

The War for Europe and North Africa

TERMS AND NAMES

- Dwight D. Eisenhower** American general
- D-Day** Allied invasion to liberate Europe
- Omar Bradley** American general
- George Patton** American general
- Battle of the Bulge** German counteroffensive in December 1944
- V-E Day** Victory in Europe Day, May 8, 1945
- Harry S. Truman** 33rd president of the United States

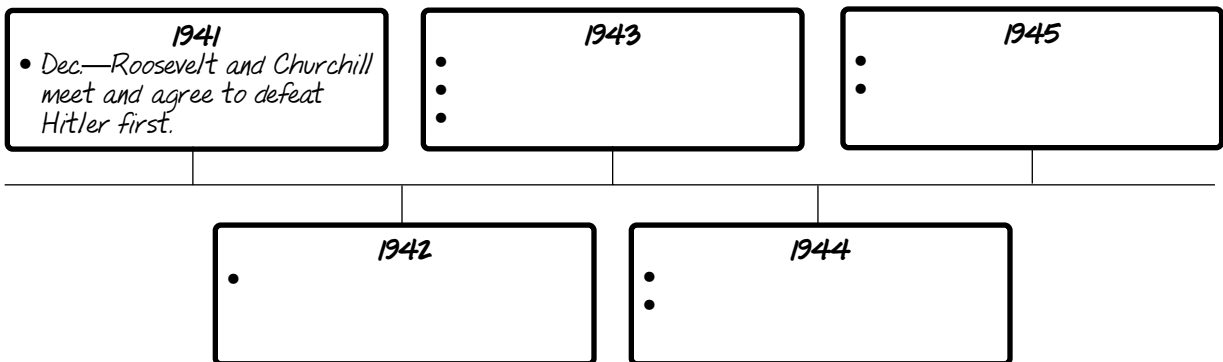
BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you saw how the American involvement in World War II affected life on the home front.

In this section, you will see how the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union combined to defeat Germany and its partners in Europe.

AS YOU READ

Take notes on the time line below. Fill it in with events that led to the defeat of Germany.



The United States and Britain Join Forces

What were the goals of the American and British alliance?

In late December 1941, a few weeks after Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt met with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. They planned their war strategy. They agreed that the first thing to do was to defeat Hitler's Germany. Roosevelt and Churchill began a lasting friendship and a strong alliance between America and Britain.

After war was declared, German U-boats increased attacks on American ships in the Atlantic. Many American ships were sunk. The

Allies organized convoys, or groups, for shared protection. Warships and airplanes escorted the convoys. They used sonar and radar to find and destroy many German submarines.

The United States also started building ships at a rapid pace. Soon there were more Allied cargo ships, or Liberty ships, being made than being sunk. By mid-1943, the tide of the Battle of the Atlantic had turned in favor of the Allies.

- 1. What was the Battle of the Atlantic, and how did the Allies win it?**

The Eastern Front and the Mediterranean

What happened in the Soviet Union, North Africa, and Italy?

By the summer of 1943, the Allies were winning on land as well as on the sea.

The German invasion of the Soviet Union had begun in 1941. When it stalled early in 1942, Hitler changed his tactics. He moved to capture Soviet oil fields and to take the industrial city of Stalingrad. The Germans bombed Stalingrad until almost the whole city was on fire.

But Stalin refused to give up. In three months of horrible hand-to-hand combat, the Germans took most of Stalingrad. Then the Soviets counter-attacked. They trapped a large German force just as winter came. The Germans froze and starved. In February 1943, the few German soldiers who were still alive surrendered. The Battle of Stalingrad was a turning point. From then on, Soviet forces moved steadily west towards Germany.

Meanwhile, in November 1942, the Allies invaded North Africa. North Africa at the time was controlled by the Axis. American forces led by General **Dwight D. (“Ike”) Eisenhower** defeated German troops under General Erwin Rommel. The Germans surrendered in May 1943.

Next, in July 1943, the Allies invaded Italy. They captured Sicily. The war-weary Italian king stripped Prime Minister Mussolini of power and had him arrested. But then Hitler seized Italy. It took 18 long and bloody months of fighting for the Allies to drive the Germans out of Italy. In the Italian campaign, segregated units of African Americans, Mexican Americans, and Japanese Americans all won honors for bravery.

2. How were the Allies victorious in the Soviet Union, North Africa, and Italy?

The Allies Liberate Europe

Why did the Allies invade Normandy?

The Americans and British had been building a huge invasion force for two years. It was designed to *liberate* Europe. June 6, 1944, was **D-Day**—the day the Allies crossed the English Channel and landed in Normandy, France. This invasion was the largest land-sea-air operation in history.

British, American, and Canadian forces landed on the beaches of Normandy. They met fierce German resistance, and many were killed. But they took the beaches. Over 1 million Allied troops landed in France, and began to advance. General **Omar Bradley** opened a huge hole in the German lines. It allowed American General **George Patton** and his Third Army to liberate Paris in August. By September, the Allies had liberated other European nations and had entered Germany itself.

In the United States, Roosevelt won reelection to a fourth term as president.

To the Allies’ surprise, Hitler began a counter-attack in December. At first, the Germans cut deeply into Allied lines. After a month of fierce fighting, the Allies pushed the Germans back. The Germans had lost so many men and weapons in this **Battle of the Bulge** that they could only retreat.

Meanwhile, the Soviets pushed through Poland toward Germany. The Soviets were the first to liberate death camps and to describe the unbelievable horrors they saw there. By April 25, the Soviets were in Berlin. Hitler responded to certain defeat by shooting himself.

On May 8, 1945, General Eisenhower accepted the *unconditional surrender* of Nazi Germany. That became known as **V-E Day**—Victory in Europe Day. Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945 before V-E Day. Vice President **Harry S. Truman** became president.

3. How did the Allies liberate Europe and defeat Germany?
