

SECTION 2

The Course of World War II

Guide to Reading

Main Ideas

- The bombing of Pearl Harbor created a global war between the Allied and the Axis forces.
- Allied perseverance and effective military operations, as well as Axis miscalculations, brought an end to the war.

Key Terms

blitzkrieg, partisan

People to Identify

Franklin D. Roosevelt, Douglas MacArthur, Winston Churchill, Harry S Truman

Places to Locate

Stalingrad, Midway Island, Normandy, Hiroshima

Preview Questions

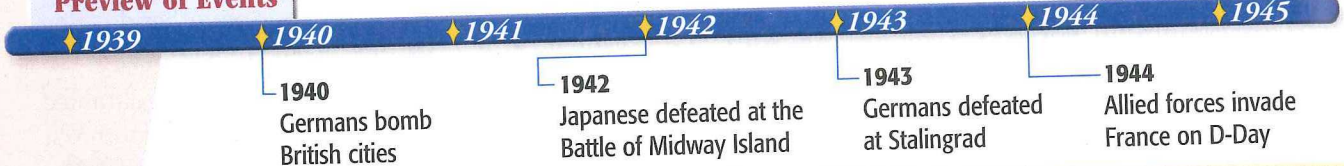
1. Why did the United States not enter the war until 1941?
2. What major events helped to end the war in Europe and Asia?

Reading Strategy

Cause and Effect Create a chart listing key events during World War II and their effect on the outcome of the war.

Event	Effect

Preview of Events



Voices from the Past

On September 1, 1939, after beginning his attack on Poland, Hitler addressed the German Reichstag:

“I do not want to be anything other than the first soldier of the German Reich. I have once more put on the uniform which was once most holy and precious to me. I shall only take it off after victory or I shall not live to see the end. . . . As a National Socialist and as a German soldier, I am going into this struggle strong in heart. My whole life has been nothing but a struggle for my people, for their revival, for Germany . . . Just as I myself am ready to risk my life any time for my people and for Germany, so I demand the same of everyone else. But anyone who thinks that he can oppose this national commandment, whether directly or indirectly, will die! Traitors can expect death.”

—*Nazism 1919–1945, A Documentary Reader*, J. Noakes and G. Pridham, 1995

Hitler had committed Germany to a life-or-death struggle.

Europe at War

Hitler stunned Europe with the speed and efficiency of the German attack on Poland. His **blitzkrieg**, or “lightning war,” used armored columns, called panzer divisions, supported by airplanes. Each panzer division was a strike force of about three hundred tanks with accompanying forces and supplies.

The forces of the blitzkrieg broke quickly through Polish lines and encircled the bewildered Polish troops. Regular infantry units then moved in to hold the newly conquered territory. Within four weeks, Poland had surrendered. On September 28, 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union divided Poland.

Hitler's Early Victories After a winter of waiting (called the "phony war"), Hitler resumed the attack on April 9, 1940, with another blitzkrieg against Denmark and Norway. One month later, on May 10, Germany launched an attack on the Netherlands, Belgium, and France.

The main assault was through Luxembourg and the Ardennes (ahr•DEHN) Forest. German panzer divisions broke through weak French defensive positions there and raced across northern France. French and British forces were taken by surprise when the Germans went around, instead of across, the Maginot Line (a series of concrete and steel fortifications armed with heavy artillery along France's border with Germany). The Germans' action split the Allied armies, trapping French troops and the entire British army on the beaches of Dunkirk. Only by the heroic efforts of the Royal Navy and civilians in private boats did the British manage to evacuate 338,000 Allied (mostly British) troops.

The French signed an armistice on June 22. German armies now occupied about three-fifths of France. An authoritarian regime under German control was set up over the remainder of the country. It was known as Vichy France and was led by an aged French hero of World War I, Marshal Henri Pétain. Germany was now in control of western and central Europe, but Britain had still not been defeated. After Dunkirk, the British appealed to the United States for help.

President **Franklin D. Roosevelt** denounced the aggressors, but the United States followed a strict policy of isolationism. A series of neutrality acts, passed in the 1930s, prevented the United States from taking sides or becoming involved in any European wars. Many Americans felt that the United States had been drawn into World War I due to economic involvement in Europe and they wanted to prevent a recurrence. Roosevelt was convinced that the neutrality acts actually encouraged Axis aggression and wanted the acts repealed. They were gradually

relaxed as the United States supplied food, ships, planes, and weapons to Britain.

The Battle of Britain Hitler realized that an amphibious (land-sea) invasion of Britain could succeed only if Germany gained control of the air. At the beginning of August 1940, the Luftwaffe (LOOFT•vah•fuh)—the German air force—launched a major offensive. German planes bombed British air and naval bases, harbors, communication centers, and war industries.

The British fought back with determination. They were supported by an effective radar system that gave them early warning of German attacks. Nevertheless, by the end of August, the British air force had suffered critical losses.

In September, in retaliation for a British attack on Berlin, Hitler ordered a shift in strategy. Instead of bombing military targets, the Luftwaffe began massive bombing of British cities. Hitler hoped in this way to break British morale. Instead, because military targets were not being hit, the British were able to rebuild their air strength quickly. Soon, the British air force was inflicting major losses on Luftwaffe bombers. At the end of September, Hitler postponed the invasion of Britain indefinitely.



London buildings collapse as a result of nightly German bombing.





Attack on the Soviet Union Although he had no desire for a two-front war, Hitler became convinced that Britain was remaining in the war only because it expected Soviet support. If the Soviet Union was smashed, Britain's last hope would be eliminated. Moreover, Hitler had convinced himself that the Soviet Union had a pitiful army and could be defeated quickly.

Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union was scheduled for the spring of 1941, but the attack was delayed because of problems in the Balkans. Hitler had already gained the political cooperation of Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania. However, the failure of Mussolini's invasion of Greece in 1940 had exposed Hitler's southern flank to British air bases in Greece. To secure his Balkan flank, Hitler therefore seized both Greece and Yugoslavia in April.

Reassured, Hitler invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. He believed that the Russians could still be decisively defeated before the brutal winter weather set in.

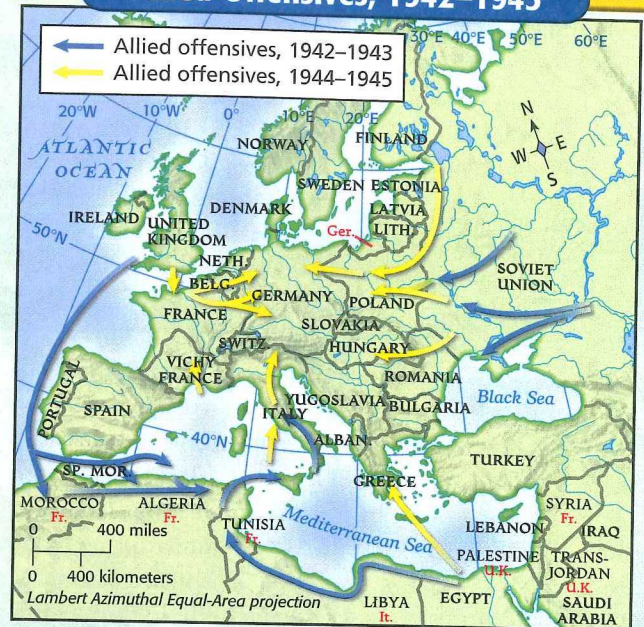
The massive attack stretched out along a front some 1,800 miles (about 2,900 km) long. German troops advanced rapidly, capturing two million Russian soldiers. By November, one German army group had swept through Ukraine. A second army was besieging the city of Leningrad, while a third approached within 25 miles (about 40 km) of Moscow, the Soviet capital.

An early winter and fierce Soviet resistance, however, halted the German advance. Because of the planned spring date for the invasion, the Germans had no winter uniforms. For the first time in the war, German armies had been stopped. A counterattack in

Axis Offensives, 1939–1941



Allied Offensives, 1942–1945



Battle Deaths in World War II

Country	Battle Deaths
USSR	7,500,000
Germany	3,500,000
Yugoslavia	410,000
Poland	320,000
Romania	300,000
United States	292,000
United Kingdom	245,000
France	210,000
Hungary	140,000
Finland	82,000
Italy	77,000
Greece	74,000
Canada	37,000

Geography Skills

Heavy fighting took place in Europe and North Africa.

- Interpreting Maps** Name at least six major land battles of the war in Europe. Which side, the Allies or the Axis Powers, was more aggressive at the beginning of the war? Summarize the changes in direction of this side's offensives during the first three years of the war.
- Applying Geography Skills** Using information from the maps on pages 816 and 817, create a model of the war's outcome had Hitler not invaded the Soviet Union. Your model could take the form of a map, a chart, or a database and include such items as battles, offensives, and casualties.

December 1941 by a Soviet army came as an ominous ending to the year for the Germans.

Reading Check Evaluating In the spring of 1941, what caused Hitler to delay his invasion of the Soviet Union? What halted the German advance once it had begun?

Japan at War

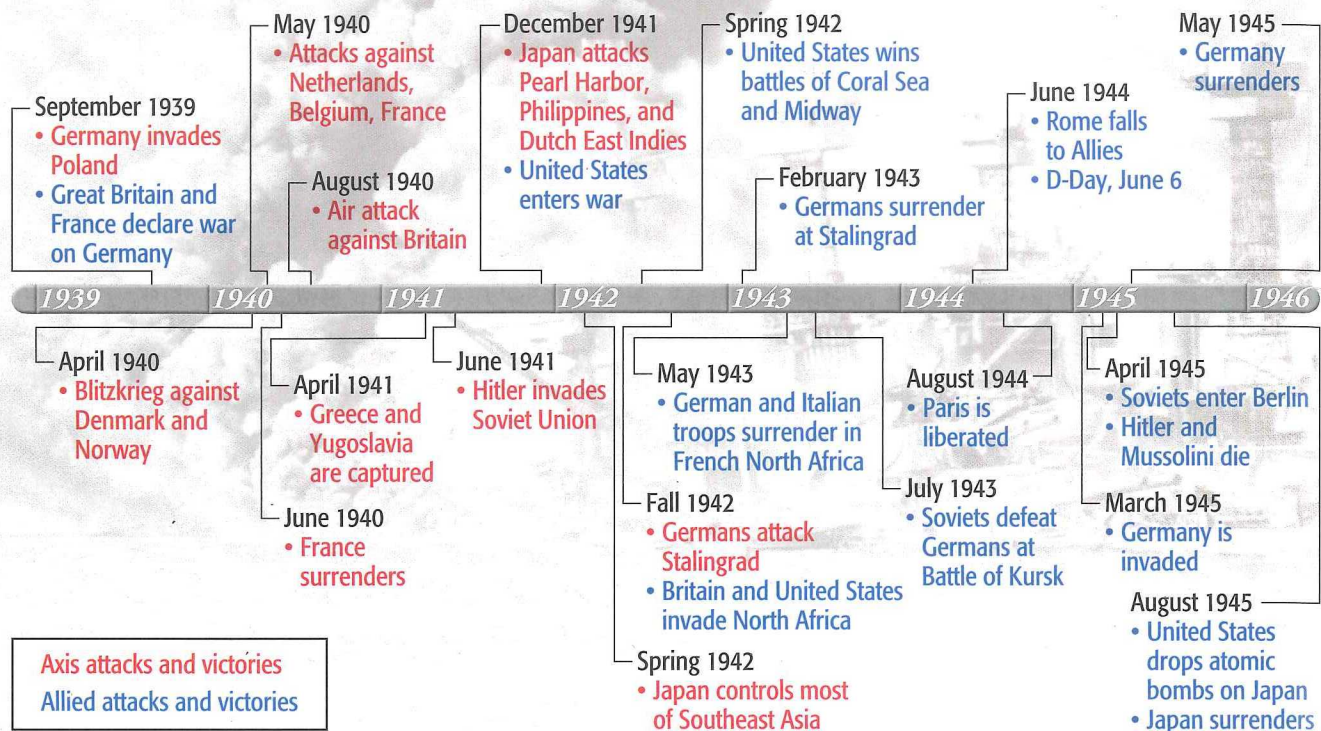
TURNING POINT As you will learn, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor outraged Americans and led to the entry of the United States into the war.

On December 7, 1941, Japanese aircraft attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands. The same day, other Japanese units launched additional assaults on the Philippines and began advancing toward the British colony of Malaya. Soon

after, Japanese forces invaded the Dutch East Indies and occupied a number of islands in the Pacific Ocean. In some cases, as on the Bataan Peninsula and the island of Corregidor in the Philippines, resistance was fierce. By the spring of 1942, however, almost all of Southeast Asia and much of the western Pacific had fallen into Japanese hands.

A triumphant Japan now declared the creation of a community of nations. The name given to this new "community" was the Greater East-Asia Co-prosperity Sphere. The entire region would now be under Japanese direction. Japan also announced its intention to liberate the colonial areas of Southeast Asia from Western colonial rule. For the moment, however, Japan needed the resources of the region for its war machine, and it treated the countries under its rule as conquered lands.

World War II: Attack and Counterattack



Japanese leaders had hoped that their lightning strike at American bases would destroy the U.S. fleet in the Pacific. The Roosevelt administration, they thought, would now accept Japanese domination of the Pacific. The American people, in the eyes of Japanese leaders, had been made soft by material indulgence.

The Japanese miscalculated, however. The attack on Pearl Harbor unified American opinion about becoming involved in the war. The United States now joined with European nations and Nationalist China in a combined effort to defeat Japan. Believing the American involvement in the Pacific would make the United States ineffective in the European theater of war, Hitler declared war on the United States four days after Pearl Harbor. Another European conflict had turned into a global war.

✓ Reading Check **Describing** By the spring of 1942, which territories did Japan control?

The Allies Advance

The entry of the United States into the war created a new coalition, the Grand Alliance. To overcome mutual suspicions, the three major Allies—Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union—

Graphic Organizer → Skills

The time line above traces the major events of the war, from September 1939 to Japan's surrender in August 1945.

- 1. Identifying** How much time elapsed from the beginning of the war until France's surrender? From France's surrender until Germany's surrender?
- 2. Compare and Contrast** Use the time line and your knowledge of world history to compare the Soviet Union's involvement in World War II to Russia's involvement in World War I. How do you explain the successes and failures of the Soviet Union and Russia in these two wars?

agreed to stress military operations and ignore political differences. At the beginning of 1943, the Allies agreed to fight until the Axis Powers—Germany, Italy, and Japan—surrendered unconditionally. The unconditional surrender principle, which required the Axis nations to surrender without any favorable condition, cemented the Grand Alliance by making it nearly impossible for Hitler to divide his foes.

The European Theater Defeat was far from Hitler's mind at the beginning of 1942. As Japanese forces advanced into Southeast Asia and the Pacific,

Hitler and his European allies continued fighting the war in Europe against the armies of Britain and the Soviet Union.

Until late 1942, it appeared that the Germans might still prevail on the battlefield. In North Africa, the Afrika Korps, German forces under General Erwin Rommel, broke through the British defenses in Egypt and advanced toward Alexandria. A renewed German offensive in the Soviet Union led to the capture of the entire Crimea in the spring of 1942. In August, Hitler boasted:

“As the next step, we are going to advance south of the Caucasus and then help the rebels in Iran and Iraq against the English. Another thrust will be directed along the Caspian Sea toward Afghanistan and India. Then the English will run out of oil. In two years we'll be on the borders of India. Twenty to thirty elite German divisions will do. Then the British Empire will collapse.”

This would be Hitler's last optimistic outburst. By the fall of 1942, the war had turned against the Germans.

In North Africa, British forces had stopped Rommel's troops at El Alamein (EL A•luh•MAYN) in the summer of 1942. The Germans then retreated back across the desert. In November 1942, British and American forces invaded French North Africa. They forced the German and Italian troops there to surrender in May 1943.

On the Eastern Front, after the capture of the Crimea, Hitler's generals wanted him to concentrate on the Caucasus and its oil fields. Hitler, however, decided that **Stalingrad**, a major industrial center on the Volga, should be taken first.

In perhaps the most terrible battle of the war, between November 1942 and February 2, 1943, the Soviets launched a counterattack. German troops were stopped, then encircled, and supply lines were cut off, all in frigid winter conditions. The Germans



CONNECTIONS Around The World

Women as Spies in World War II

For thousands of years, governments have relied on spies to gather information about their enemies. Until the twentieth century, most spies were men. During World War II, however, many women became active in the world of espionage.

Yoshiko Kawashima was born in China but raised in Japan. In 1932, she was sent to China by Japanese authorities to gather information for the invasion of China. Disguised as a young man, Kawashima was an active and effective spy until her arrest by the Chinese in 1945. The Chinese news agency announced that “a long-sought-for beauty in male costume was arrested today in Beijing.” She was executed soon after her arrest.

Hekmath Fathmy was an Egyptian dancer. Her hatred of the British, who had occupied Egypt, caused her to become a spy for the Germans. Fathmy sang and danced for British troops in the Kit Kat Club, a nightclub in Cairo. After shows, she took British officers to her houseboat on the banks of the Nile. Any information she was able to obtain from her guests was passed on to John Eppler, a German spy in Cairo. Eventually, she was caught, but she served only a year in prison for her spying activities.

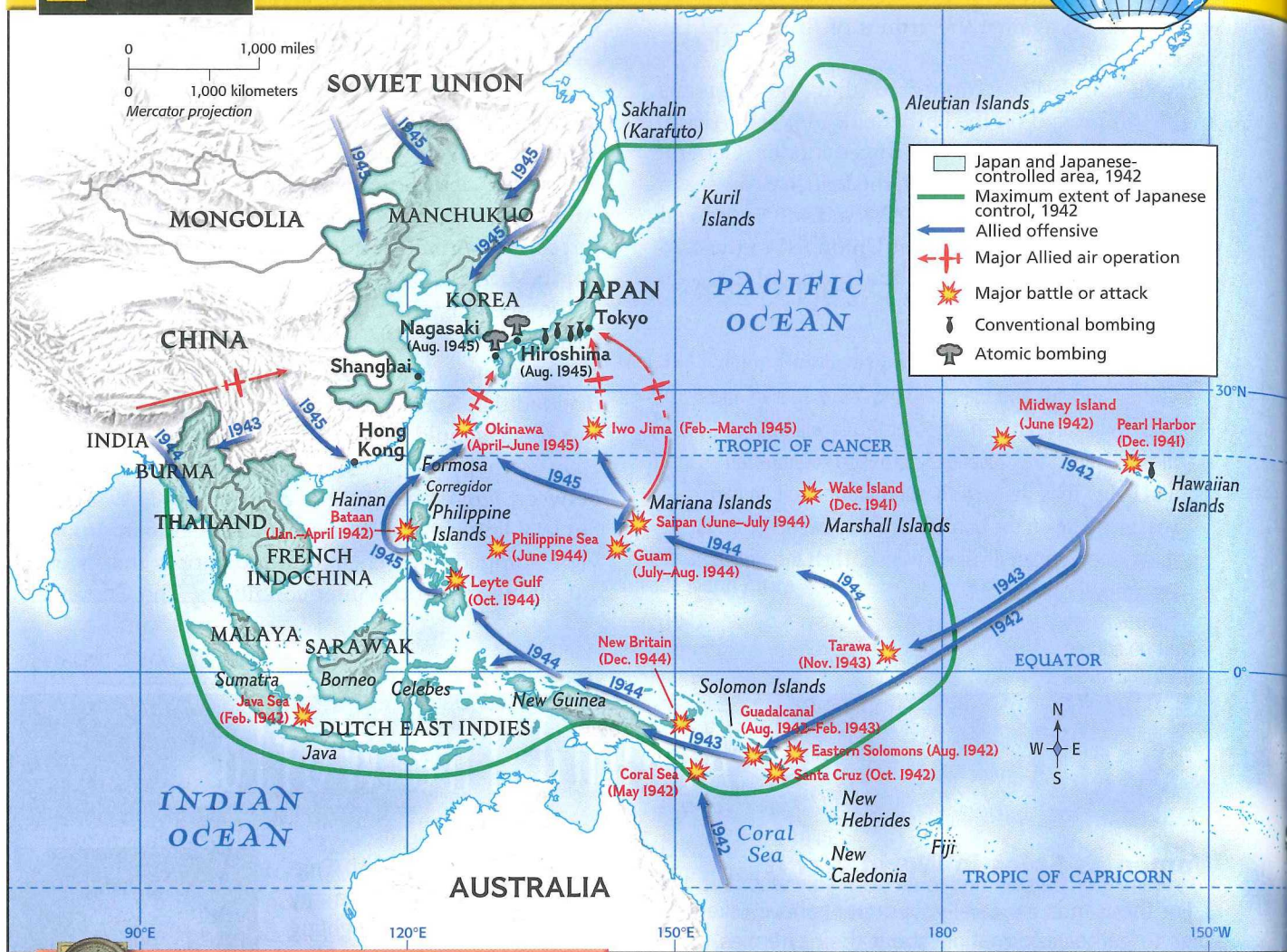
Violette Szabo of French/English background became a spy after her husband died fighting the Germans in North Africa. She joined Special Operations Executive, an arm of British Intelligence, and was sent to France several times. In August 1944, she parachuted into France to spy on the Germans. Caught by Gestapo forces at Salon La Tour, she was tortured and then shipped to Ravensbrück, a women's concentration camp near Berlin. She was executed there in April 1945.



▲ *Violette Szabo spied for the Allies to avenge her husband's death.*

Comparing Cultures

People have different motives for becoming spies. List several motives that might draw someone to espionage. Do you think the motives are different in peacetime? Investigate current espionage activities using the Internet or library. What various methods do governments use today to gather intelligence?



Geography Skills

“Island hopping,” the Allied strategy in Asia and the Pacific, focused more on the islands in the Pacific than on the mainland of Asia.

- 1. Interpreting Maps** What was the approximate distance from Japan, in miles and kilometers, to its farthest point of control?
- 2. Applying Geography Skills** Compare this map to the earlier maps in the chapter dealing with the war in Europe. Then analyze the effects of geographic factors on the major events in the two different theatres of war.

were forced to surrender at Stalingrad. The entire German Sixth Army, considered the best of the German troops, was lost.

By February 1943, German forces in Russia were back to their positions of June 1942. By the spring of 1943, even Hitler knew that the Germans would not defeat the Soviet Union.

The Asian Theater

In 1942, the tide of battle in the East also changed dramatically. In the Battle of the Coral Sea on May 7 and 8, 1942, American naval forces stopped the Japanese advance and saved Australia from the threat of invasion.

The turning point of the war in Asia came on June 4, at the Battle of Midway Island. U.S. planes destroyed four attacking Japanese aircraft carriers. The United States defeated the Japanese navy and established naval superiority in the Pacific.

By the fall of 1942, Allied forces in Asia were gathering for two operations. One, commanded by U.S. general Douglas MacArthur, would move into the Philippines through New Guinea and the South Pacific Islands. The other would move across the Pacific with a combination of U.S. Army, Marine, and Navy attacks on Japanese-held islands. The policy was to capture some Japanese-held islands and bypass others, “island hopping” up to Japan. After a series of bitter engagements in the waters off the Solomon

Winston Churchill

1874–1965

British prime minister



Winston Churchill was Great Britain's wartime leader. At the beginning of the war, Churchill had already had a long political career. He had advocated a hard-line policy toward Nazi Germany in the 1930s.

On May 10, 1940, he became British prime minister.

Churchill was confident that he could guide Britain to ultimate victory. "I thought I knew a great deal about it all," he later wrote, "and I was sure I should not fail." Churchill proved to be an inspiring leader who rallied the British people with stirring speeches: "We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, in the fields, in the streets, and in the hills. We shall never surrender." *Time* magazine designated Churchill the Man of the Year in 1940 and named him the Man of the Half Century in 1950.

Islands from August to November 1942, Japanese fortunes were fading.

Reading Check Summarizing Why was the German assault on Stalingrad a crushing defeat for the Germans?

Last Years of the War

By the beginning of 1943, the tide of battle had turned against Germany, Italy, and Japan. Axis forces in Tunisia surrendered on May 13, 1943. The Allies then crossed the Mediterranean and carried the war to Italy, an area that Winston Churchill had called the "soft underbelly" of Europe. After taking Sicily, Allied troops began an invasion of mainland Italy in September.

The European Theater After the fall of Sicily, Mussolini was removed from office and placed under arrest by Victor Emmanuel III, king of Italy. A new Italian government offered to surrender to the Allied forces. However, Mussolini was liberated by the Germans in a daring raid and then set up as the head of a puppet German state in northern Italy. At the same time, German troops moved in and occupied much of Italy.

The Germans set up effective new defensive lines in the hills south of Rome. The Allied advance up the Italian Peninsula turned into a painstaking affair with very heavy casualties. Rome did not fall to the

Allies until June 4, 1944. By that time, the Italian war had assumed a secondary role as the Allied forces opened their long-awaited "second front" in western Europe.

Since the autumn of 1943, the Allies had been planning an invasion of France from Great Britain, across the English Channel. Finally, on June 6, 1944 (D-Day), Allied forces under U.S. general Dwight D. Eisenhower landed on the Normandy beaches in history's greatest naval invasion. The Allies fought their way past underwater mines, barbed wire, and horrible machine gun fire. There was heavy German resistance even though the Germans thought the battle was a diversion and the real invasion would occur elsewhere. Their slow response enabled the Allied forces to set up a beachhead. Within three months, the Allies had landed two million men and a half-million vehicles. Allied forces then pushed inland and broke through German defensive lines.

After the breakout, Allied troops moved south and east. In Paris, resistance fighters rose up against the occupying Germans. The Allies liberated Paris by the end of August. In March 1945, they crossed the Rhine River and advanced into Germany. At the end of April 1945, Allied armies in northern Germany moved toward the Elbe River, where they linked up with the Soviets.

FICTION

"Tears, Sweat, and Blood"?

Winston Churchill is renowned for the speeches he wrote during World War II and for the expressions he created for those speeches. Of special fame is the "blood, toil, tears, and sweat" phrase. Supposedly, Churchill also coined the term "iron curtain." In reality, however, phrases similar to "blood, toil, tears, and sweat" had been used by both John Donne and Lord Byron. The term "iron curtain" had been used by Joseph Goebbels in 1945, and by Queen Elizabeth of Belgium in 1914.

The Soviets had come a long way since the Battle of Stalingrad in 1943. In the summer of 1943, Hitler gambled on taking the offensive using newly developed heavy tanks. German forces were soundly defeated by the Soviets at the Battle of Kursk (July 5 to 12), the greatest tank battle of World War II.

Soviet forces now began a steady advance westward. They had reoccupied Ukraine by the end of 1943 and moved into the Baltic states by the beginning of 1944. Advancing along a northern front, Soviet troops occupied Warsaw in January 1945 and entered Berlin in April. Meanwhile, Soviet troops, along a southern front, swept through Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria.

By January 1945, Adolf Hitler had moved into a bunker 55 feet (almost 17 m) under the city of Berlin to direct the final stages of the war. In his final political testament, Hitler, consistent to the end in his anti-Semitism, blamed the Jews for the war. He wrote, "Above all I charge the leaders of the nation and those under them to scrupulous observance of the laws of race and to merciless opposition to the universal poisoner of all peoples, international Jewry."

Hitler committed suicide on April 30, two days after Mussolini had been shot by Italian **partisans**, or resistance fighters. On May 7, 1945, German commanders surrendered. The war in Europe was finally over.

The Asian Theater The war in Asia continued. Beginning in 1943, U.S. forces had gone on the offen-

sive and advanced, slowly at times, across the Pacific. As Allied military power drew closer to the main Japanese islands in the first months of 1945, **Harry S Truman**, who had become president after the death of Roosevelt in April, had a difficult decision to make. Should he use newly developed atomic weapons to bring the war to an end or find another way to defeat the Japanese forces?

Using atomic weapons would, Truman hoped, enable the United States to avoid an invasion of Japan. The Japanese had made extensive preparations to defend their homeland. Truman and his advisers had become convinced that American troops would suffer heavy casualties if they invaded Japan. At the time, however, only two bombs were available, and no one knew how effective they would be.

Truman decided to use the bombs. The first bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of **Hiroshima** on August 6. Three days later, a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Both cities were leveled. Thousands of people died immediately after the bombs were dropped. Thousands more died in later months from radiation. Japan surrendered on August 14.

World War II was finally over. Seventeen million had died in battle. Perhaps twenty million civilians had perished as well. Some estimates place total losses at fifty million.

✓ Reading Check Identifying What was the "second front" that the Allies opened in Western Europe?

SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

- Define** blitzkrieg, partisan.
- Identify** Franklin D. Roosevelt, Douglas MacArthur, Winston Churchill, Harry S Truman.
- Locate** Stalingrad, Midway Island, Normandy, Hiroshima.
- Explain** Hitler's strategy of attacking the Soviet Union. Why did his delay in launching the attack ultimately contribute to the Soviet victory over the Germans?
- List** events leading to U.S. entry into the war.

Critical Thinking

- Evaluate** How might the Allied demand for unconditional surrender have helped Hitler to maintain his control over Germany?
- Sequencing Information** Using a chart like the one below, place the events of World War II in chronological order.

Year	Country	Event
1939		

Analyzing Visuals

- Examine** the photo on page 815 showing the destruction caused by the Luftwaffe's bombing raids on London. Explain how this strategy of Hitler's hurt, rather than helped, Germany's efforts.

Writing About History

- Descriptive Writing** Imagine you lived in California during World War II. Write an essay about your expectations of a Japanese invasion of California. You can choose to believe that an invasion was possible or impossible.