

VOICES OF WAR: WORLD WAR II DELAWARE  
RESOURCE SECTION

# HISTORY, TIMELINE AND IMAGES OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR



BY  
MARK GIANANTI



**DEDICATED TO THOSE WHO  
SERVED  
SACRIFICED  
AND  
SAVED THE WORLD**



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To the Teacher:

**Voices of War: World War II Delaware** has been initiated to preserve the memories of Delawareans that served at home and abroad both as civilians and in the armed services. Since the “Greatest Generation” is disappearing from our landscape it is essential that we use their stories to remember them and explain our past to future generations.

These stories and remembrances provide us all with glimpses of the past that are rarely, if ever, recorded in traditional texts. This pack is designed to integrate the oral histories into current high school curricula. The activities in this packet will help students to understand that the past was made by real people. Activities are provided that connects historic events to the recollections presented in the oral histories. Students are asked to listen to the recollections of Delaware veterans, examine primary resources, and interpret the past.

Furthermore, the primary source activities in this packet will enhance student skills and knowledge. The activities within this packet have been aligned with the Delaware Social Studies Standards. By examining documents, photographs, charts, and other historical evidence, students will be able to demonstrate deeper comprehension about the past. Additionally, the students will become active participants, discussing various interpretations of the past and the roles and contributions of diverse segments of the population in an era that defined the contemporary world.

The goal of this packet is to provide an easy to use resource that enables teachers to bring Delaware’s veterans into the classroom so that the future can have a deeper understanding, and appreciation, of the past.



HISTORY, TIMELINE AND IMAGES  
OF THE  
SECOND WORLD WAR

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### *The Seeds of the Second World War*

The First World War was, up to 1945, the most destructive war in history. Civilian and military casualties numbered in the millions, hundreds of thousands more suffered through the ravages of war, vast amounts of property and material were destroyed, huge debts were acquired by the warring powers, European society was shattered, and empires had been destroyed or overthrown. The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 was an attempt to end the First World War and create a means of ensuring world peace.

In January of 1919, allied leaders met in Paris to create a peace treaty that would bring an end to the First World War. Additionally, they would attempt to create an international organization that would prevent future conflicts between nations from erupting into war. While all allied nations were participants at the conference, the representatives of France, Great Britain, the United States, Italy, and Japan controlled the conference. As the representatives of the leading powers, Premier George Clemenceau of France, Prime Minister David Lloyd-George of Great Britain, and President Woodrow Wilson of the United States, made the final decisions regarding the terms of the peace treaty. The final proposal was based on the Allies' desire to make the Central Powers pay for the costs of the war and disable their ability to easily launch a war again.

Under the Treaty of Versailles, all German colonies became mandate territories of Great Britain and Japan. Germany gave up Alsace-Lorraine to France and the territories of Posen, West Prussian and sections of Upper Silesia to the newly formed nation of Poland. Additionally, Memel was ceded to Lithuania, Danzig became a "Free City", and the Saar region came under the control of the League of Nations for the next 15 years.

Germany was also forced to limit the strengths of their army and navy, and compulsory military service was abolished. The Rhineland became a demilitarized zone, and neither it nor any of Germany's western frontiers could be fortified. Additionally, Germany was forbidden to manufacture submarines, military aircraft, heavy artillery, tanks, and poison gas. Finally, Germany was required to pay an indemnity for the costs of the war to the allied nations.

Whereas Germany lost her overseas empire and some border territories, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was completely dismantled at the end of the war. The nation of Yugoslavia was created by joining Serbia with Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia. Poland acquired Galicia, Romania took over Bukovia and Transylvania, Czechoslovakia was created out of the regions of Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia, and Ruthenia, and Italy annexed the regions of Trentino, Istria, and the southern area of the Tyrol. The remaining regions of the empire were split to form the countries of Austria and Hungary.

In her treaty with the Allies, Turkey abandoned all claims to North Africa. Egypt, Sudan, Trans-Jordan, Palestine, and Iraq became mandates of Great Britain. Syria became a mandate of France. Additionally, Thrace and Smyrna became part of Greece. These terms led to a nationalist revolt in Turkey, which resulted in the overthrow of the sultan. Mustafa Kemal, as the new leader of Turkey, revised the treaty and had the territories of Smyrna and Thrace returned to Turkey.

Since Russia abandoned the war earlier with the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, it was not represented at the Paris Peace Conference. However, the defeat of Germany had allowed the Baltic peoples to create four new nations. The Allied delegates at Paris recognized the independence of these nations, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Finland.

The agreements and arrangements made by the Allied delegates in 1919 were designed to prevent the renewal of aggression by Germany. However, there were faults with the final treaty that undermined this goal. These faults included:

- Germany had been effectively disarmed. The Allied nations had only promised that they would dismantle their military forces at a future undetermined date. This lack of military downsizing provided "justification" for German rearmament in the 1930s.
- Reparation payments were crippling to the German economy. The economic hardships suffered by the country's citizens enabled extremist political parties to gain political power.

- The boundaries created by the Allies for the newly created states were designed to provide the Allied nations with a measure of security. Unfortunately, no methods were developed to oversee border disputes or population transfers which resulted in tensions and difficulties throughout the inter-war period.
- The mandate system adopted by the signatories at Paris allowed the victorious Allied nations to take over the German colonies. While the territories themselves were not hugely significant economically, the loss of territories gave extreme nationalists a rallying cry that would receive a positive response from German citizens.
- Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles laid the blame for the war directly on the Germans. The article stated that "...Germany accepts the responsibility...for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allies...have been subjected..." This was considered unjust and untrue by the German people and was another plank used by extremist groups in their efforts to gain power.
- Additionally, the Allies abandoned their responsibilities in enforcing the terms of the treaty. Gradually, Germany was able to rearm and reacquire those territories that had been taken away.

The results of the First World War on the Allies were mixed. The destruction of German military might on the continent brought a hope for a more peaceful world. The destruction wrought by the belligerents was such that the idealism that had been shown at the start of the war had been replaced by a sense of despondency.

The British were able to expand their empire through the acquisition of German and Turkish territories in the Middle East, Africa, and the Pacific. However, the benefits these territories provided the empire were overshadowed by the numbers of dead and wounded from the war, loss of markets in Europe, competition with the United States, an immense war debt, and a rise of nationalist sentiment in the colonial populations. These concerns would divert Britain's attention from the issues and events that led directly towards the Second World War.

The French regained lands lost during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. France also demanded that Germany pay a huge indemnity for the damages caused by the war. Additionally, the French government joined in a series of alliances with the nations formed from the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Belgium. However, France was burdened with a gigantic war debt; she had lost a significant percentage of her population, had an unstable political system, and would suffer through inflation and the devaluation of the franc. All of these issues would plague France during the inter-war period.

Italy, though a member of the victorious Allies, was not pleased with what came to her after the war. Economic difficulties further undermined the stability of the country. Three years after the First World War ended, Benito Mussolini had become the Prime Minister of Italy. Mussolini, the founder of fascism, was supported in his rise to power by nationalists, industrialists, ex-soldiers, and the unemployed. Once in power, Mussolini was granted emergency powers. He used these powers to enact censorship laws and eliminate political rivals and parties, thereby turning Italy into a totalitarian state. Opponents to Mussolini's regime either fled into exile or were imprisoned.

Russia also became a communist dictatorship following the Bolshevik takeover of the country in 1917 led by Lenin and Trotsky. Opponents to the Bolshevik takeover were imprisoned, exiled or executed. The private ownership of land was eliminated. All means of production and distribution such as farms, mines, factories and railroads were nationalized. The Greek Orthodox Church and aristocratic titles were abolished. The nation's capital was moved to Moscow and the country itself was renamed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. After Lenin's death, Stalin became the leader of the USSR. He launched the first of the Five-Year Plans that were created to industrialize the country and reorganize farming areas into huge collectives.

Following the end of the First World War the Weimar Republic had replaced imperial Germany. The country was riddled with armed political organizations. The Weimar Republic was never able to gain the widespread support essential for its continued existence. Radicals were demanding ever more far-reaching social and economic reform, while conservatives wanted the monarchy re-established. Additionally, radical nationalists wanted to correct what they saw as the injustices in the Treaty of Paris. The organization that

would eventually defeat all others and take over Germany was the National Socialist German Worker's Party or Nazi Party, under the leadership of Adolf Hitler.

Hitler became chancellor of Germany in 1933 and quickly turned Germany into a totalitarian state. All criticism of the Nazi regime was silenced through the enactment of laws designed to curtail individual liberties. Jews were targeted and identified as an inferior race. Nazi control was extended through all areas of German life. Industry, trade, agriculture, education, sports, and family life all were brought under Nazi control. Hitler also pushed for the rearmament of Germany and a repudiation of the Treaty of Versailles. After developing new weapons technology, Hitler announced that Germany would expand her military strength.

### ***Interwar Economic and Political Problems***

The reparation payments that Germany was required to pay as compensation for the damage done during the war had not been determined at the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. From 1919 until 1924, Germany and France argued over the final amount to be paid by Germany. French and Belgian troops went so far as to occupy Germany's industrial region, the Ruhr after Germany had defaulted on payments. In 1924, the Dawes Plan was adopted. Germany resumed making payments by using international loans granted for that purpose and the improvement of German industry. In 1929, the Young Plan was adopted. This plan gave a final figure for reparations of 27 billion dollars to be paid over 58 years. Additionally, the United States had loaned nearly 10 billion dollars to various nations during the war and expected these loans to be repaid. While there was no official link between the loans from the United States and the German reparations payments, it was understood by all nations that the American loans could not be repaid without money coming from Germany. Eventually, the payment system collapsed. The loss of markets, spiraling inflation, and the worldwide economic depression forced the cancellation of all debts and reparations payments.

The Great Depression, which began around 1929 and would continue until 1941, occurred due to the effects of the First World War and inherent problems within the economies of the industrialized nations of the world. First, the war had destroyed a great deal of property and industrial capability in the nations where most of the conflict was fought. Second, the costs of the war forced nations to increase taxes in an effort to acquire the funds to pay for the costs of the war. Third, the nations of the world were attempting to become economically sovereign. To that end they had enacted high tariffs and various trade restrictions and quotas. As economic troubles worsened political troubles followed. Those governments that were in power during the economic crises were blamed for real and imagined failures. As problems increased, governments changed. For example, the Hoover administration was replaced by Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal and Hitler and the Nazi party gained control of Germany.

The large-scale death and destruction caused by the First World War, as well as the futility of trench warfare, had spawned worldwide anti-war movements. In order to prevent future conflicts, the League of Nations was created. The role of the League was to foster cooperation between nations of the world, settle international disputes, and regulate arms production and reduction. While the idea of the League was a valid one, the League itself had no way of enforcing its wishes on member states. When disputes did arise, League representatives investigated and made recommendations but there was no power behind the recommendations. When Italy invaded Ethiopia, Japan invaded Manchuria, and Germany violated the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles, the League could condemn these actions but could not stop them from continuing.

Other actions were taken in an effort to eliminate war. Though ineffective, the actions nevertheless reflected popular opinion that war, as a national policy, would no longer be readily accepted. In 1921 the Permanent Court for International Justice or World Court, a permanent tribunal that based its decisions on international law, was created. The Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1927 was an international agreement whose signatories renounced the use of aggression as a part of international policy. The arms conferences carried out in the inter-war years developed from the view that the arms production was a significant cause of conflict. The Washington Conference of 1921-22 was the first effort to limit or reduce naval strengths. The



United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan agreed on tonnage limits, construction ratios, and a building moratorium on capital ships. Unfortunately, as aggressive governments came to power the belief that these arms limitation treaties would prevent war had been lost.

The peace that settled over the world in 1919 would, ultimately, not last. Within 20 years from the signing of the Treaty of Versailles the world would again be at war. National and international rivalries, the rise of aggressive, totalitarian regimes, the rearmament programs of various nations, and the ineffectiveness of the peace movements all contributed to the outbreak of war.

### ***Prelude to War***

Various international events preceded the outbreak of hostilities between France, Great Britain, and Germany. Used to mark the start of the Second World War, the most important of these incidents include the Japanese actions in Manchuria and China, the Italo-Ethiopian War, the Spanish Civil War, and the military and territorial expansion of Germany from 1933 to 1938.

Japanese actions in Asia were designed to provide Japan with the raw materials, resources, and markets that they felt were essential for economic security. With the European nations still reeling from the effects of the Great Depression, Japanese leaders saw their chance to expand into Manchuria and acquire the markets and raw materials essential for continued economic prosperity. The “Mukden Incident” provided Japanese militarists and nationalists with the opportunity to make demands on Manchuria and Nationalist China. On September 18, 1931, an explosion destroyed three feet of track of the South Manchurian Railroad near Mukden. Japanese military leaders quickly blamed Chinese nationalists for the incident and rushed troops to the area. These troops overwhelmed the Chinese forces and expanded Japanese control until all of Manchuria came under their control.

The conflict between China and Japan would continue to expand. Between 1931 and 1937, there were a series of events that made war between China and Japan a certainty. Eventually, in 1937, a clash between Japanese and Chinese forces at the Marco Polo Bridge in Beijing began the Sino-Japanese War. This conflict would eventually become the Asian and Pacific theaters of the Second World War.

In 1935, a clash on the border of Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland gave Mussolini the pretext he needed to launch an invasion against Ethiopia on October 3, 1935. Various nations offered to help the two nations settle their disputes peacefully, however Mussolini rejected all offers. The League of Nations responded by placing economic sanctions against Italy. These sanctions were ineffective since France and Great Britain were unwilling to antagonize Italy and risk war in Europe over Ethiopia. By May 5, 1935, the superior Italian forces had overwhelmed the ill-equipped Ethiopian army. Mussolini had gained territory, but had also created deeper divisions between the democracies and dictatorships of Europe. The disfavor shown to Mussolini by the western democracies forced Mussolini into a closer relationship with his supporters, including Hitler and Nazi Germany. This would mean that in the future Mussolini would be supportive of Hitler than the democracies of the west.

War came to Europe in 1936 with the start of the Spanish Civil War. The liberal, communist, and radical leftist groups were locked in a destructive three-year struggle against the army of General Francisco Franco, who was supported by monarchists, fascists, and conservative members of society. German and Italian forces were deployed in Spain in support of Franco’s Nationalist Forces while Stalin sent Soviet men and equipment to the Republican forces. France and Great Britain, eager to keep the conflict contained, agreed that non-intervention was in their best interests. Meanwhile, the German and Italian aid was instrumental in securing Franco’s victory in 1939. The results of the war were had far-reaching consequences, however. France and Great Britain became more firmly involved in rearmament programs. These programs, especially the British ones, would be instrumental in the defense of Great Britain in 1940. Hitler came to the conclusion that the western democracies would be willing to give him a free hand in Eastern Europe if the alternative was war in Western Europe.

When Hitler came to power in 1933, he inherited the results of secret weapons research and development plans that had been funded by the *Reichswehr*. From 1922 until the Nazi rise to power, the German military created and maintained secret training schools inside the Soviet Union. These bases were

used to develop weapons, tactics, and personnel development in the military areas that had been prohibited to Germany according to the Treaty of Versailles. It was the equipment and skills developed in these schools, and inherited by Hitler, that were the backbone of Germany's early diplomatic and military victories from 1933 to 1941.

Once Hitler came to power he embarked on a plan to build upon the work done in secret. War industries were given manpower and material priorities, used assembly line production techniques, and operated an increased number of shifts in order to complete as many weapons systems as possible. Additionally, many German organizations provided military training as part of their programs. This provided Hitler with a vast reserve of trained manpower in the event of hostilities.

The expanded German military was a weapon of last resort. Hitler announced the existence of his military with a great deal of propaganda and misinformation. In this way, he was able to make his military might seem stronger than it was in reality. This supposed strength, as well as a European view that the Treaty of Versailles was too harsh and needed to be revised allowed Hitler to openly display military strength as well as acquire territories that had been lost at the conclusion of the First World War.

These bloodless conquests provided Hitler with manpower, resources, and industrial potential that would be essential in his waging of war. In March 1938, indigenous Nazis and external agitators undermined the Austrian government. Hitler's demands that the Austrian Nazi Party become an active participant in the current Austrian government led to a crisis in between the two nations. The prime minister of the Austria left office and was replaced with one acceptable to Hitler. This reorganization of the Austrian Government led to the *Anschluss*, or union of Germany and Austria.

In September 1938, Hitler demanded that the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia be ceded to Germany. People of German ancestry who resisted Czech rule populated this region. France had signed a mutual assistance agreement with Czechoslovakia but, in the face of German threats, proved unwilling to go to war in order to protect Czech sovereignty. Without the support of France, and facing resistance towards the use of military force at home, Great Britain was forced to find a way to prevent the German demands and Sudeten agitators from causing a European war. The agreement that was reached between French, British, German, Italian, and Soviet delegates, called the *Munich Pact*, stated that the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia would become part of Germany. Within six months, Hitler threw this agreement away. Claiming the need for more *lebensraum*, or living space, German forces occupied the regions of Moravia, Bohemia, and Slovakia.

In the summer of 1939, Hitler focused his attention on Poland. The port city of Danzig had been separated from Germany after the First World War and placed under the protection of the League of Nations. Hitler, in his desire to destroy the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, was willing to risk war in order to reacquire territory that contained significant ethnic Germans. In 1939, he demanded the return Danzig to Germany and unhindered road rail routes across Polish territory to the city.

However, Hitler's breaking of the 1938 Munich Pact had forced France and Great Britain to come to believe that Hitler's diplomatic promises were worthless. France and Great Britain had therefore publicly stated that they would go to war in defense of Polish territory. Unable to diplomatically acquire what he wanted, Hitler created a Polish raid on a German radio station as a pretext for war with Poland. On September 1, 1939, German forces invaded Poland while German aircraft bombed military, industrial, and civilian targets. Two days later, on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, France and Great Britain declared war on Germany. World War II had begun.

### ***Nazi Germany Victorious***

The German invasion of Poland introduced the world to a new tactical doctrine, *Blitzkrieg*, or Lightning War, In this new, combined arms approach to combat, armored and mechanized infantry units were supported by tactical air strikes and self-propelled artillery. Developed in the interwar years, this school of warfare was the German answer to the question of how to avoid the static warfare that had characterized combat on the Western Front in the First World War. *Blitzkrieg* gave the German military battlefield superiority against which Poland could not resist.

As German forces drove deep into Polish territory and Polish cities faced relentless air attacks Poland was attacked by the Soviet Union on September 17. Forced to deploy troops to counter this invasion Polish forces were further weakened. Despite a heroic resistance, the last Polish forces capitulated on October 6, 1939.

### ***Hitler Directs His Armies West***

Between September 1939 and May of 1940, British, French, and German forces participated in the Phony War, or *Sitzkrieg*. During this time combat between the allies and Germans was limited to air raids and small infantry raids. Diplomatic maneuvering continued as Hitler tried unsuccessfully to negotiate a peace that recognized his control of Poland. In the face of this allied refusal to negotiate, Hitler ordered that his military begin planning offensive operations against the west.

In April of 1940, the German assault on the western democracies began with attacks on Norway and Denmark. Small groups of German forces landed along the coast of Norway at the same time as German airborne troops, *Fallschirmjäger*, landed on Norwegian airfields. The Norwegian troops resisted this invasion as British and French men and material were rushed to help the beleaguered nation. Allied victories, such as the one at Narvik, were short lived as the German invasion of France and the Low Countries on May 10 forced the allies to withdraw their troops in early June. With the removal of the Anglo-French forces, Norway was forced to surrender on June 7, 1940.

While German forces were fighting in Norway, the German invasion of France, Belgium, and the Netherlands was launched on May 10, 1940. The invasions of neutral Belgium and the Netherlands were adopted by the German High Command in order to avoid the formidable defenses of the Maginot Line. Moving through the Ardennes Forest, German forces flanked the French positions and quickly broke through the limited forces they faced in the region.

British forces that had entered Belgian territory in response to the German invasion narrowly escaped capture by retreating towards the English Channel. Realizing that France would soon be unable to defend herself and would be forced to capitulate, the British government organized a rescue flotilla of military, commercial, and personal ships and boats in an effort to rescue as many men as possible from France. In one of the greatest rescue attempts in military history, this flotilla managed to rescue nearly 340,000 British, French, and Belgian troops.

German forces then finished their conquest of France. With German forces already behind the Maginot Line (France's main network of defensive fortifications), the French were unable to stop the German military. Paris was surrendered on June 14, and on June 24, the new French government at Vichy accepted the German terms for peace. The terms that Germany imposed on the Vichy regime were harsh. Germany occupied 60 percent of France with France paying for the costs of the occupation. France would further supply war material to Germany.

Things looked well for Germany in the summer of 1940. Hitler had annexed or conquered Czechoslovakia, Austria, Poland, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and France. Of all of the countries that he had gone to war against in September 1939, only Great Britain and the Commonwealth countries were left. Hitler's domination of the European mainland meant, in Hitler's mind, that Great Britain should see reason and enter into negotiations with Germany. However, Great Britain, under the leadership of Winston Churchill, would never negotiate with Hitler.

Recognizing that the British leadership was unwilling to recognize the German conquests and end the war, Hitler ordered the planning for an invasion and conquest of the British Isles. Operation Sea Lion (*Sealöwe*) required German air superiority in order to guarantee German success while storming the British beaches. The *Luftwaffe* initially attacked British Channel convoys and Royal Air Force (RAF) airfields in order to draw British fighters into combat where the situations were definitely in the German favor. The RAF heroically defended Great Britain and inflicted severe losses on the *Luftwaffe* forcing them to adopt a different strategy to eliminate Great Britain from the war: bombing industrial and culturally significant cities. London, Liverpool, Southampton, Manchester, and Coventry were all extensively damaged. However, the British maintained their steadfast determination to "never surrender," and with the support of their allies,

the various resistance governments, and the aid provided by the United States through Lend Lease, were able to hold out against the German assaults on their homeland.

### ***The Axis in the Mediterranean***

Even though the British Isles were able to muster the forces necessary to stave off the German attacks, her overseas territories were at risk. Italy's entry into the war just before the French surrender had put British possessions in the Mediterranean at risk. Eager to show that Italy was just as significant militarily as Germany, and believing that Great Britain was about to collapse, Mussolini ordered Italian forces to invade Egypt from Libya. In order to support the attack on Egypt, Italian forces were also directed to invade Greece. The Italian invasions were quickly defeated. British troops drove off and counter-attacked into Libya while Greek troops forced the Italian army to retreat to Albania.

Watching the Italian military collapse, Hitler had no choice but to send military aid to his ally. In April of 1941, German troops invaded and overran Yugoslavia and Greece. Meanwhile, with the assistance of the Vichy government, Hitler was able to deploy men and materiel to North Africa. Under the command of Erwin Rommel, this *Deutsch Afrika Korps*, was destined to become legendary. In a series of campaigns, the Axis forces drove the British back into Egypt and threatened to capture the Suez Canal and the oil fields of Iraq. The British were able to hold on to their territory despite the threat of an Axis sponsored insurrection.

### ***The German Drive in the East***

In June of 1941, with the Italian situation in North Africa stabilized, the countries of Yugoslavia and Greece occupied, and the puppet states of Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania ready to provide support, Hitler launched his biggest invasion and greatest mistake of the war, *Operation Barbarossa*, the invasion of the Soviet Union. The German forces achieved complete surprise and devastated Soviet land and air units. Quickly overrunning huge amounts of land, the Germans reached and surrounded Leningrad in the north, on the outskirts of Moscow in the center, and the Caucasus in the south before the Soviet resistance and the onset of winter forced them to halt operations. With the support of "General Winter," the Soviets were able to launch limited counter-attacks.

### ***The War Becomes Global***

While the European conflict had become ever larger, the Japanese were engaged in their battle for the control of China. The United States, hindered initially by isolationist sentiment, could not openly provide military support for any of the belligerent nations. Eventually, President Roosevelt was able to convince the American public and congress that national defense was more important than neutrality. Laws were enacted that allowed those nations with the means to purchase and ship war material to do so. While the laws applied to all nations, Great Britain was the nation most able to take advantage of the change in American policy.

By late 1940, American public opinion supported all possible aid to Great Britain short of the United States going to war. In September of 1940, the United States gave 50 First World War era destroyers to the Royal Navy in exchange for air and naval bases on British territories in the Western Hemisphere. In March of 1941, Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act, which authorized the President to lend, lease, or exchange war material to those nations deemed essential for American national defense. The passage of this law made the United States the arsenal of democracy. In addition to providing equipment, the United States Navy extended their neutrality patrols further into the Atlantic. This led to increased conflict with German submarines.

During this period, the United States drifted closer to war with Germany and Japan. Following the collapse and surrender of France, Japan had occupied French Indochina. Japanese expansion was seen as a threat to U.S. national security. The fact that the colonial powers of France and the Netherlands were occupied by Germany, and Great Britain was dedicated to defeating Germany and had few if any supplies to spare for actions in Asia, meant that the United States would have to find some way to restrain Japanese expansionist attempts.

The United States placed an embargo on exports to Japan. The items included scrap metal and oil, two items that were essential to Japanese economic and military growth. Deciding that they could not allow the United States to deflect them from their ultimate goals, the Japanese government decided to attack the United States. On December 7, 1941, Japanese naval aircraft launched a surprise attack on the United States Army and Navy installations at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Other attacks were launched against United States and British possessions throughout Asia and the Pacific. With the United States' still coming to grips with the devastation following the Japanese attack, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States. Congress quickly granted to President Roosevelt full war powers while organizing the full industrial potential of the United States. At this point, the war had truly become a world war.

### ***The Pinnacle of Axis Power***

The late 1941 through early 1942 the Axis nations were at the pinnacle of their power. The Allied merchant ships were being sunk in record numbers by "wolf packs" of German U-boats in the Atlantic, the U.S. Navy was still reeling from the attack on Pearl Harbor, saw devastation unleashed on the US merchant fleet, vast areas of the Soviet Union were under German control, while German forces were preparing to take Egypt and the Suez Canal. Additionally, in 6 weeks of operations, the Japanese had captured Guam, Wake Is., the Philippines, Malaya, Netherlands East Indies, Hong Kong, Singapore, and threatened Australia and New Zealand. In the situation facing the Allied leadership, it was quite possible that German and Japanese forces would join forces in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean areas.

### ***The Tide Turns***

However, the tide was beginning to turn against Germany, Japan, Italy, and their client states. Japanese naval forces were unable to complete their planned operation against New Guinea after their defeat during the Battle of the Coral Sea. While U.S. Naval losses were heavy, they nevertheless prevented the Japanese from cutting off Allied supplies being shipped to Australia. The Japanese Navy then attempted to capture the U.S. base at Midway Atoll. This battle marked the high point of Japanese expansion in the Pacific. Japanese losses were such that they never fully recovered. In the summer of 1942, U.S. landed forces in the Solomon Islands on Guadalcanal. This first invasion in the Pacific theater by the Allies was the start of the island-hopping campaign that acquired bases that allowed Allied forces to launch air assaults on mainland Japan. In addition to these military setbacks, Japanese losses in men and material could never be recovered while the industrial might of the United States was beginning to make itself felt.

In North Africa, British forces stopped the German advance on the Suez Canal at the Battle of El Alamein. Quickly following up their victory with a counter attack, the British troops drove the Axis armies back into Libya and, eventually, Tunisia. Allied leaders agreed that a second front was essential to draw German resources away from Russia. Deciding that an invasion of Europe was not possible in 1942, they decided to invade Vichy territory in French North Africa. In November of 1942, American and British forces landed in Morocco and Algeria. German troops were rushed to the battlefield but were overwhelmed by Anglo-American attacks from the east and west. All Axis resistance ended with a general capitulation in May of 1943.

In Russia, the 1942 German offensive was stopped on the banks of the Volga River in the city of Stalingrad. By the winter of 1943, the German forces inside Stalingrad had been captured or destroyed and the Russians had recaptured significant amounts of territory lost to the Germans in 1941-42. The loss of the German 6<sup>th</sup> Army at Stalingrad and the resulting hole in their lines devastated the German position on the Eastern Front. With the losses in North Africa and Russia, Germany had taken losses that it could not sustain. Forced to fight on two fronts, Germany was slowly being defeated by the industrial potential of the United States and the Soviet Union.

The British and American Air Forces had coordinated a bombing campaign that, they hoped, would speed up the German collapse. The American bombers would attack German industrial targets by day while the British would attack at night. This "round-the-clock" bombing campaign rained destruction down on the country, people, and infrastructure of Germany.

Once the Allies gained control of North Africa, the decision was made to attack Sicily as a first step towards knocking Italy out of the war. In July of 1943, Anglo-American forces launched an airborne and seaborne invasion of the island. While the Allies quickly gained control of the beaches, Mussolini was overthrown, jailed, and replaced as head of state by Marshall Pietro Badoglio. Following the defeat of Axis forces on Sicily, Allied forces landed on the southern coast of Italy. The Badoglio government quickly agreed to an armistice and joined the Allied nations fighting Germany. However, German forces had occupied northern and central Italy thereby insuring that the Italian campaign would continue and it was not until June of 1944 that Allied forces were able to enter Rome.

While Allied forces were being driven out of North Africa, Sicily, and Italy, men and equipment were assembled for an invasion of Western Europe. On June 6, 1944, the Allied invasion was launched. Airborne and seaborne troops crossed the English Channel and landed in Normandy, France. German forces skillfully defended against Allied attacks in the *bocage*, or hedgerow country. After weeks of heavy fighting, the Allies were finally able to break out of Normandy and quickly race across France. As the Germans rushed troops to defend against the Allied breakout, the amount of material available to the Allied armies made itself felt with an Allied invasion of Southern France. Allied forces quickly seized vital ports, and began to advance northward. Everywhere within France German forces were outnumbered, overwhelmed, and retreating.

While the Anglo-American forces were driving towards the frontier of Western Germany, Soviet forces were closing in on Germany's eastern territories. After clearing Russian soil of German invaders, Soviet forces entered Finland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Poland.

In the fall of 1944, Anglo-American forces had begun operations along the western fortified zone of German territory with an eye towards conquering the industrialized Ruhr Saar regions. Unable to recognize or accept that defeat was inevitable, Hitler ordered one last offensive in the west. Gathering the remaining reserves of men, machines, and fuel, the Germans launched desperate assault into Belgium. Initial successes were not enough to offset the material advantages that the Allied armies had over the German forces. Allied forces ground down the German assault and soon the "Battle of the Bulge" ended in a German defeat. With this defeat, few German forces could stand up to the Allied armies as they swept through Germany. By March 1945, Allied armies had crossed the Rhine and raced through western Germany. At the same time, Soviet forces had driven through Poland and crossed the eastern German frontier on their way to Berlin.

Pressured from the west by the quickly moving British and American armies and the east by the massed Soviet juggernaut, Hitler's "thousand year Reich" collapsed. The Allied armies quickly overran German cities. American and British armies captured the major cities in the west while the Soviets surrounded and assaulted Berlin. On May 1, 1945, German radio reported that Hitler had died in the fighting in Berlin. In reality, he and his long-time mistress, Eva Braun, had committed suicide. On May 7, 1945, the German High Command surrendered unconditionally to the Allied forces. The war in Europe was over, and V-E Day, or Victory in Europe Day, was declared.

### ***The End of Imperial Japan***

Prior to V-E Day, the majority of Allied military might had been directed towards the defeat of Germany. This had meant that progress in the Pacific had been rapid. In early 1943, American forces launched campaigns in the Solomon Islands that had ended the Japanese threat against Australia. In late 1943, the Gilbert Islands were taken. In early 1944, the Marshall and Caroline Islands were assaulted and taken by Allied forces. In mid-1944, operations in the Marianas resulted in bases that could be used to launch long-range bombers against mainland Japan. Also, Guam, the first American territory lost in the war, was retaken.

In the fall of 1944, American forces in the western Pacific, launched an invasion of the Philippines. Japanese naval forces attempted to disrupt the American landings in Leyte Gulf. These forces were defeated in the Battle of Leyte Gulf by U.S. naval forces. Early in 1945, U.S. forces invaded Luzon, the main island in the Philippines, and fought their way into Manila. The fighting would continue for months, but the pledge that General MacArthur had made in 1941, that he would return, had been fulfilled.

With the capture of Saipan, Tinian, and Guam, the Japanese home islands came in range of America's heavy strategic bomber, the B-29 Superfortress. These bombers carried out high altitude, long-range attacks on Japanese urban and industrial centers. However, the need to augment the heavy bombers with medium bombers and fighter escorts meant that islands closer to Japan would have to be taken. In February 1945, the U.S. Marines invaded Iwo Jima, an island in the Volcano Islands chain. In April 1945, U.S. forces invaded Okinawa, part of the Ryuku Islands and the first pre-war Japanese territory to be fought over. Losses in both campaigns were heavy, however the goal of bringing more of Japan into range of American air power had been achieved.

While they had been trying to stem the tide of Allied advances across the Pacific, Japanese forces had also been trying to defeat China. For years, Japanese forces had engaged in a series of campaigns that had inflicted severe losses on China's military, but had never cracked China's resistance to Japan. This theater of operations, known as the China-Burma-India Theater, became a weight around the neck of Japan's military. Unable to knock China out of the war, they were faced with increasingly powerful allied armies that drove off Japanese invasions of India, and in-turn, invaded Burma.

With the reverses in Asia and the Pacific, Japan's defeat was assured. When Germany surrendered the Allied victory against Japan occurred that much quicker. Men, ships, and planes that had been earmarked for Europe were transferred to Asia and the Pacific. As Allied military commanders planned for an invasion of Japan, *Operation Olympic*, Allied political leaders called on Japan to surrender unconditionally before even more damaging attacks were unleashed. The Japanese leaders, unwilling to surrender unconditionally, prepared their population to fight to the allied invaders and defend their homeland no matter what the cost.

Recognizing that an Allied invasion of Japan could cost as many as one million casualties, and facing significant war weariness at home, President Harry S. Truman, ordered the deployment and use of the Atomic bomb on Japan. This weapon, developed in secret as the *Manhattan Project*, was seen as the way to end the war without the staggering Allied casualties estimated for the invasion of Japan.

On August 6, 1945, the B-29 Superfortress, *Enola Gay*, arrived above the Japanese city of Hiroshima and dropped the first nuclear weapon used in combat. The bomb virtually destroyed the city and caused thousands of casualties. Three days later, on August 9, another B-29, *Bock's Car*, dropped a second atomic bomb, this time on the city of Nagasaki. Stunned by the destructive power of these bombs, and the declaration of war by the Soviet Union on Japan, the Japanese leadership sued for peace. The peace treaty between the Empire of Japan and the victorious Allies was signed on September 2, 1945 aboard the battleship *USS Missouri*. Proclaimed as V-J Day, or Victory over Japan Day, it was the official end to the Second World War.

## TIMELINE OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

1917	October	<b>Russian Revolution:</b> Financial help from Imperial Germany is instrumental in helping Lenin and the Bolsheviks overthrow Czar Nicholas II and his government.
1918	January 8	<b>Fourteen Points:</b> President Wilson presents his Fourteen Points to a joint session of Congress. This speech presents Wilson's plan for the foundation of an equitable and enduring peace. The Fourteen Points consisted of certain fundamental principles, such as freedom of the seas, renunciation of secret treaties, geographic arrangements carried out through the implementation of national/ethnic self-determination, and an international League of Nations that would enforce the peace.
	March 3	<b>Treaty of Brest-Litovsk:</b> This treaty ends the war between the Central Powers and Russia is signed. The Western Allies consider Russia's action as one of abandonment. Germany is now able to shift large numbers of troops to the Western Front.
	November 11	<b>Armistice:</b> The armistice ending the First World War is signed at Marshall Foch's headquarters in Compiègne. The conditions for final peace are to be determined by the Allies.
1919	January	The Free Workers' Committee for a Fair Peace is renamed German Workers Party ( <i>Deutsche Arbeiterpartei</i> (DAP)).
	January 18	The peace conference to formally end the Great War opens in Versailles, France.
	March 23	<b>Fascism:</b> Benito Mussolini, a former revolutionary and socialist leader develops Fascism in Milan, Italy. Fascist ideology is a mixture of liberal and conservative ideas that stressed the need for a strong leader with intense extreme nationalism.
	April 29	The delegates to the Versailles peace conference accept the constitution of the League of Nations. It is further agreed that the constitution will be included in the final treaty as Articles 1 through 26.
		<b>Treaty of Versailles:</b> The Versailles Treaty is signed by the combatant nations of the First World War. The treaty forced Germany and the other Central Powers to take responsibility for the opening of hostilities (the War Guilt Clause), to surrender overseas territories, reduce the size of their armed forces, and pay reparations for the cost of the war. The total reparation amount is to be determined by an Allied committee.
	June 28	An international military committee oversaw German disarmament until 1927. The conditions imposed were that Germany: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• was required to end conscription</li> <li>• was prohibited from having artillery, armor, or military aircraft</li> <li>• could maintain an army of 1 only 100,000 men</li> <li>• could maintain a drastically reduced navy</li> </ul>
	August 11	The Weimar Constitution is announced. Germany becomes known as the Weimar Republic
	September 11	Adolf Hitler sent as a Vertrauensmann (government informant) to infiltrate the German Worker's Party.



1920	November 15	<b>The League of Nations:</b> The League of Nations has its inaugural session. Original member states are: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, El Salvador, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Italy, Japan, Liberia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Persia, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, Siam, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, South Africa, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia
	February 20	<b>Nazi Party:</b> The DAP changes its name to the National Socialist German Workers' Party. The name Nazi comes from the German spelling of the party name, <i>National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei</i> , (NSDAP). By using violent paramilitary organizations, the Nazi party is able to suppress political rivals. The two groups that are instrumental in the Nazi rise to power are the SA ( <i>Sturmabteilung</i> ) and the SS ( <i>Schutzstaffel</i> ).
	February 24	The NSDAP holds its first public meeting.
1921	January 24	<b>Reparations:</b> The Allied Reparations Committee, without German participation, decides that Germany will pay 269 billion Gold marks for 42 years, 12% of the value of German exports (approximately 1 to 2 Billion Gold marks a year). Interest on the unpaid reparation debt was set at 6%. The German war debt is not included in the decisions made by the reparations committee. German war expenses from the First World War amount to approximately 150 Billion Gold marks. The money used by the German government during the war was collected through the sale of war bonds and needs to be repaid with interest by Germany to the holders of the bonds.
	July 29	Adolf Hitler becomes the leader of the Nazi Party and assumes the title of <i>Fuehrer</i> .
1922	April 16	<b>Treaty of Rapallo:</b> This treaty reopens diplomatic and economic relations between Germany and the Soviet Union who further agree that all questions or concerns that have remain from the First World War are settled. With this, the Soviet Union renounces any claims that it could impose on Germany due to the Versailles Treaty.
	June	Hyperinflation begins to affect Germany. 272 Reichsmarks (RM) are equal to one United States' dollar (USD).
	October 28	<b>March on Rome:</b> In Italy, the nationalist movement under Mussolini gained power. Italy had been disappointed with her gains following the First World War. Additionally, severe economic problems had provided Mussolini with a great number of supporters when he marched on Rome and demanded control of the government. Mussolini takes the title <i>Il Duce</i> , or the Leader.
	November 12, 1922	<b>Washington Naval Conference:</b> The start of International Conference on Naval Limitation successfully reduces the size of the United States', British, Japanese, French, and Italian fleets. The five nations agree on a tonnage-ratio of 5:5:3:1.75:1.75. They further pledge not to build any new capital ships as well as limit the types and numbers of ships they do build.
1923	September	German inflation continues to rocket out of control. At this time, 60,000,000 RM are equal to 1 USD.
	October	Inflation hits a peak of 40 Billion RM is equal to 1 USD.

	November 8	<b>Beer Hall Putsch:</b> The Nazi attempt to take control of Bavaria is stopped by police and <i>Reichswehr</i> forces. Hitler is arrested and sentenced to serve nine months in Landsberg prison. While incarcerated he writes <i>Mein Kampf</i> , or My Struggle. This manifesto outlines Hitler's ideas, goals, and future methods. Hitler will be released on December 20, 1924.
1925	December 1	<b>Locarno Treaties:</b> These seven international agreements sought to guarantee the territorial provisions of the Versailles Treaty. The treaties included a mutual guarantees of the French-German and the Belgian-German borders (signed by Germany, France, Belgium, with Great Britain and Italy as guarantors); arbitration treaties between Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, and France; and a treaty for mutual assistance in case of attack by Germany between France, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.
1926	September 8	Germany becomes a member of the League of Nations.
1927	January 31	End of the Inter-Allied Commission of Military Control in Germany: Issues concerning German arms are now under the jurisdiction of the League of Nations.
1928	August 27	<b>Kellogg-Briand Pact:</b> All signatories agreed to renounce war as an instrument of national policy. The signatories of the treaty were: Australia, Belgium, Dominion of Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Irish Free State, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, and the Union of South Africa
1929	February 9	<b>Litvinov Protocol:</b> This is an agreement between the nations of Eastern Europe, Soviet Union, Poland, Romania, Estonia, and Latvia, where each nation renounces the use of war to achieve its aims.
	October 25	<b>Black Friday</b> on the New York stock exchange intensifies the downward economic conditions in the rest of the world. The steadily worsening world economic situation increases the appeal of militaristic and nationalistic political parties.
1931	September 19	<b>Mukden Incident:</b> Self-inflicted "sabotage" of the South Manchurian Railway was the pretext for Japanese expansion into Manchuria. Members of Japan's Kwangtung Army dynamited Three feet of track. Justifying their aggressive actions by claiming that their operations were "measures of legitimate self-defense" this was in reality an operation aimed at securing natural resources for Japan as well as a sound strategic position essential in any future conflict with the Soviet Union. The Sino-Japanese conflict would grow as Japanese forces continued to expand Japanese influence throughout Manchuria.
	November 7	<b>Chinese Communists:</b> Mao Tse-tung announces the creation of the Chinese Soviet Republic in southern Kiangsi Province.
1932	January 9	Germany defaults on its reparation payments.
	February 18	<b>Manchukuo:</b> A committee composed of prominent Chinese motivated by Japanese pressure and self-interest, announced the creation of an independent Manchurian state known as Manchukuo.
	April 15	The Chinese Soviet Republic declares war on Japan. This action has no political or military effect on the conflict but provides many with the view that the Communists were more capable than the official Chinese government in Nanking to defend the nation.

**May 15** Japanese Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai is assassinated by members of an extremist organization called the Young Officers of the Army and Navy. Japan's new Prime Minister is Admiral Viscount Makoto Saito. Saito immediately forms a military dominated cabinet effectively ending democracy in Japan.

**July 31** The Nazi Party gains 38% of the Reichstag seats while the Communist Party gains nearly 15% of the seats. The two strongest enemies of the Weimar Republic now have a majority of seats in the Reichstag.

**November 8** Franklin Delano Roosevelt is elected President of the United States.

## 1933

**January 30** Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany. He gains office through the support of political and business leaders that feel they can control him.

**February 4** Hitler issues his "For the Protection of the German People" decree that provides the government with the power to ban political meetings and suppress any material that it deems is detrimental to the public interest.

**February 17** Hitler orders the German police to cooperate with the SS and SA in operations against political opponents.

**February 24** In a raid by German police on Communist Party headquarters, documents are "discovered" that detail plans for a violent overthrow of the government.

**February 27** **Reichstag Fire:** The Communists are blamed and a violent attack on their political opponents is unleashed by the Nazis.

**February 28** President Hindenburg signs into law an emergency decree suspending free speech, free press, and the rights of assembly and privacy. This effectively ends the Weimar Republic.

**March 23** **Enabling Act:** Under this act, Hitler is granted dictatorial powers by the Reichstag.

**March 27** Japan announces its intention to leave the League of Nations due to the League's censure of Japanese actions in China.

**April 7** The Aryan Civil Service Law was passed. This law barred anyone with a Jewish grandparent from having public occupations.

**May 17** Hitler demands that the Treaty of Versailles be revised in order to enable Germany to rearm to a level comparable with her neighbors.

**July 14** The Nazi Party becomes the only legal political party in Germany.

**September 3** Hitler renounces war as an instrument of national policy except in the case of Bolshevism.

**October 14** Germany announces its intention to leave the League of Nations.

## 1934

**June 30** **Night of the Long Knives:** Hitler launches a purge of his enemies in and out of the Nazi party.

**July 30** Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin announces to Parliament that the British policy on disarmament was being abandoned. He further stated that the Royal Air Force would be expanded to equal any other nations within range of the British Isles.

**August 2** Hitler becomes President of Germany following Hindenburg's death. Upon assuming control, Hitler ordered that the military swear a personal oath of allegiance to Hitler.

**December 29** Japan announced its decision not to abide by the provisions of the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty. This treaty had set relative size and tonnage ratios for the fleets of the United States, Great Britain, Japan, Italy, and France.

## 1935

**January 13** In a plebiscite to determine national control of the Saar over 90% vote to join Germany with 10% voting to join France. The League formally hands over the territory to Germany on January 17.

**March 16** Hitler formally renounces the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles that relate to German military strength. He announces plans to create an army of 550,000 men. Hitler justifies his actions by stating that many European nations had vowed to disarm but had instead increased their military strengths.

**March 23** Showing a deeper concern with Germany, the Soviet Union sells the Chinese Eastern Railway to Manchukuo, thereby abandoning Manchuria to the Japanese. Additionally, articles begin to appear in the Soviet newspaper *Pravda* denouncing Hitler and his imperialistic actions.

**June 18** Great Britain and Germany sign a naval agreement that allows Germany to build a fleet equal to 35% of Britain's surface fleet and 45% of its submarine fleet. This is the first overt violation of the Treaty of Versailles by a major European power.

**August 31** The United States' Neutrality Act is signed into law. This law prohibited the export of all implements of war to all belligerent countries.

**September 15** Germany adopts the brutal anti-Jewish policies listed by the Nürnberg Laws. German citizenship rights were significantly curtailed and relations between Aryans and Jews were restricted.

The swastika was made an official part of the German national flag.

**October 3** **The Italian – Ethiopian War:** Italy invades Ethiopia.

**November 18** The League of Nations economic and arms sanctions against Italy (approved by the League on October 11) went into effect. However, exceptions to the embargo included items such as oil. The embargo was ineffectual in halting Italian aggression.

**December 23** Attacking Italian forces employ mustard gas against Ethiopian defenders along the Takkaze River.

## 1936

**February 10** **Gestapo:** A law was enacted which named the Gestapo (*Gebeime Staatspolizei* or Secret State Police) a "Supreme Reich Agency." This gave the Gestapo, and its head, Heinrich Himmler, absolute control of German internal security issues.

**March 7** **Occupation of the Rhineland:** German troops occupy the Rhineland. The Treaty of Versailles had demilitarized this area. Afraid that France and Britain would go to war, Hitler assured the generals that they would do nothing. The lack of a serious response by the Anglo-French leadership give Hitler prestige in the eyes of his people. It also make Hitler more aggressive in his dealings with the western democracies.

**May 5** Italian troops under the command of Marshall Pietro Badoglio enter Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, ending the Italian–Ethiopian War. As had the Japanese actions in Manchuria, Italian actions in Ethiopia had shown the impotence of the League of Nations.

**July 17** **Spanish Civil War:** General Francisco Franco leads forces from Spanish Morocco in an uprising against the government of Spain. Liberal forces or "Loyalists" were recruited from Republicans, Socialists, and Communists. Conservative forces or "Nationalists" support

Franco.

- July 30** Italian forces begin operations in support of Nationalist forces in Spain.
- August 15** Japanese Premier Hirota outlines Japanese plans and goals to the emperor. These included expansion into the East Indies, elimination of white rule in Asia, independence of the Philippines, and continued peaceful relations with the United States.
- October 25** **Rome-Berlin Axis:** Germany and Italy sign an agreement that aligns the foreign policies of the two countries. In the agreement, Germany recognized Italy's annexation of Ethiopia and Italy recognizes Germany's interests in Austria.
- October 29** Soviet land and air forces, supporting Spanish Loyalists, make their appearance in the Spanish Civil War.
- November 1** Franklin Roosevelt is elected to his second term as president of the United States.
- November 6** **Condor Legion:** The German "Condor Legion" begins operations supporting Nationalist operations in Spain. Consisting of nearly 100 aircraft, over 30 tanks, and 2 battleships it was the most powerful foreign force engaged in the conflict. This force will test out combat theories and tactics that will be used by German forces at the start of the Second World War.
- November 25** **Anti-Comintern Pact:** Germany and Japan are the original signatories of the pact. It was designed to block Communist expansion but included a clause that prevented either party from making an agreement with the Soviet Union. Additionally, if either nation went to war against the Soviet Union, joint actions would be discussed.
- December 10** King Edward VIII of Great Britain abdicates the throne in order to marry American divorcee Wallis Simpson. George VI succeeds him.

## 1937

- January 27** Chinese Communists and Nationalists agree to cease fighting between themselves in an effort to combine their forces against the Japanese.
- January 30** Hitler repudiates the War Guilt Clause of the Treaty of Versailles.
- May 28** Neville Chamberlain becomes Prime Minister of Great Britain.
- June 11** **Marco Polo Bridge:** Japanese troops demand the right to search a Peking suburb after claiming that a Japanese soldier had been killed. Japanese forces responded to Chinese refusals to allow them entry into the area with a full-scale infantry assault supported by artillery. Soon named the "Marco Polo Bridge Incident," it was the point at which the Sino-Japanese War, which lasted until 1945, would begin.
- November 6** Italy joins the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany and Japan.
- November 20** Chiang Kai-shek establishes a new Chinese capital at Chungking.
- December 11** Italy resigns from the League of Nations.
- December 12** **USS *Panay*:** Japanese aircraft attack the United States Naval vessel Panay. The Japanese claim the attack was a mistake and pay over 2 million dollars in damages to the United States' government. (After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese government awarded the officer who led the attack on the Panay a medal.)

	<b>December 13</b>	<b>Rape of Nanking:</b> Japanese troops occupy the Chinese city of Nanking. In what became known as “The Rape of Nanking,” in two weeks, Japanese forces destroyed nearly one third of the city, killed over 200,000 civilians, and raped and murdered more than 20,000 women.
	<b>December 22</b>	The British cabinet shifts aircraft production from bombers to fighters. This change will be instrumental in making the Royal Air Force strong enough to defeat the <i>Luftwaffe</i> during the Battle of Britain.
<b>1938</b>	<b>February 4</b>	Hitler assumes direct control of the German military under the newly formed High Command of the Armed Forces ( <i>Oberkommando der Wehrmacht</i> (OKW)).  Hitler, in a speech before the Reichstag, demanded that those Germans living in Austria and the Sudetenland be given the right to determine their nationality.
	<b>February 20</b>	Hitler recognizes the state of Manchukuo.  British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden resigns in protest of Prime Ministers policy of appeasement towards Hitler.
	<b>March 12</b>	<b>Anschluss:</b> The reunification of Germany and Austria takes place. German troops enter Austria at dawn and are welcomed by the majority of the population. The British and French governments protest the German actions but do not back up their protests with force. The next day the Austrian government would declare that it was a province of the German Reich and allow its military forces to be absorbed into the <i>Wehrmacht</i> .
	<b>April 10</b>	Eduoard Daladier, a proponent of appeasement becomes Prime Minister of France.
	<b>July 11</b>	Soviet forces defeated Japanese forces in a major engagement at the junction of the Manchurian, Siberian, and Korean borders.
	<b>September 25</b>	Hitler announces that once the Sudeten issue had been settled he would have no more territorial demands in Europe.  <b>The Munich Conference:</b> Representatives for Germany, Italy, Great Britain, and France meet during the afternoon and evening, with no representatives from Czechoslovakia present. The final agreement, written by the German Foreign Office and agreed to by the other powers, secured for Hitler virtually everything that he had demanded.  1. Germany took possession of approximately 10,000 square miles of Czech territory with a population of more than 3 million people  2. The Germans occupied Czech frontier fortresses.  3. Germany acquired the rights to a route across Moravia to Vienna, and to a canal connecting the Oder and Danube Rivers.  4. The Czechoslovak nation became a satellite of the Reich.  5. Polish forces occupied Teschen, which comprised nearly 400 square miles of territory and approximately 240,000 inhabitants.  6. Hungary took a strip of southern Slovakia and Ruthenia, which added approximately 5,000 square miles and close to 1 million people.  After this public opinion turns against appeasement. This will be the last time that the democracies of Europe give in to Hitler’s demands.
	<b>October 24</b>	<b>Danzig and the Polish Corridor:</b> German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop states that

German control of Danzig as well as rail and road connections across the Polish Corridor in order to link Germany and East Prussia are vital if Germany and Poland are to resolve their differences. (German pressure over this issue will continue until September 1, 1939, when German forces invade Poland.)

November 9

**Kristallnacht:** In retaliation for the murder of Ernst von Rath on November 7, the Nazi leadership launched a terror campaign against Germany's Jewish population.

1939

March 10

The remainder of Czechoslovakia is occupied by Germany.

March 28

The Spanish Civil War ends when Madrid surrenders to Franco.

March 31

Britain and France guarantee their unqualified support if Poland's independence is threatened.

April 1

The United States recognizes the Franco regime as the legitimate government of Spain.

April 7

**Italian-Albanian War:** Italian forces invade Albania. Italy annexes Albania six days later.

Spain joins the Anti-Comintern Pact

May 3

V. M. Molotov becomes the Soviet foreign Minister, replacing M. M. Litvinov. Molotov's appointment is linked to Stalin's decision to make a pact with Hitler.

May 19

Japanese and Soviet forces engage in fierce combat along the Khalka River between Outer Mongolia and Manchuria. The defeat suffered by the Japanese would convince them that they would be unable to expand into Soviet territory and redirect the Army's attention to operations in Asia and the Pacific.

May 22

**Pact of Steel:** This is the first military alliance between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Each country pledges to come to the aid of the other in the event of war.

August 23

**Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact:** Germany and the Soviet Union sign a secret protocol that divides Europe into spheres of influence. Finland, Estonia, and Latvia are in the Soviet sphere of influence while Lithuania went to Germany. Poland was to be divided along the Narew, Vistula, and San Rivers.

August 25

Great Britain guarantees Poland's security in the event of a German declaration of war.

August 31

SS units staged incidents along the border including a phony Polish raid on a German radio station at Gleiwitz.

September 1

**Invasion of Poland:** World War Two in Europe begins with the German attack on Poland. The Germans planned to fight a quick war that would be concluded before France or Britain could assemble sufficient forces to threaten Germany should they decide to honor their guarantees to Poland. Faced with a *fait accompli*, Hitler believed that Great Britain and France would negotiate for peace.

September 3

France, Great Britain, and the Commonwealth countries declare war upon Germany.

Warsaw is occupied by German forces.

September 17

**Soviets enter Poland:** Nearly 40 Red Army divisions crossed the Poland's eastern frontier fulfilling the Soviet part of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact. Following the Soviet attack, the Polish government ordered as many of its troops as possible to escape to neutral Romania.

		The British Expeditionary Force (BEF) consisting of over 160,000 troops, 20,000 vehicles and tanks and 140,000 tons of supplies arrives in France.
	<b>October 7</b>	Heinrich Himmler becomes the Reich Commissioner for Consolidation of the German Race. His task is to eliminate those people considered inferior from all Reich lands.
	<b>October 11</b>	President Roosevelt orders American scientists to investigate the potential and feasibility of developing an Atomic weapon.
	<b>October 14</b>	The British battleship HMS <i>Royal Oak</i> is sunk by the U-47. <i>Kapitanleutnant</i> Gunther Prien, commanding the U-47, in one of the most daring operations of the war, snuck his submarine into the Royal Navy's Home Fleet base at Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands.
	<b>October 27</b>	King Leopold III of Belgium announces Belgium's intention to defend its neutrality.
	<b>November 4</b>	<b>Cash and Carry:</b> The United States' Congress modifies the United States' arms embargo law. In the revised act, belligerents can purchase war materials if they are acquired from private companies, pay for the goods prior to shipment, and transport the goods themselves. The law benefits the Allies and within a week, British and French purchasing agents are placing large orders with American companies.
	<b>November 23</b>	Dr. Hans Frank, governor of the Government General in Nazi occupied Poland, issues a decree that all Jews over the age of ten are to wear armbands marked with the Star of David.
	<b>November 30</b>	<b>Russo-Finnish Winter War:</b> Soviet forces invade neighboring Finland. Seventy-two year old Field Marshal Mannerheim is named Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish armed forces.
	<b>December 17</b>	The <i>Graf Spee</i> is scuttled by her commander after the Battle of the River Plate.

## 1940

	<b>March 12</b>	A peace treaty is concluded between Finland and the Soviet Union. Finland surrendered approximately 16,000 square miles of territory, the city of Viipuri, and the naval base at Hangö.
	<b>March 30</b>	Paul Reynaud replaces Eduoard Daladier as the French prime minister.
	<b>April 9</b>	<b>Invasions of Norway and Denmark:</b> Germany launches Operation <i>Weserbung</i> the invasions of Norway and Denmark. The Germans claimed that they had proof that Great Britain and France were planning on using Norwegian and Danish territory to launch attacks against Germany. Denmark surrenders within four hours of the start of the German invasion.
	<b>April 27</b>	Himmler issues orders for an extermination camp to be constructed at Auschwitz in Poland.



- German Invasion of France and the Low Countries:** German infantry, mechanized, armored, and airborne troops invaded France and the Low Countries. Since the Anglo-French declaration of war against Germany in September 1939, the Western Front has seen only sporadic combat. Combat between the Germans and Allies has been limited to sorties by the combatants' naval and air forces. This period has been called the "Phoney War" or "*Sitzkrieg*." On German radio, Hitler defended his invasions of neutral Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, claiming that he had proof that they had been conspiring with the Allies against Germany.
- May 10** The Netherlands will surrender on May 15, Belgium on May 28.
- Churchill as Prime Minister:** Neville Chamberlain resigns as Prime Minister of Great Britain and is replaced by Winston Churchill.
- Great Britain launches the first strategic bombing raid on Germany. In this raid, only 8 bombers were used. By the end of the war, RAF Bomber Command was able to place 1,000 aircraft over a target.
- May 15** The first letter from Prime Minister Churchill to President Roosevelt is written. These letters would continue throughout the war adding a depth of understanding and cooperation between Churchill and Roosevelt that was instrumental in the eventual Allied victory. In this letter, Churchill states what he needs from the United States in order to keep fighting. The British requirements included ships, aircraft, weapons, ammunition, and American efforts to maintain the peace in the Pacific.
- May 17** Brussels falls to German troops.
- May 20** German forces reach the English Channel cutting off all Allied forces that have been deployed north of Abbeville.
- May 26** **Miracle at Dunkirk:** The evacuation of British and French troops from the beaches of Dunkirk begins. The British had assembled nearly 900 ships and boats of all types in their attempts to rescue what they could from the beaches of France. In seven days of intense land, sea, and air actions, approximately 225,000 British, 113,000 French and Belgian troops were safely deposited in Britain. These troops would become the core of the new units that would continue the fight against Germany, Italy, and eventually Japan. However, most of the heavy equipment the British units had taken to France was left on the beaches and before Britain and her allies could go on the offensive these would have to be replaced.
- Norway sues for peace. On June 7, the government fled to England where it operated as a government-in-exile.
- June 10** **Italy Joins the War:** Italy declares war on Britain and France. The entry of Italy into the conflict expanded the war into the Mediterranean and North Africa. In response to Italian actions, Canada declared war on Italy.
- June 14** German troops enter Paris. The French government pleaded for aid from the United States in order to continue fighting the Germans.
- June 16** Hero of the First World War, Marshall Philippe Petain becomes the new French prime minister. He immediately requests an end to the fighting between France and Germany.
- June 18** General Charles de Gaulle broadcasts a speech from London declaring that France and French forces would continue the fight.

June 21	France surrenders to Germany. The surrender agreement is signed at Compiègne in the same railway car that Germany had surrendered to France ending the First World War.
	Prince Konoye formed a new Japanese cabinet. General Hideki Tojo was named as the new War Minister.
June 28	Churchill turns down an unofficial peace overture made by Germany through Swiss intermediaries.
June 30	German forces occupy the Channel Islands of Guernsey and Jersey. This is the only British territory occupied by Germany during the war.
July 1	<b>Vichy Government:</b> The French government relocates to Vichy.
July 3	Ships of the Royal Navy sank and seized elements of the French navy that were in port at Oran and Mers-el-Kebir, Algeria. Explaining their actions, the British said that they could not risk having the French units enter into German or Italian service. The British attack permanently damaged Anglo-French relations. On July 4, the Vichy government ended all diplomatic relations with Britain and debated whether a declaration of war was required as a response. On July 5, Vichy aircraft launched an attack on British units in Gibraltar.
July 5	<b>US Embargo:</b> The United States implements a limited embargo against Japan. As the year progressed additional items were included in the embargo. The Japanese could replace the majority of these items. However, on July 26 all aviation fuel to be used outside of the Western Hemisphere was placed on the list. This item would be very difficult for the Japanese to replace.
July 10	<b>The Battle of Britain:</b> The Germans begin the aerial assault on the British Isles begins. Requiring air superiority for the planned invasion, Operation Sea Lion, the Germans attack military installations, channel convoys, and harbors.
August 3	Italian forces invaded British and French Somaliland.
August 15	<b>Adler Tag:</b> The <i>Luftwaffe</i> launches its largest air attack against Britain. Its purpose was to destroy RAF fighters and give Germany control of the airspace of Great Britain in time for the proposed invasion. Losses for the <i>Luftwaffe</i> were severe limiting future German operations.
August 23	<i>Luftwaffe</i> bombers begin attacking targets in and around London. This shift gives RAF Fighter Command a desperately needed respite. The German failure to eliminate the RAF would force the German leadership to postpone the planned invasion of England.
August 27	The US Congress authorized the mobilization of the National Guard for one year.
August 30	The French agree to allow the Japanese to occupy northern Indochina.
September 3	<b>Destroyers for Bases Deal:</b> An agreement between the United States and Great Britain was concluded. In return for leases on British naval and air bases in the Western Hemisphere for 99 years, the United States would give up 50 First World War era destroyers.
September 15	The <i>Luftwaffe</i> launches its last major effort to destroy the RAF and make the German invasion of Great Britain possible. German losses are so heavy and the ability of the RAF to drive German aircraft forces Hitler to postpone Operation Sea Lion indefinitely.
	Italian forces invade Egypt.

September 16	<b>The Draft:</b> The US Congress passes the Selective Service and Training Act. It is the first peacetime conscription act in U.S. history.
September 26	<b>Tripartite Pact:</b> Germany, Italy, and Japan entered into a military and economic agreement. This is the agreement that coins the term “Axis” meaning Germany, Italy, and Japan. Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia will join the pact on November 20. Bulgaria will join on March 1.
October 28	<b>Italian Invasion of Greece:</b> Claiming British actions and Greek support of these actions as justification, Italian forces attack Greece. Heavily outnumbering the Greeks the Italian forces advanced quickly. However, fierce Greek actions eventually began to drive Italian forces back into Albania. Faced with a definite military failure, Mussolini asked for German assistance on December 8.
November 5	Roosevelt becomes President of the United States for the third time.
December 9	The first British offensive in North Africa is launched. General Wavell's attack in Northern Africa proceeds from Egypt into Libya.
December 29	President Roosevelt calls America an “arsenal of democracy” as he begins publicly advocating open, U.S. aid for Great Britain.

## 1941

January 29	U.S. and British military staff begin meeting that plans common strategy in the event the United States enters the war.
February 12	<b>Afrika Korps:</b> General Erwin Rommel, commander of the Africa Corps, arrives in Libya. This unit consists of 2 German divisions as well as six Italian divisions. It has been sent to North Africa to prevent an Italian military collapse
March 11	<b>Lend Lease:</b> The U.S. Senate approves the Lend-Lease Act. This law would allow the U.S. to grant credit to foreign powers, whose defense in the interests of the United States, so that they are able to purchase war materials.
March 27	Official US-British war planning begins.
April 6	<b>Invasion of Greece and Yugoslavia:</b> German forces invade Yugoslavia and Greece in an effort to rescue the Italians from defeat at the hands of the Greek forces. Quickly crossing the frontier, some German units drove for the capital while others headed towards Greece. The German advances forced Greek troops to retreat out of Albania. Yugoslavia will surrender on April 17.
April 13	The Soviet Union and Japan sign a neutrality agreement.
May 10	Rudolf Hess, Deputy Fuhrer of Germany, flies to Great Britain in order to make peace between the two nations. He will be denounced by Hitler and imprisoned by the British.
May 20	<b>Assault on Crete:</b> A German air- and seaborne troops manage to capture Crete after twelve days of severe fighting. The losses inflicted on the German forces Hitler to limit any future airborne operations.
May 24	The German battleship <i>Bismarck</i> and her consort the cruiser <i>Prinz Eugen</i> sink the British battle cruiser <i>Hood</i> .
May 27	After being damaged by Royal Navy aircraft, the <i>Bismarck</i> is sunk by a British fleet led by the battleships <i>King George V</i> and <i>Rodney</i> .
June 22	<b>German Invasion of Russia:</b> Operation Barbarossa commences as Germany launches its attacks the Soviet Union. 3 million German soldiers attack the Soviet army of 5.7 million, 2.5 of them in the west. In the coming weeks, Stalin mobilizes some 10 million reservists.

On June 29, the Central Committee declares the conflict to be the "Great Fatherland War."

**June 27**

Japan announces the formation of the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere."

**July 8**

US Marines are stationed in Iceland at the request of the island's government.

**August 11**

**The Atlantic Charter:** Roosevelt and Churchill announce the principles that would be the basis for the United Nations.

**Japanese Attack Pearl Harbor:** Japanese carrier planes attack the US military installations in Hawaii. Wheeler Field and Pearl Harbor are attacked.

U.S. losses at Pearl Harbor are:

Aircraft Destroyed: 188

Military Personnel Killed: 2,334 (1,103 men were killed on the USS Arizona)

Military Personnel Wounded: 1,347

Ships Sunk:

4 Battleships

Ships Damaged:

4 Battleships

3 Light Cruisers

3 Destroyers

**December 7**

1 Seaplane Tender

1 Repair Ship

Japanese losses at Pearl Harbor are:

Aircraft: 28

Midget Submarines: 5

Men: less than 100

Following the attack, Japanese forces launch a series of campaigns that enable them to occupy Malaya, the Philippines, Singapore, Java, and Borneo.

Hitler issues his *Nacht und Nebel* (Night and Fog) decree that authorized German authorities to "eliminate" Western Europeans that were considered a danger to German security. These dangerous elements were to be discreetly disposed of or disappear into the night and fog so that their whereabouts would remain unknown even to their relatives.

Approximately 60 million people listen as President Franklin Delano Roosevelt gives his "Day of Infamy" speech to the United States' Congress.

The United States, Canada, Free France, Great Britain, New Zealand, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, and Panama all declare war on Japan. The Dutch and Polish Governments in Exile would declare war on Japan on December 11.

**December 8**

Japanese air forces attack the Philippines while Japanese troops land in Malaya and Thailand.

German forces begin their retreat from Moscow while the German High Command issues a statement that declares further operations will be dictated by winter conditions in Russia.

		<b>Battle for the Philippines:</b> Japanese forces land on Luzon in the initial operation that would end in their conquest of the Philippines.
	<b>December 10</b>	<b>Sinkings in the Indian Ocean:</b> In the first ever battle fought solely between aircraft and ships on the high seas, Japanese aircraft sink the British ships <i>Prince of Wales</i> and <i>Repulse</i> . This battle eliminates any doubt that the age of the battleship is over and that the aircraft carrier will be the dominant naval vessel of the war.
	<b>December 11</b>	Hitler and Mussolini declare war upon the United States.
		<b>Battle of Wake Island:</b> The first Japanese landings are beaten back by ad hoc American defenders that include U.S. Marines, Army, Navy personnel and civilian contractors and employees of Pan American Airways. The American defenders would successfully defend the island until December 23.
	<b>December 13</b>	<b>Japanese-American Relocation:</b> Japanese-Americans are declared enemies of the United States and orders are issued for their relocation away from the Pacific coast of the United States. Lt. Gen. John L. DeWitt, commander of the Western Defense Command felt that the Japanese-Americans in his command area were determined to commit sabotage. By March 2, 1942, All people of Japanese ancestry were removed from the west coast of the United States by government decree.
<b>1942</b>	<b>January 1</b>	The pact of the "United Nations" is signed in Washington by 26 nations. They commit themselves to not agree to any separate peace with any member of the Tripartite Pact.
	<b>January 4</b>	Indian leaders promise to support the Allied war effort if Britain grants dominion status to India.
	<b>January 12</b>	A resolution to hold Axis officials responsible for the ordering of, perpetuation or participation in war crimes, was issued by the leaders of China and nine European nations occupied by Axis forces.
	<b>January 14</b>	<b>Germany First Policy:</b> The ARCADIA Conference concludes with U.S. and British leaders agreeing to defeat Germany first before turning their attention towards Japan. The first stage of this goal would be an Allied invasion of French North Africa. German U-Boats begin operating off the United States' coast. Called the "happy hunting grounds" by German naval commanders, the U-boats would sink significant numbers of merchant ships before Allied naval forces develop the tools and techniques that would finally drive the U-boats away.
	<b>January 20</b>	<b>Final Solution:</b> During the Wannsee Conference, the procedures of the elimination of the European Jews the "Final Solution to the Jewish Problem" are discussed. Shortly after this conference, the extermination camps of Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Majdanek, and Auschwitz-Birkenau began their work.
	<b>February 1</b>	Aircraft and ships of the U.S. Navy launched attacks against Japanese positions in the Gilbert and Marshall Islands. These raids are the first attacks of the war against Japanese possessions.
	<b>February 6</b>	The United States and Great Britain create the Combined Chiefs of Staff. This organization is to coordinate the Anglo-American military operations as well as the distribution of war material.
	<b>February 15</b>	Singapore falls to Japanese forces after defending the city for 70 days. In the largest surrender in British military history, 64,000 Commonwealth troops would go into Japanese captivity.
	<b>February 22</b>	President Roosevelt orders General Douglas MacArthur to leave the Philippines and assume command of all Allied forces in Australia.

<b>February 27</b>	The Imperial Japanese Navy decisively defeats the United States Navy during the Battle of the Java Sea.
<b>March 10</b>	The Dutch East Indies surrender unconditionally to the Japanese.
<b>March 11</b>	General Douglas Macarthur, his family, and staff leave the Philippines by PT Boat.
<b>March 16</b>	The Soviet Ambassador in London asks that the British and Americans begin operations in Europe that would divert German troops from the Russian Front.
<b>March 17</b>	<b>“I shall return.”:</b> Gen. Macarthur, his family, and staff arrive in Australia. In speeches made after his arrival, Macarthur states that he will return to the Philippines. Upon reaching Darwin, Gen. Macarthur assumes command of the Southwest Pacific Theater.
<b>April 9</b>	<b>Bataan Death March:</b> Bataan falls to the Japanese. Approximately 35,000 U.S. and Filipino troops would be forced to march from Balanga to San Fernando in what became known as the “Bataan Death March.”
<b>April 18</b>	<b>Dolittle Raid:</b> In the first air raid on Japan of the war, 16 U.S. bombers, launched from an aircraft carrier attacked Tokyo, Yokohama, Kobe, and Nagoya. While the raid caused minimal damage, it nevertheless forced the Japanese to redeploy anti-aircraft defenses from the front to the Home Islands. The raid also improved American morale that had taken a severe beating since the attack on Pearl Harbor. General Douglas Macarthur becomes Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific Area. Japanese forces move through Mandalay, Burma and continue their advance towards India.
<b>May 7</b>	<b>Coral Sea:</b> The Battle of the Coral Sea is fought between U.S. and Japanese naval forces. It is the first naval battle in history in which the principal opponents never saw each other (all operations were conducted by carrier aircraft). The losses suffered by the Japanese in this battle forced them to cancel planned invasions of New Guinea and Australia.
<b>May 29</b>	<b>Heydrich and Lidice:</b> Reinhardt Heydrich, SS commander for Czechoslovakia, is attacked and severely injured in an assassination attempt. On June 2, the Germans would execute 131 Czech civilians in retaliation for the attack. On June 4 Heydrich would die of his wounds. In retaliation for Heydrich’s death, on June 9, SS troops rounded up the population of Lidice. The men were all executed; the women and children were sent to concentration camps.
<b>May 30</b>	The Royal Air Force launches its first 1,000-bomber raid of the war. The German city of Cologne is attacked by nearly 900 the bombers that drop close to 1,500 tons of bombs. The fires started by this raid could be seen 150 miles away. Cologne suffered: Killed: 486 Injured: 5,027 Homeless: 59,100 Buildings destroyed: 18,432 Buildings heavily damaged: 9,516 Buildings lightly damaged: 31,070 Industrial facilities destroyed / damaged: 328 50% of the city was without electrical power  British losses: 42 planes were lost 12 damaged planes unable to fly again 104 damaged planes that returned to service.

	<p><b>Midway:</b> The Battle of Midway is fought between the U.S. Navy and the Imperial Japanese Navy. Considered one of the turning points of the Pacific War, this battle halted Japanese expansion in the Pacific. The Allies would shortly launch the first offensives that would, eventually, lead to the defeat of Japan.</p>
<b>June 4</b>	<p>Japanese losses:  4 Aircraft Carriers  1 Heavy Cruiser  332 Aircraft</p> <p>U.S. losses:  1 Aircraft Carrier  1 Destroyer  147 Aircraft</p>
<b>June 7</b>	<p><b>Japanese in Alaska:</b> The only occupation of North American territory by Axis forces occurs when Japanese troops make unopposed landings on the Aleutian islands of Attu and Kiska.</p>
<b>June 18</b>	<p>Churchill confers with Roosevelt concerning the necessity of opening a second front in Europe. Both will agree that the first Anglo-American invasion of German territory will occur in North Africa.</p> <p>Bernard Robinson received his commission as an ensign. He was the first African-American officer in the U.S. Navy.</p>
<b>June 22</b>	<p>A Japanese submarine shells Ft. Stevens, Oregon. The action resulted in no casualties for either side. The attack is noteworthy in that it was the first attack on a U.S. military base located in North America since the War of 1812.</p>
<b>June 24</b>	<p>Maj. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower assumes command of U.S. forces in the European Theater of Operations (ETO).</p>
<b>July 1</b>	<p>The Germans reach their deepest entry into Egypt while trying to break through British positions at El Alamein, Egypt.</p>
<b>July 5</b>	<p><b>PQ-17:</b> A convoy from Iceland to the Soviet Union, is attacked by German U-boats, ships, and aircraft while crossing the Barents Sea. 22 out of 33 ships in the convoy were sunk. The heavy losses force the Royal Navy to suspend convoys into the Soviet Union until the northern ice had receded and continual daylight had passed</p>
<b>July 19</b>	<p>“The Family Hostage Law” is enacted in France. Under this law, if a person identified as a terrorist did not surrender himself within 10 days all adult male members of his family would be executed. The women and children of the family would be sent to work camps and reform schools.</p>
<b>July 30</b>	<p>Stalin issues statement that Soviet forces would not be allowed to retreat in the face of German attacks.</p>
<b>July 31</b>	<p>The Germans cross the Don River as they attempt to regain the initiative they lost when offensive operations were halted in during the winter of 1941/42.</p> <p>The United States’ Navy establishes the Women’s Naval Reserve or WAVES.</p>
<b>August 6</b>	<p>Leaders of India’s independence movement war that a campaign of civil disobedience will be launch unless Great Britain grants India total independence and freedom. Gandhi and other Indian National Congress leaders would be arrested on August 9<sup>th</sup> for undermining the war effort in India. Riots broke out in several cities forcing British authorities to call out troops to restore order.</p>

<b>August 7</b>	<b>Battle of Guadalcanal:</b> The first U.S. offensive of the war occurs in the Solomon Islands as U.S. Marines land on Guadalcanal. While the initial landings were only lightly opposed Japanese resistance would stiffen considerably. The campaign would last for 6 months until Japanese resistance was broken.
<b>August 8</b>	<b>Monty:</b> Lt. Gen. Bernard Law Montgomery is named commander of the British 8 <sup>th</sup> Army. He will lead the British 8 <sup>th</sup> Army from Egypt to Italy.
<b>August 9</b>	<b>Battle of Savo Island:</b> The United States' Navy suffers one of its most severe losses in its history during this battle. The U.S. lost 3 cruisers the Australian cruiser Canberra was also sunk. From this point on the waters between Guadalcanal and Florida Island became known as "Ironbottom Bay."
<b>August 17</b>	<b>Marine Raiders:</b> The U.S. Marine Raiders, an elite force of U.S. Marines trained to sneak ashore Japanese occupied islands, inflict heavy damage, and escape, landed on Makin Atoll. The raid inflicted significant damage to Japanese installations on the island and forced the Japanese to reinforce other holdings to make future raids more costly. The raid also boosted American morale.
<b>August 19</b>	<b>Landing at Dieppe:</b> The Anglo-Canadian landing at Dieppe, on the French coast, results in almost 50% casualties for the Allied troops involved. However, a defeat for the Allies, the lessons learned from this assault will be employed in the invasion of Normandy in 1944.
	<b>Battle for Stalingrad:</b> Gen. Friedrich von Paulus orders the Sixth German Army to take the city of Stalingrad regardless of losses. The battle for Stalin's city would intensify over the coming weeks and months as more and more German and Soviet forces would be deployed within the city.
<b>September 24</b>	<b>Night Witches:</b> Olga Yamschikova a member of the 586 <sup>th</sup> Fighter Aviation Regiment of the Red Air Force is credited with shooting down a German Ju-88 bomber. The 86h FAR is an all-women unit that at war's end will be credited with shooting down 38 enemy aircraft and flying nearly 4,500 missions.
<b>September 25</b>	Australian forces launched an offensive in New Guinea driving the Japanese back along the Kokoda Trail.
<b>September 26</b>	Stalin calls for an Anglo-American second front in Europe as soon as possible.
<b>October 23</b>	<b>Second Battle of El Alamein:</b> The British open the attack with a devastating air and artillery bombardment upon Axis positions. By November 4, the German lines had been penetrated and British units had broken out and were threatening the Axis rear. Retreating German and Italian forces were continually attacked by Allied air forces. This is the first major Allied victory of the war.
<b>October 24</b>	Vice Admiral William F. Halsey becomes Commander of U.S. Naval Forces in the South Pacific.
<b>November 8</b>	<b>Operation Torch:</b> The first major Allied invasion of the war begins in North Africa as the first U.S. troops come ashore along the Algerian and Moroccan coasts. In some areas, French troops welcomed the Americans with open arms, other areas put up stiff resistance. All formal French opposition would end on November 11.
<b>November 15</b>	<b>The Sullivan Brothers:</b> The U.S. Navy cruiser Juneau was sunk off Guadalcanal. Killed in the sinking were the five Sullivan brothers, from Watrerloo, Iowa. The brothers had enlisted in the navy after being promised that they would serve together.
<b>November 23</b>	<b>Stalingrad Counteroffensive:</b> Soviet forces begin their offensive aimed at encircling the German Sixth Army.



- December 2** **Start of the Atomic Age:** Under the direction of Arthur Compton and Enrico Fermi, the first nuclear chain reaction is achieved at the University of Chicago. This is the first proof that an atomic bomb could be built and is considered the birth of the Atomic Age.
- December 17** British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden announces to the House of Commons that Hitler is proceeding with his goal of exterminating the Jews of Europe. This is the first public statement from any nation concerning the event that would become known as the Holocaust.

## 1943

- January 14** **The Casablanca Conference:** This meeting between Roosevelt, Churchill, and their combined staffs planned the future Allied strategy. The Americans argued for an invasion of the European mainland in 1943 but the British saw this as impractical and argued for smaller, more limited operations against Sicily. This was agreed upon with the provision that the buildup of troops for the cross-Channel invasion would be maintained. Additionally, Roosevelt presented his policy of concluding the war only when the Axis nations had surrendered unconditionally.
- January 18** The Soviet government announces that the 900-day long siege of Leningrad had been lifted. The city was surrounded in the early stages of Operation Barbarossa. At the height of the siege thousands were dying each day from cold and starvation.
- January 22** The Allies successfully ended their campaign against the Japanese in New Guinea. This victory eliminated the most significant threat the Japanese posed to Australia.
- January 27** An all-American force bombs Wilhelmshaven. This is the first all-American air raid on German soil.
- January 28** The German economy is placed on a war footing for the first time since the war began. On February 4, the German government ordered all non-essential business to close.
- January 31** The German Sixth Army surrenders at Stalingrad.
- February 9** All organized, Japanese resistance on Guadalcanal ends. The Japanese had been evacuating troops from the island without the Americans realizing. The last troops had left the island after a week of evacuations on February 8<sup>th</sup>. The Japanese had removed over 10,000 men.
- February 14** German forces attacked Allied forces at Kasserine Pass in Tunisia.
- March 6** Japan tells Germany that they are unable to attack Russia.
- March 13 and 20** Two attempts are made on Hitler's life. Both attempts fail.
- April 18** Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto is killed when his aircraft is intercepted by American long-range fighters. American commanders ordered the mission after being alerted to the flight by U.S. code breakers.
- April 19** **Warsaw Uprising:** Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto launch an armed revolt against Nazi forces. The SS needs a month of fighting to squash the revolt. 56,000 casualties on the Jewish side are counted.

May 13	The German army in Africa capitulates in Tunis. This marks the end of the fighting in North Africa.
May 23	<b>Battle for the Atlantic:</b> After severe losses in the U-boat fleet, Admiral Dönitz recalls his fleet from the western Atlantic. The battle for the Atlantic has been won by the Allies.
July 5	<b>Operation Zitadelle:</b> The last great German offensive in the East is launched. Badly planned, it run into severe Russian defenses and gained no ground. On July 17, a Russian counteroffensive front quickly gained ground.
July 10	<b>Operation Husky:</b> British and US troops land on Sicily.
July 28	<b>Mussolini Ousted:</b> Mussolini is removed from office and arrested. He is replaced by Marshall Pietro Badoglio.
September 3	<b>Italy Surrenders:</b> A secret treaty armistice is signed between Italy and the Allies.
September 8	Allied forces invade Italy with an amphibious landing at Salerno.
October 13	<b>Italy a Co-Belligerent:</b> Italy declares war on Germany.
November 1	US Marines land on Bougainville. The island is finally secured in 1945 by Australian troops.
November 20	US Marines attack Tarawa. The island is taken after four days of heavy fighting. There are no Japanese survivors.
November 28	<b>Teheran Conference:</b> Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin discuss the post-war order of Europe.
December 12	<b>Ike:</b> The Allies name Gen. Eisenhower as Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force and Field Marshall Montgomery as commander of the 21 <sup>st</sup> Army Group. This places Eisenhower in charge of all Allied forces in Europe and Montgomery in charge during the planned landing in Europe.
December 26	US troops land on New Britain.

## 1944

March 7	Japanese try to strike into India with an advance to Kohima and Imphal. They are stopped by British and Indian forces in a series of battles that rage until the end of May.
June 6	<b>Operation Overlord:</b> The largest amphibious operation in history is launched as Allied troops land in Normandy. Called a “Crusade in Europe” by Eisenhower, this is the beginning of the end for Nazi Germany. Fierce German resistance aided by the hedgerows of Normandy will hold allied attacks back.
January 12	<b>Anzio:</b> Allied forces land at Anzio, Italy in an attempt to flank German defensive positions. Slow moving Allied forces and a quick German response keep Allied forces pinned on the

beachhead until May.

<b>February 20</b>	<b>Big Week:</b> The start of a combined Anglo-American bombing offensive on Germany. Air strikes focused on German industrial targets forcing the <i>Luftwaffe</i> to fight. The losses to the <i>Luftwaffe</i> will cripple its ability to defend the Reich against further air raids.
<b>June 15</b>	US forces land on Saipan and take it in campaign of some three weeks. Tinian and Guam are secured by August 1. In an attempt to defend these islands, the Japanese navy rushes to help and gets almost wiped out in the battle of the Philippine Sea (19th of June).
<b>June 22</b>	<b>Operation Bagration:</b> Soviet forces cut off the German army group center. Approximately 350,000 German soldiers are reported killed, captured, or missing when the operation ends.
<b>July 20</b>	The assassination attempt on Hitler by Col. Clause Graf von Stauffenberg fails. He and several conspirators are executed. In the end, some 5,000 people are killed for their connection to the plot.
<b>July 25</b>	<b>Operation Cobra:</b> US forces manage to pierce the German defenses. General George S. Patton's Third Army rushes through the breach and deep into France.
<b>July 31</b>	US breakthrough at Avranches leads to the collapse of the German defense in France.
<b>August 15</b>	<b>Operation Dragoon:</b> U.S. and Free French forces invade the south of France.
<b>August 25</b>	United States and Free French troops under Gen De Gaulle liberate Paris.
<b>October 20</b>	<b>Philippine Invasion:</b> U.S. troops land at Leyte, on the Philippines. In a prolonged series of sea, air, and land battles Japan loses its hold on the Philippines, though large groups hold out until the end of the war. The 25th of October saw the defeat of the last Japanese naval fleet. Manila was secured on the 3rd of March 45. This campaign saw the first appearance of Kamikaze units.
<b>December 16</b>	<b>Battle of the Bulge:</b> The Ardennes offensive marks the last attempt by the Germans to regain the offensive in the west. After making gains the attack is stemmed by Allied airpower and dogged resistance by US forces.

<b>1945</b>	<b>January 12</b>	In a large offensive against the German forces facing them along the Eastern Front, which had been stripped of supplies for the Ardennes offensive, Soviet forces manage to advance into Germany.
	<b>February 4</b>	<b>Yalta Conference:</b> Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill confer about the new world order. The establishing of the United Nations is agreed upon.
	<b>February 19</b>	US Marines attack Iwo Jima. The island is secured after a month of heavy fighting.
	<b>April 1</b>	<b>Okinawa:</b> US troops land on Okinawa. The battle ends on June 21. The Americans suffer approximately 13,000 killed and wounded while the Japanese lose nearly 110,000. The fierce Japanese defense increases fears that a US invasion of the Japanese Home Islands will result in unacceptable casualties.

<b>April 13</b>	The Soviet Red Army occupies Vienna, Austria.
<b>April 16</b>	The Soviet Red Army starts its final attack on Berlin.
<b>April 25</b>	U.S. and Soviet troops meet at Torgau on the Elbe River.
<b>April 26</b>	<b>United Nations:</b> The founding conference of the United Nations begins in San Francisco. The charter is signed on the 26th of June by representatives of 51 nations.
<b>April 30</b>	Hitler commits suicide. Three days later, the last defenders of Berlin surrender.
<b>May 8</b>	<b>VE-day:</b> The new German government, headed by Admiral Karl Doenitz, surrenders unconditionally to the Allies.
<b>July 16</b>	<b>Trinity.</b> The first atomic bomb is successfully tested in New Mexico.
<b>July 17</b>	<b>Potsdam Conference:</b> Truman, Churchill, Attlee after the 29 <sup>th</sup> when he becomes Britain's prime minister, and Stalin decide the details of the post war order and formalizes the division of Europe into two spheres of influence.
<b>August 6</b>	<b>Hiroshima:</b> The <i>Enola Gay</i> , a B-29 Superfortress drops an Atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. It is the first Atomic attack in history.
<b>August 8</b>	After remaining neutral in the Asian and Pacific conflicts, the Soviet Union declares war upon Japan and quickly advances into Manchuko, Korea and the Kuriles.
<b>August 9</b>	<b>Nagasaki:</b> <i>Bockscar</i> releases the second Atomic bomb over Nagasaki.
<b>August 10</b>	<b>VJ-day.</b> The war ends with the unconditional surrender of Japan.









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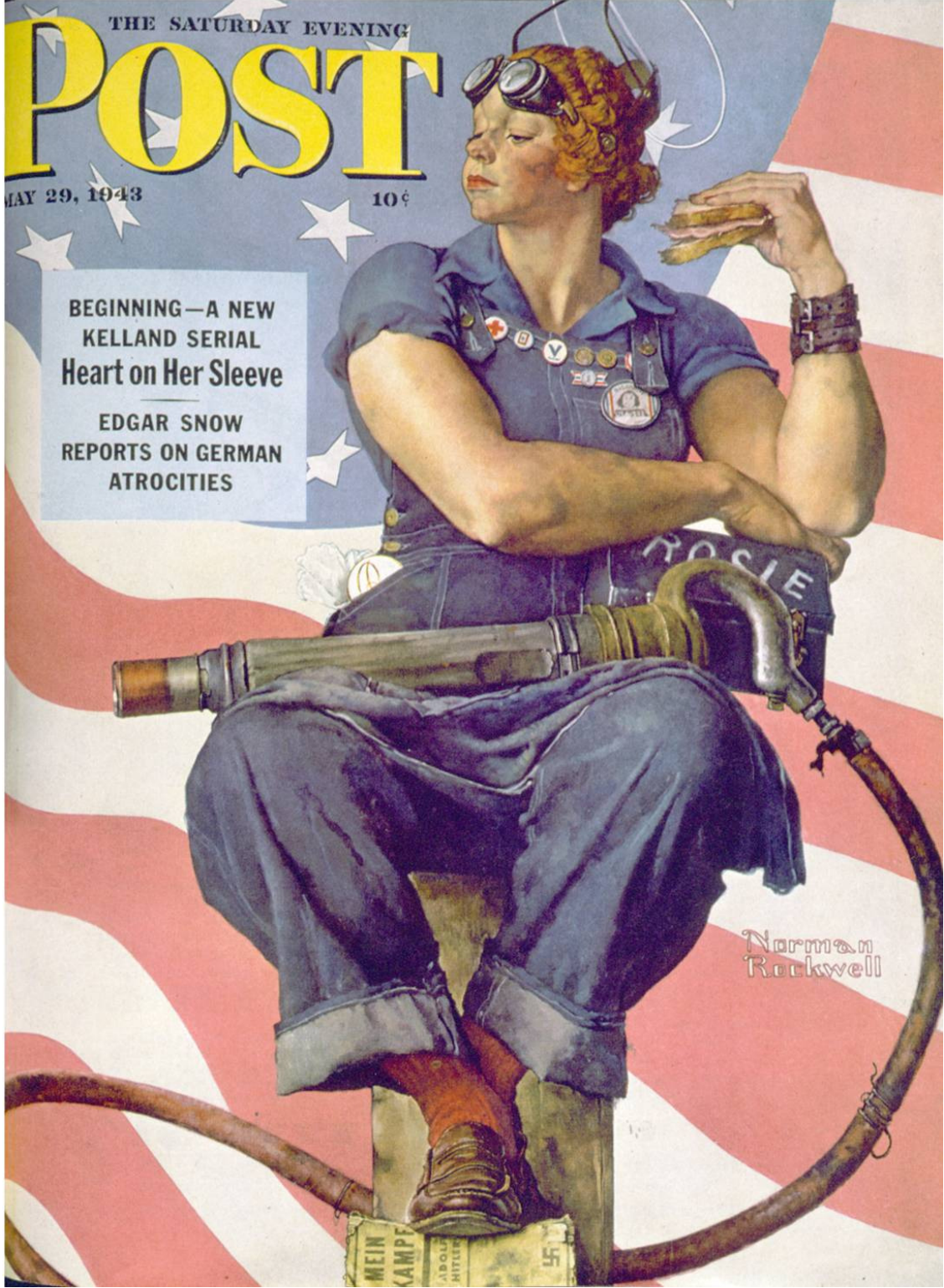
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