

WORLD WAR II TIME LINE

For Americans, World War II began on December 7, 1941. But war had been going on for years elsewhere. For the Chinese, war began in 1931, when Japan invaded northeastern China, setting up a Japanese state called Manchukuo. By 1938 Japan occupied much of China and had taken Nanking, longtime capital of China, where Japanese troops killed more than 42,000 civilians. For Europeans, war began in 1939, when Germany invaded Poland. The war in Europe would end in May 1945 and in the Pacific in August 1945.

WAR IN THE PACIFIC

WAR IN EUROPE

1939	AUGUST		Germany, under Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler, and the Soviet Union, under Communist dictator Joseph Stalin, sign the Nonaggression Pact, which secretly accepts Germany's plan to invade Poland.
	SEPTEMBER		Germany invades Poland in a blitzkrieg (lightning war). England and France react by declaring war on Germany. This begins the European War, which will become World War II.
	NOVEMBER		The Soviet Union invades Finland, occupies part of Poland, and, by threatening invasion, takes over Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia.
	DECEMBER		The United States, which supplies Japan with nearly all its aviation fuel, stops the export of any technical information about the production of aviation fuel.
1940	JANUARY		Soviet-Finland war ends in Finland's surrender.
	APRIL		Germany invades Norway and Denmark and will soon conquer both countries.
	MAY		Germany invades the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg.
	JUNE		Germany conquers France. German troops occupy northern and western France. Pro-German French officials set up a capital in Vichy and run the rest of France under Germany's watchful eye. Italy, under fascist dictator Benito Mussolini, declares war on England and France. Using more than a thousand warships, yachts, fishing boats, and smaller craft at the battered port of Dunkirk, England evacuates more than 338,000 troops from conquered France.

		Battle of the Atlantic begins as German submarines, called U-boats, begin sinking ships carrying oil and other war supplies from America to England. The U-boats will sink three million tons of merchant cargo.
	JULY	Japanese troops begin to occupy the French colony of Indochina. The United States responds by cutting off oil exports to Japan.
	SEPTEMBER	Hundreds of German warplanes begin bombing London every night for 57 nights in attacks that will continue until May 1941. More than 40,000 people will die in the Blitz as Londoners call the air raid campaign. Germany, Italy, and Japan sign a treaty (the Tripartite Pact) that makes the three countries allies against England and France. The treaty is also seen as a warning to the United States: Stop helping England and France. (The United States had traded 50 old destroyers to England in exchange for naval and air bases in the Western Hemisphere.)
	OCTOBER	More than 400,000 Polish Jews are herded into a part of Warsaw known as the Warsaw Ghetto. This continues in Poland the Nazi campaign against the Jews—the Holocaust, in which six million Jews will be killed, along with hundreds of thousands of other minorities. Italy invades Greece. German troops later come to the aid of Italian troops.
1941	JANUARY	Japanese Adm. Isoroku Yamamoto begins planning an air attack on Pearl Harbor.
	MARCH	The United States begins "Lend-Lease," allowing President Roosevelt to send ammunition and other war supplies to England. No longer a neutral nation, the United States now will give England all help "short of war."
	APRIL	Germany conquers Greece and Yugoslavia.
	JUNE	More than three million German troops invade the Soviet Union.
	SEPTEMBER	As German conquest of the Soviet Union continues, German troops besiege Leningrad (now St. Petersburg). During the siege, which will continue until January 1944, more than 500,000 people in Leningrad will die of starvation.

1942	OCTOBER	Japanese Army and Navy officers say Japan should “get ready for war” against the United States. Gen. Hideki Tojo becomes prime minister in a military-controlled government.	A German submarine torpedoes the U.S. Navy destroyer <i>Reuben James</i> in the North Atlantic. It is the first U.S. warship sunk in the European War. Only 45 of the ship’s 160 crew members survive.
	NOVEMBER	<p>The United States tells Japan to get out of China and Indochina. Tojo decides that Japan’s only choice is to go to war.</p> <p>Japan sends diplomats to Washington to try to find ways to avoid war with the United States.</p> <p>Six Japanese aircraft carriers and other warships secretly leave northern Japan and head for Pearl Harbor.</p> <p>The United States cuts off all oil exports to Japan.</p>	
	DECEMBER	<p>Japan attacks Pearl Harbor. Almost at the same time, Japanese warplanes attack the Philippines and two U.S. islands: Wake and Guam, which are later occupied. Japanese troops invade Malaya and Thailand and seize Shanghai. Later in December Japanese troops invade Burma and Hong Kong.</p> <p>Three days after Pearl Harbor, Germany and Italy declare war on the United States.</p>	
	JANUARY	Manila, Philippines, falls to Japanese troops.	
	FEBRUARY	<p>Japanese carrier planes bomb Darwin, Australia.</p> <p>In the Battle of the Java Sea, Japan defeats an Allied strike force, putting Japan in control of Java and the Netherlands Indies.</p>	
	APRIL	<p>First U.S. troops arrive in Australia.</p> <p>On the Bataan Peninsula of the Philippines, U.S. and Filipino troops, low on food and ammunition, surrender. Japanese troops force about 76,000 prisoners to march to distant camps; at least 5,200 Americans die on the march.</p> <p>Sixteen U.S. bombers, led by Lt. Col. James Doolittle, take off from an aircraft carrier 800 miles (1300 kilometers) off Tokyo and make the first bombing raid against Japan.</p> <p>The U.S. government forces thousands of Japanese-Americans</p>	

		to move from the U.S. West Coast to “relocation” camps in isolated areas.	
	MAY	In the battle of the Coral Sea, U.S. warships turn back a Japanese invasion force heading for New Guinea.	
	JUNE	U.S. carrier-based aircraft, alerted to Japanese moves by code breakers, stop a Japanese invasion of Midway, a U.S. base that guards Hawaii. U.S. dive-bombers sink four Japanese carriers; one U.S. carrier is lost. The Battle of Midway is the turning point of the Pacific War. Japanese troops land on Attu and Kiska in the Aleutian Islands.	
	AUGUST	U.S. Marines land on Japanese-held Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. This is the first battle in a U.S. “island hopping” campaign that will keep moving U.S. forces closer to Japan.	
	SEPTEMBER	An aircraft launched from a Japanese submarine drops fire bombs on forests near Brookings, Oregon, in the first bombing of the continental United States.	
	OCTOBER		After months of desert fighting, the British Eighth Army in North Africa puts Germany’s Afrika Corps to flight.
	NOVEMBER		U.S. and British troops invade French North Africa and will later link up with the British Eighth Army.
	DECEMBER		German troops are near Moscow. But, forced to fight in freezing weather, the troops pull back—defeated by the Russian winter, which had also defeated Napoleon’s army in 1812.
1943	JANUARY	Japan’s attempt to take New Guinea ends as Australian and U.S. troops defeat Japanese troops at landing sites. Australia is no longer threatened by invasion.	
	FEBRUARY		German troops surrender at Stalingrad (now Volgograd). The Soviet Red Army, turning the tide of war, begins an offensive that will end in the capture of Berlin in 1945.
	APRIL	U.S. code breakers intercept a Japanese radio message saying that Admiral Yamamoto is flying to the Solomon Islands. He is killed when U.S. fighters shoot down his plane.	
	MAY	The U.S. Navy announces that, except for the U.S.S. <i>Arizona</i> , U.S.S. <i>Utah</i> , and U.S.S. <i>Oklahoma</i> , all warships sunk at Pearl Harbor have been repaired and returned to sea.	

		U.S. forces retake Attu as Japanese troops evacuate Adak, thus ending Japan 's occupation of Alaska's Aleutian Islands.	
	JUNE	A Japanese destroyer rams and sinks a small U.S. Navy vessel, PT-109, commanded by Lt. (and future President) John F. Kennedy. He and other survivors swim for five hours to reach a small island, where they are later rescued.	The Royal Air Force and U.S. Eighth Air Force begin round-the-clock bombing of Germany.
	JULY		U.S. and British forces land in Sicily.
	SEPTEMBER		Italy surrenders. But German troops, continuing to fight the Allies in Italy, seize Rome.
	NOVEMBER	U.S. Marines land on Tarawa, an atoll in the Gilbert Islands.	
1944	JUNE	U.S. Marines land on Saipan in the Northern Marianas Islands. Japan's last aircraft carrier forces are defeated as Japan loses 220 warplanes in one battle with U.S. carrier planes.	U.S. troops enter Rome. On D-Day, June 6, 155,000 Allied troops land on the beaches of Normandy, France, to begin the liberation of Europe.
	JULY	U.S. troops liberate Guam.	
	AUGUST	U.S. Marines take Tinian Island in the Northern Marianas Islands. It will become a base from which B-29 bombers can bomb Japan.	French and American troops liberate Paris.
	SEPTEMBER	A U.S. Navy torpedo plane, piloted by Lt. (and future President) George Bush, is shot down near Okinawa. He parachutes into the sea; a U.S. submarine rescues him.	
	OCTOBER	U.S. troops land on Leyte, beginning the liberation of the Philippines.	British and Greek troops liberate Athens.
	NOVEMBER		U.S. troops in Germany begin a drive to reach the Rhine River.
	DECEMBER		German forces launch a surprise attack in the Ardennes region of Belgium, beginning the Battle of the Bulge (so called because the German drive put a "bulge" in the Allied battle line).
1945	JANUARY		In the largest land battle ever fought by the U.S. Army, American soldiers turn back German troops, winning the Battle of the Bulge. Soviet troops, continuing their eastern offensive, take Warsaw, Poland.

FEBRUARY	U.S. Marines land on Iwo Jima, in the Bonin Islands. It will be a base for fighter planes escorting B-29s flying from Tinian Island.	
MARCH	<p>B-29s bomb Tokyo, burning half the city; more than 80,000 people die.</p> <p>U.S. forces invade Okinawa, in Japan's Ryukyu Islands. The Allies want Okinawa as the base for the expected invasion of Japan. Fighting will continue until U.S. forces win in July.</p> <p>The U.S. Army liberates Manila, Philippines, after fierce street battling.</p>	<p>U.S. troops cross the Rhine River.</p> <p>U.S. Eighth Air Force bomber—about 1,250 in all—attack Berlin in the heaviest air raid made on the city.</p>
APRIL		<p>Vienna, Austria falls to Soviet troops.</p> <p>Soviet troops enter Berlin, beginning a street-by-street battle.</p> <p>Italian guerrilla fighters capture and kill Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. German forces in Italy surrender.</p> <p>U.S. soldiers free 32,000 survivors of the Dachau concentration camp. It will become a memorial for victims of the Nazi Holocaust.</p> <p>Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler kills himself.</p>
MAY 7th		Germany surrenders.
JULY	The first atomic bomb for combat use is assembled on Tinian Island.	
AUGUST	<p>Atomic bombs are dropped on Hiroshima (August 6) and Nagasaki (August 9).</p> <p>Japan surrenders (August 14). At least 100,000 people died in the atomic bombings.</p>	
SEPTEMBER 2nd	Japanese officials sign the surrender document on the U.S.S. <i>Missouri</i> in Tokyo Harbor.	

http://www.nationalgeographic.com/pearlharbor/history/wwii_timeline.html