IWO JIMA After retaking much of the Philippines and liberating the American prisoners of war there, MacArthur and the Allies turned to Iwo Jima, an island that writer William Manchester later described as "an ugly, smelly glob of cold lava squatting in a surly ocean." Iwo Jima (which means "sulfur island" in Japanese) was critical to the United States as a base from which heavily loaded bombers might reach Japan. It was also perhaps the most heavily defended spot on earth, with 20,700 Japanese troops entrenched in tunnels and caves. More than 6,000 marines died taking this desolate island, the greatest number in any battle in the Pacific to that point. Only 200 Japanese survived. Just one obstacle now stood between the Allies and a final assault on Japan—the island of Okinawa.

THE BATTLE FOR OKINAWA In April 1945, U.S. Marines invaded Okinawa. The Japanese unleashed more than 1,900 kamikaze attacks on the Allies during the Okinawa campaign, sinking 30 ships, damaging more than 300 more, and killing almost 5,000 seamen.

Once ashore, the Allies faced even fiercer opposition than on Iwo Jima. By the time the fighting ended on June 21, 1945, more than 7,600 Americans had died. But the Japanese paid an even ghastlier price—110,000 lives—in defending Okinawa. This total included two generals who chose ritual suicide over the shame of surrender. A witness to this ceremony described their end: "A simultaneous shout and a flash of the sword . . . and both generals had nobly accomplished their last duty to their Emperor."

The Battle for Okinawa was a chilling foretaste of what the Allies imagined the invasion of Japan's home islands would be. Churchill predicted the cost would be a million American lives and half that number of British lives.

MAIN IDEA

Drawing Conclusions

Why was Okinawa a significant island in the war in the Pacific?

KEY PLAYER



DOUGLAS MACARTHUR
1880–1964

Douglas MacArthur was too arrogant and prickly to be considered a "regular guy" by his troops. But he was arguably the most brilliant Allied strategist of World War II. For every American soldier killed in his campaigns, the Japanese lost ten.

He was considered a real hero of the war, both by the military and by the prisoners on the Philippines, whom he freed. "MacArthur took more territory with less loss of life," observed journalist John Gunther, "than any military commander since Darius the Great [king of Persia, 522–486 B.C.]."

The Atomic Bomb Ends the War

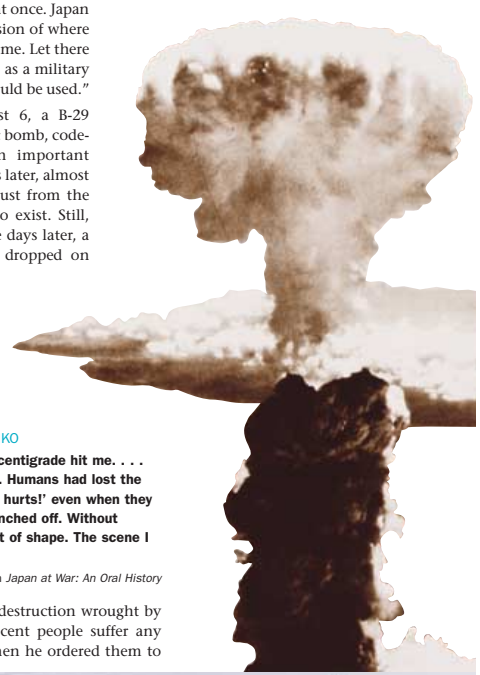
The taking of Iwo Jima and Okinawa opened the way for an invasion of Japan. However, Allied leaders knew that such an invasion would become a desperate struggle. Japan still had a huge army that would defend every inch of homeland. President Truman saw only one way to avoid an invasion of Japan. He decided to use a powerful new weapon that had been developed by scientists working on the Manhattan Project—the atomic bomb.

THE MANHATTAN PROJECT Led by General Leslie Groves with research directed by American scientist **J. Robert Oppenheimer,** the development of the atomic bomb was not only the most ambitious scientific enterprise in history, it was also the best-kept secret of the war. At its peak, more than 600,000 Americans were involved in the project, although few knew its purpose. Even Truman did not learn about it until he became president.

The first test of the new bomb took place on the morning of July 16, 1945, in an empty expanse of desert near Alamogordo, New Mexico. A blinding flash, which was visible 180 miles away, was followed by a deafening roar as a tremendous shock wave rolled across the trembling desert. Otto Frisch, a scientist on the project, described the huge mushroom cloud that rose over the desert as "a red-hot elephant standing balanced on its trunk." The bomb worked!

President Truman now faced a difficult decision. Should the Allies use the bomb to bring an end to the war? Truman did not hesitate. On July 25, 1945, he ordered the military to make final plans for dropping two atomic bombs on Japanese targets. A day later, the United States warned Japan that it faced "prompt and utter destruction" unless it surrendered at once. Japan refused. Truman later wrote, "The final decision of where and when to use the atomic bomb was up to me. Let there be no mistake about it. I regarded the bomb as a military weapon and never had any doubt that it should be used."

HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI On August 6, a B-29 bomber named *Enola Gay* released an atomic bomb, code-named Little Boy, over **Hiroshima,** an important Japanese military center. Forty-three seconds later, almost every building in the city collapsed into dust from the force of the blast. Hiroshima had ceased to exist. Still, Japan's leaders hesitated to surrender. Three days later, a second bomb, code-named Fat Man, was dropped on **Nagasaki,** leveling half the city. By the end of the year, an estimated 200,000 people had died as a result of injuries and radiation poisoning caused by the atomic blasts. Yamaoka Michiko was 15 years old and living near the center of Hiroshima when the first bomb hit.



A PERSONAL VOICE YAMAOKA MICHIKO

"They say temperatures of 7,000 degrees centigrade hit me. . . . Nobody there looked like human beings. . . . Humans had lost the ability to speak. People couldn't scream, 'It hurts!' even when they were on fire. . . . People with their legs wrenched off. Without heads. Or with faces burned and swollen out of shape. The scene I saw was a living hell."

—quoted in *Japan at War: An Oral History*

Emperor Hirohito was horrified by the destruction wrought by the bomb. "I cannot bear to see my innocent people suffer any longer," he told Japan's leaders tearfully. Then he ordered them to draw up papers "to end the war." On September 2, formal surrender ceremonies took place on the U.S. battleship *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay. "Today the guns are silent," said General MacArthur in a speech marking this historic moment. "The skies no longer rain death—the seas bear only commerce—men everywhere walk upright in the sunlight. The entire world is quietly at peace."



Hiroshima in ruins following the atomic bomb blast on August 6, 1945 ▶

POINT

"The only way to end the war against Japan was to bomb the Japanese mainland."

Many advisors to President Truman, including Secretary of War Henry Stimson, had this point of view. They felt the bomb would end the war and save American lives. Stimson said, "The face of war is the face of death."

Some scientists working on the bomb agreed—even more so as the casualty figures from Iwo Jima and Okinawa sank in. "Are we to go on shedding American blood when we have available a means to a steady victory?" they petitioned. "No! If we can save even a handful of American lives, then let us use this weapon—now!"

Two other concerns pushed Americans to use the bomb. Some people feared that if the bomb were not dropped, the project might be viewed as a gigantic waste of money.

The second consideration involved the Soviet Union. Tension and distrust were already developing between the Western Allies and the Soviets. Some American officials believed that a successful use of the atomic bomb would give the United States a powerful advantage over the Soviets in shaping the postwar world.

COUNTERPOINT

"Japan's staggering losses were enough to force Japan's surrender."

Many of the scientists who had worked on the bomb, as well as military leaders and civilian policymakers, had doubts about using it. Dr. Leo Szilard, a Hungarian-born physicist who had helped President Roosevelt launch the project and who had a major role in developing the bomb, was a key figure opposing its use.

A petition drawn up by Szilard and signed by 70 other scientists argued that it would be immoral to drop an atomic bomb on Japan without fair warning. Many supported staging a demonstration of the bomb for Japanese leaders, perhaps by exploding one on a deserted island near Japan, to convince the Japanese to surrender.

Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower agreed. He maintained that "dropping the bomb was completely unnecessary" to save American lives and that Japan was already defeated. Ike told Secretary of War Henry Stimson, "I was against it [the bomb] on two counts. First the Japanese were ready to surrender and it wasn't necessary to hit them with that awful thing. Second, I hated to see our country be the first to use such a weapon."

THINKING CRITICALLY

1. **CONNECT TO HISTORY** **Summarizing** What were the main arguments for and against dropping the atomic bomb on Japan?

SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R4.

2. **CONNECT TO TODAY** **Evaluating Decisions** Do you think the United States was justified in using the bomb against the Japanese? In a paragraph, explain why or why not.

Rebuilding Begins

With Japan's surrender, the Allies turned to the challenge of rebuilding war-torn nations. Even before the last guns fell silent, they began thinking about principles that would govern the postwar world.

THE YALTA CONFERENCE In February 1945, as the Allies pushed toward victory in Europe, an ailing Roosevelt had met with Churchill and Stalin at the Black Sea resort city of Yalta in the Soviet Union. Stalin graciously welcomed the president and the prime minister, and the Big Three, as they were called, toasted the defeat of Germany that now seemed certain.

For eight grueling days, the three leaders discussed the fate of Germany and the postwar world. Stalin, his country devastated by German forces, favored a harsh approach. He wanted to keep Germany divided into occupation zones—areas controlled by Allied military forces—so that Germany would never again threaten the Soviet Union.

MAIN IDEA

Analyzing Motives D Why was Roosevelt anxious to make concessions to Stalin concerning the fate of postwar Germany?

When Churchill strongly disagreed, Roosevelt acted as a mediator. He was prepared to make concessions to Stalin for two reasons. First, he hoped that the Soviet Union would stand by its commitments to join the war against Japan that was still waging in the Pacific. (The first test of the atom bomb was still five months away.) Second, Roosevelt wanted Stalin's support for a new world peacekeeping organization, to be named the United Nations. D