



WWII Begins



European Axis Leadership



Benito Mussolini
Duce of Fascism
(Italy)
December 24, 1925 – July 25, 1943



Adolf Hitler
Führer of Germany
April 20, 1889 – April 30, 1945

Allied Leaders



Winston Churchill
Prime Minister of
the United Kingdom



Franklin D. Roosevelt
President of the US



Joseph Stalin
General Secretary of the
Communist Party
of the Soviet Union





General Dwight Eisenhower
1st Supreme Allied Commander Europe



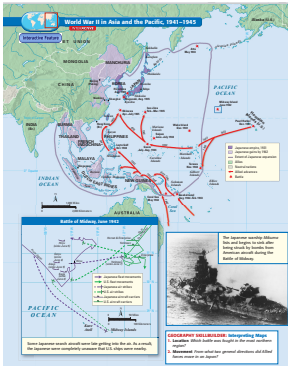
Eisenhower with U.S. paratroopers of the 502d Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division on June 5, 1944



British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery
nicknamed "Monty"



Japan Eyes the Pacific



Japan's military leaders had dreams of empire

1931: Japanese troops took over Manchuria
(in northeastern China)

1937: Japanese armies attack the heartland of China,
expecting a quick victory

Chinese resistance placed a strain on Japan's economy

Japanese eyed the rich European colonies of Southeast Asia

1940: Americans cracked Japanese code:
learned the Japanese wanted colonies in Southeast Asia
worried they might take Philippines and Guam
(American-controlled at that time)

US sent aid to the Chinese

1941: Japanese overran French Indochina (Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos)
Roosevelt cut off oil shipments to Japan

the Japanese planned massive attacks on European and American interests in Southeast Asia

Japanese naval strategist Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto called for an attack on the U.S. fleet in Hawaii

Surprise Attack on Pearl Harbor



December 7, 1941: Japanese attacked the American Naval Base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
U.S. military leaders knew from a coded Japanese message that an attack might come but didn't know when or where it would occur.

within two hours, the Japanese had sunk or damaged 19 ships, including 8 battleships

more than 2,300 Americans were killed and over 1,100 were wounded

On December 8, President Roosevelt addressed Congress, declaring the 7th as
"a date which will live in infamy"

Congress quickly accepted his request for a declaration of war on Japan and its allies

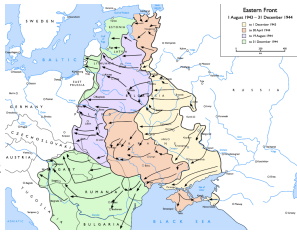
The Fighting in the Western Hemisphere Continues

the Soviet Union wanted the Allies to start a second front against Germany

Russia had been paying a heavy share of the fighting
(20 million Russians would die by the end of the war)

America wanted to attack the Nazis through France

Britain wanted to lure the war away from England
Winston Churchill suggested they hit Germany's "soft underbelly" up from North Africa and through Italy



Gen. Eisenhower attacked North Africa (Nov. 1942)

Casablanca Conference (Jan. 1943)

Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to seek the "unconditional surrender" of Germany

Germans were pushed out of Africa (May 1943)

Allies moved across North Africa and up to Sicily
Mussolini overthrown; Italy surrenders (Sept. 1943)

the Tehran Conference, November-December 1943

Joseph Stalin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill met in Tehran, Iran
Britain and the US agreed to the open a second front against Nazi Germany

The Second Front

D-Day, June 6, 1944



Although the Germans knew the Allies planned to invade France, they did not know exactly where or when.
To prepare for the invasion, Hitler ordered the building of the "Atlantic Wall": mines, barbed wire, and other obstacles on the beaches and concrete positions overlooking the landing areas.



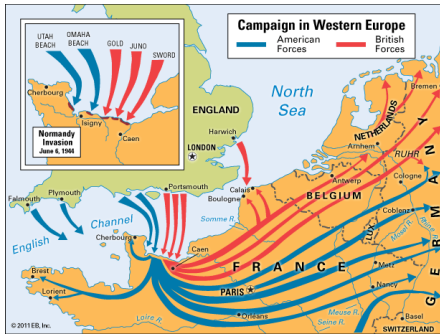
On June 6, 1944, over 160,000 Allied troops landed along the 50-mile stretch of heavily-fortified French coastline of Normandy, France in what was codenamed Operation Overlord, the largest amphibious assault in history.

More than 5,000 ships and 13,000 aircraft were involved.

By day's end the Allies had gained a foot-hold in Normandy.



D-Day was the long-awaited Second Front of WWII.



A large American force landed at Omaha Beach on D-Day where they encountered an elite German infantry division. Many American soldiers drowned in deep water before their vessels were close enough to the beach. Approximately 2,400 soldiers were killed on Omaha beach.

More than 9,000 Allied soldiers were killed or wounded that day, but more than 100,000 soldiers began the march across Europe to defeat Hitler. Within a month, one million soldiers had arrived in France ready to drive out the Germans.
