

Timeline of World War II

The events on the bottom half of this timeline are important events in United States history, leading up to, during, and after the war. The events on the top half occurred on a global level—some you may have seen in *War Dogs*.

1939

September 3

As a result of Germany's invasion of Poland, Britain and France declare war on Germany.

September 3

FDR speaks to the people of the United States about Germany's invasion of Poland. In his speech, the president pledges that America will remain neutral for as long as possible: "As long as it remains within my power to prevent, there will be no blackout of peace in the United States." This particular address was one of thirty evening radio addresses that the president gave between 1933 and 1944, a collection that came to be known as "fireside chats."

1940

June 22

An armistice is signed between France and Germany. This leaves the United Kingdom alone in the fight against Hitler and Nazi Germany. The US is still reluctant to join the war, despite Britain's pleas.

September 2

FDR signs the Destroyers for Bases Agreement, in which America gives Britain fifty US destroyers in exchange for land under Britain's rule to be used as naval and air bases.

November 5

FDR is elected to a third term as president.

1941

March 11

FDR signs the Lend-Lease Bill, allowing America to give aid to Britain and eventually China and the Soviet Union.

August 14

Winston Churchill and FDR consent to the Atlantic Charter, outlining shared ideals and goals for after the war.

1942

February 19

Executive Order 9066 is issued, which allows the US military to designate military areas as places where certain people may be excluded or banned. As a result, thousands of Japanese Americans living on the West Coast are relocated to internment camps.

December 7

Japanese Air Forces attack Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.

December 11

Germany and Italy declare war on the US.

1943

June 20

In Detroit, Michigan, a city housing many production plants used in the war effort, race riots break out. These riots last for three days as US Army troops are called in to keep the peace. Thirty-four people are killed, and hundreds are wounded.

November

At the Tehran Conference in Iran, Churchill emphasizes to FDR and Joseph Stalin of Russia the importance of their alliance to the outcome of the war and to the journey towards peace: "We three must remain friends in order to ensure happy homes in all countries."

1944

June 22

FDR signs the G.I. Bill. This bill states that benefits and compensation will be granted to veterans returning from WWII. These benefits include unemployment compensation, loans for homes and businesses, and funding for education.

June 6

Allied powers launch D-day, or Operation Neptune, an invasion against Germany's forces on the beaches of Normandy, France. The success of the attack is considered a major turning point in the war. It leads to the liberation of concentration camps and cities across Europe.

1945

June 26

In San Francisco, California, the United Nations Charter is signed, laying the foundation for the United Nations (UN), an international organization whose aims are to prevent international conflict and promote world peace. The UN was established as a replacement for the failed League of Nations which was formed after World War I.

September 2

Japan signs surrender terms aboard the battleship *Missouri*, signaling the end of the international conflict.

October 24

The UN is formally established with the ratification of the United Nations Charter.