

# 26



## WORLD WAR II

1939–1945



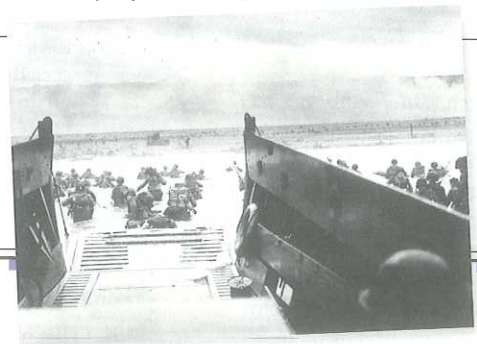
WHY WERE most Americans  
reluctant to get involved in World War II?

WHY DID the United States  
need a strategy for a two-front war?



HOW WAS the United States  
transformed socially  
and economically by the war?

HOW DID the Allies win the war?

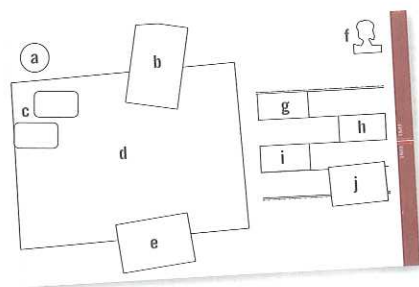




- a. Dorling Kindersley Media Library.  
©Imperial War Museum London, held  
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## IMAGE KEY

for pages 684–685



- a. A cloth patch with a yellow star of David that all Jews had to wear under the Nazi regime.  
b. Victory Garden Poster.  
c. All POWs had to carry identification (ID) tags with them at all times. These two came from the Oflag XVIIIA and Stelag VI/A camps in Germany.  
d. American soldiers landing on the coast of France at Normandy on 6 June 1944 (D-Day).  
e. Unusually addressed letters to Winston Churchill.  
f. The explosion of an atomic bomb.  
g. Mpa of central Europe.  
h. Pearl Harbor Attack, 7 December 1941. Motor launch rescues a man from the water, alongside the burning USS West Virginia (BB-48); USS Tennessee (BB-43) is inboard.  
i. Wartime marriages, Chicago, IL, August 20, 1943.  
j. D-Day invasion.

December, 1942

*The scene [under the stadium] at The University of Chicago would have been confusing to an outsider; if he could have eluded the security guards and gained admittance. He would have seen only what appeared to be a crude pile of black bricks and wooden timbers. . . .*

*Finally, the day came when we were ready to run the experiment. We gathered on a balcony about 10 feet above the floor of the large room in which the structure had been erected. Beneath us was a young scientist, George Weil, whose duty it was to handle the last control rod that was holding the reaction in check. . . .*

*Finally, it was time to remove the control rods. Slowly, Weil started to withdraw the main control rod. On the balcony, we watched the indicators which measured the neutron count and told us how rapidly the disintegration of the uranium atoms under their neutron bombardment was proceeding.*

*At 11:35 A.M., the counters were clicking rapidly. Then, with a loud clap, the automatic control rods slammed home. The safety point had been set too low.*

*It seemed a good time to eat lunch. During lunch everyone was thinking about the experiment but nobody talked much about it.*

*At 2:30, Weil pulled out the control rod in a series of measured adjustments. Shortly after, the intensity shown by the indicators began to rise at a slow but ever-increasing rate. At this moment we knew that the self-sustaining [nuclear] reaction was under way.*

*The event was not spectacular; no fuses burned, no lights flashed. But to us it meant that release of atomic energy on a large scale would be only a matter of time.*

Enrico Fermi, in *The First Reactor* (Washington: U.S. Department of Energy, 1982), accessed at <http://hep.uchicago.edu/cp>; Laura Fermi, *Atoms in the Family* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954); Laura Fermi, "The Fermis' Path to Los Alamos," in Lawrence Badash, Joseph O. Hirschfelder, and Herbert P. Broida, eds. *Reminiscences of Los Alamos, 1943–45* (Boston and Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co.).

**ENRICO FERMI** was describing the first controlled nuclear chain reaction—the critical experiment from which atomic weapons and atomic power would soon develop. Fermi himself had emigrated to the United States to escape the growing repression of Fascist Italy in 1938. When the United States entered World War II, Fermi, other atomic scientists, and their families moved to Los Alamos, a science city that the government built in northern New Mexico, where isolation was supposed to ensure secrecy and help the United States win the race with Nazi Germany to develop atomic weapons.

The Fermis were not the only family to give Los Alamos a multinational flavor. Niels Bohr had fled Denmark to escape Nazi invasion. Edward Teller was a Hungarian who had studied in Germany. Hans Bethe had left Germany, and Stanislaus Ulam was the only member of his family to survive the Nazi conquest of Poland. Absent were scientists from the Soviet Union, which was bearing the worst of the fighting against Germany but was excluded from the secret of the atomic bomb.



The men and women racing to perfect the atomic bomb knew that victory was far from certain. Allied defeat in a few key battles could have resulted in stand-off or Axis victory. Not until 1944 did American economic power allow the United States and its allies to feel confident of victory. A new weapon might end the war more quickly or make the difference between victory and defeat.

The war's domestic impacts were as profound as its international consequences. The war highlighted racial inequalities, gave women new opportunities, and fostered growth in the South and West. By devastating the nation's commercial rivals, compelling workers to retrain and factories to modernize, World War II left the United States dominant in the world economy. It also increased the size and scope of the federal government and built an alliance among the armed forces, big business, and science that helped shape postwar America.

## THE DILEMMAS OF NEUTRALITY

Opinion polls in the fall of 1941 showed that most voters still hoped to avoid war. President Roosevelt's challenge was to lead the United States toward rearmament and support for Great Britain and China without alarming a reluctant public.

### THE ROOTS OF WAR

The roots of World War II can be found in the aftereffects of World War I. The peace settlement after that war created a set of small new nations in Eastern Europe that were vulnerable to aggression from large neighbors such as Germany and the Soviet Union. Italy and Japan thought that the Treaty of Versailles failed to recognize their stature as world powers. Many Germans were convinced that Germany had been betrayed rather than defeated in 1918. In the 1930s, economic crisis and political instability fueled the rise of right-wing dictatorships that offered territorial expansion by military conquest as the way to redress old rivalries, dominate trade, and gain access to raw materials.

Japanese nationalists believed that Japan should expel the French, British, Dutch, and Americans from Asia and create a **Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere**, in which Japan gave the orders and other Asian peoples complied. When war with China erupted in 1937, Japan took many of the key cities and killed tens of thousands of civilians in the "rape of Nanking" but failed to dislodge the government of Jiang Jieshi (Chi-ang Kai-shek) and settled into a war of attrition.

Italian aggression led to the conquest of Ethiopia in 1935 and intervention in Spain in support of General Francisco Franco's right-wing rebels.

In Germany, Adolf Hitler made himself the German Führer, or absolute leader in 1934. Proclaiming the start of a thousand-year Reich (empire), he combined the historic German interest in eastward expansion with a long tradition of German racial superiority. The Slavs of eastern Europe were to be pushed aside to provide more territory for a growing German population, and the Jews, who were prominent in German business and professional life, were to be driven from the country. In 1935, the "Nuremberg laws" denied civil rights to Jews and the campaign against them intensified. The Nazi government began expropriating Jewish property and excluded Jews from most employment.

Germany and Italy formed the Rome-Berlin Axis in October 1936 and the Tripartite Pact with Japan in 1940, leading to the term **Axis Powers** to describe the aggressor nations. Political dissidents in all three nations were suppressed in the but Hitler's Germany was the most repressive. The Nazi concentration camp was a device for political terrorism. Hitler decreed that opponents should disappear

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**WHY WERE** most Americans reluctant to get involved in World War II?

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**Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere** Japanese nationalists believed that Japan should expel the French, British, Dutch, and Americans from Asia and create this sphere in which Japan would give the orders and other Asian peoples would comply.

**Axis Powers** The opponents of the United States and its allies in World War II.



The raspy-voiced Adolf Hitler had a remarkable ability to stir the German people. He and his inner circle made skillful use of propaganda, exploiting German resentment over the country's defeat in World War I and, with carefully staged mass rallies, such as this event in 1938, inspiring an emotional conviction of national greatness.

Bildarchiv Preubisher Kullterbesitz, Berlin

into “night and fog.” The concentration camps would evolve into forced labor camps and then into hellish extermination camps.

### HITLER’S WAR IN EUROPE

Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. Western journalists covering the three-week conquest of Poland coined the term **Blitzkrieg**, or “lightning war,” to describe the German tactics. Armored divisions with tanks and motorized infantry punched quick holes in defensive positions and raced forward 30 or 40 miles per day.

Striking from a central position against scattered enemies, Hitler chose

the targets and timing of each new front: east to smash Poland in September 1939; north to capture Denmark and Norway in April and May 1940; west to defeat the Netherlands, Belgium, and France in May and June 1940; south into the Balkans, enlisting Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria as allies and conquering Yugoslavia and Greece in April and May 1941. He also launched the Battle of Britain in the second half of 1940, sending bombers in an unsuccessful effort to pound Britain into submission.

In June 1941, having failed to knock Britain out of the war, Hitler invaded the Soviet Union (officially the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or USSR). The attack caught the Red Army off guard, because the Nazis and Soviets had signed a nonaggression pact in 1939, and the USSR had helped dismember Poland. Nevertheless, from June until December 1941, more than 3 million Germans, Italians, and Romanians pushed eastward, encircling and capturing entire Soviet armies. Before desperate Soviet counterattacks and a bitter winter stopped the German tanks, the Axis powers had reached the outskirts of Moscow, and they expected to finish the job in the spring.

### TRYING TO KEEP OUT

“We Must Keep Out!” shouted the September 7, 1939, *Chicago Daily News*. Most Americans wanted to avoid foreign quarrels. People who opposed intervention in the European conflict considered themselves realists. Drawing their lessons from 1914–1918, they assumed that the same situation applied in 1939. For more than two years after the invasion of Poland, strong isolationist sentiment shaped public debate and limited President Roosevelt’s ability to help Britain and its allies.

Much of the emotional appeal of neutrality came from disillusionment with the American crusade in World War I, which had failed to make the world safe for democracy. Many opponents of intervention wanted the United States to protect its traditional spheres of interest in Latin America and the Pacific. Like George Washington, whose Farewell Address they quoted, they wanted to avoid becoming entangled in the perpetual quarrels of the European nations.

Noninterventionists spanned the political spectrum from left-leaning labor unions to such ultraconservative business tycoons as Henry Ford, from radicals who wanted the European nations to fight themselves into exhaustion to admirers of Hitler and Mussolini. Any move to intervene in Europe had to take these different views into account, meaning that Roosevelt had to move the United States slowly and carefully to the side of Britain.



26-2

Charles Lindbergh, Radio Address (1941)

**Blitzkrieg** German war tactic in World War II (“lightning war”) involving the concentration of air and armored firepower to punch and exploit holes in opposing defensive lines.



MAP 26-1

**Axis Europe, 1941, on the Eve of Hitler's Invasion of the Soviet Union** After almost two years of war, the Axis powers controlled most of Europe, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Soviet border through annexation, military conquest, and alliances. Failure to force Britain to make peace caused Hitler to look eastward in 1941 to attempt the conquest of the Soviet Union.

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**HOW WAS** Germany's central location in Europe both a strength and a weakness?

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## CHRONOLOGY

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|---|--|
| <p><b>1931</b> Japan invades Manchuria.</p> <hr/> <p><b>1933</b> Hitler takes power in Germany.</p> <hr/> <p><b>1935</b> Congress passes first of three Neutrality acts. Italy invades Ethiopia.</p> <hr/> <p><b>1936</b> Germany and Italy form the Rome Berlin Axis. Civil war erupts in Spain.</p> <hr/> <p><b>1937</b> Japan invades China.</p> <hr/> <p><b>1938</b> Germany absorbs Austria. Munich agreement between Germany, Britain and France.</p> <hr/> <p><b>1939</b> Germany and the Soviet Union sign a nonaggression pact. Germany absorbs Czechoslovakia. Germany invades Poland; Great Britain and France declare war on Germany.</p> <hr/> <p><b>1940</b> Germany conquers Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, and France. Japan, Germany, and Italy sign the Tripartite Pact. Germany bombs England in the Battle of Britain. The United States begins to draft men into the armed forces. Franklin Roosevelt wins an unprecedented third term.</p> <hr/> <p><b>1941</b> The United States begins a lend-lease program to make military equipment available to Great Britain and later the USSR. The Fair Employment Practices Committee is established. Germany invades the Soviet Union. Roosevelt and Churchill issue the Atlantic Charter. Japan attacks U.S. military bases in Hawaii.</p> <hr/> <p><b>1942</b> American forces in the Philippines surrender to Japan. President Roosevelt authorizes the removal and</p> | <p>internment of Japanese Americans living in four western states. Naval battles in the Coral Sea and off the island of Midway blunt Japanese expansion. U.S. forces land in North Africa. Soviet forces encircle a German army at Stalingrad. The first sustained and controlled nuclear chain reaction takes place at the University of Chicago.</p> <hr/> <p><b>1943</b> U.S. and British forces invade Italy, which makes terms with the Allies. Race conflict erupts in riots in Detroit, New York, and Los Angeles. The landing of Marines on Tarawa initiates the island-hopping strategy. U.S. war production peaks. Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin confer at Tehran.</p> <hr/> <p><b>1944</b> Allied forces land in Normandy. The U.S. Navy destroys Japanese sea power in the battles of the Philippine Sea and Leyte Gulf. The Battle of the Bulge is the last tactical setback for the Allies.</p> <hr/> <p><b>1945</b> Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill meet at Yalta to plan the postwar world. The United States takes the Pacific islands of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Franklin Roosevelt dies; Harry S Truman becomes president. Germany surrenders to the United States, Great Britain, and the USSR. The United Nations is organized at an international meeting in San Francisco. Potsdam Conference. Japan surrenders after the detonation of atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki.</p> |
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### EDGING TOWARD INTERVENTION

Because 85 percent of the American people agreed that the nation should fight only if directly attacked, Roosevelt had to chip away at neutrality. In October 1939, lawmakers reluctantly passed the Neutrality Act of 1939 allowing arms sales to belligerent nations on a “cash and carry” basis. In control of the Atlantic, France and Britain were the only expected customers.

Isolationism helps explain why the United States accepted only a few thousand Jewish refugees. Anti-Semitism at the State Department also contributed to tight enforcement of immigration quotas, and polls showed that the public supported restricted immigration.

The collapse of France in June 1940 scared Americans into rearming. In the summer of 1940, Congress voted to expand the army to 2 million men, build 19,000 new war planes, and add 150 ships to the navy. September brought the nation’s first peacetime draft.



26-2  
Franklin Delano Roosevelt,  
Annual Message to Congress  
(1941)



In the same month, the United States concluded a “destroyer deal” with Britain, trading fifty old destroyers for the use of bases on British territories in the Caribbean, Bermuda, and Newfoundland.

In the presidential election of 1940, the big campaign issue was therefore whether FDR’s unprecedented try for a third term represented arrogance or legitimate concern for continuity in a time of peril. The voters gave Roosevelt 55 percent of their votes to defeat his Republican opponent, Wendell Wilkie. The president pledged that no Americans would fight in a foreign war, but if the United States were attacked, he said privately, the war would no longer be “foreign.”

## THE BRINK OF WAR

In January 1941, Roosevelt proposed the “lend-lease” program, which allowed Britain to “borrow” military equipment for the duration of the war. Roosevelt compared the program to lending a garden hose to a neighbor whose house had caught fire. Senator Robert Taft of Ohio countered that it was more like lending chewing gum—you wouldn’t want it back after it was used. Behind the scheme was Britain’s inability to go on paying for American goods.

The Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies argued the administration’s position. In opposition, the America First Committee claimed that lend-lease would allow the president to declare anything a “defense article.” Congress finally passed the measure in March 1941, giving Great Britain an unlimited line of credit.

FDR soon began an undeclared war in the North Atlantic. Roosevelt instructed the navy to report sightings of German submarines to the British. In September, the U.S. destroyer *Greer* clashed with a German submarine. Roosevelt proclaimed a “shoot on sight” policy for German subs and told the navy to escort British convoys to within 400 miles of Britain. In reply, German submarines torpedoed and damaged the destroyer *Kearny* on October 17 and sank the destroyer *Reuben James* with the loss of more than 100 lives on October 30. The United States was approaching outright naval war with Germany.

The **Atlantic Charter** of August 1941 provided a political umbrella for American involvement. Meeting off Newfoundland, Roosevelt and British prime minister Winston Churchill agreed that the first priority was to defeat Germany; Japan was secondary. Echoing Woodrow Wilson, Roosevelt also insisted on a commitment to oppose territorial change by conquest, to support self-government and promote freedom of the seas.

Some historians think that Roosevelt’s goal in the North Atlantic was to support Britain short of war. Others believe that he accepted the inevitability of war but hesitated to outpace public opinion. In this second interpretation, FDR wanted to eliminate Hitler without going to war if possible, with war if necessary. “I am waiting to be pushed into the situation,” he told his secretary of the treasury.

That final shove came in the Pacific rather than the Atlantic. In 1940, as part of its rearmament program, the United States decided to build a “two-ocean navy.” This decision antagonized Japan. Japan had achieved roughly 70 percent of U.S. naval strength by late 1941. However, America’s buildup promised to reduce that ratio to only 30 percent by 1944. Furthermore, the United States was gradually restricting Japan’s vital imports of steel, iron ore, and aluminum. In July 1941, after Japan occupied French Indochina, Roosevelt froze Japanese assets in the United States, blocked petroleum shipments, and began to build up U.S. forces in the Philippines. Both militarily and economically, it looked in Tokyo as if 1942 was Japan’s last chance for victory.

Japanese war planners never seriously considered an actual invasion of the United States or expected a decisive victory. They hoped that attacks on American Pacific bases would shock the United States into letting Japan have its way in Asia or at least win time to create impenetrable defenses in the central Pacific.

## QUICK REVIEW

### Undeclared War

- ◆ March 1941: Lend-lease program approved by Congress.
- ◆ FDR ordered navy to offer support to Britain.
- ◆ August 1941: Atlantic Charter lays out British and American war aims.

**Atlantic Charter** Statement of common principles and war aims developed by President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill at a meeting in August 1941.



## DECEMBER 7, 1941

It now seems that Roosevelt wanted to restrain the Japanese with bluff and intimidation so that the United States could focus on Germany. FDR also recognized the possibility of a two-front war—at least a 20 percent chance, he told military advisers in January 1941. Because the United States cracked Japanese codes, it knew by November that Japanese military action was imminent but expected the blow to come in Southeast Asia.

Instead, the Japanese fleet sailed a 4,000-mile loop through the empty North Pacific, avoiding merchant shipping and American patrols. Before dawn on December 7, six Japanese aircraft carriers launched 351 planes in two unopposed bombing strikes on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Americans counted their losses: eight battleships, eleven other warships, and nearly all military aircraft damaged or destroyed; and 2,403 people killed. Fortunately, dockyards, drydocks, and oil storage tanks remained intact because the Japanese admiral had refused to order a third attack. And the American carriers, at sea on patrol, were unharmed.

Speaking to Congress the following day, Roosevelt proclaimed December 7, 1941, “a date which will live in infamy.” He asked for—and got—a declaration of war against the Japanese. Hitler and Mussolini declared war on the United States on December 11.

## HOLDING THE LINE

WHY DID the United States need a strategy for a two-front war?

In 1940, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, the chief of Japan’s Combined Fleet, weighed the chances of victory against the United States and Great Britain: “If I am told to fight regardless of the consequences, I shall run wild for the first six months or a year, but I have utterly no confidence for the second or third year.” The admiral was right. As it turned out, Japan’s conquests reached their limit after six months, but in early 1942, it was far from clear that that would be so. In Europe, Allied fortunes went from bad to worse in the first half of 1942. Decisive turning points did not come until November 1942, a year after the United States had entered the war.

## STOPPING GERMANY

In December 1941, the United States plunged into a truly global war that was being fought on six distinct fronts. In North Africa, the British battled Italian and German armies that were trying to seize the Suez Canal. On the **Eastern Front**, Soviet armies held defensive positions. In the North Atlantic, merchant ships dodged German submarines. In China, Japan controlled the most productive provinces but could not crush Chinese resistance, which was supported by supplies airlifted from British India. In Southeast Asia, Japanese troops attacked the Philippines, the Dutch East Indies, New Guinea, Malaya, and Burma. In the central Pacific, the Japanese fleet faced the U.S. Navy.

Despite the popular desire for revenge against Japan, the United States decided to defeat Germany first, as Germany was far stronger than Japan. Defeat of Japan would not assure the defeat of Germany, especially if it crushed the Soviet Union or starved Britain into submission. In contrast, a strategy that helped the Soviets and British survive and then destroyed German military power would doom Japan.

The strategy recognized that the Eastern Front held the key to Allied hopes. In 1941, Germany had seized control of 45 percent of the Soviet population, 47 percent of its grain production, and more than 60 percent of its coal, steel, and

**Eastern Front** The area of military operations in World War II located east of Germany in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.





aluminum industries. Hitler next sought to destroy Soviet capacity to wage war. He targeted southern Russia, an area rich in grain and oil. The German thrust was also designed to eliminate the British from the Middle East.

The German offensive opened with stunning success. Every day's advance, however, stretched supply lines. Tanks ran out of fuel and spare parts. The horses that pulled German supply wagons died for lack of food.

Disaster came at Stalingrad (present-day Volgograd), an industrial center on the western bank of the Volga River. In September and October, 1942, German, Italian, and Romanian soldiers fought their way house by house into the city.

The Red Army delivered a counterstroke on November 18 that cut off 330,000 Axis soldiers. Airlifts kept the Germans fighting for two more months, but they surrendered in February 1943.

## THE SURVIVAL OF BRITAIN

In 1940 and 1941, from bases in France, German submarines (greatly improved since World War I) intercepted shipments of oil from Nigeria, beef from Argentina, minerals from Brazil, and weapons from the United States. Through the end of 1941, German “tonnage warfare” sank merchant vessels faster than they could be replaced.

The **Battle of the Atlantic** forced the British to reduce their reliance on the Atlantic supply lines. Between 1939 and 1944, planning and rationing cut Britain's need for imports in half. The British also organized protected convoys. Grouping the merchant ships into convoys with armed escorts “hardened” the targets and made them more difficult to find in the wide ocean. Roosevelt's destroyer deal of 1940 and U.S. naval escorts in the western Atlantic in 1941 thus contributed directly to Britain's survival.

Nevertheless, German submarines (known as U-boats from *Unterseeboot*) operated as far as the Caribbean and the Carolinas in 1942. In June, U-boats sank 144 ships; drowned sailors washed up on Carolina beaches. Only the extension of the convoy system to American waters forced the subs back toward Britain. Meanwhile, Allied aircraft began to track submarines with radar, spot them with searchlights as they maneuvered on the surface, and attack them with depth charges. New sonar systems allowed escort ships to measure submarines' speed and depth. By the spring of 1943, American shipyards were also launching ships faster than the Germans could sink them.

British ground fighting in 1942 centered in North Africa. By October 1942, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's German and Italian forces were within striking distance of the Suez Canal. At **El Alamein** between October 23 and November 5, 1942, however, General Bernard Montgomery, with twice Rommel's manpower and tanks, forced the enemy to retreat and lifted the danger to the Middle East.

## RETREAT AND STABILIZATION IN THE PACIFIC

Striking the Philippines a few hours after Hawaii, the Japanese gained another tactical surprise (see Map 26–2), destroying most American air power on the ground and isolating U.S. forces. Between February 27 and March 1, Japan brushed aside a combined American, British, Dutch, and Australian fleet in the Battle of the Java Sea, and a numerically inferior Japanese force had seized Singapore.

In the spring Japan pushed the British out of Burma and overwhelmed Filipino and U.S. defensive positions on the Bataan peninsula. On May 6, the last American bastion, the island fortress of Corregidor in Manila Bay, surrendered.

The first check to Japanese expansion came on May 7–8, 1942, in the Battle of the Coral Sea, where U.S. aircraft carriers halted a Japanese advance toward

### QUICK REVIEW

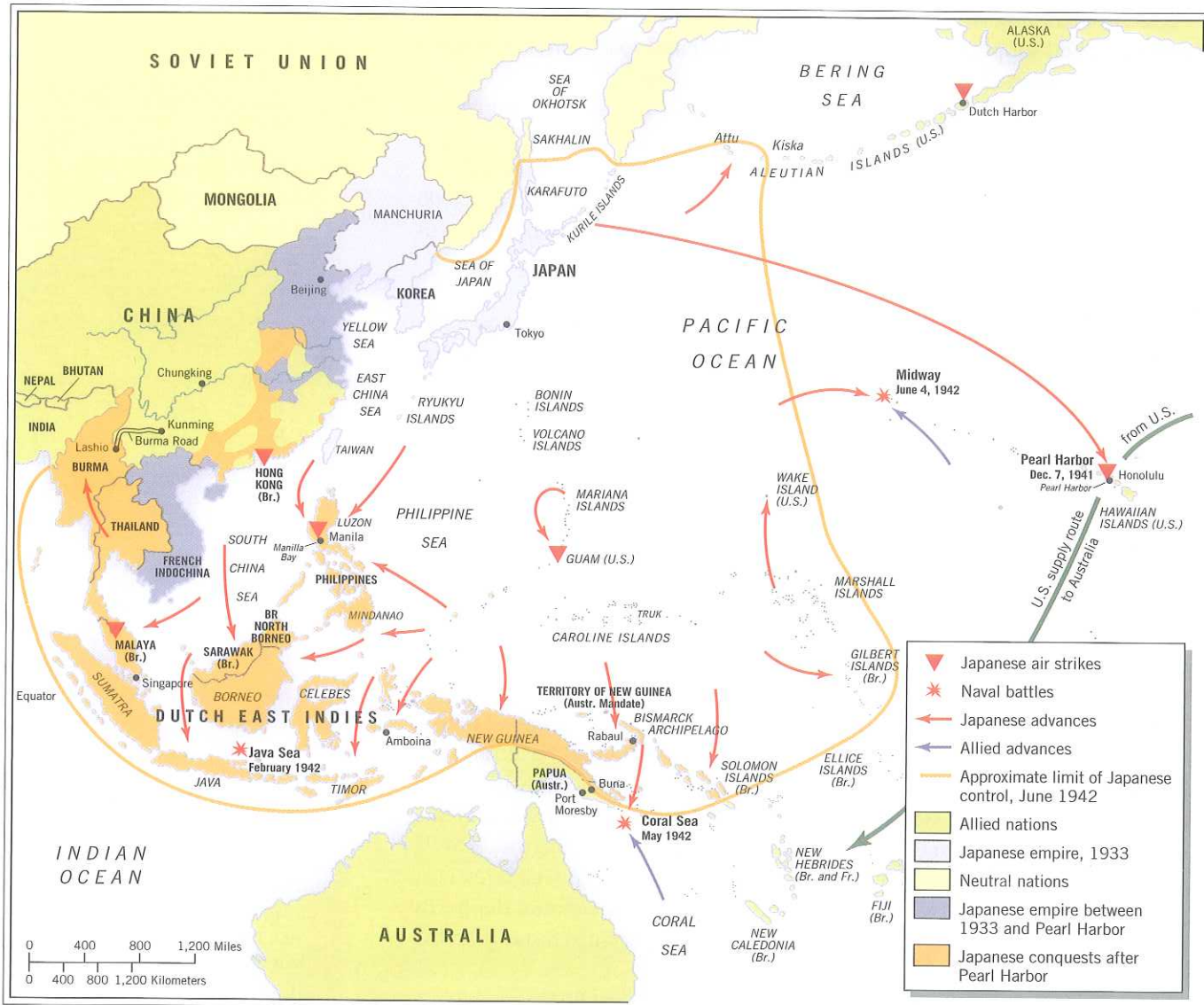
#### Britain Under Siege

- ◆ 1940–1941: German submarines sink British shipping faster than it can be replaced.
- ◆ Britain was forced to reduce its dependence on imports.
- ◆ By 1943 the Allies were producing new ships faster than the Germans could sink them.

**Battle of the Atlantic** The long struggle between German submarines and the British and U.S. navies in the North Atlantic from 1940 to 1943.

## MAP EXPLORATION

To explore an interactive version of this map, go to <http://www.prenhall.com/goldfield2/map26.2>



MAP 26-2

**World War II in the Pacific, from Pearl Harbor to Midway** The first six months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought a string of Japanese victories and conquests in the Pacific, the islands southeast of Asia, and the British colonies of Malaya and Burma. Japan's advance was halted by a standoff battle in the Coral Sea, a decisive U.S. naval victory at Midway, and the length and vulnerability of Japanese supply lines to its most distant conquests.

**HOW WAS** Japan able to mount a series of victories in the Pacific after their attack on Pearl Harbor?

Australia. In June, the Japanese struck at the island of Midway, 1,500 miles northwest of Honolulu. Their goal was to destroy American carrier forces. Having cracked Japanese radio codes, U.S. forces were aware of the plan for a diversionary invasion of the Aleutian Islands. On the morning of June 4, U.S. Navy dive bombers found the Japanese fleet and sank or crippled three aircraft carriers in five minutes; another Japanese carrier sank later in the day. The Battle of Midway ended Japanese efforts to expand in the Pacific.



## MOBILIZING FOR VICTORY

**N**ews of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor shattered a bright Sunday afternoon. Elliott Johnson was eating in a Chinese restaurant in Portland, Oregon, when the proprietor burst from the kitchen with a portable radio; the line was two blocks long by the time he got to the marine recruiting office.

War changed the lives of most Americans. Millions of men and women served in the armed forces and millions more worked in defense factories. The number of civilian employees of the federal government quadrupled to 3.8 million. Meanwhile, youngsters saved tin foil, collected scrap metal, and followed the freedom-fighting stories of Wonder Woman in the comics. The war effort gave Americans a common purpose that softened the divisions of region, class, and national origin while calling attention to continuing inequalities of race.

### ORGANIZING THE ECONOMY

The need to fight a global war brought a huge expansion of the federal government. The War Manpower Commission allocated workers among vital industries and the military. The War Production Board invested \$17 billion for new factories and managed \$181 billion in war-supply contracts, favoring big corporations with experience in large-scale production.

The Office of Price Administration (OPA) fought inflation with price controls and rationing that began with tires, sugar, and coffee and eventually included meat, butter, gasoline, and shoes. Consumers used ration cards and ration stamps to obtain scarce products. By slowing price increases, the OPA helped to convince Americans to buy the war bonds that financed half the war spending. Americans also felt the bite of the first payroll deductions for income taxes as the government secured revenues and soaked up some of the high wages that would have pushed inflation. By 1945 the federal budget was \$98 billion, eleven times as large as in 1939, and the national debt had increased more than sixfold.

Industry had reluctantly begun to convert from consumer goods to defense production in 1940 and 1941. Although corporations hated to give up the market for toasters and automobiles just as Americans had more money, the last passenger car for the duration of the war rolled off the assembly line in February 1942. Existing factories retooled to make war equipment, and huge new facilities turned out thousands of planes and ships. The United States applied mass production technology to aircraft production at a time when Japan was still building warplanes one at a time and Germany in small batches.

Most defense contracts went to such established industrial states as Michigan, New York, and Ohio, but in the South and West, the war marked the takeoff of what Americans would later call the Sunbelt. Albuquerque, New Mexico more than doubled in population during the 1940s. War-boom cities, such as San Diego (up 92 percent in population in the 1940s) and Mobile (up 68 percent), bustled with activity and hummed with tension. Factories operated three shifts, movies ran around the clock, and workers filled the streets after midnight.

The hordes of war workers found housing scarce. Workers in Seattle's shipyards and Boeing plants scrounged for living space in offices, tents, chicken coops, and rooming houses where "hot beds" rented in shifts. The situation was similar in small towns.

The results of war production were staggering—an estimated 40 percent of the world's military production was coming from the United States by 1944. The productivity of U.S. workers increased 30 percent between 1939 and 1945. Surging

HOW WAS the United States transformed socially and economically by the war?



A wartime shopper uses ration coupons to purchase groceries.

©Bettmann/Corbis

### QUICK REVIEW

#### Government and the Economy

- ◆ War brought a huge expansion of the federal government.
- ◆ Office of Price Administration (OPA): oversaw price controls and rationing.
- ◆ Under government pressure, industry shifted to defense production.



farm income pulled agriculture out of its long slump. The rich certainly got richer, but overall per capita income doubled, and the poorest quarter of Americans made up some of the ground lost during the Great Depression.

### THE ENLISTMENT OF SCIENCE

“There wasn’t a physicist able to breathe who wasn’t doing war work,” remembered Professor Philip Morrison. At the center of the scientific enterprise was Vannevar Bush, former dean at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. As head of the newly established Office of Scientific Research and Development, Bush guided spending on research and development that dwarfed previous scientific work and set the pattern of massive federal support for science that continued after the war.

The biggest scientific effort was the drive to produce an atomic bomb. As early as 1939, Albert Einstein had written FDR about the possibility of such a weapon and the danger of falling behind the Germans. In late 1941, Roosevelt established what became known as the **Manhattan Project**. On December 2, 1942, scientists manipulated graphite rods inserted in a stack of uranium ingots until they were certain they could trigger and control a self-sustaining nuclear reaction.

The Manhattan Project moved from theory to practice in 1943. Physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer directed the young scientists at Los Alamos in designing a nuclear fission bomb. Engineers in other new science cities tried two approaches to producing the fissionable material. Richland, Washington, burgeoned into a sprawling metropolis that supported the creation of plutonium at the Hanford Enginer Works. Oak Ridge, Tennessee, near Knoxville, was built around gaseous diffusion plants.

Plutonium from Hanford fueled the first bomb tested at the Trinity site, 100 miles from Alamogordo, New Mexico, on July 16, 1945. The explosion astonished even the physicists; Oppenheimer quoted from Hindu scriptures as he tried to comprehend the results: “Now I am become death, destroyer of worlds.”

### MEN AND WOMEN IN THE MILITARY

By 1945, 8.3 million men and women were on active duty in the army and army air forces and 3.4 million in the navy and Marine Corps, totals exceeded only by the Soviet Union. In total, some 350,000 women and more than 16 million men served in the armed forces; 292,000 died in battle, 100,000 survived prisoner-of-war camps, and 671,000 returned wounded.

Twenty-five thousand American Indians served in the armed forces, most in racially integrated units. Because the Navajo were one of the few tribes that had not been studied by German anthropologists, their language was unknown to the Axis armies. More than three hundred Navajo were “code-talkers” who served in radio combat-communication teams in the Pacific theater.

Approximately 1 million African Americans also served in the armed forces during World War II. As it had since the Civil War, the army organized black soldiers in segregated units and often assigned them to the more menial jobs, excluding them from combat until manpower shortages forced changes in policy.

Black soldiers encountered discrimination on and off the base. Towns adjacent to army posts were sometimes off limits to blacks. At some Southern bases, German prisoners of war watched movies from the first rows along with white GIs while African-American soldiers watched from the back. Military courts were quick to judge and harsh to punish when black GIs were the accused. Despite the obstacles, all-black units, such as the 761st Tank Battalion and the 99th Pursuit Squadron, earned distinguished records. More broadly, the war experience helped



#### WHERE TO LEARN MORE

Los Alamos County Historical Museum and Bradbury Science Museum, Los Alamos, New Mexico



25-5

A. Philip Randolph, “Why Should We March?” (1942)

**Manhattan Project** The effort, using the code name Manhattan Engineer District, to develop an atomic bomb under the management of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during World War II.



to invigorate postwar efforts to achieve equal rights, as had also been true after World War I.

The nation had a different—but also mixed—reaction to the women who joined the armed forces. The armed services tried not to change established gender roles. Many of the women in uniform hammered at typewriters, worked switchboards, inventoried supplies. Others, however, worked close to combat zones as photographers, code analysts, and nurses.

The greatest departure from expected roles was the work of the 1,074 members of the Women's Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs), a civilian auxiliary of the U.S. Army Air Forces. From 1942 to 1944, they ferried military aircraft across the United States, towed targets for antiaircraft practices, and tested new planes. Nevertheless, WASPs were not allowed to carry male passengers, and the unit was dissolved when the supply of male pilots caught up with the demand.

### THE HOME FRONT

The war inexorably penetrated everyday life. Residents in war-production cities had to cope with throngs of new workers, many of whom were unattached males—young men waiting for their draft call and older men without their families. Military and defense officials worried about sexually transmitted diseases and pressured cities to shut down their vice districts.

Americans put their lives on fast forward. Couples who had postponed marriage because of the depression could afford to marry as the economy picked up. Altogether, the war years brought 1.2 million “extra” marriages, compared to the rate for the period 1920–1939.

The war's impact on families was gradual. The draft started with single men, then called up married men without children, and finally tapped fathers in 1943. Left at home were millions of “service wives,” whose compensation from the government was \$50 per month.

The war had mixed effects on children. “Latchkey children” of working mothers often had to fend for themselves, but middle-class kids whose mothers stayed home could treat the war as an interminable scout project, with salvage drives and campaigns to sell war bonds. Between the end of the school day and supertime, children listened as Captain Midnight, Jack Armstrong, and Hop Harrigan (“America's ace of the airways”) fought the Nazis and Japanese on the radio.

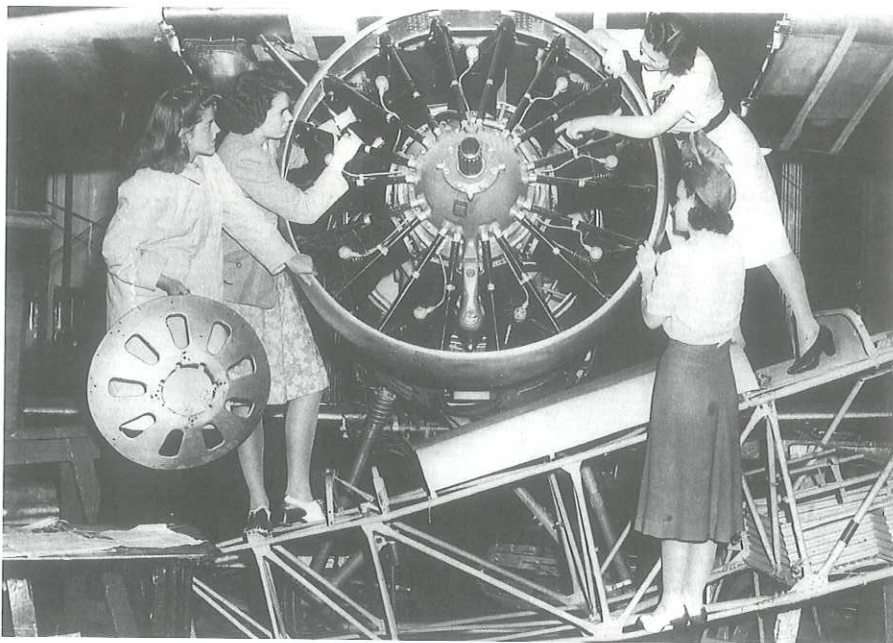
The federal government tried to keep civilians of all ages committed to the war. It encouraged scrap drives and backyard victory gardens. The government also managed news about the fighting. Censors screened soldiers' letters. Early in the war, they blocked publication of most photographs of war casualties, although magazines such as *Life* were full of haunting images. Censors also authorized photographs of enemy atrocities to motivate the public.

Government officials had a harder time controlling Hollywood. The Office of War Information wanted propaganda in feature films, but not so heavy-handed that it drove viewers from theaters. War films revealed the nation's racial attitudes, often drawing distinctions between “good” and “bad” Germans but uniformly portraying Japanese as subhuman and repulsive. The most successful films dramatized the courage of the Allies. *Mrs. Miniver* (1942) showed the British transcending class differences in their battle with the Nazis. *So Proudly We Hail* (1943) celebrated the heroism of navy nurses in the Pacific theater.



**Dorie Miller**, a mess attendant on the battleship *West Virginia*, received the Navy Cross for “extraordinary courage” during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Miller helped to pull the *Arizona*'s captain to safety and then manned a machine gun and shot down several Japanese planes. The War Department used Miller on recruiting posters such as this one but neglected to point out that it continued to restrict black recruits mostly to kitchen and other service jobs.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress



**Members of Women Fliers of America** examine an aircraft engine. The organization had been asked by the U.S. Army to identify women with more than 200 flying hours who might ferry planes, freeing military aviators for other duties.

Getty Image Inc./Hutton Archive Photos

## NEW WORKERS

As draft calls took men off the assembly line, women changed the composition of the industrial work force. The war gave them new job opportunities that were embodied in the image of Rosie the Riveter. The acute shortage of welders and other skilled workers, opened thousands of journeyman positions to women, work that was far more lucrative than waiting tables or sewing in a clothing factory. Aircraft companies, which compounded labor shortages by stubborn “whites only” hiring, developed new power tools and production techniques to accommodate the smaller average size of women workers, increasing efficiency for everyone along the production line.

By July 1944, fully 19 million women held paid jobs, up 6 million in four years. Women’s share of government jobs increased from 19 to 38 percent and their share of manufacturing jobs from 22 to 33 percent. Some women worked out of patriotism. Many others, however, needed to support their families and already had years of experience in the work force. As one of the workers recalled of herself and a friend, “We both had to work, we both had children, so we became welders, and if I might say so, damn good ones.”

Americans did not know how to respond to the growing numbers of working women. Many worried that their employment would undermine families. The federal government assisted female entry into the labor force by funding day-care programs that served 600,000 children. Employment recruitment posters showed strong, handsome women with rolled-up sleeves and wrenches in hand, but men and women assumed that women would want to return to the home after victory; they were to work when the nation needed them and quit when the need was past.

Mexican-American workers made special contributions to the war effort. As defense factories and the military absorbed workers, western farms and railroads faced an acute shortage of workers. In 1942, the United States and Mexico negotiated the *bracero* program, under which the Mexican government recruited workers to come to the United States on six-to-twelve month contracts. Although *bracero* workers still faced discrimination, the U.S. government tried to improve working conditions because it wanted to keep public opinion in Latin America favorable to the Allied cause.

The war was a powerful force for the assimilation of Native Americans. Forty thousand moved to off-reservation jobs; they were a key labor force for military supply depots throughout the West. The average cash income of Indian households tripled during the war. Many stayed in cities at its end. The experience of the war accelerated the fight for full civil rights. Congress had made Indians citizens in 1924, but several states continued to deny them the vote. Activists organized the National Congress of American Indians in 1944 and began the efforts that led the U.S. Supreme Court in 1948 to require states to grant voting rights.

African Americans, too, found economic advancement through war jobs. Early in the mobilization, labor leader A. Philip Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters worked with Walter White of the NAACP to plan a “Negro March on Washington” to protest racial discrimination by the federal government.

## QUICK REVIEW

### Rosie the Riveter

- ◆ Demand for labor drew women into the workplace.
- ◆ Companies opened positions for women in nontraditional jobs.
- ◆ Government funded daycare programs to help women enter the workforce.



To head off a major embarrassment, Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 in June 1941, barring racial discrimination in defense contracts and creating the **Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC)**; the order coined a phrase that reverberated powerfully through the coming decades: "No discrimination on grounds of race, color, creed, or national origin."

But white resistance to black coworkers remained strong. In Mobile, New Orleans, and Jacksonville, agreements between shipyards and segregated unions blocked skilled black workers from high-wage jobs. Attempts to overturn discrimination could lead to violence. When the Alabama Dry Dock Company integrated its work force in May 1943, white workers rioted. Nevertheless, African-American membership in labor unions doubled, and wartime prosperity raised the average black income from 41 percent of the white average in 1939 to 61 percent by 1950.



In 1942, the federal government removed Japanese Americans from parts of four western states and interned them in isolated camps scattered through the West.

AP/Wide World Photos

## CLASHING CULTURES

As men and women migrated in search of work, they also crossed or collided with traditional boundaries of race and region. African-American migration out of the South accelerated in the early 1940s. Many of the migrants headed for well-established black neighborhoods in Northern cities. Others created new African-American neighborhoods in Western cities. White Southerners and black Northerners with different ideas of racial etiquette found themselves side by side in West Coast shipyards. In the Midwest, black migrants from the South and white migrants from Appalachia competed for the same high-wage jobs and scarce apartments.

Tensions between black and white residents exploded in at least fifty cities in 1943 alone. In June 1943, an argument over the use of Detroit's Belle Isle Park set off three days of violence: Twenty-five black people and nine white people died in the most serious racial riot of the war.

Tensions were simultaneously rising between Mexican Americans and Anglos. As the Mexican community in Los Angeles swelled to an estimated 400,000, newspapers published anti-Mexican articles. On June 6, 1943, off-duty sailors and soldiers attacked Latinos on downtown streets and invaded Mexican-American neighborhoods. The attacks dragged on for a week of sporadic violence against black people and Filipinos as well as Latinos.

## INTERMENT OF JAPANESE AMERICANS

On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which authorized the secretary of war to define restricted areas and remove civilian residents who were threats to national security. The primary targets were 112,000 Japanese Americans in California and parts of Washington, Oregon, and Arizona. Japanese immigrants and their children in the Western states had experienced forty years of hostility and racial prejudice. The outbreak of war triggered anti-Japanese hysteria

**Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC)** Federal agency established in 1941 to curb racial discrimination in war production jobs and government employment.



## ◆ AMERICAN VIEWS ◆

### THE INTERNMENT OF JAPANESE AMERICANS IN 1942

**I**n the spring of 1942, the U.S. army ordered that Japanese Americans in four western states be relocated to internment camps distant from the Pacific Coast. Monica Itoe Stone describes the experience of her Seattle family as they were transferred to temporary quarters before they were moved again to Idaho.

HOW DO the expectations of *issei* (immigrants who had been born in Japan) differ from those of *nisei* (their American-born children, including the author of this memoir)? Why did the U.S. army wait five months after Pearl Harbor before beginning the internment? Does the management of the assembly and internment suggest anything about stereotypes of Japanese Americans?

General DeWitt kept reminding us that E day, evacuation day, was drawing near. “E day will be announced in the very near future. If you have not wound up your affairs by now, it will soon be too late.”

... On the twenty-first of April, a Tuesday, the general gave us the shattering news. “All the Seattle Japanese will be moved to Puyallup by May 1. Everyone must be registered Saturday and Sunday between 8 A.M. and 5 P.M.

Up to that moment, we had hoped against hope that something or someone would intervene for us. Now there

was no time for moaning. A thousand and one details must be attended to in this one week of grace. Those seven days sputtered out like matches struck in the wind, as we rushed wildly about. Mother distributed sheets, pillowcases and blankets, which we stuffed into seabags. Into the two suitcases, we packed heavy winter overcoats, plenty of sweaters, woolen slacks and skirts, flannel pajamas and scarves. Personal toilet articles, one tin plate, tin cup and silverware completed our luggage. The one seabag and two suitcases apiece were going to be the backbone of our future home, and we planned it carefully.

Henry went to the Control Station to register the family. He came home with twenty tags, all numbered “10710,” tags to be attached to each piece of baggage, and one to hang from our coat lapels. From then on, we were known as Family #10710.

[On the day set for relocation] we climbed into the truck. . . . As we coasted down Beacon Hill bridge for the last time, we fell silent, and stared out at the delicately flushed, morning sky of Puget Sound. We drove through bustling Chinatown, and in a few minutes arrived on the corner of Eighth and Lane. This area was ordinarily lonely and deserted but now it was gradually filling up with silent, labeled Japanese. . . .

Finally at ten o’clock, a vanguard of Greyhound busses purred in and parked themselves neatly along

and gave officials an excuse to take action against both enemy aliens (immigrants who retained Japanese citizenship) and their American-born children. As the U.S. general commanding on the West Coast put it, “A Jap is a Jap. It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen or not.”

At the end of April 1942, Japanese in the coastal states were given a week to organize their affairs and report to assembly centers, where they were housed before being moved to ten internment camps in isolated locations in the western interior (see American Views, “Internment of Japanese Americans: Life in Camp Harmony”). Here, they were housed in tar-paper barracks, hemmed in by barbed wire fences, and guarded by military police. The victims reacted to the hardship and stress in different ways. Several thousand second-generation Japanese Americans renounced their citizenship in disgust. But many others demonstrated their loyalty by cooperating with the authorities, finding sponsors who would help them move to





the curb. The crowd stirred and murmured. The bus doors opened and from each, a soldier with rifle in hand stepped out and stood stiffly at attention by the door. The murmuring died. It was the first time I had seen a rifle at such close range and I felt uncomfortable. . . .

Newspaper photographers with flash-bulb cameras pushed busily through the crowd. One of them rushed up to our bus, and asked a young couple and their little boy to step out and stand by the door for a shot. They were reluctant, but the photographers were persistent and at length they got out of the bus and posed, grinning widely to cover their embarrassment. We saw the picture in the newspaper shortly after and the caption underneath it read, “japs good-natured about evacuation.”

Our bus quickly filled to capacity. . . . The door closed with a low hiss. We were now the Wartime Civil Control Administration’s babies.

About noon we crept into a small town. . . . and we noticed at the left of us an entire block filled with neat rows of low shacks, resembling chicken houses. Someone commented on it with awe, “Just look at those chicken houses. They sure go in for poultry in a big way here.” Slowly the bus made a left turn, drove through a wire-fenced gate, and to our dismay, we were inside the oversized chicken farm. . . .

The apartments resembled elongated, low stables about two blocks long. Our home was one room, about 18 by 20 feet, the size of a living room. There was one

small window in the wall opposite the one door. It was bare except for a small, tinny wood-burning stove crouching in the center. The flooring consisted of two by fours laid directly on the earth, and dandelions were already pushing their way up through the cracks. . . .

I stared at our little window, unable to sleep. I was glad Mother had put up a makeshift curtain on the window for I noticed a powerful beam of light sweeping across it every few seconds. The lights came from high towers placed around the camp where guards with Tommy guns kept a twenty-four hour vigil. I remembered the wire fence encircling us, and a knot of anger tightened in my breast. What was I doing behind a fence like a criminal? If there were accusations to be made, why hadn’t I been given a fair trial? Maybe I wasn’t considered an American anymore. My citizenship wasn’t real, after all. Then what was I? I was certainly not a citizen of Japan as my parents were. On second thought, even Father and Mother. . . . had little tie with their mother country. In their twenty-five years in America, they had worked and paid their taxes to their adopted government as any other citizen.

Of one thing I was sure. The wire fence was real. I no longer had the right to walk out of it. It was because I had Japanese ancestors. It was also because some people had little faith in the ideas and ideals of democracy.

*Source:* Monica Itoi Sone, *Nisei Daughter* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979).

other parts of the country, or joining the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the most decorated American unit in the European war.

Although the U.S. Supreme Court sanctioned the removals in *Korematsu v. United States* (1944), the nation officially recognized its liability with the Japanese Claims Act of 1948, for many internees had lost property that they had been powerless to protect. The nation acknowledged its broader moral responsibility in 1988, when Congress approved redress payments to each of the sixty thousand surviving evacuees.

By contrast Hawaii treated Japanese Americans much differently. Hawaii’s long history as a multiethnic society made residents and officials disinclined to look for a racial scapegoat. Less than 1 percent of Hawaii’s Japanese American population of 160,000 was interned. The treatment of mainland Japanese Americans also contrasted with the situation of German Americans and Italian Americans. Only tiny fractions of their total populations were interned or had their movements restricted.



## THE END OF THE NEW DEAL

Roosevelt's New Deal had run out of steam in 1938. The war had reinvigorated his political fortunes by focusing national energies on foreign policy, over which presidents have the greatest power. After the 1942 election left Congress in the hands of Republicans, conservative lawmakers ignored proposals that war emergency housing be used to improve the nation's permanent housing stock, abolished the National Resources Planning Board, curtailed rural electrification, and crippled the Farm Security Administration.

For the presidential election of 1944, the Republicans nominated Governor Thomas Dewey of New York, who had made his reputation as a crime-fighting district attorney. The Democrats renominated Roosevelt for a fourth term. Missouri Senator Harry S. Truman, a tough investigator of American military preparedness, replaced liberal New Dealer Henry Wallace as Roosevelt's running mate, which appealed Southern Democrats.

Roosevelt supporters argued that the nation could not afford to switch leaders in the middle of a war, but Dewey's vigor and relative youth (he was twenty years younger than FDR) pointed up the president's failing health and energy. Voters gave Roosevelt 432 electoral votes to 99, but the narrowing gap in the popular vote—54 percent for Roosevelt and 46 percent for Dewey—made the Republicans eager for 1948.

## WAR AND PEACE

In January 1943, the U.S. War Department completed the world's largest office building, the Pentagon. The building housed 23,000 workers along 17.5 miles of corridors. The gray walls of the Pentagon symbolized an American government that was outgrowing its prewar roots.

## GATHERING ALLIED STRENGTH

American and British landings in North Africa in 1942 and Italy in 1943 satisfied the British desire to secure Western influence in the Mediterranean and Middle East, but they pleased neither American policymakers nor the Soviet Union. U.S. leaders wanted to justify massive mobilization with a war-winning campaign and to strike across Europe to occupy the heart of Germany. Stalin needed a full-scale invasion of western Europe to divert German forces from the Eastern Front.

In fact, 1943 was the year in which the Allies gained the edge in quality of equipment, capacity for war production, and military sophistication. The United States poured men and equipment into Britain. The Soviets recruited, rearmed, and upgraded new armies, despite enormous losses in 1941 and 1942 and rebuilt munitions factories beyond German reach. As Soviet soldiers reconquered western Russia and the Ukraine, they marched in 13 million pairs of American-made boots and traveled in 51,000 jeeps and 375,000 Dodge trucks made available from U.S. lend-lease assistance.

Meeting in Casablanca in January 1943, Roosevelt and Churchill demanded the "unconditional surrender" of Italy, Germany, and Japan; the phrase meant no deals that kept the enemy governments or leaders in power. Ten months later, the Allied leaders huddled again. Roosevelt and Churchill met with China's Jiang in Cairo and then flew on to meet Stalin in Tehran. At Tehran, the United States and Britain promised to invade France within six months. "We leave here," said the three leaders, "friends in fact, in spirit, in purpose."

HOW DID the Allies win the war?

### QUICK REVIEW

#### Allied Collaboration

- ◆ 1943: U.S. and Soviet leaders prepare for a full-scale invasion of Europe.
- ◆ Soviet advances made possible by U.S. equipment and materials.
- ◆ November 1943: Allied leaders leave Tehran with a time-table for invasion of Europe.



The superficial harmony barely survived the end of the war. Stalin and his generals scoffed at the small scale of early U.S. efforts. Roosevelt's ideal of self-determination for all peoples seemed naive to Churchill, who wanted the major powers to carve out realistic spheres of influence in Europe. It was irrelevant to Stalin, who wanted control of eastern Europe.

## TURNING THE TIDE IN EUROPE

The United States had entered the ground war in Europe with Operation TORCH. Against little opposition, British and American troops under General Dwight Eisenhower landed in French Morocco and Algeria on November 8, 1942 (see Map 26–3). The puppet French government in place there, which had collaborated with the Nazis, now switched sides, giving the Allies footholds in North Africa.

German tanks in February 1943 counterattacked U.S. divisions at Kasserine Pass in the Atlas Mountains of Tunisia. Learning quickly from this tactical defeat, Allied troops forced the Axis in Africa to surrender in May. Eisenhower had already demonstrated his ability to handle the politics of military leadership, skills he perfected commanding a multinational army for the next two and a half years.

The central Mediterranean remained the focus of U.S. and British action for the next year. The British proposed strikes in southern Europe. U.S. Army Chief of Staff George Marshall and President Roosevelt agreed first to the action in North Africa and then to invade Italy in 1943. In July and August, Allied forces led by Montgomery and Patton overran Sicily. As Sicily fell, the Italian king and army forced Mussolini from power and began to negotiate peace with Britain and America (but not the Soviet Union). In September, the Allies announced an armistice with Italy, and Eisenhower's troops landed south of Naples. Germany responded by occupying the rest of Italy.

As American military planners had feared, the Italian campaign soaked up Allied resources. Week after week, the experience of GIs on the line was the same: "You wake up in the mud and your cigarettes are all wet and you have an ache in your joints and a rattle in your chest." Despite months of bitter fighting, the Allies controlled only two-thirds of Italy when the war there ended on May 1, 1945.

On the Eastern Front, the climactic battle of the German-Soviet war had erupted on July 5, 1943. The Germans sent three thousand tanks against the Kursk Salient. Soviet generals had prepared a defense in depth with three thousand tanks of their own. When the attack finally stalled, it marked the last great German offensive until December 1944.

## OPERATION OVERLORD

On **D-Day**—June 6, 1944—the western Allies landed on the coast of Normandy in northwestern France. Six divisions went ashore from hundreds of attack transports carrying four thousand landing craft. Dozens of warships and twelve thousand aircraft provided support. One British and two American airborne divisions dropped behind German positions. When the sun set on the "longest day," the Allies had a tenuous toehold in France.

The Allies secured their beachheads and landed 500,000 men and 100,000 vehicles within two weeks. However, the German defenders kept the Allies along a narrow coastal strip. **Operation OVERLORD**, the code name for the entire campaign across northern France, met renewed success in late July and August. U.S. troops finally broke through German lines around the town of St.-Lô and then drew a ring around the Germans that slowly closed on the town of Falaise. The Germans lost a quarter of a million troops. The German command chose to regroup closer to Germany rather than fight in France. The Allies liberated Paris on August 25.

### QUICK REVIEW

#### The Beginning of the End

- ◆ Allies gained footholds in North Africa.
- ◆ Allies took control of much of Italy.
- ◆ Germans last offensive in Russia turned back.

**D-Day** June 6, 1944, the day of the first paratroop drops and amphibious landings on the coast of Normandy, France, in the first stage of Operation OVERLOAD during World War II.

**Operation OVERLORD** U.S. and British invasion of France in June 1944 during World War II.





On the Eastern Front, by the end of 1944, the Red Army had entered the Balkans and reached central Poland. With the end in sight, the Soviets had suffered nearly 20 million casualties and sustained the heaviest burden in turning back Nazi tyranny.

## VICTORY AND TRAGEDY IN EUROPE

In the last months of 1944, massive air strikes finally reduced German war production. The new American P-51 escort fighter helped B-17 bombers overfly Germany in relative safety after mid-1944. Thousand-bomber raids on railroads and oil facilities began to cripple the German economy. The raids also forced Germany to devote 2.5 million workers to air defense and damage repair. Politics rather than military need governed the final great action of the European air war. British and U.S. bombers in February 1945 staged a terror raid on the nonindustrial city of Dresden, packed with refugees, filled with great art, and undefended by the Germans; a firestorm fueled by incendiary bombs and rubble from blasted buildings killed tens of thousands of civilians without military justification.

Hitler struck a last blow on December 16, 1944. Stripping the Eastern Front of armored units, he launched twenty-five divisions against thinly held U.S. positions in the Ardennes Forest of Belgium. He hoped to split U.S. and British forces by capturing the Belgian port of Antwerp. Taking advantage of snow and fog that grounded Allied aircraft, the Germans drove a 50-mile bulge into U.S. lines. But the German thrust literally ran out of gas beyond the town of Bastogne. The Battle of the Bulge never seriously threatened the outcome of the war.

The Nazi empire collapsed in the spring of 1945. American and British divisions crossed the Rhine in March and enveloped Germany's industrial core. The Soviets drove through eastern Germany toward Berlin. On April 25, American and Red Army troops met on the Elbe River. Hitler committed suicide on April 30 in his concrete bunker deep under devastated Berlin, which surrendered to the Soviets on May 2. The Nazi state formally capitulated on May 8.

The defeat of Germany revealed appalling evidence of the evil at the heart of the Nazi ideology of racial superiority. The "final solution" to what Hitler thought of as the "Jewish problem" went far beyond slave labor. The elite SS, Hitler's personal army within the Nazi party, in 1942 set out to eliminate all of Europe's Jews. The evidence of genocide—systematic racial murder—is irrefutable. At Auschwitz and Treblinka, the SS organized the extermination of up to 6 million Jews and 1 million Poles, Gypsies, and others who failed to fit the Nazi vision of the German master race. Prisoners arrived by forced marches and cattle trains. Those who were not worked or starved to death were herded into gas chambers and then incinerated in huge crematoriums. Soviet troops could scarcely believe what they saw as they overran the death camps and freed the few survivors of what we now call the **Holocaust**.

## THE PACIFIC WAR

Washington divided responsibilities in the Pacific theater. General Douglas MacArthur operated in the islands that stretched between Australia and the Philippines. Admiral Chester Nimitz commanded in the central Pacific. The Allies planned to isolate Japan from its southern conquests. The British moved from India to retake Burma. The Americans advanced along the islands of the southern Pacific to retake the Philippines. With Japan's army still tied down in China, the Americans then planned to bomb Japan into submission.

The Pacific campaigns of 1944, often called **island hopping**, were the American naval version of the *Blitzkrieg*. Planes from American carriers controlled the air, allowing the navy and land forces to isolate and capture the most strategically located Japanese-held islands while bypassing the rest (see Map 26–4).

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



Air Force Museum,  
Dayton, Ohio

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



United States Holocaust Memorial  
Museum, Washington, D.C.  
<http://www.ushmm.urlorg>

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



Museum of the Pacific War,  
Fredericksburg, Texas

**Holocaust** The systematic murder of millions of European Jews and others deemed undesirable by Nazi Germany.

**Island hopping** The Pacific campaigns of 1944 that were the American naval versions of the *Blitzkrieg*.



# MAP EXPLORATION

To explore an interactive version of this map, go to <http://www.prenhall.com/goldfield2/map26.4>



MAP 26-4

**World War II in the Pacific, 1942-1945** The Allied strategy against Japan was to cut off Japan's southern conquests by retaking the central Pacific islands, the Philippines, and Burma and then to strike at the Japanese home islands. Submarine warfare and massive air attacks from November 1944 to August 1945 crippled Japan's capacity to wage war. The detonation of atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki then forced surrender on August 15, 1945.

## WHY WAS Japan unable to maintain its conquests in the Pacific?

Racial hatred animated both sides in the Pacific war and fueled a "war without mercy." Americans often characterized Japanese soldiers as vermin. In turn, the Japanese viewed Americans as racial mongrels and called them demons.

MacArthur used a version of the bypass strategy in the Solomon Islands and New Guinea, leapfrogging over Japanese strong points. The invasion of the Philippines repeated the approach by landing on Leyte, in the middle of the island chain. The Philippine campaign also destroyed the offensive capacity of the Japanese fleet. In the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the U.S. military sank four Japanese battleships, four carriers, and ten cruisers. The Japanese home islands were left with no defensive screen against an expected invasion.



During 1943 and 1944, submarines choked off food, oil, and raw materials bound for Japan and island bases. By 1945, imports to Japan were one-eighth of the 1940 level. Heavy bombing of Japan began in early 1944. A fire-bomb raid on Tokyo on the night of March 9, 1945, killed 124,000 people and left 1 million homeless. Overall, conventional bombing destroyed 42 percent of Japan's industrial capacity. By the time the United States captured the islands of Iwo Jima and Okinawa in fierce fighting (April–June 1945) and neared the Japanese home islands, Japan's position was hopeless.

### SEARCHING FOR PEACE

At the beginning of 1945, the Allies sensed victory. Conferring from February 4 to 11 in the Ukrainian town of Yalta, Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill debated plans for the postwar world. The most important American goal was to enlist the USSR in finishing off the Pacific war. Americans hoped that a Soviet attack on Manchuria would tie down enough Japanese troops to reduce U.S. casualties in invading Japan. Stalin repeated his intent to declare war on Japan within three months of victory in Europe, in return for a free hand in Manchuria.

The most that Roosevelt could coax from Stalin were vague pledges to allow participation of non-Communists in coalition governments in eastern Europe. Stalin also agreed to join a new international organization, the United Nations.

Conservative critics later charged that the Western powers “gave away” eastern Europe at the **Yalta Conference**. In fact, the Soviet Union gained little that it did not already control. In East Asia as well, the Soviets could seize the territories that the agreements granted them.

On April 12, two months after Yalta, Roosevelt died of a cerebral hemorrhage. Harry Truman, the new president, was a shrewd politician, but his experience was limited; Roosevelt had not even told him about the Manhattan Project. Deeply distrustful of the Soviets, Truman first ventured into personal international diplomacy in July 1945 at a British-Soviet-American conference at Potsdam, near Berlin. Most of the sessions debated the future of Germany. The leaders endorsed the expulsion of ethnic Germans from eastern Europe and moved the borders of Poland 100 miles west into historically German territory. Truman also made it clear that the United States expected to dominate the occupation of Japan. Its goal was to democratize the Japanese political system and reintroduce Japan into the international community—a policy that succeeded. The **Potsdam Declaration** on July 26 summarized U.S. policy and gave Japan an opening for surrender. However, the declaration failed to guarantee that Emperor Hirohito would not be tried as a war criminal. The Japanese response was so cautious that Americans read it as rejection.

Secretary of State James Byrnes now urged Truman to use the new atomic bomb, tested just weeks earlier. Japan's ferocious defense of Okinawa and suicide missions by thousands of *kamikaze* pilots had confirmed American fears that the Japanese would fight to the death. In contrast, the bomb offered a quick end to the conflict, and it might intimidate Stalin (see the overview table “The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb”). In short, a decision not to use atomic weapons was never a serious alternative.

In early August, the United States dropped two of three available nuclear bombs on Japan. On August 6 at Hiroshima the first bomb killed at least eighty thousand people and poisoned thousands more with radiation. A second bomb three days later at Nagasaki took another forty thousand lives. Japan ceased hostilities on August 14 and surrendered formally on September 2. The world has wondered ever since if the United States might have defeated Japan without resorting to atomic bombs, but recent research shows that the bombs were the shock that allowed the Emperor and peace advocates to overcome military leaders who wanted to fight to the death.

### QUICK REVIEW

#### Preparations for Victory

- February 1945: Allies debate plans for postwar world at Yalta.
- Soviets solidified their hold on Eastern Europe.
- July 26, 1945: Potsdam Declaration fails to produce a definitive response from Japan.

**Yalta Conference** Meeting of U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin held in February 1945 to plan the final stages of World War II and postwar arrangements.

**Potsdam Declaration** Statement issued by the United States during a meeting of U.S. President Harry Truman, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin in which the United States declared its intention to democratize the Japanese political system and reintroduce Japan into the international community.



# OVERVIEW

## THE DECISION TO USE THE ATOMIC BOMB

Americans have long argued whether the use of atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was necessary to end the war. Several factors probably influenced President Truman's decision to use the new weapon:

<b>Military necessity</b>	Truman later argued that the use of atomic bombs was necessary to avoid an invasion of Japan that would have cost hundreds of thousand of lives. Military planners expected Japanese soldiers to put up the same kind of suicidal resistance in defense of the home islands as they had to American landings at the Philippines, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. More recently, historians have argued that the Japanese military was near collapse and that an invasion would have met far less resistance than feared.
<b>Atomic diplomacy</b>	Some historians believe that Truman used atomic weapons to overawe the Soviet Union and induce it to move cautiously in expanding its influence in Europe and East Asia. Truman and his advisers were certainly aware of how the bomb might influence the Soviet leadership.
<b>Domestic politics</b>	President Roosevelt and his chief military advisers had spent billions on the secret atomic bomb project without the knowledge of Congress or the American public. The managers of the Manhattan Project may have believed that only proof of its military value would quiet critics and justify the huge cost.
<b>Momentum of war</b>	The United States and Britain had already adopted wholesale destruction of German and Japanese cities as a military tactic. Use of the atomic bomb looked like a variation on fire bombing, not the start of a new era of potential mass destruction. In this context, some historians argue, President Truman's choice was natural and expected.

## CONCLUSION

**W**orld War II made and unmade families. It gave millions of women new responsibilities and then sent them back to the kitchen. It put money in pockets that had been emptied by the Great Depression and turned struggling business owners into tycoons.

Most of the 16 million men and women in uniform served in support jobs that keep the war machine going.

World War II adventure movies in which Americans always win leave the impression that triumph was necessary and inevitable. In fact, victory was the hard-fought result of public leadership and military effort. Under other leadership, for example, the United States might have stood aside until it was too late to reverse the Axis conquest of Europe and East Asia.

The war unified the nation in new ways while confirming old divisions. People of all backgrounds shared a common cause.

But nothing broke the barriers that separated white and black Americans. Unequal treatment in a war for democracy outraged black soldiers, who returned to fight for civil rights. The uprooting of Japanese Americans was another reminder of racial prejudice.





## FROM THEN TO NOW

### Nuclear Weapons

**O**n May 11 and 12, 1998, India tested five nuclear weapons in its western desert. Two weeks later, Pakistan tested its own nuclear weapons. Neighbors and bitter rivals, the two became the sixth and seventh nations to publicly acknowledge the possession of a nuclear arsenal. Now the tensions between them, which had long fueled border clashes and twice erupted in open warfare, had become another factor in the delicate calculus of nuclear terror that has confronted the world since Hiroshima.

It has been a central goal of U.S. policy since 1945 to limit the number of nations with atomic weapons and place ceilings on the size of nuclear arsenals. The goal became more urgent when the Soviet Union deployed its own nuclear weapons after 1949, establishing the “balance of terror” that haunted the decades-long Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Two key steps toward reducing the nuclear threat were the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963—in which the United States, Britain, and the USSR outlawed atmospheric nuclear testing (see Chapter 30)—and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was signed in 1968 and extended indefinitely in 1995. One hundred eighty nations have agreed not to acquire nuclear weapons, and five acknowledged nuclear powers—the United States, Russia, Britain, France, China—have agreed to eventual elimination of their own weapons.

The power of international opinion was clearly not enough to convince India and Pakistan to abandon their nuclear weapons programs, but it has been effective elsewhere in the 1990s. One justification of the Gulf War in 1991 (see

Chapter 33) was to prevent Iraq from developing nuclear arms, and Iraqi interference with United Nations inspection teams triggered bombing raids on Iraq in 1998–1999. The United States also orchestrated pressure on North Korea to cancel a suspected nuclear weapons program and admit international inspectors.

The 1990s saw advances in efforts to reduce the huge nuclear stockpiles of the United States and Russia. The first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (START I) went into effect in 1994. The United States and Russia agreed to retain a maximum of eight thousand warheads each. START II, if implemented, would cut the total to three thousand each. The breakup of the Soviet Union and the economic challenges that have confronted its constituent republics have created fears about the diversion of warheads into the hands of terrorists. The United States, however, has helped to pay for dismantling of Russian warheads and their removal from Ukraine and Kazakhstan, both formerly parts of the Soviet Union.

The frightening proliferation and growth of nuclear arsenals that began with the Manhattan Project and continued into the 1980s may be ending. The 1990s, on the contrary, may have marked the beginning of a new era of shrinking nuclear capacity, despite reversals like those in India and Pakistan. South Africa, for example, announced in 1993 that it had destroyed six warheads that it had manufactured secretly. And planned reductions in the largest nuclear arsenals offer hope that the trend will continue in the new century.

The lessons of World War II influenced the thinking of presidents from Eisenhower in the 1950s to George H. W. Bush in the 1990s. Even though the United States ended 1945 with the world’s mightiest navy, biggest air force, and only atomic bomb, the instability that had followed World War I made Western leaders nervous about the shape of world politics.

One result in the postwar era was conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, which became the Cold War. At home, international tensions fed pressure for social and political conformity. Fifteen years of economic depression and sacrifice made the postwar generation sensitive to perceived threats to steady jobs and stable families. For the next generation, the unresolved business of World War II would haunt American life.



## SUMMARY

**The Dilemmas of Neutrality** In the late 1930s President Roosevelt's challenge was to lead the United States toward rearmament and support nations at war with fascism without alarming the public. The roots of World War II were to be found in the after-effects of the first World War; as Germany marched from victory to victory from 1939 to 1941, strong isolationist sentiment in America shaped public debate and limited attempts to help Britain and the Soviet Union. The swift collapse of France and radio broadcasts describing the bombing of London frightened Americans; the Lend Lease Act, an undeclared naval war, and the Atlantic Charter drew America closer to war. The final shove came in the Pacific with the attack on Pearl Harbor; in December 1941 America entered World War II.

**Holding the Line** Despite the popular desire to defeat Japan, the Allies planned to defeat Germany first. The Soviet Union held the Eastern front in the Battle of Stalingrad; the British fought back in the Battle of the Atlantic; German troops in North Africa were forced to retreat; Japanese expansion came to a halt at the Battle of the Coral Sea and Battle of Midway. By the end of 1942 the tide was turning; in mid-1943 the Allies could begin to plan for victory with confidence.

**Mobilizing for Victory** The need to fight a global war brought a huge expansion of the federal government; price controls and rationing fought inflation, industry mobilized for defense production, and the Manhattan Project ushered in the age of atomic energy. The war penetrated every facet of everyday life; women and minorities changed the composition of the industrial work force. The government saw Japanese Americans as threats and interned them in camps throughout the West. The war required more than a thirtyfold expansion of the U.S. military; soldiers came from across the American spectrum. While women in the military received unequal treatment, African Americans fared worse.

**War and Peace** Plans for ending the war were drawn up at Casablanca and Tehran; Italy was invaded in 1943; Operation Overlord opened the second front in Europe; in 1944 Germany was being battered from the east and west. As Allied troops entered Germany and discovered the death camps, the extent of what is now called the Holocaust became clear. Through the island hopping campaign in the Pacific, American forces neared the Japanese home islands; in 1945 President Truman chose to use the atomic bomb to end the war with Japan. The postwar world would prove to be a challenge; the Yalta and Potsdam conferences divided Europe into spheres that would last for almost fifty years.

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## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What arguments did Americans make against involvement in the war in Europe? Why did President Roosevelt and many others believe it necessary to block German and Japanese expansion?
2. How did mobilization for World War II alter life in the United States? What opportunities did it open for women?
3. What factors were decisive in the defeat of Germany?



4. What was the U.S. strategy against Japan, and how well did it work?
  5. What role did advanced science and technology play in World War II?  
How did the scientific lead of the United States affect the war's outcome?
- 

## KEY TERMS

**Allies** (p. 687)

**Atlantic Charter** (p. 691)

**Axis Powers** (p. 687)

**Battle of the Atlantic** (p. 693)

**Blitzkrieg** (p. 688)

**D-Day** (p. 703)

**Eastern Front** (p. 692)

**Fair Employment Practices**

**Committee** (p. 699)

**Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty**

**Sphere** (p. 687)

**Holocaust** (p. 705)

**Island hopping** (p. 705)





**Manhattan Project** (p. 696)

**Operation OVERLORD** (p. 703)

**Postdam Declaration** (p. 707)

**Yalta Conference** (p. 707)

## WHERE TO LEARN MORE

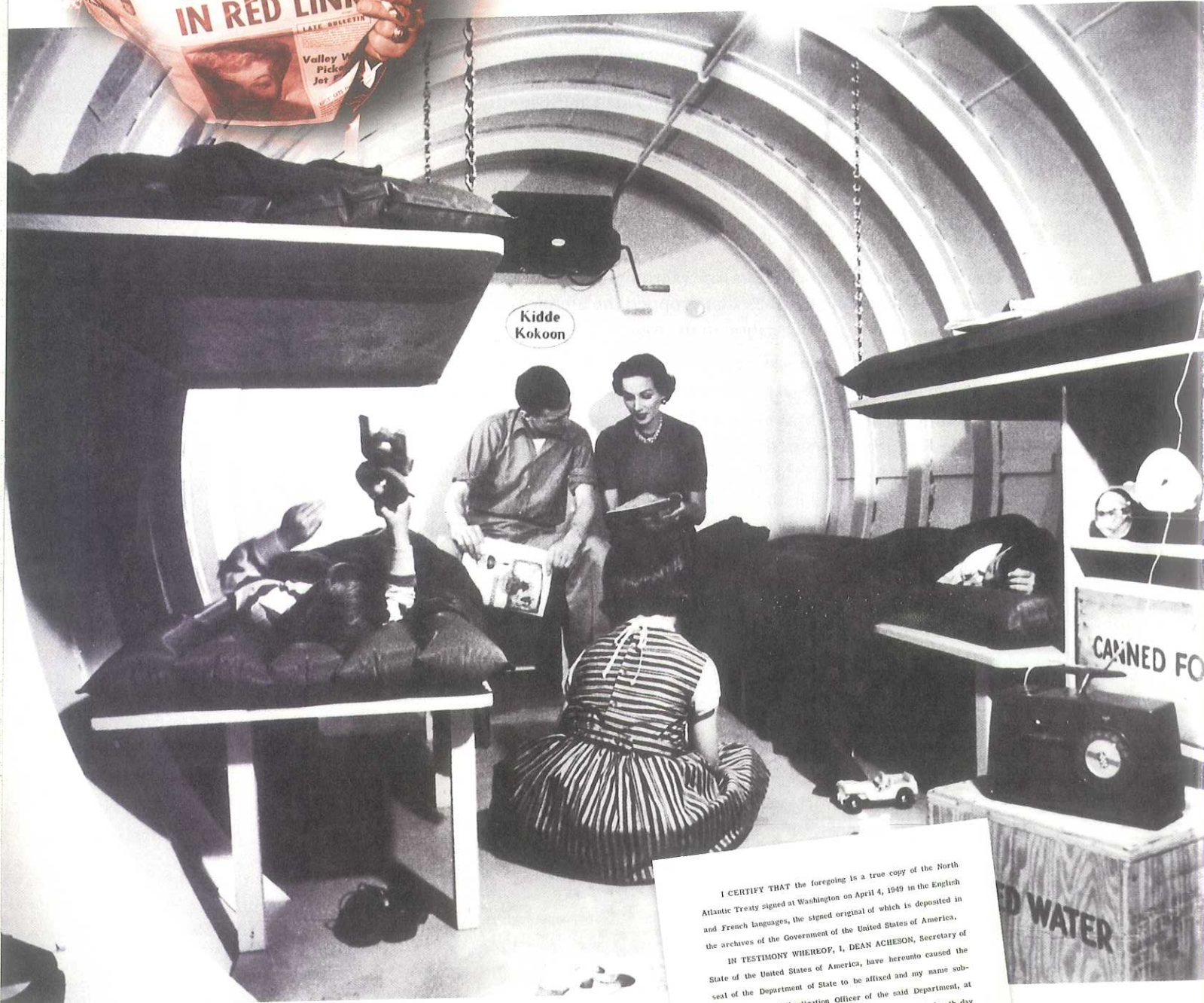
-  **Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio.** Visitors can walk among World War II fighter planes and bombers, including the B-29 that dropped the atomic bomb in Nagasaki, and learn about the role of aviation in the war.
-  **Museum of the Pacific War, Fredericksburg, Texas.** In the birthplace of Admiral Chester Nimitz, this new museum is an excellent introduction to the war with Japan.
-  **Los Alamos County Historical Museum and Bradbury Science Museum, Los Alamos, New Mexico.** The museum traces the origins of atomic energy for military and civilian uses. Nearby is the Los Alamos County Historical Museum, which gives the feel of everyday life in the atomic town.
-  **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.** The Holocaust Museum gives visitors a deeply moving depiction of the deadly impacts of Nazi ideas in the 1930s and 1940s. The museum's website at <http://www.ushmm.org> also explores virtually every facet of the Holocaust experience for Jews during World War II.



For additional study resources for this chapter, go to:

[www.prenhall.com/goldfield/chapter26](http://www.prenhall.com/goldfield/chapter26)

*To my mind we are in a situation no less dangerous than the one we were facing in 1939, and it is of the greatest importance that we realize it. We must realize . . . that democracy will not be saved by ideals alone.*



As international tensions rose with the onset of the Cold War, Americans wondered how to prepare for a possible nuclear war. Many families stocked extra food and water and bought a battery-powered radio, but few actually installed backyard bomb shelters like the one being tested by this family in a Long Island suburb not far from Levittown.

I CERTIFY THAT the foregoing is a true copy of the North Atlantic Treaty signed at Washington on April 4, 1949 in the English and French languages, the signed original of which is deposited in the archives of the Government of the United States of America.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I, DEAN ACHESON, Secretary of State of the United States of America, have herunto caused the seal of the Department of State to be affixed and my name subscribed by the Authentication Officer of the said Department, at the city of Washington, in the District of Columbia, this fourth day of April, 1949.

Secretary of State

By *D. P. Chandler*  
Authentication Officer  
Department of State