

# World War II Battles

1941-1945

# Pearl Harbor

- December 7, 1941- “A date which shall live in infamy”
- Axis: Japanese sneak attack against the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The Japanese leader was Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto.
- Allies: No general or battle strategy- the U.S. was taken completely by surprise. The attack sank 11 U.S. ships- nearly the entire Pacific fleet- and forced the United States into the war.



Photo # 80-G-182252 Japanese "Zero" fighter leaves Akagi to attack Pearl Harbor, 7 Dec. 1941



# The Philippines

- January 1942
- Allies: The Philippines was a U.S. protectorate under General Douglas MacArthur. He escaped the island shortly before the invasion began.
- Axis: Japanese General Masaharu Homma's plan was to take out all territories that the U.S. might use as a base to attack Japan.
- The Japanese won the battle and took nearly 80,000 American and Philippine prisoners. These prisoners were treated very harshly. During the infamous Bataan Death March, all but about 5,000 prisoners died.





What are **YOU** going to do about it?

5200 Yank Prisoners Killed  
by Jap Torture In Philippines;  
Cruel 'March of Death' Described

Soviets Near Heavy Action RAF Hurls  
Truck Unit in Fury New Blows  
Enter

Other Thousands of Victims Were  
Filipinos; Captives Were Starved,  
Beaten, Bayoneted, Shot and Even  
Beheaded, Army and Navy Report

**STAY ON THE JOB UNTIL EVERY  
MURDERING JAP  
IS WIPED OUT!**

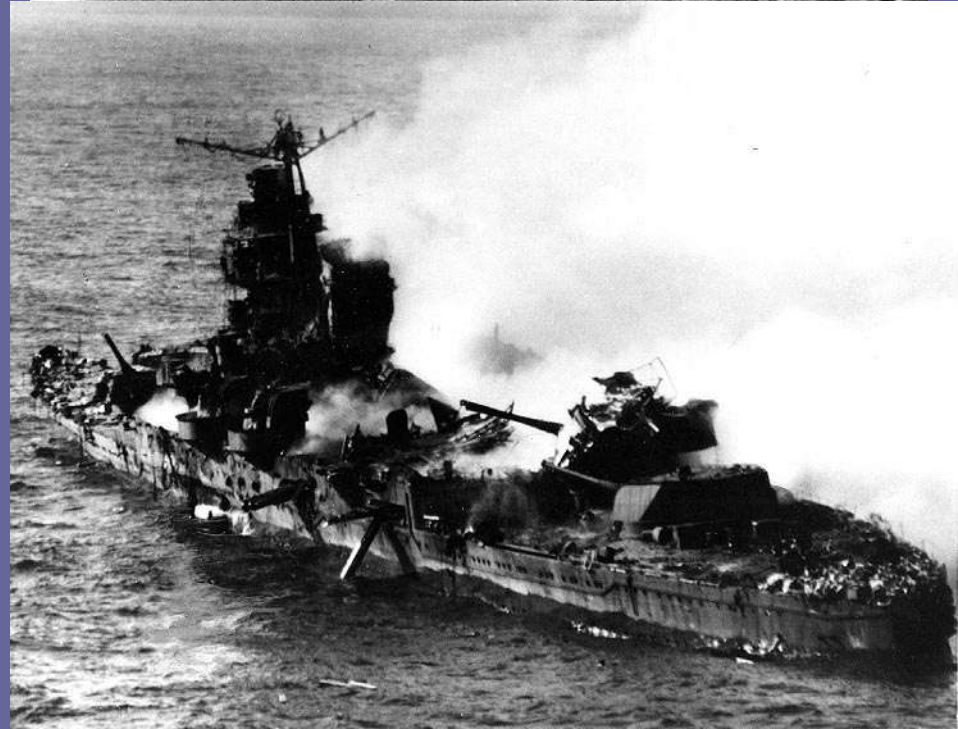
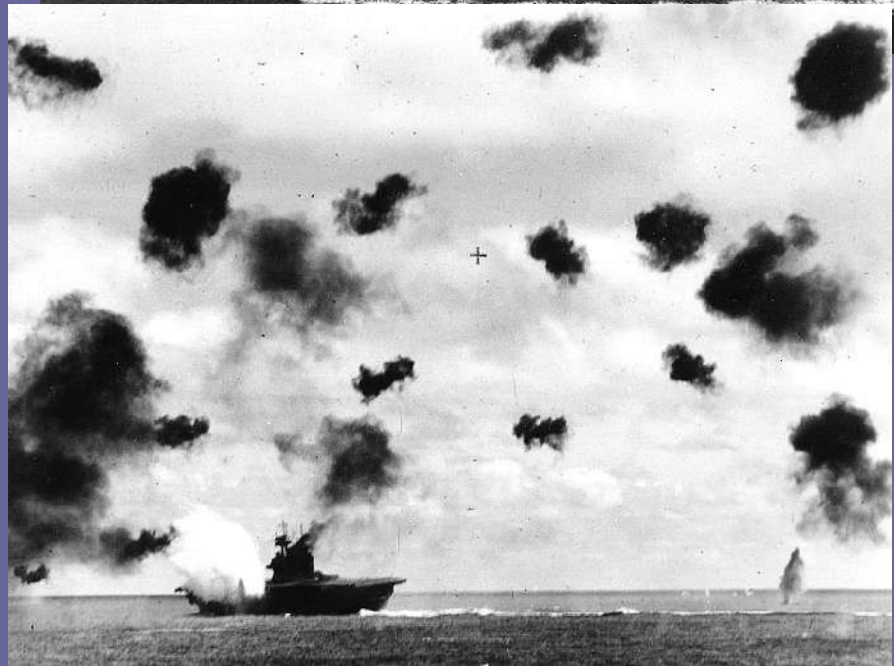
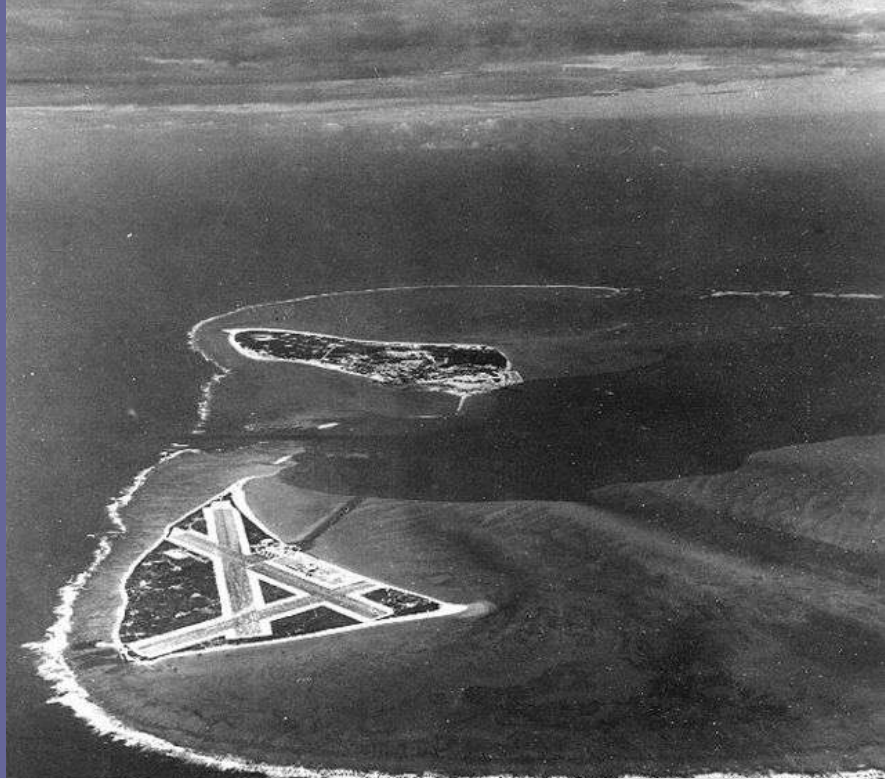
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# Battle of Midway

- June 4-7, 1942
- Axis: Admiral Yamamoto planned to ambush the U.S. fleet at Midway Atoll, and permanently knock the U.S. out of the Pacific.
- Allies: U.S. codebreakers learned of Japan's plan, and warned Admiral Chester Nimitz. When Japan's fleet arrived at Midway, the U.S. fleet was there waiting.
- Results: This battle was fought completely between ships and airplanes. With the advantage of surprise, the U.S. sank 5 Japanese ships while losing only 2. This ended Japan's expansion across the Pacific





# Battle of Guadalcanal

- August 7, 1942- February 9, 1943
- Allies: Americans, led by Vice Admiral Robert Ghormley, landed on this small jungle island in the South Pacific to stop the Japanese from building an airfield.
- Axis: Admiral Yamamoto attempted to retake the island and the airfield from the U.S., so they could continue to expand across the Pacific.
- Results: After 6 months of back and forth air, sea, and land battles, the Japanese were unable to retake Guadalcanal and were forced to withdraw. This is considered the turning point in the Pacific Theater and began the U.S. strategy of “island hopping.”







**THE PACIFIC AND ADJACENT THEATERS 1942**

— Japanese Limit of Advance

0 1600  
Miles at the Equator



# Battle of El-Alamein

- October 23- November 4, 1942
- Axis: German General Erwin Rommel- “The Desert Fox”- led his army of tanks against the important railroad stop of El-Alamein, Egypt. He hoped to take the Suez Canal from the British.
- Allies: British Lieutenant-General Bernard Montgomery held firm against Rommel’s advance and then counterattacked for a decisive Allied victory.
- Results: This hard-fought battle in the deserts of North Africa marked a turning point in this part of the war. The Allied forces were refreshed by the addition of American forces. The Axis forces were under supplied and outmanned because Hitler turned his focus to the Eastern Front and the Battle of Stalingrad.





# Battle of Stalingrad

- August 23, 1942-February 2, 1943
- Axis: When Germany broke the non-aggression pact and invaded the Soviet Union, Hitler knew that the Soviets needed to be knocked out of the war quickly. Hitler saw the city of Stalingrad as a major source of resources, as well as an important target for the German propaganda machine- the city was named after Joseph Stalin. Although Hitler did not lead this battle on the ground, he did give most of the direct orders.
- Allies: After being invaded, the Soviet Union joined the Allied Powers. Just as in World War I, Russia was far behind Germany in their technology and production, but they had the advantage of a large population available for war. Just like Hitler, Stalin gave direct orders to his generals. The most important of these orders was that defeat and retreat were not options- the city must be held at all costs.

# Battle of Stalingrad (cont.)

- The Battle: It raged back and forth for months, with the Germans slowly taking more and more of the city. Finally, Russian reinforcements arrived, trapping the German Army in the city. The entire German Army was forced to surrender.
- The Results: This was the most deadly battle in the history of the world. More than 2 millions soldiers lost their lives fighting for this one city. In the end, the city of Stalingrad was reduced to rubble, but this is also considered the turning point of World War II. The Germans would never again make a major offensive move, and it was only a matter of time before the Allies beat them back.





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1945

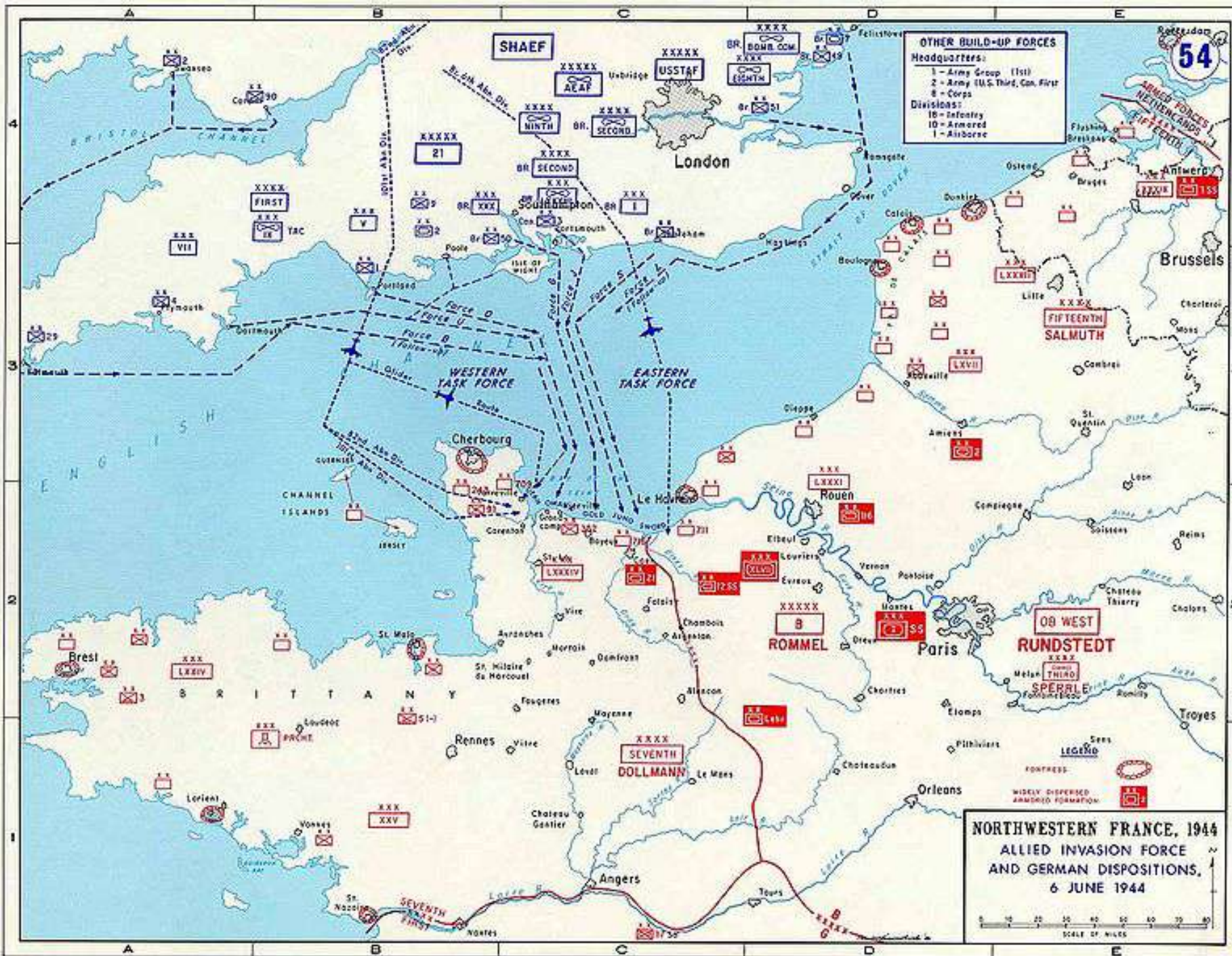




# D-Day: The Allied Invasion of Normandy

- **Axis:** The German Army, now under the command of Erwin Rommel, only had to prevent the Allies from coming ashore.
- **Allies:** General Dwight D. Eisenhower, supreme allied commander, came up with the plan. Combined Allied forces, including British, Americans, and Canadians, were to invade Normandy, France at three different locations. This would give the Allies a foothold in Europe to begin pushing the Germans back.
- **Results:** D-Day is the largest military action in the history of warfare. The Allies, especially the Americans, lost many men assaulting a heavily fortified position. This is often seen as one of the most heroic battles of the war.





**NORTHWESTERN FRANCE, 1944**  
**ALLIED INVASION FORCE**  
**AND GERMAN DISPOSITIONS,**  
**6 JUNE 1944**









# The Battle of the Bulge

- December 16, 1944
- Axis: General Rommel. On the retreat, the Germans make one last attempt to push the Allies back. Attacked in the dead of winter in the Ardennes Forest, on the border of Belgium, France, and Germany.
- Allies: General George Patton rescued a group of American soldiers trapped behind the German lines and pushed the Germans back into Germany.

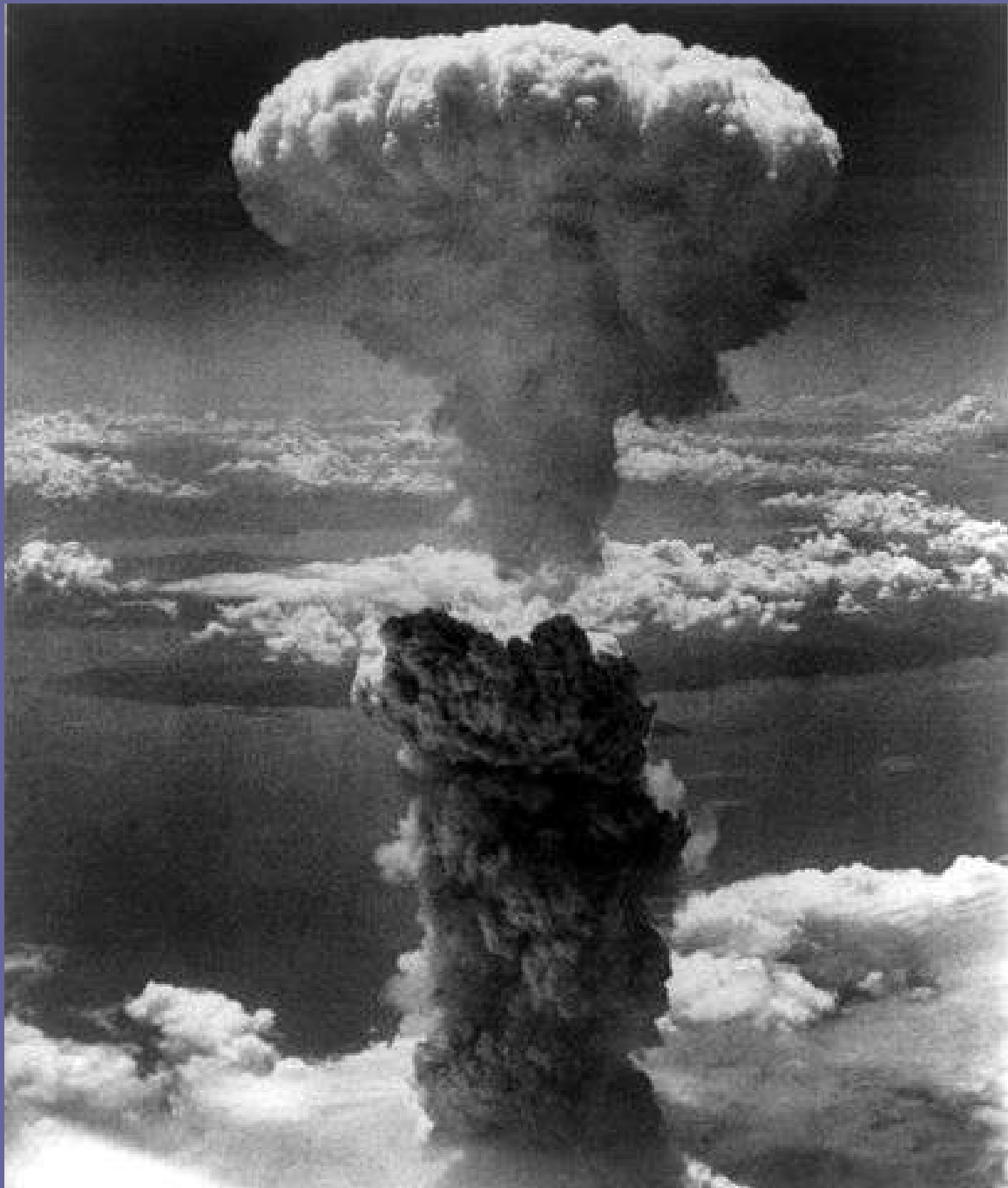


Bundesarchiv, Bild 183-J28689  
Foto: Büschel | 1944/1945 Winter



- A series of deaths, as well as the gradual push of the Allies towards Berlin, would bring an end to the war in Europe
  - April 28<sup>th</sup>- Mussolini is captured by Italian Partisans and executed
  - April 30<sup>th</sup>- Hitler commits suicide in his Berlin bunker
- V-E Day: Victory in Europe. On May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945, Germany surrenders, ending the war in Europe
- Japan refuses to accept Germany's terms of surrender, and the war in the Pacific continues for 4 months
  - To end the war with Japan, the new American President Harry Truman decides to use a powerful new weapon.
  - The Atomic bomb is dropped first on Hiroshima, then Nagasaki.
- V-J Day: Victory over Japan. On August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1945, Japan surrenders, bringing an end to World War II.
- The dropping of the atomic bomb, as well as conflicts between communism and capitalism would lead almost immediately to the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the U.S.





# World War II Deaths

■ Military deaths (millions)  
■ Civilian deaths (millions)

■+■ Total deaths (millions)  
■ Total deaths (1945) as % of population (1939)

