

Narrator Richard Gay: Welcome to 30 Brave Minutes, a podcast of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of North Carolina Pembroke. In 30 Brave Minutes we'll give you something interesting to think about. Joining the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences Jeff Frederick are professors from the Department of History. With him are Robert Brown, Bruce Dehart, and James Hudson. The topic for today is World War 2. This is the first of a two-part podcast on the topic. Now get ready for 30 Brave Minutes.

Jeff Frederick: 16 million Americans, give or take, served in the Second World War in one official capacity or another, with countless more working in defense or manufacturing jobs and filling so many other roles. This represented well over ten percent of the entire country, given that the American population was in the vicinity of 140 million or so, with 132 million in the 1940 census and 152 million in 1950. Georgia provided the highest percentage of its population to the war effort with around 14% of its population enlisting or being conscripted. From the prism of many Americans World War 2 began with Pearl Harbor, expanded with the entry into the European Theatre and concluded with a May 1945 VE Day in Europe, and an August 1945 V-J Day in the Pacific. Americans celebrate the sacrifice of troops in the liberation of the death camps, rejoice at monikers like the Greatest Generation, or the cohort of Americans that survived the Great Depression, and then won the war, and as a result ushered in a period of prosperity, superpower status, and a recasting of the twentieth into the American Century. In fact, this is an interpretation or perhaps better seen as a perspective, though its plausibility must be measured against the reality that it is only a portion of the larger narrative about World War 2, because, in fact, the second world war was a global conflict with roots and branches outside of American soil and ramifications that fell disproportionately in spaces and places well outside of the 48 contiguous American states. Outside of action in Hawaii and some episodic activities along the Pacific and Atlantic coastlines, no American city was invaded and the good people of Kansas and Texas and Indiana, and North Carolina did not suffer the same burden or face the same onslaught as say, those in Poland, France, or China. We rightly log the actions at Normandy, when Americans and others stormed beaches, established footholds, and turned the European conflict into a multi-front war. Even so, though, the Soviet Union and China suffered the most casualties by far. Global, political, economic, and cultural changes between the first and second world wars are critical, not just Pearl Harbor, maybe even determinate factors to the onset of the war, and long after the guns fell silent. Not everyone regrouped, rebuilt, recovered or regained what they had lost. The story of World War 2 is, in fact, bigger, more spectacular, crueler, and richer in texture and human interest. To view the totality of the war, we have to shift our vantage point to include the impact of America, but set the center of the frame elsewhere, so that we know what caused, expanded, and determined the outcome of the war. Only by looking abroad can we assess how this war impacted ordinary folk across the globe as well as in living rooms and factories across the American fruited plain. Our topic for today is World War 2 and here to help us understand this event in the first of a two-part episode on what

many would call the defining event of the 20th century, are professors Robert Brown, Bruce Dehart, and James Hudson. Welcome to everybody.

Brown, Dehart, and Hudson: Thank you, Dr. Frederick.

Frederick: Well, let's start this discussion with the conclusion of the First World War in 1918. What were the consequences, both in Europe and in Asia and what happened in the geopolitical landscape, from, say November of 1918 throughout much of the next decade or so?

Dehart: Well, I think one of the most obvious consequences of the war was that it left both defeated and victor countries extremely disappointed. If you take a look at three of the defeated countries: Germany, Hungary, and Bulgaria, they came away from the war and from the peace settlement feeling as if the peace settlement had been extremely unfair, had imposed burdens on them that were unjust and had taken from them territories that rightfully belonged to them. If you take a look at several of the victor nations, Great Britain and France, for example, you will find two countries that were extremely traumatized by their experiences in the war, and to a large extent this trauma helps explain why during the 1930s, when the International System was confronted by a series of international outlaws: Nazi Germany, Imperialist Japan, and Fascist Italy, they chose the policy of appeasement over the policy of confrontation until 1939. If you take a look at two of the other victor nations: Japan and Italy, they both came away from the war feeling that they had not gotten from the war what they had put into it. And, last but not least, if you take a look at the United States, the war left the vast majority of Americans extremely disillusioned, and by the 1930s, the vast majority of Americans had reached the conclusion that the United States had made a terrible mistake entering World War 1. This explains why, during the 1930s, so many Americans supported a policy of isolationism.

Frederick: So, Robert, focusing on Europe, what would you add to the decade or so after World War 1?

Brown: Okay, a couple of things I would add here. One is we should take a look at the world-wide casualties at the end of World War 1. The estimates, and these are just rough estimates, 40 million casualties in the first world war, deaths - 20 million, wounded - 20 million, civilian deaths, maybe, of that total - 10 million, and roughly 10 million military deaths. So, it was a devastating experience for Europeans who had not had a major war in a century. And for the rest of the world, this was probably the first major world war in world history.

Frederick: So James, bring Asia into this. What is the aftermath of Asia, say in the decade or so after the First World War ends?

Hudson: Well, something very important happened at Versailles when the treaty to end the war was signed at the end of June. China is the only country that does not sign the treaty. And that was because the German territory that had colonies in China was awarded to the Empire of Japan. This infuriated students and activists all over China and in May of 1919 there were protests all over the country. One big one obviously at Tiananmen Square in Beijing. This inaugurated a movement called the May 4th Movement. We just have a lot of things going on after the end of the war. The Nationalist Party was officially founded in October 1919; the Communist Party is founded in 1921. The impact of the First World War, obviously in China, is extremely felt and in the decade of the 20s, Japan is really expanding their territorial claims in North China. And there are Japanese companies like the South Japan Railway Company, that wants to expand and build a railway hub, extending into Asia, all the way through, possibly connecting to Russia. So the Japanese have a considerable growing presence in China, especially in the 1920s and 30s.

Frederick: So, let's sort of pick up on that, as we move towards the mid and late 1920s and head toward the 30s. One of the things that you mentioned, Bruce, was sort of, the rise of fascism. We see that. We see vestiges of it in Germany, and in Italy, and Japan. What are the seeds that cause that to be a response within those countries, and maybe even elsewhere in the globe, to what had happened in World War 1 and then the 1920s?

Dehart: Well if you look at Italy, the Kingdom of Italy joined the First World War in May 1915. When she did so, she joined forces with Great Britain, with France, with Russia, with the Kingdom of Serbia, with Japan, with those countries that were then at war with Germany and Germany's allies. As I like to tell my students, the Italian government in the spring of 1915, essentially proselytized itself. With the war in a military stalemate, both coalitions began to look for allies, believing that by adding an ally, or two, they might be able to break that stalemate. And so when the Allies approached the Kingdom of Italy, the Kingdom of Italy provided the Allies with a list of territorial demands, telling Great Britain and France that, if you would promise that we get these territories once victory is achieved, we will join forces with you. It just so happened that the territories that the Italians wanted at that particular time belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and consequently, the British, the French, and the Russians had no difficulty promising somebody else's territories. And so Italy joins the war, and although she doesn't make a significant military contribution to the ultimate victory achieved by the Allies, when the Italian delegation, headed by Prime Minister Orlando, shows up in Paris in January of 1919, he and members of his delegation, expect to receive the territories that they had been promised in May 1915. Thanks, in large measure to President Woodrow Wilson, the Italians did not get all of those territories, and consequently, the Italian delegation leaves Paris extremely angry and extremely disappointed. This anger and this disappointment will become pervasive in Italian society and many Italians will not only come to blame the democratic

government of Italy, but will also blame Italy's former allies. And this will provide fertile ground for the emergence of Mussolini and the Italian fascist movement that originates in 1919. I mean, there is absolutely no doubt that one of Mussolini's selling points was his advocacy of Italian nationalism, his claim that the fascists would make Italy great again and that he would re-establish the old Roman Empire. So disappointment in the territorial settlement of the Paris Peace Conference certainly fueled fascism in Italy. In Germany, the loss of territories, roughly 13% of Germany's pre-war continental territory and all of Germany's overseas colonies, certainly were selling points for not just Adolf Hitler, but other right-wing movements in Germany.

Frederick: Robert, pickup on that. These post-war grievances that different nations are feeling, for one reason or another, is really fueling resentment that is turning into action.

Brown: That would be the case, certainly as Bruce pointed out, in Italy and Germany, but I think we want to add one more thing that comes out of the Versailles Settlement. It redrew the map of Europe. Now, at the end of the war, how many empires fell? The German Empire fell; the Austrian Empire fell; the Turkish Empire fell; the Russian Empire fell. And as a consequence of this, all these new states appear, and they have aspirations, and they have resentments. If we could think about Yugoslavia, the new Czechoslovakia, Hungary, all of these states, and they are fragile. They are supposed to be democracies, but they're fragile democracies.

Frederick: And James, what are some of the things that lead to Japan's immersion into a more fascist or expansionist mindset?

Hudson: I think it's similar, or the same thing, that Bruce and Robert touched on. You just have the rise of militarist factions in the Japanese government in the mid-30s onward. In these factions are ones that want to expand Japan's territorial aims, and especially, to view themselves as this sort of "big brother" of south and East Asia. In doing so, they sort of see themselves as, a sort of, liberating presence and want to eliminate western countries' colonial influence throughout the Asian world.

Frederick: And there is some historic enmity between Japan and China. Talk a little bit about where that comes from, and how that had played out militarily and economically, even before we get to the 1930s.

Hudson: Yeah, if we go back even as far as 1895 and the first Sino-Japanese war, and this had to do with the collapse of the Korean state. Japan and China basically went to war over who was going to control Korea. Japan wins out and it is sort of viewed as an upset. And from then

on, really, Japan becomes more and more the regional "top dog." Prior to that, and even still in the early part of the 20th century, Japan was a popular place for Chinese students to go and study, because Japan, in the 19th century had modernized economy, had become an industrialized state, and its universities were more westernized. So Chinese students really wanted to go there and study and a lot of the early political leaders, and the founder of the Nationalist party himself, actually, also studied in Japan. But by the 1920s, especially because of what happened at Versailles, there was a sort of rising anti-foreignism in China, directed not only at western countries and their colonial presence at various seaports, but also at Japan.

Frederick: So that by the time we get to the mid-1930s, nations have aspirations, nations are experiencing both some historical and recent grievances, leavened with the sense of cultural hegemony that some might feel for one reason or another, and maybe this is the time to sort of bring us a little bit deeper into the twisted line of Adolf Hitler. What is it that he's doing in the midst of all this constant consternation across the globe and how does this idea of Lebensraum adding more territory and reaching greatness allow him to place himself on a German pedestal?

Dehart: From very early on, and when I say from very early on, I am speaking from the early 1920s, Hitler's world view revolved around two doctrines that were not mutually exclusive, that were, in fact, closely connected, and those two doctrines were race and space. It is very important to understand that Hitler saw Arian Germans, those whose blood was not tainted by foreign blood, to be members of a superior race commonly known as the Arians. He believed that Arians were the only people in the world capable of creating culture and civilization that other peoples in the world were capable either of imitating civilization or destroying civilization, the Jews being the people that he does identify in Mein Kampf as the race capable only of destroying civilization. In terms of Lebensraum, or space, when Hitler and others of the Nazi movement used this expression, they were referring specifically to land that could be colonized and upon which food could be grown. Hitler believed, and you can find these beliefs in Mein Kampf, and in his speeches, and in his letters, believed that Arian Germans did not have sufficient space and that if they were to survive as a people, and if they were to reproduce, which because they were racially superior, they needed to reproduce for the good of the world, they would need more space. So, if you read Mein Kampf 1924, 1925, you will see that Hitler talks about acquiring Lebensraum through the use of force and he identifies the east, the Soviet Union, as the best source of Lebensraum in Europe. What this really means is that, from the moment that Hitler becomes Chancellor of the Weimar Republic on January 30, 1933, his ultimate goal was to wage and win a series of wars that would in the short term allow the racially superior Germans to claim the Lebensraum that they need, but ultimately to achieve their position in the world that they deserved, by virtue of their racial superiority, which was global mastery.

Frederick: So, Robert, let me follow up with what might be kind of an in-answerable and unfair burden for you to respond to: why do ordinary Germans, to the extent that we can know, why do they agree to follow in this course of action?

Brown: Well, there could be a good practical reason. And one would think that the Allied Blockade of Germany during World War 1. Beginning in about 1916, Germany has a severe food shortage, and by the last couple years of the war, there is actual starvation possible in Germany. Hitler picks up on the idea, Germany is not self-sufficient in natural resources. And so he talks about a concept he calls autocrat.

The idea is you need the land for food but you also need oil, and you need other natural resources. These, also, are what he sees in the east. So, so I can suspect that Germans who starved through the Allied Blockade would be very sympathetic to the idea of "we're going to guarantee a supply of natural resources under German control." And it would be in the east, particularly in Russia, but also in Poland, and partly which had been previously German and partly which are inhabited by Slavic peoples who Hitler considered subhuman.

Frederick: And James, Japan has some natural resource needs of their own, and if they are going to reach their potential from their perspective, they are looking for some space where they might acquire that as well. That brings them into some conflict with some of their neighbors, of course including China.

Hudson: And from 1931 onward Japan is trying to build something they call "The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere", created and promulgated for all Asian populations. Japan would sort of be kind of a "big brother" to. Something really key also happens in 1931 in September in Manchuria and in Sunan, some rogue Japanese military officers blow up some portion of railroad tracks, and then blame this event on the Chinese. Events like this just used sort of cannon fodder and more of an excuse for the Japanese to increase its territorial presence in North China. Japan, like you said, has a great interest in a lot of the natural resources of the China, and the Dutch East Indies of the region, and that is one reason among others, they are creating this Co-Prosperity Sphere. Maybe this could be kind of a segue into talking about Pearl Harbor, but one of the reasons why the Japanese eventually decide to attack Pearl Harbor is....

Frederick: Hold on! We're getting there. Don't jump the shark!

Hudson: Okay.

Frederick: You are listening to 30 Brave Minutes, a broadcast service of the College of Arts and Sciences at UNC Pembroke. I'm Jeff Frederick and we're talking about World War 2 today. Our panel includes Robert Brown, Bruce Dehart, and James Hudson. So let's get into some of the

military action. When the Germans unleash Blitzkrieg in September of 1939, it is devastating. And the military action, which just a couple of decades earlier had largely been characterized by stalemate, is entirely different. Why is that and why are they so much better at this early on in the 2nd World War than some of the nations they are steamrolling over?

Dehart: I think during the 1930s, Germany's military leadership worked to develop what becomes this new way of war, commonly referred to as Blitzkrieg. What the Germans do is they combine armored divisions, mechanized infantry, and traditional infantry with tactical air power. When the Germans unleash it on September 1, 1939, they find a very vulnerable opponent in the Poles, who mobilized very, very slowly, not because they did not expect an attack, but because the British and the French told them not to mobilize fully, so as not to give the Germans any justification for a war. But, moreover, the Poles made a number of mistakes. They decided to defend their entire western frontier and consequently their forces were spread in such a way that when those German armored spearheads struck the Polish frontier defenses, they were able to pierce them very, very easily, to drive deep into the interior, and to conduct these encircling operations that ended up destroying most of Poland's army in the western portion of the country. And so, whereas the German military is developing what becomes this new way of war, the British and the French have reached the conclusion that, if, in the worst case scenario, they have to wage another type of war, they are going to fight that war the same way they won World War 1, and that is to stand on the defensive. The great manifestation of this perspective is the Maginot Line that the French began to construct in 1928. Of course, when the Germans turn west in May 1940, they simply go through the Ardennes Forest and around the Maginot Line. One thing I would add here is that the Germans were not the only ones to develop this new way of warfare. In the Soviet Union, Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky, who was considered the leading general in the Soviet Army, had begun to develop what the Soviet's call the "Concept of Deep Battle". It was essentially the Soviet version of Blitzkrieg; the concentration of armored units, mechanized infantry, traditional infantry, and tactical air support. But, unfortunately for Tukhachevsky, and unfortunately for the Soviet Union, in 1937 Stalin purged Tukhachevsky, meaning he had him arrested and killed with much of the rest of the Army, Navy, and Air Force leadership. At that particular point, the Soviet military reverted back to this old defensive notion of warfare.

Frederick: Thoughts, Robert?

Brown: Yeah, what I would add, because we have not mentioned the impact of the Great Depression. It's hard to imagine. Mussolini comes to power in 1922. Hitler, after his aborted Beerhall Putsch, falls into obscurity, until the outbreak of the Great Depression, and then it really impels him into power, and as Bruce has mentioned he is appointed (not elected, I should add) Chancellor on January 30, 1933. Immediately, he announces to his generals: we are going

to rearm; we are going to rebuild the German military. And they are in the midst of the depression. The other powers are not rebuilding military; they are not mechanizing their military; and so the Germans do this. There is a controversy in the literature, and Bruce could talk about this, how early Germany's expansion plans began. Some of the documents say planning begins roughly 1937-38 and Hitler, at that point, many people believed, wanted a war. That's the war he got on the first of September, 1939.

Frederick: So I want to bring James in, in a minute, but before we do, one sort of follow-up: If the thought of Lebensraum was immediately to the east, very quickly the success there leads to a wider Central European and Western European war. What do the Germans learn militarily from their initial actions in Poland that allows them to think that they could expand the scope even before we get to the invasion of the Soviet Union through Central and Western Europe?

Brown: Yeah, we could make a comment on that, because both the French and the British, of course, declare war after the invasion of Poland. They mobilized forces on the German border. The British are up on the northern part of France, the French are behind the Maginot Line, of course. The forces, in terms of manpower are about equal. In terms of armor they are actually about equal; in terms of aircraft, maybe the Germans... But there's an equivalency. It's the way the forces were organized and the Germans have the armored units. The French and the British dispersed their armor and they do not have dedicated armored units. So, when the Germans invade in the west, they are able to overrun the French and the British, and they surprised them by going through the Ardennes Forest, basically splitting the British up in northern France and the French down in the south behind the Maginot Line. And they are in Paris in what? 6 weeks.

Frederick: So James, let's bring you in. When does the second Sino-Japanese war begin? How would you characterize that military action and what is it that leads Japan to make the calculus to attack at Pearl Harbor?

Hudson: Really the key thing for Japan's official intervention in China is July 7, 1937. Another skirmish breaks out and this time it's between Nationalist and Japanese forces outside Beijing at the Marco Polo Bridge. It becomes the Marco Polo Bridge Incident and really from here on out, Japan initiates a full-scale invasion of the Japanese eastern coast line and within a year Japan is already occupying much of that coastal area. One of the most important, well-known, and tragic events of this time occurs the following December, in 1937, when the Japanese occupy the city of Nanjing, not too far from Shanghai, in the southeastern coastal area, and committed unspeakable atrocities and rape and massacre of the civilian population that has become known as the Rape of Nanjing. By fall of 1937, China and Japan are fully at war, and most of the Japanese military will go on to be committed in the China Theater.

Frederick: So why Pearl Harbor? What is it that leads them to make that decision because they knew well, I suppose. Was it Isoroku Yamamoto's reaction that the sleeping giant has been awakened and his reaction will be fierce? They certainly knew what would happen, had they done that. Why did they attack at Pearl Harbor and what did they hope to achieve?

Hudson: There are opinions going around that in mid-1940 Roosevelt had decided to move the US Pacific Fleet from San Diego to Hawaii. Japan, in the same year had invaded French Indochina, attempting to cut off supplies reaching China and as a result, the United States had halted all shipments of machines and parts and equipment to Japan, which is perceived as an unfriendly and hostile act, and so by the time we have Pearl Harbor happen, Japan is sort of wanting to kind of pre-emptively halt any kind of possible US presence and intervention in Asia. That's the reason why Pearl Harbor happens.

Frederick: So the Germans have their own interesting decision that they make with Barbarossa and the invasion of the Soviet Union. If things had been going so well at that point in time, why did they make that decision and how close did it come to being the success that the Germans had hoped it would be?

Dehart: As I indicated earlier from the early to mid-1920s Hitler had stated that his goal, once he got into power, and he believed that he would get in power, was to conquer Lebensraum, living space in the east. He makes it very clear in Mein Kampf, and in many other places that he recognized that Lebensraum in the east would have to be conquered by the use of force. So from the moment he comes to power in 1933 he thought in terms of the war against the Soviet Union at some point in the future. But it is extremely significant to understand that Hitler did not think in terms of refighting the First World War. He thought in terms of fighting a series of relatively short wars against isolated opponents. By late 1937 it was very, very clear that the first war was to be against Czechoslovakia, which he referred to as a "French Aircraft Carrier in central Europe" since in the early 1920s France and Czechoslovakia had, in fact, had a defensive military alliance. The second war was to be waged in the west against the French and the British to clear up his western flank. The third was to be in the east against the Soviet Union which would allow Germany to destroy the headquarters of Judeo-Bolshevism and claim Lebensraum and all of these other resources which would prepare the way for a fourth and final war against the United States of America, which from Hitler's perspective would be a relatively easy war because America was a racially mongrel country, according to Hitler's bizarre perspective. So, a war against the Soviet Union was part of Hitler's political, geo-political military agenda from day one. What happens in the summer of 1940 surprised Hitler. Once the Germans had conquered Western Europe and forced the French to capitulate, the Fuhrer was absolutely certain that the British would follow the French and capitulate. But, because of Winston Churchill, who became Prime Minister on May 10, the very day that the Germans

invaded Western Europe, Britain made what Hitler considered to be the foolish and unwise decision to stay in the war. When Hitler gave serious thought as to the best way to get Britain to recognize that she was defeated, he concluded at the end of July 1940, that the fundamental reason that Great Britain refused to quit the war was because she held out hope that at some point in the future, both the United States and the Soviet Union would come to Great Britain's rescue. So, at this meeting of military leaders on July 1, Hitler says that next year we are going to attack the Soviet Union. We will fulfill our ambitions to procure Lebensraum and once we defeat the Soviet Union that will eliminate the possibility of the Soviet Union coming to Great Britain's assistance, Britain will recognize that the Soviet Union is not coming to her assistance but moreover, Hitler reasoned that this would free up the Japanese to move south against British, against French, against Dutch possessions, and against the United States and with the United States tied down against the Japanese in the far east. That would eliminate what was perceived by Hitler to be yet another hope for Great Britain. At the end of July 1940, according to the document of reference that we have, Hitler decided that next year we are moving east, and they do move east starting on Sunday June 22 1941. They catch the Soviet Union completely unprepared, largely because Stalin, in his typical brilliance, ignored warnings from the United States, warnings from Great Britain, warnings from his own intelligence agents, and consequently when 3.3 million German soldiers attacked the Soviet Union, they are able to breach the Soviet Front and advance very, very rapidly into the Soviet interior. German offensive operations in 1941 will continue until early December when the Germans break off operations just short of Moscow, and just in time for the Soviets to launch a highly surprising and highly effective counter-attack that pushes portions of the German military back in some places as much as 100 miles. In terms of your question, how close did Barbarossa come to achieving victory? My perspective is that it never came close. In the much of the traditional, older literature, credit for the survival of the Soviet Union in 1941 is given to the rain, to the mud, to the snow, and to the freezing temperatures. We certainly do know that starting in October 1941 the weather turned bad, rains turned the Soviet dirt roads into quagmires and then you get freezing conditions and you get harsh temperatures and you get snow and there is no doubt that German soldiers certainly suffered from all of these conditions, but by the time the weather turned poorly in October 1941, Barbarossa had failed. And this is the reason why: In order for the Germans to defeat the Soviet Union, and the Germans understood this themselves, they had to emasculate Soviet military power in the opening weeks of the campaign. While they did inflict literally millions of casualties and destroyed untold millions of tons of Soviet equipment, they capture over 3 million soldiers. The Soviet Union had plenty of soldiers to spare and so, in my estimation, Barbarossa never came close to achieving success, but let me emphasize that there are others that would disagree with that.

Brown: Yeah, and I think the point is also that the front was what? A thousand miles long. And think of attacking on a front a thousand miles long, even though they concentrated their forces

aimed at cities like St. Petersburg and Moscow, but they never achieved the decisive battle to defeat the Soviet forces. They never captured St. Petersburg. They never captured Moscow. And, the war, I think, as Bruce has pointed out, bogs down in the fall of 1941. At that point, there are even, I think in some German military figures, that Hitler basically realized the war was lost, at this point, on the East. But we also have to remember that, you know, as we mentioned Pearl Harbor, that after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the United States declares war on Japan. We do not declare war on Germany. And so the other big event, I think, in 1941, is the fact that Hitler declares war on the United States, on what? The 9th or 10th of December, and that brings us into a world war that might have been delayed a bit if Hitler had not declared war on us.

Frederick: And then the American calculus to put, maybe 75-80% of their resources into the European Theater as opposed to as opposed to the Asian Theater.

Brown: Yes.

RC: This is Chancellor Robin Cummings and I want to thank you for listening to 30 Brave Minutes. Our faculty and students provide expertise, energy, and passion, driving our region forward. Our commitment to Southeastern North Carolina has never been stronger through our teaching, our research, and our community outreach. I want to encourage you to consider making a tax-deductible contribution to the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. With your help, we will continue our impact for generations to come.

You can donate online at uncp.edu/give. Thanks again for listening. Now back to more 30 Brave Minutes.

Frederick: So we'll turn our attention really in a slightly different way at this point in time. Maybe outside of the military and the battle conflicts, tell our listeners just something about the Second World War that otherwise might surprise them or they would never guess.

Dehart: Several things. The beginning of the war in September 1939 provided Adolf Hitler with an opportunity to do something that he said he would do once war came: the murder of mentally and physical disabled Germans. In early October, 1939, with the fighting in Poland on the verge of concluding, Hitler issued a written authorization on his personal stationery providing physicians across Germany with the authority to grant "a mercy death" to those of their patients deemed incurable. This marks the beginning of the infamous T4 Program which targeted mentally and physically disabled German adults. This particular program continued until it was suspended in late August 1941 and by the time it was suspended an estimated 70,000 disabled German adults had been killed. Some of them were killed through starvation. Some were killed

through lethal injections of phenol into the heart, but many of them were killed in gas chambers disguised as showers found in six euthanasia centers located across Germany. The second thing that I would bring up, and some people may be aware of this, but the German victories in Western Europe in 1940 had global ramifications. In Washington DC Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who was about to finish his second term in office, made the decision to stand for an unprecedented third term. We have all the evidence to suggest that had the war not taken that particular turn, had the British and the French stopped the German invasion of Western Europe, Roosevelt would have shuffled off into retirement at Hyde Park. He had begun making preparations for his Presidential Library there. His good friend, his Secretary of the Treasury, his Hyde Park neighbor, Henry Morgenthau, Jr. said as much, subsequently, that the president was on his way into retirement. Closely associated with this, Roosevelt makes the commitment in summer of 1940 to do whatever he can to make sure that the British stayed in the war. He understood as of June 1940 that the only thing standing between Nazi Germany, which he had already come to perceive as a terrible, terrible threat, and the good old United States of America was Great Britain, that aircraft carrier. He will also initiate preparations in the United States for the worst-case scenario: the United States must join the war. In Tokyo, the other side of the globe, the German victories led Japanese political and military leaders to conclude that an opportunity existed to claim those British, French, and Dutch territories in the southern resource areas, the East Indies, for example, Burma, for example, Malaya, for example, that the British, the French, and the Dutch could no longer defend. And so, Dr. Hudson talked about Pearl Harbor. Let me emphasize that Pearl Harbor was designed to destroy American Naval power in the Pacific long enough to give Japanese military forces the opportunity to claim those territories and then to establish a defensive perimeter so strong that the United States would not be willing to extend the blood and treasure necessary to reclaim territories that most Americans have never heard of. And so, what I'm suggesting here, is that the road to the military operations in the Far East, that the Japanese launch in December 1941, at the same time they attacked Pearl Harbor, began with those German invasions in Western Europe. And here we have the manifestations of a true global war. The third thing, and I apologize for being long-winded, but I think these points are extremely important. The victories that the Germans win across Europe, starting in Poland in September 1939, and ending at the gates of Moscow in December 1941, brought a majority of Europe's Jewish population under German control, either directly or indirectly. And so, when historians and others claim the failure of the British, and the Americans, and the International Community in the 1930s to let more Jews into their countries, doom the Jews of Europe, I take issue with that. What doomed the Jews of Europe was the inability of those countries waging war against Germany starting in 1939 to defeat the Germans.

Frederick: Robert, something that our listeners don't know?

Brown: Yeah, I guess what I would add as a new factor in the 2nd World War is the power, not just of the press, but of visual media. The fact that people did not see it on their TV like we do today, but they saw newsreels and Germany, in the 1930s, when Hitler is building up his power, there is an incessant, sort of flooding of the Germans with visual imagery. When the Germans invade Poland in 1939, there is an immense amount of imagery and that imagery, I think, convinces a lot of the west of the, what I would call, the myth of the Blitzkrieg. Because in point of fact, when the Germans invade Poland in 1939 a good amount of the German military broke down on the road, but that's not what you see in the newsreels, whether they were shown in Germany, Britain or the United States. And then, we could go on and talk about the Blitz, say for example, in England, and how do the Americans learn about the Blitz? Well, you read about it in the newspaper and you probably saw some news reels, but who did you hear on the radio? You hear Edward R. Morrow, saying "broadcasting from London" and he's supposedly standing up on top of a building and he puts the mic up in the air, and you can hear the planes, and the bombs coming down. Well, you know, it brings war, I think, to home, and you know, maybe in a certain way, it hardens the American determination to back up Roosevelt in his defense of England. So I think the media, whether it's imagery, the photograph, the newsreel, the print journalism, and then the number of books that are published during the war by journalists, and so forth, was a new factor, and the importance of the media is something that has just exploded since that. We take it for granted, but I think it was something much newer in the late 1930s to the 1940s.

Frederick: So a quick final question and we'll set the stage for the second part of our podcast that we will record in coming days. As we transition from the summer of 1942 into the fall of 1942, a time that is pretty important for events in both theaters of war. What is it that ordinary people in - pick a country -, what is it that they truly know about what is happening in terms of the conflict? You have mentioned a little bit about growing media coverage, and radio, and newsreels, and, to some extent, newspaper coverage. What do people really know in 1942 about what's really happening on the ground?

Dehart: One thing in the Soviet Union, people know that victory is still a long ways off and that victory will require even greater sacrifices than those that have already been made.

Brown: Well, in most countries, of course, the press was (I spoke about the positive aspect) tightly controlled by the governments, particularly in Germany, particularly in occupied territories, particularly in the Soviet Union, maybe to a lesser extent in Britain, and the United States. What people actually knew was filtered through censorship. Let's put it that way. But I do know, and I can speak from personal experience here, that my wife's parents are German, and they went through the war in Germany. My father-in-law served in the German army and my mother-in-law went through the war in Berlin. I think that what they knew, if they knew

anything at all, they really couldn't talk about, because of the fear in Germany of being reported by the secret police, by block wardens who monitored everybody in your neighborhood about what they said, about neighbors who could announce you to the police or the gestapo. And, you had no civil rights in Germany. You could be arrested and hauled off. But nonetheless, information got back. There were soldiers that served in the east. There were soldiers who observed, as Bruce was mentioning, the rounding-up of Jews in Polish cities and taking them out and being shot. And we know, now, that the soldiers in the Wehrmacht either observed or participated in this, and I suspect that word got back, even if it was not spoken about in public. So people did know. What we knew in the United States? My father was in the Second World War. My mother kept a scrapbook, which I still have, but much of which, in the scrap book, comes out of the newspapers, comes out of Life Magazine, and other publicly available sources, and it gave the American government's position on the progress of the war.

Frederick: Fascinating discussion today about one of the truly seminal events in world history. We'll complete the story, to the extent that we can, next time. We'll pick up the military action; we'll talk about the home front; we'll certainly talk about elements related to the Holocaust, and of course the aftermath of the war, both in America, in Asia, and in Europe. Thanks to all of you for joining us today on 30 Brave Minutes. Join us again next time.

Narrator Richard Gay: Today's podcast was edited by Richard Gay and transcribed by Janet Gentes. Theme music created by Riley Morton. This content is copyrighted by the University of North Carolina at Pembroke and the College of Arts and Sciences. It is to be used for educational and non-commercial purposes only and is not to be changed, altered, or used in any commercial endeavor without the express written permission of authorized representatives of UNCP. The views and opinions expressed by the individuals during the course of these discussions are their own and do not necessarily represent the views, opinions, and positions of UNCP or any of its subsidiary programs, schools, departments, or divisions. While reasonable efforts have been made to ensure that information discussed is current and accurate at the time of release, neither UNCP nor any individual presenting material makes any warranty that the information presented in the original recording has remained accurate due to advances in research, technology, or industry standards. Thanks for listening and go Braves.

Frederick: Good job everybody.