

# Timeline

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### MARCH 17

Given strategic defense of the entire Pacific Ocean, General MacArthur is named supreme commander of the Allied Forces.

### MARCH 25

B-25 bombers land at McClellan Field near Sacramento. In preparation for a secret mission, Lt. Col. James Doolittle oversees modifications to the planes, which depart April 1.

### APRIL 9

Bataan falls. It is the largest surrender by the U.S. Army — 78,000 American and Filipino troops. What followed would be remembered as the Bataan Death March.

### APRIL 18

In the first American raid on the Japanese mainland, 16 B-25 carrier-launched bombers led by Lt. Col. James Doolittle strike Tokyo, Kobe, Yokohama, Nagoya and Yokosuka.

### APRIL 30

Notice is posted on the West Coast announcing the planned ouster of all "Japs" from the area into assembly centers.

### MAY

The first Navajo code talkers are sent to San Diego for training. The 420 deployed to the Pacific would participate in every battle from Guadalcanal to Okinawa.

### MAY 6

Corregidor falls. The last American stronghold in the Philippines is now under Japanese control.

### MAY 7-8

The Battle of the Coral Sea rages. The first air-naval battle in history prevents the Japanese from landing a large invasion force at Port Moresby and signals America's move from a purely defensive strategy in the Pacific to a mixed defensive-offensive one.

### JUNE 4-7

The Battle of Midway is fought. The first defeat of the Japanese navy in 350 years is the turning point in the Pacific as the U.S. goes on the offensive. The Japanese had hoped to smash what was left of the Pacific fleet, take Hawaii, hold its people hostage and force the United States to sue for peace. But American cryptographers had deciphered their plans and the Navy was waiting for them. The Japanese would lose 3,500 men, four carriers, a cruiser and 332 aircraft. The Americans would lose 307 men, the carrier Yorktown, one destroyer and 150 aircraft.

### JUNE 22

A Japanese submarine shells the military depot at Fort Stevens, Oregon in the first attack on the U.S. mainland.

### AUGUST 7

American land forces go on the offensive for the first time in the Pacific, landing on Guadalcanal. It would take six months to secure the island, but Japanese expansion is halted.

### AUGUST 12

The first supply aircraft lands on Guadalcanal's Henderson Field.

### SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER

The 110,000 Japanese Americans living on the West Coast are interred. They are relocated from assembly centers to one of 10 more permanent camps in remote desert areas.

### SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER

The Battle for Stalingrad rages.

### NOVEMBER 8

Operation Torch opens as Allied forces land in North Africa. While American planners had a straightforward idea of how to beat the Germans — invade France in the spring of 1943 and drive right for Berlin, the British favored attacking German and Italian forces in North Africa. American commanders thought invading Africa would be a dangerous and wasteful diversion. But Congressional elections were coming up.

### NOVEMBER 19

The Russians launch a major counter-offensive at Stalingrad. It would end with the annihilation of the German 6th Army.

### DECEMBER 31

After a year at war, more than 35,000 Americans in uniform had died.

## 1943

### JANUARY

Calling for a segregated unit, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt reverses his policy and changes Japanese-Americans from 4-C (enemy aliens) to 1-A (fit for combat). The 442nd Regimental Combat Team would become the most decorated unit in U.S. history.

### JANUARY 14-24

At the Casablanca Conference, Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill announce that only an unconditional surrender will be accepted from the Axis Powers.

### JANUARY 31

German Field Marshal Friedrich von Paulus surrenders at Stalingrad. The war in the East has turned.

### FEBRUARY 14

Field Marshal Erwin Rommel sends his Panzer units against the untested U.S. forces in North Africa. The Americans are routed and the Germans pour through the

Kasserine Pass.

### MARCH 2-3

The Battle of the Bismarck Sea is fought for control of New Guinea. The decisive American victory forces the Japanese to re-enforce its troops by submarine - a defensive strategy employed to prevent the continued loss of transports and warships. The battle removes a threat to General Douglas MacArthur's invasion plans.

### APRIL 17

A listening post in the Aleutian Islands intercepts a radio transmission that Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto will be touring bases in the South Pacific.

### APRIL 18

Acting upon the decoded message, U.S. P-38 Lightning pilots intercept the bomber carrying Yamamoto and shoot it down. Japan's most popular military leader is killed.

### MAY 12

The Axis powers surrender in Tunisia. North Africa is now under Allied control.

### MAY 21

Tokyo announces the death of Admiral Yamamoto to a shocked nation.

### MAY 30

All organized Japanese resistance ends on Attu Island in the Aleutians.

### JULY 2

Lt. Charles B. Hall becomes the first black aviator to shoot down an enemy aircraft. Flying a P-40 as a part of the 99th Fighter Squadron, he downs a Focke Wulf-190 over western Sicily.

### JULY 5

The Soviets win the Battle of Kursk. It is the largest tank battle in history. The German Luftwaffe also loses the air war and dominion of Russian skies for the first time.

### JULY 10

Allied forces land in Sicily and gain control of the Mediterranean. The precursor to the invasion of Italy would take 38 days to secure.

### JULY 19

The Allies bomb Rome.

### JULY 25

The Fascist Grand Council passes a vote of no confidence in Benito Mussolini. He is arrested. Martial law is declared in Italy the next day.

### AUGUST 14

To prevent further bombing, Rome is declared an open city.

### SEPTEMBER 3

The Allies land in Southern Italy.

### SEPTEMBER 8

Italy accepts Allied surrender terms. German troops move to take control of the country.

### SEPTEMBER 20

*Life* magazine runs pictures of three dead American soldiers. It is the first time such photos are shown to the American public since the attack on Pearl Harbor.

### OCTOBER 1

The Allies enter Naples.

### OCTOBER 6

Italy declares war on Germany.

### OCTOBER 14

On the second strike against Schweinfurt, 60 Flying Fortresses are shot down and more than 600 men are lost on what is remembered as "Black Thursday."

### NOVEMBER 20

The Allies attack Tarawa.

### NOVEMBER 18

The Battle of Berlin begins. Bombing of the German capital will continue until March 24, 1944.

### NOVEMBER 22-26

At the conference in Cairo, the Allies demand nothing less than the unconditional surrender of Japan.

### NOVEMBER 23

Tarawa is secured at high cost. It would take 10 days to compile and release the casualty list. The total is almost as much as the six months of fighting at Guadalcanal.

## 1944

### JANUARY 21

Hoping to break the impasse near the Benedictine abbey of Monte Cassino, Allied forces land at Anzio. Despite catching the enemy by surprise, General John P. Lucas takes nine days to strengthen his position rather than dash inland. His army would remain pinned down by the Germans for four miserable months.

### FEBRUARY 15

Monte Cassino is bombed.

### MAY 11

Polish troops, eager to avenge the Nazi invasion of their country, finally take the ruined Monte Cassino monastery and the positions around it. The Gustav Line has broken. The Germans began falling back. Monte Cassino is in Allied hands.

### MAY 23

At Anzio, General Mark Clark takes the offensive. He is determined to break out of the beachhead and link up with the Allied Armies coming up from Cassino, to trap the enemy now retreating northward, finally taking the fiercely defended village of Cisterna they tried to take months earlier.

### JUNE 3

An Associated Press flash mistakenly announces Allied landings in France. The error stems from a British teletype operator practicing her typing.

### JUNE 6

D-Day arrives. The greatest invasion in history begins just after midnight as the first of 24,000 paratroopers — flown over the Channel in more than 1,000 aircraft — are dropped behind enemy lines in Normandy. More than 5,300 ships, carrying 176,000 men are streaming across the Channel. Allied commanders plan five coordinated landings along a 45-mile stretch of the Normandy coastline between the Cotentin Peninsula and the Orne River for Operation Overlord. It will be the bloodiest day in American history since the battle of Antietam in the Civil War. Some 2,500 American soldiers lay dead on French soil.

### JUNE 15

Saipan, 14 miles long but featuring all kinds of terrain, is defended by more than 30,000 Japanese troops. It is shelled for two days before the Marines of the Fourth Division go ashore.

### JUNE 19

Off Saipan's shore, the Battle of the Philippine Sea takes on a new name. As American carrier planes score over 270 kills at a loss of 29, and American submarines claim two carriers, the one-sided affair is forever known as the "Great Marianas Turkey Shoot."

### JUNE 20

Japanese Vice Admiral Jizaburo Ozawa's plan to destroy both the American land forces — still struggling their way inland on Saipan — and the American fleet off shore in order to reinforce the Japanese garrison on the island fails. He had said, "The fate of our Empire rests on this one battle. Everyone must give all he has." The Battle of the Philippine Sea would be the greatest carrier battle of the Pacific War, nearly four times as big as Midway.

### JULY 7

The Japanese launch the largest, and last, Banzai charge of the Pacific War. Three thousand men charge into the American lines.

### JULY 10

Saipan is officially declared "secured." In almost four weeks of fighting, 16,525 Americans are killed, wounded or reported missing, the costliest battle in the Pacific to date. Almost 30,000 Japanese soldiers are dead. In the final days of the battle, some 4,000 terrified Japanese civilians, mostly women and children, had fled to the island's northern tip, a high plateau called Marpi Point. Their government had convinced many of them that it was their duty to kill themselves rather than fall into the hands of the cruel Americans — and the handful of Japanese soldiers who had survived were prepared to shoot them if they hesitated. More than a thousand were either killed by Japanese troops or chose suicide.

### JULY 18

St. Lo — or what was left of it after six weeks of Allied bombing — fell to the Americans. Lt. C.D. Lester of the 332nd Fighter Group scores three kills in a single day.

### JULY 20

The German resistance group fails in its attempt to assassinate Adolf Hitler.

### JULY 25

Operation Cobra, designed to create a gap in the German lines, mistakenly strikes Allied forces in the worst friendly-fire incident of the war. Among the 111 killed is Lt. General Leslie J. McNair. The commanding general of the Army Ground Forces is the highest-ranking U.S. casualty of the war.

### JULY 27

The First Army pours through the newly opened gap in the German lines and out into the countryside beyond the hedgerows. For weeks, the Americans on the ground had felt fortunate to gain 1,000 yards a day. Soon they would be covering up to 40 miles in the same amount of time. The Germans were reeling.

### AUGUST 15

American and Free French forces land in the south of France and begin driving northward. The following day, Hitler reluctantly agrees to pull his battered Seventh Army out of Normandy. It begins a desperate retreat toward Germany. The Allies catch them near the town of Falaise. For three days, the Allies pour fire into the fleeing men from the ground and from the air: 80,000 Germans ran the terrible gauntlet. At least 10,000 died, so many that the pilots of the Allied spotter planes hundreds of feet above the battlefield were nauseated by the stench.

### AUGUST 25

After four years of Nazi occupation, Paris, the City of Light, is liberated.

### SEPTEMBER 1

General Dwight Eisenhower is given command of the combined Allied forces in Europe.

### SEPTEMBER 11

Warner H. Holzinger, leading an advance of the U.S. First Army, wades across the Our River south of Aachen to become the first foreign soldier to step on German soil since the time of Napoleon.

### SEPTEMBER 17

Operation Market-Garden opens. Designed to drive into the industrial Ruhr valley by capturing bridges and end the war in weeks, it fails. Market-Garden would be the largest Allied airborne operation of the war and the most disastrous. Seventeen thousand Britons and Canadians, Americans and Poles are killed or wounded or captured before the operation is abandoned, more casualties than the Allies suffered on D-Day.

### SEPTEMBER 15

The Allies land on Peleliu. It is only 550 miles east of Mindanao, which is to be the first stop in General Douglas MacArthur's campaign to recapture the Philippines. MacArthur wants the Peleliu airfield put out of action to protect his flank. Securing Peleliu was supposed to take four days. It took more than two months. 10,000 Japanese were killed, nearly every man who had defended the island. More than 1,200 Americans perished; 5,274 more Americans were maimed or missing.

### OCTOBER

The fighting in the Hürtgen Forest takes weeks. More than 33,000 American soldiers would be lost.

### OCTOBER 20

MacArthur's forces land on the island of Leyte, the first foothold in the struggle to win back the Philippines. MacArthur's own landing craft gets stuck 75 yards offshore, forcing him to wade to the beach. His publicity machine makes the most of it. As the Battle of Leyte Gulf wages offshore the next two days, the greatest sea battle ever fought would signal the demise of the Japanese navy.

### OCTOBER 23

MacArthur returns. The general re-installs the legitimate government of the Philippines.

### NOVEMBER 7

Franklin D. Roosevelt is elected to a fourth term as U.S. president.

### NOVEMBER 13

Americans attack Japanese installations in Manila and other parts of the Philippines.

### DECEMBER 16

Out of the Ardennes, the Battle of the Bulge begins. Thousands of guns open up. Shells fall on and around the American positions for an hour. A few moments later, the enemy emerges out of the dense fog that shrouds the forest. Twenty German infantry divisions move forward along a 50-mile front - a quarter of a million men. Behind them roar 600 tanks. Surrounded by the enemy, cut off from one another, out of ammunition and unable to fight back, others are forced to surrender - more than 10,000 men.

### DECEMBER 17

An SS Panzer unit ambushes an American convoy near a tiny village called Malmedy, capturing and disarming 150 men before gunning down at least 86 of them. They also butcher scores of Belgian civilians. News of the killing spread fast among the embattled Americans.

### DECEMBER 22

German officers under a white flag approach the American commander at Bastogne, General Anthony McAuliffe of the 101st Airborne. The Americans' situation is hopeless, they said. The town is surrounded. They demand the Americans surrender. McAuliffe has a one-word answer - "Nuts!"

### DECEMBER 25

Thirty miles west of Bastogne, the Americans stop the German advance. The following day, American tanks break through the German lines and link up with the 101st Airborne inside Bastogne.

## 1945

### JANUARY 30

Six weeks after the German offensive in the Ardennes began, the Allies regain all the ground they'd lost. It had been the biggest battle of the war on the Western Front. More than a million men took part; 19,000 Americans died; 60,000 more had been wounded or captured or listed as "missing." Hitler's enormous gamble ends in disaster. He had lost some 100,000 men and virtually all his tanks and aircraft.

### FEBRUARY 7-12

At the Yalta Conference, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Premier Josef Stalin pledge to hold free elections after the war in Eastern Europe and divide Germany and Austria into three zones of occupation.

### FEBRUARY 13-14

Nine hundred British and American bombers hit Dresden in two waves, dropping incendiary bombs in hopes of setting off a firestorm. They succeeded. At least 35,000 civilians were burned or blown apart — or asphyxiated as they huddled in basements and bomb shelters.

### FEBRUARY 19

After 72 days of shelling the island, Marines land on two Jima to capture the Japanese airfield. The intense fighting lasted a month; 6,821 Americans died, five times the number killed on Guadalcanal or Saipan. Twenty-seven Medals of Honor were awarded to those who fought on the island.

### FEBRUARY 23

The flag is raised on Mt. Suribachi. Photographer Joe Rosenthal snaps one of the most famous photos of the 20th century.

### MARCH 19

Firebombing comes to the cities of Japan. Three hundred and thirty four American B-29s roared in low over Tokyo and dropped hundreds of thousands of 70-pound napalm bombs. Sixteen square miles of the city — built largely of pine and paper and bamboo — burst into flame. More than a million were left without homes. In the next ten days, the Americans hit Nagoya, Osaka, Kobe and Nagoya again. Some 50,000 more people were killed.

### MARCH 31

Kamikazes target the USS Indianapolis for destruction off Okinawa. Damaged, she would be sent to Ulithi to have her hull mended, and eventually dispatched all the way across the Pacific to Mare Island, near San Francisco for further repairs.

### APRIL 1

The battle to take Okinawa commences. Okinawa — 60 miles long and home to almost half a million civilians - was the gateway to Japan. The Allies had to take it before they could move on to the home islands. They gathered the largest invasion force since D-Day - almost 1500 ships and more than half a million men. In the end, 92,000 Japanese soldiers and as many as 100,000 Okinawan civilians would be dead. More than 12,000 Americans died, 60,000 were wounded - the worst losses of the Pacific War.

### APRIL 12

President Roosevelt dies. Harry S. Truman is sworn in as the 33rd President.

### APRIL 25

American and Soviet forces link up at Torgau on the Elbe River. Germany has been cut in half.

### APRIL 26

The Russians enter Berlin.

### APRIL 30

Russian troops fight their way into the Reichstag, the symbol of German power. Less than half a mile away, beneath the rubble, Adolf Hitler and his closest aides huddle in their bunker. That afternoon, Hitler names Admiral Karl Donitz to succeed him, then shoots himself in the mouth.

### MAY 5

Advance patrols of the American 11th Armored Division come upon Mauthausen in Austria. There they find more than 110,000 desperate, so-called "enemies of the Reich" confined behind barbed wire. Many were too weak to stand.

### MAY 7

Germany surrenders. The Reich that Hitler promised would last a thousand years had lasted less than a dozen.

### MAY 9

V-E Day is proclaimed as Victory in Europe is celebrated.

### JULY 15

The USS Indianapolis, her repairs now complete and ready to return to war, receives orders to retrieve special cargo at Hunters Point, California.

### JULY 16

A successful test of the atomic bomb takes place at Alamogordo, New Mexico.

### JULY 17-AUGUST 2

At the Potsdam Conference, the Big Three — U.S. President Harry S. Truman, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Premier Josef Stalin — decide the fate of Europe and that Japan must submit to unconditional surrender or face "utter destruction."

### JULY 26

The USS Indianapolis delivers its mysterious cargo — the atomic bomb — to the B-29 base on Tinian.

### JULY 30

A Japanese submarine sends two torpedoes hissing into the hull of the Indianapolis. They cut her nearly in half. Within the first few minutes, some 300 of the 1,196 men aboard are blown apart or burned to death. The ship sinks in 12 minutes.

### JULY 31

Japan rejects the Potsdam ultimatum.

### AUGUST 2

Awaiting rescue, 880 crewmen from the Indianapolis die. Only 321 are plucked from the sea.

### AUGUST 6

Developed to drop on the Germans, the first atomic bomb tumbles through the bomb-bay doors of the Enola Gay. Forty-three seconds later, six miles below but still high above the city of Hiroshima, it detonates. With a single bomb, 40,000 men, women and children are obliterated in an instant. One hundred thousand more die within days of burns and radiation. Another hundred thousand would succumb to radiation poisoning over the next five years. Despite the devastation, the Japanese still would not accept the Allied surrender terms.

### AUGUST 8

The Soviet Union declares war on Japan. The islands now face invasion on two fronts.

### AUGUST 9

A second atomic bomb drops, this time on Nagasaki. Some 40,000 more civilians die instantly. In Tokyo, the Supreme Council for the Direction of the War remains split between those still determined to fight on and those willing finally to give up. That evening all six members of the Council call upon the Emperor, who breaks the deadlock.

### AUGUST 10

Japan requests conditional surrender terms but is denied.

### AUGUST 14

Japan accepts unconditional surrender terms.

### AUGUST 30

The occupation of Japan begins.

### SEPTEMBER 2

The Japanese sign ceremonial surrender terms aboard the U.S.S. Missouri.

### NOVEMBER 1

The Allies' planned invasion of the Japanese mainland was to begin this day with the island of Kyushu. More than 500,000 Japanese troops were already in position to repel them and another 6 million were either under arms or ready to be called up. Women and school children were drilling with sharpened bamboo spears.

## Honoring a Lifetime

Let us help you create a fitting tribute for your