

World War II

The Build-up

- Allied Denial & Appeasement
 - British guilt over Versailles Treaty
 - American Isolationism
 - French Fears & Maginot Line
- Hitler – Series of Bold Diplomatic Moves
 - Withdrawal from League of Nations; Rearmament
 - Rome-Berlin Axis, Oct. 1936
 - Anti-Comintern Pact, Nov. 1937
- Hitler Begins to claim “German” Territory (Lebensraum) outside German borders
 - Rhineland, March 1936
 - Anschluss, March 1938
 - Sudetenland, Czechoslovakia, Sept. 1938
 - September 1938: Munich Conference -- But Czechoslovakia not present
 - Hitler agrees he “only” wants the Sudetenland and nothing else
 - Neville Chamberlain & “Peace in Our Time”
- 1939 – The Year War Came
 - Hitler’s Demands continued
 - Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, Aug. 1939
 - Britain & France Guarantee Polish borders
 - Hitler invades Poland, Sept. 1, 1939
 - War declared Sept. 3, 1939

Progress of the War

- Phase I: Phony War Sept. 1939 – Apr. 1940
- Phase II: Initial German victories
 - Germany attacks France, April 1940
 - Belgium, Luxembourg, France (June 1940)
 - Miracle at Dunkirk, May 1940
- Phase III: Britain Alone, June 1940- June 1941
 - Britain fights Germany alone for a year with no Allies
- Phase IV: The Big Three at War = Russia (USSR), U.S.A. join Britain
 - Churchill, Stalin & FDR – The Big Three

- Operation Barbarossa, June 1941 -- Invasion of Russia
- Undeclared Atlantic Naval War – Sept. 1941 Between Germany & U.S.
- Pearl Harbor, Dec. 1941 – Japanese attack on U.S.
- Phase IV: Stages of Fighting
 - Stage 1: First half of 1942 – Holding the Axis
 - Stage 2: June 1942- Early 1943-- Turning the Tide
 - Stage 3: 1943 – Allied Offensives
 - Stage 4: June 6, 1944 – D-Day in Europe

Phase II: Initial German Victories

- Germany attacks France, April 1940
 - Not the Maginot Line ... Ardennes Forest
 - Belgium, Luxembourg Fall
 - Miracle at Dunkirk, May 1940
 - 338, 226 men rescued
 - France surrenders June 1940
 - Vichy Government – collaboration
 - Resistance– small
 - Free French Army – Charles de Gaulle
- Operation Sea Lion – Next Offensive

Phase III Britain Alone

- Battle of Britain, June 1940- June 1941 – Britain fights alone, with no allies
 - Germans bomb Britain for a year hoping to soften them up for invasion
 - Bombing of Military & Civilian Targets – London & the South of England
- How did they survive?
 - Leadership of Winston Churchill
 - Resources
 - Island Status
 - Technology – RADAR
 - Empire -- mobilized South Africa, India, Canada, Australia
 - The English Language – The Speeches of Winston Churchill
 - “Never Surrender”
 - “Blood, Toil, Tears & Sweat”
 - “Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed to so few by so many” – speaking of the RAF (Royal Air Force)
 - Britain begins to find Allies

- Lend-Lease Act, passed March. 1941 – material loaned from the U.S. for Britain to fight the Germans
- June 1941 – Operation Barbarossa -- Germany attacks the Soviet Union
- Submarine Warfare in Atlantic
- Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941 -- Japanese attack on the U.S./
 - U.S. Declares war on Japan Dec. 8th after the Japanese surprise attack
 - Germany declares war on the U.S. Dec. 11th

Phase III: Big Three at War

- Major Theaters of War
 - European
 - North Africa (& Middle East)
 - Pacific – Australia & Pacific Islands
 - Asiatic – India, & China
- **Stage 1: Defensive Position of the Allies – Holding Action – Make sure the Axis gain no more ground**
 - Early 1942 – Axis Powers winning; Germans and Japanese advancing.
 - Holocaust begins in earnest in Germany
 - The extermination of European Jews & any “undesirables”
 - 6 million Jews rounded up and killed – shot, gas chambers, starved & worked to death
 - Continued throughout the war – even when Germany started losing
- **Stage 2: Jun- Dec. 1942: Allied Victories begin – The Turning point Battles**
 - June 1942 –Midway (Pacific) – U.S. defeats the Japanese by surprising them after breaking the Japanese code
 - El Alamein – Oct. 23 – Nov.4, 1942 (N. Africa) -- the British defeat the Germans & keep them away from the Suez Canal & Middle East oil fields
 - Stalingrad – Dec. 1942 to Feb. 1943 (Eastern Europe) German siege of Stalingrad fails. Russians hold out and then bring in elite troops from Siberia to begin driving the Germans back
- **Stage 3: Allied Offensives**
 - Soviets move West and begin pushing the Germans back – 1943, early 1944
 - American Invasion of Italy, 1943
 - Island Hopping in Pacific -- taking only the most important islands

- Series of Victories against the Japanese by Americans & Australian forces
- **Stage 4: Operation Overlord – Invasion of Europe**
 - American General Dwight D. Eisenhower – Overall Commander
 - D-day & of Allied forces
 - D-Day June 6, 1944 – Invasion of Europe by the Allies
 - Largest Amphibious assault force ever assembled
 - Creates a Second Front in Europe
 - Germans now being attacked successfully from 2 sides
 - Battle of the Bulge, Dec. 16, 1944 – Jan. 25, 1945
 - Last great push of the Germans
 - Over one million men in the Battle
 - 81,000 American casualties – worst of the War
 - Fuels American anger after the War
 - Germans pushed back & so only a matter of time till the end.
 - Continued to fight
 - Race to see whether the Americans or Russians would reach Berlin first
 - Hitler commits suicide April 1945
 - Germans surrender unconditionally
 - **V-E Day (victory in Europe) – May 7, 1945**
 - Germany divided into 4 occupation zones by the Allies
 - These will become a divided Germany during the Cold War
 - **Japan remained**
 - American victory at Iwo Jima, Feb. 1945
 - Began launching bombing raids on Tokyo
 - Estimates to take home islands of Japan = over 1 million American lives
 - First Atomic bomb exploded in New Mexico in July 1945
 - First Atomic bomb dropped on Japan at Hiroshima -- Aug. 6, 1945
 - Japanese make surrender overtures through the Russians , but they don't deliver the message
 - Russians declare war on Japan: Aug. 8, 1945 & take Kurile Islands and part of Manchuria.
 - Japanese do not surrender – Second bomb -- Nagasaki , Aug. 9, 1945
 - The Emperor (Hirohito) of Japan intervenes with his military and insists on surrendering
 - Overtures sent through the Swiss not the Russians

- **V-J or V-P Day -- Victory over Japan/ Victory in the Pacific Aug. 15, 1945 when the Japanese Surrender**
 - U.S. Occupation of Japan 1945- 1952
- **Conferences of the war determine the post- War World**

Creating the Post-War World

- Series of Wartime conferences
 1. First Conference: Atlantic Charter, 1941:
 - a. Churchill & FDR set war goals (First)
 - b. Democracy, lasting peace
 - c. Unconditional surrender from Axis Powers – nothing less
 2. Strategy for the War decided
 - a. Casablanca (Jan. 1943);
 - b. Tehran – Nov. –Dec. 1943
 - c. All of the Big Three there – FDR, Stalin & Churchill
- They also determined the Post-War World
 - Political & Economic Conferences
- **July 1944, Bretton Woods (in New Hampshire) Conference – Economic**
 - Creation of IMF –International Monetary Fund sets international values of currencies
 - World Bank established for rebuilding after the War
- **September 1944, Dumbarton Oaks (A mansion in Georgetown, outside Washington, D.C.) -- -- International Politics**
 - Formation of the United Nations to replace the defunct League of Nations
 - Different structure with more ability for enforcement & commitment of the major world powers
- **Yalta, Feb. 1945 -- Political & the Cold War**
 - Occupation of Germany – 4 Zones --
 - Britain, U.S., France & U.S.S.R.
 - Seeds of the Cold War Divisions (Eastern Europe)
 - Russian liberation of these areas meant Communist take over
 - Korea to be liberated by both the U.S. & the U.S.S.R.
 - Stop at the 38th Parallel – still the division of North & South Korea
- **Potsdam Conference in Germany, July 1945**
 - Players: Stalin, Clement Atlee (elections in Britain meant new party in power) & Truman (FDR died in April)

- Breakdown of war-time alliance begins
- Cannot agree over time-line for occupation of Germany
- Eventually 1949 – Germany will be divided into East and West
 - Eastern section was Soviet zone of occupation & Communist
 - BR, FR & US sections rejoined to make West Germany
 - Reunited in 1993