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|  | **1939: Britain and France declare war on Germany ON THIS DAY** Britain and France are at war with Germany following the invasion of Poland on 3rd September 1939. At 1115 BST the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, announced the British deadline for the withdrawal of German troops from Poland had expired.

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| http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/img/t_quo.gif | I heard this voice saying we were now at war with Germany and at that moment the air raid sirens went | http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/img/b_quo.gif |

He said the British ambassador to Berlin had handed a final note to the German government this morning saying unless it announced plans to withdraw from Poland by 1100, a state of war would exist between the two countries. Mr Chamberlain continued: "I have to tell you now that no such undertaking has been received and consequently this country is at war with Germany." Similarly the French issued an ultimatum, which was presented in Berlin at 1230, saying France would be at war unless a 1700 deadline for the troops' withdrawal was adhered to. King George has called upon "my people at home and my peoples across the seas". He continued: "I ask them to stand calm, firm and united in this time of trial. The task will be hard. There may be dark days ahead and war can no longer be confined to the battlefield. But we can only do the right as we see the right and reverently commit our cause to God." A War Cabinet of nine members has been set up with two new ministers, including Winston Churchill as First Lord of the Admiralty, the post he held at the outbreak of World War I. Lord Hankey becomes Minister without Portfolio. Anthony Eden will take over as Dominions Secretary with special access to the War Cabinet. Mr Eden resigned from the post of Secretary of Foreign Affairs last year because he disagreed with the policy of appeasement. The National Service (Armed Forces) Act has been passed making all men between 18 and 41 liable for conscription. The armed forces have already been mobilized for war and in July the first Territorial Army conscripts were called up. Latest reports from Poland say the Germans have bombed a number of towns and cities, some with little or no strategic importance. About 1,500 are reported to have been killed or injured in the attacks on Friday and Saturday. In his broadcast to the nation, Mr Chamberlain spoke of his sadness that "the long struggle to win peace" had failed. He continued: "I cannot believe that there is anything more or anything different that I could have done and that would have been more successful." Yesterday there was anger in the House of Commons over the Government's apparent delay in taking action against Germany. Labour's deputy leader Arthur Greenwood had accused the Prime Minister of vacillating when "Britain and all that Britain stands for are in peril". Today's declaration of war was received with rousing cheers. As Mr Chamberlain informed the House Britain could not take part in a five-power conference proposed by Italy while Poland was being invaded.  |