**World War 2**

A terrible economic disaster occurred in 1930 and sent much of Europe into a major economic crisis. The people of Italy and Germany were unhappy with how World War 1 treated their countries. The people of Germany and Italy elected dictators to run their country. The leader of Italy, Benito Mussolini, thought that by going to war, he could make his country powerful again. The leader of Germany, Adolf Hitler, blamed all the bad things that had happened on the Jews, an ethnic group that lived in many countries of Europe. Germany started taking over its neighbors. World War 2 started in Europe on September 3, 1939. In Asia, Japan went to war with China because they wanted more control over the resources they needed. The Japanese thought the United States might make it difficult for them to win so they decided to attack them. The Japanese attacked the United States’ naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7, 1941.

In the early part of the war, Germany was very successful. Germany took control of most of Europe, including a lot of the huge Soviet Union. Great Britain, the United States, The Soviet Union, and China fought together to beat Germany, Italy, and Japan. This was a conflict that covered the entire globe, with battles in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, the Atlantic, and Europe. The United States stopped the expansion of the Japanese at the Battle of Midway (1942) while the Soviet Union began winning at Stalingrad (1943). The US and Great Britain will join the fight in Europe in Italy in 1943. They will make great progress when they attack the Germanys in France in 1944 in a massive operation called D-Day. The Allies, or those fighting Germany, Japan, and Italy, will win in Europe in May 1945 and in the Pacific in August 1945.

In addition to the fact that over 70 million people died in this conflict, World War 2 would have a huge impact on the future. The discovery that Germany had tried to kill all the Jews in Europe by shipping them to death camps in an act called the Holocaust taught many people that racism could be horrible. Many countries helped Jews to set up their own country called Israel because they thought the Jews should be protected from this happening again. The United States developed a new kind of weapon called the atomic bomb. This weapon made it possible to kill a large number of people easily and quickly. People had to change how they thought about war because of this. The United States and the Soviet Union developed a long-standing hatred of each other. Because the United States and the Soviet Union were rich and powerful, other countries had to pick a side in a forty year period called the Cold War.

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