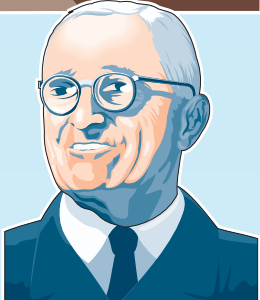


# VJ DAY

August 15 • 1945



**March 25 – Iwo Jima:** After 72 days of intense fighting, U.S. marines capture strategic island en route to Japan  
**April 6 – Okinawa:** U.S. troops land despite massive resistance  
**April 12 – Roosevelt dies – Harry Truman is new President**  
**May 3 – Rangoon:** Allies recapture Burmese capital  
**May 7 – Rheims:** Germany surrenders  
**May 8 – Victory-in-Europe Day**

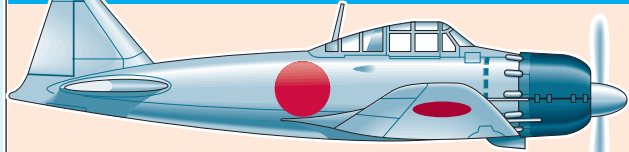


**May 14 – Nagoya:** Over 500 B-29s fire-bomb the hub of Japan's aircraft industry – beginning a series of raids on the Japanese heartland  
**May 19 – Foochow, China:** Japanese forces abandon port in strategic withdrawal from southern China  
**May 27 – Luzon:** General MacArthur – forced to retreat in March 1942 – recaptures the Philippines

**June 21 – Okinawa:** After a bloody 82-day battle the island falls to U.S. troops with the loss of over 100,000 Japanese lives – almost 7,000 in the last three days. 8,000 prisoners are taken and 3,000 planes lost. U.S. casualties are around half the Japanese total, with 31 ships lost and damage to a further 34, caused mostly by suicide attacks.  
**Emperor Hirohito urges an end to the war by diplomatic means**



## Kamikaze – the weapon of last resort



**Mitsubishi Zero-Sen A6M7 'Kamikaze' aircraft**  
 Designed as a highly effective fighter (A6M1) and used in the attack on Pearl Harbour (A6M2), the final 'Zero' was the **Kamikaze** version – earlier sub-types were later converted for suicide missions. Kamikaze pilots had a simple mission – to crash the plane into enemy targets, dying honourably for the Emperor

**June 29 – Washington:** Truman approves invasion of Japan to begin Nov 1945, expected to involve 5 million personnel

**July 20 – Mariana Islands:** Specially formed 509th Composite Group begins practice runs for using the atom bomb

**July 21 – Potsdam, Germany:** Russia, U.S. and Great Britain – the 'Big Three' allied powers – meet to shape the post-war world. Churchill and Truman agree to use A-bomb if Japan refuses to surrender

**July 28 – Tokyo:** Japanese cabinet refuses to surrender as U.S. bombers drop warning leaflets to civilians

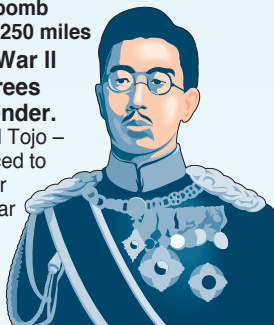
**August 6 – Hiroshima:** U.S. B-29 'Enola Gay' – named after the pilot's mother – drops the first atomic bomb, devastating the city

**August 8 – Moscow:** Russia declares war on Japan, pushing 120 miles into Japanese-held Manchuria in two days. Fearing Russian advancement in Asia, Americans feel under increased pressure to force quick Japanese surrender

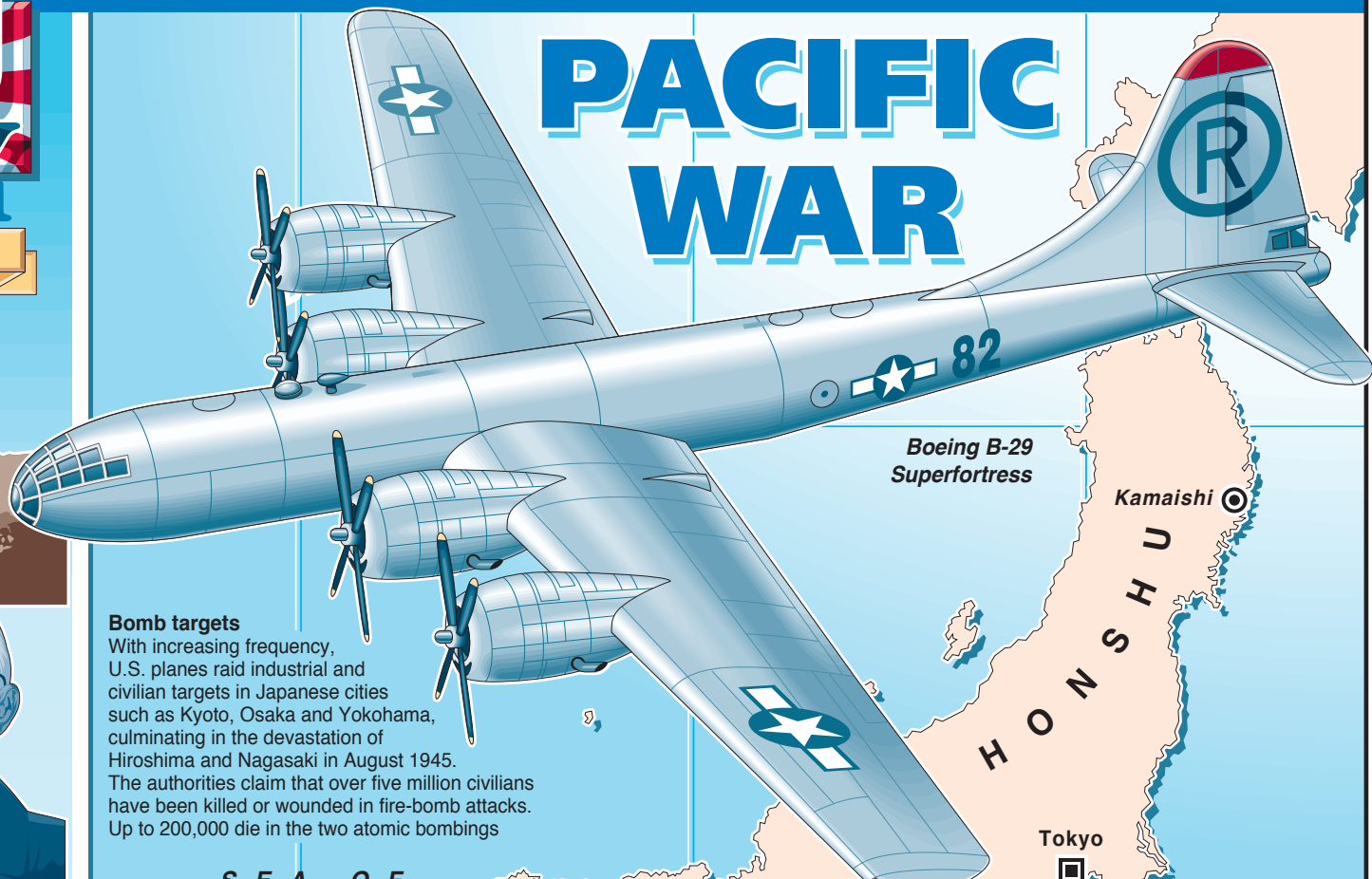
**August 9 – Nagasaki:** Second atomic bomb dropped, its huge fireball visible from 250 miles

**August 14 – World War II ends as Japan agrees unconditional surrender.** Emperor blames General Tojo – virtual dictator until forced to resign in 1944 – for Japan's entry into war

Emperor Hirohito tells his people 'the time has come when we must endure the unendurable'



# PACIFIC WAR



## Bomb targets

With increasing frequency, U.S. planes raid industrial and civilian targets in Japanese cities such as Kyoto, Osaka and Yokohama, culminating in the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. The authorities claim that over five million civilians have been killed or wounded in fire-bomb attacks. Up to 200,000 die in the two atomic bombings



## Far Eastern battle fronts: June 1945



## Invasion or atom bomb?

An invasion of Japan was scheduled for November 1945, with an initial landing on Kyushu by 13 divisions followed by 23 divisions on Honshu in March 1946. American casualties were expected to exceed 500,000. Churchill and U.S. War Secretary Henry Stimson considered the atom bomb an acceptable weapon of war, but General MacArthur claimed its use was unnecessary as Japanese surrender was imminent

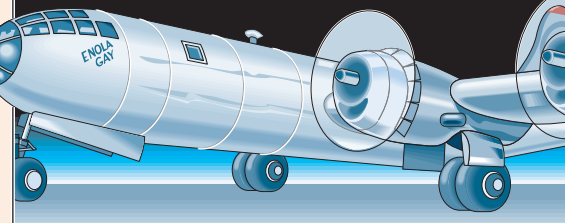
## Countdown to destruction

Following massive bombardment, the islands of Guam and Tinian were invaded by American forces on July 21 and 24 respectively, and came under U.S. control in little over two weeks. Air bases were quickly established for launching B-29 strikes on Japan

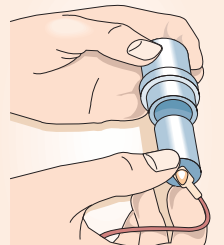
- 1 July 16, 1945 U.S. scientists explode the first atomic device at Alamogordo in the New Mexico desert
- 2 July 29 – August 2 Assembly of the A-bomb is completed on the island of Tinian



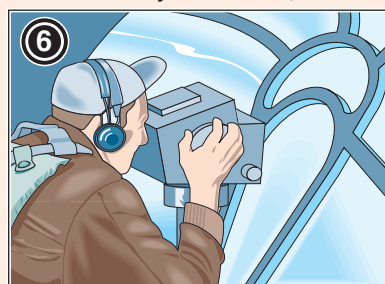
- 3 August 6, 02:45: B-29 bomber, *Enola Gay*, takes off from Tinian carrying the 9,000lb bomb, codenamed 'Little Boy'



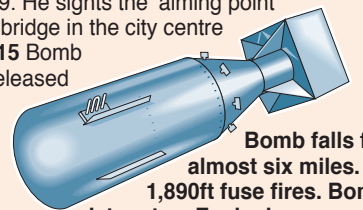
- 4 03:00 U.S. Navy weapons expert arms the bomb



- 5 06:40 B-29 Superfortress *Enola Gay* climbs to 30,000ft



- 6 08:14 The bombardier links his bombsight to the autopilot of the B-29. He sights the 'aiming point' – a bridge in the city centre  
 08:15 Bomb is released



Bomb falls for almost six miles. At 1,890ft fuse fires. Bomb detonates. Explosive power is equal to 20,000 tons of TNT – 2,000 times greater than any weapon previously used