



WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

Spiders as Big as Your Fist

World War II placed U.S. soldiers in a dazzling variety of settings, from mountains to deserts to forests to tropical isles. One marine described the ordeal of fighting on a Pacific island:

“It was beautiful, but beneath the loveliness . . . Guadalcanal was a mass of slops and stinks and pestilence; of scum-crusted lagoons and vile swamps inhabited by giant crocodiles; a place of spiders as big as your fist and wasps as long as your finger . . . of ants that bite like fire, of tree leeches that fall, fasten and suck; of scorpions, of centipedes whose foul scurrying across human skin leaves a track of inflamed flesh, of snakes and land crabs, rats and bats and carrion birds and of a myriad of stinging insects.”

—Robert Leckie, *Delivered From Evil: The Saga of World War II*

▲ American marines on Guadalcanal

The Allies Turn the Tide

Objectives

- Analyze the reasons for and impact of the Allies’ “Europe First” strategy.
- Explain why the battles of Stalingrad and Midway were major turning points in the war.
- Discuss how the Allies put increasing pressure on the Axis in North Africa and Europe.

Terms and People

Dwight Eisenhower	strategic bombing
George S. Patton, Jr.	Tuskegee Airmen
unconditional surrender	Chester Nimitz
saturation bombing	Battle of Midway

NoteTaking

Reading Skill: Summarize List the ways in which the Allies turned back the Axis advance.

Turning Back the Axis	
In Europe	In the Pacific
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battle against U-boats in Atlantic • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •

Why It Matters The attack on Pearl Harbor brought America into World War II on the Allied side. In 1942, the Allies began to stop the seemingly unstoppable Axis onslaught. Though years of fighting lay ahead, the most aggressive threat to world peace and democracy in modern times had been halted. **Section Focus Question:** How did the Allies turn the tide against the Axis?


Axis and Allies Plan Strategy

By June 1942, the Allies were battered but still fighting. As you have read, British pilots had fought off a Nazi invasion of their island, while at the Battle of Coral Sea, the U.S. Navy had frustrated Japanese plans to extend their domination in the Pacific. Although the war was not close to being over, the Allies spied signs of hope.

The Axis Powers never had a coordinated strategy to defeat the Allies. Germany, Italy, and Japan shared common enemies but nurtured individual dreams. Hitler wanted to dominate Europe and eliminate “inferior” peoples. Mussolini harbored dreams of an Italian empire stretching from the eastern Adriatic to East Africa. Tojo sought Japanese control of the Western Pacific and Asia.

The Allies shared more unified goals. Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin considered Germany the most dangerous enemy. None felt Japan or Italy posed a serious long-term threat. Only Germany had the resources to bomb Britain, fight U.S. and British navies on the

Atlantic, and invade the Soviet Union across a 1,200-mile front. Thus, although their **ultimate** goal was to fight and win a two-front war, the Allies agreed to pursue a “Europe First” strategy. Until Hitler was defeated, the Pacific would be a secondary theater of war.

 **Checkpoint** Why did the Allies decide to concentrate first on the war in Europe?

Vocabulary Builder
ultimate—(UHL tuh miht) *adj.*
final; most advanced

Turning the Tide in Europe

The first blow America struck against the Axis was by fulfilling FDR’s promise to be the “arsenal of democracy.” American industries turned out millions of tons of guns, tanks, and other supplies—enough to keep the Soviets and British battling Germany for years. The problem was delivering the supplies.

Allies Battle U-Boats in the Atlantic Hitler was determined to cut the sea lines between the United States and Europe before American aid could make a difference. “Wolf packs” of German U-boats patrolled the Atlantic and Caribbean, sinking more than 3,500 merchant ships and killing tens of thousands of Allied seamen. “The only thing that ever really frightened me during the war was the U-boat peril,” Churchill later wrote.

Finally, in mid-1943, the Allies began to win the war in the North Atlantic. As in World War I, convoys of escort carriers protected Allied shipping. A new invention, radar, helped Allied vessels locate U-boats on the surface at night. Long-range aerial bombers and underwater depth charges allowed Allied forces to sink U-boats faster than Germany could manufacture them.

Soviets Turn Back Nazis at Stalingrad Germany had attacked Russia in June 1941, sending one army north toward Leningrad, a second east toward Moscow, and a third south toward Stalingrad. Although Hitler’s forces penetrated deep into Soviet territory, killing or capturing millions of soldiers and civilians, they did not achieve their main objective of conquering the Soviet Union. Soviet resistance and a brutal Russia winter stopped the German advance.

In 1942, Hitler narrowed his sights and concentrated his armies in southern Russia. His goal this time was to control the rich Caucasus oil fields. To achieve this objective, he would have to capture the city of Stalingrad.

The struggle for Stalingrad was especially ferocious. German troops advanced slowly, fighting bitter block-by-block, house-by-house battles in the bombed-out buildings and rubble. Soviet troops then counterattacked, trapping the German forces. Yet Hitler refused to allow his army to retreat. Starving, sick, and suffering from frostbite, the surviving German troops finally surrendered on January 31, 1943.

The battle of Stalingrad was the true turning point of the war in Europe. It ended any realistic plans Hitler had of dominating Europe. Nazi armies were forced to retreat westward back toward Germany. Instead, it was the Soviet Union that now went on the offensive.

Surrender at Stalingrad

The long Battle of Stalingrad ended in January 1943 with the surrender of German troops like these. Of the 91,000 prisoners taken by the Soviets, only about 5,000 eventually survived and returned to Germany.



Focus On Geography

Desert Warfare American soldiers had to fight in many unfamiliar types of terrain. But the Sahara of North Africa—the world's largest desert—presented special challenges:

- In hot, dry weather, sandstorms choked and blinded troops.
- In wet weather, mud halted machinery.
- The high visibility of the desert terrain made it difficult for troops to move without being seen.
- Poisonous reptiles, ants, and scorpions added to the problems.

Brilliant tank strategists like Patton and Rommel were able to overcome such challenges. But the tanks themselves caused other problems, such as kicking up enormous dust clouds that could be seen miles away.



Geography and History Most supplies for Allied troops in North Africa had to be brought by sea. According to the map, why would this have posed a problem?

Allies Drive Germans Out of North Africa Meanwhile, another important campaign was taking place in the deserts and mountains of North Africa, where the British had been fighting the Germans and Italians since 1940. Several goals motivated the Allied campaign in North Africa. Stalin had wanted America and Britain to relieve the Soviet Union by establishing a second front in France. However, FDR and Churchill felt they needed more time to prepare for an invasion across the English Channel. An invasion of North Africa, however, required less planning and fewer supplies. In addition, forcing Germany out of North Africa would pave the way for an invasion of Italy.

In October 1942, the British won a major victory at El Alamein (ehl al uh MAYN) in Egypt and began to push westward. The next month, Allied troops landed in Morocco and Algeria and began to move east toward key German positions. An energetic American officer, General **Dwight Eisenhower**—known as Ike—commanded the Allied invasion of North Africa.


In February 1943, German general Erwin Rommel (known as the Desert Fox) led his Afrika Korps against the Americans at the Kasserine Pass in Tunisia. Rommel broke through the American lines in an attempt to reach the Allied supply base at Tebessa in Algeria. Finally, American soldiers stopped the assault. Lack of supplies then forced Rommel to retreat.

The fighting at the Kasserine Pass taught American leaders valuable lessons. They needed aggressive officers and troops better trained for desert fighting. To that end, Eisenhower put American forces in North Africa under the command of **George S. Patton, Jr.**, an innovative tank commander. A single-minded general known as Blood and Guts, Patton told his junior officers:

Primary Source “You usually will know where the front is by the sound of gunfire, and that’s the direction you should proceed. Now, suppose you lose a hand or an ear is shot off, or perhaps a piece of your nose, and you think you should walk back to get first aid. If I see you, it will be the last . . . walk you’ll ever take.”

—George S. Patton, Jr., 1943

Patton’s forces advanced east with heightened confidence. Simultaneously, the British pressed westward from Egypt, trapping Axis forces in a continually shrinking pocket in Tunisia. Rommel escaped, but his army did not. In May 1943, German and Italian forces—some 240,000 troops—surrendered.

 **Checkpoint** Why was the Battle of Stalingrad a turning point in World War II?

Increasing the Pressure on Germany

Germany was now on the defensive, and the Allies planned to keep it that way. In January 1943, Roosevelt and Churchill met in Casablanca, Morocco, to plan their next move. The conference resulted in two important decisions. First, the Allies decided to increase bombing of Germany and invade Italy. Second, FDR announced that the Allies would accept only **unconditional surrender**, or giving up completely without any concessions. Hitler, Mussolini, and Tojo could not hope to stay in power through a negotiated peace.

Allies Invade Italy The Allies next eyed Italy. Situated across the Mediterranean from Tunisia and 2 miles from the Italian mainland, Sicily was the obvious target for an invasion. The Allies could invade Sicily without great risk from U-boats and under the protection of air superiority. In July 1943, British and American armies made separate landings in Sicily and began to advance across the island before joining forces in the north. Once again, Eisenhower commanded the joint American-British forces.

Ike hoped to trap Axis forces on Sicily, but they escaped to the Italian mainland. Still, the 38-day campaign achieved important results: It gave the Allies complete control of the western Mediterranean, paved the way for an invasion of Italy, and ended the rule of Benito Mussolini. On September 3, 1943, Italy surrendered to the Allies and five weeks later declared war on Germany.

But Hitler was not through with Italy. After a small German airborne force rescued Mussolini from a mountaintop fortress, Hitler installed him as head of a puppet state in northern Italy. In the south, German military forces continued the fight against the Allies.

On the Beach at Sicily

Using only a small foldable shovel, an American soldier digs himself a foxhole on the beach at Sicily.



The invasion of Italy was a slow, grinding slog. Italy was crisscrossed with mountains and rivers. Heavy rains and mountain snows made combat difficult and painful. Men fought in ankle-deep mud. In the mountains, where tanks and heavy artillery were useless, Allied forces depended on mules to haul supplies up slippery and steep roads. To make matters worse, the Germans occupied the best defensive positions. Fighting continued into 1945. The Allies won battles, but none were important enough to alter the basic German defensive policy.

Bombers Batter Germany Stalin continued his demand that Roosevelt and Churchill open a second front in France. While the Allies did not launch a massive invasion of France until 1944, they did open a second front of another kind in early 1942. From bases in England, Allied bombers launched nonstop attacks against Germany. Flying by night in order to avoid being shot down in large numbers, British planes dropped massive amounts of bombs on German cities. The goal of this **saturation bombing** was to inflict maximum damage.

By day, American bombers targeted Germany's key political and industrial centers. The goal of this campaign of **strategic bombing** was to destroy Germany's capacity to make war. A Nazi official later commented that "the fleets of bombers might appear at any time over any large German city or important factory."

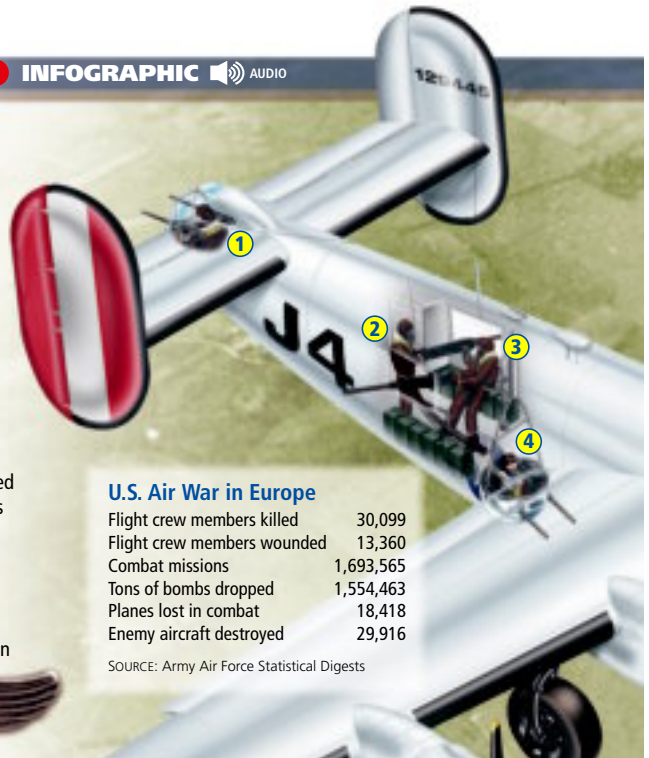
An African American fighter squadron known as the **Tuskegee Airmen** played a key role in the campaign, escorting bombers and protecting them from enemy fighter pilots. In more than 1,500 missions over enemy territory in Europe, the Tuskegee Airmen did not lose a single bomber.

Overall, though, the bombing missions cost the Allies dearly. Bomber crews suffered an incredibly high 20 percent casualty rate. But they successfully

Air War Over Europe

During World War II, the B-24 *Liberator* was the king of American bombers, faster than previous planes and with a greater long-range flight capacity. The B-24s and the men who flew them played a critical and demanding role in the air war over Europe.

● INFOGRAPHIC



◀ Hollywood hero Jimmy Stewart (seated) became a real hero: He emerged from the Air Force as a Brigadier General.

▼ Silver Air Force Gunner Wings pin


U.S. Air War in Europe

Flight crew members killed	30,099
Flight crew members wounded	13,360
Combat missions	1,693,565
Tons of bombs dropped	1,554,463
Planes lost in combat	18,418
Enemy aircraft destroyed	29,916

SOURCE: Army Air Force Statistical Digests



carried the war into Germany, day after day and night after night. This second front in the sky did indeed relieve some of the pressure on the Soviet armies on the Eastern Front and helped pave the way for an all-out Allied offensive.

 **Checkpoint** What were the goals of British and American bombing runs over Germany?

Turning the Tide in the Pacific

While the Allies pursued their “Europe First” strategy, they did not ignore the Pacific. Through May 1942, Japanese forces continued to advance with seemingly unstoppable momentum. They had attacked American, British, and Dutch colonies, winning control of the Philippines, Malaya, Dutch East Indies, Hong Kong, Wake Island, Guam, and Burma. Then, the United States struck back. As you have read in the last chapter, the Battle of Coral Sea served as a warning that America might be down in the Pacific, but it was not out.

Turning Point: Americans Triumph at Midway Admiral Yamamoto, commander of Japanese forces in the Pacific, knew that the United States Navy was still a powerful threat. Before the Americans could retaliate for Pearl Harbor, Yamamoto sought to destroy American aircraft carriers in the Pacific. He turned his attention to Midway, an American naval base in the Central Pacific that was vital to the defense of Hawaii. Losing Midway would force American defenses back to the California coast. Yamamoto’s ambitious plan entailed taking Midway and establishing a military presence in the Aleutians, a string of islands off the coast of Alaska.

Vocabulary Builder
momentum—(moh MEHN tuhm)
n. forward motion; push

The B-24 took more crew members to operate than any flying machine ever built. Each member of the 10-man crew had a vital job. **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10**

Gunners: defend the B-24 from attacking enemy planes coming from any direction **5** **Flight Engineer:** handles any mechanical problems; doubles as gunner **6** **Radio Operator:** communicates with ground, other planes **7** **Pilot:** responsible for entire mission **8** **Co-pilot:** assists pilot in flying plane **9** **Navigator:** plots course of plane; also doubles as Bombardier in charge of aiming and dropping bomb

Tuskegee Airmen Rather than carrying bombs, some planes escorted and protected the planes that did. The most celebrated of these escort crews were the Tuskegee Airmen, a special unit of African American pilots. In more than 1,500 missions over Europe, the Tuskegee Airmen did not lose a single bomber.

Thinking Critically

- 1. Draw Inferences** Which members of the flight crew carried out the main objective of the mission? What was the chief job of the other members?
- 2. Synthesize Information** How did the Tuskegee Airmen affect the casualty figures listed in the chart at left?



The Battle of Midway

Midway was a new kind of naval battle. Instead of armed ships facing each other directly, the fighting was carried on by swift airplanes that took off from the decks of aircraft carriers to bomb vessels many miles away.

What Yamamoto did not realize was that Admiral **Chester Nimitz**, commander of the United States Navy in the Pacific, knew the Japanese plans. Navy code breakers had intercepted Japanese messages. To meet the expected assault, Nimitz sent his only available aircraft carriers to Midway. The Japanese navy was stretched out across more than a thousand miles, from the Aleutians to well west of Midway. American forces were all concentrated near Midway.

The Japanese commenced their attack on June 4, 1942. In the most important naval battle of World War II, the United States dealt Japan a decisive defeat. Torpedo planes and dive bombers sank 4 Japanese aircraft carriers, along with all 250 aircraft on board and many of Japan's most experienced pilots. America lost only one aircraft carrier.

The **Battle of Midway** was the turning point of the war in the Pacific, ending the seemingly unstoppable Japanese advance. Japan still had a powerful navy, committed troops, and fortified positions. But it would never again threaten Hawaii or Pacific domination. Japan was now on the defensive end of the war.

Americans Take the Offensive The first American offensive in the Pacific took place in August 1942, with an assault on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. (See the Witness History at the beginning of this section.) After three months of intense fighting, the United States Marines drove the Japanese off the island.

Guadalcanal was the first leg in a strategy to approach Japan from both the southwest Pacific and the central Pacific, using combined U.S. Marine, Navy, and Army forces. The logic behind the dual offensives was to force Japan to fight a two-front war and to capture bases from which to bomb the Japanese home islands. In jungles and coral reefs, under torrential monsoons and the blistering sun, fighting for every new piece of territory, American servicemen began their slow, painful trek toward Japan.



Checkpoint What impact did the Battle of Midway have on Japanese expansion in the Pacific?

SECTION

1 Assessment

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-test with vocabulary practice
Web Code: nea-1102

Comprehension

1. Terms and People Write a sentence explaining how each of the following was connected with the Allied effort to turn back the Axis offensive.

- Dwight Eisenhower
- George S. Patton, Jr.
- unconditional surrender
- saturation bombing
- strategic bombing
- Tuskegee Airmen
- Chester Nimitz
- Battle of Midway

2. NoteTaking Reading Skill:

Summarize Use your table to answer the Section Focus Question: How did the Allies turn the tide against the Axis?

Writing About History

3. Quick Write: Describe a

Photograph Look at the photograph from Stalingrad in this section. Write a two-sentence factual description of what is happening in the picture. Use at least one descriptive adjective and one action verb.

Critical Thinking

- 4. Analyze Causes** Why did Roosevelt support a "Europe First" strategy even though it was Japan that had first attacked the United States?
- 5. Evaluate Information** Was the Allied invasion of Italy a success? Give reasons for your answer.
- 6. Apply Information** How does the Battle of Midway illustrate the importance of intelligence gathering and espionage in modern warfare?