**Sir Winston Leonard Spencer-Churchill**, [KG](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knight_of_the_Garter), [OM](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_Merit), [CH](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Companion_of_Honour), [TD](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territorial_Decoration), [DL](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deputy_Lieutenant),[FRS](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fellow_of_the_Royal_Society), [RA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Academician) (30 November 1874 – 24 January 1965) was a [British](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_people" \o "British people)[politician](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politician) who was the [Prime Minister of the United Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_the_United_Kingdom)from 1940 to 1945 and again from 1951 to 1955. Widely regarded as one of the greatest wartime leaders of the 20th century, Churchill was also an [officer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Officer_(armed_forces)) in the [British Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Army), a historian, a writer, and an artist. He is the only British Prime Minister to have won the [Nobel Prize in Literature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nobel_Prize_in_Literature), and was the first person to be made an [honorary citizen of the United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honorary_citizen_of_the_United_States).

Churchill was born into the aristocratic family of the [Dukes of Marlborough](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duke_of_Marlborough_(title)), a branch of the [Spencer family](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spencer_family). His father, [Lord Randolph Churchill](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Randolph_Churchill), was a charismatic politician who served as[Chancellor of the Exchequer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chancellor_of_the_Exchequer); his mother, [Jennie Jerome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Randolph_Churchill), was an American socialite. As a young army officer, he saw action in [British India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_India), the [Sudan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudan), and the [Second Boer War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Boer_War). He gained fame as a war correspondent and wrote books about his campaigns.

At the forefront of politics for fifty years, he held many political and cabinet positions. Before the First World War, he served as [President of the Board of Trade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secretary_of_State_for_Business,_Innovation_and_Skills), [Home Secretary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Home_Secretary), and [First Lord of the Admiralty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_the_First_Lords_of_the_Admiralty) as part of the [Asquith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._H._Asquith) [Liberal government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberal_Government_1905%E2%80%931915). During the war, he continued as First Lord of the Admiralty until the disastrous [Gallipoli Campaign](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallipoli_Campaign) caused his departure from government. He then briefly resumed active army service on the [Western Front](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Front_(World_War_I)) as commander of the 6th Battalion of the [Royal Scots Fusiliers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Scots_Fusiliers). He returned to government as [Minister of Munitions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minister_of_Munitions), [Secretary of State for War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secretary_of_State_for_War), and [Secretary of State for Air](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secretary_of_State_for_Air). After the War, Churchill served as [Chancellor of the Exchequer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chancellor_of_the_Exchequer) in the [Conservative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservative_Party_(UK))([Baldwin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanley_Baldwin)) government of 1924–29, controversially returning the pound sterling in 1925 to the [gold standard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gold_standard) at its pre-war parity, a move widely seen as creating deflationary pressure on the UK economy. Also controversial were his opposition to increased home rule for India and his resistance to the 1936 abdication of [Edward VIII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_VIII).

Out of office and politically "in the wilderness" during the 1930s, Churchill took the lead in warning about [Nazi Germany](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazi_Germany)and in campaigning for rearmament. On the outbreak of the[Second World War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_World_War), he was again appointed First Lord of the Admiralty. Following the resignation of [Neville Chamberlain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neville_Chamberlain) on 10 May 1940, Churchill became Prime Minister. His steadfast refusal to consider defeat, surrender, or a compromise peace helped inspire British resistance, especially during the difficult early days of the War when Britain stood alone in its active opposition to [Adolf Hitler](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolf_Hitler). Churchill was particularly noted for his speeches and radio broadcasts, which helped inspire the British people. He led Britain as Prime Minister until victory over Nazi Germany had been secured.

After the Conservative Party lost the 1945 election, he became[Leader of the Opposition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leader_of_the_Opposition_(United_Kingdom)) to the [Labour Government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labour_Party_(UK)). After winning the 1951 election, he again became Prime Minister, before retiring in 1955. Upon his death, [Elizabeth II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_II) granted him the honour of a [state funeral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_funeral), which saw one of the largest assemblies of world statesmen in history.[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winston_Churchill#cite_note-news-1) Named the[Greatest Briton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/100_Greatest_Britons) of all time in a 2002 poll, Churchill is widely regarded as being among the most influential people in British history, consistently ranking well in [opinion polls of Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_rankings_of_Prime_Ministers_of_the_United_Kingdom).

As prime minister, Sir Winston Churchill rallied the British people during WWII, and led his country from the brink of defeat to victory.

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**QUOTES**

“An appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile, hoping it will eat him last.”

—Winston Churchill

Winston Churchill - Mini Biography (TV-14; 04:12)Noted for his military service, Winston Churchill led England during World War II . He took the blame for the Gallipoli landings during World War I, but eventually became Prime Minister and led the fight against Adolf Hitler.

**Synopsis**

Winston Churchill's life was a trajectory of events leading to his stand against Adolph Hitler's threat to control Europe. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Churchill helped lead a successful Allied strategy with President Franklin D. Roosevelt and General Secretary Joseph Stalin during WWII to defeat the Axis powers and craft post-war peace. After the breakdown of the alliance, he alerted the West to the expansionist threat of Soviet Communism.



**Early Life**

Winston Leonard Spencer-Churchill was born to an aristocratic family on November 30, 1874. As his life unfolded, he displayed the traits of his father, Lord Randolph Churchill, a British statesman from an established English family, and his mother, Jeannie Jerome, an independent-minded New York socialite. As a young child, Churchill grew up in Dublin, Ireland, where his father was employed by his grandfather, the 7th Duke of Marlborough, John Spencer-Churchill. When he entered formal school, Churchill proved to be an independent and rebellious student. He did poorly at his first two schools and in April, 1888, he was sent to Harrow School, a boarding school near London. Within weeks of his enrollment, he joined the Harrow Rifle Corps, which put him on a path to a military career.

At first it didn't seem the military was a good choice for Churchill. It took him three tries to pass the exam for the British Royal Military College. However, once there, he did well and graduated 20th in his class of 130. Up to this time, his relationship with both his mother and father was distant, though he adored them both. While at school, Churchill wrote emotional letters to this mother, begging her to come see him, but she seldom came. His father died when he was 21, and it was said that Churchill knew him more by reputation than by any close relationship they shared.

Churchill enjoyed a brief but eventful career in the British army at a zenith of British military power. He joined the Fourth Hussars in 1895 and served in the Indian northwest frontier and the Sudan, where he saw action in the Battle of Omdurman in 1898. While in the army, he wrote military reports for newspapers *The Pioneer* and the *Daily Telegraph*, and two books on his experiences, *The Story of the Malakand Field Force* (1898) and *The River War* (1899).

In 1899, Churchill left the army and worked as a war correspondent for the*Morning Post*, a conservative daily newspaper. While reporting on the Boer War in South Africa, he was taken prisoner by the Boers while on a scouting expedition. He made headlines when he escaped, traveling almost 300 miles to Portuguese territory in Mozambique. Upon his return to Britain, he wrote about his experiences in the book *London to Ladysmith* (1900).

**Early Careers: Government and Military**

In 1900, Churchill became a Member of Parliament in the Conservative Party for Oldham, a town in Manchester. Following his father into politics, he also followed his father's sense of independence, becoming a supporter of social reform. Unconvinced that the Conservative Party was committed to social justice, Churchill switched to the Liberal Party in 1904. He was elected a Member of Parliament in 1908, and was appointed to the Prime Minister's Cabinet as President of the Board of Trade. That same year, he married Clementine Ogilvy Hozier, after a short courtship.

As president of the Board of Trade, he joined newly appointed Chancellor Lloyd George in opposing the expansion of the British Navy. Also in 1908, he introduced several reforms for the prison system, introduced the first minimum wage, and helped set up labor exchanges for the unemployed and unemployment insurance. Churchill assisted in the passing of the People's Budget, which introduced new taxes on the wealthy to pay for new social welfare programs. The budget passed the House of Commons in 1909, but was initially defeated in the House of Lords, before being passed in 1910. He also drafted a controversial piece of legislation to amend the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913, mandating sterilization of the feeble-minded. The bill eventually passed both Houses with only the remedy of confinement in institutions.

In January 1911, Churchill showed his tougher side when he made a controversial visit to a police siege in London. Police had surrounded a house where two robbers had been caught. Churchill's degree of participation is still in some dispute. Some accounts have him going to the scene only to see for himself what was going on; others state that he allegedly gave directions to police on how to best storm the building. What is known is that the house caught fire during the siege and Churchill prevented the fire brigade from extinguishing the flames, stating that he thought it better to "let the house burn down," rather than risk lives rescuing the occupants. The bodies of the two robbers were found inside the charred ruins.

While serving as First Lord of the Admiralty since 1911, Churchill helped modernize the British Navy, ordering that new warships be built with oil-fired instead of coal-fired engines. He was one of the first to promote military aircraft and set up the Royal Navy Air Service. So enthusiastic was he about aviation that he took flying lessons to understand firsthand its military potential. Though not directly involved in the disastrous Battle of Gallipoli, Churchill resigned his post because he felt responsible for proposing the expedition. For a brief period, he rejoined the British Arm,y commanding a battalion of the Royal Scots Fusiliers on the Western Front and seeing action in "no man's land." In 1917, he was appointed Minister of Munitions for the final year of the war, overseeing the production of tanks, airplanes and munitions.

From 1919 to 1922, Churchill served as Minister of War and Air and Colonial Secretary under Prime Minister David Lloyd George. As Colonial Secretary, Churchill was embroiled in another controversy when he ordered air power be used on rebellious Kurdish tribesmen in Iraq, a British holding. At one point, he suggested that poisonous gas be used to put down the rebellion. This proposal was considered but never enacted, though the conventional bombing campaign was and failed to end the resistance.

Fractures in the Liberal Party led to the defeat of Churchill as a Member of Parliament in 1922, and he rejoined the Conservative Party. He served as Chancellor of the Exchequer, returning Britain to the gold standard, and took a hard line against a general labor strike that threatened to cripple the British economy. With the defeat of the Conservative government in 1929, Churchill was out of government. He was perceived as a right-wing extremist, who was out of touch with the people. He spent the next few years concentrating on his writing and published *A History of English Speaking Peoples*.

**World War II**

Though not at first seeing the threat that Adolph Hitler posed when he rose to power in 1933, Churchill gradually became a leading advocate for British rearmament. By 1938, as Germany began controlling its neighbors, Churchill had become a staunch critic of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement toward the Nazis. On September 3, 1939, the day that Britain declared war on Germany, Churchill was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty and a member of the War Cabinet, and by April, 1940, he became chairman of the Military Coordinating Committee. Later that month, Germany invaded and occupied Norway, which was a setback for Neville Chamberlain, who had resisted Churchill's proposal that Britain pre-empt German aggression by unilaterally occupying vital Norwegian iron mines and sea ports. In May, debate in Parliament on the Norwegian crisis led to a vote of no confidence toward Prime Minister Chamberlain. On May 10, King George VI appointed Churchill as prime minister and Minister of Defense. Within hours, the German Army began its Western Offensive, invading the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. Two days later, German forces entered France. Britain stood alone against the onslaught.

Quickly, Churchill formed a coalition cabinet of leaders from the Labor, Liberal and Conservative parties. He placed intelligent and talented men in key positions. On June 18, 1940, Churchill made one of his iconic speeches to the House of Commons, warning that "the Battle of Britain" was about to begin. Churchill kept resistance to Nazi dominance alive, and created the foundation for an alliance with the United States and the Soviet Union. Churchill had previously cultivated a relationship with U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s, and by March 1941, was able to secure vital U.S. aid through the Lend Lease Act, which allowed Britain to order war goods from the United States on credit.

After the United States entered World War II, in December 1941, Churchill was confident that the Allies would eventually win the war. In the months that followed, Churchill worked closely with U.S. President Roosevelt and Soviet Union leader Joseph Stalin to forge an Allied war strategy and post-war world. In meetings in Teheran (1943), Yalta (February 1945) and Potsdam (July 1945), Churchill collaborated with the two leaders to develop a united strategy against the Axis Powers, and helped craft the post-war world with the United Nations as its centerpiece. As the war wound down, Churchill proposed plans for social reforms in Britain, but was unable to convince the public. Perhaps seeing him only as a "war-time prime minister," he was defeated in the general election in July 1945.

During the next six years, Churchill became the Leader of the Opposition Party and continued to have an impact on world affairs. In March 1946, while on a visit to the United States, he made his famous "Iron Curtain" speech, warning of Soviet domination in Eastern Europe. He also advocated that Britain remain independent from European coalitions and maintain its independence.

After the general election of 1951, Churchill returned to government. He was appointed Minister of Defense between October 1951 and January 1952, and became prime minister in October 1951. In 1953, Churchill was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II. He introduced various reforms such as the Mines and Quarries Act of 1954, improving working conditions in mines, and the Housing Repairs and Rent Act of 1955, establishing standards for housing. These domestic reforms were overshadowed by a series of foreign policy crises in the colonies of Kenya and Malaya, where Churchill ordered direct military action. While successful in putting down the rebellions, it became clear that Britain was no longer able to sustain its colonial rule.

**Later Years and Death**

Churchill had shown signs of fragile health as early as 1941, while visiting the White House. At that time, he suffered a mild heart attack and, in 1943, he had a similar attack while battling a bout of pneumonia. In June 1953, at age 78, he suffered from a series of strokes at his office, located at 10 Downing Street. The news was kept from the public and Parliament, with the official announcement stating that he had suffered from exhaustion. He recuperated at home, and returned to his work as prime minister in October. However, it was apparent even to him that he was physically and mentally slowing down. Churchill retired as prime minister in 1955. He remained a Member of Parliament until the general election of 1964, when he did not seek re-election.

There was speculation that Churchill suffered from Alzheimer's disease in his last years, but many medical experts feel that his reduced mental capacity was more a result of the strokes he had suffered. Despite his poor health, Churchill was able to remain active in public life, albeit mostly from the comfort of his homes in Kent and Hyde Park Gate, in London.

On January 15, 1965, Churchill suffered a severe stroke that left him gravely ill. He died at his London home nine days later, at age 90, on January 24, 1965. Britain mourned for more than a week.

Sources:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winston_Churchill>

<http://www.biography.com/people/winston-churchill-9248164#awesm=~oEdD3gDLBKJw7m>