



THIS MONTH in
MILITARY HISTORY

- 1776 France & Spain agree to donate arms to American rebels
- 1801 Tripoli declares war on United States in what would become First Barbary War.
- 1846 U.S. declares war on Mexico in what would become the Mexican-American War.
- 1848 Battle of Palo Alto, Texas.
- 1863 Battle of Chancellorsville.
- 1911 The U.S. Navy orders its first aircraft.
- 1915 German U-Boat torpedoes and sinks *RMS Lusitania*.
- 1943 Wartime rationing begins in the U.S.
- 1949 First launch of the a *Viking* Rocket.
- 1967 U.S. strikes and bombs the city of Hanoi.

TRIVIA

- 1 Where was the first fielded use of the new M777 155 mm howitzer by American forces?
 - 2 What artillery piece has the distinction of firing a shell for the longest range?
 - 3 What was the designation for the Anti-Ballistic Missile Defense system that utilized a laser system aboard a Boeing 747?
- ANSWERS FOR APRIL 2020 QUESTIONS
- 1 What 2001 battle included “the first American cavalry charge of the twenty-first century?”
➤ Fall of Mazar-i-Sharif
 - 2 What was the name of the U-2 pilot who was shot down by Soviet anti-air defenses while on a recon mission in 1960?
➤ Gary Powers
 - 3 What year did fire destroy the power plant at Rock Island Arsenal?
➤ 1899



Much of the lessons learned from World War II was compiled by the Fifteenth U.S. Army. GEN Patton was transferred to the Fifteenth from the Third prior to his time as commander of U.S. Forces Europe.

For answers to trivia, information on this month’s artifact spotlight, digital copies of old newsletters and more, visit the ASC History Office website at:
<https://aschq.army.mil/About-Us/History>



The German Surrender & V-E Day

An idea that had seemed so far away at the crux of the war in Europe had quickly come to the forefront of the mind of the Allies as April 1945 pressed on. The month had proven to be particularly harsh on Axis forces, having lost over one million combatants, massive tracts of land, large quantities of materiel, and growing pressure from what seemed to be an unstoppable force closing in around them. The Axis was further left reeling from the loss of both Hitler and Mussolini by the end of the month.

The terms of surrender had been agreed upon in July of 1944 via the European Advisory Commission. The agreement required the total and unconditional surrender of German, and subsequent disarmament and occupation thereof. By May of 1945, the last German forces certainly were not in a bargaining position, making any surrender terms appealing and manageable. Most German forces by this time had been completely cut off and forced into isolated packets. They lacked command, structure, and direction, notwithstanding their shortage of supplies, manpower, and materiel.

Prior to the signing of the German Instrument on 9 May 1945, German Generals had already been implementing partial surrenders to the Allies. German forces in Italy had negotiated a surrender on 29 April with the Surrender of Caserta. It was fully accepted, even among holdout German soldiers, after Hitler’s death was confirmed on 30 April. By 2 May, the Italian front was closed with the full capitulation of German forces there.

Additional surrenders followed on 5 and 6 May with the capitulation of most remaining Germans on the western front and southern Germany. The remaining German Army was generally left in central and northern parts of the country, including Berlin, where Allied forces were continuing to press on from both the east and west. Other smaller capitulations continued up until the instrument was signed on 9 May.

At 0100 Central European Time on 9 May, the German Instrument of Surrender was formally signed by three Western Allied commanders, including British ACM Tedder, U.S. GEN Spatz, and French GEN Tassigny. Soviet FM Zhukov

signed for the Eastern front. It was then signed by the three head commanding officers of each German force. The original signing was to take place at 2200 on 8 May however, issues arose with wording of the surrender and who was required to sign it.

The German forces were given a twelve hour grace period, which allowed their stranded forces an opportunity to verify that their forces were to be surrendered. Most of these positions complied, however, a few isolated pockets of German soldiers and sailors remained in a wartime posture well after the surrender. The last German surrender came in September 1945.

Conflicting information and broken media embargoes resulted in the German surrender at Reims being reported as the official surrender. This signing occurred on 6 May and was reported on the 8th. As a result, V-E Day has been erroneously associated with 8 May, and the official capitulation of German Forces on 9 May. The surrender, however, was backdated to 8 May, since it was to have originally been signed at 2200. The only nation to celebrate V-E Day on 9 May is Russia, where both the original signing and actual signing took place on the same date.

Europe now faced another grueling task with the reconstruction and rebuilding of a war torn continent. Operations to enforce the occupation of Germany were also underway at this time. The stage was being set for what would eventually become known as the Cold War, as both the West and the Soviet Union vied to enforce policy and coordinate reconstruction efforts.

With the signing of the Paris Peace Treaties in 1947, reparations were drafted and agreed to. These fully detailed the extent of wartime damages and losses. The state of war was subsequently ended in 1950. Despite this, Germany remained occupied until 1955. The nation was finally reunited in 1990 with the last remaining “occupation” soldiers leaving in 2002. Reparations from the war continue to be paid and a subject of question, especially in Eastern Europe with former Soviet nations.

From the Archives



FINAL SURRENDER PAPERS WILL BE SIGNED IN NAZI CAPITAL, IT IS REVEALED.

Details of Complete Victory of Allied Nations State by Chiefs of State.

London - President Truman and Prime Minister Churchill today proclaimed complete victory in Europe. Hostilities formally cease at 5:01 p.m. CWT, tonight, supreme headquarters announced.

Shattered Germany's unconditional surrender "will be ratified and confirmed at Berlin" today, Churchill said.

Both leaders summoned their nations to a battle to the finish against Japan. Churchill reminded that "Japan, with all her

treachery and greed, remains unsubdued," and Truman asserted that "when the last Japanese division has surrendered unconditionally, only then will our fighting job be done."

There was no immediate proclamation from Premier-Marshall Stalin.

Supreme Allied headquarters in a special communique said, "Allied expeditionary forces have been ordered to cease offensive operations, but will maintain their present position until the surrender becomes effective."

Germany's unconditional capitulation to the western Allies and Russia was signed at 2:41 a.m., French time Monday (7:41 p.m. CWT, Sunday) this communique announced.

These are historic times, my friends...



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Presented to you by your friendly ASC History Office. Feel free to call or stop by our office for any of your history needs.

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