



## Military History Anniversaries 16 thru 31 MAR

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

- **Mar 16 1802 – West Point:** *U.S. Military Academy established* » The United States Military Academy—the first military school in the United States—is founded by Congress for the purpose of educating and training young men in the theory and practice of military science. Located at West Point, New York, the U.S. Military Academy is often simply known as West Point.

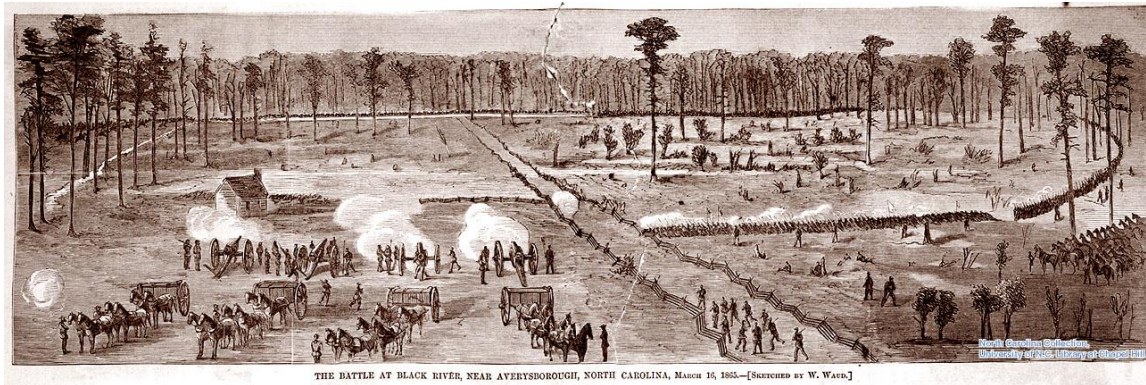


Located on the high west bank of New York’s Hudson River, West Point was the site of a Revolutionary-era fort built to protect the Hudson River Valley from British attack. In 1780, Patriot General Benedict Arnold, the commander of the fort, agreed to surrender West Point to the British in exchange for 6,000 pounds. However, the plot was uncovered before it fell into British hands, and Arnold fled to the British for protection.

Ten years after the establishment of the U.S. Military Academy in 1802, the growing threat of another war with Great Britain resulted in congressional action to expand the academy’s facilities and increase the West Point corps. Beginning in 1817, the U.S. Military Academy was reorganized by superintendent Sylvanus Thayer—later known as the “father of West Point”—and the school became one of the nation’s finest sources of civil engineers. During the Mexican-American War, West Point graduates filled the leading ranks of the victorious U.S. forces, and with the outbreak of the Civil War former West Point classmates regretfully lined up against one another in the defense of their native states.

In 1870, the first African-American cadet was admitted into the U.S. Military Academy, and in 1976, the first female cadets. The academy is now under the general direction and supervision of the department of the U.S. Army and has an enrollment of more than 4,000 students.

- **Mar 16 1865 – Civil War: *Battle of Averasboro, NC*** » The mighty army of Union General William T. Sherman encounters its most significant resistance as it tears through the Carolinas on its way to join General Ulysses Grant’s army at Petersburg, Virginia. Confederate General William Hardee tried to block one wing of Sherman’s force, commanded by Henry Slocum, but the motley Rebel force was swept aside at the Battle of Averasboro, North Carolina.



Sherman’s army left Savannah, Georgia, in late January 1865 and began to drive through the Carolinas with the intention of inflicting the same damage on those states as it famously had on Georgia two months prior. The Confederates could offer little opposition, and Sherman rolled northward while engaging in only a few small skirmishes. Now, however, the Rebels had gathered more troops and dug in their heels as the Confederacy entered its final days.

Hardee placed his troops across the main roads leading away from Fayetteville in an effort to determine Sherman’s objective. Union cavalry under General Hugh Judson Kilpatrick contacted some of Hardee’s men along the old Plank Road northeast of Fayetteville on March 15. Kilpatrick could not punch through, so he regrouped and waited until March 16 to renew the attack. When they tried again, the Yankees still could not break the Confederate lines until two divisions of Slocum’s infantry arrived. In danger of being outflanked and possibly surrounded, Hardee withdrew his troops and headed toward a rendezvous with Joseph Johnston’s gathering army at Bentonville, North Carolina.

The Yankees lost approximately 95 men killed, 530 wounded, and 50 missing, while Hardee lost about 865 total. The battle did little to slow the march of Sherman’s army.

- **Mar 16 1916 – WW1:** Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, the man largely responsible for the buildup of the German navy in the years before World War I and the aggressive naval strategy pursued by Germany during the first two years of the war, tenders his resignation to Kaiser Wilhelm II, who—somewhat to Tirpitz’s surprise—accepts it.



- **Mar 16 1926 – Space Travel: *First liquid-fueled rocket*** » The first man to give hope to dreams of space travel is American Robert H. Goddard, who successfully launches the world’s first liquid-fueled rocket at Auburn, Massachusetts, on March 16, 1926. The rocket traveled for 2.5 seconds at a speed of about 60 mph, reaching an altitude of 41 feet and landing 184 feet away. The rocket was 10 feet tall, constructed out of thin pipes, and was fueled by liquid oxygen and gasoline.

The Chinese developed the first military rockets in the early 13th century using gunpowder and probably built firework rockets at an earlier date. Gunpowder-propelled military rockets appeared in Europe sometime in the 13th century, and in the 19th century British engineers made several important advances in early rocket science. In 1903, an obscure Russian inventor named Konstantin E. Tsiolkovsky published a treatise on the theoretical problems of using rocket engines in space, but it was not until Robert Goddard’s work in the 1920s that anyone began to build the modern, liquid-fueled type of rocket that by the early 1960s would be launching humans into space.

Goddard, born in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1882, became fascinated with the idea of space travel after reading the H.G. Wells’ science fiction novel War of the Worlds in 1898. He began building gunpowder rockets in 1907 while a student at the Worcester Polytechnic Institute and continued his rocket experiments as a physics doctoral student and then physics professor at Clark University. He was the first to prove that rockets can propel in an airless vacuum-like space and was also the first to explore mathematically the energy and thrust potential of various fuels, including liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen. He received U.S. patents for his concepts of a multistage rocket and a liquid-fueled rocket, and secured grants from the Smithsonian Institute to continue his research.



In 1919, his classic treatise *A Method of Reaching Extreme Altitudes* was published by the Smithsonian. The work outlined his mathematical theories of rocket propulsion and proposed the future launching of an unmanned rocket to the moon. The press picked up on Goddard's moon-rocket proposal and for the most part ridiculed the scientist's innovative ideas. In January 1920, *The New York Times* printed an editorial declaring that Dr. Goddard "seems to lack the knowledge ladled out daily in high schools" because he thought that rocket thrust would be effective beyond the earth's atmosphere. (Three days before the first Apollo lunar-landing mission in July 1969, the *Times* printed a correction to this editorial.)

In December 1925, Goddard tested a liquid-fueled rocket in the physics building at Clark University. He wrote that the rocket, which was secured in a static rack, "operated satisfactorily and lifted its own weight." On March 16, 1926, Goddard accomplished the world's first launching of a liquid-fueled rocket from his Aunt Effie's farm in Auburn.

Goddard continued his innovative rocket work until his death in 1945. His work was recognized by the aviator Charles A. Lindbergh, who helped secure him a grant from the Guggenheim Fund for the Promotion of Aeronautics. Using these funds, Goddard set up a testing ground in Roswell, New Mexico, which operated from 1930 until 1942. During his tenure there, he made 31 successful flights, including one of a rocket that reached 1.7 miles off the ground in 22.3 seconds. Meanwhile, while Goddard conducted his limited tests without official U.S. support, Germany took the initiative in rocket development and by September 1944 was launching its V-2 guided missiles against Britain to devastating effect. During the war, Goddard worked in developing a jet-thrust booster for a U.S. Navy seaplane. He would not live to see the major advances in rocketry in the 1950s and '60s that would make his dreams of space travel a reality. NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland, is named in his honor.

- **Mar 16 1935 – Germany:** Adolf Hitler orders conscription to be re-introduced and the German military was renamed the Wehrmacht. It consisted of the Heer (army), the Kriegsmarine (navy) and the Luftwaffe (air force). The designation "Wehrmacht" replaced the previously used term Reichswehr, and was the manifestation of the Nazi regime's efforts to rearm Germany to a greater extent than the Treaty of Versailles permitted.
- **Mar 16 1942 – WW2:** The first V-2 rocket test launch. It explodes at liftoff.
- **Mar 16 1942 – WW2:** Holocaust » More than 1800 Jews from Pochep, Russia, are executed.
- **Mar 16 1944 – WW2:** PBV-5A (VP 63) seaplanes, employing magnetic anomaly detector (MAD) gear, detect German submarine U-392 while attempting to transit the Straits of Gibraltar. The sub is attacked and sunk with all hands (52) by nearby allied ships.
- **Mar 16 1945 – WW2:** The Battle of Iwo Jima ends but small pockets of Japanese resistance persist. Casualties and losses: US 26,038 - JP 22,060

- **Mar 16 1968 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. troops massacre South Vietnamese* » A platoon of American soldiers brutally slaughter more than 500 unarmed civilians at My Lai, one of a cluster of small villages located near the northern coast of South Vietnam.

In March 1968, a platoon of soldiers called Charlie Company received word that Viet Cong guerrillas had taken cover in the Quang Ngai village of Son My. The platoon entered one of the village's four hamlets, My Lai 4, on a search-and-destroy mission on the morning of March 16. Instead of guerrilla fighters, they found unarmed villagers, most of them women, children and old men.



The soldiers had been advised before the attack by army command that all who were found in My Lai could be considered VC or active VC sympathizers, and were told to destroy the village. They acted with extraordinary brutality, raping and torturing villagers before killing them and dragging dozens of people, including young children and babies, into a ditch and executing them with automatic weapons. The massacre reportedly ended when an Army helicopter pilot, Warrant Officer Hugh Thompson, landed his aircraft between the soldiers and the retreating villagers and threatened to open fire if they continued their attacks.

The events at My Lai were covered up by high-ranking army officers until investigative journalist Seymour Hersh broke the story. Soon, My Lai was front-page news and an international scandal.

- **Mar 16 1975 – Vietnam War:** *South Vietnamese flee Pleiku and Kontum* » The withdrawal from Pleiku and Kontum begins, as thousands of civilians join the soldiers streaming down Route 7B toward the sea. In late January 1975, just two years after the cease-fire established by the Paris Peace Accords, the North Vietnamese launched Campaign 275. The objective of this campaign was to capture the city of Ban Me Thuot in the Central Highlands. The battle began on March 4 and the North Vietnamese quickly encircled the city with five main force divisions, cutting it off from outside support. The South Vietnamese 23rd Division, which had been sent to defend the city, was vastly outnumbered and quickly succumbed to the communists.

As it became clear that the city—and probably the entire Darlac province—would fall to the communists, South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu decided to withdraw his forces in order to protect the more critical populous areas to the south. Accordingly, he ordered his forces in the Central Highlands to pull back from their positions. Abandoning Pleiku and Kontum, the South Vietnamese forces began to move toward the sea. By March 17, civilians and soldiers came under heavy communist attack; the withdrawal, scheduled to take three days, was still underway on April 1. Only 20,000 of 60,000 soldiers ever reached the coast; of 400,000 refugees, only 100,000 arrived. The survivors of what one South Vietnamese general described as the “greatest disaster in the history of the ARVN [Army of the Republic of Vietnam]” escaped down the coastal highway toward Saigon.

The North Vietnamese overran the South Vietnamese forces in both the Central Highlands and further north at Quang Tri, Hue, and Da Nang. The South Vietnamese collapsed as a cogent fighting force and the North Vietnamese continued the attack all the way to Saigon. South Vietnam surrendered unconditionally to North Vietnam on April 30 and the war was over.

- **Mar 16 1988 – U.S.\* Nicaragua:** *Reagan orders troops into Honduras* » As part of his continuing effort to put pressure on the leftist Sandinista government in Nicaragua, President Ronald Reagan orders over 3,000 U.S. troops to Honduras, claiming that Nicaraguan soldiers had crossed its borders. As with so many of the other actions taken against Nicaragua during the Reagan years, the result was only more confusion and criticism.



U.S. and Honduras troops work together while firing 105mm Howitzers during training exercises at Zambrano Artillery Range in Honduras, on March 24, 1988.

Since taking office in 1981, the Reagan administration had used an assortment of means to try to remove the leftist Sandinista government of Nicaragua. President Reagan charged that the Sandinistas were pawns of the Soviet Union and were establishing a communist beachhead in the Western Hemisphere, though there was little evidence to support such an accusation. Nonetheless, Reagan's administration used economic and diplomatic pressure attempting to destabilize the Sandinista regime. Reagan poured millions of dollars of U.S. military and economic aid into the so-called "Contras," anti-Sandinista rebels operating out of Honduras and Costa Rica. By 1988, however, the Contra program was coming under severe criticism from both the American people and Congress. Many Americans came to see the Contras as nothing more than terrorist mercenaries, and Congress had acted several times to limit the amount of U.S. aid to the Contras.

In an effort to circumvent Congressional control, the Reagan administration engaged in what came to be known as the Iran-Contra Affair, in which arms were illegally and covertly sold to Iran in order to fund the Contras. This scheme had come to light in late 1987. Indeed, on the very day that Reagan sent U.S. troops to Honduras, his former national security advisor John Poindexter and former National Security staffer Lt. Col. Oliver North were indicted by the U.S. government for fraud and theft related to Iran-Contra.

The New York Times reported that Washington, not Honduras, had initiated the call for the U.S. troops. In fact, the Honduran government could not even confirm whether Sandinista troops had actually crossed its borders, and Nicaragua steadfastly denied that it had entered Honduran territory. Whatever the truth of the matter, the troops stayed for a brief time and were withdrawn. The Sandinista government remained unfazed.

- **Mar 17 1776 – American Revolution:** *British evacuate Boston* » British forces are forced to evacuate Boston following General George Washington's successful placement of fortifications and cannons on Dorchester Heights, which overlooks the city from the south.



During the evening of 4 MAR, American Brigadier General John Thomas, under orders from Washington, secretly led a force of 800 soldiers and 1,200 workers to Dorchester Heights and began fortifying the area. To cover the sound of the construction, American cannons, besieging Boston from another location, began a noisy bombardment of the outskirts of the city. By the morning, more than a dozen cannons from Fort Ticonderoga had been brought within the Dorchester Heights fortifications. British General Sir William Howe hoped to use the British ships in Boston Harbor to destroy the American position, but a storm set in, giving the Americans ample time to complete the fortifications and set up their artillery. Realizing their position was now indefensible, 11,000 British troops and some 1,000 Loyalists departed Boston by ship on 17 MAR, sailing to the safety of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The bloodless liberation of Boston by the Patriots brought an end to a hated eight-year British occupation of the city, known for such infamous events as the “Boston Massacre,” in which five colonists were shot and killed by British soldiers. The British fleet had first entered Boston Harbor on October 2, 1768, carrying 1,000 soldiers. Having soldiers living among them in tents on Boston Common—a standing army in 18th-century parlance—infuriated Bostonians.

For the victory, General Washington, commander of the Continental Army, was presented with the first medal ever awarded by the Continental Congress.

- **Mar 17 1780 – American Revolution:** George Washington grants the Continental Army a holiday "as an act of solidarity with the Irish in their fight for independence".
- **Mar 17 1863 – Civil War:** *Battle of Kelly's Ford, Virginia* » Union cavalry attack Confederate cavalry at Kelly's Ford, Virginia. Although the Yankees were pushed back and failed to take any ground, the engagement proved that the Federal troopers could hold their own against their Rebel counterparts.

In the war's first two years, Union cavalry fared poorly in combat. This was especially true in the Eastern theater, where Confederate General J.E.B. Stuart boasted an outstanding force comprised of excellent horsemen. On several occasions, Stuart embarrassed the Union cavalry with his daring exploits. During the Peninsular Campaign of 1862, Stuart rode around the entire 100,000-man Union army in four days. Later that year, he made a daring raid to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, and returned unmolested to Virginia after inflicting significant damage and capturing tons of supplies. In February 1863, a raid by General Fitzhugh Lee (son of Confederate commander Robert E. Lee) left the Federals running in circles in search of the enemy force.

Now, General Joseph Hooker assumed command of the Federal Army of the Potomac. He sought to bring an end to the Confederate raids by stopping Stuart's cavalry. Hooker assigned General William Averell to attack the Rebel cavalry near Culpeper Court House, Virginia. Averell assembled 3,000 men for the mission, but left 900 behind to protect against a rumored Confederate presence near Catlett's Station. Averell led the rest of his men towards Kelly's Ford, a crossing of the Rappahannock River east of Culpeper Court House. Fitzhugh Lee learned of the advance and positioned his cavalry brigade, which was part of Stuart's corps, to block the ford and dig rifle pits above the river.



On the morning of 17 MAR, Averell's men reached Kelly's Ford and were welcomed by fire from 60 Confederate sharpshooters. It took four attacks for Averell's men to capture the rifle pits and by noon the entire force was across the Rappahannock. Now, Fitzhugh Lee arrived with 800 troopers and two pieces of artillery. As the Confederates approached, the cautious Averell ordered his men to form a defensive line, thus giving the initiative to the Confederates. Lee arrived and ordered his men to attack, but Yankee fire drove them back. He attacked again and was again repulsed. Averell had a chance to score a major rout with a counterattack, but he instead withdrew across the Rappahannock River. He later said that the arrival of Stuart on the battlefield signaled the possible approach of additional Confederate cavalry.

Averell lost 78 men killed, wounded, and captured during the day's fighting. The Confederates lost a total of 133 men. Among the Rebel dead was Major John Pelham, perhaps the best artillery officer in the Confederate army. He happened to be visiting Stuart when the battle began, and rode forward to see the action. Pelham was mortally wounded by a shell splinter as he observed the Confederate attacks in the afternoon. Although Kelly's Ford was a Union defeat, it signaled a new phase of the cavalry war in the East. The Yankees were closing the gap with the Confederate horsemen. In the next four months, the Union cavalry fought their Confederate counterparts to a standstill at Brandy Station, Virginia, and then scored a major victory at the Battle of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.



- **Mar 17 1917 – WW1: *Shakeup in French government*** » In the midst of Allied plans for a major spring offensive on the Western Front, the French government suffers a series of crises in its leadership, including the forced resignation, on March 17, 1917, of Prime Minister Aristide Briand.



Aristide Briand



Joseph Joffre



Robert Nivelle



Louis Lyautey



Paul Painlevé

Horrified by the brutal events at Verdun and the Somme in 1916, the French Chamber of Deputies had already met in secret to condemn the leadership of France's senior military leader, Joseph Joffre, and engineer his dismissal. Prime Minister Briand oversaw Joffre's replacement by Robert Nivelle, who believed an aggressive offensive along the River Aisne in central France was the key to a much-needed breakthrough on the Western Front. Building upon the tactics he had earlier employed in successful counter-attacks at Verdun, Nivelle believed he would achieve this breakthrough within two days; then, as he claimed, the ground will be open to go where one wants, to the Belgian coast or to the capital, on the Meuse or on the Rhine.

The principal power over French military strategy, however, had moved with Joffre's departure to a ministerial war committee who answered not to the commander in chief, Nivelle, but to the minister of war, Louis Lyautey, a former colonial administrator in Morocco appointed by Briand in December 1916, around the same time as Joffre's dismissal. Lyautey loudly and publicly derided the Nivelle scheme, insisting (correctly as it turned out) that it would meet with failure. He was not the only member of Briand's cabinet who opposed the offensive, but the prime minister continued to support Nivelle, desperately needing a major French victory to restore confidence in his leadership. On 14 MAR, Lyautey resigned. This embarrassing public disagreement with his ministers brought Briand down as well, forcing his resignation on 17 MAR.

French President Raymond Poincaré's next choice for prime minister, Alexandre Ribot, appointed Paul Painlevé as his minister of war. Also hesitant to fully support Nivelle's plan, Painlevé and the rest of the Ribot government were finally pressured to do so by the need to counteract the German resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare (announced in February 1917) and by Nivelle's threat that he would resign if the offensive did not proceed as planned. The so-called Nivelle Offensive, begun on April 16, 1917, was a disaster: the German positions along the Aisne, built up since the fall of 1914, proved to be too much for the Allies. Almost all the French tanks, introduced into battle for the first time, had been destroyed or had become bogged down by the end of the first day; within a week 96,000 soldiers had been wounded. The battle was called off on April 20, and Nivelle was replaced by the more cautious Philippe Pétain five days later.

- **Mar 17 1940 – WW2:** Dr. Fritz Todt, an engineer and master road builder, is appointed Minister for Weapons and Munitions, ushering in a new era in the efficient use of German industry and forced labor.

- **Mar 17 1942 – WW2: Holocaust** » Extermination camp Belzec established. Full-scale extermination begins; deportees are accepted from Poland and from as far away as the western provinces of Germany. By the end of 1942, 600,000 Jews will be murdered there. From March 17 until April 14, nearly 30,000 Jews from the Lublin Ghetto are deported to the Belzec death camp.
- **Mar 17 1944 – WW2:** West of Cape Verdes USS Block Island (CVE-21) torpedo bomber aircraft from Composite Squadron (VC 6), along with USS Corry (DD-463) and USS Bronstein (DE-189), forced German submarine U 801 to surface. On the surface, she was immediately attacked by Corry. Nine crew members lost their lives in the attack. The crew abandoned and scuttled their boat. The remaining crew were picked up by Corry and later transferred to Block Island. The 47 survivors were brought to Norfolk, Virginia and spent the rest of the war in captivity.
- **Mar 17 1945 – WW2:** The Ludendorff Bridge in Remagen, Germany collapses, ten days after its capture.



- **Mar 17 1947 – U.S. Air Force:** First flight of the B-45 Tornado strategic bomber.
- **Mar 17 1959 – U.S. Navy:** USS Skate (SSN-578) becomes the first submarine to surface at the North Pole, traveling 3,000 miles in and under Arctic ice for more than a month.
- **Mar 17 1960 – U.S.\*Cuba:** U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower signs the National Security Council directive on the anti-Cuban covert action program that will ultimately lead to the Bay of Pigs Invasion.
- **Mar 17 1964 – Vietnam War: National Security Council reviews situation** » President Lyndon B. Johnson presides over a session of the National Security Council during which Secretary of Defense McNamara and Gen. Maxwell Taylor present a full review of the situation in Vietnam. During the meeting, various secret decisions were made, including the approval of covert intelligence-gathering operations in North Vietnam; contingency plans to launch retaliatory U.S. Air Force strikes against North Vietnamese military installations and against guerrilla sanctuaries inside the Laotian and Cambodian borders; and a long-range “program of graduated overt military pressure” against North Vietnam. President Johnson directed that planning for the bombing raids “proceed energetically.”

A statement issued to the public afterwards stated that the United States would increase military and economic aid to support South Vietnamese President Nguyen Khanh’s new plan for fighting the Viet

Cong. Khanh's intention was to mobilize all able-bodied South Vietnamese males, raise the pay and status of paramilitary forces, and provide more equipment for the South Vietnamese armed forces.

- **Mar 17 1966 – U.S. Navy:** Off the coast of Spain in the Mediterranean, the DSV Alvin submarine finds a missing American hydrogen bomb.
- **Mar 17 1968 – Cold War:** As a result of nerve gas testing in Skull Valley, Utah, US, over 6,000 sheep are found dead.
- **Mar 17 1970 – Vietnam War:** *Results of Peers investigation announced* » After an investigation, the U.S. Army accuses 14 officers of suppressing information related to an incident at My Lai in March 1968



Vietnamese women and children in My Lai before being killed in the massacre, March 16, 1968. According to the court testimony, they were killed seconds after this photo was taken

Soldiers from a company had massacred Vietnamese civilians, including women and children, at My Lai 4, a cluster of hamlets in Quang Ngai Province, on March 16, 1968. The company had been conducting a search-and-destroy mission looking for the 48th Viet Cong (VC) Local Force Battalion. The unit entered My Lai, but found only women, children, and old men. Frustrated by unanswered losses due to snipers and mines, the soldiers took out their anger on the villagers, indiscriminately shooting people as they ran from their huts, and systematically rounding up and executing the survivors.

Reportedly, the killing was only stopped when Warrant Officer Hugh Thompson landed his helicopter between the Americans and the fleeing South Vietnamese, confronting the soldiers and blocking them from further action against the villagers. The incident was subsequently covered up, but eventually came to light a year later. The Army commissioned a board of inquiry, headed by Lieutenant General Peers.

After investigating, Peers reported that U.S. soldiers committed individual and group acts of murder, rape, sodomy, maiming and assault that took the lives of a large number of civilians—he concluded that a “tragedy of major proportions” occurred at My Lai. The Peers report said that each successive level of command received a more watered-down account of what had actually occurred; the higher the report went, the lower the estimate of civilians allegedly killed by Americans. Peers found that at least 30 persons knew of the atrocity, but only 14 were charged with crimes.

All eventually had their charges dismissed or were acquitted by courts-martial except Lt. William Calley, the platoon leader of the unit involved. He was found guilty of personally murdering 22 civilians and sentenced to life imprisonment, but his sentence was reduced to 20 years by the Court of Military Appeals and further reduced later to 10 years by the Secretary of the Army. Proclaimed by much of the

public as a “scapegoat,” Calley was paroled in 1974 after having served about a third of his 10-year sentence.

- **Mar 17 1973 – Vietnam War:** First POWs are released from the "Hanoi Hilton" in Hanoi, North Vietnam.
- **Mar 17 1990 – Cold War:** *Lithuania rejects Soviet demand to renounce its independence* » The former Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania steadfastly rejects a demand from the Soviet Union that it renounce its declaration of independence. The situation in Lithuania quickly became a sore spot in U.S.-Soviet relations.



**Lithuania Parliament vote for independence (left). Referendum poster (right) from 1990: Taip (Yes) stands for an independent and democratic Lithuania, while Ne (No) stands for an enslaved Lithuania.**

The Soviet Union had seized the Baltic state of Lithuania in 1939. Lithuanians complained long and loud about this absorption into the Soviet empire, but to no avail. Following World War II, Soviet forces did not withdraw and the United States made little effort to support Lithuanian independence. These matters stood until 1985 and the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev as leader of the Soviet Union. In 1989, as part of his policy of loosening political repression in the Soviet empire and improving relations with the West, Gorbachev repudiated the Brezhnev Doctrine of 1968, which stated that the Soviet Union was justified in using force to preserve already existing communist governments. Lithuanian nationalists took the repudiation of the Brezhnev Doctrine as a signal that a declaration of independence might be accepted.

On March 11, 1990, Lithuania declared that it was an independent nation, the first of the Soviet republics to do so. It had, however, overestimated Gorbachev’s intentions. The Soviet leader was willing to let communist governments in its eastern European satellites fall to democratic movements, but this policy did not apply to the republics of the Soviet Union. The Soviet government responded harshly to the Lithuanian declaration of independence and issued an ultimatum: renounce independence or face the consequences. On March 17, the Lithuanians gave their answer, rejecting the Soviet demand and asking that “democratic nations” grant them diplomatic recognition.

The Soviets had not been bluffing. The Soviet government insisted that it still controlled Lithuania, Gorbachev issued economic sanctions against the rebellious nation, and Soviet troops occupied sections of the capital city of Vilnius. In January 1991, the Soviets launched a larger-scale military operation against Lithuania. Many in the United States were horrified, and the U.S. Congress acted quickly to end economic assistance to the Soviet Union. Gorbachev was incensed by this action, but his powers in the Soviet Union were quickly eroding. In December 1991, 11 of the 12 Soviet Socialist Republics proclaimed their independence and established the Commonwealth of Independent States. Just a few

days after this action, Gorbachev resigned as president and what was left of the Soviet Union ceased to exist.

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- **Mar 18 1766 – American Revolution:** *Parliament repeals the Stamp Act* » After four months of widespread protest in America, the British Parliament repeals the Stamp Act, a taxation measure enacted to raise revenues for a standing British army in America.



The Stamp Act was passed on March 22, 1765, leading to an uproar in the colonies over an issue that was to be a major cause of the Revolution: taxation without representation. Enacted in November 1765, the controversial act forced colonists to buy a British stamp for every official document they obtained. The stamp itself displayed an image of a Tudor rose framed by the word “America” and the French phrase *Honi soit qui mal y pense*—“Shame to him who thinks evil of it.”

The colonists, who had convened the Stamp Act Congress in October 1765 to vocalize their opposition to the impending enactment, greeted the arrival of the stamps with outrage and violence. Most Americans called for a boycott of British goods, and some organized attacks on the customhouses and homes of tax collectors. After months of protest, and an appeal by Benjamin Franklin before the British House of Commons, Parliament voted to repeal the Stamp Act in March 1766. However, the same day, Parliament passed the Declaratory Acts, asserting that the British government had free and total legislative power over the colonies.

- **Mar 18 1864 – Civil War:** *Lincoln praises Sanitary Commission for work with troops* » the U.S. Sanitary Commission Fair in Washington, D.C., closes with President Abraham Lincoln commending the organization for its work on behalf of Union soldiers.

Established in 1861 as a federal government agency, the Sanitary Commission was responsible for coordinating the efforts of thousands of volunteers during the Civil War. The group’s workers raised some \$25 million in donations and medical supplies; sent inspectors to military camps to oversee the set up of clean water supplies, latrines, and cooking facilities; worked alongside doctors and nurses on the frontlines to help evacuate wounded troops; sewed uniforms and blankets and provided lodging and meals to injured soldiers returning home on furlough. Although administered by men, the organization was made up primarily of female volunteers and represented a major contribution by Yankee women to the war effort.



Mary Ann Bickerdyke

Some generals and Army doctors found Sanitary Commission volunteers annoying and meddlesome, especially when they criticized the military's medical practices. One physician complained about what he saw as "sensation preachers, village doctors, and strong-minded women" interfering with his work and that of his colleagues. Among the group's members was the no-nonsense Mary Ann Bickerdyke, who became the commission's agent to the Army of the Tennessee before the Battle of Shiloh in April 1862. Bickerdyke was dedicated to caring for common soldiers and not afraid to challenge doctors and officers when she thought troop care was being compromised. At Chattanooga, Tennessee, Bickerdyke ordered timbers for breastworks burned to keep wounded soldiers warm. When military police asked her who had authorized the burning, she replied, "Under the authority of God Almighty. Have you got anything better than that?"

The Sanitary Commission's work fit traditional roles for 19th-century American women as caretakers and nurturers of men. However, the group's activities also enabled women to gain work experience outside the home, and in that way can be seen as a step forward for the women's rights movement. At the closing of the March 1864 Sanitation Commission Fair, Lincoln stated: "If all that has been said by orators and poets since the creation of the world in praise of women applied to the women of America, it would not do them justice for their conduct during this war."

- **Mar 18 1865 – Civil War:** The Congress of the Confederate States adjourns for the last time.
- **Mar 18 1915 – WWI:** Battle of Gallipoli - British and French forces launch an ill-fated naval attack on Turkish forces in the Dardanelles, the narrow, strategically vital strait in northwestern Turkey separating Europe from Asia. Three battleships are sunk during a failed British and French naval attack on the Dardanelles.



- **Mar 18 1940 – WW2:** *Hitler/Mussolini Brenner Pass Meeting* » Germany's Adolf Hitler met the Italian leader Benito Mussolini in his railway carriage in the Brenner Pass, high in the Alps, close to the border between the two countries and agree to form an alliance against France and the United Kingdom. The haste with which the meeting was arranged had led Mussolini to suppose that Hitler

‘would soon set off the powder keg’. In the journey to the meeting Mussolini told his Foreign Minister, Count Ciano, that the Italians will not join the war until the moment that is ‘convenient’ to them, that they will form the ‘left wing’ of the offensive, tying up troops without actually fighting. After the meeting, however, it seems less certain that Hitler would go to war. Ciano recorded the meeting in his diary:

*The Hitler meeting is very cordial on both sides. The conference ... is more a monologue than anything else. Hitler talks all the time, but is less agitated than usual. He makes few gestures and speaks in a quiet tone. He looks physically fit. Mussolini listens to him with interest and with deference. He speaks little and confirms his intention to move with Germany. He reserves to himself only the choice of the right moment ... The conference ends with a short meal.*

*Later Mussolini gives me his impressions. He did not find in Hitler that uncompromising attitude which von Ribbentrop had led him to suspect. Yesterday, as well, von Ribbentrop only opened his mouth to harp on Hitler’s intransigency. Mussolini believes that Hitler will think twice before he begins an offensive on land. The meeting has not substantially changed our position.*

- **Mar 18 1942 – WW2:** War Relocation Authority is established in United States » Created to “Take all people of Japanese descent into custody, surround them with troops, prevent them from buying land, and return them to their former homes at the close of the war.”



Hayward, California, May 8, 1942. Two children of the Mochida family (left) who, with their parents, are awaiting evacuation bus. A homemade planter (right) and a doily beside a service portrait, a prayer, and a letter home. One of the few ways to earn permission to leave the camps was to enter military service.

Anger toward and fear of Japanese Americans began in Hawaii shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor; everyone of Japanese ancestry, old and young, prosperous and poor, was suspected of espionage. This suspicion quickly broke out on the mainland; as early as February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered that German, Italian, and Japanese nationals—as well as Japanese Americans—be barred from certain areas deemed sensitive militarily. California, which had a significant number of Japanese and Japanese Americans, saw a particularly virulent form of anti-Japanese sentiment, with the state’s attorney general, Earl Warren (who would go on to be the chief justice of the United States), claiming that a lack of evidence of sabotage among the Japanese population proved nothing, as they were merely biding their time.

While roughly 2,000 people of German and Italian ancestry were interned during this period, Americans of Japanese ancestry suffered most egregiously. The War Relocation Authority, established on March 18, 1942, was aimed at them specifically: 120,000 men, women, and children were rounded up on the West Coast. Three categories of internees were created: Nisei (native U.S. citizens of Japanese immigrant parents), Issei (Japanese immigrants), and Kibei (native U.S. citizens educated largely in Japan). The internees were transported to one of 10 relocation centers in California, Utah, Arkansas, Arizona, Idaho, Colorado, and Wyoming.

The quality of life in a relocation center was only marginally better than prison: Families were sardined into 20- by 25-foot rooms and forced to use communal bathrooms. No razors, scissors, or radios were allowed. Children attended War Relocation Authority schools.

One Japanese American, Gordon Hirabayashi, fought internment all the way to the Supreme Court. He argued that the Army, responsible for effecting the relocations, had violated his rights as a U.S. citizen. The court ruled against him, citing the nation's right to protect itself against sabotage and invasion as sufficient justification for curtailing his and other Japanese Americans' constitutional rights.

In 1943, Japanese Americans who had not been interned were finally allowed to join the U.S. military and fight in the war. More than 17,000 Japanese Americans fought; the all-Nisei 442nd Regiment, which fought in the Italian campaign, became the single most decorated unit in U.S. history. The regiment won 4,667 medals, awards, and citations, including 1 Medal of Honor, 52 Distinguished Service Crosses, and 560 Silver Stars. Many of these soldiers, when writing home, were writing to relocation centers.

In 1990, reparations were made to surviving internees and their heirs in the form of a formal apology by the U.S. government and a check for \$20,000.

- **Mar 18 1944 – WW2:** Nazi Germany occupies Hungary
- **Mar 18 1945 – WW2:** On 16 March, USS Lowe (DE-325) acquired U-866 on sonar and commenced a hedgehog attack. This attack missed the U-boat, which then settled on the ocean floor, attempting to hide from the attacking surface ships. Unfortunately for the U-boat, the seabed in the area was ideal for the surface ship's sonar and USS Lowe, USS Menges, USS Mosley, and USS Pride, all destroyer escorts, continued to attack with depth charges, until the U-boat was judged destroyed by 18 MAR with all [48] hands. She was not credited with having sunk any allied shipping.
- **Mar 18 1945 – WW2:** 1,250 American bombers attack Berlin.
- **Mar 18 1950 – Cold War:** *Nationalist Chinese forces invade mainland China* » In a surprise raid on the communist People's Republic of China (PRC), military forces of the Nationalist Chinese government on Taiwan invade the mainland and capture the town of Sungmen. Because the United States supported the attack, it resulted in even deeper tensions and animosities between the U.S. and the PRC.





Mao & Chang

In October 1949, the leader of the communist revolution in China, Mao Zedong, declared victory against the Nationalist government of China and formally established the People's Republic of China. Nationalist troops, politicians, and supporters fled the country and many ended up on Taiwan, an island off the Chinese coast. Once there, they declared themselves the real Chinese government and were immediately recognized as such by the United States. Officials from the United States refused to have anything to do with the PRC government and adamantly refused to grant it diplomatic recognition.

Nationalist Chinese leader Chiang Kai-Shek bombarded the mainland with propaganda broadcasts and pamphlets dropped from aircraft signaling his intention of invading the PRC and removing what he referred to as the "Soviet aggressors." In the weeks preceding the March 18, 1950 raid, Chiang had been particularly vocal, charging that the Soviets were supplying the PRC with military advisors and an imposing arsenal of weapons. On March 18, thousands of Nationalist troops, supported by air and sea units, attacked the coast of the PRC, capturing the town of Sungmen that lay about 200 miles south of Shanghai. The Nationalists reported that they killed over 2,500 communist troops. Battles between the raiding group and communist forces continued for weeks, but eventually the Nationalist forces were defeated and driven back to Taiwan.

Perhaps more important than the military encounter was the war of words between the United States and the PRC. Communist officials immediately charged that the United States was behind the raid, and even suggested that American pilots and advisors accompanied the attackers. (No evidence has surfaced to support those charges.) American officials were cautiously supportive of the Nationalist attack, though what they hoped it would accomplish beyond minor irritation to the PRC remains unknown. Just eight months later, military forces from the PRC and the United States met on the battlefield in Korea. Despite suggestions from some officials, including the commander of U.S. troops Gen. Douglas MacArthur, that the United States "unleash" the Nationalist armies against mainland China, President Harry S. Truman refrained from this action, fearing that it would escalate into World War III.

- **Mar 18 1969 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. bombs Cambodia for the first time* » U.S. B-52 bombers are diverted from their targets in South Vietnam to attack suspected communist base camps and supply areas in Cambodia for the first time in the war. President Nixon approved the mission—formally designated Operation Breakfast—at a meeting of the National Security Council on 15 MAR. This mission and subsequent B-52 strikes inside Cambodia became known as the "Menu" bombings. A total of 3,630 flights over Cambodia dropped 110,000 tons of bombs during a 14-month period through April 1970. This bombing of Cambodia and all follow up "Menu" operations were kept secret from the

American public and the U.S. Congress because Cambodia was ostensibly neutral. To keep the secret, an intricate reporting system was established at the Pentagon to prevent disclosure of the bombing. Although the New York Times broke the story of the secret bombing campaign in May 1969, there was little adverse public reaction.

- **Mar 18 1970 – Vietnam War:** *Lon Nol ousts Prince Sihanou* » Returning to Cambodia after visits to Moscow and Peking, Prince Norodom Sihanouk is ousted as Cambodian chief of state in a bloodless coup by pro-western Lt. Gen. Lon Nol, premier and defense minister, and First Deputy Premier Prince Sisowath Sirik Matak, who proclaim the establishment of the Khmer Republic. Sihanouk had tried to maintain Cambodian neutrality, but the communist Khmer Rouge, supported by their North Vietnamese allies, had waged a very effective war against Cambodian government forces. After ousting Sihanouk and taking control of the government, Lon Nol immediately set about to defeat the communists. Between 1970 and 1975, he and his army, the Forces Armees Nationales Khmer (FANK), with U.S. support and military aid, would battle the Khmer Rouge communists for control of Cambodia.



Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Lt. Gen. Lon Nol, and Prince Sisowath Sirik Matak

When the U.S. forces departed South Vietnam in 1973, both the Cambodians and South Vietnamese found themselves suddenly fighting the communists alone. Without U.S. support, Lon Nol's forces succumbed to the Khmer Rouge in April 1975. The victorious Khmer Rouge evacuated Phnom Penh and began reordering Cambodian society, which resulted in a killing spree and the notorious "killing fields." Eventually, hundreds of thousands of Cambodians were murdered or died from exhaustion, hunger, and disease. During the five years of bitter fighting for control of the country, approximately 10 percent of Cambodia's 7 million people died.

- **Mar 18 1975 – Iraqi\*Kurdish conflict:** Kurds end fight against Iraqi army.
- **Mar 18 1991 – Desert Shield/Storm:** The first ship supporting Operation Desert Shield/Storm, combat store ship USS Sylvania (AFS 2), returns back to Norfolk, Va. While supporting Desert Shield/Storm, Sylvania delivered 19,000+ pallets of cargo (equaling 20,500 tons of supplies), answered 30,000+ requisitions, and delivered spare parts and food sustaining 35,000+ sailors aboard 150 ships.

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- **Mar 19 1863 – Civil War:** The SS Georgiana, said to have been the most powerful Confederate cruiser, is destroyed on her maiden voyage with a cargo of munitions, medicines and merchandise then

valued at over \$1,000,000. Wreck discovered exactly 102 years later by teenage diver and pioneer underwater archaeologist E. Lee Spence

- **Mar 19 1865 – Civil War:** *Battle of Bentonville, North Carolina begins* » At the Battle of Bentonville, North Carolina, Confederate General Joseph Johnston makes a desperate attempt to stop Union General William T. Sherman's drive through the Carolinas in the Civil War's last days; however, Johnston's motley force cannot stop the advance of Sherman's mighty army.

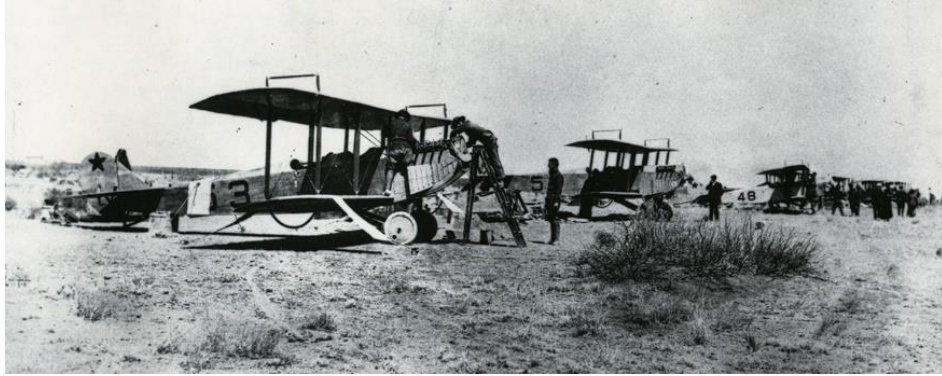


Following his famous March to the Sea in late 1864, Sherman paused for a month at Savannah, Georgia. He then turned north into the Carolinas, destroying all that lay in his path in an effort to demoralize the South and hasten the end of the war. Sherman left Savannah with 60,000 men divided into two wings. He captured Columbia, South Carolina, in February and continued towards Goldsboro, North Carolina, where he planned to meet up with another army coming from the coast. Sherman intended to march to Petersburg, Virginia, where he would join General Ulysses S. Grant and crush the army of Robert E. Lee, the largest remaining Confederate force.

Sherman assumed that Rebel forces in the Carolinas were too widely dispersed to offer any significant resistance, but Johnston assembled 17,000 troops and attacked one of Sherman's wings at Bentonville on 19 MAR. The Confederates initially surprised the Yankees, driving them back before a Union counterattack halted the advance and darkness halted the fighting. The next day, Johnston established a strong defensive position and hoped for a Yankee assault. More Union troops arrived and gave Sherman a nearly three to one advantage over Johnston. When a Union force threatened to cut off the Rebel's only line of retreat on 21 MAR, Johnston withdrew his army northward.

The Union lost 194 men killed, 1,112 wounded, and 221 missing, while the Confederates lost some 240 killed, 1,700 wounded, and 1,500 missing. About Sherman, Johnston wrote to Lee that, "I can do no more than annoy him." A month later, Johnston surrendered his army to Sherman.

- **Mar 19 1916 – WW1:** *First U.S. air combat mission begins* » Eight Curtiss "Jenny" planes of the First Aero Squadron take off from Columbus, New Mexico, in the first combat air mission in U.S. history. The First Aero Squadron, organized in 1914 after the outbreak of World War I, was on a support mission for the 7,000 U.S. troops who invaded Mexico to capture Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa.



On March 9, 1916, Villa, who opposed American support for Mexican President Venustiano Carranza, led a band of several hundred guerrillas across the border on a raid of the town of Columbus, New Mexico, killing 17 Americans. On 15 MAR, under orders from President Woodrow Wilson, U.S. Brigadier General John J. Pershing launched a punitive expedition into Mexico to capture Villa. Four days later, the First Aero Squadron was sent into Mexico to scout and relay messages for General Pershing.

Despite numerous mechanical and navigational problems, the American fliers flew hundreds of missions for Pershing and gained important experience that would later be used by the pilots over the battlefields of Europe. However, during the 11-month mission, U.S. forces failed to capture the elusive revolutionary, and Mexican resentment over U.S. intrusion into their territory led to a diplomatic crisis. In late January 1917, with President Wilson under pressure from the Mexican government and more concerned with the war overseas than with bringing Villa to justice, the Americans were ordered home.

- **Mar 19 1918 – WW1:** Ensign Stephen Potter is the first American to shoot down an enemy seaplane, a German plane off the German coast during World War I.
- **Mar 19 1941 – WW2:** The 99th Pursuit Squadron also known as the Tuskegee Airmen, the first all-black unit of the Army Air Corp, is activated.
- **Mar 19 1942 – WW2:** FDR orders men between 45 & 64 to register for non-military duty.
- **Mar 19 1942 – WW2:** *Holocaust* » Nazis arrest and deport to Auschwitz 50 Jews from Kraków as part of an operation directed against Jewish intellectuals.
- **Mar 19 1944 – WW2:** Nazi forces occupy Hungary.
- **Mar 19 1945 – WW2:** Adolf Hitler issues his "Nero Decree" ordering all industries, military installations, shops, transportation facilities and communications facilities in Germany to be destroyed.
- **Mar 19 1945 – WW2:** *General Fromm executed for plot against Hitler* » The commander of the German Home Army, Gen. Friedrich Fromm, is shot by a firing squad for his part in the July plot to assassinate the Fuhrer. The fact that Fromm's participation was half-hearted did not save him.



By 1944, many high-ranking German officials had made up their minds that Hitler must die. He was leading Germany in a suicidal war on two fronts, and they believed that assassination was the only way to stop him. According to the plan, coup d'état would follow the assassination, and a new government in Berlin would save Germany from complete destruction at the hands of the Allies. All did not go according to plan, however. Col. Claus von Stauffenberg was given the task of planting a bomb during a conference that was to be held at Hitler's holiday retreat, Berchtesgaden (but was later moved to Hitler's headquarters at Rastenburg). Stauffenberg was chief of staff to Gen. Friedrich Fromm. Fromm, chief of the Home Army (composed of reservists who remained behind the front lines to preserve order at home), was inclined to the conspirators' plot, but agreed to cooperate actively in the coup only if the assassination was successful.

] On the night of July 20, 1944, Stauffenberg planted an explosive-filled briefcase under a table in the conference room at Rastenburg. Hitler was studying a map of the Eastern Front as Colonel Heinz Brandt, trying to get a better look at the map, moved the briefcase out of place, farther away from where the Führer was standing. At 12:42 p.m. the bomb went off. When the smoke cleared, Hitler was wounded, charred, and even suffered the temporary paralysis of one arm—but was very much alive.

Meanwhile, Stauffenberg had made his way to Berlin to meet with his co-conspirators to carry out Operation Valkyrie, the overthrow of the central government. Once in the capital, General Fromm, who had been informed by phone that Hitler was wounded but still alive, ordered Stauffenberg and his men arrested, but Fromm was located and locked in an office by Nazi police. Stauffenberg and Gen. Friedrich Olbricht began issuing orders for the commandeering of various government buildings. Then the news came through from Herman Goering that Hitler was alive. Fromm, released from confinement by officers still loyal to Hitler, and anxious to have his own association with the conspirators covered up quickly, ordered the conspirators, including two Stauffenberg aides, shot for high treason that same day. (Gen. Ludwig Beck, one of the conspiracy leaders and an older man, was allowed the "dignity" of committing suicide.)

Fromm's last-ditch effort to distance himself from the plot failed. Within the next few days, on order of Heinrich Himmler, who was now the new head of the Home Army, Fromm was arrested. In February 1945, he was tried before the People's Court and denigrated for his cowardice in refusing to stand up to the plotters. But because he went so far as to execute Stauffenberg and his partners on the night of 20 JUL, he was spared the worst punishment afforded convicted conspirators—strangulation on a meat hook. He was shot by a firing squad on 19 MAR.

- **Mar 19 1945 – WW2:** Off the coast of Japan, a dive bomber hits the aircraft carrier USS Franklin, killing 724 of her crew. Badly damaged, the ship is able to return to the U.S. under her own power.
- **Mar 19 1945 – Cold War:** In a precursor to the establishment of a separate, Soviet-dominated East Germany, the People’s Council of the Soviet Zone of Occupation approves a new constitution. This action, together with the U.S. policy of pursuing an independent pathway in regards to West Germany, contributed to the permanent division of Germany.
- **Mar 19 1949 – Cold War:** *East Germany approves new constitution* » In a precursor to the establishment of a separate, Soviet-dominated East Germany, the People’s Council of the Soviet Zone of Occupation approves a new constitution. This action, together with the U.S. policy of pursuing an independent pathway in regards to West Germany, contributed to the permanent division of Germany.

The postwar status of Germany had become a bone of contention between the United States and the Soviet Union even before World War II ended. The Soviet Union wanted assurances that Germany would be permanently disarmed and demanded huge reparations from the postwar German government. The United States, however, was hesitant to commit to these demands. By 1945, many U.S. officials began to see the Soviet Union as a potential adversary in the postwar world and viewed a reunified-and pro-West-Germany as valuable to the defense of Europe. When the war ended in May 1945, Russian forces occupied a large portion of Germany, including Berlin. Negotiations between the United States, Russia, Britain, and France resulted in the establishment of occupation zones for each nation. Berlin was also divided in zones of occupation. While both the United States and Russia publicly called for a reunified Germany, both nations were coming to the conclusion that a permanently divided Germany might be advantageous.

For the United States, West Germany, with its powerful economy and potential military strength, would make for a crucial ally in the developing Cold War. The Soviets came to much the same conclusion in regards to East Germany. When, in 1949, the United States proposed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (a military and political alliance between America and several European states) and began to discuss the possible inclusion of a remilitarized West Germany in NATO, the Soviets reacted quickly. The new constitution for East Germany, approved by the People’s Council of the Soviet Zone of Occupation (a puppet legislative body dominated by the Soviets), made clear that the Russians were going to establish a separate and independent East Germany. In October 1949, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) was declared. Months earlier, in May, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) had been formally proclaimed. Germany remained a divided nation until the collapse of the communist government in East Germany and reunification in 1990.

- **Mar 19 1965 – Post Civil War:** The wreck of the SS Georgiana, valued at over \$50,000,000 and said to have been the most powerful Confederate cruiser, is discovered by teenage diver and pioneer underwater archaeologist E. Lee Spence, exactly 102 years after its destruction.
- **Mar 19 1966 – Vietnam War:** *Seoul agrees to send additional troops* » The South Korean Assembly votes to send 20,000 additional troops to Vietnam to join the 21,000 Republic of Korea (ROK) forces already serving in the war zone. The South Korean contingent was part of the Free World Military

Forces, an effort by President Lyndon B. Johnson to enlist allies for the United States and South Vietnam. By securing support from other nations, Johnson hoped to build an international consensus behind his policies in Vietnam. The effort was also known as the “many flags” program.

South Korean forces had been in South Vietnam since August 1964, when Seoul sent a liaison unit to Saigon. The first contingent was followed in February 1965 by engineer units and a mobile hospital. Although initially assigned to non-combat duties, they came under fire on April 3. In September 1965, in response to additional pleas from Johnson, the South Korean government greatly expanded its troop commitment to Vietnam and agreed to send combat troops. By the close of 1969, over 47,800 Korean soldiers were actively involved in combat operations in South Vietnam. Seoul began to withdraw its troops in February 1972, following the lead of the United States as it drastically reduced its troop commitment in South Vietnam.

- **Mar 19 1970 – Vietnam War:** *National emergency declared in Cambodia* » The National Assembly grants “full power” to Premier Lon Nol, declares a state of emergency, and suspends four articles of the constitution, permitting arbitrary arrest and banning public assembly. Lon Nol and First Deputy Premier Prince Sisowath Sirik Matak had conducted a bloodless coup against Prince Norodom Sihanouk the day before and proclaimed the establishment of the Khmer Republic.

Between 1970 and 1975, Lon Nol and his army, the Forces Armees Nationales Khmer (FANK), with U.S. support and military aid, fought the communist Khmer Rouge for control of Cambodia. 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 succumbed to the Khmer Rouge in April 1975. The victorious Khmer Rouge evacuated Phnom Penh and began reordering Cambodian society, which resulted in a killing spree and the notorious “killing fields.” Eventually, hundreds of thousands of Cambodians were murdered or died from exhaustion, hunger, and disease. During the five years of bitter fighting, approximately 10 percent of Cambodia’s 7 million people died.

- **Mar 19 1982 – Falklands War:** Argentinian forces land on South Georgia Island, precipitating war with the U.K.
- **Mar 19 2002 – U.S. Invasion of Afghanistan:** Operation Anaconda ends (started on March 2) after killing 500 Taliban and al Qaeda fighters with 11 allied troop fatalities.
- **Mar 19 2003 – Iraq:** *War in Iraq begins* » The United States, along with coalition forces primarily from the United Kingdom, initiates war on Iraq. Just after explosions began to rock Baghdad, Iraq’s capital, U.S. President George W. Bush announced in a televised address, “At this hour, American and coalition forces are in the early stages of military operations to disarm Iraq, to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger.” President Bush and his advisors built much of their case for war on the idea that Iraq, under dictator Saddam Hussein, possessed or was in the process of building weapons of mass destruction.



Hostilities began about 90 minutes after the U.S.-imposed deadline for Saddam Hussein to leave Iraq or face war passed. The first targets, which Bush said were “of military importance,” were hit with Tomahawk cruise missiles from U.S. fighter-bombers and warships stationed in the Persian Gulf. In response to the attacks, Republic of Iraq radio in Baghdad announced, “the evil ones, the enemies of God, the homeland and humanity, have committed the stupidity of aggression against our homeland and people.”

Though Saddam Hussein had declared in early March 2003 that, “it is without doubt that the faithful will be victorious against aggression,” he went into hiding soon after the American invasion, speaking to his people only through an occasional audiotape. Coalition forces were able to topple his regime and capture Iraq’s major cities in just three weeks, sustaining few casualties. President Bush declared the end of major combat operations on May 1, 2003. Despite the defeat of conventional military forces in Iraq, an insurgency has continued an intense guerrilla war in the nation in the years since military victory was announced, resulting in thousands of coalition military, insurgent and civilian deaths.

After an intense manhunt, U.S. soldiers found Saddam Hussein hiding in a six-to-eight-foot deep hole, nine miles outside his hometown of Tikrit. He did not resist and was uninjured during the arrest. A soldier at the scene described him as “a man resigned to his fate.” Hussein was arrested and began trial for crimes against his people, including mass killings, in October 2005.

In June 2004, the provisional government in place since soon after Saddam’s ouster transferred power to the Iraqi Interim Government. In January 2005, the Iraqi people elected a 275-member Iraqi National Assembly. A new constitution for the country was ratified that October. On November 6, 2006, Saddam Hussein was found guilty of crimes against humanity and sentenced to death by hanging. After an unsuccessful appeal, he was executed on December 30, 2006.

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- **Mar 20 1774 – Pre American Revolution:** The British parliament passes first of the Intolerable Acts: the Boston Port Act, which closed Boston harbor until colonists would pay for damages following the Boston Tea Party
- **Mar 20 1778 – American Revolution:** *King Louis XVI receives U.S. representatives* » Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane and Arthur Lee present themselves to France’s King Louis XVI as official representatives of the United States on this day in 1778. Louis XVI was skeptical of the fledgling republic, but his dislike of the British eventually overcame these concerns and France officially recognized the United States in February 1778.





Some of the great ironies of the American Revolution lay in the relationship between the new United States and the French. In 1774, when Parliament decided to offer religious toleration and judicial autonomy to French-speaking Catholics in Quebec, North American colonists expressed horror at the notion of empowered French Catholics on their borders. In 1778, though, Franklin, Deane and Lee, all proponents of democratic government, were delighted at the prospect that the French Catholic monarchy, ruling by divine right, would come to their aid in a war against British parliamentary rule.

As for the French, they had recently been dealt a humiliating defeat in the Seven Years' War by the British and stripped them of their own North American empire but still, they were loathe to declare war on Britain as an official American ally. King Louis XVI permitted secret aid to the American cause beginning in May 1776. The two most powerful men at court finally decided to make their support public in 1778 for opposing reasons. Louis XVI, who had previously refused to commit himself to a potentially losing cause, only decided to back the Patriots when they proved themselves capable of ultimate victory with a win at Saratoga in October 1777. By contrast, the French foreign minister, Charles Gravier, comte de Vergennes, had decided that the French should enter the war one month earlier, after the fall of Philadelphia to British control in September 1777 frightened him into thinking that the Patriots would give up without overt French aid.

- **Mar 20 1896 – Nicaragua:** Marines land in Nicaragua to protect US citizens in the wake of a revolution.
- **Mar 20 1916 – WWI:** Allies attack Zeebrugge Belgium
- **Mar 20 1917 – WWI:** After the sinking of 3 more American merchant ships, US President Woodrow Wilson meets with cabinet, who agree that war is inevitable
- **Mar 20 1922 – WWI:** Just two days after its navy suffered a demoralizing defeat against Turkish forces at the Dardanelles, the British government signs a secret agreement with Russia regarding the hypothetical post-World War I division of the former Ottoman Empire.
- **Mar 20 1922 – U.S. Navy:** The USS Langley (CV-1) is commissioned as the first United States Navy aircraft carrier.



- **Mar 20 1933 – Germany:** Dachau the first Nazi concentration camp, is completed
- **Mar 29 1939 – Germany\*Lithuania:** *German ultimatum to Lithuania* » An oral ultimatum by Joachim von Ribbentrop, Foreign Minister of Nazi Germany, is presented to Juozas Urbšys, Foreign Minister of Lithuania. The Germans demanded that Lithuania give up the Klaipėda Region (also known as the Memel Territory) which had been detached from Germany after World War I, or the Wehrmacht would invade Lithuania. The Lithuanians had been expecting the demand after years of rising tension between Lithuania and Germany, increasing pro-Nazi propaganda in the region, and continued German expansion. It was issued just five days after the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia.

Before the treaty was signed, German soldiers had already entered the port of Klaipėda. Adolf Hitler, on board the cruiser Deutschland, personally toured the city and gave a short speech. At the time the Lithuanian navy had only one warship

The 1924 Klaipėda Convention had guaranteed the protection of the status quo in the region, but the four signatories to that convention did not offer any material assistance. The United Kingdom and France followed a policy of appeasement, while Italy and Japan openly supported Germany, and Lithuania was forced to accept the ultimatum on 22 MAR. It proved to be the last territorial acquisition for Germany before World War II, producing a major downturn in Lithuania's economy and escalating pre-war tensions for Europe as a whole.

- **Mar 20 1942 – WW2:** *Holocaust* » In Rohatyn, western Ukraine, the German SS murder 3,000 Jews, including 600 children, annihilating 70% of Rohatyn's Jewish ghetto.
- **Mar 20 1942 – WW2:** General Douglas MacArthur, at Terowie, South Australia, makes his famous speech regarding the fall of the Philippines, in which he says: "I came out of Bataan and I shall return".
- **Mar 20 1942 – WW2:** German U-384 bombed and sunk.
- **Mar 20 1944 – WW2:** Four thousand U.S. Marines made a landing on unoccupied Emirau Island in the Bismarck Archipelago to develop an airbase as part of Operation Cartwheel for the encirclement of the major Japanese base at Rabaul.
- **Mar 20 1944 – WW2:** USS Angler (SS-240) completes the evacuation of 58 U.S. citizens, including women and children, from the west coast of Panay, Philippine Islands. The sub had been told there were only 20 people, straining the boats supplies until it arrived at Fremantle April 9.

- **Mar 20 1945 – WW2:** USS Kete (SS-369) missing. Most likely sunk by a mine or a Japanese submarine (perhaps RO 41) east of Okinawa. 87 killed.
- **Mar 20 1945 – WW2:** *British troops liberate Mandalay, Burma* » The 14th Army, under British Gen. William J. Slim, captures the Burmese city of Mandalay from the Japanese, bringing the Allies one step closer to liberating all of Burma.

Mandalay, a city on the Irrawaddy River in central Burma (now Myanmar), was the center of the communications in Burma, as well as of rail, road, and river travel. The British conquered Mandalay, the second-largest city in Burma, in 1885. Burma as a whole was detached from India by the British in the Government of India Act of 1935 and made a Crown Colony with its own constitution and parliament. Burmese nationalists plotted with the Japanese in the late 1930s to wrest Burma from the British Empire and bring the nation within the Japanese Empire. Attempts by the nationalists to undermine the building of the Burmese Road (which would create an overland link between the West and China) and incite riots failed, and Burma remained a British colony.

On December 8, 1941, the Japanese took matters into their own hands and invaded Burma. Troops landed at Victoria Point, at the southern tip of the peninsula. Moving north, the Japanese troops, composed mostly of disgruntled Burmese nationals who fashioned themselves an army of liberation, determined to expel the Brits from their homeland, advanced on Rangoon, Lashio (the Burmese end of the Burma Road into China), and Mandalay, which fell on May 2, 1942. With the Japanese holding central Burma, China was cut off from the West-and Western supplies.

In early 1944, British Gen. William J. Slim, commander of the 14th Army, led an offensive against the Japanese that broke a siege at Imphal. By mid-December, buoyed by his success, Slim launched an offensive against Meiktila, east of the Irrawaddy River and a key communication post between Rangoon and Mandalay. A strategy of misdirection was employed, with one corps headed toward Mandalay even as Slim's immediate objective was Meiktila. With the Japanese preoccupied with the first corps, a second corps took Meiktila on March 3, 1945, and Mandalay fell on the 20th. The 14th Army now controlled a significant swath of central Burma. Rangoon, the capital, would fall in May, returning Burma to British hands.

- **Mar 20 1945 – WW2:** US 70th Infantry division and 7th Armour division attack Saar.
- **Mar 20 1952 – Post WW2:** The United States Senate's final ratification of peace treaty restoring sovereignty to Japan.
- **Mar 20 1953 – Cold War:** *Nikita Khrushchev* » The Soviet government announces that Khrushchev has been selected as one of five men named to the new office of Secretariat of the Communist Party. Khrushchev's selection was a crucial first step in his rise to power in the Soviet Union—an advance that culminated in Khrushchev being named secretary of the Communist Party in September 1953, and premier in 1958.

The death of Joseph Stalin on March 5, 1953 created a tremendous vacuum in Soviet leadership. Stalin had ruled the Soviet Union since the 1920s. With his passing, the heir apparent was Georgi

Malenkov, who was named premier and first secretary of the Communist Party the day after Stalin's death. This seemingly smooth transition, however, masked a growing power struggle between Malenkov and Nikita Khrushchev. Khrushchev had been active in the Russian Communist Party since joining in 1918. After Stalin took control of the Soviet Union following Lenin's death in 1924, Khrushchev became an absolutely loyal follower of the brutal dictator. This loyalty served him well, as he was one of the few old Bolsheviks who survived Stalin's devastating political purges during the 1930s.

In the 1940s Khrushchev held a number of important positions in the Soviet government. Yet, when Stalin died in March 1953, Khrushchev was overlooked in favor of Malenkov. It did not take long for Khrushchev to take advantage of the mediocre Malenkov. First, he organized a coalition of Soviet politicians to force Malenkov to relinquish the post of first secretary—the more important post, since it controlled the party apparatus in the Soviet Union. Malenkov publicly stated that he was giving up the position to encourage the sharing of political responsibilities, but it was obvious that Khrushchev had gained a crucial victory. To replace Malenkov, the party announced the establishment of a new position, a five-man Secretariat. Even Western journalists noted that in announcing the five-person position, Khrushchev's name was always listed first, while the others were in alphabetical order. It was soon apparent that Khrushchev was the driving power in the Secretariat, and in September 1953, he secured enough backing to be named secretary of the Communist Party. In February 1955, he and his supporters pushed Malenkov out of the premiership and replaced him with a Khrushchev puppet, Nikolai Bulganin. In March 1958, Khrushchev consolidated his power by taking the office of premier himself.

Officials in the United States, including Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, badly underestimated Khrushchev. Initially, they considered him a lackey of Malenkov, but soon came to learn that the blunt and unsophisticated Khrushchev was a force to be reckoned with in Soviet politics. Despite their concern, Khrushchev's rise to power did initiate a period in which tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union began slightly to ease, as he called for "peaceful coexistence" between the two superpowers.

- **Mar 20 1954 – Vietnam War:** *Americans alarmed about impending French defeat* » After a force of 60,000 Viet Minh with heavy artillery had surrounded 16,000 French troops, news of Dien Bien Phu's impending fall reaches Washington.



French General Henri Navarre had positioned his forces 200 miles behind enemy lines in a remote area adjacent to the Laotian border. He hoped to draw the communists into a set-piece battle in which he supposed superior French firepower would prevail. He underestimated the enemy. Viet Minh General Vo Nguyen Giap entrenched artillery in the surrounding mountains and massed five divisions around the French positions. The battle, which far exceeded the size and scope of anything to date in

the war between the French and the Viet Minh, began with a massive Viet Minh artillery barrage and was followed by an infantry assault.

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and other members of the Eisenhower administration were stunned at the turn of events and discussions were held to decide on a course of action. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Arthur Radford proposed the use of nuclear strikes against the Viet Minh. Other options included massive conventional air strikes, paratrooper drops, and the mining of Haiphong Harbor. In the end, President Eisenhower decided that the situation was too far gone and ordered no action to be taken to aid the French.

Fierce fighting continued at Dien Bien Phu until May 7, 1954, when the Viet Minh overran the last French positions. The shock at the fall of Dien Bien Phu led France, already plagued by public opposition to the war, to agree to grant independence to Vietnam at the Geneva Conference in 1954.

- **Mar 20 1968 – Vietnam War:** *Retired Marine Commandant comments on conduct of war* » Retired U.S. Marine Corps Commandant Gen. David Shoup estimates that up to 800,000 men would be required just to defend South Vietnamese population centers. He further stated that the United States could only achieve military victory by invading the North, but argued that such an operation would not be worth the cost.



**Gen. David Shoup**

Also on this date the New York Times publishes excerpts from General Westmoreland's classified end-of-year report, which indicated that the U.S. command did not believe the enemy capable of any action even approximating the Tet Offensive. This report, Shoup's comments, and other conflicting assessments of the situation in Vietnam contributed to the growing dissatisfaction among a large segment of American society with the Vietnam War.

At the end of the previous year, Johnson administration officials had insisted that the United States had turned a corner in the war. The strength and scope of the Tet Offensive flew in the face of these claims, feeding a widening credibility gap. Despite administration assurances that the situation was getting better in Vietnam, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong had launched a massive attack at 3:00 A.M. on January 31, 1968, simultaneously hitting Saigon, Da Nang, Hue, and other major cities, towns, and military bases throughout South Vietnam. One assault team got within the walls of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon before they were destroyed. In the end, the communist forces were resoundingly defeated, but the United

States suffered a fatal strategic blow. The Tet Offensive cost the government the confidence of the American people and public opinion turned against the war.

- **Mar 20 1969 – Vietnam War:** U.S President Nixon proclaims he will end Vietnam War in 1970.
- **Mar 20 1980 – U.S.\*Iran:** U.S. appeals to International Court on hostages in Iran.
- **Mar 20 1995 – Terrorism:** *Tokyo Subway Chemical Attack* » The Japan doomsday cult Aum Shinrikyo was founded in 1984 by Shoko Asahara. The group had been accused of forcing people to join against their will, deceiving recruits, making false accusations and blackmailing members, and forcing people to give money. Members of the group engaged in multiple terror attacks, including spraying the anthrax bacteria from a building in the hopes of causing an epidemic. In 1993, the group began to manufacture sarin, a powerful nerve agent. The next year, it released sarin into Matsumoto, a large Japanese city to try to kill people involved in a lawsuit against cult members. Eight people died.

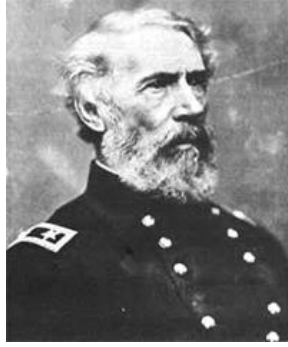
The year following it engaged in a more massive, and much more lethal, assault in the capital city of Tokyo. During the morning rush hour on 20 MAR, cult members released a chemical similar to sarin on five different Tokyo subways. In the attack, 13 people died, 54 were seriously wounded, and thousands more were wounded. The entire city went into a state of crisis. The cult never confessed to carrying out the attacks, but in 2018, the Japanese government executed the leader and other cult members.

- **Mar 20 2003 – Iraq:** Invasion of Iraq by American and British led coalition (the UK, Australia and Poland) begins without United Nations support and in defiance of world opinion after an ultimatum for Saddam Hussein and his sons to leave Iraq expires.

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- **Mar 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, the Loyalists not only kill several members of the Salem militia, but also two known Loyalists.
- **Mar 21 1863 – Civil War:** *Edwin V. Sumner dies* » Union General Edwin Vose Sumner dies while awaiting reassignment to the far West. His death came months after he led his corps at the Battle of Antietam in Maryland.

Born in Boston in 1793, Sumner joined the Army in 1819. He had already spent more than a quarter of a century in the military when he fought in the Mexican War (1846-48), traveling down the Santa Fe Trail with Stephen Watts Kearney to capture New Mexico. Sumner was transferred to Winfield Scott's command for the remainder of the war, and earned the nickname "Bullhead" when a bullet ricocheted off his skull at the Battle of Cerro Gordo.



Sumner served in Kansas during the 1850s when pro-slave and anti-slave settlers there clashed. He provided escort for president-elect Abraham Lincoln in 1861, and when the Civil War erupted, Lincoln made Sumner commander of the Department of the Pacific. In March 1862, he was given command of II Corps in the Army of the Potomac. During the Seven Days' Battles in June, Sumner performed somewhat sluggishly but his fighting spirit carried down to his men. At Antietam in September, Sumner's men attacked General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson's corps and nearly broke it before heavy fire drove them back. Sumner's command suffered a heavy toll, absorbing nearly half of the Union's 12,500 casualties from that day.

Sumner fought at Fredericksburg, Virginia, in December 1862, and remained loyal to General Ambrose Burnside in early 1863 when several generals were contemplating a mutiny against their commander. Tired of the infighting and political intrigue among the Army of the Potomac's staff, and perhaps feeling too old to command in the field, Sumner requested reassignment. He was again appointed to the Department of the Pacific, but died in Syracuse, New York, on March 21, 1863, before moving to the West.

- **Mar 21 1864 – Civil War: *Battle of Henderson Hill*** » The Battle occurred during the Red River Campaign when part of the 2nd Louisiana Cavalry and Edgar's Battery, 1st Texas Light Artillery were surprised and captured by the 35th Iowa Infantry and 33rd Missouri Infantry at upriver from Alexandria, Louisiana. The Federals made their approach during wretched weather with rain and hail helping mask their approach.

After dark, guided by deserters and jayhawkers, the two Federal regiments pushed forward toward the camp of the 2nd Louisiana Cavalry, commanded by Colonel William Vincent. At about 10:30 p.m., the guards at eight Confederate picket posts were surprised and captured without a shot being fired. Then at about midnight, the bluecoats found the main Confederate camp, and the 35th Iowa surrounded and captured the Southerners in the house and a section of Edgar's Battery before their presence had been discovered.

The Confederate guns were ready with horses hitched and two of the pieces loaded with canister, but obviously the men were not ready. The two Federal regiments then fixed bayonets and moved in on the rest of the camp, captured another section of the artillery and then the cavalymen, some of who were mounting their horses. Only a few shots were fired in resistance. While Colonel Vincent escaped, 16 officers and 206 men were captured, along with horses, cavalry equipment, artillery pieces and horses, and the encampment completely destroyed. Confederate General Richard Taylor had lost most the available cavalry he had at that time.

- **Mar 21 1865– Civil War: *Battle of Bentonville ends*** » By March 1865, both North and South realized that the long, bloody Civil War that had raged for four years was rapidly drawing to a close. With Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia trapped in the enemy’s stranglehold at Petersburg, and Major General William Sherman’s Union juggernaut racing out of Georgia and through the Carolinas, leaving a swath of destruction and desolation in its wake, there was a sense of desperation on one side and mounting expectant jubilation on the other.

Lee had convinced President Jefferson Davis that the South’s best hope of turning things around required the services of the president’s old nemesis, General Joseph E. Johnston. The much-maligned Johnston was sent to North Carolina and charged with a seemingly impossible task—stop Sherman, then race to Petersburg to join Lee.

Johnston tried—and, incredibly, for about four hours almost did exactly that. On March 19, 1865, near a place called Bentonville in east-central North Carolina, Johnston’s ragtag army managed to isolate and deal a telling blow to Maj. Gen. Henry Slocum’s wing of Sherman’s army. Unfortunately for the Confederates, who had little left but heart and pride, it was a case of far too little, too late. Fortunately for Sherman—as if he didn’t have a great enough advantage—the Confederates also had the burden of General Braxton Bragg commanding troops in the field. Though the battle would continue through 21 MAR, the valiant effort of Johnston’s army was effectively ended the first day with its failure to crush Slocum.

- **Mar 21 1907 – U.S.\*Honduras: *U.S. sends troops to Honduras*** » By 1907 the United States looked with considerable disfavor on the role President Santos Zelaya of Nicaragua was playing in regional affairs. When the Nicaraguan army entered Honduras in 1907 to overthrow President Manuel Bonilla, the United States government, believing that Zelaya wanted to dominate the entire region, landed marines at Puerto Cortés to protect the North American bananas trade. Other United States naval units prevented a Nicaraguan attack on Bonilla's last position at Amapala in the Golfo de Fonseca.



Presidents Bonilla and Zelaya

After negotiations conducted by the United States naval commander, Manuel Bonilla sought refuge on the U.S.S. Chicago, and the fighting came to an end. The United States chargé d'affaires in Tegucigalpa took an active role in arranging a final peace settlement, with which Zelaya was less than happy. The settlement provided for the installation of a compromise regime, headed by General Miguel



Dávila, in Tegucigalpa. Dávila was a liberal but was distrusted by Zelaya, who made a secret arrangement with El Salvador to oust him from office. This plan failed to reach fruition, but the United States, alarmed by the threat of renewed conflict in Central America, called the five Central American presidents to a conference in Washington in November.

The Central American Peace Conference of 1907 made a major effort to reduce the level of conflict within the region. A Honduran proposal to reestablish the political union of the Central American states failed to achieve acceptance, but several other measures were adopted. The five presidents signed the General Treaty of Peace and Amity of 1907 pledging themselves to establish the Permanent Central American Court of Justice, which would resolve future disputes. The treaty also committed the five countries to restrict the activities of exiles from neighboring states and provided the basis for legal extraditions. Of special interest was a United States-sponsored clause that provided for the permanent neutrality of Honduras in any future Central American conflicts.

Another convention adopted by all five states committed the signers to withhold recognition from governments that seized power by revolutionary means. The United States and Mexico, which had acted as cosponsors of the conference, indicated informally that they would also deny recognition to such governments. From the point of view of the United States Department of State, these agreements represented a major step toward stabilizing Central America in general and Honduras in particular.

- **Mar 21 1917 – WWI:** *U.S. Navy's 1st female Petty Officer* » Loretta Perfectus Walsh was the first woman to enlist in the U.S. Navy and the first woman to reach the rank of chief petty officer. This opportunity also made her the first woman to serve in a non-nursing capacity in any branch of the armed forces.



Like other Americans Walsh, who was almost 21, wanted to do her part, and she enlisted in the Naval Reserve. Days later, on March 21, 1917, she was sworn in as Chief Yeoman. Her position change was as a result of a change in policy by the Navy. As of March 19, 1917 the Navy became the first branch of the U.S. armed forces to allow women to enlist in a non-nursing capacity. The Naval Reserve brought women in as what they referred to as yeoman (F), also referred to as yeomanettes. Their duties ranged from clerical work and recruiting to production jobs in ammunition factories as well as design

work, drafting, translation, and radio operating responsibilities. Most of the women were stationed in Washington D.C., but some were stationed in France, Guam and Hawaii.

Notably, both men and women were earning \$28.75 per month—one instance of equal pay for both genders. Women who became yeomanettes were also given the same benefits as men of comparable rank—another unique feature for the time. When the armistice was signed about a year and a half later (November 11, 1918), there were 11,275 yeomanettes in the Navy and 300 “marinettes” in the Marine Corps. With the draw-down of the military, the need for yeomanettes declined. By 1919, those who remained were released from active duty. Walsh maintained her reserve status, drawing a small retainer salary, until the end of her four-year commitment.

- **Mar 21 1918 – WWI:** *Germany begins major offensive on the Western Front* » Near the Somme River in France, the German army launches its first major offensive on the Western Front in two years.



At the beginning of 1918, Germany’s position on the battlefields of Europe looked extremely strong. German armies occupied virtually all of Belgium and much of northern France. With Romania, Russia and Serbia out of the war by the end of 1917, conflict in the east was drawing to a close, leaving the Central Powers free to focus on combating the British and French in the west. Indeed, by March 21, 1918, Russia’s exit had allowed Germany to shift no fewer than 44 divisions of men to the Western Front.

German commander Erich Ludendorff saw this as a crucial opportunity to launch a new offensive—he hoped to strike a decisive blow to the Allies and convince them to negotiate for peace before fresh troops from the United States could arrive. In November, he submitted his plan for the offensive that what would become known as Kaiserschlacht, or the kaiser’s battle; Ludendorff code-named the opening operation Michael. Morale in the German army rose in reaction to the planned offensive. Many of the soldiers believed, along with their commanders, that the only way to go home was to push ahead.

Michael began in the early morning hours of March 21, 1918. The attack came as a relative surprise to the Allies, as the Germans had moved quietly into position just days before the bombardment began. From the beginning, it was more intense than anything yet seen on the Western Front. Ludendorff had worked with experts in artillery to create an innovative, lethal ground attack, featuring a quick, intense artillery bombardment followed by the use of various gases, first tear gas, then lethal phosgene and chlorine gases. He also coordinated with the German Air Service or Luftstreitkräfte, to maximize the force of the offensive.

Winston Churchill, at the front at the time as the British minister of munitions, wrote of his experience on 21 MAR: There was a rumble of artillery fire, mostly distant, and the thudding explosions of aeroplane raids. And then, exactly as a pianist runs his hands across a keyboard from treble to bass, there rose in less than one minute the most tremendous cannonade I shall ever hear. It swept around us in a wide curve of red flame

By the end of the first day, German troops had advanced more than four miles and inflicted almost 30,000 British casualties. As panic swept up and down the British lines of command over the next few days, the Germans gained even more territory. By the time the Allies hardened their defense at the end of the month, Ludendorff's army had crossed the Somme River and broken through enemy lines near the juncture between the British and French trenches. By the time Ludendorff called off the first stage of the offensive in early April, German guns were trained on Paris, and their final, desperate attempt to win World War I was in full swing.

- **Mar 21 1942 – WW2: *Holocaust*** » Resettlement of the ghetto in Lublin: 26,000 persons sent to extermination camps Belzec and Majdanek and other camps.
- **Mar 21 1943 – WW2:** Wehrmacht officer Rudolf von Gersdorff plots to assassinate Adolf Hitler by using a suicide bomb at the Zeughaus Museum in Berlin, where Hitler was to attend the annual memorial dedication. Once at the exhibition hall, Gersdorff was informed that the Fuhrer was to inspect the exhibits for only eight minutes—not enough time for the 10 minute fuses to melt down. Von Gersdorff was able to defuse the bomb in time and avoid suspicion.



**Rudolf von Gersdorff**

- **Mar 21 1944 – WW2:** General Eisenhower postpones invasion of the south of France until after Normandy
- **Mar 21 1945 – WW2:** Operation Carthage: Royal Air Force planes bomb Gestapo headquarters in Copenhagen, Denmark. They also hit a school and 125 civilians are killed.
- **Mar 21 1945 – WW2:** Bulgaria and the Soviet Union successfully complete their defense of the north bank of the Drava River as the Battle of the Transdanubian Hills concludes. Casualties and losses: Unknown

- **Mar 21 1945 – WW2:** 1st Japanese flying bombs (ochas) attack Okinawa.



- **Mar 21 1967 – Korean War:** 2,900,000 US Soldiers In Korea
- **Mar 21 1967 – Vietnam War:** *North Vietnam rejects Johnson overture* » 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.

Meanwhile, in South Vietnam, Operation Junction City produced what General William Westmoreland described as “one of the most successful single actions of the year.” In the effort, U.S. forces killed 606 Viet Cong in Tay Ninh Province and surrounding areas along the Cambodian border northwest of Saigon. The purpose of Operation Junction City was to drive the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops away from populated areas and into the open where superior American firepower could be more effectively used against them.

- **Mar 21 1971 – Vietnam War:** Two U.S. platoons in Vietnam refuse their orders to advance.
- **Mar 21 1972 – Vietnam War:** *Khmer Rouge shell Phnom Penh* » 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.



- **Mar 21 1980 – Cold War:** *Carter tells U.S. athletes of Olympic boycott* » 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.

After the Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan in December 1979 to prop up an unstable pro-Soviet government, the United States reacted quickly and sharply. It suspended arms negotiations with the Soviets, condemned the Russian action in the United Nations, and threatened to boycott the Olympics to be held in Moscow in 1980. When the Soviets refused to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan, President Carter finalized his decision to boycott the games. On March 21, 1980, he met with approximately 150 U.S. athletes and coaches to explain his decision. He told the crowd, “I understand how you feel,” and recognized their intense disappointment. However, Carter defended his action, stating, “What we are doing is preserving the principles and the quality of the Olympics, not destroying it.” Many of the athletes were devastated by the news. As one stated, “As citizens, it is an easy decision to make—support the president. As athletes, it is a difficult decision.” Others declared that the president was politicizing the Olympics. Most of the athletes only reluctantly supported Carter’s decision.



The U.S. decision to boycott the 1980 Olympic games had no impact on Soviet policy in Afghanistan (Russian troops did not withdraw until nearly a decade later), but it did tarnish the prestige of the games in Moscow. It was not the first time that Cold War diplomacy insinuated itself into international sports. The Soviet Union had refused to play Chile in World Cup soccer in 1973 because of the overthrow and death of Chile’s leftist president earlier that year. Even the playing field was not immune from Cold War tensions

- **Mar 21 1984 – Cold War:** *Soviet Sub and U.S. Carrier Collide* » A Soviet nuclear-powered submarine collided in the dark today with the United States aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk in the Sea of Japan, Pentagon officials said. They said that the 80,000-ton carrier had suffered no damage in the collision, which occurred at 10:07 P.M. local time, but that the 5,200-ton submarine, of what the Western nations designate as the Victor class, was seen on the surface dead in the water with a cruiser standing by to assist. The Soviet ships ignored American offers of assistance, the officials said. Naval officers said the Navy would conduct an inquiry. If the evidence showed that the submarine was at fault, a protest will probably be lodged with the Soviet Navy, the officers said.

- **Mar 22 1713 –Tuscarora War:** With the fall of Fort Neoheroke the war comes to an end, effectively opening up the interior of North Carolina to European colonization.
- **Mar 22 1765 – American Revolution:** *Stamp Act imposed on American colonies* » In an effort to raise funds to pay off debts and defend the vast new American territories won from the French in the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), the British government passes the Stamp Act on this day in 1765. The legislation levied a direct tax on all materials printed for commercial and legal use in the colonies, from newspapers and pamphlets 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. The colonists had recently been hit with three major taxes: the Sugar Act (1764), which levied new duties on imports of textiles, wines, coffee and sugar; the Currency Act (1764), which caused a major decline in the value of the paper money used by colonists; and the Quartering Act (1765), which required colonists to provide food and lodging to British troops.

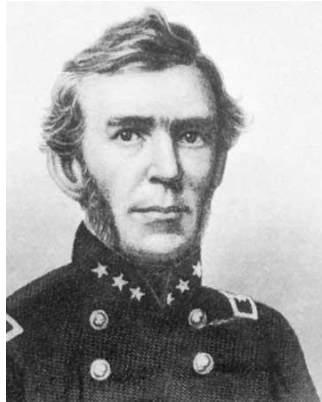


With the passing of the Stamp Act, the colonists' grumbling finally became an articulated response to what they saw as the mother country's attempt to undermine their economic strength and independence. They raised the issue of taxation without representation, and formed societies throughout the colonies to rally against the British government and nobles who sought to exploit the colonies as a source of revenue and raw materials. By October of that year, nine of the 13 colonies sent representatives to the Stamp Act Congress, at which the colonists drafted the "Declaration of Rights and Grievances," a document that railed against the autocratic policies of the mercantilist British empire.

Realizing that it actually cost more to enforce the Stamp Act in the protesting colonies than it did to abolish it, the British government repealed the tax the following year. The fracas over the Stamp Act, though, helped plant seeds for a far larger movement against the British government and the eventual battle for independence. Most important of these was the formation of the Sons of Liberty—a group of tradesmen who led anti-British protests in Boston and other seaboard cities—and other groups of wealthy landowners who came together from the across the colonies. Well after the Stamp Act was repealed, these societies continued to meet in opposition to what they saw as the abusive policies of the British

empire. Out of their meetings, a growing nationalism emerged that would culminate in the fighting of the American Revolution only a decade later.

- **Mar 22 1820 – Pre Civil War: *Braxton Bragg born*** » Confederate General Braxton Bragg is born in Warrenton, North Carolina. Bragg commanded the Army of Tennessee for 17 months, leading them to several defeats and losing most of the state of Tennessee to the Yankees.



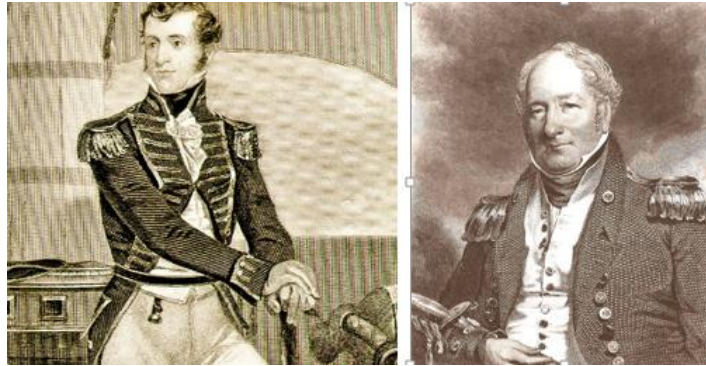
Bragg graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1837, and went on to fight in the Seminole War of the 1830s and the Mexican War in 1846 and 1847. In Mexico, he earned three promotions but also survived two assassination attempts by soldiers in his command. Bragg was temperamental and acerbic, a capable soldier but a difficult personality. These character flaws would later badly damage the Confederate war effort.

When the Civil War began, Bragg was appointed commander of the Gulf Coast defenses but soon promoted to major general and attached to General Albert Sidney Johnston's Army of Tennessee. Bragg fought bravely at the Battle of Shiloh on April 6-7, 1862, leading attacks while having two horses shot out from under him. When Johnston was killed during the battle, Bragg became second in command to Pierre G. T. Beauregard. After Beauregard was forced to relinquish his command for health reasons, Confederate President Jefferson Davis turned to Bragg.

Bragg's record as army commander was dismal. He marched northward in the fall of 1862 to regain Kentucky, but was turned back at the Battle of Perryville in October. On New Year's Eve, Bragg clashed with the army of Union General William Rosecrans at the Battle of Stones River, Tennessee. They fought to a standstill, but Bragg was forced to retreat and leave the Union in control of central Tennessee. In the summer of 1863, Rosecrans outmaneuvered Bragg, backing the Confederates entirely out of the state. Only at Chickamauga, Georgia, in September did Bragg finally win a battle, but the victory came in spite of Bragg's leadership rather than because of it.

Bragg followed up his victory by pinning the Yankees in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Union forces, now led by General Ulysses S. Grant, broke the siege in November and nearly destroyed Bragg's army. Bragg was finished, having now alienated most of his generals and lost the confidence of his soldiers. He resigned his command and went to Richmond, Virginia, to be a military advisor to President Davis. Bragg fled southward with Davis at the end of the war but both men were captured in Georgia. Bragg was soon released, and worked as an engineer and a railroad executive before his death in 1876.

- **Mar 22 1820 – U.S. Navy: *Naval hero killed in duel*** » U.S. Navy officer Stephen Decatur, hero of the Barbary Wars, is mortally wounded in a duel with disgraced Navy Commodore James Barron at Bladensburg, Maryland. Although once friends, Decatur sat on the court-martial that suspended Barron from the Navy for five years in 1808 and later opposed his reinstatement, leading to a fatal quarrel between the two men.



Decatur & Barron

Born in Maryland in 1779, Stephen Decatur was reared in the traditions of the sea and in 1798 joined the United States Navy as a midshipman aboard the new frigate, *United States*. That year, he saw action in the so-called quasi-war with France and in 1799 was commissioned a lieutenant. Five years later, during the Tripolitan War, he became the most lauded American naval hero since John Paul Jones.

In 1801, 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. Sustained action began in June 1803, and in October the U.S. frigate *Philadelphia* ran aground near Tripoli and was captured by Tripolitan gunboats. The Americans feared that the well-constructed warship would be used as a model for building future Tripolitan frigates, and on February 16, 1804, Stephen Decatur led a daring expedition into Tripoli harbor to destroy the captured vessel.

After disguising himself and his men as Maltese sailors, Decatur's force sailed into Tripoli harbor and boarded the *Philadelphia*, which was guarded by Tripolitans who were quickly overpowered by the Americans. After setting fire to the frigate, Decatur and his men escaped without the loss of a single American. The *Philadelphia* subsequently exploded when its gunpowder reserve was lit by the spreading fire. Famed British Admiral Horatio Nelson hailed the exploit as the “most bold and daring act of the age,” and Decatur was promoted to captain. In August 1804, Decatur returned to Tripoli Harbor as part of a larger American offensive and emerged as a hero again during the Battle of the Gunboats, which saw hand-to-hand combat between the Americans and the Tripolitans.

In 1807, Commodore James Barron, who fought alongside Decatur in the Tripolitan War, aroused considerable controversy when he failed to resist a British attack on his flagship, the *Chesapeake*. Decatur sat on the court-martial that passed a verdict expelling Barron from the Navy for five years. This began the dispute between Decatur and Barron that would end 13 years later on the dueling grounds in Maryland.

In the War of 1812, Decatur distinguished himself again when, as commander of the *USS United States*, he captured the British ship of war *Macedonian* off the Madeira Islands. Barron, meanwhile, was overseas when his Navy expulsion ended in 1813 and did not return to the United States to fight in



the ongoing war with England. This led to fresh criticism of Barron from Decatur, who later used his influence to prevent Barron's reinstatement in the Navy.

In June 1815, Decatur returned to the Mediterranean to lead U.S. forces in the Algerian War, the second Barbary conflict. By December, Decatur forced the dey (military ruler) of Algiers to sign a peace treaty that ended American tribute to Algeria. Upon his return to the United States, he was honored at a banquet in which he made a very famous toast: "Our country! In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong!"

Appointed to the Navy Board of Commissioners, Decatur arrived in Washington in 1816, where he became a prominent citizen and lived a satisfying life politically, economically, and socially. In 1818, however, dark clouds began to gather when he vocally opposed Barron's reinstatement into the Navy. The already strained relations between the two men deteriorated, and in March 1820 Decatur agreed to Barron's request to meet for a duel. Dueling, though generally frowned on, was still acceptable among Navy men. On March 22, at Bladensburg in Maryland, Decatur and Barron lifted their guns, fired, and each man hit his target. Decatur died several hours later in Washington, and the nation mourned the loss of the great naval hero. Barron recovered from his wounds and was reinstated into the Navy in 1821 with diminished rank.

- **Mar 22 1915 – WW1:** *Russians take Austrian garrison at Przemysl* » After six months of battle, the Austrian garrison at Przemysl (now in Poland), the citadel guarding the northeastern-most point of the Austro-Hungarian empire, falls to the Russians.



During the first weeks of World War I in August 1914, Russia had been able to mobilize more quickly than the Central Powers had expected, sending two armies into East Prussia and four into the Austrian province of Galicia, along the northern slopes of the Carpathian Mountains (now southeast Poland and western Ukraine). In Galicia, two armies moved in from the east and two from the west, both steadily advancing through the region, scoring victories over inferior numbers of Austrian troops, including at Lemberg (now Lvov) in early September.

Franz Conrad von Hotzendorff, chief of the Austrian general staff, had set up headquarters in Przemysl in accordance with his growing conviction that Galicia was a crucial front in the war, and that Russia—not Serbia, as Austrian military commanders had originally intended—had become the Austrian army's central opponent. Przemysl became a rallying point for the Austrians. As Conrad's headquarters, the city had been given seven new defensive fortifications—consisting of trenches and

barbed wire—and proved surprisingly resilient against the Russian onslaught. On September 16, 1914, its garrison was ordered to hold out until the end. Five days later, Russia's 8th Army, commanded by A.A. Brusilov, began their siege. Austria's 3rd Army fought forward and reinforced the garrison, where provisions soon began to dwindle among a growing number of troops. In mid-October, the Austrians managed to rebuild one of the nearby railway lines (previously destroyed by the Russians) and keep it open long enough to bring in supplies for the 130,000 soldiers—and 30,000 civilians—now in Przemyśl.

The stalwart Austrian resistance at Przemyśl tied up the Russian army, buying Austria-Hungary time to recoup its strength and slowing the Russians on their advance across the Carpathian Mountains toward the plains of Hungary. As the siege continued into the winter, neither side was prepared for the worsening conditions. Brusilov wrote of his army that they were literally unclad. Their summer clothing was worn out; my men, up to their knees in snow and enduring the most severe frosts had not yet received their winter kit. As for the men within Przemyśl's walls, they too were severely under-supplied and were forced to ration their food beginning in mid-November.

During the final days of battle at Przemyśl, fierce blizzards raged, and hundreds of wounded men froze to death on the battlefield before they could be treated. As Alexander von Krobatin, Austria's minister of war, wrote of the surrender, which finally took place on March 22, 1915: the food supply grew daily more and more scanty, until on the morning of the 22nd there was not a particle of bread in the stores, not a pound of meat or flour available, so that the commander of the fortress decided to surrender. Among the spoils of victory for the exhausted Russian forces were 700 heavy guns captured along with 120,000 Austrian soldiers (including nine generals).

By the end of March, then, Russia's armies were poised to move into Hungary. The loss of Przemyśl and the seeming weakness of their Austrian ally against the Russians disheartened the Germans, a mood tempered only by the British navy's spectacular failure against the Turks at the Dardanelles that same month. As Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz wrote: Everywhere the Russians are attacking ruthlessly and the Austrians are always beaten, and we too are getting nervous. Hindenburg is coming to the end of his resources. Germany would now be forced to turn its attention and resources to shoring up its Austrian ally in the east. For his part, Conrad complained that his German allies had won their victories at our expense; they have left us in the lurch.

- **Mar 22 1915 – WW1:** British and Indian troops in the Artois region of northern France attack the Germans around the village of Neuve Chapelle. The attack takes the outnumbered Germans by surprise. The British achieve their initial objective but fail to capitalize on the narrow breach they create in the German lines. After three days of fighting, with over 11,000 casualties, the British offensive is suspended. The Germans suffer over 10,000 casualties.
- **Mar 22 1942 – WW2:** *The Second Battle of Sirte* » A naval engagement in the Mediterranean, north of the Gulf of Sidra and southeast of Malta, in which the escorting warships of a British convoy to Malta frustrated a much more powerful Regia Marina (Italian Navy) squadron. The British convoy was composed of four merchant ships escorted by four light cruisers, one anti-aircraft cruiser, and 17 destroyers. The Italian force comprised a battleship, two heavy cruisers, one light cruiser, and eight destroyers.



Italian battleship *Littorio*, Admiral Iachino's flagship

Despite the initial British success at warding off the Italian squadron, the battle delayed the convoy's planned arrival before dawn, which exposed it to intense air attacks that sank all four merchant ships and one of the escorting destroyers in the following days leaving conditions on Malta critical.

- **Mar 22 1942 – WW2:** Sir Stanford Cripps, British statesman, arrives in India for talks with Mohandas Gandhi on Indian independence, in what will become known as the Cripps Mission.
- **Mar 22 1943 – WW2:** The entire population (149 people, including 75 children) of Khatyn in the Republic of Belarus near Minsk is burnt alive by the German 118th Schutzmannschaft Nazi battalion occupation force.
- **Mar 22 1943 – WW2:** USS Gudgeon (SS 211) attacks a Japanese convoy 30 miles north Surabaya, Java, sinking an army cargo ship while surviving the depth charge attack by her escort vessels.
- **Mar 22 1945 – WW2:** U.S. 3rd Army crosses Rhine at Nierstein.
- **Mar 22 1947 – Cold War:** *Truman orders loyalty checks of federal employees* » 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.



As the Cold War began to develop after World War II, fears concerning communist activity in the United States, particularly in the federal government, increased. Congress had already launched investigations of communist influence in Hollywood, and laws banning communists from teaching

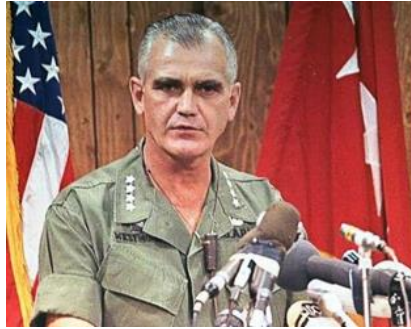
positions were being instituted in several states. Of most concern to the Truman administration, however, were persistent charges that communists were operating in federal offices. In response to these fears and concerns, Truman issued an executive order on March 21, 1947, which set up a program to check the loyalty of federal employees. In announcing his order, Truman indicated that he expected all federal workers to demonstrate “complete and unswerving loyalty” to the United States. Anything less, he declared, “constitutes a threat to our democratic processes.”

The basic elements of Truman’s order established the framework for a wide-ranging and powerful government apparatus to perform loyalty checks. Loyalty boards were to be set up in every department and agency of the federal government. Using lists of “totalitarian, fascist, communist, or subversive” organizations provided by the attorney general, and relying on investigations by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, these boards were to review every employee. If there existed “reasonable grounds” to doubt an employee’s loyalty, he or she would be dismissed. A Loyalty Review Board was set up under the Civil Service Commission to deal with employees’ appeals.

Truman’s loyalty program resulted in the discovery of only a few employees whose loyalty could be “reasonably” doubted. Nevertheless, for a time his order did quiet some of the criticism that his administration was “soft” on communism. Matters changed dramatically in 1949-1950. The Soviets developed an atomic bomb, China fell to the communists, and Senator Joseph McCarthy made the famous speech in which he declared that there were over 200 “known communists” in the Department of State. Once again, charges were leveled that the Truman administration was “coddling” communists, and in response, the Red Scare went into full swing.

- **Mar 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.”
- **Mar 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.



Gen. William Westmoreland



Gen. Creighton Abrams

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- **Mar 23 1775 – American Revolution:** *Patrick Henry voices American opposition to British policy* » 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.

The first major American opposition to British policy came in 1765 after Parliament passed the Stamp Act, a taxation measure to raise revenues for a standing British army in America. Under the banner of “no taxation without representation,” colonists convened the Stamp Act Congress in October 1765 to vocalize their opposition to the tax. With its enactment on November 1, 1765, most colonists called for a boycott of British goods and some organized attacks on the customhouses and homes of tax collectors. After months of protest, Parliament voted to repeal the Stamp Act in March 1765.



Most colonists quietly accepted British rule until Parliament’s enactment of the Tea Act in 1773, which granted the East India Company a monopoly on the American tea trade. Viewed as another example of taxation without representation, militant Patriots in Massachusetts organized the “Boston Tea Party,” which saw British tea valued at some 10,000 pounds dumped into Boston harbor. Parliament, outraged by the Boston Tea Party and other blatant destruction of British property, enacted the Coercive Acts, also known as the Intolerable Acts, in 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 the British.

With the other colonies watching intently, Massachusetts led the resistance to the British, forming a shadow revolutionary government and establishing militias to resist the increasing British military presence across the colony. In April 1775, Thomas Gage, the British governor of Massachusetts, ordered British troops to march to Concord, Massachusetts, where a Patriot arsenal was known to be located. On April 19, 1775, the British regulars encountered a group of American militiamen at Lexington, and the first volleys of the American Revolutionary War were fired.

- **Mar 23 1815 – War of 1812:** The sloop-of-war USS Hornet captures the brig sloop HMS Penguin after a 22 minute battle, with neither ship aware the War of 1812 is over.
- **Mar 23 1862 – Civil War:** *Jackson is defeated at Kernstown* » 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.

Jackson was trying to prevent Union General Nathaniel Banks from sending troops from the Shenandoah to General George McClellan’s army near Washington, D.C. McClellan was preparing to send his massive army by water to the James Peninsula southeast of Richmond, Virginia, for a summer campaign against the Confederate capital. When Turner Ashby, Jackson’s cavalry commander, detected that Yankee troops were moving out of the valley, Jackson decided to attack and keep the Union forces divided.



Ashby attacked at Kernstown on 22 MAR. He reported to Jackson that only four Union regiments were present—perhaps 3,000 men. In fact, Union commander James Shields actually had 9,000 men at Kernstown but kept most of them hidden during the skirmishing on 22 MAR. The rest of Jackson’s force arrived the next day, giving the Confederates about 4,000 men. The 23rd was a Sunday, and the religious Jackson tried not to fight on the Sabbath. The Yankees could see his deployment, though, so Jackson chose to attack that afternoon. He struck the Union left flank, but the Federals moved troops into place to stop the Rebel advance. At a critical juncture, Richard Garnett withdrew his Confederate brigade due to a shortage of ammunition, and this exposed another brigade to a Union attack. The Northern troops poured in, sending Jackson’s entire force in retreat.

Jackson's troop losses included some 80 killed, 375 wounded, and 260 missing or captured, while the Union lost 118 dead, 450 wounded, and 22 missing. Despite the defeat, the battle had positive results for the Confederates. Unnerved by the attack, President Abraham Lincoln ordered McClellan to leave an entire corps to defend Washington, thus drawing troops from McClellan's Peninsular Campaign. The battle was the opening of Jackson's famous campaign in the Shenandoah Valley. Over the following three months, Jackson's men marched hundreds of miles, won several major battles, and kept three separate Union forces occupied in the Shenandoah.

- **Mar 23 1918 – WW1:** *Paris hit by shells from new German gun* » 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.



The gun sent Paris, a city that had withstood all earlier attempts at its destruction, including scattered bombings, reeling. At first, the Paris Defense Service assumed the city was being bombed, but soon they determined that it was actually being hit by artillery fire, a heretofore unimagined situation. By the end of the day, the shelling had killed 16 people and wounded 29 more. It would continue throughout the German offensive of that year in four separate phases between March 23 and August 9, 1918, inflicting a total of somewhere under 260 Parisian casualties. This low total was due to the fact that the residents of Paris learned to avoid gathering in large groups during shelling, limiting the number of those killed and wounded by the shells and diminishing the initially terrifying impact of the weapon.

Almost all information about the Pariskanone, one of the most sophisticated weapons to emerge out of World War I, disappeared after the war ended. Later, the Nazis tried without success to reproduce the gun from the few pictures and diagrams that remained. Copies were deployed in 1940 against Britain across the English Channel, but failed to cause any significant damage

- **Mar 23 1919 – Italy:** *Mussolini founds the Fascist party* » 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.

In October 1922, Mussolini led the Fascists on a march on Rome, and King Emmanuel III, who had little faith in Italy's parliamentary government, asked Mussolini to form a new government. Initially,

Mussolini, who was appointed prime minister at the head of a three-member Fascist cabinet, cooperated with the Italian parliament, but aided by his brutal police organization he soon became the effective dictator of Italy. In 1924, a Socialist backlash was suppressed, and in January 1925 a Fascist state was officially proclaimed, with Mussolini as Il Duce, or “The Leader.”



Mussolini appealed to Italy’s former Western allies for new treaties, but his brutal 1935 invasion of Ethiopia ended all hope of alliance with the Western democracies. In 1936, Mussolini joined Nazi leader Adolf Hitler in his support of Francisco Franco’s Nationalist forces in the Spanish Civil War, prompting the signing of a treaty of cooperation in foreign policy between Italy and Nazi Germany in 1937. Although Adolf Hitler’s Nazi revolution was modeled after the rise of Mussolini and the Italian Fascist Party, Fascist Italy and Il Duce proved overwhelmingly the weaker partner in the Berlin-Rome Axis during World War II.

In July 1943, the failure of the Italian war effort and the imminent invasion of the Italian mainland by the Allies led to a rebellion within the Fascist Party. Two days after the fall of Palermo on 24 JUL, the Fascist Grand Council rejected the policy dictated by Hitler through Mussolini, and on 25 JUL Il Duce was arrested. Fascist Marshal Pietro Badoglio took over the reins of the Italian government, and in September Italy surrendered unconditionally to the Allies. Eight days later, German commandos freed Mussolini from his prison in the Abruzzi Mountains, and he was later made the puppet leader of German-controlled northern Italy. With the collapse of Nazi Germany in April 1945, Mussolini was captured by Italian partisans and on April 29 was executed by firing squad with his mistress, Clara Petacci, after a brief court-martial. Their bodies, brought to Milan, were hanged by the feet in a public square for all the world to see.

- **Mar 23 1942 – WW2:** Japanese forces occupy Andaman Islands in Indian Ocean.
- **Mar 23 1942 – WW2:** *Holocaust* » Over the next two days, the SS transfers 1,000 women — mainly German Jewish women but also Romani (Gypsy) women — from Ravensbrück to Auschwitz-Birkenau in German-occupied Poland. The SS establishes a women's camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau.
- **Mar 23 1942 – WW2:** U.S. move native-born of Japanese ancestry into detention centers.



- **Mar 23 1944 – WW2:** German occupiers shoot more than 300 Italian civilians as a reprisal for an Italian partisan attack on an SS unit. The Italian Resistance had been fighting underground against the fascist government of Mussolini long before its surrender, and now it fought against German fascism.
- **Mar 23 1945 – WW2:** Largest operation in Pacific war, 1,500 US Navy ships bomb Okinawa.
- **Mar 23 1951 – Korea:** U.S. paratroopers descend from flying boxcars in a surprise attack in Korea.
- **Mar 23 1961 – Vietnam War:** *U.S. plane shot down over Laos* » One of the first American casualties in Southeast Asia, an intelligence-gathering plane en route from Laos to Saigon is shot down over the Plain of Jars in central Laos. The mission was flown in an attempt to determine the extent of the Soviet support being provided to the communist Pathet Lao guerrillas in Laos. The guerrillas had been waging a war against the Royal Lao government since 1959. In a television news conference, President John F. Kennedy warned of communist expansion in Laos and said that a cease-fire must precede the start of negotiations to establish a neutral and independent nation.
- **Mar 23 1970 – Vietnam War:** *Prince Sihanouk issues a call for arms* » From Peking, Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia issues a public call for arms to be used against the Lon Nol government in Phnom Penh and requests the establishment of the National United Front of Kampuchea (FUNK) to unite all opposition factions against Lon Nol. North Vietnam, the National Liberation Front (Viet Cong), and the communist Pathet Lao immediately pledged their support to the new organization.



**Prince Norodom Sihanouk**

Earlier in March, Sihanouk had been overthrown in a bloodless coup led by Cambodian Gen. Lon Nol. Between 1970 and 1975, Lon Nol and his army, the Forces Armées Nationales Khmer (FANK), with U.S. support and military aid, fought the Khmer Rouge and Sihanouk’s supporters 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 succumbed to the communists in April 1975. The victorious Khmer Rouge evacuated Phnom Penh and began reordering Cambodian society, which resulted in a killing spree and the notorious “killing fields.” Eventually, hundreds of thousands of Cambodians were murdered or died from exhaustion, hunger, and disease.

- **Mar 23 1983 – Cold War: *Reagan calls for new antimissile technology*** » In an address to the nation, President Ronald Reagan proposes that the United States embark on a program to develop antimissile technology that would make the country nearly impervious to attack by nuclear missiles. Reagan’s speech marked the beginning of what came to be known as the controversial Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).



Despite his vigorous anticommunist rhetoric, Reagan made nuclear arms control one of the keynotes of his administration. By 1983, however, talks with the Soviets were stalled over issues of what kinds of weapons should be controlled, what kind of control would be instituted, and how compliance with the controls would be assured. It was at this point that Reagan became enamored with an idea proposed by some of his military and scientific advisors, including Dr. Edward Teller, the “father of the hydrogen bomb.” What they proposed was a massive program involving the use of antimissile satellites utilizing laser beams or other means to knock Soviet nuclear missiles out of the sky before they had a chance to impact the United States. Reagan therefore called upon the nation’s scientists to “turn their great talents” to this “vision of the future which offers hope.” He admitted that such a highly sophisticated program might “not be accomplished before the end of this century.”

Reagan’s speech formed the basis for what came to be known as the Strategic Defense Initiative, though pundits immediately dubbed it the “Star Wars Initiative.” Some scientists indicated that even if the SDI were able to destroy 95 percent of Soviet missiles, the remaining five percent would be enough to destroy the entire planet. Nevertheless, Congress began funding the program, which ran up a bill of over \$30 billion by 1993 (with little to show for the effort). The Soviets were adamantly opposed to SDI, and a 1986 summit meeting between Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev ended acrimoniously when Gorbachev demanded that talks on arms control were contingent on the United States dropping the SDI program. By December 1987, Gorbachev—desperately in need of a foreign policy achievement and eager to reduce his nation’s burdensome defense budget—dropped his resistance to the SDI program and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty was signed. The Strategic Defense Initiative never really got off the ground—by the mid-1990s, following the collapse of the Soviet Union and with costs skyrocketing, it was quietly shelved.

- **Mar 23 1994 – U.S. Air Force:** A USAF F-16 aircraft collides with a USAF C-130 at Pope Air Force Base and then crashes, killing 24 United States Army soldiers on the ground. This later became known as the Green Ramp disaster.



- **Mar 23 2003 – Iraq War:** In Nasiriyah, 11 soldiers of the 507th Maintenance Company as well as 18 U.S. Marines are killed during the first major conflict of Operation Iraqi Freedom. 654 Iraqi combatants are also killed.

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- **Mar 24 1765 - American Revolution:** British Parliament passes the Quartering Act, outlining the locations and conditions in which their soldiers are to find room and board in the American colonies. The Act required the colonies to house British soldiers in barracks provided by the colonies. If the barracks were too small to house all the soldiers, then localities were to accommodate the soldiers in local inns, livery stables, ale houses, victualling houses, and the houses of sellers of wine. As the language of the act makes clear, the popular image of Redcoats tossing colonists from their bedchambers in order to move in themselves was not the intent of the law; neither was it the practice.
- **Mar 24 1862 – Civil War:** Abolitionist orator Wendell Phillips is booed while attempting to give a lecture in Cincinnati, Ohio. The angry crowd was opposed to fighting for the freedom of slaves, as Phillips advocated. He was pelted with rocks and eggs before friends whisked him away when a small riot broke out.



- **Mar 24 1903 – U.S. Navy:** Adm. George Dewey is commissioned Admiral of the Navy, the only person to hold this rank. Upon his death Jan. 16, 1917, Congress deactivates the rank.
- **Mar 24 1918 – WW1:** German forces cross the Somme River, achieving their first goal of the major spring offensive begun three days earlier on the Western Front.

- **Mar 24 1942 – WW2: *Holocaust*** » The first deportations of Jews from Western Europe to Belzec begins.
- **Mar 24 1944 – WW2:** In an event later dramatized in the movie *The Great Escape*, 76 prisoners begin breaking out of Stalag Luft III.
- **Mar 24 1944 – WW2:** German occupation troops killed 335 people in Rome as a reprisal for a partisan attack conducted on the previous day against the SS Police Regiment Bozen.
- **Mar 24 1945 – WW2:** Battle of Okinawa » In preparation for the amphibious assault landings on the island of Okinawa, US Naval elements begin bombardment of shoreline positions.
- **Mar 24 1975 – Vietnam War:** Despite the 1973 Paris Peace Accords cease fire, the fighting continued between South Vietnamese forces and the North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam. The launch of the Ho Chi Minh Campaign was the final assault on Saigon. By April 30, the North Vietnamese tanks broke through the gates of the Presidential Palace in Saigon and the Vietnam War came to an end.



- **Mar 24 1977 – Cold War:** For the first time since severing diplomatic relations in 1961, Cuba and the United States enter into direct negotiations when the two nations discuss fishing rights. The talks marked a dramatic, but short-lived, change in relations between the two Cold War enemies.
- **Mar 24 1986 – U.S.\*Libya:** The first operational use of a Harpoon missile in combat is used by A-6A aircraft from VA-34 against a Libyan Combatant II G-class fast-attack missile craft. The engagement occurs after Libyan armed forces fire missiles at U.S. Navy forces operating in the Gulf of Sidra. Retaliatory strikes by A-7E Corsair II aircraft put the SA-5 missiles out of action at Surt and VA-85 aircraft then sink the missile craft.
- **Mar 24 1999 - Kosovo War: *NATO bombs Yugoslavia*** » The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) commences air strikes against Yugoslavia with the bombing of Serbian military positions in the Yugoslav province of Kosovo. The NATO offensive came in response to a new wave of ethnic cleansing launched by Serbian forces against the Kosovar Albanians on 20 MAR.

The Kosovo region lay at the heart of the Serbian empire in the late Middle Ages but was lost to the Ottoman Turks in 1389 following Serbia's defeat in the Battle of Kosovo. By the time Serbia regained control of Kosovo from Turkey in 1913, there were few Serbs left in a region that had come to be

dominated by ethnic Albanians. In 1918, Kosovo formally became a province of Serbia, and it continued as such after communist leader Josip Broz Tito established the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia in 1945, comprising the Balkan states of Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Slovenia, and Macedonia. However, Tito eventually gave in to Kosovar demands for greater autonomy, and after 1974 Kosovo existed as independent state in all but name.



Serbs came to resent Kosovo's autonomy, which allowed it to act against Serbian interests, and in 1987 Slobodan Milosevic was elected leader of Serbia's Communist Party with a promise of restoring Serbian rule to Kosovo. In 1989, Milosevic became president of Serbia and moved quickly to suppress Kosovo, stripping its autonomy and in 1990 sending troops to disband its government. Meanwhile, Serbian nationalism led to the dissolution of the Yugoslav federation in 1991, and in 1992 the Balkan crisis deteriorated into civil war. A new Yugoslav state, consisting only of Serbia and the small state of Montenegro, was created, and Kosovo began four years of nonviolent resistance to Serbian rule.

The militant Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) emerged in 1996 and began attacking Serbian police in Kosovo. With arms obtained in Albania, the KLA stepped up its attacks in 1997, prompting a major offensive by Serbian troops against the rebel-held Drenica region in February-March 1998. Dozens of civilians were killed, and enlistment in the KLA increased dramatically. In July, the KLA launched an offensive across Kosovo, seizing control of nearly half the province before being routed in a Serbian counteroffensive later that summer. The Serbian troops drove thousands of ethnic Albanians from their homes and were accused of massacring Kosovo civilians.

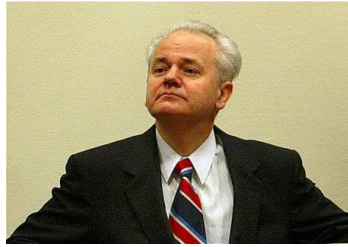
In October, NATO threatened Serbia with air strikes, and Milosevic agreed to allow the return of tens of thousands of refugees. Fighting soon resumed, however, and talks between Kosovar Albanians and Serbs in Rambouillet, France, in February 1999 ended in failure. On 18 MAR, further peace talks in Paris collapsed after the Serbian delegation refused to sign a deal calling for Kosovo autonomy and the deployment of NATO troops to enforce the agreement. Two days later, the Serbian army launched a new offensive in Kosovo. On 24 MAR, NATO air strikes began.

In addition to Serbian military positions, the NATO air campaign targeted Serbian government buildings and the country's infrastructure in an effort to destabilize the Milosevic regime. The bombing and continued Serbian offensives drove hundreds of thousands of Kosovar Albanians into neighboring Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro. Many of these refugees were airlifted to safety in the United States and other NATO nations. On 10 JUN, the NATO bombardment ended when Serbia agreed to a peace agreement calling for the withdrawal of Serb forces from Kosovo and their replacement by NATO peacekeeping troops.

With the exception of two U.S. pilots killed in a training mission in Albania, no NATO personnel lost their lives in the 78-day operation. There were some mishaps, however, such as miscalculated bombings that led to the deaths of Kosovar Albanian refugees, KLA members, and Serbian civilians.

The most controversial incident was the 7 MAY bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, which killed three Chinese journalists and caused a diplomatic crisis in U.S.-Chinese relations.

On 12 JUN, NATO forces moved into Kosovo from Macedonia. The same day, Russian troops arrived in the Kosovo capital of Pristina and forced NATO into agreeing to a joint occupation. Despite the presence of peacekeeping troops, the returning Kosovar Albanians retaliated against Kosovo's Serbian minority, forcing them to flee into Serbia. Under the NATO occupation, Kosovar autonomy was restored, but the province remained officially part of Serbia.



Slobodan Milosevic was ousted from power by a popular revolution in Belgrade in October 2000. He was replaced by the popularly elected Vojislav Kostunica, a moderate Serbian nationalist who promised to reintegrate Serbia into Europe and the world after a decade of isolation. He died in prison in the Netherlands on March 11, 2006, during his trial for crimes against humanity and genocide. Due to his death, the court returned no verdict.

- **Mar 25 1774 – Space Travel:** *Shannon Lucid enters Mir* » U.S. astronaut Shannon Lucid transfers to the Russian space station Mir from the U.S. space shuttle Atlantis for a planned five-month stay. Lucid was the first female U.S. astronaut to live in a space station.

Lucid, a biochemist, shared Mir with Russian cosmonauts Yuri Onufriyenko and Yuri Usachev, conducting scientific experiments during her stay. Beginning in August, her scheduled return to Earth was delayed more than six weeks because of last-minute repairs to the booster rockets of Atlantis and then by a hurricane. Finally, on September 26, 1996, she returned to Earth aboard Atlantis, touching down at Edwards Air Force Base in California. Her 188-day sojourn aboard Mir set a new space endurance record for an American and a world endurance record for a woman.

**-o-o-O-o-o-**

- **Mar 25 1774 – American Revolution:** *Parliament passes the Boston Port Act* » British Parliament passes the Boston Port Act, closing the port of Boston and demanding that the city's residents pay for the nearly \$1 million worth (in today's money) of tea dumped into Boston Harbor during the Boston Tea Party of December 16, 1773. The Boston Port Act was the first and easiest to enforce of four acts that together were known as the Coercive Acts. The other three were a new Quartering Act, the Administration of Justice Act and the Massachusetts Government Act.

As part of the Crown's attempt to intimidate Boston's increasingly unruly residents, King George III appointed General Thomas Gage, who commanded the British army in North America, as the new governor of Massachusetts. Gage became governor in May 1774, before the Massachusetts Government Act revoked the colony's 1691 charter and curtailed the powers of the traditional town meeting and

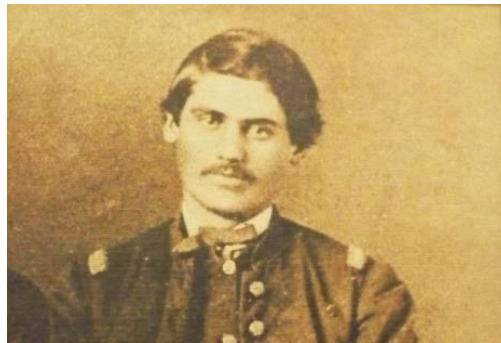
colonial council. These moves made it clear to Bostonians that the crown intended to impose martial law.

In June, Gage easily sealed the ports of Boston and Charlestown using the formidable British navy, leaving merchants terrified of impending economic disaster. Many merchants wanted to simply pay for the tea and disband the Boston Committee of Correspondence, which had served to organize anti-British protests. The merchants' attempt at convincing their neighbors to assuage the British failed. A town meeting called to discuss the matter voted them down by a substantial margin.

Parliament hoped that the Coercive Acts would isolate Boston from Massachusetts, Massachusetts from New England and New England from the rest of North America, preventing unified colonial resistance to the British. Their effort backfired. Rather than abandon Boston, the colonial population shipped much-needed supplies to Boston and formed extra-legal Provincial Congresses to mobilize resistance to the crown. By the time Gage attempted to enforce the Massachusetts Government Act, his authority had eroded beyond repair.

- **Mar 25 1863 – Civil War: *1st US Army Medal of Honor awarded*** » The Medal of Honor was first authorized by Congress in December 1861 specifically for the Department of the Navy, but within two months it was adapted for Army recipients as well. The medal is now bestowed on individuals serving in any branch of the armed forces who have performed a personal act of valor above and beyond the call of duty in action against an enemy force.

Army Pvt. Jacob Parrott was born on July 17, 1843, in Fairfield County, Ohio. He enlisted in the Army as part of Company K, 33rd Ohio Voluntary Infantry, during the Civil War. In April 1862, Parrot and nearly two-dozen other volunteers were given orders to go deep into enemy territory and destroy bridges and railroad tracks between Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Atlanta. Once they reached the Atlanta area, the Union soldiers hopped on a train heading north.



When the train stopped at Big Shanty, Georgia, the passengers and crew got off for breakfast, but the raiders stayed on and began their covert mission by uncoupling the engine, fuel car and three boxcars and steaming out of the station. The raiders gained a little bit of distance and were able to damage a few bridges, but it wasn't long before Confederate soldiers got a hold of another train and were hot on their trail. The Union soldiers uncoupled more of the stolen cars to slow their pursuers, but the move was to little effect. Eventually, the train ran out of fuel near the Georgia-Tennessee border, and all of the Union soldiers tried to get away on foot. They were all captured, including Parrott.

Parrott was eventually returned to the Union in a prisoner exchange in March 1863. For his part in the raid, he was awarded the very first Medal of Honor that same month, with five of his comrades receiving the same distinction shortly thereafter.

- **Mar 25 1864 – Civil War: *Battle of Paducah, Kentucky (Forrest's raid)*** » A Confederate cavalry force led by Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest moved into Tennessee and Kentucky to capture Union supplies. Tennessee had been occupied by Union troops since 1862. He launched a successful raid on Paducah, Kentucky, on the Ohio River.



In March 1864, Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest set out from Columbus, Mississippi, for raiding in West Tennessee and Kentucky, with a force of just under 3,000 men. Tennessee had been occupied by Union troops since 1862. His object was to recruit soldiers, re-equip his men with supplies, and disrupt Union activities. He reached Paducah on 25 MAR and quickly occupied the town. The Union garrison of 650 men under Col. Stephen G. Hicks withdrew to Fort Anderson, in the town's west end. The fort was supported by two Union gunboats on the Ohio River, and Hicks began shelling the area with his artillery.

Forrest tried to bluff Hicks into surrendering, warning him, "... if I have to storm your works, you may expect no quarter." Knowing the fort could not be easily taken, Hicks rejected the demand. With the Union garrison holed up in their fort, Forrest's men began loading any Union Army supplies they could use into wagons and destroyed the rest. They rounded up all the army horses and mules they could find. A portion of Forrest's men from Kentucky decided to attack Fort Anderson on their own, much to his irritation. This attack constituted the Battle of Paducah. It was repulsed, causing the Confederates heavy and needless casualties. In reporting on the raid, many newspapers stated that Forrest missed more than a hundred fine horses hidden by the Yankees. As a result, Forrest sent Colonel Abraham Buford back to Paducah in mid-April and he captured these horses.

Casualties during the Paducah raid totaled 90 Union soldiers and 50 Confederates, most of them during the attack on the fort. The raid was counted as a victory for the Confederates because they had fewer casualties and gained some supplies, but they achieved little beyond destroying Union supplies and capturing needed cavalry mounts. They did not take the fort or alter control of the region. The raid put the Union Army on notice that Forrest and other Confederates raiders could still strike deep into Union-held territory.



- **Mar 25 1865 – Civil War:** *Skirmish at Brentwood Tennessee* » Union Lt. Col. Edward Bloodgood held Brentwood, a station on the Nashville & Decatur Railroad, with 400 men when Confederate Brig. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, with a powerful column, approached the town. The day before, Forrest had ordered Col. J. W. Starnes, commanding the 2nd Brigade, to go to Brentwood, cut the telegraph, tear up railroad track, attack the stockade, and cut off any retreat.

Forrest and the other cavalry brigade joined Bloodgood about 7:00 am on March 25. A messenger from the stockade informed Bloodgood that Forrest's men were about to attack, and had destroyed the railroad tracks. Bloodgood sought to notify his superiors and discovered that the telegraph lines were cut. Forrest sent in a demand for a surrender under a flag of truce, but Bloodgood refused. Within a half-hour, though, Forrest had artillery in place to shell Bloodgood's position and had surrounded the Federals with a large force. Bloodgood decided to surrender. Forrest and his men caused considerable damage in the area during this expedition, and Brentwood, Tennessee, on the railroad, was a significant loss to the Federals.

- **Mar 25 1865 – Civil War:** Battle of Bluff Spring, Florida
- **Mar 25 1865 – Civil War:** *Battle of Fort Stedman, Virginia* » Confederate General Robert E. Lee makes Fort Stedman his last attack of the war in a desperate attempt to break out of Petersburg, Virginia. The attack failed, and within a week Lee was evacuating his positions around Petersburg.



For nine months, Petersburg was under siege by the Army of the Potomac and the overall Union commander, General Ulysses S. Grant. The two great armies had fought a bloody campaign in the spring of 1864, and then settled into trenches that eventually stretched for 50 miles around Petersburg and the Confederate capital of Richmond. Lee could not win this war of attrition, but his men held out through the winter of 1864 to 1865. Now, Lee realized the growing Yankee army could overwhelm his diminishing force when the spring brought better weather for an assault. He ordered General John B. Gordon to find a weak point in the Federal defenses and attack.

Gordon selected Fort Stedman, an earthen redoubt with a moat and 9-foot walls. Although imposing, Gordon believed it offered the greatest chance for success since it was located just 150 yards from the Confederate lines—the narrowest gap along the entire front. Early in the morning of 25 MAR, some 11,000 Rebels hurled themselves at the Union lines. They overwhelmed the surprised Yankees at Fort Stedman and captured 1,000 yards of trenches. After daylight, however, the Confederate momentum waned. Gordon's men took up defensive positions, and Union reinforcements arrived to turn the tide. The Rebels were unable to hold the captured ground, and were driven back to their original position.

The Union lost around 1,000 men killed, wounded, and captured, while Lee lost probably three times that number, including some 1,500 captured during the retreat. Already outnumbered, these losses were more than Lee's army could bear. Lee wrote to Confederate President Jefferson Davis that it would be impossible to maintain the Petersburg line much longer. On 29 MAR, Grant began his offensive, and Petersburg fell on 3 APR. Two weeks after the Battle of Fort Steadman, Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

- **Mar 25 1865 – Native Americans: Cheyenne Chief Little Wolf surrenders** » Little Wolf, often called “the greatest of the fighting Cheyenne,” surrenders to his friend Lieutenant W. P. Clark.

Little Wolf was the chief of the Bowstring Soldiers, an elite Cheyenne military society. From early youth, Little Wolf had demonstrated rare bravery and a brilliant understanding of battle tactics. First in conflicts with other Indians like the Kiowa and then in disputes with the U.S. Army, Little Wolf led or assisted in dozens of important Cheyenne victories

Historians believe Little Wolf was probably involved in the disastrous Fetterman Massacre of 1866, in which the Cheyenne cleverly lured a force of 80 American soldiers out of their Wyoming fort and wiped them out. After Cheyenne attacks had finally forced the U.S. military to abandon Fort Phil Kearney along the Bozeman Trail, Little Wolf is believed to have led the torching of the fort. He was also a leading participant in the greatest of the Plains Indian victories, the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876.



As with many of the other Plains Indian warriors, Little Wolf was finally forced to make peace during the army's major offensive following the massacre at Little Bighorn. In 1877, the government sent Little Wolf to a reservation in Indian Territory. Disgusted with the meager supplies and conditions on the reservation, in 1878 Little Wolf determined to leave the reservation and head north for the old Cheyenne territory in Wyoming and Montana. Chief Dull Knife and 300 of his followers went with him.

Though Little Wolf and Dull Knife announced that their intentions were peaceful, settlers in the territory they passed through feared attack. The government dispatched cavalry forces that assaulted the Indians, but Little Wolf's skillful defensive maneuvers kept Cheyenne casualties low. When the

band neared Fort Robinson, Nebraska, Dull Knife and some of his followers stopped there. Little Wolf and the rest of the Cheyenne continued to march north to Montana.

In the spring of 1879, while still traveling north, Little Wolf and his followers were overtaken by a cavalry force under the leadership of Captain W.P. Clark, an old friend of Little Wolf's. The confrontation might easily have turned violent, but with his force of warriors diminished and his people tired, Little Wolf was reluctant to fight the more powerful American army. Clark's civilized and gracious treatment of Little Wolf helped convince the chief that further resistance was pointless, and he agreed to surrender.

After returning to the reservation, Little Wolf briefly served as a scout for General Nelson A. Miles. However, during this time he disgraced himself among his people by killing one of his tribesmen. The formerly celebrated Cheyenne warrior lived out the rest of his life on the reservation but had no official influence among his own people.

**Mar 25 1905 – Post Civil War: Return of confederate Flags** » In 1887, during the first Cleveland Administration, the U.S. Government proposed to return to Southern states Confederate flags captured by Union units in the ACW. Governor Foraker of Ohio flatly refused and filed for a writ of mandamus to prevent the Secretary of War from doing so. The storm of protest was led by Grand Army of the Republic leader General Fairchild. Fairchild, "called down palsy on the hand, brain, and tongue responsible for the order returning the flags."

*"They tell us nowadays that all men are loyal. I thank God that it is so. But the Grand Army men have a loyalty that is spelled with capital letters; a loyalty without any "ifs" or "buts;" a loyalty which they will teach to their children and children's children; a loyalty teaching that the allegiance of every American citizen is due to the American flag under all circumstances, and if demanded they shall turn their backs upon their State flags and follow the Stars and Stripes. The Grand Army men have always been the friends of the South from 1861 to 1887. They were the best friends of the Southern people when they saved them from themselves. When afflicted with yellow fever, when they wanted to build soldiers' homes, when Charleston was wrecked by earthquakes, the Grand Army men were the first to tender assistance. We have no feeling of hate or malice toward the South, but we feel that they have no right to take back into their possession the relics of the rebels' flags. I believe, thank God, that the right to associate a State in the Union with a State which it was supposed was in existence during the war. What would Missouri or Maryland or Kentucky do with the rebel flags if they were restored to them [?] Destroy them I should hope. To return them would be a lesson in treason.*



Fairchild pleaded with the Governor of Connecticut to not return the flags. The governor rose and assured the GAR man that the flags would not be returned. Another guest at the dinner was William T. Sherman did not reply to Fairchild's remarks saying that he only came to witness the GAR event. President Cleveland rescinded the order saying that returning the flags was not justified by law or executive act.

In 1905, flags were discovered in the basement of the War Department and President Theodore Roosevelt ordered the flags returned to hometowns. Some flags could not be identified as to unit and were given to state historical societies. Someone said a war is not over until the last veteran is dead.

- **Mar 25 1915 – U.S. Navy:** USS F-4 (SS-23) sinks after a battery explosion off Honolulu, Hawaii with the loss of 21 lives. It is the first commissioned submarine loss for the U.S. Navy.
- **Mar 25 1941 – WW2:** Yugoslavia joins the Axis » Yugoslavia, despite an early declaration of neutrality, signs the Tripartite Pact, forming an alliance with Axis powers Germany, Italy, and Japan.



A unified nation of Yugoslavia, an uneasy federation of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, was a response to the collapse of the Ottoman and Hapsburg empires at the close of World War I, both of which had previously contained parts of what became Yugoslavia. A constitutional monarchy, Yugoslavia built friendships with France and Czechoslovakia during the years between the world wars. With the outbreak of World War II, and the Anschluss (“union”) between Austria and Germany, pressure was placed on Yugoslavia to more closely ally itself Germany, despite Yugoslavia’s declared neutrality. But fear of an invasion like that suffered by France pushed Yugoslavia into signing a “Friendship Treaty”—something short of a formal political alliance—on December 11, 1940.

With the war spreading to the Balkans after the invasion of Greece by Italy, it was important to Hitler that the Axis powers have an ally in the region that would act as a bulwark against Allied encroachment on Axis territory. Meeting on February 14, 1941, Adolf Hitler proved unable to persuade Yugoslav Prime Minister Dragisa Cvetkovic to formally join the Axis. The next day, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill contacted the Yugoslav regent, Prince Paul, in an effort to encourage him to remain firm in resisting further German blandishments. It was essential to the Allies that Yugoslavia cooperate with Anglo-Greek forces in fending off an Axis conquest of Greece.

But with King Boris of Bulgaria caving into Germany, Prince Paul felt the heat of the Nazis, and on March 20 he asked the Yugoslav Cabinet for their cooperation in allowing the Germans access to Greece through Yugoslavia. The Cabinet balked, and four ministers resigned in protest at the

suggestion. This gesture failed to prevent Prime Minister Cvetkovic from finally signing the Tripartite Pact in Vienna on March 25, 1941.

Within two days, the Cvetkovic government was overthrown by a unified front of peasants, the church, unions, and the military—an angry response to the alliance with Germany. Prince Paul was thrown from his throne in favor of his son, King Peter, only 17 years old. The new government, led by Air Force Gen. Dusan Simovic, immediately renounced the Tripartite Pact. In less than two weeks, Germany invaded the nation and occupied it by force.

- **Mar 25 1942 – WW2:** 1st 700 Jews from Polish Lvov district reach the Belżec Concentration camp
- **Mar 25 1944 – WW2:** In March 1944 partisans in Rome attacked a column of SS police officers, killing 33 Germans. On orders from German high command, 335 men and boys were rounded up and executed at the Ardeatine Caves, near Rome. The reprisal killings set the stage for how Germany would conduct the remainder of the war in Italy.
- **Mar 25 1946 – Cold War:** *Soviets announce withdrawal from Iran* » In conclusion to an extremely tense situation of the early Cold War, the Soviet Union announces that its troops in Iran will be withdrawn within six weeks. The Iranian crisis was one of the first tests of power between the United States and the Soviet Union in the postwar world.

The Iranian crisis began during World War II. In 1942, Iran signed an agreement by which British and Soviet troops were allowed into the country in order to defend the oil-rich nation from possible German attack. American troops were also soon in Iran. The 1942 treaty stated that all foreign troops would withdraw within six months after the end of the war. In 1944, however, both Great Britain and the United States began to press the Iranian government for oil concessions and the Soviets thereupon demanded concessions of their own. By 1945, the oil situation was still unsettled, but the war was coming to an end and the American attitude toward the Soviet Union had changed dramatically.

The new administration of Harry S. Truman, which came to power when Franklin D. Roosevelt died in April 1945, decided that the Soviets were not to be trusted and were bent on expansion. Therefore, a policy of “toughness” was adopted toward the former wartime ally. Iran came to be a test case for this new policy. The Soviets had decided to take action in Iran. Fearing that the British and Americans were conspiring to deny Russia its proper sphere of influence in Iran, the Soviets came to the assistance of an Iranian rebel group in the northern regions of the country. In early 1946, the United States complained to the United Nations about the situation in Iran and accused the Soviets of interfering with a sovereign nation. When the March 2, 1946 deadline for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Iran passed and the Soviets were still in place, a crisis began to develop.

A major diplomatic confrontation was avoided when the Soviets announced on March 25, 1946, that they would be withdrawing their forces within six weeks. President Truman bragged that his threats of a possible military confrontation had been the deciding factor, but that seems unlikely. The Soviet Union and Iran had reached an agreement that gave the Soviets an oil concession in Iran. With this promise in hand, the Soviets kept their part of the bargain and moved their troops out of Iran in April 1946. Almost immediately, the Iranian government reneged on the oil deal and, with U.S. aid and advice, crushed the revolt in northern Iran. The Soviets were furious, but refrained from reintroducing

their armed forces into Iran for fear of creating an escalating conflict with the United States and Great Britain. The Iranian crisis, and the suspicion and anger it created between the United States and the Soviet Union, helped set the tone for the developing Cold War.

- **Mar 25 1953 – Korean War:** The USS Missouri fires on targets at Kojo, North Korea, the last time her guns fire until the Persian Gulf War of 1992.



- **Mar 25 1957 – Cold War: *Project E*** » A joint project arrangement under which the United States provided the United Kingdom with nuclear weapons for the Royal Air Force (RAF). It was later expanded to provide warheads to the British Army, and there was a maritime version known as Project N that provided nuclear depth bombs. US personnel retained custody of the weapons, and handled their storage, maintenance and readiness.



The first bombers equipped with Project E weapons were Canberras (example pictured). Due to the operational restrictions, and the loss of independence of the British nuclear deterrent, Project E bombs were phased out in the strategic role in 1962, although they still equipped tactical bombers, and were used on the Thor missiles operated by the RAF from 1959 to 1963 under Project Emily. The British Army acquired Project E warheads for its Corporal, Honest John and Lance missiles, and its artillery pieces. The last Project E weapons were withdrawn from service in 1992.

- **Mar 25 1960 – U.S. Navy:** 1st guided missile launched from nuclear powered sub (Halibut)
- **Mar 25 1967 – Vietnam War: *Martin Luther King leads march against the 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.

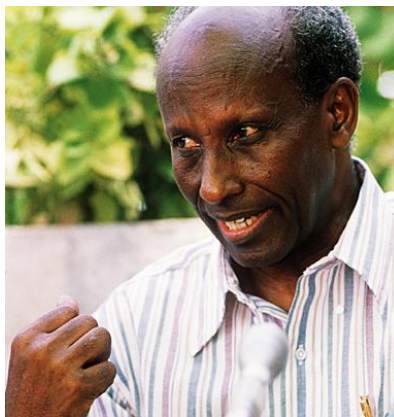


- Mar 25 1968 – Vietnam War:** *Johnson meets with the “Wise Men”* » After being told by Defense Secretary Clark Clifford that the Vietnam War is a “real loser,” President Johnson, still uncertain about his course of action, decides to convene a nine-man panel of retired presidential advisors. The group, 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. Although Johnson was initially furious at their conclusions, he quickly came to believe that they were right. On 31 MAR, Johnson announced on television that he was restricting the bombing of North Vietnam to the area just north of the Demilitarized Zone. Additionally, he committed the United States to discuss peace at any time or place. Then Johnson announced that he would not pursue reelection for the presidency.
- Mar 25 1968 – Vietnam War:** A Harris Poll reports that in the past six weeks “basic” support for the war among Americans declined from 74 percent to 54 percent. The poll also revealed that 60 percent of those questioned regarded the Tet Offensive as a defeat of U.S. objectives in Vietnam. Despite Gen. William Westmoreland’s assurances in late 1967 that the United States was making headway in the war, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong had launched a massive offensive during the Tet holiday that began in late January 1968. Although the communist forces were soundly defeated during this offensive, the scope and extent of the attacks won the communists a major psychological victory in the United States, where the events of Tet confirmed a growing disenchantment with the seemingly never-ending war for increasing numbers of Americans.
- Mar 25 1971 – Vietnam War:** The Army of the Republic of Vietnam abandon an attempt to cut off the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos.
- Mar 25 1986 – U.S. Air Force:** *Uniform Regulations* » Broadly asserting the primacy of military discipline over constitutional rights, the Supreme Court ruled that the military can bar an Orthodox Jewish officer from wearing a yarmulke indoors while in uniform. The Court ruled 5 to 4 that the

military's power to ban all wearing of headgear indoors as part of a uniform dress code prevailed over the religious duty of an Orthodox Jewish rabbi to keep his head covered.

- **Mar 25 1975 – Vietnam War:** The former imperial capital of Hue fell to North Vietnamese troops along with the entire Thua Thien Province.
- **Mar 25 1994 – Somalia:** *Last U.S. troops depart Somalia* » At the end of a largely unsuccessful 15-month mission, the last U.S. troops depart Somalia, leaving 20,000 U.N. troops behind to keep the peace and facilitate “nation building” in the divided country.

In 1992, civil war, clan-based fighting, and the worst African drought of the century created famine conditions that threatened one-fourth of Somalia’s population with starvation. In August 1992, the United Nations began a peacekeeping mission to the country to ensure the distribution of food and medical aid. On December 4, with deteriorating security and U.N. troops unable to control Somalia’s warring factions, U.S. President George Bush ordered 25,000 U.S. troops into Somalia. Although he promised the troops involved that the humanitarian mission was not an open-ended commitment, “Operation Restore Hope” remained unresolved when Bill Clinton took over the presidency in January 1993.



General Mohammed Aidid

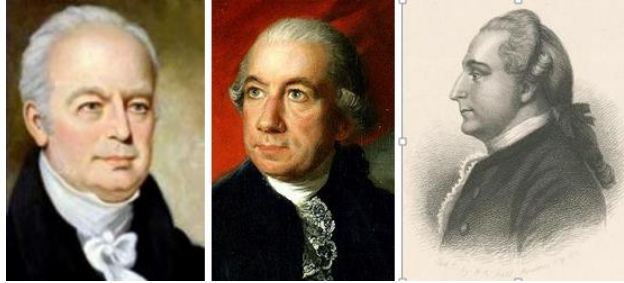
Like his predecessor, Clinton was anxious to bring the Americans home, and in May the mission was formally handed back to the United Nations. By June, only 4,200 U.S. troops remained. However, on 5 JUN, 24 Pakistani U.N. peacekeepers inspecting a weapons storage site were ambushed and massacred by soldiers under Somali warlord General Mohammed Aidid. U.S. and U.N. forces subsequently began an extensive search for the elusive strongman, and in August, 400 elite U.S. troops from Delta Force and the U.S. Rangers arrived on a mission to capture Aidid. Two months later, on October 3-4, 18 of these soldiers were killed and 84 wounded during a disastrous assault on Mogadishu’s Olympia Hotel in search of Aidid. The bloody battle, which lasted 17 hours, was the most violent U.S. combat firefight since Vietnam.

Three days later, with Aidid still at large, President Clinton cut his losses and ordered a total U.S. withdrawal. On March 25, 1994, the last U.S. troops left Somalia.

- **Mar 25 2007 – Congress:** Congress designates March 25 each year as National Medal of Honor Day. The day is significant as it is the day the first Medal of Honor was presented in 1863.



- **Mar 26 1776 – American Revolution:** *South Carolina approves new constitution* » The Provincial Congress of South Carolina approves a new constitution and government on this day in 1776. The legislature renames itself the General Assembly of South Carolina and elects John Rutledge as president, Henry Laurens as vice president and William Henry Drayton as chief justice.



**John Rutledge, Henry Laurens, and William Henry Drayton**

South Carolina took this action towards independence from Great Britain four months before the Continental Congress declared independence and five months before South Carolina learned of the declaration. Rutledge possessed quasi-dictatorial powers as president and commander in chief of the new state. In 1778, he resigned the post in protest over proposed changes to the state constitution. Rawlins Lowndes took over the presidency and instituted the changes Rutledge found objectionable. The executive power changed from a presidency to a governorship and veto power was taken away from the executive. The Senate became a popularly elected body, and the Church of England no longer held status as the state church. However, after the changes had been made, Rutledge was elected governor in 1779, a post he held until 1782.

William Henry Drayton drafted the 1778 constitution that was opposed by Rutledge. The ardent Whig died while serving Congress in Philadelphia on September 3, 1779, at age 37. Rutledge lost much of his personal wealth during the British siege of Charleston, but survived to see the new century dawn before his death in 1800.

Henry Laurens only served as vice president of South Carolina until June 1777. He was elected to the Continental Congress in January of that year and became the president of Congress under the Articles of Confederation on November 1, 1777, a position he held until December 9, 1778. Beginning in 1780, Laurens served 15 months of imprisonment in the Tower of London after being taken captive on a Congressional mission to Holland. He spent the last years of his life in retirement on his plantation, where he lived until his death in 1792.

- **Mar 26 1864 – Civil War:** *McPherson takes over the Army of the Tennessee* » General James B. McPherson assumes command of the Union Army of the Tennessee after William T. Sherman is elevated to commander of the Division of the Mississippi, the overall leader in the West.

McPherson was born in Ohio in 1828 and graduated first in his class from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1853. He joined the Army's engineering corps as a second lieutenant, and spent the prewar years in New York City and Alcatraz Island in California. When the Civil War began,

McPherson was transferred to the East and promoted to captain. Yearning for combat, he was disappointed when he was assigned to command the forts of Boston Harbor. McPherson contacted General Henry Halleck, commander of the Department of the Missouri and a former acquaintance in California, who summoned him to St. Louis. In Missouri, McPherson helped set up recruiting stations and inspected defenses.

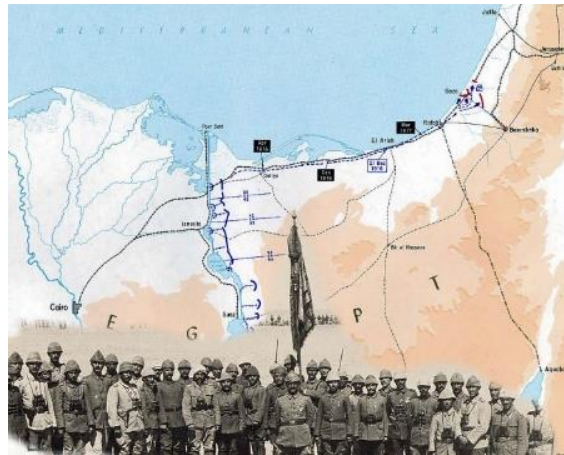


McPherson was transferred to General Ulysses S. Grant's command on February 1, 1862, just as Grant was launching an expedition against forts Henry and Donelson in Tennessee. McPherson's work in analyzing the defenses of Fort Donelson earned him the respect of Grant, and McPherson's star rose rapidly after the Battle of Shiloh in Tennessee in April 1862. McPherson fought with distinction, and was promoted to colonel. Two weeks later, he became a brigadier general. After his actions at the Battle of Corinth, Mississippi, in October 1862, McPherson was again promoted, this time to major general. In December, he capped a successful year by taking command of the XVII Corps in Grant's Army of the Tennessee.

McPherson served as corps commander throughout 1863, ably leading his men at Vicksburg, Mississippi, and Chattanooga, Tennessee. Grant's promotion to general-in-chief of all Union forces created a chain reaction of promotions. Grant left for Washington, D.C., and Sherman assumed command in the West, while McPherson inherited the Army of the Tennessee. This force was not an independent command, as it was one of three armies under Sherman's leadership during the Atlanta campaign of 1864. When the campaign reached Atlanta in July 1864 after three hard months of fighting, McPherson was charged with attacking Confederate forces on the northeast side of the city. At the Battle of Peachtree Creek on 22 JUL, McPherson was directing operations when he and his staff emerged from a grove of trees directly in front of the Confederate line. They were ordered to surrender but McPherson turned his horse and attempted to escape. He was mortally wounded, becoming the highest-ranking Union general killed in the war.

- **Mar 26 1917 – WWI:** *First Battle of Gaza* » The first of three battles fought in the Allied attempt to defeat Turkish forces in and around the Palestinian city of Gaza takes place.

By January 1917, the Allies had managed to force the Turkish army completely out of the Sinai Peninsula in northeastern Egypt, leaving British forces in the region, commanded by Sir Archibald Murray, free to consider a move into Palestine. To do so, however, they would first have to confront a string of strong Turkish positions atop a series of ridges running west to east between the towns of Gaza and Beersheba and blocking the only viable passage into the heart of Palestine. These Turkish forces, commanded by the German general Friedrich Kress von Kressenstein, numbered some 18,000 troops; Murray planned to send twice that many British soldiers against them under the command of his subordinate, Sir Charles Dobell.

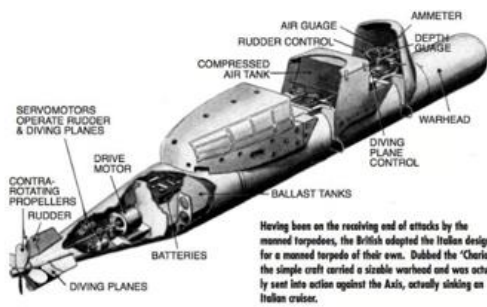


On the morning of March 26, 1917, Dobell and his men advanced on the ridges under the cover of dense fog; they were able to successfully cut off the east and southeast of Gaza and deploy troops to prevent the Turks from sending reinforcements or supplies to the town. The 53rd Infantry Division, at the center of the advance, received considerable assistance from a cavalry force commanded by Sir Philip Chetwode. However, near the end of that day, with a victory in Gaza in sight, Dobel and Chetwode decided to call off the attack. The decision, attributed to the failing light and mounting casualties among the infantry troops, was nonetheless controversial—other officers believed the Turks had been on the verge of capitulating.

Though the infantry resumed their attacks the next morning, the overnight delay had given Kressenstein time to reinforce the permanent garrison at Gaza with 4,000 new troops. After confronting a renewed Turkish counterattack, aided significantly by German reconnaissance aircraft from above, Dobell was forced to call off the attack. His forces suffered 4,000 casualties during the First Battle of Gaza, compared with only 2,400 on the Turkish side.

A second assault on Gaza, launched the following 17 APR, was similarly unsuccessful. It was not until that autumn that British forces, under the new regional command of Sir Edmund Allenby, were able to conquer the town and turn to the next challenge: securing Palestine’s capital city, Jerusalem, which fell into Allied hands on December 9, 1917.

- **Mar 26 1941 – WW2: *Naval warfare gets new weapon*** » Italy attacks the British fleet at Suda Bay, Crete, using detachable warheads to sink a British cruiser. This was the first time manned torpedoes had been employed in naval warfare, adding a new weapon to the world’s navies’ arsenals.



Having been on the receiving end of attacks by the manned torpedoes, the British adopted the Italian design for a manned torpedo of their own. Dubbed the 'Chariot,' the simple craft carried a sizable warhead and was actually sent into action against the Axis, actually sinking an Italian cruiser.



**Chariot manned torpedo**

The manned torpedo, also known as the “Chariot,” was unique. Primarily used to attack enemy ships still in harbor, the Chariots needed “pilots” to “drive” them to their targets. Sitting astride the torpedo on a vehicle that would transport them both, the pilot would guide the missile as close to the target as possible, then ride the vehicle back, usually to a submarine. The Chariot was an enormous advantage; before its development, the closest weapon to the Chariot was the Japanese Kaiten—a human torpedo, or suicide bomb, which had obvious drawbacks.

The first successful use of the Chariot was by the Italian navy, although they referred to their version as Maiali, or “Pigs.” On 26 MAR, six Italian motorboats, commanded by Italian naval Commander Lt. Luigi Faggioni, entered Suda Bay in Crete and planted their Maiali along a British convoy in harbor there. The cruiser York was so severely damaged by the blast that it had to be beached.

The manned torpedo proved to be the most effective weapon in the Italian naval arsenal, used successfully against the British again in December 1941 at Alexandria, Egypt. Italian torpedoes sank the British battleships Queen Elizabeth and Valiant, as well as one tanker. They were also used against merchant ships at Gibraltar and elsewhere.

The British avenged themselves against the Italians, though, by sinking the new Italian cruiser Ulpio Traiano in the port of Palermo, Sicily, in early January 1943. An 8,500-ton ocean liner was also damaged in the same attack. After the Italian surrender, Britain, and later Germany, continued to use the manned torpedo. In fact, Germany succeeded in sinking two British minesweepers off Normandy Beach in July 1944, using their Neger torpedoes.

- **Mar 26 1942 – WW2: *Holocaust*** » The first female prisoners arrive at Auschwitz concentration camp in German-occupied Poland. Public notices are promulgated pertaining to the identification of Jewish homes in Germany. Between March and October 1942, deportation of 60,000 Slovakian Jews, some to Auschwitz, others to the extermination camp Majdanek occur.
- **Mar 26 1943 – WW2: *Naval Blockade of Attu and Kiska*** » By March U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid had set up a blockade of the Aleutian islands of Attu and Kiska that restricted the flow of supplies to the Japanese occupiers. On this day Japanese ships in the Bering Sea attempted to deliver supplies and reinforcements to Attu; however, they were spotted by U.S. vessels patrolling the area and the two sides soon engaged in what became known as the Battle of the Komandorski Islands. The Japanese fleet outnumbered the U.S. fleet and inflicted more serious damage on the Americans, but after several hours of fighting, the Japanese ships suddenly withdrew. In addition to running low on fuel and ammunition, the Japanese reportedly feared the arrival of U.S. bombers. The Japanese were also unaware of the extent of the damage they’d caused to the U.S. fleet.

Following the battle, the Japanese soldiers on Attu and Kiska, now virtually isolated, were reduced to meager supplies sporadically delivered by submarine. Taking advantage of these conditions, the Americans prepared to land troops for ground combat against the Japanese garrisons.

- **Mar 26 1943 – WW2: *U.S. Air Force Air Medal*** » Elsie S Ott became the first woman in United States history to receive the Air Medal. Second Lieutenant Ott was the first nurse to prepare for an

evacuation of the injured. She had never been on an airplane before and was given just 24 hours notice, making her responsible for supplying and preparing the plane for her passengers.



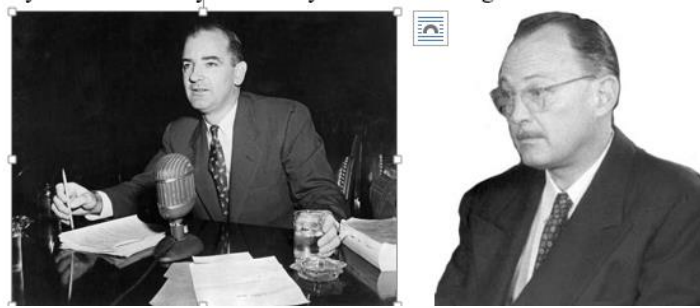
Military leaders planned the first evacuation to be from Karachi, India to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C. With Ott selected for the flight, it was arranged that the same plane that would drop off combat troops would then carry back the wounded, but the only medical equipment available to her was the equivalent of a first aid kit. She and a sergeant with a background as a medical technician were the only people on board to care for the patients. The first flight had five people who were injured or ill: two were paralysed from the waist down while the other three were ambulatory, one with tuberculosis, another with glaucoma, and the fifth person was suffering manic-depressive psychosis.

The trip was long and arduous for Ott as well as the patients, but this flight that spanned six-and-a-half days would have normally taken three months by sea or ground. Therefore, her work demonstrated the usefulness and superiority of air evacuation. Knowing that her report on the situation and her duties would be useful for future emergencies, Ott made note of certain things, such as the equipment she would need greater supplies of and the fact that wearing a skirt was impractical for an operation of this kind.

On 26 March 1943, Ott received the first Air Medal ever given to a woman in the United States Army. While some people continued to protest the use of women as nurses on these flights, by the autumn of 1943, General Davis N. Grant abolished those concerns and started the first ever training program for flight nurses at Bowman Army Air Field in Kentucky. Furthermore, the Cadet Nurse Corps program was passed by Congress unanimously and became effective on 1 July 1943.

- **Mar 26 1944 – U.S. Navy:** USS Tullibee (SS-284) accidentally sunk by circular run of own torpedo off Palau Islands. 79 died.
- **Mar 26 1945 – WW2:** Kamikazes attack U.S. battle fleet near Kerama Retto.
- **Mar 26 1945 – WW2:** U.S. 7th Army crosses Rhine at Worms Germany.
- **Mar 26 1945 – WW2:** Allies led by US Marine Corps secure island of Iwo Jima from Imperial Japanese Army, after 18,000 Japanese & 6,000 Americans killed
- **Mar 26 1950 – Cold War:** *McCarthy charges that Owen Lattimore is a Soviet spy* » During a radio broadcast dealing with a Senate investigation into communists in the U.S. Department of State, news is leaked that Senator Joseph McCarthy has charged Professor Owen Lattimore with being a top spy

for the Soviet Union. Lattimore soon became a central figure in the Red Scare hysteria created by McCarthy's reckless charges and accusations.



Joseph McCarthy & Owen Lattimore

McCarthy had achieved instant fame in February 1950 when he stated in a speech that he had a list of over 200 “known communists” in the Department of State. When pressed for details, however, McCarthy was evasive. When the Senate demanded that he produce evidence to support his claim, McCarthy gave a rambling and nearly incoherent presentation. Nevertheless, the senator from Wisconsin maintained his claim and insisted that he had definitive evidence on at least one person who had worked for the State Department—it soon became clear that Lattimore was that person.

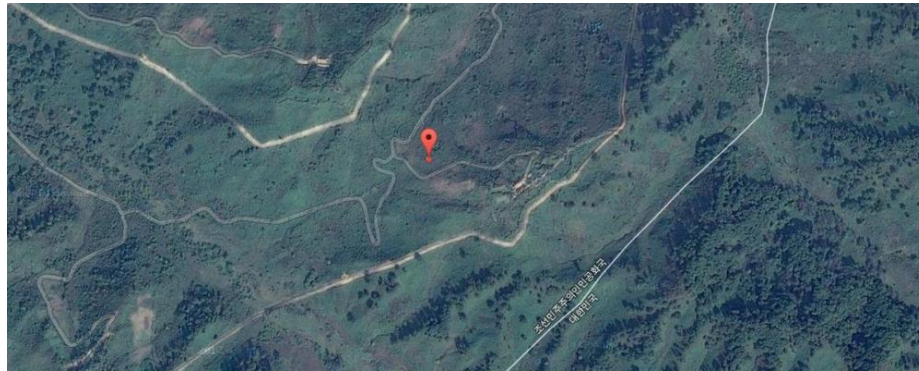
Lattimore was a scholar of Chinese history who taught at Johns Hopkins University. During World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed him as a special representative to the Nationalist Chinese government of Chiang Kai-Shek. Lattimore also served in the Office of War Information. His troubles began after the war, when it became apparent that Chiang's government would fall to the communist forces of Mao Zedong. When China fell to the communists in 1949, shocked Americans looked for scapegoats to blame for the debacle. Individuals such as Lattimore, who had been unremitting in their criticism of Chiang's regime, were easy targets.

In March 1950, Senator McCarthy was being pressed hard to produce the “known communists” he had spoken of in his February speech. He turned his attention to those in the Department of State who had been involved in Chinese affairs, and Lattimore's name naturally arose. Soon, McCarthy was charging that Lattimore was the top Soviet spy in the United States. Lattimore angrily denied it and hearings before a congressional committee cleared him of all charges. McCarthy did not give up, however. In 1951-1952, the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee revisited the accusations against Lattimore. During his testimony, the scholar admitted that his 1950 testimony contained some minor inaccuracies. This was enough for the Subcommittee to charge Lattimore with perjury. These charges were also eventually dropped for lack of evidence, but Lattimore's career had already been severely damaged. In 1963, he left the United States to teach and write in Great Britain. He returned some years later and died in 1989. He was just one of the many victims of McCarthy's reckless witch-hunts—as with all of McCarthy's “communists,” no evidence ever surfaced to support his charges against Lattimore.

- **Mar 26 1953 – Korean War: *Battles for Old Baldy end*** » The Battle of Old Baldy refers to a series of engagements which saw initial UN success but culminated with Chinese victory. The battles took place between June 26th, 1952 and March 26th, 1953 on and around Hill 266 in Western Korea near the North-South border. The engagements' location would alternatively come to be known as “Old

Baldy Hill” and “Suicide Hill” by others. It was a part of the Korean War, and it had been triggered largely by ‘Operation Counter’, which was an attempt by the American forces to attack and occupy 12 Chinese outposts, including Hill 266. The hill was very important, as it gave a strategic advantage to its possessor for miles in all directions.

The battle proved to be a costly affair for both the UN allies and the Chinese, not only in terms of the financial cost of all the ammunition used, but also because of the lives lost and the number of soldiers wounded. By the end of the battle, the United Nations had suffered 357 deaths, while the Chinese forces are estimated to have suffered up to 1,100 casualties (including the dead and wounded). During the 5 battles in the engagements at Old Baldy, both the UN Allies and the Chinese each recorded various minor victories at one point or another. However, by the end of it all, it would seem logical to declare the Chinese as the victors, as they ultimately regained control of Old Baldy. The battle had started with the Chinese as the occupants of Hill 266 and though the allies were able to capture the hill several times, it was the Chinese who ultimately held it, yet at the expense of heavy losses.



The battle did not have much significance on the Korean War. This is simply because, after 5 major engagements in battle, nothing had really changed. After all the battles had started with the Chinese occupying Old Baldy, and had ended with them as the occupants once more. What’s more, the battles exposed just how overwhelmed the United Nations’ (UN) forces were at times in the Korean War. The engagements in the Old Baldy region are also notable for the presence of the Colombia Battalion. These men were among those from the only Latin American nation to assist the United Nations forces during the war. For their bravery and performance in combat, they were awarded multiple high honors by the South Korean and United States’ military.

- **Mar 26 1969 – Vietnam War:** *Antiwar demonstration in Washington* » A group called Women Strike for Peace demonstrate in Washington, D.C., in the first large antiwar demonstration since President Richard Nixon’s inauguration in January. The antiwar movement had initially given Nixon a chance to make good on his campaign promises to end the war in Vietnam. However, it became increasingly clear that Nixon had no quick solution. As the fighting dragged on, antiwar sentiment against the president and his handling of the war mounted steadily during his term in office.
- **Mar 26 1970 – Cold War:** 500th nuclear explosion announced by the U.S. since 1945.
- **Mar 26 1975 – Vietnam War:** *Hue falls to the communists* » The city of Hue, in northernmost South Vietnam, falls to the North Vietnamese. Hue was the most recent major city in South Vietnam

to fall to the communists during their new offensive. The offensive had started in December 1974, when the North Vietnamese had launched a major attack against the lightly defended province of Phuoc Long, located north of Saigon along the Cambodian border. The communists overran the provincial capital of Phuoc Binh on January 6, 1975.

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

This situation emboldened the North Vietnamese, who launched a campaign in March 1975 to take the provincial capital of Ban Me Thuot in the Central Highlands. The South Vietnamese defenders there fought very poorly and were overwhelmed by the North Vietnamese attackers. Once again, the United States did nothing. President Thieu ordered his forces in the Highlands to withdraw to more defensible positions to the south. What started out as a reasonably orderly withdrawal 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 and Hue fell. The communists then seized Da Nang, the second largest city in South Vietnam. Many South Vietnamese, both military and civilian, died in the general chaos while attempting to escape from the airport, docks, and beaches.

By this time, the South Vietnamese forces were in flight all over the northern half of South Vietnam. The North Vietnamese continued to attack south along the coast, overrunning city after city, methodically defeating the South Vietnamese forces. By 27 APR, the North Vietnamese had completely encircled Saigon and began to maneuver for their final assault, which became known as the "Ho Chi Minh Campaign." By the morning of 30 APR, it was all over. As the North Vietnamese tanks broke through the gates of the Presidential Palace in Saigon, the Vietnam War came to an end.

- **Mar 26 1979 – Egypt\*Israel: *Israel-Egyptian peace agreement signed*** » In a ceremony at the White House, Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin sign a historic peace agreement, ending three decades of hostilities between Egypt and Israel and establishing diplomatic and commercial ties.



Less than two years earlier, in an unprecedented move for an Arab leader, Sadat traveled to Jerusalem, Israel, to seek a permanent peace settlement with Egypt's Jewish neighbor after decades of conflict. Sadat's visit, in which he met with Begin and spoke before Israel's parliament, was met with outrage in most of the Arab world. Despite criticism from Egypt's regional allies, Sadat continued to



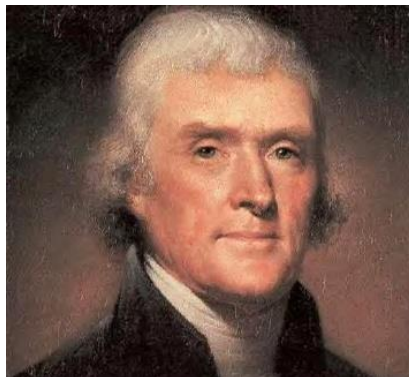
pursue peace with Begin, and in September 1978 the two leaders met again in the United States, where they negotiated an agreement with U.S. President Jimmy Carter at Camp David, Maryland. The Camp David Accords, the first peace agreement between the state of Israel and one of its Arab neighbors, laid the groundwork for diplomatic and commercial relations. Seven months later, a formal peace treaty was signed.

For their achievement, Sadat and Begin were jointly awarded the 1978 Nobel Prize for Peace. Sadat's peace efforts were not so highly acclaimed in the Arab world—Egypt was suspended from the Arab League, and on October 6, 1981, Muslim extremists assassinated Sadat in Cairo. Nevertheless, the peace process continued without Sadat, and in 1982 Egypt formally established diplomatic relations with Israel.

- **Mar 26 1982 – Post Vietnam:** A groundbreaking ceremony for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is held in Washington, D.C.
- **Mar 26 2018 – U.S. Army:** US soldier receives world's first penis and scrotum transplant at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland

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- **Mar 27 1775 – American Revolution:** *Jefferson elected to the Continental Congress* » Future President Thomas Jefferson is elected to the second Continental Congress on this day in 1775. Jefferson, a Virginia delegate, quickly established himself in the Continental Congress with the publication of his paper entitled A Summary View of the Rights of British America. Throughout the next year, Jefferson published several more papers, most notably Drafts and Notes on the Virginia Constitution.



In June 1776, Congress put together a committee to draft the Declaration of Independence. After much discussion, the committee chose Jefferson to compose the document. At just 33 years old, Jefferson finished writing his draft of what is considered the most important document in the history of democracy in just a few days. After a few minor changes, the committee submitted the draft, titled A Declaration by the Representatives in General Congress Assembled, to Congress on June 28, 1776. After some debate, the document was formally adopted by Congress on July 4, 1776, under the new title, The Declaration of Independence.

In the following years, Jefferson drafted other historical documents including, in 1777, a bill establishing religious freedom that was formally enacted by Congress in 1786. He served as Virginia's governor from 1779 to 1781, minister to France from 1784 to 1789 and the first U.S. secretary of state under President George Washington from 1790 to 1793.

Jefferson served as vice president under President John Adams from 1797 to 1801 and afterwards was elected the third president of the United States, a position he held for two terms from 1801 to 1809. After his presidency ended, Jefferson retired from public life to his home, Monticello, in Virginia. Jefferson died on July 4, 1826—50 years to the day after the signing of The Declaration of Independence. He was 83 years old.

- **Mar 27 1794 – U.S. Navy:** *Naval Act signed* » The Act to create a Naval Armament, also known as the Act of 1794, was passed by Congress and signed by President George Washington. The Act authorized the construction of six frigates (warships) at a total cost of \$688,888.82. These ships were the first ships of what eventually became the United States Navy.
- **Mar 27 1814 – War of 1812:** In central Alabama, U.S. forces under General Andrew Jackson defeat the Creek at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend.



**The Battle of Horseshoe Bend**

- **Mar 27 1836 – Texas Revolution:** *Mexicans execute defenders of Goliad* » In a disastrous setback for the Texans resisting Santa Anna's dictatorial regime, the Mexican army defeats and executes 417 Texas revolutionaries at Goliad.

Long accustomed to enjoying considerable autonomy from their Mexican rulers, many Anglo Texan settlers reacted with alarm when Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna proclaimed himself dictator of Mexico in 1835. Santa Anna immediately imposed martial law and attempted to disarm the Texans. Yet, this move merely fed the flames of Texan resistance.

In November 1853, Texan leaders proclaimed their resistance to Santa Anna's dictatorship, though they stopped short of calling for independence. The next month, the Texans managed to defeat 800

Mexican soldiers stationed in San Antonio. However, the rebel leaders remained deeply divided over what to do next, making them vulnerable to Santa Anna's ruthless determination to suppress dissension.

While the Texas rebels dallied, Santa Anna moved decisively. In mid-February he led a massive Mexican army across the Rio Grande, and after a 13-day siege of the Alamo, crushed the rebels in San Antonio. Meanwhile, to the south, Santa Ann's chief lieutenant, General Urrea, moved to destroy another faction of the rebel army attempting to defend the town of Goliad.



Disagreements among the Texans had led to a division of the rebel forces. James W. Fannin was left with only slightly more than 300 Texans to protect Goliad, a position the rebels needed in order to maintain their supply routes to the Gulf Coast. As Urrea's much larger 1400-man army approached, Fannin acted with indecision, wondering if he should go to the aid of the besieged men at the Alamo.

Belatedly, Fannin attempted to fall back from the approaching Mexican army, but his retreat order came too late. On March 19, Urrea surrounded the small column of rebel soldiers on an open prairie, where they were trapped without food, water, or cover. After repulsing one Mexican assault, Fannin realized there was no chance of escape. Rather than see his force annihilated, Fannin surrendered.

Apparently, some among the Texans who surrendered believed they would be treated as prisoners of war. Santa Anna, however, had clearly stated several months before that he considered the rebels to be traitors who would be given no quarter. In obedience to Santa Anna's orders, on this day in 1836 Urrea ordered his men to open fire on Fannin and his soldiers, along with about 100 other captured Texans. More than 400 men were executed that day at Goliad.

Ironically, rather than serving to crush the Texas rebellion, the Goliad Massacre helped inspire and unify the Texans. Now determined to break completely from Mexico, the Texas revolutionaries began to yell "Remember Goliad!" along with the more famous battle cry, "Remember the Alamo!" Less than a month later, Texan forces under General Sam Houston dealt a stunning blow to Santa Anna's army in the Battle of San Jacinto, and Texas won its independence.

- **Mar 27 1846 – Mexican\*American War:** Siege of Fort Texas.
- **Mar 27 1865 – Civil War:** *Lincoln, Sherman and Grant meet* » President Abraham Lincoln meets with Union generals Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman at City Point, Virginia, to plot the last stages of the Civil War. The following day, 28 MAR, Admiral David Dixon Porter, was present in the meeting as well.

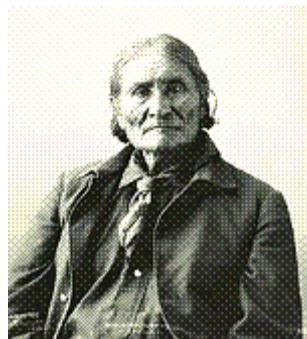


Lincoln went to Virginia just as Grant was preparing to attack Confederate General Robert E. Lee's lines around Petersburg and Richmond, an assault that promised to end the siege that had dragged on for 10 months. Meanwhile, Sherman's force was steamrolling northward through the Carolinas. The three architects of Union victory convened for the first time as a group—Lincoln and Sherman had never met—at Grant's City Point headquarters at the general-in-chief's request.

As part of the trip, Lincoln went to the Petersburg lines and witnessed a Union bombardment and a small skirmish. Prior to meeting with his generals, the president also reviewed troops and visited wounded soldiers. Once he sat down with Grant and Sherman, Lincoln expressed concern that Lee might escape Petersburg and flee to North Carolina, where he could join forces with Joseph Johnston to forge a new Confederate army that could continue the war for months. Grant and Sherman assured the president the end was in sight. Lincoln emphasized to his generals that any surrender terms must preserve the Union war aims of emancipation and a pledge of equality for the freed slaves.

After meeting with Admiral David Dixon Porter on 28 MAR, the president and his two generals went their separate ways. Less than four weeks later, Grant and Sherman had secured the surrender of the Confederacy.

- **Mar 27 1886 – Apache Wars:** Famous Apache warrior, Geronimo, surrenders to the U.S. Army, ending the main phase of the Apache Wars.



**Geronimo, 1898**

- **Mar 27 1899 – Philippine\*American War:** *Battle of Marilao River* » One of the most celebrated river crossings of the whole war, wherein American forces crossed the Marilao River, which was 80 yards wide and too deep to ford, while under Filipino fire from the opposite bank.

The American force, after the Battle of Malinta, had advanced to Marilao on 27 MAR. It was part of the campaign for the Capture of Malolos, the Philippine capital. The Filipino force was led by President Emilio Aguinaldo himself, commanding the organized forces of General Isidro Torres, General Pantaleon Garcia (who just came straight from Dagupan with a thousand riflemen) and Colonel

Enrique Pacheco. The Americans fought with the Filipinos within the range of around 400 yards. Meanwhile, the Filipinos destroyed bridges to delay American artillery units. The Americans gained superiority in the battle only after severe fighting and the use of gunboats in the river that "made great execution" of Filipino soldiers. The official American account of the battle stated that Aguinaldo acted with a great sense of military strategy, averting a disastrous rout while succeeding in inflicting heavy damage on the Americans. The losses in the American drive to Malolos, the account also stated, had proven the Filipinos' effective fighting ability

After resting at Guiguinto, Bulacan from 29 to 30, MAR the American division under General Arthur MacArthur, Jr. pushed to the suburbs of Malolos by the afternoon of 30 MAR. Malolos fell the next day since the Americans faced only token resistance. The American forces would rest in Malolos until April 1899, when they would have to shatter the Calumpit-Apalit Line at the Battle of Quingua and Battle of Calumpit,

- **Mar 27 1918 – WWI:** In the wake of Russia's withdrawal from World War I and its acceptance of the humiliating peace terms set by the Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk, the Balkan republic of Romania annexes Bessarabia, a strategically important area of land located on its eastern border and bounded on the south by the Danube River and the mouth of the Black Sea.
- **Mar 27 1933 – Pre WW2:** *Japan leaves League of Nations* » The Japanese delegation, defying world opinion, withdrew from the League of Nations Assembly after the assembly had adopted a report blaming Japan for events in Manchuria. The stunned international conclave, representing almost every nation on earth, sat in silence while the delegation, led by the dapper Yosuke Matsuoka, clad in black, walked from the hall. The crowded galleries broke into mingled hisses and applause.



Japan's formal resignation from the league is expected to be filed later. "We are not coming back," Matsuoka said simply as he left the hall. The assembly's report, recommending that Japan withdraw her troops occupying Manchuria and restore the country to Chinese sovereignty, was adopted, 42 to 1, Japan voting against it. Paul Hymans, presiding, announced it was unanimous, since the vote of interested parties does not count. The session which made history, signifying the final break between the league and one of the world's major powers, was fairly brief and simple.

As the roll was called down the alphabetical list of nations, delegate after delegate voted for the resolution. When China was called, there was a slight stir of expectancy and W. W. Yen, Chinese delegate, firmly answered: "Yes." Japan was called a few moments later. Matsuoka's decisive "no"

could be clearly heard in all parts of the hall. Matsuoka later announced the delegation's withdrawal from the league, the first step in breaking relations with Geneva. Two years is required to make withdrawal final. Japan will be held responsible for fulfillment of her international obligations during that time. The Japanese delegation stalked from the hall while a translator interpreted Matsuoka's speech.

Matsuoka, usually typifying the placid oriental diplomat, was nervous before he began his speech, and abandoned the text before he finished. He shouted from the rostrum: "Japan will oppose any attempt at international control of Manchuria. It does not mean that we defy you, because Manchuria belongs to us by right. "Read your history. We recovered Manchuria from Russia. We made it what it is today."

- **Mar 27 1941 – Pre WW2:** Adolf Hitler signs Directive 25(assault on Yugoslavia) following the Yugoslav coup d'état. At <http://www.der-fuehrer.org/reden/english/wardirectives/25.html> can be seen a copy of the directive.
- **Mar 27 1942 – WW2: *Holocaust*** » The first deportations of Jews from France to Auschwitz begin. By the end of 1944, the Germans had deported more than 75,000 Jews from France to camps in the East, above all, to the Auschwitz-Birkenau killing center in Occupied Poland, where most of them perished.
- **Mar 27 1943 – WW2: *Battle of the Komandorski Islands*** » In the Aleutian Islands the battle begins when United States Navy forces intercept Japanese attempting to reinforce a garrison at Kiska.
- **Mar 27 1944 – Holocaust: *Jewish oppression*** » On this day 1,000 Jews leave Drancy, France, for Auschwitz concentration camp; 2,000 Jews are murdered in Kaunas Lithuania; 40 Jewish policemen in Riga, Latvia, ghetto are shot by the Gestapo; and Children's Aktion-Nazis collect all the Jewish children of Lovno.
- **Mar 27 1945 – WW2:** On this day Gen Eisenhower declares German defenses on Western Front broken; Iwo Jima is occupied, after 22,000 Japanese & 6,000 US killed; and Operation Starvation, the aerial mining of Japan's ports and waterways, begins.
- **Mar 27 1945 – WW2: *Germans launch last of their V-2s*** » In a last-ditch effort to deploy their remaining V-2 missiles against the Allies, the Germans launch their long-range rockets from their only remaining launch site, in the Netherlands. Almost 200 civilians in England and Belgium were added to the V-2 casualty toll.



German scientists had been working on the development of a long-range missile since the 1930s. In October 3, 1942, victory was achieved with the successful trial launch of the V-2, a 12-ton rocket capable of carrying a one-ton warhead. The missile, fired from Peenemunde, an island off Germany's Baltic coast, traveled 118 miles in that first test.

The brainchild of rocket scientist Wernher von Braun, the V-2 was unique in several ways. First, it was virtually impossible to intercept. Upon launching, the missile rises six miles vertically; it then proceeds on an arced course, cutting off its own fuel according to the range desired. The missile then tips over and falls on its target at a speed of almost 4,000 mph. It hits with such force that the missile burrows itself into the ground several feet before exploding. The V-2 had the potential of flying a distance of 200 miles, and the launch pads were portable, making them impossible to detect before firing.

The first launches as part of an offensive occurred on September 6, 1944, when two missiles were fired at Paris. On September 8, two more were fired at England, which would be followed by over 1,100 more during the next six months. On March 27, 1945, taking advantage of their one remaining V-2 launch site, near The Hague, the Germans fired their V-2s for the last time. At 7 a.m., London awoke to a blast-one of the bombs had landed on a block of flats at Valance Road, killing 134 people. Twenty-seven Belgian civilians were killed in Antwerp when another of the rockets landed there. And that afternoon, one more V-2 landed in Kent, England, causing the very last British civilian casualty of the war.

By the end of the war, more than 2,700 Brits had died because of the rocket attacks, as well as another 4,483 deaths in Belgium. After the war, both the United States and the Soviet Union captured samples of the rockets for reproduction. Having proved so extraordinarily deadly during the war, the V-2 became the precursor of the Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM) of the postwar era.

- **Mar 27 1952 – Korean War:** Elements of the U.S. Eighth Army reach the 38th parallel.
- **Mar 27 1958 – Cold War:** *Khrushchev becomes Soviet premier* » Soviet First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev replaces Nicolay Bulganin as Soviet premier, becoming the first leader since Joseph Stalin to simultaneously hold the USSR's two top offices.



Khrushchev, born into a Ukrainian peasant family in 1894, worked as a mine mechanic before joining the Soviet Communist Party in 1918. In 1929, he went to Moscow and steadily rose in the party

ranks and in 1938 was made first secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party. He became a close associate of Joseph Stalin, the authoritarian leader of the Soviet Union since 1924. In 1953, Stalin died, and Khrushchev grappled with Stalin's chosen successor, Georgy Malenkov, for the position of first secretary of the Communist Party. Khrushchev won the power struggle, and Malenkov was made premier, a more ceremonial post. In 1955, Malenkov was replaced by Bulganin, Khrushchev's hand-picked nominee.

In 1956, Khrushchev denounced Stalin and his totalitarian policies at the 20th Party Congress, leading to a "thaw" in the USSR that saw the release of millions of political prisoners. Almost immediately, the new atmosphere of freedom led to anti-Soviet uprisings in Poland and Hungary. Khrushchev flew to Poland and negotiated a diplomatic solution, but the Hungarian rebellion was crushed by Warsaw Pact troops and tanks.

Khrushchev's program of de-Stalinization was opposed by some hard-liners in the Communist Party, and in June 1957 he was nearly ousted from his position as first secretary. After a brief struggle, he secured the removal of Malenkov and the other top party members who had opposed him and in 1958 prepared to take on the post of premier. On March 27, 1958, the Supreme Soviet—the Soviet legislature—voted unanimously to make First Secretary Khrushchev also Soviet premier, thus formally recognizing him as the undisputed leader of the USSR.

In foreign affairs, Premier Khrushchev's stated policy was one of "peaceful coexistence" with the West. He said, "we offer the capitalist countries peaceful competition" and gave the Soviet Union an early lead in the space race by launching the first Soviet satellites and cosmonauts. A visit to the United States by Khrushchev in 1959 was hailed as a new high in U.S.-Soviet relations, but superpower relations would hit dangerous new lows in the early 1960s.

In 1960, Khrushchev walked out of a long-awaited four-powers summit over the U-2 affair, and in 1961 he authorized construction of the Berlin Wall as a drastic solution to the East German question. Then, in October 1962, the United States and the USSR came close to nuclear war over the USSR's placement of nuclear missiles in Cuba. After 13 tense days, the Cuban Missile Crisis came to an end when Khrushchev agreed to withdraw the offensive weapons in exchange for a secret U.S. pledge not to invade Cuba.

The humiliating resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis, an agricultural crisis at home, and the deterioration of Soviet-Chinese relations over Khrushchev's moderate policies all led to growing opposition to Khrushchev in the party ranks. On October 14, 1964, Leonid Brezhnev, Khrushchev's protege and deputy, organized a successful coup against him, and Khrushchev abruptly stepped down as first secretary and premier. He retired to obscurity outside Moscow and lived there until his death in 1971.

- **Mar 27 1965 – Vietnam War:** *South Vietnamese forces conduct combat operations in Cambodia* » Following several days of consultations with the Cambodian government, South Vietnamese troops, supported by artillery and air strikes, launch their first major military operation into Cambodia. The South Vietnamese encountered a 300-man Viet Cong force in the Kandal province and reported killing 53 communist soldiers. Two teams of U.S. helicopter gunships took part in the action. Three South Vietnamese soldiers were killed and seven wounded.



- **Mar 27 1973 – Vietnam War:** *Bombing of Cambodia to continue* » The White House announces that, at the request of Cambodian President Lon Nol, the bombing of Cambodia will continue until communist forces cease military operations and agree to a cease-fire.

In March 1970, Lon Nol had overthrown Prince Norodom Sihanouk in a bloodless coup. Between 1970 and 1975, Lon Nol and his army, the Forces Armées Nationales Khmer (FANK), with U.S. support and military aid, fought the Khmer Rouge and Sihanouk's supporters 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 succumbed to the Khmer Rouge, surrendering to the communists in April 1975. The victorious Khmer Rouge evacuated Phnom Penh and began reordering Cambodian society, which resulted in a killing spree and the notorious "killing fields." Eventually, hundreds of thousands of Cambodians were murdered or died from exhaustion, hunger, and disease.

- **Mar 27 1975 – Vietnam War:** The evacuation by sea of Da Nang begins, a four-day effort by Military Sea Command ships that carry more than 30,000 refugees from Da Nang until 30 MAR, when the North Vietnamese troops overrun the city and harbor.
- **Mar 27 1984 – Tanker War:** Beginning of "tanker war": over the next 9 months, 44 ships, including Iranian, Iraqi, Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti tankers, are attacked by Iraqi or Iranian warplanes or damaged by mines
- **Mar 27 1990 – Cold War:** *TV Marti begins broadcasting to Cuba* » The U.S. government begins the operation of TV Marti, which broadcast television programs into communist Cuba. The project marked yet another failed attempt to undermine the regime of Cuban leader Fidel Castro.



Radio Marti broadcast studio

TV Marti was put together under the auspices of the Voice of America, the U.S. radio and television broadcasting system established in the 1940s to beam news and propaganda throughout the world, particularly directed toward communist nations. The new addition to this propaganda arsenal, TV Marti, was primarily the result of intense lobbying by Cuban-American interest groups and a handful of senators and representatives from south Florida and New Jersey (areas with large Cuban-American populations). TV Marti programming tried to give Cubans an accurate look at American life.

The legality and effectiveness of TV Marti were immediately issues for debate. International law forbade the transmitting of television signals into another nation if the transmission interfered with

regular programming. TV Marti representatives argued that the signal was being sent on unused channels in Cuba. As for how effective it was, Cuba immediately worked to jam the signal as soon as TV Marti launched, so only a few people on the outskirts of Havana could conceivably see the broadcasts. The first day's programming included some footage of old World Series games, music videos, and replays of the old "Kate and Allie" sitcom.

TV Marti was a powerful indication of the strength of Cold War animosities and the Cuban-American lobby in the United States. The United States and Cuba had been locked in a diplomatic war since Fidel Castro came to power in 1959, and the United States resorted to a number of different schemes to try to unseat the dictator during the following decades. During that time, the Cuban-American lobby, which was well organized and well-funded, became a powerful voice in Washington. Despite the fact that TV Marti was a dismal failure in terms of weakening the Castro regime, it continues to receive funding and is still in operation.

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- **Mar 28 1774 – American Revolution:** *British Parliament adopts the Coercive Acts* » Upset by the Boston Tea Party and other blatant acts of destruction of British property by American colonists, the British Parliament enacts the Coercive Acts, to the outrage of American Patriots, on this day in 1774.

The Coercive Acts were a series of four acts established by the British government. The aim of the legislation was to restore order in Massachusetts and punish Bostonians for their Tea Party, in which members of the revolutionary-minded Sons of Liberty boarded three British tea ships in Boston Harbor and dumped 342 crates of tea—nearly \$1 million worth in today's money—into the water to protest the Tea Act. Passed in response to the Americans' disobedience, the Coercive Acts included:

- The Boston Port Act, which closed the port of Boston until damages from the Boston Tea Party were paid.
- The Massachusetts Government Act, which restricted Massachusetts; democratic town meetings and turned the governor's council into an appointed body.
- The Administration of Justice Act, which made British officials immune to criminal prosecution in Massachusetts.
- The Quartering Act, which required colonists to house and quarter British troops on demand, including in their private homes as a last resort.

A fifth act, the Quebec Act, which extended freedom of worship to Catholics in Canada, as well as granting Canadians the continuation of their judicial system, was joined with the Coercive Acts in colonial parlance as one of the Intolerable Acts, as the mainly Protestant colonists did not look kindly on the ability of Catholics to worship freely on their borders.

More important than the acts themselves was the colonists' response to the legislation. Parliament hoped that the acts would cut Boston and New England off from the rest of the colonies and prevent unified resistance to British rule. They expected the rest of the colonies to abandon Bostonians to British martial law. Instead, other colonies rushed to the city's defense, sending supplies and forming their own Provincial Congresses to discuss British misrule and mobilize resistance to the crown. In September 1774, the First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia and began orchestrating a united resistance to British rule in America.

- **Mar 28 1814 – War of 1812:** British frigates HMS Phoebe and HMS Cherub capture the frigate USS Essex, commanded by Capt. David Porter, off Valparaiso, Chile after blockading the ship for six weeks.
- **Mar 28 1862 – Civil War: *Battle of Glorieta Pass*** » Union forces stop the Confederate invasion of New Mexico Territory when they turn the Rebels back at Glorieta Pass. This action was part of the broader movement by the Confederates to capture New Mexico and other parts of the West. This would secure territory that the Rebels thought was rightfully theirs but had been denied them by political compromises made before the Civil War. Furthermore, the cash-strapped Confederacy could use Western mines to fill its treasury. From San Antonio, the Rebels moved into southern New Mexico (which included Arizona at the time) and captured the towns of Mesilla, Doña Ana and Tucson. General Henry H. Sibley, with 3,000 troops, now moved north against the Federal stronghold at Fort Craig on the Rio Grande.



Sibley’s force collided with Union troops at Valverde near Fort Craig on 21 FEB, but the Yankees were unable to stop the invasion. Sibley left parts of his army to occupy Albuquerque and Santa Fe, and the rest of the troops headed east of Santa Fe along the Pecos River. Their next target was the Union garrison at Fort Union, an outpost on the other side of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. At Pigeon’s Ranch near Glorieta Pass, they encountered a Yankee force of 1,300 Colorado volunteers under Colonel John Slough. The battle began in late morning, and the Federal force was thrown back before taking cover among the adobe buildings of Pigeon’s Ranch. A Confederate attack late in the afternoon pushed the Union troops further down the pass, but nightfall halted the advance. Union troops snatched victory from the jaws of defeat when Major John Chivington led an attack on the Confederate supply train, burning 90 wagons and killing 800 animals.

With their supplies destroyed, the Confederates had to withdraw to Santa Fe. They lost 36 men killed, 70 wounded, and 25 captured. The Union army lost 38 killed, 64 wounded, and 20 captured. After a week in Santa Fe, the Rebels withdrew down the Rio Grande. By June, the Yankees controlled New Mexico again, and the Confederates did not return for the rest of the war.

- **Mar 28 1915 – WWI: *First American citizen killed during WWI*** » In the eight-month-old European conflict that would become known as the First World War the first American citizen is killed. Leon Thrasher, a 31-year-old mining engineer and native of Massachusetts, drowned when a German submarine, the U-28, torpedoed the cargo-passenger ship Falaba, on its way from Liverpool to West Africa, off the coast of England. Of the 242 passengers and crew on board the Falaba, 104 drowned.

Thrasher, who was employed on the Gold Coast in British West Africa, was returning to his post there from England as a passenger on the ship.



The Germans claimed that the submarine's crew had followed all protocol when approaching the Falaba, giving the passengers ample time to abandon ship and firing only when British torpedo destroyers began to approach to give aid to the Falaba. The British official press report of the incident claimed that the Germans had acted improperly: It is not true that sufficient time was given the passengers and the crew of this vessel to escape. The German submarine closed in on the Falaba, ascertained her name, signaled her to stop, and gave those on board five minutes to take to the boats. It would have been nothing short of a miracle if all the passengers and crew of a big liner had been able to take to their boats within the time allotted.

The sinking of the Falaba, and Thrasher's death specifically, was mentioned in a memorandum sent by the U.S. government—drafted by President Woodrow Wilson himself—to the German government after the German submarine attack on the British passenger ship Lusitania on May 7, 1915, in which 1,201 people were drowned, including 128 Americans. The note struck a clear warning tone, calling for the U.S. and Germany to come to a clear and full understanding as to the grave situation which has resulted from the German policy of unrestricted submarine warfare. Germany abandoned the policy shortly thereafter; its renewal, in early 1917, provided the final impetus for U.S. entry into World War I that April.

- **Mar 28 1941 – WW2:** Andrew Browne Cunningham, Admiral of the British Fleet, commands the British Royal Navy's destruction of three major Italian cruisers and two destroyers in the Battle of Cape Matapan in the Mediterranean. The destruction, following on the attack on the Italian Fleet at Taranto by the British in November 1940, effectively put an end to any threat the Italian navy posed to the British.
- **Mar 28 1945 – WW2:** USS Trigger (SS-237) sunk by Japanese patrol vessel Mikura, Coast Defense Vessel No.33, and Coast Defense Vessel No. 59 in the Nansei Soto. 89 killed.
- **Mar 28 1946 – Cold War:** Acheson-Lilienthal Report released » The State Department releases the so-called Acheson-Lilienthal Report, which outlines a plan for international control of atomic energy. The report represented an attempt by the United States to maintain its superiority in the field of atomic weapons while also trying to avoid a costly and dangerous arms race with the Soviet Union.

The March 1946 report had been instigated by a rather hastily assembled proposal put forward by Secretary of State James Byrnes at the Moscow Conference in December 1945. Byrnes presented a

hazy plan for some sort of United Nations control of atomic energy; Soviet leader Joseph Stalin agreed to the idea. President Harry S. Truman was livid when he learned of Byrnes's proposal. By the time of the meeting in Moscow, Truman had come to the conclusion that the Soviets were dangerous adversaries who must be met with force. Giving up America's nuclear monopoly was not appealing. Nevertheless, he ordered the Department of State to put together a preliminary plan, assuming that America had such a huge head start in atomic power that the Soviets could never really catch up. In addition, perhaps an international body could help avert a potentially dangerous arms race with the Soviets.



Dean Acheson and David Lilienthal

Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson, administrator of the Tennessee Valley Authority David Lilienthal, and others hammered out a proposal by March 1946. The Acheson-Lilienthal Report suggested that an international body—such as the United Nations—have control over atomic materials and the means of producing nuclear energy. Information on atomic energy would be shared, research facilities would be divided among the nations involved, and the international body would conduct inspections. In the meantime, while this organization was being established, the United States would maintain its atomic monopoly.

In June 1946, Truman selected businessman Bernard Baruch to present the plan at the United Nations. Baruch, however, changed many of the key points of the plan and insisted that the United States would have an ultimate veto power on any issues arising in connection with the plan. The Soviets quickly rejected the idea so the vote was never held in the United Nations. The United States and the Soviet Union would go their own ways in developing their nuclear arsenals. In 1949, the Soviets exploded an atomic device and the nuclear arms race was on.

- **Mar 28 1961 – Vietnam War:** *Diem's popular support questioned* » A U.S. national intelligence estimate prepared for President John F. Kennedy declares that South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem and the Republic of Vietnam are facing an extremely critical situation. As evidence, the reports cites that more than half of the rural region surrounding Saigon is under communist control and points to a barely failed coup against Diem the preceding November.

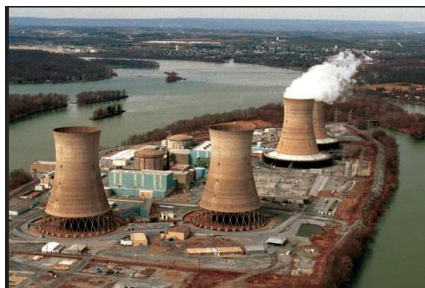


Not only were Diem's forces losing to the Viet Cong on the battlefield, the report alleged that he had not effectively dealt with the discontent among a large segment of South Vietnamese society, which had given rise to the coup against him. The report questioned Diem's ability to rally the people against the communists. Kennedy wondered what to do about Diem, who was staunchly anticommunist but did not have a lot of credibility with the South Vietnamese people because he was Catholic while the country was predominantly Buddhist. Kennedy and his advisers tried to convince Diem to put in place land reform and other measures that might build popular support, but Diem steadfastly refused to make any meaningful concessions to his opponents. He was assassinated in November 1963 during a coup by a group of South Vietnamese generals.

- **Mar 28 1967 – Vietnam War:** *American pacifists arrive in Haiphong* » The Phoenix, a private U.S. yacht with eight American pacifists aboard, arrives in Haiphong, North Vietnam, with \$10,000 worth of medical supplies for the North Vietnamese. The trip, financed by a Quaker group in Philadelphia, was made in defiance of a U.S. ban on American travel to North Vietnam. No charges were filed against the participants and the group made a second trip to North Vietnam later.
- **Mar 28 1979 – Cold War:** *Nuclear accident at Three Mile Island* » The worst accident in the history of the U.S. nuclear power industry begins when a pressure valve in the Unit-2 reactor at Three Mile Island fails to close. Cooling water, contaminated with radiation, drained from the open valve into adjoining buildings, and the core began to dangerously overheat.

The Three Mile Island nuclear power plant was built in 1974 on a sandbar on Pennsylvania's Susquehanna River, just 10 miles downstream from the state capitol in Harrisburg. In 1978, a second state-of-the-art reactor began operating on Three Mile Island, which was lauded for generating affordable and reliable energy in a time of energy crises.

After the cooling water began to drain out of the broken pressure valve on the morning of March 28, 1979, emergency cooling pumps automatically went into operation. Left alone, these safety devices would have prevented the development of a larger crisis. However, human operators in the control room misread confusing and contradictory readings and shut off the emergency water system. The reactor was also shut down, but residual heat from the fission process was still being released. By early morning, the core had heated to over 4,000 degrees, just 1,000 degrees short of meltdown. In the meltdown scenario, the core melts, and deadly radiation drifts across the countryside, fatally sickening a potentially great number of people.



As the plant operators struggled to understand what had happened, the contaminated water was releasing radioactive gases throughout the plant. The radiation levels, though not immediately life-threatening, were dangerous, and the core cooked further as the contaminated water was contained and

precautions were taken to protect the operators. Shortly after 8 a.m., word of the accident leaked to the outside world. The plant's parent company, Metropolitan Edison, downplayed the crisis and claimed that no radiation had been detected off plant grounds, but the same day inspectors detected slightly increased levels of radiation nearby as a result of the contaminated water leak. Pennsylvania Governor Dick Thornburgh considered calling an evacuation.

Finally, at about 8 p.m., plant operators realized they needed to get water moving through the core again and restarted the pumps. The temperature began to drop, and pressure in the reactor was reduced. The reactor had come within less than an hour of a complete meltdown. More than half the core was destroyed or molten, but it had not broken its protective shell, and no radiation was escaping. The crisis was apparently over.

Two days later, however, on 30 MAR, a bubble of highly flammable hydrogen gas was discovered within the reactor building. The bubble of gas was created two days before when exposed core materials reacted with super-heated steam. On 28 MAR, some of this gas had exploded, releasing a small amount of radiation into the atmosphere. At that time, plant operators had not registered the explosion, which sounded like a ventilation door closing. After the radiation leak was discovered on March 30, residents were advised to stay indoors. Experts were uncertain if the hydrogen bubble would create further meltdown or possibly a giant explosion, and as a precaution Governor Thornburgh advised "pregnant women and pre-school age children to leave the area within a five-mile radius of the Three Mile Island facility until further notice." This led to the panic the governor had hoped to avoid; within days, more than 100,000 people had fled surrounding towns.

On 1 APR, President Jimmy Carter arrived at Three Mile Island to inspect the plant. Carter, a trained nuclear engineer, had helped dismantle a damaged Canadian nuclear reactor while serving in the U.S. Navy. His visit achieved its aim of calming local residents and the nation. That afternoon, experts agreed that the hydrogen bubble was not in danger of exploding. Slowly, the hydrogen was bled from the system as the reactor cooled.

At the height of the crisis, plant workers were exposed to unhealthy levels of radiation, but no one outside Three Mile Island had their health adversely affected by the accident. Nonetheless, the incident greatly eroded the public's faith in nuclear power. The unharmed Unit-1 reactor at Three Mile Island, which was shut down during the crisis, did not resume operation until 1985. Cleanup continued on Unit-2 until 1990, but it was too damaged to be rendered usable again. In the more than two decades since the accident at Three Mile Island, not a single new nuclear power plant has been ordered in the United States.

- **Mar 28 1999 – Kosovo War:** Serb paramilitary and military forces kill 146 Kosovo Albanians in the Izbica massacre.



- **Mar 28 2003 – Iraq War:** In a friendly fire incident, two A-10 Thunderbolt II attack aircraft from the United States Idaho Air National Guard's 190th Fighter Squadron attack British tanks participating in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, killing British soldier Matty Hull.

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- **Mar 29 1776 – American Revolution:** Putnam named commander of New York troops » General George Washington appoints Major General Israel Putnam commander of the troops in New York. In his new capacity, Putnam was expected to execute plans for the defense of New York City and its waterways.



A veteran military man, Putnam had served as a lieutenant in the Connecticut militia during the French and Indian War, where he survived capture by Caughanawega Indians at Detroit and led regiments in the victories at Ticonderoga and Montreal. Connecticut elected Putnam to the colony's General Assembly in 1766 in the wake of the Stamp Act Crisis. He was also among the founders of the Sons of Liberty in Connecticut. At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, Putnam received a commission as a general in the Continental Army under General George Washington.

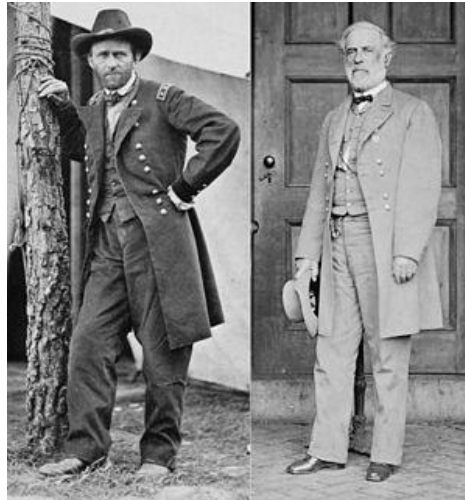
Putnam's leadership and battlefield experience served him and the Continental Army most admirably at the Battle of Bunker Hill in June 1775, where he helped develop strategy and distinguished himself on the battlefield. Shortly after taking command of the New York troops in March 1776, though, Putnam's career took a downturn. In August 1776, British troops forced his retreat at the Battle of Long Island. After retreating again from the New York battles for Fort Montgomery and Fort Clinton in 1777, General Washington began to doubt Putnam's leadership. Considered one of Washington's most valuable military men at the beginning of the Revolutionary War, Putnam began to be seen as an ineffective leader. Still, he continued serving in the Continental Army until suffering a career-ending stroke in December 1779.

Israel Putnam was not the only member of his extended family to end his life in disrepute. His ancestors were among the residents of Salem Village (modern-day Danvers), Massachusetts, to execute 20 of their neighbors after accusing them of witchcraft in the famous trials of 1692.



- **Mar 29 1847 – Mexican\*American War:** United States forces led by General Winfield Scott take Veracruz after a siege.
- **Mar 29 1865 – Civil War:** *Appomattox campaign begins* » The final campaign of the Civil War begins in Virginia when Union troops under General Ulysses S. Grant move against the Confederate trenches around Petersburg. General Robert E. Lee's outnumbered Rebels were soon forced to evacuate the city and begin a desperate race west.

Eleven months earlier, Grant moved his army across the Rapidan River in northern Virginia and began the bloodiest campaign of the war. For six weeks, Lee and Grant fought along an arc that swung east of the Confederate capital at Richmond. They engaged in some of the conflict's bloodiest battles at Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and Cold Harbor before settling into trenches for a siege of Petersburg, 25 miles south of Richmond. The trenches eventually stretched all the way to Richmond, and during the ensuing months the armies glowered at each other across a no man's land. Periodically, Grant launched attacks against sections of the Rebel defenses, but Lee's men managed to fend them off.



Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee, opposing commanders in the Appomattox Campaign

Time was running out for Lee, though. His army was dwindling in size to about 55,000, while Grant's continued to grow—the Army of the Potomac now had more than 125,000 men ready for service. On 25 MAR, Lee attempted to split the Union lines when he attacked Fort Stedman, a stronghold along the Yankee trenches. His army was beaten back, and he lost nearly 5,000 men. On 29 MAR, Grant seized the initiative, sending 12,000 men past the Confederates' left flank and threatening to cut Lee's escape route from Petersburg. Fighting broke out there, several miles southwest of the city. Lee's men could not arrest the Federal advance. On 1 APR, the Yankees struck at Five Forks, soundly defeating the Rebels and leaving Lee no alternative. He pulled his forces from their trenches and raced west, followed by Grant. It was a race that even the great Lee could not win. He surrendered his army on April 9, 1865, at Appomattox Court House.

- **Mar 29 1911 – U.S. Army:** The M1911 .45 ACP pistol becomes the official U.S. Army side arm.

- **Mar 29 1917 – WWI:** *Swedish prime minister resigns over WWI policy* » Prime Minister Hjalmar Hammarskjold of Sweden, father of the famous future United Nations Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold, resigns on this day in 1917 after his policy of strict neutrality in World War I—including continued trading with Germany, in violation of the Allied blockade—leads to widespread hunger and political instability in Sweden.



The elder Hammarskjold, a professor of law who became active in politics and served as a delegate to the Hague convention on international law in 1907, was asked by King Gustav V of Sweden to become prime minister in 1914 after a popularly elected government was opposed and defeated by conservative forces. From the beginning of his administration, Hammarskjold pursued a policy of strict neutrality in the war, continuing trade with Germany and thus subjecting his country and people to the hardships wrought by the Allied naval blockade in the North Sea, in place from November 1914.

Though the Allies—and many within Sweden—saw Hammarskjold’s neutrality as a pro-German policy, he apparently considered it a necessary product of his firm principles regarding international law. Sweden’s sacrifice during the war, he believed, would prove that it was not an opportunistic nation but a just one; this would put it in a stronger position after the war ended. In practice, however, his policies, and the hunger they produced, hurt Hammarskjold, as did his identification with Sweden’s monarchy and other reactionary forces, just as a movement toward true parliamentary democracy was growing in Sweden.

In 1917, Hammarskjold rejected a proposal for a common trade agreement with Great Britain that had been brokered by Marcus Wallenberg, brother of Sweden’s foreign minister, Knut Wallenberg, and would have brought much-needed economic relief to Sweden. With the obvious conflict between Hammarskjold and Wallenberg, the prime minister lost the support of even his most right-wing allies in parliament, and was forced to submit his resignation at the end of March 1917. He was succeeded by Carl Swartz, a conservative member of parliament who served only seven months. In October 1917, Sweden’s Social Democratic party won their first general election, and Nils Eden became prime minister.

- **Mar 29 1942 – WW2:** The Bombing of Lübeck is the first major success for the RAF Bomber Command against Germany and a German city.

- **Mar 29 1944 – WW2:** Allied bombing raid on Nuremberg. Along the English eastern coast 795 aircraft are dispatched, including 572 Lancasters, 214 Halifaxes and 9 Mosquitoes. The bombers meet resistance at the coasts of Belgium and the Netherlands from German fighters. In total, 95 bombers are lost, making it the largest Bomber Command loss of World War II.
- **Mar 29 1944 – WW2:** USS Ericsson (DD-440) and USS Kearny (DD-432), along with three submarine chasers, sink German U-223, which had sunk five Allied merchant vessels, including U.S. Army transport ship SS Dorchester of Four Chaplains fame on Feb. 3, 1943.
- **Mar 29 1945 – WW2:** The German 4th Army is almost destroyed by the Soviet Red Army.
- **Mar 29 1945 – WW2:** Gen. George S. Patton’s 3rd Army captures Frankfurt, as “Old Blood and Guts” continues his march east.



**Gen. George S. Patton**

- **Mar 29 1945 – WW2:** Last day of V-1 flying bomb attacks on England.
- **Mar 29 1951 – Korean War:** The Chinese reject Gen. Douglas MacArthur’s offer for a truce in Korea.
- **Mar 29 1951 – Cold War:** Rosenbergs convicted of espionage » In one of the most sensational trials in American history, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg are convicted of espionage for their role in passing atomic secrets to the Soviets during and after World War II. The husband and wife were later sentenced to death and were executed in 1953.



The conviction of the Rosenbergs was the climax of a fast-paced series of events that were set in motion with the arrest of British physicist Klaus Fuchs in Great Britain in February 1950. British

authorities, with assistance from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, gathered evidence that Fuchs, who worked on developing the atomic bomb both in England and the United States during World War II, had passed top-secret information to the Soviet Union. Fuchs almost immediately confessed his role and began a series of accusations.

Fuchs confessed that American Harry Gold had served as a courier for the Soviet agents to whom Fuchs passed along his information. American authorities captured Gold, who thereupon pointed the finger at David Greenglass, a young man who worked at the laboratory where the atomic bomb had been developed. Gold claimed Greenglass was even more heavily involved in spying than Fuchs. Upon his arrest, Greenglass readily confessed and then accused his sister and brother-in-law, Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, of being the spies who controlled the entire operation. Both Ethel and Julius had strong leftist leanings and had been heavily involved in labor and political issues in the United States during the late-1930s and 1940s. Julius was arrested in July and Ethel in August 1950.

By present-day standards, the trial was remarkably fast. It began on 6 MAR, and the jury had convicted both of conspiracy to commit espionage by 29 MAR. The Rosenbergs were not helped by a defense that many at the time, and since, have labeled incompetent. More harmful, however, was the testimony of Greenglass and Gold. Greenglass declared that Julius Rosenberg had set up a meeting during which Greenglass passed the plans for the atomic bomb to Gold. Gold supported Greenglass's accusation and admitted that he then passed the plans along to a Soviet agent. This testimony sealed Julius's fate, and although there was little evidence directly tying Ethel to the crime, prosecutors claimed that she was the brain behind the whole scheme. The jury found both guilty. A few days later, the Rosenbergs were sentenced to death. They were executed on 19 JUN, 1953 in Sing Sing Prison in New York. Both maintained their innocence to the end.

The Rosenberg case garnered worldwide attention. Their supporters claimed they were being made scapegoats to the Cold War hysteria that was sweeping America. The French writer and philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre called their execution a "legal lynching." Others pointed out that even if the Rosenbergs did pass secrets along to the Soviets during World War II, Russia had been an ally, not an enemy, of the United States at the time. Those who supported the verdict insisted that the couple got what they deserved for endangering national security by giving top-secret information on a devastating weapon to communists.

- **Mar 29 1971 – Vietnam War:** *Calley found guilty of My Lai murders* » Lt. William L. Calley is found guilty of premeditated murder at My Lai by a U.S. Army court-martial at Fort Benning, Georgia. Calley, a platoon leader, had led his men in a massacre of Vietnamese civilians, including women and children, at My Lai 4, a cluster of hamlets in Quang Ngai Province on March 16, 1968.



The unit had been conducting a search-and-destroy mission to locate the 48th Viet Cong (VC) Local Force Battalion. The unit entered Son My village but found only women, children, and old men. Frustrated by unanswered losses due to snipers and mines, the soldiers took out their anger on the villagers, indiscriminately shooting people as they ran from their huts. The soldiers rounded up the survivors and led them to a nearby ditch where they were shot.

Calley was charged with six specifications of premeditated murder. During the trial, Chief Army prosecutor Capt. Aubrey Daniel charged that Calley ordered Sgt. Daniel Mitchell to “finish off the rest” of the villagers. The prosecution stressed that all the killings were committed despite the fact that Calley’s platoon had met no resistance and that he and his men had not been fired on.

The My Lai massacre had initially been covered up but came to light one year later. An Army board of inquiry, headed by Lt. Gen. William Peers, investigated the massacre and produced a list of 30 people who knew of the atrocity, but only 14 were charged with crimes. All eventually had their charges dismissed or were acquitted by courts-martial except Calley, whose platoon allegedly killed 200 innocents.

Calley was found guilty of personally murdering 22 civilians and sentenced to life imprisonment, but his sentence was reduced to 20 years by the Court of Military Appeals and further reduced later to 10 years by the Secretary of the Army. Proclaimed by much of the public as a “scapegoat,” Calley was paroled in 1974 after having served about a third of his 10-year sentence.

- **Mar 29 1973 – Vietnam War: U.S. withdraws from Vietnam** » Two months after the signing of the Vietnam peace agreement, the last U.S. combat troops leave South Vietnam. As part of the Accords, Hanoi releases the last 67 of its acknowledged American prisoners of war, bringing the total number released to 591. America’s direct eight-year intervention in the Vietnam War was at an end. In Saigon, some 7,000 U.S. Department of Defense civilian employees remained behind to aid South Vietnam in conducting what looked to be a fierce and ongoing war with communist North Vietnam.



In 1961, after two decades of indirect military aid, U.S. President John F. Kennedy sent the first large force of U.S. military personnel to Vietnam to bolster the ineffectual autocratic regime of South Vietnam against the communist North. Three years later, with the South Vietnamese government crumbling, President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered limited bombing raids on North Vietnam, and Congress authorized the use of U.S. troops. By 1965, North Vietnamese offensives left President Johnson with two choices: escalate U.S. involvement or withdraw. Johnson ordered the former, and troop levels soon jumped to more than 300,000 as U.S. air forces commenced the largest bombing campaign in history.

During the next few years, the extended length of the war, the high number of U.S. casualties, and the exposure of U.S. involvement in war crimes, such as the massacre at My Lai, helped turn many in the United States against the Vietnam War. The communists’ Tet Offensive of 1968 crushed U.S. hopes

of an imminent end to the conflict and galvanized U.S. opposition to the war. In response, Johnson announced in March 1968 that he would not seek reelection, citing what he perceived to be his responsibility in creating a perilous national division over Vietnam. He also authorized the beginning of peace talks.

In the spring of 1969, as protests against the war escalated in the United States, U.S. troop strength in the war-torn country reached its peak at nearly 550,000 men. Richard Nixon, the new U.S. president, began U.S. troop withdrawal and “Vietnamization” of the war effort that year, but he intensified bombing. Large U.S. troop withdrawals continued in the early 1970s as President Nixon expanded air and ground operations into Cambodia and Laos in attempts to block enemy supply routes along Vietnam’s borders. This expansion of the war, which accomplished few positive results, led to new waves of protests in the United States and elsewhere.

Finally, in January 1973, representatives of the United States, North and South Vietnam, and the Vietcong signed a peace agreement in Paris, ending the direct U.S. military involvement in the Vietnam War. Its key provisions included a cease-fire throughout Vietnam, the withdrawal of U.S. forces, the release of prisoners of war, and the reunification of North and South Vietnam through peaceful means. The South Vietnamese government was to remain in place until new elections were held, and North Vietnamese forces in the South were not to advance further nor be reinforced.

In reality, however, the agreement was little more than a face-saving gesture by the U.S. government. Even before the last American troops departed on March 29, the communists violated the cease-fire, and by early 1974 full-scale war had resumed. At the end of 1974, South Vietnamese authorities reported that 80,000 of their soldiers and civilians had been killed in fighting during the year, making it the most costly of the Vietnam War.

On April 30, 1975, the last few Americans still in South Vietnam were airlifted out of the country as Saigon fell to communist forces. North Vietnamese Colonel Bui Tin, accepting the surrender of South Vietnam later in the day, remarked, “You have nothing to fear; between Vietnamese there are no victors and no vanquished. Only the Americans have been defeated.” The Vietnam War was the longest and most unpopular foreign war in U.S. history and cost 58,000 American lives. As many as two million Vietnamese soldiers and civilians were killed.

- **Mar 29 1974 – Space Travel:** *Mariner 10 visits Mercury* » The unmanned U.S. space probe Mariner 10, launched by NASA in November 1973, becomes the first spacecraft to visit the planet Mercury, sending back close-up images of a celestial body usually obscured because of its proximity to the sun.



Mariner 10 had visited the planet Venus eight weeks before but only for the purpose of using Venus' gravity to whip it toward the closest planet to the sun. In three flybys of Mercury between 1974 and 1975, the NASA spacecraft took detailed images of the planet and succeeded in mapping about 35 percent of its heavily cratered, moonlike surface.

Mercury is the second smallest planet in the solar system and completes its solar orbit in only 88 earth days. Data sent back by Mariner 10 discounted a previously held theory that the planet does not spin on its axis; in fact, the planet has a very slow rotational period that stretches over 58 earth days. Mercury is a waterless, airless world that alternately bakes and freezes as it slowly rotates. Highly inhospitable, Mercury's surface temperature varies from 800 degrees Fahrenheit when facing the sun to -279 degrees when facing away. The planet has no known satellites. Mariner 10 is the only human-created spacecraft to have visited Mercury to date.

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- **Mar 30 1775 – American Revolution:** King George endorses New England Restraining Act » Hoping to keep the New England colonies dependent on the British, King George III formally endorses the New England Restraining Act on this day in 1775. The New England Restraining Act required New England colonies to trade exclusively with Great Britain as of 1 JUL. An additional rule would come into effect on 20 JUL, banning colonists from fishing in the North Atlantic.

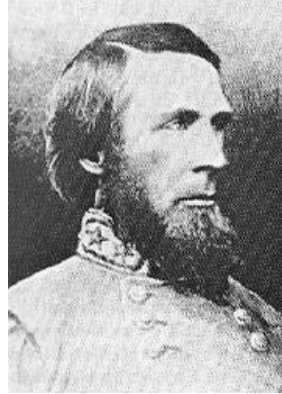


King George III and Frederick, Lord North

The British prime minister, Frederick, Lord North, introduced the Restraining Act and the Conciliatory Proposition to Parliament on the same day. The Conciliatory Proposition promised that no colony that met its share of imperial defenses and paid royal officials' salaries of their own accord would be taxed. The act conceded to the colonists' demand that they be allowed to provide the crown with needed funds on a voluntary basis. In other words, Parliament would ask for money through requisitions, not demand it through taxes. The Restraining Act was meant to appease Parliamentary hardliners, who would otherwise have impeded passage of the pacifying proposition.

Unfortunately for North and prospects for peace, he had already sent General Thomas Gage orders to march on Concord, Massachusetts, to destroy the armaments stockpiled in the town, and take Patriot leaders John Hancock and Samuel Adams into custody. The orders were given in January 1775 and arrived in Boston before the Conciliatory Proposition. Thus, on 18 APR, 700 Redcoats marched towards Concord Bridge. The military action led to the Revolutionary War, the birth of the United States as a new nation, the temporary downfall of Lord North and the near abdication of King George III. The Treaty of Paris marking the conflict's end guaranteed New Englanders the right to fish off Newfoundland—the right denied them by the New England Restraining Act.

- **Mar 30 1918 – Pre Civil War:** *Samuel Bell Maxey born* » Confederate General Samuel Maxey is born in Tompkinsville, Kentucky. During the Civil War, Maxey served in the West and led Native Americans troops in Indian Territory.



Maxey attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and graduated in 1846, second to last in a class of 59. He was sent immediately to fight in the Mexican War (1846-48). Although he did well there and fought at the Battle of Cerro Gordo, Maxey resigned his commission after the war to study law in Kentucky. In 1857, he moved to Texas and became active in politics. When the war began, he raised a regiment, the 9th Texas Infantry, and took his unit to fight in Mississippi. Maxey was promoted to brigadier general in March 1862 and his force participated in the Vicksburg campaign before aiding in the defense of Port Hudson, Louisiana. He avoided capture when those locations fell into Union hands, and wassent to assist in the Confederate siege of Chattanooga, Tennessee, in September 1863.

While there, Maxey received a promotion to commander of Indian Territory. In 1864, he worked to recruit and train members of the Cherokee, Creek, and Choctaw tribes. On April 18, 1864, troops under Maxey's command attacked a Union wagon train at Poison Spring, Arkansas. They routed the federal force, which was led by the 1st Kansas Colored Regiment. Maxey's men proceeded to kill all black soldiers who were wounded or captured.

After the war, Maxey continued to support his Native American friends when he served in the U.S. Senate and was an outspoken advocate of Indian rights. He died in 1895.

- **Mar 30 1918 – WWI:** *Battle of Moreuil Wood* » British, Australian and Canadian troops mount a successful counter-attack against the German offensive recapturing most of the area and forcing a turn in the tide of the battle in favor of the Allies.
- **Mar 30 1940 – WW2:** Japan establishes its own government in conquered Nanking, the former capital of Nationalist China. Nanking was declared by the Japanese to be the center of a new Chinese government, a regime controlled by Wang Ching-wei, a defector from the Nationalist cause and now a Japanese puppet.
- **Mar 30 1944 – WW2:** The U.S. fleet attacks Palau, near the Philippines.



- **Mar 30 1948 – Cold War:** *Henry Wallace criticizes Truman's Cold War policies* » Henry Wallace, former vice-president and current Progressive Party presidential candidate, lashes out at the Cold War policies of President Harry S. Truman. Wallace and his supporters were among the few Americans who actively voiced criticisms of America's Cold War mindset during the late-1940s and 1950s.



Widely admired for his intelligence and integrity, Henry Wallace had served as vice president to Franklin D. Roosevelt from 1941 to 1945. After Harry S. Truman succeeded to the presidency upon Roosevelt's death in April 1945, Wallace was named secretary of commerce, but Wallace did not get along with Truman. A true liberal, Wallace was harshly critical of what he perceived as Truman's backtracking from the social welfare legislation of the New Deal era. Wallace was also disturbed about U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union. During World War II, he came to admire the Soviet people for their tenacity and sacrifice. Like Roosevelt, he believed that the United States could work with Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in the postwar world.

After Roosevelt's death, the new Truman administration adopted a much tougher stance toward the Russians. In March 1948, Wallace appeared as a witness before the Senate Armed Services Committee to criticize Truman's call for universal military training, a program designed to provide military training for all American males of draft age. Dismissing Truman's alarming statements about meeting the communist threat as part of a "deliberately created crisis," Wallace denounced the universal military training program as one that would lead to "death and taxes for the many and very handsome profits for the few." He implored the Senate and U.S. government to strive for a "peaceful foreign policy." "If we are to compete with communism," he declared, "we had better get on the side of the people."

Wallace's arguments found only a limited audience in the Cold War America of the late-1940s. In the 1948 presidential election, running as the Progressive Party candidate, he garnered less than 3 percent of the vote. Two years later, Wallace left the Progressive Party after it condemned his statement in support of the United States and United Nations intervention in Korea. In 1952, he wrote an article, "Why I Was Wrong," in which he declared that his earlier stance in defense of Soviet policies had been mistaken. Nevertheless, his criticism of American Cold War policies kept the spirit of debate and dissent alive in the oppressive atmosphere of Red Scare America. In fact, many of his arguments—particularly the point that America's massive military spending was crippling its social welfare programs—were raised with renewed vigor during the Vietnam War in the 1960s.

- **Mar 30 1965 – Vietnam:** *Bomb explodes outside U.S. Embassy in Saigon* » Virtually destroying the building and killing 19 Vietnamese, 2 Americans, and 1 Filipino with 183 others injured, a bomb explodes in a car parked in front of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon. Congress quickly appropriated \$1 million to reconstruct the embassy. Although some U.S. military leaders advocated special retaliatory raids on North Vietnam, President Lyndon B. Johnson refused.



Injured Vietnamese receive aid as they lie on the street after a bomb explosion outside the U.S. Embassy in Saigon.

- **Mar 30 1972 – Vietnam War:** *North Vietnamese launch Nguyen Hue Offensive* » A major coordinated communist offensive opens with the heaviest military action since the sieges of Allied bases at Con Thien and Khe Sanh in 1968. Committing almost their entire army to the offensive, the North Vietnamese launched a massive three-pronged attack into South Vietnam. Four North Vietnamese divisions attacked directly across the Demilitarized Zone in Quang Tri province. Thirty-five South Vietnamese soldiers died in the initial attack and hundreds of civilians and soldiers were wounded.

Following the initial assault in Quang Tri province, the North Vietnamese launched two more major attacks: at An Loc in Binh Long Province, 60 miles north of Saigon; and at Kontum in the Central Highlands. With the three attacks, the North Vietnamese committed 500 tanks and 150,000 men, as well as thousands of Viet Cong, supported by heavy rocket and artillery fire.

After initial successes, especially against the newly formed South Vietnamese 3rd Division in Quang Tri, the North Vietnamese attack was stopped cold by the combination of defending South Vietnamese divisions (along with their U.S. advisers) and massive American airpower. Estimates placed the North Vietnamese losses at more than 100,000 and at least one-half of their tanks and large caliber artillery.

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- **Mar 31 1776 – American Revolution:** Abigail Adams writes to her husband, John Adams, urging him and the other members of the Continental Congress not to forget about the nation’s women when fighting for America’s independence from Great Britain.
- **Mar 31 1854 – U.S.\*Japan:** *Treaty of Kanagawa signed with Japan* » In Tokyo, Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry, representing the U.S. government, signs the Treaty of Kanagawa with the

Japanese government, opening the ports of Shimoda and Hakodate to American trade and permitting the establishment of a U.S. consulate in Japan.



In July 1853, Commodore Perry sailed into Tokyo Bay with a squadron of four U.S. vessels. For a time, Japanese officials refused to speak with Perry, but eventually they accepted letters from U.S. President Millard Fillmore, making the United States the first Western nation to establish relations with Japan since it was declared closed to foreigners in 1683.

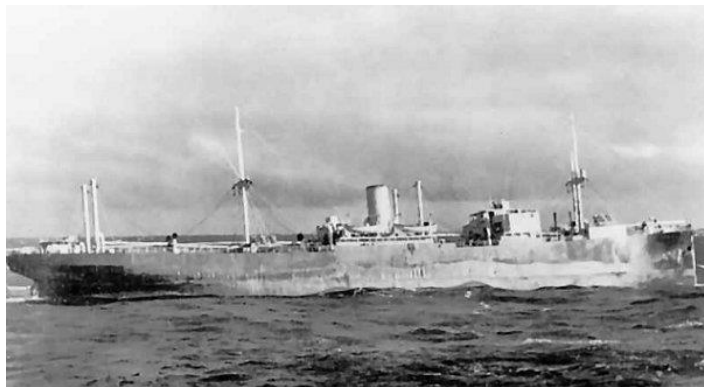
After giving Japan time to consider the establishment of external relations, Perry returned to Tokyo in March 1854, and on March 31 signed the Treaty of Kanagawa, which opened Japan to trade with the United States, and thus the West. In April 1860, the first Japanese diplomats to visit a foreign power reached Washington, D.C., and remained in the U.S. capital for several weeks discussing expansion of trade with the United States.

- **Mar 31 1865 – Civil War:** *Fighting at White Oak Road and Dinwiddie Court House* » The final offensive of the Army of the Potomac gathers steam when Union General Philip Sheridan moves against the left flank of Confederate General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia near Dinwiddie Court House. The limited action set the stage for the Battle of Five Forks, Virginia, on 1 APR.

This engagement took place at the end of the Petersburg, Virginia, line. For 10 months, the Union had laid siege to Lee's army at Petersburg, but the trenches stretched all the way to Richmond, some 25 miles to the north. Lee's thinning army attacked Fort Stedman on 25 MAR in a futile attempt to break the siege, but the Union line held. On 29 MAR, General Ulysses S. Grant, General-in-Chief of the Union Army and the field commander around Petersburg, began moving his men past the western end of Lee's line.

Torrential rains almost delayed the move. Grant planned to send Sheridan against the Confederates on March 31, but called off the operation. Sheridan would not be denied a chance to fight, though. "I am ready to strike out tomorrow and go to smashing things!" he told his officers. They encouraged him to meet with Grant, who consented to begin the move. Near Dinwiddie Court House, Sheridan advanced but was driven back by General George Pickett's division. Pickett was alerted to the Union advance, and during the night of 31 MAR, he pulled his men back to Five Forks. This set the stage for a major strike by Sheridan on 1 APR, when the Yankees crushed the Rebel flank and forced Lee to evacuate Richmond and Petersburg.

- **Mar 31 1905 – WWI:** Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany arrives in Tangiers to declare his support for the sultan of Morocco, provoking the anger of France and Britain in what will become known as the First Moroccan Crisis, a foreshadowing of the greater conflict between Europe’s great nations still to come, the First World War.
- **Mar 31 1931 – WWI:** *Danish Virgin Islands* » World War I reignited American fears of Germany establishing a base in the Caribbean and might secure the Danish Virgin Islands renewed the U.S.’s longstanding interest in them. The Danes had been trying to get rid of the Caribbean islands since the mid-1800s, because their plantations had collapsed after a slave revolt forced the abolition of slavery in the colony. The U.S. needed a military base in the Caribbean, and due to its good natural harbor St. Thomas was an obvious choice. Denmark resisted a deal without provisions for the population, but agreed to sell after President Woodrow Wilson’s secretary of state implied that the U.S. might occupy the islands. On 31 MAR Denmark relinquished possession of the Danish West Indies to the United States for \$25 million in gold coin. This is known as Transfer Day. After the transfer, the name was changed to the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- **Mar 31 1940 – WW2:** *Germany’s Atlantis launches* » The German auxiliary cruiser Atlantis sets off on a mission to catch and sink Allied merchant ships. By the time the Atlantis set sail from Germany, the Allies had already lost more than 750,000 tons worth of shipping, the direct result of German submarine attacks. They had also lost another 281,000 tons because of mines, and 36,000 tons as the result of German air raids. The Germans had lost just eighteen submarines.



The Atlantis had been a merchant ship itself, but was converted to a commerce raider with six 5.9-inch guns, 93 mines ready to plant, and two aircraft fit for spying out Allied ships to sink. The Atlantis donned various disguises in order to integrate itself into any shipping milieu inconspicuously. Commanded by Capt. Bernhard Rogge, the Atlantis roamed the Atlantic and Indian oceans. She sank a total of 22 merchant ships (146,000 tons in all) and proved a terror to the British Royal Navy. The Atlantis’s career finally came to an end on November 22, 1941, when it was sunk by the British cruiser Devonshire as the German marauder was refueling a U-boat.

- **Mar 31 1941 – WW2:** Germany begins a counter offensive in Africa.

- **Mar 31 1941 – WW2: *Battle of Christmas Island*** » At the time, Christmas Island was a British possession under administrative control of the Straits Settlement, situated 161 nmi south of Java. It was important for two reasons: it was a perfect control post for the east Indian Ocean and it was an important source of phosphates, which were needed by Japanese industry. Since 1900, the island had been mined for its phosphate, and at the time of the battle there was a large labour force, consisting of 1,000 Chinese and Malays working under the supervision of a small group of British overseers. The battle was a small engagement which began the morning of 31 MAR when a dozen Japanese bombers launched the attack, destroying the radio station. Preceding this on 11 MAR a group of Punjabi troops, apparently believing Japanese propaganda concerning the liberation of India from British rule, and probably acting with the tacit support of some or all of the local Sikh police officers, mutinied against their British officers. These mutineers signalled their intention to surrender, raising a white flag before the 850-man Japanese landing force had come ashore allowing them to do so without any resistance.

The same morning, the US Navy submarine USS Seawolf fired four torpedoes at the Japanese cruiser Naka; all missed. Seawolf attacked again at 06:50 the following morning, firing three torpedoes at the light cruiser Natori, missing again. That evening, with her final two torpedoes, from 1,100 yd (1,000 m), Seawolf managed to hit Naka on her starboard side, near her No.1 boiler. The damage was severe enough that Naka had to be towed back to Singapore by Natori, and eventually was forced to return to Japan for a year of repairs. Following the hit, the other Japanese vessels depth charged the US submarine for over nine hours but it escaped. Natori returned to Christmas Island and withdrew all elements of the occupation force, with the exception of a 20-man garrison detachment, to Banten Bay, Indonesia, on 3 April 1942.

- **Mar 31 1942 – WW2: *Holocaust*** » German troops raid the Minsk Ghetto, searching for and arresting Jewish Resistance leaders.
- **Mar 31 1945 – WW2: *Battle of Okinawa*** » The US Navy lobbs some 30,000 explosive shells on the Okinawa coastline by this time, ending a week of bombardment.
- **Mar 31 1965 – Vietnam War: *Johnson publicly denies actions contemplated in Vietnam*** » Responding to questions from reporters about the situation in Vietnam, President Johnson says, “I know of no far-reaching strategy that is being suggested or promulgated.” Early in the month, Johnson had sent 3,500 Marines to Da Nang to secure the U.S. airbase there. These troops were ostensibly there only for defensive purposes, but Johnson, despite his protestations to the contrary, was already considering giving the authorization for the U.S. troops to go from defensive to offensive tactics. This was a sensitive area, since such an authorization could (and did) lead to escalation in the war and a subsequent increase in the American commitment to it.
- **Mar 31 1968 – Vietnam War: *Johnson announces bombing halt*** » In a televised speech to the nation, President Lyndon B. Johnson announces a partial halt of bombing missions over North Vietnam and proposes peace talks. He said he had ordered “unilaterally” a halt to air and naval bombardments of North Vietnam “except in the area north of the Demilitarized Zone, where the continuing enemy build-up directly threatens Allied forward positions.”



He also stated that he was sending 13,500 more troops to Vietnam and would request further defense expenditures—\$2.5 billion in fiscal year 1968 and \$2.6 billion in fiscal year 1969—to finance recent troop build-ups, re-equip the South Vietnamese Army, and meet “responsibilities in Korea.” In closing, Johnson shocked the nation with an announcement that all but conceded that his own presidency had become another wartime casualty: “I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your president.”

- **Mar 31 1972 – Vietnam War:** *Fighting intensifies with North Vietnamese offensive* » After firing more than 5,000 rockets, artillery, and mortar shells on 12 South Vietnamese positions just below the Demilitarized Zone, the North Vietnamese Army launches ground assaults against South Vietnamese positions in Quang Tri Province. The attacks were thrown back, with 87 North Vietnamese killed. South Vietnamese fire bases Fuller, Mai Loc, Holcomb, Pioneer, and two smaller bases near the Demilitarized Zone were abandoned as the North Vietnamese pushed the defenders back toward their rear bases. At the same time, attacks against three bases west of Saigon forced the South Vietnamese to abandon six outposts along the Cambodian border.



These were a continuation of the opening attacks of the North Vietnamese Nguyen Hue Offensive, a major coordinated communist offensive initiated on 30 MAR. Committing almost their entire army to the offensive, the North Vietnamese launched a massive three-pronged attack. In the initial attack, four North Vietnamese divisions attacked directly across the Demilitarized Zone into Quang Tri province. Following the assault in Quang Tri province, the North Vietnamese launched two more major attacks: at An Loc in Binh Long Province, 60 miles north of Saigon, and at Kontum in the Central Highlands. With the three attacks, the North Vietnamese had committed 500 tanks and 150,000 regular troops (as well as thousands of Viet Cong) supported by heavy rocket and artillery fire.

After initial successes, especially against the newly formed South Vietnamese 3rd Division in Quang Tri, the North Vietnamese attack was stopped cold by the combination of defending South Vietnamese

divisions (along with their U.S. advisers) and massive American airpower. Estimates placed the North Vietnamese losses at more than 100,000 and at least one-half of their tanks and large caliber artillery.

- **Mar 31 1991 – Cold War: *Warsaw Pact ends*** » After 36 years in existence, the Warsaw Pact—the military alliance between the Soviet Union and its eastern European satellites—comes to an end. The action was yet another sign that the Soviet Union was losing control over its former allies and that the Cold War was falling apart.



The Warsaw Pact was formed in 1955, primarily as a response to the decision by the United States and its western European allies to include a rearmed West Germany in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO had begun in 1949 as a defensive military alliance between the United States, Canada, and several European nations to thwart possible Soviet expansion into Western Europe. In 1954, NATO nations voted to allow a rearmed West Germany into the organization. The Soviets responded with the establishment of the Warsaw Pact. The original members included the Soviet Union, East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Albania. Although the Soviets claimed that the organization was a defensive alliance, it soon became clear that the primary purpose of the pact was to reinforce communist dominance in Eastern Europe. In Hungary in 1956, and then again in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Soviets invoked the pact to legitimize its interventions in squelching anticommunist revolutions.

By the late-1980s, however, anti-Soviet and anticommunist movements throughout Eastern Europe began to crack the Warsaw Pact. In 1990, East Germany left the Warsaw Pact in preparation for its reunification with West Germany. Poland and Czechoslovakia also indicated their strong desire to withdraw. Faced with these protests—and suffering from a faltering economy and unstable political situation—the Soviet Union bowed to the inevitable. In March 1991, Soviet military commanders relinquished their control of Warsaw Pact forces. A few months later, the pact's Political Consultative Committee met for one final time and formally recognized what had already effectively occurred—the Warsaw Pact was no more.

- **Mar 31 1992 – U.S. Navy:** USS Missouri (BB-63), the last active American battleship, is decommissioned. Commissioned in June 1944, she served during World War II, notably for the location of the official Japanese surrender on Sept. 2, 1945. Today, the "Mighty Mo" is open for visitors in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, as the Battleship Missouri Memorial, under the care of the USS Missouri Memorial Association, Inc.

[Sources: [www.history.com/this-day-in-history](http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history), [www.history.navy.mil/today-in-history/march-31.html](http://www.history.navy.mil/today-in-history/march-31.html) & <https://www.historycentral.com> | March 2020 ++]