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II MA History
World History

World War Two, 1939-1945



PRINCIPAL BELLIGERENTS:



- **Axis powers:**
 - **Germany**
 - **Italy**
 - **Japan**
- **Allies:**
 - **China**
 - **Poland**
 - **Great Britain**
 - **France**
 - **Soviet Union, from June 1941**
 - **United States, from December 1941**

Axis Powers in Europe, 1939



Appeasement and Aggression

- **March 1938: Anschluss (“joining”)**
- **Austrians warmly greeted Hitler**
- **1938-39: Appeasement: Neville Chamberlain**
- **Sept. 1938: Munich Agreement**





Adolf Hitler greets Neville Chamberlain upon the Prime Minister's arrival in Munich



German Expansion, 1936–1939

A black and white photograph of a city in ruins, likely during the early stages of World War II. The foreground is dominated by a large, dark, irregular shape, possibly a trench or a large pile of rubble. In the middle ground, several soldiers in dark uniforms are visible, some appearing to be working or moving through the debris. The background shows a cityscape with several tall, multi-story buildings that have been severely damaged, with many windows missing and structural elements exposed. The overall atmosphere is one of devastation and the aftermath of conflict.

Outbreak of war

- **March 1939: Germany occupied Czechoslovakia**
- **August 23, 1939: German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact**
- **Sept. 1, 1939: Germany invades Poland**
- **Sept. 3, 1939: Britain and France declare war on Germany**

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- Sept. 17, 1939: Soviet Union attacked Poland
 - Soviet Union imposed control over Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia
 - Nov. 1939-March 1940: Soviet-Finnish War or the Winter War
 - German armies attacked Holland and Belgium
 - May 10, 1940: British Prime Minister N. Chamberlain resigned
 - Winston Churchill formed a coalition government: "An appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile hoping it will eat him last."

Blitzkrieg: "Lightening War"



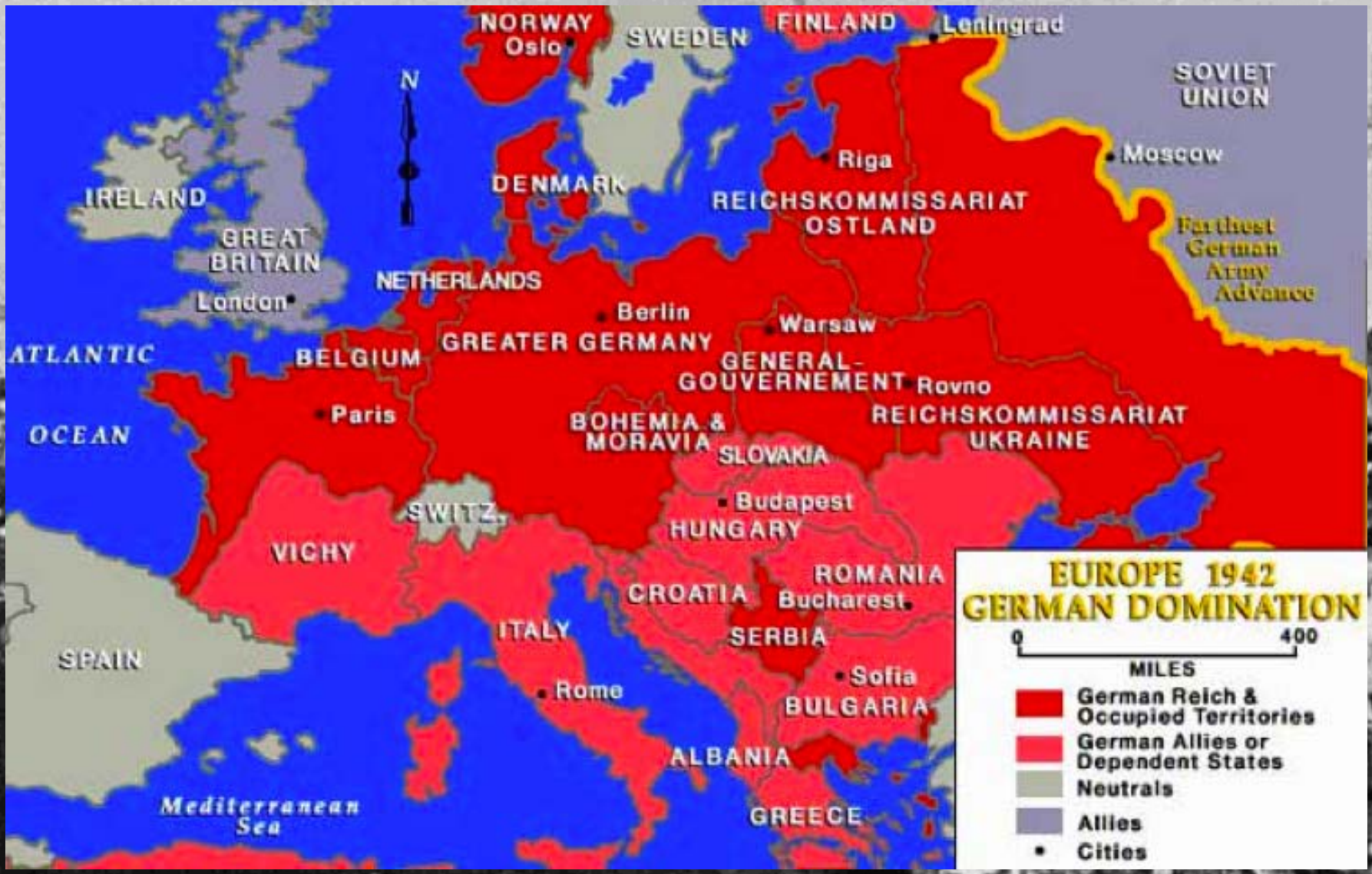
- Panzer Divisions
- Armored vehicles
- motorcycles
- Planes
- Concentrated attack

Blitzkrieg (cont.)

A black and white photograph showing the aftermath of a city bombing. The foreground is filled with a large pile of rubble and debris. In the background, several multi-story buildings are visible, many of which appear to be severely damaged or partially destroyed. The sky is overcast and hazy. The overall scene conveys a sense of devastation and destruction.

- **Germans quickly took France (occupied Paris on June 14, 1940)**
- **June 22, 1940, at Rethondes (the scene of the signing of the Armistice of 1918) Franco-German Armistice was signed**
- **Vichy France created: General Henri-Philippe Petain became head of state**

German occupied Europe



Battle of Britain, June-September 1940



- **Britain won: Why?**
 - **Winston Churchill**
 - “Never Surrender”
 - **Spitfires**
 - **RADAR**
 - **Goering’s unclear strategy**
 - **RAF or civilian targets**
 - **Hitler lost interest**

German-Soviet War, 1941-45



- *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle)
- *Lebensraum* (Living space)
- Slavs - “subhumans”
- Poor Soviet Army performance in “Winter war” with Finland
- Possibility of Soviet attack
- Hitler: “*We have only to kick in the door and the whole rotten structure will come crashing down!*”

June 22, 1941: Germany broke Non-Aggression Pact and attacked USSR: Operation Barbarossa

