

Unit 5: Crisis and Change  
Lesson F: The Failure of Democracy and Return of War  
Student Resource: Timeline for World War II — United States

### **Timeline for World War II — United States**

#### **1920-1938:**

- 1928: July 25: The U.S. recalled troops from China.
- 1928: August 27: The Kellogg-Briand Pact was signed in Paris by the major powers of the world. The treaty outlawed aggressive warfare. The Kellogg-Briand Pact went into effect July 24, 1929.
- 1929: October 29: The U.S. stock market crashed and the Great Depression began.
- 1930: April 22: The United Kingdom, United States, Italy, and Japan signed the London Naval Treaty regulating submarine warfare and shipbuilding.
- 1933: March 4: Franklin Delano Roosevelt was inaugurated as President of the United States.
- 1933: October 17: Albert Einstein arrived in the U.S. as a refugee from Nazi Germany.

#### **1939:**

- 1939: January 25: Uranium atom was split for the first time at Columbia University in the United States.
- 1939: September 5: The U.S.A. publicly declared neutrality in the European war.
- 1939: October 2: Declaration of Panama was approved by American Republics. It was decided that belligerent activities should not take place within waters adjacent to the American continent. A neutrality zone of some 300 miles in breadth was to be patrolled by the U.S. Navy.
- 1939: November 4: The U.S. Neutrality Act was passed: the French and British could buy arms, but on a strictly cash basis. Isolationists found the act an "outrage."

#### **1940:**

- 1940: The size of U.S. Navy was increased significantly after the Germans seized Paris.
- 1940: The U.S. embargoed iron, steel, and mechanical parts against Japan after Japanese incursion into French Indochina.
- 1940: July 10: President Roosevelt asked Congress for huge increases in military preparations.
- 1940: August 14: British scientist, Sir Henry Tizard, left for the United States, giving over to the Americans a number of top secret British technologies including the magnetron, the secret device needed for radar.
- 1940: September 16: Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 introduced the first peacetime conscription in United States history, specifically for men ages 21-35.
- 1940: October 9: The first number drawings for US Selective Service Act draftees took place.
- 1940: October 16: Draft registration began in the United States.
- 1940: October 30: President Roosevelt, in the middle of an election campaign, promised not to send "our boys" to war.
- 1940: November 4: President Roosevelt won a third term, which the British saw as promising of more help from the U.S.

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**1941:**

- 1941: The United States placed a complete oil embargo on Japan, which was very reliant on the U.S. for oil; the Japanese considered this move an unspoken declaration of war.
- 1941: January 21: Charles Lindbergh testified before the U.S. Congress and recommended that the United States negotiate a neutrality pact with Adolf Hitler.
- 1941: February 8: U.S. House of Representatives passed the Lend-Lease bill.
- 1941: March 11: United States President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed the Lend-Lease Act (now passed by the full Congress) allowing Britain, China, and other allied nations to purchase military equipment and to defer payment until after the war.
- 1941: April 10: Greenland was occupied by the United States. With the approval of a "free Denmark", the U.S. would build naval and air bases as counters to the U-boat war.
- 1941: April 11: Though still a "neutral" nation, the United States began sea patrols in Atlantic.
- 1941: April 15: First Civilian Public Service camp opened for conscientious objectors in the United States.
- 1941: June 2: Tuskegee Airmen began with the formation of the 99th Fighter Squadron.
- 1941: June 14: All German and Italian assets in the United States were frozen.
- 1941: June 16: All German and Italian consulates in the United States were ordered closed and their staffs to leave the country by July 10.
- 1941: July 1: All American men over 21 were required to register for the draft.
- 1941: July 26: In response to the Japanese occupation of French Indochina, US President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the seizure of all Japanese assets in the United States.
- 1941: August: The U.K. and U.S. jointly issued the Atlantic Charter, to which the Allies of World War II pledged adherence on January 1, 1942. China, the Soviet Union, and 22 smaller or exiled governments issued the Declaration by United Nations, which affirmed the Atlantic Charter.
- 1941: September 4: The USS Greer became the first United States warship fired upon by a German U-boat in the war, even though the United States was a neutral power. Tension heightened between the two nations as a result. The U.S. was committed to convoy duties between the Western Hemisphere and Europe.
- 1941: September 11: Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the United States Navy to shoot on sight if any ship or convoy was threatened.
- 1941: October: Germany and the U.S. were engaged in naval warfare, although the United States was officially neutral.
- 1941: October 17: The destroyer USS Kearney was torpedoed and damaged by U-boat U-568 near Iceland, killing eleven sailors; they were the first American military casualties of the war.
- 1941: October 30: Franklin Delano Roosevelt approved US\$1 billion in Lend-Lease aid to the Soviet Union.
- 1941: November 1: President Franklin D. Roosevelt announced that the U.S. Coast Guard would be under the direction of the U.S. Navy, a transition of authority usually reserved only for wartime.

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- 1941: November 23: The U.S. reached an agreement with the Dutch government in exile to occupy Suriname in order to protect the bauxite mines.
- 1941: November 24: The United States granted Lend-Lease to the Free French.
- 1941: December 7: The Imperial Japanese Navy attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, hoping to destroy the United States Pacific Fleet at anchor.
- 1941: December 8: The United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia, and New Zealand declared war on Japan.
- 1941: December 11: Germany and Italy declared war on the United States after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, effectively ending the isolationist sentiment in the U.S. that had prevented it from entering the war.
- 1941: December 11: U.S. forces repelled a Japanese landing attempt at Wake Island.
- 1941: December 20-22: The "Arcadia Conference": the first official meeting of British and American political and military leaders. Churchill was a guest in the White House. Overall strategies for fighting the War were agreed upon.

**1942:**

- 1942: January 24: American troops landed in Samoa, as part of a strategy to stop the Japanese advance in the Pacific.
- 1942: January 25: Thailand declared war on the United States and United Kingdom.
- 1942: January 26: The first American forces arrived in Europe landing in Northern Ireland.
- 1942: February 9: Top United States military leaders held their first formal meeting to discuss U.S. military strategy in the war.
- 1942: February 16: Being discussed in high American government circles were plans for the internment of Japanese-Americans living generally in the western U.S.
- 1942: February 19: President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 allowing the United States military to define areas as exclusionary zones. These zones affected the Japanese on the West Coast, and Germans and Italians primarily on the East Coast.
- 1942: February 25: The internment of Japanese-American citizens in the Western United States began as fears of invasion increased.
- 1942: March 4: By Executive decree, all Japanese-Americans, especially on the West coast, found themselves subject to relocation in special camps.
- 1942: May 1: The Battle of the Coral Sea began: it lasted four days and was a first in that the ships on both sides were never in sight of the other; the USS Lexington was sunk, but the U.S. claimed victory.
- 1942: May 15: In the United States, a bill creating the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC) was signed into law.
- 1942: June: The U.S. broke Japanese naval codes and used this information in a decisive victory at Midway over the Imperial Japanese Navy.
- 1942: June 4: The Battle of Midway began; The Japanese attacked installations on the island, but only managed to detect one of the three nearby American carriers. American planes sank all four Japanese carriers present at the battle.
- 1942: June 5: United States declared war on Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania.
- 1942: June 7: The Battle of Midway came to a close; the USS Yorktown sank; four Japanese carriers and one cruiser were sunk. The battle was viewed as a turning point in the Pacific war.
- 1942: June 7: Japanese forces invaded Attu and Kiska. This was the first invasion of American soil in 128 years. Japanese occupation of Attu and Japanese occupation of Kiska began.
- 1942: June 13: The United States opened its Office of War Information, a centre for production of propaganda.

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- 1942: June 18: Manhattan Project, the beginning of a scientific approach to nuclear weapons, started.
- 1942: June 25: General Eisenhower arrived in London ready to assume the post of Commander of American forces in Europe.
- 1942: August 5: The U.S. planning team for Operation Torch, which included George S. Patton, James Doolittle, Kent Lambert, and Hoyt S. Vandenberg met in Washington, D.C. to join the combined planning team from London, England.
- 1942: September 4: Manhattan Engineering District was formally created, and production of the atomic bomb began.
- 1942: November: Armed forces of Great Britain and the United States landed in North Africa.
- 1942: November 12-15: A climactic naval battle near Guadalcanal started between Japanese and American naval forces. Notably, the USS Juneau was sunk with much of its crew, including the five Sullivan brothers. The naval battle of Guadalcanal ended. Although the United States Navy suffered heavy losses, it still retained control of the sea around Guadalcanal.
- 1942: November 26: Hostilities erupted between U.S. and Australian soldiers in Brisbane, resulting in multiple fatalities.
- 1942: December 1: Gasoline rationing began in the United States.
- 1942: December 2: A team led by Enrico Fermi initiated the first nuclear chain reaction. A coded message, "The Italian navigator has landed in the new world," was sent to President Roosevelt.

**1943:**

- 1943: February 7: In the United States, it was announced that shoe rationing would go into effect in two days.
- 1943: February 9: Guadalcanal was finally secured; it was the first major achievement of the American offensive in the Pacific war.
- 1943: February 11: U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower was selected to command the Allied armies in Europe.
- 1943: March 1: Battle of the Bismarck Sea: U.S. and Australia naval forces, over the course of three days, sunk eight Japanese troop transports near New Guinea.
- 1943: March 10: The U.S. House of Representatives voted to extend the Lend-Lease plan.
- 1943: April 3: Racial tensions between American marines and New Zealand troops of Māori origin resulted in the Battle of Manners Street.
- 1943: May 12: Trident Conference began in Washington, D.C. with Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill taking part. The discussions were mostly on future strategy.
- 1943: May 19: Winston Churchill addressed a joint session of the U.S. Congress and praised the partnership of the two Allies.
- 1943: July: Armed forces of Great Britain and the United States landed in Sicily.
- 1943: August 2: John F. Kennedy's PT-109 was rammed in two and sunk off the Solomon Islands.
- 1943: August 19: Roosevelt and Churchill signed the Quebec Agreement.
- 1943: October 7: 98 American civilian prisoners were executed on Wake Island.
- 1943: November 28: The Teheran Conference: U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet Leader Joseph Stalin met in Teheran to discuss war strategy. On November 30, they established an agreement concerning a planned June 1944 invasion of Europe codenamed Operation Overlord. Stalin at last had the promise he had been awaiting.
- 1943: December 24-27: U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower became the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe and was officially named head of the invasion of Normandy.

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**1944:**

- 1944: February 8: The plan for the invasion of France, Operation Overlord, was confirmed.
- 1944: May 8: D-Day for Operation Overlord was set for June 5.
- 1944: June 19-20: With the U.S. Navy in position, the Battle of the Philippine Sea began. It would be the largest aircraft carrier battle in history.
- 1944: July 21: U.S. Marines landed on Guam.
- 1944: August 10: Guam was liberated by American troops and all of the Marianas were now in American hands. They were turned into a major air and naval centre against the Japanese homeland.
- 1944: August 14: A clash between Italian POWs and U.S. servicemen ended in the Fort Lawton Riot.
- 1944: September 10: Luxembourg was liberated by U.S. First Army.
- 1944: September 21: The Second Dumbarton Oaks Conference began. It set guidelines for the United Nations.
- 1944: October 21: Aachen was occupied by U.S. First Army. It was the first major German city to be captured.
- 1944: November 4: British General John Dill died in Washington, D.C., and was buried in Arlington Cemetery. He was the only foreigner to be so honored.
- 1944: November 6: Franklin Delano Roosevelt won a fourth term.
- 1944: December 17: The Malmedy massacre: German SS troops executed 86 American prisoners in the Ardennes offensive.
- 1944: December 24: The Belgian transport ship S.S. Leopoldville was sunk off the coast of France. More than 800 lives, predominantly those of American servicemen, were lost.
- 1944: December 26: Racial tensions within the US military boiled over into a race riot on Guam.

**1945:**

- 1945: January 1: American troops killed dozens of German POWs at Chenogne.
- 1945: January 2: 46 U.S. B-29 bombers based near Calcutta, India attacked a railroad bridge near Bangkok, Thailand and other targets in the area.
- 1945: January 6: U.S. B-29's bombed Tokyo again.
- 1945: January 16: United States First and Third Armies linked up following Battle of the Bulge.
- 1945: January 20: Franklin D. Roosevelt was sworn in as President (his fourth term); Harry Truman was sworn in as Vice President.
- 1945: February 16: American naval vessels bombarded Tokyo and Yokohama.
- 1945: February 23: U.S. Marines raised the American flag on Mt. Suribachi on Iwo Jima.
- 1945: March 3: The combined Filipino and American soldiers took Manila, the Philippines.
- 1945: March 9: The US firebombed a number of cities in Japan, including Tokyo, with heavy civilian casualties.
- 1945: March 16: Iwo Jima was finally secured after a month's fighting; the battle was the only time that the number of American casualties was larger than the Japanese's. Sporadic fighting continued as isolated Japanese fighters emerged from caves and tunnels.
- 1945: March 20: General Patton's troops captured Mainz, Germany.

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- 1945: March 31: General Eisenhower broadcasted a demand for the Germans to surrender.
- 1945: April 1: U.S. troops started Operation Iceberg, which was the Battle of Okinawa.
- 1945: April 11: Japanese kamikaze attacks on American naval ships continued at Okinawa; the carrier Enterprise and the battleship Missouri were hit heavily.
- 1945: April 12: U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt died suddenly. Harry S. Truman became president of the United States.
- 1945: May 6: The last fighting for U.S. troops in Europe occurred on this day.
- 1945: May 11: Prague Offensive ended with Soviet capture of the capital city, the last major city to be liberated, though the war was over. Eisenhower stopped Patton from participating in the liberation.
- 1945: July 4: General MacArthur announced that the Philippines had been liberated.
- 1945: July 10: U.S. Navy aircraft participated in attacks on Tokyo for the first time.
- 1945: July 16: U.S. conducted the first test of a nuclear weapon.
- 1945: July 22: America and Japan engaged in the Battle of Tokyo Bay. The Japanese took slight losses.
- 1945: July 24: Truman hinted at the Potsdam Conference that the United States had nuclear weapons.
- 1945: August 6: Enola Gay dropped the first atomic bomb, "Little Boy," on Hiroshima.
- 1945: August 9: Bockscar dropped the second atomic bomb "Fat Man" on Nagasaki. The Fat Man mushroom cloud resulting from the nuclear explosion over Nagasaki rose 18 km (60,000 ft).
- 1945: August 14: This was the last day of United States Force combat actions. All units were ordered frozen in place.
- 1945: August 31: General MacArthur took over command of the Japanese government in Tokyo.
- 1945: September 2: Ho Chi Minh issued his Proclamation of Independence, drawing heavily upon the American Declaration of Independence from a copy provided by the OSS. Ho declared himself president of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and pursued American recognition but was repeatedly ignored by President Harry S. Truman.
- 1945: October: The non-fraternization directive for U.S. troops against German civilians was rescinded. Previously, even speaking to a German could lead to court martial, except for "small children". These had been exempt in June 1945.
- 1945: November 29: The prohibition against marriage between GI's and Austrian women was rescinded on November 29. Later, it would be rescinded for German women too. Black soldiers serving in the army were not allowed to marry white women, (in the case that they remained in the army) so they were restricted until 1948 when the prohibition against interracial marriages was removed.
- 1945: December 28: The U.S. Coast Guard was transferred under the U.S. Treasury Department.
- 1945: December 31: The U.S. prohibition against food shipments to Germany was rescinded.

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**1946:**

- 1946: December 31: U.S. President Harry S. Truman declared: "Although a state of war still exists, it is at this time possible to declare, and I find it to be in the public interest to declare, that hostilities have terminated. Now, THEREFORE, I, HARRY S. TRUMAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the cessation of hostilities of World War II, effective twelve o'clock noon . . . ."

**1947:**

- 1947: February 10: The U.S. signed peace treaties with Italy, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, and Romania.

Source: This timeline is based on the timelines from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline\\_of\\_World\\_War\\_II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_World_War_II) and is licensed for use under Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike License.