



This U.S. Air Force photograph shows the mushroom cloud over Hiroshima, Japan, three minutes after the A-bomb was dropped on that city. "My God, what have we done?" said a crewman on the *Enola Gay*.

**A**t 7 A.M. on the morning of August 6, 1945, the people of Hiroshima (hear-uh-SHE-muh), Japan, began their day in the usual way. Some of them were eating breakfast. Others were on their way to work. Japan was still at war with the United States and its allies, but people did the same things they did on any other day.

Just then, air raid sirens sounded. The people of Hiroshima were not surprised. The warning sounded every morning when a U.S. weather plane flew over their land. So far, Hiroshima had been lucky. Almost every other large Japanese city had been bombed by Allied air raids. Hiroshi-

ma, with 245,000 people, had never been bombed. The people were beginning to wonder how long their luck would last.

Suddenly, the all-clear signal sounded. Japanese radar watchers had spotted three U.S. planes flying toward Hiroshima. Yet they did not believe it was a bombing raid. A raid usually included a larger group of planes.

#### **Darkness After Dawn**

Suddenly, at 8:15 A.M., a blinding flash of light cut across the sky. It was brighter than sunlight. The center of this great ball of light was as hot as the surface of the



sun. A great column of heat and dust began to climb miles into the sky. Clouds of smoke and dust turned day into darkness.

What had happened? A U.S. plane, the *Enola Gay*, had dropped the first atomic bomb. The target hit was Hiroshima.

Such a bomb had been under development in the United States for four years. Scientists had begun their work in 1941. From the beginning, the project had been top-secret. After 1943, it had been carried out in a scientific and military unit known by its code name, the Manhattan Project.

Harry Truman knew nothing of the Manhattan Project until after he became president in April 1945. He learned then that the bomb would have more power than 20,000 tons of TNT. It would have more than 2000 times the power of the biggest dynamite bomb used so far. Truman did not interfere with the project. He and his top advisers thought that using the bomb might shorten the war.

### Split the Skies

In mid-July 1945, the bomb was tested in the desert near Alamogordo (ah-lah-moe-GORE-doh), New Mexico. One observer described the test. "It was as though the earth had opened and the skies had split," he wrote. The test proved a success. A few days later, Truman gave temporary permission to use the bomb on Japan.

The Allies made one last attempt to end the war. Late in July, the United States, Britain, and China offered Japan new peace terms. Under these terms, Allied troops would occupy Japan. War criminals would be punished. Japan would not be

enslaved or destroyed. Japan was told that its only other choice was "prompt and utter destruction." It would not surrender.

Japan's refusal sealed its fate. To top-level U.S. officials, the use of the bomb would mean fewer Americans would die than if the U.S. invaded Japan. A month earlier, the United States had driven the Japanese from the island of Okinawa (oh-kee-NAH-wah). In that fighting, 11,260 Americans and 160,000 Japanese had died. Any invasion of Japan itself promised to be even bloodier. No one could predict how long it would take to win.

So the United States dropped the bomb on Hiroshima. In the center of the city, almost every building was destroyed. The temperature rose so high that steel bubbled away as if it were boiling water. Burned-out streetcars and automobiles filled the streets. Even houses on the far edge of the city were badly damaged.



In a matter of seconds, the atomic bomb reduced most of the bustling city of Hiroshima, Japan, into a smoking wasteland.



### Burials From the Blast

Thousands of people were buried alive in the ruins. Some were able to dig themselves out. Fires burned throughout the city. The people who had lived through the blast began to run from the blazing city. They were dazed and in shock. Many of them bled from their heads, chests, and

backs. Some sat or lay down in the streets, vomited, and waited to die.

Soon the wounded began to crowd into hospitals. For many, there was no hope. Many doctors had been killed, and hospitals had been wrecked.

About two weeks after the blast, thousands of people suddenly became sick.

### The Pacific Theater in World War II



How far had the U.S. advanced into Japanese-occupied territory by the end of 1944? List the Pacific islands where battles took place during World War II.



Their hair began to fall out. They became weak with fever. Soon their gums bled, and red spots appeared on their skin. Old wounds opened up or would not heal. These people were suffering from a new disease—**radiation sickness**. Many died. In all, between 70,000 and 80,000 people died from the blast, or its effects, within a year. About an equal number were injured.

The Japanese kept on fighting after August 6. United States leaders grew more determined than ever to bring the war to an end. On August 9, the United States dropped a second atomic bomb. The target was the city of Nagasaki (nah-guh-SAH-kee). This city was also almost completely destroyed. On August 10, President Truman warned that more A-bombs would be dropped unless the Japanese surrendered.

On August 14, the Emperor of Japan said his country would surrender. After six years of fighting, World War II came to an end.



In February of 1945, Allied leaders Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Josef Stalin met in the Soviet seaport Yalta to make plans for post-war Europe.

Today, people in the United States and other countries argue over whether the United States should have dropped the bomb. Was the atomic bomb too horrible to drop even on enemies? Was it necessary to kill or maim so many civilians? Was the war really shortened? No matter how one answers these questions, all the worlds' people hope that these will be the last atomic weapons ever used.

## CHAPTER CHECK

### WORD MATCH

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. radiation sickness | a. city in Japan where U.S. dropped first atomic bomb           |
| 2. Hiroshima          | b. city in Japan where U.S. dropped atomic bomb that ended WWII |
| 3. Manhattan Project  | c. secret code name for unit developing the atomic bomb         |
| 4. Nagasaki           | d. caused by being subjected to an atomic explosion             |
| 5. Okinawa            | e. island where U.S. defeated Japan in June 1945                |

### QUICK QUIZ

1. Why did President Truman and his advisors think the Manhattan Project should be continued?
2. Describe the peace terms offered to the Japanese before the first A-bomb was dropped, and after the second bomb was dropped.

### THINK ABOUT IT

1. Why do you think the Japanese refused to surrender after the first bomb? Do you think a second should have been used? Explain.
2. What consequences of using atomic weapons do you think were unforeseen by their advocates? You might want to do more research.



## LOOKING BACK



# WORLD WAR II

### History Detective

1. I played on the emotions of a whole country. I promised jobs, food, and power. While in prison I wrote of my plan to rebuild Germany. Who am I? What did I write?
2. We were the secret police who forced the German people to follow the ideas of the Führer. Who are we?
3. This policy allowed the U.S. to give the British needed weapons while still remaining free from fighting. What was this policy?
4. Due to a French and British deal made with Hitler, my mountainous land was given to Germany. This left me vulnerable to Nazi takeover. Where am I?
5. This technique of air battle convinced the U.S. that the Japanese would go to any length for victory. What is it?
6. I was the top secret project which changed history by producing a bomb 2000 times more powerful than any used before. What am I?

### Voices From the Past

When Anne Frank was 13 years old, she went into hiding in a small attic at the back of a factory building in Amsterdam, Holland. She was one of a few lucky Jews able to hide from Nazi troops who were taking all Jews to prison camps. This was 1942, and the Holo-

caust had begun. Anne and her family hid for two years before they were found. She kept a diary which has become very famous. Here is part of *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*.

*July 15, 1944: It's twice as hard for us young ones to hold our ground, and maintain our opinions, in a time when all ideals are being shattered ... But I still believe people are really good at heart ... I can hear the approaching thunder ... and feel the sufferings of millions and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will all come out right, that this cruelty too will end, and that peace and tranquility will return again.*

1. What do you think Anne meant by "approaching thunder"?
2. The Holocaust was disastrous for all Jews. What do you think Anne meant when she said that the young were affected the most?

### Hands-On History

**Being a Radio Reporter**—During World War II, events happened very quickly. But for the first time the American public could be kept informed as history was being made. This was because of radio. Choose one of the events in this chapter—the Atomic bomb, fighting in the Soviet Union, Pearl Harbor, or D-day—and write a news bulletin that you could read on the air to the American public.