

War in Europe

September 1939	Germany invaded Poland, and Poland was divided between Germany and the USSR by the end of the month.
May and June 1940:	Germany began the Blitzkrieg, conquering Belgium, France and the Netherlands.
May 1940	British and French were surrounded → total defeat They retreated to Dunkirk and at that point, they were vulnerable and could have been defeated. However, Hitler's generals felt that they needed to slow down and consolidate the German forces so that they would not be vulnerable to attack.
July 1940 - May 1941	Germany began intensive bombing/ the Blitz, in the battle of Britain
June 1941	Operation Barbarossa
August 1942 - February 1943	USSR counterattacked German forces at Stalingrad. The Siege of Stalingrad was where German forces were defeated by the USSR --> a turning point in WW2 & a huge victory for USSR.
July-August 1943	Germany launched an attack on the city of Kursk. Soviet forces were able to halt and counter German attacks.
June 1944	The Allies launched Operation D-Day. Allied troops landed in Normandy and began a slow advance across France and towards Germany. German forces tried to launch a counterattack in 1944 through the Ardennes Forest but were steadily driven back.
April 1945	Allies entered Berlin and Hitler committed suicide.
8 May 1945	Germany surrendered

Strengths of the Allies

- USA (Economic & military strength)
- Military resources in terms of manpower (soldiers), war machinery (weapons, ammunition, ships, aircrafts), and other resources (food, raw materials) were unmatched
- After Pearl Harbour bombing, war production increased to an even more staggering volume
→ US rebuilt its fleet and trained troops and produced weapons and other essential equipment quickly.

Speed of US industrial production → 1943: three cargo ships were completed daily

"Arsenal of Democracy" → cos' by 1944 – US was producing about half of the weapons made globally and twice of G-J combined

The war production of the Axis powers never exceeded the Allies, mostly due to the US' staggering output.

Morale and Motivation of the People → the US turned the attack on Pearl Harbour to its advantage. Its people, factories, shipyards, farms and even **Hollywood** and the movie industry **willingly participated in the war-effort.**

Britain (Control of the Atlantic Ocean, 1939-45)

British intelligence

- Able to allow Britain to survive and hold out before US entry
- Could turn the tides of war on various occasions

E.g. – Battle of the Atlantic:

Control of shipping routes across the Atlantic

- US military power would be worthless if the supplies cannot cross the Atlantic to bolster its allies.
- German U-boats were very effective in the Battle of the Atlantic, sinking thousands of the Allies ships and reducing the British navy to having only 2 months' supply of oil
- Developed better tracking technology to steer clear of German U-boats & safely escort convoys
- British intelligence broke the secret codes used by the U-boats in 1943 and successfully avoided them and enabled US to overcome the German U-boats threats and control the Atlantic Ocean by 1943

- By the second half of 1943, the Germans were losing more U-boats than Allied ships that they were sinking → leading to the campaign (BA) to be called off

British technology

E.g. – Battle of Britain

- Britain's Royal Air Force (RAF) had comparable fighter aircraft (Supermarine Spitfire, Hawker Hurricane)
- Possessed new technology of radar to detect enemy aircraft

Huge military base

- Britain also allowed itself to become a huge military base for the Allies including being a base from where the Allies eventually launched their successful D-Day landings in 1944

USSR (Operation Barbarossa)

Reorganisation and Resistance

- Hitler broke the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression pact and attacked the USSR → Hitler wanted to destroy communism and expand German territory into Eastern Europe and the USSR + also wanted access to USSR's vast resources.
- Operation Barbarossa was initially successful-->Stalin was on the verge of abandoning Moscow
- However, German troops were halted by the harsh winter → Stalin used the winter to reorganise the Soviet war effort and made use of the resources from the US Lend-Lease Scheme.
- Not only did the Soviets persisted in their attack against the Germans (→Harsh discipline was used so that the army would fight for every bit of Russian soil.), they also were able to develop new and more effective weapons such as tanks in large numbers as well as intercepting the Germans radio messages
 - Radio communications were adopted and were placed in all tanks and aircrafts
 - Specialist units were created to listen in on German radio signals and disrupt them. By 1943, these units were disrupting almost $\frac{2}{3}$ of German radio messages.
 - →Successfully encircled the Germans, leading them to their defeat, when they advanced into Stalingrad

Resources and Production

- Using harsh measures, Soviets were forced to keep up with the high demand of weapons

- Adults in USSR received no food unless they work in some way for the war effort
- Forced labour was used and the secret police also kept close control of the population. The USSR's production of weapons equalled and surpassed German war production in 1942.

By 1943, the USSR produced one and a half times as many aircraft and twice as many tanks as the Germans.

Despite Germany capturing the USSR's agricultural and industrial capacity, they were able to shift its major industrial complexes to Urals, Siberia and Kazakhstan.

Eg. Uralvagonzavod was a heavy train car factory before 1941. Because of that, it was able to curtail its production, to receive equipment and personnel from a leading tank factory and to quickly restart as a tank factory producing T-34 tanks. About half of all T-34s produced during the war were made there.

- Battle of Kursk in July 1943: the Soviets had 10 times as many tanks as the Germans. They also had more aircraft, artillery and other weapons like rocket launchers.
- --> allowed the USSR to put up strong resistance against Germany on the Eastern Front. 90% of German casualties were on the Eastern Front.

Allied Strategy

Coordination of Allied Forces

Operation Overlord (D-Day), 1944:

- D-Day landings in France proved the strength of Allied strategy and ability to coordinate resources.
- Largest amphibious invasion in history, bringing together land, air and sea forces
- Aircrafts pounded radar installations, rail links and bridges which effectively cut off German forces in Normandy, France from reinforcements.
- 130,000 Allied troops were brought across the English Channel by sea and 23000 by air
- 13,000 Allied aircraft versus 400 German aircraft

How did Germany quickly conquer France, the Netherlands and Belgium quickly from May-June 1940 and the technique's benefits

- It was due to the use of Blitzkrieg:

- *Fast moving tanks and other armoured vehicles were used to take enemy forces by surprise and create openings for infantry troops to move in.*
- *Junkers 52 transport planes were used to carry paratroopers which would land behind enemy lines to capture key bridges, airports and other vital infrastructure ahead of their main forces.*
- *Germans used modern attack aircraft such as the Stuka to break up enemy forces and defences. They also damaged roads, tanks, planes on the ground, enemy warships, shipping, rail lines and telephone lines.*
- *Modern, powerful field radios were used to coordinate air and land forces, enabling German troops to work together effectively.*

Benefits:

- *Speed; Surprise; Superior firepower – coordinated air and land attacks;*

Main reason for strategy:

- *Lacked important resources such as copper, rubber and oil to support long drawn-out campaigns and it also avoided military stalemate.*

Fall of France

(May-June 1940)

- *France had a larger army and air force and were supported by British forces → However, they were unable to resist the German attack → late May 1940: the British and French were surrounded and faced a total defeat.*
- *retreated to Dunkirk and at that point, they were vulnerable and could have been defeated.*
- *BUT Hitler's generals felt that they needed to slow down and consolidate the German forces so that they would not be vulnerable to attack.*
- *France surrendered and fell into Germany's hands → This was a revenge for Germany's defeat in 1918.*

Victory in Europe for the Allied powers

German forces tried to launch a counterattack in 1944 through the Ardennes Forest but were steadily driven back.

The Soviets were able to stop the German advance and had a huge victory in Stalingrad in 1943.
German troops were forced to retreat and Soviet troops encircled Berlin by Jan 1945.

30 April 1945: Hitler committed suicide

8 May 1945: Germany formally surrendered.

Germany's military weakness

Hitler's mistakes (Hitler's pride)

- Ineffective command structure → German commanders had to report back to Hitler
- was never a senior military officer and had very little military experience BUT because of pride, he continuously made poor military decisions that would be detrimental to German's war efforts
- Hitler's decision was based on a motivation to show who's boss and stamp his authority on his insubordination + jealous and suspicious of the army commanders, who were mostly from aristocratic families.
 - 1940: (aft fall of France) Field Marshall von Rundstedt issued the order to halt advances in Dunkirk → General Halder, army chief of staff, canceled the order and ordered the advances to continue → Von Rundstedt complained to Hitler about this and Hitler got angry and immediately countermanded all of Halder's orders.
 - → missed the opportunity for a complete takeover and allowed the British to recover during the Battle of Britain in 1940
 - Most German commanders wanted to withdraw from the Battle of Stalingrad as the Germans were already greatly depleted while fighting in the very harsh winter conditions and the place had no strategic value. However Hitler overruled them.
Taking Stalingrad was a matter of pride because it had Stalin's name. Hitler committed hundreds of thousands of troops to a pointless battle lost by Feb 1943.

Three-Front War (Over-stretched German's military resources)

- Fought France and Britain on the west in 1940 – captured France but not Britain
- Fought the USSR in Operation Barbarossa in 1941 – eventually defeated by USSR in 1943
- Declared war on the USA in 1941 after the bombing of Pearl Harbour by the Japanese despite having no obligation to do so under the terms of the Tripartite Pact signed with Japan and Italy.
- This brought the US into the European theatre of war → Germany has to contend with

the US' immense resources and military → prevented Germany from fully concentrating its efforts and resources, leading to the military to gradually be worn down.

Poor planning

- failure to plan for naval warfare
- While the use of U-boats were highly effective, the use of surface ships was less so. Germany put too much resources into building larger battleships and failed to build aircraft carriers → The Allied aircrafts played a key role in the destruction of the battleships.
- Weak airpower: From 1942-1945, the RAF and US Air Force bombed Germany relentlessly. Germany never developed heavy bombers like the RAF's Lancaster or US' B-17, which could do large damage to towns and cities. → German bombers were small and could not carry enough bombs → lack of radar and spare fuel, ammunition and spare parts.

War in Asia-Pacific, 1937-1945

July 1937	Japan launched a full-scale invasion on China, occupying cities like Shanghai, Wuhan and Nanjing after the Marco Polo Bridge incident
Sep 1940	Japanese forces occupied French Indochina after the Fall of France
Dec 1941	Japan disabled much of the US fleet when it launched a surprise <u>attack on Pearl Harbour</u> → The US declared war on Japan. - Near total success for the Japanese → US intelligence failed to warn US forces, and Japanese planes from aircraft carriers achieved almost complete surprise against the American forces. - However, in the long run, the bombing was not as decisive as the Japanese had thought because the US was able to recover quickly within a few months and retaliate against Japan → attack had allowed Roosevelt to rally the country together to get ready for war.

	→ the US' huge resources were directed towards the war. The US shipyards quickly constructed new ships, esp aircraft carriers and also produced large numbers of superior carrier-based aircraft. - On the tactical level, there was some comfort for the US navy, as its aircraft carriers were not at Pearl Harbor during the attack. → Japan made a massive error: they failed to hunt down and destroy the carriers, which the US continued to use throughout 1942. Hence, Japan did not gain control of the Pacific as they had hoped.
Jan-May 1942	Japan completed its invasion of Malaya, Philippines and Dutch East Indies. (attack was launched in Dec 1941)
Jun 1942	American fleet destroyed four Japanese aircraft carriers and 300 aircraft in the Battle of Midway.-->halted Japan's naval dominance and was a turning point in the Pacific war
August 1942-June 1945	Island hopping strategy: The US forces pushed back Japanese forces by island despite fierce resistance
August 1945	The USSR declared war in Japan and invaded Japan-occupied Manchuria. Atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japan surrendered unconditionally thereafter.

Strengths of the Allies

- USA (Military strength – hardware and strategies)
- Pearl Harbour (Manufacturing of war machinery & weapons): Recovered very quickly from PH through channelling their domestic resources towards their war efforts (construction of more ships & aircraft carriers).
- Lend-Lease Aid (from March 1941): (Supplied Allied nations with resources to ensure that they have the means for wartime production and war efforts)

USA contributed economically and militarily to Allied victory as she:

- supplied the Guomindang (GMD) in China with huge amounts of money, weapons and other aid to help them fight the Japanese;
- supplied resistance movements across Asia fighting the Japanese, such as the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army and the Viet Minh.
- supplied resources to Britain, whose forces fought the Japanese in Burma and New Guinea.

Battle of Midway (Superior war strategy):

- (Jun 1942) Destroyed 4 Japanese carriers and three-quarter of their experienced pilots, severely weakening the Japanese air & sea defence
- Marked a decisive turning point: Japan's navy never recovered while U.S. industrial output surged.
- Island-hopping strategy (Superior war strategy): → the Japan military was so overstretched that it was unable to defend the entire empire
 - Using air attacks & submarines to isolate Japanese-held territories before conquering these poorly defended areas and cutting the war supplies (food & ammunition) for the Japanese overall war efforts. Successfully regained the Philippines, Burma, parts of China & reduced the Japanese access to raw materials & resources and hindered their war efforts
 - (Allied ships also had been badly damaged by the Japanese kamikaze suicide bombers, who crashed their planes deliberately into them → last resort measure by the Japanese; pushing back the Japanese did come at great cost for the Allies.)
 - Aug 1942: Regained control of the Guadalcanal and the Solomon Islands
 - Jun 1944: Seize Marianas Islands to establish air force capabilities
 - Oct 1944: Regained the Philippines
 - Feb 1945: Captured Iwo Jima to build airfield to launch and supply long-range bombers that could reach Japan
 - Apr 1945: British and US forces took the island of Okinawa. Allies killed/captured everyone of the 100,000 Japanese soldiers defending the island. Japanese kamikaze bombers were also activated.

Atomic bomb

- The turning point in the war → Led directly to Japan's surrender.
- Emperor Hirohito: "Should we continue to fight, it would not only result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nations but also it would lead to the total extinction of human civilisation"
- 6 August 1945 - "Little Boy" dropped on Hiroshima
- 9 August 1945 - "Fat Man" dropped on Nagasaki

Britain

British resistance

- Essentially sole power left after fall of France
- Britain was on the verge of defeat in 1940 and but British PM Churchill refused to a deal
→ Determination and persistence not to surrender or negotiate with Germany was important in defeating Germany later on

For Japan:

- If Britain had surrendered, Japan would face much less resistance in Asia-Pacific region → Japanese troops had to fight the armies and navies of Britain, Australia, New Zealand and around 120000 African troops from British Colonies alongside US troops.

USSR (War with Japan)

- During the *Tehran Conference & Yalta Conference*, Russia declared war on Japan on 8 Aug 1945 → aft first atomic bomb and attacks were launched on three fronts of Manchuria ending with the Soviets defeating the Kwantung Army and securing northern Korea → became a war on two fronts

Significantly contributed to Japan's decision to surrender as the latter concluded that they were not able to fight both the Americans & the Soviets simultaneously

Weaknesses of the Japanese Military

Internal Disunity (Army vs Navy):

- Long-term conflict made the sharing of military resources and intelligence very difficult and severely hindered the possibility of a coordinated defence & attack against the Allies
- 1930s: both services had different strategic goals and ideas for how they wanted to seize territories to obtain resources to sustain the Japanese empire.
- rivalry prevented them from sharing resources and exchanging military intelligence, and coordinated attacks and defences against the Allies.
 - 1942: when the navy asked the army to provide troops for an invasion of Australia, the army refused → remained unresponsive throughout the Pacific War + late to recognise the threat of the US counter offensive in late 1942.
 - 1943: the army refused to commit major reinforcements to the Pacific Islands.

Both forces could not agree where to set Japan's defensive perimeter against the Allied forces.

Overstretched Empire

- There was no infrastructure (rail & communication) to support Japanese's effective control

of its vast territories + transportation of raw materials & resources from one territory to another was also very difficult → hampering the war effort Japan was unable to effectively leverage the empire they expanded from 1931 to 1941

- Large quantities of raw materials and finished goods had to be transported by sea → challenging.

Poor Planning

- Did not understand that the war at sea had changed by 1941 → air power, in the form of aircraft carriers, were now more important than traditional naval battleships.
- While the Japanese damaged battleships during the Pearl Harbor Attacks, they did not destroy any US aircraft carriers, as they were not at base. This allowed the US Navy to recover quickly.
- Had wasted scarce resources building large battleships.

Outdated attitudes in naval commanders, who equated naval power with aggregate battleship tonnage.

- failed to acknowledge that the type of war vessels and nature of the men that commanded them matters
- The Navy was fixed on fighting the US Navy and not picking off sitting-duck merchants, who were easy targets.

Lack of local support (Local anti-Japanese resistance groups and movements)

- The presence of anti-Japanese resistance groups, movements, & guerrilla warfare (ie. Mao in China, HCM in Vietnam) greatly wore the Japanese down internally, greatly hampering their fight against the Allies externally.