

Section Summary

AMERICA ENTERS THE WAR

As Japan expanded its empire throughout Asia, its relationship with the United States worsened. Japan needed resources such as oil, steel, and rubber to maintain its military. The United States began to withhold these goods to limit Japan's expansion. The United States also instituted a trade embargo against Japan.

At first, **Hideki Tojo**, the Japanese prime minister, tried to keep the United States neutral. However, when a trade agreement with the United States failed, Tojo decided on a decisive military strike. On December 7, 1941, hundreds of Japanese airplanes bombed the site of the United States Navy's main base in the Pacific at **Pearl Harbor**, Hawaii. Nearly 2,500 people were killed in this devastating surprise attack. Many ships were sunk, and hundreds of aircraft were destroyed or damaged.

Congress immediately declared war on Japan. Germany and Italy then declared war on the United States. Men joined the military by the millions. Thousands of women joined the **Women's Army Corps (WAC)** as clerical workers, truck drivers, instructors, and lab technicians. The government also created agencies to ensure the production of military equipment. These agencies allocated scarce materials to the proper industries.

In Asia, United States Army General **Douglas MacArthur** struggled unsuccessfully to hold the Philippines against the Japanese forces. U.S. forces finally had to retreat, and MacArthur evacuated to Australia. Some 75,000 U.S. troops fell back to the Bataan Peninsula and Corregidor Island where, in May 1942, they had to surrender. Japanese troops forced these sick and malnourished men to march many miles. More than 7,000 American and Filipino troops died on the march, which is known as the **Bataan Death March**.

By the summer of 1942, Japan controlled Southeast Asia and the western Pacific. Then in May 1942, the United States Navy finally began to stop the Japanese advance. At the **Battle of Coral Sea**, the United States Navy prevented Japan from taking a key spot in New Guinea. The impressive Japanese offensive was over.

Review Questions

1. Why did the United States begin a trade embargo against Japan?

2. What happened to U.S. forces in the Philippines?

READING CHECK

Why was the Battle of Coral Sea so important to the United States?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *allocated* mean in the underlined sentence? What clues can you find in the surrounding words, phrases, or sentences? Circle the words in the underlined passage that could help you learn what *allocated* means.

READING SKILL

Identify Causes and Effects
What was the United States' immediate reaction to the attack on Pearl Harbor?
