

# World War II

Timeline of Events – Leading up to, during, and after

# Timeline of 1918 - 1939



**January 1919**

## Deutsche Arbeiterpartei is formed

In January 1919, Anton Drexler founded the German Workers' Party. This party was formed from a group who had previously met regularly to discuss political matters. The party met weekly in a beer hall in Munich. After the pressures of war Munich was politically unstable. People were inclined to support new ideas that advocated extreme change. Adolf Hitler became involved with the fledgling German Workers Party which he would later transform into the Nazi Party (NSDAP).



**Mid 1920**

## The swastika becomes a symbol of hate

The swastika had historically served as a symbol of well-being in ancient societies such as those in India, China, Africa, native America, and Europe. In 1920, Adolf Hitler designed the Nazi flag, amalgamating the swastika with the three colors of the German Imperial flag (red, black, and white).

# Timeline of 1918 - 1939



**January 1921**

## Birth of the Sturmabteilung (SA)

In the early days Hitler was surrounded by the unwieldy Sturmabteilung or SA, who were tough, unemployed ex-soldiers who frequented Munich beer halls such as the Torbräukeller. They were recruited by Ernst Röhm to protect Nazi speakers at public meetings. The Brownshirts, as they became known due the brown uniforms, were party supporters who acted as bodyguards. The term Sturmabteilung existed before the formation of the Nazi Party in 1919. Initially, it denoted the specialized assault troops of Imperial Germany during World War I, utilizing infiltration tactics and organized into small squads of a few soldiers each.



**January 28 1923**

## 1st Nazi Party Day

The 1st Party Day or 'Parteitage' held between January 27 and 29, 1923, with the slogan Deutschland Erwache. Two brigades of men marched through the city of Munich and Hitler spoke at all meetings declaring the swastika would be the national symbol of the future Germany.



# Timeline of 1918 - 1939



**8 November 1923**

## Coup attempt (Beer Hall Putsch)

On the 8 November 1923, Hitler alongside other high party officials such as Göring, Hess and Himmler attempted to pull off a military coup and overthrow the Weimar Republic. Hitler and the Nazi Party collaborated with others such as General Ludendorff and Gustav von Kahr to make this plan work. This was called the Munich Putsch, although it is sometimes referred to as the Beer Hall Putsch.



**1 April 1923**

## Convicted and sentenced

Sixteen Nazi Party members and four police officers were killed in the ensuing violence. Hitler briefly escaped the city but was arrested on 11 November 1923, and put on trial for high treason, which gained him widespread public attention. Hitler was convicted and on 1 April sentenced to five years' imprisonment at Landsberg Prison.

# Timeline of 1918 - 1939



**20 December 1924**

## Released from Landsberg Prison

Adolf Hitler in front of the Bayertor gate across the Lech river after his release from Landsberg fortress prison. He spent only 9 months behind the bars (his initial sentence was 5 years). Hitler used the time in Landsberg Prison to reconsider his political strategy and dictate the first volume of 'Mein Kampf'.



**4 April 1925**

## Start of the Schutzstaffel (SS)

The Schutzstaffel SS was a major paramilitary organization under Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party in Nazi Germany, and later throughout German-occupied Europe during WW2. In 1925, Heinrich Himmler joined the unit, which had by then been reformed and given its final name. Under his direction (1929–1945) it grew from a small paramilitary formation during the Weimar Republic to one of the most powerful organizations in Nazi Germany. From the time of the Nazi Party's rise to power until the regime's collapse in 1945, the SS was the foremost agency of security, surveillance, and terror within Germany and German-occupied Europe.



# Timeline of 1918 - 1939



**18 July 1925**

## Mein Kampf a autobiographical manifesto

Mein Kampf or 'My Struggle' is a 1925 autobiographical manifesto by Nazi Party leader Adolf Hitler. The work describes the process by which Hitler became antisemitic and outlines his political ideology and future plans for Germany. Volume 1 of Mein Kampf was published in 1925 and Volume 2 in 1926. The book was edited first by Emil Maurice, then by Hitler's deputy Rudolf Hess.



**27 February 1933**

## Dutchman allegedly sets fire to Reichstag

Marinus van der Lubbe (13 January 1909 - 10 January 1934) was a Dutch communist who was tried, convicted, and beheaded by the Nazis for allegedly setting fire to the German Reichstag building on 27 February 1933. He was the first victim of the Nazis.

The Nazis exploited the fire to pass emergency legislation that abolished a number of constitutional protections and paved the way for Nazi dictatorship.

Former SA member, Hans-Martin Lennings, issued a statement to the notary in 1955 stating that he brought Marinus van der Lubbe to the Reichstag (ordered by Nazi parliamentarian and SA member Karl Ernst) on that evening in February 1933. When he arrived, the Reichstag was already burning. Therefore Marinus van der Lubbe could not have lit the building. This statement was only recently found in Hanover archives.

Van der Lubbe was given a posthumous pardon as the documents proved he could not have done it.

# Timeline of 1918 - 1939



**January 30 1933**

## Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany

Ex-chancellor Franz von Papen persuades Hindenburg to make Hitler chancellor. After President Hindenburg dies Hitler takes on dictatorial powers and German rearmament intensifies.



**October 25 to November 1 1936**

## Birth of the Axis of Evil

Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy sign a treaty of cooperation on October 25 and on November 1, 1936 the Rome - Berlin Axis is announced.

# Timeline of 1918 - 1939



**9 - 10 November 1938**

## Kristallnacht or the Night of Broken Glass

Kristallnacht or the Night of Broken Glass, was a pogrom against Jews carried out by the Nazi Party's Sturmabteilung (SA) paramilitary forces along with civilians throughout Nazi Germany on 9 - 10 November 1938. The name Kristallnacht comes from the shards of broken glass that littered the streets after the windows of Jewish-owned stores, buildings and synagogues were smashed. The pretext for the attacks was the assassination of the German diplomat Ernst vom Rath by Herschel Grynszpan, a 17-year-old German-born Polish Jew living in Paris. Historians view Kristallnacht as a prelude to the Final Solution and the murder of six million Jews during the Holocaust.



**August 23, 1939**

## Nazi and Soviet Nonaggression agreement

Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union sign a nonaggression agreement and a secret codicil dividing eastern Europe into spheres of influence.



# Timeline of 1918 - 1939



**September 1, 1939**

## The Second World War begins

Germany invades Poland, inciting Poland's allies Britain and France to declare war on Germany on September 3, 1939. Australia and New Zealand also declared war on Germany.



**September 17, 1939**

## Soviet Union invades Poland

Working in collaboration with Adolf Hitler, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin orders the invasion of Poland and securing a share of Polish territory.

# Timeline of 1918 - 1939



**September 27, 1939**

## Warsaw is captured

The Polish forces could not withstand the 'Blitzkrieg' of the German troops and Warsaw surrenders. Nine days later the whole of Poland capitulates.



**September 27, 1939**

## Poland surrenders

With civilian losses estimated at 200,000 Poland surrenders to Germany. Polish lands are divided between the Soviet Union and Germany, as are 660,000 prisoners of war. Many atrocities were still to come for the Polish people.

# Timeline of 1940



**April 9, 1940**

## Germany conquers Norway and Denmark

In a lightning attack or Blitzkrieg, German forces attack Norway and Denmark. Denmark is occupied in one day. German forces land in Norway near Oslo, the capital, and in other places, securing the south. Germany also moves to secure the ports of Narvik and Trondheim in the north. British forces intervene, landing at Narvik, Namsos, and Andalsnes, but will be forced to withdraw by the first week of June 1940. Norway surrenders to Germany on June 10.



**May 10 1940**

## Germany invades The Netherlands

The Battle of the Netherlands was a military campaign part of Operation Fall Gelb, the German invasion of the Low Countries (Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands) and France during World War II. The battle lasted from 10 May 1940 until the surrender of the main Dutch forces on 14 May. Dutch troops in the province of Zeeland continued to resist the Wehrmacht until 17 May when Germany completed its occupation of the whole country. After the devastating bombing of Rotterdam by the Luftwaffe on 14 May, the Germans threatened to bomb other Dutch cities if the Dutch forces refused to surrender. The General Staff knew it could not stop the bombers and ordered the Dutch Army to cease hostilities.



# Timeline of 1940



**May 10 1940**

## Germany invades Belgium

The Battle of Belgium or Belgian Campaign, often referred to within Belgium as the 18 Days' Campaign, formed part of the greater Battle of France, an offensive campaign by Germany during the Second World War. It took place over 18 days in May 1940 and ended with the German occupation of Belgium following the surrender of the Belgian Army.



**May 10 1940**

## Germany invades France

On 3 September 1939, France had declared war on Germany, following the German invasion of Poland. The Germans invaded Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands on 10 May, Italy entered the war on 10 June 1940 and German forces defeated the Allies on 25 June. France was conquered, ending land operations on the Western Front until the Normandy landings on 6 June 1944. German forces occupied Paris unopposed on 14 June 1940. After the flight of the French Vichy government and the collapse of the French Army, German commanders met with French officials on 18 June to negotiate an end to all hostilities. On 22 June, the Armistice was signed at Compiègne by France and Germany.

# Timeline of 1940



**May 20, 1940**

## Auschwitz main camp is established

The Auschwitz concentration camp complex was the largest of its kind established by the Nazi regime. It included three main camps, all of which deployed incarcerated prisoners at forced labor. One of them also functioned for an extended period as a killing center. The camps were located approximately 37 miles west of Krakow, near the prewar German-Polish border in Upper Silesia, an area that Nazi Germany annexed in 1939 after invading and conquering Poland.



**26 May - 4 June, 1940**

## The Battle of Dunkirk

The Battle of Dunkirk was fought around the French port of Dunkirk during WW2, between the Allies and Nazi Germany. As the Allies were losing the Battle of France on the Western Front, the Battle of Dunkirk was the defence and evacuation of British and other Allied forces to Britain from

# Timeline of 1940



**June 4 1940**

## We shall fight on the beaches

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Winston Churchill delivers his famous, "We shall never surrender", speech to the House of Commons.



**June 10, 1940**

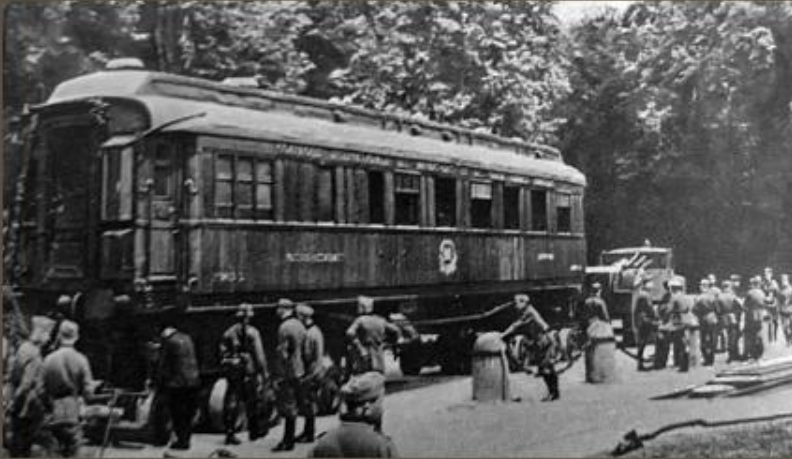
## Italy declares war on France and Great Britain

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After withholding formal allegiance to either side in the battle between Germany and the Allies, Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, declares war on France and Great Britain. "First they were too cowardly to take part. Now they are in a hurry so that they can share in the spoils." Hitler noted.



# Timeline of 1940



**22 June, 1940**

## France signs armistice with Germany

The Armistice was signed near Compiègne, France, by officials of Nazi Germany and the Third French Republic. It did not come into effect until after midnight on 25 June. Following the decisive German victory in the Battle of France, this armistice established a German occupation zone in Northern and Western France that encompassed all English Channel and Atlantic Ocean ports and left the remainder "free" to be governed by the French. Adolf Hitler deliberately chose Compiègne Forest as the site to sign the armistice due to its symbolic role as the site of the 1918 Armistice with Germany that signaled the end of World War I with Germany's surrender.



**September 7, 1940**

## The "Blitz" against Britain begins

The Blitz was a German bombing campaign against the United Kingdom in 1940 and 1941, during the Second World War. The term was first used by the British press and originated from the term Blitzkrieg, the German word for 'lightning war'. It lasted until May 11, 1941

# Timeline of 1941



**January 2, 1941**

## Germany bombs Cardiff

Llandaff Cathedral was damaged by German bombing during the worst night of the Cardiff Blitz



**June 22, 1941**

## Operation Barbarossa is unleashed

In accordance with previous agreements between SS and police and Wehrmacht representatives, German mobile units of Security Police and SD officials, called Einsatzgruppen, followed the frontline troops into the Soviet Union. RSHA chief Heydrich had tasked the Einsatzgruppen commanders with identifying, concentrating, and killing Jews, Soviet officials and other persons deemed potentially hostile to German rule in the east. Einsatzgruppen squads began to carry out mass shootings during the last week of June 1941.



# Timeline of 1941



**September 1, 1941**

## Yellow Star of David

All Jews over six years of age in the Reich, Alsace, Bohemia-Moravia and the German-annexed territory of western Poland are ordered to wear an identifying badge. Reinhard Heydrich decrees that all Jews over six years of age in the Reich, Alsace, Bohemia-Moravia and the German-annexed territory of western Poland, are to wear yellow Star of David on their outer clothing in public at all times. The word "Jew" is to be inscribed inside the star in German or the local language. Later on all Jews in occupied territories had to wear a star.



**December 7, 1941**

## Japan attacks Pearl Harbor (USA)

The Japanese attack of the American Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor in Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii, began just before 08:00, on Sunday, December 7, 1941. The United States was a neutral country at the time. In the two hour raid that followed, 18 warships, 188 aircraft and around 2,000 servicemen were lost. Luckily, the 3 aircraft carriers of the fleet were all at sea at the time of the attack. The attack led to the United States together with Britain, declaring war on Japan.



# Timeline of 1941



**December 8, 1941**

## United States Declares War on Japan

President Franklin D. Roosevelt asks the US Congress to declare war on Japan following the previous day's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. He spoke to the Congress: "Yesterday, December 7th, 1941, a date which will live in infamy, the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the empire of Japan. The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions, and well understand the implications for the very life and safety of our nation. With confidence in our armed forces, with the unbounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph so help us God. I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7th, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese empire."



**December 11, 1941**

## Germany declares war on the United States

Four days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States declaration of war against the Japanese Empire, Nazi Germany declared war against the United States, in response to what was claimed to be a series of provocations by the United States government when the US was still officially neutral during WW2. The decision to declare war was made by Adolf Hitler, apparently offhand, almost without consultation. It has been referred to as Hitler's "most puzzling" decision of WW2.

# Timeline of 1942



**January 20, 1942**

## Wannsee Conference

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Reinhard Heydrich, chief of the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA), convenes the Wannsee Conference in a villa outside Berlin. At this conference, he presents plans to coordinate a European-wide "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" to key officials from the German State and the Nazi Party.

The "Final Solution" was the code name for the systematic, deliberate, physical annihilation of the European Jews. At some still undetermined time in 1941, Hitler authorized this European-wide scheme for mass murder.



**March 1, 1942**

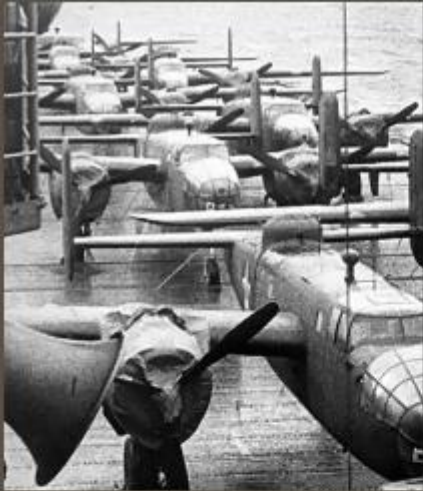
## Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp Established

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The Inspectorate of Concentration Camps opens a second camp at Auschwitz, called Auschwitz-Birkenau or Auschwitz II.



# Timeline of 1942



**April 18, 1942**

## Doolittle Raiders Bomb Japan

The Doolittle Raid, also known as the Tokyo Raid, was an air raid by the United States on the Japanese capital Tokyo and other places on Honshu during World War II. It was the first air operation to strike the Japanese archipelago. Although the raid caused comparatively minor damage, it demonstrated that the Japanese mainland was vulnerable to American air attacks. It served as retaliation for the 7 December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, and provided an important boost to American morale. The raid was planned by, led by, and named after Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle.



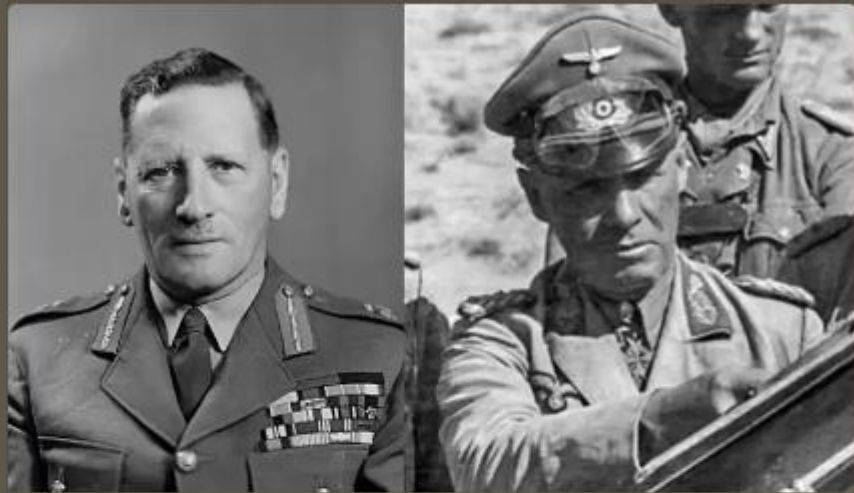
**4 - 7 June 1942**

## The Battle of Midway

The Battle of Midway was a major naval battle in the Pacific Theater of World War II that took place six months after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor and one month after the Battle of the Coral Sea. The United States Navy under Admirals Chester W. Nimitz, Frank J. Fletcher, and Raymond A. Spruance defeated an attacking fleet of the Imperial Japanese Navy under Admirals Isoroku Yamamoto, Chūichi Nagumo, and Nobutake Kondō near Midway Atoll, inflicting devastating damage on the Japanese fleet.



# Timeline of 1942



**1 – 27, July 1942**

## First Battle of El Alamein

The First Battle of El Alamein was a battle of the Western Desert Campaign of WW2, fought in Egypt between Axis forces of the Panzer Army Africa, which included the Afrika Korps under Field Marshal Erwin Rommel (right) and the Allied forces of the Eighth Army under the command of General Claude Auchinleck(left).



**August 7, 1942**

## Battle of Guadalcanal

The Guadalcanal campaign, also known as the Battle of Guadalcanal and codenamed Operation Watchtower by American forces, was a military campaign fought between August 7, 1942 and 9 February 1943 on and around the island of Guadalcanal in the Pacific theater of World War 2. It was the first major land offensive by Allied forces against the Empire of Japan.

# Timeline of 1942



**23 August, 1942**

## Battle of Stalingrad

Nazi Germany and its allies unsuccessfully fought the Soviet Union for control of the city of Stalingrad in Southern Russia. The battle was marked by fierce close-quarters combat and direct assaults on civilians in air raids, with the battle being the epitome of urban warfare. It was the deadliest battle to take place during WW2 and is one of the bloodiest battles in the history of warfare, with an estimated 2 million total casualties. The victory at Stalingrad was a huge moral boost for the Red Army and shifted the balance of power in the favour of the Soviets.



**October 3, 1942**

## First flight of the V2 rocket

At Peenemünde, Germany the first launch of V-2 (German: Vergeltungswaffe 2, meaning 'Retaliation Weapon 2', with the technical name Aggregat 4 (A4) rocket) is successful. The V2 rocket flies 147 kilometres wide and reaches a height of 84.5 kilometres and is therefore the first man-made object reaching space in history.

# Timeline of 1942



**23 October - 11 November, 1942**

## Second battle of El Alamein

The Second Battle of El Alamein was a battle that took place near the Egyptian railway halt of El Alamein. The First Battle of El Alamein and the Battle of Alam el Halfa had prevented the Axis from advancing further into Egypt. In August 1942, General Claude Auchinleck had been relieved as Commander-in-Chief Middle East Command and his successor, Lieutenant-General William Gott was killed on his way to replace him as commander of the Eighth Army. Lieutenant-General Bernard Montgomery was appointed and led the Eighth Army offensive. The British victory was the beginning of the end of the Western Desert Campaign, eliminating the Axis threat to Egypt, the Suez Canal and the Middle Eastern and Persian oil fields. The battle reboost the morale of the Allies, being the first big success against the Axis since Operation Crusader in late 1941. The end of the battle coincided with the Allied invasion of French North Africa in Operation Torch on 8 November, which opened a second front in North Africa.



# Timeline of 1943



**January 14, 1943**

## Casablanca Conference

The Casablanca Conference (codenamed *SYMBOL*) or Anfa Conference was held at the Anfa Hotel in Casablanca, French Morocco, from January 14 to 24, 1943, to plan the Allied European strategy for the next phase of World War 2. In attendance were United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British prime minister Winston Churchill. Also attending were the sovereign of Morocco, Sultan Muhammad V, and representing the Free French forces, Generals Charles de Gaulle and Henri Giraud, but they played minor roles and were not part of the military planning. Soviet general secretary Joseph Stalin declined to attend, citing the ongoing Battle of Stalingrad as requiring his presence in the Soviet Union.



**February 9, 1943**

## US captures Guadalcanal

After six months of fierce fighting on land, sea and air, Guadalcanal is taken by American forces. The campaign ended Japanese expansion plans and perhaps signified the turning point of the war in the Pacific theatre.

# Timeline of 1943



**February 11, 1943**

## Eisenhower becomes commander Europe

The United States General Dwight D. Eisenhower is selected to command the Allied armies in Europe.



**February 18, 1943**

## Joseph Goebbels "Total War"

German Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels gave a speech (also known as the Total War speech) at the Sportpalast in Berlin to a large, carefully selected audience on 18 February 1943, as the tide of World War 2 was turning against Nazi Germany and its Axis allies. The speech is particularly notable as Goebbels almost mentions the Holocaust, when he begins saying "Ausrotten" (extermination), but quickly changes it to Ausschaltung. (exclusion)



# Timeline of 1943



**March 13, 1943**

## Krakow ghetto is liquidated

On March 13 to 14, 1943, SS and police carried out the operation, murdering around 2,000 Jews in the ghetto. The SS transferred another 2,000 Jews those capable of work to the Plaszow forced labor camp. The rest of the Jews were deported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau in two transports, arriving on March 13 and March 16. At Auschwitz-Birkenau, the camp authorities selected 549 persons from the two transports to be registered as prisoners. The others, approximately 2,450 people, were murdered in the gas chambers.



**April 30, 1943**

## Operation Mincemeat

Lt. Jewell's crew release a body bearing false documents near the Spanish coast. Charles Cholmondeley and Ewen Montagu (picture) transported the body to Scotland on 17 April 1943. Later, the body washes up on the Spanish coast and is discovered by a local fisherman. They will go on to mislead the Germans about the site and timing of the Allied invasion of Sicily.



# Timeline of 1943



**April 30, 1943**

## Black May for the U-Boats

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Admiral Karl Dönitz orders the majority of U-Boats to withdraw from the Atlantic because of heavy losses to new Allied anti submarine tactics. By the end of the month, 43 U-boats are lost, compared to 34 Allied ships sunk. This is referred to as "Black May".



**May 24, 1943**

## Josef Mengele comes to Auschwitz

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Josef Mengele (32) comes to Auschwitz the extermination camp in Poland on May 24, 1943. The man who will quickly earn the nickname "the Angel of Death."

Born March 16, 1911, in Bavaria, Mengele studied philosophy under Alfred Rosenberg, whose racial theories highly influenced him. In 1934, already a member of the Nazi Party, he joined the research staff of the Institute for Hereditary Biology and Racial Hygiene.

# Timeline of 1943



**July 5, 1943**

## Battle of Kursk

The Battle of Kursk was a major Second World War engagement between German and Soviet forces on the Eastern Front near Kursk in the Soviet Union, during July and August 1943. The battle began with the launch of the German offensive Operation Citadel, on 5 July, which had the objective of pinching off the Kursk salient with attacks on the base of the salient from north and south simultaneously.



**September 3, 1943**

## Armistice of Cassibile

The Armistice of Cassibile was an armistice signed on 3 September 1943 and made public on 8 September between the Kingdom of Italy and the Allies during World War II, resulting in Italy joining the Allies and what the Germans believed to be the betrayal of Germany by Italy.

# Timeline of 1943



**October 13, 1943**

## Italy declares war on Nazi Germany

On 13 October, Pietro Badoglio and the Kingdom of Italy officially declared war on Nazi Germany. Badoglio continued to head the government for another nine months. On 9 June 1944, following the German rescue of Mussolini, the capture of Rome by the allies, and increasingly strong opposition to his government, Badoglio was replaced by Ivanoe Bonomi of the Labour Democratic Party



**October 14, 1943**

## The second Schweinfurt raid

The second Schweinfurt raid, also called Black Thursday, was a World War II air battle that took place on 14 October 1943, over Nazi Germany between forces of the United States 8th Air Force and German Luftwaffe fighter arm (Jagdweaffe). The American bombers conducted a strategic bombing raid on ball bearing factories to reduce production of these vital parts for all manner of war machines. This was the second attack on the factories at Schweinfurt.



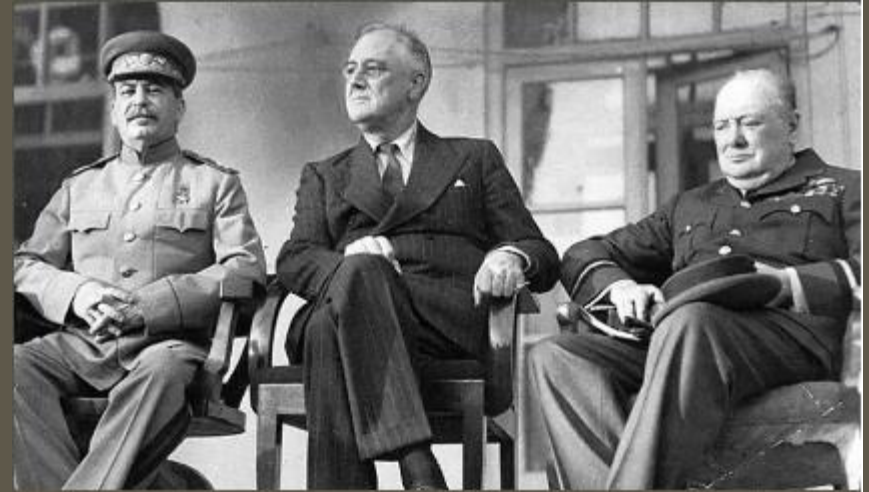
# Timeline of 1943



**November 3, 1943**

## Aktion Erntefest

Operation Harvest Festival was the murder of 43,000 Jews at the Majdanek, Poniatowa and Trawniki concentration camps by the SS, Order Police battalions and Ukrainian Sonderdienst on 3 and 4 November 1943. After a series of Jewish uprisings in ghettos and extermination camps, Heinrich Himmler ordered the murder of the remaining Jewish forced laborers in the Lublin District of German-occupied Poland. Thousands of SS and police personnel arrived in Lublin on 2 November. SS and Police Leader Jakob Sporrenberg was in charge of the operation.



**November 28, 1943**

## The Tehran Conference

US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Leader Joseph Stalin meet in Tehran to discuss war strategy; (on 30 November they establish an agreement concerning a planned June 1944 invasion of Europe codenamed Operation Overlord). Stalin at last got the promise he had been waiting for.

# Timeline of 1943



**December 27, 1943**

## Supreme Allied Commander

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US General Dwight D. Eisenhower becomes the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe. Three days later he was officially named head of Overlord, the invasion of Normandy and to lead the Allied Expeditionary Forces in the invasion of "Fortress Europe".

# Timeline of 1944



**January 14, 1944**

## The Leningrad-Novgorod offensive begins

The Leningrad-Novgorod strategic offensive was a strategic offensive during WW2. It was launched by the Red Army on January 14, 1944 with an attack on the German Army Group North by the Soviet Volkhov and Leningrad fronts, along with part of the 2nd Baltic Front, with a goal of fully lifting the siege of Leningrad. Approximately two weeks later, the Red Army regained control of the Moscow Leningrad railway, and on January 26, 1944 Joseph Stalin declared that the siege of Leningrad was lifted, and that German forces were expelled from the Leningrad Oblast.



**March 7, 1944**

## Operation U - Go commences

The U - Go offensive, or Operation C, was the Japanese offensive launched in March 1944 against forces of the British Empire in the northeast Indian regions of Manipur and the Naga Hills (then administered as part of Assam). Aimed at the Brahmaputra Valley, through the two towns of Imphal and Kohima, the offensive along with the overlapping Ha Go offensive was one of the last major Japanese offensives during the Second World War. The offensive culminated in the Battles of Imphal and Kohima, where the Japanese and their allies were first held and then pushed back.



# Timeline of 1944



**April 8, 1944**

## The Crimean offensive starts

The Crimean offensive (8 April - 12 May 1944), known in German sources as the Battle of the Crimea, was a series of offensives by the Red Army directed at the German-held Crimea. The Red Army's 4th Ukrainian Front engaged the German 17th Army of Army Group A, which consisted of Wehrmacht and Romanian formations. The battles ended with the evacuation of the Crimea by the Germans. German and Romanian forces suffered considerable losses during the evacuation.



**April 8, 1944**

## Battle of Monte Cassino

The Battle of Monte Cassino was a series of four assaults made by the Allies against German forces in Italy during the Italian Campaign of WW2. At the beginning of 1944, the western half of the Winter Line was anchored by Germans holding the Rapido-Gari, Liri and Garigliano valleys and several of the surrounding peaks and ridges. Together, these features formed the Gustav Line. Monte Cassino, a historic hilltop abbey founded in 529 by the Benedict of Nursia, dominated the nearby town of Cassino and the entrances to the Liri and Rapido valleys. Lying in a protected historic zone, it had been left unoccupied by the Germans, although they manned some positions set into the slopes below the abbey's walls.

# Timeline of 1944



**June 6, 1944**

## Operation Overlord

Operation Overlord was the codename for the Battle of Normandy, the Allied operation that launched the successful invasion of German-occupied Western Europe during WW2. The operation was launched on 6 June 1944 (D-Day) with the Normandy landings (Operation Neptune). A 1,200 plane airborne assault preceded an amphibious assault involving more than 5,000 vessels. Nearly 160,000 troops crossed the English Channel on 6 June, and more than two million Allied troops were in France by the end of August.



**June 13, 1944**

## First V1 Flying bomb is launched on London

The Wehrmacht first launched the V1's against London on 13 June 1944, one week after the successful Allied landings in France. At peak, more than one hundred V1's a day were fired at southeast England totalling 9,521, decreasing in number as sites were overrun until October 1944, when the last V1's site in range of Britain was overrun by Allied forces. After this, the Germans directed V1's at the port of Antwerp and at other targets in Belgium, launching a further 2,448 V1's. The attacks stopped only a month before the war in Europe ended, when the last launch site in the Low Countries was overrun on 29 March 1945.



# Timeline of 1944



**July 18, 1944**

## Operation Goodwood

Operation Goodwood is launched by British and Canadian forces, with hundreds of tanks heading towards Caen. In what some claim as the largest tank battle fought by the British Army, almost 5,000 casualties would be suffered and over 300 tanks lost or damaged.



**July 25, 1944**

## Paris is liberated

The liberation of Paris was a military battle that took place during WW2 from 19 August 1944 until the German garrison surrendered the French capital on 25 August 1944. Paris had been occupied by Nazi Germany since the signing of the Second Compiègne Armistice on 22 June 1940, after which the Wehrmacht occupied northern and western France. The liberation began when the French Forces of the Interior the military structure of the French Resistance staged an uprising against the German garrison upon the approach of the US Third Army, led by General George Patton. On the night of 24 August, elements of General Philippe Leclerc's 2nd French Armored Division made their way into Paris and arrived at the Hôtel de Ville shortly before midnight. The next morning, 25 August, the bulk of the 2nd Armored Division and US 4th Infantry Division and other allied units entered the city. Dietrich von Choltitz, commander of the German garrison and the military governor of Paris, surrendered to the French at the Hôtel Le Meurice, the newly established French headquarters. General Charles de Gaulle of the French Army arrived to assume control of the city as head of the Provisional Government of the French Republic.



# Timeline of 1944



**September 17, 1944**

## Operation Market Garden

Operation Market Garden was an Allied military operation during the Second World War fought in the Netherlands from 17 to 27 September 1944. Its objective was to create a 64 mi (103 km) salient into German territory with a bridgehead over the River Rhine, creating an Allied invasion route into northern Germany. This was to be achieved by two sub-operations: seizing nine bridges with combined U.S. and British airborne forces (Market) followed by land forces swiftly following over the bridges (Garden). The airborne operation was planned and undertaken by the First Allied Airborne Army with the land operation by XXX Corps of the British Second Army. Although the operation succeeded in liberating the Dutch cities of Eindhoven and Nijmegen along with many towns, and limited V2 rocket launching sites, it failed to secure a bridgehead over the Rhine, with the advance being halted at the river.



**December 16, 1944**

## Battle of the Bulge

The Battle of the Bulge, also known as the Ardennes Offensive, was the last major German offensive campaign on the Western Front during WW2. The battle lasted from 16 December 1944 to 28 January 1945 at the end of the war in Europe. It was launched through the densely forested Ardennes region between Belgium and Luxembourg. It overlapped with the Alsace Offensive and subsequently the Colmar Pocket, another series of battles launched by the Germans in support of the Ardennes thrust. After their defeat, Germany would retreat for the remainder of the war.

# Timeline of 1945



**January 27, 1945**

## Vistula - Oder offensive

January 12, 1945, the Red Army launched the massive Vistula - Oder Offensive into German occupied Poland on the Eastern Front in the European theatre of WW2.

The army made a major advance into German held territory, capturing Kraków, Warsaw and Poznań. The Red Army had built up their strength around a number of key bridgeheads, with two fronts commanded by Marshal Georgy Zhukov and Marshal Ivan Konev. Against them, the German Army Group A, led by Colonel-General Josef Harpe, was outnumbered five to one. Within days, German commandants evacuated the concentration camps, sending the prisoners on their death marches to the west, where ethnic Germans also started fleeing.

In a little over two weeks, the Red Army had advanced 480 kilometres from the Vistula to the Oder, only 69 kilometres from Berlin, which was undefended. However, Zhukov called a halt, owing to continued German resistance on his northern flank (Pomerania), and the advance on Berlin had to be delayed until April.



**January 22, 1945**

## Soviet forces cross the Oder river

On January 22nd, Soviet forces have reached the Oder River and begin crossing it into German territory and are now less than 50 miles from Berlin. Hitler reorganizes his armies in an attempt to stem the bleeding but all is for naught. While stalling Soviet forces at Kustrin, the Red Army claims some 50 miles as the war front in February. Poznan falls to the Soviets on the 22nd and Lower Silesia falls two days later. The Soviets then begin a new offensive through Hungary into Austria.



# Timeline of 1945



**January 24, 1945**

## Army Group Vistula is formed

Army Group Vistula was an Army Group of the Wehrmacht, formed on 24 January 1945. It lasted for 105 days, having been put together from elements of Army Group A (shattered in the Soviet Vistula Oder Offensive), Army Group Centre (similarly largely destroyed in the East Prussian Offensive), and a variety of new or ad hoc formations. It was formed to protect Berlin from the Soviet armies advancing from the Vistula River.



**January 27, 1945**

## Auschwitz is liberated

As the Soviet Red Army approached Auschwitz in January 1945, toward the end of the war, the SS sent most of the camp's population west on a death march to camps inside Germany and Austria. Soviet troops entered the camp on 27 January 1945, a day commemorated since 2005 as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. In the decades after the war, survivors such as Primo Levi, Viktor Frankl, and Elie Wiesel wrote memoirs of their experiences, and the camp became a dominant symbol of the Holocaust. In 1947 Poland founded the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum on the site of Auschwitz I and II, and in 1979 it was named a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.



# Timeline of 1945



**April 16, 1945**

## Battle of Berlin begins

The Battle of Berlin, designated as the Berlin Strategic Offensive Operation by the Soviet Union, and also known as the Fall of Berlin, was one of the last major offensives of the European theatre of WW2.

After the Vistula Oder Offensive of January and February 1945, the Red Army had temporarily halted on a line 60 km east of Berlin. On 9 March, Germany established its defence plan for the city with Operation Clausewitz. The first defensive preparations at the outskirts of Berlin were made on 20 March, under the newly appointed commander of Army Group Vistula, General Gotthard Heinrici.



**April 20, 1945**

## Hitler's last birthday

Adolf Hitler celebrates his 56th birthday in his Führerbunker in Berlin. Reports state that he is in an unhealthy state, shaking with Parkinson's disease, extremely nervous and severely depressed.

# Timeline of 1945



**April 23, 1945**

## Hermann Göring claims leadership

Hermann Göring sends a radiogram to Hitler's bunker, asking to be declared Hitler's successor. He proclaims that if he gets no response by 10 PM, he will assume Hitler is incapacitated and assume leadership of the Reich. Furious, Hitler strips him of all his offices and expels him from the Nazi Party.



**April 24, 1945**

## Heinrich Himmler tries to save himself

Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler, ignoring the orders of Adolf Hitler, makes a secret surrender offer to the Allies, (led by Count Folke Bernadotte, head of the Red Cross), provided that the Red Army is not involved. Himmler secretly attempted to start peace negotiations with Eisenhower in a bid to escape a war crimes trial. But Eisenhower refused to have anything to do with Himmler.

# Timeline of 1945



**April 29, 1945**

## Hitler marries Eva Braun

Hitler marries his long time mistress and companion Eva Braun as she wanted to die as Mrs Hitler. In the picture Hitler and Eva Braun in earlier days in Berchtesgaden with Hitler's dog a German Shepperd called Blondi.



**April 29, 1945**

## Dachau is liberated

Germany's first concentration camp Dachau, near München, is liberated by US troops of the 42nd and 45th Infantry Divisions and the 20th Armored Division.



# Timeline of 1945



**April 30, 1945**

## Hitler and his wife commit suicide

Hitler and his wife Eva Braun commit suicide with a combination of poison and a gunshot. Before he dies, he dictates his last will and testament. In it Joseph Goebbels is appointed Reich Chancellor and Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz is appointed Reich President.



**May 7, 1945**

## Germany surrenders

Germany surrenders unconditionally to the Allies at the Western Allied Headquarters in Rheims, France at 2:41 a.m. In accordance with orders from Reich President Karl Dönitz, General Alfred Jodl signs for Germany.

# Timeline of 1945



**May 23, 1945**

## Himmler commits suicide

Heinrich Himmler by now was on the run. He disguised himself and carried false identity papers under the name of Sergeant Heinrich Hitzinger. He headed south on 11 May to Friedrichskoog, without a final destination in mind. They were stopped and detained at a checkpoint set up by former Soviet prisoners of war where he was recognized. Himmler was brought to the British 31st Civilian Interrogation Camp near Lüneburg, on May 23. When the doctor Wells examined him he saw a dark object in a gap in Himmler's lower jaw. Suddenly Himmler bit on the cyanide capsule and was dead within 15 minutes.



**August 6, 1945**

## US bomber 'Enola Gay' bombs Hiroshima

The American B-29 bomber "Enola Gay" dropped the world's first atomic bomb ("Little Boy") over the Japanese city of Hiroshima. The explosion instantly killed an estimated 80,000 people and tens of thousands more would later die of radiation exposure.

# Timeline of 1945



**August 9, 1945**

## US bomber 'Bockscar' bombs Nagasaki

Three days later, a second B-29 "Bockscar" dropped another atomic bomb (the "Fat Man") on Nagasaki, killing an estimated 40,000 people.



**August 15, 1945**

## Japan's Emperor Hirohito announces surrender

Japan's Emperor Hirohito announced his country's unconditional surrender in WW2 in a radio address on August 15, 1945 citing the devastating power of "a new and most cruel bomb" referring to the two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



# Timeline of 1945



**September 2, 1945**

## The end of World War 2

The Japanese Instrument of Surrender was the written agreement that formalized the surrender of the Empire of Japan, marking the end of hostilities in WW2. It was signed by representatives from the Empire of Japan and from the Allied nations: the United States of America, the Republic of China, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of Canada, the Provisional Government of the French Republic, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Dominion of New Zealand. The signing took place on the deck of USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on 2 September 1945.



**November 20, 1945**

## Start of the Nuremberg Trials

The Nuremberg trials were held by the Allies against representatives of the defeated Nazi Germany, for plotting and carrying out invasions of other countries, and other crimes, in WW2. Between 1939 and 1945, Nazi Germany invaded many countries across Europe, inflicting 27 million deaths in the Soviet Union alone. Proposals for how to punish the defeated Nazi leaders ranged from a show trial (the Soviet Union) to summary executions (the United Kingdom). In mid-1945, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States agreed to convene a joint tribunal in Nuremberg, with the Nuremberg Charter as its legal instrument. Between 20 November 1945 and 1 October 1946, the International Military Tribunal (IMT) tried 21 of the most important surviving leaders of Nazi Germany in the political, military, and economic spheres, as well as six German organizations. The purpose of the trial was not just to convict the defendants but also to assemble irrefutable evidence of Nazi crimes, offer a history lesson to the defeated Germans, and delegitimize the traditional German elite.