

# America's War With Germany

## I. The Mediterranean Front

- When the U.S. entered the war, a "beat Hitler first" strategy was established
  - Top priority given to defeating Axis Powers in Europe
  - Would transfer more troops to Pacific when able

### A. North Africa

- Erwin Rommel placed at head of German tank unit in Libya in North Africa
  - Successes earned him nickname "Desert Fox"
  - Hitler's favorite military man
- Offensive against North Africa was first joint move by Roosevelt and Churchill
  - Germany was close to controlling North Africa, the Suez Canal, and the oil fields of the Middle east
- Control of North Africa important for several reasons
  - Meant control of the Mediterranean
  - Would allow Allies to invade Europe from south
- First phase of operation, called "Operation Torch," was launched in fall of 1942
  - Headed by American General Eisenhower and British Generals Montgomery and Clark
  - Involved 850 ships in surprise landing
  - After months of fighting in Tunisian desert, forced Rommel's surrender
    - Following surrender at EL Alamein, Rommel returned to Germany
    - Lost faith in Hitler toward end of war
    - Took part in attempt on Hitler's life
    - Committed suicide for role in assassination attempt

## B. Sicily

- Victory in N. Africa allowed for invasion of Sicily and Italy
  - "Blood and Guts" General George Patton led American forces
  - Montgomery led British
  - Allies overran Sicily in a month
- Allied successes changed thinking of Italians
  - People pushed Mussolini out
  - Replaced him with new government which quickly negotiated peace
  - Italy withdrew from war on Sept. 9, 1943
  - Two years later Mussolini and mistress were lynched by his own people and hung by heels for public display
- Allies slowly pushed Germans northward
  - Hitler ordered troops not to surrender
  - Fighting was bitter and costly
  - Surrender finally came near war's end

## II. Allied Offensive in Europe

### A. Operation "Overlord"

- Cross-Channel invasion of France by combined Allied forces
- Two-years in planning
- Headed by Gen. Eisenhower and British Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke
- French Normandy was the invasion point
- As troops and supplies built up in Britain, Allies battled for air supremacy over Europe
  - Round-the-clock numbing raids on German oil refineries, munitions plants, railways, communications terminals, airfields, and even cities
  - Goal achieved in time for crossing

### B. D-Day

- Operation began at 2 a.m. on June 6, 1944 with landing of parachute troops in strategic inland positions
- 5,000 warships of all kinds then began shelling German coastal forts

- first troops swarmed ashore at 6:30
- within 24 hours, 120,000 troops had landed at five different beachheads on Normandy coast
- casualties were high for Allies, but would have been worse if Germans had not been surprised
- within three weeks 800,000 men joined Allied troops in France

## II. Germany Surrenders

- Allies began pushing Germany eastward
- In December 1944, Germans mounted bloody assault at Belgium border called Battle of the Bulge
- Allied bombers pounded German cities of Berlin, Hamburg and Dresden
- Soviets entered Berlin on April 21, 1945
- American and British troops arrived two days later
- Unable to face defeat, Hitler killed his wife and committed suicide
  - The bodies were burned and buried
- The new German government signed an unconditional surrender on May 8, 1945
- V-E Day was celebrated across Europe and the United States
- The victory was diminished by three factors:
  - The realities of the concentration camps revealed to the world
  - The war in the Pacific continued for another three months
  - President Roosevelt had died on April 12