**The War in Europe**

**THE BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC** Almost as soon as war was declared, German U-boats began attacking ships in Florida’s harbors and along its coasts. In 1942, 24 Allied oil tankers and merchant ships were sunk off the coast of Florida waters. Hundreds of sailors and large quantities of cargo, especially oil, were lost. Florida became vital in the preparation and training of troops, sailors, and pilots. Florida has 172 military training centers. Over 2 million Americans ended up training in Florida.

 The impact of the war on Florida was immense. The government spent over $98 billion in Florida. They bought hotels, for troops and hospitals. Shipyards began building Liberty ships. 9 million civilian workers flooded into Florida to work in construction and agriculture. This had a huge effect on the state by encouraging both tourism and population growth. In 1940 the state population was 1,897,414, but by 1950 it had grown to 2,771,305-an increase of 46% in a single decade

The German aim in the Battle of the Atlantic was to prevent food and war materials from reaching Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Britain depended on supplies from the sea. The 3,000-milelong shipping lanes from North America were her lifeline. Hitler knew that if he cut that lifeline, Britain would be starved into submission.

In the first four months of 1942, the Germans sank 87 ships off the Atlantic shore. Seven months into the year, German wolf packs had destroyed a total of 681 Allied ships in the Atlantic. Something had to be done or the war at sea would be lost.

The Allies responded by organizing their cargo ships into convoys. The convoys were escorted across the Atlantic by destroyers equipped with sonar for detecting submarines underwater. They were also accompanied by airplanes that used radar to spot U-boats on the ocean’s surface. At the same time, the United States launched a crash shipbuilding program. By early 1943, 140 Liberty ships were produced each month. With the improved tracking, the Allies were able to find and destroy German Uboats faster than the Germans could build them. In late spring of 1943, Admiral Karl Doenitz, the commander of the German U-boat offensive, reported that his losses had “reached an unbearable height.”

1. What were the effects of the war on Florida?
2. How did the Americans turn the tide of the battles in the Atlantic?
3. In your opinion why would Florida be so important to the U.S. military in the first place?

**THE BATTLE OF STALINGRAD** The Germans had been fighting in the Soviet Union since June 1941. In November 1941, the bitter cold had stopped them in their tracks outside the Soviet cities of Moscow and Leningrad. When spring came, the German tanks were ready to roll and by August 1942 they approached Stalingrad. The Luftwaffe—the German air force—prepared the way with nightly bombing raids over the city.

For weeks the Germans pressed in on Stalingrad, conquering it house by house in brutal hand-to-hand combat. By the end of September, they controlled nine-tenths of the city—or what was left of it. Then another winter set in. The Soviets saw the cold as an opportunity to roll fresh tanks across the frozen landscape and begin a massive counterattack. The Soviet army closed around Stalingrad, trapping the Germans in and around the city and cutting off their supplies. The Germans’ situation was hopeless, but Hitler’s orders came: “Stay and fight! I won’t go back from the Volga.” The fighting continued as winter turned Stalingrad into a frozen wasteland. The German commander surrendered on January 31, 1943. Two days later, his starving troops also surrendered. From that point on, the Soviet army began to move westward toward Germany.

**The Battle of Stalingrad**

1. The Germans had signed a non-aggression pact with Stalin and the Soviet Union, and yet attacked them anyway. Why do you think Hitler would choose to do this?
2. What two key decisions led to the final outcome at Stalingrad?

1. Why do you think Stalingrad is considered a turning point in the war?

**NORTH AFRICA AND ITALY** In November 1942, some 107,000 Allied troops, the great majority of them Americans, landed in Casablanca, Oran, and Algiers in North Africa for Operation Torch, an invasion of Axis-controlled North Africa, commanded by American General Dwight D. Eisenhower. From there they sped eastward, chasing the Afrika Korps led by General Erwin Rommel, the legendary Desert Fox. After months of heavy fighting, the last of the Afrika Korps surrendered in May 1943. British general Harold Alexander sent a message to Churchill, reporting that “All enemy resistance has ceased. We are masters of the North African shores.”

Even before the battle in North Africa was won, Roosevelt, Churchill, and their commanders met in Casablanca. At this meeting, the two leaders agreed to accept only the unconditional surrender of the Axis powers. That is, enemy nations would have to accept whatever terms of peace the Allies dictated. The two leaders also discussed where to strike next. The Americans argued that the best approach to victory was to assemble a massive invasion fleet in Britain and to launch it across the English Channel, through France, and into the heart of Germany. Churchill, however, thought it would be safer to first attack Italy.

The Italian campaign got off to a good start with the capture of Sicily in the summer of 1943. Stunned by their army’s collapse in Sicily, the Italian government forced dictator Benito Mussolini to resign. On July 25, 1943, King Victor Emmanuel III summoned Il Duce (Italian for “the leader”) to his palace, stripped him of power, and had him arrested. “At this moment,” the king told Mussolini, “you are the most hated man in Italy.” Italians began celebrating the end of the war. Their cheers were premature. Hitler was determined to stop the Allies in Italy rather than fight on German soil. One of the hardest battles the Allies encountered in Europe was fought less than 40 miles from Rome. This battle, “Bloody Anzio,” lasted four months—until the end of May 1944—and left about 25,000 Allied and 30,000 Axis casualties. During the year after Anzio, German armies continued to put up strong resistance. The effort to free Italy did not succeed until 1945, when Germany itself was close to collapse.

**North Africa and Italy**

1. Summarize Operation Torch
2. Summarize the Italian Campaign
3. Explain one similarity and one difference between the Italian campaign and Operation Torch

|  |
| --- |
| Similarity |
| Difference |

**D-DAY** **AND THE WESTERN ADVANCE** Even as the Allies were battling for Italy in 1943, they had begun work on a dramatic plan to invade France and free Western Europe from the Nazis. The task of commanding Operation Overlord, as it was called, fell to American General Dwight D. (“Ike”) Eisenhower. Under Eisenhower’s direction in England, the Allies gathered a force of nearly 3 million troops, together with mountains of military equipment and supplies. Eisenhower planned to attack Normandy in northern France. To keep their plans secret, Allied commanders sent orders to this make believe army to attack the French port of Calais—150 miles away—where the English Channel is narrowest. As a result, Hitler ordered his generals to keep a large army at Calais.

Eisenhower gave the go-ahead for D-Day—June 6, 1944, the first day of the invasion. Shortly after midnight, three divisions parachuted down behind German lines. They were followed in the early morning hours by thousands upon thousands of seaborne soldiers—the largest land-sea-air operation in army history. Despite the massive air and sea bombardment by the Allies, German retaliation was brutal, particularly at Omaha Beach. “People were yelling, screaming, dying, running on the beach, equipment was flying everywhere, men were bleeding to death, crawling, lying everywhere, firing coming from all directions,” soldier Felix Branham wrote of the scene there. “We dropped down behind anything that was the size of a golf ball.”

Despite heavy casualties, the Allies held the beachheads. After seven days of fighting, the Allies held an 80-mile strip of France. Within a month, they had landed a million troops, 567,000 tons of supplies, and 170,000 vehicles in France. Pairs was liberated one month later with the help of French resistance. By September 1944, the Allies had freed France, Belgium, and Luxembourg. This good news—and the American people’s desire not to “change horses in midstream”—helped elect Franklin Roosevelt to an unprecedented fourth term in November, along with his running mate, Senator Harry S. Truman.

In October 1944, Americans captured their first German town, Aachen. Hitler responded with a desperate last-gasp offensive. He ordered his troops to break through the Allied lines and to recapture the Belgian port of Antwerp. This bold move, the Führer hoped, would disrupt the enemy’s supply lines and demoralize the Allies causing the Americans and British to ask for a separate peace and allow Germany to concentrate on the Soviet Union.

The Battle of the Bulge raged for a month. When it was over, the Germans had been pushed back, and little seemed to have changed. But, in fact, events had taken a decisive turn. The Germans had lost 120,000 troops, 600 tanks and assault guns, and 1,600 planes in the Battle of the Bulge— soldiers and weapons they could not replace. From that point on, the Nazis could do little but retreat. This was also the bloodiest action for American troops as they saw 19,000 killed, 62,000 wounded, and 26,000 missing.

**D-Day and the Western Advance**

1. What was the purpose of the D-Day invasion?
2. What was the purpose of the Battle of the Bulge?
3. Roosevelt initially wanted to land troops in France earlier in the war but Churchill talked him out of it. Based on the D-Day invasion and the Battle of the Bulge do you think that was the right decision? Explain your answer.

**UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER** By April 25, 1945, the Soviet army had stormed Berlin. As Soviet shells burst overhead, the city panicked. “Hordes of soldiers stationed in Berlin deserted and were shot on the spot or hanged from the nearest tree,” wrote Claus Fuhrmann, a Berlin clerk. “On their chests they had placards reading, ‘We betrayed the Führer.’”

In his underground headquarters in Berlin, Hitler prepared for the end. On April 29, he married Eva Braun, his longtime companion. The same day, he wrote out his last address to the German people. In it he blamed the Jews for starting the war and his generals for losing it. “I die with a happy heart aware of the immeasurable deeds of our soldiers at the front. I myself and my wife choose to die in order to escape the disgrace of . . . capitulation,” he said. The next day Hitler shot himself while his new wife swallowed poison. In accordance with Hitler’s orders, the two bodies were carried outside, soaked with gasoline, and burned.

A week later, General Eisenhower accepted the unconditional surrender of the Third Reich. On May 8, 1945, the Allies celebrated V-E Day—Victory in Europe Day. The war in Europe was finally over. President Roosevelt did not live to see V-E Day. On April 12, 1945, while posing for a portrait in Warm Springs, Georgia, the president had a stroke and died. That night, Vice President Harry S. Truman became the nation’s 33rd president.

**Unconditional Surrender**

1. Do you agree with the decision made by Roosevelt and Churchill to require unconditional surrender by the Axis powers? Why or why not?

**Summary:** What is the main idea of the Political Cartoon below?

