

Trenches to Foxholes**Next week in World War history (June 28 to July 4)****World War I****1914**

June 28 - Archduke Franz Ferdinand, nephew of Emperor Franz Josef and heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, is shot to death along with his wife by a Serbian nationalist in Sarajevo, Bosnia.

June 29 - In Sarajevo, Serbian shops are destroyed during riots to shouts of "death to the Serbian murderers." Although Austria-Hungary blamed Serbia for the assassination, the Serbian government tried to distance itself claiming it had tried to warn Austria of a plot.

1915

June 29 - Foreign Minister Istvan von Burian of Austria-Hungary sends a note to the United States protesting the U.S. sale and shipment of munitions in enormous quantities to Britain and its allies for use against the Central Powers—Austria-Hungary and Germany—on the battlefields of World War I. When war broke out in Europe in the summer of 1914, the United States maintained a position of strict neutrality. The commercial opportunities of the war, however, were enormous, and neutrality did not impede the U.S.—by 1910 the leading industrial nation, with 35.3 percent of the world's manufacturing capacity, compared with 15.9 percent for Germany and 14.7 percent for Britain—from carrying on a brisk trade of munitions from the first months of the conflict.

June 29 - The first Battle of the Isonzo begins July 1 - Russia creates a Central War Industries Committee to oversee production and address a severe shortage of artillery shells and rifles on the Front.

- Battle of the Somme begins. It results in an estimated one million casualties and no breakthrough for the Allies. British introduce the tank, an effective weapon but far too few to make much of a difference.

1916

July 1 - The British Army suffers the worst single-day death toll in its history as 18,800 Soldiers are killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme.

1917

July 1 - Russian troops begin the Kerensky Offensive attempting to recapture the city of Lemberg (Lvov) on the Eastern Front.

July 2 - Several weeks after King Constantine I abdicates his throne in Athens under pressure from the Allies, Greece declares war on the Central Powers, ending three years of neutrality by entering World War I alongside Britain, France, Russia and Italy.

July 4 - U.S. troops make their first public display of World War I, marching through the streets of Paris to the grave of the Marquis de Lafayette, a French aristocrat and hero of the American Revolutionary War.

1918

July 3 -With Turkish forces in the final months of fighting against the Allied powers during World War I, Mohammed V, sultan of the Ottoman Empire, dies at the age of 73.

World War II**1940**

June 28 - Gen. Charles de Gaulle is recognized as the leader of the Free French Forces, dedicated to the defeat of Germany and the liberation of all France.

July 3 - British naval forces destroy the French fleet at Mers-el-Kebir, a port in Algeria, in order to prevent Germany from co-opting the French ships to use in an invasion of Britain.

In order to prevent the Germans from using French battleships and cruisers in an attack on Britain, Operation Catapult was conceived: the destruction or capture of every French ship possible. The easiest stage of Catapult was the seizure of those French ships already in British ports. Little resistance was met. But the largest concentration of French warships was at the Oran, Algeria, port of Mers-el-Kebir. This stage of Catapult would prove more difficult.

As the French refused all options proposed by the Brits, British forces circled the port and opened fire on the French fleet, killing 1,250 French sailors.

July 4 - British Prime Minister Winston Churchill tells the House of Commons that he will leave Britain's actions to "history."

July 5 - Vichy France breaks off diplomatic relations with Britain.

1941

June 29 - The Germans, having already launched their invasion of Soviet territory, invade and occupy Lvov, in eastern Galicia, in Ukraine, slaughtering thousands.

1942

July 1 - Field Marshal Erwin Rommel is brought to a standstill in the battle for control of North Africa.

1943

June 30 - Gen. Douglas MacArthur launches Operation Cartwheel, a multi-pronged assault on Rabaul and several islands in the Solomon Sea in the South Pacific. The joint effort takes nine months to complete but succeeds in recapturing more Japanese-controlled territory, further eroding their supremacy in the East.

1944

June 29 - The U.S. VII Corps captures the last harbour fort at Cherbourg, but the port rendered completely useless for three weeks. The RAF carries out a saturation raid (250 Lancasters) against the 2nd and 9th SS Panzer Divisions at Villers-Bocage near Caen.

June 30 - The remaining 6,000 Germans in the Cherbourg peninsula surrender.

July 1 - The invasion of southern France is set for August 15. Since D-Day, the Allies have landed 920,000 troops, 177,000 vehicles and 600,000 tons of supplies and equipment. In the 24 days of fighting, they have lost 62,000 men killed, wounded and missing.

This is the last 'Next week in World War history' compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux public affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (June 21 to 27)

World War I

1915

June 23 - Exactly one month after Italy declares war on Austria-Hungary, the Italian army attacks Austro-Hungarian positions near the Isonzo River, in the eastern section of the Italian front; it is the first of twelve Battles of the Isonzo fought during the War.

After a series of preliminary operations on various sections of the front, Italian forces strike the Austrian positions at the Isonzo after a one-week bombardment. Despite enjoying numerical superiority, the Italian forces are unable to break the Austro-Hungarian forces. Two Austro-Hungarian infantry divisions soon arrive to aid their comrades at the Isonzo and the Italians are prevented from crossing the river.

June 24 - Oswald Boelcke, one of the earliest and best German fighter pilots of World War I, makes the first operational flight of the Fokker Eindecker plane. The Fokker Eindecker, a plane equipped first with one and eventually with two machine guns that could fire straight ahead through the aircraft's propellers, would have a huge impact on air combat and would put the German Air Service, far ahead of the Allied air forces for several months during the summer of 1915. The British referred to this as the Fokker Menace or the Fokker Scourge.

1916

June 21 - With World War I entering its third year, a controversial U.S. military expedition against Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa brings the neutral United States closer to war itself, when Mexican government troops attack U.S. Brigadier General John J. Pershing's force at Carrizal, Mexico.

June 22 - Germans resume their offensive near Verdun, targeting Fort Souville which overlooks the city and the Meuse bridges. Using poisonous phosgene gas at the start of the attack, they initially take the village of Fleury just two miles north of Verdun, but further advance southward is halted by a strong French counter-attack. Verdun has now become a battle of attrition for both sides with a death toll already approaching 500,000 men.

June 27 - The Greek Government orders a general demobilisation of its forces.

1917

June 26 - The first 14,000 U.S. infantry troops land in France at the port of Saint Nazaire. The landing site had been kept secret because of the menace of German submarines, but by the time the Americans line up to take their first salute on French soil, an enthusiastic crowd has gathered to welcome them. However, the "Doughboys," as the British referred to the green American troops, are untrained, ill-equipped, and far from ready for the difficulties of fighting along the Western Front.

1918

June 23 - British Expeditionary Forces "Syren" and "Elope" join the North Russian Expeditionary Force at Murmansk.

World War II

1940

June 23 - Adolf Hitler surveys notable sites in Paris, now German-occupied territory.

June 26 - Turkey announces neutrality in the widening world war.

1941

June 22 - More than 3 million German troops invade Russia in three parallel offensives, in what is the most powerful invasion force in history. Nineteen Panzer divisions, 3,000 tanks, 2,500 aircraft, and 7,000 artillery pieces pour across a thousand-mile front as Hitler goes to war on a second front.

June 23 - The German 6th Panzer Division encounters Soviet KV tanks for the first time at the Dubysa River in Lithuania. German Gen. Georg-Hans Reinhard is surprised to learn that the Soviet military possess such a heavy tank, especially after learning that some German 105-millimeter shells are bouncing off the thick armor, and that some KV tanks had reportedly crushed German vehicles and guns by driving over them.

1942

June 21 - Gen. Erwin Rommel turns his assault on the British-Allied garrison at Tobruk, Libya, into victory, as his Panzer division occupies the North African port. Rommel takes more than 30,000 prisoners, 2,000 vehicles, 2,000 tons of fuel, and 5,000 tons of rations. Adolf Hitler awards Rommel the field marshal's baton as reward for his victory.

1943

June 25 - As part of the preparation for the invasion of Sicily, Italy (Operation Husky) some 130 American B-17 bombers from the Northwest African Tactical Air Force drop more than 300 tons of bombs on Messina, Italy.

June 26 - 11 B-17 bombers attack Rabaul, New Britain before dawn. A J1N nightfighter (pilot Senior Flight Petty Officer Shigetoshi Kudo, observer Warrant Officer Michitaro Ichikawa) shoot down B-17F bomber "Taxpayer's Pride" and B-17E bomber "Naughty But Nice", which makes Shigetoshi Kudo the first Japanese nightfighter ace.

1944

June 27 - The Allies capture the fortified town and port of Cherbourg, in northwest France, freeing it from German occupation. Hitler had for all intents and purposes anticipated his own defeat when, in contrast with the analysis of his advisers, he accurately predicted that the D-Day invasion would be focused on Normandy.

1945

June 24 - Soviet troops parade past Red Square in celebration of their victory over Germany. As drums roll, 200 Soldiers perform a familiar ritual: They throw 200 German military banners at the foot of the Lenin Mausoleum. A little over 130 years earlier, victorious Russian troops threw Napoleon's banners at the feet of Czar Alexander I.

Next week in World War history is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux public affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (June 14 to 20)

World War I

1915

June 16 - The French 10th Army launches its second attempt to seize Vimy Ridge from the Germans in the Artois. This time the troops encounter an intensive artillery bombardment from the improved defenses of the German 6th Army. The French achieve their initial objective, but then succumb to a German counter-attack, just as they did in the first attempt at Vimy.

June 18 - After several weeks of heavy fighting, including savage hand-to-hand combat, with little success, French troops halt their attacks on the German trenches in the Artois region of France.

Artois, located in northern France between Picardy and Flanders, near the English Channel, was a strategically important battlefield during World War I and saw heavy fighting throughout the conflict.

June 20 - In Petrograd, the Constitutional Democrats (Kadets) hold a conference to consider measures for dealing with the growing crisis. It demands that the state assembly be recalled and the formation of a "government of public confidence" that is acceptable to the liberals in the legislature.

1916

June 14 - The Battle of Mont Sorrel near Ypres, Belgium, ends. In an effort to pull British resources from the observed build-up in the Somme, the XIII (Royal Württemberg) Corps and the 117th Infantry Division attacked an arc of high ground positions, defended by the Canadian Corps on June 2. The German forces initially captured the heights at Mount Sorrel and Tor Top before entrenching on the far slope of the ridge. Following a number of attacks and counterattacks, two divisions of the Canadian Corps, supported by the 20th Light Division and Second Army recaptured the majority of their former positions.

1917

June 17 - The Corpo Expedicionario Portugues (CEP), or Portuguese Expeditionary Corps, goes into action for the first time in World War I, on the battlefields of Flanders on the Western Front.

With the outbreak of World War I in the summer of 1914, Portugal entered the war on the side of the Allies in order to secure international backing of its colonial holdings in Africa. While Portuguese participation in the war was at first limited to naval support, Portugal sent its first troops—an expeditionary force of two divisions, or some 50,000 men—to the Western Front in February 1917.

1918

June 15 - Austrian troops begin an offensive along the Piave River in Italy. Although suffering from a lack of food, horses and supplies, they cross the river and establish a 12-mile front, but then realize they can not hold it against the now-revitalized Italian Army and withdraw after suffering 150,000 casualties. Following this, Austrian Soldiers in Italy begin deserting.

World War II

1940

June 14 - Parisians wake to the sound of a German-accented voice announcing via loudspeakers that a curfew is being imposed for 8 p.m. By the time German tanks roll into Paris, 2 million Parisians have already fled. In short order, the German Gestapo goes to work: arrests, interrogations, and spying are the order of the day, as a gigantic swastika flies beneath the Arc de Triomphe.

June 16 - Marshal Henri-Philippe Petain, World War I hero, becomes prime minister of the Vichy government of France.

As Germany began to overrun more French territory, the French Cabinet became desperate for a solution to this crisis. Premier Paul Reynaud continued to hold out hope, refusing to ask for an armistice, but others in the government were despondent and wanted to sue for peace. Reynaud resigned in protest. His vice premier, Henri Petain, formed a new government and asked the Germans for an armistice, in effect, surrendering.

1941

June 17 - A German counterattack launched at 4:30 a.m. breaks through the Allied lines in Libya, threatening to cut off the Allied forces attacking Halfaya Pass. In the afternoon, the Allies decide to call off the Operation Battleaxe offensive. The British 7th Armoured Division tanks form a rear guard against pursuing German tanks until 4 p.m. to allow Allied troops to fall back. The failure of the operation, especially in regards to the heavy losses in tank strength, will cost Gen. Archibald Wavell his position as the British commander-in-chief in the region.

1942

June 18 - German submarine U-159 sinks Dutch ship Flora 12 miles off Colombia. All 37 aboard survive the attack, but one of them dies before reaching land.

1943

June 15 - Paul Blobel, a Nazi SS colonel, is given the assignment of coordinating the destruction of the evidence of the Nazi systematic extermination of European Jews.

June 20 - British bombers perform the first "shuttle bombing" raid of the war, attacking sites in Germany and Italy.

1944

June 19 - During the Battle of the Philippine Sea, Japanese Adm. Ozawa Jisaburo decides to challenge the American fleet, ordering 430 of his planes to attack. In what becomes the greatest carrier battle of the war, the United States, having already picked up the Japanese craft on radar, proceed to shoot down more than 300 aircraft and sink two Japanese aircraft carriers, losing only 29 of their own planes in the process. It is described in the aftermath as a "turkey shoot."

1945

June 17 - Japanese Adm. Ota Minoru commits ritual suicide for failing to defend Okinawa, Japan.

Next week in World War history is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux public affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (June 7 to 13)

World War I

1915

June 9 - United States Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan resigns due to his concerns over President Woodrow Wilson's handling of the crisis generated by a German submarine's sinking of the British cruiser Lusitania, in which 1,201 people—including 128 Americans—died.

June 12 - After pausing to regroup, Austro-German troops resume their offensive in Galicia on the Eastern Front. Within five days, they break through the Russian lines and push the Russian 3rd and 8th Armies further eastward. Russian casualties soon surpass 400,000.

1916

June 8 - The British occupy Bismarckburg and the Belgians occupy Usumbara (German East Africa).

1917

June 7 - the British 2nd Army, led by Herbert Plumer, scores a crushing victory over the Germans at Messines Ridge in northern France, marking the successful prelude to an Allied offensive designed to break the grinding stalemate on the Western Front in World War I.

June 8 - early in the fourth summer of World War I, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George calls an emergency meeting of his War Cabinet in London to discuss plans for an upcoming British offensive against the Germans on the Western Front.

June 10 - Italian troops launch a renewed assault on Austro-Hungarian positions in the mountains of the Trentino region in northern Italy, on the border with Austria.

June 12 - King Constantine I of Greece, the foremost champion of Greek neutrality during World War I, abdicates his throne in the face of pressure from Britain and France and internal opponents—most notably Prime Minister Eleutherios Venizelos—who favors Greece's entrance into the war on the side of the Allies.

As crown prince during the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, Constantine had led Greek troops to victory on the battlefield; he ascended to the throne in March 1913 upon the death of his father, George I. Educated in Germany and married to Sophia, a sister of Kaiser Wilhelm II, Constantine was naturally sympathetic to the Central Powers after the outbreak of World War I in the summer of 1914. For this reason, Constantine refused to honor Greece's obligation to support Serbia—its ally during both Balkan Wars—when the latter country was attacked by Bulgaria in 1914.

1918

June 7 - French and American forces capture Veuilly-la-Poterie and Vinly (west of Chateau-Thierry), Bouresches and Hill 204 (west of Chateau-Thierry).

June 8 - Georgia and Armenia sign peace treaties with Turkey.

June 9 - The Germans launch their fourth offensive with an eye toward Paris. In the hastily arranged Gneisenau Offensive the German 18th Army attacks in a southwest direction toward Paris.

World War II

1940

June 10 - After withholding formal allegiance to either side in the battle between Germany and the Allies, Benito Mussolini, dictator of Italy, declares war on France and Great Britain. The Allied reaction to the declaration of war is swift: In London, all Italians who have lived in Britain less than 20 years and who are between the ages of 16 and 70 are interned. In America, the President broadcast on radio the promise of support for Britain and France.

June 11 - In response to Mussolini's declaration of war on England and France. Britain bombs targets within the cities of Genoa and Turin.

- In Africa, Italy had just bombed targets in the British-controlled Suez Canal territory, as well as the British-controlled island of Malta, in the Mediterranean. Britain retaliates with a raid on the Italian military installation in Eritrea.

June 12 - Fifty-four thousand British and French troops surrender to German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel at St. Valery-en-Caux, on the northern Channel border, as the Germans continue their gains in France. Even after the evacuation of Dunkirk by the British Expeditionary Force, tens of thousands of British and Allied troops remained in France. Overwhelmed by the German invaders, over 3,000 Allied troops attempt to escape by sea but are stopped by German artillery fire. Surrender is the order of the day; among those taken prisoner are 12 Allied generals.

1941

June 8 - British and Free French forces enter Syria and Lebanon in Operation Exporter.

1942

June 7 - Japanese soldiers occupy the American islands of Attu and Kiska, in the Aleutian Islands off Alaska, as the Axis power continues to expand its defensive perimeter. Having been defeated at the battle of Midway—stopped by the United States from even landing on the Midway Islands—the Japanese nevertheless prove successful in their invasion of the Aleutians, which had been American territory since purchased from Russia in 1867. Killing 25 American troops upon landing in Attu, the Japanese proceeded to relocate and intern the inhabitants, as well as those at Kiska. America would finally invade and recapture the Aleutians one year later—killing most of the 2,300 Japanese troops defending it—in three weeks of fighting.

1943

June 11 - After 10 days of bombing runs, Britain lands troops on the Italian island of Pantelleria, off the southern coast of Sicily, in Operation Corkscrew. The Italian garrisons surrenders upon orders from Mussolini, who would later deny the order when the Germans express outrage.

1944

June 13 - Germany launches 10 of its new V1 rockets against Britain from a position near the Channel coast. They prove to be less than devastating.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (May 24 to 30)

World War I

1915

June 5 - The Italian fleet bombards lighthouses and stations on the islands of the Dalmatian Archipelago, and Monfalcone.

1916

May 31 - Just before 4 p.m. a British naval force commanded by Vice Adm. David Beatty confronts a squadron of German ships, led by Adm. Franz von Hipper, some 75 miles off the Danish coast. The two squadrons opened fire on each other simultaneously, beginning the opening phase of the greatest naval battle of World War I, the Battle of Jutland.

June 1 - As German and British naval forces clash in the North Sea during the Battle of Jutland and the French resist the German siege at Verdun, German troops launch a major attack on British lines in the Ypres Salient.

June 3 - American President Woodrow Wilson signs into law the National Defense Act, which expands the size and scope of the National Guard — the network of states' militias that had been developing steadily since colonial times—and guaranteed its status as the nation's permanent reserve force.

June 4 - The Battle of Lutsk marks the beginning of the Brusilov Offensive, the largest and most successful Allied offensive of World War I.

1917

June 2 - Brazil revokes her neutrality between the United States and Germany, and seizes German ships in Brazilian waters.

June 4 - Gen. Aleksei Brusilov succeeds Mikhail Alekseiév as Russian commander in chief.

June 5 - A German daylight air raid on the Thames estuary and Medway kills 13 and injures 34; at least six enemy machines are destroyed while returning.

June 6 - Ala es Sultaneh is again appointed Persian prime minister and foreign minister.

1918

June 6 - The first large-scale battle fought by American Soldiers in World War I begins in Belleau Wood, northwest of the Paris-to-Metz road.

In late May 1918, the third German offensive of the year penetrates the Western Front to within 45 miles of Paris. U.S. forces under Gen. John J. Pershing helped halt the German advance, and on June 6 Pershing orders a counteroffensive to drive the Germans out of Belleau Wood. U.S. Marines under Gen. James Harbord lead the attack against the four German divisions positioned in the woods and by the end of the first day suffer more than 1,000 casualties.

For the next three weeks, the Marines, backed by U.S. Army artillery, launch many attacks into the forested area, but German Gen. Erich Ludendorff is determined to deny the Americans a victory. Ludendorff continually brings up reinforcements from the rear, and the Germans attack the U.S. forces with machine guns, artillery and gas. Finally, the Americans prevail June 26 but at a cost of nearly 10,000 dead, wounded or missing in action.

World War II

1940

June 3 - The German air force bombs Paris, killing 254 people, most of them civilians. Determined to wreck France's economy and military, reduce its population and, in short, cripple its morale as well as its ability to rally support for other occupied nations, the Germans bombed the French capital without regard to the fact that most of the victims were civilians, including schoolchildren.

1941

May 31 - The mayor of Baghdad surrenders to British Ambassador Sir Kinahan Cornwallis at the Washash Bridge in Baghdad. An armistice is agreed upon.

1942

June 4 - Japanese Adm. Chuichi Nagumo, commander of the fleet that attacked Pearl Harbor six months earlier, launches a raid on Midway Island with four aircraft carriers and hundreds of escort and support vessels. The goal is to conquer Midway as a base to further strike Pearl Harbor and draw the U.S. Pacific Fleet into decisive battle. As a feint, a second Japanese fleet including two aircraft carriers attacks U.S. military installations farther north in the Aleutians and lands invasion forces on three small islands — Attu, Kiska and Agattu (the only U.S. soil to be occupied by the enemy in World War II). Nagumo's plans for Midway turn to disaster as an unexpected American naval force of three aircraft carriers (Enterprise, Hornet and Yorktown) under Adm. Raymond Spruance quickly sink three of the four Japanese carriers and cripple the fourth. Aircraft from the fourth Japanese carrier sink the USS Yorktown, but the remaining enemy carrier is eventually sunk by U.S. planes the next day. Midway is the turning point of the Pacific War as the expansion of the Japanese Empire is halted. The battle is often considered by military historians as the most decisive naval engagement in history. Midway costs the Japanese four of their largest aircraft carriers, 322 planes, and many of their most experienced pilots. (Midway Airport in Chicago is named for the battle.)

1943

June 1 - British and American authorities begin to formulate the Pointblank Directive — a combined air-bombing campaign against the air production facilities of the German Luftwaffe.

1944

June 2 - American bombers of the Fifteenth Air Force launch Operation Frantic, a series of bombing raids over Central Europe, alighting from air bases in southern Italy but landing at air bases in Poltava, in the Soviet Union, in what is called "shuttle bombing."

1945

June 5 - Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery and Gen. Dwight Eisenhower are awarded the Order of Victory, the Soviet Union's highest award.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes**Next week in World War history (May 24 to 30)****World War I****1915**

May 24 - Entente governments (Great Britain, France, Russia and Serbia) declare that they will hold Turkish ministers personally responsible for the Armenian massacres that began April 8.

May 25 - Mehmed Talat, the Ottoman minister of the interior, announces that all Armenians living near the battlefield zones in eastern Anatolia (under Ottoman rule) will be deported to Syria and Mosul. Large-scale deportations begin five days later, after the decision is sanctioned by the Ottoman council of ministers.

May 29 - Teófilo Braga succeeds Manoel de Arriaga, as Portuguese president, after Arriaga resigns.

1916

May 25 - The era of the all-volunteer British army ends as universal conscription takes effect requiring all eligible British men between the ages of 19 and 40 to report, excluding men working in agriculture, mining or the railroads.

May 26 - Bulgarian and German forces occupy Fort Rupel on the Greek frontier of Macedonia.

1917

May 24 - Driven by the spectacular success of the German U-boat submarines and their attacks on Allied and neutral ships at sea, the British Royal Navy introduces a newly created convoy system, whereby all merchant ships crossing the Atlantic Ocean would travel in groups under the protection of the British navy.

For more than three years of World War I, Britain's Royal Admiralty steadfastly resisted the creation of a convoy system, believing they couldn't afford to spare ships and other resources from its mighty fleet where they might be needed in battle. The effect of the German U-boat submarines, however, and their attacks on merchant ships — both belligerent and neutral — proved devastating. With the entrance of the United States into the war in April 1917, there was an even greater need for protection of Allied interests at sea, as large numbers of soldiers and arms would need to be transported from the Atlantic coast to Europe. In early May 1917, it was announced that the previous month had seen the highest shipping losses of the war so far for Allied and neutral countries: 373 ships, or a total weight of 873,754 tons.

May 30 - Gen. Jacob van Deventer succeeds Gen. Reginald Hoskins as commander of British forces in East Africa.

1918

May 24 - British Maj. Gen. Sir Frederick Cuthbert Poole lands at Murmansk to organize the North Russia Expeditionary Force.

May 27 - The German army begins the Third Battle of the Aisne with an attack on Allied positions at the Chemin des Dames ridge, in the Aisne River region of France.

May 28 - In the first sustained American offensive of World War I, an Allied force including a full brigade of nearly 4,000 American Soldiers captures the village of Cantigny, on the Somme River in France, from their German enemy.

World War II**1940**

May 26 - American President Franklin D. Roosevelt makes known the dire straits of Belgian and French civilians suffering the fallout of the British-German battle to reach the northern coast of France, and appeals for support from the Red Cross "Tonight, over the once peaceful roads of Belgium and France, millions are now moving, running from their homes to escape bombs and shells and machine gunning, without shelter, and almost wholly without food," FDR broadcasts.

May 27 - Units from Germany's SS Death's Head division battle British troops just 50 miles from the port at Dunkirk, in northern France, as Britain's Expeditionary Force continues to fight to evacuate France.

After holding off an SS company until their ammo is spent, 99 Royal Norfolk Regiment soldiers retreat to a farmhouse in the village of Paradis. Agreeing to surrender, the trapped regiment starts to file out of the farmhouse, waving a white flag tied to a bayonet. They are met by German machine-gun fire.

May 28 - After 18 days of German bombardment, Leopold III, the king of the Belgians, having asked for an armistice, is given only unconditional surrender as an option. He takes it.

1941

May 24 - Germany's largest battleship, the Bismarck, sinks the pride of the British fleet, HMS Hood.

The two meet in the North Atlantic, northeast of Iceland, where two British cruisers had tracked down the Bismarck. Commanded by Adm. Gunther Lütjens, commander in chief of the German Fleet, the Bismarck sinks the Hood, resulting in the death of 1,500 of its crew; only three Brits survived.

1942

May 29 - Adolf Hitler orders all Jews in occupied Paris to wear an identifying yellow star on the left side of their coats.

1943

May 24 - Dr. Josef Mengele arrives at the extermination camp in Auschwitz, Poland. Mengele will earn the nickname "the Angel of Death." Upon arriving at Auschwitz and eager to advance his medical career by publishing "ground-breaking" work, he begins experimenting on live Jewish prisoners. In the guise of medical "treatment," he injects, or orders others to inject, thousands of inmates with everything from gasoline to chloroform. He also has a penchant for studying twins, whom he dissects.

1944

May 25 - Germany launches Operation Knight's Move, in an attempt to seize Yugoslav communist partisan leader Josip Broz Tito.

1945

May 30 - The submarine USS Bergall attacks a group of small Japanese vessels in the Gulf of Thailand with her deck gun, sinking seven.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (May 17 to 23)

World War I

1915

May 20 - British, Canadian and Indian troops launch a new round of attacks against a reinforced German line around the village of Festubert, located in the Ypres Salient on the Western Front.

The Battle of Festubert formed part of the large-scale Artois Offensive spearheaded by Joseph Joffre, commander in chief of the French forces.

May 21 - The Russian Expeditionary Force to West Persia lands at Enzeli.

May 23 - Italy declares war on Austria-Hungary, entering World War I on the side of the Allies—Britain, France and Russia.

When World War I broke out in the summer of 1914, Italy declared itself neutral in the conflict, despite its membership in the so-called Triple Alliance alongside Germany and Austria-Hungary since 1882. Over the course of the months that followed, Italy and its leaders weighed their options; wooed by both sides, they carefully considered how to gain the greatest benefit from participation in the war. The decision to join the fray on the side of the Allies was based largely on the assurances Italy received in the Treaty of London, signed in April 1915. By its terms, Italy would receive the fulfillment of its national dream: control over territory on its border with Austria-Hungary stretching from Trentino through the South Tyrol to Trieste.

1916

May 19 - representatives of Great Britain and France secretly reach an accord, known as the Sykes-Picot agreement, by which most of the Arab lands under the rule of the Ottoman Empire are to be divided into British and French spheres of influence with the conclusion of World War I.

1917

May 17 - Honduras severs diplomatic relations with Germany.
- The British Admiralty, following on a Cabinet decision, appoint a committee, in conjunction with the Ministry of Shipping, to draw up a plan to convoy merchant ships.

May 18 - Some six weeks after the United States formally enters the First World War, the U.S Congress passes the Selective Service Act on May 18, 1917, giving the U.S. president the power to draft soldiers.

May 19 - The Provisional Government of Russia announces it will stay in the war. A large offensive for the Eastern Front is then planned by Alexander Kerensky, the new Minister of War. However, Russian soldiers and peasants are now flocking to Lenin's Bolshevik Party which opposes the war and the Provisional Government.

-The United States Government announce decision to send a Division of the United States Army to France.

1918

May 19 - The last German night aeroplane raid on London in which casualties are inflicted is launched; 49 killed and 177 wounded.

World War II

1940

May 17 - British Expeditionary Force commander General Lord John Gort, fearful of being surrounded, ordered his troops to fall back to the Scheldt River; this move allowed German General Walter von Reichenau to capture Brussels.

1941

May 23 - Captain Lord Louis Mountbatten, second cousin of King George VI of Britain and the only man other than the king to hold rank in all three military services simultaneously, is among those thrown into the Mediterranean Sea when his destroyer, the HMS Kelly, is sunk.

Mountbatten's ship was among several British cruisers, destroyers, and battleships sunk off Crete by German dive-bombers. The Kelly is attacked by 24 bombers; 130 crewmembers are killed. Mountbatten is still on the bridge of the ship when it finally flips over; nevertheless, he managed to swim to shore and take control of the rescue operation.

1942

May 22 - In Ukraine, German 14th Division and 16th Panzer Division occupied Chepel and Bayrak, while 3rd Panzer Division and 23rd Panzer Division reached Chervonyi Donets and Krasnaia Gusarovka, closing the gap on the Soviet forces near Izium.

1943

May 17 - The crew of the Memphis Belle becomes the first B-17 crew to complete 25 missions over Europe.

The Memphis Belle performs its 25th and last mission, in a bombing raid against Lorient, a German submarine base.

May 18 - Adolf Hitler launches Operation Alaric, the German occupation of Italy in the event its Axis partner either surrendered or switched its allegiance.

This operation was considered so top secret that Hitler refused to issue a written order. Instead, he communicated verbally his desire that Field Marshal Erwin Rommel should assemble and ultimately command 11 divisions for the occupation of Italy to prevent an Allied foothold in the peninsula.

1944

May 20 - Eisenhower addressed French Resistance groups via a broadcast in preparation for the planned cross-Channel invasion.

- USS Wasp's aircraft attacked Japanese positions in support of the upcoming Mariana Islands invasion.

May 22 - U.S. and British aircraft begin a systematic bombing raid on railroads in Germany and other parts of northern Europe, called Operation Chattanooga Choo-Choo. The operation is a success; Germany is forced to scramble for laborers, including foreign slave laborers, to repair the widespread damage exacted on its railway network.

1945

May 23 - Heinrich Himmler, architect of Hitler's program to exterminate European Jews, commits suicide.

Next week in World War history is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux public affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (May 10 to 16)

World War I

1915

May 13 - Celebrated novelist Edith Wharton writes on May 13, 1915, from the town of Nancy, in the Argonne region of France. "Since leaving Paris yesterday we have passed through streets and streets of such murdered houses, through town after town spread out in its last writhings. And before the black holes that were homes, along the edge of the chasms that were streets, everywhere we have seen flowers and vegetables springing up in freshly raked and watered gardens"

May 11 - German forces evacuate Shavli in the Baltic provinces.

1916

May 14 - A lead article in the Times of London proclaims that an insufficiency of munitions is leading to defeat for Britain on the battlefields of World War I. The article sparked a genuine crisis on the home front, forcing the Liberal government to give way to a coalition and prompting the creation of a Ministry of Munitions.

May 15 - The Austrian army launches a major offensive operation against their Italian enemies on the Trentino front, in northern Italy.

1917

May 10 - Maj. Gen. John J. Pershing is appointed to command United States Expeditionary Force.

May 15 - German airship "L-22" is destroyed in North Sea by British warships.

- British Ace William George Sellar "Growler" Curphey is shot down by German ace Franz Walz of Jasta 2 while attacking a German balloon. Walz survives the war and goes on to be a member of the German Luftwaffe in WWII where he is captured by the Russians and dies in a prison camp.

1918

May 8 - German ace Emil Thuy gets his 20th aerial victory over Zillebeke Lake, Belgium. Later this year Thuy arrives at Chièvres where he gets his 34th and 35th aerial victories. Thuy survives the war but dies in an aircraft accident while training pilots for the Luftwaffe in 1930.

May 12 - The rulers of Germany and Austria-Hungary, Kaiser Wilhelm II and Emperor Karl I, meet to sign an agreement pledging their mutual allegiance and determining to share the economic benefits from their relationship with the newly independent state of Ukraine, one of the most fertile and prosperous regions of the former Russian Empire.

May 16 - the United States Congress passes the Sedition Act, a piece of legislation designed to protect America's participation in World War I. Aimed at socialists, pacifists and other anti-war activists, the Sedition Act imposed harsh penalties on anyone found guilty of making false statements that interfered with the prosecution of the war; insulting or abusing the U.S. government, the flag, the Constitution or the military; agitating against the production of necessary war materials; or advocating, teaching or defending any of these acts.

World War II

1940

May 10 - Hitler begins his Western offensive with the radio code word "Danzig," sending his forces into Holland and Belgium. As British and French Allied forces attempt to meet the 136 German divisions breaking into Holland and Belgium on the ground, 2,500 German aircraft proceed to bomb airfields in Belgium, Holland, France, and Luxembourg, and 16,000 German airborne troops parachute into Rotterdam, Leiden, and The Hague. A hundred more German troops, employ air gliders, land and seize the Belgian bridges across the Albert Canal. The Dutch army is defeated in five days. One day after the invasion of Belgium, the garrison at Fort Eben-Emael surrenders, outmanned and outgunned by the Germans.

The Dutch and Belgian governments immediately appeal to Britain for help.

May 13 - As Winston Churchill takes the helm as Great Britain's new prime minister, he assures Parliament that his new policy will consist of nothing less than "to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime."

1941

May 12 - Adolf Hitler sends two bombers to Iraq to support Rashid Ali al-Gailani in his revolt against Britain, which is trying to enforce a previously agreed upon Anglo-Iraqi alliance.

1942

May 15 - A bill establishing a women's corps in the U.S. Army becomes law, creating the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAACs) and granting women official military status.

1943

May 14 - U.S. and Great Britain chiefs of staff, meeting in Washington, D.C., approve and plot out Operation Pointblank, a joint bombing offensive to be mounted from British air bases.

May 16 - The British Royal Air Force sets into motion a plan to bomb key dams in order to flood the Ruhr region of Germany, while the German army pursues an anti-partisan sweep in Russia.

1944

May 11 - Allied forces begin a major assault on the Gustav Line, a German defensive line drawn across central Italy just south of Rome that has to be broken before the Italian capital can be taken; the attack on the line is also part of a larger plan to force the Germans to commit as many troops to Italy as possible in order to make way for an Allied cross-Channel assault—what would become D-Day.

1945

May 10 - The German garrison in Dunkerque, France surrenders to a Czechoslovak armored brigade, two days after the surrender of the main German army in its homeland.

Next week in World War history is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux public affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (May 3 to 9)

World War I

1915

May 3 - A combined Austro-German force succeeds in defeating the Russian army near the Dunajec River (a tributary of the Vistula River that runs through modern-day northern Slovakia and southern Poland). During 10 days of fighting in the Carpathian Mountains on the Galician front in Austria-Hungary.

The Austro-German counterattack ends nine months of victorious Russian advances in the region since August 1914.

May 7 - A German submarine sinks the Lusitania.

May 9 - Anglo-French forces fighting launch their first combined attempt to break through the heavily fortified German trench lines on the Western Front in France.

At Vimy Ridge in northwestern France, French troops launch an attack on German positions after firing shrapnel shells for five hours. On the heels of the barrage, the French Soldiers leave their trenches to advance, only to find that the bombardment has failed to break the first German wire. As they struggled to cut the wire, German machine gunners open fire. Eventually, the French are able to reach their objective, as the Germans withdraw, but they suffer heavy casualties: one regiment of the French Foreign Legion loses nearly 2,000 of its 3,000 Soldiers, including its commanding officer, who is shot in the chest by a sniper, and all three battalion commanders.

1916

May 3 - The Germans begin another attack on the west bank of the Meuse. This time they gain the advantage and within three days capture the two French hills they had been striving for since early March, thus achieving a solid position northwest of Verdun.

May 4 - Germany responds to a demand by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson by agreeing to limit its submarine warfare in order to avert a diplomatic break with the United States.

1917

May 5 - German Ace Ernst Udet gets his sixth aerial victory. Udet is the second-highest scoring German flying ace of World War I. He is one of the youngest aces and is the highest scoring German ace to survive the war (at the age of 22). His 62 confirmed victories are second only to Manfred von Richthofen, his commander in the Flying Circus.

1918

May 6 - Turko-German delegates arrive at Batum (Georgia) to negotiate peace with the Georgians and Armenians.

1919

May 5 - The delegation from Italy—led by Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando and Foreign Minister Sidney Sonnino—returns to the Versailles Peace Conference in Paris, France, after leaving abruptly 11 days earlier during contentious negotiations over the territory Italy would receive after the First World War.

May 8 - Edward George Honey writes a letter to the London Evening News proposing that the first anniversary of the armistice ending World War I—concluded on November 11, 1918—be commemorated by several moments of silence.

World War II

1939

May 3 - Fighters of the Chinese 4th Air Group intercept 54 Japanese bombers en route to attack Chongqing, China, shooting down seven Japanese bombers.

May 4 - Chinese troops attack Japanese positions at Nanchang, Jiangxi Province, China.

1940

May 3 - Dutch intelligence detect further hints of German troop gathering near its border; this information is forwarded on to Belgium. Meanwhile, in Germany, forecast of bad weather cause a postponement of the invasion.

1941

May 5 - Emperor Haile Selassie re-enters Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, exactly five years to the day of when it was occupied by Italy.

1942

May 3 - A Japanese invasion force succeeds in occupying Tulagi of the Solomon Islands in an expansion of Japan's defensive perimeter.

The United States, having broken Japan's secret war code and forewarned of an impending invasion of Tulagi and Port Moresby, attempts to intercept the Japanese armada. Four days of battles between Japanese and American aircraft carriers results in 70 Japanese and 66 Americans warplanes destroyed. This confrontation, called the Battle of the Coral Sea, marks the first air-naval battle in history.

May 6 - U.S. Lt. Gen. General Jonathan Wainwright surrenders all U.S. troops in the Philippines to the Japanese.

1943

May 4 - German submarine U-625 spots Allied convoy ONS 5 in the North Atlantic. Several German submarines gather and begin attacking at dusk and continue through the night sinking seven ships (British freighters L'Orient, North Britain, Harbury, Harpurley, Bristol City, and Wentworth; US freighter West Maximus). U-630 is lost during the attacks.

1944

May 6 - British army junior officer John Randle takes out a Japanese machine gun position in Burma, then purposefully sacrifices himself to take out a bunker with a grenade. He is posthumously awarded a Victoria Cross.

1945

May 7 - The German Gen. Alfred Jodl, signs the unconditional surrender of all German forces, at Reims, France.

May 8 - Great Britain and the United States celebrate Victory in Europe Day. Cities in both nations, as well as formerly occupied cities in Western Europe, rejoice in the defeat of the Nazi war machine.

May 9 - Herman Goering, commander in chief of the Luftwaffe, president of the Reichstag, head of the Gestapo, prime minister of Prussia, and Hitler's designated successor is taken prisoner by the U.S. Seventh Army in Bavaria.

Next week in World War history is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux public affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes**Next week in World War history (April 26 to May 2)****World War I****1915**

April 26 - After receiving the promise of significant territorial gains, Italy signs the Treaty of London, committing itself to enter World War I on the side of the Allies.

April 28 - The International Congress of Women convenes on this day in 1915 at The Hague, the Netherlands, with more than 1,200 delegates from 12 countries — including Britain, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Poland, Belgium and the United States — all dedicated to the cause of peace and a resolution of the great international conflict that was World War I.

May 2 - On the Eastern Front, a combined Austro-German offensive begins against the Russian Third Army at Tarnow and Gorlice in Galicia. The attack is preceded by a massive artillery bombardment with more than 700,000 shells. This breaks down the defenses of the weakened Russians who now suffer from shortages of artillery shells and rifles. Within two days, the Austro-Germans break through the lines and the Russians begin a disorganized retreat.

1916

April 27 - Three British officers, including the famous Capt. T.E. Lawrence (commonly known as Lawrence of Arabia), attempt to engineer the escape of thousands of British troops under siege at the city of Kut-al-Amara in Mesopotamia through a secret negotiation with the Turkish command.

April 29 - In the single largest surrender of troops in British history to that time, some 13,000 Soldiers under the command of Sir Charles Townshend give in after withstanding nearly five months under siege by Turkish and German forces at the town of Kut-al-Amara, on the Tigris River in the Basra province of Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq).

- The "Havre Declaration" is signed by France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan and Russia guaranteeing integrity of Belgian Congo.

1917

April 27 - Guatemala severs diplomatic relations with Germany

April 28 - The U.S. Congress passes a bill for raising 500,000 men.

April 30 - The so-called Battle of the Boot marks the end of the British army's Samarra Offensive, launched the previous month by Anglo-Indian forces under the regional commander in chief, Sir Frederick Stanley Maude, against the important Turkish railroad at Samarra, some 130 kilometers north of Baghdad, in Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq).

1918

April 27 - The first contingent of Italian troops arrive on the French front.

April 30 - Viborg (Finland) is captured by German forces and Finnish White Guards

May 1 - Sevastopol taken by German forces.

May 2 - In a conference of Allied military leaders at Abbeville, France, the United States, Britain and France argue over the entrance of American troops into World War I.

World War II**1939**

April 27 - The British Air Ministry awards the largest-ever order for an American-built fighter aircraft with an order for 524 Tomahawk fighters.

1940

April 29 - British submarine HMS Unity collides with Norwegian freighter Atle Jarl in the harbor of Blyth, England, in foggy weather. Unity sinks within five minutes, killing four. Lt. John Low and Able Seaman Henry Miller are posthumously awarded the George Cross for their self-sacrifice while helping fellow comrades to escape the sinking ship.

1941

April 27 - The German army enters the Greek capital, signaling the end of Greek resistance. All mainland Greece and all the Greek Aegean islands except Crete are under German occupation by May 11.

1942

April 30 - The German submarine U-456 damages HMS Edinburgh, escorting Allied convoy QP-11, with two torpedoes (one hitting amidships and another ripped off the stern) in the Norwegian Sea 200 miles north of Murmansk, Russia. It is carrying £5,000,000 of Soviet gold meant as down payment for American weapons and other war supplies. HMS Edinburgh sails for Murmansk at the slow speed of 3 knots, escorted by two British destroyer and two Soviet destroyers. U-456 runs out of torpedoes and cannot make further attacks, but remains near the convoy to report on the convoy's position.

1943

May 1 - The International Medical Commission completed its investigation on the Katyn Massacre, concluding that the Soviet Union was responsible for the atrocity..

1944

April 27 - British Sgt. Norman Jackson's Lancaster bomber is attacked by a German nightfighter after a bombing run over Schweinfurt, Germany. As he observes that the starboard wing is on fire, he climbs outside with a parachute and a fire extinguisher. Holding on with one hand, he attempts to put out the fire while the aircraft travels at 200 mph at the altitude of 20,000 feet. He is eventually thrown off the aircraft. He survives the fall but is captured.

1945

April 28 - "Il Duce," Benito Mussolini, and his mistress, Clara Petacci, are shot by Italian partisans who had captured the couple as they attempted to flee to Switzerland.

May 2 - Approximately 1 million German Soldiers lay down their arms as the terms of the German unconditional surrender, signed at Caserta April 29, come into effect. Many Germans surrender to Japanese-American Soldiers. Among the American tank crews that entered the northern Italian town of Biella was an all-Nisei (second-generation) infantry battalion, composed of Japanese-Americans from Hawaii.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes**Next week in World War history (April 19 to 25)****World War I****1915**

April 22 - German forces shock Allied soldiers along the Western Front by firing more than 150 tons of lethal chlorine gas against two French colonial divisions at Ypres in Belgium.

April 23 - Rupert Brooke, a young scholar and poet serving as an officer in the British Royal Navy, dies of blood poisoning on a hospital ship anchored off the Greek island of Skyros, while awaiting deployment in the Allied invasion of the Gallipoli Peninsula.

April 25 - A week after Anglo-French naval attacks on the Dardanelles end in dismal failure, the Allies launch a large-scale land invasion of the Gallipoli Peninsula, the Turkish-controlled land mass bordering the northern side of the Dardanelles.

1916

April 24 - Around noon on Easter Monday, some 1,600 Irish nationalists—members of the Irish Volunteers—launch the so-called Easter Rising in Dublin, seizing a number of official buildings and calling on all Irish patriots to resist the bonds of British control.

1917

April 20 - An ambitious Allied offensive against German troops near the Aisne River in central France, spearheaded by the French commander in chief, Robert Nivelle, ends in dismal failure.

Nivelle, who had replaced Joseph Joffre in December 1915 as head of all French forces, had tenaciously argued for a major spring offensive in spite of powerful opposition in the French government, at one point threatening to resign if the offensive did not go ahead. He was convinced that by implementing the tactics he had used to considerable success at Verdun during the French counter-attacks in the fall of 1916, on a greater scale, the Allies could achieve a breakthrough on the Western Front within 48 hours.

1918

April 21 - In the skies above the Somme River in France, Baron Manfred von Richthofen, the notorious German flying ace known as the Red Baron, is killed by Allied fire.

Richthofen leads his squadron deep into Allied territory on a search for British observation aircraft. The flight draws the attention of an Allied squadron led by Canadian Royal Air Force pilot Captain Arthur Roy Brown. As Richthofen pursues a plane piloted by Brown's compatriot, Wilfred R. May, the Red Baron ventures too far into enemy territory and too low to the ground. Two miles behind the Allied lines, just as Brown catches up with Richthofen and fires on him, the chase passes over an Australian machine-gun battery, whose riflemen open fire. Richthofen is hit in the torso; though he manages to land his plane alongside the road from Corbie to Bray, near Sailley-le-Sac, he is dead by the time Australian troops reach him. Brown is often given credit for downing Richthofen from the air, though some claim it was actually an Australian gunner on the ground who fired the fatal shot; debate continues to this day.

World War II**1939**

April 25 - The Chinese counter offensive toward Nanchang, Jiangxi Province, China reaches the outskirts of the city.

1940

April 24 - British forces, along with Australian, New Zealand, and Polish troops, begin to withdraw from Greece in light of the Greek army's surrender to the Axis invaders. A total of 50,732 men are evacuated quickly over a six-day period, leaving behind weapons, trucks, and aircraft.

1941

April 19 - Erwin Rommel personally inspects the front lines in the Libyan-Egyptian border area.

1942

April 23 - In retaliation for the British raid on Lubeck, German bombers strike Exeter and later Bath, Norwich, York, and other "medieval-city centers." Almost 1,000 English civilians are killed in the bombing attacks nicknamed "Baedeker Raids."

1943

April 19 - Heinrich Himmler sends more than 2,000 Waffen SS soldiers to combat the Jewish resistance. German tanks, howitzers, machine guns, and flamethrowers are met with Jewish pistols, rifles, homemade grenades, and Molotov cocktails. The Jews fend off the German assault for 28 days. Finally, SS General Jurgen Stroop sets the entire ghetto block on fire and blows up the synagogue. By May, 56,065 Jews are dead.

1944

April 22 - Allied forces land in the Hollandia area of New Guinea. The Japanese occupiers, only 15,000 in number, many of whom are on administrative duty, fight for more than three months against incredible odds at great cost: When the battle for the northern coast of New Guinea is finally won by the Allies, 12,811 Japanese are dead, compared with 527 Americans.

1945

April 20 - Allied bombers in Italy begin a three-day attack on the bridges over the rivers Adige and Brenta to cut off German lines of retreat on the peninsula. Meanwhile, Adolf Hitler celebrates his 56th birthday as a Gestapo reign of terror results in the hanging of 20 Russian prisoners of war and 20 Jewish children: Of these, at least nine are under the age of 12. All of the victims had been taken from Auschwitz to Neuengamme, the place of execution, for the purpose of medical experimentation.

April 21 - Soviet forces fighting south of Berlin, at Zossen, assault the headquarters of the German High Command. The only remaining opposing "force" to the Russian invasion of Berlin are the "battle groups" of Hitler Youth, teenagers with anti-tank guns, strategically placed in parks and suburban streets. In a battle at Eggersdorf, 70 of these Hitler teens strove to fight off a Russian assault with a mere three anti-tank guns. They were bulldozed by Russian tanks and infantry.

Next week in World War history is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux public affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes**Next week in World War history (April 12 to April 18)****World War I****1915**

April 18 - A member of the German Bahnschutzwache, or Railway Protection Guard, shoots down the well-known French airman Roland Garros in his flight over German positions in Flanders, France, on a bombing raid. Garros is killed in battle seven months later at Vouziers, France.

1916

April 14 - The Battle of Lake Naroch, an offensive on the Eastern Front by the Russian army during World War I, ends after achieving little success against German positions near Lake Naroch and the Russian town of Vilna (in modern-day Lithuania).

April 18 - President Woodrow Wilson threatens to sever diplomatic ties between the United States and Germany following the sinking of the passenger ferry Sussex by a U-Boat in the English Channel. The attack marked the beginning of a new U-Boat campaign around the British Isles. But in response to Wilson, the Germans call off the U-Boats.

1917

April 12 - After three days of fierce combat and over 10,000 casualties suffered, the Canadian Corps seizes the previously German-held Vimy Ridge in northern France.

Vimy Ridge becomes a shining example of Canada's effort in the Great War, and one that served as a symbol of the sacrifice the young British dominion had made for the Allied cause.

April 16 - The French 5th and 6th Armies attack along a 25-mile front south of the Hindenburg Line. The new offensive comes amid promises of a major breakthrough within 24-hours by the new French Commander-in-Chief, Robert Nivelle, who planned the operation. Nivelle again uses his creeping barrage tactic in which his armies advance in stages closely behind successive waves of artillery fire. However, this time it is poorly coordinated and the troops fall far behind. The Germans also benefit from good intelligence and aerial reconnaissance and are mostly aware of the French plan. Nivelle's offensive collapses within days with more than 100,000 casualties. The French president personally intervenes and Nivelle is relieved of his command. He is replaced as Commander-in-Chief by Gen. Henri Petain, who must deal with a French Army that is now showing signs of mutiny.

-Political agitator Vladimir Lenin arrives back in Russia, following 12 years of exile in Switzerland. Special train transportation for his return is provided by the Germans in the hope that anti-war Lenin and his radical Bolshevik Party will disrupt Russia's new Provisional Government. Lenin joins other Bolsheviks in Petrograd who have already returned from exile including Joseph Stalin.

1918

April 13 - As part of Germany's support of Finland and its newly declared parliamentary government, German troops wrest control of Helsingfors (Helsinki) from the Red Guard, an army of Finnish supporters of the Russian Bolsheviks.

World War II**1939**

April 13 - The USS Astoria arrives in Japan under the command of Richmond Kelly Turner in an attempt to photograph the Japanese battleships Yamato and Musashi.

1940

April 16 - German submarine U-3 and British submarine HMS Porpoise engage in combat with torpedoes 10 miles southwest of Egersund, Norway. No hits are scored.

1941

April 17 - The Yugoslav army, encircled in Bosnia, surrenders to Germany and signs a formal capitulation in Belgrade.

1942

April 17 - French Gen. Henri Giraud, who was captured in 1940, escapes from a castle prison at Konigstein by lowering himself down the castle wall and jumping on board a moving train, which takes him to the French border.

1943

April 18 - Forty-seven P-40 and 12 Spitfire fighters intercept a large Axis air convoy off Tunisia, shooting down 24 German transport aircraft, 10 German fighters, and some Italian fighters. So many lives are lost that the Germans dub the action the Palm Sunday Massacre.

1944

April 15 - The Soviet Red Army occupies Tarnopol, one of the principal cities of Eastern Galicia, across the former Polish border. Tarnopol, traditionally a part of Poland, then part of the Soviet Union, had become German-occupied territory in the great German offensive in June 1941.

1945

April 12 - U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt dies of a cerebral hemorrhage in his home at Warm Springs, Georgia, on this day in 1945. The only man to be elected to four terms as president of the United States, Roosevelt is remembered—by friends and enemies alike—for his New Deal social policies and his leadership during wartime.

April 14 - The U.S. Fifth Army joins its British allies in the assault on the German occupiers of Italy.

The Fifth Army, under Lucian K. Truscott, begins pushing its way up the peninsula, capturing Massa and crossing the Frigido River. After meeting considerable German resistance in the mountains, the Fifth sends the Germans running once the battle takes to open country.

April 18 - Pulitzer Prize-winning war correspondent Ernie Pyle was killed by Japanese machine-gun fire on the island of Ie Shima off the coast of Okinawa. Extremely popular, especially with the average GI, whose life and death he reported on (American infantrymen braved enemy fire to recover Pyle's body), Pyle had been at the London Blitz of 1941 and saw action in North Africa, Italy, France, and the Pacific. A monument exists to him to this day on Ie Shima, describing him simply as "a buddy."

Next week in World War history is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux public affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (April 5 to April 11)

World War I

1915

April 7 - First Indian units of Indian Expeditionary Force "G" sail from Egypt for the Dardanelles.

April 9 - Gen. Sir John Nixon relieves General Sir Arthur Barrett as Commander-in-Chief Indian Expeditionary Force "D" Mesopotamia.

April 11 - British troops in Mesopotamia fend off a large attack by the Turks against Basra.

1916

April 9 - The Germans attack again at Verdun, now along a 20-mile-wide front on both the east and west banks of the Meuse River. Once again the attack only yields partial gains in the face of stiff French resistance.

1917

April 6 - Two days after the U.S. Senate votes 82 to 6 to declare war against Germany, the U.S. House of Representatives endorses the decision by a vote of 373 to 50, and the United States formally enters the First World War.

April 9 - Early in the morning 20,000 Canadian Soldiers attack in the first wave of fighting at Vimy Ridge. By the afternoon, the two front lines are taken by the Canadian Corps. By April 12 the entire ridge is under Allied control. When Hill 145 is captured, the operation is considered a resounding success. The ridge remains in Allied hands for the duration of the war.

1918

April 5 - General Erich Ludendorff formally ends "Operation Michael," the first stage of the final major German offensive of World War I.

Operation Michael produces the biggest gains of territory on the Western Front by either side since 1914. The Germans advance almost 40 miles, inflict some 200,000 casualties and capture 70,000 prisoners and more than 1,000 guns.

The Germans suffered nearly as many casualties as their enemies and lacked the fresh reserves and supplies the Allies enjoyed following the American entrance into the war. Still, Ludendorff would launch four more similar operations that spring of 1918, as the Germans staked everything on a last, desperate offensive on the Western Front.

April 9 - German troops launch "Operation Georgette" the second phase of their final, last-ditch spring offensive, against Allied positions in Armentières, France, on the River Lys.

After a four-and-a-half hour long bombardment of British forces in Armentières, 14 German divisions attack along a 10-mile front to begin the Battle of the Lys. The ferocious German advance quickly drives the British back, punching a hole 3.5 miles wide through the British line. They also make quick and bloody work of a Portuguese division taking part in the battle, sending four divisions against the single Portuguese unit and take some 6,000 prisoners. To make matters worse, the Germans unleash 2,000 tons of poisonous gas—including mustard and phosgene gas—against the British at the Lys, incapacitating 8,000 (of whom many were blinded) and killing 30.

World War II

1939

April 7 - In an effort to mimic Hitler's conquest of Prague, Benito Mussolini's troops, though badly organized, invade and occupy Albania.

Although the invasion of Albania was intended as but a prelude to greater conquests in the Balkans, it proved a costly enterprise for Il Duce. Albania was already dependent on Italy's economy, so had little to offer the invaders. And future exploits in neighboring nations, in Greece in particular, proved to be disastrous for the Italians.

1940

April 9 - German warships enter major Norwegian ports, from Narvik to Oslo, deploying thousands of German troops and occupying Norway. At the same time, German forces occupy Copenhagen, among other Danish cities.

1941

April 6 - The German air force launches Operation Castigo, the bombing of Belgrade, as 24 German army divisions and 1,200 tanks drive into Greece.

1942

April 9 - Major General Edward P. King Jr. surrenders at Bataan, Philippines against General Douglas MacArthur's orders—and 78,000 troops (66,000 Filipinos and 12,000 Americans), the largest contingent of U.S. Soldiers ever to surrender, are taken captive by the Japanese.

The prisoners were at once led 55 miles from Mariveles, on the southern end of the Bataan peninsula, to San Fernando, on what became known as the "Bataan Death March."

1943

April 5 - USAAF 325th Fighter Group receives orders to move two of its P-40 squadrons to the airfield at Montesquien, Algeria.

1944

April 8 - Russian forces led by Marshal Fedor Tolbukhin attack the German army in an attempt to win back Crimea, in the southern Ukraine, occupied by the Axis power. The attack would result in the breaking of German defensive lines in just four days, eventually sending the Germans retreating.

1945

April 7 - The Japanese battleship Yamato, ostensibly the greatest battleship in the world, is sunk in Japan's first major counteroffensive in the struggle for Okinawa.

Weighing 72,800 tons and outfitted with nine 18.1-inch guns, the battleship Yamato is Japan's only hope of destroying the Allied fleet off the coast of Okinawa. But insufficient air cover and fuel curbed the endeavor as a suicide mission. Struck by 19 American aerial torpedoes, it sinks, drowning 2,498 of its crew.

April 11 - The American 3rd Army liberates the Buchenwald concentration camp, near Weimar, Germany, a camp that will be judged second only to Auschwitz in the horrors it imposed on its prisoners.

Next week in World War history is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux public affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (March 29 to April 4)

World War I

1915

March 30 - The Russian 8th Army advances in the Carpathians threatening the Hungarian plains. Attacks are centered on Lupkow, Uszok and Dukla passes.

April 4 - The Russian 3rd Army and the 8th Army, headed open a drive in bitter cold weather in a southerly direction in the Carpathians. Their objective is to occupy Hungarian railroad lines running south of, and parallel to, the main mountain range.

1916

March 29 - Gen. Alexei Polivanov, Russian minister for war, resigns and is succeeded by Gen. Dmitry Shuvaev.

March 30 - In the Black Sea, the French hospital ship Portugal, in Russian service with a French crew, is torpedoed and sunk by German submarine U-33, with 115 patients, doctors, nurses and crew being drowned.

April 2 - German army airship LZ-86 begins a monthlong series of bombing raids on railway junctions and military facilities at Minsk, Rezhitsa and Wyschki.

1917

March 29 - Prime Minister Hjalmar Hammarskjold of Sweden, father of the future United Nations Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold, resigns after his policy of strict neutrality in World War I — including continued trading with Germany, in violation of the Allied blockade — leads to widespread hunger and political instability in Sweden.

April 2 - President Woodrow Wilson appears before the U.S. Congress and gives a speech saying, "The world must be made safe for democracy," then asks the Congress for a declaration of war against Germany.

1918

March 30 - An Allied force including British and Canadian cavalry and air brigades confront the Germans head on. By the end of the day, the Allies manage to halt the German advance at Moreuil Wood, despite suffering heavy casualties.

The events at Moreuil Wood break the momentum of the German's spring offensive led by Gen. Erich Ludendorff.

April 1 - The British Royal Air Force is formed as an amalgamation of the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS). The RAF takes its place beside the British navy and army as a separate military service with its own ministry.

By war's end, the RAF drops 5,500 tons of bombs and claims 2,953 enemy aircraft destroyed, gaining clear air superiority along the Western Front. It also is the largest air force in the world at the time, with some 300,000 officers and airmen — plus 25,000 members of the Women's Royal Air Force — and more than 22,000 aircraft.

April 3 - The Allied Supreme War Council formally confers the post of commander in chief on the Western Front to Gen. Ferdinand Foch.

April 4 - German forces in the throes of a major spring offensive on the Western Front launch a renewed attack on Allied positions between the Somme and Avre Rivers.

World War II

1940

March 30 - Japan establishes its own government in conquered Nanking, the former capital of Nationalist China.

March 31 - The German auxiliary cruiser Atlantis sets off on a mission to catch and sink Allied merchant ships.

The Atlantis had been a merchant ship itself but was converted to a commerce raider with six 5.9-inch guns, 93 mines and two aircraft fit for spying out Allied ships to sink. The Atlantis donned various disguises in order to integrate itself into any shipping milieu inconspicuously.

Commanded by Capt. Bernhard Rogge, the Atlantis roamed the Atlantic and Indian oceans. It sank a total of 22 merchant ships (146,000 tons in all) and proved a terror to the British Royal Navy. The Atlantis' career finally came to an end Nov. 22, 1941, when it was sunk by the British cruiser Devonshire as the German marauder was refueling a U-boat.

1941

April 2 - German Lt. Gen. Erwin Rommel, "the Desert Fox," resumes his advance into Cyrenaica, modern-day Libya, signaling the beginning of what would, nine days later, become the recapture of Libya by the Axis forces.

1942

April 3 - German submarine U-552 sinks U.S. collier David H. Atwater with its deck gun 10 miles off Chincoteague Inlet, Virginia, at 3:40 a.m.; 24 are killed, three survive. U-754 sinks U.S. freighter Otho 150 kilometers east of Hampton Roads, Virginia, killing 31 of the 53 aboard.

April 4 - Sixty-two Luftwaffe Stuka dive bombers and 70 other bombers, escorted by 59 Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighters, attack the Soviet fleet at Kronstadt off Leningrad, Russia, damaging battleships October Revolution and Petropavlovsk, cruisers Maxim Gorky and Kirov, and destroyers Silny and Grozyashchi.

1943

March 29 - A transport of 2,501 Jews from Thessaloniki, Greece, arrives at Auschwitz Concentration Camp in Poland; 312 men and 141 women are registered while the remaining 2,048 are gassed.

1944

April 1 - Allied bombers attacked Schaffhausen, Switzerland, mistaking it for the German city of Ludwigshafen am Rhein, killing 40 people; interestingly, a group of small factories producing munitions and aircraft parts to be sold to Germany was destroyed in this accidental raid.

1945

March 29 - Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army captures Frankfurt.

April 1 - After suffering the loss of 116 planes and damage to three aircraft carriers, 50,000 U.S. combat troops of the Tenth Army, under the command of Lt. Gen. Simon B. Buckner Jr., land on the southwest coast of the Japanese island of Okinawa, 350 miles south of Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's main islands.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (March 22 to 28)

World War I

1915

March 22 - The Russians capture 120,000 Austrians at Przemyśl (now in Poland) in Galicia. This marks the culmination of a series of winter battles between the Austrians and Russians to secure the strategic Carpathian Mountain passes and opens the way for a Russian invasion of Hungary. Realizing this, the Germans and Austrians make plans to combine their troops and launch a major spring offensive.

1916

March 24 - The French passenger ship *Sussex* is torpedoed with 380 people aboard; 50 are killed.

1917

March 26 - The first of three battles fought in the Allied attempt to defeat Turkish forces in and around the Palestinian city of Gaza takes place as Sir Charles Dobell and his men advance on the ridges under the cover of dense fog; they are able to successfully cut off the east and south-east of Gaza and deploy troops to prevent the Turks from sending reinforcements or supplies to the city. The 53rd Infantry Division, at the center of the advance, receives considerable assistance from a cavalry force commanded by Sir Philip Chetwode. However, near the end of the day, with a victory in Gaza in sight, Dobell and Chetwode decide to call off the attack. The decision, attributed to the failing light and mounting casualties among the infantry troops, is nonetheless controversial—other officers believe the Turks were on the verge of capitulating.

1918

March 23 - At 7:20 a.m. an explosion in the Place de la République in Paris announces the first attack of a new German gun.

The Pariskrone, or Paris gun, as it came to be known, was 210 mm, with a 118-foot barrel, which could fire a shell the impressive distance of some 130,000 feet, or 25 miles, into the air. Three of them fired on Paris that day from a gun site at Crépy-en-Laonnais, 74 miles away.

The gun sent Paris, a city that had withstood all earlier attempts at its destruction, including scattered bombings, reeling. At first, the Paris Defense Service assumed the city was being bombed, but soon they determined that it was actually being hit by artillery fire, a heretofore unimagined situation. By the end of the day, the shelling had killed 16 people and wounded 29 more.

Almost all information about the Pariskrone, one of the most sophisticated weapons to emerge out of World War I, disappeared after the war ended. Later, the Germans tried without success to reproduce the gun from the few pictures and diagrams that remained. Copies were deployed in 1940 against Britain across the English Channel, but failed to cause any significant damage.

March 25 - Less than three weeks after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk formally brought an end to Russia's participation in the First World War, the former Russian province of Belarus declares itself an independent, democratic republic.

World War II

1940

March 26 - German submarine U-38 stops Norwegian merchant ship *Cometa* 65 miles northwest of Noup Head, Orkney Islands, Scotland, and give *Cometa's* crew one hour to abandon ship. At 2:20 a.m. U-38 hits the abandoned *Cometa* with one torpedo. The crew of 31 — six Swedish passengers, and five British sailors — are later rescued by HMS *Northern Sky*.

1941

March 25 - Despite an early declaration of neutrality, Yugoslavia signs the Tripartite Pact, forming an alliance with Axis powers Germany, Italy and Japan.

March 28 - Andrew Browne Cunningham, Admiral of the British Fleet, commands the British Royal Navy's destruction of three major Italian cruisers and two destroyers in the Battle of Cape Matapan in the Mediterranean. Following on the attack on the Italian Fleet at Taranto by the British in November 1940, the destruction effectively puts an end to any threat the Italian navy poses to the British.

1942

March 22 - Sir Stanford Cripps, British statesman, arrives in India for talks with Mohandas "Mahatma" Gandhi on Indian independence, in what will become known as the Cripps Mission.

March 24 - Adm. Chester Nimitz is appointed the commander in chief of the U.S. Pacific Theater.

- British mine-sweeping whaler HMS *Sulla* is lost to heavy seas in the Norwegian Sea.

1943

March 22 - German SS soldiers massacre civilians in the Byelorussian village of Khatyn, killing its population of 149 — 75 of whom are children. Khatyn is then burned to the ground.

1944

March 23 - Heinrich Himmler's statistician reports to him that, thus far, 633,300 Russian Jews had been "resettled," a word believed to be a euphemism for "exterminated."

March 24 - Maj. Gen. Orde Wingate, leader of the 77th Indian Brigade, also called the Chindits, dies in a transport plane crash. He was 41. Wingate, a graduate of the Royal Military Academy, was a famous eccentric who both quoted the Bible and advocated irregular warfare tactics. His career as a guerrilla fighter began as he organized Jewish underground patrols to beat back Arab raids in British-controlled Palestine in the 1930s. In 1941, Wingate led a mixed Ethiopian-and-Sudanese force in retaking Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, from the Italians, who invaded in 1935.

1945

March 27 - In a last-ditch effort to deploy their remaining V-2 missiles against the Allies, the Germans launch their long-range rockets from their only remaining launch site, in the Netherlands. Almost 200 civilians in England and Belgium are added to the V-2 casualty toll.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (March 15 to 21)

World War I

1915

March 18 - British and French forces launch an ill-fated naval attack on Turkish forces in the Dardanelles, the narrow, strategically vital strait in northwestern Turkey separating Europe from Asia.

As the only waterway between the Black Sea in the east and the Mediterranean Sea in the west, the Dardanelles was a much-contested area from the beginning of the First World War. The stakes for both sides were high: British control over the strait would mean a direct line to the Russian navy in the Black Sea, enabling the supply of munitions to Russian forces in the east and facilitating cooperation between the two allies.

March 20 - Just two days after its navy suffered a demoralizing defeat against Turkish forces at the Dardanelles, the British government signs a secret agreement with Russia regarding the hypothetical post-World War I division of the former Ottoman Empire.

1916

March 16 - Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, the man largely responsible for the buildup of the German navy in the years before World War I and the aggressive naval strategy pursued by Germany during the first two years of the war, tenders his resignation to Kaiser Wilhelm II, who – somewhat to Tirpitz's surprise – accepts it.

March 18 - The Russians oblige a French request to wage an offensive on the Eastern Front to divert German resources from Verdun. Although the Russians greatly outnumber the Germans in the northern sector of the Eastern Front, their poorly coordinated offensive around Vilna and at Lake Naroch is swiftly defeated by the Germans with 70,000 Russian casualties.

1917

March 15 - Czar Nicholas II, ruler of Russia since 1894, is forced to abdicate the throne after strikes and general revolts break out in Petrograd (now St. Petersburg).

March 17 - In the midst of Allied plans for a major spring offensive on the Western Front, the French government suffers a series of crises in its leadership, including the forced resignation of Prime Minister Aristide Briand.

1918

March 21 - Near the Somme River in France, the German army launches its first major offensive on the Western Front in two years. German armies occupied virtually all of Belgium and much of northern France. With Romania, Russia and Serbia out of the war by the end of 1917, conflict in the east was drawing to a close, leaving the Central Powers free to focus on combating the British and French in the west. Russia's exit allowed Germany to shift no fewer than 44 divisions of men to the Western Front.

German commander Erich Ludendorff sees this as a crucial opportunity to launch a new offensive. He hopes to strike a decisive blow and convince the Allies to negotiate for peace before fresh troops from the United States can arrive.

World War II

1939

March 15 - The forces of Adolf Hitler, who was known as der Führer ("the leader"), invade and occupy Czechoslovakia.

1940

March 17 - Dr. Fritz Todt, an engineer and master road-builder, is appointed Minister for Weapons and Munitions, ushering in a new era in the efficient use of German industry and forced labor.

A civil engineer with a doctorate from the School for Advanced Technical Studies in Munich, Todt caught the attention of Adolf Hitler in 1932 as Todt spoke out about the importance of building new roads to jumpstart a moribund German economy. Once Hitler came to power, Hitler placed Todt in charge of a massive road-building project that remains remarkable today: the Autobahn, Germany's superhighway.

1941

March 15 - Belgian politicians form the cross-party resistance organization Independence Front at Liège.

March 16 - German battlecruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau attack an Allied convoy 950 miles east of Nova Scotia, Canada, between 4:28 a.m. and 3:50 p.m, sinking or capturing 10 ships. Danish ship Chilean Reefer sends distress signals and returns fire with her deck gun, and is sunk by Gneisenau's 11-inch shells, killing nine. British battleship HMS Rodney receives the distress signals, but arrives after the German ships had already departed the area.

1942

March 18 - The War Relocation Authority is created to "Take all people of Japanese descent into custody, surround them with troops, prevent them from buying land, and return them to their former homes at the close of the war."

Anger toward and fear of Japanese-Americans began in Hawaii shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor; everyone of Japanese ancestry, young and old, prosperous and poor, was suspected of espionage.

1943

March 20 - The British Eighth Army breaks through the German Mareth Line in Tunisia.

1944

March 19 - German troops occupy Hungary. Nazi SS Lt. Col. Adolf Eichmann arrives in Hungary to begin mass deportation of the 750,000 Hungarian Jews who, thus far, had been largely unmolested.

1945

March 16 - The west Pacific volcanic island of Iwo Jima is declared secured by the U.S. military after months of fiercely fighting its Japanese defenders.

March 19 - The commander of the German Home Army, Gen. Friedrich Fromm, is shot by a firing squad for his part in the July 1944 plot to assassinate the Führer despite the fact that Fromm's participation was half-hearted.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (March 8 to 14)

World War I

1915

March 13 - British forces end their three-day assault on the German trenches near the village of Neuve Chapelle in northern France, the first offensive launched by the British in the spring of 1915.

The Battle of Neuve Chapelle began March 10, 1915, at 8:05 a.m., when British forces attempted to break through the German trenches at Neuve Chapelle and capture the village of Aubers, less than a mile to the east. In the opening assault, 342 guns barraged the trenches for 35 minutes, partially directed by reconnaissance aircraft flying overhead. The total number of shells fired during this barrage exceeded the number fired in the entire Boer War (a conflict fought in South Africa between British forces and South African revolutionaries in 1899-1902) — a frightening testament to how much the nature of war had changed in less than 15 years.

March 14 - British ships Kent and Glasgow corner the German light cruiser Dresden in Cumberland Bay, off the coast of Chile. After raising the white flag, the Dresden's crew abandoned and scuttled the ship, which sank with its German ensign flying.

1916

March 9 - Germany declares war on Portugal, who earlier that year honored its alliance with Great Britain by seizing German ships anchored in Lisbon's harbor.

1917

March 8 - In Russia, the February Revolution (known as such because of Russia's use of the Julian calendar) begins, when riots and strikes over the scarcity of food erupt in Petrograd (now St. Petersburg).

March 10 - Less than two weeks after their victorious recapture of the strategically placed city of Kut-al-Amara on the Tigris River in Mesopotamia, British troops under the regional command of Sir Frederick Stanley Maude bear down on Baghdad, causing their Turkish opponents to begin a full-scale evacuation of the city.

March 11 - The Allied Offensive in Macedonia to free Monastir (Bitola) begins.

March 12 - After being called out to quell workers' demonstrations on the streets of Petrograd (now St. Petersburg), regiment after regiment of Soldiers in the city's army garrison defect to join the rebels, forcing the resignation of the imperial government and heralding the triumph of the February Revolution in Russia.

1918

March 14 - U.S. fighter ace David Putnam gets his fourth aerial victory over Nauroy, France, while flying for the French Escadrille Spa 156. Putnam was killed in action Sept. 12, 1918, the same day he recorded his last aerial victory. Putnam is believed to have shot down more than 30 enemy aircraft, but only 13 were confirmed as the remainder were deep behind enemy lines. He earned the Distinguished Service Cross, French Légion d'Honneur, French Médaille Militaire and French Croix de Guerre.

World War II

1940

March 10 - After a meeting with Adolf Hitler in Berlin, U.S. Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles visits London to discuss a peacemaking proposal with Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain to prevent a widening of the European war.

1941

March 11 - During the night, six British Handley Page Halifax bombers of No. 35 Squadron of No. 4 Group from RAF Leeming in North Yorkshire, England, attack Le Havre, France. It was the operational debut of the four-engine heavy bomber. It was marred by the accidental shoot-down of one of them by an RAF night fighter.

March 12 - German bombers attacks Merseyside, England, United Kingdom. Eight merchant ships are sunk, one floating crane is destroyed, and 174 people are killed.

1942

March 8 - Dutch forces surrender to the Japanese after two months of fighting.

- The British Royal Air Force dispatches 211 bombers to attack Essen, Germany, some equipped with the new generalized estimating-equation navigational system. The results are less than hoped for as only a few homes and a church are destroyed, killing 29 civilians, while the industrial centers, the primary targets, are untouched.

1943

March 14 - German troops re-enter Kharkov, the second largest city in the Ukraine, which had changed hands several times in the battle between the USSR and the invading German forces.

Kharkov was a high-priority target for the Germans when they invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, as the city was a railroad and industrial center, and had coal and iron mines nearby.

1944

March 8 - U.S. fighter ace Robert S. Johnson leads a handful of P-47 Thunderbolts against 100 German fighters in a large aerial battle over Steinhude Lake, Germany, during which the Germans shoot down 34 American bombers. Johnson was able to claim two Messerschmitt Bf-109 kills. He was the first U.S. Army Air Forces fighter pilot in the European theater to surpass Eddie Rickenbacker's 26 victories in World War I.

March 13 - Britain announces that all travel between Ireland and the United Kingdom is suspended — the result of the Irish government's refusal to expel Axis-power diplomats within its borders.

1945

March 9 - U.S. warplanes launch a new bombing offensive against Japan, dropping 2,000 tons of incendiary bombs on Tokyo over the course of the next 48 hours. Almost 16 square miles in and around the Japanese capital were incinerated, and between 80,000 and 130,000 Japanese civilians were killed in the worst single fire storm in recorded history.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes**Next week in World War history (March 1 to 7)****World War I****1915**

March 4 - The Russian government sends circular telegram to Entente governments laying claim to Constantinople.

- S.S. "Thordis" is rammed and sunk by a German submarine.

1916

March 6 - During a punishing snowstorm, the German army launches a new attack against French forces on the high ground of Mort-Homme, on the left bank of the Meuse River, near the fortress city of Verdun, France, on this day in 1916. The Battle of Verdun began Feb. 21, 1916, with a German bombardment on the symbolic city of Verdun, the last French stronghold to fall during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. The French stubbornly hold onto Fort Douaumont, Verdun's major protective strongpoint, despite a speedy German advance begun Feb. 25. The resulting stalemate led to heavy casualties on both sides. On the night of Douaumont's capture, Gen. al Philippe Petain took over the French command of the Verdun sector, vowing to hold the fort at all costs and inflict the maximum number of German casualties in the process. The German objective was similar: In the words of Gen. Erich von Falkenhayn, chief of the general staff, they aimed to bleed the French white.

March 7 - Germans capture Hills 360 and 265, and Fresnes (southeast of Verdun).

1917

March 1 - The text of the so-called Zimmermann Telegram, a message from the German foreign secretary, Arthur Zimmermann, to the German ambassador to Mexico proposing a Mexican-German alliance in the case of war between the United States and Germany, is published on the front pages of newspapers across America.

In the telegram, intercepted and deciphered by British intelligence in January 1917, Zimmermann instructs the ambassador, Count Johann von Bernstorff, to offer significant financial aid to Mexico if it agrees to enter any future U.S.-German conflict as a German ally. If victorious in the conflict, Germany also promises to restore to Mexico the lost territories of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

March 2 - Barely a month before the United States enters World War I, President Woodrow Wilson signs the Jones-Shafroth act, granting American citizenship to the inhabitants of Puerto Rico.

March 5 - Turks abandon strong positions west of Shalal (Sinai Peninsula).

1918

March 3 - In the city of Brest-Litovsk, located in modern-day Belarus near the Polish border, Russia signs a treaty with the Central Powers ending its participation in World War I.

March 7 - Four days after Russia signs a humiliating peace treaty with the Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk, the newly declared independent state of Finland reaches a formal peace settlement with Germany.

World War II**1940**

March 5 - The Soviet Politburo declares the Polish officers in captivity "enemies of the Soviet Union" and orders death sentences for all of them, fearing that, if released back into the population, they would organize resistance movements against the Soviet occupation.

1941

March 1 - The southeastern European nation of Bulgaria joins the Axis powers by signing the Tripartite Pact.

March 4 - The British navy raids a German position off the coast of Norway and inside the Arctic Circle — the Lofoten Islands. The raid, code name Operation Claymore, proved highly destructive of its target — an armed German trawler — but ultimately a failure in achieving its objective, the capture of an Enigma decoding machine.

1942

March 7 - British and Indian troops on Christmas Island mistake the latest heavy naval bombardment as a precursor to an invasion and hoisted white flags to indicate surrender. The warships departed, however, and the troops lowered the white flags and sent British flags back up poles.

March - U.S. 8th Pursuit Squadron, flying P-40 fighters, is sent to Melbourne, Australia.

1943

March 2 - U.S. and Australian land-based planes begin an offensive against a convoy of Japanese ships in the Bismarck Sea, in the western Pacific.

1944

March 4 - Having already suffered heavy losses during day raids of various German industrial centers, the Americans had been cautious in pursuing night raids. However, with the British Royal Air Force exhausted, the U.S. Eighth Air Force pursues night bombing and makes Berlin its primary target. Fourteen U.S. bomber wings take off for Germany from England; only one plane reaches Berlin. (The rest drop their loads elsewhere.) The initial American attack is considered "none too successful" (as recorded in the official history of U.S. Army Air Force). Subsequent attacks in March are more effective.

1945

March 3 - Finland, under increasing pressure from both the United States and the Soviet Union, declares war on its former partner, Germany.

March 6 - Members of the Dutch Resistance who were attempting to hijack a truck in Apeldoorn, the Netherlands, ambush Lt. Gen. Hanns Rauter, an SS officer. The following week, the German SS executed 263 Dutch in retaliation.

The Dutch Resistance was one of the fiercest of all the underground movements in Nazi-occupied Europe. "The Dutch never accepted the German contention that ... the war was over," wrote the Dutch foreign minister in a postwar account of life under Nazi occupation. "Their acts of resistance and sabotage grew more audacious as time passed."

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes**Next week in World War history (Feb. 22 to 28)****World War I****1915**

Feb. 24 - The first British Territorial division leaves England for France.

Feb. 26 - Liquid fire (flame throwers) is used for the first time by the Germans on the Western front.

1916

Feb. 22 - Lt. Gen. Sir George Henry Fowke is appointed Adjutant-General, British Expeditionary Force, France. He holds this post until the end of the war.

Feb. 25 - German troops seize Fort Douaumont, the most formidable of the forts guarding the walled city of Verdun, France, four days after launching their initial attack. The Battle of Verdun will become the longest and bloodiest conflict of World War I, lasting 10 months and resulting in more than 700,000 casualties.

Feb. 27 - After completing their conquest of Serbia and Montenegro, the Austro-Hungarian army turns its attention toward Albania, occupying the coastal city of Durazzo on the Adriatic Sea.

Feb. 28 - Allied forces complete their conquest of the Cameroons, a German protectorate on the coast of western Africa.

1917

Feb. 22 - Sgt. Benito Mussolini is wounded by the accidental explosion of a mortar bomb on the Isonzo section of the Italian Front in World War I. Born in Predappio, Italy, in 1883, Mussolini, the son of a blacksmith and a teacher, was well-read, largely self-educated and had worked as a schoolteacher and a socialist journalist. He was arrested and jailed for leading demonstrations in the Forlì province against the Italian war in Libya in 1911-12.

Feb. 23 - German troops begin a well-planned withdrawal — ordered several weeks previously by Kaiser Wilhelm — to strong positions on the Hindenburg Line, solidifying their defense and digging in for a continued struggle on the Western Front in World War I.

Feb. 24 - The Allied war against Turkish forces gains momentum (and ground) in Mesopotamia as British and Indian troops move along the Tigris River in early 1917, recapturing the city of Kut-al-Amara and taking 1,730 Turkish prisoners. Ten months after nearly 12,000 British and Indian troops had been captured there — considered by many the most humiliating surrender in the history of the British army — Kut fell into the hands of a British corps commanded by Sir Frederick Maude.

Feb. 26 - In a crucial step toward U.S. entry into World War I, President Woodrow Wilson learns of the so-called Zimmermann Telegram, a message from German Foreign Secretary Arthur Zimmermann to the German ambassador to Mexico proposing a Mexican-German alliance in the event of a war between the United States and Germany

1918

Feb. 26 - British hospital ship "Glenart Castle" is sunk by submarine in the Bristol Channel.

World War II**1940**

Feb. 27 - No. 110 Army Co-operation (Auxiliary) Squadron of the Royal Canadian Air Force arrives in Britain.

1941

Feb. 25 - In occupied Amsterdam, a general strike begins in response to increasing anti-Jewish measures instituted by the Nazi occupation administration.

1942

Feb. 22 - President Franklin D. Roosevelt orders Gen. Douglas MacArthur out of the Philippines, as the American defense of the islands collapses.

1943

Feb. 22 - Air Marshall Sir Arthur Harris is appointed chief of RAF Bomber Command with a new remit: attempting to hit specific military and industrial targets is to be abandoned in favor of the most densely built-up areas of German cities. The area bombing directive essentially says that if the RAF cannot destroy the factories it should destroy the homes and the morale of the work force.

Feb. 23 - U.S. carrier aircraft attack Japanese installations in the Mariana Islands

Feb. 28 - The U.S. Army announces a plan to form a special Nisei combat team from Americans of Japanese parentage. Within days, they receive more than 10,000 volunteers for only 2,500 places.

1944

Feb. 24 - Maj. Gen. Frank Merrill's guerrilla force, nicknamed "Merrill's Marauders," begin a campaign in northern Burma. In August 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill agreed to create an American ground unit whose sole purpose would be to engage in a "long-range penetration mission" in Japanese-occupied Burma. This would consist of cutting Japanese communications and supply lines, and otherwise throwing the enemy's positions into chaos. It was hoped that this commando force could thus prepare the way for Gen. Joseph Stillwell's Chinese American Force to reopen the Burma Road, which was closed in April 1942 by the Japanese invaders, and once again allow supplies and war material into China through this route.

1945

Feb. 23 - During the battle for Iwo Jima, U.S. Marines raise the American flag atop Mount Suribachi, the highest point on the island and a key strategic point. Later, Marine commanders decide to raise a second, larger flag, an event that an Associated Press photographer captured on film. The resulting photograph became a defining image of the war and was later the basis for the colossal U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Feb. 26 - An ammunition dump on the Philippine island of Corregidor is blown up by a remnant of the Japanese garrison, causing more American casualties on the eve of U.S. victory there.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes**Next week in World War history (Feb. 15 to 21)****World War I****1915**

Feb. 15 - In Singapore, Indian Soldiers launch the first large-scale mutiny of World War I.

Some 800 Soldiers in the Indian army's 5th Light Infantry Brigade break out of their barracks and kill several British officers before moving on to other areas of the city. By the time the revolt is quashed several days later by British, French and Russian troops, the mutineers have killed 39 Europeans – both Soldiers and civilians. British Soldiers execute 37 of the mutiny's ringleaders by firing squad.

Feb. 17 - After encountering a severe snowstorm, the German zeppelin L-4 crash-lands in the North Sea near the Danish coastal town of Varde.

The zeppelin, a motor-driven rigid airship, was developed by German inventor Ferdinand Graf von Zeppelin in 1900. Although a French inventor had built a power-driven airship several decades before, Zeppelin's rigid dirigible, with its steel framework, was by far the largest airship ever constructed.

Feb. 19 - British and French battleships launch a massive attack on Turkish positions at Cape Helles and Kum Kaleh at the entrance to the Dardanelles, the narrow strait separating Europe from Asia in northwestern Turkey and the only waterway linking the Mediterranean Sea to the Black Sea.

With Turkey's entrance into World War I in November 1914 on the side of the Central Powers, the Dardanelles were controlled by Germany and its allies, thus isolating the Russian navy from the Allied naval forces and preventing cooperation between the two, as well as blocking passage of Russian wheat and British arms back and forth. An attack on the Dardanelles was thus a key objective of the Allies from the beginning of the war.

1916

Feb. 16 - After five days of intense fighting, the Russian army defeats the Third Turkish Army to capture Erzerum, a largely Armenian city in the Ottoman province of Anatolia.

1917

Feb. 17 - South of the Ancre river, the British penetrate 1,000 yards into enemy positions on a front of 1.5 miles.

1918

Feb. 21 - Combined Allied forces of British troops and the Australian mounted cavalry capture the city of Jericho in Palestine after a three-day battle with Turkish troops.

Commanded by British Gen. Edmund Allenby, the Allied troops began the offensive on Tuesday, Feb. 19, on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Despite battling adverse weather conditions and a determined enemy in the Turks, the Allies were able to move nearly 20 miles toward Jericho in just three days.

1919

Feb. 20 - Habibullah Khan, the leader of Afghanistan who struggled to keep his country neutral in World War I in the face of strong internal support for Turkey and the Central Powers, is shot and killed while on a hunting trip on this day in 1919.

World War II**1939**

Feb. 15 - France orders 100 DB-7 medium bombers from the Douglas Aircraft Company of the United States.

1940

Feb. 16 - German freighter Altmark, former supply ship for pocket battleship Admiral Graf Spee, is found by Hudson aircraft of Royal Air Force No. 233 Squadron in Jøssingfjord, Norway. HMS Cossack captures Altmark and rescues 299 British prisoners of war aboard.

1941

Feb. 18 - Adolf Hitler meets with tank generals and tank designers at his residence Berghof in southern Germany. He insists on using larger (either 50-millimeter or 75-millimeter) high-velocity guns for Panzer III and Panzer IV tanks.

1942

Feb. 15 - Singapore, the "Gibraltar of the East" and a strategic British stronghold, falls to Japanese forces.

An island city and the capital of the Straits Settlement of the Malay Peninsula, Singapore had been a British colony since the 19th century. In July 1941, when Japanese troops occupied French Indochina, the Japanese telegraphed their intentions to transfer Singapore from the British to its own burgeoning empire.

Feb. 20 - Lt. Edward O'Hare takes off from the aircraft carrier Lexington in a raid against the Japanese position at Rabaul – and, minutes later, becomes America's first flying ace.

1943

Feb. 18 - Hans Scholl and his sister Sophie, the leaders of the German youth group Weisse Rose (White Rose), are arrested by the Gestapo for opposing the Nazi regime.

The White Rose was composed of university (mostly medical) students who spoke out against Adolf Hitler and his regime. The founder, Hans Scholl, was a former member of Hitler Youth who grew disenchanted with Nazi ideology once its real aims became evident.

1944

Feb. 17 - Operation Catchpole is launched as American troops devastate the Japanese defenders of Eniwetok and take control of the atoll in the northwestern part of the Marshall Islands.

Feb. 21 - Hideki Tojo, prime minister of Japan, grabs even more power as he takes over as army chief of staff, a position that gives him direct control of the Japanese military.

1945

Feb. 16 - The Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines is occupied by American troops, almost three years after the devastating and infamous Bataan Death March.

Feb. 19 - Operation Detachment, the U.S. Marines' invasion of Iwo Jima, is launched. Iwo Jima is a barren Pacific island guarded by Japanese artillery, but to American military minds, it is prime real estate on which to build airfields to launch bombing raids against Japan, only 660 miles away.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (Feb. 8 to 14)

World War I

1915

Feb. 12 - One of the biggest air raids of World War I occurs on this day in 1915, when 34 planes from the British Naval Wing attack the German-occupied coastal towns of Blankenberghe, Ostend and Zeebrugge in Belgium.

The attacks, led by British Wing Commander C.R. Samson, targeted the railway stations in Ostend and Blankenberghe as well as railway lines across the coast that were being used by the occupying military forces from Germany. The town of Zeebrugge, which was being used by the Germans as a base of operations for their deadly submarine warfare and from which they planned a blockade of the Belgian coast, was also a major target of the attack.

1916

Feb. 9 - H.M.S. Mimi and Fifi sink German gunboat Hedwig von Wissman securing British command of Lake Tanganyika. The second largest of the lakes of eastern Africa, Lake Tanganyika is the longest freshwater lake in the world (410 miles [660 km]) and the second deepest (4,710 feet [1,436 meters]) after Lake Baikal in Russia. Comparatively narrow, varying in width from 10 to 45 miles (16 to 72 km), it covers about 12,700 square miles (32,900 square km) and forms the boundary between Tanzania and Congo.

Feb. 10 - As a result of bitter disagreements with President Woodrow Wilson over America's national defense strategies, Lindley M. Garrison resigns his position as the United States secretary of war.

1917

Feb. 13 - Scandinavian Governments' joint protest against German submarine warfare is published.

Feb. 14 - British Government gives pledge in House of Commons that the restitution of Alsace-Lorraine is an object of the war.

1918

Feb. 8 - The U.S. Army resumes publication of the military newsletter Stars and Stripes.

Begun as a newsletter for Union Soldiers during the American Civil War, Stars and Stripes was published weekly during World War I from Feb. 8, 1918, until June 13, 1919. The newspaper was distributed to American Soldiers dispersed across the Western Front to keep them unified and informed about the overall war effort and America's part in it, as well as supply them with news from the home front.

The front page of the newspaper's first World War I issue features "A Message from Our Chief," a short valedictory from Gen. John J. Pershing, commander in chief of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF): The paper, written by the men in the service, should speak the thoughts of the new American Army and the American people from whom the Army has been drawn. It is your paper. Good luck to it.

Feb. 9 - The first peace treaty of World War I is signed when the newly declared independent state of Ukraine officially comes to terms with the Central Powers at 2 a.m. in Berlin.

World War II

1939

Feb. 12 - Slovakian nationalist leader Vojtech Tuka meets with Adolf Hitler in Berlin, seeking support for independence.

1940

Feb. 8 - Three Hawk 75 fighters of the Chinese 18th Squadron intercept 27 Japanese aircraft en route to Mengzi, Yunnan, China. One of the Chinese fighters is heavily damaged and forced to crash land, injuring pilot Yang Tzu-fan.

1941

Feb. 12 - German Gen. Erwin Rommel arrives in Tripoli, Libya, with the newly formed Afrika Korps, to reinforce the beleaguered Italians' position.

1942

Feb. 9 - Congress pushes ahead standard time for the United States by one hour in each time zone, imposing daylight saving time — called at the time "war time."

Daylight saving time, suggested by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, is imposed to conserve fuel. It can be traced back to World War I, when Congress imposed one standard time on the United States to enable the country to better use resources, following the European model.

Feb. 10 - A Japanese submarine launches a brutal attack on Midway, a coral atoll used as a U.S. Navy base. It was the fourth bombing of the atoll by Japanese ships since Dec. 7.

Feb. 11 - The German battleships Gneisenau and Scharnhorst, as well as the heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen, escape from the French port of Brest and make a mad dash up the English Channel to safety in German waters.

1943

Feb. 14 - German Gen. Erwin Rommel and his Afrika Korps launch an offensive against an Allied defensive line in Tunisia, North Africa. The Kasserine Pass was the site of the United States' first major battle defeat of the war.

1944

Feb. 8 - Maj. William Sidney, 1st Viscount de L'Isle, leads an attack on enemy positions at Anzio, Italy. Although wounded, he refuses medical treatment until his objective is secure. For this, he is awarded the Victoria Cross (following in the footsteps of his father-in-law, Field Marshal Lord Gort (John Vereker), who also had been badly wounded while winning the same medal in WWI).

1945

Feb. 13 - A series of Allied firebombing raids begins against the German city of Dresden, reducing the "Florence of the Elbe" to rubble and flames, and killing as many as 135,000 people. It is the single-most destructive bombing of the war — including Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Dresden was firebombed to break the will of the German people. Allied troops hadn't reached the Rhein yet, and all strategic German cities had already been reduced to rubble. Dresden was selected to serve as an example because, as a cultural center with no war industry, it had escaped Allied bombing up to that point.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (Feb. 1 to 7)

World War I

1915

Feb. 3 - Turkish troops launch an unsuccessful attack against the British-controlled Suez Canal, which is regularly used by the British to ferry Dominion troops from Australia, New Zealand and India to European battlegrounds.

Feb. 4 - A full two years before Germany's aggressive naval policy would draw the United States into the war against them, Kaiser Wilhelm announces an important step in the development of that policy, proclaiming the North Sea a war zone, in which all merchant ships, including those from neutral countries, were liable to be sunk without warning.

In widening the boundaries of naval warfare, Germany was retaliating against the Allies for the British-imposed blockade of Germany in the North Sea, an important part of Britain's war strategy aimed at strangling its enemy economically. By war's end — according to official British counts — the so-called hunger blockade would take some 770,000 German lives.

Feb. 7 - In a blinding snowstorm, General Fritz von Below and Germany's Eighth Army launch a surprise attack against the Russian lines just north of the Masurian Lakes on the Eastern Front, beginning the Winter Battle of the Masurian Lakes (also known as the Second Battle of the Masurian Lakes). A previous battle in the Masurian Lakes region, located near the villages of Frogenau and Tannenberg in East Prussia, had taken place in September 1914 and ended in the second major defeat of the Russians by Erich Ludendorff's German forces

1916

Feb. 2 - Two days after nine German zeppelins dropped close to 400 bombs throughout the English Midlands, the crew of the British fishing trawler King Stephen comes across the crashed remains of one of the giant airships floating in the North Sea. Developed by a German army officer, Count Ferdinand Zeppelin, and first flown in 1900, the zeppelin was an impressive aircraft by the beginning of World War I. With the capacity to carry five machine guns and up to 2,000 kilograms (4,400 pounds) of bombs, it could reach a maximum speed of 136 kilometers per hour (84.5 miles per hour) and a height of 4,250 meters (13,943 feet).

1917

Feb. 3 - President Woodrow Wilson speaks for two hours before a historic session of Congress to announce that the United States is breaking diplomatic relations with Germany.

Feb. 6 - Just three days after U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's speech of Feb. 3, 1917 — in which he broke diplomatic relations with Germany and warned that war would follow if American interests at sea were again assaulted — a German submarine torpedoes and sinks the Anchor Line passenger steamer California off the Irish coast.

1918

Feb. 5 - The Anchor Line steamship Tuscania, traveling as part of a British convoy and transporting over 2,000 American Soldiers bound for Europe, is torpedoed and sinks off the coast of Ireland by the German submarine U-77.

World War II

1939

Feb. 7 - Named after a game fish, the submarine USS Sargo is commissioned.

1940

Feb. 1 - Soviet artillery pieces fire 300,000 shells in the Summa sector of the Karelian Isthmus at the start of a new Soviet offensive against Finnish forces.

- German submarine U-59 torpedoes and sinks British coaler Ellen M. 20 miles east of Southwold, Suffolk, England, killing the entire crew of nine.

- The keel of battleship Alabama is laid down at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Virginia.

1941

Feb. 5 - Adolf Hitler scolds Axis partner Benito Mussolini for his troops' retreat in the face of British advances in Libya, demanding that il Duce command his forces to resist.

1942

Feb. 2 - Vidkun Quisling, a collaborator with the German occupiers of Norway, is established as prime minister of a puppet government.

1943

Feb. 1 - Japanese forces on Guadalcanal Island, defeated by Marines, start to withdraw after the Japanese emperor finally gives them permission.

Feb. 2 - The last of the German forces fighting at Stalingrad surrender, despite Hitler's earlier declaration that "Surrender is out of the question. The troops will defend themselves to the last!" The Battle of Stalingrad began in the summer of 1942, as German forces assaulted the city, a major industrial center and a potential strategic coup. However, despite repeated attempts, the German 6th Army, under Friedrich von Paulus, and part of the 4th Panzer Army, under Ewald von Kleist, could not break past the adamant defense by the Soviet 62nd Army, despite pushing the Soviets almost to the Volga River in mid-October and encircling Stalingrad.

- Australian troops advanced west from Derna, Libya, continuing to push back the Italians.

Feb. 6 - Wary of his son-in-law's growing anti-war attitude, Benito Mussolini removes Count Galeazzo Ciano as head of Italy's foreign ministry and takes over the duty himself.

1944

Feb. 3 - American forces invade and take control of the Marshall Islands, long occupied by the Japanese and used by them as a base for military operations. The Marshalls, east of the Caroline Islands in the western Pacific Ocean, had been in Japanese hands since World War I.

1945

Feb. 4 - President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Premier Josef Stalin meet at Yalta, in the Crimea, to discuss and plan the postwar world — namely, to address the redistribution of power and influence. It is at Yalta that many people place the birth of the Cold War.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes**Next week in World War history (Jan. 25 to 31)****World War I****1915**

Jan. 28 - In the country's first such action against American shipping interests on the high seas, the captain of a German cruiser orders the destruction of the William P. Frye, an American merchant ship. On Jan. 27, the merchant ship was intercepted by the German cruiser in the South Atlantic Ocean off the Brazilian coast and ordered to jettison its cargo as contraband. When the American ship's crew failed to fulfill these orders completely by Jan. 28, the German captain ordered the destruction.

Jan. 29 - German Lt. Erwin Rommel leads his company in the daring capture of four French block-houses, the structures used on the front to house artillery positions, in the Argonne region of France.

Rommel creeps through the French wire first and then calls for the rest of his company to follow him. When they hang back after he repeatedly shouts his orders, Rommel crawls back, threatening to shoot the commander of his lead platoon if the other men don't follow him. The company finally advances, capturing the block-houses and successfully combating an initial French counterattack before they are surrounded, subjected to heavy fire and forced to withdraw.

Jan. 31 - The German Ninth Army, led by August von Mackensen, attacks the Russian Second Army, under Gen. Andrei K. Smirnov, near the Polish village of Bolimów, lying on the railway line connecting Lodz and Warsaw.

1916

Jan. 27 - The Military Service Act is passed by Parliament, imposing conscription on all single men aged 18 to 41 in Great Britain. Exemptions are made for men in essential war work, those declared medically unfit, religious ministers and conscientious objectors.

1917

Jan. 30 - U-boat U-55, commanded by Kapitänleutnant Wilhelm Werner, sinks six British and one Belgian ship NNW of Cornwall, England.

Jan. 31 - Germany announces the renewal of unrestricted submarine warfare in the Atlantic as German torpedo-armed submarines prepare to attack any and all ships, including civilian passenger carriers, said to be sighted in war-zone waters.

1918

Jan. 26 - The former Russian state of Ukraine declares its independence.

Jan. 27 - Plagued by hunger and increasingly frustrated with the continuing Great War, hundreds of thousands of long-suffering German workers prepare for a massive strike in Berlin.

Jan. 30 - Negotiations between the Russian Bolshevik government and Central Powers resume.

1919

Jan. 25 - Delegates to the peace conference in Paris formally approve the establishment of a commission on the League of Nations.

World War II**1939**

Jan. 30 - Appearing before the Nazi Reichstag (Parliament) on the sixth anniversary of his coming to power, Adolf Hitler makes a speech commemorating that event and also makes a public threat against the Jews.

"In the course of my life, I have very often been a prophet and have usually been ridiculed for it. During the time of my struggle for power, it was in the first instance only the Jewish race that received my prophecies with laughter when I said that I would one day take over the leadership of the State, and with it that of the whole nation, and that I would then among other things settle the Jewish problem. Their laughter was uproarious, but I think that for some time now they have been laughing on the other side of their face. Today I will once more be a prophet: If the international Jewish financiers in and outside Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more into a world war, then the result will not be the Bolshevizing of the earth, and thus the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe!"

1940

Jan. 31 - Sir John Simon announces British food subsidies are running at £1 million per week.

1941

Jan. 30 - British forces in North Africa take Derna, 100 miles west of Tobruk.

1942

Jan. 26 - The first American forces arrive in Great Britain..

Jan. 29 - Britain and Russia secure an agreement with Iran that offers Iran protection while creating a "Persian corridor" for the Allies — a supply route from the West to Russia.

1943

Jan. 27 - Eighth Air Force bombers, dispatched from their bases in England, fly the first American bombing raid against the Germans, targeting the Wilhelmshaven port. Of the 64 planes participating in the raid, 53 reach their target and manage to shoot down 22 German planes and lose only three planes in return.

Jan. 30 - The British Royal Air Force begins a bombing campaign on the German capital that coincides with the 10th anniversary of Hitler's accession to power.

1944

Jan. 27 - Soviet forces permanently break the Leningrad siege line, ending the almost 900-day German-enforced containment of the city, which cost hundreds of thousands of Russian lives.

1945

Jan. 25 - The most decorated man of the war, American Lt. Audie Murphy, is wounded in France.

Jan. 31 - Pvt. Eddie Slovik becomes the first American Soldier since the Civil War to be executed for desertion — and the only one who suffers such a fate during World War II.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (Jan. 18 to 24)

World War I

1915

Jan. 19 - Britain suffers its first casualties from an air attack when two German zeppelins drop bombs on Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn on the eastern coast of England.

Jan. 24 - German naval forces under Adm. Franz von Hipper, encouraged by the success of a surprise attack on the British coastal towns of Hartlepool and Scarborough the previous month, set off toward Britain once again, only to be intercepted by a squadron of British cruisers led by Vice Adm. Sir David Beatty near the Dogger Bank in the North Sea. Franz loses more than 1,000 men and one ship.

- Lt. Gen. Sir Archibald Murray resigns as Chief of the General Staff, British Expeditionary Force, France, and Lt. Gen. Sir William Robertson resigns as Quartermaster-General.

1916

Jan. 18 - Baron Napoléon Eugène Beyens succeeds Julien Davignon as Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Jan. 19 - Lt. Gen. Sir Percy Lake takes over command of British forces in Mesopotamia.

Jan. 21 - The First Battle of Hanna (Turkish: Felahiye Muharebesi) is fought on the Mesopotamian front between the Ottoman Army and Anglo-Indian forces.

Jan. 22 - The Rumanian government opens negotiations with the Russian government regarding military assistance.

1917

Jan. 19 - The British intercept a telegram sent by Alfred Zimmermann in the German Foreign Office to the German embassies in Washington, D.C., and Mexico City. Its message outlines plans for an alliance between Germany and Mexico against the United States.

Jan. 23 - British trawlers Agnes, George E. Benson and Vera are captured by German U-boat U-44 commanded by Kapitänleutnant Paul Wagenführ.

1918

Jan. 20 - British and German forces clash in the Aegean Sea when German battleships Goeben and Breslau attempt a surprise raid on Allied forces off the Dardanelles Strait.

1919

Jan. 18 - Post-World War I peace conference begins in Paris. Leaders of the victorious Allied powers — France, Great Britain, the United States and Italy — debate peace accords for the next six months. For most of the conference, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson struggles to support his idea of a "peace without victory" and make sure that Germany, the leader of the Central Powers and the major loser of the war, isn't treated too harshly. On the other hand, Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau of France and Prime Minister David Lloyd George of Britain argue that punishing Germany adequately and ensuring its weakness is the only way to justify the immense costs of the war. In the end, Wilson compromises on the treatment of Germany in order to push through the creation of his project, an international peacekeeping organization called the League of Nations.

World War II

1940

Jan. 21 - German submarine U-22 attacks British merchant vessel Cyprian Prince in the Moray Firth in Scotland at 5:38 a.m. but fails to hit it. At 6 a.m. U-22 torpedoes and sinks destroyer HMS Exmouth off Wick, killing 189, which is the entire crew. At 7:11 a.m. U-22 torpedoes Danish ship Tekla, killing four; nine crew members survive.

1941

Jan. 19 - British forces in East Africa, acting on information obtained by breaking the Italians' coded messages, invade Italian-occupied Eritrea — a solid step toward victory in Africa.

Jan. 22 - British and Commonwealth forces enter the port at Tobruk in Libya, and tens of thousands of Italian occupiers are taken prisoner.

1942

Jan. 18 - Heinrich Himmler promotes Auschwitz camp commandant Rudolf Hess to SS major. He also orders that the Warsaw ghetto, the Jewish quarter constructed by the Nazis upon the occupation of Poland and enclosed first by barbed wire and then by brick walls, be depopulated — a "total cleansing," as he described it. The inhabitants are to be transported to what becomes a second extermination camp constructed at the railway village of Treblinka, 62 miles northeast of Warsaw.

1943

Jan. 24 - German Gen. Friedrich von Paulus, commander in chief of the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad, urgently requests permission from Adolf Hitler to surrender his position there, but Hitler refuses.

1944

Jan. 20 - The heaviest RAF raid on Berlin to date is launched, with 769 aircraft (495 Lancaster, 264 Halifax, 10 Mosquito) dropping over 2,300 tons of explosives on the German capital. Thirteen Lancaster and 22 Halifax bombers are lost. Damage to Berlin is thought to be extensive but cannot be confirmed due to bad weather on the next day.

- Heinrich Prinz zu Sayn-Wittgenstein shoots down three British aircraft near Berlin, increasing his victories to 78. His Ju 88 aircraft is damaged by the propeller of the third aircraft he shoots down, a Lancaster bomber, and he only barely makes it back to the airfield and has to crash land.

1945

Jan. 20 - U.S. troops capture Diekirch, Luxembourg. Upon capture, they find 12 to 15 dead civilians, executed by the retreating 208th Volksgrenadier Regiment.

Jan. 23 - In fighting at Brachterbeek, the Netherlands, Lance Cpl. Henry Harden, a medic attached to the Commandos, sprints 100 yards under fire over open ground to attend three wounded men. He carries one back to safety and, despite being hit, insist on returning for the others. As he hoists the second wounded man onto his back, he is shot and killed. He is posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (Jan. 11 to 17)

**World War I
1915**

Jan. 13 - British War Council resolve that the Admiralty should prepare for a naval expedition in February against the Dardanelles.

Jan. 17 - The initial Turkish offensive into Russia is thwarted as the Turkish Third Army suffers a defeat by the Russian Army of the Caucasus near Kars. The Russians then begin a multi-pronged invasion of the Ottoman Empire from the Caucasus.

1916

Jan. 11 - To provide a safe and stable haven for the growing number of refugees pouring out of the devastated Balkan state of Serbia, French forces take formal military control of the Greek island of Corfu.

Jan. 12 - German aces Oswald Boelcke and Max Immelmann are awarded the Pour le Mérite, Germany's highest decoration for military bravery. Both lieutenants have eight aerial victories.



Oswald Boelcke and Max Immelmann each have eight WWI aerial victories.

Jan. 13 - In an attempt to relieve their compatriots under heavy siege by Turkish forces at Kut-al Amara in Mesopotamia, British forces under the command of Lt. Gen. Fenton Aylmer launch an attack against Turkish defensive positions on the banks of the Wadi River.

Jan. 16 - After an eight-day offensive that marked the beginning of a new, aggressive strategy in the region, Austro-Hungarian troops, under commander in chief Franz Conrad von Hotzendorf, take control of the Balkan state of Montenegro.

Jan. 17 - Winston Churchill, beginning his service as a battalion commander on the Western Front, attends a lecture on the Battle of Loos given by his friend, Col. Tom Holland, in the Belgian town of Hazebrouck.

1917

Jan. 17 - The Inter-Allied Conference (Russia, France, Great Britain and Italy represented) assembles at Petrograd to discuss war policy, finance, supplies and cooperation.

1918

Jan. 12 - Latvia declares its independence.

Jan. 14 - German destroyers bombard Yarmouth (Norfolk).

Jan. 16 - Riots break out in Vienna and Budapest as the Austro-Hungarians express mounting dissatisfaction with the war.

**World War II
1940**

Jan. 11 - German submarine U-23 torpedoes and sinks Norwegian coal carrier Fredville, which has just picked up coal from Methil, Scotland, about 100 miles east of the Orkney Islands. Eleven men are killed, five men are rescued by a Swedish ship.

Jan. 15 - The British government reveals that nearly twice as many people have been killed on the roads than the number of people killed in enemy action. The blackout is among the chief reasons.

1941

Jan. 15 - In Iceland, 133 mile-an-hour winds sink three PBY Catalina aircraft of U.S. Navy squadron VP-73 and two PBM Mariner aircraft of squadron VP-74.

1942

Jan. 13 - Representatives of nine German-occupied countries meet in London to declare that all those found guilty of war crimes will be punished after the war ends. Among the signatories to the declaration are Polish Gen. Wladyslaw Sikorski and French Gen. Charles de Gaulle. The core of the declaration is the promise of "the punishment, through the channels of organized justice, of those guilty of, or responsible for, these crimes, whether they have ordered them, perpetrated them, or participated in them."

- The Germans begin a U-boat offensive along the east coast of the United States.

Jan. 14 - The United States and Great Britain agree to have the British Chiefs of Staff and the U.S. Joint Chiefs work together, either through meetings or representatives, to advise the leaders of both nations on military policy during the war.

1943

Jan. 12 - Soviet troops create a breach in the German siege of Leningrad, which had lasted for a year and a half. The Soviet forces punch a hole in the siege, which ruptures the German encirclement and allows for more supplies to come in along Lake Ladoga.

1944

Jan. 17 - Operation Panther, the Allied invasion of Cassino, in central Italy, is launched.

The ancient town of Cassino, near the Rapido River, is a strategic point in the German Gustav Line, a defensive front across central Italy and based at the Rapido, Garigliano, and Sangro rivers. Taking Cassino will mean a breach in the German line and their inevitable retreat farther north.

The town is not safely in Allied hands until May and undergoes considerable destruction, including the bombing of the ancient Benedictine abbey Monte Cassino, which takes the lives of a bishop and several monks.

1945

Jan. 16 - Adolf Hitler takes to his underground bunker, where he remains for 105 days until he commits suicide.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes**Next week in World War history (Dec. 21 to 27)****World War I****1914**

Dec. 25 - At the first light of dawn on Christmas Day, some German Soldiers emerge from their trenches and approach the Allied lines across no man's land, calling out "Merry Christmas" in their enemies' native tongues. At first, the Allied Soldiers fear it is a trick, but seeing the Germans unarmed they climb out of their trenches and shake hands with the enemy Soldiers. The men exchange presents of cigarettes and plum puddings, and sing carols and songs.

1915

Dec. 21 - Shortly after Sir Douglas Haig is installed as the new commander in chief of the British forces, his steadfast supporter, Sir William Robertson, is appointed the new chief of the Imperial General Staff, with King George's backing and over the head of the embattled British war secretary, Sir Horatio Kitchener.

1916

Dec. 23 - German U-boat U-21 damages British steamer Benalder with a torpedo east of Crete. Commanded by Otto Hensing, U-21 damages or sinks 42 ships, including HMS Pathfinder (the first warship sunk by a German U-boat), HMS Triumph, HMS Majestic, the French cruiser Admiral Charner, and the French auxiliary cruiser Carthage during the war.

1917

Dec. 22 - A week after the armistice was signed between Russia and Germany and nearly three weeks after a ceasefire was declared on the Eastern Front, representatives of the two countries begin peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk, near the Polish border in what is now the city of Brest, in Belarus.

Dec. 26 - Eight months after the United States enters World War I on behalf of the Allies, President Woodrow Wilson announces the nationalization of a large majority of the country's railroads under the Federal Possession and Control Act.

1918

Dec. 24 - On Christmas Eve, American Maj. John N. Douglas writes to his wife and young daughter from Mayenne, France, telling them of the challenges still faced by the Soldiers in his regiment more than a month after World War I officially ended. "I arrived in Maron about noon on the 19th — and we waited there until the 21st before the train came. It rained continuously — the mud was 2 to 6 inches deep — there was no place to sleep — no fires — no water to drink — and very little warm food. In France at this season, it gets dark very early — about 4:00 — and as there is practically no kerosene — and candles being very high — everybody goes to bed at dusk — in fact by 6:30 everybody in the small town is asleep — we turned in at 6:00 — It was miserable — wet — cold — no lights — no fires — Oh hell."

Dec. 27 - In the wake of the German defeat, members of the People's Guard, the Polish military organization, joined by a number of volunteers — many of them veterans of the Great War — take up arms against the occupying German army in the major industrial city of Poznan.

World War II**1940**

Dec. 23 - Radio broadcast "Germany calling" warns of a second night of bombing for Manchester, England; 171 German aircraft attack the still-burning Manchester, killing 363 civilians and wounding 1,183.

1941

Dec. 22 - British Prime Minister Winston Churchill arrives in Washington, D.C., for meetings with President Franklin D. Roosevelt on a unified Anglo-American war strategy. Now that the United States is directly involved in the Pacific and Europe, Great Britain and America must project a unified front.

1942

Dec. 27 - The German military begins enlisting Soviet prisoners of war in the battle against Russia. Gen. Andrei Vlasov, a captured Soviet war hero turned anticommunist, is made commander of the renegade Soviet troops..

1943

Dec. 26 - The German battle cruiser Scharnhorst is sunk by British warships in the Arctic after decoded German naval signals reveal that the Scharnhorst is on a mission to attack an Anglo-American convoy to Russia.

1944

Dec. 21 - U.S. forces capture Stavelot, Belgium, while the Germans surround Bastogne and capture St. Vith.

Dec. 22 - In Bastogne, the German surrender demand is rebuffed by Gen. Anthony C. McAuliffe with the famous response "Nuts!" Meanwhile, the U.S. Third Army shifts its axis of advance in an attempt to relieve Bastogne. In Germany, Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt suggests a tactical withdrawal, but Adolf Hitler refuses.

Dec. 23 - Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower endorses the finding of a court-martial in the case of Eddie Slovik, who was tried for desertion, and authorizes his execution. The convening authority, D-Day hero Gen. Norman "Dutch" Cota, said of Slovik's sentence, "If I hadn't approved it ... I don't know how I could have gone up to the line and looked a good Soldier in the face." It is the only execution of an American Soldier for a purely military offense since the end of the Civil War.

Dec. 24 - A total of 160 C-47s drop 160 tons of supplies to Allied forces at Bastogne, Belgium.

Dec. 25 - U.S. 2nd Armored Division, with British help, stops German 2.Panzer Division 4 miles from the Meuse River in Belgium.

Dec. 26 - U.S. Third Army under Gen. George Patton relieves the besieged city of Bastogne, Belgium.

Dec. 27 - The encirclement of Bastogne is broken as the 4th Armored Division moves up from the south. With American units pushing from the north and south, the German advance stops and the bulge is contained.

1945

Dec. 21 - Gen. George S. Patton, commander of the U.S. Third Army, dies from injuries suffered in a car accident.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (Dec. 14 to Dec. 20)

World War I

1914

Dec. 15 - Serbia regains Belgrade. Austrian forces withdraw across their border.

Dec. 16 - German battle cruisers from Franz von Hipper's scouting squadron catch the British navy by surprise as they begin heavy bombardment of Hartlepool and Scarborough, English port cities on the North Sea.

The bombardment lasts for about 90 minutes, killing more than 130 civilians and wounding another 500. It unleashes a damning response from the British press, which points to the incident as yet another example of German brutality. The German navy, however, saw the two port cities as valid targets due to their fortified status.

Dec. 18 - Indian troops begin an attack on the Germans near Givenchy; a five-day battle commences.

Dec. 20 - After minor skirmishes, the First Battle of Champagne begins in earnest, marking the first major Allied attack against the Germans since the initiation of trench warfare on the Western Front.

1915

Dec. 15 - The Allies begin an orderly evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula. This comes after months of stalemate in which Turkish troops contained all breakthrough attempts while inflicting 250,000 casualties. The British Navy successfully evacuates 83,000 survivors by sea as the Turkish troops watch without firing a shot.

Dec. 19 - In the wake of the British defeat at the Battle of Loos in September 1915, Sir Douglas Haig replaces Sir John French as commander-in-chief of all British forces on the Western Front.

1916

Dec. 15 - The last offensive in the Battle of Verdun begins as the French push the Germans out of Louvemont and Bezonvaux on the east bank of the Meuse River. Combined with other ground losses, the German withdrawal ends the immediate threat to Verdun and both sides now focus their efforts on battles elsewhere along the Western Front. Overall, the French and Germans suffer nearly a million casualties combined during the 10-month battle in which the Germans fail to capture the city of Verdun.

- The last Allied forces in Macedonia withdraw into Greek territory.

1917

Dec. 15 - Russia signs an armistice with Germany. With Russia's departure from the Eastern Front, 44 German divisions become available to be redeployed to the Western Front in time for the spring offensive.

Dec. 16 - Cuba declares war on Austria-Hungary.

1918

Dec. 14 - In the latest bump on Finland's rocky road from Swedish and Russian duchy to independent nation, the newly-crowned Frederick, German-born and the brother-in-law of Kaiser Wilhelm II, renounces the Finnish throne after barely two months.

World War II

1940

Dec. 9 - RAF bombers attack Mannheim, Germany, in retaliation for German raids on British cities; 34 civilians are killed, 81 are injured, and 1,266 homes destroyed by 100 tons of high-explosive bombs and 14,000 incendiary bombs.

1941

Dec. 18 - The first wave of Japanese troops lands in Hong Kong with artillery fire for cover and the following order from their commander: "Take no prisoners." Upon overrunning a volunteer anti-aircraft battery, the Japanese invaders rope together the captured soldiers and proceed to bayonet them to death. Even those who offer no resistance, such as the Royal Medical Corps, are led up a hill and killed.

The Japanese quickly take control of key reservoirs, threatening the British and Chinese inhabitants with a slow death by thirst. The British finally surrender control of Hong Kong on Christmas Day.

Dec. 19 - Adolf Hitler assumes the position of commander in chief of the German army.

Dec. 20 - In one of his first acts as the new commander in chief of the German army, Adolf Hitler informs Gen. Franz Halder that there will be no retreating from the Russian front near Moscow. Halder is also informed that he can stay on as chief of the general army staff if he so chooses, but only with the understanding that Hitler alone is in charge of the army's movements and strategies.

1942

Dec. 17 - Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden reports to the British House of Commons of the mass murder of Jews by the Germans; this is followed almost immediately by a U.S. declaration that these crimes would be avenged.

1943

Dec. 15 - American troops land on the Arawe Peninsula of New Britain in the Solomon Islands.

1944

Dec. 16 - The Germans launch their last major offensive of the war, in an attempt to split the Allied armies in northwest Europe by means of a surprise blitzkrieg thrust through the Ardennes to Antwerp. The Battle of the Bulge, so called because the Germans created a "bulge" around the area of the Ardennes forest in pushing through the American defensive line, is the largest fought on the Western front.

The Germans throw 250,000 soldiers into the initial assault, 14 German infantry divisions guarded by five panzer divisions, against a mere 80,000 Americans. Their assault comes in early morning at the weakest part of the Allied line, an 80-mile poorly protected stretch of hilly, woody forest. The once-quiet region becomes bedlam as American units are caught off guard and fight desperately to stem the German advance at St.-Vith, Elsenborn Ridge, Houffalize and, later, Bastogne.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes**Next week in World War history (Dec. 7 to Dec. 13)****World War I****1914**

Dec. 8 - The Battle of Falkland Islands occurs as British Navy warships destroy the German squadron of Adm. Graf von Spee in the South Atlantic off the coast of Argentina. Von Spee and two sons serving in his squadron are killed.

Dec. 10 - The French begin a series of attacks in the Artois region of northern France and Champagne in the south. Hampered by a lack of heavy artillery and muddy winter conditions, the French fail to make any significant gains, and both offensives are soon suspended.

1915

Dec. 11 - The first president of the new Chinese republic, Yuan Shih-kai, who came to power in the wake of revolution in 1911 and the fall of the Manchu Dynasty in 1912, accepts the title of emperor of China.

1916

Dec. 7 - Romania concludes an armistice with the Central Powers due to the demise of Imperial Russia, its former military ally.

Dec. 9 - The British, led by Gen. Edmund Allenby, capture Jerusalem. The British enter the Holy City under strict instructions from London on how not to appear disrespectful to the city, its people or its traditions. Allenby enters Jerusalem on foot, and no Allied flags are flown over the city. Muslim troops from India are dispatched to guard the religious landmark, the Dome of the Rock. This ends four centuries of its control by the Ottoman Empire.

1917

Dec. 10 - After three years of war, during which there had been no Nobel Peace Prize awarded, the Norwegian Nobel Committee awards the 1917 prize to the International Committee of the Red Cross. From the outbreak of the war, the Nobel Committee had decided not to award its annual peace prize, stating officially that there had been no worthy candidates nominated.

1918

Dec. 13 - Woodrow Wilson arrives at Brest, France, and travels to Versailles. There, he heads the American delegation to the peace conference seeking a definitive end to the war. The visit marks the first official visit by an American president to Europe.

Although the president's political opponents criticize his European visit as a sign of egotism, Wilson works tirelessly to orchestrate an agreement that would encourage a lasting peace in Europe. Wilson also leads the effort to establish the League of Nations to seek diplomatic solutions to future conflicts.

His hopes for a "just and stable peace" are opposed by the other victorious Allies, and the final treaty, which calls for stiff war reparations from the former Central Powers, will be regarded with increasing bitterness in Germany in the years to come. President Woodrow Wilson is awarded the 1919 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to bring peace to Europe.

World War II**1940**

Dec. 9 - Two British divisions, half of them composed of Indian troops, attack seven Italian divisions in Egypt. Overwhelmed, the Italian position in Egypt collapses.

1941

Dec. 7 - Japanese warplanes bomb the U.S. naval base at Oahu Island's Pearl Harbor. Despite initially objecting to war with America, Adm. Isoroku Yamamoto believed that if Prime Minister Hideki Tojo was determined to go to war, it was Japan who had to make a pre-emptive strike. Yamamoto, who studied the devastating November 1940 British attack against the Italian fleet at Taranto, plans and leads the sneak attack against the United States. Approximately 360 Japanese warplanes launch from six aircraft carriers, reinforced by battleships, cruisers and destroyers. The first dive-bomber is spotted over Pearl Harbor at 7:55 a.m. local time. It is followed by 200 aircraft, which decimate the American ships anchored there, most of which are only lightly manned because it is Sunday morning. Eighteen U.S. ships are destroyed, sunk or capsized. More than 180 planes are destroyed on the ground and another 150 are damaged. American casualties total more than 3,400, with more than 2,400 killed. The Japanese lose fewer than 100 men.

Dec. 11 - Adolf Hitler declares war on the United States, bringing America, which had been neutral, into the European conflict. The bombing of Pearl Harbor surprised even Germany. Although Hitler had made an oral agreement with his Axis partner Japan that Germany would join a war against the United States, he was uncertain as to how the war would be engaged. Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor solved that problem.

1942

Dec. 13 - Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels records in his journal his contempt for the Italians' treatment of Jews in Italian-occupied territories. "The Italians are extremely lax in their treatment of Jews. They protect Italian Jews both in Tunis and in occupied France and won't permit their being drafted for work or compelled to wear the Star of David."

1943

Dec. 12 - Eighteen RAF Mosquito aircraft attack Essen, Germany, while nine RAF Mosquito aircraft attack Düsseldorf, Germany.

1944

Dec 9 - The U.S. Army Air Forces establish the 509th Composite Group for atomic-weapon delivery.

- While defending a position at Faenza, Italy, Capt. John Blunt, 22, of the British Lincolnshire Regiment uses anti-tank guns, Bren light machine guns and a 2-inch mortar to drive back the enemy. Later he turns another attack, blazing away with a Bren from the top of a tank. His conduct will later earn him the Victoria Cross. He is killed the next day by shellfire.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (Nov. 30 to Dec. 6)

World War I

1914

Dec. 4 - The Portuguese Expeditionary Force leaves Lisbon for Angola.

1915

Dec. 5 - Turkish and German forces launch an attack on the British-occupied town of Kut al-Amara on the Tigris River in Mesopotamia, modern-day Iraq.

1916

Dec. 6 - Bucharest, capital of Romania, falls to the Austro-Germans. This effectively ends Romanian resistance to the Austro-German invasion and places the country's entire agricultural and industrial resources, including the Ploesti oil fields, in German hands.

Dec. 3 - As part of a general upheaval within the French government and military due in part to demoralizing losses at Verdun and the Somme, Gen. Joseph-Jacques Césaire Joffre is dismissed as commander in chief of the French forces in favor of Gen. Robert Nivelle. French authorities blame Joffre, the stalwart champion of France's Plan XVII military strategy since 1911, for recent defeats on the Western Front as well as for the situation in the eastern Mediterranean, where some 500,000 Allied troops based out of the Greek port city of Salonika were mired in what they feared might be a losing struggle with Bulgarian forces. For his part, Nivelle believed an aggressive offensive was the key to a breakthrough on the Western Front.

1917

Nov. 30 - Foreign Minister Richard Von Kuhlmann stands before the German Reichstag government to deliver a speech applauding the recent rise to power in Russia of Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov, who adopted the surname Lenin during underground party work, and his radical socialist Bolshevik Party.

Dec. 2 - A day after Bolsheviks seize control of Russian military headquarters at Mogilev, a formal cease-fire is proclaimed throughout the battle zone between Russia and the Central Powers.

Dec. 6 - At 9:05 a.m., in the harbor of Halifax in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, the most devastating man-made explosion in the pre-atomic age occurs when the Mont Blanc, a French munitions ship, explodes 20 minutes after colliding with another vessel.

1918

Dec. 1 - Three weeks after the armistice, and on the same day that Allied troops cross into Germany for the first time, a new state is proclaimed in Belgrade, Serbia.

As the great Austrian and German empires were brought low in defeat, the new "Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes" springs to life, bolstered by the League of Nations promised support for Europe's minority populations. Included in the new state are 500,000 Hungarians and an equal number of Germans as well as tens of thousands of Romanians, Albanians, Bulgarians and Italians.

Dec. 4 - Demobilization of the British Army begins.

World War II

1939

Nov. 30 - The Red Army crosses the Soviet-Finnish border with 465,000 men and 1,000 aircraft. Helsinki is bombed, and 61 Finns are killed in an air raid that steels the Finns for resistance, not capitulation.

1940

Dec. 6 - British and Indian troops of the Western Desert Force launch Operation Compass, an offensive against Italian forces in Egypt.

1941

Dec. 6 - President Franklin D. Roosevelt — convinced on the basis of intelligence reports that the Japanese fleet is headed for Thailand, not the United States — telegrams Emperor Hirohito with the request that "for the sake of humanity," the emperor intervene "to prevent further death and destruction in the world."

Dec. 5 - The Lexington, one of the two largest aircraft carriers employed by the United States during World War II, makes its way across the Pacific in order to carry a squadron of dive bombers to defend Midway Island from an anticipated Japanese attack.

Negotiations between the United States and Japan had been ongoing for months. Japan wanted an end to U.S. economic sanctions. The Americans wanted Japan out of China and Southeast Asia and wanted Japan to repudiate the Tripartite "Axis" Pact with Germany and Italy before those sanctions could be lifted.

1942

Dec. 2 - Enrico Fermi, the Italian-born Nobel Prize-winning physicist, directs and controls the first nuclear chain reaction in his laboratory beneath the bleachers of Stagg Field at the University of Chicago, ushering in the nuclear age. Upon successful completion of the experiment, a coded message was transmitted to President Franklin D. Roosevelt: "The Italian navigator has landed in the new world."

Dec. 4 - In Warsaw, a group of Polish Christians put their own lives at risk when they set up the Council for the Assistance of the Jews. The group was led by two women, Zofia Kossak and Wanda Filipowicz.

Since the German invasion of Poland in 1939, the Jewish population had been either thrust into ghettos, transported to concentration and labor camps, or murdered.

1943

Dec. 2 - The Germans conduct a highly successful air raid on Bari, Italy. One of the German bombs hits an Allied cargo ship carrying mustard gas, releasing the chemical, which kills 83 allied soldiers. More than 1,000 other soldiers died in the raid.

1944

Dec. 3 - A civil war breaks out in Athens as communist guerillas battle democratic forces for control of a liberated Greece.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (Nov. 23 to 29)

World War I

1914

Nov. 27 - German commander Paul von Hindenburg issues a triumphant proclamation from the battlefields of the Eastern Front, celebrating his army's campaign against Russian forces in the Polish city of Warsaw.

Nov. 28 - The New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) reopens for bond trading after nearly four months, the longest stoppage in the exchange's history. The outbreak of World War I in Europe forced the NYSE to shut its doors July 31, 1914, after large numbers of foreign investors began selling their holdings in hopes of raising money for the war effort. All of the world's financial markets followed suit and closed their doors by Aug. 1.

1915

Nov. 23 - Entente Powers send note to Greek Government demanding noninterference with Allied troops and guaranteeing eventual restoration of occupied Greek territory.

1916

Nov. 26 - Thomas Edward Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia), a junior member of the British government's Arab Bureau during World War I, publishes a detailed report analyzing the revolt led by the Arab leader Sherif Hussein against the Ottoman Empire in the late spring of 1916.

1917

Nov. 24 - Aine Douleh succeeds Ala es Sultaneh as Persian prime minister.

1918

Nov. 25 - A full two weeks after an armistice ended World War I in Europe, Col. Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck of Germany finally surrenders his forces in German East Africa.

A master of guerrilla warfare known for his brave and honorable conduct, Lettow-Vorbeck emerged from the First World War as the only undefeated military commander on either side of the conflict. From the beginning, the colonel knew the British navy's dominance of the seas meant that few reinforcements would be sent from his homeland and, as a result, that the German war effort in its African colonies would have to be carried out on his own initiative.

Nov. 29 - Maude Fisher, a nurse in the American Red Cross during World War I, writes a heartfelt letter to the mother of a young soldier named Richard Hogan to inform her of her son's death in an Army hospital.

"My dear Mrs. Hogan," Fisher began, "If I could talk to you I could tell you so much better about your son's last sickness, and all the little things that mean so much to a mother far away from her boy." Richard Hogan, who survived his front-line service in the war unscathed, had been brought to the hospital with influenza Nov. 13, 1918 — just two days after the armistice was declared. The influenza soon developed into pneumonia. Hogan was "brave and cheerful," Fisher assured Mrs. Hogan, "and made a good fight with the disease....He did not want you to worry about his being sick, but I told him I thought we ought to let you know, and he said all right."

World War II

1939

Nov. 23 - Adolf Hitler gathers the top German leaders and lectures them on his vision for the future of Germany, which involves an invasion of France.

1940

Nov. 28 - Flight Lt. John Dundas of No. 609 squadron shoots down Maj. Helmut Wick over the English Channel. Wick was Germany's highest scoring ace of the war at the time with 56 kills to his credit.

1941

Nov. 25 - Adm. Harold R. Stark, U.S. chief of naval operations, tells Adm. Husband E. Kimmel, commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, that both President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Secretary of State Cordell Hull think a Japanese surprise attack is a distinct possibility. "We are likely to be attacked next Monday, for the Japs are notorious for attacking without warning," Roosevelt had informed his Cabinet. "We must all prepare for trouble, possibly soon," he telegraphed British Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

Nov. 26 - Adm. Chuichi Nagumo leads the Japanese First Air Fleet, an aircraft carrier strike force, toward Pearl Harbor, with the understanding that should "negotiations with the United States reach a successful conclusion, the task force will immediately put about and return to the homeland."

1942

Nov. 27 - French Adm. Jean de Laborde sinks the French fleet anchored in Toulon harbor, off the southern coast of France, in order to keep it out of German hands.

Nov. 29 - Coffee joins the list of items rationed in the United States. Despite record coffee production in Latin American countries, the growing demand for the bean from both military and civilian sources, and the demands placed on shipping, which was needed for other purposes, required the limiting of its availability.

1943

Nov. 29 - Fifty-three B-26's bomb Chièvres Air Field.
- The Japanese ship, Suez Maru, carrying troops as well as 200 Japanese, 422 British, and 127 Dutch sick and wounded, is torpedoed by submarine USS Bonefish in the Java sea. Many are trapped in the holds and drown, but others take to the water. A Japanese minesweeper in escort picks up nearly 300 of its own nationals but leaves between 200 and 250 Allied prisoners thrashing in the sea. The minesweeper then begins shooting the defenseless swimmers. Of the 549 British and Dutch prisoners, there is only one survivor, Kenneth Thomas, who is picked up 24 hours later by an Australian ship.

1944

Nov. 24 - One hundred and eleven U.S. B-29 Superfortress bombers raid Tokyo for the first time since Capt. Jimmy Doolittle's raid in 1942. Their target: the Nakajima aircraft engine works.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (Nov. 16 to 22)

World War I

1914

Nov. 16 - In Germany, a small group of intellectuals, led by physician Georg Nicolai, launch Bund Neues Vaterland, the New Fatherland League. One of the league's most active supporters is Nicolai's friend, the great physicist Albert Einstein. Einstein and Nicolai had written a pacifist answer to the famous pro-war manifesto of 1914, which had been signed by 93 leading German intellectuals from various fields, including the painter Max Lieberman and the poet Gerhart Hauptmann. When their counter-manifesto failed to attract much support, Nicolai and Einstein concentrated their efforts into the New Fatherland League.

Nov. 22 - The first extended battle fought between Allied and German forces in the much-contested Ypres (Ieper) Salient comes to an end after more than one month of fighting.

1915

Nov. 19 - In one of the most exciting episodes of the air war during World War I, British airman Richard Bell Davies performs a daring rescue swooping down in his plane to whisk a downed fellow pilot from behind the Turkish lines at Ferrijik Junction. A squadron commander in the Royal Naval Air Service, Davies was flying alongside Flight Sub-Lieutenant Gilbert F. Smylie on a bombing mission. Their target was the railway junction at Ferrijik, located near the Aegean Sea and the border between Bulgaria and Ottoman-controlled Europe. When the Turks hit Smylie's plane with anti-aircraft fire, he was forced to land.

1916

Nov. 18 - The Battle of the Somme ends upon the first snowfall as the British and French decide to cease the offensive. By now, the Germans have been pushed back just a few miles along the entire 15-mile front, but the major breakthrough the Allies had planned never occurred. Both sides suffer more than 600,000 casualties during the five-month battle. Among the injured German soldiers is Cpl. Adolf Hitler, wounded by shrapnel.

Nov. 21 - Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria-Hungary dies at age 86. He is succeeded by Archduke Charles who wants to take Austria-Hungary out of the war.

1917

Nov. 17 - Battle of Nebi Samwil (Palestine) begins.

Nov. 20 - The first-ever mass attack by tanks occurs as the British Third Army rolls 381 tanks accompanied by six infantry divisions in a coordinated tank-infantry-artillery attack of German trenches near Cambrai, France, an important rail center. The attack targets a 6-mile-wide portion of the front and, by the end of the first day, appears to be a spectacular success with 5 miles gained and two German divisions wrecked. The news is celebrated by the ringing of church bells in England, for the first time since 1914. However, similar to past offensives, the opportunity to exploit first-day gains is missed, followed by the arrival of heavy German reinforcements and an effective counterattack in which the Germans take back most of the ground they lost.

World War II

1939

Nov. 17 - Plans are made for British and French troops to move into Belgium to counter a possible German invasion, but reconnaissance parties were denied entry into Belgium to avoid provoking Germany.

1940

Nov. 18 - Adolf Hitler meets with Italian Foreign Minister Galeazzo Ciano over Mussolini's disastrous invasion of Greece.

Nov. 19 - Adolf Hitler tells Spanish Foreign Minister Serano Suner to make good on an agreement for Spain to attack Gibraltar, a British-controlled region. This would seal off the Mediterranean and trap British troops in North Africa.

1941

Nov. 16 - Joseph Goebbels publishes in the German magazine *Das Reich* that "The Jews wanted the war, and now they have it" — referring to the Nazi propaganda scheme to shift the blame for the world war onto European Jewry, thereby giving the Nazis a rationalization for the so-called Final Solution.

Nov. 21 - Albert Speer, Adolf Hitler's chief architect and minister for armaments and war production, asks for 30,000 Soviet prisoners of war to use as slave laborers to begin a massive Berlin building program.

1942

Nov. 19 - Two RAF Horsa gliders, carrying 34 British Royal Engineer Commandos, crash in Norway en route to their mission of destroying the German 'heavy water' plant at Telemark.

Nov. 22 - A Soviet counteroffensive against the German armies pays off as the Red Army traps about a quarter-million German soldiers south of Kalach, on the Don River, within Stalingrad. As the Soviets' circle tightens, German Gen. Friedrich Paulus requests permission from Berlin to withdraw.

1943

Nov. 20 - U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Ralph Mitchell is named Commander, Air Solomons, and is placed in charge of all U.S. naval and Marine aviation units in the Solomon Islands region.

1944

Nov. 16 - Eighty Allied bombers hit defended areas and strong points at Echtz, Luchem and Eschweiler, Germany.

1945

Nov. 20 - A series of trials of accused Nazi war criminals, conducted by an American, French and Soviet military tribunal based in Nuremberg, Germany, begins. Twenty-four former Nazi officials are tried, and, when it is all over, a year later, half will be sentenced to death by hanging. The Simon Wiesenthal Center still publishes an annual report on the status of Nazi war criminals, many of whom are still at large. Learn more at <http://www.wiesenthal.com>.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (Nov. 9 to 15)

World War I

1914

Nov. 9 - In the first-ever wartime action by an Australian warship, the cruiser Sydney sinks the German raider Emden.

Nov. 14 - In Constantinople, capital of the Ottoman Empire, the religious leader Sheikh-ul-Islam declares an Islamic holy war on behalf of the Ottoman government, urging his Muslim followers to take up arms against Britain, France, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro in World War I.

1915

Nov. 11 - First British advance on Baghdad begins.

Nov. 15 - Representatives of Central Powers leave Teheran (Persia) on approach of Russian forces.

1916

Nov. 13 - British troops stage a surprise attack and capture the towns of Beaumont Hamel and Beaucourt at the northern end of the Somme Front.

- The British statesman Henry Charles Keith Petty-Fitzmaurice, better known as the fifth Marquess of Lansdowne, writes a memorandum to the British cabinet questioning the direction of the Allied war effort.

1917

Nov. 11 - The German High Command, led by Erich Ludendorff, gathers at Mons, Belgium, to map out a strategy for 1918. Ludendorff bluntly states he is willing to accept a million German casualties in a daring plan to achieve victory in early 1918, before the American Army arrives in force. The goal is to drive a wedge between the British and French armies on the Western Front via a series of all-out offensives using Germany's finest divisions and intensive storm-troop tactics. Once this succeeds, the plan is to first decimate the British Army to knock Britain out of the war, and then decimate the French Army, and thus secure final victory.

Nov. 15 - Georges Clemenceau becomes France's new prime minister at age 76. Nicknamed "The Tiger," when asked about his agenda, he will simply answer, "I wage war."

1918

Nov. 9 - The Kaiser's imperial government collapses in ruin as a German republic is proclaimed with Friedrich Ebert heading the new provisional government. Kaiser Wilhelm then seeks refuge in Holland amid concerns for his safety after his generals warn him they may not be able to adequately protect him from the volatile situation in Germany.

Nov. 11 - At 5:10 a.m., in a railway car at Compiègne, France, the Germans sign the armistice, which is effective at 11 a.m. — the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. Fighting continues all along the Western Front until precisely 11 o'clock, with 2,000 casualties experienced that day by all sides. Artillery barrages also erupt at 11 a.m. draws near as Soldiers yearn to claim they fired the very last shot in the war.

Nov. 12 - A final action occurs as Germans in Africa under the command of the elusive Gen. Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck encounter British troops in Northern Rhodesia, where news of the armistice hasn't reached the Germans.

World War II

1939

Nov. 9 - Adolf Hitler issues directive No. 9, which calls for German aircraft and submarines to attack British shipping and port facilities.

Nov. 13 - German destroyers Z20, Z18, Z19, and Z21 mine the mouth of the River Thames in southern England, United Kingdom, before dawn. At 8:20 a.m., British destroyer Blanche hits a mine and is badly damaged — one crew member is killed and 12 are wounded. Blanche sinks while under tow by tugboat Fabia becoming the first British destroyer lost to enemy action in WWII.

1940

Nov. 14 - Five hundred German bombers unleash 150,000 incendiary bombs and more than 500 tons of high explosives on the British industrial city of Coventry, taking out 27 war factories. Of the 568 people killed, more than 400 are burned so badly they cannot be identified. Among the more than 60,000 buildings destroyed or severely damaged was St. Michael's Cathedral.

1941

Nov. 13 - The U.S. Congress amends the Neutrality Act of 1935 to allow American merchant ships access to war zones, thereby putting American vessels in the line of fire. In anticipation of another European war, and in pursuit of an isolationist foreign policy, Congress passed the Neutrality Act in August 1935, forbidding the sale of munitions by U.S. firms to any and all belligerents in any future war.

1942

Nov. 11 - Germany withdraws 25 submarines from the North Atlantic to attack Allied shipping off North Africa; on the same day, submarine U-173 attacks destroyer USS Hambleton, oiler USS Winooski and troopship USS Joseph Hewes near Casablanca, French Morocco, sinking Joseph Hewes and killing 100. On land, the French garrison at Casablanca officially surrenders to the Americans.

1943

Nov. 10 - Sixty B-26 Marauders bomb A84 (Chièvres Air Field). Bad weather causes force sent to bomb Vendeville Air Field, France, to abandon the mission.

Nov. 15 - Heinrich Himmler makes public an order that Gypsies and those of mixed Gypsy blood are to be put on "the same level as Jews and placed in concentration camps."

1944

Nov. 12 - As the German battleship Tirpitz lay at anchor in Norway's Tromsø Fjord, 32 British Lancaster bombers take off from Scotland to attack her. Each bomber drops a 12,000-pound Tallboy bomb and two hit their target, causing the Tirpitz to capsize, and kill 1,000 crewmen. Winston Churchill sums up the situation this way: "The destruction or even crippling of this ship is the greatest event at the present time. ... The whole strategy of the war turns at this period on this ship. ..."

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (Nov. 2 to 8)

World War I

1914

Nov. 3 - Kaiser Wilhelm appoints Erich von Falkenhayn as the new Chief of the German General Staff, replacing Helmuth von Moltke who is sacked due to the failure of the Schlieffen Plan.

Nov. 6 - In the Persian Gulf, a major British offensive begins as the 6th Indian Division invades Mesopotamia. The objective is to protect the oil pipeline from Persia. Two weeks later, they capture the city of Basra.

1915

Nov. 4 - Gen. Sir Charles Monro is appointed to command the British Salonika Force. Sir William Birdwood is appointed to command Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.

1916

Nov. 7 - American voters re-elect President Woodrow Wilson who campaigned on the slogan, "He kept us out of war."

1917

Nov. 6 to 7 - In Russia, Bolsheviks led by Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky overthrow the provisional government in what comes to be known as the October Revolution (Oct. 24 to 25, according to the Russian calendar). They establish a non-democratic Soviet government based on Marxism, which prohibits private enterprise and private land ownership. Lenin announces that Soviet Russia will immediately end its involvement in the war and renounces all existing treaties with the Allies.

1918

Nov. 3 - As the First World War draws to a close, angry rebels in both Germany and Austria-Hungary revolt, raising the red banner of the revolutionary socialist Communist Party and threatening to follow the Russian example in bringing down their imperialist governments.

Nov. 4 - Just one week before the armistice is declared, ending WWI, the British poet Wilfred Owen is killed in action during a British assault on the German-held Sambre Canal on the Western Front.

Nov. 5 - It is the final day of use of the Chièvres Aerodrom during WWI as Jastas 33, 57 and 58 depart. The fields won't be used for aircraft again for more than 20 years

Nov. 8 - At Compiègne, France, six representatives of the German government, with Matthias Erzberger as spokesman, are brusquely presented with armistice terms by Marshal Ferdinand Foch. The terms include German evacuation of all occupied territory, an Allied occupation of Germany west of the Rhine River, surrender of weaponry including all subs and battleships, and indefinite continuation of the naval blockade.



Wilfred Owen's most famous poem is "Dulce et Decorum Est" about the realities of war.

World War II

1939

Nov. 2 - The first transport of Polish women arrives at Ravensbrück Concentration Camp in Germany.

Nov. 3 - Franz Halder, chief of the Supreme High Command of the German army, sends a message to Ludwig Beck, chief of the German General Staff, telling him to be ready to move against Adolf Hitler on or shortly after Nov. 5, which is the date the plans for the invasion of France are supposed to be made known to top German military leaders.

1940

Nov. 5 - Franklin Delano Roosevelt is elected to a third term with the promise of maintaining American neutrality as far as foreign wars are concerned: "Let no man or woman thoughtlessly or falsely talk of American people sending its armies to European fields."

Nov. 7 - Vichy French submarine Poncelet fires a torpedo at the Allied invasion fleet sailing for Libreville, French Equatorial Africa, 50 miles southwest of Libreville, hitting sloop HMS Milford, but the torpedo fails to explode. Poncelet is forced to surface by Milford's depth charges, and then is damaged by bombs from two Walrus biplanes of HMS Devonshire. All but one of Poncelet's complement of 61 surrender after scuttling the ship; the commanding officer decides to go down with the ship.

1941

Nov. 3 - German Panzer 2nd Army attacks Tula, Russia, while other German units capture Kursk 180 miles southwest to protect the southern flank of the assault toward Moscow.

Nov. 7 - British merchant ship Nottingham, on her maiden voyage, spots German submarine U-74 in the North Atlantic and attempts to ram her. U-74 counterattacks, sinking Nottingham. All 62 aboard escape in lifeboats, never to be seen again.

1942

Nov. 6 - Josef Stalin speaks to the Congress of Soviet Deputies, warning the United States and the United Kingdom that a failure to open a second front might end badly for all freedom-loving countries.

1943

Nov. 3 - British Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris writes a treatise addressed to Winston Churchill in which he outlines RAF Bomber Command's past achievements and its future objectives; Berlin would become the priority target with the German cities of Leipzig, Chemnitz, Dresden and Bremen listed among the secondary targets. He remarks disparagingly of recent American lack of coordination.

1944

Nov. 4 - British Gen. John Dill dies in Washington, D.C., and is buried in Arlington Cemetery.

Nov. 8 - American pilot 1st Lt. Warren Corwin, flying a P-51 fighter, shoots down the Me 262 A-1a jet fighter flown by Oberleutnant Franz Schall; Schall survived the engagement by bailing out.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (Oct. 26 to Nov. 1)

World War I

1914

Oct. 29 - The Ottoman Empire (Turkey) enters the war on the side of the Germans as three warships shell the Russian port of Odessa. Three days later, Russia declares war on Turkey. Russian and Turkish troops then prepare for battle along the common border of the Russian Caucasus and the Ottoman Empire.

Nov. 1 - Austria invades Serbia. This is the third attempt to conquer the Serbs in retaliation for the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. This attempt fails like the two before it, at the hands of highly motivated Serbs fighting on their home ground. The Austrians withdraw in mid-December, after suffering over 220,000 casualties from the three failed invasions.

- The British navy suffers its worst defeat in centuries during a sea battle in the Pacific. Two British ships, the Monmouth and Good Hope, are sunk with no survivors by a German squadron commanded by Adm. Maximilian Reichsgraf (Count) von Spee.

1915

Oct. 27 - Andrew Fisher is replaced as Labor prime minister by William "Billy" Hughes, who will advocate a more active role for Australians in the war.

Oct. 28 - Lt. Gen. Sir Bryan Mahon appointed General Officer Commanding British Forces, Balkans.

Oct. 29 - Jane Addams, a leading American social activist, writes to American President Woodrow Wilson, warning him of the potential dangers of readying the country to enter the First World War.

1916

Oct. 26/27 - Two-and-a-half flotillas of German torpedo boats from the Flanders Flotilla launch a raid into the Dover Strait in an attempt to disrupt the Dover Barrage (a 25-km series of steel nets anchored to the sea floor to trap submarines, accompanied by minefield layers) and destroy whatever Allied shipping can be found in the strait.

1917

Oct. 26 - At Ieper (Ypres), Belgium, a second Allied attempt is made but fails to capture the village of Passchendaele, with Canadian troops participating this time. Four days later, the Allies attack again and edge closer as the Germans slowly begin pulling out.

Oct. 31 - At dusk, members of the 4th Light Horse Brigade storm through the Turkish defenses and seize the strategic town of Beersheba. The capture of Beersheba enables British Empire forces to break the Ottoman line near Gaza Nov. 7 and advance into Palestine.

1918

Oct. 28 - Sailors in the German High Seas Fleet steadfastly refuse to obey an order from the German admiralty to go to sea to launch one final attack on the British navy.

Oct. 28 - The Czechs declare their independence from Austria.

Oct. 30 - Turkey signs an armistice with the Allies, becoming the second of the Central Powers to quit the war.

World War II

1939

Oct. 30 - Lt. Wilhem Zahn in German submarine U-56 fires three torpedoes at the battleship HMS Nelson off the Orkney Islands in Scotland. Two of the torpedoes hit, but both proved to be duds.

1940

Oct. 27 - French Gen. Charles de Gaulle, speaking for the Free French Forces from his temporary headquarters in equatorial Africa, calls all French men and women everywhere to join the struggle to preserve and defend free French territory and "to attack the enemy wherever it is possible, to mobilize all our military, economic and moral resources ... to make justice reign."

Oct. 28 - Benito Mussolini's army, already occupying Albania, invades Greece in what will prove to be a disastrous military campaign for il Duce's forces. Mussolini surprises everyone with this move against Greece; even his ally, Adolf Hitler, is caught off-guard, especially since il Duce had led Hitler to believe he had no such intention. Hitler denounces the move as a major strategic blunder. Mussolini should have concentrated on North Africa, continuing the advance into Egypt, according to Hitler.

1941

Oct. 29 - The Atlantic Amphibious Force, consisting of both U.S. Army and Marine Corps units and commanded by Maj. Gen. Holland M. Smith, is redesignated Amphibious Force of the U.S. Navy Atlantic Fleet.

1942

Oct. 26 - U.S. Navy Ensign George L. Wrenn of VF-72 from the USS Hornet engages Japanese aircraft attacking the U.S. fleet. He shoots down five Nakajima B5N torpedo bombers during the sortie. The Hornet is sunk during the battle and Wrenn has to be recovered aboard the USS Enterprise.

Oct. 30 - German Gestapo officers round up 100 Jewish children and their caregivers from a children's home in Brussels and move them to a transit camp in Mechelen, situated in the region of Flanders, Belgium. Protests, including one from the secretary-general of the Belgian Ministry of Justice, force the Germans to return the children to the home.

1943

Oct. 31 - U.S. Fifth Army resumes the stalled offensive north of the Volturno River in Italy.

1944

Oct. 30 - The German counterattack near Debrecen, Hungary is called off, with the Germans claiming 25,000 enemy troops killed and 600 tanks destroyed.

Nov. 1 - A German V-2 rocket hits Eglington Road in Woolwich, London, killing seven people. Another rocket hits Friern Road in Camberwell, London, killing 24 and injuring 17. A third rocket hit Shardeloes Road in Deptford, London, killing 31, seriously injuring 62, and slightly injuring 90. Two other rockets hit London that day, though causing little damage.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (Oct. 19 to 25)

World War I

1914

Oct. 19 - Still hoping to score a quick victory in the West, the Germans launch a major attack on Ieper (Ypres) in Belgium. Despite heavy losses, British, French and Belgian troops fend off the attack, and the Germans don't break through. During the battle, the Germans send waves of inexperienced 17- to 20-year-old volunteer Soldiers, some fresh out of school. Advancing shoulder to shoulder while singing patriotic songs, they are systematically gunned down in what the Germans themselves later call the "massacre of the innocents." By November, overall casualties will total 250,000 men, including nearly half of the British Regular Army.

1915

Oct. 20 - The Greek government rejects the Oct. 16 British offer to give them Cyprus if they will support Serbia.

1916

Oct. 21 - Austrian Premier Count Karl von Stürgkh is murdered by Friedrich Adler.

Oct. 24 - At Verdun, the French, under Gen. Robert Nivelle, begin an ambitious offensive designed to end the German threat there by targeting Fort Douaumont and other German-occupied sites on the east bank of the Meuse River. The attack is preceded by the heaviest artillery bombardment by the French to date. Additionally, French infantry use an effective new tactic in which they slowly advance in stages, step by step behind encroaching waves of artillery fire. Using this creeping barrage tactic, they seize Fort Douaumont, then take Fort Vaux farther east, nine days later.

1917

Oct. 24 - In northern Italy, a rout of the Italian Army begins as 35 German and Austrian divisions cross the Isonzo River into Italy at Caporetto and then rapidly push 41 Italian divisions 60 miles southward. By now, the Italians have been worn down from years of costly but inconclusive battles along the Isonzo and in the Trentino, amid a perceived lack of Allied support. Nearly 300,000 Italians surrender as the Austro-Germans advance, while some 400,000 desert. The Austro-Germans halt at the Piave River north of Venice only due to supply lines, which have become stretched to the limit.

1918

Oct. 25 - Count Julius Andrássy the Younger succeeds Baron Stephan Burián von Rajecz as Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister

Oct. 23 - Under pressure from the French and British, President Wilson informs the German government that armistice negotiations cannot ensue with the current military or Imperial war leaders still in place. An outraged Gen. Erich Ludendorff then disavows the negotiations as "unconditional surrender" and is forced to resign by the kaiser. In the face of such turmoil, the armistice negotiations are conducted principally by civilian members of Germany's government. This will become the basis of a postwar "stab in the back" claim by German militarists asserting their troops at the front were sold out by the politicians back home.

World War II

1939

Oct. 22 - Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's minister of propaganda, publicly accuses Winston Churchill of ordering the passenger liner Athenia attacked so that he could blame Germany and persuade the United States to join the Allies.

1940

Oct. 21 - British motor torpedo boat MTB-17 hits a mine and sinks off Oostende (Ostend), Belgium.

Oct. 25 - Sixteen Italian BR20M bombers attack Felixstowe and Harwich in Britain. Meanwhile, four groups of German Messerschmitt Bf-109 fighters sweep southern England, shooting down 10 British fighters while losing 14 of their own.

1941

Oct. 21 - German Soldiers go on a rampage, killing thousands of Yugoslavian civilians, including whole classes of schoolboys.

Oct. 23 - Chief of the Soviet general staff, Georgi K. Zhukov, assumes command of Red Army operations to stop the German advance into the heart of Russia. Zhukov's military career began during World War I, when he served with the Imperial Russian Army.

1942

Oct. 22 - American Maj. Gen. Mark Clark meets in Algeria with French officials loyal to the Allied cause as well as Resistance fighters, regarding the launch of Operation Torch, the first Allied amphibious landing of the war.

Oct. 23 - Auschwitz-bound prisoners in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Germany stage a revolt that fails.

1943

Oct. 19 - Local Chinese and native Suluks rise up against the Japanese occupation of North Borneo. The revolt, staged in the capital, Jesselton, results in the deaths of 40 Japanese Soldiers.

Oct. 22 - Block 11 of Auschwitz I concentration camp holds a trial that sentences 76 men and 19 women to death; they had been transferred from the prison in Myslowitz. The trial is presided by the new head of the Kattowitz Gestapo, SS-Obersturmbanführer Johannes Thümmeler. He is never punished after the war and dies in old age in May 2002.

1944

Oct. 20 - More than 100,000 American soldiers land on Leyte Island, in the Philippines, in preparation for the major invasion by Gen. Douglas MacArthur. The ensuing battles of Leyte Island prove to be among the bloodiest of the war in the Pacific and signal the beginning of the end for the Japanese.

The Japanese had held the Philippines since May 1942, when the defeat of American forces led to MacArthur's departure and Gen. Jonathan Wainwright's capture.

Oct. 25 - During the Battle of the Leyte Gulf, the Japanese deploy kamikaze ("divine wind") suicide bombers against American warships for the first time. It will prove costly — to both sides.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (Oct. 12 to 18)

World War I

1914

Oct. 14 - First Battle of Ieper (Ypres) begins.
 - The Canadian Expeditionary Force of 32,000 men lands at Plymouth, England, to prepare for fighting at the Front.

1915

Oct. 12 - British Nurse Edith Cavell shot in Brussels by order of a German court-martial. Cavell's execution leads to a rise in anti-German feeling in the United States as well as in Great Britain, where she is idealized as a heroic martyr to the cause and is honored with a statue in St. Martin's Place, just off London's Trafalgar Square. "What Jeanne d'Arc has been for centuries to France," wrote one Allied journalist, "that will Edith Cavell become to the future generations of Britons."

1916

Oct. 15 - Germany resumes U-boat attacks under search and destroy rules.

Oct. 16 - Pvt. Henry Farr of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) is executed for cowardice after he refused to go forward into the front-line trenches on the Western Front during World War I.

1917

Oct. 12 - The Ieper (Ypres) offensive culminates around the village of Passchendaele as Australian and New Zealand troops die by the thousands while attempting to press forward across a battlefield of liquid mud, advancing just 100 yards. Steady October rains create a slippery quagmire in which wounded soldiers routinely drown in mud-filled shell craters.



Courtesy Photo

The name of Mata Hari is still a metaphor for someone who uses feminine wiles to gather information.

Oct. 13 - German Jagdstaffeln (fighter squadrons) 28 and 57 arrive at Chièvres Air Field. Fighter Ace Emil Thuy of the 28th will get his last two victories of the war flying from Chièvres.

Oct. 14 - Cpl. Adolf Hitler is temporarily blinded by a British gas shell in the Ieper (Ypres) Salient and evacuated to a German military hospital at Pasewalk in Pomerania, Prussia.

Oct. 17 - The British begin their advance to the Sambre and Scheldt rivers, taking many German prisoners.

World War II

1939

Oct. 12 - German U-boat U-48 sinks French tanker Emile Miguet and British freighter Heronspool.

- Germany announces that the western powers desire war, and Germany cannot be blamed for military action on the German-French border.

1940

Oct. 18 - Two British flying boats of Royal Air Force No. 202 Squadron spot Italian submarine Durbo 120 miles east of Gibraltar off Alboran Island. British destroyers HMS Firedrake and HMS Wrestler attack with depth charges, forcing Durbo to the surface and to be scuttled. British sailors manage to capture information regarding Italian submarine dispositions from the submarine before it sinks. Durbo's crew of 48 is taken prisoner.

1941

Oct. 15 - German SS-Brigadeführer Franz Stahlecker of Einsatzgruppe A sends a 130-page report to Berlin, Germany reporting that, among other things, 71,105 Jews have been liquidated in Lithuania, 30,000 Jews in Latvia, and 3,387 Communists in Russia.

- German SS Gen. Hans Frank, the Nazi Governor-General of occupied Poland, issues a general order that any Jews leaving the Warsaw ghetto will be liable for the death penalty as would any person who knowingly gives shelter to such Jews.

Oct. 16 - Tanks of SS Reich Division and 10th Panzer Division attack the Mzhaysk Line at Borodino, Russia, 125 kilometers west of the Soviet capital of Moscow; lacking infantry support, Soviet troops halt the attacks. Thousands of civilians continue to flee the city, and the Soviet government and diplomatic corps move to Kuibyshev 1,500 miles to the east; Joseph Stalin, however, chooses to stay.

1942

Oct. 17 - Ninety-four British Lancaster bombers attack the Schneider armament factory at Le Creusot in central France in daylight; one bomber is lost on this mission.

Oct. 18 - Vice Adm. William F. Halsey replaces Vice Adm. Robert L. Ghormley as commander, South Pacific.

1943

Oct. 13 - The government of Italy declares war on its former Axis partner Germany and joins the battle on the side of the Allies.

Oct. 14 - U.S. 8th Air Force launches 291 B-17 bombers and 60 B-24 bombers to attack the Schweinfurt ball bearing plants in Germany; the 60 B-24 bombers are diverted to another target. The United States loses 77 bombers and one fighter escort, while 38 Luftwaffe fighters are shot down.

1944

Oct. 14 - German Gen. Erwin Rommel, nicknamed "the Desert Fox," is given the option of facing a public trial for treason, as a co-conspirator in the plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler, or taking cyanide. He chooses the latter.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (Sept. 28 to Oct. 4)

World War I

1914

Sept. 28 - The Germans besiege and capture Antwerp, Belgium. A German bombardment of the Belgian fortifications with artillery begins. The Belgian garrison has no hope of victory without relief, and, despite the arrival of the Royal Naval Division, the Germans penetrate the outer ring of forts.

Oct. 1 - Together with the Battle of Albert, the Battle of Arras forms an attempt by the French to outflank the Germans in a north-westerly movement toward the English Channel. The attack is designed to outflank the German forces by advancing along a line between Arras and Lens.

1915

Oct. 3 - Anglo-French forces begin landing at the Greek port of Salonika (now Thessaloniki). The troops are sent to provide military assistance to the Serbs who have recently been attacked by combined German, Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian armies. The intervention comes too late to save Serbia, and, after a brief winter campaign in severe weather conditions on the Serbian frontier, the Anglo-French forces find themselves back at Salonika.

1916

Oct. 1 - The final offensive mounted by the British Fourth Army during the 1916 Battle of the Somme begins with the capture of Eaucourt L'Abbaye by the 47th (1/2nd London) Division as well as an advance along the Albert-Bapaume road toward Le Sars.

- The Battle of the Ancre Heights is the continuation of British attacks after the Battle of Thiepval Ridge from Sept. 26 to 28 by the Reserve Army (renamed Fifth Army Oct. 29) from Courcelette near the Albert-Bapaume road, west to Thiepval on Bazentin Ridge.

1917

Oct. 3 - Six months after the United States declared war on Germany and began its participation in the First World War, the U.S. Congress passes the War Revenue Act, increasing income taxes to unprecedented levels in order to raise more money for the war effort.

1918

Sept. 29 - Bulgaria signs an armistice with the Allies, becoming the first of the Central Powers to quit the war.

Sept. 30 - As Allied forces led by Gen. Edmund Allenby march steadily toward Damascus, Turkish authorities abandon the city.

Oct. 1 - Max von Baden arrives in Berlin to take office as the new German chancellor, after conflict within the German military and government leadership causes his predecessor, Georg von Hertling, to resign.

Oct. 2 - At the White House in Washington, D.C., United States President Woodrow Wilson suffers a massive stroke that leaves him partially paralyzed on his left side and effectively ends his presidential career.

Oct. 4 - President Woodrow Wilson receives a request from the German government, sent via the Swiss, asking for armistice discussions on the basis of his Fourteen Points.

World War II

1938

Sept. 30 - Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, French Premier Edouard Daladier and British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain sign the Munich Pact, which seals the fate of Czechoslovakia, virtually handing it over to Germany in the name of peace. Upon return to Britain, Chamberlain would declare that the meeting had achieved "peace in our time."

1941

Sept. 29 - The Soviet Union signs a Treaty of Mutual Assistance with the Baltic nation of Estonia, giving Josef Stalin the right to occupy Estonian naval and air bases. A similar treaty would later be signed with Latvia. Soviet tanks eventually rolled across these borders in the name of "mutual assistance," placing the Baltic States into the hands of the U.S.S.R. for decades to come.

1941

Oct. 2 - The Germans begin their surge to Moscow, led by the 1st Army Group and Gen. Fedor von Bock. Russian peasants in the path of Hitler's army employ a "scorched-earth" policy.

1942

Oct. 3 - German rocket scientist Wernher von Braun's brainchild, the V-2 missile, is fired successfully from Peenemunde, an island off Germany's Baltic coast. It traveled 118 miles. German scientists, led by von Braun, had been working on the development of these long-range missiles since the 1930s. Three trial launches had already failed; the fourth in the series, known as A-4, finally saw the V-2, a 12-ton rocket capable of carrying a one-ton warhead, successfully launched. (After the war, scientists of the Von Braun Group at Peenemunde immigrated to the United States.)

1943

Oct. 4 - Heinrich Himmler, head of the Schutzstaffel, or SS, addresses the squad leaders of his Nazi secret police, attempting to fill them with pride for the work they've accomplished: the murder of more than 1 million Jews in German-occupied Russia during a one-and-a-half-year period.

"Most of you know what it means to see a hundred corpses lying together, five hundred or a thousand," Himmler said. "To have stuck it out and at the same time ... to have remained decent fellows, that is what has made us hard. This is a page of glory in our history which has never been written and shall never be written."

1944

Oct. 1 - A84 (Chièvres Air Base) becomes fully operational after being nearly destroyed up the German departure in September.

Oct. 2 - The 368th Fighter Group, under the command of Col. Gilbert Meyers, arrives at A84.

Oct. 4 - The 365th Fighter Group, under the command of Lt. Col. Robert C Richardson III, arrives at A84.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes**Next week in World War history (Sept. 21 to 27)****World War I****1914**

Sept. 22 - The first-ever British air raid against Germany occurs as Zeppelin bases at Cologne and Düsseldorf are bombed.

1915

Sept. 24 - German U-boat U-41 is sunk by gunfire from HMS Baralong in the Western approaches of the Atlantic Ocean.

Sept. 25 - The British use poison gas for the first time as they launch an attack against the German 6th Army in the Artois. Chlorine gas is released from more than 5,000 cylinders, creating a poisonous cloud that drifts toward the Germans, opening a gap in their front line. The British advance and quickly seize their objective, the town of Loos, but then fail to capitalize on the 4-mile-wide breach in the German lines. The Germans regroup and when the British resume the attack the next day they are mowed down by the hundreds by well-placed German machine-guns. The British suffer 50,000 casualties during the Loos offensive. British Army Commander John French is replaced by Douglas Haig.

Sept. 26 - The French launch their third attempt to seize Vimy Ridge from the Germans in Artois, and this time they secure the ridge.

1916

Sept. 25 - British and French troops renew their attacks in the Somme, capturing several villages north of the Somme River, including Thiepval, where the British successfully use tanks again. Following these successes, however, heavy rain turns the entire battlefield to mud, preventing effective maneuvers.

Sept. 24 - German U-boat U-57 commanded by Carl-Siegfried Ritter von Georg sinks nine British ships and one Norwegian ship in the North Sea and English Channel.

1917

Sept. 21 - French steamer Aline Montreuil is torpedoed and sunk by German U-boat UB-38 22 miles north of Cap Barfleur, France.

Sept. 25 - German airplanes attack southeast London killing nine and injuring 23. Meanwhile German Zeppelins attack Yorkshire and Lincolnshire coasts, and injure three.

1918

Sept. 23 - The French advance their line east of St. Quentin Canal; they reach the Oise, three miles north of La Fere.

Sept. 26 - During an operation against enemy machine-gun nests west of Varennes, France, half the turret is knocked off a U.S. tank. Cpl. Donald Call, choked by gas from the high-explosive shell, leaves the tank and takes cover in a shellhole 30 yards away. Seeing that the tank officer didn't follow, Call returns to the tank under intense machine-gun and shell fire. He carries the officer more than a mile to safety under machine-gun and sniper fire. Call receives the Medal of Honor for his actions.

Sept. 27 - Allied troops break through the German fortifications at the Hindenburg Line.

World War II**1939**

Sept. 21 - German attacks on aerodromes, flying schools and aircraft factories cripple the Polish air force. Subsequent air attacks on the railways and on columns of troops reduce the mobility of the Polish ground forces and prevent the development of an effective counteroffensive. Later, air attacks on the headquarters of the Polish armies and government paralyze the direction of the country's military and civil activities.

Sept. 27 - Warsaw surrenders, and the Polish government flees into exile via Romania. Germany and the Soviet Union divide Poland between them.

1940

Sept. 24 - King George VI creates the George Cross, second in the order of wear in the United Kingdom honors system. It takes precedence over all other orders, decorations and medals, except the Victoria Cross, with which it shares equal precedence. It is the highest gallantry award for civilians as well as for members of the armed forces in actions for which purely military honors wouldn't normally be granted.

1941

Sept. 27 - The Italian garrison at Wolchefit Pass in Abyssinia surrenders to British King's African Rifles regiment.

1942

Sept. 21 - The U.S. B-29 Superfortress makes its debut flight in Seattle, Washington.

Sept. 26 - Hans-Joachim Marseille, 22 (known as Germany's 'Star of Africa'), shoots down one Hawker Hurricane fighter and three Supermarine Spitfire fighters near El Daba, Egypt, between 9:10 and 9:16 a.m. In his second sortie of the day, escorting Stuka dive bombers to El Hammam, Egypt, he shoots down four more fighters between 4:56 and 5:10 p.m., bringing his kill record to 158. They are also his final kills as he dies four days later while attempting to bail out of his burning Messerschmitt Bf-109G.

1943

Sept. 23 - Benito Mussolini, deposed dictator of Italy, fashions a new fascist republic, which he "rules" from his headquarters in northern Italy.

1944

Sept. 22 - USS Alabama escorts U.S. carriers as carrier aircraft begin attacking Japanese positions in the Manila Bay area in the Philippine Islands.

Sept. 25 - British prisoner of war Lt. Mike Sinclair is killed by a German guard while attempting to escape from the Oflag IV-C camp at Colditz Castle in Germany. He had attempted to escape several times prior. Through these attempts, Sinclair had earned the respect of his captors, who allowed the British prisoners to bury Sinclair with full military honors.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes**Next week in World War history (Sept. 14 to 20)****World War I****1914**

Sept. 17 - Austrian forces steadily retreat from the advancing Russian 3rd and 8th armies fighting in southern Poland and along the Russian-Austrian border. The Germans then send the newly formed 9th Army to halt the Russians. This marks the beginning of a pattern in which the Germans will aid the weaker Austro-Hungarian army.

1915

Sept. 18 - The Germans announce an end to their first U-Boat campaign, begun in February, which had targeted ships around the British Isles. This comes in response to increasing protests from the United States following American civilian deaths at sea. The U-Boats are then sent by the Germans to wreak havoc in the Mediterranean Sea, away from American shipping lanes in the Atlantic.

1916

Sept. 14 - The seventh Battle of the Isonzo begins.

Sept. 15 - The first-ever appearance of tanks on a battlefield occurs as British troops renew the Somme offensive and attack German positions along a 5-mile front, advancing 2,000 yards with tank support. The British-developed tanks feature two small side-cannons and four machine guns, operated by an eight-man crew. As the infantry advances, individual tanks provide support by blasting and rolling over the German barbed wire, piercing the front-line defense, and then roll along the length of the trench, raking the German Soldiers with machine-gun fire.

1917

Sept. 20 - A revised British strategy designed to wear down the Germans begins at Ypres (Ieper), Belgium. It features a series of intensive, narrowly focused artillery and troop attacks with limited objectives, to be launched every six days. The first such attack, along the Menin Road toward Gheluvelt, produces a gain of about 1,000 yards with 22,000 British and Australian casualties. Subsequent attacks yield similar results.

1918

Sept. 14 - British begin to evacuate Baku, Azerbaijan, on the Caspian Sea.

Sept. 15 - The Allies push the Bulgarians out of Serbia as French, Serbian and Italian troops make rapid gains, advancing nearly 20 miles northward from Greece in three days. Bulgarian troops attempting to redeploy westward through the narrow Kosturino Pass are relentlessly bombarded by airplanes and overall troop morale collapses. Meanwhile, political turmoil strikes at home as anti-war riots erupt in Bulgaria's cities along with Russian-style revolutionary fervor that results in the proclamation of local Soviets.

Sept. 19 - The Allies launch a cavalry attack to push the Turks out of Palestine. Australian and Indian cavalry divisions smash through the Turkish defenses around Megiddo on the first day and gallop northward, as British infantry follow, while the RAF and Arab fighters disrupt communication and supply lines. As the Turkish armies collapse, they withdraw northward toward Damascus with the Allies in pursuit.

World War II**1939**

Sept. 15 - German troops capture Gdynia, Poland. Meanwhile, Polish troops fail to break out of the Kutno Pocket. At Warsaw, with it surrounded by German troops, the Polish Army is ordered to the Romanian border to hold out until the Allies arrive. The Romanian government offers asylum to all Polish civilians who can make it across the border; however, Polish military personnel who cross the border will be interned.

Sept. 20 - German troops withdraw to the agreed-upon demarcation line in Poland; Soviet forces move in behind them.

1940

Sept. 18 - Seventy German Ju-88 bombers escorted by 100 Messerschmitt Bf-109 fighters cross the English Channel at noon and are intercepted by British fighters of No. 11 Group. Sixty of the bombers reach London and drop their bombs. At 4 p.m., 200 bombers in multiple waves attack targets in Kent in southern England; they are engaged by fighters of No. 11 and No. 12 Groups and suffer 23 bombers and 10 fighters lost, but they are able to shoot down 12 British fighters in exchange. Overnight, London is bombed by several waves of bombers; Liverpool, Manchester, Bristol and other cities are also attacked.

1941

Sept. 16 - The German XXXXI Corps (motorized) successfully cuts off the Soviet 8th Army in the Oranienbaum Pocket southwest of Leningrad, Russia, after two days of fighting

1942

Sept. 14 - German submarine U-457 attacks Allied convoy PQ-18 20 miles south of Spitzbergen, Svalbard, Norway. The destroyer HMS Impulsive detects U-457's approach, but fails to deter the attack. Shortly after, U-589 attempts to attack but is sunk by destroyer HMS Onslow and a Swordfish aircraft from escort carrier HMS Avenger.

- Japanese troops attack the Australian line at Ioribaiwa Ridge (25 miles north of Port Moresby) along the Kokoda Track in Australian Papua.

1943

Sept. 17 - USS Puffer attacks a Japanese convoy in the Dutch East Indies, damaging a transport and sinking another; it expends six torpedoes and observes three hits.

1944

Sept. 16 - British troops land unopposed on the island of Kythera in the Peloponnese peninsula in Greece.

- U.S. 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion captures Simpelveld in the Netherlands.

Sept. 19 - Flying a Dakota aircraft on a supply run for British troops at Arnhem, the Netherlands, Flight Lt. David Lord flies several runs over the drop zone despite the starboard wing being hit and in flames. Having dropped all supplies, he orders his crew to bail out while he remains in the pilot's seat to keep the aircraft steady. The aircraft eventually explodes in mid-air.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes**Next week in World War history (Sept. 7 to 13)****World War I****1914**

Sept. 7 - Sir John French, commander in chief of the British Expeditionary Force, begins his first official dispatch from the Western Front, summarizing the events of the first several weeks of British operations.

"The transport of the troops from England both by sea and by rail was effected in the best order and without a check," French said. "Each unit arrived at its destination in this country [France] well within the scheduled time."

Sept. 9 - In a letter written to the government of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, U.S. Secretary of State Robert Lansing demands the recall of Constantin Dumba, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador in Washington, D.C.

Sept. 13 - French forces reoccupy Soissons and Amiens.

1915

Sept. 8 - A German Zeppelin commanded by Heinrich Mathy, one of the great airship commanders of the war, bombs Aldersgate in central London, killing 22 people and causing £500,000 worth of damage.

Sept. 11 - Delegates to the First International Socialist Conference at Zimmerwald in Switzerland call for an immediate end to the First World War.

1916

Sept. 9 - The Irish 16th Division captures the German-held village of Ginchy, France. Ginchy is a vital strategic position 1.5 kilometers northeast of Guillemont, at the junction of six roads on a rise overlooking Combles, 4 kilometers to the southeast, that commands a view of the entire Somme battlefield.

Sept. 10 - German and Bulgarian forces take Silistra, Bulgaria, in the Dobrudja region. Dobruja is a historical region shared today by Bulgaria and Romania. It is situated between the lower Danube River and the Black Sea, and includes the Danube Delta, Romanian coast and the northernmost part of the Bulgarian coast.

1917

Sept. 11 - The first group of repatriated British prisoners reaches England from Switzerland.

1918

Sept. 12 - The American Expeditionary Force, under the command of Gen. John J. Pershing, launches its first major offensive operation as an independent army. Pershing's first target is a triangular piece of land between the fortified French cities of Verdun and Nancy known as the Saint-Mihiel salient. German troops occupy the salient as a base for their planned push toward Paris. The loss of Paris would be devastating to the allies. The U.S. First Army bombards the fortress and, in only four days, destroys the Germans' hold.

1919

Sept. 10 - Almost one year after an armistice officially ends the war, New York City holds a parade to welcome home Gen. John J. Pershing, commander in chief of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), and some 25,000 Soldiers who served in the AEF's 1st Division on the Western Front.

World War II**1939**

Sept. 13 - Yasuji Okamura moves his command center for Japanese 11th Army to Xianning, Hubei Province, China, in preparation for the upcoming attack on Changsha in the neighboring Hunan Province.

1940

Sept. 7 - Three hundred German bombers raid London in the first of 57 consecutive nights of bombing. This bombing "blitzkrieg" (lightning war) continues until May 1941.

Sept. 11 - Six French warships passed through the Strait of Gibraltar at the speed of 25 knots. Realizing they were heading for Dakar in French West Africa, British battlecruiser HMS Renown and three destroyers depart at 4 p.m. in an attempt to intercept. Overnight, the French fleet stopped at Casablanca to refuel.

Sept. 13 - Mussolini's forces finally cross the Libyan border into Egypt, achieving what "il Duce" calls the "glory" Italy had sought for three centuries.

1941

Sept. 10 - HMCS Moosejaw and another Flower-class corvette HMCS Chambly share the sinking of the German submarine U-501 by depth charges and ramming; 11 German sailors are killed along with one Canadian sailor who boards the sinking submarine; 37 German sailors survive.

Sept. 12 - Three Allied corvettes and eight destroyers are added to Allied convoy SC-42's escort force. In the air, British Catalina aircraft also appeared to provide protection during the day.

1942

Sept. 9 - A Japanese float plane drops incendiary bombs on an Oregon state forest — the first and only air attack on the U.S. mainland in the war.

1943

Sept. 8 - Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower publicly announces the surrender of Italy to the Allies. Germany reacts with Operation Axis, the Allies with Operation Avalanche.

Sept. 9 - USS Permit damages a Japanese transport between Kwajalein Atoll and Wotje Atoll, Marshall Islands, hitting it with one of three torpedoes fired. A Japanese aircraft spots USS Permit and attacks with depth charges; USS Permit escapes unscathed.

1944

Sept. 7 - The first two German V-2 rockets are fired against the Allies by German Mobile Artillery Detachments.

Sept. 10 - British army Maj. William Cavendish, Lord Hartington, the husband of the sister of future American President John F. Kennedy, is killed in action at Heppen, Belgium, at the hands of a German sniper..

1945

Sept. 9 - Americans begin the repatriation of servicemen from the Pacific theater. Over the next six months, 369 warships will take 1.3 million men back to the United States.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (Aug. 17 to 23)

World War I

1914

Aug. 17 - Russia invades Germany, attacking into East Prussia, forcing the outnumbered Germans there to fall back. This marks the advent of the Eastern Front in Europe in which Russia will oppose Germany and Austria-Hungary.

Aug. 20 - German troops occupy undefended Brussels. Following this, the main German armies continue westward and invade France according to their master strategy known as the Schlieffen Plan. It calls for a giant counter-clockwise movement of German armies wheeling into France, swallowing up Paris, and then attacking the rear of the French armies concentrated in the Alsace-Lorraine area. Under the overall command of Helmuth von Moltke, Chief of the German General Staff, the Germans seek to achieve victory over France within six weeks and then focus on defeating Russia in the East before Russia's six-million-man army, the world's largest, can fully mobilize.

Aug. 23 - The Battle of Mons begins. It is the first major action of the British Expeditionary Force in the War. The British Army attempts to hold the line of the Mons-Condé Canal against the advancing German 1st Army. Although the British fight well and inflict disproportionate casualties on the numerically superior Germans, they were eventually forced to retreat due both to the greater strength of the Germans and the sudden retreat of the French Fifth Army, which expose the British right flank.

1915

Aug. 19 - Two Americans die in the sinking of ship Arabic, off the Irish coast by a U-boat.

Aug. 21 - The Battle of Scimitar Hill is the last offensive mounted by the British at Suvla during the Battle of Gallipoli. It is also the largest single-day attack ever mounted by the Allies at Gallipoli. The purpose of the attack is to remove the immediate Ottoman threat from the exposed Suvla landing and to link with the Anzac sectors to the south. Launched to coincide with the simultaneous attack on Hill 60, it is a costly failure, in which the Turks are forced to use all their reserves in "severe and bloody fighting" far into the night, with some Turkish trenches lost and retaken twice.

1916

Aug. 18 - The Romanian government signs a secret treaty with the Allies; by its terms, in the event of an Allied victory Romania will acquire Transylvania, up to the River Theiss, the province of Bukovina to the River Pruth, and the entire Banat region, all territory under Austro-Hungarian control.

1917

Aug. 18 - The Italian army launch their 11th battle against Austro-Hungarian troops on the Isonzo River, near Italy's border with Austria-Hungary.

Aug. 20 - The Battle of Langemarck ends.

1918

Aug. 21 - The British 3rd Army begins an attack along a 10-mile front south of Arras, while the adjacent 4th Army resumes its attack in the Somme.

World War II

1940

Aug. 18 - The British evacuation of Berbera, British Somaliland is completed after troopships and hospital ship depart the port, destined for Aden. Australian cruiser HMAS Hobart is left behind to collect stragglers and destroy vehicles, fuel, and stores. Colonial troops of the Somaliland Camel Corps choose to remain; their British officers respect their decision and allow them to keep their weapons.

1941

Aug. 21 - Adolf Hitler directs the transfer of units away from the Moscow area in order to bolster the siege on Leningrad and aiming to the link up with Finnish forces, as well as pulls forces from the battles in Ukraine to focus on the oil fields in the Caucasus region.

1942

Aug. 17 - German submarine U-507 sinks Brazilian ship Itagiba off Brazil at 3:49 p.m. (36 are killed, 145 survive); later at 6:03p.m., as Brazilian ship Arará approaches to rescue survivors, U-507 sinks her as well (20 were killed, 16 survived).

Aug. 20 - Henderson Field receives 31 U.S. Marine fighter aircraft (19 Wildcat fighters and 12 Dauntless dive bombers) from USS Long Island, allowing air supply and evacuation of wounded to begin between Espiritu Santo and Guadalcanal; the small air fleet is dubbed "Cactus Air Force".

1943

Aug. 18 - Three waves of British bombers (227, 113, and 180 bombers, respectively) strike the German rocket research site at Peenemünde, dropping a total of 1,600 tons of high explosive bombs and 250 tons of incendiary bombs. Initially the damage appears to be extensive, but the site returns to operation within four to six weeks. Many buildings are left unrepaired and craters unfilled in order to trick the British into thinking that the site is abandoned after the raid.

1944

Aug. 19 - Hauptmann Werner Schmidt of the German Kampfgeschwader 55 wing is awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

- Field Marshal Günther von Kluge commits suicide by taking cyanide near Metz, France after being relieved of his command and recalled to Berlin, Germany.

1945

Aug. 22 - Japanese forces in the Manchuria region of northeastern China surrender. In the two-week campaign, the Japanese lost 80,000 killed and wounded and 54,000 taken prisoner, including 143 generals. The Soviets lost 8,200 dead and 22,000 wounded.

Aug. 23 - The Soviet Union announces that all Japanese resistance in the Manchuria region of northeastern China has ceased. Meanwhile, Soviet troops receive the surrender of the Japanese garrison at Paramushiro, Kurile Islands.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes

Next week in World War history (Aug. 10 to 16)

World War I

1914

Aug. 12 - Great Britain and France declare war on Austria-Hungary. Serbia is invaded by Austria-Hungary.

Aug. 14 - French 1st and 2nd armies attack Alsace and Lorraine.

Aug. 15 - The German right wing continues to advance through Belgium, taking Dinant on the Meuse, and Lanzerac's 5th Army falls back south of the Sambre.

- The government of Japan sends an ultimatum to Germany, demanding the removal of all German ships from Japanese and Chinese waters and the surrender of Tsingtao (the location of Germany's largest overseas naval bases, located on China's Shantung Peninsula) to Japan by noon on August 23

1915

Aug. 10 - Turkish counterattack on Chunuk Bair nearly succeeds.

- Russians pursue Turks on Upper Euphrates and capture important height in valley of Passin.

- German fleet bombards Riga, Latvia, and is again driven off.

- Bucharest refuses to authorize transport of German munitions to Turkey.

- Vilna and Kovno, Russia, are evacuated

1916

Aug. 16 - The French take a system of German trenches near Belloy-en-Santerre, France, as well as 1,300 prisoners.

- British advance west and southwest of Guillemont, France.

1917

Aug. 15 - The Battle of Hill 70 in Lens, France, between the Canadian Corps and the German Sixth Army begins. The objective of the Canadian assault is to inflict casualties and draw German troops away from the 3rd Battle of Ypres. There is extensive use of poison gas by both sides, including the newly introduced German Yellow Cross shell containing the blistering agent. The Canadians prevent German formations from transferring local men and equipment to the Ypres Salient but fail to draw in German troops. The Canadians lost more than 9,000 soldiers at Hill 70, but killed or wounded an estimated 25,000 Germans.

Aug. 16 - British troops capture the village of Langemarck from the Germans during the 3rd Battle of Ypres. a German counterattack recovers much of the ground gained at Langemarck, but British forces retain the initiative in the region, aided by the use of tanks and by a diversionary attack by the French at Verdun, where more than 5,000 German soldiers are taken prisoner.

1918

Aug. 12 - The Battle of Amiens ends.

Aug. 13 - The Allies shoot down 15 German aircraft, but lose 27 of their own.

- The Czech Legion declares war on the Central Powers.

- Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany summons his principal political and military leaders to a crown council at Spa, a resort town in Belgium, to assess the status of the German war effort during World War I.

World War II

1940

Aug. 10 - The Italian Naval Staff issues its first operational order of WWII for a September mission against Alexandria, Egypt, and an October mission against Gibraltar.

1941

Aug. 11 - Vichy France enacts a law to exclude Jewish doctors.

1942

Aug. 12 - Japanese troops march along the Kokoda Track in Australian Papua toward the Australian base at Deniki.

1943

Aug. 10 - Returning from a bombing mission of Nuremberg, Germany, a Royal Air Force Bomber Command Halifax of the 77 Squadron is shot down at 2:15 a.m. 12 km southwest of Mons by Uffz. Kustuch in a Messerschmitt Bf 110G night-fighter of Nachtjagdgeschwader 4. Pilot Peter Hobbs kept control of the flaming aircraft to miss houses in the last few moments before the plane crashed killing all on board. The crewmembers are buried at Chièvres communal cemetery.

Following are the names of the rest of the aircrew.

• Sgt. Eric Pegg Flight. engineer;

• Pilot Officer Jurgis Faliejevas serving as Pilot Officer George Cockayne, navigator;

• Flying Officer Harry Etherington, air bomber;

• Sgt. Eric Howes. wireless operator/air gunner;

• Sgt. Arthur Bryan. air gunner; and

• Sgt. Rodney Rushton. air gunner.

Aug. 11 - German forces begin a six-day evacuation of the Italian island of Sicily, having been beaten back by the Allies, who invaded the island in July. The Germans had maintained a presence in Sicily since the earliest days of the war.

1944

Aug. 14 - British troops launch Operation Tractable towards Falaise, France, preceded by 800 bombers. One hundred and fifty Polish soldiers are killed as the second of three waves of Royal Air Force Lancaster bombers release their bombs too early.

1945

Aug. 10 - In light of the bombing of Hiroshima Aug. 6, Nagasaki Aug. 9, and the Soviet invasion of Manchuria Emperor Hirohito, having rubber-stamped the decisions of his War Council, including the decision to bomb Pearl Harbor, finally feels compelled to do more. The emperor summons and presides over a special meeting of the Council and implores them to accept the terms of the Potsdam Conference. "It seems obvious that the nation is no longer able to wage war, and its ability to defend its own shores is doubtful." The Council had been split over the surrender terms; half the members wanted assurances that the emperor would maintain his hereditary and traditional role in a postwar Japan before surrender could be considered.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

Trenches to Foxholes**The week in World War history (Aug. 3 to 9)****World War I****1914**

Aug. 3 - Belgium refuses Germany's request for free passage of its army through Belgium.

Aug. 4 - The German 1st, 2nd and 3rd Armies — 34 divisions of men — align themselves on the right wing of the German lines so that they are poised to move into Belgium. In total, seven German armies, with a total of 1.5 million soldiers, are assembled along the Belgian and French frontiers.

- Great Britain declares war on Germany at 11 p.m.

Aug. 5 - The German army launches its assault on the city of Liège, Belgium, violating Belgium's neutrality and beginning the first battle of World War I.

Aug. 6 - Hungary declares war on Russia. Serbia declares war on Germany.

Aug. 7 - French troops launch their first attack of World War I, advancing toward the city of Mulhouse, located near the Swiss border in Alsace, a former French province lost to Germany in the settlement ending the Franco-Prussian War in 1871.

Aug. 8 - Great Britain enacts the Defense of the Realm Act (granting unprecedented powers to the government to control the economy and daily life).

Aug. 9 - German Minister of War Erich von Falkenhayn puts Walter Rathenau of the large electronics firm Allgemeine-Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft in charge of organizing all the raw materials for Germany's war production.

1915

Aug. 6 - In Turkey, the Battle of Sari Bair begins. The battle is timed to coincide with a further major Allied landing of troop reinforcements at Suvla Bay on the Aegean coastline north of Anzac Cove. The battle forms part of Allied Mediterranean Commander in Chief Sir Ian Hamilton's three-plank Suvla Offensive.

1916

Aug. 6 - The Battle of Gorizia, Italy (6th Battle of the Isonzo), begins with what is intended to be a diversionary artillery barrage and an infantry feint by units of two corps against Monfalcone to the south. The fighting gets out of control, though, resulting in more than five days of tough combat.

1917

Aug. 5 - Richard von Kuhlmann is appointed German Foreign Minister.

Aug. 6 - Aleksander Fyodorovich Kerensky is appointed Prime Minister of Russia.

1918

Aug. 8 - Germans in the Somme experience the "Black Day of the German Army" as later described by German Gen. Erich Ludendorff. This occurs as the British 4th Army, using 456 tanks, attacks German positions east of Amiens. Six German divisions quickly fall apart, and 13,000 prisoners are taken during the rapid 7-mile advance. The attack is only slowed when the Germans rush in nine divisions, their last reserves on the Western Front.

World War II**1940**

Aug. 3 - Italy begins its offensive against the British colony of Somaliland, in East Africa, a territory contiguous with Italian Somaliland.

Italy had occupied parts of East Africa since 1936 and by 1940, when it officially entered the war, had troops far outnumbering British forces in the region. Despite their numerical superiority, the Italians had been slow to make offensive moves for fear that the British blockade in North Africa would make it impossible to get much-needed supplies, such as fuel and weapons, to sustain long engagements. But if Italy were to make greater territorial gains, it would have to act while British numbers were still relatively small.

1941

Aug. 6 - The first German strategic reports on progress in Russia claim that Germany has taken nearly 900,000 prisoners and destroyed or captured 13,100 tanks; 9,100 aircraft; and more than 10,000 heavy guns.

- U.S. Navy aircraft based in Reykjavik, Iceland, begins routine patrols of the North Atlantic.

1942

Aug. 7 - The U.S. 1st Marine Division begins Operation Watchtower, the first U.S. offensive of the war, by landing on Guadalcanal, one of the Solomon Islands.

1943

Aug. 5 - U.S. Navy Adm. Raymond Spruance, formerly the chief of staff of the commander in chief of the Pacific Ocean Area, is named the commanding officer of the Central Pacific Area and the commanding officer of the Fifth Fleet.

Aug. 6 - Two divisions of U.S. Marine Corps squadron VMF-214 and two divisions of VMF-221 escort a P-38 reconnaissance aircraft over the Shortland Islands. The 16 Corsair fighters shoot down five Japanese aircraft, losing one.

1944

Aug. 4 - A German-born Jewish girl and her family, who had been hiding in German-occupied Holland, are found by the Gestapo and transported to various concentration camps. The young girl's diary of her time in hiding was found after her death and published.

Aug. 5 - Polish insurgents liberate a German forced-labor camp in Warsaw, freeing 348 Jewish prisoners, who join in a general uprising against the German occupiers of the city.

1945

Aug. 8 - The Soviet Union officially declares war on Japan, pouring more than 1 million Soviet soldiers into Japanese-occupied Manchuria, northeastern China, to take on the 700,000-strong Japanese army.

Aug. 9 - A second atom bomb is dropped on Japan by the United States, at Nagasaki, resulting in Japan's unconditional surrender. The devastation wrought at Hiroshima wasn't sufficient to convince the Japanese War Council to accept the Potsdam Conference's demand for unconditional surrender.

"Next week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

The week in World War history (July 27 to August 2)

World War I

1914

July 28 - The Austro-Hungarian Empire declares war on Serbia.

July 29 - Britain calls for international mediation to resolve the worsening crisis. Russia urges German restraint, but the Russians begin partial troop mobilization as a precaution. The Germans then warn Russia on its mobilization and begin to mobilize themselves.

July 30- Austrian warships bombard Belgrade, capital of Serbia.

July 31 - Reacting to the Austrian attack on Serbia, Russia begins full mobilization of its troops. Germany demands that it stop.

Aug. 1- Germany declares war on Russia. France and Belgium begin full mobilization

1915

Aug. 1- The Fokker Scourge begins over the Western Front as German pilots achieve air supremacy using the highly effective Fokker monoplane featuring a synchronized machine-gun that fires bullets through the spinning propeller. Although the technology was pioneered by French pilot Roland Garros, the Germans copied and improved the synchronized gun idea after capturing his plane. The Fokker Scourge will last nearly a year, until Allied aerial technology catches up.

1916

July 30 - Jersey City, New Jersey residents are awakened by a major explosion and a succession of explosions that lasted for several hours when the Black Tom Island munitions plant is destroyed. Shock waves are felt as far as ninety miles away. It is suspected that it was German sabotage.



1917

July 31 - The British attempt once more to break through the German lines, this time by attacking positions east of Ypres, Belgium. However, by now the Germans have vastly improved their trench defenses including well-positioned artillery. Although the British 5th Army succeeds in securing forward trench positions, further progress is halted by heavy artillery barrages from the German 4th Army and rainy weather.

1918

July 28 - French advance, occupying Fere-en-Tardenois; British retake Montagne de Bligny.

World War II

1940

July 31 - At Adolf Hitler's residence near Berchtesgaden, München-Oberbayern, Germany, German military leaders are advised of Hitler's plan to attack the Soviet Union. Hitler makes it clear that an invasion of the USSR is a way of securing mastery of Europe, as the fall of the USSR would certainly force Britain to surrender. The military leaders are told to expect the invasion to start in May 1941, and it will likely last about five months.

1941

July 28 - A special commission created on Heinrich Himmler's orders arrives at Auschwitz Concentration Camp to select prisoners within the framework of the "Euthanasia Program" for the incurably ill, extended in 1940 to Jews and in the middle of 1941 to prisoners of concentration camps. The 573 selected, most are sick Polish prisoners from Block 15, are told that they are to be transferred to other camps for easier work because of their conditions. At last moment, two German criminals Johann Siegruth and Ernst Krankemann are added to the list. The 575 are sent to Sonnenstein Castle under the supervision of Franz Hössler and are killed by carbon monoxide poisoning in a gas chamber disguised as a shower room.

1942

July 27 - The initial hours of the Allies Operation Manhood offensive in Egypt near El Alamein are successful, but British tanks fail to follow up, thus the subsequent Axis counterattack at dawn inflict heavy casualties on the exposed forward positions at Deir el Dhib and at Ruin Ridge. This marks the end of the First Battle of El Alamein, with 13,250 casualties on the Allied side and 17,000 on the Axis side.

July 30 - President Franklin Roosevelt signs the Navy Women's Reserve Act into law.

1943

July 29 - The Italian submarine, Pietro Micca, is torpedoed and sunk by the Royal Navy submarine HMS Trooper in the Mediterranean Sea. Eighteen men are rescued but 54 go down with the boat. An Italian rescue vessel later lowers listening gear to the submarine to detect signs of life but hears only the sound of gunshots. It is believed that the survivors took their own lives rather than endure a terrible, lingering death.

Aug. 2 - Auschwitz Concentration Camp's special camp for Roma people is liquidated; 2,897 prisoners are gassed.

1944

Aug. 1 - Two new Allied armoured divisions, the 4th Canadian and 1st Polish, arrive in Normandy, France. They are tasked with executing the final great break-out from the British sector to trap and destroy the German armies in Normandy or send them reeling back to the Seine.

Aug. 2 - German submarine U-804 sank American destroyer escort USS Fiske with torpedoes in the central Atlantic.

Next week in World War history is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux public affairs.

The week in World War history (July 20 to 26)

World War I

1914

July 25 - Austria-Hungary, with the backing of Germany, delivers an ultimatum to Serbia. The Serbs propose arbitration as a way to resolve dispute, but also begin mobilization of their troops.

1915

July 21 - President Woodrow Wilson sends notes to Secretary of War Lindley M. Garrison and Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels directing them to draft a defense program.

1916

July 20 - The British launch an attack on High Wood during the Somme offensive. The Germans hold onto High Wood until Sept. 15. The area was never fully cleared, and it is believed that the remains of thousands of British and German soldiers still lie in High Wood.

1917

July 21 - The armed merchant cruiser HMS OTWAY is torpedoed and sunk by German submarine UC49. Ten people are killed.

July 22 - Russians penetrate two miles into German defenses east of Vilna, Lithuania, taking 1,000 prisoners.

1918

July 21 - Pvt. Mato Raikovich, U.S. Army, earns the Distinguished Service Cross for action south of Soissons, France. Raikovich assists in carrying a machine gun forward through intense enemy machine-gun and artillery fire. Placing his machine gun in action, he delivers an effective fire that causes the enemy to abandon the counterattack.

July 22 - 1st Lt. John Rachek, U.S. Army, earns the Distinguished Service Cross for action at Trugny, France. Although he has been twice wounded, Rachek refuses to be evacuated and continues on duty with his company during the attack and capture of Trugny under heavy fire until he is incapacitated by a third wound.

- Canadian ace Raymond Collishaw gets his 51st victory shooting down a German Albatros D.V at Scarpe River, France.



Raymond Collishaw smiles from the cockpit c. 1917.

July 24 - German Ace Emil Schäpe scores his fifth victory shooting down a Bréguet XIV northeast of Sept-Saulx, France. In three months Schäpe will be stationed at Chièvres Air Field where he will get the last eight of his 18 victories.

July 25 - Allies take Villemontoire (6 miles south of Soissons), Oulchy-le-Chateau (north of River Ourcq) and the southern half of Forest of Fere.

World War II

1940

July 22 - British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Lord Halifax (Edward Frederick Lindley Wood), rejects Hitler's proposal for peace of July 19, 1940. "No one here wants the war to go on for a day longer than is necessary. But we shall not stop fighting until freedom, for ourselves and others, is secure." This is a departure from his previous stance, urging British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to negotiate a peace with Germany.

1941

July 21 - One hundred and twenty-seven German Luftwaffe bombers take off from an airfield near Smolensk, Russia, to attack Moscow in multiple waves during the night; the resulting air alarms are the first to be sounded in the city.

- Franklin D. Roosevelt asks the U.S. Congress to modify the Selective Service Act, increasing the period of service from one year of active service to also include 30 months in the reserve.

July 22 - Adolf Hitler sends an armored train equipped with anti-aircraft weapons to Benito Mussolini as a birthday gift.

July 23 - A British Hampden bomber, returning to Waddington, Lincolnshire, England, after a minelaying sortie, crashes into the staff residence of Lincoln Girls High School on Lindum Hill in the nearby city of Lincoln. The crew of four are all killed as is the senior French mistress who died trying to escape from the burning building.

1942

July 23 - The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), fearful that the completion of the Japanese airfield on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands might signal a renewed enemy advance in the South Pacific that could threaten U.S. aid to New Zealand and Australia, agree to deploy Marines to secure the lines of communication.

1943

July 20 - Italian troops surrender en masse to U.S. troops in Sicily, Italy, as U.S. 82nd Airborne Division captures Sciacca and Menfi, U.S. 9th Infantry Division captures Santo Stefano Quisquina and the heights north of Mussomeli, U.S. 2nd Armored Division with British troops in support captures Enna, Canadian 1st Division reaches Leonforte, and British 51st Division attacks the Sferro airfield.

- Approximately 150 aircraft of Allied Northwest African Strategic Air Force and more than 100 aircraft of U.S. 9th Air Force attack Rome for a second day in a row, targeting rail marshalling yards and the Ciampino Airfield. On the return trip, 9th Air Force planes drop their remaining bombs on targets at Anzio and Sicily.

1944

July 26 - German Lt. Alfred Schreiber, flying an Me 262A jet fighter, damages a British Mosquito aircraft crewed by Flight Lt. Albert Wall and navigator Albert Lobban. This is the first air-to-air combat involving a jet aircraft.

"The week in World War history" is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux Public Affairs.

The week in World War history (July 13 to 19)

World War I

1914

July 19 - The Austrian Ministerial Council meets in secret. It is decided that Army Chief of Staff Gen. Conrad von Hotzendorff shall be given his chance and Serbia will be "beaten to earth."

1915

July 13 - The German offensive in Meuse-Argonne ends.
-- On the Eastern Front, the next phase of the combined Austro-German offensive against the Russians begins in northern Poland, with the Austro-Germans advancing toward Warsaw. The Russian Army now gets weaker by the day due to chronic supply shortages and declining morale. Once again, the Russians retreat, and also order a total civilian evacuation of Poland. This results in great hardship for the people as they leave their homes and head eastward, clogging the roads and hampering the movement of Russian troops.

1916

July 13 - The British launch a night attack against German positions along a 3.5-mile portion of the Somme Front. After advancing nearly 1,000 yards, the advance is halted as the Germans regroup their defenses. Two days later, the British once again penetrate the German line and advance to High Wood but are then pushed back

1917

July 14- Herr Theobald von Bethmann-Holweg, German Imperial Chancellor, resigns.

1918

July 17 - Russian Bolsheviks murder former Czar Nicholas and his entire family. By now, an all-out civil war has erupted in Russia that features indiscriminate killings of civilians and captured fighters. Amid the chaos, disease and starvation envelop Russia. The fighting between Bolsheviks and their opponents will last three years, ending with a Bolshevik victory amid a Russian death toll estimated at 15 million persons.

July 18 - A combined French and American attack along the Marne marks the first in a series of coordinated Allied counter-offensives on the Western Front. Three French armies accompanied by five American divisions cross the Marne River. In the face of this assault, the German 7th and 9th Armies begin a withdrawal from the Marne.



Herr Theobald von Bethmann-Holweg. He never served in the army, but after the war started he was appointed to an honorary rank which carried with it the wearing of a general's uniform.

World War II

1940

July 15 - The 2nd Armored Division is formed at Fort Benning, Georgia. In 1944 the division will help liberate Mons and Chièvres.

- Hampden bombers from RAF Hemswell in England, United Kingdom are sent, in one of the most daring attacks of the war, to raid Wilhelmshaven, Germany in an attempt to cripple the Tirpitz and Admiral Scheer. Six aircraft are detailed to attack Tirpitz and two to attack Admiral Scheer. Other aircraft are detailed to carry out diversionary raids. The raid is unsuccessful. Four bombers are shot down and most of the survivors damaged (one is found to have 150 holes on its return). No damage is incurred by the German warships.

1941

July 14 - German bombers based in Crete, Greece attack Suez, Egypt, damaging harbor facilities and ships in port.

- Russian Katyusha rocket launchers are used in combat for the first time at Rudnya, Smolensk, Russia.

1942

July 16 - USS Seadragon sinks Japanese transport Hakodate Maru 70 miles north of Cam Ranh Bay, 2 miles off the coast of French Indochina. After the sinking, Seadragon sets sail for Fremantle, Australia.

July 17 - B-17 bombers of the USAAF VIII Bomber Command plan attacks on Hannover and Hamburg, Germany, but both missions are recalled after launch due to poor weather. Thirty-three of the bombers attack targets of opportunity after receiving the recall order; 21 of them attempt to attack the Fokker factory at Amsterdam, the Netherlands but accidentally drop bombs on civilian quarters, killing 150. On the same day, B-26 bombers of U.S. VIII Air Support Command attack Cayeux, France as a diversion to draw German fighters away from the primary targets in Germany.

1943

July 15 - Before dawn, Allied Northwest African Tactical Air Force bombers attack Palermo, Sicily, Italy. During the day, US Ninth Air Force B-25 bombers attack Palermo, Cape Gallo, Salina Island, and Cape Zifferano while the Northwest African Tactical Air Force attack Vibo Valentia. Meanwhile, airborne troops of the United Kingdom's 1st Airborne Division are relieved after fighting a larger German airborne force at Primosole Bridge over the Simeto River in Sicily, Italy for the past two days, ending Operation Fustian. The U.S. 7th Army captures the ports of Agrigento and Porto Empedocle.

1944

July 18 - German Luftwaffe Hauptmann Werner Thierfelder, commander of the special test unit (Eprobungskommando) tasked with evolving tactics for the new Me 262 jet-powered fighter is killed when his plane crashes in flames near Landsberg, Germany. The cause of the crash was not determined, but it was likely to be either a mechanical failure or due to poor fuel quality.

The week in World War history is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux public affairs.

The week in World War history (July 6 to 12)

Based on reader suggestions we will be changing this week in history to reflect the upcoming weeks historical events instead of the current week's so that people have the opportunity to visit some of the event locations on the anniversary of the event. In this issue you will find this week and next week's historical events.

World War I

1914

July 8 - Wilhelm II and his Imperial Chancellor, Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, telegram Count Leopold von Berchtold, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister that Austria-Hungary can rely that Germany will support whatever action is necessary to deal with Serbia -- in effect offering von Berchtold a 'blank check.'

July 8 - Count Leopold von Berchtold, Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, recommends that Austrian Army Chief of Staff Gen. Conrad von Hotzendorff and Minister of War, Baron Alexander von Krobatin, proceed with their vacation plans lest something be suspected. "It would be a good thing if you and the War Minister would go on leave for awhile so as to keep up an appearance that nothing is going on," Berchtold said.

1915

July 6 - Russians take 15,000 prisoners between Krasnik and Lyublin.

July 9 - In Africa, the German Southwest Africa colony (present day Namibia) is taken by the Allies following 11 months of fighting between the Germans and South African and Rhodesian troops loyal to the British.

1916

July 10 - The Germans attack again at Verdun, using poison gas, and advance toward Fort Souville. Four days later, the French counter-attack and halt the Germans.

1917

July 11 - British Lieutenant General Sir Frederick Stanley Maude launches an attack on Ramadi, Mesopotamia.

1918

July 7 - U.S. ace Hamilton Coolidge gets his first aerial victory shooting down a German Rumpler C.IV. In October of 1918 he is shot down and buried near Chevières, France.



Hamilton Coolidge's burial site in Chevières, France
(Courtesy of American War Memorials Overseas).

World War II

1940

July 6 - The first German U-boat base in France is opened at Lorient.

July 10 - The 114-day Battle of Britain begins

- British cruisers HMS Capetown and HMS Caledon and destroyers HMS Janus, HMS Juno, HMS Ilex, and HMS Imperial shelled Bardia, Libya near the Egyptian border at 5:37 a.m., sinking Italian ship Axum and damaging another merchant ship. Italian bombers arrived at 8:20 a.m., but cause no damage against the British warships.

1941

July 7 - The US Marine Corps establishes the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing at Quantico, Virginia, United States under Lieutenant Colonel Louis E. Woods.

July 8 - British B-17 bombers are deployed on a combat mission for the first time as three of them were ordered to attack Wilhelmshaven, Germany.

July 9 - President Franklin Roosevelt announces that American troops are to relieve British troops in the occupation of Iceland. Adolf Hitler responds by publicly noting that it is a clear act of aggression against Germany.

1942

July 9 - German 4th Panzer Army captures Voronezh, Russia while German 6th Army reaches Rossosh 100 miles to the south. In Ukraine the German 1st Panzer Army crosses the Donets River.

July 11 - The US Marines headquarters unit arrives in New Zealand.

1943

July 6 - French and Belgian prisoners of war begin to be transferred out of the Oflag IV-C camp at Colditz Castle in Germany for the Oflag X-C camp in Lübeck; the transfer continues until July 12.

July 10 - The Allies begin Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily, Italy, with an airborne assault before dawn; amphibious elements of Operation Husky land to join the fight later in the day. Out at sea, hospital ship Tampala and LST-313 are sunk by German air attack. Picket ship USS Sentinel is sunk by a SC250 bomb delivered by a Fw 190 aircraft off Molla. Destroyer USS Maddox is also lost after being attacked by dive bombers and sunk within two minutes. The US Navy subsequently suffers severe accusations for failing to supply adequate air cover.

July 12 - Soviet forces launch a massive offensive along their Bryansk, Central, and West Fronts in Russia, toward Bryansk, Kursk, and Orel. Prokhorovka, Russia becomes the site of what would be hailed as the largest armor battle in history.

1944

July 6 - British Eighth Army captured Osimo, Italy.

July 9 - Gefreiter Richard Heiff is wounded in a Messerschmitt Bf 110 crash at Chièvres Air Field. 2/NJG-3.

The week in World War history is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux public affairs.

The week in World War history (June 29 to July 5)

World War II

1914

July 5 - Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany pledges his country's unconditional support for whatever action Austria-Hungary chooses to take in its conflict with Serbia.

1915

June 29 - The Italians launch an unsuccessful attack against Austro-Hungary at what will be called the 1st Battle of Isonzo. There will be 12 in total.

July 1 - Russia creates a Central War Industries Committee to oversee production and address a severe shortage of artillery shells and rifles on the Front. Russian soldiers in the field without rifles can only get them from fellow soldiers after they are killed or wounded.

1916

July 1 - The British Army suffers the worst single-day death toll in its history as 18,800 soldiers are killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. The losses come as 13 attacking divisions encounter German defenses that are still intact despite the seven-day bombardment designed to knock them out. The Somme offensive quickly becomes a battle of attrition as British and French troops make marginal gains against the Germans but repeatedly fail to break through the entire Front as planned.

1917

July 2 - Greece declares war on the Central Powers, following the abdication of pro-German King Constantine who is replaced by a pro-Allied administration led by Prime Minister Venizelos. Greek soldiers are now added to the Allied ranks.

- Manfred von Richthofen, The Red Baron, Scores his 57 victory when he shoots down a British Royal Flying Corps No. 53 Squadron RE.8 two-seat reconnaissance and bomber biplane killing 2nd Lt. Frank Guy Buckingham Pascoe and Sgt. Hubert Arthur Whatley over Deûlémont, France.

July 3 - Belgian ace Edmond Thieffry downs two German Albatros D.III's north of Diksmuide, Belgium between 1:30 and 1:32 p.m. for his fifth and sixth victories, being the first Belgian fighter pilot to shoot down two enemy aircraft in one day. As a reward he was commissioned a sous-lieutenant, made Chevalier de l'Ordre de Léopold (Knight of the Order of Léopold), awarded the Le Croix de guerre Belge (the Belgian War Cross) and personally decorated by King Vittorio Emanuele of Italy.

July 4 - U.S. troops make their first public display of World War I, marching through the streets of Paris to the grave of the Marquis de Lafayette, a French aristocrat and hero of the American Revolutionary War.

1918

July 3 - With Turkish forces in the final months of fighting against the Allied powers during World War I, Mohammed V, sultan of the Ottoman Empire, dies at the age of 73.

July 4 - Australian Corps of the Australian Imperial Force and several American units launch attacks against the German positions in and around the town of Le Hamel in northern France during World War I.

World War II

1940

July 4 - British submarine HMS Pandora sinks French gunboat Rigault de Genouilly off Oran, Algeria.

- French bombers attack the British fleet at Gibraltar (causing no damage) while the submarines, armed merchant cruisers, and destroyers based in Dakar are ordered to sortie to attack British shipping.

- The Vichy French government breaks off all relations with the United Kingdom.

1941

July 1 - Erwin Rommel is promoted to the rank of General der Panzertruppe (General of the Armoured Corps). His leadership in the North African campaign established him as one of the most able commanders of the war, and earned him the nickname the Desert Fox.

1942

June 29 - USS Saratoga arrives at Pearl Harbor, U.S. Territory of Hawaii after ferrying aircraft to Midway Atoll.

- German 4th Panzer Army threatens to surround the Soviet 40th Army as the Germans advance toward Voronezh in southern Russia; 1,000 Soviet tanks were released from the reserves to reinforce the defense.

July 5 - Flying ace Lance C. Wade destroys a Messerschmitt Bf 109. Wade was an American pilot who joined the Royal Air Force in 1940. He is the leading American ace to serve exclusively in a foreign air force. He is credited with 25 aerial victories.

1943

July 2 - Japanese physicist Yoshio Nishina meets with army liaison officer Maj. Gen. Nobuji and reports that he expects to be successful with the nuclear research project. He notes that he has 10 kilograms of uranium-235 to create an atomic bomb, but he needs a large cyclotron to conduct experiments to confirm this theory. Nobuji promised further funding.

- U.S. Army 43rd Division begins to move from Rendova to New Georgia in the Solomon Islands, covered by gunfire from U.S. Marines 9th Defense Battalion and U.S. Army 192nd Field Artillery. Japanese bombers attempt to interfere by attacking supply dumps on Rendova, causing heavy casualties.

1944

June 30 - A transport of 2,044 Jews from Athens and Corfu Island in Greece arrived at Auschwitz Concentration Camp in occupied Poland; 455 men and 175 women were registered into the camp while the remainder were gassed.

July 3 - British troops hold on to Caen, forcing the German 12th SS Panzer Division and Army engineers (acting as infantry) to commit to the Caen area, allowing American VIII Corps to reach Coutances, which allows General Patton's US Third Army to sweep through northwestern France.

- USS Wasp's aircraft attacked Japanese positions on Iwo Jima and Chichi Jima of the Bonin Islands.

The week in World War history is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux public affairs.

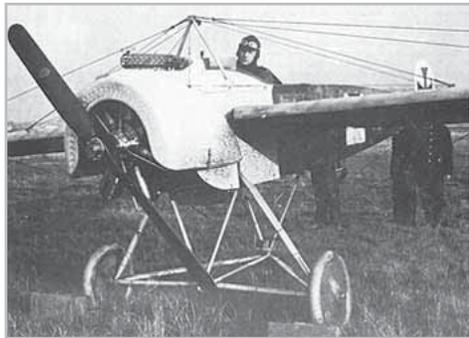
The week in World War history (June 22 to 28)

World War I

June 22, 1916 - The Germans resume their offensive near Verdun, targeting Fort Souville which overlooks the city and the Meuse bridges. Using poisonous phosgene gas at the start of the attack, they initially take the village of Fleury just two miles north of Verdun, but further advance southward is halted by a strong French counter-attack. Verdun has now become a battle of attrition for both sides with a death toll approaching 500,000 men.

June 23, 1915 - The Italian army attacks Austro-Hungarian positions near the Isonzo River, in the eastern section of the Italian front; it will become the first of twelve Battles of the Isonzo fought during World War I.

June 24, 1915 - Oswald Boelcke makes the first operational flight of the Fokker Eindecker. The Fokker E is the first combat aircraft in the world to be equipped with a forward-firing, fixed machine gun synchronized to fire between the propeller blades. It puts the German Air Service far ahead of the Allied air forces for several months during the summer of 1915. The Fokker E, plane makes German pilots like Boelcke and Max Immelman into national heroes, as the number of their kills increases exponentially.



German pilot in a Fokker Eindecker.

The years of the First World War, 1914 to 1918, see a staggering improvement not only in aircraft production, but also in technology, on both sides of the conflict.

June 24, 1916 - The Allies begin a week-long artillery bombardment of German defensive positions on the Somme River in northern France. More than 1.5 million shells are fired along a 15-mile front.

June 26, 1917 - The first 14,000 U.S. infantry troops land in France at the port of Saint Nazaire. The landing site had been kept secret because of the menace of German submarines, but by the time the Americans line up to take their first salute on French soil, an enthusiastic crowd has gathered to welcome them. However, the "Doughboys," as the British refer to the green American troops, are untrained, ill-equipped, and far from ready for the difficulties of fighting along the Western Front.

One of U.S. General John J. Pershing's first duties as commander of the American Expeditionary Force is to set up training camps in France and establish communication and supply networks.

June 28, 1914 - Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, heir presumptive to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and his wife, Sophie, Duchess of Hohenberg, are assassinated in Sarajevo.

World War II

June 22, 1945 - The U.S. 10th Army overcomes the last major pockets of Japanese resistance on Okinawa Island, ending one of the bloodiest battles of World War II. Japanese Lieutenant General Mitsuru Ushijima, the commander of Okinawa's defense, commits suicide with a number of Japanese officers and troops rather than surrender.

- Norwegian tanker Nortind, damaged by German submarine U-67 in the Gulf of Mexico two days prior, arrived at New Orleans, Louisiana for repairs.

- German submarine U-202 sinks Argentinean ship Rio Tercero 120 miles southeast of New York, New York, at 12:34p.m. Five are killed and 37 survive.

- Nine Beaufort aircraft of British No. 217 Squadron and six Beaufighter aircraft of No. 235 Squadron launch from Malta to attack an Axis convoy sailing from Naples, Italy to Tripoli, Libya; German freighter Reichenfels is sunk while three Beaufort aircraft are shot down.

- Swordfish torpedo bombers of 830 Squadron of British Fleet Air Arm are launched from Malta to attack Italian destroyer Strale, forcing Strale to run aground near Cape Bon, Tunisia to avoid sinking.

June 23, 1942 - Anxious to learn the secrets of the Luftwaffe's new Focke-Wulf 190 fighter, the British were planning a Commando-type raid to steal one from a French airfield. They are saved the trouble when disorientated German pilot Lieutenant Arnim Faber lands his Fw 190A-3 fighter at RAF Pembrey in South Wales, United Kingdom, mistaking it for an airfield in France.

The captured aircraft is taken to the Air Fighting Development Unit at Duxford, England, United Kingdom where it is discovered, during trials, that the Fw 190A is superior in all respects except turning circle to the Spitfire VB equipping most of RAF Fighter Command.

- 40 miles south of South Pass, Louisiana, United States, U-67 sinks U.S. tanker Rawleigh Warner, killing all 33 aboard.

June 23, 1944 - With two engines out and the fuselage on fire, Pilot Officer Andrew Mynarski, a Canadian gunner in Lancaster bomber, is ordered to bail out. However, he sees that the rear gunner is trapped and tries to free him even though his own clothing and parachute are on fire. Hopelessly stuck, the rear gunner signals to Mynarski that he should save himself.

The Canadian gallantly stands to attention and salutes his comrade before jumping out. He is found by the French but dies later of his injuries. Amazingly, the gunner is thrown clear when the Lancaster crashes and survives, as do the other crew members who had jumped. When they return and tell their story after the war, Mynarski is posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.

June 25, 1942 - Major General Dwight D. Eisenhower takes command of U.S. forces in Europe.

The week in World War history is compiled from various sources by Keith Houin, USAG Benelux public affairs.