



THE NATIONAL  
WWII MUSEUM  
NEW ORLEANS

## **World War II in Photographs** **A Visual Timeline Lesson**

from the Education Department  
The National WWII Museum  
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[www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education](http://www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education)

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# World War II in Photographs

## A Visual Timeline Lesson

**OBJECTIVE:** Using critical thinking and observation skills as well as prior knowledge, students will gain familiarity or reinforce knowledge of the chronology of WWII by matching images, descriptive captions and dates of 25 WWII events. This lesson makes a great WWII review.

**GRADE LEVEL:** 7-12

**STANDARDS:** **Content Era 8 (1929-1945) Standard 3**—the causes and course of WWII

**Historical Thinking Standard 1**—the student thinks chronologically and interprets data presented in timelines

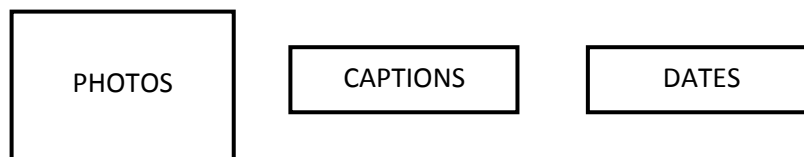
**Historical Thinking Standard 2**—the student comprehends a variety of historical sources including photographs

**Historical Thinking Standard 3**—the student engages in historical analysis and interpretation including considering multiple perspectives and analyzing cause and effect

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL (speaking and listening)**—student presents ideas, findings and supporting evidence (conveying a clear and distinct perspective), makes strategic use of digital media and adapts speech to a variety of contexts and tasks demonstrating a command of formal English

**TIME REQUIREMENT:** One class period.

**DIRECTIONS:** Print out the PDF and cut out the photographs, captions and dates. If you plan to use this lesson multiple times, you may wish to laminate each for durability.



**There are several ways to implement this lesson**, all of which involve various levels of matching photos, captions and dates. Choose the method that works best with your students based on their skill and knowledge levels, or make up your own way. However you use the timeline elements, start by having students write down everything they can tell about their photographs [*student worksheet included below*]. Make sure they indicate whether their descriptions come from what they can see or from what they previously knew about WWII. Inform students that the descriptive captions do not always describe the actual photographs, but refer to a historic WWII event.

1. Give each student or pair of students a random photograph to study. Next, in chronological order, read aloud each caption and have the student with the matching photograph bring it to the front of the class and tape it to the wall or clip it to a string with a clothes pin. You can then affix the dates and captions

to each picture for the class to review.

2. With groups of five students, randomly divide the photos, captions and dates among the groups. Have each group match their photos, captions and dates. Then have all the groups work together to create the full timeline of photos. Each group can explain how they were able to match their photos to captions and dates.
3. ***For the most fun:*** randomly distribute one photo, one date and one caption that don't match to each student. Then let them try to find their matching partners in order to complete the full timeline as a class. This exercise will require good teamwork and communication.

>End the lesson with a discussion of the challenging job historians have of selecting what facts to include in their history in order to tell the story they think is important.

**ASSESSMENT:** Students can be assessed on the accuracy of their photo matching and the quality of their written descriptions. You can also quiz them on the chronology following the activity.

**ENRICHMENT:** Further activities can include:

- Writing alternate, longer captions for each photo
- Deciding individually or as a class 5, 10, or 20 other important WWII dates to add to the timeline and seeking appropriate photos to match
- Researching one event in more depth and writing a research paper
- Creating a WWII photo timeline specifically about one topic, i.e. the War in the Pacific, the Holocaust, African Americans in WWII, Women in WWII, etc.

### List of WWII Timeline Events/Photos

#	Date	Event	Area
1	Sept. 19, 1931	Japan invades Manchuria	Pacific
2	Jan. 30, 1933	Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany	Europe
3	Nov. 9, 1938	<i>Kristallnacht</i> riots across Germany	Europe
4	Sept. 1, 1939	Germany invades Poland; WWII begins	Europe
5	Sept. 16, 1940	US Congress passes first peacetime draft	Home Front
6	March 11, 1941	Lend-Lease Act passed	Home Front
7	Dec. 7, 1941	Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor	Pacific
8	Feb. 19, 1942	FDR signs Executive Order 9066 which will lead to Japanese Americans being sent to internment camps	Home Front
9	May 4, 1942	Office of Price Administration issues Ration Book One	Home Front
10	May 15, 1942	WAACs (Women's Army Auxiliary Corps) created	Home Front
11	June 4-7, 1942	American naval forces defeat the Japanese navy at the Battle of Midway	Pacific
12	Nov. 8, 1942	Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of North Africa begins	Europe
13	May 29, 1943	"Rosie the Riveter" appears on the cover of the <i>Saturday Evening Post</i> as a tribute to working women during the War	Home Front
14	June 2, 1943	The Tuskegee Airmen undertake their first combat mission	Europe
15	June 6, 1944	D-Day: Allied Forces come ashore in Normandy, France	Europe
16	Oct. 26, 1944	Japanese navy defeated at Leyte Gulf; first use of Kamikazes by Japan	Pacific
17	Dec. 16, 1944	Battle of the Bulge, the last German offensive, begins in a frigid northern European winter	Europe
18	Jan. 26, 1945	Soviet troops liberate Auschwitz death camp	Europe
19	Feb. 4, 1945	Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin meet at Yalta to discuss post-war Europe	Europe
20	Feb. 23, 1945	Marines raise US flag on Mt. Suribachi during the battle for Iwo Jima	Pacific
21	April 25, 1945	American forces meet up with their Russian allies at the Elbe River in Germany	Europe
22	May 8, 1945	Victory in Europe (V-E) Day	Europe
23	Aug. 6-9, 1945	The US drops atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki	Pacific
24	Sept. 2, 1945	Japan signs the surrender agreement, officially ending WWII	Pacific
25	Nov. 21, 1945	Nuremberg War Crimes Trials of Nazi leaders begin	Europe

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**Directions:** Take a close look at your photograph. Pay attention to details. Write down what you see. Indicate if what you write about your photograph comes from what you see, what you already know about WWII, or both.

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**NOVEMBER 9, 1938**

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**MARCH 11, 1941**

**DECEMBER 7, 1941**

**FEBRUARY 19, 1942**

**MAY 4, 1942**

**MAY 15, 1942**

**JUNE 4-7, 1942**

**NOVEMBER 8, 1942**

**MAY 29, 1943**

**JUNE 2, 1943**

**JUNE 6, 1944**



**OCTOBER 26, 1944**

**DECEMBER 16, 1944**

**JANUARY 26, 1945**

**FEBRUARY 4, 1945**

**FEBRUARY 23, 1945**

**APRIL 25, 1945**

**MAY 8, 1945**

**AUGUST 6 and 9, 1945**

**SEPTEMBER 2, 1945**

**NOVEMBER 2, 1945**

**Japan invades Manchuria, a region of northern China that offers the Japanese much needed natural resources. The lack of forceful reaction from the rest of the world emboldens Japan over the next decade.**

**Adolf Hitler, leader of the Nazi Party, becomes chancellor of Germany and almost immediately begins consolidating his power and imprisoning his political enemies.**

***Kristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass): a series of coordinated attacks against Jews throughout Germany in which homes, shops and synagogues were burned and 30,000 Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps.**

**Germany invades Poland; Great Britain and France honor their pledge to support Poland and declare war on Germany; WWII begins.**

**Although not at war, the United States government recognizes the growing danger of the growing war in Europe and passes the first peacetime draft in American history.**

**At the urging of President Roosevelt, US Congress passes Lend-Lease Act, which provides Great Britain, the only European power left fighting Nazi Germany, with much needed war supplies.**

**Japanese naval and air forces attack the US naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, plunging the United States into WWII.**

**President Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066, which soon leads to the internment in isolated camps of more than 110,000 Japanese Americans for the remainder of the war.**

**The US Office of Price Administration issues Ration Book Number One to every American to use when purchasing rationed items, including sugar, coffee, and meat.**

**The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) is created, giving women an opportunity to serve in the Army. It will later be renamed the Women's Army Corps (WAC).**

**American naval forces sink four Japanese aircraft carriers at the decisive Battle of Midway. From this battle, Japan's vast Pacific empire begins to shrink.**

**US and British forces begin their amphibious invasion of North Africa (Operation Torch) in their first efforts to retake Axis-held territory.**

**"Rosie the Riveter" appears on the cover of the Saturday Evening Post magazine as a tribute to women working in defense factories. There will be 3,000,000 Rosies by 1945.**

**The Tuskegee Airmen, African American pilots trained at Tuskegee Airfield in Alabama, undertake their first combat missions protecting bombers flying over Europe.**

**D-Day: in the largest invasion in WWII, Allied forces come ashore in Normandy, France, breaking through Hitler's Atlantic Wall and starting the long road toward Berlin.**

**In the largest naval battle of WWII, the Japanese navy is defeated at the Battle of Leyte Gulf in the Philippines, where Japanese kamikazes (suicide pilots) are used for the first time.**

**Battle of the Bulge: Germany's last offensive in Western Europe threatens to push the Americans back toward the Atlantic; the largest and bloodiest battle the Americans fought during WWII.**

**Soviet troops liberate Auschwitz death camp in southern Poland, where the Nazis murdered more than one million Jews since 1940. It was one of six concentration camps built specifically for killing Jews.**

**British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, US President Franklin Roosevelt and Soviet General Secretary Joseph Stalin meet at Yalta, Soviet Union, to discuss post-war reorganization of Europe.**

**US Marines raise the flag atop Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima, four days into the 36-day battle for the tiny Japanese-held island.**

**American troops driving eastward into Germany meet up with Soviet troops pushing westward toward Berlin at the Elbe River, signaling the near collapse of Hitler's Germany.**

**Victory in Europe (V-E Day) is declared as Germany offers unconditional surrender to the Allies.**

**The United States Army Air Force drops two newly developed atomic bombs, one each on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, utterly destroying them.**

**Following their announcement of surrender two weeks earlier, Japanese dignitaries sign the official surrender documents aboard the USS Missouri battleship in Tokyo Bay, ending WWII.**

**The Nuremberg War Crimes Trials of top Nazi political and military leaders begins; many of the horrors of the Holocaust are brought to the public's attention.**



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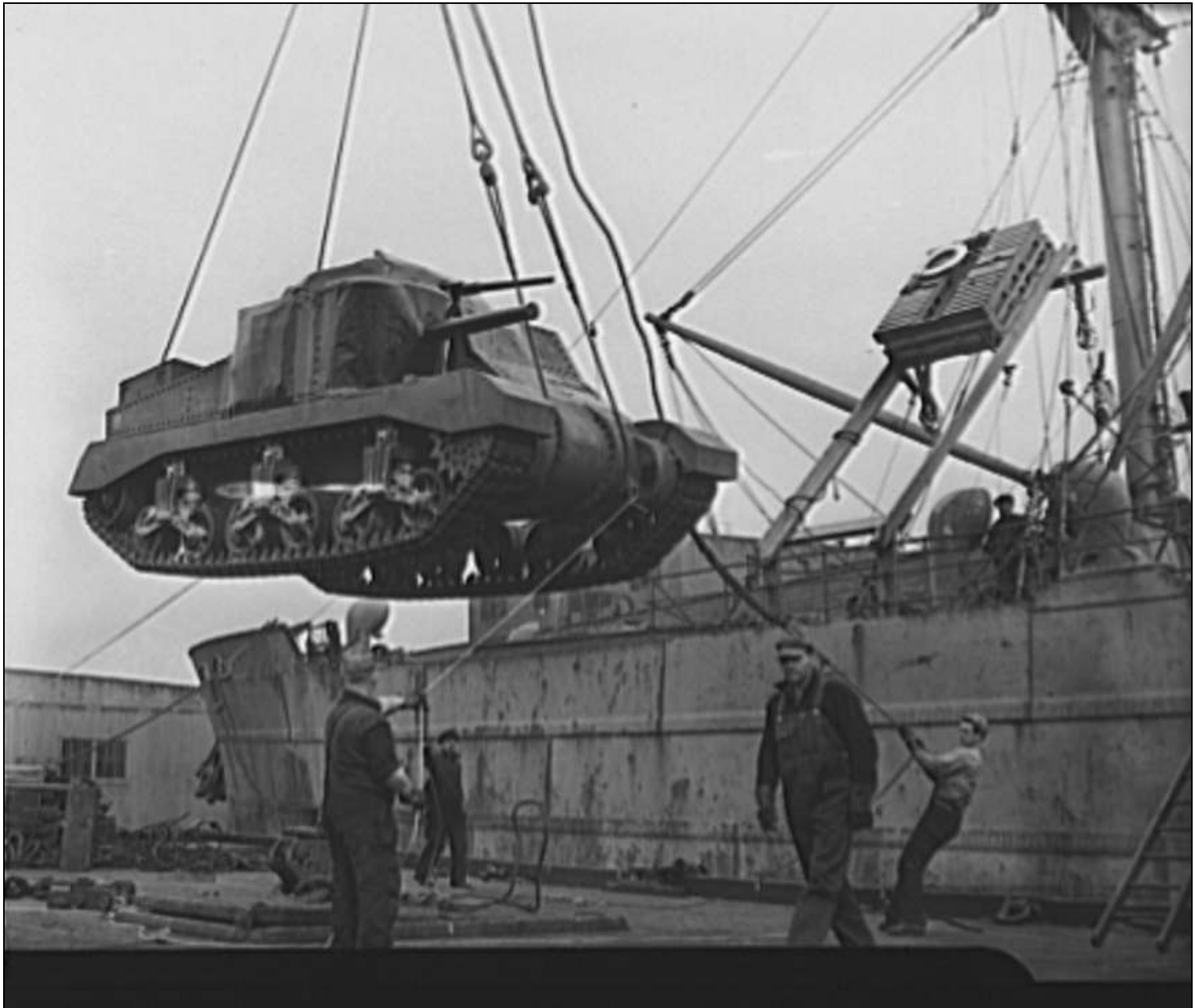


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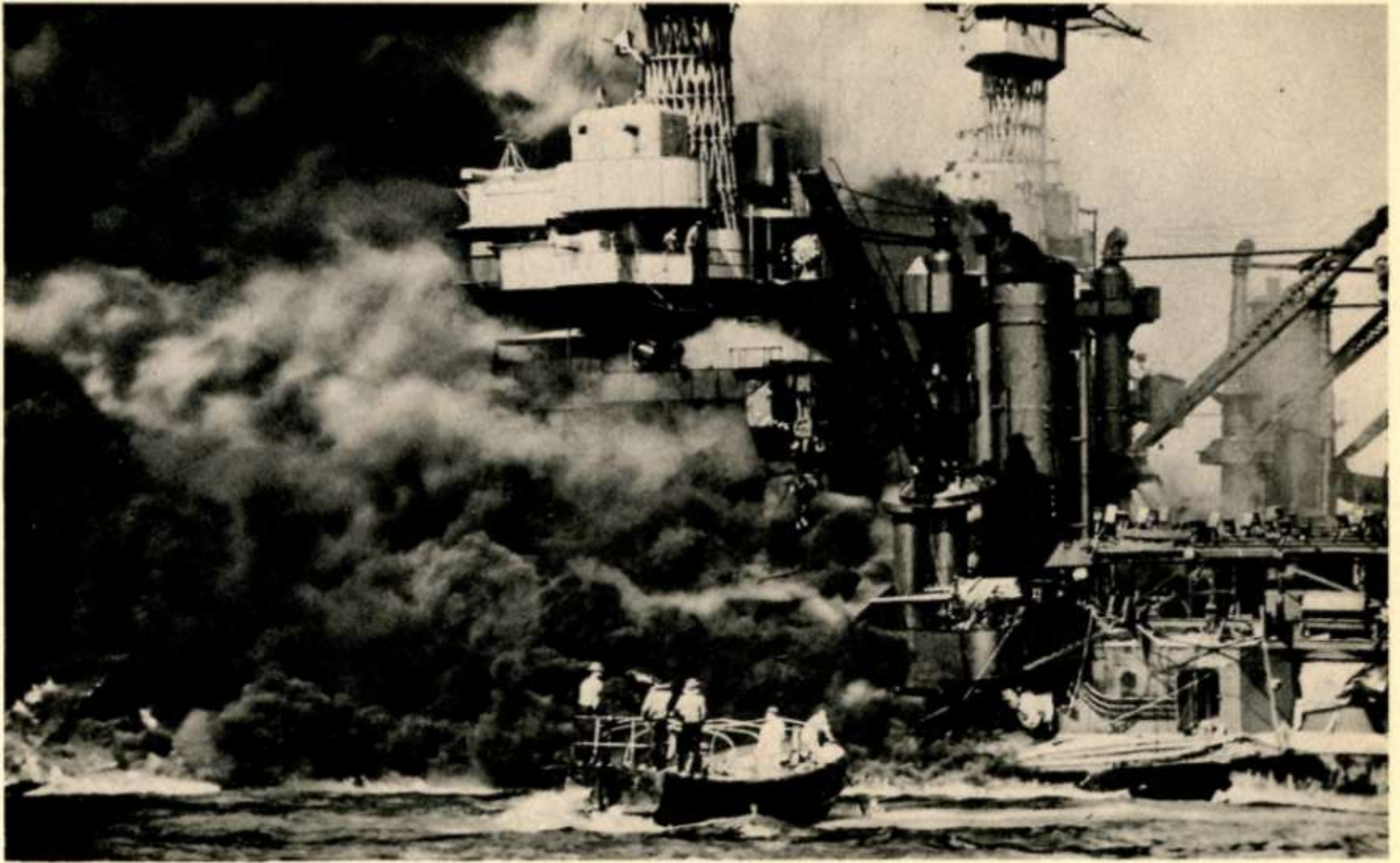
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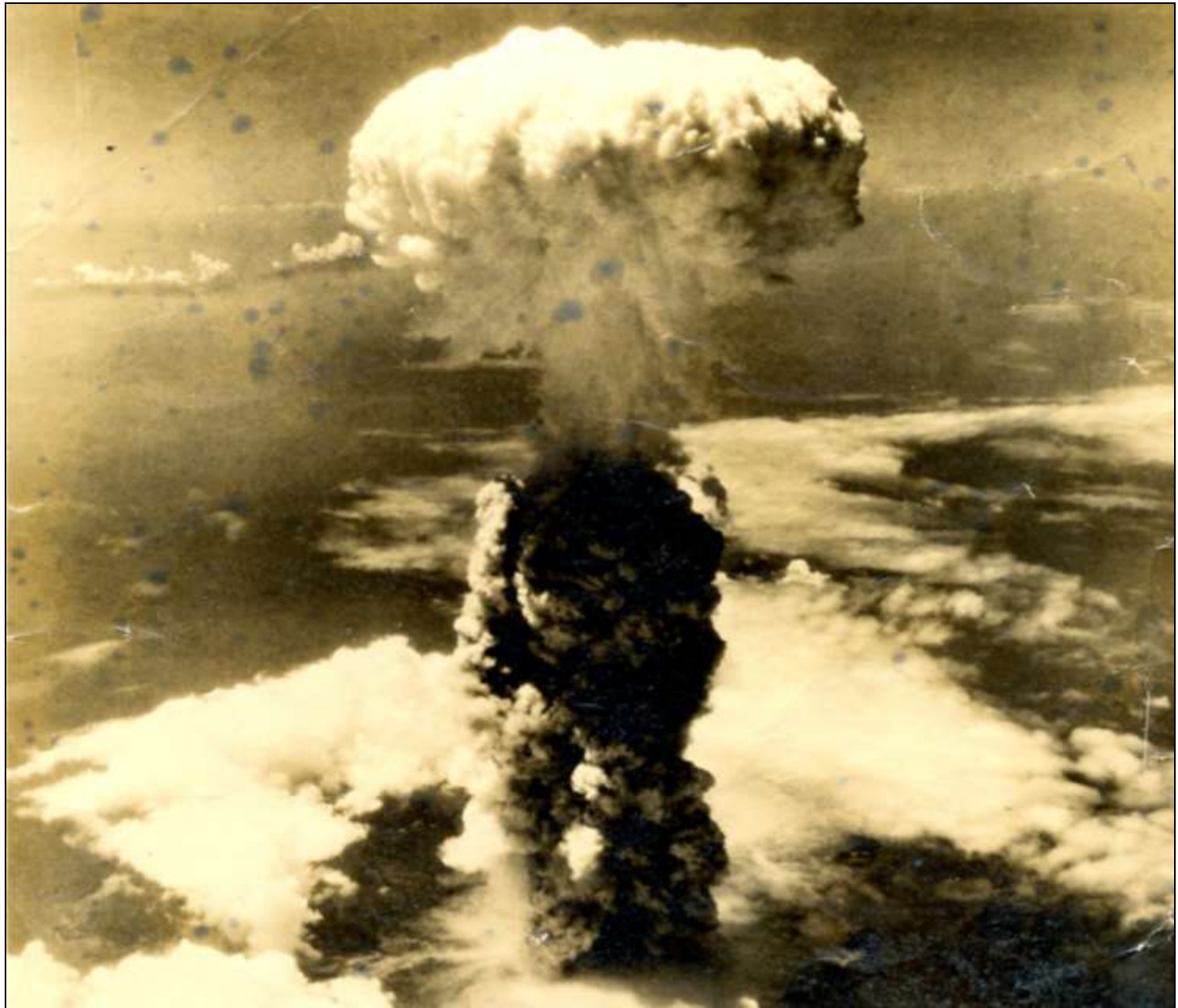
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