

educator's guide

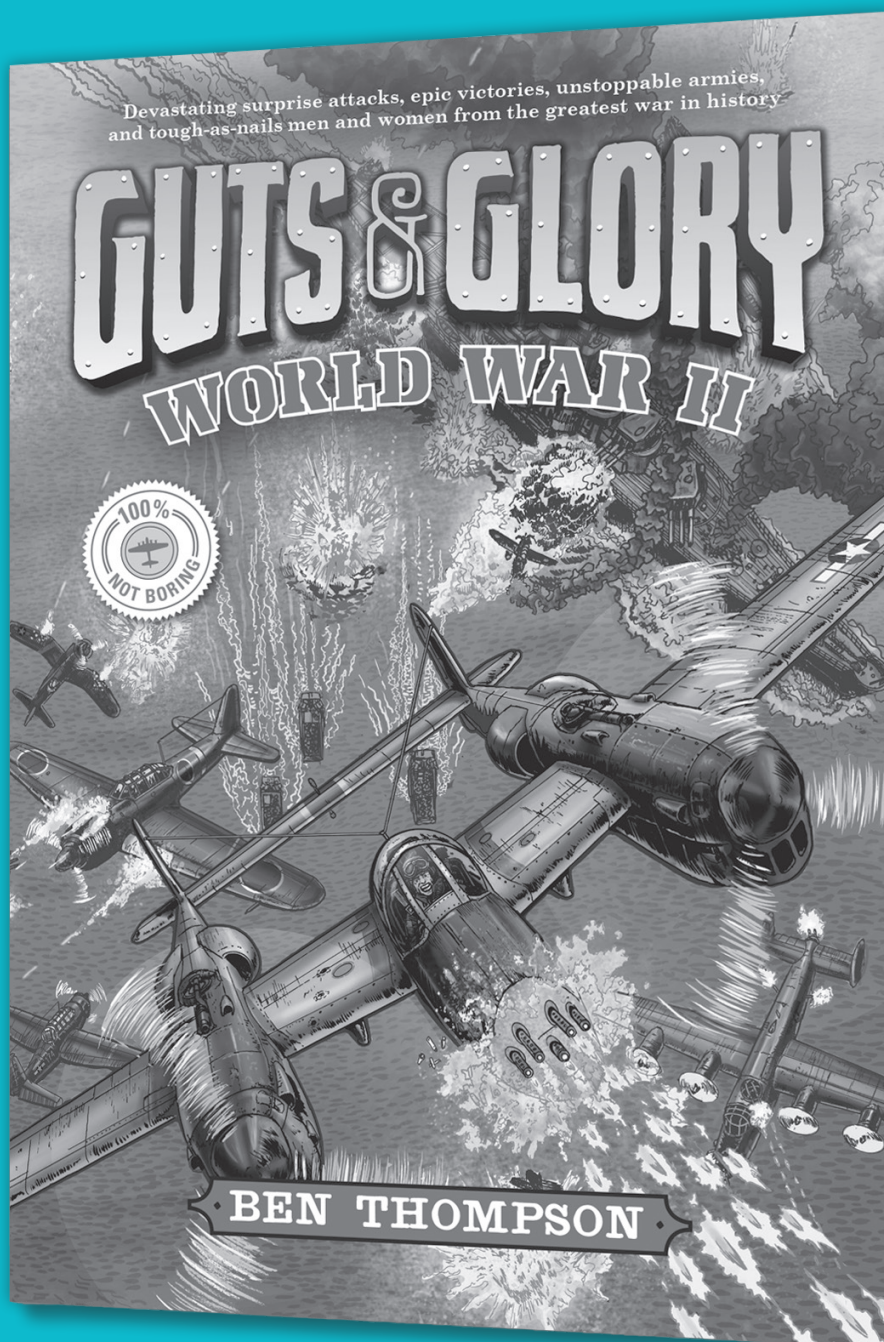
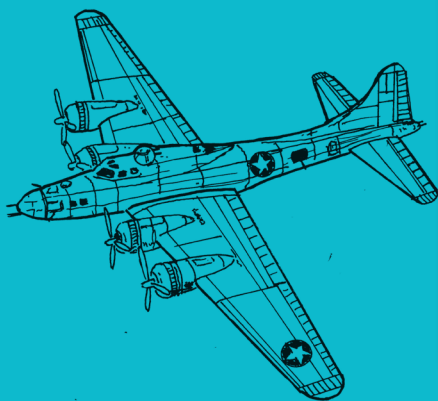
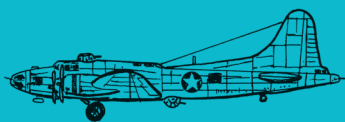
# GUTS & GLORY

## Curriculum connections

✦ Social Studies

Ages 8–12

BY BEN  
THOMPSON



## INTRODUCTION

As you read the introduction, fill out the following graphic organizer. Then, use it to help you read the rest of the book.

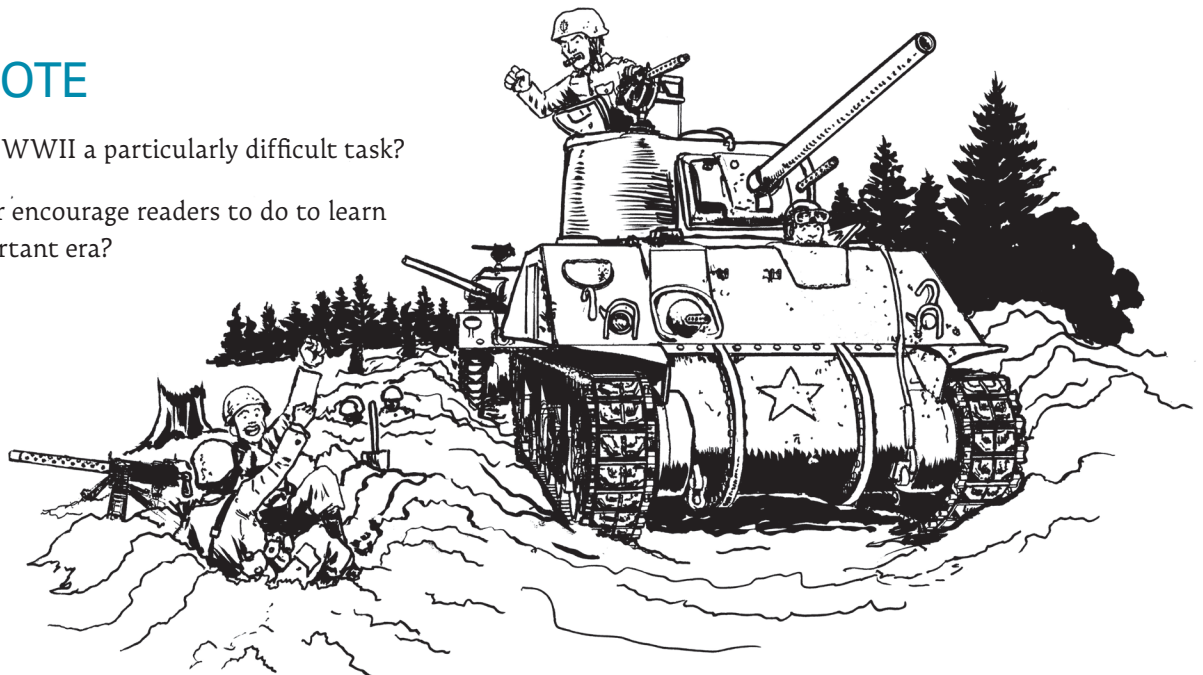
ALLIES:	LEADERS:	MILITARY ADVANTAGES:	MILITARY DISADVANTAGES:
GREAT BRITAIN			
FRANCE			
RUSSIA			
UNITED STATES			

AXIS:	LEADERS:	MILITARY ADVANTAGES:	TERRITORIES INVADED:	MILITARY DISADVANTAGES:
GERMANY				
ITALY				
JAPAN				

- ✓ Describe how Hitler came to power in post-war Germany. How did he get the support of the German people?
- ✓ List the four ways that Hitler undermined the Treaty of Versailles, a peace treaty at the end of World War I.

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

- Why is writing about WWII a particularly difficult task?
- What does the author encourage readers to do to learn more about this important era?



## CHAPTER 1: EIGHT HUNDRED HEROES

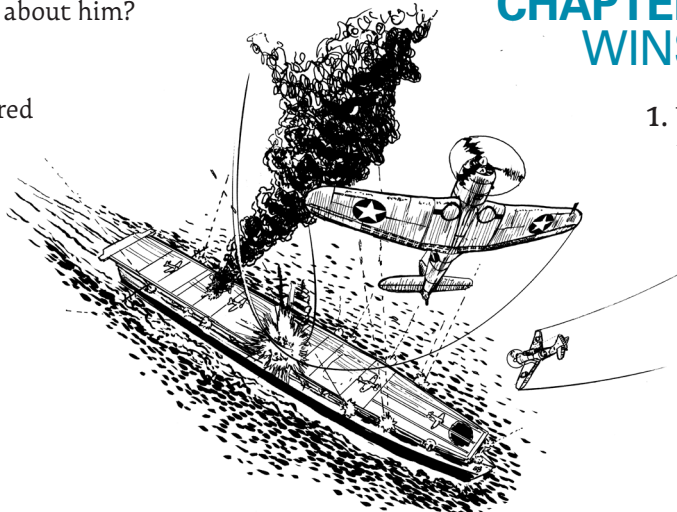
1. What happened between the Chinese and the Japanese at the battle at Sihang Warehouse?
2. What is the significance of the title of this chapter? Who was Colonel Xie?
3. Examine the motivations of Ernst Schäfer visiting Tibet. What did he learn in his travels?
4. Describe Japan's treatment of the city and people of Nanjing.

## CHAPTER 2: BLITZKRIEG

1. Who invented the blitzkrieg tactic and why?
2. How did France prepare a defense against Germany?
3. What happened in the city of Dunkirk?
4. What did Hitler make the French government do that showed how much he hated the terms from Germany's defeat in WWI?

## CHAPTER 3: THEIR FINEST HOUR

1. Create a detailed timeline of the Battle of Britain. At the end of the timeline, list the results.
2. If Douglas Bader were your grandpa, what would you want people to know about him?
3. Why is Urbanowicz's 303 Squadron story still required reading in Polish grade schools?
4. Think about the effects of Germany's U-boats on the Allied war effort. Why were they so effective?



## CHAPTER 4: OPERATION BARBAROSSA

1. What was the largest invasion in the history of warfare? Why did Hitler want it to happen?
2. Why was Stalin particularly vulnerable to attack?
3. Describe a German "pincer" attack.
4. What tactical mistake did Hitler make instead of driving toward and defeating Moscow?
5. Define the Russian word "rasputitsa" and explain its impact.
6. Describe how "General Winter" and guerilla warfare combined to stop the German assault.

## CHAPTER 5: DAY OF INFAMY

1. Why had America cut Japan off from trade resources like steel and oil?
2. Why was the United States particularly vulnerable at Pearl Harbor?
3. What was the total impact of Pearl Harbor on the US Navy? What were the casualties?
4. What did Admiral Nagumo expect from the attack? What was the actual outcome?

## CHAPTER 6: WHO DARES, WINS

1. Who was "the Desert Fox" and why was he such a fierce opponent?
2. Describe the British SAS and the goals of their mission. How did they operate recklessly but effectively?
3. Compile a list of evidence that Paddy Mayne was the most awesome British soldier in WWII.



## CHAPTER 7: DAUNTLESS

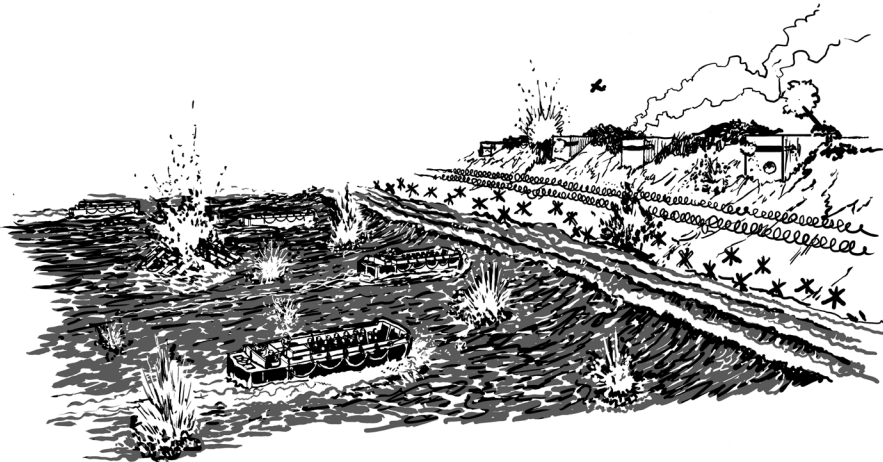
1. Explain how the Japanese could have crippled the US Navy completely.
2. Who was Clarence Wade McClusky, Jr. and what difference did he make in the war?
4. Create a timeline, web, or other graphic organizer to summarize the most important moments and results of the Battle of Midway.

## CHAPTER 8: STALINGRAD

1. Describe the 1077th Antiaircraft Regiment and their purpose.
2. What is the story of Vasily Zaitsev from the 1047th Rifle Regiment? Why was he a key player?
3. What disadvantages made things difficult for the Russian army?
4. Why did the Germans call Stalingrad Rattenkrieg?

## CHAPTER 9: SEMPER FI

1. Describe the location of the 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division and their orders.
2. Why did the Americans want Guadalcanal so badly?
3. Create a graphic organizer/chart that summarizes the actions of two heroes: John Basilone and Mitchell Paige.



## CHAPTER 10: FIGHTING WITH TIGERS

1. When did things get particularly brutal between the Germans and the Soviets? Why?
2. What was the Russian's new secret weapon? What were the pros and cons of it?
3. Describe Operation Citadel.
4. Explain the steps and defensive moves that the Russians took to send Germany packing for good.
5. Create a list of the accomplishments of Guard Lieutenant Aleksandra Samusenko from most important to least. Be prepared to defend your list and its order.

## CHAPTER 11: SOBIBOR

1. List the steps Red Army Lieutenant Alexander "Sasha" Pechersky took to escape from the Germans.
2. Why was Pechersky particularly persecuted by the Germans?
3. Led by Pechersky, where did the escapees go and what did they accomplish?

## CHAPTER 12: VOYTEK THE SOLDIER BEAR

1. What did the Russians do when the Germans were battling them at one border?
2. Who was Captain Wladislaw Anders and why was he released from one of Stalin's prisons?
3. How did the soldiers treat Voytek? How did he participate in the war?
4. How did most people receive their news in 1942? What type of music was popular during this period? Are any of the film stars, movies, musicians, or other famous folks familiar to you?

## CHAPTER 13: THE MIGHTY EIGHTH

1. Who was Lieutenant William R. Lawley, Jr. and why is his story included in this chapter?
2. Describe “Big Week.”
3. Summarize the most important moments in Lawley’s mission to take out an aircraft production plant in Leipzig.

## CHAPTER 14: THE WHITE MOUSE

1. List the many ways that Nancy Wake aided the Allies.
2. Which of her acts was the most heroic? Be prepared to defend your choice in a small group discussion.

## CHAPTER 15: D-DAY

1. What kind of conditions did the soldiers face as they waited to land in Normandy?
2. Why were losses on D-Day so vast for the Allies? Why were the Allies willing to face this devastation?
3. List the strategic decisions Dutch Cota made at Omaha Beach for the success of his part of the operation.
4. Why was D-Day considered the beginning of the end for Hitler?

## CHAPTER 16: GURKHA ASSAULT

1. Describe the Gurkha Soldiers of the British Army.
2. Why were the Japanese engaging with the Allies in British-controlled regions of Burma and Thailand?
3. Where was “Mortar Bluff” located and why was it such a strategic location?
4. List the achievements of Agansing Rai and other members of the Second Battalion, Fifth Gurkha Rifles.

## CHAPTER 17: LAST STAND AT LEYTE

1. Describe the battleship *Yamato*.
2. Why were the Americans intent on recovering the Philippines which had been lost early in the war?
3. What decision did Lieutenant Commander Ernest E. Evans make aboard the USS *Johnston*? Why?
4. Explain why the Japanese crews “saluted the American sailors who were not floating in life jackets in the water.”

## CHAPTER 18: BATTLE OF THE BULGE

1. What misstep did the Americans make concerning the Germans?
2. Describe the German offensive. What advantages did they have in this part of the conflict?
3. Why was Bastogne a key location? Who was charged with defending it?
4. Describe General George S. Patton. What amazing feat did he accomplish in this battle?
5. Why is there a square in the center of downtown Bastogne named McAuliffe Square?



## CHAPTER 19: THE FALL OF BERLIN

1. What bizarre event happened during the battle for the Reichstag, the Nazi stronghold?
2. Why were the Russians particularly suited for this mission of revenge?
3. When was the unconditional surrender signed? Was the war completely over now or not? Why?

## CHAPTER 20: TYPHOON OF STEEL

1. Describe the battle for Okinawa and why it was a necessary step in defeating Japan.
2. How did General Mitsuru Ushijima prepare for battle with the Americans?
3. What does a samurai do rather than surrender? How was this a part of the battle?
4. What was the plan for every Japanese citizen to do during the American offensive?
5. What was the mission of the *Enola Gay*? What were the results?
6. What was produced before Truman made his decision about invading or dropping the atomic bomb? How is it still used today?

## CONCLUSION

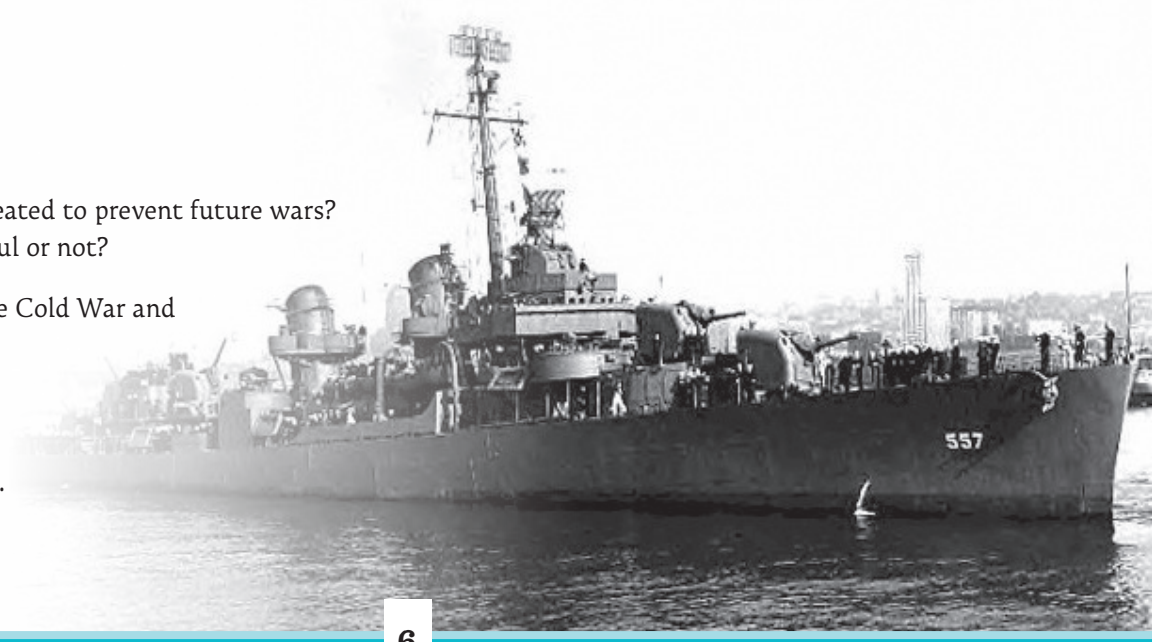
- What organization was created to prevent future wars? Do you think it is successful or not?
- What are the origins of the Cold War and who participated in it?
- Describe what happened to British Palestine and the results of this decision.

## PROJECTS

Ask students (or pairs of students) to select one of the “Know Your Vehicles” charts from the end of each chapter. These charts compare the various machinery (tanks, aircraft, etc.) used during the war. Have students analyze their selected chart and decide whether the Allies of the Axis powers had the advantage in this category of war technology. Have students put their results on a sticky note and add it to your whiteboard under the correct category (Axis vs. Allies). Then have a classroom discussion about the visual results. Who appears to have had the advantage? Who should’ve won? Who did win and why?

In groups of two or more, have students select one of these leaders from WWII: FDR, Truman, De Gaulle, Churchill, Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini, and Hirohito. Have the groups create an original product like a poster or digital poster (Glogster or Padlet), a webpage, or short documentary-type movie that synthesizes their understanding of this person. Information should include at least four of the following: early life and education; rise to power; personality; most important decision; and legacy.

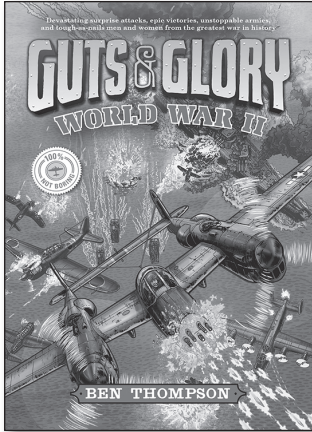
Explore the vast collections of photographs documenting WWII from the Library of Congress: [archives.gov/research/military/ww2/photos/images/thumbnails/index.html](https://www.loc.gov/research/military/ww2/photos/images/thumbnails/index.html). After students are given time to explore the collection, have them write a journal response about what they learned that cannot be gleaned from just reading text.





# GUTS & GLORY

## about the book

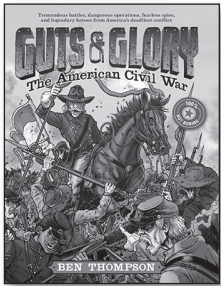


**GUTS & GLORY:  
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From massive aerial battles that clouded the skies with planes to deathly secret operations deep behind enemy lines, the events of World War II are some of the most awe-inspiring of all time. Discover legendary commanders, tremendous fights, elite soldiers, and courageous individuals whose deeds truly made the difference in this jaw-dropping guide to the biggest war the world has ever seen.

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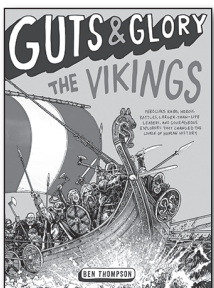


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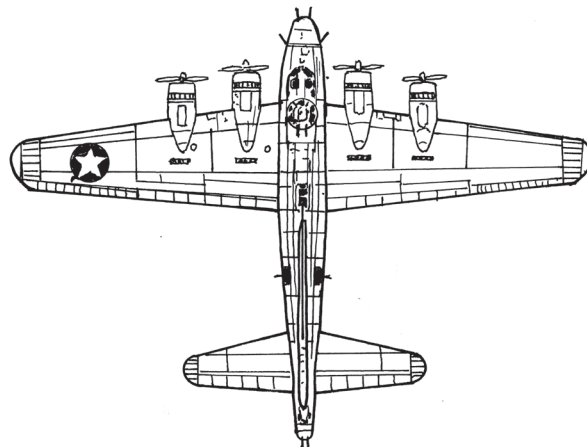
*"Entertaining.... What brings these events to life, particularly for reluctant readers, is Thompson's spirited, conversational narration." —Booklist*

*"The book's greatest strength is its colloquial storytelling. The short chapters and extensive use of sidebars are designed to attract reluctant readers, while the breezy, sometimes-humorous style makes the history accessible." —Kirkus Reviews*

*"Action-packed.... makes the history appealing and relatable." —Publishers Weekly*



**GUTS & GLORY: THE  
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PB 978-0-316-32057-3



## about the author



Simone Thompson

For more than 10 years, Ben Thompson has been producing humorous, history-related material, including articles for publications such as *Military Times* and for organizations like the American Mustache Institute. Ben has researched hundreds of World War II heroes for his various projects and is also really good at World of Tanks on the Xbox. He invites you to visit his website at [gutsandgloryhistory.com](http://gutsandgloryhistory.com).



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This guide was prepared by author  
and educator Tracie Vaughn.