September 1, 1939 - 70th Anniversary
Germans Attack Poland

Adolf Hitler: The Obersalzberg Speech (portions) 22 August 1939
The decision to attack Poland was arrived at in spring. Our strength lies in our quickness and in our brutality; Genghis Khan has sent millions of women and children into death knowingly and with a light heart. History sees in him only the great founder of States. The goal to be obtained in the war is not that of reaching certain lines but of physically demolishing the opponent. I have put my death-head formations in place with the command relentlessly and without compassion to send into death the men, women and children of Polish origin and language. For you, gentlemen, be hard, be without mercy, act more quickly and brutally than the others. That is the human way of conducting a war. Colonel-General von Brauchitsch has promised me to bring the war against Poland to a close within a few weeks. Had he reported to me that he needs two years or even only one year, I should not have given the command to march and should have allowed myself temporarily with England instead of Russia for we cannot conduct a long war. The attack upon and the destruction of Poland begins Saturday early. I shall let a few companies in Polish uniform attack in Upper Silesia or in the Protectorate. Whether the world believes it is quite indifferent (scheissegal). That world believes only in success.

And now, on to the enemy, in Warsaw we will celebrate our reunion.

From Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939. eds. E. L. Woodward and Rohan Rilfeé. 3rd series (London: HMSO, 1954). 7:258-260. This text is part of the Internet Modern History Sourcebook. © Paul Halsall, July 1998 halsal@murray.fordham.edu

Gleiwitz Radio Station
On 31 August 1939 a group of SS-men disguised as Polish soldiers seized the facilities and broadcast a proclamation in Polish, which called for an uprising against Germany.

Hitlerites wanted to create a pretext to attack Poland and to justify their aggression before world public opinion.

Westerplatte

German BattleShip Schleswig Holstein

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Invasion of Poland (fall 1939)

By: George Parada

"...in general, the bravery and heroism of the Polish Army merits great respect."

General Feldmarschall

Gerd von Rundstedt

On Friday, September 1st of 1939, Germany invaded Poland.

The German invasion began with an air raid on the undefended city of Wielan at 4:40 am. Over 1,200 people were killed in first wave of World War II. At 4:45 am, the German Battleship (training ship) "Schleswig-Holstein" opened fire on a Polish naval depot and garrison at Westerplatte. An inflammatory statement emitting station. Then the station "went irregular". German voices announced that the town of Westerplatte was broadcast urging the Polish minority in Silesia to take up arms against Adolf Hitler.

As the German invading forces approached, the Polish defenders held their fire until an uppity Polish (portions) 22 August 1939

A View of Northern Warsaw where homes, schools churches, and office buildings once stood

Old Town Warsaw - 85% of Warsaw was destroyed (All quotes and facts - Wikipedia)

"The city must completely disappear from the surface of the earth and serve only as a transport station for the Wehrmacht. No stone can remain standing Every building must be razed to its foundation."

SS chief Heinrich Himmler during an SS officers conference

Hitler planned the destruction of Warsaw before the start of WWII

In August 1944, Warsaw appeared to present the last major obstacle to the Soviet army's triumphant march from Moscow to Berlin. When the Wehrmacht was pushed back to the Vistula River, the people of Warsaw believed that liberation was at hand. So, too, did the Western leaders. The Polish Resistance poured forty thousand armed fighters into the streets to drive out the hated Germans, but Stalin condemned the Rising as a criminal adventure and refused to cooperate. The Wehrmacht was given time to regroup, and Hitler ordered the city and its inhabitants to be utterly destroyed.

For sixty-three days, the Resistance battled the SS and Wehrmacht – in the cellars and sewers. Tens of thousands of defenseless civilians were slaughtered week after week. One by one, the city’s districts were reduced to rubble as Soviet troops watched from across the river. Poland’s Western allies expressed regret, but decided there was little to be done. The sacrifice was in vain. Hitler’s orders were executed. Poles were not to be allowed to govern Poland.

Largely sidelined in history books and often confused with the Ghetto Uprising of 1943, the 1944 Warsaw Rising was a pivotal moment both in the outcome of the War and in the origins of the Cold War. (from the cover of Norman Davies’ book, Rising ‘44.)

The consequences were that 85 percent of Warsaw was destroyed – all of the bridges, 95 percent of industry, hospitals, and other health service buildings. Everything that could be moved was plundered and taken to Germany. The financial estimate was $2.5 billion in terms of the monetary value of that time. The losses suffered by Polish culture were far greater and cannot be measured in financial terms. Archives were burned. Palaces were destroyed. The total devastation was complete. No other city was so completely destroyed as Warsaw.

Priceless and irreplaceable works of art and possessions collected over seven centuries were destroyed. After fighting in battle fronts all over the world and all of the heroic deeds done for the allies, Britain and America (President Roosevelt) did very little to help the Poles in their valiant battle for freedom. Until the last, the Poles believed that someone would come to their aid. It is time for this heroic, yet very tragic, part of history to be known.

"It is our fiercest battles since the start of the war. It compares to the battle of Stalingrad.”

SS chief Heinrich Himmler to other German generals - September 21, 1944

Tell the world that the Poles were faithful from the beginning to the very end in the struggle for freedom, peace and justice.