

Topic 1: Into battle

Work Sheet 1C: Australia's Changing Relationships with Great Britain and America



NLA PIC/6524

Prime Minister Robert Menzies announcing Australia's involvement in World War II.

www.w2australia.gov.au/wardeclared

Source 1

On 3 September 1939, Prime Minister Robert Gordon Menzies announced that Australia was at war with Germany.

Fellow Australians, it is my melancholy duty to inform you officially, that in consequence of a persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland, Great Britain has declared war upon her and that, as a result, Australia is also at war. No harder task can fall to the lot of a democratic leader than to make such an announcement.

Screensound Australia, National Screen and Sound Collection, Screensound Title No: 387919

Source 2

Cablegram from Menzies to Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister

www.w2australia.gov.au/wardeclared

PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT.
DECODE OF CABLEGRAM.

TO **The Prime Minister of Great Britain, LONDON.** DATE SENT **4th September, 1939.**

Your broadcast message moved Australia deeply. We ourselves have proclaimed a state of war and I have broadcast on behalf of the Commonwealth Government that we stand with Great Britain.

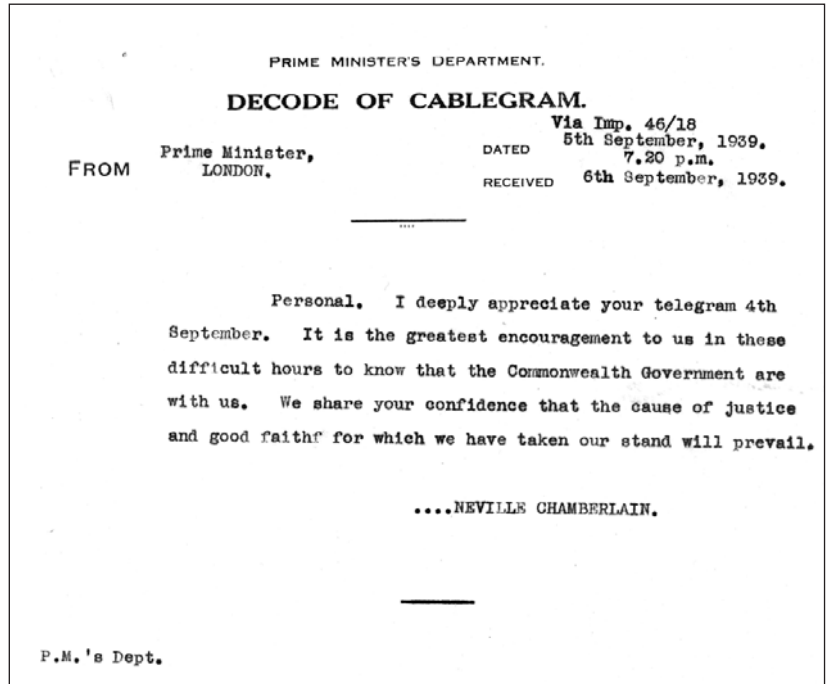
We firmly believe we have right on our side and in that strength victory is sure.

Copy E.A. 6/9/39.

NAA 581/1 A5954/69

Source 3

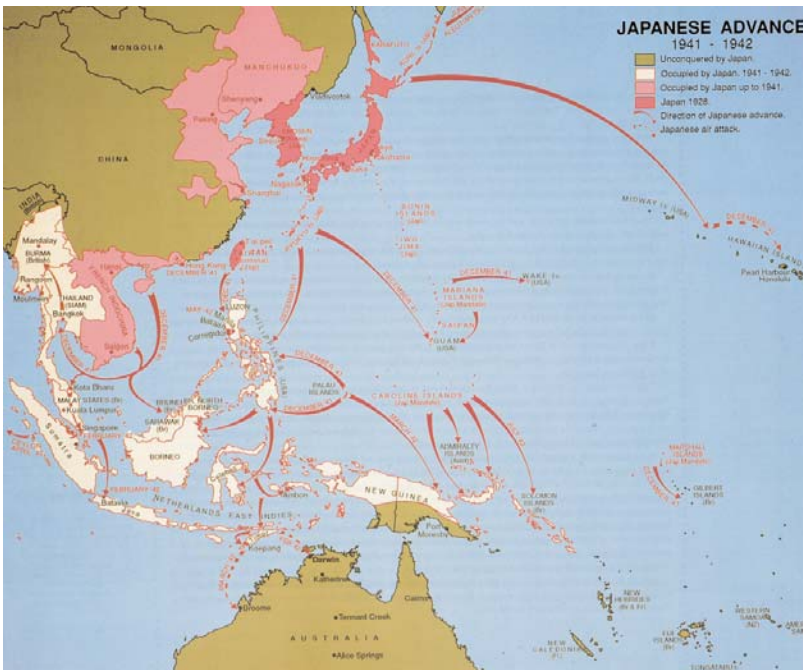
The British Prime Minister's response to the cable from Robert Menzies.
www.w2australia.gov.au/wardeclared



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Source 4

Map showing Japanese advance during World War II which began with their attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor and the invasion of Malaya in December 1941. America declared war on Japan and sent troops to the Pacific to fight the Japanese. The Japanese moved swiftly southwards capturing the British naval base at Singapore and the Philippines before launching an attack on New Guinea.
www.w2australia.gov.au/japadvance



Frank Alcorta, *Australia's Front Line: The Northern Territory's War*, Darwin, 1991

Source 5

'Australia turns to America'

During the final days of December 1941, Australian Prime Minister, John Curtin, recalled Australian troops who were fighting in the Middle East to return home to defend Australia. He was approached to provide a New Year message to the people of Australia. His message included the now famous words:

Without any inhibitions of any kind, I made it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom.

Source 6

Prime Minister John Curtin meets General Douglas MacArthur.
www.w2australia.gov.au/japadvance



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Questions:

1 According to Menzies' speech in *Source 1*, what caused the outbreak of World War II in September 1939?

2 Why did Australia also go to war on 3 September 1939? (*Sources 1 and 2*)

3 How did Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister react to Australia's declaration of war? (*Source 3*)

4 What information does the map in *Source 4* provide about the Japanese threat to Australia?

5 How did the Australian Prime Minister John Curtin respond to the Japanese threat to Australia? (*Source 5*)

6 How did the new alliance with America affect Australia's support of Great Britain in the war?

7 What was Curtin referring to when he spoke of Australia's 'traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom'?



CLICK AND FIND

Web page for this activity

Go to www.ww2australia.gov.au/japadvance and click on the headline 'Australia turns to America'.

Read the information given there and answer these questions:

8 Who was General Douglas MacArthur? What role was he to play in the Pacific war against Japan?

9 What plans did Curtin and MacArthur make for military cooperation between Australia and America in the war against Japan?

10 Using each of the six sources, write a half-page summary explaining the impact of World War II on Australia's relationships with Great Britain and America.
