

Chapter 35 (14th)

America in World War II

1. The Allies Trade Space for Time
 1. Pearl Harbor jarred many Americans' minds out of isolationism and into revenge-on-Japan mode. This was especially true on the west coast where there was only water between the U.S. and the Japanese fleet.
 2. FDR held back the reins against Japan, however, and vowed to "get Germany first." Many folks were upset at putting Japan second on the list, but Germany was the more pressing problem.
 3. The plan was absolutely *not* to let Britain fall to Germany and meanwhile send just enough effort to hold Japan at bay for the time being.
 1. The problem was preparedness. To execute this plan, the U.S. needed time to gear up for war.
 2. The task was monumental: to change industry for a total war, organize a massive military, ship everything in two directions across the world, and feed the Allies.
2. The Shock of War
 1. National unity was strong after the Pearl Harbor attack.
 2. There were no ethnic witch-hunts, with the glaring exception of Japanese-Americans.
 1. Mostly living on the west coast, Japanese-Americans were rounded up and sent to internment camps.
 2. The official reasoning was to protect them from rogues on the streets who may want to take out their Pearl Harbor frustrations on them.
 3. The ulterior motive was that there was distrust. Some believed the Japanese-Americans were more loyal to Japan than the U.S. and were really spies. This was untrue.
 4. Though jailed without due process, Supreme Court upheld internment camps in *Korematsu v. U.S.* case.
 1. Notably, in 1988, government apologized & offered reparations of \$20,000 to each camp survivor.
 3. Many New Deal programs were ended as the war began. Now, all jobs would be war jobs.
 4. Unlike WWI, WWII was not made to be an idealistic crusade. It was just the dirty work of defeating the bad guys.
3. Building the War Machine
 1. The Great Depression ended when huge orders for war effort came in. More than \$100 billion was ordered in 1942.
 2. **Henry J. Kaiser** was nicknamed "Sir Launchalot" because his crews could build an entire ship in only 14 days.
 3. **War Production Board** took control of industry. It halted production of non-essential items like passenger cars.
 1. Rubber was a much-needed item because Japan had overtaken the rubber tree fields of British Malaya. Gasoline was rationed to help save tires.
 4. Agricultural production, though many farm boys went to war, new equipment & fertilizers yielded record harvests.
 5. Prices rose, however. The **Office of Price Administration** regulated prices.
 1. Critical items were rationed to keep consumption down, like meat and butter.
 2. The **War Labor Board** set ceilings on wages (lower wages means lower prices).
 6. Though they hated the wage regulations, labor unions promised to *not* strike during the war. Some did anyway, like the United Mine Workers led by John L. Lewis.
 1. Congress passed the **Smith-Connally Anti-Strike Act** (1943) giving the federal government the authority to seize and run industries crippled by strikes. Government took over the coal mines and railroads, briefly.
 2. All-in-all, strikes were minimal during the war.
4. Manpower and Womanpower
 1. There were some 15 million men and 216,000 women in the military during WWII.
 1. Famous women were the WAACS (in the Army), the WAVES (Navy), & the SPARS (Coast Guard).
 2. Since most able-bodied men were off at war, industry needed workers.
 1. The **bracero program** brought workers from Mexico to harvest crops. The program was successful and stayed on about 20 years after the war.
 2. Women stepped up, taking war jobs. For many women, this was the first "real job" outside of the home. Almost certainly, this was the first job for women in *industry*—building planes, artillery shells, tanks, etc.
 1. The symbol for women-workers was "Rosie the Riveter" - sleeves rolled up and rivet gun in hand.
 2. Without question, the war opened things up for women in the workplace. Women "proved themselves" and gained respect.
 3. After war most women (about 2/3) left the workplace. A post-war **baby boom** resulted when the boys returned from war. Most women returned to their "job" of being homemakers and mothers.
5. Wartime Migrations
 1. As during the Depression, the war forced people to move around the country.
 2. FDR had long been determined to help the economically-hurting South. He funneled money southward in defense contracts. This would plant the seeds of the "Sunbelt's" boom after the war.
 3. African-Americans moved out of the South in large numbers, usually heading Northern cities, but also to the West.

1. Black leader **A. Philip Randolph** prepared a "Negro March on Washington" to clamor for more blacks in defense jobs and military. FDR responded by banning discrimination in defense industries.
2. FDR set up **Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC)** as a watchdog over the discrimination ban.
3. Blacks served in segregated units in the military.
 1. Aside from the segregation, there was discrimination such as separate blood banks for each race, and often the roles of blacks were more menial such as cooks, truck drivers, etc.
 2. Generally, the war and the efforts of Blacks encouraged African-Americans to strive for equality. The slogan was the "**Double V**"—victory overseas vs. dictators and victory at home vs. racism.
4. Black organizations increased in membership. The NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) neared the half-million mark and CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) was founded.
5. The mechanical cotton picker was invented. This freed blacks from the age-old cotton picking job—another reason many moved.
4. Native Americans also fought in the war in large numbers.
 1. Famously, Navajo and Comanche Indians were "code talkers." They traded messages using their traditional language. Their "codes" were never broken.
5. All the moving around mixed people who weren't accustomed to it, & there were clashes. Like, some white sailors attacked some Mexican /Mexican-Americans in L.A., 1943 & 25 blacks, 9 whites were killed in Detroit race riot.
6. Holding the Home Front
 1. The U.S. entered WWII still in Depression. The U.S. came out of WWII very prosperous (the only nation to do so).
 1. GNP (Gross National Product) had doubled. Corporate profits doubled too.
 2. Disposable income (money left to spend) also doubled. Inflation would suit and rise as well.
 2. Despite all of the New Deal programs, it was the production for WWII that ended the Great Depression.
 1. The war's cost was assessed at \$330 billion (ten times WWI).
 2. To help pay for the war, four times more people were required to pay income taxes. Most of the payments, however, were on credit. This meant the national debt shot up from \$49 to \$259 billion.
7. The Rising Sun in the Pacific
 1. Japan began to take action on its dream of a new empire—the land of the rising sun. The Japanese took island after island, including: Guam, Wake Island, the Philippines, Hong Kong, British Malaya, Burma, the Dutch East Indies, and much of coastal China.
 2. The Philippines had been embarrassing for the U.S. **Gen. Douglas MacArthur** had to sneak away. The general made a pledge, however, to return.
 1. After the U.S. lost in the Philippines, the Japanese made the captured soldiers hike the infamous "Bataan Death March"—85 miles where, if you stumbled, you died.
 2. The U.S. finally gave up and surrendered Corregidor, an island/fort in Manila Harbor.
8. Japan's High Tide at Midway
 1. The first big U.S.-Japan naval battle was the **Battle of Coral Sea**. It was the world's first naval battle where the ships never saw one another (they fought with aircraft via carriers). Both sides had heavy losses.
 2. Intercepted messages hinted at an attack on Midway Island. American **Adm. Chester Nimitz** correctly sent the U.S. fleet and the **Battle of Midway** (June 1942) followed. Instead of *being* surprised, the U.S. *gave* the surprise.
 1. **Adm. Raymond Spruance** was the admiral on the water. Midway was a rout for the U.S. as four Japanese aircraft carriers were sunk.
 2. Midway proved to be the turning point in the Pacific war, the place where Japanese expansion was halted.
 3. Japan did capture the islands of Kiska and Attu in the Aleutian chain of Alaska. The islands are home to a few hundred native Aleuts, snow, and rocks, but the mere idea the Japanese taking American soil hit hard. The northwestern states feared an invasion.
 1. "Alcan" Highway was built from Alaska, through Canada, to the continental states to help protect Alaska.
9. American Leapfrogging Toward Tokyo
 1. Japan's expansion halted, America began "**island-hopping**" toward Japan. The plan was to not attack the stronghold, take the weaker islands & build airbases there. Stronger islands would be taken by bombing/strangling of resources.
 2. There were 2 main thrusts: South led by Gen. Douglas MacArthur & Central Pacific led by Adm. Chester Nimitz.
 1. Island-hopping began in the south Pacific with victories at **Guadalcanal** (Aug. 1942). This southern strike reached **New Guinea** in August of 1944. MacArthur was working his way back to the Philippines.
 2. Northward, Tarawa & Makin in **Gilbert Islands** were captured. Next, the Marshall Island chain was won.
 1. The "Marianas Turkey Shoot" was an American highlight where American "Hellcat" fighters had their way in the air shooting down 250 enemy planes. The **Marianas Islands** also were close enough so that B-29 bombers could strike Japan and return (if the winds were favorable).
 2. This would later be the take-off point for the atomic bomb planes.
 3. Though island-hopping made steady progress, it was slow, hard-fought, and bloody.
 1. American sailors shelled beachheads with artillery, U.S. Marines stormed ashore (while navy shelled over their heads), and American bombers attacked the Japanese. Heroism and self-sacrifice were common.

2. One example was when Lt. Robert J. Albert piloted a B-24 "Liberator" on 36 missions. His final run was a record 18 hour and 25 minute strike. *His* tour of duty was complete, but his *crew's* was not. He volunteered to pilot the flight so that his men would not fly behind a rookie pilot.

10. The Allied Halting of Hitler

1. As with the Pacific, progress in Europe has slow at first. History has shown the American war machine slow to get going, but awesome when it *is* going.
2. German u-boats proved very effective. The German "**enigma code**" was broken thanks to spies' actions and lives sacrificed to get an enigma machine to decode messages. These messages helped locate German u-boat wolf packs.
3. The **Battle of the Atlantic**, the war for control of the ocean, went on until 1943 when the Allies gained control.
 1. The win over the seas was a close one. It was learned after the war that the amazing German engineers were nearing completion of a sub that could stay submerged indefinitely and cruise at 17 knots.
4. 1942 was the turning point year in Europe (like Midway in '42 in the Pacific).
 1. The British bombed the Germans in Cologne, France. American B-17's bombed Germany itself.
 2. German **Gen. Erwin Rommel** (nicknamed the "Desert Fox" because he was clever with maneuvers) was having great success in North Africa. He was almost to the Suez Canal in Egypt—taking the canal would link the Mediterranean Sea (Italy and Germany) with the Indian and Pacific Oceans (Japan).
 1. However, Brit. **Gen. Bernard Montgomery**, at the **Battle of El Alamein** (Oct. 1942) stopped the Germans. From there, Germany would be pushed back.
 3. The Russians also stopped the Germans at Stalingrad (Sep. 1942). A month later, Russia began pushing back and recaptured 2/3 of their lost land in one year.

11. A Second Front from North Africa to Rome

1. Some 20 million Russians would die by the end of the war so the Soviet Union wanted the allies to start a second front against Germany and ease Russia's burden.
 1. Britain and U.S. wanted this, but in diff. views. America wanted to ram straight at Nazis through France.
 2. Britain wanted to lure the war away from England. **Winston Churchill** suggested they hit Germany's "soft underbelly", meaning up from North Africa and through Italy.
2. The soft underbelly approach was decided upon.
 1. **Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower** led an attack on North Africa (Nov. 1942). The Allies pushed the Germans out of Africa by May 1943.
3. The Roosevelt and Churchill met at the **Casablanca Conference** to flesh out plans (Jan. 1943). They agreed to seek the "unconditional surrender" of Germany.
4. The soft underbelly attack continued.
 1. Allies leapfrogged to Sicily. Mussolini was overthrown (later murdered) at about the same time, Italy surrendered (Sept. 1943). German soldiers still in Italy, however, were determined to keep fighting.
 2. The Allies then moved to the lower portion of the Italian boot, and then started edging northward. By this time, it was clear that the soft underbelly really *wasn't* very soft.
 1. The German were dug in at Monte Cassino. After taking a beachhead at Anzio, the Allies finally took Rome on June 4, 1944.
 2. The Allied thrust essentially bogged down and stalled at this point, roughly half way up the Italian peninsula. The D-Day invasion would make the Italian assault a mere diversion.
5. The soft underbelly attack had mixed results. The good: it drew some of Hitler's men and supplies and it did defeat Italy. The bad: it delayed the D-Day invasion and gave Russia extra time to draw farther into Eastern Europe.

12. D-Day: June 6, 1944

1. Churchill, Roosevelt, & Stalin met at **Tehran Conference** (Nov.-Dec. 1943) to formulate goals/coordinate attacks.
2. The groundwork was laid for a massive assault across the English Channel (eventual D-Day invasion).
 1. Gen. Eisenhower was placed in charge of the assault.
 2. The attack would take place on the beaches of Normandy on the French coast. The Germans had guessed the sure-to-come attack would be at Calais because that's the narrowest point of the channel. The Allies offered fakes and bluffs there to confuse the enemy.
3. The **D-Day Invasion** began on June 6, 1944. It was the largest amphibious assault in history.
 1. The Allies had to cross the channel, wade ashore, cross the wide beach; scale 100 foot bluffs, and overtake German bunkers—while being shot at by machine guns and artillery. The Allies did it.
 2. After gaining a toehold at Normandy, the Allies began spreading out. **Gen. George S. Patton** led U.S. troops across the French countryside.
 3. Paris was liberated in August of 1944—a major morale boost for the Allies.

13. FDR: The Fourth-Termite of 1944

1. Despite the ongoing war in 1944, an election year came again. The Republican party nominated **Thomas E. Dewey**. He was known as a liberal and attacker of corruption.
2. The Democrats nominated FDR for a fourth term. There was no other viable choice for the party.
 1. The real question was who'd be the *vice*-presidential candidate. The nomination was made for **Harry S Truman** who was largely without enemies.

14. Roosevelt Defeats Dewey

1. Dewey campaigned hard against FDR. He attacked "twelve long years" and emphasized it was "time for a change."
 2. FDR didn't campaign much until Election Day neared.
 1. Roosevelt got a lot of financial help from the CIO's new political action committee (PAC). The PAC was set up to avoid a ban on using union money for politics.
 3. FDR won the election in a big way, again. The electoral vote was 432 to 99. The main reason that he won was that the war was moving along well at this point.
15. The Last Days of Hitler
1. The Nazi army was on the retreat at this point. Hitler made one last big push at the Ardenne Forest. The Americans were surprised and pushed back; the result was a bulge in the battle line.
 1. Americans held on Bastogne. Germany asked for surrender but **Gen. A.C. McCauliffe** answered, "Nuts."
 2. Reinforcements came and the U.S. won the **Battle of the Bulge**. From there, steady progress was made toward Berlin. Russia was simultaneously converging on Berlin.
 2. Along the way, the Allies discovered the horrors of the Holocaust.
 1. There had been rumors of such goings-on, but it was believed they were either untrue or exaggerated. They were not—the Holocaust was worse than imagined.
 2. The death camps, still stinking, made the horrors clear. Eisenhower forced German civilians to march through the camps after the war to see what they're government had done.
 3. Russians reached Germany first. Hitler killed himself in bunker (Apr. 1945), as did mistress-turned-wife Eva Braun.
 4. Only 2 weeks prior, vacationing at Warm Springs, GA, FDR suddenly died. Truman became president.
 5. German officials surrendered May 7; May 8, 1945 was named **V-E Day** (Victory in Europe). The celebration began.
16. Japan Dies Hard
1. The war with Japan was still on.
 1. American subs were devastating Japanese merchant ships—1,042 were destroyed.
 2. American bombers were devastating Japanese cities. In a two-day fire-bomb raid on Tokyo in March of 1945, the destruction was: 250,000 buildings, 1/4 of the city, and 83,000 lives. This was about the equivalent of the atomic bombs that were to come.
 2. Gen. MacArthur was determined to return to the Philippines where he'd been booted.
 1. After retaking New Guinea, MacArthur made his Filipino return in October, 1944.
 2. Hard naval fighting followed at **Leyte Gulf**. U.S. won, although **Adm. William Halsey** was suckered into a feint. Leyte Gulf was the last huge battle in the Pacific—Japan's navy was all but destroyed at this point.
 3. MacArthur then took Luzon and finally captured the capital city of Manila (Mar. 1945).
 3. The same month, the small island of **Iwo Jima** was captured by America in some of the toughest fighting yet. It was strategically located halfway between the Marianas Islands and Japan. Thus, it provided an important airstrip.
 1. The famous flag-raising photo was snapped atop Mt. Suribachi while the fighting still raged.
 4. **Okinawa** was next. The last island before Japanese mainland's. Okinawa (June 1945) - 50,000 American casualties.
 1. In a last-ditch effort, Japan unleashed the full fury of their "kamikaze" suicide pilots. Likening themselves to the samurai warriors of old the kamikazes felt they were dying for their god-emperor.
17. The Atomic Bombs
1. Rookie **Pres. Harry Truman** met with Stalin and British officials at the **Potsdam Conference** (July 1945). The final statement to Japan was: surrender or be destroyed.
 2. Meanwhile, the U.S. had been working on a super-secret project all along: to build the atomic bomb.
 1. Early on, many German scientists had fled Nazi Germany, notably **Albert Einstein**. In 1940, FDR convinced these scientists to start working on the bomb.
 2. FDR had gotten Congress to approve the money in fear that Germany may well develop the bomb first. The **Manhattan Project** secretly developed and built the world's first atomic bomb. It was tested in Alamogordo, NM (July 1945) and was ready for use.
 3. The first atomic bomb was dropped, **Hiroshima**, Japan (Aug. 8, 1945). 70,000 died there. 180,000 total casualties.
 4. On Aug. 8, Russia entered the war against Japan and attacked Manchuria.
 5. On Aug. 9, a second atomic bomb was dropped on **Nagasaki**, Japan. 80,000 were killed or missing. That's was it.
 6. Japan surrendered on Aug. 19, 1945. The Japanese emperor was allowed to stay on the throne as a symbolic gesture.
 1. The official and ceremonial surrender came a few weeks later aboard the *U.S.S. Missouri*. Gen. MacArthur accepted the surrender from Emperor Hirohito.
18. The Allies Triumphant
1. One million casualties was the American cost of WWII. But, despite the sacrifices, America came out of the war tougher and stronger-than-ever, whereas other nations came out of the war beaten down.
 1. The casualty number was incredibly large, but actually small as compared to other nations. The numbers were kept down in part due to new drugs, particularly penicillin.
 2. The American homeland was almost entirely untouched (again, unlike other nations were in rubble).
 2. Though slow-starting, America had run the war well. It was a huge undertaking, but had been undertaken in a systematic and effective manner.
 1. The U.S. had been blessed with great leaders during the war, civilian and military.
 2. Another major factor contributing to victory was America's incredible resources and industry.