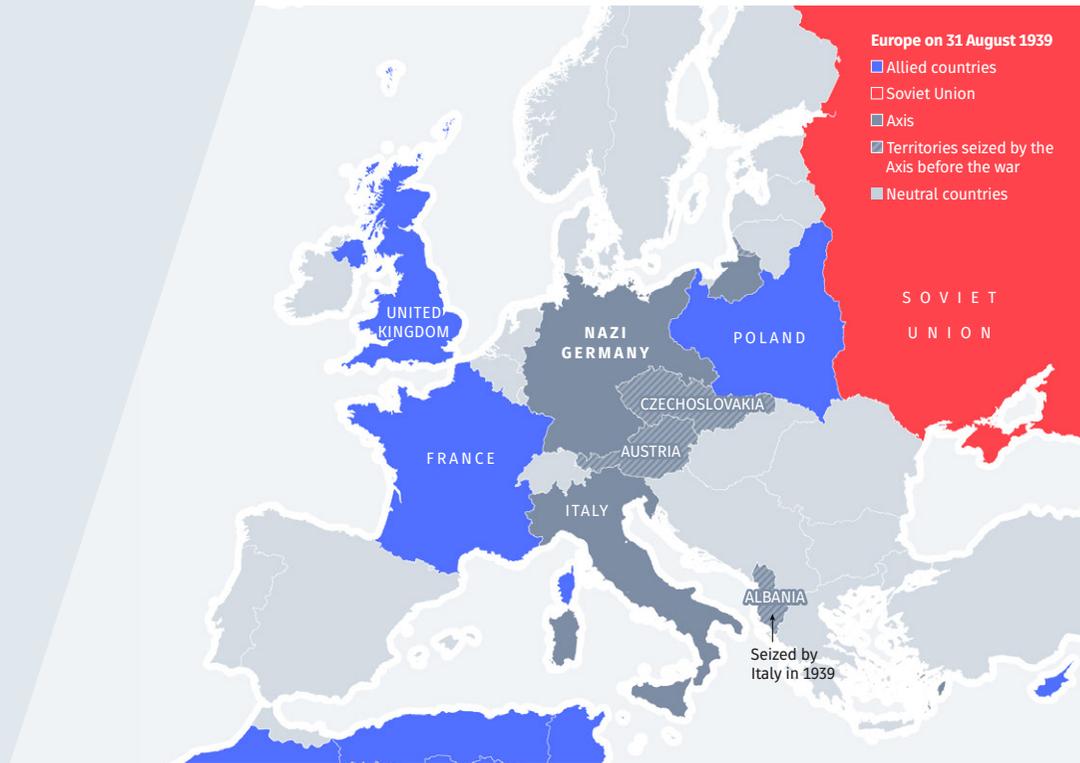


THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939–45

Westerplatte near Gdańsk. It was the target of the first attack by German troops in World War II (on September 1, 1939). The photo shows Westerplatte after seven days of fierce defense by the Polish garrison against the overwhelming German forces.



CIRCUMSTANCES



Poland, Brześć Litewski – German-Russian victory parade

1939

14 March

Slovakia supported by Germany declares independence from Czechoslovakia. On 15 March Germany invades Czechoslovakia and establishes the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

23 August

Signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact – pact of non-aggression between Nazi Germany and the USSR. Its secret protocol concerned the division of Central Europe between the two powers.

1938

17 March

Anschluss of Austria whereby Austria is incorporated into Germany.

30 September

Munich Agreement – part of Czechoslovakia is incorporated by Germany. To keep the peace European powers agreed to Hitler's demands.

1 September

German attack on Poland, triggering the Second World War ↑.

17 September

USSR attack on Poland and the incorporation of its eastern borderlands, more than one-half of Polish territory.

1933

30 January

Adolf Hitler becomes the Chancellor of Germany. →



1936

25 November

Nazi Germany and Japan sign the Anti-Comintern Pact, directed against communism and the USSR. Italy joins the pact in 1937.

1937

7 July

Japanese attack on China, beginning of the Japanese-Chinese War.

AXIS AND ALLIES

Key figures:

Adolf Hitler – leader of Nazi Germany



Benito Mussolini – leader of Italy



Hirohito – Emperor of Japan



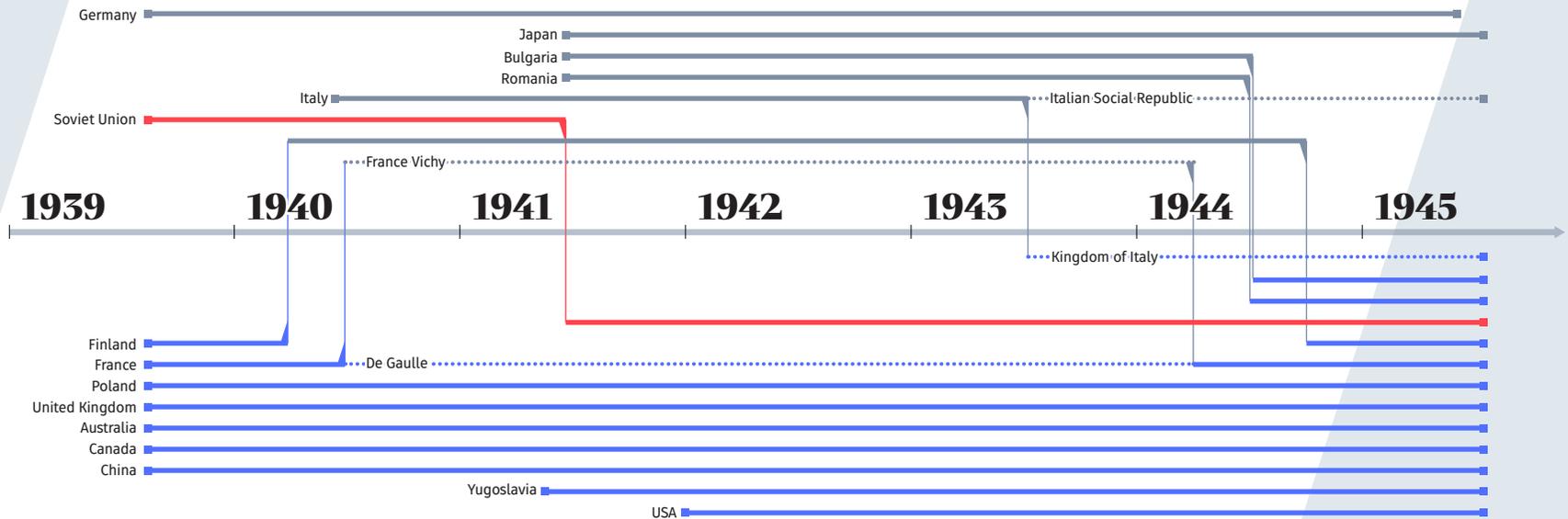
Boris III – Tsar of Bulgaria

Miklós Horthy – Regent of Hungary

Michael I – King of Romania

Philippe Pétain – Chief of State of so-called Vichy France

Axis powers and their supporters



Selected Allies and countries fighting the Axis



Winston Churchill – Prime Minister of the UK



Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) – President of the USA



Chiang Kai-shek – leader of China

Charles de Gaulle – leader of the French resistance and Prime Minister

Josip Broz Tito – leader of the communist resistance

Władysław Sikorski – Prime Minister of the Polish government-in-exile

Joseph Stalin – leader of the USSR



POLITICS



1939

1 September
German attack on Poland. ↑ Start of the Second World War.

3 September
UK and France declare war on Germany.

17 September
USSR attack on Poland and the incorporation of its eastern borderlands, more than one-half of Polish territory.

28 September
Capitulation of Warsaw, German occupation of the western half of Poland.

1940

June
USSR incorporates the Baltic States.

13 March 1940
After the Winter War with Finland (30.11.39-13.03.40) → the USSR incorporates some important territories but fails to create a Finish SSR.

22 June
Germany defeated France after conquering Luxembourg, Netherlands and Belgium in May. In the southern half of France, Germany created a puppet French State (État français) – so-called Vichy France.

1941

11 March
Lend-Lease policy – USA's financial and military aid for the countries fighting the Axis.

22 June
USSR joins the Allies after German attack.

14 August
Signing of the Atlantic Charter by Roosevelt and Churchill. The document stated that every nation has a right to self-determination.

8 December
USA joins the Allies after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (Hawaii). →

9 December
China joins the Allies against the Axis.



1942

1 January
Declaration of the United Nations signed by the Big Four (USA, UK, USSR and China). The document formalized the alliance against the Axis and was a basis for the United Nations.



1943

14–24 January
Casablanca Conference where Churchill, Roosevelt and de Gaulle decided to fight until an unconditional surrender (without any guarantees to the defeated party) of Germany, Italy and Japan.

22–26 November
First Cairo Conference where Chiang Kai-shek, Churchill and Roosevelt discussed fighting Japan until its unconditional surrender and seized territories had been reclaimed.

28 November – 1 December
Tehran Conference. First meeting of the Big Three – Churchill (UK), Roosevelt (USA) and Stalin (USSR). The leaders decided to open a new front in France.



1945

4–11 February
Yalta Conference where the Big Three ↑ decided on the division of Germany into four occupation zones and set the Polish eastern border on the Curzon line. The conference effectively allowed the USSR to expand its sphere of influence to Central Europe.

25 April – 26 June
San Francisco Conference and foundation of the United Nations.

8 May
Unconditional surrender of Germany. The end of war in Europe.

17 July – 2 August

Potsdam Conference where the Big Three established rules by which the Allies would govern Germany, set the new borders of Germany and Poland, decided on the resettlement of Germans and called on Japan to surrender.

2 September
Unconditional surrender of Japan. The end of war in the Pacific theatre.

RESISTANCE MOVEMENT IN OCCUPIED EUROPE

Uprisings in Europe:



Warsaw Ghetto

19 April – 16 May
Casualties: up to 40,000 insurgents and civilians.



Warsaw Uprising in Poland, 1944. Polish Home Army soldiers defending a barricade

Warsaw

1 August – 2 October
Casualties: 150–180,000 insurgents and civilians. Insurgents were not helped by Soviet forces stationed on the right bank of the Vistula River.

Prague

5–9 May
Casualties: 8–9,000 insurgents and civilians



A picture from Jürgen Stroop's report for Heinrich Himmler about liquidation of Warsaw Ghetto, May 1943. Original German title: These bandits offered armed resistance.

Paris

19–25 August
Casualties: 1–1,300 insurgents and civilians. Insurgents were helped by the Allied forces.

Slovakia

29 August – 28 October
Casualties: 4,000 insurgents and civilians

Poland

Polish Underground State dependent on the Polish government-in-exile in London.

The Underground State consisted of military and civilian structures operating in German- and Soviet-occupied Poland.

The Home Army in 1944:
400,000 soldiers

Soldiers of 27th Division in the forests of Vohlynia



France

Free France – French government-in-exile and its army led by Charles de Gaulle. Operated in occupied France and its colonies.

French army in 1944:
400,000 soldiers

Free France forces in August 1944:
300,000 soldiers



'Nicole' a French partisan who captured 25 Nazis in the Chartres area, in addition to liquidating others, poses with the automatic rifle with which she is most proficient, 1944

Yugoslavia

Two rival partisan organizations:

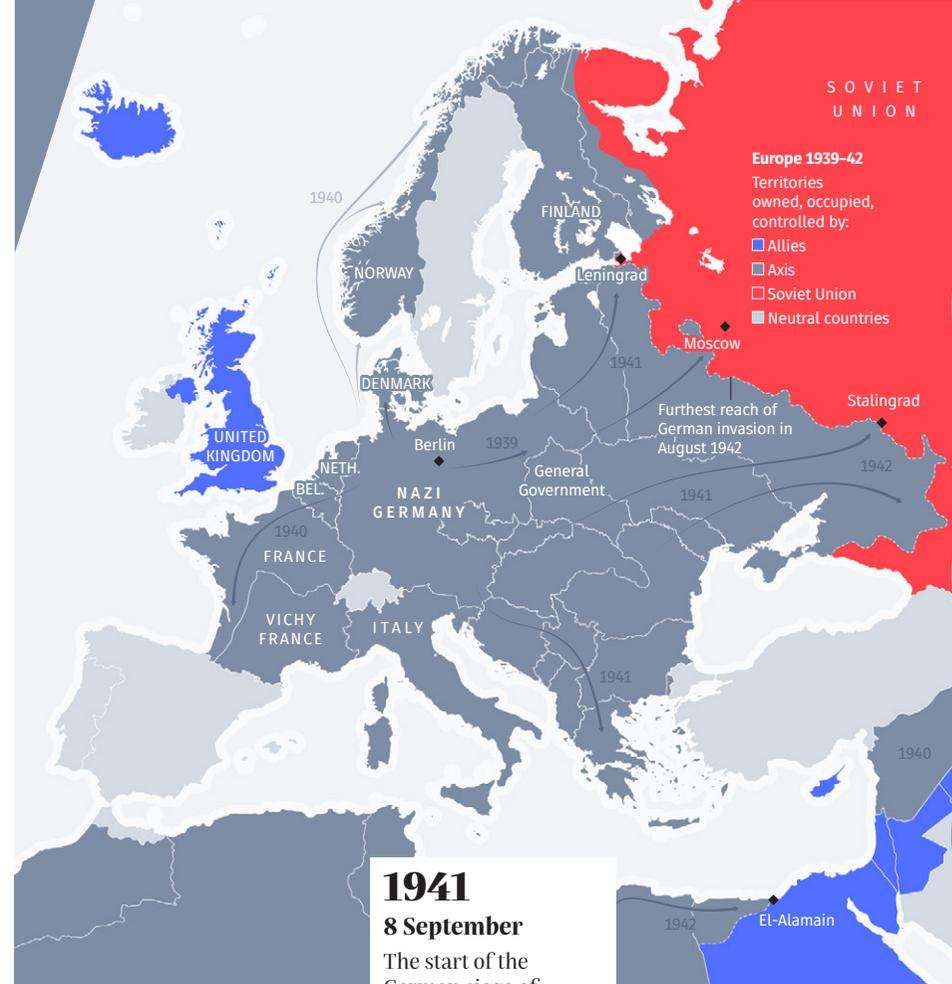
National Liberation Army – communist partisan organization lead by Josip Broz Tito. The partisans managed to liberate the country from the Nazis before the arrival of the Soviet Army (with help from the Allies).

National Liberation Army in 1944:
800,000 soldiers

Chetniks – led by Draža Mihailović, their allegiance was to the Yugoslav government-in-exile.

Chetniks in 1944:
170,000 soldiers

WAR IN EUROPE AND NORTH AFRICA



1939

1 September – 6 October

Polish September Campaign. German army defeats Polish forces. At the same time Poland is attacked by the USSR and falls under German and Soviet occupation.

1940

9 April – 10 June

German attack on Denmark and Norway, beginning the German occupation of these countries.

1941

8 September

The start of the German siege of Leningrad.

30 November 1939 – 13 March 1940

Winter War. Soviet attack on Finland. After a surprisingly long defence by Finnish forces, the USSR incorporates some important territories but fails to create a Finnish SSR.

10 May – 25 June

Battle of France. German attack on France, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg, which fall under German occupation.

10 July – 31 October

Battle of Britain. UK's successful defence against German air force attacks.

2 October 1941 – 7 January 1942

Battle of Moscow. Soviets fend off an attack by the German army. Start of the Soviet counter-offensive in the centre and northern front.

Continued on the next page

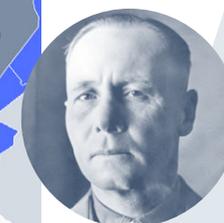
Key figures:



Friedrich Paulus – German Field Marshal



Heinz Guderian – German General



Erwin Rommel – German Field Marshal, commander of German Afrika Korps



Georgy Zhukov – Marshal of the Soviet Union

1942

17 July 1942 –
2 February 1943

Battle of Stalingrad.
Soviet victory over
Germany – the turning
point of the war on the
eastern front.

23 October –
11 November

Second battle of
El-Alamain.
Important victory of
the Allies against the
Axis in North Africa.

1943

5 July – 23 August

Battle of Kursk.
Soviet victory over
Germany. Start of the
Red Army offensive on
the Eastern front.

1944

17 January –
18 May

Battle of Monte
Cassino. Allied victory
over Axis forces in Italy.

6 June – 31 August

Operation Overlord.
Landing in Normandy
and Allied offensive in
France.

1945

12 January –
4 February

Red Army winter
offensive. Soviets
capture Poland west of
the Vistula River and
advance on Berlin.

16 April – 2 May
Battle of Berlin.
Soviet victory and fall
of Nazi Germany.

8–16 November

Operation Torch.
Allied invasion
of North Africa
(Casablanca, Oran and
Algiers) controlled by
Vichy France. Results
in Allied victory.

10 July –
8 September

Allied attack on Sicily.
The southern part of
Italy falls under
Allied rule.

27 January

End of the siege of
Leningrad. Over two-
year-long (900 days)
siege causes mass
death from starvation
of almost 1,000,000
civilians. Finally, the
Soviets lift the siege
of the city.

15 August

Operation Dragoon.
Allied attack on
southern France.

19–25 August

Liberation of Paris by
the Western Allies.

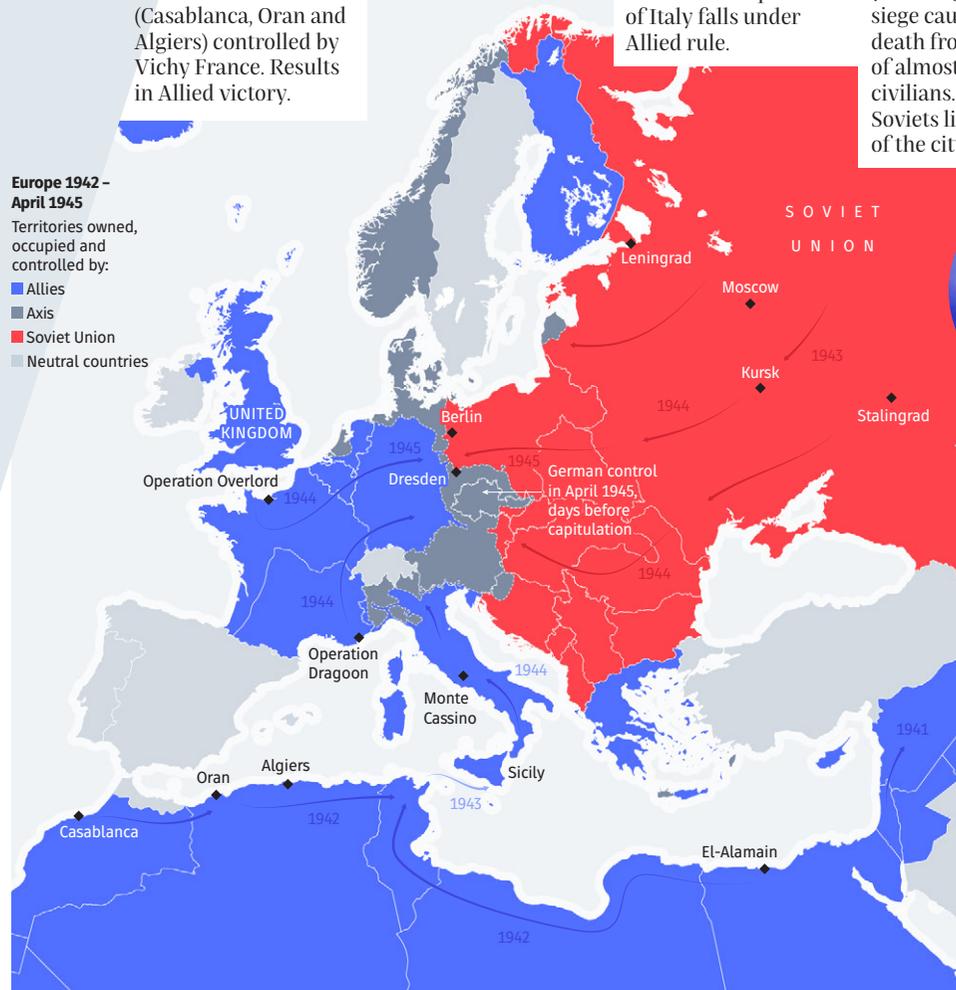
13–15 February

Allied bombing of
Dresden. Completely
destroys the city and
causes the death of
thousands of civilians.

Europe 1942 – April 1945

Territories owned,
occupied and
controlled by:

- Allies
- Axis
- Soviet Union
- Neutral countries



Dwight D. Eisenhower –
Supreme Commander
of the Allied forces in
Europe



George Patton –
American General



Bernard Montgomery
– British Field Marshal

This subject in popular culture:

Dunkirk
(2017, film)

Fury (2014, film)

City of Thieves
(2008, book)

Stalingrad
(1993, film)

Das Boot
(1981, film)

A Bridge too Far
(1977, film)

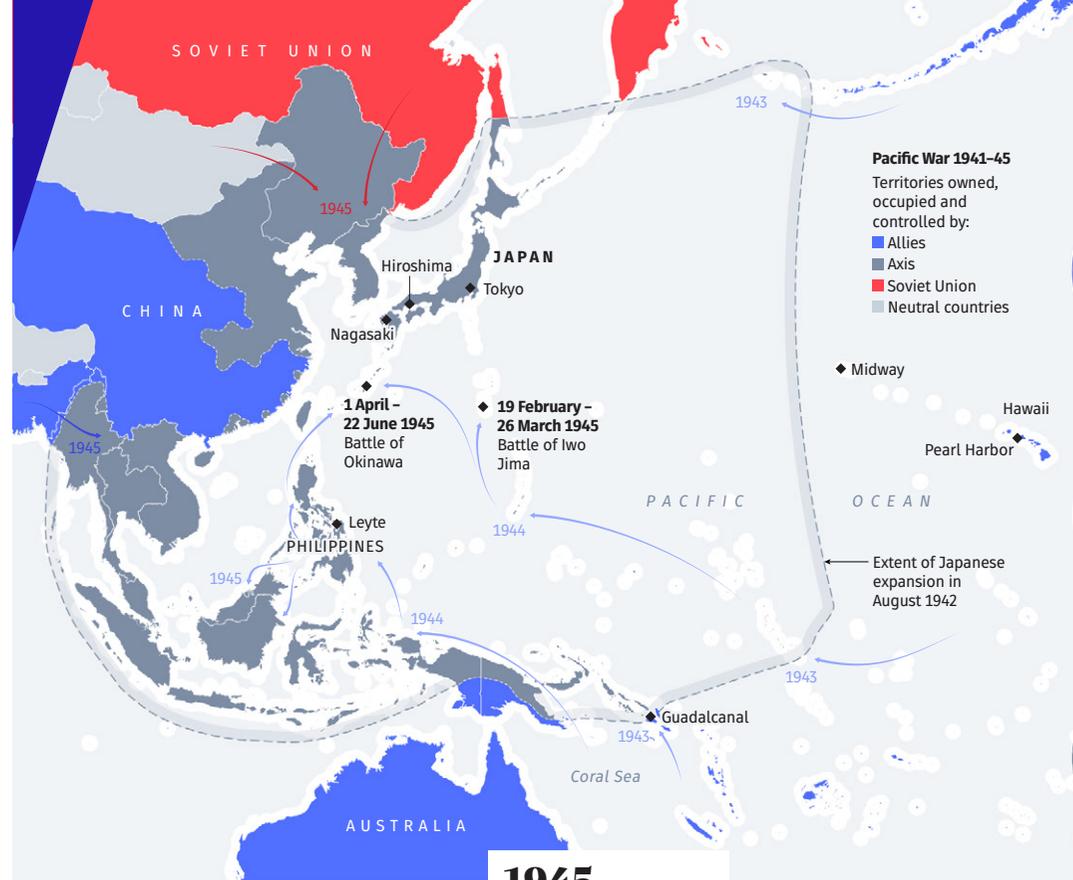
*They Fought for
Their Country*
(1975, film)

Battle of Britain
(1969, film)

Fate of a Man
(1959, film)

Kanal
(1957, film)

PACIFIC WAR



1941

7 December

Attack on Pearl Harbor. Japanese attack on Hawaii. USA joins the war against the Axis.

1942

4-8 May

Battle of the Coral Sea. Naval battle between Japanese and American-Australian forces. Allied forces stop the Japanese advance into the Pacific.

4-7 June

Battle of Midway. American victory against Japan in a naval and air battle. First and decisive American victory in the Pacific War.

7 August 1942 – 9 February 1943

Guadalcanal Campaign. Major Allied victory over Japan in a series of land battles. Start of the American offensive in the Pacific.

1944

17 October – 26 December

Battle of Leyte. Allied victory, first step in freeing the Philippines from Japanese occupation.

1945

6 August

First American nuclear attack on Hiroshima, Japan.

9 August

Second and last American nuclear attack, on Nagasaki, Japan.

Soviet attack on Manchukuo (Japanese puppet state) in Manchuria.

Key figures:



Douglas MacArthur
– Supreme Commander of Allied forces in the South West Pacific Area



Chester W. Nimitz
– Fleet admiral of the United States Navy



Hideki Tojo
– Japanese Supreme Military Leader

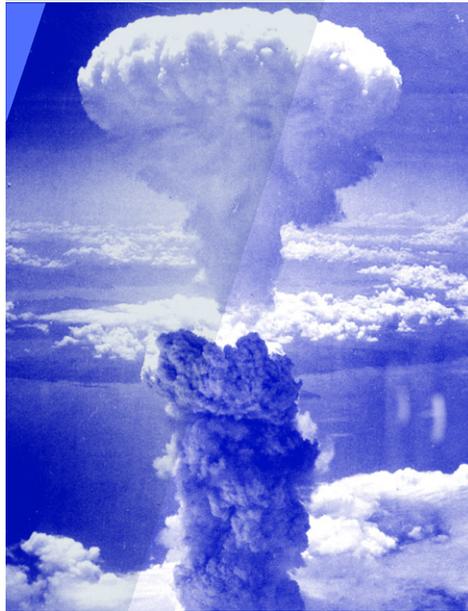


Isoroku Yamamoto
– Japanese Marshal Admiral of the Imperial Japanese Navy

This subject in popular culture:

- The Pacific* (2010, TV series)
- Letters from Iwo Jima* (2006, film)
- Tora! Tora! Tora!* (1970, film)
- The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957, film)
- James Jones, *From Here to Eternity*, 1951 (book)

WAR AND SCIENCE – NEW INVENTIONS



Atomic Cloud Rises Over Nagasaki, Japan, 1945

Atomic bomb

Americans won the race against the Germans to create an atomic bomb. The American project (code name Manhattan) was organized at Los Alamos Laboratory, New Mexico, USA and headed by Lieutenant General Leslie Groves.

Physicist Robert Oppenheimer was its scientific leader. The first nuclear detonation took place in July 1945 in the New Mexico desert (Trinity test). The first and second nuclear attack (on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan) took place on 6 and 9 August 1945.

Radar

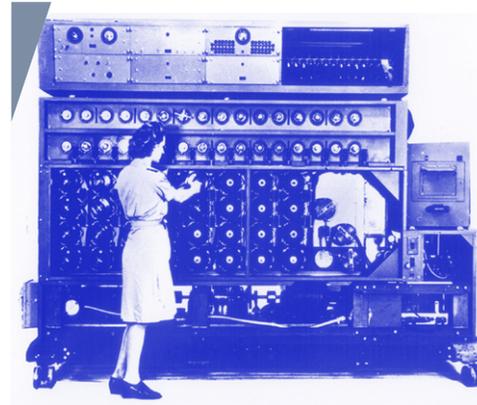
The detection system that uses radio waves was invented before the Second World War. It was developed during the war and received its name in 1940 – Radar (Radio Detection and Ranging). The invention played an important role in military operations, such as the Battle of Britain.



110-metre transmitter towers at Bawdsey Chain Home Radar Station, Suffolk, UK, May 1945.

Enigma deciphering

The Enigma Code was initially broken by Polish mathematicians Marian Rejewski, Jerzy Różycki and Henryk Zygalski in 1932. They fled to France in September 1939 and later on to the UK. They worked with British scientists (e.g. Alan Turing) on newer versions of Enigma and other cyphers at the British code centre Bletchley Park.



An Enigma decryption machine, called a 'bombe'. This machine, made by National Cash Register of Dayton, Ohio, eliminated all possible encryptions from intercepted messages until it arrived at the correct solution.



V2 rocket on Meiller vehicle, Peenemünde 1943

V-2 missile

German long-range guided ballistic missile – full technical name Vergeltungswaffen-2 ("Vengeance Weapon 2"). It had a 320 km range and 80 km peak altitude. The missile

was launched against France and Great Britain in 1944 and 1945. The invention of the V-2 rocket was later used in developing space exploration programs.

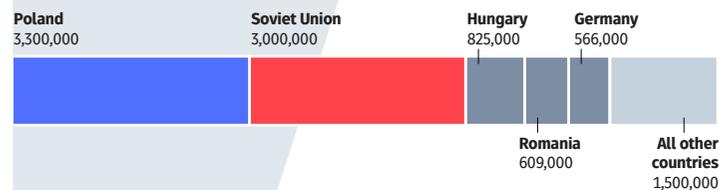
This subject in popular culture:

Manhattan (2014–15, TV series)
The Imitation Game (2014, film)

WAR CRIMES: HOLOCAUST

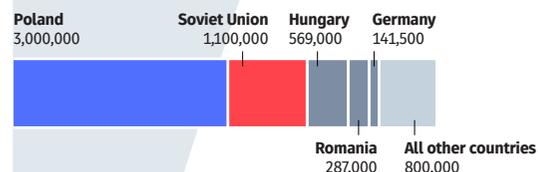
Pre-war Jewish population in Europe

9,800,000



Holocaust Jewish victims killed by Nazi Germany and collaborators.

5,900,000



1939–42

The creation of ghettos for Jews in occupied Central Europe. The biggest one – the Warsaw Ghetto – was established in October 1940 and had a population of 400,000. In German-occupied Hungary ghettos were established in 1944.

July 1941 – Spring 1942

Mass murders by special SS units (Einsatzgruppen). They killed Jews in the occupied USSR by mass shootings and later gassing.

March 1942 – November 1943

Operation Reinhard – mass extermination of Polish Jews in death camps. Jews were murdered in gas chambers and cremated.

May–July 1944

Mass transportation of Jews from Hungary to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where the majority were killed in gas chambers.

27 January 1945

Liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau camp by the Soviets.

9 May 1945

Liberation of Stutthof, the last concentration camp.

This subject in popular culture:

Schindler's List (film, 1993)

Shoah (film, 1985)

The Diary of a Young Girl (aka *The Diary of Anne Frank*; book, 1946)

TERROR AND WAR CRIMES

Concentration camp system

In Germany and occupied Europe (e.g. Poland, Yugoslavia, France, Belgium, Netherlands and Norway).

Germany USSR Japan

Mass killings

e.g. Nanking Massacre in 1937–38 – Japanese soldiers kill up to 300,000 Chinese.

Extermination of elites

- Katyn Massacre in 1940 – Soviet murder of 22,000 Poles.
- Piaśnica Massacres – German murder of about 12–14,000 people, mostly Polish elites, German, Czech and Polish families and mentally ill patients from hospitals in Germany, in 1939–40.

Destruction of villages

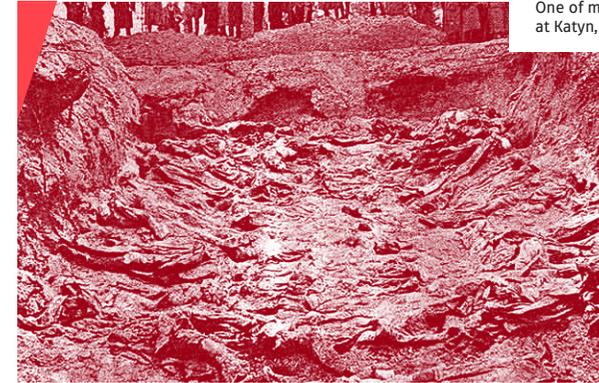
- Massacres of villages in German occupied Poland. Over 800 Polish villages (e.g. Borów, Michniów, Sochy) were subjected to pacification as well as hundreds of Belarussian and Ukrainian villages.
- e.g. Lidice Massacre – destruction of a village in occupied Czechoslovakia in 1942 in retaliation for the assassination of the acting Protector of Bohemia and Moravia, Reinhard Heydrich.
- Massacre of the entire village of Oradour-sur-Glane in 1944.

Extermination of the mentally ill and disabled

e.g. Murder of about 200,000 ill and disabled people in Germany and in German occupied territories.

Mistreatment and torture of the Prisoners of War

e.g. Death of 3,000,000 Soviet prisoners of war captured by Germans.



One of many mass graves at Katyn, 1943.

Experiments on humans

- e.g. Medical experiments on living twins in Auschwitz-Birkenau by Josef Mengele.
- Japanese experiments on prisoners of war.

Mass deportations

e.g. Deportation to Siberia and Kazakhstan from Poland (about 400,000 people), Romania (50,000), Lithuania (17,000), Latvia (17,000) and Estonia (6,000).

Forced labour

- e.g. Exile to forced labour Gulag prison-camps in USSR (mainly Siberia).
- Forced labour in Nazi Germany.



Starved prisoners, nearly dead from hunger, pose in a concentration camp in Ebensee, Austria. Ebensee was a sub-camp of the main camp Mauthausen, near the town of the same name. The camp was reputedly used for 'scientific' experiments. It was liberated by the 80th Division of the US Army.



A crowd watches the destruction of the last camp hut, the liberation of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, May 1945

This subject in popular culture:

Katyn (film, 2007)

AFTERMATH

Losses

- ◆ 70–85,000,000 people dead
- ◆ 21,000,000 refugees and displaced persons
- ◆ Destruction of cities (e.g. Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Minsk, Warsaw and Dresden)

- ◆ Destruction of industry and infrastructure
- ◆ Theft and destruction of cultural heritage

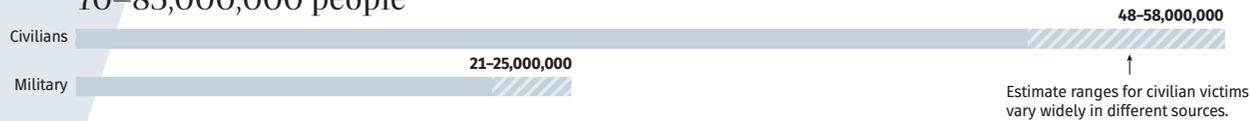
Political consequences

- ◆ Moving of the borders in Europe and population resettlement
- ◆ Occupation and demilitarization of Japan (1945–52)
- ◆ Division of the world into two blocs led by two superpowers: USSR and USA – start of the Cold War. Europe divided by an Iron Curtain.
- ◆ Occupation and division of Germany

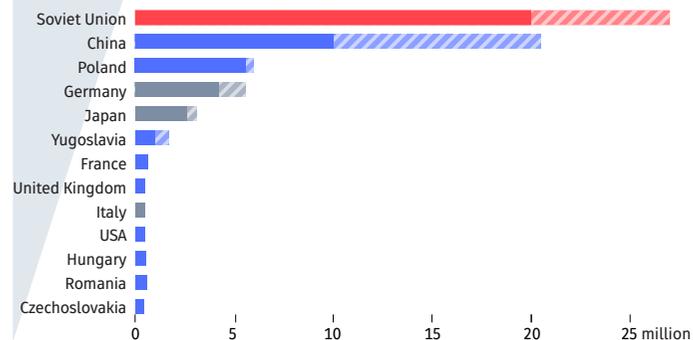


Total victims estimates

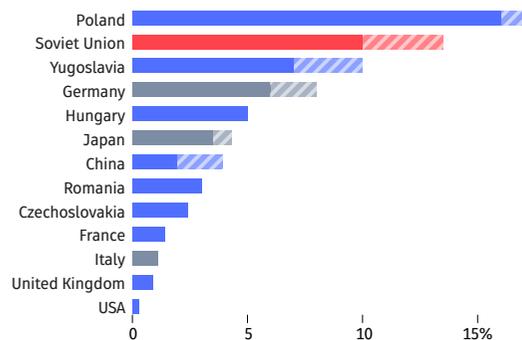
70–85,000,000 people



Military and civilian victims by country



Victims as percent of population



Jewish victims by country



FORCED MIGRATION AND DISPLACEMENT

Forced migration was a part of the totalitarian policy of the occupants from the very start of the war. The forced deportations were carried out brutally and people were transported in horrible conditions

which caused many deportees to die.

Also the Big Three's decision to move borders in Central-Eastern Europe caused millions of people to be deported at the end of the war and following years.



Polish refugees evacuated from the Soviet Union to Persia by General Anders, 1942

May 22 – June 20 1941

June deportation – mass deportation from occupied territories of the Baltic States and Poland carried out by the Soviets. Small populations of the Baltic states suffered a big loss from the deportation of 10,000 people from Estonia, 15,000 from Latvia and 17,000 from Lithuania.

Another big wave of Soviet deportation in

the Baltic States was the March deportation in 1949, in which over 22,000 people from Estonia, 43,000 from Latvia and 30,000 from Lithuania were deported.

All three countries commemorate these events with a public holiday – on June 14 in Estonia and Lithuania and on March 25 in Latvia.

1933

1939

1940

1933–1941

340,000 Jews were forced by the Nazi government to emigrate from Germany and Austria.



French mechanic at Siemens factory in Berlin, 1943

1939–1945

Forced laborers in Germany – throughout the war over 12 million people from occupied Europe were brought to Germany and forced to work.

December 1939 – Spring 1941

Deportation of approximately 390,000 Polish citizens from territories incorporated in to Germany to the General Government.

February 1940 – June 1941

Mass Soviet deportations from Polish Eastern Borderlands to the USSR. In four stages the Soviets deported approximately 330,000 Polish citizens. The deportees were transported mainly to Siberia or Kazakhstan. They were often placed in labour camps (GULAG). Many died in exile.

Continued on the next page

1942

1943

1944

1950

July 1944 – May 1945

Over 7 million Germans escaped from the Red Army from Eastern Germany and territories occupied by the Germans. Many died during the flight – e.g. 9,000 people, mostly civilians escaping East Prussia, on MV Wilhelm Gustloff, which was sunk in January 1945 by the Soviets.



Courland, evacuation from Ventspils.

1945–1950

After the Potsdam Conference where the Big Three decided that the Germans would be expelled from the Central European countries, they were deported from Poland (within its new borders), Czechoslovakia and Hungary.

The total number of Germans who escaped and were expelled from these lands is estimated at 12–14 million. The estimated number of casualties of the flight and expulsion of Germans (Flucht und Vertreibung) varies from 600,000 to just over 1,000,000

November 1942 – August 1943

Germany brutally deported 110,000 people from 300 villages from Zamojszczyzna (region in German occupied Poland). They were replaced by approximately 12,000 German colonists.

This was a part of the Generalplan Ost. The plan assumed the colonization of Central-Eastern Europe by Germans and deportation of tens of millions of people. It was never fulfilled.

August – October 1944

During and after the Warsaw Uprising 550,000 inhabitants were expelled from the city by the Germans and sent to other parts of the GG, forced labor camps or concentration camps.

Autumn 1944 – Autumn 1946

Soviet deportations of 1.7–1.8 million Poles from the Eastern Borderlands to Polish lands west from the so-called Curzon line.



Repatriation of German children from Poland.



European Network Remembrance and Solidarity

The Second World War

Infographics prepared for the project 'Hi-story lessons. Teaching & learning about 20th-century European history'.

The mission of the 'Hi-story lessons' project is to show European history of the 20th-century from different perspectives. Underlining the need to teach history with an awareness that neighbouring countries may have a different viewpoint

on the same historical fact is the project's main aim. With 'Hi-story lessons' we strive to challenge how teachers and their students see the history of Europe – its diversity and complexity – even when there are conflicting opinions.

<https://hi-storylessons.eu/>
<https://enrs.eu/>

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Photographs

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1 German Federal Archives,
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