Notes to Accompany European Theater PPT

1. 1933 – The Nazi Party came to power in Germany (the Third Reich forms). Hitler began to rebuild the military in direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles (secretly at first, and in public by 1935 – the Western democracies do nothing).

2. March 1936 – Germans occupied the Rhineland with troops – again violating the Treaty of Versailles and again resulting in no reaction from the Western democracies.

3. March 1938 – Austria was annexed by the Third Reich. (Austrian Anschluss)

4. Sept 1938 – Munich Agreement. Britain and France agreed to Hitler’s demands to ‘free’ oppressed German people that lived within the Czech Republic. German troops occupied the Sudetenland in the first weeks of October.

5. March 1939 – Germany seized the remainder of western Czechoslovakia. The western democracies finally realized Hitler’s true intention of conquest. The southeastern portion became the Slovak Republic, allied with Germany.

6. April 1939. Similarly, Italy invaded Albania and then become officially allied with Germany with the “Pact of Steel” in May.

7. 1 September 1939 Germany invaded Poland. On 17 Sept the Soviet Union, who had previously signed a non-aggression agreement with Germany invaded and occupied eastern Poland. France and Britain declared war on Germany.

8. 27 September 1940. Tripartite Pact: The Axis Powers formally came into being. Germany, Japan and Italy signed this agreement to mutually support each other in their quest to conquer their spheres of influence. Hungary and Romania joined in November ‘40 and Bulgaria joined in March 41.


10. April 1940 – German forces occupied Denmark

11. 9 April – June. Germans invaded Norway. These two actions protect the German trade routes with Sweden (Iron Ore) and assisted Germany to execute her future submarine campaign in the Atlantic.

12. 10 May 1940 – Battle of France. The Germans invaded the Netherlands and Belgium (bypassing the Maginot Line). Britain and France moved to counter this attack.

13. Germany attacks through the Ardennes Forrest and cuts off two French Armies and the BEF (British Expeditionary Force) from the rest of the French Forces. These troops either surrendered or were evacuated at Dunkirk.

14. 22 June – The Battle of France ends. After the disaster in the Low Countries (i.e. Belgium, Netherlands), the French Army becomes almost totally ineffective, and the Germans easily attack through northern and eastern France. France surrenders and Vichy France was established, which is Southern France.

15. July – October 1940. Battle of Britain. An attempt by Germany to gain air superiority, in order to invade Britain (Operation Sea Lion). The Germans failed and eventually called off the Operation.

NOT SHOWN: Sept 1940-Nov 1942: North Africa Campaign. A series of see-saw battles between German/Italian Forces (Libya) and the British (Egypt).

16. October 1940. Italy attempted to invade __________, but failed miserably. They actually lose half of __________, and the British sent forces to defend Greece.

17. April 1941. Germany goes to the aid of Italy by invading Greece, and __________. The invasion became necessary for Hitler because the Yugoslav government had been overthrown, and had canceled her previous agreement to allow the Germans to pass through their country.
18. **20-31 May 1941.** Germany seized _______ with an almost purely Airborne Assault. They suffered such great losses, they never again conducted a major airborne assault.

19. **22 June – December 1941.** Operation _______. Three German Army Groups (4.5 million Axis soldiers) attacked into the European section of the Soviet Union, but were finally stopped just short of Moscow by stiff Soviet resistance, strategic overreach and the winter. Hitler claimed that the Soviet Union was preparing to attack them. It was also no secret that Hitler (as expressed in *Mein Kampf*) coveted the resources in that region, and believed in the inferiority of the Russians and other Slavic peoples.

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**NORTH AFRICA AND ITALY**

20. **8 November 1942:** Operation _______. Knowing that they are not yet strong enough for a direct assault into Europe against Hitler, the Allies attack North Africa to destroy the German/Italian Forces that were fighting in Egypt - the Allies landed in Morocco and Algeria and quickly defeat the forces there.

21. **10 November 1942:** Germans occupied Southern _______ as the Vichy government began to topple.

22. **(5 clicks) 10 July – 17 August 1943:** Sicily was conquered by the Allies (George S. Patton one of the leaders).

23. **(3 clicks) 3 Sept 43:** UK and USA invaded Italy - Italy surrendered to the Allies.

24. **16 Sept – 8 Oct 43:** Movement to the Gustav Line. Germany in Italy - withdrew to and held the Gustav line by 8 October.

25. July-Nov 43: After two failed German offensives (_________ in 1942 and Kursk in July 1943), the Soviet Union began the 1st of their major offensives to push the Germans back to Germany.

Battle of Stalingrad - 17 July 1942 and 2 February 1943 - often cited as one of the turning points of World War II. The Battle of Stalingrad was the bloodiest battle in human history, with combined casualties estimated to be above ______ million (_____ Russian, _____ German). The battle was marked by brutality and disregard for military and civilian casualties by both sides.

- At one point, Germany held _____% of the city, and was on its way towards Russian oil. The Soviet Union waited for winter to make their counteroffensive.
- The battle at Stalingrad bled the German army dry in Russia and after this defeat; the Germany Army was in full retreat.

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**INVASION OF EUROPE**

26. **24 December 1943:** The final preparations for the invasion of Europe (Operation Overlord – led by Supreme Commander of US Forces in Europe - ___________________) began.

27. **(5 clicks) 19-25 Feb 44:** Bomber Offensive. The US orient on the destruction of the German aircraft industry. The scale and success of the attacks resulted in it being called ‘Big Week’ after the fact. More fighting in Italy.

- US Fighter Planes were now able to escort the bombers all the way to their targets and back. They (and the heavily defended bombers) destroyed so many German fighter planes, that air superiority was assured for the coming Overlord invasion. The Germans can now only defend their most critical industrial locations.

28. **(2 clicks) Jan-Apr 44:** Soviet Spring Offensive frees _______ from it’s two year German siege and pushes into the Ukraine.

29. **11 May – 4 June 44:** Operation Diadem - Allied attacks on Germany to draw their attention away from the impending Overlord invasion.
30. 6 June 44: Operation _________ – 3 Airborne Divisions landed in Normandy in the early hours, to protect the flanks of the amphibious landing sites. KNOWN AS_________

- landed in Normandy on 5 __________: Utah (4\textsuperscript{th} U.S. Infantry Division), Omaha (1\textsuperscript{st} and 29\textsuperscript{th} U.S. Infantry Division), Gold (50\textsuperscript{th} British Infantry Division), Juno, (3\textsuperscript{rd} Canadian Infantry Division) and Sword (3\textsuperscript{rd} British Infantry Division).

Allied air forces successfully conducted strikes which slowed and even prevented German reinforcements from arriving at the Normandy beachheads.

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BREAKOUT FROM NORMANDY

31. (5 clicks) 25 July 1944. Operation Cobra. - _________________mission which assisted in the breakout attack through the very difficult bocage (forested) countryside – Allies push German back to Northern Italy.

1 August 44: With this breakout, the US 12\textsuperscript{th} Army Group (General Omar Bradley) was formed – US 1\textsuperscript{st} Army (General Courtney Hodges) and US 3\textsuperscript{rd} Army _________).

1-25 August 44: Patton’s 3\textsuperscript{rd} Army poured through the breakout created by Operation Cobra _________ was liberated on 25 August (1944) by Patton’s forces.

32. 15 August 44: Operation _________ (Dragoon) – US 7\textsuperscript{th} Army landed in Southern France in support of the attack in Normandy.

33. June-August 44: The Soviets crush the German Army Group Center and reach the outskirts of _________.

25 August – 15 September 44: Dwight “Ike” Eisenhower takes over direct control of the ground battle.

34. (3 clicks) Operation Market-Garden: 21\textsuperscript{st} Army Groups attempt to rapidly cross many rivers/canals in the _________ (2 part operation)

35. August – December 44: Soviet offensive to clear the Balkans. _________ and _________ surrender and join the Allies.

Nov 8 – 15 Dec 44: Eisenhower shifted the Main Effort to the German “West Wall”.

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Battle of The Bulge and Final German Defeat

36. (5 clicks) Operation Watch on the Rhine - The Germans massed the for a desperate final counter-attack against the Western Allies. This would become known as the Battle of the __________.

15-24 Dec 44: Battle of the Bulge (1) - Germany attacked and created a ‘bulge’ in the allied line.

20-21 Dec 44: _________ began his attack on 22 December.

26 Dec – 7 Feb 45: Battle of the Bulge (2) – the allies pushed the Germans back to their start line.

37. Jan – Apr 45: The Soviets pushed to the Oder River in the north, followed by attacks in Hungary and Austria in the south.


- _________ weeks before Germany surrendered.
- Remains one of the most controversial Allied actions of the Second World War. The raids saw _____ heavy bombers drop over 3,900 tons of high-explosive bombs and incendiary devices (fire-starting)
- _________ square miles destroyed, ________________ civilians killed
- Justified as a military target, as city had a major _________ station, and had 110 factories
38. (2 clicks) 22 & 23 March: Allies push the Germans back past the Rhine River.

39. 28 March – 7 May: Attack and occupation of Germany - a final push to capture the rest of Italy.

40. 15 Apr – 6 May: Soviets attacked into Eastern Germany and captured Berlin. Hitler committed suicide on 30 April and the Germans surrendered on ___________. (KNOWN AS ___________ !!!)

   NOT SHOWN: FDR died of a stroke on April 12, 1945, 25 days before VE Day, and 1 month after the ___________ Conference. __________________ took his place.