



# Illinois During World War II: Part 1



**R.** After you **READ** this passage you should be able to  
**I.** **IDENTIFY** the key concepts, **SUMMARIZE** the  
**S.** passage and be prepared to **EXTEND** your knowledge  
**E.** through inquiry and research.

1. At the eleventh hour, on the eleventh day, of the eleventh month in the year 1918, the **Armistice** went into effect, ending World War I. The following year, the victorious Allied countries (Russia was not included) met in Versailles, France to determine what the post-war world would look like. The Ottoman Empire, Austro-Hungarian Empire and German Empire were broken apart. Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles is known as the War Guilt Clause. This part of the treaty forced Germany to accept responsibility for starting World War I and forced the German government to pay the Allies for the cost of the war (reparations). Germany was required to pay \$33 billion. That amount is so massive, Germany didn't make their last reparation payment until 2010!



2. The anger and embarrassment caused by the defeat during World War I along with a series of economic crises created an atmosphere that allowed the Nazi party to gain power. After becoming **Fuhrer** in 1934, Adolf Hitler began to rearm Germany and break the Treaty of Versailles. On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland and World War II began. Although the war began in 1939, the U.S. did not enter the war until 1941. The U.S. would be forced to enter the war because of Japan.

In Asia, Japan, who fought with the Allies in World War I, was trying to create an empire in the Pacific. Japan annexed (took over) Korea in 1910, invaded Manchuria in 1931 and China in 1937. When Japan invaded Vietnam (back then it was called French Indochina) in 1940, the U.S. cut off oil supplies to Japan. 75-80% of Japan's oil came from the U.S.

3. Seeing the U.S. as its biggest threat in the Pacific, Japan decided to launch a sneak attack against our Pacific fleet located at Pearl Harbor. On December 7, 1941, Japanese planes bombed Pearl Harbor, Hawaii killing more than 2,400 people and damaging or sinking 21 ships.

America's shift from peace time to war time was amazing. During the war, 16 million Americans joined the military. In 1939 our Gross National Product (value of all goods and services produced in a year) was \$88.6 billion. The GNP rose to \$135 billion by 1944. Factories

stopped making whatever products they produced before the war and dedicated themselves to producing materials to win the war. In 1941, more than three million cars were produced in American factories. The next four years combined, automakers produced only 139 cars! Instead of cars, companies like Ford, General Motors and Chrysler produced tanks, trucks and airplane engines.

4. Factories were not the only thing built in Illinois during the war. More than 20 prisoner of war camps



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were built in Illinois to house captured enemy soldiers. POW camps were built in Illinois towns such as, Glenview, Hoopston, Washington, Rockford and Rock Island.

Illinois played a major role in the United States effort to defeat the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy and Japan). Chicago companies were awarded more than \$9 billion in war contracts from the federal government. The largest factory in the world was located in Chicago during World War II. The factory produced the massive B-29 Superfortress, a four engined bomber used by the Army Air Corps. The factory employed more than 30,000 workers and covered 30 city blocks! The massive growth in industry was not just in Chicago. The Illinois

workforce rose from 850,000 in 1940 to 1.2 million by 1944.

Besides working in factories, men and women from Illinois joined the military in large numbers. Almost 1 million men and more than 13,000 women from Illinois joined the military during World War II. More than 17,000 of those brave men and women died during the war.

On August 15, 1945 Japan surrendered ending World War II. Celebrations broke out all over Illinois. In Chicago, residents flooded the streets and fireworks exploded over Chinatown. Illinois servicemen and women, factory workers, farmers and regular citizens were a big reason the U.S. won World War II.





# Illinois During World War II: Part 2



**R.** After you **READ** this passage you should be able to  
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**E.** through inquiry and research.

Check out these four amazing stories about Illinois and World War II.

## The Tiny Illinois Town that Helped Win the War

1. What was the most important city in the U.S. during World War II...New York, Los Angeles, Chicago? Some historians believe, for a period of time during World War II, the most important town in America was Norris City, Illinois. U.S. oil was crucial to win World War II. Oil from Texas and Oklahoma had to be shipped to industrial centers in the northeast and to other Allied countries. Historian Keith Miller wrote, "Without the **prodigious** delivery of oil from the U.S. this global war, quite frankly, could never have been won." In the first few years of World War II, German submarines sank nearly 3,000 Allied ships. The flow of oil was in jeopardy. The war could be lost!

The government decided an overland oil pipeline was needed to keep the oil flowing and win the war. The pipeline would eventually stretch from the oil fields of Texas through southern Illinois to New Jersey. The 1,253 mile pipeline would require more than a year to be built. The pipeline reached Norris City in February of 1943. Massive oil tanks that could hold a total of 1.2 million barrels of oil were built in Norris City. The oil was then shipped by railroad to the northeast, while the remainder of the pipeline was being completed. Norris City became so important that author Ed Oliver states that Nazi war planners identified Norris City as a target to be destroyed! Norris City was never attacked, and the oil that flowed through the town helped win the war.

### "There's No Crying in Baseball!"

2. More than 500 major league baseball players joined the military during World War II. Baseball, America's favorite past time was in trouble. Professional and minor league teams were in danger of not being able to field teams. Who came to the rescue... women! Phillip Wrigley, owner of the Chicago Cubs helped establish the All-American Girls Professional

Baseball League (AAGPBL). During the war, the league would have teams in midwestern towns such as; South Bend, Indiana, Racine, Wisconsin, and Rockford, Illinois.

The league continued until 1954. At its peak in 1948, almost 1 million fans attended AAGPBL games. In 1988, the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York added a display to honor women's baseball. In 1992, the movie, A League of Their Own, starring Tom Hanks and Geena Davis was released. The movie was about the story of the AAGPBL. One of the most memorable lines from the movie happens when Rockford Peaches manager Jimmy Dugan (played by Tom Hanks) yells at one of his players for making a mistake during the game. The player begins to cry, prompting Dugan to say, "Are you crying? There's no crying. There's no crying in baseball!" This became one of the most famous lines of dialogue in movie history. By the way, what was the best team in the AAGPBL? A team from Illinois of course, the Rockford Peaches. They won four league championships.

### 'Now I am Become Death, the Destroyer of Worlds'

3. Some of you may know that the United States dropped two atomic bombs at the end of World War II to force Japan to surrender. The bombs nicknamed Fatman and Little Boy were dropped on August 6 and August 9, 1945. A few of you may also know that the the top secret project to build the atomic bomb was called The Manhattan Project. Did you know some of the most important experiments for the atomic bomb were done right here in Illinois? That's right, led by physicist Enrico Fermi, the first controlled, self-sustaining **nuclear** chain reaction occurred in 1942 at the University of Chicago. Something that important and vital to the war effort, not to mention, incredibly dangerous had to have taken place in a super secure and secret lab on campus, right? Wrong! The experiments were conducted in an empty squash court under the stands at the University of Chicago's football field.

In 1943, the structure, called a nuclear reactor, which produced the first atomic chain reaction, was disassembled and moved away from the city to Red Gate Woods in the Palos Forest Preserve. At this





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site, codenamed Argonne, other reactors would be built making the atomic bomb possible. After the war, the site was dismantled and the nuclear waste which is very deadly, was placed in concrete and buried at the site. Having deadly nuclear waste buried below the ground in a very popular nature and vacation spot was not the greatest idea. The waste was removed, but this didn't happen until 1994! Today, the site has popular hiking and bicycle trails.

The atomic bomb was completed and tested in the New Mexico. After the bomb was tested, head Scientist, Robert Oppenheimer was horrified at its destructive power. He sadly stated, "Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds".

## The Illinois Preacher that Took Down the Nazis

4. Christian Christiansen was born in Norway in 1859. As a child, Christian loved to hike in the mountains and explore the fjords near his home. Later, as a young man, he became a sailor and made several trips across the Atlantic Ocean. He moved to the United States and eventually settled in the small town of Gardner, Illinois. In 1888, he became a Lutheran Minister. Christian was in his 80s when the U.S. entered World War II.

The U.S. was not the only country trying to develop the atomic bomb, Germany was also conducting experiments to build the bomb. Christian read a Chicago Tribune article about secret Nazi facilities in Norway. The Allies knew about the facilities, but they were buried in the Norwegian mountains and were nearly impossible to destroy. While reading descriptions of the area, Christian realized that the facilities were located in the same mountains that he hiked as a child. He knew exactly how the Allies could get there and destroy the facilities. With help from Burt Parkinson, editor of the Gardner Chronicle, Christian contacted the U.S. military. U.S. Navy officials came from Washington D.C. to Christian's house in Gardner. They laid out maps on the floor in his house and Christian showed them how to get to the secret facilities. The information was passed on to the British. British **commandos** then attacked and destroyed the facility, ending the Nazis' hope of building the atomic bomb.

Christian received awards from Norway, Britain and the United States. In 1965 a movie called, *The Heroes of Telemark* was made about the raid on the secret Nazi atomic facility. In 2004, a monument was dedicated in Gardner to honor Christian. The preacher who took down the Nazis.





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Use the glossary to define the words below.

1. Armistice
2. Fuehrer
3. Prodigious
4. Nuclear
5. Commandos



**Research online to find out what countries were part of WWII. Put the country names below into the proper column.**

France                      Germany                      Britain                      United States                      Japan  
 Soviet Union                      Italy                      China                      Canada                      Australia

Allied Powers	Axis Powers



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Use the Informational Text to answer the following questions with complete sentences.

1. What was the War Guilt Clause in the Treaty of Versailles?
2. Why did the United States join World War II?
3. Explain at least three ways that Illinois helped the war effort during WWII.
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
4. Why was Norris City, Illinois an important city for the United States during WWII?
5. Why was the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League formed?
6. What important event occurred under the stands of the University of Chicago football stadium?
7. What unsafe object was buried in the Red Gate Woods in the Palos Forest Preserve?
8. How did Christian Christiansen help the Allies defeat the Germans in WWII?



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## A Date that Will Live in Infamy

Below are portions of the famous speech that Franklin Roosevelt delivered to congress and the nation the day after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Read the text to answer the questions on the next page.

Mr. Vice President, and Mr. Speaker, and Members of the Senate and House of Representatives:

Yesterday, December 7, 1941 – a date which will live in infamy – the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that Nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in the American Island of Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to our Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. And while this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or of armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time the Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace. . . .

. . . Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our Nation. . . .

. . . I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.



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**Use the text from Franklin Roosevelt's speech to answer the questions below.**

1. What date did Franklin Roosevelt give the speech? How do you know?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. In the speech, Roosevelt mentions the formal reply delivered to the U.S. Secretary of State. When was this reply delivered in relation to the attack on Pearl Harbor.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. This reply had no mention of the attack or a declaration of war. Why is that significant?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. According to the last sentence, what is the purpose of Roosevelt's speech?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Imagine it is 1941 and you just heard Roosevelt give this speech on the radio. How would you feel about the fact that the United States entered World War II? Write a paragraph explaining how this event could impact you and your family.