**I. Europe at War** *(pages 596–599)*

**A.** The 1939 invasion of Poland by Germany took just four weeks. The speed and efficiency of the German army stunned the world. Called **blitzkrieg** (“lightning war”), the Germans used panzer divisions (strike forces of about 300 tanks and soldiers) that were supported by airplanes. On September 28, 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union divided Poland.

**B.** In the spring of 1940, Hitler invaded Denmark and Norway. In May, Germany attacked the Netherlands, Belgium, and France. The German armies broke through French lines and moved across northern France. The French had fortified their border with Germany along the Maginot Line, but the Germans surprised them by going around it.

**C.** The Germans trapped the entire British army and French forces on the beaches of Dunkirk. The British navy and private boats were able to evacuate 338,000 Allied troops, barely averting a complete disaster.

**D.** On June 22, the French signed an armistice with the Germans, who occupied threefifths of France. An authoritarian French regime under German control was set up to govern the rest of the country. Led by Marshal Henri Pétain, it was named Vichy France. Germany now controlled western and central Europe. Only Britain remained undefeated.

**E.** The British asked the United States for help. The United States had a strict policy of isolationism. A series of neutrality acts passed in the 1930s prevented the United States from involvement in European conflicts. Though President **Franklin D. Roosevelt** denounced the Germans, the United States did nothing at first.

**F.** Roosevelt wanted to repeal the neutrality acts and help Great Britain. Over time, the laws were slowly relaxed and the United States sent food, ships, planes, and weapons to Britain.

**G.** Hitler understood that he could not attack Britain by sea unless he first controlled the air. In August 1940, the Luftwaffe—German air force—began a major bombing offensive against military targets in Britain. Aided by a good radar system, the British fought back but suffered critical losses.

**H.** In September, Hitler retaliated to a British attack on Berlin by shifting attacks from military targets to British cities. He hoped to break British morale. However, the shift in strategy allowed the British to rebuild their air power and inflict crippling losses on the Germans. Having lost the Battle of Britain, Hitler postponed the invasion of Britain indefinitely at the end of September.

**I.** Hitler was convinced that the way to defeat Britain was to first smash the Soviet Union. He thought that the British were resisting only because they were expecting Soviet support. He also thought that the Soviets could be easily defeated. He planned to invade in the spring of 1941, but was delayed by problems in the Balkans. After the Italians had failed to capture Greece in 1940, the British still held air bases there. Hitler seized Greece and Yugoslavia in April 1941.

**J.** Then Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941. The attack on the Soviet Union stretched out for 1,800 miles. German troops moved quickly and captured two million Russian soldiers by November. The Germans were within 25 miles of Moscow. However, winter came early in 1941 and, combined with fierce Russian resistance, forced the Germans to halt. This marked the first time in the war that the Germans had been stopped. The Germans were not equipped for the bitter Russian winter. In December, the Soviet army counterattacked.

**II. Japan at War** *(pages 599–600)*

**A.** On December 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. They also attacked the Philippines and the British colony of Malaya. Soon after, they invaded the Dutch East Indies and other islands in the Pacific Ocean. In spite of some fierce resistance in places such as the Philippines, by the spring of 1942, the Japanese controlled almost all of Southeast Asia and much of the western Pacific.

**B.** The Japanese created the Greater East-Asia Coprosperity Sphere, which included the entire region under Japanese control. Japan announced its intention to liberate colonial nations in Southeast Asia, but first needed their natural resources. They treated the occupied countries as conquered lands.

**C.** The Japanese thought that their attacks on the U.S. fleet would destroy the U.S. Navy and lead the Americans to accept Japanese domination in the Pacific. However, the attack on Pearl Harbor had the opposite effect. It united the American people and convinced the nation that it should enter the war against Japan.

**D.** Hitler thought that the Americans would be too involved in the Pacific to fight in Europe. Four days after Pearl Harbor, he declared war on the United States. World War II had become a global war.

**III. The Allies Advance** *(pages 600–603)*

**A.** A new coalition was formed called the Grand Alliance. It included Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States. The three nations agreed to focus on military operations and ignore political differences. They agreed in 1943 to fight until the Axis Powers—Germany, Italy, and Japan—surrendered unconditionally.

**B.** At the beginning of 1942, the Germans continued to fight the war against Britain and the Soviet Union. The Germans were also fighting in North Africa. The Afrika Korps under General Erwin Rommel broke through British lines in Egypt and advanced on Alexandria. During the spring, the Germans captured the entire Crimea in the Soviet Union.

**C.** By the fall of 1942, the war had turned against the Germans. In the summer of 1942, the British in North Africa had stopped the Germans at El Alamein. The Germans retreated. In November, British and American forces invaded French North Africa and forced the German and Italian troops to surrender by May.

**D.** On the Eastern Front, Hitler decided to attack **Stalingrad,** a major Soviet industrial center. Between November 1942 and February 1943 the Soviets counterattacked. They surrounded the Germans and cut off their supply lines. In May, the Germans were forced to surrender. They lost some of their best troops. Hitler then realized that he would not defeat the Soviet Union.

**E.** In 1942, the Allies had their first successes in the Pacific. In the Battle of the Coral Sea in May, American naval forces stopped the Japanese and saved Australia from invasion. In June, the Battle of **Midway Island** was the turning point in the Pacific war. U.S. planes destroyed four Japanese aircraft carriers and established naval superiority.

**F.** By the fall of 1942, Allied forces were about to begin two major operation plans against Japan. One, led by General **Douglas MacArthur,** would move into South China from Burma through the islands of Indonesia. The other would move across the Pacific capturing some of the Japanese-held islands and ending up in Japan.

**G.** By November 1942, after fierce battles in the Solomon Islands, the Japanese power was diminishing.

**IV. Last Years of the War** *(pages 603–604)*

**A.** By early 1943, the tide had turned against the Axis forces. In May the Axis forces surrendered in Tunisia. The Allies then moved north and invaded Italy in September. **Winston Churchill** called Italy the “soft underbelly” of Europe.

**B.** After the Allies captured Sicily, Mussolini was removed from office. The king arrested him. A new Italian government offered to surrender to the Allies. However, the Germans rescued Mussolini and set him up as dictator of a puppet German state in northern Italy.

**C.** The Germans established a strong defense south of Rome. The Allies had very heavy casualties as they slowly advanced north. They did not take Rome until June 4, 1944.

**D.** The Allies had long been planning a “second front” in western Europe. They planned to invade France from Great Britain across the English Channel. On June 6, 1944 (D-Day), the Allies under U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower landed on the beaches in **Normandy.**

**E.** Though the Germans were expecting the invasion to take place in another location, there was still heavy resistance. However, because the Germans thought the invasion was a diversion, they were slow to respond. This gave the Allies the chance to set up a beachhead. By landing two million men and a half-million vehicles, the Allies eventually broke through the German lines.

**F.** After the breakout, the Allies moved south and east. French resistance fighters rose up in German-occupied Paris. Paris was liberated by the end of August. In March of 1945, the Allies crossed the Rhine River. In the north they linked up with the Soviet army that was moving from the east.

**G.** The Soviets had turned the tables on the Germans in 1943. They soundly defeated German troops in July at the Battle of Kursk in a huge tank battle. Then they moved steadily westward. By the end of 1943, they had reoccupied the Ukraine. By early 1944, they had moved into the Baltic states. In the north, Soviet troops occupied Warsaw in January 1945 and entered Berlin in April. Along a southern front, the Soviets swept through Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria.

**H.** By January 1945, Hitler had moved into an underground bunker in Berlin. In the end he blamed the Jews for the war. On April 30, he committed suicide. Two days before, Italian **partisans**—resistance fighters—had shot Mussolini. On May 7, 1945, German commanders surrendered, and the war in Europe was over.

**I.** The war in Asia continued. Beginning in 1943, the Allied forces had gone on the offensive and moved across the Pacific. As the Allies came closer to the Japanese home islands in 1945, U.S. president **Harry S Truman** decided to drop atomic bombs on Japanese cities. He hoped that this would avoid an invasion of Japan. The first bomb was dropped on the city of **Hiroshima** on August 6. Three days later, a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Both cities were completely destroyed. Thousands died immediately and thousands more died later of radiation sickness. The Japanese surrendered on August 14.

**J.** World War II was over. Seventeen million people had died in battle in World War II. Some estimate that, including civilian losses, as many as fifty million people died inthe war.