



Factsheet 5

Worthing Pier and World War II

When war broke out in 1939 the south coast became a fortress against possible invasion. In 1940 drastic steps were taken to hinder any enemy attack by blowing a 120-foot hole in to the Pier's decking near the South Pavilion.

A section of the pier was blown out by the military in 1940 to stop German ships unloading troops and supplies at the pier-head in the event of an invasion. Following the explosion large amounts of barbed wire were strung between the blocks and land mines were laid under parts of the shingle beach.



1940 – A section of the Pier was blown away by the military

Pill boxes, anti-aircraft guns and searchlight batteries were also strategically positioned around the town, RAF wireless and Radar stations were built on the outskirts at Poling, Highdown and High Salvington and most of the South Downs, north of the town, were used as a training area for the British and Canadian armies.

In 1942 when fears of an invasion had lessened the Pier became a recreation centre for troops complete with a canteen, library and billiard tables.



Entertaining WWII Allied Troops

Just after the war ended Worthing Pier had a lucky escape, when a large sea mine drifted between the girders. If the mine had touched the steel girders then it is very likely the Pier would have been destroyed. Following this luck escape the Borough Council put in a claim to the Government's War Damage Commission to repair the hole in the decking, and refurbish the Pier after years of military occupation and general neglect. The Pier reopened to the public in April 1949

