

**Social Science Department  
Freshmen World History  
May 25-29**



**Greetings Freshmen World Students!** We hope you are safe and well with your families! Below is the lesson plan for this week:

**Content Standard:**

**Topic 4. The Great Wars, 1914–1945 [WHII.T4] *Supporting***

***Question: What were the causes and consequences of the 20th century's***

***two world wars?*** 1. Analyze the effects of the battles of World War II on the outcome of the war and the countries involved; 14. Analyze the decision of the United States to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in order to bring the war with Japan to a swift conclusion and its impact on relations with the Soviet Union.

**Practice Standard(s):**

2. Organize information and data from multiple primary and secondary sources.
3. Argue or explain conclusions, using valid reasoning and evidence.
5. Evaluate the credibility, accuracy and relevance of each source.
6. Argue or explain conclusions, using valid reasoning and evidence.

**Weekly Learning Opportunities:**

- World War II Events/Battles: Readings & Questions
- Video Clip & Viewing Guide
- World War II: Visual Analysis
- Primary Source Activity: Life as an RAF Pilot
- Compare and Contrast: Graph Activity

**Long Term Opportunities:**

- Atomic Bomb DBQ

**Additional Resources:**

- Greatest Events of WWII In Colour (Netflix)
- Newsela: World War II: Content Text Set
- Newsela: World War II: Supplemental Text Set

**Note to students:** Your Social Science teacher will contact you with specifics regarding the above assignments in addition to strategies and recommendations for completion. Please email your teacher with specific questions and/or contact during office hours.

## WWII Events/ Battles: Week of 5/25

### *Massachusetts History Framework:*

#### **Content Standard: Topic 4. The Great Wars, 1914–1945 [WHII.T4]**

Supporting Question: What were the causes and consequences of the 20th century's two world wars?

1. Analyze the effects of the battles of World War II on the outcome of the war and the countries involved; 14. Analyze the decision of the United States to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in order to bring the war with Japan to a swift conclusion and its impact on relations with the Soviet Union.

*Note to students:* It is recommended that you don't complete the entire assignment in one sitting, rather work on your Social Studies assignment for 30-45 minutes a day. Consider breaking up the tasks into smaller chunks. When assigned in its entirety this lesson should take approximately 3-5 days to complete.

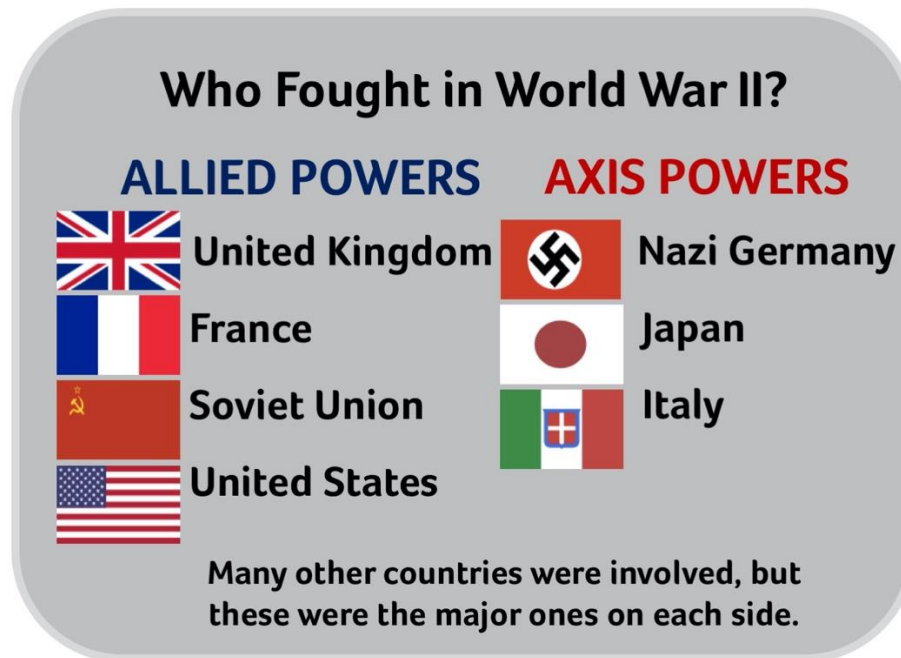
#### *Student Instructions:*

1. Read the content summary.
2. Complete Activity A OR Activity B.
3. Choose ONE activity from options Activity C, D, or E. Complete only that ONE activity.

Time: 2-4 days

## Content Summary:

World War II was fought by several world powers from 1939 to 1945.

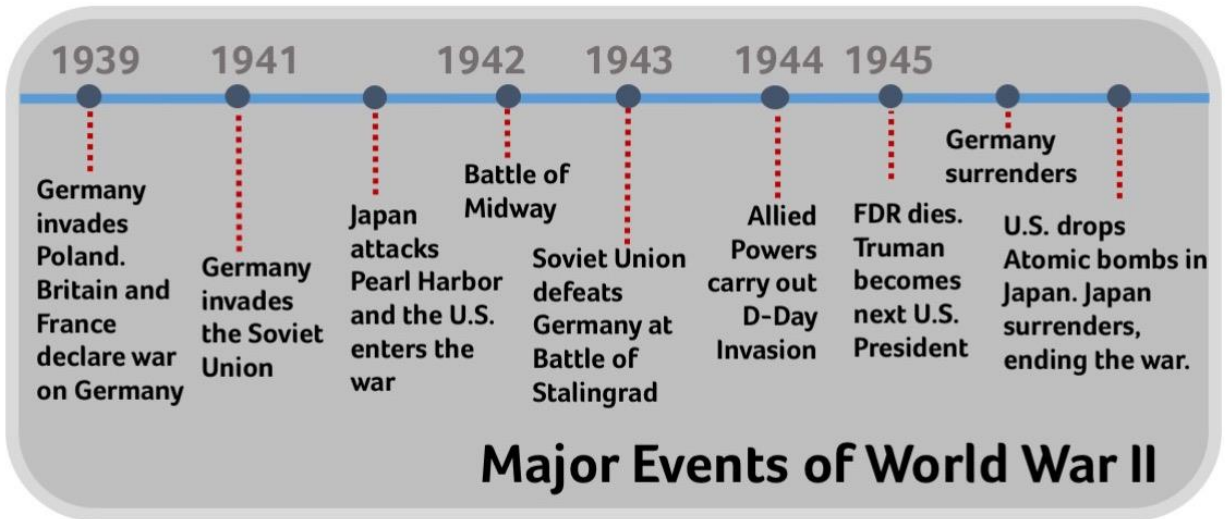


Over the course of World War II, the fighting countries fell into two categories: Allied and Axis powers. Allied powers, like United Kingdom, France, the Soviet Union and the United States, were against Adolf Hitler's Nazism, as well as Italian fascism and Japanese militarism.

It is important to note that the Soviet Union initially signed a neutrality pact, or a peace agreement, with Germany in 1939. Eventually, Germany violated the pact by invading the Soviet Union.

### **Timeline of Political Events During the War**

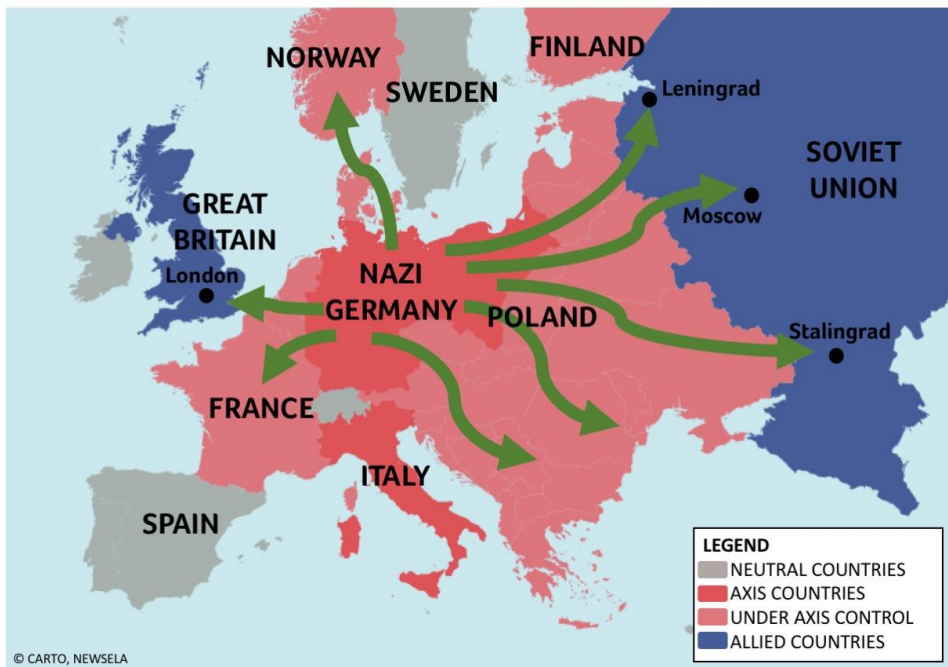
There were several fronts during World War II. The war can be boiled down to a few key political events that shaped how it developed.



### Europe During the War

The map of Europe looks different today than it did during World War II. Part of that is because the war changed borders and the face of Europe.

## How did Europe look during the War?

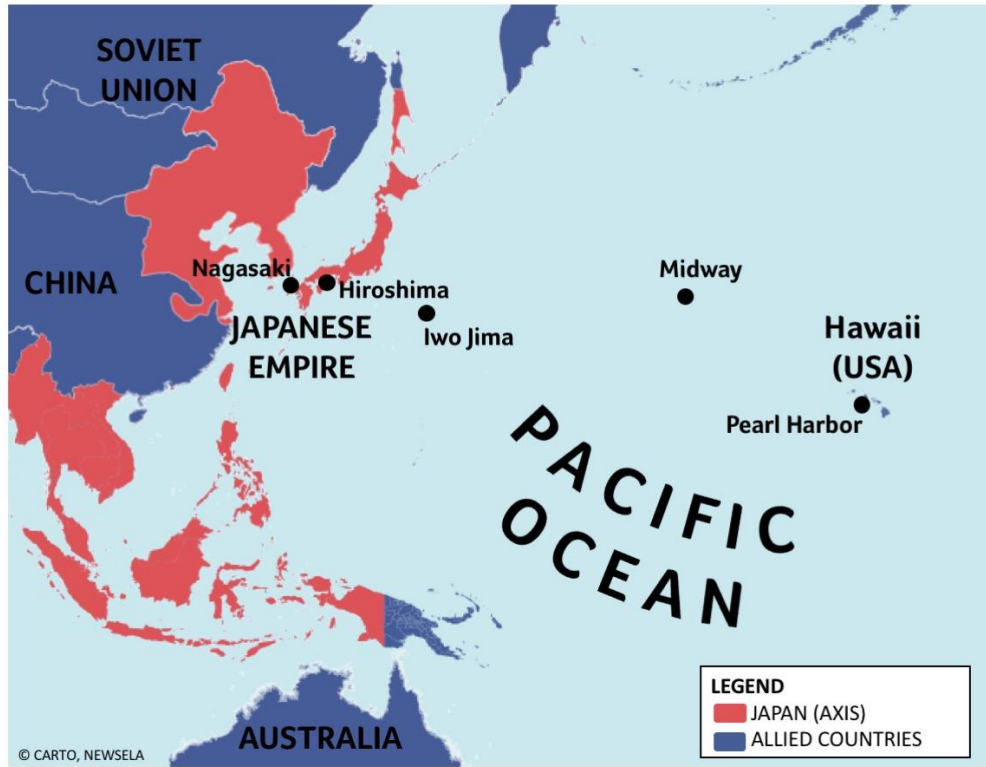


Hitler and his troops conquered much of Europe. But pushing to the East and the West at the same time proved costly.

## Asia During the War

World War II was also fought in Asia. This map shows how the powers were aligned.

# Japan and the Pacific Front



This map shows how Japan and the Pacific Front were also aligned with Allied or Axis powers.

## **Activity A:**

**Directions: Please actively read the following AND complete a graphic organizer for each sub-section.**

### **World War II in the West (1940-41)**

On April 9, 1940, Germany simultaneously invaded Norway and occupied Denmark, and the war began in earnest. On May 10, German forces swept through Belgium and the Netherlands in what became known as “blitzkrieg,” or lightning war. Three days later, Hitler’s troops crossed the Meuse River and struck French forces at Sedan, located at the northern end of the Maginot Line, an elaborate chain of fortifications constructed after World War I and considered an impenetrable defensive barrier. In fact, the Germans broke through the line with their tanks and planes and continued to the rear, rendering it useless. The British Expeditionary Force (BEF) was evacuated by sea from Dunkirk in late May, while in the south French forces mounted a doomed resistance. With France on the verge of collapse, Benito Mussolini of Italy put his Pact of Steel with Hitler into action, and Italy declared war against France and Britain on June 10.

On June 14, German forces entered Paris; a new government formed by Marshal Philippe Petain (France’s hero of World War I) requested an armistice two nights later. France was subsequently divided into two zones, one under German military occupation and the other under Petain’s government, installed at Vichy France. Hitler now turned his attention to Britain, which had the defensive advantage of being separated from the Continent by the English Channel.

To pave the way for an amphibious invasion (dubbed Operation Sea Lion), German planes bombed Britain extensively throughout the summer of 1940, including night raids on London and other industrial centers that caused heavy civilian casualties and damage. The Royal Air Force (RAF) eventually defeated the Luftwaffe (German Air Force) in the Battle of Britain, and Hitler postponed his plans to invade. With Britain’s defensive resources pushed to the limit, Prime Minister Winston Churchill began receiving crucial aid from the U.S. under the Lend-Lease Act, passed by Congress in early 1941.

### **Operation Barbarossa (1941-42)**

By early 1941, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria had joined the Axis, and German troops overran Yugoslavia and Greece that April. Hitler’s conquest of the Balkans was a precursor for his real objective: an invasion of the Soviet Union, whose vast territory would give the German master race the “Lebensraum” it needed. The other half of Hitler’s strategy was the extermination of the Jews from throughout German-occupied Europe. Plans for the “Final Solution” were introduced around the time of

the Soviet offensive, and over the next three years more than 4 million Jews would perish in the death camps established in occupied Poland.

On June 22, 1941, Hitler ordered the invasion of the Soviet Union, codenamed Operation Barbarossa. Though Soviet tanks and aircraft greatly outnumbered the Germans', their air technology was largely obsolete, and the impact of the surprise invasion helped Germans get within 200 miles of Moscow by mid-July. Arguments between Hitler and his commanders delayed the next German advance until October, when it was stalled by a Soviet counteroffensive and the onset of harsh winter weather.

### **World War II in the Pacific (1941-43)**

With Britain facing Germany in Europe, the United States was the only nation capable of combating Japanese aggression, which by late 1941 included an expansion of its ongoing war with China and the seizure of European colonial holdings in the Far East. On December 7, 1941, 360 Japanese aircraft attacked the major U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, taking the Americans completely by surprise and claiming the lives of more than 2,300 troops. The attack on Pearl Harbor served to unify American public opinion in favor of entering World War II, and on December 8 Congress declared war on Japan with only one dissenting vote. Germany and the other Axis Powers promptly declared war on the United States.

After a long string of Japanese victories, the U.S. Pacific Fleet won the Battle of Midway in June 1942, which proved to be a turning point in the war. On Guadalcanal, one of the southern Solomon Islands, the Allies also had success against Japanese forces in a series of battles from August 1942 to February 1943, helping turn the tide further in the Pacific. In mid-1943, Allied naval forces began an aggressive counterattack against Japan, involving a series of amphibious assaults on key Japanese-held islands in the Pacific. This "island-hopping" strategy proved successful, and Allied forces moved closer to their ultimate goal of invading the Japanese homeland.

### **Toward Allied Victory in World War II (1943-45)**

In North Africa, British and American forces had defeated the Italians and Germans by 1943. An Allied invasion of Sicily and Italy followed, and Mussolini's government fell in July 1943, though Allied fighting against the Germans in Italy would continue until 1945.

On World War II's Eastern Front, a Soviet counteroffensive launched in November 1942 ended the bloody Battle of Stalingrad, which had seen some of the fiercest combat of the war. The approach of winter, along with dwindling food and medical

supplies, spelled the end for German troops there, and the last of them surrendered on January 31, 1943.

On June 6, 1944—celebrated as “D-Day”—the Allies began a massive invasion of Europe, landing 156,000 British, Canadian and American soldiers on the beaches of Normandy, France. In response, Hitler poured all the remaining strength of his army into Western Europe, ensuring Germany’s defeat in the east. Soviet troops soon advanced into Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania, while Hitler gathered his forces to drive the Americans and British back from Germany in the Battle of the Bulge (December 1944-January 1945), the last major German offensive of the war.

An intensive aerial bombardment in February 1945 preceded the Allied land invasion of Germany, and by the time Germany formally surrendered on May 8, Soviet forces had occupied much of the country. Hitler was already dead, having died by suicide on April 30 in his Berlin bunker.

### **World War II Ends (1945)**

At the Potsdam Conference of July-August 1945, U.S. President Harry S. Truman (who had taken office after Roosevelt’s death in April), Churchill and Stalin discussed the ongoing war with Japan as well as the peace settlement with Germany. Post-war Germany would be divided into four occupation zones, to be controlled by the Soviet Union, Britain, the United States and France. On the divisive matter of Eastern Europe’s future, Churchill and Truman acquiesced to Stalin, as they needed Soviet cooperation in the war against Japan.

Heavy casualties sustained in the campaigns at Iwo Jima (February 1945) and Okinawa (April-June 1945), and fears of the even costlier land invasion of Japan led Truman to authorize the use of a new and devastating weapon. Developed during a top secret operation code-named The Manhattan Project, the atomic bomb was unleashed on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in early August. On August 15, the Japanese government issued a statement declaring they would accept the terms of the Potsdam Declaration, and on September 2, U.S. General Douglas MacArthur accepted Japan’s formal surrender aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.



Graphic Organizer:

<b>Readings</b>	<b>Main idea: (What was the main idea of the section?)</b>	<b>Important details: (What details are important that will help me understand the main idea?)</b>	<b>Key terms: (Identify 3 vocabulary words in each section and define them.)</b>
World War II in the West  (1940-41)			
Operation Barbarossa  (1941-42)			
World War II in the Pacific  (1941-43)			
Toward Allied Victory in World War II  (1943-45)			
World War II Ends (1945)			

### Activity B: Video Clip

Directions: Using the link provided, please watch the video clip. As you watch the Video clip, please answer the questions below.

Link: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xwju0q>

### America: The Story of Us World War II ~ Episode 10



1. What fledging technology was ignored prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor?
2. Why was the Pearl Harbor attack such a shock to the United States?
3. What were the results of the attack on Pearl Harbor?
4. Describe America's transformation into "an arsenal of democracy." What new and lasting technologies were developed? What did these technologies come to symbolize?
5. How did World War II affect women?
6. How did the war advance the rights of women?
7. How did World War II impact the economy of the United States?
8. How are making weapons as dangerous as using weapons? What are the human costs?
9. Describe the United States role in air combat over Europe during World War II? What are the risks of these missions? What new technologies are employed?
10. What are the results of bombing industrial targets near civilian homes?
11. During World War II, the American Armed Forces were still segregated by race. Why do you think this issue became increasingly important during this era, leading to the desegregation of the Armed Forces a few years after the war? (Hint: You will need to come back to this question after the sequence on D-Day.)
12. Describe the preparation for and execution of Operation Overlord (D-Day).
13. Why was the invention of penicillin so important in the context of World War II?

14. What were some of the other advances in medicine that were important during the war?
15. Describe the development of the atomic bomb. Why were even the scientists who worked on the program skeptical about its effectiveness?
16. What was the impact of using the atomic bomb on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?
17. Overall, what were the consequences of World War II for the United States?
18. How was the United States changed by the war?

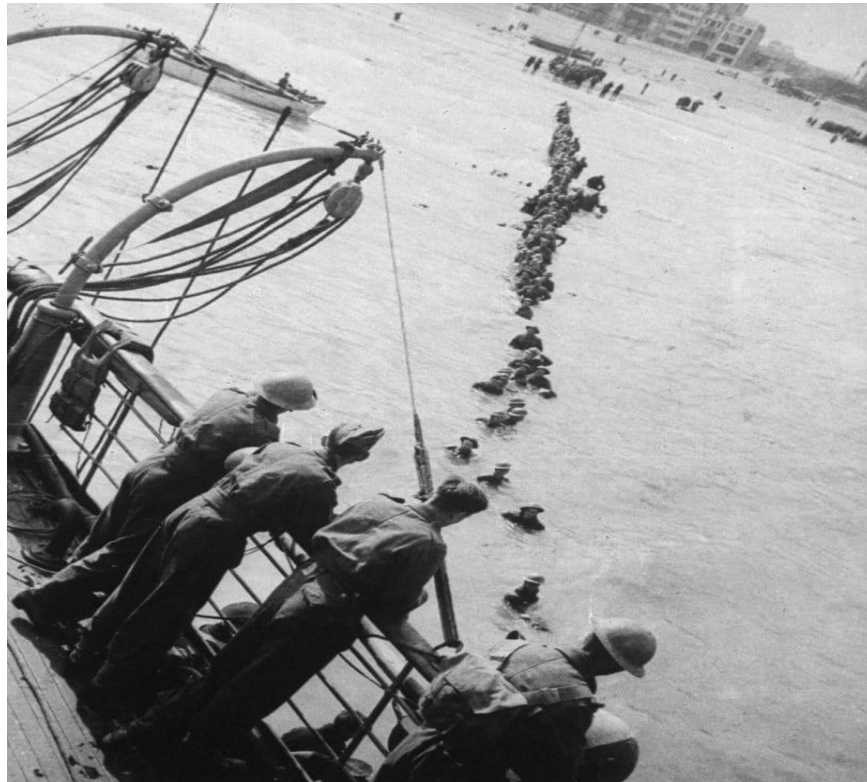
### Activity C:

**Directions:** You are working as a newspaper journalist during World War II. You have taken photos of various events throughout the war. Now you must write your story for the newspaper. Choose three of the following images and create a three-sentence caption for each of them. Research the event so you have accurate information.

Captions should include:

- a. Sentence one: title; date of the event; location of the event
- b. Sentence two: participants of the event
- c. Sentence three: description of the event

**Image One: Dunkirk**



**Image 2: Pearl Harbor**



**Image 3: Women of World War II**



**Image 4: Warsaw Ghetto**



**Image 5: Majdanek Concentration Camp**



**Image 6: D-Day invasion of Normandy**



**Image 7: Soviet liberation of Auschwitz**



**Image 8: Flag planting in Iwo Jima**

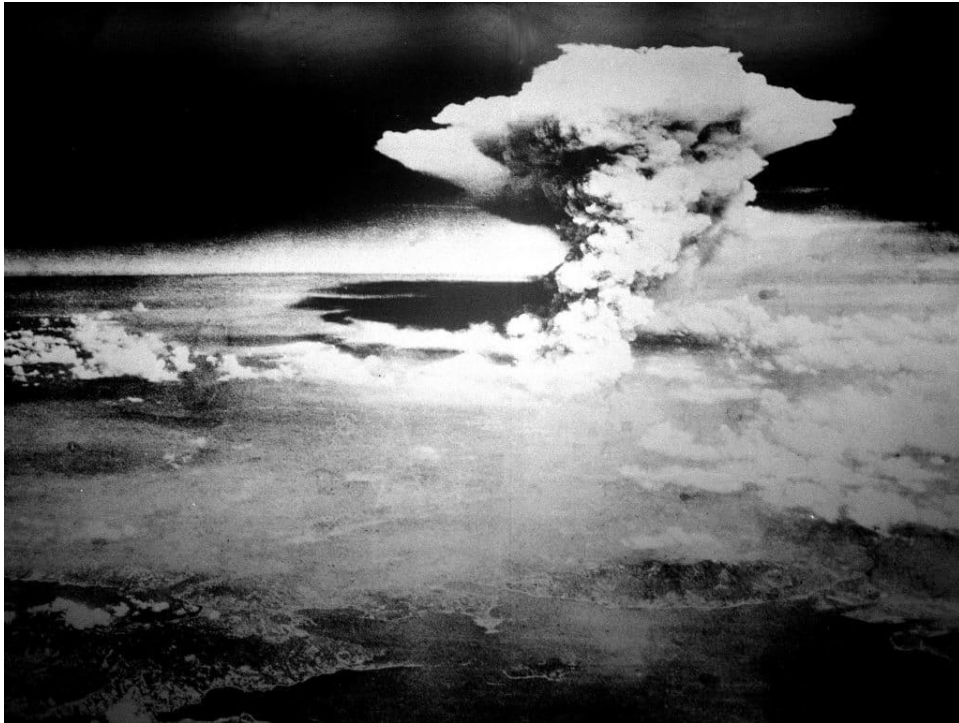


**Image 9: Soviet Victory at the Battle of Berlin**

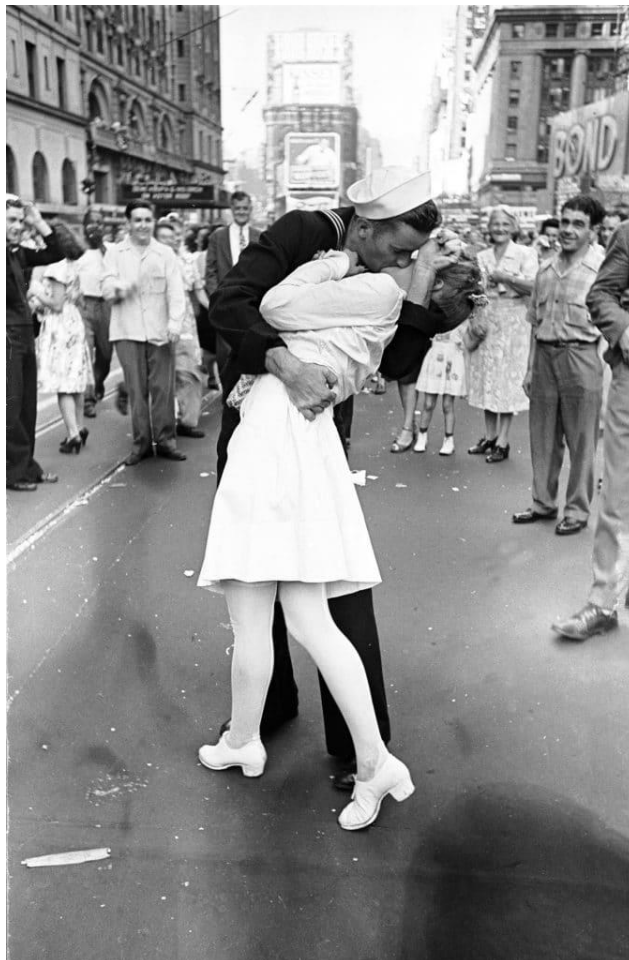




**Image 10: Atomic Bomb**



**Image 11: VJ Day**



**Activity D:****Directions:** Compare & Contrast: Examine the charts from WWI and WWII below.

Complete the charts by adding up the totals for each category under each war. When the totals are complete, answer the questions using the charts below.

**World War I**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Military Deaths</b>	<b>Civilian Deaths</b>	<b>Total Deaths</b>
Britain	45,400,000	885,138	109,000	994,138
France	39,600,000	1,397,800	300,000	1,697,800
Italy	35,600,000	651,000	589,000	1,240,000
Russia	158,900,000	1,811,000	1,500,000	3,311,000
United States	92,000,000	116,708	757	117,465
Austria-Hungary	51,400,000	1,100,000	467,000	1,567,000
Germany	64,900,000	2,050,897	426,000	2,476,897
Ottoman Empire	21,300,000	771,844	2,150,000	2,921,844
<b>Totals</b>				

**World War II**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Military Deaths</b>	<b>Civilian Deaths</b>	<b>Total Deaths</b>
China	517,568,000	3,800,000	16,200,000	20,000,000
France	41,700,000	217,600	350,000	567,600
Germany	69,623,000	5,533,000	1,700,000	7,233,000
Italy	44,394,000	301,400	153,100	454,500
Japan	71,380,000	2,120,000	580,000	2,700,000
Poland	34,849,000	240,000	5,360,000	5,600,000
Soviet Union	168,500,000	10,700,000	12,400,000	23,100,000
Britain	47,760,000	382,700	67,100	449,800
United States	131,028,000	416,800	1,700	418,500
Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia	59,763,000	1,071,000	1,714,000	2,785,000
<b>Totals</b>				

<b>Difference +/- WWI</b>				
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**Directions:** Answer the following questions in complete sentences based on the charts and your own knowledge.

1. Examine the total populations from WWI and WWII. What observations can you make about the population increase from WWI to WWII?

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2. Examine the total military deaths from WWI and WWII. Based on your answer to the question above, what observations can you make about the number of military deaths from WWI to WWII?

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3. What war had more military deaths and, based on your knowledge of how both wars were fought, why were there so many more military deaths in that war compared to the others?

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4. Examine the total civilian deaths from WWI and WWII. Based on your answers above, what observations can you make about the number of civilian deaths from WWI to WWII?

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5. Examine the number of total deaths for both WWI and WWII. What is the total number of people killed between the two wars? What observations would you make about this number?

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6. What is your reaction to the population and death statistics that you have just examined?

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A. 17.0  
B. 27.5

C. 37.5  
D. 47.0

## Activity E: Primary Source Analysis: Life as an RAF Pilot

**Directions:** Read the account then answer the questions on the other side of this document.

*In this primary source, an elderly man who was pilot in the Royal Air Force (RAF) of Great Britain in World War 2 talks about a mission where he had to attack enemy forces very close to his own. Read the account then answer the questions.*

### Words to Know

**Sortie:** Name given to a mission flown by a fighter pilot.

**Rover control:** Another name for a forward air controller, a soldier whose job is to spot enemy soldiers, positions, and vehicles, and call friendly fighter aircraft to attack those enemies.

**Control tower:** A tower at an airport where air traffic controllers tell airplanes where to go.

**Observation post:** Where soldiers will sit in order to spot enemy soldiers.

**'G' force:** The force of gravity one feels when turning at a high speed, like in an airplane or on a roller coaster.

**Strafing run:** When fighter planes fly over an area and shoot their machine guns at whatever targets they see.

**Harvards:** American-made airplanes that British pilots used to learn how to fly in World War 2.

**Elementary:** Simple or easy.

**Minimal:** Very small.

### Primary Source Account

It was while flying from this airfield (in Italy) that I had one of the most satisfying **sorties**. We were airborne and waiting for a call from our **Rover control**, when he came on the air and asked us to go to a small airfield right on the front line. Our controller described the situation to us. Our troops were around the perimeter of the airfield but were pinned down by gunfire being directed from the **control tower**. He asked us to attack the tower in order to eliminate this **observation post**. We carried out our normal bombing run starting at 10,000 feet and going into a dive of about 80 degrees, this allowed us to keep a sight of our target right up to the moment when we started to pull out of the dive at about 3,000 feet. We didn't have a bombsight but dropped our bombs by judgment, as we started to pull out the target disappeared under our noses, we then released our bomb which was a 500 pounder. By this time having been in a steep dive for some 7,000 feet we were travelling very fast and the aircraft had to be very carefully handled or you could bend the wings by exerting too much **'G' force**. It always surprised me that we could achieve any accuracy bombing in this way but our results were consistently good and in this particular sortie our own troops were only about 250 yards from our target, so obviously our Rover control had faith in our accuracy. Having finished our bombing run we regained height while our Rover control was getting very excited saying that we had successfully destroyed the observation post and that the Germans were abandoning the place. He asked us if we could come in again for a **strafing run** as the Germans were all easily seen and without cover. We then made a low-level attack, being guided by the controller and as we came in, we could see the Germans running through an olive grove. We went in turn, firing our 20mm cannon and .50 cal machine guns, each of us making several attacks until all our ammunition was expended.

This sortie took me back to my training days in [Africa], where I completed my flying training on **Harvards**. There we had a bombing area where we tried to hit ground targets with little success. It was part of our training to act as bombing range supervisors, we were sent out into the [jungle] for two weeks with a very **elementary** radio and were meant to control other pilots under training who were practicing bombing techniques. It was OK but there were hazards from the wildlife, as we had to shake scorpions out of our socks. Radio contact with the aircraft was **minimal** as the radios either didn't work or their range was too limited to reach the aircraft at all. This sortie made me realize that our training hadn't been as useless as we thought at the time!

**Source:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/28/a2773028.shtml>

### Questions to Answer

**Directions:** Answer the questions below. **BE SURE TO USE COMPLETE SENTENCES WHEN ANSWERING QUESTIONS.**

1. Why do you think this man retold this story? What was his purpose for sharing it to a historian?

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2. Do you think this source is reliable? In other words, is this story probably truthful? Why do you think this?

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3. Why did the pilot talk in the end of the story about his training in Africa? What was his purpose in telling that?

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4. Why was this particular mission dangerous? Use evidence from the story to support your answer.

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### **Respond by Writing**

On a loose-leaf sheet of paper, write a **ONE PARAGRAPH (5 SENTENCES MINIMUM)** answer to the following question. Be sure to use evidence from the story to support your answer.

**Flying close air support missions to help friendly troops is one of the most dangerous jobs a fighter pilot can have. Even more dangerous than this is the job of a forward air controller, who oftentimes asks for fighter planes to drop bombs within 100 yards of their own position.**

**Imagine that you are the forward air controller (Rover control) in this primary source account. Write about what you think you would have experienced during the fighter pilot's story as Rover control. Be sure to include as much evidence from the primary source as you can so the reader can see you are talking about the same event.**



# WWII Part One: Origins of the War

By Kenneth T. Jackson, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, adapted by Newsela staff on 01.03.17

Word Count **1,046**

Level **1230L**



TOP: German troops enter Schonlinde (Krasna Lipa) in Czechoslovakia (the present-day Czech Republic), as Nazi Germany annexes the region on October 2, 1938; FPG/Hulton Archive/Getty Images. MIDDLE: The 12th panzer division of the German army, 1944; Wikimedia Commons. BOTTOM: Map of the Nazi-Fascist occupation in Europe in 1941 AP Photo.

## *The first in a four-part series*

World War II was the central event of the 20th century. It involved all six major continents, all three of the great oceans on the planet, dozens of countries and billions of people. It caused 57 million deaths and unimaginable human suffering. It brought about the redrawing of national boundaries in Europe and Asia, forced the relocation of many ethnic groups, made millions of families homeless and led to the virtual annihilation of the Jewish population of Europe.

By the time it was over in 1945, Tokyo, Berlin, Leningrad, Stalingrad, Warsaw, Hiroshima, Dresden,

### Who Fought in World War II?

#### ALLIED POWERS



United Kingdom

France

Soviet Union

United States

#### AXIS POWERS



Nazi Germany

Japan

Italy

Many other countries were involved, but these were the major ones on each side.

Nagasaki, Cologne and dozens of other great cities had been obliterated. And population centers that had mostly avoided the worst of the death and destruction continued to see poverty and hunger linger for years after the surrender documents had been signed. Meanwhile, the prisoners and the wounded would carry the cost of the conflict with them for the rest of their lives.

## **A world at war**

There is no one date that can be said to mark the beginning of the greatest of global conflicts. In 1931, the Japanese army invaded Manchuria, a northern province of China. In July 1937, the Japanese moved again, this time directly against the regime of Chiang Kai-shek, then the military leader of the Republic of China. The atrocities that followed shocked the world.

Meanwhile, in 1936, German Chancellor Adolf Hitler moved aggressively into the Rhineland, a previously demilitarized zone along the Rhine River in western Germany. In 1938, he incorporated Czechoslovakia and Austria into Nazi Germany, also known as the Third Reich. By this time, the Western world was fully alert to the menace of this fanatically ambitious and confident dictator. Then, in the early morning hours of September 1, 1939, Hitler sent his armies into Poland. Two days later, France and Great Britain declared war on Germany, and within a matter of weeks the Soviet Union, which had recently signed a nonaggression treaty with Hitler, attacked Poland from the east. World War II had begun.

In general, the American people did not want to have any part in a European war. They felt protected by great oceans on both sides of the North American continent. And they felt that, in World War I, American boys had fought and bled in France mostly to make fortunes for weapons makers and arms merchants. Moreover, the United States had allowed its armed forces to wither in the 1920s and 1930s. By the time World War II broke out in Europe, its army of 190,000 men ranked about 18th in the world, about on a par with Romania and Bulgaria.

## **German aggression in Western Europe**

The United States might never have entered World War II if Germany, Japan and Italy had stopped after their initial conquests. But the three Axis powers made astonishing gains in the years before Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.

After taking over Norway and neutralizing Sweden, the Nazis turned their attention to the big prize. Early in the morning of May 10, 1940, Hitler launched a blitzkrieg, or lightning war, against France, whose army had previously been considered the finest in the world. The revolutionary nature of the German offensive was to concentrate all available tanks into a few specialized divisions rather than to spread them out evenly among infantry units. These offensive formations, known as panzer formations, were designed to smash holes in the enemy line and then break out into the rear. This created chaos on the roads and prevented the Allies from plugging the gaps.

The British and French armies actually had more and better tanks than the attackers, but new strategic and tactical ideas carried the contest. The German tank columns swept everything before them, and the French defenses soon collapsed. In fact, the almost total collapse of the proud



French army in May 1940 remains one of the most incredible events in all of military history. In June, France sued for peace – an act that initiates the peace process between warring nations – and Hitler's victorious troops marched past the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. By the end of June 1940, essentially all of western Europe was under the control of Nazi Germany.

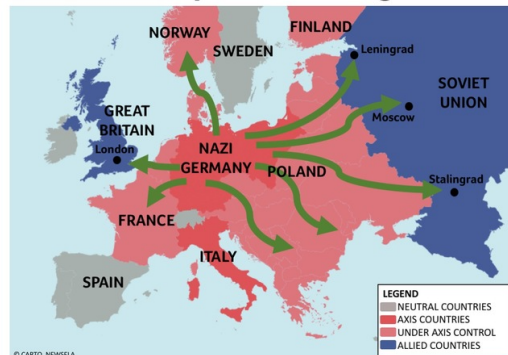
### Hitler's miscalculation

Hitler expected Great Britain, his only remaining foe, to recognize the superiority of German arms and to remove itself from active involvement in Europe. After all, he reasoned, Germany sought growing space in the east and had no intention of dismantling the British Empire. Why not just divide the world? Why would the British not be content with their vast holdings in Asia, on the other side of the world? When Great Britain refused to give in, Hitler unleashed the German air force on the English homeland, expecting that its heavy blows would bring Prime Minister Winston Churchill to his senses.

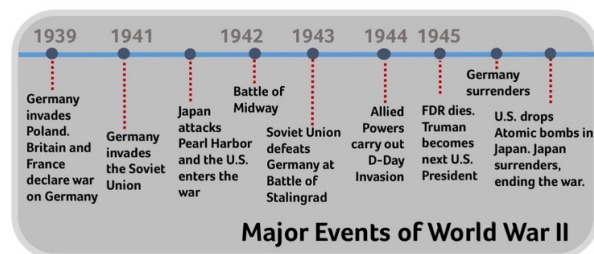
In 1941, however, Hitler made a colossal blunder. In fact, perhaps no event in human history can match in significance his decision to invade the Soviet Union in the early summer. He had not defeated Great Britain, and yet he was turning his armies to the east, initiating a two-front war. When his soldiers crossed the USSR frontier on June 22, the Nazi leader's new opponent became Joseph Stalin, a dictator as ruthless and cunning as himself, and the head of both the largest country and the largest army on earth. The eastern front, which involved hundreds of combat divisions stretched over thousands of miles of land, would turn out to be a human furnace. Germany essentially bled to death in Russia. Four-fifths of all German soldiers who perished in the war died while fighting the Soviet army. For the Soviet Union, the bloodshed was even worse. A staggering 27 million USSR citizens died in what for them will always be "the Great Patriotic War."

*Kenneth T. Jackson is the Jacques Barzun Professor in History and the Social Sciences. He is also the director of the Herbert H. Lehman Center for American History at Columbia University. His publications include "Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States" (1987), "Empire City: New York through the Centuries" (2002), and "The Encyclopedia of New York City" (2nd ed., 2010).*

### How did Europe look during the War?



Hitler and his troops conquered much of Europe. But pushing to the East and the West at the same time proved costly.



# WWII Part Two: The U.S. Enters the War

By Kenneth T. Jackson, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, adapted by Newsela staff on 01.04.17

Word Count **1,028**

Level **1200L**



Cabinet members watch with mixed emotions as President Franklin D. Roosevelt, wearing a black armband, signs the United States' declaration of war against Japan at 4:10 p.m. Washington time on December 8, 1941. On December 7, Japanese planes bombed Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in a surprise attack that destroyed a large portion of the fleet there, prompting the war declaration. Bettmann/Getty Images

*The second in a four-part series.*

U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt followed the news of fighting in Europe with obvious concern, knowing his countrymen did not want to be involved. He even ran for an unheard-of third term with the slogan: "He kept us out of war." At the time, this was still allowed.

But, he also knew that if Germany ever controlled all of Europe, its power would be colossal. So, sometimes quietly, sometimes forcefully, he moved his nation to greater preparedness, increasing the size of the U.S.

## Who Fought in World War II?

### ALLIED POWERS



United Kingdom

France

Soviet Union

United States

### AXIS POWERS



Nazi Germany

Japan

Italy

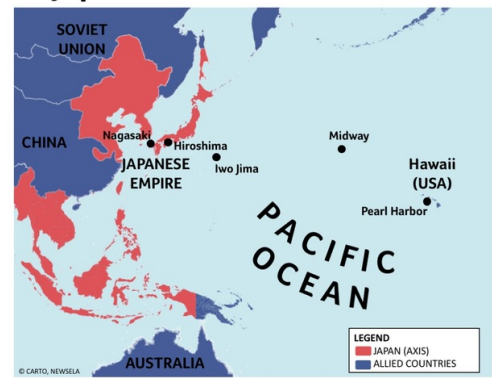
Many other countries were involved, but these were the major ones on each side.

Navy and Army. Roosevelt wanted the nation to be ready.

## Japanese ambitions

Japanese leaders felt that they were being unfairly held back by the United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands. Together, they controlled most of the natural resources, especially oil, to the south of Japan, in what is now Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines. Western powers said they would not sell resources to the Japanese if their government did not remove its troops from China and renounce its ambitions there. But the proud Japanese wanted to have their own empire in order to be one of the great nations of the world.

## Japan and the Pacific Front



This meant certain war with the West. As such, Japan made a direct strike against the United States, which was the one country with the natural resources, the population and the industrial capacity to crush Japan. It would require a bold attack on the United States Pacific Fleet, which President Roosevelt had recently redeployed from its home port in San Diego to Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands. Such an assault would require careful planning, intense training, absolute secrecy and complete surprise. Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto's plan was to first cripple the American fleet and then to force a gigantic naval battle in the Pacific. The Japanese, according to Yamamoto's plan, would win and force Roosevelt to yield to Tokyo's demands.

## Japan attacks Pearl Harbor

By every military measure, Japan's early-morning attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, was a success. Its aircraft carriers managed to cross the Pacific Ocean without being spotted, and its torpedo and dive bombers achieved complete surprise against the sleeping American fleet. All eight American battleships were disabled or sent to the bottom, as were dozens of smaller vessels. More than 2,000 sailors died that day. By contrast, the Japanese attackers lost only a few pilots and planes, and no ships. Admiral Yamamoto had every reason to be proud. He had only two reasons for immediate concern. First, the three large American aircraft carriers attached to the Pacific Fleet were not in Pearl Harbor, but were at sea on a practice mission, and the Japanese aviators could not find them. Second, Yamamoto had not thought to order his pilots to blow up the giant oil tanks and fuel storage facilities that dotted the area around Pearl Harbor.

Despite his great victory, Yamamoto had reasons to worry. He expected the United States would gather its enormous human and material resources against Japan and knew his cause was almost hopeless.

The great national debate about whether the United States should get involved in World War II essentially ended when the first bombs fell on the Hawaiian Islands. The next day, Roosevelt spoke before a joint session of Congress and asked for a Declaration of War against the Empire of Japan, which was approved without debate and almost without objection. Surprisingly, on December 10, Germany declared war on the United States even though Hitler's treaty with Japan was a defensive arrangement that did not require him to act because Japan had been the aggressor.

President Roosevelt was happy that the United States was in the war, and in fact, he had manipulated the Japanese into firing the first shot. But he had expected the initial Japanese attack to be against the Philippines and was shocked by what happened at Pearl Harbor. Roosevelt knew how to funnel national anger at Japan into a much more critical war against Germany, which he knew was actually the greater threat.

### U.S. industry gears up for war

In December of 1941, the nation launched the greatest industrial expansion in history. Within months, new orders for munitions, uniforms and combat vehicles absorbed the remaining unemployed workers from the Great Depression. Old factories were expanded and modernized, and giant new ones sprang up.

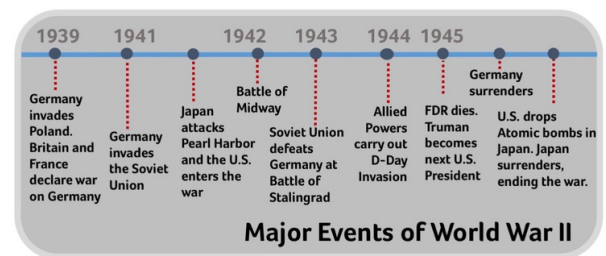
In the skies, American dominance was clear. Boeing built the great four-engine, strategic bomber fleets that destroyed entire cities. As early as 1942, American factories were already churning out 48,000 airplanes, which was more than Germany and Japan combined. Manufacturing for trucks, jeeps, landing ships, artillery pieces and self-propelled guns was high. And by 1945, the United States Navy was larger and more powerful than the navies of all other countries put together.

### Women crucial to preparation efforts, but racial prejudices persist

As millions of men joined the Army and industrial production soared, women became the obvious source of labor. The growth in female employment between 1942 and 1945 was staggering. At first, women took nondefense jobs as clerks, cabbies, truck drivers, waitresses, ambulance crews, streetcar conductors and filling-station attendants, but soon, jobs in shipyards and aircraft factories opened up.

Japanese-Americans and African-Americans had a harder time proving their importance and finding full citizenship. The Pearl Harbor attack meant that Japanese-Americans, many of whom had been citizens of the United States since birth, were suspected of being enemy agents. They were rounded up and sent to makeshift internment camps, though many served with courage and honor in the U.S. armed forces. Meanwhile, blacks were not allowed in the Marine Corps and were inducted as sailors only to serve as cooks, while in the Army, they served in segregated units under mostly white officers.

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# WWII Part Three: On the Battlefield

By Kenneth T. Jackson, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, adapted by Newsela staff on 01.05.17

Word Count **982**

Level **1170L**



American B-17 heavy bombers take off from an airfield in Britain, October 19, 1942. The B-17 was nicknamed the "Flying Fortress" because of its many machine-gun mounts. Photo: Planet News Archive/SSPL/Getty Images

## *The third in a four-part series*

The tanks, artillery, ships and trucks churned out by the United States at the beginning of World War II would be useful only if enough brave men could be found to take them into harm's way. In this respect, the United States proved to be exceptionally fruitful. After the Japanese attack on the American naval base Pearl Harbor, recruitment centers across the nation were swamped with volunteers who were anxious to take a swing at the Japanese. Even so, by 1943 Washington had resorted to a draft of all able-bodied males between 18 and 40. The Marine Corps expanded from one division to five, while the Navy

### Who Fought in World War II?

#### ALLIED POWERS



United Kingdom

France

Soviet Union

United States

#### AXIS POWERS



Nazi Germany

Japan

Italy

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put more than a thousand ships to sea. The Army was the largest of all the services, and its basic training facilities became small cities in their own right. By 1945, about 16 million Americans had served in uniform, not including the mariners of the Merchant Marine. The Merchant Marine is the fleet of ships that delivers troops and equipment during wartime.

The Allied powers — the United States, Britain, France and the Soviet Union — continued their fight against the Axis Powers — Germany, Italy and Japan — and the war continued. As millions of people joined the armed forces, separation and longing became common feelings. The songs of the time — like "Till We Meet Again" and "I'll Be Seeing You, in All the Old Familiar Places"— reflected the feelings of loneliness that were felt in every town and by almost every family. Eventually, most soldiers and Marines were shipped overseas. They got their last view of America from the ports of embarkation — New York on the East Coast and San Francisco on the West. But before leaving, they typically spent a week or 10 days at a final staging area where they received required vaccines and made out their last wills and testaments.

### **American Troops On The Way**

That last period in the United States often offered the opportunity for a few days of liberty. There was no chance for a trip home — trains were jammed and overloaded. But the port of embarkation, especially Manhattan, was another story. There, among the bright lights, nightclubs and restaurants of the largest city in the world, they drank and laughed and at least pretended to be confident and happy.

The next step was to board a troopship. Quarters were tight, pleasures were few and danger was constant, especially in the Atlantic Ocean, where German submarines — called U-boats — lurked beneath the surface. The most common way to get to Europe was in a group of about 50 or 60 similar ships. Mercifully, the Allied navies gained superiority over the Nazi submarines before most American soldiers crossed the ocean. Only 8,000 men were lost out of 4 million who made the journey aboard the defenseless cargo vessels.

### **Allied Forces Gain Ground Against Germany And Japan**

By late 1942, the tide had turned against the Axis Powers. In June, the U.S. Navy won its greatest victory ever in the Battle of Midway, in which an outnumbered American force inflicted devastating losses on the then-superior Japanese fleet. By September, American Marines were beginning an island-hopping campaign that required them to fight their way across the Pacific. The good news, however, was that after the Battle of Midway, the Japanese were no longer able to undertake offensive operations. It was just a matter of time before the Japanese were crushed by American air and naval superiority.

The German army was another matter. Generally regarded as the finest fighting force in the war, it had superbly trained and battle-hardened soldiers, sophisticated weapons and brilliant tactical leaders. Only an enormous sacrifice by many nations could bring it down. But it happened. In the fall of 1942, the British Eighth Army counterattacked German forces in Africa and sent them scurrying home to Germany. Meanwhile, the Americans who had landed in Morocco and Algeria trapped thousands of Nazi soldiers who could not escape across the Mediterranean Sea. In 1943, a combined Anglo-American force invaded Sicily and then Italy, ultimately knocking Italy out of the war. And in perhaps the most devastating battle of all time, at Stalingrad between August 1942 and February 1943, the proud German Sixth Army, which had devastated France, was systematically



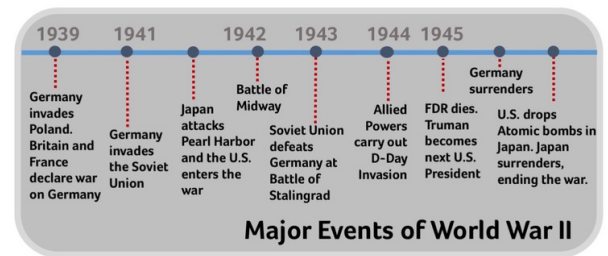
annihilated by Russia's vengeful Red Army. Thereafter, Hitler's troops were rarely able to attack. Instead, they were destroyed by enormous forces coordinated by the Big Three — Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin.

### Allies Prepare For Invasion Of Normandy

In 1943, General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army and probably the most important officer on the Allied side in the war, made a recommendation to FDR. He suggested that Dwight D. Eisenhower be made Supreme Commander of the Allied crusade in Europe.

So it fell to Eisenhower, then an obscure Kansan, to take charge of the greatest invasion in history. He had been only a lieutenant colonel when the war began in 1939. But his good judgment, hard work and devotion to duty were recognized early on by Marshall, who quickly promoted him officer over dozens of senior generals. By the early months of 1944, Eisenhower was in charge of all American and Allied ground, sea and air forces in Europe. His mission was to assault the Nazi Atlantic Wall, a network of artillery, beach hazards and pillboxes that were designed to slaughter anyone foolish enough to come out of the water.

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# WWII Part Four: D-Day and the War's End

By Kenneth T. Jackson, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, adapted by Newsela staff on 01.06.17

Word Count **951**

Level **1170L**



The landing of the Allied troops in Normandy, France, June 1944. Photo12/UIG via Getty Images








*The last in a four-part series.*

The story of June 6, 1944 – also known as D-Day – has been told many times. D-Day was an invasion by the U.S., Canada, and Britain onto a German-held beach in France. It was the largest seaborne invasion in history, and it started the process of liberating Europe from Nazi control and putting an end to World War II.

## Eisenhower's crucial role

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was in charge of the invasion, did four things that will distinguish him forever. First, he made a decision on June 5 that only he could make – to go forward with the invasion despite a terrible weather forecast. By contrast,

**Who Fought in World War II?**

<b>ALLIED POWERS</b>	<b>AXIS POWERS</b>
 United Kingdom	 Nazi Germany
 France	 Japan
 Soviet Union	 Italy
 United States	

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the German commander in charge of the Atlantic Wall decided that the weather would be so awful that he could safely go back to Germany to visit his wife and son.

Second, he took personal responsibility for possible failure, preparing a statement for release to the press in case the invasion force was hurled back into the sea. In such a circumstance, General Eisenhower reported that his soldiers and sailors had done everything he or anyone else could have expected, and that his withdrawal from the beachhead was his fault alone. As it happened, his message never had to be released.

Third, Eisenhower visited the airfields where many thousands of American paratroopers were making final preparations to be dropped into the midnight darkness behind German lines. With parachutes on their backs, they had blackened their faces and wore heavy camouflage as they stood in groups waiting to board their aircraft. Eisenhower – also known as Ike – knew that hundreds of them, maybe more, would be killed the next day. He walked informally among the young men, many of them only teenagers, chatting about their hometowns and recognizing the perils they would all soon be facing.

Finally, as the thousands of ships set out on the short voyage to Normandy, General Eisenhower read a personal message to the troops:

"You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe and security for ourselves in a free world."

### **The end of the war**

The D-Day landings were successful. In the coming months, Allies destroyed the once-unbeatable German war machine. The Russian Red Army hit northeastern Europe from the east, British and American bombers rained destruction on German cities and Allied forces trapped Germans. Adolf Hitler committed suicide in his Berlin bunker on April 30, 1945. All resistance ceased within the week. Upon accepting the surrender of Nazi officials, General Eisenhower sent to his superiors a succinct message: "The mission of this Allied force was accomplished at 0241hours, May 7th, 1945."

Although the Japanese had brave and devoted soldiers, fine airplanes and world-class sailors, Japan never had a chance against the United States. It did not have enough of anything to compete with a continental nation with almost infinite resources. At Tarawa, at Iwo Jima and at Okinawa, the Japanese fought almost to the last man, but it was no use. In desperation, they created an elite force of suicide pilots, called kamikaze, who took off with only enough fuel for a one-way trip. Their mission was to crash their aircraft into U.S. ships. They died in glory, but they were too few and too late.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who had led the country when it was attacked by Japan in 1941 and who brought the United States into World War II, died in April 1945. When his successor, Harry S. Truman, ordered atomic bombs to be dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August of 1945, the Japanese came to realize that further resistance was madness. On August 14, 1945, Truman announced over the radio that the war was over. On

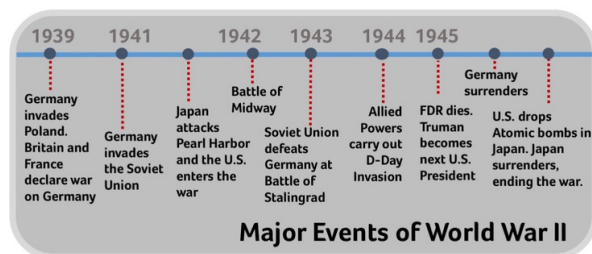
September 2, 1945, representatives of the Japanese government signed the formal instrument of surrender. World War II had ended.

## The war in retrospect

In many respects, the United States was the big winner in World War II. Relative to Germany, Japan and the Soviet Union, its battle deaths were relatively few in number. Its great cities, like New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco and Los Angeles, were never occupied by enemy armies or bombed. Its factories and steel mills, farms, stores and schools were unscathed by the conflict. Washington emerged from the war more confident than ever, with a military superior to any in the world. By every measure, the United States led the world in 1945, and it was about to begin two generations of prosperity unmatched in history.

But no one in America who had lived as an adult through the Great Depression and the years of war that followed it would claim that the experience had been easy. It had been achieved with enormous sacrifice and cost. Indeed, those years of deprivation, fear and longing would always be as central to their lives as they were to the 20th century.

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# World War II Military and Civilian Deaths by the Numbers

By Newsela staff on 05.14.20

Word Count 100

Level 1050L

## Deaths during World War II, by country

Country	Military Deaths	Total Civilian and Military Deaths
Albania	30,000	30,200
Australia	39,800	40,500
Austria	261,000	384,700
Belgium	12,100	86,100
Brazil	1,000	2,000

Graphic of total number of dead in World War II by country.

World War II was a devastating global conflict that caused mass casualties for every country involved. The following chart shows the total number of military and civilian deaths in individual countries. However, it should be noted that historians often disagree about casualty numbers. Individual governments may also give varying numbers for their own purposes. The Soviet Union, for example, suffered the largest number of casualties. Some historians estimate that upwards of 27 million lives were lost. At the time, however, the Soviet government estimated only 20 million military and civilian deaths.

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Bulgaria	22,000	25,000
Canada	45,400	45,400
China	3-4,000,000	20,000,000
Czechoslovakia	25,000	345,000
Denmark	2,100	3,200
Dutch East Indies	–	3-4,000,000
Estonia	–	51,000
Ethiopia	5,000	100,000
Finland	95,000	97,000
France	217,600	567,600
French Indochina	–	1-1,500,000
Germany	5,533,000	6,600,000-8,800,000
Greece	20,000-35,000	300,000-800,000
Hungary	300,000	580,000
India	87,000	1,500,000-2,500,000
Italy	301,400	457,000
Japan	2,120,000	2,600,000-3,100,000
Korea	–	378,000-473,000

Country	Military Deaths	Total Civilian and Military Deaths
Latvia	–	227,000
Lithuania	–	353,000
Luxembourg	–	2,000
Malaya	–	100,000
Netherlands	17,000	301,000
New Zealand	11,900	11,900
Norway	3,000	9,500
Papua New Guinea	–	15,000
Philippines	57,000	500,000-1,000,000
Poland	240,000	5,600,000
Rumania	300,000	833,000
Singapore	–	50,000
South Africa	11,900	11,900
Soviet Union	8,800,000-10,700,000	24,000,000
United Kingdom	383,600	450,700
United States	416,800	418,500
Yugoslavia	446,000	1,000,000

Source: C3 Teachers/The National WWII Museum. Graphic: Newsela staff.

# Primary Sources: Letter from a German Soldier During World War II

By Der Schulungsbrief, adapted by Newsela staff on 11.09.17

Word Count 738

Level 970L



German soldiers in Russia in 1941. Nazi Germany had a powerful army that almost took over all of Europe during World War II. Photo from the public domain

*Editor's Note: The following letter was written by a German soldier on August 30, 1943. It would take two more years for World War II to end, but by then Germany had already lost ground.*

*With this message, the author attempts to reassure his wife and children who are being forced to relocate after undergoing intense bombing. The letter was published in "Der Schulungsbrief," a government propaganda publication meant to teach the German people about Nazi thinking. In this case, it was published to provide hope that winning the war was still possible. The Bolsheviks were a communist political group that led the government in Russia. At the time, Russia was the Soviet Union.*

## **"In Our Hearts Is Germany"**

My Dear Wife,

The attack by the countless hordes in the past weeks is over. The silence of death rests over the battlefield, over the smoking, destroyed Soviet tanks, over the masses of troops the Bolsheviks drove to death. The loneliness of the steppes returns. Their attack was in vain, their sacrifice forgotten, broken against our death-spewing weapons, against our strength, against our will, against our faith, which is stronger than any challenge. For in our hearts is Germany, the Germany that must live, Germany that is you and the children. You are the homeland for us, and we carry you in our hearts. We fight and sacrifice and bleed for you. We never weaken for a second, for you must be protected.

Back in our trenches, we think of home, and I hold your last dear letter in my worn hands. Thank you for the words and news, for which I am deeply thankful.

The war is now falling on my dear homeland. You write to me of the terror attacks by the British and Americans, and of heavy sacrifices, hardships and worries that you also now face. I am filled with enormous rage, as are all of us here. There must be revenge, thousandfold revenge, but in my heart there is deep and holy thanks for those who through their sacrifice rescued you, for what they lost, you still have. Has that occurred to you?

My dear wife, now you suddenly face problems that you have never before had. They are similar to the problems we soldiers face every day and every hour, to give up what is most dear to hold on to life. Will you fail this hour of trial? Were that to happen, you would not be my wife, because I know that you will remain brave.

### **"We Must Stand Together"**

Our children are still happy and healthy. To ensure their life in the great German future, you must allow them to leave the city for the safety of the countryside, there from whence our ancestors came, and from which will come the strength to build our new empire. I know how unspeakably hard it will be for you to give up everything that you loved and valued, but it is not so much as to outweigh victory. And when victory has come, you will praise the Führer Hitler's wisdom, who protected our children and gave them back to us. And do you know how happy I will be to know that you are safe? We can lose everything we have, everything except our honor, our homeland, and the lives of our children. That we must defend, and win victory.

Now it is time to prove that we are Germans, that we believe in the Great Leader and are loyal to him. You must think the same way all of us do: Now more than ever we must stand together, help each other, obey every order. Your heart must tell you "I believe in victory, I believe in the Great Leader." That is our most holy confession. We carry it through the hell of these unimaginably difficult days of August, and it will shine in us when we rebuild our ruined cities and our children are happy around you.





My dear wife, I greet our children. Stay brave, loyal and proud, and learn what the soldier has long known: to believe in victory even in the most difficult and hopeless situation, for only victory can unite us once again in the homeland.

# Japan set out to prove it wasn't a "second-class power" in WWII

By Tim Harper, The Guardian. adapted by Newsela staff on 10.09.19

Word Count **2,018**

Level **1040L**



Image 1. Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek makes a speech in 1945. Photo by: Keystone/Hulton Archive/Getty Images

Historians tend to view the World War II years from the perspective of the West. For that reason, the Far East has too often been seen as a distant and relatively minor theater of the war in Europe. This perspective needs to be reversed. The great Asian war was a truly major conflict. Fighting began in 1931 and continued with barely a break until Japan surrendered to the Allies in August 1945. Between 1941 and 1945 alone, war claimed around 24 million lives in Japanese-occupied Asia, perhaps 3 million Japanese, and 3.5 million more in India through war-related famine. Of these victims, the European, American and Australasian casualties numbered perhaps one percent of the total. But such numbers do not express the full scale of the tragedy.

## Japan Insists On Its "Special Interests"

The Asian war had two major causes. One was competition between Western powers with empires, or major interests, in Asia. The other was the quest of newly modernizing states such as China and Japan for wealth, power and equality with the West. Japan's rapid industrialization, like that of the West, required access to raw materials overseas. To Japan, to be a modern power was to be a

colonial power. By the 1914-1918 war, Japan controlled the natural wealth of Korea and Taiwan, and demanded greater access to Chinese raw materials. Resistance to Japanese imperialism was a defining moment of national awakening in China.

For Japan, insisting on its "special interests" was a way of standing up for itself. The so-called "open door" policy that was backed by the United States, Britain and the League of Nations supposedly allowed for a system of trade in China that was open to all countries equally. Japan did not feel included in this system. Many Japanese saw the international system as a form of racial exclusion, designed by the Western powers to protect their own imperial interests, and to deny newcomers theirs. In 1918, Prince Fumimaro Konoe, who later became Japan's prime minister, wrote that the policy condemned Japan to forever remain a weak and second-class power. After 1928, a stronger central government arose in China under Chiang Kai-shek and was recognized by the West, leaving Japan increasingly isolated. As the Great Depression squeezed resources, many argued that the only way for Japan to progress was to go it alone.

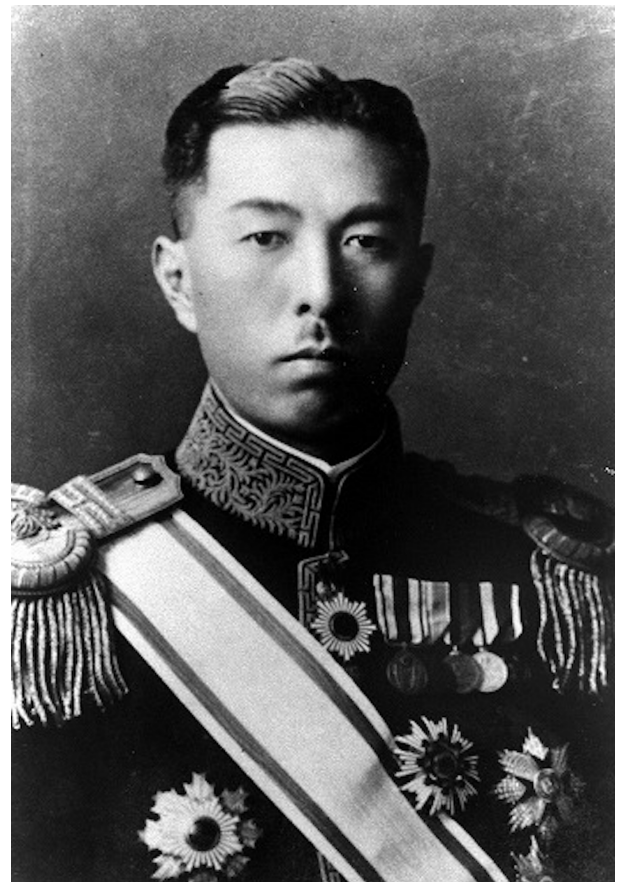
### **A War Of Conquest Aimed At China**

In 1931, Japanese armies annexed the mineral-rich Chinese province of Manchuria, and created a puppet regime under Pu Yi, China's last emperor. In July 1937, a minor confrontation broke out between Chinese and Japanese troops near Beijing. This event was escalated by the Japanese into a war of conquest aimed at seizing the northeast and maritime provinces of China. When the capital Nanjing fell in December 1937, a huge number of civilians, probably more than 300,000, were massacred. This bloody campaign overshadows relations between China and Japan to this day.

The Chinese government of Chiang Kai-shek fled to the inland city of Chongqing. It was weakened and corrupt, but committed to modernizing China and restoring its sovereignty. A patriotic "united front" was patched up between Chiang and his main rivals, Mao Zedong's communists, who gathered strength in their northern stronghold of Yan'an. It was merely a fragile truce, however, and not a working alliance.

U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt believed that a democratic China was destined to lead modern Asia. But he was not prepared to go to war for it. Nor were the British. Instead, they supplied Chongqing by air and road over the "Hump" from British Burma. By late 1941, a U.S. soldier, "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell, was essentially in command of Chiang's troops. He considered Chiang stubborn and unwilling to commit Chinese armies to battle. However, Stilwell underestimated Chiang's craftiness in drawing the Japanese into a long, costly war they could not win.

Japan now felt even more tightly encircled by the ABCD powers: America, Britain, China and the Dutch.



The Dutch East Indies was the best available source of oil for the war effort in China: Borneo and South Sumatra produced around 10 million tons a year. But blocking Japan's path to it was the British "fortress" of Singapore.

### **Take Action Or Become A "Third-Class Nation"**

On September 27, 1940, Japan entered into a fateful pact with Germany and Italy. For Japan, Germany's rapid path to modernization and warlike spirit was something to admire. But Japanese leaders were motivated by a deeper belief that Emperor Hirohito was to be at the center of a new regional arrangement: a "greater east Asian co-prosperity sphere." After the fall of Paris, Japan occupied French Indochina to cut off a supply route to Chongqing and as a springboard to the south.

But the European war presented new obstacles to Japan's destiny in Asia. It caused the United States to expand its naval presence in the region, in order to help protect the British Empire in Asia. The United States saw its stepped-up role in Asia as a way to help Britain keep fighting on in Europe. Crucially, the Japanese occupation of Indochina was met by crippling economic sanctions from the United States and the West. These penalties cut off Japan's imports of oil.

By 1941, many Japanese were beginning to think these obstacles could only be overcome by war. As Japan's new prime minister Hideki Tojo said on November 5, 1941: "I fear that we would become a third-class nation after two or three years if we just sat tight."

### **Singapore Seized In 70 Days**

On December 8, 1941, Yamashita Tomoyuki's 25th Army landed on the northeast coast of Malaya and began a driving charge down the peninsula to Singapore. The British had long expected this, but failed to react in time. What was not foreseen was the other Japanese attack that occurred at the same time: the strike by air and sea at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. This achieved the short-term goal of removing the immediate threat of the U.S. Pacific fleet. But, given the fury of America's reaction, it made Japan's long-term goal — a negotiated and advantageous peace — much harder to attain.

The British in Malaya viewed the Japanese with racist contempt. "I suppose you'll push the little men off," was the reported reaction of the governor of Singapore. But British, Australian and Indian troops were confronted by hardened veterans of the China war. Allied forces soon fell back into Singapore.

However, "fortress Singapore" was a myth. There were no fixed land defenses to speak of, few modern warplanes, and the naval base had no large warships. When the Prince of Wales and Repulse were sent to the South China Sea, they were sunk by Japanese torpedo bombers. Reinforcements poured into

Singapore, only to witness in disgust the scorched-earth destruction of the naval base they had been sent to defend.



The hard truth was that for British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the chiefs of staff in London, the first call on war materials was the Mediterranean theater. Churchill ordered the Singapore troops to fight and die to the last man. But at the hour of the final assault, local commanders were given permission to surrender. That crushing defeat came on February 15, 1942. The Japanese campaign to seize Singapore had lasted only 70 days.

When Singapore fell, between 50,000 and 100,000 Chinese were killed. Around 85,000 soldiers were taken captive.

### **A "Gigantic Gamble" Becomes A Global War**

Without pause, the Japanese pressed on into Indonesia and the Philippines. Four days after the fall of Singapore, bombs fell for the first time on Australian soil.

Convinced the British Empire was on the point of collapse, Japan then attacked British-controlled Burma. The British were not eager to call on the Chinese to save them, and, as a result, Chinese forces under Stilwell arrived too late. The battle cost the Chinese more than 10,000 men. As the British retreated from Burma, around 600,000 Indian refugees fled west to Bengal. As many as 80,000 of them died along the way.

Japan's war was a gigantic gamble: that its forces could win enough victories and hold on long enough to their gains to win a favorable peace. But Japan hadn't managed to destroy any American air carriers or submarines in Hawaii, which meant that they now preyed on Japanese shipping. That was not the only problem the United States posed for Japan. The U.S. industrial war machine vastly outmatched Japan's. During the war, Japan produced 70,000 warplanes. The U.S. produced 300,000.

This was now global total war. But in many ways, Japan was as isolated as ever. Axis cooperation did not exist. Japan's "final war" was to be fought in the Pacific, with no real help from Hitler's Germany.

By May 1942, the area Japan controlled was at its widest extent. But at the same moment, Japan was contained and turned back in the Pacific at Coral Sea and Midway, where the Japanese lost four carriers and more than 300 warplanes. In the south, the Japanese suffered their first defeat by land. Japanese forces landed in New Guinea, and were pushed back by the Australians and Americans in a series of bloody battles. These occurrences gave the Allies hope.

### **Resistance To Japan's "New Asia"**

As the first fury of conquest subsided, the Japanese attempted to build a new Asia. They promoted the Japanese language and Japanese culture throughout their new empire, and attempted to recruit Asian leaders to Japan's cause. This often backfired, and only hardened resistance to Japan. In Malaya and Indonesia, for example, they outraged Muslims by ordering worshippers to bow in prayer not toward Mecca, but toward the Japanese emperor's palace in Tokyo.

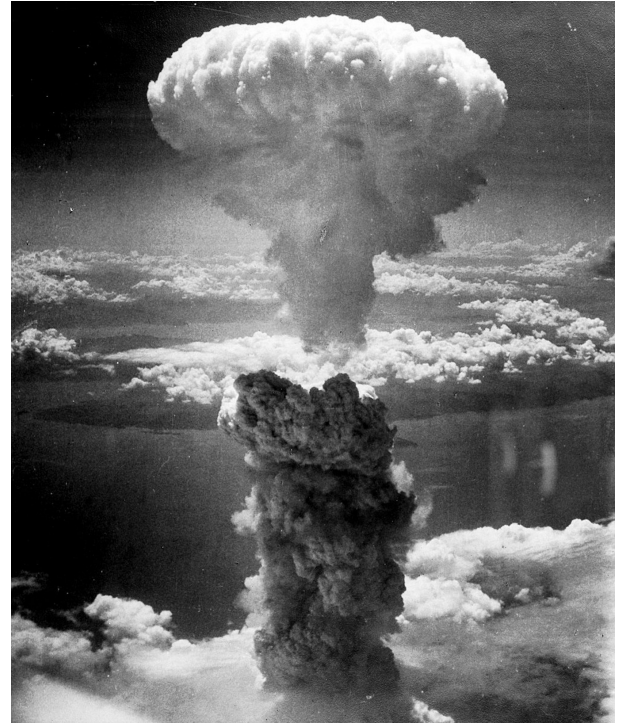
Most Asians saw Japanese rule as imperialism in another form. Japan plundered its colonies for war materials and coerced labor for the Bangkok-Rangoon railway and other projects. More than 70,000 of these laborers came from Malaya alone.

### **Japan's Last Attempts To Take Over**

Japanese commanders saw Britain as the weakest of the enemies that encircled them. In March 1944, they launched their forces in Burma across the border into British-controlled India. Japanese forces were supported by 40,000 Indian rebels seeking independence from Britain. In China, meanwhile, the massive Ichi-go offensive attempted to destroy the airfields from which U.S. bombers attacked Japanese shipping and cities.

These were last, desperate attempts. In India, half a million men were locked in some of the bitterest fighting of the war. The British positions in Kohima and Imphal held for five months. Then William Slim's 14th Army — consisting of British, Indian and African troops — began to strike forward into Burma.

In the Pacific, U.S. General Douglas MacArthur's combined operations punched ahead toward Palau and Saipan, which put B-29 bombers in range of Japan's major cities. These turning points were achieved at a shocking human cost, and greater costs now had to be weighed: not least that of assaulting Japan's home islands. A year later, Japan collapsed more suddenly than anyone could have imagined, after the United States dropped atom bombs on two Japanese cities. The war was finally over.



The long and bloody conflict had lastingly transformed Asia. By loosening the grip of Western colonial powers, it set the stage for the independence movements that soon spread across the continent. Before long, one Asian country after another would achieve self-rule.

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# Pacific battles of World War II

By National Park Service on 10.06.19

Word Count **743**

Level **MAX**



Image 1. U.S. troops approach Japanese positions near the city of Baguio on the island of Luzon in the Philippines, on March 23, 1945.  
Photo by: Wikimedia

The traditionally inward-looking but rapidly industrializing United States began to move onto the world stage in the 1890s. By the end of the century, it was a colonial power, having annexed Hawaii, the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico. The nation warmed to its new role, shedding its neutrality in World War I by declaring war on Germany in 1917. The next year it sent a force of 1.75 million soldiers to aid the Allies. O'ahu was caught up in global geopolitics as the expanding Pearl Harbor Naval Station on the island became the emblem of a fledgling U.S. empire with growing interests in the Pacific.

Japan was also making its presence known in the Pacific. Since the 1860s, it had been swiftly modernizing, transforming itself through industrialization and militarization from a dynastic feudal society to a regional power. By 1910, Japan had defeated China and Russia in armed conflicts, annexed Korea and Formosa, and occupied Manchuria. An ally of Britain, it took control of Germany's Pacific islands during World War I. Lacking natural resources to sustain its industry, Japan resolved to establish control over what it called the Southern Resource Area - Southeast

Asian countries rich in oil, tin, iron, and rubber - putting it on a collision course with European colonial powers.

During the 1930s, Japan grew more nationalistic and militaristic. In 1940, it established the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, a bloc of Asian nations freed of western influence, to gain access to their resources. It joined the Axis powers through the Tri-Partite Pact with Germany and Italy. In response, the United States moved the Pacific Fleet to Pearl Harbor in 1941 and embargoed oil bound for Japan. Knowing the U.S. Navy was repositioning, Japan decided to strike early and secure new territories before the United States and its allies could respond.

## The Asia-Pacific War

The U.S. Pacific Fleet was knocked back on its heels by the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941, while coordinated Japanese attacks overran Southeast Asia and the southern Pacific. But the U.S. Navy quickly regrouped, and six months later would deliver an effective counter-punch. As the Pacific War heated up, Pearl Harbor became the center for U.S. operations in the Pacific, commanded by Admiral Chester Nimitz. General Douglas MacArthur, headquartered in Australia, commanded U.S., British, Australian, and New Zealand ground forces in the southwest Pacific area. After Pearl Harbor, Germany declared war on the U.S., and America faced a two-ocean war. With the U.S. fleet divided, the Japanese had a decided advantage in Pacific warship numbers. U.S. industrial strength, however, allowed the military to rapidly expand its arsenal of ships, aircraft, and tanks, while Japan could not quickly enough replace its military hardware or skilled pilots lost in combat.

The damage to the U.S. Pacific Fleet battle line at Pearl Harbor hastened the end of the battleship era. The primary warship became the aircraft carrier, whose warplanes could support or thwart the amphibious landings so crucial in the Pacific theater. On this immense battlefield, carriers fought out of sight of each other, as the "flat-tops" launched swarms of dive-bombers and torpedo planes to seek out the opposing fleet. Battleships remained tactically valuable, defending carriers and shelling islands before amphibious landings, but strategically this was a carrier war.

Knowing Japan's only chance was to reduce U.S. carrier power, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto planned to lure the U.S. fleet into battle off Midway in June 1942. U.S. intelligence broke the Japanese naval code, allowing the U.S. Navy to set a trap and ambush the Japanese carriers. Japan lost four of its six carriers at Midway and was forced into the defensive. Allied offensive strategy then took three broad paths: the push across the central Pacific toward the Japanese homeland with a bloody "island-hopping" campaign by the U.S. Navy, Marine and Army forces; the Allied drive in the southwest Pacific toward the Philippines; and the engagement with U.S. allies in the China, Burma, and India theater.



By 1944, the Japanese Navy was wearing down. U.S. submarines decimated Japan's shipping, especially oil tankers bearing the lifeblood of its war machine. It was only a matter of time before Japan surrendered or the Allies invaded its home islands. After U.S. atomic bombs devastated



Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan accepted terms of surrender. On September 2, 1945, aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, the brutal Pacific War came to an end.

# Primary Source: Americans Justify Entering World War II

By Library of Congress on 01.02.20

Word Count **1,107**

Level **MAX**



Although Pearl Harbor drove many Americans to support the war, some still felt reservations about breaking America's isolationist policy. Here, Private First Class Angelo B. Reina of the 391st Infantry Regiment guards a lonely beach position in Kahuku, Oahu. Photograph by Rosenberg in March 1945. Image: National Archives and Administration.

*Editor's Note: Not every American supported going to war against Japan – in the years leading up to the attack on Pearl Harbor the United States had exhibited a mostly isolationist foreign policy. The following transcripts come from interviews with U.S. citizens in the months following the United States' entry into war. They demonstrate the differing views of Americans across the country.*

**"Dear Mr. President", Granbury, Austin, Hood County, and Fletcher County, Texas,**

**January or February 1942**

Texas Senator: Mr. Roosevelt, this is indeed a rare opportunity and one that will be long cherished by me I assure you. For me, a humble servant of the people of Texas, who brings greetings and to address you the chief of these United States.

My people came to Texas, Mr. Roosevelt, while the land was yet a wilderness. We fought the savage Indians to subdue, and subdue him. We fought and bled at the Alamo and we fought back Santa Anna at the Battle of San Jacinto. We Texans, Mr. Roosevelt, know what it is to fight for our liberties. And we will always, I assure you sir, be willing and more than ready to fight for our liberties.

I have a confession to make Mr. Roosevelt. I, six months ago, was an isolationist. I questioned the wisdom of your policies. I had an idea that you were attempting to lead us into war. I say that with shame [mattling (?)] my brow. For the day Mr. Roosevelt that Pearl Harbor met the treachery of the Nazi and of the Italian, I realized sir that you, you were the man for the job. You realized, I am convinced, how near attack the United States was and the grave danger that faced the citizenry of these great United States. And so Mr. Roosevelt, let me tender you my apologies and assure you sir today that we are behind you and I am behind you one hundred percent in this war effort. We, as Americans and Texans, have all been aroused Mr. Roosevelt in this hour. Whatever the sacrifice may be, call on us. I assure you sir as a lover of liberty as one who knows what it is to fight for his liberty as a red-blooded Texan sir and that we the people of Texas will make that sacrifice. Oh sir, if you could see the youth affected as they shoulder their guns and go marching away to unknown battlefields with the smile on their lips and defiant [security (?)] in their eyes, it would make your heart beat quicker sir just as it makes my heart beat quicker. And I want you to know today, Mr. Roosevelt that we people of Texas are behind you and we're behind those boys that are out there on the battlefields of Europe and of Asia, and we know we have a battle to win sir and I believe we will win by the help of God and of Americans and Texan soldiers.

I hope that everything goes well sir with you there in Washington. I wish you peace and a long life. Thank you.

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### **"Dear Mr. President", Minneapolis, Minnesota, January or February 1942**

Cut A1

Leland B. Saturn: Dear Mr. President, my name is Leland B. Saturn and my address, 2019 South Seventh Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota. By reason of my personal and religious conviction I am a conscientious objector to any and all forms of war and to all preparations pertaining thereto. This conviction doesn't stem from a starry-eyed idealism, not from the assumption that man is inherently good, not from the so-called over-simplification of the problem of evil, not from motives of appeasement, not from a will to national isolationism, not from thinking which refuses to face facts of evil which are inimical to the best in our American way of life. My conviction is rooted in the knowledge that there is a very practical higher way of living and dealing with men, individually and collectively. It works ultimately whether the other side is willing to adopt the same approach or not. It begins at the revelation of the character of God found in Christ. For me the life and teachings of Jesus supply my only standard for faith and actions and it is my conviction that his way cannot be reconciled with the way of war whether offensive or defensive. One is a negation of the other. I believe that war is the greatest crime which can be committed against humanity. A method of dealing with the problem of international evil in which nothing is gained and all is lost. War settles only the question of military might. The wrongs which it purports to alleviate remain and have grown a thousand fold when the war is over. As a conscientious objector I believe the greatest service I can offer my country is not that of a

circumstance-motivated life but a Christ-motivated life. The greatest disservice I can offer my country is the repudiation of this higher way. I know that Christ's way of redeeming love, though practiced ever so falteringly, individually or collectively, is all for good and gain. I am led by him on this way. I cannot walk otherwise.

### Cut A3

Bruce Butchard: Mr. President, my name is Bruce Brutchard and I am a student of electrical engineering at the University of Minnesota. I'm one of those who felt strong non-interventionist sentiments in the days when the conflict was confined to the continent of Europe and was not, it seems to me, an ignorance of the interdependence of nations nor our reliance upon supplies reaching us from the Far East that I felt these sentiments, it was rather that I felt that with the sacrifice that would have to be met anyhow if conflict were entered into by our nation that with this sacrifice, it would be possible for our nation to become somewhat self-sufficient. The reason I felt that our nation could be self-sufficient is that I have an unalterable faith in the ingenuity of our unhampered and free-thinking American scientists to devise means that would suffice at least for the period in which our nation should have to, shall we say, isolate itself from the world conflict. I felt that the ingenuity would suffice during that period to devise means whereby we could become self-sufficient at least for the period of sacrifice, for the period of world conflict, and that the small sacrifices that would be made during this period would be much smaller than those sacrifices which would undoubtedly come about as a result of our entering the European conflict.

# Primary Sources: African American reactions to World War II

By Library of Congress on 01.03.20

Word Count **1,618**

Level **MAX**



Members of the Army Air Force 332nd Fighter Group, also known as the Tuskegee Airmen, in a briefing room in Ramitelli, Italy, in March 1945. It was an all-black group because the U.S. Department of War segregated military units based on race until 1948. Photo by: Toni Frissell, courtesy of Library of Congress

*Editor's Note: African Americans during World War II had mixed reactions to U.S. involvement in the war. Some supported the war and felt that fascist oppression in the Axis powers mirrored the treatment of black people under Jim Crow law. The following transcript is from interviews with African American citizens before and during America's entry into the war. In these primary source documents, black Americans are referred to as and refer to themselves as "negroes," a popular term at the time that is now considered offensive to use.*

## **"Man-on-the-Street", Nashville, Tennessee, December 1941**

**Interviewer:** There is some confusion and some hysteria following the first impact of the war news here. Full realization of what war means has yet to come. Negro opinion has been varied and a great amount of concern has been expressed over the Negroes place in the defense. But now that the country needs all of its citizens and Negroes are anxious to take their place in a democratic

effort to defend democracy. We have here some national citizens to express their reactions to the first war news. The first person you will hear is the Reverend W. J. Faulkner, Congregational minister and president of the national branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

**Reverend W. J. Faulkner:** This sudden and unfortunate attack of the Japanese on our country has revealed in stark outline a tragic attitude of unpreparedness and selfish indifference on our part to the real dangers confronting our nation and our democratic way of life. Too long have we been divided at home. For we have been dissipating our vast strength and straining our national unity through labor conflicts and class bickerings. And in practices of stupid and costly racial discriminations, our enemies have conspired to destroy us. I earnestly hope that at last we have become struck wide awake to the real threats to our national safety at home and abroad. And that we will be galvanized into effective action by uniting all of our people and resources on a basis of equality into one invincible army of patriots who will work for the triumph of Christian democracy and brotherhood throughout the world.

**Interviewer:** The next person you will hear speak is Miss Fadie France, native of Denver, Colorado, YWCA secretary in Nashville.

**Fadie France:** Japan's aggression was an expected act. We must take into consideration, the Japanese ruthless aggression towards China throughout the past four years. One can see the fact that Japan is an aggressive nation. However, this particular act was not entirely of Japanese making. This war situation [disc skips] had to reach a head soon the United States [disc skips] was bound to enter this war. Just what the fuse was [disc skips] supposed to be was the only uncertain factor.

Rather than Japan's aggression I would say, Japan's obedience to instigated commands by the Axis powers. As some of the others who are not active participants or witnesses of the last world war, the actual horror or seriousness of combat has not dawned on me of yet. Just a mild excitement that naturally comes with mass action, the usual response of an individual to group psychology. Because of this follows my reaction to Japan. Being just another of the uninformed masses I have a feeling of resentment toward Japan for her treacherous, sly attack on the United States, words and thoughts put into my mouth by radio news commentators and writers of newspaper articles. Yet an actual hatred for Japan herself does not exist within me. She is the tool of stronger powers. My resentment is definitely directed toward them. I impatiently await the finish of Japan so that the Axis powers, the motivating factors for this recent aggression, can be stopped in their murderous attempts to thwart the cause of democracy and liberty. Their greedy attempts to rule the world only ??? of our country.

My faith and belief in superiority of the United States is childlike in its entirety. Even though the treatment of minority groups has been and is still unfair, my loyalty to my country is unlimited and unbounded.

**Interviewer:** The next expression is that of Roger Camfield, graduate student in the Department of Social Sciences at Fisk University ???.

**Roger Camfield:** Imagine seventy million people on an island the size of New Jersey which is poor in natural resources to boot. Imagine those people having to expand to live but finding themselves unable to expand because all available territories controlled by nations who intend to

maintain their power and control. War was inevitable under the circumstances and how it came was dramatic, but the fact that it came was expected. No blame in this matter can be, with good conscience, squarely placed.

The present Japanese-American war is the one aspect of the culmination of capitalistic expansion and centralization of control. Which expansion has been characterized by internal strife and war for whatever widening spheres until now in this war it is completely covered the world. Of course, as all people of the world are doing, I as other Negroes, will fight without knowing the aims they are fighting for or the results that will be obtained.

**Interviewer:** The next person to speak is W. C. Curry, FSA Fellow from Newport News, Virginia.

**W. C. Curry:** The Japanese attack on the United States and the imminent threat of Italian and German aggression is a direct result of the appeasement policies towards these countries since 1934. The naval defeat Sunday and the unpreparedness of the United States is mainly due to the pro-fascist forces within this country. This is the gravest period in our country's history. One of the gravest dangers at this time is not from abroad, but lies in those fascist-minded forces within. Courage, vigilance, and dogged determination to win should be our slogan.

The Negro as in every other crisis in our country's history will [honorably (?)] distinguish himself in the defense of these United States, his country. And will also equally share in the better world which the ultimate victory will bring.

**"Dear Mr. President", New York, New York, January or February 1942**

**David Helfeld:** Yes, I think I . . . Well speaking from the viewpoint of a City College student it's very obvious how the war has affected us. This term sixty-one percent of the students enrolled as tech men, only thirty-nine percent in the various courses in liberal arts and science college. Obviously, our society is tending toward a technocracy and very obviously those boys who are twenty will either have to give up their studies or hurry them up. It seems to me that the degree is going to be cheapened. And within two and a half years you're going to get the same diploma that took you four years to get in the previous times. And it seems to me that these students in this college are responding very finely to the war effort, the college's war effort and the total war effort of the country. [Interviewer speaks softly in the background] Well, what do you want me to say?

**David Helfeld:** Dear Mr. President, my name is David Helfeld. I live 3604 31st Avenue, Long Island City. I happen to have the honor to be the president of the student council, College of the City of New York. I'm only nineteen now and I have a year before I graduate. Before I become twenty, I intend to join the Army. But there's just one thought I'd like to get across to you. It's a feeling which horrifies all the boys at our college. And that is Negro discrimination in the Army and in the Navy. It seems to me to be an example, a very horrible example, of fascism within democracy.

When we here at the college hear that there are Negro, that there are Negro, purely Negro regiments and that Negroes are only allowed to do slop duty on the battle ships of our navy. It makes us feel very bad. We here realize that there are three wars to be fought. The physical war against the fascist nations — Germany, Italy, and Japan, and the war from within against anti-Semitism, Jim Crow, and factors of that nature. We feel that as long as we have fascism at home it is rather futile to fight it on the outside if we are not at the same time fighting it from within. I

thank you for listening. [long pause] Besides the two wars I've just mentioned I feel that there is a third war, a very important one, namely the war to make a proper peace. Peace which will do away with all wars in the future.

**Charles Atlas:** My dear Mr. President, my name is Charles Atlas and I reside at 930 DeCalve Avenue in Brooklyn. I was born in Canada and I've been a resident of the United States for the past twelve years. The message I wish to convey is one that has been called to my attention by numerous friends of mine who are at present active members of the United States Armed Services. Many of these fellows have obtained furlough only to find that financial difficulties have prevented them from visiting their friends and the people they love. I therefore deem it quite important that all members of the Armed Forces of the United States should be granted free communication and free traveling during furloughs. Furthermore, as an adjunct to this, I believe they should be given free mailing privileges to keep in communications with one's home and friends, will heighten the morale of every member of the Armed Services. Thank you.



# Why Hitler's grand plan during World War II collapsed

By Richard J. Evans, The Guardian, adapted by Newsela staff on 05.13.20

Word Count 1,212

Level 1210L



Hitler's German troops invaded Russia in June 1941 and by October had almost entirely surrounded Russia's capital, Moscow. Although many civilians of Moscow would be evacuated by the end of October, here Russian civilians build fortifications to keep out the German army. Photo: RIA Novosti Archive/Boris Vdovenko. CC-BY-SA 3.0

Two years into the war, in September of 1941, the German army seemed unbeatable. Western Europe had been decisively conquered, and there were few signs of any serious resistance to German rule. German forces had overrun Greece and subjugated Yugoslavia. In North Africa, General Erwin Rommel's brilliant generalship was pushing the British and Allied forces eastward toward Egypt and threatening the Suez Canal. Above all, the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 had reaped stunning rewards, and German armed forces were within reach of seizing Moscow. The Greater German Reich seemed to be unstoppable in its drive for supremacy in Europe.

Yet this proved to be the high point of German success. The fundamental challenge facing dictator Adolf Hitler was that Germany simply did not have the resources to fight on so many different fronts at the same time. In an attempt to overcome this problem, the Nazis, under the direction of armaments minister Albert Speer, restructured and rationalized their arms production system.

Speer's methods dramatically increased the number of planes and tanks manufactured in German plants, and boosted the supply of ammunition to the troops.

## **U.S. Military Might**

However, Speer's efforts were not enough. By the end of 1941 the Reich had to deal not only with the arms production of the British Empire and the Soviet Union, but also with the rapidly growing military might of the world's economic superpower, the United States. Throughout 1941, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt had been supplying Britain with growing quantities of arms and equipment.

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor led the United States to declare war on Japan, Hitler believed Roosevelt would be too preoccupied with fighting Japan in the Pacific to focus much on events in Europe. Yet such was the economic might of the Americans that they could pour increasing resources into the conflict in both theaters of war. Germany produced 15,000 new combat aircraft in 1942, 26,000 in 1943 and 40,000 in 1944. In the United States, the figures were 48,000, 86,000 and 114,000 respectively. Added to these were the aircraft produced in the Soviet Union – 37,000 in 1943, for example – and the United Kingdom: 35,000 in 1943 and 47,000 in 1944. It was a similar story with tanks and machine guns.

Above all, the Reich was short of fuel. Romania and Hungary supplied a large proportion of Germany's needs, but this was not enough for the Germans' gas-guzzling tanks and fighter planes. Rommel's eastward push across northern Africa was designed not just to cut off Britain's supply route through the Suez Canal but above all to break through to the Middle East and gain control over the region's vast reserves of oil. In mid-1942 Rommel captured the key seaport of Tobruk, but when he resumed his advance, he was met with massive defensive positions prepared by British General Bernard Montgomery at El Alamein in Egypt. Over 12 days he failed to break through the British lines and was forced into a hasty retreat across the desert. "The war in North Africa," Rommel concluded bitterly, "was decided by the weight of Anglo-American material." If he had been provided with more tanks, he believed, he could still have driven through to the oilfields of the Middle East. But it was not to be.

## **Battle Of The Atlantic**

The Germans attempted to make up for their lower levels of arms production by stopping American supplies and munitions from reaching Britain across the Atlantic. In the course of 1942, the Nazis increased the number of German U-boats active in the Atlantic and the Arctic from just over 20 to more than 100. In November 1942 alone, they sank 948,000 tons of Allied shipping, aided by the Germans' ability to decipher British radio traffic while keeping their own secret.

However, Germany was not able to block Allied shipping for long. From December 1942, the British could decode German ciphers once more and steer their convoys away from the waiting wolf-packs of U-boats. Small aircraft carriers began to accompany Allied convoys, using spotter planes to locate the German submarines, which had to spend most of their time on the surface in order to move with any reasonable speed and locate the enemy's ships. By May 1943 the Allies were building more ships than the Germans were sinking, while one U-boat was being sunk by allied warships and planes on average every day. On May 24, 1943, the commander of the U-boat fleet, Admiral Karl Dönitz, admitted defeat and moved his submarines out of the north Atlantic. The battle of the Atlantic was over.

## The Eastern Front

The most dramatic and most significant reversal of German fortunes came, however, on the eastern front. The sheer scale of the conflict between the German Wehrmacht and the Soviet Red Army dwarfed anything seen anywhere else during the second world war. From June 22, 1941, the day of the German invasion, there was never a point at which less than two-thirds of the German armed forces were engaged on the eastern front. Deaths on the Eastern Front numbered more than in all the other theaters of war put together, including the Pacific.

Hitler had expected the Soviet Union to crumble as soon as it was attacked. But it did not. Soviet reserves of manpower and resources were seemingly inexhaustible. Even after the Germans killed millions, the people of the Soviet Union kept fighting. The Soviets also began to pour out increasing quantities of military hardware, and in the long run, the Germans were unable to keep up. By 1943, the Germans had to abandon their attempt to conquer the Soviet Union. They had been defeated by the courage and tenacity of the Soviet people, and by the hard Russian winter.

### German Morale

German losses on the Eastern Front, along with the fall of most of Italy to the Allies, had a devastating effect on German morale at home. Many Germans became convinced the war could not be won.

But worse was yet to come for Germany. In January 1943, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Roosevelt decided to begin heavily bombing German cities. A series of massive raids on the industrial area of the Ruhr followed, severely hampering German arms production. In late July and early August 1943, the center of Hamburg was almost completely destroyed by Allied bombs, killing up to 40,000 people, injuring a further 125,000, many of them seriously, and making 900,000 homeless. Refugees from the devastated city spread a sense of shock and fear all across Germany.

By the end of 1943, the Reich had lost command of the skies and the seas. Ever more devastating bombing raids on a growing range of German towns and cities were making people's lives unbearable. Ordinary Germans knew by the end of 1943 that the war was lost, and German soldiers had to be forced to continue fighting. More than 20,000 German troops were executed during the war for varieties of defeatism. At home, people faced a similar escalation of terror from the Nazi party and the SS. Retreating into their private and family worlds, they began to focus increasingly on simply staying alive and waiting for the end.

*Richard J. Evans teaches modern history at Cambridge University.*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_

### DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION

This question is based on the accompanying documents. The question is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. Some of these documents have been edited for the purposes of this question. As you analyze the documents, take into account the *source* of each document and any *point of view* that may be presented in the document. Keep in mind that the language used in a document may reflect the historical context of the time in which it was written.

#### **Historical Context: World War II & the atomic bomb**

The US decision to drop atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 has generated much controversy over the years. Some argue that the bombing was necessary to end World War II, while others believed that more than 200,000 civilians died in vain.

Task:

Using the information from the eight documents in part A and your knowledge of US history, write an essay in Part B in which you

- **Discuss** the different perspectives on the US decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II.
  - **Explain** the arguments of those in support of using the atomic bomb
  - **Explain** the arguments of those against using the atomic bomb

- ***discuss*** means “to make observations about something using facts, reasoning, and argument; to present in some detail”
- ***explain*** means “to make plain or understandable; to give reasons for or causes of; to show the logical development or relationships of”

**Part A | Short Answer Questions** | *Directions:* Analyze the documents and answer the short-answer questions that follow in the space provided.

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**Document 1:**

...I had then set up a committee of top men and had asked them study with great care the implications the new weapons might have for us. It was their recommendation that the bomb be used against the enemy as soon as it could be done. They recommended that it should be used without specific warning and against a target that would clearly show its devastating strength. I had realized, of course, that an atomic bomb explosion would inflict damage and casualties beyond imagination. On the other hand, the scientific advisers of the committee reported, "We can propose no technical demonstration likely to bring an end to the war; we see no acceptable alternative to direct military use." It was their conclusion that no technical demonstration they might propose, such as over a deserted island, would be likely to bring the war to an end. It had to be used against an enemy target.

... I regarded the bomb as a military weapon and never had any doubt that it should be used. The top military advisers to the President recommended its use, and when I talked to Churchill he unhesitatingly told me that he favored the use of the atomic bomb if it might aid to end the war.

Source: Harry Truman *Memoirs* 1955 pages 419 - 423 | [original source](#)

- 1) Why did the committee advising President Truman recommend that bomb should not be demonstrated and instead should be used against the enemy?

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- 2) Why did Churchill favor the use of the atomic bomb?

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**Document 2:**

The use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan. The Japanese were already defeated and ready to surrender. . . .

In being the first to use it, we . . . adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages. I was not taught to make war in that fashion, and wars cannot be won by destroying women and children.

It is my opinion at the present time that a surrender of Japan can be arranged with terms that can be accepted by Japan and that will make fully satisfactory provisions for America's defense against future trans-Pacific aggression.

Source: Admiral William E. Leahy, Chief of Staff for President Harry Truman, *I Was There* 1950 | [Source](#)

- 1) Why did Admiral Leahy feel the use of the bomb on Japan was unnecessary?

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- 2) Why did Admiral Leahy feel the use of the bomb was ethically and morally incorrect?

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**Document 3:**

The face of war is the face of death; death is an inevitable part of every order that a wartime leader gives. The decision to use the atomic bomb was a decision that brought death to over a hundred thousand Japanese. No explanation can change that fact and I do not wish to gloss it over. But this deliberate, premeditated destruction was our least abhorrent [horrid] choice. The destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki put an end to the Japanese war. It stopped the fire raids and the strangling blockade; it ended the ghastly specter of a clash of great land armies.

Source: Secretary of War, Harry Stimson, *The Decision to use the Atomic Bomb*, Harpers Magazine 1950 | [Source](#)

- 1) What is the argument in support of using the bomb that Secretary Stimson is making when he writes: *“The face of war is the face of death; death is an inevitable part of every order that a wartime leader gives”*?

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- 2) Why does Secretary Stimson think that the use of the bomb was the right choice?

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**Document 4:**

"How can a human being with any claim to a sense of moral responsibility deliberately let loose an instrument of destruction which can at one stroke annihilate an appalling segment of mankind? This is not war: this is not even murder; this is purely a crime. This is a crime against God and humanity which strikes at the very basis of moral existence. What meaning is there in any international law, in any rule of human conduct, in any concept of right and wrong, if the very foundations of morality are to be overthrown as the use of this instrument of total destruction threatens to do?"

Source: Nippon Times (Tokyo) August 10, 1945

- 1) According to this source, why shouldn't the United States have used the atomic bomb?

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## Document 5:

"The view where a moment before all had been so bright and sunny was now dark and hazy... What had happened? All over the right side of my body I was bleeding... My private nurse set about examining my wounds without speaking a word. No one spoke... Why was everyone so quiet? The heat finally became too intense to endure... Those who could fled; those who could not perished... Hiroshima was no longer a city but a burned-over prairie. To the east and to the west everything was flattened. The distant mountains seemed nearer than I could ever remember... How small Hiroshima was with its houses gone."

Source: Michihiko Hachiya, *Hiroshima Diary: The Journal of a Japanese Physician* August 6 - September 30, 1945

- 1) What observations did the doctor make about the effects of the bombing on Hiroshima?

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## Document 6:

We were on garrison duty in France for about a month, and in August, we got great news: we weren't going to the Pacific. The U.S. dropped a bomb on Hiroshima, the Japanese surrendered, and the war was over. We were so relieved. It was the greatest thing that could have happened. Somebody once said to me that the bomb was the worst thing that ever happened, that the U.S. could have found other ways. I said, "Yeah, like what? Me and all my buddies jumping in Tokyo, and the Allied forces going in, and all of us getting killed? Millions more Allied soldiers getting killed?" When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor were they concerned about how many lives they took? We should have dropped eighteen bombs as far as I'm concerned. The Japanese should have stayed out of it if they didn't want bombs dropped. The end of the war was good news to us. We knew we were going home soon.

1) Why was this soldier in support of the use of the atomic bomb?

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**Document 7:**

<p><b>Why the bomb was needed or justified:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Japanese had demonstrated near-fanatical resistance, fighting to almost the last man on Pacific islands, committing mass suicide on Saipan and unleashing</li></ul>	<p><b>Why the bomb was not needed, or unjustified:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Japan was ready to call it quits anyway. More than 60 of its cities had been destroyed by conventional bombing, the home islands were being blockaded by</li></ul>
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<p>kamikaze attacks at Okinawa. Fire bombing had killed 100,000 in Tokyo with no discernible political effect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● With only two bombs ready (and a third on the way by late August 1945) it was too risky to "waste" one in a demonstration over an unpopulated area such as Tokyo's harbor. Only the atomic bomb could jolt Japan's leadership to surrender.</li> <li>● An invasion of Japan would have caused casualties on both sides that could easily have exceeded the toll at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.</li> <li>● Immediate use of the bomb convinced the world of its horror and prevented future use when nuclear stockpiles were far larger.</li> </ul>	<p>the American Navy, and the Soviet Union entered the war by attacking Japanese troops in Manchuria.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● American refusal to modify its "unconditional surrender" demand to allow the Japanese to keep their emperor needlessly prolonged Japan's resistance.</li> <li>● A demonstration explosion over Tokyo harbor would have convinced Japan's leaders to quit without killing many people.</li> <li>● The bomb was used partly to justify the \$2 billion spent on its development.</li> </ul>
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Source: Bill Dietrich: Seattle Times Reporter 1995 | [Source](#)

1) According to this table, what were the arguments for and against a demonstration of the bomb in Tokyo Harbor?

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Document 8:



1) Describe the effects of the bombing, as seen in these photographs.

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## **Part B:**

Historical Context: World War II & the atomic bomb

The US decision to drop the atomic bomb on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 has generated much controversy over the years. Some argue that the bombing was necessary to end World War II, while others believed that more than 200,000 civilians died in vain.

Task:

Using the information from the eight documents in part A and your knowledge of US history, write an essay in Part B in which you

- **Discuss** the different perspectives on the US decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II.
  - **Explain** the arguments of those in support of using the atomic bomb
  - **Explain** the arguments of those against using the atomic bomb

- ***discuss*** means “to make observations about something using facts, reasoning, and argument; to present in some detail”
- ***explain*** means “to make plain or understandable; to give reasons for or causes of; to show the logical development or relationships of”

## **Guidelines:**

In your essay, be sure to:

- Develop all aspects of the task
- Incorporate information from at least **four** documents
- Incorporate relevant outside information
- Support the theme with relevant facts, examples, and details
- Use a logical and clear plan of organization, including an introduction and a conclusion that are beyond a restatement of the theme