

**World War II**  
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## Introduction

- In retrospect, we know that the post-war period resulted in another war. The last unit took us up to the Second World War. We begin this unit with the War. Next week, we will do International System Post WWII and then focus on two major developments of the twentieth century, decolonization and the Civil Rights Movement in America, at the end of the semester.
- We will look at different theatres of this world war and how it ended. Next week, we will study some of its outcomes and consequences.

## References

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- [Digital History Center](#), US Military Academy, West Point, New York.
- Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991).
- Walter LaFeber, *The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad, 1750 to the Present*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994).

## World War II

- If we focus on the European theater of War, the Allies entered the War after Hitler smashed all hopes of appeasement with his invasion of Poland in 1939.
- Alternatively, the war began in 1931 with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and a full-scale attack on China in 1937.
- In both cases, it ended with Japan being atom-bombed into surrender in August 1945. Before it ended, the war caused unprecedented levels of death and destruction all over the world.

## In Memoriam

- We will devote a moment to all those who perished because the Great War failed to inculcate a sustainable resolve for peace in humanity.
- Estimated number of military and civilian fatalities due to the Second World War per country or region between 1939 and 1945

## In Memoriam

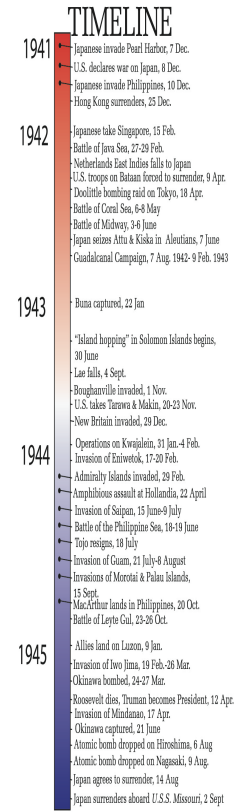
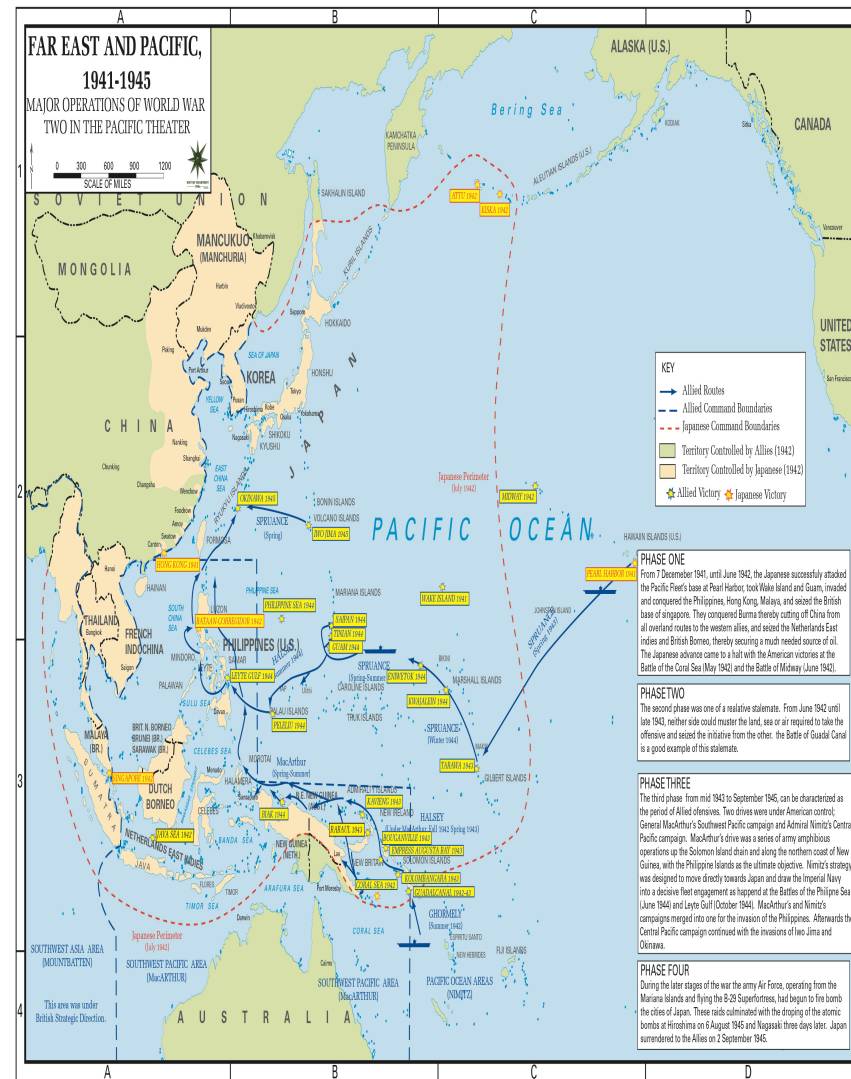
- Estimated numbers range between 70 and 85 million people.
- The Soviet Union suffered the highest number of fatalities, between 22 and 27 million deaths.
- China lost the second-highest number of persons, at around 20 million.
- Over 80 percent of all deaths were of those from Allied countries, and the majority of these were civilians. Nazis alone caused some 17 million deaths, including six million Jews who died in the Holocaust.
- The Axis Powers account for 15 to 20 percent, mostly military deaths.

## Populations Dispossessed and Displaced

- In addition to the victims of war fronts and aerial bombing, the Second World War also displaced millions of people. [Joseph B. Schechtman](#), the historian of post-war population transfers in Europe, pointed to the enormous changes in Europe's ethnic map.
- According to his research, nearly 20 million people in Europe moved for various reasons, such as fleeing their homes, being expelled, or officially transferred and exchanged during the process of sorting out ethnic groups between 1944 and 1951, both externally and internally.

# The War Theaters: Pacific and Southeast Asia

- Although the European theater opened in 1939, the War had been in progress since September 1931 when the Japanese Imperial Army invaded Manchuria.
- Facing international condemnation, the Japanese withdrew from the League of Nations in March 1933.



# The War Theaters: Pacific and Southeast Asia

- By 1934, the Japanese had advanced into mainland China. By 1937, with China mired in a civil war, they had routed the forces of the Chinese National Revolutionary Army led by Chiang Kai-shek and moved on to occupy the coastal cities, including Beijing, Shanghai, and Nanjing (Nanking).
- Japan extended its chokehold to southern ports during the war and, in 1942, seized Burma, including the inland Burma Road, to close all Chinese links to the world.

# The War Theaters: Pacific and Southeast Asia

- The scorched-earth policy of the Nationalists made it impossible or difficult for them to move inland.
- Although the Communists joined the Nationalists for a while, they reinforced their organization and positions, finally won the civil war, and proclaimed the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949, after the war ended.

# The War Theaters: Pacific and Southeast Asia

- The Japanese army was a technologically advanced force consisting of 4,100,000 men and 900,000 Chinese collaborators—and that was in China alone. The Japanese military was armed with modern rifles, artillery, armor, and aircraft.
- By 1940, the Japanese navy was the third largest and among the most technologically advanced in the world.

# The War Theaters: Pacific and Southeast Asia

- Beyond China, in September 1940, Japan overtook French Indochina.
- Japanese aggression in pursuit of their new empire, the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, raised alarm bells in America.
- In 1939, the United States dissolved its trade treaties with Japan.

# US ENTRY INTO WAR

- Next year, the US cut off Japanese supplies of war materials by embargoing oil, steel, rubber, and other vital goods.
- In response, undeterred but resource-starved, Japan launched invasions across the Pacific to sustain its war effort. Raising the slogan “Asia for the Asians,” they combatted the European powers and independent nations throughout the region.

# The War Theaters: Pacific and Southeast Asia

- Japan also considered the oil embargo a de facto declaration of war. They conceived a plan to “neutralize” the United States and other European powers, and on the morning of December 7, 1941, launched a surprise attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
- Twenty-four hundred Americans lost their lives in the attack.

# The Pacific Theater

- The attack on Pearl Harbor, on December 7, 1941, “a date which will live in infamy,” led FDR to ask Congress for a declaration of war. [Under Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution, Congress declared war](#) on Japan on December 8, and Germany and Italy on December 11, 1941; and, against Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania in 1942.
- So far, it was the last time Congress used these powers.
- US engagement in the conflicts in the Pacific and European theaters morphed them into a true world war.

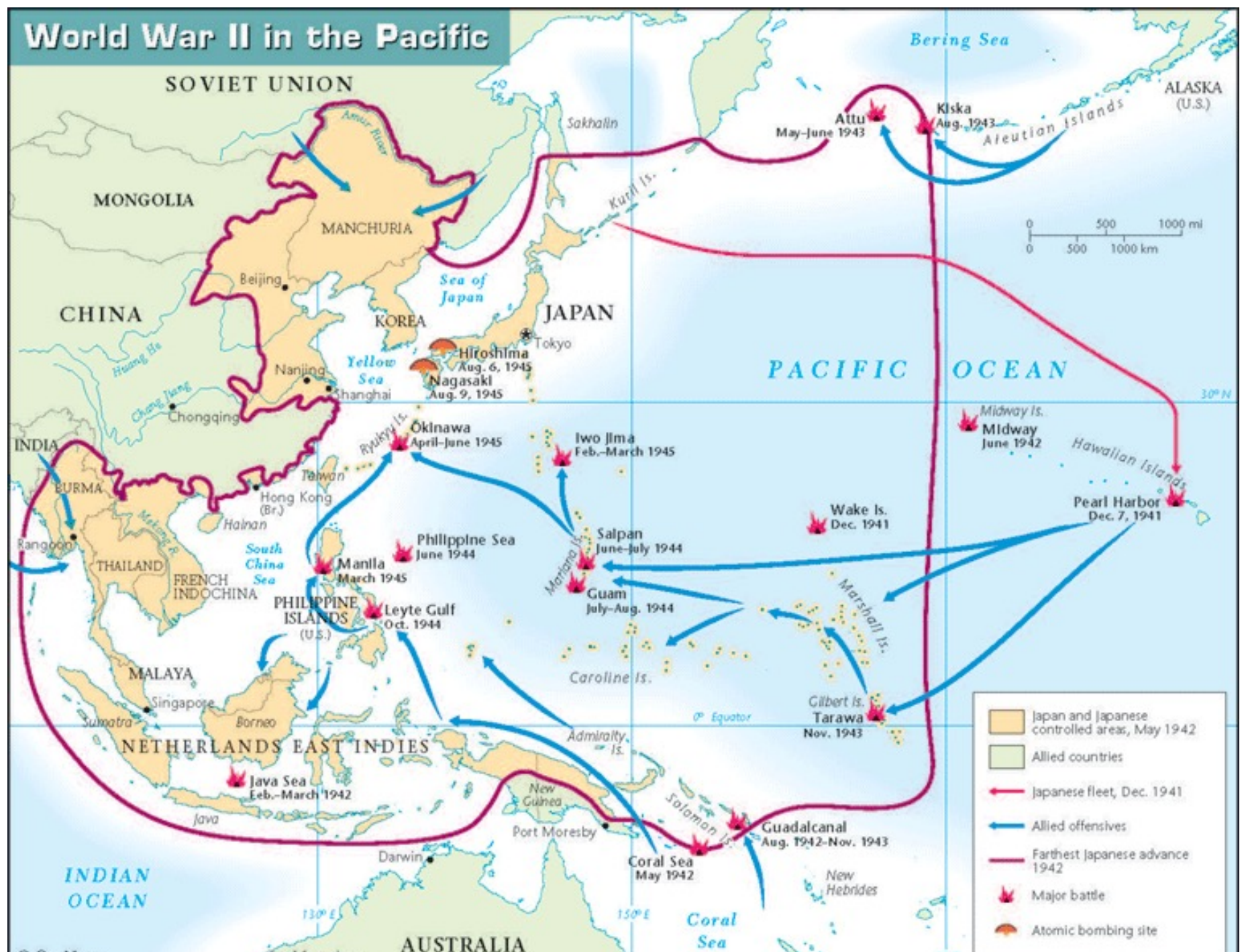
# The Pacific Theater

- In December 1941, Japan also destroyed the American airbase in the Philippines and conquered it by May 1942. The Japanese marched the prisoners eighty miles without food, water, or rest. Ten thousand died on the Bataan Death March.
- In 1942, Japan conquered British Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaya, and Burma (now Myanmar). They also took over the American Guam, Wake Islands, and the Dutch East Indies.

# The Pacific Theater

- By the summer of 1942, American naval victories at the Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle of Midway crippled Japan's Pacific naval operations.
- To dislodge Japan's hold over the Pacific, the U.S. military began island hopping: attacking island after island, pushing Japan out of the region.

# World War II in the Pacific



SOVIET UNION

MONGOLIA

CHINA

MANCHURIA

KOREA

JAPAN

INDIA

BURMA

THAILAND

FRENCH INDOCHINA

MALAYA

NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES

INDIAN OCEAN

AUSTRALIA

Bering Sea

ALASKA (U.S.)

0 500 1000 mi  
0 500 1000 km

PACIFIC OCEAN

30° N

0° Equator

150° E

130° E

Amur River

Sakhalin

Kuril Is.

Aleutian Islands

Attu  
May-June 1943

Kiska  
Aug. 1943

Sea of Japan

Yellow Sea

Hiroshima  
Aug. 6, 1945  
Nagasaki  
Aug. 9, 1945

Huang He

Chang Jang

Chongqing

Shanghai

Ryukyu Is.

Okinawa  
April-June 1945

Iwo Jima  
Feb.-March 1945

Philippine Sea  
June 1944

Manila  
March 1945

PHILIPPINE ISLANDS (U.S.)

Leyte Gulf  
Oct. 1944

Salpan  
June-July 1944

Guam  
July-Aug. 1944

Marinao Is.

Caroline Is.

Wake Is.  
Dec. 1941

Midway Is.  
June 1942

Hawaiian Islands

Pearl Harbor  
Dec. 7, 1941

Rangoon

Hainan

Taiwan

Hong Kong (Br.)

Sumatra

Java

Borneo

Singapore

Darwin

Port Moresby

Coral Sea  
May 1942

Saloman Is.

Guadalcanal  
Aug. 1942-Nov. 1943

New Guinea

New Hebrides

Coral Sea

# The Pacific Theater

- Japanese soldiers refused to be taken prisoner or to take prisoners themselves. They fought tenaciously. At Iwo Jima, for example, an eight-square-mile island, seventeen thousand Japanese soldiers against seventy thousand Marines held fort for over a month. At the cost of nearly their entire force, they inflicted almost thirty thousand casualties before the island was lost.

# The Pacific Theater

- By February 1945, American bombers were in range of the mainland. Bombers hit Japan's industrial facilities but suffered high casualties. They resorted to dropping incendiary weapons on Japan's wooden cities to create massive firestorms. Over sixty Japanese cities faced such attacks. Tokyo alone lost one hundred thousand civilians in Tokyo in March 1945.
- By March 1945, de Gaulle regained control of French Indochina.

# The Pacific Theater

- April 12, 1945, the US lost FDR. Harry Truman replaced him.
- By June 1945, the Americans had captured the island of Okinawa, a viable base from which to launch a full invasion of the Japanese homeland and end the war.

# The Pacific Theater: China-India-Burma

- Beginning in 1942, the US began a military mission to reinforce Chinese nationalists under General Stilwell.
- In 1944, the army divided the Mission into the China Theater and the Indo-Burma Theater to manage and distribute Lend-Lease, provide strategic support to Chiang Kai-shek, and enhance the war capability of about 30 divisions of the Chinese Army.

# The Pacific Theater: China-India-Burma

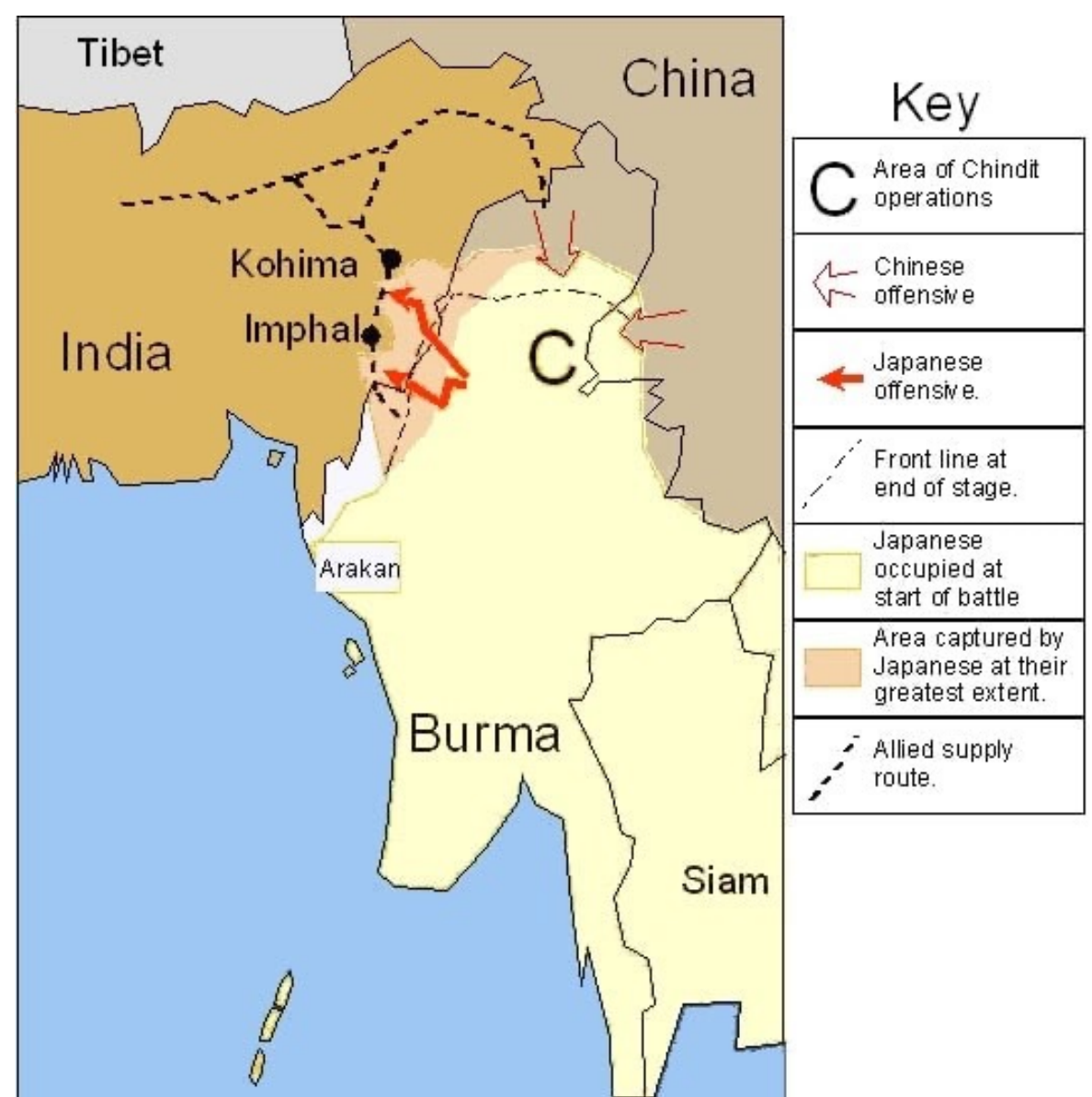
- Although the Japanese sphere in the southwest excluded India and stopped at the India-Burma border, FRD apprehended that they might appeal to Indian nationalism and strike at the heart of the British Empire.
- He pressed for Indian independence, but the British were able to delay it until 1947.

# Pacific: China-Burma-India

- The Japanese did try to play the nationalist card, but failed. They encouraged and maneuvered the creation of the Indian National Army out of the Indian POWs in the Malay Peninsula.
- An Indian freedom fighter, Subhas Chander Bose, sought German assistance for his mission. In May 1943, they had him transported in a submarine to the Japanese zone in Sumatra.
- Bose established a Free India interim government-in-exile, mobilized the Indian community and the POWS, had them trained, and deployed them to Burma by November 1943, a few months after the Japanese had “freed” Burma.

# Pacific: China-Burma-India

- Japan penetrated the India-Burma frontier in 1943, taking the route the British had taken to evacuate their forces. They allowed only a secondary role to the Indian National Army, which reached the Manipur Basin in the neighboring state of Assam, but the Allies defeated their plans to take over the Imphal-Kohima area.
- By October 1944, the Allies restored the Burma Road supply route to China. By February 1945, the British had marched back into Burma, taking most of the INA as prisoners.



# Pacific: China-Burma-India

- Post WWII, the Berlin airlift from June 1948 to September 1949 made history.
- During the War, the US mission to keep the Chinese provisioned between 1942 and 1945 was equally historic. Defeating the Japanese chokehold, the American DC 3 and C-47 planes flew from Chabua and Ledo airports in Assam over the Himalayas, the Hump as the pilots called it, to deliver supplies.
- In October 1944, for example, they transported 35,131 tons of Cargo, and another 13,578 tons in November.

# Pacific: China-Burma-India

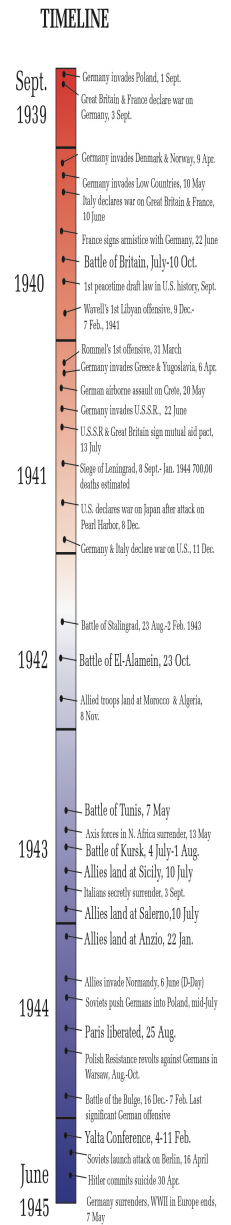
- Calcutta airport was also the base for bombers for missions to attack Japanese targets.
- Ramgarh in the state of Bihar remained a training base for the Chinese Army.
- The Army also purchased essential supplies from India: for 1944, 550,000 pairs of shoes, and nearly 25 million pounds of fish, fowl, and meat.

# The European Theater

- We had learned in the last unit how Germany under Hitler, since 1933, had boldly challenged the international community.
- In 1933, he repudiated the reparations and strict military limitations of the Treaty of Versailles and remilitarized the Rhineland.
- In 1937, backing Franco, he bombed Republican-held Guernica.

# The European Theater

- In search of Lebensraum, the living space, Hitler first attacked the Eastern and Southeastern front.
- He annexed Austria in 1938, the Sudetenland first, and then the entire Czechoslovakia in March 1939, and on September 1, invaded Poland, thwarting misconceived European appeasement.
- On September 3, France and Britain, the Allies, declared war on Germany.



# The European Theater

- Beginning in April 1940, Hitler advanced into Scandinavia to occupy Denmark and Norway.
- In May 1940, slightly modifying the Schlieffen Plan of WWI, Germany attacked through the Netherlands and Belgium to cleverly skirt the French Maginot Line, built along the trench lines of WWI.

# The European Theater: German Army

- The German army, anxious to avoid the rigid, grinding war of attrition, built its new modern army for speed and maneuverability.
- German doctrine emphasized the use of tanks, planes, and motorized infantry (infantry that used trucks for transportation instead of marching) to concentrate forces, smash front lines, and wreak havoc behind the enemy's defenses. It was called Blitzkrieg, or lightning war.

# The European Theater: France

- By June 28, Hitler was touring Paris, including a reverential stop at Napoleon's grave.
- Germany split France in half. Germany occupied and governed the north, while the south was ruled by a puppet government under Maréchal Pétain in Vichy.
- This division was eliminated in 1942.



# The European Theater: France

- The Allies helped General de Gaulle establish a government-in-exile for France Libre.
- The US also allowed him to take over French Indochina after the Japanese defeat.
- In September 1940, Germany, Japan, and Italy signed the Tripartite Pact, forming the Axis Block.

# The European Theater: England

- Britain became the next target. Under Operation Sea Lion, from June until October 1940, the German Luftwaffe lost the Battle of Britain in the skies.
- Invasion then prioritized the Blitz, bombing innocent civilians, a common practice during this war. The Luftwaffe bombed the cities of London, Liverpool, and Manchester every night from September to the following May, 1941.
- Confident that he had seriously wounded or crippled Britain, Hitler ended the Blitz in June 1941 and aimed at the next target, Operation Barbarossa against the Soviet Union.

# European Theater: The USSR

- Unlike WWI and imperial Russia, the USSR under Stalin began the war as Hitler's ally. In 1939, Germany and the USSR signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, splitting Poland between them. They had moved in unison.
- No WWI-type attrition impeded their advance. Poland fell in three weeks.
- In April 1941, Japan signed a non-aggression pact with the USSR.

# European Theater: The USSR

- By June 22, 1941, Hitler had changed his mind. The fertile Russian agricultural lands and rich oil fields beckoned.
- A shocked Stalin found it hard to believe that his ally had invaded the Soviet Union. Not only that, but it was also the largest land invasion in history.

# European Theater: The USSR

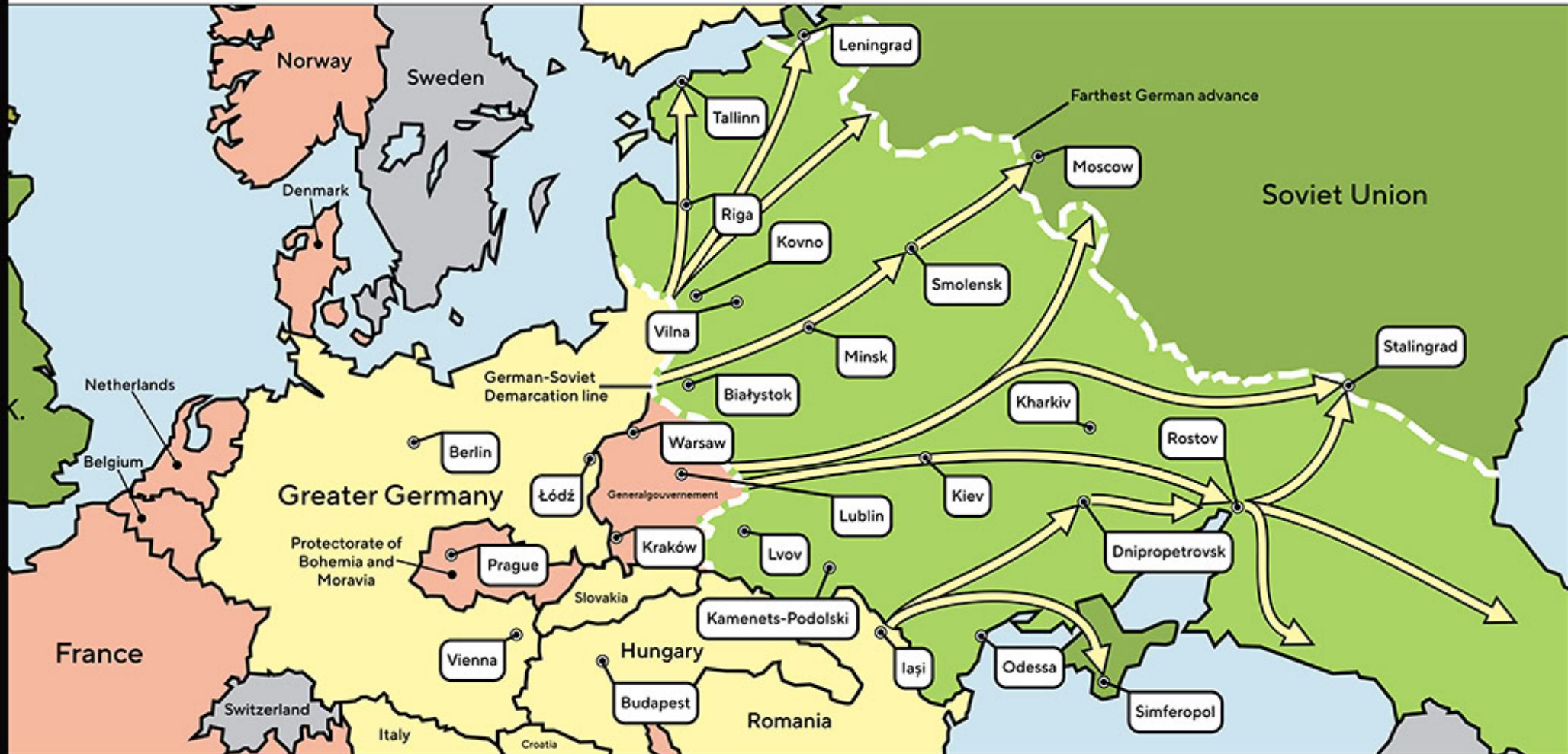
- The Blitzkrieg progressed deeper into the USSR, but as the reality dawned, the Russians moved into action. Although they had lost territory and suffered hundreds of thousands of prisoners, they were willing to resist and sacrifice.
- The Soviets joined the Allied forces in July, and a formal declaration from the Big Three, the UK, USSR, and USA, followed in January 1941.



# European Theater: The USSR

- Stalin moved his factories east of the Urals, out of range of the Luftwaffe.
- He ordered his retreating army to adopt a “scorched earth” policy, to move east and destroy food, rails, and shelters to stymie the advancing German army.
- The German army advanced in three formations to reach Moscow, Stalingrad, and Leningrad, without realizing that they had stretched their supply lines too far and that they had to face the Russian winter.

# Invasion of the Soviet Union, June-December 1941



# European Theater: The USSR

- In the north, the German army starved Leningrad to death during an interminable siege; in the south, at Stalingrad, the two armies bled themselves to a stalemate.
- Around Moscow, they faltered first in 1941 and fell back.
- Stalingrad witnessed the surrender of the German army in 1942-43, while Leningrad had to wait until 1944.

# European Theater: The USSR

- In a historic first, the Soviet Union broke Hitler's army, sacrificing twenty-five million Soviet soldiers and civilians.
- Approximately 80 percent of all German casualties, about 10 million out of 13.8 million, during the war came on the Eastern Front. The Battle of Stalingrad alone cost the German army and its various conscripts 850,000 casualties.

# European Theater: The USSR

- Says LaFeber, while the West dithered on opening the second front in France, by February 1943, “...the Soviets began to push back the Germans at Leningrad after eighteen months of siege. Two-thirds of the territory lost fell back into the Soviet hands. They had taken on eighty percent of the Nazis’ striking force, had stopped it, were now turning it back, all without the help of the second front that FDR had promised,” (p. 422).
- The Soviets followed the retreating German army and were the first of the Allies to reach Berlin in May 1945.

# US Entry into the War

- Unlike WWI, it is in the Pacific theater that the war began and ended for the US.
- Although Congress declared war on the Axis Powers in late 1941-1942, the FDR administration had been struggling with the US involvement since the beginning of the hostilities in the Pacific and Europe.

# US ENTRY INTO WAR

- In the Atlantic, Hitler had turned the WWI German submarines into U-boat “wolf packs.” Hitler had been destroying up to 500,000 tons of British shipping a month through U-Boat attacks. As Commander-in-Chief, FDR reacted to these colossal losses by sharing intelligence.

# US ENTRY INTO WAR

- Britain and the United States jointly deployed superior tactics and technology to win the Battle of the Atlantic. The British cracked Germany's radio codes, and the US and Britain managed massive naval convoys escorted by destroyers to combat the "wolf packs."
- By 1942, Hitler's Kriegsmarine was losing ships faster than they could be built.

# US ENTRY INTO WAR

FDR had to find a path through legislated isolationism.

- Since the end of World War I, isolationists had devised ways to limit the US role in foreign wars.
- [The Neutrality Laws of 1935, 1936, 1937, and 1939](#) restricted engagement with the belligerent nation in case of war or a civil war, forbade the supply of arms and shipping, and prohibited loans.

# US ENTRY INTO WAR

- In a concession, in 1937 and 1939, the Neutrality Laws permitted the administration to allow the sale of arms and goods in non-US ships to the belligerent nations on a cash and carry basis.
- Not until October 1941 did Congress make US intervention in the war situation possible.

# US ENTRY INTO WAR

- In March 1941, Congress legislated the Lend-Lease Plan. Initially funded at \$ 7 billions for the UK, allocations increased over the war years, allowing the US to provide crucial assistance to allies including England, USSR, and China.
- During the critical four years of Russian struggle against the Nazis, beginning in 1941, Lend and Lease provided \$ 12 billion worth of assistance.

# US ENTRY INTO WAR

- In August 1941, FDR and Churchill met in Newfoundland. In [the Atlantic Charter](#), the President had him agree to the principles for a better world. Besides the freedom of trade, navigation, and territorial integrity, FDR committed to a world of free nations:
  - “Second, they desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned;
  - Third, they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.”

# North African Theater

- In 1942, the British victory at El Alamein began pushing the Germans back.
- In November, the first American combat troops entered the European war via North Africa. They landed in Occupied French Morocco and, along with the British, pushed the Germans out, turning it into an Allied base. I guess also allowing Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman to release Casablanca next year.
- By 1943, the Allies had pushed Axis forces out of Africa. In January, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill met at Casablanca to discuss the next step of the European war. Churchill convinced Roosevelt to chase the Axis into Italy.
- Roosevelt declared that the Allies would accept nothing less than unconditional surrender.

# European Theater: ITALY

- The US engagement on the continent began on two fronts: Italy and the British Islands.
- The Allies began the attack on Italy in July 1943. Italy's mountainous terrain slowed the advance and caused heavy casualties. Still, as the Allies pushed up the peninsula, Mussolini's government revolted. Italy surrendered on September 8, 1943.

# The European Theater: England

- Britain became an airbase to launch attacks on Germany. Beginning mid-1942, the Army Air Force (AAF) sent hundreds (and eventually thousands) of bombers to England in preparation for a massive strategic bombing campaign against Germany. AAF and the British RAF began to bomb Germany around the clock.
- AAF targeted the German ball-bearing factories, rail yards, oil fields, and manufacturing centers during the day.
- The British RAF indiscriminately carpet-bombed German cities at night.

# The European Theater: England

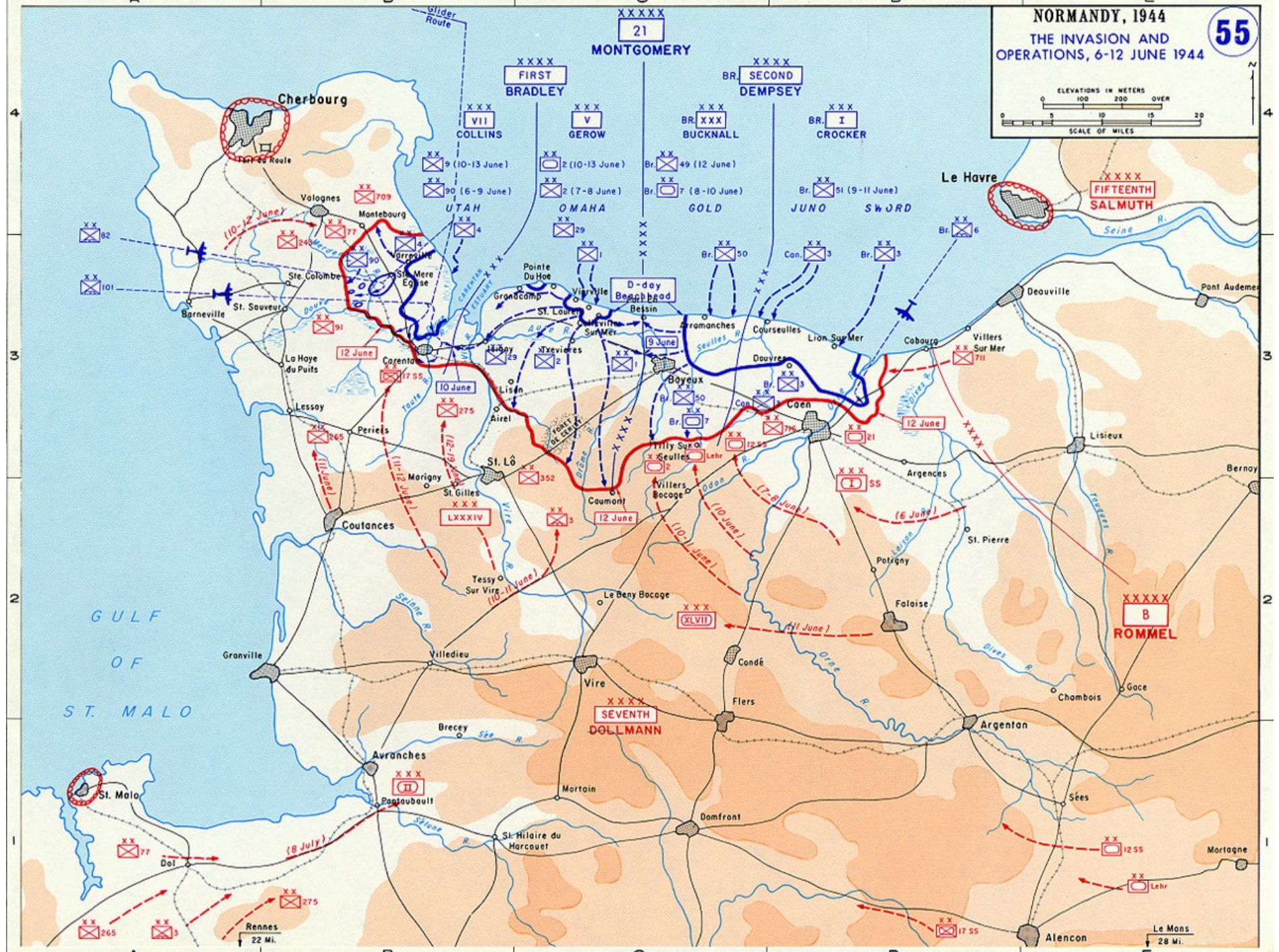
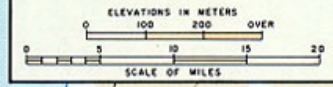
- Up to four hundred thousand German civilians were killed by Allied bombing.
- Maneuvering this tech marvel, the pilots faced enormous difficulties. They were vulnerable to German fighters shooting down the lumbering bombers. On some disastrous missions, the Germans shot down almost 50 percent of American aircraft. The Air Force lost 5000 planes. Gradually, long-range escort fighters enabled the bombers to hit their targets more accurately.
- In 1943, Allied forces expanded the bombing campaign of railroad and oil targets to oil-rich Bucharest.

# The European Theater: D-Day

- In the wake of the Soviets' victory at Stalingrad, the Big Three (Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin) met in Tehran in November 1943. FDR decided to grant Stalin's request that Britain and the United States invade France to relieve pressure on the Eastern Front.
- The Allies tentatively scheduled the attack for 1944. Says LaFeber, the objective of the second front was to "aid the Soviets and block their expansion at the same time" (p. 423).

# NORMANDY, 1944 THE INVASION AND OPERATIONS, 6-12 JUNE 1944

55



# The European Theater: D-Day

- On June 6, 1944, American, British, and Canadian forces launched Operation Overlord under General Dwight Eisenhower. D-Day was the largest amphibious assault in history.
- The Allied landings at Normandy began to roll back the German occupation. Paris was free within two months. In March 1945, the Americans crossed the Rhine and continued to Berlin.

# The European Theater: D-Day

- The Nazis were thus under attack from both the Eastern and Western fronts.
- While the Allies had to wait until March to invade Germany, the Soviet Union continued its relentless and unstoppable push westward, ravaging German populations in retribution for German war crimes.
- The Soviet Union was the first to reach Germany in January 1945. Stalin drove his forces to be the first to seize Berlin.
- By May, they did, days after Hitler and his high command had committed suicide in a city bunker. Germany was conquered. The war in the European Theater was over.

# The European Theater: D-Day

- By the beginning of 1945, the end of the European war seemed possible. The Big Three met again at Yalta in the Soviet Union to plan for postwar Europe.
- In July-August 1945, the Allied leaders met at Potsdam, Germany, and divided the defeated country into pieces according to the current Allied occupation. Berlin was also divided, pending future elections.
- Stalin agreed to join the fight against Japan in approximately three months.

# ENDING THE WAR

- On August 6, 1945, [President Truman told the world](#), “Sixteen hours ago, an American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima and destroyed its usefulness to the enemy. That bomb had more power than 20,000 tons of TNT...”
- He disclosed the details of the Manhattan Project, which had coordinated the atomic research since 1939 and won the race of laboratories with Germany to produce an atomic bomb.

# ENDING THE WAR

- The President defined the bomb as, “...the greatest achievement of organized science in history. It was done under pressure and without failure...” and warned, “We are now prepared to obliterate more rapidly and completely every productive enterprise the Japanese have above ground in any city. We shall destroy their docks, their factories, and their communications. Let there be no mistake; we shall completely destroy Japan’s power to make war...”
- It became the most effective reiteration of the Allies’ demand for unconditional Japanese surrender.

# Ending the War

- The Manhattan Project, in close coordination with Britain, had exploded the world's first nuclear device, Trinity, in New Mexico in July 1945.
- J. Robert Oppenheimer's Los Alamos Laboratory produced two more bombs—Fat Man and Little Boy.
- Over one hundred thousand civilians were killed in Hiroshima. Another eighty thousand would die on August 9 in Nagasaki after America dropped the second nuclear bomb there.

# Ending the War

- Decision-makers cited numbers of probable casualties on both sides to justify the ultimate weapon of mass destruction: an invasion of the Japanese mainland could cost half a million American casualties and perhaps millions of Japanese civilians.
- Historians also point to the interracial perspective possibly impacting the decision. Says LaFeber, “Journalists who worked in both war theaters, noted how Germans were hated but treated like human beings, while Japanese were treated as if they were jungle beasts,” (p. 448).

# Ending the War

- Emperor Hirohito announced the surrender of Japan on August 15. On September 2, aboard the battleship USS Missouri, delegates from the Japanese government formally signed their surrender.
- World War II was finally over.

## Conclusion

- World War II had phenomenal consequences and outcomes. In the next lecture, we will look at some of them, including the Nazi atrocities, the impact on the displaced populations, and the future that ensued out of the war diplomacy.
- Decidedly, the United States emerged as the uncontested leader of the Western camp of the Allied Powers and helped make or made decisions that shaped the postwar world, including the creation of the United Nations.

Email

Questions/Comments

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