

OUTLINE OF UNITED STATES IN WORLD WAR II

I. MILITARY OPERATIONS

Japan, Act I

- Original prewar war plan: Defeat Germany first
- Destruction of U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor disrupts that plan: US has to stop the Japanese offensive
 - Philippines fall to Japan, May 1942
 - Battle of the Coral Sea, 1942
 - First “carrier battle”
 - First US strategic victory in the Pacific
 - Battle of Midway, 1942
 - One of the most important and decisive battles of World War II
 - One of the most important battles in American military or naval history
 - Destroys heart of the Japanese carrier force and Japanese naval aviation
 - Places Japan permanently on the strategic defensive
 - Allows US to return to original strategy of defeating Germany first

Europe

- Battle of the Atlantic, 1942-45: Resupplying the European Allies and defeating the U-Boat menace
- Operation TORCH: The invasion of North Africa, 1942
- Strategic bombing of Germany, 1942-45
 - Unlike tactical bombing, which is aerial bombing of an enemy’s armed force, strategic bombing is the use of aerial bombing to destroy an enemy's ability to produce weapons, thereby crippling his ability to fight and thus influencing his strategic decisions
 - Cologne, May 1942
 - Hamburg, July 1943
 - killed 40,000 people, mostly civilians
 - Dresden (cultural center), February 1945
 - 40,000 dead, including 8000 children
 - Statistics overall:
 - 300,000 people killed
 - 760,000 injured
 - 7,500,000 homeless
- Germany versus USSR, 1941-45

- The ultimate Tiger vs. Tiger match, which USSR ultimately wins
- The biggest and most costly land battles of the war
- The “soft underbelly” of Europe
 - Invasion of Sicily, July 1943
 - Invasion of Italy, September 1943; Mussolini’s government falls
 - Rome falls to Allies, June 1944
- Operation OVERLORD (D-Day), 6 June 1944: The Allied invasion of Normandy, France (clip from *Saving Private Ryan*)
- Battle of the Bulge, December 1944: Germany’s last (failed) offensive
- Allied crossing of Rhine, March 1945
- V-E Day, 8 May 1945: Germany surrenders unconditionally to Allies

Japan, Act 2

- Objective: to push back and pierce Japan’s defensive perimeter to bring home islands in reach of long-range bombing and, ultimately, invasion of Japanese home islands
- Two theaters: South Pacific and Central Pacific
 - South Pacific—mainly an army campaign, commanded by General Douglas MacArthur
 - Guadalcanal, 1942-43; protecting supply lines to Australia
 - Solomons, 1943; moving towards the Philippines
 - Central Pacific—mainly a navy/marine campaign, commanded by Admiral Chester Nimitz
 - U.S. submarine campaign, 1942-45: strangulation of Japanese home islands
 - Ultimately highly successful, unlike German U-Boat campaigns of WWI and WWII
 - Strategy of island-hopping
 - Objective; to gain forward operating bases and ultimately to bring Japanese home islands within range of U.S. land-based bombers while bypassing nonessential Japanese positions
 - Major landings (many others not listed)
 - Tarawa, November 1943
 - Mariana Islands, June 1944
 - Tinian, August 1944
 - Tactical air power: the *Essex*-class aircraft carriers
 - Provide tactical air support during capture of central Pacific islands
 - Battle of the Philippine Sea, June 1944
 - The last “carrier battle”: Japanese naval air power annihilated
 - The Philippines, autumn 1944: MacArthur vs. Nimitz

- The Battle of Leyte Gulf, October 1945: the largest sea battle in human history
- Japanese surface navy defeated but not annihilated
- The Kamikaze campaign begins
- Philippines liberated, March 1945
- Strategic bombing of Japanese home islands, November 1944-August 1945
 - Made possible by capture of the Marianas
 - Tokyo firebombing, March 1945
 - 85,000 civilians killed, more than in the later atomic bombings
 - Marianas are just barely in B-29 range of Japan; closer base needed for more effective missions and fighter support
 - Iwo Jima, February-March 1945
 - Okinawa, April-July 1945
- Operation DOWNFALL: The planned invasion of Japan, called off after . . .
 - Hiroshima, atomic bombing, 6 August 1945: 70,000 killed
 - Nagasaki atomic bombing, 9 August 1945: 35,000 killed
- As a result of the atomic bombings, V-J Day, 15 August 1945: Japan announces its capitulation
- Tokyo Bay, 2 September 1945, aboard USS *Missouri*: Japan signs unconditional surrender to Allies: World War II ends

WARTIME DIPLOMACY

- Argentia Bay, August 1941—FDR, Churchill
 - FDR and Churchill sign the Atlantic Charter, declaring that U.S. and England seek no territorial gains and that they support self-determination of peoples
 - N.B.: This takes place well before U.S. is officially in the war
- Casablanca, January 1943—FDR, Churchill
 - An effort to reassure Stalin that US and England will not abandon USSR to face Germany alone
 - FDR and Churchill announce policy of unconditional surrender of Axis Powers
 - Sicily/Italy campaign to begin in 1943
 - France to be invaded in 1944 (US and England not yet ready)
- Teheran, November 1943—FDR, Churchill, Stalin (the “Big Three”)
 - FDR and Churchill agree to invade France in 6 months
 - Stalin agrees that USSR will join war against Japan upon defeat of Germany
 - Stalin agrees to formation of United Nations
- Yalta, February 1945—FDR, Churchill, Stalin
 - FDR agrees to let Stalin take over territory in Far East in exchange for USSR’s help in war against Japan

- Allies agree to disagree: they accept plan to divide Germany into four occupation zones, each administered by an Allied Power (U.S, British, French, Soviet)
- Potsdam, July 1945—Truman, Churchill/Atlee, Stalin
 - Allies disagree over German reparations—occupation zones become a more-or-less permanent arrangement (ultimately coalescing into East and West Germany)
 - Grand Alliance begins to disintegrate

WARTIME CIVIL LIBERTIES IN THE U.S.

- Japanese relocation
 - Pursuant to an executive order and then federal statute, more than 100,000 persons of Japanese ancestry, among them 70,000 U.S. citizens, are transported from U.S. west coast to concentration camps/detention centers in Wyoming and elsewhere without trial, filing of formal charges, or any other legal proceeding
 - The government has never presented any evidence that any of these persons committed espionage, sabotage, or other acts of disloyalty
 - *Korematsu* case, 1944: U.S. Supreme Court upholds these acts under the War Power and “military necessity”
- Suspension of habeas corpus
 - December 1941, General Walter Short imposed martial law in Hawaii, trying civilians in military courts
 - *Duncan* case, 1946: U.S. Supreme Court prohibits blanket imposition of martial law in areas in the absence of actual rebellion or invasion where civilian courts are open
- Legal status of enemy combatants
 - 1942. eight German military officers secretly enter U.S. with help of a U-Boat with intent to carry out acts of sabotage; U.S. captures them in June
 - FDR orders a military commission (not a regular federal court) to try them for violation of laws of war
 - They seek a writ of habeas corpus from the regular courts, claiming violation of their constitutional right to a jury trial
 - *Quirin* case, November 1942: U.S. Supreme Court finds that enemy belligerents tried by military commission have no standing in regular federal courts
- Applicability of WWII civil liberties cases to present-day civil rights:
 - What is an “enemy belligerent?”
 - What if an act of war is also a federal crime?
 - What if an “enemy belligerent” or a terrorist is also a U.S. citizen?
 - What if a terrorist is a citizen of a foreign state with which the U.S. is allied or at peace? (e.g., Osama Bin Laden is a Saudi national)