

GERMAN EXPANSION

- 1933 – The Nazi Party came to power in Germany (the Third Reich forms). Hitler began to rebuild the military in direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles (secretly at first, and in public by 1935 – the Western democracies do nothing).
- March 1936 – Germans occupied the Rhineland with troops – again violating the Treaty of Versailles and again resulting in no reaction from the Western democracies.
- March 1938 – Austria was annexed by the Third Reich.
- Sept 1938 – Munich Agreement. Britain and France agreed to Hitler's demands to 'free' oppressed German people that lived within the Czech Republic. German troops occupied the Sudetenland in the first weeks of October.
- March 1939 – Germany seized the remainder of western Czechoslovakia. The western democracies finally realized Hitler's true intention of conquest. The southeastern portion became the Slovak Republic, allied with Germany.
- April 1939. Similarly, Italy invaded Albania and then become officially allied with Germany with the "Pact of Steel" in May.

- 1 September 1939 **Germany invaded Poland** with two Army Groups. On 17 Sept the Soviet Union, who had previously signed a non-aggression agreement with Germany invaded and occupied eastern Poland. France and Britain declared war on Germany.

Poland fell in four weeks.

Hitler had invaded using blitzkrieg tactics.

Use tanks and aircraft to tear through enemy defenses.

Destroy their airfields, spread panic among civilians and clog the roads with refugees so enemy forces can't advance.

Germany and Russia divided Poland in two - Russia took eastern Poland as well as the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

WWII was total war - no line between soldiers and civilians- all are targets.

- 27 September 1940. **Tripartite Pact**: The Axis Powers formally came into being. Germany, Japan and Italy signed this agreement to mutually support each other in their quest to conquer their spheres of influence. Hungary and Romania joined in November '40 and Bulgaria joined in March 41.
- October 1939-April 1940. **The 'Phony War'**. Germany built up forces to invade France while France established defenses behind her Maginot Line (a series of strong fortifications on the French-German Border). Since the Maginot Line did not extend beyond that border, the French positioned their more mobile forces, including the British Expeditionary Force, on the Belgium Border, which would cross that border should the Germans attempt a repeat of the Schlieffen plan they had executed at the beginning of WW I. This, the Dyer Plan, would meet and defeat any German attack trying to swing around the Maginot Line, through Belgium/Netherlands. Throughout the winter of 1939/1940, the British and French sat behind the Maginot Line and waited. The Nazis responded with the Siegfried Line. Britain and France didn't want to invade Germany and Germany wasn't ready to invade France.
- 9 April – German forces occupied Denmark
- 9 April – June. Germans invaded Norway. These two actions protect the German trade routes with Sweden (Iron Ore) and assisted Germany to execute her future submarine campaign in the Atlantic.

10 May 1940 – Battle of France. The Germans invaded the Netherlands and Belgium (bypassing the Maginot Line). Britain and France moved to counter this attack.

- German Army Group A (containing the majority of the Panzer Units) attacks through the Ardennes Forrest and cuts off two French Armies and the BEF from the rest of the French Forces. These troops either surrendered or were evacuated at Dunkirk.
- 22 June – The Battle of France ends. After the disaster in the Low Countries, the French Army becomes almost totally ineffective, and the Germans easily attack through northern and eastern France. France surrenders and Vichy France was established, which is Southern France, Corsica and the French Colonies that now became essentially allied with Germany.

With France now Fallen Britain will have to stand alone.

- July – October 1940.

Battle of Britain. An attempt by Germany to gain air superiority, in order to invade Britain (*Operation Sea Lion*).

The Germans failed and eventually called off the Operation.

What were the General Causes of the Second World War?

- Issues left unresolved by the Treaty Of Versailles.
- Economic conditions caused by the Great Depression.
- Territorial Disputes (Who gets what land after the First World War?)
- German Expansionism. (Hitler violating the Treaty of Versailles)
- the Appeasement of Germany

