BERLIN FALLS



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This image, from a Russian-language website entitled "Russia at War, 1941-1945 Victory," depicts the scene at Berlin's Reichstag when it fell to the Soviet Army. The translation, from the Russian, describes the picture in greater detail: "Victory! God is with us! Berlin in May 1945: The Reichstag captured. Nazi Germany is prostrated. Holy Russia has proved invincible!"

Berlin had long been on the minds of Americans who worked in factories, <u>producing</u> war materiel. Berlin was also on the minds of U.S. government officials who directed artists to create propaganda posters. Let's look at a few of the most interesting:

- It's only 1000 minutes from Cheyenne [United Airlines modification center] to Berlin!
- The Fighting Plane You're Working on TODAY ... May Be Over Berlin or Tokio NEXT WEEK!
- Bundles [bombs] for Berlin!
- The Road to Berlin Begins at Home!

Although British and American men, and products, had previously bombed Berlin, it would take troops <u>on the ground</u> to capture the center of Hitler's government. And it was <u>the Soviet army</u>, without American or British assistance, which undertook the <u>city's final assault</u> on the <u>16th of April, 1945</u>. It is estimated that more than a million <u>Soviet soldiers were involved</u>. (Don't miss the videos in this paragraph.)

During the fight for Berlin, <u>Hitler Youth</u> formed lines of defense <u>in the city</u>. Boys in that organization were as young as ten, as <u>this 1940 poster</u> reveals:

... All 10-year-olds into the Hitler Youth.

On April 20 - as Soviet forces <u>encircled the capital</u> on Hitler's 56th birthday - the <u>nearly defeated</u> leader left his bunker to <u>award Iron Crosses</u> to some of the <u>child defenders</u>. It was his last-known public appearance.

Five days later, the U.S. Army <u>blew-up a swastika</u> at the top of a Nuremberg building and, on the <u>30th of April</u>, Hitler (and his new wife, <u>Eva Braun</u>) <u>committed suicide</u>. (<u>His nurse</u> finally broke her silence about the <u>last days</u> in the bunker <u>sixty years</u> later).

Hitler's Last Will and Political Testament, which he dictated the day before he shot himself, tells us that he was:

. . . resolved to remain in Berlin and there to choose death of my own will at the very moment when, as I believe the seat of the Fuehrer and Chancellor can no longer be defended.

The world learned that Hitler was dead on the <u>2nd of May, 1945</u>. (Fifty years later, the BBC rebroadcast the news exactly as the British people had originally heard the message - this time, adding historic footage from the last days of the war.)

On the day of that most-welcome announcement, Soviet soldiers <u>captured</u> the Reichstag, in Berlin, <u>raising a Soviet flag</u> they had made. <u>The fight</u> for the German capital was <u>over</u>. After the incredible noise of battle, the <u>city's silence</u> was "literally deafening."

Field Marshall Wilhelm Keitel, <u>accompanied by members of the German command, signed surrender documents at a villa</u> in Karlshorst - an eastern suburb of Berlin - on May 7. People in <u>London, Moscow, Paris</u> and <u>elsewhere</u> - including smaller towns like the <u>Cossack village</u> of New Aleksandrovsk - celebrated the war's end.

Churchill announced that May 8th would be VE (Victory in Europe) Day, causing more than a million people to jam the streets of London. The Prime Minister joined King George VI, and his family, on the balcony of Buckingham Palace to greet the <u>celebrating throngs</u>.

The <u>end of the war</u>, however, was not the end of troubles for Germany's capital city. And it was just the beginning of a bad year for Field Marshall Keitel who was convicted of war crimes and hanged, in Nuremberg, on the 16th of October, 1946.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/BERLIN-FALLS-Victory-in-Europe-End-of-WWII

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/BERLIN-FALLS-Victory-in-Europe-End-of-WWII

Questions 2 Ponder

Why Do Failed Leaders Commit Suicide?

As Soviet soldiers invaded, then conquered Berlin, the Third Reich had lost its chance to survive. Is that why Hitler committed suicide? Why do you think the Third-Reich leader committed suicide?

When Should Children Actively Serve Their Country?

As early as 1940, German propaganda posters were commanding "all 10-year-olds into the Hitler Youth" where they would be "Youth in the Service of the Fuhrer." What do you think was the purpose of recruiting such young children?

In April of 1945, as the Soviets attacked Berlin by land and by air, members of the Hitler Youth provided lines of defense in the German capital city. Placing children in positions of danger, Hitler surely knew the risks of such an action. Why, do you think, did he do this?

Media Stream



Producing War Materiel in America - WWII

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Producing-War-Materiel-in-America-WWII



American War Poster: 1,000 Minutes to Berlin

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

Quoted passage, on the Cheyenne Modification Center, from the <u>Wyoming State Archives and Museum.</u>

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/American-War-Poster-1-000-Minutes-to-Berlin



American War Poster - Creating Fighter Planes

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/American-War-Poster-Creating-Fighter-Planes



American War Poster: Bombs for Berlin

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/American-War-Poster-Bombs-for-Berlin



American War Poster: The Road to Berlin Begins at Home

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/American-War-Poster-The-Road-to-Berlin-Begins-at-Home



Hitler Youth - Prisoners of War

Image online, courtesy Russian State Archives.

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Hitler Youth - Recruiting Poster

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hitler-Youth-Recruiting-Poster



Animated Map Depicting German Control of Europe

Animated map, created with maps from the University of Texas, at Austin.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Animated-Map-Depicting-German-Control-of-Europe



Hitler Awards Medals to Child Defenders

Image online, courtesy BPK - Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz (the Visual Archive of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation).

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hitler-Awards-Medals-to-Child-Defenders



US Army Blows-up a Swastika in Nuremberg

Animation online, courtesy U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/US-Army-Blows-up-a-Swastika-in-Nuremberg



Eva Braun

Image online, courtesy the <u>History in Pictures</u> blog site.

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Eva-Braun



Hitler's Nurse - Erna Flegel

Photos and quoted information online, courtesy BBC.

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hitler-s-Nurse-Erna-Flegel



Stars and Stripes Newspaper Announces Hitler's Death

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Stars-and-Stripes-Newspaper-Announces-Hitler-s-Death



Berlin - Raising a Soviet Flag

Image online, courtesy Russian State Archives.

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Berlin-Raising-a-Soviet-Flag



Berlin - A Devastated City

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Berlin-A-Devastated-City



Field Marshall Keitel - Captured

Image online, courtesy Russian State Archives.

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Field-Marshall-Keitel-Captured



Signing Surrender Documents - German High Command

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Signing-Surrender-Documents-German-High-Command



Place of German Surrender - WWII

Image online, courtesy Russian State Archives.

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Place-of-German-Surrender-WWII









Image online, courtesy Russian State Archives.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Moscow-Celebrates-End-of-World-War-II

Cossack Village Celebrating the End of WWII

Image online, courtesy Russian State Archives.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Cossack-Village-Celebrating-the-End-of-WWII



View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/BERLIN-FALLS



Berlin - Final Battle for the City Begins in April, 1945

From the Battle of Berlin, online courtesy The History Channel.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Berlin-Final-Battle-for-the-City-Begins-in-April-1945



Berlin, April 1945 - The Soviet Army Approaches the City

From the Battle of Berlin, online courtesy $\underline{\text{The History Channel}}.$

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Berlin-April-1945-The-Soviet-Army-Approaches-the-City



Berlin - The Red Army Begins Its Final Assault

From the *Battle of Berlin*, online courtesy <u>The History Channel</u>.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Berlin-The-Red-Army-Begins-Its-Final-Assault



Berlin - Final Days of the Battle of Berlin

From the Battle of Berlin, online courtesy The History Channel.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Berlin-Final-Days-of-the-Battle-of-Berlin



Berlin - The Red Army Captures the City

From the *Battle of Berlin*, online courtesy <u>The History Channel</u>.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Berlin-The-Red-Army-Captures-the-City



Hitler Youth - Children Defend Berlin

Historical video clip, online courtesy U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hitler-Youth-Children-Defend-Berlin



Original Broadcast - "Hitler is Dead"

Clip of the news from May 2, 1945, as rebroadcast by the BBC on May 2, 1995. Online, courtesy BBC Worldwide at YouTube.

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Original-Broadcast-Hitler-is-Dead-



VE Day - Londoners Celebrate

Video clip from *Pathe Gazette*, "The Voice of Britain," online courtesy U.K. National Archives. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/VE-Day-Londoners-Celebrate