

Merit
Students
Encyclopedia

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MERIT STUDENTS ENCYCLOPEDIA

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MACMILLAN EDUCATIONAL CORPORATION
NEW YORK

P. F. COLLIER, Inc.
LONDON and NEW YORK

Library of Congress catalog number 78-56516

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also 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972,
1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978

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ALPHABETICAL ARRANGEMENT OF ENTRIES

The entries in the *Merit Students Encyclopedia* are arranged in a simple alphabetical order. The method of arrangement combines elements of the system used in most dictionaries with that used in telephone directories. Each entry begins with a heading in dark type. Some of these headings contain a comma; others do not. The basic principles of arrangement are listed below, including rules for placement of identical headings.

The alphabetical sequence is letter by letter.

air
air conditioning
aircraft
aircraft carrier
aircraft landing system
airedale terrier
airfoil

When headings contain words out of their usual order, a comma is used to indicate the change of order, as in

Alaska, University of
Alba, Duke of
Alger, Horatio

Such entry headings are arranged in alphabetical sequence only up to the comma.

Bryansk
Bryant, William Cullen
Bryant College

When words preceding a comma are the same in two or more consecutive entries, the order is determined by the arrangement of the letters following the comma.

Brooks, Phillips
Brooks, Van Wyck

When two or more entries have the same heading, the entries are placed in the following order: persons, places, things.

Hannibal (person)	Hercules (person)	Phoenix (place)
Hannibal (place)	Hercules (constellation)	phoenix (bird)

Rulers with identical names are listed alphabetically by the name of the territory ruled. Rulers with the same name and same realm are listed according to dates of reign.

Frederick IX (of Denmark)
Frederick I (of Holy Roman Empire)
Frederick II (of Holy Roman Empire)
Frederick II (of Prussia)

Popes are listed by dates of reign, and they precede rulers of the same name.

Paul VI (Pope)
Paul I (Emperor of Russia)

Other persons with identical names are listed according to date of birth.

Butler, Samuel (born 1612)
Butler, Samuel (born 1835)

Places with identical names are listed according to the importance of the political unit, in descending order.

New Brunswick (Canadian province)
New Brunswick (U.S. city)

When places of the same political unit have identical names, they are arranged alphabetically by location. Cities in the United States and Canada are always located in reference to states or provinces. Cities elsewhere are usually located in reference to countries.

Abilene (Kansas)	Abydos (Egypt)
Abilene (Texas)	Abydos (Turkey)

Things with identical names are arranged alphabetically according to the subject in which they are classified.

aberration, in astronomy
aberration, in optics

GUIDE TO PRONUNCIATION

Pronunciations in *Merit Students Encyclopedia* appear in parentheses following entry headings. Heavy and light stress marks are used after syllables to indicate primary and secondary accents. A heavy stress mark is used in words that contain one primary accent, such as **comet** (kom'it). Both heavy and light stress marks are used in words that have secondary as well as primary accents, as in **communication** (kə mū' nə ka' shən). When two or more entries have exactly the same pronunciation, as with Paris the mythological hero and Paris the French city, the pronunciation is given only with the entry that appears first. Where possible, letters of the standard alphabet are used as symbols in the pronunciation system in preference to less familiar symbols. The symbols used are shown below with some words in which their sounds appear.

a	hat, cap	j	jam, enjoy	u	cup, butter
ā	age, face	k	kind, seek	û	full, put
ã	care, air	l	land, coal	ü	rule, move
ä	father, far	m	me, am	ū	use, music
		n	no, in		
b	bad, rob	ng	long, bring		
ch	child, much			v	very, save
d	did, red	o	hot, rock	w	will, woman
		ō	open, go	y	young, yet
e	let, best	ô	order, all	z	zero, breeze
ē	equal, see	oi	oil, voice	zh	measure, seizure
èr	term, learn	ou	house, out		
f	fat, if	p	paper, cup		
g	go, bag	r	run, try	ə	represents:
h	he, how	s	say, yes	a	in about
		sh	she, rush	e	in taken
		t	tell, it	i	in April
i	it, pin	th	thin, both	o	in lemon
ī	ice, five	th	then, smooth	u	in circus

In pronunciations for entries describing foreign persons and places it is sometimes necessary to represent sounds that are not used in English. Such foreign sounds are represented by four special symbols, which are listed below. Each symbol is accompanied by a brief indication of how the sound it represents is produced.

Y	as in French <i>du</i> . Pronounce ē with the lips rounded as for English ü in rule.	N	as in French <i>bon</i> . The N is not pronounced but shows that the vowel before it is nasal.
œ	as in French <i>peu</i> . Pronounce ā with the lips rounded as for ō.	H	as in German <i>ach</i> . Pronounce k without closing the breath passage.

WORLD WAR II to INDEX

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World War II, the second great war fought in the 20th century. The conflict lasted from Sept. 1, 1939, to Sept. 2, 1945. Probably more than 40 million people lost their lives through military operations, saturation bombing of military and civilian targets, or political extermination.

The theaters of major operations in World War II were the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa and the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans. The fighting on land and sea, as well as in the air, took place on a scale, and with a range and intensity, unparalleled in history. In the last days of the war the first nuclear weapons ever used in actual conflict were detonated, and the world entered the Atomic Age.

The conflict was called World War II to distinguish it from its predecessor, the World War, or World War I. Both wars marked the collapse of international political systems intended to ensure the peaceful settlement of conflicts of interest among nations. Both times the ultimate victory rested with a coalition of countries that had gone to war to resist aggressor nations. In World War II the major aggressor nations were Germany, Italy, and Japan. The principal countries in the coalition opposing them were the United States, Great Britain and the other members of the Commonwealth of Nations (except the Republic of Ireland), the Soviet Union, France, and China.

Causes of the War

Postwar Illusions. After World War I the United States and, to a much lesser extent, Britain entertained the fallacy that a nation could avoid being involved in war by refusing to take any active responsibility for preserving international order. Another illusion was the idea that wars are caused by the existence of armaments, rather than by political decisions of governments. From this idea arose the artificial and futile attempt to disarm Germany by limiting the size of its armed forces under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. This illusion was also the basis for the Washington Conference of 1921 and 1922. The conference's attempt to limit all naval armaments resulted in Japan's gaining a naval superiority in the Far East that it could not have achieved under competitive conditions. A further misconception was that a defeated state could be forced to pay vast sums of money in reparations, to be usefully applied by the victors in building up their own economies. The application of this theory to Germany, coupled with U.S. insistence that Allied war debts to the United States be repaid, helped bring about the world-wide economic depression of the early 1930's.

Military Negligence. After World War I the United States and Britain allowed their armies to wither away. Both countries failed to concentrate on developing their air power, a weapon of increasing importance. In spite of the lesson of World War I, the two countries permitted the antisubmarine capabilities of their navies to fall far below the safety level. It is true, nonetheless, that the U.S. Navy did reorient its strategy toward the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean, anticipating the possible need to deal with Japan's rising ambitions, and therefore did, within the imposed budgetary limitations, develop its naval aviation along realistic lines. In partnership with the U.S. Marine Corps it produced a common doctrine of amphibious warfare and a task-force organization, of which the aircraft carrier eventually provided the tactical cornerstone.

In France, military theory became frozen within a concept of defense. The French concentrated on building up the Maginot Line, a series of massive fortified positions along the German frontier. However, they neglected to extend the defenses to cover the longer frontier with Belgium, through which the Germans had marched to attack France in 1914, at the outbreak of World War I.

Student's Guide

This article discusses the background, immediate causes, and main strategic phases of World War II. It begins with Germany's and Japan's prewar aggressions in Europe and Asia and then describes the many rapid conquests by the Axis Powers in the first years of the war. The article recounts Germany's long and bloody struggle with the Soviet Union and the seesaw war that the British fought against the Germans and Italians in the Middle East. It concludes with a description of the combined Allied operations that crushed the Axis between 1943 and 1945. It sets forth in detail key military, air, and naval operations, as well as subordinate actions in each phase of the war.

The important political and military leaders mentioned in this article are the subjects of separate articles, as are the Tehran and Yalta conferences, at which the diplomatic exchanges between the Allied leaders took place. The implications of the detonations of the first atomic bombs used in warfare are discussed in the article WAR.



German parachutists land on Crete in 1941. World War II was fought on land, on sea, and, to an unprecedented degree, in the air.

Political Chaos. After World War I, Britain and France were seriously debilitated. The United States withdrew to the Western Hemisphere in a vain attempt to resume its isolation from the quarrels of Europe. Austria-Hungary ceased to exist and was replaced by a cluster of smaller and bitterly antagonistic countries whose nationalism had yet to find expression in solidly based political institutions. After the Russian Revolution of 1917 the Soviet Union was the avowed enemy of the political and economic principles of Europe's democracies. In Italy a totalitarian regime under Benito Mussolini began in 1922 to extinguish the liberties of the Italian people in the name of restoring order. In Germany economic and industrial recovery was not paralleled by the development of political stability, partly because inflation had gravely damaged the middle class.

During the 1920's the efforts of the victors of World War I to guarantee Europe's security were spasmodic, poorly coordinated, and marred by timidity, rivalry, and increasing economic weakness. The League of Nations met regularly at Geneva, and after the Locarno Pact was signed, it admitted Germany to membership in 1926. However, the league's peace-keeping powers were measured by the strength of purpose felt by its principal member states. France, for one, felt isolated by the U.S. withdrawal from European affairs, as well as by a lukewarm British foreign policy, and the French concluded military alliances with several of the new eastern European states.

The Troubled Thirties: Prelude to War

Japanese Aggression. The challenge of Japanese imperialism became clearly visible in the Second Sino-Japanese War, which began in 1931. The Japanese army was permitted by treaty to police the South Manchurian Railroad which was owned by Japan. In September 1931, Japanese troops suddenly seized Mukden and other principal cities of Manchuria. The pretext was an explosion that had caused some damage to the railroad tracks. However, the incident was widely believed to be the work of Japanese agents, because the subsequent military take-over was of massive proportions and clearly the product of extensive planning. The League of Nations passed resolutions deploring Japan's action and appointed an investigating commission. U.S. Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson reacted by refusing U.S. recognition of territories and agreements achieved by aggression, a policy that became known as the Stimson Doctrine. China ordered a boycott of Japanese goods, to which Japan reacted in January 1932 by attacking the Chinese port of Shanghai. Pressure from foreign powers with commercial interests in Shanghai compelled the Japanese to draw back a few months later. However, by that time, Japan had set up a puppet government in Manchuria, which they transformed into the supposedly independent state of Manchukuo under their protection. In February 1933 the League of Nations passed a resolution directing Japan to restore Manchuria to Chinese control. Japan's prompt and defiant response was to withdraw from the league.

Rise of Hitler. Adolf Hitler, who became Chancellor of Germany on Jan. 30, 1933, drew the appropriate conclusions from the league's failure to stop Japan's aggression. He was already engrossed in making himself absolute master in Germany by means of his well-

At the Munich Conference in 1938, Great Britain and France offered Germany part of Czechoslovakia in return for "peace in our time." Chief negotiators are, from left to right, Neville Chamberlain of Britain, Édouard Daladier of France, Adolf Hitler of Germany, and Benito Mussolini of Italy. The Czechs were not represented.



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organized National Socialist, or Nazi, Party and its paramilitary units. With his secret plans for rearming Germany and restoring its military power, Hitler won over the army leaders. He suddenly proposed, in March 1936, to reoccupy the Rhineland, a zone demilitarized under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Hitler by this time had taken the measure of French and British resolution to stop him. He sent his troops across the Rhine, and nothing happened.

By May 1936, Benito Mussolini had completed Italy's conquest of Ethiopia, in direct and open defiance of the League of Nations. The Rome-Berlin Axis was created in October by an agreement between Germany and Italy.

In July 1937 the Japanese military chiefs, observing the course of events in Europe, fabricated another incident near Peiping (now Peking) and used it as the pretext to launch Japanese armies on the conquest of China. Meanwhile, both Germany and Italy were openly giving material support to the antidemocratic forces of Generalissimo Francisco Franco in the Spanish civil war.

In March 1938, Hitler annexed Austria in a bloodless coup. Immediately thereafter he began demanding the cession of border areas of Czechoslovakia that were inhabited largely by people of Germanic origin. Czechoslovakia was one of France's eastern allies. Nevertheless, Czechoslovakia's borderlands were bargained away under the terms of the Munich Pact of September 1938. In March 1939, Hitler occupied the rest of the country.

By his succession of triumphs and by the remarkable progress made in rearming Germany under his direction, Hitler finally gained the confidence of most of his generals. Those who opposed him, he purged. Hitler's actions convinced a large section of public opinion in Britain and in France that appeasement would not erase his threat to the peace of Europe. Both countries belatedly began to build up their armaments. Early in 1939, Hitler began a new propaganda campaign aimed at Poland, another French ally. Both Britain and France promptly warned Germany that a attack on Poland would mean war.

Nonaggression Pact. The attitude of the Soviet Union, Poland's eastern neighbor, became of crucial importance. For strategic reasons, Britain and France

could not do much to help Poland without Soviet assistance. The Soviet Union had offered to come to the aid of Czechoslovakia in 1938, but both Poland and Rumania had refused to give Soviet troops free passage to the west, presumably on the theory that the troops might not be easily induced to go home again. The Soviet government, while offering in April 1939 to join with Great Britain, France, and, if possible, Poland, was at the same time cautiously testing its chances of coming to an agreement with Germany. Britain and France were cool to the idea of Soviet aid;

A Czech woman gives a grief-stricken salute as German troops enforce the Munich Pact and take over the Sudetenland in 1938.

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and Poland did not know which it dreaded more, Soviet help or German conquest. Negotiations between the Soviets and the Western powers languished, were renewed, and finally were broken off. On Aug. 23, 1939, the German foreign minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, suddenly arrived in Moscow. That night a nonaggression pact was signed between the Soviet Union and Germany. Also concluded at this time, but kept secret, was an agreement dealing with the division of Poland between the two powers.

War in Europe, 1939 to 1940

Blitzkrieg in Poland. Hitler had correctly anticipated that Poland could be defeated before France and Britain could succeed in launching a counterattack against Germany from the west. During the years from 1933 to 1939 the German armed forces had expanded into an army of 80 divisions, of which 12 were armored or mechanized. Germany's Luftwaffe, or air force, had become the strongest in Europe. The Polish army had 30 divisions, backed only by poorly equipped reserves, and with very few armored vehicles. The Poles had a large force of horse cavalry, but it could hardly stand up against German tanks, and the smaller and outmoded Polish air force was no match for the Luftwaffe.

The Germans had evolved a new tactical doctrine, of which the Polish campaign provided the first trial by battle. It was the doctrine of blitzkrieg, or "lightning war," in which tanks and motorized artillery were grouped in strong formations for swift independent action in a war of movement with continuous air support.

Early on the morning of Sept. 1, 1939, the squadrons of the Luftwaffe roared across the Polish frontier, Stuka dive bombers struck Polish airfields, destroying planes on the ground, as well as communications and control centers. Medium bombers pushed into Poland and smashed bridges and railway yards. The Polish air force was neutralized, and the concentration of Polish reserves was thrown into hopeless chaos. Into that chaos struck two German army groups consisting of 56 divisions and including first-line troops and armored and mechanized divisions. Army Group North, under General Fedor von Bock, struck to the south and southeast from East Prussia and Pomerania. Army Group South, under General Karl Gerd von Rundstedt, drove east and northeast from Silesia. The Poles made the error of trying to defend their entire 1,000-mile frontier with Germany, instead of fighting delaying actions on shorter fronts along successive interior river lines. They fought with desperate bravery but in vain. They were too widely dispersed, and the blitzkrieg denied them time to correct initial errors. Britain and France declared war against Germany on September 3 and soon afterward were joined by the members of the Commonwealth of Nations.

The Fall of Poland. On September 17, Bock dealt with an attack by Polish troops that had been bypassed on the frontier between the two German advances. On that same day the Polish government fled from Warsaw. The capital suffered a merciless bombing from the Luftwaffe, whose purpose was to compel Warsaw to surrender to the Germans before the Soviets could get there. Two Soviet army groups entered Poland on September 17 and met little resistance. Warsaw sur-

rendered to the Germans on September 27, and the last organized Polish resistance ended with the surrender of the remnants of a Polish army corps on October 6. Poland was divided into German and Soviet zones of occupation.

What it meant to be conquered by Nazi Germany soon became all too plain to the Poles, although it was as yet unrealized in western Europe. Included in the invading German armies were several units of the black-uniformed S.S., or *Schutzstaffel*. In the 1920's the S.S. had been organized by Hitler as his personal bodyguard and had been bound to him by a special oath. The force had grown to a strength of thousands, including special armed units that operated under army command when fighting was in progress but otherwise took their orders from Heinrich Himmler, Hitler's chief policeman. In Poland the S.S. set about deliberately to exterminate the Jewish population, as well as "all men capable of leadership in Poland." Some German army commanders were horrified and protested, but they received sharp orders from Berlin to cease interfering with the S.S. butcheries.

Winter of Indecision

Comparative Strength. Hitler's West Wall, or western frontier, fortifications were loudly advertised by Nazi propaganda as being impregnable, but they were in fact far from complete. During the Polish campaign they were held by a force of only 8 first-line divisions, reinforced by about 25 second-line reserve divisions in varying states of readiness. The French army had 65 first-line and 45 reserve divisions, of which 72 were immediately available when mobilization had been completed. The German general staff fully expected a determined French attack, and their respect for Hitler's powers of intuition was enormously increased when no attack materialized. The French army, trained in and oriented toward a doctrine of defense was simply not ready for a major offensive. The French had more tanks than the Germans, but the machines, built as infantry support weapons, were slow and ponderous. The French air force was inferior to the Luftwaffe both in number and quality of aircraft. Offensive air operations against Germany were ruled out because the French leaders feared that such attacks would trigger German retaliation against French cities and industry.

The defensive attitude of the French army was, of necessity, adopted by the British. Only four British divisions were available for immediate support of the French, although British air reinforcements were proportionately larger and of excellent quality.

The Phony War. Hitler proposed to launch a full-scale attack against the French as quickly as he could shift his main forces from Poland to the Rhine River. However, his general staff favored digging in along the west wall and letting the Allies do the attacking. The determined opposition of the military helped restrain Hitler, but more decisive was the generally bad weather, which prevented free use of German air superiority.

On the Allied side another complication was the stubbornly neutral attitude of the Belgian government, which refused even to discuss common defense plans with the French and British. The winter passed without any serious move by either side, except for the gradual trickle of British reinforcements across the

English Channel and the development of field fortifications along the Franco-Belgian frontier. This winter of indecision was the period of the so-called phony war.

Finland, Norway, and Denmark. The principal military activity of the winter of 1939 and 1940 came in Finland, which was invaded late in November 1939 by the Soviet Union. The Finns put up a resistance that won the admiration of the whole Western world. However, in the end they had to yield to overwhelming force. On Mar. 12, 1940, a peace agreement was signed, under whose terms Finland ceded strategic territory to the Soviets.

Meanwhile, Hitler had been urged by Grand Admiral Erich Raeder, chief of the German navy, to consider an operation against Norway. Raeder pointed out that this step would not only protect the ore traffic but would give German submarines and surface raiders the advantage of Norwegian ports facing the Atlantic Ocean. While Hitler was still considering this idea, the German steamer *Altmark*, which had been operating in the South Atlantic as tender to a German raiding warship, entered Norwegian waters with 300 British merchant seamen on board as prisoners of war. Winston Churchill, then Britain's first lord of the Admiralty, ordered the *Altmark* to be intercepted and the prisoners released, regardless of Norwegian neutrality. This action was taken by the British destroyer *Cossack* on the night of Feb. 16, 1940, with only token Norwegian opposition.

This incident convinced Hitler that the Norwegians would not seriously oppose further British forays into their territorial waters, which meant that Germany's vital iron-ore traffic was no longer safe. The Germans went ahead with plans to land troops at the Norwegian ports of Oslo, Kristiansand, Stavanger, Bergen, Trondheim, and Narvik. These ports were the headquarters of the country's military districts and the storage places for military arms and equipment, and the Norwegian army would be paralyzed if full surprise were gained. The invasion would take place under cover of German naval forces and would be combined with a sea-and-land invasion of Denmark.

The coordinated attacks were launched on April 9. In Denmark only a few shots were fired at the German invaders before King Christian X ordered his troops to lay down their arms. In Norway the Germans achieved quick success at all points except Oslo, where Norwegian shore batteries sank the heavy cruiser *Bluecher* and seriously damaged the pocket battleship *Luetzow*. This battle gave King Haakon VII and his government officials time to escape. They later set up a government-in-exile in England.

British and French troops landed at Narvik and near Trondheim. However, there was little they could do in the face of the Luftwaffe, which was operating from German-controlled air bases in southern Norway, and they soon withdrew. British naval operations did sink two more German cruisers and ten destroyers and severely damage Germany's two largest battleships.

Hitler had to pay one more very heavy price for his Norwegian adventure. Public opinion and parliamentary uproar in Britain over British ineffectiveness in supporting Norway forced the resignation of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain. Winston Churchill was made leader of the British government and of its war effort on May 10, 1940, the day that German troops invaded the Netherlands and Belgium.

Germany's Western Offensive. From the beginning of the war the French and British general staffs had calculated that a German attack in the west must be launched, as in 1914, through Belgian territory. The French frontier with Germany was heavily fortified and therefore presented little scope for blitzkrieg tactics. Another barrier to the Germans seemed to be the hilly, thickly wooded forest of the Ardennes, in the southeastern corner of Belgium, where the frontiers of France, Belgium, and Luxembourg met near Longuyon, the western terminus of the Maginot Line. To Allied planners and, at first to German planners as well, the broad open plains of central Belgium north and west of the Ardennes seemed the only possible approach for a German blitzkrieg attack to destroy the French and British armies.

The Belgian army, including reserves, had in May 1940 reached a strength of 22 divisions. The fortifications of Liège and Namur, on the Meuse River, had been improved. A new fortress, Eben Emael, reputed to be the strongest in Europe, guarded the deep cutting of the Albert Canal north of Liège, near the Dutch frontier.

However, when the German attack finally came on May 10, Belgian preparations proved to be of little use. The vital bridges across the Meuse River and the Albert Canal were seized by German airborne troops. A specially trained group of sappers was parachuted to the roof of the Eben Emael fortress and succeeded in forcing the garrison's surrender through the use of chemical weapons and flamethrowers applied to the gun ports. In the invasion of the Netherlands on the same day the Germans bypassed the well-developed system of defensive flooding on which the Dutch had depended. Again, seizure of key bridges by paratroopers was followed by an armored assault. When the Dutch seemed to be making a stand at Rotterdam, the city was mercilessly bombed, as Warsaw had been. A French relief army was driven back, and the Dutch stopped fighting on May 14.

The Belgian army at once established liaison with the British and the French. British troops moved forward into Belgium and took up positions with the Belgians along the Dyle River from Namur to Antwerp. There they were attacked by 28 German divisions of Army Group B, under General von Bock. This attack appeared at first to be the main German thrust, and was expected to be built up rapidly.

German Drive Into France. Actually, however, Bock's attack was a holding action. The main striking force was Army Group A, under General von Rundstedt. With 44 divisions spearheaded by 7 armored divisions, it was moving through the supposedly impassable Ardennes along narrow, difficult roads. In two days, May 13 to 15, the Germans forced two crossings of the Meuse River and tore a 50-mile gap in the French front, through which German armored spearheads raced into open country and headed for Abbeville, near the coast of the English Channel.

Strong German armored forces thus advanced behind the positions held by the British, the Belgians, and the northern wing of the French forces, cutting off some 40 to 45 divisions from the French main body farther south. The Germans reached St. Quentin on May 18 and Amiens on May 19 and took Abbeville on May 20. Unless the German penetration could be broken through by counterattacks from the north or



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The evacuation of Dunkirk. As the Allied front collapsed in 1940, the British withdrew to Dunkirk, the only Channel port still open. From May 27 to the arrival of the Germans on June 5, a total of 338,226 Allied troops were ferried to safety in England.

south, the position of Allied troops to the north was almost hopeless. The counterattacks were attempted on both sides but failed. Bock's infantry pushed the British and Belgians back to the Scheldt River, while Rundstedt's infantry exploited the breakthrough west of the Meuse. Persistent attacks by the Luftwaffe disrupted Allied efforts to regroup. On May 18, Bock drove the Belgian forces from Antwerp. By May 21 they were on the Lys River, where the Belgians had held fast in 1914. On May 19, meanwhile, the French government had replaced General Maurice Gamelin, the French and Allied Commander in Chief, with General Maxime Weygand, who had been Chief of Staff to Marshal Ferdinand Foch in World War I.

Dunkirk Evacuation. The British under General Lord Gort were steadily forced back to the coast, where only the port of Dunkirk was then available for purposes of supply or of withdrawal. Rundstedt's armored troops seemed poised to cut Gort off when, on May 24, Hitler ordered armored attacks on Dunkirk to be discontinued. Apparently, Rundstedt thought that the flooded lowlands near the coast were unsafe for tank operations, although after the war the general blamed Hitler's desire to make peace with the British for the order that resulted in the escape of most of Gort's army.

Anticipating the collapse of the Belgians, who were in desperate straits, the British government on May 26 ordered Gort to withdraw to Dunkirk and to save what he could of the British army. The Royal Navy began Operation Dynamo, in which every sort of ship and boat that could cross the English Channel began moving from British ports to Dunkirk. On May 28, King Leopold III of Belgium in defiance of his ministers, surrendered with his army, and the way was open for Bock's troops to attack Dunkirk. However, the embarkation of the British army and of French troops in the area, which had started on May 27, continued steadily through June 4 under almost continuous attack by land and air. Severe losses were suffered by the Royal Air Force (RAF), which provided air cover from British bases, and by the Royal Navy. Nevertheless, 338,226 Allied soldiers, more than two-thirds of whom were British, reached England safely.

Fall of France. General Weygand's forces were by then critically reduced both in number and in morale. He tried to form a front to defend Paris but was driven back by German armies reinforced by fresh reserves. A new German army group attacked in the east and broke through the Maginot Line, which was by then without infantry support. On June 10, Italy entered the war on the side of Germany and attacked France in the south. The Germans entered Paris on June 14. Three days later the French government, then at Bordeaux and headed by Marshal Henri

St. Paul's Cathedral, clouded by a daylight raid on London

BRITISH INFORMATION SERVICES



Philippe Pétain, asked for an armistice. On June 22, in the same railway car at Compiègne where the 1918 armistice had been signed by the victorious Allies, France signed an armistice with Germany. Two days later, French representatives in Rome signed an armistice with Italy.

Aid to Britain. Britain stood alone, facing the hostile shores of a European continent over which Hitler was the undisputed master. However, because Britain was an island, it gained the time to build new fighting power, time that had been denied to France. Britain was helped additionally by the Royal Navy's command of the sea and by the quality of the RAF Fighter Command. The armored spearheads of the German blitzkrieg could not push on across the English Channel. Try as they might, German U-boats could not prevent the passage of arms and munitions from the United States. The U.S. government, shocked and stirred by the collapse of France, had promptly reacted by sending weapons and ammunition from its own army's reserve stocks to help rearm British troops. Fifty obsolete U.S. destroyers were reconditioned and transferred to the Royal Navy to meet the urgent need for antisubmarine escorts. In exchange the United States was granted leases to air and naval bases on British islands in the Western Hemisphere.

Operation Sea Lion. Hitler expected the British government to bow to "the inevitable" and to conclude peace on what he called "honorable terms," or terms that would last only until he would be able to conquer the Soviet Union and was ready to deal with Britain. The British however, meant to allow Hitler no such comfortable arrangement, they meant to keep on fighting. By mid-July 1940 their determination had become evident to Hitler, and he was engaged in planning Operation Sea Lion for the invasion and final defeat of his island enemy.

Hitler did not find much enthusiasm for the project among the German generals and even less among his admirals. After its losses in the Norwegian campaign the German navy had no armored ships except for two completely obsolete battleships. It also had only two cruisers and a handful of destroyers that were fit for service. Admiral Raeder and his staff insisted that, at the very best, the navy could hope to cover a landing in Great Britain only on a very narrow front. The German generals were aghast, asserting that such a restricted operation was equivalent to running their troops through a meat grinder. However, Reichsmarshal Hermann Wilhelm Goering, the Luftwaffe chief, asserted that he could knock out the RAF in short order. Because the navy maintained that air superiority was a necessary prerequisite to invasion, Hitler decided to let Goering have his chance.

Battle of Britain. The British had shown foresight in preparing for an onslaught from the air. In 1936 they had started to build up the strength of their Fighter Command. In June 1940, Churchill assured the air defense of the British Isles by refusing French pleas for more RAF planes to be sent against the Luftwaffe in France. Under the guidance of the distinguished scientist Sir Henry Tizard, the British had developed the radar-warning system that was to prove the key to the RAF's victory.

The Battle of Britain was begun by the Luftwaffe on July 10 and rose steadily in violence. At first, German bombing attacks were directed chiefly against



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British Prime Minister Winston Churchill (right) inspects the bombed streets of London during the Battle of Britain.

RAF airfields and direction centers, as well as against ports, shipping, and industrial targets. The superiority of the British fighter pilots and of the British Spitfire over the German Messerschmitt fighter, as well as the advantage of radar warning, provided the RAF with a considerable margin of tactical advantage. However, the numbers of British pilots and aircraft started to dwindle under the incessant German assaults, and damage to radar and control stations became serious. At least from a military standpoint, it was fortunate that in early September the emphasis of the German attack began to shift more and more to the sprawling metropolis of London. Fighter Command was given the breathing space that it so desperately needed to repair damage, rest its exhausted pilots, and receive into its squadrons the new aircraft being turned out day and night by Britain's factories.

Goering's view, which was common to most advocates of strategic bombing at that time, was that attacks on population centers were the certain key to victory in air warfare. No mistake could have been more serious. It meant terrible suffering for the people of London, but it also meant eventual British victory in the Battle of Britain. From then on, the relative advantage of British air defense over German attack capabilities increased steadily. At last the Germans abandoned Operation Sea Lion. The island that Fighter Command had successfully defended became the base from which the decisive Anglo-American assault on Hitler's Europe was later to be launched.

The Mediterranean and Africa, 1940-1941

Italian Offensives. For a year after the fall of France, war operations centered on the Mediterranean Sea and surrounding territories in the Balkan Peninsula, the Middle East, and northern and eastern Africa. Hitler,

absorbed in the Battle of Britain, at first left operations in the area to be mismanaged by his Axis partner, Benito Mussolini.

The Italians had an army of some 215,000 men in Libya and another of about the same size in Italian East Africa. The British had some 30,000 troops in Egypt and about 20,000 in Kenya, the Sudan, and British Somaliland. Mussolini was eager for the lime-light and for what seemed to be easy victories that would involve few risks. He had been restrained from declaring war on Britain and France at an earlier date because Libya would have been exposed to double attack, from Egypt and from French North Africa. However, the terms of the German armistice with France left French North Africa and the French fleet in the hands of the collaborationist Vichy regime of Marshal Pétain and Pierre Laval, removing any danger of the French joining in an attack on Libya.

On entering the war in June 1940, Mussolini had moved 32 divisions against the frontier of southern France, and 6 French divisions had stopped them cold. Africa, Mussolini hoped, would be a different story. In August he picked off British Somaliland, where about 1,500 British troops were garrisoned. On September 13 his Libyan army under Marshal Rodolfo Graziani crossed into Egypt, advancing during the next few days some 60 miles to Sidi Barrani, where it halted and remained immobile for almost two months.

Mussolini was disturbed by Graziani's inaction and by news that reached him of German intrigues in Rumania, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. He regarded the Balkans as his own sphere of influence and in 1939 had taken over Albania as a beachhead for further exploitation. He now massed more troops in Albania. On Oct. 28, 1940, without advance notice to Hitler, he launched a surprise attack on Greece. Hitler was furious, the more so because by early November the Greeks had brought the Italians to a standstill and were counterattacking.

Hitler's actions in the Balkan area were based on his growing conviction that a final reckoning with Britain was not immediately attainable. The German dictator was moving toward a decision to attack the Soviet Union as early as possible in 1941. To prepare for this attack, he had to secure the southern flank of the German invading forces by solidifying his control of the Balkans. Hungary and Rumania were about to join the Axis, and there was reason to expect Bulgaria to follow. Mussolini's attack on Greece threatened to upset these careful arrangements. In addition to defeating the Italian army and causing the Axis to lose face throughout the Balkans, Greece had brought the British into the picture. British planes, furnishing air support to the Greeks, operated from Crete, Lemnos, and southern Greece. They were within striking distance not only of the Italians in Albania but of the Rumanian oil fields at Ploesti, which were to supply the fuel for Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union.

Allied Counterstrokes. On Nov. 11, 1940, British naval aircraft struck at the Italian fleet in its base at Taranto and knocked out three battleships. By that time the Greek counterattack was driving the Italians back in a headlong rout. By the end of November the Greeks had advanced 30 miles into Albania.

On December 9 a carefully prepared British counterstroke fell without warning on Marshal Graziani's army at Sidi Barrani. It was spearheaded by tanks



Rommel, commander of Germany's Afrika Korps, in Libya

that had been sent out from Great Britain earlier in the year and that at the time represented half the tanks available to the British forces. General Sir Archibald Wavell, British Commander in Chief in the Middle East, had to allocate his forces carefully. In addition to dealing with Graziani in the Western Desert, he was planning a major offensive against the Italians in East Africa. For the desert operation he could spare no more than 31,000 men. However, these troops, under the energetic leadership of General Sir Richard N. O'Connor, were enough to deal handily with more than 200,000 Italians. By Feb. 7, 1941, the British had totally destroyed the Italian Tenth Army and had overrun all of Cyrenaica, the eastern half of Libya.

German Drives in the Balkans and Africa. The Greek counteroffensive into Albania ran out of steam in the spring of 1941. Hitler was now preparing to attack Greece by way of Bulgaria to eliminate any prospect of a British lodgment on the Continent. For this purpose he needed and demanded direct rail connections through Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav government complied after Hitler had applied pressure with his usual combination of threats and promises of other peoples' territory. However, on March 26 and 27, Yugoslav army leaders overthrew the government and repudiated the agreement. Hitler, in a paroxysm of rage, announced his intention "to destroy Yugoslavia militarily and as a nation." He ordered a full-scale attack on both Yugoslavia and Greece. He also ordered that the opening of the offensive against the Soviet Union, which had been scheduled for May 15, be delayed at least four weeks. This delay was a fatal mistake.

At this time, Churchill also made a mistake, which, *although not fatal*, had serious consequences. After occupying Cyrenaica, General O'Connor had wanted to push ahead to take Tripoli, the only seaport in Libya remaining in Axis hands. Hitler at that same time had reluctantly decided that it was necessary for Germany to intervene in North Africa. On Feb. 12, 1941, shortly after the surrender of the last units of the Italian Tenth Army, General Erwin Rommel arrived at Tripoli with a small staff to prepare plans for employing two German divisions that had been assigned to him. If O'Connor had been allowed to take Tripoli, as Rommel's own notes admitted, "no resistance worthy of the name could have been offered." O'Connor would have reached Tripoli before the first German troops arrived, and a forced landing in the face of British naval and air superiority would have been out of the question. However, Churchill decided that British troops were needed in Greece and that Cyrenaica must be held with minimum force to make the Greek expedition possible. As it turned out, two years of desperate fighting was involved in the British defense of Egypt. This conflict absorbed almost all of the Commonwealth of Nations' overseas strength and left the Far East practically defenseless against Japan.

Defeat in Greece and Crete. On Mar. 5, 1941, an army of 58,000 British, Australian, and New Zealand troops began landing in Greece. Considerable confusion in planning and cooperation followed, and when the German blow fell, it proved to be irresistible. Between April 6 and April 30, Yugoslavia and Greece were overrun by German armies that were supported by overwhelmingly superior air power. Yugoslav resistance collapsed because the Yugoslavs tried, like the Poles, to defend the entire length of their frontier and because of the ingrained hatred between Serbs and Croats that resulted in the defection of many Croatian troops. The Greeks also attempted to defend everything, including their newly won positions in Albania, and they ended by losing everything. The British troops that escaped from the debacle were evacuated by the Royal Navy. About 14,000 men of the original Allied force were lost.

The Germans resolved to drive the British from the Greek island of Crete by mounting airborne attacks on a larger scale than had yet been attempted in the war. A newly organized airborne force under General Kurt Student was given this assignment. The attacks began on May 20 and continued with great violence and heavy losses for ten days, until British resistance was finally overcome. The Royal Navy succeeded in evacuating about half of the nearly 30,000-man British garrison, suffering very severe losses from German bombers in the process. However, the battle proved to be the ruin of Student's airborne corps, and no airborne operation on an equal scale was attempted by the Germans during the remainder of the war.

Other Events. Late in March, Rommel launched a counterattack into Cyrenaica. His offensive was spearheaded by two German divisions that became famous as the Afrika Korps. By April 11, Rommel had fought his way back to the Egyptian frontier. He bypassed the port of Tobruk, where a garrison of Australian troops was still holding out.

Against this tale of repeated disaster the British could set the elimination of the Italian armies in East Africa. In a campaign lasting from February to May

1941, a small Commonwealth force from the south under General Sir Alan Gordon Cunningham and another under General Sir William Platt overran Italian Somaliland and Eritrea. They recovered British Somaliland and liberated Ethiopia, restoring Emperor Haile Selassie to his throne. These operations involved some hard fighting, and about 185,000 Axis prisoners were taken.

During this period the German occupation in France covered the northern part of the country up to the English Channel and also the coastal region adjoining the Bay of Biscay. Southern and southeastern France remained unoccupied and was ruled by Marshal Pétain, who chose Vichy as his capital. Civil and military authorities of the French overseas possessions adhered to the Vichy regime. However, General Charles de Gaulle appealed to Frenchmen everywhere to resist, and his Free French Forces established control of French Equatorial Africa and of the North American islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon.

Destruction of the French Fleet. A question of vital importance to the British was the fate of the French fleet. In German hands it would have been a deadly threat to British control of the seas. By the terms of the armistice with France the Germans had bound themselves not to seize and use the French navy for war purposes, but Hitler's promises were not to be trusted. The British immobilized several French warships at Alexandria, Egypt, and demanded that a sizable squadron at Mers-el-Kebir, Algeria, either withdraw to the West Indies under guard or join the British side in the war. When the French admiral rejected both alternatives, the British fleet opened fire on July 3, 1940, sinking one battleship and damaging others.

War in the Soviet Union, 1941

Early on the morning of June 22, 1941, German armies and aircraft poured across the long frontier of the Soviet Union. Operation Barbarossa had begun.

Comparative Strength. The German forces included approximately 110 to 120 divisions, of which at least 17 to 20 were panzer, or armored, divisions. This great mass of fighting power was organized into three army groups: Army Group North, under General Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb; Army Group Center, under General von Bock, and Army Group South, under General von Rundstedt. Each army group consisted of three armies, two composed mainly of infantry divisions and one panzer army composed mainly of armored and motorized divisions. There were also a number of Rumanian divisions, and later on, Hungarian and Italian divisions came into action. The Luftwaffe manned more than 2,500 planes.

The opposing Soviet forces were estimated by German intelligence to total about 200 divisions plus about 40 to 50 armored brigades, which were units of approximately one-third division size. This estimate proved to be grossly inaccurate and far below actual Soviet strength. By the end of 1941, according to German General Guenther Blumentritt, 360 Soviet divisions had been identified and new ones were appearing all the time.

Soviet aircraft were superior in number to German planes but were older and slower. There were three Soviet fronts, which corresponded to the German army groups. The Northwest Front was commanded by Marshal Klimenty Voroshilov, the West Front was under



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Russian trucks convoy food and medicine across frozen Lake Ladoga to besieged Leningrad. One out of four never reached the city.

Marshal Semyon Timoshenko, and the Southwest Front was under Marshal Semyon Budenny. Of the three marshals, only Timoshenko was a capable field commander; the others were political hacks.

German Advance. For the first few weeks everything seemed to be going according to plan for the Germans. The Soviets, like the Poles and the Yugoslavs before them, had concentrated too many troops too far forward along the frontier. Time and again, masses of Soviet troops were enveloped by the swift-moving German armor. Prisoners were taken by the hundreds of thousands, and most of them were penned into barbed-wire enclosures and left to die.

By the end of the first week in August, Leeb's Army Group North had crossed the Dvina River and was approaching Leningrad, its immediate objective. Army Group Center, having taken and passed Smolensk, only 200 miles (320 km) from Moscow, slowed its advance to refit and regroup its armored units. Meanwhile, Army Group South was driving forward into the great bend of the Dnieper River.

The German commanders were anticipating a final drive on Moscow. However, to their disgust, Hitler informed them on August 21 that it was more urgent to concentrate on the rich industrial and agricultural areas of the south and to cut off the Soviets' oil supply from the Caucasus. In the north he intended to isolate Leningrad and to link German and Finnish forces. Hitler was obsessed with capturing Leningrad and Stalingrad, the "holy cities of Communism," as he called them, and with conquering the Ukraine. He ordered Leeb to continue to drive on Leningrad, while Army Group South was to bear to its right, take Kiev, and occupy the Crimea and the industrial Donets Basin. For this operation, armor was switched north and south from Army Group Center, which was thus left relatively immobilized astride the road to Moscow. Leningrad was surrounded and placed under siege, but it resisted fiercely. In the south the Germans took the city of Kiev and another huge batch of prisoners.

German Setbacks. On October 2, under the persistent urging of his generals, Hitler finally ordered the drive on Moscow to be resumed. However, by then it was too late. A few days later the autumn rains began, the Russian dirt roads turned into bogs, and wheeled artillery and transport were stalled. The first snow fell on October 7, and the situation became ominous for the Germans. On that same day a new Soviet commander, Georgi Zhukov, took over the Moscow

front. Timoshenko went south to relieve the hapless Budenny, who had just lost more than 660,000 prisoners to Rundstedt. Rundstedt was ordered to push on to Rostov, cross the Don River into the Caucasus, and capture the oil fields. His task was then to drive ahead and take Stalingrad (now Volgograd) on the Volga River. His total advance was to be almost 500 miles (800 km). Rundstedt managed to reach Rostov by November 20, but he was thrown out again a week later by Timoshenko's forces in the first great Soviet counterattack of the war.

Bock struggled on toward Moscow, with the thermometer dropping below 0° F. (−18° C.). The Russians were used to this weather, were clothed for it, and knew how to make machinery operate in it. The Germans were not. It was later claimed that "General Winter" had saved Moscow, but the city was saved primarily by the fierce fighting of the Russian troops.

The final German drive for Moscow began on December 1 and struggled forward until one German patrol caught a glimpse of the Kremlin's spires. However, by December 5 all forward progress had stopped. On the next day, Zhukov launched his counterattack with 100 Soviet divisions of whose existence the Germans had been quite unaware. Included were formations of the new Soviet T-34 tanks, which were described by a German source as a most unpleasant surprise.

Only a few weeks earlier, Hitler had broadcast to the world that the Soviet Union had been "struck down and would never rise again." Now the best his armies could do was avoid being destroyed. They fell back and hastily dug in at a series of strong defended localities well to the west of Moscow. The Soviets, more from necessity than foresight, had traded space for time. They had brought the war to a moment of balance, and thereafter their resources steadily increased compared to those of Germany. Hitler had gambled on quick victory and had lost his gamble, at the cost of a million men.

Japan's Thrust Toward Empire, 1940 to 1942

The fall of France in 1940 aroused immediate U.S. concern about what might happen if Great Britain also capitulated to the Nazis. By March 1941, U.S. steps to provide Britain with essential arms had developed into the lend-lease program. U.S. efforts to check German submarine attacks on transatlantic shipping and to keep British naval power alive brought

the country ever closer to active hostilities. U.S. relations with Japan had become strained, and therefore, since April 1939, the main strength of the U.S. fleet had been concentrated in the Pacific. A year later the fleet moved from its West Coast bases to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

The continued resistance of the Chinese against Japan's drive to conquer their country was by 1939 seriously straining Japanese resources of oil and ferrous metals. China, like the Soviet Union, was trading space for time. Although by the end of 1938, Japan held most of northern China, all of the principal seaports, and the lower Yangtze river valley, the war was approaching stalemate. The Chinese transferred their capital to the city of Chungking, deep in the interior of China, and kept on fighting.

The war in Europe and the Middle East had left the Netherlands East Indies (now Indonesia) and Borneo without significant capacity for defense. The Japanese military leaders began to advocate a campaign of expansion in Southeast Asia. Their ideas gained support when the United States, early in 1940, began restricting vital exports to Japan.

In September 1940 the Japanese put pressure on the Vichy government to permit Japanese troops to move into the northern part of French Indochina (now Vietnam). In that same month, Japan signed a military pact with Germany and Italy, and the United States retorted by an embargo on all shipments of scrap metal to Japan. In the next year, when the Soviet Union was occupied in fighting Germany, the only remaining threat to Japan's drive for empire was the United States, a threat that in terms of immediately available military force meant the U.S. Pacific Fleet. However, in April 1941 the fleet had been weakened by the transfer to the Atlantic of three battleships, one aircraft carrier, four cruisers, and two squadrons of destroyers.

Japanese War Plans. Japan planned to seize the Netherlands East Indies, the Philippines, Malaya, Thailand, Burma, and various British, French, and U.S. islands in the Pacific Ocean. It made its first move in late July 1941, when it occupied the southern part of French Indochina and gained the air base at Saigon. From there it would be able to bomb Singapore and parts of the Netherlands East Indies. The United States, the British, and the Dutch promptly froze all Japanese assets in their countries, thus

preventing Japan from buying oil for lack of foreign exchange. Japan could thus go to war to obtain reliable sources of oil and other raw materials or give up its hopes of empire. Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Commander in Chief of the Japanese fleet, considered war with the United States a bad gamble. However, he insisted that if it were undertaken, it would have to begin with a strike by Japanese aircraft carriers at the U.S. fleet in Pearl Harbor. Some Japanese leaders thought that a Pearl Harbor strike would be too risky. However, when Yamamoto threatened to resign his command if his plan were not adopted, the opposition dissolved.

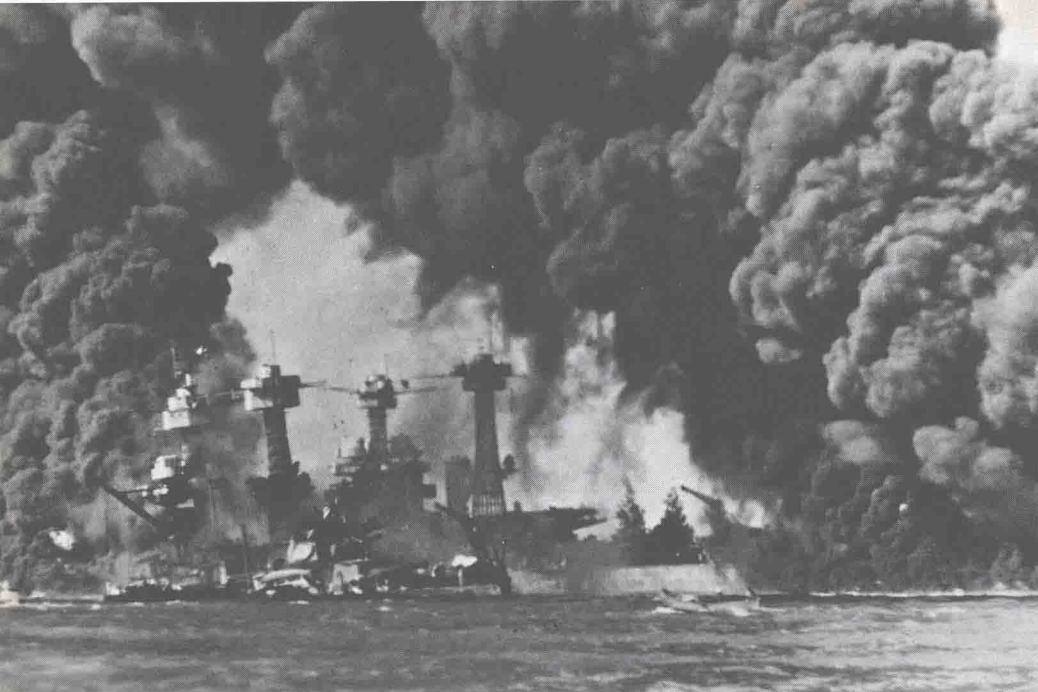
Attack on Pearl Harbor. The Japanese force that struck against Pearl Harbor included 6 aircraft carriers and was under the command of Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo. On Nov. 28, 1941, the Japanese ships set sail from the fogbound Kurile Islands. Early on Sunday, December 7, Nagumo's planes roared over Pearl Harbor. The Japanese pilots found the 8 battleships of the U.S. Pacific Fleet lying at their berths, exactly where a diligent member of the Japanese consular staff at Honolulu had reported them to be. Surprise was complete. The attack, delivered by the bombs and torpedoes of 360 Japanese aircraft, lasted just under two hours. By 10 A.M., as the last Japanese planes headed back to their carriers, 6 U.S. battleships had been sunk. Four of these were later raised and restored to service. The other 2 battleships had been damaged, and there was also considerable damage to cruisers, destroyers, and auxiliary vessels. More than half of the U.S. Army and Navy airplanes at bases near Pearl Harbor were destroyed. About 2,400 Americans were killed, and the 1,100 wounded included a few civilians. Japanese losses were 29 aircraft, 5 midget submarines, 1 fleet submarine, and 34 men.

However, the Japanese failed to mount a second strike to destroy the repair facilities of the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard and the huge tank farm that held the U.S. fleet's reserve fuel supply. Loss of the Navy Yard facilities would have delayed repairs to damaged ships for months, and loss of the oil reserve would have crippled U.S. operations in the Pacific Ocean for almost a year. The U.S. Pacific Fleet still had its three big aircraft carriers, which had not been in Pearl Harbor on December 7. Carriers, armed with weapons whose striking range was measured in hundreds of

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Russian assault troops move against the German Sixth Army, trapped in Stalingrad in 1942. Months of house-to-house fighting left the city in ruins, but halted the German advance on the eastern front.



CULVER

The Japanese bomber attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, crippled the U.S. fleet, destroyed its strategic Pacific base, and catapulted the United States into World War II.

miles, were far more effective instruments of naval warfare than ships whose striking range was measured in thousands of yards, and these three ships eventually proved to be the cornerstone of U.S. victory over the Japanese.

On December 8, Japan was officially at war with the United States and Great Britain. The Japanese attack had taken Hitler completely by surprise, but three days later, Germany declared war on the United States and was obediently followed by Italy.

Japanese Advance. During the rest of December 1941, Japan executed its carefully laid war plans in a series of violent and successful blows. On December 8, U.S. air bases in the Philippines were raided and many aircraft were destroyed. Two days later, Japanese troops began landing on the island of Luzon, and by the end of the month, General Douglas MacArthur, commander of the U.S. forces in the Philippines, had begun withdrawal into the Bataan Peninsula for a last stand.

Elsewhere, the small U.S. garrison on Wake Island was finally overwhelmed on December 23 after a furious defense. On Christmas Day the British colony of Hong Kong was captured. Burma, Thailand, Borneo, and Malaya were invaded. Two British battleships, the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse*, were sunk off the Malayan coast by Japanese aircraft operating from French Indochina.

Invasion of the Netherlands East Indies began in January 1942. Small U.S., British, and Dutch naval forces fought bravely for almost two months, but were overwhelmed on February 27 in the Battle of the Java Sea. As Japanese forces under General Tomoyuki Yamashita advanced down the Malay Peninsula, British forces withdrew to Singapore, and the island, with its great military base, surrendered on February 15. In March the Japanese completed the conquest of Java, landed in New Guinea, and forced the British out of Rangoon, the capital of Burma. Early in April a major Japanese attack compelled the surrender of the hard-fighting U.S. and Filipino forces on Bataan. At U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's express order, General MacArthur had left Bataan for Australia a month before to take command of U.S. forces in the southwestern Pacific. A Japanese carrier task force made a

foray into the Indian Ocean, bombed Ceylon, and inflicted severe losses on the British fleet. However, one ray of light shone through this dark period for the Allies. On Apr. 18, 1942, U.S. Army planes, launched from the carrier *Hornet* and under the command of Colonel James H. Doolittle, carried out a raid on Tokyo, the Japanese capital. The raid did little material damage, but it had a considerable effect on Allied morale.

U.S. Naval Victories. May 1942 saw the surrender of Corregidor, the last U.S. bastion in the Philippines. The Japanese also completed their conquest of Burma and severed China's last supply line from the outside world. However, it was in that same month that the tide of victory began to turn.

The change, barely perceptible at the time, had two immediate causes. One was that the Japanese high command, made overconfident by easy victories, overreached themselves. The other was the firm guiding hand with which Admiral Chester W. Nimitz had taken command, after Pearl Harbor, of U.S. operations in the Pacific.

The original Japanese war plan called for the establishment of a defensive perimeter extending in a vast arc from the Aleutian Islands across the central Pacific by way of Wake, the Marshalls, and the Gilberts, then westward past the Solomons to the north shore of New Guinea, the Netherlands East Indies, and Burma. Except for the lack of a foothold in the Aleutians, this perimeter was virtually complete early in May, when Japanese troops landed on Tulagi, in the Solomon Islands. The Japanese had intended to consolidate their gains and conduct a strategic defensive operation after reaching this point in their plan of conquest. Now, however, they began to think in wider terms. Their new goals included the occupation of Port Moresby, on the southern coast of New Guinea, from which Australia could be directly threatened. All of the Solomons, New Caledonia, and the Fiji islands were to be taken in order to block the sea-lanes connecting Australia and the United States. Hawaii would be kept under close watch through the seizure of Midway.

Although the Japanese did not yet know it, their codes had been broken by U.S. cryptographers. In Pearl Harbor, Nimitz read the Japanese code messages