

EUROPE, 1945 MAJOR OPERATIONS OF WORLD WAR TWO

0 100 200 300 400
SCALE OF MILES

WORLD WAR TWO IN EUROPE

World War II began in Europe on 1 September 1939 with Germany invading Poland. U.S. involvement started on 11 Dec. 1941, only four days after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, when Germany and Italy unexpectedly declared war on the U.S. British Prime Minister Churchill met with President Roosevelt in Washington D.C. 22 Dec. 1941-Jan. 1942, and decided to defeat Germany first.

NORTH AFRICA

The Americans wanted to invade continental Europe in 1943, but this idea was deemed premature and was cancelled in favor of an Allied invasion of French North Africa. Operation TORCH consisted of three task forces which landed on 8 November 1942. Moving east, these forces linked up with General Montgomery's Eighth Army in Apr. 1943, becoming 18th Army Group under the overall command of General Alexander. By 12 May 1943 this unit had forced the surrender of all Axis forces in North Africa

ITALIAN LANDINGS

Operation HUSKY the invasion of Sicily, began on 9 July 1943, and after that island was cleared, the mainland of Italy was assaulted on 3 Sept. 1943. Allied forces continued to "slog" their way up the Italian peninsula until 2 May 1945. Amphibious operations at Salerno and at Anzio were attempts to outflank the Germans in Italy.

NORMANDY LANDING

Roosevelt and Churchill decided at the Trident Conference (May 1943) to conduct a major cross-Channel invasion of Europe in June 1944. General Eisenhower was designated to command Operation OVERLORD. The greatest amphibious assault yet known to history began on the Normandy coast in complete tactical surprise on D-Day, 6 June 1944. To protect Eisenhower's flank, the U.S. Seventh Army landed in southern France (Operation DRAGOON) on 15 August 1944.

THE BREAKOUT

The breakout from the Normandy beach head took place in July 1944, and the offensive continued using General Eisenhower's "broad front" strategy. Attempts to breach the German Siegfried Line blunted the Allied offensive. The Germans then launched an offensive - the ensuing fight being the "Battle of the Bulge" - through the thinly held Ardennes Forest in December 1944. The Allies halted the German offensive in January 1945 and continued the attack, crossing the Rhine River in March 1945 and encircling the Ruhr area in April 1945. This resulted, along with the Soviet pressure from the east, in the German collapse and surrender on 8 May 1945.

From U.S.
PATTON (Nov. 1942)
RYDER (Nov. 1942)
ALEXANDER (Nov. 1942-May 1943)
FREDENALL (Nov. 1942)
Sicily Invasion, 1943
Tobruk, 1942

- City or Town
- ⊗ National Capital
- National Boundaries
- ★ Battle Site
- Axis Advance
- Allied Advance (American & British)
- Allied Advance (Soviet)
- Allies
- Axis
- Neutral Countries
- Axis Controlled (Max. Extent)



TIMELINE

- Sept. 1939**
 - Germany invades Poland, 1 Sept.
 - Great Britain & France declare war on Germany, 3 Sept.
- 1940**
 - Germany invades Denmark & Norway, 9 Apr.
 - Germany invades Low Countries, 10 May
 - Italy declares war on Great Britain & France, 10 June
 - France signs armistice with Germany, 22 June
 - Battle of Britain, July-10 Oct.**
 - 1st peacetime draft law in U.S. history, Sept.
 - Wavell's 1st Libyan offensive, 9 Dec.-7 Feb., 1941
- 1941**
 - Rommel's 1st offensive, 31 March
 - Germany invades Greece & Yugoslavia, 6 Apr.
 - German airborne assault on Crete, 20 May
 - Germany invades U.S.S.R., 22 June
 - U.S.S.R & Great Britain sign mutual aid pact, 13 July
 - Seige of Leningrad, 8 Sept.- Jan. 1944 700,000 deaths estimated
 - U.S. declares war on Japan after attack on Pearl Harbor, 8 Dec.
 - Germany & Italy declare war on U.S., 11 Dec.
- 1942**
 - Battle of Stalingrad, 23 Aug.-2 Feb. 1943**
 - Battle of El Alamein, 23 Oct.**
 - Allied troops land at Morocco & Algeria, 8 Nov.
- 1943**
 - Battle of Tunis, 7 May**
 - Axis forces in N. Africa surrender, 13 May
 - Battle of Kursk, 4 July-1 Aug.**
 - Allies land at Sicily, 10 July
 - Italians secretly surrender, 3 Sept.
 - Allies land at Salerno, 10 July
 - Allies land at Anzio, 22 Jan.
- 1944**
 - Allies invade Normandy, 6 June (D-Day)
 - Soviets push Germans into Poland, mid-July
 - Paris liberated, 25 Aug.
 - Polish Resistance revolts against Germans in Warsaw, Aug.-Oct.
 - Battle of the Bulge, 16 Dec.-7 Feb.** Last significant German offensive
 - Yalta Conference, 4-11 Feb.**
 - Soviets launch attack on Berlin, 16 April
 - Hitler commits suicide 30 Apr.
- June 1945**
 - Germany surrenders, WWII in Europe ends, 7 May