

“Declaration of War” in *Daily Mirror* August 4, 1914

The following is an article from The Daily Mirror, a national British newspaper published daily, on the British declaration of war against Germany.

Great Britain Declares War on Germany

Declaration last night after 'unsatisfactory reply' to British ultimatum that Belgium must be kept neutral.

The King's message to his navy - Government to take control of all railways. Admiral Jellicoe to be in supreme command of the Home Fleets.

Huge crowds cheer their majesties at palace - £100,000,000 voted in Commons in five minutes. German invasion of Belgium with airships

Great Britain is in a state of war with Germany. It was officially stated at the Foreign Office last night that Great Britain declared war against Germany at 7pm. The British Ambassador in Berlin has been handed his passport.

War was Germany's reply to our request that she should respect the neutrality of Belgium, whose territories we were bound in honour and by treaty obligations to maintain inviolate.

Speaking in a crowded and hushed House the Premier yesterday afternoon made the following statement: 'We have made a request to the German Government that we shall have a satisfactory assurance as to the Belgian neutrality before midnight tonight.'

The German reply to our request, officially stated last night, was unsatisfactory.

The King and His Navy

The King has addressed the following message to Admiral Sir John Jellicoe: 'At this grave moment in our national history I send to you and, through you, to the officers and men of the fleets, of which you have assumed command, the assurance of my confidence that under your direction they will revive and renew the old glories of the Royal Navy, and prove once again the sure shield of Britain and of her Empire in the hour of trial.'

The above message has been communicated to the senior naval officers on all stations outside of home waters.

It was reported yesterday evening that Germany had taken the first hostile step by destroying a British mine-layer.

At the present time Germany is in a state of war with: Great Britain, Russia, France and Belgium.

Germany tried to bribe us with peace to desert our friends and duty. But Great Britain has preferred the path of honour.

It would seem as if Germany, in her ambition to control the destiny of the whole of Europe, were ready to embark on any grandiose scheme of adventure, however precarious her chances.

So far as Great Britain is concerned, her attitude has always been plain, straightforward and perfectly intelligible. She was prepared to stand aside from the conflict that has now involved practically the whole of Europe.

But she insisted and had to insist on two things: these were that Belgium's neutrality should be respected; and that the German fleet should not bombard defenceless French towns.

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Chief of the Fleets

Sir John R Jellicoe has assumed the supreme command of the Home Fleets, with the acting rank of Admiral. Rear Admiral Charles E Madden has been appointed to be his chief of staff. Field Marshal Sir John French, the famous cavalry leader, has been appointed Inspector General to the Forces.

Mr Lloyd George subsequently announced in the House that the Government was engaged in preparing a scheme for the distribution of food, and hoped that it would be completed in the course of one or two days. The House unanimously passed in five minutes all outstanding votes, amounting to over £100,000,000.

An Order in Council has been issued declaring it expedient that Government should have control over the railroads of Great Britain.

Mr Asquith's Statement

In a strained silence in every part of the House of Commons yesterday, the Prime Minister made his momentous statement.

He explained how the King of the Belgians had appealed to England for diplomatic intervention on behalf of his country - Germany having demanded free passage for her troops through Belgium, promising to maintain the integrity and independence of the kingdom.

'Simultaneously,' continued Mr Asquith, 'we received from the Belgian Legation in London the following telegram from the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs: "The General Staff announce that territory has been violated at Verviers, near Aix-la-Chapelle. Subsequent information tends to show that a German force has penetrated still further into Belgian territory."

...we cannot regard this as in any sense a satisfactory communication...

'We also received this morning from the German Ambassador here a telegram sent to him from the German Foreign Secretary: "Please dispel any distrust that must exist on the part of the British

Government with regard to our intentions by repeating, most positively, the formal assurance that, even in case of armed conflict with Belgium, Germany will not, under any pretence whatever, annex Belgian territory. Please impress upon Sir Edward Grey that the German Army could not be exposed to a French attack across Belgium, which was planned according to absolutely unimpeachable information."

'I have,' continued Mr Asquith, 'to add this on behalf of the Government: we cannot regard this as in any sense a satisfactory communication.

'We have, in reply to it, repeated the request we made last week to the German Government that they should give us the same assurance with regard to Belgian neutrality as was given to us and to Belgium by France last week.

'We have asked that a reply to that request and a satisfactory answer to the telegram of this morning, which I have read to the House, should be given before midnight.'

Roars of Cheers for the King

The King and Queen, accompanied by the Prince of Wales and Princess Mary, were hailed with wild, enthusiastic cheers when they appeared at about eight o'clock last night on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, before which a record crowd had assembled.

Seeing the orderliness of the crowd, the police did not attempt to force the people back and went away.

A little later the police passed the word around that silence was necessary as the King was holding a meeting in the Palace, and except for a few spasmodic outbursts there was silence for a time.

Afterwards the cheering was renewed with increased vigour and soon after 11pm the King and Queen and Prince of Wales made a further appearance on the balcony and the crown once more sang the National Anthem, following this with hearty clapping and cheering.

After the departure of the royal party some minutes later many of the crowd dispersed. Several enthusiasts, however, stayed outside keeping up the demonstration by shouting and waving flags.

Why There is War

The following statement was issued from the Foreign Office last night: Owing to the summary rejection by the German Government of the request made by His Majesty's Government for assurances that the neutrality of Belgium would be respected, His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin has received his passport, and His Majesty's Government has declared to the German Government that a state of war exists between Great Britain and Germany as from 11pm on August 4.

Call for All Motorcyclists

The War Office announce that civilian medical practitioners desiring to serve at home or abroad as surgeons with the army should communicate with the Secretary, War Office.

Motorcyclists for service with the army are also required. Their pay will be 35s weekly, all found. A bounty of £10 will be paid to each man approved and a further £5 on discharge.

Men are required to enlist for one year, or as long as the war continues.

A certain number of foreman artificers, electricians, blacksmiths etc, are also required for service with the army.

Prince Albert at Sea

It is understood that the King yesterday received a telegram from his son Prince Albert, who is in the battleship Collingwood.

British Warship Reported Sunk by German Fleet

The alleged destruction of a British mine-layer was reported by the Press Association last night.

It is understood, says the agency, that the British Government has received intimation of the sinking of a British mine-layer by the German fleet.

Britain Commandeers Warships

The Admiralty last night officially stated that the Government had taken over the two battleships, one completed and the other shortly due for completion, which had been ordered in this country by the Turkish Government and the two destroyer leaders ordered by the Government of Chile.

The two battleships will receive the names *Agincourt* and *Erin*, and the destroyer leaders will be called *Faulkner* and *Broke*, after two famous naval officers.

Battle of Belgium

Germany has declared war on Belgium and invaded the country.

The Germans have entered Belgium, says an Exchange special message, at three places - Dolhain, Francorchamps, and Stavelot.

An engagement is reported before Fort Fleron, Liège, and Visé, says the Central News, has been captured by the Germans. (Liège, on the Meuse, is a provincial city and the centre of the Belgian coalfields. It exports firearms to every country in the world. Stavelot is 12 miles south-south east of Verviers. Francorchamps is two or three miles north of Stavelot. Visé, a town of 4,000 inhabitants, lies on the River Meuse, some 14 miles inside the Belgian frontier. It is about equidistant from Verviers and Maastricht.)

The Belgian Legation in London had informed Mr Asquith that Belgian territory had been violated at Verviers, near Aix-la-Chapelle, and that a German force had penetrated still further into Belgian territory.

Berlin, August 4: It is announced here that a portion of the garrison of Memel, on the east Prussian frontier, yesterday repulsed an advance party of the enemy's frontier guards. (Reuters)

Calm and United Home

The King has sent the following message to his Colonies: I desire to express to my people of the overseas dominions with what appreciation and pride I have received the messages from their

respective Governments during the last few days. These spontaneous assurances of their fullest support recall to me the generous, self-sacrificing help given by them in the past to the mother country. I shall be strengthened in the discharge of the great responsibility which rests upon me by the confident belief that in this time of trial my Empire will stand united, calm and resolute, trusting in God.

Berlin, August 4: A Bill was presented in the Reichstag today authorising the Imperial Chancellor to raise a credit of five milliards of marks - about 250 millions sterling - to meet non-recurring extraordinary expenditure.

Airmen's Bombs as Cause of War

The Daily Mirror's Paris correspondent states that before Baron von Schoen, the German Ambassador, left Paris he told Monsieur Viviani that Germany considered herself in a state of war with France, and the reason for it was because French airmen had dropped bombs on Nuremberg.

Paris, August 4: Shortly before 6pm yesterday evening a German aeroplane dropped three bombs in the town of Luneville. Some damage was done, but there were no casualties.

Paris, August 3: The French Government formally denies the report that French officers disguised as Ublans have penetrated into German territory.

Quiet German Embassy

Absolute quiet prevailed at the German Embassy at 11.15pm last night, though earlier in the evening there had been some booing.

The Ambassador sat in his room on the lower floor writing dispatches. The window was open and the room was fully lighted. At 11.30pm he finished and his butler came to close the window and put out the lights.

As the clock struck twelve the few people still outside the Embassy began to suggest that the Ambassador had departed.

In response to an enquiry by the Daily Mirror the butler smilingly replied, 'The people are mistaken - the Ambassador has gone to bed.'

The German Ambassador leaves today.

August 4, 12.13am: Reuters Agency is informed that it is now stated officially at the foreign office that it was Great Britain who declared war against Germany at 7pm this evening.