World War II
1931 - 1945
Adolf Hitler dreamed of a mighty German empire. He began to secretly build up the German military.

Communist dictator Joseph Stalin crushed his political opponents and dominated all aspects of Soviet life.

Fascist dictator Francisco Franco held power in Spain after the Spanish Civil War ended in the 1930s.

Fascist Benito Mussolini promised to restore Italy’s greatness. He had a vision of a strong, powerful Italian military.
Germany lost land to surrounding nations

War reparations
- Allies collect $ to pay back war debts to US
- Germany pays $57 trillion (modern day equivalent)
- Germans are bankrupt, embarrassed, guilt ridden, and angry.
The Rise of Dictators

The legacy of **World War I** and the effects of the **Great Depression** led to mass unemployment, inflation, and the threat of communism in Europe. These factors caused widespread **political unrest**.

### Unemployment in Europe, 1932

- **25–32% workforce unemployed**
- **15–24% workforce unemployed**
- **No data available**

### Value of German Currency, 1914-1923

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of German Marks to the U.S. Dollar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1923</td>
<td>4,620,455.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1923</td>
<td>4,200,000,000,000.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler preached an extreme form of patriotism and nationalism mixed with racism that became known as fascism. Mussolini became prime minister of Italy in 1922 and soon established a dictatorship. Hitler and his Nazi Party won control of the German government in 1933 and quickly overthrew the nation’s constitution.
By 1929, Joseph Stalin was dictator of the Soviet Union, which he turned into a totalitarian state.

Stalin took brutal measures to control and modernize industry and agriculture.

Stalin had four million people killed or imprisoned on false charges of disloyalty to the state.
The Spanish Civil War offered an opportunity to test the new German military tactics and the strategy of *Die Totale Krieg* (The Total War).
In 1931, military leaders urged the Emperor Hirohito to invade Manchuria, a province in northern China that is rich in natural resources.
In 1935, **Benito Mussolini** ordered the invasion of Ethiopia. Italian troops roared in with machine guns, tanks, airplanes, and chemical weapons quickly overwhelming the poorly equipped Ethiopian army and killing thousands of civilians.
In 1935, Adolf Hitler moved troops into the Rhineland, a region of Germany along the French border. Under the Treaty of Versailles, the Rhineland was to remain free of German forces. France was outraged but took no action to stop the treaty violation. Meeting Germany’s demands in order to avoid war was known as appeasement.
Appeasement at Munich
Germany Invades Poland

On September 1, 1939, **Germany invaded Poland**, plunging Europe into war. Great Britain and France declared war on Germany two days later. World War II had begun. The Germans introduced a new method of warfare known as **blitzkrieg** (lightning war) that stressed speed, surprise, and the coordinated use of tanks, troops, and planes.
Blitzkrieg

Aircraft bombed airfields, transportation systems, and cities, crippling defenses.

Fast-moving armored columns struck quickly, driving deeply into enemy territory.

Behind the armor came foot soldiers. They crushed any resistance behind the armor advance.

The speed of a German blitzkrieg attack had a devastating effect on a population—both physically and emotionally.

**Drawing Conclusions** What was the main element on which this type of warfare depended?

See Skills Handbook, p. H18
The Maginot Line was an elaborate fortification built as a permanent line of defense against German invasion into France.

**Movement**  Why did the Maginot Line prove ineffective?

**Region**  How much European territory did the Axis Powers control by 1941?

See *Skills Handbook*, p. H20
In June 1940, Germany launched a major offensive against France. The German army reached Paris in less than two weeks. Days later France surrendered.
More than 300,000 British troops were evacuated from Dunkirk in May and June 1940. A variety of boats and many other types of craft crossed the English Channel to assist in the escape. At the time the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill said it was "a miracle of deliverance". It seemed like a victory in just getting the troops back to fight another day.
The Battle of Britain was fought between the July 10 and October 31, 1940. The British RAF, outnumbered by the German Luftwaffe by over 4 to 1, won a decisive victory, handed Hitler’s military forces their first real defeat, and saved Great Britain from invasion.

The British triumph was not without heavy cost. Total British civilian losses from July to December 1940 were 23,002 dead and 32,138 wounded.

The Germans continued to launch spectacular attacks against important British cities and industries, but they could not destroy the RAF or the will of the British people. Today, September 15th is “Battle of Britain Day” in Great Britain.
For months, German planes bombed London and other British cities, killing tens of thousands.

Londoners slept in subway stations at night to avoid the bombs and tried to carry on with their lives during the day.

By fall, Hitler abandoned plans to invade Britain.
“Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.”  Winston Churchill

By the end of 1940, the Germans realized that the RAF could not be defeated. Germany was also preparing to attack Russia, so Operation Sea-Lion was cancelled indefinitely and eventually abandoned altogether. The Battle of Britain was over.
As World War II raged, President Roosevelt tried to help the Allies by supplying them with arms and materials. Roosevelt felt “We must be the great arsenal of democracy.” He proposed the **Lend-Lease Act**, a measure that allowed the U.S. to lend or lease equipment and weapons to the Allied nations. Congress approved and the U.S. sent about $50 billion worth of war goods to the Allies.
Roosevelt had promised to maintain American neutrality, but he sympathized with the Allies.

### Lend-Lease Aid Given by the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>To British Empire</th>
<th>To Soviet Union</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1941 (March–December)</td>
<td>$1.1 billion</td>
<td>$20.0 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>$4.8 billion</td>
<td>$1.4 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>$9.0 billion</td>
<td>$2.4 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>$10.8 billion</td>
<td>$4.1 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945 (January–August)</td>
<td>$4.4 billion</td>
<td>$2.8 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$30.1 billion</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10.7 billion</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*SOURCE: British War Economy, W. K. Hancock and M. M. Gowing*
After World War I, Germany was not allowed to have any submarines. In 1935, Germany ignored the treaty and began to rebuild a new submarine force. An innovative and experienced submarine commander, Karl Doenitz, advanced submarine warfare to new heights. Captains and crews trained and developed devastating new tactics. The **wolf pack** tactic allowed a group of submarines to efficiently coordinate and concentrate their effort instead of fighting alone.
The Allied Convoy System

Convoys offered safety in numbers. They could include dozens of ships spread over many miles.

Aircraft flying over the convoy helped spot prowling U-boats in the ocean below. These airplanes used radar to detect U-boats.

Armed fighting ships sailed on the edges of the convoy.

Merchant ships sailed safely inside.

German U-boats began hunting in groups. These so-called wolf packs often launched their attacks from the surface at night. In the daytime they tried to avoid detection.

Skills Focus: Interpreting Infographics

1. Making Inferences Why were aircraft helpful as part of the convoy system?
2. Drawing Conclusions How did the arrangement of ships in the convoy protect the merchant ships from attack?

See Skills Handbook, p. H18
Despite his non-aggression agreement with Stalin, Hitler’s troops invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941. German forces moved quickly through the country and inflicted heavy casualties on Soviet troops and civilians.
The Russian Front
In July 1941, Japan invaded the French colony of Indochina.

In response, Roosevelt banned iron and steel scrap exports and restricted the sale of oil to Japan.

Facing a shortage of fuel for their navy, Japanese leaders decided to attack the U.S.

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese launched a surprise attack on American forces at Pearl Harbor.
Attack on Pearl Harbor

In December 1941 military officials throughout the Pacific were on alert for a possible Japanese attack. Yet Pearl Harbor was not considered the most likely target, and the Japanese strike force approached Hawaii undetected. In one stroke, they destroyed the American Pacific battleship fleet. Below, the USS West Virginia sinks as sailors rescue a survivor in the water.

**Skills Focus**

**INTERPRETING INFOGRAPHICS**

1. **Making Inferences** What types of ships do you think the Japanese were targeting in their attack?
2. **Interpreting Visuals** How do you think the images of the destruction to the American fleet may have affected the American public?

See *Skills Handbook*, pp. H7, H18, H30
### U.S. Losses at Pearl Harbor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Casualties</th>
<th>Killed</th>
<th>Wounded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>1,998</td>
<td>710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Corps</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ships</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunk or beached</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damaged</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aircraft</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Destroyed</td>
<td>164</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damaged</td>
<td>159</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On Monday, December 8, 1941, President Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war on Japan. He called December 7, 1941, “a date which will live in infamy.” On December 11, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.
In early 1942, the Japanese attacked the island of Luzon, where General Douglas MacArthur commanded a Filipino-American force.

As the Japanese closed in on Manila, the capital city, MacArthur withdrew his forces onto the Bataan Peninsula.
At Bataan, the Japanese captured nearly 70,000 soldiers and forced them to walk 65 miles to a prison camp.

Along the way, many prisoners died of starvation, disease, or violence.

Their trek became known as the **Bataan Death March**.
If the Japanese had not attacked Pearl Harbor, do you believe the United States would have entered World War II? Explain.
Mobilizing for War

After the attack on Pearl Harbor millions of American men and women volunteered for duty in the armed forces. **Millions were drafted under the Selective Service Act.**

Franklin D. Roosevelt at draft lottery.
Mobilizing for War
Mobilizing for War

SAY, SERGEANT WILL YOU LET US STOP AT THAT HAMBURGER STAND!
Mobilizing for War
Mobilizing for War
Mobilizing for War

Under the **Selective Service Act**, all men between the ages of 18 and 38 had to register for military service.

Those who served represented all of the nation’s many ethnic, racial, and religious groups. **Mexican-Americans, African-Americans, and Japanese-Americans served in the armed services.** The later groups served in segregated units.

**More than 300,000 women also served in the U.S. armed forces.** Many worked for the Women’s Army Corps (WAC) as mechanics, drivers, and clerks. Others joined the Army and Navy Nurse Corps. Thousands of women also joined the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard (WAVES), where they performed important **non-combat duties.**
**Paying for the War**

**War bonds** were issued by the government for the purpose of financing military operations and equipment. They were sold for as little as $18.75 and matured in ten years, at which time the U.S. government paid the bondholder $25. Large denominations of between $50 and $1000 were also made available. Bond rallies were held throughout the country with famous celebrities, usually Hollywood film stars, to enhance the bond advertising effectiveness. Over the course of the war 85 million Americans purchased bonds totaling approximately $185.7 billion.
The Frightening Stakes of the War.
American Strength and Patriotism.
On January 6, 1941, in an address known as the Four Freedoms speech, Franklin D. Roosevelt listed four fundamental freedoms that humans "everywhere in the world" ought to enjoy: Freedom of Speech and Expression, Freedom of every person to Worship God in his own way, Freedom from Want, and Freedom from Fear.

Norman Rockwell created a series of posters that illustrated President Roosevelt’s ideas.
To divide scarce goods like gasoline, meat, and sugar fairly among its citizens, the U.S. government established a system of rationing. Under this system families were able to buy a fixed amount of certain items.
More Meat Is Going To War
U.S. ACTS TO IMPROVE DISTRIBUTION

Retail ceiling prices for beef, veal, lamb, and mutton
Zone 4
Effective June 15, 1945

United States of America
Office of Price Administration
Fuel Oil Ration
Class 3B Consumer Coupons
Issued to Torie Ezempo
For use only at
(Number Assigned)

This sheet issued for 120 gallons for the
issuance period ending August 31, 1945.
Date issued: (Number Assigned)

Coupon sheet must be signed

10 Cents
Stamp Album
For the purchase of United States War Savings Bonds

Endorse your coupon and help lick the black market

Certificate of deposit
Certificate of deposit

Union Savings Bank

United States of America
Office of Price Administration
Certification Folder

Notice to Addressee:

Bonds

Endorsement Protects You and Helps

Your name and address is printed on the face of each coupon. Or the color of each stamp block or block of coupons is identical for entire block of coupons. The black market exchange service authorized. To the holder of this endorsement at the nearest War Price and Rationing Board.
Geraldine Hoff Doyle was working in a Michigan factory in 1942 when a UPI photographer took her photo. The image became the inspiration for the subsequent “We Can Do It!” poster—which Doyle didn't know until she recognized herself in a magazine in 1982. Her daughter said, “She didn’t have big, muscular arms. She was 5-foot-10 and very slender. She was a glamour girl.” In fact, Doyle quit the factory job after two weeks because she was afraid she'd damage her hands and be unable to play the cello.
Rosie the Riveter

U.S. Women in the Labor Force, 1900–1950

Number of women employed (in millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>1920</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1950</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of total labor force

Between 14 and 19 million women worked in munitions factories, shipyards, and offices — about 25 to 30 percent of the nation’s workforce.
The government established a War Production Board to supervise industry as it hastily converted its output from consumer to military goods.

The war quickly ended the Great Depression, because now there were jobs for everyone, including minorities.

**World War II Aircraft Production**

- **Aircraft (in thousands)**
- **SOURCE:** U.S. Department of Defense
Opportunities for Minorities

More than one million African Americans worked in the defense industries. Nearly one million more served in segregated units of the armed forces. The Tuskegee Airmen were an all-black fighter squadron.

The government’s bracero program hired more than 120,000 Mexican workers to perform much-needed farm labor throughout the country.
After the attack on Pearl Harbor, many Americans feared that Japanese Americans would act as spies.

However, during World War II, there were no cases of disloyalty by Japanese Americans.

Nevertheless, Americans’ intense anti-Japanese fears led President Roosevelt to issue Executive Order 9066 in February 1942.

The order was used to intern some 110,000 Japanese Americans in small camps for the duration of the war.
Internment of Japanese Americans
When the war ended, the government released the internees.

In 1948, it made a small payment to them for the property they had lost.

In 1990, the U.S. formally apologized and paid each surviving internee $20,000.

Korematsu v. United States

The Supreme Court ruled that military necessity justified internment, although three of the justices dissented.
Five Attacks on US Soil During WWII

1. The Duquesne Spy Ring
A German espionage operation that included 30 men and three women. The group gained intelligence on American shipping patterns, and even stole information about secret bombsights used in American aircraft. The FBI arrested all the spies. They were all convicted and sentenced to a total of over 300 years in prison.

2. The Bombing of Ellwood Oil Field
On February 23, 1942, the Japanese submarine I-17 sailed into a channel near Ellwood Oil Field, a large oil well and storage facility outside of Santa Barbara, CA. After surfacing, the submarine lobbed 16 shells at Ellwood Beach from its lone deck gun before submerging and fleeing to the open ocean. Very little damage was done.

3. The Bombing of Fort Stevens and the Lookout Air Raids
The only attack on a mainland American military site during World War II occurred on June 21, 1942, on the Oregon coastline. The Japanese submarine I-25 surfaced near Fort Stevens, an antiquated Army base that dated back to the Civil War. Just before midnight, I-25 used its 140-millimeter deck gun to fire 17 shells at the fort. The bombardment was almost totally unsuccessful—a nearby baseball field bore the brunt of the damage.

I-25 would later make history again when it executed the first-ever bombing of the continental United States by an enemy aircraft. In what became known as the Lookout Air Raids, I-25 launched a Yokosuka E14Y floatplane. After flying to a wooded area near Brookings, Oregon, the floatplane dropped a pair of incendiary bombs in the hope of starting a forest fire. Thanks to light winds and a quick response from fire patrols, the bombing failed to have its desired effect.
The largest invasion of American soil during World War II came in the form of eight Nazi saboteurs sent to the United States. In June 1942, U-boats secretly dropped the two four-man crews on the coast of Amagansett, New York, and Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. Each team carried up to $84,000 in cash and enough explosives to wage a long campaign of sabotage.

The men had orders to attack transport hubs, hydroelectric power plants and industrial facilities. But before a single act of sabotage could ever take place one of the saboteurs from the New York group chose to turn himself in to the FBI. He was heavily interrogated, and after two weeks the FBI successfully rounded up the remaining saboteurs. Six of the men were executed as spies.

Starting in 1944, the Japanese military constructed and launched over 9,000 high-altitude balloons, each loaded with nearly 50 pounds of anti-personnel and incendiary explosives. After being launched, the specially designed hydrogen balloons would ascend to an altitude of 30,000 feet and ride the jet stream across the Pacific Ocean to the mainland United States. Their bombs were triggered to drop after the three-day journey was complete—hopefully over a city or wooded region that would catch fire.

Nearly 350 of the bombs actually made it across the Pacific. From 1944 to 1945, balloon bombs were spotted in more than 15 states—some as far east as Michigan and Iowa. The only fatalities came from a single incident in Oregon, where a pregnant woman and five children were killed in an explosion after coming across one of the downed balloons. Their deaths are considered the only combat casualties to occur on U.S. soil during World War II.
Americans Contribute to the War Effort at Home

- Rationing
- Paying higher taxes
- Buying war bonds

EFFORT ON THE HOME FRONT
1. Movement: Describe the major Allied advances in North Africa.
In June of 1942, British General Bernard Montgomery defeated German General Erwin “The Desert Fox” Rommel at the **Battle of El Alamein**. When Churchill heard of the victory he said, “*This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.*”
Battle of Stalingrad

The Battle of Stalingrad lasted from September 1942 to February 1943. Brutal fighting, freezing cold, and lack of food and supplies decimated German forces. German casualties were 850,000 and Soviet casualties were over 1,000,000. Eventually, Field Marshal Paulus disobeyed Hitler’s orders and surrendered. 91,000 Germans surrendered and only 5,000 lived to return home in 1955.
Stalingrad

Vasily Zaytsev
The leaders of the allies were **FDR, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin**. The “Big Three” allied nations were the USA, Great Britain, & the Soviet Union. This photo is from the Tehran Conference in 1943.
The US pushed for an invasion of France as early as possible, but our British allies felt invasions of Sicily and Italy were the next logical steps after the victory in North Africa.

Once Italy surrendered in September 1943, on the eve of the Allied landings on the Italian mainland, a new strategy evolved: this was to tie down as many German forces in Italy as possible so that they could not be used to reinforce the German defenses in northwest Europe.

Difficult battles at Anzio and Monte Cassino made Italy a costly campaign. Nearly 100,000 allied soldiers were lost by 1945.
First they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for the Communists and I did not speak out because I was not a Communist.
Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant.
Then they came for me – and by then there was no one left to speak out.
The Holocaust was the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed that Germans were "racially superior" and that the Jews, deemed "inferior," were an alien threat to the so-called German racial community.

About two out of every three Jews living in Europe before the war were killed in the Holocaust. When World War II ended in 1945, six million European Jews were dead; more than one million of the victims were children.

During the era of the Holocaust, German authorities also targeted other groups because of their perceived "racial inferiority": Gypsies, the disabled, and some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals.
An estimated 11 million people were murdered by the Nazis.
The Nazis expanded the number of camps as their conquests brought more Jews under their control.

1. **Place** Which country had the greatest number of camps?
2. **Location** Why do you think the Nazis built so many camps there?

See *Skills Handbook*, p. H20
Entire families were wiped out in a genocide known today as the Holocaust.

As Allied soldiers liberated the death camps, they were shocked by the piles of corpses and the condition of the survivors.

Jewish Population in Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population (in millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Online
What lessons, if any, did the world learn from the Holocaust?

Why were genocides allowed to occur in Africa and the Balkans since World War II?

How do we stop racism and intolerance today?
American and British bomber crews pounded Germany and the occupied territories day and night. Although losses were very high, the bombing campaign helped to deny the German war machine of needed supplies and raw materials like oil and ball bearings.
The Allied invasion of France was known as Operation Overlord during World War II. The landings commenced on Tuesday, June 6, 1944, code named – D-Day.

The assault was conducted in two phases: an air assault landing of 24,000 American, British, Canadian and Free French airborne troops shortly after midnight, and an amphibious landing of Allied infantry and armored divisions on the coast of France commencing at 6:30 AM.

The operation was the largest amphibious invasion of all time, with over 175,000 troops landing on June 6, 1944. Over 5,000 ships were involved.

The landings took place along a 50-mile stretch of the Normandy coast divided into five sectors: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword. Total allied casualties (killed, wounded, missing, or captured) are estimated at approximately 10,000.
D-Day June 6, 1944
D-Day June 6, 1944

The New York Times. 6 A.M. EXTRA

ALLIED ARMIES LAND IN FRANCE IN THE HAVRE-CHERBOURG AREA; GREAT INVASION IS UNDER WAY
Troops at four of the beaches quickly overcame German opposition, but 2,500 American soldiers died fighting the fierce German defense at Omaha Beach.

D-Day was a success, and on August 25, 1944, the Allies liberated Paris.

### Allied Troop Strengths and Casualties on D-Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Troops</th>
<th>Estimated Casualties*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>73,000</td>
<td>6,603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>61,715</td>
<td>2,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>21,400</td>
<td>946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allied Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>156,115</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,249</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*includes those killed, wounded, missing, and captured

SOURCE: The D-Day Museum Online
By the end of June 1944, 850,000 Allied troops had poured into France. They quickly discovered the special difficulties posed by the formidable tangles of rock, earth, and trees called "hedgerows." Fighting inland was difficult but Allied forces liberated Paris on August 25. American and British troops fought on through the fall and by the end of 1944 they were poised to invade Germany itself.
In December 1944, Germany launched an all-out counterattack to push back Allied forces on the Western front. In what became known as the Battle of the Bulge, German troops overwhelmed American defenses in the Ardennes. U.S. forces eventually regrouped and defeated the Germans but the battle was costly. German casualties were 120,000. While nearly 80,000 Americans were killed, wounded, or captured.
By the spring of 1945, the Allies were closing in on Hitler. At left, U.S. army infantrymen blast their way through a German city. Below, an American soldier is lifted into the air by Russians celebrating their liberation from a German camp.
Germany Defeated
Battle of the Coral Sea

In May 1942, war planes launched from aircraft carriers fought the Battle of the Coral Sea. For the first time in history, enemy ships fought a naval battle without seeing each other. Neither side won a clear victory.
The Battle of Midway was the turning point of the War in the Pacific.
The US strategy in the Pacific theater was **island hopping**, attacking islands that were not heavily defended by the **Japanese**. They used the captured islands to stage further attacks.
After Guadalcanal, United States Marines “island hopped” to the Gilbert Islands, Marshall Islands, and the Marianas in the Central Pacific. In 1944, the US recaptured the Philippines. As the fighting reached closer to their homeland, Japanese resistance became more fierce and often suicidal.
Navajo soldiers made a key contribution to the island-hopping strategy.

Using their own language, these code-talkers radioed vital messages from island to island.

The Japanese intercepted the messages but were unable to understand the rare Navajo language.
In February 1945, the US marines invaded the Japanese held island of Iwo Jima. More than 23,000 US soldiers were killed or wounded during the battles for the island. Finally, after fierce fighting American soldiers planted the US flag on Mount Suribachi, signaling their victory.
Battle of Okinawa

Fierce Japanese resistance continued during the Battle of Okinawa. Japanese Kamikaze attacks took a devastating toll on the ships of the invasion fleet. More than 120,000 Japanese were killed at Iwo Jima and Okinawa.
During the battles, the Japanese displayed their willingness to die rather than surrender.

Japanese kamikaze pilots crashed their planes into American ships.

American leaders were convinced that only a full-scale invasion of Japan’s home islands would force surrender.

President Truman’s military advisers warned him that an invasion of Japan might cost 500,000 American casualties.
The Manhattan Project, conducted during World War II, was a top secret effort to develop the first atomic bomb. The project was under the direction of American physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer from 1942–1946.

In the 1930s American and British scientists feared that Nazi Germany was investigating nuclear weapons. A small research program that started in 1939, the Manhattan Project eventually employed more than 130,000 people and cost nearly $2 billion ($24 billion in 2008 dollars).

The first bomb was tested in a remote area of New Mexico during the predawn hours of July 16, 1945 and forever changed the world. Even before the bomb was tested, a second bomb was secretly dispatched to the Pacific for an attack on the Japanese city of Hiroshima.
On August 6, 1945, the bomber *Enola Gay* dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima. The explosion killed more than 70,000 people and turned 5 square miles into a wasteland. A second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki three days later.
Burns visible on a woman in Hiroshima during the blast. Darker colors of her kimono at the time of detonation correspond to clearly visible burns on skin touching parts of the garment exposed to thermal radiation.
Events that led to the U.S. Defeat of Japan

June 1942  
Battle of Midway

October 1944  Invasion of the Philippines

August 1945  Atomic bombs dropped on Japan

DEFEAT OF JAPAN
Victory at Last

On May 7, 1945, Germany officially agreed to an unconditional surrender. The Allies declared the next day, V-E Day, or Victory in Europe Day. On September 2, 1945, Japanese leaders signed an official letter of surrender aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.
## World War II Casualties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Military Dead</th>
<th>Military Wounded</th>
<th>Civilian Dead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALLIES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>1,310,000</td>
<td>1,753,000</td>
<td>1,000,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>213,000</td>
<td>4,000,000</td>
<td>350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>264,000</td>
<td>277,000</td>
<td>93,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet Union</td>
<td>11,000,000</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>7,000,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>292,000</td>
<td>672,000</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AXIS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>3,500,000</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
<td>780,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>242,000</td>
<td>66,000</td>
<td>153,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1,300,000</td>
<td>4,000,000</td>
<td>672,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nearly 300,000 American soldiers died in World War II.

*Decorating a soldier’s grave (May 1943), Esther Bubley*
Seven Future Presidents served in the military during World War II. Can you name them?
The war left most of Europe in ruins. Bombing campaigns destroyed factories, transportation centers, and most of Europe’s infrastructure. In 1948, Congress approved the Marshall Plan to help boost the economies of Europe. The US gave more than $13 billion to help the nations of Europe get back on their feet.
The G.I. Bill of Rights

When American servicemen got back home from the war competition for jobs and education was great. The government passed the G.I. Bill which provided educational aid and economic help to veterans.
For the first time in history, war victors prosecuted leaders of the losing side for **war crimes**.

In **Nuremberg**, Germany, Allied judges tried prominent Nazis for starting World War II and for the horrors of the death camps.

Similar trials were held in **Manila** and **Tokyo** to try leaders of the Japanese war machine.
In November 1945, some of Hitler’s top officials were put on trial for crimes against humanity. After nearly a year, 19 of the 24 original defendants were found guilty. Another 185 Nazi leaders were found guilty in later trials. The main theme that developed during the trials is that - **People are responsible for their actions, even in wartime.**
The Effects of World War II

- Defeat of fascism
- Weakening of national economies
- Nuremberg trials
- Formation of the UN

Large numbers of casualties

Use of nuclear weapons
Dedicated to the “Greatest Generation”