

World War II:

The Battles

I. Intro:

A. Hitler invaded Soviet Union in June 1941

- Allies—US, Britain, SU
- Axis—Japan, Italy, Germany

A. Those areas and people that were conquered had to work in slave labor camps so the Germans could work in military—because of this there developed many resistance units in Poland, Russia, and other Nazi conquered lands

II. North Africa

- a. The Allies first attacked in North Africa because they felt they didn't have enough resources to attack in the west yet
- b. The Axis powers felt they would of course be victorious but they lost territory in North Africa



III. Battle of Stalingrad

- a. Germans surrendered at this battle in Feb. 1943 after four months of fighting
- b. 300,000 German casualties; 500,000 Soviet casualties



IV. Japan

- “The Pacific”—“Island-Hopping Campaign”
 - a. Took Manila, Philippines—Jan. 1942
 - i. Seized 300,00 square miles of ocean in 6 months



B. The Battle of Midway

- June 1942
 - i. Japanese armada of 100 ships attacked American naval base on Midway Island
 - ii. Significant - a stepping stone on the way to Hawaii
 - iii. Japan—had 5 aircraft carriers, hundred war planes
 - iv. US won b/c the navy knew where Japan was headed because American codebreakers intercepted the messages. Japan was forced to retreat, Midway remained an American stronghold
 - v. Midway was turning point in the war in Pacific—the US began to drive Japan back to their land



V. Back to Europe

- 1943 stopped Axis assault, now able to take offensive and conquer
- late 1943 “Big 3” met in Tehran, Iran for the first time
 - i. Jan. 1943—all Stalin wanted was an invasion in France to divert Germans, but FDR and Churchill wanted to stall til 1944



- a. D-Day—**June 6, 1944**—Dwight D. Eisenhower
- i. 3 million American soldiers, sailors and airmen - came in ‘waves’
 - ii. Germans unprepared
 - iii. Largest seaborne invasion force in history landed in Normandy region—northwest France



D-Day (Invasion of Normandy) Cont.

- i. At night Allies broke the German communication and transportation lines
 - 1. at dawn, 11,000 planes provided air cover for the allies landed 300,000 men in the first week



i. August 25, 1944: Allies marched into Paris ending Nazi occupation of 4 years



By winter, 1944 Allies closed in on Hitler from both sides with:

British and US—West
Soviet Union—East



B. Battle of the Bulge

- i. Dec. 1944
- ii. Last ditch counter offensive
- iii. Germans caught allies off guard
- iv. Created a huge bulge in lines
(how it got its name)
- v. Heavy losses, but allies managed to regroup and drive Germans back



VI. Back to the Pacific

- a. Iwo Jima—750 miles from Japan
 - i. Feb. 1945
 - ii. 25,000 US casualties—6800 killed
 - iii. US triumphed



B. Okinawa

- a. 350 miles from Japan
 - i. April 1945
 - ii. Bloodiest island fight in Pacific
 - iii. Marines controlled island by June
 - iv. 110,000 Japanese; 12,000 US killed
 - v. Signif: Gave US more airbases for raids against Japan
 - 1. US began systematic fire bombing of Japan's most populous cities



VII. End of Wars:

a. End of War in Europe—May 1945

i. Hitler commits suicide—
April 30, 1945

ii. End of “3rd Reich”



B. Potsdam Conference

- July, 1945
 - War in Europe over at this point
 - Significance:
 - Germany divided amongst the allies
 - Truman let it slip we have the “bomb” (Oppenheimer)
 - agreed to put Nazis on trial
 - unconditional surrender by Japan



C. End of War in the Pacific

- August 1945
 - a. Aug. 6, 1945—Dropped Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima
 - b. Aug. 9, 1945—Dropped Atomic Bomb on Nagasaki
 - c. **Sept. 2, 1945**—Treaty to end WWII signed on USS Missouri



