

Highlights of World War No. 2

1939

September—Adolf Hitler's army smashes into Poland, using new lightning warfare, the blitzkrieg. Great Britain keeps pledge of aid to Poland. Britain and France declare war on Germany. Germans push ahead and Germany and Russia divide Poland.

1940

April—Germany invades Norway and Denmark. Denmark capitulates. Norway declares war. British expeditionary force lands in Norway and is beaten into sea by nazis.

May—Hitler sends troops into Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. Dutch army gives up after four days. Wehrmacht drives through Belgium to English channel. King Leopold surrenders entire Belgian army. 400,000 British soldiers are evacuated from Dunkerque.

June—Germans march into Paris, after breaking Maginot line. Marshal Henry Petain signs armistice giving Germany half of France. Russia occupies Bessarabia in Romania.

July—Russia annexes Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Petain severs relations with Britain after British attack on French warships at Oran.

August—Nazi luftwaffe begins bombing of Britain. More than 30,000 persons killed by bombs until May, 1941, when Britain gained control of skies. Italians invade British Somaliland, press to Egypt, where British take 20,000 Italian prisoners Dec. 12.

September—Japan joins the axis in 10-year pact with Berlin.

October—Italy invades Greece, aided later by Germans, who took Athens in April, 1941.

November—Slovakia, Hungary and Romania join axis.

1941

January—Germany and Russia sign a new friendship pact.

March—Yugoslavia joins axis. Germany attacks Yugoslavia three weeks after pact signed, and country surrenders.

May—Rudolf Hess, Hitler aide, parachutes to Scotland with alleged peace offer. Germans attack Crete in first airborne action and British withdraw.

June—Germany, Italy and Romania declare war on Russia and German troops cross old Russian border. Finland joins axis against Russia.

July—Britain and Russia pledge joint action against Germany.

August—President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill meet on battleship to sign Atlantic charter, guaranteeing four free-

doms. British and Russians invade Iran.

October—Germans advance through Russia and state of siege declared in Moscow.

November—Russians start counter-offensive west of Rostov.

December—Japanese attack Pearl Harbor. U. S. declares war on Germany, Italy and Japan. Russians announce Germans in retreat on entire eastern front.

1942

January—Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's German forces check British drive into Libya. First American troops land in Ireland.

February—Singapore surrenders to Japanese forces after 40-day battle.

May—Russians, on offensive, push toward Kharkov. Axis forces in Libya thrust toward Tobruk. RAF planes drop 8,000,000 pounds of bombs on Cologne in biggest air raid in history.

June—U. S. and Russia sign mutual aid pact.

July—Nazi forces roll toward Egypt.

August—Allies, including American Rangers, suffer heavy losses in commando raid on Dieppe.

September—Nazis drive to Stalingrad, and the Russian counter-offensive begins.

October—British Gen. Sir Bernard L. Montgomery's forces strike through axis line at El Alamein, in beginning of offensive which hurls axis from North Africa.

November—American and British forces land in French Northwest Africa, capture Casablanca and Oran, ending French resistance. British 8th army takes Tobruk. Most of French fleet scuttled at Toulon when Germans attempt to seize vessels. Germans occupy all of France.

December—Admiral Darlan is assassinated.

1943

January—Russians break 17-month siege of Stalingrad. President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill meet at Casablanca to demand unconditional surrender of Germany.

February—British 8th army crosses into Tunisia.

May—Allies capture Tunis and Bizerte. Axis in Africa defeated in the Cap Bon peninsula.

June—Pantelleria, Italy's outpost, falls after heavy air barrage.

July—Allied forces invade Sicily. Mussolini resigns in favor of Marshal Badoglio. U. S. middle east Liberators planes bomb Ploesti oil refineries.

August—Allies complete conquest of Sicily. Russians take Kharkov for second time in summer. Danes scuttle fleet in revolt against nazis. Germans seize Danish king.

September—Italy surrenders unconditionally. Russians capture Smolensk. Americans crash through nazi line east of Naples.

October—Italy declares war on Germany. Allied 5th army takes Naples.

November—President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill and Premier Josef Stalin meet at Teheran for war-planning conference.

1944

January—Russians pour over Polish borders.

March—U. S. army air forces bomb Berlin for first time. German troops occupy Hungary and Romania.

April—Russians invade Romania. Red army captures Odessa in drive against the Crimea. 5,000 planes raid Germany in 24 hours.

May—Russians capture Sevastopol. End all German offensives in Russia, Poland and in the Crimea. Allies begin new offensive in Italy. Take Cassino, bastion of German defenses. Greatest aerial offensive against Germany hits targets for 29 consecutive days.

June—Rome falls. D-Day—Allies invade Hitler's Europe under the command of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. Troops land on Normandy coast and advance through Cherbourg peninsula in greatest am-

phibian operation in history.

July—Allies take Cherbourg, drive through Normandy. Revolt of German army generals results in attempts on Hitler's life. Heinrich Himmler, Gestapo and SS chief, put in charge of German home front.

August—Allied troops race through France; Paris is liberated. U. S., French and British forces open fourth front in Europe, landing in southern France. All nazi resistance ended in southwestern France. Russians invade East Prussia, and capture Bucharst, capital of Romania. U. S. and British soldiers, fighting once again on world war I battlefields, start rout of Germans back to own borders.

September—American troops invade Germany, tearing gaps in the Siegfried line. British 2nd army sweeps through Belgium into Netherlands and to Germany. 5,000 allied planes ravage Germany in biggest air blow of war. Finland signs an armistice in Moscow; Red army enters Sofia. U. S. forces draw closer to Philippines with capture of Morotai and Peleliu islands. American carrier planes deal crippling blows to Japanese in central Philippines and Manila bay. President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill meet in Quebec; pledge all-out assault on Japanese as soon as nazis are defeated. Britain ends blackout after five years.

October—Devastated Aachen falls to U. S. 1st army on seventh day of siege. British win battle for the port of Antwerp. Russians capture Riga, capital of Latvia, and invade Hungary from Romania. Prime Minister Churchill and Foreign Secretary Eden confer in Moscow with Premier Stalin and Foreign Commissar Molotov. British troops occupy Athens. Hitler creates "Home Army" of men between 16 and 60. U. S. carrier planes batter Japanese vessels and planes in sweeps off Ryukyu islands, Formosa, and the Philippines. Gen. MacArthur keeps his vow to return to the Philippines, invading Leyte island with a 600-ship armada. In battle of the Philippines, Japanese navy is put to flight with 58 warships sunk or damaged out of 59 or 60.

November—U. S. and German planes over the reich fight the biggest air battle in history—involving more than 2,400 planes—with the American bag totalling 183 enemy planes at a loss of 89 planes. Gen. Eisenhower opens winter offensive against Germany, sending 1,500,000 men over the top supported by history's greatest aerial support bombardment. U. S. 3rd army pushes toward Saar basin, wins control of Metz. Allied armies capture Saarbourg. U. S. 9th army reaches Roer river on a 10-mile front, throwing Germans in retreat to new defenses only 21 miles from Cologne. Superforts from Salpan raid Tokyo for third time in six days, first bombing of capital since small-scale raid 20 months ago. Russians invade Slovakia. RAF Lancasters sink the German superbattleship Tirpitz.

December—U. S. 3rd army crosses the Saar river into the heart of the westwall at Saarlautern and the British 2nd army opens an offensive toward the Ruhr. U. S. 1st army reaches the approaches of Duren, keystone of Roer river line. U. S. 7th army troops enter Germany through Wissenbourg gate, joining five other allied armies on German soil. Germany starts sudden major offensive into Belgium and Luxembourg, pushes 51 miles into Belgium, reaching a point four miles from the Meuse river. Gen. Patton's 3rd army smashes to Bastogne, ending an American garrison's 10-day epic stand, and drives into the foe's southern flank. Americans seize port of Ormoc in the Philippines; other troops land on Mindoro island, 155 miles below Manila. Gen. MacArthur announces the Leyte-Samar islands campaign at an end, with 112,728 enemy dead.

1945

January—Eastern front blazes as the red army starts great winter offensive with capture of Warsaw. Soviet troops encircle East Prussia; deal vital blow to Germany's war production with clearance of the upper Silesian area. Russians invade Pomerania; reach Germany's "fast ditch" Oder river defense line, and penetrate within

40 miles of Berlin. Allies wipe out the German Ardennes bulge in Belgium after 42 days of bitter fighting. Four allied armies set up a solid 120-mile front from Luxembourg to Holland and take the offensive toward the Rhineland. Gen. MacArthur leads 6th army troops in 800-ship invasion of main Philippine island of Luzon.



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