

Ch 17 The U.S. in WWII

Sec 1 Mobilization on the Home Front

Industrial Response

1. Automobile construction was completely halted in Feb 1942, plants were retooled to build tanks, planes, boats, and command cars
2. More than 6 million women took industrial jobs in order to fill vacancies left by men
3. A. Philip Randolph – nation's leading African American labor leader, lead a march on D.C. in order to protest discrimination in the military and in industry
 - a. FDR asked employers in defense industries and labor unions not to engage in discriminatory behavior
4. Office of Scientific Research and Development (OSRD) – spurred improvements in radar and sonar, insect repellents, and penicillin
 - a. Manhattan Project – OSRD's greatest achievement, the construction of the atomic bomb

Internment of Japanese Americans

1. Americans feared that Asian Americans were part of Japan's master plan for destroying the U.S.
2. U.S. citizens and newspapers attacked Japanese Americans daily

3. Feb 19, 1942 – Roosevelt signed an order requiring the removal of Japanese ancestry from CA and parts of OR, WA, and AZ
 - a. 110,000 Japanese Americans were rounded up and shipped to ten hastily constructed internment camps
 - b. Nisei – Japanese Americans who had been born in the U.S. making them U.S. citizens

Economic Controls

1. Office of Price Administration (OPA) – established by Congress to fight inflation by freezing prices on most goods
 - a. Congress raised income tax rates and extended the tax to millions who had never paid
2. War Production Board (WPB) – established to coordinate the production of military supplies
3. Rationing – establishing fixed allotments of goods deemed essential for the military
 - a. Ration Books – had coupons which had to be used to buy such scarce goods as meat, shoes, sugar, coffee, and gas

Sec 2 The War for Europe and North Africa

War Plans – Churchill and Roosevelt met on Dec 22, 1941 to put together a plan to defeat the Axis Powers

1. Defeat of Germany was the 1st priority

- a. Roosevelt had always considered Hitler the number one enemy of the U.S.
 - b. Stalin was desperate for help against invading German forces
 - c. After defeating Germany, U.S. could look for help from Britain and Soviet Union to defeat Japan
2. Allies would only accept an unconditional surrender of the Axis Powers

Battle of the Atlantic

1. Hitler ordered German U-boats to attack any U.S. ship in the Atlantic Ocean
2. Allies responded with the convoy system once again, in addition to utilizing radar and sonar to find and destroy U-boats
3. By mid 1943 the tide of the Battle of the Atlantic had turned in the Allies' favor

The Eastern Front

1. Battle of Stalingrad – the initial German charge into the Soviet Union stalled in front of Moscow and Leningrad in 1942
 - a. With the Germans running low on oil, Hitler ordered his troops south to take Stalingrad and the Soviet Union's oil fields
 - b. By the end of Sept., Germans controlled 9/10 of the city, but the Soviets launched a counterattack

- c. On Feb 2, 1943, 91,000 German troops (what was left of 330,000) surrendered
- d. Soviets lost 1,250,000 soldiers and civilians – more than all American casualties during the entire war
- e. Major turning point, Soviets began to steadily move towards Germany

North African Front

1. Operation Torch – Nov 1942, an invasion of Axis-controlled North Africa commanded by General Dwight D. Eisenhower
 - a. General Erwin Rommel – legendary military leader for the Axis Powers known as the Desert Fox
2. After several months of fighting, the Afrika Korps surrendered in May 1943

Italian Campaign

1. Churchill referred to Italy as “the soft underbelly of the Axis”
2. Italians had grown weary of fighting, on July 25, 1943 the Italian king strips Mussolini of his power and arrests him
3. Hitler seizes control of Italy and reinstates Mussolini
4. “Bloody Anzio” – one of the hardest battles the Allies encountered in all of Europe
 - a. Lasted 4 months – until end of May 1944

- b. Allied deaths – 25,000, Axis – 30,000**
- 5. April 28, 1945 – Mussolini is discovered by the Italian partisan (resistance) and is shot the next day

Allies Liberate Europe

1. Operation Overlord – invasion of Hitler’s “fortress Europe”, organized by Eisenhower
 - a. For 2 years U.S. and Britain had been amassing troops, ships, and landing craft to cross the English channel**
 - b. Normandy Peninsula – lightly fortified area that would be the spot for the Allied landing
2. D-day – June 6, 1944, the largest land-sea-air operation in history
 - a. Allies faced heavy fighting and suffered large amounts of casualties but were able to hold all of the beachheads
3. General George Patton – led the Third army to Paris and with the help of the French resistance, liberated the city on Aug 25, 1944
- 4. By Sept. 1944 the Allies had freed France, Belgium, Luxemburg, and much of the Netherlands**

Election of 1944 – with good news on the war front, Americans reelected Roosevelt and his new running mate, Harry S. Truman, to a 4th term

Battle of the Bulge – Dec 16, 1944, desperate, last ditch offensive which resulted in a huge dent in the Allied lines

1. Initial German success was due to their ability to keep the Allies off guard
2. Battle lasted for a month with the Germans being pushed back
3. War took a decisive turn after the battle - Germans had lost 120,000 troops, 600 tanks, and assault guns, and 1,600 planes – things they could no longer replace
4. Allies now pressed eastward into the German heartland and the Soviet Union pushed westward across Poland toward Berlin

Unconditional Surrender

1. April 25, 1945 – Soviet army storms Berlin
2. April 30, 1945 – not wanting to face surrender, Hitler and wife, Eva Braun, committed suicide in his underground bunker
3. V-E Day (Victory in Europe) – May 8, 1945, Eisenhower accepted the unconditional surrender of the Third Reich

Sec 3 The War in the Pacific

Japanese Advances

1. The attack on Pearl Harbor had missed the Pacific Fleet's submarines and aircraft carriers

2. In the 1st 6 months after Pearl Harbor the Japanese conquered an Empire: Hong Kong, French Indochina, Malaya, Burma, Thailand, half of China, and several islands in the Pacific
3. Philippines – General Douglas MacArthur was able to hold off a much larger Japanese force for four months but was eventually forced to retreat
4. Japan had acquired 150 million new subjects and now ruled 1/7 of the globe

U.S. Retaliation

1. April 18, 1942 – 16 U.S. bombers bombed factories, steel mills, oil tanks and other military targets over Tokyo and four other Japanese cities
 - a. Wounded Japanese aura of invincibility
2. Battle of the Coral Sea – May 1942, U.S. and Australian fleet intercepted a Japanese force headed for Australia
 - a. New Naval Warfare - opposing ships never saw one another or exchanged gunfire, all fighting was done by carrier based airplanes
 - b. Allies lost more ships than the Japanese, but Japanese were too low on fuel to continue to Australia

Battle of Midway

1. Admiral Chester Nimitz – commander of American naval forces in the Pacific

2. 110 Japanese ships were heading toward Midway island where they planned to launch an invasion force on Hawaii
3. Nimitz responded with a surprise attack and intercepted the Japanese at Midway
4. Japanese lost 4 irreplaceable aircraft carriers, a cruiser, and 322 planes

Island Hopping

1. Japanese troops were dug in on hundreds of islands scattered across thousands of miles of ocean
2. MacArthur decided to leapfrog Japanese strongholds and seize less fortified islands
 - a. On these islands he would build airfields and use air power to cut supply lines to enemy troops
3. Battle of Leyte Gulf - Oct 1944, U.S. had leapfrogged to the Philippines and MacArthur was prepared to retake the islands
 - a. Kamikaze – suicide plane attack in which the Japanese pilots crashed their bomb laden planes into Allied ships
 - b. Battle was a disaster for Japan – lost 3 battleships, 4 aircraft carriers, 13 cruisers, and 400 planes – Imperial Navy would only play a minor role the rest of the war
4. Iwo Jima – island critical to the U.S., from here heavily loaded bombers could reach Japan

- a. Japanese were heavily entrenched and several U.S. soldiers lost their lives
5. April 12, 1945 – Roosevelt suffers a stroke and dies making Harry S. Truman president
6. Battle of Okinawa – last obstacle separating the Allies and a final assault on Japan
 - a. Both sides suffered heavy death tolls: 7,600 Americans, 110,000 Japanese

Manhattan Project – most ambitious scientific enterprise in history and also the best-kept secret of the war, the construction of the atomic bomb

1. More than 600,000 Americans were involved
2. Work began in 1942
3. J. Robert Oppenheimer – headed a group of brilliant scientists who built the actual atomic bomb in a research lab in Los Alamos, NM
4. July 16, 1945 – the first atomic bomb was detonated in an empty expanse of desert near Alamogordo, NM

To Bomb or not to Bomb

1. Many scientists felt it would be immoral to use the bomb against Japan w/o fair warning, with many proposing a test explosion for the Japanese to witness
2. Oppenheimer outlined 3 problems with a test to the Interim committee on May 31, 1945:
 - a. Nothing less than actually dropping the bomb on a city would convince the Japanese to surrender

- b. The test might be a dud
 - c. Japanese might shoot down the delivery plane or move American prisoners to the test site
- 3. Committee decided the bomb would be used against Japanese military targets and used w/o warning
- 4. Three main reasons the bomb would be used:
 - a. Heavy casualties suffered at Iwo Jima and Okinawa, led many to believe that an invasion of mainland Japan could result in millions of casualties
 - b. Weapon needed to be used to justify the cost of building it
 - c. Tension and distrust beginning to build with the Soviets, bomb would give U.S. the edge in shaping the postwar world
- 5. July 26, 1945 – U.S. warned Japan that it faced “prompt and utter destruction” unless it surrendered at once
- 6. Aug 6, 1945 – B-29 bomber named the *Enola Gay* released an atomic bomb (Little Boy) over Hiroshima which was an important military center
 - a. 43 seconds later, Hiroshima ceased to exist
 - b. Japan’s leaders still hesitated to surrender
- 7. Aug 9, 1945 – a second bomb (Fat Man) was dropped on Nagasaki, leveling half the city
 - a. By the end of the year, an estimated 200,000 people died of injuries and radiation poisoning

8. VJ-Day - Sept 2, 1945, Japan surrenders to the U.S. on the U.S. battleship *Missouri*

Preparation for Peace

1. Yalta Conference – Feb 1945, meeting between Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin at the Soviet city of Yalta
 - a. Agreed on a set of measures to be implemented after the defeat of Germany
 - i. United Nations (UN) – a new international peace keeping body which would be based on the principles of the Atlantic Charter
 - ii. Established an 11 member security council, an administrative, a judicial, and economic governing bodies
2. A blueprint for disarming Germany and eliminating the Nazi regime were put together as well a plan to punish all war criminals

Post-war Germany

1. Divided into 4 zones: U.S., Great Britain, Soviet Union, and France each administered one zone
 - a. Berlin was also divided into four zones
2. Nuremberg Trials – an unprecedented event, 23 nations tried 22 Nazi war criminals
 - a. 12 of the 22 were sentenced to death, rest were sentenced to prison

- b. For the 1st time in history a nation's leaders had been held legally responsible for their actions during wartime

Occupation of Japan

1. Occupied by U.S. forces under the command of Gen. MacArthur
2. Several Japanese leaders were put on trial and 7 were sentenced to death
3. During 6 years of occupation, MacArthur reformed Japan's economy, transformed the gov't, and helped them write a constitution which is still called the MacArthur Constitution

Sec 4 The Impact of War

Opportunity and Adjustment

1. U.S. emerged from WWII as the world's dominant economic and military power
2. Unemployment fell to a low of 1.2% in 1944 and avg. weekly paychecks rose 70%
3. Farm crop production increased by 50% and farm income tripled
4. During the war women made up 35% of the workforce

Population Shifts

1. Towns with defense industries and military bases saw populations double and triple
2. Cities suffered from housing and food shortages because of the rapid increases in population

Social Adjustments

1. Mothers, neighbors, relatives, and day care centers were left to raise children
2. Marriages increased, which also led to an increase in divorces
3. GI Bill of Rights – passed in 1944 to help ease the transition of returning servicemen to civilian life
 - a. Provided education and training for veterans which would be paid for by the Fed Gov't

African Americans in the Military

1. Segregation remained the rule in the military
2. No longer were black units restricted to menial tasks
 - a. 92nd Infantry Division (Buffaloes) – won several military awards in just 6 months of fighting
 - b. 99th Fighter Squadron – Tuskegee Airmen, won two Distinguished Unit Citations (the military's highest commendation) for their aerial combat against the Luftwaffe

African Americans at Home

1. Many African Americans left the South and moved to the West Coast where they found good jobs
2. Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) – an interracial organization designed to confront urban segregation in the North, established by James Farmer
3. As blacks moved into overcrowded cities tensions rose
 - a. Detroit Riot – fighting raged for 3 days which was fueled by false rumors that whites had murdered a black woman and her children and that black rioters had killed 17 whites
 - b. Roosevelt had to send in federal troops
 - i. 9 whites and 25 blacks died

Japanese Americans in the War Effort

1. Many felt it was their obligation to demonstrate that they were indeed loyal, and the government was wrong in putting them into camps
2. 442nd Regimental Combat Team – all Nisei unit, became the most decorated combat unit of the war
3. Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) – pushed for the U.S. gov't to compensate Japanese Americans for property they had lost when they were interned during WWII