

Noncombatant Deaths in WW II

The purpose of this page is to gather in one place the most accurate statistics available of noncombatants killed in the Second World War. I realize that this page is a slightly grisly idea, but the premise is simply that accurate information is a good thing.

The list of deaths should by no means be taken to mean that these people were the only ones to suffer. The amount of suffering brought on by the Nazi regime, in particular, is immeasurable.

I will update this page as the information becomes available to me. If you have additions or corrections, please send them, but be sure to include a verifiable reference. Where several estimates are available, I will include a representative range.

For my purposes noncombatants will include unarmed POW's.

- Killed by the European Axis Powers.
 - Jews
 - At least 5.1 million according to Hilberg ¹
 - At least 5.75 million according to Gilbert. ²
 - Reitlinger estimates 4,194,200 to 4,581,200. He also quotes the Anglo-American Commitees figures from April, 1946 of 5,721,800. He qualifies his own estimates with the note, "Owing to the lack of reliable information at the time of writing, these figures must be regarded as conjectural." ³
 - Poles
 - Approximately 5,384,000 about 50% of whom were Jews according to Lukas. ⁴
 - Soviet citizens.
 - 7 million civilians died in the war according to Gilbert. ⁵
 - At the siege of Leningrad approximately 1 million (source needed!)
 - 3.3 million POW's according to Streit. ⁶
 - Romani and Sinti
 - 250,000-1,000,000 according to sources cited by Hancock ⁷
 - Disabled
 - Over 200,000 were killed in the official euthanasia campaign, 1939-41. There is no way to know how many were killed outside the campaign. "No reliable figures exist for the spontaneous killings." ⁸
 - British and American POW's
 - 8,348 according to Streit. ⁶
 - Homosexuals
 - 3,000-9,000 German homosexuals according to Whitman. ⁹
 - 5,000-15,000 according to Lautmann ¹⁰
 - Jehovah's Witnesses.
 - Killed by the Japanese.
 - The Nanking massacre:
 - about 300,000 deaths and 20,000 rapes. ¹¹
 - Killed by the Western Allies.
 - Japanese civilian dead:
 - 2 million⁵
 - Hiroshima:
 - about 138,890 according to Gilbert. ⁵
 - Nagasaki:
 - about 48,857according to Gilbert.⁵
 - Tokyo bombings:
 - "On May 24, more than four hundred American bombers dropped 3,646 tons of bombs on central Tokyo, and on the industrial areas in the south of the city. More than a thousand Japanese were killed."⁵
 - Tokyo, March 1945: "83,793 Japanese civilians killed. That was the official minimum death toll; later, 130,000 deaths were 'confirmed' by the Japanese authorities." ⁵
 - Nagoya, Osaka, Kobe, Yokohama, Kawasaki March-May 1945:
 - "more than a quarter of a million"⁵
 - German civilians killed by bombing
 - In total about 800,000 according to Gilbert. ¹²
 - Hamburg, July 1943:
 - 42,000 ⁵
 - Dresden, February 1945:
 - "39,773 'officially identified dead' were found in the city and registered, most of them burned to death. At least 20,000 more bodies were buried beneath ruins, or incinerated beyond recognition, even as bodies. ⁵
 - Killed by the USSR.
 - Germans
 - Gilbert says that the German government estimates a total of 3.6 million German civilians were killed; he does not specify how many were killed by Eastern vs. Western allies.⁵
 - Katyn massacre of Polish prisoners.
 - On 5 March 1940 L. Beria signed an execution order for 25,700 Polish captives. A 1956 memo from KGB chief Shelepin to Khrushchev confirmed 21,257 of these exections at the following sites. ¹³
 - Katyn: 4,421
 - Starobelsk Camp: 3,820
 - Ostashkov Camp: 6,311
 - Other places of detention: 7,305.
- The Katyn murders were later blamed on the Nazis by the Soviets
- Killed by the Nationalist Chinese.
 - Killed by the Communist Chinese.

[Rich Green |Notes]