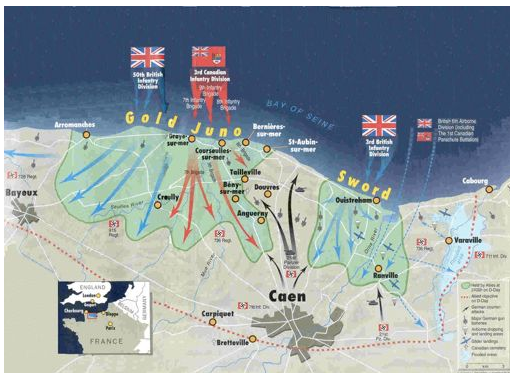


World War II Is Fought



D-Day Gives the Allies a Foothold in Europe



On June 6, 1944, Allied forces under U.S. general Dwight D. Eisenhower landed on the Normandy beaches in history's greatest naval invasion: D-Day.

Within three months, the Allies had landed 2 million men and 500,000 vehicles in northern France.

Allied forces then began pushing inland and broke through German defensive lines.

Allied troops liberated Paris
by the end of August 1944.



The Battle of the Bulge



In December, 1944 the Germans launched a counteroffensive to regain the seaport of Antwerp in Belgium.

The Battle of the Bulge was named for the “bulge” the German attack caused in Allied lines.

By January 1945, both sides had suffered heavy losses, but the Allied lines held.

In March 1945, the Allied forces crossed the Rhine River and advanced into Germany.

At the end of April 1945, Allied armies in northern Germany moved toward the Elbe River, where they linked up with the Soviets.



The Soviets Advance

The Soviets had soundly defeated the German forces at the Battle of Kursk in July of 1943, the greatest tank battle of World War II.

Soviet forces now began a steady advance westward.

Reoccupying the Ukraine by the end of 1943, they moved into the Baltic states by early 1944.

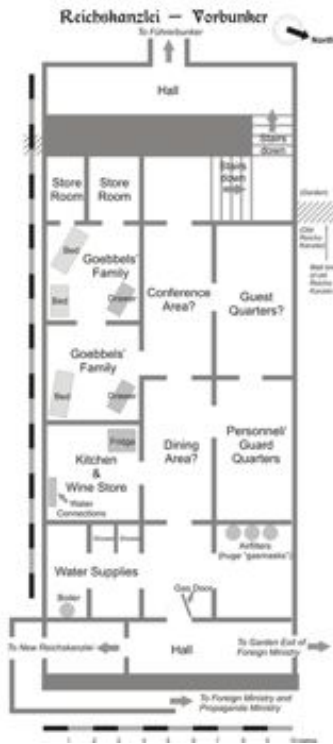


Advancing along a northern front, Soviet troops occupied Warsaw in January 1945 and entered Berlin in April.

Meanwhile, Soviet troops along a southern front swept through Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria.



Hitler's Demise



By January 1945, Adolf Hitler had moved into a bunker 55 feet under the city of Berlin. In his final political testament, Hitler, consistent to the end in his anti-Semitism, blamed the Jews for the war. He wrote:

Above all I charge the leaders of the nation and those under them to scrupulous observance of the laws of race and to merciless opposition to the universal poisoner of all peoples, international Jewry.
from Hitler's Final Will and Testament, April 29, 1945

Hitler committed suicide on April 30, two days after Italian partisans, or resistance fighters, shot Mussolini.

On May 7, 1945, Germany surrendered.
The war in Europe was finally over.

Germany is Defeated



At the Tehran Conference in November of 1943, Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill agreed that the final assault on Germany would happen in France in June of 1944 (D-Day)

Soviet and British-American forces would meet in defeated Germany:
Soviet forces would liberate Eastern Europe
American-British forces would liberate Western Europe
they would divide up postwar Germany

At the Yalta Conference in February of 1945 the "Big Three" leaders met again in Southern USSR

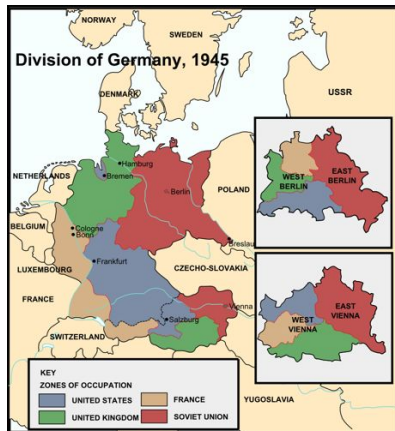
Stalin was deeply suspicious of the Western powers

wanted a buffer zone to protect the Soviet Union from possible future Western aggression



A Divided Germany

After Germany surrendered, the Big Three agreed to divide Germany into four zones, for the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union to occupy and to govern separately.



New US President Harry Truman, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee, and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin met again at the Potsdam Conference in July of 1945 to discuss what would happen to the European countries liberated from German occupation

Roosevelt favored the idea of self-determination, pledging to help liberated Europe create “democratic institutions of their own choice” through elections.

Stalin responded, “A freely elected government in any of these East European countries would be anti-Soviet, and that we cannot allow.”



(left) British Prime Minister Attlee, US President Truman, and Soviet Premier Stalin at the Potsdam Conference, July - August 1945



The Pacific Theater

In 1943, U.S. forces began an island-hopping offensive against Japan, skipping across the Pacific.



At the beginning of 1945, the acquisition of Iwo Jima and Okinawa

helped the Allied military power draw even closer to the main Japanese islands.

Iwo Jima had two airfields used by the Japanese to attack Allied aircraft and to support their naval forces.

Okinawa would also provide them with a base near the mainland.



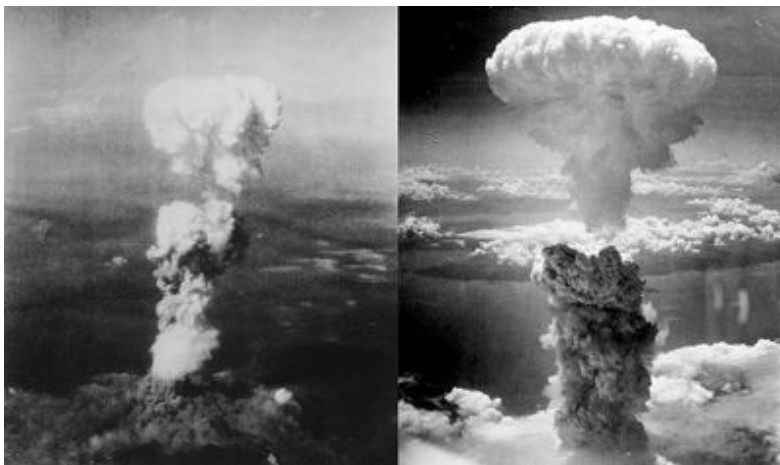
The Allies were victorious in both battles, but casualties were great on both sides.



The Manhattan Project

The Americans began to fear even more losses if the war in the Pacific continued.

Truman was convinced that if the US invaded Japan, American troops would suffer heavy casualties.



Scientists in America working on the Manhattan Project had secretly developed the atomic bomb. Truman made the difficult decision to use the bombs against Japan.

The first bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima on August 6.

Three days later, a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

Both cities were leveled.

Thousands of people died immediately after the bombs were dropped. Thousands more died in later months from radiation.

Emperor Hirohito accepted unconditional surrender terms on August 14, 1945.

World War II was finally over.

The Cold War Begins



After the world had witnessed the deadly potential of nuclear energy, other countries raced to build their own nuclear weapons.

In August 1949, the Soviet Union set off its first atomic bomb, starting an arms race with the United States that lasted for 40 years.

Western countries thought Soviet expansionist policy was part of a worldwide Communist conspiracy. The Soviets viewed Western policy as global capitalist expansionism.

In March 1946, former British prime minister Winston Churchill had declared that “an iron curtain” had “descended across the continent,” dividing Europe into two hostile camps.

Stalin branded Churchill’s speech “a call to war on the USSR.”

The Cold War was the name given to the ideological conflict and period of political tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union following WWII.

Only months after the world’s most devastating conflict had ended, the world seemed to be bitterly divided once again, a situation that would dominate world affairs until the end of the 1980s.