



## Military History Anniversaries 16 thru 30 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 16 1738 – American Revolution:** *Blamed for the loss of the 13 colonies* » Henry Clinton, the future commander in chief of British forces charged with suppressing the rebellion in North America, is born in Newfoundland, Canada.



Henry Clinton

Henry Clinton's father, George, was the royal governor of Newfoundland at the time of his birth. He was made the royal governor of New York in 1743, and Henry spent eight years in that colony before moving to England and taking a military commission in the Coldstream Guards in 1751. By 1758, Henry Clinton had earned the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Grenadier Guards. He continued to distinguish himself as a soldier during the Seven Years' War and, in 1772, achieved two significant feats for a man born in the colonies—the rank of major general in the British army and a seat in Parliament.

Clinton's part in the War of American Independence began auspiciously. He arrived with Major General William Howe and, after the draw at Bunker Hill, served in the successful capture of New York City and the Battle of Long Island, which earned him the rank of lieutenant general and membership in the Most Honourable Order of Bath as a KCB, or Knight Commander of the British Empire, which conferred to him the title of Sir.

After Howe performed poorly at Saratoga and was demoted, Clinton was promoted to commander in chief of Britain's North American forces in 1778. Clinton oversaw the concentration of British troops in his former home state of New York and went on to successfully capture Charleston, South Carolina,

in 1779. However, the persistent ineptitude of General Cornwallis, his second in command, caused him consternation and, ultimately, defeat at Yorktown in 1781.

As commander in chief, Clinton was blamed for the loss of the 13 colonies and was replaced by Sir Guy Carleton after the defeat at Yorktown. Afterward, Clinton attempted to rebuild his reputation by publishing his own account of the war. By the time of his death in 1795, he had managed to gain a seat in parliament, the title of general and an appointment as the governor of Gibraltar.

- **Apr 16 1863 - Civil War:** *Union ships pass Vicksburg* » Union Admiral David Dixon Porter leads 12 ships past the heavy barrage of Confederate artillery at Vicksburg, Mississippi. He lost only one ship, and the operation speeded General Ulysses S. Grant's movement against Vicksburg.



Grant had been trying to capture Vicksburg for six months. A first attempt failed when General William T. Sherman's troops were unsuccessful in attacking Vicksburg from the north. Grant now planned to move his army down the opposite bank of the river, cross back to Mississippi, and approach the city from the east. The soggy spring conditions slowed his advance to a crawl as his force had to build bridges over the bayous on the Louisiana side of the river. To speed the operation, Grant called on Porter to take the ships loaded with men and supplies and run past the powerful Vicksburg batteries.

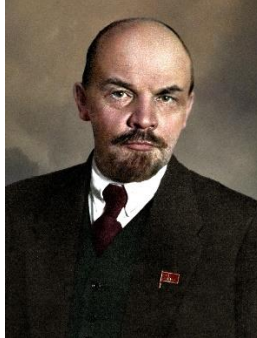
The flotilla quietly moved down the river on the dark night of 16 APR. The exhausts on the steamboats were vented into the paddle wheel housing to muffle the noise. The boats were positioned off center so that if a ship were hit, the following craft could pass safely. The ships were stacked with cotton bales to act as a soft armor in the event of a direct hit. Confederate pickets spotted the flotilla and sent word to the batteries, and the bombardment began. The commanding Confederate, General John Pemberton, was attending a ball and was quickly summoned to the scene. Some Rebel soldiers even rowed across the Mississippi River to set fire to the trees on the western bank and provide backlighting for their gunners on the eastern shore.

It took over two hours for the ships and attached barges to pass. The Union lost only one ship and two barges, and Grant's plan proceeded. Within six weeks, he had locked up Vicksburg from the east and the siege began. Vicksburg would surrender on July 4, 1863.

- **Apr 16 1917 - WWI:** *Lenin returns to Russia from exile* » Vladimir Lenin, leader of the revolutionary Bolshevik Party, returns to Petrograd after a decade of exile to take the reins of the Russian Revolution.

Born Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov in 1870, Lenin was drawn to the revolutionary cause after his brother was executed in 1887 for plotting to assassinate Czar Alexander II. He studied law and took up practice in Petrograd (now St. Petersburg), where he moved in revolutionary Marxist circles. In 1895, he helped

organize Marxist groups in the capital into the “Union for the Struggle for the Liberation of the Working Class,” which attempted to enlist workers to the Marxist cause. In December 1895, Lenin and the other leaders of the Union were arrested. Lenin was jailed for a year and then exiled to Siberia for a term of three years.



Vladimir Lenin

After his exile ended in 1900, Lenin went to Western Europe, where he continued his revolutionary activity. It was during this time that he adopted the pseudonym Lenin. In 1902, he published a pamphlet entitled *What Is to Be Done?*, which argued that only a disciplined party of professional revolutionaries could bring socialism to Russia. In 1903, he met with other Russian Marxists in London and established the Russian Social-Democratic Workers’ Party (RSDWP). However, from the start, there was a split between Lenin’s Bolsheviks (Majoritarians), who advocated militarism, and the Mensheviks (Minoritarians), who advocated a democratic movement toward socialism. These two groups increasingly opposed each other within the framework of the RSDWP, and Lenin made the split official at a 1912 conference of the Bolshevik Party.

After the outbreak of the Russian Revolution of 1905, Lenin returned to Russia. The revolution, which consisted mainly of strikes throughout the Russian empire, came to an end when Nicholas II promised reforms, including the adoption of a Russian constitution and the establishment of an elected legislature. However, once order was restored, the czar nullified most of these reforms, and in 1907 Lenin was again forced into exile.

Lenin opposed World War I, which began in 1914, as an imperialistic conflict and called on proletariat soldiers to turn their guns on the capitalist leaders who sent them down into the murderous trenches. For Russia, World War I was an unprecedented disaster: Russian casualties were greater than those sustained by any nation in any previous war. Meanwhile, the economy was hopelessly disrupted by the costly war effort, and in March 1917, riots and strikes broke out in Petrograd over the scarcity of food. Demoralized army troops joined the strikers, and on March 15, 1917, Nicholas II was forced to abdicate, ending centuries of czarist rule. In the aftermath of the February Revolution (known as such because of Russia’s use of the Julian calendar), power was shared between the ineffectual provisional government, led by Minister of War Alexander Kerensky, and the soviets, or “councils,” of soldiers’ and workers’ committees.

After the outbreak of the February Revolution, German authorities allowed Lenin and his lieutenants to cross Germany en route from Switzerland to Sweden in a sealed railway car. Berlin hoped, correctly, that the return of the anti-war socialists to Russia would undermine the Russian war effort, which was continuing under the provisional government. Lenin called for the overthrow of the provisional

government by the soviets; he was subsequently condemned as a “German agent” by the government’s leaders. In July, he was forced to flee to Finland, but his call for “peace, land, and bread” met with increasing popular support, and the Bolsheviks won a majority in the Petrograd soviet. In October, Lenin secretly returned to Petrograd, and on November 7, the Bolshevik-led Red Guards deposed the Provisional Government and proclaimed soviet rule.

Lenin became the virtual dictator of the world’s first Marxist state. His government made peace with Germany, nationalized industry and distributed land but, beginning in 1918, had to fight a devastating civil war against czarist forces. In 1920, the czarists were defeated, and in 1922, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was established. Upon Lenin’s death in early 1924, his body was embalmed and placed in a mausoleum near the Moscow Kremlin. Petrograd was renamed Leningrad in his honor. After a struggle of succession, fellow revolutionary Joseph Stalin succeeded Lenin as leader of the Soviet Union.

- **Apr 16 1944 - WW2:** Allied forces start bombing Belgrade, killing about 1,100 people. This bombing fell on the Orthodox Christian Easter.
- **Apr 16 1945 - WW2:** American troops enter Nuremberg Germany



- **Apr 16 1945 – WW2:** The U.S Army liberates Nazi Sonderlager (high security) prisoner-of-war camp Oflag IV-C (better known as Colditz).
- **Apr 16 1945 - WW2:** German refugee ship MV Goya carrying wounded and fleeing refugees from the Soviet invasion is sunk by a Soviet submarine. One of the largest maritime losses of life in history, with just 183 survivors among 7,000 passengers and crew.



- **Apr 16 1945 - WW2:** The Red Army begins the final assault on German forces around Berlin, with nearly one million troops fighting in the Battle of the Seelow Heights. Estimated casualties and losses: Soviets 20 to 30,000 – Ger. 20,000
- **Apr 16 1947 - Cold War:** *Bernard Baruch coins the term “Cold War”* » Multimillionaire and financier Bernard Baruch, in a speech given during the unveiling of his portrait in the South Carolina House of Representatives, coins the term “Cold War” to describe relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. The phrase stuck, and for over 40 years it was a mainstay in the language of American diplomacy.



**Bernard Baruch**

Baruch had served as an advisor to presidents on economic and foreign policy issues since the days of Woodrow Wilson. In 1919, he was one of the U.S. advisers at the Paris Peace Conference that ended World War I. During the 1930s, he frequently advised Franklin D. Roosevelt and members of Congress on international finance and issues of neutrality. After World War II, he remained a trusted adviser to the new administration of Harry S. Truman. His speech in April 1947, however, was given in a completely different context. A portrait of the native South Carolinian was to be hung in the state’s House of Representatives, and Baruch was invited for its unveiling. Most guests expected that he would give a brief talk, but Baruch instead launched into a scorching attack on the industrial labor problems in the country. It was only through “unity” between labor and management, he declared, that the United States could hope to play its role as the major force by which “the world can renew itself physically or spiritually.” He called for longer workweeks, no-strike pledges from unions, and no-layoff pledges from management. It was imperative that American business and industry pull itself together, Baruch warned. “Let us not be deceived—we are today in the midst of a cold war. Our enemies are to be found abroad and at home. Let us never forget this: Our unrest is the heart of their success. The peace of the world is the hope and the goal of our political system; it is the despair and defeat of those who stand against us. We can depend only on ourselves.”

The term “Cold War” was instantly embraced by American newspapers and magazines as an apt description of the situation between the United States and the Soviet Union: a war without fighting or bloodshed, but a battle nonetheless.

- **Apr 16 1948 – Cold War:** 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.
- **Apr 16 1953 - Korean War:** Battle of Pork Chop Hill (Hill 255) begins.

- **Apr 16 1968 – Vietnam War:** *Johnson arrives in Honolulu* » At a series of meetings in Honolulu, President Johnson discusses recent Allied and enemy troop deployments with U.S. military leaders. He also conferred with South Korean President Park Chung Hee to reaffirm U.S. military commitments to Seoul and assure Park that his country’s interests would not be compromised by any Vietnamese peace agreement.
- **Apr 16 1972 – Vietnam War:** *United States resumes bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong* » In an effort to help blunt the ongoing North Vietnamese Nguyen Hue Offensive, the United States resumes bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong after a four-year lull.

In the first use of B-52s against both Hanoi and Haiphong, and the first attacks against both cities since November 1968, 18 B-52s and about 100 U.S. Navy and Air Force fighter-bombers struck supply dumps near Haiphong’s harbor. Sixty fighter-bombers hit petroleum storage facilities near Hanoi, with another wave of planes striking later in the afternoon. White House spokesmen announced that the United States would bomb military targets anywhere in Vietnam in order to help the South Vietnamese defend against the communist onslaught.



These actions were part of the U.S. response to the North Vietnamese offensive, which had begun on March 30. The North Vietnamese had launched a massive invasion designed to strike the knockout blow that would win the war for the communists. The attack was called the Nguyen Hue Offensive by the North Vietnamese, but was also more commonly known to Americans as the “Easter Offensive.” The attacking force of North Vietnamese 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 as the South Vietnamese fought for their very survival. They prevailed against the invaders with the help of U.S. advisors and massive American airpower.

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- **Apr 17 1783 – American Revolution:** *Colbert launches raid on Fort Carlos, Arkansas* » About 2 a.m. on the morning of April 17, 1783, British Captain James Colbert, along with a group of 82 British partisans, launches a surprise attack on the Arkansas post of Fort Carlos (modern-day Gillett, in Desha County), located on the banks of the Arkansas River. The “Colbert Raid” was the only Revolutionary War action to take place in Arkansas.

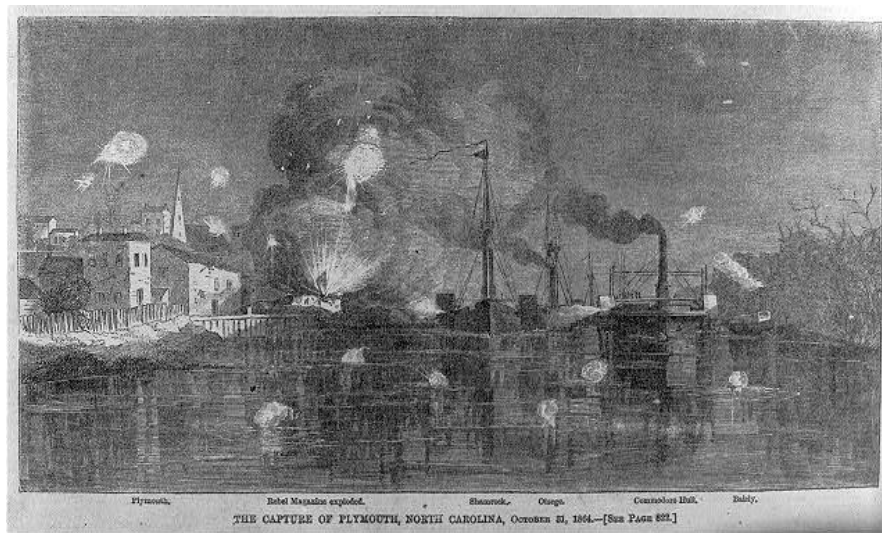
Colbert launched the British attack on the Spanish-controlled fort in response to Spain’s decision to side with the Americans during the revolution. Forty Spanish soldiers defended the fort with help from

their Quapaw Indian allies. After a six-hour battle, Spanish Commander Jacobo Du Breuil ordered a sortie, which forced the retreat of the British contingent.

The raid took place nearly two months after America's preliminary peace treaty was signed with Great Britain, but word of the peace treaty did not reach either the British or American troops located in the Mississippi Valley until well after the raid. The area did not become part of the United States until 1803; in 1800, the Spanish ceded it to France and the French in turn sold it to Thomas Jefferson as part of Louisiana Purchase three years later.

The first European to recognize the value of this location, at the intersection of the Arkansas and Mississippi Rivers, had been a French trader, Henri de Tonty. In 1686, he established the Poste de Arkansa near a Quapaw Indian village in the area. The state of Arkansas now maintains the fort and its surroundings as the Arkansas Post Memorial and Arkansas Post Museum State Park.

- **Apr 17 1863 - Civil War:** Grierson's 16 day Raid begins – 1700 horse troopers under Union Army Colonel Benjamin Grierson successfully attack central Mississippi. Casualties and losses: US 24 – CSA 240 estimated.
- **Apr 17 1864 - Civil War:** *Battle of Plymouth, North Carolina, begins* » Confederate forces attack Plymouth, North Carolina, in an attempt to recapture ports lost to the Union two years before. The four-day battle ended with the fall of Plymouth, but the Yankees kept the city bottled up with a flotilla on nearby Albemarle Sound.



In 1862, the Union captured Plymouth and several other points along the North Carolina coast. In doing so, they deprived the Confederacy of several ports for blockade-runners and the agricultural products from several fertile counties. In the spring of 1864, the Confederates mounted a campaign to reverse these defeats. General George Pickett led a division to the area and launched a failed attack on New Bern in February. Now, General Robert Hoke assumed command and moved his army against Plymouth, fifty miles north of New Bern. He planned an attack using the C.S.S. Albemarle, an ironclad that was still being built on the Roanoke River inland from Plymouth.

With 7,000 men, Hoke attacked the 2,800-man Union garrison at Plymouth on 17 APR. His troops began to capture some of the outer defenses, but he needed the Albemarle to bomb the city from the river. The ironclad moved from its makeshift shipyard on 17 APR, but it was still under construction. With workers aboard, Captain James Cooke moved down the Roanoke. The Albemarle's rudder broke and the engine stalled, so it took two days to reach Plymouth. When it arrived, the Rebel ship took on two Yankee ships, sinking one and forcing the other to retreat. With the ironclad on the scene, Hoke's men captured Plymouth on 20 APR.

The Confederates lost 163 men killed and 554 wounded, but captured the entire Union garrison and vast amounts of supplies and arms. The Union lost about 150 killed and wounded, while several hundred of the captured soldiers eventually died at the notorious Andersonville Prison in Georgia. The Rebel victory was limited by the fact that the Albemarle was still pinned in the Roanoke River. The crew tried to fight past a Union flotilla on Albemarle Sound on May 5, but it could not escape. It was destroyed in a Union raid on Plymouth on October 27, 1864. Yankee troops recaptured the city four days later.

- **Apr 17 1917 - WWI:** As the major Allied offensive masterminded by Robert Nivelle was failing miserably on the Western Front, British forces in Palestine make their second attempt to capture the city of Gaza from the Ottoman army.
- **Apr 17 1941 - WW2:** *Yugoslavia surrenders* » Representatives of Yugoslavia's various regions sign an armistice with Nazi Germany at Belgrade, ending 11 days of futile resistance against the invading German Wehrmacht. More than 300,000 Yugoslav officers and soldiers were taken prisoner. Only 200 Germans died in the conquest of Yugoslavia.



On March 27, 1941, two days after the Yugoslav government signed a controversial pact with the Axis powers, Yugoslav air officers, aided by the British secret services, toppled the country's pro-Axis regime. In response, Nazi leader Adolf Hitler launched a massive invasion of the country that began on April 6 with the bombing of Belgrade. The Yugoslav defenders, made up of various politically unstable nationalities, were routed by the hordes of German, Italian, Hungarian, and Bulgarian troops invading their country.

On 17 APR, Yugoslavia surrendered and was divided, with the exception of the puppet state of Croatia, between the four invading Axis powers. The occupying troops aggravated the traditional religious and national differences in the region, and the Serbs were especially brutalized. However, by the end of the year, two separate effective resistance movements had sprung up, one led by Colonel Dragolyub Mihailovich, which was loyal to the Yugoslav government-in-exile, and another led by Josip Broz Tito, which was made up of members of the illegal Communist Party of Yugoslavia.



- **Apr 17 1942 - WW2:** French General Henri Giraud, who was captured in 1940, escapes from a castle prison at Konigstein by lowering himself down the castle wall and jumping on board a moving train, which takes him to the French border. Hitler, outraged, ordered Giraud's assassination upon being caught, but the French general was able to make it to North Africa via a British submarine.
- **Apr 17 1945 - WW2:** U.S. Lieutenant Colonel Boris T. Pash commandeers over half a ton of uranium at Strassfurt, Germany, in an effort to prevent the Russians from developing an A-bomb.
- **Apr 17 1961 - Bay of Pigs Invasion:** *The Bay of Pigs invasion begins* » The Bay of Pigs invasion begins when a CIA-financed and -trained group of Cuban refugees lands in Cuba and attempts to topple the communist government of Fidel Castro. The attack was an utter failure.



Fidel Castro had been a concern to U.S. policymakers since he seized power in Cuba with a revolution in January 1959. Castro's attacks on U.S. companies and interests in Cuba, his inflammatory anti-American rhetoric, and Cuba's movement toward a closer relationship with the Soviet Union led U.S. officials to conclude that the Cuban leader was a threat to U.S. interests in the Western Hemisphere. In March 1960, President Dwight D. Eisenhower ordered the CIA to train and arm a force of Cuban exiles for an armed attack on Cuba. John F. Kennedy inherited this program when he became president in 1961.

Though many of his military advisors indicated that an amphibious assault on Cuba by a group of lightly armed exiles had little chance for success, Kennedy gave the go-ahead for the attack. On April 17, 1961, around 1,200 exiles, armed with American weapons and using American landing craft, waded ashore at the Bay of Pigs in Cuba. The hope was that the exile force would serve as a rallying point for the Cuban citizenry, who would rise up and overthrow Castro's government. The plan immediately fell apart—the landing force met with unexpectedly rapid counterattacks from Castro's military, the tiny Cuban air force sank most of the exiles' supply ships, the United States refrained from providing necessary air support, and the expected uprising never happened. Over 100 of the attackers were killed, and more than 1,100 were captured.

The failure at the Bay of Pigs cost the United States dearly. Castro used the attack by the “Yankee imperialists” to solidify his power in Cuba and he requested additional Soviet military aid. Eventually that aid included missiles, and the construction of missile bases in Cuba sparked the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962, when the United States and the Soviet Union nearly came to blows over the issue. Further, throughout much of Latin America, the United States was pilloried for its use of armed force in trying to unseat Castro, a man who was considered a hero to many for his stance against U.S. interference and imperialism. Kennedy tried to redeem himself by publicly accepting blame for the attack and its subsequent failure, but the botched mission left the young president looking vulnerable and indecisive. Casualties: Cuba 4,176 - Cuban Exiles/US 1,320. Video at <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/the-bay-of-pigs-invasion-begins>.

- **Apr 17 1972 – Vietnam War:** *First antiwar protest of the year is conducted* » The demonstration, held at the University of Maryland, was organized to protest the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC). Hundreds of students were arrested and 800 National Guardsmen were ordered onto the campus. Significant protests continued across the country in reaction to the increased bombing of North Vietnam, which had been initiated in response to the new communist offensive in South Vietnam.
- **Apr 17 1975 – Vietnam War:** *Cambodia falls to the Khmer Rouge* » Khmer Rouge troops capture Phnom Penh and government forces surrender. The war between government troops and the communist insurgents had been raging since March 1970, when Lt. Gen. Lon Nol had ousted Prince Norodom Sihanouk in a bloodless coup and proclaimed the establishment of the Khmer Republic.



Between 1970 and 1975, Lon Nol and his army, the Forces Armees Nationale Khmer (FANK), with U.S. support and military aid, battled the communist Khmer Rouge for control of Cambodia. During the five years of bitter fighting, approximately 10 percent of Cambodia’s 7 million people died. When the U.S. forces departed South Vietnam in 1973, both the Cambodians and South Vietnamese found themselves fighting the communists alone. Without U.S. support, Lon Nol’s forces fought on, but eventually succumbed to the Khmer Rouge. With the surrender, the victorious Khmer Rouge evacuated Phnom Penh and set about reordering Cambodian society. This 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 18 1775 - American Revolution:** *Revere and Dawes ride* » In Massachusetts, British troops march out of Boston on a mission to confiscate the Patriot arsenal at Concord and to capture Patriot leaders Samuel Adams and John Hancock, known to be hiding at Lexington. As the British departed, Boston Patriots Paul Revere and William Dawes set out on horseback from the city to warn Adams and Hancock and rouse the Patriot minutemen.



Samuel Prescott



Paul Revere



William Dawes

By 1775, tensions between the American colonies and the British government approached the breaking point, especially in Massachusetts, where Patriot leaders formed a shadow revolutionary government and trained militias to prepare for armed conflict with the British troops occupying Boston.

In the spring of 1775, General Thomas Gage, the British governor of Massachusetts, received instructions from England to seize all stores of weapons and gunpowder accessible to the American insurgents. On April 18, he ordered British troops to march against Concord and Lexington.

The Boston Patriots had been preparing for such a British military action for some time, and upon learning of the British plan Revere and Dawes set off across the Massachusetts countryside. Taking separate routes in case one of them were captured, Dawes left Boston by the Boston Neck peninsula, and Revere crossed the Charles River to Charlestown by boat. As the two couriers made their way, Patriots in Charlestown waited for a signal from Boston informing them of the British troop movement. As previously agreed, one lantern would be hung in the steeple of Boston's Old North Church, the highest point in the city, if the British were marching out of the city by Boston Neck, and two if they were crossing the Charles River to Cambridge. Two lanterns were hung, and the armed Patriots set out for Lexington and Concord accordingly. Along the way, Revere and Dawes roused hundreds of minutemen, who armed themselves and set out to oppose the British.

Revere arrived in Lexington shortly before Dawes, but together they warned Adams and Hancock and then set out for Concord. Along the way, they were joined by Samuel Prescott, a young Patriot who had been riding home after visiting a friend. Early in the morning of April 19, a British patrol captured Revere, and Dawes lost his horse, forcing him to walk back to Lexington on foot. However, Prescott escaped and rode on to Concord to warn the Patriots there. After being roughly questioned for an hour or two, Revere was released when the patrol heard minutemen alarm guns being fired on their approach to Lexington.

Around 5 a.m., 700 British troops under Major John Pitcairn arrived at the town to find a 77-man-strong colonial militia under Captain John Parker waiting for them on Lexington's common green. Pitcairn ordered the outnumbered Patriots to disperse, and after a moment's hesitation the Americans began to drift off the green. Suddenly, the "shot heard around the world" was fired from an undetermined gun, and a cloud of musket smoke soon covered the green. When the brief Battle of Lexington ended, eight Americans lay dead and 10 others were wounded. Only one British soldier was injured, but the American Revolution had begun.

- **Apr 18 1848 - Mexican\*American War:** *Battle of Cerro Gordo* - Winfield Scott's U.S. troops out-flanked and drove Santa Anna's larger Mexican army from a strong defensive position in the Battle of Cerro Gordo. American victory opened the way for invasion of Mexico.
- **Apr 18 1861 - Civil War:** *First blood of the War is shed* - Pro-Confederate volunteers (Residents of Baltimore, Maryland) attack a Union regiment while the group makes its way to Washington, D.C. Cobblestones rained down on the soldiers as they prepared to transfer from the President Street Station to Camden Station. Shots were fired, and when the smoke cleared four Massachusetts soldiers lay dead along with 12 Baltimoreans, while 36 troops and an undetermined number of civilians were wounded.
- **Apr 18 1864 - Civil War:** *Confederates inflict pain at Battle of Poison Spring* » At Poison Spring, Arkansas, Confederate soldiers under the command of General Samuel Maxey capture a Union forage train and slaughter black troops escorting the expedition.

The Battle of Poison Spring was part of broad Union offensive in the region of Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas. General Nathaniel Banks had led a Yankee force through Louisiana in March and April, but a defeat in northwestern Louisiana at the Battle of Mansfield on 8 APR sent Banks in retreat. Union forces nearby in Arkansas were moving towards Banks' projected thrust into Texas with the intention of securing southwestern Arkansas for the Federals.



Union General Frederick Steele occupied Camden, Arkansas, on 15 APR. Two days later, he sent Colonel John Williams and 1,100 of his 14,000-man force to gather 5,000 bushels of corn discovered west of Camden. The force arrived to find that Confederate marauders had destroyed half of the store, but the Yankees loaded the rest into some 200 wagons and prepared to return to Camden. On the way back Maxey and 3,600 Confederates intercepted them. Maxey placed General John Marmaduke in charge of the attack that ensued. Williams positioned part of his force, the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry, between the wagon train and the Confederate lines. The regiment was the first black unit in the army, comprised primarily of ex-slaves.

The determined soldiers of the 1st Kansas stopped the first two Rebel attacks, but they were running low on ammunition. A third assault overwhelmed the Kansans, and the rout was on. Williams gathered the remnants of his force and retreated from the abandoned wagons. More than 300 Yankee troops were killed, wounded, or captured, while the Confederates lost just 13 killed and 81 wounded. The Rebels' treatment of black troops was harsh. No black troops were captured, and those left wounded on the battlefield were brutally killed, scalped, and stripped. The Washington Telegraph, the major Confederate newspaper in Arkansas, justified the atrocity by declaring "We cannot treat Negroes taken in arms as prisoners of war without a destruction of social system for which we contend."

- **Apr 18 1915 - WWI:** *Germans shoot down French pilot Roland Garros* » A member of the German Bahnschutzwache, or Railway Protection Guard, shoots down the well-known French airman Roland Garros in his flight over German positions in Flanders, France, on a bombing raid.



Garros, born in 1882, gained renown early in his career as an experienced practitioner of aerial acrobatics, the first French pilot to fly across the Mediterranean Sea and a two-time winner of both the Paris-Madrid and Paris-Rome flying races. In 1914, while working as a test pilot for Morane-Saulnier, an aircraft manufacturer, Garros set the then-world record for the highest flight: 4,250 meters. When war broke out in Europe that same year, he was sent to serve with the French air service, L'Aviation Militaire, on the Western Front.

At the end of 1914, Garros took leave from his regiment and returned to the Morane-Saulnier factory to work with Raymond Saulnier to test a recently developed device that enabled a pilot to fire bullets from a machine-gun through the blades of the propeller of his plane. The device, employed successfully by Garros in the early spring of 1915, allowed him to approach his enemies head-on in the air, giving him a vast advantage. Garros shot down his first German victim, an Albatross reconnaissance aircraft, on April 1, 1915; in the next two weeks, he downed four more.

Garros' run ended on 18 APR, however, when he was flying his single-seater plane, a Morane-Saulnier Type L, low in the skies above the German positions in Flanders. A member of the German Bahnschutzwache described the events of that day: At that moment we saw a southbound train approaching on the railway line Ingelmunster-Kortrijk. Suddenly the plane went into a steep dive. He flew over the train in a loop and as he rose up into the sky again with his wings almost vertical, he threw a bomb at the train. Fortunately it missed the target and there was no damage. As the plane had swooped down over the train the Bahnschutzwache troops had fired on it following my order to open fire. We shot at him from a distance of only 100 meters as he flew past. After he had thrown his bomb at the train he tried to escape, switching his engine on again and climbing to about 700 metres through the shots fired by our troops. But suddenly the plane began to sway about in the sky, the engine fell silent, and the pilot began to glide the plane down in the direction of Hulste.

A German bullet had apparently hit the gas pipe on Garros' plane, forcing him to land. Although the daring airman attempted to set the plane on fire and escape on foot once he hit the ground, both he and the plane were captured by the Germans. Garros later managed to escape from captivity and rejoin L'Aviation Militaire. Killed in battle at Vouziers on October 5, 1918, he is remembered as one of France's most celebrated war heroes; the famous tennis stadium in Paris bears his name.

The propeller of Garros' Morane-Saulnier plane and its innovative machine-gun firing device were sent immediately after his capture in April 1915 to the Fokker aircraft factory in Germany. A few weeks later, the first Fokker EI—a single-seater airplane fitted with machine guns, deflectors and interrupter gear that could synchronize the rate of fire of the gun with the speed of the propeller—was sent to German forces on the Western Front. From mid-1915 until mid-1916, the Fokker E-types of the German Air Force were the menace of the skies, shooting down a total of over 1,000 Allied aircraft.

- **Apr 18 1942 - WW2:** *Doolittle leads air raid on Tokyo* » On this day in 1942, 16 American B-25 bombers, launched from the aircraft carrier USS Hornet 650 miles east of Japan and commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James H. Doolittle, attack the Japanese mainland.



The now-famous Tokyo Raid did little real damage to Japan (wartime Premier Hideki Tojo was inspecting military bases during the raid; one B-25 came so close, Tojo could see the pilot, though the American bomber never fired a shot)—but it did hurt the Japanese government’s prestige. Believing the air raid had been launched from Midway Island, approval was given to Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto’s plans for an attack on Midway—which would also damage Japanese “prestige.” Doolittle was eventually awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. A book describing the raid, *30 Seconds Over Tokyo* by Ted Lawson, was adapted into a film starring Spencer Tracy in 1944.

- **Apr 18 1943 - WW2:** Warsaw Ghetto Uprising - In Poland, Nazi forces attempting to clear out the city’s Jewish ghetto are met by gunfire from Jewish resistance fighters.
- **Apr 18 1943 - WW2:** Operation Vengeance - The mastermind of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto) is shot down by American P-38 fighters while traveling in a bomber.
- **Apr 18 1944 - WW2:** USS Gudgeon (SS-211) missing. Most likely sunk by Japanese naval aircraft (901st Kokutai) southwest of Iwo Jima. 79 killed.
- **Apr 18 1945 - WW2:** Over 1,000 bombers attack the small island of Heligoland, Germany.
- **Apr 18 1945 - WW2:** *Journalist Ernie Pyle killed* » During World War II, journalist Ernie Pyle, America’s most popular war correspondent, is killed by Japanese machine-gun fire on the island of Ie Shima in the Pacific.



**Ernie Pyle**

Pyle, born in Dana, Indiana, first began writing a column for the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain in 1935. Eventually syndicated to some 200 U.S. newspapers, Pyle's column, which related the lives and hopes of typical citizens, captured America's affection. In 1942, after the United States entered World War II, Pyle went overseas as a war correspondent. He covered the North Africa campaign, the invasions of Sicily and Italy, and on June 7, 1944, went ashore at Normandy the day after Allied forces landed. Pyle, who always wrote about the experiences of enlisted men rather than the battles they participated in, described the D-Day scene: "It was a lovely day for strolling along the seashore. Men were sleeping on the sand, some of them sleeping forever. Men were floating in the water, but they didn't know they were in the water, for they were dead." The same year, he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for distinguished correspondence and in 1945 traveled to the Pacific to cover the war against Japan.

On April 18, 1945, Ernie Pyle was killed by enemy fire on the island of Ie Shima. After his death, President Harry S. Truman spoke of how Pyle "told the story of the American fighting man as the American fighting men wanted it told." Pyle is buried at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific on the Hawaiian island of Oahu.

- **Apr 18 1949 – U.S. Navy:** The keel for the aircraft carrier USS United States is laid down at Newport News Drydock and Shipbuilding. However, construction is canceled five days later, resulting in the Revolt of the Admirals.
- **Apr 18 1949 – Cold War:** At the opening night of the spring edition of the famous Moscow Circus, clowns and magicians fire salvos of jokes aimed at the United States. Although a relatively minor aspect of the total Cold War, the night was evidence that even humor played a role in the battle between the United States and the Soviet Union.
- **Apr 18 1961 - Cold War:** *JFK denies U.S. military intervention in Cuba* » President John F. Kennedy heats up Cold War rhetoric in a letter responding to Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's claim that the U.S. was engaging in armed aggression against the communist regime in Cuba. Kennedy denied the allegations, told Khrushchev he was under a serious misapprehension and stated that the U.S. intends no military intervention in Cuba. However, Kennedy insisted that he would support Cubans who wish to see a democratic system in an independent Cuba and that the U.S. would take no action to stifle the spirit of liberty.



In fact, the night before Kennedy wrote this letter, approximately 1,200 Cuban exiles, supplied and trained by the CIA, landed in Cuba's Bay of Pigs with plans to overthrow Castro. Kennedy was fully aware that the invasion was underway; he had authorized it three days earlier. CIA documents released in 2000 indicated that Khrushchev had also learned of the plans for a CIA-led invasion well in advance and had passed the information on to Castro via the KGB, Russia's secret police. Early on April 18, Khrushchev sent a letter to Kennedy warning the president to stop the little war against Cuba or risk an incomparable conflagration with the Soviet Union. Privately, Kennedy dismissed as hypocritical a lecture on intervention coming from a Soviet leader who had supported communist-led coups in Europe and Asia. In his official response, Kennedy warned Khrushchev not to use the U.S.'s support for Cuban rebels as an excuse to inflame other areas of the world and told the Soviet Union to stay out of the Western Hemisphere's internal affairs.

The Bay of Pigs invasion quickly fell apart when it became apparent that the CIA had gravely miscalculated the willingness of Cuba's military to join the exiles in a coup. Castro's forces quickly put down the rebellion, killing approximately 200 of the exiles and capturing the rest, except for a few who managed to escape and report back to the CIA. On April 24, 1961, Kennedy accepted sole responsibility for the botched invasion. The Bay of Pigs failure did not stop Kennedy from supporting subsequent covert plans to overthrow Castro.

- **Apr 18 1969 – Vietnam War:** *Nixon says prospects for peace in Vietnam are better* » At a news conference, President Nixon says he feels the prospects for peace have “significantly improved” since he took office. He cited the greater political stability of the Saigon government and the improvement in the South Vietnamese armed forces as proof.

With these remarks, Nixon was trying to set the stage for a major announcement he would make at the Midway conference in June. While conferring with South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu, Nixon announced that the United States would be pursuing a three-pronged strategy to end the war. Efforts would be increased to improve the combat capability of the South Vietnamese armed forces so that they could assume responsibility for the war against the North Vietnamese—Nixon described this effort as “Vietnamization.” As the South Vietnamese became more capable, U.S. forces would be withdrawn from South Vietnam. At the same time, U.S. negotiators would continue to try to reach a negotiated settlement to the war with the communists at the Paris peace talks.

This announcement represented a significant change in the nature of the U.S. commitment to the war, as the United States would be withdrawing troops from the war for the first time. The first U.S. soldiers were withdrawn in the fall of 1969 and the withdrawals continued periodically through 1972. At the same time, the United States increased the advisory effort and provided massive amounts of new equipment and weapons to the South Vietnamese as well. When the North Vietnamese launched a massive invasion in the spring of 1972, the South Vietnamese wavered, but eventually rallied with U.S. support and prevailed over the North Vietnamese. Nixon proclaimed that the South Vietnamese victory validated his strategy. In fact, a peace agreement was finalized in January 1973, but the fighting continued anyway. The U.S. did not deliver the aid it had promised in the case of continued attacks—the South Vietnamese held out for two years but they succumbed to the North Vietnamese in April 1975.



- **Apr 18 1983 – Beirut Embassy:** *Suicide bomber destroys U.S. embassy in Beirut* » The U.S. embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, is almost completely destroyed by a car-bomb explosion that kills 63 people, including the suicide bomber and 17 Americans. The terrorist attack was carried out in protest of the U.S. military presence in Lebanon.



In 1975, a bloody civil war erupted in Lebanon, with Palestinian and leftist Muslim guerrillas battling militias of the Christian Phalange Party, the Maronite Christian community, and other groups. During the next few years, Syrian, Israeli, and United Nations interventions failed to resolve the factional fighting, and on August 20, 1982, a multinational force featuring U.S. Marines landed in Beirut to oversee the Palestinian withdrawal from Lebanon.

The Marines left Lebanese territory on 10 SEP but returned on 29 SEP, following the massacre of Palestinian refugees by a Christian militia. The next day, the first U.S. Marine to die during the mission was killed while defusing a bomb, and on April 18, 1983, the U.S. embassy in Beirut was bombed. On 23 OCT, Lebanese terrorists evaded security measures and drove a truck packed with explosives into the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, killing 241 U.S. military personnel. Fifty-eight French soldiers were killed almost simultaneously in a separate suicide terrorist attack. On February 7, 1984, U.S. President Ronald Reagan announced the end of U.S. participation in the peacekeeping force, and on 26 FEB the last U.S. Marines left Beirut.

- **Apr 18 1988 - Iran\*Iraq War:** The United States launches Operation Praying Mantis against Iranian naval forces in the largest naval battle since World War II.
- **Apr 18 1989 – Cold War:** Thousands of Chinese students continue to take to the streets in Beijing to protest government policies and issue a call for greater democracy in the communist People’s Republic of China (PRC). The protests grew until the Chinese government ruthlessly suppressed them in June during what came to be known as the Tiananmen Square Massacre.
- **Apr 18 1995 – Oklahoma City Bombing:** A massive truck bomb explodes outside the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The blast collapsed the north face of the nine-story building, instantly killing more than 100 people and trapping dozens more in the rubble. Emergency crews raced to Oklahoma City from across the country, and when the rescue effort finally ended two weeks later the death toll stood at 168 people killed, including 19 young children who were in the building’s day-care center at the time of the blast.

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- **Apr 19 1775 - American Revolution:** At about 5 a.m., 700 British troops, on a mission to capture Patriot leaders and seize a Patriot arsenal, march into Lexington to find 77 armed minutemen under Captain John Parker waiting for them on the town's common green. British Major John Pitcairn ordered the outnumbered Patriots to disperse, and after a moment's hesitation the Americans began to drift off the green. Suddenly, the "shot heard around the world" was fired from an undetermined gun, and a cloud of musket smoke soon covered the green. When the brief Battle of Lexington ended, 8 Americans lay dead or dying and 10 others were wounded. Only one British soldier was injured, but the American Revolution had begun.
- **Apr 19 1861 - Civil War: *First blood in the Civil War*** » In the Baltimore Riot of 1861 the first blood of the American Civil War is shed when a secessionist mob in Baltimore attacks Massachusetts troops bound for Washington, D.C. Four soldiers and 12 rioters were killed.



One week earlier, on 12 APR, the Civil War began when Confederate shore batteries opened fire on Union-held Fort Sumter in South Carolina's Charleston Bay. During a 34-hour period, 50 Confederate guns and mortars launched more than 4,000 rounds at the poorly supplied fort. The fort's garrison returned fire, but lacking men, ammunition, and food, it was forced to surrender on 13 APR. There were no casualties in the fighting, but one federal soldier was killed the next day when a store of gunpowder was accidentally ignited during the firing of the final surrender salute. Two other federal soldiers were wounded, one mortally.

On 15 APR, President Abraham Lincoln issued a public proclamation calling for 75,000 volunteer soldiers to help put down the Southern "insurrection." Northern states responded enthusiastically to the call, and within days the 6th Massachusetts Regiment was en route to Washington. On 19 APR, the troops arrived in Baltimore, Maryland, by train, disembarked, and boarded horse-drawn cars that were to take them across the city to where the rail line picked up again. Secessionist sympathy was strong in Maryland, a border state where slavery was legal, and an angry mob of secessionists gathered to confront the Yankee troops.

Hoping to prevent the regiment from reaching the railroad station, and thus Washington, the mob blocked the carriages, and the troops were forced to continue on foot. The mob followed close behind and then, joined by other rioters, surrounded the regiment. Jeering turned to brick and stone throwing, and several federal troops responded by firing into the crowd. In the ensuing mayhem, the troops fought their way to the train station, taking and inflicting more casualties. At the terminal, the infantrymen were aided by Baltimore police, who held the crowd back and allowed them to board their train and escape. Much of their equipment was left behind. Four soldiers and 12 rioters were killed in what is generally regarded as the first bloodshed of the Civil War.

Maryland officials demanded that no more federal troops be sent through the state, and secessionists destroyed rail bridges and telegraph lines to Washington to hinder the federal war effort. In May, Union troops occupied Baltimore, and martial law was declared. The federal occupation of Baltimore, and of

other strategic points in Maryland, continued throughout the war. Because western Marylanders and workingmen supported the Union, and because federal authorities often jailed secessionist politicians, Maryland never voted for secession. Slavery was abolished in Maryland in 1864, the year before the Civil War's end. Eventually, more than 50,000 Marylanders fought for the Union while about 22,000 volunteered for the Confederacy.

- **Apr 19 1916 – WWI:** U.S. President Wilson address to the U.S. Congress. He said that the U.S. should break diplomatic relations with Germany if they did not stop attacking merchant ships with its submarines.
- **Apr 19 1919 – WWI:** *Discussion of Italian claims begins at Paris peace conference* » Tense and complicated negotiations begin at the Paris peace conference over Italy's claims to territory in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire.



The Italians must somehow be mollified, wrote Britain's foreign secretary, Arthur Balfour, and the only question is how to mollify them at the smallest cost to mankind. Italy had agreed to enter World War I in the spring of 1915 after the Entente promised to fulfill its national dream and give it undisputed control over the land around its northeastern border, including the Tyrol region, where many Italians then lived under Austro-Hungarian control. When the actual Treaty of London—which committed Italy to join the war on the side of the Allies—was drawn up in April 1915, however, the Allies had thrown in far more territory from Austria-Hungary, including parts of Dalmatia and numerous islands along the Adriatic coast, as well as the Albanian port city of Vlore (Italian: Valona) and territory from the Ottoman Empire. The Italian delegation in Paris, led by Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando and Sidney Sonnino, Italy's foreign minister, had argued from the beginning of the conference that they considered the Treaty of London to be a solemn, binding agreement that should dictate the terms of the peace.

For their part, the British and French by 1919 deeply regretted making such promises. They felt that Italy had done little to contribute to the Allied victory: its army had delayed and then bungled their attack on Austria-Hungary, its ships had not honored their promise to patrol the Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas and its government had repeatedly asked the other Allies for resources that it then refused to put into the war effort. A British diplomat reported from the conference that the delegates' attitude toward Italy has been one of supreme contempt up to now and now it is one of extreme annoyance. They all say that the signal for an armistice was the signal for Italy to begin the fight.

The formation in December 1918 of a Yugoslav state caused more strain between Italy and its allies at the peace conference. Britain and France supported this new state, and wanted Italy to see that its former claims on South Slav territory and Dalmatia no longer made sense. The Italian government, driven by public opinion among its people, was unwilling to give up these claims, and was firmly opposed to recognition of the new Yugoslav state at the peace conference. Britain and France reluctantly obliged, and were prepared to honor the Treaty of London, although they resented it. The

American president, Woodrow Wilson, however, felt differently. He proclaimed that the United States would recognize no such secret treaties (though he had been shown the Treaty of London during the war, he claimed not to remember having seen it) and held fast to his professed dedication to the self-determination of the Yugoslavs, refusing to bend to many of Italy's demands, including, most sensationally, its claims on Fiume, a small port city on the Adriatic Sea, where Slavs slightly outnumbered the Italian inhabitants.

The negotiations that opened 19 APR were intended to last six days. Orlando and Sonnino held firm, warning the other delegates of the possibility of civil war in Italy if their demands were not met and pointing to the escalating conflicts between the radicalizing Socialist Party and the nationalist right with their armed *fasci di combattenti*. Resistance to the Italian claims was fierce, led by Wilson, who wrote a statement arguing that the Treaty of London must be set aside and reminding Italy that it should be satisfied with receiving the territory of the Trentino and the Tyrol, where the majority of the population was Italian.

On 24 APR, the day after Wilson's statement was published, the Italian delegation left Paris and returned to Rome, where they were met with a frenzied demonstration of patriotism and anti-Americanism. This incident threatened the entire conference, as the German delegation was about to arrive in Paris to receive their terms. The Italians did not return to the negotiations until May 5, joining the deliberations with Germany late; in the final Treaty of Versailles, signed in June, they nonetheless received a permanent seat on the League of Nations, the Tyrol and a share of the German reparations.

Many Italians were bitterly disappointed with their post-war lot, however, and conflict continued over Fiume and other territories in the Adriatic. In September 1919, the poet, playwright and rabid nationalist Gabriele D'Annunzio—who had coined the phrase *mutilated victory* in reference to the peace negotiations in Paris—and his supporters seized Fiume. They remained there some 15 months in complete defiance of the Italian government before Italy and Yugoslavia finally reached an agreement in November 1920, settling the boundaries between the two countries and making Fiume a free state. Benito Mussolini, the future fascist dictator, watched and waited during this period, learning much from D'Annunzio's charismatic example.

- **Apr 19 1942 - WW2:** In Poland, the Majdan-Tatarski ghetto is established, situated between the Lublin Ghetto and a Majdanek subcamp.
- **Apr 19 1943 - WW2:** *Warsaw Ghetto Uprising begins* » In Warsaw, Poland, Nazi forces attempting to clear out the city's Jewish ghetto are met by gunfire from Jewish resistance fighters, and the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising begins.



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

On January 18, 1943, when the Nazis entered the ghetto to prepare a group for transfer, a ZOB unit ambushed them. Fighting lasted for several days, and a number of German soldiers were killed before they withdrew. On 19 APR, Nazi leader Heinrich Himmler announced that the ghetto was to be emptied of its residents in honor of Hitler's birthday the following day, and more than 1,000 S.S. soldiers entered the confines with tanks and heavy artillery. Although many of the ghetto's remaining 60,000 Jewish dwellers attempted to hide themselves in secret bunkers, more than 1,000 ZOB members met the Germans with gunfire and homemade bombs. Suffering moderate casualties, the Germans initially withdrew but soon returned, and on April 24 launched an all-out attack against the Warsaw Jews.

Thousands were slaughtered as the Germans systematically progressed down the ghettos, blowing up the buildings one by one. The ZOB took to the sewers to continue the fight, but on May 8 their command bunker fell to the Germans and their resistant leaders committed suicide. By 16 MAY, the ghetto was firmly under Nazi control, and mass deportation of the last Warsaw Jews to Treblinka began. During the uprising, some 300 German soldiers were killed, and thousands of Warsaw Jews were massacred. Virtually all those who survived the Uprising to reach Treblinka were dead by the end of the war.

- **Apr 19 1951 – Cold War:** *Soviet clowns lampoon U.S. foreign policy* » At the opening night of the spring edition of the famous Moscow Circus, clowns and magicians fire salvos of jokes aimed at the United States. Although a relatively minor aspect of the total Cold War, the night was evidence that even humor played a role in the battle between the United States and the Soviet Union.



Most of the barbs thrown during the opening night of the circus came from one of the most famous Russian clowns, Konstantin Berman. He began his act by tossing a boomerang, which he likened to the workings of the U.S. Marshall Plan (an economic recovery plan designed to pump billions of dollars into the economies of Western Europe). "American aid to Europe," Berman announced. "Here is the dollar." The crowd roared its approval as the boomerang "dollar" returned directly to his hand. He then produced a radio. First, all that could be heard were barking dogs. "That's the Voice of America." Berman then made room for a magician. His most popular trick began when workers brought out an iron cage and an individual made up to look like Hitler was placed inside. The magician then pulled a curtain—"not an iron curtain, just a silken one"—over the cage and surrounding area. When the curtain

was lifted, Hitler was outside the cage and the workers were trapped within. Two other individuals, one impersonating Churchill and another dressed like a typical American “capitalist,” came out and shook Hitler’s hand. The magician then intoned, “How much longer is this going on? Until the people’s patience bursts, then it will end.” He replaced the curtain, removed it again, and the delighted audience discovered that Hitler, Churchill, and the capitalist had been caged and the workers freed. “That’s how it will be,” the magician announced, “and forever, too.”

On the other side of the Atlantic, American comics and entertainers were just as busily poking fun at the Soviets and communism, indicated that laughter was universally welcomed in a period when the threats of massive new world wars and nuclear holocaust hung heavy in the air.

- **Apr 19 1951 - Korean War:** General Douglas MacArthur retires from the military in his speech (<http://www.rjgeib.com/thoughts/war/douglas-macarthur-farewell.html>) before the joint session of Congress after his abrupt dismissal as Commander in Chief of the United Nations forces in Korea. His retirement provoked a nation-wide controversy that recalled the fury over the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854.
- **Apr 19 1967 – Vietnam War:** *Air Force pilot cited for bravery* » Over North Vietnam, Air Force Maj. Leo K. Thorsness, from the 357th Tactical Fighter Squadron, and his electronic warfare officer, Capt. Harold E. Johnson, destroy two enemy surface-to-air missile sites, and then shoot down a MiG-17 before escorting search-and-rescue helicopters to a downed aircrew. Although his F-105 fighter-bomber was very low on fuel, Major Thorsness attacked four more MiG-17s in an effort to draw the enemy aircraft away from the downed aircrew.



Leo K. Thorsness

Awarded the Medal of Honor for his courageous action this day, Major Thorsness did not receive his medal until 1973—on April 30, 1967, he was shot down over North Vietnam and spent the next six years as a prisoner of war.

- **Apr 19 1971 - Vietnam War:** *Vietnam Veterans Against the War demonstrate* » As a prelude to a massive antiwar protest, Vietnam Veterans Against the War begin a five-day demonstration in Washington, D.C. The generally peaceful protest, called Dewey Canyon III in honor of the operation of the same name conducted in Laos, ended on April 23 with about 1,000 veterans throwing their combat ribbons, helmets, and uniforms on the Capitol steps, along with toy weapons. Earlier, they had lobbied with their congressmen, laid wreaths in Arlington National Cemetery, and staged mock “search and destroy” missions.

On 24 APR, a massive rally of about 200,000 took place on the Mall in Washington, D.C. A simultaneous protest was held by 156,000 demonstrators in San Francisco, but that rally, described as the largest such protest to date on the West Coast, ended prematurely when militants took over the stage and protest coordinators were forced to cancel the last few speeches. The comparatively orderly demonstrations in Washington, D.C., ended on 26 APR when the demonstrators changed their tactics to aggressive “people lobbying,” with the avowed purpose of “shutting down the government.” Five thousand police officers, backed by 12,000 troops, out-maneuvered the demonstrators and prevented them from blocking access to government buildings.

- **Apr 19 1989 – U.S. Navy:** A gun turret explodes on the USS Iowa, killing 47 sailors.

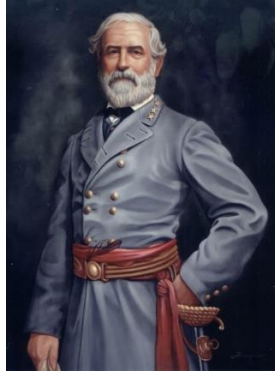


USS Iowa's Turret Two explodes

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- **Apr 20 1775 – American Revolution:** The Siege of Boston begins, following the battles at Lexington and Concord.
- **Apr 20 1861 - Civil War:** *Lee resigns from U.S. Army* » Two days after he was offered command of the Union army and three days after his native state, Virginia, seceded from the Union Colonel Robert E. Lee resigns from the United States army

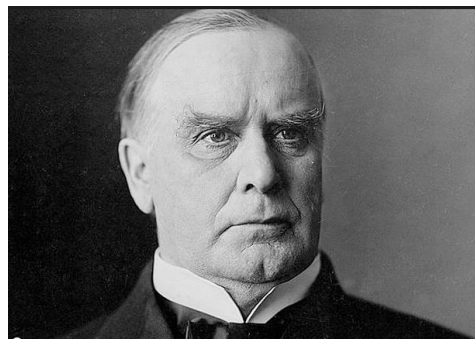
Lee opposed secession, but he was a loyal son of Virginia. His official resignation was only one sentence, but he wrote a longer explanation to his friend and mentor, General Winfield Scott, later that day. Lee had fought under Scott during the Mexican War (1846-48), and he revealed to his former commander the depth of his struggle. Lee spoke with Scott on April 18, and explained that he would have resigned then “but for the struggle it has cost me to separate myself from a service to which I have devoted the best years of my life and all the ability I possess.” Lee expressed gratitude for the kindness shown him by all in the army during his 25-year service, but Lee was most grateful to Scott. “To no one, general, have I been as much indebted as to yourself for uniform kindness and consideration...” He concluded with this poignant sentiment: “Save in the defense of my native State, I never desire again to draw my sword.”



Colonel Robert E. Lee

But draw it he would. Two days later, Lee was appointed commander of Virginia's forces with the rank of major general. He spent the next few months raising troops in Virginia, and in July he was sent to western Virginia to advise Confederate commanders struggling to maintain control over the mountainous region. Lee did little to build his reputation there as the Confederates experienced a series of setbacks, and he returned to Richmond when the Union gained control of the area. The next year, Lee assumed command of the Army of Northern Virginia after General Joseph Johnston was wounded in battle. Lee quickly turned the tables on Union General George B. McClellan, as he would several other commanders of the Army of the Potomac. His brilliance as a battlefield tactician earned him a place among the great military leaders of all time.

- **Apr 20 1898 - Spanish-American War:** *McKinley asks for declaration of war with Spain* » In 1895, Cuba, located less than 100 miles south of the United States, attempted to overthrow Spanish colonial rule. The rebels received financial assistance from private U.S. interests and used America as a base of operations from which to attack. The Spanish military responded with brutal force; approximately 100,000 Cuban civilians died in wretched conditions within Spanish concentration camps between 1895 and 1898. McKinley originally tried to avoid an armed conflict with Spain, but the American media, led by newspaper baron Randolph Hearst, lambasted McKinley as weak and whipped up popular sentiment for a war to give Cubans their independence.



President McKinley

On February 17, 1898, the battleship USS Maine, moored in Havana's harbor, sank after being rocked by two explosions; 252 men onboard were killed. Hawks in the media and within the government immediately blamed Spain, and President McKinley, abandoning his hopes for neutrality in the Cuban-Spanish conflict, bowed to Congressional calls for war. (It was later discovered that the explosion was caused by the spontaneous ignition of faulty ammunitions onboard the Maine.)



Swift, successful naval battles in the Philippines and the army's capture of Santiago and Puerto Rico, led by future President Theodore Roosevelt and his band of Rough Riders, ended what became known as the Spanish-American War in four months with relatively few casualties. The quick success boosted American confidence, leading to further intervention in foreign affairs in an attempt to liberate what were, in the eyes of the U.S. government, at least, oppressed nations yearning for democracy and independence. Although contemporaries of McKinley and Roosevelt called it a splendid little war, the Spanish-American War is now viewed by most historians as a war of American imperialism.

- **Apr 20 1917 – WWI:** *Nivelle Offensive ends in failure* » An ambitious Allied offensive against German troops near the Aisne River in central France, spearheaded by the French commander in chief, Robert Nivelle, ends in dismal failure.



Robert Nivelle

Nivelle, who had replaced Joseph Joffre in December 1915 as head of all French forces, had tenaciously argued for a major spring offensive in spite of powerful opposition in the French government, at one point threatening to resign if the offensive did not go ahead. He was convinced that by implementing the tactics he had used to considerable success at Verdun during the French counter-attacks in the fall of 1916, on a greater scale, the Allies could achieve a breakthrough on the Western Front within 48 hours.

In preparation for the planned offensive at the Aisne River, the British army began its attacks on April 9 around the town of Arras, capital of the Artois region of France, with the limited objective of pulling German reserve troops away from the Aisne, where the French would launch the central thrust of the offensive. Of the nearly 1,000 heavy guns used in the attacks, 377 were aimed at a six-kilometer stretch of front facing Vimy Ridge, a high point overlooking the plains of Artois, France, to the east. The Canadian Corps was given the task of moving forward to capture the ridge itself, directed by photographic images taken by aerial reconnaissance crafts used to plan the attacks as well as to report progress during their execution. After overcoming 4,000 yards of German defenses, the Canadians captured Vimy Ridge on 12 APR—a national triumph for Canada and a successful outcome for the initial phase of the Nivelle Offensive, as the Germans were forced to double their strength in the Arras region and thus draw forces away from the area further south, where Nivelle was preparing to launch his attacks.

On 16 APR, Nivelle and the French began their assault along an 80-kilometer front stretching from Soissons to Reims along the Aisne River. Despite the evacuation of reserve troops to Arras, the German positions were deeply and strongly entrenched in the region, which they had occupied since September 1914. The Germans had ample warning of French intentions from their intelligence systems; this,

combined with the depth of their positions, meant that the Allies were literally outgunned from the beginning of the battle. The overconfident Nivelle had ordered a rate of advance of up to two kilometers per hour, which proved exceedingly difficult with the steep grade of the land, horrible weather and the strength of enemy fire.

For this attack, known as the Second Battle of the Aisne, the French used tanks in great numbers for the first time; by the end of the first day, however, 57 of 132 tanks had been destroyed and 64 more had become bogged down in the mud. All in all, the French suffered 40,000 casualties on 16 APR alone, a loss comparable to that suffered by the British on the first day of the Battle of the Somme offensive of July 1, 1916. It was clear from the start that the attack had failed to achieve the decisive breakthrough Nivelle had planned: over the next three days, the French made only modest gains, advancing up to seven kilometers on the west of the front and taking 20,000 German prisoners. On the rest of the front, progress was significantly slower, and Nivelle was forced to call off the attacks on 20 APR.

The high casualty rate among French forces during the ill-fated Nivelle Offensive, combined with the continuing effects of exhausting battles at Verdun and the Somme, led to sharply increased discontent among the soldiers on the Western Front. Mutinies began in late April 1917, and by June had affected 68 divisions, or about 40,000 troops. The army's response to this was quick: on 25 APR, Nivelle was dismissed as commander in chief. He was replaced by the more cautious Philippe Petain, the hero of the Verdun resistance, on May 8. Petain immediately responded to the soldiers' complaints, knowing that mutinies must be quelled in order to have a hope of success on the battlefield. Where Nivelle had cut soldiers' leave in March 1917, releasing only 5 percent of the army at a time, Petain increased it, establishing a standard of 13 percent, or ten days' leave for each soldier every four months.

- **Apr 20 1945 - WW2:** US troops capture Leipzig, Germany, only to later cede the city to the Soviet Union.
- **Apr 20 1945 - WW2:** Fuehrerbunker: Adolf Hitler makes his last trip to the surface to award Iron Crosses to boy soldiers of the Hitler Youth.
- **Apr 20 1945 - Cold War:** *Operation Corncock is launched while Hitler celebrates his birthday* » On this day in 1945, Allied bombers in Italy begin a three-day attack on the bridges over the rivers Adige and Brenta to cut off German lines of retreat on the peninsula. Meanwhile, Adolf Hitler celebrates his 56th birthday as a Gestapo reign of terror results in the hanging of 20 Russian prisoners of war and 20 Jewish children: Of these, at least nine are under the age of 12. All of the victims had been taken from Auschwitz to Neuengamme, the place of execution, for the purpose of medical experimentation.
- **Apr 20 1970 – Vietnam War:** *Nixon announces more troop withdrawals* » In a televised speech, President Nixon pledges to withdraw 150,000 more U.S. troops over the next year “based entirely on the progress” of the Vietnamization program. His program, which had first been announced in June 1969, included three parts. First, the United States would step up its effort to improve the combat capability of the South Vietnamese armed forces so that they could assume responsibility for the war against the North Vietnamese. As the South Vietnamese became more capable, U.S. forces would be withdrawn from South Vietnam. At the same time, U.S. negotiators would continue to try to reach a negotiated settlement to the war with the communists at the Paris peace talks.

Nixon's new strategy and the continuing U.S. troop withdrawals represented a significant change in the nature of the American commitment to the war, as the primary responsibility for the fighting was transferred to the South Vietnamese armed forces. The first U.S. soldiers were withdrawn in the fall of 1969 and the withdrawals continued periodically through 1972. The remaining U.S. troops were withdrawn from South Vietnam in March 1973 as part of the provisions of the Paris Peace Accords.

- **Apr 20 1971 – Vietnam War:** *“Fragging” on the rise in U.S. units* » The Pentagon releases figures confirming that fragging incidents are on the rise. In 1970, 209 such incidents caused the deaths of 34 men; in 1969, 96 such incidents cost 34 men their lives. Fragging was a slang term used to describe U.S. military personnel tossing of fragmentation hand grenades (hence the term “fragging”) usually into sleeping areas to murder fellow soldiers. It was usually directed primarily against unit leaders, officers, and noncommissioned officers.



Fragging was rare in the early days of U.S. involvement in ground combat, but it became increasingly common as the rapid turnover caused by the one-year rotation policy weakened unit cohesion. With leadership and morale already declining in the face of repetitive Vietnam tours, the withdrawal of public support led to soldiers questioning their purpose on the battlefield. The situation worsened with the gradual U.S. troop withdrawal that began in 1969. As some troops were withdrawn, discipline and motivation declined as many remaining soldiers began to question why they had to continue fighting.

Fragging incidents in combat were usually attempts to remove leaders perceived to be incompetent and a threat to survival. Most fragging incidents, however, occurred in rear-echelon units and were committed by soldiers on drugs or because unit leaders were enforcing anti-drug policies. Unit leaders who were perceived to be too stringent in the enforcement of discipline or regulations sometimes received warnings via a fragmentation grenade, with the safety pin left on, but with their name painted on it left on their bunk, or a smoke grenade discharged under their bunk. Most understood the message, and intimidation through threat of fragging far exceeded actual incident

- **Apr 20 1978 - Cold War:** *Korean Air Lines jet forced down over Soviet Union* » Soviet aircraft force a Korean Air Lines passenger jet to land in the Soviet Union after the jet veers into Russian airspace. Two people were killed and several others injured when the jet made a rough landing on a frozen lake about 300 miles south of Murmansk.



The plane after landing in the Soviet Union, with visible damage to its left wing

The jet was on a flight from Paris to Seoul when the incident occurred. Soviet officials claimed that the plane, which usually flew over the northern Polar Regions to reach Seoul, suddenly veered sharply to the east and penetrated Russian airspace. Soviet jets intercepted the passenger plane and ordered it to land. Instead of going to the airfield indicated by the Soviet jets, however, the KAL flight made a very rough landing on a frozen lake south of Murmansk. Two passengers were killed and several others were injured during the landing. A short time later, the Soviet Union allowed a civilian American aircraft to retrieve the survivors.

U.S. officials were confused about what had gone wrong with the KAL flight, and Soviet officials were not extraordinarily helpful in clearing up matters. South Korea claimed that “navigational errors” were to blame for the plane flying so far off course. Aviation experts, however, doubted that “errors” of that magnitude would occur in such a sophisticated aircraft or that navigation problems could account for the plane’s wildly inaccurate flight pattern. All that could be said for certain was that the episode once again demonstrated the Soviet Union’s strict adherence to the protection of its airspace. Since the end of World War II a number of civilian and military aircraft had been driven away, forced to land, or shot down by the Soviet airforce. The Russian policy would have even more tragic consequences on September 1, 1983, when Soviet jets shot down KAL Flight 007 after it veered 300 miles off course and flew over the Soviet Union—nearly 270 people died in that crash.

- **Apr 20 1980 - Cuba:** *Castro announces Mariel Boatlift* » The Castro regime announces that all Cubans wishing to emigrate to the U.S. are free to board boats at the port of Mariel west of Havana, launching the Mariel Boatlift. The first of 125,000 Cuban refugees from Mariel reached Florida the next day.



The boatlift was precipitated by housing and job shortages caused by the ailing Cuban economy, leading to simmering internal tensions on the island. On 1 APR, Hector Sanyustiz and four others drove a bus through a fence at the Peruvian embassy and were granted political asylum. Cuban guards on the street opened fire. One guard was killed in the crossfire.

The Cuban government demanded the five be returned for trial in the dead guard's death. But when the Peruvian government refused, Castro withdrew his guards from the embassy on Good Friday, 4 APR. By Easter Sunday, 6 APR, some 10,000 Cubans crowded into the lushly landscaped gardens at the embassy requesting asylum. Other embassies, including those of Spain and Costa Rica, agreed to take a small number of people. But suddenly, two weeks later, Castro proclaimed that the port of Mariel would be opened to anyone wishing to leave, as long as they had someone to pick them up. Cuban exiles in the United States rushed to hire boats in Miami and Key West and rescue their relatives.

In all, 125,000 Cubans fled to U.S. shores in about 1,700 boats, creating large waves of people that overwhelmed the U.S. Coast guard. Cuban guards had packed boat after boat, without considering safety, making some of the overcrowded boats barely seaworthy. Twenty-seven migrants died, including 14 on an overloaded boat that capsized on 1 MAY.

The boatlift also began to have negative political implications for U.S. President Jimmy Carter. When it was discovered that a number of the exiles had been released from Cuban jails and mental health facilities, many were placed in refugee camps while others were held in federal prisons to undergo deportation hearings. Of the 125,000 "Marielitos," as the refugees came to be known, who landed in Florida, more than 1,700 were jailed and another 587 were detained until they could find sponsors. The exodus was finally ended by mutual agreement between the U.S. and Cuban governments in October 1980.

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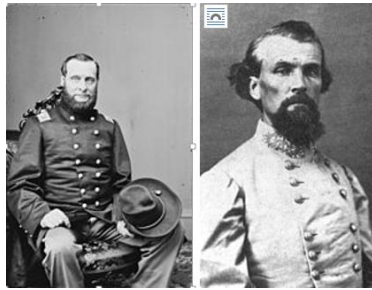
- **Apr 21 1778 – American Revolution:** *Massacre at Hancock's Bridge* - Just three days after British Loyalists and Hessian mercenary forces assault the local New Jersey militia at Quinton's Bridge, three miles from Salem, New Jersey, the same contingent surprises the colonial militia at Hancock's Bridge, five miles from Salem. During the battle at least 20 members of the Salem militia lost their lives, some after attempting to surrender.
- **Apr 21 1836 – Texas Revolution:** *The Battle of San Jacinto* » During the Texan War for Independence, the Texas militia under Sam Houston launches a surprise attack against the forces of Mexican General Santa Anna along the San Jacinto River. The Mexicans were thoroughly routed, and hundreds were taken prisoner, including General Santa Anna himself.

After gaining independence from Spain in the 1820s, Mexico welcomed foreign settlers to sparsely populated Texas, and a large group of Americans led by Stephen F. Austin settled along the Brazos River. The Americans soon outnumbered the resident Mexicans, and by the 1830s attempts by the Mexican government to regulate these semi-autonomous American communities led to rebellion. In March 1836, in the midst of armed conflict with the Mexican government, Texas declared its independence from Mexico.

The Texas volunteers initially suffered defeat against the forces of Santa Anna—Sam Houston's troops were forced into an eastward retreat, and the Alamo fell. However, in late April, Houston's army surprised a Mexican force at San Jacinto, and Santa Anna was captured, bringing an end to Mexico's effort to subdue Texas. In exchange for his freedom, Santa Anna recognized Texas's independence; although the treaty was later abrogated and tensions built up along the Texas-Mexico border.

The citizens of the so-called Lone Star Republic elected Sam Houston as president and endorsed the entrance of Texas into the United States. However, the likelihood of Texas joining the Union as a slave state delayed any formal action by the U.S. Congress for more than a decade. Finally, in 1845, President John Tyler orchestrated a compromise in which Texas would join the United States as a slave state. On December 29, 1845, Texas entered the United States as the 28th state, broadening the irrepressible differences in the U.S. over the issue of slavery and igniting the Mexican-American War.

- **Apr 21 1863 – Civil War: *Steight's Raid begins*** » Union Colonel Abel Streight begins a raid into northern Alabama and Georgia with the goal of cutting the Western and Atlantic Railroad between Chattanooga, Tennessee and Atlanta. The raid ended when Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest captured Streight's entire command near Rome, Georgia.



Col. Abel D. Streight, USA Gen. & Nathan Bedford Forrest, CSA

The plan called for Streight and General Greenville Dodge to move from central Tennessee into northwestern Alabama. Dodge would lead a diversionary attack on Tuscumbia, Alabama, while Streight would take nearly 2,000 troopers across northern Alabama and into Georgia. Streight outfitted his men with mules instead of horses, as he felt they were better adapted to the rugged terrain of the southern Appalachians. The expedition ran into trouble almost immediately when the mules arrived at Nashville in poor condition. A Confederate cavalry detachment swooped in and caused the mules to stampede, and it took two days to round them up.

The first part of the expedition went well. Dodge captured Tuscumbia, and Streight continued east toward Georgia. But on 29 APR, Streight's command was attacked by part of General Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry. Streight's men set a trap for the pursuing Rebels, and it worked well. The Confederate cavalry detachment, led by Captain William Forrest, brother of Nathan Bedford, found itself under fire from two sides. William Forrest was wounded, and the Federals continued on their mission.

But now General Nathan Bedford Forrest was on Streight's trail, and he would not let up. The Yankees were in hostile territory, and several times the Rebels received important information from local residents that allowed them to gain the upper hand. Finally, Forrest confronted the exhausted Union troops. Under a flag of truce, they discussed terms of surrender on 3 MAY. Forrest had just 600 men, less than half of what Streight now possessed. But Forrest spread his men around the woods. As he met with Streight, couriers from nonexistent units rode up with reports. Streight took the bait, and agreed to surrender. When the Confederates finally emerged to gather the Yankee's weaponry, the Union colonel realized that he had been had by the crafty Forrest.

- **Apr 21 1918 – WWI:** Near the Somme River in France, the German army launches its first major offensive on the Western Front in two years. By the end of the first day, German troops had advanced more than four miles and inflicted almost 30,000 British casualties.
- **Apr 21 1918 – WWI:** *Red Baron killed in action* » In the skies over Vauz sur Somme, France, Manfred von Richthofen, the notorious German flying ace known as “The Red Baron,” is killed by Allied fire.



**Richthofen wearing the Blue Max, Prussia's highest military order**

Richthofen, the son of a Prussian nobleman, switched from the German army to the Imperial Air Service in 1915. By 1916, he was terrorizing the skies over the western front in an Albatross biplane, downing 15 enemy planes by the end of the year, including one piloted by British flying ace Major Lanoe Hawker. In 1917, Richthofen surpassed all flying ace records on both sides of the western front and began using a Fokker triplane, painted entirely red in tribute to his old cavalry regiment. Although only used during the last eight months of his career, it is this aircraft that Richthofen was most commonly associated with and it led to an enduring English nickname for the German pilot—the Red Baron.

On April 21, 1918, with 80 victories under his belt, Richthofen penetrated deep into Allied territory in pursuit of a British aircraft. The Red Baron was flying too near the ground—an Australian gunner shot him through his chest, and his plane crashed into a field alongside the road from Corbie to Bray. Another account has Captain A. Roy Brown, a Canadian in the Royal Air Force, shooting him down. British troops recovered his body, and he was buried with full military honors. He was 25 years old. In a time of wooden and fabric aircraft, when 20 air victories ensured a pilot legendary status, Manfred von Richthofen downed 80 enemy aircraft.

- **Apr 21 1942 – WW2:** The most famous (and first international) Aggie Muster is held on the Philippine island of Corregidor, by Brigadier General George F. Moore (with 25 fellow Texas A&M graduates who are under his command), while 1.8 million pounds of shells pounded the island over a 5 hour attack.
- **Apr 21 1943 – WW2:** The second military conspiracy plan to assassinate Hitler in a week fails to come off.
- **Apr 21 1945 – WW2:** *Red Army overruns German High Command as it approaches the capital* » Soviet forces fighting south of Berlin, at Zossen, assault the headquarters of the German High

Command. The only remaining opposing “force” to the Russian invasion of Berlin are the “battle groups” of Hitler Youth, teenagers with anti-tank guns, strategically placed in parks and suburban streets. In a battle at Eggersdorf, 70 of these Hitler teens strove to fight off a Russian assault with a mere three anti-tank guns. They were bulldozed by Russian tanks and infantry.

- **Apr 21 1945 – WW2:** British Guardsman Edward Charlton wins the last Victoria Cross of the war for saving the lives of several men trapped in their tank during a battle in the German village of Wistedt. He is so badly wounded during his act of heroism that he dies shortly after being taken prisoner. A total of 182 Victoria Crosses—Britain’s highest honor for valor—were finally awarded for World War II.



Edward Charlton

- **Apr 21 1953 – Cold War:** *Roy Cohn and David Schine return to U.S.* » Roy Cohn and David Schine, two of Senator Joseph McCarthy’s chief aides, return to the United States after a controversial investigation of United States Information Service (USIS) posts in Europe. Upon their recommendation, thousands of books were removed from USIS libraries in several Western European countries.



Cohn and Schine had risen to fame on the coattails of Senator McCarthy as he conducted his well-publicized hunt for subversives and communists in the United States. Cohn became chief counsel to the McCarthy Senate subcommittee devoted to investigating communism in the U.S. government, and Schine, one of Cohn’s close friends, became a “special consultant.” In the spring of 1953, Cohn and



Schine departed for a seven-nation tour of Western Europe. Their primary task was to investigate the workings of the USIS posts, foreign offices of the United States Information Agency that had recently been established to serve as propaganda centers. The posts hosted speakers, showed movies, and set up libraries containing what were considered to be representative pieces of American literature. Cohn and Schine were appalled by the authors they found on the USIS bookshelves. The two men reported that over 30,000 books in the libraries were by “pro-communist” writers and demanded their removal. The authors they targeted included crime novelist Dashiell Hammett, African-American intellectual W.E.B. Du Bois, Herman Melville, John Steinbeck, and Henry Thoreau. The State Department, which oversaw the operations of USIS, immediately ordered thousands of books removed from the libraries.

The irony of the situation did not escape commentators of the time. With the Nazi book burnings of World War II still fresh in the collective memory, many felt it was questionable that America had joined the ranks of nations that censored literature. In the fight against communism, even Moby Dick was dispensable.

- **Apr 21 1965 – Vietnam War:** *Intelligence reveals North Vietnamese units in South Vietnam* » The Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency report a “most ominous” development: a regiment of the People’s Army of Vietnam—the regular army of North Vietnam—division is now operating with the Viet Cong in South Vietnam.

Prior to this, it was believed that South Vietnam was dealing with an internal insurgency by the Viet Cong; the report detailed that, in fact, the Viet Cong forces were being joined in the war against the Saigon government by North Vietnamese army units. In short, the report revealed that South Vietnam was now involved in a much larger war than originally believed. The situation far outstripped the combat capability of the South Vietnamese forces. In order to stabilize the situation, President Lyndon B. Johnson would have to commit U.S. ground combat units, leading to a much greater American involvement in the war. Indeed, eventually over 500,000 U.S. troops were stationed in South Vietnam.

- **Apr 21 1967 – Vietnam War:** The North Vietnamese press agency reports that an exchange of notes took place in February between President Lyndon B. Johnson and Ho Chi Minh. The agency said that Ho rejected a proposal made by Johnson for direct talks between the United States and North Vietnam on ending the war. The North Vietnamese demanded that the United States “stop definitely and unconditionally its bombing raids and all other acts of war against North Vietnam.” The U.S. State Department confirmed the exchange of letters and expressed regret that Hanoi had divulged this information, since the secret letters were intended as a serious diplomatic attempt to end the conflict. Nothing of any consequence came from Johnson’s initiative.
- **Apr 21 1972 – Vietnam War:** In Cambodia, more than 100 civilians are killed and 280 wounded as communist artillery and rockets strike Phnom Penh and outlying areas in the heaviest attack since the beginning of the war in 1970. Following the shelling, a communist force of 500 troops attacked and entered Takh Mau, six miles southeast of Pnom Penh, killing at least 25 civilians.
- **Apr 21 1972 – Vietnam War:** *Thieu flees Saigon as Xuan Loc falls* » Xuan Loc, the last South Vietnamese outpost blocking a direct North Vietnamese assault on Saigon, falls to the communists.



Nguyen Van Thieu

The North Vietnamese had launched a major offensive in March to capture the provincial capital of Ban Me Thuot in the Central Highlands. The South Vietnamese defenders fought very poorly and were quickly overwhelmed by the North Vietnamese attackers. Despite previous promises to provide support to the South Vietnamese if the communists violated the provisions of the cease-fire, the United States did nothing.

In an attempt to reposition his forces for a better defense, 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 in the Highlands 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 began to move 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, and the South Vietnamese soldiers destroyed three of Dung’s divisions. However, the South Vietnamese succumbed to the superior North Vietnamese numbers. With the fall of Xuan Loc, President Nguyen Van Thieu resigned and transferred authority to Vice-President Tran Van Huong. Thieu then fled Saigon, flying to Taiwan on 25 APR and eventually on to Great Britain, where he now resides.

By 27 APR the North Vietnamese had completely encircled Saigon and began to maneuver for their final assault. By the morning of 30 APR, the war was over. When the North Vietnamese tanks broke through the gates of the Presidential Palace in Saigon, the South Vietnamese surrendered and the Vietnam War came to an end.

- **Apr 21 1980 – Cold War:** President Jimmy Carter informs a group of U.S. athletes that, in response to the December 1979 Soviet incursion into Afghanistan, the United States will boycott the 1980 Olympics in Moscow. It marked the first and only time that the United States has boycotted the Olympics.



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- **Apr 22 1765 – American Revolution:** Stamp Act - Hoping to raise sufficient funds to defend the vast new American territories won from the French in the Seven Years' War, the British government passes the notorious Stamp Act. The legislation levied a direct tax on all materials printed for commercial and legal use in the colonies, including everything from broadsides and insurance policies to playing cards and dice. Though the Stamp Act employed a strategy that was a common fundraising vehicle in England, it stirred a storm of protest in the colonies.
- **Apr 22 1778 – American Revolution:** *John Paul Jones leads American raid on Whitehaven, England*  
» At 11 p.m. on this day, Commander John Paul Jones leads a small detachment of two boats from his ship, the USS Ranger, to raid the shallow port at Whitehaven, England, where, by his own account, 400 British merchant ships are anchored. Jones was hoping to reach the port at midnight, when ebb tide would leave the ships at their most vulnerable.

Jones and his 30 volunteers had greater difficulty than anticipated rowing to the port, which was protected by two forts. They did not arrive until dawn. Jones' boat successfully took the southern fort, disabling its cannon, but the other boat returned without attempting an attack on the northern fort, after the sailors claimed to have been frightened away by a noise. To compensate, Jones set fire to the southern fort, which subsequently engulfed the entire town.



**John Paul Jones**

Commander Jones, one of the most daring and successful naval commanders of the American Revolution, was born in Scotland on July 6, 1747. He was apprenticed to a merchant at the age of 13 and soon went to sea from Whitehaven, the very port he returned to attack on this day in 1778. In Virginia at the onset of the revolution, Jones sided with the Patriots and received a commission as a first lieutenant in the Continental Navy on December 7, 1775.

After the raid on Whitehaven, Jones continued to his home territory of Kirkcudbright Bay, where he intended to abduct the earl of Selkirk, 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. The USS Bonhomme Richard was struck; it began taking on water and caught fire. When the British captain of the Serapis ordered Jones to surrender, Jones 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.

Jones went on to establish himself as one of the great naval commanders in history; he is remembered, along with John Barry, as a Father of the American Navy. He is buried in a crypt in the U.S. Naval Academy Chapel at Annapolis, Maryland, where a Marine honor guard stands at attention in his honor whenever the crypt is open to the public.

- **Apr 22 1836 – Texas Revolution:** A day after the Battle of San Jacinto, forces under Texas General Sam Houston capture Mexican General Antonio López de Santa Anna.
- **Apr 22 1898 – Spanish\*American War:** The USS Nashville captures a Spanish merchant ship.
- **Apr 22 1863 – Civil War:** *Union raid cuts Mississippi telegraph wires* » Colonel Benjamin Grierson's Union troops bring destruction to Central Mississippi as part of a two-week raid along the entire length of the state.



This action was a diversion in General Ulysses S. Grant's campaign to capture Vicksburg, Mississippi, the last remaining Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River. Grant had his army on the western shore of the river, but he was planning to cross the mighty river south of Vicksburg, and move against Vicksburg from the west. Grierson's orders were to destroy enemy supplies, telegraph lines, and railroads in Mississippi.

Grierson crafted a brilliant campaign. He left La Grange, Tennessee, on 17 APR with 1,700 cavalry troopers and began traveling down the eastern side of the state. Whenever Confederate cavalry approached, Grierson sent out a diversionary force to draw them away. The diversionary units then rode back to La Grange, while the main force continued south. On 22 APR, he dispatched Company B of the 7th Illinois regiment to destroy telegraph lines at Macon, Mississippi, while Grierson rode to Newton Station. Here, Grierson could inflict damage on the Southern Mississippi Railroad, the one specific target identified by Grant. On 24 APR, his men tore up the tracks and destroyed two trainloads of ammunition bound for Vicksburg.

On 2 MAY, Grierson and his men rode into Union occupied Baton Rouge, Louisiana, ending one of the most spectacular raids of the war. The Yankees killed about 100 Confederates, took 500 prisoners, destroyed 50 miles of rail line, and destroyed hundreds of thousands of dollars of supplies and property. Grierson lost just 3 men killed, 7 wounded, 14 missing. More important, the raiders drew the attention of Confederate troops in Mississippi and weakened the forces at Vicksburg and Port Hudson, Louisiana. Both strongholds fell to the Union in July 1863. For his efforts, Grierson was promoted to brigadier general.

- **Apr 22 1898 – Spanish\*American War:** The United States Navy begins a blockade of Cuban ports and the USS Nashville captures a Spanish merchant ship. When the U.S. Congress issued a declaration of war on 25 APR, it declared that a state of war had existed from this date.
- **Apr 22 1915 – WWI:** *Second Battle of Ypres begins* » German forces shock Allied soldiers along the Western Front by firing more than 150 tons of lethal chlorine gas against two French colonial divisions at Ypres in Belgium.



Toxic smoke had been used occasionally in warfare since ancient times, and in 1912, the French used small amounts of tear gas in police operations. At the outbreak of World War I, however, the Germans began to actively develop chemical weapons. In October 1914, small tear-gas canisters were placed in shells that were fired at Neuve Chapelle, France, but Allied troops were not exposed. In January 1915, the Germans fired shells loaded with xylol bromide, a more lethal gas, at Russian troops at Bolimov on the Eastern Front. Because of the wintry cold, most of the gas froze, preventing it from being effective.

On April 22, 1915, the Germans launched their first and only offensive of the year. Now referred to as the Second Battle of Ypres, the offensive began with the usual artillery bombardment of the enemy's line. When the shelling died down, the Allied defenders waited for the first wave of German attack troops but instead were thrown into panic when chlorine gas wafted across no-man's land and down into their trenches. The Germans targeted four miles of the front with the wind-blown poison gas, decimating two divisions of French and Algerian colonial troops. The Germans, perhaps as shocked as

the Allies by the devastating effects of the poison gas, failed to take full advantage, and the Allies managed to hold most of their positions.

A second gas attack, against a Canadian division, on 24 APR, pushed the Allies further back, and, by May, they had retreated to the town of Ypres. The Second Battle of Ypres ended on 25 MAY, with insignificant gains for the Germans. The introduction of poison gas, however, would have great significance in World War I.

Immediately after the German gas attack at Ypres, the French and British began developing their own chemical weapons and gas masks. With the Germans taking the lead, an extensive number of projectiles filled with deadly substances polluted the trenches during the next several years of war. Mustard gas, introduced by the Germans in 1917, blistered the skin, eyes and lungs, and killed thousands. Military strategists defended the use of poison gas by saying it reduced the enemy's ability to respond and thus saved lives in offensives. In reality, defenses against poison gas usually kept pace with offensive developments, and both sides employed sophisticated gas masks and protective clothing that eventually negated the strategic importance of chemical weapons.

The United States, which entered World War I in 1917, also developed and used chemical weapons. Future President Harry S. Truman was the captain of a U.S. field artillery unit that fired poison gas against the Germans in 1918. In all, more than 100,000 tons of chemical weapons agents were used in World War I, some 500,000 troops were injured from their use and almost 30,000 died, including 2,000 Americans.

- **Apr 22 1943 – WW2:** USS Grenadier (SS-210) scuttled after Japanese seaplane attacks (936 Kokutai) damaged the boat the previous day, off Penang, Malaysia. 76 POWs, 4 later died.
- **Apr 22 1944 – WW2:** The 1st Air Commando Group using Sikorsky R-4 helicopters stage the first use of helicopters in combat with CSAR operations in the China-Burma-India theater.
- **Apr 22 1944 – WW2:** *Americans launch Operation Persecution in the Pacific* » Allied forces land in the Hollandia area of New Guinea. The Japanese occupiers, only 15,000 in number, many of whom were on administrative duty, fight for more than three months against ludicrous odds at great cost: When the battle for the northern coast of New Guinea was finally won by the Allies, 12,811 Japanese were dead, compared with 527 Americans.
- **Apr 22 1945 – WW2:** *Prisoners at the Jasenovac concentration camp revolt* » Jasenovac camp was established in August 1941. It was one of the largest concentration camps in Europe, and has been referred to as the “Auschwitz of the Balkans.” It was run by the Croats and not the Nazis. It was a good deal more brutal than Auschwitz. It was established in a marsh where the rivers Sava and Una met, near the village of Jasenovac. The camp was actually a complex containing five smaller sub-camps that were spread over 210 square kilometers.



The overall complex contained sub-camps, five work farms, and killing grounds. It was the largest place of execution and torture in Yugoslavia. The camp had a single agenda: kill Jews, Serbs, and Romas. Since the end of the war, there has been significant debate about the number of victims killed during Jasenovac's three years of operation. The numbers range from 20,000 to 1.4 million!

On 22 APR, there was a revolt that ended in the deaths of 516 prisoners – 84 escaped. Shortly after the revolt, sensing the end, the Ustase killed all the remaining prisoners, burned down the camp, and escaped. The Yugoslav Partisans arrived to see sooty ruins, smoke, and the skeletal remains of hundreds of victims. In the subsequent months, the camp was razed to the ground.

- **Apr 22 1945 – WW2: Hitler admits defeat** » Adolf Hitler, learning from one of his generals that no German defense was offered to the Russian assault at Eberswalde, admits to all in his underground bunker that the war is lost and that suicide is his only recourse. Almost as confirmation of Hitler's assessment, a Soviet mechanized corps reaches Treuenbrietzen, 40 miles southwest of Berlin, liberates a POW camp and releases, among others, Norwegian Commander in Chief Otto Ruge.
- **Apr 22 1947 – Cold War:** In response to public fears and Congressional investigations into communism in the United States, President Harry S. Truman issues an executive decree establishing a sweeping loyalty investigation of federal employees.
- **Apr 22 1951 - Korean War:** The Chinese People's Volunteer Army begin assaulting positions defended by the Royal Australian Regiment and the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry at the Battle of Kapyong.
- **Apr 22 1951 – Korean War:** Ticker-tape parade for General MacArthur in NYC.



- **Apr 22 1951 – Cold War: McCarthy Army hearings begin** » Senator Joseph McCarthy begins hearings investigating the United States Army, which he charges with being “soft” on communism. These televised hearings gave the American public their first view of McCarthy in action, and his recklessness, indignant bluster, and bullying tactics quickly resulted in his fall from prominence.



In February 1950, Senator McCarthy charged that there were over 200 “known communists” in the Department of State. Thus began his dizzying rise to fame as the most famous and feared communist hunter in the United States. McCarthy adeptly manipulated the media, told ever more outrageous stories concerning the communist conspiracy in the United States, and smeared any opponents as “communist sympathizers” to keep his own name in the headlines for years. By 1954, however, his power was beginning to wane. While he had been useful to the Republican Party during the years of the Democratic administration of President Harry S. Truman, his continued attacks on “communists in government” after Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower took over the White House in 1953 were becoming political liabilities.

In an effort to reinvigorate his declining popularity, McCarthy made a dramatic accusation that was a crucial mistake: in early 1954, he charged that the United States Army was “soft” on communism. McCarthy was indignant because David Schine, one of his former investigators, had been drafted and the Army, much to McCarthy’s surprise, refused the special treatment he demanded for his former aide. In April 1954, McCarthy, chairman of the Government Operations Committee in the Senate, opened televised hearings into his charges against the Army.

The hearings were a fiasco for McCarthy. He constantly interrupted with irrelevant questions and asides; yelled “point of order” whenever testimony was not to his liking; and verbally attacked witnesses, attorneys for the Army, and his fellow senators. The climax came when McCarthy slandered an associate of the Army’s chief counsel, Joseph Welch. Welch fixed McCarthy with a steady glare and declared evenly, “Until this moment, Senator, I think I never really gauged your cruelty or your recklessness...Have you no sense of decency, sir, at long last?” A stunned McCarthy listened as the packed audience exploded into cheers and applause. McCarthy’s days as a political power were effectively over. A few weeks later, the Army hearings dribbled to a close with little fanfare and no charges were upheld against the Army by the committee. In December 1954, the Senate voted to censure McCarthy for his conduct. Three years later, having become a hopeless alcoholic, he died.

- **Apr 22 1965 - Vietnam War: Officials confirm “non-lethal gas” was provided** » The State Department acknowledges that the United States had supplied the South Vietnamese armed forces with a “non-lethal gas which disables temporarily” for use “in tactical situations in which the Viet Cong intermingle with or take refuge among non-combatants, rather than use artillery or aerial bombardment.” This announcement triggered a storm of criticism worldwide. The North Vietnamese and the Soviets loudly protested the introduction of “poison gas” into the war. Secretary of State Dean Rusk insisted at a news conference on 24 MAR that the United States was “not embarking upon gas

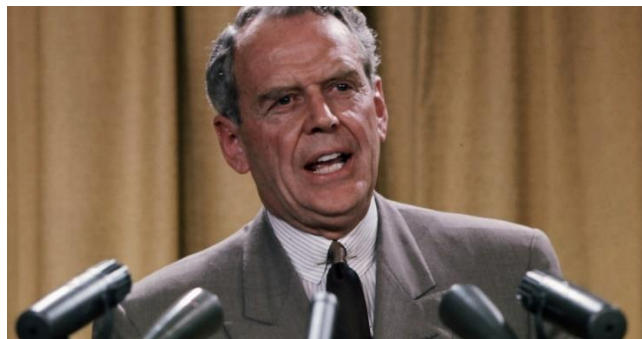


warfare,” but was merely employing “a gas which has been commonly adopted by the police forces of the world as riot-control agents.”

- **Apr 22 1968 - Vietnam War: Westmoreland to depart South Vietnam** » President Lyndon B. Johnson announces the appointment of Gen. William Westmoreland as Army Chief of Staff; Gen. Creighton Abrams replaced him as commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam. Westmoreland had first assumed command of U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam in June 1964, and in that capacity was in charge of all American military forces in Vietnam. One of the war’s most controversial figures, General Westmoreland was given many honors when the fighting was going well, but when the war turned sour, many Americans blamed him for problems in Vietnam. Negative feeling about Westmoreland grew particularly strong following the Tet Offensive of 1968.

As Westmoreland’s successor, Abrams faced the difficult task of implementing the Vietnamization program instituted by the Nixon administration. This included the gradual reduction of American forces in Vietnam while attempting to increase the combat capabilities of the South Vietnamese armed forces.

- **Apr 22 1968 - Vietnam War: South Vietnamese have increased combat capabilities** » In a news conference, Defense Secretary Clark Clifford declares that the South Vietnamese have “acquired the capacity to begin to insure their own security [and] they are going to take over more and more of the fighting.”



Clark Clifford

Clifford, who had succeeded Robert McNamara, had taken office with more than a little skepticism about the way the United States was conducting the war in Vietnam. This skepticism increased after the communists launched their massive offensive during the Tet (Chinese New Year) holiday earlier in 1968. Clifford set up a Vietnam task force to reassess the situation. He learned that U.S. military leaders could offer no plan for victory or assurance of success. Accordingly, he told President Lyndon B. Johnson that victory was probably impossible and recommended that the president initiate a bombing halt of North Vietnam and try to negotiate an end to the war. Clifford’s comments about the combat capabilities of the South Vietnamese were part of his effort to set the stage for U.S. disengagement from the war.

Johnson would follow Clifford’s advice on the bombing halt in October 1968 when he called an end to Operation Rolling Thunder, the bombing campaign against North Vietnam that had been ongoing since March 1965. Clifford left office in 1969 with the rest of the Johnson administration. The next president, Richard M. Nixon, instituted a new policy that echoed many of the things that Clifford had

recommended. In June 1969, Nixon announced his “Vietnamization” policy, a strategy built around two main objectives: increasing South Vietnamese combat capability and withdrawing U.S. troops.

- **Apr 22 1972 - Vietnam War:** *Antiwar demonstrations held* » Antiwar demonstrations prompted by the accelerated U.S. bombing in Southeast Asia draw somewhere between 30,000 to 60,000 marchers in New York; 30,000 to 40,000 in San Francisco; 10,000 to 12,000 in Los Angeles; and smaller gatherings in Chicago and other cities throughout the country. The new bombing campaign was in response to the North Vietnam’s massive invasion of South Vietnam in March. As the demonstrations were happening, bitter fighting continued all over South Vietnam. In the Mekong Delta, for example, the fighting was the heaviest it had been in 18 months.
- **Apr 22 2004 - Afghanistan:** *Pat Tillman killed by friendly fire in Afghanistan* » Pat Tillman, who gave up his pro football career to enlist in the U.S. Army after the terrorist attacks of September 11, is killed by friendly fire while serving in Afghanistan on April 22, 2004. The news that Tillman, age 27, was mistakenly gunned down by his fellow Rangers, rather than enemy forces, was initially covered up by the U.S. military.’



Pat Tillman

Patrick Daniel Tillman was born the oldest of three brothers on November 6, 1976, in San Jose, California. He played linebacker for Arizona State University, where during his senior year he was named Pac-10 Defensive Player of the Year. In 1998, Tillman was drafted by the Arizona Cardinals. He became the team’s starting safety as well as one of its most popular players. In 2000, he broke the team record for tackles with 224. In May 2002, Tillman turned down a three-year, multi-million-dollar deal with the Cardinals and instead, prompted by the events of 9/11, joined the Army along with his brother Kevin, a minor-league baseball player. The Tillman brothers were assigned to the 75th Ranger Regiment in Fort Lewis, Washington, and did tours in Iraq in 2003, followed by Afghanistan the next year.

On April 22, 2004, Pat Tillman was killed by gunfire while on patrol in a rugged area of eastern Afghanistan. The Army initially maintained that Tillman and his unit were ambushed by enemy forces. Tillman was praised as a national hero, awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart medals and posthumously promoted to corporal. Weeks later, Tillman’s family learned his death had been accidental. His parents publicly criticized the Army, saying they had been intentionally deceived by military officials who wanted to use their son as a patriotic poster boy. They believed their son’s death was initially covered up by military officials because it could’ve undermined support for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

A criminal investigation was eventually launched into the case and in 2007 the Army censured retired three-star general Philip Kensinger, who was in charge of special operations at the time of Tillman's death, for lying to investigators and making other mistakes. "Memorandums of concern" were also sent to several brigadier generals and lower-ranking officers who the Army believed acted improperly in the case.

- **Apr 22 2008 – U.S. air Force:** The United States Air Force retires the remaining F-117 Nighthawk aircraft in service.

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- **Apr 23 1775 – American Revolution:** During a speech before the second Virginia Convention, Patrick Henry responds to the increasingly oppressive British rule over the American colonies by declaring, "I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!" Following the signing of the American Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, Patrick Henry was appointed governor of Virginia by the Continental Congress.
- **Apr 23 1862 – Civil War:** At the First Battle of Kernstown, Virginia, Confederate General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson suffers a rare defeat when his attack on Union forces in the Shenandoah Valley fails.
- **Apr 23 1862 – Civil War:** "*Panic has seized the country,*" writes Davis » Confederate President Jefferson Davis writes to his wife, Varina, of the desperate situation facing the Confederates.



Jefferson Davis and Varini Howell Davis

"Panic has seized the country," he wrote to his wife in Georgia. Davis was in Charlotte, North Carolina, on his flight away from Yankee troops. It was three weeks since Davis had fled the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, as Union troops were overrunning the trenches nearby. Davis and his government headed west to Danville, Virginia, in hopes of reestablishing offices there. When Confederate General Robert E. Lee was forced to surrender his army at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on 9 APR, Davis and his officials traveled south in hopes of connecting with the last major Confederate army, the force of General Joseph Johnston. Johnston, then in North Carolina, was himself in dire straits, as General William T. Sherman's massive force was bearing down.

Davis continued to his wife, “The issue is one which it is very painful for me to meet. On one hand is the long night of oppression which will follow the return of our people to the ‘Union’; on the other, the suffering of the women and children, and carnage among the few brave patriots who would still oppose the invader.” The Davis’ were reunited a few days later as the president continued to flee and continue the fight. Two weeks later, Union troops finally captured the Confederate president in northern Georgia. Davis was charged with treason, but never tried. In 1889, he died at age 81.

- **Apr 23 1899 – U.S.\*Philippines:** An American force consisting of four battalions of infantry from Nebraska and Iowa plus a battery of guns from the Utah Light Artillery, is fiercely engaged by Filipino insurgents at Quingua, Luzon, about 20 miles north of the capital of Manila.
- **Apr 23 1915 – WWI:** *Poet-soldier Rupert Brooke dies in Greece* » The young scholar and poet Robert Brooke serving as an officer in the British Royal Navy, dies of blood poisoning on a hospital ship anchored off the Greek island of Skyros, while awaiting deployment in the Allied invasion of the Gallipoli Peninsula.



Robert Brooke

Brooke, born in 1887 in Rugby, Britain, attended King’s College in Cambridge, where he befriended such future luminaries as E.M. Forster, John Maynard Keynes and Virginia Stephens (later Woolf) as a member of the famed Bloomsbury set. Brooke’s travels in the United States in 1912 produced a series of acclaimed essays and articles; he also lived for a time in Tahiti, where he wrote some of his best-known poems. Returning to England just before the outbreak of World War I in August 1914, Brooke gained a commission in the Royal Naval Division with the help of his close friend Edward Marsh, then secretary to First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill. In his poetry, Brooke welcomed the arrival of war, writing: Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour/And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping.

Rupert Brooke saw his only action of World War I during the defense of Antwerp, Belgium, against German invasion in early October 1914. Although aided by a stiff resistance from Antwerp’s inhabitants, British troops suffered a decisive defeat in that conflict and were forced to retreat through a devastated Belgian countryside. Brooke subsequently returned to Britain to await redeployment, where he caught the flu during the training and preparation. While recovering, Brooke wrote what would become the most famous of his war sonnets, including *Peace*, *Safety*, *The Dead*, and *The Soldier*.

Brooke sailed for the Dardanelles near Turkey on February 18, 1915; problems with enemy mines led to a delay in his squadron’s deployment and a training stint in Egypt, where Brooke contracted dysentery. By this time, Brooke’s poems had begun to gain notice in Britain, and he was offered the

chance to return to Britain and serve away from the battlefield after his recovery; he refused. On April 10, he sailed with his unit to Greece, where they anchored off Skyros. There, Brooke developed a fatal case of blood poisoning from an insect bite; he died on April 23, 1915, aboard a hospital ship, two days before the Allies launched their massive, ill-fated invasion of Gallipoli.

On 26 APR, The Times of London ran an obituary notice for Brooke written by Winston Churchill. The thoughts to which he gave expression in the very few incomparable war sonnets which he has left behind, Churchill wrote, will be shared by many thousands of young men moving resolutely and blithely forward in this, the hardest, the cruelest, and the least-rewarded of all the wars that men have fought. The opening lines of The Soldier, Brooke's most famous poem, evoke the simple, heartfelt patriotism to which Churchill felt all England's soldiers should aspire: If I should die, think only this of me/That there's some corner of a foreign field/That is forever England.

- **Apr 23 1919 – WWI:** At 7:20 in the morning an explosion in the Place de la Republique in Paris announces the first attack of a new German gun. The Pariskanone, or Paris gun, as it came to be known, was manufactured by Krupps; it was 210mm, with a 118-foot-long barrel, which could fire a shell the impressive distance of some 130,000 feet, or 25 miles, into the air. Three of them fired on Paris that day from a gun site at CrÉpy-en-Laonnaise, 74 miles away.
- **Apr 23 1919 – PreWW2:** Benito Mussolini, an Italian World War I veteran and publisher of Socialist newspapers, breaks with the Italian Socialists and establishes the nationalist Fasci di Combattimento, named after the Italian peasant revolutionaries, or “Fighting Bands,” from the 19th century. Commonly known as the Fascist Party, Mussolini's new right-wing organization advocated Italian nationalism, had black shirts for uniforms, and launched a program of terrorism and intimidation against its leftist opponents. (<http://www.history.com/news/9-things-you-may-not-know-about-mussolini>).
- **Apr 23 1941 – WW2:** The Greek government and King George II evacuate Athens before the invading Wehrmacht.
- **Apr 23 1942 – WW2:** Germans begin “Baedeker Raids” on England » In retaliation for the British raid on Lubeck, German bombers strike Exeter and later Bath, Norwich, York, and other “medieval-city centres.” Almost 1,000 English civilians are killed in the bombing attacks nicknamed “Baedeker Raids.”



On 28 MAR of the same year, 234 British bombers struck the German port of Lubeck, an industrial town of only “moderate importance.” The attack was ordered (according to Sir Arthur Harris, head of British Bomber Command) as more of a morale booster for British flyers than anything else, but the destruction wreaked on Lubeck was significant: Two thousand buildings were totaled, 312 German civilians were killed, and 15,000 Germans were left homeless.

As an act of reprisal, the Germans attacked cathedral cities of great historical significance. The 15th-century Guildhall, in York, as an example, was destroyed. The Germans called their air attacks “Baedeker Raids,” named for the German publishing company famous for guidebooks popular with tourists. The Luftwaffe vowed to bomb every building in Britain that the Baedeker guide had awarded “three stars.”

- **Apr 23 1945 – WW2: Göring Telegram** » Adolf Hitler's designated successor Hermann Göring sends him a telegram asking permission to take leadership of the Third Reich. The telegram caused Hitler to strip his hand-picked successor of power and appoint new political successors, Joseph Goebbels and Karl Dönitz.
- **Apr 23 1945 – WW2: Truman confronts Molotov** » Less than two weeks after taking over as president after the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman gives a tongue-lashing to Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov. The incident indicated that Truman was determined to take a “tougher” stance with the Soviets than his predecessor had.

When Roosevelt died of a massive stroke on April 12, 1945, Harry S. Truman took over as president. Truman was overwhelmed by the responsibilities so suddenly thrust upon him and, particularly in terms of foreign policy, the new president was uncertain about his approach. Roosevelt had kept his vice-president in the dark about most diplomatic decisions, not even informing Truman about the secret program to develop an atomic bomb. Truman had to learn quickly, however. The approaching end of World War II meant that momentous decisions about the postwar world needed to be made quickly. The primary issue Truman faced was how to deal with the Soviet Union. Just weeks before his death, Roosevelt met with Russian leader Joseph Stalin and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill at Yalta to discuss the postwar situation. Agreements made during the meeting left the Soviets in de facto control of Eastern Europe in exchange for Soviet promises to hold “democratic” elections in Poland. Some officials in the U.S. government were appalled at these decisions, believing that Roosevelt was too “soft” on the Soviets and naive in his belief that Stalin would cooperate with the West after the war. Truman gravitated to this same point of view, partially because of his desire to appear decisive, but also because of his long-standing animosity toward the Soviets.



Vyacheslav Molotov, seen in September 1945, stormed out of a meeting with President Harry S. Truman.

On April 23, 1945, Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov arrived at the White House for a meeting with the new president. Truman immediately lashed out at Molotov, “in words of one syllable,” as the president later recalled. As Molotov listened incredulously, Truman charged that the Soviets were breaking their agreements and that Stalin needed to keep his word. At the end of Truman’s tirade,

Molotov indignantly declared that he had never been talked to in such a manner. Truman, not to be outdone, replied that if Molotov had kept his promises, he would not need to be talked to like that. Molotov stormed out of the meeting. Truman was delighted with his own performance, telling one friend that he gave the Soviet official “the straight one-two to the jaw.” The president was convinced that a tough stance was the only way to deal with the communists, a policy that came to dominate America’s early Cold War policies toward the Soviets.

- **Apr 23 1970 – Vietnam War:** *Ford says that war is finished for America* » At a speech at Tulane University, President Gerald Ford says the Vietnam War is finished as far as America is concerned. “Today, Americans can regain the sense of pride that existed before Vietnam. But it cannot be achieved by re-fighting a war.” This was devastating news to the South Vietnamese, who were desperately pleading for U.S. support as the North Vietnamese surrounded Saigon for the final assault on the capital city.

The North Vietnamese had launched a major offensive in March to capture the provincial capital of Ban Me Thuot (Darlac province) in the Central Highlands. The South Vietnamese defenders there fought very poorly and were quickly overwhelmed by the North Vietnamese attackers. Despite previous promises by both Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford to provide support, the United States did nothing. In an attempt to reposition his forces for a better defense, 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. The South Vietnamese abandoned Pleiku and Kontum in the Highlands 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.



**President Gerald Ford, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Vice President Nelson Rockefeller discuss the evacuation of Saigon on April 28, 1975, at the White House**

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. However, the South Vietnamese finally succumbed to the superior North Vietnamese numbers. With the fall of Xuan

Loc on 21 APR and Ford's statement at Tulane, it was apparent that the North Vietnamese would be victorious. President Thieu resigned and transferred authority to Vice President Tran Van Huong before fleeing Saigon on 25 APR.

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 crashed through the gates of the Presidential Palace in Saigon, the South Vietnamese surrendered and the Vietnam War was officially over.

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- **Apr 24 1781 – American Revolution:** *Phillips and Arnold launch attack on Petersburg, Virginia* » British General William Phillips lands on the banks of the James River at City Port, Virginia. Once there, he combined forces with British General Benedict Arnold, the former American general and notorious traitor, to launch an attack on the town of Petersburg, Virginia, located about 12 miles away.



British Generals William Phillips & Benedict Arnold

Defending the town of Petersburg from the approaching British troops was a contingent of 1,000 troops from the Virginia militia led by Major General Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben. General von Steuben had set up defensive lines of resistance, but had no real hope of victory as the Americans were severely outnumbered by the British army of 2,500 troops. After several hours of fighting, von Steuben ordered a full-scale retreat of the Virginia militia as the city of Petersburg fell into British hands. Although Petersburg was lost, General von Steuben and the Virginia militia were able to resist the British force long enough for Patriot troops to assemble and set up defensive positions in nearby towns.

General Phillips had survived three years of captivity after being taken prisoner by the Americans at Saratoga in 1777 and marching with the so-called “Convention Army”—dubbed as such because the British and Americans signed a short-lived convention that the prisoners would be released to Europe if they agreed not to fight in North America again—700 miles from Saratoga, New York, to Charlottesville, Virginia, in 13 MAY in Petersburg, less than a month after his victory.

- **Apr 24 1805 – First Barbary War:** U.S. Marines attack and capture the town of Derna in Tripoli from the Barbary pirates.
- **Apr 24 1863 – Civil War:** *Union issues conduct code for soldiers* » The Union army issues General Orders No. 100, which provided a code of conduct for Federal soldiers and officers when dealing with Confederate prisoners and civilians. The code was borrowed by many European nations, and its influence can be seen on the Geneva Convention.





Francis Lieber

The orders were the brainchild of Francis Lieber, a Prussian immigrant whose three sons had served during the Civil War. One son was mortally wounded while fighting for the Confederacy at the Battle of Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1862. Lieber's other two sons fought for the Union. Lieber was a scholar of international law who took a keen interest in the treatment of combatants and civilians. He wrote many essays and newspaper articles on the subject early in the war, and he advised General Henry Halleck, general-in-chief of the Union armies, on how to treat guerilla fighters captured by Federal forces.

Halleck appointed a committee of four generals and Lieber to draft rules of combat for the Civil War. The final document consisted of 157 articles written almost entirely by Lieber. The orders established policies for, among other things, the treatment of prisoners, exchanges, and flags of truce. There was no document like it in the world at the time, and other countries soon adopted the code. It became the standard for international military law, and the Germans adopted it by 1870. Lieber's concepts are still very influential today.

- **Apr 24 1918 – WWI:** First tank-to-tank combat, at Villers-Bretonneux, France, when three British Mark IVs met three German A7Vs.
- **Apr 24 1944 – WW2:** 1st Boeing B-29 arrives in China "over the Hump"
- **Apr 24 1944 – WW2:** *Truman is briefed on Manhattan Project* » President Harry Truman learns the full details of the Manhattan Project, in which scientists are attempting to create the first atomic bomb, on this day in 1945. The information thrust upon Truman a momentous decision: whether or not to use the world's first weapon of mass destruction.



America's secret development of the atomic bomb began in 1939 with then-President Franklin Roosevelt's support. The project was so secret that FDR did not even inform his fourth-term vice president, Truman, that it existed. (In fact, when Truman's 1943 senatorial investigations into war-

production expenditures led him to ask questions about a suspicious plant in Minneapolis, which was secretly connected with the Manhattan Project, Truman received a stern phone call from FDR's secretary of war, Harry Stimson, warning him not to inquire further.)

When President Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, Truman was immediately sworn in and, soon after, was informed by Stimson of a new and terrible weapon being developed by physicists in New Mexico. In his diary that night, Truman noted that he had been informed that the U.S. was perfecting an explosive great enough to destroy the whole world.

On 24 APR, Stimson and the army general in charge of the project, Leslie Groves, brought Truman a file full of reports and details on the Manhattan Project. They told Truman that although the U.S. was the only country with the resources to develop the bomb—eliminating fears that Germany was close to developing the weapon—the Russians could possibly have atomic weapons within four years. They discussed if, and with which allies, they should share the information and how the new weapon would affect U.S. foreign-policy decisions. Truman authorized the continuation of the project and agreed to form an interim committee that would advise the president on using the weapon.

Although the war in Europe ended in May 1945, Stimson advised Truman that the bomb might be useful in intimidating Soviet leader Joseph Stalin into curtailing post-war communist expansion into Eastern Europe. Truman agreed and said that if the weapon proved feasible I'll certainly have a hammer on those [Russians]. Meanwhile the war with Japan dragged on and it looked to many as if the Japanese would never surrender. On July 16, the team of scientists at the Alamogordo, New Mexico, research station successfully exploded the first atomic bomb. Truman gave Stimson the handwritten order to release when ready but not sooner than August 2 on July 31, 1945.

The first bomb was exploded over Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, and a second was dropped on Nagasaki on August 8. The Japanese quickly surrendered. Although other nations have developed atomic weapons and nuclear technology since 1945, Truman remains the only world leader to have ever used an atomic bomb against an enemy.

- **Apr 24 1955 – Cold War:** *The Bandung Conference concludes* » The Afro-Asian Conference—popularly known as the Bandung Conference because it was held in Bandung, Indonesia—comes to a close on this day. During the conference, representatives from 29 “non-aligned” nations in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East met to condemn colonialism, decry racism, and express their reservations about the growing Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.



Merdeka Building during the 1955 Asian-African Conference

The Bandung Conference grew out of an increasing sense of frustration and alienation among the so-called “non-aligned” nations of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. These were nations that preferred to remain neutral during the Cold War, believing that their interests would not be served by allying with either the United States or the Soviet Union. In April 1955, representatives from 29 of these nations, including Egypt, Indonesia, India, Iraq, and the People’s Republic of China, met to consider the issues they considered most pressing. Various speeches and resolutions condemned colonialism and imperialism and called for the freedom of all subjugated peoples. Racism in all forms was likewise criticized, with the apartheid system of South Africa coming in for particularly harsh denunciations. The assembled nations also called for an end to the nuclear arms race and the elimination of atomic weapons. The fundamental message of many of the sessions was the same: the Cold War struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union had little meaning to nations battling for economic development, improved health, and better crop yields, and fighting against the forces of colonialism and racism.

The United States government was generally appalled by the Bandung Conference. Although invited to do so, it refused to send an unofficial observer to the meetings. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was already on record as equating neutralism in the fight against communism as close to a mortal sin. For the United States, the issue was black and white: join America in the fight against communism or risk being considered a potential enemy. This unfortunate policy brought the United States into numerous conflicts with nations of the underdeveloped world who were struggling to find a middle road in the Cold War conflict.

- **Apr 24 1967 – Vietnam War:** *Westmoreland makes controversial remarks* » At a news conference in Washington, Gen. William Westmoreland, senior U.S. commander in South Vietnam, causes controversy by saying that the enemy had “gained support in the United States that gives him hope that he can win politically that which he cannot win militarily.” Though he said that, “Ninety-five percent of the people were behind the United States effort in Vietnam,” he asserted that the American soldiers in Vietnam were “dismayed, and so am I, by recent unpatriotic acts at home.” This criticism of the antiwar movement was not received well by many in and out of the antiwar movement, who believed it was both their right and responsibility to speak out against the war.



William Westmoreland

- **Apr 24 1971 – Vietnam War:** *North Vietnamese attack South Vietnamese installations* » North Vietnamese troops hit Allied installations throughout South Vietnam. In the most devastating attack, the ammunition depot at Qui Nhon was blown up. On 27 APR, the aviation fuel tanks at Da Nang air base were attacked by communist gunners, resulting in explosions and a fire that destroyed a large proportion of the fuel stored there. In the following three days, 54 South Vietnamese soldiers and

civilians were reported killed, and 185 wounded. The United States reported seven dead and 60 wounded.

- **Apr 24 1980 – U.S.\*Iran:** *Hostage rescue mission ends in disaster* » An ill-fated military operation to rescue the 52 American hostages held in Tehran ends with eight U.S. servicemen dead and no hostages rescued.

With the Iran Hostage Crisis stretching into its sixth month and all diplomatic appeals to the Iranian government ending in failure, President Jimmy Carter ordered the military mission as a last ditch attempt to save the hostages. During the operation, three of eight helicopters failed, crippling the crucial airborne plans. The mission was then canceled at the staging area in Iran, but during the withdrawal one of the retreating helicopters collided with one of six C-130 transport planes, killing eight soldiers and injuring five. The next day, a somber Jimmy Carter gave a press conference in which he took full responsibility for the tragedy. The hostages were not released for another 270 days.

On November 4, 1979, the crisis began when militant Iranian students, outraged that the U.S. government had allowed the ousted shah of Iran to travel to the U.S. for medical treatment, seized the U.S. embassy in Tehran. The Ayatollah Khomeini, Iran's political and religious leader, took over the hostage situation and agreed to release non-U.S. captives and female and minority Americans, citing these groups as among the people oppressed by the U.S. government. The remaining 52 captives remained at the mercy of the Ayatollah for the next 14 months.

President Carter was unable to diplomatically resolve the crisis, and the April 1980 hostage attempt ended in disaster. Three months later, the former shah died of cancer in Egypt, but the crisis continued. In November, Carter lost the presidential election to Republican Ronald Reagan, and soon after, with the assistance of Algerian intermediaries, successful negotiations began between the United States and Iran. On the day of Reagan's inauguration, January 20, 1981, the United States freed almost \$8 billion in frozen Iranian assets, and the 52 hostages were released after 444 days. The next day, Jimmy Carter flew to West Germany to greet the Americans on their way home.

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- **Apr 25 1775 – American Revolution:** *Cornwallis retreats from Guilford Courthouse* » British General Lord Charles Cornwallis retreats to Wilmington, North Carolina, after being defeated at Guilford Courthouse by 4,500 Continental Army soldiers and militia under the command of American Major General Nathanael Greene.



Gen. Cornwallis. First Maryland Regiment retaking British field artillery at Guilford Court House, and Lord Rawdon

With Cornwallis' defeat, the British task of defending North Carolina fell to a young Irish-born nobleman, Francis, Lord Rawdon, an officer of marked ability, who went on to execute an unlikely victory over Greene at Hobkirk's Hill, a ridge just north of Camden, North Carolina.

Rawdon, who was being provided information on the Continentals' movements by British Loyalists, learned of the movements of General Greene and his troops. A deserter from the Continental Army informed Rawdon about the precarious supply situation of the Continental Army, and the commander sprang into action. Although outnumbered by a Continental Army of 1,174 men to Rawdon's 800 British troops, the British managed to surprise Greene and the Continentals at Hobkirk's Hill. Although casualties were approximately the same on each side, the British won a tactical victory, taking the field. Greene retreated, but managed to save his supplies and artillery, while Rawdon and the British fell back to Charleston, South Carolina.

Upon his return to England, King George III honored Lord Rawdon with his own peerage as Baron Rawdon in March 1783. Six years later, Rawdon added his mother's surname, Hastings, to his own. With his father's death in 1793, Rawdon-Hastings became the second earl of Moira. He served as the governor general of India beginning in 1813. Proving his military and diplomatic prowess, he gained Nepal, Marathas and Singapore for the crown. These successes led to yet another new title, the marquess of Hastings.

- **Apr 25 1846 – Mexican\*American War: Thornton Affair** » An incident between the militaries of the United States and Mexico that served as the primary motivator that caused U.S. President James K. Polk to ask for a declaration of war against Mexico in 1846, sparking the Mexican-American War.



The incident is clouded by over a century and a half of propaganda, half-truths, and great exaggerations by the participants on both sides. However, it can be ascertained that the event occurred sometime around dusk on April 25, 1846, and continued in the early hours of 26 APR.

A company of seventy U.S. Dragoons commanded by Capt. Seth Thornton was ordered to scout an area about twenty miles (30 km) northwest of what later became Brownsville, Texas. On the 25th, the Dragoons, acting on the advice of a local guide, investigated an abandoned hacienda. What precisely happened after this point is not entirely clear; however, some two thousand Mexican soldiers under the command of Col. Anastasio Torrejón were encamped in and around the hacienda, and a firefight occurred. Both sides fought ferociously, but the greatly outnumbered U.S. force was forced to surrender after several hours of skirmishing.

During the skirmish, some sixteen U.S. troopers were killed, with an unknown number of Mexican dead. Thornton and many of his officers were taken prisoner, and held in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, as prisoners of war. Upon learning of the incident, President Polk asked for a declaration of war before a joint session of the United States Congress, summing up the need for war by famously stating:

"American blood has been shed on American soil". On May 13, 1846, Congress declared war on Mexico, despite protestations by the Mexican government that Thornton had crossed the border into Mexican Texas — a border that Mexico claimed began south of the Nueces River, and which the United States claimed began further to the south at the Rio Grande (Río Bravo). The ensuing Mexican-American War was waged from 1846-1848, and witnessed the loss of many thousands of lives and nearly half of the territory of Mexico.

- **Apr 25 1864 – Civil War:** *Confederates overwhelm Union at Marks' Mills (Battle of Marks' Mills)* » For the second time in a week, a Confederate force captures a Union wagon train trying to supply the Federal force at Camden, Arkansas. This time, the loss forced Union General Frederick Steele to withdraw back to Little Rock.



Generals Frederick Steele & James Fagan and Lt. Col. Francis Drake

Steele captured Camden on 15 APR as he moved southwest towards Shreveport, Louisiana. This was part of a larger Union operation in the region. General Nathaniel Banks moved up the Red River into northwest Louisiana on a planned invasion of Texas, but he was turned back at the Battle of Mansfield in Louisiana on 8 APR. Steele was to pinch Confederate forces around Shreveport with a move from central Arkansas. After taking Camden, Steele sent 1,100 men west to capture a store of corn. That force was badly defeated by a Confederate detachment at the Battle of Poison Spring in Arkansas on 18 APR. Now, with provisions dwindling, Steele sent another wagon train northeast from Camden towards Pine Bluff to fetch supplies.

Lieutenant Colonel Francis Drake and 1,700 Union troops accompanied the 240 wagons that left Camden on 22 APR. Three hundred runaway slaves traveled along as well. Three days later, Confederate troops under General James Fagan pounced on Drake's command near Marks' Mills. They came from two sides, and Drake was wounded and captured early in the battle along with 1,400 of his troops. The Confederates lost 41 killed and 108 wounded, but they captured the entire wagon train. The Rebels followed up their victory much as they had at Poison Spring on 18 APR, where they massacred captured black soldiers. At Marks' Mills, at least half of the runaways were killed in cold blood. Even one of the Confederate officers admitted in his report that "No orders, threat, or commands could restrain the men from vengeance on the Negroes..."

Steele's army was now in dangerous territory. With Confederate forces lurking all around Camden and with supplies running low, Steele retreated to Little Rock, leaving southern Arkansas under Rebel control. Drake survived his wounds and later became governor of Iowa. Drake University in Des Moines now bears his name.

- **Apr 25 1898 – Spanish\*American War:** *The United States declares war on Spain* » America's short war with Spain in 1898 was the nation's first step on the pathway to becoming a world power. The U.S. victory brought with it the unintended possession of the Philippines and a vested interest in the politics of the Pacific region that would ultimately lead to conflict with Japan. As an immediate outcome of the war, America found itself embroiled in an insurgency in the Philippines that closely mimicked the conflict in Vietnam over 60 years later.

Cuba, a Spanish colony, had been in rebellion since 1895. The brutal Spanish response turned American sympathies to the Cuban insurgents. The US Battleship Maine arrived in Havana Harbor in January 1898 with a dual mission - to protect American interests and present the Spanish with a show of force. At 9:40 PM on the evening of 15 FEB, an explosion ripped the forward hull quickly sending the ship to the bottom of the harbor, killing two hundred sixty-six of the 345 crew members. Investigations started immediately. A US Naval Board of Inquiry attributed the sinking to an external explosion - a conclusion interpreted by many as referring to a mine placed beneath the ship. The finger of blame pointed to Spanish treachery.



**The Wreck of the Maine**

An anti-Spanish press - particularly the "Yellow Journalism" of the Hearst and Pulitzer newspapers - enflamed American public opinion and raised it to a war-fever pitch. Congress clamored for action. President McKinley reluctantly succumbed to pressure and asked Congress to declare war on 21 APR. Congress obliged on April 25, 1898.

The war lasted only 3 months and cost the U.S. about 400 killed or wounded. The United States gained the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Guam and emerged as a power to be reckoned with on the world stage. Cuba gained independence from Spain. For Spain it was a humiliating defeat. Both her Atlantic and Pacific fleets were sent to the bottom of the sea and with them went Spain's prestige as a world power.

**Apr 25 1915 - WWI:** *The Battle of Gallipoli* » The Battle was one of the Allies' greatest disasters in World War One. It was carried out between 25th April 1915 and 9th January 1916 on the Gallipoli peninsula in the Ottoman Empire. The doomed campaign was thought up by Winston Churchill to end the war early by creating a new war front that the Ottomans could not cope with. His idea was simple. Creating another front would force the Germans to split their army still further as they would need to support the depleting Turkish army. When the Germans went to assist the Turks, that would leave their lines weakened in the west or east and lead to greater mobility there, as the Allies would have a weakened army to fight against.



The invasion of the Turkish Gallipoli Peninsula by Australian, British, French and New Zealand troops, under the command of General Sir Ian Hamilton, commander of the newly created Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, began with landings at Anzac Cove and Cape Helles on April 25th. The British landed unopposed on three beaches at Cape Helles. Another landing was resisted but the Turks were defeated. But the landing at Sedd-el-Bahr was a disaster. The British were caught in the fire of well dug-in Turkish machine gunners. Many British troops could not get ashore and were killed at sea.

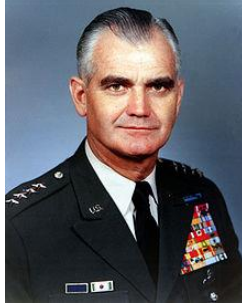
The ANZAC's (Australian and New Zealand troops) landed at Anzac Cove. Here they were faced with steep cliffs which they had to climb to get off the beach. To make matter worse, Anzac Cove was a tiny beach and quickly became very congested. The Turks pushed back the initial ANZAC move inland. The fighting was bloody and costly. The Turks in this area were led by the unknown Colonel Mustapha Kemal. Lieutenant-General Birdwood asked Hamilton for permission to withdraw his troops. Hamilton refused. By May in Helles, the British had lost 20,000 men out of 70,000. Six thousand had been killed. The medical facilities were completely overwhelmed by the casualties. Trench warfare occurred along with the fear of dysentery and the impact of the heat.

The next phase of the battle started in August. Hamilton ordered an attack on Suvla Bay that was not heavily defended. The landing took place on August 6th and involved the landing of 63,000 Allied troops. This time the secrecy behind the operation was so complete that senior officers were unaware of what others were doing. These 63,000 men were meant to take the area around Suvla Bay and then link up with the ANZAC's at Anzac Cove. The plan very nearly worked but the ANZAC's could not break out of Anzac Cove. The British at Suvla were pushed back by a frantic attack led by Mustapha Kemal and by August 10th, the Turks had retaken Suvla Bay.

The overall campaign was a disaster of the first order. Over 200,000 Allied casualties occurred with many deaths coming from disease. The number of Turkish deaths is not clear but it is generally accepted that they were over 200,000.

- **Apr 25 1951 - Korean War:** *Battle of Kapyong* » Assaulting Chinese forces are forced to withdraw after heavy fighting with UN forces, primarily made up of Australian and Canadian troops, at the Battle of Kapyong. Casualties and losses: UN 146 - CH/NK ~1,000.
- **Apr 25 1964 – Vietnam War:** *Johnson announces appointment of Westmoreland* » President Lyndon B. Johnson announces that Gen. William Westmoreland will replace Gen. Paul Harkins as head of U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) as of 20 JUN. The assignment would put Westmoreland in charge of all American military forces in Vietnam.





Gen. William Westmoreland

One of the war's most controversial figures, General Westmoreland was given many honors when the fighting was going well, but when the war turned sour, many Americans saw him as a cause of U.S. problems in Vietnam. Negative feeling about Westmoreland grew particularly strong following the Tet Offensive of 1968, when he had requested a large number of additional troops for deployment to Vietnam. On March 22, 1968, President Johnson announced that Westmoreland would depart South Vietnam to take on the post of Army Chief of Staff; Gen. Creighton Abrams replaced him as the senior U.S. commander in South Vietnam.

- **Apr 25 1967 – Vietnam War:** The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., leads a march of 5,000 antiwar demonstrators in Chicago. In an address to the demonstrators, King declared that the Vietnam War was “a blasphemy against all that America stands for.” King first began speaking out against American involvement in Vietnam in the summer of 1965. In addition to his moral objections to the war, he argued that the war diverted money and attention from domestic programs to aid the black poor. He was strongly criticized by other prominent civil rights leaders for attempting to link civil rights and the antiwar movement.
- **Apr 25 1968 – Vietnam War:** After being told by Defense Secretary Clark Clifford that the Vietnam War is a “real loser,” President Johnson, still uncertain about his course of action, decides to convene a nine-man panel of retired presidential advisors. The group, which became known as the “Wise Men,” included the respected generals Omar Bradley and Matthew Ridgway, distinguished State Department figures like Dean Acheson and George Ball, and McGeorge Bundy, National Security advisor to both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. After two days of deliberation the group reached a consensus: they advised against any further troop increases and recommended that the administration seek a negotiated peace.
- **Apr 25 1972 – Vietnam War:** *North Vietnamese Army close to cutting South Vietnam in two* (Nguyen Hue Offensive) » Hanoi's 320th Division drives 5,000 South Vietnamese troops into retreat and traps about 2,500 others in a border outpost northwest of Kontum in the Central Highlands. This was part of the ongoing North Vietnamese Nguyen Hue Offensive, also known as the “Easter Offensive,” which included an invasion by 120,000 North Vietnamese troops. The offensive was based on three objectives: Quang Tri in the north, Kontum in the Central Highlands, and An Loc in the south—just 65 miles north of Saigon. If successful, the attack at Kontum would effectively cut South Vietnam in two across the Central Highlands, giving North Vietnam control of the northern half of South Vietnam. The South Vietnamese defenders were able to hold out and prevent this from happening.

- **Apr 25 1983 – Cold War: Andropov writes to U.S. student** » The Soviet Union released a letter that Russian leader Yuri Andropov wrote to Samantha Smith, an American fifth-grader from Manchester, Maine, inviting her to visit his country. Andropov’s letter came in response to a note Smith had sent him in December 1982, asking if the Soviets were planning to start a nuclear war. At the time, the United States and Soviet Union were Cold War enemies.



Samantha Smith

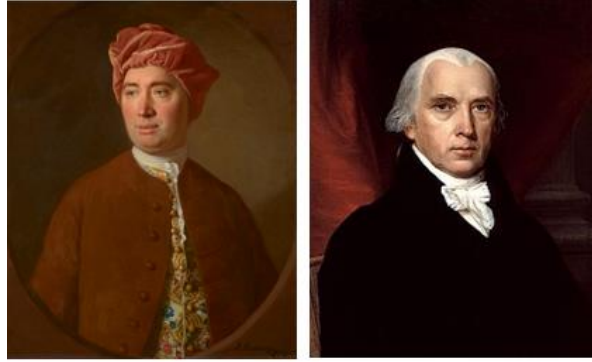
President Ronald Reagan, a passionate anti-communist, had dubbed the Soviet Union the “evil empire” and called for massive increases in U.S. defense spending to meet the perceived Soviet threat. In his public relations duel with Reagan, known as the “Great Communicator,” Andropov, who had succeeded longtime Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev in 1982, assumed a folksy, almost grandfatherly approach that was incongruous with the negative image most Americans had of the Soviets.

Andropov’s letter said that Russian people wanted to “live in peace, to trade and cooperate with all our neighbors on the globe, no matter how close or far away they are, and, certainly, with such a great country as the United States of America.” In response to Smith’s question about whether the Soviet Union wished to prevent nuclear war, Andropov declared, “Yes, Samantha, we in the Soviet Union are endeavoring and doing everything so that there will be no war between our two countries, so that there will be no war at all on earth.” Andropov also complimented Smith, comparing her to the spunky character Becky Thatcher from “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer” by Mark Twain.

Smith, born June 29, 1972, accepted Andropov’s invitation and flew to the Soviet Union with her parents for a visit. Afterward, she became an international celebrity and peace ambassador, making speeches, writing a book and even landing a role on an American television series. In February 1984, Yuri Andropov died from kidney failure and was succeeded by Konstantin Chernenko. The following year, in August 1985, Samantha Smith died tragically in a plane crash at age 13.

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**April 26, 1711 – American Revolution: David Hume is born** » Although Hume died on August 25, 1776, when the American Revolution was barely underway, his essay “Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth” greatly affected the ideas of the drafters of the federal Constitution in 1787. Most famously, James Madison contemplated Hume’s proposals for an ideal government and, more precisely, Hume’s thoughts regarding the prevention of faction as he constructed his argument in favor of the Constitution in “Federalist X.”



Scottish Philosopher and essayist David Hume & President James Madison

In establishing a government for the new nation, Madison was particularly concerned with avoiding a tyranny of the majority, defined as the largest faction in a republic pursuing its interests while ignoring or suppressing the interests and voices of all opposition. Hume, and most political theorists of the 18th century, believed that the only way to control faction, or what today would be called special interests, was to create small republics, where the common interest of all would be self-evident. Therefore, no majority block could take control at the expense of a significant minority.

Madison respectfully rejected the “Humean” logic he had so carefully studied, and argued that the best way to prevent one faction from driving out all opposing interest was to create such large republics that no one special interest could motivate a majority to tyrannize their opposition. Even in a small republic, he argued, one or two individuals might be tyrannized by what the majority deemed to be the common interest. In a large republic, so many factions and interests would exist that they would have to find a means of peaceful coexistence. Madison successfully took a term that struck fear in Hume’s heart—“faction”—and presented it as a great benefit of the new American system of federalism. In his eyes, faction would be a positive force in the new, and diverse, United States.

- **Apr 26 1865 – Civil War: Confederate Memorial Day** » After Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman's March to the Sea, he turned north through the Carolinas for the Carolinas Campaign. Confederate President Jefferson Davis met his General Joseph E. Johnston in Greensboro, North Carolina, while Sherman had stopped in Raleigh.

Though Davis wished strongly to continue the war, Johnston sent a courier to the Union troops encamped at Morrisville Station, with a message to General Sherman, offering a meeting between the lines to discuss a truce. Johnston's army was still an active fighting force unlike Robert E. Lee's beleaguered Army of Northern Virginia, which had surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865. Johnston had an available line of retreat along which, according to Davis, "ample supplies" had been placed.

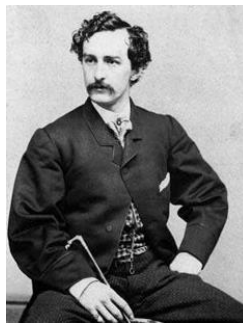
Johnston, escorted by a detachment of about 60 troopers of the 5th South Carolina Cavalry Regiment, traveled east along the Hillsborough Road toward Durham Station in Durham, Durham County. Sherman was riding west to meet him, with an escort of 200 men from the 9th and 13th Pennsylvania, 8th Indiana and 2nd Kentucky Cavalry. The farm of James and Nancy Bennett at Bennett Place, sometimes known as Bennett Farm, was a convenient place for privacy.

The first day's discussion on 17 APR was intensified by the telegram Sherman handed to Johnston, informing of the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. They met the following day, 18 APR,

and signed terms of surrender. However, on 24 APR, Grant arrived and informed Sherman that the terms had been rejected by the presidential cabinet in Washington because they exceeded the terms that Grant had given Lee and included civil matters. The opposing generals met again on April 26, 1865, and with the assistance of Gen. John M. Schofield, agreed to new terms omitting the controversial sections. The agreement disbanded all active Confederate forces in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, totaling 89,270 soldiers, as the largest group to surrender during the Civil War.

Confederate Memorial Day (26 APR) is widely but unofficially holiday observed in some Southern states, although it is an official state holiday in South Carolina, Mississippi, and Alabama.

- **Apr 26 1865 – Civil War:** *Lincoln assassin John Wilkes Booth dies* » John Wilkes Booth is killed when Union soldiers track him down to a Virginia farm 12 days after he assassinated President Abraham Lincoln.



John Wilkes Booth

Twenty-six-year-old Booth was one of the most famous actors in the country when he shot Lincoln during a performance at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C., on the night of 14 APR. Booth was a Maryland native and a strong supporter of the Confederacy. As the war entered its final stages, Booth hatched a conspiracy to kidnap the president. He enlisted the aid of several associates, but the opportunity never presented itself. After the surrender of Robert E. Lee's Confederate army at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on 9 APR, Booth changed the plan to a simultaneous assassination of Lincoln, Vice President Andrew Johnson, and Secretary of State William Seward. Only Lincoln was actually killed, however. Seward was stabbed by Lewis Paine but survived, while the man assigned to kill Johnson did not carry out his assignment.

After shooting Lincoln, Booth jumped to the stage below Lincoln's box seat. He landed hard, breaking his leg, before escaping to a waiting horse behind the theater. Many in the audience recognized Booth, so the army was soon hot on his trail. Booth and his accomplice, David Herold, made their way across the Anacostia River and headed toward southern Maryland. The pair stopped at Dr. Samuel Mudd's home, and Mudd treated Booth's leg. This earned Mudd a life sentence in prison when he was implicated as part of the conspiracy, but the sentence was later commuted. Booth found refuge for several days at the home of Thomas A. Jones, a Confederate agent, before securing a boat to row across the Potomac to Virginia.

After receiving aid from several Confederate sympathizers, Booth's luck finally ran out. The countryside was swarming with military units looking for Booth, although few shared information since there was a \$20,000 reward. While staying at the farm of Richard Garrett, Federal troops arrived on their search but soon rode on. The unsuspecting Garrett allowed his suspicious guests to sleep in his

barn, but he instructed his son to lock the barn from the outside to prevent the strangers from stealing his horses. A tip led the Union soldiers back to the Garrett farm, where they discovered Booth and Herold in the barn. Herold came out, but Booth refused. The building was set on fire to flush Booth, but he was shot while still inside. He lived for three hours before gazing at his hands, muttering “Useless, useless,” as he died.

- **Apr 26 1915 –WWI:** *Allies sign Treaty of London* » After receiving the promise of significant territorial gains, Italy signs the secret Treaty of London, committing itself to enter World War I on the side of the Allies. Refer to <https://alphahistory.com/worldwar1/treaty-of-london-1915> for its 16 articles.



**Territories promised to Italy by the Entente on the Eastern Adriatic, in the Austrian Littoral and Dalmatia**

With the threat of imminent war looming in July 1914, the Italian army under Chief of Staff Luigi Cadorna had begun preparing for war against France, according to Italy’s membership in the Triple Alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary. Under the terms of that agreement, however, Italy was only bound to defend its allies if one of them was attacked first. Italian Prime Minister Antonio Salandra deemed the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia late that month an act of aggression, declaring that Italy was free of its alliance obligations, and was officially neutral. In the first year of war, both sides—the Central Powers and the Entente, as the British-French-Russian axis was known—attempted to recruit neutral countries including Italy, Bulgaria, Romania and Greece, to join the war on their side. Italy, more than any other country, was clear about its aims for joining the war effort: to gain the most possible territory for itself and raise its status from a minor to a great power.

In reality, Italy’s geographical position—bounded on all sides by the sea, and thus subject to pressure from Britain’s great navy—inclined it to favor the Entente. Moreover, past interactions between Italy and Austria-Hungary had been driven more by mutual animosity than alliance, as the Italians had been forced to push the Austrians out of their peninsula in order to achieve unification in 1860. In making a bid for Italy’s allegiance in World War I, the Central Powers clashed over Germany’s desire to promise the Italians the Trentino region (now occupied by Austria) in return for their entrance into the war. Though Austria-Hungary agreed to cede the Trentino in March 1915, their army’s sorry performance against Russia gave the Italians more bargaining power and led them to demand even more territory.

The Entente, for its part, offered much more substantial gains of territory—most of which currently fell within the Austro-Hungarian Empire—and it was under these terms that Italy signed the Treaty of London on April 26, 1915. Italy was promised the fulfillment of its national dream: control over territory on its border with Austria-Hungary stretching from Trentino through the South Tyrol to Trieste. In the treaty, the Allies gave them that and more, including parts of Dalmatia and numerous islands along Austria-Hungary’s Adriatic coast; the Albanian port city of Vlore (Italian: Valona) and a central protectorate in Albania; and territory from the Ottoman Empire.

Carrying out its part of the bargain, Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary (but not on Germany) on 23 MAY. The Allies seemingly faced a more difficult task in the fulfillment of their own obligations: another secret treaty, signed March 20, had promised Russia control of Constantinople and the Dardanelles. Both treaties depended on an Allied victory at the Gallipoli Peninsula for their promised gains, which at this point seemed in no way secure. A naval attack against the Dardanelles on 18 MAR had failed miserably; a massive Anglo-French land invasion, begun the day before the Treaty of London was signed, would soon be stymied by a stiff Turkish resistance.

- **Apr 26 1933 – Nazi Germany:** Secret State Police force established » The Gestapo (abbreviation of Geheime Staatspolizei) was the official secret police of Nazi Germany and German-occupied Europe.



Hermann Göring

The force was created by Hermann Göring by combining the various security police agencies of Prussia into one organization. Beginning on 20 April 1934 it passed to the administration of Schutzstaffel (SS) national leader Heinrich Himmler, who in 1936 was appointed Chief of German Police (Chef der Deutschen Polizei) by Hitler. The Gestapo at this time becoming a national rather than a Prussian state agency as a suboffice of the Sicherheitspolizei (SiPo) (Security Police). Then from 27 September 1939 forward, it was administered by the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA) (Reich Main Security Office) and was considered a sister organization to the SS Sicherheitsdienst (SD) (Security Service). During World War II, the Gestapo played a key role in the Nazi plan to exterminate the Jews of Europe.

- **Apr 26 1937 – Nazi Germany:** *Nazis test Luftwaffe on Guernica* » During the Spanish Civil War, the German military tests its powerful new air force—the Luftwaffe—on the Basque town of Guernica in northern Spain.



Although the independence-minded Basque region opposed General Francisco Franco's Nationalist forces in the Spanish Civil War, Guernica itself was a small rural city of only 5,000 inhabitants that

declared nonbelligerence in the conflict. With Franco's approval, the cutting-edge German aircraft began their unprovoked attack at 4:30 p.m., the busiest hour of the market day in Guernica. For three hours, the German planes poured down a continuous and unopposed rain of bombs and gunfire on the town and surrounding countryside. One-third of Guernica's 5,000 inhabitants were killed or wounded, and fires engulfed the city and burned for days.

The indiscriminate killing of civilians at Guernica aroused world opinion and became a symbol of fascist brutality. Unfortunately, by 1942, all major participants in World War II had adopted the bombing innovations developed by the Nazis at Guernica, and by the war's end, in 1945, millions of innocent civilians had perished under Allied and Axis air raids.

- **Apr 26 1944 – WW2: Kidnap of Heinrich Kreipe** » An operation executed jointly by the Special Operations Executive (SOE) and the Cretan resistance. The operation was launched on 6 February 1944, when SOE agent Patrick Leigh Fermor landed in Crete with the intention of abducting notorious war criminal and commander of Fortress Crete, Friedrich-Wilhelm Müller. By the time of the arrival of the rest of the abduction team, led by William Stanley Moss, two months later Müller had been succeeded by Heinrich Kreipe, who was chosen as the new target.



Heinrich Kreipe & Friedrich-Wilhelm Müller

On the night of 26 APR, Kreipe's car was ambushed while en route from his residence to the Divisional H.Q. Kreipe was tied and forced into the back seat while Fermor and William Stanley Moss impersonated him and his driver respectively. Kreipe's impatience at roadblocks enabled the car to successfully pass 22 checkpoints before being abandoned at the hamlet of Heliana. The abductors continued on foot, continuing to evade thousands of Axis soldiers sent to stop them with the help of guides from the local resistance. On 14 MAY, the team was picked up by a British motorboat from the Rodakino beach and safely transported to British held Egypt.

The success of the operation was put into question several months after its conclusion. The outcome came to be seen as a symbolic propaganda victory rather than a strategic one. The relatively harmless Kreipe was replaced by Müller who ordered a series of large scale reprisals, known as Holocaust of Kedros, against the civilian population of the island. The operation entered popular imagination through the biographical works of the several of its participants.

- **Apr 26 1945 – WW2:** Filipino troops of the 66th Infantry Regiment, Philippine Commonwealth Army, USAFIP–NL and the American troops of the 33rd and 37th Infantry Division, United States Army were liberated in Baguio City. All had fought against the Japanese forces under General Tomoyuki Yamashita.

- **Apr 26 1945 – WW2: Battle of Bautzen** » One of the last battles of the Eastern Front during World War II. It was fought on the extreme southern flank of the Spremberg-Torgau Offensive, seeing days of pitched street fighting between forces of the Communist Polish Second Army under elements of the Soviet 52nd Army and 5th Guards Army[a] on one side and elements of German Army Group Center in the form of the remnants of the 4th Panzer and 17th armies on the other.



The battle took place during Ivan Konev's 1st Ukrainian Front's push toward Berlin, which was part of the larger Soviet Berlin Offensive. The battle was fought in the town of Bautzen (Polish: Budziszyn) and the rural areas to the northeast situated primarily along the Bautzen–Niesky line. Major combat began on 21 April 1945 and continued until 26 APR although isolated engagements continued to take place until 30 APR. The Polish Second Army under Karol Świerczewski suffered heavy losses, but, with the aid of Soviet reinforcements, prevented the German forces from breaking through to their rear. Casualties and losses: Ger 6,500 – Soviets/Polish 18,232.

After the battle both sides claimed victory and modern views as to who won the battle remain contradictory. Because the war was almost over and the battle had no strategic impact on the ongoing Battle of Berlin, German historiography has focused more on its tactical aspects. The German operation successfully recaptured Bautzen and its surroundings, which were held until the end of the war. Polish historiography during the People's Republic of Poland portrayed the battle as difficult, but victorious. After the fall of communism, Polish historians became much more critical of Świerczewski's command, blaming the near destruction of the Polish force on his incompetence and desire to capture Dresden. The battle's outcome is now generally seen in Poland as a very costly victory for the Soviets and their Polish allies.

- **Apr 26 1954 – Cold War: Geneva Conference begins** » In an effort to resolve several problems in Asia, including the war between the French and Vietnamese nationalists in Indochina, representatives from the world's powers meet in Geneva. The conference marked a turning point in the United States' involvement in Vietnam. Check out AP video report at <https://youtu.be/vCwbVG2HCxs>.

Representatives from the United States, the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, France, and Great Britain came together in April 1954 to try to resolve several problems related to Asia. One of the most troubling concerns was the long and bloody battle between Vietnamese nationalist forces, under the leadership of the communist Ho Chi Minh, and the French, who were intent on continuing colonial control over Vietnam. Since 1946 the two sides had been hammering away at each other. By 1954, however, the French were tiring of the long and inclusive war that was draining both the national treasury and public patience. The United States had been supporting the French out of concern that a victory for Ho's forces would be the first step in communist expansion throughout Southeast Asia.



When America refused France's requests for more direct intervention in the war, the French announced that they were including the Vietnam question in the agenda for the Geneva Conference.



Discussions on the Vietnam issue started at the conference just as France suffered its worst military defeat of the war, when Vietnamese forces captured the French base at Dien Bien Phu. In July 1954, the Geneva Agreements were signed. As part of the agreement, the French agreed to withdraw their troops from northern Vietnam. Vietnam would be temporarily divided at the 17th parallel, pending elections within two years to choose a president and reunite the country. During that two-year period, no foreign troops could enter Vietnam. Ho reluctantly signed off on the agreement though he believed that it cheated him out of the spoils of his victory. The non-communist puppet government set up by the French in southern Vietnam refused to sign, but without French support this was of little concern at the time.

The United States also refused to sign, but did commit itself to abide by the agreement. Privately, U.S. officials felt that the Geneva Agreements, if allowed to be put into action, were a disaster. They were convinced that national elections in Vietnam would result in an overwhelming victory for Ho, the man who had defeated the French colonialists. The U.S. government scrambled to develop a policy that would, at the least, save southern Vietnam from the communists. Within a year, the United States had helped establish a new anti-communist government in South Vietnam and began giving it financial and military assistance, the first fateful steps toward even greater U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

- **April 26, 1971 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. troop strength in South Vietnam at five-year low* » The U.S. command in Saigon announces that the U.S. force level in Vietnam is 281,400 men, the lowest since July 1966.

These figures were a direct result of President Richard Nixon's new "Vietnamization" strategy, which he had announced at the Midway Conference in June 1969. This strategy was a three-pronged program to disengage the United States from the war in Vietnam. The program required that efforts be increased to improve the combat capability of the South Vietnamese armed forces so that they could assume responsibility for the war against the North Vietnamese. Then, as the South Vietnamese became more capable, U.S. forces would be withdrawn from South Vietnam. At the same time, U.S. negotiators would continue to try to reach a negotiated settlement to the war with the communists at the Paris peace talks. The announcement represented a significant change in the nature of the U.S. commitment to the war.

The first U.S. soldiers were withdrawn in the fall of 1969 and the withdrawals continued periodically through 1972. Simultaneously, the U.S. increased the advisory effort and provided massive amounts of new equipment and weapons to the South Vietnamese. When the North Vietnamese launched the

massive “Easter Offensive” invasion in spring 1972, the South Vietnamese wavered, but eventually rallied with U.S. support and prevailed over the North Vietnamese. Nixon proclaimed that the South Vietnamese victory validated his strategy.

- **April 26, 1972 – Vietnam Wat:** *Nixon announces additional troop withdrawals* » President Nixon, despite the ongoing communist offensive, announces that another 20,000 U.S. troops will be withdrawn from Vietnam in May and June, reducing authorized troop strength to 49,000. Nixon emphasized that while U.S. ground troops were being withdrawn, sea and air support for the South Vietnamese would continue. In fact, the U.S. Navy doubled the number of its fighting ships off Vietnam.
- **April 26, 1986 – Chernobyl:** *Nuclear disaster at Chernobyl* » The world’s worst nuclear power plant accident occurs at the Chernobyl nuclear power station in the Soviet Union. Thirty-two people died and dozens more suffered radiation burns in the opening days of the crisis, but only after Swedish authorities reported the fallout did Soviet authorities reluctantly admit that an accident had occurred.



The Chernobyl station was situated at the settlement of Pripyat, about 65 miles north of Kiev in the Ukraine. Built in the late 1970s on the banks of the Pripyat River, Chernobyl had four reactors, each capable of producing 1,000 megawatts of electric power. On the evening of April 25, 1986, a group of engineers began an electrical-engineering experiment on the Number 4 reactor. The engineers, who had little knowledge of reactor physics, wanted to see if the reactor’s turbine could run emergency water pumps on inertial power.

As part of their poorly designed experiment, the engineers disconnected the reactor’s emergency safety systems and its power-regulating system. Next, they compounded this recklessness with a series of mistakes: They ran the reactor at a power level so low that the reaction became unstable, and then removed too many of the reactor’s control rods in an attempt to power it up again. The reactor’s output rose to more than 200 megawatts but was proving increasingly difficult to control. Nevertheless, at 1:23 a.m. on 26 APR, the engineers continued with their experiment and shut down the turbine engine to see if its inertial spinning would power the reactor’s water pumps. In fact, it did not adequately power the water pumps, and without cooling water the power level in the reactor surged.

To prevent meltdown, the operators reinserted all the 200-some control rods into the reactor at once. The control rods were meant to reduce the reaction but had a design flaw: graphite tips. So, before the control rod’s five meters of absorbent material could penetrate the core, 200 graphite tips simultaneously entered, thus facilitating the reaction and causing an explosion that blew off the heavy steel and concrete lid of the reactor. It was not a nuclear explosion, as nuclear power plants are incapable of producing such a reaction, but was chemical, driven by the ignition of gases and steam that were generated by the runaway reaction. In the explosion and ensuing fire, more than 50 tons of radioactive material were released into the atmosphere, where it was carried by air currents.

On 27 APR, Soviet authorities began an evacuation of the 30,000 inhabitants of Pripyat. A cover-up was attempted, but on April 28 Swedish radiation monitoring stations, more than 800 miles to the northwest of Chernobyl, reported radiation levels 40 percent higher than normal. Later that day, the Soviet news agency acknowledged that a major nuclear accident had occurred at Chernobyl.

In the opening days of the crisis, 32 people died at Chernobyl and dozens more suffered radiation burns. The radiation that escaped into the atmosphere, which was several times that produced by the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was spread by the wind over Northern and Eastern Europe, contaminating millions of acres of forest and farmland. An estimated 5,000 Soviet citizens eventually died from cancer and other radiation-induced illnesses caused by their exposure to the Chernobyl radiation, and millions more had their health adversely affected. In 2000, the last working reactors at Chernobyl were shut down and the plant was officially closed.

- **April 26, 2012 – Libya:** *Charles Taylor found guilty of war crimes* » Former Liberian president Charles Taylor is found guilty of abetting horrific war crimes, including rape and mutilation in Sierra Leone. His conviction was the first for war crimes by a former head of state in an international court since the Nuremberg trials of Nazi leaders after World War II. Taylor was found guilty of aiding and abetting a notoriously brutal rebel force who murdered, raped, forced sexual slavery, built a child army and mined diamonds to pay for guns.



Charles Taylor

Taylor's road to war crimes started after he escaped a U.S. jail, where he was waiting to be extradited for embezzlement. Taylor made it from his jail cell to Libya, where he started the militia group National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). With his newly formed militia, he overthrew the regime of Samuel Doe in 1989. The upheaval plunged the country into a 14-year bloody civil war. By the end, 200,000 were killed in the fighting and more than half of the population became refugees.

After a peace deal was made to end the civil war, Taylor was elected Liberia's president until he was forced out in 2003. During his reign, Taylor is said to have meddled in another civil war raging in Sierra Leone. Witnesses said he sold guns to, and arranged attacks for, rebel groups in exchange for blood diamonds. However, Taylor wasn't just aiding a rebellion. He was also perpetuating horrific brutality. Over 50,000 were killed, and thousands more were mutilated in the more than a decade long civil war. The rebels were known to amputate limbs, rape women, enslave survivors of their attacks and force boys into child armies.

Taylor denied the accusations, but once put on trial in 2006, 115 witnesses, including victims of rape and mutilation, testified against him. Radio and telephone intercepts used in the case also revealed direct communication between him and the rebels. Taylor will spend his 50-year sentence in a prison in the United Kingdom.

- **April 27, 1773 – American Revolution:** *British Parliament passes the Tea Act* » The Tea Act, a bill designed to save the faltering East India Company from bankruptcy by greatly lowering the tea tax paid to the British government and, thus, granting it a de facto monopoly on the American tea trade. Because all legal tea entered the colonies through England, allowing the East India Company to pay lower taxes in Britain also allowed it to sell tea more cheaply in the colonies. Even untaxed Dutch tea, which entered the colonies illegally through smuggling, was more expensive than the East India tea, after the act took effect.



Frederick, Lord North

British Prime Minister, Frederick, Lord North, who initiated the legislation, thought it impossible that the colonists would protest cheap tea; he was wrong. Many colonists viewed the act as yet another example of taxation tyranny, precisely because it left an earlier duty on tea entering the colonies in place, while removing the duty on tea entering England.

When three tea ships carrying East India Company tea, the Dartmouth, the Eleanor and the Beaver, arrived in Boston Harbor, the colonists demanded that the tea be returned to England. After Massachusetts Governor Thomas Hutchinson refused to send back the cargo, Patriot leader Samuel Adams organized the so-called Boston Tea Party with about 60 members of the radically anti-British Sons of Liberty. On December 16, 1773, the Patriots boarded the British ships disguised as Mohawk Indians and dumped the tea chests, valued then at £18,000 (nearly \$1 million in today's money), into the water.

Parliament, outraged by the Boston Tea Party and other blatant acts of destruction of British property, enacted the Coercive Acts, known to colonists as the Intolerable Acts, the following year. The Coercive Acts closed Boston to merchant shipping, established formal British military rule in Massachusetts, made British officials immune to criminal prosecution in America and required colonists to quarter British troops. The colonists subsequently called the first Continental Congress to consider a united American resistance to what they saw as British oppression.

- **Apr 27 1777 – American Revolution:** *The Battle of Ridgefield* » The Battle was a battle and a series of skirmishes between American and British forces. The main battle was fought in the village of Ridgefield, Connecticut, on 27 APR. More skirmishing occurred the next day between Ridgefield and the coastline near Westport, Connecticut.

On 25 APR a British force landed between Fairfield and Norwalk, Connecticut (now Westport) under the command of New York's Royal Governor Major General William Tryon. They marched to Danbury, where they destroyed Continental Army supplies after chasing off a small garrison of troops. Word spread concerning the British troop movements, and Connecticut militia leaders sprang into

action. Major General David Wooster, Brigadier General Gold Selleck Silliman, and Brigadier General Benedict Arnold raised a combined force of roughly 700 Continental Army regular and irregular local militia forces to oppose the raiders, but they could not reach Danbury in time to prevent the destruction of the supplies. Instead, they set out to harass the British on their return to the coast.



The company led by General Wooster twice attacked Tryon's rear guard during their march south on 27 APR. Wooster was mortally wounded in the second encounter, and he died five days later. The main encounter then took place at Ridgefield, where several hundred militia under Arnold's command confronted the British; they were driven away in a running battle down the town's main street, but not before inflicting casualties on the British. Additional militia forces arrived, and the next day they continued to harass the British as they returned to Compo Beach in Westport where the fleet awaited them. Arnold regrouped the militia and some artillery to make a stand against the British near their landing site, but his position was flanked and his force scattered by artillery fire and a bayonet charge.

The expedition was a tactical success for the British forces, but the raid galvanized Patriot support in Connecticut.

- **Apr 27 1805 – First Barbary War:** *To the shores of Tripoli* » After marching 500 miles from Egypt, U.S. agent William Eaton leads a small force of U.S. Marines and Berber mercenaries against the Tripolitan port city of Derna. The Marines and Berbers were on a mission to depose Yusuf Karamanli, the ruling pasha of Tripoli, who had seized power from his brother, Hamet Karamanli, a pasha who was sympathetic to the United States.



The First Barbary War had begun four years earlier, when U.S. President Thomas Jefferson ordered U.S. Navy vessels to the Mediterranean Sea in protest of continuing raids against U.S. ships by pirates from the Barbary states—Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, and Tripolitania. American sailors were often abducted along with the captured booty and ransomed back to the United States at an exorbitant price. After two years of minor confrontations, sustained action began in June 1803, when a small U.S. expeditionary force attacked Tripoli harbor in present-day Libya.

In April 1805, a major American victory came during the Derna campaign, which was undertaken by U.S. land forces in North Africa. Supported by the heavy guns of the USS Argus and the USS Hornet, Marines and Arab mercenaries under William Eaton captured Derna and deposed Yusuf Karamanli. Lieutenant Presley O' Bannon, commanding the Marines, performed so heroically in the battle that Hamet Karamanli presented him with an elaborately designed sword that now serves as the pattern for the swords carried by Marine officers. The phrase "to the shores of Tripoli," from the official song of the U.S. Marine Corps, also has its origins in the Derna campaign.

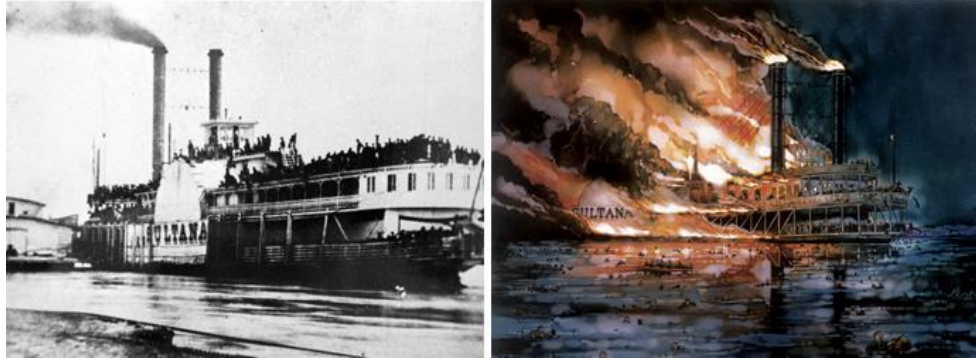
- **Apr 27 1813 – War of 1812:** *American forces capture the British base at York, Canada* -- York Ontario, which became Toronto, was located on the Northwestern shore of Lake Ontario. It was not strategically important, but was an easy target. More important there were reports that the British were building ships there. American forces, under the command of Commodore Chancey, departed Sacketts Harbor on April 25th. The American force consisted of a corvette, a brig and twelve schooners with 1,600 to 1,800 troops aboard the ships commanded by General Pike.

On the morning of 27 APR American troops went ashore three miles from York. The Americans were lucky when the first wave of British troops arrived at the landing too late. By the time they did arrive the second wave of American troops arrived and it was too late. American troops outnumbered the British two to one. Initially, the British and their Indian allies put up a spirited defense, but the Americans were able to overpower them and push them back to York. The commanding British officer, General Roger Hale Sheaffe ordered his troops to withdraw leaving the Canadian militia alone to defend the town.

The American troops rapidly advanced on the city. They then regrouped under the ramparts of York's Western ramparts. General Pike was interrogating a British prisoner, when a massive explosion shook the garrison. The British had blown up the armory. The explosion caused a bolder to hit Pike who died soon after. American troops went on to occupy the city. Despite the fact that initially they had been ordered not to loot the city, the American troops did so and burned down government and other buildings in town.

The raid on York was publically hailed as the first US victory in the ground war against Canada. In fact the failure to capture British troops intact, the fact that the British regulars had escaped and Pike had been killed tempered that victory. The Americans suffered 55 killed and 265 wounded. The British whose records of the day are a little less reliable suffered 82 killed 43 wounded, 69 wounded prisoner and 274 captured with 7 missing.

- **Apr 27 1865 – Post Civil War:** *Civil War vets are caught in steamboat explosion* » An explosion on a Mississippi River steamboat kills an estimated 1,547 people, mostly Union soldiers returning home after the Civil War. Although this disaster near Memphis took a huge toll, it was barely noticed against the backdrop of the end of the Civil War, a conflict in which tens of thousands had died.



The previous day had marked the final surrender and end of armed resistance by the remaining Confederate forces. Only two weeks earlier, President Abraham Lincoln had been assassinated. Prisoners of war who had been held in hellish conditions in Alabama's Andersonville and Cahaba prison camps were trying to make their way home to Illinois. The steamboat Sultana was one of their only options.

At 2 a.m. on April 26, the steamboat left Vicksburg, Mississippi. It was built to hold 376 passengers, but reports say that there were as many as 2,700 people on board as it lumbered slowly up the Mississippi River. It took 17 hours to make the journey to Memphis, where it stopped to pick up more coal.

A couple of hours past midnight, the trip came to a sudden end: near the Arkansas side of the river, one of the Sultana's three boilers suddenly exploded. Hot metal debris ripped through the vessel and two other boilers exploded within minutes of the first. The passengers were killed by flying metal, scalding water, collapsing decks and the roaring fire that broke out on board. Some drowned as they were thrown into the water, but rescue boats were immediately dispatched, saving hundreds of lives.

The final tally of casualties was hotly disputed. Some believe it may have been almost 2,000 people, though the U.S. Army said that only 1,200 people had been killed. Local customs officials determined that 1,547 were killed; that became the generally accepted count. The Sultana disaster remains one of the most deadly maritime accidents in U.S. history.

- **Apr 27 1916 – WWI:** Three British officers, including the famous Captain T.E. Lawrence (known as Lawrence of Arabia), attempt to engineer the escape of thousands of British troops under siege at the city of Kut-al-Amara in Mesopotamia through a secret negotiation with the Turkish command. T made their offer: if the Turks allowed the men in Kut to leave the city and rejoin Allied regional forces located to the south of Kut, they would be rewarded with £1 million in gold. Turkish officers, confident of their imminent victory at Kut, refused the offer, and all Lawrence and his comrades were able to secure was the release of some of the wounded. Kut fell on April 29, as Townshend and his remaining 13,000 men were taken prisoner, in the largest single surrender of troops in British history to that point.
- **Apr 27 1941 – WW2:** » the German army enters the Greek capital, signaling the end of Greek resistance. All mainland Greece and all the Greek Aegean islands except Crete are under German occupation by May 11. In fending off the Axis invaders, the Greeks suffer the loss of 15,700 men. Greece will not be liberated until 1944, by British troops from the Mediterranean theater.

- **Apr 27 1972 – Vietnam War:** *Humphrey announces his candidacy* » Vice President Hubert Humphrey announces his candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination. In an interview, he said he supported the current U.S. policy of sending troops “where required by our own national security.”



**Hubert Humphrey**

On March 31, 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson, frustrated with his inability to reach a solution in Vietnam, announced that he would neither seek nor accept the nomination of his party for re-election. This set up a contest for the Democratic nomination. Humphrey’s main competition was Senator Eugene McCarthy (D-Minnesota), who had come within a few hundred votes of beating Lyndon Johnson in the New Hampshire primary. Robert Kennedy had entered the race and won most of the Democratic primaries until he was assassinated in June. When the Democratic National Convention opened in Chicago in August, a conflict immediately erupted over the party’s Vietnam platform. While demonstrations against the war took place in the streets outside the convention hall, Humphrey won the party nomination. He was ultimately defeated in the general election by Republican Richard Nixon, who criticized the Johnson’s handling of the war and ran on a platform of achieving “peace with honor” in Vietnam.

- **Apr 27 1972 – Vietnam War:** *North Vietnamese attack outskirts of Quang Tri* » Troops shatter defenses north of Quang Tri and move to within 2.5 miles of the city. Using Russian-built tanks, they took Dong Ha, 7 miles north of Quang Tri, the next day and continued to tighten their ring around Quang Tri, shelling it heavily. South Vietnamese troops suffered their highest casualties for any week in the war in the bitter fighting.

This was the northern-most front of the North Vietnamese Nguyen Hue Offensive, launched on 30 MAR when more than 120,000 North Vietnamese troops invaded South Vietnam. The attacks on Quang Tri were followed by attacks on Binh Long province, just 75 miles north of Saigon, and Kontum in the Central Highlands.

Hanoi’s 304th Division, supported by tanks, artillery, and antiaircraft units, swept across the Demilitarized Zone and routed the South Vietnamese division that had been guarding outlying positions on the approach to Quang Tri. The attackers quickly overwhelmed the South Vietnamese troops, who fell back toward the city of Quang Tri.

The North Vietnamese encircled the city and continued to pound it with artillery and rockets. On 1 MAY, the North Vietnamese captured the city as the South Vietnamese 3rd Division collapsed as a fighting force. This was the first provincial capital to fall during the North Vietnamese offensive and ultimately the North Vietnamese controlled the entire province. Hanoi claimed 10,000 South Vietnamese and Allied casualties were captured during the battle for Quang Tri.



- **Apr 27 1975 – Vietnam War:** Saigon is encircled by North Vietnamese troops.
- **Apr 27 1978 – Cold War:** *Afghan president is overthrown and murdered* » Afghanistan President Sardar Mohammed Daoud is overthrown and murdered in a coup led by procommunist rebels. The brutal action marked the beginning of political upheaval in Afghanistan that resulted in intervention by Soviet troops less than two years later.

Daoud had ruled Afghanistan since coming to power in a coup in 1973. His relations with the neighboring Soviet Union had grown progressively worse since that time as he pursued a campaign against Afghan communists. The murder of a leading Afghan Communist Party leader in early April 1978 may have encouraged the communists to launch their successful campaign against the Daoud regime later that month. In the political chaos that followed the death of Daoud, Nur Mohammed Taraki, head of the Afghan Communist Party, took over the presidency. In December 1978, Afghanistan signed a 20-year “friendship treaty” with the Soviet Union, by which increasing amounts of Russian military and economic assistance flowed into the country.



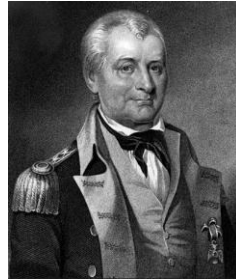
**Sardar Mohammed Daoud**

None of this, however, could stabilize the Taraki government. His dictatorial style and his decision to turn Afghanistan into a one-party state alienated many people in the heavily Moslem country. In September 1979, Taraki was himself overthrown and murdered. Three months later, Soviet troops crossed into Afghanistan and installed a government acceptable to the Russians, and a war between Afghan rebels and Soviet troops erupted. The conflict lasted until Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev withdrew the Soviet forces in 1988.

In the years following the Soviet intervention, Afghanistan became a Cold War battlefield. The United States responded quickly and harshly to the Soviet action by freezing arms talks, cutting wheat sales to Russia, and boycotting the 1980 Olympic games in Moscow. Tension increased after Ronald Reagan became president in 1981. The United States provided arms and other assistance to what Reagan referred to as the “freedom fighters” in Afghanistan. For the Soviets, the Afghanistan intervention was a disaster, draining both Soviet finances and manpower. In the United States, commentators were quick to label the battle in Afghanistan “Russia’s Vietnam.”

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- **Apr 28 1776 – American Revolution:** *Colonel McIntosh writes to Washington* » In a letter dated April 28, 1776, from Savannah, Georgia, Colonel Lachlan McIntosh informs General George Washington that he is pleased with his recruitment efforts in the colony. However, McIntosh’s news was not all good: he concluded his letter with the report that because the South had limited manufacturing capability, the price of needed goods was two or three times higher than in the North, making procurement of clothing and arms for the new recruits difficult.



Colonel Lachlan McIntosh

McIntosh had only recently risen from the position of colonel in the Georgia militia to colonel in the Continental Army. The promotion was a reward for his successful defense of Savannah from British attack in the Battle of the Rice Boats, which had taken place in the Savannah River between Georgia and South Carolina on March 2 and 3.

Although McIntosh was born in Scotland, his family moved to Georgia in 1736, when Lachlan was 11 years old. The colony of Georgia came into existence as a military buffer zone between South Carolina rice plantations, run by African slaves while their British landlords enjoyed the Caribbean sun, and the Spanish colony of Florida. During the War of Jenkin’s Ear between British Georgians and Spanish Floridians, Lachlan’s father was taken captive in 1740. Though released, his health was never recovered, and he died shortly thereafter.

After a stint in famous British evangelist George Whitefield’s Savannah orphanage, Lachlan McIntosh set out to receive military training. He and his brother, William McIntosh, wanted to join the Jacobite Rebellion of Scots against Queen Mary and Prince William of Orange, but, as promising young men, were convinced to stay in Georgia by the colony’s founder, James Oglethorpe.

Lachlan McIntosh found plenty of other opportunities to fight the British crown beginning on January 7, 1776, when he received his commission as a colonel in the Georgia militia.

- **Apr 28 1820 – Pre Civil War:** Union general who advocated for black troops is born » Union General Daniel Ullmann is born in Wilmington, Delaware. Ullmann was best known as an advocate for black troops.

Ullman was educated at Yale University and practiced law in New York City. He was an active Whig before the party’s collapse around 1850, and he ran for governor of New York on the American, or “Know-Nothing,” ticket in 1854. Ullmann became a colonel in command of the 78th New York regiment when the war began. He was sent to Virginia and served in the Shenandoah Valley, where he was given command of a brigade. He was captured at the Battle of Cedar Mountain and briefly incarcerated at Richmond’s Libby Prison.



General Daniel Ullmann

Promoted to brigadier general in January 1863, Ullmann was sent to New Orleans to recruit black troops. His efforts were met by much resistance among his fellow officers. Ullmann often complained that his men were given work details and not seriously considered for military duty. He finally got his wish, and his brigade was sent to assist in the siege of Port Hudson, Louisiana, in May 1863. After Ullmann's men bravely made several unsuccessful attacks on Port Hudson, one Union officer warned, "We must not discipline them, for if we do, we will have to fight them someday ourselves."

Ullmann spent most of the war at Port Hudson after the Confederates surrendered it in July 1863. After the war, he traveled extensively, and studied literature and science. He died in Nyack, New York, in 1892.

- **Apr 28 1915 – WWI:** *International Congress of Women opens at The Hague* » The Congress convenes with more than 1,200 delegates from 12 countries—including Britain, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Poland, Belgium and the United States—all dedicated to the cause of peace and a resolution of the great international conflict that was World War I. Resolutions adopted at the Congress are available at <http://womhist.alexanderstreet.com/hague/doc1.htm>.



Often referred to as the Women's Peace Congress, the meeting was the result of an invitation by a Dutch women's suffrage organization, led by Aletta Jacobs, to women's rights activists around the world, on the basis of the belief that a peaceful international assemblage of women would have its moral effect upon the belligerent countries, as Jacobs put it during her opening address to the conference on April 28, 1915.

With mourning hearts we stand united here, Jacobs told the assembled delegates. We grieve for many brave young men who have lost their lives on the battlefield before attaining their full manhood;

we mourn with the poor mothers bereft of their sons; with the thousands of young widows and fatherless children, and we feel that we can no longer endure in this twentieth century of civilization that government should tolerate brute force as the only solution of international disputes. Over the course of the next three days, the congress worked out what they considered an alternative, non-violent form of conflict resolution, calling for a process of continuous mediation to be implemented, without armistice, until peace could be restored among the warring nations. This policy was set forward explicitly in a set of resolutions on May 1. The congress also marked the foundation of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), an organization that still exists today.

The American delegation to the congress in April 1915 included two future recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize: Jane Addams, the co-founder of Hull House, a social settlement that served as a welfare agency for needy families in Chicago, and Emily G. Balch, a sociologist who taught at Wellesley College. Another American delegate, Alice Hamilton, was a pathology professor and medical investigator who became the first female faculty member of Harvard University in 1919.

Other prominent international women who gathered at the Hague included Lida Gustava Heymann, one of 28 delegates from Germany; Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, Emily Hobhouse and Chrystal Macmillan from Great Britain; and Rosika Schwimmer from Hungary. Notably absent from the International Women's Congress were the French, whose government refused to allow delegates to attend the conference, although, as Balch later pointed out, the French women have been the earliest to actually form their national organization in support of the program worked out at the congress. Of the other belligerent nations, Russia, Serbia and Japan also failed to send any delegates to the conference. The British government, for its part, prevented most of its planned 180-member delegation from traveling to Holland by suspending regular commercial ferry service between the British port of Folkestone and the Dutch port of Flushing.

- **Apr 28 1942 – WWI & 2:** Gallup Poll » Systematic polling of public opinion did not begin until the mid-1930s, so no poll of the public's support for World War I was taken during the war. But a Gallup poll conducted just after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor found that only 21% of Americans felt it was a mistake for the United States "to enter the last war (1917-18)," while 62% said it was not. It was in that same poll that Gallup found that 97% approved of the United States entering the war against Japan. Another Gallup poll conducted two weeks later found Americans said, by 84% to 9%, that President Roosevelt had done everything he should have to prevent war with Japan.
- **Apr 28 1944 – WW2: *Battle of Lyme Bay*** » During Exercise Tiger, a large-scale rehearsal for the invasion of Normandy, a large number of casualties were suffered from two incidents. Friendly fire and a German E-boat attack.



American troops landing on Slapton Sands in England during rehearsals for the invasion of Normandy

The first practice assault on the morning of 27 APR was marred by friendly fire. H-hour was set for 07:30, and was to include live ammunition to acclimatize the troops to the sights, sounds and even smells of a naval bombardment. During the landing itself, live rounds were to be fired over the heads of the incoming troops by forces on land, for the same reason. This followed an order made by General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander, who felt that the men must be hardened by exposure to real battle conditions. The exercise was to include naval bombardment by ships of Force U Bombardment Group fifty minutes prior to the landing. Several of the landing ships for that morning were delayed, and the officer in charge decided to delay H-hour for 60 minutes, until 08:30. Some of the landing craft did not receive word of the change. Landing on the beach at their original scheduled time, the second wave came under fire, suffering an unknown number of casualties. Rumors circulated along the fleet that as many as 450 men were killed.

#### Battle of Lyme Bay

The exercise was blighted on the morning of 28 APR when Convoy T-4, consisting of eight LSTs carrying vehicles and combat engineers of the 1st Engineer Special Brigade, was attacked by nine German E-boats in Lyme Bay. The E-boats had left Cherbourg on patrol the previous evening and did not encounter the Allied patrol lines off Cherbourg or in the English Channel. They spotted the convoy and attacked.

- LST-289 was set on fire but eventually made it back to shore with the loss of 123 Navy personnel.
- LST-507 was torpedoed and sunk with the loss of 202 US Army/US Navy personnel.
- LST-511 was damaged by friendly fire.
- LST-531 sank within six minutes of being torpedoed with the loss of 424 Army and Navy personnel.

The remaining ships and their escort fired back and the E-boats made no more attacks. In total, 749 servicemen (551 United States Army and 198 United States Navy) were killed during Exercise Tiger. Many servicemen drowned or died of hypothermia in the cold sea while waiting to be rescued. Many had not been shown how to put on their lifebelt correctly, and placed it around their waist, the only available spot because of their large backpacks. In some cases this meant that when they jumped into the water the weight of their combat packs flipped them upside down, dragging their heads under water and drowning them. Dale Rodman, who travelled on LST-507, commented: "The worst memory I have is setting off in the lifeboat away from the sinking ship and watching bodies float by." The 248 bodies that were recovered were sent to Brookwood Cemetery in Surrey on 29 APR.

Of the two ships assigned to protect the convoy, only one was present. HMS Azalea, a corvette, was leading the LSTs in a straight line, a formation that later drew criticism since it presented an easy target to the E-boats. The second ship that was supposed to be present, HMS Scimitar, a World War I destroyer, had been in a collision with an LST, suffered structural damage and left the convoy to be repaired at Plymouth. Because the LSTs and British naval headquarters were operating on different frequencies, the American forces did not know this. HMS Saladin was dispatched as a replacement, but did not arrive in time to help protect the convoy.

- **Apr 28 1945 – WW2:** *Benito Mussolini executed* » “Il Duce,” Benito Mussolini, and his mistress, Clara Petacci, are shot by Italian partisans who had captured the couple as they attempted to flee to Switzerland.



**Benito Mussolini**



**Clara Petacci**

The 61-year-old deposed former dictator of Italy was established by his German allies as the figurehead of a puppet government in northern Italy during the German occupation toward the close of the war. As the Allies fought their way up the Italian peninsula, defeat of the Axis powers all but certain, Mussolini considered his options. Not wanting to fall into the hands of either the British or the Americans, and knowing that the communist partisans, who had been fighting the remnants of roving Italian fascist soldiers and thugs in the north, would try him as a war criminal, he settled on escape to a neutral country.

He and his mistress made it to the Swiss border, only to discover that the guards had crossed over to the partisan side. Knowing they would not let him pass, he disguised himself in a *Luftwaffe* coat and helmet, hoping to slip into Austria with some German soldiers. His subterfuge proved incompetent, and he and Petacci were discovered by partisans and shot, their bodies then transported by truck to Milan, where they were hung upside down and displayed publicly for revilement by the masses. Two days later Hitler was also dead.

- **Apr 28 1965 – Cold War:** *U.S. troops land in the Dominican Republic (Operation Powerpack)* » In an effort to forestall what he claims will be a “communist dictatorship” in the Dominican Republic, President Lyndon B. Johnson sends more than 22,000 U.S. troops to restore order on the island nation. Johnson’s action provoked loud protests in Latin America and skepticism among many in the United States.



**American soldiers engaged in a firefight while a child hides under a jeep for protection in Santo Domingo on 5 May 1965**

Troubles in the Dominican Republic began in 1961, when long-time dictator Rafael Trujillo was assassinated. Trujillo had been a brutal leader, but his strong anticommunist stance helped him retain the support of the United States. His death led to the rise of a reformist government headed by Juan Bosch, who was elected president in 1962. The Dominican military, however, despised Bosch and his liberal policies. Bosch was overthrown in 1963. Political chaos gripped the Dominican Republic as

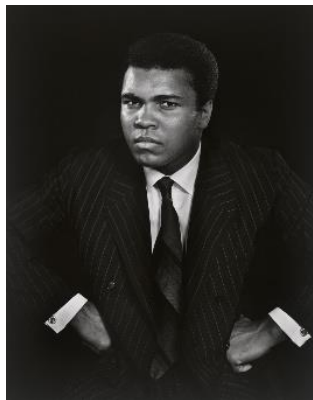
various groups, including the increasingly splintered military, struggled for power. By 1965, forces demanding the reinstatement of Bosch began attacks against the military-controlled government.

In the United States government, fear spread that “another Cuba” was in the making in the Dominican Republic; in fact, many officials strongly suspected that Cuban leader Fidel Castro was behind the violence. On 28 APR, more than 22,000 U.S. troops, supported by forces provided by some of the member states of the Organization of American States (a United Nations-like institution for the Western Hemisphere, dominated by the United States) landed in the Dominican Republic. Over the next few weeks they brought an end to the fighting and helped install a conservative, non-military government.

President Johnson declared that he had taken action to forestall the establishment of a “communist dictatorship” in the Dominican Republic. As evidence, he provided American reporters with lists of suspected communists in that nation. Even cursory reviews of the list revealed that the evidence was extremely flimsy—some of the people on the list were dead and others could not be considered communists by any stretch of the imagination.

Many Latin American governments and private individuals and organizations condemned the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic as a return to the “gunboat diplomacy” of the early-20th century, when U.S. Marines invaded and occupied a number of Latin American nations on the slightest pretexts. In the United States, politicians and citizens who were already skeptical of Johnson’s policy in Vietnam heaped scorn on Johnson’s statements about the “communist danger” in the Dominican Republic. Such criticism would become more and more familiar to the Johnson administration as the U.S. became more deeply involved in the war in Vietnam.

- **Apr 28 1967 – Vietnam War:** *Muhammad Ali refuses Army induction* » Boxing champion Muhammad Ali refuses to be inducted into the U.S. Army and is immediately stripped of his heavyweight title. Ali, a Muslim, cited religious reasons for his decision to forgo military service.



Cassius Marcellus Clay, Jr

Born Cassius Marcellus Clay, Jr., in Louisville, Kentucky, on January 14, 1942, the future three-time world champ changed his name to Muhammad Ali in 1964 after converting to Islam. He scored a gold medal at the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome and made his professional boxing debut against Tunney Husaker on October 29, 1960, winning the bout in six rounds. On February 25, 1964, he defeated the heavily favored bruiser Sonny Liston in six rounds to become heavyweight champ.

On April 28, 1967, with the United States at war in Vietnam, Ali refused to be inducted into the armed forces, saying “I ain’t got no quarrel with those Vietcong.” On June 20, 1967, Ali was convicted of draft evasion, sentenced to five years in prison, fined \$10,000 and banned from boxing for three years. He stayed out of prison as his case was appealed and returned to the ring on October 26, 1970, knocking out Jerry Quarry in Atlanta in the third round. On March 8, 1971, Ali fought Joe Frazier in the “Fight of the Century” and lost after 15 rounds, the first loss of his professional boxing career. On 28 JUN of that same year, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned his conviction for evading the draft.

- **Apr 28 1972 – Vietnam War:** Nixon approves Cambodian incursion » The President gives his formal authorization to commit U.S. combat troops, in cooperation with South Vietnamese units, against communist troop sanctuaries in Cambodia.



Secretary of State William Rogers and Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, who had continually argued for a downsizing of the U.S. effort in Vietnam, were excluded from the decision to use U.S. troops in Cambodia. Gen. Earle Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, cabled Gen. Creighton Abrams, senior U.S. commander in Saigon, informing him of the decision that a “higher authority has authorized certain military actions to protect U.S. forces operating in South Vietnam.” Nixon believed that the operation was necessary as a pre-emptive strike to forestall North Vietnamese attacks from Cambodia into South Vietnam as the U.S. forces withdrew and the South Vietnamese assumed more responsibility for the fighting. Nevertheless, three National Security Council staff members and key aides to presidential assistant Henry Kissinger resigned in protest over what amounted to an invasion of Cambodia.

When Nixon publicly announced the Cambodian incursion on April 30, it set off a wave of antiwar demonstrations. A protest at Kent State University resulted in the killing of four students by Army National Guard troops. Another student rally at Jackson State College in Mississippi resulted in the death of two students and 12 wounded when police opened fire on a women’s dormitory. The incursion angered many in Congress, who felt that Nixon was illegally widening the war; this resulted in a series of congressional resolutions and legislative initiatives that would severely limit the executive power of the president.

- **Apr 28 1972 – Vietnam War:** *North Vietnamese press South Vietnamese at Hue and Kontum* » The North Vietnamese offensive continues as Fire Base Bastogne, 20 miles west of Hue, falls to the communists. Fire Base Birmingham, 4 miles to the east, was also under heavy attack. As fighting intensified all across the northern province of South Vietnam, much of Hue’s civilian population tried to escape south to Da Nang. Farther south in the Central Highlands, 20,000 North Vietnamese troops converged on Kontum, encircling it and cutting it off. Only 65 miles north of Saigon, An Loc lay under



siege and continued to take a pummeling from North Vietnamese artillery, rockets, and ground attacks. To the American command in Saigon, it appeared that South Vietnam was on the verge of total defeat by the North Vietnamese, but the South Vietnamese were able to hold out.

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- **Apr 29 1945 – WW2:** *Dachau liberated* » The U.S. Seventh Army's 45th Infantry Division liberates Dachau, the first concentration camp established by Germany's Nazi regime. A major Dachau subcamp was liberated the same day by the 42nd Rainbow Division.



Dachau Death March



Inmates gather to hear a speech by Hitler

Established five weeks after Adolf Hitler took power as German chancellor in 1933, Dachau was situated on the outskirts of the town of Dachau, about 10 miles northwest of Munich. During its first year, the camp held about 5,000 political prisoners, consisting primarily of German communists, Social Democrats, and other political opponents of the Nazi regime. During the next few years, the number of prisoners grew dramatically, and other groups were interned at Dachau, including Jehovah's Witnesses, Gypsies, homosexuals, and repeat criminals. Beginning in 1938, Jews began to comprise a major portion of camp internees.

Prisoners at Dachau were used as forced laborers, initially in the construction and expansion of the camp and later for German armaments production. The camp served as the training center for SS concentration camp guards and was a model for other Nazi concentration camps. Dachau was also the first Nazi camp to use prisoners as human guinea pigs in medical experiments. At Dachau, Nazi scientists tested the effects of freezing and changes to atmospheric pressure on inmates, infected them with malaria and tuberculosis and treated them with experimental drugs, and forced them to test methods of making seawater potable and of halting excessive bleeding. Hundreds of prisoners died or were crippled as a result of these experiments.

Thousands of inmates died or were executed at Dachau, and thousands more were transferred to a Nazi extermination center near Linz, Austria, when they became too sick or weak to work. In 1944, to increase war production, the main camp was supplemented by dozens of satellite camps established near armaments factories in southern Germany and Austria. These camps were administered by the main camp and collectively called Dachau.

With the advance of Allied forces against Germany in April 1945, the Germans transferred prisoners from concentration camps near the front to Dachau, leading to a general deterioration of conditions and typhus epidemics. On April 27, 1945, approximately 7,000 prisoners, mostly Jews, were forced to begin a death march from Dachau to Tegernsee, far to the south. The next day, many

of the SS guards abandoned the camp. On April 29, the Dachau main camp was liberated by units of the 45th Infantry after a brief battle with the camp's remaining guards.

As they neared the camp, the Americans found more than 30 railroad cars filled with bodies in various states of decomposition. Inside the camp there were more bodies and 30,000 survivors, most severely emaciated. Some of the American troops who liberated Dachau were so appalled by conditions at the camp that they machine-gunned at least two groups of captured German guards. It is officially reported that 30 SS guards were killed in this fashion, but conspiracy theorists have alleged that more than 10 times that number were executed by the American liberators. The German citizens of the town of Dachau were later forced to bury the 9,000 dead inmates found at the camp.

In the course of Dachau's history, at least 160,000 prisoners passed through the main camp, and 90,000 through the subcamps. Incomplete records indicate that at least 32,000 of the inmates perished at Dachau and its subcamps, but countless more were shipped to extermination camps elsewhere.

- **Apr 29 1946 – WW2:** *International Military Tribunal indicts Hideki* » Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal for the Far East convenes to try the leaders of the Empire of Japan for three categories of crimes. "Class A" crimes were reserved for those who participated in a joint conspiracy to start and wage war, and were brought against those in the highest decision-making bodies; "Class B" crimes were reserved for those who committed "conventional" atrocities or war crimes; "Class C" crimes were reserved for those who committed Crimes against Humanity. This includes murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population or persecutions on political or racial grounds.



Hirohito, Asaka, Kishi, Aikawa, and Ishii

Former Prime Minister of Japan Hideki Tojo plus 27 Japanese military and political leaders were charged with waging aggressive war and with responsibility for conventional war crimes. More than 5,700 lower-ranking personnel were charged with conventional war crimes in separate trials convened by Australia, China, France, The Netherlands, the Philippines, the United Kingdom and the United States. The charges covered a wide range of crimes including prisoner abuse, rape, sexual slavery, torture, ill-treatment of labourers, execution without trial and inhumane medical experiments. China held 13 tribunals, resulting in 504 convictions and 149 executions.

In September 1945, Tojo had tried to commit suicide by shooting himself but was saved by an American physician who gave him a transfusion of American blood. He was eventually hanged by the Americans in 1948 after having been found guilty of war crimes

The Japanese Emperor Hirohito and all members of the imperial family, such as career officer Prince Yasuhiko Asaka, were not prosecuted for involvement in any of the three categories of crimes. The

Truman administration and General MacArthur both believed the occupation reforms would be implemented smoothly if they used Hirohito to legitimise their changes". As many as 50 suspects, such as Nobusuke Kishi, who later became Prime Minister, and Yoshisuke Aikawa, head of Nissan, were charged but released in 1947 and 1948. Shiro Ishii received immunity in exchange for data gathered from his experiments on live prisoners. The lone dissenting judge to exonerate all indictees was Indian jurist Radhabinod Pal. The tribunal was adjourned on November 12, 1948.

- **Apr 29 1950 – Cold War:** *American statesmen deny Lattimore's influence* » In response to Senator Joseph McCarthy's charge that former State Department consultant and university professor Owen Lattimore was a top Soviet spy in the United States, Secretary of State Dean Acheson and three former secretaries of state deny that Lattimore had any influence on U.S. foreign policy. The Lattimore case was one of the most famous episodes of the "red scare" in the United States.

In February 1950, Senator McCarthy gave a speech in which he charged that there were over 200 "known communists" in the Department of State. McCarthy was asked to appear before a subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to provide details about his accusation. During the course of the hearing, the senator charged that Owen Lattimore was a top spy for the Soviet Union and had been "the principal architect of our Far Eastern policy." The implication of McCarthy's testimony was clear: Lattimore, acting as a virtual Soviet agent, had helped design a policy that resulted in the loss of China to the communists in 1949.



Owen Lattimore

In fact, Lattimore, a well-known specialist in the field of Chinese history, had merely served as a consultant to the Department of State during and after World War II. Like many others, he had come to the conclusion that the Nationalist Chinese government of Chiang Kai-Shek was hopelessly inefficient and corrupt, and that continued U.S. support of such a government was useless. In the harsh Cold War atmosphere of America, though, the "loss" of China to the communists encouraged suspicion that spies and sympathizers were to blame.

In response to McCarthy's charge, the chair of the subcommittee, Senator Millard Tydings, wrote to Secretary of State Dean Acheson and three former secretaries of state, Cordell Hull, James Byrnes, and George C. Marshall, asking whether the accusations were true. The men answered that Lattimore had absolutely no impact on U.S. foreign policy toward Asia. Indeed, each of them went to great lengths to make clear that they had never even met Lattimore. Byrnes and Marshall went further, declaring McCarthy's charges were particularly harmful to America's foreign relations.

Lattimore was cleared by a congressional investigation in 1950, but in 1951-1952 the attacks against the professor were renewed and he was charged with perjury in connection with his 1950 testimony. These charges were eventually dismissed, but not before Lattimore's academic career in the United States had been destroyed.

- **Apr 29 1970 – Vietnam War:** *U.S.-South Vietnamese forces launch Cambodian “incursion”* » The campaign included 13 major ground operations to clear North Vietnamese sanctuaries 20 miles inside the Cambodian border. Some 50,000 South Vietnamese soldiers and 30,000 U.S. troops were involved, making it the largest operation of the war since Operation Junction City in 1967.



ARVN M113 APC and 11th ACR's M551 Sheridan with mine-clearing team on a road in Cambodia.

The operation began with South Vietnamese forces attacking into the “Parrot’s Beak” area of Cambodia that projects into South Vietnam above the Mekong Delta. During the first two days, an 8,000-man South Vietnamese task force, including two infantry divisions, four ranger battalions, and four armored cavalry squadrons, killed 84 communist soldiers while suffering 16 dead and 157 wounded.

The second stage of the campaign began on 2 MAY with a series of joint U.S.-South Vietnamese operations. These operations were aimed at clearing communist sanctuaries located in the densely vegetated “Fishhook” area of Cambodia (across the border from South Vietnam, immediately north of Tay Ninh Province and west of Binh Long Province, 70 miles from Saigon). The U.S. 1st Cavalry Division and 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, along with the South Vietnamese 3rd Airborne Brigade, killed 3,190 communists in the action and captured massive amounts of war booty, including 2,000 individual and crew-served weapons, 300 trucks, and 40 tons of foodstuffs. By the time all U.S. ground forces had departed Cambodia on June 30, the Allied forces had discovered and captured or destroyed 10 times more enemy supplies and equipment than they had captured inside South Vietnam during the entire previous year.

Many intelligence analysts at the time believed that the Cambodian incursion dealt a stunning blow to the communists, driving main force units away from the border and damaging their morale, and in the process buying as much as a year for South Vietnam’s survival. However, the incursion gave the antiwar movement in the United States a new rallying point. News of the incursion set off a wave of antiwar demonstrations, including one at Kent State University that resulted in the killing of four students by Army National Guard troops and another at Jackson State in Mississippi that resulted in the shooting of two students when police opened fire on a women’s dormitory. The incursion also angered many in Congress, who felt that Nixon was illegally widening the scope of the war; this resulted in a series of congressional resolutions and legislative initiatives that would severely limit the executive power of the president.

- **Apr 29 1971 – Vietnam War:** *New casualty figures released* » U.S. casualty figures for 18 to 24 APR are released. The 45 killed during that time brought total U.S. losses for the Vietnam War to 45,019 since 1961. These figures made Southeast Asia fourth in total losses sustained by the U.S. during a war, topped only by the number of losses incurred during the Civil War, World War I, and World War II.
- **29 Apr 1975 – Vietnam War:** *Operation Frequent Wind begins* » The largest helicopter evacuation on record, begins removing the last Americans from Saigon.



The North Vietnamese had launched their final offensive in March 1975 and the South Vietnamese forces had fallen back before their rapid advance, losing Quang Tri, Hue, Da Nang, Qui Nhon, Tuy Hoa, Nha Trang, and Xuan Loc in quick succession. With the North Vietnamese attacking the outskirts of Saigon, U.S. Ambassador Graham Martin ordered the commencement of Frequent Wind.

In 19 hours, 81 helicopters carried more than 1,000 Americans and almost 6,000 Vietnamese to aircraft carriers offshore. Cpl. Charles McMahon, Jr. and Lance Cpl. Darwin Judge, USMC, were the last U.S. military personnel killed in action in Vietnam, when shrapnel from a North Vietnamese rocket struck them as they were guarding Tan Son Nhut Airbase during the evacuation. At 7:53 a.m. on 30 APR, the last helicopter lifted off the roof of the embassy and headed out to sea. Later that morning, North Vietnamese tanks crashed through the gates of the Presidential Palace. North Vietnamese Col. Bui Tin accepted the surrender from Gen. Duong Van Minh, who had taken over from Tran Van Huong (who only spent one day in power after President Nguyen Van Thieu fled). The Vietnam War was over.

- **Apr 29 2004 – Post World WW2:** *National World War II Memorial opens* » Memorial in Washington, D.C., opens to thousands of visitors, providing overdue recognition for the 16 million U.S. men and women who served in the war. The memorial is located on 7.4 acres on the former site of the Rainbow Pool at the National Mall between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. The Capitol dome is seen to the east, and Arlington Cemetery is just across the Potomac River to the west.

The granite and bronze monument features fountains between arches symbolizing hostilities in Europe and the Far East. The arches are flanked by semicircles of pillars, one each for the states, territories and the District of Columbia. Beyond the pool is a curved wall of 4,000 gold stars, one for every 100 Americans killed in the war. An Announcement Stone proclaims that the memorial honors those “Americans who took up the struggle during the Second World War and made the sacrifices to perpetuate the gift our forefathers entrusted to us: A nation conceived in liberty and justice.”



Though the federal government donated \$16 million to the memorial fund, it took more than \$164 million in private donations to get it built. Former Kansas Sen. Bob Dole, who was severely wounded in the war, and actor Tom Hanks were among its most vocal supporters. Only a fraction of the 16 million Americans who served in the war would ever see it. Four million World War II veterans were living at the time, with more than 1,100 dying every day, according to government records.

The memorial was inspired by Roger Durbin of Berkey, Ohio, who served under Gen. George S. Patton. At a fish fry near Toledo in February 1987, he asked U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur why there was no memorial on the Mall to honor World War II veterans. Kaptur, a Democrat from Ohio, soon introduced legislation to build one, starting a process that would stumble along through 17 years of legislative, legal and artistic entanglements. Durbin died of pancreatic cancer in 2000.

The monument was formally dedicated May 29, 2004, by U.S. President George W. Bush. Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, it received some 4.4 million visitors in 2005.

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- **Apr 30 1789 – American Revolution:** *Samuel Adams writes of hope for more battles* » In a letter to Reverend Samuel Cooper dated April 30, 1776, Samuel Adams writes of his hopes for another battle between British and American troops, stating his belief that, “One battle would do more towards a Declaration of Independence than a long chain of conclusive arguments in a provincial convention or the Continental Congress.” At the time of the letter’s composition, General George Washington had successfully driven the British from Boston with his victory at Dorchester Heights on March 17. The British were left with very meager footholds in North America: Quebec, the Floridas and Nova Scotia, Canada.



Adams & Cooper

Fifteen days after Adams wished for bloodshed, the colonies effectively overthrew the British on the strength of the pen, not the sword. Emboldened by the impassioned words of Thomas Paine in his pamphlet, *Common Sense*, the people of Pennsylvania and New Jersey followed the congressional

injunction of May 15 to take “every kind of authority” from the British crown, and overthrew their royal governments. New York, Delaware and Maryland soon followed suit. By June, Thomas Jefferson began to draft the Declaration of Independence, with John Adams and Benjamin Franklin at his side.

Reverend Cooper, the recipient of Adams’ letter, played a quiet, but influential role in the revolution. Installed at the Brattle Street Church in Boston, Massachusetts, since 1746, he soon became one of the most popular preachers in the country. Founded in 1699, the Brattle Street Church was known for its rejection of conservative Calvinism and its influence upon Harvard University, which, like the church, was becoming increasingly liberal. The church eventually rejected the concept of the Christian trinity and became Unitarian. Cooper was devoted to both religious and civil liberty and was an early critic of British policy in America. In addition to writing some political works, he vociferously shared these sentiments with his Brattle Street congregation, which included John Hancock, James Bowdoin and John Adams. Samuel Adams, his fellow Massachusetts Patriot James Otis and Benjamin Franklin were also among Cooper’s circle of friends.

Cooper’s political writings were popular abroad and he worked with his foreign acquaintances to cement American alliances with Europe during the American Revolution. Cooper was seen as so instrumental in lobbying for the Patriot alliance with France, negotiated by his friend Benjamin Franklin, that he received a stipend from the French crown.

- **Apr 30 1789 – American Revolution:** *The first presidential inauguration* » In New York City, George Washington, the great military leader of the American Revolution, is inaugurated as the first president of the United States. Go to [https://youtu.be/wdE\\_-9E3WqU](https://youtu.be/wdE_-9E3WqU) to listen to a recitation on the event.



In February 1789, all 69 presidential electors unanimously chose Washington to be the first U.S. president. In March, the new U.S. constitution officially took effect, and in April Congress formally sent word to Washington that he had won the presidency. He borrowed money to pay off his debts in Virginia and traveled to New York. On April 30, he came across the Hudson River in a specially built and decorated barge. The inaugural ceremony was performed on the balcony of Federal Hall on Wall Street, and a large crowd cheered after he took the oath of office. The president then retired indoors to read Congress his inaugural address, a quiet speech in which he spoke of “the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people.” The evening celebration was opened and closed by 13 skyrockets and 13 cannons.

As president, Washington sought to unite the nation and protect the interests of the new republic at home and abroad. Of his presidency, he said, "I walk on untrodden ground. There is scarcely any part of my conduct which may not hereafter be drawn in precedent." He successfully implemented executive authority, made good use of brilliant politicians such as Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson in his cabinet, and quieted fears of presidential tyranny. In 1792, he was unanimously re-elected but four years later refused a third term. In 1797, he finally began a long-awaited retirement at his estate in Virginia. He died two years later. His friend Henry Lee provided a famous eulogy for the father of the United States: "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

- **Apr 30 1864 – Civil War:** *Confederates attack Union troops at Jenkins' Ferry* » At the Battle of Jenkins' Ferry in Arkansas, Union troops under General Frederick Steele fight off a Confederate army under General Edmund Kirby Smith as the Yankees retreat towards Little Rock, Arkansas.



Jenkins' Ferry came at the end of a major Union offensive in Arkansas. While a Federal force under General Nathaniel Banks moved up the Red River in Louisiana towards Shreveport, Steele led his troops from Little Rock into southwestern Arkansas. The combined effort promised to secure northern Louisiana and southern Arkansas for the Union before the armies moved west to invade Texas. In April, however, the plans ran afoul when Banks was defeated at Mansfield, Louisiana, and Steele found himself dangerously low on supplies.

Steele occupied Camden, Arkansas, on April 15. Over the next ten days, Steele lost more than 400 supply wagons and 2,500 troops at the Battles of Poison Spring and Marks' Mills. Now, Steele was surrounded by hostile armies and running low on food. He headed back to Little Rock with Smith in hot pursuit. A heavy rain began to fall, lasting for nearly a day and bringing Steele's retreat to a grinding halt. At Jenkins' Ferry on April 30, Smith attacked Steele as the Yankees were trying to cross the flooded Saline River. General Samuel Rice directed the Union defense, and his men held off a series of Rebel attacks before Rice was mortally wounded. Fighting in knee-deep water, the Confederates could not penetrate the Union lines. Steele was able to remove his force across the Saline River. He destroyed the pontoon bridge and left Smith on the other side of the river before escaping to Little Rock.

The Union suffered 700 men killed, wounded, and missing out of 4,000, while the Confederates lost about 1,000 out of 8,000. Some of the Rebel dead included wounded troops who were killed by members of the 2nd Kansas Colored regiment, exacting a measure of revenge for dozens of comrades from the 1st Kansas Colored murdered on the battlefield at Poison Spring. When it was over, Smith and the Confederates controlled the field but they had failed to destroy Steele's army.



- **Apr 30 1917 – WWI: *Battle of the Boot*** » The so-called Battle of the Boot marks the end of the British army's Samarra Offensive, launched the previous month by Anglo-Indian forces under the regional commander in chief, Sir Frederick Stanley Maude, against the important Turkish railroad at Samarra, some 130 kilometers north of Baghdad, in Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq).



Sir Frederick Stanley Maude (left)

Fresh from the triumphant capture of Baghdad, Maude decided not to hesitate before moving to consolidate the Allied positions to the north, where Turkish commander Khalil Pasha's forces had retreated from Baghdad to await reinforcements sent from Persia. In the Samarra Offensive, begun on March 13, 1917, some 45,000 Anglo-Indian frontline troops were sent up the Tigris River towards the railway at Samarra; on 19 MAR, Maude's forces seized Falluja, preventing the Turks from flooding the Euphrates River onto the plains and hampering the British advance. Though an attempt on 25 MAR to intercept the Turkish reinforcement troops, led by Ali Ishan Bey, met with failure, the British were able to capture another city, Dogameh, by the end of March.

As the Samarra Offensive continued into April, the Turks had backed up to positions between the Tigris and the Al Jali Canal; the Samarra railway itself lay in between. Heavy fighting beginning on 21 APR resulted in a Turkish defeat two days later and they were forced to cede Samarra to the British. Less than a week later, Ishan suddenly reappeared with the majority of his troops at Dahubu in an attempt to surprise the British forces; they were aware of his movements, however, and the Turks were met by several infantry brigades, commanded by General William Marshall, and forced to retreat to prepared positions in the foothills that spanned the river at Band-i-Adhaim. The subsequent action that took place, beginning early the morning of 30 APR, became known as the Battle of the Boot, for the boot-shaped peninsula of high ground on which it was fought.

Marshall began his infantry attack early in the morning of 30 APR; his forces advanced quickly, taking 300 Turkish prisoners and two lines of trenches within a short time. A sandstorm subsequently halted British operations, and the Turks were able to call on reserve forces for a successful counter-attack. By the time the sandstorm cleared, in the late afternoon, Isha and his men had taken 350 British prisoners and begun a retreat into the mountains; the punishing heat prevented Marshall's troops from pursuing them.

The Battle of the Boot effectively ended the Samarra Offensive, as Maude decided to pause in order to regroup and give his forces the chance to recover their strength. Casualties in the offensive numbered some 18,000, with losses due to illness running more than twice that number. Ishan and his Turkish forces remained in the mountains, preparing for the renewal of hostilities on the Mesopotamian front that would begin that fall.

- **Apr 30 1943 – WW2: Operation Mincemeat** » British intelligence officers manage to pull off one of the most successful wartime deceptions ever achieved: Operation Mincemeat. In April 1943, a decomposing corpse was discovered floating off the coast of Huelva, in southern Spain. Personal documents identified him as Major William Martin of Britain’s Royal Marines, and he had a black attaché case chained to his wrist.

When Nazi intelligence learned of the downed officer’s briefcase (as well as concerted efforts made by the British to retrieve the case), they did all they could to gain access. Though Spain was officially neutral in the conflict, much of its military was pro-German, and the Nazis were able to find an officer in Madrid to help them. In addition to other personal effects and official-looking documents, they found a letter from military authorities in London to a senior British officer in Tunisia, indicating that Allied armies were preparing to cross the Mediterranean from their positions in North Africa and attack German-held Greece and Sardinia.



Charles Cholmondeley and Ewen Montagu (left) transporting the body to Scotland, The corpse of Glyndwr Michael, dressed as Martin, (center) just prior to placement in the canister, and Naval identity card of Major Martin (right)

This intelligence coup for the Nazi spy network allowed Adolf Hitler to transfer German troops from France to Greece ahead of what was believed to be a massive enemy invasion. The only problem? It was all a hoax. The “drowned” man was actually a Welsh tramp whose body was obtained in a London morgue by British intelligence officers Charles Cholmondeley and Ewen Montagu, the brains behind Operation Mincemeat. After creating an elaborate fake identity and backstory for “William Martin,” Cholmondeley and Montagu got Charles Fraser-Smith (thought to be the model for Q in the James Bond novels, written by former British naval intelligence officer Ian Fleming) to design a special container to preserve the body during its time in the water.

One of England’s leading racecar drivers transported the container to the Royal Navy submarine HMS Seraph, which dropped it off the Spanish coast. Once the Spanish recovered the body, British authorities began their frantic attempts to recover the case, counting on the fact that their efforts would convince the Nazis of the documents’ validity. As a result of the false intelligence carried by “William Martin,” the Nazis were caught unawares when 160,000 Allied troops invaded Sicily on July 10, 1943. In addition to saving thousands of Allied soldiers’ lives, Operation Mincemeat helped further Italian leader Benito Mussolini’s downfall and turn the tide of the war towards an Allied victory in Europe.

- **Apr 30 1945 – WW2: Adolf Hitler commits suicide in his underground bunker** » Der Fuhrer, Adolf Hitler, dictator of Germany, burrowed away in a refurbished air-raid shelter, consumes a cyanide capsule, then shoots himself with a pistol, on this day in 1945, as his “1,000-year” Reich collapses above him.



Hitler had repaired to his bunker on 16 JAN, after deciding to remain in Berlin for the last great siege of the war. Fifty-five feet under the chancellery (Hitler's headquarters as chancellor), the shelter contained 18 small rooms and was fully self-sufficient, with its own water and electrical supply. He left only rarely (once to decorate a squadron of Hitler Youth) and spent most of his time micromanaging what was left of German defenses and entertaining such guests as Hermann Goering, Heinrich Himmler, and Joachim von Ribbentrop. At his side were Eva Braun, whom he married only two days before their double suicide, and his dog, an Alsatian named Blondi.

Warned by officers that the Russians were only a day or so from overtaking the chancellery and urged to escape to Berchtesgarden, a small town in the Bavarian Alps where Hitler owned a home, the dictator instead chose suicide. It is believed that both he and his wife swallowed cyanide capsules (which had been tested for their efficacy on his "beloved" dog and her pups). For good measure, he shot himself with his service pistol.



German dictator Adolf Hitler and his mistress Eva Braun dine in a still from a private home movie made by Braun's sister Gretl Fegelein.

The bodies of Hitler and Eva were cremated in the chancellery garden by the bunker survivors (as per Der Fuhrer's orders) and reportedly later recovered in part by Russian troops. A German court finally officially declared Hitler dead, but not until 1956.

- **Apr 30 1975 – Cold War:** Organization of American States established » The United States and 20 Latin American nations sign the charter establishing the Organization of American States (OAS). The new institution was designed to facilitate better political relations between the member states and, at least for the United States, to serve as a bulwark against communist penetration of the Western Hemisphere.

The OAS was established just a year after the Rio Pact was signed. The Rio Pact set up a defensive military alliance between the United States and the nations of Latin America. The Latin American republics, however, wanted something more substantial than a mere military alliance. In response to Latin American demands for a summit to discuss economic and political relations with the United States, American delegates traveled to an Inter-American Conference in Bogota, Colombia in April 1948. Among other things, the Latin American delegates wanted a political institution to deal with intra-hemispheric disputes-this request was based on the fear that the United States, intent on its

anticommunist crusade, might engage in unilateral interventions against suspected Latin American governments. The United States grudgingly gave its assent to the establishment of the OAS, but insisted that the charter include a statement condemning “international communism or any totalitarianism” as “irreconcilable with the tradition of the American countries.” For the Latin American delegates, the key article of the OAS charter stated that, “No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State.”



The OAS never truly functioned as either the United States or the Latin American members had hoped. For the United States, the OAS proved a disappointment since the other member states did not seem to share its own Cold War zeal. In a number of cases—most notably Castro’s Cuba—the OAS refused to give its approval of direct action to remove what the United States felt were “communist threats.” In other cases, such as the U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965, the OAS gave only grudging support after the fact. For their parts, the Latin American member states have also been disappointed in the OAS. The U.S.-orchestrated overthrow of the government of Guatemala in 1954, the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba in 1961, the intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965, and other examples of the unilateral use of force by the United States indicate that it had not given up its “gunboat diplomacy” in Latin America.

The OAS continues to function, though the end of the Cold War has dramatically lessened its importance in intra-hemispheric affairs.

- **Apr 30 1975 – Vietnam War: South Vietnam surrenders** » By dawn, communist forces move into Saigon, where they meet only sporadic resistance. The South Vietnamese forces had collapsed under the rapid advancement of the North Vietnamese. The most recent fighting had begun in December 1974, when the North Vietnamese had launched a major attack against the lightly defended province of Phuoc Long, located due north of Saigon along the Cambodian border, overrunning the provincial capital at Phuoc Binh on January 6, 1975. Despite previous presidential promises to provide aid in such a scenario, 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 rescue Saigon from communist takeover.

This situation emboldened the North Vietnamese, who launched a new campaign in March 1975. The South Vietnamese forces fell back in total disarray, and 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.

The South Vietnamese 18th Division had fought a valiant battle at Xuan Loc, just to the east of Saigon, destroying three North Vietnamese divisions in the process. However, it proved to be the last battle in the defense of the Republic of South Vietnam. The South Vietnamese forces held out against the attackers until they ran out of tactical air support and weapons, finally abandoning Xuan Loc to the communists on 21 APR.

Having crushed the last major organized opposition before Saigon, the North Vietnamese got into position for the final assault. In Saigon, South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu resigned and transferred authority to Vice President Tran Van Huong before fleeing the city on 25 APR. By 27 APR, the North Vietnamese had completely encircled Saigon and began to maneuver for a complete takeover.



When they attacked at dawn on 30 APR, they met little resistance. North Vietnamese tanks crashed through the gates of the Presidential Palace and the war came to an end. North Vietnamese Col. Bui Tin accepted the surrender from Gen. Duong Van Minh, who had taken over after Tran Van Huong spent only one day in power. Tin explained to Minh, “You have nothing to fear. Between Vietnamese there are no victors and no vanquished. Only the Americans have been beaten. If you are patriots, consider this a moment of joy. The war for our country is over.”

- **Apr 30 2004 – Iraq: Abu Ghraib torture and prisoner abuse** » During the war in Iraq that began in March 2003, personnel of the United States Army and the Central Intelligence Agency committed a series of human rights violations against detainees in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. These violations included physical and sexual abuse, torture, rape, sodomy, and murder. The abuses came to widespread public attention with the publication of photographs of the abuse by CBS News in April 2004. The incidents received widespread condemnation both within the United States and abroad, although the soldiers received support from some conservative media within the United States.

The administration of George W. Bush asserted that these were isolated incidents, not indicative of general U.S. policy. This was disputed by humanitarian organizations such as the Red Cross, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch. These organizations stated that the abuses at Abu Ghraib were not isolated incidents, but were part of a wider pattern of torture and brutal treatment at American overseas detention centers, including those in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Guantanamo Bay. Several scholars stated that the abuses constituted state-sanctioned crimes.



**Graphic photos released by U.S. media of American soldiers abusing and sexually humiliating Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison.**

The United States Department of Defense removed seventeen soldiers and officers from duty, and eleven soldiers were charged with dereliction of duty, maltreatment, aggravated assault and battery. Between May 2004 and March 2006, these soldiers were convicted in courts-martial, sentenced to military prison, and dishonorably discharged from service. Two soldiers, Specialist Charles Graner and PFC Lynndie England, were sentenced to ten and three years in prison, respectively. Brigadier General Janis Karpinski, the commanding officer of all detention facilities in Iraq, was reprimanded and demoted to the rank of colonel. Several more military personnel who were accused of perpetrating or authorizing the measures, including many of higher rank, were not prosecuted. It was reported that most inmates were innocent of the crimes they were accused of and were simply detained due to their being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Documents popularly known as the Torture Memos came to light a few years later. These documents, prepared shortly before the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the United States Department of Justice, authorized certain enhanced interrogation techniques, generally held to involve torture of foreign detainees. The memoranda also argued that international humanitarian laws, such as the Geneva Conventions, did not apply to American interrogators overseas. Several subsequent U.S. Supreme Court decisions, including *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* (2006), have overturned Bush administration policy, and ruled that Geneva Conventions apply.

Many of the torture techniques used were developed at Guantánamo detention center, including prolonged isolation; the frequent flyer program, a sleep deprivation program whereby people were moved from cell to cell every few hours so they couldn't sleep for days, weeks, even months; short shackling in painful positions; nudity; extreme use of heat and cold; the use of loud music and noise and preying on phobias.

[Source: <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history> & <https://www.historycentral.com> | March 2019 ++]