

# World War II: The Atlantic Theater

An aerial photograph of a tropical island with a white sandy beach and lush green vegetation. The sky is filled with several World War II-era aircraft. A large German bomber, possibly a Heinkel He 111, is the central focus, flying from the upper left towards the center. It has a dark grey upper fuselage with a white cross insignia and a yellow lower fuselage. To its right, a blue and white American bomber, likely a B-24 Liberator, is flying in the same direction. In the background, another aircraft is visible, and a small boat is on the water near the beach. The overall scene depicts a military operation or a dogfight in the Atlantic Theater.

# The War Begins

- The Invasion of Poland
  - September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939
  - Britain and France declare war against Germany
- Germans use new style of warfare called “blitzkrieg”
  - Lightning war
  - Fast moving ground soldiers supported by air
  - Soviets invade from the east
  - Poland lasts 5 weeks



# The Phony War

- Britain and France do nothing while Germany takes more
  - 1940
    - Norway last 2 months
    - Denmark lasts 6 hours
    - Belgium lasts 18 days
    - Netherlands lasts 5 days
    - France lasts 2 months



# The Battle of Britain

- Hitler begins plan to invade Britain
  - Has to remove royal air force and navy before he can invade Britain
  - Turns into aerial battle
- Germany declares unrestricted submarine warfare
  - Trying to starve Britain out of the war



# The War Expands

- Britain calls on help
  - Gets soldiers from Commonwealth, Free Soldiers from France, Poland, Ireland, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, and the United States
- 1942
  - Germany takes Baltic, Ukraine, and Balkans and North Africa



# Hitler's Great Mistake

- Operation Barbarossa
  - Invasion of Russia
  - June 22, 1941
  - Attacks at Leningrad, Moscow, and Stalingrad
  - One of the worst winters on record
- Battle of Stalingrad
  - German army surrounded and forced to surrender
    - Massive casualties on both sides
  - Turning point – Allies winning after battle



# America Enters the War

- Lend Lease
  - Americans send war supplies to British and Russians
- Bombing Campaign
  - Americans bomb Germany during the day, British bomb at night
- Invasion of North Africa
  - Fall 1942
  - Americans getting practice
  - Trying to relieve pressure off Russians



# The Fall of Italy

- British and Americans invade Sicily
  - July 1943
  - Italy overthrows Mussolini and drops out of the war
  - Germans quickly take over Italy and defend it
- Rome taken June, 1944





# Russians Push Germans Back

- Battle of Kursk
  - Largest tank battle in history
  - Armies of over 1 million each
  - Russians win and push Germans back towards Germany
- Siege of Leningrad lifted
  - In Jan 1944 after over 872 days
- Germany fighting defensive war



# Allies Invade “Fortress Europe”

- Operation Overlord
  - Americans, British, Canadians, and Free Forces Invade June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1944
    - Liberate Paris on Aug 24<sup>th</sup>
- Operation Market Garden
  - Americans, British, and Polish invade Netherlands
  - Meet stiff resistance
- Trying to help Russians



# The Fall of Germany

- Americans and British enter Germany in March 1945
- Battle of Berlin
  - Russians are given “honor” of taking Berlin
  - Brutal street fighting
- End of the War in Europe
  - Hitler commits suicide – April 30<sup>th</sup>
  - Germany surrenders May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945

