After British and American troops won victories over the Axis in North Africa and Italy, Allied leaders made plans for an invasion of Europe. Led by Admiral Nimitz and General MacArthur, American forces steadily advanced across the Pacific.

### Striking Germany and Italy

**MAIN Idea** The Allies stepped up bombing of Germany and invaded Sicily and Italy.

**HISTORY AND YOU** Have you ever talked over your ideas with a good friend whose opinion you value? Read on to learn about FDR’s meetings with Churchill and Stalin.

The Allied invasion of North Africa in November 1942 had shown that a large-scale invasion from the sea was possible. The success of the landings convinced Roosevelt to meet again with Churchill to plan the next stage of the war. In January 1943, FDR headed to Casablanca, Morocco, to meet the prime minister.

At the Casablanca Conference, Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to step up the bombing of Germany. The goal of this new campaign was “the progressive destruction of the German military, industrial, and economic system, and the undermining of the morale of the German people.” The Allies also agreed to attack the Axis on the island of Sicily. Churchill called Italy the “soft underbelly” of Europe. He was convinced that the Italians would quit the war if the Allies invaded their homeland.

### Strategic Bombing

The Allies had been bombing Germany even before the Casablanca Conference. Britain’s Royal Air Force had dropped an average of 2,300 tons (2,093 t) of explosives on Germany every month for more than three years. The United States Eighth Army Air Force had dropped an additional 1,500 tons (1,365 t) of bombs during the last six months of 1942. These numbers were small, however, compared to the massive new campaign. Between January 1943 and May 1945, the Royal Air Force and the United States Eighth Army Air Force dropped approximately 53,000 tons (48,230 t) of explosives on Germany every month.

The bombing campaign did not destroy Germany’s economy or undermine German morale, but it did cause a severe oil shortage and wrecked the railroad system. It also destroyed so many aircraft factories that Germany’s air force could not replace its losses. By the time
the Allies landed in France, they had control of the air, ensuring that their troops would not be bombed.

**Striking the Soft Underbelly**

As the bombing campaign against Germany intensified, plans to invade Sicily also moved ahead. General Dwight D. Eisenhower commanded the invasion, with General Patton and the British General Bernard Montgomery heading the ground forces. The invasion began before dawn on July 10, 1943. Despite bad weather, the Allied troops made it ashore with few casualties. A new amphibious truck delivered supplies and artillery to the soldiers on the beach.

Eight days after the troops came ashore, American tanks smashed through enemy lines and captured the western half of the island. Patton’s troops then headed east, while the British attacked from the south. By August 18, the Germans had evacuated the island.
The attack on Sicily created a crisis within the Italian government. The king of Italy, Victor Emmanuel, and a group of Italian generals decided that it was time to depose Mussolini. On July 25, 1943, the king invited the dictator to his palace. “My dear Duce,” the king began, “it’s no longer any good. Italy has gone to bits. The soldiers don’t want to fight anymore. At this moment, you are the most hated man in Italy.” The king then arrested Mussolini, and the new Italian government began negotiating a surrender to the Allies.

Following Italy’s surrender, however, German troops seized control of northern Italy, including Rome, and returned Mussolini to power. The Germans then took up positions near the heavily fortified town of Cassino. The terrain near Cassino was steep, barren, and rocky. Rather than attack such difficult terrain, the Allies landed at Anzio, behind German lines. Instead of retreating, however, as the Allies had hoped, the Germans surrounded the Allied troops near Anzio.

It took the Allies five months to break through the German lines at Cassino and Anzio. Finally, in late May 1944, the Germans retreated. Less than two weeks later, the Allies captured Rome. Fighting in Italy continued, however, for another year. The Italian campaign was one of the bloodiest in the war, with more than 300,000 Allied casualties.

The Tehran Conference

Roosevelt wanted to meet with Stalin before the Allies invaded France. In late 1943, Stalin agreed, proposing that Roosevelt and Churchill meet him in Tehran, Iran.

The leaders reached several agreements. Stalin promised to launch a full-scale offensive against the Germans when the Allies invaded France in 1944. Roosevelt and Stalin then agreed to divide Germany after the war so that it would never again threaten world peace. Stalin promised that once Germany was defeated, the Soviet Union would help the United States against Japan. He also accepted Roosevelt’s proposal of an international peace-keeping organization after the war.

Explaining What effect did the Allied victory in Sicily have on Italy?
**Landing in France**

**MAIN Idea** The Allies landed a massive force on France’s beaches on June 6, 1944, known as D-Day.

**HISTORY AND YOU** What has been the biggest surprise you ever successfully planned? Read on to find out how the Allies made a surprise landing in France.

After the conference in Tehran, Roosevelt headed to Cairo, Egypt, where he and Churchill continued planning the invasion of France. One major decision still had to be made. The president had to choose the commander for Operation Overlord—the code name for the invasion. Roosevelt selected General Eisenhower.

**Planning Operation Overlord**

Knowing that the Allies would eventually invade France, Hitler had fortified the coast along the English Channel. The Allies did have the advantage of surprise, because the Germans did not know when or where the Allies would land. The Germans believed the Allies would land in Pas-de-Calais—the area of France closest to Britain. The Allies placed dummy equipment along the coast across from Calais as decoys. The real target was to be further south, at five beaches covering a 60-mile spread along the Normandy coast.

By the spring of 1944, more than 1.5 million American soldiers, 12,000 airplanes, and 5 million tons (4.6 million t) of equipment had been sent to England. Only one thing was left to do—pick the date for the invasion and give the command to go. The invasion had to begin at night to hide the ships crossing the English Channel. The ships had to arrive at low tide so that they could see the beach obstacles. The low tide had to come at dawn so that gunners bombarding the coast could see their targets. Paratroopers, who would be dropped behind enemy lines before the main landing on the beaches, needed a moonlit night to see where to land. Perhaps most important of all, the weather had to be good. A storm would ground the airplanes, and high waves would swamp landing craft.

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**June 6, 1944**

Over 130,000 American, British, and Canadian troops land in Normandy on D-Day, beginning the liberation of France.

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**March 4, 1944**

The Allies make their first major daylight bombing raid on Berlin.

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**January 1944**

American forces attack Monte Cassino and land at Anzio in an attempt to break through German lines and capture Rome.

**Analyzing TIME LINES**

1. **Identifying** On what date did Allied forces land at Normandy to begin liberating France, and what is the date known as?

2. **Determining Cause and Effect** What effect did the successful Allied invasion of Sicily have on politics in Italy?
Given all these requirements, there were only a few days each month when the invasion could begin. The first opportunity was from June 5 to 7, 1944. Eisenhower’s planning staff referred to the day any operation began by the letter D. The date for the invasion, therefore, came to be known as D-Day. Heavy cloud cover, strong winds, and high waves made landing on June 5 impossible. The weather was forecast to improve briefly a day later. The Channel would still be rough, but the landing ships and aircraft could operate. After looking at forecasts one last time, shortly after midnight on June 6, 1944, Eisenhower gave the final order: “OK, we’ll go.”

The Longest Day

Nearly 7,000 ships carrying more than 100,000 soldiers headed for Normandy’s coast. At the same time, 23,000 paratroopers were dropped inland, east and west of the beaches. Allied fighter-bombers raced up and down the coast, hitting bridges, bunkers, and radar sites. At dawn, Allied warships began a tremendous barrage. Thousands of shells rained down on the beaches, code-named “Utah,” “Omaha,” “Gold,” “Sword,” and “Juno.”

The American landing at Utah Beach went well. The German defenses were weak, and in less than three hours the troops had captured the beach and moved inland, suffering fewer than 200 casualties. On the eastern flank, the British and Canadian landings also went well. By the end of the day, nearly 35,000 American troops had landed at Utah, but by early afternoon, Bradley received this message: “Troops formerly pinned down on beaches . . . [are] advancing up heights behind beaches.” The invasion—the largest amphibious operation in history—had succeeded.

Summarizing What conditions had to be met before Eisenhower could order D-Day to begin?

The United States began island-hopping across the Pacific with the Battle of Tarawa in November 1943. Reporter Robert Sherrod witnessed the savage hand-to-hand fighting:

“A Marine jumped over the seawall and began throwing blocks of fused TNT into a coconut-log pillbox. . . . Two more Marines scaled the seawall, one of them carrying a twin-cylindered tank strapped to their shoulders, the other holding the nozzle of the flame thrower. As another charge of TNT boomed inside the pillbox, causing smoke and dust to billow out, a khaki-clad figure ran out the side entrance. The flame thrower, waiting for him, caught him in its withering stream of intense fire. As soon as it touched him, the [Japanese soldier] flared up like a piece of celluloid. He was dead instantly . . . charred almost to nothingness.”

—from Tarawa: The Story of a Battle
Driving Japan Back

**MAIN Idea** American troops slowly regained islands in the Pacific that the Japanese had captured.

**HISTORY AND YOU** Have you ever had to do a project over? Read to learn about American forces that took back Pacific islands from the Japanese.

While the buildup for invading France was taking place in Britain, American military leaders were also developing a strategy to defeat Japan. The American plan called for a two-pronged attack. The Pacific Fleet, commanded by Admiral Nimitz, would advance through the central Pacific by “hopping” from one island to the next, closer and closer to Japan. Meanwhile, General MacArthur’s troops would advance through the Solomon Islands, capture the north coast of New Guinea, and then launch an invasion to retake the Philippines.

**Island-Hopping in the Pacific**

By the fall of 1943, the navy was ready to launch its island-hopping campaign, but the geography of the central Pacific posed a problem. Many of the islands were coral reef atolls. The water over the coral reef was not always deep enough to allow landing craft to get to the shore. If the landing craft ran aground on the reef, the troops would have to wade to the beach. As some 5,000 United States Marines learned at Tarawa Atoll, wading ashore could cause very high casualties. Tarawa, part of the Gilbert Islands, was the navy’s first objective. The Japanese base there had to be captured in order to put air bases in the nearby Marshall Islands.

**Analyzing GEOGRAPHY**

1. **Place** When Nimitz left Pearl Harbor, what was his destination?
2. **Place** Who controlled Guam in 1942?
When the landing craft hit the reef, at least 20 ships ran aground. The marines had to plunge into shoulder-high water and wade several hundred yards to the beach. Raked by Japanese fire, only one marine in three made it ashore. Once the marines reached the beach, the battle was still far from over.

Although many troops died wading ashore, one vehicle had been able to cross the reef and deliver its troops onto the beaches. The vehicle was a boat with tank tracks, nicknamed the “Alligator.” This amphibious tractor, or amphibtrac, had been invented in the late 1930s to rescue people in Florida swamps. It had never been used in combat, and the navy decided to buy only 200 of them in 1941. If more had been available at Tarawa, American casualties probably would have been much lower.

More than 1,000 marines died on Tarawa. Photos of bodies lying crumpled next to burning landing craft shocked Americans back home. Many people began to wonder how many lives would be lost in defeating Japan.

The next assault—Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands—went much more smoothly. This time all of the troops went ashore in amphibtracs. Although the Japanese resisted fiercely, the marines captured Kwajalein and nearby Eniwetok with far fewer casualties.

After the Marshall Islands, the navy targeted the Mariana Islands. American military planners wanted to use the Marianas as a base for a new heavy bomber, the B-29 Superfortress. The B-29 could fly farther than any other plane in the world. From airfields in the Marianas, B-29s could bomb Japan. Admiral Nimitz decided to invade three of the Mariana Islands: Saipan, Tinian, and Guam. Despite strong Japanese resistance, American troops captured all three by August 1944. A few months later, B-29s began bombing Japan.

MacArthur Returns

As the forces under Admiral Nimitz hopped across the central Pacific, General Douglas MacArthur’s troops began their own campaign

The Navajo Code Talkers

When American marines stormed an enemy beach, they used radios to communicate. Using radios, however, meant that the Japanese could intercept and translate the messages. In the midst of the battle, however, there was no time to use a code-machine. Acting upon the suggestion of Philip Johnston, an engineer who had lived on a Navajo reservation as a child, the marines recruited Navajos to serve as “code talkers.”

The Navajo language had no written alphabet and was known only to the Navajo and a few missionaries and anthropologists. The Navajo recruits developed code words, using their own language, that stood for military terms. For example, the Navajo word jay-sho, or “buzzard,” was code for bomber; lotso, or “whale,” meant battleship; and na-ma-si, or “potatoes,” stood for grenades.

Code talkers proved invaluable in combat. They could relay a message in minutes that would have taken a code-machine operator hours to encipher and transmit. At the battle of Iwo Jima, code talkers transmitted more than 800 messages during the first 48 hours as the marines struggled to get ashore under intense bombardment. More than 400 Navajo served in the marine corps as code talkers. Sworn to secrecy, their mission was not revealed until 1971. In 2001 Congress awarded the code talkers the Congressional Gold Medal for their unique contribution during the war.

What advantage did the code talkers provide over traditional forms of communication?
in the southwest Pacific. The campaign began by invading Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands, east of New Guinea, in August 1942. It continued until early 1944, when MacArthur's troops finally captured enough islands to surround the main Japanese base in the region. In response, the Japanese withdrew their ships and aircraft from the base, although they left 100,000 troops behind to hold the island.

Worried that the navy's advance across the central Pacific was leaving him behind, MacArthur ordered his forces to leap nearly 600 miles (966 km) to capture the Japanese base at Hollandia on the north coast of New Guinea. Shortly after securing New Guinea, MacArthur's troops seized the island of Morotai—the last stop before the Philippines.

To take back the Philippines, the United States assembled an enormous invasion force. In October 1944, more than 700 ships carrying more than 160,000 troops sailed for Leyte Gulf in the Philippines. On October 20, the troops began to land on Leyte, an island on the eastern side of the Philippines. A few hours after the invasion began, MacArthur headed to the beach. Upon reaching the shore, he strode to a radio and spoke into the microphone: “People of the Philippines, I have returned. By the grace of Almighty God, our forces stand again on Philippine soil.”

To stop the American invasion, the Japanese sent four aircraft carriers toward the Philippines from the north and secretly dispatched another fleet to the west. Believing the Japanese carriers were leading the main attack, most of the American carriers protecting the invasion left Leyte Gulf and headed north to stop them. Seizing their chance, the Japanese warships to the west raced through the Philippine Islands into Leyte Gulf and ambushed the remaining American ships.

The Battle of Leyte Gulf was the largest naval battle in history. It was also the first time that the Japanese used kamikaze attacks. Kamikaze means “divine wind” in Japanese. It refers to the great storm that destroyed the Mongol fleet during its invasion of Japan in the thirteenth century. Kamikaze pilots would deliberately crash their planes into American ships, killing themselves but also inflicting severe damage. Luckily for the Americans, just as their situation was becoming desperate, the Japanese commander, believing more American ships were on the way, ordered a retreat.

Although the Japanese fleet had retreated, the campaign to recapture the Philippines from the Japanese was long and grueling. More than 80,000 Japanese were killed; fewer than 1,000 surrendered. MacArthur’s troops did not capture Manila until March 1945. The battle left the city in ruins and more than 100,000 Filipino civilians dead. The remaining Japanese retreated into the rugged terrain north of Manila; they were still fighting in August 1945 when word came that Japan had surrendered.

Describing What strategy did the United States Navy use to advance across the Pacific?
The Battle for Omaha Beach

The selection of a site for the largest amphibious landing in history was one of the biggest decisions of World War II. Allied planners considered coastlines from Denmark to Portugal in search of a sheltered location with firm flat beaches within range of friendly fighter planes in England. There also had to be enough roads and paths to move jeeps and trucks off the beaches and to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of American, Canadian, and British troops set to stream ashore following the invasion. An airfield and a seaport that the Allies could use were also needed. Most important was a reasonable expectation of achieving the element of surprise.

How Did Geography Shape the Battle?

Surrounded at both ends by cliffs that rose wall-like from the sea, Omaha Beach was only four miles long. The entire beach was overlooked by a 150-foot high bluff and there were only five ravines leading from the beach to the top of the bluff.

The Germans made full use of the geographic advantage the 150-foot bluff gave them. They dug trenches and built concrete bunkers for machine guns at the top of the cliffs and positioned them to guard the ravines leading to the beach.

Analyzing GEOGRAPHY

1. Location Why did the Allies choose Normandy as the invasion site?
2. Human-Environment Interaction How did geography make the invasion of Omaha Beach difficult?
American troops were carried to Omaha Beach in landing craft. Many of the landing craft came under such intense fire that they opened their front ramp doors early.