

MCH 2020vv
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New Zealand military involvement in the Second World War

A brief outline of the key events of the Second World War, particularly focusing on the involvement of New Zealand.

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By 1938 developments internationally over the previous 20 years, specifically the rise of Nazi Germany, had made the possibility of war very real.

1939

- 14 March: German troops occupy Prague
- 31 March: Britain and France extend guarantee to Poland
- 7 April: Italy invades Albania
- 14 June: Japanese blockade British concession at Tientsin, China
- 22 August: Soviet Union and Germany sign non-aggression pact
- 1 September: Germany invades Poland
- 3 September: Britain, France, New Zealand and Australia declare war on Germany
- 5 September:
 - First New Zealander, a flying officer with RAF, taken prisoner of war.
 - South Africa declares war on Germany
- 10 September: Canada declares war on Germany
- 12 September: Enlistment for 2 New Zealand Expeditionary Force (2 NZEF) begins
- 17 September: Soviets invade Poland
- 27 September Germans take Warsaw
- 29 September: Germany and Russia partition Poland
- 3 October: First Echelon, 2 NZEF training begins at Burnham, Trentham, Hopuhopu and Papakura
- 4 October: New Zealand Government announces the formation of a Maori battalion for 2 NZEF
- 16 October: First German air raid on Britain
- 8 November: Assassination attempt on Hitler fails
- 17 November: Major-General Bernard Freyberg is appointed to command 2 NZEF

Related content

We have 1 event in history, 9 biographies, 21 articles, related to Second World War - overview.

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- 11 December: First Echelon advance party sails from Wellington
- 13 December: Battle of the River Plate-New Zealand cruiser HMS *Achilles* involved in battle with German pocket battleship the *Admiral Graf Spee*
- 17 December: Empire Air Training Scheme agreement commits New Zealand to produce 3000 trainees per annum

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1940

- 5 January: First Echelon embarks for the Middle East
- 7 January: First Echelon advance party arrives Port Said, Egypt
- 8 January: Rationing begins in Britain
- 12 January: Second Echelon, 2 NZEF, begins training
- 28 January: 28 (Maori) Battalion assembles in Palmerston North
- 12 February: First Echelon, 2 NZEF, main body arrives at Maadi Camp, Egypt
- 19 March: First British air attacks on a land target - the island of Sylt in the Frisian Islands
- 27 March:
 - New Zealand airmen take part in first leaflet raid on Hamburg as members of the RAF (Royal Air Force)
 - Michael Savage, Prime Minister of New Zealand, dies
- 1 April:
 - Formation of No. 75 (NZ) Squadron in Britain by the British Air Ministry
 - Peter Fraser becomes Prime Minister of New Zealand
- 9 April:
 - Germany invades Denmark and Norway
 - RAF and Royal Navy involved in campaign in Norway, including New Zealanders
- 15-18 April: British troops land in Norway
- 29 April: Empire Air Training Scheme commences in Canada, Australia and New Zealand
- 30 April: Evacuation of British forces from Andalsnes, Norway
- 2 May: Second Echelon, 2 NZEF, sails from Wellington
- 10 May:
 - Germany invades the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and France.
 - Winston Churchill becomes Prime Minister of Britain.
 - RAF begins bombing raids on Germany.
- 12-14 May: Germans break through on the French front
- 15 May: Holland surrenders to Germany
- 17 May: Third Echelon, 2 NZEF, begins training
- 20 May: Germans reach the Somme battlefield

- 25 May: Germans surrounded the Belgian Army, French forces and most of British Expeditionary Force
- 26 May: Evacuation at Dunkirk begins
- 28 May: Belgium surrenders to Germany
- 3 June: Germans bomb Paris. Evacuation of Dunkirk ends
- 5 June: **New Zealand begins raising an infantry brigade group for Fiji**
- 7 June: **Fighter ace, Flying Officer E.J. ('Cobber') Kain (Wellington), serving with RAF, is killed in a flying accident in France (see his biography at www.dnzb.govt.nz)**
- 10 June:
 - Italy declares war on the United Kingdom and France.
 - Canada declares war on Italy.
- 11 June: **Australia, New Zealand and South Africa declare war on Italy**
- 11-12 June:
 - First air raids on Italy.
 - East Africa campaign begins.
- 14 June: Germans enter Paris
- 16 June: **2 Echelon, 2 NZEF, arrives at Greenoch, Scotland**
- 22 June: France accepts German armistice terms
- 25 June: Hostilities in France end
- 28 June: Britain recognises General Charles de Gaulle as the Free French leader
- 2 July: Adolf Hitler orders preparations for the invasion of Britain
- 5 July: French Vichy government breaks off relations with Britain
- 10 July: Battle of Britain begins with German attacks on Channel convoys
- 15 July: RAF attacks enemy shipping in North Sea and Channel ports
- 23-24 July: First British aircraft over Berlin
- 2 August: **New Zealand Home Guard established**
- 4 August: Italians invade British Somaliland
- 8 - 18 August: Battle of Britain. Intense air raids on British shipping and daylight raids. Airfields main objectives of attack.
- 20 August: **German raider *Orion* sinks the steamer *Turakina* off Cape Egmont**
- 23 - 24 August: German air raids on London begin
- 25 - 26 August: First British air raids on Berlin
- 27 August: **Third Echelon, 2 NZEF, embarks for the Middle East**
- 10 September: **Advance party of 8 Infantry Battalion leave for Fiji**
- 13 September:
 - Italians invade Egypt
 - **Pte, G. R. Osbourne, 4 Reserve (MT) Company is killed by explosion of thermos bomb. First New Zealander in 2 NZEF killed as the result**

of enemy action.

- Headquarters New Zealand Division (HQ NZ Division) moves to Baggush in the Western Desert
- 15 September: Germans suffer heavy losses to RAF with whom about 100 New Zealanders serve as fighter pilots
- 27 September: Tripartite (Axis) Pact signed by Germany, Italy and Japan
- 28 September: First United States destroyers reach Britain under the destroyers for bases deal
- 29 September:
 - HQ NZ Division returns to Maadi Camp
 - Third Echelon 2 NZEF arrives in Egypt
- 28 October: Italy invades Greece
- 3 November: HQ 8 Infantry Brigade established in Fiji
- British troops land in Crete, Greece
- 14 November: German raid on Coventry. Coventry Cathedral destroyed.
- 25 November: Steamer *Holmwood* sunk by German raiders off Chatham Islands
- 27 November: *Rangitane* sunk by German raiders 480km from East Cape
- 8 December: New Zealand steamer *Komata* sunk by German raiders off Nauru Island
- 9 December: The first Western Desert offensive begins including some New Zealand support troops
- 16 December: British offensive opens in Italian East Africa
- Egypt cleared of Italian forces

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1941

- 16 January: Establishment of Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF)
- 22 January: Tobruk in Libya falls to British and Australian troops
- 3 February: First blackout restrictions gazetted
- 7 February: Benghazi, Libya captured by British
- 12 February: German forces under General Erwin Rommel arrive in Tripoli, Libya
- 17 February: Instructions issued to Allied military commanders for a Greek expedition
- 3 March:
 - Bulk of 2 NZEF now in the Middle East
 - Kiwi Concert Party formed
- 6-7 March: British troops including most of 2 NZ Division begin to enter Greece. (Freyberg wrongly assumes New Zealand government has agreed to this while the government, also wrongly, assumes Freyberg believes it is a militarily feasible operation.)

- 24 March: Rommel strikes and captures El Agheila, Libya with little resistance
- 30 March: Enemy counter offensive in the Western Desert. German armour and Italian infantry advance.
- 31 March: **New Zealand Division in position on Aliakmon line north of Mt Olympus, Greece**
- April: Bombing raids continue over Britain and Germany
- 2 April: Rommel attacks, meeting little resistance
- 3 April: British evacuate Benghazi
- 6 April: **Germany invades both Yugoslavia and Greece. NZ Division withdraws along eastern seaboard.**
- 10 April: Australians forced to withdraw to Tobruk
- 11 April: **First New Zealand prisoners of war (fighting as members of a New Zealand unit) taken at Klidhi Pass (11 men of 27 (Machine Gun) Battalion).**
- 12 April: **Germans breakthrough at Klidhi Pass. Allied forces begin to abandon Mt Olympus-Aliakmon line.**
- 12-13 April: Rommel encircles Tobruk. Siege begins.
- 14 April: German attack on Tobruk repulsed
- 22-29 April: **Evacuation of troops from Greece, some to Crete, others to Egypt**
- 27 April: Germans enter Athens. Greece surrenders to Germany.
- 17 May: Italian forces in East Africa surrender
- 20 May: **German airborne invasion of Crete begins. Capture of Maleme airfield.**
- 24 May: *Bismarck* sinks the British battlecruiser HMS *Hood*
- 27 May: *Bismarck* sunk
- 28-31 May: **British and Dominion (Australian and New Zealand) troops evacuated from Crete**
- 1 June: **Second Lt. Charles Upham and Sgt. V.C. Hulme awarded Victoria Cross for gallantry during Crete campaign. New Zealand troops regroup and complete training exercises in Egypt.**
- 14 June: United States freezes German and Italian assets
- 15-18 June: British Operation Battleaxe fails to relieve Tobruk
- 22 June: Germany invades USSR
- 28 June: Germans capture Minsk
- 10 July: Germans cross the River Dnieper in the Ukraine
- 14 July: British occupy Syria
- 25-27 July: **Britain, Australia, New Zealand and United States freeze Japanese assets**
- 28 July: Japanese troops move into southern Indo-China
- 31 July: **All married men in unreserved occupations have been called up for military service**
- 3-4 August: German air raids over Moscow
- 5 August: **Sgt. Pilot J.A. Ward (75 Squadron) awarded the Victoria**

Cross for gallantry during attack on Munster. First New Zealand airman to receive this award. (Later killed in action September 1941.)

- 7 - 8 August: Soviet Air Force raids Berlin
- 14 August: Britain and America announce Atlantic Charter
- 20 August: Siege of Leningrad begins
- 1 September: Nazis order Jews to wear yellow stars as identification
- 12 September: **2 NZ Division moves to Baggush in the Western Desert**
- 19 September: Germans take Kiev
- 2 October: Operation Typhoon begins (German advance on Moscow)
- 4 - 6 October: Raids on Benghazi and Tripoli by RAF; continued during October
- 16 October: Germans take Odessa
- 18 October: General Tojo Hideki forms Cabinet in Japan
- 24 October: Germans take Kharkov
- 11 November: **2 NZ Division moves from Baggush to assembly point near Matruh - Siwa. This is the first time the entire New Zealand force has been together (20,000 all ranks).**
- 18 November: **British Crusader offensive begins in the Western Desert. 2 NZ Division crosses the Libyan frontier into Cyrenaica.**
- 21 November: Tank battle between 8 Army and Axis begins south and south-east of Tobruk
- 26 November: **2 NZ Division links up with garrison at Tobruk. NZ troops (4 Brigade) capture Belhamed, and (6 Brigade) Sidi Rezegh.**
- 27 – 30 November: **Axis army returns to Tobruk front. Overruns several NZ held points, taking many prisoners of war.**
- 2 December:
 - **2 NZ Division withdraws from Libya**
 - Heavy RAF raids on Axis supply bases in Tripoli and Benghazi
 - Royal Navy Force Z arrives in Singapore
- 5 December: German attack on Moscow is abandoned as Soviets launch counter-offensive
- 7 December: Japanese attack Pearl Harbor
- 7 - 8 December: Japanese troops land in Thailand and north-eastern Malaya
- 8 December: **Britain, USA, and New Zealand declare war on Japan**
- 10 December: Siege of Tobruk lifted
- 11 December:
 - Germany declares war on United States
 - **5 Brigade, 2 NZEF advance westward from Asroma and captures large force of Italians**
- 16 December: Rommel begins retreat to El Agheila
- 18 December: Japanese land in Hong Kong
- 22 December: Japanese land in the Philippines
- 23 December: **New Zealanders serving with 67 Squadron RAF have**

first encounter with enemy during Japanese air raid on Rangoon, Burma

- 24 December: British take Benghazi
- 25 December: Hong Kong falls to Japanese troops
- 31 December: Martial law declared in Singapore

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1942

- 1 January: Declaration of the United Nations signed by 26 Allied Nations
- **New Zealand casualties in the Libyan campaign: 671 killed in action, 209 died of wounds, 1699 wounded, 2042 prisoners of war**
- 2 January:
 - Bardia taken by 8 Army – 1000 British prisoners of war set free
 - Japanese occupy Manila
- 3 January: **488 Sqn RNZAF in action at Singapore**
- 6 January: Rommel commences offensive at El Agedabia
- 8 January: Rommel repulsed and withdraws during sandstorms
- 10 January: More New Zealand reinforcements to Fiji
- 21 January: Rommel commences second offensive
- 23 January: Axis troops take El Agedabia
- 26 January: First American forces arrive in Britain
- 29 January: Rommel's forces retake Benghazi
- 30 January: Japanese within 25 km of Singapore
- 8 February: Japanese invade Burma
- 10 February: **US naval vanguard arrives in Wellington**
- 15 February: Fall of Singapore
- 19 February: Japanese attack Dutch East Indies [now Indonesia]. Darwin, Australia, raided for the first time.
- 20 February: Western Desert frontline stabilised at Gazala
- February: **2 NZ Division deploys to Lebanon-Syria**
- 3 March: **No 486 (New Zealand) fighter squadron formed in RAF in Britain**
- March: Japanese air raids over Australia
- 8 March: Japanese submarine I-25 sends reconnaissance plane over **Wellington**
- 13 March: **Reconnaissance flight from I-25 over Auckland**
- 7 - 8 April: Peak of air attacks on Malta
- 18 April: **US General Douglas MacArthur assumes command of the South West Pacific Area. New Zealand in South Pacific Area a US Navy responsibility under Admiral Chester Nimitz**
- Doolittle raid on Tokyo
- 30 April: **New Zealand prepares for possible invasion. Evacuation**

plans for some cities prepared.

- 1 May: Rationing now includes sugar, clothing, boots, hosiery, and knitting yarns. (Petrol has been rationed since September 1939.)
- 7 May: Battle of Coral Sea. Japanese forces heading for Port Moresby turn back.
- 8 May: German summer offensive begins in Crimea
- 27 May: Rommel launches new offensive in Libya
- 31 May: Japanese midget submarine raid on Sydney Harbour
- 3-6 June: US victory at Battle of Midway effectively ends the danger of invasion of New Zealand
- 11-12 June: First US Air Force attack in the Middle East/Mediterranean
- 14 June: With defeat of 8 Army in Libya, 2 NZ Division recalled from Lebanon-Syria
- 21 June: Rommel captures Tobruk
- 28 June: 2 NZ Division narrowly escapes destruction with breakout at Minqar Qaim (1,000 casualties)
- 30 June: Rommel reaches El Alamein near Cairo
- 1 July: First Battle of El Alamein
- 5 July: Soviet resistance in the Crimea ends with the fall of Sevastopol
- 9 July: Germans begin drive toward Stalingrad
- 12 July: New Zealand motor-ship *Hauraki* captured by Japanese raiders in Indian Ocean
- 14 – 15 July: 2 NZ Division advances to Ruweisat Ridge but are overrun by German tanks (1400 casualties or POWs). Keith Elliott earns Victoria Cross and Charles Upham earns bar to Victoria Cross.
- 22 July: Two New Zealand battalions destroyed at El Mreir (900 casualties including 500 POWs)
- 23 July: Germans cross the River Don in Russia
- 24 July: Due to US assuming control in Fiji, 2 NZEF troops from Fiji return to New Zealand
- July: 9 Sqn RNZAF deployed to New Caledonia. First RNZAF involvement in area.
- 1 August: Air raid drills being held regularly in New Zealand schools
- 7 August:
 - First American land offensive against Japan at Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands
 - General Bernard Montgomery takes command of 8 Army in North Africa
- 17 August: Enemy transport ship *Nino Bixio* torpedoed carrying prisoners of war. 118 New Zealanders are killed.
- First all American air attack in Europe
- 23 August: Massive German air raid on Stalingrad
- 25 August: Two companies of the 28 (Maori) Battalion inflict heavy casualties on Italians on the El Alamein Line

- 2 September: Rommel driven back by Montgomery in the Battle of Alam Halfa
- 13 September: Battle of Stalingrad begins
- 21 September: Rommel hands over command of Italian-German Panzer Army to General Georg Stumme and proceeds to Germany
- September: **HMNZS *Leander*** involved in Solomons campaign
- 5 – 13 October: US forces continue attacks against Japanese at Guadalcanal
- 18 October: Hitler orders the execution of all captured British commandos
- 23 October: Operation Lightfoot – the second battle of El Alamein – begins with massive air support of the 8 Army
- **2 NZ Division captures Miteiriya Ridge**
- 25 October: General Stumme dies and Rommel returns to Africa
- 28 October: RAF breaks up German armour reforming for possible counter attack in the Western Desert
- October: **3 Sqn RNZAF deploys in South Pacific theatre**
- 2 November: **Operation Supercharge – Allies forces break Axis forces at El Alamein. 2 NZ Division opens way for British armour.**
- 8 November: Operation Torch begins – US invasion of North Africa. Lt. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower in command.
- 11 November:
 - Germans and Italians invade unoccupied Vichy France.
 - Axis forces now driven out of Egypt.
- 13 November: Tobruk falls to the 8 Army
- 19 November: Soviet counter-offensive at Stalingrad begins
- 20 November: Benghazi recaptured by British forces
- 2 December: Professor Enrico Fermi sets up an atomic reactor in Chicago
- 3 December: **3 NZ Div. HQ temporarily established in New Zealand. Throughout December troops are sent to New Caledonia from New Zealand.**
- 13 December: Rommel withdraws from El Agheila
- 16 December: Soviets defeat German attempt to relieve Stalingrad
- 31 December: German forces retreat from Caucasus

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1943

- 5 January: **HMNZS *Achilles*** badly damaged by bomb off Guadalcanal
- 22 January: Australian and US forces defeat Japan in the Papua campaign
- 23 January: Eighth Army under General Montgomery takes Tripoli
- 29 January:

- Eighth Army advance parties enter Tunisia
- Japan withdrawing land forces from Guadalcanal
- 29 – 30 January: **RNZN corvettes *Kiwi* and *Moa* sink Japanese submarine I-1 off Guadalcanal**
- 2 February: Germans surrender at Stalingrad — the biggest defeat of Hitler's army to date
- 16 February: Soviets take back Kursk
- 27 February: Eighth Army takes up position on the Mareth Line
- 6 March: Rommel attacks Eighth Army in Tunisia and is repulsed
- 9 March: Rommel leaves Africa
- 16 – 20 March: Battle of Atlantic climaxes with 27 merchant ships sunk by German U-boats
- 20 – 28 March: Eighth Army breaks through the Mareth Line
- 27 March: **2 NZ Division executes 'left hook' at Tebaga Gap. Axis troops retire from Mareth Line.**
- 6 April: Axis forces in Tunisia withdraw as British and American forces link up
- 26 April: First Army offensive against Tunis begins
- 7 May: Allies take Tunis
- 13 May: German and Italian troops surrender in North Africa
- 15 May: **2 NZ Division begins to return from Tunisia to Maadi Camp**
- 18 May: Japanese begins an offensive along Yangtze River
- 20 May: **New Zealand government agrees to keep 2 NZEF in the Middle East to be available for operations in Europe. A furlough scheme for those with long service in the Middle East is decided upon. The division in the Pacific to be reduced.**
- 3 June:
 - Committee formed by General de Gaulle and General Henri Giraud for liberation of France
 - Chinese win victory in Yangtze fight
- 5 July: Germans begin major offensive at Kursk, but progress is limited. Soviets eventually win greatest tank battle in history. This effectively decides outcome on eastern front.
- 9 – 10 July: Allies land in Sicily
- 12 – 13 July: **HMNZS *Leander* suffers heavy damage when torpedoed off New Georgia**
- 14 July: Axis counter attack in Sicily
- 19 July: Allies bomb Rome
- 22 July: Americans capture Palermo, Sicily
- 24 July: British bombing raid on Hamburg
- 25 July: Benito Mussolini arrested and Italian fascist government falls. Marshal Pietro Badoglio takes over and negotiates with Allies.
- 1 August: Germans disarm Italian troops in Crete and other Greek islands
- 12 – 17 August: Germans evacuate Sicily

- 15 August: US troops land at Vella Lavella in the Solomon Islands
- 16 August: American daylight air raids on Regensburg and Schweinfurt in Germany.
- Heavy Allied air attacks on Japanese at Wewak, Papua New Guinea
- 23 August: Soviet troops recapture Kharkov
- 8 September: Italian armistice is announced
- 9 September: Allied landings at Salerno and Taranto, Italy
- 11 September: Germans occupy Rome
- 12 September: Germans rescue Mussolini
- 14 September:
 - Allied landings in Sardinia
 - Heavy fighting at Salerno
- 22 September: **New Zealand troops land on Leros in the Dodecanese Islands off eastern Greece.** (Germans invade and recapture these islands by mid November.)
- 23 September: Mussolini re-establishes Fascist government in northern Italy
- 1 October: Allies enter Naples
- 3 October: **3 NZ Division secures Vella Lavella. First troops of 2 NZ Division arrive at Taranto, Italy.**
- 5 October: US force attacks Wake Island
- 13 October: Italy declares war on Germany
- 16 – 17 October: **4 and 5 NZ Brigades leave Port Tewfik for Italy**
- 27 October:
 - Soviets break through between Dnieper River and the Sea of Azov
 - **3 NZ Division lands on Mono in the Treasury Islands**
- **28 October: Butter rationing is introduced in New Zealand**
- 1 November: US invades Bougainville
- 6 November: Soviets recapture Kiev in the Ukraine
- 9 November: Eighth Army takes Castiglione, Italy
- 22 November: Offensive on the Sangro River by 8 Army begins
- 1 December: German line on the Sangro River broken
- 3 – 24 December: **2 NZ Division battles for Orsogna north of Sangro River**
- 20 December: Japanese air raid on Calcutta
- 31 December: Soviets take Zhitomir

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1944

- 13 January: **Decision made to move NZ troops from Orsogna across the Italian peninsula to Cassino**
- 17 January:
 - US 5 Army offensive along the Gustav line begins. **2 NZ Division**

assembling in army's rear.

- First attack towards Cassino.
- 22 January: Allied landing at Anzio, behind the German lines at Cassino
- 27 January:
 - Siege of Leningrad is raised after nearly 900 days
 - January: US invades Marshall Islands
- 3 February: First counter attack by Germans at Anzio
- 15 – 18 February:
 - Allies bomb the monastery at Monte Cassino
 - **3 NZ Division lands on Nissan Island in the Solomons. Organised Japanese resistance ceases by 20 February.**
- 16 February: Second German attack at Anzio
- 17 February: **28 Maori Battalion crosses the Rapido River south of Cassino and captures railway station. Forced to withdraw the following day as Germans counter attack.**
- 29 February: US General Douglas MacArthur's force invades Admiralty Island
- 4 March: Soviets begin an offensive on the Byelorussian front
- 6 March: **Meat rationing introduced in New Zealand**
- 7 March: **20 New Zealand warplanes take part in attack on Rabaul, Papua New Guinea, their first attack on this Japanese base**
- Japan invades India near Imphal
- 15 March: NZ Corps begins the assault on Cassino town after further Allied bombing. Assault continues until 23 March when they withdraw.
- 2 April: Russian forces enter Romania
- 8 April: Soviets begin offensive to liberate Crimea
- 10 April: Soviets recapture the port of Odessa on the Black Sea
- 16 April: Imphal plains (India) now in British hands
- 8 May: Japanese launch offensive against British troops in Burma
- 9 May: Soviets recapture Sevastopol
- 11 – 12 May: Allied forces open new offensive against Gustav line in Italy
- 15 May: Germans in Italy withdraw to the Adolf Hitler Line
- 18 May: Polish troops capture Cassino
- 5 June: Allies enter Rome
- 6 June: D-Day: Allied landing in Normandy, France
- 9 June: Soviet offensive against the Finnish front begins
- 13 June: First German V-1 rocket attack on Britain
- 15 June: **Main body of 3 NZ Division HQ sails for New Caledonia**
- 16 June: China-based B-29s bomb southern Japan
- 18 June: Eighth Army captures Assisi in central Italy
- 27 June:

- US troops liberate Cherbourg
- German forces overwhelmed by Soviets beyond Vitebsk
- 3 July: Soviets recapture Minsk
- 9 July: British and Canadian forces enter Caen
- 17 July: Allies cross the Arno river in Italy
- 20 July: Attempted assassination of Hitler
- 21 July: US troops land in Guam
- 27 July: Allied breakthrough west of Saint Lo, France
- 31 July: Completion of Normandy breakthroughs with the capture of Avranches
- 1 August: Polish Home Army uprising against Nazis in Warsaw, Poland
- 4 August:
 - Allied forces advance into Florence
 - Soviets at the gates of Warsaw
- 7 August: Germans begin counter offensive towards Avranches
- 10 August: Japanese resistance in Guam ends
- 12 August: Germans begin to evacuate Normandy
- 15 August: Allied forces land in southern France
- 22 August: Germans retreat to the Gothic Line in Italy
- 23 August:
 - French troops take Marseilles
 - Romania surrenders to Soviets
- 24 August: Liberation of Paris
- 31 August:
 - Eighth Army attacks the Gothic Line
 - Soviets enter Bucharest
- 2 September:
 - Eighth Army breaks the Gothic Line. US troops capture Pisa
 - Allied 1 Army enters Belgium
- 3 September: US and French troops capture Lyon
- 4 September:
 - Finland signs armistice with Russia
 - Allies take Antwerp
- 8 September: Soviet troops enter Bulgaria
- 13 September: US troops reach the Siegfried Line
- 17 September:
 - Operation Market Garden — Allied airborne attack on Holland — begins
 - Germans contain landing at Arnhem
- 26 September: Allied forces at Arnhem surrender
- 30 September: Allies capture Calais
- 2 October: Warsaw uprising ends as Polish Home Army surrenders to

Germans

- 5 October: British forces land in Greece
- 10 October: Soviets reach Baltic coast
- 11 October: British troops occupy Corinth, Greece
- 14 October: Athens is liberated. Rommel commits suicide.
- 20 October: Philippines campaign begins
- 21 October: German surrender at Aachen, Germany (close to the Belgium/Germany border)
- 22 October: Soviets reach Norwegian frontier
- 23 October: Soviets enter East Prussia
- 30 October: Last use of gas chambers at Auschwitz
- 2 November: Greek mainland cleared of German forces
- 5 November: Allied planes bomb Singapore
- 18 November: US troops cross German border
- 24 November: B-29s bomb Tokyo
- 4 December:
 - Civil war begins in Greece
 - Eighth Army enters Ravenna, Italy
- 16 – 27 December: Battle of the Bulge in Ardennes
- 24 December: Last Japanese attack on Calcutta
- 27 December: Soviet troops besiege Budapest, Hungary

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1945

- 1 in which New Zealanders were involved 17 January: Germans withdraw from Ardennes
- 12 January: Soviets launch offensive in southern Poland
- 16 January: Soviet troops liberate Auschwitz
- 17 January: Soviet troops enter Warsaw
- 20 January: Hungary signs an armistice
- 22 January: Burma Road is reopened
- 13 February: Budapest is occupied
- 13/14 February: Firebombing of Dresden, Germany
- 19 February: US troops land on Iwo Jima, Japan
- 6 March: Last German offensive of the war begins to defend oil fields in Hungary
- 7 March: US troops take Cologne and cross the Rhine River
- 17 March: Soviet troops take Brandenburg, west of Berlin
- 21 March: British forces take Mandalay, Burma (Myanmar)
- 1 April:
 - US troops encircle Germans in the Ruhr Valley
 - Allied forces begin offensive in northern Italy

- US troops invade Okinawa
- 8 April: Soviets capture Vienna
- 12 April: US troops cross the Elbe River
- 16 April: US troops enter Nuremberg
- 18 April: Germans in the Ruhr surrender
- 21 April: Soviets enter Berlin
- 25 April: US and Soviet troops join forces at Torgau, central Germany.
- 28 April:
 - Mussolini executed by partisans
 - Allies take Venice
- 29 April: Germans in southern Austria surrender
- 30 April: Hitler commits suicide
- 2 May:
 - 2 NZ Division enters Trieste
 - Germans in Italy surrender
 - Surrender of Berlin to Soviets
 - Surrender of German troops in Yugoslavia
- 3 May: Rangoon recaptured
- 5 May: German forces in the Netherlands, northwest Germany and Denmark surrender
- 7 May: German High Command surrenders unconditionally to Allied forces
- 8 May: Victory in Europe (VE) Day
- 13 May: Australian troops occupy Wewak, Papua New Guinea
- 26 May: 700,000 incendiary bombs fall on Tokyo
- 1 June: First landing of US troops on Okinawa
- 20 June: Australian troops land in Sarawak
- 21 June: US forces capture Okinawa
- 26 June: United Nations Charter is signed in San Francisco
- 5 July: Liberation of the Philippines completed
- 14 July: US Navy bombards Honshu and Hokkaido
- 16 July: First atomic bomb test in New Mexico
- 3 August: Japanese home islands blockaded
- 6 August: Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan
- 8 August: Russia declares war on Japan
- 9 August:
 - Atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan
 - Soviet troops enter Manchuria
- 12 August: Soviet troops enter Korea
- 14 August: Japan accepts Allied surrender terms
- 15 August: VJ (Victory in Japan) Day. (Some prefer 2 September as VJ Day as this date on which Japan signed the surrender agreement.)

- 28 August: US troops enter Japanese main islands
- 30 August: British troops re-occupy Hong Kong
- 2 September: Formal Japanese surrender on deck of USS *Missouri*
- 24 October: United Nations officially born
- 20 November: Nuremberg War crimes trials begin

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