**World War II Information**

**Causes of the War**

1. Aftermath of WWI: The harsh treatment toward Germany after WWI in the Treaty of Versailles caused Germans to feel angry and vengeful toward France and England especially. A defeated and severely weakened Germany also created an environment where an extremist party (the Nazis) and Adolf Hitler to come to power.
2. Failure of the League of Nations: The League of Nations had very little power to enforce its policies. Thus, when Hitler begins to disregard the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles, the League is powerless to take action.
3. German and Japanese Aggression: Both countries begin expanding the size of their militaries and engage in taking new territories near their respective homelands. Hitler took back the Rhineland (border region of Germany/France), he united Austria with Germany and he conquered the Sudetenland (a Germanic region of Czechoslovakia). The leaders of other European countries, especially England and France, **appeased** Hitler and allowed him to do these things. With respect to Japan, its military assumed greater control over the government and began a war with China. Japanese aggression also included expansion into Southeast Asia and Australia.

**Main Countries Involved**

1. Allies (Big Three Alliance): The U.S., England, Soviet Union (U.S.S.R./Russia), and France (defeated early in the war)

2. Axis: Germany, Japan and Italy

**U.S. Strategy in WWII**

1. Germany First Strategy: This was the overall strategy of the U.S. during WWII. Roosevelt made a promise to Winston Churchill (Prime Minister of England) that the U.S. would be committed to defeating Germany before defeating Japan.

2. Island-hopping Strategy: In the Pacific, the U.S. took on the strategy of invading Japanese controlled islands that held great strategic importance. These islands tended to have on them airfields or natural harbors.

**Important U.S. Figures**

1. Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR): President during WWII until his death in April of 1945.

2. Harry Truman: Vice President under FDR and President during the final months of WWII. He made the decision to use the atomic bombs against Japan.

3. Dwight D. Eisenhower: Supreme Allied Commander in Europe. He was the head planner of the D-Day invasion and numerous other battles against the Nazis. He would later become President of the U.S.

4. George Patton: America’s most feared general by the Nazis. Patton was put in charge of operations against Germany in North Africa and he played a critical role in the victory over the Germans at the Battle of the Bulge. During the all-important D-Day invasion of Normandy, France, Patton was put in charge of a fake army which was used to fool the Germans about where the invasion would take place. The Germans greatly respected and feared Patton and they were confident that he would lead the invasion of Normandy. They were wrong.

5. Douglas MacArthur: Supreme Allied Commander in the Pacific against Japan. He devised the island-hopping strategy and personally signed the documents signifying Japan’s unconditional surrender to the U.S. He famously said “I shall return” when he was fleeing the Philippines early in the war. He upheld his promise when the U.S. began operations to retake the Philippines in October of 1944.

**Important World Figures**

1. Adolf Hitler: Führer of Germany and principal cause of WWII.

2. Winston Churchill: Prime Minister of England.

3. Joseph Stalin: Premier of the Soviet Union.

4. Emperor Hirohito: Emperor of Japan during WWII.

5. Hideki Tojo: Head of Japanese military during WWII and Japanese Prime Minister.

6. Admiral Yamamoto: Head of Japanese Navy during the early years of WWII and main planner of the attack on Pearl Harbor. He died in 1943 when his plane was shot down over the Solomon Islands by U.S. fighters.