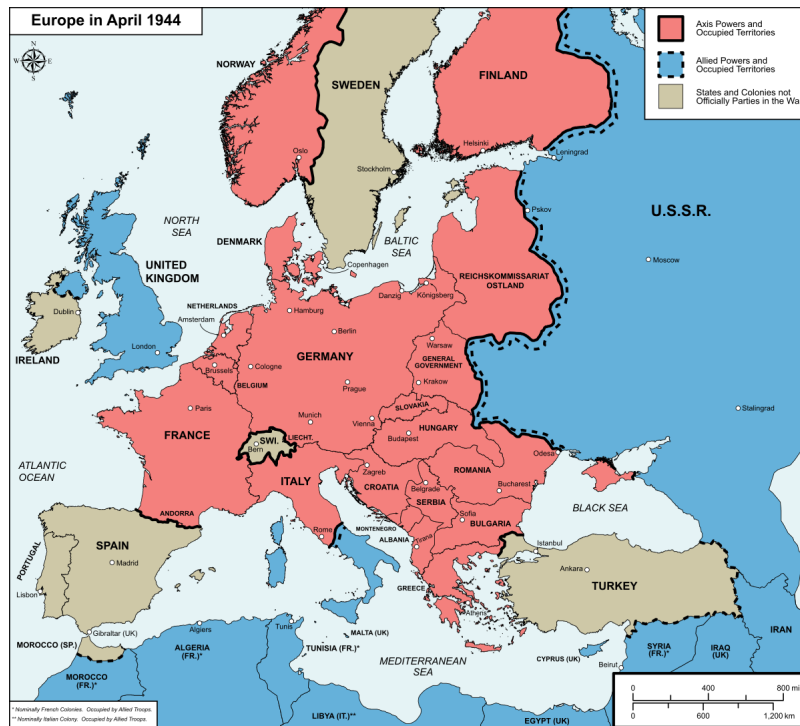# Europe in April 1944

Abstract

This map shows the course of the Eastern Front at the beginning of April 1944. The front was approximately 1,000 miles (1,600 km) long and stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea. The German invasion of the Soviet Union had begun in June 1941. In the early stages of the campaign, German troops registered various successes and made significant territorial gains. Within a year, they had advanced approximately 750 miles (1,200 km) to the east toward Moscow. In late summer of 1942, the German campaign in Russia reached its highpoint: the army had penetrated the Caucasus and made it as far as the Don River. In the northern part of the Soviet Union, the front moved relatively little. This was not the case, however, in the oil-rich southern part of the country, where the front shifted constantly, because the area was of great economic importance to the war effort. Over time, however, it proved logistically impossible to continue supplying soldiers on the Eastern Front with food rations and armaments; the supply routes were simply too long and rail shipments were often attacked by partisans. From spring 1943 onward, the Eastern Front was pushed increasingly westwards. In March 1944, the Soviet army initiated a spring offensive that succeeded in pushing German troops out of Ukraine by the end of April 1944. Although Hitler replaced generals and ordered troops to continue fighting, he would not be able to stop the Red Army's advance.

For the German army, it was the Eastern Front – with its insufficient provisions and extreme winter weather – that claimed the highest number of victims. 2,700,000 soldiers, more than half of the German war dead – perished on the Eastern Front. More than 800,000 of those deaths occurred in the last four months of the war alone. At the same time, the Russian campaign saw the most brutal excesses in the National Socialists' racist and antisemitic war of annihilation. The number of military and civilian victims in the Soviet Union during World War II is estimated at 19 to 25 million, including millions of soldiers and Soviet prisoners of war, in addition to people persecuted as partisans, Jews, Communists, and Roma and Sinti.

Source

Europe in April 1944

Source: Sources and cartography: "Europe in April 1944," in *Germany and the Second World War*, edited by the Research Institute for Military History, Potsdam, Germany. Volume V, *Organization and Mobilization of the German Sphere of Power*, Part 2, *Wartime Administration, Economy, and Manpower Resources 1942-1944/45*, by Bernhard R. Kroener, Rolf-Dieter Müller, and Hans Umbreit. Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1998. Original cartography by Cherie Norton/Mapping Solutions. Revised cartography by Gabriel Moss, 2021.

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