

World War II Flashcards



Bataan Death March

- Forced march of 76,000 American and Filipino soldiers captured by the Japanese from the Bataan Peninsula in May 1942
- More than 10,000 soldiers died during this one-week ordeal

Eleanor Roosevelt

- Franklin Roosevelt's wife, Eleanor, became an invaluable political asset to him while he recovered from polio in the 1920s
- As First Lady, she served as FDR's "legs," visiting mines, schools, and other groups
- Discussed policy with FDR, and urged him to do more to fight the Depression

GI Bill

- Officially called the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, this bill gave many benefits to returning WW II veterans
- Benefits included financial assistance to go to college or job training programs, special loans to buy homes or businesses, and preference for government jobs

Marshall Plan

- Announced in 1947, the United States agreed to help rebuild Europe after the war
- 17 Western European nations became part of the plan
- The U.S. introduced the plan so that communism would not spread across war-torn Europe

Battle of Guadalcanal

- The battle over this Pacific island lasted from August 1942 through February 1943
- The American victory against fierce Japanese resistance was the first major offensive victory for the Americans in the Pacific War

Island-Hopping

- Successful American military tactic in the Pacific War of taking strategic islands that could be used as staging points for continued military offensives, while bypassing enemy strong points
- American dominance in air power made this possible

Holocaust

- Historical term used for the extermination of 6 million Jewish victims by Nazi Germany during World War II
- Much has been written on the reasons for the Holocaust and why it occurred in Germany

Allied Powers

- Coalition of nations that opposed Germany, Italy, and Japan in World War II
- Led by Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States

Potsdam Conference

- July 1945 conference between new President Harry Truman, Joseph Stalin, and Clement Atlee, who had replaced Winston Churchill
- Harry Truman took a much tougher stance toward Joseph Stalin than Franklin Roosevelt
- Little substantive agreement took place at this conference

Enola Gay

- Name of the American bomber that on August 6, 1945 dropped the first atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima in Japan
- Initiated the nuclear age

Lend-Lease Act

- Act proposed by Franklin Roosevelt and adopted by Congress in 1941 that stated the U.S. could either sell or lease arms and other equipment to any nation whose security was vital to U.S. interests
- After the passage of this bill, military equipment started to be shipped to Britain

Final Solution

- Plan of Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany to eliminate Jewish civilization from Europe
- By the end of the war in 1945, nearly 6 million Jews had been murdered
- The full extent of German atrocities was not known in the U.S. until the end of the war

Yalta Conference

- At this meeting held between Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt in February 1945, Stalin agreed to assist the U.S. against the Japanese after Germany was defeated
- Stalin also agreed to hold free elections in Eastern Europe
- Critics said FDR trusted Stalin too much

Neutrality Act of 1939

- Franklin Roosevelt persuaded Congress to amend the Neutrality Act of 1935
- New legislation stated that Britain and France could buy arms from the United States as long as there was cash "up front" for these weapons
- Allowed the U.S. to assist the Allies

D-Day

- On June 6, 1944, Allied forces landed in Normandy in France
- With an initial force of 176,000 troops supported by 4,000 landing craft, 600 warships, and 11,000 planes, this was the largest amphibious landing in history
- Decisive defeat for Germany

Pearl Harbor

- On Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, 190 Japanese warplanes attacked the American fleet anchored at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii
- The Americans lost 2,400 lives, 150 planes, and 6 battleships
- Brought the U.S. into the war

War Bonds

- Also called Liberty Bonds, these were sold by the government during the world wars to raise money for the war effort
- A person who purchased a bond could make money by cashing it in after 5–10 years
- Movie stars and other celebrities encouraged Americans to buy war bonds

GI

- Popular term for American servicemen during World War II
- Refers to the fact that virtually anything they wore or used was "government issued"

Ration Cards

- During World War II, these recorded the amount of rationed goods such as automobile tires, gasoline, meat, butter, and other materials an individual had purchased
- Where regulation in World War I had been voluntary, consumption in World War II was regulated by government agencies

Rosie the Riveter

- This image of a woman factory worker was drawn by Norman Rockwell for the *Saturday Evening Post* during World War II
- Women were needed to take on factory jobs that had been held by departing soldiers
- By 1945, women made up nearly 37% of the entire domestic workforce

Battle of the Bulge

- December 1944 German attack was the last major offensive by the Axis powers in World War II
- The Germans managed to push forward into Belgium but were then driven back
- The attack was costly to the Germans in terms of materials and manpower

Double V Campaign

- World War II policy supported by several prominent black newspapers, which stated that blacks in America should work for victory over the Axis powers but at the same time work for victory over oppression at home
- Black leaders remained frustrated over continued segregation in the military

Atlantic Charter

- Fall 1941 agreement between FDR and Winston Churchill that stated the U.S. and Britain would support a postwar world based on self-determination and endorse a world body to ensure "general security"
- The U.S. agreement to convoy merchant ships drew it closer to war with Germany

Battle of the Atlantic

- Began in spring 1941 with the sinking of an American merchant vessel by a German submarine
- Armed conflict between warships of America and Germany took place in September 1941
- U.S. merchant ships were armed by 1942

Internment Camps

- The controversial decision to intern Japanese-Americans living on the West Coast in camps was made after Pearl Harbor
- President Franklin Roosevelt authorized this with Executive Order #9066
- Was validated by the Supreme Court in 1944

Manhattan Project

- Begun in 1941 to develop an atomic weapon for the United States
- Aided by German scientists added to the research team who had been working on a bomb in Germany
- The first test of the bomb took place in New Mexico on July 16, 1945

Battle of the Coral Sea

- May 1942 American naval victory over the Japanese prevented the Japanese from attacking Australia
- First naval battle where losses on both sides came almost exclusively from bombing from planes

Neutrality Act of 1935

- To prevent the United States from being drawn into potential European conflicts, this bill said that America would not trade arms with any country at war
- Stated that any American citizen traveling on a ship of a country at war was doing so at his or her own risk

Isolationism

- Policy of disengaging the United States from major world commitments and concentrating on U.S. domestic issues
- Dominant foreign policy of the United States for much of the 1920s and 1930s

Franklin D. Roosevelt

- FDR was the only person elected president four times, in 1932, 1936, 1940, and 1944
- His New Deal helped lay the foundations of the American social-welfare state
- He worked to provide assistance to the Allies in WW II, and played a key role in guiding the Allied coalition after Pearl Harbor

Kamikaze Pilots

- Late-war tactic of the Japanese air force where pilots flew at American ships and crashed into them
- Showed the desperate nature of the Japanese military situation at this time
- By July 1945, these attacks were dropped, as Japan was running out of planes and pilots

Battle of Midway

- June 4, 1942, naval battle that crippled Japanese offensive capabilities in the Pacific
- American airplanes destroyed 4 aircraft carriers and 245 planes
- After Midway, Japanese military operations were mainly defensive

"Four Freedoms"

- Four fundamental principles for which the United States stood in a world at war laid out by President Roosevelt in 1941
- Freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear
- Norman Rockwell created posters for them