

# CANADA'S AIR WAR 1939

updated 24/04/19

## January 1939

- During the year the *Imperial War Graves Commission* (predecessor to today's *Commonwealth War Graves Commission*) would declare that its initial tasks of locating, identifying and re-interring those Commonwealth soldiers killed or missing in the 1914-1918 World War, and creating cemeteries and memorials for them, to have been completed, and it would now concentrate on the maintenance and upkeep of the cemeteries created (S. Hadaway).
- Influential owner of the *Globe and Mail* newspaper C. George McCullagh began a series of radio broadcasts and articles entitled "*Let's Do Some Plain Speaking*" advocating strong measures to deal with the financial situation and corruption in Ontario (*Things the Globe and Mail Would Rather Forget* - [www.canadaland.com](http://www.canadaland.com)). See February 12, below.

### Sunday

- 1 RAF strength is 135 Regular squadrons spread from Britain to Hong Kong, and 19 Auxiliary squadrons based in England (RAF Timeline).

### Tuesday

- 3 **George Vanier DSO MC & Bar** appointed Canada's Minister to France (CJCA headline). See November 9, 1942.

Hockey player **Bobby Hull** born in Point Anne, Ontario (wikipedia).

### Friday

- 6 Publication in Germany of the discovery of nuclear fission by Otto Hahn, Fritz Strausmann and Lise Meitner. In 1944 the Nobel Prize for Chemistry would be awarded to Hahn, but not to Meitner, although she was nominated 49 times for her work in Chemistry and Physics and was considered an honorary Laureate by the Academy. An Austrian citizen, Professor Meitner had already been forced to leave Germany for Sweden in 1938, due to her Jewish roots, where she became a citizen (wikipedia). Hahn had studied in London and under Ernest Rutherford at McGill before the Great War.

Spanish Civil War, Panamanian registered coaster *Authorpe* sunk by bombing at Alicante (wikipedia).

Tuesday

10 England agrees to support France in any claim by Italy on France's African colonies (wikipedia).

Thursday

12 Parliament meets in Ottawa (CJCA headline).

US President Roosevelt asks Congress to increase defence budget (LoN).

In Vancouver **W/C A.D. Bell-Irving MC** (a fighter pilot and ace from the World War, and aide-de-camp to the Lt. Governor of BC) has the idea to form an Air Cadet unit (Bell-Irving Diary).

Friday

13 *Bren Contract Report* tabled in Parliament (CJCA headline), for manufacture of Czechoslovakian designed Bren light machine guns, adopted by the British Army, in Canada. Canada was to establish a plant operated by Inglis (Canada) Ltd. to build Bren guns for the UK and for the Canadian Army. By 1943 60% of world wide Bren gun production was centred in Canada (wikipedia), total production during the War was 186,000 Bren guns for Commonwealth and Chinese forces (<http://ww2db.com>).

Saturday

14 Spanish Civil War, In an attempt to divert the Nationalist drive in Catalonia, Republican forces make a successful attack in Andalusia, but Franco ignores it, and it has no effect on the advance (SCW).

The German press was instructed to refer to Hitler as *Führer*, no longer as *Führer and Reich Chancellor* (wikipedia).

Sunday

15 Spanish Civil War, French coaster *Aunis* seized at sea by a Nationalist gunboat (wikipedia).

Construction begins of the first airfield in the Bahamas, later Oakes Field, on land owned by mining millionaire **Sir Harry Oakes** (E. Wiberg). See July 8, 1943.

Monday

16 Three bombs set by the IRA go off in London, causing a power outage. This was the first in a series of IRA bombings over the year (wikipedia).

Tuesday

17 Sino-Japanese War, China asks for arms embargo on shipments to Japan (CJCA headline).

Recognizing that Calgary might be inappropriate for training and introduction of the Hurricane to the RCAF, given its higher altitude and winter weather, a contract was signed for hangar space at the Vancouver Sea Island airport for a detachment of #1 (F) Sqn. to receive, erect and operate its first Hurricanes (C. Vincent).

Thursday

19 *United Farmers Association* quits politics (CJCA headline), decides not to run candidates in future elections. Its policies had formed many of those of the new Co-operative Commonwealth Federation party.

German research ship *Schwabenland* begins a survey of the Princess Martha Coast in Antarctica. Dornier Wal flying boats are used to fly photo survey flights inland, dropping metal survey posts topped with a swastika to mark an area named by Germany as "*New Swabia*". The ship leaves after a months work (wikipedia).

Friday

20 *Imperial Airways* C-Class flying boat G-ADUU *Cavalier* on a flight from New York City to Bermuda runs into icing in heavy weather that was affecting the US East Coast. Losing power it force-landed at sea and sank due to hull damage. Aircraft from *Pan American Airways*, the USAAC and the US Coast Guard, as well as Coast Guard ships searched for the survivors. A tanker *Esso Baytown* located and with difficulty rescued 10 passengers and crew that night, 3 lost. The investigation into this accident recommended that passenger aircraft be fitted with seat belts for passengers, and that aircraft operating over water carry life rafts, life vests for all on board, and briefings on life vests and emergency exits be given to passengers before taking off in future, as well as equipping engines to melt ice building up in carburetors. One of the rescued survivors was Canadian born **Edna Watson**, a trained physiotherapist, who was awarded the Silver Medal of the Royal Humane Society for her efforts to keep the survivors alive. During the war she served as a nurse in the Canadian Army and survived when her ship was torpedoed in the Mediterranean. Post war she was one of the first 2 women elected to the Bermudian Parliament (wikipedia; [www.thebermudian.com](http://www.thebermudian.com); [www.bermudabiographies.bm](http://www.bermudabiographies.bm)).

Tuesday

22 Spanish Civil War, British ship *African Monitor* sunk by bombing at Barcelona (wikipedia).

Monday

23 Dutch War Scare, leak of false information that Germany intends to invade Holland and use airfields there to attack England (wikipedia).

First flight of the Douglas DB.7B light bomber, later in use as the A-20 /Boston/Intruder/Havoc aircraft (M.J.H. Taylor). See February 15, below.

Tuesday

24 Earthquake in Chile kills 30,000 people (wikipedia).

Spanish Civil War, British ship *Miocene* sunk at Barcelona by bombing (wikipedia).

After discussions by **W/C A.D. Bell-Irving** with various civic leaders in Vancouver an enrolment parade for an air cadet unit is held that attracts over 1,000 boys (Bell-Irving Diary). No girls were allowed to join. One of those recruited was **K.A. Norman**, who became a band-member (Lancaster, C. et al). See April 24-25, 1945.

Wednesday

25 Canadian Defence estimates increased (CJCA headline).

Spanish Civil War, Republican government leaves Barcelona, establishes a new seat in Figueres (wikipedia). French coaster *Azelma* sunk by bombing at Sant Feliu de Guixols (wikipedia).

Uranium atom split for first time at Columbia University (wikipedia). This is the basic method of producing energy by nuclear fission.

Thursday

26 Spanish Civil War, Franco occupies Barcelona (CJCA headline). Nationalist soldiers enter the bombed and deserted city, which is undefended (SCW). French ship *Yolande* sunk by bombing in the harbour (wikipedia).

Danzig Crisis German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop visits Warsaw and again states desire to have Danzig returned to Germany and for Poland to join the Anti-Comintern Pact (<http://ww2db.com>).

Friday

27 Leader of the Conservative Party **R.B. Bennett** announces his retirement (CJCA headline), moves to England.

Hitler approves Naval Plan Z, a 5-year construction program designed to expand the

German Navy to a size that could defeat the Home Fleet of the Royal Navy, and surpass it soon after. Planned construction included battleships, battle cruisers, aircraft carriers and over 200 U-boats (G.S. Snyder), in contravention of the Anglo-German agreement signed in 1935. The timing was based on Hitler's conviction that France and England would not wish to fight Germany for several years (Oxford). He believes a war with England will take place, but not until 1943 at earliest. See April 28, below.

Sunday

29 Subhas Chandra Bose re-elected President of the Indian National Congress (wikipedia).

Monday

30 Hitler states he only needs Colonies (CJCA headline). In a speech in the Reichstag to celebrate the 6th anniversary of becoming Chancellor, Hitler wants the return of German colonies in Africa, China and the Pacific Ocean taken under the *Versailles Treaty*, and for the first time states that if a war is forced on Europe by "international Jewry", it would lead to "the annihilation of Jewish race in Europe" (A. Beevor). See also America First entry, September 11, 1941.

## **February 1939**

-- **After the Conservative opposition attacked the government for not supporting the RAF a new scheme for incorporating RAF students into the RCAF training curriculum is worked out which is acceptable to **PM Mackenzie King**, to begin in September, but it was not implemented as the RAF then decided to complete all training in England (Dalke; Douglas & Greenhouse).**

Thursday

2 Germany announces plans to match Britain in submarines (CJCA headline). Actually Plan Z plans to exceed Britain in all naval types.

Monday

6 As a response to the Dutch War Scare PM Chamberlain announces that England would stand with France if it was attacked by Germany (wikipedia). Thus Britain and France are forced to begin joint military planning for operations against Germany (Oxford). This includes plans for basing an RAF bombing force in France. The French politicians stipulate that this force could only be used to attack military targets (S. Shail). See August 23, below.

The French Air Force places an order in the USA for 115 Martin 167F-1 (Maryland) high speed medium bomber/reconnaissance aircraft (Butler & Hagedorn).

## Tuesday

- 7 #10 FTS RAF Hart K5031 was low flying when it struck a tree and crashed in England, Acting P/O F.J. Hamell RAF (Can.) killed, instructor F/O E.R. Berrill injured (tomthorne83 and Ken MacLean at [www.rafcommands.com](http://www.rafcommands.com)).

## Wednesday

- 8 Spanish Civil War, Spanish Cabinet flees to France (CJCA headline). Following the invasion of France many of these Cabinet ministers would be deported to Spain by the Vichy government where they were executed (SCW). Other veterans of the Republican forces in France would be rounded up by German authorities at Franco's request, some going to concentration camps, others being used as slave labour under the *Todt Organization* building the Atlantic Wall anti-invasion defences. Thousands more went into hiding and/or joined the French Resistance, and later enlisted in the Free French Army established in 1944 (wikipedia).

## Thursday

- 9 Spanish Civil War, In response to Republican offers to surrender if the Nationalists would guarantee no reprisals against Loyalists post war, Franco enacted the *Law of Political Responsibilities*, retroactive to October 1934, which holds Republicans criminally responsible for acts such as joining the Popular Front, supporting the Republic [a legal government], being a Freemason [ie, liberal or anti-Catholic] or simply not supporting the rebellion by remaining passive. The act of voting for the left in past legal democratic elections was now punishable retroactively, and those who had served in the Republican army could be charged and executed as "accessories to murder" of Nationalist soldiers killed in combat (SCW). This removes any remaining doubt of Franco's willingness to compromise or forgive.

British government announced it's plan to provide simple bomb shelters free to home owners in the event of a war (wikipedia).

## Friday

- 10 Pope Pius XI dies (CJCA headline).

Spanish Civil War, All Catalonia is occupied by the Nationalists. Some 200,000 civilians and 250,000 disarmed Republican soldiers are refugees in France (SCW).

Sino-Japanese War, In an effort to stop supplies of arms reaching Nationalist China Japan occupies Hainan Island to threaten access to the port of Haiphong in French Indo-China, which supplied China via it's railroad to the interior (Shores, Cull & Izawa). This also places a Japanese military base between Singapore and Hong Kong (D.

Sommerville). See June 19, 1940.

Journalist and future Governor General **Adrienne Clarkson** born in Hong Kong (wikipedia).

Sunday

12 Influential owner of the *Globe and Mail* newspaper **C. George McCullagh** made the last of his series of radio broadcasts and announced he was creating a movement called the "*Leadership League*", that would work to establish Canada as a single party state with no opposition, based on fascist ideals. Every week articles were published by the *Globe and Mail* promoting the movement. Despite support behind the scenes the movement was underfunded, and had little support outside of Ontario, and the articles ended in July (*Things the Globe and Mail Would Rather Forget* - [www.canadaland.com](http://www.canadaland.com); *George McCullagh - Canada's first media mogul you've never heard of*, CBC Ideas March 6, 2023). See February 12, below.

Tuesday

14 By this night the Vancouver Cadet Squadron was able to parade 250 enrolled Cadets under the command of **S/L (ret'd) A.W. "Nick" Carter, OBE, DSC**, a World War ace and former member of "*The Black Flight*" of 10 Sqn. RNAS. Most of these Cadets went on to serve in the RCAF, four won the DFC and one a posthumous George Cross (Carter obituary, *Airforce Magazine*, Vol. 11, #1, 1987). **W/C Bell-Irving** was in discussions with local militia units (who oppose the idea) and the Air Force, seeking uniforms for the Cadets (Bell-Irving Diary).

France places an order for 200 North American Aviation NA-57 (BT-9B Yale) basic trainers (Butler & Hagedorn). See October 31, 1943.

German battleship *Bismarck* launched (wikipedia).

Giant Boeing XB-15 bomber leaves Langley, Virginia, on a flight of 30 hours with two stops to Chile carrying 3,250 lb. of medical supplies for the victims of the Jan. 24th earthquake (M.J.H. Taylor). On the same date a long range *Lufthansa* Do 26 flying boat D-AWDS *Seefalke* leaves Germany carrying 580 kg (1,279 lbs) of medical equipment, taking 36 hours to fly to Chile in stages (wikipedia; <http://www.worldatlas.com>).

**First British built Hawker Hurricane arrives in Vancouver for service with the RCAF (Griffin CMA). These were brand new, but to speed delivery had the original fabric covered wings and 2 bladed wooden propellers, with the intention of being upgraded later (C. Vincent). These were the first modern combat aircraft in the RCAF (CCMA). At this time the Hurricane was (briefly) the most**

## advanced fighter in service in North America.

Wednesday

15 Giulio Douhet, Italian Air Force General and widely influential theorist on strategic bombing, dies in Italy (wikipedia).

France orders 100 DB-7 medium bombers from Douglas Aircraft in the USA, the first customer for what became the A-20/Boston/Intruder/Havoc series of aircraft (Butler & Hagedorn).

#2 FTS RAF, Audax I K7366 crashed on a night flight in England, P/O C.A. Ross RAF (Can.) killed (<http://www.rcawsey.co.uk/Acc1939.htm>; H.A. Halliday; aviation-safety.net).

Thursday

16 Guaranteed wheat price ended; 2,500 mental patients saved in Quebec fire (CJCA headline).

Sunday

19 USSR and Poland sign trade treaty (CJCA headline).

Monday

20 Britain sends trade mission to the USSR (CJCA headline).

US *German American Bund* and *Christian Front* organizations hold a dual rally at Madison Square Gardens in New York to oppose Roosevelt and the *New Deal* that is attended by 20,000 members, 50,000 more people opposed to the rally protested outside. Protestors were attacked by Bund storm troopers as police tried to keep the groups apart (wikipedia). Attacks by *Christian Front* members on Jews in New York continued for several months until an operation by the New York City Police Department resulted in over a hundred convictions of assault (wikipedia). See December 28, below.

Tuesday

21 In Germany Jews are ordered to turn over gold, silver and other valuables to the state without compensation (wikipedia).

Wednesday

22 France places an order in the USA for 20 Vought V-156F (SB2U Chesapeake) naval scout/dive bombers, soon doubled to 40 (Butler & Hagedorn).

British government authorizes aircraft production to increase to the highest possible levels regardless of the cost (wikipedia).

Thursday

23 Spanish Civil War, British coaster *Stangrove* shelled and captured by a Nationalist gunboat off Cap de Crues (wikipedia).

Saturday

25 Spanish Civil War, Greek coaster *Loulis* sunk by a mine off Cap de Creus (wikipedia).

Tuesday

28 Spanish Civil War, England recognizes Franco government (CJCA headline), followed by France.

## **March 1939**

- During the month RAF aircraft removed the numbers and coloured symbols used on aircraft since the World War to identify squadrons, and replaced them with a two letter code identifying the squadron and a single letter identifying the individual aircraft, divided by the national markings (for example RR-F would be aircraft F of 407 Squadron, while VR-O would be aircraft O of 419 Squadron). At the same time the RAF roundels were altered to make them less conspicuous and camouflage of airfields and dispersal of aircraft was put into practice (L.F.E. Coombs).
- During March members of the *National Research Council* and the RCAF were briefed in London by British Air Ministry officials of the development of RDF or radar. Their reports led to a request by the NRC of immediate funding for radar development in Canada but this was refused. However funds were found in the 1939 budget and a small DND/NRC radar group was set up (P.A. Redhead).

Wednesday

- 1 Cross Country Airmail started; Herridge starts new party (CJCA headline). **William Duncan Herridge**, inspired by Franklin Roosevelt's policies, formed the federal New Democracy Party, a national party with similar policies as the Social Credit Party in Alberta (wikipedia). See June 30, below.

Thursday

- 2 Cardinal Pacelli elected Pope Pius XII (CJCA headline). A fire destroys the Queen Hotel in Halifax, NS, killing 28 people (www.halifax.ca; CJCA headline).

**#1 (F) Sqn. Hurricane I #312, Sgt R.C. Davis, collided on take off with United Air**

**Transport Ford 6-ATS Trimotor CF-BEP, at Sea Island, BC, writing off the fighter and damaging the Ford beyond economical repair (R.W.R. Walker; F.H. Ellis). The loss of the first RCAF Hurricane to fly just days after it's first flight indicated that the transition from the Siskin to the modern Hurricane required more intensive training than originally thought, and a Delta was ordered flown from #8 (GP) Sqn. in Rockcliffe to Vancouver to give pilots there experience with more modern, flap equipped aircraft. The next 3 Hurricane fighters arrived in Vancouver on this day (C. Vincent).**

Saturday

- 4 USAAC 17th Pursuit Sqn. P-35 36-372, crashed at Parkhill, Ontario, pilot N.A. Cowles killed (AAIR).

Sunday

- 5 Spanish Civil War, After attempts by PM Negrín to rally the defenders of Madrid and still get a promise of safety for Republicans in return for a surrender, Republican General Casado, believing he can get better terms, rebels against Negrín, ending Civil Government in Spain. Negrín leaves by aircraft for Dakar and exile in France (SCW). In Cartagena an uprising in the Republican Naval base there led to confused fighting between those who believed the war should end and supporters of the Government, with Nationalist undercover agents joining in and attacks by Italian bombers which sinks a destroyer. Two Nationalist freighters, attempting to enter and seize the port, are taken under fire by loyal Republican shore batteries which sink one, killing over 1,200 Nationalist soldiers. The loyal Republican forces keep control of the port, but the Republican Navy leaves for France, preventing evacuation by sea of Republican refugees from Cartagena (wikipedia).

France orders a further 100 Curtiss Hawk 75A-2 fighters.

Monday

- 6 US announces increase in Army Air Corps (CJCA headline).

Tuesday

- 7 Spanish Civil War, The operational ships of the Spanish Republican Navy, 3 cruisers, 8 destroyers and 2 submarines, sailed to Bizerta in France where they were surrendered to French authorities, later to be turned over to Nationalist forces (G. Wilson).

Wednesday

- 8 Spanish Civil War, Unwilling to follow Casado, Communist led army units march on Madrid (SCW). The French freighter *Saint Prosper* was lost with all hands after striking a

mine (wikipedia).

Thursday

9 Commons approve US trade treaty (CJCA headline).

Loggers working near Port Alberni find the crash site of Fairchild 51A CF-AUX that had disappeared the year before, with the remains of it's pilot and 3 passengers (E. White; J.R. Ellis).

Monday

13 Slovakia declares independence (CJCA headline).

Spanish Civil War, In Madrid, after occupying much of the City, Communist units are defeated in fighting with other Republican units, but the fighting cripples the still powerful Republican forces defending the City (SCW).

#6 FTS RAF, Audax I K4396 dove over a beach on a gunnery exercise in England, struck the ground pulling out and flew into the sea, P/O A.E. de Pencier RAF (Can.) killed (H.A. Halliday; aviation-safety.net).

Tuesday

14 Slovakia and Ruthenia declare their independence from Czechoslovakia. Czech President Emil Hacha accepts Hitler's demand to make Bohemia-Moravia a German protectorate (Polsson).

Wednesday

15 Czecho-Slovak republic collapses (CJCA headline). German forces occupy the remainder of Czechoslovakia. This action was in contravention of, and destroyed, the *Munich Agreement* of September, 1938 (Oxford). Again large formations of Luftwaffe bombers overfly the country while troops are flown into strategic centres ahead of ground forces (F.K. Mason). By this action Hitler confirmed what his detractors in the rest of Europe had been saying, and finally turned public opinion into accepting that his expansionist aims could only be deterred by a threat of war (A. Beevor).

Enrico Fermi and Leó Szilárd prove neutrons are produced in a nuclear reaction, necessary to produce a 'chain reaction' that would release usable energy.

Thursday

16 Germany declares protectorate in Slovakia (CJCA headline).

## Saturday

18 French Premier Daladier voted dictator [emergency?] powers (CJCA headline).

Romanian Minister in London spreads false information that Germany is planning to invade his country (wikipedia).

## Sunday

19 Slovakia signs protection agreement with Germany (H.W. Neulen).

## Monday

20 German Foreign Minister Von Ribbentrop delivers an ultimatum to Lithuania, demanding that the port of Memel (now Klaipeda), made a part of Lithuania under the *Versailles Treaty*, be surrendered to Germany (wikipedia).

US Naval Research Laboratory seeks funding to explore the possible uses of atomic energy to power naval ships (C.E. Hipperson).

Lawyer and future Prime Minister **Brian Mulroney** born in Baie-Comeau, Quebec (wikipedia).

## Tuesday

21 Danzig Crisis In London PM Chamberlain wants a British-Polish-French alliance to control Germany's expansionism, sending a note to Warsaw through the Polish Embassy while broaching the idea to visiting French President Lebrun. On the same day in Berlin von Ribbentrop states the present friendship of Germany with Poland would be at risk if Poland did not relinquish Danzig and join the Anti-Comintern Pact (<http://ww2db.com>).

## Wednesday

22 Danzig Crisis Poland responds to Germany's threat by seeking consultations on Danzig with Britain and France, who respond they wished to go further and talk about a treaty between the three countries (<http://ww2db.com>).

Unable to find international support, Lithuania cedes the port of Memel to Germany in exchange for its continued use by Lithuania as a 'Free Port' (wikipedia).

## Thursday

23 Romania, seeing in the destruction of the *Munich Agreement* that its long alliance with France as the strongest European military power was no longer tenable, signs an economic agreement with Germany (Oxford).

German military occupy the port and area around Memel (A. Beevor).

Hungary invades frontier areas of Slovakia to make "border corrections", initiating limited air and ground fighting (H.W. Neulen). Poland partially mobilizes in response (Polsson).

Students of the Université de Montréal stage a rally calling for peace, and rejecting conscription in the event of a war (ref. *Legion Magazine* November/December 2021). This is a good indication of the awareness of the growing war threat in Canada. See March 30, below.

Spanish Civil War, Spanish Republican negotiators representing General Casado meet with Nationalists, who dismiss all their proposals and instead dictate surrender terms. Casado realizes he has no leverage (SCW).

Saturday

**25 First clandestine flight over Germany by "Aeronautical Sales & Research Corporation" Lockheed 12 G-AFKR, modified with concealed cameras and painted a light blue to blend in with the sky at higher altitude, by Australian World War pilot and inventor Sidney Cotton and F/L R.H. Niven RAF (Can.) (under the aegis of the French Deuxième Bureau and British MI6), to take photographs of military installations. Between the wars Cotton had pioneered aviation in Newfoundland and Labrador.**

**RCAF contract for 14 more Hurricane fighters from England approved (C. Vincent).**

Eight drowned in flooding in BC (CJCA headline).

Sunday

**26 Spanish Civil War, Nationalist forces begin advancing on Madrid, ordering the Republicans to surrender. Most Republican units abandon their positions and weapons (SCW).**

Commercial oil field discovered in Nottinghamshire in England (wikipedia).

Monday

**27 British Cabinet decides to side with Poland against concessions to Germany (Polsson). British Prime Minister Chamberlain now realizes that a long term peace with Germany under Hitler is not possible, and that a war with Germany will occur (Oxford).**

Tuesday

28 Danzig Crisis Polish Foreign Minister Beck tells German Ambassador that if Germany persists in its demands for Danzig it might result in a war (<http://ww2db.com>).

France orders an additional 100 Martin 167F-2 (Maryland) medium bombers (Butler & Hagedorn).

Spanish Civil War, Fascist forces take Madrid (CJCA headline). Franco assumes power as Dictator of all Spain in Madrid (wikipedia).

Wednesday

29 Spanish Civil War ends (CJCA headline).

England announces plans to double the size of the Territorial (ie, militia) Army (CJCA headline).

Thursday

30 Danzig Crisis British Ambassador in Poland offers a British-French-Polish agreement guaranteeing each others borders. Soviet Union excluded from the Pact at request of Poland (and England?) (<http://ww2db.com>). See April 6, below.

The modified He 100 takes the World Speed Record for aircraft at 747 km/h (464 mph) (wikipedia). This aircraft was a fighter developed from the He 112 fighter design that was rejected in favour of the Bf 109 in 1935. See April 26, below.

PM **Mackenzie King** states there will be no overseas conscription in Canada in the event of a war (CJCA headline). In March, 1918, protests against conscription in Montreal had led to 4 deaths and many wounded when fired on by soldiers, and there was no desire to endanger the countries stability again. See March 4, 1942.

Friday

31 England pledges aid to Poland (CJCA headline). Neville Chamberlain announces to British House of Commons agreement with France to lend support to Poland, Greece and Romania if their independence is threatened (M.J.H. Taylor). Hungarian-Slovakian fighting ends with Slovakian frontier areas now part of Hungary (H.W. Neulen).

31 149 Sqn. Wellington I L4253 damaged in a landing accident, **F/L J. Fulton RAF (Can.)** and crew safe. See April 28-29, 1942.

**31 Manpower of the RCAF stands at 261 officers and 1,930 airmen Regular Air Force,**

and 99 officers and 867 airmen in the Auxiliary Active Air Force. Improvement of bases on the East and West coast continued, weather forecasting in co-operation with Department of Transport is extended to the east coast with plans for the entire country underway, armaments were improved and an Intelligence Section formed. A Flying Instructors School was formed at Camp Borden to train civilian instructors who would then operate Air Force elementary training at civilian flying schools, intermediate training was to be given at Camp Borden and advanced training at Trenton. Photo mapping and other seasonal operations continued (CCMA). Although small in size and with limited experience in purely military affairs, RCAF pilots, aircrew and mechanics had valuable practical experience operating in remote areas with limited resources, giving them a high level of professionalism (D. Morton).

## **April 1939**

- The new airport terminal building at Berlin-Tempelhof airport opens. The largest building in Europe at the time it included built in hangars and a canopy covered aircraft parking area that was large enough to handle medium jet airliners in the 1960s and 70s. See August 23-24, 1943, 218 Sqn. entry.
- During the month the newly constructed radar sites in England began continuous monitoring (L.F.E. Coombs).

## Saturday

- 1 Spanish Civil War, Last Republican forces in Spain surrender, ending the Spanish Civil War (wikipedia). The USA recognizes the Franco government. German and Italian combat formations and advisors will return to their countries over the next few months.

The German *Condor Legion* had developed a new concept of integrated ground and air support in Spain. As it finally evolved, in the initial attack fighters and all bombers would be used to eliminate enemy airfields and aircraft in the battle area, gaining air superiority. Then light bombers and dive bombers would be used directly in the battle to support advancing ground forces by attacking points of resistance, using modern radio equipment on the ground to call them to targets as required, while the medium bombers searched rear areas, bombing and disrupting communications, supply and command headquarters. This would prevent retreating enemy forces from forming an organized defence against the fast moving motorized attacking ground column. The strategic use of bombers was limited to attacks against morale, attacking populations in cities to spread fear as attacking forces advanced, as at Madrid, Durango, Guernica and Barcelona (Bergström & Mikaillov). See September

1, below.

Other lessons learned by the *Condor Legion* and applied by the Luftwaffe include advanced fighter tactics for modern high speed aircraft, tactical reconnaissance, dive bombing, concentration of bombing attacks, development of mobile ground support units and the need for radio navigation aids for bombing at night and in bad weather (Oppenheimer). The war also had the normal effect of weeding out poor designs and stimulating the design and production of more effective aircraft (Oppenheimer). In particular armour protection for crew and vital components, and the development of self-sealing fuel tanks improved survival of aircrew and aircraft (A. Price).

All this would make the Luftwaffe the most tactically advanced air force in the world at this time with a clear edge in many technical areas.

On the other hand the ability of unescorted bomber formations to successfully attack their largely undefended targets in the conditions of the Spanish Civil War led to unrealistic expectations of what was possible in the face of an organized and effective defence (Oppenheimer). Certainly German bomber designs that evolved from the Spanish war almost all suffered from relatively light defensive armament with hand held single machine gun positions. In the Battle of Britain this meant the bombers required a fighter escort during the day, thus the number of bombers that could be used each day was dependent on the number of fighters available, and their targets in day-time limited by the range of the fighters (LH). As well, anti-aircraft defences, rare in the Spanish War, would force them to bomb from higher altitudes, decreasing the concentration of bombs dropped. The air superiority enjoyed by the forces supporting the Nationalist armies also meant that attacking ground units were not subject to air attacks on their supply lines, which turned out to be a weakness when operating against better air opposition.

Soviet pilots, however, faced criticism on their return, and many lessons they had learned were dismissed by the Russian Air Forces (Bergström & Mikhailov V.1). Many returning Soviet air and ground officers were "purged" to keep any defeatist ideas from spreading. The combined use of aircraft (and of tanks) with infantry by Germany and Italy was misread and the new Russian military commanders (those left after the purges) broke fighter and tank regiments into small units scattered throughout the army to provide support to the infantry as the primary arm (Oxford). This ignored the successful pre-purge tactics which would be used in the Khalkin Gol Incident, below.

Their development and use of specialized armoured ground attack (Shturmovik) aircraft (the Polikarpov R-Z in Spain) was validated (Hallion), and while not widely noted in

the popular press, it was discussed by foreign attaches and may have in turn influenced German Stuka tactics. In Russia development of the next Shturmovik aircraft, the Ilyushin Il-2, continued. The development of the long range strategic bomber, the TB-7, was curtailed, as evidence from Spain seemed to indicate a strategic long-range bomber was not as useful as a medium range tactical aircraft, and as part of the doctrine of infantry support as the primary purpose of aircraft (Oxford).

Italy had sent the largest military force to Spain (75,000 soldiers, LoN), and over 6,000 Italians were killed there. The Italian Air Force sent over 700 aircraft and gained operational experience, but applied little of it in the way of tactics or aircraft design. Alone among the major European powers they would continue with the development of biplane fighters, believing that their greater manoeuvrability countered the monoplanes speed advantage. In part this was forced on them due to the lack of indigenous development of high powered aircraft engines. To support this force in Spain without a strong industrial base had also meant stripping modern equipment from the Italian military, much of which could not be quickly replaced, leaving the Italian airforce weak on operational aircraft. See April 27, 1941.

In the United States the events in Europe had led to popular support of the Republican cause, but this had come too late, and attempts to allow the Spanish government access to US arms were defeated (in large part due to the efforts of US Ambassador to England Joseph Kennedy and British PM Chamberlain) (SCW). It was recognized that this embargo of arms plus active support of the Nationalist government by US businessmen, had actually helped the defeat of a democratic government by a military dictatorship, and this would lead to moderation of US neutrality policy in the coming war (see December 17, 1940).

Concentration camps were set up across Spain where former Republican soldiers, supporters and countless others were tried under the *Political Responsibilities* law. It is believed nearly 200,000 were executed in Spain after the war, and many others were imprisoned, the last being released in the 1960's (SCW). Hundreds of thousands of Spaniards fled the country, most to France.

Cross country air passenger service begins in Canada (CJCA headline).

In France Irene and Frederic Joliot-Curie proposed the possibility of a nuclear fission reactor.

German battleship *Tirpitz* launched (wikipedia).

**#117 (F) Sqn. RCAF, Saint John, NB, re-designated a Coastal Artillery Co-operation (CAC) unit (RCAF Sqns.).**

First flight of the Mitsubishi A6M1 naval fighter, also known as the Type 0 or 'Zero' for its year of approval in the Japanese calendar (2600) (M.J.H. Taylor). An all metal design armed with cannons and machine guns it had a long range and was very manoeuvrable, achieving this with a lower powered engine by using a light structure and foregoing heavy defensive features such as armour plate and self sealing fuel tanks. Japanese fighter tactics had always stressed the offensive and manoeuvrability in combat, and this design was the culmination of their philosophy. They did not foresee that advances in aircraft design and engines could lead to aircraft that were faster, as manoeuvrable and well armed, and yet could carry protective armour, and could choose not to engage in dogfighting but use their capabilities to make attacks when they had an advantage, and disengage at will.

Monday

- 3 Disregarding the warning of Chamberlain on this date Hitler orders military planning to begin for the occupation of Poland (A. Beevor).

US President Roosevelt signs a *National Defence Act*, part of which expands the USAAC to a planned 6,000 aircraft (J.C. Fredrikson).

Thursday

- 6 Danzig Crisis Poland promises aid to England (CJCA headline). British-French-Polish agreement signed in London as a formal treaty (<http://ww2db.com>).

Friday

- 7 Italy invades Albania (CJCA headline).

Saturday

- 8 Italy completes occupation of Albania (CJCA headline). Mussolini gives assurances he will not invade Greece. France and England immediately pledge to safeguard the independence of Greece and Romania (Oxford).

**Further flights by clandestine photo Lockheed G-AFKR made April 1, 7 and 9 over Germany, and April 25 over Libya.**

Tuesday

- 11 Hungary leaves the *League of Nations* (wikipedia).

The tenth USAAF P-36A aircraft 38-10 was completed as the prototype XP-40 with an in-

line engine on this date (D. Hagedorn & A. Tincopa).

Thursday

13 Sino-Japanese War, *Eurasia* Junkers Ju 52/3m airliner flying from Hanoi to Kunming, China, is intercepted and forced down by Japanese bombers (Shores, Cull & Izawa).

Britain offers support to Romania and Greece (wikipedia). However, Britain also recognizes Italy's right to take over Albania in an attempt to appease Italy from following Hitler's policies (Oxford).

Government announces youth forestry program (CJCA headline).

W/C Bell-Irving persuades the Minister of Defence to provide uniforms for his Cadet unit (Bell-Irving Diary).

Friday

14 Publication in USA of John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath* (wikipedia).

**Last 5 of the first order of RCAF Hurricanes delivered to Vancouver, but without their propellers (urgently needed by the RAF). As well training with the 4 available aircraft was being affected by damage and wear to their 2-bladed wooden propellers being operated from a hard surface (gravelled?) runway rather than grass (C. Vincent).**

Saturday

15 US President Roosevelt appeals for a 10 year peace in Europe (CJCA headline), requests Hitler and Mussolini to attend a conference to discuss it. He later states he doubted it would be accepted, but he wanted to make it clear to others the difference between democratic and dictatorial states (wikipedia).

Tuesday

18 Soviet Union Foreign Minister Litvinov proposes alliance with England and France to rein in Germany (wikipedia). Possibly Stalin's last attempt to form a coalition against German expansion.

In Washington USAAC Commanding General calls Charles Lindbergh, who had just moved back to the USA, to discuss with him his views on military aviation developments in Europe (J.C. Fredrikson). This was to take advantage of his visits to various European air forces during the years he lived there. Lindbergh reported on the superiority of the German Luftwaffe, an advantage he believed would give Germany a victory in any war in Europe. He was asked to return to active service to

advise the USAAC on it's expansion, but refused (Ahlgren and Monier).

In Egypt the RAF formed a new Middle East, Egypt Group, under the command of **A/C R. Collishaw DSO OBE DSC DFC**, which would evolve into #202 Group, the main RAF force for offensive operations in the region (Shores, Massimello V.1).

Thursday

20 Mussolini rejects US appeal for peace conference (CJCA headline).

Italian Ambassador in Berlin alerts Rome that a war between Germany and Poland may be imminent (<http://ww2db.com>).

144 Sqn. Hampden I L4136 crashed in England due to improper maintenance, **P/O C.E. Jones RAF (Can.)** killed (<http://www.rcawsey.co.uk/Acc1939.htm>; W.R. Chorley).

Tuesday

25 \$60 Million deficit in budget (CJCA headline).

Wednesday

26 Britain calls up men of 20 and 21 (CJCA headlines). This call up was intended to form 5 divisions of anti-aircraft artillery for national defence (Oxford).

Messerschmidt Me 209 sets new world speed record of 755 km/h (469 mph) (wikipedia). This aircraft is publicly claimed to be a variant of the standard Bf 109 fighter, but this is propaganda. Unlike the He 100, the Me 209 was a new design, a one-off aircraft specially built for this speed record and has no military value beyond research. Although surpassed in speed by fighters during the war, it was the last propellor driven aircraft to officially hold the absolute world speed record.

Plan to train British fliers in Canada (CJCA headline).

Thursday

27 88 Sqn. Battle I K9249 damaged in a landing accident, **P/O D.A.J. Foster RAF (Can.)** safe. See June 19-20, 1939.

Friday

28 Hitler rejects US peace appeal, demands the return of Danzig (CJCA headline) and renounces Polish non-aggression treaty of 1934 and Naval pact with England (wikipedia) while stating that Germany did not have any aggressive intentions (LoN). Hitler rejected Roosevelt's peace proposal by reading it in the *Reichstag* to the laughter of the deputies (wikipedia). See December 11, 1941.

Soviet TsKB-30 "*Moskva*", pilot V. Kokkinaki and navigator M. Gordienko, takes off from Moscow to fly non stop over the Arctic and land in New York for the start of the World's Fair (russiapedia.rt.com; M. MacLean). The TsKB-30 was the prototype of what would evolve into the DB-3 (wikipedia).

Saturday

29 In Vancouver W/C Bell-Irving's cadet unit receives official designation as #1601 Cadet Corps under the Army cadet organization, the first officially designated Air Cadet unit in Canada (although not the first to be formed) (Bell-Irving Diary).

Soviet TsKB-30 "*Moskva*", lost in bad weather and with failing equipment, ran out of oxygen which led to the pilot passing out. They managed to find an island where the navigator Gordienko made a forced landing in what he thought was a field but turned out to be a bog, he was safe but pilot Kokkinaki suffered broken ribs. They had landed on Miscou Island, New Brunswick, after a flight of 8,000 km at 348 km/hr (over 200 miles per hour), an impressive performance at the time (russiapedia.rt.com; M. MacLean). The flight route they pioneered (Moscow-Finland-Iceland-Greenland-New York) is still used by airliners today (wikipedia). This was the last of the Soviet Polar flights of the 1930s.

Sunday

30 1939 New York World's Fair opens (wikipedia).

## **May 1939**

-- During the month supplies of British bombs and ammunition are transferred to military storage in France for use by RAF bombers (S. Shail).

Monday

1 First appearance of the Batman comic character (wikipedia).

**#116 (CAC) Sqn. RCAF, Halifax, NS, was re-designated as a Fighter unit (RCAF Sqns.).**

Tuesday

2 England deports Nazi spies (CJCA headline). [Reference not found.]

Canadian *National Film Board* formed.

Wednesday

- 3 In the Soviet Union Litvinov is replaced as Foreign Minister by Molotov, signalling a change of Soviet policy towards Germany (wikipedia). Litvinov and several other Jewish members of the Soviet Foreign Ministry were removed on Stalin's orders to improve relations between Russia and Germany (A. Beevor).

Friday

- 5 Danzig Crisis, Poland again rejects Germany's demand for the return of Danzig (CJCA headline). Polish Foreign Minister Beck warns Polish Parliament that relations with Germany were deteriorating due to German actions (<http://ww2db.com>).

Saturday

- 6 King and Queen sail for Canada (CJCA headline).

Italian Foreign Minister Ciano meets von Ribbentrop in Milan and states Italy would not be ready for a European war for three years. Von Ribbentrop replied Hitler had no plans for a war (<http://ww2db.com>).

Sunday

- 7 Danzig Crisis French Ambassador in Berlin warns Paris of concern in deterioration of German-Polish relationship (<http://ww2db.com>).

Monday

- 8 **Airspeed Oxford twin engined trainer enters service with the RCAF (Griffin CMA).**

Tuesday

- 9 Spain leaves the *League of Nations* (wikipedia).

Danzig Crisis French Ambassador in Berlin reports he has indications Hitler may soon make a proposal for the partition of Poland to Stalin (<http://ww2db.com>).

Wednesday

- 10 Khalkin Gol Incident, continued clashes along the disputed border of Mongolia and Manchuria (Manchukuo) results in an attack by Japanese military, probably in error, on cattle farmers crossing the Khalkin Gol (now the Halha) River (D. Nedailkov). Since their loss at Lake Kasan the previous year local Japanese commanders had been planning a new attack on the border despite orders from Japan. Local unit commanders had been told to act on their own initiative to decide where the border should be, and take their own actions to defend it. Railway lines for supply were being built along the border to support large scale operations, if required (D. Nedailkov).

Thursday

11 Beginning of the Khalkin Gol Incident between the Soviet Union and Japan (wikipedia).  
Mongolian cavalry attack into the Manchurian claimed area to avenge the attack on cattle farmers (D. Nedailkov).

Friday

12 Britain and Turkey sign aid pact (CJCA headline).

Khalkin Gol Incident, A decision was made to heavily reinforce the disputed area of the Mongolian border with a Japanese infantry division and light armour units. To support the operations against the Mongolian incursion, a special Japanese unit of light bombers, fighters and reconnaissance aircraft is formed and positioned on the border (D. Nedailkov).

**Due to propeller damage all 4 flying RCAF Hurricanes in Vancouver were grounded. Urgent requests for replacement had already been made, but now it was pointed out that without propellers the fighters would be unavailable during the upcoming Royal Visit (C. Vincent).**

Saturday

13 Hamburg-America ship *St. Louis* departs Hamburg for Havana, Cuba, carrying over 900 refugees, most Jewish, from Germany (wikipedia).

Sunday

14 First flight of the Short Stirling 4 engined bomber (wikipedia), which crashes on landing. This is a very large all metal heavy bomber with powered turrets for defence, based on the C-Class/Sunderland flying boat wing, capable of carrying a 14,000 lb. bomb load in a long internal bomb bay and bomb cells in the wing. This was twice the bomb load of any existing bomber at the time, but on long operational flights the bomb load would be greatly reduced to carry fuel. Internal structure in the bomb bay also limited the size of bombs it could carry but this could not have been foreseen when it was originally designed.

The longer wing proposed by the designers was reduced to 99 feet to meet the RAF specification, intended to force the competing designers to minimize the weight, but this resulted in making landings and take-offs very demanding and reduced the possible lift of the design. As well the aircraft was designed for catapult or rocket assisted take-offs (as were the Halifax and Manchester initially) and by the time it was realized that longer runways were more preferable than these launch assistance schemes the design had been set, and was heavier than it needed to be when it

entered service (M.J.F. Bowyer). Thus the aircraft with a smaller wing and heavy airframe was not able to meet the original specifications, although it flew well it was limited in total bomb load for long range operations, speed and operational height.

At the request of the RAF the angle of incidence of the wing was increased to achieve better take-off capability. This came at a late stage in the design, and to achieve this without a major redesign of the aircraft, and without sacrificing performance further, a noticeably long undercarriage was designed to give the wing a better angle of attack. This long undercarriage was vulnerable and easily torn off in a ground loops or overrun landings, which is what had happened to the prototype as when it landed a part of the undercarriage failed.

Khalkin Gol Incident, Japanese bomber and reconnaissance aircraft begin operations in support of Manchurian cavalry to force out the invading Mongolian force. With support of light armoured vehicles the Mongolians are driven back, and the Japanese force continues into Mongolian claimed territory with the intention of occupying the disputed area up to the Khalkin Gol River (D. Nedailkov).

At about this time a young Montreal pilot **George Beurling** quits his first flying job and rides the freights to Vancouver planning to enlist in a group of volunteer pilots in the USA heading to fight in China (Nolan).

Monday

15 The first aircraft to use the airfield at Gander, Newfoundland, for Transatlantic flight, a Monocoupe 90A NX19421 (using the registration SE-AGM), lands enroute from the USA on an attempt to fly solo to Sweden. The pilot, Swedish American Charles Backman, takes off the next day and disappears over the Atlantic Ocean (C.F. Warren et al). As a result of this flight similar solo flights to Sweden are banned (Swedish Aviation Historical Forum).

Ravensbrück Concentration Camp for women opened in Germany (wikipedia).

Wednesday

17 King and Queen arrive at Quebec City (CJCA headline).

In discussions in the British House of Commons regarding the inclusion of women for subsidies for pilot training at flying clubs it was stated that women pilots would be used to ferry aircraft in a national emergency (L. Curtis). See September 23, below.

**First 4 RCAF Hurricanes of the second order arrived at Dartmouth, NS, where an airfield was being built at the former seaplane base. They were accepted by**

**the RCAF, but placed in storage unassembled (C. Vincent).**

Thursday

18 King and Queen arrive at Montreal (CJCA headline). Escorted up the St. Lawrence by RCAF Stranraer flying boats (CCMA). This is the first time a reigning monarch has visited Canada, and only the third time a reigning English monarch has left Europe (Douglas & Greenhous). Also aboard the ship were 6 replacement propellers for RCAF Hurricane fighters in Vancouver (C. Vincent).

Friday

19 A Flight Refuelling Limited Harrow tanker G-AFRH, converted from a Harrow II bomber, lands in Gander, Newfoundland, from Montreal, where it had been erected after being shipped from England. It would later be joined by a second, G-AFRG, May 21, and both are based at Gander, for air-to-air refuelling of *Imperial Airways* S.30 flying boats to enable them to fly east across the Atlantic. A third converted Harrow is based in Eire for western crossings (<http://1000aircraftphotos.com>). The Newfoundland based Harrows carried out their first practice refuelling over Gander on June 19 (C.F. Warren et al). See August 5, below.

Khalkin Gol Incident, The Soviet Union sends a warning to Japan that it would take action in Mongolia if operations there continued (D. Nedailkov).

Saturday

20 Transatlantic air mail service begins by *Pan-American* Boeing B.314 aircraft from New York to Lisbon, via Bermuda and the Azores (M.J.H. Taylor).

Khalkin Gol Incident, Japanese government decides to join German-Italian military union against the USSR, so ignores Soviet warning. In the region Japanese fighters find a Russian R-5 biplane on a reconnaissance flight with fighter escort and shoot it down, the first aerial combat between the two forces (D. Nedailkov).

It should be noted that the bulk of Soviet aircraft were inferior in performance to the Japanese aircraft opposing them, with the exception of the I-16 fighter and SB-2 light bomber. Soviet pilot training was also weaker, and the effects of the purge of Air Force leaders was being felt. But delays in development of the Japanese Ki-21 heavy bomber had led to a shortage of these aircraft, and as a result the Japanese Army had purchased a number of Italian BR-20 bombers to cover the gap, and these did not live up to their claimed performance (D. Nedailkov).

Sunday

21 King George VI unveils *National War Memorial* in Ottawa (CJCA headline), before 10,000

Canadian veterans of the war. During their stay at Rideau Hall the household guard was provided by the RCAF, the first time the RCAF has mounted a Royal Guard (W. Buchan, letters, *Airforce Magazine*, March 1980).

#### Monday

22 Germany and Italy sign military pact (CJCA headline). Termed *The Pact of Steel* by Mussolini this treaty bound both countries to declare war if either was attacked. Mussolini signed on the verbal agreement that Germany would not provoke a war before 1943 (Oxford). This allowed him to renege on declaring war in September.

#### Tuesday

23 Danzig Crisis In a speech to German military commanders Hitler states Danzig will be a way to engage Poland in a war for *Lebensraum*, that this might lead to a war with England and France, and thus Germany would have to plan to seize Holland and Belgium for airfields to attack England (<http://ww2db.com>). This marks the beginning of the planning for an invasion of western Europe.

7 Sqn. Hampden I L4155 crashed possibly after an engine fire on a navigation exercise, **F/O J.G. McGrail RAF (Can.)**, Sgt H.K. Trencham RAF, AC1 R. Lumley RAF, AC2 E.B. Brentnall RAF and P/O G. Lloyd RAFO (Reserve of Air Force Officers) killed (<http://www.rcawsey.co.uk/Acc1939.htm>; W.R. Chorley).

On a test dive the newly built submarine *USS Squalus* sinks with the loss of 26 crewmen off Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Quick action by US Navy divers using newly developed diving techniques and a rescue bell developed after other submarine losses enables the rescue of 33 survivors. The submarine is later salvaged, and served in the war as *USS Sailfish* (wikipedia). See June 1, below.

#### Wednesday

24 Khalkin Gol Incident, After further air fighting along the border, with losses to the Soviet units, both sides begin sending in further air groups (D. Nedailkov).

Operational control of British naval aircraft officially transferred from the RAF to the Fleet Air Arm (FAA) of the Royal Navy (M. Bechthold).

#### Saturday

27 224 Sqn. Coastal Command takes delivery of the first operational RAF Hudson, the first US built aircraft to go into service in the RAF since the Curtiss JN-3/JN-4 Canuck/Jenny trainers and Curtiss flying boats of the Great War (L.F.E. Coombs).

Sunday

28 Khalkin Gol Incident, Japanese ground advance begins, forcing back Mongolian and Soviet forces. In the air Russian flights of I-16 fighters are being ignored while I-15bis biplane fighter units are suffering heavy casualties, many being nearly wiped out by Japanese Ki-27 fighters, giving control of the air over the battle to the Japanese (D. Nedailkov). However on the ground a column of Japanese soldiers and armoured cars is attacked and destroyed (A. Beevor).

Monday

29 King George VI reviews military in Vancouver wearing an RAF uniform. Units include #111 (CAC) Sqn. AAAF and #1601 (Air) Cadets in their new uniforms. The King later asks **W/C Bell-Irving** about the Cadet unit (Bell-Irving Diary).

Tuesday

30 Royal Party crosses to Vancouver Island to visit Victoria, BC, returning the next day (C. Vincent). #1 (F) Squadron was able to put up 3 of its new Hurricane fighters as a Royal Escort, the replacement propellers having arrived in Vancouver the day before (C. Vincent). Other aircraft in the escort were Shark torpedo aircraft, Stranraer and Vancouver flying boats (H.A. Halliday).

Wednesday

31 Khalkin Gol Incident, A buildup of Soviet air forces in Mongolia causes the deployment of Japanese heavy bombers (Ki-21 & BR-20) into the region to attack the Russian main bases (D. Nedailkov).

Germany and Denmark sign a Non-Aggression Treaty (Palmer & Neeven). See April 9, 1940.

## **June 1939**

-- During the month the first tanker docked in England carrying 100 octane aviation fuel from the Esso refinery in the Dutch Caribbean island of Aruba. This higher octane fuel would give an advantage in engine power to RAF and later Allied aircraft that was denied to German and Italian engine developers (B. Gunston).

Thursday

**1 First #1 (F) Sqn. RCAF Hurricane arrives at its base in Calgary from Vancouver, flown by **S/L E.G. Fullerton (CCMA)**. Those still without propellers were stored at Jericho Beach, including the 4 from the second order that arrived at this time (C. Vincent).**

Royal party resting at Jasper (CJCA headline).

In Liverpool Bay the new RN submarine *HMS Thetis* sinks on trials with the loss of 99 lives including designers and builders on board for the test dive (wikipedia). Frantic attempts to save those trapped on board fail, only 4 are rescued. She was later salvaged and put into service renamed *HMS Thunderbolt*.

First flight of the prototype Fw 190 fighter in Germany (M.J.H. Taylor). The Fw 190 went against the grain of inline engines for fighters by using a radial engine with an innovative forced air cooling system. With a wide set undercarriage, high performance, automatic mixture controls and a well designed clear vision canopy the Fw 190 would become one of the best fighters of the war. Later versions with an inline engine and longer fuselage would become Germany's most potent propeller fighter, the Fw 190D.

Friday

- 2 Royal family arrives in Edmonton, Alberta (CJCA headline), where among other visits a display of bushplanes is presented for the King's inspection at the end of a street renamed in his honour (Kingsway Ave., formerly Portage Ave.). There 15 year old **T.A. Tweed** of Lethbridge was presented to him. Tweed had soloed as a pilot September 28, 1935, the youngest pilot to solo in the Commonwealth at that time. He went on to a career as a commercial pilot, as a B.747 Captain with *CP Air* before 'retiring' as a bushpilot in the NWT in 1976 (B.W. Gowans).

Saturday

- 3 Parliament in Ottawa ends sitting (CJCA headline).

First conscripted soldiers begin serving in England (wikipedia).

Sunday

- 4 Refugees on *St. Louis* were denied entry to Cuba. The ship sailed for Florida, but was prevented from entering US waters, and begins to return to Germany. In Canada a petition by clergy and academics is sent to **PM Mackenzie King**, requesting Canada accept the *St. Louis* refugees (wikipedia).

Khalkin Gol Incident, The first of a group of highly capable Soviet pilots, many with combat experience in Spain and China and equipped with newly built and improved aircraft, arrive in Mongolia. Other fighter and bombers units are in transit or just arriving. These included versions of the I-16 armed with 20 mm cannon for ground attack, which were able to penetrate the armour of the Japanese light tanks (D. Nedailkov). The RS-82 ground attack rocket also made it's debut in the fighting (Bergström &

Mikhailov V.2). See August 12, 1941.

Consolidated 28 NC777 "*Guba II*", purchased by US zoologist Richard Arhbold to replace the original "*Guba*" sold to the USSR in 1937, takes off from Port Hedland, Australia to Batavia (now Jakarta) (wikipedia). See June 21, below.

Monday

5 Khalkin Gol Incident, A Soviet army, led by General Zhukov, is formed in Mongolia to oppose the Japanese invasion (D. Nedailkov; Oxford).

King and Queen visit Sudbury, Ontario (CJCA headline).

Politician and future Prime Minister **Joe Clark** born in High River, Alberta (wikipedia).

Tuesday

6 **Hawker Hart light bomber struck off service with the RCAF (Griffin CMA). See May 30, 1940.**

Wednesday

7 **At Hamilton, Ontario, #119 (B) Sqn. AAAF is part of a review by King George VI (424 SH).**

7-10 The King and Queen visit Washington, DC, in the United States, and the New York World's Fair before returning to Canada to tour the maritime provinces (Douglas & Greenhouse).

Thursday

8 **#1 (F) Sqn. Hurricane I #317 suffered an engine failure near Mission, BC. With no way to force land F/O T.G. Fraser bailed out, but was too low and was killed (I. Wikene; Ian M. MacDonald at www.rafccommands.com).**

Friday

9 **Mackenzie King** rejects accepting the *St. Louis* refugees on advice from cabinet ministers and immigration officials opposed to more immigration of Jews into Canada (wikipedia). See April 11, 1945. In November 2018 this rejection was the subject of a formal apology by the Government of Canada (wikipedia).

Wednesday

14 Tientsin Incident, Japanese navy blockades the British treaty port of Tientsin in China demanding Chinese nationals believed responsible for the assassination of a Japanese banker be surrendered to them (wikipedia).

Twenty nine IRA bombs exploded in mailboxes and post offices in England, injuring 7 people (wikipedia).

**Clandestine photo flights by Cotton and Niven, accompanied by F/O M.V.**

**Longbottom RAF, continue June 14 in another extensively modified Lockheed 12 G-AFTL from Malta over Sicily, followed on the 16th by flights over other Italian island bases in the Mediterranean, followed by a flight from Egypt to Aden over Eritrea and Ethiopia on June 19, to Italian Somalia on the 20th, back across Ethiopia to the Sudan on the 21st, and then across Libya and back to Egypt on the 22nd, returning to England on June 25 (D.J. Carter).**

Friday

16 King and Queen depart Canada at Halifax aboard the CPR Liner *RMS Empress of Britain*, carrying only the Royal party. This visit had done much to unify Canadian support for England's policies, and increase England's public profile in the USA (Douglas & Greenhouse).

Cruisers *HMS Southampton* and *HMS Glasgow*, part of return escort, had secretly carried 50 tons of British gold to be stored in Ottawa for use to purchase US arms in the event of a war, first of several such shipments (D.J. Carter).

Saturday

17 Hamburg-Amerika ship *St. Louis* docks in Antwerp, where the refugees are accepted by Belgium, Holland, England and France. After the German invasions of 1940 some 250 of these refugees trapped in Europe would die in concentration camps (wikipedia).

Monday

19 Danzig Crisis German military officers being placed covertly in Danzig (<http://ww2db.com>).

In Tientsin the British and French enclaves are surrounded by an electric fence by the Japanese military (wikipedia).

19-20 88 Sqn. Battle I K9249 caught fire in the air and was abandoned over England. Pilot P/O D.A.J. Foster RAF (Can.) and his gunner AC2 E.G. Williams RAF survived, but their observer Sgt H.G. Ing RAF did not leave the aircraft and was killed (S. Shail; W.R. Chorley). See May 14, 1940.

Tuesday

20 Britain levies arms-profit tax (CJCA headline).

Wednesday

21 US Consolidated 28 flying boat NC777 "*Guba II*" arrives in Kenya, the first aircraft to fly the Indian Ocean, from Australia via Java, the Cocos Islands, Diego Garcia and the Seychelles (wikipedia).

Thursday

22 Khalkin Gol Incident, In an attempt to destroy the Soviet fighter force a large Japanese attack against the Russian fighter bases is made. This is met by a larger force of Soviet fighters and a large air battle occurs, some 160 fighters engaging over Mongolia for over 2 hours. Some fighters land to re-arm and refuel during this time. Both sides claim high numbers of victories, but the Japanese objective is not achieved. One of the reasons for these large numbers of aircraft engaged in combat was the limited nature of the fighting, in effect over a very small region of disputed territory only 80 km (50 miles) long (D. Nedailkov). It should be also noted that both sides top fighters (Ki-27 and I-16 tip 10) had close performances (the Ki-27 was faster and more agile, while the I-16 had better armament and was more robust), and both air forces believed in the theory of close engagement and maneuver. These same Soviet tactics applied later against German fighters, whose radio equipped fighters were much faster and who could choose to attack and break away without maneuvering (dogfighting), would be devastating for the Soviets (Bergström & Mikhailov V.1).

Friday

23 Khalkin Gol Incident, Further Japanese fighter units are ordered sent to the region in the face of larger numbers of Russian aircraft (D. Nedailkov).

Saturday

24 IRA bomb in London injures 19 (CJCA headline). Four bombs exploded in the theatre district of London (wikipedia).

Siam changes its name to Thailand (Thai meaning Free) (wikipedia).

Sunday

25 Khalkin Gol Incident, A flight of Soviet fighters is sent to attack a Japanese airfield, but is engaged by Japanese fighters. Again a large air battle takes place. A further flight of Russian fighters allows the first group to disengage and retreat. Both sides make large claims (D. Nedailkov).

Monday

26 Russian and Japanese forces clash in Manchuria (CJCA headline). (Reference to Khalkin

Gol Incident.)

FBI given responsibility for US intelligence operations in the USA and Latin America (Oxford).

Tuesday

27 Khalkin Gol Incident, Ignoring orders from Tokyo to make only minor incursions into Mongolian airspace, a large attack by heavily escorted heavy and light bombers is made on two Soviet airfields, resulting in heavy Russian losses at one. A later attack on a third base is made. This restores temporary Japanese control of the air over the border (D. Nedailkov).

Wednesday

28 Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) formed in England from the air component of the Auxiliary Territorial Service (RAF Timeline; B. Kite).

Thursday

29 Khalkin Gol Incident, Bad weather brings air operations to a halt for several days (D. Nedailkov).

Friday

30 Alberta **Premier Aberhart** endorses New Democracy (CJCA headline). In the 1940 Federal election the New Democracy and Social Credit parties would run a joint national campaign, but only a few Social Credit members would be elected, and the New Democracy party soon folded (wikipedia).

## July 1939

- **#4 (GR) Sqn. RCAF, Vancouver, BC, begins to receive Stranraer flying boats to replace Fairchild 71 and Vedette aircraft (RCAF Sqns.).**
- After a brief period out of office, Vice Minister General Tojo is appointed Japanese Army Minister, where he opposed compromises with China and western countries (Oxford).
- France and Britain complete plans for deployment of a British Expeditionary Force to France with an Air Component and an RAF bombing force of light bombers, in the event of a war (Oxford). This Expeditionary Force would deploy opposite the Belgian border, to guard against a German invasion through Belgium (Pareham & Belfield). See October 3, below.

- Increased delivery of Hurricane and Spitfire aircraft gave Fighter Command 12 squadrons of Hurricanes with 6 more of Spitfires in July. It was decided to equip several Auxiliary Air Force squadrons, previously light bomber units, with the new fighters as a further means of expansion of fighter forces (F.K. Mason).
- Foreseeing that it might be attacked and defeated by Germany, Polish Intelligence sends to England and France all the information it had developed on deciphering coded messages from the German ENIGMA coding machine (considered unbreakable by Germany) and examples of the code breaking machines they had built, called *bombes* (Oxford). This would lead to the code breaking known collectively as ULTRA, and the development of the electronic computer.

#### Saturday

- 1 Crossing the US border on a freight train to volunteer for flying in China **George Beurling** is arrested as an illegal alien by US Customs and detained (Nolan).

RAF orders 90 Beaufort torpedo bombers to be built in Australia for delivery in 1940 to provide modern dedicated maritime patrol and strike aircraft to Malaysia and Singapore. Australia had already decided to produce the Beaufort to modernize its air manufacturing industry. However problems with the design in England that delayed its introduction there, and the invasion of Norway and France, also delayed its production in Australia, and the first aircraft were not delivered until late in 1941 (R. Hayward). See December 4, 1941.

#### Sunday

- 2 Australia pledges aid to England (CJCA headline). Possible reference to Beaufort order, above.

Khalkin Gol Incident In the evening Japanese infantry with tank support cross the Khalkin Gol River into Mongolia. They continue to advance through the night (Oxford; D. Nedailkov).

#### Monday

- 3 Khalkin Gol Incident, Outnumbered on the ground, but strong in armour, General Zhukov orders an unsupported tank attack on the Japanese force that stops the advance. Japanese and Soviet fighters are active all day over the battle area while SB-2 bombers assist the Russian tanks. Over 300 aircraft are fighting over the region at one point supporting their troops. This continued for the next two days with neither side's air force able to establish more than temporary control of the air over the battle. But the Japanese find themselves forced more and more to react to the more numerous Soviet aircraft, a defensive posture they were unaccustomed to. On the

ground, however, the Japanese advance was stalled (Oxford; D. Nedailkov).

Luftwaffe Commander Göring hosts Hitler at a display of new air technology at Rechlin, including helicopters, rockets, and the unflown He 176 rocket powered and He 178 jet powered prototype aircraft.

Tuesday

4 **#3 (B) Sqn. RCAF Wapiti #530 damaged beyond repair at the Sarcee Military Camp, Calgary, Alberta (B.W. Gowans).**

Wednesday

5 Khalkin Gol Incident, Japanese ground forces were forced back to their bridgehead over the Khalkin Gol River, which is destroyed, trapping them against the river. Air operations continued but at a reduced level due to losses (D. Nedailkov).

Saturday

8 Britain tests blackout (CJCA headline).

Monday

10 Danzig Crisis PM Chamberlain reaffirms support for Poland and declares that the future of Danzig is an international matter, not a domestic dispute (wikipedia).

38 Sqn. Wellington I L4230 damaged in a ground accident, **F/O H.H. Burnell RAF (Can.)** safe. See November 14, 1945.

Tuesday

11 Proposal by President Roosevelt that would revise the *US Neutrality Act* that placed an embargo on all combatants without distinguishing between aggressor and victim was put on hold by the *US Foreign Relations Committee*, bowing to pressure from isolationist senators (wikipedia). See July 18, below.

Dresden Meteor, in the evening a meteor crossed the NW USA and broke up over Ontario with many fragments, including a single piece weighing about 40 kg that landed in a field near Dresden, Ontario (R. Fortier, Ingenium website, 2019).

Wednesday

12 German airship *Graf Zeppelin II* begins a patrol over the North Sea lasting nearly 2 days searching for British radio location transmissions (A. Price).

Thursday

13 A Catalina flying boat, P9630, purchased by the RAF for test purposes, leaves Botwood,

Newfoundland for England (Butler & Hagedorn).

**Fernand Rinfret** dies (CJCA headline). Federal MP and former mayor of Montreal (wikipedia)

Friday

14 Japanese ask British to quit Kaifeng (CJCA headline). (Part of Tientsin Incident?)

The RAF Catalina flying boat P9630 lands at Felixstowe, England, the first military aircraft flown across the Atlantic for delivery in Europe (Butler & Hagedorn). See November 10, 1940. For a description of the impact this aircraft had on the RAF, and details of Catalina operations in the Arctic see C.S.J. West.

Saturday

15 US plan for a war with England (including an invasion of Canada), War Plan RED, shelved as it did not reflect the current world situation (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk>).

Sunday

16 *Graf Zeppelin II* flies along the Polish border on a radio analysis flight (A. Price).

Monday

17 Danzig Crisis, Nazi "tourists" crowd Danzig (CJCA headline). These included members of the SS "visiting" Danzig using various reasons, such as a sports competition held in June, and not leaving. By July they were openly wearing SS uniforms in the city, and in August began building a barracks in the dock area (<http://ww2db.com>).

First flight of the Bristol Beaufighter (wikipedia), a twin engined long range fighter with heavy armament, similar in concept to the Bf 110, but with a much greater range (Oxford). The design was based on other work Bristol had done, but for quick production used the wings and tail of the Beaufort torpedo bomber with a streamlined fuselage, larger Bristol Hercules 1,400 hp sleeve valved engines and a heavy armament of 4 x 20 mm cannons under the nose and 6 x .303 cal. machine guns in the wings. It's quiet sleeve valve engines combined with it's great speed gave it the ability to make a near silent approach when attacking a ground target (this can be appreciated in part in a brief scene in the 1958 British movie "*Ice Cold in Alex*").

Tuesday

18 Believing war in Europe to be imminent, President Roosevelt hosts key senators at the White House to discuss his proposed changes to the *Neutrality Act*, but is rebuffed by those who do not agree a war is coming (wikipedia).

Wednesday

19 In a demonstration a flight of RAF bombers flies from their bases to Marseilles, France and return non-stop, the same distance from their airfields as Berlin (wikipedia).

Thursday

**20 North American Harvard I advanced trainer enters service with the RCAF (Griffin CMA).**

He 176 makes the first powered flight of a purely rocket powered aircraft (wikipedia).

Friday

21 Khalkin Gol Incident, After a period of rest and re-organization, air fighting over the border began to escalate again. Unable to engage Japanese fighters on equal terms, the Soviet commanders began to use their greatest asset, numbers, to overwhelm and exhaust the Japanese pilots. On this date over 150 Russian fighters intercepted an escorted Japanese bombing attack, and intense fighting went on for 90 minutes over the front. Soviet SB-2 bombers began using their high altitude ability to avoid interception by Japanese Ki-27 fighters, flying unescorted and in larger formations to compensate for their less accurate aiming from the higher altitudes (D. Nedailkov).

Danzig Crisis British Foreign Office asks Poland to refrain from replying defiantly to German threats (<http://ww2db.com>).

Saturday

22 *Graf Zeppelin II* is again investigating radio signals, on the Polish border (A. Price).

Sunday

23 Khalkin Gol Incident A second Japanese invasion into Mongolia is made, with artillery support, and is again halted by Soviet soldiers and airmen (Oxford).

Monday

24 Danzig Crisis Hungarian Prime Minister tells Germany and Italy they would not join in an invasion if Germany and Poland go to war, but pressure from Hitler forces him to rescind the statement. On the same day Mussolini says he would support Germany in a war with Poland, but believes it would lead to Britain and France declaring war as well (<http://ww2db.com>).

Tuesday

25 First flight of the Avro Manchester heavy bomber (wikipedia). This was a twin engined all metal design with retractable undercarriage and three powered turrets for defence

plus provision for a manual belly gun. Like the Stirling it had a very long bomb bay (extending half the length of the fuselage), but unlike the Stirling this was unobstructed and was able to carry larger bombs as they were developed. Its engines were 24 cylinder Rolls-Royce Vultures which had reliability and power problems. It later evolved into the 4 engined Lancaster bomber.

Wednesday

26 Sino-Japanese War, US ends commercial treaty with Japan (CJCA headline), which means trade agreements between the two countries will end in 6 months. This is in response to Japanese actions in China (C.E. Hipperson).

Thursday

27 Khalkin Gol Incident, Soviet air commanders receive permission to fly missions crossing the border of the disputed area, and begin a series of attacks on Japanese air bases in Manchukuo (D. Nedailkov).

Friday

28 Britain deports IRA members (CJCA headline).

**Further flights across Germany are made by Cotton and Niven in G-AFTL using cameras concealed in secret compartments July 28 and 30. (D.J. Carter).**

Saturday

29 Royal Naval reservists join Fleet (for naval exercises) (CJCA headline).

24 Sqn. DH.86a L7596 (ex British Airways G-ADYJ) was caught in bad weather on a flight from London to Belfast, turned back over the Irish Sea and force landed in England, pilot W/C D.F. Anderson RAF, co-pilot F/O J.S. Dunlevie RAF, wireless operator Cpl Peach RAF and AOC Reserve Command A/M Sir Christopher Courtney DSO MiD RAF were injured, Secretary of State for Air Sir Kingsley Wood, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff AVM W. Sholto Douglas MC DFC CG (France) three times MiD RAF, Sir Edward Champion MP (parliamentary secretary to Sir Kingsley), Mr F.H. Sandford (private secretary to Sir Kingsley) and fitter LAC Poole RAF shaken but safe (discussion page, [www.rafcommands.com](http://www.rafcommands.com)). F/O Dunlevie may be **W/C J.S. Dunlevie RAF (Can.)** who was killed August 5, 1944 (needs confirmation).

A/M Sir Christopher Courtney was to have replaced AVM Hugh Dowding as C-in-C of Fighter Command, but this accident prevented that (R. Meredith).

Faced with a growing crisis in Danzig the French government, facing elections in the fall, extends terms to avoid possibly being caught with a declaration of war in the middle

of an election (wikipedia), as Hitler had done in 1936 when Germany re-occupied the Rhineland.

Sunday

30 Admiral Pound made Admiral of the Fleet [Royal Navy] (CJCA headline).

## **August 1939**

- In China, Nationalist forces are engaged in heavy fighting with the Chinese Communists, attempting to blockade them in their mountain centres (Oxford).
- 185 Sqn. **P/O Barr RAF (Can.)** killed, no details (Allison & Hayward). Possibly involving a Hampden or Hereford aircraft ([http://www.historyofwar.org/air/units/RAF/185\\_wwII.html](http://www.historyofwar.org/air/units/RAF/185_wwII.html)). Not found in W.R. Chorley.

Tuesday

- 1 **Mackenzie King** refuses Dunning resignation (CJCA headline). **Charles A. Dunning** was the long time Minister of Finance and one of the founders of the Saskatchewan Co-op wheat company (wikipedia). [The reason for his offer to resign not given].

*'In the Mood'* recorded by the Glenn Miller Orchestra (wikipedia).

Wednesday

- 2 Lord Halifax [British Foreign Secretary] warns of war danger (CJCA headline).

A letter to President Roosevelt is drafted by Leó Szilárd with Edward Teller and Eugene Wigner, all physicists who had been forced to leave Nazi Germany, to warn of the possibility of an atomic bomb being developed by Germany. It is signed at their request by Albert Einstein, the world's leading and most publicly recognized physicist and also a refugee from the Nazis (wikipedia). See Oct. 11, below.

The *Graf Zeppelin II* leaves Frankfurt to scout for radio detection signals again off England. In overcast weather it dips south into the English Channel, then flies up the North Sea coast to the end of Scotland, turns back along it's track to a point off Yorkshire, then heads back for Germany, landing August 4th. Although tracked on it's journey by RAF radar stations the analysts on board failed to notice the signals, as they were on a lower frequency than they had expected. This was due in part to the technicians searching for signals similar to their own developments, which used a narrow beam on a rotating source, while the RDF in use by the RAF at this time transmitted a signal in a wide arc from a fixed source. As well the 'freezing' of the

design had left the transmitters using the same cyclic period as the main English power grid, thus 'blending in' to the background signal interference. This failure to appreciate that British developments were different than Germany's leads to a report discounting radio detection of aircraft by England (A. Price). After the outbreak of the war the dirigible was scrapped in 1940 along with the older *Graf Zeppelin*, the last of the world's large rigid airships.

149 Sqn. Wellington I L4255 damaged in a landing accident, F/O W.J. MacCrae RAF (Can.), P/O R.E.C. Beeny RAF and their crew safe. See December 18, below.

Friday

4 British Parliament recesses until October (wikipedia).

Tientsin Crisis, British business offices invaded and trashed by a mob of Chinese which Britain claims were acting on orders from Japanese agents (wikipedia).

Danzig Crisis In response to German actions in Danzig Polish Customs officials on the border of the Free City begin wearing sidearms (<http://ww2db.com>).

In Egypt RAF Advanced Wing of fighters of #202 Group (A/C R. Collishaw RAF (Can.) commanding) moves to war stations (Shores, Massimello & Guest).

A Royal Navy Walrus from the cruiser *HMS Berwick*, visits Gander, Newfoundland, the first military aircraft to land there (C.F. Warren et al).

Saturday

5 US Congress adjourns (wikipedia).

*Imperial Airways* begins experimental transatlantic airmail service from England to Montreal via Botwood, Newfoundland, with Short S.30 flying boat *Cabot* flown by Captain D.C.T. Bennett (Aus.), using air refuelling from Ireland (M.J.H. Taylor). See November 10, 1940.

Las Trece Rosas (The 13 Roses). In Spain 13 young women between 18 and 29 are shot, part of 43 young people executed for trying to re-organize a socialist youth group. This was part of the White Terror that was reviewing hundreds of thousands of prisoners, executing thousands while sending tens of thousand more to work as slave labour. Young children and babies whose mothers were executed were taken to be brought up in Falangist families to "save" them, a practice later done by Nazi Germany and by right wing governments in South America (wikipedia).

Monday

7 Danzig Crisis A group of British businessmen organized by Swedish businessman Berger Dahlerus meet with Hermann Göring and inform him England would not accept further appeasement of Germany, and would go to war if Germany threatens Poland (<http://ww2db.com>; R. Milton). Dahlerus, a close friend of Göring, continued his efforts to make peace between England and Germany until October 1940 (R. Milton).

107 Sqn. Blenheim IV N6180 was on a formation flight over the sea and lost contact in mist. It turned toward land, emerging from cloud at very low level, and crashed making a steep turn, **AC2 (WAG) L. Phillips RAF (Can.)**, Sgt H.D.P Farrow RAF, Acting Sgt A.J.W. Sargeant and Miss M.F. Savoury, who was walking on the cliffs, were killed (Allison & Hayward; W.R. Chorley).

Tuesday

8 **Mackenzie King** celebrates 20 years as leader of the Liberal Party (CJCA headline).

**Further photo flights into Germany and Denmark by Cotton and Niven in G-AFTL.**

**Between the 8th and 11th of August RAF and French aircraft participate in combined Home Defence exercises over south-east England (M.G. Burns). This was the first time aircraft from a foreign air force had participated in an air exercise over England (Adco at [www.rafcommands.com](http://www.rafcommands.com)).**

Wednesday

9 Danzig Crisis Germany sends a message to Poland that it's continued refusal to meet the demands for their annexation of Danzig might lead to war, which would not be Germany's responsibility (<http://ww2db.com>).

King George VI reviews the Reserve Fleet (CJCA headline).

149 Sqn. Wellington I L4258 lost without trace over the North Sea, **F/O T.A. Darling RAF (Can.)**, P/O F.E. Board RAF, Acting Sgt A. Lindley RAF, AC1 R.C.B. Collins RAF and AC1 J.W. Sadler RAF presumed dead (<http://www.rcawsey.co.uk/Acc1939.htm>). Part of the extensive air defence exercise, which pitted 500 bombers of "Eastland" making attacks across the North Sea and from over France on "Westland", south eastern England, and Fighter Command (S. Bond). See October 8-9, 1943, Wellington LN451, 432 Squadron.

**Last UK built RCAF Hurricanes delivered to Canada, with new 3 bladed variable pitch propellers, one to the Test Flight at Rockcliffe, one to Toronto where it**

**was displayed to the public at the Canadian National Exhibition, and the third to storage in Dartmouth (C. Vincent).**

Thursday

10 Danzig Crisis Poland replies to the German note that if a war broke out between the two countries it would be started by German aggression, not by Poland (<http://ww2db.com>).

A unique diesel powered Ryan Foursome C-2 NX557NN aircraft named *Shalom*, sponsored by the Jewish *Betar* organization, takes off from St. Peter's, NS, to fly to Ireland, possibly to be the first to fly from New York City to Palestine, but disappears over the Atlantic, 2 crew, Alex Loeb and Richard Decker, lost (wikipedia).

Monday

14 Royal Navy begins a cipher exercise, designed to test code systems with stations world-wide over the next week (M. Milner).

Tuesday

15 US President Roosevelt visits Halifax (CJCA headline).

Indian Army troops arrive in Egypt to help England secure the Suez Canal (D. Sommerville).

Winston Churchill makes a 10 day visit of the French Rhine frontier with Germany, to familiarize himself with the region in the event of a war (R. Langworth).

Movie *The Wizard of Oz* premieres (wikipedia).

German U-boat fleet ordered to sea (wikipedia). German tanker *Altmark* takes on a load of fuel oil in Port Arthur, Texas, and departs for Europe (E. Wiberg). See September 1, below.

**16-17 Last pre-war Air Force exercise, 200 French aircraft make a mock attack on England (M.G. Burns; I. Brown at [www.rafcommands.com](http://www.rafcommands.com)).**

Thursday

17 Poland requisitions border estates for defence (CJCA headline).

The first return flight of the *Imperial Airways* S.30 flying boat *Cabot*, from North America (Montreal) to England, takes off from Botwood, Newfoundland, then refuels in-flight from Harrow G-AFRH from Gander before flying to England (C.F. Warren et al). See

May 5, 1940. For a description of this early and complicated process see T. Heffernan and A. Lumsden.

Friday

18 Air pact with US signed (CJCA headline).

In Germany Hitler orders planning for the secret and illegal euthanization of mental patients and other citizens deemed "inferior" (Oxford). On this date medical personnel were ordered to report children under 3 who showed signs of mental or physical disabilities (wikipedia). See January 1940.

Saturday

19 After an evaluation of the European political situation, Hitler orders preliminary moves for the invasion of Poland scheduled for August 26 (wikipedia). He hopes signing of *Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact* will result in the fall of the Chamberlain government in England. He does not believe France and England will support Poland.

German liner *Columbus* leaves New York harbour on a cruise of the Caribbean (wikipedia).

Saturday to Tuesday

19-22 Sixteen U-boats and 2 pocket battleships (*Admiral Graf Spee* and *Deutschland*) of the German Navy are deployed to war positions in the Atlantic (R. McNeill).

Sunday

20 With Royal Navy forces withdrawn from the Far East, and unable to break the blockade, Tientsin Incident ends with England surrendering the four wanted Chinese to Japanese control. They are later tried and executed (wikipedia).

Khalkin Gol Incident Soviet army, tanks and aircraft counter attack across the Khalkin Gol River into Manchukuo in what is believed to be the first modern co-ordinated attack using all arms. Prototype T-34 tanks (in their first use), other armour and overwhelming numbers, combined with air support, sweep aside Japanese troops and drive into the country (Oxford).

USSR and Germany sign trade agreement; German and Polish forces mass at their border (CJCA headline). Public announcement in Berlin that the Soviet Union and Germany are negotiating a *Non-Aggression Pact*. In Germany the public celebrated, as they believed this would avert a war, but Britain and France were shaken, as their diplomatic work to support Poland and Romania was undercut, while Franco in

Spain, the Japanese government who had signed the *Anti-Comintern Pact*, and the Nationalist Chinese whom the Soviets had assisted in their war against the Japanese, all felt betrayed by Hitler and Stalin's action (A. Beevor).

Monday

**21 Fairey Battle light bomber enters service with the RCAF (Griffin CMA).**

Royal Navy code exercise extended indefinitely as war looms (M. Milner).

Tuesday

**22 RAF issues directives that restrict bombing to military targets but allow tactics to be developed with the French in response to any German actions (P. Gray).**

British Parliament recalled in response to the announcement of the German-USSR Non-Aggression Pact.

With government approval the RCN Intelligence and Planning office begins to put prepared plans into operation, mobilizing reserves and servicemen and sending them to Canadian ports to take military control when a war breaks out, and sending out codes to civilian officials designated for control of shipping (M. Milner).

Wednesday

**23 German-USSR Non-Aggression Pact, or *Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact*, signed in Moscow.**

Publicly this is an act of non-aggression, but secretly this pact divides eastern Europe into two zones of influence for each party, with the dividing line running through Poland, which both countries wish destroyed. Germany gains western Poland and the freedom to act in western Europe without fear of a Soviet attack, while Russia wants eastern Poland (the region that was part of Russia before 1919), and a free hand in Estonia, Latvia and Bessarabia (Oxford).

The British Ambassador to Germany flies to Hitler's home at Berchtesgaden to hand deliver a letter from PM Chamberlain appealing to Hitler not to provoke a war. Hitler dismisses the letter, saying it was British and French promises to Poland that had prevented an agreement, and thus had forced him to act (A. Beevor).

Danzig Crisis Germany unilaterally appoints a State President for the Free City of Danzig (<http://ww2db.com>).

**All RAF units are ordered to mobilize to war establishment (Burns).**

Thursday

24 At 3 am local time the British Embassy in Berlin receives orders to begin burning secret documents (A. Beevor).

German-USSR Non-Aggression Pact announced. Chamberlain warns war is at hand (CJCA headline). British Parliament approves implementation of *War Measures Act*; Royal Navy, RAF and Army cancel all leaves and begin to come to war posture; French and British citizens urged to leave Germany (wikipedia). The RAF bomber force goes to 12 hour readiness (L.F.E. Coombs).

President Roosevelt contacted the King of Italy, Hitler and the President of Poland asking for direct negotiations and arbitration to defuse the Danzig Crisis. Poland agrees but Germany does not (LoN).

In Japan, which had been in negotiation with Germany and Italy on a mutual defence plan against Soviet aggression, and with Japanese Army units in active combat with Soviet forces, the announcement ended the talks and lead to the resignation of the Prime Minister (Shores, Cull & Izawa).

**RAF Coastal Command begins continuous daylight reconnaissance patrols between Wick, Scotland, and the Norwegian Coast (R. McNeill). German merchant ships at sea are instructed by radio to open their sealed instructions for war (Oxford).**

In Canada reporting of cargo vessels with cargos which might be used to block harbours begins (M. Milner).

Friday

25 British Ambassador to Germany again meets with Hitler, now in Berlin, and is again dismissed (A. Beevor).

Belgium mobilizes it's military (Oxford). German embassies in Poland, England and France warn their nationals to leave these countries (A. Beevor). In Paris the Louvre is closed to the public as it's paintings are taken down for safe storage (wikipedia).

British-Polish Alliance signed (CJCA headline). The *Polish-British Common Defence Pact* was signed in the evening and was a shock to Hitler, who believed England would back down from it's support of Poland

As planned Germany severs international communications prior to the invasion of Poland scheduled for the next day, only to have the invasion postponed by order of Hitler

due to threats of Italy not to support it, and uncertainty due to the signing of the *Polish-British Pact* (wikipedia). One German undercover unit in Poland does not receive the postponement order and attempts to take control of a railway tunnel, later disappearing when they understood they had acted alone (Oxford). They had been stopped by a Polish Army unit which wounded 2 of the attackers (wikipedia).

After receiving warning from England that they were implementing their defence plans, the Canadian Cabinet passes by Order in Council a *State of Apprehended War*, enabling actions to be taken to position the Canadian military in defensive positions. Canadian Army calls up Militia members to form a 10,000 strong force for the defence of Canada (Douglas & Greenhouse; S.J. Harris).

Police in London prevent 3 IRA bombs from being placed in public locations in the City, but an IRA bomb explodes in a shopping area of Coventry, killing 5 and wounding 50 people, the most serious in the bombing campaign that began in January. Public reaction to the deaths soon ended the bombings (F. Taylor; wikipedia).

**At midnight the RCAF begins to mobilize. All leaves cancelled. Photo mapping commitments suspended. #8 (GP) Sqn., engaged in photo survey work in remote areas, begins recalling its parties and aircraft to Rockcliffe, re-fitting the Delta aircraft on arrival for maritime patrol duties, becoming #8 Bomber Reconnaissance (BR) Sqn. on re-deployment (CCMA).**

**Auxiliary Active Air Force Squadrons mobilized as part of the Permanent RCAF (424 SH; RCAF Sqns.). Recruitment to full strength authorized and guards mounted (424 SH).**

**At about this time the Air Force began sending letters to selected civilian pilots (AAAF members and/or Flight Instructor School graduates?) requesting that they report to recruiting centres for enlistment as instructor pilots in the Air Force (T. MacTavish pers. comm., June 2, 2012).**

Saturday

26 Danzig Crisis French President Daladier warns Hitler that France desired peace, but would fight if Poland was invaded (<http://ww2db.com>). Rationing goes into effect in Germany (wikipedia).

The German training battleship *Schleswig-Holstein* arrives unannounced at Danzig, actually intended to attack the Polish naval facilities there with Marines and shellfire as per the original plan, but hastily changed to a surprise 'Goodwill Visit' due to the postponement (A. Beevor; wikipedia).

A modified Mitsubishi G3M aircraft, registered J-BACI *Nippon* and sponsored by the *Mainichi Shimbun* newspaper, left Tokyo on a planned round-the-world flight via Alaska, New York, South America, Europe and India (Old Tokyo website). See August 29, below.

First televised professional baseball game in New York City (wikipedia).

Royal Navy sends signal to all stations and commonwealth navies to take control of all British and Commonwealth commercial shipping, in effect going to a war footing. RCN implements this in all Canadian ports (M. Milner; wikipedia).

**#1 Group Bomber Command advanced units deploy to France, redesignated the Advanced Air Strike Force (AASF) (S. Shail).**

**RAF Bomber Command orders all aircraft on standby to be dispersed to civilian airfields and landing grounds, fully fuelled and armed (L.F.E. Coombs). At this time it had 8 squadrons operational on Wellington bombers and another re-equipping, all of which had been equipped in the last 12 months (S. Bond). Radial engined Whitley II, III and IV bombers equipped another 8 squadrons with more powerful Merlin engined Whitley V aircraft beginning to enter service, soon replacing the earlier aircraft (R. Williams).**

**RCAF Squadrons begin moving to War Stations, #3 (B) Sqn. (Wapiti's) from Calgary to Halifax, and #2 (AC) Sqn. from Trenton to Saint John NB via Halifax (CCMA). #8 (GP) Sqn. photography units returning from field camps to Rockcliffe being re-equipped and re-deployed to Sydney, NS. Canadian Militia called up to man coastal defences and protect industrial targets (Polsson).**

Sunday

27 Danzig Crisis Hitler responds to French President that Germany had no intention to fight France, but if France chose to go to war over Poland then it was not Germany's responsibility (<http://ww2db.com>).

**#8 (BR) Sqn. RCAF, 6 float equipped Deltas recalled from mapping duties and re-equipped for maritime patrol leave Ottawa enroute to Sydney, NS, including Delta #673 which suffers an engine problem and force lands on a lake in Maine, USA. Later, parts are flown in to make temporary repairs and #673 is ferried to Megantic, Quebec, for an engine change (E.P. Gardiner).**

He 178 makes the first flight of a turbojet powered aircraft (wikipedia). It's He S-3B engine

was capable of 380 kg (838 lbs) of thrust (B. Johnson).

Monday

28 Hitler is told Britain will fight if he attacks Poland (CJCA headline). Swedish and British diplomats are shuttling by air between Berlin and London, trying to avert the crisis (D. Sommerville).

Britain recalls merchant vessels from the Baltic and Mediterranean. German-French border closed (wikipedia).

Tuesday

29 Spitfire Ia L1090 was shipped on this date to the USAAC test facility at Dayton, Ohio ([www.spitfires.ukf.net](http://www.spitfires.ukf.net)). It may have arrived in Canada and was then held in shipping due to events. See Feb. 19, 1940.

Danzig Crisis Through Swedish diplomats Hitler tells Britain, France and Poland that Germany desires only the port of Danzig and a portion of the Polish Corridor to connect East Prussia with the rest of Germany, and a plebiscite to determine the fate of the rest of the Polish Corridor (<http://ww2db.com>). However he produces no paperwork or proposals, sets a deadline of August 31 for the Polish government to meet his demands, while Foreign Minister Von Ribbentrop refuses to meet with Polish, French or British ambassadors (A. Beevor).

Poland sends 3 modern destroyers from the Baltic to England to co-ordinate with Royal Navy in supporting Poland in future operations, including naval convoys through the Baltic (wikipedia).

The modified Mitsubishi G3M J-BACI *Nippon* lands at Nome, Alaska Territory from northern Japan ([wingnet.org](http://wingnet.org)).

Wednesday

30 Danzig Crisis Poland refuses to send a delegation to Germany to negotiate Danzig and the Polish Corridor, and orders the mobilization of the Polish Army (<http://ww2db.com>). Polish Air Force combat units disbursed to alternate airfields (R. Gretzyngier).

Sidney Cotton was in Germany with the modified Lockheed G-AFTL, not with cameras, but as part of a bid to stop the war by flying Luftwaffe commander and vice leader of the Nazi party Göring to talks in London where Cotton hoped he could be persuaded that England and France were serious about going to war. The plan fell through and the Lockheed G-AFTL was the last civilian aircraft to leave Germany before the war

began (<http://www.adastron.com/lockheed/electra/sidcotton.htm>). See September 19-20, 1940.

Britain refuses to coerce Poland; German liner *Bremen* departs from New York City (CJCA headlines). The ship arrived in New York and stayed only to disembark it's passengers before leaving empty (wikipedia). See September 6, below. Likewise the liner *Columbus* enters Havana, Cuba, and drops most of its passengers there, but was unable to break-out across the Atlantic and took refuge in Veracruz, Mexico (wikipedia). See December 14, below.

**Prime Minister Mackenzie King** creates an *Emergency Council of Ministers* (Douglas & Greenhous).

The modified Mitsubishi G3M J-BACI *Nippon* lands at Fairbanks, Alaska Territory (wingnet.org).

Khalkin Gol Incident Soviet forces have penetrated 30 km into Manchukuo (Oxford). Outnumbered Japanese air units manage to counter the Russian air attacks at the cost of many pilots killed or wounded, but this achieves only parity over the battlefield (D. Nedailkov).

#112 Sqn. AAAF (?), Winnipeg, Manitoba, AC2 **T.H. Perley-Martin** fell out of an Avro 626, but came down safely by parachute, pilot **F/L W. Hanna** landed safely (paulmcmillan at [www.rafcommands.com](http://www.rafcommands.com)).

Thursday

31 Britain mobilizes fleet, calls up army reserve (CJCA headline). Censorship imposed on communications to and from the British Isles, and civil aircraft flights banned over half of the country (Polsson). Selected volunteer civil pilots requested to report to Bristol for evaluation as communications pilots in case bombing disrupted communications, and were signed up into the newly formed Air Transport Auxiliary or ATA (L. Curtis). Order given to begin evacuation of civilians from large cities (wikipedia). In the evening Soviet Parliament ratifies the German-USSR Non-Aggression Pact (Polsson).

Destroyers *HMCS Fraser* and *HMCS St. Laurent* sail from Vancouver for Halifax via the Panama Canal (Douglas & Greenhous).

The modified Mitsubishi G3M J-BACI *Nippon* lands at Whitehorse, Yukon Territory where it stayed 2 days (wingnet.org).

Khalkin Gol Incident Japanese forces fighting the Russian invasion are surrounded. With the signing of the German-USSR Non-Aggression Pact Japan felt it had gotten too deeply involved against the USSR without possible support from Germany. On the Soviet side the developing war in Europe and his planned attack on Poland meant Stalin did not need entanglements in the east. Thus both sides wanted this fighting to stop (Oxford). Soviet aircraft are again prohibited from flying into unoccupied Manchukuo to attack air bases (D. Nedailkov). See Sept. 15, below.

Hitler reveals his 16 demands, asks for Danzig Corridor [sic] (CJCA headline). This document was never delivered to Poland (wikipedia).

Danzig Crisis At midnight Von Ribbentrop tells British Ambassador in Berlin that Germany is not willing to risk a war with Poland if the port of Danzig and a section of the Polish Corridor was given to Germany, with the promise of a later plebiscite (A. Beevor). Ambassador Henderson replies that Britain desires peace, but would not sacrifice Poland, while at the same time urging Poland to send a delegation to Berlin. However, when the Polish Ambassador tried to send this message to Warsaw he found communications had been cut between Germany and Poland (<http://ww2db.com>).

**#1 (F) Sqn. RCAF Hurricanes begin to leave Calgary for St. Hubert, Quebec by rail (CCMA; C. Vincent).**

**#3 (B) Sqn., flight of Wapiti aircraft from Calgary land at Millinocket, Maine, USA, enroute to Halifax, after the leaders aircraft develops engine problems (C.L. Annis).**

**Manpower of the RCAF 298 officers and 2,750 airmen Regular and 112 officers and 901 airmen in the activated AAAF, total 4,061, an increase of nearly 25% since March, mostly recruited into the regular force. Total aircraft on strength numbered 270, including 22 Wapitis, 20 Oxfords, 19 Hurricanes, 13 Atlas, 12 Delta, 11 Shark, 10 Battles, 9 Stranraers, 5 Siskin, 4 Norseman and 4 Vancouver aircraft. Production of Hurricane fighters in Canada had been ordered and the first Canadian built Lysander army co-operation aircraft were nearly ready for delivery, while construction of the Bolingbroke (maritime patrol version of the Blenheim), Shark and Stranraer was proceeding and Hampden production was still in formative stages. There were 8 permanent Squadrons, #1 Fighter, #2 Army Co-operation, #3 Bomber, #4 General Reconnaissance, #5 GR, #6 Torpedo Bomber, #7 General Purpose and #8 GP/GR, as well as 12 Auxiliary units (#110 to #121), 5 of which (#113, #114, #116, #117 and #121) were still forming up and would soon be disbanded as**

incomplete. #9, #10 and #11 Squadrons in the Regular force had been authorized but not formed (CCMA).

By comparison Australia had 3,500 personnel and 246 aircraft (164 modern), New Zealand even less aircraft (although it was forming a squadron of Wellingtons in England), India had only 1 squadron and less than 300 personnel (although the RAF in India was much larger) and France had about 2,000 aircraft. The USAAC had 2,470 aircraft, of which about 800 were modern, and the US Navy about the same (P.A. Sammons). Poland had 1,369 aircraft in it's airforce, including impressed civilian light planes, but new modern fighter designs had only reached the prototype stage, and it's most modern fighter in production, the PZL-24, was only being exported to other countries while Poland had counted on receiving the new modern PZL-50 aircraft before a war broke out (wikipedia). Germany had over 3,700 aircraft in service, about 2,500 of which were modern designs (F.K. Mason; Oxford; C. Clark). The Italian Air Force numbered over 5,000 aircraft, but less than 1,000 were considered modern and within months over 1,800 obsolete aircraft were ordered scrapped (H.W. Neulen). The RAF had about 1,500 modern aircraft in service in England, and a further 400 or so overseas (<http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/UN/UK/UK-RAF-I/UK-RAF-I-1.html>), not including many obsolescent and obsolete aircraft still in service. Manpower of the RAF and WAAF was 11,753 officers and 163,939 enlisted (C. Charland at [www.rafcommands.com](http://www.rafcommands.com)).

The Canadian Army had some 4,000 all ranks in the permanent force, with a militia of 51,000. The Army possessed only artillery from the 1914-1918 World War, 16 light tanks, 27 anti-tank guns, 4 modern anti-aircraft guns and 23 Bren light machine guns for infantry support. But it still had the professional experience of the soldiers of the World War, and the knowledge of veterans to enhance the training of it's militia units (Douglas & Greenhous).

## **September 1939**

Friday

**1 Germany invades Poland. Phoney border incident staged just after midnight involving "attack" on German radio transmitter on the border by SS soldiers disguised in Polish uniforms who made a dramatic "on air" seizure of the studio, broadcast a fake message in Polish calling for the invasion of Germany and left. They also murdered a concentration camp inmate dressed in a Polish uniform, whose body was left on the "battlefield" and shown to reporters and photographers as "proof" of an invasion (Polsson).**

**0435 First military action of the war in Europe, Ju 87 dive bombers attack forward Polish positions (Bergström & Mikhailov V.2).**

**0445 In Danzig the old German battleship Schleswig-Holstein opens fire on the Polish naval storage base of Westerplatte, which signalled German Marines to attack the base (Polsson; D. Sommerville), defended by 182 Polish soldiers and 27 civilian naval reservists with orders to hold for 12 hours if they were attacked. It was expected that the Marines would quickly take over the base, but the Polish forces had prepared their defences and drove the Germans back with heavy losses (wikipedia).**

**On the other side of the harbour the Polish Government buildings, holding such offices as Customs, Mail, Immigration, etc., known as the Polish Post, were attacked by the local German police and the SS in it's first military action. Expecting to easily seize the buildings which were occupied by office workers (men & women), they were repulsed by these workers armed with small arms which had been placed there, led by 1 Polish army officer. The office building is then attacked with artillery, but the workers were only forced to surrender after 15 hours when German combat engineers demolished sections of the building (wikipedia). See Oct. 5, below.**

**0511 In response to the Polish "invasion" Hitler issues a proclamation to the German Army accusing Poland of refusing his peace offers, persecuting Germans in Poland, and invading Germany (Polsson). Hitler also publicly states he has ordered only military targets to be bombed by the Luftwaffe (M.J.H. Taylor), but orders for the invasion specify attacks by aircraft on civilian refugees and towns will take place as part of the tactics evolved in Spain to use panicked civilians to hamper co-ordination of effective defences (Oxford).**

**Under German law passed under the Nazi Party, following this declaration of war criticism of the conduct of the war now becomes a capital offence (Oxford) [see October 29, 1943]. A new law was soon introduced making it a crime to listen to foreign radio broadcasts as well (A. Beevor).**

**0520 (Polsson) Luftwaffe aircraft attack Polish cities of Puck, Gdynia, Cracow and Katowice, having surprise and a 3 to 1 advantage in numbers of aircraft (Oxford). Although the training of Polish aircrew is to a very high standard their aircraft are either out of date or (in the case of their very good new PZL-37 Los light bomber) in short supply, and their bases suffer heavy losses of training aircraft, repair and supply facilities (R. Gretzyngier).**

**0545 German and Slovakian ground forces cross the Polish border (Polsson, H.W. Neulen). Columns of attacking German troops, carried in vehicles with mobile Luftwaffe radio teams, are preceded by aerial reconnaissance aircraft, medium bombers which attack Polish bases and communication points such as railroads and towns, and dive bombers to give tactical support by attacking opposing soldiers and strong points. These columns are supplied with fuel and ammunition by transport aircraft to allow them to keep moving, preventing organized defence by their speed and aggressiveness, all part of a new tactic called "Lightning War", or Blitzkrieg (Oxford). This overwhelms the Polish Army, deployed in forward positions in an attempt to stop the invasion on its borders. Most are still awaiting reinforcements scheduled in the mobilization order of August 30 (D. Sommerville).**

**0600 German aircraft attack Polish capitol of Warsaw (Polsson). Warned by their observer net based on telephones Polish fighters met them, their PZL-11 fighters outgunned and far slower than their opponents, but more manoeuvrable (R. Gretzyngier).**

**About 1015, Hitler addresses the Reichstag, offering peace in the west to England and France, and 'assuring' Russia of peace with Germany. Chamberlain addresses the British House of Commons accusing Hitler of waging aggressive war (Polsson). The mood of England (and in most of the world) is a growing anger that Hitler, seen to be willing to compromise for peace just one year ago, has fomented yet another crisis and unleashed an even greater war in Europe (Oxford). Full mobilization ordered in England. This had not been ordered before due to the part that mobilization had played in escalating the crisis of 1914, which had led to war, and the hope in France and England that a new war might be averted (A. Beevor).**

**2100 British Ambassador to Germany delivers an ultimatum to foreign minister von Ribbentrop stating that unless German soldiers withdraw from Poland their countries would be at war. An identical note is delivered by the French Ambassador 1 hour later (wikipedia).**

**Newfoundland passes Act for Defence of Newfoundland. Switzerland mobilizes its armed forces, sending them to guard against a possible German invasion through Swiss territory to outflank the southern end of the Maginot Line (Oxford). Norway, Finland, Latvia, Portugal, Cuba, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania and Denmark declare neutrality. Irish Free State (known as Eire since 1937) declares it will try to remain neutral and declares a state of**

***National Emergency (Oxford). Italy declares neutrality unless attacked.***

***The neutrality of Eire, a Commonwealth country, is a great blow to England as it had been hoped to base anti-submarine ships and aircraft there to protect convoys. Later an agreement for a flight path, or corridor, across neutral Ireland is worked out to give better access for anti-submarine aircraft to the Atlantic from bases in Northern Ireland. In the meantime police in Northern Ireland and Eire cooperate in a strong operation to suppress the IRA, who have been engaged in a bombing campaign in England during the past year (Oxford).***

***Southwest of the Canary Islands the tanker Altmark met and refuelled the battleship Admiral Graf Spee (E. Wiberg). See September 11, below.***

***US President Roosevelt sends appeals to Britain, France, Germany and Italy urging them to refrain from aerial bombing of unfortified cities and civilians, unaware such bombing has already begun in Poland.***

***The Emergency Cabinet in Ottawa invokes parts of the the War Measures Act, and begins to fully mobilize the RCAF, RCN and Canadian Army for war (Polsson; Douglas & Greenhous).***

***RAF Reserve and Volunteer Reserve members called out for wartime service (RAF Timeline).***

***F/L Niven RAF (Can.) flies a camouflaged Beech 17 Staggerwing to take oblique photos of the German naval base at Wilhelmshaven.***

***#4 Flying Training School RAF in Egypt is moved to Habbaniya, Iraq, and becomes #4 SFTS RAF (Shores, Massimello & Guest). See end of June 1940 and April 1941.***

***In London a blackout is applied in the evening, the lights will not be turned on again until just before the war has ended (Polsson). A succinct but detailed description of air raid and anti-gas preparations in London can be found in K. Stofer's 'The Biggs' Boys'. Similar civil defence measures were being put in place in major cities across Europe, although not to the degree made in London. This was likely due to the fact that London alone in the 1914-1918 World War had been subject to a sustained bombing campaign, and the government recognized how vulnerable the City and England were to such attacks (R. Fredette).***

**Evacuation of children from London and other British cities begins, over 6 million English adults and children would be evacuated to rural areas, and some to other countries (including Canada) during the war (Oxford). Similar programs were carried out in other countries as both sides feared the mass bomber attacks and the use of poisoned gas predicted by Air Superiority proponents and publicized in the media of the time.**

**The first Cannes Film Festival, scheduled to begin on this date, is cancelled due to the news (wikipedia). The new Cannes Festival was created to replace the older Venice Film Festival which had become a showcase for fascist films (CBC Under the Influence, 2018 show on Ad Awards and Creativity). See September 19, 1946.**

**In Vancouver **George Beurling** is released by US Customs back to Canada with a train ticket back to his home in Montreal (Nolan).**

**Leading an aerial survey party in the Rockies BC Provincial surveyor **G. Andrews** hears about the war on their floatplanes radio, and they return to Vancouver (R. Eagle). See September 4, below.**

**RCAF takes delivery of the first Canadian built Lysander II, #416 (R.W.R. Walker). Delivered in an all silver scheme this aircraft was later the subject of a Hawk (later Testor's) chrome plated plastic model. See September 6, 1945.**

Saturday

**2 Danzig Crisis Germany officially annexes Danzig, and Hitler tells Britain and France German troops would withdraw from Poland if Germany was given Danzig and the Polish Corridor (<http://ww2db.com>). The secret agreement with the USSR meant this statement was meaningless.**

**Britain and France agree to Roosevelt's appeal, declare only "strictly military objectives in the narrowest sense of the word" will be bombed by their air forces, which limits RAF Bomber Command to naval targets only (as long as the ships were not moored to a wharf) and dropping propaganda leaflets, which did give useful experience in night flying over blacked out areas (BC War Diaries). See December 16-17, 1940.**

**In Poland the Luftwaffe has gained air superiority over much of the country. The Polish airforce is forced to abandon established bases and disperse it's remaining aircraft on an ad hoc basis. A major problem for them is lack of**

**communications at these new airfields, limiting their effectiveness against a fast moving enemy (F.K. Mason). Operations are also limited by deliveries of fuel and ammunition, which is controlled by the Polish Army (J. Painter).**

**In Danzig the small Polish force in the Westerplatte naval storage base is still holding out, despite heavy shelling and an attack by Ju 87 dive bombers which destroyed their mortars, their radio and food stocks (wikipedia).**

**French army mobilizes. France maintained a conscript based army, and did not have a force ready to react quickly (LH), although the Maginot defensive fortifications are fully manned. It would take almost 3 weeks to form up and equip a field force. This was the purpose of the Maginot Line, to give France time to form it's Army in a modern war, but it's manning requirements also robbed France of having a standing force capable of immediate offensive operations. All this was directly due to the very high losses of soldiers France had sustained in the Great War.**

**Advanced Air Striking Force (AASF) of 160 light Battle bombers begins to deploy to forward bases in France (RAF Timeline), one ditches in the Channel and one force lands in France (S. Shail).**

**Bookings on ocean liners leaving for Canada and the USA are sold out. The CPR Liner RMS Empress of Britain left Southampton for Montreal filled to overcapacity, with temporary berths (wikipedia). From Liverpool the also packed SS Athenia had sailed for Montreal via Belfast the day before. See September 3, below and October 26, 1940.**

**Brazil, Chile, Sweden and Estonia declare neutrality, Turkey agrees to support it's agreements with Britain and France and remain neutral (Polsson).**

**The modified Mitsubishi G3M J-BACI Nippon lands at Seattle, USA, from Whitehorse, Yukon Territory (wingnet.org). See September 9, below.**

Sunday

**3 At 0900 London time the British Ambassador to Germany informs the German government that if German troops are not withdrawing from Poland by 1100 England will declare war on Germany (Polsson).**

**Russia informs Britain and France that if they join into the German-Polish conflict, Russia would be compelled to revise her western borders with Poland (Polsson). This is a cover for their planned attack on eastern Poland.**

**The Luftwaffe considers the Polish Air Force to have been virtually annihilated on this date, and although Polish aircraft continue to make attacks, the fluid situation and scale of the war makes them ineffective. Without opposition in the air German reconnaissance and tactical bombing disrupt most Polish Army efforts to halt the advance. The dive bombing by Ju 87 and Hs 123 aircraft is very effective, and is afterwards the subject of much propaganda by the Luftwaffe (F.K. Mason).**

**1110 In a radio broadcast British PM Chamberlain informs the public that England is now at war with Germany as of 1100 (Polsson). This includes English colonies and controlled areas such as Newfoundland.**

**1115 British Foreign Office informs German Embassy of declaration of war (Polsson).**

**1117 Admiralty transmits orders to RN ships to begin hostilities on Germany.**

**1130 Air Raid sirens in London are tested (Polsson). Later in the day a French courier aircraft sets off the first Air Raid Warning in earnest in London.**

**1200 France sets a deadline for withdrawal by Germany at 1700 (wikipedia).**

**About 1134 Berlin time, German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop reads on radio Hitler's signed reply to the British ultimatum which blames England for creating the conditions that led to the war (Polsson).**

**1215 Berlin time, French ambassador to Germany informs von Ribbentrop that France will declare war at 1700 if ultimatum to withdraw from Poland not met (Polsson).**

**1400 Off the River Plate the cruiser HMS Ajax intercepts the German freighter SS Olinda and, after her crew abandoned her, sinks her with gunfire (<http://www.wrecksite.eu>; Cull, Lander & Horan).**

**1800 The King addresses England and the Commonwealth on radio [dramatized in the movie "The King's Speech"].**

**Bomber Command sent 27 bombers and a reconnaissance aircraft searching for units of the German fleet at sea off the coast of Germany, it's first wartime operation, but found nothing (BC War Diaries).**

**1930, evening, passenger ship SS Athenia which left Belfast September 2 for Montreal torpedoed at sea by U-30, sinking with the loss of 118 people (including 54 Canadian and 28 US citizens) of the 1,400 onboard. A member of the crew, *Stewardess Hannah Baird*, became the first Canadian Merchant Seaman to die in the war. The body of 10 year old *Margaret Hayworth* was returned to Hamilton, Ontario, where a huge public funeral was held (wikipedia). Others lost included *Jean G. Holmes* (6) from Winnipeg, *Allan E.E. Vincent* (7), *Agnes McFarlane* and her daughter *Gladys* (3) from Verdun, Quebec. The commander of the U-boat attacked the ship in error, believing it was an armed merchant cruiser. On return to Germany the attack was made secret, and Germany claimed the liner had been deliberately sabotaged to give Britain an excuse to attack German ships without warning (G.S. Snyder).**

**Outbound from Montreal to Bermuda the Canadian National passenger liner RMS Lady Rodney received the war notice and begins to re-paint the ship grey. On arrival in Bermuda they were told Canada was not at war, and were to re-paint the ship white again, which was done enroute to the Bahamas (J. Boileau). See September 10, below.**

**2030 French Premier Daladier announces a state of war between France and Germany (Polsson.)**

**Under the terms of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty signed in 1936 the British controlled Egyptian government declares martial law, which allows censorship and deportation of German citizens from the country, and for England to defend the Suez Canal (Polsson, Oxford). But the Egyptian Government did not declare war on Germany (Oxford). See February 23, 1945.**

**Late evening, Winston Churchill is re-appointed First Lord of the Admiralty and made a member of the Cabinet. He had last served in this position in 1919, but had always kept himself informed on Admiralty matters, even being given access to secret signals while in Opposition at the express wish of the Prime Minister. He immediately took several measures he knew were required. Among them was the immediate implementation of the Convoy system for merchant shipping, ordering the installation of RDF (radar) in all RN warships (the navy only had 3 radar units at this time) and placing orders for the construction of the Flower class corvette anti-submarine convoy escort ships (Oxford). The signal of his appointment made by the Admiralty to the RN's ships simply said "Winston is back."**

**2030 local time the British Viceroy of India makes a simple announcement that India was at war. This was done without consultation with the National Congress or any Indian leaders at all, as he believed the division of power built into Government of India Act of 1935 had reduced the power of the National Congress to the point where it was no longer relevant (S. Raghavan).**

**2115 Melbourne time, Prime Minister Menzies announces that the Dominion of Australia is at war with Germany (Polsson).**

**(Sept. 4, local date) Morning Wellington time, Governor General Viscount Galway proclaims the Dominion of New Zealand is at war with Germany.**

**Denmark, Spain, and the Netherlands declare neutrality (Polsson).**

**In Canada police arrest suspected fascists (CJCA headline). AAAF Squadron members are called out for duty with the RCAF on a volunteer basis (424 SH). **PM Mackenzie King** and Justice Minister **Ernest LaPointe** give a joint English-French radio broadcast stating the intentions of Canada to join the war against Germany (wikipedia), and that Canada's military contribution would be made up of volunteers. Canadian Parliament is recalled.**

**Between Sept. 3 and 10 the RCAF orders immediate delivery of 30 Harvard I trainers it had paid for from the US, receive 15 via Alberta before US border closed (B.W. Gowans). See November 19, 1939, below.**

- 3 #1 AOS, England, Wallace K6028 flew into high ground in Scotland, **P/O E.A. Cummings RAF (Can.)** and LAC A.R.R. Stewart RAF killed. These were the first members of the RAF, and P/O Cummings was the first Canadian, killed in the war. There is a cairn commemorating these airmen on the hill where they crashed, dedicated in 2012.

**3-4 Ten RAF Bomber Command Whitley III aircraft drop leaflets in Northern Germany, the first NICKEL operation (Polsson). **P/O G.E. Walker RAF (Can.)** was the first Canadian airman to fly over Germany in the war as second pilot in a 58 Squadron Whitley (H.A. Halliday). **F/O G.L. Raphael**, 77 Sqn., may also have been on this operation (acesofww2.com). This initial operation dropped 13 tons of leaflets over Hamburg, Bremen and the industrial Ruhr Valley (R. Williams).**

**Night time attacks on the Polish force in the Westerplatte base at Danzig are repulsed (wikipedia).**

Monday

**4 Admiralty orders beginning of escorted convoy system.**

**Argentina, Uruguay, Guatemala and Mexico declare neutrality (Polsson).**

**Polish combat aircraft continue to resist Luftwaffe attacks, but these are limited in number by fuel and spares shortage, and in effectiveness as the warning network breaks down (R. Gretzyngier).**

**Anticipating treatment of burned and disfigured airmen the RAF had planned a special unit at the recently built Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead to treat these casualties. On this date Dr. (later Sir) Archibald McIndoe, a New Zealand specialist in reconstructive surgery, arrived at the hospital to operate this unit (R. Donovan).**

**In Canada #8 (GR) Sqn. deploys a detachment of 2 Delta aircraft, #676 (F/S Thomas) and #677 (F/S Gilmour), to St. John's, Newfoundland for 9 days to patrol the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, and the Bell Island iron ore shipping port area, the RCAF's first overseas deployment (RCAF Sqns.; E.P. Gardiner). The iron mines on Bell Island were the largest in the Commonwealth and before the war was a major supplier to Germany (CBC As It Happens July 15, 2019).**

**It is interesting to note that there were more Canadians serving as officers in the RAF than there were total officers in the RCAF at this time (RCAF Sqns.). D. McIntosh notes that in early 1940 there were 2,400 Canadians serving in the RAF.**

**During this week George Beurling, a trained and dedicated pilot just 18 years old but with better than average skills and knowledge, who had dropped out of high school to pursue his flying career, applied to the RCAF as soon as he arrived back in Montreal. He was turned down as he did not meet the educational requirements (Nolan). See comment following after September 14, below. Angry at being turned down, Beurling would not return.**

**To be fair this was a period of stress in the RCAF ("bags of panic" would be the best Royal Air Force term to describe it), nobody knew the shape the war would take, and Beurling (who was never noted for tact) chose the wrong time to apply. His education record would meet only the minimum requirements later used by the RCAF, but his actual applied knowledge of aeronautics was far above average. If he had been known to the recruiting officer he met, or had**

*better social skills, or reapplied when the education requirement was made more realistic, it might have been different. It is a good example of the difficulty a bureaucracy has in distinguishing skills from credentials, but to be fair sometimes the luxury of determining skills is restricted by time or urgency.*

*In Victoria surveyor **G. Andrews**, with extensive knowledge of aerial survey work, also applies to the Canadian Army, but they are not interested. Frustrated, he writes to his contacts in England where he is immediately offered a commission in the Royal Engineers (R. Eagle). See January 21, 1944.*

*The first Bomber Command attack of the war, 15 Blenheim and 14 Wellington bombers sent to attack German naval ships off Wilhelmshaven and Brunsbüttel. Only 9 bombers made attacks in low visibility, and 2 bombs also fell in neutral Esbjerg, Denmark, killing 2 people. The pocket battleship Admiral Scheer was hit by bombs that failed to explode, and the cruiser Emden was damaged when an attacking Blenheim crashed into the ship. Of the 29 bomber sorties and 1 reconnaissance flight, 7 were shot down (BC War Diaries). Unknown at the time warning of the attack had come from German radar, which detected the force 120 km out to sea ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oslo\\_Report](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oslo_Report)).*

*In India the National Congress and much of the population had mixed feelings about unilaterally being involved in a European war. At the invitation of the Viceroy, Gandhi, leader of the All-India or Congress Party, visited him to discuss it. As did most leaders of the time he expected immediate attacks on England, and especially London, to begin, which he found appalling. He said he knew India's independence would be achieved, but not by the destruction of England. It was his position that the decision to support England was to be decided by Indians, but he would not take sides. He, the world's most famous and dedicated follower of non-violence, made the observation that "it almost seems as if Herr Hitler knows no God but brute force" (S. Raghavan).*

*The Indian Viceroy also invited the leader of the Muslim League, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, whose political power had been damaged in the elections for the National Congress, and informed him that the federation plan was to be ended, implying that constitutional agreement in India would require the agreement of the Muslim League, thus placing him on the same level as Gandhi, and making the League a counter to the majority Congress Party (S. Raghavan).*

- 4 107 Sqn. Blenheim IV N6240 shot down by flak attacking German naval units off Wilhelmshaven. Sgt G.F. Booth RAF and AC1 (WAG) L.J. Slattery RAF become the

first RAF Prisoners of War (PoW), but their pilot **Sgt A.S. Prince RAF (Can.)** of Vancouver, BC, was killed, becoming Canada's first operational air casualty. Lead navigator on this attack is **P/O S.R. Henderson RAF (Can.)**, seconded from 206 Sqn., Coastal Command (H.A. Halliday). Other participants were **P/O P.S. Goulder RAF (Can.)** and **F/L(?) F.W.S. Turner RAF (Can.)** (419 SH). See November 7 and 13, below.

- 4 223 Sqn. Hudson I N7239 stalled on take off on a training flight, **F/O E.D. Godfrey RAF (Can.)** and **F/L G.P. Robinson RAF** killed. **F/O Godfrey** was the first Canadian lost in Coastal Command in wartime. This might have been caused by an error in trimming the aircraft (ref. D. Edwards).

Tuesday

- 5 **US President Roosevelt declares US neutrality, officially asks *PM Mackenzie King if Canada is at war?* Reply "No" allows further imports of aircraft and other supplies under US Neutrality Act.**

***US Neutrality patrol begins, US naval ships and aircraft begin monitoring foreign warships in the western Atlantic (C.E. Hipperson).***

***Under the Neutrality Act US citizens were forbidden to sail to belligerent countries except on US flagged ships. This included British and French possessions in the Caribbean, and was particularly hard on Canadian ships sailing in that region, especially those which regularly sailed from US ports, where they were now excluded (E. Wiberg).***

***First attack on a U-boat by Coastal Command, off Holland, inconclusive (R. McNeill).***

***In Poland the remaining Air Force units concentrate on the border with Romania, where British Hurricane fighters and Battle bombers are to arrive to re-equip them, via Romania, by prior agreement. They also expected to be able to train and re-equip at Romanian bases (Falkowski). Despite the obsolescence of it's PZL-11c fighter, Polish fighter pilots had claimed 170 Luftwaffe aircraft destroyed (wikipedia).***

***The Polish forces in the Westerplatte naval storage base in Danzig are still holding out against heavy shelling and attacks by German Marines, Army, Police and SS forces (wikipedia).***

***Japan declares neutrality (Polsson). German Army give development of A-4 Rocket (later V-2) highest priority (Polsson).***

**The losses in the first RAF attack on German warships the previous day presented a problem, in that no official mechanism existed for accounting for those missing. The International Red Cross in Switzerland was contacted and through them it was arranged for Germany and Britain to exchange lists of each sides missing airmen, whether killed, prisoner or injured (S. Hadaway). See October 14, below.**

**After arriving in Halifax #3 (Bomber) Sqn. RCAF was disbanded, and personnel and aircraft used to create #10 (Bomber) Sqn., formed on this date on Wapiti aircraft (RCAF Sqns.).**

- 5 7 Sqn. Hampden I L4161 crashed in England on a training flight, killing P/O A.R. Playfair RAF (Can.). P/O Playfair was on a solo flight practicing single engine operations when he lost control and dove into the ground (R. Allenby). This was the first wartime training loss by Bomber Command.
- 5 #10 E&RFTS, Cadet Pilot P/O J.H. Cavanagh RAF (Can.) and J.W. Hadley RAF killed in a vehicle accident in England, E.J. Lamb RAF survived (COL BRUGGY and F. Williston at [www.rafcommands.com](http://www.rafcommands.com)).

Wednesday

- 6 **Colonel J.L. Ralston appointed Canadian Finance Minister (CJCA headline).**

**General Jan Christiaan Smuts becomes new Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa after the narrow defeat of a motion of neutrality by the former Prime Minister Hertzog. He pledges to cooperate with Britain and declares war on Germany (Polsson).**

**Iraq breaks off diplomatic relations with Germany (Polsson).**

**British Cabinet discusses production of aircraft. One measure was the formation of an Anglo-French Co-ordinating Committee for Aircraft Production which sought ways to integrate the two countries by sharing raw materials, production of parts and instruments, providing engines for new designs, co-ordinating purchases of aircraft from the USA, and license manufacture of French designs in Canada (details unknown) (M. Willis).**

**Responding to PM Mackenzie Kings query regarding what Canada could do for England, Dominions Secretary Anthony Eden requests dispatch of Canadian Army units to England, control of the RCN, and recruitment of Canadians to serve in the Royal Navy and the RAF, with the promise of an RCAF contingent to serve in the RAF once numbers warranted it. This is a continuation of the**

*situation of Canada's military in 1918, before the Statutes of Westminster, and reflects the opinion of England on Canada's military capabilities, valuing the Army, wanting to take over the Navy, and with the Air Force seen as a source of recruits. See December 17, below and discussion under beginning of May 1943.*

*Luftwaffe He 111 scouts Royal Navy base at Scapa Flow and photographs ships there without interception (G.S. Snyder).*

*German passenger liner Bremen arrives in Murmansk, in Arctic Russia, after a high speed passage from New York (ww2total.com Chronology/1939). There it was joined by the St. Louis, which had evaded RN patrols after sailing empty from Bermuda (wikipedia). See Dec. 10, below.*

*Battle of Barking Creek, in England an error in radar detection indicates incoming raids, actually plotting a mirror image of aircraft flying behind the radar stations and inland over England. Fighters scrambled to intercept them are also reported as further raids, prompting more scrambles. The snowball effect led to several "interceptions" and combat by friendly aircraft over the Thames estuary with the loss of a Hurricane fighter and its pilot (RAF Timeline). The result of this exposure of a technical fault combined with effects of an actual combat stress situation leads to development of better and more accurate methods of detection and better evaluation of reporting of friendly aircraft to eliminate errors.*

*Among the ways found to reduce errors was a radio device called PIPSQUEAK which was fitted to many fighters (one in three in a squadron usually). It emitted regular timed signals that could be picked up by High Frequency Direction Finders (HF/DF, or Huff-Duff) and cross plotted within seconds (using technology developed in part by soldier and scientist **General A.G.L. McNaughton CB CMG DSO**) to give Fighter Controllers a clear picture (on plotting tables) of where their own aircraft were in near real time. Colour segmented clocks with sweep minute hands in the plotting rooms were used to keep track of which Squadrons PIPSQUEAK was transmitting at any given time, which was matched to the colours of the markers on the plotting table map to tell the Controllers how accurate the plot was (<http://www.battleofbritain1940.net>; R. Prior). The communications system was refined to bring all the information on the fast changing movements in as near real time as possible. For example the time lapse between an Observer Post making a report to that report arriving at its Sector control room was about 40 seconds (B. Kite). The fighters PIPSQUEAK plot was then guided to the plot of the*

**enemy bombers derived from radar or Observer Corps reports. Friendly aircraft were later also identified to radar operators by highly secret on-board transponders, referred to as IFF, or Identification, Friend or Foe, which responded to the radar with an identifiable return signal (Oxford), but at this time radar was only searching over the sea, while PIPSQUEAK could be plotted over sea and land as well.**

**Another result of the Battle of Barking Creek was better attention paid to reports of the Observer Corps, a volunteer civil defence organization that operated a web of observation posts in England and reported to Fighter Command the positions, types, numbers, altitudes and courses of any aircraft they could see or hear (above clouds or at night), backing up and confirming electronic detection and in fact doing the majority of tracking of hostile aircraft inland where there was initially no radar available. Radar was not in place inland from the coast of England at this time due to technical problems, so the Observers would be warned of an inbound hostile target, confirm it's type, position, course, altitude and numbers when sighted, and pass the sighting from site to site as it flew over England while reporting to controllers. It was these reports that were used for interception by fighters over the land. This organization was also a result of the German bombing campaign against England in the World War of 1914-1918.**

Thursday

**7 Canadian Parliament meets in emergency session in Ottawa (CJCA headline).**

**During the debate **PM Mackenzie King** stated the governments position thusly "When it comes to a fight between good and bad, when the evil forces of the world are let loose upon mankind, are those of us who believe in Christianity and all it means going to allow evil forces to triumph, without if necessary opposing them by our very lives?" (Quoted by T. Reardon, Winston Churchill and Mackenzie King, *Finest Hour* 130, The International Churchill Society, Spring 2006).**

**Remaining Polish Air Force fighters defending Warsaw are ordered to retreat to the east, leaving the capital defenceless from air attack (R. Gretzyngier).**

**In the morning the Polish commander of the forces at the Westerplatte naval base surrenders, and the survivors are allowed to march out. These 200 soldiers had resisted a force far larger than their own and inflicted heavy casualties during the siege. Danzig was once again a German port (wikipedia).**

***Five ships sunk by submarines (CJCA headline).***

Friday

***8 Parliamentary debates in Ottawa, build up of air force, navy and munitions industry stressed.***

***CPR Liner RMS Empress of Britain docks safely in Quebec City, finishing it's career as a liner. It begins to be converted to a troopship (wikipedia). See October 26, 1940.***

***President Roosevelt declares limited national emergency, issues orders to increase size of the US armed forces.***

***French army invades Saar region of Germany, surrounds the town of Saarbrücken without opposition. German units reach edges of Warsaw. Nicaragua declares neutrality (Polsson).***

8-9 77 Sqn. Whitley III K8961 landed in France on return from a NICKEL sortie, collided with a Dewoitine aircraft when taxiing in poor visibility, pilot **F/O G.L. Raphael RAF (Can.)** and crew safe. See May 18-19, 1940.

8-9 102 Sqn. Whitley III K8950 DY-M was shot down over the Ruhr on a NICKEL sortie, **P/O A.B. Thompson RAF (Can.)**, S/L S.S. Murray RAF, Sgt C.A. Hill RAF, AC1 (AG) S.A. Burry RAF and AC1 (AG) P.F. Pacey RAF all PoW. P/O Thompson was the first Canadian airman taken PoW. He was interviewed by Luftwaffe Commander in Chief Göring, who promised him as a PoW he would survive the war (N.M. Greenfield). See March 29, 1944.

Saturday

***9 In Poland the Polish army attacks at Kutno, forcing back German units advancing towards Warsaw (Oxford).***

***French troops complete occupation of the Saar pocket, occupying an area evacuated by German soldiers (S. Shail). Hitler directs there be no ground offensive against the French, and no air attacks against England or France, all Luftwaffe forces to concentrate on Poland.***

***Luftwaffe chief Göring makes a propaganda speech, ridiculing RAF leaflet raids (ww2total.com Chronology/1939).***

***Noting the reports from Poland that the Luftwaffe was attacking non-military and civilian targets the RAF Chief of the Air Staff requested that Cabinet loosen***

*restrictions on attacking targets inside Germany to help Poland, but this was turned down (R. Prior).*

*#3 (B) Sqn. Wapiti, grounded at Millinocket, Maine, USA, is repaired and flown to Halifax (C.L. Annis). Part of the delay was weather, which nearly caused the aircraft to be interned in the USA (Douglas & Greenhous).*

*A single Barkley-Grow T8P transport enters service with the RCAF (Griffin CMA). See Oct. 20, 1941.*

*The modified Mitsubishi G3M aircraft, J-BACI Nippon, landed in New York where the 7 man crew visited the New York World's Fair (Old Tokyo website). See September 13, below.*

*At 22:20 with one vote against, the Canadian Parliament adopts a motion to support Britain and France in the war against Germany (Polsson). See March 21, 1942. Bypassing usual procedures the Act is telegraphed to England, where King George VI gives it immediate Royal Assent (CBC Sunday Edition).*

Sunday

*10 Canada declares war against Germany, implementation of full Canadian War Measures Act is enabled, giving the Government extra-ordinary powers required to prosecute war but also restricting civil liberties where required. Mindful of Canadian sensitivities Prime Minister Chamberlain appeals to **Mackenzie King** for the RCAF to expand it's training schools in Canada (Dalke).*

*Canadians responded to the declaration of war positively but realistically, without the mass enthusiasm that had been noted in 1914 when the World War began. If the full scope of what was to come was not realized, the veterans of that war at all levels knew that this was no glorious event. Above all, Canada's military and political leaders knew many would die, and were determined not to suffer the scale of casualties they had endured in the previous conflict.*

*On arrival in Nassau the Canadian National liner RMS Lady Rodney was told Canada was now at war, and the newly painted white had to be repainted (again) in grey (J. Boileau). See October 1940 and January 19, 1942.*

*In India the National Congress began several days of debate in committee about how or if the country should support England in this war. Gandhi advocated "unconditional but non-violent support", and he observed that this war would*

*end imperialism, and it would be better after to deal with England than Germany, but this view was not popular (S. Raghavan).*

*An article in the New York Times uses the term "Second World War" for the first time.*

*RAF NICKEL leaflet operations over Germany cease over public criticism that only leaflets are being dropped (Polsson).*

*In England the expected bombing of cities had not occurred, so the civilian pilots recruited for communications flights as the ATA were sent home. However the need to ferry aircraft from factories and maintenance units to squadrons was soon seen as essential and the ATA was given the task (L. Curtis).*

*#8 (GP) Sqn. formally re-designated a General Reconnaissance Squadron (RCAF Sqns.).*

*Quebec Airways Ltd. DH.89A Rapide CF-BND, on floats, leaves on a chartered timber survey in Labrador carrying **G.H. Davidson** of Macfarlane, Son & Hodgson Ltd, paper mill manager **J.C. Cote** and pilot **J. Fecteau**. The aircraft was brand new and on the advice of others was carrying a radio. They became lost, and eventually landed out of fuel at a trapper's cabin (A. Scully). See September 20, below.*

10-11 58 Sqn. Whitley III K8965 crashed taking off from an advanced base in France on NICKEL sortie, **F/O B.W. Currie RAF (Can.)**, Sgt J.S. Camron RAF, Sgt A.G.E. Dixon RAF, AC1(AG?) R.D. Fowlis RAF and AC1(AG?) J. Thomas RAF safe (W.R. Chorley).

Monday

*11 Canadian Parliament votes \$100 million war fund (CJCA headline). Trading with the enemy banned (CJCA headline).*

*The British Secretary for India ends the program to create a federation of Indian states, believing that the National Congress had no real power and that this would solidify political power needed for the war. At this time England depended on the India Army for the bulk of it's garrisons from Hong Kong to East Africa (Kenya), as well as Indian business and labour in those regions for the economy (S. Raghavan).*

*US closes border to arms deliveries (CJCA headline).*

***In the South Atlantic the German pocket battleship Graf Spee was refuelling from its supply ship Altmark when the nearby presence of an RN cruiser was reported by its Ar 196 floatplane, enabling both ships to escape (Cull, Lander & Horan).***

***#7 (GP and Test) Sqn. RCAF disbanded to provide personnel to other units, the GP flight becomes the Air Force Headquarters Communications Flight, later reformed into #12 (Comm.) Sqn. (RCAF Sqns.).***

***President Roosevelt (a former Assistant Secretary of the Navy in the First World War) sends a personal letter to First Lord of the Admiralty Churchill inviting him to keep Roosevelt "in touch personally with anything you want me to know about..." (Oxford).***

Tuesday

***12 British-French Supreme War Council formed (K. Farrington).***

***First Canadian war budget passed (CJCA headline). Ships sunk by submarine since war started total 27 (CJCA headline).***

***Mackenzie King replies to Chamberlains request for expansion of aircrew training schools that this will be done immediately, but under Canadian control, and also requests "Canadian Air Force units" be formed from Canadians in the RAF already overseas, to be paid for by Canada (Dalke; Douglas & Greenhous).***

Wednesday

***13 Canadian Parliament adjourns. Rescued survivors from Athenia reach Halifax aboard the US ship SS City of Flint (wikipedia). See October 9, below.***

***The modified Mitsubishi G3M aircraft, J-BACI Nippon, left New York for South America via the Caribbean (Old Tokyo website). Then it crossed to the west coast of South America, south to Chile, across to Brazil, then north to the eastern tip of Brazil, and across the Atlantic to Dakar. Due to the war its planned tour of Europe was curtailed, but it flew to Spain, Greece, and then to India via Iraq. From India it flew to Thailand, and back to Japan via Taiwan (wikipedia). See October 20, below.***

***13 #5 (BR) Sqn. Stranraer #911 on an anti-submarine patrol from Dartmouth, NS, caught by bad weather and forced down at sea. See Sept. 14, below.***

Thursday

**14 After destroying a German division and advancing 10 miles, Polish forces at Kutno are forced to retreat by air and ground attacks. They have given time for the organization of defences around Warsaw, however (Oxford).**

**German command issues warning to Polish citizens that sabotage and guerilla activities will result in bombing and shelling of towns (ww2total.com Chronology/1939).**

**Pope asks for poison gas ban (CJCA headline).**

**Off Ireland U-39 attacks the aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal with torpedoes but misses, the submarine is then attacked and forced to the surface to be sunk, first U-Boat loss of the war (Polsson). Three of the Ark Royal's Skua aircraft then locate U-30 (which had sunk the Athenia) on the surface engaged in trying to sink a merchantman, SS Fanad Head carrying grain from Montreal (Cull, Lander & Horan). The U-boat was attacked but two of the Skuas were brought down by their own exploding bombs, 2 aircrew missing and 2 taken PoW by the U-boat crew (G.S. Snyder). A further attack by Swordfish and destroyers damaged the U-boat (Cull, Lander & Horan), but after they had left the U-boat sank the Fanad Head with a torpedo (uboat.net). The carrier and it's escorts were at sea under a pre-war plan to hunt German U-boats using aircraft carriers. See September 17 and 19, below.**

**First tethered flight of the Sikorsky VS-300 helicopter, considered the first modern helicopter, which evolved into a single main rotor for lift and propulsion, and an auxiliary tail rotor used to steer.**

**By Order in Council RCAF Special Reserve created and placed on active service (CCMA). This was to allow other foreign nationals from non-Commonwealth countries to serve, legally, in the RCAF (S.W. Dziuban, Military Relations Between the United States and Canada 1939-1945, cited by R.W.R. Walker at www.rafcommands.com). See beginning of June 1940.**

**In India the Committee debate between those who wanted full co-operation with England (but with the proviso that India be granted full Dominion status as soon as possible) and those that advocated for full resistance against England, continued. Jawaharlal Nehru proposed a compromise, that the Congress condemned the attack on Poland, but stating that India found it difficult to fully support a war for Freedom when India itself was not free and not an equal partner in the Commonwealth. This put pressure on England that**

**India's support came at a price, and the National Congress wanted that point dealt with. There were many other, conflicting, political factions in India, many of whom did not support or participate in the National Congress or Gandhi's Congress Party, but most had the same belief that India needed to be recognized as a full Dominion. A better discussion of this can be found in S. Raghavan's India's War.**

**date unknown, First World War fighter ace *W.A. 'Billy' Bishop* forms a group to facilitate volunteers from the USA to join the RCAF. He contacts a friend and former First World War pilot Clayton Knight in the US. The group becomes known as the *Clayton Knight Committee*. This work had to be done covertly due to US Neutrality laws, but between September 1939 and December 1941 it interviewed 50,000 applicants and assisted almost 7,000 volunteers to enter Canada for enlistment in the RCAF. After the US entered the war many of these RCAF (USA) aircrew would later transfer in the field to the USAAF and USN, bringing their training and valuable operational skills to rapidly expanding US air forces (Oxford). See April 8-9, 1945 for an example of the career of one of these airmen. The effects of the US neutrality law (\$10,000 fine and/or 2 years in jail) should be considered when RCAF aircrew are sometimes identified by one source as US citizens, and as Canadian in other sources, as many claimed hometowns of relations in Canada to avoid possible prosecution. (Other countries had similar laws, notably Eire, whose post war treatment of it's citizens who joined British forces was later the subject of a national apology.)**

**Besides the different oath, the enlistment of US (and Canadian) recruits was assisted by dropping the pre-war education requirement of a university degree for pilot training (a requirement that had led to many Canadians joining the RAF) for a more realistic high school or equivalent. In the USA, however, all Army pilot's were officers, and enlistment as an officer required 2 years of college by US law, which was only available to a minority of the population, especially during the Depression. The USN had enlisted pilots, and the USAAC experimented with programs to train enlisted pilots in this period (Chuck Yeager was one of these) but it and the USN enlisted pilot program were terminated soon after the American entry into the war. In 1942 the USAAF replaced the college requirement with an intelligence test, but this still remained a bar to otherwise qualified and willing young Americans, especially black Americans as the US forces were rigidly segregated. Thus even after the US joined the war enlistment in the RCAF was one way for these young men to serve as pilots, navigators or bomb aimers despite their lack of higher education. They were then able to switch back to the US forces while still**

**servicing in RCAF/RAF units but were required to complete their first tour in Commonwealth units, which is why the reader will see references to servicing USAAF aircrew in Bomber Command aircraft. (Note that US citizens in the RCAF who were Sergeant or Flight Sergeant pilots and transferred to the USAAF were initially ranked as Flight Officers, an enlisted rank, but were eligible for later promotion). Even during the war some prejudice remained for US pilots transferring to the USAAF, as in the case of *F/L L.D. Thomas DFC RCAF (USA)*, cited April 18, 1944.**

- 14 #5 (BR) Sqn. Stranraer #911 found by Norwegian tanker *Pollux*, who manage to rescue the crew, *S/L R. Mair*, *LAC Clarke*, *F/O Stapley*, *Cpl (WAG) A. Callow*, *LAC Daniels*, *LAC Hornick*, *AC2 Alexander* and *AC2 W. Phillips*, before the aircraft sinks (see *W. Phillips* and *L. Birchall* for details). This rescue was due largely to the efforts of the radio operator, *Cpl. Callow*, who stayed at the radio for 22 hours despite cold and sea sickness, and brought the *Pollux* to the disabled aircraft. He was recognized with the award of a BEM (*H. Tate*).
- 14 #8 (GR) Sqn., delayed by weather Delta II #673 takes off from Megantic, Quebec on the last leg of it's ferry flight. It does not arrive, and was believed to have crashed into the sea near Sydney, NS, *WO2 J.E. Doan* and *Cpl D.A. Rennie* missing. Search flights at low level were made for 2 months which found nothing (*E.P. Gardiner*). The wreckage of the aircraft was found July 9, 1958 in a forested area 40 miles north of Fredericton, NB, no sign of the missing airmen or their parachutes. The wreckage was recovered and is now at the National Aeronautical Collection, Ottawa. *WO2 Doan* and *Cpl. Rennie* were the first RCAF airmen to die in the Second World War. For details see *J. Nelles, First lost ... Last Found, Airforce Magazine, Vol.19, #4, Winter 1995-96.*

Friday

**15 Soviet and Japanese forces cease fighting on the Manchurian Border (CJCA headline). Japan and USSR agree on a cease fire in *Khalkin Gol Incident*, Japanese armour and aircraft had been badly mauled by superior Russian equipment and tactics (wikipedia). It is estimated that 30,000 were killed in this border war, the majority Japanese (Oxford). One major effect of this battle is that the Navy party gain power politically from the defeat of the Army faction, and Japanese expansionists began to look south towards French, British and Dutch possessions in Asia rather than north towards the Soviet Union. As well, Japan would decline attacking the USSR in 1941 (A. Beevor). See April 13, 1941.**

**RCAF Directorate of Air Force Manning formed to control expansion of the Air Force, opening 20 recruiting centres across the country. By the end of the year they had received 102,777 applications (CCMA).**

**E.A. Bott**, head of the Psychology Department of the University of Toronto, seconded to the RCAF, begins to use psychological testing as part of the evaluation of air crew, using tests he had developed in the spring (A.D. English). See January, 1942.

Chief of Air Staff of the RCAF proposes a plan for training of 12,000 RAF aircrew and 8,000 RAF groundcrew in Canada (Douglas & Greenhous).

#2 (AC) Sqn. RCAF recalled to Rockcliffe for training prior to re-deployment to England (RCAF Sqns.)

Lockheed Hudson maritime patrol bombers, diverted from the RAF order and flown to Canada before it had declared war, enter service with the RCAF (Griffin CMA).

In the USA Charles Lindbergh makes a nation wide radio broadcast appealing for the United States not to get involved in the war in Europe.

Saturday

16 Fuel rationing begins in England (K. Farrington).

First transatlantic convoy, HX-1, leaves Halifax, with RCN/RN escort (Polsson).

Canadian and Australian High Commissioners in London expand on the discussions regarding aircrew training in Canada and make a proposal to the British government that such a program include Canada, New Zealand and Australia and provide for distinctive combat squadrons to be formed by each countries air forces (Dalke).

Sunday

17 German army reaches the Vistula River and encircles Warsaw.

Soviet Army crosses Polish border to "protect" relatives of Soviet citizens in Poland (Polsson). Although declaring their neutrality, resistance to the Soviet forces results in massacres of Poles taken prisoner (Oxford). This action by Russia was completely unexpected by the Polish government. That night Polish Military and Air Force units regrouping at the Romanian border are ordered to cross into Romania. Some 200 Polish aircraft that manage to fly there are absorbed into the Romanian Air Force. Plans made to transfer military personnel to France and England, with Air Force members given priority, but

**soon German and Soviet influence in Romania, and political unrest (see September 21, below), begins to disrupt this. Nevertheless many aircrew members manage to leave (Falkowski).**

**Considering the war in Poland won the Luftwaffe begins transferring units to the west (F.K. Mason).**

**Aircraft Carrier HMS Courageous torpedoed by U-29 at sea off the Bay of Biscay, sinks in 20 minutes, 518 lost including 36 RAF ground crew attached to FAA squadrons (FE; C. Horrock). Naval airman **Lt(A) E.G. Barrow RN (Can.)** survived the sinking (Allison & Hayward). See Sept. 29, 1940.**

**This loss, and the attack on the Ark Royal, ended the use of large carriers to hunt U-boats. Although the idea was sound, the methods and equipment were not suitable, the carriers involved were too valuable to continue to risk them on such tasks. Later in the war similar groups based on small escort carriers, with large escort screens and equipped with better anti-submarine aircraft, radar and weapons would prove to be very effective. See May 29, 1944.**

17 #2 (AC) Sqn. RCAF, Halifax, NS, **AC2 F.G. Cail** died of natural causes.

Monday

**18 With the loss of the eastern territories to Soviet forces the Polish Army faces defeat. Soviet army reaches the Vilna River and occupies Brest-Litovsk in Poland (Polsson), the old border of Russia and the limit of their objectives secretly agreed on in the German-USSR Non-Aggression Pact (D. Sommerville).**

**After having defeated Poland, with many attacks by bombers on cities to spread panic, Germany agrees to Roosevelt's appeal of Sept. 1 not to attack civilian targets (BC War Diaries). See September 24, below.**

**RCAF Manning Depot (later #1 Manning Depot) opens in the Canadian National Exhibition grounds in Toronto (CCMA).**

18 210 Sqn. Sunderland I L2165 DA-B lost and out of fuel, crashed off Wales, **P/O G.W. Brant RAF (Can.)**, F/L T.I. Davies RAF, Cpl. R.W. Ewens RAF, AC2 J. Moss RAF, AC1 M. Murphy RAF (Eire), P/O G.W. Sutton RAF (NZ), AC1 W.A. Soanes RAF and AC2 W.A. O'Brien RAF (Eire) killed, AC1 F.J. Soffe RAF and AC1 F.E. Hudson RAF missing.

Tuesday

**19 Right Honourable Norman M. Rogers, previously Minister of Labour, is appointed Defence Minister, with the responsibility for expanding the Air Force, a**

*planned two division army, and naval forces to be doubled (CJCA headline).  
See June 10, 1940.*

*Soviet Naval forces blockade Estonia (CJCA headline).*

*Damaged U-boat U-30 enters neutral Reykjavik, Iceland, where it lands a badly wounded crewman for treatment and then leaves for Germany after repairs. U-27 attacked two destroyers but missed, and was sunk in return (wikipedia).*

*German army forces surrender of over 150,000 Polish soldiers in the Poznan Pocket (wikipedia). In Danzig Adolf Hitler gives a speech and refers to the future use of unknown weapons against Germany's enemies, which is noted by British and French intelligence services (Polsson). See Nov. 11, below.*

*PM Chamberlain publicly states that the war will continue until Hitler's government falls, which he privately believes will take at least three years (K. Farrington).*

*In a Cabinet meeting Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty, proposes mining the coastal waters of neutral Norway, to disrupt shipments of iron ore from Narvik to Germany (LH). The Foreign Office dissuades this action, but the discussions are reported to Germany.*

*19-20 S/L W.I. Clements RCAF on exchange with 53 Sqn. RAF becomes the first member of the RCAF to fly over enemy territory, in a Blenheim IV aircraft (RCAF Sqns.).*

Wednesday

*20 Three AASF Battles are intercepted by Bf 109s over Aachen, Germany. Two Battles were shot down and the third claimed a Bf 109 shot down. Confirmed after the war, this was the first enemy aircraft shot down in the war by the RAF.*

*The wives of the timber survey crew on Quebec Airways Ltd. DH.89A Rapide CF-BND have become concerned with the continued absence of the aircraft and request Quebec Airways begin a search. The airline has heard nothing either but believes they are probably delayed by weather. After pressure from the paper company they send out 1 airplane, followed by others in the next 2 days. The events of the war precluded RCAF support, and finding adequate search aircraft to lease also failed. The crew of aircraft were low on food and having secured the aircraft were sending out radio messages twice daily, but unfamiliarity with radio operations meant the company was not maintaining a proper listening watch, and the crew may have set it up improperly (A. Scully).*

**See October 20, below.**

- 20 #1 FPP (Ferry Pilots Pool?) Skua I L3026 collided with a vehicle on take off, **P/O J.C. Campbell RAF (Can.)** safe (R. Allenby). See Nov. 7, below.

Thursday

**21 Romanian Premier Calinescu assassinated by pro-Fascist Iron Guard (Polsson).**

**Germany orders concentration of Polish Jews into ghettos (wikipedia).**

**President Roosevelt addresses Congress proposing again that the US Neutrality Act be changed to allow the USA to support countries attacked by an aggressive nation (wikipedia).**

Friday

**22 Romanian Iron Guard purged; Dutch and Belgians open dikes [to form defensive barriers on their borders with Germany] (CJCA headline).**

**Joint German and Soviet Victory Parade at Brest-Litovsk to celebrate successful invasion and division of Poland (wikipedia).**

Saturday

**23 Heston Flight (forerunner of Photo Reconnaissance Unit (PRU)) formed by Sidney Cotton with **F/L Niven** and **F/O Longbottom**, using the modified Lockheed 12 and the Beech 17 aircraft. Later Spitfire and Hudson aircraft were modified for this work, and the unit deployed to France. See May 30, 1942.**

**Decision made to include women pilots in the ATA to ferry aircraft (L. Curtis).**

**Father of modern psychoanalyses Sigmund Freud dies in London (ww2total.com Chronology/1939).**

**Panama Conference sponsored by the USA and attended by most countries in North and South America not involved in the war, meets to formulate the response to the war in the Americas (Oxford).**

- 23 185 Sqn. Anson crashed, **LAC(WOP) A.L. Wright RAF (Can.)** injured (Allison & Hayward). See May 9, 1940.

Sunday

**24 Despite Germany agreeing to Roosevelt's request to refrain from bombing civilians Luftwaffe heavy bombing of the residential parts of the city of Warsaw begins (wikipedia). Previous attacks had been on military targets in the city.**

**RAF NICKEL leaflet operations resume, publicly described as "Night Reconnaissance" (Polsson).**

Monday

**25 In Warsaw bombing continues, damage to city water lines means many fires cannot be fought. The bombing caused over 30,000 civilian and military deaths (A. Beevor). Luftwaffe bombers dropped 600 tons of bombs and incendiaries on the city flying 1,500 sorties (CWY).**

**Quebec Premier *Maurice Duplessis* calls for general election in Quebec in a month's time, stating that proclamations made by federal government under War Measures Act are a violation of provincial rights (Polsson).**

25 #9 EFTS, England, Tiger Moths N6855 and N6850 collided in mid air, **Cadet Pilots W.S. Longhurst (Can.)** and P. Brandon-Trye bailed out and safe (paulmcmillan at www.rafcommands.com).

Tuesday

**26 England renews proposal for air training plan, accepting proposal of Canada, Australia and New Zealand for greatly enlarged program, which is supported by *Mackenzie King* as such a large project would require manpower that would reduce the size of the Canadian Army commitment and, he hoped, the heavy casualties of a ground war and the need for conscription. He proposes a meeting in Ottawa to work out the details (Dalke). In this it should be recalled that the Canadian Army fielded in the First World War came to be relied on as a fighting force for assaults, but it cost the country dearly, Canada having the highest per capita casualties of any of the Allied countries, which cut a wide swath through the nation at all levels of its society. The Prime Minister was not alone in wishing to keep casualties to a minimum in this second conflict. No leaders of any of the European countries, with the possible exceptions of Hitler (himself a wounded veteran of that war) and Stalin, were willing at this time to suffer the casualties seen in the First World War.**

**France outlaws communism (CJCA headline).**

**Hitler removes restrictions on his naval ships attacking merchant ships at sea (wikipedia).**

**Skua aircraft from the carrier Ark Royal off Norway intercept and shoot down a German Do 18 flying boat. In the early afternoon He 111 and Ju 88 bombers attack the carrier and the ships it was guarding without interception but make**

**no hits (Cull, Lander & Horan). Of interest, the bombers were expected, but the RN policy on defence of aircraft carriers from air attack at this time was to drain the fuel from the Skua fighters and store them inside the ship, while depending on the anti-aircraft fire and evasive maneuvers to defend the ships from the bombers (Cull, Lander & Horan).**

Wednesday

**27 Warsaw falls, Poland surrenders, the country is partitioned between USSR and Germany.**

**Hitler astonishes his Generals by stating his intentions are to invade France by November (ww2total.com Chronology/1939). See October 6, below.**

**In a meeting of the War Cabinet the question of political change in India was discussed, but turned down as reports from the Viceroy indicated the National Congress did not speak for all the factions in India. In this he was strongly supported by First Lord of the Admiralty Churchill, who never supported political change in India (S. Raghavan).**

Thursday

**28 Air attack on Scotland (CJCA headline). [reference not found]**

**Germany and Russia conclude a pact on the partition of Poland, in which Russia yields further Polish territory to German control in return for freedom of action to take over Lithuania, and both countries agree to cooperate in suppressing Polish nationalism (Oxford). The defensive fortified Stalin Line is now too far east to defend the new border of the USSR, and is regarded as a symbol of the pre-purge "defeatist" idea of defence. Thus Russia begins to dismantle it (Oxford) as politically incorrect. Plans to build a new line of fortifications on the new border across Poland are also held back as this might also be seen as "defeatist".**

**In Moscow Russia and Estonia sign Mutual Assistance Pact (Polsson).**

Friday

**29 Soviet forces take over Estonia (CJCA headline).**

**Bomber Command sends 11 Hampden aircraft in 2 waves to search for German naval targets in the North Sea. The first formation returned without incident, but the second formation of 5 bombers was intercepted and all were shot down with the loss of 1 RAF (Can.) and 15 RAF missing/killed and 1 RAF (Can.)**

**and 3 RAF PoW (BC War Diary).**

- 29 144 Sqn. Hampden I L4127 shot down into the sea attacking German destroyers off Heligoland, AC1 (AG) A. Wilson RAF, F/O N.C. Neck RAF and Sgt P.E.B. Sproston RAF killed, **P/O R. Turner RAF (Can.)** missing.
- 29 144 Sqn. Hampden I L4132 shot down into the sea attacking German destroyers off Heligoland, F/S S. Williams RAF, AC2 (AG) S. Isherwood RAF and Sgt C.G. Williams RAF missing/killed, **P/O R.M. Coste RAF (Can.)** PoW. These were 2 of 5 144 Sqn. lost in this operation. In PoW camp P/O Coste studied medicine and postwar became a doctor in Alberta (Allison & Hayward).

**29-30 53 Sqn. Blenheim IV, S/L W.I. Clements, undertakes long range night reconnaissance over Germany (FF Years).**

Saturday

**30 Polish Government-in-exile formed in France (LoN).**

**The pocket battleship Graf Spee sinks it's first merchant ship in the South Atlantic, SS Clements off Brazil (D. Sommerville).**

**#121 (B) Sqn. RCAF, Quebec City, incomplete and disbanded (RCAF Sqns.).**

**Last Imperial Airways airmail flight over the Atlantic from Newfoundland by a S.30 flying boat using flight refuelling from the Harrow tankers based at Gander (R.K. Smith). The British Air Ministry believes that the new airfield at Gander will see little use in the foreseeable future, and orders the airfield mothballed. The airport staff disagreed and managed to delay the implementation of the order. See February 10, 1940 and April 1, 1946. Activity at the flying boat station at Botwood increases as US and British diplomats and ViPs make use of the facility for fast communication to Europe via Ireland and the Azores on Pan-Am flying boats (C.F. Warren et al). These flights are referenced in the 1942 movie 'Casablanca'.**

**October 1939**

**At about this time the first flight of the Focke-Engels Fa 223 helicopter took place, the largest helicopter to be manufactured in the war.**

**Newfoundland Militia formed. This would later be trained and commanded by the Canadian Army under an agreement with the Newfoundland Commission of Government. The Newfoundland Commission of Government also enquires about including Newfoundlanders in the air training scheme being negotiated**

**with Canada, and was told by the RAF that this was still in preparation and that they should wait before recruiting for flying personnel, but that the RAF would welcome skilled men for ground trades at this time ([www.heritage.nf.ca](http://www.heritage.nf.ca)).**

Sunday

**1 #113 (F) Sqn. RCAF, Calgary, Alberta disbanded as incomplete after mobilization, no aircraft available (RCAF Sqns.).**

**1-2 First RAF bombers fly over Berlin, 3 Whitleys of 10 Squadron making a NICKEL drop of leaflets (Polsson; W.R. Chorley).**

1-2 10 Sqn. Whitley IV, W/C W.E. Staton MC DFC RAF, was on a NICKEL flight over Berlin at high altitude when the wireless operators dropping the leaflets at the rear lower hatch collapsed from lack of oxygen. The navigator **F/O D.A. Willis RAF (Can.)** dragged them into the forward part of the aircraft, gave W/C Staton a new course to fly, then undertook the dropping of leaflets until he too collapsed. When the aircraft descended to a lower altitude F/O Willis revived and took up his navigation again. For this he received a DFC. See November 27, below and May 17-18, 1940.

Monday

**2 The Polish fortress of Hel north of Danzig, the last centre of Polish resistance, surrenders (Falkowski). See May 14, 1945.**

**Shipping of scrap iron to Japan [from Canada?] halted (CJCA headline).**

**With the outbreak of the war in Europe the Japanese Navy began to establish permanent bases in the Mandated Islands in the Pacific at Saipan, Truk, Palau, Kwajalein and Jaluit Atoll, some using facilities built to military specifications by civilian companies since 1937 (<http://pwencycl.kgbudge.com>; <http://tighar.org/Projects/Earhart/Archives/Research/ResearchPapers/mandates.html>).**

**The Panama Conference issues the Panama Declaration which confirmed the neutrality of the participating countries in North and South America, banned submarines of belligerent nations from their ports, demands an end to subversive activities in their countries and established a 300 mile Neutrality Zone off both sides of the coasts of North and South America (exclusive of Canada and colonies of European nations) to be patrolled by a multi-national Neutrality Patrol of naval and air forces in their respective territorial waters (Oxford). To this effect the USA passes the Act of Panama establishing the 300 mile neutrality zone to be patrolled by the US Navy off the coast of North**

**America (excluding the Canadian coast) from Trinidad to the Canadian border (web.archive.org; www.naval-history.net). In response Germany declares it will board and inspect US merchant ships (C.E. Hipperson). See Oct. 9, below.**

2 #1 Equipment Depot, Ottawa, Ontario, S/L H.S. Ivey died of natural causes.

Tuesday

3 #11 (GR) Sqn. RCAF formed at Rockcliffe, Ontario on Hudson I aircraft, the first RCAF squadron formed on aircraft purchased since the war began (RCAF Sqns.). These aircraft operated without their British built Boulton-Paul turrets until late January, 1941, some having a locally produced gun position in the turret position (I. Wikene).

**A section of the French border with Belgium is taken over by the British Expeditionary Force (D. Sommerville).**

**West of the Scilly Islands the U-35 sank a Greek freighter. As it's lifeboats were not suited for the freezing conditions the U-boat took the entire crew aboard and landed them in Eire the next day (wikipedia). See September 12, 1942.**

**NICKEL operations over Germany again suspended due to diplomatic complaints about airspace violations over neutral Belgium, Holland and Denmark (Polsson).**

Wednesday

4 **French soldiers occupying land around Saarbrucken are withdrawn back to the Maginot Line (S. Shail).**

**France orders an additional 130 Martin 167F-3 medium bombers from the USA (many of these would be taken on RAF strength as Marylands) (Butler & Hagedorn).**

Thursday

5 **Latvia signs Mutual Assistance Pact with Russia (CJCA headline), granting bases to the Soviet Union (Polsson). Russia invites Finnish diplomats to come to Moscow to discuss border changes (wikipedia).**

**France orders an additional 530 Curtiss Hawk 75A (P-36) fighters and 100 of the new Hawk 81A (P-40) fighters from the USA. Many of the Hawk 75 aircraft would serve with the RAF as Mohawk IV fighters (Butler & Hagedorn).**

**In Danzig after a short military trial the male Polish civilian office workers who held**

**out in the Polish Post against the SS, as well as Polish railway workers who had prevented a German armoured train from entering Danzig on September 1, were executed by firing squad for the "crime" of resisting the German Army (wikipedia). The day before Hitler had issued a blanket pardon to all Germans who may have committed crimes in the Polish invasion, as the soldiers had only been "responding to Polish atrocities" (wikipedia). See May 27, 1940.**

**After seeking Cabinet approval, Churchill responds to President Roosevelt's letter, beginning a close partnership between the two men (Oxford).**

**At sea British and French naval groups are searching for the German pocket battleship Graf Spee from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean (D. Sommerville).**

Friday

**6 Final Polish army units in the field surrender near Kock, having run out of food and ammunition after holding off German units in a 4 day fight (wikipedia).**

**General A.G.L. McNaughton CB CMG DSO appointed head of the 1st Canadian Division.**

**Hitler proposes peace terms (CJCA headline). Hitler states the occupation of Poland has ended the reason for the war to continue, that Germany has no plans to take territory from France, assures Belgium and The Netherlands that they will not be attacked, and offers to sit down in peace negotiations with England and France (ww2total.com Chronology/1939; K. Farrington). See October 9, below and June 22, 1940.**

**Gallup Poll in the USA asking if that country should declare war and fight in Europe returns 95% against (wikipedia).**

Saturday

**7 43 Sqn. Hurricane I L1825 was making a night landing and crashed, F/O (?) J.L. Sullivan RAF (Can.) safe (H.A. Halliday at www.rafcommands.com).**

Sunday

**8 First confirmed RAF air to air victory, Lockheed Hudson shoots down a Do 18 aircraft near Jutland (wikipedia).**

**Germany formally annexes western Poland as part of Germany (wikipedia).**

Monday

**9 Hitler, believing that British and French forces might invade the heavily industrialized German Ruhr Valley through Belgium and Holland, issues directive for the limited invasion of France through neutral Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg as soon as armoured forces are ready and weather allows (Polsson). As well, Luftwaffe units on the border with France are to avoid combat with French and British fighters to conserve numbers while the air force is built up for this invasion (F.K. Mason).**

**Food price controls introduced in Britain (K. Farrington).**

**At sea off Newfoundland the US freighter City of Flint, which had assisted in rescuing survivors of the Athenia in early September and bringing them to Halifax, was carrying general cargo to England when it was stopped by the German battleship Deutschland. It's cargo was determined to be contraband, and a German prize crew was put aboard. The ship was sailed to neutral Norway under a neutral Danish identity, then to Murmansk, and then back to Norway where it was finally boarded by the Norwegian military for violations of neutrality rules and returned to it's US crew. The cargo was sold to neutral countries and the ship returned to the USA in November. It was sunk in 1943 as part of a convoy (<http://ahoy.tk-jk.net/macslog/TheSagaOfAmericanFreighte.html>). Soon after it's seizure US cargo ships were prohibited from entering war zones. See April 11, 1941.**

**9 unknown unit, Cadet Pilot P/O R.I. Hopkins RAF (Can.) died in England by suicide while depressed about his fitness to fly ([www.rafcommands.com](http://www.rafcommands.com)).**

**9 USAAC 116th Observation Sqn. O-38E 34-20 abandoned due to weather near Keefers, BC, 2Lt E.B. Saxon USAAC and Pvt W.E. Shane USAAC safe (AAIR; paulmcmillan at [www.rafcommands.com](http://www.rafcommands.com)).**

Tuesday

**10 Agreement in Principal by Canada, Australia, New Zealand and England to establish an air training plan in Canada publicly announced by **PM MacKenzie King** in a radio address to the country (CJCA headline; RCAF Sqns; C. Simonsen).**

**In India the Congress again issued it's offer of support in the war for England in return for discussions on independence, but made the concession these begin "to the largest extent possible" (S. Raghavan).**

**Lithuania signs Mutual Assistance pact with Russia (Polsson).**

**French PM Daladier rejects Hitlers proposal for peace in a radio speech ([wikipedia](http://wikipedia)).**

**German Navy proposes invasion of Norway to protect the iron ore shipping and to provide bases to counter the Royal Navy (D. Sommerville).**

**France orders 200 North American NA-64 basic pilot trainers, many of which would end up in Canada as Yales (Butler & Hagedorn).**

Wednesday

**11 USSR asks Finland to grant them military bases in Finland. Sweden, Denmark and Norway issue joint declaration that a Soviet attack on Finland would be seen as an attack on all the Scandinavian countries (Polsson).**

**Einstein-Szilárd letter delivered to US President Roosevelt, who authorizes an Advisory Committee on Uranium to investigate the possibility of a nuclear bomb (wikipedia). See Oct. 21, below and May, 1941.**

Thursday

**12 US asks USSR to spare Finland (CJCA headline).**

**PM Chamberlain rejects Hitlers peace proposal, stating that his actions show he cannot be trusted to keep his word (wikipedia).**

Friday

**13 In a second radio broadcast in support of isolationism Charles Lindbergh states the USA would protect all American countries and questioned what right Canada had to choose to fight for England and risk drawing the USA into the war (wikipedia; <http://www.charleslindbergh.com/pdf/NeutralityandWar.pdf>). It should be noted that Lindbergh was not politically naive. He was the son of a US Congressman, and familiar with the Monroe Doctrine he was evoking when he made this speech.**

**13-14 U-boat U-47 enters the Royal Navy base at Scapa Flow in northern Scotland through a poorly blocked channel, where it torpedoes the battleship HMS Royal Oak, and leaves undetected. The ship sank with the loss of 833, over 100 of which were Boy Seamen under training (wikipedia).**

Saturday

**14 France orders an additional 170 Douglas DB-7 medium bombers (Butler & Hagedorn).**

**Finland begins mobilization (ww2total.com Chronology/1939).**

**German pocket battleship Admiral Scheer departs Germany (E. Wiberg).**

**The first list accounting for Allied aircrew lost in Germany received in London via the International Red Cross in Switzerland. This exchange of information continued throughout most of the war in Europe (S. Hadaway). See April, 1942 and July 26, 1945.**

- 14 RCAF Navigation and Reconnaissance School (later #1 Air Navigation School), Trenton, Ontario, Battle I #1304 crashed at Sharbot Lake, Ontario, on a navigation exercise, P/O H.K. Corbett and P/O G.J. Olstead killed. This was the first Battle lost by the RCAF, only 5 weeks after it's delivery to Trenton (R.W.R. Walker).

Sunday

**15 Rosyth naval base bombed (CJCA headline). This attack was made on the Repulse, which the German navy believed to have been damaged in the U-boat attack on Scapa Flow (G.S. Snyder).**

**New York Municipal Airport (later LaGuardia Airport) formally opened (wikipedia).**

- 15 102 Sqn. Whitley III K7858 made a heavy crash landing from low altitude after a failure of the controls, P/O R.C. Bisset RAF (Can.) [and crew?] safe (W.R. Chorley). See Nov. 30-Dec. 1, 1941.

Monday

**16 Five RN ships arrive in Halifax with about £10 million in gold from England and other countries for safekeeping.**

**Armoured skirmishes occur at extreme northern border of Germany and France.**

**RAF NICKEL operations resume (Polsson).**

**First bomber attack on a land target in the United Kingdom, German bombers attack RN base on the Firth of Forth, intercepted with the loss of two Ju 88 bombers. This was the first combat for the Spitfire fighter, and the first enemy bombers shot down over England in the war.**

Tuesday

**17 German bombers attack Scapa Flow (CJCA headline). This was a further attack seeking the "damaged" battleship Repulse (G.S. Snyder). Germans imprison 1,200 Czechs (CJCA headline). [typo for Nov. 17? See below].**

**In India the Viceroy replied to the Congress, stating the view that they did not**

**represent all of India and offering no change in India's status (S. Raghavan).**

**British negotiating team meets with *PM Mackenzie King* in Ottawa to organize air training plan (Dalke).**

**41 Sqn. section of three Spitfires intercept He 111 F6+PK at sea and it is shot down by *F/O H.P. Blatchford RAF (Can.), Sgt A.H. Harris RAF (Can.)* and *F/S A.E. Shipman RAF*, the first victory for Canadian fighter pilots in the war (Brown & Lavigne; FE). See Oct. 18, below and Nov. 11, 1940.**

Wednesday

18 52 Sqn. Battle I K9398 collided on a training flight with another Battle and crashed, killing *P/O J.R. Anderson RAF (Can.)* and AC1 (AG) R.A.W. Keogh RAF. The other aircraft, K9399, flown by *P/O H.D. Wardle RAF (Can.)*, landed safely (W.R. Chorley). See October 29, below.

18 102 Sqn. Whitley III K8996 was tasked with taking a load of ammunition and passengers of 41 Squadron to their new base at Wick in Scotland. After loading the aircraft took off, suddenly climbed steeply, stalled, and crashed, crew Sgt H.J. Gaut RAF, P/O R.A.M. Luckman RAF (S. Africa), AC1 (AG) C. Paterson RAF and AC1 (AG) J.B. Clark RAF, and passengers *Sgt A.H. Harris RAF (Can.)* (41 Sqn.), Sgt A. Vincent RAF (41 Sqn.) and AC1 H. Jones RAF (41 Sqn.) were killed, Sgt D. Gibbs RAF (41 Sqn.) and Cpl Jenkinson RAF (41 Sqn.) were injured (RAF41Sqn at www.rafcommands.com). Sgt Harris was the Spitfire pilot who the day before had intercepted and shared in the destruction of a He 111 aircraft off the coast of Yorkshire. The investigation into this loss showed the aircraft was improperly loaded with too much weight placed behind the centre of gravity. This resulted in the use of bombers for casual transport to be curtailed. One of the survivors was pulled from the burning wreck by army Sgt B. Traynor (Green Howards) and LAC A. Gorring RAF, who both received OBEs for this act (R. Allenby).

18-19 10 Sqn. Whitley IV damaged making a forced landing in France due to engine problems after enduring an electrical storm over Germany on a NICKEL sortie, *P/O W.H. Nelson RAF (Can.)* and crew safe (H.A. Halliday). See May 27-28, 1940.

Thursday

**19 *France and England sign Pact of Mutual Assistance with Turkey, against the possibility of a Soviet invasion of that country (Polsson; ww2total.com Chronology/1939).***

***Lindbergh's radio speech of October 13 was publicly criticized by former boxer Gene Tunney, especially his remarks about Canada. Tunney had served in***

***Europe in the US Marines in the First World War and for a time worked as a lumberjack in Canada (wikipedia).***

***19-20 German tanker SS Emmy Friedrich departs Tampico, Mexico, with fuel and supplies intended to support the battlecruiser Graf Spee in the South Atlantic (Cull, Lander & Horan). See October 22, below.***

Friday

***20 Allies sign pact with Turkey (CJCA headline).***

***The modified Mitsubishi G3M aircraft, J-BACI Nippon, landed back in Tokyo, having flown around the world in 194 flying hours (Old Tokyo website).***

***#11 (GR) Sqn. RCAF moves from Rockcliffe to Uplands, Ontario (RCAF Sqns.). #114 (B) Sqn. RCAF, London, Ontario, disbanded as it was incomplete (RCAF Sqns.).***

***With winter weather closing in in Labrador the search for the missing Quebec Airways Ltd. DH.89A Rapide CF-BND and it's crew was suspended. It was hoped that they would be able to hike out to the coast in the winter (A. Scully). See December 17, below.***

Saturday

***21 Atlantic convoys begin being attacked by Luftwaffe aircraft (K. Farrington).***

***First meeting of US Uranium Committee (wikipedia). See May, 1941.***

Sunday

***22 In the Yucatan Channel off Mexico the cruiser HMS Orion and destroyer HMCS Saguenay spot the support ship SS Emmy Friedrich, forcing her to turn back.***

***First television broadcast of a US football game (wikipedia).***

Monday

***23 First flight of the Mitsubishi G4M long range naval bomber, later given the Allied code name "Betty" (Flypast, September 1986).***

***Lockheed 10 transport enters service with the RCAF (Griffin CMA). This was part of a program to purchase suitable civil aircraft in the USA for use as transport and communication aircraft in Canada by the RCAF. Most were given temporary Canadian civil registrations to allow their import into Canada***

*(Butler & Hagedorn).*

**SS Emmy Freidrich is intercepted by the cruiser HMS Caradoc, and scuttles herself (Cull, Lander & Horan).**

**Second Gallup Poll on the war indicates 84% of US citizens would want France and England to win the war, and 64% were in favour of selling arms to the Allies. Only 2% were in favour of a German victory (wikipedia).**

Tuesday

**24 Allied Forces and Belgium agree that in the event of a German attack on the latter, French forces will advance into Belgium to reinforce the line of the Scheldt River (Polsson).**

**Soviet-German Trade Agreement signed, for supply of food and animal feed to Germany (ww2total.com Chronology/1939).**

Wednesday

**25 Quebec Election, Premier *Maurice Duplessis* defeated by Liberal Party under *Adélar Godbout*.**

**First flight of the Handley-Page Halifax four engined heavy bomber (M.J.H. Taylor).**

Friday

**27 Fleet Finch trainer enters service with the RCAF (Griffin CMA).**

27-28 51 Sqn. Whitley III K9008 MH-J was one of two forced down in France due to heavy icing on a NICKEL operation over Germany, *Sgt D.C. Hide RAF (Can.)*, F/S J.H.P. Wynton RAF, Sgt W. Foster RAF, Cpl (AG) E. Short RAF and AC1 (AG) A.J. Heller RAF safe (W.R. Chorley). See May 17, 1942.

Saturday

**28 Independence Day in Czechoslovakia, crowds that gather in Prague to protest German occupation are fired on, killing and wounding 16 (ww2total.com Chronology/1939). See November 15, below.**

**Hitler changes plans for invasion of France from an operation with limited objectives to secure the approaches to the industrial Ruhr Valley, to a full scale invasion to cut Belgium in two and invade France from the north (Polsson). Date of attack set tentatively as November 12. Despite the success in Poland this plan does not make use of armoured units except as support for**

*infantry (D. Sommerville).*

***In Canada #4 (GR) Sqn., #5 (GR) Sqn., #8 (GR) Sqn., #11 (GR) Sqn., #6 (TB) Sqn., #119 (Bomber) Sqn. and #120 (B) Sqn. re-designated Bomber Reconnaissance (BR) Squadrons.***

***#118 (B) Sqn. is relocated from Montreal to Halifax and re-designated from Bomber to Coastal Artillery Co-operation (CAC) using Atlas and Lysander aircraft in Halifax and Saint John, NB. #117 (CAC) Sqn., Saint John, NB, incomplete, is disbanded, the personnel incorporated into A Flight, #118 (CAC) Sqn. (RCAF Sqns.).***

Sunday

***29 In an attempt to mislead the RN forces seeking it, the German pocket battleship Graf Spee enters the Indian Ocean (Cull, Lander & Horan).***

29 52 Sqn. Battle I K9397 written off after an emergency landing in England, P/O H.D. Wardle RAF (Can.) [and crew?] safe (W.R. Chorley). See April 20-21, 1940.

Monday

***30 Battleship HMS Nelson with First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill on board is attacked at sea by U-56, which hits it with three torpedoes, all of which fail to explode (wikipedia).***

***242 (Canadian) Sqn. RAF formed in England, one of 18 fighter squadrons formed during the month (FE). This Squadron, to be made up of Canadian pilots and groundcrew in the RAF, was formed to appease PM Mackenzie King in the hope that he would allow the RAF to control overseas deployment of RCAF airmen and as propaganda to France, to indicate widespread support for the war effort (H.A. Halliday). See Dec. 17, below and January 1940.***

30 18 Sqn. Blenheim I L1415 shot down by fighters on a reconnaissance over Germany, F/O D.F. Elliot RAF (Can.), Sgt K.B. Crew and wireless air gunner AC1 J.A. Garrick killed (FE).

Tuesday

***31 #10 (Bomber) Sqn. RCAF redesignated as Bomber Reconnaissance (BR) (RCAF Sqn.s)***

31 108 Sqn. Anson I aircraft N5177 and N5158 crashed after a mid-air collision, P/O J.D. Cody RAF (Can.) and P/O E.E. Cox RAF killed in N5177, F/O D.R. Green RAF in N5158.

## **November 1939**

**#2 (AC) Sqn. RCAF begins to re-equip with Canadian built Lysander aircraft (RCAF Sqns.).**

Wednesday

**1 S/L F.M. Gobeil, a career RCAF officer and a member of the RCAF Siskin Flight, on exchange to the RAF, arrives at RAF Station Church Fenton to become the first member and commanding officer of the new 242 (Canadian) Sqn. RAF. The new Unit was initially equipped with a mix of Blenheim If and Battle aircraft (H.A. Halliday).**

**#1 SFTS opened at Camp Borden, Ontario, using Harvard trainers (<http://www.bombercrew.com/BCATP.htm>).**

**1 #15 SFTS RAF Oxford II N6434 crashed in England, P/O E.W. Allinson RAF (Can.) and F/S F.J.B. Moore RAF killed ([www.rafcommands.com](http://www.rafcommands.com)).**

**1 & 2 German physicist Dr. Hans Ferdinand Mayer, on a trip to Sweden, and on behalf of other German scientists opposed to the war, writes two letters (together called the Oslo Report) detailing German secret projects (radar, radio beam navigation, rockets, bomb fusing, magnetic fuses in torpedoes, acoustic torpedoes, proximity fuses in anti-aircraft shells, remote controlled anti-ship glider bombs and more), which he mailed to the British Embassy in Oslo. Although taken seriously by some it is regarded as a hoax by British Intelligence though not by scientists. The report was in fact genuine and accurate, and in the short term would help improve British radar countermeasures (wikipedia). Dr. Mayer was later arrested and imprisoned for listening to BBC broadcasts but survived the war (B. Kite).**

Thursday

**2 US repeals arms embargo (CJCA headline, see November 3, below).**

**#11 (BR) Sqn. RCAF Hudsons depart Uplands Ontario for Dartmouth, NS (RCAF Sqns.). #116 (F) Sqn. RCAF disbanded at Halifax due to being incomplete (RCAF Sqns.).**

Friday

**3 Congress amends 1937 Neutrality Act to permit Britain and France (and Canada) to purchase US arms, on a "Cash and Carry" basis, ie, paid in cash or gold and transported in the purchaser's ships at their risk (Polsson; wikipedia). This allows further purchase of US aircraft for the RCAF, although the restriction of flying them over the border remains. See November 19, below.**

Saturday

**4 US Neutrality Law becomes effective, banning US ships and citizens from entering war zones (wikipedia).**

Sunday

**5 First broadcast of the National Research Council Time Signal on CBC Radio. It ended Oct. 9, 2023 due to technical reasons.**

**Revolt in South Africa foiled (CJCA headline, event not found). Possible reference to split of the National Party, opposed to entering the war, and the new Reunited National Party (www.sahistory.org.za).**

**Leader of the US German American Bund Fritz Huhn was found guilty of embezzlement and imprisoned (wikipedia)**

**#1 (F) Sqn. Hurricanes begin to redeploy from St. Hubert, Quebec to Dartmouth, NS by air (RCAF Sqns.).**

**Hitler reaffirms Nov. 12 date for invasion of France through Belgium (LH).**

**Special Survey Flight of the Heston Flight (now designated #2 Camouflage Unit for security) arrived in France to undertake reconnaissance operations (FE).**

Monday

**6 In Krakow, Poland, university professors are arrested and sent to a concentration camp (where several die from mistreatment) as part of the plan to "Germanify" annexed Poland. Most are later released due to international protests (wikipedia). All schools beyond elementary level in the German occupied Poland are closed and their equipment and textbooks destroyed as it is Nazi ideology that inferior races do not need higher education to work as labourers for Germans (Oxford).**

**Formation of Organization and Training Division at RCAF HQ, Ottawa, tasked with controlling the proposed training scheme in Canada (CCMA). Initially engaged in finding appropriate locations for schools, planning airbase facilities, designing standard buildings, engaging suppliers and contractors, supervising construction, supplying equipment, aircraft, fuel, training aids and so on.**

**With the changes to the US neutrality laws a British Purchasing Commission is set**

**up in New York from members of the Ottawa based British Supply Board led by *A.B. Purvis*, which had been set up to co-ordinate purchase and production of war material in Canada for the Commonwealth (Butler & Hagedorn). This access to the USA may have diverted and delayed England's interest in Canadian industrial production capabilities. See notes on appointment of *Lord Beaverbrook*, May 11, 1940 and June 17, 1940.**

**#120 (BR) Sqn. RCAF moved from Regina, Saskatchewan to Sea Island, BC, to serve with #4 (BR) Sqn. (RCAF Sqns.).**

- 6 41 Sqn. Spitfire Ia K9846 banked at low level and hit a telephone pole taking off in foggy conditions in England, part of a flight of two tasked with helping in the search for a Whitley bomber, **F/O H.E.H. Overall RAF (Can.)** killed. The aircraft struck and damaged a house in Catterick. After the accident the Overall family in Niagara Falls offered to take care of the two young children (Maureen and Tony Hughes) of the family whose house had been damaged, and they were sent to live in Canada in 1940 until the war ended. Tony Hughes later returned to Canada as an adult (www.spitfires.ukf.net; R. Allenby).

Tuesday

**7 Forecast bad weather forces postponement of German invasion to Nov. 15 (LH).**

- 7 206 Sqn. Anson I K6190, **P/O S.R. Henderson RAF (Can.)**, engaged a Do 18 flying boat without result (FE). See November 8, below.
- 7 #1 FPP (Ferry Pilots Pool?) Hart Special K4439 flew into high ground on a ferry flight, pilot **P/O J.C. Campbell RAF (Can.)** killed (www.rafcommands.com; www.findagrave.com).

Wednesday

**8 Hitler escapes Munich blast (CJCA headline). Burgerbraukellar Bombing, at the annual Anniversary of the Beer Hall Putsch in Munich a timed bomb planted by carpenter Georg Elser explodes in the Burgerbraukellar, killing 8 and injuring 63 (Polsson). Hitler was saved by bad weather over Berlin which required him to leave earlier than planned to travel by train rather than by aircraft. His speech began 30 minutes early and the bomb exploded 8 minutes after he had left. A nervous Georg Elser was detained and arrested at the German-Swiss border 35 minutes before the bomb exploded. He was carrying documents that linked him to the bombing.**

**Sino-Japanese War, In China a British DH.86 airliner enroute from Hong Kong to Bangkok, Thailand, is intercepted and forced down off the coast of China by Japanese fighters for allegedly flying too close to their base. The aircraft, crew and passengers are released after a week without apology (Shores, Cull**

**& Izawa).**

- 8 206 Sqn. Anson I K6190, P/O S.R. Henderson RAF (Can.), P/O R.H. Harper RAF (Can.) and crew, engage two Do 18 flying boats over the North Sea and damage one with bombs and their guns before running out of ammunition. For this action P/O Henderson was recommended for a DFC (FE; H.A. Halliday). See Jan. 2, 1940 and Dec. 2, 1944.

Thursday

**9 Holland floods defence areas (CJCA headline).**

**Hitler refuses to believe results of the interrogation of Elser that he acted alone, demands that Himmler kidnap British SIS agents who, in a German counter intelligence operation, had been led to believe they had been contacted by disaffected German officers in Holland to discuss possible peace with England after disposing of Hitler. When the agents came to their meeting that night at Venlo, Netherlands, the German agents fired on their car, mortally wounding a Dutch security officer Lt. D. Koop. The dying Dutch officer, his driver and the two British agents, Capt. S.P. Best and Major R.H. Stevens, were forced across the nearby border into Germany. Papers they carried and interrogation leads to the exposing of several British intelligence networks, especially in Czechoslovakia. The Venlo Incident also left an abiding suspicion of all future contacts with Germans seeking peace and/or help to depose Hitler. Best and Stevens were portrayed in the German press as collaborators with Georg Elser in the attempt to kill Hitler at the Burgerbraukeller, and were imprisoned in Sachsenhausen and Dachau, but both survived the war.**

Friday

**10 #11 (BR) Sqn. RCAF, Dartmouth, NS, flies its first operational Hudson sortie (I. Wikene).**

- 10 #11 Group Pool, pilot P/O E.E. Crompton RAF (Can.) died in England when his Hurricane I L2007 crashed (discussion page at [www.rafcommands.com](http://www.rafcommands.com)).

Saturday

**11 Forewarned by German sources in Berlin of the original invasion date of Nov. 12 (by an actual group of Army officers opposed to Hitler's planned invasion of France), the Belgium Army cancels military leave, police clear the roads on the border for expected support from the French Army, but the invasion does not occur. Continuing bad weather over Europe postpones date again (LH).**

**In England Dr. R.V. Jones submits a list of possible German Secret Weapons based**

*on research triggered by Hitler's speech in Danzig and the Oslo Report. Long range guns and rockets (later V-3 and V-2 weapons) listed as #5 on the list (Polsson).*

Sunday

**12 Dr. Henry Norman Bethune** dies of an infection in China where he is providing medical services for the Chinese Communist Army (wikipedia). Dr. Bethune had been wounded in France with the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps before completing his medical degree, then served as a doctor in the RCN, and became the first Medical Officer of the new Canadian Air Force (Airforce Magazine, Vol. 44, No.2). In Spain, beginning in the defence of Madrid, Dr. Bethune had revolutionized combat medicine by using motor vehicles and portable refrigeration, creating a mobile surgical unit, able to provide surgery and blood transfusions as close to the front lines as possible. The dramatic increase in survival of wounded soldiers treated by this unit was reported and studied in the West, and similar systems were adopted by other countries. (In the US Army these units were called Mobile Army Surgical Hospitals, or MASH units. Beyond their medical work they are commemorated in the media by 2 Hollywood movies, a series of novels and a TV series. The last US Army MASH unit was deactivated in 2006).

Monday

**13 Finnish diplomats return to Helsinki following failure of talks with the USSR, who demanded moving the Finnish border near Leningrad back 30-40 kilometres and establishment of a Soviet naval base in Finnish territory (Polsson). Finnish forces and reserves mobilizing and preparing defensive positions.**

13 110 Sqn. Blenheim IV N6198 crashed in England on a low level training exercise, Sgt V.B. Thorne RAF killed, P/O P.S. Goulder RAF (Can.) badly injured and was later medically discharged in Canada (Allison & Hayward). He had flown on the first Bomber Command attack of the war, Sept. 4, above.

13 #1 SFTS, England, Harvard I N7043 crashed, F/L W.I. Hammond RAF (Can.) and Sub Lt(A) D. Copsey RN killed (brian and H. Welting at www.rafccommands.com; wikipedia).

Tuesday

**14 J.D. Eaton, head of the T. Eaton Co. department store chain, gifted his private Beech 18 CF-BMU to the RCAF for the war effort, where it became #1530, the first of these aircraft to serve in the RCAF. He had taken delivery of the aircraft, new, the previous July (F.W. Hotson).**

*In Venezuela the town of Legunillas was destroyed and 500 people killed in an oil*

*refinery fire (wikipedia).*

Wednesday

**15 First Canadian built Bolingbroke I bomber #702 flies, built by Fairchild Aircraft of Canada, and taken on service with the RCAF (Oughton). The Bolingbroke was a maritime patrol version of the Bristol Blenheim light bomber. For this the Blenheim I was re-designed with a longer nose and accommodation for a 4th crewman as navigator in the glazed nose. To improve the pilot's view when landing the nose windows were scalloped downwards on the left side. The Bolingbroke production had run into trouble in England resulting in the acquisition of the more capable Hudson aircraft (G. Franklin, Britain's Anti-Submarine Capability, 1919-1939, Routledge, 2004). The longer nose (but without the extra maritime navigation equipment) was then adopted by the RAF on the Blenheim IV bomber (which preceded the Bolingbroke into production), but although they appeared the same externally the Canadian aircraft were designed as maritime patrol aircraft and were always called Bolingbrokes. Most "Blenheim" aircraft flying or in Museums today are actually Bolingbrokes.**

**In Czechoslovakia large demonstrations occur at the funeral of a student who died of wounds received October 28th, above (ww2total.com Chronology/1939).**

**German pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee, operating in the Indian Ocean, sinks the British tanker Africa Shell off Madagascar (ww2total.com Chronology/1939). Afterwards the warship returned to the South Atlantic.**

Thursday

**16 Canadian Army advance units arrive in England (CJCA headline).**

Friday

**17 Allies pool economic resources (CJCA headline).**

**17-18 In the former Czechoslovakia students protest against German occupation. As a result universities are closed by SS troops, 9 student leaders are executed without trial and over 1,200 arrested and sent to concentration camps (Oxford). Universities in the former Czechoslovakia remained closed until 1945 (ww2total.com Chronology/1939). International Students Day, November 17, commemorates these students (wikipedia).**

**Poet, novelist and activist *Margaret Atwood* born in Ottawa, Ontario (wikipedia).**

Saturday

**18 Martial Law proclaimed in Prague (ww2total.com Chronology/1939).**

***Dutch liner Simon Bolivar sunk after hitting 2 mines off Harwich, 86 died. Britain accused Germany of laying mines which would endanger commercial shipping, a violation of the Hague convention (wikipedia). See November 21 and 29, below.***

18 #110 (AC) Sqn. RCAF, DH.82A(Can.) Tiger Moth #279 was part of a practice formation of 3 aircraft when it collided in mid-air during a loop and crashed at Ottawa, Ontario, **F/O G.P. Johnstone** killed (College of Physicians & Surgeons of BC, via pers. comm. Carl Mills). **F/O J.D. Morrison** bailed out safely from Tiger Moth #252 (paulmcmillan at www.rafccommands.com).

Sunday

**19 15 Harvard aircraft (remainder of the RCAF order for Mk. I aircraft?) land at Sweetgrass, Montana, on the US/Canada Border, where to avoid the 1937 US Neutrality Act they are pushed across the border to Coutts, Alberta, and flown away by RCAF pilots (B.W. Gowans; T. Keene [who dates this as occurring in early 1941]). It is later determined that the act of pushing them across the border was a form of delivery, and thus violated the Act. Later in May, 1941 (? see December 18, below), on the advice of President Roosevelt, aircraft are parked beside the border, then lassoed and dragged into Canada as a way around the Act (Oxford). This is all propaganda, but it is recorded and publicized to give deniability to German claims of US support. (It also provides the opening of the popular period US novel and movie "A Yank in the RAF", [Harlan Thomas, 1942], which also incorrectly portrays RCAF Trenton as a sleepy airfield with the RCAF war effort as lackadaisical, at the least. The confusion of dates is likely due to the US author of the article not understanding that Canada entered the war in 1939).**

Monday

**20 A German Do 17 reconnaissance aircraft is intercepted over London by Spitfires which chase it out to sea where it is shot down (<http://www.battleofbritain1940.net/0020.html>).**

***Canada Car and Foundry contacted the RCAF to enquire if they had any spare propellers for Hurricanes they could borrow, as they had not received any and the first production Hurricane for the RAF expected to be ready to be flight tested in early December, except they had not received any propellers from England. The RCAF replied that they would try to provide a wooden one (C. Vincent).***

**20-21 German He 59 floatplane aircraft begin dropping top secret magnetic mines off Harwich and the Thames estuary, England (FE). These mines are triggered by a steel ships magnetic field. [The actual initial date of this may be incorrect, given the loss of the Simon Bolivar, above].**

Tuesday

**21 German battlecruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau depart from Germany for commerce raiding in Atlantic.**

**RN Destroyer HMS Gipsy sunk by a magnetic mine off coast of Britain (Polsson), cruiser HMS Belfast damaged (ww2total.com Chronology/1939).**

**Britain announces a blockade of shipping of German goods due to the attacks on shipping such as the Athenia and the Simon Bolivar (wikipedia).**

Wednesday

**22 The first RCAF base built on Vancouver Island at Patricia Bay, BC, begins operations when #111 (CAC) Squadron Avro 626 #525 lands to begin a deployment there. The Station had opened October 26 (440 SH).**

**In Northern France a Luftwaffe Bf 109E force lands due to fog and is captured by French forces. See May 2, 1940.**

**22-23 A secret German magnetic mine lands in the mud flats off Shoeburyness in England and is recovered intact at low tide (Polsson). Analysis by the RN gives information on the mechanism, which allows Allies to counter it by "degaussing" (neutralizing) ships magnetic fields electrically, and to develop a method of clearing of mines using aircraft encircled with high intensity electro-magnetic generating rings to explode them.**

Thursday

**23 Battlecruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau were intercepted by the RN armed merchant cruiser Rawalpindi at sunset in foggy conditions north of the Faroe Islands. The armed cruiser was vastly outgunned but signalled their position and attacked the two warships, inflicting only slight damage before being sunk after 40 minutes, 238 crew lost, 37 taken PoW and 11 rescued. British Home Fleet units quickly converge on the German ships but lose them in poor visibility (they had no radar. The German ships did, but only for directing guns). Scharnhorst and Gneisenau retreat to Wilhelmshaven (wikipedia).**

**Transport Minister C.D. Howe** appointed head of War Supply Board (CJCA headline). **A graduate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with an engineering degree at 20 years old, Howe had worked on government projects in Halifax and Port Arthur before starting his own engineering firm in the 1920s. To create the plants and infrastructure needed for the war he began to recruit qualified men from business with the pragmatic drive to undertake and complete difficult tasks no matter the challenges. Their politics was secondary, and some were strong opponents of the Mackenzie King government, but this did not deter Howe, nor Mackenzie King, who focused on the requirements of the war (K. Cuthbertson).**

**AVM G.M. Croil** sends a memorandum to the Minister of National Defence arguing for an RCAF overseas command to be established to work with the RAF, with RCAF bomber and fighter units to be involved directly in the war (RCAF Sqns.).

- 23 1 Sqn. Hurricanes flown by F/O M.H. "Hilly" Brown RAF (Can.) and S/L P.J.H. Halahan RAF shoot down a Do 17P photo reconnaissance aircraft over France (FE). See March 2, 1940. F/O Brown had learned to fly at the Brandon Flying Club in Manitoba (P. Caygill).

Friday

**24 British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) formed from the merger of Imperial Airways and British Airways (wikipedia).**

- 24 #9 AOS, England, Battle I aircraft L5255 and L5256 crashed after a mid-air collision over Wales, F/L A.A. Deacon RAF (Can.) was killed in L5256 (S. Shail) with LAC R.G. Stirling RAF and LAC J.D. Siddons RAF (www.rafcommands.com). P/O K.P. Hamilton RAF, AC1 T.D. King RAF and AC2 F. Shepherd RAF were killed in the other aircraft (www.rafcommands.com; CWGC).

Saturday

**25 Partially in response to the German expedition to Antarctica, reported by Norwegian whalers, a new US Navy Expedition is organized to establish 2 bases for research there (wikipedia).**

Sunday

**26 After consultations in Moscow, Finland rejects the proposals by the USSR for military bases on Finnish soil. Soviets claim their border troops were shelled by Finns on this date [the shelling later known to be from a Soviet artillery unit], Finland denies accusation.**

**In Sweden the awarding of a Nobel Peace Prize for 1939 is cancelled (ww2total.com)**

## **Chronology/1939).**

Monday

**27 Britain blockades German exports (CJCA headline). This would have little effect as Germany could purchase supplies and export products by land via the Soviet Union.**

27 10 Sqn. **F/O D.A. Willis DFC RAF (Can.)** injured, no details (R. Allenby). Following this he was involved in staff positions, see July 31, 1942.

27 207 Sqn. Battle I L5279 crashed on a night take-off in England on a training flight when the engine failed, **P/O T.R. Williams RAF (Can.)** killed (aviation-safety.net).

Tuesday

**28 601 Sqn. Blenheim fighters led by F/O J.W. Aitken RAF (Can.) strafed floatplanes at the German seaplane base at Borkum, the first RAF fighter strike into enemy territory. Despite reports only 2 floatplanes were slightly damaged. The purpose of the attack on Borkum was to suppress activities of magnetic mine-laying German floatplanes, which were causing heavy losses of shipping around the British Isles (FE). F/O Aitken was born in Montreal, the son of Max Aitken, Lord Beaverbrook (Allison & Hayward).**

**The Magna Carta, on display at the New York Worlds Fair, was entrusted to the US Library of Congress for the duration of the war (wikipedia).**

**Inventor of Basketball James Naismith died (wikipedia).**

Wednesday

**29 In response to the announced blockade of German exports, Hitler issued a directive for economic warfare on Britain, identifying targets to be attacked by U-boats on shipping and the blocking of sea lanes with mines (Polsson; wikipedia).**

29 RCAF Station Trenton, Ontario, Oxford II #1509 crashed, **P/O L.A. Clements, P/O J.G. Lee, P/O G.T. Maher and LAC L.S. Stempel** killed.

Thursday

**30 Soviet Union invades Finland (Winter War). Soviet forces invade Finland in the Arctic regions, in central Finland, and on the Karelian Isthmus north from Leningrad (LoN). Soviet airforce bombs Helsinki (Polsson).**

30 #1 (F) Sqn. RCAF Hurricane I #329 crashed at Dartmouth, NS, killing **F/O D.R. Anderson.**

## **December 1939**

***Winter War, Sweden declares itself a non-belligerent in the war between Finland and the USSR, but provides 12,000 military "volunteers" to assist Finland. This includes a complete squadron of Gladiator fighter aircraft. The Soviet Air Forces have a 6 to 1 advantage in numbers over the Finnish Air Force, but winter weather, limited daylight, poor training and poor tactics used by the Soviets give the small but well trained and motivated Finns an edge, although flying continuous sorties during daylight takes a heavy toll on the small group of available pilots (H.W. Neulen).***

***Other volunteers from other countries travel or attempt to travel to Finland to join the fight, including from Norway, Denmark, Hungary, Poland, England, Canada and the USA (H.W. Neulen). See entry for 70 Squadron, September 5-6, 1943 for example. **George Beurling** in Montreal went to the Finnish Consulate to offer his services as a pilot (he had ancestors from Sweden) who are interested, but as a minor (18) he needed his father's permission to go, which was refused (Nolan).***

***When accused of bombing cities in Finland Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov denied this, stating the bombers were dropping food to starving Finns. Later the Finnish forces developed a simple anti-tank grenade made from a sticky flammable liquid in a glass bottle, with a wick that could be lit by an attached igniter. They called these "Molotov Cocktails", to go with the "food" (note similar devices were used in the Spanish Civil War, developed by the Nationalists) (wikipedia). The name has stuck, referring to any incendiary device made using gasoline and glass bottles.***

***In England Churchill sees the Finnish war as an opportunity to open a front against Germany and again to cut off the supply of Swedish iron ore to Germany (LH).***

***At about this time or earlier France and England agree to absorb Polish Air Force pilots on a 50/50 basis, but the RAF wants to incorporate them into existing squadrons while in France plans are made for Polish national units (similar to the US Lafayette Escadrille in the First World War) (Falkowski).***

***Continued bad weather forces further postponement of German invasion of France. Early in December it is decided to release soldiers for Christmas leave and the invasion is put off to after the New Year (LH).***

Friday

***1 Official announcement of the formation of 242 (Canadian) Squadron in the RAF, with***

***an RCAF officer commanding, and all pilots serving RAF (Can.) officers, plus an adjutant who was born Canadian, a wounded veteran from the First World War, serving in the RAF Volunteer Reserve and a serving MP in the British Parliament (H.A. Halliday).***

- 1 63 Sqn. Anson I N5073 failed to return from a navigation training flight in poor weather, **P/O A. Cameron RAF (Can.)**, P/O C.R. Coventry RAF (Aus.), Sgt A.G. Gibson RAF, AC2 H.W. Gormley RAF and AC2 J.C. Buckland RAF missing.
- 1 141 Sqn. Blenheim I L8691 crashed in Scotland, **P/O H.G. Yelland RAF (Can.)**, AC2 (WAG) L. Dale RAF, AC2 J.C. Hunt RAF and P/O R.M. Williams RAF killed.

Saturday

- 2 ***Guided by her spotter plane the pocket battleship Graf Spee intercepted and sank the SS Doric Star in the South Atlantic. The plane then spotted another ship, the SS Tairoa, before running out of fuel and landing at sea. The crew and aircraft were retrieved by the Graf Spee that evening (Cull, Lander & Horan).***

**Winter War, Soviet forces capture Petsamo (wikipedia).**

Sunday

- 3 **Winter War, Finnish forces evacuate Helsinki.**

***The Graf Spee intercepts and sinks the SS Tairoa (Cull, Lander & Horan).***

***RAF begins anti-mining operations over the North Sea, including attacks on German bases and warships (Polsson). On this date the RAF sent a flight of 24 new turret equipped Wellington Ia bombers on a patrol off Heligoland, searching for German warships. The flight was detected by radar, but intercepting German Bf 109D fighters were held off, and one was shot down, by the tail gunners. This success may have misled planners on the defence capabilities of these turret armed bombers in formation (FE). That they had fought off lighter armed "D" variants of the Bf 109 was not noted.***

- 3 149 Sqn. Wellington Ia N2980 OJ-R 'R for Robert', **F/L J.B. Stewart RAF (Can.)**, returned safely from the operation over Heligoland on it's first operation just 17 days after it was delivered to the RAF (J. Ewan; Allison and Hayward). See Dec. 18, below.

Monday

- 4 ***King George VI visits troops in France (CJCA headline).***

Tuesday

- 5 ***#111 (CAC) Sqn. RCAF, Patricia Bay, BC, Avro 626 #525 crashed on take-off when***

***the controls jammed, crew safe. This destroyed the only aircraft on the West coast fitted for Coastal Artillery fire control (440 SH).***

***Winter War, Soviet army reaches the Mannerheim Line (wikipedia).***

5 #1 (F) Sqn. Hurricane I #315 damaged in a force landing in near Halifax (C. Vincent).

Wednesday

6 ***Winter War, Britain sends military material to Finland (CJCA headline). Very little of this actually arrived in time for use in the war.***

Thursday

7 ***German pocket battleship Graf Spee intercepts and sinks the SS Streonshalh in the South Atlantic.***

***First mentally disabled patients secretly euthanized in Germany by SS (wikipedia).***

Friday

8 ***US sent a protest note to England about it's blockade, which included seizing German goods being shipped in neutral ships (wikipedia).***

***In order to prevent the economic disruptions Canada experienced in the First World War, and after, a Committee of Demobilization and Re-establishment was created. Among it's other recommendations were social programs to assist Canadians, the first being putting in place Unemployment Insurance (Douglas & Greenhous). See August 5, 1940.***

Saturday

9 ***Seven week long coal miners strike in Estevan, Saskatchewan, ends (CJCA headline).***

Sunday

10 ***First Canadian troop convoy, 5 liners carrying 7,400 Canadian soldiers, leaves Halifax for Britain with 4 RCN destroyers as escort (RCN Chronology).***

***Norwegian politician Vikun Quisling meets with Hitler and others in Berlin, seeking aid for his fascist party to take control of Norway by a coup. Discussions take place over the next 11 days (Polsson).***

***German liner Bremen leaves Murmansk on a high speed run back to Germany, arriving Dec. 13. At one point in the voyage she was challenged by a British submarine, but this was driven underwater by an escorting patrol aircraft. The***

*submarine's captain could have torpedoed the liner, but did not do so as he believed the liner was not a legal target under the rules of war (wikipedia).*

Monday

**11** *After months of useful spotting the Ar 196 floatplane on the pocket battleship Graf Spee is damaged beyond repair and jettisoned at sea (wikipedia).*

11 76 Sqn. Hampden I P1267 crashed in poor visibility in England on a solo training flight, P/O C.D. Stevens RAF (Can.) killed.

Wednesday

**13** *German pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee was in a gun battle off Argentina with an Allied force of three lighter gunned cruisers, HMNZS Achilles, HMS Ajax and HMS Exeter, and retreats, damaged, to Montivideo, Uruguay, where it is blockaded by the Allied cruiser force, also badly damaged. Without her floatplane the Graf Spee had had no way of avoiding the RN force, or of driving off the Seafox spotter plane of the Ajax during the engagement.*

*In the North Sea the German cruisers Leipzig and Nürnberg were torpedoed and damaged by the RN submarine Salmon (D. Sommerville).*

**#111** (CAC) Sqn., Patricia Bay, BC, DH.82A(Can.) Tiger Moth #253, the only operating aircraft on the station, damaged in a ground loop that put it out of action for 2 months (440 SH).

Thursday

**14** *Winter War, League of Nations expels the Soviet Union for attacking Finland (CJCA headline; Polsson; wikipedia).*

*Hitler agrees to help Quisling take over Norway by coup and issues orders for planning of military support following it's success (Polsson).*

*An armed reconnaissance by 99 Sqn. RAF on a daylight patrol off the German coast locates and attempts an attack on the damaged cruiser Nürnberg off the Elbe River, but is intercepted by German Bf 109E and Bf 110 fighters and lose five of twelve Wellington la aircraft, one other crashing on return to England, with the loss of 33 RAF crew killed or missing. So effective and sudden was the attack that at the debriefing the returning aircrew gave the opinion that the bombers were shot down by flak, which was completely incorrect. W/C J.F. Griffiths RAF (Can.) (Squadron commanding officer), F/O J.P. Dyer RAF (Can.) and F/O F.A.H. Lambart RAF (Can.) were involved in this action (Allison & Hayward). See also Jan. 2, April 17-18, May 21-22, August 13, 1940, and May 9,*

1945.

**The German liner Columbus, under orders to return to Germany, leaves Veracruz, Mexico, under escort by US destroyers through the Neutrality Zone (wikipedia). See December 17, below.**

Friday

**15 Movie Gone with the Wind premiers (wikipedia).**

Saturday

**16 First Lord of the Admiralty Churchill proposes an invasion of Norway and Sweden, to force Germany to respond with a counter invasion. Cabinet turns it down but authorizes planning for a landing at Narvik (terminus of the railway that transported iron ore from Sweden in winter), under the guise of assistance to Finland (LH).**

**#2 (AC) Sqn. RCAF disbanded in Rockcliffe to provide Lysander aircraft and personnel to #110 and #112 (AC) Squadrons prior to their re-deployment overseas (RCAF Sqns.).**

Sunday

**17 Believing themselves to be facing a superior fleet, damaged and with engines in need of repair, on orders from Germany the pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee is scuttled by it's crew off Montevideo, Uruguay. In it's short cruise it had sunk 10 merchant ships, and been the object of French and British naval groups searching from the Caribbean to India.**

**1st Division of the Canadian Army arrives in England (CJCA headline). The converted liners Empress of Britain, Empress of Australia, Monarch of Bermuda and Aquitania arrive from Halifax carrying 6,100 Canadian soldiers under heavy RN escort (Cull, Lander & Horan).**

**#110 (AC) Sqn. RCAF redeployed from Toronto to Rockcliffe for operational training on Lysander aircraft prior to re-deploying overseas as part of the Canadian Active Service Force (RCAF Sqns.).**

**In Labrador crew of the missing Quebec Airways Ltd. DH.89A Rapide CF-BND, **G.H. Davidson, J.C. Cote and J. Fecteau** make their last entry in the letters they have made to their families (A. Scully). See March 5, 1940.**

**British Commonwealth Air Training Plan Agreement signed in Ottawa between**

**Canada, England, Australia and New Zealand, for the enlarging of 20 existing airfields, construction of 60 new airfields and establishment of 74 training facilities in Canada, beginning April 29, 1940, and to be in full operation by April 30, 1942. These would include RAF training units transferred from England on Canadian built and owned bases, but the majority of the training units were to be RCAF units, or civilian operations under RCAF control. These would need 40,000 military and civilian staff to operate. All this would cost \$600 million over three years, of which Canada was expected to put up \$350 million. This organization was expected to graduate 25,000 trained aircrew per year (FF Years). These were the initial estimates, but in fact as the plan grew larger and trained more aircrew, Canada and the RCAF were required to contribute much more operational and financial responsibility.**

**Article 15 of the agreement, required by **Mackenzie King** and supported by the other Dominions, referred to graduates from the Dominions being formed in squadrons of their own, but details are left vague (CCMA). This is in contrast to the original British proposal that all squadrons in combat be RAF with some having designated nationalities, such 242 (Canadian) Sqn., 125 (Newfoundland) Sqn., 75 (New Zealand) Sqn. and later Eagle Squadrons manned by US citizens in the RAF. It can be argued that the identification of the RCAF, RAAF and RNZAF as national organizations can be traced to this document (Dalke).**

Monday

**18 The first two Douglas Digby (similar to the B-18A) patrol bombers are delivered to the RCAF, lassoed and pulled by horse-teams over the border at Sweetgrass, Montana / Coumts, Alberta (B.W. Gowans). The event was filmed as "proof" that US Neutrality laws were not broken. Later Digby deliveries were made at the US border at Emerson, Manitoba. The aircraft were finished for RCAF use and #10 (BR) Sqn. crew training took place at Winnipeg (C.L. Annis). The Digby gave the RCAF a longer ranged maritime patrol capability. This purpose anticipated the USAAF experience, where the B-18 and B-18A were used as bombers and target tugs before their entry into the war, but then went onto a successful (and unpublicized) role as anti-submarine aircraft (Hagedorn & Hagedorn).**

**Battle of Heligoland Bight, 12 of 22 Wellington Ia bombers on a daylight reconnaissance off Wilhelmshaven shot down by intercepting German fighters, guided by an experimental radar unit. Six of the surviving bombers crash landed on return to England. There was no doubt what had caused these losses. These aircraft, although armed with turrets, did not have armour**

**protection or, more importantly, self sealing fuel tanks, and adding these modifications to other bombers was given priority (FE). Among the returning aircrew several were decorated including *F/O W.J. Macrae RAF (Can.)* of 9 Sqn. (see March 8, 1940). This event was used by Nevil Shute as a plot device in his novel *Pied Piper*, published in 1942.**

**#111 (CAC) Sqn., Vancouver, BC, the first of the new *Lysander II* aircraft issued to the Squadron, #424 & #425, arrive in Vancouver from a cross country flight of 7 days from Ottawa (440 SH). An account of this flight by then *Corporal (later W/C) L.A. Yellowlees* appears in *Airforce Magazine*, Vol. 11, #2, 1987, under the title "424 Where Are You".**

- 18 9 Sqn. Wellington Ia N2939 WS-H shot down by fighters off Heligoland Bight, *F/O J.T.I. Challes RAF (Can.)*, P/O A.H.R. Bourne RAF, Sgt F.M. Mason RAF, Sgt T.H. English RAF, LAC (AG) G.E. Cox RAF and AC1 (AG) A. Telfer RAF missing.
- 18 9 Sqn. Wellington Ia N2872 shot down by fighters off Heligoland Bight, *S/L A.J. Guthrie RAF (Can.)*, P/O J.E. Atkinson RAF, Sgt H.W. Tyrrell RAF, LAC (AG) T.L. Marlin RAF, Sgt B.J. Pickles RAF and LAC (AG) J.M.F. Key RAF missing.
- 18 9 Sqn. Wellington Ia N2971 force landed on return to England, *F/O W.J. Macrae RAF (Can.)* and 3 crew safe, 2 crew wounded (FE).
- 18 37 Sqn. Wellington Ia N2889 LF-P shot down by fighters off Heligoland Bight, *P/O R.M. Ross RAF (Can.)*, F/O O.J.T. Lewis RAF, Sgt M.W. Barrington-Taylor RAF and AC1 (AG) P.T. Jones RAF missing, AC1 (AG) G.W. Geddes RAF died of injuries.
- 18 149 Sqn. Wellington Ia N2980 OJ-R 'R for Robert', S/L P. Harris RAF, was part of the operation over Heligoland. The crew noted another Squadron Wellington ditch and attempted to drop them a life-raft, but it tangled in the tailplane and caused damage to the elevator. An engine was shut down to reduce vibration, and the aircraft returned on one engine and landed safely. S/L Harris received a DFC for this sortie. Just over a year later, on Dec. 31, 1940, this bomber was operating with #20 OTU when it suffered an engine failure and ditched in Loch Ness. Recovered in 1985 and now on display in England it is one of only 2 surviving Wellington aircraft, and the only one that had seen combat (J. Ewan).

Tuesday

- 19 ***Under observation by a USN cruiser, the German liner Columbus is sighted at sea by the destroyer HMS Hyperion, 400 miles off the Virginia coast. The crew sets the liner on fire and scuttles her, after transferring 576 crew and passengers to the cruiser, as rescued seamen. They are brought to New York where most were interned for the duration of the war in the USA. When Hitler declared war on the USA in 1941 he cited this as an act of war against Germany, saying the US cruiser forced the liner into the path of the Royal Navy destroyer (wikipedia; E. Wiberg).***

Thursday

**21 Italian airline Linee Aeree Transcontinentali Italiane (LATI) begins airmail flights connecting Rome with Rio de Janeiro, crossing the South Atlantic from the Cape Verde Islands to Recife, Brazil, using SM.79 and SM.83 aircraft (H.W. Neulen; wikipedia).**

Friday

**22 First flight of the Pe-2 as a high altitude long range fighter. Analysis of the use of tactical bombers during the Spanish Civil war led to it's redesign as a dive bomber (wikipedia). See December 15, 1940.**

**As a result of a British commission to Italy to investigate purchasing aircraft an order is placed for 300 Ca.313 light bombers and 1,000 Re.2000 fighter aircraft for the RAF, and the Ca.313 was also ordered by the French Air Force. Italy sought Germany's advice on the sale (B. Micrander). See March 8, 1940.**

**In British ammunition factories women entering the workforce demand the same wages as paid to men for the same work (K. Farrington).**

22 RCAF Station Trenton, Ontario, **F/S F.B. Lummis** was draining fuel from an aircraft in a hangar when a worklight fell, broke, and ignited a can of gasoline. F/S Lummis grabbed the flaming can and carried it outside, by which time his clothing was on fire. His actions saved the hangar and 12 aircraft inside. He survived and was later awarded the George Medal for courage in saving lives (from citation quoted in *The R.C.A.F. Overseas - The First Four Years*).

Saturday

**23 IRA raid in Dublin steals the Irish Army's entire reserve of small arms ammunition, most of which is recovered by police and Army searches over the next few weeks (ww2total.com Chronology/1939).**

**Aircraft designer Anthony Fokker dies (wikipedia).**

Sunday

**24 Pope offers peace plan (CJCA headline).**

**Winter War, Finnish forces stop an invading Russian army in Finland (Polsson). Although heavily outnumbered and poorly equipped the Finns are very well trained in mobile harassing tactics (using skis) and highly motivated. They are also operating in their own country and knew how to cope with the winter there, which most Soviet soldiers did not. The defensive line built behind the**

**southern border allows them to halt the Soviet offensive from Leningrad. Russian air superiority is countered by the shortness of the Arctic day (Oxford).**

**Sino-Japanese War, Concerned that the US sponsored aviation facilities in China would be attacked by Japanese forces, US and Indian companies establish a factory in Poona, India, as Hindustani Aircraft Limited, to service and build US and local designs for India and China (G. Beauchamp). Now known as Hindustan Aeronautics, it is now one of the largest aircraft companies in the world.**

**The first airfield in the Bahamas officially opened, later named Oakes Field in memory of **Sir Harry Oakes**, who donated the land for the airfield (E. Wiberg). See July 8, 1943.**

Monday

**25 Heavy bomber attacks on towns in Finland by Soviet aircraft met with determined Finnish defence, over 20 bombers lost (ww2total.com Chronology/1939).**

Tuesday

**26 First RAAF squadron arrives in England (<http://www.worldwar-2.net/timelines>). 10 Sqn. RAAF had sent crews to England before the outbreak of the war to fly Sunderland flying boats purchased by the Australian Government back to Australia, but it was decided instead to send the rest of the Squadron to England where they would serve with Coastal Command.**

Wednesday

**27 Earthquake in Turkey causes flooding that kills 30,000 people (wikipedia).**

Thursday

**28 Winter War, Finnish forces defeat Soviet invaders, begin advance into Russia (CJCA headline). Newspaper propaganda, Finland was in fact doing all it could to hold Soviet forces from further advances into Finland.**

**In the USA after months of media reports on the anti-Jewish activities of the Christian Front organization, the US Department of Justice announced it would be investigating it (wikipedia). See January 14, 1940.**

Friday

**29 Douglas Digby officially taken on service with the RCAF (Griffin CMA).**

***First flight of the XB-24 4 engined bomber, later known as the Liberator (M.J.H. Taylor).***

Saturday

***30 First flight of the Il-2 attack aircraft, later known as the Shturmovik (M.J.H. Taylor).***

30 #11 (BR) Sqn. RCAF, Hudson I #767 ditched near Pleasant Point, NS, and damaged by waves. The first RCAF Hudson to be written off (R.W.R. Walker).

Sunday

***31 Germany produced 8,295 military aircraft, and England 7,940 in 1939. Japanese production totalled 4,467 in this period, and the USA built 2,141 (P.A. Sammons).***

***Manpower of the RCAF 949 officers and 7,258 airmen, a total of 8,307. This represents a 100% increase in manpower in the last 4 months. Tens of thousands more volunteers had been processed and were awaiting call-up for training as facilities became available. A total of fourteen Squadrons were deployed in Canada, #1 (F), #5 (BR) and #11 (BR) at Dartmouth NS; #4 (BR), #6 (BR), #111 (CAC) and #120 (BR) in Vancouver, BC; #110 (AC) and #112 (AC) Sqns. at Ottawa; #8 (BR) at North Sydney, NS, #10 (BR) at Halifax NS, #115 (F) at St. Hubert, Quebec, and #119 (BR) Sqn. at Hamilton, Ontario.***

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