

CENTRAL EUROPE CAMPAIGN – VICTORY IN EUROPE DAY (V-E DAY)



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By the early spring of 1945, events favored the Allied forces in Europe. The Allied front along the Rhine stretched 450 miles from the river's mouth at the North Sea in the Netherlands to the Swiss border in the south. The war in Europe was coming to an end.

By late March, General Dwight D. Eisenhower made a strategic decision to alter his original plan to advance through north Germany toward Berlin. Instead, he would make a main offensive thrust through southern Germany. The fortuitous capture of a bridge across the Rhine at Remagen, the potential threat posed by enemy strongholds, and the Soviet army's proximity to Berlin all spurred his decision. In early April, U.S. troops swept through central Europe. They encountered pockets of enemy resistance, but the German army was broken. Yet even as thousands of enemy soldiers surrendered to the Allies, the victories uncovered horrific atrocities as Allied soldiers liberated concentration camps.

On 8 May, the Germans officially surrendered to the Allies, ending the war in Europe. As we commemorate the 75th anniversary of World War II and victory in Europe, we remember and honor the soldiers who fought in the Central European Campaign.

Cover illustration: *Meeting with the Russians at Torgau*

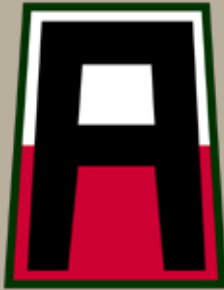
By Olin Dows

Germany, 1945

(U.S. Army Art Collection)

U.S. ARMY LEVEL UNITS INVOLVED

(75 U.S. ARMY CORPS AND DIVISIONS UNDER THESE MAJOR ARMY COMMANDS)



First Army



Third Army



Seventh Army



Ninth Army



Fifteenth Army

FACTS

90

Full-strength Allied Divisions under General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

National Treasure

U.S. Army units discovered hundreds of millions of dollars in stolen assets by the Nazi, like the 90th Infantry Division who found and seized hidden enemy treasure worth up to \$250 million.

Atrocities Unearthed

On 4 April 1945, the 4th Armored and elements of the 89th Infantry Divisions were the first western Allies to liberate a concentration camp near Ohrdruf, Germany.

Humanitarian Aid

Even before the war ended, American soldiers embarked on a humanitarian mission to provide comfort to millions of people across war-torn Europe.



Soldiers from the 44th Infantry Division celebrate after hearing the news of the surrender of the *19th German Army*, Landeck, Austria, 6 May 1945

“The crusade on which we embarked in the early summer of 1944 has reached its glorious conclusion. . . . Full Victory in Europe has been attained!”

— General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower, from his “Victory Order of the Day” memo, 8 May 1945



THE U.S. ARMY CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY commemorates the 75th anniversary of the Second World War through outreach events and other mediums to educate and inspire all members of American society by honoring the selfless acts of courage and heroism performed by U.S. soldiers in the service of our nation.

For more information about the World War II 75th Anniversary and U.S. Army campaigns, please visit the U.S. Army Center of Military History home page:

www.history.army.mil

Learn more about the National Museum of the United States Army:

www.thenmusa.org

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