning’

Rommel’s arrival at the head of a German force prompted a see-saw struggle for control of North Africa. To Churchill’s fury, no British general was able to find the recipe to beat Rommel until, at El Alamein, Montgomery finally delivered a clear Imperial victory over the Axis.

**Chapter 4.2: Russian Front 1941–1942**

Message: The Axis invasion of the Soviet Union was a world-changing event. It consumed enormous quantities of men and resources. Hitler’s ambitious plans to destroy the USSR necessitated a quantum leap in violence and cruelty. Chief among the victims were the USSR’s Jews. The failure to achieve a quick victory prompted the Nazis to plan the extermination of Europe’s Jews.

Section 4.2.1 Operation Barbarossa

The German invasion of the USSR was the largest military operation the world had ever seen. Hitler expected to destroy the power of the Soviet Union within months. At first astonishing advances made this look a possibility. But by the onset of a harsh winter the Germans were overstretched and vulnerable to a Soviet counter-attack. Meanwhile Soviet prisoners in German hands were allowed to die in vast numbers.

Section 4.2.2 Winter

The German Army was unprepared for winter fighting in Russia. Its men froze and its vehicles were immobilised. Desperate improvisations were made to keep men warm until more effective equipment and clothing could be produced.

Section 4.2.3 Stalingrad

In the summer of 1942 Axis troops made another attempt to win the war in the East, aiming to secure the USSR’s oil supplies in the Caucasus. But, under Stalin’s direction, the Red Army had reformed and re-equipped. It inflicted the Germans’ greatest defeat of the war so far when it surrounded and destroyed an entire German army at Stalingrad.

Section 4.2.4 Jews and Partisans

Special task forces were formed to eradicate any resistance to German occupation. These *Einsatzgruppen* were tasked with the murder of Communist officials, resistance fighters and anyone who helped them. Jews were identified as leading representatives of such groups and were massacred as a result. Soon the *Einsatzgruppen* moved on to the murder of whole Jewish communities. What we now know as the Holocaust had begun.

**Chapter 4.3 Asia/Pacific part I – Japan expands 1941-1942**

Message: Since 1937, Japan had been undertaking an aggressive war in China. Recognising this had reached stalemate, in December 1941 Japan adopted a high risk, ‘now or never’ strategy to extend its economic and military control westwards by capturing the European colonies of South-East Asia. The rapid advances threatened the foundations of the Britain Empire. At the same time the Japanese launched a pre-emptive attack on the American Pacific Fleet in Hawaii, believing this would prevent the US entering a wider Asian war.

Section 4.3.1.~~Japan Attacks~~ The Road to Pearl Harbour

For over a decade Japan had pursued aggressive, expansionist goals across Asia, most notably in China. Facing damaging US sanctions after it moved into Vichy French controlled Indo-China, Japan decided to pause its war in China and launch a powerful assault across South-East Asia to capture the valuable oil and mineral resources it produced. This campaign began on 7 December 1941 with a pre-emptive strike against the US fleet at Pearl Harbor. This brought America into the war and set US popular opinion against Japan, jeopardising America’s stated ‘Europe-first’ strategy.

Section 4.3.2. Rapid Japanese Conquests and British Disasters

The Japanese capture of the European colonies in South-East Asia between December 1941 and February 1942 was a devastating blow to Britain. In addition to the humiliation of defeat, there was the loss of valuable resources such as the tin and rubber Britain needed from Malaya that was now available to the Japanese. This material and moral reverse caused irrevocable damage to Britain’s prestige as an Imperial power, particularly in the shocking loss of Singapore.

Section 4.3.3. Fighting Back

By the middle of 1942, despite direct Japanese attacks on Australia, the momentum of Japan’s advance across the Pacific and southern Asia was beginning to falter. In the decisive naval Battles of the Coral Sea and Midway, and at Guadalcanal the situation around the Pacific was reversed and American forces prepared to push back.

Section 4.3.4. Prisoners of the Japanese: civilian internees and POWs

The fall of British and Dutch colonies resulted in thousands of civilians being captured alongside military prisoners. Both civilian internees and prisoners of war held by the Japanese experienced harsh, demeaning captivity and exploitation as a labour force that added further humiliation to the experience of defeat.

~~4,4 Moment in Time 3: winter 1941~~

**Chapter 4.5 Battle of the Atlantic**

Message: Battle of the Atlantic was a key battle of the war and one in which Britain played the leading role on the Allied side. When Britain fought alone, losing the battle would have meant losing the war. Later, winning control of the Atlantic became essential before a Second Front could be opened in Europe. Meeting this challenge required technological and industrial advances, inter-Allied cooperation and great feats of human endurance.

Section 4.5.1 A Battle at the Heart of the War

Britain could only keep fighting if supplied by sea with food, raw materials and military equipment. Germany tried to use submarines to cut Britain’s seaborne supply lines, concentrating on the most crucial link of all – across the Atlantic to the USA. The Allies struggled to combat the U-boats and to build ships at a faster rate than the Germans could sink them. And without control of the sea, no invasion of occupied Europe could be mounted.

Section 4.5.2 Winning the Battle of the Atlantic

Both sides in the Battle of the Atlantic strove to gain technological or tactical advantages over their enemies. This resulted in see-sawing fortunes until a number of British advances combined to give the Allies a decisive advantage in mid-1943.

Section 4.5.3 Surviving the Battle of the Atlantic

As well as the danger of enemy attack, men fighting the Battle of the Atlantic faced terrible weather and grim living conditions. These stresses were faced not only by the men of the Allied navies, but by the multi-national crews of the merchant ships. For the crews of the German U-boats there was just a 37% chance of survival.

Section 4.5.4 Shipbuilding and Seamen Wall

The Battle of the Atlantic was a multi-national effort. On both sides of the ocean shipyards strained to produce the ships required – merchant vessels to replace those sunk; escort vessels to protect them. The men who served in these ships were drawn from every Allied nation and from across the British Empire.

**Chapter 4.6 World at War: The Big Three**

Message: By early 1942, the three leading nations opposing the Axis powers of Germany, Italy and Japan had formed an alliance. A key reason for the final outcome of the war was that these new Allies of Britain, the United States and the USSR worked together and the Axis powers did not.

Section 4.6.1 The Big Three

The Allies won the war because of their willingness to co-ordinate their strategy and co-operate materially. However, due to their polarised political outlooks, it was an uneasy alliance and there was tension and distrust amongst the ‘Big Three’.

Section 4.6.2 Allies At War

Despite sharing common goals, there remained many unresolved issues and tensions between the ‘Big Three’, including Soviet demands for a Second Front, and the ways in which they worked together, including Allied aid to the USSR and Arctic Convoys.

Section 4.6.3 Axis Occupation

Occupations of Asian and European countries by the Axis powers ranged from authoritarian repression to uncontrolled violence. There was a sliding scale of experience. In occupied countries there were puppet regimes, resistance movements, reprisals and collaboration.

**Gallery Five: Victory in the Balance**

**Question: Why did the Allies win and the Axis lose in 1945?**

Gallery message:The relationship between the Axis powers of Germany, Italy and Japan was dysfunctional. They failed to work together and co-ordinate their strategies. In contrast, the Allies led by Britain, the USA and the USSR increasingly shared resources and dovetailed their plans. Growing Allied strength slowly undermined the ability of the Axis to wage war and after extensive, costly fighting in 1945 both in Europe and in Asia the Axis powers surrendered unconditionally.

Primary messages:

1. The Allies won the war by working together, achieving greater strategic planning of operations and resources and the sharing of vital goods and weapons. The Axis failed to do this.
2. In 1945 relentless Allied advances brought about the unconditional surrender of the Axis powers.
3. The deliberate and systematic killing of millions of European Jews resulted in what is now known as the Holocaust. Allied advances in Europe revealed shocking evidence of this through the liberation of concentration camps.

Secondary messages:

1. The Allies successfully mobilised their populations for war work and produced decisive quantities of industrial resources to smash the Axis powers
2. The nature of global war forced the Allies to take difficult decisions about how to best to confront and defeat the Axis
3. Victory in Europe was contingent on the massive effort of the Soviet Union

Tertiary messages:

1. The USSR joined the war against Japan and invaded Manchuria in northern China. Combined with the dropping of two US atomic bombs in Japan, this brought about an unexpectedly rapid Japanese surrender in August 1945.
2. The Allies made more effective use of new technologies developed during the war
3. Humiliations in Asia undermine Britain’s authority as Imperial power. Britain’s war effort was an imperial effort not just a national effort.

NOTE: There are also no old Chapters 5.2 and 5.6 as these were the now removed Moments in Time for 1943 and 1944

**Chapter 5.7 Britain at War (Home Front) part II 1942-1945**

Message: From 1942 onwards the war dominated life in Britain. Women were called-up for war work, while military set-backs, shortages of food and clothing and continued air attacks including from the new V Weapons all resulted in a widespread war weariness. People travelled from across the Empire to offer Britain material support, and the British became familiar for the first time with a diverse, global population.

Key point: war comes to dominate all aspects of life in Britain and becomes very tedious

Section 5.7.1. Life in Britain (Total War)

Characterised by increasing shortages and a deepening sense of war weariness, life in Britain during the second half of the war was characterised by the impact of wartime measures, the mobilisation of the workforce and particularly the conscription of women (an element of Britain’s Total War), movements of people around the country and new, unfamiliar faces in Britain, notably US servicemen awaiting the landings in Europe.

Section 5.7.3. Empire at War

Home fronts across the empire experienced many of the same hardships as those in Britain – rationing, air raids, displacement and the creation of new job roles. Public appeals through posters followed similar slogans and themes as seen in Britain such as ‘Dig for Victory’ and ‘Make do and Mend’ as well as some promoting war savings and recruitment drives. The war created a deep sense of affinity and togetherness between Britain and the Empire.

Section 5.7.2 V Weapons

As the war progressed the planning and organisation of relief after air raids improved significantly. Between June 1944 and March 1945 London came under attack from the V1 Flying Bomb ("buzz bomb" or "doodlebug”) and later the V2 rocket, the first ballistic missile.

**Chapter 5.4 War in Asia, 1942-1945**

Message: From late 1942 an American led Allied offensive began to push back the Japanese from New Guinea to the Philippines and across the central Pacific, while intensive fighting continued in China. British failures in Burma resulted in growing political desire in India for independence. British, Imperial and Chinese forces resumed successful advances in Burma early in 1945, while US bombers began intensive fire-bombing raids on Japanese cities.

One key point: there was a very extensive, destructive war in Asia that covered a wide geographical area reaching from the borders of India to northern Australia to Japan in which Britain only played a relatively minor role

Section 5.4.1 New Guinea to the Philippines

Throughout 1942 bitter fighting continued across New Guinea, including around Kokoda, until General Douglas MacArthur was able to begin his drive back to the Philippines. US troops, supported by others including the Australians, fought across the hostile terrain of New Guinea, the Solomons and Borneo. MacArthur’s recapture of the Philippines in 1944-45 proved costly and met fierce Japanese resistance.

Section 5.4.2 Island Hopping across the Pacific

Led by Admiral Chester Nimitz, the US Navy and US Marines methodically drove the Japanese back across the central Pacific, bypassing heavily fortified Japanese positions. To enable the bombing of Japan, the US captured the Pacific islands known as the Marianas, bringing Japan within range of its B29 bombers which began intensive raids on Japanese cities early in1945. American troops continued to push north, capturing Iwo Jima and Okinawa in April which carried them to the outer reaches of Japan.

Section 5.4.3 War in China

China had been resisting the Japanese since 1937 with heavy civilian and military casualties. When America entered the war against Japan in December 1941, it looked to the Chinese Nationalist government to play a key role in defeating Japan. US bomber bases were established in China. However, US interest in China dwindled as the Chinese continued to fare badly against the Japanese and more effective means of striking Japan became available.

Section 5.4.4 War on the borders of India

Japanese successes in Burma placed a severe strain on Britain’s forces. Indian nationalist leaders calling for Indian independence were arrested, while the Indian National Army called for volunteers from Indian soldiers already captured by the Japanese. Only unorthodox guerrilla operations such as those of the Chindits maintained British morale. After the Japanese were defeated at Imphal and Kohima in mid-1944, the tide was turned and in late 1944 Britain’s forces in Burma, including troops from West and East Africa and the Indian Army, began to push methodically south through Burma leading to the capture of Rangoon in May 1945.

**Chapter 5.1 Strategic Bombing 1942-1945**

Message: From mid-1942, despite heavy casualties, new heavy bombers and increasingly sophisticated navigation systems gradually made the strategic bombing of German targets by the RAF and USAAF more effective. When fighters began to protect American daylight raids, German fighter strength was slowly destroyed and by 1945 Allied raids were able to achieve significant destruction across Germany. The bombing of German cities remained a controversial strand of Allied policy.

One key point: visitors understand that the Allies undertook extensive bombing of German cities and industrial targets

Section 5.1.1 The Combined Bomber Offensive – RAF.

Crewing a bomber was the most dangerous role in Britain’s war effort. All aircrew were volunteers. By the war’s end 40% of Bomber Command’s crews were recruited from across the Empire. Bomber Command operated by night to keep casualties to acceptable levels. New heavy bombers such as the Lancaster and Halifax delivered more intensive raids. But the difficulties of locating the target and the enemy led to a controversial policy of area-bombing, aimed at entire cities. Bomber Command believed the war could be won through this means alone.

Section 5.1.2 Combined Bomber Offensive – USAAF.

The US 8th Air Force, based in Britain, bombed by day; relying on heavily armed bombers flying in defensive formations and believing the sophisticated Norden bombsight would make daylight raids effective against industrial targets. Yet initially US aircrews suffered high casualties and were unable to press home their attacks.

Section 5.1.3 German defences and the area bombing of its cities (Total War)

The area bombing of its cities brought terror, mass-death and huge destruction to the heart of Germany. Even at the time the morality of such a strategy was questioned by some in Britain. Hamburg presented the best general conditions for a large scale incendiary attack because of its ship building industry. The vulnerability of Hamburg was magnified by its proximity to British bases, the conspicuous coastline and its sheer size.

Section 5.1.4 The final year – 1945

Resuming their bombing of Germany after the Allied invasion of Normandy, US escort fighters began to accompany bombers to the heart of Germany. The German fighters were largely destroyed as they attempted to counter these attacks towards the end of 1944. This allowed Allied aircraft to bomb German targets even more intensively and cause widespread destruction.

**Chapter 5.3 War in Eastern Europe, 1943-1945**

Message: From mid-1943 the Red Army, backed by a resurgent industry, began to drive the Germans from Soviet territory and back into Germany. As Germany’s grip on the East was loosened, knowledge of its genocidal activities spread.

One key point: visitors understand level of mobilisation of Soviet society which made possible their recovery and fight back

Section 5.3.1 USSR ascendant

Commencing with the halting of the German offensive at Kursk, the Red Army drove the enemy from its territory. By the end of 1944 its troops were fighting in Poland and Hungary and Germany’s Allies Romania, Bulgaria and Finland had changed sides.

Section 5.3.2 Poland (Total War)

The Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland had featured deportations and mass killings. In 1944, with the Red Army approaching Warsaw, the Polish Home Army rose to liberate its own capital, but met with tragic failure.

Section 5.3.3 Soviet Mobilisation (Total War)

The USSR mounted a miraculous industrial recovery following the disruption of industry and loss of resources in 1941. It now began to out-produce Germany. Soviet society was mobilised more completely than any other. Those who did not work for the war effort did not eat. Women served in large numbers in the armed forces, including in frontline roles.

Section 5.3.4 The Holocaust (Total War)

It was in Eastern Europe that the Nazis pursued their genocidal war against the Jews. Eventually mass murder was supplemented by the use of Jews and others as slave labour for the German war industry. By late 1942 knowledge of the Holocaust was spreading to the wider world, including Britain.

Section 5.3.5 Germany Defeated

Germany’s military power was inexorably eroded as it made a series of retreats in the face of Soviet offensives. As hopes of victory evaporated, Germany’s allies sought to desert it. Early 1945 saw Germans fighting desperately against a Soviet invasion of their own soil and a wave of refugees fleeing westward.

**Chapter 5.5 War in Western Europe**

Message: The Allies began to turn the tide in Western Europe with their invasions of Sicily/Italy in 1943 and northern France in June 1944. These operations were huge undertakings in manpower, resources, planning, preparation and execution. Both sides suffered heavy losses but the Allies gradually pushed the Germans back until they were finally able to invade Germany itself.

One key point: As US strength grew, Britain’s role within Allied operations gradually diminished and British forces had to follow an American lead. Massive numbers of allied troops were used to open a second front in western Europe, but casualties were high and greater than experienced on the Western Front of the First World War.

Section 5.5.1 Italy: Sicily to Rome

In 1943 the war took a new turn when the Allies invaded one of the Axis powers, Italy. Churchill convinced the other Allies that as the ‘soft underbelly’ of the Mediterranean fighting in Italy would be an easy way to strike at Germany. The capture of Sicily quickly led to the fall of Mussolini’s fascist government, but Germany seized control of Italy and fiercely resisted Allied advances on the mainland. Marked by Allied disagreements over its value, Italy became a lengthy campaign and Rome was not liberated by the Allies until June 1944.

Section 5.5.2 D-Day to Paris

After huge preparations, around 132,000 troops were successfully landed on five beaches in Normandy on D-Day, 6 June 1944. German defences varied and the Allies suffered heavy casualties where they were strongest. But they secured a foothold and, although the subsequent campaign soon fell behind its intended objectives and they suffered high casualty rates in the intense fighting, Allied forces advanced out of Normandy to liberate Paris in August.

Section 5.5.3 Road from Normandy

Allied forces were helped in their movement to the west over the summer of 1944 by the support of clandestine resistance groups. An attempt to speed up the Allied advance into Germany and end the war in September by a rapid drive towards the Rhine turned into a costly disaster. A powerful German counterattack in the Ardennes in December shocked US and British forces. But the advance into Germany resumed in March 1945 with the British crossing of the Rhine and US crossings further south.

Section 5.5.4 Road from Rome

Partisan warfare gripped Northern Italy by 1945, while Allied armies remained locked in conventional campaigns on their continued move north. Life for Italian civilians as war raged around them became very difficult.

**Chapter 5.8: The War Ends**

(New numbers from old chapters/sections of old Gallery 6)

Message: By April 1945 the Allies were in a dominant position both in Europe and Asia. Surrounded by American and British led forces in the south and the west and the Soviet army in the east, the Germans finally surrendered in May. Evidence of Nazi genocide was clearly revealed through the liberation of concentration camps. The combination of two atomic bombs and the Soviet invasion of Manchuria also forced the Japanese unexpectedly to accept defeat in August.

One key point: The Allies achieved their overarching goal of unconditional Axis surrender in Europe and Asia

Section 5.8.1 End of the war in Germany and Italy

Allied forces in Italy continued to move north but by the time the Germans and Mussolini loyalists finally surrendered in May, the war in Italy had become just a sideshow. In the west US and British forces advanced rapidly, leading to formal German surrenders at Lüneberg Heath and Reims. In the east, the symbolic climax of the war came when Berlin fell to the Red Army – an event preceded by the suicide of Adolf Hitler. The war finally ended with a German surrender to the Allies in Berlin on 9 May.

Section 5.8.2 Discovery of the Holocaust

As the Allies moved into Austria and Germany, they liberated concentration camps and exposed the human rights abuses contained within them. The subsequent media coverage was the first time many in the wider world learned of the Holocaust and the true extent of the horrors of the Nazi regime.

Section 5.8.3 Surrender of Japan

In the US the development of an atomic bomb was completed in July. After a Russian declaration of war on Japan and the Red Army’s invasion of Manchuria early in August, two atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Together these factors brought about Japan’s rapid surrender.

Threshold AV between Gallery 5 and Gallery 6: VE and VJ Day – the end of the war

**Gallery Seven [six]**: **The Impact of Total War**

**[NOTE no Gallery 6 in narrative sequence, absorbed into Gallery 5 as part of value engineering. Number sequence left as before to avoid confusion]**

Message: The immediate consequences of the war were profound, both on the world and individual lives. Britain faced unique challenges, striving for widespread domestic social change while struggling to meets its commitments as an international power as the end of empire loomed. Globally, the hope invested in the establishment of the United Nations gradually dissolved into the start of the Cold War. These crucial changes all had an impact on the lives of ordinary people’s.

Primary messages:

1. Global war had huge political and social consequences for the lives of people around the world
2. People returned from war to pick up the threads of their former lives
3. War resulted in huge numbers of displaced persons and mass movement around the world

Secondary messages:

1. In the wake of the war, Britain turned to a new form of politics
2. The events of the war fractured Britain’s imperial authority and began the process of decolonisation
3. The attempted extermination of Europe’s Jews by the Nazis led to the creation of the concept of Genocide and a determination to bring those held responsible for the war to justice through a series of international tribunals
4. The disintegration of Allied unity of purpose in the aftermath of the Axis surrender laid the foundations for the Cold War

**Chapter 7.3 Post War Britain**

Message: As war ended, Britain looked to the future. Rebuilding its war-damaged cities, it voted in a socialist government and demanded new social welfare provisions. Britain’s Empire also rejected the pre-war order and looked to break away from British rule. For those returning from the war, the readjustment to civilian life could be difficult and austerity was still a problem for many, despite the new political changes.

Section 7.3.1 A Better Way

With austerity and the continuation of rationing, life in Britain remained hard and drab for many years after the war. But a note of optimism returned through emerging aspirations for a better way of life. The Labour government introduced significant social changes including the NHS, nationalisation, education reforms, and new housing. People emerged from the shadow of war and tried to pick up the pieces of their former lives.

Section 7.3.2 End of Empire

With the defeat of Japan, Britain moved to re-establish its empire in Asia. But in India this proved impossible. Nationalist pressures quickly led to Indian independence in 1947. But the country was divided into India and Pakistan, a move that came at a high price as communities broke apart and descended into sectarian violence. In Palestine, violent pressures from both Arabs and Jews, led Britain to give up its UN mandate, dealing another severe blow to its positon as an Imperial power.

**Chapter 7.1 Building a New World**

Message: Total War had a profound impact across the world. New global bodies were established such as the United Nations which conducted War Crimes Trials and tried to help the plight of refugees. But the breakdown of pragmatic wartime political relationships led to the blockade of west Berlin and the start of the Cold War.

Section 7.1.1 United Nations

The establishment of the United Nations provided the framework for examining the legal and moral consequences of the war. Displaced persons and refugees were cared for by the UN.

Section 7.1.2 Judgement

A range of international war crimes trials were held in Europe and Asia to bring perpetrators to justice. The true extent of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan’s crimes were uncovered and relayed to the public.

Section 7.1.3 Rebuilding Europe

The widespread devastation of European communities could only be overcome with a concerted international effort. Physical infrastructure and domestic economies had to be rebuilt, supported by money and resources supplied through initiatives like the US Marshall Plan.

Section 7.1.4 An Iron Curtain Falls: beginning of a Cold War

Tensions between the western Allies began to show immediately the war ended. Differences in outlook and expectation overshadowed victory, highlighted most clearly in the joint administration of occupied Germany and Japan. The USSR’s dominant position in central and Eastern Europe, compounded by Mao’s victory in China’s civil war, led to the high water mark of Communism by the end of the decade. Manifest in a growing arms race and incidents such as the Berlin airlift and the Yangtze River incident, this quickly led into an ideological Cold War.