

Summary of: to be implemented

Aircraft played a major role in the conflict, including in the use of strategic bombing of population centres, and the only uses of nuclear weapons in war.

World War II is generally considered to have begun on 1 September 1939, with the invasion of Poland by Germany and subsequent declarations of war on Germany by France and the United Kingdom. On 22 June 1941, Germany led the European Axis powers in an invasion of the Soviet Union, opening the largest land theatre of war in history and trapping the Axis, crucially the German Wehrmacht, in a war of attrition.

Japan, which aimed to dominate Asia and the Pacific, was at war with the Republic of China by 1937. Following an immediate US declaration of war against Japan, supported by one from the UK, the European Axis powers declared war on the United States in solidarity with their ally. During 1944 and 1945, Japan suffered reversals in mainland Asia, while the Allies crippled the Japanese Navy and captured key Western Pacific islands.

The war in Europe concluded with an invasion of Germany by the Western Allies and the Soviet Union, culminating in the capture of Berlin by Soviet troops, the suicide of Adolf Hitler and the German unconditional surrender on 8 May 1945. In the wake of the war, Germany and Japan were occupied and war crimes tribunals were conducted against German and Japanese leaders.

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