

WWII

European Battles

1. Battle of the Atlantic 570

- 1942 – 1943
- Hitler orders submarine raids against ships along America's east coast.
- Hitler wanted to stop the shipment of food and war supplies to the Allies.
- Hitler wanted to starve Great Britain.
- Hitler destroyed 681 ships.
- The Allied response was to organize cargo ships into convoys in order to protect one another.
- The convoys were escorted by destroyers who had sonar capability to detect submarines.
- Airplanes also accompanied the boats and used sonar to spot U-boats.
- The US started to build more ships – 140 Liberty ships were being built everyday
- Allies won the Battle of Atlantic

Significance – The supply line (food/war supplies) for the Allies stayed intact.

2. Battle of Stalingrad 571

- June 1942 – 1943
- Hitler was interested in capturing Stalingrad because it was an industrial center close to the Volga River.
- The Luftwaffe – German air force – set fire to most of Stalingrad in nightly raids.
- By September of 1942, Germany controlled 90% of the city.
- Soviets took advantage of the winter cold to send tanks into the city and surround the Germans and cut off their supplies.
- Germany surrendered.
- 1,100,000 Soviet soldiers died during this battle.

Significance – The USSR was able to start moving westward toward Germany

3. The North African Front 572

- The Allies did not believe they were ready for an invasion through Western Europe so they decided to invade Axis' controlled North Africa.
- Operation Torch was led by Dwight D. Eisenhower.
- In 1942, 107,000 American troops landed in Casablanca, Oran, and Algiers.
- Fought against the Afrika Korps led by General Erwin Rommel "Desert Fox"
- Axis surrendered in May of 1943.

Significance – This win boosted Allied morale and brought them a step closer to Europe.

4. The Italian Campaign 573

- Allies captured Sicily in 1943.
- Benito Mussolini was forced to resign and was arrested in 1943.
- Hitler was determined to stop the Allies on Italian soil rather than fight on German soil.
- Battle of Bloody Anzio was fought 40 miles from Rome in 1944.
- 25,000 Allied casualties and 30,000 Axis casualties.
- Germans continued to resist defeat.
- Defeat came in 1945 when Germany was close to collapse.

Significance – The Italian Campaign succeeded in taking Mussolini out of power and advancing closer to Germany.

5. D-Day 574

- Called Operation Overlord – commander was General Dwight D. Eisenhower.
- 3 million American, British, and Canadian troops.
- Plan was to attack Normandy in northern France.
- Ike made the Germans believe that the attack would be at Calis – 150 miles way from Normandy.
- June 6, 1944 – divisions parachuted down behind enemy lines and thousands of soldiers arrived on the shore.
- It was the largest land-sea-air operation in army history.
- The fighting was really brutal especially at Omaha Beach.
- After seven days the Allies controlled a 80 mile strip of land in France.
- Within a month they had landed a million troops, 567,000 tons of supplies and 170,000 vehicles.
- On July of 1944 Paris was free of Germany control.
- By September of 1944 France, Belgium, and Luxembourg was free.

Significance – D-Day was a complete success for the Allies and it brought them closer to defeating Germany.

6. The Battle of the Bulge 576

- In October of 1944 the Allies captured the first German town, Aachen.
- Hitler responded with a last attempt – he ordered his troops to capture the Belgian port of Antwerp.
- Hitler wanted to disrupt the supply lines and demoralize the Allies.
- On December 16 the Germans broke the Allied defense lines in two creating a bulge.
- Lasted one month – Germans were pushed back.
- Germany lost 120,000, 600 assault guns, and 1,600 planes.
- Germany surrendered on May 8, 1945.

Significance – This was the last battle Germany fought before surrendering.

Pacific Battles

7. Battle of the Coral Sea and Battle of Midway 579 – 580

- Battle of Coral Sea was fought between the Australians and Americans against the Japanese.
- In May of 1942, Australia and the US succeed at stopping the Japanese as they headed towards Australia.
- The fighting was done by airplanes – not a single shot was fired from surface ships.
- Allies won.
- Island of Midway is northwest of Hawaii.
- Allies broke the Japanese code and knew that they would attack.
- Admiral Chester Nimitz was the commander of the US army.
- On June 3, 1942 the Americans sent torpedo planes and dive bombers against the Japanese. The Japanese were caught off guard.
- Japan lost. They lost four aircraft carriers, a cruiser, and 250 planes

Significance – Battle of Midway was the turning point in the Pacific and it allowed for the beginning of Island Hopping, whose purpose was the move the US closer to Japan.

8. Battle of Guadalcanal and Battle of Leyte Gulf 581

- August of 1942 – 19,000 stormed Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands.
- Lasted six months and marked Japan's first defeat on land.
- In October of 1944, 178,000 Allied troops and 738 ships landed on Leyte Island in the Philippines for the Battle of Leyte Gulf.
- During this battle the Japanese used kamikazes (suicide bombers) to attack the Allies.
- 424 kamikazes embarked on suicide missions, sinking 16 ships and damaging 80.
- Battle was a disaster for the Japanese – in 3 days they lost 4 aircraft carriers, 3 battleships, 13 cruisers, and 500 airplanes.

Significance – These two battles significantly weakened the Japanese Navy.

9. Battle of Iwo Jima and Battle for Okinawa 584

- Iwo Jima was critical to the US because it could be used as a base from which bombers could be loaded to attack Japan.
- IJ was heavily guarded by 20,700 Japanese troops living in its tunnels and caves.
- 6,000 marines lost their lives – greatest number of losses in the Pacific.
- Only 200 Japanese survived.
- US won the battle.
- Okinawa – April 1945.
- Japanese used 1,900 Kamikazes, sinking 30 ships, damaging 300 more, and killing 5,000.
- US won June 21, 1945 – 7,600 Americans died and 110,000 lives.

Significance – The battles get the US closer to Japan but also make the US realized that the invasion of Japan would be really deadly.

10. **Hiroshima and Nagasaki 584**

- The prediction was that if the Allies invaded Japan, one million troops would die and half a million British soldiers.
- The atomic bombs were used to prevent an invasion of Japan.
- Little Boy was dropped on Hiroshima – an important military center – on August 6, 1945.
- Almost every building in Hiroshima was destroyed.
- Fat Man was dropped on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945.
- 200,000 people died as a result of injuries and radiation poisoning.
- Japan surrendered on September 2, 1945.

Significance – The dropping of the two atomic bombs is what finally convinced Japan to surrender unconditionally.

11. **Heroes in Combat**

African-Americans

- Tuskegee Airmen (99th Pursuit Squadron)
- Fought in the Sicily Campaign.
- Won two Distinguished Unit Citations for their combat against the German Luftwaffe.
- The 92nd Infantry Division
- They were nicknamed the Buffaloes.
- In six months this unit won 7 Legions of Merit awards, 65 Silver Stars, and 162 Bronze Stars for courage under fire.

Mexican-Americans

- 17 Mexican-American soldiers were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.
- An all-Mexican-American unit – Company E of the 141st regiment – 16th Division became the most decorated unit of the war.

Japanese-Americans

- Japanese-Americans served in Italy and North Africa.
- The 442nd Regimental Combat Team was made up of all Japanese-Americans. It is the most decorated unit of the war.

Navajo Native-Americans

- 400 Navajo Native-Americans were recruited by the Marine Corps.
- They became known as the Navajo Code Talkers.
- The Navajo language has no alphabet or other written symbols.
- They were indispensable in the Pacific theater of war.