

# **World War II: A Military and Social History**

**Part I**

**Professor Thomas Childers**



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## **Thomas Childers, Ph.D.**

Professor of History, University of Pennsylvania

Thomas Childers was born and raised in East Tennessee. He received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Tennessee, and he earned his Ph.D. in History from Harvard University in 1976.

Since 1976, Professor Childers has taught in the Department of History at the University of Pennsylvania. He is a fellow of the Ford Foundation, term chair at the University of Pennsylvania and the recipient of several other fellowships and awards, including the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung Research Grant, a fellowship in European Studies from the American Council of Learned Societies, and a West European Studies Research Grant from Harvard University.

In addition to teaching at University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Childers has held visiting professorships at Trinity Hall College, Cambridge, Smith College, and Swarthmore College, and he has lectured in London, Oxford, Berlin, Munich, and other universities in the United States and Europe.

Professor Childers is the author and editor of several books on modern German history and the Second World War. These include *The Nazi Voter* (Chapel Hill, 1983) and *Reevaluating the Third Reich: New Controversies, New Interpretations* (New York, 1993). He is currently completing a trilogy on the Second World War. The first volume of that history, *Wings of Morning: The Story of the Last American Bomber Shot Down Over Germany in World War II* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1995), was praised by Jonathan Yardley in *The Washington Post* as "a powerful and unselfconsciously beautiful book." The second volume, *We'll Meet Again* (New York: Henry Holt and Company) is set for publication in spring 1999. The final volume, *The Best Years of Their Lives*, will follow in due course.

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# World War II: A Military and Social History

## Scope:

This set of thirty lectures examines the greatest conflict in human history, the Second World War. Between 1937 and 1945 approximately fifty-five million people perished in this series of interrelated conflicts. No continent was left untouched, no ocean or sea unaffected. The war fundamentally altered the international system, leading to the eclipse of Europe and the emergence of the United States and the Soviet Union as global superpowers. It ushered in the atomic age and produced, in Auschwitz and elsewhere, the most grisly crimes ever committed in the long course of Western civilization. It set the stage for the cold war, and it accelerated or, in some cases ignited, movements for national liberation around the world, prompting the rollback of Europe's colonial empires. In short, the Second World War has defined an entire epoch in human history, an epoch from which we are only now, in the final decade of the twentieth century, emerging.

The first four lectures are devoted to the origins of the war in Europe. They examine the relationship between the First World War, especially the way that conflict ended, and the Second. We examine the controversial Treaty of Versailles and the international security system that its framers envisioned, and we analyze the reasons for its failure. We dissect Adolf Hitler's conception of foreign policy, his domestic and international objectives, and the means he used to pursue his aims. We also address the failure of the Western powers—France, Great Britain, and the United States—to counter Hitler's attempts to destroy the Treaty of Versailles. This failure set the stage for overt Nazi aggression in 1939.

Lectures Five through Eleven focus on the war in Europe, from its outbreak in September 1939 to the failure of the German offensive before Moscow in December 1941. We examine the revolutionary German military strategy of Blitzkrieg and its dramatic success in Poland and in the West in 1939 and 1940. We explore the shocking collapse of France in the summer of 1940, the "Miracle of Dunkirk," and the German plans for an invasion of Great Britain. Two lectures are devoted to Britain's confrontation during 1940 and 1941—without allies and with only minimal aid from the United States—of a triumphant, seemingly invincible Nazi Germany, and its survival of that confrontation. Hitler's decision to attack the Soviet Union forms the point of departure for the final two lectures in this set. These lectures focus on the ideological background to Operation Barbarossa, the stunning successes of the opening phase of this gigantic military undertaking in the summer of 1941, and the reasons for its ultimate failure to achieve its goals. The German offensive bogged down in the snow before Moscow in December 1941, and the Blitzkrieg phase of the war came to an end.

In the next set of lectures—numbers Eleven through Fourteen—we turn to the war in Asia and the South Pacific. We examine the evolution of Japanese foreign policy and military thinking between the end of the First World War in

1918 and the invasion of China in 1937. The lectures provide an analysis of the dilemmas confronting Japanese policy makers in the years leading to their massive assault on European colonial possessions in Asia and on the American position in the South Pacific in 1941. We examine the planning for the attack on Pearl Harbor, the reasons for its success, and the American response. In the final lectures of this set, we examine Japanese strength at its high water mark and then turn to the two decisive American victories that signaled a major change of fortunes in the Pacific war: the naval battle at Midway and the long, bloody land campaign for Guadalcanal.

In Lectures Fourteen through Seventeen we return to the struggle against Germany, focusing on two major turning points in the war in Europe. We examine first the Anglo-American campaigns in North Africa between 1940 and 1942 and the invasions of Sicily and Italy in 1943. Allied victories in the Mediterranean Theater were highly controversial, provoking considerable disagreement between the British and American high commands. We will examine these differences over strategic priorities. Allied victories there marked a major turning point in the Western war against Germany, but, as Stalin complained and as the Americans agreed, even these successful campaigns seemed to delay the long-awaited invasion of northwestern Europe. Lecture Seventeen examines the battle of Stalingrad in 1942-1943, the turning point of the war on the Eastern Front. We examine the reasons for the failure of Hitler's plans in the Soviet Union and the remarkable rebound of the Red Army.

The next three lectures deal with Allied operations in Western Europe from the summer of 1944 to the spring of 1945. They focus on the planning for D-Day, the course of events on June 6, 1944, and the surprisingly long campaign in Normandy. We examine the German defensive schemes on the Western Front, the liberation of Paris, the controversy over Operation Market Garden, and finally the massive German counteroffensive in the Ardennes—the Battle of the Bulge—in December 1944. We also address the serious differences between Eisenhower and Montgomery over the Allied drive into Germany. The Supreme Commander insisted on a broad-based advance, while Montgomery advocated a “single thrust” toward the Ruhr and Berlin.

In the next set of three lectures, we shift our focus again to events in the Pacific Theater. We examine the American strategic decisions that would create a dual command structure and two axes of approach to Japan. The southwest Pacific would be dominated by General Douglas MacArthur and would be largely an Army theater, while operations in the central Pacific would be the responsibility of Admiral Chester Nimitz and hence the Navy. We will first examine the implications of this two-pronged strategy and then consider events in these two areas. We will analyze the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the gigantic naval engagement in the southwest in October 1944, and MacArthur's subsequent invasion of the Philippines. Next we follow Nimitz's relentless advance through the Central Pacific, the “island-hopping strategy,” and the climactic battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

After following the course of military events in Europe and the Pacific, the next two lectures interrupt the narrative to examine two features of the Second World War that distinguish it from all previous conflicts and place its terrifying stamp on the entire era. We will first consider the Nazis' efforts to create their "New Order" in Europe. We trace the role of anti-Semitism in Nazi ideology from the very beginning of the Third Reich and then analyze the steps that, after the outbreak of the war, led to the mass murder of European Jews. This "final solution to the Jewish question," as the Nazis euphemistically called their monstrous plans, is examined in detail. The use of strategic bombing, which would kill hundreds of thousands of civilians during the war, would fundamentally alter the nature of warfare in the modern age, and its effectiveness as well as its morality have remained among the most controversial issues of the war. We will examine the air war in both Europe and the Pacific, appraising its contribution to the Allied victory.

The next two lectures examine the creation of the U.S. Armed Forces (one of the most astonishing accomplishments of the Second World War) and social, economic, and cultural developments on the American home front during the war. We analyze how America's gigantic military machine, which hardly existed before 1940, was created. We will examine its organization, training, and social composition, and we will look at the day-to-day life of a new phenomenon—the GI, how he was fed, entertained, and equipped. In the same vein, we will examine the American economic miracle, the creation of the mammoth wartime economy, the influx of women into the labor market, and the social tensions that emerged during the war, especially the racial problems that led to riots in Detroit, Philadelphia, and other cities. We will also examine the hysteria that led to the internment of Japanese-Americans.

The final three lectures deal with the conclusion of the war in Europe and Asia, examining the "race" between the Red Army and the Western Allies to reach Berlin and the American air assault against Japan which culminated in the use of atomic weapons. We give special attention to Truman's decision to employ the bomb. The series concludes by assessing not only the historical significance and epochal political and economic impact of the war, but also its colossal human toll.

# Lecture One

## The Origins of the Second World War

**Scope:** At the outset we examine the historical importance of the Second World War, a conflict that was the single largest event in human history, stretching around the globe and consuming fifty-five million lives. It reshaped international politics, marked the emergence of the United States and Soviet Union as superpowers, and set the stage for the cold war. We will then turn to the origins of the Second World War in Europe, analyzing the role of the Versailles Treaty, the international system as it emerged from the 1920s, and the reasons for its failure in the 1930s.

### Outline

- I. Why should we study the Second World War?
  - A. It inflicted a terrible human cost on Europe and the world.
    1. 55 million people perished in the conflict, and millions more were wounded or left missing.
    2. It left no continent untouched.
    3. It was the largest event in human history.
  - B. World War II fundamentally altered the international system.
    1. It led to the emergence of the United States and the Soviet Union as world superpowers and ushered in the cold war.
    2. It led to the decline of Europe in geopolitical and economic significance.
    3. It also led to the rollback of European colonial empires and the rise of national liberation movements in the “Third World” during the 1950s and 1960s.
  - C. World War II marked the origins of the welfare state in Europe.
- II. Introduction to this series of lectures.
  - A. These lectures will examine the macro-events of the war and its leading political and military figures, *and* they will examine the war as it was actually experienced by workers, soldiers in the field, and the civilian population at home.
  - B. We will explore the origins and consequences of the war, the role of economic factors in explaining its origins and development, and its impact on culture and society.

- C. We will also explore the “psychic” dimension of the war, including its ability to evoke both the best and worst in human nature.
  - 1. The writer Studs Terkel called World War II the last “good war.” Many have seen it as ennobling and as relatively free from the heavy emotional and psychological costs later associated with Vietnam.
  - 2. We have perhaps lost a sense of the grim realities of World War II, which we will try to recapture in these lectures by examining the full range of human experiences associated with the war, both those of its leaders and of the millions who suffered its consequences.

### III. World War II had its origins in the conclusion of the First World War.

- A. The sudden armistice of 1918 created various problems.
  - 1. The German people had been led to believe that Germany’s spring 1918 offensive would bring victory.
  - 2. The absence of foreign troops on German soil at the time of the armistice in October 1918 left many Germans convinced that the Army had been “stabbed in the back” by domestic enemies.
  - 3. The army blamed Germany’s surrender on its republican government and leading political parties.
- B. The victorious Allies were determined through the Treaty of Versailles (1919) to weaken Germany and provide a system of collective security for France and the new nations of Eastern Europe.
  - 1. Germany lost much of its territory: eastern territory (including mineral-rich Silesia) went to Poland; Memel was transferred to Lithuania; Alsace-Lorraine was returned to France; a Polish corridor was established between Germany proper and Prussia; and the Saar would be administered by the League of Nations for 15 years.
  - 2. Germany lost many of its overseas colonies.
  - 3. The Allies required Germany to pay huge war reparations. The Versailles Treaty included a “war guilt clause” to justify these reparations.
  - 4. The Treaty included various clauses restricting Germany’s armaments and troop levels.
  - 5. The Treaty established a League of Nations and a system of collective security intended to keep the peace thereafter.



- C. Problems with the Versailles Treaty and the collective security system arose almost immediately.
1. The Treaty alienated the Germans, who saw it as a “dictated peace.” They particularly resented the reparations and war guilt provisions.
  2. The German army shifted blame for the armistice toward the new republican government, thereby undermining its legitimacy.
  3. The U.S. Senate failed to ratify the Versailles Treaty or to approve the Anglo-American guarantees to France. The United States began to withdraw into isolationism.
  4. Wary of being drawn into a new conflict on the continent, Britain distanced itself from France and sought accommodation with Germany.
  5. Italy was embittered because it had not been awarded new territories in the Adriatic region and in North Africa.
  6. Russia had not been invited to Versailles, and the new Bolshevik regime’s distrust of the Western powers grew.

**Recommended Reading:**

A.J.P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War*, Part I

**Supplemental Reading:**

Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World At Arms*, chapter 1

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, chapter 1

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Was the Treaty of Versailles too harsh? Not harsh enough?
2. Why were the victorious Allies unable to agree on enforcement of the Treaty?

## **Lecture Two**

### **Hitler's Challenge to the International System, 1933-1936**

**Scope:** In this lecture we will examine the rise of Hitler's Nazi party in Germany and the ideological and geopolitical wellsprings of his foreign policy. We will trace his step-by-step revision of the Treaty of Versailles and the rhetorical style with which he presented his policies to his domestic audience in Germany and to the international community.

#### **Outline**

- I.** The problems created by the Versailles settlement were present but manageable during the 1920s.
  - A.** Aware that it would have to maintain the Versailles settlement virtually alone, France established military alliances and agreements with the East European "successor" states.
  - B.** In 1924 Germany embarked on a "policy of fulfillment." By making a good-faith effort to fulfill the Versailles terms, Germany would demonstrate to the Allies that those terms were unreasonable.
  - C.** In 1924 Germany began to reintegrate itself into the European collective security system. The Kellogg-Briand Non-aggression Pact of 1928 signaled the high-water mark of postwar cooperation.
  - D.** The United States became somewhat more active in aiding Europe's economic recovery. The Dawes Plan extended financial aid from private sources to Germany.
  
- II.** The Great Depression imposed tremendous strains on Germany and on the European international system.
  - A.** The Wall Street Crash of 1929 brought massive unemployment and business failures in Germany.
  - B.** Growing resentment and political polarization fueled the rise of Hitler's Nazi Party (the NSDAP) between 1930 and 1933. The Nazis relentlessly attacked the Weimar government and the other political parties, promising to restore Germany to its rightful place in Europe and the world.
  - C.** Hitler demanded revision of the Treaty of Versailles.

### III. Hitler pursued an aggressive foreign policy.

- A. Hitler's foreign policy operated on two levels: geopolitical and ideological.
  - 1. His geopolitical goals were to destroy the Treaty of Versailles, attain *Lebensraum* (living space) in the east for the German *Volk* (people), ensure Germany's economic self-sufficiency, and create a Greater German *Reich* (Empire) to dominate the European continent.
  - 2. His ideological goal was to unleash a crusade against "Judeo-Bolshevism" to ensure the racial purity of his *Reich*.
  - 3. Hitler knew that attainment of these goals would require war.
- B. Hitler moved next to destroy the remnants of the Versailles Treaty.
  - 1. In 1933 he withdrew Germany from the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations.
  - 2. In 1934 he signed a ten-year non-aggression pact with Poland, thereby undermining the French alliance system.
  - 3. In March 1935 Hitler announced that Germany was rebuilding its *Luftwaffe*, ostensibly as a defensive action. When the Western powers failed to react, he announced the following week that Germany would rebuild its army.
  - 4. The Anglo-German Naval Agreement of June 1935 horrified the French. This agreement demonstrated that the British had abandoned the Versailles settlement and reached their own accommodation with Hitler.
  - 5. In March 1936 German troops entered the Rhineland; its remilitarization closed off France's direct access to Germany.
  - 6. The 1936 Berlin Olympics strengthened Germany's and Hitler's prestige.

#### Recommended Reading:

A.J.P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War*, Part II

#### Supplemental Reading:

Eberhard Jackel, *Hitler's World View: A Blueprint For Power*

Norman Rich, *Hitler's War Aims: Ideology, The Nazi State, and the Course of Expansion*

#### Questions to Consider:

- 1. What were Hitler's basic goals in foreign policy?
- 2. To what extent were Hitler's moves in foreign policy determined by ideology?

## Lecture Three

### The Failure of the International System

**Scope:** This lecture will examine the reasons for the failure of the international system, especially in the 1930s, to meet the threat posed by German foreign policy. We will examine the dilemmas of French, British, and Soviet foreign policy as well as the problem of isolationism confronted by President Franklin Roosevelt in the United States. We will conclude by examining the major international crises of 1938 and 1939 as Europe moved relentlessly toward war.

### Outline

- I. Divided responses by the West European powers to the German challenge help to explain the failure of the post-Versailles international system during the 1920s and 1930s.
  - A. In 1936 Hitler introduced a four-year plan to ensure German economic self-sufficiency. For the next two years he constantly asserted his desire for peace and justice while secretly preparing for war.
  - B. During the 1930s France was politically polarized and economically weakened.
    1. It cast about for allies with which to face a revived Germany, but it lacked a political consensus to confront the German challenge.
    2. It adopted an overly defensive, static, and reactive “Maginot mentality.”
    3. For various reasons, French military planners failed to extend the Maginot line along the French-Belgian frontier.
  - C. France and Britain failed to respond effectively to signs of aggressive German intent.
    1. Distrusting Britain’s reliability as an ally, France developed an uneasy relationship during the middle 1930s with the Soviet Union, which feared a possible German-Polish axis.
    2. In 1935 Stalin agreed to defend Czechoslovakia against external assault *if* France also honored its treaty obligations to Czechoslovakia.
    3. France also considered an alliance with Italian dictator Mussolini, who feared German intentions regarding the Balkans. Possibilities for British and French cooperation with Italy against Germany were destroyed by Mussolini’s invasion of Ethiopia in late 1935 and his intervention in the Spanish Civil War in 1936. The following year Italy allied with Germany.
  - D. As recounted in the 1937 Hossbach Memorandum, Hitler instructed his generals to prepare for a move into Eastern Europe that would bring Germany into conflict with France. Meanwhile, he removed top German officials who had expressed reservations about aggressive

operations in the East and consolidated his own control over top positions in the German armed forces.

**II. Crises involving Austria and Czechoslovakia during 1938 presaged war in Europe.**

**A. The Austrian crisis arose in February and March 1938.**

1. In early 1938 Austrian chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg sought British and French guarantees of Austria's sovereignty. These efforts upset Hitler when they eventually became known to him.
2. German ambassador to Austria Franz von Papen suggested a meeting between Schuschnigg and Hitler, which took place in Hitler's "Eagle's Nest" in the Bavarian Alps.
3. Having sidestepped Hitler's demands that he cede to Germany the control of Austria's foreign policy, Schuschnigg returned to Vienna and announced plans for a plebiscite.
4. After Schuschnigg refused Hitler's demand to call off the plebiscite, Hitler announced Germany's annexation of Austria (the "*Anschluss*"), which he justified on the basis of the national self-determination of peoples. The international community issued only mild protests.

**B. In summer 1938 a crisis arose regarding the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia.**

1. Ethnic Germans in the Sudetenland began to demand a "return to the Reich."
2. The Czech government (with its well-equipped army) mobilized to resist the anticipated German assault.
3. Mussolini and British premier Neville Chamberlain intervened in autumn 1938 to prolong the peace. Mussolini feared being dragged into war with the Allies over Sudetenland. French weakness and U.S. isolationism and unreliability convinced Chamberlain of the need to appease the Germans.
4. Czechoslovakia's fate was sealed at the September 1938 Munich Conference.

**Recommended Reading:**

Telford Taylor, *Munich: The Price of Peace*

**Supplemental Reading:**

Christopher Thorne, *The Approach of War, 1938-1939*

Gerhard L. Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany*

**Questions to Consider:**

1. In 1938 Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain was seen by most in Europe as a great hero, a savior of the peace. How did Chamberlain justify the Munich agreement and the policy of appeasement?
2. Why was France unable to play a more aggressive role in dealing with the threat of Hitler's Germany?

## Lecture Four

### The Coming of War

**Scope:** This lecture will focus on the implications of the Munich conference for Hitler's evaluation of the international situation. We will examine his calculations about Anglo-French responses to an invasion of Czechoslovakia, and Stalin's assessment of the Western powers in the last months of peace. We will also describe the impact of the conference on the German military conspiracy against Hitler. The lecture concludes by tracing the evolution of the Polish crisis in the summer of 1939, especially the stunning ramifications of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in August.

### Outline

- I. In late 1938 Europe stood on the brink of war.
  - A. Chamberlain received a hero's welcome on his return from Munich. His efforts to save the peace in Europe were greeted by general relief.
    1. Intent on preserving peace in Europe, Chamberlain had made all allowable concessions to Hitler.
    2. He was convinced that the United States was unreliable, France was weak, and the British army could not undertake operations on the continent.
    3. He and many others believed that World War I had occurred because European leaders had not taken all possible steps to preserve peace and avert war.
    4. He feared that another war would subordinate Britain to the United States.
    5. He sincerely believed Hitler's protestations of peaceful intent.
  - B. Hitler concluded from the Munich Conference that the Western powers were weak and lacked the will to fight.
  - C. Stalin also concluded that the West was weak.
    1. He was angry that the Soviet Union had been excluded from the Munich deliberations.
    2. He was convinced that the West sought to channel Nazi expansionism eastward.
  - D. Until 1938, the German army acted to restrain Hitler's aggressive impulses.
    1. Nervous about fighting the well-equipped Czech army, certain members of the army high command conspired to overthrow Hitler if he ordered an invasion of Czechoslovakia.
    2. The conspiracy began to dissolve in the wake of Munich.
  - E. Asserting the need to quell Czech-Slovak ethnic tensions, Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia on March 15, 1939.

1. This move could not be justified in terms of national self-determination; it was seen by all as naked aggression.
2. In a dramatic policy reversal, Britain joined France in extending security guarantees to Poland.
3. In March 1939 Hitler seized Memel; the veil had dropped.

**II.** The last prelude to war came in the summer of 1939.

- A.** France and Britain delayed in bringing the Soviet Union into the European collective security system.
  1. Chamberlain and the British foreign policy establishment distrusted Stalin.
  2. Britain and France thought the Soviet Union was militarily weak due to Stalin's purging of the Red Army.
- B.** The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was announced on August 23, 1939.
  1. The Pact made no ideological sense; Germany and the Soviet Union were sworn ideological foes.
  2. Hitler hoped to avoid the threat of a two-front war following his anticipated invasion of Poland. He believed the Pact would deter Britain from coming to Poland's defense.
  3. Stalin hoped that the Pact would give him time to rebuild Soviet military strength. Moreover, the secret annexes of the treaty provided for Soviet territorial gains in Poland and the Baltic states. The Soviet Union stood to acquire much of eastern Poland.
  4. The Hitler-Stalin Pact made war in Europe inevitable.
- C.** Hitler had not intended to fight in the West in the autumn of 1939. After he refused Chamberlain's ultimatum to withdraw from Poland, however, the war was on.

**Recommended Reading:**

Williamson Murray, *The Change in the European Balance of Power, 1938-1939*

**Supplemental Reading:**

Jonathan Haslam, *The Soviet Union and the Struggle for Collective Security in Europe, 1933-1939*

Klaus Hildebrand, *The Foreign Policy of the Third Reich*



**Questions to Consider:**

1. Why was the Soviet Union so mistrustful of the West? Why did Stalin sign the Non-Aggression Pact with Nazi Germany?
2. What were the implications of the Munich Agreement for Hitler's calculations?

## Lecture Five

### Blitzkrieg

**Scope:** At the outset we examine Blitzkrieg, or Lightning War, as a revolutionary military concept, tracing its origins in the thinking of the German high command during the 1930s. Blitzkrieg served Hitler as an economic and diplomatic strategy as well as a military one, since it would allow him, he believed, to conduct short wars against diplomatically isolated enemies without a full mobilization of the German economy. We will then examine Hitler's first use of the Blitzkrieg strategy—in the war against Poland in September 1939.

### Outline

- I. Blitzkrieg—i.e., “lightning warfare”—was more than a military tactic of Nazi Germany. It also served political, economic and foreign policy objectives.
  - A. The military elements of the Blitzkrieg included armored divisions, motorized infantry, and close air support. Its military goal was to avoid static trench warfare as Germany experienced between 1914 and 1918
  - B. Blitzkrieg offered several political and economic advantages for Hitler.
    1. Lightning war against a diplomatically isolated adversary could be conducted without full mobilization of Germany's society and economy.
    2. A policy of armaments in breadth, not in depth, would allow Hitler rapidly to build up and deploy Germany's armed forces. Lightning campaigns would substitute for sustained military efforts, for which Germany in late 1939 was not yet prepared.
  - C. The Blitzkrieg strategy had the following components.
    1. It was an offensive operation in which tanks would lead the attack, followed by motorized infantry, tracked personnel carriers, and massed infantry.
    2. The Luftwaffe would first destroy enemy air forces and disrupt enemy communications, and then provide close air support to attacking ground units.
    3. This strategy was intended to provide the movement, speed, and flexibility that had been conspicuously lacking during the First World War.
  - D. The Blitzkrieg strategy was developed by General Heinz Guderian.
    1. Guderian had been appalled by the slaughter occasioned by the static warfare at Verdun during World War I.
    2. Guderian adopted his ideas about aggressive armored warfare from British military thinkers, especially Gen. J.F.C. Fuller and Capt. B.H. Liddell Hart. Hitler was impressed by Guderian's ideas, although the German military high command was dubious.

- II.** The first German Blitzkrieg was directed at Poland.
- A.** Britain and France did not react as Hitler had anticipated to his aggression against Poland in September 1939. Their reaction raised the prospect of a two-front war for which Germany was not yet ready.
  - B.** Germans reacted with disappointment to news of the German invasion of Poland. Hitler’s popularity had previously been based on his ability to achieve his foreign policy goals by means short of war.
  - C.** The first Blitzkrieg against Poland—known as “Case White”—proceeded according to plan.
    - 1.** Poland was vastly outmatched in troop strength and armaments.
    - 2.** German troops reached Warsaw on September 8, 1939. The Polish army fought tenaciously in the face of a massive German aerial attack but was annihilated.
    - 3.** Soviet troops crossed Poland’s eastern frontier on September 17, 1939.
    - 4.** Many escaping Poles traveled to Britain, where they formed Europe’s largest army-in-exile.
    - 5.** The “Enigma machine” was used by the Germans to encipher their military communications. Polish mathematicians “broke” the mathematics behind Enigma and provided this information to the British after the fall of Poland. Britain and later the U.S. were able to successfully exploit German military communications as a result, particularly in the U-boat ‘war’ in the Atlantic in 1943 – 1944.

- III.** The war in the East ended by October 1939. It was followed in the West by a strange lull that lasted until the spring of 1940.
- A.** Hitler launched a series of peace initiatives between November 1939 and February 1940 intended to prevent a two-front war.
  - B.** In the East, the Russo-Finnish War was fought between November 1939 and March 1940.
    - 1.** Afraid that Finland would fall under German influence and pose a threat to Leningrad, Stalin demanded that Finland cede part of the Karelian Peninsula to the Soviet Union.
    - 2.** After the Finns refused this demand, Soviet forces attacked. The Finns resisted with great skill and tenacity despite being vastly outnumbered. The Red Army bogged down quickly and incurred heavy casualties.
    - 3.** Although the Soviets ultimately prevailed, the fighting reinforced the poor combat reputation of the Red Army.

**Essential Reading:**

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Chapter 3.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Gerhard Weinberg, *A World At Arms*, Chapter 2.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What objectives did the Blitzkrieg strategy serve for Nazi Germany? What were its main military components?
2. What considerations led Hitler to miscalculate the likely Allied reaction to his invasion of Poland? What were the consequences of this miscalculation?

## Lecture Six

### The German Offensive in the West

**Scope:** This lecture examines the German Blitzkrieg in western Europe in the spring of 1940 that brought to an end the strange period of “phony war” that had prevailed in the West since September 1939. We will examine English and French preparations for the anticipated attack, and Germany’s daring strategy for victory in the West. We also analyze the “miracle of Dunkirk” and examine the reasons for the sudden, utterly unexpected fall of France.

### Outline

- I. The “Phony War” ended in April 1940.
  - A. The new German offensive began with a preemptive assault on Denmark and Norway.
  - B. Having secured his northern flank, Hitler prepared for an invasion of the Low Countries, where France had virtual parity with Germany in troops and armor.
  - C. British and French preparations for a German attack were inadequate.
    1. The Allies’ military strategy remained defensive in orientation, in reaction to the high losses sustained as a consequence of their offensive posture during the Great War.
    2. The French adopted a “Maginot mentality” that emphasized static defense and fortifications.
  - D. Naval power remained the centerpiece of British military planning during the inter-war period.
    1. Having suffered economically during World War I, Britain was reluctant during the 1920s and 1930s to launch an extensive rearmament program.
    2. Britain devoted greater resources to its air force than to its army. It was among the first countries to develop a strategic bombing capability.
    3. Britain also developed new fighter aircraft to defend the country against attack from the continent.
  - E. Although the Allies’ military strength was adequate in terms of numbers and technology, they faced certain problems.
    1. The French army lacked a unified command, and its divided leadership failed to respond speedily enough to the German Blitzkrieg.
    2. The government of the French Third Republic lacked political cohesion.
  - F. The French high command anticipated a German attack through Belgium.

1. The “Gamelin Plan” called for the Allies to respond to a German advance by sending troops into Belgium.
  2. Gamelin ignored intelligence indicating that the Germans were massing in the Ardennes Forest.
- II.** The Germans attacked Belgium and Holland simultaneously on May 10, 1940.
- A.** As the Germans had hoped, British and French forces assumed defensive positions in Belgium. Then three German Panzer corps smashed through the Ardennes behind Allied lines, cutting off the Allied armies in Belgium.
  - B.** Led by Guderian and Erwin Rommel, German forces raced across northern France and Belgium during May 1940.
  - C.** Subsequent events became known as “the riddle of Dunkirk.”
    1. Hitler ordered the advancing German forces to halt fifteen miles from Dunkirk, where British forces were trapped.
    2. Why did the Germans halt?
      - a. The marshy terrain was not suited to armor operations.
      - b. German armored units needed maintenance.
      - c. Perhaps Hitler wanted to let the British escape in order to placate their government.
      - d. Perhaps he expected to destroy the British forces from the air without need for ground operations.
    3. The subsequent evacuation of more than 338,000 British troops from Dunkirk between May 26 and June 4, 1940, was a miraculous logistic feat.
  - D.** Next the Germans turned south toward Paris.
    1. On June 10 the Weygand line north of Paris collapsed, and Mussolini’s Italy declared war on France.
    2. German troops entered Paris on June 13, 1940.
    3. Under the terms of the armistice signed on June 16, Germany would occupy coastal and northern France while the Vichy regime would administer the rest of the country. France would retain its empire and fleet.
    4. Charles DeGaulle escaped to London, where he established a free French government.

**Essential Reading:**

Alistair Horne, *To Lose A Battle: France 1940*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*; vol. 2: "Their Finest Hour," Book 1.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Why were the Allies militarily unprepared for the German offensive of spring 1940?
2. Why did Hitler not press his advantage against the British forces in France following the success of his Ardennes offensive?

## Lecture Seven

### “Their Finest Hour”: Britain Alone

**Scope:** We turn in this lecture to the precarious situation of Great Britain in the summer of 1940 after the collapse of France, when German troops stood poised for a cross-channel invasion of southern England. Hitler gave the order for an invasion—Operation Sea Lion—to be undertaken in the late summer or early fall. We will examine the scope of that plan, and Britain’s preparations to repel the Germans. We will analyze British strategic thinking in these perilous weeks, as well as the military assets possessed by Churchill’s government, especially the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force (RAF).

### Outline

- I. Britain faced a desperate situation. In the summer of 1940 as it stood alone against Germany.
  - A. The German plan for invading England was called “Operation Sea Lion.”
  - B. Britain lacked allies in mid-1940.
    1. France had been knocked out of the war
    2. The United States was not yet prepared to engage in hostilities with Germany.
  - C. Churchill and British military leaders hoped to prevail through strategic bombing, a naval blockade of Germany, and support for anti-German resistance movements on the continent.
    1. British officials saw strategic bombing of Germany as their only viable offensive option.
    2. The Special Operations Executive (SOE) was set up in 1940 to establish and support anti-Nazi resistance movements and sabotage operations in occupied Europe.
    3. British hopes regarding a naval blockade of Germany were based on the success of a similar blockade between 1916 and 1918. Britain incurred lasting French resentment by destroying the French navy from the air in July 1940 in order to keep it from falling into German hands.
    4. The blockade remained largely ineffective while Germany continued to receive resources and economic assistance from the Soviet Union and elsewhere in Europe.
    5. The Royal Navy worked to prevent German U-boats from blockading Britain.



- II.** In July 1940 Britain was ill-prepared to withstand a German invasion.
- A.** In June, Britain shipped its gold and negotiable securities to Canada, and it made plans for evacuating the government there as well.
  - B.** Britain’s survival depended on the ability of the Royal Air Force to maintain air superiority.
  - C.** Following the failure of his peace feelers to Britain, Hitler had to confront the realities of a cross-channel invasion. Unlike the offensives against Poland and France, German operations against Britain were improvised.
    - 1.** In July 1940 the German high command had made no plans for an invasion of Great Britain, yet Hitler set August 15 as the deadline for the invasion.
    - 2.** The German high command faced numerous problems in planning the invasion.
      - a.** The Army lacked faith in the Luftwaffe’s ability to protect its troops from the RAF and thus planned to disperse its invasion force along a 200-mile coastal front in England.
      - b.** The German Navy was ill-equipped to ferry the invasion force across the channel and protect it from the British navy.
      - c.** The success of the invasion depended on the Luftwaffe, but this air force was tactical and not equipped for sustained strategic bombing.
    - 3.** Hitler still hoped to avert the need for an invasion.
  - D.** Panic prevailed in Britain in mid-1940, but a sense of confidence slowly emerged as the difficulties facing the Germans became clearer.

**Essential Reading:**

Gerhard Weinberg, *A World At Arms*, Chapter 3.

Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*; vol. 2: “Their Finest Hour,” Book 2.

**Supplementary Reading:**

John Lukacs, *The Duel*

**Questions to Consider:**

- 1.** Describe Britain’s strategic position in the summer of 1940. How did Britain hope to hold out against the expected German assault?
- 2.** What problems did the German high command confront as it prepared for a cross-channel invasion of Britain?

## Lecture Eight

### The Battle of Britain

**Scope:** Establishing air superiority over the Channel and the planned landing zones in southern England was the prerequisite for a successful German invasion of Great Britain, and in July 1940 the Luftwaffe (German Air Force) began its air assault against targets in Britain. This colossal air battle raged from August to October and was ultimately won by the RAF. In this lecture we examine the course of this decisive conflict, the objectives of the combatants, and the reasons for Britain's ultimate triumph.

### Outline

- I. The air war over Britain lasted from July to October 1940.
  - A. The British enjoyed some important advantages.
    1. The RAF had capable commanders and a range of aircraft—including the Spitfire and Hurricane—which were superior to German aircraft.
    2. The British had a high rate of production for fighter aircraft.
    3. Radar gave the British advance warning of enemy air attacks.
    4. The “Ultra” machine allowed Britain to read German coded messages.
  - B. The German air campaign went through several phases and had several objectives.
    1. The first phase began on July 10, 1940. During July and August, the Luftwaffe attempted to establish air superiority over the Channel and landing beaches.
    2. German attacks on RAF airfields began on August 8. “Operation Eagle”—an effort to destroy RAF airfields, flying units, supply, and the aircraft industry— was launched on August 13.
    3. The Germans both inflicted and suffered tremendous casualties. The British government was genuinely worried that German attacks on the airfields would destroy the RAF.
    4. On September 7, however, Hitler shifted the focus of the Luftwaffe attacks to London, probably in an effort to concentrate the RAF fighters so they could be more easily downed, and to erode British will to resist.
    5. Hitler ordered the “postponement” of Operation Sea Lion on September 17, after the attacks on London had failed to achieve their strategic objective.
    6. Churchill said of the RAF pilots: “Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.”
  - C. In all, the Germans lost 1,882 aircraft and the RAF lost 1,265 in the Battle of Britain.

- II.** The Germans' nighttime terror bombing of London and other British cities between September 1940 and May 1941 was known as the Blitz.
- A.** In September, the Luftwaffe tried to minimize their own losses by shifting to nighttime terror raids rather than daytime precision bombing.
  - B.** In November the raids were expanded to other cities, including Coventry.
  - C.** The bombing became a regular feature of British life in late 1940 and early 1941.
    - 1.** A written report on activities in the Smithy Street bomb shelter in East London in September 1940 dramatizes the psychological impact of the Blitz on Londoners.
    - 2.** London was bombed for 57 consecutive nights beginning in September 1940. It resumed again in March and April 1941 and lasted until the end of May.

**Essential Reading:**

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Chapter 4.

**Supplementary Reading:**

John Terraine, *A Time For Courage: The Royal Air Force in World War II*

**Questions to Consider:**

- 1.** Describe the phases and objectives of the German air campaign against Britain.
- 2.** What considerations led the Germans to switch from daytime precision bombing of Britain to nighttime terror bombing?

## Lecture Nine

### Hitler Moves East

**Scope:** In this lecture we turn to Hitler’s greatest military and political gamble: the attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941. We will examine the place of the Soviet Union in Hitler’s ideological thinking, his determination to destroy “Judeo-Bolshevism,” and his desire to seize *Lebensraum* (living space) in the East. We will also explore Germany’s evaluation of Russian military strength and the German plan for the invasion, named Operation Barbarossa. Finally, we will analyze how Nazi ideological objectives colored the conduct of German troops as they crossed into Russian territory in June 1941.

### Outline

- I. The German invasion of the Soviet Union—Operation Barbarossa—was the largest military operation in human history. Both ideological and practical considerations shaped Hitler’s decision to invade the Soviet Union.
  - A. He believed that the “civilized” world was destined to clash with the Soviet Union as the center of Judeo-Bolshevism.
  - B. He sought *Lebensraum* for Germans via eastward expansion into the successor states of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire and ultimately into the Soviet Union.
  - C. He assumed that Great Britain had essentially been defeated by 1940 and was no longer a factor on the continent. Thus he did not risk a two-front war.
  - D. He questioned the leadership, organization, and morale of the Red Army, and he assumed that it had been gravely weakened by the purges of 1938.
- II. The planning for Operation Barbarossa began in the summer of 1940. The invasion was planned for spring 1941.
  - A. After some debate, it was decided that the goal of the operation should not be the capture of Moscow or other specific cities, but instead the destruction of the Red Army in western Russia.
  - B. Three army groups were assembled. Army Group North would advance toward Leningrad through the Baltic states; Army Group Center would advance toward Moscow; and Army Group South would invade the Ukraine.

- C. Why was the invasion postponed from its initial starting date of May 15 until late June 1941?
  - 1. Some have attributed this delay to Hitler’s need to invade the Balkans in April 1941 to restore order there following Mussolini’s disastrous invasion of Greece in October 1940.
  - 2. In fact, unusually wet weather in eastern Europe in spring 1941 was responsible for the postponement of Barbarossa.
- D. Stalin discounted intelligence reports of the German invasion plans. He suspected Churchill of trying to foment trouble between the Germans and Soviets.
- E. The invasion was to be an ideological crusade against “Asiatic Bolshevism.”
  - 1. Invading troops were ordered to eliminate all resistance without regard to international law.
  - 2. The infamous “Commissar Order” required the summary execution of all captured Bolshevik agitators, guerrillas, saboteurs, and Jews, and it ordered the Army to eliminate all active or passive opposition.
  - 3. The German Army—not the Nazi Party—issued directives requiring its troops to assault “Jewish sub-humanity” without regard to the Geneva accords.

### III. The invasion began on June 22, 1941.

- A. The Germans caught the Russian troops completely unprepared.
- B. During the first 24 hours, the Germans inflicted tens of thousands of casualties, took almost 10,000 prisoners, and destroyed 1,200 Soviet aircraft, almost all on the ground.

#### **Essential Reading:**

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Chapters 6-9.

Gerhard Weinberg, *A World At Arms*, Chapter 4

#### **Supplementary Reading:**

Alan Clark, *Barbarossa: The Russian-German Conflict, 1941-1945*.

#### **Questions to Consider:**

- 1. What considerations motivated the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941?
- 2. How did the invasion serve Nazi ideological objectives?

## Lecture Ten

### The Germans Before Moscow

**Scope:** In this lecture we follow the German drive deep into the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941, as Operation Barbarossa proceeded according to plan, exceeding even the German high command's expectations. Yet, even as the Germans took hundreds of thousands of prisoners and inflicted ghastly casualties on the Red Army—and civilians—the invaders began encountering unsettling logistical and weather problems that slowed the offensive by late summer. We will examine those problems, the emerging differences of opinion within the German high command about objectives, and finally the extraordinary resilience of the Red Army as winter set in and the German assault ground to a halt in the snow before Moscow.

### Outline

- I. Initially, the German invasion of the Soviet Union proceeded according to plan and achieved its objectives.
  - A. The Germans made spectacular gains in June and July.
    1. Army Group North captured the Baltics.
    2. Army Group Center encircled Smolensk.
    3. Army Group South met fierce resistance in Ukraine.
    4. The Red Army incurred enormous casualties. German General Franz Halder commented: “The Russians lost the war in the first two weeks.”
  - B. Despite their impressive victories, the Germans faced problems.
    1. The rapidly advancing Army Groups North and Center began to outdistance their supplies.
    2. Terrain and weather proved more difficult than anticipated.
    3. The Red Army resisted tenaciously and inflicted huge casualties on the Germans.
      - a. The Germans' brutality prompted the Russian defenders to fight heroically even in the face of hopeless odds.
      - b. Advancing behind the German forces, the *Einsatzgruppen* murdered 1 million Soviets (mainly Jews) during the early months of the invasion.
      - c. Stalin's order that all Soviet deserters would be shot also motivated the troops to stand and fight.
      - d. Soviet partisan troops behind the advancing German lines created constant problems for the German armies.
    4. The Soviets' new T-34 tank worried the German high command.
- II. A new strategic debate over objectives arose within the German high command in mid July.

- A. Hitler sought to divert units from Army Group Center to Army Groups North and South. He favored a drive on Leningrad. Guderian and other generals sought to concentrate German forces for an assault on Moscow.
  - B. The panzers paused in late July as this debate took place. They did not resume their advance until late August.
  - C. Hitler had several reasons for wanting to maintain the Germans' broad front strategy.
    - 1. Logistical and supply problems were imposing a severe burden on the Wehrmacht.
    - 2. The German forces had nearly exhausted their manpower reserves.
    - 3. The Soviets were redeploying new reserves to meet the Germans.
  - D. The existence of this debate over objectives showed that the Germans had failed to achieve their goal of destroying the Red Army in the West.
- III. The German offensive resumed in September.**
- A. Two hundred thousand civilians died during the siege of Leningrad.
  - B. Kiev was encircled and eventually capitulated.
  - C. On September 30, 1941, Army Group Center moved toward Moscow. Panic ensued in Moscow as the government pondered whether to evacuate.
  - D. The Soviets began to dismantle industrial enterprises and reconstruct them far to the east.
  - E. Heavy rainfall during October forced the Germans to postpone the final offensive until early November, after the onset of cold weather. The German forces were unprepared for the Russian winter; the troops lacked winter uniforms and their vehicles lacked antifreeze.
  - F. The Soviets responded by redeploying troops from the Far East for the defense of Moscow.
    - 1. On December 5/6, the Soviets launched a massive surprise counter-offensive under the command of Marshal Zhukov.
    - 2. The German offensive halted, and the Blitzkrieg phase of the war came to an end.
    - 3. Why did Barbarossa fail? Could it have succeeded?

**Essential Reading:**

Gerhard Weinberg, *A World At Arms*, Chapter 5

**Supplementary Reading:**

Alan Clark, *Barbarossa*, Chapters 4-9.

John Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad*

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Evaluate the strategic debate within the German high command during mid 1941 over the objectives of the Soviet campaign.
2. What factors contributed to the eventual failure of Operation Barbarossa?



# Timeline

## The War in Europe

- Jan. 30, 1933.....Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany
- March 16, 1935.....Germany renounces disarmament clauses of Versailles Treaty, introduces conscription, and begins construction of an air force
- March 7, 1936.....German remilitarization of the Rhineland
- July 18, 1936.....Beginning of Spanish Civil War
- March 1938.....The Austrian crisis and the *Anschluss*
- September 1938.....The Sudetenland crisis
- Sept. 29, 1938.....The Munich Conference
- March 1939.....German occupation of Czechoslovakia
- August 23, 1939.....The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact
- Sept. 1, 1939.....Germany invades Poland
- Sept. 29, 1939.....Russia and Germany divide Poland
- Nov. 30, 1939-  
March 12, 1940.....Russo-Finish War
- April 9, 1940.....Germany invades Norway
- May 10, 1940.....Germany invades Holland, Belgium, and France
- May 29 - June 4, 1940.....British and French troops evacuated from Dunkirk
- June 10, 1940.....Italy declares war on Britain and France
- June 22, 1940.....France signs armistice
- July 8 - Nov. 1940.....Battle of Britain
- October 28, 1940.....Italy invades Greece
- April 6, 1941.....Germany invades Yugoslavia and Greece
- June 22, 1941.....Germans launch Operation Barbarossa
- Sept. 4, 1941.....German siege of Leningrad begins
- December 6, 1941.....Russian counterattack before Moscow
- December 11, 1941.....Hitler declares war on the United States
- January 20, 1942.....Wannsee Conference in Berlin
- July 2, 1942.....New German offensive in Soviet Union

August 22, 1942.....Battle of Stalingrad begins  
 September 21, 1942.....Soviet forces counterattack, begin the encirclement of Stalingrad  
 November 8, 1942.....Allied invasion of French North Africa begins  
 January 17-27, 1943.....Casablanca Conference  
 February 2, 1943.....German 6th Army surrenders at Stalingrad  
 February 8, 1943.....Battle of Kursk  
 May 8-12, 1943.....End of German resistance in North Africa  
 July 10, 1943.....Allied forces invade Sicily  
 July 25, 1943.....Mussolini forced to resign  
 August 17, 1943.....American air raids on Schweinfurt and Regensburg  
 September 2 1943.....Allied invasion of Italy  
 September 9, 1943.....American forces land at Salerno  
 November 6, 1943.....Russians retake Kiev  
 January 22, 1944.....Allied forces land at Anzio  
 March 15-May 18, 1944....Allied attacks on Monte Casino  
 June 4, 1944.....Anglo-American troops enter Rome  
 June 6, 1944.....D-Day: the invasion of France  
 June -August 1944.....Soviet offensive against German Army Group Center  
 July 1944.....The Warsaw uprising  
 August 25, 1944.....The liberation of Paris  
 September 17-26, 1944.....Operation Market Garden fails  
 December 16-25, 1944.....The Battle of the Bulge  
 January 12, 1945.....Russians take Warsaw  
 February 7, 1945.....Yalta Conference  
 March 7, 1945.....American forces cross the Rhine at Remagen  
 May 1, 1945.....Battle of Berlin begins  
 May 7, 1945.....German surrender to Western Allies at Reims  
 May 8, 1945.....V-E Day in the West

## **Timeline**

### **The War in the Pacific**

September 1931.....	The Mukden Incident and Japanese attacks in Manchuria
February 18, 1932.....	Japanese declare the independence of Manchukuo
July 7, 1937.....	Japanese hostilities with China commence
December-January 1938....	The “rape of Nanking”
December 7, 1941.....	Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor
December 25, 1941.....	British forces at Hong Kong surrender
January -April 9, 1942.....	Battle of the Philippines
January -March 1942.....	Japan seizes Dutch East Indies, Singapore, Burma
April 18, 1942.....	The Doolittle raid on Tokyo
May 7, 1942.....	The Battle of the Coral Sea
June 4-7, 1942.....	The Battle of Midway
Aug. 1942-Feb. 1943.....	The Struggle for Guadalcanal
June 1943.....	MacArthur launches Operation Cartwheel
November 1943.....	The fighting on Tarawa
February 2, 1944.....	Invasion of the Marshall Islands
June 16, 1944.....	Invasion of the Marianas
August 11, 1944.....	Conquest of Guam
October 19, 1944.....	MacArthur opens offensive in the Philippines
February -March 1945.....	Battle of Iwo Jima
March 9-10.....	First fire-bombing of Tokyo
April 1 - June 21, 1945.....	Battle of Okinawa
August 6, 1945.....	Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima
August 8, 1945.....	Soviet Union enters war against Japan
August 9, 1945.....	Second atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki
August 14, 1945.....	Allies accept Japanese surrender
September 2, 1945.....	Formal surrender signed on board U.S.S. Missouri in Tokyo Bay, marking end of Second World War

## Glossary

***Anschluss***: the “connection” of Austria with Germany in March 1938.

***Blitz***: “lightning” in German; refers to the German aerial assault on British cities between 1940 and 1942.

***Blitzkrieg***: “lightning war”; term referring to Germany’s form of warfare in the first phase of the war, 1939-1941.

***Einsatzgruppen*** Special SS commando units that conducted a bloodbath on the eastern front against the Jews.

***Kamikaze***: “Divine Wind”—special suicide planes used by the Japanese for the first time in the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

***Lebensraum***: “living space”—term employed by Hitler to describe Germany’s need for expansion to the east in order to claim land for the Reich’s swelling population.

**SHAEF**: Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces in the European Theater of Operations, commanded by Gen. Dwight Eisenhower from late 1943 until the end of the war in Europe.

**SS**: *Schutzstaffel*, the elite organization of the National Socialist Party headed by Heinrich Himmler. Originally a special bodyguard for Hitler, it became police organization in the Third Reich.

***Waffen-SS***: special SS units that operated as elite military units on both the Eastern and Western Fronts.

**V-2**: Vengeance Weapons, the V-2 and its buzz bomb predecessor, the V-1, were rockets developed by the Germans and launched against targets in Britain during the last year of the war.

## Biographical Notes

**Chiang Kai-shek** (1887-1975). Leader of the Chinese Kuomintang and head of state of Nationalist China.

**Chamberlain, Neville** (1869-1940). Last prewar prime minister of Great Britain. Associated with the policy of appeasement and the Munich Conference.

**Churchill, Winston** (1874-1965) Wartime leader of Great Britain. Churchill became prime minister on May 10, 1940, the day Germany launched its invasion of Western Europe. He was an inspiring orator whose leadership during Britain's dark days of 1940 and 1941 held the nation together. He worked tirelessly to create and maintain the anti-Nazi alliance and cemented a particularly close relationship with the United States. More than FDR, Churchill remained wary of Stalin's postwar intentions.

**De Gaulle, Charles** (1890-1970). Tank commander in the French Army and cabinet minister in the French government in 1940. In exile he became leader of the Free French Forces.

**Eisenhower, Dwight** (1890-1969). American and Allied Supreme Commander in North Africa, Sicily and northwest Europe. He was in charge of Operation Overlord and commanded the Allied military forces in Europe. Known mainly for his remarkable personal political skills, desperately needed in managing a coalition military force. Eisenhower determined the overall military strategy during the western drive into Germany, advocating a broad-front approach rather than a dash for Berlin.

**Goering, Hermann** (1893-1946). Head of the four-year plan in prewar Germany; commander of the German Air Force (*Luftwaffe*); and officially second in command of the Third Reich.

**Guderian, Heinz** (1888-1953). Tank commander and architect of the *Blitzkrieg*; commanded German armored forces in France and Russia.

**Halsey, William** (1882-1959). Fleet Admiral "Bull" Halsey played a key role in U.S. naval operations against the Japanese in the Central Pacific. He commanded the U.S. Central Pacific Fleet at the crucial Battle of Leyte Gulf in October 1944.

**Harris, Arthur** (1892-1984). Air Chief Marshal, Bomber Harris was commander of the Royal Air Force's Bomber Command from 1942 until the end of the war; he was associated with the policy of nighttime area bombing of Germany.

**Heydrich, Reinhard** (1904 -1942). Head of the Reich Main Security Office, Heydrich took charge of the SS extermination squads (*Einsatzgruppen*) on the Eastern Front in 1941. Heydrich was responsible for drafting the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" and presided over the Wannsee Conference in January 1942.

**Himmler, Heinrich** (1900-1945). Head of the SS (Reichsführer SS) throughout the Third Reich. Himmler was the primary architect of Nazi extermination policy in Europe and was the second most powerful figure of the Nazi regime.

**Hirohito** (1901-1987). Emperor of Japan, Hirohito officially presided over Japanese policy throughout the war but was largely a figurehead. In the war's final days, he intervened to press the military leadership to terminate hostilities.

**Hitler, Adolf** (1889-1945). Führer of the Third Reich who came to power in 1933. Hitler directed every aspect of German policy and increasingly intervened directly in military decisions. More than any other individual, he bears responsibility for the Second World War and its horrors.

**King, Ernest** (1878-1956) Appointed Commander in Chief of U.S. Naval Forces at war's outbreak, he assumed duties as Chief of Naval Operations and became the leading figure in the U.S. Navy during the war. In Allied councils he consistently pressed for greater attention to the Pacific Theater.

**MacArthur, Douglas** (1880-1964). Dominant American military figure in the Pacific Theater, MacArthur survived the Japanese assault on the Philippines in 1941, vowing "I shall return." He did so in January 1945. While Nimitz directed American forces in the Central Pacific, MacArthur led the advance through the southwest. At war's end he accepted the Japanese surrender on Halsey's flagship, the U.S.S. Missouri.

**Marshall, George** (1880-1959). Army Chief of Staff at war's outbreak, Marshall presided over the creation of the U.S. Army, which in 1939 possessed fewer than 200,000 troops. He became chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and FDR's most trusted military advisor.

**Molotov, Vyacheslav** (1890-1970). Served as Soviet foreign minister throughout the war. He began his career with the Nazi-Soviet Pact in August 1939 and continued as Stalin's foreign representative with the Allies after Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941.

**Montgomery, Bernard** (1887-1976). Field Marshal Montgomery was the leading British military figure of the Second World War. He played a major role in the Allied victories in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy, and under Eisenhower's command he planned Operation Overlord. On D-Day Montgomery was ground commander of Allied forces under Eisenhower's supreme command and directed an Allied army group until the end of the war.

**Mussolini, Benito** (1883-1945). Fascist dictator of Italy from 1922 to 1943. Mussolini embarked on an expansionist policy in Ethiopia in 1935 and supported Franco in Spain in 1936. He entered the Second World War as Hitler's junior partner, invading France only after the Germans had smashed the French Army, and he mounted a disastrous campaign against Greece in November 1940, only to be bailed out by Hitler. Defeated in North Africa, he was deposed in July 1943 and was again rescued by Hitler to rule a German

puppet state in northern Italy. He was captured and executed by partisans in April 1945.

**Nagumo, Chuichi** (1887-1944). Vice-Admiral Nagumo was the commander of the Japanese First Carrier Fleet. He directed the Japanese assault on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and at the Battle of Midway in 1942. He fought unsuccessful naval engagements off Guadalcanal and later at Saipan, and he committed suicide in July 1944.

**Nimitz, Chester** (1885-1966). Nimitz commanded the U.S. Pacific Fleet from just after Pearl Harbor until the end of the war. In 1942 he assumed command of the Central Pacific Theater and directed the island-hopping drive through the Gilberts, Marshalls, and Marianas toward the Japanese home islands.

**Patton, George** (1885-1945). Easily the most flamboyant American general, Patton was a vocal advocate of armored warfare. He commanded a corps in Operation Torch, directed the 7th Army in the invasion of Sicily, and led the spectacular Allied breakout from Normandy as commander of the U.S. 3rd Army. His intervention during the Battle of the Bulge was a decisive factor in the Allied victory.

**Pétain, Henri-Philippe** (1856-1951). French hero of the First World War, Pétain entered the government of Paul Reynaud in 1940 during the German invasion. Rather than bolstering French morale, Pétain advocated an armistice, undermining those, such as de Gaulle, who wished to fight on. He assumed power and offered the Germans an armistice on June 22, 1940. He served as head of the new collaborationist Vichy regime until its collapse, was tried after the war and sentenced to death, but de Gaulle commuted his sentence to life in prison.

**von Ribbentrop, Joachim** (1893-1946). Became Hitler's foreign minister in 1938 and negotiated the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact in August 1939. His influence waned during the war. Tried at Nuremberg, he was hanged in 1946.

**Rommel, Erwin** (1891-1944). Excellent German commander chosen by Hitler to lead the Afrika Korps where he established his reputation as "the Desert Fox." He was placed in charge of preparing German defenses for the anticipated Allied landing in northwest Europe. Wounded after D-Day, he was implicated in the plot to overthrow Hitler on July 20, 1944, and was offered the choice of suicide or standing trial. Hitler gave him a hero's funeral, claiming that he had died of his combat wounds.

**Roosevelt, Franklin D.** (1882-1945). President of the United States since 1933, FDR was a towering figure in the alliance against Hitler and Japan. He struggled against American isolationism until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor threw the United States into the war, and he sent aid to Britain and the Soviet Union under "Lend-Lease." Agreeing with Churchill that defeat of Germany was the first priority, he presided over American policy, both military and diplomatic, until his death in April 1945. He held out great hopes for the United Nations, an organization that he inspired and founded.

**von Rundstedt, Gerd** (1875-1953). Rundstedt came out of retirement in 1939 and led an army group in the invasions of Poland and France. His troops executed the breakthrough that stranded British and French forces in Belgium, but Rundstedt halted his forces before Dunkirk, allowing British and some French troops to be evacuated. In 1941 he commanded German forces in the Ukraine and in 1942 was named commander in chief of the West, a post he held until July 1, 1944. He planned the Ardennes offensive of December 1944 but retired after its failure in March 1945.

**Spaatz, Carl** (1891-1974). Spaatz commanded U.S. air forces in Europe and then in the Pacific. An advocate of daylight strategic bombing, Spaatz led the 8th Air Force in England, the principal American instrument in the strategic air campaign against Germany. Later he directed U.S. air forces in North Africa, and in 1944 he assumed the position of commanding general of the strategic air force in Europe. In the spring of 1945 he took up the same post in the Pacific Theater, where he directed the final air assault on Japan.

**Speer, Albert** (1905-1999). Hitler's architect, who in 1942 became the mastermind of Germany's economic mobilization for war. As minister of armaments and munitions, Speer managed to increase German war production, despite massive Allied bombing, until September 1944.

**Stalin, Joseph** (1879-1953). Dictatorial leader of the Soviet Union and its armed forces. Mistrustful of the West, Stalin entered into a non-aggression pact with Hitler in 1939 and faithfully fulfilled its terms until the German invasion in June 1941. His purge of the Red Army in 1938 had seriously weakened the armed forces but Stalin presided over their revival and made shrewd military appointments, especially the selection of Georgi Zhukov. Stalin never really overcame his mistrust of the West, and tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States grew during the last year of the war.

**Tojo, Heideki** (1884-1948). A military man who became Prime Minister of Japan in 1941, Tojo directed the Japanese war effort until the summer of 1944. He held two additional positions—war minister and chief of army staff—and was the central figure in Japan's conduct of the war. He resigned after the fall of the Marianas in July 1944. After the war he was one of the seven Japanese to be hanged as a war criminal by the Allies.

**Truman, Harry** (1884-1972). A senator from Missouri at the war's outbreak, Truman was elected vice president in 1944 and became president upon FDR's death on April 12, 1945. He continued FDR's policies, though he would find himself on a collision course with Stalin at the Potsdam conference and afterward. He remained in office until 1953, playing a leading role in shaping the contours of the cold war.

**Yamamoto, Isoroku** (1884-1943). Japan's leading naval strategist and an early advocate of carrier-based aircraft in naval operations. As minister of the navy and subsequently commander of the 1st Fleet, Yamamoto oversaw the buildup of the Imperial Navy and its air power. Although he was convinced that Japan



could not prevail in a protracted war with the United States, he devised the daring plan of attack on Pearl Harbor which he hoped would cripple American naval power in the Pacific. He was also responsible for planning the ill-fated naval attack on Midway. He was killed in April 1943 when American aircraft shot down an plane in which he was traveling to inspect the Western Solomons.

**Zhukov, Georgi** (1896-1974). Deputy supreme commander and chief of the Red Army during virtually all of the Second World War, Zhukov earned his reputation with a successful action against the Japanese in Mongolia during 1939. After the German invasion of the Soviet Union, he held a series of important command positions in defense of Smolensk, Leningrad, and finally Moscow in the fall of 1941. The “Savior of Moscow,” he went on to become the “Savior of Stalingrad” as well, commanding the Soviet defense and counterattack against Paulus’s 6th Army. Zhukov would lead the great Russian sweep into the Ukraine, Poland, and finally Germany. His troops entered Berlin on May 2, and the Germans surrendered to him on May 8, 1945.

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\*Overy, Richard. *Why the Allies Won*. New York: Norton, 1996. An insightful and probing examination of the factors that led to the Allied victory. The best interpretive treatment of these issues in the literature today.

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# **World War II: A Military and Social History**

## **Part II**

**Professor Thomas Childers**



**THE TEACHING COMPANY ®**

## Thomas Childers, Ph.D.

Professor of History, University of Pennsylvania

Thomas Childers was born and raised in East Tennessee. He received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Tennessee, and he earned his Ph.D. in History from Harvard University in 1976.

Since 1976, Professor Childers has taught in the Department of History at the University of Pennsylvania. He is a fellow of the Ford Foundation, term chair at the University of Pennsylvania and the recipient of several other fellowships and awards, including the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung Research Grant, a fellowship in European Studies from the American Council of Learned Societies, and a West European Studies Research Grant from Harvard University.

In addition to teaching at University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Childers has held visiting professorships at Trinity Hall College, Cambridge, Smith College, and Swarthmore College, and he has lectured in London, Oxford, Berlin, Munich, and other universities in the United States and Europe.

Professor Childers is the author and editor of several books on modern German history and the Second World War. These include *The Nazi Voter* (Chapel Hill, 1983) and *Reevaluating the Third Reich: New Controversies, New Interpretations* (New York, 1993). He is currently completing a trilogy on the Second World War. The first volume of that history, *Wings of Morning: The Story of the Last American Bomber Shot Down Over Germany in World War II* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1995), was praised by Jonathan Yardley in *The Washington Post* as "a powerful and unselfconsciously beautiful book." The second volume, *We'll Meet Again* (New York: Henry Holt and Company) is set for publication in spring 1999. The final volume, *The Best Years of Their Lives*, will follow in due course.

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## World War II: A Military and Social History

### Scope:

This set of thirty lectures examines the greatest conflict in human history, the Second World War. Between 1937 and 1945 approximately fifty-five million people perished in this series of interrelated conflicts. No continent was left untouched, no ocean or sea unaffected. The war fundamentally altered the international system, leading to the eclipse of Europe and the emergence of the United States and the Soviet Union as global superpowers. It ushered in the atomic age and produced, in Auschwitz and elsewhere, the most grisly crimes ever committed in the long course of Western civilization. It set the stage for the cold war, and it accelerated or, in some cases ignited, movements for national liberation around the world, prompting the rollback of Europe's colonial empires. In short, the Second World War has defined an entire epoch in human history, an epoch from which we are only now, in the final decade of the twentieth century, emerging.

The first four lectures are devoted to the origins of the war in Europe. They examine the relationship between the First World War, especially the way that conflict ended, and the Second. We examine the controversial Treaty of Versailles and the international security system that its framers envisioned, and we analyze the reasons for its failure. We dissect Adolf Hitler's conception of foreign policy, his domestic and international objectives, and the means he used to pursue his aims. We also address the failure of the Western powers—France, Great Britain, and the United States—to counter Hitler's attempts to destroy the Treaty of Versailles. This failure set the stage for overt Nazi aggression in 1939. Lectures Five through Eleven focus on the war in Europe, from its outbreak in September 1939 to the failure of the German offensive before Moscow in December 1941. We examine the revolutionary German military strategy of Blitzkrieg and its dramatic success in Poland and in the West in 1939 and 1940. We explore the shocking collapse of France in the summer of 1940, the "Miracle of Dunkirk," and the German plans for an invasion of Great Britain. Two lectures are devoted to Britain's confrontation during 1940 and 1941—without allies and with only minimal aid from the United States—of a triumphant, seemingly invincible Nazi Germany, and its survival of that confrontation. Hitler's decision to attack the Soviet Union forms the point of departure for the final two lectures in this set. These lectures focus on the ideological background to Operation Barbarossa, the stunning successes of the opening phase of this gigantic military undertaking in the summer of 1941, and the reasons for its ultimate failure to achieve its goals. The German offensive bogged down in the snow before Moscow in December 1941, and the Blitzkrieg phase of the war came to an end.

In the next set of lectures—numbers Eleven through Fourteen—we turn to the war in Asia and the South Pacific. We examine the evolution of Japanese foreign policy and military thinking between the end of the First World War in 1918 and the invasion of China in 1937. The lectures provide an analysis of the dilemmas confronting Japanese policy makers in the years leading to their

massive assault on European colonial possessions in Asia and on the American position in the South Pacific in 1941. We examine the planning for the attack on Pearl Harbor, the reasons for its success, and the American response. In the final lectures of this set, we examine Japanese strength at its high water mark and then turn to the two decisive American victories that signaled a major change of fortunes in the Pacific war: the naval battle at Midway and the long, bloody land campaign for Guadalcanal.

In Lectures Fourteen through Seventeen we return to the struggle against Germany, focusing on two major turning points in the war in Europe. We examine first the Anglo-American campaigns in North Africa between 1940 and 1942 and the invasions of Sicily and Italy in 1943. Allied victories in the Mediterranean Theater were highly controversial, provoking considerable disagreement between the British and American high commands. We will examine these differences over strategic priorities. Allied victories there marked a major turning point in the Western war against Germany, but, as Stalin complained and as the Americans agreed, even these successful campaigns seemed to delay the long-awaited invasion of northwestern Europe. Lecture Seventeen examines the battle of Stalingrad in 1942-1943, the turning point of the war on the Eastern Front. We examine the reasons for the failure of Hitler's plans in the Soviet Union and the remarkable rebound of the Red Army.

The next three lectures deal with Allied operations in Western Europe from the summer of 1944 to the spring of 1945. They focus on the planning for D-Day, the course of events on June 6, 1944, and the surprisingly long campaign in Normandy. We examine the German defensive schemes on the Western Front, the liberation of Paris, the controversy over Operation Market Garden, and finally the massive German counteroffensive in the Ardennes—the Battle of the Bulge—in December 1944. We also address the serious differences between Eisenhower and Montgomery over the Allied drive into Germany. The Supreme Commander insisted on a broad-based advance, while Montgomery advocated a “single thrust” toward the Ruhr and Berlin.

In the next set of three lectures, we shift our focus again to events in the Pacific Theater. We examine the American strategic decisions that would create a dual command structure and two axes of approach to Japan. The southwest Pacific would be dominated by General Douglas MacArthur and would be largely an Army theater, while operations in the central Pacific would be the responsibility of Admiral Chester Nimitz and hence the Navy. We will first examine the implications of this two-pronged strategy and then consider events in these two areas. We will analyze the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the gigantic naval engagement in the southwest in October 1944, and MacArthur's subsequent invasion of the Philippines. Next we follow Nimitz's relentless advance through the Central Pacific, the “island-hopping strategy,” and the climactic battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

After following the course of military events in Europe and the Pacific, the next two lectures interrupt the narrative to examine two features of the Second World War that distinguish it from all previous conflicts and place its terrifying stamp on the entire era. We will first consider the Nazis' efforts to create their “New

Order” in Europe. We trace the role of anti-Semitism in Nazi ideology from the very beginning of the Third Reich and then analyze the steps that, after the outbreak of the war, led to the mass murder of European Jews. This “final solution to the Jewish question,” as the Nazis euphemistically called their monstrous plans, is examined in detail. The use of strategic bombing, which would kill hundreds of thousands of civilians during the war, would fundamentally alter the nature of warfare in the modern age, and its effectiveness as well as its morality have remained among the most controversial issues of the war. We will examine the air war in both Europe and the Pacific, appraising its contribution to the Allied victory.

The next two lectures examine the creation of the U.S. Armed Forces (one of the most astonishing accomplishments of the Second World War) and social, economic, and cultural developments on the American homefront during the war. We analyze how America’s gigantic military machine, which hardly existed before 1940, was created. We will examine its organization, training, and social composition, and we will look at the day-to-day life of a new phenomenon—the GI, how he was fed, entertained, and equipped. In the same vein, we will examine the American economic miracle, the creation of the mammoth wartime economy, the influx of women into the labor market, and the social tensions that emerged during the war, especially the racial problems that led to riots in Detroit, Philadelphia, and other cities. We will also examine the hysteria that led to the internment of Japanese-Americans.

The final three lectures deal with the conclusion of the war in Europe and Asia, examining the “race” between the Red Army and the Western Allies to reach Berlin and the American air assault against Japan which culminated in the use of atomic weapons. We give special attention to Truman’s decision to employ the bomb. The series concludes by assessing not only the historical significance and epochal political and economic impact of the war, but also its colossal human toll.

## Lecture Eleven

### The War in Asia

**Scope:** Turning our attention to events in Asia, we trace the evolution of Japanese foreign and military policy between the close of the First World War in 1918 and the invasion of China in 1937. We will examine Japanese designs on the Asian mainland, beginning with “the Mukden incident” in 1931 and continuing through the early stages of the war with China. The Japanese ruling military elites faced a strategic dilemma in the late 1930s: they had to choose between an advance north into Manchuria, which would lead to war with the Soviet Union, and an advance to the south, which would provoke conflict with the Western imperial powers, especially Britain, France, and possibly the United States. We will evaluate the internal Japanese debate over these strategic options and conclude by examining the impact of events in Europe on Japanese calculations.

### Outline

- I. The roots of the conflict in Asia lay in the diplomatic context of the end of World War I.
  - A. The Japanese emerged from the First World War as the leading power in the Far East.
    1. Japan seized the Marshall, Mariana, and Caroline Islands in the Pacific, all of which were former German possessions.
    2. At Versailles, Japan was awarded former German concessions in China despite protests from the United States and China.
  - B. Japanese naval officers resented the restrictions imposed on the Japanese fleet at the Washington Naval Conference of 1921-1922.
  - C. Many in the Japanese armed forces were convinced that Japan’s only salvation lay in expansion, particularly on the Asian mainland.
    1. Expansionists sought access to food, oil, and other raw materials through military conquest.
    2. Many military officers were increasingly disgusted with Japan’s corrupt civilian government.
  - D. China was an especially inviting target. Manchuria was rich in natural resources and appeared ripe for the taking. Since 1905, influence in Manchuria had been split between Japan and Russia.
  - E. The Mukden “Incident” of 1931 led to the Japanese seizure of Manchuria and the creation in 1932 of the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo.
    1. This operation underscored the strong influence of the military over the civilian government in Tokyo.

2. Condemned by the League of Nations, Japan withdrew from the League in 1932.
3. The Chinese central government was weak and divided. The Nanking government could not respond effectively to Japanese aggression.

## II. Japan engaged in full war with China in July 1937.

- A. In July 1937 the Japanese Kwantung Army invaded northern China from Manchukuo.
  1. The Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact with China.
  2. The Soviets and the Chinese Communists announced their intention to support Chiang Kai-shek's forces, which were defending China against the Japanese.
- B. In November 1937, Japanese forces besieged the new Chinese capital, Nanking, which fell on December 12.
- C. The "Rape of Nanking" in December 1937 and January 1938 provoked widespread condemnation of Japan, especially in the United States where the "China Lobby" was particularly strong.
  1. Some 200,000 Chinese civilians died in the attack.
  2. The capital was moved to Chungking.
  3. Canton fell in October 1938.
  4. In December 1938, the United States extended a \$25 million loan to China.
- D. Armed clashes with Red Army on Mongolian border in August 1939 sobered Japanese military commanders about prospects for expansion to the north.

## III. Tokyo faced a strategic dilemma.

- A. The Japanese army favored expansion to the north against the Soviet Union, while the navy advocated expansion southward through Southeast Asia and the Pacific and seizure of the colonial possessions of the western European powers.
- B. A compromise solution was reached, as outlined in the "Fundamental Principles of National Policy" of August 1936.
  1. Japan should extend its influence in China and the South Seas gradually and by peaceful means.
  2. Both the army and navy would be strengthened so that they could better resist the Russian army and the U.S. navy.
  3. This policy committed Japan to an arms race with the Soviet Union and the United States, and it called for expansion into China.



- C. The triumph of Germany in the west in 1940 had a dramatic effect on Japanese strategic thinking.
  - 1. In July 1940 the civilian government was replaced by a more aggressive cabinet that pursued an alliance with Germany and the Axis powers.
  - 2. The new government was determined to crush China.
  - 3. It decided to push southward into Southeast Asia.
- D. The new cabinet sought to silence domestic opposition.
- E. Japan faced continued resistance in China during 1940 from Chiang and the Chinese Communists.
  - 1. Tojo reasoned that a move to the south against Western colonial possessions would help Japan subdue China by cutting off Chiang's external supplies. It would also provide needed raw materials for Japan.
  - 2. This planned push to the south required Japan to reach a non-aggression pact with the Soviets and to prepare for conflict with the United States.
  - 3. War games conducted in May 1940 showed that Japan could prevail in a short conflict with the United States but might lose a long one. The war would be a great strategic gamble.

#### IV. The situation in East Asia deteriorated during 1941.

- A. Japan felt threatened by U.S. economic sanctions and aid to China. Following Japan's demand in July 1940 that Britain close the Burma Road, the United States imposed a limited embargo on the sale of certain key goods to Japan.
- B. In late 1940, Tojo linked Japan with the Axis powers in the "Tripartite Pact." Each member pledged to support the others in a war against the United States.
- C. The United States offered to assist the Dutch if they would cut off oil shipments to Japan, and it provided \$70 million in new loans to China.
- D. In March 1941 the U.S. Congress passed Lend-Lease and provided additional support for Chiang.
- E. In April 1941 Japan and the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact, indicating that Japan had chosen the southern strategy. Japan and the United States inched closer to conflict.
- F. Roosevelt rejected the proposal but prolonged negotiations in spring 1941 in order to prevent Japan from attacking. Japan hoped to resolve its differences with the United States through negotiation but was prepared to use force if necessary.

- G. Japanese threats to French Indochina, the Dutch East Indies, British Malaya, and the American Philippines in July 1941 led the United States to freeze Japanese assets. Great Britain and the Netherlands followed, and Japan found itself cut off from 90 percent of its oil supplies.
- V. Events moved rapidly toward war in late 1941.
- A. In early September 1941 the Japanese government decided that it would be ready for war by late October.
  - B. Minister of War Tojo assumed power in October 1941.
  - C. Diplomatic overtures continued. Japan offered to withdraw from Indochina and parts of China if the United States would not interfere with Sino-Japanese peace negotiations and if it would normalize trade relations with Japan and support Japanese acquisition of Dutch East Indies.
  - D. The Japanese government set a secret deadline of November 25, 1941, for progress in the talks. Roosevelt knew that this was an important date. Because the U.S. government expected an attack, it was less interested in negotiating.
  - E. Although the American military position was weak, Roosevelt rejected the Japanese proposals and demanded Japanese withdrawal from China.
  - F. On November 26, 1941, a large Japanese carrier force set sail in the northern Pacific. Its objective was the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor.

**Essential Reading:**

Akira Iriye, *The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific*

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Chapter 12

**Supplementary Reading:**

Suburo Ienaga, *The Pacific War, 1931-1945*, Chapters 1-6

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What factors explain the resurgence of Japanese expansionism during the 1930s?
2. What developments and strategic considerations led the Japanese government to choose the “southern strategy” of expanding into Southeast Asia and the southwest Pacific? What were the consequences of this choice?

## **Lecture Twelve**

### **The Japanese Gamble**

**Scope:** In this lecture we will continue our analysis of Japanese policy, especially the deterioration of Japanese-American relations between 1937 and 1941 that led in December 1941 to the Japanese attack on the American Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor. We will also examine the Japanese planning for the attack and the reasons for its stunning success. In so doing, we also evaluate American policy and the security lapses that resulted in the disasters not only at Pearl Harbor but also in the Philippines.

### **Outline**

- I. The Japanese leadership faced important decisions as they planned for war against the United States.
  - A. Japan's leaders believed they had three options.
    1. Japan could abandon its ambitions in the Pacific, Southeast Asia, and China.
    2. It could attempt a compromise with the United States and hope for concessions.
    3. It could take military action.
  - B. Japan had two principal military options.
    1. It could strike the European colonial possessions in Southeast Asia but spare the Philippines in order to preserve peace with the United States. Eventually Japan's leaders decided that military action in Southeast Asia would require an attack on the United States.
    2. Japan could strike American positions in the Pacific, notably the Philippines and Pearl Harbor.
  - C. Admiral Yamamoto argued that if Japan chose to fight the United States, it must strike a crippling blow against the U.S. Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor.
    1. This attack would allow Japan to "run wild" for six months and secure control of Southeast Asia and the western Pacific,
    2. Yamamoto's plan assumed that the United States would negotiate peace terms following the loss of its fleet, and that it would accept Japanese dominance in East Asia.
    3. Yamamoto did not believe that Japan would prevail in a protracted conflict with the United States.

- II.** The Japanese chose to attack the U.S. Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor.
- A.** Admiral Yamamoto's plan had several components.
    - 1. Japan would launch simultaneous attacks on the U.S. islands of Wake and Guam; British Malaya, Burma, and Hong Kong; the Dutch East Indies; and the American Philippines.
    - 2. The centerpiece of the operation would be a surprise attack on the U.S. Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor.
    - 3. The assault force would be centered on Japan's aircraft carrier fleet. Japan had a very well-trained and -equipped naval air force.
    - 4. The element of surprise was essential. The attack force maintained strict radio silence and followed a northern course well away from the standard sea lanes.
  - B.** The Japanese forces attacked Pearl Harbor on the morning of December 7, 1941.
    - 1. The attackers achieved complete surprise.
    - 2. They destroyed much of the U.S. fleet and U.S. air power. Japanese losses were minuscule.
    - 3. However, the victory was not complete.
      - a. The three American aircraft carriers were not at Pearl. Seven heavy cruisers were also at sea. Only two battleships were wholly destroyed.
      - b. The attackers failed to hit American fuel depots.
      - c. They did not destroy the U.S. submarine base.
      - d. Admiral Nagumo, who commanded the attack, was concerned to protect the Japanese carriers and thus did not order a follow-up air assault.
  - C.** The United States declared war on Japan on December 8, 1941.
- III.** There were several reasons for the American defeat at Pearl Harbor and in the Philippines.
- A.** Some of these reasons involved intelligence failures.
    - 1. Some historians have suggested that FDR had advance knowledge of the attack, which he saw as an opportunity to involve the United States actively in the war. There is no evidence that the U.S. government knew that Pearl Harbor had been targeted for attack.
    - 2. The U.S. government had not yet broken the Japanese military code. It anticipated a Japanese attack in Southeast Asia but not at Pearl Harbor. It was confident that Hawaii was secure.
    - 3. Security breakdowns in the Pacific were also important.
      - a. The initial alert message was not taken seriously; the ships had no torpedo nets; and there was no general alert.
      - b. The conduct of Admiral Husband Kimmel and General Walter Short was later criticized.
  - B.** The Japanese success was mainly attributable to a brilliant plan that was carried out to perfection.

**Essential Reading:**

Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War With Japan*, Chapters 1-5

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Chapter 12.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Gordon W. Prangle, *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor*

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What were the components of Admiral Yamamoto's plan for victory over the United States in the Pacific?
2. What factors account for the devastating U.S. defeat at Pearl Harbor?

## Lecture Thirteen

### The Height of Japanese Power

**Scope:** In the wake of the Japanese victory at Pearl Harbor, the Japanese rolled to a unbroken series of triumphs that established their dominance in Southeast Asia and across the South Pacific. In this lecture, we will examine the fall of British Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaya, French Indochina, the Netherlands East Indies, and the American Philippines, exploring Japanese strategic options at this high-water mark of Axis power. We will close with the Battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942, when the U.S. Navy inflicted a surprising defeat on the Japanese in what was to be the war's first battle of aircraft carriers.

### Outline

- I. Admiral Yamamoto had predicted that the Japanese could “run wild” for three or four months following the Pearl Harbor attack.
  - A. The Japanese steamrolled throughout the western Pacific and Southeast Asia.
    1. Guam and Wake fell in December 1941.
    2. Hong Kong was taken by Christmas.
    3. The sinking of the HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse* on December 10, 1941, gave Japan naval superiority in Southeast Asia.
    4. The loss of Malaya and of Singapore in February 1942 was a huge blow to Western morale. The Japanese began to speak of creating a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.
    5. Burma and the Netherlands East Indies fell in March 1942. Britain had been pushed out of Southeast Asia, and its position in India was threatened.
    6. The Japanese also attacked the Philippines, destroying U.S. air power at Clark Field. MacArthur underestimated the Japanese and overestimated the local Allied force.
      - a. U.S. troops on Corregidor surrendered on May 5, 1942.
      - b. U.S. troops on Bataan held out until April 1942. In the Bataan “death march,” 75,000 troops from the U.S. garrison were marched 55 miles to a railhead. More than 7,000 died along the way.
  - B. Japan was dominant throughout Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific in the spring of 1942.
    1. The Allies feared that Japan would move east toward India or east toward U.S. possessions in the Pacific.
    2. Meanwhile in Europe, the Russian counteroffensive before Moscow was stalled.

3. German U-boats operated with near-impunity off the U.S. coast. The German Navy sank many U.S. merchant ships during the winter of 1941-1942.

## II. Japan faced several strategic options in the spring of 1942.

- A. The Japanese leadership considered three competing offensive strategies.
  1. One involved a thrust westward into the Indian Ocean and perhaps onward to link up with German forces in the Middle East. This option most frightened the Allied leadership in early 1942.
  2. Another option was a continued push to the south to seize New Guinea and perhaps Australia.
  3. A third option was a strike against the last American outpost in the Pacific—Midway, followed perhaps by an invasion of the Hawaiian Islands. Yamamoto argued that Japan had to engage the U.S. fleet as early as possible, destroy U.S. naval power in the Pacific, and force the United States into a negotiated settlement.
- B. Instead of adopting one strategy, Japan sampled from each.
  1. Japan considered seizing Madagascar from France. Britain seized the island to keep Japan from taking it.
  2. Japan's advance into the Indian Ocean—Churchill's and Roosevelt's nightmare—came to naught in April 1942.
  3. Jimmy Doolittle's raid on Tokyo on April 18, 1942, underscored the vulnerability of the home islands and prompted Yamamoto to plan a "ribbon defense" across the Pacific by driving U.S. forces out of Midway and Hawaii.
  4. The Japanese plan called for attacks in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands to disrupt the supply flow to MacArthur in Australia.
- C. U.S. and Japanese naval forces clashed at the Battle of the Coral Sea on May 7-8, 1942.
  1. This was the first great naval battle between aircraft carriers and the first in which carrier-based airplanes inflicted all damage.
  2. The battle ended in a draw.
    - a. Japan withdrew without attempting a landing at Port Moresby.
    - b. The United States achieved its strategic goal of blocking the Japanese advance. The battle seemed to end in an Allied victory.
- D. Yamamoto hoped to destroy the U.S. Pacific fleet in order to protect the home islands and prevent a repetition of Doolittle's raid.
  1. Japanese forces would attack Midway in order to lure the U.S. fleet out of Hawaii.
  2. The Japanese would follow up the Midway attack with a major invasion front. They had huge superiority over the United States in ships and aircraft.

- E. Due to intelligence provided by “Magic,” the U.S. carriers secretly relocated from Pearl Harbor to Midway.
1. The stakes were very high. If the Japanese succeeded, the U.S. position in the Pacific would be untenable.
  2. Admiral Nagumo launched his air attack against Midway on June 4, 1942. Initially, the attack proceeded according to plan.
  3. As the Japanese returned for a second strike, U.S. aircraft arrived.

**Essential Reading:**

Ronald Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*

Gerhard Weinberg, *A World At Arms*, Chapter 6

**Supplementary Reading:**

Saburo Ienaga, *The Pacific War*, Chapters 7-8.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How did the Japanese leadership resolve the strategic decision that it faced in early 1942?
2. What was the strategic significance of the U.S. victory in the Battle of the Coral Sea?



## Lecture Fourteen

### Turning the Tide in the Pacific: Midway and Guadalcanal

**Scope:** This lecture examines two critical battles in 1942, one a naval engagement and the other a long land campaign, that halted the Japanese advance in the Pacific and turned the tide of the Japanese-American war. We will focus first on the crushing defeat of the Imperial Navy at Midway in June 1942, which saved the American position in the Hawaiian Islands and severely damaged Japanese carrier forces. Next we will examine the brutal fighting in and around the Solomons between August 1942 and February 1943. The American victory over the Japanese army at Guadalcanal marked the first defeat of Japanese land forces in the war and set the tone for the ferocious combat that would characterize the Japanese-American struggle in the South Pacific.

#### Outline

- I. The fortuitous U.S. victory at Midway Island became known as the “Miracle of Midway.”
  - A. The Japanese planes were preparing for a second assault on Midway on June 4, 1942, when a U.S. air squadron appeared.
    1. The U.S. planes were shot down and the Japanese carriers suffered no significant damage.
    2. One group of U.S. dive bombers had gotten lost looking for the Japanese carriers. It later found and attacked them at the worst possible moment for the Japanese; three of the four carriers were sunk and the fourth severely damaged.
    3. Without the carriers and air cover, the main Japanese force could not press the attack on Midway.
  - B. The Battle of Midway marked a key turning point in the U.S.-Japanese struggle.
    1. The outcome shifted the naval balance in the Pacific.
    2. It marked the end of Japan’s initiative on the high seas. Henceforth the Imperial Navy would be on the defensive.
    3. Pearl Harbor was secured for the United States.
- II. The major turning point on land came with the Battle of Guadalcanal, August 1942-February 1943.
  - A. U.S. forces attacked the Japanese airfield on Guadalcanal on August 7, beginning a six-month epic struggle that proved to be the longest in the Pacific war.
    1. The U.S. attack was intended to keep the Japanese from securing a foothold in the Solomon Islands, located northeast of Australia.

2. The fighting involved seven naval battles and ten land battles.
3. The brutal and vicious fighting at Guadalcanal shaped the nature of combat between Japanese and Americans in the Pacific.
  - a. It marked the first U.S. experience of Japanese suicide attacks.
  - b. The jungle environment underscored the distinctiveness of warfare in the Pacific theater.
  - c. Japanese and American propaganda helped to enhance the brutality of the conflict.
- B. Sea battles off the coast—notably at Savo Island in the central Solomons—were extremely costly to both sides. Admiral Halsey took charge of the U.S. Fleet.
- C. Guadalcanal represented the first defeat for Japan on land and marked a shift in momentum and initiative to the United States.

**Essential Reading:**

Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun*, Chapters 6-10

Walter Lord, *Incredible Victory: The Battle of Midway*

**Supplementary Reading:**

John Costello, *The Pacific War*, Chapters 15-20

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Why was the Battle of Midway a key turning point in the war in the Pacific?
2. What was new or different about the nature of the fighting on Guadalcanal? How did it affect subsequent U.S.-Japanese warfare in the Pacific?

## **Lecture Fifteen**

### **The War in North Africa**

**Scope:** The Mediterranean Theater was a sideshow for Hitler, but it loomed large in the strategic thinking of the Western Allies. This lecture will treat the role of North Africa in Hitler's strategic approach to the war, illuminating the problematic relationship between Mussolini's Italy and Nazi Germany in military matters between 1940 and 1943. British and American forces scored their first victories over the German army in the deserts of North Africa, culminating in Operation Torch in November 1942, which drove the Germans from the continent. It also revealed a serious difference in Anglo-American strategic priorities, provoking considerable conflict within the Western command structure. This lecture will examine these issues, with particular emphasis on Hitler's missed opportunities in North Africa and the British triumph over their American allies in establishing strategic objectives for 1942 and 1943.

### **Outline**

- I.** Did Hitler lose an important strategic opportunity in the Mediterranean Theater?
  - A.** The Mediterranean Theater was a sideshow for Hitler, who was mainly concerned with subduing the Soviet Union.
    1. Hitler sought alliances with Spain, Vichy France, and Italy to put pressure on British positions in the Mediterranean, but without success.
    2. Neither Franco nor the Vichy regime nor Mussolini was a reliable German military ally.
    3. Hitler avoided direct military involvement in the Mediterranean.
  - B.** Mussolini, by contrast, had important ambitions in the Mediterranean.
    1. Perceiving British weakness, he was determined to conquer Egypt and Greece and reestablish the Roman Empire.
    2. He did not coordinate his actions with Hitler.
  - C.** Mussolini's disastrous Egyptian campaign (1940) prompted Hitler's intervention and the creation of the Afrika Korps under the command of General Erwin Rommel.
    1. Rommel forced the British back into Egypt but failed to dislodge them from Tobruk. By late May the German offensive bogged down.
    2. Meanwhile, a pro-German coup in Iraq led to British intervention in April 1941.
    3. British and Free French troops moved into Syria in June 1941, where they fought Vichy troops.

- D. Hitler's vision was European rather than global. Even if he had been inclined to seize available opportunities in North Africa and the Middle East, any effort to assert German power there would have faced significant obstacles.
  - 1. Tripoli was very far from Alexandria and had limited port facilities, both of which posed logistical problems.
  - 2. Because only one east-west road ran along the North African coast, it would have been hard to engage in broad flanking movements or move supplies.
  - 3. Logistical and supply problems made it hard to sustain huge military operations; much of the fighting went back and forth over the same territory.
  - 4. Britain's ability to resupply its troops in Egypt swung the tide in its favor during 1942.
- E. Montgomery and Rommel fought a desert war during 1941 and 1942.
  - 1. Rommel pushed the British forces westward toward Egypt, but the fighting deadlocked along the Egyptian border in May 1942. By late June, German forces had pushed deep into Egypt.
  - 2. Victory in the first battle of El Alamein (July 1942) seemed to be within Rommel's reach, but he failed to sustain the offensive due to supply problems. Meanwhile, British supplies poured into Egypt.
  - 3. In August 1942 Churchill appointed Gen. Harold Alexander to command British forces in the North African theater, and he chose Gen. Bernard Montgomery to command the British Eighth Army.
  - 4. At the second battle of El Alamein (October 23, 1942), Montgomery attacked with huge superiority. Although the British suffered extensive casualties, Hitler refused to reinforce Rommel.
  - 5. Finally, in November 1942 Rommel retreated back into Libya.

## II. The Allied camp was divided by conflicts over strategy.

- A. The Americans pressed for a cross-channel invasion in 1942 or 1943 at the latest, and for strategic and political reasons they resisted British interest in a Mediterranean strategy.
  - 1. American officials feared that a North Africa operation would divert Allied strength from the cross-channel invasion.
  - 2. They were wary of supporting British colonial interests.
  - 3. They were concerned about a possible Russian collapse and heedful of Stalin's demands for a second front.
  - 4. In March 1942 the Americans proposed Operation Round-Up to build up forces in Britain for the cross-channel invasion, and Operation Sledgehammer (a smaller landing in France during 1942) to mollify the Russians.
- B. The British supported a cross-channel operation in principle but sought to delay it past 1942. They raised various practical objections to the U.S. plans.

1. The logistical base for the invasion was not yet prepared. Churchill was convinced that Britain could not survive another major defeat.
2. The British questioned the battle-worthiness of American troops, who had not yet engaged in armed conflict.
3. The disastrous outcome of the small British raid at Dieppe in August 1942 convinced the British that they were not yet ready for a large-scale invasion of the continent.
4. Churchill advocated an invasion of French North Africa while the buildup for the cross-channel operation moved forward.
5. Churchill and his staff emphasized the need to stretch German resources by attacking around the periphery of Hitler's Fortress Europe—North Africa, Greece, and Italy.

**III.** Churchill convinced FDR that French North Africa was the only reasonable area for action during 1942. This operation, begun in November 1942, was code-named Operation Torch.

- A. The British position carried the day and the Allied invasion of French North Africa was launched.
- B. General Eisenhower was placed in command of Operation Torch, but General Alexander and the British staff dominated planning.
- C. The Allied forces would land in the west and then march eastward to Tunisia. Mistrustful of DeGaulle, the Allies turned to Gen. Henri Giraud to lead the free French forces.
- D. Although Allied forces bogged down in Tunisia, squabbled among themselves, and suffered a serious defeat at the Kassirene Pass, they amassed great strength by early 1943. Meanwhile, Hitler failed to reinforce Rommel until it was too late.
- E. By March 1943 the Allies had driven the Germans from North Africa. As the Americans had feared, however, the success of Torch caused a delay in the cross-channel invasion of northern Europe.

**Essential Reading:**

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Chapters 17-18

**Supplementary Reading:**

Carlo D'Este, *World War II in the Mediterranean, 1942-1945*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Why did North Africa and the Middle East represent a missed opportunity for Hitler? What factors militated against German military success in that region?
2. Describe the Anglo-American debate over Allied strategy in 1942 and 1943, and evaluate its outcome.

## **Lecture Sixteen**

### **War in the Mediterranean: The Invasions of Sicily and Italy**

**Scope:** This lecture deals with Operation Husky—the Allied campaign in Sicily and the subsequent invasion of Italy in September 1943. It traces the course of the campaigns, examining in particular the Anzio landings in January 1944, the Battle of Monte Cassino in May, and the liberation of Rome in June. We will also analyze the politics of the war in Italy, from Mussolini’s fall to the ongoing internal Allied debate over the strategic importance of Italy. Stalin remained dissatisfied with the failure of the Allies to open a second front in the west and was not mollified by the Sicilian and Italian campaigns. In closing, we will evaluate the impact of the Italian campaign on the timing of the cross-Channel invasion of France.

### **Outline**

- I. The Allied invasion of Sicily on July 10, 1943, was code-named Operation Husky.
  - A. The Sicilian invasion—vehemently advocated by the British—was a logical extension of the Allied victory in North Africa. As U.S. commanders had feared, it locked them into a Mediterranean strategy for which they had little enthusiasm, and it forced postponement of the cross-channel invasion.
  - B. Eisenhower was again named commander-in-chief, but British General Alexander remained actual field commander .
  - C. The Italians put up weak resistance to the Allied invaders, although German forces under Kesselring resisted impressively. Mass surrenders of Italian troops were common.
  - D. Generals Patton and Montgomery raced toward Palermo.
    1. Patton won the race after German resistance slowed Montgomery.
    2. Both generals subsequently raced toward Messina.
    3. Although Patton became a hero in the United States, he was subsequently removed from command for slapping two soldiers whom he had accused of cowardice.
  - E. The Allied victory in Sicily had important consequences.
    1. It drew the United States deeper into Churchill’s Mediterranean strategy.
    2. Churchill renewed his emphasis on the “soft underbelly” of Europe—Italy, the Balkans, and Turkey.
    3. The Americans remained skeptical about this Mediterranean focus but had no alternative plans.

4. The collapse of Sicily and the prospect of an Allied invasion of Italy led to Mussolini's fall from power on July 24, 1943. A new government headed by Marshal Badoglio took power in Rome, while the Germans installed Mussolini as head of a puppet state in northern Italy.

**II.** The Italian campaign began with the Allied invasion of mainland Italy on September 3, 1943.

- A. Bowing to U.S. demands, General Badoglio's government surrendered.
- B. Hitler rushed troops to northern Italy and the area around Rome under General Kesselring.
- C. The Allies launched a three-pronged assault.
  1. British forces under Montgomery crossed the Straits of Messina and landed in the "toe" of Italy.
  2. Another British force stormed ashore at Taranto.
  3. U.S. and British troops under General Mark Clark landed south of Naples at Salerno. The near-failure of the U.S. landing reinforced doubts about the ability of American troops to make amphibious landings—and about the upcoming cross-channel invasion.
- D. Italy proved to be anything but a "soft underbelly."
  1. The British seized the Italian air base at Foggia.
  2. The harsh Italian terrain worked to the advantage of the German defenders. The fighting in Italy was among the most arduous experienced in the war.
  3. In late 1943 the slow Allied advance halted at the "Gustav Line" some 100 miles south of Rome. The front stabilized in January 1944, making it possible theoretically for the Allies to shift troops from Italy to Britain for the cross-channel invasion.
  4. In an effort to break the deadlock in Italy, Allied troops made an amphibious landing at Anzio (30 miles south of Rome) on January 22, 1944. The American invasion force failed to drive inland rapidly and seal off the Germans in southern Italy; the Americans were again bogged down.
  5. In February, Allied planes bombed the monastery of Monte Cassino. After several months of fierce German resistance, Polish troops finally captured Monte Cassino in May 1944. At about the same time, American forces broke out of Anzio.
  6. Instead of driving east to cut off the German retreat from the Gustav Line, Allied troops moved north to liberate Rome on June 4, 1944. Kesselring did not contest the city but instead withdrew north to the "Gothic Line."
- E. The Italian campaign had important implications.
  1. It held down twenty German divisions.
  2. Allied progress was slow, costly, and destructive.



3. The campaign did not satisfy Stalin's demand for a second front against the Axis.
4. Detractors were convinced that the Italian operations delayed the cross-channel invasion. Could a major cross-channel offensive have been launched in 1943?
  - a. As the British argued, German submarines in the channel still posed a major threat in 1943; the Allies lacked available landing craft and troops; and U.S. troops lacked combat experience.
  - b. But sufficient landing craft and ships were available in the Pacific, and German defenses in northern Europe were stronger in 1944 than in 1943.
  - c. German submarine strength and lack of Allied air superiority probably precluded a cross-channel invasion during 1943.

**Essential Reading:**

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Chapter 19

**Supplementary Reading:**

W.G.F. Jackson, *The Battle for Italy*

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What were the strategic implications and political consequences of the Allied invasions of Sicily and the Italian peninsula?
2. Was the Italian campaign responsible for the Allies' failure to launch a cross-channel invasion in 1943, as American war planners had feared?

## Lecture Seventeen

### Stalingrad: The Turning Point on the Eastern Front

**Scope:** This lecture is devoted to the titanic struggle for Stalingrad between August 1942 and March 1943. This battle marked the turning point of the war on the Eastern front. We will examine the German summer offensive of 1942, aimed at reaching the oil fields of the Caucasus, that led the Wehrmacht to Stalingrad. We will explore German strategy and the Russian responses, especially the actions of Marshal Zhukov, who organized the defense of Stalingrad and led the massive counterattack that trapped the German Third Army in the city and resulted in a crushing defeat of Hitler's plans in Russia. From this point, the Germans were forced onto the defensive, and the Russians began their long and agonizing drive to liberate their country.

#### Outline

- I. In the spring of 1942 the Germans launched a new offensive against Stalingrad.
  - A. Having abandoned earlier efforts to take Leningrad and Moscow, Hitler adopted new objectives. German forces would drive to the south of Kiev, seize the Caucasus oil fields, and take Stalingrad.
  - B. The Soviets appeared highly vulnerable.
    1. They had fewer tanks in 1942 than they had possessed in 1941.
    2. The Red Army was absolutely exhausted, and its best units remained positioned in front of Moscow.
  - C. At first, the German offensive was highly successful.
    1. The Germans defeated the Soviets at Kharkov in May.
    2. The main German offensive began on June 28, 1942. Stalin remained convinced that Moscow was the Germans' main target.
    3. The Germans reached Sebastopol in July.
  - D. Although Stalingrad was not yet secure, Hitler ordered a drive into the Caucasus.
    1. The drive by Germany's first panzer division proceeded with great speed into September.
    2. The Germans penetrated deep into Russia; the invasion force split, with part heading toward the Grozny oil field and the other toward the Black Sea. The euphoric Germans underestimated the Soviets.
    3. The German drive slowed in late September and October as resistance by Russian defenders and local forces (e.g., the Chechnians) stiffened.
    4. The Germans faced mounting problems. Their front was now more than 500 miles long, and their supply lines were 1,300 miles long. Resistance activities behind the German lines were mounting.

5. Concerned about the slow pace of the offensive, Hitler fired General Halder as chief of staff in November 1942.

**II.** The Germans and Soviets fought a ferocious battle for Stalingrad.

- A.** The Germans had to take Stalingrad in order to block Soviet troop movements to the South.
  1. The task was left to General von Paulus's 6th Army.
  2. German troops entered the northern suburbs and reached the Volga on August 22. The next day the Germans launched a terror air raid on Stalingrad with incendiary bombs.
  3. The Russians appeared to be trapped.
- B.** Russian resistance was fierce as the battle acquired enormous symbolic significance.
  1. The Germans were determined to take the city and the Russians to hold it at all costs.
  2. The two sides waged a ferocious battle of attrition. The fighting proceeded street by street, block by block, and house by house.
  3. The city was reduced to rubble, and movement was measured in meters.
  4. By early November, the Germans held 90 percent of the city.

**III.** General Zhukov, the savior of Moscow, took command in the South and planned a counterattack.

- A.** Zhukov deliberately kept reinforcements of the city to a minimum as he massed Russian troops to the north and south of Stalingrad. All preparations for the counterattack were kept under tight security.
- B.** Zhukov unleashed the counterattack on November 19.
  1. The attack came on the northern and southern flanks, catching the Germans off-guard.
  2. On November 23, the two Russian spearheads linked up 45 miles away from Stalingrad, encircling the entire German 6th Army and one corps of the 4th Panzer army.
- C.** Hitler refused Paulus's request for permission to break out of Stalingrad.
  1. He ordered General Manstein to fight through to Stalingrad, but the effort failed.
  2. Doomed, Paulus's 6th Army was ordered to fight to the last man.
  3. Paulus held out until February 2, 1943, then surrendered.

**IV.** The battle for Stalingrad had important implications.

- A.** It was a catastrophic defeat for the Germans. Two hundred thousand troops were lost, and 90,000 were captured.
- B.** The summer offensive of 1942, concluding at Stalingrad, marked the end of German initiative on the eastern front.
  1. After Stalingrad, Germany remained on the defensive.
  2. Zhukov emerged as the leading Soviet commander

**Essential Reading:**

John Keegan, The Second World War, Chapter 11

Richard Overy, Why The Allies Won, Chapter 3

**Supplementary Reading:**

John Erikson, The Road to Stalingrad

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What German miscalculations contributed to the defeat of Hitler's Stalingrad offensive?
2. What were the consequences and significance of the Battle of Stalingrad?

# Lecture Eighteen

## Eisenhower and Operation Overlord

**Scope:** In this lecture we will analyze the Allied planning for the D-Day invasion of northwestern Europe—Operation Overlord—and the German preparations for the anticipated attack. In early 1944 everyone expected an Allied invasion of northwestern Europe. The only questions concerned where and when it would come. We will examine the preconditions for undertaking a cross-channel invasion, differences within the Allied camp over timing, the command structure designed for the invasion, and the final plan for D-Day. We will also analyze German calculations, problems within the German command structure, Hitler's role, and limitations of German counterintelligence.

### Outline

- I. Allied planners faced many difficult choices as they prepared the cross-channel invasion.
  - A. President Roosevelt chose Gen. Dwight Eisenhower to be supreme commander.
    1. The British and Soviets had preferred Gen. George C. Marshall, and Marshall himself had wanted the assignment.
    2. FDR decided that he could not spare Marshall's presence in Washington.
    3. Gen. Bernard Montgomery was chosen to be ground commander and in charge of the actual operational planning of the invasion.
  - B. The Allies decided that the invasion force would land in Normandy.
    1. The Germans knew that the invasion was afoot, but they did not know where and when it would take place.
    2. Although Pas-de-Calais offered the shortest route to the Ruhr, which was the Allies' ultimate target, the Normandy ports would better accommodate the invasion force.
    3. An American force under Gen. Omar Bradley would land on the eastern end of the Normandy coast and advance on Cherbourg, while a British force would seize Caen.
    4. Paratroopers from the 82nd and 101st airborne divisions would land the night before, and seaborne troops would land at daybreak.
  - C. There were serious disagreements within the German high command over how to prepare for the invasion.
    1. Hitler knew that the Ruhr was the Allies' ultimate target, and so he decided to strengthen his western defenses.
    2. His calculations were largely political. If the invasion failed, another attempt would not be made for at least a year, and in the meantime the Soviets might make a separate peace with Germany.

3. Although Hitler expected the landing to occur in Normandy, both Rommel and Rundstedt expected the invasion force to land in the Pas-de-Calais. The latter was the worst-case scenario, and thus it was adopted as the basis for German defensive planning.
  4. Rommel argued for stopping the invasion force on the beaches, while Rundstedt favored a mobile defense that would launch a vigorous counterattack after the Allied forces had landed and the main invasion force had been identified.
- D.** The Allies tried to convince the Germans that the main landing would come at the Pas-de-Calais.
1. A “dummy” camp under the command of Gen. George Patton was constructed near Dover, directly across the channel from Calais.
  2. Deceptive Allied radio traffic suggested that the landing would occur in Norway. The Allies learned through Ultra that the Germans had believed the deception.
- II.** Weather conditions dictated that the invasion would have to occur in late spring or early summer.
- A.** Eisenhower chose June 4, 1944, as D-Day.
1. The Allied Expeditionary Force assault waves were loaded up on the evening of June 3.
  2. However, a storm developed on June 4, and the weather on June 5 was terrible.
- B.** Eisenhower faced a tremendously hard decision about whether to proceed.
1. If he decided to postpone the invasion, the tide and light conditions would not be right again until June 19.
  2. Air support was questionable if the weather was bad.
  3. Eisenhower also had to consider the morale of his troops, who had already boarded the ships.
  4. The element of surprise might be lost with postponement.
- C.** At 21:30 on June 4, Eisenhower’s weather officer predicted a 36-hour break in the storm on June 5-6. Eisenhower decided to proceed.
1. He issued an inspirational message to the invasion force: “You are about to embark on a great crusade. . . .”
  2. He drafted a second statement in which he accepted full responsibility in the event of failure.

**Essential Reading:**

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Chapter 20

Richard Overy, *Why The Allies Won*, Chapter 5

Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, Chapters 13-14

**Supplementary Reading:**

Stephen E. Ambrose, *D-Day, June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II*, Chapters 1-9

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Why did the Allies choose Normandy as the landing point for the cross-channel invasion?
2. Describe the disagreements within the German high command over how to prepare for the invasion.

# Lecture Nineteen

## D-Day to Paris

**Scope:** Erwin Rommel, the German commander in charge of defending northwestern Europe, argued that the key to German victory was to defeat the Allies at the beaches, and that the first twenty-four hours of the invasion would be decisive. It would be, as he put it, “the longest day.” This lecture traces the last agonizing stage of planning and then the launching of the D-Day invasion, the course of the battle in Normandy, and the liberation of Paris.

### Outline

- I.** The seaborne invasion force was preceded by Allied paratroopers who dropped into France the previous night.
  - A.** On June 5, Eisenhower visited troops of the 101st Airborne, of whom some 80 percent were expected to become casualties.
  - B.** These troops carried a daunting amount of equipment.
  - C.** Most pilots of the C-47s were going into combat for the first time; their planes were neither armored nor armed.
  - D.** The planes formed a 300-mile “V” formation. At first they maintained an extremely tight formation while crossing the Channel, despite no radio communications. They dispersed, however, after they hit a cloud bank.
  - E.** Very few paratroopers of the 82nd and 101st units were actually dropped where they should have been. Some were mistakenly dropped at sea; some were dropped at a too-low altitude; some were dropped into flooded fields and drowned.
  - F.** Due to this dispersal, the Germans received reports of invading paratroopers from all across Normandy. Meanwhile, the French resistance began to cut German communications. Both factors caused the German response to be slow.
- II.** The seaborne invasion force landed in Normandy early on D-Day.
  - A.** Strategic surprise was achieved at Normandy, especially due to the poor weather.
    - 1.** Rundstedt and the high command were still convinced that the Normandy landing was a diversion and that the main invasion would come in the Pas-de-Calais.
    - 2.** Hitler was not awakened with the news, and the key Panzer units were delayed for several hours.
    - 3.** The German response was slowed by poor intelligence, the role of the French resistance, and the inability to move troops rapidly to the front.



- B. The Allied landings at Juno, Sword, and Utah beaches were successful.
  - C. U.S. troops were pinned down for hours on Omaha beach. They broke out and moved inland only late in the day.
  - D. The success of the D-Day landings had not been a foregone conclusion.
- III. The Normandy landings were merely the prelude to a long and murderous campaign in Normandy and later for France.
- A. The breakout of Allied troops from Normandy went very slowly.
    - 1. By July 1, almost 1 million Allied troops had landed.
    - 2. The impenetrable hedgerows made fighting particularly difficult.
    - 3. Montgomery was slowed by tenacious German defenses at Caen, which did not fall until July 18.
    - 4. The breakout of Patton's Third Army in July opened the war of movement.
  - B. Allied forces trapped an entire German army group in the Falaise Pocket, where the fighting and destruction were particularly intense.
  - C. The landing of a second invasion force in mid-August 1944 presaged a debate among Allied commanders over the liberation of Paris.
    - 1. Eisenhower wanted to bypass the city, which had little strategic importance and would only slow the Allied advance.
    - 2. De Gaulle wanted his Free French forces to liberate Paris before the Communist Parisian resistance did.
    - 3. Eisenhower relented on August 22 and ordered Gen. Leclerc to advance on Paris. The Parisian resistance rose anyway, and Hitler ordered the city's destruction.
  - D. The liberation of Paris was the final chapter in the battle for France. By September, Allied armies were advancing on Germany, and the outcome of the war in Europe was no longer in doubt.

**Essential Reading:**

John Keegan, *Six Armies in Normandy*

Stephen E. Ambrose, *Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army From the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany*, Chapters 1-5.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Stephen E. Ambrose, *D-Day*, Chapters 10-32

Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, Chapter 15

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What explains the failure of the German forces in France to contain and defeat the Allied invasion force?
2. Evaluate the debate among Allied leaders over whether to liberate or bypass Paris.

## Lecture Twenty

### Operation Market Garden and the Battle of the Bulge

**Scope:** After the fall of Paris in August 1944, the Germans seemed defeated, and the Allies were poised for a final assault on Germany. Yet the Allies did not cross the Rhine in 1944, and the Germans were hardly ready to surrender. In this lecture we will examine Operation Market Garden, the Allied plan advanced by General Montgomery to cross the Rhine in Holland, and the reasons for its failure, and then we turn to Hitler's daring Ardennes offensive in December. That offensive became the Battle of the Bulge and represented Hitler's last gasp in the West. Its failure set the stage for the Allied advance into Germany in early 1945.

#### Outline

- I. The success of the battle for France raised new strategic choices for Allied commanders.
  - A. After the fall of Paris, Germany appeared beaten. The Allies debated the best way to break into Germany and bring the war to a conclusion in 1944.
    1. Montgomery urged a single-thrust strategy aimed at taking the Ruhr.
    2. Eisenhower advocated a broad front strategy.
  - B. Various problems beset the Allied armies.
    1. The Allies faced a troop shortage. The British were at the limit of their manpower reserves, and the United States was stretched by the demands of a two-theater war.
    2. The Allies also suffered from overconfidence and faulty intelligence in late 1944. They were convinced that Germany was on the brink of defeat; Allied intelligence underestimated German potential in the west.
    3. The Allied armies also faced enormous logistical problems. Advancing troops were outrunning their supplies. A port closer to the front—Antwerp—was desperately needed.
    4. Although Antwerp fell in September, Hitler remained in control of the Scheldt estuary, which made the port useless.
  - C. Operation Market Garden was planned for September 1944.
    1. Montgomery advanced a daring plan to jump the Rhine in Holland, thereby outflanking the Siegfried line to the north.
    2. The goals of the operation were to cross the last river barrier that guarded Germany, outflank the northernmost fortifications of the West Wall, and threaten Germany's V-2 launching sites in Holland.
    3. The Allies faced formidable problems.

- a. They had to cross numerous rivers and canals and seize many bridges.
    - b. They suffered again from overconfidence, expecting to brush aside two defending German armored divisions.
    - c. The Allied forces moved very slowly.
  - 4. Operation Market Garden ended as an abysmal failure. The defeat of the Allies meant no Rhine crossing in 1944.
  - D. Meanwhile, Patton and the Americans bogged down in Lorraine.
    - 1. The First Army took Aachen on October 21.
    - 2. Nevertheless, Allied progress was slow in late 1944 and victory remained elusive.
- II. Hitler struck back with the Ardennes offensive in December 1944.**
- A. He hoped that one last dramatic stroke in the west would split the Allies between Montgomery in the north and the Americans further south.
  - B. The German high command, meanwhile, sought to find defensible positions behind the Rhine. They worried that Hitler's plan would weaken Germany's position in the east and consume its last troop reserves.
  - C. The plan called for smashing the Allies in the Ardennes Forest, then making a massive armored drive for Antwerp, then driving a wedge between the Allied armies and destroying them piecemeal.
    - 1. The Allies assumed that the Ardennes was impenetrable, especially in winter.
    - 2. German radio silence meant that Ultra was of little use to the Allies.
    - 3. Despite telltale German troop movements, the Allies were still caught off guard. They continued to exhibit fatal overconfidence.
  - D. Hitler's Operation "Autumn Fog" commenced on December 16, 1944.
    - 1. It caught the overmatched Americans completely by surprise and unprepared.
    - 2. Allied air power was neutralized by bad weather for more than a week.
    - 3. The German drive created a huge bulge in the American lines.
    - 4. American prisoners were massacred at Malmedy.
    - 5. Despite being surrounded by Germans, isolated U.S. units held out at the key road junctions of Saint Vith and Bastogne. Patton's army finally broke the siege of Bastogne on December 26.
    - 6. When the weather cleared, the Americans rallied their air power and halted the German offensive by the end of January.
  - E. The Battle of the Bulge further weakened the German army.
    - 1. Hitler had sacrificed his last reserves and best armor on an essentially doomed enterprise.
    - 2. German troops were caught west of the Rhine.

3. The battle gravely weakened the German position in the east on the eve of a massive Russian offensive in Poland in January 1945.
4. The failure of the Ardennes offensive represented the last gasp of the Third Reich.

**Essential Reading:**

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Chapter 23

Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius For War*, Chapter 43.

Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, Chapter 18

**Supplementary Reading:**

Gerald Astor, *A Blood-Dimmed Tide: The Battle of the Bulge By The Men Who Fought It*

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Evaluate the disagreement between Montgomery and Eisenhower over how best to end the war following the fall of Paris.
2. What were the goals of Operation Market Garden? Why did it fail?

# Timeline

## The War in Europe

Jan. 30, 1933.....	Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany
March 16, 1935.....	Germany renounces disarmament clauses of Versailles Treaty, introduces conscription, and begins construction of an air force
March 7, 1936.....	German remilitarization of the Rhineland
July 18, 1936.....	Beginning of Spanish Civil War
March 1938.....	The Austrian crisis and the <i>Anschluss</i>
September 1938.....	The Sudetenland crisis
Sept. 29, 1938.....	The Munich Conference
March 1939.....	German occupation of Czechoslovakia
August 23, 1939.....	The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact
Sept. 1, 1939.....	Germany invades Poland
Sept. 29, 1939.....	Russia and Germany divide Poland
Nov. 30, 1939- March 12, 1940.....	Russo-Finish War
April 9, 1940.....	Germany invades Norway
May 10, 1940.....	Germany invades Holland, Belgium, and France
May 29 - June 4, 1940.....	British and French troops evacuated from Dunkirk
June 10, 1940.....	Italy declares war on Britain and France
June 22, 1940.....	France signs armistice
July 8 - Nov. 1940.....	Battle of Britain
October 28, 1940.....	Italy invades Greece
April 6, 1941.....	Germany invades Yugoslavia and Greece
June 22, 1941.....	Germans launch Operation Barbarossa
Sept. 4, 1941.....	German siege of Leningrad begins
December 6, 1941.....	Russian counterattack before Moscow
December 11, 1941.....	Hitler declares war on the United States
January 20, 1942.....	Wannsee Conference in Berlin
July 2, 1942.....	New German offensive in Soviet Union

August 22, 1942.....Battle of Stalingrad begins  
 September 21, 1942.....Soviet forces counterattack, begin the encirclement of Stalingrad  
 November 8, 1942.....Allied invasion of French North Africa begins  
 January 17-27, 1943.....Casablanca Conference  
 February 2, 1943.....German 6th Army surrenders at Stalingrad  
 February 8, 1943.....Battle of Kursk  
 May 8-12, 1943.....End of German resistance in North Africa  
 July 10, 1943.....Allied forces invade Sicily  
 July 25, 1943.....Mussolini forced to resign  
 August 17, 1943.....American air raids on Schweinfurt and Regensburg  
 September 2 1943.....Allied invasion of Italy  
 September 9, 1943.....American forces land at Salerno  
 November 6, 1943.....Russians retake Kiev  
 January 22, 1944.....Allied forces land at Anzio  
 March 15-May 18, 1944....Allied attacks on Monte Casino  
 June 4, 1944.....Anglo-American troops enter Rome  
 June 6, 1944.....D-Day: the invasion of France  
 June -August 1944.....Soviet offensive against German Army Group Center  
 July 1944.....The Warsaw uprising  
 August 25, 1944.....The liberation of Paris  
 September 17-26, 1944.....Operation Market Garden fails  
 December 16-25, 1944.....The Battle of the Bulge  
 January 12, 1945.....Russians take Warsaw  
 February 7, 1945.....Yalta Conference  
 March 7, 1945.....American forces cross the Rhine at Remagen  
 May 1, 1945.....Battle of Berlin begins  
 May 7, 1945.....German surrender to Western Allies at Reims  
 May 8, 1945.....V-E Day in the West

# Timeline

## The War in the Pacific

September 1931.....	The Mukden Incident and Japanese attacks in Manchuria
February 18, 1932.....	Japanese declare the independence of Manchukuo
July 7, 1937.....	Japanese hostilities with China commence
December-January 1938....	The “rape of Nanking”
December 7, 1941.....	Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor
December 25, 1941.....	British forces at Hong Kong surrender
January -April 9, 1942.....	Battle of the Philippines
January -March 1942.....	Japan seizes Dutch East Indies, Singapore, Burma
April 18, 1942.....	The Doolittle raid on Tokyo
May 7, 1942.....	The Battle of the Coral Sea
June 4-7, 1942.....	The Battle of Midway
Aug. 1942-Feb. 1943.....	The Struggle for Guadalcanal
June 1943.....	MacArthur launches Operation Cartwheel
November 1943.....	The fighting on Tarawa
February 2, 1944.....	Invasion of the Marshall Islands
June 16, 1944.....	Invasion of the Marianas
August 11, 1944.....	Conquest of Guam
October 19, 1944.....	MacArthur opens offensive in the Philippines
February -March 1945.....	Battle of Iwo Jima
March 9-10.....	First fire-bombing of Tokyo
April 1 - June 21, 1945.....	Battle of Okinawa
August 6, 1945.....	Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima
August 8, 1945.....	Soviet Union enters war against Japan
August 9, 1945.....	Second atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki
August 14, 1945.....	Allies accept Japanese surrender
September 2, 1945.....	Formal surrender signed on board U.S.S. Missouri in Tokyo Bay, marking end of Second World War



## Glossary

***Anschluss***: the “connection” of Austria with Germany in March 1938.

***Blitz***: “lightning” in German; refers to the German aerial assault on British cities between 1940 and 1942.

***Blitzkrieg***: “lightning war”; term referring to Germany’s form of warfare in the first phase of the war, 1939-1941.

***Einsatzgruppen*** Special SS commando units that conducted a bloodbath on the eastern front against the Jews.

***Kamikaze***: “Divine Wind”—special suicide planes used by the Japanese for the first time in the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

***Lebensraum***: “living space”—term employed by Hitler to describe Germany’s need for expansion to the east in order to claim land for the Reich’s swelling population.

**SHAEF**: Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces in the European Theater of Operations, commanded by Gen. Dwight Eisenhower from late 1943 until the end of the war in Europe.

**SS**: *Schutzstaffel*, the elite organization of the National Socialist Party headed by Heinrich Himmler. Originally a special bodyguard for Hitler, it became police organization in the Third Reich.

***Waffen-SS***: special SS units that operated as elite military units on both the eastern and western fronts.

**V-2**: Vengeance Weapons, the V-2 and its buzz bomb predecessor, the V-1, were rockets developed by the Germans and launched against targets in Britain during the last year of the war.

## Biographical Notes

**Chiang Kai-shek** (1887-1975). Leader of the Chinese Kuomintang and head of state of Nationalist China.

**Chamberlain, Neville** (1869-1940). Last prewar prime minister of Great Britain. Associated with the policy of appeasement and the Munich Conference.

**Churchill, Winston** (1874-1965) Wartime leader of Great Britain. Churchill became prime minister on May 10, 1940, the day Germany launched its invasion of Western Europe. He was an inspiring orator whose leadership during Britain's dark days of 1940 and 1941 held the nation together. He worked tirelessly to create and maintain the anti-Nazi alliance and cemented a particularly close relationship with the United States. More than FDR, Churchill remained wary of Stalin's postwar intentions.

**De Gaulle, Charles** (1890-1970). Tank commander in the French Army and cabinet minister in the French government in 1940. In exile he became leader of the Free French Forces.

**Eisenhower, Dwight** (1890-1969). American and Allied Supreme Commander in North Africa, Sicily and northwest Europe. He was in charge of Operation Overlord and commanded the Allied military forces in Europe. Known mainly for his remarkable personal political skills, desperately needed in managing a coalition military force. Eisenhower determined the overall military strategy during the western drive into Germany, advocating a broad-front approach rather than a dash for Berlin.

**Goering, Hermann** (1893-1946). Head of the four-year plan in prewar Germany; commander of the German Air Force (*Luftwaffe*); and officially second in command of the Third Reich.

**Guderian, Heinz** (1888-1953). Tank commander and architect of the *Blitzkrieg*; commanded German armored forces in France and Russia.

**Halsey, William** (1882-1959). Fleet Admiral "Bull" Halsey played a key role in U.S. naval operations against the Japanese in the Central Pacific. He commanded the U.S. Central Pacific Fleet at the crucial Battle of Leyte Gulf in October 1944.

**Harris, Arthur** (1892-1984). Air Chief Marshal, Bomber Harris was commander of the Royal Air Force's Bomber Command from 1942 until the end of the war; he was associated with the policy of nighttime area bombing of Germany.

**Heydrich, Reinhard** (1904 -1942). Head of the Reich Main Security Office, Heydrich took charge of the SS extermination squads (*Einsatzgruppen*) on the Eastern Front in 1941. Heydrich was responsible for drafting the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" and presided over the Wannsee Conference in January 1942.

**Himmler, Heinrich** (1900-1945). Head of the SS (Reichsführer SS) throughout the Third Reich. Himmler was the primary architect of Nazi extermination policy in Europe and was the second most powerful figure of the Nazi regime.

**Hirohito** (1901-1987). Emperor of Japan, Hirohito officially presided over Japanese policy throughout the war but was largely a figurehead. In the war's final days, he intervened to press the military leadership to terminate hostilities.

**Hitler, Adolf** (1889-1945). Führer of the Third Reich who came to power in 1933. Hitler directed every aspect of German policy and increasingly intervened directly in military decisions. More than any other individual, he bears responsibility for the Second World War and its horrors.

**King, Ernest** (1878-1956) Appointed Commander in Chief of U.S. Naval Forces at war's outbreak, he assumed duties as Chief of Naval Operations and became the leading figure in the U.S. Navy during the war. In Allied councils he consistently pressed for greater attention to the Pacific Theater.

**MacArthur, Douglas** (1880-1964). Dominant American military figure in the Pacific Theater, MacArthur survived the Japanese assault on the Philippines in 1941, vowing "I shall return." He did so in January 1945. While Nimitz directed American forces in the Central Pacific, MacArthur led the advance through the southwest. At war's end he accepted Japanese surrender on Halsey's flagship, the U.S.S. Missouri.

**Marshall, George** (1880-1959). Army Chief of Staff at war's outbreak, Marshall presided over the creation of the U.S. Army, which in 1939 possessed fewer than 200,000 troops. He became chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and FDR's most trusted military advisor.

**Molotov, Vyacheslav** (1890-1970). Served as Soviet foreign minister throughout the war. He began his career with the Nazi-Soviet Pact in August 1939 and continued as Stalin's foreign representative with the Allies after Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941.

**Montgomery, Bernard** (1887-1976). Field Marshal Montgomery was the leading British military figure of the Second World War. He played a major role in the Allied victories in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy, and under Eisenhower's command he planned Operation Overlord. On D-Day Montgomery was ground commander of Allied forces under Eisenhower's supreme command and directed an Allied army group until the end of the war.

**Mussolini, Benito** (1883-1945). Fascist dictator of Italy from 1922 to 1943. Mussolini embarked on an expansionist policy in Ethiopia in 1935 and supported Franco in Spain in 1936. He entered the Second World War as Hitler's junior partner, invading France only after the Germans had smashed the French Army, and he mounted a disastrous campaign against Greece in November 1940, only to be bailed out by Hitler. Defeated in North Africa, he was deposed in July 1943 and was again rescued by Hitler to rule a German

puppet state in northern Italy. He was captured and executed by partisans in April 1945.

**Nagumo, Chuichi** (1887-1944). Vice-Admiral Nagumo was the commander of the Japanese First Carrier Fleet. He directed the Japanese assault on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and at the Battle of Midway in 1942. He fought unsuccessful naval engagements off Guadalcanal and later at Saipan, and he committed suicide in July 1944.

**Nimitz, Chester** (1885-1966). Nimitz commanded the U.S. Pacific Fleet from just after Pearl Harbor until the end of the war. In 1942 he assumed command of the Central Pacific Theater and directed the island-hopping drive through the Gilberts, Marshalls, and Marianas toward the Japanese home islands.

**Patton, George** (1885-1945). Easily the most flamboyant American general, Patton was a vocal advocate of armored warfare. He commanded a corps in Operation Torch, directed the 7th Army in the invasion of Sicily, and led the spectacular Allied breakout from Normandy as commander of the U.S. 3rd Army. His intervention during the Battle of the Bulge was a decisive factor in the Allied victory.

**Pétain, Henri-Philippe** (1856-1951). French hero of the First World War, Pétain entered the government of Paul Reynaud in 1940 during the German invasion. Rather than bolstering French morale, Pétain advocated an armistice, undermining those, such as de Gaulle, who wished to fight on. He assumed power and offered the Germans an armistice on June 22, 1940. He served as head of the new collaborationist Vichy regime until its collapse, was tried after the war and sentenced to death, but de Gaulle commuted his sentence to life in prison.

**von Ribbentrop, Joachim** (1893-1946). Became Hitler's foreign minister in 1938 and negotiated the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact in August 1939. His influence waned during the war. Tried at Nuremberg, he was hanged in 1946.

**Rommel, Erwin** (1891-1944). Excellent German commander chosen by Hitler to lead the Afrika Korps where he established his reputation as "the Desert Fox." He was placed in charge of preparing German defenses for the anticipated Allied landing in northwest Europe. Wounded after D-Day, he was implicated in the plot to overthrow Hitler on July 20, 1944, and was offered the choice of suicide or standing trial. Hitler gave him a hero's funeral, claiming that he had died of his combat wounds.

**Roosevelt, Franklin D.** (1882-1945). President of the United States since 1933, FDR was a towering figure in the alliance against Hitler and Japan. He struggled against American isolationism until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor threw the United States into the war, and he sent aid to Britain and the Soviet Union under "Lend-Lease." Agreeing with Churchill that defeat of Germany was the first priority, he presided over American policy, both military and diplomatic, until his death in April 1945. He held out great hopes for the United Nations, an organization that he inspired and founded.

**von Rundstedt, Gerd** (1875-1953). Rundstedt came out of retirement in 1939 and led an army group in the invasions of Poland and France. His troops executed the breakthrough that stranded British and French forces in Belgium, but Rundstedt halted his forces before Dunkirk, allowing British and some French troops to be evacuated. In 1941 he commanded German forces in the Ukraine and in 1942 was named commander in chief of the West, a post he held until July 1, 1944. He planned the Ardennes offensive of December 1944 but retired after its failure in March 1945.

**Spaatz, Carl** (1891-1974). Spaatz commanded U.S. air forces in Europe and then in the Pacific. An advocate of daylight strategic bombing, Spaatz led the 8th Air Force in England, the principal American instrument in the strategic air campaign against Germany. Later he directed U.S. air forces in North Africa, and in 1944 he assumed the position of commanding general of the strategic air force in Europe. In the spring of 1945 he took up the same post in the Pacific Theater, where he directed the final air assault on Japan.

**Speer, Albert** (1905-1999). Hitler's architect, who in 1942 became the mastermind of Germany's economic mobilization for war. As minister of armaments and munitions, Speer managed to increase German war production, despite massive Allied bombing, until September 1944.

**Stalin, Joseph** (1879-1953). Dictatorial leader of the Soviet Union and its armed forces. Mistrustful of the West, Stalin entered into a non-aggression pact with Hitler in 1939 and faithfully fulfilled its terms until the German invasion in June 1941. His purge of the Red Army in 1938 had seriously weakened the armed forces but Stalin presided over their revival and made shrewd military appointments, especially the selection of Georgi Zhukov. Stalin never really overcame his mistrust of the West, and tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States grew during the last year of the war.

**Tojo, Heideki** (1884-1948). A military man who became prime minister of Japan in 1941, Tojo directed the Japanese war effort until the summer of 1944. He held two additional positions—war minister and chief of army staff—and was the central figure in Japan's conduct of the war. He resigned after the fall of the Marianas in July 1944. After the war he was one of the seven Japanese to be hanged as a war criminal by the Allies.

**Truman, Harry** (1884-1972). A senator from Missouri at the war's outbreak, Truman was elected vice president in 1944 and became president upon FDR's death on April 12, 1945. He continued FDR's policies, though he would find himself on a collision course with Stalin at the Potsdam conference and afterward. He remained in office until 1953, playing a leading role in shaping the contours of the cold war.

**Yamamoto, Isoroku** (1884-1943). Japan's leading naval strategist and an early advocate of carrier-based aircraft in naval operations. As minister of the navy and subsequently commander of the 1st Fleet, Yamamoto oversaw the buildup of the Imperial Navy and its air power. Although he was convinced that Japan

could not prevail in a protracted war with the United States, he devised the daring plan of attack on Pearl Harbor which he hoped would cripple American naval power in the Pacific. He was also responsible for planning the ill-fated naval attack on Midway. He was killed in April 1943 when American aircraft shot down an plane in which he was traveling to inspect the Western Solomons.

**Zhukov, Georgi** (1896-1974). Deputy supreme commander and chief of the Red Army during virtually all of the Second World War, Zhukov earned his reputation with a successful action against the Japanese in Mongolia during 1939. After the German invasion of the Soviet Union, he held a series of important command positions in defense of Smolensk, Leningrad, and finally Moscow in the fall of 1941. The “Savior of Moscow,” he went on to become the “Savior of Stalingrad” as well, commanding the Soviet defense and counterattack against Paulus’s 6th Army. Zhukov would lead the great Russian sweep into the Ukraine, Poland, and finally Germany. His troops entered Berlin on May 2, and the Germans surrendered to him on May 8, 1945.

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# **World War II: A Military and Social History**

## **Part III**

**Professor Thomas Childers**



**THE TEACHING COMPANY ®**

## **Thomas Childers, Ph.D.**

Professor of History, University of Pennsylvania

Thomas Childers was born and raised in East Tennessee. He received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Tennessee, and he earned his Ph.D. in History from Harvard University in 1976.

Since 1976, Professor Childers has taught in the Department of History at the University of Pennsylvania. He is a fellow of the Ford Foundation, term chair at the University of Pennsylvania and the recipient of several other fellowships and awards, including the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung Research Grant, a fellowship in European Studies from the American Council of Learned Societies, and a West European Studies Research Grant from Harvard University.

In addition to teaching at University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Childers has held visiting professorships at Trinity Hall College, Cambridge, Smith College, and Swarthmore College, and he has lectured in London, Oxford, Berlin, Munich, and other universities in the United States and Europe.

Professor Childers is the author and editor of several books on modern German history and the Second World War. These include *The Nazi Voter* (Chapel Hill, 1983) and *Reevaluating the Third Reich: New Controversies, New Interpretations* (New York, 1993). He is currently completing a trilogy on the Second World War. The first volume of that history, *Wings of Morning: The Story of the Last American Bomber Shot Down Over Germany in World War II* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1995), was praised by Jonathan Yardley in *The Washington Post* as "a powerful and unselfconsciously beautiful book." The second volume, *We'll Meet Again* (New York: Henry Holt and Company) is set for publication in spring 1999. The final volume, *The Best Years of Their Lives*, will follow in due course.



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# World War II: A Military and Social History

## Scope:

This set of thirty lectures examines the greatest conflict in human history, the Second World War. Between 1937 and 1945 approximately fifty-five million people perished in this series of interrelated conflicts. No continent was left untouched, no ocean or sea unaffected. The war fundamentally altered the international system, leading to the eclipse of Europe and the emergence of the United States and the Soviet Union as global superpowers. It ushered in the atomic age and produced, in Auschwitz and elsewhere, the most grisly crimes ever committed in the long course of Western civilization. It set the stage for the cold war, and it accelerated or, in some cases ignited, movements for national liberation around the world, prompting the rollback of Europe's colonial empires. In short, the Second World War has defined an entire epoch in human history, an epoch from which we are only now, in the final decade of the twentieth century, emerging.

The first four lectures are devoted to the origins of the war in Europe. They examine the relationship between the First World War, especially the way that conflict ended, and the Second. We examine the controversial Treaty of Versailles and the international security system that its framers envisioned, and we analyze the reasons for its failure. We dissect Adolf Hitler's conception of foreign policy, his domestic and international objectives, and the means he used to pursue his aims. We also address the failure of the Western powers—France, Great Britain, and the United States—to counter Hitler's attempts to destroy the Treaty of Versailles. This failure set the stage for overt Nazi aggression in 1939. Lectures Five through Eleven focus on the war in Europe, from its outbreak in September 1939 to the failure of the German offensive before Moscow in December 1941. We examine the revolutionary German military strategy of Blitzkrieg and its dramatic success in Poland and in the West in 1939 and 1940. We explore the shocking collapse of France in the summer of 1940, the "Miracle of Dunkirk," and the German plans for an invasion of Great Britain. Two lectures are devoted to Britain's confrontation during 1940 and 1941—without allies and with only minimal aid from the United States—of a triumphant, seemingly invincible Nazi Germany, and its survival of that confrontation. Hitler's decision to attack the Soviet Union forms the point of departure for the final two lectures in this set. These lectures focus on the ideological background to Operation Barbarossa, the stunning successes of the opening phase of this gigantic military undertaking in the summer of 1941, and the reasons for its ultimate failure to achieve its goals. The German offensive bogged down in the snow before Moscow in December 1941, and the Blitzkrieg phase of the war came to an end.

In the next set of lectures—numbers Eleven through Fourteen—we turn to the war in Asia and the South Pacific. We examine the evolution of Japanese foreign policy and military thinking between the end of the First World War in 1918 and the invasion of China in 1937. The lectures provide an analysis of the dilemmas confronting Japanese policy makers in the years leading to their

massive assault on European colonial possessions in Asia and on the American position in the South Pacific in 1941. We examine the planning for the attack on Pearl Harbor, the reasons for its success, and the American response. In the final lectures of this set, we examine Japanese strength at its high water mark and then turn to the two decisive American victories that signaled a major change of fortunes in the Pacific war: the naval battle at Midway and the long, bloody land campaign for Guadalcanal.

In Lectures Fourteen through Seventeen we return to the struggle against Germany, focusing on two major turning points in the war in Europe. We examine first the Anglo-American campaigns in North Africa between 1940 and 1942 and the invasions of Sicily and Italy in 1943. Allied victories in the Mediterranean Theater were highly controversial, provoking considerable disagreement between the British and American high commands. We will examine these differences over strategic priorities. Allied victories there marked a major turning point in the Western war against Germany, but, as Stalin complained and as the Americans agreed, even these successful campaigns seemed to delay the long-awaited invasion of northwestern Europe. Lecture Seventeen examines the battle of Stalingrad in 1942-1943, the turning point of the war on the Eastern Front. We examine the reasons for the failure of Hitler's plans in the Soviet Union and the remarkable rebound of the Red Army.

The next three lectures deal with Allied operations in Western Europe from the summer of 1944 to the spring of 1945. They focus on the planning for D-Day, the course of events on June 6, 1944, and the surprisingly long campaign in Normandy. We examine the German defensive schemes on the Western Front, the liberation of Paris, the controversy over Operation Market Garden, and finally the massive German counteroffensive in the Ardennes—the Battle of the Bulge—in December 1944. We also address the serious differences between Eisenhower and Montgomery over the Allied drive into Germany. The Supreme Commander insisted on a broad-based advance, while Montgomery advocated a “single thrust” toward the Ruhr and Berlin.

In the next set of three lectures, we shift our focus again to events in the Pacific Theater. We examine the American strategic decisions that would create a dual command structure and two axes of approach to Japan. The southwest Pacific would be dominated by General Douglas MacArthur and would be largely an Army theater, while operations in the central Pacific would be the responsibility of Admiral Chester Nimitz and hence the Navy. We will first examine the implications of this two-pronged strategy and then consider events in these two areas. We will analyze the Battle of Leyte Gulf, the gigantic naval engagement in the southwest in October 1944, and MacArthur's subsequent invasion of the Philippines. Next we follow Nimitz's relentless advance through the Central Pacific, the “island-hopping strategy,” and the climactic battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

After following the course of military events in Europe and the Pacific, the next two lectures interrupt the narrative to examine two features of the Second World War that distinguish it from all previous conflicts and place its terrifying stamp on the entire era. We will first consider the Nazis' efforts to create their “New

Order” in Europe. We trace the role of anti-Semitism in Nazi ideology from the very beginning of the Third Reich and then analyze the steps that, after the outbreak of the war, led to the mass murder of European Jews. This “final solution to the Jewish question,” as the Nazis euphemistically called their monstrous plans, is examined in detail. The use of strategic bombing, which would kill hundreds of thousands of civilians during the war, would fundamentally alter the nature of warfare in the modern age, and its effectiveness as well as its morality have remained among the most controversial issues of the war. We will examine the air war in both Europe and the Pacific, appraising its contribution to the Allied victory.

The next two lectures examine the creation of the U.S. Armed Forces (one of the most astonishing accomplishments of the Second World War) and social, economic, and cultural developments on the American homefront during the war. We analyze how America’s gigantic military machine, which hardly existed before 1940, was created. We will examine its organization, training, and social composition, and we will look at the day-to-day life of a new phenomenon—the GI, how he was fed, entertained, and equipped. In the same vein, we will examine the American economic miracle, the creation of the mammoth wartime economy, the influx of women into the labor market, and the social tensions that emerged during the war, especially the racial problems that led to riots in Detroit, Philadelphia, and other cities. We will also examine the hysteria that led to the internment of Japanese-Americans.

The final three lectures deal with the conclusion of the war in Europe and Asia, examining the “race” between the Red Army and the Western Allies to reach Berlin and the American air assault against Japan which culminated in the use of atomic weapons. We give special attention to Truman’s decision to employ the bomb. The series concludes by assessing not only the historical significance and epochal political and economic impact of the war, but also its colossal human toll.

# Lecture Twenty-One

## Advance Across the Pacific

**Scope:** In this lecture we turn back to the Pacific, which was to be largely an American theater of operations. We will analyze the debates within the American command structure over strategy, focusing in particular on MacArthur's demands for operations in the Southwest Pacific and Nimitz's preference for a drive through the Central Pacific toward Japan. Roosevelt and Marshall adopted a compromise solution that was largely political. The resulting two-pronged strategy allowed Nimitz to pursue an "island-hopping" strategy through the island chains of the Central Pacific, while MacArthur began his long march toward the Philippines. This lecture will trace Nimitz's bloody drive through the Gilberts, Marshalls, and Marianas, and MacArthur's struggles in New Guinea and the Solomons.

### Outline

- I. U.S. debate over strategy in the Pacific theater led to a compromise solution.
  - A. U.S. officials debated the command structure.
    1. The Pacific war was to be largely an American responsibility.
    2. Britain retained operational control over Burma and Southeast Asia.
    3. There was little inter-Allied squabbling, as there had been in Europe, but serious inter-service rivalry occurred within the American command structure.
    4. FDR favored appointing a single commander-in-chief for the Pacific Theater.
      - a. Admiral King and FDR wanted Admiral Nimitz.
      - b. MacArthur's escape from the Philippines made him a hero in the United States and complicated the decision.
    5. FDR resolved the disagreement by dividing the command structure in the Pacific.
      - a. MacArthur was named commander of Allied forces in the southwest Pacific.
      - b. Nimitz was named commander of the north, central, and south Pacific theaters,
      - c. The Southwest Pacific was an Army theater, and MacArthur reported to Marshall. Nimitz reported to Admiral King. The British retained operational control in Burma and the rest of Southeast Asia.

- B.** The strategic debate followed service lines.
    1. The Navy favored a central Pacific strategy based on an advance through the Marshalls, Carolines, and Marianas. This would allow concentration of resources and afford the most direct route to Japan.
    2. The Army preferred a drive through northern New Guinea and thence on to the Philippines and the southwest Pacific.
  - C.** The result was a compromise solution.
    1. The Joint Chiefs chose a two-pronged strategy, merging Army and Navy proposals. The Navy strategy took highest priority.
    2. The advance on Japan would proceed on two axes—the southwest and central Pacific.
    3. Both offensives would employ the “island-hopping” tactic.
- II.** U.S. forces launched a series of operations against the Japanese in the southwest Pacific during 1943 and 1944.
- A.** MacArthur and Halsey commanded Operation Cartwheel in the southwest Pacific, which was launched in June 1943.
    1. The key targets were New Guinea and the Solomon Islands (especially Rabaul and Truk).
    2. Fighting was particularly intense, and the flamethrower was a major combat weapon.
    3. MacArthur’s progress along the coast was monumentally slow, but by late 1943 his forces were closing in on Rabaul, where the Japanese had constructed strong defenses. Ultimately MacArthur decided to bypass Rabaul entirely.
    4. By February 1944, MacArthur had achieved his objectives.
  - B.** Meanwhile, U.S. forces advanced in the Central Pacific.
    1. Nimitz launched assaults on the Gilberts (especially Makin and Tarawa), Marshalls, and Marianas.
    2. The battle of “Bloody Tarawa” began on November 20, 1943.
      - a. The invading forces used “amtrack” vehicles to cross the reefs. The tides were low, as the planners had feared.
      - b. Most of the Marines had to wade hundreds of yards to reach the beach.
      - c. Tarawa provided a rude shock to U.S. military planners and the U.S. public; U.S. casualties were high, and the Japanese defenders fought to the last man.
    3. Nimitz then leapfrogged the Carolines and attacked the Marianas.
      - a. These islands, unlike Tarawa, were substantial and lay within striking distance of the Japanese home islands.
      - b. Saipan was Nimitz’s key target. U.S. forces invaded in June 1944. The ensuing combat was extremely bloody, with Japanese defenders engaging in suicide charges and 8,000 Japanese civilians on the island committing suicide.

- c. Saipan offered a stark picture of what U.S. forces invading the Japanese home islands could expect.
- 4. The battle of the Philippine Sea took place in June 1944.
  - a. U.S. forces had huge air superiority; U.S. carrier-based aircraft intercepted Japanese planes in “the Great Marianas Turkey Shoot.”
  - b. Japanese sea power suffered a crippling defeat.
- 5. Tinian was invaded on June 24, and Guam was invaded on July 21.
- 6. The loss of the Marianas was devastating for Japan.
  - a. The Tojo government fell nine days after the fall of Saipan.
  - b. The capture of Tinian brought Japan into range for attack by B-29 bombers.

**Essential Reading:**

Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against The Sun*, Chapters 11-14

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Chapter 16

**Supplementary Reading:**

Eric Bergerud, *Touched With Fire: The Land War in the South Pacific*

**Questions to Consider:**

- 1. How did Roosevelt and the U.S. Joint Chiefs resolve the inter-service rivalry over U.S. strategy in the Pacific theater?
- 2. What were the military, political, and psychological consequences for Japan of its loss in the Battle of the Philippine Sea?

## Lecture Twenty-Two

### Turning Point in the Southwest Pacific: Leyte Gulf and the Philippines

**Scope:** The Battle of Leyte Gulf, fought in October 1944, was the most decisive naval battle fought in the Pacific war since the battle of Midway in 1942. It broke the back of Japanese naval strength and secured the American landing in the Philippines. This lecture will trace the course of that great naval encounter, in which the Japanese employed for the first time the *kamikazes*. We will then analyze the American invasion of the Philippines, which began in December 1944 and raged well into the new year, with massive Japanese, Filipino, and American casualties.

#### Outline

- I. The invasion of the Philippines was prefaced by the struggle for Peleliu and the Battle of Leyte Gulf.
  - A. The “tragedy of Peleliu” in September-November 1944 constituted the prelude to Leyte.
    1. Fighting conditions on Peleliu were unbelievably bad—tremendous heat and ferocious Japanese resistance.
    2. The capture of Peleliu was ultimately unnecessary to the success of the Leyte landings.
  - B. The Battle of Leyte Gulf took place on October 23-25, 1944.
    1. Admiral Toyoda’s goal was to force a decisive naval battle involving the whole combined Japanese fleet. If his daring plan had succeeded, it could have reversed the U.S.-Japanese balance of forces in the Pacific.
    2. The Japanese operation was conducted without carrier-based air support.
    3. Victory came within Admiral Kurita’s grasp when Halsey decided to pursue Admiral Ozawa’s decoy carrier force. However, Kurita made the fatal decision to turn back after Halsey had taken the bait.
    4. In this battle, the Japanese introduced a new weapon—the “*kamikaze*” suicide air assaults. These had a hugely negative impact on U.S. morale.
    5. The outcome of this confrontation—the largest naval battle in history—was the destruction of Japanese naval power in the Pacific.



- II.** The battle for the Philippines took place between December 1944 and March 1945.
- A.** The brutal fighting in Manila (February-March 1945) was reminiscent of Stalingrad.
  - B.** The Bataan Peninsula and Corregidor fell in late February 1945.
  - C.** MacArthur sent troops to each of the islands, ignoring the high command's decision to bypass them.
    - 1.** He was determined to keep his promise to the Filipino Resistance.
    - 2.** The Japanese withdrew into the interior of Luzon and continued to fight until the war's end.
  - D.** The battle for the Philippines was Japan's most costly defeat in the entire war.

**Essential Reading:**

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Chapter 30

Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Two-Ocean War: A Short History of the U.S. Navy in the Second World War*, Chapter 14

E.B. Sledge, *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa*, Part I

**Supplementary Reading:**

Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against The Sun*, Chapters 19, 22

**Questions to Consider:**

- 1.** What were the key turning points in the Battle of Leyte Gulf? Why did the Japanese lose the battle?
- 2.** How did the outcome of the Battle of Leyte Gulf shape the later course of the Pacific war?

## Lecture Twenty-Three

### The Final Drive for Japan: Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and the Fire-Bombing of Tokyo

**Scope:** This lecture examines the two climactic battles in the final drive for Japan in 1945: Iwo Jima and Okinawa. We will trace the strategic considerations that prompted these battles and follow the course of the bloody fighting. It was on Iwo Jima that Joe Rosenthal, an A.P. photographer, snapped the most famous picture of the Second World War when a handful of U.S. Marines raised the American flag atop Mount Suribachi. One-third of all U.S. marines killed in the Pacific died on Okinawa. Here, only 350 miles from Japan, American forces faced the largest Japanese garrison they confronted during the war, and the battle on this large island was protracted and grim. The onslaught of kamikazes was unprecedented in strength, killing almost 5,000 American sailors and sinking thirty-four ships. The battle did not end until June 21, 1945. Twenty percent of all casualties suffered by the Navy in all of World War II were sustained in the waters around Okinawa.

#### Outline

- I. The battle of Iwo Jima took place in February and March 1945.
  - A. The objective of the battle was to secure air fields for the final air assault on Japanese home islands.
    1. The assault was postponed until February due to slowness in subduing Leyte.
    2. The fighting on Iwo Jima was indescribably brutal. The terrain was difficult, and Japanese defenses were formidable. U.S. Marines suffered terrible casualties on the exposed beaches.
    3. On February 23, a Marine patrol reached the summit of Mount Surabachi and raised the U.S. flag. A.P. photographer Joe Rosenthal captured the moment in a famous photograph.
    4. The Americans suffered heavy casualties: more than 6,000 dead and 17,000 wounded. Virtually the entire Japanese garrison perished, including General Kuribayashi. The costs of victory were rising steadily as U.S. forces approached the Japanese home islands.
  - B. A debate ensued over whether the conquest of Iwo Jima was worth the high price in lives lost.
    1. Was the battle necessary?
    2. Might Iwo Jima have been bypassed?
- II. The battle for Okinawa—the last fought in the Pacific war—took place in April 1945.

- A. Okinawa was a very substantial island, 76 miles long and at some spots eighteen miles wide.
  - 1. It was located just 350 miles from the southernmost Japanese island, and it possessed excellent airfields and two good anchorages.
  - 2. It was garrisoned by the largest Japanese military force (120,000 troops) that U.S. forces engaged during the Pacific war. It also held a large civilian population.
  - 3. Okinawa would provide a major jumping-off point for an invasion of Japan.
- B. The United States assembled the largest ground force and naval armada deployed during the Pacific war.
  - 1. U.S. naval forces numbered 1,300 vessels, including 40 aircraft carriers.
  - 2. One hundred eighty thousand Marines and soldiers went ashore. Their numbers ultimately rose to 250,000.
- C. The Japanese responded with ten mass *kamikaze* assaults that sank 34 ships, damaged 350 others, and killed 4,900 U.S. sailors.
- D. The losses were staggering for both sides.
  - 1. Fourteen percent of all U.S. Marines killed in World War II died at Okinawa.
  - 2. Twenty percent of all naval casualties suffered during the war were sustained off Okinawa.
  - 3. Despite these huge losses, the Japanese military showed no inclination to surrender following the defeat at Okinawa.
  - 4. Six weeks of desperate combat convinced the Americans that the Japanese would resist fanatically an invasion of the Japanese home islands.

### III. The United States also waged an air war against Japan.

- A. The original strategy involved daylight strategic bombing.
  - 1. Raids were carried out by B-29 Superfortresses flying from bases in China and, in spring of 1945, the Marianas.
  - 2. The first raid on the home islands came in June 1944.
  - 3. The early bombing was ineffective, and Air Corps leaders sought a different strategy.
- B. Gen. Curtis LeMay's new strategy departed from Air Corps doctrine.
  - 1. He shifted from daytime strategic bombing to nighttime area raids.
  - 2. This shift allowed the planes to fly at lower altitudes and thereby avoid disruption by the jet stream.
  - 3. The new raids would include the use of incendiaries.
  - 4. The first night raid on Tokyo was conducted on March 9-10, 1945.
    - a. The city was massively fire-bombed.
    - b. Some 80,000-100,000 Japanese died in the resulting firestorm.

5. The Tokyo attack inaugurated a campaign of fire-bombing raids against Japan's major cities that continued into the summer.
- C. Military rather than racial considerations dictated this change in bombing strategy.
- D. The U.S. invasion of Japan was tentatively scheduled for November 1945. General Marshall expected 1 million U.S. casualties.

**Essential Reading:**

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Chapter 31

E.B. Sledge, *With The Old Breed*, Part II

Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against The Sun*, Chapter 21

**Supplementary Reading:**

Bill D. Ross, *Iwo Jima: Legacy of Valor*

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How did combat conditions for U.S. forces on Okinawa differ from those on Iwo Jima?
2. Was the capture of Iwo Jima worth the price that was paid to achieve it?

## Lecture Twenty-Four

### War in the Air

**Scope:** In this lecture we will examine a new dimension of warfare introduced during the Second World War: strategic bombing. We explore its moral implications and its impact on the outcome of the war. We will trace the evolution of air doctrine in the major combatant states, analyzing why only the two democracies, Great Britain and the United States, adopted a policy of strategic bombing with its inevitable civilian casualties, and we will examine the course of Anglo-American air operations against Germany and, to some extent, Japan. The lecture will conclude with an evaluation of the air war's contribution to the ultimate Allied victory over Germany and Japan.

### Outline

- I. Air power and strategic bombing were the key to Allied victory, and they transformed the nature of warfare between 1939 and 1945.
  - A. The United States and Britain had a distinctive conception of air power.
    1. Unlike the Germans or Japanese, the Americans and British emphasized strategic rather than tactical bombing.
    2. For the British, a strategic bombing capability substituted for the country's lack of a large land army. The British emphasized nighttime area bombing.
    3. The U.S. Army Air Corps endorsed high-altitude "daylight precision bombing," which offered the political advantage of limiting casualties.
    4. Strategic bombing doctrine was embodied in Air War Plans Department One, which called for a sustained air offensive against the Axis powers to destroy their will and capacity to wage war.
    5. It was hoped that air ascendancy would make an invasion of the continent unnecessary.
  - B. The RAF was the first to test the concept of strategic bombing.
    1. It tried but soon abandoned daylight operations in Germany: casualty rates were high.
    2. Casualty rates remained high following the shift to nighttime bombing, and inadequate technology made it hard for RAF pilots to defend themselves and locate targets.
    3. In February 1942, the British shifted their bombing policy; they acquired new radar equipment and new four-engine bombers—the Lancasters.
    4. Also in 1942, the RAF shifted to area bombing of Germany's large industrial cities. It began to measure its success in terms of urban acres destroyed and industrial man-hours lost. In February 1944,

the RAF began to measure success in terms of the number of German workers killed per raid.

- C. The new commanding officer of Bomber Command, Arthur Harris, championed area bombing.
    - 1. During the spring and summer of 1942, Harris launched three devastating RAF raids on German cities, in part to score propaganda points.
    - 2. However, radar proved to be ineffective as an aiming device for bombing. The Germans developed the means to jam British radar; and German night fighter defenses increased the RAF's aircraft losses.
  - D. The United States entered the air war in Europe in 1942.
    - 1. U.S. bombing commanders remained committed to daytime bombing assaults against industrial targets.
    - 2. The Eighth Air Force slowly built up its forces in Europe. The equipment needs of Operation Torch slowed its buildup.
  - E. The Allied air policy adopted at the Casablanca Conference in January 1943 was "round-the-clock" bombing.
    - 1. American forces would bomb Germany during the day, and the RAF would bomb at night.
    - 2. U.S. and British bombing offensives were combined but not coordinated.
    - 3. Bomber Harris ignored pressure to attack priority industrial targets and continued to attack urban centers. He failed to follow up U.S. raids against industrial targets.
    - 4. The RAF launched a huge but disastrous air offensive against Berlin between November 1943 and March 1944. Harris followed up this failure with another disastrous raid on Nuremberg. These failures undermined Harris' contention that Germany could be defeated through air power alone, and without an invasion.
    - 5. In mid-1943, the United States accepted sustained bombing of Germany. Its first raid—against Schweinfurt and Regensburg—ended in disaster.
- II. Life and death at 20,000 feet: the experience of aerial combat.**
- A. It was very hard for large groups of bombers to maintain formation as they flew through flak over German targets.
  - B. The B-17 and B-24 heavy bombers were on the cutting edge of technology. However, they were not pressurized; waist windows were open and the turrets were not sealed, so that temperatures inside the planes often fell to 20-40 degrees below zero.
  - C. Heavy losses suffered by U.S. bombers showed that they needed fighter support. The deployment of P-51 Mustangs in early 1944 allowed huge bomber formations to challenge the Luftwaffe over Germany.

**III. What did U.S. and British strategic bombing achieve?**

- A. German war production increased in tandem with the tonnage of Allied bombs dropped on Germany.
- B. The shortcomings of Allied strategic bombing campaigns were attributable to poor coordination, the impossibility until late in the war of relentless attack on key priority targets; and technological and operational shortcomings that continued to make precision bombing difficult.
- C. However, the bombing was more effective than the Allies realized. It prevented German war production from increasing faster than it actually did.

**Essential Reading:**

Richard Overy, *The Air War, 1939-1945*

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Chapter 22

**Supplementary Reading:**

Richard Overy, *Why The Allies Won*, Chapter 4

Geoffrey Perret, *Winged Victory: The Army Air Force in World War II*

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Why did the U.S. and British forces adopt strategic bombing? What purposes did it serve?
2. Evaluate the contribution of strategic bombing to the success of the Allied war effort.

## Lecture Twenty-Five

### Hitler's New Order in Europe

**Scope:** In this lecture we shift our attention to the evolution of Nazi racial policy from the boycott of Jewish shops in 1933 (the first year of the Third Reich) to the gas chambers of Auschwitz between 1942 and 1945. We will examine the origins of Nazi genocide—what Nazi leaders euphemistically called “the Final Solution to the Jewish Question in Europe”—and trace the escalation of anti-Jewish measures, especially following the outbreak of war in 1939. We will discuss the ideological origins of Hitler's anti-Semitism and the implementation of those ideological impulses, exploring just how his ideas were translated from the pages of *Mein Kampf* to the killing fields and gas chambers of Eastern Europe. We will also address the Allied responses to Nazi mass murder and the factors that determined those responses.

### Outline

- I. Hitler's wars against the Allied powers and against the Jews must be viewed together.
  - A. Nazi racial policy evolved during the 1930s.
    1. During 1933 and 1934 the Nazi regime issued anti-Jewish legislation.
    2. A Nazi boycott of Jewish businesses was called off almost immediately when it proved to be unpopular.
    3. Jews were eliminated from the civil service and certain professions.
    4. The anti-Jewish policy seemed to lose momentum during 1934 and 1935.
    5. The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 revoked the citizenship of Jews.
    6. Marriage and sexual relations between Jews and “Aryans” were prohibited.
    7. In November 1938, Goebbels' propaganda ministry orchestrated the *Reichskristallnacht* (night of broken glass) pogrom throughout Germany. This was the first instance of violence against the Jews clearly directed by the leadership of the regime.
    8. The policy of forced emigration was instituted in 1938.
  - B. The Nazi regime gradually moved toward the “final solution.”
    1. In January 1939 Hitler threatened the destruction of the Jewish race in Europe, and he linked Bolshevism with “world finance Jewry.”
    2. In November 1939, Himmler became responsible for Nazi racial policy. He delegated this work to Heydrich, who designated Poland as the concentration point for Jews in preparation for their deportation to the east.



3. The *Einsatzgruppen* (3,000 special SS commando units) were responsible for rounding up the Jews.
  4. Various solutions to the “Jewish question” were discussed within the SS leadership during 1940 and 1941. These included the settlement of all Jews in Madagascar.
  5. The “Commissar Order” informed the German Army on the Eastern Front about the SS “special tasks,” which included the massacre of Russian and Ukrainian Jews behind German lines.
  6. In late summer 1941, Hitler issued a verbal order to Himmler regarding the final solution.
- C. Heydrich developed a plan for systematic mass murder of Jews, which he presented at the Wannsee Conference on January 20, 1942.
1. The system of death camps was established during 1942. Ten percent of the inmates would be put to work, and the rest would be killed.
  2. European Jews were deported to the east.
- II. The Allies faced difficult choices in considering how to respond to the Holocaust.
- A. The Allies were aware of SS activities but did not have extensive knowledge about the death camps.
  - B. There was considerable skepticism and even disbelief within the Allied camp about these reports. Many of the information sources were regarded as suspect.
  - C. Various factors worked to discourage a vigorous Allied response.
    1. The Allies discussed bombing either the camps or the rail lines leading to them.
    2. It was feared that such bombings might inadvertently kill numerous inmates, and that they might detract from the broader military effort.
    3. Latent anti-Semitism in official circles contributed to a reluctance to publicize accounts of Nazi atrocities against the Jews.
  - D. In sum, Allied policy held that the best way to save the Jews was rapidly to win the war against Nazi Germany.

**Essential Reading:**

Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*

Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide From Euthanasia to the Final Solution*

**Supplementary Reading:**

Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*

Yehuda Bauer, *A History of the Holocaust*

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Trace the evolution of the Nazi regime's "final solution to the Jewish problem." What role did the "final solution" play in Hitler's larger ideological program?
2. What considerations discouraged the Allies from responding aggressively to the Holocaust? Was their restraint justified?

## Lecture Twenty-Six

### “This Man’s Army”

**Scope:** The creation of the U.S. Armed Forces was one of the most astonishing accomplishments of the Second World War. The army that went ashore at Normandy and Okinawa, the Air Corps that launched the great air offensives against Germany and Japan, and the gigantic navy that fought across the South Pacific and North Atlantic simply did not exist in 1939. The American military was smaller at war’s outbreak than that of France, and yet within two short years it would be able to mount major campaigns on two far-flung fronts. After examining the development of America’s armed forces, we will examine life in the military. We will explore the world of the GI, from the PX to the USO to V-mails, analyzing the military as a social and ethnic melting pot. We will also discuss the role of the African-American soldier and the racial tensions that occasionally emerged in a largely segregated military.

### Outline

- I. The U.S. Army had to be virtually created during the late 1930s and early 1940s.
  - A. The Army had been neglected during the inter-war years.
    1. Five years after the end of World War I, U.S. Army strength stood at 132,000 troops.
    2. President Hoover cut pay for officers by 15 percent and for enlisted men by 30 percent.
    3. Early in his presidency, FDR threatened to slash the military budget by 51 percent, relenting only when Douglas MacArthur threatened to resign as chief of staff.
    4. The military budget began to rise again in 1935. When war broke out in Europe in 1939, army strength stood at 190,000 troops.
  - B. The turning point came with the fall of France in June 1940.
    1. The Army received a huge budget allocation of \$9 billion.
    2. The first U.S. army draft in peacetime was introduced in September 1940.
  - C. Gen. Marshall relied on Major Albert Wedemeyer to rebuild the Army.
    1. Wedemeyer had to find manpower to fill 800 divisions and construct a fleet within two years.
    2. The federal government bought or seized land to establish the huge military camps that would be needed to accommodate the millions of new army inductees.
    3. Although FDR hoped that the United States would outproduce its enemies in equipment and munitions, the United States had no large munitions industries in 1941.

4. Gen. Marshall and Secretary of War Henry Stimson reorganized the War Department.
  5. The U.S. Army never reached the 8.8-million-man size projected by Wedemeyer. At its height, it was half the size of the Red Army and slightly smaller than the German army.
- II.** The world of the citizen-soldier was characterized by OD (olive drab) and khaki.
- A. The prospective soldier's first contact with the army came through the Selective Service System. At the reception center, the soldier entered a new world in which privacy was unknown.
  - B. The army served as a melting pot, revealing the nation's diversity to many soldiers who had previously not traveled far from their homes.
    1. The army was a kaleidoscope of regional and religious diversity.
    2. The bomber crew was a microcosm of American society.
    3. African-American soldiers remained second-class and were over-represented in the service units. Gen. Marshall resisted any effort to use the armed forces to resolve the nation's racial tensions.
  - C. Gen. Marshall emphasized measures to boost morale among the troops. These included USO entertainment; the V-mail system (63 million pieces of V-mail were sent per month); regular food and drink; and good pay.

**Essential Reading:**

Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in World War II*

David Reynolds, *Rich Relations: The American Occupation of Britain, 1941-1945.*

**Supplementary Reading:**

Gerald Linderman, *The World Within War: America's Combat Experience in World War II*

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What challenges confronted Major Wedemeyer as he attempted to rebuild U.S. military strength in the late 1930s? How successful were his efforts?
2. In what ways did the U.S. armed forces constitute a "melting pot"? What were some of the social consequences of the experience of military service?

# Lecture Twenty-Seven

## Daily Life, Culture, and Society in Wartime

**Scope:** The home front in the United States assumes center stage in this lecture. We will trace the extraordinary transformation of the American economy, which allowed the United States to become by 1943 the great “Arsenal of Democracy.” We will examine FDR’s economic planning, the role of private entrepreneurs such as Henry Ford and Henry Kaiser, and the changing social composition of the labor force, especially the massive entry of women into war industries. We will also analyze the very significant social problems that surfaced during wartime, especially the position of African-Americans and Japanese-Americans.

### Outline

- I. By 1944, the United States had become the “Arsenal of Democracy.”
  - A. The U.S. economy accomplished prodigious feats of wartime production.
    1. At the outbreak of war, U.S. industrial facilities operated nowhere close to their potential, due to lingering effects of the Depression.
    2. War contracts began to flow in 1939 and especially in 1940.
    3. Henry Ford’s bomber site at Willow Run produced huge numbers of aircraft.
    4. Henry J. Kaiser became the world’s largest ship builder. Kaiser built one-third of the U.S. Navy’s “Liberty ships.” Naval tonnage grew by 42 percent.
    5. During 1942, U.S. production equaled that of all the Axis powers.
    6. By 1944, U.S. production was twice that of Germany and Japan combined.
    7. By 1945, the United States produced 40 percent of the world’s armaments.
  - B. To facilitate economic planning, Roosevelt established the War Resources Board, the War Production Board, the Office of Economic Stabilization, and the Office of War Mobilization.
- II. The war generated social strains and social change.
  - A. Despite a 1943 strike by the United Mine Workers, there was remarkably little labor strife during the war.
  - B. Women’s roles changed importantly during the war.
    1. The share of women in the work force rose from 25 percent during the 1930s to 36 percent during the war.
    2. For the first time, married women outnumbered single women in the work force. Germany, by contrast, avoided introducing

German women into the work force and relied instead on slave labor.

3. “Rosie the Riveter” symbolized the entry of women into jobs traditionally reserved for men.
  4. Although women did not have wage parity with men, their wages rose faster than men’s wages did.
- C. The position of African-Americans also changed.
1. Blacks left the South in large numbers to take industrial jobs in the Midwest and California.
  2. The army had no plans to induct black troops into the Army.
  3. In the summer of 1941, A. Philip Randolph threatened a march by blacks on Washington to protest discrimination. FDR established a Fair Employment Practices Committee, but tensions remained rampant.
  4. Detroit, Philadelphia, and other cities experienced race riots and strikes during 1943 and 1944.
  5. The U.S. Armed Forces remained segregated.
- D. Japanese-Americans suffered discrimination.
1. There was considerable fear of a possible Japanese invasion of the U.S. West Coast.
  2. FDR bowed to pressure in February 1942 and approved the “relocation” of Japanese-Americans. Ten major relocation camps were established in barren regions in seven Western states. Most of the forced evacuations were completed by August 1942.
  3. The Nisei 442nd Regimental Combat Team was established in 1943.

### III. The war also altered daily life.

- A. Rationing and blackouts were common.
1. “Is this trip necessary?” Automobile production was halted; gas was rationed; and tires were invaluable.
  2. “Don’t you know there’s a war on?” Various consumer goods were rationed.
  3. Cities on both coasts were blacked out in 1942.
- B. A spirit of volunteerism prevailed.
1. Civilians planted 18 million “victory gardens” on their own initiative.
  2. “Eat what you can and can what you can’t.”
  3. Hollywood stars were mobilized to assist in eight major bond drives.

C. Cultural life was also affected.

1. Night life flourished. Five hundred were killed in the “Coconut Grove fire” of November 1942.
2. The government tried to mobilize the music industry to produce patriotic songs.
3. War-weariness gradually set in, contributing to Republican gains in the 1942 election and restricting FDR’s victory margin in 1944.

**Essential Reading:**

Richard Overy, *Why The Allies Won*, Chapter 6

John M. Blum, *V Was For Victory*, Chapters 4-6

**Supplementary Reading:**

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Chapter 10

William O’Neil, *A Democracy At War*

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How did the war affect the social and economic roles of women in the United States? How lasting were these changes?
2. What admirable traits or qualities did the wartime experience elicit in the U.S. civilian population? Did wartime conditions also reveal certain negative traits?

## Lecture Twenty-Eight

### The Race for Berlin

**Scope:** In this lecture, we return to the battlefield in Europe. Following the failure of Hitler's Ardennes offensive, both the Western Allies and the Russians resumed their inexorable march toward the Reich. We will examine this final phase of the war in Europe, reviewing the race for Berlin from the Anglo-American breaching of the Rhine in early spring 1945 and the Russian drive through Poland to Hitler's suicide in his bunker on April 30. We will analyze the controversy concerning Eisenhower's decision not to rush on to Berlin, "allowing" the Russians to take the city and setting the stage for the Cold War.

#### Outline

- I. The Red Army advanced on Germany from the East during 1943 and 1944.
  - A. The Red Army assumed the offensive against the Germans with the battle of Kursk in July 1943—the largest armored battle in history. This battle ended Germany's ability to launch Panzer offensives.
  - B. In November 1943 the Soviets recaptured Kiev, and in January 1944 they reached the prewar frontier of Poland.
  - C. The Red Army's summer offensive of June 1944 was directed against German Army Group Center and resulted in a bigger defeat for Germany than Stalingrad.
  - D. Serious tensions emerged in mid-1944 between Hitler and the German high command. Hitler narrowly escaped assassination in July 1944.
  - E. In a foretaste of the coming Cold War, in August 1944 the advancing Red Army halted outside of Warsaw as the Germans crushed the Polish underground insurgency.
  - F. As the Red Army pushed into Finland in September 1944, Germany's satellite states began to desert the Axis. Hitler refused pleas from his military commanders to withdraw German troops from the Baltic states and form a new defensive line against the Soviets.
  - G. In January 1945 the Soviets moved through Poland. German forces were heavily outmatched. By February the Red Army was just 65 miles from Berlin.
- II. Meanwhile, British and American forces drove toward Germany from the West.
  - A. The invasion of Germany began when Anglo-American forces crossed the Rhine.
    1. The Allied plan called for three-pronged advance to clear the Rhineland.



2. The British and Canadians proceeded slowly against bitter German resistance. They did not reach the Rhine until February 21, 1945. Montgomery understood that his troops would have priority to cross the Rhine first.
  3. Cologne fell to the U.S. First Army on March 5. Two days later, the U.S. Third Army crossed the Rhine at Remagen.
  4. On March 23, Montgomery launched what was to have been the main offensive across the Rhine.
  5. By March 25, all organized resistance west of the Rhine had ceased. By March 27, all seven Allied armies had crossed the Rhine.
- B.** The Anglo-American forces then raced toward Berlin.
1. The Allied forces' next objective was the Ruhr, which was encircled in April.
  2. German forces resisted fiercely, even though they had already effectively lost the war.
  3. On April 11, Simpson's Ninth Army reached the Elbe, where Eisenhower ordered him to halt.
    - a. Simpson was overextended and short of supplies.
    - b. The Germans were planning a last-ditch offensive action.
    - c. By April 16, the Russians were poised at the Oder River.
    - d. The Big Three had agreed at Yalta that Berlin would be part of the Soviet zone of occupation.
    - e. The Allies were unsure of Hitler's whereabouts. They were fooled by German plans to construct an "Alpine redoubt." Eisenhower directed the main thrust of the Allied assault at Bavaria.
- C.** The final Soviet drive for Berlin began on April 16, 1945.
1. The Soviets unleashed a huge artillery barrage against the city.
  2. Russian units linked up west of Berlin on April 25 and then invaded the city.
  3. Hitler committed suicide in his bunker on April 30.
- D.** The Soviets lost more casualties in the Battle for Berlin than American troops had suffered throughout the war in Europe. If U.S. forces had seized Berlin and incurred similar casualties, it would have been very difficult for them to have subsequently turned the city over to the Soviets per the Yalta agreement.
- E.** In his "last testament," Hitler blamed the Jews for provoking the outbreak of war in 1939.
- F.** V-E Day was declared in the West on May 8, 1945.

**Essential Reading:**

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Chapters 25-28

**Supplementary Reading:**

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Describe the collapse of the German military position in the East during 1944 and early 1945.
2. In view of later events, was Eisenhower right to order Gen. Simpson's Ninth Army to halt at the Elbe while the Soviets captured Berlin?

## Lecture Twenty-Nine

# Truman, The Bomb, and the End of the War in the Pacific

**Scope:** In the summer of 1945, with Germany defeated and signs of war-weariness surfacing in the United States, the new American president, Harry Truman, confronted the dismal prospect of a bloody invasion of the Japanese home islands. In August Truman chose to use a revolutionary new weapon, the atomic bomb, against the Japanese, hoping to induce the Imperial government to surrender. In this lecture we will analyze Truman's decision to use the bomb, the background of the firebombing raids on Tokyo and other Japanese cities, and the actual missions against Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Our appraisal will include the political, military, and moral implications of Truman's decision.

### Outline

- I. President Truman's decision to drop two atomic bombs on Japan brought the war in the Pacific to an end.
  - A. Several factors influenced President Truman's decision to use the atomic bomb.
    1. The Japanese military showed no sign of surrendering.
    2. In the wake of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, Truman worried about the high U.S. casualty rates that would result from an invasion of the Japanese home islands.
  - B. The Manhattan Project was a joint U.S.-British effort. It was motivated by the Allies' knowledge that Germany was developing a similar weapon.
    1. It was assumed initially that the bomb would be used against Germany.
    2. Both Roosevelt and Truman came to see the bomb as a large conventional device with which they hoped to shock the Japanese into surrender.
  - C. Truman received word of the successful testing of the bomb on July 15, 1945, while he was attending the Potsdam Conference.
    1. Truman insisted at Potsdam on maintaining Roosevelt's demand for unconditional Japanese surrender.
    2. U.S. terms for accepting Japanese surrender were contained in the "Potsdam Declaration." The Japanese were threatened with "complete and utter destruction" if they failed to accept the Declaration.
    3. Truman interpreted the vague Japanese response as a rejection.

- D. The first bomb was dropped by the *Enola Gay* onto Hiroshima, destroying 60 percent of the city and killing some 80,000 to 100,000 Japanese.
  - 1. Truman suggested to Japanese leaders that the United States possessed a stockpile of atomic bombs.
  - 2. The Soviet Union declared war on Japan on August 8, 1945, shortly after the Hiroshima bombing.
  - 3. The Navy argued that a blockade and air raids were sufficient to secure Japanese surrender, while the Army advocated the use of the atomic bomb.
- E. Truman faced limited options in the summer of 1945.
  - 1. Neither an effective blockade nor terror bombing had succeeded in ending the war.
  - 2. The availability of just two bombs discouraged the use of one for demonstration purposes.
- F. On August 9, 1945, a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, killing some 35,000 people.
  - 1. It is ahistorical to argue about Truman's "decision" to use the bomb, since no such decision was made. Use of the bomb was a foregone conclusion.
  - 2. The Japanese military continued to reject surrender even after Nagasaki. There were plans to kidnap the Emperor, who had spoken in council in favor of surrender.
  - 3. On August 14, Hirohito addressed the nation for the first time, announcing that the war was over.
  - 4. August 14 was designated as V-J Day.

**Essential Reading:**

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Chapter 32

Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against The Sun*, Chapter 23

**Supplementary Reading:**

Stanley Weintraub, *The Last Great Victory: The End of World War II, July/August 1945*

**Questions to Consider:**

- 1. What considerations led Truman to authorize the use of the atomic bomb against Japan?
- 2. Was his decision to do so morally justifiable?

## Lecture Thirty

### The Costs of War

**Scope:** In this concluding lecture, we will evaluate the outcome of the war, its meaning in a global political and military context, and its historical significance. Yet, the real focal point of this lecture is an appraisal of the enormous costs of the war as reflected in the experiences a single American family.

### Outline

- I. The Second World War had important historical consequences.
  - A. The war fundamentally altered the balance of power in the world
    1. It marked the emergence of the United States and the Soviet Union as superpowers.
    2. It led to the Cold War.
    3. It led to the eclipse and (temporary) division of Europe.
    4. It intensified and accelerated anti-colonialist movements around the globe.
    5. It intensified demands for a greater state intervention in domestic affairs, as illustrated by the emergence of the welfare state.  
Returning veterans made new socio-economic demands on the state.
  - B. The human costs were very high.
    1. Fifty-five million people perished in the Second World War.
    2. No corner of the globe was left untouched.
    3. The human costs of the war are poignantly depicted in the story of the last U.S. bomber crew shot down over Germany during World War II.

### Essential Reading:

John Keegan, *The Second World War*, Chapter 33

Thomas Childers, *Wings of Morning*

### Questions to Consider:

1. How did World War II shape world politics during the postwar decades?
2. How does the study of World War II highlight both what is best and what is worst in human nature?

# Timeline

## The War in Europe

Jan. 30, 1933.....	Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany
March 16, 1935.....	Germany renounces disarmament clauses of Versailles Treaty, introduces conscription, and begins construction of an air force
March 7, 1936.....	German remilitarization of the Rhineland
July 18, 1936.....	Beginning of Spanish Civil War
March 1938.....	The Austrian crisis and the <i>Anschluss</i>
September 1938.....	The Sudetenland crisis
Sept. 29, 1938.....	The Munich Conference
March 1939.....	German occupation of Czechoslovakia
August 23, 1939.....	The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact
Sept. 1, 1939.....	Germany invades Poland
Sept. 29, 1939.....	Russia and Germany divide Poland
Nov. 30, 1939- March 12, 1940.....	Russo-Finish War
April 9, 1940.....	Germany invades Norway
May 10, 1940.....	Germany invades Holland, Belgium, and France
May 29 - June 4, 1940.....	British and French troops evacuated from Dunkirk
June 10, 1940.....	Italy declares war on Britain and France
June 22, 1940.....	France signs armistice
July 8 - Nov. 1940.....	Battle of Britain
October 28, 1940.....	Italy invades Greece
April 6, 1941.....	Germany invades Yugoslavia and Greece
June 22, 1941.....	Germans launch Operation Barbarossa
Sept. 4, 1941.....	German siege of Leningrad begins
December 6, 1941.....	Russian counterattack before Moscow
December 11, 1941.....	Hitler declares war on the United States
January 20, 1942.....	Wannsee Conference in Berlin
July 2, 1942.....	New German offensive in Soviet Union

August 22, 1942.....Battle of Stalingrad begins  
 September 21, 1942.....Soviet forces counterattack, begin the encirclement of Stalingrad  
 November 8, 1942.....Allied invasion of French North Africa begins  
 January 17-27, 1943.....Casablanca Conference  
 February 2, 1943.....German 6th Army surrenders at Stalingrad  
 February 8, 1943.....Battle of Kursk  
 May 8-12, 1943.....End of German resistance in North Africa  
 July 10, 1943.....Allied forces invade Sicily  
 July 25, 1943.....Mussolini forced to resign  
 August 17, 1943.....American air raids on Schweinfurt and Regensburg  
 September 2 1943.....Allied invasion of Italy  
 September 9, 1943.....American forces land at Salerno  
 November 6, 1943.....Russians retake Kiev  
 January 22, 1944.....Allied forces land at Anzio  
 March 15-May 18, 1944....Allied attacks on Monte Casino  
 June 4, 1944.....Anglo-American troops enter Rome  
 June 6, 1944.....D-Day: the invasion of France  
 June -August 1944.....Soviet offensive against German Army Group Center  
 July 1944.....The Warsaw uprising  
 August 25, 1944.....The liberation of Paris  
 September 17-26, 1944.....Operation Market Garden fails  
 December 16-25, 1944.....The Battle of the Bulge  
 January 12, 1945.....Russians take Warsaw  
 February 7, 1945.....Yalta Conference  
 March 7, 1945.....American forces cross the Rhine at Remagen  
 May 1, 1945.....Battle of Berlin begins  
 May 7, 1945.....German surrender to Western Allies at Reims  
 May 8, 1945.....V-E Day in the West

## **Timeline**

### **The War in the Pacific**

September 1931.....	The Mukden Incident and Japanese attacks in Manchuria
February 18, 1932.....	Japanese declare the independence of Manchukuo
July 7, 1937.....	Japanese hostilities with China commence
December-January 1938....	The “rape of Nanking”
December 7, 1941.....	Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor
December 25, 1941.....	British forces at Hong Kong surrender
January -April 9, 1942.....	Battle of the Philippines
January -March 1942.....	Japan seizes Dutch East Indies, Singapore, Burma
April 18, 1942.....	The Doolittle raid on Tokyo
May 7, 1942.....	The Battle of the Coral Sea
June 4-7, 1942.....	The Battle of Midway
Aug. 1942-Feb. 1943.....	The Struggle for Guadalcanal
June 1943.....	MacArthur launches Operation Cartwheel
November 1943.....	The fighting on Tarawa
February 2, 1944.....	Invasion of the Marshall Islands
June 16, 1944.....	Invasion of the Marianas
August 11, 1944.....	Conquest of Guam
October 19, 1944.....	MacArthur opens offensive in the Philippines
February -March 1945.....	Battle of Iwo Jima
March 9-10.....	First fire-bombing of Tokyo
April 1 - June 21, 1945.....	Battle of Okinawa
August 6, 1945.....	Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima
August 8, 1945.....	Soviet Union enters war against Japan
August 9, 1945.....	Second atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki
August 14, 1945.....	Allies accept Japanese surrender
September 2, 1945.....	Formal surrender signed on board U.S.S. Missouri in Tokyo Bay, marking end of Second World War



## Glossary

***Anschluss***: the “connection” of Austria with Germany in March 1938.

***Blitz***: “lightning” in German; refers to the German aerial assault on British cities between 1940 and 1942.

***Blitzkrieg***: “lightning war”; term referring to Germany’s form of warfare in the first phase of the war, 1939-1941.

***Einsatzgruppen*** Special SS commando units that conducted a bloodbath on the eastern front against the Jews.

***Kamikaze***: “Divine Wind”—special suicide planes used by the Japanese for the first time in the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

***Lebensraum***: “living space”—term employed by Hitler to describe Germany’s need for expansion to the east in order to claim land for the Reich’s swelling population.

**SHAEF**: Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces in the European Theater of Operations, commanded by Gen. Dwight Eisenhower from late 1943 until the end of the war in Europe.

**SS**: *Schutzstaffel*, the elite organization of the National Socialist Party headed by Heinrich Himmler. Originally a special bodyguard for Hitler, it became police organization in the Third Reich.

***Waffen-SS***: special SS units that operated as elite military units on both the eastern and western fronts.

**V-2**: Vengeance Weapons, the V-2 and its buzz bomb predecessor, the V-1, were rockets developed by the Germans and launched against targets in Britain during the last year of the war.

## Biographical Notes

**Chiang Kai-shek** (1887-1975). Leader of the Chinese Kuomintang and head of state of Nationalist China.

**Chamberlain, Neville** (1869-1940). Last prewar prime minister of Great Britain. Associated with the policy of appeasement and the Munich Conference.

**Churchill, Winston** (1874-1965) Wartime leader of Great Britain. Churchill became prime minister on May 10, 1940, the day Germany launched its invasion of Western Europe. He was an inspiring orator whose leadership during Britain's dark days of 1940 and 1941 held the nation together. He worked tirelessly to create and maintain the anti-Nazi alliance and cemented a particularly close relationship with the United States. More than FDR, Churchill remained wary of Stalin's postwar intentions.

**De Gaulle, Charles** (1890-1970). Tank commander in the French Army and cabinet minister in the French government in 1940. In exile he became leader of the Free French Forces.

**Eisenhower, Dwight** (1890-1969). American and Allied Supreme Commander in North Africa, Sicily and northwest Europe. He was in charge of Operation Overlord and commanded the Allied military forces in Europe. Known mainly for his remarkable personal political skills, desperately needed in managing a coalition military force. Eisenhower determined the overall military strategy during the western drive into Germany, advocating a broad-front approach rather than a dash for Berlin.

**Goering, Hermann** (1893-1946). Head of the four-year plan in prewar Germany; commander of the German Air Force (*Luftwaffe*); and officially second in command of the Third Reich.

**Guderian, Heinz** (1888-1953). Tank commander and architect of the *Blitzkrieg*; commanded German armored forces in France and Russia.

**Halsey, William** (1882-1959). Fleet Admiral "Bull" Halsey played a key role in U.S. naval operations against the Japanese in the Central Pacific. He commanded the U.S. Central Pacific Fleet at the crucial Battle of Leyte Gulf in October 1944.

**Harris, Arthur** (1892-1984). Air Chief Marshal, Bomber Harris was commander of the Royal Air Force's Bomber Command from 1942 until the end of the war; he was associated with the policy of nighttime area bombing of Germany.

**Heydrich, Reinhard** (1904 -1942). Head of the Reich Main Security Office, Heydrich took charge of the SS extermination squads (*Einsatzgruppen*) on the Eastern Front in 1941. Heydrich was responsible for drafting the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" and presided over the Wannsee Conference in January 1942.

**Himmler, Heinrich** (1900-1945). Head of the SS (Reichsführer SS) throughout the Third Reich. Himmler was the primary architect of Nazi extermination policy in Europe and was the second most powerful figure of the Nazi regime.

**Hirohito** (1901-1987). Emperor of Japan, Hirohito officially presided over Japanese policy throughout the war but was largely a figurehead. In the war's final days, he intervened to press the military leadership to terminate hostilities.

**Hitler, Adolf** (1889-1945). Führer of the Third Reich who came to power in 1933. Hitler directed every aspect of German policy and increasingly intervened directly in military decisions. More than any other individual, he bears responsibility for the Second World War and its horrors.

**King, Ernest** (1878-1956) Appointed Commander in Chief of U.S. Naval Forces at war's outbreak, he assumed duties as Chief of Naval Operations and became the leading figure in the U.S. Navy during the war. In Allied councils he consistently pressed for greater attention to the Pacific Theater.

**MacArthur, Douglas** (1880-1964). Dominant American military figure in the Pacific Theater, MacArthur survived the Japanese assault on the Philippines in 1941, vowing "I shall return." He did so in January 1945. While Nimitz directed American forces in the Central Pacific, MacArthur led the advance through the southwest. At war's end he accepted Japanese surrender on Halsey's flagship, the U.S.S. *Missouri*.

**Marshall, George** (1880-1959). Army Chief of Staff at war's outbreak, Marshall presided over the creation of the U.S. Army, which in 1939 possessed fewer than 200,000 troops. He became chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and FDR's most trusted military advisor.

**Molotov, Vyacheslav** (1890-1970). Served as Soviet foreign minister throughout the war. He began his career with the Nazi-Soviet Pact in August 1939 and continued as Stalin's foreign representative with the Allies after Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941.

**Montgomery, Bernard** (1887-1976). Field Marshal Montgomery was the leading British military figure of the Second World War. He played a major role in the Allied victories in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy, and under Eisenhower's command he planned Operation Overlord. On D-Day Montgomery was ground commander of Allied forces under Eisenhower's supreme command and directed an Allied army group until the end of the war.

**Mussolini, Benito** (1883-1945). Fascist dictator of Italy from 1922 to 1943. Mussolini embarked on an expansionist policy in Ethiopia in 1935 and supported Franco in Spain in 1936. He entered the Second World War as Hitler's junior partner, invading France only after the Germans had smashed the French Army, and he mounted a disastrous campaign against Greece in November 1940, only to be bailed out by Hitler. Defeated in North Africa, he was deposed in July 1943 and was again rescued by Hitler to rule a German

puppet state in northern Italy. He was captured and executed by partisans in April 1945.

**Nagumo, Chuichi** (1887-1944). Vice-Admiral Nagumo was the commander of the Japanese First Carrier Fleet. He directed the Japanese assault on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and at the Battle of Midway in 1942. He fought unsuccessful naval engagements off Guadalcanal and later at Saipan, and he committed suicide in July 1944.

**Nimitz, Chester** (1885-1966). Nimitz commanded the U.S. Pacific Fleet from just after Pearl Harbor until the end of the war. In 1942 he assumed command of the Central Pacific Theater and directed the island-hopping drive through the Gilberts, Marshalls, and Marianas toward the Japanese home islands.

**Patton, George** (1885-1945). Easily the most flamboyant American general, Patton was a vocal advocate of armored warfare. He commanded a corps in Operation Torch, directed the 7th Army in the invasion of Sicily, and led the spectacular Allied breakout from Normandy as commander of the U.S. 3rd Army. His intervention during the Battle of the Bulge was a decisive factor in the Allied victory.

**Pétain, Henri-Philippe** (1856-1951). French hero of the First World War, Pétain entered the government of Paul Reynaud in 1940 during the German invasion. Rather than bolstering French morale, Pétain advocated an armistice, undermining those, such as de Gaulle, who wished to fight on. He assumed power and offered the Germans an armistice on June 22, 1940. He served as head of the new collaborationist Vichy regime until its collapse, was tried after the war and sentenced to death, but de Gaulle commuted his sentence to life in prison.

**von Ribbentrop, Joachim** (1893-1946). Became Hitler's foreign minister in 1938 and negotiated the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact in August 1939. His influence waned during the war. Tried at Nuremberg, he was hanged in 1946.

**Rommel, Erwin** (1891-1944). Excellent German commander chosen by Hitler to lead the Afrika Korps where he established his reputation as "the Desert Fox." He was placed in charge of preparing German defenses for the anticipated Allied landing in northwest Europe. Wounded after D-Day, he was implicated in the plot to overthrow Hitler on July 20, 1944, and was offered the choice of suicide or standing trial. Hitler gave him a hero's funeral, claiming that he had died of his combat wounds.

**Roosevelt, Franklin D.** (1882-1945). President of the United States since 1933, FDR was a towering figure in the alliance against Hitler and Japan. He struggled against American isolationism until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor threw the United States into the war, and he sent aid to Britain and the Soviet Union under "Lend-Lease." Agreeing with Churchill that defeat of Germany was the first priority, he presided over American policy, both military and diplomatic, until his death in April 1945. He held out great hopes for the United Nations, an organization that he inspired and founded.

**von Rundstedt, Gerd** (1875-1953). Rundstedt came out of retirement in 1939 and led an army group in the invasions of Poland and France. His troops executed the breakthrough that stranded British and French forces in Belgium, but Rundstedt halted his forces before Dunkirk, allowing British and some French troops to be evacuated. In 1941 he commanded German forces in the Ukraine and in 1942 was named commander in chief of the West, a post he held until July 1, 1944. He planned the Ardennes offensive of December 1944 but retired after its failure in March 1945.

**Spaatz, Carl** (1891-1974). Spaatz commanded U.S. air forces in Europe and then in the Pacific. An advocate of daylight strategic bombing, Spaatz led the 8th Air Force in England, the principal American instrument in the strategic air campaign against Germany. Later he directed U.S. air forces in North Africa, and in 1944 he assumed the position of commanding general of the strategic air force in Europe. In the spring of 1945 he took up the same post in the Pacific Theater, where he directed the final air assault on Japan.

**Speer, Albert** (1905-1999). Hitler's architect, who in 1942 became the mastermind of Germany's economic mobilization for war. As minister of armaments and munitions, Speer managed to increase German war production, despite massive Allied bombing, until September 1944.

**Stalin, Joseph** (1879-1953). Dictatorial leader of the Soviet Union and its armed forces. Mistrustful of the West, Stalin entered into a non-aggression pact with Hitler in 1939 and faithfully fulfilled its terms until the German invasion in June 1941. His purge of the Red Army in 1938 had seriously weakened the armed forces but Stalin presided over their revival and made shrewd military appointments, especially the selection of Georgi Zhukov. Stalin never really overcame his mistrust of the West, and tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States grew during the last year of the war.

**Tojo, Heideki** (1884-1948). A military man who became prime minister of Japan in 1941, Tojo directed the Japanese war effort until the summer of 1944. He held two additional positions—war minister and chief of army staff—and was the central figure in Japan's conduct of the war. He resigned after the fall of the Marianas in July 1944. After the war he was one of the seven Japanese to be hanged as a war criminal by the Allies.

**Truman, Harry** (1884-1972). A senator from Missouri at the war's outbreak, Truman was elected vice president in 1944 and became president upon FDR's death on April 12, 1945. He continued FDR's policies, though he would find himself on a collision course with Stalin at the Potsdam conference and afterward. He remained in office until 1953, playing a leading role in shaping the contours of the cold war.

**Yamamoto, Isoroku** (1884-1943). Japan's leading naval strategist and an early advocate of carrier-based aircraft in naval operations. As minister of the navy and subsequently commander of the 1st Fleet, Yamamoto oversaw the buildup of the Imperial Navy and its air power. Although he was convinced that Japan

could not prevail in a protracted war with the United States, he devised the daring plan of attack on Pearl Harbor which he hoped would cripple American naval power in the Pacific. He was also responsible for planning the ill-fated naval attack on Midway. He was killed in April 1943 when American aircraft shot down an plane in which he was traveling to inspect the Western Solomons.

**Zhukov, Georgi** (1896-1974). Deputy supreme commander and chief of the Red Army during virtually all of the Second World War, Zhukov earned his reputation with a successful action against the Japanese in Mongolia during 1939. After the German invasion of the Soviet Union, he held a series of important command positions in defense of Smolensk, Leningrad, and finally Moscow in the fall of 1941. The “Savior of Moscow,” he went on to become the “Savior of Stalingrad” as well, commanding the Soviet defense and counterattack against Paulus’s 6th Army. Zhukov would lead the great Russian sweep into the Ukraine, Poland, and finally Germany. His troops entered Berlin on May 2, and the Germans surrendered to him on May 8, 1945.

# Bibliography

\* Denotes Essential Reading

## I. General Works

Gilbert, Martin. *The Second World War*. Among the most extensive and useful of the single-volume histories of the war.

\*Keegan, John. *The Second World War*. New York: Penguin Books, 1989. The best synthetic treatment of the war by the most respected military historian today. The book offers not only the essential story line of the war but an incisive interpretation.

\*Overy, Richard. *Why the Allies Won*. New York: Norton, 1996. An insightful and probing examination of the factors that led to the Allied victory. The best interpretive treatment of these issues in the literature today.

Weinberg, Gerhard. *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994. An encyclopedic analysis of the war that is particularly strong on the diplomacy of the conflict.

## II. The Diplomatic Origins of the Second World War

\*Iriye, Akira. *The Origins of the Second World War: Asia and the Pacific*. London: Longman, 1987. A brief but probing analysis of the diplomatic origins of the conflict in Asia and the South Pacific by the leading expert in the field.

Kitchen, Martin. *Europe Between the Wars: A Political History*. London: Longman, 1988. A very useful account of the diplomacy of the interwar period from Versailles in 1919 to the outbreak of war in 1939.

Rich, Norman. *Hitler's War Aims: Ideology, the Nazi State, and the Course of Expansion*. New York: Norton, 1973. Still the best treatment of Hitler's foreign policy and war aims in English.

\*Taylor, A.J.P. *The Origins of the Second World War*. New York: Atheneum, 1961. A highly controversial but at times brilliant analysis of the coming of the war. Taylor's treatment of German foreign policy is questionable but his explanation of appeasement and the dilemmas of British and French policy in the interwar years is compelling.

## III. The Air War

Crane, Conrad. *Bombs, Cities, and Civilians: American Air Power Strategy in World War II*. Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1993. A very useful examination of American bombing which emphasizes the differences between American and British policy.

Hastings, Max. *Bomber Command*. London: Pan Books, 1981. A very readable account of the RAF's Bomber Command.

Terraine, John. *A Time for Courage: The Royal Air Force in World War II*. New York: Macmillan, 1985. A useful companion volume to Hastings's work.

Murray, Williamson. *Luftwaffe*. Baltimore: The Nautical and Aviation Publishing Co., 1985. The best analysis of the German air force in World War II. Excellent evaluation of the Luftwaffe's strengths and weaknesses and the effects of Allied bombing.

Perret, Geoffrey. *Winged Victory: The Army Air Forces in World War II*. New York: Random House, 1993. A very readable volume that deals with American air operations around the globe.

Schaffer, Ronald. *Wings of Judgement: American Bombing in World War II*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985. A provocative and enlightening examination of the development, evolution, and execution of American strategy during World War II.

\* Overy, R.J. *The Air War, 1939-1945*. Chelsea, MI: Scarborough House, 1991. The best overall treatment of the air war in Europe and Asia, examining the policies of all the major combatants.

#### **IV. The War at Sea**

Boyne, Walter. *Clash of Titans: World War II at Sea*. New York, Touchstone Books, 1995. A highly readable one-volume account of naval combat around the globe.

Miller, Nathan. *War at Sea: A Naval History of World War II*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. More detailed and analytic than Boyne's fine book, a good companion to Boyne and Morison.

\*Morison, S. E. *The Two-Ocean War: A Short History of the United States Navy in the Second World War*. New York: Little Brown and Co., 1963. An excellent condensation of Morison's multi-volume history of the American navy during the war. Morison's work remains at the top of the list.

Padfield, Peter. *War Beneath the Sea: Submarine Conflict During World War II*. New York: John Wiley & Son, 1995. The standard work on submarine warfare around the globe.



## V. The War in Asia and the South Pacific

Alperovitz, Gar. *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb*. New York: Vintage, 1995. A revisionist analysis of Truman's decision to employ the atomic bomb in 1945.

Bergerud, Eric. *Touched with Fire: The Land War in the South Pacific*. New York: Penguin Books, 1996. An important examination of how the land war in the South Pacific was fought, dealing not only with the formulation of strategy but with the actual conditions on the ground.

Costello, John. *The Pacific War*. New York: Quill, 1982. A very useful single-volume history of the war.

Dower, John. *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986. Offers a controversial interpretation of the confrontation between Americans and Japanese, arguing that race was the dominant feature of the Pacific war.

Feis, Herbert. *The Atomic Bomb and the End of World War II*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966. Feis argues that Truman's decision to use the bomb was based largely on his determination to bring the war to a speedy end and stop the slaughter. A useful counterpoint to Alperovitz's revisionist argument.

Ienaga, Saburo. *The Pacific War 1931-1945*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978. A provocative interpretation of the war from a Japanese perspective—one highly critical of Japanese policy and motives.

\*Lord, Walter. *Incredible Victory: The Battle of Midway*. New York, Harper-Collins, 1967. Riveting account of perhaps the most important naval battle in the Pacific war.

\*Prangle, Gordon W. *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981. An excellent depiction of the attack on Pearl Harbor and the controversy surrounding it.

Ross, Bill D. *Iwo Jima: Legacy of Valor*. New York: Vintage, 1988. A powerful analysis of this important battle, this book is among the very best narrative accounts of the slaughter on Iwo Jima.

\*Spector, Ronald H. *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan*. New York: Free Press, 1985. The most comprehensive and probably the best single-volume history of the war in the Pacific.

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July/August 1945. New York: Penguin, 1995. An important analysis of the last months of the war, especially the decision to drop the atomic bomb on Japan.

## **VI. The War in Europe**

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Clark, Alan. *Barbarossa: The Russian-German Conflict, 1941-1945*. New York: Quill, 1985. A very lively one-volume account of the colossal conflict between these two ideological adversaries.

D'Este, Carlo. *Decision in Normandy*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1983. A probing analysis of the Allied strategic conflicts and their resolution during the Normandy campaign.

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Erickson, John. *The Road to Berlin: Stalin's War with Germany*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1983. Among the best treatments of the Red Army's relentless drive into Germany, as the Russians went onto the offensive in 1943-1945.

\*Erickson, John. *The Road to Stalingrad*. New York: Harper & Row, 1975. An important account of the German offensives in the Soviet Union from 1941 to the defeat at Stalingrad in 1943.

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\*Keegan, John. *Six Armies in Normandy: From D-Day to the Liberation of Paris*. New York: Penguin Books, 1983. A brilliant analysis of D-Day invasion and the strategic differences between Britain and the United States prior to—and after—D-Day.

## **VII. The Experience of Combat**

Ambrose, Stephen E. *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992. Follows the experiences of a 101st Airborne company from training, through Normandy, Operation Market Garden, and into Germany.

\*Ambrose, Stephen E. *Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany, June 7, 1944-May 7, 1945*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997. An excellent treatment of the American war effort, from top to bottom, in northern Europe.

Astor, Gerald. *A Blood-Dimmed Tide: The Battle of the Bulge by the Men Who Fought It*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1992.

\*Bartov, Omer. *The Eastern Front, 1941-1945: German Troops and the Barbarization of Warfare*. New York: St. Martin's, 1985. A searing account of Germany's war without rules against the Red Army.

\*Childers, Thomas. *Wings of Morning: The Story of the Last American Bomber Shot Down Over Germany in World War II*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1995) The tragic story an American air crew and their families.

Ellis, John. *On the Front Lines: The Experience of War Through the Eyes of the Allied Soldiers in World War II*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1990.

Fahey, James J. *Pacific War Diary 1942-1945: The Secret Diary of an American Sailor*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1963.

Hynes, Samuel. *Reflections of a World War II Aviator*. New York: Pocket Books, 1989. A beautifully written account of an American aviator's training and war in the Pacific.

Linderman, Gerald. *The World Within War: America's Combat Experience in World War II*. New York: The Free Press, 1997. An analysis of the experience of combat in Europe and the Pacific. It deals largely with American experiences, but also examines those of the Japanese, Germans, and Russians.

\*Sledge, Eugene. *With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa*. New York: Oxford University Press. The most powerful memoir of the war in the Pacific. An unforgettable, haunting book that captures the horrors of combat in two of the most memorable campaigns of the war.

## **VIII. America at War: The Homefront**

Fussel, Paul. *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989. A provocative and biting examination of wartime attitudes on both the homefront and the front lines. The author contrasts the "high-mindedness" of the homefront with the brutal realities of war.

\*Blum, John M. *V Was For Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II*. New York: Harcourt Brace-Jovanovich, 1976. Perhaps the standard work on life in the United States during the war.

\*O'Neil, William. *A Democracy At War: America's Fight at Home and Abroad in World War II*. New York: Free Press, 1993. A very useful treatment of life on the homefront in the United States, examining race relations, the changing role of women, popular entertainment, and sexual mores.

Milward, Alan S. *War, Economy and Society 1939-1945*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977. A comparative analysis of the major combatants' mobilization for war and the social consequences thereof.

Noakes, Jeremy, ed. *The Civilian in War: The Home Front in Europe, Japan, and the USA in World War II*. Exeter, 1992. An informative collection of articles dealing with various aspects of social and cultural life in the major powers during the war.

\*Reynolds, David. *Rich Relations: The American Occupation of Britain, 1942-1945*. New York: Random House, 1995. An exceptional book that deals not only with Anglo-American relations at the highest levels but provides a very revealing portrait of both British and American societies as they collided when American troops arrived in Britain in 1942.

## **IX. The Holocaust**

Bauer, Yehuda. *A History of the Holocaust*. New York: Doubleday, 1982. An excellent overall treatment of the evolution of Nazi racial policies.

\*Browning, Christopher. *Ordinary Men: Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. New York: Harper-Collins, 1992. An extremely powerful and well argued examination of the opening phase of Nazi genocide in Poland by one of the leading historians of the Holocaust.

\*Friedlander, Henry. *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1997. The best of the many comprehensive studies of the Holocaust.

Hilberg, Raul. *The Destruction of the European Jews*. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985. Hilberg's work remains the starting point for any reading about the Holocaust.

## **X. Biographies/Memoirs of the Major Wartime Leaders**

Ambrose, Stephen E. *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President*

*Elect, 1890-1952*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983. Comprehensive treatment of Eisenhower's career by his definitive biographer.

\*Bullock, Alan *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*. London: Odhams Press, 1952. Bullock's classic biography remains, despite numerous newer works, the essential one volume treatment of Hitler and his rule.

\*Churchill, Winston. *The Second World War*. Six volumes. London, 1948-1955. A classic memoir/history of the war years by Britain's wartime prime minister. Still electrifying reading.

\*D'Este, Carlo. *Patton: A Genius for War*. New York: Harper-Collins, 1995. A very readable book that breaks down many of the myths about America's most colorful general.

Doolittle, James H. *I Could Never Be This Lucky Again*. New York: Bantam, 1991. General Doolittle relates his experiences, from his prewar career to his famous 1942 raid on Tokyo to his leadership of the Eighth Air Force.

\*Eisenhower, Dwight D. *Crusade in Europe*. New York: Doubleday, 1948. The Allied commanding general's account of the defeat of Nazi Germany. A remarkable memoir/analysis.

Hamilton, Nigel. *Monty: Master of the Battlefield, 1942-1944*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1983. A detailed and spirited account of General Bernard Montgomery's role in the war, from the campaign in North Africa to the D-Day invasion.

Hamilton, Nigel. *Monty: The Field Marshal, 1944-1976*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1986. Hamilton continues the story with the invasion of northern Europe in 1944 and traces Field Marshal Montgomery's contribution to the Allied victory as well as his evaluation of subsequent events.