Time Capsule 1945

The Year in Review: World War II, which began in 1939 (the U.S. entered the war in 1941), finally ends with as many as 62 million military and civilian lives lost on both sides. More than half were civilians who died of disease, starvation, genocide and aerial bombing. The Axis powers of Germany, Italy, Japan and others are defeated by the Allies—the United States, the United Kingdom, France, the Soviet Union, Poland, China and others.

Early in the year, as Allied victories mount, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British prime minister Winston Churchill and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin meet at Yalta, on the Black Sea, to decide the fate of postwar Europe.

Allied troops advance through Germany, crossing the Rhine River in March. In Italy, German troops surrender. On May 7, a week after Adolf Hitler's suicide, all remaining German forces surrender and V-E (Victory in Europe) Day is celebrated on May 8.

In Asia, the Soviet Union honors an agreement made at Yalta to attack the Japanese, following the end of the war in Europe. The Japanese army in Manchuria is destroyed, and the Soviets move into northern Korea. That country is subsequently divided at the 38th parallel into Soviet and U.S. zones.

Fierce fighting continues between the Allies and Japanese troops in the Pacific. In January, U.S. troops land on Luzon, the main island of the Philippines, and Manila is liberated from Japanese control in March. U.S. forces capture Iwo Jima and Okinawa, bringing the Japanese mainland within easier range of air and naval attack.

The Allies firebomb Tokyo and mine ports and waterways, further disrupting logistics of the island nation.

They plan an invasion of the Japanese mainland, but massive casualties—estimated as larger than all other wartime losses to date—cause them to reconsider. When tests in the New Mexico desert show the effectiveness of the atomic bomb, the U.S. decides to use it.

On August 6, a B-29 bomber drops a nuclear bomb on Hiroshima, destroying the city. The U.S. calls on Japan to surrender. When there is no response, a second atomic bomb is dropped, on Nagasaki on August 9. The Japanese surrender on August 15—V-J Day.

When the war ends, Europe is in ruins. Millions of refugees are homeless, the economy has collapsed and the majority of Europe's industrial infrastructure has been destroyed.

Germany is divided into four occupation zones, one each for the U.S., Britain, France and the Soviet Union. Austria is separated from Germany, is divided into four occupation zones and eventually reunites.

While there is great relief in the United States at the end of the war, it is not without sadness. Along with soldiers killed and injured in action, Americans mourn the loss of President Roosevelt, who dies of a cerebral hemorrhage on April 12 at Warm Springs, Georgia.

Roosevelt had shepherded the country during the recovery from the Great Depression and through the war. His vice president, Harry S. Truman, becomes President.

On the U.S. home front, with the end of the war, rationing gradually ends—of gas in August and of everything else but sugar by November.

Names in the News: Sir Alexander Fleming, Sir Howard Florey and Ernst B. Chain win a Nobel Prize for their work on penicillin,

one of the first antibiotics. The drug saved millions of lives in WWII. Prior to its use, infections killed more soldiers than injuries.

In the 1920s, Fleming noted that penicillin mold impacted the growth of staphylococcal bacteria, as well as scarlet fever, pneumonia, gonorrhea, meningitis and diphtheria. Efforts to refine and mass-produce the drug took years.

Ernie Pyle, a roving war correspondent from Indiana, dies of a bullet wound on a Pacific island, 6 days after the death of President Roosevelt. He had gained a large following for his folksy dispatches. His columns, carried in hundreds of newspapers, gave those at home a warm, compassionate view of their boys on the front lines.

Movies: Hollywood's serious side shows with thought-provoking dramas like The Lost Weekend, starring Ray Milland as a man struggling with alcoholism, and Mildred Pierce, featuring Joan Crawford as a housewife-turned-waitress who clashes with her daughter over the love of the same man.

Other blockbusters are the light romantic comedy Anchors Aweigh, starring Frank Sinatra and Gene Kelly; The Bells of St. Mary's, with the big-name tandem of Bing Crosby and Ingrid Bergman; Spellbound, with Alfred Hitchcock's pairing of Bergman and Gregory Peck; and A Tree Grows in Brooklyn with Dorothy McGuire and James Dunn.

Going My Way wins seven Academy Awards, including one for Best Picture and another for Crosby as Best Actor. Bergman's role in Gaslight earns her a Best Actress Oscar.

Music: Also big in Hollywood are musicals, which spawn such hits as It Might as Well Be Spring and It's a Grand Night for Singing, both sung in the movie State Fair.

Perry Como also sings out hits with If I Loved You from the stage

musical Carousel and Dig You Later (A Hubba-Hubba-Hubba) from the film Doll Face.

Harry James and his orchestra strike it big with Autumn Serenade and two chart-toppers, It's Been a Long, Long Time and I'm Beginning to See the Light, both sung by Kitty Kallen.

Other popular Big Bands are led by Benny Goodman, Woody Herman, Kay Kyser, Stan Kenton, and the Dorsey brothers, Tommy and Jimmy. Dizzy Gillespie tours with his first Big Band as bebop, a new form of jazz, becomes a national craze.

Among other songs topping the charts are Rum and Coca-Cola, a calypso song by The Andrews Sisters; Dream by The Pied Pipers; On the Atchison, Topeka, and the Santa Fe, sung by Johnny Mercer and The Pied Pipers; Sentimental Journey, which becomes the theme song of Les Brown's band and is sung by Doris Day; There, I've Said It Again by Vaughn Monroe and his orchestra; and Chickery Chick by Sammy Kaye and his orchestra, with vocals by Nancy Norman and Billy Williams.

Stage: Tennessee Williams' play The Glass Menagerie hits Broadway, and Mary Chase wins the Pulitzer Prize for drama for her play Harvey.

Radio: Notable premieres include Bride and Groom, on which newly married couples are interviewed; This Is Your FBI; and Queen for a Day.

Popular with listeners are the soap opera One Man's Family, the quiz show Information, Please and programs starring Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Dinah Shore. Favorite serials include Young Widder Brown, The Romance of Helen Trent, The Guiding Light, Ma Perkins, Our Gal Sunday, Portia Faces Life and Stella Dallas.

Sports: National League MVP Phil Cavarretta helps lead the

Chicago Cubs to the World Series in baseball, only to see the Detroit Tigers and American League MVP Hal Newhouser take the title, 4 games to 3.

Don Hutson of Green Bay's Packers is the National Football League's top receiver for the fifth straight season and the eighth time in the last 10 years. Other leaders are quarterbacks Sammy Baugh of Washington and Sid Luckman of Chicago and running back Steve Van Buren of the Philadelphia Eagles. The Cleveland Rams win the NFL title game over Washington, 15-14.

The Heisman Trophy winner in college football is Felix "Doc" Blanchard of Army, which wins its second straight national championship.