

American during World War II

The attack on **Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941**, saw the United States entering World War II. The war saw 26 nations united together as the **Allied Powers** and eight nations creating the **Axis Powers**.



The Leaders during World War II

The Allies (Allied Powers)	
United States	Franklin D. Roosevelt , President until his death in April 1945 Harry S. Truman , President following Roosevelt's death Dwight D. Eisenhower , Supreme Commander of Allied troops in Europe Douglas MacArthur , Commander of the Allied troops in the Pacific
Great Britain	Winston Churchill , Prime Minister
USSR	Joseph Stalin , Communist dictator
France	Charles de Gaulle , leader of the Free-French during the Nazi occupation

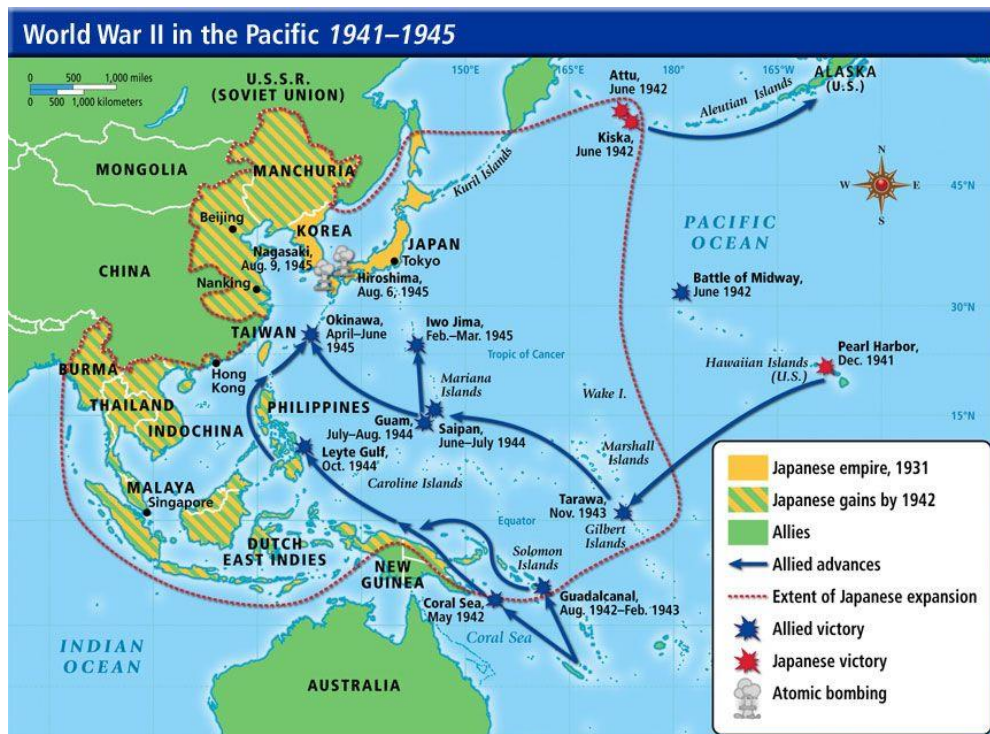
The Axis Powers	
Germany	Adolf Hitler , leader of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazis), known as "Der Fuhrer" (The Leader)
Italy	Benito Mussolini , Fascist dictator known as "Il Duce" (The Leader)
Japan	Emperor Hirohito Hideki Tojo , General and Prime Minister

The **technological advancements** before and during World War II forever changed warfare.

Aircraft carriers, fighter planes and long-range bombers for carpet-bombing. Radar and Sonar able to detect airplanes and submarines. New materials for the productions of aircraft such as Nylon and Bakelite (the first plastics). Electronic computers were devised, yet still primitive.

Penicillin was mass produced along with **plasma** as a blood substitute. The Germans invented Zyklon B used to kill millions in the concentration camps.

Finally there were the V1, V2, and V3 rockets made by Germany and the **Manhattan Project** creating the atomic bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



Major Events of World War II

1939	Germany invades Poland with blitzkrieg (lightning war)
1940	Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, and much of Northern France fall to the Nazi invasion The Battle of Britain and the London Blitz
1941	Germany invades the Soviet Union. The siege of Leningrad begins and lasts 17 months. Japan attacks Pearl Harbor on December 7 th and the United States enters the war
1941-1942	Japan seizes the Philippines, Burma, Singapore, the Dutch East Indies, and French Indochina then presses southwards towards Australia.
1942	Battle of Midway in the Pacific giving the United States naval superiority over Japan
1943	In North Africa the Allied troops defeat the Axis armies to regain control of the Mediterranean Sea and the Suez Canal
June 6, 1944	The Allied invasion of Normandy, Operation Overlord or D-Day . The largest invasion in history, over 150,000 soldiers from America, Britain, Canada.
1944-1945	Bitter fighting in the Pacific, Island Hopping , Leyte, Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Thousands of American lives lost,
December 1944	Battle of the Bulge, a German counter-attack against the Allies
April 12, 1945	Franklin D. Roosevelt dies from a cerebral hemorrhage, Harry S. Truman sworn in as President.
April 1945	Allied troops from the East and West meet at the Elbe River. Adolf Hitler commits suicide
May 8, 1945	VE Day, Victory in Europe Day
August 6, 1945	The United States drops an atomic bomb on Hiroshima , Japan
August 9, 1945	The United States drops an atomic bomb on Nagasaki , Japan
August 14, 1945	Emperor Hirohito announces Japan's defeat to the Japanese people
September 2, 1945	Japan officially surrenders, VJ Day, Victory in Japan Day .



VE Day Celebrations

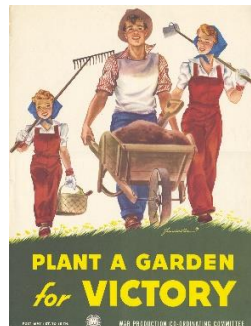


VJ Day Celebrations

Wartime Life in the United States

After the United States declared war on Japan, and Germany retaliated by declaring war on America, the nation moved to a full-scale wartime production effort and **mobilization** of the armed forces. American rallied behind the war effort.

Except for Pearl Harbor, none of the war took place on American soil. However, on the West Coast the larger cities held **blackout drills** in case of attack and **rationing** of vital materials such as food, gasoline and other necessities and luxuries took place. Government campaigns encouraged people to have “**Meatless Tuesdays**” and many Americans planted “**Victory Gardens**” to increase the food supply. Many celebrities encouraged the people to buy “**War Bonds**” to help the government pay for the wartime production and effort.



The Role of American Women during World War II

The war brought about a dramatic change to the lives of American women in both the military and the civilian workforce. More than 200,000 women joined the military services. They served in sperate units from the men, such as the **Women’s Army Corps (WAC)** and performed vital military duties. They even operated radios, repaired and flew airplanes to the front and drove vehicles in addition to clerical duties.

When millions of men went off to fight in Europe and the Pacific, this opened up opportunities for women in jobs that had traditionally been for men only. More than 5 million women worked in factories devoted to wartime production, although they did not receive equal pay. A song about a woman called “**Rosie the Riveter**” captured their sense of duty and patriotism and the phrase became a slang term for all women who worked in the wartime factories.



African Americans during World War II

The experiences of African Americans during the war would help them lay the foundation for the Civil Rights Movement during the 1950's and 1960's.

Nearly one million African American men and women served in the military. Initially, military units were segregated and soldiers were limited to support roles. As the war progressed, these soldiers soon saw combat.

The **Tuskegee Airmen** were the first black military pilots. These **944 Fighter Squadron** pilots were some of the most distinguished fliers during the war effort. However, they fought two wars, one overseas against a foreign enemy, and one at home against racism. In 1948, President Harry S. Truman supported their civil rights by signing **Executive Order 9981** which led to the end of segregation in the military.



At home, many African Americans began moving to the North for economic opportunities and a release from discrimination, however, they were still discriminated against in the major cities. In the summer of 1943, **race riots** broke out in Detroit and New York. Membership in civil rights movements grew rapidly in the North.

Some gains were made during the war. Politically the numbers of African Americans added to the voting bloc in urban areas. Jobs in wartime factories saw African Americans earn more than ever before. Despite these gains, African Americans still faced discrimination and inequality in salaries. Due to these hardships, the black press urged that the struggle for freedom be fought on two fronts – overseas and also at home.



Harlem Race Riot 1943

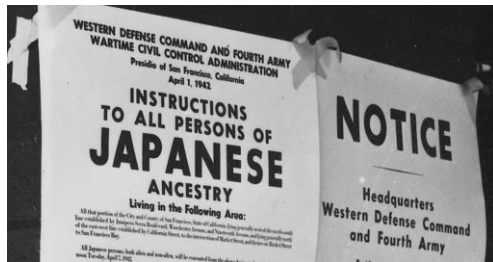


Detroit Race Riot 1943

Japanese Americans during World War II

Japanese immigration to America began in the early 1900's, the majority of whom settled along the West Coast. By 1941, thousands of Americans by Japanese descent, called **Nisei**, had been born in the United States and were American citizens. Many had never been to Japan, nor did they have the desire to go there.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, many Americans feared that the Japanese Americans were a threat to national security. **Anti-Japanese sentiment** grew and President Roosevelt issued **Executive Order 9066**, establishing military zones for the imprisonment in **internment camps** for Japanese Americans. The agency created for this process was the **Wartime Relocation Authority (WRA)** and more than 100,000 people of Japanese descent were forced to relocate to these WRA camps that were hastily constructed military-style barracks with barbed wire fences and guarded by federal troops.



In the 1944 Supreme Court Case of **Korematsu v. United States**, the Supreme Court upheld the forced evacuation as a reasonable wartime emergency measure. However, no acts of Japanese American sabotage or treason were ever identified. Despite these injustices, thousands of Nisei soldiers served in the U.S. armed forces, mostly in Europe. The **442nd Regimental Combat Team**, entirely of Japanese Americans, won more medals for bravery than any other unit of its size during the war.

Daniel Inouye lost his right arm in the war. After the war he became a U.S. Senator from Hawaii until his death in 2012. He recalled that on his return, still in uniform and with only one arm, he tried to get a haircut but the barber refused him and used ethnic slurs against him because he was a Japanese American.

Almost 50 years after the war, the United States government admitted that the wartime relocation was unjust. In 1988, Congress voted to pay \$20,000 to each of the approximate 60,000 surviving Americans who had been interned. The government gave a formal apology and the first payments were made in 1990.

Mexican Americans and Latino Americans during World War II

Mexican Americans were another large minority group who served during World War II in combat overseas and on the home front. Over 500,000 Latinos served in both the European and Pacific theatres. That number included about 350,000 Mexican Americans and over 50,000 Puerto Ricans. Latino soldiers were especially valuable in the Philippines as they spoke both Spanish and English and could communicate with the Filipinos fighting against the Japanese invaders.

Bilingual Latino women served in the military as linguists, nurses, and Red Cross aides. Latino men and women worked vital jobs on the home front such as mines, shipyards, and airplane factories. Thousands of Mexicans were needed in agricultural jobs and worked the railroads, many came under special **Guest-Worker visas**. After the war, these people still faced discrimination, despite having equal rights as a minority group. Dr. Hector Garcia founded the **American G.I. Forum**, working for Latino rights in health care, education, labor agreements, and the court system. G.I. is a slang term for American soldiers and short for **Government Issue**.

Native Americans during World War II

Dozens of different tribal people served during the war. The most famous Native American contributors were the **Code Talkers**. The **Navajo Code Talkers** were important in the Pacific wars and the **Comanche Code Talkers** were integral to communications during the war in Europe. They were radio operators who spoke in native tongue which could not be broken by the enemy. Many Germans and Japanese spoke fluent English but none could speak or translate Native American.

During the war, the government seized some Native American lands for their vital minerals such as oil, gas, lead, zinc, and copper. In fact, Navajo helium was used to make the atomic bomb. Two Japanese internment camps were built on reservations in Arizona.

Native Americans as a whole continued to suffer various forms of discrimination both during and after the war. Several states did not allow Native Americans to vote, and similarly to other minorities, they were paid less than White Americans for their wartime service and work.

In the famous photo of “**Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima**” one of the soldiers, Ira Hayes, was a full-blooded Pima Native American from Arizona. He was part of the invasion force on Iwo Jima who died after the war from what today we call PTSD at the age of 32.



Demobilization

When World War II ended, the United States had to convert from a **wartime to a peaceful society**. This period of time is known as **demobilization**. The armed forces were reduced from 12 million to only 1.5 million members. Factories that had been making airplanes, tanks and weapons now reverted to making **consumer goods**, serving the post-war demand for everything from cars to washing machines. Economically, this time period was vital so that the nation would not slip back into a depression.

President Harry S. Truman created and passed legislation programs to ensure full employment, a higher minimum wage, greater unemployment compensation, and housing assistance. His plans became known as the **Fair Deal**, a copy from FDR's New Deal.

The **Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944**, better known as the **GI Bill of Rights**, or simply **the GI Bill**, authorized billions of dollars to pay for veteran's benefits, that included money for college, medical treatment, unemployment insurance, home and business loans.

The **Employment Act of 1946** made full employment a national goal. It also created a Council of Economic Advisors to assist the president on economic matters.

Price controls were set during the war but post-war these restrictions were lifted. However, combined with a federal tax cut, it created a rapid increase in inflation. Food prices soared 25% in just two years.

The **Taft-Hartley Act (1947)** was passed despite Truman's veto. Workers' wages could not keep up with post-war inflation and major strikes were held by unions for higher wages. The act

- Provided an **80-day "cooling-off"** period through which the President could delay a strike that threatened national welfare
- **Barred the closed shop**, under which workers had to belong to a union before being hired
- Allowed states to pass **"right-to-work"** laws which said workers could take jobs and not be forced to join a union
- Banned union contributions to political campaigns
- Required union leaders to swear that they were not communists

The **National Security Act of 1947** created the **National Military Establishment**, which later became the **Department of Defense**. The Act also created the **CIA (Central Intelligence Agency)**.

In addition, Truman also passed **Executive Order 9981** which banned discrimination in the armed forces.

The **Baby Boom** was the largest population explosion in American history. As a result, it caused the expansion of many public services, especially schools. Parallel to the baby boom was a rapid increase in personal income that resulted in a huge **expansion of the middle-class** in America.



Postwar Efforts for Justice and Peace

The **Nuremberg Trials** in 1945 and 1946 were international military courts that tried twenty-four high-level Nazis for atrocities during World War II. United States Supreme Court Justice **Robert Jackson** served as Chief Prosecutor for the United States. The trials found the Nazis guilty of “**crimes against humanity**” and faced the death penalty. Escaped Nazis who were found after the end of the war, even decades later, were also brought to trial for war-related crimes.

Two such people were Adolf Eichmann, captured in Argentina in 1960 and tried in Israel, convicted of crimes against humanity and was hanged in 1962. Klaus Barbie, the “Butcher of Lyon” was also apprehended and tried in 1987 for his wartime brutality against Jews.

War crime trials were also held in Japan and they led to the execution of former Premier Tojo and six other leaders. About 4,000 other Japanese war criminals were also convicted and received jail sentences.

The United Nations

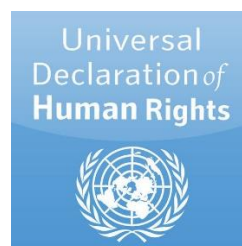
Before the end of World War II, plans had already been made for a **United Nations Conference** to take place in San Francisco in April 1945. Even Joseph Stalin agreed to participate in the planning of this new organization.

The United States Senate approved the United Nations Charter by a vote of 82 to 2 on June 26, 1945.

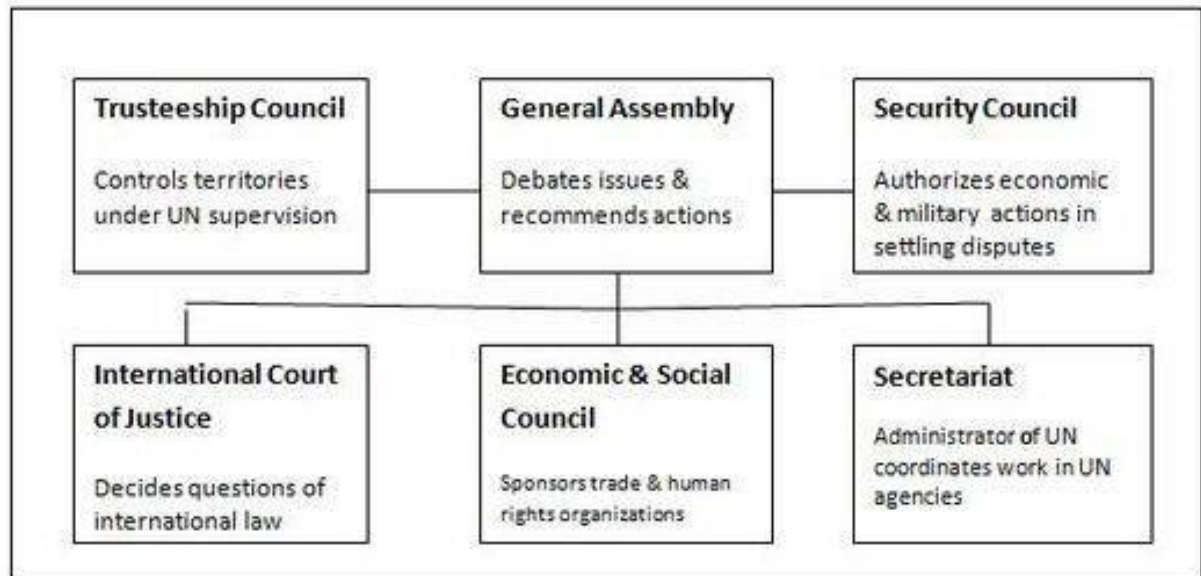
The structure of the United Nations includes a **General Assembly** of all of its members as a forum for world leaders to speak on a variety of concerns, and a **Security Council of 15 members**. The Security Council consists of ten rotating members and five permanent members (the original permanent members were the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, China, and France). After the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation became a permanent member.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

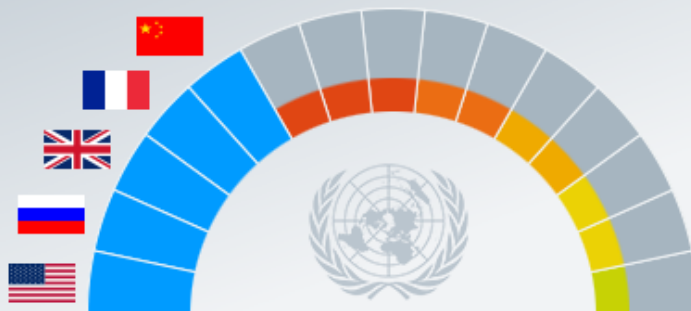
In 1946, President Truman appointed the former **First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt** as a delegate to the United Nations. She was the only woman in the American delegation. The committee that she led created the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** that is a proclamation which is part of the United Nations today. Her proposal led to the creation of **Thirty Basic Human Rights**, that was unanimously approved and passed on December 10, 1948



Organization of the United Nations



United Nations Security Council



Permanent members, veto rights (5)

■ China, France, Russia, UK, USA

Non-permanent members, two-year terms (10)

■ Africa (3)

■ Asia (2)

■ Latin America (2)

■ Western Europe and others (2)

■ Eastern Europe (1)

- The Security Council has the primary responsibility within the UN of maintaining international peace and security

- It is the only United Nations organ that has the power to make decisions that member states are obligated to implement