Britain and France declared war on Germany two days later. While the USA proclaimed neutrality, it continued to supply Britain with essential supplies, and the critical Battle of the Atlantic between German U-Boats and British naval convoys commenced. Western Europe was eerily quiet during this 'phony war'. That country was carved up between the two invaders before the end of the year, and Russia continued this aggression by going on to invade Finland. Top. Events of 1940. The Battle of Britain, lasting from July to September, was the first to be fought solely in the air. Germany lacked planes but had many pilots. In Britain, the situation was reversed, but - crucially - it also had radar. - England's Last War Against France: Fighting Vichy 1940â€“1942 by Colin Smith. It is a truism that the 1904 entente cordiale between Britain and France has been one of the most successful alliances in modern history, but, as this book eloquently proves, it entirely broke down for the vital two years between the French armistice with Germany in June 1940 and the German invasion of Vichy France in November 1942. In this excellent account of a woefully under-studied war within a war, Colin Smith has identified no fewer than fourteen occasions when Britons and Frenchmen fought each other during the Second World War. Subscribe or Sign In to read the full article. Literary R From a squalid exchange of bullets and bayonet thrusts in July 1940, between French naval officers and a Royal Navy boarding party in the cramped ward-room of a French submarine moored at Devonport, to Operation Torch in November 1942, when a 700-strong Anglo-American armada invaded North Africa, Britain and Vichy France were locked in a low-intensity war that was mainly played out away from their homelands. In the first phase of the Second World War, when Britain and France were allies, their naval officers co-operated in the Norway campaign and in the evacuation of British and French troops.