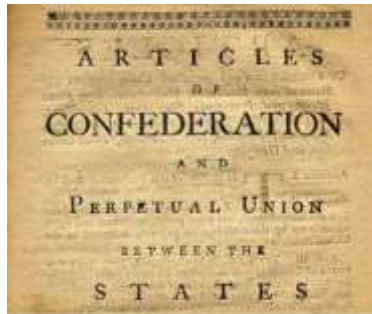




## Military History Anniversaries 1 thru 15 MAR

**Events in History over the next 15 day period that had U.S. military involvement or impacted in some way on U.S military operations or American interests**

- **Mar 01 1781 – American Revolution: *Articles of Confederation are Ratified*** » The Articles are finally ratified. They were signed by Congress and sent to the individual states for ratification on November 15, 1777, after 16 months of debate. Bickering over land claims between Virginia and Maryland delayed final ratification for almost four more years. Maryland finally approved the Articles on March 1, 1781, affirming the Articles as the outline of the official government of the United States. The nation was guided by the Articles of Confederation until the implementation of the current U.S. Constitution in 1789.



The critical distinction between the Articles of Confederation and the U.S. Constitution —the primacy of the states under the Articles—is best understood by comparing the following lines. The Articles of Confederation begin: *“To all to whom these Present shall come, we the undersigned Delegates of the States”* By contrast, the Constitution begins: *“We the People of the United States do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”*

The predominance of the states under the Articles of Confederation is made even more explicit by the claims of Article II: *“Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every power, jurisdiction, and right, which is not by this Confederation expressly delegated to the United States, in Congress assembled.”*

Less than five years after the ratification of the Articles of Confederation, enough leading Americans decided that the system was inadequate to the task of governance that they peacefully overthrew their second government in just over 20 years. The difference between a collection of sovereign states forming a confederation and a federal government created by a sovereign people lay at the heart of debate as the new American people decided what form their government would take.

Between 1776 and 1787, Americans went from living under a sovereign king, to living in sovereign states, to becoming a sovereign people. That transformation defined the American Revolution.

- **Mar 01 1867 – Utah War:** *Confrontation (Mar 1857 thru Jul 1858)* » The war, also known as the Utah Expedition, Utah Campaign, Buchanan's Blunder, the Mormon War, or the Mormon Rebellion was an armed confrontation between Mormon settlers in the Utah Territory and the armed forces of the United States government. There were some casualties, mostly non-Mormon civilians. The war had no notable military battles.

In 1857 President James Buchanan sent U.S. forces to the Utah Territory in what became known as the Utah Expedition. The Mormons, fearful that the large U.S. military force had been sent to annihilate them and having faced persecution in other areas, made preparations for defense. Though bloodshed was to be avoided, and the U.S. government also hoped that its purpose might be attained without the loss of life, both sides prepared for war. The Mormons manufactured or repaired firearms, turned scythes into bayonets, and burnished and sharpened long-unused sabres. Rather than engaging the Army directly, Mormon strategy was one of hindering and weakening them. Daniel H. Wells, Lieutenant-General of the Nauvoo Legion, instructed Major Joseph Taylor:

*On ascertaining the locality or route of the troops, proceed at once to annoy them in every possible way. Use every exertion to stampede their animals and set fire to their trains. Burn the whole country before them and on their flanks. Keep them from sleeping, by night surprises; blockade the road by felling trees or destroying the river fords where you can. Watch for opportunities to set fire to the grass on their windward, so as, if possible, to envelop their trains. Leave no grass before them that can be burned. Keep your men concealed as much as possible, and guard against surprise.*

The Mormons blocked the army's entrance into the Salt Lake Valley, and weakened the U.S. Army by hindering them from receiving provisions. The confrontation between the Mormon militia, called the Nauvoo Legion, and the U.S. Army involved some destruction of property and a few brief skirmishes in what is today southwestern Wyoming, but no battles occurred between the contending military forces. At the height of the tensions, on September 11, 1857, between 95 and 120 California-bound settlers from Arkansas, Missouri and other states, including unarmed men, women and children, were killed in remote southwestern Utah by a group of local Mormon militia. They first claimed that the migrants were killed by Indians but it was proven otherwise. This event was later called the Mountain Meadows Massacre and the motives behind the incident remain unclear.

The Aiken massacre took place the following month. In October 1857, Mormons arrested six Californians traveling through Utah and charged them with being spies for the U.S. Army. They were released but were later murdered and robbed of their stock and \$25,000. Other incidents of violence have also been linked to the Utah War, including an Indian attack on the Mormon mission of Fort Lemhi in eastern Oregon Territory, modern day Idaho. They killed two Mormons and wounded several others. The historian Brigham Madsen notes, "[T]he responsibility for the [Fort Limhi raid] lay mainly with the Bannock." David Bigler concludes that the raid was probably caused by members of the Utah Expedition who were trying to replenish their stores of livestock which had been stolen by Mormon raiders.

Taking all incidents into account, MacKinnon estimates that approximately 150 people died as a direct result of the year-long Utah War, including the 120 migrants killed at Mountain Meadows. He points out that this was close to the number of people killed during the seven-year contemporaneous struggle in "Bleeding Kansas". In the end, negotiations between the United States and the Latter-day Saints resulted in a full pardon for the Mormons (except those involved in the Mountain Meadows murders), the transfer of Utah's governorship from church President Brigham Young to non-Mormon Alfred Cumming, and the peaceful entrance of the U.S. Army into Utah.

- **Mar 01 1864 – Civil War:** *Grant Nominated for Lieutenant General* » President Abraham Lincoln nominates Ulysses S. Grant for the newly revived rank of lieutenant general. At the time, George Washington was the only other man to have held that rank. Winfield Scott also attained the title but by brevet only; he did not actually command with it.



The promotion carried Grant to the supreme command of Union forces and capped one of the most remarkable success stories of the war. Born in Ohio in 1822, Grant attended West Point and graduated in 1843. He served in the Mexican War in 1847 to 1848 and on the American frontier in the 1850s. During this time, Grant acquired experience in logistics and the supply of troops, developing skills that later made him a success during the Civil War.

When the Civil War erupted, Grant was not in the service and was working as a clerk in his father's store in Galena, Illinois. Grant re-enlisted after Fort Sumter fell in April 1861; his first assignment was to raise troops in Illinois. In June, the governor appointed him colonel of the 21st Illinois. After leading his regiment to protect a railroad in Missouri, Grant was promoted to brigadier general in July 1861. In early 1862, Grant won the first major Union victories of the war when he captured Fort Henry and Fort Donelson in Tennessee. For the next two years, he was the most successful general in the Army. His campaign to capture Vicksburg, Mississippi, was one of the most efficient offensives of the war, and the Yankees captured the Mississippi River and most of Tennessee under his leadership.

Lincoln replaced Henry Halleck as the commander of all Union armies when he elevated Grant to the rank of lieutenant general. Unlike Halleck, Grant did not serve from behind a desk; he took the field with the largest Federal force, the Army of the Potomac, as he moved against Confederate General Robert E. Lee in Virginia.

- **Mar 01 1865 – Civil War:** Side-wheel steamship Harvest Moon, while underway near Georgetown, S.C., with Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren on board, hits a Confederate mine (or "torpedo" in contemporary terms) and sinks with the loss of one of her crew.

- **Mar 01 1912 – U.S. Army:** U.S. Army Captain Albert Berry performs first (attached-type) parachute jump from an airplane.
- **Mar 01 1916 – WWI Era:** Germany begins attacking ships in the Atlantic.
- **Mar 01 1941 – WW2 Era:** Bulgaria signs the Tripartite Pact under threat of a German invasion and after the discovery of a planned pro-British coup, allying itself with the Axis powers. Also,
  - Italian civilian rations are halved in order to allow food exports to Germany.
  - The 11th African Division begins a lightning pursuit of the retreating Italian forces north from Mogadishu, towards the Ogaden Plateau.
  - US Navy establishes Support Force Atlantic Fleet to protect North Atlantic convoys.
  - Joe Simon & Jack Kirby, creators of Captain America, are offered police protection in New York after receiving death threats from U.S. Nazis.
- **Mar 01 1941 – Holocaust:** *Auschwitz* » Reichsfuehrer SS and Chief of German Police Heinrich Himmler inspect Oswiecim (Auschwitz). Because nearby factories use prisoners for forced labor, Himmler is concerned about the prisoner capacity of the camp. On this visit, he orders both the expansion of Auschwitz I camp facilities to hold 30,000 prisoners and the building of a camp near Birkenau for an expected influx of 100,000 Soviet prisoners of war. Himmler also orders that the camp supply 10,000 prisoners for forced labor to construct an I.G. Farben factory complex at Dwory, about a mile away. Himmler will make additional visits to Auschwitz in 1942, when he will witness the killing of prisoners in the gas chambers.
- **Mar 01 1942 – WW2:** *U.S. Sinks First U-Boat* » Naval Reserve pilot Ensign William Tepuni, flying a Lockheed Hudson reconnaissance, light bombing and transport aircraft (PBO) from VP-82 Squadron based at Naval Air Station Argentia, Newfoundland, Canada, attacks and sinks German submarine U-656 southwest of Newfoundland—the first U-boat sunk by U.S. forces in World War II.
 

Also on this date:

  - Thousands of Belorussian Jews are transported to Koidanav, Belorussia where they are murdered.
- **Mar 01 1943 – WW2:** The Russians announce that new offensive to the South of Leningrad and led by Timoshenko, ‘has made considerable gains’. German troops begin the evacuation of the Rzhev area.
 

Also on this date:

  - In New York, American Jews hold a mass rally at Madison Square Garden to pressure the U.S. government into helping the Jews of Europe.
  - The British RAF conducts strategic bombing raids on all European railway lines.

- **Mar 01 1944 – WW2: *Battle of Sio Ends (5 DEC 43 -1 MAR)*** This was the break-out and pursuit phase of General Douglas MacArthur's Huon Peninsula campaign, part of the New Guinea campaign. After the defeat of the Japanese in the Battle of Sattelberg, Australian Army forces broke through the Japanese positions around Finschhafen. Constant pressure from U.S. Navy PT boats, Australian land forces and Allied aircraft brought the Japanese logistical system to the brink of collapse, resulting in disease, malnutrition, and privation for the Japanese soldiers. Meanwhile, the Allied supply system grappled with the problems of terrain and climate, particularly inclement weather and rough monsoonal seas that hampered and occasionally prevented delivery of supplies by sea.

Australian and Papuan troops advanced along the coast of the Huon Peninsula, using infantry, tanks, and air strikes against the Japanese positions, which were generally sited at creek crossings in the jungle. The advancing infantry kept strictly within range of the supporting artillery, which was liberally employed in the early stages of the operation. Using tactics that exploited the firepower of Australian artillery and armour, the Australian and Papuan troops inflicted heavy and disproportionate casualties on the Japanese as they advanced, ultimately linking up with the American forces at Saidor. Hundreds of Japanese soldiers were killed; thousands more died from disease, malnutrition, exhaustion and suicide. The Allies failed to seize the opportunity to completely destroy the Japanese forces.

During the advance, Australian troops captured Japanese cryptographic materials. This had an important effect on the subsequent course of the war against Japan in the South West Pacific, as it permitted codebreakers in Australia and the United States to read Japanese Army messages on a much greater scale than previously. Casualties and losses: U.S./AUS 169 – JP 3695.

- **Mar 01 1944 – WW2:** U.S.S Bronstein (DE-189) sinks German submarine U-603 in the North Atlantic and then teams with U.S.S Thomas (DE-102) and U.S.S Bostwick (DE-103) to sink German submarine U-709. Both subs were sunk with all hands.

Also on this date:

- Wing Commander John Cunningham, now on 20 'kills', gets the 2nd bar to his DSO, the first pilot to receive this triple honor.
- Both German and Russian forces in the Baltic region go on the defensive.
- The 'Chindits' cross the Chindwin in Burma.

- **Mar 01 1945 – WW2:** The U.S Ninth Army captures Mönchengladbach, Germany.

Also on this date:

- A U.S. submarine sinks a Japanese merchant ship loaded with supplies for Allied POWs, resulting in a court martial for the captain of the submarine, since the ship had been granted safe passage by the U.S. government.
- Units of Army group Centre recapture Lauban in lower Silesia.

- **Mar 01 1950 – Cold War: *Klaus Fuchs Convicted*** » In a trial lasting less than 90 minutes, German-British physicist Klaus Fuchs was convicted of violating the Official Secrets Act by

supplying information from the Manhattan Project to the Soviet Union during and shortly after World War II. While at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, Fuchs was responsible for many significant theoretical calculations relating to the first nuclear weapons and, later, early models of the hydrogen bomb. It is likely that Fuchs' espionage led the U.S. to cancel a 1950 Anglo-American plan to give Britain American-made atomic bombs.

In January 1950, Fuchs confessed that he was a spy and had passed detailed information on the project to the Soviet Union through courier Harry Gold in 1945, and further information about Edward Teller's unworkable "Super" design for a hydrogen bomb in 1946 and 1947. A British court sentenced him to fourteen years' imprisonment and stripped him of his British citizenship. He was released in 1959, after serving nine years, and emigrated to the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), where he was elected to the Academy of Sciences and became a member of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) central committee. He was later appointed deputy director of the Institute for Nuclear Research in Rossendorf, where he served until he retired in 1979. Fuchs died in Berlin on 28 January 1988.

- **Mar 01 1953 – Korean War:** U.S.S Valley Forge (CVA 45) aircraft raid the No.1 power plant at Chosen, Korea and heavily damage the strongly defended industrial site.
- **Mar 01 1954 – Cold War:** The Castle Bravo, a 15–megaton hydrogen bomb, is detonated on Bikini Atoll in the Pacific Ocean, resulting in the worst radioactive contamination ever caused by the United State.
- **Mar 01 1954 – Terrorism:** *U.S. Capitol Building Shooting* » Four Puerto Rican nationalists, armed with handguns, opened fire onto the House Floor from the back row of the south gallery. At the time, the House was voting on a measure to re-authorize a program allowing migrant Mexican farm workers to work in the country. Numerous Representatives and staff were present, with Speaker Joe Martin presiding over the roll call. In the fusillade, five Representatives were wounded—Alvin Bentley of Michigan, Ben Jensen of Iowa, Clifford Davis of Tennessee, George Fallon of Maryland, and Kenneth Roberts of Alabama. All five survived, although Bentley was critically wounded. Gallery visitors and police quickly subdued the nationalists; later, they were tried and sentenced to long prison terms.
- **Mar 01 1961 – Cold War:** *President Kennedy Establishes Peace Corps* » Newly elected President John F. Kennedy issues an executive order establishing the Peace Corps. It proved to be one of the most innovative and highly publicized Cold War programs set up by the United States.

During the course of his campaign for the presidency in 1960, Kennedy floated the idea that a new “army” should be created by the United States. This force would be made up of civilians who would volunteer their time and skills to travel to underdeveloped nations to assist them in any way they could.

To fulfill this plan, Kennedy issued an executive order on March 1, 1961 establishing the Peace Corps as a trial program. Kennedy sent a message to Congress asking for its support and made clear the significance of underdeveloped nations to the United States. The people of these nations were

“struggling for economic and social progress.” “Our own freedom,” Kennedy continued, “and the future of freedom around the world, depend, in a very real sense, on their ability to build growing and independent nations where men can live in dignity, liberated from the bonds of hunger, ignorance, and poverty.” Many in Congress, and the U.S. public, were skeptical about the program’s costs and the effectiveness of American aid to what were perceived to be “backward” nations, but Kennedy’s warning about the dangers in the underdeveloped world could not be ignored. Revolutions were breaking out around the globe and many of these conflicts—such as in Laos, the Congo, and elsewhere—were in danger of becoming Cold War battlefields. Several months later, Congress voted to make the Corps permanent.

During the 1960s and 1970s, thousands of Americans—especially young people—flocked to serve in dozens of nations, particularly in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Working side by side with the people of these nations, Peace Corps volunteers helped build sewer and water systems; constructed and taught in schools; assisted in developing new crops and agricultural methods to increase productivity; and participated in numerous other projects. Volunteers often faced privation and sometimes danger, and they were not always welcomed by foreign people suspicious of American motives. Overall, however, the program was judged a success in terms of helping to “win the hearts and minds” of people in the underdeveloped world. The program continues to function, and thousands of Americans each year are drawn to the humanitarian mission and sense of adventure that characterizes the Peace Corps.

- **Mar 01 1962 – Vietnam:** *Viet Cong Estimates* » The U.S. Department of Defense estimated that the Viet Cong numbered 20,000 full-time guerrillas, up from 4,000 two years earlier. DOD estimated that the Viet Cong controlled 10 percent of South Vietnam’s hamlets and had influence in another 60 percent. In the cities, however, Viet Cong influence was minimal and the Montagnard people of the Central Highlands supported neither the government nor the communists. The bulk of the Viet Cong fighters were located in the Mekong Delta and near Saigon. DOD identified three types of Viet Cong fighters. First the main forces were well armed and Used only on large operations; second were the provincial and district units, a mixture of guerrillas and organized units; and third, not part of the 20,000 estimate, were the part-time guerrillas, often armed only with primitive weapons but important for intelligence, logistics, and terrorist operations. Five hundred to 1,000 men monthly were estimated to be infiltrating South Vietnam from North Vietnam.
- **Mar 01 1965 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. informs South Vietnam of Intent To send Marines* » Ambassador Maxwell Taylor informs South Vietnamese Premier Phan Huy Quat that the United States is preparing to send 3,500 U.S. Marines to Vietnam to protect the U.S. airbase at Da Nang.

Three days later, a formal request was submitted by the U.S. Embassy, asking the South Vietnamese government to “invite” the United States to send the Marines. Premier Quat, a mere figurehead, had to obtain approval from the real power, Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu, chief of the Armed Forces Council. Thieu approved, but asked that the Marines be “brought ashore in the most inconspicuous way feasible.” Rumors of the imminent arrival of American troops soon circulated in Saigon, but there was no official word from either government until March 6 when the Johnson administration publicly confirmed that it would be sending the Marines to South Vietnam.

- **Mar 01 1966 – Space Travel:** *Soviet Probe Crashes Into Venus* » Venera 3, a Soviet probe launched from Kazakhstan on November 15, 1965, collides with Venus, the second planet from the sun. Although Venera 3 failed in its mission to measure the Venusian atmosphere, it was the first unmanned spacecraft to reach the surface of another planet. Four years earlier, the U.S. probe Mariner 2 was the first spacecraft to pass close enough to Venus to take scientific measurements of the planet, discovering surface temperatures in excess of 800 degrees Fahrenheit on its surface.



In 1967, Venera 4 succeeded where Venera 3 failed, successfully ejecting several scientific instruments, including a thermometer, a barometer, an atmospheric density gauge, and gas analyzers, into Venus' atmosphere. Then, in 1970, Venera 7 became the first spacecraft created by humans to soft-land on Venus, successfully sending back images and data for 23 minutes before succumbing to the extremely high temperature and atmospheric pressure found on the planet's surface.

- **Mar 01 1968 – Vietnam War:** *Clifford Replaces McNamara* » Clark Clifford replaces Robert McNamara as Secretary of Defense. McNamara, who had first taken office under President John F. Kennedy, left amid a debate over Vietnam policy precipitated by the Tet Offensive. In the summer of 1967, McNamara had become convinced that the United States should seek an end to the war through a negotiated settlement. In a memorandum submitted to President Johnson, he recommended that the U.S. freeze its troop levels, cease the bombing of North Vietnam, and turn over responsibility for the ground war to South Vietnam. Johnson rejected these proposals outright. After the communists launched the Tet Offensive in January 1968, an increasingly demoralized McNamara left Washington after eight years as Defense Secretary to become the president of the World Bank. Clifford, a successful Washington lawyer and Democratic Party powerbroker, served as Defense Secretary until January 1969, when he departed with the rest of the Johnson administration.
- **Mar 01 1971 – Vietnam War:** *Bomb Explodes in U.S. Capitol Building* » A bomb explodes in the Capitol building in Washington, D.C., causing an estimated \$300,000 in damage but hurting no one. A group calling itself the "Weather Underground" claimed credit for the bombing, which was done in protest of the ongoing U.S.-supported Laos invasion.

The so-called Weathermen were a radical faction of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS); the Weathermen advocated violent means to transform American society. The philosophical foundations of the Weathermen were Marxist in nature; they believed that militant struggle was the key to striking out against the state to build a revolutionary consciousness among the young, particularly the white working class. Their primary tools to achieving these ends were arson and bombing. Among the other targets of Weathermen bombings were the Long Island Court House, the New York Police Department headquarters, the Pentagon, and the State Department. No one was killed in these bombings, because the bombers always called in an advanced warning. However, three



members of the Weather Underground died on March 6, 1970, when the house in which they were constructing the bombs exploded.

- **Mar 01 1985 – Cold War:** Pentagon accepts theory that atomic war would cause a nuclear winter.
- **Mar 01 1991 – Desert Storm:** Following U.S.S Missouri's (BB-63) bombardment of Faylaka Island during Operation Desert Storm, hundreds of Iraqi soldiers wave white flags and surrender to the battleship's Remotely Piloted Vehicle (RPV) flying overhead. Also, the United States reopened its embassy in newly liberated Kuwait.
- **Mar 01 2002 – Afghanistan:** *U.S. Invasion of Afghanistan* » Operation Anaconda begins in eastern Afghanistan lasting until 6 MAR. Casualties and losses: U.S. 97 - Taliban 23 confirmed KIA.
- **Mar 01 2014 – U.S. Navy:** U.S.S Somerset (LPD-25) is commissioned in Philadelphia, PA. The ninth of the 12-ship San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock warships, Somerset is named to honor the passengers of United Airlines Flight 93 who attacked the 9/11 terrorists after they hijacked the plane, sending it crashing into the ground at Somerset County, PA, rather than their target in Washington, D.C

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- **Mar 02 1776 – American Revolution Era:** Patriot militia units arrest the Royal Governor of Georgia James Wright and attempt to prevent capture of supply ships in the Battle of the Rice Boats.
- **Mar 02 1776 – American Revolution Era:** *Siege of Boston* » In advance of the Continental Army's occupation of Dorchester Heights, Massachusetts, General George Washington orders American artillery forces to begin bombarding Boston from their positions at Lechmere Point, northwest of the city center, on this day. After two straight days of bombardment, American Brigadier General John Thomas slipped 2,000 troops, cannons and artillery into position just south of Boston at Dorchester Heights. The 56 cannon involved in the move were those taken at Ticonderoga, New York, by Lieutenant Colonel Benedict Arnold and Ethan Allen with his Green Mountain Boys, which had then been transported to Boston by Colonel of Artillery Henry Knox the previous winter.

By 5 MAR the Continental Army had artillery troops in position around Boston, including the elevated position at Dorchester Heights, overlooking the city. British General William Howe realized Boston was indefensible to the American positions and decided on 7 MAR to leave the city. Ten days later the eight-year British occupation of Boston ended when British troops evacuated the city and sailed to the safety of Halifax, Nova Scotia. The victory at Boston resulted in John Thomas' promotion to major general; soon after, he was assigned to replace General Richard Montgomery, who was killed in action as he and Benedict Arnold attempted to take Quebec. Thomas arrived at Quebec on May 1 and soon lost his own life. Although a physician by profession, he died of smallpox on 2 JUN, as the Patriots retreated up the Richelieu River from their failed siege of the city.

- **Mar 02 1836 – Texas\*Mexico: *Texas Declares Independence*** » During the Texas Revolution, a convention of American Texans meets at Washington-on-the-Brazos and declares the independence of Texas from Mexico. The delegates chose David Burnet as provisional president and confirmed Sam Houston as the commander in chief of all Texan forces. The Texans also adopted a constitution that protected the free practice of slavery, which had been prohibited by Mexican law. Meanwhile, in San Antonio, Mexican General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna’s siege of the Alamo continued, and the fort’s 185 or so American defenders waited for the final Mexican assault.

In 1820, Moses Austin, a U.S. citizen, asked the Spanish government in Mexico for permission to settle in sparsely populated Texas. Land was granted, but Austin died soon thereafter, so his son, Stephen F. Austin, took over the project. In 1821, Mexico gained independence from Spain, and Austin negotiated a contract with the new Mexican government that allowed him to lead some 300 families to the Brazos River. Under the terms of the agreement, the settlers were to be Catholics, but Austin mainly brought Protestants from the southern United States. Other U.S. settlers arrived in succeeding years, and the Americans soon outnumbered the resident Mexicans. In 1826, a conflict between Mexican and American settlers led to the Fredonia Rebellion, and in 1830 the Mexican government took measures to stop the influx of Americans. In 1833, Austin, who sought statehood for Texas in the Mexican federation, was imprisoned after calling on settlers to declare it without the consent of the Mexican congress. He was released in 1835.

In 1834, Santa Anna, a soldier and politician, became dictator of Mexico and sought to crush rebellions in Texas and other areas. In October 1835, Anglo residents of Gonzales, 50 miles east of San Antonio, responded to Santa Anna’s demand that they return a cannon loaned for defense against Indian attack by discharging it against the Mexican troops sent to reclaim it. The Mexicans were routed in what is regarded as the first battle of the Texas Revolution. The American settlers set up a provisional state government, and a Texan army under Sam Houston won a series of minor battles in the fall of 1835.

In December, Texas volunteers commanded by Ben Milam drove Mexican troops out of San Antonio and settled in around the Alamo, a mission compound adapted to military purposes around 1800. In January 1836, Santa Anna concentrated a force of several thousand men south of the Rio Grande, and Sam Houston ordered the Alamo abandoned. Colonel James Bowie, who arrived at the Alamo on 19 JAN realized that the fort’s captured cannons could not be removed before Santa Anna’s arrival, so he remained entrenched with his men. By delaying Santa Anna’s forces, he also reasoned, Houston would have more time to raise an army large enough to repulse the Mexicans. On 2 FEB, Bowie and his 30 or so men were joined by a small cavalry company under Colonel William Travis, bringing the total number of Alamo defenders to about 140. One week later, the frontiersman Davy Crockett arrived in command of 14 Tennessee Mounted Volunteers.

On 23 FEB, Santa Anna and some 3,000 Mexican troops besieged the Alamo, and the former mission was bombarded with cannon and rifle fire for 12 days. On 24 FEB, in the chaos of the siege, Colonel Travis smuggled out a letter that read: “To the People of Texas and All Americans in the World.... I shall never surrender or retreat.... Victory or Death!” On 1 MAR, the last Texan reinforcements from nearby Gonzales broke through the enemy’s lines and into the Alamo, bringing the total defenders to approximately 185. On 2 MAR, Texas’ revolutionary government formally declared its independence from Mexico.



In the early morning of 6 MAR, Santa Anna ordered his troops to storm the Alamo. Travis' artillery decimated the first and then the second Mexican charge, but in just over an hour the Texans were overwhelmed, and the Alamo was taken. Santa Anna had ordered that no prisoners be taken, and all the Texan and American defenders were killed in brutal hand-to-hand fighting. The only survivors of the Alamo were a handful of civilians, mostly women and children. Several hundred of Santa Anna's men died during the siege and storming of the Alamo.

Six weeks later, a large Texan army under Sam Houston surprised Santa Anna's army at San Jacinto. Shouting "Remember the Alamo!" the Texans defeated the Mexicans and captured Santa Anna. The Mexican dictator was forced to recognize Texas' independence and withdrew his forces south of the Rýo Grande. Texas sought annexation by the United States, but both Mexico and antislavery forces in the United States opposed its admission into the Union. For nearly a decade, Texas existed as an independent republic, and Houston was Texas' first elected president. In 1845, Texas joined the Union as the 28th state, leading to the outbreak of the Mexican-American War.

- **Mar 02 1865 – Civil War:** *Battle of Waynesboro, Virginia* » At the Battle Union General George Custer's troops rout Confederate General Jubal Early's force, bringing an end to fighting in the Shenandoah Valley.



The Shenandoah Valley was the scene of many battles and skirmishes during the Civil War. It was located directly in the path of armies invading from the south—as Confederate General Robert E. Lee did during the 1863 Gettysburg campaign—and the north. The fertile valley could sustain armies, and the gentle terrain allowed for rapid troop movement. In 1862, Confederate General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson staged a successful campaign in the Shenandoah Valley, defeating three Yankee armies with quick marching and bold attacks. In 1864, Early drove through the valley to threaten Washington, D.C., as he tried to relieve pressure on Lee, who was pinned down near Richmond, Virginia.

That fall, General Ulysses S. Grant, the Union commander, dispatched General Philip Sheridan to stop Early. At Cedar Creek on October 19, Sheridan achieved his goal. The Confederates were soundly defeated, but the remnants of Early's force lingered at the southern end of the valley through the winter of 1864 and 1865. Grant ordered Sheridan to move further west and destroy a railroad in southwestern Virginia. As Sheridan marched from the valley, Early sent a few hundred cavalry under General Thomas Rosser to block his path. On 1 MAR, Rosser set fire to a bridge along the middle fork of the Shenandoah River, but Custer, leading the advance units of Sheridan's army, charged across the burning span and extinguished the fire before the bridge was destroyed.

The next day, Custer followed Sheridan's orders and chased down the bulk of Early's force, which numbered about 2,000. Custer and about 5,000 troops found the Confederates entrenched along a ridge near Waynesboro. Part of the Yankee army shelled the Rebel position, while the rest slipped undetected through some woods that stood between Early's line and the South River. Custer gave the order in the late afternoon, and the Union troops stormed out of the woods and swarmed over the Confederate trenches from the rear. In a short time, a majority of the Confederates were captured and only nine Federal troops were killed. Early and his staff narrowly escaped over the Blue Ridge Mountains, marking the end of the Confederate presence in the Shenandoah Valley.

- **Mar 02 1888 – Suez Canal:** *Convention of Constantinople* » In 1882 the Anglo-Egyptian War resulted in Britain acquiring physical control over the Suez Canal and Egypt. On March 2, 1888 a treaty was drafted and signed on 29 OCT by the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire to regulate the Use of the Canal. Article 1 guaranteed free maritime passage through the Canal during war and peace. On 5 August 1914, at the beginning of the First World War when Egypt declared that the canal would be open to ships of all nations, Britain converted its occupation of Egypt into a British protectorate and barred canal access to enemy ships. Citing the security of the canal, Britain attempted to maintain its prerogatives in unilateral declaration.

Subsequent wars and skirmishes passed control of the Canal to various powers, including the United Kingdom, Egypt, Israel, and the United Nations. In 1956 the Egyptian Government nationalized the Suez Canal and on June 5, 1967, during the Six-Day War, they closed and blockaded the canal against Israel. The waterway reopened on June 10, 1975. A multinational observer force (including the United States, Israel, and Egypt) currently oversees the canal, which is owned and maintained by the Suez Canal Authority of the Arab Republic of Egypt. According to the international rules which govern navigation through Suez, Egypt cannot forbid any vessel from passing through the Suez Canal if there is no war between Egypt and that country.

- **Mar 02 1901 – U.S.\*Cuba:** *The Platt Amendment* » This was a rider appended to the U.S. Army appropriations bill of March 1901, stipulating the conditions for withdrawal of U.S. troops remaining in Cuba since the Spanish-American War and molding fundamental Cuban-U.S. relations until 1934. The Platt Amendment stipulated the conditions for U.S. intervention in Cuban affairs and permitted the United States to lease or buy lands for the purpose of the establishing naval bases (the main one was Guantánamo Bay) and coaling stations in Cuba. It barred Cuba from making a treaty that gave another nation power over its affairs, going into debt, or stopping the United States from imposing a sanitation program on the island.

Specifically, Article III required that the government of Cuba consent to the right of the United States to intervene in Cuban affairs for “the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty, and for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the Treaty of Paris on the United States, now to be assumed and undertaken by the Government of Cuba.” The Platt Amendment supplied the terms under which the United States intervened in Cuban affairs in 1906, 1912, 1917, and 1920.

By 1934, rising Cuban nationalism and widespread criticism of the Platt Amendment resulted in its repeal as part of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy toward Latin America. The United States, however, retained its lease on Guantánamo Bay, where a naval base was established.

- **Mar 02 1917 – WWI Era:** Wilson signed the Jones-Shafroth Act, under which Puerto Rico became a U.S. territory and Puerto Ricans were granted statutory citizenship. As citizens, Puerto Ricans could now join the U.S. Army, but few chose to do so. After Wilson signed a compulsory military service act two months later, however, 20,000 Puerto Ricans were eventually drafted to serve during World War I.
- **Mar 02 1940 – WW2 Era:** British India liner Domala bombed in English Channel, killing 100 people.
- **Mar 02 1941 – WW2 Era:** The day after Bulgaria joined the Axis Tripartite Pact, the German Twelfth Army crosses the River Danube from Romania into Bulgaria, moving troops forward to attack Greece.

Also on this date:

- Great Britain breaks off diplomatic relations with Bulgaria.
  - The RAF launches a heavy raid against Cologne, Germany.
  - U-552 U-95 and U-147 attack convoy HX-109, 170 miles Northwest of Outer Hebrides, Scotland. Around midnight, U-552 sinks tanker SS Cadillac carrying 17,000 tons of aviation spirit from Aruba (37 killed, 4 crew and 1 passenger picked up by destroyer HMS Malcolm) and U-95 sinks SS Pacific carrying 9000 tons of steel and scrap metal from U.S.A (34 crew lost, 1 survivor picked up by Icelandic trawler Dora). At 10.12 PM, U-147 sinks Norwegian SS Augvald (29 crew killed, Able seaman Rasmus Kolstø survives 11 days on a raft and is rescued by corvette HMS Pimpernel).
  - Operation Canvas; Italian Somaliland/Ethiopia, East Africa. 11th African Division sets out from Mogadishu, Italian Somaliland, resupplied by Royal Navy and U.S.ing fuel left behind by the Italians. They head 500 miles North for Jijiga, Eastern Ethiopia, to pursue retreating Italian forces. Allied efforts on the ground are aided by RAF aircraft flying across the Red Sea from Aden, which attack Italian airfields in Somaliland, Ethiopia and Eritrea.
- **Mar 02 1942 – WW2:** Churchill declares that the German Battleship Tirpitz is ‘the most important naval vessel in the situation today’ and believes her destruction would ‘profoundly affect the course of the war’.

Also on this date:

- General Wavell reassumes post as C-in-C India and Burma. Burma is now cut off from the Southwest Pacific.
  - The Dutch take supreme command of all allied forces in Southwest Pacific.
  - In Australia, all adult civilians are liable for compulsory war service.
  - U.S. Army reorganizes into three autonomous commands—Ground Forces, Army Air Forces, and Services of Supply.
- **Mar 02 1942 – WW2: Stage Door Canteens** » The first Stage Door Canteen opens in New York in the basement of the 44th Street Theater; it measured 40 by 80 feet and could accommodate 500 people at a time. The canteen offered servicemen nights of dancing, entertainment, food and nonalcoholic drinks, and even opportunities to rub shoulders with celebrities. And all this was for free. On its opening night entertainers included a comedian, a ballet dancer, and actors Gertrude Lawrence, Tallulah Bankhead, and Walter Pidgeon. A reporter from the New York Times wrote of “a conga line, which trailed all over the place.” It was a success and seven nights a week the building pulsed with hordes of servicemen and young women dancing to the sounds of the most famous bands in the country. Stars abounded. Actress Helen Hayes served sandwiches while actors Alfred Lunt and Sam Jaffe cleared away the plates.

Young women were recruited to work as hostesses. Their uniform was normally a red, white and blue apron to be worn over an appropriate dress. Canteens were later located in Boston, Washington DC, Philadelphia, Cleveland, San Francisco and Newark. Towards the end of the war there were Canteens in London and Paris. Bing Crosby sang for the opening of the London Canteen on 31 August 1944. The Canteens were closed at the war's end. All of the records for all of the Canteens were stored in an individual's garage after the war and were later destroyed in a fire.

Also on this date:

- Six Jews at the Janowska labor camp near Lvov are forced to spend the night outside; all six freeze to death. Also, Children from a Jewish nursery in the Minsk (Belorussia) Ghetto are thrown into a sandpit, tossed sweets, and then smothered to death. More than 5000 Jewish adults from Minsk are also killed.
- **Mar 02 1943 – WW2: Battle of the Bismarck Sea** » U.S. and Australian land-based planes begin an offensive against a convoy of Japanese ships in the Bismarck Sea, in the western Pacific.

On 1 MAR U.S. reconnaissance planes spotted 16 Japanese ships en route to Lae and Salamaua in New Guinea. The Japanese were attempting to keep from losing the island and their garrisons there by sending 7,000 reinforcements and aircraft fuel and supplies. But a U.S. bombing campaign, beginning 2 MAR and lasting until the 4 MAR, consisting of 137 American bombers supported by U.S. and Australian fighters, destroyed eight Japanese troop transports and four Japanese destroyers. More than 3,000 Japanese troops and sailors drowned as a consequence, and the supplies sunk with their ships. Of 150 Japanese fighter planes that attempted to engage the American bombers, 102 were shot down. It was an utter disaster for the Japanese—the U.S. 5th Air Force and the Royal Australian Air Force dropped a total of 213 tons of bombs on the Japanese convoy.



British Prime Minister Winston Churchill chose 4 MAR, the official end of the battle, to congratulate President Franklin D. Roosevelt, since that day was also the 10th anniversary of the president's first inauguration. "Accept my warmest congratulations on your brilliant victory in the Pacific, which fitly salutes the end of your first 10 years."

Also on this date:

- U.S. Fifth Air Force (SW Pacific) B-25s Use skip-bombing to attack a Japanese convoy sinking 12 ships. Also on this date:
- Germans begin a withdrawal from Tunisia, Africa.
- The center of Berlin is bombed by the RAF. Some 900 tons of bombs are dropped in a half hour.

- **Mar 02 1944 – Italy:** *Rail Disaster Kills 520* » Occurring in the midst of World War II, the details of this incident were not revealed at the time and remain somewhat murky. Train Number 8017 left Salerno heading for the rural area south of the city through the Apennine Mountains. Although it was a freight train that was not supposed to carry passengers, it was common at the time for both soldiers and civilians to hitch rides on any convenient train. Passing through the towns of Eboli, Persano and Romagnano, the 8017 had picked up approximately 650 passengers by the time it reached Balvano.

Balvano was a tiny town between two long tunnels in the Apennines. It was raining as the 8017 began to ascend the Galleria delle Amri tunnel pass just outside of Balvano. Almost immediately, it was forced to stop. There were conflicting reports as to why this happened: either the train was unable to pull the overloaded freight cars up the slope or the train stopped to wait for a train descending in the opposite direction. In any case, the train sat idling in the tunnel for more than 30 minutes. While this might not have posed a severe danger in some circumstances, the train's locomotives were burning low-grade coal substitutes because high-grade coal was hard to obtain during the war and the coal substitutes produced an excess of odorless and toxic carbon monoxide.

Approximately 520 of the train's passengers were asphyxiated by the carbon monoxide as they sat in the train. The government, in the midst of an intense war effort, kept a lid on the story—it was barely reported at the time although it was one of the worst, and most unusual, rail disasters of the century and came less than two months after a train wreck in the Torro tunnel in Spain killed 500 people.

- **Mar 02 1945 – WW2:** After 14 days of fierce fighting, the 503rd Regimental Combat Team – the "Rock Force" – raised the American Flag in the presence of General MacArthur at the Topside Barracks on Corregidor in the Philippines.

Also on this date:

- US Ninth Army crosses into Germany and reaches the Rhine near Düsseldorf.

- The U.S. Third Army captures Trier on the Moselle.
- The RAF launches a heavy attack (300 bombers) against Mannheim, causing a devastating firestorm.
- In the United States, strikes close ten Chrysler and Briggs plants.
- **Mar 02 1949 – U.S. Air Force:** *First Circumnavigation Of The World* » The B-50 Superfortress Lucky Lady II landed in Fort Worth, Texas, after completing the first non-stop around-the-world airplane flight in 94 hours and 1 minute. The Lucky Lady II was a B-50 of the 43rd Bombardment Group, equipped with 12 .50-caliber (12.7mm) machine guns. For its circumnavigation mission, a fuel tank was added in the bomb bay for extra range. The mission required a double crew with three pilots, under the command of Capt. James Gallagher. The crews rotated in shifts of four to six hours.
- **Mar 02 1952 – Korean War:** U.S.S Endicott (DMS-35) silences enemy guns on the east coast of Chuuronjang, Korea, in a counter-battery engagement.
- **Mar 02 1965 – Vietnam War:** *First Rolling Thunder Raid Conducted* » Operation Rolling Thunder begins with more than 100 United States Air Force jet bombers striking an ammunition depot at Xom Bang, 10 miles inside North Vietnam. Simultaneously, 60 South Vietnamese Air Force propeller planes bombed the Quang Khe naval base, 65 miles north of the 17th parallel.

Six U.S. planes were downed, but only one U.S. pilot was lost. Capt. Hayden J. Lockhart, flying an F-100, was shot down and became the first Air Force pilot to be taken prisoner by the North Vietnamese. Lockhart was released in 1973 when U.S. POWs were returned under provisions of the Paris Peace Accords.

The raid was the result of President Lyndon B. Johnson's decision in February to undertake the sustained bombing of North Vietnam that he and his advisers had been considering for more than a year. The goal of Rolling Thunder was to interdict North Vietnamese transportation routes in the southern part of North Vietnam and the slow infiltration of personnel and supplies into South Vietnam. In July 1966, Rolling Thunder was expanded to include North Vietnamese ammunition dumps and oil storage facilities as targets and in the spring of 1967 it was further expanded to include power plants, factories, and airfields in the Hanoi-Haiphong area.

The White House closely controlled Operation Rolling Thunder and President Johnson occasionally selected the targets himself. From 1965 to 1968, about 643,000 tons of bombs were dropped on North Vietnam. A total of nearly 900 U.S. aircraft were lost during Operation Rolling Thunder. The operation continued, with occasional suspensions, until President Johnson halted it on October 31, 1968, under increasing domestic political pressure.

- **Mar 02 1967 – Vietnam War:** *Kennedy Proposes Plan to End the War* » Senator Robert Kennedy (D-NY) proposes a three-point plan to help end the war. The plan included suspension of the U.S. bombing of North Vietnam and the gradual withdrawal of U.S. and North Vietnamese troops from South Vietnam with replacement by an international force. Secretary of State Dean Rusk rejected



Kennedy's proposal because he believed that the North Vietnamese would never agree to withdraw their troops.



Kennedy had been Attorney General under his brother, President John F. Kennedy. When the elder Kennedy was assassinated, Robert stayed on to serve his successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, but resigned his post in 1964 to run for the Senate. In the Senate, Kennedy initially continued to support U.S. efforts in Vietnam despite his growing apprehension about the war, especially the massive bombing of North Vietnam, because he was reluctant to disagree with the Johnson administration and its handling of the war. As racial strife and urban violence intensified along with mounting antiwar sentiment, however, Kennedy found it increasingly difficult to remain silent. The presidential campaign of 1968 opened the door for him to act on his concern. When President Johnson announced that he would not seek re-election, Kennedy entered the race, quickly emerging as a serious contender for the presidency. On June 4, 1968, he won the all-important California primary, thereby becoming his party's front-runner. That night, after addressing his supporters at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, he was shot by Sirhan Sirhan. He died the following day at the age of 42.

- **Mar 02 1969 – Cold War: Soviet Union and Chinese Armed Forces Clash** » In a dramatic confirmation of the growing rift between the two most powerful communist nations in the world, troops from the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China fire on each other at a border outpost on the U.S.suri River in the eastern region of the U.S.SR, north of Vladivostok. In the years following this incident, the United States used the Soviet-Chinese schism to its advantage in its Cold War diplomacy.

The cause of the firefight between Soviet and Chinese troops was a matter of dispute. The Soviets charged that Chinese soldiers crossed the border between the two nations and attacked a Soviet outpost, killing and wounding a number of Russian guards. The intruders were then driven back with heavy casualties. The Chinese report indicated that it was the Soviets who crossed the border and were repulsed. Either way, it was the first time that either side openly admitted to a clash of arms along the border, though it had been rumored for years that similar run-ins were occurring. Ever since the early-1960s, relations between the two communist superpowers had deteriorated. China charged that the Soviet leadership was deviating from the pure path of Marxism, and by the mid-1960s, Chinese leaders were openly declaring that the United States and the Soviet Union were conspiring against the Chinese Revolution.

For the United States, the breakdown of relations between the Soviet Union and China was a diplomatic opportunity. By the early 1970s, the United States began to initiate diplomatic contacts with China. (Relations between the two nations had been severed in 1949 following the successful communist revolution in China.) In 1972, President Richard Nixon surprised the world by

announcing that he would visit China. The strongest impetus for this new cordiality toward communist China was the U.S. desire to Use the new relationship as leverage in its diplomacy with the Soviet Union, making the Russians more malleable on issues such as arms control and their support of North Vietnam in the on-going Vietnam War. Pitting these two communist giants against one another became a mainstay of U.S. diplomacy in the later Cold War era.

- **Mar 02 1991 – Space Travel:** *Pioneer 10 Launched to Jupiter* » The world’s first outer-planetary probe, is launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida, on a mission to Jupiter, the solar system’s largest planet. In December 1973, after successfully negotiating the asteroid belt and a distance of 620 million miles, Pioneer 10 reached Jupiter and sent back to Earth the first close-up images of the spectacular gas giant. In June 1983, the NASA spacecraft left the solar system and the next day radioed back the first scientific data on interstellar space. NASA officially ended the Pioneer 10 project on March 31, 1997, with the spacecraft having traveled a distance of some six billion miles.



Headed in the direction of the Taurus constellation, Pioneer 10 will pass within three light years of another star–Ross 246–in the year 34,600 A.D. Bolted to the probe’s exterior wall is a gold-anodized plaque, 6 by 9 inches in area, that displays a drawing of a human man and woman, a star map marked with the location of the sun, and another map showing the flight path of Pioneer 10. The plaque, intended for intelligent life forms elsewhere in the galaxy, was designed by astronomer Carl Sagan.

Also on this date:

- Battle at Rumaila Oil Field brings end to the 1991 Gulf War.
- **Mar 02 2002 – Iraq War:** U.S. invasion of Afghanistan: Operation Anaconda begins (ending on March 19 after killing 500 Taliban and al Qaeda fighters, with 11 Western troop fatalities).
- **Mar 02 2004 – Iraq War:** Al Qaeda carries out the Ashoura Massacre killing 170 and wounding over 500.



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- **Mar 03 1776 – American Revolution Era:** Silas Deane, Connecticut delegate to the Continental Congress, leaves for France on a secret mission on this day in 1776. He was, instructed to meet with French Foreign Minister Charles Gravier, comte de Vergennes, to stress America’s need for military stores and assure the French that the colonies were moving toward total separation.
- **Mar 03 1776 – American Revolution Era:** *Battle of Nassau* » The United States Marine Corps under the command of Commodore Esek Hopkins and Marine Capt. Samuel Nicholas, with the Continental Navy makes the first American amphibious landing operation at New Providence, Bahamas, and captures the forts for much needed ordnance and gunpowder.
- **Mar 03 1777 – American Revolutionary War:** The Continental brig Cabot comes under attack by the British frigate HMS Milford and is run ashore off the coast of Nova Scotia, becoming the first Continental navy ship captured by the British.
- **Mar 03 1779 – American Revolutionary War:** The Continental Army is routed at the Battle of Brier Creek near Savannah, Georgia. Casualties and losses: U.S. 377 – GB 16.
- **Mar 03 1845 – U.S. Military Appropriations:** *Congress Overrides Presidential Veto for First Time* » Congress reins in President John Tyler’s zealous use of the presidential veto, overriding it with the necessary two-thirds vote. This marked Congress’ first Use of the Constitutional provision allowing Congressional veto overrides and represented Congress’ parting gift to Tyler as he left office.  

About two weeks earlier, Tyler had vetoed a Congressional bill that would have denied him the power to appropriate federal funds to build revenue-cutter ships without Congress’ approval. With the override, Congress insisted that the executive branch get the legislature’s approval before commissioning any new military craft. Tyler Used the presidential veto 10 times on a variety of legislation during his administration; the frequency of his Use of the veto was second only to that of Andrew Jackson, who employed it 12 times during his tenure.
- **Mar 03 1863 – Civil War:** *Congress Passes Civil War Conscription Act* » During the Civil War, the U.S. Congress passes a conscription act that produces the first wartime draft of U.S. citizens in American history. The act called for registration of all males between the ages of 20 and 45, including aliens with the intention of becoming citizens, by 1 APR. Exemptions from the draft could be bought for \$300 or by finding a substitute draftee. This clause led to bloody draft riots in New York City, where protesters were outraged that exemptions were effectively granted only to the wealthiest U.S. citizens.



Although the Civil War saw the first compulsory conscription of U.S. citizens for wartime service, a 1792 act by Congress required that all able-bodied male citizens purchase a gun and join their local state militia. There was no penalty for noncompliance with this act. Congress also passed a conscription act during the War of 1812, but the war ended before it was enacted. During the Civil War, the government of the Confederate States of America also enacted a compulsory military draft. The U.S. enacted a military draft again during World War I, in 1940 to make the U.S. ready for its involvement in World War II, and during the Korean War. The last U.S. military draft occurred during the Vietnam War.

- **Mar 03 1918 – WWI: *Treaty of Brest-Litovsk Concluded*** » In the city of Brest-Litovsk, located in modern-day Belarus near the Polish border, Russia signs a treaty with the Central Powers ending its participation in World War I.

Russia's involvement in World War I alongside its allies, France and Britain, had resulted in a number of heavy losses against Germany, offset only partially by consistent victories against Austria-Hungary. Defeat on the battlefield fed the growing discontent among the bulk of Russia's population, especially the poverty-stricken workers and peasants, and its hostility towards the imperial regime, led by the ineffectual Czar Nicholas II. This discontent strengthened the cause of the Bolsheviks, a radical socialist group led by Vladimir Lenin that was working to harness opposition to the czar and turn it into a sweeping revolution that would begin in Russia and later, he hoped, spread to the rest of the world.

The February Revolution broke out in early March 1917 (or February, according to the Julian calendar, which the Russians Used at the time); Nicholas abdicated later that month. After Lenin's return from exile (aided by the Germans) in mid-April, he and his fellow Bolsheviks worked quickly to seize power from the provisional government, led by Alexander Kerensky, Russia's minister of war. On 6 NOV, aided by the Russian military, they were successful. One of Lenin's first actions as leader was to call a halt to Russian participation in the war. An armistice was reached in early December 1917 and a formal cease-fire was declared December 15, but determining the terms of peace between Russia and the Central Powers proved to be far more complicated. Negotiations began at Brest-Litovsk on December 22. Leading their respective delegations were Foreign Ministers Leon Trotsky of Russia, Baron Richard von Kuhlmann of Germany and Count Ottokar Czernin of Austria.

In mid-February, the talks broke down when an angry Trotsky deemed the Central Powers' terms too harsh and their demands for territory unacceptable. Fighting resumed briefly on the Eastern Front, but the German armies advanced quickly, and both Lenin and Trotsky soon realized that Russia, in its

weakened state, would be forced to give in to the enemy terms. Negotiations resumed later that month and the final treaty was signed on 3 MAR.

By the terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Russia recognized the independence of Ukraine, Georgia and Finland; gave up Poland and the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to Germany and Austria-Hungary; and ceded Kars, Ardahan and Batum to Turkey. The total losses constituted 1 million square miles of Russia's former territory; a third of its population or 55 million people; a majority of its coal, oil and iron stores; and much of its industry. Lenin, who bitterly called the settlement that abyss of defeat, dismemberment, enslavement and humiliation, was forced to hope that the spread of world revolution—his greatest dream—would eventually right the wrongs done at Brest-Litovsk.

- **Mar 03 1931 – U.S. National Anthem:** *“The Star-Spangled Banner” Becomes Official* » President Herbert Hoover signs a congressional act making “The Star-Spangled Banner” the official national anthem of the United States.

On September 14, 1814, Francis Scott Key composed the lyrics to “The Star-Spangled Banner” after witnessing the massive overnight British bombardment of Fort McHenry in Maryland during the War of 1812. Key, an American lawyer, watched the siege while under detainment on a British ship and penned the famous words after observing with awe that Fort McHenry's flag survived the 1,800-bomb assault.

After circulating as a handbill, the patriotic lyrics were published in a Baltimore newspaper on September 20, 1814. Key's words were later set to the tune of “To Anacreon in Heaven,” a popular English song. Throughout the 19th century, “The Star-Spangled Banner” was regarded as the national anthem by most branches of the U.S. armed forces and other groups, but it was not until 1916, and the signing of an executive order by President Woodrow Wilson, that it was formally designated as such. In March 1931, Congress passed an act confirming Wilson's presidential order, and on March 3 President Hoover signed it into law.

- **Mar 03 1940 – WW2 Era:** The Russian launch a massive offensive and bring Viipuri under direct attack. This brings home to the Finns the fact that they cannot resist for must longer against the overwhelming force that the Russians are now deploying. Also, Italy protests to Britain over proposed ban on Italian imports of German coal.
- **Mar 03 1941 – WW2 Era:** Rommel moves German 5th Light Division along the Libyan coast road from Sirte to hold a narrow pass 17 miles West of the Allied forward positions at El Agheila. This will block any Allied advances towards Tripoli and serve as a base for offensive operations. Germans also construct defenses in the desert to prevent the Allies from bypassing this position.

Also on this date:

- Italian aircraft bomb Larissa in central Greece (devastated 2 days prior by 6.3 magnitude earthquake) but five Cant bombers are shot down over Corfu by RAF Hurricane fighters.
- German battlecruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau arrive off the West coast of Africa near the Cape Verde Islands, threatening convoy routes to Britain.

- **Mar 03 1942 – WW2:** RAF Bomber Command, under its new C-in-C, Air Vice Marshal Harris, attacks the Renault plant in the Paris suburb of Billancourt. Of the 235 RAF planes that took off, only 1 failed to return. The new navigation device, GEE wasn't Used, although the target was marked with flares for the first time and serious damage done to production facilities with many French workers killed. This successful raid was a much needed morale boost for the bomber crews.

Also on this date:

- The Lancaster bomber makes its operational debut, laying mines of the French port of Brest.
  - Vichy announces that 'official' German figures put the number of French arrested in 1941 at 5,390 and executions at more than 250.
  - Nazis begin deportation of 10,000 Jews from Lublin, Poland.
  - Belgian Jews are drafted for forced labor.
  - General Chiang Kai-shek meets General Wavell in Burma.
  - Ten Japanese warplanes raid the town of Broome Western Australia killing more than 100 people.
- **Mar 03 1942 – WW2:** U.S.S Perch (SS-176) was forced to scuttle herself after being mortally wounded in a depth charge attack. All crew members (60) were picked up by the Japanese, and sent to Prisoner of War camps. Six crew members of U.S.S Perch died as Prisoners of War.



- **Mar 03 1943 – WW2:** In London, England, 173 people are killed in a crush while trying to enter an air-raid shelter at Bethnal Green tube station.
- **Mar 03 1944 – WW2:** Under pressure from the Western Allies withdraw all remaining Spanish troops from the Eastern front, the Franco government orders members of the so-called "Blue Legion," attached to the German 121st Infantry Division, to return home and outlaws service by Spanish citizens with the Axis forces. Nevertheless, a handful of fanatically anti-Communist Spaniards defy orders and volunteer for service with the Waffen SS, some of them fighting suicidally to the end in the ruins of Berlin.

Also, on this date:

- For the war to date British civilian casualties total 50,324 dead, with military deaths at 50,103.

- The allies announce that Russia is to get a third of Italian fleet, or equivalent in British and American warships.
- Japanese counter-attacks on Los Negros fail.
- German attacks cease at Anzio after losing 3,500 men and 30 Panzer's in four days.
- **Mar 03 1945 – WW2:** The Royal Air Force mistakenly bombed the Bezuidenhout neighborhoods in the Dutch city of The Hague. At the time, they was more densely populated than U.S.ual with evacuees from The Hague and Wassenaar; tens of thousands were left homeless and had to be quartered in the Eastern and Central Netherlands.



The British bomber crews had intended to bomb the Haagse Bos ("Forest of the Hague") district where the Germans had installed V-2 launching facilities that had been Used to attack English cities. However the pilots were issued with the wrong coordinates so the navigational instruments of the bombers had been set incorrectly, and combined with fog and clouds which obscured their vision, the bombs were instead dropped on the wrong location.

As a result of the bombing, there were: 511 fatalities, 344 wounded, 20,000 people left homeless 3,250 burned out residences, 3,241 damaged residences, 391 irreparably damaged residences, 290 destroyed businesses, 5 destroyed churches, and 9 destroyed schools. During the total 128 raids on Hague casualties amounted to 884 killed and a further 631 wounded.

- **Mar 03 1945 – WW2:** *Finland Declares War on Germany* » Under increasing pressure from both the United States and the Soviet Union, Finland finally declares war on its former partner, Germany.

After the German invasion of Poland, the U.S.SR, wanting to protect Leningrad more than ever from encroachment by the West—even its dubious Nonaggression Pact partner Germany—began demanding control of various disputed areas from Finland, including part of the Karelian Isthmus (the land bridge that gave access to Leningrad). Finland resisted the Soviet pressure. Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin responded by enacting the “small print” of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Nonaggression Pact the U.S.SR had signed with Germany back in August, which gave the U.S.SR free reign in its “sphere of influence.” The Soviets invaded Finland on November 30, 1939. (Stalin claimed that Finnish troops opened fire on Soviet troops.)





The Finns stunned everyone by beating back the initial Soviet offensive. Although their resistance consisted of only small numbers of trained soldiers (on skis and bicycles!) the refusal to submit made headlines around the world. President Roosevelt quickly extended \$10 million in credit to Finland, while also noting that the Finns were the only people to pay back their World War I war debt to the United States in full. But by the time the Soviets had a chance to regroup and send in massive reinforcements, the Finnish resistance was spent. In March 1940, negotiations with the Soviets began, and Finland signed the Treaty of Moscow, which handed over control of the Karelian Isthmus.

As tension increased between Germany and the U.S.S.R, Finland saw in Hitler a possible ally in gaining back its lost territory. German troops were allowed on Finnish soil as the Germans prepared for their invasion of the Soviet Union—a war that the Finns joined. Although Finnish troops captured large areas of East Karelia back from the Soviet Union, they were reluctant to trespass the old borders of 1939 and help Germany in the siege of Leningrad.

But repeated German setbacks resulted in putting the Soviet Union on the offensive again. Shortly after the Red Army broke through to the Karelian Isthmus in June 1944, the Finnish president, Risto Ryti, resigned. (Around this same time, the United States broke off relations with Finland after repeated demands that Ryti renounce his alliance with Germany were rebuffed.) Ryti's successor, Gustaf Mannerheim, immediately sued for an armistice with the Soviet Union. This was signed on September 19, 1944; Finland agreed to the terms of the 1940 Treaty of Moscow and to throw all German troops off Finnish soil. The final act of capitulation came on March 3, 1945, with a formal declaration of war against the already dying Germany.

Also on this date:

- The American and Filipino troops liberate Manila, Philippines after 30 days of fighting.
  - Units of the Canadian First Army capture Xanten on the lower Rhine in the battle of the Reichswald.
  - The U.S. First Army captures Krefeld.
  - 100 Luftwaffe night-fighters attack 27 RAF airfields, in what is the last night intrusion raid of the war. 22 RAF aircraft were destroyed for 6 German.
- **Mar 03 1952 – Cold War:** In a 6-3 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court upholds a New York state law that prohibits communists from teaching in public schools. Coming at the height of the Red Scare in the United States, the Supreme Court decision was additional evidence that many Americans were concerned about possible subversive communist activity in their country.



- **Mar 03 1965 – Vietnam: *Ho Chi Minh Trail*** » The Ho Chi Minh Trail was a military supply route running from North Vietnam through Laos and Cambodia to South Vietnam. The route sent weapons, manpower, ammunition and other supplies from communist-led North Vietnam to their supporters in South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. The trail was named after Ho Chi Minh, the president of North Vietnam. During the 1960s, the Ho Chi Minh Trail (actually a network of trails, footpaths and roadways) moved several tons of supplies each day through rugged mountain ranges and dense jungle.

U.S. military forces—aware of the amount of weaponry that the trail supplied to the Viet Cong, its enemies in South Vietnam—had the Ho Chi Minh Trail in its sights as American involvement in Vietnam increased over the 1960s. In 1965, more than 30 U.S. Air Force jets struck targets along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos. This was just one part of several American ground and air strikes against villages and roads along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Since such raids had become common knowledge and were being reported in the American media, the U.S. State Department felt compelled to announce that these controversial missions were authorized by the powers granted to President Lyndon B. Johnson in the August 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.



But the Johnson administration came under increasing criticism at home and abroad because of the bombing raids along the trail in Laos and Cambodia. Congressional opponents of the Johnson administration thought the president was escalating the war without authorization. There was also an immediate response in the international community. Not surprisingly, communists roundly criticized Johnson's actions. In Havana, Premier Fidel Castro condemned the United States and promised that Cuba would aid North Vietnam. On 4 MAR, about 2,000 students attacked the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

There was also a reaction in non-communist capitals. Prime Minister Lester Pearson of Canada expressed concern about the risk of escalation, but said that Canada understood the U.S. position. In Britain, however, there was mounting criticism of the government's support of U.S. policies in Vietnam. In New York City, Women Strike for Peace members demonstrated outside the United Nations to urge an end to the war.

Sections of the Ho Chi Minh Trail still exist today, and parts of it have been incorporated into the Ho Chi Minh Highway, a paved road that connects the north and south regions of Vietnam.

- **Mar 03 1971 – Vietnam: *U.S. 5th Special Forces Group Withdraws*** » The U.S. Army's 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) departs South Vietnam. The Special Forces were formed to organize and train guerrilla bands behind enemy lines. President John F. Kennedy, a strong believer in the

potential of the Special Forces in counterinsurgency operations, had visited the Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg to review the program and authorized the Special Forces to wear the headgear that became their symbol, the Green Beret.



The 5th Group was sent to Vietnam in October 1964 to assume control of all Special Forces operations in Vietnam. Prior to this time, Green Berets had been assigned to Vietnam only on temporary duty. The primary function of the Green Berets in Vietnam was to organize the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG) among South Vietnam's Montagnard population. The Montagnards—"mountain people" or "mountaineers"—were a group of indigenous people from several tribes, such as the Rhade, Bru, and Jarai, who lived mainly in the highland areas of Vietnam. These tribes were recruited to guard camps in the mountainous border areas against North Vietnamese infiltration. At the height of the war the Green Berets oversaw 84 CIDG camps with more than 42,000 CIDG strike forces and local militia units. The CIDG program ended in December 1970 with the transfer of troops and mission to the South Vietnamese Border Ranger Command. The Green Berets were withdrawn as part of the U.S. troop reductions in Vietnam.

- **Mar 03 1980 – U.S. Navy:** The U.S.S Nautilus is decommissioned and stricken from the Naval Vessel Register.
- **Mar 03 1994 – Somalia:** American soldiers completely withdraw 28 days earlier than expected. Other nations, such as Belgium, France and Sweden, also decided to withdraw at this time.



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- **Mar 04 1776 – American Revolution Era:** *American Forces Occupy Dorchester Heights* » Under the cover of constant bombing from American artillery, Brigadier General John Thomas slips 2,000 troops, cannons and artillery into position at Dorchester Heights, just south of Boston, on this day. Under orders from General George Washington, Thomas and his troops worked through the night digging trenches, positioning cannons and completing their occupation of Dorchester Heights.



The cannon that made Thomas' efforts possible were those taken by Lieutenant Colonel Benedict Arnold and Ethan Allen with his Green Mountain Boys at Fort Ticonderoga on May 10, 1775. Colonel Henry Knox then brought the cannon and powder to Boston through the winter snow in time for Washington and Thomas to employ them in the engagement at Dorchester Heights. By muffling their wagon-wheels with straw, the Patriots were able to move their cannon unnoticed. Washington would Use this same strategy to evade British General Charles Cornwallis after the Battle of Trenton.

At daybreak, British General William Howe received word of the American position overlooking the city. Within days, General Howe came to realize that the American position made Boston indefensible and soon ordered the evacuation of all British troops from the city; the British sailed for Halifax, Nova Scotia, on March 27. Howe and his troops remained in Canada until they traveled to meet Washington in the conflict over New York in August.

In 1898, a Georgian white marble revival tower was commissioned for the site of the battle to memorialize the Patriot victory at Dorchester Heights. The memorial tower has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1966. In 1978, it joined eight other sites in the Boston National Historic Park under the purview of the National Park Service.

- **Mar 04 1861 – Civil War: *Lincoln Inaugurated*** » Abraham Lincoln becomes the 16th president of the United States. In his inauguration speech Lincoln extended an olive branch to the South, but also made it clear that he intended to enforce federal laws in the states that seceded.



Since Lincoln's election in November 1860, seven states had left the Union. Worried that the election of a Republican would threaten their rights, especially slavery, the lower South seceded and formed the Confederate States of America. In the process, some of those states seized federal properties such as armories and forts. By the time Lincoln arrived in Washington, D.C., for his inauguration, the threat of war hung heavy in the air. Lincoln took a cautious approach in his remarks,

and made no specific threats against the Southern states. As a result, he had some flexibility in trying to keep the states of the upper South—North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Arkansas, Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware—in the Union.

In his inaugural address, Lincoln promised not to interfere with the institution of slavery where it existed, and pledged to suspend the activities of the federal government temporarily in areas of hostility. However, he also took a firm stance against secession and the seizure of federal property. The government, insisted Lincoln, would “hold, occupy, and possess” its property and collect its taxes. He closed his remarks with an eloquent reminder of the nation’s common heritage:

“In your hand, my fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath in Heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to preserve, protect, and defend it... We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”

Six weeks later, the Confederates fired on Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, and the Civil War began.

- **Mar 04 1913 – WW1 Era:** *Woodrow Wilson’s First Inaugural Address* » With trouble brewing between the great nations of Europe, Thomas Woodrow Wilson takes office as the 28th president of the United States on this day in 1913, in Washington, D.C.



The Virginia-born son of a Presbyterian minister, Wilson became president of Princeton University in 1902; he resigned the post in 1910 to run successfully for the governorship of New Jersey. Two years later, he won a tight race for the Democratic nomination for president, aided by a split in the Republican Party and the third-party candidacy of former president Theodore Roosevelt. After a vigorous campaign on a reformist platform dubbed New Freedom, Wilson outpolled both Roosevelt and the Republican incumbent, William Howard Taft, though he failed to capture a majority of the popular vote.

At his inauguration ceremony on March 4, 1913, Wilson made clear his vision of the United States and its people as an exemplary moral force: “Nowhere else in the world have noble men and women exhibited in more striking forms the beauty and the energy of sympathy and helpfulness and counsel in their efforts to rectify wrong, alleviate suffering, and set the weak in the way of strength and hope.” Wilson’s first term as president would be dedicated to pushing through ambitious domestic

programs—including the Federal Reserve Act and the creation of the Federal Trade Commission; his second, which began in 1916, would be marked irrevocably by the First World War.

Though Wilson won reelection in 1916 on a platform of strict neutrality, he would soon give himself over completely to his vision of the United States as a powerful moral force that should play an important role in shaping international affairs. German aggression—best exemplified by its policy of unrestricted submarine warfare—provided an impetus for this vision, pushing the president and his country towards entrance into the war. Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war on April 2, 1917; the U.S. formally entered the war four days later.

Wilson's famous Fourteen Points—presented in a speech to Congress in January 1918—and his plan for an international organization dedicated to regulating conflicts and preserving peace between nations became the basis, after the armistice, for the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations. In the face of tough opposition from conservative opponents in Congress, Wilson was unable to push through ratification of either the treaty or the League in his own country, which greatly lessened its efficacy in the post-war era. Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1920, an exhausted Wilson suffered a stroke soon after that nearly killed him. He left office in 1921 and died three years later.

- **Mar 04 1941 – WW2 Era: *Operation Claymore*** » The United Kingdom launches its first large scale British Commando raid on Norway's Lofoten Islands. They were an important center for the production of fish oil and glycerin, Used in the German war economy. The landings were carried out by the men of No. 3 Commando, No. 4 Commando, a Royal Engineers section and 52 men from the Norwegian Independent Company 1. Supported by the 6th Destroyer Flotilla and two troop transports of the Royal Navy, the force made an unopposed landing and generally continued to meet no opposition. The original plan was to avoid contact with German forces and inflict the maximum of damage to German-controlled industry. They achieved their objective of destroying fish oil factories and some 3,600 tons of oil and glycerin. The British experienced only one accident; an officer injuring himself with his own revolver and returned with some 228 German prisoners, 314 loyal Norwegian volunteers and a number of Quisling regime collaborators.

Through naval gunfire and demolition parties, 18,000 tons of shipping (10 ships) were sunk. Perhaps the most significant outcome of the raid was the capture of a set of rotor wheels for an Enigma machine and its code books from the German armed trawler Krebs. German naval codes could be read at Bletchley Park, providing the intelligence needed to allow Allied convoys to avoid U-boat concentrations. In the aftermath, the evaluation of the operation differed, with the British, especially Winston Churchill and the Special Operations Executive, deeming it a success. In the eyes of the British the main value of such actions was to tie up large German forces on occupation duties in Norway. Martin Linge and the other Norwegians involved were more doubtful of the value of such raids against the Norwegian coast but were not told of the value of the seized cryptographic information. Following Operation Claymore, the Norwegian special operations unit Norwegian Independent Company 1 was established for operations in Norway.

Also on this date:

- As German troops move into Bulgaria, Yugoslavia becomes the key to the invasion of Greece. Hitler meets Prince Paul of Yugoslavia at Berchtesgaden to pressure him into joining the

Tripartite Pact, offering the Greek Aegean port of Salonika in return. Britain also seeks Yugoslavian assurances denying Germany access to Greece. Prince Paul must decide soon.

- Transport of Allied troops and equipment from North Africa begins (Operation Lustre). Four freighters depart Alexandria and Port Said, Egypt, escorted by destroyers HMS Hereward and HMS Stuart.
  - British General Wilson arrives in Athens to take command of Allied ground forces. He discovers confusion over the planned defense against German attack. Greek troops still hold the Metaxas line facing Bulgaria instead of withdrawing to the Aliakmon Line (as had been agreed, or so the British thought).
  - In Albania, Italian warships shell Greek coastal positions in preparation for a renewed Italian ground offensive.
  - In the Indian Ocean South of the Seychelles, a Walrus seaplane from Australian cruiser HMAS Canberra spots German steamer Coburg and captured Norwegian tanker Ketty Brøvig (supply ships for German armed merchant cruisers). HMAS Canberra tries to intercept, but Coburg and Ketty Brøvig are scuttled to avoid capture.
  - Canada orders Japanese-Canadians 16 and older to register with Mounted Police as “suspicious aliens.”
- **Mar 04 1942 – WW2: Japanese Operation K** » During the Pearl Harbor attack, the Japanese had missed out on destroying the Oil Storage facilities near Pearl Harbor Naval Air Station and the Naval Yard. So, they aimed to bomb these facilities in Operation K. Also, the Japanese aimed to disrupt the repair and salvage operations that were going on in full swing. This was, perhaps, the longest bombing sortie by two planes without fighter escort in WWII. Operation K culminated on 4 MAR when two aircraft, nicknamed “Emily,” carried out an unsuccessful attack on Pearl Harbor. These flying boats were huge with a gross takeoff weight of 71,650 lb and a wingspan of 124 ft. Four 1,850 hp engines powered this flying boat. Its top speed was 296 mph, and it had a crew of 10. Named “the Flying Porcupine” by Allied pilots, this flying boat was defended by 10 machine guns and an equal number of 20mm cannons. The H8K flying boat was capable of undertaking long missions that lasted up to 24 hours. Each flying boat could carry eight 550 lb bombs.

Operation K was a colossal failure. The mission was jinxed right from the beginning. Only two porcupines flew instead of the planned five. Also, the absence of an element of surprise and poor weather conditions forced the Japanese planes to drop their bombs blind when they could not sight their targets. The flying giants returned without success.

- **Mar 04 1943 – WW2:**
- **Mar 04 1943 – WW2: Battle of Fardykambos (4-6 MAR)** » Also known as the Battle of Bougazi was fought between the National Liberation Front (EAM-ELAS) of the Greek Resistance against the Italian troops during the Axis Occupation of Greece. The battle was notable for the large-scale and spontaneous participation of the local populace, and of officers from other groups and organizations, including right-wing rivals to ELAS.

The three-day battle began with the successful ambush of an Italian transport column on 4 MAR. The Italian battalion garrisoning the nearby town of Grevena came to the column's rescue, but was halted before the town of Siatista by Greek partisan forces. The Greek forces continued to swell as reserve officers and ordinary civilians flocked as volunteers to the sound of battle, reaching a force of some 2,000 men. By nightfall on 5 MAR, the Italian battalion had been surrounded by the Greeks, and after incessant harassment and attacks over the following day, was forced to surrender on the night of 6/7 MAR. Many weapons and supplies, including field artillery, were acquired by the Greeks, and over 550 Italian troops became prisoners of war. The battle led to the liberation of Grevena from Italian occupation a few weeks later, and was a major sign of the growth of the Greek partisan movement, and the collapse of Italian rule over rural Greece.

Also on this date:

➤ The Battle of the Bismarck Sea in the South West Pacific comes to an end. Casualties and losses: U.S./Aus 13 + 2 Bombers & 4 Fighters – JP 2,890 + 8 Transport, 5 Destroyers, & 20 Fighters.

- **Mar 04 1944 – WW2:** The U.S.AAF launch, but then cancel the first daylight heavy bomber raid on Berlin. However 29 aircraft fail to receive the counter-order and bomb the capital. The British Royal Air Force (RAF) had been conducting night raids against Berlin and other German cities since NOV 1943, suffering losses at increasingly heavy rates. The RAF flew 35 major raids between NOV 1943 and MAR 1944 and lost 1,047 aircraft, with an even greater number damaged.

Also on this date:

➤ Soviet Commander of the 1st Ukrainian Front Gen. Georgy Zhukov renews his attacks against the forces of Germany's Erich von Manstein Army Group South in the Ukraine. Manstein's ongoing disagreements with Hitler over the conduct of the war led to his dismissal in March 1944.

➤ Convoy RA-57 (31 ships) sailing the Arctic route from the Kola Peninsula to Loch Ewe, is attacked off Norway. The steam merchant Empire Tourist is sunk by U-703 for 7,062 gross tons lost. However, the convoy's escorts sink 3 U-boats en-route.

➤ Merrill's 'Marauders' fight their first major action in Burma.

- **Mar 04 1945 – WW2:** The first B-29 bombers arrive on Iwo Jima's emergency field in order to use the island as a base for attacks on Japan. Within a few weeks the Army Air Force would begin attacks on Japan.

Also on this date:

➤ The First Belorussian Front breaks through at Stargard Poland and drives towards Stettin and also establishes a new bridgehead across the Oder to the South of Frankfurt, Germany.

➤ The British Fourteenth Army takes Meiktila, Burma.

- **Mar 04 1954 – Cold War:** *Dulles Asks For Action Against Communism* » Speaking before the 10th Inter-American Conference, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles warns that "international communism" is making inroads in the Western Hemisphere and asks the nations of Latin America to condemn this danger. Dulles's speech was part of a series of actions designed to put pressure on the

leftist government of Guatemala, a nation in which U.S. policymakers' feared communism had established a beachhead.

Dulles was stern and direct as he declared that there was not "a single country in this hemisphere which has not been penetrated by the apparatus of international communism acting under orders from Moscow." Communism, he continued, was an "alien despotism," and he asked the nations of Latin America to "deny it the right to prey upon our hemisphere." "There is no place here," he concluded, "for political institutions which serve alien masters." Though he did not mention it by name, it was clear to most observers that Dulles was targeting Guatemala.



**John Foster Dulles**

The United States had been concerned about political developments in Guatemala since 1944, when a leftist revolution overthrew long-time dictator Jorge Ubico. In the years since, U.S. policymakers were increasingly fearful that communist elements were growing in power in Guatemala and deeply troubled by government policies that seemed to threaten U.S. business interests that nation. By 1954, Dulles and President Dwight D. Eisenhower were convinced that international communism had established a power base in the Western Hemisphere that needed to be eliminated. As evidence, they pointed to Guatemala's expropriation of foreign-owned lands and industries, its "socialistic" labor legislation, and vague allegations about Guatemala's assistance to revolutionary movements in other Latin American nations.

Dulles's speech did get some results. The Latin American representatives at the meeting passed a resolution condemning "international communism." As Dulles was to discover, however, the Latin American governments would go no further. In May, Dulles requested that the Organization of American States (OAS) consider taking direct action against Guatemala. The OAS was established in 1948 by the nations of Latin America and the United States to help in settling hemispheric disputes. Dulles's request fell on deaf ears, however. Despite their condemnation of "international communism," the other nations of Latin America were reluctant to sanction direct intervention in another country's internal affairs. At that point, Eisenhower unleashed the Central Intelligence Agency. Through a combination of propaganda, covert bombings, and the establishment of a mercenary force of "counter-revolutionaries" in neighboring Nicaragua and Honduras, the CIA was able to destabilize the Guatemalan government, which fell from power in June 1954. An anti-communist dictatorship led by Carlos Castillo Armas replaced it.

- **Mar 04 1968 – Vietnam War:** *Task Force Sends Memo To The President* » In a draft memorandum to the president, the Ad Hoc Task Force on Vietnam advises that the administration send 22,000 more troops to Vietnam, but make deployment of the additional 185,000 men previously



requested by Gen. William Westmoreland (senior U.S. commander in Vietnam) contingent on future developments.

The Task Force was a group of senior policy advisors including Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford; Central Intelligence Agency Director Richard Helms; General Maxwell Taylor; Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs William Bundy; and Paul Warnke, head of the Pentagon's politico-military policy office. President Johnson requested that the Task Force study a request by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and General Westmoreland for more than 200,000 additional troops to augment U.S. forces in Vietnam and to strengthen U.S. security in other parts of the world.

President Johnson asked that the memorandum be sent to General Westmoreland, who, in a reply four days later, welcomed the additional 22,000 troops, but insisted that he still needed the full requested reinforcements by year's end. Ultimately, President Johnson and his advisers, seeking a way to disengage from the war, refused Westmoreland's request for more troops.

- **Mar 04 1991 – Post Desert Storm:** Iraq releases ten Desert Storm prisoners of war (six Americans, three of whom were designated MIA), including Navy Lt. Jeffrey Zaun, Lt. Robert Wetzell, and Lt. Lawrence Slade.
- **Mar 04 2002 – Afghanistan:** Seven American Special Operations Forces soldiers are killed as they attempt to infiltrate the Shahi Kot Valley on a low-flying helicopter reconnaissance mission.
- **Mar 04 2012 – U.S.\*Iran:** President Barack Obama said he didn't want war but insisted he would attack Iran if that were the only option left to stop that nation from getting a nuclear weapon.

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- **Mar 05 1770 – American Revolution Era:** *The Boston Massacre* » On the cold, snowy night of March 5, 1770, a mob of American colonists gathers at the Customs House in Boston and begins taunting the British soldiers guarding the building. The protesters, who called themselves Patriots, were protesting the occupation of their city by British troops, who were sent to Boston in 1768 to enforce unpopular taxation measures passed by a British parliament that lacked American representation.

British Captain Thomas Preston, the commanding officer at the Customs House, ordered his men to fix their bayonets and join the guard outside the building. The colonists responded by throwing snowballs and other objects at the British regulars, and Private Hugh Montgomery was hit, leading him to discharge his rifle at the crowd. The other soldiers began firing a moment later, and when the smoke cleared, five colonists were dead or dying—Crispus Attucks, Patrick Carr, Samuel Gray, Samuel Maverick, and James Caldwell—and three more were injured. Although it is unclear whether Crispus Attucks, an African American, was the first to fall as is commonly believed, the deaths of the five men are regarded by some historians as the first fatalities in the American Revolutionary War.



The British soldiers were put on trial, and patriots John Adams and Josiah Quincy agreed to defend the soldiers in a show of support of the colonial justice system. When the trial ended in December 1770, two British soldiers were found guilty of manslaughter and had their thumbs branded with an “M” for murder as punishment.

The Sons of Liberty, a Patriot group formed in 1765 to oppose the Stamp Act, advertised the “Boston Massacre” as a battle for American liberty and just cause for the removal of British troops from Boston. Patriot Paul Revere made a provocative engraving of the incident, depicting the British soldiers lining up like an organized army to suppress an idealized representation of the colonist uprising. Copies of the engraving were distributed throughout the colonies and helped reinforce negative American sentiments about British rule.

In April 1775, the American Revolution began when British troops from Boston skirmished with American militiamen at the battles of Lexington and Concord. The British troops were under orders to capture Patriot leaders Samuel Adams and John Hancock in Lexington and to confiscate the Patriot arsenal at Concord. Neither missions were accomplished because of Paul Revere and William Dawes, who rode ahead of the British, warning Adams and Hancock and rousing the Patriot minutemen. Eleven months later, in March 1776, British forces had to evacuate Boston following American General George Washington’s successful placement of fortifications and cannons on Dorchester Heights. This bloodless liberation of Boston brought an end to the hated eight-year British occupation of the city. For the victory, General Washington, commander of the Continental Army, was presented with the first medal ever awarded by the Continental Congress. It would be more than five years before the Revolutionary War came to an end with British General Charles Cornwallis’ surrender to Washington at Yorktown, Virginia.

- **Mar 05 1862 – Civil War: *Union Troops Occupy Fernandina, FL*** » Fernandina is a relatively small spot in Florida with a tiny population of 10,000. However, despite being a seemingly unimportant placed, this little beach city has been sought after and flown 8 different flags, making it the only municipality in the U.S. to have flown so many flags. On this day Union General Wright occupied Fernandina, thus removing the confederates and the confederate flag from flying over its city. General Wright was not only a successful general, but he was also an engineer who helped build such things as the Brooklyn Bridge. After becoming a successful military leader, Wright was promoted and helped conquer the Kentucky territory and return it to the Union. What made Fernandina prevalent during the Civil War was its location, being one of the northernmost cities in Florida. Furthermore, it is part of Greater Jacksonville and was a key point to occupying Jacksonville (Jacksonville played a crucial role due to its supplying food to the Confederacy).

- **Mar 05 1864 – Civil War:** *John C. Breckinridge Assumes Command* » General Breckinridge takes control of Confederate forces in the Appalachian Mountains of western Virginia. The native Kentuckian was a former U.S. senator, U.S. vice president and runner-up to Abraham Lincoln in the 1860 presidential election. Breckinridge took over the obscure Western Department of Virginia, where he managed forces until he was elevated to the Confederacy's secretary of war in the closing weeks of the Civil War.



Born in 1821, Breckinridge practiced law, served in the military during the Mexican War (1846-48) and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives at age 30. In 1856, at age 35, Breckinridge became the youngest person elected U.S. vice president; he served under President James Buchanan. In the 1860 presidential election, Breckinridge represented the southern wing of the Democratic Party, which had split during the convention over the issue of slavery. He finished third in the popular vote behind Lincoln and Stephen Douglas, who represented the northern Democrats. (With 72 electoral votes, Breckinridge finished second behind Lincoln in electoral voting.) Although he lost the White House, his home state's legislature selected him as U.S. senator shortly after the election.

During the summer of 1861, Breckinridge remained in the Senate, supporting secessionists' views as the war escalated. In September, Kentucky declared itself a Union state. Having literally become a man without a country, Breckinridge fled to the Confederacy and joined the army. He was made commander of the so-called Orphan Brigade, a collection of Kentucky regiments with soldiers who found themselves geographically cut off from their native state. His unit suffered significant casualties at the Battle of Shiloh in Tennessee in April 1862, but went on to fight in most of the battles in the Western theater.

After taking control of the Western Department of Virginia, Breckinridge led forces at the Battle of New Market in May 1864, where his army routed a Union force. In October, troops in his department were victorious at the Battle of Saltville, but the victory was tarnished when the Confederates began killing black soldiers during the Union retreat. Breckinridge also served during Jubal Early's 1864 Shenandoah Valley campaign.

In February 1865, Confederate President Jefferson Davis tapped Breckinridge to be secretary of war. He showed great ability in that capacity, but the Confederate cause had become hopeless. Breckinridge oversaw the evacuation of Richmond, Virginia, in March and fled southward with Davis. Unlike Davis, however, Breckinridge successfully escaped the country through Florida and traveled to Cuba. He eventually went on to Europe, where he spent several years before a presidential pardon allowed him to return to Kentucky. Breckinridge worked as a lawyer until his death at age 54 in 1875.

- **Mar 05 1912 – Italo\*Turkish War:** Italian forces are the first to Use airships for military purposes, employing them for reconnaissance behind Turkish lines during the Italo-Turkish War.
- **Mar 05 1915 - WWI:** The zeppelin LZ 33 is damaged by French AA. It wrecked south of Ostend, Belgium at Tirlémont with the crew of 21 killed.
- **Mar 05 1927 – U.S.\*China:** The U.S. Marine Corps land 1,000 troops in China to protect American lives, property, and commerce of the International Settlement of Shanghai, an enclave for foreigners, also made up of British, Japanese, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch communities. Chinese sovereignty was theoretically intact, but in practice the settlements were self-governing and needed independent protection. Shanghai became a highly coveted tour of duty. With a currency exchange rate of about 20 to 1 the troops lived well. Chinese labor was cheap so the servicemen were well taken care of. They spent their earnings on silk, ivory and other goods, which they often shipped home. They even had their own club, fitted out with several bars, a bowling alley, theater, restaurant, library and ballroom.

In 1931 the Japanese Army began invading Manchuria. The Chinese retaliated, and fighting broke out between Japanese troops guarding their settlement in Shanghai and Chinese troops at Chaipei, a district to the north of the International Settlement. The 4th Marines – also known as the China Marines - sprang into action, maintaining a defensive perimeter and protecting the settlements. Peace returned and for the next six years the China Marines continued their comfortable lifestyle.

- **Mar 05 1941 – WW2 Era:** The British government breaks off diplomatic relations with Bulgaria in response to their alliance with Germany.

Also on this date:

- Reichsmarschall Göring meets with Romanian dictator General Antonescu in Vienna, demanding Romanian participation in the upcoming German invasion of U.S.S.R.
- 20 miles East of Catania, Sicily, British submarine HMS Triumph sinks Italian steamers Marzamemi and Colombo Lo Faro.
- Swedish MV Murjek is sailing from Freetown, Sierra Leone, to Gothenburg, Sweden, with lights on and transmitting radio messages identifying herself. At 5.25 AM, 200 miles South of Iceland, U-95 sinks the friendly, neutral merchant vessel with 5 torpedoes (all 31 hands lost).

- **Mar 05 1942 – WW2:** *Japanese Troop March Into Batavia* » The Netherlands formally surrendered to the Japanese occupation forces the Dutch East Indies (present day Indonesia) on 9 March 1942 and rule of the colony was transferred to Japan. The city was renamed Jakarta. The economic situation and the physical condition of Indonesian cities deteriorated during the occupation. Many buildings were vandalized, as metal was needed for the war, and many iron statues from the Dutch colonial period were taken away by the Japanese troops. Civil buildings were converted into internment camps where Dutch people were imprisoned.

Also on this date:

- German reconnaissance planes locate the British convoy PQ-12 bound for Murmansk.

- General Sir Harold Alexander arrives at Rangoon to take over command of Burma Army from Lieutenant General Hutton. Wavell had given Alexander orders to hold Rangoon at all costs. Immediately, orders were issued for the 1st Burma Division to counter-attack the Japanese from the north and 17th Indian Division which had been reinforced was to attack east of Pegu. Both attacks failed and Alexander realized that Rangoon could not be held. He ordered that Rangoon be evacuated and his troops withdraw north to the Irrawaddy Valley to regroup.
  - U.S. Navy's Mobile Construction Battalions "SEABEES" officially formed and placed in action in New Caledonia, an island in the southwest Pacific, as they landed and began construction of base facilities. Rear Adm. Ben Moreell personally furnishes them with their official motto: *Construimus, Batuimus* — "We Build, We Fight."
  - In the wake of the 24 FEB Struma sinking, the British War Cabinet reaffirms its decision not to allow "illegal" Jewish refugees' admission to Palestine.
- **Mar 05 1943 – WW2: RAF Bombs Essen Germany (5-6 Mar)** » During the war the industrial town of Essen was a target of Allied strategic bombing. The Krupp factory was an important industrial target, Essen was a "primary target" designated for area bombing by the February 1942 British Area bombing directive. As part of the campaign in 1943 known as the Battle of the Ruhr, Essen was a regular target. The Germans built large-scale night-time decoys like the Krupp decoy site which was a copy of the Krupp steel works in Essen. It was designed to divert Allied airstrikes from the actual production site of the arms factory. In the period 1939 to 1945 the Royal Air Force (RAF) dropped a total of 36,429 long tons of bombs on Essen.
 

On 5 MAR 442 aircraft in the first raid of the Battle of the Ruhr on the night that marked RAF Bomber Command's 100,000th sortie of the war and the Use of a new navigational aid 'Oboe', fourteen aircraft were lost: 3.2 per cent of the force. A further 56 aircraft turned back early. Three of these were Oboe-equipped Mosquito marker aircraft leaving five to mark the target. Marking was carried out 'blind', avoiding the effects of the industrial haze that usually concealed Essen. The Main Force bombed in 3 waves. Two thirds of the bomb tonnage was incendiary, the rest high-explosive. One third of the high-explosive bombs were fused for long delay. The attack lasted for 40 minutes. Reconnaissance photographs showed 160 acres of destruction with buildings within the Krupp works hit by bombs.
  - **Mar 05 1943 – WW2: Gloster Meteor** » First British jet fighter and the Allies' only jet aircraft to achieve combat operations during the Second World War. The Meteor's development was heavily reliant on its ground-breaking turbojet engines, pioneered by Frank Whittle and his company, Power Jets Ltd. Development of the aircraft began in 1940, although work on the engines had been under way since 1936. The Meteor first flew in 1943 and commenced operations on 27 July 1944 with No. 616 Squadron RAF. The Meteor was not a sophisticated aircraft in its aerodynamics, but proved to be a successful combat fighter. Several major variants of the Meteor incorporated technological advances during the 1940s and 1950s. Thousands of Meteors were built to fly with the RAF and other air forces and remained in Use for several decades.



The Meteor saw limited action in the Second World War. Meteors of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) fought in the Korean War. Several other operators such as Argentina, Egypt and Israel flew Meteors in later regional conflicts. Specialized variants of the Meteor were developed for Use in photographic aerial reconnaissance and as night fighters. The Meteor was also Used for research and development purposes and to break several aviation records. On 7 November 1945, the first official airspeed record by a jet aircraft was set by a Meteor F.3 at 606 miles per hour. In 1946, this record was broken when a Meteor F.4 reached a speed of 616 miles per hour. Other performance-related records were broken in categories including flight time endurance, rate of climb, and speed. On 20 September 1945, a heavily modified Meteor I, powered by two Rolls-Royce Trent turbine engines driving propellers, became the first turboprop aircraft to fly.

In the 1950s, the Meteor became increasingly obsolete as more nations introduced jet fighters, many of these newcomers having adopted a swept wing instead of the Meteor's conventional straight wing; in RAF service, the Meteor was replaced by newer types such as the Hawker Hunter and Gloster Javelin. As of 2018, two Meteors, G-JSMA and G-JWMA, remain in active service with the Martin-Baker company as ejection seat testbeds. One further aircraft in the UK remains airworthy, as does another in Australia.

- **Mar 05 1944 – WW2:** The Red Army begins the Uman-Botoshany Offensive in the western Ukrainian SSR. Casualties and losses: SU 270,000 – Ger 130,000.

Also on this date:

- Gliders and air-transport-borne ‘Chindits’ set up ‘Broadway’ a stronghold behind Japanese lines, North East of Indaw.

- **Mar 05 1945 – WW2:** U.S. 7th Army Corps capture Cologne. Germany is now conscripting 15 and 16-year-olds into the regular army.



- **Mar 05 1946 – Cold War:** *Churchill Delivers Iron Curtain Speech* » In one of the most famous orations of the Cold War period, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill condemns the Soviet Union’s policies in Europe and declares, “From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic,

an iron curtain has descended across the continent.” Churchill’s speech is considered one of the opening volleys announcing the beginning of the Cold War.



Churchill, who had been defeated for re-election as prime minister in 1945, was invited to Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri where he gave this speech. President Harry S. Truman joined Churchill on the platform and listened intently to his speech. Churchill began by praising the United States, which he declared stood “at the pinnacle of world power.” It soon became clear that a primary purpose of his talk was to argue for an even closer “special relationship” between the United States and Great Britain—the great powers of the “English-speaking world”—in organizing and policing the postwar world. In particular, he warned against the expansionistic policies of the Soviet Union. In addition to the “iron curtain” that had descended across Eastern Europe, Churchill spoke of “communist fifth columns” that were operating throughout western and southern Europe. Drawing parallels with the disastrous appeasement of Hitler prior to World War II, Churchill advised that in dealing with the Soviets there was “nothing which they admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for military weakness.”

Truman and many other U.S. officials warmly received the speech. Already they had decided that the Soviet Union was bent on expansion and only a tough stance would deter the Russians. Churchill’s “iron curtain” phrase immediately entered the official vocabulary of the Cold War. U.S. officials were less enthusiastic about Churchill’s call for a “special relationship” between the United States and Great Britain. While they viewed the English as valuable allies in the Cold War, they were also well aware that Britain’s power was on the wane and had no intention of being used as pawns to help support the crumbling British Empire. In the Soviet Union, Russian leader Joseph Stalin denounced the speech as “war mongering,” and referred to Churchill’s comments about the “English-speaking world” as imperialist “racism.” The British, Americans, and Russians—allies against Hitler less than a year before the speech—were drawing the battle lines of the Cold War.

Also on this date:

- Ho Chi Minh signs an agreement with France which recognizes Vietnam as an autonomous state in the Indochinese Federation and the French Union.
- **Mar 05 1953 – Russia:** *Joseph Stalin Dies* » Leader of the Soviet Union since 1924, Joseph Stalin, dies in Moscow. Ioseb Dzhugashvili was born in 1889 in Georgia, then part of the Old Russian Empire. The son of a drunk who beat him mercilessly and a pious washerwoman mother, Stalin learned Russian, which he spoke with a heavy accent all his life, in an Orthodox Church-run school. While studying to be a priest at Tiflis Theological Seminary, he began secretly reading Karl Marx and other left-wing revolutionary thinkers. In 1900, Stalin became active in revolutionary political activism, taking part in labor demonstrations and strikes. Stalin joined the more militant wing of the Marxist Social Democratic movement, the Bolsheviks, and became a student of its leader, Vladimir Lenin.





Stalin’s first big break came in 1912, when Lenin, in exile in Switzerland, named him to serve on the first Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party—now a separate entity from the Social Democrats. The following year, Stalin (finally dropping Dzugashvili and taking the new name Stalin, from the Russian word for “steel”) published an article on the role of Marxism in the destiny of Russia. In 1917, escaping from an exile in Siberia, he linked up with Lenin and his coup against the middle-class democratic government that had supplanted the czar’s rule. Stalin continued to move up the party ladder, from commissar for nationalities to secretary general of the Central Committee—a role that would provide the center of his dictatorial takeover and control of the party and the new U.S.S.R.

Stalin demanded—and got—absolute state control of the economy, as well as greater swaths of Soviet life, until his totalitarian grip on the new Russian empire was absolute. He proceeded to annex parts of Poland, Romania, and Finland, and occupy Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. In May 1941, he made himself chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars; he was now the official head of the government and no longer merely head of the party. After Germany’s surrender in April 1945, Stalin oversaw the continued occupation and domination of much of Eastern Europe, despite “promises” of free elections in those countries.

Stalin did not mellow with age; he pursued a reign of terror, purges, executions, exiles to the Gulag Archipelago (a system of forced-labor camps in the frozen north) and persecution in the postwar U.S.S.R, suppressing all dissent and anything that smacked of foreign, especially Western European, influence. To the great relief of many, he died of a massive heart attack on March 5, 1953. He is remembered to this day as the man who helped save his nation from Nazi domination—and as the mass murderer of the century, having overseen the deaths of between 8 million and 20 million of his own people.

- **Mar 05 1964 – Vietnam War:** *U.S.A.F. Advisory Team Sent To Laos* » The Joint Chiefs of Staff order a U.S. Air Force air commando training advisory team to Thailand to train Lao pilots in counterinsurgency tactics. Laos had won its independence from French control in July 1949 but the country quickly became a battleground as various factions vied for control of the government. One of the factions was the Neo Lao Hak Sat (Lao Liberation Front), communist insurgents more popularly known as the Pathet Lao. President Dwight Eisenhower believed that Laos was “the key to the entire area of Southeast Asia” and was concerned that the government would fall to the communists. The situation was defused somewhat when a conference in Geneva in July 1952 set up a coalition government for Laos and officially proclaimed the neutrality of the country. This eventually proved to be a farce when the North Vietnamese Army moved 80,000 soldiers into Laos to assist the Pathet Lao. The United States then increased its support to the Royal Lao government.

The mission of the American air commandos was to train the Laotian pilots in the conduct of close air support for the Royal Lao ground forces. Since Laos was officially neutral, the training efforts



were conducted in Thailand with that government's permission. The training did not result in sufficient numbers of trained Laotian pilots, so in December 1964, U.S. pilots in American planes began flying support missions for the Laotian ground troops as part of Operation Barrel Roll. The mission continued until February 1973.

- **Mar 05 1964 – Vietnam War:** Premier Chou En-lai of the People's Republic of China visits Hanoi. After lengthy consultations, Chou and North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong issued a joint communique on 10 MAR, which vowed continued Chinese support for the North Vietnamese struggle against the United States. This support was instrumental in providing the North Vietnamese with weapons and equipment needed for the major offensive they launched in the spring of 1972.



- **Mar 05 1970 – Cold War:** Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty » The NPT is a landmark international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful Uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament. The Treaty represents the only binding commitment in a multilateral treaty to the goal of disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States. Opened for signature in 1968, the Treaty entered into force in 1970. A total of 191 States have joined the Treaty, including the five nuclear-weapon States. More countries have ratified the NPT than any other arms limitation and disarmament agreement, a testament to the Treaty's significance.

The treaty defines nuclear-weapon states as those that have built and tested a nuclear explosive device before 1 January 1967; these are the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, and China. Four other states are known or believed to possess nuclear weapons: India, Pakistan, and North Korea have openly tested and declared that they possess nuclear weapons, while Israel is deliberately ambiguous regarding its nuclear weapons status. The NPT is often seen to be based on a central bargain: The NPT non-nuclear-weapon states agree never to acquire nuclear weapons and the NPT nuclear-weapon states in exchange agree to share the benefits of peaceful nuclear technology and to pursue nuclear disarmament aimed at the ultimate elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

The treaty is reviewed every five years in meetings called Review Conferences. Even though the treaty was originally conceived with a limited duration of 25 years, the signing parties decided, by consensus, to unconditionally extend the treaty indefinitely during the Review Conference in New York City on 11 May 1995, in the culmination of U.S. government efforts led by Ambassador Thomas Graham Jr.

- **Mar 05 1971 – Vietnam War:** “Blackhorse” Departs South Vietnam » The U.S. 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, less its 2nd Squadron, withdraws from Vietnam. The “Blackhorse Regiment” (named for the black horse on the regimental shoulder patch) first arrived in Vietnam in September

1966 and consisted of three squadrons, each with three armored cavalry troops, a tank troop and a howitzer battery, making it a formidable fighting force. Upon arriving in Vietnam, the regiment had 51 tanks, 296 armored personnel carriers, 18 self-propelled 155-mm howitzers, nine flamethrower vehicles, and 18 helicopters.



While in Vietnam, Blackhorse conducted combat operations in the 11 provinces surrounding Saigon and participated in the Cambodian incursion in 1970. During its combat service in Vietnam, Blackhorse suffered 635 troopers killed in action and 5,521 wounded in action. Three of its troopers won the Medal of Honor for bravery on the battlefield.

Upon its departure from Vietnam, the group was sent to Europe where it was assigned to guard the frontier in West Germany. The regiment's 2nd Squadron remained in Vietnam until March 1972, when it departed to join the rest of the regiment in Germany.

- **Mar 05 1984 – Iran\*Iraq War:** *U.S. Accuses Iraq Of Using Poison Gas* » The United States accused Iraq of using "lethal chemical weapons" against Iran during the latest fighting in the 42-month-old war. A statement issued by the State Department said that the United States "has concluded that the available evidence" indicates that the weapons were Used, in violation of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, which Iraq agreed to adhere to in 1931. The Administration, however, balanced the strong criticism of Iraq with an attack on Iran for its "intransigent refusal" to stop the war until it has overthrown the Iraqi Government. This, the statement said, was "inconsistent with the accepted norms of behavior among nations."

An Administration official said the chemical weapon being used by the Iraqis seemed to be mustard gas, a blistering agent that damages any tissue it touches. Iran has accused Iraq of using nerve gas and nitrogen mustard, another blistering agent similar to mustard gas. The Administration said there was no evidence that Iraq had used nerve gas. Mustard gas was responsible for a majority of the poison gas casualties of World War I and was stockpiled by the major powers in World War II. The official said all indications were that the gas was being produced by the Iraqis. He said it is not hard to manufacture and the Iraqis have a relatively sophisticated chemical industry.

- **Mar 05 2006 – Mideast:** Iran threatened to launch full-scale uranium enrichment if its nuclear program was referred to the U.N. Security Council for sanctions.
- **Mar 05 2018 – Korea:** North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met with South Korean officials for the first time since becoming leader. The special envoys of South Korean President Moon Jae-in were on a mission to broker denuclearization talks between North Korea and the United States.

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- **Mar 06 1776 – American Revolution Era:** *New York Demands Sandy Hook Lighthouse Be Dismantled* » A committee of the New York Provincial Congress instructs Major William Malcolm to dismantle the Sandy Hook lighthouse in the then-disputed territory of Sandy Hook, now in New Jersey, telling him to “use your best discretion to render the light-house entirely Useless.”

The Sandy Hook lighthouse first shone its beam on June 11, 1764, after the Provincial Congress of New York orchestrated two lotteries to raise money for its construction. Discussion about the construction of a lighthouse for Sandy Hook had begun nearly a century before, initiated by Colonial Governor Edmund Andreas. Forty-three New York merchants proposed the lotteries to the Provincial Council, after losing 20,000 pounds sterling from shipwrecks in early 1761.

Major Malcolm’s task was to prevent the lighthouse from helping the British to reach New York City. The Congress wanted Malcolm to remove the lens and lamps so that the lighthouse could no longer warn ships of possible wreck on the rocky shore; he succeeded. Colonel George Taylor reported six days later that Malcolm had given him eight copper lamps, two tackle falls and blocks, and three casks, and a part of a cast of oil from the dismantling of the beacon.

Malcom’s efforts, however, failed to keep the British from invading New York; they were soon able to put the lighthouse back into service by installing lamps and reflectors. The Patriots attempted to knock the light out again on 1 JUN, by placing cannon on boats and attempting to blow away the British paraphernalia. They managed some damage before being chased away.

The new states of New Jersey and New York bickered over ownership of the lighthouse, until the federal government assumed control of all U.S. lighthouses in 1787. As of 1996, the Sandy Hook lighthouse, the oldest original lighthouse in the United States, passed into the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. It remains in operation as part of the Gateway National Recreation Area.

- **Mar 06 1822 – U.S. Navy:** The schooner Enterprise captures four pirate ships in the Gulf of Mexico. During her time in the Gulf, Enterprise takes 13 vessels while suppressing pirates, smugglers, and slaves.
- **Mar 06 1831 – U.S. Army:** *Edgar Allen Poe’s West Point Dismissal* » On January 28, 1831, a court-martial convened at the U.S. Military Academy found the defendant guilty on charges of gross neglect of duty and disobedience of orders. It “adjudged that the Cadet E. A. Poe be dismissed.” So ended Edgar Allan Poe’s short career at West Point. He had been admitted to the academy on July 1, 1830, and nearly seven months later, he was out.

In those months, he accumulated an impressive record—though not of the sort to which a cadet U.S.ually aspired. The Conduct Roll for July–December 1831 lists the number of offenses committed by cadets and their corresponding demerits. Poe’s name appears about midway down the list of top offenders, with 44 offenses and 106 demerits for the term. The roll for January alone shows Poe at the top of the list with 66 offenses for the month. It would appear that Poe was trying very hard to get kicked out of West Point.

But before he left, he squeezed a little more Use out of the army. He had persuaded 131 cadets to each give him a dollar and a quarter to finance the printing of a new volume of his poems. When he

arrived in New York in February 1831, he released the book, simply called Poems, and dedicated it to his fellow cadets.

- **Mar 06 1836 – Texas Revolution: *Battle of the Alamo*** » After a thirteen day siege by an army of 3,000 Mexican troops, the 187 Texas volunteers, including frontiersman Davy Crockett and colonel Jim Bowie, defending the Alamo are killed and the fort is captured. Mexican losses are about 600.



The Alamo, as drawn in 1854.

- **Mar 06 1857 – Pre Civil War: *Supreme Court Rules in Dred Scott Case*** » The Court hands down its decision on Sanford v. Dred Scott, a case that intensified national divisions over the issue of slavery.

In 1834, Dred Scott, a slave, had been taken to Illinois, a Free State, and then Wisconsin territory, where the Missouri Compromise of 1820 prohibited slavery. Scott lived in Wisconsin with his master, Dr. John Emerson, for several years before returning to Missouri, a slave state. In 1846, after Emerson died, Scott sued his master's widow for his freedom on the grounds that he had lived as a resident of a Free State and territory. He won his suit in a lower court, but the Missouri Supreme Court reversed the decision. Scott appealed the decision, and as his new master, J.F.A. Sanford, was a resident of New York, a federal court decided to hear the case on the basis of the diversity of state citizenship represented. After a federal district court decided against Scott, the case came on appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, which was divided along slavery and antislavery lines; although the Southern justices had a majority.

During the trial, the antislavery justices Used the case to defend the constitutionality of the Missouri Compromise, which had been repealed by the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. The Southern majority responded by ruling on March 6, 1857, that the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional and that Congress had no power to prohibit slavery in the territories. Three of the Southern justices also held that African Americans who were slaves or whose ancestors were slaves were not entitled to the rights of a federal citizen and therefore had no standing in court. These rulings all confirmed that, in the view of the nation's highest court, under no condition did Dred Scott have the legal right to request his freedom. The Supreme Court's verdict further inflamed the irrepressible differences in America over the issue of slavery, which in 1861 erupted with the outbreak of the American Civil War.

- **Mar 06 1865 – Civil War: *Battle of Natural Bridge, Florida*** » Late in the war, Union Maj. Gen. John Newton led a joint force expedition to engage and destroy Confederate troops in Florida that had attacked at Cedar Keys and Fort Myers, and were allegedly encamped somewhere around St. Marks

near the state capital at Tallahassee. When the expedition began, the U. S. Navy had difficulty getting its ships up the narrow and shallow St. Marks River. The Army force, however, had advanced, and after finding one bridge destroyed, started before dawn on March 6th to attempt a crossing of the river at Natural Bridge.

The Union troops initially pushed Rebel forces back but not away from the bridge. Confederate forces under Gen. Samuel Jones, protected by breastworks, guarded all of the approaches and the bridge itself. The action at Natural Bridge lasted most of the day, but, unable to take the bridge, the Union troops retreated to the protection of the fleet. The battle prevented the Union from capturing the Florida capital and made Tallahassee the only Confederate capital east of the Mississippi River not to be captured by Union forces during the war. The battle has been described as the last Confederate victory in the Civil War, and it was the second largest battle fought in Florida. Casualties and losses: U.S. 148 - CSA 26.

- **Mar 06 1916 – WWI Era:** *New German attacks at Verdun: Battle of the Flanks* » During a punishing snowstorm, the German army launches a new attack against French forces on the high ground of Mort-Homme, on the left bank of the Meuse River, near the fortress city of Verdun, France, on this day in 1916. The Battle of Verdun began February 21, 1916, with a German bombardment on the symbolic city of Verdun, the last French stronghold to fall during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. Though the Germans had advanced speedily since the start of their advance, capturing Verdun’s major protective fort, Fort Douaumont, on 24 FEB, the French were by no means ready to give way, and the battle soon settled into a stalemate, with heavy casualties on both sides. On the night of Douaumont’s capture, General Philippe Petain took over the French command of the Verdun sector, vowing to hold the fort at all costs and inflict the maximum number of German casualties in the process. The German objective was similar: in the words of General Erich von Falkenhayn, chief of the general staff, they aimed to bleed the French white.



**Germans helping a French wounded soldier**

Knowing the Allies planned to launch a major offensive at the Somme River that July, the German high command was determined to keep French troops and resources devoted to the defense of Verdun throughout the spring. To do this, Falkenhayn determined that he needed to change the focus of the German attacks, shifting them from Verdun and the inner ring of forts that protected it—the core of Petain’s defensive strategy—to the flanks of the French lines surrounding the city.

To that end, on 6 MAR, after receiving fresh artillery supplies, the Germans attacked along the west bank of the Meuse, beginning the so-called Battle of the Flanks with a preliminary artillery bombardment every bit as intense as the one of 21 FEB. Although under heavy fire from French artillery positions, the Germans managed to cross the river at Brabant and Champneuville to step up

their assault on Mort-Homme, which held, though 1,200 French soldiers were captured over the course of two days' fighting. The Germans made good progress in the area in general, however, capturing nearby positions before the French began their aggressive counterattacks. The struggle for Mort-Homme itself went on for more than a month, with thousands dying on both sides of the line, but the Germans never captured the position.

Fighting at Verdun would continue for 10 months, making it the longest battle of World War I. Paul von Hindenburg—who replaced Falkenhayn that summer—finally called a halt to the German attacks on 18 DEC, after more than a million total casualties had been suffered by German and French troops.

- **Mar 06 1918 – U.S. Navy:** *"Cyclops" Disappears in Bermuda Triangle* » The enormous Navy collier, the U.S.S Cyclops, disappeared on a voyage between the West Indies to Baltimore. The Cyclops was nearly 550 feet long, with a crew of 306 people and around 11,000 tons of manganese aboard. She had been sailing successfully since 1910, traveling between the Baltic Sea, the Caribbean and Mexico and assisting with moving coal around the world and helping refugees. But in 1917, when America entered World War I, Cyclops became a key naval asset, transporting troops and coal to fuel other ships all over the world.

In March 1918, the ship was given a new cargo: tons and tons of dense manganese ore, Used in steelmaking. She left Brazil loaded up with the brittle metal, then voyaged to Barbados to resupply for the long journey home to Baltimore. The last known message from the ship said simply: "Weather Fair, All Well." But on the nine-day journey, something went awry, and no one from the ship was ever seen or heard again—vanishing without even an SOS.

- **Mar 06 1940 – WW2 Era:** Hitler changes his plans for the invasion of the west. At a military conference in Berlin, he decides to adopt the plan put forward by Gerd von Rundstedt and his former chief of staff, Erich von Manstein, for the Ardennes option. Code-named 'Fall Sichelschnitt', it called for the attack against the Low Countries to go ahead, but with slightly fewer forces, in order to draw the allies forward, while the decisive thrust would be mounted through the Ardennes. Holding attacks would be made against the Maginot line.
- **Mar 06 1941 – WW2 Era:** German Luftwaffe begins dropping mines in the Suez Canal to disrupt British shipping blocking it for 3 weeks.

Also on this date:

- In Kaso Strait, East of Crete, Italian submarine Anfitrite approaches a convoy of empty freighters returning to Alexandria. Anfitrite is brought to the surface by depth charges from British destroyer HMS Greyhound, shelled by destroyers HMS Greyhound and HMS Havoc and then scuttled (39 crew taken prisoner). Convoy is then unsuccessfully attacked by Italian bombers.
- British minesweeping trawler HMT Keryado hits a mine and sinks in the English Channel (9 killed but the Captain survives).
- **Mar 06 1942 – Holocaust:**

- **Mar 06 1942 – WW2:** Having received permission from Hitler, the Battleship Tirpitz and 3 destroyers set sail from Trondheim to intercept convoy PQ-12, but is spotted by a British submarine which relays the information onto the British Admiralty. Tirpitz is unable to locate PQ-12 due to, bad weather and so heads back to base. Enroute to Trondheim the Tirpitz is spotted and attacked by aircraft from HMS Victorious, but is not damaged.

Also on this date:

- Japanese cut all roads north of Rangoon, trapping the British at Pegu in southern Burma.
  - Japanese occupy Batavia in Java, Dutch East Indies.
  - First conference on sterilization is held pertaining to sterilization of persons of mixed blood. During this meeting at the Head Office for Reich Security, Adolf Eichmann emphasizes the need for strict security during deportation and annihilation of Jews presently living in Germany, Austria, Moravia, and Bohemia.
- **Mar 06 1943 – WW2:** Battle at Medenine (a.k.a. Operation Capri) North–Africa: Rommel’s assault attack which was abandoned at dusk on the same day after the loss of 52 German tanks.
  - **Mar 06 1944 – WW2:** The U.S.AAF sends 730 bombers and 796 fighters in their first full–scale daylight American raid on Berlin, during which 69 bombers and 11 escorts are shot down.

Also on this date:

- Bomber Command begins a large-scale offensive over northern France in preparation for D-Day.
  - Another ‘Chindit’ stronghold is established south of the Irrawaddy River in Burma. The Chindits were a British India 'Special Force' that served in Burma and India in 1943 and 1944 during the Burma Campaign. They were formed to put into effect Orde Wingate's newly developed guerilla warfare tactic of long-range penetration.
  - U.S. Marines land near Talasea on Willaumez Peninsula, New Britain, about 160 miles southwest of Rabaul and 110 miles northeast of their base at Cape Gloucester. On the opposite side of New Britain, American infantrymen advanced twenty-four miles from the Arawe airdrome toward Gasmata, chief town on the island's south shore.
- **Mar 06 1945 – WW2:** *SD Prisoners (117) Executed At Savage Farm Prison Camp* » Sicherheitsdienst (German Security Service) or SD, was the intelligence agency of the SS and the Nazi Party in Nazi Germany. Originating in 1931, the organization was the first Nazi intelligence organization to be established and was considered a sister organization with the Gestapo through integration of SS members and operational procedures. Between 1933 and 1939, the SD was administered as an independent SS office, after which it was transferred to the authority of the Reich Main Security Office as one of its seven departments/offices. Its first director, Reinhard Heydrich, intended for the SD to bring every single individual within the Third Reich's reach under "continuous supervision".





Following Germany's defeat in World War II, the tribunal at the Nuremberg Trials declared the SD a criminal organization, along with the rest of Heydrich's RSHA (including the Gestapo) both individually and as branches of the SS in the collective. Heydrich's successor, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, was convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity at the Nuremberg trials, sentenced to death and hanged in 1946.

- **Mar 06 1945 – WW2: Dutch Resistance Ambush** » The Dutch Resistance was one of the fiercest of all the underground movements in Nazi-occupied Europe. “The Dutch never accepted the German contention that... the war was over,” wrote the Dutch foreign minister in a postwar account of life under Nazi occupation. “Their acts of resistance and sabotage grew more audacious as time passed.” Those acts of resistance and sabotage included harboring Allied soldiers and pilots who either parachuted or crash-landed within Dutch territory, harboring Dutch Jews, and killing German troops. The Resistance was composed of representatives from all segments of Dutch society, ranging from the most conservative to communists.

Lt. Gen. Hanns Rauter was head of the SS in Holland and answered directly to Heinrich Himmler, the SS commander. In 1941, during a strike that broke out in Amsterdam among Dutch workers to protest the round-up of almost 400 Dutch Jews, Rauter ordered the SS and German troops to open fire on the strikers, killing 11. The Jews, whom the strikers were trying to protect, were deported to Buchenwald. All were dead by the fall.

Rauter was riding in an SS truck in Apeldoorn, Holland, filled with food destined for the Luftwaffe (the German air force) based near Apeldoorn when some young members of the Dutch Resistance ambushed the truck. The closing days of the war had left much of occupied Holland close to famine conditions, and the guerrillas were determined to co-opt the food. They did not know Rauter was in the truck when it was attacked; Rauter was shot during the heist attempt but lived. In retaliation. During the following week the SS proceeded to round up and execute 263 Dutchmen, some of whom were Resistance fighters who were already being held in prison.

Rauter was tried for war crimes by the Dutch court Den Haag. He was found guilty and sentenced to death. He appealed the sentence at Nuremberg in 1949, but the sentence was upheld and he was executed that year.

Also, on this date:

- The 2nd Panzer and 6th SS Panzer Armies launch a major counter-attack from Lake Balaton towards Budapest.
- The U.S. 8th Air Force launches a heavy attack against Chemnitz in Saxony.
- The new Chinese First Army takes Lashio in north-eastern Burma.



- The U.S. Third Army reaches the Rhine Northwest of Koblenz, as Cologne falls to U.S. First Army.
- **Mar 06 1965 – Cold War:** *Georgi Malenkov Succeeds Stalin* » Just one day after the death of long-time Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin, Georgi Malenkov is named premier and first secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Malenkov's tenure was extremely brief, and within a matter of weeks he was pushed aside by Nikita Khrushchev.



Malenkov was one of the few old-time Bolsheviks who had survived Stalin's bloody purges of the 1930s. A quiet figure who seemed to prefer working in the background, Malenkov was not taken seriously by many of his peers in the Soviet government, but under Stalin's watchful eye he proceeded up the Communist Party hierarchy throughout the 1930s and 1940s. By the late-1940s it was widely assumed that he would succeed Stalin. When Stalin died in March 1953, Malenkov took the position of premier and first secretary of the Communist Party. It appeared that he might have a reformist streak, as he called for cuts in military spending and eased up on political repression in the Soviet Union and the eastern bloc nations. These actions might have proved his undoing. In just two weeks, his main political opponent in the Communist Party, Nikita Khrushchev, had organized a coalition of political and military leaders against Malenkov and took over as first secretary.

In February 1955, this same group voted Malenkov out as premier and a Khrushchev puppet, Nikolai Bulganin, took over. Malenkov seethed at this action and in 1957 joined in a plot to overthrow Khrushchev. When the attempt failed, he was dismissed from his government positions and expelled from the Communist Party. Instead of imprisonment, Malenkov faced the disgrace of being sent to Kazakhstan to serve as the manager of a hydroelectric operation. He died in 1988.

Malenkov was a transition figure from the iron-fisted dictatorship of Joseph Stalin to the more moderate regime instituted by Nikita Khrushchev. In an ironic turn of affairs, Khrushchev eventually supported many of the reforms first put forward by Malenkov.

- **Mar 06 1965 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. is sending Marines to South Vietnam* » The White House confirms reports that, at the request of South Vietnam, the United States is sending two battalions of U.S. Marines for security work at the Da Nang air base, which will hopefully free South Vietnamese troops for combat. On 1 MAR, Ambassador Maxwell Taylor informed South Vietnamese Premier Phan Huy Quat that the United States was preparing to send 3,500 U.S. Marines to Vietnam. Three days later, a formal request was submitted by the U.S. Embassy, asking the South Vietnamese government to "invite" the United States to send the Marines. Premier Quat, a mere figurehead, had to obtain approval from the real power, Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu, chief of the Armed Forces Council.

Thieu approved, but asked that the Marines be “brought ashore in the most inconspicuous way feasible.” The Marines began landing near Da Nang on 8 MAR.

- **Mar 06 1967 – Cold War:** Stalin's daughter Svetlana Allilujeva asks for political asylum in U.S.
- **Mar 06 1971 – Vietnam War:** *Operation Lam Son 719 Continues* » The Operation reinforced South Vietnamese forces continues the push into Tchepone, a major enemy supply center located on Route 9 in Laos. The base was deserted and almost completely destroyed as a result of American bombing raids.



The operation, begun on 8 FEB, included a limited incursion by South Vietnamese forces into Laos to disrupt the communist supply and infiltration network in Laos along Route 9, adjacent to the two northern provinces of South Vietnam. The operation was supported by U.S. airpower (aviation and airlift) and artillery (firing across the border from firebases inside South Vietnam). Observers described the drive on North Vietnam’s supply routes and depots in Laos as some of the “bloodiest fighting” of the war. Enemy resistance was light at first as a 12,000-man spearhead of the South Vietnamese army thrust its way across the border into the communists’ deepest jungle stronghold toward Tchepone. However, resistance stiffened in the second week of February as the North Vietnamese rushed reinforcements to the area. On 23 FEB, the big push bogged down around 16 miles from the border after bloody fighting in which the communist troops overran two South Vietnamese battalions.

The fierce fighting continued into March and the South Vietnamese finally reached Tchepone. However, fighting near the Vietnam border intensified and in the second week of March, South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu gave the order for his troops to withdraw as casualties soared on both sides.

However, withdrawing the ground task force under heavy North Vietnamese pressure was a difficult task. The South Vietnamese fought for two weeks to get back inside their own border and losses were heavy. The South Vietnamese suffered some 9,000 casualties, almost 50 percent of the force. In supporting the South Vietnamese, the U.S. sustained 1,462 casualties and lost 168 helicopters.

- **Mar 06 1991 – Iraq War:** Following Iraq's capitulation in the Persian Gulf conflict President George H. W. Bush addresses a joint session of Congress and states, “I can report to the nation: Aggression is defeated. The war is over.”
- **Mar 06 2001 – Cold War:** The U.S. Senate approved a U.S.-Russian agreement whereby each country would reduce deployed nuclear warheads to between 1,700 and 2,200 by 2012

- **Mar 06 2018 – U.S. Navy:** American WWII aircraft carrier U.S.S Lexington rediscovered in Australia's Coral Sea, lost during 1942 Battle of the Coral Sea.

**-o-o-O-o-o-**

- **Mar 07 1778 – American Revolution Era:** Continental frigate Randolph explodes while attacking HMS Yarmouth off the coast of Barbados, killing all but four of her 305 crew.
- **Mar 07 1862 – Civil War:** *Battle of Pea Ridge (Elkhorn Tavern), Arkansas* » Union forces under General Samuel Curtis clash with the army of General Earl Van Dorn at the Battle of Pea Ridge (also called the Battle of Elkhorn Tavern), in northwest Arkansas. The following day, the battle ended in defeat for the Confederates.

Pea Ridge was part of a larger campaign for control of Missouri. Seven months earlier, the Confederates defeated a Union force at Wilson's Creek, some 70 miles northeast of Pea Ridge. General Henry Halleck, the Federal commander in Missouri, now organized an expedition to drive the Confederates from southwestern Missouri. In February 1862, Yankee General Samuel Curtis led the 12,000-man army toward Springfield, Missouri. Confederate General Sterling Price retreated from the city with 8,000 troops in the face of the Union advance. Price withdrew into Arkansas, and Curtis followed him.



Price hooked up with another Rebel force led by General Ben McCulloch, and their combined army was placed under the leadership of General Earl Van Dorn, recently appointed commander of Confederates forces in the trans-Mississippi area. Van Dorn joined Price and McCulloch on March 2, 1862, and ordered an advance on Curtis' army. Curtis received word of the approaching Confederates and concentrated his force around Elkhorn Tavern. Van Dorn sent part of his army on a march around the Yankees. On March 7, McCulloch slammed into the rear of the Union force, but Curtis anticipated the move and turned his men towards the attack. McCulloch was killed during the battle, and the Confederate attack withered. Meanwhile, the other part of Van Dorn's army attacked the front of Curtis' command. Through bitter fighting the Union troops held their ground.

Curtis, suspecting that the Confederates were low on ammunition, attacked the divided Rebel army the following morning. Van Dorn realized he was in danger and ordered a retreat, ending the battle. The Yankees suffered some 1,380 men killed, wounded, or captured out of 10,000 engaged; the Confederates suffered a loss of about 2,000 out of 14,000 engaged. The Union won a decisive victory that also helped them clear the upper Mississippi Valley region on the way to securing control of the

Mississippi River by mid-1863. US 1,384 - CSA 2,000. For a reenactment of the engagement go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMZN8fCiGyI>.

- **Mar 07 1918 – WWI: *Finland Signs Treaty With Germany*** » Four days after Russia signs a humiliating peace treaty with the Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk, the newly declared independent state of Finland reaches a formal peace settlement with Germany.



Though Finland—a former Swedish duchy ceded to Russian control in 1809, when Russia’s Czar Alexander I attacked and occupied it—did not participate directly in the First World War, Russian troops were garrisoned in the country from the beginning of the conflict. For Finland, the war provided the ultimate opportunity for an emerging nation: independence.

In 1917, with Russia struggling on the battlefield against Germany and in the throes of internal revolution, Finland saw its chance. On November 15, 1917, a newly elected Finnish parliament announced it was assuming all powers formerly held by the Czar-Grand Duke—Nicholas II, who had abdicated the previous March. On December 6, barely a month after Vladimir Lenin’s Bolsheviks seized power in Petrograd (later St. Petersburg), the parliament voted to make Finland an independent republic.

Almost immediately, however, conflict broke out within the nascent nation between the radical socialists—supporters of the Bolsheviks in Russia—and non-socialists. With government forces working to disarm and expel the remaining Russian troops stationed in Finland, the radical socialist Red Guard rebelled in late January 1918, terrorizing and killing civilians in their attempt to spark a Bolshevik-style revolution. The clash between the Reds and the Whites, as Finnish government troops were known, ended in victory by the government, due in part to the assistance of German troops sent by the Kaiser to southern Finland.

On March 3, 1918, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was concluded, depriving Lenin’s new Soviet state of no less than 1 million square miles of territory that had been part of imperial Russia, including Finland, which was recognized in the treaty by both Russia and the Central Powers as an independent republic. As stated in the treaty, Finland will immediately be cleared of Russian troops and the Russian Red Guard, and the Finnish ports of the Russian fleet and of the Russian naval forces. Russia is to put an end to all agitation or propaganda against the Government or the public institutions of Finland. Four days later, the Finnish government signed a separate treaty with Germany, confirming its independence but also solidifying a close relationship and promising German support for Finland to help the new state preserve order.

That close relationship was confirmed the following October, when conservative forces in Finland decided to establish monarchical rule in the country, giving the throne to Frederick, a German prince. One month later, however, when the war ended in the defeat of the Central Powers, it no longer

seemed a viable choice: Germany itself was no longer a monarchy, Kaiser Wilhelm having abdicated on November 9, and it was certain that the victorious Allies would not look kindly upon a German prince on the Finnish throne. Frederick abdicated on December 14. The Treaty of Versailles, signed in June 1919, recognized Finland's hard-won independence; that July, the Finnish parliament adopted a new republican constitution and Kaarlo J. Stahlberg, a liberal, was elected as the country's first president.

- **Mar 07 1936 – Germany:** *Hitler Reoccupies the Rhineland* » Nazi leader Adolf Hitler violates the Treaty of Versailles and the Locarno Pact by sending German military forces into the Rhineland, a demilitarized zone along the Rhine River in western Germany.



The Treaty of Versailles, signed in July 1919—eight months after the guns fell silent in World War I—called for stiff war reparation payments and other punishing peace terms for defeated Germany. Having been forced to sign the treaty, the German delegation to the peace conference indicated its attitude by breaking the ceremonial pen. As dictated by the Treaty of Versailles, Germany's military forces were reduced to insignificance and the Rhineland was to be demilitarized.

In 1925, at the conclusion of a European peace conference held in Switzerland, the Locarno Pact was signed, reaffirming the national boundaries decided by the Treaty of Versailles and approving the German entry into the League of Nations. The so-called “spirit of Locarno” symbolized hopes for an era of European peace and goodwill, and by 1930 German Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann had negotiated the removal of the last Allied troops in the demilitarized Rhineland.

However, just four years later, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party seized full power in Germany, promising vengeance against the Allied nations that had forced the Treaty of Versailles on the German people. In 1935, Hitler unilaterally canceled the military clauses of the treaty and in March 1936 denounced the Locarno Pact and began remilitarizing of the Rhineland. Two years later, Nazi Germany burst out of its territories, absorbing Austria and portions of Czechoslovakia. In 1939, Hitler invaded Poland, leading to the outbreak of World War II in Europe.

- **Mar 07 1941 — WW2 Era:** In Allied convoy OB-293 off Iceland, German U-boats U-99 and U-47 sink British whaling factory ship Terje Viken, one of the largest ships sunk in war at 20,000 tons. The German submarine U-47, one of the most successful U-boats of World War II, disappeared and was lost with all hands. During U-47's career, she sank a total of 31 enemy vessels and damaged eight more, including the British battleship HMS Royal Oak on 14 October 1939. U-47 carried out ten combat patrols and spent a total of 238 days at sea. It was believed at the time to have been sunk by the British destroyer HMS Wolverine west of Ireland, when the submarine was attacked by Wolverine and HMS Verity.



U-boat commander Günther Prien

- **Mar 07 1941 -- WW2 Era:** *British Forces Arrive in Greece* » A British expeditionary force from North Africa lands in Greece.

In October 1940, Mussolini's army, already occupying Albania, invaded Greece in what proved to be a disastrous military campaign for the Duce's forces. Mussolini surprised everyone with this move against Greece, but he was not to be upstaged by recent Nazi conquests. According to Hitler, who was stunned by a move that he knew would be a strategic blunder, Mussolini should have concentrated on North Africa by continuing the advance into Egypt. The Italians paid for Mussolini's hubris, as the Greeks succeeded in pushing the Italian invaders back into Albania after just one week, and the Axis power spent the next three months fighting for its life in a series of defensive battles.

Mussolini's precipitate maneuver frustrated Hitler because it opened an opportunity for the British to enter Greece and establish an airbase in Athens, putting the Brits within striking distance of valuable oil reserves in Romania, which Hitler relied upon for his war machine. It also meant that Hitler would have to divert forces from North Africa, a high strategic priority, to bail Mussolini out of Greece-and postpone Hitler's planned invasion of the Soviet Union.

The Brits indeed saw an opening in Greece, and on March 7, 1941, Prime Minister Winston Churchill diverted troops from Egypt and sent 58,000 British and Aussie troops to occupy the Olympus-Vermion line. But the Brits would be blown out of the Peloponesus Peninsula when Hitler's forces invaded on the ground and from the air in April. Thousands of British and Australian forces were captured there and on Crete, where German paratroopers landed in May.

Also on this date:

- Actor James Stewart is inducted into the U.S. Army.
- **Mar 07 1942 – WW2:** Force H, consisting of HMS Argus and HMS Eagle and supported by a number of destroyers, sets sail for Malta with a number of Spitfires on board. Fifteen Spitfires were flown off when Force H came within range of the Island. Also on this date:
- **Mar 07 1943 – WW2:** A new wolfpack, codenamed 'Raubgraf' (Robber Baron), was created in the central North Atlantic to operate between the 7th and 20th March. It included U-84, U-89, U-91, U-435, U-468, U-600, U-603, U-615, U-621, U-638, U-653, U-664, and U-758. Immediately the wolfpack attacked convoy ON-168 which was traveling between North America and the UK. One ship was damaged and abandoned on the 7th March, to be finally sunk on the 12th March for 6,537 gross tons.



- **Mar 07 1944 – WW2:** The Japanese begin the Imphal-Kohima offensive from northern Burma into Assam, India.

Also on this date:

- U.S. Marines secure Los Negros.
- In reply to Arab protests, the U.S. says that the idea of a Jewish state has no official sanction.
- **Mar 07 1945 – WW2:** *Ludendorff Bridge Seized* » The Battle of Remagen during the Allied invasion of Germany resulted in the unexpected capture by American forces of the Ludendorff Bridge over the Rhine and shortened World War II in Europe.



After capturing the Siegfried Line, the 9th Armored Division of the U.S. First Army had advanced unexpectedly quickly towards the Rhine. They were very surprised to see one of the last bridges across the Rhine still standing. The Germans had wired the bridge with about 6,200 lb of demolition charges. When they tried to blow it up, only a portion of the explosives detonated. U.S. forces captured the bridge and rapidly expanded their first bridgehead across the Rhine, two weeks before Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery's meticulously planned Operation Plunder. The GIs' actions prevented the Germans from regrouping east of the Rhine and consolidating their positions.

- **Mar 07 1950 – Cold War:** *Soviet Union Denies Klaus Fuchs Served As Its Spy* » Just one week after British physicist Klaus Fuchs was sentenced to 14 years in prison for his role in passing information on the atomic bomb to the Russians, the Soviet Union issues a terse statement denying any knowledge of Fuchs or his activities. Despite the Russian disclaimer, Fuchs' arrest and conviction led to the uncovering of a network of individuals in the United States and Great Britain who had allegedly engaged in spying activities for the Soviet Union during World War II.



Fuchs worked on developing the atomic bomb during World War II, both in Great Britain and as part of the super-secret Manhattan Project in the United States. In February 1950, British officials arrested him and charged him with passing information concerning the atomic bomb to the Soviets. After his arrest, Fuchs implicated an American, Harry Gold, as someone who served as a courier between himself and Soviet agents. Gold fingered David Greenglass, who also worked on the

Manhattan Project, and Greenglass informed on his brother-in-law and sister, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. Eventually, Gold and Greenglass were sentenced to jail terms for their roles. The Rosenbergs were convicted and sentenced to death; they were executed in 1953.

The Soviets consistently denied any part in the spy ring. In a statement released on March 7, 1950, the Russians declared that any confession by Fuchs indicating that he was working for the Soviet Union was a “gross fabrication since Fuchs is unknown to the Soviet Government and no ‘agents’ of the Soviet Union had any connection with Fuchs.” The exact level of Soviet spying, as well as the value of any information it succeeded in digging up as a result of such activity, has never been precisely determined. Fuchs was released from prison in 1959 and spent his remaining years living with his father in East Germany.

- **Mar 07 1951 – Korean War:** *Operation Ripper* » United Nations troops led by General Matthew Ridgeway begin an assault against Chinese forces in an offensive to straighten out the U.N. front lines against the Chinese.
- **Mar 07 1958 – U.S. Navy:** U.S.S Grayback (SSG 574) is commissioned. She is the first submarine built from the keel up with guided missile capability to fire the Regulus II missile.
- **Mar 07 1966 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. Jets Launch Heaviest Air Raids Of The War* » In the heaviest air raids since the bombing began in February 1965, U.S. Air Force and Navy planes fly an estimated 200 sorties against North Vietnam. The objectives of the raids included an oil storage area 60 miles southeast of Dien Bien Phu and a staging area 60 miles northwest of Vinh.
- **Mar 07 1967 – Vietnam War:** *Republic of Korea forces Operation Launch* » The largest South Korean operation to date starts, forming a link-up of two Korean division areas of operations along the central coastal area of South Vietnam.

South Korean forces had been in South Vietnam since August 1964, when Seoul sent a liaison unit to Saigon. The South Korean contingent was part of the Free World Military Forces, an effort by President Lyndon B. Johnson to enlist allies for the United States and South Vietnam. By securing support from other nations, Johnson hoped to build an international consensus behind his policies in Vietnam. The effort was also known as the “many flags” program. The first South Korean contingent was followed in February 1965 by engineer units and a mobile hospital. Although initially assigned to non-combat duties, they came under fire on 3 APR when the Viet Cong attacked them.

In September 1965, in response to additional pleas from Johnson, the South Korean government greatly expanded its troop commitment to Vietnam, agreeing to send combat troops. By the close of 1969 there were over 47,800 Korean soldiers actively involved in combat operations in South Vietnam. Seoul began to withdraw its troops in February 1972, following the lead of the United States as it drastically reduced its troop commitment to South Vietnam.

- **Mar 07 1968 – Vietnam War:** The United States and South Vietnamese military begin Operation Truong Cong Dinh to root out Viet Cong forces from the area surrounding My Tho.



Also on this date:

- The Battle of Saigon begins on the day of the Tet Offensive ends.



- **Mar 07 1971 – Vietnam War:** A thousand U.S. planes bomb Cambodia and Laos.
- **Mar 07 1972 – Vietnam War:** *Jets Engage In Aerial Combat* » In the biggest air battle in Southeast Asia in three years, U.S. jets battle five North Vietnamese MiGs and shoot one down 170 miles north of the Demilitarized Zone. The 86 U.S. air raids over North Vietnam in the first two months of this year equaled the total for all of 1971.
- **Mar 07 1994 – U.S. Navy:** The Navy issues the first orders for women to be assigned on board a combatant ship, U.S.S Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN-69).

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- **Mar 08 1777 – American Revolutionary War:** Regiments from Ansbach and Bayreuth Germany, sent to support Great Britain in the War, mutiny in the town of Ochsenfurt.
- **Mar 08 1782 – Native Americans:** *Gnadenhütten Massacre* » 160 Pennsylvania militiamen murder 96 Christian Indians—39 children, 29 women and 28 men—by hammering their skulls with mallets from behind as they kneel unarmed, praying and singing, in their Moravian Mission at Gnadenhutten in the Ohio Country. The Patriots then piled their victims' bodies in mission buildings before burning the entire community to the ground. Two boys managed to survive, although one had lost his scalp to his attackers. Although the militiamen claimed they were seeking revenge for raids on their frontier settlements, the Native Americans they murdered had played no role in any attack.

This infamous attack on non-combatants led to a loss of faith in the Patriots by their Indian allies and reprisals upon Patriot captives in Native custody. The Native Americans resurrected the practice of ritualized torture, discontinued during the Seven Years' War, on the men they were able to apprehend who had participated in the Gnadenhutten atrocity.

Although the Moravians and their Indian converts were pacifists who refused to kill under any circumstances, they found other ways to assist the Patriot cause. Like other Indian allies who refused to kill fellow Indians, they aided the Patriots by working as guides and spies. The German Moravian missionaries were also supplying the Americans with critical information, for which they were later arrested and tried by the British.

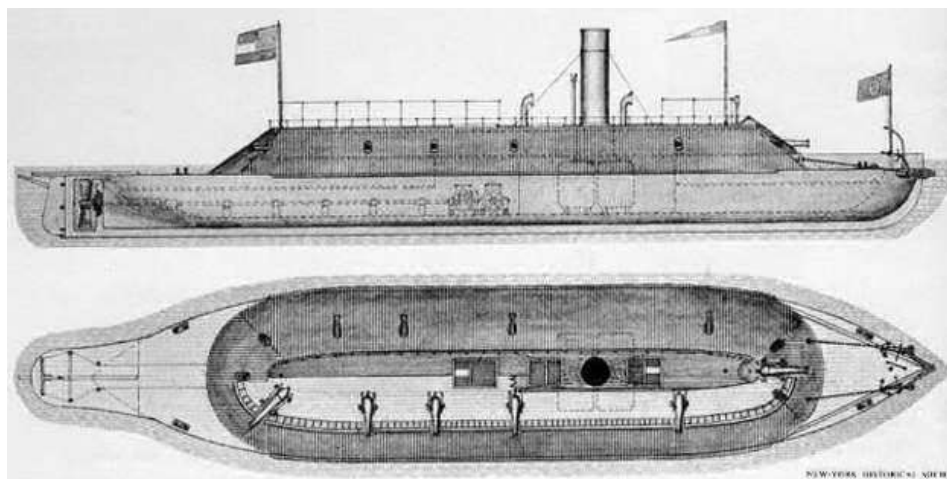
None of this protected the Indians when 160 members of the Pennsylvania militia decided to act as judge, jury and executioner. The Delaware Natives they murdered were neutral pacifists. Their

Christian missionaries were aiding the Patriot cause. Furthermore, they did not live in the manner described as savage by European settlers—they were instead engaged in European-style settled agriculture in their mission village. There was no political, religious or cultural justification for the militiamen's indiscriminate brutality during the Gnadenhutzen massacre; the incident is sadly illustrative of the anti-Indian racism that sometimes trumped even political allegiances during the American Revolution.

- **Mar 08 1854 – U.S.\*Japan:** *Trade Treaty Demand Made* » U.S. Commodore Matthew C. Perry made his second landing in Japan. This was the era when all Western powers were seeking to open new markets for their manufactured goods abroad, as well as new countries to supply raw materials for industry. It was clear that Commodore Perry could impose his demands by force. The Japanese had no navy with which to defend themselves, and thus they had to agree to the demands. Upon seeing Perry's fleet sailing into their harbor, the Japanese called them the "black ships of evil mien (appearance)." Many leaders wanted the foreigners expelled from the country, but within a month, Perry concluded a treaty with the Japanese which allowed trade at two ports.

In 1858 another treaty was signed which opened more ports and designated cities in which foreigners could reside. The trade brought much foreign currency into Japan disrupting the Japanese monetary system. Because the ruling shōgun seemed unable to do anything about the problems brought by the foreign trade, some samurai leaders began to demand a change in leadership. The weakness of the Tokugawa shogunate before the Western demand for trade, and the disruption this trade brought, eventually led to the downfall of the Shogunate and the creation of a new centralized government with the emperor as its symbolic head.

- **Mar 08 1862 - Civil War:** *C.S.S. Virginia Terrorizes Union Navy* » The Confederate ironclad Virginia wreaks havoc on a Yankee squadron off Hampton Roads, Virginia.



The C.S.S. Virginia was originally the U.S.S. Merrimack, a 40-gun frigate launched in 1855. The Merrimack served in the Caribbean and was the flagship of the Pacific fleet in the late 1850s. In early 1860, the ship was decommissioned for extensive repairs at the Gosport Navy Yard in Norfolk, Virginia. It was still there when the Civil War began in April 1861, and Union sailors sank the ship as

the yard was evacuated. Six weeks later, a salvage company raised the ship and the Confederates began rebuilding it.

The project required some \$172,000 to build an ironclad upon the Merrimack's hull. A new gun deck was added and an iron canopy was draped over the entire vessel. The most challenging part of the construction came in finding the iron plating. Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond, Virginia, finally produced it, but the plant had to alter its operations to roll more than 300 tons of scrap iron for the 2-inch thick plating.

The Virginia was launched on February 17, 1862. On 8 MAR, it steamed from Norfolk toward Union ships guarding the mouth of the James River at Hampton Roads. Rumors of the ironclad had circulated for several days among the Yankee sailors, and now they saw the creation first hand. The Virginia attacked the U.S.S. Cumberland, firing several shots into her before ramming the Federal ship and sinking it. The other Union ships fired back, but the shots were, in the words of one observer, "having no more effect than peas from a pop-gun." Ninety-eight shots hit the Virginia, but none did significant damage. The Virginia then attacked the U.S.S. Congress, which exploded when fires caused by the Confederate barrage reached the powder magazine. The Virginia next ran the U.S.S. Minnesota aground before calling it a day.

It had been the worst day in U.S. naval history and signaled the end of the wooden ship era. But help was on its way—the next day, the Virginia fought the most famous naval duel in history with the U.S.S. Monitor, a Union ironclad that was able to fight the Confederate ship to a draw.

Also on this date:

- On the second day of the Battle of Pea Ridge Confederate force including some Indian troops under General Earl Van Dorn surprise Union troops but fail to win the battle. Casualties & losses: U.S. 1384 - CSA 2000.
- **Mar 08 1917 – Russia: *February Revolution Begins*** » In Russia, the February Revolution (known as such because of Russia's Use of the Julian calendar) begins when riots and strikes over the scarcity of food erupt in Petrograd. One week later, centuries of czarist rule in Russia ended with the abdication of Nicholas II, and Russia took a dramatic step closer toward communist revolution.



By 1917, most Russians had lost faith in the leadership ability of the czarist regime. Government corruption was rampant, the Russian economy remained backward, and Nicholas repeatedly dissolved the Duma, the Russian parliament established after the Revolution of 1905, when it opposed his will. However, the immediate cause of the February Revolution—the first phase of the Russian Revolution of 1917—was Russia's disastrous involvement in World War I. Militarily, imperial Russia was no match for industrialized Germany, and Russian casualties were greater than those sustained by any nation in any previous war. Meanwhile, the economy was hopelessly disrupted by the costly war effort, and moderates joined Russian radical elements in calling for the overthrow of the czar.

On March 8, 1917, demonstrators clamoring for bread took to the streets in the Russian capital of Petrograd (now known as St. Petersburg). Supported by 90,000 men and women on strike, the protesters clashed with police but refused to leave the streets. On 10 MAR, the strike spread among all of Petrograd's workers, and irate mobs of workers destroyed police stations. Several factories elected deputies to the Petrograd Soviet, or "council," of workers' committees, following the model devised during the Revolution of 1905.

On 11 MAR, the troops of the Petrograd army garrison were called out to quell the uprising. In some encounters, regiments opened fire, killing demonstrators, but the protesters kept to the streets, and the troops began to waver. That day, Nicholas again dissolved the Duma. On 12 MAR, the revolution triumphed when regiment after regiment of the Petrograd garrison defected to the cause of the demonstrators. The soldiers, some 150,000 men, subsequently formed committees that elected deputies to the Petrograd Soviet.

The imperial government was forced to resign, and the Duma formed a provisional government that peacefully vied with the Petrograd Soviet for control of the revolution. On 14 MAR, the Petrograd Soviet issued "Order No. 1," which instructed Russian soldiers and sailors to obey only those orders that did not conflict with the directives of the Soviet. The next day, 15 MAR, Czar Nicholas II abdicated the throne in favor of his brother Michael, whose refusal of the crown brought an end to the czarist autocracy.

The new provincial government, tolerated by the Petrograd Soviet, hoped to salvage the Russian war effort while ending the food shortage and many other domestic crises. It would prove a daunting task. Meanwhile, Vladimir Lenin, leader of the Bolshevik revolutionary party, left his exile in Switzerland and crossed German enemy lines to return home and take control of the Russian Revolution.

- **Mar 08 1921 – Post WW1:** After Germany failed to make its first war reparation payment, French troops occupied Dusseldorf and other towns on the Ruhr River in Germany's industrial heartland.
- **Mar 08 1940 – WW2 Era:** Heavy fighting is reported at the outskirts to Viipuri, as the Red Army continues its attempt to capture the city. This prompts the Finns to seek an immediate armistice, which the Russians refuse. Therefore the Finnish delegation in Moscow is instructed to sue for peace.
- **Mar 08 1941 – WW2 Era:** The U.S. Senate passes the 'Lend Lease' bill by 60 votes to 31.  
Also on this date:
  - Martial law is proclaimed in Holland in order to extinguish any anti-Nazi protests.
- **Mar 08 1942 – WW2:** *Rangoon Burma Captured* » Rangoon was initially defended relatively successfully against Japanese air raids, by small RAF detachments reinforced by a squadron of the American Volunteer Group, better known as the "Flying Tigers". The majority of the airfields were between Rangoon and the Axis advance and as the Japanese gained Use of the airfields in Tenasserim, the amount of warning the Rangoon airfields could get of attack decreased, and they became more and more untenable. Although the Australian government refused to allow its troops to be committed to Burma, some British and Indian reinforcements, including the British 7th Armored

Brigade (equipped with new M3 Stuart tanks) and the 63rd Indian Infantry Brigade, landed in Rangoon.



**Electrical equipment and oil installations at Yenanguang being destroyed (left) as part of the "scorched earth" policy, in the face of the Japanese advance (right).**

General Harold Alexander ordered counter-attacks against the Japanese at Pegu, 40 miles northeast of Rangoon, but soon realized that there was no hope of defending Rangoon. On 7 March, the Burma Army evacuated Rangoon after implementing a scorched earth plan to deny the Japanese the Use of its facilities. The port was destroyed and the oil terminal was blown up. As the Allies departed, the city was on fire. The remnants of the Burma Army faced encirclement as they retreated north from the city, but broke through the Taukkyan Roadblock as the result of an error on the part of the local Japanese commander. Colonel Takanobu Sakuma, commanding the Japanese 214th Infantry Regiment, had been ordered to block the main road north from Rangoon to Prome while the main body of the 33rd Division circled round the city to attack from the west.

The retreating British and Indian troops were thrown back when they attempted to break through Sakuma's road block. Alexander ordered another attack but found the Japanese had gone. Not realizing that the British were evacuating Rangoon, Sakuma had withdrawn the road block, as ordered, once the 33rd Division reached its intended positions. Had he not done so, the Japanese might have captured General Alexander and much of the rest of the Burma Army. The retreat from Burma was conducted in horrible circumstances. Starving refugees, disorganized stragglers, and the sick and wounded clogged the primitive roads and tracks leading to India. At least 500,000 civilian fugitives reached India, while an unknown number, conservatively estimated between 10,000 and 50,000, died along the way. In later months, 70 to 80% of those who reached India were afflicted with diseases such as dysentery, smallpox, malaria or cholera, with 30% "desperately so". On 26 April the British, Indian and Burman forces joined the civilians in a full retreat.

- **Mar 08 1942 – WW2:** *Dutch Surrender on Java* » Dutch forces surrender to the Japanese after two months of fighting and the Government of the Dutch East Indies flees Java for Australia.

Java is an island of modern-day Indonesia, and it lies southeast of Malaysia and Sumatra, south of Borneo and west of Bali. The Dutch had been in Java since 1596, establishing the Dutch East India Company, a trading company with headquarters at Batavia (modern-day Jakarta), which the Dutch commandeered in 1619. The Dutch East India Company began to assert greater and greater control over the Muslim kingdoms of the East Indies, transforming them into vassal states, with peasants growing rice, sugar, pepper, and coffee for the Dutch government. The company was dissolved in

1799 because of debts and corruption, and the Dutch government took control of the East Indies directly.

The British supplanted the Dutch in Java for a brief period (1811-1816), but the Dutch returned to power, slowly granting native Javanese more local control, even giving them a majority on the People's Council. But on January 11, 1942, the Japanese declared war on the Royal Dutch government with its invasion of Borneo and the Island of Celebes, a date that also marked the beginning of the end of the Dutch presence in the East Indies. Sumatra was the next site of Japanese occupation, with paratroopers and troops landing from transports on 14-16 FEB. Seven thousand British and Australian troops reinforced the Dutch fighters on Java, but the Allies pulled out of the fight in late February at the approach of two larger Japanese invasion forces that arrived on 1 MAR.

The Dutch finally ended all resistance to the superior Japanese forces on 8 MAR, surrendering on Java. Java's independence of colonial control became a final fact of history in 1950, when it became part of the newly independent Republic of Indonesia.

Also on this date:

- Japanese make unopposed landings at Lae and Salamaua on New Guinea.
- The RAF Use GEE for the first time for target marking during a raid on Essen. The technique was known as 'Shaker' and consisted of aircraft marking the target with flares, allowing aircraft further behind to see the target more clearly. However the results of the raid were disappointing.
- **Mar 08 1943 – WW2:** PBY-5 Catalinas from VP-53 sink German submarine U-156 east-northeast of Trinidad with depth charges resulting in the loss of all hands. U-156 was the main participant in the Laconia Incident in September 1942, during which she torpedoed and sank the troopship Laconia west of Africa. Whilst rescuing the survivors and flying the Red Cross flag, the U-boat was attacked by an American aircraft and forced to dive, resulting in the shipwrecked survivors being cast back into the sea. The incident led to the Laconia Order, banning U-boats from attempting rescues, and later caused major embarrassment to the U.S. during the Nuremberg trials.

Also on this date:

- Japanese forces attack American troops on Hill 700 in Bougainville. The battle will last five days.
- **Mar 08 1944 – WW2:** The U.S. 8th Air Force carries out a heavy attack against Berlin. The primary target is the ball bearing plant at Erkner, a suburb of Berlin; enemy opposition is fierce and 37 bombers and 16 fighters are lost.
- **Mar 08 1945 – WW2:** British and Canadian troops involved in Operation 'Blockbuster' enter Xanten on the Rhine after several days of heavy fighting further to the South U.S. troops enter Bonn.

Also on this date:

- Beginning of secret negotiations at Bern, Switzerland, between representatives of the American OSS (Allan Dulles) and the German High Command in Italy (General von Vietinghoff and SS General Wolff) for an early surrender of German forces in Italy.
- The Red Army penetrates into the southern suburbs of Breslau.

- **Mar 08 1965 – Egypt\*Israel: Egypt Reopens the Suez Canal** » Following Israel’s withdrawal from occupied Egyptian territory, the Suez Canal is reopened to international traffic. However, the canal was so littered with wreckage from the Suez Crisis that it took weeks of cleanup by Egyptian and United Nations workers before larger ships could navigate the waterway. The Suez Canal, which connects the Mediterranean and Red Seas across Egypt, was completed by French engineers in 1869. For the next 88 years, it remained largely under British and French control, and Europe depended on it as an inexpensive shipping route for oil from the Middle East.



In July 1956, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the canal, hoping to charge tolls that would pay for construction of a massive dam on the Nile River. In response, Israel invaded in late October, and British and French troops landed in early November, occupying the canal and other Suez territory. Under pressure from the United Nations, Britain and France withdrew in December, and Israeli forces departed in March 1957. That month, Egypt took over control of the canal and reopened it to commercial shipping. Ten years later, Egypt shut down the canal again following the Six Day War and Israel’s occupation of the Sinai Peninsula. It remained closed for eight years, ending when Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat reopened it in 1975 after peace talks with Israel.

- **Mar 08 1965 – Vietnam War: U.S. Marines Land At Da Nang** » The first U.S. troops sent to Vietnam arrive aboard the U.S.S. *Henrico*, *Union*, and *Vancouver*. The 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade under Brig. Gen. Frederick J. Karch, take up stations 4,000 yards off Red Beach Two, north of Da Nang.



First ashore was the Battalion Landing Team 3/9, which arrived on the beach at 8:15 a.m. Wearing full battle gear and carrying M-14s, the Marines were met by sightseers, South Vietnamese officers, Vietnamese girls with leis, and four American soldiers with a large sign stating: “Welcome, Gallant Marines.” Gen. William Westmoreland, senior U.S. military commander in Saigon, was reportedly “appalled” at the spectacle because he had hoped that the Marines could land without any fanfare. Within two hours, Battalion Landing Team 1/3 began landing at Da Nang air base.

The 3,500 Marines were deployed to secure the U.S. airbase, freeing South Vietnamese troops up for combat. On March 1, Ambassador Maxwell Taylor had informed South Vietnamese Premier Phan



Huy Quat that the United States was preparing to send the Marines to Vietnam. Three days later, a formal request was submitted by the U.S. Embassy, asking the South Vietnamese government to “invite” the United States to send the Marines. Premier Quat, a mere figurehead, had to obtain approval from the real power, Gen. Nguyen Van Thieu, chief of the Armed Forces Council. Thieu approved, but, like Westmoreland, asked that the Marines be “brought ashore in the most inconspicuous way feasible.” These wishes were ignored and the Marines were given a hearty, conspicuous welcome when they arrived.

- **Mar 08 1975 – Vietnam War:** *Thieu Orders Force Withdrawal* » South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu orders the withdrawal of South Vietnamese forces from the Central Highlands. In late January 1975, just two years after the cease-fire had been established by the Paris Peace Accords, the North Vietnamese launched Campaign 275. The objective of this campaign was the capture of Ban Me Thuot in the Central Highlands.



A refugee clutches her baby as a government helicopter gunship carries them away near Tuy Hoa, 235 miles northeast of Saigon on March 22, 1975. They were among thousands fleeing from recent Communist advances. With U.S. forces out of the country, North Vietnamese troops tested South Vietnamese defenses (and the willingness of the U.S. to return to the fight) starting in 1974, and began capturing territory.

The battle began on 4 MAR and the North Vietnamese quickly encircled the city. As it became clear that the communists would take the city and probably the entire Darlac province, Thieu decided to withdraw his forces in order to protect the more critical populous areas. Accordingly, he ordered his forces in the Central Highlands to pull back from their positions. Abandoning Pleiku and Kontum, the South Vietnamese forces began to move toward the sea, but what began as an orderly withdrawal soon turned into panic. The South Vietnamese forces rapidly fell apart. The North Vietnamese were successful in both the Central Highlands and further north at Quang Tri, Hue, and Da Nang. The South Vietnamese soon collapsed as a cogent fighting force and the North Vietnamese continued the attack all the way to Saigon. South Vietnam surrendered unconditionally on 30 APR.

- **Mar 08 1982 – Cold War:** *United States Accuses Soviets Of U.S.ing Poison Gas* » The U.S. government issues a public statement accusing the Soviet Union of U.S.ing poison gas and chemical weapons in its war against rebel forces in Afghanistan. The accusation was part of the continuing U.S. criticism of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

Since sending troops into Afghanistan in 1979 in an attempt to prop up a pro-Soviet communist government, the Soviet Union had been on the receiving end of an unceasing string of criticism and diplomatic attacks from the United States government. First the Carter administration, and then the



Reagan administration, condemned the Soviets for their intervention in a sovereign nation. Because of the issue, arms control talks had been tabled, the United States had boycotted the 1980 Olympics in Moscow, and diplomatic tension between America and Russia reached alarming proportions.

Reports that the Soviets were U.S.ing poison gas and chemical weapons in Afghanistan only intensified the heightened tensions. The U.S. government's official statement charged that over 3,000 Afghans had been killed by weapons, including "irritants, incapacitants, nerve agents, phosgene oxime and perhaps mycotoxins, mustard, lewisite and toxic smoke." Evidence to support these charges was largely anecdotal and a number of U.S. scientists had serious doubts about the data put forward by the Reagan administration. Some critics charged that the accusations were a smokescreen behind which the United States could go forward with further development and stockpiling of its own chemical weapons arsenal.

The U.S. attack must have seemed mildly ironic to the Soviets, who had pilloried America for the Use of defoliants and other chemical weapons during its war in Vietnam. By 1982, many Americans were referring to Afghanistan as "Russia's Vietnam."

- **Mar 08 2006 – Mideast:** Iran threatened the United States with "harm and pain" if the U.S. tried to Use the U.N. Security Council to punish Tehran for its suspect nuclear program.
- **Mar 08 2008 – War On Terror:** U.S. President George W. Bush vetoed legislation that would have outlawed severe interrogation methods such as waterboarding Used by the CIA. Bush said the proposal would eliminate "one of the most valuable tools in the war on terror."

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- **Mar 09 1781 – American Revolutionary War:** *Battle of Pensacola* » After successfully capturing British positions in Louisiana and Mississippi, Spanish General Bernardo de Galvez, commander of the Spanish forces in North America, turns his attention to the British-occupied city of Pensacola, Florida. General Galvez and a Spanish naval force of more than 40 ships and 3,500 men landed at Santa Rosa Island and begin a two-month siege of British occupying forces that becomes known as the Battle of Pensacola.

Galvez's flotilla survived a hurricane in harbor before initiating two months of constant artillery and cannon bombardment of the British forts. By 23 APR, reinforcements had arrived, increasing Galvez's total force to 7,800 and, on the morning of 8 MAY, the 18-year British occupation of Pensacola, Florida, ended with a British surrender. The British lost 105 men; the Spanish lost 78. An additional 198 Spaniards were wounded. Spain took 1,113 prisoners and sent 300 Britons to Georgia on the promise that they would not reenter the British military.

Spain never officially signed an alliance with the American revolutionaries, as King Charles III was hesitant about the precedent he might be starting by encouraging the population of another empire to overthrow their monarch. However, Spain also wanted to regain Gibraltar in the Mediterranean and solidify control of its North American holdings, so it allied itself to France in the international war against Britain. As a result, Spain regained West Florida during the fighting and

East Florida, which it exchanged for the Bahamas, in the final peace. Though Gibraltar remained in British control, Spain held all the land surrounding the Gulf of Mexico.

- **Mar 09 1847 – Mexican\*American War: U.S. Forces Land At Vera Cruz** » During the Mexican-American War, U.S. forces under General Winfield Scott invade Mexico three miles south of Vera Cruz. Encountering little resistance from the Mexicans massed in the fortified city of Vera Cruz, by nightfall the last of Scott's 10,000 men came ashore without the loss of a single life. It was the largest amphibious landing in U.S. history and not surpassed until World War II.



**A 3"/50 gun bombarding Veracruz**

The Mexican-American War began with a dispute over the U.S. government's 1845 annexation of Texas. In January 1846, President James K. Polk, a strong advocate of westward expansion, ordered General Zachary Taylor to occupy disputed territory between the Nueces and Rio Grande Rivers. Mexican troops attacked Taylor's forces, and on May 13, 1846, Congress approved a declaration of war against Mexico. In March 1847, General Scott's forces landed near Vera Cruz, and by 29 MAR, with very few casualties, the Americans had taken the fortified city and its massive fortress, San Juan de Ulua. In April, Scott began his devastating march to Mexico City, which ended on 14 SEP, when U.S. forces entered the Mexican capital and raised the American flag over the Hall of Montezuma.

In February 1848, representatives from the United States and Mexico signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, formally ending the Mexican War, recognizing Texas as part of the United States and extending the boundaries of the United States west to the Pacific Ocean.

- **Mar 09 1862 – Civil War: Battle of the Ironclads** » During the American Civil War, the CSS Virginia, a captured and rebuilt Union steam frigate formerly known as the Merrimac, engages the U.S.S Monitor in the first battle between iron-fortified naval vessels in history.

The Confederate navy's addition of iron plates to the captured U.S.S Merrimac steam frigate temporarily made it an unstoppable force in the disputed waters of the Civil War. After seeing the Merrimac in action, the Union navy constructed its own ironclad, the U.S.S Monitor. On March 8, 1862, the Virginia attacked a Union squadron of wooden-hulled vessels in Hampton Roads off the Virginia coast. The U.S.S Congress, a frigate, and the U.S.S Cumberland, a sailing sloop, were easily sunk by the Virginia, which suffered no noticeable damage. Late that night, the U.S.S Monitor arrived

in the area. With its deck nearly at the water level, the Monitor had an unassuming appearance, but it was a formidable match for the Confederate ironclad.



On 9 MAR, the two vessels engaged each other, and both the Monitor and the Virginia suffered direct hits that failed to penetrate their iron shells. Finally, after four hours, a cannon blast from the Virginia hit the Monitor's pilothouse, temporarily blinding the ship's captain, Union Lieutenant John L. Worden. The Virginia was thus allowed to escape to Norfolk, Virginia, and the Battle of the Ironclads ended in a draw. Two months later, the Virginia was trapped in Norfolk by advancing Union forces, and its Confederate crew blew up the fearful vessel rather than allow it to fall into Union hands.

- **Mar 09 1916 – WWI: *Germany Declares War On Portugal*** » Portugal had earlier in the year on 23 FEB honored its alliance with Great Britain by seizing German ships anchored in Lisbon's harbor.

Portugal had become increasingly anxious about the security of its colonial holdings in Angola and Mozambique with the outbreak of World War I in 1914. In order to secure international support for its authority in Africa, Portugal entered the war on the side of Britain and the Allies. Its participation was at first limited to naval support. However in February 1917 Portugal sent its first troops—an expeditionary force of 50,000 men—to the Western Front. They saw action for the first time in Belgium on 17 JUN of that year.

One notable battle in which Portuguese forces took part was the Battle of Lys, near the Lys River in the Flanders region of Belgium, in April 1918. It was part of the major German offensive—the last of the war—launched that spring on the Western Front. During that battle, one Portuguese division of troops was struck hard by four German divisions; the preliminary shelling alone was so heavy that one Portuguese battalion refused to push forward into the trenches. All told, the victorious Germans took more than 6,000 prisoners in that conflict and were able to push through enemy lines along a three-and-a-half mile stretch. By the time World War I ended, a total of 7,000 Portuguese soldiers had died in combat.

- **Mar 09 1916 – U.S. Army: *Gen. Pershing's Mexican Expedition*** » In the early morning several hundred Mexican guerrillas under the command of Francisco "Pancho" Villa cross the U.S.-Mexican border and attack the small border town of Columbus, New Mexico. Seventeen Americans were killed in the raid, and the center of town was burned. It was unclear whether Villa personally participated in the attack, but President Woodrow Wilson ordered the U.S. Army into Mexico to capture the rebel leader dead or alive.



Before he invaded the United States, Pancho Villa was already known to Americans for his exploits during the Mexican Revolution. He led the famous Division del Norte, with its brilliant cavalry, Los Dorados, and won control of northern Mexico after a series of audacious attacks. In 1914, following the resignation of Mexican leader Victoriano Huerta, Pancho Villa and his former revolutionary ally Venustiano Carranza battled each other in a struggle for succession. By the end of 1915, Villa had been driven north into the mountains, and the U.S. government recognized General Carranza as the president of Mexico.

In January 1916, to protest President Woodrow Wilson's support for Carranza, Villa executed 16 U.S. citizens at Santa Isabel in northern Mexico. Then, in early March, he ordered the raid on Columbus. Cavalry from the nearby Camp Furlong U.S. Army outpost pursued the Mexicans, killing several dozen rebels on U.S. soil and in Mexico before turning back. On 15 MAR, under orders from President Wilson, U.S. Brigadier General John J. Pershing launched a punitive expedition into Mexico to capture Villa and disperse his rebels. The expedition eventually involved some 10,000 U.S. troops and personnel. It was the first U.S. military operation to employ mechanized vehicles, including automobiles and airplanes.

For 11 months, Pershing failed to capture the elusive revolutionary, who was aided by his intimate knowledge of the terrain of northern Mexico and his popular support from the people there. Meanwhile, resentment over the U.S. intrusion into Mexican territory led to a diplomatic crisis with the government in Mexico City. On 21 JUN, the crisis escalated into violence when Mexican government troops attacked a detachment of the 10th Cavalry at Carrizal, Mexico, leaving 12 Americans dead, 10 wounded, and 24 captured. The Mexicans suffered more than 30 dead. If not for the critical situation in Europe, war might have been declared. In January 1917, having failed in their mission to capture Villa, and under continued pressure from the Mexican government, the Americans were ordered home.

Villa continued his guerrilla activities in northern Mexico until Adolfo de la Huerta took power over the government and drafted a reformist constitution. Villa entered into an amicable agreement with Huerta and agreed to retire from politics. In 1920, the government pardoned Villa, but three years later he was assassinated at his ranch in Parral.

- **Mar 09 1919 – U.S. Navy:** The first flight from a battleship platform is made by Lt. Cmdr. Edward O. McDonnell in a Sopwith Camel from turret No. 2 of U.S.S Texas (BB 35) while anchored at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.
- **Mar 09 1936 – Holocaust:** The German press warns that all Jews who vote in the upcoming elections will be arrested.

- **Mar 09 1940 – WW2 Era:** Italian-Anglo agreement on coal, Britain to release Italian collier ships, Italy to import no more German coal.
- **Mar 09 1941 – WW2 Era:** The Suez Canal is cleared of mines and British aircraft carrier HMS Formidable sails through from the Red Sea escorted by anti-aircraft cruiser HMS Carlisle and sloop HMS Grimsby.

Also on this date:

- Germans bombing of London damages Buckingham Palace and destroys the underground nightclub Café De Paris, where a bomb comes down a ventilation shaft and explodes on the dance floor (80 people killed including performer Ken 'Snakehips' Johnston who is decapitated onstage). An hour later the club would have been packed with resultant much higher casualties.
  - 250 miles North of Cape Verde Islands, German cruiser Scharnhorst sinks Greek SS Marathon (carrying coal to Alexandria around the Cape of Good Hope), taking the entire crew prisoner.
  - British minesweeping trawler HMT Gulfoss hits a mine and sinks in the English Channel 3 miles South of Dungeness, Kent (10 killed).
  - British Ministry of Labour appeals for 100,000 women to work in factories.
  - The Italians launch Primavera offensive against the Greek 1st Army in Albania, but it makes very little progress
  - Japanese establish intelligence network in San Diego, CA, to spy on U.S. shipping.
- **Mar 09 1943 – WW2:** U-510 torpedoes eight ships in three hours off the coast of Brazil, in what is the most successful single U-boat action of the war.

Also on this date:

- Von Arnim replaces Field Marshal Rommel as C-in-C of the Axis forces in Tunisia and Rommel is ordered by Hitler to leave Africa, never to return.
- **Mar 09 1944 – WW2:** As part of the, the Soviet Air Forces heavily bombed Tallinn, Estonia after Soviet saboteurs had deliberately disabled the water supply. Over a thousand incendiary bombs set the defenseless town on fire. 757 people died of whom 586 were civilians and 75 prisoners of war, 659 were wounded, and over 20,000 people were left without shelter in the spring thaw.



The Soviet bombings left a legacy of anti-Soviet resentment and resistance, as personified in the slogan Varemeist tõuseb kättemaks!, or "Vengeance Will Rise from the Ruins!", which was also Used as a slogan by an Estonian division of the Nazi Waffen-SS.

Also on this date:

- Japanese troops counter-attack American forces on Hill 700 in Bougainville in a battle that would last five days.
- **Mar 09 1945 – WW2: *Operation Meetinghouse (09-10 Mar)*** » U.S. warplanes launch a new bombing offensive against Japan, dropping 2,000 tons of incendiary bombs on Tokyo's residential areas in a region where homes were mostly made of wood, paper, and bamboo over the course of 48 hours. Almost 16 square miles in and around the Japanese capital were incinerated, and between 80,000 and 130,000 Japanese civilians were killed in the worst single firestorm in recorded history.

Early on 9 MAR, Air Force crews met on the Mariana Islands of Tinian and Saipan for a military briefing. They were planning a low-level bombing attack on Tokyo that would begin that evening, but with a twist: Their planes would be stripped of all guns except for the tail turret. The decrease in weight would increase the speed of each Superfortress bomber and would also increase its bomb load capacity by 65 percent, making each plane able to carry more than seven tons. Speed would be crucial, and the crews were warned that if they were shot down, all haste was to be made for the water, which would increase their chances of being picked up by American rescue crews. Should they land within Japanese territory, they could only expect the very worst treatment by civilians, as the mission that night was going to entail the deaths of tens of thousands of those very same civilians. "You're going to deliver the biggest firecracker the Japanese have ever seen," said U.S. Gen. Curtis LeMay.

The cluster bombing of the downtown Tokyo suburb of Shitamachi had been approved only a few hours earlier. Shitamachi was composed of roughly 750,000 people living in cramped quarters in wooden-frame buildings. Setting ablaze this "paper city" was a kind of experiment in the effects of firebombing; it would also destroy the light industries, called "shadow factories," that produced prefabricated war materials destined for Japanese aircraft factories.



**Charred remains of Japanese civilians after the firebombing of Tokyo**

The denizens of Shitamachi never had a chance of defending themselves. Their fire brigades were hopelessly undermanned, poorly trained, and poorly equipped. At 5:34 p.m., Superfortress B-29 bombers took off from Saipan and Tinian, reaching their target at 12:15 a.m. on 10 MAR. Three hundred and thirty-four bombers, flying at a mere 500 feet, dropped their loads, creating a giant bonfire fanned by 30-knot winds that helped raze Shitamachi and spread the flames throughout

Tokyo. Masses of panicked and terrified Japanese civilians scrambled to escape the inferno, most unsuccessfully. The human carnage was so great that the blood-red mists and stench of burning flesh that wafted up sickened the bomber pilots, forcing them to grab oxygen masks to keep from vomiting.

The raid lasted slightly longer than three hours. "In the black Sumida River, countless bodies were floating, clothed bodies, naked bodies, all black as charcoal. It was unreal," recorded one doctor at the scene. Only 243 American airmen were lost which were considered as acceptable losses.

- **Mar 09 1945 – WW2:** *Japanese Coup D'état In French Indochina* » With Japanese forces losing the war and the threat of an Allied invasion of Indochina imminent, the Japanese were concerned about an uprising against them by French colonial forces. Despite the French having anticipated an attack, the Japanese struck in a military campaign attacking garrisons all over the colony. The French were caught off guard and all of the garrisons were overrun with some then having to escape to Nationalist China where they were harshly interned. The Japanese replaced French officials, and effectively dismantled their control of Indochina. The Japanese were then able to install and create a new Empire of Vietnam, Kingdom of Kampuchea and Kingdom of Luang Phrabang which under their direction would acquiesce with their military presence and forestall a potential invasion by the Allies.

Also on this date:

- The U.S. First Army widens the Remagen bridgehead. The U.S. Third Army captures Andernach on the Rhine.
  - German light naval vessels from the still German-occupied British Channel Islands enter the allied supply port of Granville in Bretagne, sinking five ships.
- **Mar 09 1952 – Korean War:** U.S.S Samuel N. Moore (DD 747) and HMS Morecambe Bay silence enemy shore batteries firing at U.S.S Merganser (AMS-26) near Songjin, Korea.
  - **Mar 09 1954 – Cold War:** *Republican Senators Criticize Joseph McCarthy* » Senate Republicans level criticism at fellow Republican Joseph McCarthy and take action to limit his power. The criticism and actions were indications that McCarthy's glory days as the most famous investigator of communist activity in the United States were coming to an end.

A Republican senator from Wisconsin, McCarthy had risen to fame in early 1950 when he stated in a speech that there were over 200 known communists operating in the U.S. Department of State. Various other charges and accusations issued forth from McCarthy in the months and years that followed. Although he was notably unsuccessful in discovering communists at work in the United States, his wild charges and sensational Senate investigations grabbed headlines and his name became one of the most famous in America.

Republicans at first embraced McCarthy and his devastating attacks on the Democratic administration of President Harry S. Truman. However, when McCarthy kept up with his charges about communists in the government after the election of Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1952, the party turned against him. Eisenhower himself was particularly disturbed by McCarthy's accusations about communists in the U.S. Army. On March 9, 1954, Republican Senator Ralph

Flanders (Vermont) verbally blasted McCarthy, charging that he was a “one-man party” intent on “doing his best to shatter that party whose label he wears.” Flanders sarcastically declared, “The junior Senator from Wisconsin interests U.S. all, no doubt about that, but also he puzzles some of U.S.. To what party does he belong? Is he a hidden satellite of the Democratic Party, to which he is furnishing so much material for quiet mirth?” In addition to Flanders’ speech, Senate Republicans acted to limit McCarthy’s ability to conduct hearings and to derail his investigation of the U.S. Army.

McCarthy’s days as a political force were indeed numbered. During his televised hearings into the U.S. Army later in 1954, the American people got their first look at how McCarthy bullied witnesses and ignored procedure to suit his purposes. By late 1954, the Senate censured him, but he remained in office until his death in 1957. His legacy was immense: during his years in the spotlight, he destroyed careers, created a good deal of hysteria, and helped spread fear of political debate and dissent in the United States.

- **Mar 09 1965 – Vietnam War:** *Marines Continue To Land At Da Nang* » The 3,500 Marines of the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade under Brig. Gen. Frederick J. Karch continue to land at Da Nang. The Marines had begun disembarking from the U.S.S. *Henrico*, *Union*, and *Vancouver* on 8 MAR and were the first U.S. combat troops in South Vietnam. Among the arrivals on this day were the first U.S. armor in Vietnam—a tank of the 3rd Marine Tank Battalion. More tanks, including those with flame-throwing capability, followed in a few days. There was scattered firing from Viet Cong soldiers hidden ashore as the Marines landed, but no Marines were hit. The Marines were at once assigned to protect the U.S. base at Da Nang, both from the immediate perimeter and from the high ground along a ridge to the west.



Many others eventually joined this initial contingent of Marines. During the course of the war, the Marine Corps deployed one corps-level headquarters, two Marine divisions, two additional Marine regimental landing teams and a reinforced Marine aircraft wing, plus a number of battalion-size Marine special landing forces afloat with the 7th Fleet. Present at the beginning of U.S. commitment to the Vietnam War, the Marine Corps was also there at the end. In 1975, Marine Corps elements took part in the final evacuation of South Vietnam as the country fell to the North Vietnamese.

- **Mar 09 1968 – Vietnam War:** General William Westmoreland asks for 206,000 more troops in Vietnam.



- **Mar 09 1970 – Vietnam War:** *Marines Hand over Control of I Corps Region* » The U.S. Marines turn over control of the five northernmost provinces in South Vietnam to the U.S. Army. The Marines had been responsible for this area since they first arrived in South Vietnam in 1965. The change in responsibility for this area was part of President Richard Nixon's initiative to reduce U.S. troop levels as the South Vietnamese accepted more responsibility for the fighting. After the departure of the 3rd Marine Division from Vietnam in late 1969, the 1st Marine Division was the only marine division left operating in South Vietnam.
- **MAR 09 1974 – Post WW2:** *Japanese Holdout* » Imperial Japanese Army intelligence officer Hirō "Hiroo" Onoda formerly surrenders. After the war ended he spent 29 years holding out in the Philippines until his former commander traveled from Japan to relieve him from duty.



Onoda trained as an intelligence officer in the commando class "Futamata" of the Nakano School. On 26 December 1944, he was sent to Lubang Island in the Philippines. He was ordered to do all he could to hamper enemy attacks on the island, including destroying the airstrip and the pier at the harbor. Onoda's orders also stated that under no circumstances was he to surrender or take his own life. When he landed on the island, Onoda joined forces with a group of Japanese soldiers who had been sent there previously. The officers in the group outranked Onoda and prevented him from carrying out his assignment, which made it easier for United States and Philippine Commonwealth forces to take the island when they landed on 28 February 1945. Within a short time of the landing, all but Onoda and three other soldiers had either died or surrendered. Onoda, who had been promoted to lieutenant, ordered the men to take to the hills.

Onoda's commanding officer, Major Yoshimi Taniguchi, who had since become a bookseller, flew to Lubang where on 9 March 1974, he finally met with Onoda on 9 MAR and fulfilled the promise made in 1944, "Whatever happens, we'll come back for you," by issuing him the following orders:

- In accordance with the Imperial command, the Fourteenth Area Army has ceased all combat activity.
- In accordance with military Headquarters Command No. A-2003, the Special Squadron of Staff's Headquarters is relieved of all military duties.
- Units and individuals under the command of Special Squadron are to cease military activities and operations immediately and place themselves under the command of the nearest superior officer. When no officer can be found, they are to communicate with the American or Philippine forces and follow their directives.

Upon being properly relieved of duty, he surrendered. He turned over his sword, his functioning Arisaka Type 99 rifle, 500 rounds of ammunition and several hand grenades, as well as the dagger his mother had given him in 1944 to kill himself with if he was captured. Though he had killed people and engaged in shootouts with the police, the circumstances (namely, that he believed that the war was still ongoing) were taken into consideration, and Onoda received a pardon from President Ferdinand Marcos. Only Private Teruo Nakamura, arrested on 18 December 1974 in Indonesia, held out for longer. He was the penultimate Japanese soldier to surrender (with Teruo Nakamura), both surrendering in 1974.

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- **Mar 10 1783 – American Revolutionary War:** U.S.S Alliance (CAPT John Barry) defeats HMS Sybil in final naval action of the Revolution in West Indies waters
- **Mar 10 1848 – Post American Revolution:** *The Right Honorable John Stuart Dies* » The 3rd Earl of Bute and advisor to the British king, George III, John Stuart dies in London.

Although most Americans have never heard his name, Lord Bute played a significant role in the politics of the British Empire that spawned the American Revolution. A wealthy Scottish noble, educated at the prestigious Eton College and University of Leiden, Bute became Prince George's tutor in 1755. He also befriended George's mother, Augusta of Saxe-Gotha, the dowager princess of Wales. This relationship, although never proven to be sexual, resulted in a tremendous scandal when it was written about by radical English pamphleteer John Wilkes. Wilkes abhorred Bute and named his newspaper North Briton, a synonym for Scot, as a direct reference, and insult, to Bute's Scottish origins.



Prince George became King George III in 1760, while Britain was in the midst of the Seven Years' War with France. The king, along with Bute, who was now his advisor, worried that the tremendous expense of the war in North America and around the world would drive Britain to bankruptcy. William Pitt, whose military strategy and political finesse had transformed the American branch of the war, known as the French and Indian War, from disaster to triumph, argued for a preemptive strike against Spain in 1761 to prevent them from aligning with France. The king, with Bute's guidance, not only rejected Pitt's idea, but forced him to resign. In January 1762, Spain joined the war on the side of France, as Pitt predicted. Despite a resounding victory in North America, the king followed Bute's advice to end the war on other fronts as quickly as possible, returning substantial portions of land. (They might even have returned Canada, if the French had asked for it.) Lambasted by the British press for his poor decision-making, most famously in John Wilkes' 45th

edition of the North Briton, Bute finally lost the king's trust and resigned upon the signing of the Treaty of Paris in February 1763.

The squabbling between Bute, Pitt and Wilkes had a lasting impact on Anglo-American politics. In 1763, the new first lord of the treasury (or prime minister), George Grenville, attempted to prosecute Wilkes for questioning the king's integrity in North Briton No. 45. Meanwhile, Grenville began a program of taxation in the American colonies to help refill Britain's coffers, drained by the expenses of the Seven Years' War. Wilkes' arrest and eventual banishment to France made him a martyr for liberty in the eyes of many Britons at home as well as in those of the American colonists as they strained under the taxes and other costly measures imposed by Grenville's ministry.

- **Mar 10 1848 – Mexican\*American War:** The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo is ratified by the United States Senate, ending the War.
- **Mar 10 1864 – Civil War:** Lincoln Signs Ulysses S. Grant's Commission to Command the U.S. Army » President Abraham Lincoln signs a brief document officially promoting then-Major General Ulysses S. Grant to the rank of lieutenant general of the U.S. Army, tasking the future president with the job of leading all Union troops against the Confederate Army.

The rank of lieutenant general had not officially been used since 1798; at that time, President John Adams assigned the post to former President George Washington, in anticipation of a possible French invasion of the United States. One of Grant's predecessors in the Civil War, Winfield Scott, had briefly earned the rank, but the appointment was only temporary—really, use of the rank had been suspended after George Washington's death in 1799.

In 1862, Lincoln asked Congress to revive the rank of lieutenant general in order to distinguish between the general in charge of all Union forces and other generals of equal rank who served under him in the field. Congress also wanted to reinstate the rank of lieutenant general, but only if Lincoln gave the rank to Grant. Lincoln had other ideas.

Lincoln preferred to promote then-Commanding General Henry Wagner Halleck to lead the Union Army, which had been plagued by a string of ineffective leaders and terrible losses in battle. He was reluctant to promote Grant and risk boosting the general's popularity; at the time Washington was abuzz with rumors that many northern senators were considering nominating Grant instead of Lincoln at the 1864 Republican National Convention. After Grant publicly dismissed the idea of running for the presidency, Lincoln submitted to Congress' choice and agreed to give Grant the revived rank. As lieutenant general of the U.S. Army, Grant was answerable only to Lincoln. Well-respected by troops and civilians, Grant earned Lincoln's trust and went on to force the South's surrender in 1865.

Although Grant enjoyed a distinguished career in the military, he later wrote that he never consciously chose the life of a soldier. As a student at West Point, he never expected to graduate, let alone lead the entire U.S. Army in a desperate but ultimately successful struggle to preserve the Union. In 1869, Grant became the 18th president of the United States.

- **Mar 10 1864 – Civil War:** The Red River Campaign (10-22 MAR) » The Red River Campaign or Red River Expedition comprised a series of battles fought along the Red River in Louisiana. The campaign was a Union initiative, fought between approximately 30,000 Union troops under the

command of Major General Nathaniel P. Banks, and Confederate troops under the command of Lieutenant General Richard Taylor, whose strength varied from 6,000 to 15,000. The campaign was primarily the plan of Union General-in-Chief Henry W. Halleck, and a diversion from Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant's plan to surround the main Confederate armies by U.S.ing Banks's Army of the Gulf to capture Mobile, Alabama. The Union had four goals at the start of the campaign:

- ✓ To destroy the Confederate Army commanded by Taylor.
- ✓ To capture Shreveport, Louisiana, Confederate headquarters for the Trans-Mississippi Department, control the Red River to the north, and occupy east Texas.
- ✓ To confiscate as much as a hundred thousand bales of cotton from the plantations along the Red River.
- ✓ To organize pro-Union state governments in the region.

It was a Union failure, characterized by poor planning and mismanagement, in which not a single objective was fully accomplished. Taylor successfully defended the Red River Valley with a smaller force. However, the decision of Taylor's immediate superior, General Edmund Kirby Smith, to send half of Taylor's force north to Arkansas rather than south in pursuit of the retreating Banks after the Battle of Mansfield and the Battle of Pleasant Hill, led to bitter enmity between Taylor and Smith.

- **Mar 10 1865 – Civil War:** *William H. C. Whiting Dies* » Confederate General William Henry Chase Whiting dies in prison from wounds suffered during the fall of Fort Fisher, North Carolina.

Born in 1824 in Biloxi, Mississippi, Whiting was educated in Boston and at Georgetown College (now University) in Washington, D.C., where he graduated first in his class at age 16. He then entered the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, where in 1845 he again topped his graduating class. Whiting joined the Corps of Engineers and designed coastal fortifications in the West and South, including the defenses for the Cape Fear River in North Carolina. During this project, he married and settled in Wilmington, North Carolina.



When the Civil War began, Whiting offered his services to the Confederacy. He was at Fort Sumter in South Carolina when the Union garrison surrendered at the start of the war. Whiting returned to Wilmington in the summer of 1861 to supervise the construction of defenses for the city, and then moved to northern Virginia as chief engineer for the Confederate army forming there. Whiting was responsible for moving troops from the Shenandoah Valley to Manassas in time for the First Battle of Bull Run on July 21, 1861. His work was a vital component of the Confederate rout of Union troops there.

Whiting was given command of a division, and his leadership during the Seven Days' Battles in June 1862 earned him the praise of the top Confederate leaders. In November 1862, he was given command of the District of Wilmington, allowing him to return to his North Carolina home. He set about strengthening the city's defenses and constructing Fort Fisher at the Cape Fear River's mouth. Partly due to his efforts, Wilmington was one of the most important blockade running ports for the Confederates throughout the war. Whiting spent the rest of the war in Wilmington, with the exception of a few months in 1864 spent shoring up the defenses around Petersburg, Virginia.

Whiting's Fort Fisher was a formidable barrier to the Union capture of Wilmington. General Benjamin Butler led a Yankee force against Fort Fisher in December 1864, but the garrison fended off the attack. The next month, General Alfred Terry launched another assault; this time, Fort Fisher fell to the Yankees. Whiting was badly wounded and captured during the attack. He was shipped to New York and died on March 10 at age 40 while imprisoned at Governors Island.

- **Mar 10 1865 – Civil War:** *Battle of Monroe's Crossroads, NC* » Part of the Campaign of the Carolinas it was also known as also known as the Battle of Fayetteville Road, and colloquially in the North as Kilpatrick's Shirttail Skedaddle. It was fought on the grounds of the present day Fort Bragg Military Reservation. Involving solely Cavalry forces it pitted 3,000 mounted Confederate cavalry against 1,800 dismounted Union cavalry and was one of the last all-cavalry battles of the Civil War. The inconclusive fighting lasted for several hours early on the morning of 10 MAR. The Confederate attack delayed the Federal cavalry's movement toward Fayetteville, denying Brevet Maj. Gen. Hugh Judson Kilpatrick the honor of entering the town of Fayetteville first. Casualties and losses: 183 Union and 86 Confederate.
- **Mar 10 1915 – WWI:** British and Indian troops in the Artois region of northern France attack the Germans around the village of Neuve Chapelle. The attack takes the outnumbered Germans by surprise. The British achieve their initial objective but fail to capitalize on the narrow breach they create in the German lines. After three days of fighting, with over 11,000 casualties, the British offensive is suspended. The Germans suffer over 10,000 casualties.
- **Mar 10 1916 – WWI:** *McMahon–Hussein Correspondence* » The last in a series of letters was written, agreeing that Britain would recognize Arab independence in return for the Sharif of Mecca launching a revolt against the Ottoman Empire. The correspondence had a significant impact on Middle Eastern history during and after the war, and a dispute over Palestine continued thereafter.

The correspondence is composed of ten letters that were exchanged from July 1915 to March 1916[5] between Hussein bin Ali, Sharif of Mecca and Lieutenant Colonel Sir Henry McMahon, British High Commissioner to Egypt. Whilst there was some military value in the Arab manpower and local knowledge alongside the British Army, the primary reason for the arrangement was to counteract the Ottoman declaration of jihad ("holy war") against the Allies, and to maintain the support of the 70 million Muslims in British India (particularly those in the Indian Army that had been deployed in all major theatres of the wider war). The area of Arab independence was defined to be "in the limits and boundaries proposed by the Sherif of Mecca" with the exception of "portions of Syria" lying to the west of "the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo"; conflicting

interpretations of this description were to cause great controversy in subsequent years. One particular dispute, which continues to the present, is the extent of the coastal exclusion.

Following the publication of the November 1917 Balfour Declaration, which promised a national home for the Jews in Palestine, and the subsequent leaking of the secret 1916 Sykes–Picot Agreement in which Britain and France proposed to split and occupy parts of the territory, the Sharif and other Arab leaders considered the agreements made in the McMahon–Hussein Correspondence had been violated. Hussein refused to ratify the 1919 Treaty of Versailles and in response to a 1921 British proposal to sign a treaty accepting the Mandate system stated that he could not be expected to "affix his name to a document assigning Palestine to the Zionists and Syria to foreigners". A further British attempt to reach a treaty failed in 1923–24 and negotiations were suspended in March 1924; within six months the British withdrew their support in favor of their central Arabian ally Ibn Saud, who proceeded to conquer Hussein's kingdom.

- **Mar 10 1917 – WWI Era:** *Turkish Troops Begin Evacuation of Baghdad* » Less than two weeks after their victorious recapture of the strategically placed city of Kut-al-Amara on the Tigris River in Mesopotamia, British troops under the regional command of Sir Frederick Stanley Maude bear down on Baghdad, causing their Turkish opponents to begin a full-scale evacuation of the city that evening.

Shortly after receiving control of regional operations in Mesopotamia in the summer of 1916, Maude began to reorganize and re-supply his troops in preparation for a renewed offensive. The central target of the operation would be the city of Kut, which had been captured by the Turks in April 1916 along with 10,000 British and Indian soldiers under the command of Sir Charles Townshend, a devastating defeat for Allied operations in the region. In January 1917, Maude's 150,000 troops set out from the regional command headquarters at Basra, located south of Kut near the junction of the Tigris with the Euphrates River, launching the offensive that would culminate in the recapture of Kut on 24 FEB.

In the wake of their success at Kut, Maude's forces paused briefly while waiting for confirmation from headquarters in London to continue their offensive. Operations were not renewed until 5 MAR—a pause that gave Turkish commander in chief Khalil Pasha some time to consider his options for mounting a defense of Baghdad, the capital of the Ottoman Empire's southern region. In the end, Pasha was indecisive—after first beginning preparations for an offensively minded forward assault on approaching Allied forces, he decided instead to fall back and concentrate his troops near Baghdad itself. He therefore stationed the Turkish Sixth Army some 35 miles to the south of the city, near the junction of the Tigris with the Diyala River.

In the absence of significant reserves, the Turks were vastly outnumbered, with only 9,500 soldiers facing 45,000 British and Indian troops. Maude's troops reached the Diyala on 8 MAR, mounting their first assault on the Turkish positions the next morning, which Pasha and his men successfully repelled. After struggling to cross the fast-moving Diyala, Maude decided to shift his troops and cross the river at a more northern point. Alerted to enemy movements by German reconnaissance aircraft, Pasha mirrored his movements, sending the bulk of his forces to meet the Allied soldiers. He left a single regiment to hold the original defensive position at the Diyala, which was quickly and decisively crushed by British and Indian forces with a sudden attack on 10 MAR.

Stunned, Pasha ordered his troops to retreat. By the end of the day, the evacuation of Baghdad was underway.

After marching more than 100 miles in 15 days, Maude's troops entered Baghdad on 11 MAR without a struggle, taking 9,000 prisoners from the retreating Ottoman army amid cheers from the city's 140,000 occupants. The Allied victory in Baghdad marked only the beginning of the struggle over who would control the oil-rich region of Mesopotamia (the area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, now Iraq and eastern Syria). The British government had earlier promised a number of Arab leaders that their people would receive their independence if they rebelled against Turkish rule; a subsequent uprising in June 1916 was led by Faisal Husein and partially engineered by the British, including Colonel T.E. Lawrence (later known as Lawrence of Arabia).

After World War I ended in November 1918, however, the Treaty of Versailles and the newly created League of Nations gave Britain a mandate to govern in Mesopotamia, and the British and French governments issued a joint declaration stating their intention to work towards establishing independent Arab governments in the former Ottoman states. This was not enough, however, for the Arabs in Mesopotamia, who began an armed uprising in 1920 against British occupation forces in Baghdad and other areas. After subduing the revolt at great expense—£40 million—the British government decided to give up its mandate, drawing up a provisional government for Iraq that included a council of Arab ministers under the supervision of a British high commissioner. In August 1921, Faisal Husein won 96 percent of the votes and was elected king of the new Iraqi nation.

- **Mar 10 1940 – WW2 Era:** *Sumner Welles Makes A "Peace Proposal"* » U.S. Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles, after a meeting with Adolf Hitler in Berlin, visits London to discuss a peacemaking proposal with Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain to prevent a widening of the European war.



Sumner Welles, a diplomat and expert on Latin America, spent his early professional life promoting the United States' "Good Neighbor" foreign policy as attache to the U.S. embassy in Buenos Aires, chief of Latin American affairs of the State Department, and commissioner to the Dominican Republic. In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed him assistant secretary of state, sending him to Cuba, where Welles successfully mediated opposing groups attempting to overthrow the government of Gerardo Machado. He was promoted to undersecretary of state in 1937, serving as a delegate to several Pan-American conferences.



But in 1940, the stakes were raised for Welles. War had broken out in Europe with the German invasion of Poland, and Welles was sent on a fact-finding tour of Berlin, Rome, Paris, and London, in the hopes of keeping the war contained, at the very least, and ideally brought to an end. After a trip to Rome to chat with Benito Mussolini, Welles met with Hitler on March 1-3. Hitler feared that Welles would try to drive a wedge between himself and Axis partner Italy by convincing Mussolini to keep out of the conflict completely. As a result, the Fuhrer bombarded Welles with a propagandistic interpretation of recent events, putting the blame for the European conflict on England and France. Welles informed Hitler that he and Mussolini had engaged in a “long, constructive, and helpful” conversation, and that the Duce believed “there was still a possibility of bringing about a firm and lasting peace.” Hitler agreed that there would be peace-after a German victory in Europe.

Welles left Berlin and arrived in London on 10 MAR. He briefed British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain on Hitler’s intransigence, arguing that the only hope for a lasting peace was the progressive disarmament of the belligerents, primarily Germany. Chamberlain’s foreign ministers were less than impressed with the suggestion, believing that even a “disarmed” Germany could still invade a smaller, weaker nation. In short, Welles’ trip accomplished nothing.

- **Mar 10 1941 – WW2 Era:** *Halifax Bomber* » RAF Handley Page Halifax heavy bomber makes its combat debut when six of them flew a bombing raid against Le Havre, targeting the area around the docks and any shipping that might be present. The existence of the Halifax was not officially acknowledged until July 1941, after it was Used in a daylight attack on La Pallice, France, against the German battleship Scharnhorst. At the end of 1941, the Halifax was withdrawn from daylight bombing operations after intensifying fighter opposition had increased the casualty rates to unsustainable levels.

On 25 April 1945, the Halifax performed its last major operation against the enemy during an attack upon coastal gun batteries on Wangerooge in the Frisian Islands of the North Sea. While the type continued to fly operations after this, these were primarily diversions to other operations and sporadic, uncoordinated attacks against targets of opportunity. Upon the end of the conflict, Bomber Command quickly disbanded the majority of its Halifax-equipped squadrons; the aircraft themselves were transferred to Transport Command. During the type's service with Bomber Command, Halifaxes flew 82,773 operations and dropped 224,207 tons of bombs. 1,833 aircraft were lost.

Also on this date:

- Vichy France threatens to Use its navy unless Britain allows food to reach France.
- Vice Admiral Adolphus Andrews assumes command of U.S. Navy’s new North Atlantic Naval Coast Frontier (Eastern Sea Frontier)

- **Mar 10 1942 – WW2:** Based on FBI intercepts the Brazilian police arrest a German spy whose message to Hamburg contained sailing information for the Queen Mary, carrying 10,000 U.S. troops.

Also on this date:

- Japanese troops make landings at Finschhafen in New Guinea. They also occupy Buka in the Solomon Islands. Japanese aircraft attack Port Moresby in Papua.

- Aircraft from the American Aircraft Carriers Lexington and Yorktown make attacks against the Japanese at Lae and Salamaua.
- Britain reports that spending for WWII has surpassed spending for WWI.
- **Mar 10 1943 – WW2:** U.S.S Savannah (CL-42) and U.S.S Eberle (DD-430) intercept German blockade runner Karin in the South Atlantic. After boarding the ship, a timed explosion goes off, killing 11 of Eberle's boarding party.

Also on this date:

- P-47 Thunderbolts fly first mission with U.S. Eighth Air Force.
- The United States retakes Sbeitla, Tunisia.
- The United States Fourteenth Air Force activated under Maj. Gen. Claire Chennault, based in Kunming, China
- **Mar 10 1944 – WW2:** German Submarine U-575 Sunk » At 0154 hours on 10 March 1944 the German submarine U-575 on her 10<sup>th</sup> and last patrol attacked convoy SL-150, which was combined with convoy MKS-41 in the Atlantic Ocean and sank British corvette HMS Asphodel with a Gnat torpedo northwest of Cape Finisterre. Only five survivors out of a crew of 97 were picked up by the British corvette HMS Clover. The boat was hunted for 18 hours by convoy escorts, but escaped.



U-575's luck ran out on the 13 MAR when she was sunk by the combined efforts of the Canadian frigate HMCS Prince Rupert, the American destroyer U.S.S Hobson and destroyer escort U.S.S Haverfield, a British Vickers Wellington of No. 172 Squadron RAF, two B-17 Flying Fortresses of 206 and 208 squadrons and a TBM Avenger from U.S.S Bogue. Depth charges were Used in the attack. 18 men died with U-575; there were 37 survivors. Between 2 OCT 1941 and her sinking she has sunk or damaged 11 allied ships and had sailed with 18 wolfpacks.

Also on this date:

- Uman is taken as the Russians drive towards the Bug and Dnieper rivers.
- The Irish refuse to oust all Axis envoys and deny the accusation of spying on Allied troops.
- **Mar 10 1945 – WW2:** The Firebombing of Tokyo Continues » 300 American bombers continue to drop almost 2,000 tons of incendiaries on Tokyo, Japan, in a mission that had begun the previous day. The attack destroyed large portions of the Japanese capital and killed 100,000 civilians. In the closing months of the war, the United States had turned to incendiary bombing tactics against Japan, also

known as “area bombing,” in an attempt to break Japanese morale and force a surrender. The firebombing of Tokyo was the first major bombing operation of this sort against Japan.



**B-29s drop firebombs and napalm on Tokyo March 10, 1945 (left) with the resultant burning of large sections of the city (right)**

Early in the morning, the B-29s dropped their bombs of napalm and magnesium incendiaries over the packed residential districts along the Sumida River in eastern Tokyo. The conflagration quickly engulfed Tokyo’s wooden residential structures, and the subsequent firestorm replaced oxygen with lethal gases, superheated the atmosphere, and caused hurricane-like winds that blew a wall of fire across the city. The majority of the 100,000 who perished died from carbon monoxide poisoning and the sudden lack of oxygen, but others died horrible deaths within the firestorm, such as those who attempted to find protection in the Sumida River and were boiled alive, or those who were trampled to death in the rush to escape the burning city. As a result of the attack, 10 square miles of eastern Tokyo were entirely obliterated, and an estimated 250,000 buildings were destroyed.

During the next nine days, U.S. bombers flew similar missions against Nagoya, Osaka, and Kobe. In August, U.S. atomic attacks against Hiroshima and Nagasaki finally forced Japan’s hand.

- **Mar 10 1945 – WW2:** U.S. troops land in western Mindanao, Philippines in Operation VICTOR IV.  
Also on this date:
  - The 2nd Belorussian Front captures Zoppot, during its attack towards Danzig. The Kriegsmarine evacuates 25,000 civilian refugees from the besieged Baltic fortress of Kolberg in Pomerania.
  - Field Marshal Kesselring replaces Field Marshal von Rundstedt as C-in-C of German forces in the West. German troops evacuate Wesel on the lower Rhine. The U.S. Third Army captures Bonn.
  - U.S. Eighth Army invades Zamboanga Peninsula on Mindanao in the Philippines.
- **Mar 10 1948 – Cold War:** *Strange Death of Jan Masaryk* » The communist-controlled government of Czechoslovakia reports that Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk has committed suicide. The story of the noncommunist Masaryk’s death was greeted with skepticism in the West.



Masaryk was born in 1886, the son of Czechoslovakia's first president. After World War I, he served as foreign minister in the new Czech government. Later he served as the Czech ambassador to Great Britain. During World War II, he once again took the position of foreign minister, this time with the Czech government-in-exile in London. After the war, Masaryk returned to Czechoslovakia to serve as foreign minister under President Eduard Benes. It was a tense time in Masaryk's native country. The Soviet Union had occupied the nation during World War II and there were fears that the Soviets would try to install a communist government in Czechoslovakia, as it had in Poland, East Germany, and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Masaryk, however, was skillful in dealing with the Soviets, assuring them that a democratic Czechoslovakia posed no security threat to Russia.

In 1947, though, Masaryk made a fatal mistake. When the United States unveiled the Marshall Plan—the multimillion-dollar aid program for postwar Europe—Masaryk indicated Czechoslovakia's interest in participating. When he informed the Soviets, they absolutely refused to give their approval. This was quickly followed, in February 1948, by a communist coup in Czechoslovakia. President Benes was forced to accept a communist-dominated government. Masaryk was one of the few non-communists left in place. On March 10, 1948, the Czech government reported that Masaryk had committed suicide by jumping out of a third-story window at the Foreign Ministry.

The reaction in the West was characterized by deep suspicion. Secretary of State George Marshall stated that Czechoslovakia was under a “reign of terror,” and that Masaryk's “suicide” indicated “very plainly what is going on.” Despite suspicions that the communists had murdered Masaryk, nothing has been proven definitively and his death remains one of the great mysteries of the Cold War era.

Also on this date:

- First Use of jets assigned to USN operational squadron (VF-5A) on board a carrier (i.e. Boxer)
- **Mar 10 1949 – Post WW2:** Nazi wartime broadcaster Mildred E. Gillars, also known as “Axis Sally,” was convicted in Washington D.C. of treason. She served 12 years in prison.
- **Mar 10 1952 – Cuba:** *General Batista Coup D'etat* » The Cuban Army, led by Fulgencio Batista, intervened in the election that was scheduled to be held on 1 JUN, staging a coup d'état and establishing a de facto military dictatorship in the country. Batista was one of the candidates in the 1952 election. However, some of the polling put him in a distant third place. The coup itself was bloodless, but it attracted the attention and concern of most of the population. Batista overthrew President Carlos Prío Socarrás, canceled the election and took control of the government as "Provisional President." Soon after the coup, the government of the United States recognized his

regime. Batista (whose rule was formalized after the 1954 general election) went on to rule the country until January 1, 1959, when he was forced into exile with his family (first to the Trujillo-ruled Dominican Republic, then Corporatist Portugal and eventually Francoist Spain). Batista's exile marked the climax of the Cuban Revolution, which started on July 26, 1953 with the attack on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba, and saw Fidel Castro emerging as the new leader of Cuba.

- **Mar 10 1953 – Korean War:** North Korean gunners at Wonsan fire on the U.S.S Missouri. The ship responds by firing 998 rounds at the enemy position.
- **Mar 10 1959 – China\*Tiber:** Tibetans revolt against Chinese occupation » Tibetans band together in revolt, surrounding the summer palace of the Dalai Lama in defiance of Chinese occupation forces. China's occupation of Tibet began nearly a decade before, in October 1950, when troops from its People's Liberation Army (PLA) invaded the country, barely one year after the Communists gained full control of mainland China. The Tibetan government gave into Chinese pressure the following year, signing a treaty that ensured the power of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the country's spiritual leader, over Tibet's domestic affairs. Resistance to the Chinese occupation built steadily over the next several years, including a revolt in several areas of eastern Tibet in 1956. By December 1958, rebellion was simmering in Lhasa, the capital, and the PLA command threatened to bomb the city if order was not maintained.



The March 1959 uprising in Lhasa was triggered by fears of a plot to kidnap the Dalai Lama and take him to Beijing. When Chinese military officers invited His Holiness to visit the PLA headquarters for a theatrical performance and official tea, he was told he must come alone, and that no Tibetan military bodyguards or personnel would be allowed past the edges of the military camp. On 10 MAR, 300,000 loyal Tibetans surrounded Norbulinka Palace, preventing the Dalai Lama from accepting the PLA's invitation. By 17 MAR, Chinese artillery was aimed at the palace, and the Dalai Lama was evacuated to neighboring India. Fighting broke out in Lhasa two days later, with Tibetan rebels hopelessly outnumbered and outgunned. Early on 21 MAR, the Chinese began shelling Norbulinka, slaughtering tens of thousands of men, women and children still camped outside. In the aftermath, the PLA cracked down on Tibetan resistance, executing the Dalai Lama's guards and destroying Lhasa's major monasteries along with thousands of their inhabitants.

China's stranglehold on Tibet and its brutal suppression of separatist activity has continued in the decades following the unsuccessful uprising. Tens of thousands of Tibetans followed their leader to India, where the Dalai Lama has long maintained a government-in-exile in the foothills of the Himalayas.

- **Mar 10 1966 – Vietnam:** Battle of A Chau (9-10 Mar) » The battle, waged between 2,000 of the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) and the forces of the United States (17) and South Vietnam (410

to 417), began on 9 MAR and lasted until 10 MAR with the fall of the U.S. Army's Special Forces camp of the same name. The battle was a strategic victory for the PAVN in that they were able to take control of the A Shau Valley and Use it as a base area for the rest of the war.

During the battle the U.S. Special Forces team suffered five killed and twelve wounded (100% casualties). The numbers of South Vietnamese soldiers present at the camp or how many casualties they suffered varies. Only 186 of the garrison of 434 were evacuated, with the others listed as missing, although some of them surfaced later. Another report stated 231 out of 417 irregulars were lost. According to Sgt. Major Bennie G. Adkins only 122 out of about 410 irregulars survived, with many of them wounded. Adkins was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions in defense of the camp by President Barack Obama in September 2014.

The PAVN transformed the A Shau Valley into a heavily fortified base area with bunkers, anti-aircraft guns, and artillery. U.S. and South Vietnamese forces were never able to re-establish a permanent presence in the valley for the remainder of the war. During the Tet Offensive the A Shau Valley provided Communist troops an important sanctuary from which to launch attacks at South Vietnamese cities and military bases, especially Huế and Phu Bai. U.S. Raids were launched into the valley in April 1968 (Operation Delaware), August 1968 (Operation Somerset Plain), March 1969 (Operation Dewey Canyon) and May 1969 (Operation Apache Snow).

- **Mar 10 1968 – Vietnam War:** Battle of Lima Site 85, concluding the 11th with largest single ground combat loss of United States Air Force members (12) during that war.
- **Mar 10 1970 – Vietnam War:** *Troops Charged with My Lai War Crimes* » The U.S. Army accuses Capt. Ernest Medina and four other soldiers of committing crimes at My Lai in March 1968. The charges ranged from premeditated murder to rape and the “maiming” of a suspect under interrogation. Medina was the company commander of Lt. William Calley and other soldiers charged with murder and numerous crimes at My Lai 4 in Song My village.



William Calley



Capt. Ernest Medina

The My Lai massacre became the most publicized war atrocity committed by U.S. troops in Vietnam. Allegedly, a platoon had slaughtered between 200 and 500 unarmed villagers at My Lai 4, a cluster of hamlets in the coastal lowlands of I Corps Tactical Zone. This was a heavily mined region where Viet Cong guerrillas were firmly entrenched and numerous members of the participating platoon had been killed or maimed during the preceding month.

The company had been conducting a search-and-destroy mission. In search of the 48th Viet Cong (VC) Local Force Battalion, the unit entered My Lai but found only women, children, and old men.

Frustrated by unanswered losses due to snipers and mines, the soldiers took out their anger on the villagers. During the attack, several old men were bayoneted, some women and children praying outside the local temple were shot in the back of the head, and at least one girl was raped before being killed. Many villagers were systematically rounded up and led to a nearby ditch where they were executed.

Reportedly, the killing was only stopped when Warrant Officer Hugh Thompson, an aero-scout helicopter pilot, landed his helicopter between the Americans and the fleeing South Vietnamese, confronting the soldiers and blocking them from further action against the villagers. The incident was subsequently covered up, but eventually came to light a year later. An Army board of inquiry headed by Lt. Gen. William Peers investigated the massacre and produced a list of 30 people who knew of the atrocity. Only 14, including Calley and Medina, were eventually charged with crimes. All eventually had their charges dismissed or were acquitted by courts-martial except Calley, who was found guilty of murdering 22 civilians. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, but his sentence was reduced to 20 years by the Court of Military Appeals and further reduced later to 10 years by the Secretary of the Army. Proclaimed by much of the public as a “scapegoat,” Calley was paroled in 1974 after having served about three years.

- **Mar 10 1975 – Vietnam War:** *Communists Surround Ban Me Thuot* » The North Vietnamese surround and attack the city of Ban Me Thuot, as heavy fighting erupts in the Central Highlands. This action, initiated in late January 1975, just two years after a cease-fire was established by the Paris Peace Accords, was part of what the North Vietnamese called Campaign 275. The battle for Ban Me Thuot began on March 4, when North Vietnamese encircled the city with five main force divisions and effectively cut it off from outside support. The South Vietnamese 23rd Division was vastly outnumbered and quickly succumbed to the communists.

As it became clear that the communists would take the city and probably the entire province, South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu decided to withdraw his forces in order to protect the more critical populous areas. Accordingly, he ordered his forces in the Central Highlands to pull back from their positions. Abandoning Pleiku and Kontum, the South Vietnamese forces began to move toward the sea, but what started out as an orderly withdrawal soon turned into panic and the South Vietnamese forces rapidly fell apart. The North Vietnamese were successful in both the Central Highlands and further north at Quang Tri, Hue, and Da Nang. The South Vietnamese soon collapsed as a cogent fighting force and the North Vietnamese continued the attack all the way to Saigon. South Vietnam surrendered unconditionally on 30 APR.

Also on this date:

- The U.S.S Winston S. Churchill (DDG 81) is commissioned at Naval Station Norfolk. The 31st destroyer of the Arleigh Burke class is the fourth U.S. Navy warship to be named after a British citizen. Churchill has a Royal Naval officer assigned permanently to the ship and she flies the Royal Navy’s White Ensign as well as the Stars and Stripes.
- **Mar 01 1983 – USA:** President Ronald Reagan by proclamation establishes the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) which extends to a distance 200 nautical miles from the baseline from which the breadth of the territorial sea (12 NM) is measured. Within the EEZ, the United States has, to the extent permitted by international law,



(a) Sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring, exploiting, conserving and managing natural resources, both living and non-living, of the seabed and subsoil and the superjacent waters and with regard to other activities for the economic exploitation and exploration of the zone, such as the production of energy from the water, currents and winds; and

(b) Jurisdiction with regard to the establishment and use of artificial islands, and installations and structures having economic purposes, and the protection and preservation of the marine environment.

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- **Mar 11 1779 – U.S. Army:** *Congress Establishes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* » On this day in 1779, Congress establishes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to help plan, design and prepare environmental and structural facilities for the U.S. Army. Made up of civilian workers, members of the Continental Army and French officers, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers played an essential role in the critical Revolutionary War battles at Bunker Hill, Saratoga and Yorktown.

The members of the Corps who had joined at the time of its founding in 1779 left the army with their fellow veterans at the end of the War for Independence. In 1794, Congress created a Corps of Artillerists and Engineers to serve the same purpose under the new federal government. The Corps of Engineers itself was reestablished as an enduring division of the federal government in 1802.

Upon its reestablishment, the Corps began its chief task of creating and maintaining military fortifications. These responsibilities increased in urgency as the new United States prepared for a second war with Britain in the years before 1812. The Corps' greatest contribution during this era was to the defense of New York Harbor—the fortifications it built not only persuaded British naval commanders to stay away from the city during the War of 1812, but later served as the foundations for the Statue of Liberty.

In subsequent years, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers evolved from providing services for the military to helping map out the uncharted territories that would become the western United States. Beginning in 1824, the Corps also took responsibility for navigation and flood control of the nation's river systems. Today, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers is made up of more than 35,000 civilian and enlisted men and women. In recent years, the Corps has worked on rebuilding projects in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the reconstruction of the city of New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

- **Mar 11 1863 – Civil War:** Union troops under General Ulysses S. Grant give up their preparations to take Vicksburg after failing to pass Fort Pemberton north of Vicksburg.
- **Mar 11 1861 – Civil War:** *Confederate Constitution Adopted* » In Montgomery, Alabama, delegates from South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas adopt the Permanent Constitution of the Confederate States of America.

The constitution resembled the Constitution of the United States, even repeating much of its language, but was actually more comparable to the Articles of Confederation—the initial post-Revolutionary War U.S. constitution—in its delegation of extensive powers to the states. The constitution also contained substantial differences from the U.S. Constitution in its protection of

slavery, which was “recognized and protected” in slave states and territories. However, in congruence with U.S. policy since the beginning of the 19th century, the foreign slave trade was prohibited. The constitution provided for six-year terms for the president and vice president, and the president was ineligible for successive terms. Although a presidential item veto was granted, the power of the central Confederate government was sharply limited by its dependence on state consent for the Use of any funds and resources.

Although Britain and France both briefly considered entering the Civil War on the side of the South, the Confederate States of America, which survived until April 1865, never won foreign recognition as an independent government.

- **Mar 11 1862 – Civil War: *Lincoln Shuffles the Union Command*** » The President issues War Order No. 3, a measure making several changes at the top of the Union Army command structure. Lincoln created three departments, placing Henry Halleck in charge of the West, John C. Fremont in command of troops in the Appalachian region, and George McClellan in charge in the East.



**Henry Halleck, John C. Fremont, and George McClellan**

The most significant change in the order removed McClellan from his post as general-in-chief of all Union armies, though he retained command of the Army of the Potomac, the most important Union force. McClellan had assumed leadership of that army after it was defeated at the First Battle of Bull Run, Virginia, in July 1861. He quickly installed an efficient command structure and began training an effective fighting force. Three months later, Lincoln elevated McClellan to general-in-chief. However, the relationship between the president and his commanding officer was strained and sometimes contentious. The arrogant McClellan was contemptuous of the president and often ignored Lincoln’s communications or kept information from him.

McClellan was stretched thin as general-in-chief, and even he recognized this fact. He was bothered by the March 1862 demotion, but wrote to Lincoln that he would “work just as cheerfully as ever before, and... no consideration of self will in any manner interfere with the discharge of my public duties.” For McClellan, this was a rare show of grace and deference towards Lincoln. The move allowed McClellan to spend more time planning his upcoming campaign against the Confederate capital at Richmond, Virginia.

For a time, there was no general-in-chief, and the three regional commanders reported to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. The post did not stay empty for long, though, as Halleck was elevated to general-in-chief five months later.

- **Mar 11 1865 – Civil War:** Union General William Sherman and his forces occupy Fayetteville N.C.
- **Mar 11 1914 – WWI Era:** *Britain Declares German Port Blockade* » While stationing ships within a three-mile limit, was considered legitimate, a distant blockade of the kind in which Britain was engaged was not. In a distant blockade, one side simply declares whole areas of the seas to be off-limits. In this case, the British mined the North Sea so that even neutral ships would travel in peril. So while an opposing force had the right to search ships carrying cargo to its enemy, British mines indiscriminately destroyed anything with which they came into contact. “By sowing mines in international waters,” historian John Coogan explains, “Britain deliberately replaced the belligerent right of visit and search in the North Sea with a new rule: explode and sink.” It led to Germany declaring waters surrounding Britain to be a war zone, which led to the sinking of a U.S. vessel and the entrance of the United States into the War.
- **Mar 11 1916 – U.S. Navy:** U.S.S Nevada (BB-36) is commissioned. The first U.S. Navy "super-dreadnought".



*Nevada* during her **running trials** in early 1916

- **Mar 11 1918 – WWI:** *Spanish Flu Pandemic* » Just before breakfast Private Albert Gitchell of the U.S. Army reports to the hospital at Fort Riley, Kansas, complaining of the cold-like symptoms of sore throat, fever and headache. By noon, over 100 of his fellow soldiers had reported similar symptoms, marking what are believed to be the first cases in the historic influenza pandemic of 1918, later known as Spanish flu. The flu would eventually kill 675,000 Americans and an estimated 20 million to 50 million people around the world, proving to be a far deadlier force than even the First World War.

The initial outbreak of the disease, reported at Fort Riley in March, was followed by similar outbreaks in army camps and prisons in various regions of the country. The disease soon traveled to Europe with the American soldiers heading to aid the Allies on the battlefields of France. (In March 1918 alone, 84,000 American soldiers headed across the Atlantic; another 118,000 followed them the next month.) Once it arrived on a second continent, the flu showed no signs of abating: 31,000 cases

were reported in June in Great Britain. The disease was soon dubbed the Spanish flu due to the shockingly high number of deaths in Spain (some 8 million, it was reported) after the initial outbreak there in May 1918.

The flu showed no mercy for combatants on either side of the trenches. Over the summer, the first wave of the epidemic hit German forces on the Western Front, where they were waging a final, no-holds-barred offensive that would determine the outcome of the war. It had a significant effect on the already weakening morale of the troops—as German army commander Crown Prince Rupprecht wrote on 3 AUG: poor provisions, heavy losses, and the deepening influenza have deeply depressed the spirits of men in the III Infantry Division. Meanwhile, the flu was spreading fast beyond the borders of Western Europe, due to its exceptionally high rate of virulence and the massive transport of men on land and aboard ship due to the war effort. By the end of the summer, numerous cases had been reported in Russia, North Africa and India; China, Japan, the Philippines and even New Zealand would eventually fall victim as well.

The Great War ended on 11 NOV, but influenza continued to wreak international havoc, flaring again in the U.S. in an even more vicious wave with the return of soldiers from the war and eventually infecting an estimated 28 percent of the country's population before it finally petered out. In its December 28, 1918, issue, the American Medical Association acknowledged the end of one momentous conflict and urged the acceptance of a new challenge: fighting infectious disease.

- **Mar 11 1941 – WW2 Era: *FDR Signs Lend-Lease*** » President Roosevelt's Lend-Lease program, which provides money and materials for allies in the war, goes into effect. It was devised by Roosevelt as a means of aiding Great Britain in its war effort against the Germans, by giving the chief executive the power to “sell, transfer title to, exchange, lease, lend, or otherwise dispose of” any military resources the president deemed ultimately in the interest of the defense of the United States. The reasoning was that if a neighbor was successful in defending his home, the security of your home would be enhanced. It also served to bolster British morale by giving them the sense that they were no longer alone in their struggle against Hitler.

The program was finally authorized by Congress and signed into effect on March 11, 1941. Initial priority for war supplies was to be given to Britain and Greece. By November, after much heated debate, Congress extended the terms of Lend-Lease to the Soviet Union, even though the U.S.S.R had already been the recipient of American military weapons and had been promised \$1 billion in financial aid. By the end of the war, more than \$50 billion in funds, weapons, aircraft, and ships had been distributed to 44 countries. After the war, the Lend-Lease program morphed into the Marshall Plan, which allocated funds for the revitalization of “friendly” democratic nations—even if they were former enemies.

Also on this date:

- British diplomats from Bulgaria reach Istanbul, although 2 people are killed when a bomb in their luggage explodes.
- The German 5th Light Division has now completely arrived in Libya and is ordered to prepare for an attack on El Agheila. Meanwhile, Rommel has flown back to Germany for

further orders and has been told that when the 15th Panzer Division has arrived in Libya at the end of May he is to recapture Benghazi.

- **Mar 11 1942 – WW2: *MacArthur Leaves Corregidor*** » After struggling against great odds to save the Philippines from Japanese conquest, U.S. General Douglas MacArthur abandons the island fortress of Corregidor under orders from President Franklin Roosevelt. Left behind at Corregidor and on the Bataan Peninsula were 90,000 American and Filipino troops, who, lacking food, supplies, and support, would soon succumb to the Japanese offensive.



After leaving Corregidor, MacArthur and his family traveled by boat 560 miles to the Philippine island of Mindanao, braving mines, rough seas, and the Japanese Navy. At the end of the hair-raising 35-hour journey, MacArthur told the boat commander, John D. Bulkeley, “You’ve taken me out of the jaws of death, and I won’t forget it.” On 17 MAR, the general and his family boarded a B-17 Flying Fortress for Northern Australia. He then took another aircraft and a long train ride down to Melbourne. During this journey, he was informed that there were far fewer Allied troops in Australia than he had hoped. Relief of his forces trapped in the Philippines would not be forthcoming. Deeply disappointed, he issued a statement to the press in which he promised his men and the people of the Philippines, “I shall return.” Washington asked MacArthur to amend his promise to “We shall return”. He ignored the request. The promise would become his mantra during the next two and a half years, and he would repeat it often in public appearances. Bataan surrendered on 9 APR and Corregidor on 6 May.

For his valiant defense of the Philippines, MacArthur was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and celebrated as “America’s First Soldier.” Put in command of Allied forces in the Southwestern Pacific, his first duty was conducting the defense of Australia. Meanwhile, in the Philippines, Bataan fell in April, and the 70,000 American and Filipino soldiers captured there were forced to undertake a death march in which at least 7,000 perished. Then, in May, Corregidor surrendered, and 15,000 more Americans and Filipinos were captured. The Philippines–MacArthur’s adopted home–were lost, and the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff had no immediate plans for their liberation.

After the U.S. victory at the Battle of Midway in June 1942, most Allied resources in the Pacific went to U.S. Admiral Chester Nimitz, who as commander of the Pacific Fleet planned a more direct route to Japan than via the Philippines. Unperturbed, MacArthur launched a major offensive in New Guinea, winning a string of victories with his limited forces. By September 1944, he was poised to launch an invasion of the Philippines, but he needed the support of Nimitz’s Pacific Fleet. After a period of indecision about whether to invade the Philippines or Formosa, the Joint Chiefs put their support behind MacArthur’s plan, which logistically could be carried out sooner than a Formosa invasion.

On October 20, 1944, a few hours after his troops landed, MacArthur waded ashore onto the Philippine island of Leyte. That day, he made a radio broadcast in which he declared, "People of the Philippines, I have returned!" In January 1945, his forces invaded the main Philippine island of Luzon. In February, Japanese forces at Bataan were cut off, and Corregidor was captured. Manila, the Philippine capital, fell in March, and in June MacArthur announced his offensive operations on Luzon to be at an end; although scattered Japanese resistance continued until the end of the war in August. Only one-third of the men MacArthur left behind on March 11, 1942, survived to see his return. "I'm a little late," he told them, "but we finally came."

- **Mar 11 1943 – WW2:** The north Atlantic convoy ONS-169 is attacked by wolfpack 'Raubgraf' between the 11th and 12th March losing 2 ships for 10,531 gross tons. Atlantic convoys SC121 and HX228 are also attacked by other wolfpacks and lose 17 ships for the loss of just U-444 and U-432.

Also on this date:

➤ Nazi Militia forms in Netherlands.

- **Mar 11 1944 – WW2:** Some 12,000 Chindits are now behind Japanese lines in Burma. British forces capture Buthiduang on the Arakan front.

Also on this date:

➤ Zhukov is stopped on River Bug after a 60-mile advance.

- **Mar 11 1945 – WW2:** The Imperial Japanese Navy attempts a large-scale kamikaze attack on the U.S. Pacific Fleet anchored at Ulithi atoll in Operation Tan No.

Also on this date:

➤ The Empire of Japan established the Empire of Vietnam, a short-lived puppet state, with Bảo Đại as its ruler.

➤ The U.S. third Army captures Kochem on the lower Moselle river.

➤ The Red Army advances towards Gotenhafen, a vital port of embarkation for tens of thousands of refugees from East Prussia.

➤ An RAF Bomber Command record for the largest tonnage dropped on a single target in single day is achieved at Essen when 4,661 tons are dropped.

- **Mar 11 1946 – Post WW2:** Rudolf Höss, the first commandant of Auschwitz concentration camp, is captured by British troops.

- **Mar 11 1958 – U.S. Air Force:** American B-47E-LM from Hunter AFB accidentally dropped a nuclear bomb 15,000 ft onto a family home area in Mars Bluff, South Carolina. The bomb, which lacked the fissile nuclear core, caused damage to 7 buildings plus a playhouse. Six people were injured by the explosion of the bomb's conventional explosive load which created a crater 70 feet wide and 35 feet deep. The United States Air Force was sued by the family of the victims, who received U.S. \$54,000, equivalent to \$478,526 in 2019.

- **Mar 11 1965 – Vietnam War: *Operation Market Time Begins*** » It was established after the Vung Ro incident to blockade the vast South Vietnam coastline against North Vietnamese trawlers that could carry several tons of arms and ammunition in their hulls. The ships would maneuver out in the South China Sea, waiting for the cover of darkness to make high-speed runs to the South Vietnam coastline. If successful, the ships would off load their cargoes to waiting Viet Cong or North Vietnamese forces.

The discovery in February 1965, of a 130-foot junk off-loading enemy supplies in Vung Ro Bay brought about the decision to order the Coast Guard patrol vessels to Vietnam. In this particular case, the camouflaged junk had infiltrated with enough arms and supplies to outfit an entire enemy battalion. There were reasons to believe that similar landings were being made at other points along the coast.

“By almost all measurable criteria the task forces (Market Time, Game Warden, and Mobile Riverine) had achieved a high degree of effectiveness (by the fall of 1968). There had been no known attempts to infiltrate large shipments of men or arms into South Vietnam by sea since the Tet offensive earlier in the year. Possibly, small intra-coastal transshipments may still have occurred, but if they did, it was at a high cost to the enemy because of the intensive and well co-ordinated Market Time air and sea patrols. These patrols had forced the enemy to reorient his entire logistics system and to organize and construct networks of infiltration routes in the Demilitarized Zone, in Laos, and in Cambodia.” In his article “Skimmer Ops” (Proceedings July 1977) Lieutenant J. F. Ebersole, U. S. Coast Guard remarks in the words of one Market Time Swift boat (PCF) skipper, “If we hadn’t done our job so well, they wouldn’t have had to build the Ho Chi Minh Trail.”

- **Mar 11 1967 – Vietnam War: *Heavy Battle Rages during Operation Junction City*** » U.S. 1st Infantry Division troops engage in one of the heaviest battles of Operation Junction City. The fierce fighting resulted in 210 reported North Vietnamese casualties.



Operation Junction City was an effort to smash the communist stronghold in Tay Ninh Province and surrounding areas along the Cambodian border northwest of Saigon. The purpose of the operation was to drive the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops away from populated areas and into the open, where superior American firepower could be more effectively Used. Junction City was the largest operation of the war to date, involving more than 25,000 troops.



The first day's operation was supported by 575 aircraft sorties, a record number for a single day in South Vietnam. The operation was marked by one of the largest airmobile assaults in history when 240 troop-carrying helicopters descended on the battlefield. In one of the few airborne operations of the war, 778 "Sky Soldiers" parachuted into the Junction City area of operations 28 miles north of Tay Ninh City. There were 2,728 enemy casualties by the end of the operation on 17 MAR.

- **Mar 11 1985 – Russia:** *Mikhail Gorbachev Picked To Succeed Chernenko* » Capping his rapid rise through the Communist Party hierarchy, Mikhail Gorbachev is selected as the new general secretary and leader of the Soviet Union, following the death of Konstantin Chernenko the day before. Gorbachev oversaw a radical transformation of Soviet society and foreign policy during the next six years.

Gorbachev was born in 1931, the son of peasant farmers near Stavropol. As a young man he joined the U.S.ual Communist Party youth groups. In 1952, he traveled to Moscow to earn his degree in law. Upon his return to his native town of Stavropol, Gorbachev became extremely active in party politics and began a rapid rise through the Communist Party bureaucracy. Part of his success was due to his intelligence, drive, and ability to see and exploit opportunities. He was also aided by his ability to attach himself to important mentors, such as Yuri Andropov, the head of the dreaded KGB—Russia's secret police. With Andropov's support, Gorbachev was elected to the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1971.

During the next decade and a half, Gorbachev worked hard to promote his own career and to support Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. When Brezhnev died in 1982, Andropov took power. Gorbachev's role in the new government expanded, and then Andropov died in 1984. It was widely assumed that Gorbachev would be his successor, but his youth, combined with suspicions from some old-line Communist Party officials that the young man was too reform-minded, led to the selection of Konstantin Chernenko. Gorbachev did not have to wait long for a second chance, however. Chernenko died after less than a year in office. With the rapid-fire deaths of Andropov and Chernenko, Gorbachev had outlived his only serious competition, and he was selected to become the new leader of the Soviet Union on March 11, 1985.”



In the next six years, Gorbachev led the Soviet Union through a dizzying pace of domestic reforms and foreign policy changes. He relaxed political oppression and led the push for reform of the nation's crumbling economic system. On the foreign policy scene, he worked hard to secure better relations with the United States, and in 1987, he and President Ronald Reagan signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which reduced the number of medium-range missiles each nation kept in Europe.

The pace of change, however, might have been too rapid. By the late-1980s, the Soviet Union was cracking to pieces. Eastern European satellites were breaking free, various Russian republics were pushing for independence, and the economy was on a downward spiral. In December 1991, Gorbachev resigned as president and the Soviet Union formally ceased to exist.

- **Mar 11 1990 – Russia\*Lithuania: *Lithuania Proclaims Independence*** » The first Soviet republic to do so. The Soviet government responded by imposing an oil embargo and economic blockade against the Baltic republic, and later sent troops. Lithuanians have lived along the Nemen River and the Baltic Sea for some 3,000 years, and during the medieval period Lithuania was one of the largest states in Europe, stretching from present-day European Russia to as far as the Black Sea. In the late 14th century, Lithuania united with Poland in forming a commonwealth, and with the third partition of Poland in 1795, Lithuania was absorbed into Russia.



In the 19th century, a Lithuanian linguistic and cultural revival began, and with the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Levost between Russia and Germany in 1918, Lithuania achieved independence. For the next two decades, however, Poland, Germany, and the U.S.S.R all interfered with Lithuania's affairs. In 1940, Soviet forces occupied the country, but in 1941 the Nazis replaced them. During World War II, many Lithuanians fought alongside the Germans against the Soviet Union, but by 1944 the country was liberated and a pro-Soviet communist regime was installed.

In the late 1980s, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of glasnost, or "openness," led Lithuania to reassert its identity, and on March 11, 1990, formal independence was proclaimed. Sajudis, a non-communist coalition established in 1988, subsequently won control of the Lithuanian parliament and Vytautas Landsbergis became Lithuania's first post-Soviet head of state. In January 1991, Soviet paratroopers and tanks invaded Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital, beginning a standoff that lasted until September 6, 1991, when the crumbling Soviet Union agreed to grant independence to Lithuania and the other Baltic republics of Estonia and Latvia.

- **Mar 11 2004 – War On Terrorism: *Madrid, Spain*** » The Madrid train bombings (also known in Spain as 11-M) were nearly simultaneous, coordinated bombings against the Cercanías commuter train system of Madrid, Spain three days before Spain's general elections. The explosions killed 193 people and injured around 2,000. The bombings constituted the deadliest terrorist attack carried out in the history of Spain and the deadliest in Europe since the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. The official investigation by the Spanish judiciary found that the attacks were directed by an al-Qaeda terrorist cell, although no direct al-Qaeda participation has been established. Although they had no role in the planning or implementation, the Spanish miners who sold the explosives to the terrorists were also arrested.

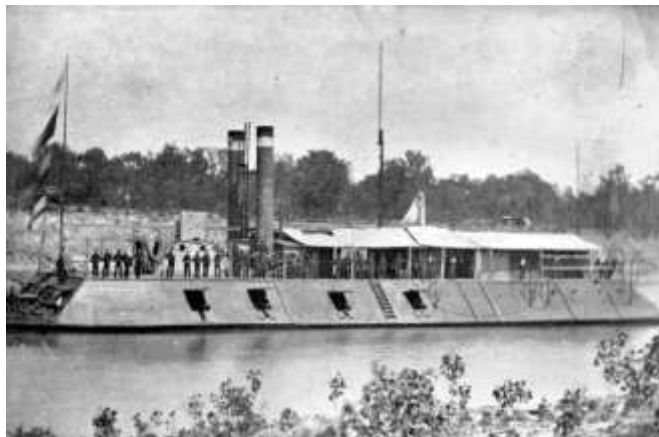


Controversy regarding the handling and representation of the bombings by the government arose, with Spain's two main political parties—Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) and Partido Popular (PP)—accusing each other of concealing or distorting evidence for electoral reasons. The bombings occurred three days before general elections in which incumbent José María Aznar's PP was defeated. Immediately after the bombing, leaders of the PP claimed evidence indicating the Basque separatist organization ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna) was responsible for the bombings. Islamist responsibility would have had the opposite political effect, as it would have been seen as a consequence of the PP government taking Spain into the Iraq War, a policy extremely unpopular among Spaniards.

Following the attacks, there were nationwide demonstrations and protests demanding that the government "tell the truth". The prevailing opinion of political analysts is that the Aznar administration lost the general elections as a result of the handling and representation of the terrorist attacks, rather than because of the bombings "per se". After 21 months of investigation, Judge Juan del Olmo tried Moroccan national Jamal Zougam, among several others, for his participation carrying out the attack. The September 2007 sentence established no known mastermind nor direct al-Qaeda link.

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- **Mar 12 1864 – Civil War: *Red River Campaign Begins*** » One of the biggest military fiascos of the Civil War begins as a combined Union force of infantry and river boats starts moving up the Red River in Louisiana. The month-long campaign was poorly managed and achieved none of the objectives set forth by Union commanders.



The campaign had several strategic goals. The Union hoped to capture everything along the Red River in Louisiana and continue into Texas. Additionally, President Abraham Lincoln hoped to send a symbolic warning to France, which had set up a puppet government in Mexico and seemed to have designs on territorial expansion. Finally, Union officials wanted to capture cotton-producing regions, as cotton was in short supply in the North.

The plan called for Admiral David Dixon Porter to take a flotilla of 20 gunboats up the Red River while General Nathaniel Banks led 27,000 men along the western shore of the river. Porter's squadron entered the river on 12 MAR. Two days later, Fort Derussy fell to the Yankees and the ships moved upriver and captured Alexandria. The expedition was going well, but Banks was moving too slowly. He arrived two weeks after Porter took Alexandria, and continued to plod towards Shreveport. Banks traveled nearly 20 miles from the Red River, too far for the gunboats to offer any protection. On 8 APR, Banks' command was attacked and routed by Confederate General Richard Taylor, son of former U.S. president Zachary Taylor. The two sides fought again the next day, but this time the Yankees held off the Rebel pursuit.

The intimidated Banks elected to retreat back down the river before reaching Shreveport. Porter's ships followed, but the Red River was unusually low and the ships were stuck above some rapids near Alexandria. It appeared that the ships would have to be destroyed to keep them from falling into Confederate hands, but Lt. Colonel Joseph Bailey of Wisconsin, an engineer with a logging background, supervised several thousand soldiers in constructing a series of wing dams that raised the water level enough for the ships to pass. The campaign was deemed a failure—it drew Union strength away from other parts of the South and the expedition never reached Texas.

- **Mar 12 1904 – Russo\*Japanese War:** The Marine detachment from U.S.S Cincinnati (C-7) provides protection and assistance during the evacuation of Americans from Chemuplo (Inchon) and Seoul, Korea, when they are endangered by the Russo-Japanese War.
- **Mar 12 1912 – Great Britain\*Germany:** *Anglo-German Naval Arms Race Ends* » In 1912, German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg ended the naval arms race. His aim was to secure an understanding with the British to end the increasingly isolated position of Germany. Russian military expansion compelled the Germans to prioritize spending on their army and therefore less on the navy. The initiative led to the Haldane Mission in which Germany offered to accept British naval superiority in exchange for British neutrality in a war in which Germany could not be said to be the aggressor. The proposal was rejected, as Britain felt that it had nothing to gain by such a treaty since its naval superiority was insecure, but the British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey favored a more assertive policy against Germany.

The arms race between Great Britain and Germany that occurred from the last decade of the nineteenth century until the advent of World War I in 1914 was one of the intertwined causes of that conflict. While based in a bilateral relationship that had worsened over many decades, the arms race began with a plan by German Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz in 1897 to create a fleet in being to force Britain to make diplomatic concessions; Tirpitz did not expect the Imperial German Navy to defeat the Royal Navy.

With the support of Kaiser Wilhelm II, Tirpitz began passing a series of laws to construct an increasing number of a large surface warships. The construction of HMS Dreadnought in 1906 prompted Tirpitz to further increase the rate of naval construction. While some British observers were uneasy at German naval expansion, alarm was not general until Germany's naval bill of 1908. The British public and political opposition demanded that the Liberal government meet the German challenge, resulting in the funding of additional dreadnoughts in 1910 and escalating the arms race.

Maintaining Europe's largest army and second-largest navy took an enormous toll on Germany's finances. Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, German Chancellor from 1909, undertook a policy of détente with Britain to alleviate the fiscal strain and focus on the rivalry with France. Under Bethmann-Hollweg, and particularly from 1912 onwards, Germany abandoned the dreadnought arms race and focused on a commerce raiding naval strategy to be conducted with submarines. By the start of the First World War, Britain had 29 dreadnoughts and 9 battlecruisers, compared with Germany's 17 dreadnoughts and 7 battlecruisers.

One of the ironies of the arms race and subsequent conflict was that while the German battle fleet fought only one major surface engagement, the inconclusive Battle of Jutland, and never seriously threatened British naval supremacy. The commerce raiding strategy that had been the historic focus of German naval doctrine would consistently endanger British merchant shipping and imports throughout the war.

- **Mar 12 1917 – WWI Era:** *One More Step to War* » A German submarine sinks the unarmed U.S. merchant steamship 'Algonquin' on the same day that U.S. President Woodrow Wilson gives executive order to arm U.S. merchant ships. The Algonquin was one of the last casualties of Germany's policy of unrestricted submarine warfare that brought American into World War I.

The steamship Algonquin was one of the first American merchant ships to leave the United States after Germany announced her submarine blockade. On February 20, 1917, she sailed from New York bound for London carrying foodstuffs. The Algonquin didn't carry any munitions, she flew the American flag and the flag was also painted on her side. Her cargo was valued at \$1,700,000. She safely crossed the Atlantic and had reached a point about 65 miles off of Bishops Rock, a small rock at the westernmost tip of the Isle of Scilly off the coast of Cornwall, when she encountered a German U-boat. The U-boat opened fire on the Algonquin from a distance of 4,000 yards, firing about twenty shells.

These failed to sink the steamer, so men from the submarine carrying bombs boarded the Algonquin and detonated the bombs to sink her. The crew of 26 men, eleven of them Americans, put off in small boats and after 27 hours of strenuous rowing landed safely at Penzance on the Cornish coast on March 14, 1917.

- **Mar 12 1918 – WWI:** French airship AT-0 mistakenly attacks and sinks British submarine D3 with loss of all hands. Unfortunately, the grenade recognition signals Used by British submariners to British aircraft were not known to the French at the time.
- **Mar 12 1920 – U.S. Navy:** U.S.S H-1 Seawolf (SS-28) foundered and sunk off Santa Margarita Island, California. 4 died.



- **Mar 12 1938 –WW2 Era:** Germany Annexes Austria » German troops march into Austria to annex the German-speaking nation for the Third Reich.

In early 1938, Austrian Nazis conspired for the second time in four years to seize the Austrian government by force and unite their nation with Nazi Germany. Austrian Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg, learning of the conspiracy, met with Nazi leader Adolf Hitler in the hopes of reasserting his country's independence but was instead bullied into naming several top Austrian Nazis to his cabinet. On 9 MAR, Schuschnigg called a national vote to resolve the question of Anschluss, or "annexation," once and for all. Before the plebiscite could take place, however, Schuschnigg gave in to pressure from Hitler and resigned on 11 MAR. In his resignation address, under coercion from the Nazis, he pleaded with Austrian forces not to resist a German "advance" into the country.

The next day, 12 MAR, Hitler accompanied German troops into Austria, where enthusiastic crowds met them. Hitler appointed a new Nazi government, and on 13 MAR the Anschluss was proclaimed. Austria existed as a federal state of Germany until the end of World War II, when the Allied powers declared the Anschluss void and reestablished an independent Austria. Schuschnigg, who had been imprisoned soon after resigning, was released in 1945.

- **Mar 12 1940 – WWII Era:** A peace treaty is concluded between Finland and Russia, which formally ends the "Winter War". The terms of this treaty are harsh for Finland, who is forced to cede the entire Karelia Isthmus, and the city of Viipuri, which is renamed Vyborg. They also lose parts of eastern Karelia, Lake Ladoga, the Rybachiy Peninsula and the Petsamo plus have to grant the Russians a 30 year lease of the Hang Peninsula. However, the ever 'generous' Russians drop their recognition of the Kuusinen puppet government in Moscow.

Also on this date:

- The British finalize their plans for the invasion of Norway. Landings are to be made at Narvik and Trondheim in order to secure the rail line to Sweden and the large iron-ore fields.
- **Mar 12 1941 – WWII Era:** Churchill thanks America for 'a new Magna Carta'. Also, Luftwaffe bombs Clydebank, Scotland, leaving 75% of the population homeless.
- **Mar 12 1942 – WWII:** British Troops Vacate The Andaman Islands » The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are a group of 139 islands situated in the Bay of Bengal at about 120 miles from Cape Nargis in Burma. Until 1938 the British government Used them as a penal colony for Indian and African

political prisoners, who were mainly put in the notorious Cellular Jail in Port Blair, the biggest town (port) on the islands. The only military objective on the islands was the city of Port Blair. The garrison consisted of a 300-man Sikh militia with 23 British officers, augmented in January 1942 by a Gurkha detachment of 4/12th Frontier Force Regiment of the 16th Indian Infantry Brigade. Following the fall of Rangoon on 8 MAR the British recognized that Port Blair had become impossible to defend, and on 10 MAR the Gurkhas were withdrawn to the Arakan peninsula. The Japanese, seeking to secure their seaward flank, dispatched a force to seize the islands and occupied Port Blair was on the 23 MAR.

Also on this date:

- Convoy PQ-12 arrives unscathed at Murmansk, earning the distinction of being the last PQ convoy to sail without losses.
- US troops occupy New Caledonia.
- **Mar 12 1943 – WWII:** U.S.S Champlin (DD-601) sinks German submarine U-130, which had previously sunk 25 Allied vessels, including three U.S. Navy ships during Operation Torch.

Also on this date:

- German troops evacuate Vyazma.
- In North Africa, the U.S. 802nd Medical Air Evacuation Transport Squadron flies first medical air evacuation flight with flight nurses.
- George Patton promoted to Lieutenant general.
- The first labor strike in a totalitarian regime: 50,000 Italian workers strike against Mussolini and delay war production.
- **Mar 12 1945 – WWII:** RAF Bomber Command sets another new record for single target, when 4,851 tons are dropped on Dortmund. Also, Anne Frank dies in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp of typhus, age 15.
- **Mar 12 1947 – Cold War:** *Truman Doctrine Is Announced* » In a dramatic speech to a joint session of Congress, President Harry S. Truman asks for U.S. assistance for Greece and Turkey to forestall communist domination of the two nations. Historians have often cited Truman's address, which came to be known as the Truman Doctrine, as the official declaration of the Cold War.

In February 1947, the British government informed the United States that it could no longer furnish the economic and military assistance it had been providing to Greece and Turkey since the end of World War II. The Truman administration believed that both nations were threatened by communism and it jumped at the chance to take a tough stance against the Soviet Union. In Greece, leftist forces had been battling the Greek royal government since the end of World War II. In Turkey, the Soviets were demanding some manner of control over the Dardanelles, territory from which Turkey was able to dominate the strategic waterway from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean.



On March 12, 1947, Truman appeared before a joint session of Congress to make his case. The world, he declared, faced a choice in the years to come. Nations could adopt a way of life “based upon the will of the majority” and governments that provided “guarantees of individual liberty” or they could face a way of life “based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority.” This latter regime, he indicated, relied upon “terror and oppression.” “The foreign policy and the national security of this country,” he claimed, were involved in the situations confronting Greece and Turkey. Greece, he argued, was “threatened by the terrorist activities of several thousand armed men, led by communists.” It was incumbent upon the United States to support Greece so that it could “become a self-supporting and self-respecting democracy.” The “freedom-loving” people of Turkey also needed U.S. aid, which was “necessary for the maintenance of its national integrity.” The president declared that “it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.” Truman requested \$400 million in assistance for the two nations. Congress approved his request two months later.

The Truman Doctrine was a de facto declaration of the Cold War. Truman’s address outlined the broad parameters of U.S. Cold War foreign policy: the Soviet Union was the center of all communist activity and movements throughout the world; communism could attack through outside invasion or internal subversion; and the United States needed to provide military and economic assistance to protect nations from communist aggression.

Not everyone embraced Truman’s logic. Some realized that the insurgency in Greece was supported not by the Soviet Union, but by Yugoslavia’s Tito, who broke with the Soviet communists within a year. Additionally, the Soviets were not demanding control of the Dardanelles, but only assurances that this strategic waterway would not be used by Russia’s enemies—as the Nazis had used it during World War II. And whether U.S. assistance would result in democracy in Greece or Turkey was unclear. Indeed, both nations established repressive right-wing regimes in the years following the Truman Doctrine. Yet, the Truman Doctrine successfully convinced many that the United States was locked in a life-or-death struggle with the Soviet Union, and it set the guidelines for over 40 years of U.S.-Soviet relations.

- **Mar 12 1951 – Korean War:** *Communist Troops Driven out Of Seoul* » After a series of offensives, UN forces succeeded in winning back control of Seoul. It was followed by a UN call for a ceasefire, the first since the war began. Talks finally began in July 1951 but the negotiations at Kaesong broke down. The war reached stalemate. In July 1953 talks reopened. The Korean War ended with the signing of the armistice on 27 July 1953. Two million people had died during the war. In August, prisoners of war were exchanged in Operation Big Switch – 77,000 communists for 12,700 UN men, of whom 3,597 were Americans. North and South Korea were separated by a



demarcation line which was extended by a 1.5 miles demilitarized zone on either side. A peace deal has never been signed.

- **Mar 12 1968 – Vietnam War:** *McCarthy Does Well In The Democratic Primary* » Senator Eugene McCarthy (D-Minnesota), an outspoken critic of the Johnson administration's policies in Vietnam, polls 42 percent of the vote in New Hampshire's Democratic presidential primary. President Lyndon B. Johnson got 48 percent. A Harris poll later showed that anti-Johnson, rather than antiwar, sentiment provided the basis for McCarthy's surprisingly strong performance.

McCarthy had been a contender to be President Lyndon B. Johnson's running mate in the 1964 election, but since then he had become increasingly disenchanted with Johnson's policies in Vietnam and the escalation of the war. In 1967, he published *The Limits of Power*, an assessment of U.S. foreign policy that was very critical of the Johnson administration. McCarthy announced his candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination in January 1968, saying that he hoped to harness the growing antiwar sentiment in the country, particularly among the young. His showing in the New Hampshire primary astonished most of the political pundits. Johnson, frustrated with his inability to reach a solution in Vietnam and stunned by his narrow victory in New Hampshire, announced on March 31, 1968, that he would neither seek nor accept the nomination of his party for re-election.

The rest of McCarthy's campaign was almost an anticlimax. Senator Robert Kennedy of New York entered the race and won most of the Democratic primaries until his assassination in June. When the Democratic National Convention opened in Chicago, a conflict immediately erupted over the party's Vietnam platform. While demonstrations against the war took place in the streets outside the convention hall, Vice President Hubert Humphrey won the party nomination.

Humphrey was defeated in the general election by Republican Richard Nixon. McCarthy retired from the Senate in 1971, but his surprising showing in the primary was evidence of the strong antiwar sentiment in the country.

- **Mar 12 1972 – Vietnam War:** *Australians Withdraw from South Vietnam* » The last remnants of the First Australian Task Force withdraw from Vietnam. The Australian government had first sent troops to Vietnam in 1964 with a small aviation detachment and an engineer civic action team. In May 1965, the Australians increased their commitment with the deployment of the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (RAR). The formation of the First Australian Task Force in 1966 established an Australian base of operations near Ba Ria in Phuoc Tuy province. The task force included an additional infantry battalion, a medium tank squadron, and a helicopter squadron, as well as signal, engineer, and other support forces. By 1969, Australian forces in Vietnam totaled an estimated 6,600 personnel.

The Australian contingent was part of the Free World Military Forces, an effort by President Lyndon B. Johnson to enlist allies for the United States and South Vietnam. By securing support from other nations, Johnson hoped to build an international consensus behind his policies in Vietnam. The effort was also known as the "many flags" program. Australia began to withdraw its troops in 1970, following the lead of the United States as it drastically reduced its troop commitment to South Vietnam.

- **Mar 12 1975 – Vietnam War:** *Vietcong Conquer Ban Me Thuot* » The Battle of Ban Me Thuot was a decisive battle of the Vietnam War which led to the complete destruction of South Vietnam's II Corps Tactical Zone. The battle was part of a larger North Vietnamese military operation known as Campaign 275 to capture the Tay Nguyen region, known in the West as the Vietnamese Central Highlands.

In March 1975 the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) 4th Corps staged a large-scale offensive, known as Campaign 275, with the aim of capturing the Central Highlands from the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) in order to kick-start the first stage of the 1975 Spring Offensive. Within ten days, the North Vietnamese destroyed most ARVN military formations in II Corps Tactical Zone, exposing the severe weaknesses of the South Vietnamese military. For South Vietnam, the defeat at Ban Me Thuot and the disastrous evacuation from the Central Highlands came about as a result of two major mistakes. Firstly, in the days leading up to the assault on Ban Me Thuot, ARVN Major General Pham Van Phu repeatedly ignored intelligence which showed the presence of several PAVN divisions around the district. Secondly, President Nguyen Van Thieu's strategy to withdraw from the Central Highlands was poorly planned and implemented.

The loss of Ban Me Thuot and the subsequent evacuation from the Central Highlands cost South Vietnam's II Corps Tactical Zone more than 75% of its combat units—the 23rd Infantry Division, the Ranger groups, tanks, armoured cavalry, artillery, and combat engineering units. Overall about 3/4 of all ARVN soldiers were killed, wounded, deserted, or missing. PAVN casualties were light in comparison, with 600 soldiers killed and 2,416 wounded. Official Vietnamese history claims that during the eight days of fighting, the PAVN put 28,514 South Vietnamese officers and soldiers out of action; 4,502 were killed in action and 16,822 were captured. The PAVN destroyed 17,183 small arms of various kinds, 79 artillery pieces, and 207 tanks and armoured vehicles; 44 aircraft were shot down and another 110 were damaged.

In the end, it was the ordinary South Vietnamese soldiers and their families who paid the ultimate price, as North Vietnamese artillery destroyed much of the South Vietnamese military convoy on Route 7. Most of the civilians who followed the military convoy were either relatives of soldiers or officers in the ARVN, or were government civil servants. Of the estimated 400,000 civilians who initially took part in the march, only a handful actually reached their destinations in the Mekong region. In addition to the casualties inflicted upon them by PAVN artillery, the civilians were also hit by air strikes from the RVNAF. As a result of those huge losses, Route 7 became known as the 'convoy of tears'.

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- **Mar 13 1836 – Texas Revolution:** *Houston Retreats From Santa Anna's Army* » Less than a week after the disastrous defeat of Texas rebels at the Alamo, the newly commissioned Texan General Sam Houston begins a series of strategic retreats to buy time to train his ill-prepared army.



Revolutionary Texans had only formally announced their independence from Mexico 11 days earlier. On March 6, 1836, the separatists chose Sam Houston to be the commander-in-chief of the revolutionary army. Houston immediately departed for Gonzales, Texas, where the main force of the revolutionary army was stationed. When he arrived, he found that the Texan army consisted of 374 poorly dressed and ill-equipped men. Most had no guns or military experience, and they had only two days of rations.

Houston had little time to dwell on the situation, because he learned that the Mexican general Santa Anna was staging a siege of the Alamo in San Antonio. Before Houston could prepare his troops to rush to aid the defenders, however, word arrived that Santa Anna had wiped them out on March 6. Scouts reported that Santa Anna's troops were heading east toward Gonzales. Unprepared to confront the Mexican army with his poorly trained force, Houston began a series of strategic retreats designed to give him enough time to whip his army into fighting shape.

Houston's decision to retreat won him little but scorn from the Texas rebels. His troops and officers were eager to engage the Mexicans, and they chafed at Houston's insistence on learning proper field maneuvers. Houston wisely continued to organize, train, and equip his troops so they would be prepared to meet Santa Anna's army. Finally, after nearly a month of falling back, Houston ordered his men to turn around and head south to meet Santa Anna's forces.

On 21 APR, Houston led his 783 troops in an attack on Santa Anna's force of nearly twice that number near the confluence of Buffalo Bayou and the San Jacinto River. With the famous cry, "Remember the Alamo," the Texans stormed the surprised Mexican forces. After a brief attempt at defense, the Mexican soldiers broke into a disorganized retreat, allowing the Texans to isolate and slaughter them. In a stunning victory, Houston's army succeeded in killing or capturing nearly the entire Mexican force, including General Santa Anna, who was taken prisoner. Only two Texans were killed and 30 wounded.

Fearful of execution, Santa Anna signed an order calling for the immediate withdrawal of all Mexican troops from Texas soil. The Mexicans never again seriously threatened the independence of the Lone Star Republic.

- **Mar 13 1852 – U.S. Army:** Uncle Sam was featured as a cartoon character in the New York Lantern. The name is associated with Samuel Wilson, a meatpacker who provided food for the Army during the War of 1812. Wilson's barrels of meat were stamped with "U.S." for United States. Soldiers started calling the meat "Uncle Sam's." The (unillustrated) character of Uncle Sam appeared

years earlier, and was even mentioned in a 1775 verse of “Yankee Doodle,” the first national anthem of the United States! This famous poster dates from World War I.



- **Mar 13 1862 – Civil War:** The U.S. federal government forbids all Union army officers to return fugitive slaves, thus effectively annulling the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and setting the stage for the Emancipation Proclamation.
- **Mar 13 1865 – Civil War:** *Confederacy Approves Black Soldiers* » With the main Rebel armies facing long odds against must larger Union armies, the Confederacy, in a desperate measure, reluctantly approves the Use of black troops.



The situation was bleak for the Confederates in the spring of 1865. The Yankees had captured large swaths of Southern territory, General William T. Sherman’s Union army was tearing through the Carolinas, and General Robert E. Lee was trying valiantly to hold the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, against General Ulysses S. Grant’s growing force. Lee and Confederate President Jefferson Davis had only two options. One was for Lee to unite with General Joseph Johnston’s army in the Carolinas and Use the combined force to take on Sherman and Grant one at a time. The other option was to arm slaves, the last source of fresh manpower in the Confederacy.

The idea of enlisting blacks had been debated for some time. Arming slaves was essentially a way of setting them free, since they could not realistically be sent back to plantations after they had

fought. General Patrick Cleburne had suggested enlisting slaves a year before, but few in the Confederate leadership considered the proposal, since slavery was the foundation of Southern society. One politician asked, “What did we go to war for, if not to protect our property?” Another suggested, “If slaves will make good soldiers, our whole theory of slavery is wrong.” Lee weighed in on the issue and asked the Confederate government for help. “We must decide whether slavery shall be extinguished by our enemies and the slaves be Used against U.S., or Use them ourselves.” Lee asked that the slaves be freed as a condition of fighting, but the bill that passed the Confederate Congress on March 13, 1865, did not stipulate freedom for those who served.

The measure did nothing to stop the destruction of the Confederacy. Several thousand blacks were enlisted in the Rebel cause, but they could not begin to balance out the nearly 200,000 blacks who fought for the Union.

- **Mar 13 1881 – Russia:** *Czar Alexander II Assassinated* » The ruler of Russia since 1855, is killed in the streets of St. Petersburg by a bomb thrown by a member of the revolutionary “People’s Will” group. The People’s Will, organized in 1879, employed terrorism and assassination in their attempt to overthrow Russia’s czarist autocracy. They murdered officials and made several attempts on the czar’s life before finally assassinating him on March 13, 1881.

As czar, Alexander did much to liberalize and modernize Russia, including the abolishment of serfdom in 1861. However, when his authority was challenged, he turned repressive, and he vehemently opposed movements for political reform. Ironically, on the very day he was killed, he signed a proclamation—the so-called Loris-Melikov constitution—that would have created two legislative commissions made up of indirectly elected representatives.

He was succeeded by his 36-year-old son, Alexander III, who rejected the Loris-Melikov constitution. Alexander II’s assassins were arrested and hanged, and the People’s Will was thoroughly suppressed. The peasant revolution advocated by the People’s Will was achieved by Vladimir Lenin’s Bolshevik revolutionaries in 1917.

- **Mar 13 1915 – WWI Era:** *Battle of Neuve Chapelle* » British forces end their three-day assault on the German trenches near the village of Neuve Chapelle in northern France, the first offensive. Allied forces captured a small salient 2,000 yards wide and 1,200 yards deep, along with 1,200 German prisoners, at the cost of 7,000 British and 4,200 Indian casualties.
- **Mar 13 1933 – Germany:** *Joseph Goebbels* » Appointed as Nazi Germany's Minister of Information and Propaganda. He was one of Adolf Hitler's closest and most devoted associates, and was known for his skills in public speaking and his deeply virulent antisemitism, which was evident in his publicly voiced views. He advocated progressively harsher discrimination, including the extermination of the Jews in the Holocaust.



In 1943, Goebbels began to pressure Hitler to introduce measures that would produce total war, including closing businesses not essential to the war effort, conscripting women into the labor force, and enlisting men in previously exempt occupations into the Wehrmacht. Hitler finally appointed him as Reich Plenipotentiary for Total War on 23 July 1944, whereby Goebbels undertook largely unsuccessful measures to increase the number of people available for armaments manufacture and the Wehrmacht.

As the war drew to a close and Nazi Germany faced defeat, Magda Goebbels and the Goebbels children joined him in Berlin. They moved into the underground Vorbunker, part of Hitler's underground bunker complex, on 22 April 1945. Hitler committed suicide on 30 April. In accordance with Hitler's will, Goebbels succeeded him as Chancellor of Germany; he served one day in this post. The following day, Goebbels and his wife committed suicide, after poisoning their six children with cyanide.

- **Mar 13 1938 – Holocaust:** *Jewish Harassment in Vienna Begins* » Just one day after the annexation of Austria into Nazi Germany ((Anschluss) Jews were being harassed in Vienna. They were driven through the streets of Vienna, their homes and shops were plundered and the process of Aryanisation began. These events reached their climax in the Kristallnacht pogrom of 9–10 November 1938. All synagogues and prayer houses in Vienna were destroyed – the Stadttempel was the sole survivor because its location in a residential area prevented it from being burned down. Most Jewish shops were plundered and then closed down; over 6000 Jews were arrested in this one night, the majority were deported to the Dachau concentration camp in the following days.

The Nuremberg Laws applied in Austria from May 1938; they were reinforced with innumerable anti-semitic decrees. Jews were gradually robbed of their freedoms, were blocked from almost all professions, were shut out of schools and universities, and were forced to wear the Yellow badge. The Nazis dissolved Jewish organizations and institutions, hoping to force Jews to emigrate. Their plans succeeded – by the end of 1941, 130,000 Jews had left Vienna, 30,000 of whom went to the U.S.A.

They left behind all of their property, but were forced to pay the Reich Flight Tax, a tax on all émigrés from the Third Reich; some received financial support from international aid organizations so that they could pay this tax. Following the Wannsee Conference in January 1942, where the Nazis resolved to completely annihilate the Jewish population, the majority of the Jews who had stayed in Vienna became victims of the Holocaust. Of the more than 65,000 Viennese Jews who were deported to concentration camps, only a few more than 2000 survived.

- **Mar 13 1940 – WW2 Era:** Finland capitulates conditionally to Soviet terms, but maintains its independence. The Finns have lost 25,000 killed and 45,000 wounded, while the Russians have lost an estimated 200,000 killed and an unknown number of wounded.
- **Mar 13 1941 – WW2 Era:** President Franklin Roosevelt establishes President’s Committee on War Relief Agencies.

Also on this date:

- The Luftwaffe carries out a heavy raid against Clydebank, near Glasgow. 35,000 of the town’s population of 47,000 are made homeless.
  - Hitler issues an edict calling for an invasion of the Soviet Union.
  - Two Japanese-American men are sworn in to U.S. Army Corps of Intelligence Police, Fort Shafter, HI, to conduct surveillance into Japanese community in Manila.
- **Mar 13 1942 – WW2:** *U.S. Army Launches K-9 Corps* » The Quartermaster Corps (QMC) of the United States Army begins training dogs for the newly established War Dog Program, or “K-9 Corps.”



Well over a million dogs served on both sides during World War I, carrying messages along the complex network of trenches and providing some measure of psychological comfort to the soldiers. The most famous dog to emerge from the war was Rin Tin Tin, an abandoned puppy of German war dogs found in France in 1918 and taken to the United States, where he made his film debut in the 1922 silent film *The Man from Hell’s River*. As the first bona fide animal movie star, Rin Tin Tin made the little-known German Shepherd breed famous across the country.

In the United States, the practice of training dogs for military purposes was largely abandoned after World War I. When the country entered World War II in December 1941, the American Kennel Association and a group called Dogs for Defense began a movement to mobilize dog owners to donate healthy and capable animals to the Quartermaster Corps of the U.S. Army. Training began in



March 1942, and that fall the QMC was given the task of training dogs for the U.S. Navy, Marines and Coast Guard as well.

The K-9 Corps initially accepted over 30 breeds of dogs, but the list was soon narrowed to seven: German Shepherds, Belgian sheep dogs, Doberman Pinschers, collies, Siberian Huskies, Malamutes and Eskimo dogs. Members of the K-9 Corps were trained for a total of 8 to 12 weeks. After basic obedience training, they were sent through one of four specialized programs to prepare them for work as sentry dogs, scout or patrol dogs, messenger dogs or mine-detection dogs. In active combat duty, scout dogs proved especially essential by alerting patrols to the approach of the enemy and preventing surprise attacks.

The top canine hero of World War II was Chips, a German Shepherd who served with the Army's 3rd Infantry Division. Trained as a sentry dog, Chips broke away from his handlers and attacked an enemy machine gun nest in Italy, forcing the entire crew to surrender. The wounded Chips was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star and the Purple Heart—all of which were later revoked due to an Army policy preventing official commendation of animals.

Also on his date:

- The Red Army launches a major attack against Army Group B from the Kerch peninsula in the eastern Crimea.
  - Three German spies in New York get a total of 117 years imprisonment.
  - Julia Flikke of the Nurse Corps becomes the first woman colonel in the U.S. Army.
  - Fifty aircraft equipped with Gee receivers attack Cologne. This is the most successful attack to date with the device; estimates put it is being five times more effective than non-Gee equipped aircraft.
- **Mar 13 1943 – WW2:** German submarine U-163 is sunk by depth charges from the Canadian corvette HMCS Prescott northwest of Cape Finisterre, Spain with the loss of 57 men (all hands). She was responsible for sinking in 1942 the United Kingdom's La Cordillera & Empire Starling on 5 & 9 NOV, the American gunboat U.S.S Erie (PG-50) on 12 NOV, and the Brazilian Apóide on 13 NOV.
  - **Mar 13 1943 – WW2:** *Failed Assassin Attempt on Adolf Hitler* » German officer Henning von Tresckow attempted to assassinate Hitler during a Smolensk-Rastenburg flight. Originally, he planned to shoot him at the airport with the other conspirators. This was called off and he instead smuggled a bomb onto a plane, which took Hitler to Prussia. However, low temperatures caused the bomb to fail to detonate. This was one of forty attempts to end Hitler's life. To learn about the top 10 go to <https://youtu.be/DswpPRSMj1M>.
  - **Mar 13 1943 – WW2:** *Empress Of Canada Sunk* » Canadian Pacific's Empress of Canada was hit on the starboard side by a torpedo from the Italian submarine Leonardo da Vinci, and quickly developed a list and lost all power. Within an hour another torpedo hit and she sank soon after, some 400 miles south of Cape Palmas. The final casualty toll was 44 crew, 8 guards and 340 passengers, ironically many of them Italian prisoners of war. An SOS had been transmitted and a Catalina flying



boat found the lifeboats the next day. Rescue boats finally collected 1,360 survivors and took them to Freetown,

- **Mar 13 1943 – Holocaust:** *Holocaust:* German forces liquidate the Jewish ghetto in Kraków, Poland sending 2,000 of its inhabitants to Belzec extermination & Plaszów slave-labor camps with the remaining 5,000 either killed or sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp for extermination. Germans have already killed 240,000 Jews in Ukraine alone.



**Deportation of Jews from the Ghetto, March 1943**

- **Mar 13 1944 – WW2:** *London suspends travel between Ireland and Britain* » All travel between Ireland and the United Kingdom is suspended, the result of the Irish government's refusal to expel Axis-power diplomats within its borders.

In 1922, an independent Irish republic was established after generations of conflict between Ireland and Britain. One of the conditions of that agreement was that Britain would retain control of three naval bases along the Irish coast in order to continue Ireland's defense. But as war loomed in the late 1930s, Irish Prime Minister Eamon de Valera negotiated an agreement that ended the British occupation of those naval bases; Ireland had declared a pre-emptive state of neutrality in any European war, and the presence of the Royal Navy on independent Irish soil violated that neutrality. De Valera did not want Ireland to become an object of attacks aimed at Britain.

De Valera was willing to bargain away Irish neutrality, though, in exchange for Northern Ireland's being returned to the Irish Republic. The British were not willing to pay that price but did agree to end conscription in Northern Ireland once De Valera denounced conscription—because it forced Irish men to fight in what De Valera believed was an English war—as an “act of aggression.”

Irish neutrality was challenged in 1941, with German air raids against Dublin. It was challenged again in 1942, when the United States landed troops in Northern Ireland, under the understanding that it was under the control of its ally, Britain. De Valera protested. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was stunned at this intransigence and applied pressure to the de Valera government, attempting to change Ireland's neutrality stance. De Valera did not relent. Finally, when the Irish prime minister refused to expel from Ireland the diplomats of the Axis powers, Britain retaliated by suspending all travel

between the Irish Republic and the United Kingdom. Ireland did not flinch and, when the war ended, developed good relations with all the powers involved.

- **Mar 13 1944 – WW2:** *U-575 Sunk* » German submarine U-575 was a Type VIIC U-boat in service of Nazi Germany's Kriegsmarine. She carried out ten patrols, sailing for 463 days and sinking eight ships totaling 36,010 gross register tons (GRT) and damaged three others of 29,777 GRT. She was a member of 18 separate wolfpacks. On her 10<sup>th</sup> and last patrol U-575 was fitted with a Snorkel. On this journey she was Used as weather-boat. She left St. Nazaire for the last time on 29 February 1944. After sinking HMS Asphodel northwest of Cape Finisterre on 10 MAR, the boat was hunted for 18 hours by convoy escorts, but escaped. Her luck ran out on the 13th when she was sunk by the combined efforts of the Canadian frigate HMCS Prince Rupert, the American destroyer U.S.S Hobson and destroyer escort U.S.S Haverfield, a British Vickers Wellington of No. 172 Squadron RAF, two B-17 Flying Fortresses of 206 and 208 squadrons and a TBM Avenger from U.S.S Bogue. Depth charges were Used in the attack. 18 men died with U-575; there were 37 survivors.
- **Mar 13 1944 – WW2:** In Bougainville, during the Solomon Islands campaign, Japanese troops end their 5 day assault on American forces at Hill 700. The capture of Bougainville from 1 November 1943 – 21 August 1945 resulted in 727 American, 516 Australian, and 18,500–21,500 Japanese dead. It involved 144,000 American troops plus 728 aircraft, 30,000 Australian troops, and 45,000–65,000 Japanese troops plus 154 aircraft. The Bougainville airstrips constructed at Torokina and Piva by Seabees and engineers made fighter-escorted bomber attacks against Rabaul possible, as well as attacks on other Japanese bases on New Ireland and New Britain. In December 1943, AirSols began a massive attack on Rabaul. The ensuing two months of constant air strikes, only made possible by the possession of Bougainville, caused the Japanese to withdraw from Rabaul.
- **Mar 13 1945 – WW2:** Following a 600-bomber raid by the U.S. 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force, the RAF with 800 bombers attack Swinemünde North of Stettin, a major port of embarkation for German refugees from eastern Germany, causing heavy damage to the docks and killing hundreds of civilians.

Also on this date:

- The 2nd Belorussian Front launches an offensive against the Braunsberg pocket to the South of Koenigsberg.
- A surprise armored thrust by the British in central Burma, cuts off 3,000 Japanese in Mandalay.
- US B-29s launch fire raid on Osaka, killing 4000 and destroying 119 factories.
- **Mar 13 1954 – First Indochina War:** *Battle of Dien Bien Phu* » A force of 40,000 Viet Minh with heavy artillery surround 15,000 French troops at Dien Bien Phu. French General Henri Navarre had positioned these forces 200 miles behind enemy lines in a remote area adjacent to the Laotian border. He underestimated the enemy.

The operation's purpose was to cut off Viet Minh supply lines into the neighboring Kingdom of Laos (a French ally), and draw the Viet Minh into a major confrontation in order to cripple them. The plan was to resupply the French position by air, and was based on the belief that the Viet Minh had no

anti-aircraft capability. As a result of blunders in decision-making the French had begun an operation to insert, then support, the soldiers at Điện Biên Phủ, deep in the hills of northwestern Vietnam.



**General Võ Nguyên Giáp (left) and Viet Minh troops plant their flag over the captured French headquarters at Dien Bien Phu**

The Viet Minh, however, under General Võ Nguyên Giáp, massed five divisions around the French positions and besieged the French. They brought in vast amounts of heavy artillery (including anti-aircraft guns) and managed to move these bulky weapons through difficult terrain up the rear slopes of the mountains. The Viet Minh were then able to dig tunnels through the mountain, and emplaced the artillery pieces overlooking the French encampment. The battle began with a massive Viet Minh artillery barrage, followed by an infantry assault. Fierce fighting continued to rage until May 7, 1954, when the Viet Minh overran the last French positions. The shock of the fall of Dien Bien Phu led France, already plagued by public opposition to the war, to agree to the independence of Vietnam at the Geneva Conference in 1954.

France agreed to withdraw its forces from all its colonies in French Indochina, while stipulating that Vietnam would be temporarily divided at the 17th parallel, with control of the north given to the Viet Minh as the Democratic Republic of Vietnam under Ho Chi Minh, and the south becoming the State of Vietnam, nominally under Emperor Bảo Đại, preventing Ho Chi Minh from gaining control of the entire country.

- **Mar 13 1961 – Cold War:** *Kennedy Proposes Alliance for Progress* » A 10-year, multibillion-dollar aid program for Latin America is proposed by President Kennedy. The program came to be known as the Alliance for Progress and was designed to improve U.S. relations with Latin America, which had been severely damaged in recent years.

When Kennedy became president in 1961, U.S. relations with Latin America were at an all-time low. The Latin American republics were disappointed with U.S. economic assistance after World War II. They argued that they had supported America during the war by increasing their production of vital raw materials and keeping their prices low—when the United States began massive aid programs to Europe and Japan after the war, Latin American nations protested that they also deserved economic assistance. Their anger was apparent during Vice President Richard Nixon’s trip through the region in 1958, when a mob attacked his car at a stop in Caracas.

More troubling to American officials was the threat of communism in Latin America. In 1954, the Central Intelligence Agency had funded and supplied a revolution that overthrew the leftist

government of Guatemala. In 1959, Fidel Castro came to power in Cuba and by 1961, the United States had severed relations with his government. In response to these developments, Kennedy made his plea for the Alliance for Progress. In requesting funds from Congress, the president stressed the need for improved literacy, land Use, industrial productivity, health, and education in Latin America. The United States needed to help Latin America, where “millions of men and women suffer the daily degradations of hunger and poverty” and “discontent is growing.” The United States would provide money, expertise, and technology to raise the standard of living for the people of Latin America, which would hopefully make the countries stronger and better able to resist communist influences.



In response to Kennedy’s plea, Congress voted for an initial grant of \$500 million in May 1961. During the next 10 years, billions were spent on the Alliance, but its success was marginal and there were many reasons that the program was ultimately a failure. American congressmen were reluctant to provide funds for land redistribution programs in Latin America because they felt it smacked of socialism. Latin American elites directed most of the funds into pet projects that enriched themselves but did little to help the vast majority of their people. The Alliance certainly failed in its effort to bring democracy to Latin America: by the time the program faded away in the early-1970s, 13 governments in Latin America had been replaced by military rule.

- **Mar 13 1975 – Vietnam War: *Ban Me Thuot falls*** » Ban Me Thuot, capital of Darlac Province in the Central Highlands, falls to North Vietnamese troops.

In late January 1975, just two years after the cease-fire established by the Paris Peace Accords, the North Vietnamese launched Campaign 275. The objective of this campaign was to capture Ban Me Thuot in the Central Highlands. The battle began on 4 MAR and the North Vietnamese quickly encircled the city with five main force divisions, cutting it off from outside support.

As it became clear that the communists would take the city and probably the entire province, South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu decided to withdraw his forces in order to protect the more critical populous areas to the south. Accordingly, he ordered his forces in the Central Highlands to pull back from their positions. Abandoning Pleiku and Kontum, the South Vietnamese forces began to move toward the sea, but what started out as an orderly withdrawal soon turned into panic and the South Vietnamese forces rapidly fell apart. The North Vietnamese were successful in both the Central Highlands and further north at Quang Tri, Hue, and Da Nang. The South Vietnamese soon collapsed as a cogent fighting force while the North Vietnamese continued their attack all the way to Saigon. South Vietnam surrendered unconditionally to the North Vietnamese on April 30 and the war was over.

- **Mar 13 1986 – U.S.\*Russia:** *Black Sea Incident* » The American cruiser U.S.S Yorktown and the destroyer U.S.S Caron, claiming the right of innocent passage, entered Soviet territorial waters in the Black Sea near the southern Crimean Peninsula. The warships passed within six miles of the Soviet coast, where they were soon confronted by the Soviet frigate Ladny. The commander of Ladny notified the U.S. warships that they had violated Soviet territorial waters and requested that they depart immediately. The U.S. warships confirmed receipt of the warning but did not change course. The Soviet command placed its Black Sea air and naval forces on combat readiness and dispatched border guard vessels and naval aircraft to intercept the U.S. warships. Yorktown and Caron stayed in Soviet territorial waters for roughly two hours. The situation de-escalated when the U.S. ships left; diplomatic repercussions continued for several weeks.
- **Mar 13 2013 – North Korea:** *North Korea Shreds the Korean Armistice Agreement* » North Korea announced that it was scrapping all non-aggression pacts with South Korea. It also closed the border and closed the direct phone line between the two Koreas. North Korea further stated it had the right to make a preemptive nuclear attack. A United Nations spokesman stated that the Armistice Agreement had been adopted by the U.N. General Assembly, and could not be unilaterally dissolved by either North Korea or South Korea.

On 28 March 2013, the U.S. sent two B-2 Spirit stealth bombers to South Korea to participate in ongoing military exercises in the region, including the dropping of inert munitions on a South Korean bomb range. This was the first B-2 non-stop, round-trip mission to Korea from the United States. Following this mission, North Korean state media announced that it was readying rockets to be on standby to attack U.S. targets. In May 2013, North Korea offered to enter into negotiations for a peace treaty to replace the armistice agreement.

In August 2016, North Korea installed anti-personnel mines to prevent the defection of its front-line border guards around the "Bridge of No Return," situated in the Joint Security Area (JSA).[63] The UN Command protested this move as it violates the Armistice Agreement which specifically prohibits armed guards and anti-personnel mines.

In 2016, when North Korea proposed formal peace talks, the U.S. adjusted its position from the pre-condition that North Korea should have already taken "irreversible steps toward denuclearization", to a negotiating stance that includes North Korea halting its nuclear program. The discussions did not take place. A State Department spokesman said that "[North Korea] periodically raise[s] the idea and it never really gets far

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- **Mar 14 1776 – American Revolution Era:** *Alexander Hamilton Is Named Captain Of Artillery Company* » Alexander Hamilton receives his commission as captain of a New York artillery company. Throughout the rest of 1776, Captain Hamilton established himself as a great military leader as he directed his artillery company in several battles in and around New York City. In March 1777, Hamilton's performance came to the attention of General George Washington and he was commissioned lieutenant colonel and personal aide to General Washington in the Continental Army.



**Alexander Hamilton in the Uniform of the New York Artillery**

After serving under Washington for four years, Hamilton resigned in February 1781 after a dispute with the general, but remained in the army. In July 1781, Hamilton took a position as commander of a regiment of New York troops and served with distinction at the Battle of Yorktown in the fall of that year.

After resigning from the army and working at a law practice, Hamilton was elected to the Continental Congress from New York in 1782, where he quickly became known as a proponent of a stronger national government. In the years to come, Hamilton became well-known for his political philosophy and published several papers with James Madison and John Jay that became known as the Federalist Papers.

Hamilton became the first secretary of the treasury in September 1789 after the election of President George Washington and served in that office until resigning in January 1795. Hamilton then returned to the private sector and a law practice in New York City, but remained a close advisor to President Washington.

In 1800, Hamilton became embroiled in a bitter dispute when he threw his support behind President John Adams' reelection campaign instead of presidential candidate Aaron Burr's. After his defeat, Burr ran for governor of New York in 1804; Hamilton again opposed his candidacy. Humiliated, Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel on July 11, 1804, in Weehawken, New Jersey. Alexander Hamilton was shot in the duel and died of his wound the following day, July 12, in New York at the age of 49.

- **Mar 14 1780 – American Revolution:** Spanish forces capture Fort Charlotte in Mobile, Alabama, the last British frontier post capable of threatening New Orleans in Spanish Louisiana.
- **Mar 14 1862 – Civil War:** *Battle of New Bern, North Carolina* » Union General Ambrose Burnside captures North Carolina's second largest city and closes another port through which the Confederates could slip supplies.

The capture of New Bern continued Burnside's success along the Carolina coast. Five weeks earlier, he led an amphibious force against Roanoke Island between Albemarle and Pamlico Sounds. The Yankees captured the island on February 8; now Burnside moved against New Bern on the mainland. On March 13, he landed 12,000 troops along the Neuse River, 15 miles south of New Bern. Accompanied by 13 gunboats, Burnside's army marched up river to face 4,000 Confederate troops commanded by General Lawrence O. Branch.

The city was protected by extensive defenses, but Branch did not have enough soldiers to properly staff them. He concentrated his men along the inner works a few miles downriver from New Bern. Early on the morning of March 14, Burnside's men attacked in a heavy fog, and two of the three Yankee brigades crashed into the fortifications. General Jesse Reno's brigade struck the weakest part of the line, where an inexperienced Rebel militia unit tried to hold off the Federals. Burnside's third brigade joined Reno and the Confederate line collapsed. That afternoon, Union gunboats steamed into New Bern.



Union casualties for the battle were around 90 killed and 380 wounded, while the Confederates suffered approximately 60 killed, 100 wounded, and 400 captured. The conflict produced a Confederate hero, Colonel Zebulon Vance, who rescued his regiment by U.S.ing small boats to bypass a bridge set afire by his comrades. Vance was elected governor of the state later that year.

- **Mar 14 1862 – Civil War:** *Battle at Pound Gap, Ky* » Six hundred Federal infantry and one hundred cavalry led by Brigadier General Garfield attack the Confederate garrison at Pound Gap, consisting of five companies of Virginia State Militia under Major J. B. Thompson. After a twenty-minute fight, the rebels are routed and flee their fort, consisting of sixty log huts, commissary, hospital, and officers quarters. There are no Union casualties. Confederate casualties are seven killed and wounded.
- **Mar 14 1864 – Civil War:** Union troops occupy Fort de Russy, Louisiana.
- **Mar 14 1915 – WWI Era:** *Battle of Más a Tierra* » The British ships Kent and Glasgow corner the German light cruiser Dresden in Cumberland Bay, off the coast of Chile. After raising the white flag, the Dresden's crew abandoned and scuttled the ship, which sank with its German ensign flying.

Dresden, a 3,600-ton light cruiser, was one of the fastest ships in the German Imperial Navy, capable of traveling at speeds of up to 24.5 knots. The sister ship of the Emden, it was one of the first German ships to be built with modern steam-turbine engines. The British navy possessed faster ships, but luckily for Dresden, it had never had to face one. In continuous service since its introduction in



1909, Dresden traveled over 21,000 miles between August 1, 1914 and March 1915, more than any other German cruiser in action during the early months of World War I.



When war broke out in the summer of 1914, Dresden was patrolling the Caribbean Sea, safeguarding German investments and German citizens living abroad in the region. On 20 JUL, during a bitter civil war in Mexico, Dresden gave safe passage to the fleeing Mexican president, Victoriano Huerta, transporting him and his family to Jamaica, where they received asylum from the British government. Shortly thereafter, news from Europe arrived of Austria's ultimatum to Serbia and the imminent possibility of war, and the German Admiralty put its fleet on alert.

By the first week of August, the great nations of Europe were at war. The Dresden was ordered to head to South America to attack British shipping interests there; it sunk several merchant ships on its way to Cape Horn, at the southern tip of Chile, and eluded pursuit by the British naval squadron in the region, commanded by Rear Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock. In October, the ship joined Admiral Maximilian von Spee's German East Asia Squadron at Easter Island in the South Pacific. On November 1, Spee's squadron, including Dresden, scored a crushing victory over the British in the Battle of Coronel, sinking two cruisers with all hands aboard—including Cradock, who went down with his flagship, Good Hope.

Five weeks later, the speedy Dresden was the only German ship to escape destruction at the Battle of the Falkland Islands on 8 NOV, when the British light cruisers Inflexible and Invincible, commanded by Sir Doveton Sturdee, sank four of Spee's ships, including Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Leipzig and Nurnberg. As a crew member of Dresden wrote later of watching one of the other ships sink: Each one of U.S. knew he would never see his comrades again—no one on board the cruiser can have had any illusions about his fate. Dresden escaped under cover of bad weather south of the Falkland Islands.

For the next several months, Dresden consistently avoided capture by the British navy, sinking a number of cargo ships and seeking refuge in the network of channels and bays in southern Chile. On 8 MAR, the ship put into an island off the Chilean coast, in Cumberland Bay; its captain, Fritz Emil von Luedecke, had decided the ship needed serious repairs in the wake of such heavy and extended Use. Six days later, after picking up one of the many pleas for fuel sent by Luedecke in the hopes of reaching any passing coal ships in the area, Kent and Glasgow found Dresden. When Kent opened fire, Dresden sent a few shots back, but soon raised the white flag of surrender. After a German representative negotiated a truce with the British sailors to stall for time, Luedecke ordered his crew to abandon the ship and scuttle it.



At 10:45, the scuttling charge detonated in the bow and exploded the forward ammunition magazines. The bow was badly mangled; in about half an hour, the ship had taken on enough water to sink. As it struck the sea floor, the bow was torn from the rest of the ship, which rolled over to starboard. As the rest of the hull settled below the waves, a second scuttling charge exploded in the ship's engine rooms. Amid cheers from both the British on board their two ships and the German sailors that had escaped onto land, Dresden disappeared beneath the water, its German ensign flag flying, thus ending the five-year and 21,000-mile career of one of Germany's most famous World War I commerce-raiding ships.

- **Mar 14 1916 – WWI Era:** Battle of Verdun – German attack on Mort–Homme ridge West of Verdun.
- **Mar 14 1936 – Germany:** Adolf Hitler tells a crowd of 300,000 that Germany's only judge is God and itself.
- **Mar 14 1939 – WW2 Era:** The Nazis dissolve the republic of Czechoslovakia.
- **Mar 14 1941 – WW2:** Nazi occupiers of Holland forbid Jewish owned companies. Also, Japanese fighters raid Chengtu, China in longest range for fighter operation of war to date.
- **Mar 14 1942 – Holocaust:** At Ilja, Poland, Jews sent to labor on a farm join Soviet partisans in a nearby forest. In reprisal, the Germans shoot old and sick Jews in the streets, then herd more than 900 Jews into a building that is set ablaze. All inside die.

Also on this date:

- US troops arrive in Australia in force.
- Gen. Douglas MacArthur arrives in Mindanao, after evacuating from Corregidor on Roosevelt's orders.
- **Mar 14 1943 – WW2:** *Germans Recapture Kharkov* » German troops re-enter Kharkov, the second largest city in the Ukraine, which had changed hands several times in the battle between the U.S.S.R and the invading German forces.

Kharkov was a high-priority target for the Germans when they invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, as the city was a railroad and industrial center, and had coal and iron mines nearby. Among the most important industries for Stalin's war needs was the Kharkov Tanks Works, which he moved out of Kharkov in December 1941 into the Ural Mountains. In fact, Joseph Stalin was so desperate to protect Kharkov that he rendered a "no retreat" order to his troops, which produced massive casualties within the Red Army over time.

Hitler's troops first entered Kharkov in October 1941. In May 1942, the Soviets launched an effective surprise attack on the Germans just south of Kharkov, enabling the Red Army to advance closer to the occupied city, and finally re-enter it on February 16, 1943. Hitler began planning an immediate recapture as early as February 21—Red Army Day—hoping that success there would

reverse the Soviet momentum of the previous three months. On March 10, German troops launched their major offensive; the Soviets had already suffered the loss of 23,000 soldiers and 634 tanks in the recapture and defense of Kharkov and were forced to rely on 1,000 Czech troops for aid.

On 14 MAR, the tide in Kharkov turned again, and the Germans took the city once more. “We have shown the Ivans we can withstand their terrible winter. It can hold no fear for U.S. again,” wrote an SS officer. This proved to be a meaningless boast when the Red Army liberated the city that summer, and untrue, as the brutal Soviet winter actually did take a terrifying toll on German troops.

Also on this date:

- Gen. Henri Giraud restores representative government in French North Africa, suppresses Vichy organizations.
  - The Krakow Ghetto is liquidated.
  - The Royal Navy Submarine Thetis, now renamed Thunderbolt is sunk by the Italian corvette Cicogna, off Sicily.
- **Mar 14 1944 – WW2:** The British are forced to withdraw towards Imphal in Assam, while fighting a bitter rearguard action. Also, in Burma, Japanese cut road from Tiddim north to Imphal; Indian troops are unable to retreat.
  - **Mar 14 1945 – WW2:** RAF Bomber Command makes its first Use of the 22,000lb ‘Grand Slam’ bomb, wrecking the Bielefeld viaduct in Germany.

Also on this date:

- The U.S. Third Army crosses the Moselle, Southwest of Koblenz.
  - Germans counterattack to recapture the oilfields near Lake Balaton come to an end. The Red Army cuts all communications between Koenigsberg and the German forces fighting in the Braunsberg pocket.
  - The U.S. 15th Air Force, taking off from Italian airfields, launches a heavy raid (500 bombers) against Regensburg, while the RAF attacks Wuppertal with 400 aircraft.
  - On Luzon, a force of Filipinos led by U.S. Col. Russell Volckmann, who refused to surrender to the Japanese in 1942, takes San Fernando.
  - First U.S. infantry arrive in China, the Mars Task Force, ferried by the Air Transport Command.
  - U.S. troops begin mopping up on Iwo Jima and launch heavy attacks in the North of the island.
- **Mar 14 1947 – U.S.\*Philippines:** The United States signs a 99-year lease on naval bases in the Philippines.
  - **Mar 14 1951 – Korean War:** U.N. forces recapture Seoul for the second time during the Korean War.



- **Mar 14 1965 – Vietnam War:** *Allies Launch Second Wave Of Rolling Thunder* » Twenty-four South Vietnamese Air Force planes, led by Vice-Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky and supported by U.S. jets, bomb the barracks and depots on Con Co (“Tiger”) Island, 20 miles off the coast of North Vietnam. The next day, 100 U.S. Air Force jets and carrier-based bombers struck the ammunition depot at Phu Qui, 100 miles south of Hanoi. This was the second set of raids in Operation Rolling Thunder and the first in which U.S. planes used napalm.

Operation Rolling Thunder was a result of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s decision in February to undertake the sustained bombing of North Vietnam that he and his advisers had been contemplating for a year. The operation was designed to interdict North Vietnamese transportation routes in the southern part of North Vietnam and slow infiltration of personnel and supplies into South Vietnam. In July 1966, Rolling Thunder was expanded to include the bombing of North Vietnamese ammunition dumps and oil storage facilities, and in the spring of 1967, it was further expanded to include power plants, factories, and airfields in the Hanoi-Haiphong area.

The White House closely controlled operation Rolling Thunder and President Johnson sometimes personally selected the targets. From March 1965 to November 1968, Air Force planes flew 153,784 attack sorties against North Vietnam, while the Navy and Marine Corps added another 152,399. On Dec. 31, 1967, the Department of Defense announced that 864,000 tons of American bombs had been dropped on North Vietnam during Rolling Thunder. The U.S. dropped 653,000 tons in the Korean War and 503,000 tons in the Pacific theater during World War II.

The CIA estimated that the operation inflicted \$500 million in damage on the North. The agency estimated that by April 1967, 52,000 casualties, including 21,000 deaths, had occurred in the air raids. An estimated 75 percent of casualties were involved in military or quasi-military operations. U.S. government estimates put the number of civilian deaths stemming from the operation at 30,000. A total of nearly 900 U.S. aircraft were lost during Operation Rolling Thunder. The operation continued, with occasional suspensions, until President Johnson, under increasing domestic political pressure, halted it on October 31, 1968.

- **Mar 14 1969 – Vietnam War:** *Nixon Discusses the Possibility of U.S. Troop Withdrawals* » At a news conference, President Richard Nixon says there is no prospect for a U.S. troop reduction in the

foreseeable future because of the ongoing enemy offensive. Nixon stated that the prospects for withdrawal would hinge on the level of enemy activity, progress in the Paris peace talks, and the ability of the South Vietnamese to defend themselves. Despite these public comments, Nixon and his advisers were secretly discussing U.S. troop withdrawals. On June 8, at a conference on Midway Island with South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu, Nixon formally announced a new policy that included intensified efforts to increase the combat capability of the South Vietnamese armed forces so that U.S. forces could be gradually withdrawn. This program became known as “Vietnamization.” The first U.S. troop withdrawals occurred in the fall of 1969 with the departure of the headquarters and a brigade from the 9th Infantry Division.

- **Mar 14 1971 – Vietnam War:** South Vietnamese troops flee Laos’
- **Mar 14 1973 – Vietnam War:** Future U.S. senator John McCain is released after spending over five years in a North Vietnamese prisoner of war camp. His wartime injuries left him permanently incapable of raising his arms above his head. After the war, McCain returned to the site with his wife Cindy and family on a few occasions to try to come to terms with what had happened to him there during his capture.
- **Mar 14 1988 – China\*Vietnam:** *Johnson South Reef Skirmish* » An altercation that took place between Chinese and Vietnamese forces over who would annex the Johnson South Reef in the Union Banks region of the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. In late 1987, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) started deploying troops to some of the unoccupied reefs of the Spratly Islands. Soon after the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) stormed the Johnson South Reef on 14 MAR, a skirmish began between the People’s Army of Vietnam (PAVN) occupiers and PRC landing parties in which the PAVN were eliminated. China moved quickly to consolidate its presence. By the end of 1988, it had occupied six reefs and atolls in the Spratly Islands. On 2 September 1991, China released the nine Johnson South Reef Skirmish PAVN prisoner survivors of the skirmish.

In 1994, China had a similar confrontation by asserting its ownership of Mischief Reef, which was inside the claimed EEZ of the Philippines. However, the Philippines only made a political protest, since according to the Henry L. Stimson Center, the Philippine Navy decided to avoid direct confrontation. This was partly based on the Johnson South Reef Skirmish, in which the Chinese had killed Vietnamese troops even though the conflict took place near the Vietnamese-controlled area.

- **Mar 14 1990 – Cold War:** *Gorbachev Elected President of the Soviet Union* » The Congress of People’s Deputies elects General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev as the new president of the Soviet Union. While the election was a victory for Gorbachev, it also revealed serious weaknesses in his power base that would eventually lead to the collapse of his presidency in December 1991.

Gorbachev’s election in 1990 was far different from other “elections” previously held in the Soviet Union. Since coming to power in 1985, Gorbachev had worked hard to open up the political process in the Soviet Union, pushing through legislation that eliminated the Communist Party’s monopoly on power and establishing the Congress of People’s Deputies. The public at large elected the Congress by secret ballot. By 1990, however, Gorbachev was facing criticism from both reformers and communist hard-liners. The reformers, such as Boris Yeltsin, criticized Gorbachev for the slow pace

of his reform agenda. Communist hard-liners, on the other hand, were appalled by what they saw as Gorbachev's retreat from Marxist principles. In an attempt to push forward his reform program, Gorbachev led a movement that amended the Soviet constitution, including writing a section establishing a new and more powerful presidency, a position that had previously been largely symbolic.

On March 14, 1990, the Congress of People's Deputies elected Gorbachev to a five-year term as president. While this was certainly a victory for Gorbachev, the election also vividly demonstrated the problems he faced in trying to formulate a domestic consensus supporting his political reform program. Gorbachev had worked assiduously to make sure that the Congress gave him the necessary two-thirds majority, including making repeated threats to resign if the majority was not achieved. Had he not received the necessary votes, he would have had to campaign in a general election against other candidates. Gorbachev believed that a general election would result in chaos in an already unsteady Russia; others in the Soviet Union attributed his actions to fear that he might lose such an election. The final vote in the Congress was extremely close, and Gorbachev achieved his two-thirds majority by a slim 46 votes.

Gorbachev won the presidency, but by 1991 his domestic critics were pillorying him for the nation's terrible economic performance and faltering control over the Soviet empire. In December 1991 he resigned as president, and the Soviet Union dissolved. Despite the criticism he received, Gorbachev is credited for instituting a dizzying number of reforms that loosened the tight grip of communism on the Soviet people.

- **Mar 14 2016 – Russia\*Syria:** Russia Withdrawal from Syria » President Putin declared mission accomplished and orders Russian troops out of Syria. He had sent in Russian forces in October to prop-up tottering dictator Bashar Assad, who was being attacked from one side by Islamic State militants and from the other by U.S.-backed Syrian rebels seeking regime change.

In the months that followed, the anti-Assad forces accused the Russians of taking the fight to them to protect Assad rather than going after ISIS. Putin denied the charge. "What we are trying to achieve is to contribute to the fight against terrorism, which is a threat to both the United States to Russia to European countries and the whole world," he said.

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- **Mar 15 1781 – American Revolutionary War:** Battle of Guilford Court House, SC » The Battle proved pivotal to the American victory in the American Revolutionary War (1775-83). Although 1900 British troops under Lieutenant General Charles Cornwallis (1738-1805) scored a tactical victory at Guilford Courthouse over American forces numbering 4,400 under Major General Nathanael Greene (1742-86), the British suffered significant troop losses during the battle. Afterward, Cornwallis abandoned his campaign for the Carolinas and instead took his army into Virginia, where in October of that year he surrendered to General George Washington (1732-99) following the Battle of Yorktown, the last major land battle of the war. Casualties and losses: U.S. 1,272 - GB 538.
- **Mar 15 1783 – American Revolution Era:** Washington Puts An End To The Newburgh Conspiracy  
» On the morning of March 15, 1783, General George Washington makes a surprise appearance at

an assembly of army officers at Newburgh, New York, to calm the growing frustration and distrust they had been openly expressing towards Congress in the previous few weeks. Angry with Congress for failing to honor its promise to pay them and for its failure to settle accounts for repayment of food and clothing, officers began circulating an anonymous letter condemning Congress and calling for a revolt.

When word of the letter and its call for an unsanctioned meeting of officers reached him, Washington issued a general order forbidding any unsanctioned meetings and called for a general assembly of officers for 15 MAR. At the meeting, Washington began his speech to the officers by saying, “Gentlemen: By an anonymous summons, an attempt has been made to convene you together; how inconsistent with the rules of propriety! How unmilitary! And how subversive of all order and discipline...”

Washington continued by pledging, “to exert whatever ability I am possessed of, in your favor.” He added, “Let me entreat you, gentlemen, on your part, not to take any measures, which viewed in the calm light of reason, will lessen the dignity, and sully the glory you have hitherto maintained; let me request you to rely on the plighted faith of your country, and place a full confidence in the purity of the intentions of Congress.”

When he finished, Washington removed a letter from his breast pocket that he had received from a member of the Continental Congress. He hesitated for a moment as he looked down at the letter before fumbling to retrieve a pair of spectacles from his pocket. Before reading the letter, Washington, in an almost apologetic tone said, “Gentlemen, you must pardon me. I have grown old in the service of my country and now find that I am growing blind.” The eyes of most of his audience filled with tears. The content of the letter became irrelevant as the assembled officers realized that Washington had given as much or more in the service of the new nation as any of them. Within minutes, the officers voted unanimously to express confidence in Congress and their country.

In a letter to the Continental Congress dated March 18, 1783, Washington wrote to assure the body that the unrest of officers was over, writing, “The result of the proceedings of the grand convention of the officers, which I have the honor of enclosing to your Excellency for the inspection of Congress, will, I flatter myself, be considered as the last glorious proof of patriotism which could have been given by men who aspired to the distinction of a Patriot army; and will not only confirm their claim to the justice, but will increase their title to the gratitude of their country.”

- **Mar 15 1831 – Pre Civil War:** *Edward A. Perry Born* » Confederate General Edward Aylesworth Perry is born in Richmond, Massachusetts. The transplanted Yankee led a Florida brigade during the Civil War, and served as governor of the state after the war.

Perry received his education at Lee Academy in Massachusetts and Yale University. In 1852, he moved to Georgia to teach school and study law. After a sojourn in Alabama, he settled in Pensacola, Florida. When the war erupted, Perry took up arms for his adopted state, becoming a captain in the Pensacola Rifle Rangers. His company was later absorbed into the 2nd Florida Infantry. Perry participated in the occupation of the Pensacola navy yard before joining the Confederate army in Virginia.

The 2nd Florida fought in the 1862 Peninsular Campaign, defending Yorktown, Virginia, in the face of General George B. McClellan's invading Union army. Perry became the regiment's commander when Colonel George Ward was killed near Williamsburg, Virginia, and Perry led the unit through hard fighting during the Seven Days' Battles in June 1862. Three months later, the Floridians fought at the Battle of Antietam in Maryland and suffered heavy losses. Perry was promoted to brigadier general and received command of two other Florida regiments. He fought at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, but typhoid fever caused him to miss the Battle of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in July 1863, where his brigade lost more than half of its men.

Perry returned to command, but was seriously wounded at the Battle of the Wilderness in Virginia in May 1864. He was forced to relinquish control of his brigade, and after recovering spent the rest of the war commanding reserve troops in Alabama. He served as governor of Florida from 1884 to 1888, and in that post signed a bill providing pensions for Confederate veterans. Perry died from a stroke on October 15, 1889, in Kerrville, Texas, and was buried in St. John's Cemetery in Pensacola.

- **Mar 15 1862 - Civil War:** General John Hunt Morgan begins 4 days of raids near Gallatin, Tennessee
- **Mar 15 1864 - Civil War:** The Red River Campaign - U.S. Navy fleet arrives at Alexandria, Louisiana.
- **Mar 15 1916 – Pancho Villa:** President Woodrow Wilson sends 4,800 United States troops Under Gen. Pershing over the U.S.–Mexico border to pursue Pancho Villa.
- **Mar 15 1916 – WWI Era:** Dutch merchant ship *Tubantia* torpedoed by German submarine and sinks in North Sea. As a vessel of the neutral Netherlands, her sinking caused great fury amongst the Dutch public. The Germans initially claimed that *Tubantia* must have been sunk by a mine or a British torpedo, but when fragments of a German torpedo were found in one of *Tubantia*'s lifeboats, the Germans claimed that UB-13 had fired the torpedo on 6 MAR at a British warship but it had remained active until hitting *Tubantia* ten days later.

To redirect Dutch anger over *Tubantia*'s sinking, Germany spread rumors of an impending British invasion of the Netherlands, which one author called a "propaganda coup". Germany initially offered a settlement of £300,000—the ship's original cost—to Royal Holland Lloyd, but was rejected. In 1922, an international arbitration committee awarded the company £830,000 compensation from Germany for the loss of the ship. This was followed by an attempt to recover a fortune in gold coins from the wreck, which was the subject of a landmark court case, but the salvage operation was unsuccessful. *Tubantia* was the largest neutral vessel sunk during the entire war.

- **Mar 15 1917 – WWI Era:** *Russian Czar Abdicates Russian Throne* » During the February Revolution, Czar Nicholas II, ruler of Russia since 1894, is forced to abdicate the throne on this day in 1917, after strikes and general revolts break out in Petrograd (now St. Petersburg).



Crowned on May 26, 1894, Nicholas was a relatively weak and ineffectual leader, which did not help the autocracy he sought to preserve over a people desperate for change. Russia's disastrous loss to the Japanese in the Russo-Japanese War exacerbated discontent among the Russian population and led to the Russian Revolution of 1905, which the czar calmed only after signing a manifesto promising reform, representative government—in the form of Dumas, or assemblies—and basic civil liberties in Russia. Nicholas soon retracted most of these concessions, however, repeatedly dissolving the Dumas when they opposed him, and radical forces within Russia, most notably the Bolsheviks, a revolutionary-minded socialist group founded by Vladimir Lenin, begin to gain widespread support. In 1914, Nicholas led his country into another costly war—World War I—and discontent in Russia grew as food became scarce, ill-equipped soldiers became war-weary and devastating defeats on the Eastern Front demonstrated the czar's incompetent leadership.

After the outbreak of the so-called February Revolution in early March 1917 (Russia Used the Julian calendar at the time), the army garrison at Petrograd joined striking workers in demanding socialist reforms, and Czar Nicholas II was forced to abdicate. Nicholas and his family were first held at the Czarskoye Selo Palace, then in the Yekaterinburg Palace near Tobolsk, where they remained during the rise to power of Lenin's Bolsheviks and Russia's exit from World War I. In July 1918, the advance of counterrevolutionary forces during the Russian Civil War caused the soviet, or Bolshevik council, in power in Yekaterinburg to fear that Nicholas might be rescued. After a secret meeting, the soviet passed a death sentence on the imperial family, and, on July 16, 1918, Nicholas, his wife Alexandra, their children and their remaining servants were shot to death.

- **Mar 15 1930 – U.S. Navy:** First streamlined submarine of U.S. navy, U.S.S Nautilus, launched.
- **Mar 15 1939 – WW2 Era:** Nazis take Czechoslovakia » Hitler's forces invade and occupy Czechoslovakia—a nation sacrificed on the altar of the Munich Pact, which was a vain attempt to prevent Germany's imperial aims.

On September 30, 1938, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, French Premier Edouard Daladier, and British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain signed the Munich Pact, which sealed the fate of Czechoslovakia, virtually handing it over to Germany in the name of peace. Although the agreement was to give into Hitler's hands only the Sudetenland, that part of Czechoslovakia where 3 million



ethnic Germans lived, it also handed over to the Nazi war machine 66 percent of Czechoslovakia's coal, 70 percent of its iron and steel, and 70 percent of its electrical power. Without those resources, the Czech nation was left vulnerable to complete German domination.

No matter what concessions the Czech government attempted to make to appease Hitler, whether dissolving the Communist Party or suspending all Jewish teachers in ethnic-German majority schools, rumors continued to circulate about "the incorporation of Czechoslovakia into the Reich." In fact, as early as October 1938, Hitler made it clear that he intended to force the central Czechoslovakian government to give Slovakia its independence, which would make the "rump" Czech state "even more completely at our mercy," remarked Hermann Goering. Slovakia indeed declared its "independence" (in fact, complete dependence on Germany) on March 14, 1939, with the threat of invasion squelching all debate within the Czech province.

Then, on March 15, 1939, during a meeting with Czech President Emil Hacha—a man considered weak, and possibly even senile—Hitler threatened a bombing raid against Prague, the Czech capital, unless he obtained from Hacha free passage for German troops into Czech borders. He got it. That same day, German troops poured into Bohemia and Moravia. The two provinces offered no resistance, and they were quickly made a protectorate of Germany. By evening, Hitler made a triumphant entry into Prague. The Munich Pact, which according to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain had purchased "peace in our time," was actually a mere negotiating ploy by the Hitler, only temporarily delaying the Fuhrer's blood and land lust. Czechoslovakia ceases to exist.

- **Mar 15 1941 – WW2 Era:** FDR's national radio address that announces "the end of compromise with tyranny".

Also, on this date:

- The British 'Northern Force' having concentrated the 4th and 5th Indian Divisions begin their offensive for Italian fortress of Keren in Eritrea.
- Scharnhorst German battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau sink 15 Allied ships in the North Atlantic over next two days.

- **Mar 15 1942 – WW2:** U-503 is sunk near the Grand Banks, off Newfoundland, by another aircraft from the U.S. squadron, VP-82.

Also on this date:

- Norwegian resistance members seize ship SS Galtesundand sail to Britain.
- Off Newfoundland, U.S. Navy PBO Hudson sinks U-503, the same pilot (CPO Donald Mason) who had radioed "Sighted sub—sank same" in January, vindicating himself

- **Mar 15 1943 – WW2:** U.S. *S Triton (SS-201) sunk* » U.S.S Trigger reported on 15 March she had attacked a convoy and had been depth charged. Even though attacks on her ceased, she could still hear distant depth charging for about an hour. No further messages from Triton were ever received. Post-war examination of Japanese records revealed on that date three Japanese destroyers attacked a submarine a little northwest of Triton's assigned area and subsequently observed an oil slick, debris,

and items with American markings. On 10 April 1943, Triton and her crew of 72 was reported overdue from patrol and presumed lost, one of three lost in a month. In total, she is credited with sinking 16 ships, totaling 64,600 tons, and damaging 4 ships, of 29,200 total tons. Triton received five battle stars for World War II service.

There are persistent rumors Triton was actually lost off Moreton Island near Brisbane, sunk either to friendly fire from an Australian pilot or Japanese mines or torpedoes. Her loss was allegedly covered up by the Australian military. It is undisputed two weeks after Triton was supposed to have been sunk, a welcoming committee, complete with band, mail delivery, fresh fruit and ice-cream was waiting for her on the dock at New Farm on the Brisbane River; since she could simply have suffered a radio casualty.

- **Mar 15 1943 – WW2: Third Battle of Kharkov** » The last great victory of German arms in the eastern front. In a series of battles the German counterstrike led to the destruction of approximately 52 Soviet divisions and the recapture of the cities of Kharkov and Belgorod. Casualties and losses: SU 86,469 – Ger 11,500.

Also on this date:

- The climax of the Battle of the Atlantic: U-boats sink 21 ships, with only one U-boat lost.
  - The U.S. Navy establishes numbered fleet system; fleets in the Pacific assigned odd numbers and those in the Atlantic even.
  - The British Navy launches first X-class midget submarines.
- **Mar 15 1944 – WW2: Battle of Monte Cassino, Italy** » In the Battle the abbey is destroyed by the Allies through the dropping 1,250 tons of bombs and the firing of 195,969 artillery shells in 7 and a half hours. The bombing was conducted because many reports from the British commanders of the Indian troops on the ground suggested that Germans were occupying the monastery, and it was considered a key observation post by all those who were fighting in the field. However, during the bombing no Germans were present in the abbey. Subsequent investigations found that the only people killed in the monastery by the bombing were 230 Italian civilians seeking refuge there.[ Following the bombing the ruins of the monastery were occupied by German Fallschirmjäger (paratroopers) of the 1st Parachute Division, because the ruins provided excellent defensive cover.



**The rebuilt Abbey of Monte Cassino and Monte Cassino in ruins after Allied bombing**

Also on this date:

- The Soviet 1st Ukrainian Front breaks through German defenses and reaches the Bug river, the starting point in 1941 for Operation 'Barbarossa'.
  - The U.S. 1st Cavalry Division lands on Manus in the Admiralty Islands.
  - The Japanese begin crossing the Chindwin for an advance against Kohima.
  - The heaviest RAF raid of war is made against Stuttgart, with 3,000 tons dropped from 863 bombers, for the loss of only 36 planes
- **Mar 15 1945 – WW2:** The Royal Air Force first Used the Grand Slam, a 22,000 lb earthquake bomb, on a strategic railway viaduct in Bielefeld, Germany. By the end of the war, 42 Grand Slams had been dropped in active service. It was the most powerful non-atomic aerial bomb Used in combat until 2017.

Also on this date:

- Attacks by troops of the U.S. First Army to expand the Remagen bridgehead further, meet with little success.
  - The Soviet 1st Ukrainian Front begins an offensive in the Ratibor area of Upper Silesia.
  - U.S. troops report slow progress on Luzon in the Philippines.
- **Mar 15 1947 – U.S. Navy:** John Lee appointed first black commissioned officer in U.S. Navy
- Also on this date:
- The U.S. Air Force unveils self-guided missile.
- **Mar 15 1949 – Post WW2:** Almost four years after the end of World War II, clothes rationing in Great Britain ends.
  - **Mar 15 1953 – Korean War:** Marine pilots of VMA 312 destroy eight rail cars, two possible radar towers, a power transformer and numerous other assorted targets in Korea before returning to U.S.S Bataan (CVL-29).
  - **Mar 15 1965 – Korean War:** UN forces recapture Seoul, the fourth and final time the city changes hands in the Korean War
  - **Mar 15 1965 – Vietnam War:** *Army Chief of Staff Reports on South Vietnam* » Gen. Harold K. Johnson, Army Chief of Staff, reports on his recent visit to Vietnam to President Lyndon B. Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. He admitted that the recent air raids ordered by President Johnson had not affected the course of the war and said he would like to assign an American division to hold coastal enclaves and defend the Central Highlands.

General Johnson also advocated creating a four-division force of Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and U.S. troops to patrol the Demilitarized Zone along the border separating North and South Vietnam and Laos. Nothing ever came of General Johnson's recommendation on the SEATO troops, but President Johnson ordered the 173rd Airborne Brigade to Vietnam in May 1965

and followed it with the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) in September of the same year. These forces, along with the first contingent of U.S. Marines—which had arrived in March—were only the first of a massive American build up. By 1969, there were more than 540,000 U.S. troops in South Vietnam.

- **Mar 15 1969 – Russia\*China:** Violent Chinese-Russian border dispute leaves 100s dead
- **Mar 15 1973 – Vietnam War:** *President Nixon Hints at Reintervention* » President Nixon hints that the United States might intervene again in Vietnam to prevent communist violations of the truce. A cease-fire under the provisions of the Paris Peace Accords had gone into effect on January 27, 1973, but was quickly and repeatedly violated by both sides as they jockeyed for control of territory in South Vietnam. Very quickly, both sides resumed heavy fighting in what came to be called the “cease-fire war.”

Nixon had been instrumental in convincing the reluctant South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu to sign the peace treaty, promising him repeatedly that, “We will respond with full force should the settlements be violated by North Vietnam.” As the fighting continued throughout 1973 and into 1974, Thieu appealed to Nixon to make good on his promises. For his part, Nixon was increasingly embroiled in the developing Watergate scandal, and resigned from office in August 1974. His successor, Gerald Ford, was unable to persuade a hostile Congress to provide the promised support to South Vietnam. The United States did nothing when the North Vietnamese launched their final offensive in the spring of 1975. South Vietnam was defeated in less than 55 days, surrendering unconditionally to the North Vietnamese on 30 APR.

- **Mar 15 1989 – U.S.A:** The Veterans Administration is elevated to a Cabinet-level agency under Public Law 100-527
- **Mar 15 2006 – Mideast:** Saddam Hussein, testifying for the first time in his trial, called on Iraqis to stop killing each other and instead fight U.S. troops; the judge reprimanded him for making a rambling, political speech and ordered the TV cameras switched off.
- **Mar 15 2012 – U.S.\*Afghanistan:** the Taliban in Afghanistan suspended preliminary peace negotiations with the United States blaming unwanted U.S. efforts to include Afghan leaders in the talks. ALSO: Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai urged NATO troops be limited to major bases by 2013 after the killing of 16 civilians allegedly by a U.S. soldier.

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