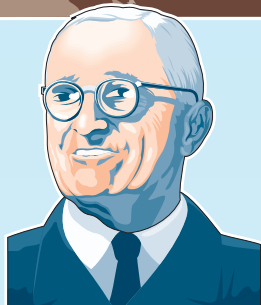


V-J DAY

August 15 • 1945



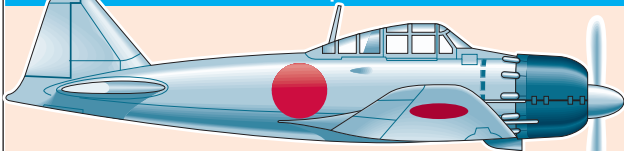
March 25 – Iwo Jima: After 72 days of intense fighting, U.S. marines capture strategic island en route to Japan
 April 6 – Okinawa: U.S. troops land despite massive resistance
 April 12 – Roosevelt dies – Harry Truman is new President
 May 3 – Rangoon: Allies recapture Burmese capital
 May 7 – Rheims: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



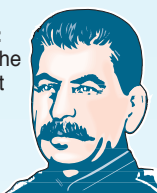
Mitsubishi Zero-Sen A6M7 'Kamikaze' aircraft
 Designed as a highly effective fighter (A6M1) and used in the attack on Pearl Harbour (A6M2), the final 'Zero' was the **Kamikaze** version – earlier sub-types were later converted for suicide missions. Kamikaze pilots had a simple mission – to crash the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



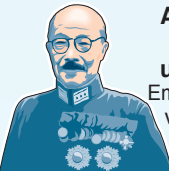
July 28 – Tokyo: Japanese cabinet refuses to surrender as U.S. bombers drop warning leaflets to civilians

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

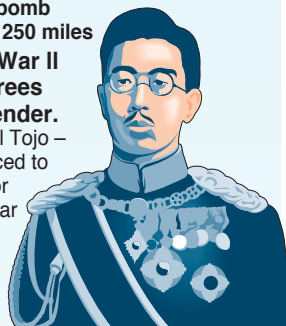
August 8 – Moscow: Russia declares war on Japan, pushing 120 miles into Japanese-held Manchuria in two days. Fearing Russian advancement in Asia, Americans feel under increased pressure to force quick Japanese surrender

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

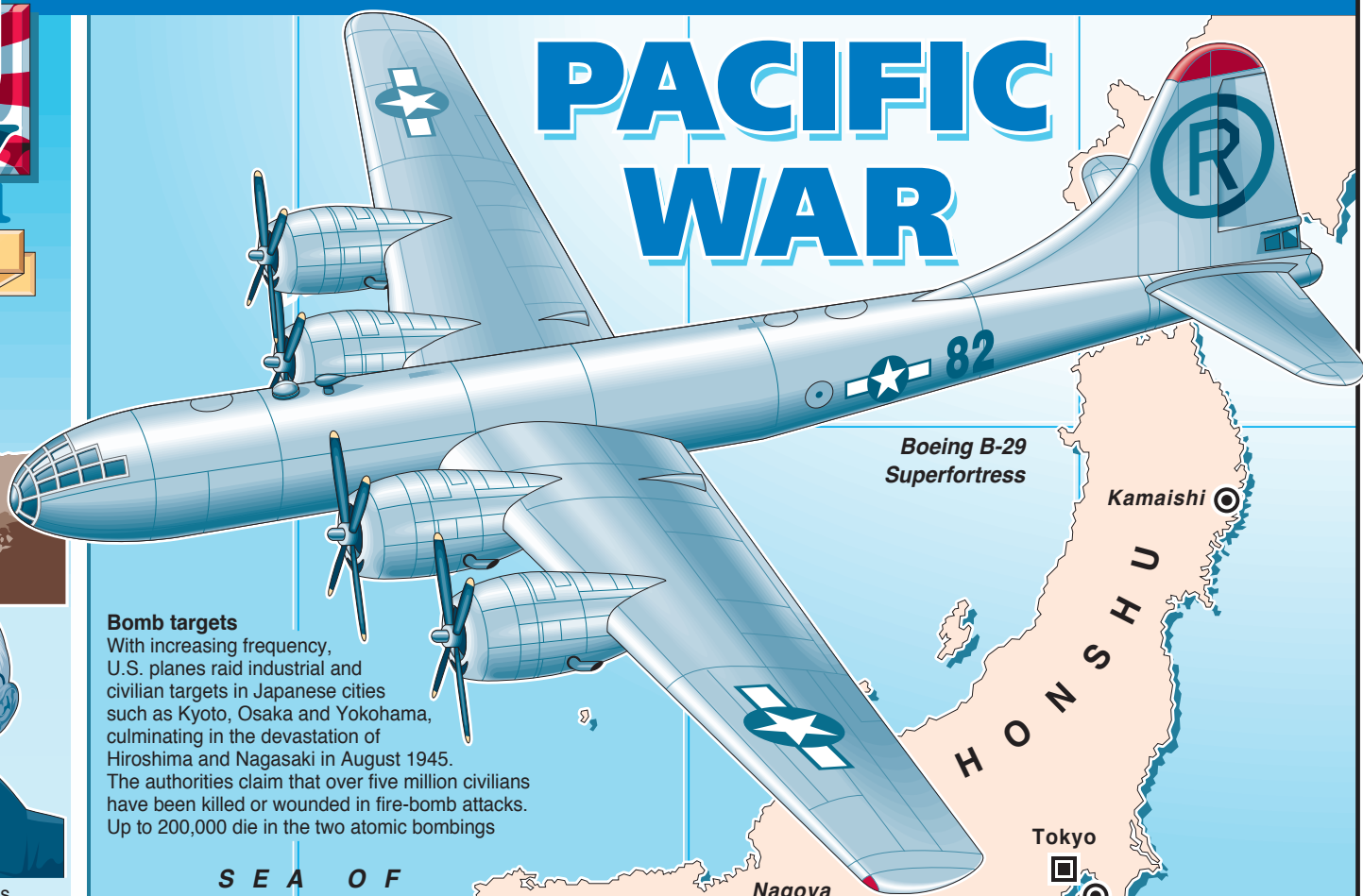
August 14 – World War II ends as Japan agrees unconditional surrender. Emperor blames General Tojo – virtual dictator until forced to resign in 1944 – for Japan's entry into war



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

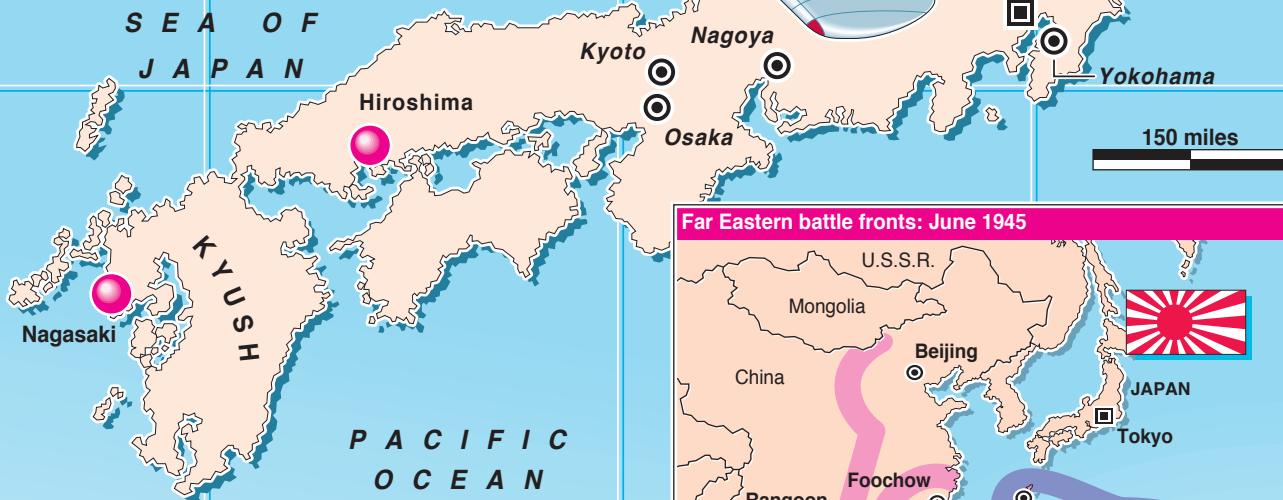


PACIFIC WAR



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

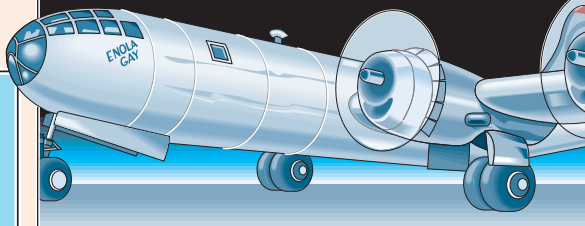
Countdown to destruction

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

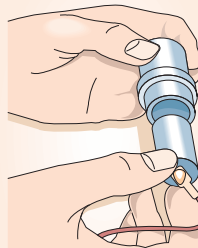
- 1 July 16, 1945 U.S. scientists explode the first atomic device at Alamogordo in the New Mexico desert
- 2 July 29 – August 2 Assembly of the A-bomb is completed on the island of Tinian



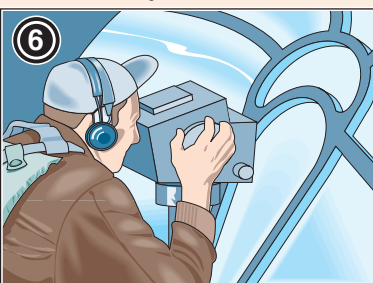
- 3 August 6, 02:45: B-29 bomber, *Enola Gay*, takes off from Tinian carrying the 9,000lb bomb, codenamed 'Little Boy'



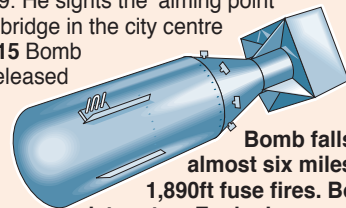
- 4 03:00 U.S. Navy weapons expert arms the bomb



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



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