

HISTORICAL NOTES



Because North American and European gamers may be less familiar with the events and personalities of the 1930s that led to the outbreak of war in China, then in the Pacific, it seemed like a good idea to provide some background material. You can certainly play *Storm Over Asia* without reading what follows, but some may find it interesting and useful to know more about the actual history upon which the game is based

Only people, places and things referenced in *Storm Over Asia* are covered by these historical notes. Many come from the random event cards.



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Thai irredentists: Extreme nationalists in Thailand had designs on areas of Burma, Laos, Cambodia and Malaya that had been part of Siam in the nineteenth century, but had been appropriated by Britain and France during their colonial expansion. When Thailand aligned itself with Japan in World War II, Thailand annexed these areas, leading to a short-lived “Greater Thailand”.

Tojo: Hideki Tojo was a Japanese general who became Prime Minister of Japan shortly before the outbreak of war with the United States. Tojo supported the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy, and was a proponent of pre-emptive war against the Western Allied. Elevated by Allied war propaganda to the same status as Hitler and Mussolini, Tojo in fact never had the same power as the European dictators, as the Japanese system was much more consensus-based. Tojo was convicted of war crimes and hanged after World War II, arguably in part to deflect guilt from the Japanese Emperor.

Yamamoto: Isoroku Yamamoto was the commander-in-chief of the Imperial Japanese navy before and during World War II. The architect of the Pearl Harbor attack, Yamamoto is often spoken of as a brilliant and far-sighted commander, in part because his knowledge of the economic power and character of the United States led him to correctly conclude that Japan could run amok for the first year or year and a half of a war with the United States, but after that there was no hope. The attack on Pearl Harbor, which was partly successful, and the overly elaborate and excessively optimistic Midway campaign, which failed completely, were both born of desperation.

Yamashita: Tomoyuki Yamashita, the “Tiger of Malaya”, led the Japanese army that conquered Malaya and captured Singapore during the heady days of early 1942. In 1944 he was given the impossible assignment of defending the Philippines against overwhelming American power, and gained the more unfortunate sobriquet “the Beast of Bataan” as a result of atrocities committed by Japanese troops. After a controversial trial, in which there was no evidence that Yamashita knew of, much less approved of, the atrocities, many of which were committed by troops that were not under his command, he was hanged as a war criminal.

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Greater East Asia: The Japanese concept of Greater East Asia, which most notably manifested itself in the “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere”, embraced as its goal the union of all Asians under Japanese guidance and leadership. What was in theory a counter-balance to western imperialism that would lead to the liberation of Asia, including China, from colonial domination became, in practice, a cover for Japanese imperialism, exploitation and oppression.

Manchukuo: The puppet state established by Japan after its occupation of Manchuria in 1931-1932. Under Japanese military rule, rapid industrial development was fostered in Manchukuo and it became the centerpiece of Japan’s project to create a self-sufficient, militarized economy.

Manchuria: A province in the northeast of China, bounded by China, Mongolia, Siberia and Korea. In 1931 the Imperial Japanese Army, on its own initiative, seized Manchuria and it was transformed into the puppet state of Manchukuo.

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Autarky: Derived from the Greek for “self-sufficiency”, autarky became a central goal of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Japan. Each aimed, or purported to aim, to create self-sustaining economic blocs, which would contain all the raw materials and people necessary to achieve their economic, political and military goals. All three revision states tended to view the British Empire, with its worldwide possessions, and the United States, with its continental economy, as role models.

Genro: The elder statesmen associated with the Meiji Restoration in 1868. The *genro* continued to have an unofficial, extra-constitutional role as imperial advisors. Japanese economic/military random event 29 takes a small liberty in using the plural, as by the 1930s only one *genro*, Saionji Kinmochi, remained alive.

Imperial Conferences: At crucial times, top Japanese government and military officials would meet in the presence of the Emperor to obtain his approval of the decisions they had made. Traditionally the Emperor would remain silent and approval was a foregone conclusion, but this tradition broke down under the pressures of war and at the final Imperial Conference in August, 1945, Emperor Hirohito actually broke the deadlock in favor of Japanese surrender.

Imperial General Staff: Both the Imperial Japanese Army and Naval had General Staffs, the former being modelled on the Prussian General Staff, which was thought to be the key to Prussian success during the wars of German Unification in the nineteenth century. Japanese economic/military random event 15 is ambiguous as to which General Staff “commits to expansion”, but this is appropriate, since the random event gives Japan the use of one additional army or naval military counter.

Imperial Guard: The Imperial Japanese Army contained Imperial Guard units, although they don’t appear to have been the same type of elite units that they were in the Napoleonic army. But the image of them as the best of the Japanese army is hard to shake.

Imperial Japanese Army: Tough, versatile, fanatical, brutal... Almost any adjective you pick will accurately describe some aspect of the Imperial Japanese Army. The army’s widely-held view that “death before surrender” was more than a slogan and should be taken literally astounded Japan’s World War II adversaries, but it was hardly a winning approach. The Imperial Japanese Army’s involvement in uncountable war crimes has permanently tarnished its legacy.

Imperial Japanese Navy: While the Imperial Japanese Navy may be considered to be the more cosmopolitan of the two branches of Japan’s military, this was only true in the context of the Japanese army’s insular fanaticism. The army really thought they would win; the navy knew better but fought anyway.

Imperial rescript: Imperial rescripts were issued in the name of the Emperor and had near-religious significance in Japan. This was done only a handful of times.

Imperial Rule Assistance Association: The Imperial Rule Assistance Association was actually created in 1940, in an effort to convert Japan into a one-party, totalitarian state. This was both impossible and unnecessary, for more or less the same reason. Japanese society operated on the basis of consensus, and there was little point in trying to enforce a consensus that

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already existed. Coercion helped, but was not essential, as it was in Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia.

Imperial Way faction: A radical faction in the Japanese Army that favored a simplistic totalitarian government in Japan, coupled with expansion in Asia and war with the Soviet Union to eliminate the threat of Communism. The Imperial Way may be contrasted to the more moderate rival “Control Faction”, which urged a more inclusive domestic policy and cautious expansion. The term “moderate” has to be viewed in Japanese terms - both factions had similar goals, but differed on the best way to achieve them.

Kagoshima naval base: Kagoshima is the largest city in Kyushu, the southernmost of the four main Japanese home islands. Japanese research random event 46 game posits the existence of a submarine development center in Kagoshima, which is visited by the commander of the German U-boat fleet, Admiral Karl Doenitz.

Kempeitai: The military police of the Imperial Japanese Army, which developed a well-deserved reputation for brutality and committed numerous atrocities prior to and during World War II.

Koken-ki: A Japanese long-range research aircraft which set the world record for the longest flight in March 1938 (11,651 km - 7,240 miles).

Kwantung Army: The Kwantung Army was based in Manchuria and was a stronghold of the Imperial Way faction. Acting without authority, it engineered the Japanese conquest of Manchuria in 1931 and both preached and practiced the doctrine of “loyal disobedience”.

Naval Research Bureau: A fictitious, but very real-sounding, department of the Imperial Japanese Navy devoted to research, presumably.

Pan-Asianism: The belief that Asians should unite to free themselves from European and American domination. In its benign form, Pan-Asianism called for a union of equals, but as interpreted by Japanese militarists, it led to a form of imperialism even more brutal and exploitive than what it replaced.

“Third Way” movement: In general, this term refers to something other than the first and second ways - an alternative to two opposing, and usually extreme, approaches. In the context of Japanese diplomatic random event 10, the two approaches were the increasingly fascistic Kuomintang government and the anarchy of Communism. Chinese national development under the fraternal guidance of Japan was the third way.

Zaibatsu: The Japanese business conglomerates that dominated Japanese economic and, derivatively, political development prior to World War II.

Long Lance torpedo: The Japanese oxygen-driven Long Lance torpedo was first deployed in 1935. It was the most advanced torpedo in the world and gave Japan a significant advantage in naval combat.

Midget submarines: Japan was an enthusiastic proponent of midget submarines, and employed them as an integral component of the Pearl Harbor attack – where they did nothing other than almost tipping off the Americans to the fact that Japan was about to attack them.



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Canton clique: Kwantung province, and its principal city of Canton, was a stronghold of local interests throughout the Nationalist era, and was one of the areas that most resisted the centralized nation-state that Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang sought to build. The Kwantung leaders, who agreed on this policy of autonomy, were often referred to as the “Canton clique”.

Chiang Kai-shek: Chiang rose to command the military arm of the Kuomintang Party, the National Revolutionary Army, and ultimately became the leader of the Nationalist Chinese government. His complex personality has made an assessment of Chiang difficult, but he has been viewed more kindly by recent historians. One example is the debunking of the myth that one of the reasons the Nationalists “lost” China to the Communists was because they didn’t fight against the Japanese. In fact, the fact they did fight probably contributed to their defeat in the post-World War II civil war against the Communists.

Chou En-lai: One of the principle Communist Chinese leaders, the urbane and educated Chou was in the moderate wing of the Party and presented a calming face to the western world. Because he never threatened Mao’s Tse-tung’s hold on power, Chou Survived every purge and was the Premier of the People’s Republic of China for more than two decades.

Christian General: The nickname given to Feng Yuxiang.

Dai Li: The head of Nationalist China’s secret police agency, the Investigation and Statistics Bureau.

Mao Tse-tung: Mao outlasted and outmaneuvered every challenger during the 1930s and became the Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party and the leader of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, defeating the Nationalists in the Chinese civil war. Mao’s self-confidence and brutality were largely responsible for his success, but eventually led to a disastrous personality cult and gave Mao the dubious distinction of being history’s worst mass murderer, surpassing both Hitler and Stalin.

Soong sisters: The three Soong sisters - Soong Ai Ling, Soong Ching Ling and Soong Mei Ling - were part of one of the most influential families in modern Chinese history. Soong Ching Ling, the eldest, married China’s wealthiest man, H.H. Kung, who was also China’s finance minister (in the corrupt Nationalist regime, the rich could and did benefit from positions of political power). Soong Ching Ling, the middle sister, married Sun Yat-sen, the “Father of Modern China”, and later became a Communist. Soong Meiling, the youngest, married Chiang Kai-shek and, as Madame Chiang, was an important figure in the Nationalist regime and used her western education and beauty to plead China’s cause in the United States. One of their brothers was T.V. Soong.

T.V. Soong: The most prominent male in the Soong clan, T.V. Soong served as Finance Minister in the Nationalist government, then as Foreign Minister during World War II. Aided by his charming sister, he projected an image of Nationalist China to the United States that was at odds with reality, but accorded with the delusional American image of Nationalist China.

Wang Jingwei: Wang, whose name graces the pro-Japanese Chinese units in A World at War, was a left-wing Kuomintang leader who lost out to Chiang Kai-shek for control of the party. His views shifted to the right with time, and he became increasingly anti-Communist. Wang concluded that conflict with Japan would break the bonds that held Chinese society together and would only benefit the Chinese Communists (he was right), but his solution - collaboration with Japan – was naïve and led to his subsequent vilification as a traitor.

Chang Hsueh-liang: When Chang’s father, Manchurian warlord Chang Tso-lin, was assassinated by the Japanese in 1928, Chang inherited his position, earning the nickname the “Young Marshal”. When Japan took overt control of Manchuria in 1931, Chiang and his forces, optimistically renamed the “Northeast Peace Preservation Forces”, or the “Northeast Army”, moved into northern China, which he ruled on behalf of the Nationalist government. Chiang is best known for his role in the Sian incident, which led to the formation of the United Front against Japan.

Han Fu-chu: Han learned his trade from the “Christian General”, Feng Yuxiang, morphed from a successful warlord to a Kuomintang official, and governed Shantung strictly and successfully, eliminating banditry and the narcotics trade. When the Sino-Japanese war began in 1937, he disobeyed orders to resist the Japanese in order to preserve his own position, and was executed by the Nationalists in early 1938 “*pour encourager les autres*”.

Du Yuesheng: Working his way up through the Shanghai underworld, Du became the leader of the notorious “Green Gang” by the mid-1920s and was the mob boss of the city until the Japanese occupied the city in 1937. The line between gangster and Nationalist politician was a thin one, and Du often cooperated with Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang, including by offering Chiang support during the 1937 Shanghai massacre of the Communists.

Chen Chi-tang: As warlord of Kwantung province, which included the important city of Canton, Chen was a progressive and energetic leader, fostering the development of infrastructure and education. He played a significant role in the fifth Extermination Campaign in 1934, which led to the Long March, but this was mainly on paper - Chen in fact came to an arrangement with the retreating Communists that he wouldn’t impede their withdrawal and they would get out of his province as quickly as possible. Always jealous of his local power, Chen was of marginal importance in the war against Japan.

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Feng Yuxiang: Known as the Christian General, Feng had largely lost power by the mid-1930s, although he continued as a Kuomintang official. Stories of his mass baptisms of troops with firehoses are considered to be apocryphal.

Liu Hsiang: One of a number of Szechuan warlords, Liu emerged as the first among equals and aligned himself with the Kuomintang. He led the Szechuan 15th Army at Shanghai in 1937, and also commanded significant forces at Nanking. He strongly supported the war against Japan, but some attributed his death in early 1938 to Chiang Kai-shek's suspicions of disloyalty.

Li Tsung-jen: Li started as a bandit in Kiangsi province, and rose to become of the leading commanders in the Kuomintang Northern Expedition, which "unified" China in 1926-1927. He was a popular commander who was strongly anti-Communist. After a falling out with Chiang Kai-shek, the two reconciled after Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931. Li's greatest claim to fame was his victory over the Japanese at the Battle of Taierzhuang in 1938, which did wonders to restore China's flagging morale.

Tang Sheng-chih: As a warlord/Nationalist general, Tang had a rocky relationship with Chiang Kai-shek. The defining moment of his career was his agreement, after repeated requests, to take command of the defense of Nanking in late 1937, where he pledged to "fight to the death". The Nationalist armies were broken after their defeat at Shanghai, however, and no defense of Nanking was possible. Tang was later unfairly blamed for the ensuing Rape of Nanking, arguably the worst atrocity of the Sino-Japanese war.

Lung Yun: As the governor of Yunnan province from 1928 to 1945, Lung was a progressive and enlightened leader, and Yunnan prospered under his guidance. His reforms led to Yunnan being known as a "democratic fortress". As the terminus of the Burma Road, and too distant to be accessible to the Japanese, Yunnan continued to develop during World War II, so it was no surprise when this success story ended with his ouster by Chiang Kai-shek soon after the end of the war. With his loyalty unrewarded, Lung reached an accommodation with the Communist regime and was reinstated as Governor of Yunnan.

Yen Hsi-Shan: As warlord of Shansi, which is adjacent to Shensi, Yen opted out of the pointless conflict with other warlords and concentrated on modernization of the areas under his control. In this he was successful, and was termed the "Model Governor". He survived the Sino-Japanese war and the ensuing Civil War, convincing numerous Japanese troops to help him fight the Communists.

Young Marshal: The nickname given to Chang Hsueh-liang.

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Central Committee: In theory the governing body of the Communist Party of China; in practice a meaningless and powerless group of sycophants.

Eighth Route Army: Together with the New Fourth Army, the main fighting force of the Chinese Communist Party in the war with Japan, although after 1940, the Communists avoided direct, conventional warfare with the Japanese.

Extermination Campaigns: The catchy phrase used by the Nationalists to describes their efforts to rid China of Communism. The first four failed badly, but the fifth, which used a slow strategy of blockade and strangulation recommended by German advisors, succeeded convincingly, and led to the retreat of the Communists from Kiangsi, in the southeast of China, to the remote province of Shensi, in the north.

International Settlement: Formed in 1863 by the merger of the British and American extraterritorial enclaves in Shanghai, the International Settlement, together with the French Concession, remained inviolate in the Sino-Japanese war until December 1941, when it was occupied by Japanese troops.

Investigation and Statistics Bureau: The military intelligence agency of the Nationalist Chinese government, also known as the Bureau of Investigation and Statistics. Headed by the notorious Dai Li, the Bureau was considered by many to be the Chinese equivalent of the German *Gestapo*.

KMT Congress: The Chinese Kuomintang (Nationalist) Party was organized along the lines of the Soviet Communist Party, and periodically held Congresses which were purportedly important, but really were as much rubber stamps as were the Communist Party Congresses.

KMT: The common abbreviation for the Kuomintang Party.

Kuomintang: The Nationalist Party of China. Originally a revolutionary party with a strong left wing, the Kuomintang Party moved to the right over time and eventually had strong fascist, or at least authoritarian, leanings.

Nanking government: The Kuomintang selected Nanking as their national capital in 1928.

Sian Incident: Chiang Kai-shek's kidnapping and imprisonment in December 1936, which led to the formation of the United Front. The goal of Chiang's captors was to force him to abandon his efforts against the Communists and lead a united China against Japanese encroachment. After two weeks, Chiang agreed - and stuck to the agreement.

Soviets: Following the Russian model, the Chinese Communists established several autonomous "Soviets" in the early 1930s, the main one being in Kiangsi. It was destroyed by the Nationalists in the fifth Extermination Campaign.

Triads: A type of Chinese criminal organization.

United Front: The truce between the Nationalist and Communist Chinese hammered out in December 1936, as a result of the Sian Incident. The United Front was never as united as its name implied, as the relationship between the Nationalists and Communists went from outright hostility to "strained" (at best). The creation of the United Front was one of the causes of the Japanese invasion of China in 1937, as Japan's greatest fear was that China would become unified and strong. For the first few years of the Sino-Japanese war, there were many instances of cooperation between the Nationalists and Communists, especially at the local level, but as time went on both sides maneuvered to prepare for the post-war showdown they knew to be inevitable.

Yellow River dikes: The second longest river in China, after the Yangtze, the Yellow River valley was extensively irrigated and was the birthplace of ancient Chinese civilization. In 1938, Nationalist forces intentionally breached the Yellow River dikes in order to flood the valley. The estimated death toll from this man-made disaster was 500,000 to 900,000 people. The strategy largely failed in its goal of slowing the Japanese advance, but succeeded in showing China's determination to resist Japanese aggressions. In this it resembled the British attack on the French fleet following the French collapse in 1940.



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Dowding: Air Chief Marshal Hugh Dowding was the architect of the British air defense system and the head of RAF Fighter Command in the Battle of Britain. Dowding proved that the adage that "the bomber always gets through" was a myth, and in doing so may have won the Second World War.

Ghandi: Mahatma Gandhi was the leader of the Indian Congress Party and the father of Indian independence.

Wingate: Orde Wingate was the type of military iconoclast that appealed to Churchill, who embraced his aggressive and unconventional approach to modern warfare. Historically Wingate was sent to Burma in 1942, where he organized the Chindits.

Shan: The people of Northern Burma. The Shan states saw considerable fighting in World War II.

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Anzac: A World War I acronym for the Australia New Zealand Army Corps, which came to more generally refer to anything relating to Australia and New Zealand.

Burma Road: The main supply route from the Western Allies to Nationalist China, once the Japanese had captured the main Chinese ports and blockaded China. The Burma Road was cut when Japan conquered Burma in 1942.

Chindits: The brain-child of Orde Wingate, the Chindits were a long-range penetration unit developed by the British in Indian. The idea was that the Chindits would operate deep behind the Japanese lines in Burma, being supplied and reinforced by air. The Chindits were more successful in theory and in the Allied press than they were in reality, as they sustained a very high

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casualty rate, in part from disease, because World War II logistics simply weren't sufficient to sustain such a force.

Congress Party: Founded in 1885, the Indian Congress Party was the main vehicle for Indian independence from Britain, which was achieved in 1947. Led by Mahatma Gandhi, the Congress Party adopted a unique and effective policy of non-violent civil disobedience, and was a major concern of the British when Japan threatened India.

Dominions: A sovereign state within the British Commonwealth. Canada was the first Dominion (1867). By the 1930s, it had been joined by Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the Irish Free State, and, in a typically British legally confused and pragmatic way, Newfoundland.



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Stalin: Joseph Stalin was the Soviet dictator from the early 1930s until his death in 1953. He made all important decisions with respect to Soviet domestic and foreign policy, and was often wrong. No one told him so.

Zhukov: The Soviet Union's best general in World War II, Georgy Zhukov made his name by crushing the Japanese at the Battle of Khalkhin Gol (Nomonhan) in August 1939. This defeat, the result of meticulous preparation and inspired generalship, made the normally bellicose Kwantung Army so wary of confronting the Red Army that Russia was able to transfer significant numbers of troops to hold off the German invasion in late 1941.

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"Popular front" strategy: The anti-fascist strategy formally adopted by the Communist International (Comintern) in 1935, calling for cooperation with non-Communist leftist and centrists to oppose fascism, Naziism and Japanese militarism.

Stakhanovite movement: A movement in the Soviet Union to produce more than was required, emulating the glorified feats of Alexey Stakhanov, a coal miner. Naturally this type of fanatical overproduction was encouraged by the Soviet government, but of course the movement eventually burnt itself out. Stakhanov was the model for the cart horse "Boxer" in Orwell's *Animal Farm*, who was eventually sold to be made into glue once he wore himself out.



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Clare Boothe Luce: Second wife of Henry Luce, Clare Boothe Luce, was a political force in her own right, winning a seat in the House of Representatives in 1942 and becoming a high-profile American conservative.

Henry Luce: Henry Luce built a publishing empire in the United States that included *Time*, *Life*, *Fortune* and *Sports Illustrated*. He was an ardent supporter of Chiang Kai-shek and a key figure in the American "China Lobby".

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Physical Review: A scientific journal established in 1893 by Edward Nichols, and published by the American Physical Society.

Racist state legislation: A number of American states, especially California, passed legislation in the early 1900s aimed at prohibiting non-white (Asian) immigration and discriminating against Asians already in the United States. These actions were a major source of friction between the U.S. and Japan, as Japanese nationals and their descendants were subject to these laws.



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Doenitz: German Admiral Karl Doenitz headed the submarine arm of the German navy, and was responsible for both the successes and failures of the German U-boat campaign. He became head of the German Navy in 1943, although by then there was little remaining of the Kriegsmarine other than its submarines. Doenitz was appointed by Hitler to be his successor, and presided over Germany's surrender to the Allies in May 1945.

German military advisors: Sino-German military cooperation began in the 1920s, and accelerated when Hitler came to power in 1933. In return for Chinese raw materials, German advisors provided training, equipment and tactical and strategic guidance. Hans von Seeckt, as the head of German military mission, advocated a smaller, better trained and better armed Chinese army, and significant steps were taken towards this goal. Japanese concerns over the modernization of the Chinese army contributed to its sense of urgency. The elite German-trained divisions acquitted themselves well at the Battle of Shanghai in 1937, but were largely destroyed in the process. Once full-scale war broke out between China and Japan, Germany made a cold-blooded decision to abandon its Chinese ally and align itself with Japan.

Stoßtruppen: Highly trained and heavily armed German units in World War I, who specialized in "infiltration tactics" that bypassed enemy strongpoints. These units broke the trench deadlock in Germany's 1918 western front offensive, but could not compensate for Germany's strategic bankruptcy and inferiority of resources. The term was co-opted by the Nazi Brownshirts.

Student: Kurt Student was a *Luftwaffe* General who conceived of, developed and commanded the German airborne units in World War II.

Walter: Hellmuth Walter was a German engineer who conducted pioneering research into rocket engines and gas turbines. He is best known for his revolutionary propulsion system for submarines, which had the potential to be a war-winning breakthrough.

