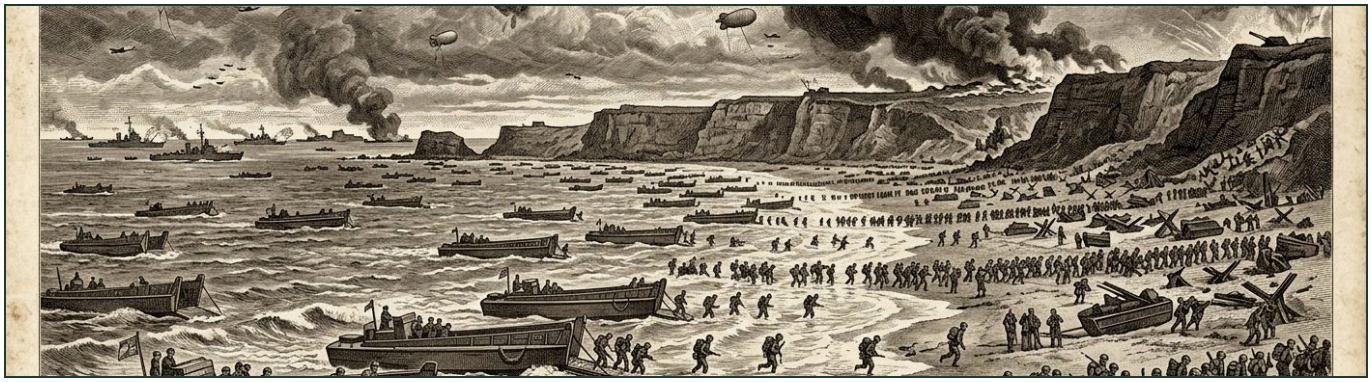


1939 – 1945

World War II Timeline

World War II was the largest war in history, fought across Europe, Asia, and the Pacific. The United States entered the war in December 1941 after Japan attacked the US naval base at Pearl Harbor.

1939

Germany Invades Poland

Adolf Hitler sends the German army into Poland on September 1, launching World War II in Europe.

> **Why it mattered:** *Britain and France immediately declared war on Germany, turning a European crisis into a world war.*

1940

Fall of France

Germany sweeps through Western Europe and conquers France in just six weeks.

> **Why it mattered:** *With France fallen, Britain stood nearly alone against Nazi Germany, holding on through the Battle of Britain air campaign.*

1941

Germany Invades the Soviet Union

Hitler breaks his alliance with Stalin and launches a massive invasion of the Soviet Union in June.

> **Why it mattered:** *Opening a second enormous front stretched Germany thin and set in motion the eventual Allied victory.*

1941

Attack on Pearl Harbor

Japan launches a surprise air attack on the US naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, killing more than 2,400 Americans.

> **Why it mattered:** *The attack brought the United States into the war on both fronts — against Japan in the Pacific and alongside Britain against Germany in Europe.*

World War II Timeline *continued*

1942 — **Battle of Midway**

The US Navy defeats Japan in a crucial Pacific battle in June, sinking four Japanese aircraft carriers.

> **Why it mattered:** *Midway stopped Japan's Pacific advance and shifted the momentum decisively to the United States.*

1942–43 — **Battle of Stalingrad**

Soviet forces encircle and destroy a massive German army during a brutal winter siege in southern Russia.

> **Why it mattered:** *Germany's catastrophic defeat began its long retreat on the Eastern Front — the turning point of the war in Europe.*

1944 — **D-Day — Normandy Invasion**

Allied forces storm the beaches of Normandy, France, on June 6 in the largest seaborne invasion in history.

> **Why it mattered:** *Opening a Western Front forced Germany to fight on two sides at once, accelerating the collapse of the Nazi regime.*

1945 — **V-E Day — Germany Surrenders**

Germany surrenders unconditionally on May 8, ending the war in Europe.

> **Why it mattered:** *With Hitler dead and Nazi Germany defeated, the war in Europe was over — V-E Day was celebrated across the Allied world.*

1945 — **Atomic Bombs on Japan**

The United States drops atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima on August 6 and Nagasaki on August 9.

> **Why it mattered:** *The unprecedented destruction — each bomb destroyed most of a city — convinced Japan's leaders to agree to surrender.*

1945 — **V-J Day — Japan Surrenders**

Japan formally surrenders on the deck of the USS Missouri on September 2, ending World War II.

> **Why it mattered:** *The most destructive war in human history was over; the Allied victory reshaped the world for generations to come.*