**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ HW#9 – World War II**

**Due Tuesday 4/16/13**

**Dictators Threaten World Peace**

The Treaty of Versailles created problems that led to new dangers. Germans resented losing territory and being blamed for starting the war. New democratic governments in many nations were weak. Soon dictators seized power. In the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin focused on creating a communist state, in which the state takes ownership of farms and factories away from individuals. He also made the nation a huge police state, in which anyone who criticized him or his policies was arrested and removed.

In Italy, Benito Mussolini came to power as head of a fascist movement. Fascism combines nationalism with a strong central government, though it avoids communism’s direct control of farms and factories. Mussolini crushed all foes.

In Germany, Adolf Hitler hoped to unite all German-speaking people into a new German empire. Hitler believed that Germans—especially blond, blue-eyed “Aryans”—were a master race, fated to achieve power over all “inferior races.” Hitler also believed that Germany had to expand its territory to thrive. His political movement was

called Nazism, which combined extreme nationalism with racism and expansionism. Once appointed

chancellor, Hitler seized all power.

In Japan, military leaders believed that more land and resources were needed. In 1931, they launched an attack on a province of China. With success there, Japanese militarists gained control of Japan’s government. The League of Nations’ failure to stop Japan emboldened Hitler and Mussolini. Hitler rebuilt the German armed forces, breaking the Versailles treaty. Mussolini conquered Ethiopia, in Africa.

World nations responded weakly to these threats to peace. Most Americans wanted the U.S. to avoid foreign conflicts. In the Neutrality Acts, Congress outlawed arms sales or loans to nations at war. In 1935, a civil war broke out in Spain between an elected government and a group of fascists. The U.S. government remained neutral. By 1937, Roosevelt was less willing to remain neutral to the dictators’ growing power. When Japan

invaded China that year, he continued to send arms and supplies to China.

**War in Europe**

In Europe, Hitler continued plans to increase German power. In 1937, Germany annexed Austria. The next year, Hitler claimed that Germans living in an area of Czechoslovakia were being mistreated. Great Britain and France appeased Hitler by letting him take over this area. Hitler promised it would be his last land seizure.

The next year, Hitler claimed persecution of Germans in Poland. Many people thought he would never attack Poland for fear of the Soviet Union, on Poland’s eastern border. Then Germany and the Soviet Union signed an agreement not to attack each other.

On September 1, 1939, Hitler launched World War II by attacking Poland. The Germans used tanks and planes in an attack called *blitzkrieg*, or “lightning war.” They overran Poland quickly. Great Britain and France declared war on Germany. For the next few months, both sides prepared for war.

Meanwhile, Stalin seized some Baltic states and then occupied Finland. In the spring of 1940, Hitler attacked and captured Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. His forces overran France. Only Great Britain was left uninvaded. However, Hitler’s air force bombed Britain frequently. The Royal Air Force, though, destroyed many German planes and won the Battle of Britain.

**America Moves Toward War**

According to the Neutrality Acts, the United States could not enter the war in Europe to aid Poland after Germany invaded Poland. However, President Roosevelt began preparing the nation for war. He persuaded Congress to amend the acts, allowing the United States to sell weapons to Great Britain and France. When Japan signed an agreement with Germany and Italy, many Americans were alarmed. Roosevelt increased the aid to Great

Britain. At the same time, Congress passed a military draft and began training men for the armed forces. In 1940, Roosevelt broke tradition and ran for a third term as president. He won.

Roosevelt spoke to Americans of the threat the Hitler posed. He proposed increasing American armaments to loan to Great Britain. He stopped short of entering the war. Some aid went to the Soviet Union, too: Hitler had broken his agreement with Stalin in 1941 and attacked his former ally. The Germans used submarines to attack the

American ships carrying weapons and supplies to its enemies.

In August 1941, Roosevelt met with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. They issued the Atlantic Charter, a statement of goals for which the war was being fought. The United States had not yet entered that war, however. German submarines attacked American ships, but Roosevelt felt he lacked support to declare war.

In the Pacific, conflict grew between Japan and the United States. When Japan seized Indochina, the United States protested. Peace talks between the two countries began in late 1941. On December 7, 1941, however, the Japanese attacked the main U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The attack left many navy ships destroyed and others crippled. The next day, President Roosevelt asked Congress for a declaration of war, which was quickly approved.

**Mobilizing for Defense**

Fighting a war on two fronts required large numbers of soldiers. About 5 million volunteered to enter the armed forces; another 10 million were drafted. After eight weeks of basic training, former civilians became soldiers. Among them were about 300,000 Mexican Americans, a million African Americans, and many thousand Asian and Native Americans.

To free more men for combat, the army created the Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC). About 200,000 women served in the military even though they did not receive the same pay or benefits as male soldiers.

The nation’s factories converted from peacetime to wartime production. Automakers made planes, tanks, and other vehicles; shipyards built warships. About 18 million workers—one third of them women—kept these war industries productive. African Americans pushed for—and won—equal access to jobs in war industries.

Through the Office of Scientific Research and Development (OSRD) the government recruited scientists to develop new weapons and medicines. This effort produced radar, sonar, penicillin and other “miracle” drugs. The most significant result of OSRD research was the secret development of the atomic bomb.

The government also created the Office of Price Administration (OPA). The OPA froze the prices of

consumer goods and issued ration books, restricting access to scarce goods such as gasoline and meat. Most Americans cooperated with rationing. They also bought war bonds and collected scrap paper or metal to help the soldiers fighting overseas.

**The War for Europe and North Africa**

President Franklin Roosevelt met with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in late 1941. They agreed to concentrate their efforts first on defeating Hitler’s Germany. They also began a close alliance between the two nations.

At first, many U.S. ships were destroyed by German submarines. Eventually, the Allies won the battle of the Atlantic by using convoys and radar to sink submarines and by relying on the tremendous output of American shipyards.

The German attack on the Soviet Union, begun in 1941, stalled in early 1942. They moved to take Stalingrad and oil fields in the south, but the Soviet army trapped a large German force in the city. In February 1943, the army’s remnants surrendered. Just months later, the Americans and British pushed the Germans out of North Africa. The Allies were on the move.

The Americans and British next captured Sicily, leading the war-weary Italian king to overthrow dictator

Benito Mussolini. Hitler seized Italy, however, and dug in to fight. The Allies’ advance through Italy was slow and bloody.

Meanwhile, the Americans and British launched a massive invasion to liberate western Europe. Landing

on June 6, 1944, in northern France, the Allies forced the Germans off the coast and began to advance eastward. By August, they had liberated Paris, and by the fall they had entered Germany. The Germans began a counterattack in December. They cut deeply into Allied lines at first, but the Allies responded quickly. This battle—called the Battle of the Bulge—was Germany’s last gasp. At the same time, the Soviets entered Germany from the east.

As the Allied armies advanced, they began to find the death camps that the Nazis had built to kill millions of Jews and others. The Soviets reached Berlin in April 1945. Hitler committed suicide, and a week later Germany surrendered.

**The War in the Pacific**

After Pearl Harbor, Japan captured large parts of Asia and the Pacific. The United States struck back. First there was a token air raid on Tokyo that lifted American spirits. Then there were major victories in the battles of Coral Sea and Midway, stopping planned Japanese invasions. The enemy lost valuable aircraft carriers and planes.

U.S. strategy called for leapfrogging, island by island, across the Pacific toward Japan. The Allies took Guadalcanal in 1943 and gradually moved northwest, recapturing the Philippines in 1944. Next was the extremely bloody battle for Iwo Jima.

As Americans neared Japan, President Roosevelt died. Vice President Harry S. Truman took over while the Allies won a costly battle in Okinawa. U.S. leaders feared similar high casualties if Japan itself had to be invaded.

In February 1945, while war with Japan was still raging, Roosevelt met with Churchill and Stalin at the Soviet resort city of Yalta. The Allied leaders’ major agreements were to:

• divide Germany into 4 zones

• get Soviet help against Japan

• create the United Nations

President Truman learned of the secret effort to develop an atomic bomb. Scientists were split over

whether or not to use the bomb on Japan, but Truman decided to authorize using the weapon. On August 6, 1945, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, leveling the city. When the Japanese did not surrender, another bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Finally the Japanese agreed to end the war.

The Allies took steps to punish the Nazi and Japanese leaders that they held responsible for the war and for cruel treatment of prisoners and civilians. The United States occupied Japan, helping create a democratic government.

**The Home Front**

The economy boomed during World War II, and workers’ wages rose significantly. Farmers enjoyed good weather and high demand for their crops, enabling them to thrive. The share of women in the work force rose to 35 percent. Many Americans relocated, moving to find the growing defense jobs in the Middle Atlantic states,

Michigan, Florida, and the Pacific coast states. Rapid urban growth led to a housing shortage.

People had to adjust to new family situations. The marriage rate boomed during the war—as did the divorce rate after servicemen returned to civilian life. Single mothers juggled jobs and childrearing. Congress passed a law called the GI Bill of Rights allowing returning servicemen to attend college or technical school with paid tuition.

African-American service personnel served honorably in segregated units. At home, large numbers of African Americans got well-paying skilled jobs. But racial tension erupted into violence in many cities, notably Detroit in 1943. Many communities started committees to improve race relations. Mexican-American civilians also suffered discrimination and violence in the 1943 riots in Los Angeles.

Japanese-American civilians suffered the most. Their homes, businesses, and possessions were taken when they were sent to internment camps. Some young males joined the army to show their loyalty. Others sued the government to end the internment, but the courts refused. Not until 1990 did the government make reparation—

compensation—payments to all those who had been interned.

**Answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper. Use complete sentences.**

1. What led to the rise of dictators?

2. How did Germany begin World War II?

3. How did America enter World War II?

4. How did the United States provide the people and weapons to fight the war?

5. How did the Allies defeat Germany and Italy?

6. How did the Allies defeat Japan?

7. What social and economic changes arose from the war?