**Dictatorships and the Second World War**

WWII Vocab.

**SIGNIFICANT EVENTS**

Tehran Conference – 1943: first conference of the Big Three – USA, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union. The Allies committed to opening a second front against Germany.

Yalta Conference – 1945: second conference of the Big Three. The Allies agreed that Germany must surrender unconditionally, and that the Soviet Union would enter the war against Japan after Germany was defeated.

Potsdam Conference – 1945: third of the Big Three conferences, it occurred 9 weeks after Germany’s unconditional surrender. Agreements included the prosecution of Nazi war crimes and a declaration calling for the unconditional surrender of Japan.

Nuremberg Trials – trials of Nazis accused of war crimes.

Rhineland – Part of Germany between the Rhine River and the German border with France and Belgium, it was demilitarized by the Versailles Treaty. Hitler re-militarized the Rhineland in violation of the treaty in 1936, and Britain and France did nothing to stop him.

Sudetenland – Part of Czechoslovakia inhabited by people of German descent. Hitler demanded that it be given to Germany. At the Munich Conference between Germany, France, and Britain the allies agreed to let Hitler take it.

Manchukuo – The Japanese name for an area of northern China that was invaded by the Japanese in 1931. Before and after the Japanese occupation it is known as Manchuria.

Stalingrad – Named in honor of Joseph Stalin, it was a transportation and industrial center and a target during the German invasion of 1942-43. German defeat at Stalingrad after winter set in was a turning point in the war. It remains one of the worst battles in history, with an estimated 2 million casualties.

Dresden – German industrial city that was target of the Allied bombing campaign. In the final months of the war, U.S. and British bombers used incendiary devices on the city, creating a firestorm that destroyed 15 square miles of the city and caused thousands of civilian casualties.

Midway Island – In 1942, 6 months after Pearl Harbor, U.S. naval forces defeated Japanese naval forces in the Battle of Midway. It was the turning point in the war in the Pacific, as Japan was never again able obtain naval superiority over the US.

Normandy – Site of the Allied invasion of France in 1944, US and British forces succeeded in establishing a beachhead in France and opening up a second front against Germany.

Hiroshima – Japanese city where the first atomic bomb was dropped by the US in 1945.

Nagasaki - Japanese city where the second atomic bomb was dropped 3 days after the first when Japan refused to surrender.

Auschwitz – the largest of the German concentration camps, it was set up to exterminate Jews in what the Nazis called “the final solution.”

Cold War – the name for the military and political tensions between the communist Soviet Union and the United States after WWII. It lasted from 1948 to 1989, when the Berlin Wall came down and the Soviet Union dissolved.

**IMPORTANT PEOPLE**

Adolf Hitler – fascist dictator of Germany during the war

Benito Mussolini – fascist dictator of Italy during the war

Joseph Stalin – communist dictator of the Soviet Union during the war

Chiang Kai-shek – Leader of the Chinese nationalist party, he led China during the war.

Douglas MacArthur – Commander of US forces in the Pacific. *“I shall return.”*

Franklin D. Roosevelt – President of the US for 4 terms, including the Great depression and WWII. He died in office a few weeks before Germany’s surrender and was succeeded by Vice-President Harry S Truman

Harry S Truman – Became President in 1945 after FDR’s death. He was elected in his own right in 1948, and served as President during the end of WWII and the beginning of the Cold War.

Winston Churchill – British Prime Minister during WWII

General Hideki Tojo – Japan’s Prime Minister and Commander of the Japanese military during WWII, it was his decision to bomb Pearl Harbor.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Axis Powers – Germany, Italy, Japan

Allies – US, Britain, Soviet Union

Munich Agreement – agreement by France and Britain in 1938 to allow Germany to take the Sudetenland

Nazi – Soviet Non-aggression Pact – 1939 agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union to remain neutral should either country be attacked by the 3rd party. The agreement shocked the world, because Hitler had been saying for years that the communist were the enemy and that Germany would take land from the Soviet Union.

Demilitarized – all military forces removed and not allowed access

Appeasement – policy of giving dissatisfied countries what they want in the hopes of keeping the peace.

Lend-Lease – US effort to provide material support the Allies from the time the war started in 1939 to US entry in 1941while technically remaining neutral. It involved “lending” or “leasing” food, weapons, and supplies to Britain and the Soviet Union because selling them would violate neutrality.

America 1st Committee – a group of Americans who opposed US entry into WWII, it’s chief spokesman was Charles Lindbergh, famous for the first solo flight across the Atlantic.

Blitzkrieg – “lightening war” a new style of warfare pioneered by Germany that relied on rapid attacks with tanks and planes

Kamikaze – suicide attacks by Japanese pilots against US ships.

Island Hopping – US strategy in the Pacific designed to take control of islands around Japan in order to contain the Japanese military and eventually launch an attack on Japan

Tokyo Rose – name given to an English-speaking female Japanese radio broadcaster who broadcast propaganda in the Pacific on Radio Tokyo

Big Three – US, Britain, Soviet Union

Marshall Plan – Plan developed by US Secretary of State George Marshall to rebuild Europe after the war to prevent the spread of Soviet Communism

Iron Curtain – the Iron Curtain referred to the armed border between the Soviet Union and its communist satellite states in the Warsaw Pact and the democracies of Western Europe. From WWII to the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 it defined the boundary between Communism and the free world.

Warsaw Pact – the mutual defense treaty between the eight communist countries behind the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe

NATO – the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, it was a military alliance between the US and the democratic countries of Europe primarily to defend against Soviet Aggression

Ideology – a system of ideas that forms the basis for government or economic policies

Egalitarian – a person who views the people of the world equally

Paramilitary – an organization set that is set up and functions like a regular military, but is not associated with the state.

Sabotage – the deliberate destruction of something

Figurehead – someone who has a royal title, but doesn’t have any actual power

Reich – Empire in German

Anti-Semitism – a hatred of Jewish people

Aryans – people who settled in India in ancient times and created Hinduism

Luftwaffe – Hitler’s Air force

Kristallnacht – “Night of the Broken Glass”; Nazi sympathizers vandalized Jewish owned businesses in Germany and Central Europe

Concentration Camps – camps to which Hitler sent Jews to do forced labor; death camps where Jews were systematically murdered

Annex – to add a new territory to existing territory

Collaborator – someone who cooperates with enemy forces

Maginot Line – a line of French forts on the German border

Puppet government – a country that is controlled by another country

Seige – an attacking army surrounds a city and won’t let anyone in or out; eventually you run out of food and water

Gas Chambers – often disguised as showers.

Wartime production – factories have to produce only items that will help the war effort

Internment Camps – Japanese Americans had their civil liberties and possessions taken and were forced to live in camps throughout the West and Southwest; not starved or killed; President Franklin Roosevelt (D)

Collective security – the idea that countries can work together to prevent war

Refugees – people who have nowhere to live due to war or disaster

Cold War – a war in which warring countries do not face each other directly or fight in battle; involves spying