

— THE STORY OF —
AMERICA



— 1939–1959 —

WORLD WAR II
AND THE U.S.
AS A GLOBAL
SUPERPOWER

1939

In May, the MS *St. Louis* leaves Germany and eventually docks off the coast of Florida. The ship carries more than 900 Jewish refugees trying to escape Nazi Germany, but they are denied entry into the United States.

1941

Japan bombs Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7.

1941

The United States declares war on Japan on December 8.

1941

The United States declares war on Germany and Italy on December 11.

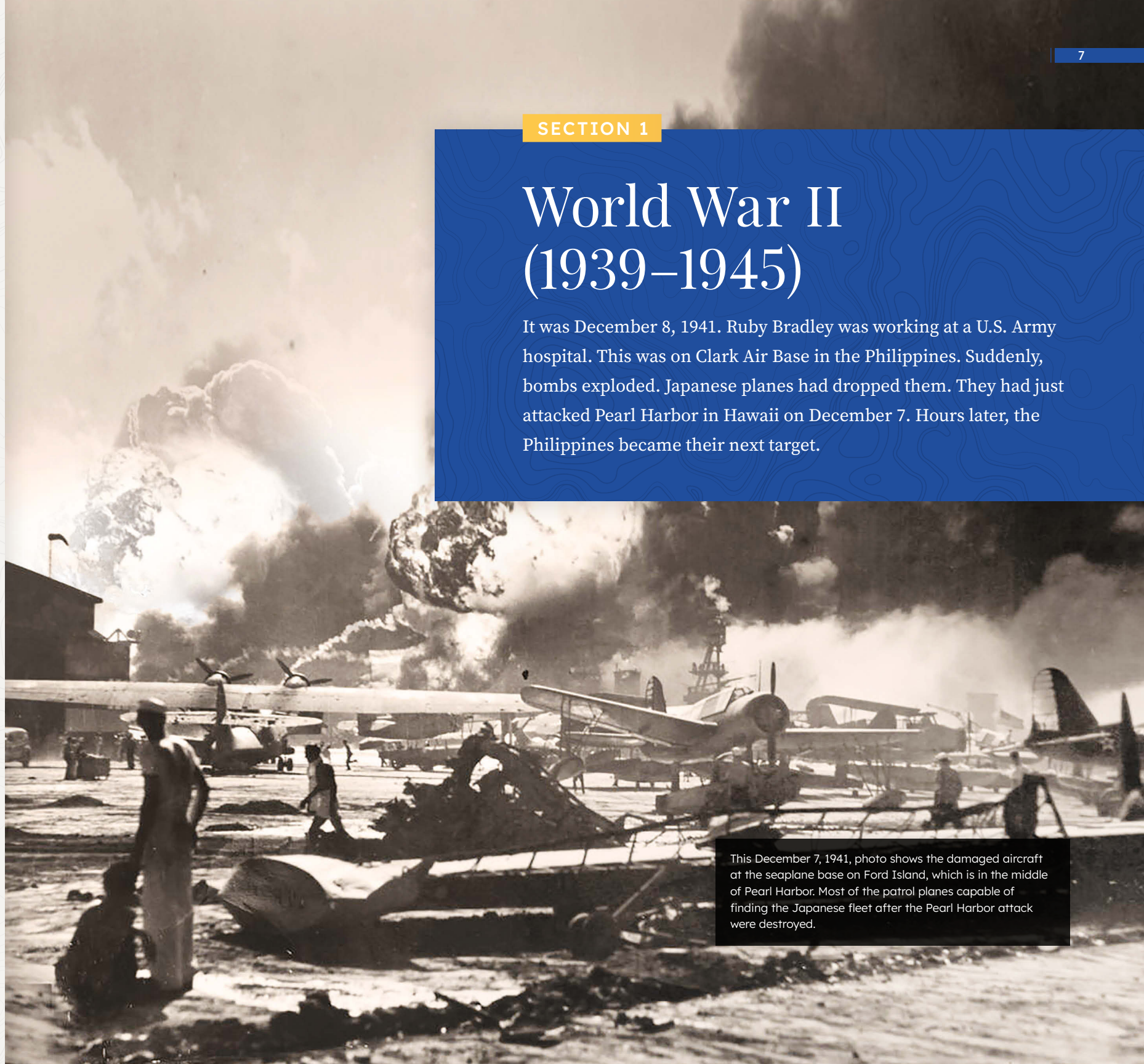
1942

President Franklin Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066, resulting in the internment of Japanese Americans.

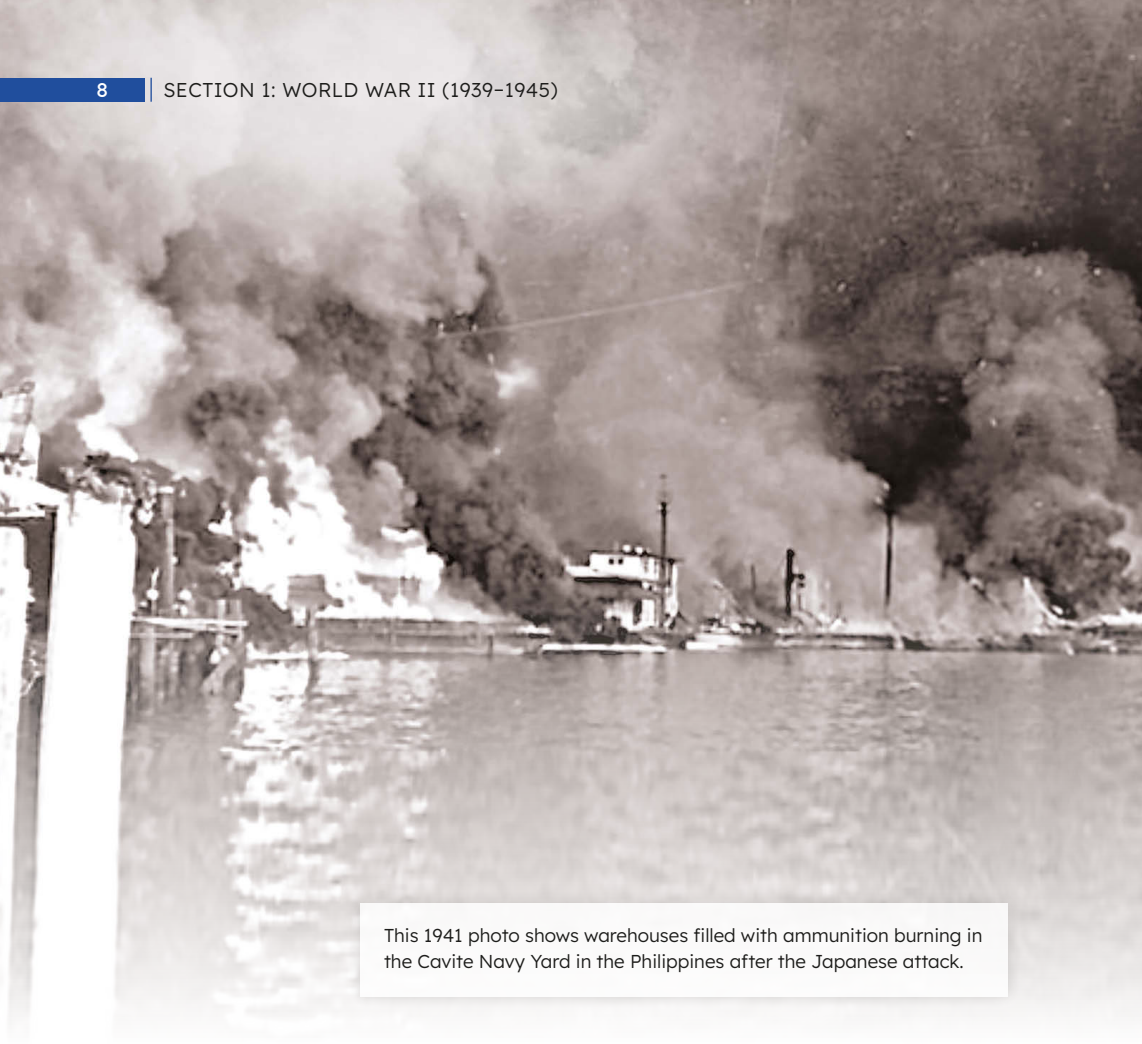
SECTION 1

World War II (1939–1945)

It was December 8, 1941. Ruby Bradley was working at a U.S. Army hospital. This was on Clark Air Base in the Philippines. Suddenly, bombs exploded. Japanese planes had dropped them. They had just attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7. Hours later, the Philippines became their next target.



This December 7, 1941, photo shows the damaged aircraft at the seaplane base on Ford Island, which is in the middle of Pearl Harbor. Most of the patrol planes capable of finding the Japanese fleet after the Pearl Harbor attack were destroyed.



This 1941 photo shows warehouses filled with ammunition burning in the Cavite Navy Yard in the Philippines after the Japanese attack.

Within weeks, Japanese forces took over the base. The Army **evacuated**. Bradley, a 34-year-old nurse, stayed behind. She hid in the hills with a doctor and another nurse. A couple helped them. Then the couple told the Japanese where they were. All three were captured and sent back to the base. It had been turned into a camp for prisoners of war (POWs).

Bradley wanted to help the other POWs. She set up a clinic. In her three years there, she assisted in 230 surgeries. The nurse also helped deliver 13 babies.

In 1943, Bradley was moved to another camp. She helped the sick there too. People called her and the other nurses “Angels in Fatigues.”

Bradley went on to serve in the Korean War. She left the Army in 1963. By then, she had won 34 medals. The nurse was the third woman to become an Army colonel. Still, Bradley didn’t think she was special. In 1991, she talked to a reporter. “I want to be remembered as just an Army nurse,” Bradley said.



Colonel Ruby Bradley was one of the most decorated women in the history of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps.

This image depicts Adolf Hitler addressing his troops at a rally in Dortmund, Germany, in 1933.

CHAPTER 1

A Growing Conflict

In 1933, Adolf Hitler had come to power in Germany. He led the Nazi Party. The **dictator** wanted to conquer all of Europe.

America had stayed on the sidelines as German troops stormed across the continent. Poland was invaded in 1939. This led Britain and France to declare war on Germany. The **Allies** wanted to stop Hitler. But his army pushed west.

By May 1940, the Germans were moving toward France. British and French troops tried to slow them down. But soon they were trapped. Hitler had pushed them to Dunkirk. This is a port in Belgium. It's on the English Channel. Allied troops crowded onto beaches. The Germans closed in. There seemed to be no way out.

1939 — 1940

..... 1942 1945 1948 1950 1953 1954 1956 1957 1959



This photo shows British and French troops waiting on the dunes at Dunkirk during the evacuation, which took place May 26 through June 4, 1940. Through the evacuation, known as Operation Dynamo, more than 338,000 soldiers were rescued.

Then boats began to arrive. Some were military ships. Many were not. There were fishing boats and private yachts. They had come from Britain. These boats rescued thousands of Allied troops.

Soon, France fell to the Nazis. Britain was Hitler's next target. It was July 1940. Hitler began sending planes across the English Channel. Every day they attacked. First, British ports and air bases were destroyed. Then cities were bombed.

British fighter planes took flight. They shot down German planes. This battle in the air went on for months. It became known as the Battle of Britain.

During the bombings, British people huddled in air raid shelters. Some hid in London's subway tunnels. Many were killed or injured. Still, the British didn't give up. The skill of their pilots frustrated the Germans.

Winston Churchill was Britain's prime minister. He made a speech. In it, he issued a warning about what might happen if Britain fell to Germany. "If we fail," Churchill said, "then the whole world, including the United States, . . . will sink into the **abyss** of a new Dark Age."



This photo shows people taking shelter in a subway tunnel during an air raid in London, England, in 1940.

1940

American Neutrality

In the U.S., life went on. By 1940, the Great Depression was over. Many people were back to work. President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal had helped. It had included many projects and programs. These had been designed to help Americans recover. Voters reelected Roosevelt for a third term in 1940.

As the war grew in Europe, Roosevelt watched closely. He wanted to help Britain. But World War I was still fresh in Americans' minds. Many didn't want the U.S. to get involved in another war. Congress had passed laws to keep the country out of conflicts between other nations. These were the **Neutrality Acts**.

Still, the president looked for creative ways to aid the Allies. Britain needed **destroyers**. Roosevelt sent 50 old Navy ships. In return, Britain let the U.S. use several of its military bases.



In this September 1939 photo, President Franklin Roosevelt appeals to Congress to amend the provision in the Neutrality Acts that made it illegal to supply military aid to other countries.



In this 1941 photo, President Franklin Roosevelt signs the Lend-Lease Act.

In 1941, Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act. Under the act, the U.S. wouldn't sell military supplies to warring countries. But it could let those countries borrow or rent the items. This aid just had to support America's defense. These terms helped the U.S. stay neutral.

Meanwhile, Roosevelt slowly prepared the nation for war. He tried to convince people that the country's survival was at stake. In speeches, he talked about the "four freedoms." These included freedom of speech and religion. Freedom from want and from fear were the other two. Protecting them all was vital to democracy, he said.

In one radio address, Roosevelt gave a warning. If Great Britain falls, he said, "all of us . . . would be living at the point of a gun."

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