



## Military History Anniversaries 16 thru 30 September

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

- **Third Friday of Sep** – National POW/MIA day to pay tribute to the lives and contributions of the more than 83,000 Americans who are still listed as Prisoners of War or Missing in Action.
- **Sep 16 1776 – American Revolution: *Battle of Harlem Heights*** » The Continental Army, under Commander-in-chief General George Washington, Major General Nathanael Greene, and Major General Israel Putnam, totaling around 9,000 men, held a series of high ground positions in upper Manhattan. Immediately opposite was the vanguard of the British Army totaling around 5,000 men under the command of Major General Henry Clinton.



An early morning skirmish between a patrol of Knowlton's Rangers (an elite reconnaissance and espionage detachment of the Continental Army established by George Washington) and British light infantry pickets developed into a running fight as the British pursued the Americans back through woods towards Washington's position on Harlem Heights. The overconfident British light troops, having advanced too far from their lines without support, had exposed themselves to counter-attack. Washington, seeing this, ordered a flanking maneuver which failed to cut off the British force but in the face of this attack and pressure from troops arriving from the Harlem Heights position, the outnumbered British retreated.

Meeting reinforcements coming from the south and with the added support of a pair of field pieces, the British light infantry turned and made a stand in open fields on Morningside Heights. The Americans, also reinforced, came on in strength and there followed a lengthy exchange of fire. After two hours, with ammunition running short, the British force began to pull back to their lines.

Washington cut short the pursuit, unwilling to risk a general engagement with the British main force, and withdrew to his own lines. Casualties and losses: US 130 | GB 92~390.

The battle helped restore the confidence of the Continental Army after suffering several defeats. It was Washington's first battlefield success of the war. After a month without any major fighting between the armies, Washington was forced to withdraw his army north to the town of White Plains in southeastern New York when the British moved north into Westchester County and threatened to trap Washington further south on Manhattan. After two defeats Washington retreated west across the Hudson River.

- **Sep 16 1779 – American Revolution: *Second Battle of Savannah (Sep 16 – Oct 18)*** » The year before, the city of Savannah, Georgia, had been captured by a British expeditionary corps under Lieutenant-Colonel Archibald Campbell. On 16 SEP the siege begins which consisted of a joint Franco-American attempt to retake Savannah. On 19 SEP Charles-Marie de Trolong du Romain moved his squadron up the river, he exchanged fire with Comet, Thunder, Savannah, and Venus. The next day the British scuttled Rose, which was leaking badly, just below the town to impede the French vessels from progressing further. They also burnt Savannah and Venus. By scuttling Rose in a narrow part of the channel, the British effectively blocked it. Consequently, the French fleet was unable to assist the American assault.

Germaine took up a position to protect the north side of Savannah's defenses. Comet and Thunder had the mission of opposing any attempt by the South Carolinian galleys to bombard the town. Over the next few days, British shore batteries assisted Comet and Thunder in engagements with the two South Carolinian galleys; during one of these, they severely damaged Revenge. The French commander, rejecting the idea of assaulting the British defenses, unloaded cannons from his ships and began a bombardment of the city. The city, rather than the entrenched defenses, bore the brunt of this bombardment, which lasted from October 3 to 8. "The appearance of the town afforded a melancholy prospect, for there was hardly a house that had not been shot through", wrote one British observer.



When the bombardment failed to have the desired effect, d'Estaing changed his mind, and decided it was time to try an assault. He was motivated in part by the desire to finish the operation quickly, as scurvy and dysentery were becoming problems on his ships, and some of his supplies were running low. While a traditional siege operation would likely have succeeded eventually, it would have taken longer than d'Estaing was prepared to stay. Against the advice of many of his officers, d'Estaing

launched the assault against the British position on the morning of 9 OCT. The success depended in part on the secrecy of some its aspects, which were betrayed to Prevost well before the operations were supposed to begin around 4:00 am. Fog caused troops attacking the Spring Hill redoubt to get lost in the swamps, and it was nearly daylight when the attack finally got underway.

The redoubt on the right side of the British works had been chosen by the French admiral in part because he believed it to be defended only by militia. In fact, it was defended by a combination of militia and Scotsmen from John Maitland's 71st Regiment of Foot, Fraser's Highlanders, who had distinguished themselves at Stono Ferry. The militia included riflemen, who easily picked-off the white-clad French troops when the assault was underway. Admiral d'Estaing was twice wounded, and Polish cavalry officer Casimir Pulaski, fighting with the Americans, was mortally wounded. By the time the second wave arrived near the redoubt, the first wave was in complete disarray, and the trenches below the redoubt were filled with bodies. Attacks intended as feints against other redoubts of the British position were easily taken.

The second assault column was commanded by the Swedish Count Curt von Stedingk, who managed to reach the last trench. He later wrote in his journal, "I had the pleasure of planting the American flag on the last trench, but the enemy renewed its attack and our people were annihilated by cross-fire". He was forced back by overwhelming numbers of British troops, left with some 20 men—all were wounded, including von Stedingk. He later wrote, "The moment of retreat with the cries of our dying comrades piercing my heart was the bitterest of my life". After an hour of carnage, d'Estaing ordered a retreat. On October 17, Lincoln and d'Estaing abandoned the siege and the British remained in control of Savannah until July 1782, near the end of the war.

The battle was one of the bloodiest of the war. While Prevost claimed Franco-American losses at 1,000 to 1,200, the actual tally of 244 killed, nearly 600 wounded and 120 taken prisoner, was severe enough. British casualties were comparatively light: 40 killed, 63 wounded, and 52 missing. Sir Henry Clinton wrote, "I think that this is the greatest event that has happened the whole war," and celebratory cannons were fired when the news reached London.

- **Sep 16 1810 – Mexico: *Mexican War of Independence Begins*** » Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, a Catholic priest, launches the Mexican War of Independence with the issuing of his Grito de Dolores, or "Cry of Dolores," The revolutionary tract, so-named because it was publicly read by Hidalgo in the town of Dolores, called for the end of 300 years of Spanish rule in Mexico, redistribution of land, and racial equality. Thousands of Indians and mestizos flocked to Hidalgo's banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and soon the peasant army was on the march to Mexico City.



In the early 19th century, Napoleon's occupation of Spain led to the outbreak of revolts all across Spanish America. Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla—"the father of Mexican independence"—launched the Mexican rebellion with his "Cry of Dolores," and his populist army came close to capturing the Mexican capital. Defeated at Calderón in January 1811, he fled north but was captured and executed. He was followed by other peasant leaders, however, such as José María Morelos y Pavón, Mariano Matamoros, and Vicente Guerrero, who all led armies of native and racially mixed revolutionaries against the Spanish and the Royalists.

Ironically, it was the Royalists—made up of Mexicans of Spanish descent and other conservatives—who ultimately brought about independence. In 1820, liberals took power in Spain, and the new government promised reforms to appease the Mexican revolutionaries. In response, Mexican conservatives called for independence as a means of maintaining their privileged position in Mexican society.

In early 1821, Agustín de Iturbide, the leader of the Royalist forces, negotiated the Plan of Iguala with Vicente Guerrero. Under the plan, Mexico would be established as an independent constitutional monarchy, the privileged position of the Catholic Church would be maintained, and Mexicans of Spanish descent would be regarded as equal to pure Spaniards. Mexicans of mixed or pure Indian blood would have lesser rights.

Iturbide defeated the Royalist forces still opposed to independence, and the new Spanish viceroy, lacking money, provisions, and troops, was forced to accept Mexican independence. On August 24, 1821, Spanish Viceroy Juan de O'Donojú signed the Treaty of Córdoba, which approves a plan to make Mexico an independent constitutional monarchy. In 1822, as no Bourbon monarch to rule Mexico had been found, Iturbide was proclaimed the emperor of Mexico. However, his empire was short-lived, and in 1823 republican leaders Santa Anna and Guadalupe Victoria deposed Iturbide and set up a republic, with Guadalupe Victoria as its first president.

• **Sep 16 1864 – Civil War:** » *Battle of Coggin's Point, Virginia (Hampton-Rosser Cattle Raid)* »

Shortages plagued the rebel ranks in fall of 1864. Lee's cavalry chief, Wade Hampton, figured a way of relieving these empty bellies. He had word from one of his scouts that five miles east of Grant's headquarters on the James River in the vicinity of Coggins Point was a sizable herd of lightly defended cattle. "Three thousand beeves," went the report. This was a perfect gambit for the fun-loving, popular Hampton. He could embarrass the Yankees, raise Southern morale, and deal with hunger in the ranks with one blow.

General Grant had to go up into the Shenandoah Valley to confer with Phil Sheridan and left on September 4th. Thanks to Confederate spies, Hampton had known about this so-called secret trip for five days and he was ready to move. Taking 3000 men including several certified Texas cattle thieves, Hampton rode south, then east and then north all the way around the unwary Union Army. At five in the morning of the 16th, Hampton's men struck, captured just short of 2500 head of beef, and made it back to Confederate lines by 9:00 the following morning. In a season filled with bad news, the so-called Beefsteak Raid gave a decided boost to southern morale. Lincoln called it "the slickest piece of cattle-stealing" he had ever heard of. When Grant was asked when he expected to starve out Lee and take Richmond, he said, "Never, if our armies continue to supply him with beef-cattle."

- **Sep 16 1893 – Westward Expansion:** Settlers Race to Claim Land » The largest land run in history begins with more than 100,000 people pouring into the Cherokee Strip of Oklahoma to claim valuable land that had once belonged to Native Americans. With a single shot from a pistol the mad dash began, and land-hungry pioneers on horseback and in carriages raced forward to stake their claims to the best acres.

Ironically, not many years before that same land had once been considered worthless desert. Early explorers of Oklahoma believed that the territory was too arid and treeless for white settlement, but several suggested it might be the perfect place to resettle Indians, whose rich and fertile lands in the southeast were increasingly coveted by Americans. The U.S. government later took this advice and began removing eastern Indian tribes like the Cherokee and Choctaw to Oklahoma Territory in 1817. No more eager than the whites to leave their green and well-watered lands for the arid plains, some Indians resisted and had to be removed by force—most tragically, the 4,000 Cherokee who died during the brutal overland march known appropriately as the “Trail of Tears.”

By 1885, a diverse mixture of Native American tribes had been pushed onto reservations in eastern Oklahoma and promised that the land would be theirs “as long as the grass grows and the water runs.” Yet even this seemingly marginal land did not long escape the attention of land-hungry Americans. By the late nineteenth century, farmers had developed new methods that suddenly made the formerly reviled Plains hugely valuable. Pressure steadily increased to open the Indian lands to settlement, and in 1889, President Benjamin Harrison succumbed and threw open large areas of unoccupied Indian lands to white settlement. The giant Cherokee Strip rush was only the largest of a series of massive “land runs” that began in the 1890s, with thousands of immigrants stampeding into Oklahoma Territory and establishing towns like Norman and Oklahoma City almost overnight.

- **Sep 16 1916 – WWI:** Hindenburg Gives Orders to Strengthen the German defenses » One month after succeeding Erich von Falkenhayn as chief of the German army’s general staff, General Paul von Hindenburg orders the construction of a heavily fortified zone running several miles behind the active front between the north coast of France and Verdun, near the border between France and Belgium. This “semi-permanent” defense line, as Hindenburg called it, would be the last line of German defense; its aim was to brutally crush any Allied breakthrough on the Western Front in France before it could reach the Belgian or German frontier. The British referred to it as the Hindenburg Line, for its mastermind; it was known to the Germans as the Siegfried Line. Allied troops would not breach it until the last days of September 1918, barely one month before the armistice.



- **SEP 16 1935 – Germany:** Reich Law Gazette (Reichsgesetzblatt) » From 1933 to 1945 thousands upon thousands of Germans were deprived of their citizenship. Although mostly Jews, others also lost their claim to the rights and protections of citizenship including, for example, Communists, Socialists, members of the Social Democratic party, Conscientious Objectors, Jehovah's Witnesses and Quakers. In some cases, the deprivation of citizenship occurred specifically with the publication of an individual's name in the Reich Law Gazette. Most, however, lost their citizenship with the passage the Eleventh Decree to the Law on the Citizenship of the Reich of 25 November 1941. This decree not only stripped Jews of their remaining rights, but also stipulated that Jews living outside of Germany were no longer citizens. Consequently, deprived of their citizenship (and their passports nullified), this effectively stranded them in place.

The German government also published a list of Jews whose citizenship were annulled. The records were created when German citizenship was revoked because of the Nuremberg Laws of 1935. The laws spelled out exactly who was considered Jewish and who was allowed German citizenship and its accompanying rights. An admixture of so-called "Jewish blood" with "Aryan blood" made individuals with one quarter or more Jewish ancestry (one or more grandparents) Jewish. Individuals with less than one quarter (one grandparent) were considered first or second class Mischlinge (mixed race). The degrees are further complicated by the dates of birth, when and if parents married, and if the individual ever practiced the Jewish religion. Deprivation of citizenship in particular applied to all individuals of Jewish or mixed Jewish-Christian descent. Nazi policies required all Germans to carry an Ahnenpass that documented a person's ancestors. The presence of a Jew or a Slavic ancestor on the Ahnenpass was enough to prevent someone from becoming a civil servant, a teacher, or a lawyer.

With Germany's adoption of Basic Law in 1949 under Article 116 (paragraph 2) those individuals that emigrated because of Nazi policies and acquired a new citizenship may be eligible nevertheless to re-obtain former German citizenship. The law does not require them to give up citizenship of whatever country where they currently reside. Specifically, the law reads: *Former German citizens who[,] between January 30, 1933 and May 8, 1945[,] were deprived of their citizenship on political, racial, or religious grounds, and their descendants, shall on application have their citizenship restored. They shall be deemed never to have been deprived of their citizenship if they have established their domicile in Germany after May 8, 1945 and have not expressed a contrary intention.*

- **Sep 16 1940 – WW2:** United States Imposes the Draft » The Burke-Wadsworth Act is passed by Congress, by wide margins in both houses, and the first peacetime draft in the history of the United States is imposed. Selective Service was born.

The registration of men between the ages of 21 and 36 began exactly one month later, as Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, who had been a key player in moving the Roosevelt administration away from a foreign policy of strict neutrality, began drawing draft numbers out of a glass bowl. The numbers were handed to the president, who read them aloud for public announcement. There were some 20 million eligible young men—50 percent were rejected the very first year, either for health reasons or illiteracy (20 percent of those who registered were illiterate).

REGISTRATION CARD - (Must be filled out by April 28, 1942, and by June 1, 1942)

NAME: LEBETTER

DATE OF BIRTH: 12/14/1914

PLACE OF BIRTH: NY

CITY: FREEPORT

STATE: NY

DATE OF REGISTRATION: 12/14/1942

STATUS: UNEMPLOYED

SIGNATURE: [Handwritten Signature]

In November 1942, with the United States now a participant in the war, and not merely a neutral bystander, the draft ages expanded; men 18 to 37 were now eligible. Blacks were passed over for the draft because of racist assumptions about their abilities and the viability of a mixed-race military. But this changed in 1943, when a “quota” was imposed, meant to limit the numbers of blacks drafted to reflect their numbers in the overall population, roughly 10.6 percent of the whole. Initially, blacks were restricted to “labor units,” but this too ended as the war progressed, when they were finally used in combat.

“Conscientious objector” status was granted to those who could demonstrate “sincerity of belief in religious teachings combined with a profound moral aversion to war.” Quakers made up most of the COs, but 75 percent of those Quakers who were drafted fought. COs had to perform alternate service in Civilian Public Service Camps, which entailed long hours of hazardous work for no compensation. About 5,000 to 6,000 men were imprisoned for failing to register or serve the nation in any form; these numbers were comprised mostly of Jehovah’s Witnesses. By war’s end, approximately 34 million men had registered, and 10 million served with the military.

- **Sep 16 1942 – WW2:** The Japanese base at Kiska in the Aleutian Islands is raided by American bombers
- **Sep 16 1943 – WW2:** The Allied invasion of Italy concludes when Heinrich von Vietinghoff, commander of the German Tenth Army, orders his troops to withdraw from Salerno.
- **Sep 16 1950 – Cold War:** United Nations Essay Contest Angers Soviets » Soviet representatives condemn an essay writing contest sponsored by the United Nations. The incident, though small, indicated that the Cold War was as much a battle of words as a war of bombs and guns.
- **Sep 16 1950 – Korea:** The U.S. 8th Army breaks out of the Pusan Perimeter in South Korea and begins heading north to meet MacArthur’s troops heading south from Inchon.
- **Sep 16 1950 – Vietnam:** General Giap begins his main attack against French outposts near the Chinese border. As the outposts fall, the French lose 6000 men and large stores of military equipment to the Viet Minh.

- **Sep 16 1960 – Vietnam War:** In a cable to Secretary of State Christian A. Herter, U.S. Ambassador in Saigon, Elbridge Durbrow analyzes two separate but related threats to the Ngo Dinh Diem regime, danger from demonstration or coup, predominantly “non-Communist” in origin; and the danger of a gradual Viet Cong extension of control over the countryside. A period of political instability ensued during which there was a series of “revolving door” governments.
- **Sep 16 1967 – Vietnam War:** *Siege of Con Thien Began.* Con Thien was a United States Marine Corps combat base located near the Vietnamese Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) about 3 km from North Vietnam in Gio Linh District, Quảng Trị Province. It was the site of fierce fighting from February 1967 through February 1968. The PAVN started their major shelling of the base on 16 SEP hitting it with at least 200 artillery and mortar rounds daily, peaking on 25 SEP when a reported 1200 rounds hit the base.[ From 19–27 SEP more than 3000 rounds hit the base. In response Marine artillery fired 12,577 rounds, Navy ships fired 6148 rounds and more than 5200 Marine and USAF sorties hit PAVN positions.



The Marine Corps rotated battalions in and out of Con Thien every thirty days. The constant shelling and the threat of a PAVN assault took a psychological toll on the Marines, the base was nicknamed "Our Turn in the Barrel" and "the Meat Grinder", while the DMZ was said to stand for "Dead Marine Zone."

- **Sep 16 1969 – Vietnam War:** *Nixon Announces the Withdrawal of a Further 35,000 Troops* » President Richard Nixon announces the second round of U.S. troop withdrawals from Vietnam. This was part of the dual program that he had announced at the Midway conference on June 8 that called for “Vietnamization” of the war and U.S. troop withdrawals, as the South Vietnamese forces assumed more responsibility for the fighting. The first round of withdrawals was completed in August and totaled 25,000 troops (including two brigades of the 9th Infantry Division). There would be 15 announced withdrawals in total, leaving only 27,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam by November 1972.
- **Sep 16 1972 – Vietnam War:** *Quang Tri* » ARVN forces recapture the city after four days of heavy fighting, with the claim that over 8,135 NVA had been killed in the battle.

The North Vietnamese forces had launched a massive offensive, called the Nguyen Hue or “Easter Offensive,” on 31 MAR 1972, with three main attacks aimed at Quang Tri south of the Demilitarized Zone, Kontum in the Central Highlands, and An Loc just 60 miles north of Saigon. This invasion



included 14 divisions and 26 separate regiments, a total force numbering over 120,000 troops, and was designed to knock South Vietnam out of the war and inflict a defeat on the remaining U.S. forces (which numbered less than 70,000 by this date due to President Nixon's Vietnamization policy and the American troop withdrawal schedule). The North Vietnamese attack was characterized by conventional combined arms attacks by tank and infantry forces supported by massive artillery barrages, resulting in some of the heaviest fighting of the war.

The South Vietnamese forces and their American advisors supported by U.S. tactical airpower and B-52 bombers were able to hold at An Loc and Kontum despite being vastly outnumbered, but the South Vietnamese forces at Quang Tri faltered under the communist assault and were quickly overwhelmed. It was only after President Thieu fired the I Corps commander and replaced him with Major General Ngo Quang Truong, arguably one of the best officers in the South Vietnamese army, that the ARVN were able to stop the North Vietnamese. Truong took measures to stabilize the situation and the South Vietnamese began to fight back. After a tremendously bloody four-and-a-half-month battle in which 977 South Vietnamese soldiers perished, Truong and his troops retook Quang Tri from the North Vietnamese, winning a major victory. President Nixon used this as proof positive that his Vietnamization policy had worked and that the South Vietnamese were prepared to take over responsibility for the war.

- **Sep 16 1974 – Post Vietnam War:** Conditional Amnesty Offered to U.S. Deserters » President Gerald R. Ford issued a proclamation that offered amnesty to those who evaded the draft during the Vietnam War. Mr. Ford also granted amnesty to those in the military who deserted their duty while serving. However, the amnesty came with certain conditions, namely that those involved agreed to reaffirm their allegiance to the United States and serve two years working in a public service job. Out of an estimated 124,000 men eligible, about 22,500 take advantage of the offer.

Nearly 210,000 men were charged with evading the draft, including the boxer Muhammad Ali, whose conviction was overturned on appeal. Hundreds of thousands of other suspected draft evaders were never officially charged. Three years after Ford's conditional amnesty program, President Jimmy Carter granted a pardon to most draft evaders without a requirement of public service. This pardon, however, did not extend to military deserters.

- **Sep 16 2013 – Terrorism:** Gunman Kills 12 in D.C. Navy Yard Massacre » A 34-year-old man goes on a rampage at the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C., killing 12 people and wounding several others over the course of an hour before he is fatally shot by police.

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- **Sep 17 1775 – American Revolution:** The Invasion of Canada begins with the 47 day Siege of Fort St. Jean.
- **Sep 17 1778 – American Revolution:** The Treaty of Fort Pitt is signed. It is the first formal treaty between the United States and a Native American tribe (the Lenape or Delaware Indians).

- **Sep 17 1778 – American Revolution:** Indians and Loyalists Burn German Flats, New York » Mohawk Indian chief and British Loyalist leader Joseph Brant lead a force of 150 Iroquois Indians and 300 British Loyalists under the command of Captain William Caldwell in a surprise attack on the area of German Flats, New York. German Flats, now known as Herkimer, New York, was left virtually undefended by Patriot troops prior to the raid. The Indian and Loyalist raiders captured hundreds of head of cattle and sheep before setting fire to every house, barn and mill in German Flats.
- **Sep 17 1787 – American Revolution:** U.S. Constitution Signed » Supporters of the document waged a hard-won battle to win ratification by the necessary nine out of 13 U.S. states.



The Articles of Confederation, ratified several months before the British surrender at Yorktown in 1781, provided for a loose confederation of U.S. states, which were sovereign in most of their affairs. On paper, Congress—the central authority—had the power to govern foreign affairs, conduct war, and regulate currency, but in practice these powers were sharply limited because Congress was given no authority to enforce its requests to the states for money or troops. By 1786, it was apparent that the Union would soon break up if the Articles of Confederation were not amended or replaced. Five states met in Annapolis, Maryland, to discuss the issue, and all the states were invited to send delegates to a new constitutional convention to be held in Philadelphia.

On May 25, 1787, delegates representing every state except Rhode Island convened at Philadelphia's Pennsylvania State House for the Constitutional Convention. The building, which is now known as Independence Hall, had earlier seen the drafting of the Declaration of Independence and the signing of the Articles of Confederation. The assembly immediately discarded the idea of amending the Articles of Confederation and set about drawing up a new scheme of government. Revolutionary War hero George Washington, a delegate from Virginia, was elected convention president.

During an intensive debate, the delegates devised a brilliant federal organization characterized by an intricate system of checks and balances. The convention was divided over the issue of state

representation in Congress, as more-populated states sought proportional legislation, and smaller states wanted equal representation. The problem was resolved by the Connecticut Compromise, which proposed a bicameral legislature with proportional representation in the lower house (House of Representatives) and equal representation of the states in the upper house (Senate).

On September 17, 1787, the Constitution was signed. As dictated by Article VII, the document would not become binding until it was ratified by nine of the 13 states. Beginning on 7 DEC, five states—Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, and Connecticut—ratified it in quick succession. However, other states, especially Massachusetts, opposed the document, as it failed to reserve undelegated powers to the states and lacked constitutional protection of basic political rights, such as freedom of speech, religion, and the press. In February 1788, a compromise was reached under which Massachusetts and other states would agree to ratify the document with the assurance that amendments would be immediately proposed. The Constitution was thus narrowly ratified in Massachusetts, followed by Maryland and South Carolina. On June 21, 1788, New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify the document, and it was subsequently agreed that government under the U.S. Constitution would begin on March 4, 1789. In June, Virginia ratified the Constitution, followed by New York in July.

On September 25, 1789, the first Congress of the United States adopted 12 amendments to the U.S. Constitution—the Bill of Rights—and sent them to the states for ratification. Ten of these amendments were ratified in 1791. In November 1789, North Carolina became the 12th state to ratify the U.S. Constitution. Rhode Island, which opposed federal control of currency and was critical of compromise on the issue of slavery, resisted ratifying the Constitution until the U.S. government threatened to sever commercial relations with the state. On May 29, 1790, Rhode Island voted by two votes to ratify the document, and the last of the original 13 colonies joined the United States. Today, the U.S. Constitution is the oldest written constitution in operation in the world.

- **Sep 17 1859 – Pre Civil War:** *United States Emperor Norton I* » On this day a most unusual decree appeared in the San Francisco Bulletin newspaper. In grandiloquent fashion, the message stated, “At the peremptory request and desire of a large majority of the citizens...I, Joshua Norton...declare and proclaim myself Emperor of these United States.” It went on to command representatives from all the states to convene in the Bay Area, “to make such alterations in the existing laws of the Union as may ameliorate the evils under which the country is laboring.” The edict was signed, “NORTON I, Emperor of the United States.”



The Bulletin’s editors had printed the imperial decree on a lark, but over the next 20 years, its author would grow into one of San Francisco’s most recognizable tourist attractions. Clad in an

epaulette-adorned Navy coat, an ostrich feather-plumed hat and occasionally carrying a military saber, the delightfully eccentric “Emperor Norton I” walked the streets accepting mock-fealty from all who were willing to indulge his royal fantasy. He ate in restaurants free of charge, issued his own currency and made official proclamations that ranged from the comical to the surprisingly prophetic. It didn’t matter that the self-styled ruler was more than a little unhinged, or that he was actually a poor beggar whose “palace” was a local flophouse—many in San Francisco enjoyed playing along with the joke. It is even said that when Emperor Pedro II of Brazil visited the City by the Bay, its residents marched out their beloved “Mad Monarch” for a formal meeting.

On January 8, 1880, that Norton I, Emperor of the United States and Protector of Mexico, dropped dead from a stroke. His passing inspired comment in dozens of newspapers including the New York Times. San Francisco gave Norton I a send-off fit for an Emperor. “LE ROI EST MORT” (“THE KING IS DEAD”), read the headline in the Chronicle. “He is dead,” lamented another paper, “and no citizen of San Francisco could have been taken away who would be more generally missed.” At Norton I’s funeral a few days later, some 10,000 loyal subjects turned up to pay their respects.

- **Sep 17 1862 – Civil War:** The Allegheny Arsenal explosion results in the single largest civilian disaster during the war. 78 workers, mostly young women, were killed. Cause was officially unknown but it was speculated that the metal shoe of a horse had struck a spark which touched off loose powder



Allegheny Arsenal Laboratory Building (circa 1870) and the Stone Road

- **Sep 17 1862 – Civil War:** *Battle of Antietam [Sharpsburg] Breaks Out (17-18 SEP)* » Beginning early on the morning of this day in 1862, Confederate and Union troops in the Civil War clash near Maryland’s Antietam Creek in the bloodiest single day in American military history. The Battle of Antietam marked the culmination of Confederate General Robert E. Lee’s first invasion of the Northern states. Guiding his Army of Northern Virginia across the Potomac River in early September 1862, the great general daringly divided his men, sending half of them, under the command of General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson, to capture the Union garrison at Harper’s Ferry.

President Abraham Lincoln put Major General George B. McClellan in charge of the Union troops responsible for defending Washington, D.C., against Lee’s invasion. Over the course of September 15 and 16, the Confederate and Union armies gathered on opposite sides of Antietam Creek. Fighting began in the foggy dawn hours of 17 SEP. As savage and bloody combat continued for eight hours

across the region, the Confederates were pushed back but not beaten, despite sustaining some 15,000 casualties.



By the time the sun went down, both armies still held their ground, despite staggering combined casualties—nearly 23,000 of the 100,000 soldiers engaged, including more than 3,600 dead. McClellan's center never moved forward, leaving a large number of Union troops that did not participate in the battle. On the morning of 18 SEP, both sides gathered their wounded and buried their dead which totaled 26,293 casualties. That night, Lee turned his forces back to Virginia.

- **Sep 17 1862 – Civil War:** *Cumberland Gap* » Confederate General Stevenson forces evacuation of Union troops from the Cumberland Gap as the Confederates push into the northern Kentucky bluegrass region begins. Subsequently in the Battle of Cumberland Gap (7-9 September 1863) Union forces would regain control of the Gap and hold it until the end of the war. For the North, Cumberland Gap was a natural invasion route into the South - providing access to vulnerable railroads and valuable minerals and salt works in East Tennessee and southwest Virginia. For the South, the Gap was a gateway for an invasion of Kentucky to drive out the Federal foe. Cumberland Gap exchanged hands four times during the Civil War
- **Sep 17 1868 – Old West:** *Cheyenne and Sioux Decimate Frontiersmen at Beecher's Island* » Early in the morning a large band of Cheyenne and Sioux stage a surprise attack on Major George A. Forsyth and a volunteer force of 50 frontiersmen in Colorado. Retreating to a small sandbar in the Arikaree River that thereafter became known as Beecher's Island, Forsyth and his men succeeded in repulsing three massed Indian charges. Thanks to the rapid fire capability of their seven-shot Spencer rifles, Forsyth's volunteers were able to kill or wound many of the Indian attackers, including the war chief Roman Nose. But as evening came and the fighting temporarily halted, Forsyth found he had 22 men either dead or wounded, and he estimated the survivors were surrounded by a force of 600 Indians. The whites faced certain annihilation unless they could somehow bring help. Two men—Jack Stilwell and Pierre Trudeau—volunteered to attempt a daring escape through the Indian lines and silently melted into the night.



The battle raged for five more days. Forsyth's effective fighting force was reduced to ten men before the Indians finally withdrew, perhaps reasoning that they had inflicted enough damage. Miles from help and lacking wagons and horses, Forsyth knew that many of his wounded would soon be dead if they didn't get help. Fortunately, on 25 SEP, the 10th Cavalry—one of the Army's two African-American units nicknamed the "Buffalo Soldiers"—came riding to their rescue with a field ambulance and medical supplies. Miraculously, Stilwell and Trudeau had managed to make it through the Sioux and Cheyenne and bring help. Thanks to their bravery and the timely arrival of the Buffalo Soldiers, the lives of many men were saved.

- **Sep 17 1900 – Philippine American War:** Filipinos under Juan Cailles defeat Americans under Colonel Benjamin F. Cheatham at Mabitac, Laguna.
- **Sep 17 1902 – Latin America Interventions:** U.S. troops are sent to Panama to keep train lines open over the isthmus as Panamanian nationals struggle for independence from Colombia.
- **Sep 17 1916 – WWI:** *Manfred von Richthofen Shoots Down his first plane* » The Red Baron, shoots down his first enemy plane over the Western Front. By the end of 1916, Richthofen had downed 15 enemy planes. The following year, he surpassed all flying-ace records on both sides of the Western Front.
- **Sep 17 1917 – WWI:** The German Army recaptures the Russian Port of Riga from Russian forces.
- **Sep 17 1929 – Post WWI:** British troops begin withdrawal from occupied Germany.
- **Sep 17 1939 – WW2:** *Soviet Union invades Poland* » Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov declares that the Polish government has ceased to exist, as the U.S.S.R. exercises the "fine print" of the Hitler-Stalin Non-aggression pact—the invasion and occupation of eastern Poland.

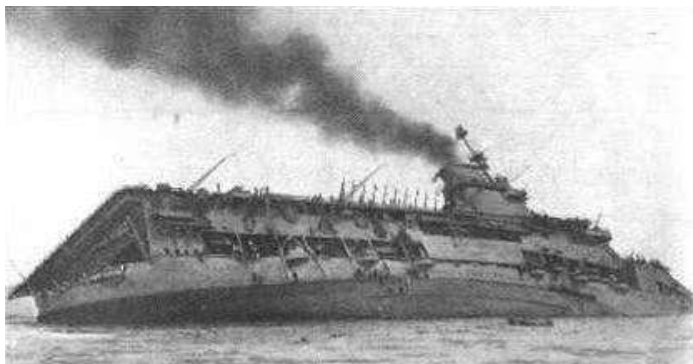


Hitler's troops were already wreaking havoc in Poland, having invaded on the first of the month. The Polish army began retreating and regrouping east, near Lvov, in eastern Galicia, attempting to escape relentless German land and air offensives. But Polish troops had jumped from the frying pan into the fire—as Soviet troops began occupying eastern Poland. The Ribbentrop-Molotov Non-aggression Pact, signed in August, had eliminated any hope Poland had of a Russian ally in a war against Germany. Little did Poles know that a secret clause of that pact, the details of which would not become public until 1990, gave the U.S.S.R. the right to mark off for itself a chunk of Poland's eastern region. The "reason" given was that Russia had to come to the aid of its "blood brothers," the Ukrainians and Byelorussians, who were trapped in territory that had been illegally annexed by Poland. Now Poland was squeezed from West and East—trapped between two behemoths. Its forces overwhelmed by the mechanized modern German army, Poland had nothing left with which to fight the Soviets.

As Soviet troops broke into Poland, they unexpectedly met up with German troops who had fought their way that far east in a little more than two weeks. The Germans receded when confronted by the Soviets, handing over their Polish prisoners of war. Thousands of Polish troops were taken into captivity; some Poles simply surrendered to the Soviets to avoid being captured by the Germans. The Soviet Union would wind up with about three-fifths of Poland and 13 million of its people as a result of the invasion.

- **Sep 17 1939—WW2:** German U-29 sinks British aircraft carrier Courageous, 519 die

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- **Sep 17 1944 – WW2:** Operation Market Garden » In the largest airborne operation of WWII British airborne troops parachute into Holland to capture the Arnhem Bridge over the Rhine. The plan called for the airborne troops to be relieved by British troops, but they were left stranded and eventually surrendered to the Germans.
- **Sep 17 1957 – Cold War:** Louis Armstrong Cancels Trip to Russia » The famous African-American jazz musician, angrily announces that he will not participate in a U.S. government-sponsored tour of the Soviet Union. Armstrong was furious over developments in Little Rock, Arkansas, where mobs of white citizens and armed National Guardsmen had recently blocked the entrance of nine African-American students into the all-white Central High School.



Elizabeth Eckford is surrounded by a white crowd after she was denied entrance to Little Rock Central High School, Sept. 4, 1957

- **Sep 17 1970 – Vietnam War:** People's Revolutionary Government Presents a New Peace Plan » At the Paris talks, in exchange for the withdrawal of all U.S. and Allied forces by June 30, 1971, communist forces promised to refrain from attacking the departing troops and also offered to begin immediate negotiations on the release of POWs once the withdrawal was agreed to. The PRG statement demanded the purge of South Vietnam's top three leaders which was a major inhibitor to any meaningful negotiation.
- **Sep 17 1972 – Vietnam War:** POW's – Three U.S. pilots are released by Hanoi. They were the first POWs released since 1969. North Vietnamese officials cautioned the United States not to force the freed men to "slander" Hanoi, claiming that "distortions" about Hanoi's treatment of POWs from a previous release of prisoners in 1969 caused Hanoi to temporarily suspend the release of POWs. The conditions for their release stipulated that they would not do anything to further the U.S. war effort in Indochina. The rest of the POWs were released in March 1973 as part of the agreement that led to the Paris Peace Accords.
- **Sep 17 1976 – Cold War:** NASA publicly unveils its first space shuttle, the *Enterprise*, during a ceremony in Palmdale, California. Development of the aircraft-like spacecraft cost almost \$10 billion and took nearly a decade.



- **Sep 17 1978 – Egypt\*Israel:** Camp David Accords are signed » At the White House in Washington, D.C., Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin sign the Camp David Accords, laying the groundwork for a permanent peace agreement between Egypt and Israel after three decades of hostilities. The accords were negotiated during 12 days of intensive talks at President Jimmy Carter's Camp David retreat in the Catocin Mountains of Maryland. The final peace agreement—the first between Israel and one of its Arab neighbors—was signed in March 1979. Sadat and Begin were jointly awarded the 1978 Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts.



A state of war had existed between Egypt and the State of Israel since the establishment of Israel in 1948. In the first three Arab-Israeli wars, Israel decisively defeated Egypt. As a result of the 1967 war, Israel occupied Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, the 23,500-square-mile peninsula that links Africa with Asia. When Anwar el-Sadat became Egyptian president in 1970, he found himself leader of an economically troubled nation that could ill afford to continue its endless crusade against Israel. He wanted to make peace and thereby achieve stability and recovery of the Sinai, but after Israel's stunning victory in the 1967 war it was unlikely that Israel's peace terms would be favorable to Egypt. So Sadat conceived of a daring plan to attack Israel again, which, even if unsuccessful, might convince the Israelis that peace with Egypt was necessary.

In 1972, Sadat expelled 20,000 Soviet advisers from Egypt and opened new diplomatic channels with Washington, which, as Israel's key ally, would be an essential mediator in any future peace talks. Then, on October 6, 1973, Egyptian and Syrian forces launched a joint attack against Israel. It was Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year for Jews, and Israeli forces were taken entirely by surprise. It took more than a week for Israel to beat back the impressive Arab advances. A U.S. airlift of arms aided Israel's cause, but President Richard Nixon delayed the emergency military aid for seven days as a tacit signal of U.S. sympathy for Egypt. In November, an Egyptian-Israeli cease-fire was secured by the United States.

Although Egypt had again suffered military defeat against its Jewish neighbor, the initial Egyptian successes greatly enhanced Sadat's prestige in the Middle East and provided him with an opportunity to seek peace. In 1974, the first of two Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreements providing for the return of portions of the Sinai to Egypt were signed, and in 1975 Sadat traveled to the United States to discuss his peace efforts and seek American aid and investment.

When talks with Israel stalled, Sadat made a dramatic journey to Jerusalem in November 1977 and spoke before the Israeli Knesset (Parliament). In September 1978, President Jimmy Carter invited Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Begin to the presidential retreat at Camp David, Maryland, where dual peace accords were hammered out under the direction of Carter. Signed on 17 SEP, the historic agreements provided for complete Israeli evacuation from the Sinai, laid the groundwork for the

signing of a final peace agreement, and outlined a broader framework for achieving peace in the Middle East.

Sadat and Begin received the Nobel Peace Prize, and on March 29, 1979, a permanent peace agreement was signed that closely resembled the Camp David Accords. The treaty ended the state of war between the two countries and provided for the establishment of full diplomatic and commercial relations. Although Sadat was greatly praised in the West, he was widely condemned in the Arab world. In 1979, Egypt was expelled from the Arab League, and internal opposition to his policies led to domestic crises. On October 6, 1981, Sadat was assassinated by Muslim extremists in Cairo while viewing a military parade commemorating the Yom Kippur War. Despite Sadat's death, the peace process continued under Egypt's new president, Hosni Mubarak. In 1982, Israel fulfilled the 1979 peace treaty by returning the last segment of the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt. Egyptian-Israeli peace continues today.

- **Sep 17 1980 – Iran\*Iraq:** Iraq breaks 1975 treaty with Iran and proclaims sovereignty over Shatt al-Arab waterway.
- **Sep 17 1993–** Last Russian troops leave Poland.

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- **Sep 18 1776 – American Revolution:** Washington Reports to Congress on Battle of Harlem Heights  
» General George Washington writes to the president of the Continental Congress, John Hancock, reporting on the Battle at Harlem Heights and relaying the unfortunate news of the death of Captain Thomas Knowlton. Despite the American failure to stop the British invasion of New York City the previous day at Kip's Bay, the successful Battle of Harlem Heights restored public confidence in the American troops and lifted the spirits of the Continental Army. The Americans and British each lost approximately 70 troops in the fighting.
- **Sep 18 1783 – Washington D.C:** Capitol Cornerstone is Laid » George Washington lays the cornerstone to the United States Capitol building, the home of the legislative branch of American government. The building would take nearly a century to complete, as architects came and went, the British set fire to it and it was called into use during the Civil War.



- **Sep 18 1846 – Old West:** *The Struggling Donner Party Sends Ahead to California for Food* » Weeks behind schedule and the massive Sierra Nevada mountains still to be crossed the 89 members of the ill-fated Donner party realize they are running short of supplies and send two men ahead to California to bring back food. A month after the two men had left for California, one returned with the desperately needed provisions as well as two Indian guides to help lead the party on the final stage of the trip through the Sierras.
- **Sep 18 1862 – Civil War:** *McClellan Lets Lee Retreat from Antietam* » Confederate General Robert E. Lee's army pulls away from Antietam Creek, near Sharpsburg, Maryland, and heads back to Virginia. The day before, at the Battle of Antietam, Lee's force had engaged in the bloodiest one-day battle of the Civil War against the army of General George B. McClellan. The armies struggled to a standstill, but the magnitude of losses forced Lee to abandon his invasion of Maryland.



The significance of the battle was not Lee's withdrawal, but McClellan's lack of pursuit. When Lee settled into a defensive line above Antietam Creek on 16 SEP, he had only about 43,000 troops. McClellan had around 50,000 in position on 17 SEP, with many more on the way.

On 18 SEP, the armies remained in their positions without fighting. By this point, Lee was highly vulnerable. His army had its back to the Potomac River, just a few miles away, and a quarter of his force had been lost in the previous day's battle. And after more than two weeks of marching, his men were tired. McClellan, on the other hand, welcomed thousands of additional troops on 18 SEP. But, although he outnumbered Lee's troops by almost three times, McClellan did not pursue Lee. In fact, despite constant urging from President Abraham Lincoln and Chief of Staff Henry Halleck, McClellan did not move toward Virginia for over a month. McClellan overestimated the size of Lee's force, assuming that Lee had nearly 100,000 troops in his command, and insisted that the fall of Harpers Ferry, Virginia, on 15 SEP allowed an additional 40,000 Confederate troops—in his inflated estimation—to fight at Antietam.

In McClellan's defense, it should be noted that his soldiers were extremely fatigued after the Battle of Antietam, which was the bloodiest day of the war. It would be difficult to rally them for another attack; but certainly not impossible. Instead, Lee was allowed to escape with his command intact. A chance to destroy the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia was lost, and the war lasted another two and a half years.

- **Sep 18 1863 – Civil War: Battle of Chickamauga (18-20 SEP)** » In Georgia, as Gen. Braxton Bragg with ~65,000 troops marched north, his cavalry and infantry fought with Union cavalry and mounted infantry, which were armed with Spencer repeating rifles. Fighting began in earnest on the next morning. Bragg's men strongly assaulted but could not break the Union line of ~60,000 troops. The next day on 20 SEP, Bragg resumed his assault. In late morning, Union Gen. William Rosecrans was misinformed that he had a gap in his line. In moving units to shore up the supposed gap, Rosecrans accidentally created an actual gap, directly in the path of an eight-brigade assault on a narrow front by Confederate Lt. Gen. James Longstreet, whose corps had been detached from the Army of Northern Virginia. In the resulting rout, Longstreet's attack drove one-third of the Union army, including Rosecrans himself, from the field.



It was the first major battle of the war fought in Georgia, the most significant Union defeat in the Western Theater, and involved the second-highest number of casualties after the Battle of Gettysburg. Union 16,170 – Confederate 18,454. It marked the end of a Union offensive in southeastern Tennessee and northwestern Georgia

- **Sep 18 1864 – Civil War: Battle of Martinsburg, Virginia** » Confederate forces under General John B. Gordon occupy Martinsburg but later that day are driven out by Union general Philip H. Sheridan's Army of the Shenandoah. Martinsburg remains in Union hands for the remainder of the Civil War. The city had been occupied by both the North and south forces numerous times since June 20, 1861 when Confederate troops under Colonel Thomas J. Jackson entered and begin destroying railroad line, locomotives, and associated buildings. Although the scars of war would eventually heal, occupations and battles left a once-thriving Martinsburg devastated by war's end. "Its situation has rendered it a peculiarly undesirable place of residence," observed a Northern reporter in December 1864. "Its streets have been trampled ... the ruins of the depot buildings, and of houses burned in former attacks upon the town, give the usual air of desolation seen in border towns."
- **Sep 18 1864 – Civil War: The Franklin–Nashville Campaign (18 SEP – 27 DEC)** » Also known as Hood's Tennessee Campaign, was a series of battles in the Western Theater in Alabama, Tennessee, and northwestern Georgia. The Confederate Army of Tennessee under Lt. Gen. John Bell Hood drove north from Atlanta, threatening Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman's lines of communications and central Tennessee. After a brief attempt to pursue Hood, Sherman returned to Atlanta and began his March to the Sea, leaving Union forces under Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas to deal with Hood's threat.

Hood hoped to defeat the Union force under Maj. Gen. John Schofield before it could converge with Thomas's army and attempted to do so at the Battle of Spring Hill on 29 NOV, but poorly coordinated Confederate attacks allowed Schofield to escape. The following day, Hood launched a series of futile frontal assaults against Schofield's field fortifications in the Battle of Franklin, suffering heavy casualties; Schofield withdrew his force and successfully linked up with Thomas in Nashville, Tennessee. On December 15–16, Thomas's combined army attacked Hood's depleted army and routed it in the Battle of Nashville, sending it in retreat to Tupelo, Mississippi. Hood resigned his commission shortly thereafter and the Army of Tennessee ceased to exist as an effective fighting force.

- **Sep 18 1918 – WWI:** *Battle of Epehy* » Near the French village of Epehy the British 4th Army attacks German forward outposts in front of the Hindenburg Line, Germany's last line of defense on the Western Front during World War I, with a creeping artillery barrage from approximately 1,500 guns, as well as 300 machine guns. Although the Germans held steady on both flanks, they were soundly defeated in the center by the Allied advance, led by two Australian divisions. By the end of the day, the Allies had advanced some three miles, a modest result that nonetheless encouraged the British commander in chief and his fellow commanders to proceed with further attacks to capitalize on the emerging German weaknesses. The success of this attack showed to the Allies that the German defense, even on the fortified Hindenburg Line positions, was not impossible to break through.
- **Sep 18 1931 – Japan\*China:** *Mukden (Manchurian) Incident* » Lt. Suemori Kawamoto of the Chinese Independent Garrison Unit detonated a small quantity of dynamite close to a railway line owned by Japan's South Manchuria Railway near Mukden (now Shenyang). The explosion was so weak that it failed to destroy the track, and a train passed over it minutes later. The Imperial Japanese Army accused Chinese dissidents of the act and responded with a full invasion that led to the occupation of Manchuria, in which Japan established its puppet state of Manchukuo six months later. The deception was soon exposed by the Lytton Report of 1932, leading Japan to diplomatic isolation and its March 1933 withdrawal from the League of Nations.
- **Sep 18 1939 – WW2:** The Nazi propaganda radio program *Germany Calling*, with a host nicknamed "Lord Haw-Haw", began broadcasting to audiences in the United Kingdom and the United States. Broadcasts continued until 30 APR 1945 when Hamburg was overrun by the British Army.
- **Sep 18 1944 – WW2:** British submarine HMS *Tradewind* torpedoes *Junyo Maru* killing 5,600 including 1,377 allied POWs and 4,200 Javanese slave labourers.
- **Sep 18 1944 – WW2:** U.S. 266th division occupiers Brest Bretagne, France.
- **Sep 18 1945 – WW2:** *MacArthur in Tokyo* » General Douglas MacArthur moves his command headquarters to Tokyo as he prepares for his new role as architect of a democratic and capitalist postwar Japan.

- **Sep 18 1947 – Cold War:** The Central Intelligence Agency officially comes into existence after being established by President Truman in July. Truman was conscious of rivalry among US intelligence organizations both during and after World War II. He realized that reorganization was necessary and that a reorganization plan needed to be developed, from competing proposals, which would not exacerbate these rivalries.
- **Sep 18 1947 – Cold War:** U.S. Department of Defense 1st day of operation.
- **Sep 18 1947 – U.S. Air Force:** The USAF becomes an independent service.
- **Sep 18 1960 – Cold War:** Castro Arrives in New York » Fidel Castro arrives in New York City as the head of the Cuban delegation to the United Nations. Castro's visit stirred indignation and admiration from various sectors of American society, and was climaxed by his speech to the United Nations on 26 SEP.



By the time Castro arrived in New York City in September 1960, relations between the United States and Cuba were rapidly deteriorating. Since taking power in January 1959, Castro had infuriated the American government with his policies of nationalizing U.S. companies and investments in Cuba. Some American officials, such as Vice President Richard Nixon, believed that Castro was leaning perilously toward communism. (Castro did not publicly proclaim his adherence to communism until late-1961, when he declared that he was a “Marxist-Leninist”.) In March 1960, President Dwight D. Eisenhower ordered the CIA to begin training Cuban exiles to overthrow Castro's regime. When the United States suspended the import of Cuban sugar in 1960, Castro's government turned to the Soviet Union for economic assistance. The Russians were happy to oblige.

In September 1960, Castro led a delegation to New York City to address the United Nations General Assembly. He and his entourage caused an immediate sensation by deciding to stay at the Theresa Hotel in Harlem. While there, Castro met with a number of African-American leaders, including Malcolm X from the Nation of Islam and the poet Langston Hughes. On 26 SEP, Castro delivered a blistering attack on what he termed American “aggression” and “imperialism.” For over four hours, Castro lambasted U.S. policy toward Cuba and other nations in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. The United States, he declared, had “decreed the destruction” of his revolutionary government.

Castro's visit and lengthy public denunciation marked the final breaking point in relations between the U.S. and Cuba. In January 1961, the Eisenhower administration severed all diplomatic relations with Cuba. In April 1961, just a short time after taking office, President John F. Kennedy ordered the

Bay of Pigs invasion, and the Cuban exile force, armed and trained by the CIA, landed in Cuba. The attack was a fiasco. Castro's power in Cuba was solidified by his Bay of Pigs victory over the American "imperialists." Castro remained the undisputed leader of the communist government in Cuba for over four decades; meanwhile, relations between the United States and Cuba remained strained. In late July 2006, an unwell Fidel Castro temporarily ceded power to his younger brother Raul. Fidel Castro officially stepped down in February 2008. In 2015, relations between the U.S. and Cuba were finally normalized, with the opening of embassies and diplomatic missions in both countries and the easing of travel restrictions. Castro died on November 25, 2016, at 90.

- **Sep 18 1964 – Vietnam War:** North Vietnamese Army Begins Infiltration » South Vietnamese officials claim that two companies from the North Vietnamese army have invaded South Vietnam. A battle resulted in Quang Tri Province, just south of the Demilitarized Zone, but the North Vietnamese forces were defeated with heavy casualties. Since North Vietnamese main force units had not been seen in South Vietnam before, U.S. military advisers questioned whether these were actually North Vietnamese troops, but in fact Hanoi had ordered its forces to begin infiltrating to the South. This marked a major change in the tempo and scope of the war in South Vietnam and resulted in President Lyndon Johnson committing U.S. combat troops.
- **Sep 18 1964 – Vietnam:** U.S. destroyers' fire on hostile targets.
- **Sep 18 1969 – Vietnam War:** Antiwar protestors announce that they will organize a 36-hour "March Against Death" to take place in Washington in November; there will be a simultaneous rally in San Francisco. This effort was led by Dr. Benjamin Spock and 10 other representatives of the New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam.
- **Sep 18 1976 – Cold War:** Mao Zedong funeral » More than one million people gather at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing for the funeral of Mao Zedong, the leader of the Chinese Communist Party and chairman of the People's Republic of China since 1949. Mao, who died on September 9, 1976, at the age of 82, was born on December 26, 1893, to a peasant family in the Hunan province of central China. Trained to be a teacher, he helped found the Chinese Communist Party in 1921. After they claimed victory in a civil war with the nationalist party following WWII, Mao founded the People's Republic of China and became its leader.



During an eight-day mourning period after his death, more than 1 million people paid their respects, as Mao's body, in a flag-draped coffin, lay in state. At the start of the 30-minute public funeral in Tiananmen Square, a three-minute moment of silence was observed in honor of the leader,

with reports that nearly all of China's 800 million residents stood in silent tribute. The ceremony included music from an army band that played a funeral march, China's national anthem and the Communist "Internationale" and was televised live to the nation, which was a Chinese broadcast first. No foreign leaders were allowed to attend the service or the mourning period.

Hua Guofeng, China premier and Communist party first vice chairman who served as Mao's immediate successor, delivered the eulogy. "It was under Chairman Mao's leadership that the disaster-plagued Chinese nation rose to its feet," he said. "The Chinese people love, trust and esteem Chairman Mao from the bottom of their hearts."

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- **Sep 19 1777 – American Revolution: *Arnold and Gates Argue at First Battle of Saratoga*** » In the early morning hours of this day in 1777, British General John Burgoyne launches a three-column attack against General Horatio Gates and his American forces in the First Battle of Saratoga, also known as the Battle of Freeman's Farm (Bemis Heights).

Coming under heavy cannon fire from the approaching British troops, General Gates initially ordered the Northern Army to be patient and wait until the British neared before launching a counter-attack. General Gates' second in command, American Brigadier General Benedict Arnold, strongly disagreed with Gates' orders and did not hesitate to share his opinion with his superior. After arguing for several hours, General Arnold was finally able to convince Gates to order American troops onto the battlefield to meet the center column of the approaching British, and to dispatch a regiment of riflemen to intercept the British right flank.



Although the Americans were able to inflict severe casualties on the British, the delay in ordering a counter-attack forced the Americans to fall back. During the five-hour battle, the Americans lost approximately 280 troops killed, while the British suffered a more severe loss of more than 550 killed.

Due to their heated argument and disagreement over military decisions, General Gates removed General Arnold as his second in command. Arnold continued to feel slighted by the army he served, and in 1780, he betrayed the Patriot cause by offering to hand over the Patriot-held fort at West Point, New York, to the British. With West Point in their control, the British would have controlled the critical Hudson River Valley and separated New England from the rest of the colonies. Arnold's wife, Margaret, was a Loyalist and would not have objected to his plans. However, his plot was foiled, and



Arnold, the hero of the early battles of Ticonderoga and Saratoga, became the most famous traitor in American history. He continued to fight on the side of the British and, after the war, returned to Britain, where he died destitute in London in 1801.

- **Sep 19 1862 – Civil War:** Union Forces Defeat Rebels at the Battle of Iuka » Union troops under General William Rosecrans defeat a Confederate force in northern Mississippi. The Battle was part of a Confederate attempt to prevent General Ulysses S. Grant from reinforcing General Don Carlos Buell in central Tennessee. Casualties and losses: US 790 | CSA 1,516.



- **Sep 19 1918 – WWI:** American troops of the Allied North Russia Expeditionary Force receive their baptism of fire near the town of Seltsö against Soviet forces.
- **Sep 19 1918 – WWI:** British Offensive Begins in Palestine » British forces renew their offensive against the Turkish lines north of Jerusalem, beginning with the capture of Megiddo, the city mentioned in the Bible as the site of the Battle of Armageddon.
- **Sep 19 1939 – WW2:** Soviet Union declares war on Poland.
- **Sep 19 1940 – WW2:** Nazi decree forbids gentile woman to work in Jewish homes.
- **Sep 19 1940 – WW2:** Witold Pilecki, a Polish cavalry officer and the founder of the Secret Polish Army (Tajna Armia Polska) resistance group in German-occupied Poland in November 1939, volunteered for a Polish resistance operation to get imprisoned at Auschwitz in order to gather intelligence and escape. He was voluntarily captured this day and sent to Auschwitz. While in the camp, Pilecki organized a resistance movement and as early as 1941, informed the Western Allies of Nazi Germany's Auschwitz atrocities. He escaped from the camp in 1943 after nearly 3 years of imprisonment. Pilecki took part in the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944
- **Sep 19 1941 – WW2:** Nazis force German Jews, 6 & over to wear Jewish stars.
- **Sep 19 1941 – WW2:** Germans Bombard Leningrad » As part of their offensive campaign in the Soviet Union, German bombers blast through Leningrad's anti-aircraft defenses, and kill more than 1,000 Russians

Hitler's armies had been in Soviet territory since June. An attempt by the Germans to take Leningrad (formerly St. Petersburg) in August by a massive panzer invasion had failed. Hitler had wanted to decimate the city and hand it over to an ally, Finland, who was attacking Russia from the north. But Leningrad had created an antitank defense sufficient to keep the Germans at bay—and so a siege was mounted. German forces surrounded the city in an attempt to cut it off from the rest of Russia. (Finland eventually stopped short of an invasion of Leningrad, happy just to recapture territory it had lost to the Soviet invasion in 1939.)

The halt of the German land attack and the withdrawal of the panzer divisions to be used elsewhere did not stop the Luftwaffe from continuing to raid the city. ("The Fuhrer has decided to have St. Petersburg wiped off the face of the Earth," declared Hitler to his generals.) The air attack of the 19th was particularly brutal; many of those killed were already recuperating from battle wounds in hospitals, which were hit by German bombs.

The siege of Leningrad would last a total of 872 days and would prove devastating to the population. More than 650,000 Leningrad citizens died in 1942 alone, from starvation, exposure, diseases, and artillery shelling from German positions outside the city. The only route by which supplies could enter the city was via Lake Ladoga, which entailed sleds negotiating ice during the winter. But the resources that got through were only enough to prolong the suffering of the Leningraders. Even tales of cannibalism began leaking out of the city. Soviet forces were finally successful in breaking the siege in January 1944, pushing the Germans 50 miles from the city.

Among those trapped in the city was an air-raid warden born in St. Petersburg named Dimitri Shostakovich, who wrote his Seventh Symphony during the siege. He was eventually evacuated and able to perform his masterwork in Moscow. The U.S. premiere of the piece raised relief funds for the desperate Russians.

- **Sep 19 1944 – WW2: *Battle of Hürtgen Forest (19 SEP – 16 DEC)*** » The 88 day between United States and Nazi Germany begins. The Battle (German: Schlacht im Hürtgenwald) was a series of fierce battles fought between American and German forces on the Western Front in the Hürtgen Forest, a sq mi area about 3.1 mi east of the Belgian–German border. It was the longest battle on German ground during World War II and is the longest single battle the U.S. Army has ever fought.

The U.S. commanders' initial goal was to pin down German forces in the area to keep them from reinforcing the front lines farther north in the Battle of Aachen, where the US forces were fighting against the Siegfried Line network of fortified industrial towns and villages speckled with pillboxes, tank traps, and minefields. A secondary objective may have been to outflank the front line. The Americans' initial tactical objectives were to take Schmidt and clear Monschau. In a second phase the Allies wanted to advance to the Rur River as part of Operation Queen.

Generalfeldmarschall Walter Model intended to bring the Allied thrust to a standstill. While he interfered less in the day-to-day movements of units than at the Battle of Arnhem, he still kept himself fully informed on the situation, slowing the Allies' progress, inflicting heavy casualties, and taking full advantage of the fortifications the Germans called the Westwall, better known to the Allies as the Siegfried Line. The Hürtgen Forest cost the U.S. First Army at least 33,000 killed and wounded, including both combat and non-combat losses, with upper estimate at 55,000; German

casualties were 28,000. The city of Aachen in the north eventually fell on 22 OCT at high cost to the U.S. Ninth Army, but they failed to cross the Rur or wrest control of its dams from the Germans. The battle was so costly that it has been described as an Allied "defeat of the first magnitude," with specific credit given to Model.

The Germans fiercely defended the area because it served as a staging area for the 1944 winter offensive Unternehmen: Wacht am Rhein (later known as the Battle of the Bulge), and because the mountains commanded access to the Rur Dam at the head of the Rur Reservoir. The Allies failed to capture the area after several heavy setbacks, and the Germans successfully held the region until they launched their last-ditch offensive into the Ardennes. This was launched on 16 DEC and ended the Hürtgen offensive. The Battle of the Bulge gained widespread press and public attention, leaving the battle of Hürtgen Forest less well remembered. The overall cost of the Siegfried Line Campaign in American personnel was close to 140,000.

- **Sep 19 1948 – Cold War:** Moscow announces it will withdraw soldiers from Korea by the end of the year.
- **Sep 19 1955 – Argentina:** *Peron Deposed in Argentina* » After a decade of rule, Argentine President Juan Domingo Peron is deposed in a military coup. Peron, a demagogue who came to power in 1946 with the backing of the working classes, became increasingly authoritarian as Argentina's economy declined in the early 1950s. His greatest political resource was his charismatic wife, Eva "Evita" Peron, but she died in 1952, signaling the collapse of the national coalition that had backed him. Having antagonized the church, students, and others, he was forced into exile by the military in September 1955. He settled in Spain, where he served as leader-in-exile to the "Peronists"—a powerful faction of Argentines who remained loyal to him and his system.



Born into a lower middle class family in 1895, Juan Domingo Peron built a career in the army, eventually rising to the rank of colonel. In 1943, he was a leader of a group of military conspirators that overthrew Argentina's ineffectual civilian government. Requesting for himself the seemingly minor cabinet post of secretary of labor and social welfare, he began building a political empire based in the labor unions. By 1945, he was also vice president and minister of war in the military regime.

In 1945, Peron oversaw the return of political freedoms in the country, but this led to unrest and mass demonstrations by opposition groups. Peron's enemies in the navy seized the opportunity and had him arrested on October 9. Labor unions organized strikes and rallies in protest of his imprisonment, and Peron's beautiful paramour, the radio actress Eva Duarte, was highly effective in enlisting the public to the cause. On October 17, Peron was released, and that night he addressed a crowd of some 300,000 people from the balcony of the presidential palace. He vowed to lead the people to victory in the coming presidential election. Four days later, Peron, a widower, married Eva Duarte, or Evita, as she became affectionately known.

In the subsequent presidential campaign, Peron suppressed the liberal opposition, and his Labor Party won a narrow, but complete, election victory. President Peron removed political opponents from their positions in the government, courts, and schools, nationalized public services, and improved wages and working conditions. Although he restricted constitutional liberties, he won overwhelming support from the masses of poor workers, whom Evita Peron called los descamisados, or the "shirtless ones." Evita served an important role in the government, unofficially leading the Department of Social Welfare and taking over her husband's role as caretaker of the working classes. She was called the "First Worker of Argentina" and "Lady of Hope," and was instrumental in securing passage of a woman suffrage law.

In 1950, Argentina's postwar export boom tapered off, and inflation and corruption grew. After being reelected in 1951, Peron became more conservative and repressive and seized control of the press to control criticism of his regime. In July 1952, Evita died of cancer, and support for President Peron among the working classes became decidedly less pronounced. His attempt to force the separation of church and state was met with considerable controversy. In June 1955, church leaders excommunicated him, encouraging a clique of military officers to plot his overthrow. On September 19, 1955, the army and navy revolted, and Peron was forced to flee to Paraguay. In 1960, he settled in Spain.

Meanwhile, a string of civilian and military governments failed to resolve Argentina's economic troubles. The memory of Peron's regime improved with time, and Peronismo became the most powerful political force in the country. In 1971, the military regime of General Alejandro Lanusse announced his intention to restore constitutional democracy in 1973, and Peron was allowed to visit Argentina in 1972. In March 1973, Peronists won control of the government in national elections, and Peron returned in June amid great public excitement and fighting among Peronist factions.

In October 1973, Peron was elected president in a special election. His wife, Isabel Peron, an Argentine dancer he married in 1961, was elected vice president. She was much resented by millions still devoted to the memory of Evita Peron.

Economic troubles continued in Peron's second presidency and were made worse by the Arab oil embargo of 1973 and an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease that devastated Argentina's beef industry. When Peron died on July 1, 1974, his wife became president of a nation suffering from inflation, political violence, and labor unrest. In March 1976, she was deposed in an air-force-led coup, and a right-wing military junta took power that brutally ruled Argentina until 1982.

- **Sep 19 1957 – Cold War:** *First-ever Underground Nuclear Explosion* » The United States detonates a 1.7 kiloton nuclear weapon in an underground tunnel at the Nevada Test Site (NTS), a

1,375 square mile research center located 65 miles north of Las Vegas. The test, known as Rainier, was the first fully contained underground detonation and produced no radioactive fallout. A modified W-25 warhead weighing 218 pounds and measuring 25.7 inches in diameter and 17.4 inches in length was used for the test. Rainier was part of a series of 29 nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons safety tests known as Operation Plumbbob that were conducted at the NTS between May 28, 1957, and October 7, 1957.



In December 1941, the U.S. government committed to building the world's first nuclear weapon when President Franklin Roosevelt authorized \$2 billion in funding for what came to be known as the Manhattan Project. The first nuclear weapon test took place on July 16, 1945, at the Trinity site near Alamogordo, New Mexico. A few weeks later, on August 6, 1945, with the U.S. at war against Japan, President Harry Truman authorized the dropping of an atomic bomb named Little Boy over Hiroshima, Japan. Three days later, on 9 AUG, a nuclear bomb called Fat Man was dropped over Nagasaki. Two hundred thousand people, according to some estimates, were killed in the attacks on the two cities and on August 15, 1945, Japan surrendered to the Allied Powers.

1957's Operation Plumbbob took place at a time when the U.S. was engaged in a Cold War and nuclear arms race with the Soviet Union. In 1963, the U.S. signed the Limited Test Ban Treaty, which banned nuclear weapons testing in the atmosphere, underwater and outer space. A total of 928 tests took place at the Nevada Test Site between 1951 and 1992, when the U.S. conducted its last underground nuclear test. In 1996, the U.S. signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which prohibits nuclear detonations in all environments.

- **Sep 19 1959 – Cold War:** *Khrushchev Barred from Visiting Disneyland* » In one of the more surreal moments in the history of the Cold War, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev explodes with anger when he learns that he cannot visit Disneyland. The incident marked the climax of Khrushchev's day in Los Angeles, one that was marked by both frivolity and tension.

Khrushchev arrived in the United States on 15 SEP for an extended visit and a summit meeting with President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The Soviet leader indicated a desire to see Hollywood and a visit was arranged. On 19 SEP, Khrushchev and his wife arrived in Los Angeles. The day began pleasantly enough, with a tour of the Twentieth Century Fox Studios in Hollywood. The Soviet premier was taken on to the sound stage for the movie "Can-Can" and was immediately surrounded by the cast of the film, including Shirley MacLaine and Juliet Prowse. MacLaine greeted Khrushchev

in broken Russian and then attempted to engage the premier in an impromptu dance. Khrushchev jovially begged off and then stood by while the cast members performed a number from the film. Frank Sinatra was brought in to serve as an unofficial master of ceremonies for the visit, and he later lunched with an obviously delighted Khrushchev.



Things began to unravel when Twentieth Century Fox President Spyros P. Skouras introduced Khrushchev at Los Angeles Town Hall. Almost immediately, Skouras, who was an ardent anticommunist, irritated Khrushchev by referring to the premier's famous statement that Russia would "bury" capitalism. Skouras declared that Los Angeles was not particularly interested in "burying" anyone, but would meet the challenge if posed. Khrushchev's famous temper quickly flared. He charged that Skouras's remarks were part of a campaign to heckle him during his trip to America. The plan, Khrushchev suggested, was to needle him, "rub" America's strength in his face, and make him "a little shaky in the knees." Addressing Skouras directly, Khrushchev stated, "If you want to go on with the arms race, very well. We accept that challenge. As for the output of rockets—well, they are on the assembly line. This is a most serious question. It is one of life or death, ladies and gentlemen. One of war and peace."

Khrushchev's anger increased when he learned that he would not be allowed to visit Disneyland. Government authorities feared that the crowds would pose a safety hazard for the premier. Khrushchev, still fuming about the debate with Skouras, exploded. "And I say, I would very much like to go and see Disneyland. But then, we cannot guarantee your security, they say. Then what must I do? Commit suicide? What is it? Is there an epidemic of cholera there or something? Or have gangsters taken hold of the place that can destroy me?" Khrushchev left Los Angeles the next morning.

From photo ops with Shirley MacLaine to a heated debate with the head of a movie studio and a childish outburst about not being allowed into Disneyland, Khrushchev's day in Los Angeles was full of activity. The Soviet leader continued his trip through California without further incident and returned to Washington for his meeting with Eisenhower.

- **Sep 19 1966 – Vietnam War:** *Pressure Mounts Against Continued U.S. Involvement in Vietnam* » The Johnson administration and its handling of the war in Vietnam comes under attack from several quarters. A group of 22 eminent U.S. scientists, including seven Nobel laureates, urged the President to halt the use of antipersonnel and anti-crop chemical weapons in Vietnam.

- **Sep 19 1969 – Vietnam War:** Nixon Cancels Draft Calls for November and December » President Nixon announces the cancellation of the draft calls for November and December. He reduced the draft call by 50,000 (32,000 in November and 18,000 in December). This move accompanied his twin program of turning the war over to the South Vietnamese concurrent with U.S. troop withdrawals and was calculated to quell antiwar protests by students returning to college campuses after the summer.
- **Sep 19 1972 – Terrorism:** Letter Bombs » A diplomat at the Israeli embassy in London is killed by a letter bomb. Dr Ami Sachori received severe chest and stomach injuries when the device exploded at 0930 GMT and died on the way to hospital. Eight bombs were addressed to diplomats at the embassy, but three were detected in the consulate post room and four others were intercepted at a sorting office in Earl's Court. Palestinian extremist group Black September is thought to have posted the letters. Some were also sent to the Israeli embassy in Paris, sparking a worldwide security alert. Scotland Yard said the devices - contained in manila envelopes only a little bulkier than normal letters - all originated in Amsterdam in the Netherlands. A note in one of the packages appeared to implicate the Arab faction which murdered nine Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games two weeks before.
- **Sep 19 1980 – Cold War:** Damascus Titan Missile Explosion » A U.S. Broken Arrow incident involving a Titan II Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) occurred at Missile Complex 374-7 in rural Arkansas when a U.S. Air Force LGM-25C Titan II ICBM loaded with a 9 megaton W-53 Nuclear Warhead had a liquid fuel explosion inside its silo. The Launch Complex was located in Van Buren County farmland just 3.3 miles NNE of Damascus, and approximately fifty miles north of Little Rock.

At around 6:30 p.m. CDT on 18 SEP 1980, two airmen from a Propellant Transfer System (PTS) team were checking the pressure on the oxidizer tank. Due to time constraints when going into the silo, a ratchet – 3 long weighing 25 lb – was taken instead of the newly mandated torque wrench. The 8 lb socket for the oxidizer tank fell off the ratchet and dropped approximately 80 feet before bouncing off a thrust mount and piercing the missile's skin over the first-stage fuel tank, causing it to leak a cloud of its aerazine 50 fuel. Aerazine 50 is hypergolic with the Titan II's oxidizer, dinitrogen tetroxide; i.e., they spontaneously ignite upon contact with each other. The nitrogen tetroxide is kept in a second tank in the rocket's first-stage, directly above the fuel tank and below the second-stage and its 9-megaton W-53 nuclear warhead.



Eventually, the missile combat crew and the PTS team evacuated the launch control center, while military and civilian response teams arrived to tackle the hazardous situation. There was concern for the possible collapse of the now empty first-stage fuel tank, which could cause the rest of the 8-story missile to fall and rupture, allowing the oxidizer to contact the fuel already in the silo.

Early in the morning of 19 SEP, a two-man PTS investigation team consisting of Senior Airman David Lee Livingston and Sergeant Jeff K. Kennedy entered the silo. Because their vapor detectors indicated an explosive atmosphere, the two were ordered to evacuate. The team was then ordered to reenter the silo to turn on an exhaust fan. Senior airman David Livingston reentered the silo to carry out the order and shortly thereafter, at about 3:00 a.m., the hypergolic fuel exploded – likely due to arcing in the exhaust fan. The initial explosion catapulted the 740-ton silo door away from the silo and ejected the second stage and warhead. Once clear of the silo, the second stage exploded. The W53 warhead landed about 100 feet (30 m) from the launch complex's entry gate; its safety features prevented any loss of radioactive material or nuclear detonation.

Livingston died at the hospital, and 21 others in the immediate vicinity of the blast sustained various injuries. The entire missile launch complex was destroyed. At daybreak, the Air Force retrieved the warhead and took it to Little Rock AFB. The former launch complex was never repaired. Pieces of debris were taken away from the 400 acres surrounding the facility, and the site was buried under a mound of gravel, soil, and small concrete debris. It now stands on private land, under a small hill. The site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on February 18, 2000.

- **Sep 19 1994 – Latin America Interventions:** *U.S. Forces Land in Haiti* » Operation Uphold Democracy began. 20,000 U.S. troops land unopposed to oversee the country's transition to democracy.
- **Sep 19 2006 – Thailand:** A military coup in Bangkok revokes Thailand's constitution and establishes martial law.

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- **Sep 20 1565 – Spain\*France:** *First European Battle on American Soil* » Spanish forces under Pedro Menéndez de Avilés capture the French Huguenot settlement of Fort Caroline, near present-day Jacksonville, Florida. The French, commanded by Rene Goulaine de Laudonniere, lost 135 men in the first instance of colonial warfare between European powers in America. Most of those killed were massacred on the order of Aviles, who allegedly had the slain hanged on trees beside the inscription “Not as Frenchmen, but as heretics.” Laudonniere and some 40 other Huguenots escaped.

In 1564, the French Huguenots (Protestants) had settled on the Banks of May, a strategic point on the Florida coast. King Philip II of Spain was disturbed by this challenge to Spanish authority in the New World and sent Pedro Menéndez de Avilés to Florida to expel the French heretics and establish a Spanish colony there. In early September 1565, Aviles founded San Augustin on the Florida coast, which would later grow into Saint Augustine—the oldest city in North America. Two weeks later, on 20 SWP, he attacked and destroyed the French settlement of Fort Caroline. The decisive French defeat encouraged France to refocus its colonial efforts in America far to the north, in what is now Quebec and Nova Scotia in Canada.



- **Sep 20 1777 – American Revolution: Paoli Massacre** » In the evening near Paoli, Pennsylvania, British General Charles Grey and nearly 5,000 soldiers launch a surprise attack on a small regiment of Patriot troops commanded by General Anthony Wayne in what becomes known as the Paoli Massacre. Not wanting to lose the element of surprise, Grey ordered his troops to empty their muskets and to use only bayonets or swords to attack the sleeping Americans under the cover of darkness.

With the help of a Loyalist spy who provided a secret password and led them to the camp, General Grey and the British launched the successful attack on the unsuspecting men of the Pennsylvania regiment, stabbing them to death as they slept. It was also alleged that the British soldiers took no prisoners during the attack, stabbing or setting fire to those who tried to surrender. Before it was over, nearly 200 Americans were killed or wounded. The Paoli Massacre became a rallying cry for the Americans against British atrocities for the rest of the Revolutionary War.

Less than two years later, Wayne became known as “Mad Anthony” for his bravery leading an impressive Patriot assault on British cliff-side fortifications at Stony Point on the Hudson River, 12 miles from West Point. Like Grey’s attack at Paoli, Wayne’s men only used bayonets in the 30-minute night attack, which resulted in 94 dead and 472 captured British soldiers.

- **Sep 20 1861 – Civil War: First Battle of Lexington ends (13-20 SEP)** » The battle, also known as the Siege of Lexington, was a minor conflict that took place between the Union Army and the pro-Confederate Missouri State Guard in Lexington, county seat of Lafayette County, Missouri. The victory won by the Missouri Guard bolstered the considerable Southern sentiment in the area, and briefly consolidated Missouri State Guard control of the Missouri River Valley in the western part of the state. Casualties and losses: MO State Guard ~150 (30 killed, 120 wounded) – Union ~36 killed, 117 wounded, 8 missing, and ~3,000 captured.
- **Sep 20 1863 – Civil War: Battle of Shepardstown VA (19-20 SEP)** » The Battle was the bloodiest battle in what would become West Virginia. Although often overlooked by historians because, as one Union soldier termed it, Shepherdstown “was not much of a battle as modern battles go,” it had important consequences. First, it marked the end of Confederate general Robert E. Lee’s first invasion of the North, which had been effectively repulsed at the Battle of Antietam, near Sharpsburg, Maryland, on 17 SEP. In addition, this battle where Lee’s army retreated back into Virginia, convinced Union general George B. McClellan that a second invasion was possible, paralyzing the Army of the Potomac in Maryland for the next month and allowing Lee’s army time to regroup. Furthermore, it contributed to U.S. president Abraham Lincoln’s decision to remove McClellan from command of the Army of the Potomac. After two days of fighting, Union and Confederate forces suffered a combined total of 677 casualties. Among that number were 269 casualties from the 118th Pennsylvania.
- **Sep 20 1863 – Civil War: The Battle of Chickamauga (18-20 SEP)** » Union troops under George Thomas prevent the Union defeat at Chickamauga from becoming a rout, earning him the nickname “the Rock of Chickamauga.” in the most significant Union defeat in the Western Theater of the War. Casualties and losses: US 16,170 | CSA 18,454.



- **Sep 20 1939 – WWII: U-27 Sunk** » U-Boat 27's keel was laid down in November 1935 in Bremen, Germany. She was commissioned in August 1936. On 8 July, 1939 Johannes Franz assumed command and commanded the boat until her loss. She had a very short career, with only one war patrol and only two enemy ships sunk. Following the sinking of two British trawlers, Davara on 13 SEP and Rudyard Kipling on 16 SEP, U-27 was hunted down and sunk west of Lewis, Scotland, by depth charges from the British destroyers HMS Fortune, Faulknor and Forester. All 38 crewmen survived and were made prisoner for the remainder of the war.
- **Sep 20 1943 – WWII: British Launch Operation Source** » British submarines attempt to sink the German battleship Tirpitz as it sits in Norwegian waters, as Operation Source gets underway. The Tirpitz was the second largest battleship in the German fleet (after the Bismarck) and a threat to Allied vessel movement through Arctic waters.
- **Sep 20 1943 – WWII: U-338 Sunk** » The German U-boat 338 was laid down on 4 April 1941 at the Nordseewerke yard at Emden, launched on 20 April 1942, and commissioned on 25 June 1942 under the command of Oberleutnant zur Kinze sailed from St. Nazaire on 25 AUG with a compliment of 4 officers and 40-56 enlisted into the mid-Atlantic, joining the wolfpack 'Leuthen' on 15 SEP. She was lost on 20 SEP during an attack on Convoy ON 202. After being spotted by a B-24 Liberator patrol aircraft, the Canadian corvette HMCS Drumheller approached at speed firing her 4-inch gun. The U-boat dived, and was located by Drumheller's ASDIC (sonar). As the corvette prepared to attack with depth charges she observed a large underwater explosion. No further contact with U-338 was made, and it is assumed that she was destroyed as a result of damage caused by Drumheller's shell fire.
- **Sep 20 1944 – WWII: Battle of Nijmegen (17-20 SEP)** » In 1940, the Netherlands was invaded by Germany with Nijmegen being the first Dutch city to fall into German hands. On 22 February 1944, Nijmegen was heavily bombed by American planes, causing great damage to the city center. It was subsequently claimed by the Allies that the American pilots thought they were bombing the German city of Kleve, while the Germans alleged that it was a planned operation authorized by the Dutch government in exile. The Dutch organization for investigating wartime atrocities, the NIOD,

announced in January 2005 that its study of the incident confirmed that it was an accident caused by poor communications and chaos in the airspace. Over 750 people died in the bombardment.



In September 1944 the city saw heavy fighting during Operation Market Garden. The objective in was mainly to prevent the Germans from destroying the bridges in Nijmegen. Capturing the road bridge allowed the British Army XXX Corps to attempt to reach the 1st British Airborne Division in Arnhem. The bridge was heavily defended by over 300 German troops on both the north and south sides with close to 20 anti-tank guns and two anti-aircraft guns, supported with artillery. The Germans' late attempt to blow the road bridge was possibly foiled by a local Dutch resistance hero, Jan van Hoof, who is said to have cut the wires to the bridge.

The Germans made repeated attacks on the bridge using bombs attached to driftwood, midget submarines and later resorted to shelling the bridge with 88mm barrages. Troops were positioned on the bridge giving an excellent arc of fire in case of attack. Troops that couldn't fit onto the bridge were positioned in a bombed-out house slightly upstream of the bridge. During the shelling, the house was hit, killing six soldiers and wounding one more. On 20 SEP units from the 82nd Airborne crossed the river under murderous enemy fire. They managed to establish a beachhead on the northern bank of the Waal and from this small foothold they eventually were able to storm and capture the bridges of Nijmegen and liberate the city. The city would later be used as a springboard for Operation Veritable, the invasion across the Rhine River by Allied Troops.

- **Sep 20 1963 – Cold War:** *Kennedy Proposes Joint Mission to the Moon* » An optimistic and upbeat President John F. Kennedy suggests in a speech that the Soviet Union and the United States cooperate on a mission to mount an expedition to the moon. The proposal caught both the Soviets and many Americans off guard. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko applauded Kennedy's speech and called it a "good sign," but refused to comment on the proposal for a joint trip to the moon.
- **Sep 20 1965 – Vietnam:** Seven U.S. planes are downed in one day.
- **Sep 20 1968 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. Officials Defend Use of Defoliants* » U.S. military spokesmen at a news conference in Saigon, claim that the use of the agents in selected areas of South Vietnam had neither appreciably altered the country's ecology, nor produced any harmful effects on human or animal life. '

- **Sep 20 1972 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. Planes Mine Waters in Northern Quang Tri* » The USAF reveals that U.S. planes have been mining the coastal rivers and canals of northern Quang Tri province below the DMZ, the first mining of waterways within South Vietnam.
- **Sep 20 1984 – U.S.\*Lebanon:** *Beirut Embassy Bombing* » The Shi'a Islamic militant group Hezbollah, with support and direction from the Islamic Republic of Iran, carried out a suicide car bombing targeting the U.S. embassy annex in East Beirut, Lebanon. Hezbollah had also used suicide car or truck bombs in the April 1983 U.S. embassy bombing and the 1983 Beirut barracks bombings.



The explosion "ripped off the front of the embassy, shredding glass, bending steel bars and destroying cars in a nearby parking lot." The attack killed a total of 24 people (including the suicide bomber). Only two of the dead were American: Chief Warrant Officer Kenneth V. Welch of the U.S. Army and Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Ray Wagner of the U.S. Navy, who were both assigned to the U.S. Defense Attache Office in Beirut. The majority of those killed were Lebanese, "either local employees or people seeking visas". Of the injured, the U.S. Ambassador, Reginald Bartholomew, was slightly hurt, as well as the British Ambassador, David Miers, who was meeting with Bartholomew at the time of explosion

The Islamic Jihad Organization (IJO) claimed responsibility for the attack in a telephone call a few hours after the explosion. The caller said, "The operation goes to prove that we will carry out our previous promise not to allow a single American to remain on Lebanese soil." The U.S. government understood that Hezbollah had carried out the attack under the cover name of IJO with the support of Iran. Through satellite reconnaissance, U.S. intelligence discovered that a mock-up of the annex had been created at the Iranian Revolutionary Guard-run Sheikh Abdullah barracks in Baalbek to practice for the attack

- **Sep 20 2000 – England:** The British MI6 Secret Intelligence Service building in London is attacked by an unidentified group using an RPG-22 anti-tank missile.
- **Sep 20 2001 – Terrorism:** In an address to a joint session of Congress and the American people, US President George W. Bush declares a "war on terror"
- **Sep 20 2008 – Terrorism:** A truck loaded with explosives detonates by Marriott hotel in Islamabad, Pakistan, killing 45 and injuring 226.
- **Sep 20 2011 – U.S. Military:** The United States ends its "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, allowing gay men and women to serve openly for the first time.

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- **Sep 21 1776 – American Revolution:** Part of New York City is burned shortly after being occupied by British forces.
- **Sep 21 1779 – American Revolution:** On this day in 1779, the Louisiana governor and Spanish military officer Bernardo de Galvez, with the aide of American troops and militia volunteers, captures the British post and garrison at Baton Rouge, located in what was then British-controlled West Florida.
- **Sep 21 1780 – American Revolution: *Benedict Arnold Commits Treason*** » During the American Revolution, American General Benedict Arnold meets with British Major John Andre to discuss handing over West Point to the British, in return for the promise of a large sum of money and a high position in the British army. The plot was foiled and Arnold, a former American hero, became synonymous with the word “traitor.”



Arnold was born into a well-respected family in Norwich, Connecticut, on January 14, 1741. He apprenticed with an apothecary and was a member of the militia during the French and Indian War (1754-1763). He later became a successful trader and joined the Continental Army when the Revolutionary War broke out between Great Britain and its 13 American colonies in 1775. When the war ended in 1783, the colonies had won their independence from Britain and formed a new nation, the United States.

During the war, Benedict Arnold proved himself a brave and skillful leader, helping Ethan Allen's troops capture Fort Ticonderoga in 1775 and then participating in the unsuccessful attack on British Quebec later that year, which earned him a promotion to brigadier general. Arnold distinguished himself in campaigns at Lake Champlain, Ridgefield and Saratoga, and gained the support of George Washington. However, Arnold had enemies within the military and in 1777, five men of lesser rank were promoted over him. Over the course of the next few years, Arnold married for a second time and he and his new wife lived a lavish lifestyle in Philadelphia, accumulating substantial debt. The debt and the resentment Arnold felt over not being promoted faster were motivating factors in his choice to become a turncoat.

In 1780, Arnold was given command of West Point, an American fort on the Hudson River in New York (and future home of the U.S. military academy, established in 1802). Arnold contacted Sir Henry Clinton, head of the British forces, and proposed handing over West Point and his men. On 21 SEP of that year, Arnold met with Major John Andre and made his traitorous pact. However, the

conspiracy was uncovered and Andre was captured and executed. Arnold, the former American patriot, fled to the enemy side and went on to lead British troops in Virginia and Connecticut. He later moved to England, though he never received all of what he'd been promised by the British. He died in London on June 14, 1801.

- **Sep 21 1904 – Westward Expansion: Nez Perce War of 1877** » The remarkable Nez Perce leader Chief Joseph dies on the Colville reservation in northern Washington at the age of 64. The whites had described him as superhuman, a military genius, an Indian Napoleon. But in truth, the Nez Perce Chief Him-mah-too-yah-lat-kekt (“Thunder Rolling Down from the Mountains”) was more of a diplomat than a warrior.



Chief Joseph-as non-Indians knew him-had been elected chief of the Wallowa band of Nez Perce Indians when he was only 31. For six difficult years the young leader struggled peacefully against the whites who coveted the Wallowa's fertile land in northeastern Oregon. In 1877, General Howard of the U.S. Army warned that if the Wallowa and other bands of the Nez Perce did not abandon their land and move to the Lapwai Reservation within 30 days, his troops would attack. While some of the other Nez Perce chiefs argued they should resist, Chief Joseph convinced them to comply with the order rather than face war, and he led his people on a perilous voyage across the flood-filled Snake and Salmon River canyons to a campsite near the Lapwai Reservation. But acting without Chief Joseph's knowledge, a band of 20 young hotheaded braves decided to take revenge on some of the more offensive white settlers in the region, sparking the Nez Perce War of 1877.

Chief Joseph was no warrior, and he opposed many of the subsequent actions of the Nez Perce war councils. Joseph's younger brother, Olikut, was far more active in leading the Nez Perce into battle, and Olikut helped them successfully outsmart the U.S. Army on several occasions as the war ranged over more than 1,600 miles of Washington, Idaho, and Montana territory. Nonetheless, military leaders and American newspapers persisted in believing that since Chief Joseph was the most prominent Nez Perce spokesman and diplomat, he must also be their principal military leader.

By chance, Chief Joseph was the only major leader to survive the war, and it fell to him to surrender the surviving Nez Perce forces to Colonel Nelson A. Miles at the Bear Paw battlefield in northern Montana in October 1877. "From where the sun now stands," he promised, "I will fight no more forever." Chief Joseph lived out the rest of his life in peace, a popular romantic symbol of the noble "red men" who many Americans admired now that they no longer posed any real threat.

- **Sep 21 1917 – WWI:** *Central Powers Respond to Papal Peace Note* » Austria-Hungary and Germany make separate replies to the proposal issued by Pope Benedict XV at the beginning of the previous month calling for an immediate armistice between the Allied and Central Powers in World War I. Unfortunately for Benedict, none of the belligerent nations were inclined to accept a peace along the lines that he had suggested. In fact, Germany and the Allies both saw the Vatican as prejudiced toward the other, and neither was at that point prepared to accept anything less than a complete victory.
- **Sep 21 1929 – Soviet Union\*Manchuria:** Fighting between China and the Soviet Union breaks out along the Manchurian border.
- **Sep 21 1936 – PreWW2:** The German army holds its largest maneuvers since 1914.
- **Sep 21 1939 – PreWW2:** *Neutrality Act Embargo* » President Franklin Delano Roosevelt appears before Congress and asks that the Neutrality Acts, a series of laws passed earlier in the decade, be amended. Roosevelt hoped to lift an embargo against sending military aid to countries in Europe facing the onslaught of Nazi aggression during World War II.

In 1936 and 1937, the Neutrality Acts had been expanded to restrict the sale of arms and war materials during a period of isolationist sentiment. However, in 1939, the rising threat to democracy in Western Europe—and pro-democratic forces in China—spurred Roosevelt to ease these restrictions. FDR warned Congress that Europe was on the verge of descending into a second global conflict. During the address, Roosevelt described how countries such as Germany built up “vast armies and navies and storehouses of war...with growing speed and intensity,” while the U.S. had tried to remain neutral doing “all in its power to encourage peaceful settlements.” However, by 1939, Roosevelt had begun to weigh the benefits of American neutrality against the nation’s obligation to help democratic nations defend themselves against fascist, expansionist Germany and Italy. In his speech before Congress, Roosevelt said that American neutrality laws as they stood in 1939 may actually give passive “aid to an aggressor” while denying help to victimized nations.

Although the language of the proposed amendment technically stated that any country would be allowed to purchase arms and goods from a still neutral U.S., Roosevelt’s primary goal was to make it easier for the U.S. to supply arms to democratic Britain and France. The new provision prohibited American ships from transporting arms or war material, gave the president power to identify combat zones (primarily Atlantic sea lanes) from which American citizens would be restricted and made it illegal for U.S. citizens to travel on vessels from belligerent nations.

Congress finally agreed to the proposed changes on November 4, 1939. A year later, with Britain standing as the last bastion against Nazi aggression in Europe and with German U-boats threatening American shipping, the Neutrality Act was again amended to allow the arming of merchant vessels. In December 1941, the act was rendered moot by the bombing of Pearl Harbor and America’s subsequent entry into World War II.

- **Sep 21 1941 – WW2:** The German Army cuts off the Crimean Peninsula from the rest of the Soviet Union.

- **Sep 21 1942 – WW2:** British forces attack the Japanese in Burma.
- **Sep 21 1942 – U.S. Air Force:** *The Superfortress takes Flight* » The U.S. B-29 makes its debut flight in Seattle, Washington. It was the largest bomber used in the war by any nation. The B-29 was conceived in 1939 by Gen. Hap Arnold, who was afraid a German victory in Europe would mean the United States would be devoid of bases on the eastern side of the Atlantic from which to counterattack.
- **Sep 21 1944 – WW2:** U.S. troops of the 7th Army, invading Southern France, cross the Meuse River.
- **Sep 21 1949 – Cold War:** *Mao Zedong Outlines the New Chinese Government* » At the opening of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in Peking, Mao Zedong announces that the new Chinese government will be "under the leadership of the Communist Party of China."



The September 1949 conference in Peking was both a celebration of the communist victory in the long civil war against Nationalist Chinese forces and the unveiling of the communist regime that would henceforth rule over China. Mao and his communist supporters had been fighting against what they claimed was a corrupt and decadent Nationalist government in China since the 1920s. Despite massive U.S. support for the Nationalist regime, Mao's forces were victorious in 1949 and drove the Nationalist government onto the island of Taiwan. In September, with cannons firing salutes and ceremonial flags waving, Mao announced the victory of communism in China and vowed to establish the constitutional and governmental framework to protect the "people's revolution."

In outlining the various committees and agencies to be established under the new regime, Mao announced that "Our state system of the People's Democratic Dictatorship is a powerful weapon for safeguarding the fruits of victory of the people's revolution and for opposing plots of foreign and domestic enemies to stage a comeback. We must firmly grasp this weapon." He denounced those who opposed the communist government as "imperialistic and domestic reactionaries." In the future, China would seek the friendship of "the Soviet Union and the new democratic countries." Mao also claimed that communism would help end reputation as a lesser-developed country. "The era in which the Chinese were regarded as uncivilized is now over. We will emerge in the world as a highly civilized nation." On October 1, 1949, the People's Republic of China was formally announced, with Mao Zedong as its leader. He would remain in charge of the nation until his death in 1976.

- **Sep 21 1961 – U.S. Army:** Maiden flight of the CH-47 Chinook transportation helicopter.





- **Sep 21 1961 – Vietnam War:** 5th Special Forces Group is Activated at Fort Bragg » The Special Forces were formed to organize and train guerrilla bands behind enemy lines. President John F. Kennedy, a strong believer in the potential of the Special Forces in counterinsurgency operations, visited the Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg to review the program and authorized the Special Forces to wear the headgear that became their symbol, the Green Beret.
- **Sep 21 1967 – Vietnam War:** Thai Troops Arrive in Saigon » Gen. William Westmoreland, commander of U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam, welcomes 1,200 Thai troops as they arrive in Saigon. By 1969, Thai forces in Vietnam would number more than 12,000.
- **Sep 21 1972 – Philippines:** Martial Law Declared » President Ferdinand E. Marcos placed the Philippines under Martial Law. The declaration issued under Proclamation 1081 suspended the civil rights and imposed military authority in the country. Marcos defended the declaration stressing the need for extra powers to quell the rising wave of violence allegedly caused by communists. The emergency rule was also intended to eradicate the roots of rebellion and promote a rapid trend for national development. The autocrat assured the country of the legality of Martial Law emphasizing the need for control over civil disobedience that displays lawlessness. Marcos explained citing the provisions from the Philippine Constitution that Martial Law is a strategic approach to legally defend the Constitution and protect the welfare of the Filipino people from the dangerous threats posed by Muslim rebel groups and Christian vigilantes that places national security at risk during the time. Marcos explained that martial law was not a military takeover but was then the only option to resolve the country's dilemma on rebellion that stages national chaos threatening the peace and order of the country. The emergency rule, according to Marcos's plan, was to lead the country into what he calls a "New Society".



Marcos used several events to justify martial law. Threat to the country's security was intensifying following the re-establishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in 1968. Supporters of CPP's military arm, the New People's Army, also grew in numbers in Tarlac and other parts of the country. The alleged attempt to the life of then Minister of Defense Juan Ponce Enrile gave Marcos a window to declare Martial Law. Marcos announced the emergency rule the day after the shooting incident. Marcos also declared insurgency in the south caused by the clash between Muslims and Christians, which Marcos considered as a threat to national security. The Muslims were defending their ancestral land against the control of Christians who migrated in the area. The minority group organized the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in Malaysia and pushed for the autonomy of Mindanao from the national government.

The move was initially supported by most Filipinos and was viewed by some critics as a change that solved the massive corruption in the country. Martial law ceased the clash between the executive and legislative branches of the government and a bureaucracy characterized by special interest. Marcos started to implement reforms on social and political values that hindered effective modernization. To match the accomplishments of its Asian neighbors, Marcos imposed the need for self-sacrifice for the attainment of national welfare. His reforms targeted his rivals within the elite depriving them of their power and patronage but did not affect their supporters.

- Thirty-thousand opposition figures including Senator Benigno Aquino, journalists, student and labor activists were detained at military compounds under the President's command.
- The army and the Philippine Constabulary seized weapons and disbanded private armies controlled by prominent politicians and other influential figures.
- Marcos took control of the legislature and closed the Philippine Congress.
- Numerous media outfits were either closed down or operated under tight control.
- Marcos also allegedly funneled millions of the country's money by placing some of his trusted supporters in strategic economic positions to channel resources to him. Experts call this the "crony capitalism."

The deterioration of the political and economic condition in the Philippines triggered the decline of support on Marcos' plans. More and more Filipinos took arms to dislodge the regime. Urban poor communities in the country's capital were organized by the Philippine Ecumenical Council for Community and were soon conducting protest masses and prayer rallies. These efforts including the exposure of numerous human rights violations pushed Marcos to hold an election in 1978 and 1981 in an aim to stabilize the country's chaotic condition. Marcos, in both events, won the election; however, his extended term as President of the Republic of the Philippines elicited an extensive opposition against his regime.

Social unrest reached its height after former Senator Benigno Aquino was murdered. The incident sent thousands of Filipinos to the streets calling for Marcos' removal from post. Turning again to his electoral strategy, Marcos held a snap election in 1986 but what he hoped will satisfy the masses only increased their determination to end his rule that seated Corazon Aquino, widow of Benigno Aquino, as President of the Philippines ousting Marcos from Malacañang Palace and ending the twenty-one years of tyrant rule.

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- **Sep 22 1711 – Native Americans:** The Tuscarora War begins in present-day North Carolina between the British, Dutch, and German settlers and the Tuscarora Native Americans. A treaty was signed on 11 FEB 1715.
- **Sep 22 1776 – American Revolution:** *Patriot Executed for Spying* » Nathan Hale was an American soldier and spy for the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War. After it began in 1775, he joined a Connecticut militia and was elected first lieutenant within five months. His militia unit participated in the Siege of Boston, but Hale remained behind. It has been suggested that he was unsure as to whether he wanted to fight, or whether he was hindered because his teaching contract in New London did not expire until several months later, in July 1775.



On July 4, 1775, Hale received a letter from his classmate and friend Benjamin Tallmadge, who had gone to Boston to see the siege for himself. He wrote to Hale, "Was I in your condition, I think the more extensive service would be my choice. Our holy Religion, the honor of our God, a glorious country, & a happy constitution is what we have to defend." Tallmadge's letter was so inspiring that, several days later, Hale accepted a commission as first lieutenant in the 7th Connecticut Regiment under Colonel Charles Webb of Stamford. Nathan Hale was also a part of Knowlton's Rangers, the first organized intelligence service organization of the United States of America, led by LTC Thomas Knowlton.

In the following spring, the army moved to Manhattan Island to prevent the British from taking over New York City. In September, General Washington was desperate to determine the location of the imminent British invasion of Manhattan Island. To that end, Washington needed a spy behind enemy lines, and Hale was the only volunteer. He volunteered for an intelligence-gathering mission in New York City but was captured by the British and executed. Hale has long been considered an American hero and in 1985, he was officially designated the state hero of Connecticut. Captain Nathan Hale is hanged as a spy by the British in New York City. His last words are reputed to have been, "I only regret that I have but one life to give for my country."

- **Sep 22 1862 – Civil War:** *Emancipation Proclamation is Announced* » President Abraham Lincoln issues a preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, which sets a date for the freedom of more than 3 million black slaves in the United States and recasts the Civil War as a fight against slavery.

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, shortly after Lincoln's inauguration as America's 16th president, he maintained that the war was about restoring the Union and not about slavery. He avoided issuing an anti-slavery proclamation immediately, despite the urgings of abolitionists and radical Republicans, as well as his personal belief that slavery was morally repugnant. Instead, Lincoln chose to move cautiously until he could gain wide support from the public for such a measure.

In July 1862, Lincoln informed his cabinet that he would issue an emancipation proclamation but that it would exempt the so-called border states, which had slaveholders but remained loyal to the Union. His cabinet persuaded him not to make the announcement until after a Union victory. Lincoln's opportunity came following the Union win at the Battle of Antietam in September 1862. On 22 SEP, the president announced that slaves in areas still in rebellion within 100 days would be free.



On January 1, 1863, Lincoln issued the final Emancipation Proclamation, which declared “that all persons held as slaves” within the rebel states “are, and henceforward shall be free.” The proclamation also called for the recruitment and establishment of black military units among the Union forces. An estimated 180,000 African Americans went on to serve in the army, while another 18,000 served in the navy. After the Emancipation Proclamation, backing the Confederacy was seen as favoring slavery. It became impossible for anti-slavery nations such as Great Britain and France, who had been friendly to the Confederacy, to get involved on behalf of the South. The proclamation also unified and strengthened Lincoln's party, the Republicans, helping them stay in power for the next two decades.

The proclamation was a presidential order and not a law passed by Congress, so Lincoln then pushed for an antislavery amendment to the U.S. Constitution to ensure its permanence. With the passage of the 13th Amendment in 1865, slavery was eliminated throughout America (although blacks would face another century of struggle before they truly began to gain equal rights). Lincoln's handwritten draft of the final Emancipation Proclamation was destroyed in the Chicago Fire of 1871. Today, the original official version of the document is housed in the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

- **Sep 22 1914 – WWI:** German naval forces bombarded Papeete, Tahiti in French Polynesia with the objective of seizing the coal piles stored on the island.
- **Sep 22 1914 – WWI:** *U-boat Devastates British Squadron* » In the North Sea, the German U-9 submarine sinks three British cruisers, the Aboukir, the Hogue, and the Cressy, in just over one hour. The one-sided battle, during which 1,400 British sailors lost their lives, alerted the British to the deadly effectiveness of the submarine, which had been generally unrecognized up to that time.

The German U-boat was a submarine far more sophisticated than those built by other nations at the time. The typical U-boat was 214 feet long, carried 35 men and 12 torpedoes, and could travel underwater for two hours at a time. In the first few years of World War I, the U-boats took a terrible toll on Allied shipping. Germany's quarantine of the British Isles was almost successful, but in 1917 unrestricted U-boat attacks on neutral American vessels traveling to Britain prompted the U.S.

entrance into the war. The infusion of American ships, troops, and arms into World War I turned the tide of the war against Germany.

- **Sep 22 1945 – WW2:** *Patton Questions Necessity of Germany's "Denazification"* » Gen. George S. Patton tells reporters that he does not see the need for “this denazification thing” and compares the controversy over Nazism to a “Democratic and Republican election fight.” Once again, “Old Blood and Guts” had put his foot in his mouth.



Descended from a long line of military men, Patton graduated from the West Point Military Academy in 1909 and served in the Tank Corps during World War I. As a result of this experience, Patton became a dedicated proponent of tank warfare. During World War II, as commander of the U.S. 7th Army, he captured Palermo, Sicily, in 1943 by just such means. Patton’s audacity made itself evident in 1944, when, as commander of the 3rd Army, he overran much of northern France in an unorthodox—and ruthless—strategy.

Along the way, Patton’s mouth proved as dangerous to his career as the Germans. When he berated and slapped a hospitalized soldier diagnosed with shell shock, but whom Patton accused of “malinger,” the press turned on him, and pressure was applied to cut him down to size. He might have found himself enjoying early retirement had not Generals Dwight Eisenhower and George Marshall intervened on his behalf. After several months of inactivity, he was put back to work.

And work he did—at the Battle of the Bulge, during which Patton once again succeeded in employing a complex and quick-witted strategy, turning the German thrust in Bastogne into an Allied counterthrust, driving the Germans east across the Rhine. In March 1945, Patton’s army swept through southern Germany into Czechoslovakia—which he was stopped by the Allies from capturing, out of respect for the Soviets’ postwar political plans for Eastern Europe.

Patton had many gifts, but diplomacy was not one of them. After the war, while stationed in Germany, he criticized the process of denazification, or the removal of former Nazi party members from positions of political, administrative, and governmental power, probably out of naivete more than anything else. Nevertheless, his impolitic press statements questioning the policy resulted in Eisenhower’s removing him as U.S. commander in Bavaria. He was transferred to the 15th Army Group, but in December 1945 he suffered a broken neck in a car accident and died less than two weeks later at the age of 60.

- **Sep 22 1945 – Post WW2:** In South Vietnam, 1400 French soldiers released by the British from former Japanese internment camps enter Saigon and go on a deadly rampage, attacking Viet Minh and killing innocent civilians including children, aided by French civilians who joined the rampage. At the time an estimated 20,000 French civilians live in Saigon.
- **Sep 22 1950 – Korea:** *Second Battle of Seoul (Sep 22-28)* » Before the battle, North Korea had just one understrength division in the city, with the majority of its forces south of the capital. MacArthur personally oversaw the 1st Marine Regiment as it fought through North Korean positions on the road to Seoul. Control of Operation Chromite was then given to Major General Edward Almond, the X Corps commander. General Almond was in an enormous hurry to capture Seoul by 25 SEP, exactly three months after the North Korean assault across the 38th parallel. The advance on Seoul was slow and bloody after the landings at Inchon. The reason was the appearance in the Seoul area of two first-class fighting units of the Korean People's Army (KPA), the 78th Independent Infantry Regiment and 25th Infantry Brigade, about 7,000 troops in all.

The KPA launched a T-34 attack, which was trapped and destroyed, and a Yak bombing run in Incheon harbor, which did little damage. The KPA attempted to stall the UN offensive to allow time to reinforce Seoul and withdraw troops from the south. Though warned that the process of taking Seoul would allow remaining KPA forces in the south to escape, MacArthur felt that he was bound to honor promises given to the South Korean government to retake the capital as soon as possible.



On the second day, vessels carrying the U.S. Army's 7th Infantry Division arrived in Incheon Harbor. General Almond was eager to get the division into position to block a possible enemy movement from the south of Seoul. On the morning of 18 SEP, the division's 2nd Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment landed at Incheon and the remainder of the regiment went ashore later in the day. The next morning, the 2nd Battalion moved up to relieve a U.S. Marine battalion occupying positions on the right flank south of Seoul. Meanwhile, the 7th Division's 31st Infantry Regiment came ashore at Incheon. Responsibility for the zone south of Seoul highway passed to the 7th Division at 18:00 on September 19. The 7th Infantry Division then engaged in heavy fighting with KPA forces on the outskirts of Seoul.

The Marines entered Seoul shortly after 7:00am on 25 SEP to find it heavily fortified. Buildings were heavily defended by machine guns and snipers, and on Ma Po Boulevard, the main road through the city, the KPA had established a series of 8-foot-high barricades of burlap bags, typically filled with either sand or rice. Located about 200-300 yards apart, each major intersection of the city featured such a barricade, the approaches to which were laced with mines, and which were usually

defended by a 45mm anti-tank gun and machine guns. Each had to be eliminated one at a time, and it took the Marines, on average, 45–60 minutes to clear each position. Casualties mounted as the Americans engaged in heated house-to-house fighting.

Almond declared the city liberated on 25 SEP, although Marines were still engaged in house-to-house combat (gunfire and artillery could still be heard in the northern suburbs). Effective resistance would cease by September 28th. After the battle, South Korean police executed citizens and their families who were suspected as communist sympathizers in what is known as the Goyang Geumjeong Cave and Namyangju massacres.

- **Sep 22 1961 – Cold War:** *President Kennedy signs Peace Corps legislation* » In an important victory for his Cold War foreign policy, President John F. Kennedy signs legislation establishing the Peace Corps as a permanent government agency. Kennedy believed that the Peace Corps could provide a new and unique weapon in the war against communism.
- **Sep 22 1964 – Vietnam:** *Goldwater Attacks Johnson's Vietnam Policy* » Presidential candidate and senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ) charges that President Lyndon Johnson lied to the American people and that he is committing the United States to war “recklessly.” Having previously called the war “McNamara’s War,” he now described it as “Johnson’s War.” Goldwater said that the United States should do whatever it took to support U.S. troops in the war and that if the administration was not prepared to “take the war to North Vietnam,” it should withdraw.
- **Sep 22 1971 – Vietnam:** *Medina is Acquitted of All Charges* » Captain Ernest Medina is acquitted of all charges relating to the My Lai massacre of March 1968. His unit, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade (Light) of the 23rd (Americal) Division, was charged with the murder of over 200 Vietnamese civilians, including women and children, at My Lai 4, a cluster of hamlets that made up Son My village in Son Tinh District in Quang Ngai Province in the coastal lowlands of I Corps Tactical Zone.



Medina and Calley

Medina had been charged with murder, manslaughter, and assault. All charges were dropped when the military judge at the Medina’s court martial made an error in instructing the jury. After the charges were dropped, Medina subsequently resigned from the service. There were 13 others charged with various crimes in conjunction with the My Lai massacre, but only one, Lt. William Calley, was found guilty. Calley was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of 22 civilians, but his sentence was reduced first to 20 years, then 10 years, and he was ultimately paroled by President Nixon in November 1974, after having served about one-third of his sentence.

- **Sep 22 1973 – Vietnam:** South Vietnamese troops assault NVA near Pleiku.
- **Sep 22 1980 – Iran-Iraq War:** Long-standing border disputes and political turmoil in Iran prompt Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to launch an invasion of Iran's oil-producing province of Khuzestan. After initial advances, the Iraqi offense was repulsed. In 1982, Iraq voluntarily withdrew and sought a peace agreement, but the Ayatollah Khomeini renewed fighting. Stalemates and the deaths of thousands of young Iranian conscripts in Iraq followed. Population centers in both countries were bombed, and Iraq employed chemical weapons. In the Persian Gulf, a "tanker war" curtailed shipping and increased oil prices. In 1988, Iran agreed to a cease-fire.
- **Sep 22 2006 – U.S. Navy:** The F-14 Tomcat is retired from the United States Navy.



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- **Sep 23 1779 – American Revolution:** *John Paul Jones Wins in English Waters* » During the American Revolution, the U.S. ship Bonhomme Richard, commanded by John Paul Jones, wins a hard-fought engagement against the British ships of war Serapis and Countess of Scarborough, off the eastern coast of England.

Scottish-born John Paul Jones first sailed to America as a cabin boy and lived for a time in Fredericksburg, Virginia, where his brother had a business. He later served on slave and merchant ships and proved an able seaman. After he killed a fellow sailor while suppressing a mutiny, he returned to the American colonies to escape possible British prosecution. With the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1775, he traveled to Philadelphia and was commissioned a senior lieutenant in the new Continental Navy. He soon distinguished himself in actions against British ships in the Bahamas, the Atlantic Ocean and the English Channel.

In August 1779, Jones took command of the Bonhomme Richard and sailed around the British Isles. On September 23, the Bonhomme Richard engaged the Serapis and the smaller Countess of Scarborough, which were escorting the Baltic merchant fleet. After inflicting considerable damage to the Bonhomme Richard, Richard Pearson, the captain of the Serapis, asked Jones if he had struck his colors, the naval signal indicating surrender. From his disabled ship, Jones replied, "I have not yet begun to fight," and after three more hours of furious fighting it was the Serapis and Countess of



Scarborough that surrendered. After the victory, the Americans transferred to the Serapis from the Bonhomme Richard, which sank the following day.

Jones was hailed as a great hero in France, but recognition in the United States was somewhat belated. He continued to serve the United States until 1787 and then served briefly in the Russian navy before moving to France, where he died in 1792 amidst the chaos of the French Revolution. He was buried in an unmarked grave. In 1905, his remains were located under the direction of the U.S. ambassador to France and then escorted back to the United States by U.S. warships. His body was later enshrined in a crypt at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

- **Sep 23 1780 – American Revolution:** British Major John André is arrested as a spy by American soldiers exposing Benedict Arnold's change of sides.
- **Sep 23 1863 – Civil War:** Confederate Siege of Chattanooga Begins » President Abraham Lincoln meets with Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, several cabinet members, and military planners on 23 SEP to discuss the desperate situation at Chattanooga, Tennessee. In the interim Major General William S. Rosecrans's Federal Army of the Cumberland continued building defenses in Chattanooga while General Braxton Bragg's Confederate Army of Tennessee began laying siege.

Rosecrans, having recently suffered his most serious defeat at Chickamauga, pulled his Federals into Chattanooga. In so doing, he gave up the strong high ground atop Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge overlooking the city. Bragg's Confederates promptly took those positions, pointing cannon down on the Federals below and posting sharpshooters along the Tennessee River to cut off the supply lines and keep his enemy trapped within the city.

- **Sep 23 1899 – Philippine American War:** American Asiatic Squadron destroys a Filipino battery at the Battle of Olongapo.
- **Sep 23 1917 – WWI:** German Pilot Werner Voss Shot Down Over Western Front » The German flying ace Werner Voss is shot down and killed during a dogfight with British pilots in the skies over Belgium, on the Western Front. Voss had amassed 42 victories in the air, earning the prestigious Pour le Merite award.



- **Sep 23 1936 – U.S. Military:** Gold Star Mother's & Family's Day » During World War I, military family households would put a Service Flag in the windows of their homes. The Service Flag would have a deep Blue Star and/or a Gold Star for each family member that was serving our country. A Blue Star represented those who were alive and a Gold Star honored those who had lost their life.

In 1928, twenty-five mothers who resided in Washington, D.C., created a national organization known as American Gold Star Mother's Inc. In 1936, as established in Title 36 § 111 of the United

States Code, the last Sunday in September was designated as the Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day, which has been observed each year by a presidential proclamation.

- **Sep 23 1942 – WW2:** The Matanikau action on Guadalcanal begins. U.S. Marines attack Japanese units along the Matanikau River.
- **Sep 23 1943 – WW2:** *Mussolini Re-Establishes a Fascist Regime in Northern Italy* » Benito Mussolini, deposed dictator of Italy, fashions a new fascist republic—by the leave of his new German masters—which he “rules” from his headquarters in northern Italy.
- **Sep 23 1944 – WW2:** *FDR Defends his Dog* » During a campaign dinner with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters union, President Franklin D. Roosevelt makes a reference to his small dog, Fala, who had recently been the subject of a Republican political attack. The offense prompted Roosevelt to defend his dog's honor and his own reputation.



After addressing pertinent labor issues and America's status in World War II, Roosevelt explained that Republican critics had circulated a story claiming that Roosevelt had accidentally left Fala behind while visiting the Aleutian Islands earlier that year. They went on to accuse the president of sending a Navy destroyer, at a taxpayer expense of up to \$20 million, to go back and pick up the dog. Roosevelt said that though he and his family had “suffered malicious falsehoods” in the past, he claimed the right to “object to libelous statements about my dog.” Roosevelt went on to say that the desperate Republican opposition knew it could not win the upcoming presidential election and used Fala as an excuse to attack the president. He half-jokingly declared that his critics sullied the reputation of a defenseless dog just to distract Americans from more pressing issues facing the country.

Roosevelt was indeed attached to his dog. Fala, a small, black Scottish terrier, accompanied Roosevelt almost everywhere: to the Oval Office, on official state visits and on long, overseas trips including one to Newfoundland in 1941 during which Fala met British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Roosevelt's cousin, Margaret Suckley, had given Fala to the president in 1940 when Fala was still a puppy. Although Eleanor Roosevelt disapproved of having a dog in the White House, Roosevelt adamantly kept the dog by his side. Fala slept at the foot of his master's bed and only the president had the authority to feed him; the White House kitchen staff sent up a bone for Fala every morning with Roosevelt's breakfast tray.

After FDR's death, Fala lived with Eleanor and, when the dog died in 1952 at the ripe old age of 12, he was buried near the president at his family home in Hyde Park, New York.

- **Sep 23 1944 – WW2:** *Philippine President Jose P. Laurel War Years* » Laurel was among the Commonwealth officials instructed by the Japanese Imperial Army to form a provisional government when they invaded and occupied the country. He cooperated with the Japanese in contrast to the decision of Filipino Chief Justice Abad Santos against collaboration. It was because of his being well-known to the Japanese as a critic of US rule, as well as his demonstrated willingness to serve under the Japanese Military Administration, that he held a series of high posts in 1942-1943. In 1943, he was shot by Philippine guerillas while playing golf at Wack-Wack, but he quickly recovered. Later that year, he was selected, by the National Assembly, under vigorous Japanese influence, to serve as President.

During Laurel's tenure as President, hunger was the main worry. Prices of essential commodities rose to unprecedented heights. The government exerted every effort to increase production and bring consumers' goods under control. However, Japanese rapacity had the better of it all. On the other hand, guerrilla activities and Japanese retaliatory measures brought the peace and order situation to a difficult point. Resorting to district-zoning and domiciliary searches, coupled with arbitrary asserts, the Japanese made the mission of Laurel's administration incalculably exasperating and perilous. Laurel resisted in vain Japanese demands that the Philippines issue a formal declaration of war against the United States. On 23 SEP Laurel issued Proclamation No. 30 declaring the existence of a state of war between the Philippines and the United States and the United Kingdom. The day before he declared the Philippines under martial law in through Proclamation No. 29.

On August 15, 1945, the Japanese forces surrendered to the United States. Gen. Douglas MacArthur ordered Laurel arrested for collaborating with the Japanese. In 1946 he was charged with 132 counts of treason, but was never brought to trial due to the general amnesty granted by President Manuel Roxas in 1948. Laurel ran for president against Elpidio Quirino in 1949 but lost in what was then considered as the dirtiest election in Philippine electoral history. Laurel was elected to the Senate in 1951, under the Nacionalista Party. He was urged upon to run for President in 1953, but he declined, working instead for the successful election of Ramon Magsaysay. Magsaysay appointed Laurel head of a mission tasked with negotiating trade and other issues with United States officials, the result being known as the Laurel-Langley Agreement.

- **Sep 23 1945 – Vietnam War:** The first American dies in Vietnam during the fall of Saigon to French forces.
- **Sep 23 1949 – Cold War:** *Truman announces Soviets have Exploded a Nuclear Device* » In a surprisingly low-key and carefully worded statement, President Harry S. Truman informs the American people that the Soviets have exploded a nuclear bomb. The Soviet accomplishment, years ahead of what was thought possible by most U.S. officials, caused a panic in the American government.

The United States developed the atomic bomb during the latter stages of World War II and dropped two bombs on Japan in August 1945. By the time of the bombings in Japan, relations between the United States and the Soviet Union were already crumbling. Many U.S. officials, including President Truman, came to see America's atomic monopoly as a valuable asset in the developing Cold War with Russia. Most American officials, and even the majority of scientists in the

United States, believed that it would be many years before the Soviets could develop an atomic bomb of their own, and by that time the United States would have achieved a vast numeric superiority. On September 3, 1949, however, U.S. scientists recorded seismic activity from inside the Soviet Union that was unmistakably the result of an underground nuclear test.



Truman, informed of this development, at first refused to believe it. He ordered his scientific and military advisers to recheck their data. Once they confirmed the results, however, Truman had to face the fact that America's nuclear monopoly was gone. He also had to face the task of informing the American people, for the news was sure to leak. On 23 SEP, he issued a brief statement to the media. "We have evidence," the statement read, "within recent weeks an atomic explosion occurred in the USSR." The president attempted to downplay the seriousness of the event by noting that "The eventual development of this new force by other nations was to be expected. This probability has always been taken into account by us."

What had not been taken into account by the U.S. government was the fact that the Soviets, like the Americans, had captured many German scientists after World War II who had been working on nuclear development. In addition, the United States was unaware of the scope of Soviet spy efforts to gain valuable information. Years ahead of what Americans thought possible, the Soviets had exploded a nuclear device. Truman reacted by requesting an intensive re-evaluation of America's Cold War policies by the National Security Council. The report, issued to the president in early 1950, called for massive increases in military spending and a dramatic acceleration in the program to develop the next stage of nuclear weaponry—the hydrogen bomb.

- **Sep 23 1950 – Korean War:** *The Battle of Hill 282* » The first U.S. friendly-fire incident on British Military personnel since World War II occurred. The mistaken air attack caused approximately 60 casualties.



- **Sep 23 1965 – Vietnam War:** *South Vietnam Executes Accused VC Agents* » Three accused Viet Cong agents held at Da Nang were executed at night by the South Vietnamese government to prevent foreign photographers from recording it, but nevertheless, the story got out. Three days later, a clandestine Viet Cong radio station announced North Vietnam’s execution of two U.S. soldiers held captive since 1963, as “war criminals.”
- **Sep 23 1966 – Vietnam War:** The U.S. reveals jungles near the Demilitarized Zone are being defoliated by sprayed chemicals.

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- **Sep 24 1776 – American Revolution:** *Congress Prepares Instructions for Negotiating Treaty with France* » The Continental Congress prepares instructions and guidance for the agents appointed to negotiate a treaty between the United States and France. The agents were also instructed to request immediate assistance in securing arms. However, it was not until the arrival of the suave Benjamin Franklin and the American victory at the Battle of Saratoga in October 1777 that the French became convinced that it was worth backing the Americans in a formal treaty.
- **Sep 24 1914 – WWI:** In the Alsace-Lorraine area between France and Germany, the German Army captures St. Mihiel.
- **Sep 24 1915 – WWI:** Germany’s ally Bulgaria mobilizes troops on the Serbian border.
- **Sep 24 1918 – WWI:** *Bulgaria Seeks Ceasefire with Allied Powers* » The government of Bulgaria issues an official statement announcing it had sent a delegation to seek a ceasefire with the Allied powers that would end Bulgaria’s participation in WWI.

After being secretly courted as an ally by both sides in the opening months of the war, Bulgaria had decided in favor of Germany and the Central Powers in October 1915. By the end of that same month, Bulgarian forces had clashed with Serbia’s army in the former Ottoman province on Macedonia, driving a wedge between Serbia and Allied forces in Greece that were attempting to come to that country’s aid. In the summer of 1916, Bulgaria invaded and occupied a section of then-neutral Greece, mounting a major offensive in August that was only halted by British aerial and naval attacks. In April 1917, further British attacks against the Bulgarian trenches at Macedonia’s Lake Doiran proved unsuccessful, and the two sides remained locked in stalemate for much of the following year.

Over the course of 1918, as the Allies began to put more pressure on Germany on the Western Front, the Germans were forced to transfer many of their troops from the Salonika front—as the battlegrounds of northern Greece and Macedonia were known—where they had been aiding their Bulgarian allies. As a result, a planned Bulgarian offensive for that summer was canceled, contributing to disintegrating morale and growing discontent among the Bulgarian troops and on the home front, where people were starving. In mid-September, the Allies capitalized on the enemy’s weakness by launching their own offensive in Salonika, led by French General Louis Franchet

d'Esperey. Less than a week after the initial attack against German and Bulgarian positions in Macedonia, the Allies had captured Lake Doiran. Defeat in Macedonia sparked unrest in the Bulgarian capital city, Sofia, including mutinies in the army garrison.

On 24 SEP, with British forces approaching the Bulgarian frontier—they would cross it the following day—the Bulgarian government issued a statement announcing that due to “the conjunction of circumstances which have recently arisen,” its authorities had “authorized the Commander-in-Chief of the army to propose to the Generalissimo of the armies of the Entente at Salonika a cessation of hostilities and the entering into of negotiations for obtaining an armistice and peace.” Armistice talks began on 28 SEP, and Bulgaria formally exited World War I the following day, having lost a total of 90,000 soldiers over the course of the conflict.

- **Sept. 24 1918 – WWI:** Allies are completing a complicated shift of 820,000 troops as 600,000 Americans from 15 divisions take over for 220,000 French and Italian troops. Soldiers are moving mostly at night over the three roads capable of handling heavy traffic in preparation of an Allied assault into the Meuse-Argonne region. The offensive is scheduled to begin in two days.
- **Sep 24 1940 – WWII:** Luftwaffe Bombs Spitfire Factory in Southampton » The Supermarine Aviation Works at Southampton were attacked by 17 aircraft at 1350 and again by 3 aircraft at 1615. The first raid was led by German Pilot Martin Lutz of TG210 and achieved a surprise attack with the workforce of Supermarines receiving little warning of the raid. The factory sites weren't damaged but the bombs straddled the railway embankment and crucially the air raid shelters just as the workers were arriving. A shelter was hit (24 killed, 75 injured) but the works were only slightly damaged, and the effect on production would be small. Some damage to railway lines and private property, and numerous small fires were caused. Total casualties in the two raids - 33 dead, 69 seriously injured and 120 slightly.



A still from camera-gun film taken from a Supermarine Spitfire Mark I of No. 609 Squadron RAF, flown by by Pilot Officer J D Bisdée, as he dives on a formation of Heinkel He IIIs of KG 55 which had just bombed the Supermarine aircraft works at Woolston, Southampton.

The uninjured workers had to dig out people who had been buried as a result of the bombing and administer first aid as best they could. Female ambulance drivers then ferried the injured to the Royal South Hants Hospital showing great courage as they had to drive through the second raid later in the afternoon. Martin Lutz was awarded the Knight's Cross for this raid but his luck ran out three days later when he was shot down during a raid on the Bristol Aeroplane Factory.

- **Sep 24 1941 – Holocaust:** Massacre at Babi Yar » On this day, shortly after the Nazi Germans' successful 45-day battle for Kiev, Red Army engineers exploded a number of land mines that had

been pre-positioned in key buildings in the city center. One of these was the Hotel Continental, in which the Germans had just established their headquarters. The devastation was enormous, with hundreds of German troops killed or severely injured and 25,000 Kiev residents left homeless. Even though the attack had been carried out by Russian soldiers, the Nazi German high command blamed the city's Jewish community and ordered it to assemble for "resettlement" on 20 SEP. These Jews, together with a number of Gypsies, were then marched away in groups into the nearby forests by troops of Sonderkommando 4a of SS Einsatzgruppe C along with Ukrainian militiamen.

Over a two-day period, the groups arrived at Babi Yar, a ravine. There they were summarily shot and then buried in a huge pit. In total, some 34,000 Jews died at Babi Yar. Subsequently, the Nazi Germans stated that they had solved Kiev's housing problem by evacuating an "adequate number of apartments." Far from condemning the atrocity, several non-SS senior officers applauded such actions. Among them was Field Marshal von Reichenau, commander of the German Sixth Army, who issued a directive emphasizing the need for his soldiers to "fully understand the need for severe but just atonement of the Jewish subhumans." While Einsatzgruppen would go on to execute hundreds of thousands of Jews during the war, Babi Yar was the largest individual massacre.

- **Sep 24 1941 – WWII:** *Japanese Gather Preliminary Data on Pearl Harbor* » The Japanese consul in Hawaii is instructed to divide Pearl Harbor into five zones and calculate the number of battleships in each zone—and report the findings back to Japan.

Relations between the United States and Japan had been deteriorating quickly since Japan's occupation of Indo-China and the implicit menacing of the Philippines, an American protectorate. American retaliation included the seizing of all Japanese assets in the States and the closing of the Panama Canal to Japanese shipping. In September 1941, Roosevelt issued a statement, drafted by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, that threatened war between the United States and Japan should the Japanese encroach any farther on territory in Southeast Asia or the South Pacific.

The Japanese military had long dominated Japanese foreign affairs. So, although official negotiations between the U.S. secretary of state and his Japanese counterpart to ease tensions were ongoing, Hideki Tojo, the minister of war who would soon be prime minister, had no intention of withdrawing from captured territories. He also construed the American "threat" of war as an ultimatum and prepared to deliver the first blow in a Japanese-American confrontation: the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

In September 1941, Nagai Kita, the Japanese consul in Hawaii, was told to begin carving up Pearl Harbor into five distinct zones and to determine the number of warships moored in each zone. Little did Japan know that the United States had intercepted the message; unfortunately, it had to be sent back to Washington for decrypting. Flights east were infrequent, so the message was sent via sea, a more time-consuming process. When it finally arrived at the capital, staff shortages and other priorities further delayed the decryption. When the message was finally unscrambled in mid-October—it was dismissed as being of no great consequence.

- **September 24 1945 – Post WW2:** In Saigon, Viet Minh successfully organize a general strike shutting down all commerce along with electricity and water supplies. In a suburb of Saigon,

members of Binh Xuyen, a Vietnamese criminal organization, massacre 150 French and Eurasian civilians, including children.

- **Sep 24 1953 – Cold War:** *United States Will Not "Cringe" before Soviet Weapons* » In a speech that is by turns confrontational and sarcastic, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles declares that the United States will not “cringe or become panicky” in the face of Soviet nuclear weapons.
- **Sep 24 1957 – Little Rock, Arkansas:** President Dwight D. Eisenhower sends 101st Airborne Division troops into Little Rock to protect nine black students entering its newly integrated high school.



- **Sep 24 1960 – U.S. Navy:** USS Enterprise (CVN-65), the world's first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, is launched.
- **Sep 24 1960 – Vietnam War:** *McNamara and Taylor Assess Situation in Vietnam* » Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and Gen. Maxwell Taylor, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, arrive in Vietnam. At President John F. Kennedy's request, they were to determine whether South Vietnam's military situation had deteriorated as a result of the continuing clash between the Ngo Dinh Diem government and the Buddhists over Diem's refusal to institute internal political reform.
- **Sep 24 1967 – Vietnam War:** *Political Instability Continues in South Vietnam* » In Saigon, Hue, and Da Nang, demonstrations are staged against the recent election of President Nguyen Van Thieu and Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky, led by the militant Buddhist faction, who charge that the elections were rigged and demand that the Constituent Assembly cancel the results.
- **Sep 24 1970 – Cold War:** The Soviet Luna 16 lands, completing the first unmanned round trip to the moon.
- **Sep 24 1990 – Cold War:** East Germany left the Warsaw Pact in preparation for its reunification with West Germany. Poland and Czechoslovakia also indicated their strong desire to withdraw. Faced with these protests—and suffering from a faltering economy and unstable political situation—the Soviet Union bowed to the inevitable. In March 1991, Soviet military commanders relinquished their control of Warsaw Pact forces. A few months later, the pact's Political Consultative Committee met



for one final time and formally recognized what had already effectively occurred—the Warsaw Pact was no more.

- **Sep 24 1996 – UN:** Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty » Under the CTBT treaty each state party signing it undertakes not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion, and to prohibit and prevent any such nuclear explosion at any place under its jurisdiction or control. Also, each state party undertakes, furthermore, to refrain from causing, encouraging, or in any way participating in the carrying out of any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion.

The Treaty was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 SEP and it opened for signature in New York on 24 September 1996, when it was signed by 71 States, including five of the eight then nuclear-capable states. As of February 2019, 168 states have ratified the CTBT and another 17 states have signed but not ratified it. The treaty will enter into force 180 days after the 44 states listed in Annex 2 of the treaty have ratified it. These "Annex 2 states" are states that participated in the CTBT's negotiations between 1994 and 1996 and possessed nuclear power reactors or research reactors at that time. As of 2016, eight Annex 2 states have not ratified the treaty: China, Egypt, Iran, Israel and the United States have signed but not ratified the Treaty; India, North Korea and Pakistan have not signed it.

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- **Sep 25 1775 – American Revolution:** Battle of Longue-Pointe » This was an attempt by Ethan Allen and a small force of American and Quebec militia to capture Montreal from British forces early in the American Revolutionary War. Allen, who had been instructed only to raise militia forces among the local inhabitants, had long had thoughts of taking the lightly defended city. When he reached the southern shore of the St. Lawrence River with about 110 men, he seized the opportunity to try. Major John Brown, who Allen claimed was supposed to provide additional forces, did not appear as they had planned, isolating Allen and his men on the north side of the river.



British General Guy Carleton sent a force composed mostly of Quebec militia in response to news of Allen's crossing of the St. Lawrence. This force cut off Allen's escape route, and eventually surrounded and captured Allen and a number of his men. Carleton eventually abandoned Montreal, which fell without battle to Continental Army forces on 13 NOV. Casualties and losses: Colonists 6 killed, 10 wounded, 20 Americans & 11 Canadians surrendered. Remaining force scattered – British/Quebec forces 5 to 8 casualties. Allen was sent first to England and then New York City as a prisoner, and was eventually exchanged in 1778.

- **Sep 25 1779 – American Revolution:** *Bill of Rights Passes Congress* » The first Congress of the United States approves 12 amendments to the U.S. Constitution, and sends them to the states for ratification. The amendments, known as the Bill of Rights, were designed to protect the basic rights of U.S. citizens, guaranteeing the freedom of speech, press, assembly, and exercise of religion; the right to fair legal procedure and to bear arms; and that powers not delegated to the federal government were reserved for the states and the people.

Influenced by the English Bill of Rights of 1689, the Bill of Rights was also drawn from Virginia's Declaration of Rights, drafted by George Mason in 1776. Mason, a native Virginian, was a lifelong champion of individual liberties, and in 1787 he attended the Constitutional Convention and criticized the final document for lacking constitutional protection of basic political rights. In the ratification process that followed, Mason and other critics agreed to approve the Constitution in exchange for the assurance that amendments would immediately be adopted.

In December 1791, Virginia became the 10th of 14 states to approve 10 of the 12 amendments, thus giving the Bill of Rights the two-thirds majority of state ratification necessary to make it legal. Of the two amendments not ratified, the first concerned the population system of representation, while the second prohibited laws varying the payment of congressional members from taking effect until an election intervened. The first of these two amendments was never ratified, while the second was finally ratified more than 200 years later, in 1992.

- **Sep 25 1846 – Mexican-American War:** *Battle of Monterey* » American forces led by Zachary Taylor capture the Mexican city of Monterrey. Casualties and losses: US 531 - Mex 367.



- **Sep 25 1864 – U.S. Navy:** Secretary of U.S. Navy authorizes enlistment of slaves.
- **Sep 25 1864 – Civil War:** *Confederate President Visits General Hood in Georgia* » Jefferson Davis meets with General John Bell Hood at Hood's Palmetto, Georgia, headquarters to discuss the recent misfortunes of the Army of Tennessee. Since Hood had assumed command of the army in July, he had launched an unsuccessful series of attacks on Union General William T. Sherman's forces, endured a month-long siege in Atlanta, and was finally forced to abandon the city. Now, Davis journeyed to Georgia to shore up the sagging morale of his leader and troops.

- **Sep 25 1915 – WWI: Battle of Loos (25 SEP – 14 OCT)** » The battle took place in France on the Western Front. It was the biggest British attack of 1915, the first time that the British used poison gas and the first mass engagement of New Army units. The French and British tried to break through the German defenses in Artois and Champagne and restore a war of movement. Despite improved methods, more ammunition and better equipment, the Franco-British attacks were contained by the German armies, except for local losses of ground. British casualties at Loos (59,207) were about twice as high as German losses. (~25,000).



- **Sep 25 1915 – WWI: Second Battle of Champagne (25 SEP – 6 NOV)** » This was part of a wider Allied offensive launched in the autumn of 1915 (First World War). At the end of 1914 the active part of the German front line in France took the form of a giant salient, running south from the coast of Belgium to the Somme, and then turning east, running through the Champagne region to Verdun. South of Verdun the line was largely inactive. The Allied plans for 1915 called for attacks on the flanks of the German salient, in Artois and Champagne. The spring offensive had ended in failure (Second Battle of Artois), but that had not discouraged General Joffre, the French Command in Chief.

In June 1915 the Allies had met in the first inter-allied conference of the war. Britain, France, Belgium, Russian, Italy and Serbia had been represented, and all had agreed to coordinate their attacks. Circumstances intervened to prevent this from happening. The Battle of Gorlice-Tarnow (2 May-27 June 1915) broke the Russian front and forced a dramatic retreat out of occupied Poland. It was followed by a combined Austrian-German-Bulgarian invasion of Serbia in October 1915, the threat of which prevented any earlier Serbian offensives. Finally, the Italians launched the first of the eleven Battles of the Isonzo (23 June-7 July), without achieving anything. By the end of the year Second, Third and Fourth Isonzo would have repeated the failure.

This only left the British and French offensive on the Western Front. Initially it had been hoped to launch this attack in late August, but it took much longer than expected to build up sufficient supplies in Champagne to support a major offensive. Preparations included the construction of a new light railway line into the rear area. The attack was delayed, first to 8 SEP and then finally to 25 SEP. This gave the Germans time to increase the strength of their defenses. A new second line of defenses was constructed, running three miles behind the first line. This alone would have made it almost impossible to achieve a breakthrough in a single day. Concrete machine gun posts were built between the two lines. The rear lines were normally built on the reverse slopes of any available high ground, making it much harder for the Allied artillery to bombard the German second line.

The attack was to be launched by German Pétain's Second Army and General de Langle de Cary's Fourth Army, under the overall command of General Castelnau. The attack was preceded by a length bombardment. Chlorine Gas was then released immediately before the infantry assault. On the

morning of 25 September the attack went in (on the same day the attacks began in the Third Battle of Artois and at Loos). As at Loos the initial assault went well. The German front line was overrun in several places, and French troops advanced towards the second line. That second line was almost entirely intact, and the French attack bogged down while the Germans rushed reinforcements to the area.



French assaults continued until the end of September. After a brief break they began again on 6 OCT, but without success. At the end of October the Germans launched a limited counterattack that recovered much of the ground they had lost on 25 SEP. By the time the battle was officially abandoned on 6 NOV, the French had lost 143,567 men. In some places they had advanced two and a half miles, but at no point had they captured the German second line of defenses. German casualties were much lower, perhaps around 85,000 men, of whom 25,000 had been captured by the French. The battles in Artois and at Loos also ended in costly failure.

- **Sep 25 1918 – WWI:** Brazil declares war on Austria.
- **Sep 25 1925 – U.S. Navy:** USS S-51 (SS-162) – Sunk after collision with steamer City of Rome off Block Island, Rhode Island. 33 died.
- **Sep 25 1937 – PreWW2:** German Chancellor Adolf Hitler meets with Italian Premier Benito Mussolini in Munich.
- **Sep 25 1938 – PreWW2:** President Franklin Roosevelt urges negotiations between Hitler and Czech President Edvard Benes over the Sudetenland.
- **Sep 25 1942 – WW2:** Gestapo headquarters targeted in Norway » British bombers attempt to take out the local headquarters of the German secret state police, the Gestapo, in Norway. They miss—but send some Nazis running for their lives.
- **Sep 25 1942 – WW2:** The War Labor Board orders equal pay for women in the United States.
- **Sep 25 1943 – WW2:** The Red Army retakes Smolensk from the Germans who are retreating to the Dnieper River in the Soviet Union.
- **Sep 25 1944 – WW2:** *Operation Market Garden* » British troops began their withdrawal from the Battle of Arnhem in the Netherlands, ending the Allies' Operation Market Garden in defeat.

- **Sep 25 1950 – Korea:** Marine Major General Edward Almond declares the city of Seoul liberated even though skirmishes continue until 28 SEP.
- **Sep 25 1959 – Cold War:** *Eisenhower and Khrushchev Meet for talks* » Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev caps his trip to the United States with two days of meetings with President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The two men came to general agreement on a number of issues, but a U-2 spy plane incident in May 1960 crushed any hopes for further improvement of U.S.-Soviet relations during the Eisenhower years.



Khrushchev arrived in the United States on September 15, 1959, for an extended visit and summit with Eisenhower. The first days of the Russian's visit were a mixture of pomp, tourism, and a few moments of tension. While visiting Los Angeles, Khrushchev became infuriated by comments by the head of Twentieth Century Fox Studio and then threw a tantrum when he was barred from visiting Disneyland because of security concerns. On 25 SEP, however, the real business part of Khrushchev's trip began as he and President Eisenhower met at Camp David in Maryland to begin two days of talks about the Cold War. Eisenhower indicated that he was going into the talks with high hopes, but also warned that progress would only come if the Soviets were willing to make concessions on several issues, notably Germany and Berlin. Khrushchev and his entourage also seemed optimistic about the talks.

After two days of meetings, the two leaders issued a joint communique. It suggested that both "agreed that these discussions have been useful in clarifying each other's position on a number of subjects." They hoped "their exchanges of views will contribute to a better understanding of the motives and position of each, and thus to the achievement of a just and lasting peace." In particular, they believed that "the question of general disarmament is the most important one facing the world today." There were no specific agreements or treaties, but both nations did resolve to reopen talks about Berlin and other issues related to cultural exchanges and trade. Eisenhower and Khrushchev also agreed to hold another summit in the near future and the president announced that he would visit the Soviet Union sometime in the next year.

Unfortunately, the hopeful optimism generated by the September 1959 meeting did not last long. In May 1960, the Soviets shot down an American U-2 spy plane over Russia and captured the pilot. The Eisenhower administration compounded the situation by initially disclaiming any knowledge of

espionage flights over the Soviet Union. A summit meeting scheduled for Geneva was scrapped, as were plans for Eisenhower to visit to the Soviet Union.

- **Sep 25 1969 – Vietnam War:** *Congressional Opponents of Nixon Vietnam Policy Renew Opposition*
  - » Senator Charles Goodell (a maverick Republican from New York) proposes legislation that would require the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam by the end of 1970, and bar the use of congressionally appropriated funds after December 1, 1970, for maintaining U.S. military personnel in Vietnam. The legislation failed to pass, but it was followed by 10 similar proposals over the next three weeks by legislators including Senators Jacob Javits, Frank Church, and Mark Hatfield.



- **Sep 25 1969 – Vietnam War:** Two terrorist attacks occur near Da Nang in which 19 South Vietnamese die. Viet Cong commandos threw a grenade into a meeting place, killing four civilians and one policeman and wounding 26 others. At nearly the same time, a bus struck a mine 95 miles southeast of Da Nang killing 14 civilians.
- **Sep 25 1969 – Iraq\*Kuwait:** UN Security Council votes 14-1 to impose air embargo against Iraq for their invasion of Kuwait.
- **Sep 25 2009 – Iran:** US President Barack Obama, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, and French President Nicolas Sarkozy jointly accuse Iran of building a secret nuclear enrichment facility.

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- **Sep 26 1777 – American Revolution: *Philadelphia Campaign*** » This was a British initiative in to gain control of Philadelphia, which was then the seat of the Second Continental Congress. British General William Howe, after unsuccessfully attempting to draw the Continental Army under General George Washington into a battle in northern New Jersey, embarked his army on transports, and landed them at the northern end of Chesapeake Bay. From there, he advanced northward toward Philadelphia. Washington prepared defenses against Howe's movements at Brandywine Creek, but was flanked and beaten back in the Battle of Brandywine on 11 SEP. After further skirmishes and maneuvers, Howe was able to enter and occupy Philadelphia. Washington then unsuccessfully attacked one of Howe's garrisons at Germantown before retreating to Valley Forge for the winter.



Howe's campaign was controversial because, although he successfully captured the American capital of Philadelphia, he proceeded slowly and did not aid the concurrent campaign of John Burgoyne further north, which ended in disaster at Saratoga for the British, and brought France into the war. General Howe resigned during the occupation of Philadelphia and was replaced by his second-in-command, General Sir Henry Clinton. Clinton evacuated the troops from Philadelphia back to New York City in 1778 in order to increase that city's defenses against a possible Franco-American attack. Washington harried the British army all the way across New Jersey, and successfully forced a battle at Monmouth Court House that was one of the largest battles of the war. At the end of the campaign the two armies were roughly in the same positions they were at its beginning.

- **Sep 26 1820 - Old West:** The legendary frontiersman Daniel Boone dies quietly at the Defiance, Mo., home of his son Nathan, at age 85.
- **Sep 26 1864 – Civil War:** *Rebels Begin Attack Against Fort Davidson, Missouri* » Confederate General Sterling Price invades Missouri and engages Union pickets near Fort Davidson at Pilot Knob. Price's troops captured the fort within two days and scattered the Union defenders, but also suffered heavy losses. Some 1,000 of Price's troops were killed or wounded, and the Confederates gained little in the way of strategic value or political impact.
- **Sep 26 1918 – WW1:** German Ace Ernst Udet shoots down two Allied planes, bringing his total for the war up to 62.



- **Sep 26 1918 – WW1:** Meuse-Argonne Offensive Opens (Sept 26 –Nov 11) » At 5:30 on the morning of September 26, 1918, after a six-hour-long bombardment over the previous night, more than 700 Allied tanks, followed closely by infantry troops, advance against German positions in the Argonne Forest and along the Meuse River.

Building on the success of earlier Allied offensives at Amiens and Albert during the summer of 1918, the Meuse-Argonne offensive, carried out by 37 French and American divisions, was even more ambitious. Aiming to cut off the entire German 2nd Army, Allied Supreme Commander Ferdinand Foch ordered General John J. Pershing to take overall command of the offensive. Pershing's American Expeditionary Force (AEF) was to play the main attacking role, in what would be the largest American-run offensive of World War I.

After some 400,000 U.S. troops were transferred with difficulty to the region in the wake of the U.S.-run attack at St. Mihiel, launched just 10 days earlier, the Meuse-Argonne offensive began. The preliminary bombardment, using some 800 mustard gas and phosgene shells, killed 278 German soldiers and incapacitated more than 10,000. The infantry advance began the next morning, supported by a battery of tanks and some 500 aircraft from the U.S. Air Service.

By the morning of the following day, the Allies had captured more than 23,000 German prisoners; by nightfall, they had taken 10,000 more and advanced up to six miles in some areas. The Germans continued to fight, however, putting up a stiff resistance that ultimately forced the Allies to settle for far fewer gains than they had hoped.

Pershing called off the Meuse-Argonne offensive on 30 SEP; it was renewed again just four days later, on 4 OCT. Exhausted, demoralized and plagued by the spreading influenza epidemic, the German troops held on another month, before beginning their final retreat. Arriving U.S. reinforcements had time to advance some 32 kilometers before the general armistice was announced on 11 NOV, bringing the First World War to a close. Casualties and losses: US 117,000 | FR 70,000 | GER 90~120,000.

- **Sep 26 1938 – Pre WWII:** Adolf Hitler Issues Ultimatum to Czech Government, Demanding Sudeten Land » The Sudetenland has been part of Germany until 1806. It contained 3.5 million Germans who had been cut off from the rest of Germany after the creation of Czechoslovakia by the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler felt he had a legitimate claim upon the area because he saw it as German land. Also, Sudeten Germans claimed they were victimized by the Czech government and wanted home rule or union with Germany. Britain was reluctant to involve herself because she had inadequate armed forces to do so and had no treaty obligations to Czechoslovakia.

After the Bad Godesberg and Munich conferences the four main European powers (Britain, France, Italy and Germany) decided, without the presence of the Czech leader, to give the Sudetenland to Hitler over a ten day period. The Czechs had little alternative but to agree to Hitler's demands, as they had few allies and a weak army. (However they did have an alliance with France which they failed to honor) By the 1st of October 1938 the Sudetenland had been fully surrendered to Hitler.



- **Sep 26 1940 – Pre WWII:** Japanese Invasion of French Indochinaas Ends (Sep 22-26) » A short undeclared military confrontation between Japan and France in northern French Indochina. Fighting lasted from 22 to 26 SEP, simultaneous with the Battle of South Guangxi in the Sino-Japanese War. The main objective of the Japanese was to prevent China from importing arms and fuel through French Indochina along the Kunming–Hai Phong Railway, from the Indochinese port of Haiphong, through the capital of Hanoi to the Chinese city of Kunming in Yunnan. Although an agreement had been reached between the French and Japanese governments prior to the outbreak of fighting, authorities were unable to control events on the ground for several days before the troops stood down. Per the prior agreement, Japan was allowed to occupy Tonkin in northern Indochina and effectively blockade China.



- **Sep 26 1940 - WWII:** During the London Blitz, the underground Cabinet War Room suffers a hit when a bomb explodes on the Clive Steps.
- **Sep 26 1941 – U.S. Army:** The Army establishes the Military Police Corps.
- **Sep 26 1944 – WWII:** Allies Slaughtered by Germans in Arnhem » Operation Market-Garden, a plan to seize bridges in the Dutch town of Arnhem, fails, as thousands of British and Polish troops are killed, wounded, or taken prisoner.

British Gen. Bernard Montgomery conceived an operation to take control of bridges that crossed the Rhine River, from the Netherlands into Germany, as a strategy to make “a powerful full-blooded thrust to the heart of Germany.” The plan seemed cursed from the beginning. It was launched on 17 SEP, with parachute troops and gliders landing in Arnhem. Holding out as long as they could, waiting for reinforcements, they were compelled to surrender. Unfortunately, a similar drop of equipment was delayed, and there were errors in locating the proper drop location and bad intelligence on German troop strength. Added to this, bad weather and communication confused the coordination of the Allied troops on the ground.

The Germans quickly destroyed the railroad bridge and took control of the southern end of the road bridge. The Allies struggled to control the northern end of the road bridge, but soon lost it to the superior German forces. The only thing left was retreat-back behind Allied lines. But few made it: Of more than 10,000 British and Polish troops engaged at Arnhem, only 2,900 escaped.

Claims were made after the fact that a Dutch Resistance fighter, Christiaan Lindemans, betrayed the Allies, which would explain why the Germans were arrayed in such numbers at such strategic points. A conservative member of the British Parliament, Rupert Allason, writing under the named

Nigel West, dismissed this conclusion in his *A Thread of Deceit*, arguing that Lindemans, while a double agent, “was never in a position to betray Arnhem.” Winston Churchill would lionize the courage of the fallen Allied soldiers with the epitaph “Not in vain.” Arnhem was finally liberated on April 15, 1945.

- **Sep 26 1945 – Post WW2:** *First American Soldier Killed in Vietnam* » Lt. Col. Peter Dewey, a U.S. Army officer with the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in Vietnam, is shot and killed in Saigon. Dewey was the head of a seven-man team sent to Vietnam to search for missing American pilots and to gather information on the situation in the country after the surrender of the Japanese.



According to the provisions of the Potsdam Conference, the British were assigned the responsibility of disarming Japanese soldiers south of the 16th parallel. However, with the surrender of the Japanese, Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh declared themselves the rightful government of Vietnam. This angered the French colonial officials and the remaining French soldiers who had been disarmed and imprisoned by the Japanese. They urged British Maj. Gen. Douglas D. Gracey to help them regain control. Gracey, not fond of the Viet Minh or their cause, rearmed 1,400 French soldiers to help his troops maintain order.

The next day these forces ousted the Viet Minh from the offices that they had only recently occupied. Dewey's sympathies lay with the Viet Minh, many of whom were nationalists who did not want a return to French colonial rule. The American officer was an outspoken man who soon angered Gracey, eventually resulting in the British general ordering him to leave Indochina. On the way to the airport, accompanied by another OSS officer, Capt. Henry Bluechel, Dewey refused to stop at a roadblock manned by three Viet Minh soldiers. He yelled back at them in French and they opened fire, killing Dewey instantly. Bluechel was unhurt and escaped on foot. It was later determined that the Viet Minh had fired on Dewey thinking he was French. He would prove to be the first of nearly 59,000 Americans killed in Vietnam.

- **Sep 26 1950 – Korea:** General Douglas MacArthur's American X Corps, fresh from the Inchon landing, links up with the U.S. Eighth Army after its breakout from the Pusan Perimeter.
- **Sep 26 1967 – Vietnam War:** Hanoi rejects a U.S. peace proposal.
- **Sep 26 1983 – Cold War:** Soviet military officer Stanislav Petrov averts a likely worldwide nuclear war by correctly identifying a report of an incoming nuclear missile as a computer error and not an American first strike.



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- **Sep 27 1779 – American Revolution:** John Adams Appointed to Negotiate Peace Terms with British  
» The Continental Congress appoints John Adams to travel to France as minister plenipotentiary in charge of negotiating treaties of peace and commerce with Great Britain during the Revolutionary War.

Adams had traveled to Paris in 1778 to negotiate an alliance with France, but had been unceremoniously dismissed when Congress chose Benjamin Franklin as sole commissioner. Soon after returning to Massachusetts in mid-1779, Adams was elected as a delegate to the state convention to draw up a new constitution; he was involved in these duties when he learned of his new diplomatic commission. Accompanied by his young sons John Quincy and Charles, Adams sailed for Europe that November aboard the French ship *Sensible*, which sprang a leak early in the voyage and missed its original destination (Brest), instead landing at El Ferrol, in northwestern Spain. After an arduous journey by mule train across the Pyrenees and into France, Adams and his group reached Paris in early February 1780.

While in Paris, Adams wrote to Congress almost daily (sometimes several letters a day) sharing news about British politics, British and French naval activities and his general perspective on European affairs. Conditions were unfavorable for peace at the time, as the war was going badly for the Continental Army, and the blunt and sometimes confrontational Adams clashed with the French government, especially the powerful Foreign Minister Charles Gravier, Comte de Vergennes. In mid-June, Adams began a correspondence with Vergennes in which he pushed for French naval assistance, antagonizing both Vergennes and Franklin, who brought the matter to the attention of Congress.

By that time, Adams had departed France for Holland, where he was attempting to negotiate a loan from the Dutch. Before the end of the year, he was named American minister to the Netherlands, replacing Henry Laurens, who was captured at sea by the British. In June 1781, capitulating to pressure from Vergennes and other French diplomats, Congress acted to revoke Adams' sole powers as peacemaker with Britain, appointing Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, John Jay and Laurens to negotiate alongside him.

The tide of the war was turning in America's favor, and Adams returned to Paris in October 1782 to take up his part in the peace negotiations. As Jefferson didn't travel to Europe and Laurens was in

failing health after his release from the Tower of London, it was left to Adams, Jay and Franklin to represent American interests. Adams and Jay both distrusted the French government (in contrast with Franklin), but their differences of opinion and diplomatic styles allowed the team to negotiate favorable terms in the Peace of Paris (1783). The following year, Jefferson arrived to take Adams' place as American minister to France, forming a lifelong bond with Adams and his family before the latter left to take up his new post as American ambassador to London and continue his distinguished record of foreign service on behalf of the new nation.

- **Sep 27 1779 – American Revolution:** The former president of the Continental Congress, John Jay, is appointed minister to Spain and tasked with winning Spanish support for the American Revolution and Spain's recognition of America's independence.



- **Sep 27 1864 – Civil War:** Confederate Guerillas Sack Centralia, Missouri » A guerilla band led by William “Bloody Bill” Anderson sacks the town of Centralia, Missouri, killing 22 unarmed Union soldiers before slaughtering more than 100 pursuing Yankee troops. The Civil War in Missouri and Kansas was rarely fought between regular armies in the field. It was carried out primarily by partisan bands of guerilla fighters, and the atrocities were nearly unmatched.
- **Sep 27 1869 – Old West:** Sheriff Wild Bill Hickok Proves Too Wild for Kansas » While his brutal ways were indisputably effective, many Hays City citizens were less than impressed that after only five weeks in office he had already found it necessary to kill two men in the name of preserving peace. During the regular November election later that year, the people expressed their displeasure, and Hickok lost to his deputy, 144-89. Though Wild Bill Hickok would later go on to hold other law enforcement positions in the West, his first attempt at being a sheriff had lasted only three months
- **Sep 27 1915 – WWI:** Battle of Loos » On this day Second Lieutenant John Kipling of the British army, the only son of Nobel Prize-winning author Rudyard Kipling, is killed at the Battle, in the Artois region of France.

The Battle, part of a joint Allied offensive on the Western Front, began on September 25, 1915, and engaged 54 French and 13 British divisions on a front of some 90 kilometers running from Loos in the north to Vimy Ridge in the south. The death toll at Loos was greater than in any previous battle of the war. The names of the British soldiers killed on the opening day of battle alone filled four columns in London's Times newspaper the following morning. The British made five separate attempts to push past German positions at the Bois Hugo forest before calling off the attack on 27 SEP. One of the many officers reported “missing” after facing machine-gun fire and shellfire from

the Bois Hugo was Second Lieutenant John Kipling. His body was never found; neither were those of several of his fellow officers. Twenty-seven soldiers under their command were also killed.

Rudyard Kipling, perhaps best-known for his classic children's novel *The Jungle Book* (1894), later wrote a haunting elegy to his son, and to the legions of sons lost in the First World War:

*That flesh we had nursed from the first in all cleanness was given...  
To be blanched or gay-painted by fumes – to be cindered by fires –  
To be senselessly tossed and retossed in stale mutilation  
From crater to crater. For this we shall take expiation.  
But who shall return us our children?*

- **Sep 27 1918 – WWI:** President Woodrow Wilson opens his fourth Liberty Loan campaign to support men and machines for World War I.
- **Sep 27 1938 – WW2:** *Franklin Roosevelt Appeals to Hitler for Peace* » President Franklin Roosevelt writes to German Chancellor Adolf Hitler regarding the threat of war in Europe. The German chancellor had been threatening to invade the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia and, in the letter, his second to Hitler in as many days, Roosevelt reiterated the need to find a peaceful resolution to the issue.

The previous day, FDR had written to Hitler with an appeal to negotiate with Czechoslovakia regarding Germany's desire for the natural and industrial resources of the Sudetenland rather than resort to force. Hitler responded that Germany was entitled to the area because of the "shameful" way in which the Treaty of Versailles, which had ended World War I, had made Germany a "pariah" in the community of nations. The treaty had given the Sudetenland, a territory that was believed by Hitler and many of his supporters to be inherently German, to the state of Czechoslovakia. Therefore, Hitler reasoned, German invasion of the Sudetenland was justified, as annexation by Germany would simply mean returning the area to its cultural and historical roots. Hitler assured Roosevelt that he also desired to avoid another large-scale war in Europe.

In his letter of 27 SEP, Roosevelt expressed relief at Hitler's assurances but re-emphasized his desire that "negotiations [between Germany and Czechoslovakia] be continued until a peaceful settlement is found." FDR also suggested that a conference of all nations concerned with the current conflict be convened as soon as possible. He appealed to Hitler's ego, saying "should you agree to a solution in this peaceful manner I am convinced that hundreds of millions throughout the world would recognize your action as an outstanding historic service to all humanity." FDR then assured Hitler that the U.S. would remain neutral regarding European politics, but that America recognized a responsibility to be involved "as part of a world of neighbors."

In the end, Hitler ignored the international community's pleas for a peaceful solution and invaded Czechoslovakia in March 1939. The invasion was just the first in Hitler's quest to control Europe and create a "Third Reich" of German geopolitical supremacy.

- **Sep 27 1939 – WW2:** *Poland Surrenders | Germany Occupies Warsaw* » On this day 140,000 Polish troops are taken prisoner by the German invaders as Warsaw surrenders to the superior

mechanized forces of Hitler's army. The Poles fought bravely, but were able to hold on for only 26 days.



On the heels of its victory, the Germans began a systematic program of terror, murder, and cruelty, executing members of Poland's middle and upper classes: Doctors, teachers, priests, landowners, and businessmen were rounded up and killed. The Nazis had given this operation the benign-sounding name "Extraordinary Pacification Action." The Roman Catholic Church, too, was targeted, because it was a possible source of dissent and counterinsurgency. In one west Poland church diocese alone, 214 priests were shot. And hundreds of thousands more Poles were driven from their homes and relocated east, as Germans settled in the vacated areas.

This was all part of a Hitler master plan. Back in August, Hitler warned his own officers that he was preparing Poland for that "which would not be to the taste of German generals"—including the rounding up of Polish Jews into ghettos, a prelude to their liquidation. All roads were pointing to Auschwitz.

- **Sep 27 1940 – WW2:** *The Tripartite Pact is Signed by Germany, Italy, and Japan* » The Pact provided for mutual assistance should any of the signatories suffer attack by any nation not already involved in the war. This formalizing of the alliance was aimed directly at "neutral" America—designed to force the United States to think twice before venturing in on the side of the Allies. The Pact provided for mutual assistance should any of the signatories suffer attack by any nation not already involved in the war. This formalizing of the alliance was aimed directly at "neutral" America—designed to force the United States to think twice before venturing in on the side of the Allies.

The Pact also recognized the two spheres of influence. Japan acknowledged "the leadership of Germany and Italy in the establishment of a new order in Europe," while Japan was granted lordship over "Greater East Asia." *A footnote:* There was a fourth signatory to the Pact-Hungary, which was dragged into the Axis alliance by Germany in November 1940.

- **Sep 27 1941 – WW2:** SS Patrick Henry is launched becoming the first of more than 2,700 Liberty ships.



- **Sep 27 1942 – WW2:** Last day of the September Matanikau action on Guadalcanal as United States Marine Corps troops barely escape after being surrounded by Japanese forces near the Matanikau River.
- **Sep 27 1942 - WW2:** Australian forces defeat the Japanese on New Guinea in the South Pacific.
- **Sep 27 1944 – WW2:** Kassel Mission – Results in the largest loss by a USAAF group on any mission in World War II. Casualties and losses: US 118 KIA & 25 of 29 B24's - GER 18 KIA & 29 Fighter planes.
- **Sep 27 1944 – WW2:** Thousands of British troops are killed as German forces rebuff their massive effort to capture the Arnhem Bridge across the Rhine River in Holland.
- **Sep 27 1950 – Vietnam:** The U.S. establishes a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in Saigon to aid the French Army.
- **Sep 27 1956 – Cold War:** The U.S. Air Force Bell X-2, the world's fastest and highest-flying plane, crashes, killing the test pilot Milburn G. Apt.



- **Sep 27 1956 – Cold War:** Khrushchev Ends Trip to the United States » Khrushchev concluded his visit. He met briefly to exchange goodbyes with Eisenhower and then was escorted to the airport by Vice President Richard Nixon. A few months earlier, at the American National Exhibition in Moscow, Nixon and Khrushchev had engaged in the famous “kitchen debate” concerning the battle between communism and capitalism. Now, however, the two men were exhibited great goodwill toward each other. With a 21-gun salute and a U.S. military band playing both the American and Soviet national anthems, Khrushchev boarded a Russian aircraft and returned to the Soviet Union.

- **Sep 27 1967 – Vietnam War:** *Antiwar Sentiment Increases* » An advertisement headed “A Call To Resist Illegitimate Authority,” signed by over 320 influential people (professors, writers, ministers, and other professional people), appears in the New Republic and the New York Review of Books, asking for funds to help youths resist the draft.
- **Sep 27 1967 – Vietnam War:** *Thieu Comments on Nixon's Vietnamization Policy* » President Nguyen Van Thieu says his government entertains no “ambition or pretense” to take over all fighting by the end of 1970, but given proper support South Vietnamese troops could replace the “bulk” of U.S. troops that year. Thieu said his agreement on any further U.S. troops withdrawals would hinge on whether his requests for equipment and funds for ARVN forces were granted. These comments were in response to President Nixon’s continued emphasis on “Vietnamizing” the war so that U.S. forces could be withdrawn.
- **Sep 27 1996 – Afghanistan:** The Taliban capture Afghanistan’s capital city, Kabul.

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- **Sep 28 1781 – American Revolution:** *Battle of Yorktown* » General George Washington, commanding a force of 17,000 French and Continental troops, begins the siege known as the Battle of Yorktown against British General Lord Charles Cornwallis and a contingent of 9,000 British troops at Yorktown, Virginia, in the most important battle of the Revolutionary War.

Earlier, the French fleet commanded by Francois, Count de Grasse, departed St. Domingue (the then-French colony that is now Haiti) for the Chesapeake Bay, just as Cornwallis chose Yorktown, at the mouth of the Chesapeake, as his base. Washington realized that it was time to act. He ordered Marquis de Lafayette and an American army of 5,000 troops to block Cornwallis’ escape from Yorktown by land while the French naval fleet blocked the British escape by sea. By 28 SEP, Washington had completely encircled Cornwallis and Yorktown with the combined forces of Continental and French troops. After three weeks of non-stop bombardment, both day and night, from cannon and artillery, Cornwallis surrendered to Washington in the field at Yorktown on October 17, 1781, effectively ending the War for Independence.



Pleading illness, Cornwallis did not attend the formal surrender ceremony, held on 19 OCT. Instead, his second in command, General Charles O’Hara, carried Cornwallis’ sword to the American and French commanders. Although the war persisted on the high seas and in other theaters, the Patriot victory at Yorktown ended fighting in the American colonies. Peace negotiations began in 1782, and



on September 3, 1783, the Treaty of Paris was signed, formally recognizing the United States as a free and independent nation after eight years of war.

- **Sep 28 1864 – Civil War:** Union General William Rosecrans blames his defeat at Chickamauga on two of his subordinate generals. They are later exonerated by a court of inquiry.
- **Sep 28 1874 – Old West:** Colonel Ronald Mackenzie raids a war camp of Comanche and Kiowa at the Battle of Palo Duro Canyon, Texas, slaughtering 2,000 of their horses
- **Sep 28 1901 – Philippine-American War:** Filipino guerrillas kill more than forty American soldiers while losing 28 of their own in a surprise attack in the town of Balangiga on Samar Island.
- **Sep 28 1906 – Latin America Interventions:** U.S. troops reoccupy Cuba, stay until 1909.
- **Sep 28 1912 – U.S. Army:** Corporal Frank S. Scott becomes the first United States Army enlisted man to die in an airplane crash. He and pilot Lt. Lewis C. Rockwell are killed in the crash of an Army Wright Model B at College Park, Maryland.
- **Sep 28 1918 – WWI: *USS TAMPA Sunk*** » One of six U.S. Coast Guard cutters serving overseas on convoy duty during the war. After escorting her 19th convoy safely from Gibraltar to Great Britain, TAMPA, low on coal, detached and proceeded independently to Milford Haven, Wales. At 8:15 p.m. local time, the Imperial German Navy submarine UB-91 sighted her and fired a single torpedo that hit and destroyed the cutter. She went down with all hands in less than three minutes. Of the 130 men aboard there were no survivors.



- **Sep 28 1918 – WWI: *British Soldier Allegedly Spares the Life of an Injured Adolf Hitler*** » In an incident that would go down in the lore of World War I history—although the details of the event are still unclear—Private Henry Tandey, a British soldier serving near the French village of Marcoing, reportedly encounters a wounded German soldier and declines to shoot him, sparing the life of 29-year-old Lance Corporal Adolf Hitler.

Tandey, a native of Warwickshire, took part in the First Battle of Ypres in October 1914 and the Battle of the Somme in 1916, where he was wounded in the leg. After being discharged from the hospital, he was transferred to the 9th Battalion in France and was wounded again during the Third Battle of Ypres at Passchendaele in the summer of 1917. From July to October 1918, Tandey served

with the 5th Duke of Wellington Regiment; it was during this time that he took part in the successful British capture of Marcoing, for which he earned a Victoria Cross for “conspicuous bravery.”

As Tandy later told sources, during the final moments of that battle, as the German troops were in retreat, a wounded German soldier entered Tandy’s line of fire. “I took aim but couldn’t shoot a wounded man,” Tandy remembered, “so I let him go.” The German soldier nodded in thanks, and disappeared. Though sources do not exist to prove the exact whereabouts of Adolf Hitler on that day in 1918, an intriguing link emerged to suggest that he was in fact the soldier Tandy spared. A photograph that appeared in London newspapers of Tandy carrying a wounded soldier at Ypres in 1914 was later portrayed on canvas in a painting by the Italian artist Fortunino Matania glorifying the Allied war effort. As the story goes, when British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain traveled to Germany in 1938 to engage Hitler in a last-ditch effort to avoid another war in Europe, he was taken by the führer to his new country retreat in Bavaria. There, Hitler showed Chamberlain his copy of the Matania painting, commenting, “That’s the man who nearly shot me.”



The authenticity of the Tandy-Hitler encounter remains in dispute, though evidence does suggest that Hitler had a reproduction of the Matania painting as early as 1937—a strange acquisition for a man who had been furious and devastated by the German defeat at Allied hands in the Great War. Twice decorated as a soldier, Hitler was temporarily blinded by a mustard gas attack in Belgium in October 1918 and was in a military hospital in Pacewalk, Germany, when he received news of the German surrender. The experiences of battle—first glory and ultimately disillusion and despondence—would color the rest of Hitler’s life and career, as he admitted in 1941, after leading his country into another devastating conflict: “When I returned from the War, I brought back home with me my experiences at the front; out of them I built my National Socialist community.”

- **Sep 28 1943 – WW2:** *USS Cisco (SS-290)* » Sunk by Japanese observation seaplane (945th Kokutai) and gunboat Karatsu in Sulu Sea off Panay Island. 76 killed
- **Sep 28 1968 – Vietnam War:** *Battle for Thuong Duc* » A battle begins for the Special Forces camp at Thuong Duc, situated between Da Nang and the Laotian border. The communists briefly captured the base before being driven out by air and artillery strikes. They then besieged the base, which was only lifted after a relief column, led by the U.S. 7th Marines, reached the base and drove the enemy forces out of the area.
- **Sep 28 1996 – Afghanistan:** The former president of Afghanistan (1986-92) Mohammad Najibullah is tortured and murdered by the Taliban.

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- **Sep 29 1780 – American Revolution:** *British Spy John André Court-Martialed* » British spy John André is court-martialed, found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging on this day in 1780. André, an accomplice of Benedict Arnold, had been captured by Patriots John Paulding, David Williams and Isaac Van Wart six days earlier on 23 SEP, after they found incriminating papers stashed in his boot. It was the discovery of these papers that revealed the traitorous actions of Benedict Arnold to the U.S. authorities. Upon hearing of André's capture, Arnold fled to the British warship Vulture and subsequently joined the British in their fight against his country.



After being sentenced to death, André was allowed to write a letter to his commander, British General Henry Clinton. André also wrote a letter to General George Washington in which he asked, not that his life be spared, but that he be executed by firing squad. Death by firing squad was considered a more “gentlemanly” death than hanging. Even members of the Continental Army respected André's bravery, including General Washington, who wanted to find a way to spare André's life. Believing that André committed a lesser crime than Benedict Arnold, Washington wrote a letter to Clinton, stating that he would exchange André for Arnold, so that Arnold could be hanged instead.

When he did not receive a reply to his offer by 2 OCT, Washington wrote in his “general order” of the day, “That Major Andre General to the British Army ought to be considered as a spy from the Enemy and that agreeable to the law and usage of nations it is their opinion he ought to suffer death. “The Commander in Chief directs the execution of the above sentence in the usual way this afternoon at five o'clock precisely.”

- **Sep 29 1789 – U.S. Army:** Congress votes to create a U.S. army. Department of War establishes a regular army with a strength of several hundred men.
- **Sep 29 1864 – Civil War:** *Battle of New Market Heights (Chaffin's Farm/Fort Harrison)* » Union General Ulysses S. Grant unsuccessfully tries to break the stalemate around Richmond and Petersburg (25 miles south of Richmond) by attacking two points along the defenses of Confederate General Robert E. Lee.

Alongside New Market Heights, the assault on Fort Harrison formed the second distinct stage at the Battle of Chaffin's Farm, itself part of the lengthy Siege of Petersburg, Virginia. Less an official fort and more of an extended network of trenches and other fortifications, Fort Harrison stood as a critical link in Richmond's defenses, which therefore made it a tempting target for the Army of the

James under General Benjamin F. Butler. Butler assigned the role of punching through the Confederate lines defending the fort to Major General Edward Ord, commander of the XVIII Corps. Ord commenced his assault under the leadership of Brigadier General George Stannard as the fighting raged at nearby New Market Heights, trusting that the Confederates did not have the resources to defend two separate fronts. In this regard, he was correct, and the men of the XVIII Corps charged the swept over the earthworks and forced the enemy to fall back to a new position.

This small victory came at a heavy price, however, including the life of one of the brigade commanders, Brigadier General Hiram Burnham, and Union troops renamed the fortifications Fort Burnham in his honor. General Ord himself was also wounded in the fighting, so seriously, in fact, that he was relieved of command and would not take the field again for some time. The battle was not quite done yet, however, as the regrouped Confederates, bolstered by volunteers sent by General Robert E. Lee, attempted to retake the fort the next day, but federal troops led by General George Weitzel easily fought off the rebels. Butler managed to set out what he accomplished to do, but soon his troops lost their inertia, and the Siege of Petersburg once more settled down into a low simmer. Union troops soon renamed their new fortifications Fort Burnham, in honor of their fallen general. Casualties and losses: US 3300 | CSA 2,000.

- **Sep 29 1899 – Vet Support:** Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) established.
- **Sep 29 1918 – WWI:** *Battle of the St. Quentin Canal (29 SEP - 2 OCT)* » This was an attack launched by US, French and British forces. A north-south stretch of this canal between St. Quentin and Vendhuile had been incorporated into the German defenses of the Hindenburg Line. The German defenses on the canal comprised not only barbed wire entanglements and traps, but generally this stretch of canal was in a deep cutting of about 50 to 80 meters. The canal ran through a tunnel at Bellicourt and there was a bridge further south of the tunnel at Bellenglise.



The British Fourth Army and the French First Army had reached the canal sector in mid-September, and were tasked with crossing the canal at the tunnel section or by the bridge. An attempt by a U.S. regiment to clear the German strongpoints at Bellicourt in advance of the main attack did not succeed, and the attack by U.S. and Australian troops on 29 SEP did not make progress through the Hindenburg Line at Bellicourt. However, an attack by the British IX Corps at Bellenglise did

succeed in crossing the bridge with two divisions before the Germans could blow it up. With reinforcements brought down from Bellicourt following across the bridge, the Allied crossing of the canal advanced about 6 miles beyond the canal by the end of the day. Over 5,000 German prisoners were captured.

- **Sep 29 1918 – WWI: Allied Forces Break Through the Hindenburg Line** » After a 56-hour-long bombardment, Allied forces breach the so-called Hindenburg Line, the last line of German defenses on the Western Front during World War I.

Built in late 1916, the Hindenburg Line—named by the British for the German commander in chief, Paul von Hindenburg; it was known to the Germans as the Siegfried Line—was a heavily fortified zone running several miles behind the active front between the north coast of France and Verdun, near the border of France and Belgium. By September 1918, the formidable system consisted of six defensive lines, forming a zone some 6,000 yards deep, ribbed with lengths of barbed wire and dotted with concrete emplacements, or firing positions. Though the entire line was heavily fortified, its southern part was most vulnerable to attack, as it included the St. Quentin Canal and was not out of sight from artillery observation by the enemy. Also, the whole system was laid out linearly, as opposed to newer constructions that had adapted to more recent developments in firepower and were built with scattered “strong points” laid out like a checkerboard to enhance the intensity of artillery fire.

The Allies would use these vulnerabilities to their advantage, concentrating all the force built up during their so-called “Hundred Days Offensive”—kicked off on August 8, 1918, with a decisive victory at Amiens, France—against the Hindenburg Line in late September. Australian, British, French and American forces participated in the attack on the line, which began with the marathon bombardment, using 1,637 guns along a 10,000-yard-long front. In the last 24 hours the British artillery fired a record 945,052 shells. After capturing the St. Quentin Canal with a creeping barrage of fire—126 shells for each 500 yards of German trench over an eight-hour period—the Allies were able to successfully breach the Hindenburg Line on 29 SEP.



The offensive was driven ahead by Australian and U.S. troops, who attacked the heavily fortified town of Bellicourt with tank, aircraft and artillery support. After four days of battle, with heavy losses

on both sides, the Germans were forced to retreat. With Kaiser Wilhelm II pressured by the military into accepting governmental reform and Germany's ally, Bulgaria, suing for an armistice by the end of September, the Central Powers were in disarray on the battlefield as well as the home front. The Allies, meanwhile, pressed their advantage on the Western Front throughout the following month, which would, against their predictions, turn out to be the final month of World War I.

- **Sep 29 1939 – WW2: Nazis and Communists Divvy up Poland** » On this day Germany and the Soviet Union agree to divide control of occupied Poland roughly along the Bug River—the Germans taking everything west, the Soviets taking everything east.

As a follow-up to the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, (also known as the Hitler-Stalin Pact), that created a non-aggression treaty between the two behemoth military powers of Germany and the U.S.S.R., Joachim von Ribbentrop, the German foreign minister, met with his Soviet counterpart, V.M. Molotov, to sign the German-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty. The fine print of the original non-aggression pact had promised the Soviets a slice of eastern Poland; now it was merely a matter of agreeing where to draw the lines.

Joseph Stalin, Soviet premier and dictator, personally drew the line that partitioned Poland. Originally drawn at the River Vistula, just west of Warsaw, he agreed to pull it back east of the capital and Lublin, giving Germany control of most of Poland's most heavily populated and industrialized regions. In return, Stalin wanted Lvov, and its rich oil wells, as well as Lithuania, which sits atop East Prussia. Germany now had 22 million Poles, "slaves of the Greater German Empire," at its disposal; Russia had a western buffer zone.

On this same day, the Soviet Union also signed a Treaty of Mutual Assistance with the Baltic nation of Estonia, giving Stalin the right to occupy Estonian naval and air bases. A similar treaty would later be signed with Latvia. Soviet tanks eventually rolled across these borders, in the name of "mutual assistance," placing the Baltic States into the hands of the U.S.S.R. for decades to come. These "treaties" were once again merely the realization of more fine print from the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, giving Stalin more border states as buffer zones, and protecting Russian territory where the Bolshevik ideology had not been enthusiastically embraced from intrusion by its western neighbor, namely its non-aggression partner Germany. The highly vulnerable Baltic nations had little to say about any of these arrangements; they were merely annexed.

- **Sep 29 1941– WW2: Babi Yar Massacre Begins (29-30 SEP)** » The Babi Yar massacre of nearly 34,000 Jewish men, women, and children begins on the outskirts of Kiev in the Nazi-occupied Ukraine.



The German army took Kiev on 19 SEP, and special SS squads prepared to carry out Nazi leader Adolf Hitler's orders to exterminate all Jews and Soviet officials found there. Beginning on that day, more than 30,000 Jews were marched in small groups to the Babi Yar ravine to the north of the city, ordered to strip naked, and then machine-gunned into the ravine. The massacre ended on 30 SEP and the dead and wounded alike were covered over with dirt and rock.

Between 1941 and 1943, thousands more Jews, Soviet officials, and Russian prisoners of war were executed at the Babi Yar ravine in a similar manner. As the German armies retreated from the USSR, the Nazis attempted to hide evidence of the massacres by exhuming the bodies and burning them in large pyres. Numerous eyewitnesses and other evidence, however, attest to the atrocities at Babi Yar, which became a symbol of Jewish suffering in the Holocaust.

- **Sep 29 1953 – Cold War:** *Russians Want the American Dream* » An article in the New York Times claims that Russian citizens want the "American dream": private property and a home of their own. The article was one of many that appeared during the 1950s and 1960s, as the American media attempted to portray the average Russian as someone not much different from the average American.
- **Sep 29 1965 – Vietnam:** *Hanoi Announces that Downed Pilots will be Treated as War Criminals* » Hanoi publishes the text of a letter it has written to the Red Cross claiming that since there is no formal state of war, U.S. pilots shot down over the North will not receive the rights of prisoners of war (POWs) and will be treated as war criminals.
- **Sep 29 1969 – Vietnam:** *Intelligence Agency (CIA) Drops Charges Against Green Berets* » Secretary of the Army Stanley Resor announces that the U.S. Army, conceding that it is helpless to enlist the cooperation of the Central murder charges (of August 6) against eight Special Forces accused of killing a Vietnamese national.
- **Sep 29 1969 – Vietnam:** Heavy U.S. air raids against airfields in North Vietnam destroy 10 percent of their air force.
- **Sep 29 1995 – U.S. Navy:** The Navy disbands Fighter Squadron 84 (VF-84), nicknamed the "Jolly Rogers".



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- **Sep 30 1776 – American Revolution:** *Washington Blames Militia for Problems* » In a letter to his nephew, Lund Washington, plantation manager of Mount Vernon, General George Washington

writes on this day in 1776 of his displeasure with the undisciplined conduct and poor battlefield performance of the American militia. Washington blamed the Patriot reliance on the militia as the chief root of his problems in the devastating loss of Long Island and Manhattan to the British.

In his letter, Washington wrote, “I am wearied to death all day with a variety of perplexing circumstances, disturbed at the conduct of the militia, whose behavior and want of discipline has done great injury to the other troops, who never had officers, except in a few instances, worth the bread they eat.” Washington added, “In confidence I tell you that I never was in such an unhappy, divided state since I was born.”

Just as the British had discovered the difficulties of waging war with obstreperous Yankees for soldiers during the Seven Years’ War, Washington, the Virginia planter-cum-soldier, was unimpressed upon meeting his supposed army outside Boston upon his appointment as commander in chief of Continental forces in 1775. Just as the British had, he saw “stupidity” among the enlisted men, who were used to the easy familiarity of being commanded by neighbors in local militias with elected officers. Washington promptly insisted that the officers behave with decorum and the enlisted men with deference. Although he enjoyed some success with this original army, the New Englanders went home to their farms at the end of 1775, and Washington had to start fresh with new recruits in 1776.



Friedrich, Freiherr von Steuben

Washington fought an uphill battle for military order until Friedrich, Freiherr von Steuben arrived at General Washington’s encampment at Valley Forge on February 23, 1778. The Prussian military officer commenced training soldiers in close-order drill, instilling new confidence and discipline in the demoralized Continental Army. Before von Steuben’s arrival, colonial American soldiers were notorious for their slovenly camp conditions. Von Steuben insisted on reorganization to establish basic hygiene, ordering that kitchens and latrines be put on opposite sides of the camp, with latrines facing a downhill slope. Just having latrines was a novelty to the Continental troops, who were accustomed to living in their own filth.

On the merit of his efforts at Valley Forge, Washington recommended that von Steuben be named inspector general of the Continental Army; Congress complied. In this capacity, von Steuben propagated his methods throughout the Patriot forces by circulating his “Blue Book,” entitled “Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States.”

- **Sep 30 1862 – Civil War: *1<sup>st</sup> Battle of Newtonia*** » On this day Union columns appeared before Newtonia, Missouri and fighting ensued by 7:00 a.m. The Federals began driving the enemy, but



Confederate reinforcements arrived, swelling the numbers. The Northerners gave way and retreated in haste. As they did so, additional Union reinforcements appeared and helped to stem their retreat. They soon renewed the attack, threatening the Confederate's right flank. But newly arrived Confederates stopped the assault and eventually forced the Federals to finally retire.

Pursuit of the Federals continued after dark. Union gunners posted artillery in the roadway to halt the pursuit. As Confederate gunners observed the enemy artillery fire for its location, they fired back, creating panic. The Union retreat turned into a rout as some ran all the way to Sarcoux, more than ten miles away. Although the Confederates won the battle, they were unable to maintain themselves in the area given the great number of Union troops. Most Confederates retreated into northwest Arkansas. Casualties and losses: U.S. 245 – CSA 100.

The 1862 Confederate victories in southwestern Missouri at Newtonia and Clark's Mill were the South's apogee in the area; afterwards, the only Confederates in the area belonged to raiding columns. Newtonia was one of the few battles during the Civil War in which Native Americans played a significant role on both sides. The Second Battle of Newtonia was fought near the same location on October 28, 1864.

- **Sep 30 1864 – American Revolution: *Continental Congress' Capture*** » The Continental Congress was the governing body of the fledgling United States of America from 1776 until its capture by the British Army in late 1777. The Second Continental Congress consisted primarily of the members of the former First Continental Congress, which had met between 5 SEP and 26 OCT 1774 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. When the new Congress convened in May 1775, the membership had changed very little. Notable additions included Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and John Hancock, who was elected President of the Congress on May 24, 1775. By the time the Second Congress met, the Revolutionary War had already begun with the Battles of Lexington and Concord.

On 14 JUN, the Congress voted to form a Continental Army to replace the uncoordinated military efforts against the British. The Continental Congress did not technically have the authority to govern on behalf of the individual states, but assumed many national powers needed during time of war. For over a year, Congress debated the adoption of a resolution of independence, finally passing it on July 2, 1776. The formal explanation of this resolution, the United States Declaration of Independence, was submitted and published on July 4, 1776. This formal Declaration would later be cited as just cause for the execution or imprisonment of the members of Congress as it entailed "treason against the crown and lawful government."

In 30 September 1777, the Continental Congress was forced to evacuate Philadelphia to the borough of Lancaster, Pennsylvania in the face of British occupation of the city after the disastrous defeat at Brandywine. They met in Lancaster from September 27 to October 4, 1777 before fleeing once again to York, Pennsylvania. With the presence of large British forces in the vicinity, Congress adjourned on October 11, 1777 with many members attempting to return to their home states while avoiding British patrols. Very few managed to escape capture over the next few months. A small group of escaped delegates met quietly in Boston from November 23 to December 2, 1777 before they were also captured as the British regained control over the New England and middle colonies.

- **Sep 30 1864 – Civil War:** *Battle of Poplar Springs Church (Peeble's Farm)* » In an attempt to cut the last rail line into Petersburg, Virginia, Union troops attack the Confederate defense around the besieged city. Initially successful, the attack ground to a halt when Confederate reinforcements were rushed into place from other sections of the Petersburg line. Casualties and losses: US 2800 | CSA 1300
- **Sep 30 1918 – WWI:** *Turks Abandon Damascus as Allies Approach* » As Allied forces led by General Edmund Allenby march steadily toward Damascus, Turkish authorities abandon the city. When the Allies occupied Damascus, Arab riflemen fired their guns in the air to celebrate the fall of the Turks in that city. Barely a month later, Turkey sued for peace, signing an armistice with the Allies on October 30, 1918.
- **Sep 30 1938 – PreWW2:** The League of Nations unanimously outlaws "intentional bombings of civilian populations".
- **Sep 30 1938 – PreWW2:** *Munich Pact Signed* » British and French prime ministers Neville Chamberlain and Edouard Daladier sign the Munich Pact with Nazi leader Adolf Hitler. The agreement averted the outbreak of war but gave Czechoslovakia away to German conquest.



In the spring of 1938, Hitler began openly to support the demands of German-speakers living in the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia for closer ties with Germany. Hitler had recently annexed Austria into Germany, and the conquest of Czechoslovakia was the next step in his plan of creating a “greater Germany.” The Czechoslovak government hoped that Britain and France would come to its assistance in the event of German invasion, but British Prime Minister Chamberlain was intent on averting war. He made two trips to Germany in September and offered Hitler favorable agreements, but the Fuhrer kept upping his demands.

On 22 SEP, Hitler demanded the immediate cession of the Sudetenland to Germany and the evacuation of the Czechoslovak population by the end of the month. The next day, Czechoslovakia ordered troop mobilization. War seemed imminent, and France began a partial mobilization on 24 SEP. Chamberlain and French Prime Minister Daladier, unprepared for the outbreak of hostilities, traveled to Munich, where they gave in to Hitler’s demands on 30 SEP.

Daladier abhorred the Munich Pact's appeasement of the Nazis, but Chamberlain was elated and even stayed behind in Munich to sign a single-page document with Hitler that he believed assured the future of Anglo-German peace. Later that day, Chamberlain flew home to Britain, where he addressed a jubilant crowd in London and praised the Munich Pact for bringing "peace with honor" and "peace in our time." The next day, Germany annexed the Sudetenland, and the Czechoslovak government chose submission over destruction by the German Wehrmacht. In March 1939, Hitler annexed the rest of Czechoslovakia, and the country ceased to exist.

On September 1, 1939, 53 German army divisions invaded Poland despite British and French threats to intervene on the nation's behalf. Two days later, Chamberlain solemnly called for a British declaration of war against Germany, and World War II began. After eight months of ineffectual wartime leadership, Chamberlain was replaced as prime minister by Winston Churchill.

- **SEP 29 1941 – WW2: Holocaust Babi Yar Massacres** » Babi Yar is a ravine in the Ukrainian capital Kiev and a site of massacres carried out by German forces during their campaign against the Soviet Union in World War II. The first, and best documented, of the massacres took place on 29–30 September 1941, killing approximately 33,771 Jews.

The decision to kill all the Jews in Kiev was made by the military governor Generalmajor Kurt Eberhard, the Police Commander for Army Group South, SS-Obergruppenführer Friedrich Jeckeln, and the Einsatzgruppe C Commander Otto Rasch. Sonderkommando 4a soldiers, along with the aid of the SD and SS Police Battalions with the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police backed by the Wehrmacht carried out the orders. The commander of the Einsatzkommando reported two days later: The difficulties resulting from such a large scale action—in particular concerning the seizure—were overcome in Kiev by requesting the Jewish population through wall posters to move. Although only a participation of approximately 5,000 to 6,000 Jews had been expected at first, more than 30,000 Jews arrived who, until the very moment of their execution, still believed in their resettlement, thanks to an extremely clever organization.

According to the testimony of a truck driver named Hofer, victims were ordered to undress and were beaten if they resisted: *I watched what happened when the Jews—men, women and children—arrived. The Ukrainians[b] led them past a number of different places where one after the other they had to give up their luggage, then their coats, shoes and over-garments and also underwear. They also had to leave their valuables in a designated place. There was a special pile for each article of clothing. It all happened very quickly and anyone who hesitated was kicked or pushed by the Ukrainians to keep them moving. The crowd was large enough that most of the victims could not have known what was happening until it was too late; by the time they heard the machine gun fire, there was no chance to escape. All were driven down a corridor of soldiers, in groups of ten, and then shot. A truck driver described the scene. Once undressed, they were led into the ravine which was about 150 meters long and 30 meters wide and a good 15 meters deep ... When they reached the bottom of the ravine they were seized by members of the Schutzpolizei and made to lie down on top of Jews who had already been shot ... The corpses were literally in layers. A police marksman came along and shot each Jew in the neck with a submachine gun ... I saw these marksmen stand on layers of corpses and shoot one after the other ... The marksman would walk across the bodies of the executed Jews to the next Jew, who had meanwhile lain down, and shoot him.*

Dina Pronicheva on the witness stand, 24 January 1946, at a Kiev war-crimes trial of fifteen members of the German police responsible for the occupied Kiev region testified: *In the evening, the Germans undermined the wall of the ravine and buried the people under the thick layers of earth. According to the Einsatzgruppe's Operational Situation Report, 33,771 Jews from Kiev and its suburbs were systematically shot dead by machine-gun fire at Babi Yar on 29 September and 30 September 1941. The money, valuables, underwear, and clothing of the murdered were turned over to the local ethnic Germans and to the Nazi administration of the city. Wounded victims were buried alive in the ravine along with the rest of the bodies.*

The massacre was the largest mass killing under the auspices of the Nazi regime and its collaborators during its campaign against the Soviet Union and has been called "the largest single massacre in the history of the Holocaust" to that particular date, and surpassed overall only by the later 1941 Odessa massacre of more than 50,000 Jews in October 1941 (committed by German and Romanian troops) and by Aktion Erntefest of November 1943 in occupied Poland with 42,000–43,000 victims. Victims of other massacres at the site included Soviet prisoners of war, communists, Ukrainian nationalists and Roma. It is estimated that between 100,000 and 150,000 people were killed at Babi Yar during the German occupation.

- **Sep 30 1949 – Cold War: Berlin Airlift Ends** » After 15 months and more than 250,000 flights, the Berlin Airlift officially comes to an end. The airlift was one of the greatest logistical feats in modern history and was one of the crucial events of the early Cold War.

In June 1948, the Soviet Union suddenly blocked all ground traffic into West Berlin, which was located entirely within the Russian zone of occupation in Germany. It was an obvious effort to force the United States, Great Britain, and France (the other occupying powers in Germany) to accept Soviet demands concerning the postwar fate of Germany. As a result of the Soviet blockade, the people of West Berlin were left without food, clothing, or medical supplies. Some U.S. officials pushed for an aggressive response to the Soviet provocation, but cooler heads prevailed and a plan for an airlift of supplies to West Berlin was developed.



C-47s unloading at Tempelhof, formed the nucleus of the airlift until September when the larger and faster four engine C-54s capable of hauling 10 tons had been put into service.

It was a daunting task: supplying the daily wants and needs of so many civilians would require tons of food and other goods each and every day. On June 26, 1948, the Berlin Airlift began with U.S. pilots and planes carrying the lion's share of the burden. During the next 15 months, 277,264 aircraft landed in West Berlin bringing over 2 million tons of supplies. On September 30, 1949, the last

plane—an American C-54—landed in Berlin and unloaded over two tons of coal. Even though the Soviet blockade officially ended in May 1949, it took several more months for the West Berlin economy to recover and the necessary stockpiles of food, medicine, and fuel to be replenished.

The Berlin Airlift was a tremendous Cold War victory for the United States. Without firing a shot, the Americans foiled the Soviet plan to hold West Berlin hostage, while simultaneously demonstrating to the world the “Yankee ingenuity” for which their nation was famous. For the Soviets, the Berlin crisis was an unmitigated disaster. The United States, France, and Great Britain merely hardened their resolve on issues related to Germany, and the world came to see the Russians as international bullies, trying to starve innocent citizens.

- **Sep 30 1950 – Korea:** U.N. forces cross the 38th parallel as they pursue the retreating North Korean Army.
- **Sep 30 1954 – U.S. Navy:** The USS Nautilus » The world’s first nuclear submarine is commissioned by the U.S. Navy. The Nautilus was constructed under the direction of U.S. Navy Captain Hyman G. Rickover, a brilliant Russian-born engineer who joined the U.S. atomic program in 1946. In 1947, he was put in charge of the navy’s nuclear-propulsion program and began work on an atomic submarine. Regarded as a fanatic by his detractors, Rickover succeeded in developing and delivering the world’s first nuclear submarine years ahead of schedule. In 1952, the Nautilus’ keel was laid by President Harry S. Truman, and on January 21, 1954, first lady Mamie Eisenhower broke a bottle of champagne across its bow as it was launched into the Thames River at Groton, Connecticut. Commissioned on September 30, 1954, it first ran under nuclear power on the morning of January 17, 1955.

Much larger than the diesel-electric submarines that preceded it, the Nautilus stretched 319 feet and displaced 3,180 tons. It could remain submerged for almost unlimited periods because its atomic engine needed no air and only a very small quantity of nuclear fuel. The uranium-powered nuclear reactor produced steam that drove propulsion turbines, allowing the Nautilus to travel underwater at speeds in excess of 20 knots.



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In its early years of service, the USS Nautilus broke numerous submarine travel records and in August 1958 accomplished the first voyage under the geographic North Pole. After a career spanning 25 years and almost 500,000 miles steamed, the Nautilus was decommissioned on March 3, 1980. Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1982, the world’s first nuclear submarine went

on exhibit in 1986 as the Historic Ship Nautilus at the Submarine Force Museum in Groton, Connecticut.

- **Sep 30 1964 – Vietnam:** *First Large Scale Antiwar Demonstration Staged at Berkeley* » The demonstration is staged at the University of California at Berkeley, by students and faculty opposed to the war. Nevertheless, polls showed that a majority of Americans supported President Lyndon Johnson's policy on the war.
- **Sep 30 1968 – Vietnam War:** *Humphrey Announces that he Would Halt the Bombing of North Vietnam* » Apparently trying to distance himself from Johnson's policies, Democratic presidential candidate Hubert Humphrey announces that, if elected, he would halt the bombing of the North if there was any "evidence, direct or indirect, by deed or word, of communist willingness" to restore the Demilitarized Zone between North and South Vietnam.
- **Sep 30 1968 – Vietnam War:** The 900th US aircraft is shot down over the North and the USS New Jersey, the world's only active battleship, arrives in Vietnamese waters and begins bombarding the Demilitarized Zone from her station off the Vietnamese coast.

[Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September\\_1944](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_1944) , [www.history.com/this-day-in-history](http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history) , and [www.historycentral.com](http://www.historycentral.com) | September 2020 ++]