

STUDY PACK 23

WORLD WAR II - EUROPE

“Only from an inspired nation, under these conditions, an inspired army... The special glory of the whole endeavor must be a surge of the whole peoples finest qualities worthy to the prayer. _____”

~ British leader General Montgomery right before D-Day ~

I. THE LEAD UP TO WORLD WAR II

In the 1930's peace was threatened by _____. The Soviet Union, under the cruel dictator Joseph Stalin, claimed that _____. Their stated goal was to create a one world socialist government. In Italy, fascist dictator Benito Mussolini dreamed _____ under his leadership. He established a socialist government by force and tried to turn Italy into a military power. In Germany, Hitler established the National Socialist Workers Party and redesigned the German government around his racist, pagan and occult principles. In Asia, control of the Japanese government had been seized by aggressive warlords. They taught that all Asia should be controlled by Japan and _____ should be established.

All four nations had signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact. All four had agreed to arms limitations. All four ignored their treaty obligations. All four used the fact that other nations honored these agreements to gain advantage over them.

In the late 1930's Italy invaded Ethiopia. It was a contest of tanks and machine guns against spears and shields. The League of Nations _____ but Italy ignored these protests. This prompted Hitler to speed up his plans for conquest. The Soviet Union invaded Finland but they met surprisingly strong resistance. The Finns had large numbers of _____ and they used the terrain to great advantage over the invaders. Japan invaded China and began to conquer large areas of mainland China.

Hitler's German army invaded Austria. It was absorbed into the nation of Germany quickly. The world _____ but did nothing to thwart Hitler's ambitions. Then Hitler seized part of the nation of Czechoslovakia. The nations of Europe sent representatives to Munich, Germany to meet with Hitler. Neville Chamberlain, Prime Minister of Great Britain, negotiated an agreement. The nations of Europe agreed not to seize any more territory. Neville Chamberlain returned to England and announced – “It is peace in our time.”

Chamberlain further said,

“Ever since I assumed my present office my main purpose has been to work for the pacification of Europe, for the removal of those suspicions and those animosities which have so long poisoned the air. The path which leads to appeasement is long and bristles with obstacles. The question of Czechoslovakia is the latest and perhaps the most dangerous. Now that we have got past it, I feel that it may be possible to make further progress along the road to sanity.”

Winston Churchill saw things differently.

“The people should know that we have sustained _____...they should know that we have passed an awful milestone in our history...and that the terrible words have for the time being been pronounced against the Western democracies: “Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting.” And, do not suppose this is the end. This is only the beginning of the reckoning. This is only the first sip, _____ which will be proffered to us year by year unless, by a supreme recovery or moral health and martial vigor, we arise again and take our stand for freedom as in the olden times.”

Of course Hitler quickly broke his promise and seized the rest of Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain was forced to resign in disgrace.

II. THE OUTBREAK OF WW II

Hitler signed a non-aggressive pact with the Soviet Union. They promised never to attack each other and agreed to divide Poland between them. Hitler’s forces invaded from the west, Stalin’s from the east.

The governments of France and England were now convinced that Hitler had to be stopped. They both declared war on Germany.

Hitler launched his “Blitzkrieg” through central Europe. The “Blitzkrieg” was a new military tactic which coordinated _____, _____, and _____. Under the “Blitzkrieg”, Poland was conquered in just 28 days. The Polish cavalry charged bravely against German tanks, but it was massacred. Denmark was conquered in less than a day. Holland was defeated in _____, Belgium _____. German armies would sweep through Norway and much of Eastern Europe in similar fashion. Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary allied themselves with Germany to avoid conquest. Germany and Italy invaded France. The French and British armies bravely resisted but they were not ready for this kind of war. Italian and German armies invaded North Africa and then Greece.

III. THE MIRACLE OF DUNKIRK

Hitler’s “Blitzkrieg” overwhelmed France. The British army was ordered out of France. French soldiers bled and died to give the British a chance to withdraw. They understood that a _____.

The Germans trapped the British army in the French port town of Dunkirk. The German air force, the Luftwaffe, prevented English ships from crossing the channel to remove the soldiers to England. A bloody destruction of the English army was expected the next day.

Winston Churchill told the nation by radio, “There is only one hope. _____.” The King called for _____. Soldiers began to hold prayer meetings.

The channel was hit suddenly by several unforecast storms. These storms were followed by a set of very unusual weather conditions. _____

_____ German Chief of Staff, General Franz Holder said, “Bad weather has grounded the Luftwaffe and now we must stand by and watch countless of the enemy getting away to England under our noses.”

The people of England crossed the English Channel again and again with every boat available. Naval ships, yachts, fishing boats and garbage scows, often manned _____, brought the entire British army of 250,000 back to England. They further rescued 100,000 French soldiers.

IV. THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

The world was shocked at the strength of the German army. The English turned to the leadership of Winston Churchill. His speeches helped to rally the English people as they prepared for a German invasion. Appearing before the English Parliament, Churchill declared, "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat." The British people organized local militias called Home Guards. Queen Elizabeth took pistol lessons and declared "I shall not go down like the others."

General Charles de Gaulle fled France and arrived in London. He organized a French government in exile and tried to rally the French forces that had escaped the Nazis. Churchill declared, "We shall go down to the end... We shall defend our island whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills, we shall never surrender." He also promised that if the island of Britain fell to the Nazis, the government would move to the colonies and fight on.

Every night, waves of German bombers attacked England. Every night, the people went to their air raid shelters until the bombing runs were over. Every night, Britain's outnumbered air force fought the German planes. The world watched in awe at the bravery, endurance, and aggressiveness of the British pilots. Winston Churchill, describing the bravery of the British pilots, said, "_____."

After watching the determination of the British government, the organization of the British people, and the bravery of the British pilots, Hitler canceled his plans to cross the English Channel and invade England.

Many people in the United States strongly sympathized with the English and detested Hitler. The U.S. began to sell, loan, and give military equipment to the English. The U.S. took possession of _____ and _____ to keep them from falling into German hands. The U.S. became known as the "_____."

V. THE INVASION OF RUSSIA

On June 22, 1941, Hitler surprised the Soviet Union by invading it. He quickly took millions of Russian soldiers prisoner (many of whom died in German prison camps) and captured large sections of Russia (including several key cities). Hitler took control of the important wheat fields and oil wells of the Ukraine. He recruited several million Russians (_____) as soldiers. But Stalin had learned the lessons of Napoleon's invasion and World War I well. He kept retreating to the east, destroying everything he could not take with him. By the time the dreaded Russian winter hit, _____. His troops were not adequately supplied for winter and he could not move supplies to them quickly. When the German armies were suffering from the winter and a lack of supplies, Stalin counter-attacked. The Germans resisted furiously but the next three years saw them steadily losing ground until the Soviet army had pushed _____.

VI. THE UNITED STATES ENTERS THE WAR

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the United States. Japan had a mutual defense treaty with Germany and Italy. Both nations declared war on the United States. England declared war on Japan. The U.S. declared war on Japan, Italy and Germany.

Churchill declared that the Japanese had “_____.”

VII. ENCIRCLING GERMANY

As the Russians pressed Germany in the East, the allies began to prepare pressure all around. British and American forces invaded North Africa. The German and Italian forces were led by the brilliant German tank commander, Irwin Rommel. The English and Americans adapted to this kind of warfare and by May, 1943, they had taken control of North Africa. Rommel returned to Germany where he led an unsuccessful plot to kill Hitler. He committed suicide to prevent a public execution.

Next, the Allies invaded the island of Sicily and then mainland Italy. The Italian people and army had lost all faith in Hitler and Mussolini and put up little resistance. Many units surrendered _____ . Mussolini was overthrown and arrested and a new government was declared. German commanders rescued Mussolini and German armies seized parts of Italy and placed Mussolini in control there. These armies had been pulled from the Russian front, further weakening the German forces there. Again, the Germans fought furiously, but gradually had to give ground as the Allies pushed them farther north.

By June, 1944, all of Italy was secured and the new Italian government declared war on Germany. Mussolini was captured by a band of Italian partisans and executed.

The Germans prepared for an Allied invasion of France. The Allies prepared for several different locations and kept the Germans from concentrating their forces.

VIII. D-DAY

On June 6, 1944, General Dwight D. Eisenhower ordered the invasion of Normandy. Bad weather seemed to threaten the invasion and the Germans relaxed. A sudden break in the weather gave the allies the opportunity they needed. Eight years later, Eisenhower would say, “If there was nothing else in my life to prove the existence of an almighty and merciful God, the events of the next twenty-four hours did it...the greatest break in a terrible outlay of weather occurred the next day and allowed that great invasion to proceed, with losses far below those we had anticipated!” – (*Time Magazine*/June 6, 1952).

That night, American President Franklin Delano Roosevelt addressed the American people by radio and _____ :

“My Fellow Americans:

Last night, when I spoke with you about the fall of Rome, I knew at that moment that troops of the United States and our Allies were crossing the Channel in another and greater operation. It has come to pass with success thus far.

And so, in this poignant hour, I ask you to join with me in prayer:

Almighty God: Our sons, pride of our nation, this day have set upon a mighty endeavor, a struggle to preserve _____, _____, and _____, and to set free a suffering humanity. Lead them straight and true; give strength to their arms, stoutness to their hearts, steadfastness in their faith. They will need Thy blessings. Their road will be long and hard. For the enemy is strong. He may hurl back our forces. Success may not come with rushing speed, but we shall return again and again; and we know that by Thy grace, and by the righteousness of our cause, our sons will triumph.

They will be sore tried, by night and by day, without rest – until the victory is won. The darkness will be rent by noise and flame. Men's souls will be shaken with the violence's of war. For these men are lately drawn from the ways of peace. They fight not for the lust of conquest. They fight to end conquest. They fight to liberate. They fight to let justice arise, and tolerance and goodwill among all Thy people. They yearn but for the end of battle, for their return to the haven of home.

Some will never return. Embrace these, Father, and receive them, Thy heroic servants, into Thy kingdom. And for us at home-fathers, mothers, children, wives, sisters and brothers of brave men overseas, whose thoughts and prayers are ever with them-help us, Almighty God, to rededicate ourselves in renewed faith in Thee in this hour of great sacrifice.

Many people have urged that I call the nation into a single day of special prayer. But because the road is long and the desire is great, I ask that our people devote themselves in a continuance of prayer. As we rise to each new day, and again when each day is spent, let words of prayer be on our lips, invoking Thy help to our efforts.

Give us strength, too-strength in our daily tasks, to redouble the contributions we make in the physical and the material support of our armed forces. And let our hearts be stout, to wait out the long travail, to bear sorrows that may come, to impart our courage unto our sons wheresoever they may be.

And, O Lord, give us faith. Give us faith in Thee; faith in our sons; faith in each other; faith in our united crusade. Let not the keenness of our spirit ever be dulled. Let not the impacts of temporary events, of temporal matters of but fleeting moment-let not these deter us in our unconquerable purpose. With Thy blessing, we shall prevail over the unholy forces of our enemy. Help us to conquer the apostles of greed and racial arrogances. Lead us to the saving of our country, and with our sister nations into a world unity that will spell a sure peace-a peace invulnerable to the schemings of unworthy men. And a peace that will let all of men live in freedom, reaping the just rewards of their honest toil.

Thy will be done, Almighty God.

Amen.”

Franklin D. Roosevelt – June 6, 1944

General Eisenhower addressed this message to the invasion troops:

“Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force!

You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other

Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal, great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!

I have full confidence in your courage and devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!"

Within 18 hours, 57,000 American and 75,000 British and Canadian troops had landed on the beaches of Normandy. There were 2,500 Americans killed and 8,500 allied soldiers killed that day. Within 30 days, _____ had landed on the beaches to move through France winning battle after battle. Many of the French people attacked German supply lines, messengers and outposts. The French resistance inflicted great damage upon the Germans.

IX. THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

From the beginning of the war, British planes had bombed Germany. After the U.S. entered the war, American planes joined the bombing. _____ there were more American planes available and the bombing took an increasing toll on Germany.

Hitler and his generals realized that the Allies were encircling them. They planned one decisive counter attack. They mustered all their available forces for a coordinated counter-attack on Christmas Day, 1944. The Germans pushed back the Allied line (this became known as the Battle of the Bulge) but they could not break it. When the Germans surrounded the U.S. forces at Bastogne, they demanded their surrender. The U.S. commander sent back a one word reply – “_____.” The American troops fought valiantly for hours – giving the rest of the American and British forces time to regroup. Eventually, the Germans were pushed back.

X. THE HOLOCAUST AND THE END

By now, the Germans’ military situation seemed hopeless. The Germans fought on knowing that their scientists were racing to develop an atomic bomb. Hitler lost all contact with reality and began to issue orders to non-existent armies and imagine victories in battles that had never taken place. Several attempts to kill or overthrow Hitler failed.

Throughout the war, the Germans had been rounding up as many Jews as they could and shipping them to concentration camps. Life in the camps was unbelievably cruel. Several of the camps were designated as “death camps.” Jews sent there usually ended up in gas chambers where they were executed in large groups. This mass execution was referred to by the Germans as the “_____” and by the Jews as the “_____.” As Germany was encircled, the attempt to destroy the Jews was speeded up. Many methods were employed. One large community of Jews in Warsaw, Poland, put up a courageous resistance but were eventually slaughtered. Modern historians usually estimate that about _____ were killed during the Holocaust.

As the Russians invaded Germany from one side and England and the United States from another, the German armies began to collapse. Allied leaders decided that all the armies should enter Berlin on the same day and as a result, General George Patton's tank divisions were held up. Finally, Hitler and many leading Nazis committed suicide and Germany surrendered. May 8, 1945 was declared Victory in Europe Day.