



History & Geography

For history and geography, you can read through the major battles of WWII that we have included below. We have also included various videos under the History & Geography section. We have also included two line drawn maps of Europe for map drills.

"This is the lesson: never give in, never give in, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy."

~ Winston Churchill

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Major Battles of World War II

European Theater of Operations (ETO):

Battle of the Atlantic (September 3, 1939 to May 8, 1945)

The Battle of the Atlantic was one of the longest and deadliest naval engagements fought during World War II. It spanned over six years, from September 3, 1939 to May 8, 1945, and pitted Allied navies against the German Kriegsmarine. During most of that period, the Nazi U-boats controlled the strategic Atlantic Ocean shipping lanes, which affected supplies and food for Britain, but also oil and other materials for the US.

The battle was brutal and costly--with the loss of more than 3,000 Allied merchant ships, numerous warships sunk by the German wolf packs, and approximately 100,000 sailors killed in action. But it was also the Allies' greatest victory of World War II--a pivotal turning point that saved the Atlantic Ocean sea lanes and thwarted German plans to invade Britain.

Battle of Dunkirk (May 26 to June 4, 1940)

The Battle of Dunkirk was a pivotal moment in World War II. After France collapsed under the weight of Nazi aggression, the British were forced to retreat to the coastal town of Dunkirk. Despite facing tremendous obstacles, they managed to evacuate over 300,000 Allied soldiers from the area, saving them from capture and certain death. The victory was a major boost to Britain's morale and military strength, paving the way for their eventual triumph over Germany.

Allied Invasion of Sicily (July 9 - 17, 1943)

The Allied invasion of Sicily was launched by a massive force comprised of British, American, and Canadian troops via amphibious and airborne assault. It was a crucial turning point in the war as it helped to drive Axis forces from the island and saw the collapse of Mussolini's regime, beginning the Italian Campaign.

Battle of Monte Casino (January 17, 1944 - May 18, 1944)

The Battle of Monte Casino, also known as the Battle of Rome, included four assaults by the Allied against the Nazis during the Italian Campaign. Located high in the mountains, the ancient monastery at Monte Casino offered a strategic position from which German troops could defend against Allied advances. For months, both sides engaged in fierce fighting over control of this vital location, with heavy casualties on both sides. Even though the Allies eventually won this battle, it was a long and arduous struggle that took a great toll on both soldiers and civilians alike.

Normandy Invasion (June 6, 1944 – August 30, 1944)

Also known as, "Operation Overlord," the Normandy Invasion was the first Allied invasion into Western Europe with the largest amphibious and airborne assault, establishing the Allies' foothold in France and ultimately, Germany.

On June 6, 1944 aka "D-Day", nearly 160,000 Allied troops crossed the English Channel and stormed the beaches of Normandy, France. Over 9,000 Allied soldiers were killed or wounded in the initial onslaught, but it ultimately proved a success as by the end of August, more than two million Allied troops were in France.

Liberation of Paris (August 19-25, 1944)

The Liberation of Paris took place on August 19th, 1944, when the Allies launched a major offensive to liberate the city from Nazi occupation. After intense fighting, Paris was finally freed on August 25th as the German occupation garrison was forced to surrender to the Allied forces.

Battle of the Hurtgen Forest (September 19, 1944 – December 16, 1944)

The Battle of the Hurtgen Forest was a series of battles fought in the Hurtgen Forest on the Belgium-German border. The Allied forces began pushing deeper into Germany, but were met with resistance from German troops entrenched in the dense Hurtgen Forest. This was the largest battle fought on German ground and the longest single battle ever fought by the U.S. Army.

Battle of the Bulge (December 16, 1944 – January 25, 1945)

The Battle of the Bulge was the Nazi's last major offensive of the Western Front. It took place during a long and bitter-cold winter in the snowy Ardennes Forest in Belgium. The Germans initially gained some ground, but the Allied forces held the line and emerged victorious, while the Germans exhausted their supplies, leading to a collapse of their frontline. This opened up the Siegfried line to the Allies and enabled them to advance into Germany.

Battle of the Remagen (March 7-25, 1945):

During the Battle of the Remagen, the Allies invaded Germany. At this time, German forces were facing increasing pressure and desperately tried to hold onto their remaining strongholds in western Europe. Then the Allies unexpectedly captured the Ludendorff Bridge over the Rhine, and the holding of the bridgehead advanced the war effort by three weeks.

Non-Allied Battles

Siege of Leningrad (September 8, 1941 – January 27, 1944)

The Siege of Leningrad was one of the longest and most destructive sieges in human history. During this time, Nazi Germany and its allies surrounded the city of Leningrad (modern-day St. Petersburg), blockading it and cutting off all supply routes to the population within. The Siege caused immense suffering, with up to 1.5 million people dying from starvation, disease and bombardment. Despite this terrible toll, the Siege of Leningrad was also a symbol of courage and resilience as the citizens of Leningrad endured a horrendous ordeal, but refused to give in. Their bravery helped secure a major victory against Nazi Germany.

Battle of Stalingrad (August 23, 1942 – February 2, 1943)

The Battle of Stalingrad took place when Nazi Germany turned on the Soviet Nation and unsuccessfully attempted to take control of the city of Stalingrad. With over two million casualties, it is considered one of the deadliest battles in history. It is now considered one the biggest turning points in World War II as German High Command was forced to withdraw most of their military forces to replace those who had died.

Battle of Berlin (April 16, 1945 – May 2, 1945)

The Battle of Berlin was one of the final and deadliest battles of WWII. It began in April 1945, as Soviet forces advanced on the German capital city. By this time, Germany's military capabilities were severely weakened. The battle lasted for nearly two months and resulted in around 700,000 casualties. In May 1945, Berlin fell to the Soviets after a failed German counterattack and Hitler's suicide. This marked the end of the Third Reich and Nazi rule.

Pacific Theater of Operations

Attack on Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941)

The Attack on Pearl Harbor was a surprise military strike conducted by the Japanese Navy against the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7, 1941. It killed 2,403 people and wounded another 1,178. Six battleships were either sunk or heavily damaged, and 347 planes and aircraft were either destroyed or severely damaged.

The attack was intended as an attempt to deter the United States from entering the war, however it merely provoked the U.S. into officially waging war on the Axis and joining the Allies. In response to the attack, President Franklin D. Roosevelt made his famous "Day of Infamy" speech and declared war on Japan.

Battle of Midway (June 4, 1942 – June 7, 1942)

The Battle of Midway was a pivotal turning point in the war. Involved naval engagements between Allied and Japanese forces near Midway Atoll in the Pacific Ocean. Though losses were high on both sides, the Allies ultimately emerged victorious thanks to their superior tactics and strategy.

Guadalcanal Campaign (August 7, 1942 – February 9, 1943)

The Guadalcanal Campaign was the first major land assault by the Allies in the battle of the Pacific war against Imperial Japan. It was composed of a series of land and naval engagements on the island of Guadalcanal in the South Pacific. Despite facing difficult odds, the Allied forces emerged victorious.

Battle of Iwo Jima (February 19, 1945 – March 26, 1945)

During the Battle of Iwo Jima, American forces fought against Japanese forces for control of the islands of Iwo Jima and their airfields. This ended up being the bloodiest battle of the Pacific Theater of operations. Despite heavy losses, the American troops ultimately emerged victorious and helped pave the way for the Allies to defeat Japan.

Battle of Okinawa (April 1, 1945 – June 22, 1945)

Codenamed, "Operation Iceberg," the Battle of Okinawa was the largest amphibious assault of the Pacific Theater fought by the U.S. Army and Marine Corps against Imperial Japan. Fought on the island of Okinawa, the battle saw major casualties on both sides, with nearly 150,000 Okinawan people caught in the crossfires and forced to join the battle.

Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (August 6 & 9, 1945)

The United States dropped two atomic bombs on two major Japanese cities: Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This was the first time nuclear weapons had been used in a war, and the blast completely destroyed the city, leaving a massive crater in its place. The devastating effects of these bombings forced Japan to surrender and led to the Allied victory in WWII.

