

Name _____

Lightning War

On August 23, 1939, Adolf Hitler of Germany and Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union secretly agreed to attack Poland and divide it between them. They also agreed not to go to war against each other. At dawn on September 1, 1939, Nazi Germany unexpectedly attacked Poland, setting off World War II.

With the invasion, Adolf Hitler introduced a new kind of warfare. It was called *blitzkrieg*. *Blitzkrieg* is a German word that means "lightning war." These attacks are so quick they take the enemy by surprise. Swift German dive bombers called *stukas* led the way, weakening the outmanned Polish army for German tanks and troops to move in. At the same time these bombers destroyed the small Polish air force before it could even take to the air. The fight lasted only 17 days. Polish troops on horseback were no match for German tanks and planes. On the day the Germans were victorious in the west, the Soviet Union invaded Poland from the east.

Match the words to the right with the phrases on the left.

- | | | |
|----------|---|---------------|
| 1. _____ | dictator of the Soviet Union | A. Stalin |
| 2. _____ | German dive bomber | B. stuka |
| 3. _____ | country divided by Germany and the U.S.S.R. | C. Hitler |
| 4. _____ | lightning war | D. blitzkrieg |
| 5. _____ | dictator of Nazi Germany | E. Poland |

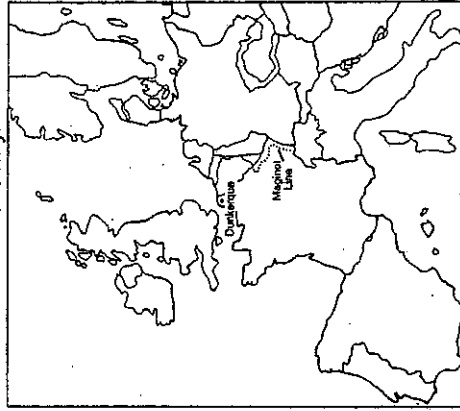
6. By making an agreement to give the eastern half of Poland to the Soviet Union, Hitler was able to attack Poland without fear that the Soviet Union would declare war on Germany. Suppose Joseph Stalin had refused to make an agreement with Adolf Hitler in 1939. Do you think Hitler would have invaded Poland anyway? Support your opinion.

The Miracle of Dunkerque

The Phony War ended abruptly in April of 1940. Needing ports from which to launch an attack against Great Britain and fearing that shipments of iron ore from Sweden to Germany through the port of Narvik in Norway would be cut off, the Germans invaded and easily conquered Norway and Denmark. Then Germany turned its attention to France. The French felt that the Maginot Line could withstand a German assault, but the Germans never attacked the huge fortification from the front. They simply went north around it through the forests of Belgium and Luxembourg and captured it from the rear. It fell in June of 1940. Soon Belgium surrendered, trapping more than 370,000 British, French, and Belgian troops at the small French port of Dunkerque.

What followed became known as the "Miracle of Dunkerque." From May 30 to June 4, 1940, the British government rescued about 338,000 soldiers from the Dunkerque beach. Every imaginable type of ship and boat was used to ferry men to safety across the 24-mile-wide English Channel. Destroyers, gunboats, yachts, fishing boats, motorboats, and even rowboats worked feverishly to save what was left of the Allied army. All the while the vessels were constantly badgered by German planes and artillery. While planning the evacuation, the British government had hoped the operation would save 45,000 troops. The fact that the vessels safely evacuated about 338,000 to Great Britain was truly a miracle.

Eight European countries are referred to in the paragraphs above. Unscramble each and write its correct spelling on the line next to it. Then label the eight countries on the map below. Use your textbook or another book for reference if necessary.



1. CRAFTEN _____
2. YONWAR _____
3. EGRTA AITBNRI _____
4. KREMAND _____
5. YARMGEN _____
6. MUGLIEB _____
7. GUBLERUMOX _____
8. DSEEWN _____

9. About 338,000 soldiers were rescued at Dunkerque. The operation lasted 6 days. What was the average number of soldiers rescued each day? _____

10. How many more soldiers were saved than originally expected? _____