

Allied soldier
in the Pacific



1st Marine Division
patch from Guadalcanal



WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

A Soldier Remembers

A defeated General Douglas MacArthur left the Philippines in 1942. As he departed, he pledged his determination to free the islands with the words “I shall return.” In October 1944, that pledge became a reality when MacArthur landed on the Philippine island of Leyte. As one soldier recalled,

“When I heard that he had returned, I finally had the feeling that I might have a chance of living through the war. . . . [O]nce they landed in Leyte, I knew it was only a question of hanging on for a few more months and I would be able to live through it.”

—Edwin Ramsey

Focus Question How did the Allies finally defeat the Axis powers?

Victory in Europe and the Pacific

Objectives

- Describe the reasons for the final defeat of the Nazis.
- Summarize how the Allies began to push back the Japanese in the Pacific.
- Explain the American strategy for ending the war against Japan and the consequences of that strategy.

Terms, People, and Places

V-E Day	kamikaze
Bataan Death March	Manhattan Project
Douglas MacArthur	Hiroshima
island-hopping	Nagasaki

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Recognize Sequence Use a timeline like the one below to sequence the events that led to the defeat of the Axis powers.

Oct. 1944	Feb. 1945	June 1945	Oct. 1945
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By early spring 1945, the war in Europe was nearing its end, and the Allies turned their attention to winning the war in the Pacific. There remained a series of bloody battles ahead, as well as an agonizing decision for American President Harry Truman.

Nazis Defeated

By March 1945, the Allies had crossed the Rhine into western Germany. From the east, Soviet troops closed in on Berlin. In late April, American and Russian soldiers met and shook hands at the Elbe River. All over Europe, Axis armies began to surrender.

In Italy, guerrillas captured and executed Mussolini. As Soviet troops fought their way into Berlin, Hitler committed suicide in his underground bunker. On May 7, Germany surrendered. Officially, the war in Europe ended the next day, May 8, 1945, which was proclaimed **V-E Day** (Victory in Europe). After just 12 years, Hitler’s “thousand-year Reich” was bomb-ravaged and in ruins.

The Allies were able to defeat the Axis powers in Europe for a number of reasons. Because of the location of Germany and its allies, they had to fight on several fronts simultaneously. Hitler, who took almost complete control over military decisions, made some poor ones. He underestimated the ability of the Soviet Union to fight his armies.

The enormous productive capacity of the United States was another factor. By 1944, the United States was producing twice as much as all of the Axis powers combined. Meanwhile, Allied bombing hindered German production. Oil became so scarce because of

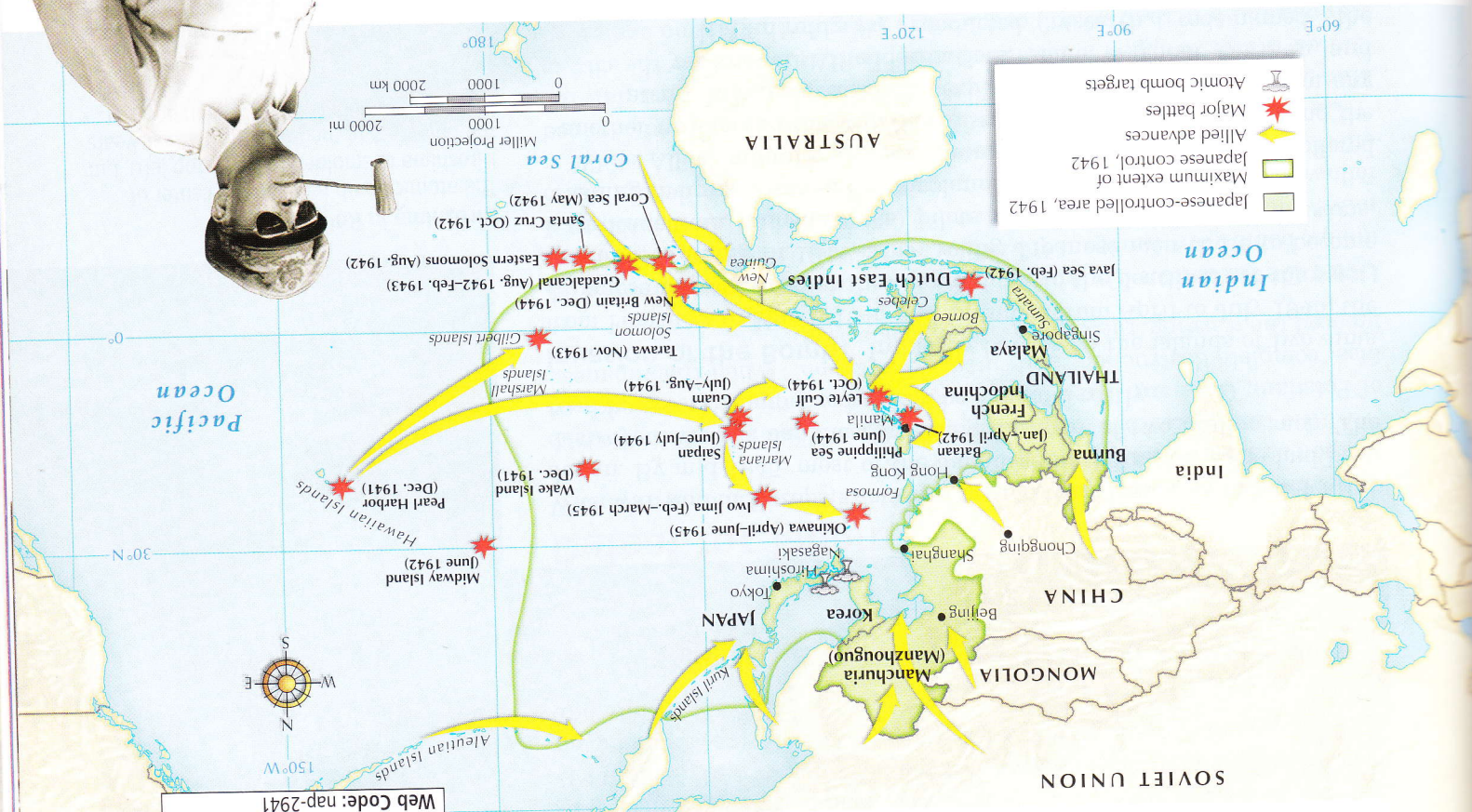
World War II in the Pacific, 1941-1945

Map Skills After the Battle of Midway, the Allies took the offensive in the Pacific. They gradually worked their way north towards Japan itself.

1. Locate (a) Japan (b) Pearl Harbor (c) Iwo Jima (d) Okinawa (e) Hiroshima (f) Manila
2. Regions Describe the extent of Japanese control in 1942.

3. Draw Conclusions How did geography make it difficult for Japan to maintain control of its empire?

Geography Interactive
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bombing that the Luftwaffe was almost grounded by the time of the Day invasion. With victory in Europe achieved, the Allies now had to triumph over Japan in the Pacific.

Checkpoint How did the Allied forces finally defeat the Germans?

Struggle for the Pacific

Until mid-1942, the Japanese had won an uninterrupted series of victories. They controlled much of Southeast Asia and many Pacific islands. By May 1942, the Japanese had gained control of the Philippines, killing several hundred American soldiers and as many as 10,000 Filipino soldiers during the 65-mile **Bataan Death March**. One survivor described the ordeal as "a macabre litany of heat, dust, starvation, thirst, flies, filth, murder, torture, corpses, and wholesale brutality that numbs the memory." Many Filipino civilians risked—and sometimes lost—their lives to give food and water to captives on the march. After the battles of Midway and the Coral Sea, however, the United States took the offensive. That summer, United States Marines landed at Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. Victory at Guadalcanal marked the

General Douglas MacArthur



Vocabulary Builder

objective—(ub JEK tiv) *n.* something worked toward; a goal

beginning of an “**island-hopping**” campaign. The goal of the campaign was to recapture some Japanese-held islands while bypassing others. The captured islands served as steppingstones to the next objective. In this way, American forces, led by General **Douglas MacArthur**, gradually moved north towards Japan. By 1944, the United States Navy, commanded by Admiral Chester Nimitz, was blockading Japan, and American bombers pounded Japanese cities and industries. In October 1944, MacArthur began the fight to retake the Philippines. The British, meanwhile, were pushing Japanese forces back into the jungles of Burma and Malaya.

✓ **Checkpoint** What strategy did General MacArthur use to fight the Japanese in the Pacific?

Defeat for Japan

With war won in Europe, the Allies poured their resources into defeating Japan. By mid-1945, most of the Japanese navy and air force had been destroyed. Yet the Japanese still had an army of two million men. The road to victory, it appeared, would be long and costly.

Invasion or the Bomb? In bloody battles on the islands of Iwo Jima from February to March 1945 and Okinawa from April to July 1945, the Japanese had shown that they would fight to the death rather than surrender. Beginning in 1944, some young Japanese men chose to become **kamikaze** (kah muh KAH zee) pilots who undertook suicide missions, crashing their explosive-laden airplanes into American warships.

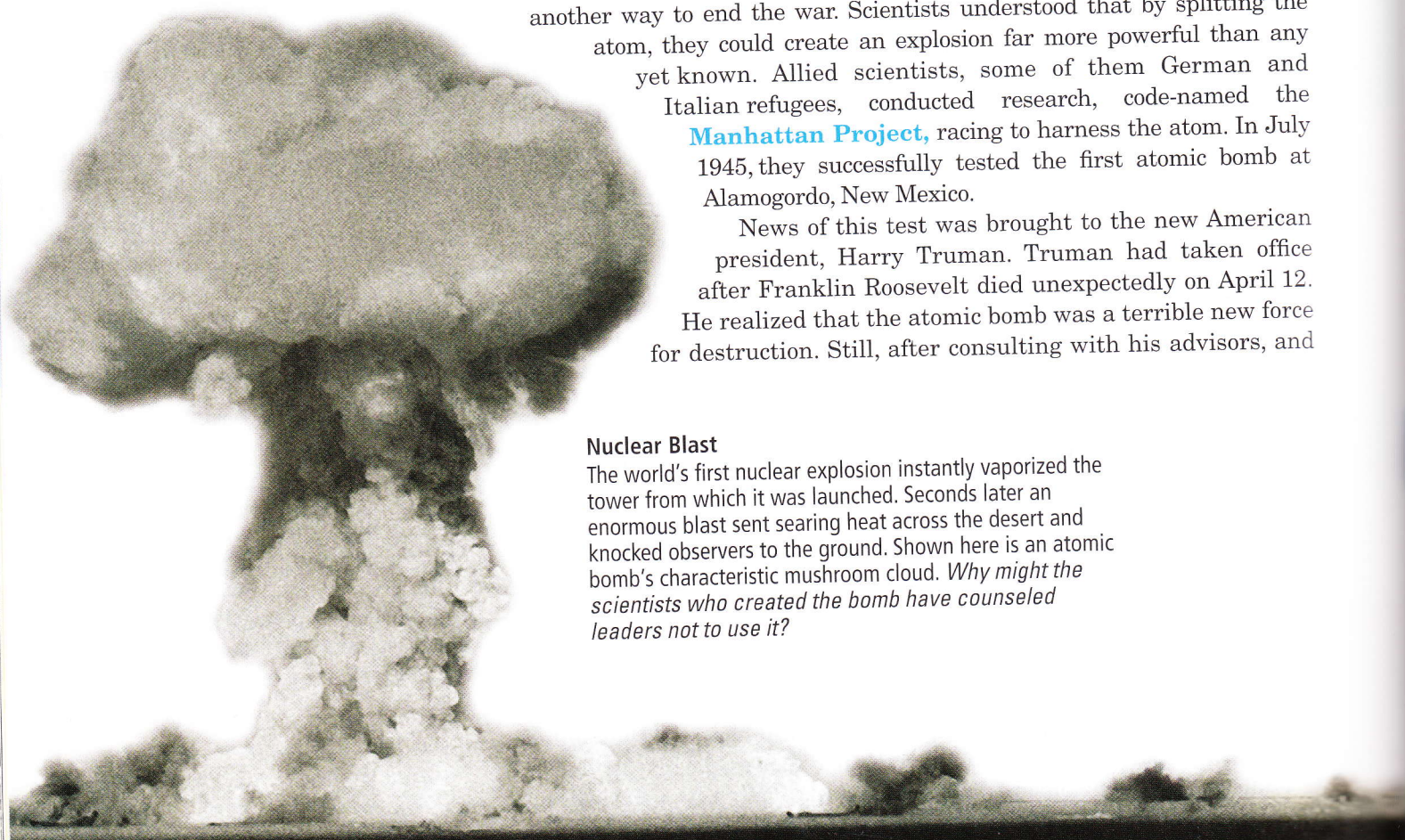
While Allied military leaders planned for invasion, scientists offered another way to end the war. Scientists understood that by splitting the atom, they could create an explosion far more powerful than any yet known. Allied scientists, some of them German and Italian refugees, conducted research, code-named the

Manhattan Project, racing to harness the atom. In July 1945, they successfully tested the first atomic bomb at Alamogordo, New Mexico.

News of this test was brought to the new American president, Harry Truman. Truman had taken office after Franklin Roosevelt died unexpectedly on April 12. He realized that the atomic bomb was a terrible new force for destruction. Still, after consulting with his advisors, and

Nuclear Blast

The world's first nuclear explosion instantly vaporized the tower from which it was launched. Seconds later an enormous blast sent searing heat across the desert and knocked observers to the ground. Shown here is an atomic bomb's characteristic mushroom cloud. *Why might the scientists who created the bomb have counseled leaders not to use it?*



Assessment

Terms, People, and Places

1. For each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section, write a sentence explaining its significance.

Note Taking

2. Reading Skill: Recognize Sequence

Use your completed flowchart to answer the Focus Question: How did the Allies finally defeat the Axis powers?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Determine Relevance** How did the location of the Axis powers in Europe contribute to their defeat?
4. **Draw Inferences** What factors besides ending the war in the Pacific might have contributed to President Harry Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb?

Writing About History

Quick Write: Make an Outline Once you have a thesis and have gathered research on your topics, you must choose an organization. Some choices are compare and contrast, order of importance, chronological, and cause and effect. Using one of these organizations, create an outline for the following thesis statement: The atomic bomb was a decisive weapon in World War II.

Progress Monitoring Online
For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
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Checkpoint with Japan?

Checkpoint What strategies did the Allies use to end the war

can battleship *Missouri*, anchored in Tokyo Bay. September 2, 1945, the formal peace treaty was signed on board the American

for a Japanese emperor, and forced the government to surrender. On

Finally, on August 10, Emperor Hirohito intervened, an action unheard of

Nagasaki. More than 40,000 people were killed in this second explosion.

United States dropped a second atomic bomb, this time on the city of

Manchuria. Again, Japanese leaders did not respond. The next day, the

On August 8, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan and invaded

effect of exposure to radioactive materials.

followed, many more would die from radiation sickness, a deadly after-

miles and instantly killed more than 70,000 people. In the months that

atomic bomb over the city of **Hiroshima.** The bomb flattened four square

On August 6, 1945, an American plane dropped an

ignored the warning, the United States took action.

face "complete destruction" and "utter devastation." When the Japanese

At the time, Truman was meeting with other Allied leaders in the city

weapon against Japan.

determining that it would save American lives, he decided to use the new

Hiroshima in Ruins

The atomic bomb reduced the center of Hiroshima to smoldering ruins (top left), but the full effect of the bomb would take years to materialize. A woman (above) pays respects to the victims of the atomic bomb at the Memorial Cenotaph in Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima. A cenotaph is a monument that honors people who are buried elsewhere.

