

WWII ENDS ACTIVITY

1: Operation Barbarossa

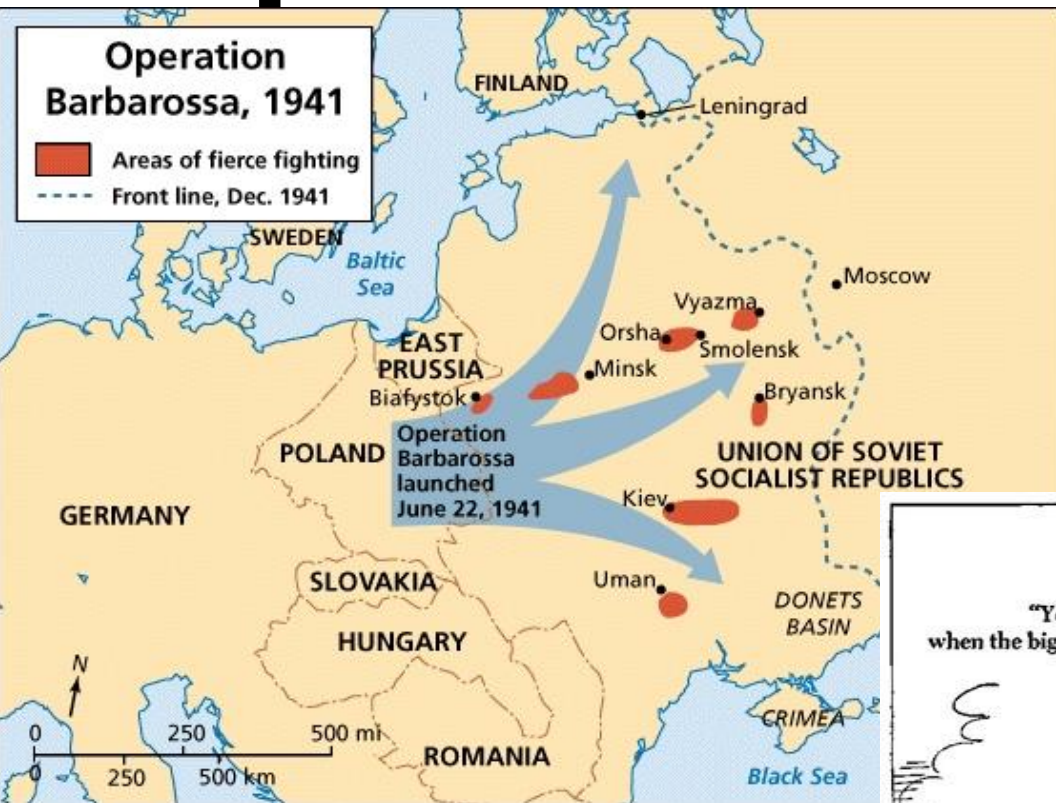
Hitler moved ahead with Operation Barbarossa, his plan to invade the Soviet Union. Early in the morning of June 22, 1941, the roar of German tanks and aircraft announced the beginning of the invasion. The Soviet Union was not prepared for this attack. Although it had the largest army in the world, its troops were neither well equipped nor well trained.

The invasion rolled on week after week until the Germans had pushed 500 miles inside the Soviet Union. As the Soviet troops retreated, they burned and destroyed everything in the enemy's path. The Russians had used this scorched-earth strategy against Napoleon. On September 8, German forces put Leningrad under siege. By early November, the city was completely cut off from the rest of the Soviet Union. To force a surrender, Hitler was ready to starve the city's more than 2.5 million inhabitants.

German bombs destroyed warehouses where food was stored. Desperately hungry, people began eating cattle and horse feed, as well as cats and dogs and, finally, crows and rats. Nearly one million people died in Leningrad during the winter of 1941–1942. Yet the city refused to fall.

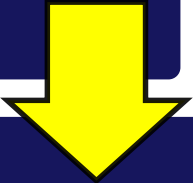
Impatient with the progress in Leningrad, Hitler looked to Moscow, the capital and heart of the Soviet Union. A Nazi drive on the capital began on October 2, 1941. By December, the Germans had advanced to the outskirts of Moscow. Soviet General Georgi Zhukov (ZHOO•kuhf) counterattacked. As temperatures fell, the Germans, in summer uniforms, retreated. Ignoring Napoleon's winter defeat 130 years before, Hitler sent his generals a stunning order: "No retreat!" German troops dug in about 125 miles west of Moscow. They held the line against the Soviets until March 1943 [when they finally retreated in defeat]. Hitler's advance on the Soviet Union gained nothing but cost the Germans 500,000 lives.

2: Operation Barbarossa Images




3: War in the Pacific

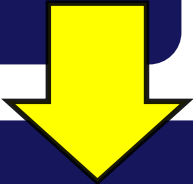
Spring 1942—Japanese were masters (in control) of the South Pacific (islands, Southeast Asia, coast of China)



June 1942—Battle of Midway—U.S. defeated Japan

- Japan next targeted to attack was Midway Island, the location of a key American airfield. Thanks to Allied code breakers the U.S. knew that a huge Japanese force was heading toward Midway.
 - On June 4, American forces hidden beyond the horizon as the first Japanese planes got into the air, American planes swooped in to attack the Japanese fleet
 - The strategy was a success. American pilots destroyed 332 Japanese planes, all four aircraft carriers, and one support ship.
 - Turning point of war in Pacific
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U.S. strategy: “Island hopping”—forced Japan on defense

- Plan: “island-hop” past Japanese strongholds (not attack the most well-defended islands).
 - Instead, seize islands that were not well defended but were closer to Japan.
 - US took back one island at a time from Japan
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Japanese used Kamikaze pilots—suicide pilots—to crash into Allied aircraft carriers

4: Instructions for Kamikaze Pilots

“Exert the best in yourself. Strike an enemy vessel that is either moored or at sea. Sink the enemy and thus pave the road for our people's victory... You have lived for 20 years or more. You must exert your full might for the last time in your life. Exert supernatural strength.

At the very moment of impact: do your best. Every deity and the spirits of your dead comrades are watching you intently. Just before the collision it is essential that you do not shut your eyes for a moment so as not to miss the target. Many have crashed into the targets with wide-open eyes. They will tell you what fun they had.

The moment of the crash

You are two or three metres from the target... You feel that you are suddenly floating in the air. At that moment, you see your mother's face. She is not smiling or crying. It is her usual face.

You won't precisely remember them but they are like a dream or a fantasy. You are relaxed and a smile creases your face. The sweet atmosphere of your boyhood days returns.”

From Kamikaze: Japan's Suicide Gods by Albert Axell and Hideaki Kase



5: Turning Point in Europe

June 6, 1944—

D-Day

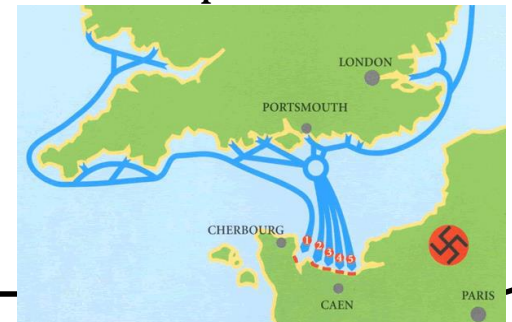
In 1943, the Allies began secretly planning to launch an attack on German-held France across the English Channel.

The Plan: strike on the coast of Normandy, in northwestern France
The Germans knew that an attack was coming. But they did not know where it would be launched. To keep Hitler guessing, the Allies set up a huge dummy army with its own headquarters and equipment. This make-believe army appeared to be preparing to attack the French seaport of Calais.

Code-named Operation Overlord, the invasion of Normandy was the largest land and sea attack in history. The invasion began on June 6, 1944—known as D-Day. At dawn on that day, British, American, French, and Canadian troops fought their way onto a 60-mile stretch of beach in Normandy. The Germans had dug in with machine guns, rocket launchers, and cannons. They sheltered behind concrete walls three feet thick. Not surprisingly, the Allies took heavy casualties.

Despite heavy losses, the Allies held the beachheads. Within a month of D-Day, more than one million additional troops had landed.

Greatest land & sea attack in history!
By August, Paris had been liberated.



6: D-Day Images/Quotes



"And what a plan! This vast operation is undoubtedly the most complicated and difficult that has ever occurred."

Winston Churchill

"This operation is not being planned with any alternatives. This operation is planned as a victory, and that's the way it's going to be. We're going down there, and we're throwing everything we have into it, and we're going to make it a success."

General Dwight D Eisenhower



7: Yalta Conference

Feb. 1945—Allied Powers Met to Discuss Post-WWII



Big Three: US (FDR), Great Britain (Churchill),
USSR (Stalin)

Soviets agreed to join in war against Japan (once the war in Europe ended)

Promised land in Manchuria & north Japan to USSR for help in war in Pacific

Division of Germany into 4 zones (to be occupied by: Great Britain, US, USSR, and France)

Proposed the creation of the United Nations

8: End of WWII

April 12, 1945—FDR died

April 30, 1945—Hitler killed himself as the Soviets were entering Berlin

May 8, 1945—V-E Day (Victory in Europe)



August 1945 atomic bombs on Hiroshima & Nagasaki
(100,000 died)

September 2, 1945—V-P Day (Victory in the Pacific)