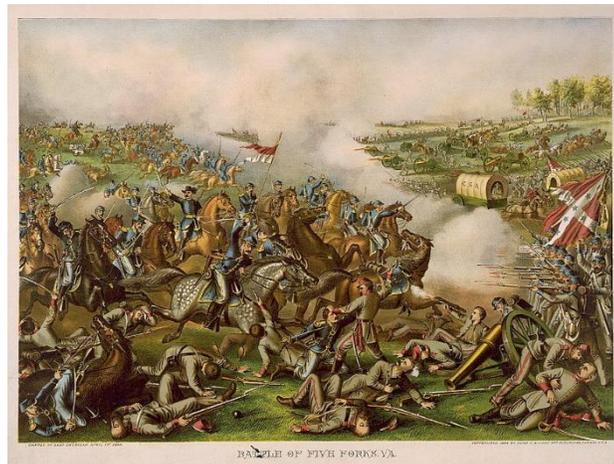




Military History Anniversaries 01 thru 15 April

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

- **Apr 01 1745 – French & Indian War:** A fleet consisting of 19 transport ships escorted by 13 armed merchant vessels is carrying a total of 4,220 American colonial militiamen toward Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. The goal is the capture of Louisburg, the largest fort in North America. It was built and garrisoned by the French to protect the entrance to the St. Lawrence River and French Canada.
- **Apr 01 1865 – Civil War:** *Confederates suffer at Battle of Five Forks* » Confederate General Robert E. Lee's supply line into Petersburg, Virginia, is closed when Union forces under General Ulysses S. Grant collapse the end of Lee's lines around Petersburg. The Confederates suffer heavy casualties, and the battle triggered Lee's retreat from Petersburg as the two armies began a race that would end a week later at Appomattox Court House.



For nearly a year, Grant had laid siege to Lee's army in an elaborate network of trenches that ran from Petersburg to the Confederate capital at Richmond, 25 miles north. Lee's hungry army slowly dwindled through the winter of 1864-65 as Grant's army swelled with well-fed reinforcements. On 25 MAR, Lee attacked part of the Union trenches at Fort Stedman in a desperate attempt to break the siege and split Grant's force. When that attack failed, Grant began mobilizing his forces along the

entire 40-mile front. Southwest of Petersburg, Grant sent General Philip Sheridan against Lee's right flank.

Sheridan moved forward on 31 MAR, but the tough Confederates halted his advance. Sheridan moved troops to cut the railroad that ran from the southwest into Petersburg, but the focus of the battle became Five Forks, a road intersection that provided the key to Lee's supply line. Lee instructed his commander there, General George Pickett, to "Hold Five Forks at all hazards." On April 1, Sheridan's men slammed into Pickett's troops. Pickett had his force poorly positioned, and he was taking a long lunch with his staff when the attack occurred. General Gouverneur K. Warren's V Corps supported Sheridan, and the 27,000 Yankee troops soon crushed Pickett's command of 10,000. The Union suffered 1,000 casualties, but nearly 5,000 of Pickett's men were killed, wounded, or captured. During the battle, Sheridan, with the approval of Grant, removed Warren from command despite Warren's effective deployment of his troops. It appears that a long-simmering feud between the two was the cause, but Warren was not officially cleared of any wrongdoing by a court of inquiry until 1882.

The vital intersection was in Union hands, and Lee's supply line was cut. Grant now attacked all along the Petersburg-Richmond front and Lee evacuated the cities. The two armies began a race west, but Lee could not outrun Grant. The Confederate leader surrendered at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on 9 APR.

- **Apr 01 1893 – U.S. Navy:** The rank of Chief Petty Officer in the United States Navy is established.



- **Apr 01 1918 – WWI:** *RAF founded* » The Royal Air Force (RAF) is formed with the amalgamation of the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS). The RAF took its place beside the British navy and army as a separate military service with its own ministry.



In April 1911, eight years after Americans Wilbur and Orville Wright made the first flight of a self-propelled, heavier-than-air aircraft, an air battalion of the British army's Royal Engineers was formed at Larkhill in Wiltshire. The battalion consisted of aircraft, airship, balloon, and man-carrying kite companies. In December 1911, the British navy formed the Royal Naval Flying School at Eastchurch, Kent. In May 1912, both were absorbed into the newly created Royal Flying Corps,

which established a new flying school at Upavon, Wiltshire, and formed new airplane squadrons. In July 1914, the specialized requirements of the navy led to the creation of RNAS.

One month later, on 4 AUG, Britain declared war on Germany and entered World War I. At the time, the RFC had 84 aircraft, and the RNAS had 71 aircraft and seven airships. Later that month, four RFC squadrons were deployed to France to support the British Expeditionary Force. During the next two years, Germany took the lead in air strategy with technologies like the manual machine gun, and England suffered bombing raids and frustration in the skies against German flying aces such as Manfred von Richthofen, “The Red Baron.” Repeated German air raids led British military planners to push for the creation of a separate air ministry, which would carry out strategic bombing against Germany. On April 1, 1918, the RAF was formed along with a female branch of the service, the Women’s Royal Air Force. That day, Bristol F.2B fighters of the 22nd Squadron carried out the first official missions of the RAF.

By the war’s end, in November 1918, the RAF had gained air superiority along the western front. The strength of the RAF in November 1918 was nearly 300,000 officers and airmen, and more than 22,000 aircraft. At the outbreak of World War II, in September 1939, the operational strength of the RAF in Europe had diminished to about 2,000 aircraft.

In June 1940, the Western democracies of continental Europe fell to Germany one by one, leaving Britain alone in its resistance to Nazi Germany. Nazi leader Adolf Hitler planned an invasion of Britain and in July 1940 ordered his powerful air force—the Luftwaffe—to destroy British ports along the coast in preparation. The outnumbered RAF fliers put up a fierce resistance in the opening weeks of the Battle of Britain, leading the Luftwaffe commanders to place destruction of the British air fleet at the forefront of the German offensive. If the Germans succeeded in wiping out the RAF, they could begin their invasion as scheduled in the fall.

During the next three months, however, the RAF successfully resisted the massive German air invasion, relying on radar technology, more maneuverable aircraft, and exceptional bravery. For every British plane shot down, two Luftwaffe warplanes were destroyed. In October, Hitler delayed the German invasion indefinitely, and in May 1941 the Battle of Britain came to an end. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill said of the RAF pilots, “Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.” By the war’s end in 1945, the strength of the RAF was nearly one million personnel. Later, this number was reduced and stabilized at about 150,000 men and women.

- **Apr 01 1924 – Germany:** *Hitler sent to Landsberg jail* » Nazi Party leader Adolf Hitler is sentenced to five years in prison for leading the Nazis’ unsuccessful “Beer Hall Putsch” in the German state of Bavaria.



Beer Hall Putsch Nov 8th to 9th 1923

In the early 1920s, the ranks of Hitler's Nazi Party swelled with resentful Germans who sympathized with the party's bitter hatred of Germany's democratic government, leftist politics, and Jews. In November 1923, after the German government resumed the payment of war reparations to Britain and France, the Nazis launched the "Beer Hall Putsch"—their first attempt at seizing the German government by force. Hitler hoped that his nationalist revolution in Bavaria would spread to the dissatisfied German army, which in turn would bring down the government in Berlin. However, the uprising was immediately suppressed, and Hitler was arrested and sentenced to five years in prison for high treason.

Sent to Landsberg jail, he spent his time dictating his autobiography, *Mein Kampf*, and working on his oratorical skills. After nine months in prison, political pressure from supporters of the Nazi Party forced his release. During the next few years, Hitler and the other leading Nazis reorganized their party as a fanatical mass movement that was able to gain a majority in the German parliament—the Reichstag—by legal means in 1932. In the same year, President Paul von Hindenburg defeated a presidential bid by Hitler, but in January 1933 he appointed Hitler chancellor, hoping that the powerful Nazi leader could be brought to heel as a member of the president's cabinet.

However, Hindenburg underestimated Hitler's political audacity, and one of the new chancellor's first acts was to use the burning of the Reichstag building as a pretext for calling general elections. The police under Nazi Hermann Goering suppressed much of the party's opposition before the election, and the Nazis won a bare majority. Shortly after, Hitler took on absolute power through the Enabling Acts. In 1934, Hindenburg died and the last remnants of Germany's democratic government were dismantled, leaving Hitler the sole master of a nation intent on war and genocide.

- **Apr 01 1942 – WW2:** Rationing - Anyone wishing to purchase a new toothpaste tube, then made from metal, had to turn in an empty one.
- **Apr 01 1944 – WW2:** Navigation errors lead to an accidental American bombing of the Swiss city of Schaffhausen.
- **Apr 01 1945 – WW2:** *U.S. troops land on Okinawa* » After suffering the loss of 116 planes and damage to three aircraft carriers, 50,000 U.S. combat troops of the 10th Army, under the command of Lieutenant General Simon B. Buckner Jr., land on the southwest coast of the Japanese island of Okinawa, 350 miles south of Kyushu, the southern main island of Japan.



Determined to seize Okinawa as a base of operations for the army ground and air forces for a later assault on mainland Japan, more than 1,300 ships converged on the island, finally putting ashore 50,000 combat troops on April 1. The Americans quickly seized two airfields and advanced inland to cut the island's waist. They battled nearly 120,000 Japanese army, militia, and labor troops under the command of Lieutenant General Mitsuru Ushijima.

The Japanese surprised the American forces with a change in strategy, drawing them into the mainland rather than confronting them at the water's edge. While Americans landed without loss of men, they would suffer more than 50,000 casualties, including more than 12,000 deaths, as the Japanese staged a desperate defense of the island, a defense that included waves of kamikaze ("divine wind") air attacks. Eventually, these suicide raids proved counterproductive, as the Japanese finally ran out of planes and resolve, with some 4,000 finally surrendering. Japanese casualties numbered some 117,000.

Lieutenant Buckner, son of a Civil War general, was among the casualties, killed by enemy artillery fire just three days before the Japanese surrender. Japanese General Ushijima committed ritual suicide upon defeat of his forces. The 1952 film *Okinawa* starring Pat O'Brien, is one of several movies to depict this decisive episode in the history of the war.

- **Apr 01 1948 – Cold War:** *Soviets stop U.S. and British military trains* » Soviet troops stop U.S. and British military trains traveling through the Russian zone of occupation in Germany and demand that they be allowed to search the trains. British and U.S. officials refused the Soviet demand, and the problems associated with the Soviet, British, and U.S. occupation of Germany grew steadily more serious in the following months.



Soviet and U.S. differences over the post-World War II fate of Germany began even before the war ended in 1945. The Soviets were determined that Germany would never again pose a military threat to Russia and they also demanded huge postwar reparations. The United States shared the Soviet concern about German rearmament, but as the Cold War began to develop, American officials realized that a revitalized Germany might act as a bulwark against possible Soviet expansion into Western Europe. When Germany surrendered in 1945, it was divided into British, American, Russian (and, eventually, French) zones of occupation. Berlin was located within the Russian sector, but the city itself was also divided into occupation zones.

As it became clear during 1946 and 1947 that the United States, acting with the British and French, were determined to economically revitalize and militarily rearm Western Germany, tensions with the Soviet Union began to mount. On April 1, 1948, Soviet troops began stopping U.S. and British military trains traveling through the Russian sector to and from Berlin. Both the British and American governments responded with indignant letters of reproach to the Soviet Union. Eventually,

the stoppages ceased, but in June 1948 the Soviets began a full-scale blockade of all ground travel to and from the U.S.-British-French sectors of Berlin. Thus began the Berlin Blockade, which was only broken when U.S. aircraft carried out the amazing task of flying and dropping supplies into Berlin. Germany remained a major Cold War battlefield throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

- **Apr 01 1954 – U.S. air Force:** President Dwight D. Eisenhower authorizes the creation of the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado.
- **Apr 01 1992 – Bosnia:** Start of the Bosnian War. The most recent figures suggest that around 100,000 people were killed during the war. In addition, an estimated total of 20,000 to 50,000 women were raped and over 2.2 million people were displaced, making it the most devastating conflict in Europe since the end of World War II.

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- **Apr 02 1863 – Civil War:** *Richmond riots over food shortages* » Responding to acute food shortages, hundreds of angry women riot in Richmond, Virginia, demanding that the government release emergency supplies. For several hours, the mob moved through the city, breaking windows and looting stores, before Confederate President Jefferson Davis threw his pocket change at them from the top of a wagon. Davis ordered the crowd to disperse or he would order the militia to fire upon them. The riot ended peacefully, although 44 women and 29 men were arrested.



- **Apr 02 1865 – Civil War:** *Union forces capture Petersburg line* » After a ten-month siege, Union forces under Ulysses S. Grant capture the trenches around Petersburg, Virginia, and Confederate General Robert E. Lee leads his troops on a desperate retreat westward.

The ragged Confederate troops could no longer maintain the 40-mile network of defenses that ran from southwest of Petersburg to north of Richmond, the Rebel capital 25 miles north of Petersburg. Through the winter, desertion and attrition melted Lee's army down to less than 60,000, while Grant's army swelled to over 120,000. Grant attacked Five Forks southwest of Petersburg on 1 APR, scoring a huge victory that cut Lee's supply line and inflicted 5,000 casualties. The next day, Lee wrote to Confederate President Jefferson Davis, "I think it absolutely necessary that we should abandon our position tonight..."

Grant's men attacked all along the Petersburg front. In the predawn hours, hundreds of Federal cannon roared to life as the Yankees bombarded the Rebel fortifications. Said one soldier, "the shells

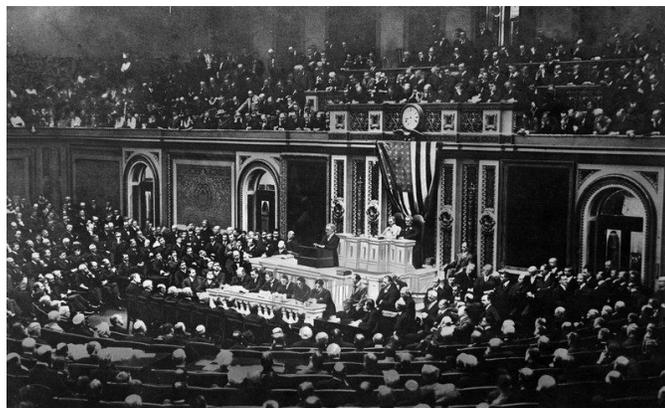
screamed through the air in a semi-circle of flame.” At 5:00 in the morning, Union troops silently crawled toward the Confederates, shrouded in darkness. Confederate pickets alerted the troops, and the Yankees were raked by heavy fire, but the determined troops poured forth and began overrunning the trenches. Four thousand Union troops were killed or wounded, but a northern officer wrote, “It was a great relief, a positive lifting of a load of misery to be at last let at them.”



Confederate General Ambrose Powell Hill, a corps commander in the Army of Northern Virginia and one of Lee’s most trusted lieutenants, rode to the front to rally his men. As he approached some trees with his aide, two Union soldiers emerged and fired, killing Hill instantly. Hill had survived four years of war and dozens of battles only to die during the final days of the Confederacy. When Lee received the news, he quietly said, “He is at rest now, and we who are left are the ones to suffer.”

By nightfall, President Jefferson Davis and the Confederate government were in flight and Richmond was on fire. Retreating Rebel troops set ablaze several huge warehouses to prevent them from being captured by the Federals and the fires soon spread. With the army and government officials gone, bands of thugs roamed the streets looting what was left.

- **Apr 02 1885 – Indian Wars:** Cree warriors attacked the village of Frog Lake, North-West Territories, Canada, killing 9.
- **Apr 02 1917 – WWI:** *Wilson asks for declaration of war* » President Woodrow Wilson asks Congress to send U.S. troops into battle against Germany in World War I. In his address to Congress that day, Wilson lamented it is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war. Four days later, Congress obliged and declared war on Germany.



In February and March 1917, Germany, embroiled in war with Britain, France and Russia, increased its attacks on neutral shipping in the Atlantic and offered, in the form of the so-called

Zimmermann Telegram, to help Mexico regain Texas, New Mexico and Arizona if it would join Germany in a war against the United States. The public outcry against Germany buoyed President Wilson in asking Congress to abandon America's neutrality to make the world safe for democracy.

Wilson went on to lead what was at the time the largest war-mobilization effort in the country's history. At first, Wilson asked only for volunteer soldiers, but soon realized voluntary enlistment would not raise a sufficient number of troops and signed the Selective Service Act in May 1917. The Selective Service Act required men between 21 and 35 years of age to register for the draft, increasing the size of the army from 200,000 troops to 4 million by the end of the war. One of the infantrymen who volunteered for active duty was future President Harry S. Truman.

In addition to raising troop strength, Wilson authorized a variety of programs in 1917 to mobilize the domestic war effort. He appointed an official propaganda group called the Committee on Public Information (CPI) to give speeches, publish pamphlets and create films that explained America's role in the war and drummed up support for Wilson's war-time policies. For example, the CPI's representatives, known as four-minute men, traveled throughout the U.S. urging Americans to buy war bonds and conserve food. Wilson appointed future President Herbert Hoover to lead the Food Administration, which cleverly changed German terms, like hamburger and sauerkraut, to more American-sounding monikers, like liberty sandwich or liberty cabbage.

Wilson hoped to convince Americans to voluntarily support the war effort, but was not averse to passing legislation to suppress dissent. After entering the war, Wilson ordered the federal government to take over the strike-plagued railroad industry to eliminate the possibility of work stoppages and passed the Espionage Act aimed at silencing anti-war protestors and union organizers.

The influx of American troops, foodstuffs and financial support into the Great War contributed significantly to Germany's surrender in November 1918. President Wilson led the American delegation to Paris for the negotiation of the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919, a controversial treaty—which was never ratified by Congress—that some historians claim successfully dismantled Germany's war machine but contributed to the rise of German fascism and the outbreak of World War II. Wilson's most enduring wartime policy remains his plan for a League of Nations, which, though unsuccessful, laid the foundation for the United Nations.

- **Apr 02 1941 – WW2:** *“The Desert Fox” recaptures Libya* » German Lieutenant General Erwin Rommel, “the Desert Fox,” resumes his advance into Cyrenaica, modern-day Libya, signaling the beginning of what nine days later will become the recapture of Libya by the Axis forces.



German general Erwin Rommel arrival in the desert in early 1941

Early Italian successes in East Africa, which included occupying parts of Sudan, Kenya, and British Somaliland, were soon reversed after British offensives, led by British Field Marshall Archibald Wavell, resulted in heavy Italian casualties and forced the Italians to retreat into Libya. But Axis control of the area was salvaged by the appearance of Rommel and the Afrika Korps, sent to East Africa by the German High Command to bail their Italian ally out.

On the verge of capturing Tripoli, the Libyan capital, Britain's forces were suddenly depleted when British Prime Minister Winston Churchill transferred British troops to Greece. Seizing the opportunity of a weakened British force, Rommel struck quickly, despite orders to remain still for two months. With 50 tanks and two fresh Italian divisions, Rommel forced the British to begin a retreat into Egypt. Operation Battleaxe, the counteroffensive by British Field Marshall Archibald Wavell, resulted in little more than the loss of large numbers of British tanks to German 88mm anti-tank guns, as well as Wavell's ultimately being transferred from North Africa to India.

Rommel, known for his trademark goggles, which he pilfered from a British general's command vehicle, may have had some help in defeating his British counterpart. He was known to carry with him a book called *Generals and Generalship*, written by Archibald Wavell. Rommel was portrayed by James Mason in the 1953 film *The Desert Rats* and by Christopher Plummer in 1967's *Night of the Generals*. Wavell was portrayed by Patrick Magee in the 1981 TV movie *Churchill and the Generals*.

- **Apr 02 1972 – Vietnam War:** North Vietnamese troops capture part of Quang Tri » Soldiers of Hanoi's 304th Division, supported by Soviet-made tanks and heavy artillery, take the northern half of the Quang Tri province. This left only Quang Tri City (the combat base on the outskirts of the city) and Dong Ha in South Vietnamese hands. South Vietnam's 3rd Division commander Brig. Gen. Vu Van Giai moved his staff out of the Quang Tri combat base to the citadel at Quang Tri City, the apparent North Vietnamese objective.

This attack was the opening move of the North Vietnamese Nguyen Hue Offensive (later called the "Easter Offensive"), a massive invasion by North Vietnamese forces designed to strike the blow that would win them the war. The attacking force included 14 infantry divisions and 26 separate regiments, with more than 120,000 troops and approximately 1,200 tanks and other armored vehicles. The main North Vietnamese objectives, in addition to Quang Tri in the north, were Kontum in the Central Highlands, and An Loc farther to the south.



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

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

- **Apr 02 1975 – Vietnam War:** South Vietnamese evacuation begins at Qui Nhon » As North Vietnamese tanks and infantry continue to push the remnants of South Vietnam’s 22nd Division and waves of civilian refugees from the Quang Ngai Province, the South Vietnamese Navy begins to evacuate soldiers and civilians by sea from Qui Nhon. Shortly thereafter, the South Vietnamese abandoned Tuy Hoa and Nha Trang, leaving the North Vietnamese in control of more than half of South Vietnam’s territory. During the first week in April, communist forces attacking from the south pushed into Long An Province, just south of Saigon, threatening to cut Highway 4, Saigon’s main link with the Mekong Delta, which would have precluded reinforcements from being moved north to assist in the coming battle for Saigon.

This action was part of the North Vietnamese general offensive launched in late January 1975, just two years after the cease-fire had been established by the Paris Peace Accords. The initial objective of this campaign was the capture of Ban Me Thuot in the Central Highlands. The battle began on 4 MAR with the North Vietnamese quickly encircling the city. As it became clear that the communists would take the city and probably the entire Darlac province, South Vietnamese president Thieu decided to protect the more critical populous areas. He ordered his forces in the Central Highlands to pull back from their positions. Abandoning Pleiku and Kontum, the South Vietnamese forces began to move toward the sea, but what started out as an orderly withdrawal soon turned into panic. The South Vietnamese forces rapidly fell apart. The North Vietnamese pressed the attack and were quickly successful in both the Central Highlands and farther north at Quang Tri, Hue and Da Nang. The South Vietnamese soon collapsed as a cogent fighting force and the North Vietnamese continued the attack all the way to Saigon. The South Vietnamese surrendered unconditionally on 30 APR.

- **Apr 02 1989 – Argentina’s Falklands War:** *Falklands invasion* » Argentina, a British colony since 1892 and British possession since 1833, invades. Her amphibious forces rapidly overcame the small garrison of British marines at the town of Stanley on East Falkland and the next day seized the dependent territories of South Georgia and the South Sandwich group. The 1,800 Falkland Islanders, mostly English-speaking sheep farmers, awaited a British response.



The Falkland Islands, located about 300 miles off the southern tip of Argentina, had long been claimed by the British. British navigator John Davis may have sighted the islands in 1592, and in 1690 British Navy Captain John Strong made the first recorded landing on the islands. He named them after Viscount Falkland, who was the First Lord of the Admiralty at the time. In 1764, French navigator Louis-Antoine de Bougainville founded the islands’ first human settlement, on East

Falkland, which was taken over by the Spanish in 1767. In 1765, the British settled West Falkland but left in 1774 for economic reasons. Spain abandoned its settlement in 1811.

In 1816 Argentina declared its independence from Spain and in 1820 proclaimed its sovereignty over the Falklands. The Argentines built a fort on East Falkland, but in 1832 it was destroyed by the USS Lexington in retaliation for the seizure of U.S. seal ships in the area. In 1833, a British force expelled the remaining Argentine officials and began a military occupation. In 1841, a British lieutenant governor was appointed, and by the 1880s a British community of some 1,800 people on the islands was self-supporting. In 1892, the wind-blown Falkland Islands were collectively granted colonial status.

For the next 90 years, life on the Falklands remained much unchanged, despite persistent diplomatic efforts by Argentina to regain control of the islands. In 1981, the Falkland Islanders voted in a referendum to remain British, and it seemed unlikely that the Falklands would ever revert to Argentine rule. Meanwhile, in Argentina, the military junta led by Lieutenant General Leopoldo Galtieri was suffering criticism for its oppressive rule and economic management, and planned the Falklands invasion as a means of promoting patriotic feeling and propping up its regime.

In March 1982, Argentine salvage workers occupied South Georgia Island, and a full-scale invasion of the Falklands began on 2 APR. Under orders from their commanders, the Argentine troops inflicted no British casualties, despite suffering losses to their own units. Nevertheless, Britain was outraged, and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher assembled a naval task force of 30 warships to retake the islands. As Britain is 8,000 miles from the Falklands, it took several weeks for the British warships to arrive. On April 25, South Georgia Island was retaken, and after several intensive naval battles fought around the Falklands, British troops landed on East Falkland on 21 MAY. After several weeks of fighting, the large Argentine garrison at Stanley surrendered on June 14, effectively ending the conflict.

Britain lost five ships and 256 lives in the fight to regain the Falklands, and Argentina lost its only cruiser and 750 lives. Humiliated in the Falklands War, the Argentine military was swept from power in 1983, and civilian rule was restored. In Britain, Margaret Thatcher's popularity soared after the conflict, and her Conservative Party won a landslide victory in 1983 parliamentary elections.

- **Apr 02 1989 – Cold War:** *Gorbachev begins visit to Cuba* » In an effort to mend strained relations between the Soviet Union and Cuba, Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev arrives in Havana to meet with Fidel Castro. Castro's suspicions regarding Gorbachev's economic and political reform measures in the Soviet Union, together with the fact that Russia's ailing economy could no longer support massive economic assistance to Cuba, kept the meetings from achieving any solid agreements.



The relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba had been extremely close since the early-1960s, when Castro declared his government to be a Marxist-Leninist regime. In the years that followed, the Soviet Union provided Cuba with large amounts of military and economic assistance. Since Gorbachev's rise to leadership in the Soviet Union in 1985, however, relations with Cuba had deteriorated badly. Castro was extremely suspicious, and often openly critical, of Gorbachev's efforts to introduce more free market economics and political democracy into the Soviet Union. In a speech in December 1988, the Cuban leader warned that his nation might "be in for difficulties coming from the enemy camp and difficulties coming from the camp of our own friends." In addition, the weakening Soviet economy could no longer provide the levels of assistance to Cuba that it had in the past. Gorbachev's visit was an attempt to mend political fences between the two communist nations.

Castro greeted Gorbachev with a great deal of pomp and public affection. The meeting quickly cooled, though, when it became apparent that Gorbachev hoped to convince Castro to enact political and economic reforms and had also made the trip to explain that Soviet aid would be dwindling even further in the years to come. When Gorbachev left, the farewell was correct and cordial, but nothing more. Gorbachev had little time to consider Soviet-Cuban relations, however. The Soviet Union was soon thrown into upheaval by political and economic instability, and Gorbachev resigned in December 1991. Castro continues to hold power in Cuba.

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- **Apr 03 1776 – American Revolution:** Because it lacked sufficient funds to build a strong navy, the Continental Congress gives privateers permission to attack any and all British ships. In a bill signed by John Hancock the Congress issued, INSTRUCTIONS to the COMMANDERS of Private Ships or vessels of War, which shall have Commissions of Letters of Marque and Reprisal, authorizing them to make Captures of British Vessels and Cargoes.
- **Apr 03 1865 – Civil War:** Confederate capital of Richmond is captured » The Rebel capital of Richmond, Virginia, falls to the Union, the most significant sign that the Confederacy is nearing its final days. For ten months, General Ulysses S. Grant had tried unsuccessfully to infiltrate the city. After Lee made a desperate attack against Fort Stedman along the Union line on 25 MAR, Grant prepared for a major offensive. He struck at Five Forks on April 1, crushing the end of Lee's line southwest of Petersburg. On 2 APR, the Yankees struck all along the Petersburg line, and the Confederates collapsed.



On the evening of 2 APR, the Confederate government fled the city with the army right behind. Now, on the morning of 3 APR, blue-coated troops entered the capital. Richmond was the holy grail of the Union war effort, the object of four years of campaigning. Tens of thousands of Yankee lives were lost trying to get it, and nearly as many Confederate lives lost trying to defend it.

Now, the Yankees came to take possession of their prize. One resident, Mary Fontaine, wrote, “I saw them unfurl a tiny flag, and I sank on my knees, and the bitter, bitter tears came in a torrent.” Another observer wrote that as the Federals rode in, the city’s black residents were “completely crazed, they danced and shouted, men hugged each other, and women kissed.” Among the first forces into the capital were black troopers from the 5th Massachusetts Cavalry, and the next day President Abraham Lincoln visited the city. For the residents of Richmond, these were symbols of a world turned upside down. It was, one reporter noted, “...too awful to remember, if it were possible to be erased, but that cannot be.”

- **Apr 03 1918 – WWI:** The Allied Supreme War Council formally confers the post of commander in chief on the Western Front to General Ferdinand Foch.
- **Apr 03 1942 – WW2:** *Japanese launch major offensive against Bataan* » Japanese infantry stage a major offensive against Allied troops in Bataan, the peninsula guarding Manila Bay of the Philippine Islands. The invasion of the Japanese 14th Army, which began in December 1941 and was led by General Masaharu Homma, had already forced General Douglas MacArthur’s troops from Manila, the Philippine capital, into Bataan, in part because of poor strategizing on MacArthur’s part.

By March, after MacArthur had left for Australia on President Roosevelt’s orders and been replaced by Major General Edward P. King Jr., the American Luzon Force and its Filipino allies were half-starved and suffering from malnutrition, malaria, beriberi, dysentery, and hookworm. Homma, helped by reinforcements and an increase in artillery and aircraft activity, took advantage of the U.S. and Filipinos’ weakened condition. The Japanese attack signaled the beginning of the end and would result, six days later, in the surrender of the largest number of U.S. troops in U.S. military history.

- **Apr 03 1943 – WW2:** USS Pickerel (SS-177) sunk by Japanese minelayer Shirakami and auxiliary subchaser Bunzan Maru off northern Honshu, Japan. 74 killed
- **Apr 03 1945 – WW2:** U.S. 1st Army conquers Hofgeismar, Germany
- **Apr 03 1946 – Post WW2:** Japanese Lt. General Masaharu Homma is executed in the Philippines for leading the Bataan Death March. He maintained that he had no knowledge of atrocities until after they had occurred.



Masaharu Homma

- **Apr 03 1948 – Cold War:** *President Harry Truman signs Marshall Plan* » The President signs the Economic Assistance Act, which authorized the creation of a program that would help the nations of Europe recover and rebuild after the devastation wrought by World War II. Commonly known as the Marshall Plan, it aimed to stabilize Europe economically and politically so that European nations would not be tempted by the appeal of communist parties.

U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall made his famous call for American assistance to Europe in a speech at Harvard University on June 5, 1947. He proposed that the European states themselves draw up a program for economic recovery, which the United States would help fund. In mid-June 1947, Britain and France invited European nations to send representatives to Paris in order to draw up a cooperative recovery plan. The Soviet Union declined to attend the meeting; the Soviet-influenced nations of Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland also excluded themselves. The Committee of European Economic Cooperation (CEEC) eventually presented a unified plan before Congress, which authorized the Economic Cooperation Act on April 2, 1948. President Truman signed the act into law the following day.



U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall

Under the Marshall Plan, the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) distributed \$13 billion in aid over four years (1948-51). Most of the funds were given in direct grants, and the rest in loans. Seventeen nations in western and southern Europe received assistance, including the United Kingdom, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, France, Sweden, Iceland, Ireland, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Switzerland, Turkey and West Germany. The plan aided both agricultural and industrial productivity in Europe, and helped rejuvenate ailing industries like chemicals, engineering and steel. Participating countries saw their gross national products go up by 15 to 25 percent.

Rebuilding post-war Europe was just one of many serious foreign-policy challenges faced by President Truman, who became president in April 1945 after the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt during World War II. Just months after he took office, he made the decision to drop atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In the so-called Truman Doctrine, he asked Congress to provide economic and military aid to Turkey and Greece after the two countries came under Soviet and communist pressure in 1947. Truman was also responsible for the massive airlift that supplied West Berlin in 1948 and the negotiation of a military alliance that became the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949. During his second term, Truman sent U.S. military forces to defend against a communist invasion of Korea, but struggled to keep the war limited, rather than come into

direct conflict with China or even Russia. In 1952, Truman declined to run for another term in office; he retired to his home state of Missouri and lived there until his death in 1972, at the age of 88.

- **Apr 03 1969 – Vietnam War:** *Nixon administration will “Vietnamize” the war* » Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird announces that the United States is moving to “Vietnamize” the war as rapidly as possible. By this, he meant that the responsibility for the fighting would be gradually transferred to the South Vietnamese as they became more combat capable. However, Laird emphasized that it would not serve the United States’ purpose to discuss troop withdrawals while the North Vietnamese continued to conduct offensive operations in South Vietnam. Despite Laird’s protestations to the contrary, Nixon’s “Vietnamization” program, as he would announce it in June, did include a series of scheduled U.S. troop withdrawals, the first of the war.



Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird

- **Apr 03 1969 – Vietnam War:** U.S. military headquarters in Saigon announce that combat deaths for the last week of March have pushed the total number of Americans killed during eight years of U.S. involvement in Vietnam to 33,641. This was 12 more deaths than during the Korean War. By the end of the war, 47,244 Americans had been killed in action in Vietnam. An additional 10,446 died as a result of non-hostile causes like disease and accidents.
- **Apr 03 1972 – Vietnam War:** Nixon orders response to North Vietnamese invasion » The United States prepares hundreds of B-52s and fighter-bombers for possible air strikes to blunt the recently launched North Vietnamese invasion. The aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk was sent from the Philippines to join the carriers already off the coast of Vietnam and provide additional air support.

This attack was the opening move of the North Vietnamese Nguyen Hue Offensive (later called the “Easter Offensive”), a massive invasion by North Vietnamese forces designed to strike the blow that would win them the war. The attacking force included 14 infantry divisions and 26 separate regiments, with more than 120,000 troops and approximately 1,200 tanks and other armored vehicles. The main North Vietnamese objectives, in addition to Quang Tri in the north, were Kontum in the Central Highlands, and An Loc farther to the south.

North Vietnam had a number of reasons for launching the offensive: impressing the communist world and its own people with its determination; capitalizing on U.S. antiwar sentiment and possibly hurting President Richard Nixon’s chances for re-election; proving that “Vietnamization” was a failure; damaging the South Vietnamese forces and government stability; gaining as much territory as possible before a possible truce; and accelerating negotiations on their own terms.

Initially, the South Vietnamese defenders were almost overwhelmed, particularly in the northernmost provinces, where they abandoned their positions in Quang Tri and fled south in the face of the enemy onslaught. At Kontum and An Loc, the South Vietnamese were more successful in defending against the attacks, but only after weeks of bitter fighting. Although the defenders suffered heavy casualties, they managed to hold their own with the aid of U.S. advisors and American airpower. Fighting continued all over South Vietnam into the summer months, but eventually the South Vietnamese forces prevailed against the invaders and retook Quang Tri in September. With the communist invasion blunted, President Nixon declared that the South Vietnamese victory proved the viability of his Vietnamization program, instituted in 1969 to increase the combat capability of the South Vietnamese armed forces.

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- **Apr 04 1776 – American Revolution:** After the successful siege of Boston, General George Washington begins marching his unpaid soldiers from their headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts, toward New York in anticipation of a British invasion.
- **Apr 04 1865 - Civil War:** President Abraham Lincoln visits the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, a day after Union forces capture it. Lincoln, accompanied by a small group of soldiers and a growing entourage of freed slaves, walked to the Confederate White House and sat in President Jefferson Davis's chair. He remained in Richmond a few more days in hopes that Robert E. Lee's army would surrender, but on April 8 he headed back to Washington. Six days later, Lincoln was shot as he watched a play at Ford's Theater.



- **Apr 04 1915 – WWI:** Germany decrees British waters as part of the war zone; all ships to be sunk without warning.
- **Apr 04 1917 – WWI:** The U.S. Senate votes 90–6 to enter World War I on the Allied side.
- **Apr 04 1918 – WWI:** *Second Battle of the Somme ends* » During World War I, the Second Battle of the Somme, the first major German offensive in more than a year, ends on the western front.

On March 21, 1918, a major offensive against Allied positions in the Somme River region of France began with five hours of bombardment from more than 9,000 pieces of German artillery. The poorly prepared British Fifth Army was rapidly overwhelmed and forced into retreat. For a week, the Germans pushed toward Paris, shelling the city from a distance of 80 miles with their “Big Bertha” cannons. However, the poorly supplied German troops soon became exhausted, and the Allies halted the German advance as French artillery knocked out the German guns besieging Paris. On 2 APR, U.S. General John J. Pershing sent American troops down into the trenches to help defend Paris and repulse the German offensive. It was the first major deployment of U.S. troops in World War I. Several thousand American troops fought alongside the British and French in the Second Battle of Somme.

By the time the Somme offensive ended on 4 APR, the Germans had advanced almost 40 miles, inflicted some 200,000 casualties, and captured 70,000 prisoners and more than 1,000 Allied guns. However, the Germans suffered nearly as many casualties as their enemies and lacked the fresh reserves and supply boost the Allies enjoyed following the American entrance into the fighting.

- **Apr 04 1918 – WWI:** German military officials announced that their attacks in the Somme region had claimed a total of 90,000 Allied prisoners since 21 MAR. The following day, Erich Ludendorff, chief of the German general staff, formally closed down the Michael offensive; the second phase of the attacks, “Georgette,” would begin four days later in Flanders.
- **Apr 04 1944 – WW2:** First bombardment of oil refineries in Bucharest by Anglo-American forces kills 3000 civilians.
- **Apr 04 1945 – WW2:** Battle of Kassel - After a four day struggle with the German Army American troops capture Kassel Germany. Casualties and losses: US light – GE 50 killed & 5400+ POW
- **Apr 04 1945 – WW2:** American troops liberate Ohrdruf forced labor camp in Germany. It was the first Nazi concentration camp liberated by U.S. troops. They discovered piles of bodies, some covered with lime, and others partially incinerated on pyres.



Gallows



Cremation Pyre



Stacked Bodies

- **Apr 04 1949 – Cold War:** *NATO established* » The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is established by 12 Western nations: the United States, Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Iceland, Canada, and Portugal. The military

alliance, which provided for a collective self-defense against Soviet aggression, greatly increased American influence in Europe.

Greece, Turkey, and West Germany later joined NATO, but in 1966 France withdrew, citing American violations of the 1949 treaty. In 1955, the Warsaw Pact, a Soviet-led Eastern European alliance, was established to counter NATO. In 1994, three years after the end of the Cold War, NATO engaged in its first military action as part of an international effort to end two years of fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, which all left the Warsaw Pact upon its dissolution in 1991, joined NATO in 1999. Today, there are twenty-six member states in total.

- **Apr 04 1967 – Vietnam War:** The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, delivers a speech entitled “Beyond Vietnam” in front of 3,000 people at Riverside Church in New York City. In it, he says that there is a common link forming between the civil rights and peace movements.
- **Apr 04 1973 – Vietnam War:** A Lockheed C-141 Starlifter, dubbed the Hanoi Taxi, makes the last flight of Operation Homecoming.
- **Apr 04 1975 – Vietnam War:** *Operation Baby Lift aircraft crashes* » A major U.S. airlift of South Vietnamese orphans begins with disaster when an Air Force cargo jet crashes shortly after departing from Tan Son Nhut airbase in Saigon. More than 138 passengers, mostly children, were killed. Operation Baby Lift was designed to bring 2,000 South Vietnamese orphans to the United States for adoption by American parents. Baby Lift lasted for 10 days and was carried out during the final, desperate phase of the war, as North Vietnamese forces closed in on Saigon. Although this first flight ended in tragedy, all subsequent flights were completed safely, and Baby Lift aircraft brought orphans across the Pacific until the mission’s conclusion on 14 APR, only 16 days before the fall of Saigon and the end of the war.



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- **Apr 05 1774 – American Revolution:** Benjamin Franklin publishes “An Open Letter to Lord North” » Benjamin Franklin writes an open letter to Great Britain’s prime minister, Frederick, Lord North, from the Smyrna Coffee House in London. It was published in The Public Advertiser, a British newspaper, on April 15, 1774.

Franklin’s tongue-in-cheek letter suggested that the British impose martial law upon the colonies and appoint a “King’s Viceroy of all North America.” Franklin satirically went on to suggest that such centralized power over “Yankee Doodles,” who had “degenerated to such a Degree” from their

British ancestors, “that one born in Britain is equal to twenty Americans,” would allow the crown to collect its taxes, then sell their impoverished colonies and colonists to Spain.

Smyrna Coffee House on St. James Street in London had been a meeting place of Whigs, or political liberals, since the 17th century. For Franklin to sign a letter drafted at Smyrna’s “A Friend of Military Government” was an obvious use of irony. The details of his purported plan for a military government, including the exclusive use of military courts in colonies known for their commitment to trial by jury, and “One Hundred to a Thousand Lashes in a frosty Morning” for offenders made Franklin’s disdain for Lord North and his heavy-handed tactics clear.

In fact, Franklin’s letter proved prophetic when Lord North imposed martial law on Massachusetts the next month with the passage of the Massachusetts Government Act. General Thomas Gage received the appointment to institute the military government as the colony’s royal governor. Franklin had snidely suggested in his treatise, “that great Commander G—l G—e” could take but a few men and “so intimidate the Americans that the General might march through the whole Continent of North America, and would have little else to do but to accept of the Submission of several Towns as he passed.”

Franklin, of course, found his own suggestions laughable. North, however, seemed to find such a scheme practicable, and pursued it at the cost of many lives and, eventually, Britain’s 13 colonies.

- **Apr 05 1862 – Civil War:** *Siege of Yorktown begins* » Union forces under General George McClellan arrive at Yorktown, Virginia, and establish siege lines instead of directly attacking the Confederate defenders.



This was the opening of McClellan’s Peninsular campaign. He sailed his massive Army of the Potomac down Chesapeake Bay and landed on the James Peninsula southeast of the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia. He reasoned that this would bring him closer to Richmond, and the Confederates would have a difficult time gathering their scattered forces to the peninsula. The first resistance came at Yorktown, the site of George Washington’s decisive victory over Lord Cornwallis to end the American Revolution 91 years earlier.

McClellan was discouraged by what he thought was a substantial force resting inside of strong and well-armed fortifications. The Confederates he saw were actually 11,000 troops under General John B. Magruder. Although vastly outnumbered, Magruder staged an elaborate ruse to fool McClellan. He ordered logs painted black, called “Quaker Guns,” placed in redoubts to give the appearance of numerous artillery pieces. Magruder marched his men back and forth to enhance the illusion. The performance worked, as McClellan was convinced that he could not make a frontal assault.

He opted to lay siege instead. Not until May 4 did Magruder's troops finally abandon Yorktown, giving the Confederates valuable time to gather their troops near Richmond. The campaign climaxed in late June when McClellan was driven away from the gates of Richmond in the Seven Days' battles.

- **Apr 05 1918 – WWI:** General Erich Ludendorff formally ends “Operation Michael,” the first of 3 stages of the final major German offensive of World War I.
- **Apr 05 1943 – WW2:** American bomber aircraft accidentally cause more than 900 civilian deaths, including 209 children, and 1300 wounded among the civilian population of the Belgian town of Mortsel. The target is the Erla factory one kilometer from the residential area hit.
- **Apr 05 1945 - Cold War:** *Tito signs “friendship treaty” with Soviet Union* » Yugoslav partisan leader Tito signs an agreement permitting “temporary entry of Soviet troops into Yugoslav territory.”



Josip Broz, alias “Tito,” secretary general of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, led a partisan counteroffensive movement against the Axis occupying powers of Germany and Italy in 1941. Recognized by the Allies as the leader of the Yugoslav resistance, he was, in fact, the leader of a power grab meant not only to expel the Axis forces but to wrest control of Yugoslavia in the postwar environment from both royalist and democratic movements. Once the Soviet army liberated Serbia, the fate of Yugoslavia as a communist-dominated nation was sealed. Tito's task now lay in remaining independent of both the U.S.S.R. and the West. To this end, he created a “second Yugoslavia,” a socialist federation that became known for its nonalignment stance.

As part of the agreement signed on April 5, 1945, Tito secured a proviso that the Soviets would leave Yugoslavia once its “operational task” was completed. Ensuring compliance with this clause proved problematic, as Stalin tried to maintain a presence in postwar Yugoslavia, attempting to co-opt the Yugoslav Communist Party and create another puppet state. He failed; Tito played the West against the East in a Machiavellian scheme to keep his own Stalin-like grip on his country. Although he permitted cultural and scientific freedom unheard of in Soviet-bloc countries, he was also guilty of purging centrist and democratic forces fighting for reform within Yugoslavia and centralizing all power in one party. But upon Tito's death, in 1980, the center could not hold—chaos was ultimately unleashed in the form of ethnic civil war.

- **Apr 05 1944 – WW2:** The Germans execute 270 inhabitants of the Greek town of Kleisoura in reprisal for the active participation of Cretan civilians in the Battle of Crete.

- **Apr 05 1942 – WW2:** The Imperial Japanese Navy launches a carrier-based air attack on Colombo, Ceylon during the Indian Ocean Raid. Port and civilian facilities are damaged and the Royal Navy cruisers HMS Cornwall and HMS Dorsetshire are sunk southwest of the island.
- **Apr 05 1945 – WW2:** Yugoslav partisan leader Tito signs an agreement permitting temporary entry of Soviet troops into Yugoslav territory. As part of the agreement Tito secured a proviso that the Soviets would leave Yugoslavia once its “operational task” was completed. Ensuring compliance with this clause proved problematic, as Stalin tried to maintain a presence in postwar Yugoslavia, attempting to co-opt the Yugoslav Communist Party and create another puppet state. He failed.
- **Apr 05 1951 – Cold War:** *Rosenbergs sentenced to die* » At the end of a highly publicized espionage case, death sentences are imposed against Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, one week after the couple were found guilty of conspiring to transmit atomic secrets to the Soviet Union.

The Rosenberg case began with the arrest of Klaus Fuchs, a German-born and U.S.-employed scientist who confessed to passing classified information about the U.S. atomic program to the Soviets. Following his 1950 conviction, U.S. authorities began an extensive investigation of Los Alamos, New Mexico, the top secret U.S. atomic development headquarters where Fuchs worked during the war. Harry Gold, a Philadelphia chemist, was arrested as a Fuchs accomplice, followed by David Greenglass, who had been stationed near the Los Alamos atomic testing site during the war. In July 1950, Ethel Rosenberg, the sister of Greenglass, was arrested along with her husband, Julius, an electrical engineer who had worked for the U.S. Army Signal Corps during the war. Alleged to have communist leanings, the couple was accused of convincing Greenglass to provide Harry Gold with atomic secrets.



During their trial, the Rosenbergs maintained their innocence, though Greenglass, who had pleaded guilty, agreed to testify against them. At the trial’s end in the spring of 1951, David Greenglass was sentenced to 15 years in prison, Harry Gold was sentenced to 30 years, and the Rosenbergs were sentenced to death. Despite court appeals and pleas for executive clemency, the Rosenbergs, the first U.S. civilians to be given the death penalty in an espionage trial, were executed by electrocution on June 19, 1953.

The trial occurred at the height of the “red scare” in the early 1950s, and critics of the case argued that the political climate of the time made a fair trial impossible. Others questioned whether the Rosenbergs deserved execution, especially as the only seriously incriminating evidence came from a confessed spy who was given a reduced sentence to testify against them. In one of her last letters

before being executed, Ethel Rosenberg wrote, “My husband and I must be vindicated by history; we are the first victims of American Fascism.”

- **Apr 05 1968 – Post WW2: Winston Churchill resigns** » Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill, the British leader who guided Great Britain and the Allies through the crisis of World War II, retires as prime minister of Great Britain.



Born at Blenheim Palace in 1874, Churchill joined the British Fourth Hussars upon his father’s death in 1895. During the next five years, he enjoyed an illustrious military career, serving in India, the Sudan, and South Africa, and distinguishing himself several times in battle. In 1899, he resigned his commission to concentrate on his literary and political career and in 1900 was elected to Parliament as a Conservative MP from Oldham. In 1904, he joined the Liberals, serving a number of important posts before being appointed Britain’s First Lord of the Admiralty in 1911, where he worked to bring the British navy to a readiness for the war he foresaw.

In 1915, in the second year of World War I, Churchill was held responsible for the disastrous Dardanelles and Gallipoli campaigns and was thus excluded from the war coalition government. However, in 1917, he returned to politics as a cabinet member in the Liberal government of Lloyd George. From 1919 to 1921, he was secretary of state for war and in 1924 returned to the Conservative Party, where two years later he played a leading role in the defeat of the General Strike of 1926. Out of office from 1929 to 1939, Churchill issued unheeded warnings of the threat of Nazi and Japanese aggression.

After the outbreak of World War II in Europe, Churchill returned to his post as First Lord of the Admiralty and eight months later replaced Neville Chamberlain as prime minister of a new coalition government. In the first year of his administration, Britain stood alone against Nazi Germany, but Churchill promised his country and the world that Britain would “never surrender.” He rallied the British people to a resolute resistance and expertly orchestrated Franklin D. Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin into an alliance that eventually crushed the Axis.

After a postwar Labor Party victory in 1945, he became leader of the opposition and in 1951 was again elected prime minister. In 1953, he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II and awarded the Nobel Prize in literature. After his retirement as prime minister, he remained in Parliament until 1964, the year before his death.

- **Apr 05 1968 – Vietnam War:** Operation Pegasus was launched by the 1st Air Cavalry Division to relieve the marines at Khe Sanh.
- **Apr 05 1969 – Vietnam War:** *Antiwar demonstrations held across United States* » Approximately 100,000 antiwar demonstrators march in New York City to demand that the United States withdraw

from Vietnam. The weekend of antiwar protests ended with demonstrations and parades in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and other cities. The National Mobilization Committee, the Student Mobilization Committee, and the Socialist Workers Party were among the groups that helped organize the demonstrations. At the same time, Quakers held sit-ins at draft boards and committed other acts of civil disobedience in more than 30 cities.



- **Apr 05 1972 – Vietnam War:** *North Vietnamese launch second front of Nguyen Hue Offensive* » Moving out of eastern Cambodia, North Vietnamese troops open the second front of their offensive with a drive into Binh Long Province, attacking Loc Ninh, a border town 75 miles north of Saigon on Highway 13. At the same time, additional North Vietnamese cut the highway between An Loc, the provincial capital, and Saigon to the south, effectively isolating An Loc from outside support.

This attack was the southernmost thrust of the three-pronged Nguyen Hue Offensive (later known as the “Easter Offensive”), a massive invasion by North Vietnamese forces designed to strike the blow that would win them the war. The attacking force included 14 infantry divisions and 26 separate regiments, with more than 120,000 troops and approximately 1,200 tanks and other armored vehicles. The main North Vietnamese objectives, in addition to An Loc in the south, were Quang Tri in the north, and Kontum in the Central Highlands. Initially, the South Vietnamese defenders in each case were almost overwhelmed, particularly in the northernmost provinces where government forces abandoned their positions in Quang Tri and fled south in the face of the enemy onslaught.

In Binh Long, the North Vietnamese forces crossed into South Vietnam from Cambodia to strike first at Loc Ninh, then quickly encircled An Loc, holding it under siege for almost three months while they made repeated attempts to take the city. The defenders suffered heavy casualties, including 2,300 dead or missing, but with the aid of U.S. advisors and American airpower, they managed to hold An Loc against vastly superior odds until the siege was lifted on June 18. Fighting continued all over South Vietnam into the summer months, but eventually the South Vietnamese forces prevailed against the invaders and they retook Quang Tri in September. With the communist invasion blunted, President Nixon declared that the South Vietnamese victory proved the viability of his Vietnamization program, which he had instituted in 1969 to increase the combat capability of the South Vietnamese armed forces.

- **Apr 05 2009 – Korea:** The North launches its controversial Kwangmyongsong-2 rocket. The satellite passed over mainland Japan, which prompted an immediate reaction from the United Nations Security Council, as well as participating states of Six-party talks.

- **Apr 06 1776 – American Revolution:** the Continental Congress takes the first step toward American independence by announcing their decision to open all American ports to international trade with any part of the world that is not under British rule.

It was the first act of independence by the Continental Congress that had so openly and publicly rejected the American Prohibitory Act passed by the British parliament in December 1775. The act was designed to punish the American colonies for the rebellion against the king and British rule, which had begun with the Battle of Lexington and Concord in April 1775, by banning all British trade with America. It was, in essence, a declaration of economic warfare by Great Britain. For its part, the Continental Congress' decision to open all ports to any country but those ruled by Britain constituted America's declaration of economic independence.

The economic relationship between Britain and the 13 colonies had been mercantilist—the colonies provided raw materials such as rice and tobacco to the mother country, Great Britain, and in return received manufactured goods such as textiles and ceramics or foreign goods such as tea. Under the mercantile system, all American imports and exports had to pass through Great Britain on their way to and from the colonies. Undoing this economic relationship was a necessary aspect of freeing the colonies from the control of the British empire. Recognizing this, Britain had passed the Tea Act in 1773 in a misguided attempt to trick colonists into accepting parliamentary taxation by making legal tea imported from India through Britain cheaper than non-taxed tea smuggled into the colonies from the Netherlands. It failed; the colonists were outraged and protested vigorously, most famously in form of the Boston Tea Party. The Prohibitory Act finally cut the colonists loose from the mercantilist system, but not without repercussions: colonists lost not only the burdens of British taxes, but the benefits of British products, making it necessary for the new nation to open its ports to trade from elsewhere.

- **Apr 06 1822 – Westward Expansion:** *Black Hawk War Begins* » Determined to resist the growing presence of Anglo settlers on traditional tribal lands, the Sauk warrior Black Hawk is drawn into war with the United States.



Called Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak by his people, Black Hawk was born in 1767 in the village of Saukenuk in the present-day state of Illinois. He quickly earned a reputation as a fierce and courageous fighter in the frequent skirmishes between the Sauk and their principle enemy, the Osage.

By the early 1800s, however, Black Hawk began to realize that the real threat to his people was the rapidly growing numbers of white people streaming into the region.

In 1804, representatives of the Sauk and Fox (Mesquakie) Indians signed a treaty that ceded all of their territory east of the Mississippi River to the United States. Black Hawk, however, maintained the treaty was invalid and had been signed by drunken Indian representatives. In 1816, he reluctantly confirmed the treaty with his own signature, but he later said he did not understand that this meant he would someday have to cede his home village of Saukenuk on the Rock River.

As the U.S. Army built more forts and droves of settlers moved into the territory during the next 15 years, Black Hawk grew increasingly angry. Finally, in 1831, settlers began to occupy the village of Saukenuk, an area that would later become Rock Island, Illinois. Regardless of the provisions of the 1804 treaty, Black Hawk refused to leave his own home. He began to prepare for war.

Early in 1832, General Edmund P. Gaines arrived in the area with a sizeable force of U.S. soldiers and Illinois militiamen. Initially, Black Hawk withdrew his large band of warriors, women, and children to the west side of the Mississippi. On April 5, however, he led them back into the disputed territory, believing that other Indian forces and the British to the north would support him in a confrontation. The following day, a large army of soldiers caught up to Black Hawk and his followers near the Rock River of northern Illinois. When neither the British nor his Indian allies came to his support, Black Hawk attempted to surrender. Unfortunately, one of his truce bearers was killed in the confusion, and the Black Hawk War began.



In May, Black Hawk's warriors won a significant victory that left the Americans badly demoralized. As subsequent generations of Indian fighters would learn, however, the mighty force of the U.S. government was relentless. On August 2, U.S. soldiers nearly annihilated Black Hawk's band as it attempted to escape west across the Mississippi, and Black Hawk finally surrendered.

Casualties in the 15-week war were grossly one-sided. An estimated 70 settlers or soldiers lost their lives; estimates for the number of Indians killed are between 442 and 592. Black Hawk was captured and incarcerated for a time in Fortress Monroe, Virginia. In order to demonstrate the futility of further resistance to the powerful Americans, Black Hawk was taken on a tour of the major eastern cities before being relocated to an Iowa Indian agency. He lived the remaining six years of his life under the supervision of a Sauk chief who had once been his enemy. Unlike Black Hawk, the Sauk chief had cooperated with the United States government.

- **Apr 06 1862 – Civil War:** *Battle of Shiloh begins* » The Civil War explodes in the west as the armies of Union General Ulysses S. Grant and Confederate General Albert Sidney Johnston collide at Shiloh, near Pittsburgh Landing in Tennessee. The Battle of Shiloh became one of the bloodiest engagements of the war, and the level of violence shocked North and South alike.



For six months, Yankee troops had been working their way up the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers. Kentucky was firmly in Union hands, and now the Federals controlled much of Tennessee, including the capital at Nashville. Grant scored major victories at Forts Henry and Donelson in February, forcing Johnston to gather the scattered Rebel forces at Corinth in northern Mississippi. Grant brought his army, 42,000 strong, to rendezvous with General Don Carlos Buell and his 20,000 troops. Grant's objective was Corinth, a vital rail center that if captured would give the Union total control of the region. Twenty miles away, Johnston lurked at Corinth with 45,000 soldiers.

Johnston did not wait for Grant and Buell to combine their forces. He advanced on April 3, delayed by rains and muddy roads that also slowed Buell. In the early dawn of April 6, a Yankee patrol found the Confederates poised for battle just a mile from the main Union army. Johnston attacked, driving the surprised bluecoats back near a small church called Shiloh, meaning "place of peace." Throughout the day, the Confederates battered the Union army, driving it back towards Pittsburgh Landing and threatening to trap it against the Tennessee River. Many troops on both sides had no experience in battle. The chances for a complete Confederate victory diminished as troops from Buell's army began arriving, and Grant's command on the battlefield shored up the sagging Union line. In the middle of the afternoon, Johnston rode forward to direct the Confederate attack and was struck in the leg by a bullet, severing an artery and causing him to quickly bleed to death. The ball severed an artery, and Johnston quickly bled to death. He became the highest ranking general on either side killed during the war. General Pierre G. T. Beauregard assumed control, and he halted the advance at nightfall. The Union army was driven back two miles, but it did not break.

The arrival of additional troops from Buell's army provided Grant with reinforcements, while the Confederates were worn out from their march. The next day, Grant pushed the Confederates back to Corinth for a major Union victory.

- **Apr 06 1865 – Civil War:** The Battle of Sayler's Creek – Confederate General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia fights its last major battle while in retreat from Richmond, Virginia. Casualties and losses: US 1,148 - CSA 7,700.
- **Apr 06 1866 – Post Civil War:** The Grand Army of the Republic, an American patriotic organization composed of Union veterans of the American Civil War, is founded. It lasts until 1956.



GAR Parade during the 1914 Encampment in Detroit, Michigan

- **Apr 06 1917 – WWI:** *America enters World War I* » Two days after the U.S. Senate voted 82 to 6 to declare war against Germany, the U.S. House of Representatives endorses the declaration by a vote of 373 to 50, and America formally enters World War I.

When World War I erupted in 1914, President Woodrow Wilson pledged neutrality for the United States, a position that the vast majority of Americans favored. Britain, however, was one of America's closest trading partners, and tension soon arose between the United States and Germany over the latter's attempted quarantine of the British Isles. Several U.S. ships traveling to Britain were damaged or sunk by German mines, and in February 1915 Germany announced unrestricted warfare against all ships, neutral or otherwise, that entered the war zone around Britain. One month later, Germany announced that a German cruiser had sunk the *William P. Frye*, a private American vessel. President Wilson was outraged, but the German government apologized and called the attack an unfortunate mistake.



On 7 MAY, the British-owned *Lusitania* ocean liner was torpedoed without warning just off the coast of Ireland. Of the 1,959 passengers, 1,198 were killed, including 128 Americans. The German government maintained that the *Lusitania* was carrying munitions, but the U.S. demanded reparations and an end to German attacks on unarmed passenger and merchant ships. In August, Germany pledged to see to the safety of passengers before sinking unarmed vessels, but in November sunk an Italian liner without warning, killing 272 people, including 27 Americans. With these attacks, public opinion in the United States began to turn irrevocably against Germany.

In 1917, Germany, determined to win its war of attrition against the Allies, announced the resumption of unrestricted warfare in war-zone waters. Three days later, the United States broke diplomatic relations with Germany, and just hours after that the American liner *Housatonic* was sunk by a German U-boat. On 22 FEB, Congress passed a \$250 million arms appropriations bill intended to make the United States ready for war. In late March, Germany sunk four more U.S. merchant

ships, and on 2 APR President Wilson appeared before Congress and called for a declaration of war against Germany. Four days later, his request was granted.

On 26 JUN, the first 14,000 U.S. infantry troops landed in France to begin training for combat. After four years of bloody stalemate along the western front, the entrance of America's well-supplied forces into the conflict marked a major turning point in the war and helped the Allies to victory. When the war finally ended, on November 11, 1918, more than two million American soldiers had served on the battlefields of Western Europe, and some 50,000 of them had lost their lives.

- **Apr 06 1941 – WW2:** Germany invades Yugoslavia and Greece » The German air force launches Operation Castigo, the bombing of Belgrade, on this day in 1941, as 24 divisions and 1,200 tanks drive into Greece.

The attack on Yugoslavia was swift and brutal, an act of terror resulting in the death of 17,000 civilians—the largest number of civilian casualties in a single day since the start of the war. Making the slaughter all the worse was that nearby towns and villages had emptied out into the capital city to celebrate Palm Sunday. All of Yugoslavia's airfields were also bombed, destroying most of its 600 aircraft while still on the ground.

As part of a comprehensive Balkan offensive, German forces also bombed the Greek port city of Piraeus as army divisions swept south and west, en route to Salonica and the eventual occupation of Greece.

- **Apr 06 1941 – WW2:** British General Alan Cunningham's troops enter Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, formally expelling the Italian occupiers and setting the stage for the return of Ethiopia's emperor, Haile Selassie.
- **Apr 06 1945 – WW2:** *The Battle of Slater's Knoll on Bougainville comes to an end* » The battle was fought between Australian and Japanese forces on Bougainville Island. Part of the Bougainville campaign, the battle occurred as a force of about 3,300 Japanese from the Japanese 6th Division supported by a sizeable concentration of artillery launched a counterattack against the main Australian offensive which had been pushing south towards Buin, concentrating their attacks on Slater's Knoll near the Puriata River. The Australian troops belonged to the 7th Brigade, with the 25th Infantry Battalion being the most heavily engaged, although the 9th Infantry Battalion and the 61st Infantry Battalion also took part in the fighting.



Against Japanese tactics that included massed attacks, the Australians utilized armor and artillery, and in the end these proved decisive. Commencing in late March, after the Australian advance had been halted by wet weather, over the course of several days the Japanese launched several probing raids followed by heavy attacks against the Australians. The final assault on the knoll came on the night of 4/5 April when 129 men from 'B' Company, 25th Infantry Battalion repulsed an attack by a force of about 1,100 Japanese, killing 292. This proved to be the 7th Brigade's final involvement in the campaign as they were relieved by the 15th Brigade shortly afterwards. Overall, 620 Japanese were killed in the battle with another 1,000 estimated to have been wounded, while the Australians suffered 189 casualties.

- **Apr 06 1965 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. ground combat troops to take offensive measures* » National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy drafts and signs National Security Action Memorandum 328 on behalf of President Lyndon B. Johnson. This document came out of National Security Council meetings that were held on April 1 and April 2. The memorandum authorized U.S. personnel to take the offensive in South Vietnam to secure “enclaves” and to support South Vietnamese operations. The so-called “enclave strategy” called for the U.S. forces to control the densely-populated coastal areas while the South Vietnamese forces moved inland to fight the communists. This memorandum represented a major mission change for the American soldiers and Marines who had recently arrived in Vietnam. American forces had been limited to strictly defensive operations around the U.S. air bases, but the memorandum authorized them to go on the offensive to secure large areas of terrain, an escalation of U.S. involvement in the war.
- **Apr 06 1972 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. forces respond to North Vietnamese offensive* » Clear weather for the first time in three days allows U.S. planes and Navy warships to begin the sustained air strikes and naval bombardments ordered by President Nixon in response to the massive North Vietnamese offensive launched on 30 MAR.

The Nguyen Hue Offensive (later known as the “Easter Offensive”) was a massive invasion by North Vietnamese forces designed to strike the blow that would win the war for the communists. The attacking force included 14 infantry divisions and 26 separate regiments, with more than 120,000 troops and approximately 1,200 tanks and other armored vehicles. The main North Vietnamese objectives were Quang Tri in the north, Kontum in the Central Highlands, and An Loc farther to the south.



President Richard Nixon had ordered the Air Force and Navy to provide all available air support to help the South Vietnamese stabilize the situation. In response, U.S. planes flew 225 missions by 9 APR, hitting North Vietnamese troop concentrations and missile emplacements above and below the

Demilitarized Zone. Two U.S. planes were shot down over North Vietnam by missiles, a new element in North Vietnamese air defenses.

Ultimately, the South Vietnamese forces prevailed against the invaders, but only after six months of desperate fighting that raged across South Vietnam. U.S. airpower proved to be the difference between victory and defeat for the South Vietnamese. With the communist invasion blunted, President Nixon declared that the South Vietnamese victory proved the viability of his “Vietnamization” program, instituted in 1969 to increase the combat capability of the South Vietnamese armed forces.

- **Apr 06 1990 – Cold War:** U.S. and Soviet negotiators make progress » U.S. and Soviet diplomats meeting in Washington, D.C., make significant progress in negotiations concerning the role to be played by the newly reunified Germany in Europe.



James Baker & Eduard Shevardnadze

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze carried out most of the negotiations. Both sides approached the meeting with caution. Although U.S.-Soviet relations had been progressing quite well in the past few years, the recent independence movement in the Soviet Republic of Lithuania and the aggressive Soviet response toward that movement—which included a military intervention in March 1990—had temporarily soured diplomatic interchange between the two superpowers.

In early discussions, the Soviets indicated their preference for Germany to remain completely neutral. Many U.S. officials, however, wanted the reunified Germany to become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). During the talks, the Soviets dropped their insistence on German neutrality, but suggested that perhaps Germany could join both NATO and the Warsaw Pact (the Soviet equivalent of NATO). Both sides agreed that a U.S.-Soviet summit meeting in May would explore this question in more detail.

The Baker-Shevardnadze talks did not produce the any serious breakthroughs or dramatic resolutions. However, they were indicative of the continuing spirit of cooperation between the two nations that began when Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in Russia in 1985. As the Soviet suggestion that Germany take membership in both NATO and the Warsaw Pact suggested, Cold War suspicions had not entirely disappeared. In July 1990, Gorbachev dropped his opposition to German membership in NATO in exchange for a U.S. promise of much-needed economic assistance to the Soviet Union. Shortly after German reunification took place in October 1990, Germany did become a member of NATO. The suggestion that it also become a member of the Warsaw Pact became superfluous when that organization dissolved in March 1991. Gorbachev resigned in December 1991 and the Soviet Union ceased to exist.

- **Apr 07 1712 – Tuscarora War:** Col. John Barnwell, commanding a combined white militia and friendly Indian force numbering about 300 men, again besieges this main encampment of the hostile Tuscarora Indians. The Tuscarora had launched a surprise attack in September 1711, killing about 130 colonists, prompting North Carolina to ask Virginia and South Carolina for help. Barnwell's army was composed mostly of South Carolina militia. He had besieged the hostiles' fort in March, but agreed to a truce after the Indians began torturing their captives within earshot of the militia. When the Tuscarora failed to honor part of their agreement, Barnwell maintained the siege for 10 days, finally forcing the Indians to surrender. All captives were freed and other conditions were met bringing the Tuscarora War to a close.
- **Apr 07 1776 – American Revolution:** *U.S. Navy captures first British warship* » Navy Captain John Barry, commander of the American warship Lexington, makes the first American naval capture of a British vessel when he takes command of the British warship HMS Edward off the coast of Virginia. The capture of the Edward and its cargo turned Captain Barry into a national hero and boosted the morale of the Continental forces.



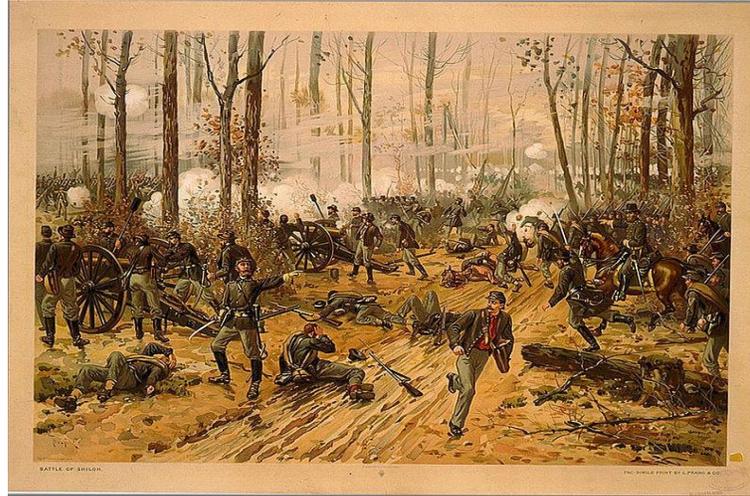
Barry was born in the seaboard county of Wexford, Ireland, in 1745 and offered his services to the Continental Congress upon the outbreak of the American Revolution. Congress purchased Barry's ship, Black Prince, which it renamed Alfred and placed under the command of Commodore Esek Hopkins. It was the first ship to fly the American flag, raised by John Paul Jones.

Barry served with distinction throughout the American Revolution. At sea, he had continued success with the Lexington. On land, he raised a volunteer force to assist General Washington in the surprisingly successful Trenton, New Jersey, campaign of 1776-77. On May 29, 1781, Barry was wounded while successfully capturing the HMS Atlanta and the HMS Trepassy while in command of a new ship, Alliance. He recovered and successfully concluded the final naval battle of the Revolutionary War with a victory over the HMS Sybille in March 1783.

Barry's outstanding career has been memorialized on both sides of the Atlantic. A bridge bearing his name crosses the Delaware River, and Brooklyn, New York, is home to a park named for him. In addition, four U.S. Navy ships and a building at Villanova University carry his name, and statues in his honor stand in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and his birthplace, Wexford, Ireland. On September 13, 1981, President Ronald Reagan declared Commodore John Barry Day to honor a man

he called one of the earliest and greatest American patriots, a man of great insight who perceived very early the need for American power on the sea.

- **Apr 07 1862 – Civil War: *Battle of Shiloh concludes*** » Two days of heavy fighting conclude near Pittsburgh Landing in western Tennessee. The Battle of Shiloh became a Union victory after the Confederate attack stalled on 6 APR, and fresh Yankee troops drove the Confederates from the field on 7 APR.



Shiloh began when Union General Ulysses S. Grant brought his army down the Tennessee River to Pittsburgh Landing in an effort to move on Corinth, Mississippi, 20 miles to the southwest. Union occupation of Corinth, a major rail center, would allow the Yankees to control nearly all of western Tennessee. At Corinth, Confederate General Albert Sidney Johnston did not wait for Grant to attack. He moved his army toward Grant, striking on the morning of 6 APR. Throughout the day, the Confederates drove the Yankees back but could not break the Union lines before darkness halted the advance. Johnston was killed during the first day, so General Pierre G. T. Beauregard assumed command of the Confederate force.

Now, Grant was joined by the vanguard of Buell's army. With an advantage in terms of troop numbers, Grant counterattacked on 7 APR. The tired Confederates slowly retreated, but they inflicted heavy casualties on the Yankees. By nightfall, the Union had driven the Confederates back to Shiloh Church, recapturing grisly reminders of the previous days' battle such as the Hornets' Nest, the Peach Orchard, and Bloody Pond. The Confederates finally limped back to Corinth, thus giving a major victory to Grant.

The cost of the victory was high. Grant's and Buell's forces totaled about 62,000, of which 1,754 were killed, 8,408 were wounded, and 2,885 were captured or missing for a total of 13,047 casualties. Of 45,000 Confederates engaged, 1,723 were killed, 8,012 wounded, and 959 missing for a total of 10,694 casualties. The 23,741 casualties were five times the number at the First Battle of Bull Run in July 1861, and they were more than all of the war's major battles (Bull Run, Wilson's Creek, Fort Donelson, and Pea Ridge) to that date combined. It was a sobering reminder to all in the Union and the Confederacy that the war would be long and costly.

- **Apr 07 1918 – WWI:** One month after Russia signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, formally ending its participation in World War I, Winston Churchill secretly proposes to the British War Cabinet a method by which Britain’s former ally could be persuaded to reenter the war.
- **Apr 07 1939 – WW2:** Italy invades Albania » In an effort to mimic Hitler’s conquest of Prague, Benito Mussolini’s troops, though badly organized, invade and occupy Albania. Although the invasion was intended as but a prelude to greater conquests in the Balkans, it proved a costly enterprise for Il Duce (Mussolini). Albania was already dependent on Italy’s economy, so had little to offer the invaders. And future exploits in neighboring nations, in Greece in particular, proved to be disastrous for the Italians.



Three Albanian soldiers in an unidentified location fleeing North with peasants towards Yugoslavia

- **Apr 07 1943 – WW2:** Holocaust: In Terebovlia, Ukraine, Germans order 1,100 Jews to undress to their underwear and march through the city of Terebovlia to the nearby village of Plebanivka. There they are shot dead
- **Apr 07 1945 – WW2:** Japanese battleship Yamato is sunk by Allied forces » The Japanese battleship Yamato, ostensibly the greatest battleship in the world, is sunk in Japan’s first major counteroffensive in the struggle for Okinawa. Weighing 72,800 tons and outfitted with nine 18.1-inch guns, the battleship Yamato was Japan’s only hope of destroying the Allied fleet off the coast of Okinawa. But insufficient air cover and fuel cursed the endeavor as a suicide mission. Struck by 19 American aerial torpedoes, it was sunk, drowning 2,498 of its crew.



- **Apr 07 1954 – Cold War:** *Eisenhower gives famous “domino theory” speech* » President Dwight D. Eisenhower coins one of the most famous Cold War phrases when he suggests the fall of French Indochina to the communists could create a “domino” effect in Southeast Asia. The so-called “domino theory” dominated U.S. thinking about Vietnam for the next decade.

By early 1954, it was clear to many U.S. policymakers that the French were failing in their attempt to re-establish colonial control in Indochina (Vietnam), which they lost during World War II when the Japanese took control of the area. The Vietnamese nationalists, led by the communist Ho Chi Minh, were on the verge of winning a stunning victory against French forces at the battle of Dien Bien Phu. In just a few weeks, representatives from the world's powers were scheduled to meet in Geneva to discuss a political settlement of the Vietnamese conflict. U.S. officials were concerned that a victory by Ho's forces and/or an agreement in Geneva might leave a communist regime in control of all or part of Vietnam. In an attempt to rally congressional and public support for increased U.S. aid to the French, President Eisenhower gave an historic press conference on April 7, 1954.

He spent much of the speech explaining the significance of Vietnam to the United States. First was its economic importance, "the specific value of a locality in its production of materials that the world needs" (materials such as rubber, jute, and sulphur). There was also the "possibility that many human beings pass under a dictatorship that is inimical to the free world." Finally, the president noted, "You have broader considerations that might follow what you would call the 'falling domino' principle." Eisenhower expanded on this thought, explaining, "You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is a certainty that it will go over very quickly." This would lead to disintegration in Southeast Asia, with the "loss of Indochina, of Burma, of Thailand, of the Peninsula, and Indonesia following." Eisenhower suggested that even Japan, which needed Southeast Asia for trade, would be in danger.

Eisenhower's words had little direct immediate impact—a month later, Dien Bien Phu fell to the communists, and an agreement was reached at the Geneva Conference that left Ho's forces in control of northern Vietnam. In the long run, however, Eisenhower's announcement of the "domino theory" laid the foundation for U.S. involvement in Vietnam. John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson both used the theory to justify their calls for increased U.S. economic and military assistance to non-communist South Vietnam and, eventually, the commitment of U.S. armed forces in 1965.

- **Apr 07 1975 – Vietnam War:** North Vietnamese forces begin preparations for final offensive » North Vietnamese forces prepare to launch the "Ho Chi Minh Campaign," designed to set the conditions for a final communist victory in South Vietnam. By this time, well over two-thirds of South Vietnam was under communist control as South Vietnamese forces had fallen back in panic when the North Vietnamese pressed the attack.

The Ho Chi Minh Campaign offensive was the final phase of the North Vietnamese plan to defeat South Vietnam. Despite the imposition of a cease-fire by the terms of the 1973 Paris Peace Accords, fighting had continued between South Vietnamese forces and the North Vietnamese troops left in South Vietnam at the end of the 1972 Easter Offensive. In December 1974, the North Vietnamese launched a major attack against the lightly defended province of Phuoc Long, located north of Saigon along the Cambodian border. They overran the provincial capital at Phuoc Binh on January 6, 1975.

President Richard Nixon had repeatedly promised South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu that the United States would come to the aid of South Vietnam if the North Vietnamese violated the Peace Accords in a major way. However, by the time the communists captured Phuoc Long, Nixon had resigned from office and his successor, Gerald Ford, was unable to convince a hostile Congress to make good on Nixon's promises to Saigon.

This situation emboldened the North Vietnamese, who launched Campaign 275 in March 1975, to capture the provincial capital of Ban Me Thuot (Darlac province) in the Central Highlands. The South Vietnamese defenders fought very poorly and were quickly overwhelmed by the North Vietnamese attackers. The United States did nothing. Stunned by the lack of response from Washington, South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu ordered his forces in the Highlands to withdraw to more defensible positions to the south. What started out as a reasonably orderly withdrawal soon degenerated into a panic that spread throughout the South Vietnamese armed forces. They abandoned Pleiku and Kontum with very little fighting and the North Vietnamese pressed the attack from the west and north. In quick succession, Quang Tri, Hue, and Da Nang in the north fell to the communist onslaught. The North Vietnamese continued to attack south along the coast, defeating the South Vietnamese forces at each encounter.



As the North Vietnamese forces closed on the approaches to Saigon, the politburo in Hanoi issued an order to Gen. Van Tien Dung to launch the Ho Chi Minh Campaign, the final assault on Saigon itself. Dung ordered his forces into position for the final battle. The South Vietnamese 18th Division made a valiant final stand at Xuan Loc, 40 miles northeast of Saigon, in which the South Vietnamese soldiers destroyed three of Dung's divisions. After a week, however, the South Vietnamese succumbed to the North Vietnamese. By 27 APR, the North Vietnamese had completely encircled Saigon and began to maneuver for their final assault. By the morning of 30 APR, it was all over. When the North Vietnamese tanks broke through the gates of the Presidential Palace in Saigon, the South Vietnamese surrendered. The Vietnam War was over.

- **Apr 07 1978 – Cold War:** Development of the neutron bomb is canceled by President Jimmy Carter.
- **Apr 07 2003 – Gulf War:** U.S. troops capture Baghdad; Saddam Hussein's regime falls two days later.

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- **Apr 08 1778 – American Revolution:** John Adams arrives in Paris to replace Silas Deane » Future United States President John Adams arrives in Paris, France, on this day in 1778 to replace former Continental Congress member Silas Deane as a member of the American commission representing the interests of the United States.



John Adams and Silas Deane

Deane had been recalled to America by Congress after fellow diplomat Arthur Lee accused him of misappropriating French funds. Whereas Deane was born and raised in Connecticut and educated at Yale, Arthur Lee was a Virginian following the educational and career path of the British elite when revolutionary politics intervened. The lesser-known brother of Francis Lightfoot Lee and Richard Henry Lee, he left the colonies to enroll at the aristocratic boarding school Eton College in England. He then pursued medical studies at the prestigious University of Edinburgh in Scotland, receiving his degree in 1765. In 1766, Lee went to London and began legal studies at the equally renowned Temple Bar until 1770, when he began a legal practice in London at which he worked until the outbreak of revolution in 1776, when he was named, along with Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane, as an American commissioner to France.

Lee never got along with his two colleagues and instigated Deane's recall by accusing him of financial mismanagement and corruption. Deane's replacement, John Adams, was also a New Englander (although from Massachusetts and Harvard) and defended Deane. Nonetheless, Deane was unable to clear his name and was forced to live his life in exile until his death in 1789.

In 1842, Congress reopened the investigation into Deane's accounts and, finding no evidence of misconduct, ordered his heirs be paid \$37,000 in reparations.

- **Apr 08 1832 – Black Hawk War:** Around three-hundred United States 6th Infantry troops leave St. Louis, Missouri to fight the Sauk Native Americans.
- **Apr 08 1864 – Civil War:** *Confederates rout Union at Battle of Mansfield* » The Red River campaign of Union General Nathaniel Banks grinds to a halt when Confederate General Richard Taylor routs Banks' army at Mansfield, Louisiana.



The Red River campaign, which had begun a month earlier, was an attempt by the Union to invade Confederate Texas from Shreveport, Louisiana. Banks, accompanied by a flotilla on the Red River, would move northwest across the state and rendezvous at Shreveport with a force under General Frederick Steele moving from Little Rock, Arkansas.

The slow-moving Banks approached Mansfield and opted to take a shorter road to Shreveport than one that ran along the Red River. Not only was the road narrow, it was far away from the gun support offered by the Union flotilla on the river. Banks' troops ran into Taylor's force and a skirmish erupted. At 4 p.m., Taylor ordered an all-out assault on the Yankees. The Rebels eventually broke the Union lines, sending the Federals in a disorganized retreat. The Yankees fell back three miles before reinforcements stopped the Confederate advance.

Banks suffered 113 men killed, 581 wounded, and 1,541 missing, while Taylor had about 1,500 total casualties. But Banks was now in retreat, and the Red River campaign was failing. Taylor attacked again the next day, but this time Banks' men held the Confederates at bay. Banks was unnerved, though, and he began to retreat back down the Red River without penetrating into Texas.

- **Apr 08 1904 – Pre WWI:** With war in Europe a decade away, Britain and France sign an agreement, later known as the Entente Cordiale, resolving long-standing colonial disputes in North Africa and establishing a diplomatic understanding between the two countries.
- **Apr 08 1942 – WW2:** The Japanese take Bataan in the Philippines.
- **Apr 08 1942 – WW2:** Siege of Leningrad - Soviet forces open a much-needed railway link to Leningrad.
- **Apr 08 1944 – WW2:** *Russians attack Germans in drive to expel them from Crimea* » Russian forces led by Marshal Fedor Tolbukhin attack the German army in an attempt to win back Crimea, in the southern Ukraine, occupied by the Axis power. The attack would result in the breaking of German defensive lines in just four days, eventually sending the Germans retreating. Crimea was the territorial plaything of many great powers, from the Ottoman Turks to the Russia of Ivan III. It had declared its independence in 1918 but was occupied again by Germany in 1941. It was “liberated” by the Russians, only to find itself trapped within the greater Soviet Union. It once again declared itself an independent republic in the 1990s.
- **Apr 08 1945 – WW2:** After an air raid accidentally destroys a train carrying about 4,000 Nazi concentration camp internees in Prussian Hanover, the survivors are massacred by Nazis.
- **Apr 08 1945 – WW2:** Lutheran pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer is hanged at Flossenburg, only days before the American liberation of the POW camp. The last words of the brilliant and courageous 39-year-old opponent of Nazism were “This is the end—for me, the beginning of life.”



Bonhoeffer in 1939

- **Apr 08 1950 – Cold War:** *McCarthy publicly attacks Owen Lattimore* » Senator Joseph McCarthy labels Professor Owen Lattimore “extremely dangerous so far as the American people are concerned” in a carefully worded public speech, but stops short of calling him a Soviet spy. The speech was yet another example of McCarthy’s ability to whip up damaging Red Scare hysteria with no real evidence.



Owen Lattimore and Joseph McCarthy

In February 1950, the little-known Senator McCarthy gave a speech in which he charged that there were over 200 “known communists” in the Department of State. When pressed for particulars, McCarthy made an appearance before a special joint session of Congress. During the course of presenting his “evidence,” McCarthy declared that Professor Owen Lattimore was a “top Soviet spy.” Lattimore, an expert on Chinese history, had served as a special consultant about Chinese affairs during and after World War II and had been a consistent critic of the Nationalist Chinese regime of Chiang Kai-Shek. Word soon leaked out about McCarthy’s charge. Though Lattimore decried the senator’s statements as lies, there was nothing he could legally do, since McCarthy’s testimony was protected by congressional immunity.

On April 8, 1950, McCarthy gave a public speech in which he continued his attacks on Lattimore. He started by stating, “The reason we find ourselves in a position of impotency is not because our powerful potential enemy has sent men to invade our shores but rather because of the traitorous actions of those who have been treated so well by this nation.” He called Lattimore “extremely dangerous,” and declared that the professor had been “invaluable to Russia.”

McCarthy’s attacks on Lattimore continued for years. A congressional committee cleared Lattimore of McCarthy’s charges in 1950, but in 1951 the Senate reopened the investigation. This new investigation, spearheaded by McCarthy, claimed that Lattimore had perjured himself during his earlier testimony. In 1952, Lattimore was formally charged with perjury in connection to his 1950 testimony. A very long and costly legal battle ensued, and eventually Lattimore succeeded in having

all charges dropped. His career in American academia, however, was ruined and he left the country in 1963. He later returned to the United States and died in 1989. Lattimore was just one of many people smeared by McCarthy's reckless and unsubstantiated charges during the anticommunist hysteria of the Red Scare.

- **Apr 08 1972 – Vietnam War:** *North Vietnamese forces open a third front* » North Vietnamese 2nd Division troops drive out of Laos and Cambodia to open a third front of their offensive in the Central Highlands, attacking at Kontum and Pleiku in attempt to cut South Vietnam in two. If successful, this would give North Vietnam control of the northern half of South Vietnam.

The three-front attack was part of the North Vietnamese Nguyen Hue Offensive (later known as the “Easter Offensive”), which had been launched on March 30. The offensive was a massive invasion by North Vietnamese forces designed to strike the knockout blow that would win the war for the communists. The attacking force included 14 infantry divisions and 26 separate regiments, with more than 120,000 troops and approximately 1,200 tanks and other armored vehicles.

North Vietnam had a number of objectives in launching the offensive: impressing the communist world and its own people with its determination; capitalizing on U.S. antiwar sentiment and possibly hurting President Richard Nixon's chances for re-election; proving that “Vietnamization” was a failure; damaging the South Vietnamese forces and government stability; gaining as much territory as possible before a possible truce; and accelerating negotiations on their own terms.

Initially, the South Vietnamese defenders in each case were almost overwhelmed, particularly in the northernmost provinces, where they abandoned their positions in Quang Tri and fled south in the face of the enemy onslaught. At Kontum and An Loc, the South Vietnamese were more successful in defending against the North Vietnamese attacks. Although the defenders suffered heavy casualties, they managed to hold out with the aid of U.S. advisors and American airpower. Fighting continued all over South Vietnam into the summer months, but eventually the South Vietnamese forces prevailed against the invaders, even retaking Quang Tri in September. With the communist invasion blunted, President Nixon declared that the South Vietnamese victory proved the viability of his Vietnamization program, instituted in 1969 to increase the combat capability of the South Vietnamese armed forces.

- **Apr 08 1975 – Vietnam War:** *Weyand reports to Congress* » After a weeklong mission to South Vietnam, Gen. Frederick Weyand, U.S. Army Chief of Staff and former Vietnam commander, reports to Congress that South Vietnam cannot survive without additional military aid. Questioned again later by reporters who asked if South Vietnam could survive with additional aid, Weyand replied there was “a chance.”



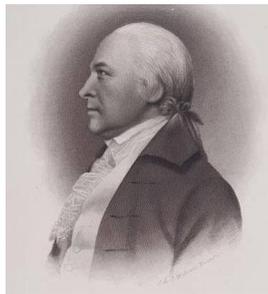
Weyand had been sent to Saigon by President Gerald Ford to assess the South Vietnamese forces and their chances for survival against the attacking North Vietnamese. The South Vietnamese were on the verge of collapse. The most recent assaults had begun in December 1974 when the North Vietnamese launched a major attack against the lightly defended province of Phuoc Long—located north of Saigon along the Cambodian border—and overran the provincial capital at Phuoc Binh on January 6, 1975. Despite previous presidential promises to aid South Vietnam in such a situation, the United States did nothing. By this time, Nixon had resigned from office and his successor, Gerald Ford, was unable to convince a hostile Congress to make good on Nixon’s earlier promises to Saigon.

The situation emboldened the North Vietnamese, who launched a new campaign in March 1975, in which the South Vietnamese forces fell back in total disarray. Once again, the United States did nothing. The South Vietnamese abandoned Pleiku and Kontum in the Highlands with very little fighting. Then Quang Tri, Hue, and Da Nang fell to the communist onslaught. The North Vietnamese continued to attack south along the coast toward Saigon, defeating the South Vietnamese forces at each encounter.

As Weyand reported to Congress, the South Vietnamese were battling three North Vietnamese divisions at Xuan Loc, the last defense line before Saigon. Indeed, it became the last battle in the defense of the Republic of South Vietnam. The South Vietnamese forces managed to hold out against the attackers until they ran out of tactical air support and weapons, finally abandoning Xuan Loc to the communists on 21 APR. Saigon fell to the communists on 30 APR.

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- **Apr 09 1778 – American Revolution:** *Jeremiah Wadsworth named commissary general* » Jeremiah Wadsworth is named commissary general of purchases for the Continental Army at the insistence of General George Washington. Born in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1743 to a minister who died when he was four, Wadsworth was raised by his uncle, Matthew Talcott, a ship-owner from Middletown, Connecticut. At the age of 18, Wadsworth embarked on a 10-year career as a sailor aboard one of his uncle’s ships, where he rose to the rank of captain. In 1767, he married a minister’s daughter, Mehitable Russel, also of Middletown; they had three children.



An early and vocal Patriot, Wadsworth began the next step of his career in April 1775, when he was appointed to work in a supply commissary for Connecticut troops. Wadsworth’s experience as a sailor and merchant aboard his uncle’s ships helped him understand the supply commissary, and he quickly rose in rank. The Continental Congress elected Wadsworth as deputy commissary-general of

purchases on June 18, 1777. Upon the retirement of Joseph Trumbull, Wadsworth was appointed commissary general in April 1778, a post he held until December 1779, when he resigned.

Wadsworth earned Washington's favor as a provider of good and ample supplies and went on to work as the commissary for the French troops in America. After submitting his accounting records in Paris at the end of the war, Wadsworth made purchases in England and Ireland, which he resold on the commercial market for profit upon his return to America. The transactions helped to make Wadsworth the wealthiest man in Connecticut.

Wadsworth later served as a member of the Continental Congress and Connecticut ratification convention in 1788, the U.S. Congress from 1789 to 1795, the Connecticut House of Representatives in 1795 and, finally, on Connecticut's executive council from 1795 to 1801.

- **Apr 09 1782 – American Revolution:** Four day Battle of the Saintes begins. Casualties and losses: Brit 1,059 - FR 8,000 *Est.*
- **Apr 09 1865 – Civil War:** *Robert E. Lee surrenders* » At Appomattox, Virginia, Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrenders his 28,000 troops to Union General Ulysses S. Grant, effectively ending the American Civil War. Forced to abandon the Confederate capital of Richmond, blocked from joining the surviving Confederate force in North Carolina, and harassed constantly by Union cavalry, Lee had no other option.



In retreating from the Union army's Appomattox Campaign, the Army of Northern Virginia had stumbled through the Virginia countryside stripped of food and supplies. At one point, Union cavalry forces under General Philip Sheridan had actually outrun Lee's army, blocking their retreat and taking 6,000 prisoners at Saylor's Creek. Desertions were mounting daily, and by April 8 the Confederates were surrounded with no possibility of escape. On April 9, Lee sent a message to Grant announcing his willingness to surrender. The two generals met in the parlor of the Wilmer McLean home at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Lee and Grant, both holding the highest rank in their respective armies, had known each other slightly during the Mexican War and exchanged awkward personal inquiries. Characteristically, Grant arrived in his muddy field uniform while Lee had turned out in full dress attire, complete with sash and sword. Lee asked for the terms, and Grant hurriedly wrote them out. All officers and men were to be pardoned, and they would be sent home with their private property—most important, the horses, which could be used for a late spring planting. Officers would keep their side arms, and Lee's starving men would be given Union rations.

Shushing a band that had begun to play in celebration, General Grant told his officers, “The war is over. The Rebels are our countrymen again.” Although scattered resistance continued for several weeks, for all practical purposes the Civil War had come to an end.

- **Apr 09 1916 – WWI:** The Battle of Verdun - German forces launch their third offensive of the battle.
- **Apr 09 1917 – WWI:** *The Battle of Arras* - The battles was a British offensive on the Western Front during World War I. From 9 April to 16 May 1917, British troops attacked German defenses near the French city of Arras on the Western Front. The British achieved the longest advance since trench warfare had begun, surpassing the record set by the French Sixth Army on 1 July 1916. The British advance slowed in the next few days and the German defense recovered. The battle became a costly stalemate for both sides and by the end of the battle, the British Third and First Armies had suffered about 160,000 and the German 6th Army about 125,000 casualties.



- **Apr 09 1918 – WWI:** *The Battle of the Lys* - German troops launch “Operation Georgette” the second phase of their final, last-ditch spring offensive, against Allied positions in Armentieres, France, on the River Lys. In the offensive the Portuguese Expeditionary Corps is crushed on the Belgian region of Flanders.



- **Apr 09 1940 – WW2:** *Germany invades Norway & Denmark* » As part of Operation Weserübung Nazi Germany invades neutral Norway, surprising the Norwegian and British defenders of the country and capturing several strategic points along the Norwegian coast. During the invasion’s preliminary phase, Norwegian Fascists under Vidkun Quisling acted as a so-called fifth column for the German invaders, seizing Norway’s nerve centers, spreading false rumors, and occupying military bases and other locations. In June, Norway fell to the Nazis. Quisling was made head of a puppet government but was vigorously opposed by the Norwegian resistance, the most effective resistance movement in all of Nazi-occupied Europe. After the German surrender in May 1945, he was arrested, convicted of high treason, and shot. From his name comes the word quisling, meaning “traitor” in several languages.



German warships entered major Norwegian ports, from Narvik to Oslo, deploying thousands of German troops and occupying Norway. At the same time, German forces occupy Copenhagen, among other Danish cities. German forces were able to slip through the mines Britain had laid around Norwegian ports because local garrisons were ordered to allow the Germans to land unopposed.

- **Apr 09 1942 – WW2:** The Japanese Navy launches an air raid on Trincomalee in Ceylon (Sri Lanka); Royal Navy aircraft carrier HMS Hermes and Royal Australian Navy Destroyer HMAS Vampire are sunk off the island's east coast.
- **Apr 09 1942 – WW2:** *U.S. surrenders in Bataan* » Major General Edward P. King Jr. surrenders at Bataan, Philippines—against General Douglas MacArthur’s orders—and 78,000 troops (66,000 Filipinos and 12,000 Americans), the largest contingent of U.S. soldiers ever to surrender, are taken captive by the Japanese.

The prisoners were at once led 55 miles from Mariveles, on the southern end of the Bataan peninsula, to San Fernando, on what became known as the “Bataan Death March.” At least 600 Americans and 5,000 Filipinos died because of the extreme brutality of their captors, who starved, beat, and kicked them on the way; those who became too weak to walk were bayoneted. Those who survived were taken by rail from San Fernando to POW camps, where another 16,000 Filipinos and at least 1,000 Americans died from disease, mistreatment, and starvation.



After the war, the International Military Tribunal, established by MacArthur, tried Lieutenant General Homma Masaharu, commander of the Japanese invasion forces in the Philippines. He was held responsible for the death march, a war crime, and was executed by firing squad on April 3, 1946.

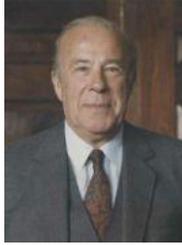
- **Apr 09 1945 – WW2:** USS Snook (SS-279) missing. Most likely sunk by a combination of Japanese naval aircraft in the Nansei Soto. 84 killed.
- **Apr 09 1945 – WW2:** The German pocket battleship Admiral Scheer is sunk.

- **Apr 09 1945 – WW2:** The Battle of Königsberg, in East Prussia, ends. Casualties and losses: Ger 50K + 80K taken POW – SU 3,700
- **Apr 09 1945 – Vietnam War:** *“Chicago Eight” plead not guilty* » Indicted on federal charges of conspiracy to incite a riot at the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago, the so called “Chicago Eight” plead not guilty. The trial for the eight antiwar activists had begun in Chicago on 20 MAR. The defendants included David Dellinger of the National Mobilization Committee (NMC); Rennie Davis and Thomas Hayden of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS); Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, founders of the Youth International Party (“Yippies”); Bobby Seale of the Black Panthers; and two lesser known activists, Lee Weiner and John Froines.



They were charged with conspiracy to cross state lines with intent to incite a riot. Attorneys William Kunstler and Leonard Weinglass represented all but Seale. The trial, presided over by Judge Julius Hoffman, turned into a circus as the defendants and their attorneys used the court as a platform to attack Nixon, the war, racism, and oppression. Their tactics were so disruptive that at one point Judge Hoffman ordered Seale gagged and strapped to his chair. (Seale’s disruptive behavior eventually caused the judge to try him separately). When the trial ended in February 1970, Hoffman found the defendants and their attorneys guilty of 175 counts of contempt of court and sentenced them to terms ranging from two to four years. Although declaring the defendants not guilty of conspiracy, the jury found all but Froines and Weiner guilty of intent to riot. The others were each sentenced to five years and fined \$5,000. However, none of the defendants served time because in 1972 a Court of Appeals overturned the criminal convictions and eventually most of the contempt charges were also dropped.

- **Apr 09 1981 – U.S Navy:** The U.S. Navy nuclear submarine USS George Washington (SSBN-598) accidentally collides with the Nissho Maru, a Japanese cargo ship, sinking it.
- **Apr 09 1987 – Cold War:** *George Shultz condemns Soviet spying* » Just days before he is to travel to Moscow for talks on arms control and other issues, U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz states that he is “damned angry” about possible Soviet spy activity in the American embassy in the Soviet Union. Soviet officials indignantly replied that the espionage charges were “dirty fabrications.”



Secretary Shultz was scheduled to travel to Moscow for talks on a number of matters, but the foremost issue was the reduction of medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe. President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev had discussed arms reduction during their summit in Iceland in October 1986, but talks had ended on an acrimonious note. Gorbachev linked progress on the reduction of the missiles to U.S. abandonment of the proposed Strategic Defense Initiative (the so-called “Star Wars” antimissile program). A new summit was scheduled for December 1987, and Shultz’s visit was in preparation for that event. However, charges of Soviet espionage in the U.S. embassy in Moscow threatened to derail any discussions. In particular, U.S. officials charged that since at least the early 1980s, Soviet espionage agents had gained access to the American embassy in Moscow by working through the Marine guards stationed there. In addition, there were allegations that the new U.S. embassy under construction was riddled with Soviet spying equipment. Shultz declared, “They invaded our sovereign territory, and we’re damned upset about it.”

In the long run, the arms negotiations were not affected by the spying allegations. In December 1987, Reagan and Gorbachev negotiated the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Treaty, which eliminated U.S. and Soviet medium-range nuclear missiles from Europe. In the short run, however, the episode indicated that while relations between the United States and the Soviet Union had improved dramatically in recent years, long-held animosities and suspicions lingered just beneath the surface.

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- **Apr 10 1778 – American Revolution:** John Paul Jones sets out to raid British ships » Commander John Paul Jones and his crew of 140 men aboard the USS Ranger set sail from the naval port at Brest, France, and head toward the Irish Sea to begin raids on British warships. This was the first mission of its kind during the Revolutionary War.

Commander Jones, remembered as one of the most daring and successful naval commanders of the American Revolution, was born in Scotland, on July 6, 1747. He became an apprentice to a merchant at 13 and soon went to sea, traveling first to the West Indies and then to North America as a young man. In Virginia at the onset of the American Revolution, Jones sided with the Patriots and received a commission as a first lieutenant in the Continental Navy on December 7, 1775.

After departing from Brest, Jones successfully executed raids on two forts in England’s Whitehaven Harbor, despite a disgruntled crew more interested in “gain than honor.” Jones then continued to his home territory of Kirkcudbright Bay, Scotland, where he intended to abduct the earl of Selkirk and then exchange him for American sailors held captive by Britain. Although he did not find the earl at home, Jones crew was able to steal all his silver, including his wife’s teapot, still containing her breakfast tea. From Scotland, Jones sailed across the Irish Sea to Carrickfergus, where

the Ranger captured the HMS Drake after delivering fatal wounds to the British ship's captain and lieutenant.



In September 1779, Jones fought one of the fiercest battles in naval history when he led the USS Bonhomme Richard frigate, named for Benjamin Franklin, in an engagement with the 50-gun British warship HMS Serapis. After the Bonhomme Richard was struck, it began taking on water and caught fire. When the British captain of the Serapis ordered Jones to surrender, he famously replied, “I have not yet begun to fight!” A few hours later, the captain and crew of the Serapis admitted defeat and Jones took command of the British ship.

One of the greatest naval commanders in history, Jones is remembered as a “Father of the American Navy,” along with fellow Revolutionary War hero Commodore John Barry. John Paul Jones is buried in a crypt at the U.S. Naval Academy Chapel in Annapolis, Maryland, where a Marine honor guard stands at attention in his honor whenever the crypt is open to the public.

- **Apr 10 1865 – Civil War:** *General Lee gives final address to troops* » One day after surrendering to Union General Ulysses S. Grant, Confederate General Robert E. Lee addresses his army for the last time.

“After four years of arduous service, marked by unsurpassed courage and fortitude, the Army of Northern Virginia has been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources. I need not tell the brave survivors of so many hard-fought battles, who have remained steadfast to the last, that I have consented to the result from no distrust of them...I determined to avoid the useless sacrifice of those whose past services have endeared them to their countrymen...I bid you an affectionate farewell.”

This closed the book on one of the most remarkable armies in history. The Army of Northern Virginia had fought against long odds for four years and won most of the battles in which it engaged the Union's Army of the Potomac. Along the way, Lee was lionized by his troops as few military leaders ever have been. The final surrender was a bitter pill for Lee to swallow, but the grace of his final communiqué to his troops exhibited the virtues that made him the single most enduring symbol of the Confederacy.

- **Apr 10 1918 – WWI:** *Congress of Oppressed Nationalities closes in Rome* » Convened in Rome, Italy, during the second week of April 1918, closes on April 10, after representatives from the Czechoslovak, South Slav (or Yugoslav), Romanian and Polish National Committees proclaim their right to become “completely independent national States” after World War I ends.

U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's call for "self-determination" for all nations in his famous Fourteen Points speech, delivered in January 1918, began a decisive year in the history of the diverse peoples of central and eastern Europe. America's entry into the war brought renewed hope to the exhausted Allies—France, Britain, and Italy—and made them far more receptive to plans made by representatives of the Czech and South Slav populations now under control of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Even Italy, with its hopes of territorial expansion along the Dalmatian coast, chose to support the right of the South Slavs to independence. With Russia out of the war, the other Allies no longer had to respect that nation's claims to Poland, and they also began to defend the notion of a reorganized, independent Poland that would emerge when the war had been won.

The Congress of Oppressed Nationalities was sponsored by the Allies—particularly France and Italy—and designed to encourage the minority populations of different ethnicities inside Germany and particularly Austria-Hungary to assert their right to self-determination and rebel against their oppressors, thus weakening the Central Powers and making an Allied victory more likely. The congress's closing vote, on April 10, denounced the Hapsburg government as an impediment to the rightful freedom and development of the nations and called for the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary once it had been defeated in the war.

As the delegates who attended the congress recognized, the future of the central and eastern European peoples—to a greater extent than that of anyone else in Europe or the rest of the world—rested wholly on the outcome of World War I. If the Central Powers proved victorious, which still seemed possible in the spring of 1918, the different nationalities living in the Austro-Hungarian Empire would be given autonomous status but would remain under the control of the empire, now ruled by Emperor Karl I of Austria. If the Entente proved victorious, on the other hand, the empire would be broken into pieces, with the South Slavs joined in a large state ruled by the Serbian monarchy and the Czechs and Slovaks united into a single state, Czechoslovakia. In both cases, Poland would likely gain its independence, and would serve as a buffer between Europe and the vast expanse of the newly created Soviet state.

- **Apr 10 1941 – WW2:** The German and Italian invaders of Yugoslavia set up the Independent State of Croatia (also including Bosnia and Herzegovina) and place nationalist leader Ante Pavelic's Ustase, pro-fascist insurgents, in control of what is no more than a puppet Axis regime.
- **Apr 10 1942 – WW2:** *Bataan Death March begins* » The day after Japan bombed the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, the Japanese invasion of the Philippines began. Within a month, the Japanese had captured Manila, the capital of the Philippines, and the U.S. and Filipino defenders of Luzon were forced to retreat to the Bataan Peninsula. For the next three months, the combined U.S.-Filipino army, under the command of U.S. General Jonathan Wainwright, held out impressively despite a lack of naval and air support. Finally, on 7 APR, with his army crippled by starvation and disease, Wainwright began withdrawing as many troops as possible to the island fortress of Corregidor in Manila Bay. However, two days later, 75,000 Allied and American troops were trapped by the Japanese and forced to surrender.

The next day, the Bataan Death March began. They started a forced march to a prison camp near Cabanatuan. During this infamous trek, known as the "Bataan Death March," the prisoners were forced to march 85 miles in six days, with only one meal of rice during the entire journey. By the end

of the march, which was punctuated with atrocities committed by the Japanese guards, hundreds of Americans and many more Filipinos had died. Of those who survived to reach the Japanese prison camp near Cabanatuan, few lived to celebrate U.S. General Douglas MacArthur's liberation of Luzon in 1945.

In the Philippines, homage is paid to the victims of the Bataan Death March every April on Bataan Day, a national holiday that sees large groups of Filipinos solemnly rewalking parts of the death route.

- **Apr 10 1963 – U.S. Navy:** *Atomic submarine sinks in Atlantic* » The USS Thresher, an atomic submarine, sinks in the Atlantic Ocean, killing the entire crew. One hundred and twenty-nine sailors and civilians were lost when the sub unexpectedly plunged to the sea floor 300 miles off the coast of New England.



The Thresher was launched on July 9, 1960, from Portsmouth Naval Yard in New Hampshire. Built with new technology, it was the first submarine assembled as part of a new class that could run more quietly and dive deeper than any that had come before. On April 10, 1963, at just before 8 a.m., the Thresher was conducting drills off the coast of Cape Cod. At 9:13 a.m., the USS Skylark, another ship participating in the drills, received a communication from the Thresher that the sub was experiencing minor problems. Other attempted communications failed and, only five minutes later, sonar images showed the Thresher breaking apart as it fell to the bottom of the sea. Sixteen officers, 96 sailors and 17 civilians were on board. All were killed.

On 12 APR, President John F. Kennedy ordered that flags across the country be flown at half-staff to commemorate the lives lost in this disaster. A subsequent investigation revealed that a leak in a silver-brazed joint in the engine room had caused a short circuit in critical electrical systems. The problems quickly spread, making the equipment needed to bring the Thresher to the surface inoperable. The disaster forced improvements in the design and quality control of submarines. Twenty-five years later, in 1988, Vice Admiral Bruce Demars, the Navy's chief submarine officer, said "The loss of Thresher initiated fundamental changes in the way we do business—changes in design, construction, inspections, safety checks, tests, and more. We have not forgotten the lessons learned. It's a much safer submarine force today."

- **Apr 10 1970 – Vietnam War:** *Poll reveals that public approval of Vietnam policy is down* » A Gallup Poll shows that 48 percent of the public approves of President Nixon's policy in Vietnam, while 41 percent disapprove. In January, Nixon had a 65 percent approval rating. The drop reflected the growing dissatisfaction with Nixon's failure to end the war in Vietnam. He had been elected in

1968 largely because he claimed to have a plan to end the war, but after three months in office, there was still no announcement about when the plan would be enacted. His approval rating further plummeted later in April, when he announced that U.S. and South Vietnamese forces had crossed the border into Cambodia. This announcement set off a wave of antiwar demonstrations, including one at Kent State University that resulted in the killing of four students by Army National Guard troops. The “Cambodian incursion,” as it came to be called, angered many in Congress, who felt that Nixon was illegally widening the war; this resulted in a series of congressional resolutions and legislative initiatives to severely limit the executive power of the president.

- **Apr 10 1971 – Cold War:** *U.S. table tennis team visits communist China* » The U.S. table tennis team begins a weeklong visit to the People’s Republic of China (PRC) at the invitation of China’s communist government. The well-publicized trip was part of the PRC’s attempt to build closer diplomatic relations with the United States, and was the beginning of what some pundits in the United States referred to as “ping-pong diplomacy.”



Diplomatic relations between the United States and the PRC ended in 1949 when the U.S. severed ties to the new communist government that had taken power. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the United States and the PRC remained implacable enemies. During the Korean War they clashed militarily, and during the 1960s they supported opposing sides in the conflict in Vietnam. By the late 1960s, however, the communist leadership in the PRC began to rethink its policy towards the United States.

Several factors motivated China to reconsider its relationship with the United States. Chinese officials hoped that closer relations with the United States might provide a very useful counterweight in Chinese relations with Russia. Chinese communists were concerned that the Soviets were deviating from the Marxist hard-line, and Soviet and Chinese troops engaged in some brief but bloody border skirmishes in 1969. The Chinese desire for U.S. trade was another factor motivating the re-establishment of diplomatic ties. The invitation to the U.S. table tennis team in April 1971 was a friendly gesture indicating that the Chinese hoped for a general easing of tensions.

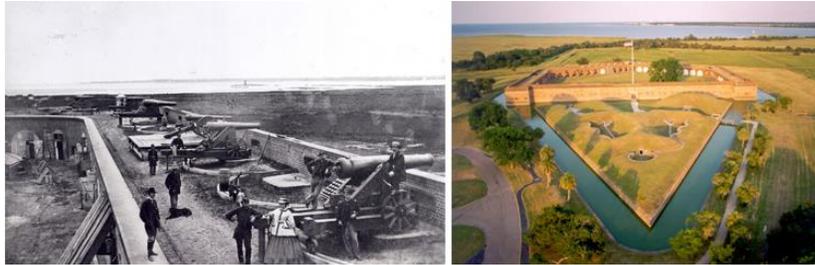
The “ping-pong diplomacy” worked. In June 1972, President Richard Nixon made an historic visit to China to begin talks about re-establishing diplomatic relations. The Chinese table tennis team also toured America, causing a short-lived craze for table tennis.

- **Apr 10 1972 – Vietnam War:** *B-52s begin bombing North Vietnam* » Although the U.S. command refuses to confirm publicly the location of targets, U.S. B-52 bombers reportedly begin bombing North Vietnam for the first time since November 1967. The bombers struck in the vicinity of Vinh, 145 miles north of the Demilitarized Zone. It was later acknowledged publicly that target priority during these attacks had been given to SAM-2 missile sites, which had made raids over North Vietnam increasingly hazardous. U.S. officials called Hanoi’s SAM-2 defenses “the most

sophisticated air defenses in the history of air warfare.” These defenses consisted of advanced radar and lethally accurate air defense missiles.

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- **Apr 11 1862 – Civil War:** *Confederates surrender Fort Pulaski* » The Confederates surrender Fort Pulaski, guarding the mouth of the Savannah River in Georgia, after a two-day Union bombardment tears great holes in the massive fort.



Fort Pulaski was constructed in 1847 as part of the country’s coastal defense network. The imposing masonry stronghold was named for Polish Count Casimir Pulaski, who was killed at Savannah by British troops during the American Revolution. The Union landed troops on Tybee Island, a mile south of Pulaski, in early 1862 and prepared for an attack. An engineering officer, Captain Quincy Gilmore, spent two months moving heavy artillery into place. These included large smoothbore cannon and smaller, rifled guns that shot conical shells at high speed and with greater accuracy than the larger pieces.

The attack began on 10 APR, and Gilmore’s work paid off. The rifled cannon fired shots that penetrated two feet into Fort Pulaski’s seven-foot-thick walls. By the morning of 11 APR, two huge gaps had been torn in the fort walls and a group of Federal infantry was poised for an attack. Colonel Charles Olmstead, commander of Fort Pulaski, recognized that further resistance was futile, and he surrendered the fort to Union troops.

The Savannah River was sealed and a vital Confederate port was closed, although Savannah itself would not be captured until General William T. Sherman marched across Georgia two and a half years later. The destruction of Fort Pulaski signaled an end to the era of brick fortifications, though, which had been made obsolete by the new rifled artillery.

- **Apr 11 1945 – WW2:** *The U.S. army liberates Buchenwald concentration camp* » A camp that will be judged second only to Auschwitz in the horrors it imposed on its prisoners, is liberated by the American Third Army near Weimar, Germany,

As American forces closed in on the Nazi concentration camp at Buchenwald, Gestapo headquarters at Weimar telephoned the camp administration to announce that it was sending explosives to blow up any evidence of the camp—including its inmates. What the Gestapo did not know was that the camp administrators had already fled in fear of the Allies. A prisoner answered the phone and informed headquarters that explosives would not be needed, as the camp had already been blown up, which, of course, was not true.



German civilians (center) are forced by American troops to bear witness to Nazi atrocities at Buchenwald concentration camp, mere miles from their own homes, April 1945, Ilse Koch(left) and Elie Wiesel (right)

The camp held thousands of prisoners, mostly slave laborers. There were no gas chambers, but hundreds, sometimes thousands, died monthly from disease, malnutrition, beatings, and executions. Doctors performed medical experiments on inmates, testing the effects of viral infections and vaccines.

Among the camp’s most gruesome characters was the bitch of Buchenwald Ilse Koch, wife of the camp commandant, who was infamous for her sadism. She often beat prisoners with a riding crop, and collected lampshades, book covers, and gloves made from the skin of camp victims. Among those saved by the Americans was Elie Wiesel, who would go on to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986.

- **Apr 11 1951 – Korea:** *Truman relieves MacArthur of duties in Korea* » In perhaps the most famous civilian-military confrontation in the history of the United States, President Harry S. Truman relieves General Douglas MacArthur of command of the U.S. forces in Korea. The firing of MacArthur set off a brief uproar among the American public, but Truman remained committed to keeping the conflict in Korea a “limited war.”



Problems with the flamboyant and egotistical General MacArthur had been brewing for months. In the early days of the war in Korea (which began in June 1950), the general had devised some brilliant strategies and military maneuvers that helped save South Korea from falling to the invading forces of communist North Korea. As U.S. and United Nations forces turned the tide of battle in Korea, MacArthur argued for a policy of pushing into North Korea to completely defeat the communist forces. Truman went along with this plan, but worried that the communist government of the People’s Republic of China might take the invasion as a hostile act and intervene in the conflict. In October 1950, MacArthur met with Truman and assured him that the chances of a Chinese intervention were slim. Then, in November and December 1950, hundreds of thousands of Chinese troops crossed into North Korea and flung themselves against the American lines, driving the U.S. troops back into South Korea. MacArthur then asked for permission to bomb communist China and use Nationalist Chinese

forces from Taiwan against the People's Republic of China. Truman flatly refused these requests and a very public argument began to develop between the two men.

In April 1951, President Truman fired MacArthur and replaced him with Gen. Matthew Ridgeway. On 11 APR, Truman addressed the nation and explained his actions. He began by defending his overall policy in Korea, declaring, "It is right for us to be in Korea." He excoriated the "communists in the Kremlin [who] are engaged in a monstrous conspiracy to stamp out freedom all over the world." Nevertheless, he explained, it "would be wrong—tragically wrong—for us to take the initiative in extending the war... Our aim is to avoid the spread of the conflict." The president continued, "I believe that we must try to limit the war to Korea for these vital reasons: To make sure that the precious lives of our fighting men are not wasted; to see that the security of our country and the free world is not needlessly jeopardized; and to prevent a third world war." General MacArthur had been fired "so that there would be no doubt or confusion as to the real purpose and aim of our policy."

MacArthur returned to the United States to a hero's welcome. Parades were held in his honor, and he was asked to speak before Congress (where he gave his famous "Old soldiers never die, they just fade away" speech). Public opinion was strongly against Truman's actions, but the president stuck to his decision without regret or apology. Eventually, MacArthur did "just fade away," and the American people began to understand that his policies and recommendations might have led to a massively expanded war in Asia. Though the concept of a "limited war," as opposed to the traditional American policy of unconditional victory, was new and initially unsettling to many Americans, the idea came to define the U.S. Cold War military strategy.

- **Apr 11 1963 – Vietnam War:** Troops from Hawaii sent to South Vietnam » One hundred U.S. troops of the Hawaiian-based 25th Infantry Division are ordered to temporary duty with military units in South Vietnam to serve as machine gunners aboard Army H-21 helicopters. This was the first commitment of American combat troops to the war and represented a quiet escalation of the U.S. commitment to the war in Vietnam.
- **Apr 11 1972 – Vietnam War:** *B-52s strike North Vietnamese positions* » B-52 strikes against communist forces attacking South Vietnamese positions in the Central Highlands near Kontum remove any immediate threat to that city. Air strikes against North Vietnam continued, but were hampered by poor weather. Also on this day, the Pentagon ordered two more squadrons of B-52s to Thailand.



A B-52 strike seen from Khe Sanh.

These actions were part of the U.S. response to the ongoing North Vietnamese Nguyen Hue Offensive, which had begun on March 30. This offensive, later more commonly known as the “Easter Offensive,” was a massive invasion by North Vietnamese forces designed to strike the blow that would win the war for the communists. The attacking force included 14 infantry divisions and 26 separate regiments, with more than 120,000 troops and approximately 1,200 tanks and other armored vehicles. The main North Vietnamese objectives, in addition to Quang Tri in the north, were Kontum in the Central Highlands, and An Loc farther to the south. The fighting, which continued into the fall, was some of the most desperate of the war. The South Vietnamese prevailed against the invaders with the help of U.S. advisors and massive American airpower.

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- **Apr 12 1861 – Civil War:** The Civil War begins » The bloodiest four years in American history begin when Confederate shore batteries under General P.G.T. Beauregard open fire on Union-held Fort Sumter in South Carolina’s Charleston Bay. During the next 34 hours, 50 Confederate guns and mortars launched more than 4,000 rounds at the poorly supplied fort. On April 13, U.S. Major Robert Anderson surrendered the fort. Two days later, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation calling for 75,000 volunteer soldiers to quell the Southern “insurrection.”

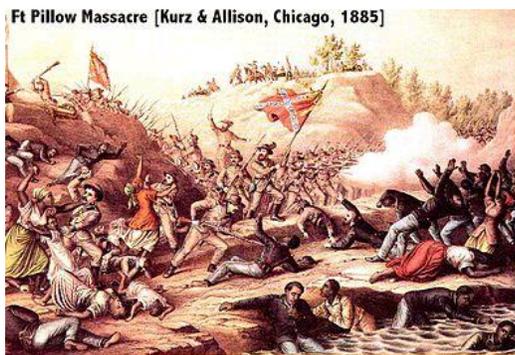


As early as 1858, the ongoing conflict between North and South over the issue of slavery had led Southern leadership to discuss a unified separation from the United States. By 1860, the majority of the slave states were publicly threatening secession if the Republicans, the anti-slavery party, won the presidency. Following Republican Abraham Lincoln’s victory over the divided Democratic Party in November 1860, South Carolina immediately initiated secession proceedings. On December 20, the South Carolina legislature passed the “Ordinance of Secession,” which declared that “the Union now subsisting between South Carolina and other states, under the name of the United States of America, is hereby dissolved.” After the declaration, South Carolina set about seizing forts, arsenals, and other strategic locations within the state. Within six weeks, five more Southern states—Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana—had followed South Carolina’s lead.

In February 1861, delegates from those states convened to establish a unified government. Jefferson Davis of Mississippi was subsequently elected the first president of the Confederate States of America. When Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated on March 4, 1861, a total of seven states (Texas had joined the pack) had seceded from the Union, and federal troops held only Fort Sumter in South Carolina, Fort Pickens off the Florida coast, and a handful of minor outposts in the South. Four years

after the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter, the Confederacy was defeated at the total cost of 620,000 Union and Confederate soldiers dead.

- **Apr 12 1862 – Civil War:** The Andrews Raid (the Great Locomotive Chase) occurred, starting from Big Shanty, Georgia (now Kennesaw). Some of Andrews' raiders were the first to be awarded the Medal of Honor by the US Congress for their actions
- **Apr 12 1864 – Civil War:** *The Fort Pillow Massacre* » During the American Civil War, Major General Nathan Bedford Forrest's Confederate raiders attack the isolated Union garrison at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, overlooking the Mississippi River. The fort, an important part of the Confederate river defense system, was captured by federal forces in 1862. Of the 500-strong Union garrison defending the fort, more than half the soldiers were African-Americans.



1885 color poster of the "Fort Pillow Massacre"

After an initial bombardment, General Forrest asked for the garrison's surrender. The Union commander refused, and Forrest's 1,500 cavalry troopers easily stormed and captured the fort, suffering only moderate casualties. However, the extremely high proportion of Union casualties—231 killed and more than 100 seriously wounded—raised questions about the Confederates' conduct after the battle. Union survivors' accounts, later supported by a federal investigation, concluded that African-American troops were massacred by Forrest's men after surrendering. Southern accounts disputed these findings, and controversy over the battle continues today.

The enlistment of African-Americans into the Union army began after the enactment of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, and by the war's end 180,000 African Americans had fought in the Union army and 10,000 in the navy.

- **Apr 12 1865 – Civil War:** Mobile, Alabama, falls to the Union Army.
- **Apr 12 1917 – WWI:** Canadian forces successfully complete the taking of Vimy Ridge from the Germans.
- **Apr 12 1945 – WW2:** *Roosevelt Dies* » U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt dies of a cerebral hemorrhage in his home at Warm Springs, Georgia, on this day in 1945. The only man to be elected to four terms as president of the United States, Roosevelt is remembered—by friends and enemies alike—for his New Deal social policies and his leadership during wartime.



Roosevelt was elected to a third term in 1940 with the promise of maintaining American neutrality as far as foreign wars were concerned: “Let no man or woman thoughtlessly or falsely talk of American people sending its armies to European fields.” But as Hitler’s war spread, and the desperation of Britain grew, the president fought for passage in Congress of the Lend-Lease Act, in March 1941, which committed financial aid to Great Britain and other allies. In August, Roosevelt met with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to proclaim the Atlantic Charter, which would become the basis of the United Nations; they also drafted a statement to the effect that the United States “would be compelled to take countermeasures” should Japan further encroach in the southwest Pacific.

Despite ongoing negotiations with Japan, that “further encroachment” took the form of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, “—a day that would live in infamy.” The next day Roosevelt requested, and received, a declaration of war against Japan. On December 11, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.

Certain wartime decisions by Roosevelt proved controversial, such as the demand of unconditional surrender of the Axis powers, which some claim prolonged the war. Another was the acquiescence to Joseph Stalin of certain territories in the Far East in exchange for his support in the war against Japan. Roosevelt is often accused of being too naïve where Stalin was concerned, especially in regards to “Uncle Joe’s” own imperial desires.

- **Apr 12 1961 – Vietnam War:** *Rostow recommends escalation of effort* » Walt W. Rostow, senior White House specialist on Southeast Asia and a principal architect of U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine, delivers a memorandum to President John F. Kennedy asserting that the time has come for “gearing up the whole Vietnam operation.” Rostow’s proposals, almost all of which eventually became policy, included: a visit to Vietnam by the vice president; increasing the number of American Special Forces; increasing funds for South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem; and “persuading Diem to move more rapidly to broaden the base of his government, as well as to decrease its centralization and improve its efficiency.”
- **Apr 12 1970 – Cold War:** Soviet submarine K-8, carrying four nuclear torpedoes, sinks in the Bay of Biscay four days after a fire on board.
- **Apr 12 1975 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. Embassy in Cambodia evacuated* » In Cambodia, the U.S. ambassador and his staff leave Phnom Penh when the U.S. Navy conducts its evacuation effort, Operation Eagle. On April 3, 1975, as the communist Khmer Rouge forces closed in for the final assault on the capital city, U.S. forces were put on alert for the impending embassy evacuation. An 11-man Marine element flew into the city to prepare for the arrival of the U.S. evacuation helicopters.

On 10 APR, U.S. Ambassador Gunther Dean asked Washington that the evacuation begin no later than 12 APR.

At 8:50 a.m. on 12 APR, an Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service HH-53 landed a four-man Air Force combat control team to coordinate the operation. Three minutes later, it guided in a Marine Corps helicopter with the first element of the Marine security force. Marine and Air Force helicopters then carried 276 evacuees—including 82 Americans, 159 Cambodians, and 35 foreign nationals—to the safety of U.S. Navy assault carriers in the Gulf of Thailand. By 10 a.m., the Marine contingency force, the advance 11-man element, and the combat control team had been evacuated without any casualties.



U.S. Marines provide cover during Operation Eagle Pull as Americans and Cambodians board Marine helicopters in Phnom Penh during the final U.S. pullout of Cambodia on April 12, 1975. Five days after Operation Eagle Pull, the dramatic evacuation of Americans, the U.S.-backed government fell as communist Khmer Rouge guerrillas stormed into Phnom Penh. Nearly 2 million Cambodians - one in every four - would die from executions, starvation and hideous torture

On 16 APR, the Lon Nol government surrendered to the Khmer Rouge, ending five years of war. With the surrender, the victorious Khmer Rouge evacuated Phnom Penh and set about to reorder Cambodian society, which resulted in a killing spree and the notorious “killing fields.” Eventually, hundreds of thousands of Cambodians were murdered or died from exhaustion, hunger, and disease.

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- **Apr 13 1776 – Revolutionary War:** American forces are surprised in the Battle of Bound Brook, New Jersey. During the battle, most of the 500–man garrison escaped. Casualties and losses: US 40 to 120 - GB 7.
- **Apr 13 1861 – Civil War:** *Fort Sumter surrenders* » After a 33-hour bombardment by Confederate cannons, Union forces surrender Fort Sumter in South Carolina’s Charleston Harbor. The first engagement of the war ended in Rebel victory.

The surrender concluded a standoff that began with South Carolina’s secession from the Union on December 20, 1860. When President Abraham Lincoln sent word to Charleston in early April that he planned to send food to the beleaguered garrison, the Confederates took action. They opened fire on Sumter in the predawn of 12 APR. Over the next day, nearly 4,000 rounds were hurled toward the black silhouette of Fort Sumter.

Inside Sumter was its commander, Major Robert Anderson, 9 officers, 68 enlisted men, 8 musicians, and 43 construction workers who were still putting the finishing touches on the fort. Union

Captain Abner Doubleday, the man often inaccurately credited with inventing the game of baseball, returned fire nearly two hours after the barrage began. By the morning of 13 APR, the garrison in Sumter was in dire straits. The soldiers had sustained only minor injuries, but they could not hold out much longer. The fort was badly damaged, and the Confederate's shots were becoming more precise. Around noon, the flagstaff was shot away. Louis Wigfall, a former U.S. senator from Texas, rowed out without permission to see if the garrison was trying to surrender. Anderson decided that further resistance was futile, and he ran a white flag up a makeshift flagpole.

The first engagement of the war was over, and the only casualty had been a Confederate horse. The Union force was allowed to leave for the north; before leaving, the soldiers fired a 100-gun salute. During the salute, one soldier was killed and another mortally wounded by a prematurely exploding cartridge. The Civil War had officially begun. Casualties and losses: US 2 - CSA 0

- **Apr 13 1939 – WW2:** *USS Astoria attempts pre-war reconnaissance* » The USS Astoria (CA-34) arrives in Japan under the command of Richmond Kelly Turner in an attempt to photograph the Japanese battleships Yamato and Musashi.



U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Turner, whose motto was “If you don’t have losses, you’re not doing enough,” saw the cruiser Astoria through many assignments, from assessing Japanese naval strength before U.S. entry in the war, to returning the ashes of a Japanese ambassador to Japan, to the amphibious assault at Guadalcanal. The Astoria was unfortunately sunk, along with the Quincy and the Vincennes, during Operation Watchtower, the landing of 16,000 troops on Guadalcanal, in the Solomon Islands, in August 1942.

- **Apr 13 1940 – WW2:** *Japan and USSR sign nonaggression pact* » During World War II, representatives from the Soviet Union and Japan sign a five-year neutrality agreement. Although traditional enemies, the nonaggression pact allowed both nations to free up large numbers of troops occupying disputed territory in Manchuria and Outer Mongolia to be used for more pressing purposes.



The Soviet-Japanese pact came nearly two years after the Soviet Union signed a similar agreement with Nazi Germany, dividing much of Eastern Europe between the two countries. The Molotov-

Ribbentrop Nonaggression Pact allowed Nazi leader Adolf Hitler to move German forces to the West for his major offensives of 1939 to 1941 and bought Soviet leader Joseph Stalin time to prepare the empire for what he saw as its inevitable involvement in World War II.

However, on June 22, 1941, just two months after the Soviet-Japanese nonaggression pact was signed, Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the USSR. Stalin was caught by surprise, and the German Wehrmacht penetrated deep into the Soviet Union, killing millions of Russians and reaching the outskirts of Moscow before the Red Army was able to begin a successful counteroffensive. Although Japanese offensives into the eastern USSR during this time might have resulted in the defeat of the Soviet Union, Japan was forced to concentrate all its resources in a resistance against the massive U.S. counteroffensive in the Pacific, underway by fall 1942.

During the Yalta conference in early 1945, Joseph Stalin, at the urging of U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, agreed to declare war against Japan within three months of Germany's defeat. On August 8, 1945, true to Stalin's promise, the Soviet Union declared war against Japan, and the next day the Red Army invaded Manchuria. The same day, the United States dropped its second atomic bomb on Japan, devastating Nagasaki as it had Hiroshima three days earlier. Faced with the choice of destruction or surrender, Japan chose the latter. On August 15, one week after the Soviet declaration of war, Emperor Hirohito announced the Japanese surrender on national radio, urging the Japanese people to "endure the unendurable."

- **Apr 13 1945 – WW2:** *Hitler bluffs from bunker as Russians advance and atrocities continue* » Adolf Hitler proclaims from his underground bunker that deliverance was at hand from encroaching Russian troops—Berlin would remain German. A "mighty artillery is waiting to greet the enemy," proclaims Der Fuhrer. This as Germans loyal to the Nazi creed continue the mass slaughter of Jews.

As Hitler attempted to inflate his troops' morale, German soldiers, Hitler Youth, and local police chased 5,000 to 6,000 Jewish prisoners into a large barn, setting it on fire, in hopes of concealing the evidence of their monstrous war crimes as the end of the Reich quickly became a reality. As the Jewish victims attempted to burrow their way out of the blazing barn, Germans surrounding the conflagration shot them. "Several thousand people were burned alive," reported one survivor. The tragic irony is that President Roosevelt, had he lived, intended to give an address at the annual Jefferson Day dinner in Washington, D.C., on that very day, proclaiming his desire for "an end to the beginnings of all wars—yes, an end to this brutal, inhuman, and thoroughly impractical method of settling the differences between governments."

Apr 13 1966 – Vietnam War: *SCLC passes resolution about South Vietnam* » The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) adopts a resolution urging that the United States "desist from aiding the military junta against the Buddhists, Catholics, and students, whose efforts to democratize their government are more in consonance with our traditions than the policy of the military oligarchy." This resolution, which had little real impact on administration policies, indicated the growing dissatisfaction among many segments of the American population with President Lyndon B. Johnson's handling of the war in Vietnam.



Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., had helped establish the SCLC in 1957 to coordinate civil rights protests in the South. King began to speak out against the American involvement in Vietnam in July 1965, and he became increasingly identified with the antiwar movement. He argued that the war diverted money and attention from domestic programs created to aid the black poor. The SCLC resolution was one of the first public pronouncements by King and his followers against U.S. policy in Vietnam, but successive protests by King rapidly alienated President Johnson.

- **Apr 13 1972 – Vietnam War:** *North Vietnamese launch major attack on An Loc* » Three North Vietnamese divisions attack An Loc with infantry, tanks, heavy artillery and rockets, taking half the city after a day of close combat. An Loc, the capital of Binh Long Province, was located 65 miles northwest of Saigon.

This attack was the southernmost thrust of the three-pronged Nguyen Hue Offensive (later more commonly known as the “Easter Offensive”), a massive invasion by North Vietnamese forces designed to strike the knockout blow that would win the war for the communists. The attacking force included 14 infantry divisions and 26 separate regiments, with more than 120,000 troops and approximately 1,200 tanks and other armored vehicles. The main North Vietnamese objectives, in addition to An Loc in the south, were Quang Tri in the north, and Kontum in the Central Highlands. Initially, the South Vietnamese defenders in each case were almost overwhelmed, particularly in the northernmost provinces, where the South Vietnamese abandoned their positions in Quang Tri and fled south in the face of the enemy onslaught.



PAVN T-54 tanks destroyed in An Lộc

In Binh Long, the North Vietnamese forces crossed into South Vietnam from Cambodia to strike first at Loc Ninh on April 5, then quickly encircled An Loc, holding it under siege for almost three months while they made repeated attempts to take the city. The defenders suffered heavy casualties, including 2,300 dead or missing, but with the aid of U.S. advisors and American airpower, they managed to hold An Loc against vastly superior odds until the siege was lifted on June 18. Fighting continued all over South Vietnam throughout the summer months, but eventually the South

Vietnamese forces prevailed against the invaders, even retaking Quang Tri in September. With the communist invasion blunted, President Nixon declared that the South Vietnamese victory proved the viability of his Vietnamization program, instituted in 1969 to increase the combat capability of the South Vietnamese armed forces.

- **Apr 13 1972 – Post WW2: Soviets admit to Katyn Massacre** » The Soviet government officially accepts blame for the Katyn Massacre of World War II, when nearly 5,000 Polish military officers were murdered and buried in mass graves in the Katyn Forest. The admission was part of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's promise to be more forthcoming and candid concerning Soviet history.



In 1939, Poland had been invaded from the west by Nazi forces and from the east by Soviet troops. Sometime in the spring of 1940, thousands of Polish military officers were rounded up by Soviet secret police forces, taken to the Katyn Forest outside of Smolensk, massacred, and buried in a mass grave. In 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union and pushed into the Polish territory once held by the Russians. In 1943, with the war against Russia going badly, the Germans announced that they had unearthed thousands of corpses in the Katyn Forest. Representatives from the Polish government-in-exile (situated in London) visited the site and decided that the Soviets, not the Nazis, were responsible for the killings. These representatives, however, were pressured by U.S. and British officials to keep their report secret for the time being, since they did not want to risk a diplomatic rupture with the Soviets. As World War II came to an end, German propaganda lashed out at the Soviets, using the Katyn Massacre as an example of Russian atrocities. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin flatly denied the charges and claimed that the Nazis were responsible for the slaughter. The matter was not revisited for 40 years.

By 1990, however, two factors pushed the Soviets to admit their culpability. First was Gorbachev's much publicized policy of "openness" in Soviet politics. This included a more candid appraisal of Soviet history, particularly concerning the Stalin period. Second was the state of Polish-Soviet relations in 1990. The Soviet Union was losing much of its power to hold onto its satellites in Eastern Europe, but the Russians hoped to retain as much influence as possible. In Poland, Lech Walesa's Solidarity movement was steadily eroding the power of the communist regime. The Katyn Massacre issue had been a sore spot in relations with Poland for over four decades, and it is possible that Soviet officials believed that a frank admission and apology would help ease the increasing diplomatic tensions. The Soviet government issued the following statement: "The Soviet side expresses deep regret over the tragedy, and assesses it as one of the worst Stalinist outrages."

Whether the Soviet admission had any impact is difficult to ascertain. The communist regime in Poland crumbled by the end of 1990, and Lech Walesa was elected president of Poland in December of that year. Gorbachev resigned in December 1991, which brought an effective end to the Soviet Union.

- **Apr 14 1865 – Post Civil War: *Lincoln is shot*** » John Wilkes Booth, an actor and Confederate sympathizer, fatally shoots President Abraham Lincoln at a play at Ford’s Theater in Washington, D.C. The attack came only five days after Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered his massive army at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, effectively ending the American Civil War.



Booth, a Maryland native born in 1838, who remained in the North during the war despite his Confederate sympathies, initially plotted to capture President Lincoln and take him to Richmond, the Confederate capital. However, on March 20, 1865, the day of the planned kidnapping, the president failed to appear at the spot where Booth and his six fellow conspirators lay in wait. Two weeks later, Richmond fell to Union forces.

In April, with Confederate armies near collapse across the South, Booth hatched a desperate plan to save the Confederacy. Learning that Lincoln was to attend a performance of “Our American Cousin” at Ford’s Theater on April 14, Booth masterminded the simultaneous assassination of Lincoln, Vice President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of State William H. Seward. By murdering the president and two of his possible successors, Booth and his conspirators hoped to throw the U.S. government into disarray.

On the evening of 14 APR, conspirator Lewis T. Powell burst into Secretary of State Seward’s home, seriously wounding him and three others, while George A. Atzerodt, assigned to Vice President Johnson, lost his nerve and fled. Meanwhile, just after 10 p.m., Booth entered Lincoln’s private theater box unnoticed and shot the president with a single bullet in the back of his head. Slashing an army officer who rushed at him, Booth leapt to the stage and shouted “Sic semper tyrannis! [Thus always to tyrants]—the South is avenged!” Although Booth broke his leg jumping from Lincoln’s box, he managed to escape Washington on horseback.

The president, mortally wounded, was carried to a lodging house opposite Ford’s Theater. About 7:22 a.m. the next morning, Lincoln, age 56, died—the first U.S. president to be assassinated. Booth, pursued by the army and other secret forces, was finally cornered in a barn near Bowling Green, Virginia, and died from a possibly self-inflicted bullet wound as the barn was burned to the ground. Of the eight other people eventually charged with the conspiracy, four were hanged and four were jailed. Lincoln, the 16th U.S. president, was buried on May 4, 1865, in Springfield, Illinois.

- **Apr 14 1918 – WWI: *U.S. fliers in first dogfight over western front*** » Six days after being assigned for the first time to the western front, two American pilots from the U.S. First Aero Squadron engage in America’s first aerial dogfight with enemy aircraft. In a battle fought almost directly over the

Allied Squadron Aerodome at Toul, France, U.S. fliers Douglas Campbell and Alan Winslow succeeded in shooting down two German two-seaters. By the end of May, Campbell had shot down five enemy aircraft, making him the first American to qualify as a “flying ace” in World War I.



The First Aero Squadron, organized in 1914 after the outbreak of World War I, undertook its first combat mission on March 19, 1917, in support of the 7,000 U.S. troops that invaded Mexico to capture Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa. Despite numerous mechanical and navigational problems, the American fliers flew hundreds of scouting missions for U.S. Brigadier General John J. Pershing and gained important experience that would later be used over the battlefields of Europe in World War I.

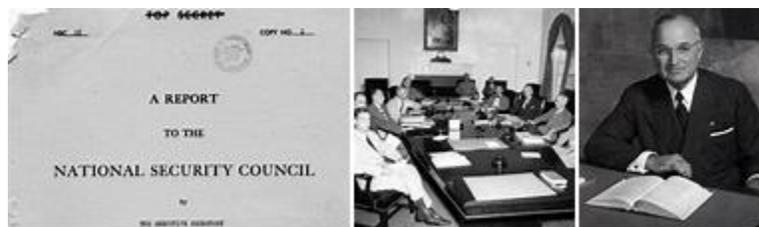
- **Apr 14 1941 – WW2:** *German general Erwin Rommel attacks Tobruk* -- The siege diverted Axis troops from the frontier and the Tobruk garrison repulsed several attacks. The port was frequently bombarded by artillery, dive-bombers and medium bombers, as the RAF flew defensive sorties from airfields in Egypt. British Mediterranean Fleet and Inshore Squadron ships ran the blockade, to carry reinforcements and supplies in and wounded and prisoners out. On 27 November, Tobruk was relieved by the 8th Army (the name of British, Commonwealth, Imperial and Allied forces in the Western Desert since September 1941), during Operation Crusader.



Australian troops (left) occupy a front line position at Tobruk. Field Marshal Erwin Rommel in 1942

- **Apr 14 1945 – WW2:** US 7th Army & allies forces captured Nuremberg & Stuttgart in Germany.

- **Apr 14 1945 – WW2: U.S. Fifth Army joins in Italian offensive** » Our British allies are joined by the U.S. Fifth Army in the assault on the German occupiers of Italy. The Fifth Army, now under Lucian K. Truscott (General Mark Clark, former commander of the Fifth, was made commander of the Allied armies in Italy), began pushing its way up the peninsula, capturing Massa and crossing the Frigido River. After meeting considerable German resistance in the mountains, the Fifth sent the Germans running once the battle took to open country. Bologna became the next target, falling to the Fifth one week after engaging the enemy in Italy. Ferrara, Bondeno, and Modena succumbed shortly thereafter, Genoa on the 27th, and Milan on the 29th—an agenda of assaults that mimicked Napoleon’s Italian campaigns. Helping the U.S. effort was the work of Italian guerilla partisan groups, who had successfully taken control of the area west of the Como-Milan-Genoa line. By the time of the unconditional surrender of the Germans, signed at Caserta on April 29, almost 660,000 Axis troops lay dead—compared with 321,000 Allied dead.
- **Apr 14 1950 – Cold War: President Truman receives NSC-68** » National Security Council Paper Number 68 (NSC-68) is received by President Harry S. Truman. The report was a group effort, created with input from the Defense Department, the State Department, the CIA, and other interested agencies; NSC-68 formed the basis for America’s Cold War policy for the next two decades.



In the face of U.S. foreign policy concerns, most notably the Soviet explosion of an atomic device in September 1949 and China’s fall to communism the following October, President Truman requested a complete review and re-evaluation of America’s Cold War diplomacy strategy. The result was NSC-68, a report that took four months to compile and was completed in April 1950.

The report began by noting that the United States was facing a completely changed world. World War II had devastated Germany and Japan, and France and Great Britain had suffered terrific losses. This situation left the United States and the Soviet Union as the only two great world powers. The Soviet Union posed a new and frightening threat to U.S. power. Animated by “a new fanatic faith” in communism, the Soviet Union sought nothing less than the imposition of “its absolute authority over the rest of the world.” Clashes with the United States were, therefore, inevitable. According to the report, the development of nuclear weapons meant, “Every individual faces the ever-present possibility of annihilation,” and, as a result, “the integrity and vitality of our system is in greater jeopardy than ever before in our history.”

According to the report, the United States should vigorously pursue a policy of “containing” Soviet expansion. NSC-68 recommended that the United States embark on rapid military expansion of conventional forces and the nuclear arsenal, including the development of the new hydrogen bomb. In addition, massive increases in military aid to U.S. allies were necessary as well as more effective use of “covert” means to achieve U.S. goals. The price of these measures was estimated to be about \$50 billion; at the time the report was issued, America was spending just \$13 billion on defense.

Truman was somewhat taken aback at the costs associated with the report's recommendations. As a politician, he hesitated to publicly support a program that would result in heavy tax increases for the American public, particularly since the increase would be spent on defending the United States during a time of peace. The outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, however, prompted action. Truman signed NSC-68 into policy in September 1950. As one State Department official noted, "Thank God Korea came along," since this act of communist aggression was believed to be crucial in convincing the public to support increased military spending. NSC-68 remained the foundation of U.S. Cold War policy until at least the 1970s. The document itself remained top secret until historians successfully lobbied for its declassification in 1975.

- **Apr 14 1965 – Vietnam War:** *173rd Airborne Brigade ordered to South Vietnam* » The Joint Chiefs of Staff order the deployment of the 173rd Airborne Brigade from Okinawa to South Vietnam. The 173rd arrived in Vietnam in May 1965 and was the first major U.S. Army ground combat unit committed to the war.

Headquartered at Bien Hoa Air Base near Saigon from May 1965 to October 1967, the brigade conducted combat operations in the region surrounding Saigon. In November 1967, the brigade fought a major battle with North Vietnamese Army forces at Dak To in the Central Highlands, winning the Presidential Union Citation for bravery in action. After more than six years in South Vietnam, the 173rd was withdrawn from Vietnam in August 1971 as part of President Richard Nixon's troop withdrawal program.

During combat service in Vietnam, 12 troopers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade won the Medal of Honor for conspicuous bravery; 1,606 were killed in action; and 8,435 were wounded in action.

- **Apr 14 1975 – Vietnam War:** Operation "Baby Lift" concludes » The American airlift of Vietnamese orphans to the United States ends after 2,600 children are transported to America. The operation began disastrously on April 4 when an Air Force cargo jet crashed shortly after take-off from Tan Son Nhut airbase in Saigon. More than 138 of the passengers, mostly children, were killed. Operation Baby Lift was initiated to bring South Vietnamese orphans to the United States for adoption by American parents. Baby Lift lasted 10 days and was carried out during the final, desperate phase of the war, as North Vietnamese forces were closing in on Saigon. Although the first flight ended in tragedy, all other flights took place without incident, and Baby Lift aircraft ferried orphans across the Pacific until the mission concluded on April 14, only 16 days before the fall of Saigon and the end of the war.
- **Apr 14 1986 – U.S.*Libya:** *U.S. bombs Libya* » The United States launches air strikes against Libya in retaliation for the Libyan sponsorship of terrorism against American troops and citizens. The raid, which began shortly before 7 p.m. EST (2 a.m., April 15 in Libya), involved more than 100 U.S. Air Force and Navy aircraft, and was over within an hour. Five military targets and "terrorism centers" were hit, including the headquarters of Libyan leader Muammar al-Qaddafi.

During the 1970s and '80s, Qaddafi's government financed a wide variety of Muslim and anti-U.S. and anti-British terrorist groups worldwide, from Palestinian guerrillas and Philippine Muslim rebels to the Irish Republican Army and the Black Panthers. In response, the U.S. imposed sanctions against Libya, and relations between the two nations steadily deteriorated. In 1981, Libya fired at a

U.S. aircraft that passed into the Gulf of Sidra, which Qaddafi had claimed in 1973 as Libyan territorial waters. That year, the U.S. uncovered evidence of Libyan-sponsored terrorist plots against the United States, including planned assassination attempts against U.S. officials and the bombing of a U.S. embassy-sponsored dance in Khartoum, Sudan.



In December 1985, five American citizens were killed in simultaneous terrorist attacks at the Rome and Vienna airports. Libya was blamed, and U.S. President Ronald Reagan ordered expanded sanctions and froze Libyan assets in the United States. On March 24, 1986, U.S. and Libyan forces clashed in the Gulf of Sidra, and four Libyan attack boats were sunk. Then, on April 5, terrorists bombed a West Berlin dance hall known to be frequented by U.S. servicemen. One U.S. serviceman and a Turkish woman were killed, and more than 200 people were wounded, including 50 other U.S. servicemen. U.S. intelligence reportedly intercepted radio messages sent from Libya to its diplomats in East Berlin ordering the 5 APR attack on the LaBelle discotheque.

On 14 APR, the United States struck back with dramatic air strikes against Tripoli and Benghazi. The attacks were mounted by 14 A-6E navy attack jets based in the Mediterranean and 18 FB-111 bombers from bases in England. Numerous other support aircraft were also involved. France refused to allow the F-111Fs to fly over French territory, which added 2,600 total nautical miles to the journey from England and back. Three military barracks were hit, along with the military facilities at Tripoli's main airport and the Benina air base southeast of Benghazi. All targets except one were reportedly chosen because of their direct connection to terrorist activity. The Benina military airfield was hit to preempt Libyan interceptors from taking off and attacking the incoming U.S. bombers.

Even before the operation had ended, President Reagan went on national television to discuss the air strikes. "When our citizens are abused or attacked anywhere in the world," he said, "we will respond in self-defense. Today we have done what we had to do. If necessary, we shall do it again."

Operation El Dorado Canyon, as it was code-named, was called a success by U.S. officials. Qaddafi's 15-month-old adopted daughter was killed in the attack on his residence, and two of his young sons were injured. Although he has never admitted it publicly, there is speculation that Qaddafi was also wounded in the bombing. Fire from Libyan surface-to-air missiles and conventional anti-aircraft artillery was heavy during the attack, and one F-111, along with its two-member crew, were lost in unknown circumstances. Several residential buildings were inadvertently bombed during the raid, and 15 Libyan civilians were reported killed. The French embassy in Tripoli was also accidentally hit, but no one was injured.

On 15 APR, Libyan patrol boats fired missiles at a U.S. Navy communications station on the Italian island of Lamedusa, but the missiles fell short. There was no other major terrorist attack linked to Libya until the 1988 bombing of Pan Am 747 over Lockerbie, Scotland. All 259 passengers and crew of that flight were killed, and 11 people on the ground perished. In the early 1990s, investigators identified Libyan intelligence agents Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi and Lamem Khalifa Fhimah as

suspects in the bombing, but Libya refused to turn them over to be tried in the United States. But in 1999—in an effort to ease United Nations sanctions against Libya—Colonel Moammar Gadhafi agreed to turn the suspects over to Scotland for trial in the Netherlands using Scottish law and prosecutors. In early 2001, al-Megrahi was convicted and sentenced to life in prison, although he continues to profess his innocence and work to overturn his conviction. Fhimah was acquitted.

In accordance with United Nations and American demands, Libya accepted responsibility for the bombing, though it did not express remorse. The U.N. and U.S. lifted sanctions against Libya; the country then paid each victim’s family approximately \$8 million in compensation. In 2004, Libya’s prime minister said that the deal was the “price for peace,” implying that his country only accepted responsibility to get the sanctions lifted, angering the survivors’ families. He also admitted that Libya had not really accepted guilt for the bombing. Pan Am Airlines, which went bankrupt as a result of the bombing, is still seeking \$4.5 billion in compensation from Libya in civil court.

Qaddafi surprised many around the world when he became one of the first Muslim heads of state to denounce al-Qaida after the attacks of September 11, 2001. In 2003, he gained favor with the administration of George W. Bush when he announced the existence of a program to build weapons of mass destruction in Libya and that he would allow an international agency to inspect and dismantle them. Though some in the U.S. government pointed to this as a direct and positive consequence of the ongoing war in Iraq, others pointed out that Qaddafi had essentially been making the same offer since 1999, but had been ignored. In 2004, U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair visited Libya, one of the first western heads of state to do so in recent memory; he praised Libya during the visit as a strong ally in the international war on terror.

In February 2011, as unrest spread through much of the Arab world, massive political protests against the Qaddafi regime sparked a civil war between revolutionaries and loyalists. In March, an international coalition began conducting airstrikes against Qaddafi strongholds under the auspices of a U.N. Security Council resolution. On October 20, Libya’s interim government announced that Qaddafi had died after being captured near his hometown of Sirte.

- **Apr 14 1988 – Afghanistan:** *Soviets to withdraw* » Representatives of the USSR, Afghanistan, the United States, and Pakistan sign an agreement calling for the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan. In exchange for an end to the disputed Soviet occupation, the United States agreed to end its arms support for the Afghan anti-Soviet factions, and Afghanistan and Pakistan agreed not to interfere in each other’s affairs.



In 1978, a Soviet-backed coup in Afghanistan installed a new communist government under Nur Mohammad Taraki. However, in 1979, a second coup toppled Taraki’s government in favor of Hafizullah Amin, a Muslim leader less favorable to the Soviets. In December 1979, Soviet tanks and

troops invaded Afghanistan, and Amin was murdered in a Soviet-backed coup. Babrak Karmal, a product of the KGB, was installed in his place.

Despite early gains, the Soviet army met with unanticipated resistance from Muslim guerrillas, who launched a jihad, or “holy war,” against the foreign atheists. Armed by the United States, Britain, China, and several Muslim nations, the muhajadeen, or “holy warriors,” inflicted heavy casualties on the Russians. In the USSR, the Red Army’s failure to suppress the guerrillas, and the high cost of the war in Russian lives and resources, caused significant discord in the Communist Party and Soviet society. In April 1988, after years of stalemate, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev signed a peace accord with Afghanistan. In February 1989, the last Soviet soldier left Afghanistan, where civil war continued until the Taliban’s seizure of power in the late 1990s.

- **Apr 14 1994 – U.S. Air Force:** In a U.S. friendly fire incident during Operation Provide Comfort in northern Iraq, two United States Air Force aircraft mistakenly shoot-down two United States Army helicopters, killing 26 people.
- **Apr 14 2003 – U.S.*PLO:** Abu Abbas, a convicted Palestinian terrorist who masterminded the 1985 hijacking of the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro on which a wheelchair-bound American was killed, is captured by U.S. Special Forces in the outskirts of Baghdad

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- **Apr 15 1783 – American Revolution:** Preliminary articles of peace ending the American Revolutionary War (or American War of Independence) are ratified.
- **Apr 15 1861 – Civil War:** President Abraham Lincoln calls for 75,000 Volunteers to quell the insurrection that soon became the American Civil War.
- **Apr 15 1900 – Philippine-American War:** Filipino guerrillas launch a surprise attack on U.S. infantry and begin a four-day siege of Catubig, Philippines.
- **Apr 15 1940 – WW2:** The Allies begin their attack on the Norwegian town of Narvik which is occupied by Nazi Germany.
- **Apr 15 1941 – WW2:** In the Belfast Blitz, two-hundred bombers of the German Luftwaffe attack Belfast, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom killing one thousand people.
- **Apr 15 1944 – WW2:** Soviets capture Tarnopol in Poland » The Soviet Red Army occupies Tarnopol, one of the principal cities of Eastern Galicia, across the former Polish border. Tarnopol, traditionally a part of Poland, then part of the Soviet Union, had become German-occupied territory in the great German offensive eastward in June 1941. One hundred and eighty Jews were shot in Tarnopol early in the German occupation; tens of thousands of Polish Jews would be slaughtered as German forces occupied larger swaths of the former eastern Poland. The Red Army naturally represented liberation for the Jewish survivors of German totalitarianism—although, Jews would eventually find their communist liberators to represent a totalitarianism of another stripe.

- **Apr 15 1944 – WW2: Operation Wedlock** » A U.S. plan for an invasion of the Kurile Islands of northern Japan. American and Canadian troops, aided by the Ninth Fleet and American bombers would be ordered to bomb the islands every day, prepare to occupy the islands long disputed between Japan and Russia. The plan was a fiction. There was no invasion—or a Ninth Fleet. It was all a ruse to divert Japanese attention away from the Marianas Islands, the Allies' true target. Operation Forager, the real thing, was launched on June 15, 1944, with a landing on Saipan, one of the three Marianas Islands. It was a U.S. success, resulting in the deaths of thousands of Japanese—both from combat and ritual suicide—including that of the Japanese commander, Lieutenant General Yoshitsugu Saito.
- **Apr 15 1945 – WW2: The Bergen-Belsen concentration camp is liberated** -- Originally established as a prisoner of war camp, in 1943, parts of it became a concentration camp. Initially this was an "exchange camp", where Jewish hostages were held with the intention of exchanging them for German prisoners of war held overseas. The camp was later expanded to accommodate Jews from other concentration camps. From 1941 to 1945, almost 20,000 Soviet prisoners of war and a further 50,000 inmates died there. Overcrowding, lack of food and poor sanitary conditions caused outbreaks of typhus, tuberculosis, typhoid fever and dysentery, leading to the deaths of more than 35,000 people in the first few months of 1945, shortly before and after the liberation.



The camp was liberated by the British 11th Armoured Division. The soldiers discovered approximately 60,000 prisoners inside, most of them half-starved and seriously ill, and another 13,000 corpses lying around the camp unburied. The horrors of the camp, documented on film and in pictures, made the name "Belsen" emblematic of Nazi crimes in general for public opinion in many countries in the immediate post-1945 period. Today, there is a memorial with an exhibition hall at the site.

- **Apr 15 1952 – U.S. Air Force:** The maiden flight of the B-52 Stratofortress



- **Apr 15 1959 – Cold War:** Castro visits the United States Four months after leading a successful revolution in Cuba, Fidel Castro visits the United States. The visit was marked by tensions between Castro and the American government.

On January 1, 1959, Castro's revolutionary forces overthrew the Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista. From the beginning of the new regime in Cuba, U.S. officials worried about the bearded revolutionary. Castro's anti-American rhetoric, his stated plans to nationalize foreign properties in Cuba, and his association with a number of suspected leftists (including his second-in-command, Che Guevara) prompted American diplomats to keep a wary eye on him. Though he worried politicians, American reporters adored him—his tales of the days spent fighting a guerrilla war in Cuba, the fatigues and combat boots he favored, and his bushy beard cut a striking figure. In April 1959, Castro accepted an invitation from the American Society of Newspaper Editors to visit the U.S.

The trip got off to an inauspicious start when it became clear that President Dwight D. Eisenhower had no intention of meeting with Castro. Instead, Eisenhower went to the golf course to avoid any chance meeting with Castro. Castro gave a talk to the Council on Foreign Affairs, a New York-based group of private citizens and former government officials interested in U.S. international relations. Castro was confrontational during the session, indicating that Cuba would not beg the United States for economic assistance. Angered by some of the questions from the audience, Castro abruptly left the meeting. Finally, before departing for Cuba, Castro met with Vice President Richard Nixon. Privately, Nixon hoped that his talk would push Castro "in the right direction," and away from any radical policies, but he came away from his discussion full of doubt about the possibility of reorienting Castro's thinking. Nixon concluded that Castro was "either incredibly naive about communism or under communist discipline—my guess is the former."



On April 21, 1959, in New York City, Fidel Castro speaks before the Women Lawyers Association of the State of New York at the Statler Hilton.

Relations between the United States and Castro deteriorated rapidly following the April visit. In less than a year, President Eisenhower ordered the CIA to begin arming and training a group of Cuban exiles to attack Cuba (the disastrous attack, known as the Bay of Pigs invasion, was eventually carried out during the Kennedy administration). The heated Cold War animosity between America and Cuba would last for over 50 years.

- **Apr 15 1969 – Korea:** The EC-121 shootdown incident: North Korea shoots down a United States Navy aircraft over the Sea of Japan, killing all 31 on board.
- **Apr 15 1970 – Vietnam War:** During the Cambodian Civil War, massacres of the Vietnamese minority results in 800 bodies flowing down the Mekong River into South Vietnam.
- **Apr 15 1970 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. 1st Infantry Division withdraws from Vietnam* » As part of the third phase of U.S. troop withdrawals announced by President Nixon, the 1st Infantry Division departs Vietnam. One of the most distinguished units in the U.S. Army, the 1st Infantry Division was

organized in May 1917 and served with distinction in both World War I and II. It was deployed to the area north of Saigon in October 1965, one of the first Army infantry divisions to arrive in Vietnam. The division consisted of seven battalions of light infantry and two battalions of mechanized infantry. Other combat elements included an armored reconnaissance unit and four battalions of artillery.

The approaches to Saigon and the border regions between Vietnam and Cambodia were the major battlefields for the 1st Infantry Division. It took part in large-scale operations such as Operation Junction City (February-May 1967) and the Tet Offensive of 1968. The division also conducted major operations in conjunction with South Vietnamese forces in the region. It returned to Fort Riley, Kansas, upon its departure from South Vietnam.

The 1st Infantry Division was awarded the Vietnamese Civil Action Medal and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm. Among other individual awards, its soldiers won 11 Medals of Honor, 67 Distinguished Service Crosses, and 905 Silver Stars for bravery. The division suffered 20,770 soldiers killed or wounded in action, slightly more than the 20,659 casualties the division suffered in World War II.

- **Apr 15 1986 – U.S.*Libya:** The United States launches Operation El Dorado Canyon, its bombing raids against Libyan targets in response to a bombing in West Germany that killed two U.S. servicemen.
- **Apr 15 1998 – Post Vietnam War:** *Pol Pot dies* » Pol Pot, the architect of Cambodia's killing fields, dies of apparently natural causes while serving a life sentence imposed against him by his own Khmer Rouge.



The Khmer Rouge, organized by Pol Pot in the Cambodian jungle in the 1960s, advocated a radical communist revolution that would wipe out Western influences in Cambodia and set up a solely agrarian society. In 1970, aided by North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops, Khmer Rouge guerrillas began a large-scale insurgency against Cambodian government forces, soon gaining control of nearly a third of the country. By 1973, secret U.S. bombings of Cambodian territory controlled by the Vietnamese communists forced the Vietnamese out of the country, creating a power vacuum that was soon filled by Pol Pot's rapidly growing Khmer Rouge movement. In April 1975, the Khmer Rouge captured Phnom Penh, the Cambodian capital, overthrew the pro-U.S. regime, and established a new government, the Kampuchean People's Republic.

As the new ruler of Cambodia, Pol Pot set about transforming the country into his vision of an agrarian utopia. The cities were evacuated, factories and schools closed, and currency and private property was abolished. Anyone believed to be an intellectual, such as someone who spoke a foreign

language, was immediately killed. Skilled workers were also killed, in addition to anyone caught in possession of eyeglasses, a wristwatch, or any other modern technology. In forced marches punctuated with atrocities from the Khmer Rouge, the millions who failed to escape Cambodia were herded onto rural collective farms.

Between 1975 and 1978, an estimated two million Cambodians died by execution, forced labor, and famine. In 1978, Vietnamese troops invaded Cambodia, capturing Phnom Penh in early 1979. A moderate communist government was established, and Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge retreated back into the jungle.

In 1985, Pol Pot officially retired but remained the effective head of the Khmer Rouge, which continued its guerrilla actions against the government in Phnom Penh. In 1997, however, he was put on trial by the organization after an internal power struggle ousted him from his leadership position. Sentenced to life imprisonment by a “people’s tribunal,” which critics derided as a show trial, Pol Pot later declared in an interview, “My conscience is clear.” Much of the international community hoped that his captors would extradite him to stand trial for his crimes against humanity, but he died of apparently natural causes while under house arrest in 1998.

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