The third in a four-part series

World War II began around 1939. The United States did not get involved until 1941. That was when Japan attacked the United States. Japan bombed a place in Hawaii called Pearl Harbor. The United States had already been making tanks, guns, ships and trucks, though. Many Americans were ready to use these against Japan. About 16 million Americans served in the military during the war.
One side of the war was called the Allied powers. These included the United States, Britain, France and the Soviet Union. The other side was called the Axis powers. This was Germany, Italy and Japan. At that time Germany was led by the Nazis.

Many people during this time felt lonely. Most soldiers were shipped overseas. They were sent far away from their families.

**American Troops On The Way**

Men stayed for a few days in New York City or San Francisco before going overseas. They drank and laughed. They pretended to be confident and happy.

The next step was to board a ship. It was crowded, unpleasant and dangerous. German submarines lurked underwater.

**Allied Forces Gain Ground Against Germany And Japan**

The Axis powers were starting to lose by late 1942. The U.S. Navy had its greatest victory ever. The United States beat the Japanese at the Battle of Midway. The Japanese were no longer able to attack after that. It was just a matter of time before Japan's troops were crushed.

The German army was another matter. Its soldiers were well trained. Its weapons were sophisticated. Its leaders were brilliant. Only a combined effort from many nations could bring it down. But it happened. Britain attacked German forces in Africa in 1942. Americans trapped thousands of German soldiers there. The Soviet army beat the German troops that had conquered France. Germany's troops were rarely able to attack after that.

**Allies Prepare For Invasion Of Normandy**

Dwight D. Eisenhower was put in charge of the fight in Europe in 1944. He had to be responsible for the greatest attack in history. His goal was to attack the Nazi Atlantic Wall. This was a network of German forts. It ran along the northwestern coast of Europe. It was designed to kill anyone who came out of the water.
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