

World War II by country

Summary: Almost every country in the world participated in World War II. Most were neutral at the beginning, but relatively few nations remained neutral to the end. World War II pitted two alliances against each other, the Allies and the Axis powers. It is estimated that 74 million people died, with estimates ranging from 40 million to 90 million dead (including all genocide casualties). The main Axis powers were Nazi Germany, the Empire of Japan, and the Kingdom of Italy; while the United Kingdom, the U...

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The countries involved in or affected by World War II are listed alphabetically, with a description of their role in the conflict:

Participants and non-participants during World War II

Neutral powers

Axis powers

Germany

Italy (from 1940-1943)

Japan (from 1940-1945)

Hungary (from 1940-1945)

Romania (from 1940-1944)

Bulgaria (from 1940-1944)

Slovakia

Croatia (from 1941)

Philippines (from 1943)

It

alian Social Republic (from 1943)

Thailand (from 1941)

Iraq (1941)

Bohemia and Moravia

Italian Albania (from 1940-1943)

Finland (from 1941-1944)

Vichy France (from 1940-1944)

Serbia (from 1941-1944)

Lokot Autonomy (from 1941-1944)

Montenegro (from 1941-1944)

Chetniks (from 1942-1945)

Belarus (from 1941-1944)

German Albania (from 1943-1944)

Vietnam (1945)

Hellenic State (from 1941-1944)

Norwegian State (from 1942-1945)

Kampuchea (from 1941-1945)

Yugoslavia (1941)

Burma (from 1942-1945)

Luang Prabang (1941)

Macedonia (1944) (A proposed puppet state of Germany in Macedonia)

Azad Hind (from 1943)

Manchukuo

Mengjiang

China (from 1940)

Allied powers

Afghanistan

Under Prime Minister Mohammad Hashim Khan, Afghanistan stayed neutral. Despite British pressure, Afghanistan maintained friendly relations with the Axis during the war, in the hopes that the Axis would help stop British influence in the region, which came from the British Raj and Mesopotamia. In 1940, the Afghanistan legation in Berlin asked whether Germany would cede land in British Raj to Afghanistan if it should win the war; specifically, the king and minister wanted to acquire all the ethnic Pashtun land between the Durand Line and the Indus River. Despite this stated goal, Afghanistan stayed out of the war, neither suffering an attack nor attacking any other country.

In 1941, Western press reported that Amanullah Khan, a former king who lost his throne in a civil war in the 1920s, was working as an agent for Nazi Germany in Berlin. It is believed he was involved in plans to regain his throne with Axis help. Following the Axis loss in Stalingrad in 1943, the plans cooled off and were never executed.

Albania

After the Italian invasion of Albania in April 1939, 100,000 Italian soldiers and 11,000 Italian colonists who wanted to integrate Albania into the Italian Empire settled in the country. Initially the Albanian Fascist Party received support from the population, mainly because of th

e unification of Kosovo and other Albanian-populated territories with Albania proper after the conquest of Yugoslavia and Greece by the Axis in Spring 1941. Benito Mussolini boasted in May 1941 to a group of Albanian fascists that he had achieved the Greater Albania long wanted by the Tirana nationalists. On June 22, 1941, Germany launched Operation Barbarossa and on June 28 Albania also declared war on the USSR.

In October 1941, small Albanian Communist groups established an Albanian Communist Party in Tirana of 130 members under the leadership of Enver Hoxha. In mid-1942, however, party leaders increased their popularity by calling young people to fight for the liberation of their country from Italy. In September 1942, the party organized the Albanian National Anti-Fascist Front, from a number of resistance groups, including several that were strongly anti-communist. They assembled a National Liberation Army.

Germany occupied Albania in September 1943, dropping paratroopers into Tirana before the Albanian guerrillas could take the capital, and soon drove the guerrillas into the hills and to the south. Berlin subsequently announced it would recognize the independence of a neutral Albania and organized an Albanian government, police, and military. Many Balli Komb tar units and leaders collaborated. The partisans entirely liberated Albania from German occupation on November 29, 1944. The Albanian partisans also helped in the liberation of Kosovo and parts of Yugoslavia.

Algeria

After the Fall of France, Algeria, along with France's other possessions in Africa, were under the control of Nazi Germany and Vichy France. Next, the British Empire launched a squadron of the Royal Navy to attack the port of Mers-El-K bir, near Oran because it was full of French warships. On November 8, 1942, the Allies launched a major offensive codenamed Operation Torch. Afterwards, the Italians bombed Algiers. Then, the Allies attempted to capture the cities of Oran and Algiers by naval landing but the French troops and navy were in large quantity. So, they first took Morocco and then Algeria along the way, establishing the liberation of northern Africa.

During the War, large numbers of both Muslim and European Algerians served with the French Army. Algerian troops

particularly distinguished themselves in the French Expeditionary Corps under General Juin during the Italian campaign of 1943 and in Operation Dragoon, the Allied invasion of southern France in 1944.

Andorra

Andorra remained politically neutral throughout the war but was used as a smuggling route by Axis Vichy French and Axis-aligned Spanish personnel.

Anglo-Egyptian Sudan

The condominium of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan was at war from the time of the United Kingdom's declaration in 1939. Fighting reached Sudan in 1940 when Italy entered the war. Sudan had a long border with Italian East Africa and therefore became the Northern Front in the East African campaign. Italian forces captured the railway junction at Kassala and other towns and raided as far north as Port Sudan. Units of the Sudan Defence Force (SDF) were combined with the Indian 1st Horse to form Gazelle Force, which helped drive the Italian forces out of Sudanese territory in January 1941.

Another SDF battalion was part of Gideon Force, which invaded Ethiopia, while others took part in the invasion of Eritrea. The SDF took part in the Western Desert campaign along the northern Sudanese border with Libya, supplying the Free French and then the Long Range Desert Group stationed there.

Antarctica

Antigua and Barbuda

Argentina

Before the start of World War II in 1939, Argentina had maintained a long tradition of neutrality regarding European wars, which had been upheld and defended by all major political parties since the 19th century. One of the main reasons for this policy was related to Argentina's economic position as one of the world's leading exporters of foodstuffs and agricultural products, to Europe in general and to the

United Kingdom in particular. Thus, initially, even though the government of Argentina was sympathetic to the Allies and provided economic assistance to the United Kingdom, the country's political tradition of neutralism prevailed. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent American declaration of war upon Japan, American pressure for Argentine entry into the war begun to increase. Relations worsened further following a military coup in 1943, as the plotters were accused of holding Axis sympathies. Because of strong divisions and internal disputes between members of the Argentine military, the country would continue to remain neutral, even after American sanctions. However, Argentina eventually gave in to the Allies' pressure, broke relations with the Axis powers on January 26, 1944, and declared war on March 27, 1945. Over 4,000 Argentine volunteers fought on the Allied side. Beginning in the late stages

of the war and continuing for some years after, the Ratlin

es were systems of escape routes for German Nazis and other fascists fleeing Europe. Argentina, with the clandestine support and encouragement of Juan Per n and his government, was the principal destination of these escape routes and became a haven for thousands of people associated with the Hitler regime.

Australia

Australia was among the first countries to announce it was at war with Germany, on 3 September 1939. The Prime Minister, Robert Menzies considered that the British declaration legally bound Australia, and he announced a state of war between Australia and Germany as a direct consequence of the British declaration.

More than one million Australian men served in the war out of a total population of around seven million. Although it was ill-prepared for war, the Australian government soon dispatched squadrons and personnel to serve with the Royal Air Force. The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) commenced operations against Italy in June 1940. Later that year the Australian Army en

tered the North Africa campaign and fought in Greece. German submarines and raiding ships operated in Australian waters throughout the war. After the outbreak of hostilities with Japan in late 1941, Japanese aircraft launched a bombing attack on Darwin in February, and smaller air raids on Australia, 1942 43.

For the remainder of the war, the Australian war effort was concentrated in south-east Asia and the South West Pacific Area: they were involved from January 1942 in Malaya, the Dutch East Indies and the Australian territory of New Guinea. During mid-1942 Militia troops fought the Kokoda Track campaign, and the New Guinea campaign came to occupy the attention of most of the Australian armed forces until 1945.

Papua and New Guinea

What is now Papua New Guinea consisted of two territories under Australian administration, the Territories of Papua and New Guinea. Upon the outbreak of the Second World War, the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles were organized as a militia unit of white expa

triates in the New Guinea territory, while the bulk of the Australian military was deployed in the Mediterranean. Japanese forces invaded beginning in January 1942 with the Battle of Rabaul; in the following months Japan occupied most of the Territory of New Guinea. From late 1942 until the Japanese surrender, the Allies, mostly Australian and US forces, cleared the Japanese first from Papua, then the Territory of New Guinea, and finally from Dutch West New Guinea. The campaign resulted in heavy losses for Japan. Disease and starvation claimed more Japanese lives than combat. Allied forces effectively besieged enemy garrisons, cutting them off from food and medical supplies.

During the war, civil administration in both territories ceased and the whole area was placed under martial law. Only a single battalion, the Papuan Infantry Battalion, was ever recruited from the native Papuan population. Many other people

were recruited to bring supplies up to the front and carry injured Australian troops: the so-called Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels. Civil government was restored after the war, and in 1949 the two territories were united as the Territory of Papua and New Guinea.

Bahamas

As part of the Destroyers for Bases Agreement of 1940, the United States Navy established a base and airstrip at George Town on Great Exuma. Some Bahamians enlisted in the Caribbean Regiment and other British units.

The Duke of Windsor, the former King Edward VIII, was installed as Governor of the Bahamas in August 1940. It is widely believed that the Duke and Duchess sympathised with fascism before and during the war, and were moved to the Bahamas to minimise their opportunities to act on those feelings. The Duke was praised for his efforts to combat poverty on the islands, although he was as contemptuous of the Bahamians as he was of most non-white peoples of the Empire.

He was also praised for his resolution of civil unrest over low wages in Nassau in June 1942, when there was a "full-scale riot", even though he blamed the trouble on "mischief makers communists" and "men of Central European Jewish descent".

The Duke resigned the post on 16 March 1945. In April 1942 the United Kingdom asked Canada to provide military support in Nassau, in part to protect the Duke. A company of the Veterans Guard of Canada served in the Bahamas, followed by a company of the Pictou Highlanders. The Canadian garrison left Nassau in 1946

Bahrain

The Sheikh of Bahrain declared war on Germany on September 10, 1939. On October 19, 1940, four Italian planes bombed Bahrain to destroy oil refineries supplying the Allies. The raid caused minimal damage to the oil refineries but made the Allies increase the defense around Bahrain (being a UK protectorate).

Belgium

In 1936, Belgium had declared its neutrality in the event of war in Europe. Nevertheless, in May 1940, Germany launched a surprise attack during its wider blitzkrieg against France. Belgian forces resisted the invasion in the Battle of Belgium

for 18 days, but the Belgian army and its commander, King Leopold III, surrendered on 28 May 1940. A few Belgian soldiers escaped via Dunkirk, but the King and most of the army were made prisoners of war. Many remained imprisoned until the end of World War II.

Germany occupied Belgium and installed a military government. The occupiers imposed harsh taxes and strict rationing. Hundreds of thousands of Belgians laboured in Germany during the war, most as part of Germany's forced labour programme. Around 25,000 Jews and Romani were deported during the Holocaust in Belgium, most passing through

the Mechelen transit camp. Nearly all lost their lives in the Nazi death camps. A number of Nazi collaborationist groups operated in Flanders and Wallonia; other Belgians collaborated through the national administration and the Flemish and Walloon Legions of the Waffen-SS. In opposition, the Belgian Resistance comprised numerous groups that fought against the occupation in various ways. Groupe G ran

a successful campaign of sabotage against railroads, while other groups worked to protect Jewish people from deportation or help downed Allied airmen escape from the country.

Belgium's elected government fled the occupation, relocating to France and then London, where it established the Belgian government in exile under Hubert Pierlot and the Free Belgian Forces under Victor van Strydonck de Burkel. Belgian forces participated in the D-Day campaign, the Italian campaign, the landings on Walcheren Island, and the Battle of the Atlantic. Britain and the United States targeted occupied Belgium with strategic bombing, which caused many civilian casualties. The Liberation of Belgium began in September 1944 when Allied forces, including Free Belgians, entered the country. German troops counterattacked in December with the Ardennes Offensive; the failure of that offensive forced all German troops out of Belgium by February 1945. German V-bomb attacks continued until the end of the war.

Post-war Belgium joined NATO and the Benelux customs union, while accusations of collaboration by King Leopold sparked the political crisis called the Royal Question.

Belgian Congo

The Belgian Colonial Empire stayed loyal to the Allies: after Belgium's surrender, both the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi remained under the authority of the Belgian government in exile and the Free Belgian Forces. The Congo played an important role as an economic asset, producing large amounts of raw materials for the Allies, notably gold and uranium. The nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were made with uranium from Congolese mines. Congolese troops also fought as the Force Publique, which saw combat against Italian forces in the East African campaign. Medical troops were also brought on the east-Asian front.

The colonial government's demands on the Congolese population provoked strikes, riots and other forms of resistance. These were repressed, often violently, by the colonial authorities. The Congo's comparative prosperity during the conflict led to a wave of post-war immigration from Belgium, bringing the white population to 100,000 by 1950, as well as a period of industrialisation and urbanisation that continued throughout the 1950s.

Rwanda-Urundi

Belgium's mandate of Ruanda-Urundi consisted of the modern nations of Rwanda and Burundi. There, the war years

were marked by the Ruzagayura famine. Though initially caused by a drought, the famine's effects were made worse by the Belgian war effort as authorities tried to send agricultural produce to the Congo to support the Allies. The famine killed between a fifth and a third of the colony's population and displaced many thousands more.

Bhutan

Although Bhutan was under British suzerainty, it remained independent; and under the reign of Jigme Wangchuck the kingdom continued to maintain almost complete isolation from the outside world with only limited relations with the British Raj in India. Despite his policy of neutrality,

upon the outbreak of the war the king sent the government of India a gift of 100,000 rupees as a gesture of friendship.

Bolivia

Bolivia was one of many Latin American countries to declare war on Germany later on in the war, joining the Allies on 7 April 1943. It was one of the three countries to declare war in 1943, the others being Chile and Colombia. Shortly after war was declared, the President of Bolivia, Enrique Peñaranda, was overthrown in a coup. The new ruler, Gualberto Villarroel, had fascist and anti-Semitic leanings, but foreign pressure compelled him to remain at peace and to suppress his more extreme pro-Nazi supporters. Bolivian mines supplied needed tin to the Allies, but with no coastline, the landlocked country did not send troops or warplanes overseas.

Brazil

Brazil was under its second civilian-military dictatorship led by Getúlio Vargas, maintaining its official neutrality until 1941, when it allowed US forces to use bases to patrol the South Atlantic. The United States built several airfields on Brazilian soil with the understanding that shortly after the war ended, they would be turned over to Brazil. In the wake of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the declarations of war of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy against the US, in January 1942 at the 9th Pan-American Conference held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil helped to influence other American countries to cut diplomatic relations with Axis Powers. In retaliation, Germany and Italy extended their submarine warfare against them. In the first half of 1942 Axis submarines sank Brazilian merchant ships, and Brazilian naval forces chased and attacked these submarines. When seven merchant ships were sunk by the German Submarine U-507, Vargas decided to make official the state of war against Germany and Italy.

Northeastern Brazil hosted at Natal the largest single American air base outside of its own territory, and at Recife, the U.S. 4th Fleet Headquarter under Admiral Ingram's command. The air

base in Natal gave support to the North Africa campaign, and a route for USAAF airplanes to fly to India and China.

Brazilian naval forces in the Battle of the Atlantic helped US and British Navies to patrol the South and Central Atlantic Ocean, combating Axis U-boats and raiders. In 1943, Allied naval forces sunk most of the Axis submarines which were

active in the West of the South Atlantic, the U-199 among them. After this intense campaign, the South Atlantic became a lost battle to Germany.

After two years of preparation, a complete infantry Division (about 25,000 troops, called the Brazilian Expeditionary Force (BEF)) was sent in July 1944 to fight in the Italian campaign. They fought in the last two stages of the Italian campaign: the slow breakdown of the Gothic Line and the final Allied offensive in that front.

British Borneo

Borneo was divided into five territories: four in the north under the British Sarawak, Brunei, Labuan island, and British North Borneo and the remainder

under and bulk of the island to the south under the jurisdiction of the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia).

The Japanese invasion plan called for the British territories to be taken and held by the Imperial Japanese Army and the southern Dutch territory to be taken and held by the Imperial Japanese Navy. On 8 December 1941, the Brooke government instructed that the oilfields at Miri and Seria and refinery at Lutong be quickly demolished. At dawn on 16 December, two Japanese landing units secured Miri and Seria with little resistance from British forces. A few hours later, Lutong was captured.

British Honduras (Belize)

Bulgaria

Bulgaria gave up neutrality and became a German ally, signing the Tripartite Pact on 1 March 1941. Their main contribution was transit rights for German units involved against Yugoslavia and Greece. Bulgaria occupied portions of Greece and Yugoslavia to recreate the 19th-century boundaries of Greater Bulgaria, but it did not participate in the Invasion of the Soviet Union.

After the Communist-dominated Bulgarian coup d'état of 1944 of 9 September, the Bulgarian government declared war on Germany. Bulgarian armies attacked the German positions in Yugoslavia. An armistice was signed with the Allies in Moscow on 28 October 1944. After the Nazis fled Yugoslav territory, the Bulgarian Army continued its offensive in Hungary and Austria. Bulgaria's participation in World War II ended when its soldiers met British troops in Klagenfurt, Austria in May 1945.

Burma (Myanmar)

Burma was separated from British India in 1937 as a Crown Colony with a constitutional government. The colony was important for sending supplies to China via the Burma Road, which was completed in 1938. Nevertheless, it was left lightly defended at the outbreak of World War II: the British considered it a backwater and unlikely target of attack. Japan

began its conquest of Burma with small raids in December 1941, launching a full invasion the following January. Japan held most

of the country by April and ceded the Shan states to its ally Thailand.

Many Burmese hoped to gain support of the Japanese in expelling the British, so that Burma could become independent. Japan had already trained the Thirty Comrades, who now formed the nucleus of the Burma Independence Army. Japan declared the colony independent as the State of Burma on 1 August 1943. A puppet government led by Ba Maw was installed. However, many Burmese began to believe the Japanese had no intention of giving them real independence. Aung San and other nationalist leaders formed the Anti-Fascist Organisation in August 1944, which asked the United Kingdom to form a coalition with the other Allies against the Japanese.

Allied forces launched offensives into Burma beginning in late 1944. They captured Rangoon following the Battle of Elephant Point in May 1945. Subsequently, negotiations began between the Burmese and the British for independence. Under Japanese occupation, 170,000 to 250,000 civilians died.

Canada

On 10 September 1939, Canada likewise declared war on Germany, this was the beginning of Canada's participation in the largest combined national effort in its history. Canada's military was active mainly in Italy, Northwestern Europe, and the North Atlantic.

Over the course of the war, 1.1 million Canadians served in the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Of these more than 45,000 lost their lives and another 54,000 were wounded. The financial cost was \$21,786,077,519.13, between the 1939 and 1950 fiscal years. By the end of the War, Canada had the world's fourth largest air force, and third largest navy. As well, the Canadian Merchant Navy completed over 25,000 voyages across the Atlantic. Many Allied pilots trained in Canada during the war. Canadians also served in the militaries of various Allied countries.

Canadian forces deployed to the United Kingdom in 1939. One corps fought in the Italian campaign while the other fought in Northwest Europe beginning with the Normandy landings on 6 June 1944, invading Juno Beach. The 1st Canadian Army ended the war on German soil with five Canadian divisions and a host of allied formations under direct command.

During the war, Canada was subject to direct attack in the Battle of the St. Lawrence, and in the shelling of a lighthouse at Estevan Point in British Columbia.

The war had significant cultural, political and economic effects on Canada, including the conscription crisis. However, the war effort not only strengthened the Canadian economy but further established Canada as a major actor on the world stage.

Caribbean Islands

Over the course of World War II, the United States assumed Britain's defense responsibilities in the Caribbean. In September 1940, the two countries agreed to the Lend-Lease Agreement (also called the Destroyers-for-Bases Agreement). It involved the loan of American destroyers in return for leasing, rent free for ninety-nine years, eleven naval and air bases on British territory, including t

he Bahamas, Jamaica, Antigua, St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, British Guiana, and Bermuda, as well as Newfoundland. The eastern Caribbean became the forward edge of American defense strategy, formalized in the Panama Declaration of 1939. American strategists called the West Indies as "the bulwark that we watch."

More than 50 percent of the supplies sent to Europe and Africa from the United States were shipped from ports in the Gulf of Mexico and passed through the Caribbean. One year after the Pearl Harbor attack, the United States Caribbean Defense Command reached a total of 119,000 personnel, half of them stationed in Panama to protect the canal from an anticipated Japanese attack. Meanwhile, the German Kriegsmarine inflicted massive damage on shipping in the Caribbean in 1942. By the end of that year, U-boats operating in the Caribbean had sunk 336 ships, at least half of which were oil tankers.

Parts of the Caribbean had been colonized by countries that now came under Axis occupation. Aruba and Curaao remained loyal to the Dutch government-in-exile, but because they housed valuable refineries that processed Venezuelan petroleum, they were placed under British protection. Both islands were subjected to German attacks in Operation Neuland. In 1942 they were transferred to the United States, which had also stationed troops in Surinam in 1941 to secure its bauxite mines. Martinique and Guadeloupe came under the control of Vichy France. American and British pressure ensured that several French ships, including its only aircraft carrier, *Barn*, remained interned at Martinique. Thousands of refugees fled, many going to Dominica, while an anti-Vichy resistance movement grew. The islands, along with French Guiana, switched to Free France in 1943.

Ceylon (Sri Lanka)

Ceylon (now known as Sri Lanka), was a British colony and a major Allied naval base. On 5 April 1942, over 300 aircraft from Japanese carriers bombed the island. Winston Churchill called it "the most dangerous moment" of World War II, because the Japanese wished to replicate a grander success of the attack at Pearl Harbor. British ships, however, were moved to Addu Atoll, Maldives Islands. Nevertheless, the British lost an aircraft carrier, two cruisers, and two destroyers, while the Royal Air Force squadrons on Ceylon suffered severe losses.

The Ceylon Garrison Artillery Regiment was stationed on Horsburgh Island in the Cocos Islands, to defend it from Japanese attack. However, the regiment mutinied on the night of 8 May 1942, intending to hand the islands over to the Japanese. The mutiny was suppressed and three of the Ceylonese soldiers were executed.

Following the Cocos Islands Mutiny, no Ceylonese combat unit was deployed in front-line combat, although Supply &

Transport Corps troops were used in rear areas in the Middle East. The defences of Sri Lanka were beefed up to three Allied army divisions because the island was strategically important, as a producer of rubber. Ceylonese in Japanese-occupied Malaya and Singapore were recruited by the Japanese for the Lanka Regiment of the Indian National Army, to fight against the Allies. They never actually saw action.

Chile

Chile declared its neutrality upon the outbreak of war in Europe, having close trading links with Germany. Later in the war, however, Chile actively distanced itself from the Axis powers, and the Chilean government took steps to dismiss pro-German military officers. An attempted Nazi-backed coup in September 1938 turned most of the Chilean population against the German community within Chile. Following the sinking of the *Tolt* n by a Nazi submarine off the coast of New Jersey and anti-German demonstrations in Chile, relations with Axis countries were broken on January 20, 1943. Throughout the duration of the war, Chilean naval presence around Easter Island was strengthened to ward-off a feared Japanese attack (as the Japanese had territorial ambitions for all the islands of Polynesia to be under their rule), and bolstered defensive capabilities at the vital harbors of Antofagasta, Coquimbo, Valparaíso and Talcahuano. Chilean merchant naval ships also aided Peruvian, Colombian and Cuban ships in patrolling the area around the Panama Canal Zone during the Battle of the Caribbean. From 1943 to 1945, the Chilean prison camp of Pisagua became the site of wartime internment for citizens of enemy nations. Chile eventually declared war on Japan on April 13, 1945, becoming the last country in Latin America to do so. In mid-2017, newly declassified documents revealed that Chile's Investigative Police Units had stopped a Nazi spy ring's plot to bomb Northern Chilean copper mines and blow up the Panama Canal.

China

The Republic of China had been fighting Japan intermittently since the 1931 Mukden incident, when Japan annexed Manchuria. On 7 July 1937, the Marco Polo Bridge incident led the two countries to full-scale war. With this and civil conflict between the Kuomintang (KMT, Chinese Nationalist Party) and the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese Nationalist Government's full attention was within its borders. However, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek still managed to send troops to Britain's aid in Burma, in early 1942. More than 1.5 million Japanese military personnel were bogged down in China with casualties estimated at 1.1–1.9 million. At the start of the war, the Chinese army had 2.6 million soldiers; by end of the war it had grown to 5.7 million (excluding communist soldiers).

The war cooled China's formerly warm relations with Germany (see Sino-German cooperation), and following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, China formally joined the Allies and declared war on Germany on 9 December 1941. Many of China's urban centers, industrial resources, and coastal regions were occupied by Japan for most of the war.

China suffered a large death toll from the war, both military and civilian. The Chinese Nationalist army suffered some 3.2 million casualties, and 17 million civilians died in the crossfire. After the war, China gained one of the permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council.

Although the Nationalists and Communists had cooperated to oppose the Japanese, once the war was over the Chinese Civil War erupted once again. The Nationalist government was defeated by the Communists in 1949 and retreated to Taiwan, while the communist People's Republic of China was established on the mainland.

Colombia

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Colombia broke diplomatic relations with the Axis powers. Colombia provided the Allies with petroleum products. In 1943, the German submarine U-505 destroyed a Colombian schooner, which caused Colombia to declare a "status of belligerency" against Germany on 26 November 1943.

The German ambassador left the country, and measures of control were implemented, including the internment of German citizens in designated areas. Photographs and reconnaissance airplanes belonging to the Colombian-German company Sca

tda, which used to take aerial shots of Colombian and German cities, were also handed to the United States. The Colombian Navy assisted in patrolling the waters near the Panama Canal Zone and participated in the Battle of the Caribbean. The only notable engagement occurred in 1944: the destroyer ARC Caldas attacked the German submarine U-154, which faked its own destruction in order to escape.

Comoros

Costa Rica

Left-wing reformist President Rafael Ángel Calderón Guardia was an ally of Franklin Roosevelt and hostile to Nazism. In 1940, it was reported that Calderón and Roosevelt had agreed to the construction of an American base on Cocos Island, Costa Rica's territory in the Pacific; however, the United States ultimately decided on a base in the Galápagos instead. Costa Rica joined the Allies on 8 December 1941, declaring war on Japan the day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and on Germany and Italy shortly afterwards. While Costa Rica's small army of 500 men could not contribute directly to the fighting, Calderón's administration introduced wartime measures against people from Axis nations in the country, including property seizure and internment. Targets included Germans, Italians, and Spaniards, the last of whom were viewed as franquistas sympathetic to fascism.

Cuba

President Federico Laredo Brú led Cuba when war broke out in Europe, though real power belonged to Fulgencio Batista

as Chief of Staff of the army. In 1940, Laredo Br infamously denied entry to 900 Jewish refugees who arrived in Havana aboard the German oceanliner MS St. Louis. After both the United States and Canada likewise refused to accept the refugees, they returned to Europe, where many were eventually murdered in the Holocaust. Batista became president in his own right following the election of 1940. He cooperated with the United States as it moved closer to war against the Axis. Cuba declared war on Japan on 8 December 1941, and on Germany and Italy on 11 December.

Cuba was an important p

articipant in the Battle of the Caribbean and its navy gained a reputation for skill and efficiency. The navy escorted hundreds of Allied ships through hostile waters, flew thousands of hours on convoy and patrol duty, and rescued over 200 victims of German U-boat attacks from the sea. Six Cuban merchant ships were sunk by U-boats, taking the lives of around eighty sailors. On 15 May 1943, a squadron of Cuban submarine chasers sank the German submarine U-176 near Cayo Blanquizal. Cuba received millions of dollars in American military aid through the Lend-Lease program, which included air bases, aircraft, weapons, and training. The United States naval station at Guantanamo Bay also served as a base for convoys passing between the mainland United States and the Panama Canal or other points in the Caribbean.

Cyprus

The Cyprus Regiment was founded on 12 April 1940, and made part of the British Army structure. It was mostly volunteers from the Greek and Turkish Cypriot inhabitants of Cypr
us, but also included other Commonwealth nationalities. About 30,000 Cypriots served in the Regiment. It included Infantry, Mechanical, Transport, and Pack Transport Companies. Cypriot mule drivers were the first colonial troops sent to the Western Front. They served in France, Ethiopia and Italy carrying equipment to areas inaccessible to vehicles. The regiment served at Dunkirk, in the Greek campaign (Battle of Greece), North Africa (Operation Compass), France, the Middle East and Italy. In the post war years and prior to its disbandment, the regiment served in Cyprus and the Middle East, including Palestine in 1945 1948. The Regiment was disbanded on 31 March 1950.

Czechoslovakia

Czechoslovakia was dismembered starting with the Munich Agreement and by the First Vienna Award in 1938. As a result, the Sudetenland became part of Germany, Trans-Olza was annexed by Poland, and southern Czechoslovakia became part of Hungary. Later on, the newly separated Slovak Republic, a Nazi-dependent
puppet regime led by Roman Catholic priest Jozef Tiso was set up, while the remainder of Carpathian Ruthenia was occupied and annexed by Hungary. The next day the Czech part of the country became the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia under state-President Emil H cha.

From 1940, a government-in-exile in London under former Czechoslovak President Edvard Bene was recognized as an

Allied power.

Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia

German leader Adolf Hitler established the protectorate on 16 March 1939, issuing a proclamation from Prague Castle.

The creation of the protectorate violated the Munich Agreement.

The protectorate remained nominally autonomous and had a dual system of government, with German law applying to ethnic Germans while other residents had the legal status of Protectorate subjects and were governed by a puppet Czech administration. During World War II, the well-trained Czech workforce and developed industry were forced to make a major contribution to the German war e

conomy. Since the Protectorate was just out of the reach of Allied bombers based in Britain, the Czech economy was able to work almost undisturbed until the end of the war. The Protectorate administration became deeply involved in the Holocaust in Bohemia and Moravia. The state's existence came to an end with the surrender of Germany to the Allies in May 1945.

Slovak Republic (Slovakia)

The newly founded Slovak Republic led by Jozef Tiso was proclaimed on March 14, 1939, allying with Nazi Germany and its armed forces participated in war against Poland and Soviet Union. On 24 November 1940, Slovakia joined the Axis when its leaders signed the Tripartite Pact.

The local Jewish population was heavily persecuted. As part of the Holocaust in Slovakia, 75,000 Jews out of 80,000 in Slovakia were deported and taken to German death camps.

The Slovak National Uprising, commenced in August 1944 was suppressed by German forces at the end of October; partisans, however, continued fighting in the mountains until the war's end. In April 1945, the Red Army defeated the Germans and ousted Tiso's government, and restored the Czechoslovak state.

Danzig

The Free City of Danzig, a semi-autonomous city-state under League of Nations protection, was predominantly German and had a Nazi government by 1936.

On 30 August 1939, Germany gave

great Poland an ultimatum demanding control of the city, provoking the Danzig crisis and the invasion of Poland on 1 September. The city-state aided Nazi Germany during the invasion. The Free City of Danzig Police and militia fought in the Battle of Westerplatte and the attack on the Polish post office in Danzig. After the Polish campaign, Danzig was annexed to Germany. The Nazis subjected Danzig's Jewish and Polish minorities to the violence of the Holocaust and

the Nazi crimes against the Polish nation. The Red Army occupied Danzig on 30 March 1945 and expelled its Germans; an estimated 290,800 had fled or been expelled from the city by 1950. Gdańsk became part of Poland after the war.

Denmark

Denmark officially remained neutral from the outbreak of the war. Germany invaded without declaration of war as part of Operation Weserübung on 9 April 1940, and overwhelmed Denmark in a few hours of fighting.

The Danish government remained in office in Copenhagen until 1943 and signed the Anti-Comintern Pact. On 29 August 1943, the government resigned and dissolved, as a response to German demands for more concessions. Denmark was now under German military occupation. Civil affairs were handled by SS-general Werner Best.

On 4 May 1945, German forces in Denmark surrendered to the British army. Since the German commander of the eastern island of Bornholm refused to surrender to the Soviet Union, two local towns were bombed and the garrison forced to surrender. Bornholm remained under Soviet control until 1946.

Faroe Islands and Greenland

On 10 May 1940, the British invaded Iceland and the Danish Faroe Islands. The United States occupied Greenland, a position later supported by the Danish envoy in Washington, Henrik Kauffmann. Iceland, which was later transferred from British to American control, declared independence in 1944.

Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic declared war on Germany and Japan following the attacks of Pearl Harbor and the Nazi declaration of war on the U.S. It did not directly contribute with troops, aircraft, or ships, however 112 Dominicans were integrated into the U.S. military and fought in the war. In addition, 27 Dominicans were killed when German submarines sank four Dominican-crewed ships in the Caribbean.

Dutch East Indies (Indonesia)

The rich petroleum resources of the Dutch East Indies were a prime objective of the Japanese military in its attack on the Allies from 7 December 1941. The Royal Netherlands Navy and the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army were part of the American-British-Dutch-Australian Command, but with the Netherlands having been occupied by Germany in 1940, the country was

as little able to defend its colony. The Japanese navy and army overran Dutch and allied forces in less than three months, completing the occupation in March 1942. Some Dutch personnel and ships escaped to Australia, where they continued to fight the Japanese.

The period of the Japanese occupation was one of the most critical in Indonesian history. Initially, many Indonesians joyfully welcomed the Japanese as liberators from Dutch colonialism. The sentiment changed, however, as Indonesians realized that they were expected to endure hardships for the Japanese war effort. In Java and Sumatra, the Japanese educated, trained and armed many young Indonesians and gave nationalist leaders a political voice. In this way, the Japanese occupation created the conditions for Indonesian independence.

In 1944-1945, Allied troops largely bypassed Indonesia. Therefore, most of the colony was still under Japanese occupation at the time of its surrender in August 1945. The Proclamation of Indonesian Independence was read within days of the Japanese surrender in the Pacific. The Indonesian National Revolution followed, winning independence for the country in 1949. A later UN report stated that four million people died in Indonesia as a result of the Japanese occupation. About 2.4 million people died in Java from famine during 1944-45.

Ecuador

Ecuador was one of several South American nations to join the Allies late in the war (joined against Germany on 2 February 1945), allowing the United States use of Baltra Island as a naval base.

Egypt

Britain had unilaterally recognized the independence of Egypt in 1922, but continued to occupy the country militarily, and to dominate it. By the Anglo Egyptian Treaty of 1936, the British occupation was limited to the Suez Canal Zone, but it allowed British troops to re-occupy the rest of the country in time of war.

Egypt was of vital strategic importance because of the Suez Canal and Egypt's central geographical location. The Egyptian government

supplied the British forces, but some engaged in secret negotiations with Germany about the prospect of Egypt's joining the Axis should the British be defeated in the Western Desert campaign. Many Egyptian politicians and army officers sought Axis support for removing the occupying British forces from the country.

After British forces defeated the initial Italian invasion, Germany entered the North African theatre to save Italian Libya. A series of German victories brought Axis forces within 160 kilometres (99 miles) of Cairo, creating great expectation among Egyptian nationalists. However, British victory at El-Alamein heralded the end of Axis advances in Egypt, and the eventual Axis defeat in North Africa. Although Egypt had almost all of its military fighting the Axis on the western desert campaign, King Farouk still resisted British pressure to declare war on Germany until 1945.

El Salvador

From 1931 to 1944, El Salvador was ruled by the military dictator Maximiliano Hernández

Martínez, an admirer of Hitler and Mussolini. Despite his personal admiration, Hernández Martínez declared war on both

Japan (8 December 1941) and Germany (12 December 1941) shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor due to El Salvador's strong economic ties with the United States. He removed Germans from the government and interned Japanese, German, and Italian nationals. The Second World War made Salvadorans weary of their dictatorship, and a general national strike in 1944 forced Hernández Martínez to resign and flee to Guatemala. Postwar, he was later killed in Honduras by a vengeful Salvadoran citizen.

José Castellanos Contreras was a Salvadoran army colonel and diplomat who, while working as El Salvador's Consul General for Geneva during World War II, and together with a Jewish-Hungarian businessman named György Mandl, helped save up to 40,000 Jews and Central Europeans from Nazi persecution by providing them with false papers of Salvadoran nationality.

José Gustavo Guerrero was a

Salvadoran judge who challenged the Nazis during Hitler's invasion of Europe. The distinguished Salvadoran jurist lived in Europe for many years in his career as a diplomat and as presiding judge of the Permanent Court of International Justice, based in The Hague, Netherlands.

In 1937, during the rise of Nazism in Europe, Doctor Guerrero took over as president, until he was forced to leave in 1940 by the Nazis. Precisely after the fall of the Netherlands, on May 17, 1940, the Nazis tried to take the Peace Palace of the Permanent Court of International in The Hague, but there they met the Salvadoran, the only judge who stayed with a group of Dutch officers. When a German general approached, the Presiding Judge told him: "The Court and its staff are inviolable. Only on my body can they enter the palace." For this and others before courage in defense of Universal Law, Guerrero was twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Once established in Geneva, Guerrero was visited by the Consul Ge

neral of El Salvador in Switzerland, Colonel José Castellanos Contreras, who had fled from Germany, where he served as Consul until El Salvador broke relations with the Hitler regime.

Castellanos had already granted several visas to people of Jewish origin who were persecuted by the Nazis. However, now that it was part of a larger project: the handing over of false documents of Salvadoran nationality to people of Jewish origin. Castellanos then consulted Guerrero, who immediately agreed to the plan that saved the lives of thousands of Jews. According to the investigations, Guerrero would have contributed to writing the text of the document that was then given to them to save their lives.

Estonia

The August 1939 Molotov Ribbentrop Pact between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union left Estonia in the Soviet sphere of interest. The Soviet Union threatened Estonia with war if Estonia did not agree with "a mutual assistance pact", which would allow the Soviet troops to use several military ba

ses in Estonia during a 10-year period. The Estonian government, convinced that a war against USSR would be

inevitably lost, agreed on 28 September 1939. The Soviets conducted a coup d'etat with the start of the full Soviet occupation of Estonia by the Red Army in June 1940, and a sham election was held under Soviet control. The new government took office and the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic was proclaimed on 21 July 1940. The puppet state was formally accepted into the Soviet Union on 6 August. The legality of the annexation was not recognized by most Western countries and the Baltic states continued to exist formally as independent nations until they regained independence in 1991.

Estonia was occupied by Germany in 1941 after war broke out between Germany and the Soviet Union. With the return of the Soviet Armed Forces, 70,000 Estonians joined or were conscripted by the German side to fight the Soviets. The National Committee failed to restore the national government in September 1944 due to the Soviet reoccupation. At the end of the war, the subsequent Forest Brothers armed insurrection against the Soviet authorities started, which lasted in the Baltic states until the mid-1950s. Estonia remained a de facto part of the USSR until 1991.

Ethiopia

At the outbreak of the war, Ethiopia was under Italian occupation and Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia was in exile in England trying in vain to obtain Allied support for his nation's cause. The Arbegnoch movement had begun its guerrilla war against the occupying Italian forces the day Addis Ababa fell in May 1936. Upon the emperor's flight into exile, remnants of Ethiopia's disbanded imperial army had transformed into guerrilla units. Urban city residents throughout the country formed underground movements to aid the Patriots as the overall population led a passive resistance campaign aimed at stifling Mussolini's economic agenda for the region. Throughout the occupation and into the beginning of the Second World

War, the constant harassment of Italian columns and communication and supply lines reduced their fighting capabilities and their morale. A state of paranoia among Italian troops and civilians alike had sunk in as they became increasingly isolated from Rome. Fascist retaliation to Patriot attacks was brutal and often targeted the civilian population, which only further filled the ranks of the Patriots creating a cycle that led to the eventual demise of Mussolini's Italian East Africa.

Britain's declaration of war against Italy reinvigorated the Patriot movement and paved the way for the final ousting of the Italians in Ethiopia and in the Horn of Africa. The Allied liberation campaign of Ethiopia began in the winter of 1940. Emperor Haile Selassie, with the support and cooperation of the British, was transported to the Sudan to work alongside Major Orde Wingate to organize and lead the main Ethiopian Patriot divisions that had fled fascist-controlled Ethiopia upon news of Britain's de