



## Military History Anniversaries 16 thru 31 May

**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**

- **May 16 1771 – The Battle of Alamance:** Pre-American Revolutionary War battle between local militia and a group of rebels (The Regulators) occurs in present-day Alamance County, North Carolina. It was a protest against local taxation and corrupt government. Casualties and losses: Militia 9 to 27 killed + 61 wounded – Regulators 9 killed + 7 later executed for treason.
- **May 16 1777 – Revolutionary War Era:** *Button Gwinnett Fatally Wounded In Duel* » British-born Georgia Patriot and signer of the Declaration of Independence Button Gwinnett receives a bullet wound in a duel with his political rival, Georgia city Whig Lachlan McIntosh. Three days later, Gwinnett died as a result of the gangrenous wound. McIntosh was also shot in the duel, but the wound was not fatal.

Button Gwinnett was born in Down Hatherley, Gloucestershire, England, and was baptized in Gloucester in 1735. He was married and began a career in trading while still in Britain. In the 1760s, Gwinnett moved first to Charleston, South Carolina, then to Savannah, Georgia, where he had established himself as a trader by 1765. Entering politics in 1769, he was elected to the Commons House of Assembly. Taking up residence on St. Catherine's Island, Georgia, in 1770, Gwinnett left commerce for farming. His politics were deeply influenced by his contempt for the wealthy and powerful city Whigs of Savannah. Gwinnett's political base of country Whigs consisted of less prosperous coastal dwellers like himself and backcountry farmers. When first made commander of Georgia's Patriot forces, Gwinnett was forced to resign by the outcry of city Whigs. He went on to win election to the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia and became a signatory of the Declaration of Independence.

Gwinnett returned to Georgia immediately after signing the declaration to find city Whig Lachlan McIntosh commanding Georgia's nascent military efforts. Determined to take control of Georgia politics, Gwinnett became speaker of the legislature, guided the Georgia Constitution of 1777 into existence and took over as governor when Archibald Bulloch died suddenly in office. Gwinnett then wanted to lead an expedition to secure Georgia's border with Florida. A dispute between McIntosh and Gwinnett over who would command the effort ultimately led to their duel and Gwinnett's death.

- **May 16 1832 –Pre Texas Revolution:** *Anahuac Disturbances* » In 1830 Juan Davis Bradburn, a brigadier general in the Mexican Army, established a new military and customs post at Anahuac in Mexican Texas. The local settlers resented his efforts to withhold land titles from those who had

squatted in unauthorized areas. They were further angered by his attempts to enforce customs laws which had been largely ignored. The hard feelings escalated when Bradburn, following Mexican law, refused to return runaway slaves to their owners in the United States. After receiving a hoax letter claiming that armed men were marching on Anahuac to retrieve runaway slaves, he arrested local lawyers William B. Travis and Patrick Churchill Jack. Settlers were outraged that Travis did not receive some of the protections offered by the United States Bill of Rights, even though these rights were not guaranteed in Mexico. In May 1832 a large force of Texians marched on Anahuac to secure Travis's release. The resulting confrontation forced Bradburn's expulsion from Texas and encouraged other immigrants to take armed action against Mexican soldiers. As a result of his actions, he was one of the most maligned men in historical accounts of Texas in the 19th century.



- **May 16 1863 – Civil War:** *Battle of Champion's Hill, Mississippi* - The battle was the pivotal battle in the Vicksburg Campaign of the American Civil War. Union commander Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and the Army of the Tennessee pursued the retreating Confederate Lt. Gen. John C. Pemberton and defeated his army twenty miles to the east of Vicksburg, Mississippi, leading inevitably to the Siege of Vicksburg and surrender.



It was a bloody, but decisive, Union victory. In his Personal Memoirs, Grant observed, "While a battle is raging, one can see his enemy mowed down by the thousand, or the ten thousand, with great composure; but after the battle these scenes are distressing, and one is naturally disposed to alleviate the sufferings of an enemy as a friend." Casualties and losses: Union ~2500 – Confederate ~3800.

- **May 16 1864 – Civil War:** Battle of Resaca, ends after 3 days.

- **May 16 1864 – Civil War:** *Battle of Bermuda Hundred, Virginia* » The Bermuda Hundred Campaign was a series of battles fought at the town of Bermuda Hundred, outside Richmond, Virginia, during May 1864 in the American Civil War. Union Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler, commanding the Army of the James, threatened Richmond from the east but was stopped by forces under Confederate Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard. Butler's expedition was an overall failure, and he was "bottled up" at Bermuda Hundred, unable to move. Although he was able to distract Confederate forces for a brief time, their victories at Proctor's Creek and Ware Bottom Church enabled Beauregard to detach strong reinforcements for Lee's army in time for the fighting at Cold Harbor.
- **May 16 1918 – WW2:** *U.S. Congress Passes Sedition Act* » The United States Congress passes the Sedition Act, a piece of legislation designed to protect America's participation in World War I. Along with the Espionage Act of the previous year, the Sedition Act was orchestrated largely by A. Mitchell Palmer, the United States attorney general under President Woodrow Wilson. The Espionage Act, passed shortly after the U.S. entrance into the war in early April 1917, made it a crime for any person to convey information intended to interfere with the U.S. armed forces' prosecution of the war effort or to promote the success of the country's enemies.

Aimed at socialists, pacifists and other anti-war activists, the Sedition Act imposed harsh penalties on anyone found guilty of making false statements that interfered with the prosecution of the war; insulting or abusing the U.S. government, the flag, the Constitution or the military; agitating against the production of necessary war materials; or advocating, teaching or defending any of these acts. Those who were found guilty of such actions, the act stated, shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment for not more than twenty years, or both. This was the same penalty that had been imposed for acts of espionage in the earlier legislation.

Though Wilson and Congress regarded the Sedition Act as crucial in order to stifle the spread of dissent within the country in that time of war, modern legal scholars consider the act as contrary to the letter and spirit of the U.S. Constitution, namely to the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights. One of the most famous prosecutions under the Sedition Act during World War I was that of Eugene V. Debs, a pacifist labor organizer and founder of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) who had run for president in 1900 as a Social Democrat and in 1904, 1908 and 1912 on the Socialist Party of America ticket.

After delivering an anti-war speech in June 1918 in Canton, Ohio, Debs was arrested, tried and sentenced to 10 years in prison under the Sedition Act. Debs appealed the decision, and the case eventually reached the U.S. Supreme Court, where the court ruled Debs had acted with the intention of obstructing the war effort and upheld his conviction. In the decision, Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes referred to the earlier landmark case of *Schenck v. United States* (1919), when Charles Schenck, also a Socialist, had been found guilty under the Espionage Act after distributing a flyer urging recently drafted men to oppose the U.S. conscription policy. In this decision, Holmes maintained that freedom of speech and press could be constrained in certain instances, and that The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent.

Debs' sentence was commuted in 1921 when the Sedition Act was repealed by Congress. Major portions of the Espionage Act remain part of United States law to the present day, although the crime of sedition was largely eliminated by the famous libel case *Sullivan v. New York Times* (1964), which determined that the press's criticism of public officials—unless a plaintiff could prove that the statements were made maliciously or with reckless disregard for the truth—was protected speech under the First Amendment.

- **May 16 1940 – WW2 Era:** Germans try to enlarge Sedan pocket. British withdraw from Louvain, west of Brussels as troops of the German 6th Army break through the Allied Dyle line in Belgium and occupy Brussels. Belgian government leaves Brussels for Ostend Germany.

Also on this date:

- The Red Army occupies Latvia and Estonia. Tens of thousands of “hostile” natives and their families are rounded up and deported to NKVD prison camps around the Soviet Union.
- Churchill urges Mussolini not to become involved in the war.

- **May 16 1941 – WW2 Era:** With a raid by 111 German aircraft on Birmingham, the Night Blitz campaign against England comes to an end. Most Luftwaffe bomber formations in France and Belgium are being transferred to airfields in eastern Germany and occupied Poland. The RAF launch a night raid on Cologne.

Also on this date:

- The Afrika Korps counter-attack against the British and retake Sollum and Capuzzo, although the Halfaya Pass remains in British hands. Berlin orders Rommel to leave Tobruk to the Italians and to concentrate the Afrika Korps near the Egyptian border. The Italian forces under the Duke of Aosta surrender to British forces at Amba Alagi in Abyssinia.
- Last British reinforcements arrive in Crete.

- **May 16 1942 – WW2:** Kerch, a seaport in Eastern Crimea, in Southern Ukraine on Kerch Strait., is captured by German troops, forcing the Russians to evacuate their troops across the straits in extremely difficult conditions and under heavy fire. For five days, Russian ships shuttle back and forth, finally pulling out 86,000 men, including 23,000 wounded.

- **May 16 1943 – Holocaust:** *The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Ends* » In Poland, the Warsaw Ghetto uprising comes to an end as Nazi soldiers gain control of Warsaw's Jewish ghetto, blowing up the last remaining synagogue and beginning the mass deportation of the ghetto's remaining dwellers to the Treblinka extermination camp.



Shortly after the German occupation of Poland began, the Nazis forced the city's Jewish citizens into a "ghetto" surrounded by barbed wire and armed SS guards. The Warsaw Ghetto had an area of only 840 acres but soon held almost 500,000 Jews in deplorable conditions. Disease and starvation killed thousands every month, and beginning in July 1942, 6,000 Jews a day were transferred to the Treblinka concentration camp. Although the Nazis assured the remaining Jews that their relatives and friends were being sent to work camps, word soon reached the ghetto that deportation to the camp meant extermination. An underground resistance group was established in the ghetto—the Jewish Combat Organization (ZOB)—and limited arms were acquired at great cost.

On January 18, 1943, when the Nazis entered the ghetto to prepare a group for transfer, a ZOB unit ambushed them. Fighting lasted for several days, and a number of German soldiers were killed before they withdrew. On April 19, Nazi leader Heinrich Himmler announced that the ghetto was to be cleared out in honor of Hitler's birthday the following day, and more than 1,000 SS soldiers entered the confines with tanks and heavy artillery. Although many of the ghetto's remaining 60,000 Jewish dwellers attempted to hide themselves in secret bunkers, more than 1,000 ZOB members met the Germans with gunfire and homemade bombs. Suffering moderate casualties, the Germans initially withdrew but soon returned, and on April 24 they launched an all-out attack against the Warsaw Jews. Thousands were slaughtered as the Germans systematically moved down the ghetto, blowing up buildings one by one. The ZOB took to the sewers to continue the fight, but on May 8 their command bunker fell to the Germans, and their resistant leaders committed suicide. By May 16, the ghetto was firmly under Nazi control, and mass deportation of the last Warsaw Jews to Treblinka began.

During the uprising, some 100 hundred German soldiers were killed to the thousands of Warsaw Jews who perished. Virtually all the former ghetto residents who survived to reach Treblinka were dead by the end of the war. Casualties and losses: Ger 110 – Jews ~16,000 killed + 56,885 deported.

- **May 16 1943 – WW2:** *Operation Chastise (16-17 May)* » No. 617 Squadron RAF with 19 Lancaster bombers begins the famous dambusters Raid, bombing the Möhne and Eder dams in the Ruhr valley with bouncing bombs from an altitude of 60 ft at an air speed of 240 mph.



The attack on German dams carried out on 16–17 May 1943 used a purpose-built "bouncing bomb" developed by Barnes Wallis. The Möhne and Edersee dams were breached, causing catastrophic flooding of the Ruhr valley and of villages in the Eder valley; the Sorpe Dam sustained only minor damage. Two hydroelectric power stations were destroyed and several more damaged. Factories and mines were also damaged and destroyed. An estimated 1,600 civilians – about 600

Germans and 1,000 mainly Soviet forced laborers – died. Despite rapid repairs by the Germans, production did not return to normal until September.

- **May 16 1944 – WW2:** 1st of 180,000+ Hungarian Jews reach Auschwitz. Eichmann arrives to personally oversee and speed up the extermination process.

Also on this date:

- Aircraft of RAF Coastal Command sink 5 U-boats off the Norwegian coast.
- The 17th Indian Division counter-attacks South of Imphal, India.

- **May 16 1945 – WW2:** German submarine U-234 surrenders at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, USA. On 16th April 1945 she had departed Norway and was reroute to Japan with an extremely important cargo, which included technical drawings, a Me-262 jet fighter in crates, 550 kg of U-238 uranium ore for atom bomb development, several high ranking German technological experts, and 2 Japanese officers. When Kptlt. Fehler heard of the cease-fire orders on 4 May 1945, he decides to surrender to the Americans, rather than the Canadians, being in a relatively equal position to do either. Still at war with the U.S., the Japanese officers take their own lives rather than surrender.

Also on this date:

- British troops land on the Channel island Alderney, taking 3,200 Germans prisoner.
- Heavy fighting continues on Okinawa, as the U.S. 77th Division takes ‘Chocolate Drop Hill’.

- **May 16 1960 – Cold War:** U.S. - Soviet Summit Meeting Collapses » In the wake of the Soviet downing of an American U-2 spy plane on 1 MAY, Russian leader Nikita Khrushchev lashes out at the United States and President Dwight D. Eisenhower at a Paris summit meeting between the two heads of state. Khrushchev’s outburst angered Eisenhower and doomed any chances for successful talks or negotiations at the summit.

On May 1, 1960, the Soviets shot down a CIA spy plane and captured the pilot, Gary Francis Powers. The United States issued public denials that the aircraft was being used for espionage, claiming instead that it was merely a weather plane that had veered off course. The Soviets thereupon triumphantly produced Powers, large pieces of wreckage from the plane, and Powers’ admission that he was working for the CIA. The incident was a public relations fiasco for Eisenhower, who was forced to admit that the plane had indeed been spying on Russia.



Tensions from the incident were still high when Eisenhower and Khrushchev arrived in Paris to begin a summit meeting on 16 MAY. Khrushchev wasted no time in tearing into the United States, declaring that Eisenhower would not be welcome in Russia during his scheduled visit to the Soviet Union in June. He condemned the “inadmissible, provocative actions” of the United States in sending the spy plane over the Soviet Union, and demanded that Eisenhower ban future flights and punish those responsible for this “deliberate violation of the Soviet Union.” When Eisenhower agreed only to a “suspension” of the spy plane flights, Khrushchev left the meeting in a huff. According to U.S. officials, the president was “furious” at Khrushchev for his public dressing-down of the United States. The summit meeting officially adjourned the next day with no further meetings between Khrushchev and Eisenhower. Eisenhower’s planned trip to Moscow in June was scrapped.

The collapse of the May 1960 summit meeting was a crushing blow to those in the Soviet Union and the United States who believed that a period of “peaceful coexistence” between the two superpowers was on the horizon. During the previous few years, both Eisenhower and Khrushchev had publicly indicated their desire for an easing of Cold War tensions, but the spy plane incident put an end to such talk, at least for the time being.

- **May 16 1965 – Vietnam:** *Accident at Bien Hoa Kills 27 U.S. Servicemen* » What is described by the United States government as “an accidental explosion of a bomb on one aircraft which spread to others” at the Bien Hoa air base leaves 27 U.S. servicemen and 4 South Vietnamese dead and some 95 Americans injured. More than 40 U.S. and South Vietnamese planes, including 10 B-57s, were destroyed.
- **May 16 1968 – Vietnam:** *Navy Corpsman Receives Medal of Honor for Action* » Donald E. Ballard, Corpsman U.S. Navy, is awarded the Medal of Honor for action this date in Quang Tri Province. Ballard, from Kansas City, Missouri, was a corpsman with Company M, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 3rd Marine Division.



He had just finished evacuating two Marines with heatstroke when his unit was surprised by a Viet Cong ambush. Immediately racing to the aid of a casualty, Ballard applied a field dressing and was directing four Marines in the removal of the wounded man when an enemy soldier tossed a grenade into the group. With a warning shout of, “Grenade!” Ballard vaulted over the stretcher and pulled the grenade under his body. The grenade did not go off. Nevertheless, he received the Medal of Honor for his selfless act of courage. Ballard was only the second man whose valor was rewarded despite the fact that the deadly missile did not actually explode.

- **May 16 1972 – Vietnam:** *U.S. Bombing Destroys Main Fuel Line* » A series of air strikes over five days destroys all of North Vietnam’s pumping stations in the southern panhandle, thereby cutting North Vietnam’s main fuel line to South Vietnam. These strikes were part of Operation Linebacker, an air offensive against North Vietnam that had been ordered by President Richard Nixon in early April in response to a massive communist offensive launched on 30 MAR.

-o-o-O-o-o-

- **May 17 1863 – Civil War:** *Battle of Big Black River Bridge* » The Union army defeats the Confederates on the Big Black River in Mississippi and drives them into Vicksburg in part of a brilliant campaign by General Ulysses S. Grant. The Union leader had swung his army down the Mississippi River past the strong riverfront defenses, and landed in Mississippi south of Vicksburg. He then moved northeast toward Jackson and split his force to defeat Joseph Johnston’s troops in that city and John C. Pemberton’s at Champion Hill.



During the engagement at Champion Hill, a Confederate division under William Loring split from Pemberton’s main force and drifted south of the battlefield. Pemberton was forced to retreat to the Big Black River where he waited for Loring’s troops. Loring, however, was heading east to join Johnston’s army because he believed he could not reach Pemberton. While Pemberton waited for Loring on a bridge over the Big Black River, Grant attacked.

Pemberton suffered his second defeat in two days at the Big Black River. The battle began at dawn, and by 10 a.m. the Confederate position appeared hopeless. The Confederates suffered 1,752 troops killed, wounded or captured, while the Yankees had 279 casualties. Pemberton withdrew across the bridge and then burned it down. With the bridge out, Grant could no longer advance. But he now had Pemberton backed up into Vicksburg. He soon closed the ring and laid siege to the town, which surrendered on July 4, 1863.

- **May 17 1864 – Civil War:** *Battle of Adairsville* » This was a battle of the Atlanta Campaign fought just northeast of Rome, Georgia. The brief engagement was a Confederate delaying action that allowed General Joseph E. Johnston to bait a trap for the Union army at Cassville, GA. Casualties and losses: USA 200 – CSA Unknown
- **May 17 1885 – Native Americans:** *Geronimo Breaks Out of San Carlos, AZ Reservation* » For the second time in two years, the Apache leader Geronimo breaks out of an Arizona reservation, sparking panic among Arizona settlers. A famous medicine man, Geronimo achieved national fame by being the last American Indian to surrender formally to the United States. For nearly 30 years, Geronimo



and his followers resisted the attempts of Americans to take away their southwestern homeland and confine them to a reservation. He was a fearless warrior and a master of desert survival. The best officers of the U.S. Army found it nearly impossible to find Geronimo, much less decisively defeat him.

In 1877, Geronimo was forced to move to the San Carlos, Arizona, reservation for the first time, but he was scarcely beaten. Instead, Geronimo treated the reservation as just one small part of the vast territory he still considered to belong to the Apache. Fed up with the strictures and corruption of the reservation, he and many other Apache broke out for the first time in 1881. For nearly two years, the Apache band raided the southwestern countryside despite the best efforts of the army to stop them. Finally, Geronimo wearied of the continual harassment of the U.S. Army and agreed to return to the reservation in 1884, much on his own terms.

He did not stay long. Among the many rules imposed upon the Apache on the reservation was the prohibition of any liquor, including a weak beer they had traditionally brewed from corn. In early May 1885, Geronimo and a dozen other leaders deliberately staged a corn beer festival. Reasoning that the authorities would be unlikely to try to punish such a large group, they openly admitted the deed, expecting that it would lead to negotiations. Because of a communication mix-up, however, the army failed to respond. Geronimo and the others assumed the delay indicated the army was preparing some drastic punishment for their crime. Rather than remain exposed and vulnerable on the reservation, Geronimo fled with 42 men and 92 women and children.

Quickly moving south, Geronimo raided settlements along the way for supplies. In one instance, he attacked a ranch owned by a man named Phillips, killing him, his wife, and his two children. Frightened settlers demanded swift military action, and General George Crook coordinated a combined Mexican and American manhunt for the Apache. Thousands of soldiers tracked the fugitives but Geronimo and his band split into small groups and remained elusive.

Crook's failure to apprehend the Indians led to his eventual resignation. General Nelson Miles replaced him. Miles committed 5,000 troops to the campaign and even established 30 heliograph stations to improve communications. Still, Miles was also unable to find the elusive warrior. Informed that many of the reservation Apache, including his own family, had been taken to Florida, Geronimo apparently lost the will to fight. After a year and a half of running, Geronimo and his 38 remaining followers surrendered unconditionally to Miles on September 3, 1886. Relocated to Florida, Geronimo was imprisoned and kept from his family for two years. Finally, he was freed and moved with this family to Indian Territory in Oklahoma. He died of pneumonia at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in 1909.

- **May 17 1942 – WW2:** USS Tautog (SS-199) sinks Japanese submarine I-28; USS Triton (SS-201) sinks the Japanese submarine (I-64).
- **May 17 1943 – WW2:** *Memphis Belle Flies its 25th Bombing Mission* » The crew of the Memphis Belle, one of a group of American bombers based in Britain, becomes the first B-17 crew to complete 25 missions over Europe. It performed its 25th and last mission, in a bombing raid against Lorient, a German submarine base. But before returning back home to the United States, film footage was shot of Belle's crew receiving combat medals. This was but one part of a longer documentary on

a day in the life of an American bomber, which included dramatic footage of a bomber being shot out of the sky, with most of its crew parachuting out, one by one. Another film sequence showed a bomber returning to base with its tail fin missing. What looked like damage inflicted by the enemy was, in fact, the result of a collision with another American bomber.

The Memphis Belle documentary would not be released for another 11 months, as more footage was compiled to demonstrate the risks these pilots ran as they bombed “the enemy again and again and again—until he has had enough.” The film’s producer, Lieutenant Colonel William Wyler, was known for such non-military fare as *The Letter*, *Wuthering Heights* and *Jezebel*. A fictional film about the B-17, called *Memphis Belle*, was released in 1990, starring John Lithgow, Matthew Modine and Eric Stoltz.

- **May 17 1970 – Vietnam War: *Operations Continue in Cambodia*** » A force of 10,000 South Vietnamese troops, supported by 200 U.S. advisers, aircraft and logistical elements, attack into what was known as the “Parrot’s Beak,” the area of Cambodia that projects into South Vietnam above the Mekong Delta. The South Vietnamese reached the town of Takeo in a 20-mile thrust. This action was part of the ongoing operation ordered by President Richard Nixon in April. U.S. and South Vietnamese forces launched a limited “incursion” into Cambodia that included 13 major ground operations to clear North Vietnamese sanctuaries 20 miles inside the Cambodian border in both the “Parrot’s Beak” and the densely vegetated “Fishhook” area (across the border from South Vietnam, 70 miles from Saigon). Some 50,000 South Vietnamese soldiers and 30,000 U.S. troops were involved, making it the largest operation of the war since Operation Junction City in 1967.



In the United States, news of the incursion set off a wave of antiwar demonstrations, including one at Kent State University that resulted in the killing of four students by Army National Guard troops. Another protest at Jackson State in Mississippi resulted in the shooting of two students when police opened fire on a women’s dormitory. The incursion also angered many in Congress who felt that Nixon was illegally widening the scope of the war; this resulted in a series of congressional resolutions and legislative initiatives that would severely limit the executive power of the president.

- **May 17 1972 – Vietnam War: *South Vietnamese Reinforcements Near An Loc*** » Preceded by five B-52 strikes, which reportedly killed 300 North Vietnamese to the south, South Vietnamese forces arrive by helicopter to within two miles of An Loc in continuing efforts to relieve this besieged city. It had been surrounded by three North Vietnamese divisions since early April. The North Vietnamese had been holding An Loc under siege for almost three months while they made repeated attempts to take the city. The defenders suffered heavy casualties, including 2,300 dead or missing, but with the

aid of U.S. advisors and American airpower, they managed to hold An Loc against vastly superior odds until the siege was finally lifted on 18 JUN.

- **May 17 1987 – U.S.\*Iraq: Iraq Attacks U.S. Frigate** » On this day During the Iran-Iraq War an Iraqi Dassault Mirage F1 fighter jet launched two Exocet missiles at the USS Stark, a Perry class frigate. The first struck the port side of the ship and failed to explode, though it left burning propellant in its wake; the second struck moments later in approximately the same place and penetrated through to crew quarters, where it exploded, killing 37 crew members and leaving 21 injured. Whether or not Iraqi leadership authorized the attack is still unknown. Initial claims by the Iraqi government (that Stark was inside the Iran–Iraq War zone) were shown to be false, and the motives and orders of the pilot remain unanswered.

Though American officials claimed that the pilot who attacked Stark had been executed, an ex-Iraqi Air Force commander since stated he had not been punished, and was still alive at the time. The attack remains the only successful anti-ship missile strike on an American warship. Due to the extensive political and military cooperation between the Iraqis and Americans by 1987, the attack had little effect on relations between the two countries.

- **May 17 1990 – Cold War: Gorbachev Meets with Lithuanian Prime Minister** » Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev meets with Lithuanian Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskiene in an effort to settle differences arising from Lithuania’s recent proclamation of independence from the Soviet Union. For Gorbachev, the meeting was a test of his skill and ability to maintain the crumbling Soviet empire.



Lithuania became part of the Soviet Union after Soviet forces seized it in 1939, and the country remained a Soviet republic for the next 50 years. In 1989, Gorbachev publicly repudiated the so-called Brezhnev doctrine. This doctrine—established in 1968 to justify the Soviet military intervention to put down anti-government protest in Czechoslovakia—allowed the Soviet Union to use force to preserve already existing communist governments in other states. Gorbachev’s repudiation was obviously intended to improve relations with Russia’s increasingly restless allies in eastern Europe, where anti-government and anticommunist protests were growing. In Lithuania, however, anti-Soviet nationalists took Gorbachev’s statement to mean that Russia would not interfere with an independent movement in one of its own republics. On March 11, 1990, Lithuania declared itself an independent republic.

Gorbachev, however, had no intention of allowing republics to break free from the USSR. On 17 MAY, Gorbachev met with Lithuanian Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskiene in Moscow to discuss

the situation. Despite optimistic press releases concerning their talks, it quickly became apparent that Lithuania would not back down on its claim to independence. After imposing economic sanctions and threatening military action, the Soviet Union launched a full-scale military assault against Lithuania in January 1991. The Soviet effort was in vain, however. In December 1991, 11 of the 12 Soviet Socialist Republics (including Lithuania) proclaimed their independence and established the Commonwealth of Independent States. A few weeks later, Gorbachev resigned as president and the Soviet Union ceased to exist.

The Lithuanian-Soviet conflict had a significant impact on U.S.-Soviet relations. Many in the United States were horrified by the January 1991 military Soviet intervention into Lithuania. The U.S. Congress quickly moved to end economic assistance to the Soviet Union. Some U.S. officials also believed that Russia's actions indicated that Gorbachev, despite his talk of reform, was increasingly under the control of hard-liners in the Soviet government.

- **May 17 2006 – U.S. Navy:** The aircraft carrier USS Oriskany is sunk in the Gulf of Mexico as an artificial reef. A Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal team from Panama City, FL detonated C-4 explosive charges of approximately 500 lb (230 kg), strategically placed on 22 sea connection pipes in various machinery spaces. The ship sank stern first 37 minutes after detonation in 210 ft (64 m) of water in the Gulf of Mexico.



-o-o-O-o-o-

- **May 18, 1775:** Col. Benedict Arnold captures a British sloop at St. Johns in Quebec, Canada and renames her Enterprise, the first of many famous ships with that name.
- **May 18, 1861 – Civil War:** *Battle of Sewell's Point* » An inconclusive exchange of cannon fire between the Union gunboat USS Monticello, supported by the USS Thomas Freeborn, and Confederate batteries on Sewell's Point that took place on May 18, 19 and 21, 1861, in Norfolk County, Virginia in the early days of the War. Little damage was done to either side. By the end of April 1861, USS Cumberland and a small number of supporting ships were enforcing the Union blockade of the southeastern Virginia ports at the southern end of the Chesapeake Bay and had captured several ships which attempted to pass the blockade. USS Monticello's bombardment of the Sewell's Point battery was one of the earliest Union Navy actions against Confederate forces during the Civil War. While it has been suggested by some sources that the Monticello's action may have been the first gunfire by the Union Navy during the Civil War, a brief exchange of cannon fire between the U.S. gunboat USS Yankee and shore batteries manned by Virginia volunteer forces

which had not yet been incorporated into the Confederate States Army at Gloucester Point, Virginia on the York River occurred on May 7, 1861.

- **May 18, 1863 – Great Britain\*France:** The Seven Years' War begins when Great Britain declares war on France.
- **May 18, 1863 – Civil War:** *The 47 Day Siege of Vicksburg Begins* » In a series of maneuvers, Union Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and his Army of the Tennessee crossed the Mississippi River and drove the Confederate Army of Mississippi, led by Lt. Gen. John C. Pemberton, into the defensive lines surrounding the fortress city of Vicksburg, Mississippi.



Vicksburg was the last major Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River; therefore, capturing it completed the second part of the Northern strategy, the Anaconda Plan. When two major assaults against the Confederate fortifications, on 19 and 22 MAY, were repulsed with heavy casualties, Grant decided to besiege the city beginning on 25 MAY. After holding out for more than forty days, with their supplies nearly gone, the garrison surrendered on July 4. The successful ending of the Vicksburg Campaign significantly degraded the ability of the Confederacy to maintain its war effort. This action, combined with the surrender of Port Hudson to Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks on 9 JUL, yielded command of the Mississippi River to the Union forces, who would hold it for the rest of the conflict.

The Confederate surrender on 4 JUL, is sometimes considered, when combined with Gen. Robert E. Lee's defeat at Gettysburg by Maj. Gen. George Meade the previous day, the turning point of the war. It cut off the Trans-Mississippi Department (containing the states of Arkansas, Texas and part of Louisiana) from the rest of the Confederate States, effectively splitting the Confederacy in two for the duration of the war. Casualties and losses: U.S. 4,835 - CSA 32,697.

- **May 18 1864 – Civil War:** *Battle of Yellow Bayou, Louisiana* » Battle between Union and Confederate forces took place in Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana. After learning of Confederate forces in Yellow Bayou, Brig. Gen. Joseph A. Mower was ordered to halt their advance. Union forces subsequently attacked the Confederates and drove them back to their main line. The Confederates then counter-attacked, forcing the Union forces to retreat, until they eventually repulsed the Confederate attack. This “see-saw” action lasted a few hours, until the ground cover caught fire and both sides were forced to retreat. Yellow Bayou was the last battle of the Union’s ill-fated Red River

Expedition, and it ensured that the Federals would escape as an army to fight again. Casualties and losses: Union 360 – CSA 500.

- **May 18 1871 – Native Americans:** *Chief Satanta Attacks Wagon Trains, Killing Teamsters* » The Kiowa Chief Satanta joins with other Indians to massacre a wagon train near the Red River in northeastern Texas.

One of the leading chiefs of the Kiowa in the 1860s and 1870s, Satanta was a fearsome warrior but also a skilled orator and diplomat. He helped negotiate and signed treaties with the U.S. establishing a Kiowa reservation in Indian Territory (modern-day Oklahoma), but Satanta remained resistant to government efforts to force the Kiowa to abandon their nomadic ways. The 1867 treaty allowed the Kiowa periodically to leave the reservation to hunt buffalo, but for more than a year, Satanta and other Kiowa continued to hunt and never even set foot on reservation lands. Fearing the Kiowa hunters would never come to the reservation, in late 1868 General Philip Sheridan had them arrested and brought in by force.

From the start, Satanta detested reservation life. He did not intend to become a farmer, a chore he considered to be women's work. The beef provided by the Indian agents was stringy and vastly inferior to fresh buffalo, and he hated the tasteless corn they received. In 1870, when the Indian agent finally agreed that they could leave on another of the hunts provided for by the treaty, Satanta and several Kiowa happily rode off to Texas in search of buffalo. Along the way, they raided several white settlers, but the Kiowa were not identified and later returned to the reservation. The following spring, Satanta grew more aggressive. He joined a large party of other Kiowa and Comanche who bridled under the restrictions of the reservation and determined to leave. Heading south to Texas, the Indians eluded army patrols along the Red River and crossed into Texas. On this day in 1871, they spotted a wagon train traveling along the Butterfield Trail. Hoping to steal guns and ammunition, the warriors attacked the 10 freight trains, killing seven teamsters. They let the remaining drivers escape while they looted the wagons.

Again, Satanta and the other warriors returned to the reservation. Informed of the Texas raid, the Indian agent asked if any of his charges had participated. Amazingly, Satanta announced that he had led the raid, and that their poor treatment on the reservation justified it. "I have repeatedly asked for arms and ammunition," he explained, "which you have not furnished, and made many other requests, which have not been granted." Taken to Texas for trial, Satanta was sentenced to hang, but the penalty was later commuted to life in prison. Besieged with humanitarian requests, the Texas governor paroled Satanta back to the reservation in 1873. The following summer, Satanta again led war parties off the reservations, this time to participate in the Red River War from 1874 to 1875. By October 1875, Satanta and his allies were again forced to surrender.

Despite his vocal protests that he preferred execution to imprisonment, Satanta was returned to the Texas State Penitentiary in Huntsville. He fell into a deep depression, refused to eat, and slowly began to starve to death. Transferred to the prison hospital in 1878, he died by suicide by leaping headfirst from a second-story window.

- **May 18 1917 – WWI:** The Selective Service Act of 1917 is passed, giving the President of the United States the power of conscription.

- **May 18 1940 – WW2 Era:** German troops conquer Brussels, the capital of Belgium.
- **May 18 1941 – WW2 Era:** Italian army in Ethiopia under general Aosta in the East African Campaign surrenders to Britain but an Italian guerrilla war continued until 1943. Despite the return of Emperor Haile Selassie from his exile and the recognition of Ethiopian sovereignty with the signing of an Anglo-Ethiopian Agreement in December 1944, some regions still remained under British occupation for several more years.
- **May 18 1943 – WW2:** *Hitler Gives the Order for Operation Alaric* » Adolf Hitler launches the German occupation of Italy in the event its Axis partner either surrendered or switched its allegiance. This operation was considered so top secret that Hitler refused to issue a written order. Instead, he communicated verbally his desire that Field Marshal Erwin Rommel should assemble and ultimately command 11 divisions for the occupation of Italy to prevent an Allied foothold in the peninsula.
- **May 18 1943 – WW2:** *A Test For U.S. Heavy Bombing Tactics* » On 13 MAY, General Eisenhower told Army chief of staff, General George C. Marshall, “I want to make the capture of the island of Pantelleria a sort of laboratory to determine the effect of concentrated heavy bombing on a defended coastline. When the time comes we are going to concentrate everything we have to see whether damage to material, personnel and morale cannot be made so serious as to make a landing a rather simple affair.” The main air assault was to begin on 18 MAY and would consist of 50 medium bomber sorties and 50 fighter-bomber sorties daily against the island through 5 JUN. On 6 JUN, the plan would shift to around-the-clock aerial bombing that would increase in intensity up to the scheduled invasion day, 11 JUN. Opposing this air armada were approximately 900 Axis aircraft.

The Allied air offensive began on 18 MAY with the first daylight sorties. At night, RAF bombers dropped 4,000-pound blockbuster bombs, and RAF Hurricane fighters dropped additional bombs to cause the inhabitants to lose sleep. On 21 MAY, P-40 and P-38 fighters destroyed the Wurzburg radar apparatus, and on 23 MAY, the Freya radar was abandoned. This effectively rendered the island blind to incoming Allied air attacks and prevented warnings to Axis air bases in Sicily. From 18 to 29 May over 1,500 sorties were flown against the island with 1,300 tons of bombs dropped. These sorties targeted the harbor, airfield, and shore batteries with 900 tons of bombs dropped on the port and airfield and 400 tons devoted to the shore batteries. The heavy B-17s commenced operations on 1 JUN.

The second phase of the bombing campaign began 6 JUN and lasted six days. The attacks increased in ferocity from 200 sorties on the first day to 1,500 by 11 JUN. During this phase an amazing 5,324 tons of bombs and 3,712 sorties were flown against the island. All this bombing reduced the developed areas of Pantelleria to destruction and chaos. Damage to the port, roads, housing, and phone lines was extreme. The electricity production facilities were knocked out, and several of the shore batteries were destroyed. As the garrison was making preparations to surrender on 11 JUN, the Allies were making their amphibious assault on the island. The only casualty suffered by the Allies during the landing and occupation occurred when an unlucky corporal of the 2nd Sherwood Foresters was kicked in the head by a mule and perished. The island’s garrison surrendered. The

island was taken on schedule, and 11,621 Italians and 78 Germans were taken prisoner. When prisoners from Lampedusa are included, over 16,000 Axis soldiers were captured.

As for airpower's overall effectiveness during the Operation, post-campaign analysis showed varying results. While all the mission objectives for airpower were achieved, only 108 Axis soldiers were killed and 200 wounded by Allied air attacks. Considering the size of the garrison and the weight of the bombing, these were meager casualties indeed.

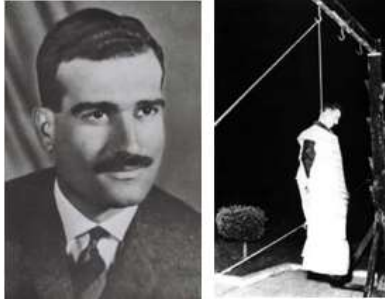
- **May 18 1944 – WW2: Monte Cassino Taken** » The Polish Corps, part of a multinational Allied Eighth Army offensive in southern Italy, finally pushes into Monte Cassino as the battle to break German Field Marshal Albert Kesselring's defensive Gustav Line nears its end. The Allied push northward to Rome began in January with the landing of 50,000 seaborne troops at Anzio, 33 miles south of the Italian capital. Despite having met very little resistance, the Allies chose to consolidate their position rather than immediately battle north to Rome. Consequently, German forces under the command of Field Marshal Kesselring were able to create a defensive line that cut across the center of the peninsula.



General Wladyslaw Anders, leader of the Polish troops who would raise their flag over the ruins of the famous Benedictine monastery at Monte Cassino, commenting on the cost of the battle, said, "Corpses of German and Polish soldiers, sometimes entangled in a deathly embrace, lay everywhere, and the air was full of the stench of rotting bodies." The 122 day battle ends after seven days of the 4<sup>th</sup> battle as German paratroopers evacuate. Casualties and losses: Allies 55,000 - Axis ~20,000.

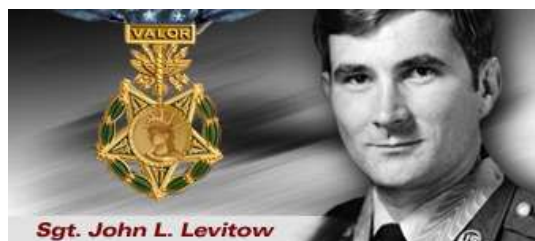
- **May 18 1955 – France\*Vietnam: Operation Passage to Freedom** » Event name used by the United States Navy to describe its assistance in transporting in 1954–55 310,000 Vietnamese civilians, soldiers and non-Vietnamese members of the French Army from communist North Vietnam (the Democratic Republic of Vietnam) to South Vietnam (the State of Vietnam, later to become the Republic of Vietnam). The French and other countries may have transported a further 500,000.
- **May 18 1965 – Israel\*Syria War: Israeli Spy Eli Cohen is Executed** » Cohen is best known for his espionage work in 1961–1965 in Syria, where he developed close relationships with the political and military hierarchy and became the Chief Adviser to the Minister of Defense. Syrian counter-intelligence authorities eventually uncovered the spy conspiracy, captured and convicted Cohen under pre-war martial law, sentencing him to death and executing him by public hanging on 18 MAY.





The intelligence he gathered before his arrest is said to have been an important factor in Israel's success in the Six-Day War. Cohen's last wish to see a rabbi was respected by the prison authorities. While on his way to the Marjeh Square in a truck, he was accompanied by Nissim Andabo, the elderly Chief Rabbi of Syria.

- **May 18 1966 – Vietnam War:** *Laird Charges Creditability Gap* » U.S. Representative Melvin Laird (R-Wisconsin) states that because the Johnson administration is not providing the American public with precise information on planned troop deployments to Vietnam, a “credibility gap” is developing. Informed sources reported that 254,000 U.S. troops were serving in Vietnam, and that another 90,000 were performing tasks directly concerned with the war. These numbers were higher than those provided by the government. This was emblematic of the gap between what the administration said and what it did, leading to a growing distrust of the government among a large part of American society. This mistrust also plagued Johnson’s successor, Richard Nixon, who made Laird his secretary of defense. Like the Johnson administration, Nixon’s administration was marked by attempts to manage the information released about the war. Under Nixon, this included the secret bombing campaign of Cambodia, which was kept from the American public until it was exposed by William Beecher, a military correspondent for the New York Times, in May 1969.
- **May 18 1969 – Vietnam War:** More than 1,500 communist troops attack U.S. and South Vietnamese camps near Xuan Loc, located 38 miles east of Saigon. After five hours of intense fighting, the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces were driven off. At the U.S. camp, 14 Americans were killed and 39 wounded; 24 enemy soldiers were killed in the action. At the South Vietnamese camp, 4 South Vietnamese were killed and 14 wounded, with 54 communist soldiers reported killed and 9 captured.
- **May 18 1970 – Vietnam:** *Air Force Sergeant Awarded Medal of Honor* » At the White House, President Richard Nixon presents Sgt. John L. Levitow with the Medal of Honor for heroic action performed on February 24, 1969, over Long Binh Army Post in South Vietnam.



Then an Airman 1st Class, Levitow was the loadmaster on a Douglas AC-47 gunship. His aircraft had been supporting several Army units that were engaged in battle with North Vietnamese troops when an enemy mortar hit the aircraft's right wing, exploding in the wing frame. Thousands of pieces of shrapnel ripped through the plane's thin skin, wounding four of the crew. Levitow was struck forty times in his right side; although bleeding heavily from these wounds, he threw himself on an activated, smoking magnesium flare, dragged himself and the flare to the open cargo door, and tossed the flare out of the aircraft just before it ignited. For saving his fellow crewmembers and the gunship, Airman Levitow was nominated for the nation's highest award for valor in combat. He was one of only two enlisted airmen to win the Medal of Honor for service in Vietnam and was one of only five enlisted airmen ever to win the medal, the first since World War II.

- **May 18 1974 – India:** *India Joins the Nuclear Club* » In the Rajasthan Desert in the state of Pokhran, India successfully detonates its first nuclear weapon, a fission bomb similar in explosive power to the U.S. atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan. The test fell on the traditional anniversary of the Buddha's enlightenment, and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi received the message "Buddha has smiled" from the exuberant test-site scientists after the detonation. The test, which made India the world's sixth nuclear power, broke the nuclear monopoly of the five members of the U.N. Security Council—the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, China, and France.

India, which suffered continuing border disputes with China, refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968. Fearing a second war with China and a fourth war with Pakistan, India actively sought the development of a nuclear deterrent in the early 1970s. The successful detonation of its first bomb on this date, set off an expanded arms race with Pakistan that saw no further nuclear tests but the development of lethal intermediate and long-range ballistic missiles by both countries. On May 11, 1998, India resumed nuclear testing, leading to international outrage and Pakistan's detonation of its first nuclear bomb later in the month.

- **May 18 1989 – Cold War:** *One Million Protesters Take to the Streets in Beijing* » A crowd of protesters, estimated to number more than one million, marches through the streets of Beijing calling for a more democratic political system. Just a few weeks later, the Chinese government moved to crush the protests.



Protests in China had been brewing since the mid-1980s when the communist government announced that it was loosening some of the restrictions on the economy, allowing for a freer market to develop. Encouraged by this action, a number of Chinese (particularly students) began to call for similar action on the political front. By early 1989, peaceful protests began to take place in some of China's largest urban areas. The largest of these protests took place around Tiananmen Square in the center of Beijing. By the middle of May 1989, enormous crowds took to the streets with songs, slogans, and banners calling for greater democracy and the ouster of some hard-line Chinese officials. The Chinese government responded with increasingly harsh measures, including arrests and beatings of some protesters. On June 3, 1989, Chinese armed forces stormed into Tiananmen Square and swept the protesters away. Thousands were killed and over 10,000 were arrested in what came to be known as the Tiananmen Square Massacre.

The protests attracted worldwide attention. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev applauded the protesters and publicly declared that reform was necessary in communist China. In the United States, the Chinese students were treated like heroes by the American press. Following the Tiananmen Square Massacre, a shocked U.S. government suspended arms sales to China and imposed economic sanctions. The Chinese government, however, refused to bend, referring to the protesters as "lawless elements" of Chinese society.

-o-o-O-o-o-

- **May 19 1776 – American Revolution:** *Battle of the Cedars* » This was a series of military confrontations early in the war during the Continental Army's invasion of Canada that had begun in September 1775. The skirmishes, which involved limited combat, occurred in May around the Cedars, 28 mi west of Montreal, British North America. Continental Army units were opposed by a small force of British troops leading a larger force of Indians (primarily Iroquois) and militia.

Brigadier General Benedict Arnold, commanding the American military garrison at Montreal, had placed a detachment of his troops at the Cedars in April 1776, after hearing of rumors of British and Indian military preparations to the west of Montreal. The garrison surrendered on 19 MAY after a confrontation with a combined force of British and Indian troops led by Captain George Forster. American reinforcements on their way to the Cedars were also captured after a brief skirmish on 20 MAY. All of the captives were eventually released after negotiations between Forster and Arnold, who was bringing a sizable force into the area. The terms of the agreement required the Americans to release an equal number of British prisoners, but the deal was repudiated by Congress, and no British prisoners were freed.

Colonel Timothy Bedel and Lieutenant Isaac Butterfield, leaders of the American force at the Cedars, were court-martialed and cashiered from the Continental Army for their roles in the affair. After distinguishing himself as a volunteer, Bedel was given a new commission in 1777. News of the affair included greatly inflated reports of casualties, and often included graphic but false accounts of atrocities committed by the Iroquois, who made up the majority of the British forces. In reality each side suffered fewer than 6 casualties each.

- **May 19 1848 – Mexican\*American War:** Mexico ratifies the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo thus ending the war and ceding California, Nevada, Utah and parts of four other modern-day U.S. states to the United States for US\$15 million.
- **May 19 1864 – Civil War: *Battle of Spotsylvania Concludes*** » A dozen days of fighting around Spotsylvania, Virginia, ends with a Confederate attack against the Union forces. The epic campaign between the Army of the Potomac, under the effective direction of Ulysses S. Grant, and Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia began at the beginning of May when Union forces crossed the Rapidan River. After a bloody two-day battle in the Wilderness forest, Grant moved his army further south toward Spotsylvania Court House. This move was a departure from the tactics of the previous three years in the eastern theater of the Civil War. Since 1861, the Army of the Potomac had been coming down to Virginia under different commanders only to be defeated by the Army of Northern Virginia, usually under Lee's direction, and had always returned northward.



But Grant was different than the other Union generals. He knew that by this time Lee could not sustain constant combat. The numerical superiority of the Yankees would eventually wear Lee down. When Grant ordered his troops to move south, a surge of enthusiasm swept the Union veterans; they knew that in Grant they had an aggressive leader who would not allow the Confederates time to breathe. Nevertheless, the next stop proved to be more costly than the first.

After the battle in the Wilderness, Grant and Lee waged a footrace for the strategic crossroads at Spotsylvania. Lee won the race, and his men dug in. On 8 MAY, Grant attacked Lee, initiating a battle that raged for 12 awful days. The climax of which came on 12 MAY, when the two armies struggled for nearly 20 hours over an area that became known as the Bloody Angle.

The fighting continued sporadically for the next week as the Yankees tried to eject the Rebels from their breastworks. Finally, when the Confederates attacked on 19 MAY, Grant prepared to pull out of Spotsylvania. Convinced he could never dislodge the Confederates from their positions, he elected to try to circumvent Lee's army to the south. The Army of the Potomac moved, leaving behind 18,000 casualties at Spotsylvania to the Confederates' 12,000. In less than three weeks Grant had lost 33,000 men, with some of the worst fighting yet to come.

- **May 19 1916 – WWI Era: *Britain and France Conclude Sykes-Picot Agreement*** » representatives of Great Britain and France secretly reach an accord, known as the Sykes-Picot agreement, by which most of the Arab lands under the rule of the Ottoman Empire are to be divided into British and French spheres of influence with the conclusion of World War I.

After the war broke out in the summer of 1914, the Allies—Britain, France and Russia—held many discussions regarding the future of the Ottoman Empire, now fighting on the side of Germany and the Central Powers, and its vast expanse of territory in the Middle East, Arabia and southern-central Europe. In March 1915, Britain signed a secret agreement with Russia, whose designs on the empire’s territory had led the Turks to join forces with Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1914. By its terms, Russia would annex the Ottoman capital of Constantinople and retain control of the Dardanelles (the crucially important strait connecting the Black Sea with the Mediterranean) and the Gallipoli peninsula, the target of a major Allied military invasion begun in April 1915. In return, Russia would agree to British claims on other areas of the former Ottoman Empire and central Persia, including the oil-rich region of Mesopotamia.

More than a year after the agreement with Russia, British and French representatives, Sir Mark Sykes and Francois Georges Picot, authored another secret agreement regarding the future spoils of the Great War. Picot represented a small group determined to secure control of Syria for France; for his part, Sykes raised British demands to balance out influence in the region. The agreement largely neglected to allow for the future growth of Arab nationalism, which at that same moment the British government and military were working to use to their advantage against the Turks.

In the Sykes-Picot agreement, concluded on May 19, 1916, France and Britain divided up the Arab territories of the former Ottoman Empire into spheres of influence. In its designated sphere, it was agreed, each country shall be allowed to establish such direct or indirect administration or control as they desire and as they may think fit to arrange with the Arab State or Confederation of Arab States. Under Sykes-Picot, the Syrian coast and much of modern-day Lebanon went to France; Britain would take direct control over central and southern Mesopotamia, around the Baghdad and Basra provinces. Palestine would have an international administration, as other Christian powers, namely Russia, held an interest in this region. The rest of the territory in question—a huge area including modern-day Syria, Mosul in northern Iraq, and Jordan—would have local Arab chiefs under French supervision in the north and British in the south. Also, Britain and France would retain free passage and trade in the other’s zone of influence.

- **May 19 1935 – Lawrence of Arabia:** *Thomas Edward Lawrence Dies* » Known to the world as Lawrence of Arabia, he died as a retired Royal Air Force mechanic living under an assumed name. The legendary war hero, author, and archaeological scholar succumbed to injuries suffered in a motorcycle accident six days before.



He was born in Tremadoc, Wales, in 1888. In 1896, his family moved to Oxford. Lawrence studied architecture and archaeology, for which he made a trip to Ottoman (Turkish)-controlled Syria

and Palestine in 1909. In 1911, he won a fellowship to join an expedition excavating an ancient Hittite settlement on the Euphrates River. He worked there for three years and in his free time traveled and learned Arabic. In 1914, he explored the Sinai, near the frontier of Ottoman-controlled Arabia and British-controlled Egypt. The maps Lawrence and his associates made had immediate strategic value upon the outbreak of war between Britain and the Ottoman Empire in October 1914.

Lawrence enlisted in the war and because of his expertise in Arab affairs was assigned to Cairo as an intelligence officer. He spent more than a year in Egypt, processing intelligence information and in 1916 accompanied a British diplomat to Arabia, where Hussein ibn Ali, the emir of Mecca, had proclaimed a revolt against Turkish rule. Lawrence convinced his superiors to aid Hussein's rebellion, and he was sent to join the Arabian army of Hussein's son Faisal as a liaison officer.

Under Lawrence's guidance, the Arabians launched an effective guerrilla war against the Turkish lines. He proved a gifted military strategist and was greatly admired by the Bedouin people of Arabia. In July 1917, Arabian forces captured Aqaba near the Sinai and joined the British march on Jerusalem. Lawrence was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel. In November, he was captured by the Turks while reconnoitering behind enemy lines in Arab dress and was tortured and sexually abused before escaping. He rejoined his army, which slowly worked its way north to Damascus, which fell in October 1918.

Arabia was liberated, but Lawrence's hope that the peninsula would be united as a single nation was dashed when Arabian factionalism came to the fore after Damascus. Lawrence, exhausted and disillusioned, left for England. Feeling that Britain had exacerbated the rivalries between the Arabian groups, he appeared before King George V and politely refused the medals offered to him.

After the war, he lobbied hard for independence for Arab countries and appeared at the Paris peace conference in Arab robes. He became something of a legendary figure in his own lifetime, and in 1922 he gave up higher-paying appointments to enlist in the Royal Air Force (RAF) under an assumed name, John Hume Ross. He had just completed writing his monumental war memoir, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, and he hoped to escape his fame and acquire material for a new book. Found out by the press, he was discharged, but in 1923 he managed to enlist as a private in the Royal Tanks Corps under another assumed name, T.E. Shaw, a reference to his friend, Irish writer George Bernard Shaw. In 1925, Lawrence rejoined the RAF and two years later legally changed his last name to Shaw.

In 1927, an abridged version of his memoir was published and generated tremendous publicity, but the press was unable to locate Lawrence (he was posted to a base in India). In 1929, he returned to England and spent the next six years writing and working as an RAF mechanic. In 1932, his English translation of Homer's *Odyssey* was published under the name of T.E. Shaw. *The Mint*, a fictionalized account of Royal Air Force recruit training, was not published until 1955 because of its explicitness.

In February 1935, Lawrence was discharged from the RAF and returned to his simple cottage at Clouds Hill, Dorset. On 13 MAY, he was critically injured while driving his motorcycle through the Dorset countryside. He had swerved to avoid two boys on bicycles. On 19 MAY, he died at the hospital of his former RAF camp. All of Britain mourned his passing.

- **May 19, 1942 – WW2:** USS Pollack (SS-180) torpedoed and sank the 5350-ton converted light cruiser Bangkok Maru which was carrying 1,200 Japanese troops intending to reinforce the garrison at Tarawa. Pollack received a depth charge attack and was lightly damaged
- **May 19 1943 – WW2:** Berlin is declared "Judenrien" (free of Jews) and Churchill pledges Britain's full support to U.S. against Japan. Also on this date May 19, 1943 | USS Tuna (SS-203) came under attack by a Japanese submarine which fired one torpedo at the American ship before breaking off the attack enroute to her war patrol station.
- **May 19 1943 – WW2:** *FDR and Winston Churchill Plot D-Day* » British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt set a date for the cross-Channel landing that would become D-Day—May 1, 1944. That date will prove a bit premature, as bad weather becomes a factor. Addressing a joint session of Congress, Churchill warned that the real danger at present was the “dragging-out of the war at enormous expense” because of the risk that the Allies would become “tired or bored or split”—and play into the hands of Germany and Japan. He pushed for an early and massive attack on the “underbelly of the Axis.”

And so, to “speed” things up, the British prime minister and President Roosevelt set a date for a cross-Channel invasion of Normandy, in northern France, for May 1, 1944, regardless of the problems presented by the invasion of Italy, which was underway. It would be carried out by 29 divisions, including a Free French division, if possible. The D-Day invasion ended up taking place on June 6, 1944.

- **May 19 1944 – WW2:** German defense line in Italy collapses
- **May 19 1951 – Korean War:** United Nations forces begin counter offensive in Korea.
- **May 19 1964 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. Air Force Begins Operation Yankee Team* » Units of South Vietnam’s 9th and 21st Divisions, along with several South Vietnamese airborne battalions, open new stretches of road south of An Loc and come within two miles of the besieged city. In the Central Highlands, North Vietnamese troops, preceded by heavy shelling, tried to break through the lines of South Vietnam’s 23rd Division defending Kontum, but the South Vietnamese troops held firm. These actions were part of the North Vietnamese Nguyen Hue Offensive (later called the “Easter Offensive”), a massive invasion by North Vietnamese forces on 30 MAR to strike the blow that would win them the war. The attacking force included 14 infantry divisions and 26 separate regiments, with more than 120,000 troops and approximately 1,200 tanks and other armored vehicles. The main North Vietnamese objectives, in addition to Quang Tri in the north and Kontum in the Central Highlands, included An Loc farther to the south.

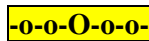
Initially, the South Vietnamese defenders were almost overwhelmed, particularly in the northernmost provinces, where they abandoned their positions in Quang Tri and fled south in the face of the enemy onslaught. At Kontum and An Loc, the South Vietnamese were more successful in defending against the attacks, but only after weeks of bitter fighting. Although the defenders suffered heavy casualties, they managed to hold their own with the aid of U.S. advisors and American airpower. Fighting continued all over South Vietnam into the summer months, but eventually the South Vietnamese forces prevailed against the invaders and retook Quang Tri in September. With the

communist invasion blunted, President Nixon declared that the South Vietnamese victory proved the viability of his Vietnamization program, which he had instituted in 1969 to increase the combat capability of the South Vietnamese armed forces.

- **May 19 1967 – Vietnam War:** U.S. planes bomb Hanoi for the first time.
- **May 19 1967 – Cold War:** *Soviets Ratify Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapons from Outer Space* » One of the first major treaties designed to limit the spread of nuclear weapons goes into effect as the Soviet Union ratifies an agreement banning nuclear weapons from outer space. The United States, Great Britain, and several dozen other nations had already signed and/or ratified the treaty.

With the advent of the so-called “space race” between the United States and the Soviet Union, which had begun in 1957 when the Russians successfully launched the Sputnik satellite, some began to fear that outer space might be the next frontier for the expansion of nuclear weapons. To forestall that eventuality, an effort directed by the United Nations came to fruition in January 1967 when the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and dozens of other nations signed off on a treaty banning nuclear weapons from outer space. The agreement also banned nations from using the moon, other planets, or any other “celestial bodies” as military outposts or bases.

The agreement was yet another step toward limiting nuclear weapons. In 1959, dozens of nations, including the United States and the Soviet Union, had agreed to ban nuclear weapons from Antarctica. In July 1963, the Limited Test Ban Treaty was signed, banning open-air and underwater nuclear tests. With the action taken in May 1967, outer space was also officially declared off-limits for nuclear weapons.



- **May 20 1775 – American Revolution:** Citizens of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina declare independence from Britain
- **May 20 1861 – Civil War:** Kentucky proclaims its neutrality in Civil War and North Carolina becomes 11th and last state to secede from the Union.
- **May 20 1864 – Civil War:** *Battle of Ware Bottom Church* » After severe fighting at Drewry's Bluff on the James River blunted a Union offensive against Richmond, Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler's Army of the James withdrew to the Bermuda Hundred peninsula in Virginia. On May 20th, eight Confederate brigades under Gen. Pierre G.T. Beauregard attacked Butler's advance picket lines near Ware Bottom Church. Nearly 10,000 soldiers from both sides clashed in the vicinity of the structure. At the end of the Confederate victory, over 1,400 men were left either dead or wounded.





Bermuda hundred earthworks

After the battle, the Confederates constructed the Howlett Line, a series of strong defensive works from the James to the Appomattox River, effectively trapping Butler's army on the Bermuda Hundred peninsula. The church itself stood for four weeks after the battle, until it was destroyed by Parker's Virginia Battery on the Howlett Line, who were harassed by Union sharpshooters inside the church. Confederate gains at the Bermuda Hundred battles allowed Beauregard to send Brig. Gen. Robert Hoke's division to reinforce Lee's army at Cold Harbor, while Grant was reinforced with the Union Eighteenth Corps from Butler. In June, Grant's movement against Petersburg caused Beauregard to abandon the Bermuda Hundred line in order to help Lee defend that strategic city. For a short while, the Ware Bottom Church area once again lay behind Union lines.\

- **May 20 1882 – Pre WWI: *Triple Alliance*** » An agreement between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy was formed and renewed periodically until it expired in 1915 during World War I. Germany and Austria-Hungary had been closely allied since 1879. Italy sought support against France shortly after it lost North African ambitions to the French. Each member promised mutual support in the event of an attack by any other great power. The treaty provided that Germany and Austria-Hungary were to assist Italy if it was attacked by France without provocation. In turn, Italy would assist Germany if attacked by France. In the event of a war between Austria-Hungary and Russia, Italy promised to remain neutral. The existence and membership of the treaty was well known, but its exact provisions were kept secret until 1919.



When the treaty was renewed in February 1887, Italy gained an empty promise of German support of Italian colonial ambitions in North Africa in return for Italy's continued friendship. Austria-Hungary had to be pressured by German chancellor Otto von Bismarck into accepting the principles of consultation and mutual agreement with Italy on any territorial changes initiated in the Balkans or on the coasts and islands of the Adriatic and Aegean seas. Italy and Austria-Hungary did not

overcome their basic conflict of interest in that region despite the treaty. In 1891 attempts were made to join Britain to the Triplice, which, though unsuccessful, were widely believed to have succeeded in Russian diplomatic circles.

Shortly after renewing the Alliance in June 1902, Italy secretly extended a similar guarantee to France. By a particular agreement, neither Austria-Hungary nor Italy would change the status quo in the Balkans without previous consultation. On 18 October 1883 Carol I of Romania, through his Prime Minister Ion I. C. Brătianu, had also secretly pledged to support the Triple Alliance, but he remained neutral since Austria-Hungary started the war [World War I]. On 1 November 1902, five months after the Triple Alliance was renewed, Italy reached an understanding with France that each would remain neutral in the event of an attack on the other.

When Austria-Hungary found itself at war in August 1914 with the rival Triple Entente, Italy proclaimed its neutrality, considering Austria-Hungary the aggressor and defaulting on the obligation to consult and agree compensations before changing the status quo in the Balkans, as agreed in 1912 renewal of the Triple Alliance. Following parallel negotiation with both Triple Alliance, aimed to keep Italy neutral, and the Triple Entente, aimed to make Italy enter the conflict, Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary.

- **May 20 1902 – Latin America Interventions:** United States withdraws its troops from Cuba (since Jan 1, 1899) as the first Cuban president, Tomas Estrada Palma takes power.
- **May 20 1940 – Holocaust:** The first prisoners arrive at a new concentration camp at Auschwitz.



- **May 20 1940 – WW2 Era:** *Germans Break Through to English Channel at Abbeville, France* » In reaching Abbeville, German armored columns, led by General Heinz Guderian (a tank expert), severed all communication between the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in the north and the main French army in the south. He also cut off the Force from its supplies in the west. The Germans now faced the sea, England in sight. Winston Churchill was prepared for such a pass, having already made plans for the withdrawal of the BEF (the BEF was a home-based army force that went to northern France at the start of both World Wars in order to support the French armies) and having called on the British Admiralty to prepare “a large number of vessels” to cross over to France if necessary. With German tanks at the Channel, Churchill prepared for a possible invasion of England itself, approving

a plan to put into place gun posts and barbed wire roadblocks to protect government offices in Whitehall as well as the prime minister's dwelling, 10 Downing Street.

- **May 20 1941 – WW2 Era: *Battle of Crete*** » The Battle was fought from May 20 to June 1, 1941. It saw the Germans make large-scale use of paratroopers during the invasion. Though a German victory, the Battle of Crete dubbed Operation Mercury saw these forces sustain such high losses that they were not used again by the Germans.

On the morning of May 20, 1941, Major General Kurt Student's aircraft began arriving over their drop zones. Departing their aircraft, the German paratroopers met fierce resistance upon landing. Their situation was worsened by German airborne doctrine, which called for their personal weapons to be dropped in a separate container. Armed with only pistols and knives, many German paratroopers were cut down as they moved to recover their rifles. Beginning around 8:00 AM, New Zealand forces defending Maleme airfield inflicted staggering losses on the Germans. More than 500 Germans were captured, including the local commander.



German paratroopers land in Crete, May 1941.

Those Germans arriving by glider fared little better as they immediately came under attack as they left their aircraft. While attacks against Maleme airfield were repulsed, the Germans succeeded in forming defensive positions to the west and east towards Chania. As the day progressed, German forces landed near Rethymnon and Heraklion. As in the west, losses during the opening engagements were high. Rallying, German forces near Heraklion managed to penetrate the city but were driven back by Greek troops. Near Maleme, German troops gathered and began attacks against Hill 107, which dominated the airfield.

Though the New Zealanders were able to hold the hill through the day, an error led to their being withdrawn during the night. As a result, the Germans occupied the hill and swiftly gained control of the airfield. This permitted the arrival of elements of the 5th Mountain Division though Allied forces heavily shelled the airfield, causing significant losses in aircraft and men. As fighting continued ashore on 21 MAY, the Royal Navy successfully dispersed a reinforcement convoy that night. Quickly understanding the full importance of Maleme, Freyberg ordered attacks against Hill 107 that night.

These were unable to dislodge the Germans and the Allies fell back. With the situation desperate, King George II of Greece was moved across the island and evacuated to Egypt. In the fighting for

Crete, the Allies suffered around 4,000 killed, 1,900 wounded, and 17,000 captured. The campaign also cost the Royal Navy 9 ships sunk and 18 damaged. German losses totaled 4,041 dead/missing, 2,640 wounded, 17 captured, and 370 aircraft destroyed.

- **May 20 1942 – U.S. Navy:** Black recruits are first permitted to serve in Navy.
- **May 20, 1944:** USS Angler (SS-240) sinks Japanese transport Otori Maru and survives depth charging by its escort.
- **May 20 1951 – Korean War:** U.S. Air Force Captain James Jabara becomes the first jet air ace in history.
- **May 20 1953 – Vietnam:** *French See “Light at the End of the Tunnel” in Vietnam* » Using a phrase that will haunt Americans in later years—“Now we can see [success in Vietnam] clearly, like light at the end of a tunnel”—Gen. Henri Navarre assumes command of French Union Forces in Vietnam. The French had been fighting a bloody war against communist insurgents in Vietnam since 1946. The insurgents, the Viet Minh, were fighting for independence and the French were trying to reassert their colonial rule in Indochina.



Upon assumption of command, Navarre addressed himself to the grave deterioration of the French military position, particularly in the North, by advancing a plan for a buildup of French forces preparatory to a massive attack against the Viet Minh. He received more support from U.S. Secretary of State John F. Dulles in Washington than he did from Paris, but his operations during the summer only underscored the inadequacy of French military means and French inability to deal with Viet Minh tactics. Ultimately, the French were decisively defeated by the Viet Minh at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954.

When the Americans took over the role of stopping communism in South Vietnam, they ran into the same kind of military problems that had plagued the French. Nevertheless, there was a widespread feeling that the United States would not make the same mistakes that the French had. In late 1967, Gen. William Westmoreland, commander of U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam, used similar language to Navarre’s when he asserted that the U.S. “had turned the corner in the war.” His credibility was seriously damaged on January 29, 1968, when the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese launched a massive attack that became known as the Tet Offensive. Conditioned by Westmoreland’s overly optimistic assessments of the war’s progress, many Americans were stunned that the communists could launch such a ferocious attack. In the end, the communists were defeated on the

battlefield, but achieved a great psychological victory that caused many in America to question the wisdom of continuing U.S. involvement in the war.

- **May 20 1956 – Cold War: Operation Redwing** » The first United States airborne hydrogen bomb is dropped over Bikini Atoll in the Pacific Ocean in a series of 17 nuclear test detonations from May to July 1956. The entire operation followed Project 56 and preceded Project 57. The primary intention was to test new, second-generation thermonuclear weapons. Also tested were fission devices intended to be used as primaries for thermonuclear weapons, and small tactical weapons for air defense. Redwing demonstrated the first United States airdrop of a deliverable hydrogen bomb during test Cherokee. Because the yields for many tests at Operation Castle in 1954 were dramatically higher than predictions, Redwing was conducted using an "energy budget": There were limits to the total amount of energy released, and the amount of fission yield was also strictly controlled. Fission, primarily "fast" fission of the natural uranium tamper surrounding the fusion capsule, greatly increases the yield of thermonuclear devices, and constitutes the great majority of the fallout, as nuclear fusion is a relatively clean reaction.



- **May 20 1967 – Vietnam:** 10,000 demonstrate against war in Vietnam.
- **May 20 1969 – Vietnam: Battle for Hamburger Hill Ends** » After 10 days and 10 bloody assaults, Hill 937 in South Vietnam is finally captured by U.S. and South Vietnamese troops. The Americans who fought there cynically dubbed Hill 937 “Hamburger Hill” because the battle and its high casualty rate reminded them of a meat grinder.



Located one mile east of the Laotian border, Hill 937 was ordered taken as part of Operation Apache Snow, a mission intended to limit enemy infiltration from Laos that threatened Hue to the northeast and Danang to the southeast. On May 10, following air and artillery strikes, a U.S.-led infantry force launched its first assault on the North Vietnamese stronghold but suffered a high proportion of casualties and fell back. Ten more infantry assaults came during the next 10 days, but Hill 937's North Vietnamese defenders did not give up their fortified position until 20 MAY. Almost 100 Americans were killed and more than 400 wounded in taking the hill, amounting to a shocking 70 percent casualty rate.

The same day that Hamburger Hill was finally captured, Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts called the operation "senseless and irresponsible" and attacked the military tactics of President Richard Nixon's administration. His speech before the Senate was seen as part of a growing public outcry over the U.S. military policy in Vietnam. U.S. military command had ordered Hill 937 taken primarily as a diversionary tactic, and on 28 MAY it was abandoned. This led to further outrage in America over what seemed a senseless loss of American lives. North Vietnamese forces eventually returned and re-fortified their original position. Casualties and losses: U.S. 444 - NVN 678.

- **May 20 1970 – Vietnam:** 100,000 march in NY supporting U.S. policies in Vietnam.
- **May 20 1985 – US\*Cuba:** U.S. began broadcasts to Cuba on Radio Marti.
- **May 20 1989 – China:** Martial law is declared in Beijing.

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

- **May 21 1856 – Native Americans:** *Lenape Indians Abduct Mary Campbell* » Ten year old Mary Campbell is abducted from her home in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, by Lenape Indians; she becomes an icon of the French and Indian War.

After her abduction, Campbell lived among the family of Chief Netawatwees in the Ohio Valley. In October 1758, the British and the Indians living in the Ohio Valley, including the Lenape, signed the Treaty of Easton, which temporarily brought peace to the Pennsylvania frontier, in exchange for British departure from the region. In an attempt to maintain their promise, the British created the Proclamation Line of 1763 prohibiting settlement beyond the Appalachian watershed. However, the creation of the infamous line failed to satisfy anyone. Euro-American settlers wanted to maintain their western claims, and after eliminating the threat of French military assistance for the Indians, the British treated Indian requests for assistance with disdain. By 1763, western Indians decided to unite their efforts and drive the British Empire back to the Atlantic in what would come to be known as Pontiac's War.

Mary Campbell was returned to a European settlement at age 16 in the famous release of captives orchestrated by Colonel Henry Bouquet at the conclusion of Pontiac's War in November 1764. At the end of a year of dispersed fighting between western Indians, the colonist Bouquet and a force of over 1,000 men managed to convince the allied Indian forces, who faced a winter low on supplies, to surrender without an exchange of fire.

Mary lived through the major turning points of late 18th-century America. She was a child taken captive during the imperial competition between Britain and France, an adolescent among the Indians as they attempted to reassert their rights to the American landscape and a woman among colonists as they fought to free themselves of the British Empire. Mary wed in 1770 as colonial protests became violent and gave birth to seven children as her home, Pennsylvania, was reborn first as a state independent of Britain and then as part of a new nation.

- **May 21 1856 – Pre Civil War:** *Lawrence, Kansas Captured and Sacked* » Pro-slavery activists, led by Douglas County Sheriff Samuel J. Jones, attacked and ransacked Lawrence, Kansas, a town which had been founded by anti-slavery settlers from Massachusetts who were hoping to make Kansas a free state. The incident fueled the irregular conflict in Kansas Territory that later became known as Bleeding Kansas. The human cost of the attack was low: only one person—a member of the pro-slavery gang—was killed, and his death was accidental. However, Jones and his men halted production of the Free-State newspapers the Kansas Free State and the Herald of Freedom (with the former ceasing publication altogether and the latter taking months to once again start up). The pro-slavery men also destroyed the Free State Hotel and Charles L. Robinson's house.
- **May 21 1861 – Civil War:** Richmond, VA is designated Confederate Capital.
- **May 21 1863 – Civil War:** The Union Army succeeds in closing off the last escape route from Port Hudson, Louisiana, in preparation for the coming siege.
- **May 21 1864 – Civil War:** The 13 day Battle of Spotsylvania Court House ends. Spotsylvania campaign casualties and losses were U.S. 18,399 - CSA 13,421. Grant disengaged his troops and ordered them to continue their march south toward the Confederate capital of Richmond.
- **May 21 1881 – USA:** *Red Cross Founded* » In Washington, D.C., humanitarians Clara Barton and Adolphus Solomons founded the American National Red Cross, an organization established to provide humanitarian aid to victims of wars and natural disasters in congruence with the International Red Cross. Barton, born in Massachusetts in 1821, worked with the sick and wounded during the American Civil War and became known as the “Angel of the Battlefield” for her tireless dedication. In 1865, President Abraham Lincoln commissioned her to search for lost prisoners of war, and with the extensive records she had compiled during the war she succeeded in identifying thousands of the Union dead at the Andersonville prisoner-of-war camp.

She was in Europe in 1870 when the Franco-Prussian War broke out, and she went behind the German lines to work for the International Red Cross. In 1873, she returned to the United States, and four years later she organized an American branch of the International Red Cross. The American Red Cross received its first U.S. federal charter in 1900. Barton headed the organization into her 80s and died in 1912.

- **May 21 1917 – Pre WWI:** *French Troops Occupy Fez, Sparking Second Moroccan Crisis* » Six years after the First Moroccan Crisis, during which Kaiser Wilhelm’s sensational appearance in Morocco provoked international outrage and led to a strengthening of the bonds between Britain and

France against Germany, French troops occupy the Moroccan city of Fez on May 21, 1911, sparking German wrath and a second Moroccan Crisis.

In March 1911, French authorities claimed, rebel tribes staged an uprising in Morocco, endangering one of the country's capital cities, Fez. The sultan appealed to France for help restoring order, which led the French to send their troops to Fez on May 21. Germany, however, wary of French power in Africa, believed the French had fomented the tribal revolt to create an excuse to occupy Morocco. The German foreign secretary, Alfred von Kiderlen-Wachter, neglected to consult key personnel, including the chiefs of the armed forces, before sending a naval cruiser, the Panther, to anchor in the harbor of Agadir on Morocco's Atlantic coast, asserting Germany's claims of French aggression on July 1 in an attempt to encourage resistance against the French among the native population.

Though, as in the First Moroccan Crisis, Germany had counted on France's isolation and eventual submission, this did not prove to be the case, as Britain once again backed France, its partner in the Entente Cordiale of 1904. David Lloyd George, Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer, made this clear in a public address in London at a banquet at the Mansion House on July 21. After Russia too gave its support to France, though somewhat ambiguously, and Austria-Hungary failed to lend Germany even its diplomatic support, the Germans were forced to back down. In the ensuing negotiations, concluding November 4, Germany reluctantly agreed to recognize the French protectorate over Morocco in return for territorial concessions—which they deemed inadequate—in other regions of Africa.

Meanwhile, military talks began between the British and French, and it was decided that their two navies would divide responsibilities, with the French taking control of the Mediterranean and the British the North Sea and the English Channel. As the two countries moved from friendship to alliance—counting Russia as well on their side—in the wake of the Second Moroccan Crisis, a powerful Germany found itself increasingly isolated, with only tenuous support from its fellow Triple Alliance members, Austria-Hungary and Italy. As Helmuth von Moltke, chief of the German general staff, wrote to the German chancellor, Theobald Bethmann von Hollweg in a memorandum dated December 2, 1912: All sides are preparing for European War, which all sides expect sooner or later.

- **May 21 1917 – WWI:** Leo Pinckney, 1st American drafted during WWI.
- **May 21 1940 – WW2 Era:** Allied counter attack at Atrrecht, northern France.
- **May 21 1940 – Holocaust:** *Nazis Kill “Unfit” People in East Prussia* » A “special unit” carries out its mission-and murders more than 1,500 hospital patients in East Prussia. Mentally ill patients from throughout East Prussia had been transferred to the district of Soldau, also in East Prussia. A special military unit, basically a hit squad, carried out its agenda and killed the patients over an 18-day period, one small part of the larger Nazi program to exterminate everyone deemed “unfit” by its ideology. After the murders, the unit reported back to headquarters in Berlin that the patients had been “successfully evacuated.”



- **May 21 1941 – WW2 Era:** *First U.S. Ship Sunk by a German U-boat* » Before dawn on 21 MAY, before U.S. entered into war with Germany, the German U-boat U-69 stopped the SS Robin Moore. A hog islander steamship sailing under an American ship, and after speaking with the freighter's officers, announced the *Robin Moor* would be sunk, and gave the crew and passengers a few minutes to launch the ship's lifeboats. The submarine then torpedoed and shelled the hapless freighter, and departed, leaving four lifeboats with some eight passengers and thirty-eight merchant seamen to fend for themselves in the middle of the ocean.



Three of those lifeboats were picked up after fourteen grueling days, and the survivors taken to Cape Town, South Africa. The fourth lifeboat was picked up after eighteen days and taken to Recife, Brazil. Remarkably, nobody died in the incident, although one young mariner tragically committed suicide while on his way home.

- **May 21 1941 – WW2 Era:** *German Operation Mercury* » Maleme Airport, Crete became a target for the German army when they decided on an airborne invasion of Crete, codenamed Operation Mercury. The Germans wanted to take Maleme Airport because it would allow them to land their planes in Crete and land troops, heavy guns and vehicles. On the first day of the battle, German airplanes dropped paratroopers continuously. However, these were killed by the Cretans, the few men of the Greek Army, and their British, Australian and New Zealand allies fighting by their side. The defenders of the airfield shot down many planes with their machine guns. On the second evening, however, the German paratroopers took Hill 107 and, in effect, the whole of Crete, as the inhabitants could no longer resist the flood of German reinforcements.
- **May 21 1942 – WW2:** *Lend Lease* » Convoy PQ16, an Arctic convoy sent from Great Britain by the Western Allies to aid the Soviet Union, departs for Russia. It reached the Soviet northern ports after five days of air attacks that left seven ships sunk and three damaged. 25 ships arrived safely. There were 78 convoys between August 1941 and May 1945 sailing via several seas of the Atlantic and Arctic oceans, with two gaps with no sailings between July and September 1942, and March and November 1943. About 1,400 merchant ships delivered essential supplies to the Soviet Union under the Lend-Lease program, escorted by ships of the Royal Navy, Royal Canadian Navy, and the U.S. Navy. Eighty-five merchant vessels and 16 Royal Navy warships (two cruisers, six destroyers, eight other escort ships) were lost. Nazi Germany's Kriegsmarine lost a number of vessels including one battleship, three destroyers, 30 U-boats, and many aircraft. The convoys demonstrated the Allies' commitment to helping the Soviet Union, prior to the opening of a second front, and tied up a substantial part of Germany's naval and air forces.

- **May 21 1942 – Holocaust:** *Thousands of Jews Die in Nazi Gas Chambers* » Jews, 4,300 of them, are deported from the Polish town of Chelm to the Nazi extermination camp at Sobibor, where all are gassed to death. On the same day, the German firm IG Farben sets up a factory just outside Auschwitz, in order to take advantage of Jewish slave laborers from the Auschwitz concentration camps.



Sobibor had five gas chambers, where about 250,000 Jews were killed between 1942 and 1943. A camp revolt occurred in October 1943; 300 Jewish slave laborers rose up and killed several members of the SS as well as Ukrainian guards. The rebels were killed as they battled their captors or tried to escape. The remaining prisoners were executed the very next day.

IG Farben, as well as exploiting Jewish slave labor for its oil and rubber production, also performed drug experiments on inmates. Tens of thousands of prisoners would ultimately die because of brutal work conditions and the savagery of the guards. Several of the firm's officials would be convicted of "plunder," "spoliation of property," "imposing slave labor," and "inhumane treatment" of civilians and POWs after the war. The company itself came under Allied control. The original goal was to dismantle its industries, which also included the manufacture of chemicals and pharmaceuticals, so as to prevent it from ever posing a threat "to Germany's neighbors or to world peace." But as time passed, the resolve weakened, and the Western powers broke the company up into three separate divisions: Hoechst, Bayer, and BASF.

- **May 21 1944 – WW2:** Hitler begins attack on British/US "terror pilots".
- **May 21 1945 – WW2:** Nazi SS-Reichsfuehrer Heinrich Himmler captured.
- **May 21 1950 – Vietnam:** Vietnamese troops of Ho Chi-Minh attack Cambodia,
- **May 21 1951 – Korean War:** The U.S. Eighth Army counterattacks to drive the Communist Chinese and North Koreans out of South Korea.
- **May 21 1964 – Vietnam:** U.S. begin intelligence flights above Laos.
- **May 21 1969 – Vietnam:** *Military Spokesman Defends "Hamburger Hill"* » A U.S. military command spokesman in Saigon defends the battle for Ap Bia Mountain as having been necessary to stop enemy infiltration and protect the city of Hue. The spokesman stated that the battle was an integral part of the policy of "maximum pressure" that U.S. forces had been pursuing for the prior six

months, and confirmed that no orders had been received from President Nixon to modify that basic strategy. On 20 MAY, the battle, described in the American media as the battle for “Hamburger Hill,” had come under attack in Congress from Senator Kennedy (D-Massachusetts), who described the action as “senseless and irresponsible.”

On 22 MAY in Phu Bai, South Vietnam, Maj. Gen. Melvin Zais, commanding general of the 101st Airborne Division that took “Hamburger Hill,” responded to continuing media criticism by saying that his orders had been “to destroy enemy forces” in the A Shau Valley and that he had not received any other orders to reduce casualties by avoiding battles.

The battle in question had occurred as part of Operation Apache Snow in the A Shau Valley. During that operation, which had begun on May 10, paratroopers had engaged a North Vietnamese regiment on the slopes of Hill 937, known to the Vietnamese as Ap Bia Mountain. Entrenched in prepared fighting positions, the North repulsed the initial American assault and on 14 MAY, beat back another attempt by the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry. An intense battle raged for the next 10 days as the mountain came under heavy Allied air strikes, artillery barrages, and 10 infantry assaults. On 20 MAY, Maj. Gen. Zais sent in two additional U.S. airborne battalions and a South Vietnamese battalion as reinforcements. The communist stronghold was finally captured in the 11th attack when the American and South Vietnamese soldiers fought their way to the summit of the mountain. In the face of the four-battalion attack, the North Vietnamese retreated to sanctuary areas in Laos.

During the intense fighting, 597 North Vietnamese were reported killed and U.S. casualties were 56 killed and 420 wounded. Due to the bitter fighting and the high loss of life, the battle for Ap Bia Mountain received widespread unfavorable publicity in the United States and was dubbed “Hamburger Hill” in the U.S. media, a name evidently derived from the fact that the battle turned into a “meat grinder.” Since the operation was not intended to hold territory but rather to keep the North Vietnamese Army off balance, the mountain was abandoned soon after the battle and was occupied by the North Vietnamese a month later.

The news of the battle resulted in widespread public outrage over what appeared to be a senseless loss of American lives. The situation was exacerbated by pictures published in Life magazine of 241 U.S. soldiers killed during the week of the battle. Subsequently, Gen. Creighton Abrams, commander of U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam, was ordered to avoid such battles. Because of Hamburger Hill, and other battles like it, U.S. emphasis was placed on “Vietnamization” (turning the war over to the South Vietnamese forces), rather than direct combat operations.

- **May 21 1982 – Britain\*Falklands:** British troops land on Falkland Islands,
- **May 21 1988 – Cold War:** *Gorbachev Consolidates Power* » In an attempt to consolidate his own power and ease political and ethnic tensions in the Soviet republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev dismisses the Communist Party leaders in those two republics.



Since coming to power in 1985, Gorbachev had faced numerous problems with his efforts to bring about domestic reform in the Soviet Union. First and foremost was the opposition by more conservative Russian officials, who believed that Gorbachev's economic and political reforms might threaten the position of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union. Both Karen S. Demirchyan and Kyamran I. Bagirov, heads of the Communist Party in Armenia and Azerbaijan respectively, fell into this group—Gorbachev had publicly complained about his frustrations in bringing about economic reform in the two republics. The second major problem faced by the Soviet leader was the rising tide of ethnic unrest in several Russian republics. In the case of Armenia and Azerbaijan, the unrest spilled across their borders, with Azerbaijanis and Armenians trading charges about mistreatment at the hands of the other. Neither Demirchyan nor Bagirov seemed capable of dealing with the situation. Gorbachev thus decided to kill two birds with one stone, and on May 21, announced that both men were being removed from their positions for “reasons of health.” They were quickly replaced with men handpicked by Gorbachev.

Gorbachev's action was only a temporary solution to the problems. During the next three years, the slow pace of reform in the Soviet Union could not keep up with the rapidly crumbling economy and increasingly factionalized political system. And ethnic tensions in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and other Soviet republics continued unabated, sometimes exploding into violence. By 1991, it was clear that the Soviet Union was falling apart. In December, Gorbachev resigned as president and the Soviet Union soon thereafter ceased to exist as a nation.

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

- **May 22 1455 – Wars of the Roses:** *Begins (1455 thru 1487)* » In the opening battle of England's War of the Roses, the Yorkists defeat King Henry VI's Lancastrian forces at St. Albans, 20 miles northwest of London. Many Lancastrian nobles perished, including Edmund Beaufort, the duke of Somerset, and the king was forced to submit to the rule of his cousin, Richard of York. The dynastic struggle between the House of York, whose badge was a white rose, and the House of Lancaster, later associated with a red rose, would stretch on for 30 years.

Both families, closely related, claimed the throne through descent from the sons of Edward III, the king of England from 1327 to 1377. The first Lancastrian king was Henry IV in 1399, and rebellion and lawlessness were rife during his reign. His son, Henry V, was more successful and won major victories in the Hundred Years War against France. His son and successor, Henry VI, had few kingly qualities and lost most of the French land his father had conquered. At home, chaos prevailed and

lords with private armies challenged Henry VI's authority. At times, his ambitious queen, Margaret of Anjou, effectively controlled the crown.

In 1453, Henry lapsed into insanity, and in 1454 Parliament appointed Richard, duke of York, as protector of the realm. Henry and York's grandfathers were the fourth and third sons of Edward III, respectively. When Henry recovered in late 1454, he dismissed York and restored the authority of Margaret, who saw York as a threat to the succession of their son, Prince Edward. York raised an army of 3,000 men, and in May the Yorkists marched to London. On May 22, 1455, York met Henry's forces at St. Albans while on the northern road to the capital. The bloody encounter lasted less than an hour, and the Yorkists carried the day. The duke of Somerset, Margaret's great ally, was killed, and Henry was captured by the Yorkists.

After the battle, Richard again was made English protector, but in 1456 Margaret regained the upper hand. An uneasy peace was broken in 1459, and in 1460 the Lancastrians were defeated, and York was granted the right to ascend to the throne upon Henry's death. The Lancastrians then gathered forces in northern England and in December 1460 surprised and killed York outside his castle near Wakefield. York's son Edward reached London before Margaret and was proclaimed King Edward IV. In March 1461, Edward won a decisive victory against the Lancastrians at the Battle of Towton, the bloodiest of the war. Henry, Margaret, and their son fled to Scotland, and the first phase of the war was over.

Yorkist rivalry would later lead to the overthrow of Edward in 1470 and the restoration of Henry VI. The next year, Edward returned from exile in the Netherlands, defeated Margaret's forces, killed her son, and imprisoned Henry in the Tower of London, where he was murdered. Edward IV then ruled uninterrupted until his death in 1483. His eldest son was proclaimed Edward V, but Edward IV's brother, Richard III, seized the crown and imprisoned Edward and his younger brother in the Tower of London, where they disappeared, probably murdered. In 1485, Richard III was defeated and killed by Lancastrians led by Henry Tudor at the Battle of Bosworth Field.

Henry Tudor was proclaimed King Henry VII, the first Tudor king. Henry was the grandson of Catherine of Valois, the widow of Henry V, and Owen Tudor. In 1486, he married Edward IV's daughter Elizabeth of York, thereby uniting the Yorkist and Lancastrian claims. This event is seen as marking the end of the War of Roses; although some Yorkists supported in 1487 an unsuccessful rebellion against Henry, led by Lambert Simnel. The War of Roses left little mark on the common English people but severely thinned the ranks of the English nobility.

- **May 22 1781 – American Revolution:** *Patriot Siege of Ninety Six, S.C. Begins* » Major General Nathanael Greene and 1,000 Patriots attempt an attack on the critical village of Ninety Six in the South Carolina backcountry. After failing to seize the fortified settlement, they began a siege of it, which lasted until their retreat on 18 JUN, making it the longest of the Revolutionary War.

Ninety Six, on the Saluda River, was critical for the defense of the northwest portion of the state and the most strategically important position in South Carolina after Camden. It was manned by 550 Loyalists commanded by British Lieutenant Colonel John Harris Cruger. The Patriots lay siege to the city beginning on 22 MAY, using siege lines—trenches and structures built for the use of the besieging army and its artillery—which were designed by the Continental Army's noted engineering talent Thaddeus Kosciusko and are considered the best example of their kind in the United States.

When the Patriots learned that British Lieutenant Colonel Francis Rawdon was on his way to reinforce the Loyalists, they began a preemptory assault led by Major General Nathanael Greene on 18 JUN. Unable to breach the defenses at Ninety Six's Star Fort, the Patriots were forced to retreat, with 185 Patriot casualties to a mere 75 for the Loyalist defenders. Lord Rawdon arrived and General Greene withdrew on 19 JUN.

Although Greene failed to remove the British from Ninety Six, he and Brigadier General Francis Marion of the South Carolina militia were remarkably successful at taking back other British outposts, capturing five others before their attempt at Ninety Six. By the time the British left Ninety Six of their own accord, on July 1, 1781, it was the last Loyalist fort in South Carolina.

- **May 22 1863 – Civil War:** Siege of Port Hudson – Union forces begin to lay siege to the Confederate-controlled Port Hudson, Louisiana.
- **May 22 1863 – Civil War:** General Ulysses S. Grant begins siege on Vicksburg and War Department establishes Bureau of Colored Troops.
- **May 22 1864 – Civil War:** Battle of North Anna River, Virginia (Totopotamy River, Haw's Shop, Hanover town)
- **May 22 1864 – Civil War:** After ten weeks, the Union Army's Red River Campaign ends with the Union unable to achieve any of its objectives. Casualties and losses: U.S. 5,500 - CSA 4,300.
- **May 22 1871 – Native Americans:** The U.S. Army issued an order for abandonment of Fort Kearny in Nebraska. The fort had been utilized mostly as a supply post, and not as defensive position in the Indian Wars.
- **May 22 1872 – Post Civil War:** Amnesty Act restores civil rights to all but some 500 military leaders of the confederacy. Gradually Southern states began electing members of the Democratic Party into office, ousting so-called carpetbagger governments and intimidating blacks from voting or attempting to hold public office.
- **May 22 1916 – WWI:** French troops assault Fort Douaumont, Verdun but fail to recapture it after hours of dogged fighting
- **May 22 1917 – WW1:** *Crisis in Austria-Hungary* » With hunger and discontent spreading among the civilian and military populations of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a crisis mounts within its government, as Hungarian Prime Minister Istvan Tisza resigns at the request of the Austrian emperor, Karl I, on May 22, 1917.



Istvan Tisza

Karl I

A great power in decline when World War I broke out in 1914, Austria-Hungary was a predominately agricultural society but was not agriculturally self-sufficient. The war had cut off the empire's two main sources of food, Russia and Romania, and the military effort cut domestic production significantly: by 1917, Austria's output of wheat had fallen to less than half of its 1913 total, and that of rye and oats had fallen even more. To make matters worse, Hungary—Austria's less powerful partner in the so-called Dual Monarchy—had closed its frontier with Austria in 1914 and ceased to consider its agricultural produce as a common resource, choosing instead to sell whatever surplus it had to the army and to Germany. Defeat on the battlefield against Russia in the first years of war forced Austria-Hungary to rely heavily on its ally, Germany, to keep them in the war effort, and the Italian entrance into the war in 1915 forced the Austrians to fight on yet another front, to the south.

On November 21, 1916, Emperor Franz Josef died; he was succeeded by his great-nephew, Karl I, who assumed supreme command of the army, dismissing longtime chief of the general staff, Conrad von Hotzendorff. Though the new emperor promised to institute reforms and build consensus within the Dual Monarchy, his efforts led initially to disorder and dissent. Karl's liberalism posed a direct challenge to the Hungarian government and its prime minister, Ivan Tisza. His reformist opposition within Hungary, Party of Independence, led by Mihaly Karolyi, favored a total break with Austria when the compromise between the two nations came up for renewal in 1917.

Socialists and revolutionaries supported Karolyi, who organized major demonstrations in Budapest on May 1, 1917. Meanwhile, though he had urged restraint in 1914, Tisza was by now associated in the mind of the Hungarian public with the aggressive prosecution of a war effort many had come to see as hopeless, and had begun to lose much-needed support. At the emperor's request, he tendered his resignation on May 22, 1917. He was succeeded by Moritz Esterhazy, who expressed his desire to build "Hungarian democracy"; the new deal between Austria and Hungary, signed in December, would last just two years, not the expected 20. Still blamed for the continued war effort, and its impending failure, Tisza was assassinated on October 31, 1918, by Magyar members of the Communist Red Guard.

Meanwhile, barely a week after Tisza's resignation in May 1917, Austria-Hungary experienced the first of a series of mutinies within its army. Led by nationalist groups, the first mutiny involved a group of Slovenes; no sooner had it been suppressed than others broke out, led by Serbs, Rusyns (or Ruthenians) and Czechs.

- **May 22 1939 – WW2 Era:** *The Pact of Steel is Signed; the Axis is Formed* » Italy and Germany agree to a military and political alliance, giving birth formally to the Axis powers, which will ultimately include Japan.



Mussolini coined the nickname “Pact of Steel” (he had also come up with the metaphor of an “axis” binding Rome and Berlin) after reconsidering his first choice, “Pact of Blood,” to describe this historic agreement with Germany. The Duce saw this partnership as not only a defensive alliance, protection from the Western democracies, with whom he anticipated war, but also a source of backing for his Balkan adventures. Both sides were fearful and distrustful of the other, and only sketchily shared their prospective plans. The result was both Italy and Germany, rather than acting in unison, would often “react” to the precipitate military action of the other. In September 1940, the Pact of Steel would become the Tripartite Pact, with Japan making up the third constituent of the triad.

- **May 22 1941 – WW2 Era:** British troops attack Baghdad.
- **May 22 1942 – WW2:** *Mexico Declares War on Nazi-Germany & Japan* » Mexico enters World War II on the side of the Allies after German submarines attacked two Mexican oil tankers. Some 300,000 Mexican citizens went to the U.S. to work in factories that produced war supplies and to help in any way that would benefit the Allies.
- **May 22 1942 – WW2:** Ted Williams of the Boston Red Sox enlists in the United States Marine Corps as a flight instructor.
- **May 22 1943 – WW2:** During the battle to protect British Royal Convoy (ON 184) in the North Atlantic, TBFs from (VC 9) based on board USS Bogue (ACV-9) sink German the submarine (U-569) and damage the (U-305).
- **May 22 1943 – WW2:** RAF scatters 1st copies of "The Flying Hollander"
- **May 22 1944 – WW2:** Anzio Beachhead, Italy - Allied forces, including elements of three National Guard divisions—the 34th (IA, MN, ND), 36th (TX) and 45th (AZ, CO, OK)—begin their final push to break out of the besieged positions just south of Rome for four months. The breakout would be completed on 31 MAY, with the Allies entering Rome on 5 JUN.
- **May 22 1944 – WW2:** *Operation Chattanooga Choo-Choo is Launched* » U.S. and British aircraft begin a systematic bombing raid on railroads in Germany and other parts of northern Europe, called Operation Chattanooga Choo-Choo. The operation is a success; Germany is forced to scramble



for laborers, including foreign slave laborers, to repair the widespread damage exacted on its railway network.

- **May 22 1945 – WW2:** 6th U.S. Marine division reaches suburbs of Naha Okinawa.
- **May 22 1945 – WW2:** United States Army Major Robert B. Staver recommends that the U.S. evacuate German scientists and engineers to help in the development of rocket technology.



104 German rocket scientists from Operation Paperclip

- **May 22 1947 – Cold War:** In an effort to fight the spread of Communism, U.S. President Harry S. Truman signs an act into law that will later be called the Truman Doctrine. The act grants \$400 million in military and economic aid to Turkey and Greece, each battling an internal Communist movement.
- **May 22 1947 – Cold War:** 1st U.S. ballistic missile fired.
- **May 22 1964 – Vietnam War:** *SecDef Rusk Warns North Vietnamese* » In a major speech before the American Law Institute in Washington, D.C., Secretary of State Dean Rusk explicitly accuses North Vietnam of initiating and directing the aggression in South Vietnam. U.S. withdrawal, said Rusk, “would mean not only grievous losses to the free world in Southeast and Southern Asia but a drastic loss of confidence in the will and capacity of the free world.” He concluded: “There is a simple prescription for peace—leave your neighbors alone.” In the fall, there was incontrovertible evidence that North Vietnamese regular troops were moving down the Ho Chi Minh Trail to join the Viet Cong in their war against the Saigon government and its forces.



Elsewhere in Southeast Asia, Thailand mobilized its border provinces against incursions by the communist Pathet Lao forces from Laos and agreed to the use of bases by the U.S. Air Force for reconnaissance, search and rescue, and even attacks against the Pathet Lao. By the end of the year, some 75 U.S. aircraft would be based in Thailand to assist in operations against the Pathet Lao. Eventually, Thailand permitted the United States to use its air bases for operations against the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese in South Vietnam, and ultimately to launch bombing raids against North Vietnam. In addition, Thailand sent combat troops to South Vietnam, numbering 11,000 at the height of the Thai commitment.

- **May 22 1967 – Vietnam War:** Vinh Xuan massacre conducted by South Korean forces resulted in the deaths of at least 15 unarmed women and children, and old men who refused to leave their villages.
- **May 22 1968 – U.S. Navy:** Last radio message received from the nuclear powered USS Scorpion (SSN-589) while traveling southwest of the Azores. She was declared lost 6 JUN. Cause not ascertainable; most probable inadvertent activation of battery of torpedo resulting in a possible "hot run" torpedo detonation off Azores. 99 men died. In late Oct. 1968, her remains are found on the sea floor more than 10,000 feet below the surface by a deep-submergence vehicle towed from USNS Mizar (T-AGOR-11).
- **May 22 1969 – Vietnam War:** *Negotiators Differ on Diplomatic Exchange* » Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, at the 18th plenary session of the Paris peace talks, says he finds common ground for discussion in the proposals of President Richard Nixon and the National Liberation Front. In reply, Nguyen Thanh Le, spokesman for the North Vietnamese, said the programs were "as different as day and night."

At the 16th plenary session of the Paris talks on 8 MAY, the National Liberation Front had presented a 10-point program for an "overall solution" to the war. This proposal included an unconditional withdrawal of United States and Allied troops from Vietnam; the establishment of a coalition government and the holding of free elections; the demand that the South Vietnamese settle their own affairs "without foreign interference"; and the eventual reunification of North and South Vietnam.



Henry Cabot Lodge & Nguyen Thanh Le

In a speech to the American public on 14 MAY, President Nixon responded to the communist plan with a proposal of his own. He proposed a phased, mutual withdrawal of major portions of U.S. Allied and North Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam over a 12-month period. The remaining non-South Vietnamese forces would withdraw to enclaves and abide by a cease-fire until withdrawals were completed. Nixon also insisted that North Vietnamese forces withdraw from Cambodia and Laos at the same time and offered internationally supervised elections for South Vietnam. Nixon's offer of a "simultaneous start on withdrawal" represented a revision of the last formal proposal offered by the Johnson administration in October 1966. In the earlier proposal, known as the "Manila formula," the United States stated that the withdrawal of U.S. forces would be completed within six months after the North Vietnamese left South Vietnam.

In the end, Nguyen Thanh Le's observation was on target. The communists' proposal and Nixon's counteroffer were very different and there was, in fact, almost no common ground. Neither side relented nor did nothing meaningful come from this diplomatic exchange.

- **May 22 1985 – Cold War:** U.S. sailor Michael L Walker arrested for spying for USSR
- **May 22 2014 – Thailand:** Thailand's military announced it had taken control of the country and suspended the constitution. The coup followed months of political turmoil

-o-o-O-o-o-

- **May 23 1777 – American Revolution:** *Meigs Long Island Expedition* » At Sag Harbor, New York, Patriot troops under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Return Jonathan Meigs capture several British vessels and burn Redcoat supplies. With the help of two local men, Meigs and his Connecticut raiders grabbed the British commander from his bed in the wee hours of the morning, firing only one gunshot. Instead of guns, the Patriots used silent but deadly bayonets to capture the British fort, successfully avoiding announcing their presence with gunfire.

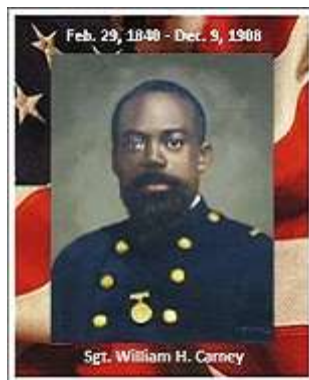
The British had built their fort on the site of a burial ground because it was the highest land in the area and had the best view of the harbor. The Redcoats desecrated colonists' family gravesites, and in the process, lost the important battle for the hearts and minds of the residents. Nearly half of Sag Harbor's families fled to Connecticut during the British occupation. With six Redcoats dead and 53 captive from their success on land, the Patriots moved from the hilltop fort towards the harbor. The

British ships anchored there eventually noticed the body of men moving towards them and opened fire. The Patriots, though, went on to burn 24 British ships and their cargoes of hay, rum, grain and other merchandise. With an additional 37 prisoners in custody, the 170 Yankee raiders returned to Connecticut without having lost a single man in their party.

The Sag Harbor ambush was the only successful Patriot attack on Long Island between the British takeover in 1776 and their departure following the Treaty of Paris in 1783.

- **May 23 1846 – Mexican\*American War:** President Mariano Paredes of Mexico unofficially declares war on the United States.
- **May 23 1864 – Civil War:** Battle of North Anna, Virginia, 1st of 3 days of fighting.
- **May 23 1865 – Post Civil War:** Victory parade in Washington, D.C. (Grand Review)
- **May 23 1891 – US\*Philippines:** 1st Philippine Expeditionary Troops sail from San Francisco.
- **May 23 1900 – Post Civil War:** *Forgotten Civil War Hero Honored* » Sergeant William Harvey Carney is awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his bravery on July 18, 1863, while fighting for the Union cause as a member of the 54th Massachusetts Colored Infantry. He was the first African American to receive the Medal of Honor, which is the nation's highest military honor.

The 54th Massachusetts, formed in early 1863, served as the prototype for African American regiments in the Union army. On July 16, 1863, the regiment saw its first action at James Island, South Carolina, performing admirably in a confrontation with experienced Confederate troops. Three days later, the 54th volunteered to lead the assault on Fort Wagner, a highly fortified outpost on Morris Island that was part of the Confederate defense of Charleston Harbor.



Struggling against a lethal barrage of cannon and rifle fire, the regiment fought their way to the top of the fort's parapet over several hours. Sergeant William Harvey Carney was wounded there while planting the U.S. flag. The regiment's white commander, Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, was killed, and his soldiers were overwhelmed by the fort's defenders and had to fall back. Despite his wound, Carney refused to retreat until he removed the flag, and though successful, he was shot again in the process. The 54th lost 281 of its 600 men in its brave attempt to take Fort Wagner, which throughout the war never fell by force of arms. The 54th went on to perform honorably in expeditions in Georgia

and Florida, most notably at the Battle of Olustee. Carney eventually recovered and was discharged with disability on June 30, 1864.

- **May 23 1915 – WWI Era: *Italy Enters War on Allies Side*** » When World War I broke out in the summer of 1914, Italy declared itself neutral in the conflict, despite its membership in the so-called Triple Alliance alongside Germany and Austria-Hungary since 1882. Over the course of the months that followed, Italy and its leaders weighed their options; wooed by both sides, they carefully considered how to gain the greatest benefit from participation in the war. The decision to join the fray on the side of the Allies was based largely on the assurances Italy received in the Treaty of London, signed in April 1915. By its terms, Italy would receive the fulfillment of its national dream: control over territory on its border with Austria-Hungary stretching from Trentino through the South Tyrol to Trieste. In addition, the Allies promised the Italians parts of Dalmatia and numerous islands along Austria-Hungary's Adriatic coast; the Albanian port city of Vlore (Italian: Valona) and a central protectorate in Albania; and territory from the Ottoman Empire.

On May 23, 1915, Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary. The Italian declaration opened up a new front in World War I, stretching 600 kilometers—most of them mountainous—along Italy's border with Austria-Hungary. Italy—which had become a unified nation only as recently as 1859—was, like Russia, not yet a fully industrialized power. It was certainly not prepared for large-scale warfare, and although it managed to mobilize 1.2 million men in the spring of 1915, it possessed equipment for just 732,000. Upon declaring war, the Italian army immediately advanced into the South Tyrol region and to the Isonzo River, where Austro-Hungarian troops met them with a stiff defense. The snowy and treacherous terrain made the region poorly suited to offensive operations, and after several quick Italian successes, combat settled into a stalemate.

By late 1917, the Austrians and Italians had fought no fewer than 11 battles along the Isonzo River, with negligible progress and heavy losses on both sides. In late October 1917, German intervention to help Austria-Hungary resulted in a spectacular victory over the Italians in the Battle of Caporetto (also known as the Twelfth Battle of the Isonzo), during which Italian forces suffered some 300,000 casualties (90 percent of which were prisoners) and were forced to retreat. The defeat sparked a crisis in Italy, prompting the dismissal of the army's chief of staff, Luigi Cadorna, his replacement with Armando Diaz, and the formation of a coalition government under Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando. After Caporetto, Italy's allies jumped in to offer increased assistance, as British and French—and later American—troops soon arrived in the region, and the Allies began to take back the initiative.

By the time fighting ended on the Italian front on November 4, 1918—a week before the general armistice—615,000 Italians had been killed in action or died of wounds sustained in World War I. In the ensuing peace negotiations in Paris, the Italian government struggled against great opposition from the other Allied leaders to see that they were given all they had been promised in the Treaty of London. At one point in the negotiations, the entire Italian delegation walked out of the peace conference, returning only days later. Though Italy would eventually receive control of the Tyrol and a permanent seat on the newly formed international peace-keeping organization, the League of Nations, many within the country were dissatisfied with their lot and continued to nurse resentments of the other Allied powers—resentments that would later drive the success of Benito Mussolini and his fascist movement.

- **May 23 1939 – U.S. Navy:** USS Squalus (SS-192) foundered in a test dive off Portsmouth, New Hampshire. 26 died. The remaining 33 were rescued the next day.
- **May 23 1939 –WW2 Era:** Adolf Hitler proclaims he wants to move into Poland.
- **May 23 1939 – U.S. Navy:** Submarine USS Squalus sinks in the Gulf of Maine with the loss of 26 crewmwn by drowning. The remaining 33 crewmembers are rescued from a depth of 243 ft by divers using newly developed heliox air systems (divers later awarded the Medal of Honor)
- **May 23 1940 – WW2 Era:** 1st great dogfight between Spitfires and Luftwaffe.
- **May 23 1941 – WW2 Era:** Lord Mountbatten Survives German Dive-Bombers » Captain Lord Louis Mountbatten, second cousin of King George VI of Britain and the only man other than the king to hold rank in all three military services simultaneously, is among those thrown into the Mediterranean Sea when his destroyer, the HMS Kelly, is sunk.



Mountbatten's ship was among several British cruisers, destroyers, and battleships sunk off Crete by German dive-bombers. The Kelly was attacked by 24 bombers alone; 130 crewmembers were killed. Mountbatten was still on the bridge of the ship when it finally flipped over; nevertheless, he managed to swim to shore and take control of the rescue operation. He would ultimately accept, as senior Allied officer present, the surrender of Japanese land forces within Southeast Asia by General Sieshiro Itagaki.

Mountbatten survived the terror of war against the Axis powers, only to be killed by an Irish Republic Army bomb, planted on his boat, on August 26, 1979.

*Side note:* Just a day before the sinking of the Kelly, the battleship Valiant was damaged but not sunk during an equally vicious German air attack, also off Crete, which succeeded in sinking two cruisers and four destroyers. Among the crewmen of the Valiant was Lord Mountbatten's nephew, Prince Philip of Greece.

- **May 23 1943 – WW2:** 826 Allied bombers attack Dortmund.
- **May 23 1944 – WW2:** British and Canadian troops occupy Pontecorvo, Italy.

- **May 23 1944 – WW2:** Chinese counter offensive at Hunan front.
- **May 23 1944 – WW2:** Operation Buffalo: Allied break out from Anzio bridgehead.
- **May 23 1945 – WW2:** *Nazi SS Chief Dies by Suicide* » Heinrich Himmler, chief of the SS, assistant chief of the Gestapo, and architect of Hitler's program to exterminate European Jews, commits suicide one day after being arrested by the British.



As head of the Waffen-Schutzstaffel (“Armed Black Shirts”), the military arm of the Nazi Party, and assistant chief of the Gestapo (the secret police), Himmler was able over time to consolidate his control over all police forces of the Reich. The power he would ultimately wield would rival that of the German army; it would also prove highly effective in eliminating all opposition to Hitler and the party, as well as in carrying out the Fuhrer's Final Solution. It was Himmler who organized the creation of death camps throughout Eastern Europe and a pool of slave laborers.

Himmler's megalomania, which included a plan to surrender to the Western Allies late in the war in order to pursue the fight against Russia unimpeded, caused Hitler to strip him of all his offices and order his arrest. Himmler attempted to slip out of Germany disguised as a soldier, but was caught by the British. He swallowed a cyanide capsule a day later. Himmler has been portrayed in many films, including *The Eagle Has Landed*, with Donald Pleasance as Himmler.

- **May 23 1945 – WW2:** U.S. B-29s make two enormous firebombing attacks on Tokyo over 2 days, dropping 4,500 tons of bombs, destroying 22 square miles of the city and damaging many key buildings – including the Imperial Palace, which crews had not been asked to target for fear of killing emperor Hirohito
- **May 23 1945 – WW2:** The short lived Flensburg Government formed after the suicide of Adolf Hitler to rule Germany under Reichspräsident Karl Dönitz is dissolved when its members are captured and arrested by British forces at Flensburg in Northern Germany.
- **May 23 1945 – WW2:** German island of Helgoland in the North Sea surrenders to British.
- **May 23 1949 – Post WW2:** Federal Republic of [West] Germany created out of the American, British and French occupation zones

- **May 23 1960 – WW2: *Nazi Adolph Eichmann Captured*** » Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion announces to the world that Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann has been captured and will stand trial in Israel. Eichmann, the Nazi SS officer who organized Adolf Hitler’s “final solution of the Jewish question,” was seized by Israeli agents in Argentina on May 11 and smuggled to Israel nine days later.



Eichmann was born in Solingen, Germany, in 1906. In November 1932, he joined the Nazi’s elite SS (Schutzstaffel) organization, whose members came to have broad responsibilities in Nazi Germany, including policing, intelligence, and the enforcement of Adolf Hitler’s anti-Semitic policies. Eichmann steadily rose in the SS hierarchy, and with the German annexation of Austria in 1938, he was sent to Vienna with the mission of ridding the city of Jews. He set up an efficient Jewish deportment center and in 1939 was sent to Prague on a similar mission. That year, Eichmann was appointed to the Jewish section of the SS central security office in Berlin.

In January 1942, Eichmann met with top Nazi officials at the Wannsee Conference near Berlin for the purpose of planning a “final solution of the Jewish question,” as Nazi leader Hermann Goring put it. The Nazis decided to exterminate Europe’s Jewish population. Eichmann was appointed to coordinate the identification, assembly, and transportation of millions of Jews from occupied Europe to the Nazi death camps, where Jews were gassed or worked to death. He carried this duty out with horrifying efficiency, and between three to four million Jews perished in the extermination camps before the end of World War II. Close to 2 million were executed elsewhere.

Following the war, Eichmann was captured by U.S. troops, but he escaped the prison camp in 1946 before having to face the Nuremberg International War Crimes Tribunal. Eichmann traveled under an assumed identity between Europe and the Middle East and in 1950 arrived in Argentina, which maintained lax immigration policies and was a safe haven for many Nazi war criminals. In 1957, a German prosecutor secretly informed Israel that Eichmann was living in Argentina. Agents from Israel’s intelligence service, the Mossad, were deployed to Argentina, and in early 1960 they finally located Eichmann. He was living in the San Fernando section of Buenos Aires, under the name Ricardo Klement.

In May 1960, Argentina was celebrating the 150th anniversary of its revolution against Spain, and many tourists were traveling to Argentina from abroad to attend the festivities. The Mossad used the opportunity to smuggle more agents into the country. Israel, knowing that Argentina might never extradite Eichmann for trial, had decided to abduct him and take him to Israel illegally. On 11 MAY, Mossad operatives descended on Garibaldi Street in San Fernando and snatched Eichmann away as



he was walking from the bus to his home. His family called local hospitals but not the police, and Argentina knew nothing of the operation. On 20 MAY, a drugged Eichmann was flown out of Argentina disguised as an Israeli airline worker who had suffered head trauma in an accident. Three days later, Prime Minister Ben-Gurion announced that Eichmann was in Israeli custody.

Argentina demanded Eichmann's return, but Israel argued that his status as an international war criminal gave it the right to proceed with a trial. On April 11, 1961, Eichmann's trial began in Jerusalem. It was the first trial to be televised in history. Eichmann faced 15 charges, including crimes against humanity, crimes against the Jewish people, and war crimes. He claimed he was just following orders, but the judges disagreed, finding him guilty on all counts on 15 DEC and sentencing him to die. On May 31, 1962, he was hanged near Tel Aviv. His body was subsequently cremated and his ashes thrown into the sea.

- **May 23 1967 – Vietnam War:** *Congressman Claims M-16 is Defective* » A public controversy over the M-16, the basic combat rifle in Vietnam, begins after Representative James J. Howard (D-New Jersey) reads a letter to the House of Representatives in which a Marine in Vietnam claims that almost all Americans killed in the battle for Hill 881 died as a result of their new M-16 rifles jamming. The Defense Department acknowledged on 28 AUG that there had been a “serious increase in frequency of malfunctions in the M-16.”



The M-16 had become the standard U.S. infantry rifle in Vietnam earlier in 1967, replacing the M-14. Almost two pounds lighter and five inches shorter than the M-14, but with the same effective range of over 500 yards, it fired a smaller, lighter 5.56-mm cartridge. The M-16 could be fired fully automatic (like a machine gun) or one shot at a time.

Because the M-16 was rushed into mass production, early models were plagued by stoppages that caused some units to request a reissue of the M-14. Technical investigation revealed a variety of causes for the defect, in both the weapon and ammunition design, and in care and cleaning in the field. With these deficiencies corrected, the M-16 became a popular infantry rifle that was able to hold its own against the Soviet-made AK-47 assault rifle used by the enemy.

- **May 23 1971 – Vietnam War:** *North Vietnamese Infiltrators Attack U.S. Base* » North Vietnamese demolition experts infiltrate the major U.S. air base at Cam Ranh Bay, blowing up six tanks of aviation fuel, which resulted in the loss of about 1.5 million gallons. U.S. commander Creighton Abrams criticized the inadequate security.

- **May 23 1972 – Vietnam War:** *United States Widens Aerial Campaign* » Heavy U.S. air attacks that began with an order by President Richard Nixon on 8 MAY are widened to include more industrial and non-military sites. In 190 strikes, the United States lost one plane but shot down four. The new strikes were part of the ongoing Operation Linebacker, an effort launched in response to the massive North Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam on March 30. The purpose of the raids were to interdict supplies from outside sources and the movement of equipment and supplies to the North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam. The strikes concentrated on rail lines around Hanoi and Haiphong, bridges, pipelines, power plants, troops and troop training facilities, and rail lines to China.

-o-o-O-o-o-

- **May 24 1846 – Mexican\*American War:** General Zachary Taylor captures Monterrey. Casualties and losses: U.S. 450 - Mex 450.
- **May 24 1861 – Civil War:** Union troops occupy Alexandria, Virginia.
- **May 24 1917 – WWI:** *British Naval Convoy System Introduced* » Driven by the spectacular success of the German U-boat submarines and their attacks on Allied and neutral ships at sea, the British Royal Navy introduces a newly created convoy system, whereby all merchant ships crossing the Atlantic Ocean would travel in groups under the protection of the British navy.

For more than three years of World War I, Britain’s Royal Admiralty steadfastly resisted the creation of a convoy system, believing they could not afford to spare ships and other resources from its mighty fleet where they might be needed in battle. The effect of the German U-boat submarines, however, and their attacks on merchant ships—both belligerent and neutral—proved devastating. With the entrance of the United States into the war in April 1917, there was an even greater need for protection of Allied interests at sea, as large numbers of soldiers and arms would need to be transported from the Atlantic coast to Europe. In early May 1917, it was announced that the previous month had seen the highest shipping losses of the war so far for Allied and neutral countries: 373 ships, or a total weight of 873,754 tons.

Consequently, on May 24, 1917, Britain introduced its convoy system. Under the new arrangements, a convoy of 10 to 50 merchant ships—along with, possibly, a troopship carrying arms and soldiers—might be escorted by a cruiser, six destroyers, 11 armed trawlers and a pair of torpedo boats with aerial reconnaissance equipment that could detect the movement of underwater submarines. Convoy gathering points were established along the Atlantic coast of North and South America, from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Hampton, Virginia, all the way down to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to handle the transport not only of men and arms but also of foodstuffs and horses, the basic supplies of the Allied war effort.

The introduction of the convoy system finally marked the beginning of a sharp decline in the scale of German submarine damage and the death of German hopes to starve Britain into submission. Between May 1917 and November 1918, a total of 1,100,000 American troops were transported across the Atlantic in convoy, and only 637 of them were drowned as a result of German attacks.

- **May 24 1941 – U.S. Navy:** Vice Adm. Allan McCann's Rescue Chamber is first used to rescue 33 men from the sunken USS Squalus (SS 192). Four Navy divers receive the Medal of Honor for their heroic actions on May 24-25 to rescue the trapped men.
- **May 24 1941 – WW2 Era:** *The Bismarck Sinks the Hood* » In the Battle of the Atlantic, Germany's largest battleship, the Bismarck, sinks the pride of the British fleet, HMS Hood. The Bismarck was the most modern of Germany's battleships, a prize coveted by other nation's navies, even while still in the blueprint stage (Hitler handed over a copy of its blueprints to Joseph Stalin as a concession during the days of the Hitler-Stalin neutrality pact). The HMS Hood, originally launched in 1918, was Britain's largest battle cruiser (41,200 tons)-but also capable of achieving the relatively fast speed of 31 knots. The two met in the North Atlantic, northeast of Iceland, where two British cruisers had tracked down the Bismarck. Commanded by Admiral Gunther Lutjens, commander in chief of the German Fleet, the Bismarck sunk the Hood, resulting in the death of all but 3 of her 1,418 crew. Due to her publicly perceived invincibility, the loss affected British morale.



Bismarck (left) & HMS Hood (right)

During the engagement, the Bismarck's fuel tank was damaged. Lutjens tried to make for the French coast, but was sighted again only three days later. Torpedoed to the point of incapacity, the Bismarck was finally sunk by a ring of British war ships. Admiral Lutjens was one of the 2,300 German casualties.

- **May 24 1941 – WW2 Era:** U.S. Navy PBY search aircraft assist the British navy search for the German battleship Bismarck. Two days later, American Navy observers on two British PBY's spotted the Bismarck.
- **May 24 1941 – WW2:** *Auschwitz Gets A New Doctor / "The Angel of Death"* » The extermination camp at Auschwitz, Poland, receives a new doctor, 32-year-old Josef Mengele, a man who will earn the nickname "the Angel of Death."



Josef Mengele

Born March 16, 1911, in Bavaria, Mengele studied philosophy under Alfred Rosenberg, whose racial theories highly influenced him. In 1934, already a member of the Nazi Party, he joined the research staff of the Institute for Hereditary Biology and Racial Hygiene.

Upon arriving at Auschwitz, and eager to advance his medical career by publishing “groundbreaking” work, he began experimenting on live Jewish prisoners. In the guise of medical “treatment,” he injected, or ordered others to inject, thousands of inmates with everything from petrol to chloroform. He also had a penchant for studying twins, whom he used to dissect.

Mengele managed to escape imprisonment after the war, first by working as a farm stableman in Bavaria, then by making his way to South America. He became a citizen of Paraguay in 1959. He later moved to Brazil, where he met up with another former Nazi party member, Wolfgang Gerhard. In 1985, a multinational team of forensic experts traveled to Brazil in search of Mengele. They determined that a man named Gerhard, but believed to be Mengele, had died of a stroke while swimming in 1979. Dental records later confirmed that Mengele had, at some point, assumed Gerhard’s identity, and was in fact the stroke victim.

A fictional account of Josef Mengele’s life after the war was depicted in the film *Boys from Brazil*, with Mengele portrayed by Gregory Peck.

- **May 24 1942 – WW2:** USS Nautilus (SS 168) got underway for its first war patrol to help repel the expected attack by the Japanese Fleet.
- **May 24 1945 – WW2:** Patrol bomber PBM aircraft sink Japanese Special Coast Defense Ship No.21 off the China coast, Task Force 58 attacks airfields on southern Kyushu. In return, the Japanese attack U.S. positions and ships at Okinawa and kamikazes strike USS William C. Cole (DE 641), USS Sims (APD 50), and LCS (L) 121.
- **May 24 1959 – Cold War:** *John Foster Dulles Dies* » After battling cancer for nearly three years, former Secretary of State John Foster Dulles dies. Dulles served as secretary of state from 1953 until shortly before his death in 1959 and was considered one of the primary architects of America’s Cold War foreign policy during that period.

Dulles was born in 1888, the son of a Presbyterian minister. President Dwight D. Eisenhower would later joke that the serious Dulles had been preparing to become secretary of state since he was a toddler. This was not far from the truth. Dulles’ great-uncle was John W. Foster, who served as secretary of state during the 1890s (and for whom John Foster Dulles was named). His uncle, Robert

Lansing, had filled the same position during the presidency of Woodrow Wilson. Thus, when Eisenhower selected Dulles to be his secretary of state in 1952, he was keeping a family tradition alive. Dulles, however, was not one to merely follow in the footsteps of his famous relatives. He was determined to have an impact on U.S. foreign policy. He brought to his thinking about international relations a strong dose of religion, which often had the effect of simplifying complex issues into contests between good and evil, right and wrong. He was also ferociously anticommunist.



As secretary of state, Dulles was most famous for developing the notion of “massive retaliation.” In this theory, Dulles posited that the United States should make it known that it was ready and willing to use its massive nuclear arsenal to retaliate against threats to American interests around the globe. Dulles believed that it would never come to that, since the Soviets, faced with nuclear annihilation, would back away from the “brink” of atomic warfare. The secretary was also well known for his views on Third World neutralism. In Dulles’ view, neutralism in the battle against communism was a sin. During his tenure, Dulles saw the United States through several foreign policy crises, including the Suez Crisis of 1956. In 1956, however, it was discovered that Dulles was suffering from lung cancer. Over the next two-and-a-half years, Dulles bravely battled the disease, continuing his work as secretary of state between trips to the hospital for treatment. On April 22, 1959, Dulles resigned his position when he became too weak to fulfill his duties. Christian Herter replaced him as Secretary of State.

- **May 24 1964 – Vietnam War:** *Goldwater Suggests Using Atomic Weapons* » Senator Barry Goldwater (R-Arizona), running for the Republican Party nomination in the upcoming presidential election, gives an interview in which he discusses the use of low-yield atomic bombs in North Vietnam to defoliate forests and destroy bridges, roads, and railroad lines bringing supplies from communist China. During the storm of criticism that followed, Goldwater tried to back away from these drastic actions, claiming that he did not mean to advocate the use of atomic bombs but was “repeating a suggestion made by competent military people.” Democrats painted Goldwater as a warmonger who was overly eager to use nuclear weapons in Vietnam. Though he won his party’s nomination, Goldwater was never able to shake his image as an extremist in Vietnam policies. This image was a key factor in his crushing defeat by opponent Lyndon B. Johnson, who took about 61 percent of the vote to Goldwater’s 39 percent.
- **May 24 1971 – Vietnam War:** *Soldiers Place Controversial Ad in Antiwar Newspaper* » At Fort Bragg, North Carolina, an antiwar newspaper advertisement signed by 29 U.S. soldiers supporting the Concerned Officers Movement results in controversy. The group had been formed in 1970 in

Washington, D.C., by a small group of junior naval officers opposed to the war. The newspaper advertisement at Fort Bragg was in support of group's members, who had joined with antiwar activist David Harris and others in San Diego to mobilize opposition to the departure of the carrier USS Constellation for Vietnam. No official action was taken against the military dissidents at Fort Bragg and the aircraft carrier sailed on schedule from San Diego.

-o-o-O-o-o-

- **May 25 1861 – Civil War:** *President Lincoln Suspends the Writ of Habeas Corpus* » John Merryman, a state legislator from Maryland, is arrested for attempting to hinder Union troops from moving from Baltimore to Washington during the Civil War and is held at Fort McHenry by Union military officials. His attorney immediately sought a writ of habeas corpus so that a federal court could examine the charges. However, President Abraham Lincoln decided to suspend the right of habeas corpus, and the general in command of Fort McHenry refused to turn Merryman over to the authorities.



Federal judge Roger Taney, the chief justice of the Supreme Court (and also the author of the infamous Dred Scott decision), issued a ruling that President Lincoln did not have the authority to suspend habeas corpus. Lincoln didn't respond, appeal, or order the release of Merryman. But during a July 4 speech, Lincoln was defiant, insisting that he needed to suspend the rules in order to put down the rebellion in the South.

Five years later, a new Supreme Court essentially backed Justice Taney's ruling: In an unrelated case, the court held that only Congress could suspend habeas corpus and that civilians were not subject to military courts, even in times of war.

This was not the first or last time that the U.S. federal government willfully ignored its own laws during times of strife. Hundreds of thousands of Japanese Americans were sent to internment camps following the attack on Pearl Harbor and America's entry into World War II. Some forty years later, a U.S. congressional commission determined that those held in the camps had been victims of discrimination. Each camp survivor was awarded \$20,000 in compensation from the U.S. government.

- **May 25 1915 – WWI Era:** *Second Battle of Ypres Ends* » The Second Battle of Ypres was the first mass use by Germany of poison gas on the Western Front. It also marked the first time a former colonial force (the 1st Canadian Division) defeated a European power (the German Empire) in Europe (at the battles of St. Julien and Kitcheners' Wood). Although poison gas had been used on the

Eastern Front, it surprised the Allies and about 7,000 gas casualties were transported in field ambulances and treated in casualty clearing stations. In May and June, 350 British deaths were recorded from gas poisoning. Both sides developed gas weapons and counter-measures, which changed the nature of gas warfare. The battle created 105,000 casualties



- **May 25 1940 – WW2 Era:** The Germans take Boulogne, France.  
Also on this date:
  - The British Expeditionary Force is ordered to retreat to Dunkirk.
  - The British garrison of Calais rejects a German call for surrender.
  - 15 French generals are relieved of their commands on the same day.
- **May 25 1941 – WW2 Era:** German Navy Chief, Admiral Raeder warns that U.S. escorts of British ships would be considered an 'act of war'.  
Also on this date:
  - Bismarck escapes the Royal Navy's pursuit and separates from the Prinz Eugen and makes her way towards Brest.
  - The Germans decide to go on the offensive having now received substantial reinforcement through Maleme airfield on Crete.
- **May 25 1942 – WW2:** Andrew Higgins's landing craft competes with Navy landing craft at Norfolk, VA; the Higgins boat defeats Navy boat in all categories and will be produced as the LCP (Landing Craft, Vehicle or Personnel).  
Also on this date:
  - RAF Coastal Command refuses permission for their aircraft to take part in operation 'Millennium', which means that a shortfall of 250 aircraft is expected. However, by scraping up all the resources within Bomber Command, he manages to find the required 1000 bombers.
  - Perth police arrest four Australians for planning to set up an 'Australia First' Nazi-style government.

- **May 25 1944 – WW2: *Operation Knight's Move is Launched*** » Germany launches Operation Knight's Move (Rösselsprung), in an attempt to seize Yugoslav communist partisan leader Tito. Using parachute drops and glider troops, German forces landed in the Yugoslavian village of Drvar, where Josp Broz Tito, leader of the anti-Axis guerilla movement, was believed to be. The village was decimated: Men, women, and children were all killed by German troops in search of Tito, who escaped.



Marshal Josip Broz Tito (far right) with his cabinet and principal staff officers in Drvar, days before the offensive.

The airborne assault was preceded by heavy bombing of the town by the Luftwaffe. The ground forces included Home Guard forces of the Independent State of Croatia. Tito, his principal headquarters staff and the Allied military personnel escaped, despite their presence in Drvar at the time of the airborne assault. The operation failed due to a number of factors, including Partisan resistance in the town itself and along the approaches to Drvar. The failure of the various German intelligence agencies to share the limited intelligence available on Tito's exact location and the lack of contingency planning by the commander of the German airborne force also contributed to the unsuccessful outcome for the Germans.

- **May 25 1944 – WW2: *Auschwitz II Revolt*** » As several hundred Hungarian Jews were being led to a gas chamber in Birkenau (a supplementary camp, part of the Auschwitz complex known as Auschwitz II), the prisoners ran into the woods, suspecting their fate. Searchlights flooded the surrounding area, enabling the SS, who controlled the camp, to shoot all those who fled. This was the second such revolt in three days.

Also on this date:

- US VI Corps from Anzio joins U.S. II Corps from Gustav Line near Littoria, Italy, taking Cisterna, Italy in the process.
- German paratroopers attack Tito's Partisan HQ at Drvar in Bosnia on Tito's 52nd birthday. Tito and Churchill's son Randolph, both manage to escape in to the mountains.

- **May 25, 1945 – WW2:** USS Razorback (SS-394) rescued Lt. Col. Charles E. Taylor, a P-51 fighter pilot from the 21st Fighter Group.

Also on this date:



- The U.S. Joint Chiefs complete the plan for Operation ‘Olympic’, which sets the date to invade the Japanese mainland as no later than the 1st November 1945.
- The last major U.S. B-29 fire raid on Tokyo. In the campaign, 50% of city has been burned. Imperial Palace is hit in the B-29 raid, and Emperor Hirohito and his family are nearly killed.
- **May 25 1953 – Cold War:** *First Atomic Cannon is Fired in Nevada* » The M65 atomic cannon, often called "Atomic Annie", [3] was an artillery piece built by the United States and capable of firing a nuclear device. It was developed in the early 1950s, at the beginning of the Cold War, and fielded, by 1953, in Europe and South Korea.

On 25 MAY at 8:30 a.m., the atomic cannon was tested at the Nevada Test Site (specifically Frenchman Flat) as part of the Upshot–Knothole series of nuclear tests. The test—codenamed "Grable"—was attended by the Chairman-delegate of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Arthur W. Radford and United States Secretary of Defense Charles Erwin Wilson; it resulted in the successful detonation of a 15 kiloton shell (W9 warhead) at a range of 7 miles (11 km). This was the first and only nuclear shell to be fired from a cannon.



After the successful test, at least 20 cannons were manufactured at Watervliet and Watertown Arsenals, at a cost of \$800,000 each. They were deployed overseas to Europe and Korea, frequently shifted around to avoid being detected and targeted by opposing forces. Due to the size of the apparatus, their limited range, the development of nuclear shells compatible with existing artillery pieces (the W48 for the 155 mm and the W33 for the 203 mm), and the development of rocket- and missile-based nuclear artillery (such as the Little John and Honest John tactical nuclear missiles), the M65 was effectively obsolete soon after it was deployed. However, it remained a prestige weapon and was not retired until 1963.

- **May 25 1968 – Vietnam War:** *Communist Launch New Offensive* » The communists launch their third major assault of the year on Saigon. The heaviest fighting occurred during the first three days of June, and again centered on Cholon, the Chinese section of Saigon, where U.S. and South Vietnamese forces used helicopters, fighter-bombers, and tanks to dislodge deeply entrenched Viet Cong infiltrators. A captured enemy directive, which the U.S. command made public on 28 MAY, indicated that the Viet Cong saw the offensive as a means of influencing the Paris peace talks in their favor.
- **May 25 1969 – Vietnam War:** *National Democratic Front Formed in Saigon* » South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu assumes personal leadership of the National Social Democratic Front at

its inaugural meeting in Saigon. Thieu said the establishment of this coalition party was “the first concrete step in unifying the political factions in South Vietnam for the coming political struggle with the communists,” and emphasized that the new party would not be “totalitarian or despotic.” The six major parties comprising the NSDF coalition were: the Greater Union Force, composed largely of militant Roman Catholic refugees from North Vietnam; the Social Humanist Party, successor to the Can Lao party, which had held power under the Ngo Dinh Diem regime; the Revolutionary Dai Viet, created to fight the French; the Social Democratic Party, a faction of the Hoa Hao religious sect; the United Vietnam Kuomintang, formed as an anti-French party; and the People’s Alliance for Social Revolution, a pro-government bloc formed in 1968.

-o-o-O-o-o-

- **May 26 1637 – Native Americans: *Pequot Massacres Begin*** » During the Pequot War, an allied Puritan and Mohegan force under English Captain John Mason attacks a Pequot village in Connecticut, burning or massacring some 500 Indian women, men, and children.

As the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay spread further into Connecticut, they came into increasing conflict with the Pequots, a war-like tribe centered on the Thames River in southeastern Connecticut. By the spring of 1637, 13 English colonists and traders had been killed by the Pequot, and Massachusetts Bay Governor John Endecott organized a large military force to punish the Indians. On 23 APR, 200 Pequot warriors responded defiantly to the colonial mobilization by attacking a Connecticut settlement, killing six men and three women and taking two girls away.

On May 26, 1637, two hours before dawn, the Puritans and their Indian allies marched on the Pequot village at Mystic, slaughtering all but a handful of its inhabitants. On 5 JUN, Captain Mason attacked another Pequot village, this one near present-day Stonington, and again the Indian inhabitants were defeated and massacred. On 28 JUL, a third attack and massacre occurred near present-day Fairfield, and the Pequot War came to an end. Most of the surviving Pequot were sold into slavery, though a handful escaped to join other southern New England tribes.

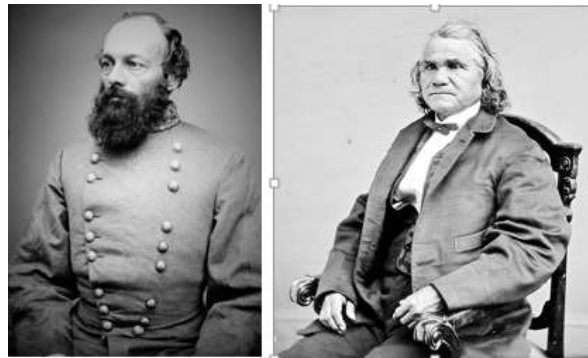
- **May 26 1783 – American Revolution:** A Great Jubilee Day held at North Stratford, Connecticut celebrated end of fighting in American Revolution.
- **May 26 1865 – Civil War: *Battle of Dallas*** » This was a series of engagements during the Atlanta Campaign. They occurred between 26 MAY and June 4, 1864, in and around Dallas, Georgia, between Lt. General William J. Hardee's Confederate corps and the Union defense line, held by the XV Corps under Maj. General John A. Logan of the Army of the Tennessee. The Battle of New Hope Church and the Battle of Pickett's Mill are often subgrouped as part of the overall engagement at Dallas.

On 24 MAY, Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman, in overall command of the Union forces in Georgia, learned that his Confederate counterpart, Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, was forming a defensive line along the south side of Pumpkinvine Creek. After a series of engagements, Johnston's army fell back from the vicinity of Cassville-Kingston, first to Allatoona Pass and then to the Dallas area and entrenched. Sherman's army tested the Rebel line while entrenching themselves. The Battle of Dallas occurred on 29 MAY when Hardee's Corps probed the Union defensive line, held by Logan's Army of the

Tennessee corps, to exploit any weakness or possible withdrawal. Fighting ensued at two different points, but the Rebels were repulsed, suffering high casualties.

Sherman continued looking for a way around Johnston's line, and, on 1 JUN, his cavalry occupied Allatoona Pass, which had a railroad and would allow his men and supplies to reach him by train. Sherman abandoned his lines at Dallas on 5 JUN and moved toward the rail-head at Allatoona Pass, forcing Johnston to follow soon afterwards. For the rest of June, the armies fought a series of skirmishes around Marietta, just 20 miles north of Atlanta.

- **May 26 1865 – Civil War: *One of the Last Confederate Generals Surrenders*** » Confederate General Edmund Kirby Smith, commander of the Confederate Trans-Mississippi division, surrenders on this day in 1865, one of the last Confederate generals to capitulate. Smith, who had become commander of the area in January 1863, was charged with keeping the Mississippi River open to the Southerners. Yet he was more interested in recapturing Arkansas and Missouri, largely because of the influence of Arkansans in the Confederate Congress who helped to secure his appointment.



Generals Edmund Smith and Stand Watie

Drawing sharp criticism for his failure to provide relief for Vicksburg, Mississippi in the summer of 1863, Smith later conducted the resistance to the Union's failed Red River campaign of 1864. When the Confederate forces under Robert E. Lee and Joseph Johnston surrendered in the spring of 1865, Smith continued to resist with his small army in Texas. He insisted that Lee and Johnston were prisoners of war and decried Confederate deserters. On 2 MAY, General Simon Buckner, acting for Smith, met with Union officers in New Orleans to arrange the surrender of Smith's force under terms similar to Lee's surrender at Appomattox, Virginia. Smith reluctantly agreed, and officially laid down his arms at Galveston on 2 JUN. Smith himself fled to Mexico, and then to Cuba, before returning to Virginia in November 1865 to sign an amnesty oath. He was the last surviving full Confederate general until his death in 1893.

Twenty-three days after Smith's surrender, Brigadier General Stand Watie, a Cherokee, became the last Confederate field general to surrender.

- **May 26 1940 – WW2 Era: *Siege of Calais*** » The battle for the major ferry port in France ends after 4 days with the surrender of the British and French garrison. 20,000 prisoners were taken, including 3,000–4,000 British troops, the remainder being French, Belgian and Dutch, most of whom had been "locked in cellars by the British" after they had ceased to fight. In 2006, Sebag-Montefiore wrote that German casualties killed and wounded during the battle were not recorded but probably

amounted to several hundred. Brigadier Nicholson was never able to give his views as he died in captivity on 26 June 1943 aged 44. German situation reports recorded 160 aircraft lost or damaged from 22–26 May; the RAF lost 112 aircraft.

- **May 26 1940 – WW2 Era:** *Battle of Dunkirk (26 May thru 4 Jun)* » As the Allies were losing the Battle of France on the Western Front, the Battle of Dunkirk was the defense and evacuation of British and other Allied forces to Britain. Allied forces begin a massive 9-day evacuation (Operation Dynamo) from Dunkirk, France. In one of the most debated decisions of the war, the Germans halted their advance on Dunkirk. Contrary to popular belief, what became known as the "Halt Order" did not originate with Adolf Hitler. Colonel-Generals Gerd von Rundstedt and Günther von Kluge suggested that the German forces around the Dunkirk pocket should cease their advance on the port and consolidate to avoid an Allied breakout. Hitler sanctioned the order on 24 May with the support of the High Command of the Wehrmacht of Nazi Germany. The army was to halt for three days, which gave the Allies sufficient time to organize the Dunkirk evacuation and build a defensive line.

On 26 MAY Ships arrived at Calais to remove the Force before German troops occupied the area, and it was hoped that British soldiers could be shipped back to Britain within two days. The German air force, though, had other plans. Determined to prevent the evacuation, the Luftwaffe initiated a bombing campaign in Dunkirk and the surrounding area. British, Polish, and Canadian fighter pilots succeeded in fending off the German attack in the air, allowing finally for a delayed, but successful, evacuation nine days later. But the cost to civilians was great, as thousands of refugees fled for their lives to evade the fallout of the battle.

A total of 338,226 men escaped, including 139,997 French, Polish, and Belgian troops, together with a small number of Dutch soldiers, aboard 861 vessels (of which 243 were sunk during the operation). Fighter Command lost 106 aircraft over Dunkirk and the Luftwaffe lost about 135. The docks at Dunkirk were too badly damaged to be used, but the east and west moles (sea walls protecting the harbor entrance) were intact. Captain William Tennant—in charge of the evacuation—decided to use the beaches and the east mole to land the ships. This highly successful idea hugely increased the number of troops that could be embarked each day, and on 31 May, over 68,000 men were embarked. The last of the British Army left on 3 JUN and at 10:50, Tennant signaled Ramsay to say "Operation completed. Returning to Dover". Churchill insisted on coming back for the French, and the Royal Navy returned on 4 JUN to rescue as many as possible of the French rearguard. Over 26,000 French soldiers were evacuated on that last day.

British and French military forces sustained heavy casualties and were forced to abandon nearly all their equipment. Of an Allied force of approximately 400,000, overall British casualties were 61,774 killed and wounded of which ~3,500 were killed during the evacuation. The French lost 18,000 killed and 35,000 captured. German losses were 20,000 killed and wounded of their force of 800,000. 90% of Dunkirk was destroyed during the battle.

- **May 26 1940 – WW2 Era:** *FDR Informs Americans about Dunkirk* » American President Franklin D. Roosevelt makes known the dire straits of Belgian and French civilians suffering the fallout of the British-German battle to reach the northern coast of France, and appeals for support for the Red Cross. "Tonight, over the once peaceful roads of Belgium and France, millions are now

moving, running from their homes to escape bombs and shells and machine gunning, without shelter, and almost wholly without food,” broadcast FDR.

Also on this date:

- In Britain General Sir John Dill is appointed Chief of the Imperial General Staff and Sir Edmund Ironside becomes C-in-C, Home defense.
- Empire Day in Britain is declared as a national day of prayer. Coastal towns from Great Yarmouth to Folkestone are declared evacuation areas.
- **May 26 1941 – WW2 Era:** *HMS Ark Royal Aircraft Sight German Battleship Bismarck* » Following the sighting of the Bismarck by Catalina Z/209, Swordfish 2H from Ark Royal fifteen Swordfish take off from the Ark Royal to attack. At 1550, they obtain radar contact with a ship and dive to attack. The attack, however, turns out to be a failure as the ship sighted is actually the light British cruiser Sheffield which had been previously detached from Force H to make contact with the Bismarck. Luckily for the British, the Sheffield is not hit by any of the eleven torpedoes launched because they were armed with faulty magnetic pistols. Two torpedoes explode on hitting the water, three on crossing the cruiser wake, and the other six are successfully avoided. The Swordfish return to the Ark Royal and another group composed of fifteen Swordfish takes off with their torpedoes armed with contact pistols. The striking force first approaches the Sheffield to get the range and bearing of the Bismarck, and at 2047, dive to attack. During the course of the attack, the Bismarck is hit by at least two 18 inch MK XII torpedoes. One or two torpedoes’ hit the port side amidships, and another strikes the stern in the starboard side jamming both of her rudders at 12 degrees to port.

Also on this date:

- The Aircraft carrier Formidable is severely damaged in the Mediterranean by Stukas.
- **May 26 1942 – WW2:** *Battle of Gazala (May 26 thru Jun 21)* » Fought during the Western Desert Campaign west of the port of Tobruk in Libya. Erwin Rommel’s Axis troops of the Panzerarmee Afrika consisting of German and Italian units fought the British Eighth Army composed mainly of British Commonwealth, Indian and Free French troops.

The Axis troops made a decoy attack in the north as the main attack moved round the southern flank of the Gazala position. Unexpected resistance at the south end of the line around the Bir Hakeim box by the Free French garrison, left Panzerarmee Afrika with a long and vulnerable supply route around the Gazala Line. Rommel retired to a defensive position backing onto Allied minefields (the Cauldron), forming a base in the midst of the British defenses. Italian engineers lifted mines from the west side of the minefields to create a supply route through to the Axis side.

Operation Aberdeen, an attack by the Eighth Army to finish off the Panzerarmee, was poorly coordinated and defeated in detail; many British tanks were lost and the Panzerarmee regained the initiative. The Eighth Army withdrew from the Gazala Line and the Axis troops overran Tobruk in a day. Rommel pursued the Eighth Army into Egypt and forced it out of several defensive positions. The Battle of Gazala is considered the greatest victory of Rommel's career. As both sides neared exhaustion, the Eighth Army checked the Axis advance at the First Battle of El Alamein. To support the Axis advance into Egypt, the planned attack on Malta (Operation Herkules) was postponed. The

British were able to revive Malta as a base for attacks on Axis convoys to Libya, greatly complicating Axis supply difficulties at El Alamein. Casualties and losses: Allies ~50,000 + 1,188 tanks – Axis ~5,000 + 400 tanks.

Also on this date:

- Britain and Russia sign a treaty in London. Each country pledges itself to fight Germany until final victory and not make a separate peace. They also agreed a 20-year alliance, not to join any coalition or treaty directed against one of them, and not to interfere with the other states internal affairs.
- In the Barents Sea, Convoy QP-12 is on its way home to Britain with 15 ships, while Convoy PQ-16 is en-route to Murmansk with 35. Some 260 Luftwaffe aircraft, including He 111 torpedo bombers, swing in to attack, joined by U-boats, amid appalling weather. QP-12 emerges unscathed, but PQ-16 feels the teeth of a running five-day battle, losing an acceptable six ships.
- **May 26 1943 – WW2:** The British Government informs churches throughout England that they may ring their bells freely. The ringing of church bells has been banned, except to warn of an invasion, since the start of the war. Also on this date the Red Army begins an offensive against the German forces isolated in the Kuban bridgehead between the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea.
- **May 26 1943 – WW2:** Charles De Gaulle proclaims his Free French movement to be the “Provisional Government of the French Republic.” Though the new government wins recognition from Czechoslovakia, Poland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Yugoslavia and Norway, Roosevelt and Churchill are furious and refuse recognition. They retaliate by excluding De Gaulle from the final planning for Operation Overlord.

Also on this date:

- U.S. troops from Anzio take Cori, 22 miles inland. Mark Clark makes a decision to direct four divisions on Rome, but only one to Valmontone on Highway 6 to cut German retreat.
- The Japanese launch a two-pronged attack from Canton and Hankow.
- **May 26 1945 – WW2:** *U.S. Drop Fire Bombs on Tokyo* » The Bombing of Tokyo was a series of firebombing air raids by the United States Army Air Forces during the Pacific campaigns of World War II. Operation Meetinghouse, which was conducted on the night of 9–10 March 1945, is regarded as the single most destructive bombing raid in human history. 16 square miles of central Tokyo were destroyed, leaving an estimated 100,000 civilians dead and over 1 million homeless.

The U.S. first mounted a seaborne, small-scale air raid on Tokyo in April 1942. Strategic bombing and urban area bombing began in 1944 after the long-range B-29 Superfortress bomber entered service, first deployed from China and thereafter the Mariana Islands. B-29 raids from those islands began on 17 November 1944, and lasted until 15 August 1945, the day of Japanese surrender. Over 50% of Tokyo's industry was spread out among residential and commercial neighborhoods; firebombing cut the whole city's output in half.



Tokyo burns under B-29 firebomb assault on 26 MAY

- **May 26 1946 – Atomic Energy Commission:** Patent filed in U.S. for H-Bomb.
- **May 26 1948 – U.S. Air Force:** The U.S. Congress passes Public Law 557, which permanently establishes the Civil Air Patrol as an auxiliary of the United States Air Force.
- **May 26 1954 – U.S. Navy:** While the 27,000-ton aircraft carrier USS Bennington (CVA-20) was cruising off Narragansett Bay, the fluid in one of her catapults exploded setting off a series of secondary explosions which killed 103 crewmen and injured 201 others. Bennington proceeded under her own power to Quonset Point, R. I., to land her injured. Moving to New York Naval Shipyard for repairs she was completely rebuilt during 12 June 1954 - 19 March 1955.
- **May 26 1960 – Cold War:** *United States Charges Soviets with Espionage* » During a meeting of the United Nations Security Council, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Henry Cabot Lodge charges that the Soviet Union has engaged in espionage activities at the U.S. embassy in Moscow for years. The charges were obviously an attempt by the United States to deflect Soviet criticisms following the downing of an American U-2 spy plane over Russia earlier in the month.



On May 1, 1960, a highly sophisticated (and supposedly invulnerable) U.S. spy plane, the U-2, was shot down over the Soviet Union. Although U.S. officials at first denied the existence of any such spy planes, the Soviets gleefully produced both the wreckage of the plane and its pilot, Francis Gary

Powers. Embarrassed U.S. officials, including President Dwight D. Eisenhower, were forced to publicly admit that the United States was indeed spying on the Soviet Union with the high altitude planes. However, the U.S. government consistently declared that it was doing nothing that the Soviets themselves were not doing. As evidence of that charge, Henry Cabot Lodge brought the issue before the U.N. Security Council. There, he produced a wooden reproduction of the Great Seal of the United States. Nestled inside was a small listening and transmitting device. Lodge claimed that the seal had been presented to the U.S. embassy in Moscow in 1945 by a group of Russian citizens. In 1952, a security sweep of the embassy discovered the listening device. Lodge went on to note that more than 100 other such devices had been found in the U.S. embassies in Russia and other communist-bloc countries during the last few years. The Soviet representative on the Security Council chuckled often during Lodge's presentation and then asked, "From what plays were these props taken and when will it open?"

Despite the U.S. charges of Soviet espionage, nothing could undo the damage of the downed U-2 spy plane, the subsequent denials, and the public embarrassment suffered by Eisenhower and other U.S. officials when they were caught in a lie. Just 10 days before Lodge's presentation in the Security Council, a summit meeting between Eisenhower and Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev ended with each side exchanging angry accusations about spying and bad faith.

- **May 26 1965 – Vietnam War:** *Australian Troops Depart for Vietnam* » Eight hundred Australian troops depart for Vietnam and New Zealand announces that it will send an artillery battalion.



The Australian government had first sent troops to Vietnam in 1964 in the form of a small aviation detachment and an engineer civic action team. They were increasing their commitment to the war with the deployment of the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (RAR). In 1966, the Australians once again increased their troop strength in Vietnam with the formation of the First Australian Task Force, which established a base of operations near Ba Ria in Phuoc Tuy province. The task force included two infantry battalions, 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 8,000 personnel.

New Zealand had initially sent a small engineer detachment to South Vietnam, but later sent an artillery battery in July 1965. Over time, the New Zealand contingent, which was placed under the operational control of the First Australian Task Force, grew to over 1,000 men.



The Australian and New Zealand contingents were part of the Free World Military Forces, also known as the “many flags” program, which was 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.

Australia and New Zealand began to withdraw their troops in 1970, following the lead of the United States as it drastically reduced its troop commitment to South Vietnam.

- **May 26 1971 – Vietnam War:** *North Vietnamese Seize Snoul, Cambodia* » In Cambodia, an estimated 1,000 North Vietnamese capture the strategic rubber plantation town of Snoul, driving out 2,000 South Vietnamese as U.S. air strikes support the Allied forces. Snoul gave the communists control of sections of Routes 7 and 13 that led into South Vietnam and access to large amounts of abandoned military equipment and supplies. On 31 MAY, the Cambodian government called for peace talks if all North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces agreed to withdraw. The communists rejected the bid. Cambodia ultimately fell to the communist Khmer Rouge and their North Vietnamese allies in April 1975.
- **May 26 1981 – U.S. Navy:** While conducting night training exercises 60 miles off Jacksonville, Florida a Marine EA6B electronics warfare jet slammed onto the wrong part of the USS Nimitz' (CVN-68) flight deck skidded off to the right and ended up in a ball of flames near the bow of the giant aircraft carrier, killing 14 men and injuring at least 48 others.
- **May 26 2004 – Terrorists:** The U.S. Army veteran Terry Nichols is found guilty of 161 state murder charges for helping carry out the Oklahoma City bombing.



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

- **May 27 1813 – War of 1812:** *Americans capture Fort George in Canada* » Americans forces planned an attack on a key British Fort, Fort George that was located on the Niagara River opposite Fort Niagara. The Americans, who had 4,000 troops at their disposal, began to bombard Fort George from Fort Niagara and other positions on 25 MAY. This alerted British commander Brigadier General John Vincent that the Americans were going to attack. He had 1,000 troops at his disposal. His problem was that he did not know from what side the Americans were going to attack. He decided that they would land along the Niagara River thus gaining the support from Fort Niagara on the other side.

The American forces under the command of Colonel Winfield Scott landed on Lake Erie instead, in the early hours of 27 MAY, with four hundred troops at Newark. The British forces put up a spirited defense trying to stop the Americans from landing but were unsuccessful. Once they landed Vincent decided that there was no way he could stop the American forces. He ordered Fort George blown up and an immediate withdrawal of his forces. Scott advanced so quickly that the Americans managed to extinguish the fuses before most of the fort could blow up.

With the hope of capturing the whole British force an American force had been tasked with blocking the British retreat. Unfortunately for the Americans their troops were late in being getting in place and could not successfully cut off the British forces, thus they escaped to fight another day. The Americans lost 41 killed and 113 wounded. The British lost 52 killed, 44 wounded and 262 missing

- **May 27 1863 – Civil War:** *Siege of Port Hudson (May 27 thru JUL 9)* » The siege in Louisiana was the final engagement in the Union campaign to recapture the Mississippi River. While Union General Ulysses Grant was besieging Vicksburg upriver, General Nathaniel Banks was ordered to capture the Confederate stronghold of Port Hudson, in order to go to Grant's aid. When his assault failed, Banks settled into a 48-day siege, the longest in U.S. military history up to that point. A second attack also failed, and it was only after the fall of Vicksburg that the Confederate commander, General Franklin Gardner surrendered the port. The Union gained control of the river and navigation from the Gulf of Mexico through the Deep South and to the river's upper reaches.
- **May 27 1905 – Russo-Japanese War:** *The Battle of Tsushima Strait* » The only decisive clash between modern steel battleships in history. The Russian Baltic Fleet is nearly destroyed at the Battle of Tsushima Strait. The decisive defeat, in which only 10 of 45 Russian warships escaped to safety, convinced Russian leaders that further resistance against Japan's imperial designs for East Asia was hopeless.

On February 8, 1904, following the Russian rejection of a Japanese plan to divide Manchuria and Korea into spheres of influence, Japan launched a surprise naval attack against Port Arthur, a Russian naval base in China. It was the first major battle of the 20th century, and the Russian fleet was decimated. During the subsequent war, Japan won a series of decisive victories over the Russians, who underestimated the military potential of its non-Western opponent. In January 1905, the strategic naval base of Port Arthur fell to Japanese naval and ground forces under Admiral Heihachiro Togo, and in March Russian troops were defeated at Shenyang, China, by Japanese Field Marshal Iwao Oyama.



Russian Czar Nicholas II hoped that the Russian Baltic fleet under Admiral Zinovy Rozhdestvensky would be able to challenge Admiral Togo's supremacy at sea, but during the two-day Battle of Tsushima Strait, beginning on May 27, more than 30 Russian ships were sunk or captured by the superior Japanese warships. It was naval history's first decisive sea battle fought by modern steel battleship fleets, and the first naval battle in which wireless telegraphy (radio) played a critically important role. The Battle of Tsushima conclusively demonstrated that battleship speed and big guns with longer ranges were more advantageous in naval battles than mixed batteries of different sizes. It has been characterized as the "dying echo of the old era – for the last time in the history of naval warfare, ships of the line of a beaten fleet surrendered on the high seas".

In August, the stunning string of Japanese victories convinced Russia to accept the peace treaty mediated by U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. (Roosevelt was later awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for this achievement.) In the Treaty of Portsmouth, Russia recognized Japan as the dominant power in Korea and gave up Port Arthur, the southern half of Sakhalin Island, and the Liaotung Peninsula to Japan. Japan emerged from the conflict as the first modern non-Western world power and set its sights on greater imperial expansion. However, for Russia, its military's disastrous performance in the war was one of the immediate causes of the Russian Revolution of 1905.

- **May 27 1915 – WWI Era: *Minelayer Princess Irene Explodes*** » Princess Irene was requisitioned by the Royal Navy on her completion in 1915 and converted to an auxiliary minelayer. She had a complement of 225 officers and men. Princess Irene was moored in Saltpan Reach, on the Medway Estuary in Kent between Port Victoria and Sheerness, being loaded with mines in preparation for deployment on a minelaying mission. At 11:14 GMT on 27 May, she exploded and disintegrated. A column of flame 300 feet (100 m) high was followed a few seconds later by another of similar height and a pall of smoke hung over the spot where she had been, reaching to 1,200. Two barges lying alongside her were also destroyed.

The explosion was larger than that which had destroyed HMS Bulwark in the Medway six months earlier, although the loss of life was less. A total of 352 people were killed, including 273 officers and men, and 76 dockyard workers who were on board Princess Irene. On the Isle of Grain a girl of nine was killed by flying debris, and a farmhand died of shock. A collier half a mile away had its crane

blown off its mountings. A part of one of Princess Irene's boilers landed on the ship; a man working on the ship died from injuries sustained when he was struck by a piece of metal weighing 70 pounds

Wreckage was flung up to 20 miles away, with people near Sittingbourne being injured by flying debris, some of which landed in Bredhurst. Severed heads were found at Hartlip and on the Isle of Grain. A case of butter landed at Rainham, 6 miles away. A 10-ton section of the ship landed on the Isle of Grain. The Admiralty's oil storage tanks there were damaged. The sole survivor from Princess Irene was a stoker, who suffered severe burns. Three of her crew had a lucky escape as they were ashore at the time. A Court of Inquiry was held into the loss of Princess Irene. Evidence was given that priming of the mines was being carried out hurriedly and by untrained personnel. A faulty primer was blamed for the explosion.

- **May 27 1918 – WWI:** *Third Battle of Aisne May 27 – Jun 4* » Battle of the German Spring Offensive that focused on capturing the French Chemin des Dames Ridge before the American Expeditionary Forces arrived completely in France. It was one of a series of offensives, known as the Kaiserschlacht, launched by the Germans in the spring and summer of 1918.

The massive surprise attack was the first full-scale German offensive following the Lys Offensive in Flanders in April. The Germans held the Chemin des Dames Ridge from the First Battle of the Aisne in September 1914 to 1917, when French General Mangin captured it during the Second Battle of the Aisne (in the Nivelle Offensive). Operation Blücher-Yorck was planned primarily by General Erich Ludendorff, the First Quartermaster-General of the German Army, who was certain that success at the Aisne would lead the German armies to within striking distance of Paris. Ludendorff, who saw the British Expeditionary Force as the main threat, believed that this, in turn, would cause the Allies to move forces from Flanders to help defend the French capital, allowing the Germans to continue their Flanders offensive with greater ease. Thus, the Aisne drive was to be essentially a large diversionary attack.

On the morning of 27 MAY, the Germans began a bombardment of the Allied front lines with over 4,000 artillery pieces. The British suffered heavy losses, because they were reluctant to abandon the Chemin des Dames ridge, after it had been captured at such cost the previous year. They were ordered to mass together in the front trenches, in defiance of instructions from the French Commander-in-Chief Henri-Philippe Petain. Huddled together, they made easy artillery targets. The bombardment was followed by a poison gas drop. Once the gas had lifted, the main infantry assault by 17 German Sturmtruppen divisions commenced, part of an Army Group nominally commanded by Crown Prince Wilhelm, the eldest son of Kaiser Wilhelm II.

Taken completely by surprise and with their defenses spread thin, the Allies were unable to stop the attack and the German army advanced through a 25 mi gap in the Allied lines. Reaching the Aisne in under six hours, the Germans smashed through eight Allied divisions on a line between Reims and Soissons, pushing the Allies back to the river Vesle and gaining an extra 15 km of territory by nightfall. Victory seemed near for the Germans, who had captured just over 50,000 Allied soldiers and over 800 guns by 30 May. But advancing within 35 mi of Paris on 3 JUN, the German armies were beset by numerous problems, including supply shortages, fatigue, lack of reserves and many casualties. Ultimately, following many Allied counter-attacks, the German advance came to a halt three days later

Despite penetrating Allied lines by approximately 34 miles and coming closer to Paris than any time since 1914, the Germans were successfully halted by the Allies at the Marne on 6 JUN. By the battle's end, the Germans had suffered 130,000 casualties while the combined total of the Allies reached up to 137,000. The battle also marked one of the first instances where an appreciable numbers of American troops participated and had proven themselves in combat.

- **May 27 1939 –WW2 Era: Jewish Refugees Denied Entry to Cuba** » A boat carrying 937 Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution is turned away from Havana, Cuba. After appeals to the United States and Canada for entry are denied, the rest are forced to sail back to Europe, where they're distributed among several countries including Great Britain and France.



On 13 MAY, the S.S. St. Louis sailed from Hamburg, Germany to Havana, Cuba. Most of the passengers—many of them children—were German Jews escaping increasing persecution under the Third Reich. Six months earlier, 91 people were killed and Jewish homes, businesses, and synagogues were destroyed in what became known as the Kristallnacht pogrom. It was becoming increasingly clear the Nazis were accelerating their efforts to exterminate Jews by arresting them and placing them in concentration camps. World War II and the formal implementation of The Final Solution were just months from beginning. The refugees had applied for U.S. visas, and planned to stay in Cuba until they could enter the United States legally. Even before they set sail, their impending arrival was greeted with hostility in Cuba. On 8 MAY, there was a massive anti-Semitic demonstration in Havana. Right-wing newspapers claimed that the incoming immigrants were Communists.

The St. Louis arrived in Havana on 27 MAY. Roughly 28 people onboard had valid visas or travel documents and were allowed to disembark. The Cuban government refused to admit the nearly 900 others. For seven days, the ship's captain attempted to negotiate with Cuban officials, but they refused to comply. The ship sailed closer to Florida, hoping to disembark there, but it was not permitted to dock. Some passengers attempted to cable President Franklin D. Roosevelt asking for refuge, but he never responded. A State Department telegram stated that the asylum-seekers must "await their turns on the waiting list and qualify for and obtain immigration visas before they may be admissible into the United States."

As a last resort, the St. Louis continued north to Canada, but it was rejected there, too. "No country could open its doors wide enough to take in the hundreds of thousands of Jewish people who want to leave Europe: the line must be drawn somewhere," Frederick Blair, Canada's director of immigration, said at the time. Faced with no other options, the ship returned to Europe. It docked in Antwerp, Belgium on 17 JUN. By then, several Jewish organizations had secured entry visas for the

refugees in Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Great Britain. The majority who had traveled on the ship survived the Holocaust; 254 later died as the Nazis swept through the continent.

- **May 27 1940 – WW2 Era: Le Paradis Massacre** » A war crime committed by members of the 14th Company, SS Division Totenkopf, under the command of Hauptsturmführer Fritz Knöchlein. It took place on 27 May 1940, during the Battle of France, at a time when troops of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) were attempting to retreat through the Pas-de-Calais region during the Battle of Dunkirk.

Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, the Royal Norfolk Regiment, had become isolated from their unit. They occupied and defended a farmhouse against an attack by Waffen-SS forces in the village of Le Paradis. After running out of ammunition, the defenders surrendered to the German troops. The Germans led them across the road to a wall where they were murdered by machine gun fire. Ninety-seven British troops were killed. Two survived, with injuries, and hid until they were captured by German forces several days later. After the war, Knöchlein was convicted by a war crimes court, with the two survivors acting as witnesses against him. For his part in the massacre, Knöchlein was executed in 1949.

Also on this date:

- British position in Flanders worsens as King Leopold of Belgium surrenders the remnants of his Army.
  - British sugar ration reduced from 12oz to 8oz.
  - Japanese Premier Admiral Yonai forms 'Inner Cabinet' with ministers for Foreign Affairs, War and the Navy.
- **May 27 1941 – WW2 Era: Bismarck Sunk by Royal Navy** » The British navy sinks the German battleship Bismarck in the North Atlantic near France. The German death toll was more than 2,000.

On February 14, 1939, the 823-foot Bismarck was launched at Hamburg. Nazi leader Adolf Hitler hoped that the state-of-the-art battleship would herald the rebirth of the German surface battle fleet. However, after the outbreak of war, Britain closely guarded ocean routes from Germany to the Atlantic Ocean, and only U-boats moved freely through the war zone.



In May 1941, the order was given for the Bismarck to break out into the Atlantic. Once in the safety of the open ocean, the battleship would be almost impossible to track down, all the while

wreaking havoc on Allied convoys to Britain. Learning of its movement, Britain sent almost the entire British Home Fleet in pursuit. On 24 MAY, the British battle cruiser Hood and battleship Prince of Wales intercepted it near Iceland. In a ferocious battle, the Hood exploded and sank, and all but three of the 1,421 crewmen were killed. The Bismarck escaped, but because it was leaking fuel it fled for occupied France. On 26 MAY, it was sighted and crippled by British aircraft, and on 27 MAY three British warships descended on the Bismarck and finished it off.

- **May 27 1941 –WW2 Era:** *FDR Announces State of Unlimited National Emergency* » President Franklin D. Roosevelt in response to Nazi Germany's threats of world domination on May 27, 1941 announces a state of unlimited national emergency. In a speech on this day, he repeated his famous remark from a speech he made in 1933 during the Great Depression: the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.

In a radio address delivered from the White House, FDR tried to rally isolationists to his philosophy that aid to Europe was purely in America's self-interest. In March 1941, he had successfully pushed through the Lend-Lease Bill, which gave military aid to any country vital to the defense of the United States. Roosevelt recounted for his audience how German submarines were boldly attacking British shipping and threatening American shipping in the Atlantic and how Londoners endured nightly raids of German bombers. He painted an almost apocalyptic vision of a Nazi-controlled Western Hemisphere where American workers would be enslaved by Germany, godless Nazis would outlaw freedom of worship and America's children would wander off, goose-stepping in search of new gods.

Roosevelt also took pains to define what he meant by America being attacked. He insisted that an attack on the United States can begin with the domination of any base which menaces our security, for instance Canada, Brazil or Trinidad, and not just when bombs actually drop in the streets of New York or San Francisco or New Orleans or Chicago. He appeared to be urging Americans to consider actively engaging in the war in Europe stating it would be suicide to wait until they are in our front yard.

FDR then laid out his administration's policy with regard to the current war in Europe. Without committing troops, he promised the protection of shipping in the Atlantic, continued humanitarian and military aid to Britain, the establishment of a civilian defense and warned of saboteurs and fifth columnists (communist infiltrators) who threatened democracy in America and abroad. He also condemned war profiteering and urged organized labor to resist disruptive strikes in war-production industries.

Finally, FDR warned Germany that the U.S. was prepared to go to war in case of attack and pledged to strengthen America's defense to the extreme limit of our national power and authority. Just over seven months later, the United States entered World War II after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Also on this date:

- Proposal to introduce conscription in Northern Ireland finally scrapped.
- The convoy HX129, becomes the first to have continuous escort protection across the Atlantic.

- Germans paratroopers take Canea and with it the main British supply point of Suda Bay. This convinces Major General Freyberg VC, that the situation has gone against the British and that he must withdraw from Crete to save what he can.
- Having been reinforced by the 15th Panzer Division, Rommel retakes the Halfaya Pass on Egyptian border. The 10th Indian Division begins to advance north from Basra towards Baghdad.
- **May 27 1942 – WW2: *Operation Anthropoid*** » Reinhard Heydrich, one of the main architects of the Holocaust is fatally wounded in Prague; he dies of his injuries eight days later.



Also on this date:

- The siege of Sevastopol rages on, becoming the only incident of a formal siege of a modern fortress being pushed through to final reduction. Sevastopol is the premier port on the Black Sea, and its defenses include three zones of trenches, pillboxes, and batteries. The strongest defenses lie in the middle zone, which includes the heights and the south bank of the Belbek River. Among these hills are “Fort Stalin” on the East and the massive western anchor of “Fort Maxim Gorki I,” with its turret of twin 305 mm (12-inch) guns sweeping the length of the Belbek valley. 105,000 men defend this port. Against this the Germans and Romanians range 203,000 men and some of the most powerful siege artillery ever disposed by any army in World War II. Field Marshal Erich von Manstein aims 305 mm, 350 mm, and 420 mm howitzers at the Russians, along with two of the new, stubby “Karl” and “Thor” 600 mm mortars. Also on hand is the 800 mm (31.5-inch) “Big Dora” from Krupp, which has to be transported to position by 60 railway wagons. “Big Dora” is commanded by a major general and a colonel, protected by two flak regiments and periodically fed with a 10,500 lb. shell.
- Luftwaffe bombers sink 5 ships of Convoy PQ-16 off the northern coast of Norway.
- Czech patriots shoot Reinhard Heydrich in the suburbs of Prague. His condition is described as critical.
- The Afrika Korps, having pushed around the British defenses, move northeast. They are engaged by elements of the British 1st and 7th Armored Divisions. Many tank losses were taken by both sides, although as the battle went on the British armor became increasingly scattered. The Italian Ariete Armored Division continued to meet stiff resistance from the Free French at Bir Hacheim,



while the Italian Trieste Motorized Division further north, found itself grinding through minefields under heavy fire as a result of a navigation error.

- Japanese Combined Fleet lifts anchor and sets sail for Midway. On the same day, Admiral Nimitz, having been warned of the impending Japanese attack against Midway by U.S. intelligence who were intercepting Japanese naval signals, issues orders for Task Force 16 (Admiral Spruance) with the carriers Enterprise and Hornet, plus 6 cruisers, 11 destroyers, 2 tankers and 19 submarines, to sail for Midway the next day.
- **May 27 1943 – WW2: U.S. Olympian Louie Zamperini's Plane Goes Down** » Zamperini enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps in September 1941 and earned a commission as a second lieutenant. He was deployed to the Pacific island of Funafuti as a bombardier on the Consolidated B-24 Liberator bomber Super Man. In April 1943, during a bombing mission against the Japanese-held island of Nauru, the bomber was badly damaged in combat. With Super Man no longer flight-worthy, and a number of the crew injured, the healthy crew members were transferred to Hawaii to await reassignment. Zamperini, along with some other former Super Man crewmates, was assigned to conduct a search for a lost aircraft and crew. They were given another B-24, Green Hornet, notorious among the pilots as a defective "lemon."

While on the search 27 May, mechanical difficulties caused the bomber to crash into the ocean 850 miles south of Oahu, killing eight of the 11 men aboard. The three survivors were Zamperini and his crewmates, pilot Russell Allen Phillips and Francis McNamara; with little food and no water, they subsisted on captured rainwater, small fish eaten raw, and birds that landed on their raft. McNamara ate all the chocolate they had in a panic, but he later redeemed himself by using an oar to defend the survivors from a shark attack. They attempted to gain the attention of a search plane but failed. With the few tools they were able to salvage from the crash, the men were able to manage on two small rafts that got released. They caught two albatrosses, one of which they ate, and used pieces as bait to catch fish, all while fending off constant shark attacks and nearly being capsized by a storm.



Zamperini examines a hole in his B-24D Liberator *Super Man* made by a 20 mm shell over Nauru.

They were strafed multiple times by a Japanese bomber, which punctured their life raft, but no one was hit. After 33 days at sea, McNamara died; to wish him a good life, free from the war, Zamperini and Phillips wrapped up his body and sent it into the sea. On their 47th day adrift, they reached land in the Marshall Islands and were immediately captured by the Japanese Navy.

They were held in captivity, severely beaten, and mistreated until the end of the war in August 1945. Initially held at Kwajalein Atoll, after 42 days they were transferred to the Japanese prisoner-of-war camp at Ōfuna, for captives who were not registered as prisoners of war (POW). Zamperini was later transferred to Tokyo's Ōmori POW camp, and was eventually transferred to the Naoetsu POW camp in northern Japan, where he stayed until the war ended. He was tormented by prison guard Mutsuhiro "The Bird" Watanabe, who was later included in General Douglas MacArthur's list of the forty most wanted war criminals in Japan.

Zamperini was held at the same camp as then-Major Greg "Pappy" Boyington, and in his book, *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, Boyington describes the Italian recipes Zamperini would write to keep the prisoners' minds off the food and conditions. The defiant American managed to survive and was released after the war ended in 1945. Back home in California, Zamperini drank heavily and was haunted by his experiences in captivity. Then, after being inspired by evangelist Billy Graham to convert to Christianity in 1949, Zamperini went on to become an inspirational speaker, forgive his captors and publish an autobiography, "Devil at my Heels." A wider audience learned about his life with the publication of "Unbroken" by Laura Hillenbrand, author of the 2001 best-seller "Seabiscuit: An American Legend," about the Depression-era champion racehorse.

- **May 27 1943 – WW2:** *U.S. Olympian Louis Zamperini's Plane Goes Down in the Pacific* » A B-24 carrying U.S. airman and former Olympic runner Louis Zamperini crashes into the Pacific Ocean. After surviving the crash, Zamperini floated on a raft in shark-infested waters for more than a month before being picked up by the Japanese and spending the next two years in a series of brutal prison camps. His story of survival was featured in the 2010 best-selling book *Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand.

Born in 1917 to Italian immigrants, Zamperini grew up in Torrance, California, where he was frequently in trouble with the law. As a teen, he channeled his energy into athletics and became a champion distance runner. At age 19, Zamperini competed for the United States at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, Germany. He ran the 5,000-meter race and finished in eighth place; however, his fast final lap caught the attention of Adolf Hitler, who later asked to shake Zamperini's hand. After the Olympics, he was a record-setting standout on the University of Southern California's track team.

In the fall of 1941, Zamperini enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps and was eventually stationed in Hawaii. In May 1943, he was serving as the bombardier on a B-24 that was searching for a missing plane when his own aircraft developed mechanical problems and went down in the Pacific. Of the 11 people onboard, only the 26-year-old Zamperini, along with the pilot and the tail gunner survived the initial crash. The three men stayed alive in their small raft by drinking rainwater and eating the occasional seabirds and fish they were able to catch, all while facing strafing from Japanese bombers and the ever-present threat of shark attacks. After a month at sea, Francis McNamara, the tail gunner, perished. On their 47th day in the raft, Zamperini and fellow survivor Russell Allen Phillips, having drifted some 2,000 miles since the crash, were picked up by Japanese sailors.

For more than two years, the two men were held in a series of prison camps, where they were repeatedly beaten and starved. As an ex-Olympian, Zamperini was considered a propaganda tool by the Japanese and saved from execution; at the same time, however, he was singled out for particularly vicious forms of torture. The defiant American managed to survive and was released after the war ended in 1945.

Back home in California, Zamperini drank heavily and was haunted by his experiences in captivity. Then, after being inspired by evangelist Billy Graham to convert to Christianity in 1949, Zamperini went on to become an inspirational speaker, forgive his captors and publish an autobiography, *Devil at my Heels*. A wider audience learned about his life with the publication of *Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand, author of the 2001 best-seller *Seabiscuit: An American Legend*, about the Depression-era champion racehorse. Zamperini died in July 2014, in Los Angeles. He was 97.

Also on this date:

- USS *Runner* (SS 275) departs Midway for her third war patrol but is never heard from again. Overdue and presumed lost in July 1943, she is struck from the Navy list that October.
- Jean Moulin presides over the first-ever unified meeting of the French Resistance at 48 Rue de Four in Paris, where Charles de Gaulle is unanimously recognized as the movement's leader. A month later, Moulin is betrayed and arrested by the Gestapo, dying on his way to a concentration camp in Germany.
- The first British 'liaison' team is dropped into Yugoslavia to join up with Tito's partisans.
- **May 27 1944 – WW2:** 12,000 U.S. troops land on Biak in the Schouten Island Group New Guinea, 350 miles West of Hollandia. MacArthur says, 'this marks the strategic end of the New Guinea campaign'. Also on this date the start of the monsoon season bogs down operations in Burma.
- **May 27 1945 – WW2:** *Battle of Okinawa* » Naha is officially captured by American forces. The Orouku Peninsula to the south is now within reach. Also on this date the U.S. Sixth Army takes Santa Fe on Luzon and Chinese troops are now 25 miles North of Foochow and take Loyaun.
- **May 27 1958 – U.S. Air Force:** The F-4 Phantom II makes its first flight.
- **May 27 1965 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. Warships Begin Bombardment of Viet Cong Targets* » Augmenting the vital role now being played by U.S. aircraft carriers, whose planes participated in many of the raids over South and North Vietnam, U.S. warships from the 7th Fleet begin to fire on Viet Cong targets in the central area of South Vietnam. At first, this gunfire was limited to 5-inch-gun destroyers, but other ships would eventually be used in the mission.

Organized into Task Group 70.8, the ships were assigned from the fleet's cruiser-destroyer command, from the carrier escort units and amphibious units, from the Navy-Coast Guard Coastal Surveillance Force, and from the Royal Australian Navy. Ships and weapons included the battleship *New Jersey*, with 16-inch guns; cruisers with 8-inch and 5-inch guns; destroyers with 5-inch guns, and inshore fire support ships and landing ships.

Naval gunfire support and shore bombardment ranged the entire coast of Vietnam, but most of the operations took place off the coast of the northernmost region of South Vietnam, just south of the Demilitarized Zone. During the 1968 Tet Offensive, Task Group 70.8 had as many as 22 ships at a time on the gun line, offering invaluable naval gunfire support to ground forces.

In May 1972, as part of Operation Linebacker I, a 7th Fleet cruiser-destroyer group bombarded targets near Haiphong and along the North Vietnam coast, firing over 111,000 rounds at the enemy. One destroyer was hit by a MiG bombing attack and 16 ships were hit by communist shore batteries, but none were sunk.

- **May 27 1967 – U.S. Navy:** The U.S. Navy aircraft carrier USS John F. Kennedy is launched by Jacqueline Kennedy and her daughter Caroline.
- **May 27 1971 – Vietnam War:** *Sweden Announces Support to Viet Cong* » In Sweden, Foreign Minister Torsten Nilsson reveals that Sweden has been providing assistance to the Viet Cong, including some \$550,000 worth of medical supplies. Similar Swedish aid was to go to Cambodian and Laotian civilians affected by the Indochinese fighting. This support was primarily humanitarian in nature and included no military aid.
- **May 27 1972 – Cold War:** *SALT Agreements Signed* » Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev and U.S. President Richard Nixon, meeting in Moscow, sign the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) agreements. At the time, these agreements were the most far-reaching attempts to control nuclear weapons ever.



Nixon and Brezhnev seemed unlikely candidates for the American and Soviet statesmen who would sign a groundbreaking arms limitation treaty. Both men carried reputations as hard-line Cold War warriors. Yet, by 1972, both leaders were eager for closer diplomatic relations between their respective nations. The Soviet Union was engaged in an increasingly hostile war of words with communist China; border disputes between the two nations had erupted in the past few years. The United States was looking for help in extricating itself from the unpopular and costly war in Vietnam. Nixon, in particular, wished to take the American public's mind off the fact that during nearly four

years as president, he had failed to bring an end to the conflict. The May 1972 summit meeting between Nixon and Brezhnev was an opportune moment to pursue the closer relations each desired.

The most important element of the summit concerned the SALT agreements. Discussions on SALT had been occurring for about two-and-a-half years, but with little progress. During the May 1972 meeting between Nixon and Brezhnev, however, a monumental breakthrough was achieved. The SALT agreements signed on 27 MAY addressed two major issues. First, they limited the number of antiballistic missile (ABM) sites each country could have to two. (ABMs were missiles designed to destroy incoming missiles.) Second, the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched ballistic missiles was frozen at existing levels. There was nothing in the agreements, however, about multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle missiles (single missiles carrying multiple nuclear warheads) or about the development of new weapons. Nevertheless, most Americans and Soviets hailed the SALT agreements as tremendous achievements. In August 1972, the U.S. Senate approved the agreements by an overwhelming vote. SALT-I, as it came to be known, was the foundation for all arms limitations talks that followed.

- **May 27 1988 – Cold War:** The U.S. Senate voted 93-5 in favor of the U.S.-Soviet treaty to abolish intermediate-range nuclear missiles. The treaty would eliminate only a fraction of the superpowers' nuclear arsenals, leaving both sides with long-range missiles that could be used against the same targets the medium- and shorter-range missiles had been aimed at. Both sides also had thousands of other nuclear weapons.
- **May 27 2010 – U.S.\*Iraq/Afganistan:** Vice President Joe Biden said the number of American troops in Iraq would be trimmed to 50,000 by summer while U.S. troop presence in Afghanistan would approach 100,000

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

- **May 28 1754 – French and Indian War:** *First Blood in Seven Years War* » In the first engagement of the French and Indian War, a Virginia militia under 22-year-old Lieutenant Colonel George Washington defeats a French reconnaissance party in southwestern Pennsylvania. In a surprise attack, the Virginians killed 10 French soldiers from Fort Duquesne, including the French commander, Coulon de Jumonville, and took 21 prisoners. Only one of Washington's men was killed.

The French and Indian War was the last and most important of a series of colonial conflicts between the British and the American colonists on one side, and the French and their broad network of Native American allies on the other. Fighting began in the spring of 1754, but Britain and France did not officially declare war against each other until May 1756 and the outbreak of the Seven Years War in Europe.

In November 1752, at the age of 20, George Washington was appointed adjutant in the Virginia colonial militia, which involved the inspection, mustering, and regulation of various militia companies. In November 1753, he first gained public notice when he volunteered to carry a message from Virginia Governor Robert Dinwiddie to the French moving into the Ohio Valley, warning them to leave the territory, which was claimed by the British crown. Washington succeeded in the perilous wilderness journey and brought back an alarming message: The French intended to stay.



**In 1754, George Washington, of the Virginia Regiment, was dispatched to warn the French to leave Virginian territory.**

In 1754, Dinwiddie appointed Washington a lieutenant colonel and sent him out with 160 men to reinforce a colonial post at what is now Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Before Washington could reach it, however, it was given up without bloodshed to the French, who renamed it Fort Duquesne. Washington moved within about 40 miles of the French position and set about building a new post at Great Meadows, which he named Fort Necessity. From this base, he ambushed an advance detachment of about 30 French, striking the first blow of the French and Indian War. For the victory, Washington was appointed a full colonel and reinforced with several hundred Virginia and North Carolina troops.

On 3 JUL, the French descended on Fort Necessity with their full force, and after an all-day fight Washington surrendered to their superior numbers. The disarmed colonials were allowed to march back to Virginia, and Washington was hailed as a hero despite his surrender of the fort. The story of the campaign was written up in a London gazette, and Washington was quoted as saying, “I have heard the bullets whistle; and believe me, there is something charming in the sound.” Reading this, King George II remarked, “He would not say so if he had been used to hear many.”

In October 1754, Washington resigned his commission in protest of the British underpayment of colonial offices and policy of making them subordinate to all British officers, regardless of rank. In early 1755, however, British General Edward Braddock and his army arrived to Virginia, and Washington agreed to serve as Braddock’s personal aide-de-camp, with the courtesy title of colonel. The subsequent expedition against Fort Duquesne was a disaster, but Washington fought bravely and succeeded in bringing the survivors back after Braddock and 1,000 others were killed.

With the western frontier of Virginia now dangerously exposed, Governor Dinwiddie appointed Washington commander in chief of all Virginia forces in August 1755. During the next three years, Washington struggled with the problems of frontier defense but participated in no major engagements until he was put in command of a Virginia regiment participating in a large British campaign against Fort Duquesne in 1758. The French burned and abandoned the fort before the British and Americans arrived, and Fort Pitt was raised on its site. With Virginia’s strategic objective attained, Washington resigned his commission with the honorary rank of brigadier general. He returned to a planter’s life and took a seat in Virginia’s House of Burgesses.

The French and Indian War raged on elsewhere in North America for several years. With the signing of the Treaty of Paris in February 1763, France lost all claims to the mainland of North America east of the Mississippi and gave up Louisiana, including New Orleans, to Spain. Fifteen years later, French bitterness over the loss of their North American empire contributed to their intervention in the American Revolution on the side of the Patriots, despite the fact that the Patriots were led by one of France's old enemies, George Washington.

- **May 28 1830 – Native Americans:** *Indian Removal Act* » President Andrew Jackson signs the Indian Removal Act, authorizing the Army to force Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole tribes, including some of his former allies in the War of 1812, out of Georgia and surrounding states. This sets the stage for the Cherokee Trail of Tears and other forced relocation marches. The Removal Act becomes a reality in 1831 as the Choctaw are forcibly relocated to Indian Territory (which is now known as Oklahoma). Thousands—nearly one-third of the Choctaw Nation—die of starvation, exposure, and disease on the more than 500-mile journey. Disease, early death, and ill health plague the Choctaw for many generations after removal. The phrase “Trail of Tears” originated from a description of the removal of the Choctaw Nation in 1831.
- **May 28 1863 – Civil War:** *African-American Regiment Departs for Combat* » The 54th Massachusetts Infantry, the most famous African-American regiment of the war, leaves Boston for combat in the South. For the first two years of the war, President Abraham Lincoln resisted the use of black troops despite the pleas of men such as Frederick Douglass, who argued that no one had more to fight for than African Americans. Lincoln finally endorsed, albeit timidly, the introduction of blacks for service in the military in the Emancipation Proclamation. On May 22, 1863, the War Department established the Bureau of Colored Troops to recruit and assemble black regiments. Many blacks, often freed or escaped slaves, joined the military and found themselves usually under white leadership. Ninety percent of all officers in the United States Colored Troops (USCT) were white.



Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, the idealistic scion of an abolitionist family, headed the 54th. Shaw was a veteran of the 2nd Massachusetts infantry and saw action in the 1862 Shenandoah Valley and Antietam campaigns. After being selected by Massachusetts Governor John Andrew to organize and lead the 54th, Shaw carefully selected the most physically fit soldiers and white officers with

established antislavery views. The regiment included two of Frederick Douglass's sons and the grandson of Sojourner Truth.

On May 28, 1863, the new regiment marched onto a steamer and set sail for Port Royal, South Carolina. The unit saw action right away, taking part in a raid into Georgia and withstanding a Confederate attack near Charleston, South Carolina. On July 18, 1863, Shaw led a bold but doomed attack against Fort Wagner, South Carolina, in which he was killed and the 54th suffered heavy casualties.

The story of Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts was immortalized in the critically acclaimed 1990 movie *Glory*, starring Mathew Broderick, Denzell Washington, and Morgan Freeman

- **May 28 1864 – Civil War:** *Battle of Haw's Shop (Salem Church)* » Fought in Hanover County, Virginia as part of Union Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's Overland Campaign against Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Grant abandoned the stalemate following the Battle of North Anna (May 23–26) by once again swinging widely around Lee's right flank, using the Pamunkey River to screen his movements to the southwest. Lee's army moved directly south and took up positions on the southern bank of Totopotomoy Creek. The Confederate general sent a cavalry force under Maj. Gen. Wade Hampton to collect intelligence about Grant's next moves. On 28 MAY, Hampton's troopers encountered Union cavalry under Brig. Gen. David McM. Gregg. Fighting predominately dismounted and utilizing earthworks for protection, neither side achieved an advantage. Gregg was reinforced by two brigades of Brig. Gen. Alfred T.A. Torbert's division, and the brigade under Brig. Gen. George A. Custer launched a spirited attack just as Hampton was ordering his men to withdraw.

The seven-hour battle was inconclusive, but it was the second significant cavalry engagement of the Overland Campaign and one of the bloodiest of the war. Both sides claimed victory. Union Cavalry Corps commander Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan bragged that his men had driven Hampton from the field and demonstrated the superiority of the Union cavalry. But Hampton had held up the Union cavalry for seven hours, prevented it from achieving its reconnaissance objectives, and had provided valuable intelligence to General Lee about disposition of Grant's army. Casualties and losses: U.S. 365 of 4,000 troops – CSA 378 of 4,500 troops.

- **May 28 1918 – WWI:** *U.S. Troops Score Victory at Cantigny* » In the first sustained American offensive of World War I, an Allied force including a full brigade of nearly 4,000 United States soldiers captures the village of Cantigny, on the Somme River in France, from their German enemy.

Though the United States formally entered World War I on the side of the Allies in April 1917, they were not fully prepared to send significant numbers of troops into battle until a full year had passed. By May 1918, however, large numbers of American soldiers had arrived in France, just in time to face the onslaught of the great German spring offensive. On May 28, a day after their French allies suffered a blistering defeat on the Aisne River, a two-hour artillery barrage preceded the attack on Cantigny, located further north on the Western Front. The French army provided air cover, artillery, heavy tanks and—in an especially effective tactic—teams of flamethrowers to aid the U.S. advance through the German-held village, which was quickly overrun. The Americans took 100 German prisoners by the end of that day.



The commander in chief of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), General John J. Pershing, gave the order that no inch of Cantigny was to be surrendered. Over the next 72 hours, the Americans in Cantigny endured seven German counterattacks, maintaining control of the village despite high casualties, with 200 soldiers killed and another 200 incapacitated by German gas attacks. By the time relief finally came, total U.S. casualties at Cantigny had reached over 1,000, and the soldiers were exhausted from the strain of continual shelling. As their commander, Colonel Hanson E. Ely, remembered: They could only stagger back, hollow-eyed with sunken cheeks, and if one stopped for a moment he would fall asleep.

As the first major U.S. victory, the capture of Cantigny had a threefold impact on the war effort in the spring of 1918: first, it deprived the Germans of an important observation point for their troops on the Western Front. It also lent weight to Pershing's argument that an independent U.S. command should be maintained apart from the joint Allied command. Finally, it provided a warning to the Germans that the Americans, although recently arrived and relatively new to the battlefield, were not a force to be taken lightly.

- **May 28 1940 – WW2 Era: *Battle of Lys – Dunkirk (24-29 May)*** » This was the final battle of the Belgian campaign, fought predominately between the invading German forces and the Belgian Army. The battle took its name from the river Leie (Lys in French) which ran through the battlefield and was the bloodiest of the entire 18-day campaign. Although it culminated in the capitulation of Belgium and the surrender of King Leopold III, it did provide the vital breathing space required for the British and French forces to organize their defense of, and evacuation from Dunkirk.

The heavy German assault on 24 MAY forced the Allied troops to fall back across the river Lys at the Belgian town of Kortrijk. The Belgians had already been persuaded to abandon their positions along the River Scheldt in order to relieve the British Army and to allow for a counter attack. In reality this served little benefit and the Belgian forces became very close to being cut off from the rest of the Allies. A fundamental lack of Allied air support meant that the Luftwaffe was able to hamper their attempts at an organized defense, making the situation even worse. It took a counter-attack from the Belgian 2nd Cavalry and 6th Infantry to blunt the German onslaught.

On 25 MAY, the British acknowledged that the only option left open to them was to withdraw to the port of Dunkirk in order to make good their escape. The Belgians also realized that their situation was now beyond hope and the only option, other than immediate surrender, was to fight on to allow their allies the time required to evacuate. The British placed a brigade and machine gun battalion to assist in this rearguard action. King Leopold III as part of his orders stated, 'Whatever may happen, I shall share your fate'.

Understandably, the Belgian forces were suffering from low morale, which manifested itself in sections of two regiments surrendering without a fight at Meigem. This was in total defiance of their orders and in one instance, the soldiers, fed up with the relentless and (to them) pointless fight, actually shot their officers. The elite Belgian Chasseurs Ardennais (who had fought an almost non-stop action from the Belgian-German border) were deployed at the village of Vinkt. The Belgians finally began to collapse on 27 MAY, the rail system had been destroyed and in excess of 1.5 million civilians were on the move clogging up the roads; ammunition stocks were almost exhausted and all reserves had already long been thrown into the battle.

The inevitable actions of an army in its death throes began; focus moved away from attack and towards the denial of assets to the soon-to-be conquerors; artillery was destroyed and stores torched. Bruges was now the only major city in the whole the country not directly under German control. The Chasseurs Ardennais were forced out of Vinkt in the late afternoon, which witnessed the now-victorious Germans committing a massacre of 86 innocent civilians. By 06.00 on May 28th, the Belgians had formally surrendered. Of the 80,000 casualties sustained by the Belgians from the invasion, 40,000 occurred between 25–27th of May.

Also on this date:

- French mountain troops along with Norwegian, Polish and British troops capture the port of Narvik, forcing the German defenders into the surrounding hills and towards the safety of the Swedish border and internment. This is the first allied infantry victory of the War.
- Belgium formally surrenders to the Germans.
- **May 28 1941 – WW2 Era:** *Allied Troops Begin Evacuation Of Crete* » After six days of hard fighting Major-General Bernard Freyberg, who led the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force (2NZEF), received the order to evacuate his weary forces. Parts of “Creforce” pulled back to Sfakia on the south coast, and from here about 10,500 troops left the island over four nights. A separate evacuation at Heraklion rescued a further 6000 soldiers, although a number of these men were killed by air attacks on their ships during the return journey to Egypt. The soldiers left behind – around 6500 – formally surrendered to the Germans on 1 June. The majority would spend the rest of the war in prisoner of war camps – initially in Italy and later in Germany and Poland. Others took to the hills, some later escaping to Egypt by submarine or fishing boat. With the help of Cretan civilians, a handful of men eluded capture on the island for years and took part in resistance fighting. During the battle of Crete Germans used 22,750 soldiers, 1370 airplanes, 70 gliders and 70 ships.

Also on this date:

- FDR proposes the repeal of the Neutrality Act which was an “expression of the desire...to avoid any action which might involve [the U.S.] in war. Its signing came at a time when newly installed fascist governments in Europe were beginning to beat the drums of war.
- In Britain Lord Woolton announces experimental egg rationing, further restrictions on fish and milk; successful prosecutions under Food Control Orders during war now total 17,319.
- **May 28 1942 – WW2:** In retaliation for the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, Nazis in Czechoslovakia kill over 1,800 people.

Also on this date:

- The Soviet forces caught in a pocket southeast of Kharkov surrender.
- 200 Poles are taken from Warsaw by the Germans to the village of Magdalenka and shot. Among them are three women brought on stretchers from Pawiak prison hospital.

- Heavy fighting continues at the southern end of the Gazala line, although by now Rommel's forces are beginning to run out of fuel and his tanks are becoming scattered. In order to shorten his supply lines he decides to punch a hole through the Gazala line.
- **May 28 1943 – WW2:** The U.S. 15th Air Force attacks Italian oil refineries at Livorno.
- **May 28 1944 – WW2:** In a mission to Cologne, U.S. Eighth Air Force B-17s attempt use of GB-1 “Grapefruit” glide bombs for the first and only time. Also on this date the U.S. 8th Air Force attacks synthetic fuel-producing plants at Leuna-Meseburg.
- **May 28 1945 – WW2:** The British Twelfth Army HQ is set up in Rangoon. Also on this date the British capture traitor William Joyce (“Lord Haw Haw”) in Flensburg, Germany, to be hanged in 1946, the last British person to be executed for treason.
- **May 28 1964 – Terrorism:** *PLO Is Founded* » The Palestine Liberation Organization was founded. In February of 1969, Yasir Arafat was elected as its leader. By 1974, when he addressed the United Nations, Arafat had made significant strides towards establishing new respectability for the PLO's campaign for a Palestinian homeland. But gaining legitimacy hinged on cooling down terrorism, and Arafat found it increasingly difficult to reconcile the moderate and extremist segments of Palestinian politics.
- **May 28 1969 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. Troops Abandon “Hamburger Hill”* » U.S. troops abandon Ap Bia Mountain. A spokesman for the 101st Airborne Division said that the U.S. troops “have completed their search of the mountain and are now continuing their reconnaissance-in-force mission throughout the A Shau Valley.”

This announcement came amid the public outcry about what had become known as the “Battle of Hamburger Hill.” The battle was part of Operation Apache Snow in the A Shau Valley. The operation began on 10 MAY when paratroopers from the 101st Airborne engaged a North Vietnamese regiment on the slopes of Hill 937, known to the Vietnamese as Ap Bia Mountain. Entrenched in prepared fighting positions, the North Vietnamese 29th Regiment repulsed the initial American assault and beat back another attempt by the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry on 14 MAY. An intense battle raged for the next 10 days as the mountain came under heavy Allied air strikes, artillery barrages, and 10 infantry assaults. On 20 MAY, Maj. Gen. Melvin Zais, commanding general of the 101st, sent in two additional U.S. airborne battalions and a South Vietnamese battalion as reinforcements. The communist stronghold was finally captured in the 11th attack, when the American and South Vietnamese soldiers fought their way to the summit of the mountain. In the face of the four-battalion attack, the North Vietnamese retreated to sanctuary areas in Laos.

During the intense fighting, 597 North Vietnamese were reported killed and U.S. casualties were 56 killed and 420 wounded. Due to the bitter fighting and the high loss of life, the battle for Ap Bia Mountain received widespread unfavorable publicity in the United States and was dubbed “Hamburger Hill” in the U.S. media, a name evidently derived from the fact that the battle turned into a “meat grinder.” The purpose of the operation was not to hold territory but rather to keep the North

Vietnamese off balance so the decision was made to abandon the mountain shortly after it was captured. The North Vietnamese occupied it a month after it was abandoned.



Outrage over what appeared to be a senseless loss of American lives was exacerbated by pictures published in Life magazine of 241 U.S. soldiers killed during the week of the battle. Gen. Creighton Abrams, commander of U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam, was ordered to avoid such battles. Because of Hamburger Hill, and other battles like it, U.S. emphasis was placed on “Vietnamization”—turning the war over to the South Vietnamese forces rather than engage in direct combat operations.

- **May 28 1980 – U.S. Navy:** 55 women become the first female graduates of the U.S. Naval Academy.
- **May 28 1984 – USA:** President Reagan led a state funeral at Arlington National Cemetery for an unidentified American soldier killed in the Vietnam War. (However, the remains were later identified as those of Air Force First Lieutenant Michael J. Blassie, and were sent to St. Louis for hometown burial.)
- **May 28 1987 – Cold War:** *Matthias Rust Lands His Plane In Red Square* » A 19-year-old amateur pilot Matthias Rust, from West Germany, takes off from Helsinki, Finland, travels through more than 400 miles of Soviet airspace, and lands his small Cessna aircraft in Red Square by the Kremlin. The event proved to be an immense embarrassment to the Soviet government and military.



Rust, described by his mother as a “quiet young man...with a passion for flying,” apparently had no political or social agenda when he took off from the international airport in Helsinki and headed for Moscow. He entered Soviet airspace, but was either undetected or ignored as he pushed farther and farther into the Soviet Union. Early on the morning of May 28, 1987, he arrived over Moscow, circled Red Square a few times, and then landed just a few hundred yards from the Kremlin. Curious onlookers and tourists, many believing that Rust was part of an air show, immediately surrounded him. Very quickly, however, Rust was arrested and whisked away. He was tried for violating Soviet airspace and sentenced to prison. He served 18 months before being released.

The repercussions in the Soviet Union were immediate. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev sacked his minister of defense, and the entire Russian military was humiliated by Rust’s flight into Moscow. U.S. officials had a field day with the event—one American diplomat in the Soviet Union joked, “Maybe we should build a bunch of Cessnas.” Soviet officials were less amused. Four years earlier, the Soviets had been harshly criticized for shooting down a Korean Airlines passenger jet that veered into Russian airspace. Now, the Soviets were laughingstocks for not being able to stop one teenager’s “invasion” of the country. One Russian spokesperson bluntly declared, “You criticize U.S. for shooting down a plane, and now you criticize U.S. for not shooting down a plane.”

- **May 28 2010 – Terrorism: *Terrorists Attack Ahmadiyya Mosques in Pakistan*** » As Friday prayers came to a close in Lahore, Pakistan, seven terrorists wielding guns, grenades and suicide vests stormed into two crowded Ahmadi Muslim mosques and opened fire, killing 94 victims and injuring more than 120. The coordinated attacks took place just minutes apart. At the Bait-ul-Noor Mosque in Model Town—an upscale neighborhood in Lahore—people ran for their lives as three gunmen entered with AK-47 assault rifles and grenades, opening fire on security personnel and worshippers alike. The attack lasted more than one hour as the attackers shot into the horrified crowd. Twenty-seven people were killed. Several miles away, near Lahore’s main railway station, another three attackers barged into the Dar-ul-Zakir mosque with the same destructive intentions. They sprayed bullets into the congregation and took several hundred people hostage. A three-hour standoff ensued, as police and terrorists exchanged gunfire. Two of the attackers then detonated their suicide vests, killing 67.



The nightmare didn't end for survivors the day of the mosque attacks. A few days later, gunmen attacked the intensive-care Unit of Lahore's Jinnah Hospital, where victims and one of the alleged attackers were recovering. Twelve more people, including police officers and hospital staff, were killed. The attackers escaped.

A Punjab provincial chapter of the Taliban took responsibility for all the attacks. Although the incidents came as a horrifying surprise, a leader at the Model Town mosque expressed that they had been receiving threatening phone calls in the weeks prior to the attacks. When Mosque leaders reached out to the police for more security, they received no response. Unfortunately, threats and violence are nothing new for the Ahmadi, who are always met with discrimination from majority Muslim sects. Though the Ahmadi consider themselves Muslim, Pakistani law does not. Even an act as simple as declaring themselves Muslim is considered blasphemy under the law, and can be punished with fines, prison time or death. Sunni Muslim conservatives have led a recent campaign to ostracize the Ahmadis, and Sunni extremists have made them the targets of violence.

The victims of the attacks were buried in Rabwah—the home to the Ahmadi's religious headquarters. Although Pakistani ministers, politicians and other prominent figures issued statements of condemnation toward the attackers and their actions, none of them attended the services—likely due to fear of political and religious backlash for publicly supporting the much-maligned sect.

- **May 28 2012 – Russia:** *German Aviator Flight to Red Square* » An amateur pilot, the then-teenager Mathias Rust flew his Cessna 172 from Helsinki, Finland, to Moscow, being tracked several times by Soviet air defense and interceptor aircraft. The Soviet fighters did not receive permission to shoot him down, and his airplane was mistaken for a friendly aircraft several times. He landed on Bolshoy Moskvoretsky Bridge, next to Red Square near the Kremlin in the capital of the Soviet Union. Rust said he wanted to create an "imaginary bridge" to the East, and that his flight was intended to reduce tension and suspicion between the two Cold War sides.

Rust's flight through a supposedly impenetrable air defense system had a great effect on the Soviet military and led to the dismissal of many senior officers, including Minister of Defense Marshal of the Soviet Union Sergei Sokolov and the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Air Defence Forces, former World War II fighter ace pilot Chief Marshal Alexander Koldunov. The incident aided Mikhail Gorbachev in the implementation of his reforms, by allowing him to dismiss numerous military officials opposed to his policies. Rust was sentenced to four years in prison for violation of border crossing and air traffic regulations, and for provoking an emergency situation upon his landing. After 14 months in prison, he was pardoned by Andrei Gromyko, the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, and released.

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

- **May 29 1765 – U.S.\*Canada:** The right of Canadians to keep First Nations Indian slavery slaves is upheld in Quebec City. In 1777 slaves began fleeing Canada for Vermont, which had just abolished slavery. It took Britain to finally outlaw the practice across their entire empire in 1834 to end the practice.

- **May 29 1765 – Pre American Revolution:** Patrick Henry's historic speech against the Stamp Act, answering a cry of "Treason!" with, "If this be treason, make the most of it!"
- **May 29 1780 – American Revolution:** *Tarleton Gives "Quarter" In South Carolina* » The treatment of Patriot prisoners by British Colonel Banastre Tarleton and his Loyalist troops leads to the coining of a phrase that comes to define British brutality for the rest of the War for Independence: "Tarleton's Quarter."



Col. Banastre Tarleton



Col. Abraham Buford



Brig. Gen. Thomas Sumter

After the surrender of Charleston on 12 MAY, the 3rd Virginia, commanded by Colonel Abraham Buford, was virtually the only organized Patriot formation remaining in South Carolina; British Colonel Banastre Tarleton had been given the mission to destroy any colonial resistance in the state. At Waxhaws on the North Carolina border, a cavalry charge by Tarleton's men broke the 350 remaining Patriots under Buford. Tarleton and his Tories proceeded to shoot at the Patriots after their surrender, a move that spawned the term "Tarleton's Quarter," which in the eyes of the Patriots meant a brutal death at the hands of a cowardly foe. The Continentals lost 113 killed and 203 captured in the Battle of Waxhaws; British losses totaled 19 men and 31 horses killed or wounded. Although they were routed, the loss became a propaganda victory for the Continentals: wavering Carolina civilians terrified of Tarleton and their Loyalist neighbors were now prepared to rally to the Patriot cause.

Under the leadership of Thomas Sumter, the Patriot militia quickly returned the terror in kind with their own brutal raids on Carolina loyalists. Carolinians went on to fight a bloody civil war in which they killed their own with far greater efficacy than any outsider sent to assist them.

- **May 29 1861 – Civil War:** Dorothea Dix offers help in setting up hospitals for the Union Army
- **May 29 1864 – Civil War:** *Battle of Bethesda Church [Totopotomoy Creek] Va* » Union troops lose another foot race with the Confederates in a minor stop on the long and terrible campaign between Ulysses S. Grant's Army of the Potomac and Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. During the entire month of May 1864, Grant and Lee had pounded each other in Virginia along an arc swinging from the Wilderness forest south to the James River. After fighting in the Wilderness, Grant moved south to Spotsylvania Court House to place his army between Lee and Richmond. Predicting his move, Lee marched James Longstreet's corps through the night and beat the Federals to the strategic crossroads.



For 12 days the two armies fought in some of the bloodiest combat of the war. Finally, Grant pulled out and again moved south, this time to the North Anna River, where he probed the Rebel lines on the high banks of the river, but found no weakness. He moved south again, this time to Totopotomoy Creek. Once again, Lee and his men beat him there and stood ready to defend Richmond from the Union army. Grant was getting frustrated. After the Totopotomoy, Grant slid south to Cold Harbor, just 10 miles from Richmond. His impatience may have gotten the best of him. At Cold Harbor, Grant would commit the foolish mistake of hurling his troops at well-fortified Confederates, creating a slaughter nearly unmatched during the war.

- **May 29 1916 – U.S.\*Nicaragua:** *Occupation of Nicaragua Begins* » The U.S. military invaded various Latin American countries from 1898 to 1934. Collectively the invasions and occupations were known as the Banana Wars. The first formal occupation of Nicaragua began in 1912 and lasted till 1925. The second occupation in 1926 lasted until 1933. American military interventions in Nicaragua were designed to stop any other nation except the USA from building a Nicaraguan Canal. Nicaragua assumed a quasi-protectorate status under the 1916 Bryan–Chamorro Treaty. President Herbert Hoover opposed the relationship. Finally in 1933 President Franklin D Roosevelt, invoking his new Good Neighbor policy ended American intervention.
- **May 5 1916 – U.S.\*Dominican Republic:** *Invasion of Dominican Republic Begins* » U.S. forces invade the Dominican Republic and stay until 1924. It was one of the many interventions in Latin America undertaken by the military forces of the United States in the 20th century. The piecemeal invasion resulted in the U.S. Navy occupying all key positions in government and controlling the army and police. The first landing took place on the 5 May when "two companies of marines landed from the USS Prairie at Santo Domingo." Their goal was to offer protection to the U.S. Legation and the U.S. Consulate, and to occupy the Fort San Geronimo. Within hours, these companies were reinforced with "seven additional companies."

On 6 MAY American forces from the USS Castine landed to offer protection to the Haitian Legation, a country under similar military occupation from the U.S. Two days after the first landing, constitutional President, Juan Isidro Jimenes resigned. On the 13 MAY, Rear Admiral William B. Caperton forced the Dominican Republic's Secretary of War who had seized power, to leave Santo Domingo by threatening the city with naval bombardment. Most Dominicans greatly resented the loss of their sovereignty to foreigners, few of whom spoke Spanish or displayed much real concern for the welfare of the republic. A guerrilla movement, known as the *gavilleros* enjoyed considerable support from the population in the eastern provinces of El Seibo and San Pedro de Macorís. Having



knowledge of the local terrain, they fought from 1917 to 1921 against the United States occupation. The fighting in the countryside ended in a stalemate, and the guerrillas agreed to a conditional surrender.

After WWI, public opinion in the United States began to run against the occupation. Warren G. Harding had campaigned against the occupations of both Haiti and the Dominican Republic. In June 1921, United States representatives presented a withdrawal proposal, known as the Harding Plan, which called for Dominican ratification of all acts of the military government, approval of a loan of \$2.5 million USD for public works and other expenses, the acceptance of United States officers for the constabulary—now known as the National Guard (Guardia Nacional)—and the holding of elections under U.S. supervision. Popular reaction to the plan was overwhelmingly negative. Moderate Dominican leaders, however, used the plan as the basis for further negotiations that resulted in an agreement between U.S. Secretary of State and Dominican Ambassador to the United States on June 30, 1922. Ultimately, with his inauguration of a new president on 13 JUL 1924, control of the republic returned to Dominican hands.

- **May 29 1931 – Italy:** Michele Schirru, a citizen of the United States, is executed by Italian military firing squad for intent to kill Benito Mussolini.



- **May 29 1932 – Bonus Army:** *Bonus Expeditionary Force Arrives in Washington* » At the height of the Great Depression, the so-called “Bonus Expeditionary Force,” a group of 1,000 World War I veterans seeking cash payments for their veterans’ bonus certificates, arrive in Washington, D.C. One month later, other veteran groups spontaneously made their way to the nation’s capital, swelling the Bonus Marchers to nearly 20,000 strong, most of them unemployed veterans in desperate financial straits. Camping in vacant government buildings and in open fields made available by District of Columbia Police Chief Pelham D. Glassford, they demanded passage of the veterans’ payment bill introduced by Representative Wright Patman.



While awaiting a vote on the issue, the veterans conducted themselves in an orderly and peaceful fashion, and on 15 JUN the Patman bill passed in the House of Representatives. However, two days

later, its defeat in the Senate infuriated the marchers, who refused to return home. In an increasingly tense situation, the federal government provided money for the protesters' trip home, but 2,000 refused the offer and continued to protest. On 28 JUL, President Herbert Hoover ordered the army, under the command of General Douglas MacArthur, to evict them forcibly. MacArthur's men set their camps on fire, and the veterans were driven from the city. Hoover, increasingly regarded as insensitive to the needs of the nation's many poor, was much criticized by the public and press for the severity of his response.

- **May 29 1940 – WW2:** The British destroyer HMS Wakeful is hit and sunk by a torpedo from the German E-boat S30 off Dunkirk. HMS Grafton which was nearby try's to rescue the sailors from HMS Wakeful, but is itself hit by another torpedo from the same German E-boat and begins to sink. Another British destroyer, HMS Comfort moves up to help, but HMS Grafton fires on her in the mistaken belief that she is a German ship, sinking HMS Comfort. 15 other vessels are also sunk by Luftwaffe Stuka attacks near Dunkirk. 737 to 763 are killed this day.

Also on this date:

- 47,300 British and French troops are evacuated from Dunkirk this day.
  - German 6th Army takes Lille, Ostend and Ypres in western Flander's, France. Luftwaffe activity increases as orders the Panzers to be switched south ready for main battle of France.
  - The first flight of the Vought F4U Corsair by the U.S. Navy.
- **May 29 1941 – WW2:** During the evacuation of British troops from Crete, a Luftwaffe attack on the British cruiser Orion inflicts 200 casualties and sinks British destroyers Imperial and Hereward.
  - **May 29 1942 – Holocaust:** *Jews In Paris Are Forced To Sew A Yellow Star On Their Coats* » On the advice of Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, Adolf Hitler orders all Jews in occupied Paris to wear an identifying yellow star on the left side of their coats.



Joseph Goebbels had made the persecution, and ultimately the extermination, of Jews a personal priority from the earliest days of the war, often recording in his diary such statements as: “They are no longer people but beasts,” and “[T]he Jews... are now being evacuated eastward. The procedure is pretty barbaric and is not to be described here more definitely. Not much will remain of the Jews.”

But Goebbels was not the first to suggest this particular form of isolation. “The yellow star may make some Catholics shudder,” wrote a French newspaper at the time. “It renews the most strictly Catholic tradition.” Intermittently, throughout the history of the Papal States, that territory in central

Italy controlled by the pope, Jews were often confined to ghettos and forced to wear either yellow hats or yellow stars.

Also on this date:

- ‘Fridericus I’ is completed as the Russian pocket to the Southeast of Kharkov is finally wiped out and 214,000 Russians captured, along with 1,200 tanks and 2,000 guns destroyed. German casualties in the fighting around Kharkov amount to some 20,000.
  - Rommel is only 25 miles from Tobruk as a massive tank battle rages in the ‘Cauldron’.
  - The Chinese are defeated by Japanese forces at Kinhwa in Chekiang province south of Shanghai.
- **May 29 1943 – WW2:** The RAF launches a major raid (719 bombers) against Wuppertal, dropping 1,900 tons of bombs and killing 2,450 civilians and claim that half of Wuppertal has been ‘wiped off the map’. Also on this date in the U.S. meats and cheeses were added to rationing. Rationed meats included beef, pork, veal, lamb, and tinned meats and fish. Poultry, eggs, fresh milk—and Spam—were not rationed. Cheese rationing started with hard cheeses, since they were more easily shipped overseas. However, on June 2, 1943, rationing was expanded to cream and cottage cheeses, and to canned evaporated and condensed milk.
  - **May 29 1944 – WW2:** The first U.S. armored battle of the Pacific war occurs on Biak, with six tanks being involved. The Japanese manage to force the partial re-embarkation of U.S. forces.

Also on this date:

- The U.S. escort carrier Block Island is sunk by German U-549 off the Canary Islands.
  - Using its maximum range, the U.S. 8th Air Force attacks aircraft production plants at Marienburg and Posen in eastern Germany.
  - British troops occupy Aprilia, Italy. Much of the fighting had swirled around the small, strategically important village (sometimes called “the Factory” by the troops), located about 10 miles north of Anzio on the Anzio-Rome highway; the settlement exchanged hands several times during the course of the battle.
- **May 29 1945 – WW2:** SHAEF in Paris says that there are an estimated 4.25 million displaced persons in the Anglo-American zone, of which only 1.39 million have so far been repatriated, most of these to Western Europe.

Also on this date:

- U.S. 1st Marine division conquers Shuri-castle Okinawa.
  - First combat mission occurs for the Consolidated B-32 Dominator heavy bomber.
- **May 29 1972 – Vietnam War:** *United States and USSR Issue A Joint Communiqué* » In a joint communique issued by the United States and the Soviet Union following the conclusion of summit talks with General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev during President Richard Nixon’s visit to Moscow (the first visit ever by an U.S. president), both countries set forth their standard positions on Vietnam. The

United States insisted that the future of South Vietnam should be left to the South Vietnamese without interference. The Soviet Union insisted on a withdrawal of U.S. and Allied forces from South Vietnam and an end to the bombing of North Vietnam.

Despite this disagreement over the situation in Southeast Asia, Brezhnev and Nixon had reached a detente and Brezhnev did not want the Vietnam War to threaten the thawing of relations with the United States. Nixon, who had also visited China in February 1972, had hoped that the rapprochement with the Chinese and Soviets would scare North Vietnam into making concessions at the Paris peace talks. He was wrong, however, and the North Vietnamese continued to pursue the massive invasion of South Vietnam that they had launched on March 30 and proved intractable in the ongoing negotiations.

The Soviet Union had supported North Vietnam because it served Soviet interests well by keeping the United States fully occupied in an area not of crucial importance to the USSR. After the 1968 Tet Offensive, the Soviets believed for the first time that a total victory was possible, but as the fighting continued, the Soviet leaders became increasingly weary of the war. They came to believe that little more was to be gained from a war that was proving very expensive for the Soviet Union. The Soviets had supplied weapons and equipment that were used in the 1972 spring offensive, but when the Paris peace talks became deadlocked later that year, the Soviets pressured Hanoi to accept a compromise settlement with South Vietnam and the United States that was finally reached in January 1973.

- **May 29 1988 – Cold War:** *Reagan Arrives in Moscow for Summit Talks* » President Ronald Reagan travels to Moscow to begin the fourth summit meeting held in the past three years with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Though the summit produced no major announcements or breakthroughs, it served to illuminate both the successes and the failures achieved by the two men in terms of U.S.-Soviet relations.



In May 1988, President Reagan made his first trip to Moscow to meet with Gorbachev and begin their fourth summit meeting. Just six months earlier, during a summit in Washington, D.C., in December 1987, the two men had signed the historic Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which eliminated an entire class of nuclear weapons from Europe. In many ways, Reagan's trip to Moscow in May was a journey of celebration. Demonstrating the famous Reagan charm, the president and his wife waded into crowds of Russian well-wishers and curiosity-seekers to shake hands and exchange pleasantries.

Very quickly, however, the talks between Reagan and Gorbachev revealed that serious differences still existed between the Soviet Union and the United States. From the beginning, Reagan—who had in the past referred to the Soviet Union as the “evil empire”—pressed Gorbachev on the issue of human rights. He urged Gorbachev to ease Soviet restrictions on freedom of religion and also asked that the

Soviet Union relax the laws that kept many Russian Jews from emigrating. The Soviets were obviously displeased at Reagan's insistence on lecturing them about what they considered purely internal matters. A spokesman from the Soviet Foreign Ministry showed his irritation when he declared to a group of reporters, "We don't like it when someone from outside is teaching U.S. how to live, and this is only natural."

Despite the tension introduced by the human rights issue, the summit was largely an opportunity for Reagan and Gorbachev to trade compliments and congratulations about their accomplishments, most notably the INF Treaty. As Reagan stated after their first day of meetings, "I think the message is clear—despite clear and fundamental differences, and despite the inevitable frustrations that we have encountered, our work has begun to produce results."

- **May 29 1989 – Cold War:** Student protesters in China construct a replica of Statue of Liberty.
- **May 29 2004 – Post WW2:** The National WW2 Memorial is dedicated in Washington, D.C.
- **May 29 2004 – U.S.\*Syria:** President Obama approves U.S. military training of 'moderate' Syrian rebels to fight the regime of Bashar al-Assad and al Qaeda-linked groups

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

- **May 30 1431 – Hundred Years War:** 19 year old Joan of Arc is burned at the stake by an English-dominated tribunal in Rouen, France
- **May 30 1862 – Civil War:** Confederates Evacuate Corinth, Mississippi » The Confederates abandon the city of Corinth, Mississippi. After the epic struggle at Shiloh, Tennessee, in April 1862, the Confederate army, under the command of P.T. Beauregard, concentrated at Corinth, while the Union army, under Henry Halleck, began a slow advance from the Shiloh battlefield toward the rail center at Corinth. Halleck had no intention of taking on Beauregard's army directly; he was more concerned with controlling the railroad junction.



Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard



Gen. Henry W. Halleck

Beauregard was in a difficult position. Halleck, the commander of Union forces in the West, had at his disposal Ulysses S. Grant's Army of the Tennessee, Don Carlos Buell's Army of the Ohio, and

John Pope's Army of the Mississippi. With these forces, he had a more than two-to-one advantage over Beauregard.

Nearly a week before the evacuation, Beauregard assessed his situation with his lieutenants. Although he considered the city to be vital to the Confederacy, he also worried that his entire command could be captured or cut to pieces if a retreat was delayed. So he crafted a clever withdrawal from Corinth: His troops deployed a number of logs painted black ("Quaker guns") along his front lines to fool the Yankees into thinking they were facing substantial artillery. Meanwhile, he had his troops cook extra rations and cheer the arrival of empty boxcars to lead the Union troops to believe the Confederates were preparing for battle and receiving reinforcements.

On the night of 29 MAY, Beauregard began slipping his forces out of Corinth. On May 30, the remainder of the army left the city and burned any remaining supplies. Halleck's men entered a deserted Corinth later that day. Although an important city had been forfeited to the Union army, Beauregard's army remained intact and, with it, Confederate hopes in the West.

- **May 30 1864 – Civil War:** Battle of Bethesda Church [Totopotomoy Creek], cavalry battle fought in Hanover County, Virginia, inconclusive result.
- **May 30 1868 – Post Civil War:** *Civil War Dead Honored On Decoration Day* » By proclamation of General John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic, the first major Memorial Day observance is held to honor those who died "in defense of their country during the late rebellion." Known to some as "Decoration Day," mourners honored the Civil War dead by decorating their graves with flowers. On the first Decoration Day, General James Garfield made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, after which 5,000 participants helped to decorate the graves of the more than 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers buried in the cemetery.



Gen. John A. Logan



Gen. James Garfield

The 1868 celebration was inspired by local observances that had taken place in various locations in the three years since the end of the Civil War. In fact, several cities claim to be the birthplace of Memorial Day, including Columbus, Mississippi; Macon, Georgia; Richmond, Virginia; Boalsburg, Pennsylvania; and Carbondale, Illinois. In 1966, the federal government, under the direction of President Lyndon B. Johnson, declared Waterloo, New York, the official birthplace of Memorial Day. They chose Waterloo—which had first celebrated the day on May 5, 1866—because the town had made Memorial Day an annual, community-wide event, during which businesses closed and residents decorated the graves of soldiers with flowers and flags.

By the late 19th century, many communities across the country had begun to celebrate Memorial Day, and after World War I, observers began to honor the dead of all of America's wars. In 1971, Congress declared Memorial Day a national holiday to be celebrated the last Monday in May. Today, Memorial Day is celebrated at Arlington National Cemetery with a ceremony in which a small American flag is placed on each grave. It is customary for the president or vice president to give a speech honoring the contributions of the dead and to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. More than 5,000 people attend the ceremony annually. Several Southern states continue to set aside a special day for honoring the Confederate dead, which is usually called Confederate Memorial Day.

- **May 30 1912 – U.S.\*Nicaragua:** *First Nicaraguan Occupation 1912-1925* » U.S. Marines are sent to Nicaragua to protect American interests. The United States occupation of Nicaragua from 1912 to 1933 was part of the Banana Wars, when the U.S. military forcefully intervened in various Latin American countries from 1898 to 1934. The formal occupation of Nicaragua began in 1912, even though there were various other assaults by the U.S. throughout this period. American military interventions in Nicaragua were designed to stop any other nation except the United States of America from building a Nicaraguan Canal. Nicaragua assumed a quasi-protectorate status under the 1916 Bryan–Chamorro Treaty. But with the onset of the Great Depression, it became too costly for the U.S. government and a withdrawal was ordered in 1933. Casualties: U.S. 5 Marines and 2 sailors killed, 16 wounded.



The USS Denver ship's landing force under Lt. A. B. Reed rests beside the Corinto, Nicaragua railroad line, 1912.

- **May 30 1940 – WW2:** 53,823 evacuated from Dunkirk, bringing total landed in England since 27 MAY to 126,606. Britain orders modern destroyers to leave Dunkirk due to heavy losses.

Also on this date:

- Germany increases food rations due to increased supplies from newly conquered countries.
- Roosevelt asks Congress for considerable funds to strengthen the U.S. Armed forces.
- Mussolini tells Hitler he intends to enter the war.

- **May 30 1941 – WW2:** The revolt in Iraq collapses as the British near Baghdad. The Iraqi leader Rashid Ali flees in to Persia (Iran).

Also on this date:

- British Army enters Baghdad, chasing pro-German coup government.
  - German commander in Crete orders deadly reprisals for civilian resistance. In Iraq, British troops enter Baghdad.
- **May 30 1942 – WW2:** *First 1,000 Bomber Night Raid on Cologne* » Bad weather over Hamburg, means the alternate target, Cologne is selected by Bomber Command for the first 1,000 night-bomber raid of the war. The German city of Cologne was bombed in 262 separate air raids by the Allies during the war. This raid by the RAF was codenamed Operation Millennium. Cologne was chosen as the target and the raid took place on the night of 30/31. 1,047 bombers eventually took part in the raid, two and a half times more than any previous raid by the RAF. In addition to the bombers attacking Cologne, 113 other aircraft on "Intruder" raids harassed German night-fighter airfields. The bomber raid was launched for several reasons:
    - It was expected that the devastation from such raids might be enough to knock Germany out of the war or at least severely damage German morale.
    - The raids were useful propaganda for the Allies and particularly for Sir Arthur Harris, 1st Baronet, and the concept of a Strategic Bombing Offensive. Bomber Command's poor performance in bombing accuracy during 1941 had led to calls for the force to be split up and diverted to other urgent theatres i.e. Battle of the Atlantic. A headline-grabbing heavy raid on Germany was a way for Bomber Command's commander Arthur "Bomber" Harris to demonstrate to the War Cabinet that given the investment in numbers and technology Bomber Command could make a vital contribution to victory.

In the raid, 868 aircraft bombed the main target with 15 aircraft bombing other targets. The total tonnage of bombs dropped was 1,455 tons with two-thirds of that being incendiaries. Two and a half thousand separate fires were started with 1,700 classed by the German fire brigades as "large". The action of fire fighters and the width of the streets stopped the fires combining into a firestorm, but nonetheless most of the damage was done by fire and not directly by the explosive blasts. 3,330 non-residential buildings were destroyed, 2,090 seriously damaged and 7,420 lightly damaged, making a total of 12,840 buildings of which 2,560 were industrial or commercial buildings making 59,000 people homeless.

The number reported killed was between 469 and 486, of whom 411 were civilians and 58 military. 5,027 people were listed as injured and 45,132 as "bombed out". It was estimated that from 135,000 to 150,000 of Cologne's population of nearly 700,000 fled the city after the raid. The RAF lost 43 aircraft, 3.9% of the 1,103 bombers sent on the raid. 22 aircraft were lost over or near Cologne, 16 shot down by flak, 4 by night fighters, 2 in a collision, and 2 Bristol Blenheim light bombers lost in attacks on night fighter airfields.

- **May 30 1942 – WW2:** *Aircraft Carrier USS Yorktown Leaves Pearl Harbor* » Dry-docked on 27 MAY after the Battle of Coral Sea as a result of a 551-pound armor-piercing bomb which had



plunged through the flight deck 15 feet inboard of her island and penetrated fifty feet into the ship before exploding above the forward engine room.



Six compartments were destroyed, as were the lighting systems on three decks and across 24 frames. The gears controlling the No. 2 elevator were damaged. She had lost her radar and refrigeration system. Near misses by eight bombs had opened seams in her hull from frames 100 to 130 and ruptured the fuel-oil compartments. Many men were killed or badly injured in C-301-L, a crew's messing space that was the assembly area for the ship's engineering repair party. Rear Adm. Aubrey Fitch, aboard the damaged carrier, estimated that repairing the Yorktown would take ninety days.

After Adm. Nimitz had cut orders voiding the safety rule of spending a day purging her tanks of stored aviation fuel, the Yorktown eased into Drydock Number One. The caissons closed behind her, and pumps began draining out the water. With at least a foot of water still remaining in the drydock, men in waders gathered to inspect the hull. One of them was Nimitz. After staring at the burst seams and other damage on the hull, Nimitz turned to the technicians and said, "We must have this ship back in three days." After a long silence, hull repair expert Lt. Cmdr. H. J. Pflugstagg gulped and said, "Yes, sir."

Shipyard workers were given just three days to patch up Yorktown and return her to the fleet in order. Within minutes the first of 1,400 repairmen, who would work around the clock, swarmed into the drydock to begin repairing the Yorktown. To satisfy the enormous power needs of the repair crews the Navy contacted Leslie Hicks, president of the Hawaiian Electric Company, who arranged a series of rolling blackouts in Honolulu. Only the most urgent repairs were made. Instead of individually fixing the hull's ruptured seams, an enormous steel plate was welded over the damaged section.

At 11:00 a.m. on 28 MAY, Drydock Number One was flooded and the Yorktown was towed into the harbor with workmen still busy aboard. On the morning of 30 MAY, more patched than repaired but fit enough to fight, Yorktown steamed out of Pearl Harbor. With an air group composed of aircraft from three carriers, Yorktown sped to a rendezvous with the Enterprise and Hornet at "Point Luck" to participate in one of the most decisive battles in naval history, the Battle of Midway.

Also on this date:

- The Afrika Korps take up defensive positions in the 'Cauldron' in readiness for their attempt to punch through the Gazala line.
  - Admiral Nimitz orders for Task Force 17 (Admiral Fletcher) consisting of the carrier Yorktown, 2 cruisers and 6 destroyers, which had been refitting at Pearl Harbor after operations in the Coral Sea, to set sail for Midway and meet Admiral Spruance there.
  - The main architect of the Holocaust Reichsfuehrer Herman Himmler arrives in Prague.
  - United States commemorates Memorial Day.
- **May 30 1943 – WW2:** After 19 days of fighting, the United States recaptures Alaska's Attu Island from the Japanese Army, annihilating the remaining fighters "except for a few snipers". Japanese losses were 2,500 killed with American losses at 600 killed.

Also on this date:

- French general Charles de Gaulle arrives in Algiers.
  - Transport number 75 departs France with French Jews destined for Auschwitz in Nazi Germany.
  - Twenty children are killed when a bomb hits the Torquay church in Devon England. In all, 45 people died as 21 German aircraft bombed the town, concentrating on the St Mary church and Hele areas. The dead in the church included eight little girls who had already lost their families. They were orphans living at the Erskine Home in Babbacombe.
- **May 30 1944 – WW2:** In England, the loading of assault forces for Operation Overlord (D-Day) begins. Allied troops begin to load in England-Force A (60,000 U.S. troops); Force B (25,600 U.S. reinforcements); British (75,000).

Also on this date:

- The Eighth Army captures Arce, 15 miles Northwest of Cassino, en route to Rome.
  - Germany approves the summary execution of downed Allied airmen who strafed passenger trains or civilians ("Terrorflieger").
- **May 30 1958 – Memorial Day:** The remains of two unidentified American servicemen, killed in action during World War II and the Korean War respectively, are buried at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery.
  - **May 30 1965 – Vietnam War:** Viet Cong offensive against U.S. base Da Nang, begins.
  - **May 30 1966 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. Aircraft Carry Out New Raids* » In the largest raids since air attacks on North Vietnam began in February 1965, U.S. planes destroy five bridges, 17 railroad cars, and 20 buildings in the Thanh Hoa and Vinh areas (100 and 200 miles south of Hanoi, respectively). Others planes hit Highway 12 in four places north of the Mugia Pass and inflicted heavy damage on the Yen Bay arsenal and munitions storage area, which was located 75 miles northeast of Hanoi. A

U.S. spokesman attributed the unprecedented number of 300 planes taking part in the raids to an improvement in weather conditions.

- **May 30 1966 – Vietnam War:** *President Thieu Vows Never To Agree To A Coalition Government*  
» South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu, concluding a four-day visit to South Korea, tells reporters at a news conference that he would “never” agree to a coalition government with the National Liberation Front (NLF). Regarding the role of the NLF in possible elections, Thieu said, “If the communists are willing to lay down their weapons, abandon the communist ideology, and abandon atrocities, they could participate in elections.”



- **May 30 1990 – Cold War:** Gorbachev arrives in Washington for summit » Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev arrives in Washington, D.C., for three days of talks with President George Bush. The summit meeting centered on the issue of Germany and its place in a changing Europe.

When Gorbachev arrived for this second summit meeting with President Bush, his situation in the Soviet Union was perilous. The Soviet economy, despite Gorbachev’s many attempts at reform, was rapidly reaching a crisis point. Russia’s control over its satellites in Eastern Europe was quickly eroding, and even Russian republics such as Lithuania were pursuing paths of independence. Some U.S. observers believed that in an effort to save his struggling regime, Gorbachev might try to curry favor with hard-line elements in the Russian Communist Party. That prediction seemed to be borne out by Gorbachev’s behavior at the May 1990 summit. The main issue at the summit was Germany.



By late 1989, the Communist Party in East Germany was rapidly losing its grip on power; the Berlin Wall had come down and calls for democracy and reunification with West Germany abounded. By the time Gorbachev and Bush met in May 1990, leaders in East and West Germany were making plans for reunification. This brought about the question of a unified Germany’s role in Europe. U.S.

officials argued that Germany should become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The Soviets adamantly opposed this, fearful that a reunified and pro-western Germany might be a threat to Russian security. Gorbachev indicated his impatience with the U.S. argument when he declared shortly before the summit that, “The West hasn’t done much thinking,” and complained that the argument concerning German membership in NATO was “an old record that keeps playing the same note again and again.”

The Gorbachev-Bush summit ended after three days with no clear agreement on the future of Germany. Russia’s pressing economic needs, however, soon led to a breakthrough. In July 1990, Bush promised Gorbachev a large economic aid package and vowed that the German army would remain relatively small. The Soviet leader dropped his opposition to German membership in NATO. In October 1990, East and West Germany formally reunified and shortly thereafter joined NATO.

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

- **May 31 1862 – Civil War: *Battle of Seven Pines (a.k.a. Fair Oaks) Begins*** » Gen. Joseph E. Johnston withdrew his army from the Virginia Peninsula toward the Confederate capital of Richmond as Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan's army pursued him. By the end of May, Johnston held a defensive position seven miles east of the city on the Richmond and York River Railroad. McClellan's army facing Johnston straddled the Chickahominy River and stretched south. Capturing the initiative from his Union foe, Johnston attempted to overwhelm two Federal corps isolated south of the river. The Confederate assaults, though not well coordinated, succeeded in driving back the Fourth Corps under Brig. Gen. Erasmus Keyes and inflicted heavy casualties. Reinforcements arrived, and both sides fed more troops into the action.



**Franklin's corps retreating from the Battle of Fair Oaks**

Supported by Brig. Gen. Samuel P. Heintzelman's Third Corps and Brig. Gen. John Sedgwick's division of Brig. Gen. Edwin Sumner's Second Corps that crossed the rain-swollen river on Grapevine Bridge, the Federal position was finally stabilized. Johnston was seriously wounded during the action, and command of the Confederate army devolved temporarily to Maj. Gen. G.W. Smith. On June 1st, the Confederates renewed their assaults against the Federals who had brought up more reinforcements but made little headway. Both sides claimed victory but Johnston's wounding had profound influence on the war: it led to the appointment of General Robert E. Lee as Confederate commander. The more aggressive Lee initiated the Seven Days Battles, leading to a Union retreat in late June.

- **May 31 1864 – Civil War: *Battle of Cold Harbor Begins*** » A disastrous defeat for the Union Army that caused some 18,000 casualties. Continuing his relentless drive toward the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, General Ulysses S. Grant ordered a frontal infantry assault on General Robert E. Lee's Confederate troops, who were now entrenched at Cold Harbor, some 10 miles northeast of Richmond. The result was Lee's last major victory of the war and a bloodbath for the Union army.
- **May 31 1900 – U.S.\*China: *U.S. Troops Arrive In Peking*** » Capt. John T. Myers, USMC, arrived in Peking in overall command of two ship detachments of U.S. Marines to help put down the Boxer Rebellion.. This newly formed Legation Guard consisted of Myers and twenty-five marines from the USS Oregon along with Capt. Newt Hall, USMC, twenty-three marines, five sailors, and U.S. Navy Assistant Surgeon T. M. Lippett from the USS Newark. Arriving in Peking the same day were approximately 350 foreign sailors and marines sent to protect their respective legations. The United States and seven other countries - Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, and Russia-all had interests in China and maintained legations in the Legation Quarter of Peking



U.S. Marines - Part of the international relief expedition sent to lift the siege of Peking.

Individual honors were bestowed on many marines in the wake of the Boxer Rebellion. Thirty-three enlisted men were awarded the Medal of Honor, including the first medal awarded to a marine posthumously. Pvt. Harry Fisher was killed on 16 JUL while helping erect a barricade near the wall in Peking. Pvt. Dan Daly received his first Medal of Honor for volunteering to stay alone on the bastion of the wall while undergoing constant fire from the enemy on the night of 15 JUL. Marine Corps officers were not eligible for Medals of Honor until 1913. Instead, officers noted for bravery in action were usually distinguished by being "advanced in numbers" in their rank or sometimes awarded brevet rank. For example, Capt. John Myers was advanced four numbers and brevetted a major; 1st Lt. Smedley Butler was advanced two numbers and brevetted a captain; and 1st Lt. Henry Leonard was advanced two numbers.

Butler and Leonard had been singled out in a report to Meade by the British officer in charge of the action against Tientsin on 13 JUL, "Among many instances of personal bravery in the action I propose specially to bring to notice in dispatches the conduct of 1st Lieut. Smedley D. Butler, United States Marine Corps, in bringing in a wounded man from the front under heavy and accurate fire; Lieut. Butler was wounded while so doing but I am glad to learn not seriously. The Regimental Adjutant First Lieutenant Henry Leonard, as Lieut. Butler was suffering severely, volunteered to

carry him out of the firing line. This gallant feat he successfully accomplished, but I regret to say was very dangerously wounded in so doing."

In addition, three officers who served in the Boxer Rebellion went on to become Commandants of the Marine Corps

- **May 31 1902 – Boer War:** *Treaty Signed in South Africa* » In Pretoria, representatives of Great Britain and the Boer states sign the Treaty of Vereeniging, officially ending the three-and-a-half-year South African Boer War.

The Boers, also known as Afrikaners, were the descendants of the original Dutch settlers of southern Africa. Britain took possession of the Dutch Cape colony in 1806 during the Napoleonic wars, sparking resistance from the independence-minded Boers, who resented the Anglicization of South Africa and Britain's anti-slavery policies. In 1833, the Boers began an exodus into African tribal territory, where they founded the republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. The two new republics lived peaceably with their British neighbors until 1867, when the discovery of diamonds and gold in the region made conflict between the Boer states and Britain inevitable.

Minor fighting with Britain began in the 1890s and in 1899 full-scale war ensued. By mid-June of 1900, British forces had captured most major Boer cities and formally annexed their territories, but the Boers launched a guerrilla war that frustrated the British occupiers. Beginning in 1901, the British began a strategy of systematically searching out and destroying these guerrilla units, while herding the families of the Boer soldiers into concentration camps. By 1902, the British had crushed the Boer resistance, and on May 31 of that year, the Peace of Vereeniging was signed, ending hostilities.

The treaty recognized the British military administration over Transvaal and the Orange Free State, and authorized a general amnesty for Boer forces. In 1910, the autonomous Union of South Africa was established by the British. It included Transvaal, the Orange Free State, the Cape of Good Hope and Natal as provinces.

- **May 31 1912 – U.S.\*Cuba:** *Cuban Pacification Campaign* » U.S. Marines land on Cuba to help quell the Negro Rebellion. In the spring of 1912, revolt again flared in Cuba, and Marines were once more called to the island. On 27 May, the 2d Provisional Regiment was formed at Philadelphia and Norfolk to reinforce the 1st Provisional Regiment already in Cuba. Under the command of Colonel James E. Mahoney, the regiment sailed in several vessels of the Navy for Cuba, where Companies B, D, and E helped quell the Negro Rebellion. Within two months, peace again prevailed in the island, and on 1 August, the 2d Provisional Regiment was disbanded, and its personnel were returned onboard the USS *Prairie* to the United States or detached to the newly reorganized 1st Provisional Regiment in Cuba.
- **May 31 1916 – WW1:** *Battle of Jutland Begins* » Just before four o'clock on the afternoon of 31 MAY a British naval force commanded by Vice Admiral David Beatty confronts a squadron of German ships, led by Admiral Franz von Hipper, some 75 miles off the Danish coast. The two squadrons opened fire on each other simultaneously, beginning the opening phase of the greatest naval battle of World War I, the Battle of Jutland.



After the Battle of Dogger Bank in January 1915, the German navy chose not to confront the numerically superior British Royal Navy in a major battle for more than a year, preferring to rest the bulk of its strategy at sea on its lethal U-boat submarines. In May 1916, however, with the majority of the British Grand Fleet anchored far away, at Scapa Flow, off the northern coast of Scotland, the commander of the German High Seas Fleet, Vice Admiral Reinhard Scheer, believed the time was right to resume attacks on the British coastline. Confident that his communications were securely coded, Scheer ordered 19 U-boat submarines to position themselves for a raid on the North Sea coastal city of Sunderland while using air reconnaissance crafts to keep an eye on the British fleet's movement from Scapa Flow.

Bad weather hampered the airships, however, and Scheer called off the raid, instead ordering his fleet—24 battleships, five battle cruisers, 11 light cruisers and 63 destroyers—to head north, to the Skagerrak, a waterway located between Norway and northern Denmark, off the Jutland Peninsula, where they could attack Allied shipping interests and with luck, punch a hole in the stringent British blockade. Unbeknownst to Scheer, however, a newly created intelligence unit located within an old building of the British Admiralty, known as Room 40, had cracked the German codes and warned the British Grand Fleet's commander, Admiral John Rushworth Jellicoe, of Scheer's intentions. Consequently, on the night of 30 MAY, a British fleet of 28 battleships, nine battle cruisers, 34 light cruisers and 80 destroyers set out from Scapa Flow, bound for positions off the Skagerrak.

On May 31 at 2:20 p.m., Beatty, leading a British squadron, spotted Hipper's warships. As each squadron maneuvered south to better its position, shots were fired, but neither side opened fire until 3:48 that afternoon. The initial phase of the gun battle lasted 55 minutes, during which two British battle cruisers, *Indefatigable* and *Queen Mary* were destroyed, killing over 2,000 sailors. At 4:43 p.m., Hipper's squadron was joined by the remainder of the German fleet, commanded by Scheer. Beatty was forced to fight a delaying action for the next hour, until Jellicoe could arrive with the rest of the Grand Fleet.

With both fleets facing off in their entirety, a great battle of naval strategy began among the four commanders, particularly between Jellicoe and Scheer. As sections of the two fleets continued to engage each other throughout the late evening and the early morning of 1 JUN, Jellicoe maneuvered 96 of the British ships into a V-shape surrounding 59 German ships. Hipper's flagship, *Lützow*, was disabled by 24 direct hits but was able, before it sank, to sink the British battle cruiser *Invincible*. Just after 6:30 on the evening of 1 JUN, Scheer's fleet executed a previously planned withdrawal under cover of darkness to their base at the German port of Wilhelmshaven, ending the battle and cheating the British of the major naval success they had envisioned.

The Battle of Jutland—or the Battle of the Skagerrak, as it was known to the Germans—engaged a total of 100,000 men aboard 250 ships over the course of 72 hours. The Germans, giddy from the glory of Scheer’s brilliant escape, claimed it as a victory for their High Seas Fleet. At first the British press agreed, but the truth was not so clear-cut. The German navy lost 11 ships, including a battleship and a battle cruiser, and suffered 3,058 casualties; the British sustained heavier losses, with 14 ships sunk, including three battle cruisers, and 6,784 casualties. Ten more German ships had suffered heavy damage, however, and by June 2, 1916, only 10 ships that had been involved in the battle were ready to leave port again (Jellicoe, on the other hand, could have put 23 to sea). On July 4, 1916, Scheer reported to the German high command that further fleet action was not an option, and that submarine warfare was Germany’s best hope for victory at sea. Despite the missed opportunities and heavy losses, the Battle of Jutland had left British naval superiority on the North Sea intact. The German High Seas Fleet would make no further attempts to break the Allied blockade or to engage the Grand Fleet for the remainder of World War I.

- **May 31 1937 – Spanish Civil War:** The German cruiser 'Leipzig' and four torpedo boats bombard Almeria, Spain after an alleged attack on the 'Deutschland'. Hitler asserted it was a retaliatory measure to repair German honor after Spanish government bombers bombing of the cruiser 'Germany'.
- **May 31 1940 – WW2 Era:** Churchill flies to Paris for a meeting of the Supreme Allied War Council, the second time since the 10th May.

Also on this date:

- The Defense of Dunkirk continues as 68,000 allied troops are evacuated.
  - The French defense of Lille in northern France collapses.
  - Heavy Luftwaffe attacks sink two French destroyers off the beaches at Dunkirk.
- **May 31 1941 –WW2 Era:** *Germans Conquer Crete* » The last of the Allies evacuate after 11 days of battling a successful German parachute invasion of the island of Crete. Crete is now Axis-occupied territory.

On the morning of 20 MAY, some 3,000 members of Germany’s Division landed on Crete, which was patrolled and protected by more than 28,000 Allied troops and an almost equal number of Greek soldiers. The German invasion, although anticipated, was not taken seriously; the real fear was of an attack from the sea. Those initial 3,000 parachutists were reinforced—to the tune of an additional 19,000 men, arriving by parachute drop, glider, and troop carrier.





The Allies remained optimistic; many of the German soldiers who dropped from the sky died or were injured on impact. The rest were undersupplied and inexperienced. But by the 26 MAY, British General Bernard Freyberg, commander of the defense of Crete, already reported that their position was hopeless. Evacuation of Allied troops began on the 28th. By the night of the 31st, the last of the Allies that would make it out had left the seaport of Sphakia; 5,000 men would be left behind in the hands of the Germans. The total loss of Allied land soldiers in the Cretan engagements was 1,742; a further 2,265 sailors were lost at sea. Three cruisers and six destroyers had been sunk. The Germans suffered a loss of about 4,000 men.

Strangely, Hitler, despite the victory, considered his “losses” too great to pursue further gains in the Mediterranean and finally drive Great Britain out of the area.

Also on this date:

- German bombers attack Dublin by mistake: Eire government protests, Germans later offer compensation.
  - British civilian casualties for May announced: 5,394 killed and 5,181 injured.
  - British forces enter Baghdad and an armistice is signed. The terms of the armistice require that all axis personnel in Iraq are to be interned and that Iraq support the British cause against the axis.
- **May 31 1942 –WW2: *Battle of the Cauldron Begins*** \_» The battle begins as Rommel attacks the fortified box in the Gazala line that is held by the 150th Brigade of the British 50th Division. The Italians attack from the west as elements of the Afrika Korps attack from the east. Meanwhile Rommel’s anti-tank gunners, repulse a number of British armored counter-attacks against his position in the ‘Cauldron’. However, Lieutenant General Ritchie is hampered by his inability to concentrate his armor and so is unable to relieve the 150th Brigade.

Also on this date:

- Since the start of Germany’s Operation Paukenschlag (Drum Beat) in January, the U-boats operating along the U.S. eastern seaboard have sunk 111 vessels.
- A Japanese midget submarine enters Sydney Harbor.

- U-boats sink and damage 146 allied (722,666 tons) ships in May.
- Allies sunk 42 U-boats in May.
- **May 31 1943 –WW2: *Black May*** » By the end of May, 41 U-boats have been sunk in the Atlantic due to greatly improved allied anti-submarine techniques and tactics (Hedgehog, greater-range patrol aircraft, better radar, more escort vessels and carriers, plus the advantage of having broken the German Navy Enigma code). “Black May” effectively marks the end of a sustained German U-boat campaign in WW2 which did come very close to starving out Britain and forcing her to make terms with Germany.

Also on this date:

- The Danish resistance blows up an engine shed at Toender as sabotage mounts, despite Danish King’s appeal for a halt.
- The U.S. 15th Air Force bombs German and Italian airfields at Foggia, destroying many aircraft on the ground.
- Chiang Kai-Shek claims three Japanese divisions have been surrounded on Yangtze River.
- Japanese end their occupation of the Aleutian Islands as the U.S. completes the capture of Attu.
- **May 31 1944 –WW2:** The Russians repel a heavy German counter attack North of Jassy, in the southern Ukraine. Also on this date Stalin gives the go-ahead to Operation ‘Bagration’ (the Russian summer offensive) which is to destroy Army Group Centre in Byelorussia.
- **May 31 1945 –WW2:** Chiang Kai-Shek resigns the Chinese Premiership but remains as President and Generalissimo, with Dr. Soong succeeding him as premier.

Also on this date:

- Osaka Japan is totally burnt out by U.S. incendiaries.
- **May 31 1962 – Post WW2: *Architect Of The Holocaust Hanged In Israel*** » Near Tel Aviv, Israel, Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi SS officer who organized Adolf Hitler’s “final solution of the Jewish question,” was executed for his crimes against humanity.



Eichmann was born in Solingen, Germany, in 1906. In November 1932, he joined the Nazi’s elite SS (Schutzstaffel) organization, whose members came to have broad responsibilities in Nazi

Germany, including policing, intelligence, and the enforcement of Adolf Hitler's anti-Semitic policies. Eichmann steadily rose in the SS hierarchy, and with the German annexation of Austria in 1938 he was sent to Vienna with the mission of ridding the city of Jews. He set up an efficient Jewish deportment center and in 1939 was sent to Prague on a similar mission. That year, Eichmann was appointed to the Jewish section of the SS central security office in Berlin.

In January 1942, Eichmann met with top Nazi officials at the Wannsee Conference near Berlin for the purpose of planning a "final solution of the Jewish question," as Nazi leader Hermann Goering put it. The Nazis decided to exterminate Europe's Jewish population. Eichmann was appointed to coordinate the identification, assembly, and transportation of millions of Jews from occupied Europe to the Nazi death camps, where Jews were gassed or worked to death. He carried this duty out with horrifying efficiency, and between three to four million Jews perished in the extermination camps before the end of World War II. Close to two million were executed elsewhere.

Following the war, Eichmann was captured by U.S. troops, but he escaped a prison camp in 1946 before having to face the Nuremberg International War Crimes Tribunal. Eichmann traveled under an assumed identity between Europe and the Middle East, and in 1950 he arrived in Argentina, which maintained lax immigration policies and was a safe haven for many Nazi war criminals. In 1957, a German prosecutor secretly informed Israel that Eichmann was living in Argentina. Agents from Israel's intelligence service, the Mossad, were deployed to Argentina, and in early 1960 they finally located Eichmann; he was living in the San Fernando section of Buenos Aires under the name of Ricardo Klement.

In May 1960, Argentina was celebrating the 150th anniversary of its revolution against Spain, and many tourists were traveling to Argentina from abroad to attend the festivities. The Mossad used the opportunity to smuggle more agents into the country. Israel, knowing that Argentina might never extradite Eichmann for trial, had decided to abduct him and take him to Israel illegally. On 11 MAY, Mossad operatives descended on Garibaldi Street in San Fernando and snatched Eichmann away as he was walking from the bus to his home. His family called local hospitals but not the police, and Argentina knew nothing of the operation. On May 20, a drugged Eichmann was flown out of Argentina disguised as an Israeli airline worker who had suffered head trauma in an accident. Three days later, Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion announced that Eichmann was in Israeli custody.

Argentina demanded Eichmann's return, but Israel argued that his status as an international war criminal gave them the right to proceed with a trial. On April 11, 1961, Eichmann's trial began in Jerusalem. It was the first televised trial in history. Eichmann faced 15 charges, including crimes against humanity, crimes against the Jewish people, and war crimes. He claimed he was just following orders, but the judges disagreed, finding him guilty on all counts on December 15 and sentencing him to die. On May 31, 1962, he was hanged near Tel Aviv. His body was cremated and his ashes thrown into the sea.

- **May 31 1962 – Vietnam War: *Operation Rolling Thunder Continues*** » U.S. planes bomb an ammunition depot at Hoi Jan, west of Hanoi, and try again to drop the Than Hoa highway bridge. These raids were part of Operation Rolling Thunder, which had begun in March 1965. President Lyndon B. Johnson had ordered the sustained bombing of North Vietnam 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 North Vietnamese ammunition dumps and oil storage facilities as targets. In the spring of 1967, it was further expanded to include power plants, factories, and airfields in the Hanoi-Haiphong area.



540 ft Thanh Hóa Bridge after it was hit by laser-guided bombs in 1972

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.

- **May 31 1970 – Vietnam War:** *Communist Soldiers Escape South Vietnamese Forces* » About 75 communist soldiers who had seized key outposts in the city of Dalat, 145 miles northeast of Saigon, manage to slip past 2,500 South Vietnamese militiamen and soldiers who had surrounded their positions. In earlier fighting, 47 communist soldiers were reported killed; South Vietnamese reported that 16 soldiers were killed and 2 were wounded.
- **May 31 1988 – Cold War:** *U.S. Presidents Close Cold War Chapters* » On May 30, 1988, three U.S. presidents in three different years take significant steps toward ending the Cold War.

Beginning on May 28, 1988, President Ronald Reagan met Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev for a four-day summit in Russia. Upon his election in 1980, Reagan had abandoned Nixon, Ford and Carter's attempts to diffuse political tensions between the two superpowers and instead instigated an enormous build-up of arms and rhetoric against the Soviet Union. The Soviets could not keep up with the U.S.'s massive defense spending and this, along with Gorbachev's policy of granting increasing freedom to Soviet citizens (glasnost), helped to erode hard-line communism within Russia. In a remarkable and symbolic address to a group of Moscow University students on May 31, Reagan stood in front of an enormous bust of Lenin and spoke openly about freedom, technology, creativity and his desire to see the Berlin Wall torn down. He told the students your generation is living in one of the most exciting, hopeful times in Soviet history when the first breath of freedom stirs the air and the heart beats to the accelerated rhythm of hope, when the accumulated spiritual energies of a long silence yearn to break free.

Two years to the day after Reagan's 1988 visit, and just about a year after the 1989 demolition of the Berlin Wall, Reagan's successor George H. W. Bush met with Gorbachev in the United States to discuss the reunification of East and West Germany. Bush and Gorbachev outlined a plan that would unite the separate communist and democratic spheres into one nation not seen since World War II. In 1991, after an aborted communist coup against Gorbachev, Boris Yeltsin became president and the Soviet Union was officially declared over, dismantled and re-named Russia. Most of the former

Soviet satellite territories were granted their independence. Russia then initiated tentative steps toward a capitalist economic system.

On this day in 1994, President Bill Clinton pledged continued cooperation with Russia in a New World Order, declaring that the U.S. would no longer point nuclear missiles at Russia, ending the antagonism and fear of mutually assured destruction that characterized the half-century-long Cold War between the two superpowers.

**Derivative Sources:**

- [www.history.com/this-day-in-history](http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history) \*
- <https://www.historycentral.com>
- <https://www.wwiidoctags.com/ww2-history/may-16>
- <https://www.historyanswers.co.uk/history-of-war/day>
- <https://worldwar2daybyday.blogspot.com/2012/05/>
- <https://www.navalhistory.org>
- <https://www.warhistoryonline.com/category/war-articles>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May\\_1915](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_1915) thru 1921
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May\\_1939](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_1939) thru 1945
- <https://www.history.navy.mil/today-in-history/may-16.html>
- <https://www.pbs.org/battlefieldvietnam/timeline/index.html>
- <https://www.answers.com>
- <https://www.reddit.com/r/RealTimeWW2> [1944 only] \*
- <https://ww2aircraft.net/forum/threads/this-day-in-the-war-in-the-pacific-65-years-ago.6103/page-30> (1942 only)
- <https://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/vietnam/index-1965.html> Jungle War 1965-1968
- <https://www.historynet.com/today-in-history/may-01>

To subscribe contact Lt. James “EMO” Tichacek, USN (Ret) Email: [raoemo@sbcglobal.net](mailto:raoemo@sbcglobal.net) or [raoemo77@gmail.com](mailto:raoemo77@gmail.com) Tel: (858) 842-1111. [Source: RAO Bulletin Attachment | May 2022 ++]