

The Participation of the Allies in World War II

Every year people of our country celebrate the anniversary of the day of Great Victory. Parades and processions of veterans are held in May. People lay flowers in Moscow's Park Pobedi and at the Tombs of the Unknown Soldiers in different cities. In each city and town, people join the Immortal Regiment marches to remember relatives who participated in the war. As for us, we try to collect as much information about the war as possible. I believe that nothing should be forgotten.

After the First World War Adolph Hitler founded *the Nazi Party* in Germany. Together with his followers he began to spread his beliefs. Hitler called the German people a superior race, which must rule the world.

Soon Hitler made himself dictator of Germany and began preparing for war. The Nazis oppressed anyone whose race, religion or politics they didn't like. They built huge *concentration camps*. Jews, Catholics, Poles and others whom Hitler considered enemies were sent to these camps.

Germany was not the only country in Europe ruled by a dictator. **Benito Mussolini**, who had come to power in Italy, was making plans to revive the glory of *the Roman Empire*.

In Asia, a military group came to power in **Japan**. They also believed in the "glory" of ruling over other nations. They wanted to take control of other countries in Asia and islands in the Pacific Ocean.

In the 1930s Germany, Italy and Japan formed an alliance called **the Axis**. Britain and France led the alliance of European countries called **the Allies**. The Allies opposed the Axis.

Japan was the first to use military might. In 1931 the Japanese army invaded a part of China called *Manchuria*. In 1935 Italy invaded parts of Africa. Germany seized *Austria* and part of *Czechoslovakia*.

On September 1, 1939 the German army invaded *Poland*. The Polish government asked Britain and France for help. On September 3, 1939, Britain and France declared the war on Germany. That was the beginning of **the Second World War**.

The Germans used a new tactics called a blitzkrieg (lightning war). They conquered Poland in less than 3 weeks. The attack was so swift that Poland's allies, Britain and France, had no time to come and help Poland.

In 1940 the Germans invaded *Denmark*, *Norway*, *the Netherlands*, *Belgium* and *Luxembourg*. The French army was thought to be very strong. But, with the help of Italy, Germany defeated the French in a few weeks. The British who were fighting in France were driven into the sea losing almost all their weapons. At **Dunkirk**, a small French port, the British army was saved by thousands of private boats which crossed the English Channel carrying the soldiers over to Britain. As some historians said, Dunkirk was a miraculous rescue from military disaster. Britain's new Prime-Minister, Sir Winston Churchill, played a great role in keeping up the fighting spirit of the British people. He persuaded the nation that Dunkirk was a victory of courage and determination at Britain's darkest hour.

By June 1940 Britain stood alone against the Nazis. Germany planes made bombing raids against British cities, railways and factories. All night long the bombs dropped. The pilots of the British air force tried to fright off the German planes.

Hitler's plan was to break the spirit of the British and destroy Britain's ability to defend itself. Then the Germans would cross the English Channel from France. They would invade and take control of Britain. But *the British Royal Air Force* shot down many German planes, and Germany was not able to fulfil its plan of invading the country. The battle of Britain was the Allies' first victory.

In 1941 Germany and Japan made two fatal mistakes: Germany attacked the Soviet Union and Japan attacked the United States of America. Thus the Axis of Germany, Italy and Japan forced onto the battlefield two of the most powerful nations in the world. Germany had to fight on 2 fronts: in the east and in the west.

By 1943 the Soviet army was pushing the Germans out of the USSR, and Britain had driven German and Italian troops out of North Africa. In July 1943 the Allied troops landed in Italy.

Meanwhile the British army was preparing a huge invasion of France. A large army and thousands of ships and boats were gathered on the southern shore of Great Britain. The day of the invasion went down into history as **D-Day**. On the night of June 5, 1944, the Allied Army boarded ships in Great Britain. A giant fleet of 600 warships and 4,000 smaller boats carried 176,000 Allied soldiers towards France. The soldiers were from the United States, Britain, Canada, France, Poland and many other nations. In the sky 11,000 Allied planes bombed the German positions in France. Early in the morning of June 6, the Allies landed on the French beaches.

The invasion of France by Allied forces was the beginning of the end for Germany. Four months later France and Belgium were freed. Then the battle for Germany began. In May 1945 Germany surrendered.

Japan continued to fight until Britain and the USA dropped 2 atom bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. 11,000 people perished immediately, and many others died later from the after-effects. It was a terrible end to the war, and bitter memories are still living in the hearts of people all over the world.