



**Bluebonnet  
Learning**  
K-5 Reading Language Arts

**ENGLISH**

# WORLD WAR II



**GRADE 5 UNIT 7 | READER**

EDITION 1

Grade 5

Unit 7

# **World War II**

**Reader**

Acknowledgement:

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# World War II

## Reader

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## Chapter 1

# Steps Toward War

### THE BIG QUESTION

What people, events, and beliefs led to the start of World War II?



Map showing the nations of Europe and North African colonies in 1914 before the outbreak of World War I

To understand how World War II began, students of history turn to an earlier war. First known as the *Great War*, World War I started in the early years of the twentieth century. The conflict erupted in 1914, with many of the powerful nations of Europe driven by a desire for more power, land, wealth, and resources. On one side were Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire. On their eastern **front**, they faced Russia. On their western front, they faced France and Great Britain. Many of these nations were **empires**, meaning they had established colonies around the world, and had formed strong alliances with other nations. These colonies and allies also fought in the war or supported their efforts with money or supplies. Because of its global scale, the conflict was seen as a *world war*.

Japan also entered the war at this time. They recognized that Germany was weakened by fighting a war on two fronts. While Japan gave valuable support to France and Great Britain, they also took this opportunity to take control of regions in China and islands in the Pacific Ocean.

Initially, the United States was not part of the war. It had taken an **isolationist** stance for a long time. This meant that the government and many Americans believed it was better not to get involved in other countries' conflicts or political problems. However, as the fighting in Europe intensified, so did the concern that the conflict could threaten America. In 1917, America entered the war on the side of Great Britain, France, and Russia. New soldiers and supplies from the United States caused the tide of the war to turn. In 1919, the Germans were finally

pushed to surrender. American military and economic power had entered the world stage and made a decisive difference.



U.S. vintage postage stamp showing an engraved image of veterans of World War I

To end the war, the involved nations signed an **armistice**, or peace treaty; however, not all parties were satisfied with the terms of the armistice. The treaty named Germany as completely responsible for starting World War I. It required Germany to pay reparations to the Allied nations as payment for their losses and damages. It also took back many of the territories Germany had conquered and limited the size of the German military. This fueled deep resentment within Germany. The leaders of Italy and Japan also resented efforts to control their **expansionism**.



Benito Mussolini inspecting troops during the Italo-Ethiopian War

The people of Italy suffered mightily during and after the Great War. A political party known as the National Fascists formed immediately after the Great War. **Fascism** is a political belief system that emphasizes **nationalism**, or the view that one nation is superior to all other nations. Fascism also supports the idea that one single, powerful leader should have ultimate control. Leaders with absolute power are known as **dictators**. In Italy, this leader was Benito Mussolini. Mussolini gave powerful public speeches, tapping into the resentment many Italians felt after the war. In 1922, Mussolini became Prime Minister of Italy. As his power in Italy grew, Italian democracy declined. Mussolini began referring to himself as *il Duce*, or the Leader. But leading Italy itself was not enough. Over the next decade, Mussolini would expand Italy's military and begin a campaign of conquest in North Africa.

## **Fascism & Democracy: What's the Difference?**

Within democratic countries like the United States, power lies with the voters, and decisions are made by the representatives that the people elect. People have rights, like freedom of speech, that are protected by laws. No one exists outside of or above those laws. When fascism begins to grow, power shifts away from individual citizens to the political party that is in charge. The leader of that party can grow into a dictator with total power. If what the leader wants goes against established laws, they change or ignore those laws. People's individual rights are no longer as important as the strength or success of the nation. Fascist leaders often get people to follow them by using nationalist ideas and misinformation to spread fear and anger about their opponents. With these differences in mind, it's not surprising that conflicts would appear between democratic and fascist nations.

At the same time, in Germany, a political group known as the Nazi Party was beginning to grow in popularity. They were led by a charismatic leader named Adolf Hitler. Like Mussolini, Hitler was a gifted speaker. He gave passionate speeches that gave voice to the resentment many Germans felt after World War I. He stoked the anger of the German public, saying that the countries Germany had fought in the Great War were preventing the German people from succeeding and hurting the German economy. He also blamed minority groups who lived in Germany for being part of a plan to keep ordinary Germans from being successful, leveling special blame on Jewish people.

Germany was a democracy, but like the fascists in Italy, Hitler believed that the supreme leader of the Nazi Party, the *Führer*, should have total power over the country. By



1932, the Nazi Party was the largest political party in Germany but still wasn't the majority. In early 1933, Hitler was appointed chancellor. He soon consolidated his power, effectively ending German democracy. He called the new era in Germany the Third Reich, or Third Empire, indicating that Nazi Germany intended to expand its territory through conquest. He used German industry to massively expand the nation's military power. This broke the terms of the armistice signed at the end of the Great War. But, importantly, no foreign power intervened.

Portrait of Adolf Hitler

Hitler viewed the Allied forces who had written the armistice as weak. He worked to make sure that the German forces would soon be ready to launch a large-scale war in pursuit of expanding German power, territory, and influence.



**Japanese Commanding Officers and Chiefs of Staff of the Allied Military Mission to Siberia, Vladivostok during the Western Intervention from 1918-1920**

This spirit of expansionism was alive on the other side of the world as well. The people of Japan did not suffer from the war like those in Europe, and the country grew and prospered. Within the Japanese military, a powerful figure began to rise in the ranks: Hideki Tōjō. In the years before World War II, Tōjō's power grew until he achieved the absolute control of a dictator. As an ultra-militant nationalist, Tōjō believed that his country would only continue to prosper if it took control over the territory of its neighbors. In 1937, Japan invaded northern China. From that point forward, Japan was a nation completely dedicated to military conquest.

This determination to conquer other nations to grow their own territory was shared by Joseph Stalin, the dictator who had risen to power in the Soviet Union. He industrialized the nation and led the government to take control of privately owned factories and farms. He created a mighty military and brutally eliminated his rivals and opponents.

The Great War had ended in 1919, and people around the world wanted a lasting peace. But in the years that followed, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union pursued a path of military expansion. In Europe, Africa, and Asia, regional conflicts began to break out. The United States had emerged from the Great War as one of the globe's most powerful nations. However, Americans were eager to live out their lives in peace. They supported a return to isolationism. Then, the Great Depression began in 1929.



**Unemployed men waiting outside a soup kitchen in Chicago in February 1931**

This period, involving the worst economic downturn that had ever been seen, brought poverty to many Americans. This caused the United States to withdraw from world events even more, which only allowed the expansionism of Germany, Italy, and Japan to fester unchecked by American influence.

In time, the Great War, once thought of as “The War to End All Wars,” would take on a new name: World War I. In its aftermath, the seeds of a second world war were planted—and it would prove far more destructive than the first.





## Chapter 2

# The War Begins

### THE BIG QUESTION

What historical figures, locations, and military tactics influenced the beginning of World War II?



Hitler being driven through the crowd in Sudetenland in October 1938

Adolf Hitler was convinced of the inherent superiority of the German race. He intended to build up Germany and then to conquer all of Europe. Before Hitler's rise to power, the German army had roughly 100,000 soldiers. By 1939, it had grown to 2.7 million. Nazi Germany had grown incredibly powerful, and incredibly dangerous. The other European powers watched this transformation with increasing levels of concern.

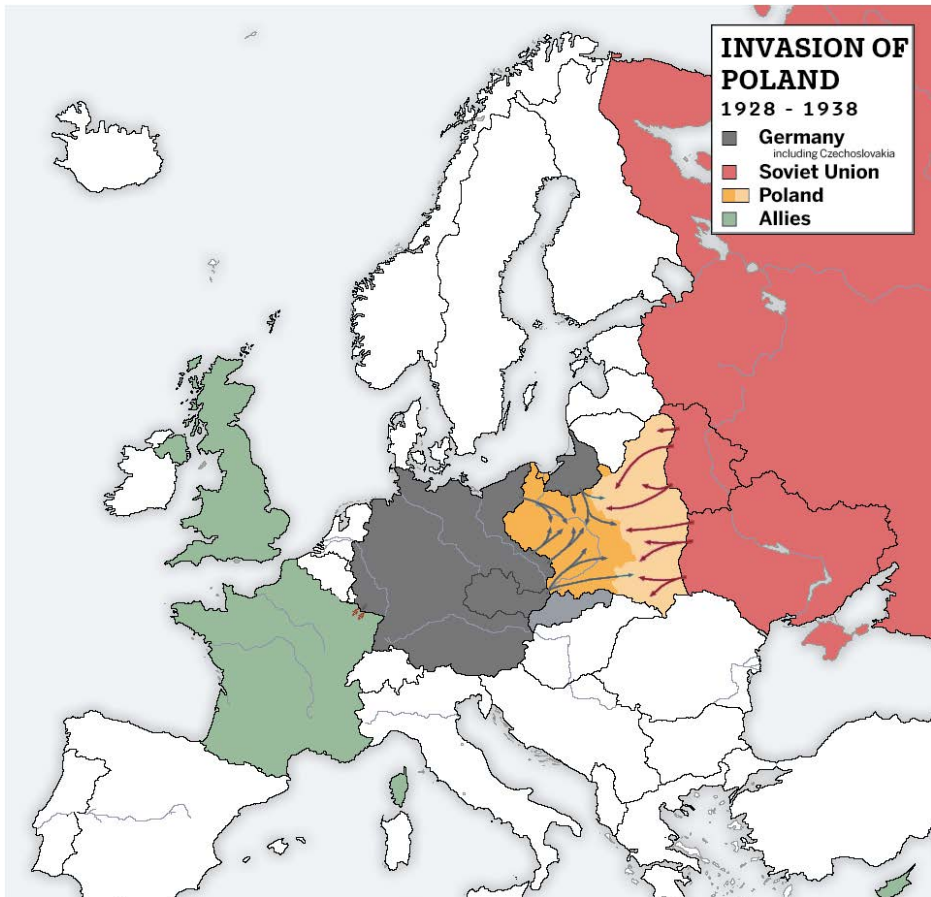
Throughout the 1930s, Germany's neighbors to the east and the west tried various strategies to contain and appease Nazi Germany. The Soviet Union signed a **non-aggression pact** with Germany. This arrangement was intended to contain Germany, essentially allowing Germany to invade eastern Europe, as long as Germany did not get too close to the Soviet border. Similarly, the leaders of France and Great Britain embraced a strategy of **appeasement**. Effectively, they would give the Germans what they wanted in order to avoid a direct war with Germany.



Map of Europe showing Czechoslovakia, Poland, Germany, and Austria between 1928 and 1938

In 1938, Hitler made his first move of conquest. He sent troops to occupy Austria and **annexed** Czechoslovakia. The other world powers were intent on avoiding a war, and simply agreed to the German expansion. Hitler had conquered two countries, dramatically increasing the size of Nazi Germany, with barely any shots fired. Critically, both countries had strong manufacturing industries and abundant natural resources, which helped further strengthen the German military war machine, known as the *Wehrmacht*. The success emboldened the Nazis to continue their expansions.

In September 1939, Germany invaded Poland. But there would no longer be expansion without war. The Polish army, with almost one million soldiers, fought back. Unfortunately, they were overwhelmed. Germany used a military strategy of **blitzkrieg**, which is a German term that translates to “lightning war.” It is characterized by a swift, concentrated attack using ground and air forces. German tanks and aircraft were the most advanced in the world, and their **tactics** were just as advanced. German forces began their invasion of Poland’s northern and western borders.



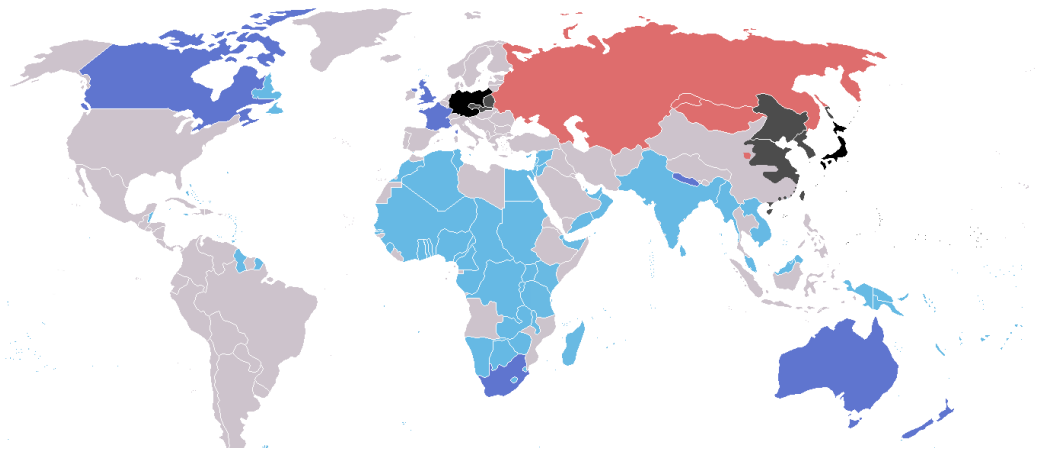
Map showing the invasion of Poland in September 1939, marking the beginning of World War II in Europe

To make matters worse, the non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Germany included a secret provision indicating that the Soviet Union would also attack Poland. The two countries planned to conquer Poland, divide it up, and each take half of it for themselves. Two weeks after the German blitzkrieg began, the Soviets invaded Poland from the east.

An already strained Polish army faced an overwhelming number of Soviet forces. After 35 days of conflict, Poland was defeated, and it was devastating. Poland saw 66,000 deaths, 133,700 wounded, and 675,000 captured troops and civilians.

The Soviet Union and Germany had triumphed. The Soviets were confident, with a buffer including half of Poland, that the German threat would remain far from their borders. Few understood that Hitler could never be contained.

Britain and France had tried appeasement with Germany for nearly a decade to avoid war, but war could no longer be avoided. The two countries declared war against Germany and encouraged other nations to join their cause as the Allied forces. Within a few weeks, the French began to attack Germany but made little progress.



World map showing the World War II alliances in November 1940

In early 1940, Germany invaded Denmark and Norway. The German blitzkrieg faced very little resistance in Denmark. British and French forces tried to stop the advance in Norway but failed. The German *Wehrmacht* continued to grow in strength and size. By March 1940, Germany had entered into an agreement with Italy. Its leader, Benito Mussolini, joined forces with Germany to form the Axis powers. By the start of May, Germany began its advance on Belgium, the Netherlands, and France. It seemed as if all of Europe was soon to be under Axis control. The Allied forces desperately needed something to change, if only to provide hope.

The change happened in Great Britain. At this point in history, Great Britain was ruled by a king. However, as a constitutional monarchy, the British government was (and is now) functionally led by its Prime Minister. In the years leading up to the war, the Prime Minister of Great Britain was Neville Chamberlain, who spearheaded the policy of appeasement. That policy had failed. And now, too,



Portrait of Winston Churchill in 1941

Britain and its allies were losing the war. The country needed a new leader, someone who was committed to ensuring Britain could fight and win in war. That is exactly what they got in May 1940 with the selection of Winston Churchill as the British Prime Minister. From the start, he brought a sense of urgency and resolve to the war effort, but from his first day in office, the German *Wehrmacht* continued its dominance.

In less than a month, Germany had taken nearly all of France. The remaining forces of the French and British armies that had been fighting in France retreated to the coastal town of Dunkirk. German planes bombed the port of Dunkirk to prevent any large naval ships from evacuating French and British soldiers. A massive army of German tanks was moving toward Dunkirk intending to wipe out the remaining Allied forces. But the Germans would not succeed.

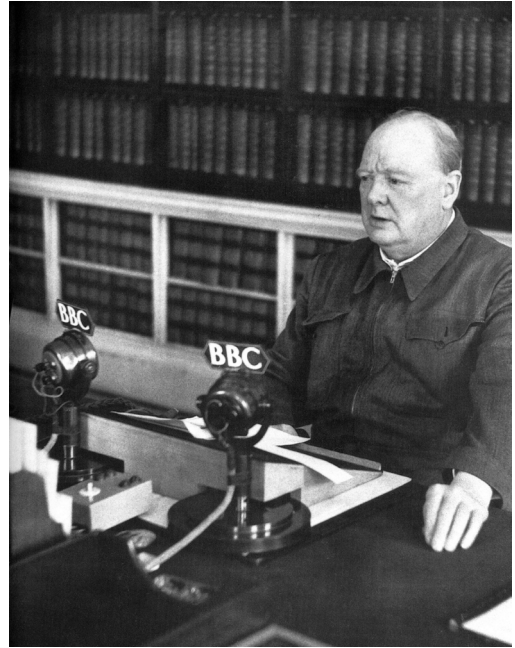
Instead, over 800 private boats crossed the British Channel to ferry soldiers from the beach in Dunkirk to the navy ships. **Operations** continued for several days under heavy Axis firepower and bombardment. Over 340,000 Allied troops were evacuated from Dunkirk. What was expected by most to be a disaster for the Allies turned into a moment of hope.



**Troops on a naval destroyer about to land at Dover on May 31, 1940, after being evacuated from Dunkirk**

Prime Minister Churchill used the opportunity to rally the fighting spirit of the British people. He delivered a historic address that captivated the country and put its fighting spirit on full display:

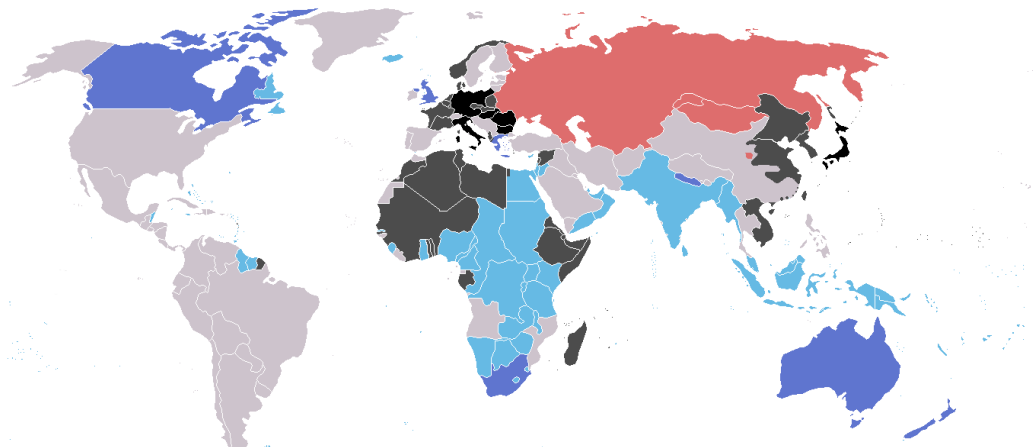
*We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender, and even if, which*



Churchill speaking to the British people

*I do not for a moment believe, this Island or a large part of it were **subjugated** and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the **liberation** of the old.*

Prime Minister Churchill's words echoed throughout the British empire. His speech acknowledged an important truth about the difficulties ahead. France had fallen. By September 1940, Japan signed an agreement with Italy and Germany to formally join the Axis powers. The Soviets, for the time being, were also aligned with Germany. Most of Europe, indeed most of the globe, was under Axis control. If the Allies were going to win, the Allies needed the United States. And if the United States valued freedom, the Axis powers had to be stopped.



**World map showing the World War II alliances from October 1939 to November 1940**

The United States was still weary from World War I and still feeling the effects of the Great Depression. Americans remained isolationists, confident that the oceans surrounding the United States would keep the growing problems in Europe and around the world at bay. But these problems were growing so big, even the oceans would not keep them away for long.



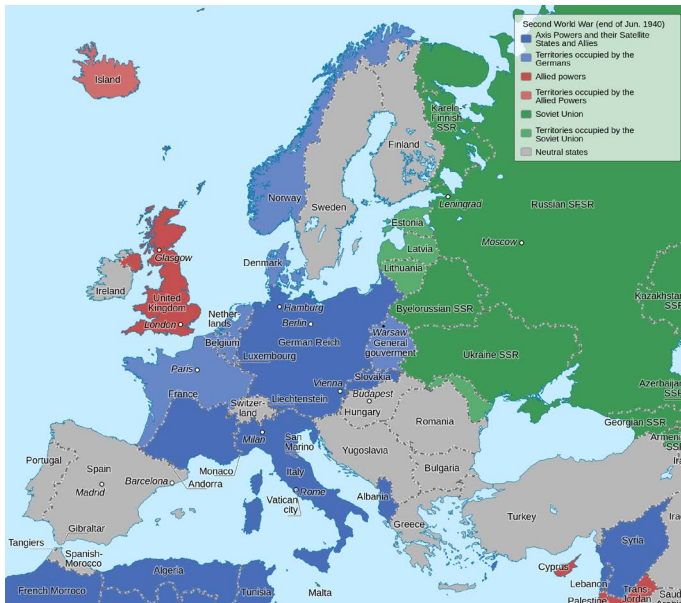
## Chapter 3

# America Enters the War

### THE BIG QUESTION

How did the events at Pearl Harbor change Americans' opinions about entering the war?

As war broke out in Europe, the United States took a posture of isolationism. From the beginning, public opinion among Americans was strongly against the Axis powers and in favor of the Allies. But that didn't mean Americans wanted to enter the war. The United States was still struggling to recover from the Great Depression. The focus for



Map showing Allied and Axis territories in Europe in 1940

most Americans, Congress, and the administration of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was on internal issues. The President wanted to see the U.S. economy grow because that would help people throughout the country.

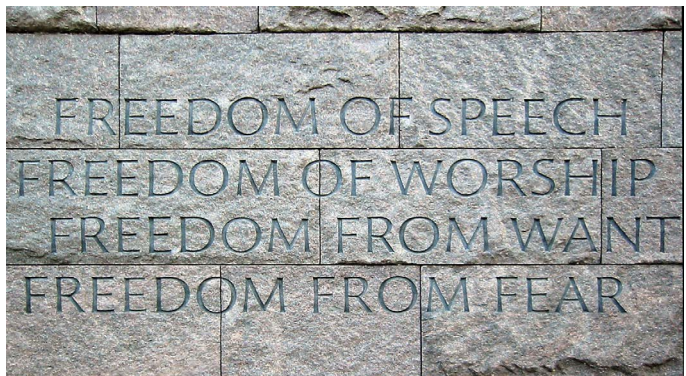
But as the Axis powers took more territory, U.S. leaders began planning for a change. President Roosevelt knew that the United States would have to be involved in the war in some way. In



Franklin Delano Roosevelt addressing the nation via radio.

early 1941, President Roosevelt addressed Congress and, via radio, the nation. It would become known as the “Four Freedoms” speech. President Roosevelt’s goal for the speech was to appeal to Americans’ value of freedom. He also wanted to prepare the nation for what looked like an **impending** war. He framed the possibility of war as a defense of democratic societies:

*In the future days, which we seek to make **secure**, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms. The first is freedom of speech*



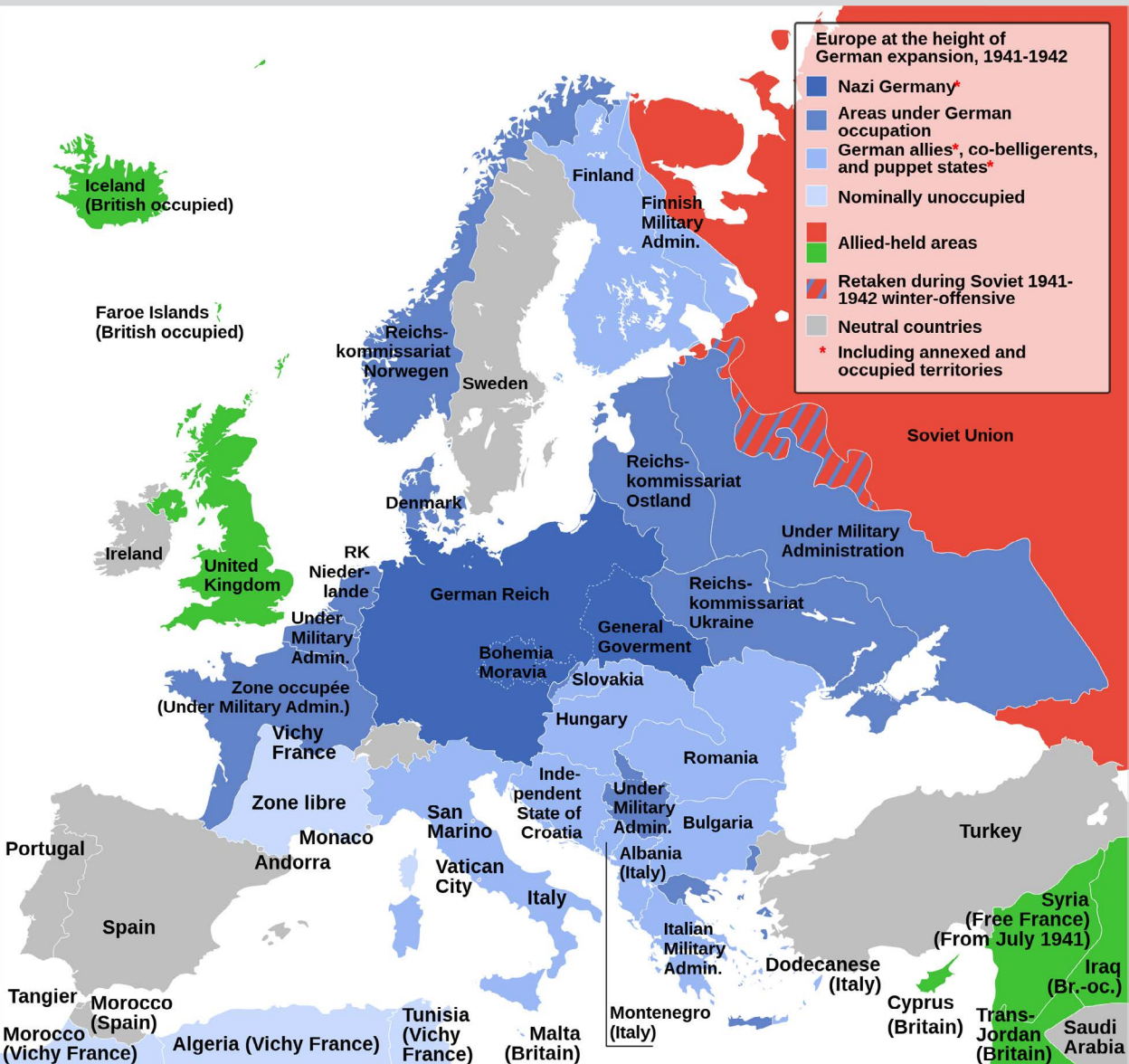
Engraving of the Four Freedoms at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C.

*and expression—everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world.*

*The third is freedom from want—which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peace time life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear—which, translated into world terms, means a worldwide reduction of **armaments** to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor—anywhere in the world.*

To defend freedom, the United States began to provide supplies to the Allies. The United States passed a law that allowed the government to supply Allied forces with critical war materials, including money, food, weapons, and oil.

The Allied forces' need for these materials grew dramatically. In June 1941, the Nazis turned on the Soviet Union, breaking the non-aggression pact the two powers had signed before the invasion of Poland. Germany launched a brutal assault, intending to conquer all of Soviet Russia. The Soviet Union immediately joined forces with the Allies, but the Russians were outgunned by Germany. By December 1941, the Soviets had suffered four million **casualties**. The Soviets, along with the British, would need all the weaponry the United States could produce.

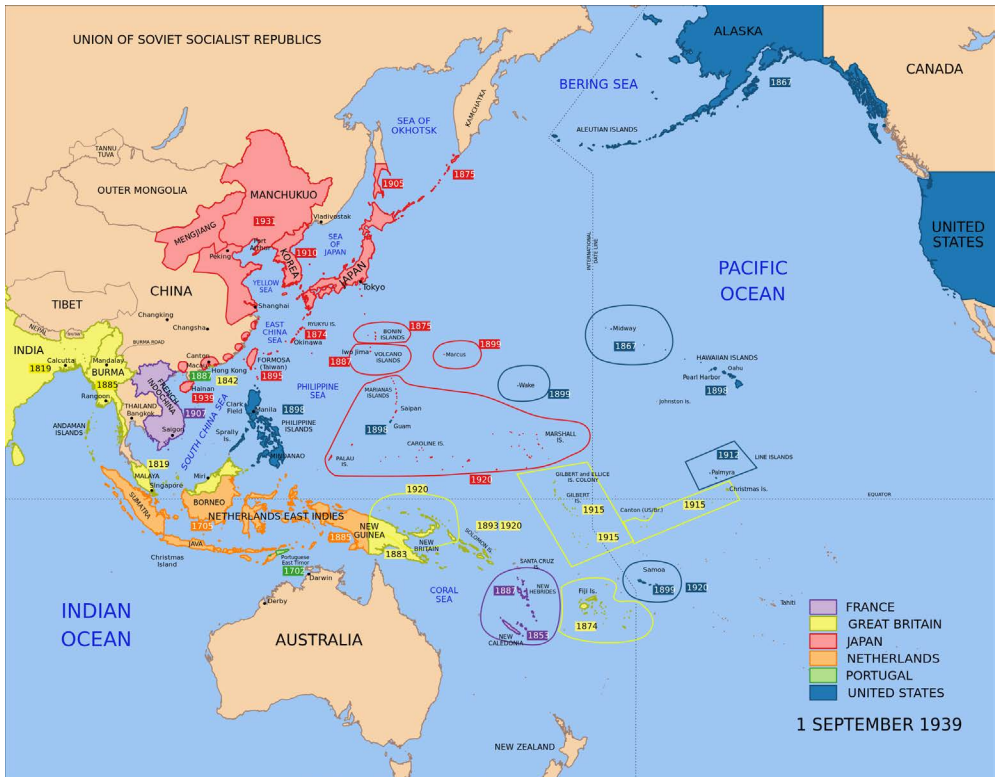


Map showing Allied and Axis territories in Europe in 1942, during the height of German expansion

In August 1941, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill met in Canada to discuss military strategy. They formed an agreement that showed a public sense of **solidarity** between the United States and Britain, but it did not lead to the immediate entrance of the United States into the war as Churchill had hoped. Public opinion in the United States was still against full-scale intervention in the war, so Roosevelt refused to officially join the effort, for now.

Meeting between Roosevelt  
and Churchill in 1941





**Map of the Imperial Powers of the Pacific in 1939**

The change would finally come because of Axis aggression in Asia. The Japanese Empire had already conquered Korea and much of northern China. It began eyeing expansion throughout the South Pacific, including the Philippines. The Empire's military leadership knew this would draw the United States into war. They planned a surprise attack designed to cripple U.S. military power in the Pacific.



**U.S.S. Shaw exploding during the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941**

On the morning of December 7, 1941, Japan began its attack on Pearl Harbor in two separate waves via air attack. The first wave of bombings began around 7:45 a.m. This wave targeted battleships and aircraft carriers that were docked in the harbor. **Airstrips** were also destroyed to prevent U.S. aircraft from responding to the attack. The second wave targeted aircraft carriers as well as aircraft hangars located around the naval base. The attack had a **devastating** effect on the naval base and its operations. After 90 minutes of assault, 2,403 Americans had been killed, and 1,178 Americans were wounded. Eighteen battleships and 188 aircraft were destroyed.

Despite the horrific attack, displays of heroism began to emerge. One such case was that of Cook Petty Officer Third Class Doris Miller. He was born in Waco, Texas. Miller enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1939. He was stationed on the *USS West Virginia* on the morning of the attack on Pearl Harbor. As the attack began, Miller left his normal duties and reported to his battle station. Miller, who had earned



Portrait of Doris "Dorie" Miller just after being presented with the Navy Cross by Admiral Chester W. Nimitz on board USS Enterprise at Pearl Harbor on 27 May 1942

the reputation of being a great boxer, assisted in carrying wounded sailors to safety. While helping transport the wounded, Miller was then ordered to fight and defend the ship.

Miller was never trained on anti-aircraft weapons, but he took control of an anti-aircraft machine gun and began firing upon Japanese aircraft. Miller was credited with downing two Japanese aircraft during their attack on Pearl Harbor. He also helped care for many wounded sailors aboard the *USS West Virginia*. For his heroic actions that day, Miller was awarded the Purple Heart and the Navy Cross. Miller's Navy Cross citation is as follows:

*For distinguished devotion to duty, extraordinary courage, and disregard for his own personal safety during the attack on the Fleet in Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, by Japanese forces on December 7, 1941. While at the side of his Captain on the bridge, Miller, despite enemy strafing and bombing and in the face of a serious fire, assisted in moving his Captain, who had been mortally wounded, to a place of greater safety, and later manned and operated a machine gun directed at enemy Japanese attacking aircraft until ordered to leave the bridge.*



**Purple Heart Medal awarded to U.S. Army soldiers in World War II**



**Franklin Delano Roosevelt delivering his "Day of Infamy" speech to Congress on December 8, 1941**

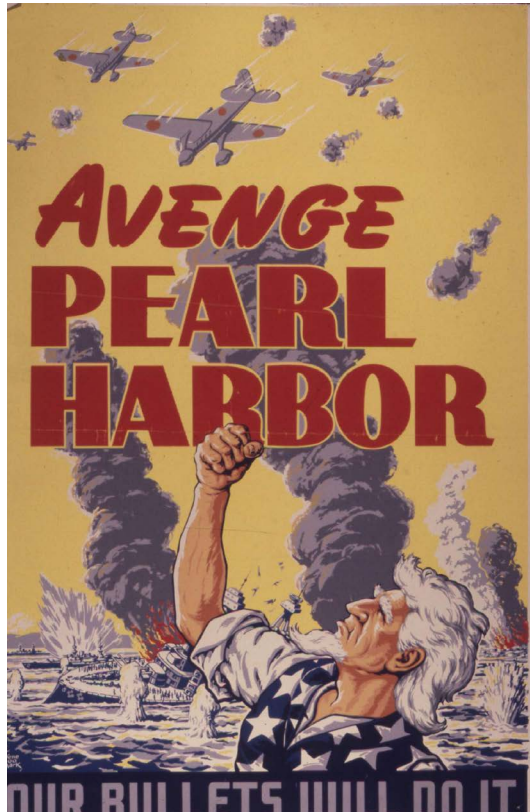
The day following the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt addressed Congress. The speech was broadcast on the radio for all Americans to hear. President Roosevelt asked the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate for a formal declaration of war against the Empire of Japan. President Roosevelt opened his remarks with the now famous line:



Franklin Delano Roosevelt signing the  
Declaration of War against Japan

*Yesterday, December 7, 1941, a date which will live in **infamy**, the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan. . . . I believe that I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us. . . . With confidence in our armed forces, with the unbounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph—so help us God.*

Almost immediately following Roosevelt's address, the U.S. Congress voted to declare war. Roosevelt signed the declaration. Just prior to the official declaration by the United States, Britain declared war against Japan as well. The U.S. declaration also led the Axis powers, Germany and Italy, to declare war against the United States. The Allied forces now included the United States.



Poster created by the War Production Board in 1942–1943

The attack on Pearl Harbor had an overwhelming effect on the American public's opinion of the war effort. Almost overnight, Americans united in supporting the U.S. entrance into the war. They supported avenging the attack on Pearl Harbor. The attack also increased public support for the U.S. war against Germany. The Japanese attack and Germany's declaration of war on the United States transformed a reluctant nation into a united one. "Remember Pearl Harbor" became a rallying cry for the U.S. war effort throughout the rest of the conflict.

# America—The Arsenal of Democracy

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, caught the United States off guard. President Roosevelt knew the United States would need to turn all of its attention toward building, training, and equipping its armed forces. America would need all of its manufacturing might to wage war **simultaneously** in Europe and Asia.

## Before Pearl Harbor

Efforts had been underway to put the United States on a **war footing**, or a position in which the country was prepared for war. In September 1940, Congress passed the first peacetime **draft** in U.S. history. This draft required all American men between the ages of 21 and 45 to register for military service. This increased the U.S. armed forces to three million people, up from just over 330 thousand in 1939.



Six female officers being sworn into the Women's Army Corps (WAC) at Camp Atterbury, Indiana on August 27, 1943

The United States was also increasing its capacity to produce military supplies to aid the Allies. Nearly a year before Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt described this effort in one of his radio addresses, called Fireside Chats, to the American public:

*I want to make it clear that it is the purpose of the nation to build now with all possible speed every machine, every arsenal, every factory that we need to manufacture our defense material. . . . We must be the great **arsenal** of democracy.*

## After Pearl Harbor

Some sources report that in the days following Pearl Harbor, Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto wrote in his journal, “I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve.” While he may not have actually written those words, they are unquestionably true. The United States was now unified in its commitment to becoming stronger than ever before and defeating the nation that had attacked it.

By January 1942, there was still much work to be done. The draft was expanded to include all men between the ages of 18 and 65. This expanded the armed forces to more than 16 million men and nearly 350 thousand women by 1945. President Roosevelt had previously banned racial and ethnic discrimination in defense production industries by **executive order**. This discrimination ban opened these jobs up for the first time to African Americans and other minority workers. Many of those men, too, were drafted following Pearl Harbor.

After Pearl Harbor, more and more American men left their jobs to join the fighting in Europe and the Pacific, so the United States turned to women to keep production going. Over six million women would eventually enter the workforce. They helped produce all the equipment soldiers needed to win the war. The cultural impact of this many women entering manufacturing was massive, and so was the output. Before the war, women had primarily been homemakers. If they worked outside the home, they had largely been **relegated** to jobs such as domestic servants

and secretaries. By 1942, there were so many women working in factories that they came to be known as “Rosies.” Rosie the Riveter became symbolic of women in wartime.

The United States achieved a massive increase in weapons manufacturing. This was done in large part by changing what it produced. Companies that had previously made everyday items started making war materials. For instance, the automobile industry completely shifted. It produced three million cars in 1941 before the United States joined the war. It only produced 139 cars during the entire war—through the next four years! Instead of cars, Ford shifted to airplanes. It produced one airplane every 63 minutes at just one plant in Michigan. Chrysler made fuselages, the central structure of an aircraft, for airplanes. General Motors produced trucks, tanks, guns, and airplane engines.



Postage stamp showing the symbolic image of Rosie the Riveter

| Type of aircraft        | Total          | 1940 <sup>1</sup> | 1941   | 1942   | 1943   | 1944   | 1945 <sup>2</sup> |
|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------------------|
| <b>Grand total</b>      | 295,959        | 3,611             | 18,466 | 46,907 | 84,853 | 96,270 | 45,852            |
| <b>Combat aircraft</b>  | <b>200,443</b> | 1,771             | 8,395  | 24,669 | 53,183 | 74,564 | 37,861            |
| Very heavy bombers      | 3,740          | —                 | —      | 4      | 91     | 1,147  | 2,498             |
| Heavy bombers           | 31,685         | 46                | 282    | 2,513  | 9,574  | 15,057 | 4,213             |
| Medium bombers          | 21,461         | 52                | 762    | 4,040  | 7,256  | 6,732  | 2,619             |
| Light bombers           | 39,986         | 453               | 2,617  | 5,954  | 11,848 | 12,376 | 6,738             |
| Fighters                | 99,465         | 1,157             | 4,036  | 10,721 | 23,621 | 38,848 | 21,082            |
| Reconnaissance          | 4,106          | 63                | 698    | 1,437  | 793    | 404    | 711               |
| <b>Support Aircraft</b> | <b>95,516</b>  | 1,840             | 10,071 | 22,238 | 31,670 | 21,706 | 7,991             |
| Transports              | 23,900         | 164               | 525    | 1,887  | 6,913  | 9,925  | 4,486             |
| Trainers                | 58,085         | 1,676             | 9,294  | 17,237 | 20,950 | 7,936  | 1,352             |
| Communication           | 13,531         | —                 | 252    | 3,114  | 4,167  | 3,845  | 2,153             |

**Table showing the increase in total production of aircraft from 1940 to 1945 in the United States**

The United States was producing so much military equipment for the Allies that Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin noticed. He said the following to President Roosevelt in December 1943:

*The most important things in this war are machines. The United States has proven that it can turn out from eight thousand to ten thousand airplanes per month. Russia can only turn out, at most, three thousand airplanes a month. . . . The United States, therefore, is a country of machines. Without the use of those machines, . . . we would lose this war.*

The United States was clearly the arsenal of the Allies, providing essential support to Britain and the Soviet Union. The machinery and supplies produced in U.S. factories were used throughout the world as the Allies fought back against the Axis aggression.



**Winston Churchill, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Joseph Stalin planning the final defeat of Germany while at the Big Three Conference at Yalta in February of 1945**

## Chapter 5

# The European Theater, Part 1

### THE BIG QUESTION

Why was it important for the Allies to win the Battle of Britain?

World War II took place in two military **theaters**. In the Pacific, the Allies were focused on defeating Japan. In the European Theater, the Allies needed to overcome Germany and Italy. Hitler, the dictator of Germany, and Mussolini, the dictator of Italy, had momentum in 1940. Neither country could be stopped without U.S. intervention.

## The Battle of Britain

Germany conquered most of the entire continent of Europe at the onset of the 1940s, and there was no sign of the Nazi advances slowing down. France, Britain's closest European ally and neighbor, was the most recently defeated country. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill prepared his nation for the fight to come:

*I expect that the Battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of the Christian civilization. Upon it depends our own British life, and the long continuity of our institutions and our Empire. The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be*

*turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this Island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be free and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands. But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age. . . . Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, "This was their finest hour."*

Germany planned to invade Britain by sea; however, the Germans needed to conquer the air space before this was possible. And so, the Battle of Britain began. It would be the first battle in history fought almost fully in the air. The summer of 1940 saw German and British fighter pilots competing in the skies.



**A German Luftwaffe bomber flying over the East End of London at the start of the evening raids on September 7, 1940**

The German air force, known as the Luftwaffe, initiated the conflict by bombing military sites in Britain. The British air force, known as the Royal Air Force (RAF), counter-attacked with great success. The British had recently developed an early warning radar technology that helped them locate German planes. But Hitler doubled down with an intense bombing campaign against British cities, including their capital city, London. The campaign is commonly known as the Blitz.

The bombing continued for 57 nights in a row. It caused fear and panic. People tried to flee the cities. Many parents voluntarily agreed to send their children to stay with host families in the countryside for safety.

### Did You Know?

C. S. Lewis's famous novel, *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*, is set in Great Britain during World War II. It features four children who were sent away from London to live with their uncle in the country during the war because of the air-raids. Over a million children in Great Britain shared this experience and were evacuated from cities and towns. Most traveled by train and were assigned foster parents. Those who stayed in London endured bombing raids, rationing, and major disruptions to their schooling.



Smoke rising from fires in the London docks, following the Blitz bombings on September 7, 1940

The Blitz affected cities across Great Britain. An estimated 43,000 lives were lost between September 1940 and May 1941. The heroic efforts of the RAF caused Hitler to back down from Britain. During the middle of the fighting, Churchill praised the RAF's efforts:

*Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few*

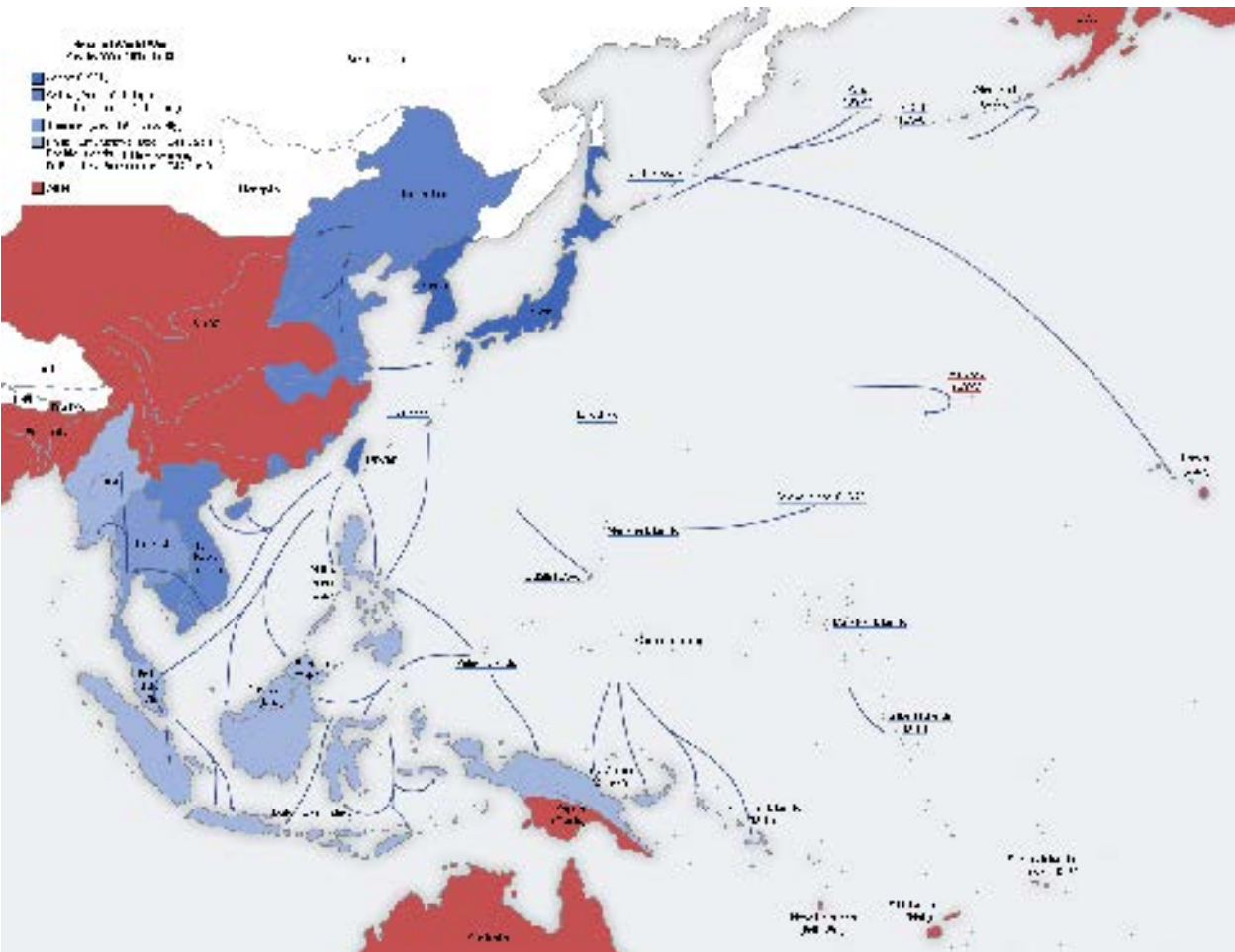
The RAF put up such a fight that Germany's plan to attack Great Britain by sea was put on hold indefinitely. The German *Wehrmacht*, with coordinated attacks from large divisions of tanks, artillery, and infantry, would **inflict** tremendous suffering on the Soviet Union. But for now, the British Isles were safe.

## Chapter 6

# The Pacific Theater, Part 1

### THE BIG QUESTION

What significant events occurred in the Pacific Theater?



Map showing the Pacific Theatre and Japanese military advances from 1937 to 1942

The U.S. military fought with Japan in the Pacific Ocean because of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. This fighting in the Pacific Theater was largely done at sea on small islands. This kind of warfare was very different from the land fighting that occurred in the European



Two U.S. officers planting the American flag on Guam 8 minutes after the U.S. Marines and Army assault landed on the Central Pacific island on July 20, 1944

Theater. The war in the Pacific was powered by aircraft carriers, battleships, and planes. Aircraft carriers are huge warships on which planes can take off and land. The carriers allowed planes to be used in places far from airstrips on land.

Because of these aircraft carriers, many battles in the Pacific Theater were fought at sea and off the coasts of islands. To succeed, the United States developed an **offensive** strategy known as **island-hopping**. The strategy involved conquering one island at a time, moving step-by-step toward the Japanese homeland. Intense battles were played out one island at a time. Each new island meant a supply base and an important airfield. The strategy allowed the United States to push the conflict closer toward Japan and farther away from its own West Coast.

## Initial Losses

The Pacific Ocean has a range of many large islands, including the Philippines, which was held by the United States. The Philippines was strategically important to the United States. It had vast resources and had been a U.S. territory since 1898. The Japanese knew that this was an important location for the U.S. military, which is why they decided to attack on the same day as the Pearl Harbor strike, on December 7, 1941. Japan began a major bombing action in the Philippines and continued to raid the islands of this nation. Filipinos fought fiercely alongside the Americans.

The air attack and bombing brought much success to the Japanese advance as they pushed the Americans and Filipinos all the way to a corner of a region called the Bataan **Peninsula**. Eventually, the Allied forces had no choice but to surrender. The Japanese took over 60,000 surviving American and Filipino soldiers captive. They would eventually force these prisoners to endure a brutal 65-mile march through the Philippines, during which many died.

Captain William E. Dyess was one of the American soldiers captured at Bataan. He had grown up in Albany, Texas, and played football and ran track in high school before he entered the military.



William Edwin Dyess after his return to the United States in 1943

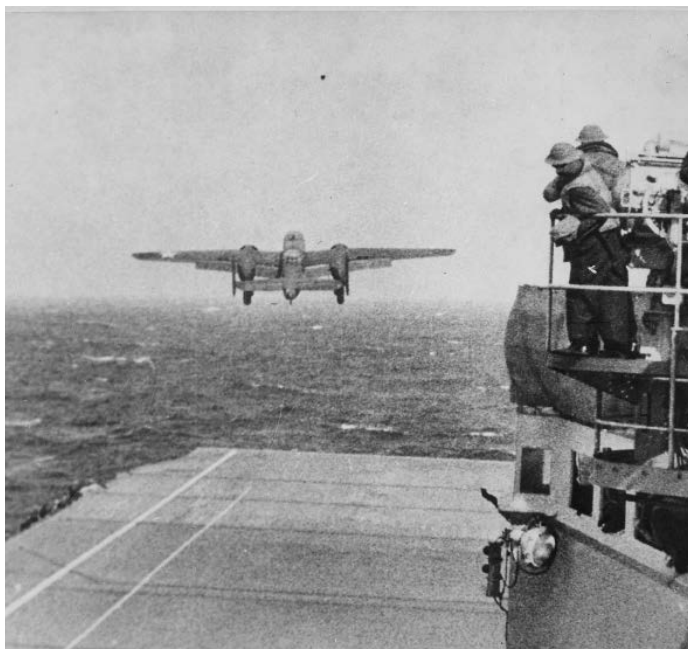
Dyess was taken as a prisoner of war in April 1942. However, over one year later, he and two others miraculously escaped. They found Filipinos willing to help them. Dyess fought with the Filipino **guerilla** forces for several months before being rescued by submarine. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel that December. Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, Texas, is named in his honor.

## The Doolittle Raids

After Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt pushed his military leaders to come up with some way to strike back at the Japanese homeland. This attack had several goals. One was to cause Japan to pull back combat equipment from other areas in the Pacific, which would give the U.S. soldiers fighting there an advantage in combat. The second was to damage industrial sites and reduce Japan's ability to produce war supplies. The third was to boost

American **morale** after Pearl Harbor.

The plan called for a daring, long-term bombing attack on major Japanese cities. It would require launching a squadron of B-25 bombers off aircraft carriers in the middle of the Pacific.



Army B-52 taking off from the deck of the USS HORNET to take part in the Doolittle Raid on Japan in April 1942



**James (Jimmy) Doolittle and his crew just before takeoff for the missions on April 18, 1942**

They would fly over 2,200 miles, all the way to Japan, with the hope of landing safely in China. B-29 bombers had a normal range of only 1,350 miles. It would be a one-way flight. This courageous attack became known as the Doolittle Raids, named after the officer in charge, Colonel James “Jimmy” Doolittle. His innovative tactics included rapid advances in technology that enabled the mission to succeed. News of the raids became a source of pride for Americans as the raids were a great success for the United States in the larger war.

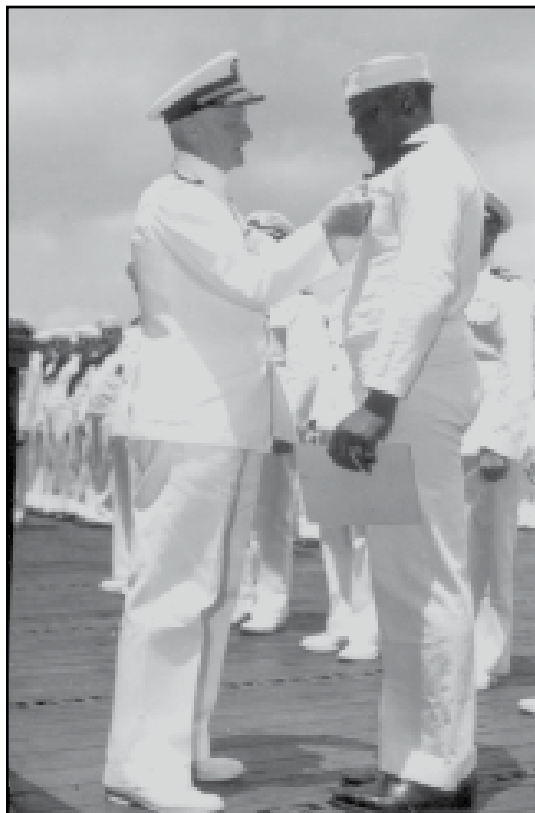
The raid caused Japan to move resources to China. It also created a large divide in Japan between military and political leaders. Japanese civilians called for defending the home island more vigorously. The Japanese military chose to conduct their attack on Midway Island sooner than planned. This rushed action would later contribute to Japan’s defeat by U.S. forces at Midway, the U.S. victory that would serve as a turning point in the war.

## Dual Commanders

President Roosevelt named two commanding officers in the Pacific Theater. General Douglas MacArthur was placed in charge of the Southwest Pacific, and Admiral Chester Nimitz was assigned to the Central Pacific, where he commanded the U.S. fleet. Both played such important roles in World War II, especially related to the island-hopping strategy, that they are still remembered and revered today.



General Douglas MacArthur wades ashore during initial landings in the Philippines



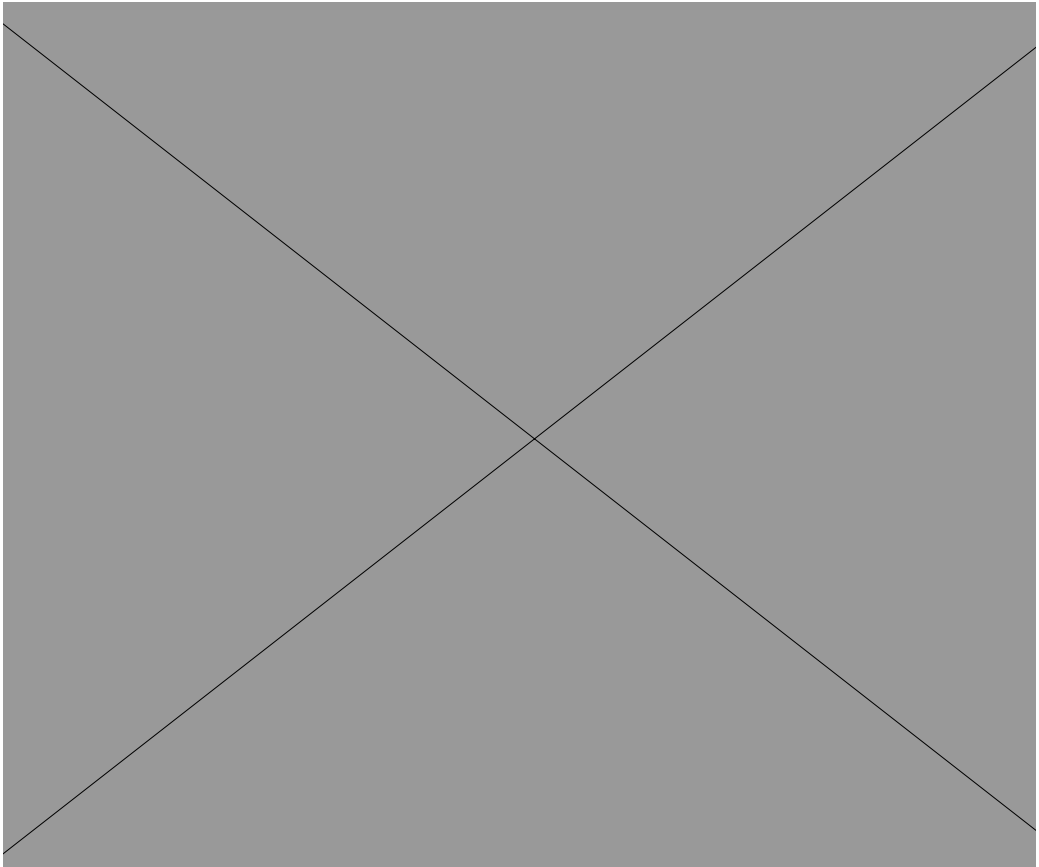
**Chester W. Nimitz pinning the Navy Cross on Doris Miller on board USS Enterprise in Pearl Harbor on May 27, 1942**

Chester Nimitz was born in Fredericksburg, Texas. After his high school days at Tivy High School in Kerrville, Texas, Nimitz attended the U.S. Naval Academy. Upon graduation, he rose quickly through the ranks toward a highly successful military career.

## **The Battle of Midway**

The Battle of Midway was the turning point in the Pacific Theater of World War II and was led by Nimitz. The Midway Islands were a territory of the United States, not too far from the Hawaiian Islands. If the Japanese had conquered this area, they would have been able to continue attacking Pearl Harbor. The United States even feared an invasion of its West Coast.

The Japanese started the battle by bombing the U.S. base on the island on June 4, 1942. However, they were unaware that the United States had three carriers from which it launched planes. These planes dropped bombs and hit all four Japanese carriers, destroying three of them. This was nearly a third of the Japanese fleet. The Japanese lost over 3,000 men, while the United States lost under 400. It was a decisive victory. With the dramatic loss of aircraft carrier strength, Japan's ability to attack was dramatically reduced. The victory set up the United State's offensive to advance through the Pacific islands on their way to the Japanese homeland.



Devastator aircraft being prepared for launch aboard the USS Enterprise on June 4, 1942 during the Battle of Midway

## Chapter 7

# The American Home Front

### THE BIG QUESTION

How did American civilians support the war effort at home?

In previous lessons, you learned about the first years of World War II, including how the United States officially joined the Allied forces in 1941. During this time, the U.S. military and economy were rapidly expanding, and there was a greater **emphasis** on **industrial mobilization**.

The United States shifted its focus to support the war effort through manufacturing. Weapons, vehicles, ships, planes, and other resources were needed to ensure the military was prepared and successful. In Michigan, the Ford Motor Company shifted from building cars to building B-24 Liberator bombers. These efforts came with great sacrifice, but there was a great deal of unity around the **collective** effort to win the war.



Poster created by the War Production Board between 1942–1943 to build support for industrial mobilization

In Texas, this industrial mobilization occurred throughout the state. Texas became a place for many military posts that helped to train around 1.2 million U.S. troops. In McGregor, Texas, near Waco, the Bluebonnet Ordnance Plant was created to manufacture bombs. The plant was one of four U.S. plants used to produce bombs for the war. It was so large it nearly tripled McGregor's population when it opened.



Group of women welders from the Shipbuilding Corporation in Mississippi in 1943

Many service members **deployed** overseas, including some women who were in non-combat positions as pilots, code breakers, first-aid instructors, and other important roles. Many women who were not serving in the military took on new roles in the workforce. During the war, more than six million women took jobs in factories that were previously done by men. They became integral to the manufacturing of war materials. Women became mechanics and built aircraft, ships, and trucks.

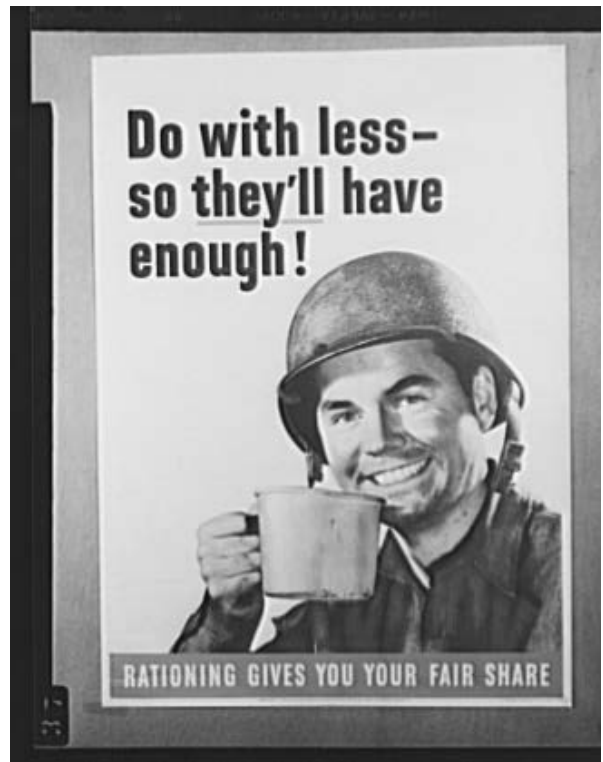
Women also filled government office positions that were vital to the management of vast war operations. One Texan, Oveta Culp Hobby, became the first director of the Women's Army Corps (WAC). She worked to recruit and mobilize women to help in the war effort. Filling more non-combat jobs with women would allow more men to serve in combat. This changed the workforce forever for the better. After the war was over, many women did not want to leave their new professions.



**Oveta Culp Hobby talking with other officers of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps at Mitchel Field, New York in 1943**

The war had other impacts, too. The fear of an enemy can unfortunately lead people to make bad decisions. This occurred during World War I when anti-German sentiment ran strong throughout the country. Americans of German descent faced harassment and sometimes even violence. During World War II, the same happened to Americans of Japanese descent. On the West Coast, the U.S. government forced Japanese Americans to move into internment camps for much of the war. It was a move many Americans regretted as a betrayal of our country's values. Long after the war was over, it was finally deemed unconstitutional.

Despite the negative effects of war, America was generally united, with everyone doing what they could to support the war effort. Civilians were told to limit their use of certain supplies that were needed for war. This was called **rationing** and impacted everyday items like gas, plastic, tires, and even food. Families were issued ration stamps, which allowed them to get limited items like butter, sugar, or even tires. These everyday sacrifices allowed the materials to be used to make war equipment and support the troops.



Poster released by the Office of War Information to encourage civilians to help with the war effort

The government also encouraged families to plant victory gardens to grow their own food. Victory gardens saved resources and supported the war effort. The War Food Administration emphasized “do more with less” to reserve supplies for the troops.

Scrap metal drives were also used in communities to preserve supplies for the war. The Salvage for Victory campaign was created in 1942. The campaign asked Americans to collect, save, and recycle materials, which could then be used for the military. Saved scrap steel and aluminum could be used to make tanks, planes, and other military supplies. Nearly every county across the country had some form of salvage committee.

From school children to elected officials, everyone had a part to play. The Salvage for Victory campaign was one of the most successful campaigns during the war.



**Children bringing their weekly contribution of scrap paper to school in Washington D.C. as part of the scrap salvage campaign to help the war effort**

The challenges and contributions of those who remained at home in the United States were important. Everyone did what they could to support the more than 16 million Americans who served in the armed forces during World War II. Leaving their families behind was a difficult task as they deployed overseas. Families had to say goodbye to their loved ones. Letters were the primary way to communicate with those overseas. Over 570 million pieces of mail were sent to soldiers in 1943. The military had a hard time transporting the heavy and bulky mail and needed to prioritize transporting war equipment. A system known as victory mail provided a solution. Vast amounts of mail were converted to a strip of film and shipped overseas. Machines would reproduce the letter to a 4 x 5-inch card, which would then be distributed. The victory mail system ensured the steady and fast delivery of letters.

Despite harsh conditions, military leaders tried to keep soldiers' morale high. Soldiers appreciated being able to communicate with their loved ones back home. They also appreciated the Hollywood films that were produced to keep spirits high. The films illustrated the heroism of the soldiers with clips of battles and cartoons. On the radio, patriotic music was played, and reports were heard from well-known broadcasters. Throughout the war, at home and abroad, Americans came together in all aspects of society to defeat the tyranny of the Axis powers.

## Chapter 8

# The European Theater, Part 2

### THE BIG QUESTION

What role did the United States play in the Allied victory in Europe?

Germany and the other Axis powers succeeded in conquering much of Europe by 1941. Many nations had been unprepared for their blitzkrieg attacks. However, in December 1941, the United States joined the war in response to the attack at Pearl Harbor. The United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union would coordinate their forces to defeat the Axis powers in Europe.

In 1942, the Soviet Union in eastern Europe was the subject of continuing and **relentless** attacks from Nazi forces. They needed

the British and Americans to attack the Axis from the west. The Allies debated and planned. Many countries in North Africa were under Axis control because of Italian acts of conquest. The Allies decided that North Africa was the best place for American and British forces to attack in the fall of 1942. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, a Texan, was named the commander of Allied forces in the operation.



Dwight Eisenhower at his desk in 1942, serving as the Commander of American Forces in the European Theatre



It helped shape how the two powers would work together on military operations. It also forced the Axis powers to fight on two fronts. This relieved pressure for the Soviet Union fighting the Nazis on the eastern front. Importantly, the Allied forces finally seized the offensive, and North Africa would serve as an Allied base for future campaigns against Italy.



**American troops landing on an Algerian beach during Operation Torch on November 8, 1942**

## Invasion of Italy

The next goal was to cross the Mediterranean Sea and invade Italy. The first step toward this goal was to take on Sicily, an island off the coast of Italy.



First class of Tuskegee cadets being saluted by James Ellison in Alabama in 1941

Attacks were made on Sicily and Italy by land, air, and sea. They began with an **aerial** bombing campaign. Jimmy Doolittle, hero of the Doolittle raids on Japan, had been promoted to a general and was in charge of the strategic air force in Algeria. One fighter group under his command was the Tuskegee Airmen. They were among the first African American pilots in the U.S. Army Air Corps. These pilots shot down 12 German planes in two days. They were one of the most effective fighter escorts in the war, helping keep bombers safe while they hit their targets in Sicily and in the rest of Italy.

From Sicily, Allied forces proceeded into the Italian mainland. The Italian campaign was deadly, and slow. Over sixty thousand Allied soldiers died. But the Allies were eventually victorious. The attack to take back Rome occurred on June 4, 1944. Mussolini's regime fell apart, leading to the liberation of Italy and, after the war, a return to democracy.

## D-Day

The Allies knew that they would likely lose many soldiers in the attempt to liberate France. However, they had no other option if Germany was to be defeated. France was a strategic location for the Allies. They needed to secure France in order to reach Germany and end the war. The location that gave the most advantage was Normandy, a coastal region of France along the English Channel. German forces defended the beaches, but the Allies coordinated a major plan that involved land, air, and sea. On June 6, 1944, also known as D-Day, Allied troops **stormed** the beaches while battleships provided cover. One of these ships was the U.S.S. Texas. It would become the only ship that survived both World War I and World War II.



American troops approaching Omaha Beach during the invasion of Normandy on D-Day on 6 June 1944

One of the young American soldiers storming the beach was Lt. Col. James Earl Rudder. Rudder was born and raised in Eden, Texas. On D-Day, he landed on a French beach with one goal. That goal was to secure a 100-foot cliff overlooking the ocean. It was fortified with German artillery that could destroy the landing ships. To scale the cliff, Rudder and the other men used hook-shooting launchers, rope, and ladders from the London Fire Department. Their mission was incredibly dangerous and required tremendous bravery. In this battalion, just ninety out of 225 men survived. Rudder was wounded twice, but he and his men took the cliff.



**James Earl Rudder, U.S.  
Army Major General**

The scene was repeated along many beaches on D-Day. Because of the bravery of many American and other Allied soldiers, the invasion was a success.

In the weeks and months that followed D-Day, Allied forces advanced far beyond the Normandy region. The Allies had gained a foothold in France and began to move through the rest of the nation, but the fighting could be intense. In war, there is always danger, and soldiers must sometimes overcome great fear in order to accomplish the mission. One memorable act of bravery came as American soldiers fought through northeastern France. There, a Texan named Second Lt. Audie Murphy risked his life in a battle with the Germans. Here is the incredible story that was recorded:

*Behind him, to his right, one of our tank destroyers received a direct hit and began to burn. Its crew withdrew to the woods.*

*Second Lt. Murphy continued to direct artillery fire, which killed large numbers of the advancing enemy infantry. With the enemy tanks abreast of his position, Second Lt. Murphy climbed on the burning tank destroyer, which was in danger of blowing up at any moment, and employed its .50 caliber machine gun against the enemy . . . He then made his way to his company, refused medical attention, and organized the company in a counterattack, which forced the Germans to withdraw.*



Audie Murphy in 1948

Murphy made this courageous stand in northeastern France. It helped drive the Germans from their final foothold on French soil. Murphy received a Congressional Medal of Honor and medal for heroism from the French for his actions.

## **The Battle of the Bulge**

The Allies were now closing in on the Germans from the west. American soldiers formed a strong line along the border of France and Germany. However, out of desperation and in the cold of December 1944, “Hitler’s Last Gamble” was launched. This became known as the **Battle of the Bulge**. It included Germans attacking in a concentrated area, with

the hope of splitting Allied forces in half and preventing the invasion of Germany. The German push against the American line created a “bulge” as American forces tried to prevent their forces from being split.

Despite frigid weather conditions, American forces led a heroic response. They slowly cut down and pushed back the “bulge” until the Germans were out of France once again. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill said of the effort, *“This is undoubtedly the greatest American battle of the war and will, I believe, be regarded as an ever-famous American victory.”*

## **Victory in Europe**

On the western front, Americans were leading Allied forces into Germany. On the eastern front, after years of devastating losses fighting the Nazis in their own territory, the Soviet Union had finally gone on the offensive. Having drafted millions of soldiers into their army, which was now supplied by American weaponry, the Soviets slowly worked their way back through Europe. By 1945, they had successfully retaken the capital of Poland.

Berlin, Germany’s capital, was the final target. The Soviets were the first to get there. With one of the largest armies ever assembled, they overran the city, and Germany finally surrendered on May 7, 1945. This was the long-awaited triumph over the Axis powers in Europe. It was called **V-E Day**, which stands for “Victory in Europe.”



Winston Churchill giving his famous “V for Victory” sign to crowds in London on May 8, 1945 (V-E Day) after he announced that the war with Germany had been won

The Nazis were defeated. The Fascists had been removed from power. The war in Europe was over. But World War II was not over yet. The last remaining Axis power, Japan, continued to be a threat in Asia, and there remained much work to recover from the terrible damage inflicted by the Nazis.



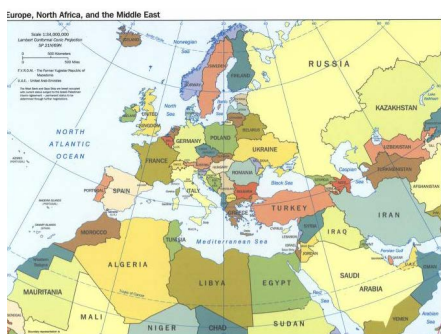
## Chapter 9

# The Holocaust

### THE BIG QUESTION

What was the Holocaust, and what impact did it have on Jewish people and the world during and after World War II?

The Holocaust was the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators during World War II. This **atroc**ity was fueled by **antisemitism**, which is prejudice against Jews. Antisemitism existed long before the Nazis came along. Learning about what happened during the Holocaust allows people today to recognize the dangers of antisemitism. It also helps us work to prevent something so horrific from happening again.



Map showing Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East

Jewish people have lived in Europe and North Africa since ancient times. They practice Judaism, which is a religion that believes in one God who cares about how human beings behave. By the early 1900s, Jewish people could be found in every country in Europe and throughout North Africa. While they were a small minority group in these countries, they generally lived in relative harmony with their neighbors. In Germany, the law had considered them regular citizens.



Adolph Hitler speaking under the Nazi eagle in Berlin in March 1938

However, when Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party came to power in 1933, the situation for the Jews in Germany soon began to change. The Nazis used speeches, movies, newspapers, books, and posters to tell lies about Jews that increased antisemitism. In the years prior, Germany was having economic and social problems, and many Germans thought Germany was no longer a powerful country in the world. The Nazi Party and Hitler **scapegoated** the Jewish people, blaming them for these problems. The Nazis promised to make Germany strong again while using terrible anti-Jewish messages and claiming that Germany needed a strong leader in charge of everything. Because of widespread antisemitism and the desire for economic improvement and national pride within Germany, too many people were willing to accept the Nazis' hateful **propaganda** and anti-democratic ideas. After they won the elections of 1933, Hitler and his Nazi Party quickly moved to roll back German democracy to consolidate their power.

One of the Nazi Party's first moves was to get rid of their many political opponents. For this purpose, the Nazis opened their first concentration camp, Dachau, in March



The entrance gate at Dachau Concentration Camp, whose inscription reads "Work sets you free"

of 1933. A **concentration camp** is a place where people are confined under harsh conditions, usually because of their membership in a particular group. At first, Dachau imprisoned Communists and other political opponents, including trade unionists, as well as prominent Jewish leaders.

The Nazis discouraged people from visiting Jewish-owned stores or restaurants. They also called for ordinary German citizens to vandalize, burn, and otherwise attack those shops. These calls fanned the flames of **prejudice** and **dehumanized** Jewish people. In time, these calls grew into state-sanctioned antisemitic discrimination.

In September of 1935, the Nazi Party passed discriminatory legislation known as the Nuremberg Laws, which revoked German citizenship from all Jewish people. The German government then passed laws to strip Jewish people of their rights.

On the night of November 9, 1938, the Nazi government ordered a nationwide **pogrom**, or state-sponsored massacre, against the Jews. Many Jews were murdered. Hundreds of Jewish synagogues and cemeteries were destroyed along with thousands of Jewish-owned shops. Ordinary German citizens, including those who had been the neighbors of Jewish people for years, helped commit these atrocities. The Nazis then forced the Jewish community to pay for all of the damage and took over remaining Jewish businesses.

You might wonder why the Jews didn't leave Germany. Some were able to leave, and did. But the Nazi regime made it very difficult for the Jews to leave, often taking money and property from Jews who left. It was also very difficult for Jews to find countries that would take them in. Other countries often set limits on the number of people who could enter. Widespread antisemitism and economic hardships made people reluctant to help.

Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, beginning World War II. As they moved across eastern Europe, German troops conquered many territories. These areas contained most of Europe's Jewish population. Nazi officials implemented a policy that Jewish people in these conquered territories had to wear a badge that identified them as Jews. The Nazis began to deport many of the Jewish people from these German-occupied territories to concentration camps.

At great risk to themselves, the Jewish people actively resisted the Nazis whenever they had the opportunity. They organized armed uprisings and rescue missions. They also launched attacks and sabotaged Nazi operations. Many Jews resisted by writing about what they experienced and witnessed. A small minority of non-Jews also risked their lives to try to protect some Jews by hiding them or smuggling them to safety. Just to stay alive against overwhelming odds was an amazing act of resistance against the Nazis. Although many Jews struggled with their religious faith, some were able to use it as a source of strength during these dark times.

By 1942, the Nazis and their collaborators were systematically executing thousands of Jews every day. Over three million of the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust were killed in concentration camps.



**The pile of shoes belonging to the people who were deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland, the biggest Nazi concentration camp during World War II**

As World War II progressed, Soviet, American, and British forces advancing across Europe discovered these concentration camps. There they witnessed the horror of the conditions. General Dwight D. Eisenhower heard news of the atrocities committed by the Nazis and their collaborators. He made a personal visit to a camp in 1945 to see it with his own eyes. The visit made a powerful impression on him. He wrote:

*The things I saw beggar description. . . . The visual evidence and the verbal testimony of starvation, cruelty . . . were so overpowering as to leave me a bit sick. . . . I made the visit deliberately, in order to be in a position to give first-hand evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to chart these allegations merely to propaganda.*

On May 8, 1945, Germany surrendered, marking the end of World War II in Europe. The state-sponsored program to annihilate the Jewish people was over, with the staggering loss of an estimated six



**Defendants during the Nuremberg Trials in 1945–1946**

million Jewish men, women, and children. This statistic shocked the world. It meant that two out of every three Jews in Europe had been murdered in a few short years. People also realized that far too few took a stand to stop it from happening.

After the end of World War II, a tribunal from the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and France conducted the Nuremberg Trials, the first of their kind. A small number of perpetrators were tried and punished for war crimes and crimes against humanity. But most collaborators just went back to their normal lives.



The Hall of Remembrance inside the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

After the war, many vowed: Never again! Museums have been created to remind current and future generations of what happened. People can visit the United States Holocaust **Memorial** Museum in Washington, D.C., in addition to Holocaust museums in Dallas, El Paso, Houston, and San Antonio. These museums honor the victims of the Holocaust, tell the stories of what became of the survivors, and offer lessons we should all take to heart.



The International Monument at Dachau Concentration Camp with the phrase "Never Again" in multiple languages, the urn of the unknown prisoner, and stones left by visitors

Guided by the phrase, “Never again!,” people around the world study the Holocaust. Learning from its terrible example can help all people work to prevent **genocide**. The Holocaust did not have to happen. It was made possible because people were willing to embrace ideas that devalued life, weakened democracy, and rejected the truth. The phrase “Never again!” encourages us to remain focused on the importance of valuing life, protecting democracy, and teaching the truth.

## Chapter 10

# The Pacific Theater, Part 2

### THE BIG QUESTION

What events and innovations led to the end of World War II in the Pacific Theater?

In the months that followed D-Day, the majority of Allied forces were in Europe, pushing the Germans back toward Berlin. But the United States and its Allies in the Pacific could not forget about Japan. The Allies were committed to their strategy of island-hopping. With the Battle of Midway turning the momentum of the Pacific war, the island-hopping strategy continued to push Japan back to their home islands. The Allies, led by Admiral Nimitz and General MacArthur, would fight courageously on many islands as they got closer to Japan.

## The Island of Iwo Jima

American island-hopping led to the Battle of Iwo Jima in February 1945. Though it was only 10 square miles, the island was important. It was close to mainland Japan and had three airfields that could be used as an air and naval base for the Allies to plan attacks on the Japanese home islands.



**Military vehicles stranded on the black sands of Iwo Jima, damaged by Japanese mortar and shellfire in February 1945**

The battle lasted a brutal 36 days. The terrain was volcanic. The Japanese had built a network of tunnels that were miles long and set up camouflaged artillery in the mountains. Marines advanced on the island, but they were met with heavy fighting and well-coordinated counterattacks by the Japanese. For years, Japanese soldiers had been taught the ancient samurai code of ethics, translated as “the way of the warrior.” For these Japanese soldiers, it was more honorable to die than to surrender. This led to kamikaze attacks, where Japanese aviators flew their airplanes directly into their targets. At Iwo Jima, the kamikazes sank an aircraft carrier escort and badly damaged several other Navy carriers.



Three Navajo code talkers in Saipan during June 1944

Fighting on the island was intense, and each side was constantly looking for an advantage. Japanese soldiers monitored U.S. radio communications in hopes of using the information to find where marines

were located. The Navajo Code Talkers became known as secret weapons employed by the Americans. They were marines who were Navajo Indians and used their language to communicate through radio. The Japanese were capable of intercepting and breaking English codes but not Navajo messages.

One of the most iconic moments of the battle came when the United States took Mt. Suribachi. Six marines raised the U.S. flag on top of the mountain. A famous picture of this moment inspired people across the world as they saw the **resolve** and bravery of those in the U.S. military. The United States succeeded in taking Iwo Jima, but nearly 7,000 marines died. Our country was one step closer to Japan, but every foot of land came at an incredible cost.



Four soldiers raising the American flag on Iwo Jima on February 23, 1945

## Manhattan Project

Years before the war, scientists in Germany discovered the splitting of an atom. Splitting an atom produces enough energy to create a bomb more powerful than any other weapon that existed at the time. Albert Einstein was a Jewish scientist who moved from Germany to the United States. Jewish people were being discriminated against, and he did not feel safe in Germany. Fearing what Germany could do with such a powerful weapon, Einstein alerted America to the new discovery by writing a letter to President Roosevelt. As

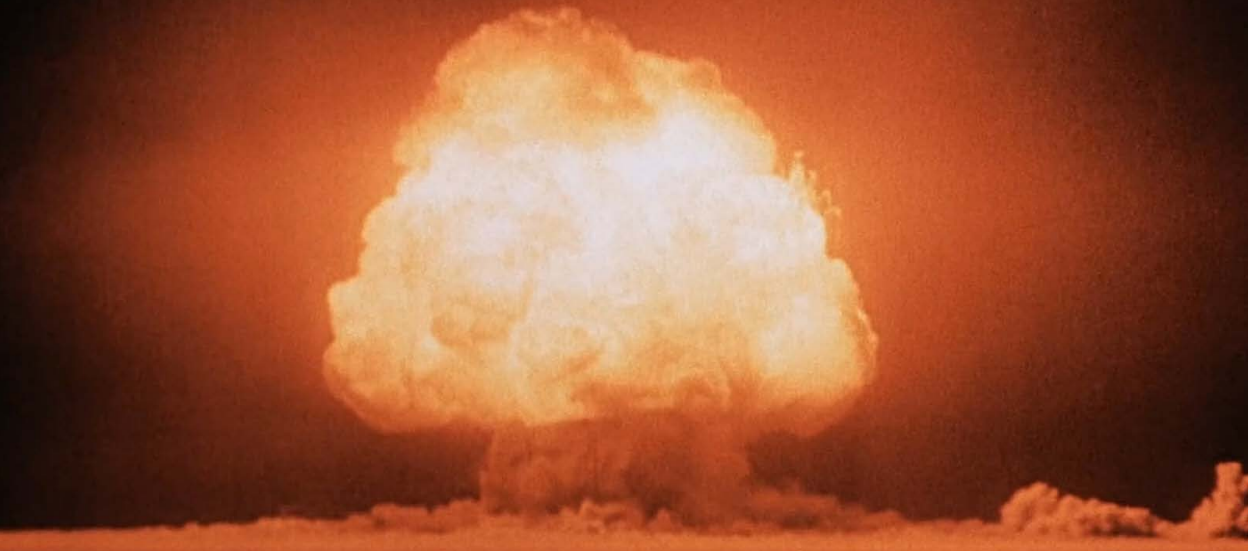


**Dr. Robert Oppenheimer and General Leslie Groves, Director of the Manhattan Project, two months after the test blast of the atomic bomb and just after the end of World War II**

World War II was now underway, a secretive project was begun to create an atomic bomb.

It was called the Manhattan Project. Dr. Robert Oppenheimer was appointed as the lead scientist. Secret manufacturing plants were created in three states: Tennessee, Washington, and New Mexico. After years of intense work by the greatest scientific minds in the nation, the bomb was ready to test. A test conducted in the desert of New Mexico was deemed a

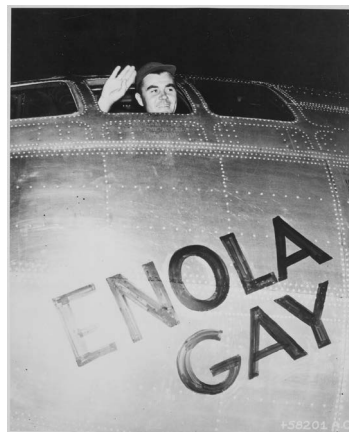
success on July 16, 1945. A successful test meant that it could possibly be utilized to end the war.



**Mushroom cloud from the Manhattan Project Trinity test, seconds after detonation on July 16, 1945**

## **President Truman's Decision**

Three months before the testing of the bomb, U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt passed away. He had led the nation through the Great Depression and World War II. Roosevelt's Vice President Harry Truman quickly stepped into the role. He faced three main options to end the war. Now that the Americans had landed on Okinawa, he could continue with conventional bombing, but there was little indication this alone would cause a Japanese surrender. He could also invade Japan by land, but this would cost millions of American and Japanese lives. The third option was to drop an atomic bomb on a Japanese city as an inescapable show of force, in hopes that it would cause Japan to surrender and save millions of lives.

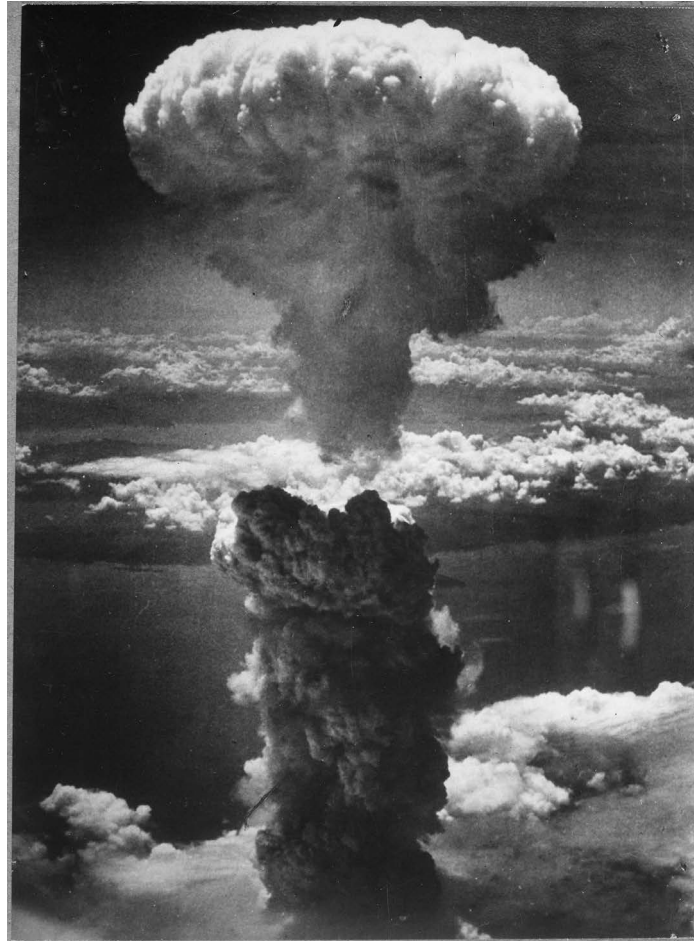


**Pilot of the Enola Gay, the plane that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, waving before takeoff on August 6, 1945**

On July 26, the Allies sent the Japanese a letter demanding their surrender, warning of “destruction” if this did not happen. After 11 days of no reply, Truman took action.

On August 6, 1945, a large bomber took flight carrying the most powerful weapon the world had ever seen. “Little Boy,” as the bomb was nicknamed, was dropped on **Hiroshima** that day. It caused an unprecedented 80,000 deaths in just a few minutes. Despite this destruction, Japan still refused to surrender.

Three days later, another atomic bomb nicknamed “Fat Man” was dropped on Nagasaki, Japan. The devastation was repeated as it killed an estimated 39,000 people.



Atomic cloud rising over Nagasaki, Japan on August 9, 1945, the result of the second atomic bomb ever used in warfare

## Japan Surrenders

After the second atomic bomb was dropped, the Japanese Emperor agreed to sign the terms of surrender. The ceremony was held on September 2, 1945. It would become known as **V-J Day**, for the day of victory in Japan. Generals Douglas MacArthur and Chester Nimitz fittingly signed on behalf of the Americans.



Citizens and workers in Tennessee celebrating V-J Day on August 14, 1945

Six years and one day after Germany invaded Poland, World War II was finally over.



## Chapter 11

# A New World

### THE BIG QUESTIONS

What sacrifices and contributions were made by the Greatest Generation?  
What were some of the lasting effects of World War II?

## A New World

By early 1945, the Allies were winning World War II, and they knew this was their chance to start planning for the future. The Allied leaders wanted to create a lasting postwar peace that guaranteed global security. In October 1945, the United Nations (UN) was formed. It became the international organization aimed at maintaining peace and security throughout the world to prevent another world war. Besides maintaining international peace, the organization was also committed to protecting human rights and providing **humanitarian** aid to people in need throughout the world. America's newfound economic **prosperity** and military strength positioned the United States to play a leadership role. Winston Churchill stated the following:

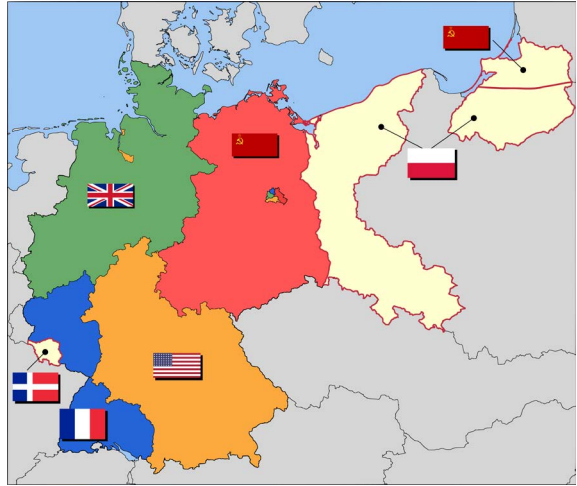
*The United States stands at this time at the pinnacle of world power. It is a solemn moment for the American Democracy. For with primacy in power is also joined an awe-inspiring accountability to the future.*

The Allied forces knew that they had to construct a peace plan that would be **sustainable**. They wanted to avoid repeating the



Poster created for the Allies of World War II in 1943, two years before the founding of the United Nations

mistakes of World War I, which had led to the rise of **extremism** in Germany. After World War II, the situation in Germany was dire once again. The German economy, government, and **infrastructure** were all in shambles. The Allies knew they would have to help the nation rebuild. This meant keeping a physical presence in Germany by each of the major Allied forces. The United States built military bases there, and today Germany is one of America's top democratic allies.



Map showing post-World War II occupation zones of Germany

A similar plan emerged in Japan. After the Japanese surrender, the country adopted a new constitution, including provisions committing the nation to peace. The United States provided investments to help the country rebuild and created U.S. military bases there. Today, Japan is also one of America's top democratic allies.

Another major international development from the war was the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. After the Holocaust, many Jewish survivors wanted to leave Europe. Many came to America. On May 14, 1948, the Israeli Declaration of Independence was announced to proclaim the formation of the State of Israel. It was created as a safe haven for Jews throughout the world. The United States recognized the newly established



**Jewish children on their way to what would become the State of Israel on June 5, 1945, after having been released from the Buchenwald Concentration Camp.**

State of Israel that same day, and Holocaust survivors began arriving soon thereafter. Beyond the creation of the State of Israel, the newly established United Nations held the 1948 Genocide Convention, which defined and outlawed genocide.

All of these postwar changes were intended to preserve a more lasting peace. This was even more important in a world that now had atomic weapons. During the war, the Manhattan Project was one

of America's most important achievements, leading to the development of atomic weapons that ended the war. But the weapons were far more powerful than anything that came before. Our country's leaders were worried about the risks. In an interview after the war, Dr. Robert Oppenheimer, who was the lead scientist of the Manhattan Project, was asked what he thought after the successful test of the atomic bomb. He said: "I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita. Vishnu is trying to persuade the Prince that he should do his duty, and, to impress him, takes on his multi-armed form and says, 'Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.'" Moving forward, the United States and its allies would have to work to prevent the spread of atomic weapons, and to ensure they were never used again in war.

## The Greatest Generation

World War II was the deadliest conflict in world history. In total, 60 to 80 million lives were lost. Americans from all walks of life contributed to the war effort, both in the military and supporting American manufacturing and agriculture at home. The sacrifices made during World War II stopped dictatorships and protected the American way of life.

The generation that fought and served during World War II is rightly known as the “Greatest Generation.” They stood up for the ideals penned in 1776 in the Declaration of Independence: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Freedom triumphed over **tyranny** in World War II, but only because brave American men and women were willing to endure tremendous danger and sacrifice.

The difficulty of that sacrifice is hard for many of us to understand today. Today, America is regarded as a superpower. The United States has the largest economy in the world. Our country has thousands of businesses in many different industries, creating wealth and opportunity for Americans by engaging in free trade. The United States also has the most powerful military in the world. It has over one million men and women in its armed forces, well trained and with advanced technology and weaponry that help give our military an edge in battle. This strong military discourages other nations from considering an attack on the United States. While there



Ernie Pyle with a tank crew from the U.S. Army at the Anzio Beachhead in Italy in 1944

are always challenges, some consider our modern era to be a *Pax Americana*, a time of peace and prosperity akin to the time of *Pax Romana* at the height of the Roman Empire.

But that wasn't the

case in early American history, and it certainly wasn't the case during World War II. The sacrifices made by those on the home front were significant, from everyday changes like rationing and scrap drives to whole industries being transformed. The sacrifices of those in combat are almost indescribable.

A famous journalist named Ernie Pyle traveled with American soldiers during much of the war. He witnessed the bravery and the danger firsthand, writing to help Americans back home understand what our soldiers were experiencing. His newspaper stories inspired a great sense of patriotism for Americans, who were rightly filled with pride over our fight against tyranny. Like so many of the soldiers he profiled, Pyle, too, experienced the dangers of war. He was killed during the battle for Okinawa. He was working on his last newspaper story at the time. It was a grim tribute to the sacrifices made by the Greatest Generation, showing why the freedom that we have in

America comes at a price and why it is important for us to understand the sacrifices made by those in history to better preserve our freedoms today. Pyle wrote:



**Happy veterans heading home on May 25, 1945**

*Last summer I wrote that I hoped the end of the war could be a gigantic relief, but not an elation. In the joyousness of high spirits it is easy for us to forget the dead.*

Thankfully for the United States and the world today, the war did end, and tyranny was defeated. Since 1945, there have been other conflicts around the world. But with U.S. leadership, none have come close to the scale of destruction seen in World War II.

# Glossary

## A

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**aerial, *n.*** having to do with or done by means of an aircraft

**airstrip, *n.*** a runway used by planes to take off or land (airstrips)

**annex, *v.*** to take over control of another location (annexed)

**antisemitism, *n.*** a hostile attitude toward Jewish people, which can lead to discrimination and violence

**appeasement, *n.*** the strategy of giving a person or group what they want to prevent conflict

**armament, *n.*** weapons, equipment, and supplies used for war (armaments)

**armistice, *n.*** an agreement between opponents to stop or pause warfare

**arsenal, 1. *n.*** collection of weapons and military equipment;  
**2. *n.*** place where weapons and military equipment are stored or made

**atrocity, *n.*** an exceptionally and shockingly evil or cruel act

## B

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**blitzkrieg, *n.*** a tactic in which a military uses intense speed and power to attack and surprise its opponents

## C

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**casualty, *n.*** a military person removed from battle because of death, injury, illness, or capture (casualties)

**collective, *adj.*** shared or done by people in a group

**concentration camp, *n.*** a place or facility in which people are detained, usually under harsh conditions and without a trial or fair cause

## D

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**deceive, *v.*** to make someone believe something that is not true

**dehumanize, *v.*** to treat a person or people in a manner that devalues them as if they are less than human

**deploy, *adj.*** to move troops into position for military action (deployed)

**devastating, *adj.*** causing serious damage, destruction, or pain

**dictator, n.** a single leader of a country or territory who has absolute and total power (dictators)

**draft, 1. n.** the process where the government selects people to join the military during times of war; **2. n.** the first version or plan of a text; **3. n.** a flow of air; **4. n.** to put in written form

## E

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**emphasis, n.** special attention to something important

**empire, n.** a group of countries or territories ruled by one powerful leader

**executive order, n.** an official statement from the President that has the force of law

**expansionism, n.** a policy or practice of growing by acquiring new territory

**extremism, n.** belief in and support for radical ideas

## F

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**fascism, n.** a political system in which the government controls all businesses and labor and is led by a dictator with absolute power

**front, 1. n.** the leading edge of a conflict and the zone where active military operations are occurring; **2. n.** the forward part or surface; **3. adj.** related to the forward part or surface

## G

**genocide, *n.*** the intentional physical destruction of part or all of a group of people

**guerilla, 1. *adj.*** irregular fighting styles that include sneak or surprise attacks; **2. *n.*** a member of a small independent fighting team

## H

**humanitarian, 1. *adj.*** promoting the well-being of other people; **2. *n.*** a person who takes actions that promote the well-being of other people

## I

**impending, *adj.*** about to happen

**industrial mobilization, *n.*** the process of industries shifting to providing goods and services for the war effort

**infamy, *n.*** the state of being well-known because of something negative or evil

**inflict, *v.*** to cause or impose something unpleasant or harmful on someone or something

**infrastructure, *n.*** the basic framework of a country or city that allows it to function, such as systems of roads, bridges, hospitals, schools, and other public works

**island-hopping, *n.*** a war strategy to capture one island at a time

**isolationist, *adj.*** preferring a policy of staying uninvolved in alliances or the affairs of other countries

## L

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**liberation, *n.*** a the act of being set free

## M

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**memorial, *n.*** a structure made to honor or preserve the memory of an event, individual, or group

**morale, *n.*** the mental and emotional condition of an individual or a group concerning a task or goal to be accomplished

## N

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**nationalism, *n.*** a belief in the importance of promoting the culture and interests of your own country above all others

**non-aggression pact, *n.*** an agreement between countries to avoid fighting with one another

# O

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**offensive, 1. *adj.*** relating to or made for attack; **2. *n.*** the state or attitude of one who is making an attack

**operation, 1. *n.*** an active military mission or process; **2. *n.*** the act of surgery being performed on a patient; **3. *n.*** the act or process of functioning (operations)

# P

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**peninsula, *n.*** a piece of land nearly surrounded by water but is connected to the mainland on one side

**pogrom, *n.*** a mob attack sponsored by the government with the goal of harassing or killing defenseless people in their homes, neighborhoods, businesses, and places of worship

**prejudice, *n.*** negative attitudes, including hatred, toward a person or group without a fair cause or reason

**premeditated, *adj.*** planned in advance

**propaganda, *n.*** typically biased or misleading information or opinions that are made public to promote or attack a movement, cause, or person

**prosperity, *n.*** a state of well-being, thriving, good fortune, or success

# R

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**ration, 1. v.** to control the amount one can use (rationing);

**2. n.** the limited amount of an item a person can use

**relegate, v.** to remove or dismiss to a less important place (relegated)

**relentless, adj.** without stopping or lessening in intensity

**resolve, 1. n.** firmness of purpose; determination; **2. v.** to decide firmly and sincerely to do something or that something shall be done.

# S

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**scapegoat, v.** to unfairly blame an individual or group for a problem or the wrongs of others

**secure, 1. adj.** free from danger or fear;

**2. adj.** to make something safe

**simultaneous, adj.** existing or occurring at the same time (simultaneously)

**solidarity, n.** a feeling of being united in common goals or beliefs

**storm, 1. v.** to move or rush in an angry way (stormed); **2. n.** a type of weather pattern that brings wind, rain, thunder, and lightning

**subjugate, v.** to win power over someone by force (subjugated)

**sustainable, adj.** capable of being continued or upheld

## T

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**tactic, n.** a plan for achieving something (tactics)

**theater, 1. n.** a multi-country geographical region where significant events, particularly related to war, take place: **2. n.** a building or outdoor area in which plays and other dramatic performances are given (theaters)

**tyranny, n.** a government led by a single cruel, harsh ruler who holds all the power

## U

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**unprovoked, adj.** not brought on by anything done or said

## W

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**war footing, n.** a state of preparedness for war; being ready for military action

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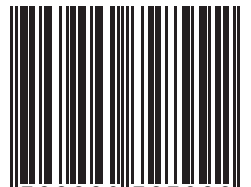
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