

U.S. Enters WWII

AP US History notes

Conditions in December of 1941:

- Axis Powers
 - Germany, Italy, Japan
- Allies
 - U.S., G.B., USSR, France (among many others)
 - “Europe first” strategy - greater threat
 - Pacific: “Aggressive defense”
- Germans had taken most of mainland Europe
 - forced slavery of Jews and others and captured enemies such as Poles (war Industries)
- Mediterranean
 - Germany & Italy took much of N. Africa. ~ Erwin Rommel: “Desert Fox”
 - moving toward Egypt - Suez Canal
 - stopped by G.B. - battle of El Alomein Oct, 42
 - May 1943 (Axis African forces surrender);
 - General Dwight D. Eisenhower (from Casablanca) and Great Britain (from Egypt) close in on Rommel who escapes from Tripoli to Sicily and into Italy.
- Stalingrad (Kiev) (Sept ‘42- Feb ‘43) turning pt. in east
 - major industrial center
 - USSR held although the city was leveled
 - Germans lost 300,000
 - Came after losing 100,000 troops in a failed attempt on Moscow (winter of ‘42-’43)

Pacific Front

- Japan’s Attack (Dec. 7-8, 1941)
 - Pearl Harbor -Guam -Singapore
 - Malaya -Philippines - Others
- Bataan death march
 - 12,000 American & 65,00 Filipino forces surrendered May ‘42
 - Bataan Peninsula (Philippines)
 - 65 mile march 7-10,000 died from torture, starvation, and exposure
= U.S. Anger
- 1942- Japanese fleet 3x larger than U.S.
- Coral Sea (May ‘42)
 - Japan moving towards Australia
 - Intercepted
 - 1st air- only battle in world history
 - Allied victory saved Australia from imminent invasion
- Midway (June ‘42)
 - Knew attack was coming (Chester Nimitz)- intercepted messages
 - Over 100 Japanese ships
 - Air battle- Heavy Losses- both sides
 - much of Japan's fleet damaged or destroyed
 - THE TURNING POINT IN THE WAR OF THE PACIFIC

European Front WWII

- Dwight D. Eisenhower named Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces
- Allied Plan to retake Europe
 - 1) Control the Atlantic
 - Used radar and sonar to locate U-Boats
 - Controlled by 1943 (spring)
 - Blocked and bombed German Ports
 - 2) Strike from south
 - a) Defeat Italy and push north
 - Took Sicily in July 1943 (Mussolini removed from power by Victor Emmanuel III)
 - Germans moved to block Allied advance but failed
 - Final surrender July 1944 (Rome)
 - 3) Cross English Channel
 - "Operation Overlord" (D-Day)- July 6, 1944
 - Largest sea born invasion in world history
 - 3 million allied troops massed
 - Normandy (least obvious spot)
 - Darkness -Dawn
 - 11,000 planes
 - 300,000 men in 1st week
 - 1 million within a month
 - by July, controlled coast and pushed toward Paris.
 - also invaded from south and pushed north.
 - Paris liberated: August 25, 1944
- By Winter of '44
 - Allies closing in on Hitler from both sides
- Battle of the Bulge (mid - Dec- '44)
 - last ditch effort by Germans
 - Ardennes Forrest (Belgium)
 - Germans attacked a weakly defended part of line (mostly U.S.)
 - "Bulge" in lines
 - Heavy Losses but Allies flanked to stop the German advance
- Yalta (Soviet Resort on the Black Sea) Feb. 1945
 - "Big 3" FDR, Churchill & Stalin - knew end was near
 - Decided new borders for Poland + Germany
 - Divided Germany into 4 parts to be monitored by G. B., U. S., France, and USSR
 - Stalin Promised:
 - war on Japan
 - Democratic elections in E. Europe -This did not happen!
- FDR died on April 12, 1945
- Victory in Europe
 - April 25, 1945 - U.S. + soviet Troops Met on Elbe R 60 miles south of Berlin
 - As they approached Berlin, Hitler allegedly committed Suicide.
 - May 7 Germany surrounded at Eisenhower headquarters in France
 - May 8- V-E Day

Island-Hopping to Victory in the Pacific

- Allied Forces in the Pacific were led by:
 - U. S. Admiral of the Pacific Fleet, Chester Nimitz
 - U. S. General of Pacific Land Forces, General Douglas MacArthur

- A foothold was established through bloody battles at Guadalcanal

- A decision was made by MacArthur and Nimitz to skip heavily fortified Japanese held islands and take others from which attacks can then be made on the stronger fortifications

- The Allies were literally “island-hopping” toward Tokyo

- Retaking the Philippines:
 - In 1944 the Allies successfully attempted to retake the Philippines
 - Battle of Leyte Gulf: The U. S. smashed the Japanese Fleet in the largest battle in Navel history

- Communist movements in East Asia grew out of the desire to defeat and remove the Japanese presence. The two most prominent movements were actually aided by American money and weapons:
 - Mao Tse-tong (*also* Zedong) in China
 - Ho Chi Minh in Indochina (later Vietnam and Cambodia)

- The Japanese islands of Iwo Jima and Okinawa were hard fought and important acquisitions allowing for easier access to Japan and thus pressure on Tojo and Hirohito

- The Manhattan Project in the dessert of New Mexico produced the first ever atomic bomb. This project was a result of the urging of refugee scientists from Germany such as Albert Einstein who warned of Germany’s efforts and progress in atomic research.

- Hiroshima & Nagasaki: After FDR’s death, Harry Truman had the decision of whether to invade Japan who refused to surrender and would fight to the death or drop the A-bomb. He chose the bomb because he felt it in the long run, fewer people on both sides would be killed.

- V-J Day - Sept. 2, 1945: the Japanese officially surrendered on *USS Missouri* in Tokyo Bay

Effects of WWII

- Holocaust
 - 11 million died
 - 6 million Jews
 - Other groups included: Communists, Homosexuals, Gypsies, Poles, Jehovah's Witnesses, Socialists, Handicapped and Soviet POWs (2-3 million).

- Aprox. 55 million people died in WWII
 - About 1/2 were civilians
 - USSR 20 million dead
 - Germany 7 million lives lost

- U.S. Casualties
 - War= 291,000 dead -670,000 wounded - millions wounded or killed in factories

- War crime trials
 - Nuremberg (12 death sentences)
 - 500,000 Nazis convicted
 - Tokyo
 - Tojo + 6 generals hanged
 - 100's of others hanged
 - Many escaped trial

- U.S. prosperous again- war profits and industry
 - G.I. Bill of Rights
 - \$ for college + housing (better work force)
 - \$ for low interest loans (housing + business = jobs)

- Beginning of "Cold War" -Superpowers
 - USSR (communism) vs. U.S. (capitalist democracy)
 - "Third World" = nations not allied to the USSR or U. S. - - the battle ground for the KGB and CIA

- United Nations established to avoid "postwar war"
 - FDR conceived the U. N.
 - "Police the world"