

American History (2006-2007): The United States in World War II

Sections 25.2 – 25.4 and General Information

Americans begin their fight in World War II

Hitler-First strategy

“Four essential human freedoms”

Atlantic Charter – Churchill & FDR

Aims: self-determination, equal trading rights, system of general security

June 1941 – Hitler broke non-aggression pact with Stalin; USSR becomes an ally!

German blitzkrieg: Battle of Britain ('40-'41); Rommel's campaigns in N. Africa

BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

- raids on American ships / local submarine stories
- convoy system returns
- shipbuilding program (i.e. Henry Kaiser)

Early problems in the Pacific: Defeat at the Philippines

Gen. Douglas MacArthur

“Doolittle's Raid”

European Theatre (Section 25.2)

Hitler's Russian mistake (stalled Nov. 1942 at Stalingrad) – see 777

Nov. 1942 – Operation Torch (Allied invasion of N. Africa)

US led by Gen. Dwight Eisenhower (and Montgomery)

**Stalin wanted a second front in W. Europe

Jan. 1943 – Casablanca Conference (FDR & Churchill)

Agreed to invade Sicily (quells Stalin's cries!)

Unconditional Surrender pledge

Aug. 1943 – Sicily fell; Sep. 1943 – Mussolini deposed

“1 down, 2 to go”

The Italian Campaign (against Germans) – ends May 2, 1945

Significance?

“Heroes in Battle” (see text, p. 779)

Teheran Conference: Nov. 28 – Dec. 1, 1943

“Big Three”: Churchill, FDR, Stalin

Open 2nd front in Europe, plan invasion of France

D-day Invasion: June 6, 1944 (Inv. of Normandy/Op. Overlord)

**See p. 780 & interactive map

Aug. 1944: Americans liberate Paris, again

Oct. 1944: Aachen – first Germany city

Dec. 1944: Battle of the Bulge (last chance effort)

Discovered evidence of Holocaust

Pacific Theatre Timeline (Section 25.3)

Japanese Strategy 1941-1942
Invasion of Burma / control of Pacific
May 1942 – Battle of Coral Sea
June 3-6, 1942 – Battle of Midway (significance)
Admiral Chester W. Nimitz
August 1942 – Battles at Guadalcanal (& Solomon Islands)
Island-hopping strategy, as designed by Nimitz and MacArthur
August 1943 – Attu & Kiska regained
November 1943 – Tarawa & Makin regained
Jan-Feb 1944 – Marshall Islands
June 1944 – Marianas Islands (why significant?)
June 20, 1944 – Battle of Philippine Sea
Raids on Tokyo; MacArthur's October return to Philippines
Battle of Leyte Gulf – significance?
**Japanese desperation (Kamikaze pilots)
March-June 1945: Iwo Jima and Okinawa (heavy losses)

Ending the War

Yalta Conference: February 1945
Big Three again; Division of Germany; Free elections in E. Europe as promised by Stalin
Soviets agreed to enter war against Japan
Agreed on United Nations
**Did FDR and Churchill give in to Stalin?

March 1945 – Crossing of the Rhine – almost to Berlin!

April 12, 1945 – FDR dies at Warm Springs, GA; Harry S. Truman becomes 33rd President

April 30, 1945 – Hitler commits suicide in Berlin

May 7, 1945 – V-E Day (New German government submits “unconditional surrender”)

Final Conference: Potsdam (mid-1945)
New three: Harry Truman, Clement Atlee, Josef Stalin
Ultimatum to Japan: “surrender or be destroyed”
Final organization of the United Nations

Dropping the Atomic Bomb

Albert Einstein and his fateful letter to FDR (1939)
1942 – Manhattan Project begun
Head: J. Robert Oppenheimer
July 16, 1945: Test at Alamogordo, NM

WHY USE THE ATOMIC BOMB? (list reasons/debate)

The dropping of the bombs:

Aug. 6, 1945 – Hiroshima (70,000 dead)
Aug. 8, 1945 – Soviets enter war against Japan
Aug. 10, 1945 – Nagasaki (40,000 dead)
Aug. 14, 1945 – Tokyo sued for peace
Sept. 2, 1945 – V-J Day; Japan signed “unconditional surrender” on the *USS Missouri*
(final end for US involvement in WW II)

Immediate Post-War:
Germany: Nuremberg Trials and division

Japan: War Crimes Trials and democratic constitution

Americans on the Battle Fronts

(Review from 25.1)

GI = Government Issue = name for soldiers
Stories of the front line at home & news reels

Women's Service: WAC, WAVES, WASPs
Barred from combat duty

African-American Service: participated in the war, some saw combat duty, still in segregated units
Jan. 1945 program in the Army allowed blacks to train for infantry duty

Mexican-Americans: 350,000, most in the Army
Native Americans: code talkers
Even some Japanese-Americans joined the war effort, despite internment camps at home

The Shift to Wartime Production

Office of War Mobilization (coordinate the production of war materials); New Deal problems?

Auto Industry conversion
Stopped production of cars in 1942; Henry Ford helped produce war materials (including bombers)

Cost-plus system
Robert Woodruff and Coca-Cola
Henry J. Kaiser

Unions and War

Increase in union membership
Wildcat strikes
Smith-Connally Act (June 1943)

War Finance: Deficit spending (3/5ths borrowed)

Daily Life on the Home Front

Prosperity and Popular Culture
World War II ended the Great Depression
Books, Hollywood, Baseball (women's league), music

Shortages and Controls
Office of Price Administration
Government tried to head off inflation
Limits on supplies; scarcity of foods; speed limit

Campaigns at Home
Why? Maintain morale, patriotism, encourage rationing and people to save resources
Also... Bonds, Bonds, Bonds! (again!)

Women and the War

Rosie the Riveter

Women = patriotic duty to go to work
Still paid less than men – but job opportunities grew
Women from all levels, groups responded

Conditions for African-American women

After the war, push to “demobilize women”; WHY?

The Struggle for Justice at Home

Still fighting racism and discrimination...

“Double V”; A. Philip Randolph; CORE

FDR’s Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) and *Smith v. Allright* (1944)

Major race riots in Detroit and New York in Summer ‘43

Mexican-Americans and the *bracero* program

Braceros: Mexican farm laborers brought to the US to work (200,000 participated)

Zoot-suit riots in Los Angeles, Summer 1943