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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, producing 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 on the ground to capture the center of Hitler's government. And it was the Soviet army, without American or British assistance, which undertook the city's final assault on the 16th of April, 1945. It is estimated that more than a million Soviet soldiers were involved. (Don't miss the videos in this paragraph.)

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

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

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

Five days later, the U.S. Army blew-up a swastika at the top of a Nuremberg building and, on the 30th of April, Hitler (and his new wife, Eva Braun) committed suicide. (His nurse finally broke her silence about the last days in the bunker sixty years 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 2nd of May, 1945. (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 captured the Reichstag, in Berlin, raising a Soviet flag they had made. The fight for the German capital was over. After the incredible noise of battle, the city's silence was "literally deafening."

Field Marshall Wilhelm Keitel, accompanied by members of the German command, signed surrender documents at a villa in Karlshorst - an eastern suburb of Berlin - on May 7. People in London, Moscow, Paris and elsewhere - including smaller towns like the Cossack village 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 celebrating throngs.

The end of the war, 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 [Wyoming State Archives and Museum](#).

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.

View this asset at:

<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:

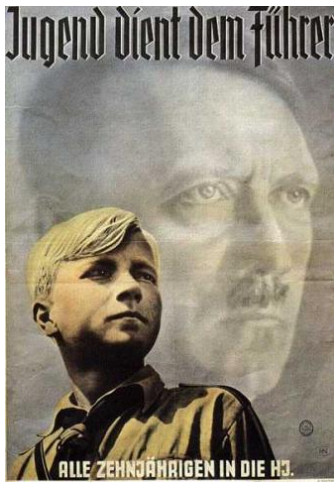
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/American-War-Poster-The-Road-to-Berlin-Begins-at-Home>



Hitler Youth - Prisoners of War

Image online, courtesy Russian State Archives.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hitler-Youth-Prisoners-of-War>



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 [History in Pictures](http://www.historyinpictures.com) 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>



Moscow Celebrates End of World War II

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>



BERLIN FALLS

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 [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 [The History Channel](#).

View this asset at:

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

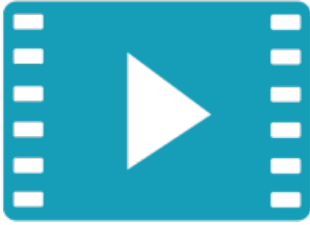


Berlin - Final Days of the Battle of Berlin

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 [The History Channel](#).

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.

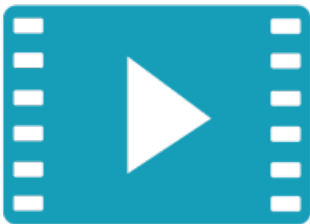
View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hitler-Youth-Children-Defend-Berlin>



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>