

Key Events and Battles During American Involvement in World War II

Event/Battle	Date	Location	Significance
Germany invades Poland	1-Sep-39	Polish-German border	Following non-aggression treaty with Soviet Union, German troops invade Poland. England and France declare war on Germany. Soviets invade Poland from East.
Germany's blitzkrieg takes western Europe	March-June 1940	Western Europe	Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France crushed by German offensive
Battle of Britain	Fall 1940	Great Britain	German bombers ruin British cities in attempt to obtain British surrender before U.S. entry. Britain's breaking of German code ("Ultra") helps overcome air attacks.
U.S. enacts draft bill	Sep-40	Washington D.C.	Registration of all men between 21 and 35. Limit of 900,000 men in time of peace.
Destroyer for Bases deal	Sep-40	Washington D.C. and London	U.S. transfers 50 old destroyers to Britain in exchange for use of eight British Atlantic bases.
Lend-Lease plan	Nov-40	Washington D.C.	U.S. would "lend" military equipment to cash-strapped Britain.
Germany invades Russia	Jun-41	Polish-Russian border	Germany begins two-front war with invasion of Russia. Germans halt 15 miles from Moscow in December 1941.
Atlantic Charter	Aug-41	North Atlantic	FDR and Churchill agree to war aims, self-determination, and condemnation of Nazism.
Japan attacks Pearl Harbor	7-Dec-41	Hawaii	361 Japanese warplanes attack American airfields and shipyards, disabling 19 ships, destroying 200 planes, and killing over 2300 men. Southeast Asia, Hong Kong, Malaya, Philippines soon fall to Japan.
FDR asks for war on Japan	8-Dec-41	WashingtonD. C.	Congress approves entry into war. Germany and Italy declare war on U.S.
Battle of Coral Sea	May-42	South Pacific	Carrier-based U.S. planes halt Japanese advance on Australia.
Midway	Jun-42	Central Pacific	Threat on Hawaii ended as four Japanese aircraft carriers are sunk.
Allies attack Germans in North Africa	Nov-42	North Africa	Huge Allied landing forces Germany to retreat to Tunisia, where they are surrounded by British and American forces.
Guadalcanal	Feb-43	Solomon Islands, South Pacific	Americans take first island in start of island-hopping strategy.

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Germans surrender at Stalingrad	Feb-43	Central Russia	Germans surrender after fierce hand-to-hand fighting and huge casualties for each side.
Germans surrender at Tunisia	May 1943	Tunisia, North Africa	Over 250,000 German and Italian troops are captured and Allies prepare to invade Sicily and Italy.
Allies invade Sicily	Jul-43	Sicily	In largest amphibious invasion in history, over 250,000 American and British troops land. Germans and Italians escape to mainland of Italy.
Italy surrenders	Sep-43	Italy	Although Italian troops quit fighting Allies, Germans continue in fierce fighting. Rome finally surrenders on June 4, 1944.
D-Day Invasion	6-Jun-44	Normandy coast of France	Allies use 4600 ships to invade German-held France. Suffering heavy casualties, the Allies were able to retake Paris in August.
Battle of Leyte Gulf	Oct-44	Pacific east of Philippines	60 Japanese ships in largest naval battle in history.
Battle of the Bulge	Dec-44	French-German-Belgian border	German counteroffensive almost succeeds in retaking Belgium but is crushed with Allied reinforcements.
Tokyo Bombing Raids	Mar-45	Tokyo, Japan	American bombers destroy 250,000 buildings and kill 83,000 in massive fire-bombing.
Russians take Berlin	Apr-45	Berlin, Germany	Russians take German capital after house-to-house fighting. Hitler commits suicide.
V-E Day	7-May-45	Europe	German government issues unconditional surrender to Allied forces.
Okinawa	April to June 1945	Southern tip of Japan	Fighting from caves and bunkers, Japanese inflict 80,000 losses on Americans. Over 30 American ships are sunk by Japanese suicide missions.
Gen. MacArthur retakes Philippines	Jul-45	Philippine Islands	After Manila's fall to Americans in May, Japanese surrender here after inflicting 60,000 American casualties.
Hiroshima	6-Aug-45	Japan	180,000 killed, wounded, or missing after atomic bomb is dropped. Two days later Soviet Union enters war against Japan.
Nagasaki	9-Aug-45	Japan	Second bomb is dropped after Japanese delay surrender. 80,000 killed or missing.
V-J Day	2-Sep-45	Tokyo Bay	Japan surrenders with one term: the emperor must retain his throne.