



AUSA BACKGROUND BRIEF

WORLD WAR II — A SELECTED CHRONOLOGY*



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The five-year Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of World War II is underway. Most commemorative activities are keyed to significant military and political events of the war period. This chronology of World War II, though not exhaustive, serves as a reminder of many of the more significant events of the war and will be of use to those who need factual information.

1939

- Sep 1: Germany invades Poland.
- Sep 3: Great Britain and France declare war on Germany.
- Sep 17: Soviet forces enter Poland.
- Sep 27: Conquest of Poland is completed.
- Nov 30: Soviets invade Finland.

1940

- Mar 12: Russo-Finnish war ends.
- Apr 9: Germans overrun Denmark, invade Norway.
- May 10: Germany invades Low Countries; Netherlands surrenders on May 14, Belgium on May 28.
Churchill replaces Chamberlain as British Prime Minister.
- May 29-Jun 2: Allied forces evacuate Dunkirk.
- Jun 10: German conquest of Norway completed.
Italy declares war on France and Great Britain.
- Jun 22: France signs armistice with Germany.
- Jun 24: France signs armistice with Italy.
- Sep 16: U.S. Selective Service bill enacted.
- Sep 27: Japan forms military alliance with Germany and Italy.
- Oct 28: Italy attacks Greece.

1941

- Mar 11: U.S. Lend-Lease bill enacted.
- Apr 6: Germany invades Yugoslavia and Greece. Belgrade falls on Apr 17, Athens on Apr 27.
- Apr 13: Russo-Japanese neutrality pact is signed.
- Jun 22: Germany invades USSR.
- Dec 7: Japanese make surprise air attack on Pearl Harbor.
- Dec 8: U.S. declares war on Japan.
- Dec 10: Japanese land on Luzon, Philippine Islands.
- Dec 11: Germany and Italy declare war on U.S.; U.S. makes counter declaration of war.
- Dec 23: Wake Island garrison surrenders to Japanese.
- Dec 25: Japanese take Hong Kong.

1942

- Jan 1: United Nations Pact is signed in Washington, D.C.
Jan 2: Manila is occupied by Japanese.
Jan 23: Japanese invade Bismarck and Bougainville, Solomon Islands.
Jan 26: U.S. troops arrive in Ireland.
Feb 15: Singapore is surrendered to Japanese.
Feb 27-Mar 1: Allied sea forces overwhelmed in Battle of Java Sea.
Mar 8: Japanese land on New Guinea.
Apr 9: Bataan is surrendered to Japanese.
Apr 18: U.S. bombers raid Tokyo, Yokohama, Kobe, and Nagoya.
May 4: U.S. planes attack Japanese fleet near Tulagi, Solomon Islands.
May 6: Surrender of Corregidor to Japanese.
May 7-8: Battle of the Coral Sea.
Jun 3-6: Battle of Midway, first decisive defeat of Japanese. Enemy force lands troops on the Aleutians.
Jul 1: British 8th Army stops Rommel's drive at El Alamein.
Jul 4: U.S. planes begin operations in Europe.
Aug 7: U.S. Marines invade southern Solomons, land on Guadalcanal; first U.S. offensive land action in WWII.
Aug 19: British troops raid Dieppe, on French coast.
Aug 23-25: Naval Battle of the Eastern Solomons.
Oct 11-12: Naval Battle of Cape Esperance (Solomons).
Oct 13: U.S. Army and Marines in the Battle of the Solomons.
Oct 23: El Alamein offensive begins in Egypt.
Nov 8: U.S. forces land at Morocco and Algeria.
Nov 12-15: Naval Battle of Guadalcanal; Japanese fail to regain island.

1943

- Jan 14: Roosevelt and Churchill meet in Casablanca.
Jan 27: First U.S. bomber attack on Germany.
Feb 2: Moscow reports defeat of Germans at Stalingrad.
Feb 6: North African Theater commanded by Eisenhower is announced.
Feb 20-25: Battle of Kasserine Pass, Tunisia.
May 13: Tunisian Campaign concludes.
Jun 30: MacArthur launches broad offensive.
Jul 10: British, Canadian, U.S. troops land on Sicily.
Aug 1: U.S. Liberators attack Ploesti oil refineries in Romania.
Aug 17: Conquest of Sicily is completed with fall of Messina.
Aug 17-24: Roosevelt and Churchill confer at Quebec
Sep 3: European continent is invaded; British forces cross Straits of Messina and land on southern Italy.
Sep 8: Eisenhower announces unconditional surrender of Italy.
Sep 9: U.S. 5th Army forces land at Gulf of Salerno, Italy.
Oct 1: Allies secure Naples, Italy.
Oct 13: Italy declares war on Germany.
Nov 22-26: Roosevelt, Churchill, Chiang Kai-shek meet at Cairo.
Nov 28-Dec 1: Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin confer at Tehran, Iran.
Dec 24: Eisenhower appointed supreme allied commander for European invasion.

1944

- Jan 22: Allied forces land at Anzio, Italy.
Feb 1-7: U.S. forces invade and capture Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands; first offensive against Japanese territory.
Feb 18-22: U.S. forces invade and occupy Eniwetok, Marshall Islands.
Feb 24: Merrill's Marauders (U.S. 5307th Prov. Unit) start expedition to harass Japanese in Burma.
May 18: Cassino, Italy, falls to Allies.
Jun 2: U.S. planes make first shuttle raid from Italian to Russian bases.
Jun 4: Rome falls to Allies.
Jun 6: U.S., British, Canadian troops invade Europe, landing on Normandy coast of France.
Jun 13: First robot bomb attack is made on London.
Jun 15: China-based B-29s bomb Kyushu Island, Japan; first B-29 attack on Japan.
Jun 15-Jul 9: U.S. forces capture Saipan in the Marianas Islands.
Jun 19-20: First Battle of Philippine Sea.
Jul 21- Aug 10: U.S. troops invade and capture Guam and Tinian, Marianas Islands.
Jul 25: U.S. forces launch offensive to break out of Cotentin Peninsula, France.
Aug 15: Allied troops land in southern France.
Aug 25: Enemy forces in Paris surrender.
Sep 11: Allied troops enter Germany.
Sep 15-30: U.S. troops capture Morotai Island, Netherlands East Indies, and the Palaun islands.
Sep 17-18: British, U.S. airborne troops land in Arnhem, Holland.
Oct 6: Soviets invade Hungary.
Oct 9: Announcement is made of proposed international organization, "The United Nations."
Oct 15: Allies land in Greece, take Athens. Hungary asks for armistice.
Oct 18: Soviets advance into Czechoslovakia.
Oct 19: Soviets cross border into East Prussia.
Oct 20: U.S. forces invade Leyte, Philippines.
Oct 23-26: Second Battle of Philippine Sea (Battle for Leyte Gulf).
Nov 16: Allies open offensive against Nazis on 450-mile front.
Nov 24: B-29s from Saipan bomb Tokyo; first attack on Japanese capital by land-based planes.
Dec 15: U.S. forces land on Mindoro Island, Philippines.
Dec 16: Germans launch Ardennes counteroffensive (Battle of the Bulge).
Dec 27: Germany's offensive into Belgium and Luxembourg is halted.

1945

- Jan 1: Germans make final major air effort against Allies.
Jan 9: U.S. troops invade Luzon, Philippines.
Jan 16: U.S. 1st and 3d Armies meet at Houffalize, Belgium; ends the Battle of the Bulge.
Jan 17: Soviets capture Warsaw, Poland.
Feb 3: American troops re-enter Manila.
Feb 4-11: Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin confer at Yalta.

Feb 15: U.S. forces land on Bataan.
 Feb 16: U.S. forces land on Corregidor.
 Feb 19: U.S. Marines go ashore on Iwo Jima.
 Feb 28: U.S. troops invade Palawan, Philippines.
 Mar 7: 9th Armored Division, III Corps, seizes bridge over the Rhine River at Remagen intact.
 Mar 10: Americans land on Mindanao, Philippine Islands.
 Mar 22-24: Allied troops cross the Rhine in force.
 Mar 26: U.S. troops land on Cebu Island, Philippines.
 Apr 1: U.S. 10th Army invades Okinawa, Ryukyus.
 Apr 12: Roosevelt dies at Warm Springs, Ga.
 Apr 13: Soviet troops capture Vienna.
 Apr 20: Americans capture Nurnberg.
 Apr 21: Red Army enters Berlin.
 Apr 25: Advance Soviet and U.S. forces in Torgau area, on the Elbe River.
 Apr 28: Mussolini is executed by Italian patriots.
 Apr 29: Terms for unconditional surrender of Nazis in Italy and part of Austria are signed.
 Apr 30: U.S. 7th Army takes Munich.
 May 1: Hitler is reported dead; Admiral Doenitz is successor.
 May 2: Soviet troops take Berlin.
 May 3: British recapture Rangoon, Burma.
 May 5: German Army Group G surrenders.
 May 7: Germany surrenders unconditionally.
 Jun 22: Japanese resistance on Okinawa ceases.
 Jul 5: Philippine Campaign ends.
 Jul 17-Aug 2: Big Three powers meet at Potsdam, Germany.
 Aug 1: 800 B-29s raid Japan.
 Aug 6: Atomic bomb is dropped on Hiroshima, Japan.
 Aug 8: USSR declares war on Japan.
 Aug 9: Atomic bomb is dropped on Nagasaki, Japan.
 Aug 14: Truman announces acceptance by Japan of terms of the Potsdam Declaration (unconditional surrender).
 Aug 30: Occupation forces arrive in Japan.
 Sep 2: Japanese officials formally sign unconditional surrender to Allied powers in Tokyo Bay.

*Keegan, John, The Second World War. New York: Viking Penguin, 1990.

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