

# The steps that led to D-Day



**1938, March to October:**

Hitler initiates plan to create a greater Germany, seizing first Austria by force, then

annexing the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia with the agreement of Britain and France

**1939, September:** German armies invade Poland. Britain and France declare war on Germany

**1939-40:** The 'phony war'. Most of Europe remains neutral, little fighting takes place

**April 1940:** Germany invades Norway and Denmark

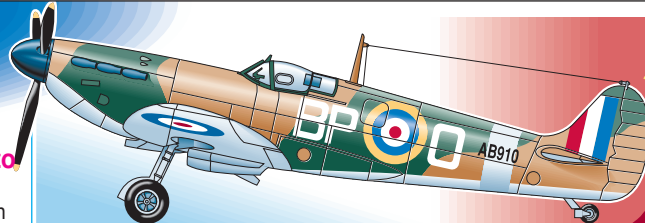


**May:** Britain has coalition government under Winston Churchill. Germany occupies Belgium and

Holland. France defeated within days. 224,000 British forces and 95,000 French forces evacuated from Dunkirk

**June:** France surrenders and signs armistice with Germany

**July:** *Operation Sealion* – Hitler prepares to invade Britain



**August-October:** The Battle of Britain. Germany assembles over 2,300 aircraft. The RAF has only 650 fighter aircraft available to defend itself

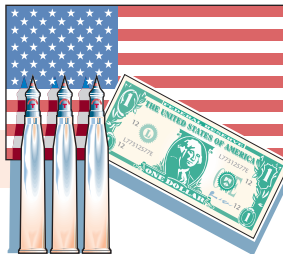
**September 7:** Hitler orders the Blitz of London



**September 15:** Battle of Britain day. More than 1,000 Nazi aircraft attack London to deliver the Luftwaffe's final blow against Britain before invasion. In what becomes known as Britain's 'finest hour', RAF pilots repulse the attack

**October:** Hitler abandons plans for the invasion of Britain

**Spring 1941:** Germany overruns Yugoslavia and Greece, including Crete. Italy and Germany threaten to take the Suez Canal, cutting Britain's supply lines from her Empire. President Roosevelt pushes a **Lend-Lease**



bill through U.S. Congress appropriating over \$7 billion for military support – mostly to Britain – to be repaid after the war

**June:** Germany invades Soviet Union. After fierce fighting advance is halted at Leningrad and Moscow

**1941-43:** Battle of the Atlantic escalates. U-boats attack convoys bound for Britain



**December 1941:** Japan attacks Pearl Harbour. America enters the war



**January 1942:** Churchill and Roosevelt agree defeat of Germany is vital. Planning starts to produce enough ships, planes, tanks and guns to mount a direct assault on '**Fortress Europe**'

**November 1942 - May 1943:** *Operation Torch* – North African campaign results in Allied victory, boosting morale

**November 1943:** Stalin pressures Churchill and Roosevelt to mount a second European front. They agree to the invasion of France in May or June 1944

**June 6, 1944:** *Operation Overlord* – 155,000 men take part in the Normandy landings on D-Day itself

