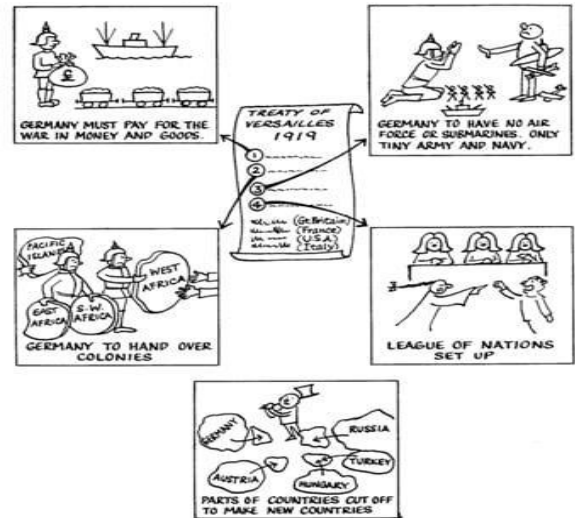


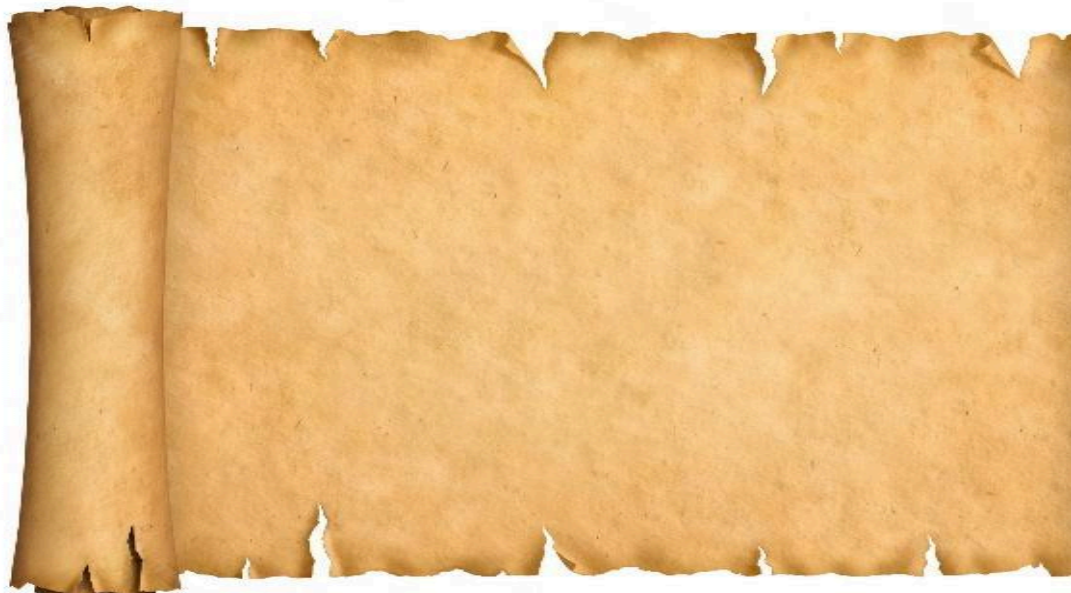
Year 8 Term 3 Knowledge Organiser

Why was World War II *truly* a world war?

After the First World War, Germany was forced to accept the Treaty of Versailles. This treaty was agreed by the leaders of the countries that won the war; Germany was not allowed to have a say! The harsh terms of the treaty made the German people very angry because it made their country weak and vulnerable. What its more, Germans had been divided from one another after land was given to France, Czechoslovakia and Poland.



Destroy the Treaty of Versailles



- Secret
- Placed
- Made

After coming to power, Adolf Hitler carried out the following actions, all of which were not allowed by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles:

- Took control of the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia and later the whole country.
- Invaded Poland.



Between 1933 and 1939, leaders from other world powers, including the USA, Britain and France, did not attempt to stop Adolf Hitler. Instead, they followed a policy of appeasement, giving in to his demands, provided that they seemed reasonable. This happened because the leaders including Britain's Neville Chamberlain (opposite), felt a degree of sympathy for Germany after it had been so harshly punished after the First World War. They hoped that appeasing Adolf Hitler would avoid a future war. It was only after Germany invaded Poland in 1939 that it became clear that appeasement had failed, so Britain declared war on Germany.

After its invasion of Poland in September 1939, the German army, known as the Wehrmacht, swept through western Europe. Having been given a drug called Pertvitin to keep them alert, German soldiers used 'blitzkrieg' tactics to attack and overwhelm targets before the enemy had the chance to respond.



By June 1940, the Germans had conquered Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands and France. British and French troops that had tried to repel the German invasion of France were forced to retreat to Dunkirk on the northern coastline of the country. It was from there that they were 330,000 troops were rescued, following a co-ordinated evacuation by the British government. However, there were heavy losses too: 68,000 soldiers were killed, wounded, captured or unaccounted for. Over 400 tanks, 6 battleships, and 145 aircraft were lost. This was hugely damaging for the Allied war effort. What is more, the evacuation of Dunkirk meant that Britain was forced to 'stand alone' against Germany without the support of France. Prime Minister Winston Churchill privately called the events at Dunkirk, 'a colossal military disaster', which shows his concern about the situation in the war.

The German air force, the Luftwaffe, began to attack targets in major British cities including London, Manchester and Coventry. The aim was to weaken Britain so that an invasion by sea could take place. These attacks became known as the Battle of Britain. The Royal Air Force (RAF) used radar to intercept the Luftwaffe and fight them off, ultimately winning the battle.



Operation Barbarossa was launched by the Germans on 22nd June 1941. The operation took its name from the Holy Roman emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, who reigned between 1152 and 1190. He sought to establish German dominance in Europe. It involved about 3 million men, 3,000 tanks and 2,500 aircraft. It was the largest and most powerful invasion force in history.



The aim of the operation was to launch a surprise invasion of the Soviet Union, targeting its main cities, including Leningrad, Stalingrad and Moscow, in order to defeat the Red Army. It meant that Germany was now fighting a war on two fronts, against Britain in the west and the Soviet Union in the east.

Operation Barbarossa failed. There were mistakes in planning and tactics which meant Germany could not take advantage of early successes. The winter in the Soviet Union also made it difficult. Fuel froze in German tanks and vehicles, and German soldiers froze to death as they weren't given enough winter clothing.



There were many casualties. Germany suffered over 1 million, while the Soviet Union had almost 5 million. Although the Red Army experienced greater losses than the Germans during the campaign, the inability of German forces to defeat the Soviet Union marked a significant setback for the German military effort.

After February 1941, the German army, led by Erwin Rommel, launched Operation Sunflower in North Africa. This operation aimed to support Italian forces in their campaign there against the British and their allies, as they were close to defeat. Rommel's involvement in the operation led to him being known as the 'Desert Fox'.



By the end of 1941, the Germans were fighting on three fronts! The Allied victory in North Africa resulted in around 900,000 German and Italian casualties and made it possible for the Allies to invade Sicily and the Italian mainland. It also removed the threat posed by the Axis powers to British supply lines to Asia and Africa.

In 1940, Germany, Italy and Japan signed the Three Power Pact. Each country agreed to help the others in the Second World War. At the same time, the USA was lending war supplies to Britain. Meanwhile, Japan was aggressively taking over land in Asia. The USA was trying to stop them, even refusing to trade with the Japanese, which was detrimental to Japan's economy.

As a result, on 7th December 1941, Japan launched a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, a US naval base located on the island of Hawaii off the west coast of the USA. Two waves of Japanese aircraft, supported by submarines, bombed the ships and aircraft at the base. 2,403 US servicemen were killed and a further 1,178 were injured. 8 US battleships were damaged and a further 4 were sunk. In addition, 188 US aircraft were destroyed. Japanese losses were significantly less.



Following the attack, there was a sense of patriotism that spread throughout the USA. It incited a desire to fight against Japan. On 8th December 1941, Congress approved President Roosevelt's request for a declaration of war. As a result, the USA entered the war on the side of the Allies. This meant that Britain now had a rich and powerful ally. Together they planned to take the fight to Germany in Europe in order to liberate the territories that had been occupied.

Singapore is often referred to as 'The gateway to Asia'. Its geographical location makes it ideal for shipping access from Europe to Asia, which could benefit trade between nations. In 1942, Singapore was under British control, having been a colony in the British Empire since 1867. This allowed the Royal Navy to intercept Japanese forces that might head south to attack India or Australia [as they were allies of Britain] after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Between the 8th and 15th June 1942, the Japanese attacked Singapore. Whilst the British had anticipated an attack, they were taken by surprise because the Japanese General, Yamashita, directed his troops to attack through the dense jungle in the north of the island, whereas the British had anticipated an attack from the sea to the south. 80,000 British and Commonwealth soldiers from India and Australia became prisoners of war. They were subjected to harsh treatment and even slave labour. One-third of them died.

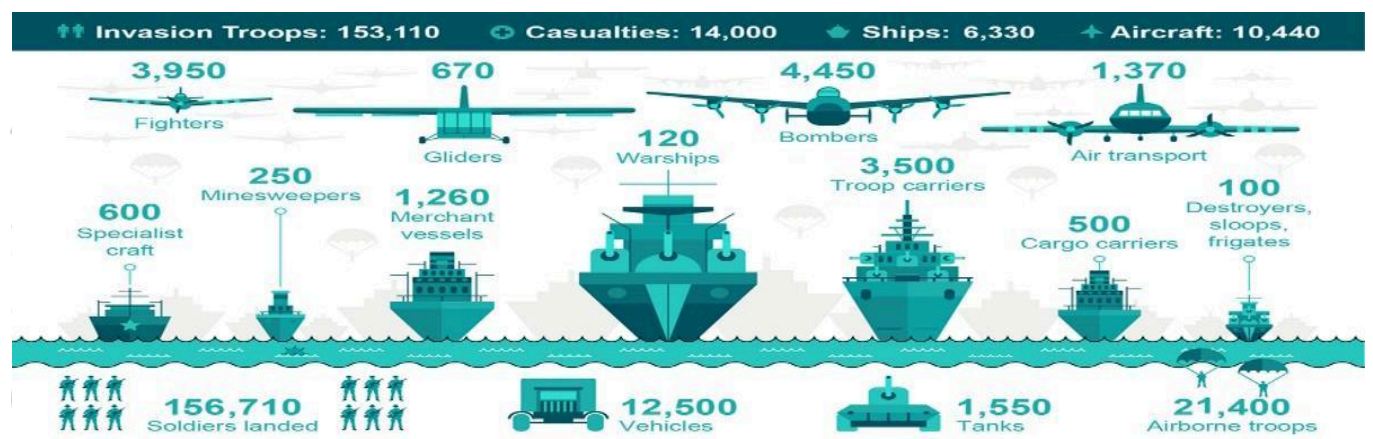




The British were forced to surrender Singapore to Japan, which gave the Japanese the ability to more straightforwardly attack other parts of Asia. The loss of Singapore had a significant effect on Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister. Lord Moran, his personal doctor recalled that, 'The fall of Singapore stupefied the Prime Minister. He felt it was a disgrace. It left a scar on his mind. One evening, months later, when he was sitting in the bathroom, enveloped in a towel, he stopped drying himself and looked at the floor: 'I cannot get over Singapore,' he said gloomily.'

By 1943, much of western Europe was occupied by Germany, mainly due to the initial success of its 'blitzkrieg' tactics. Britain 'stood alone' in Europe.

In 1944, the Allies launched their campaign to liberate the occupied territories. The operation was codenamed 'Overlord'. 156,000 Allied troops, mostly from Britain, the USA and Canada, attempted to land on 5 beaches in northern France on 6th June 1944 [D-Day].

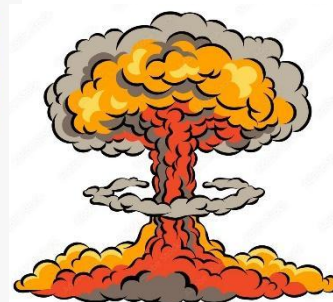


In October 1939, US President Franklin Roosevelt, received a letter from Albert Einstein. In the letter, Einstein warned that Nazi Germany was likely already at work on developing a nuclear weapon. By August 1942, the Manhattan Project was underway. The Manhattan Project was the codename for the secret US government research and engineering project during the Second World War that developed the USA's first nuclear weapons. The development of these weapons was led by a physicist called Robert Oppenheimer.



By 1945, the USA had developed nuclear weapons of their own and President Harry Truman was minded to use them to bring a swift end to the US campaign in the Pacific theatre of war, where conflict had begun when the Japanese launched their attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Truman's rationale for using nuclear weapons, in spite of their devastating power, was that they would most likely force the Japanese to surrender. This was especially important to the president, as there had already been up to 2.5 million deaths.

President Truman sanctioned the use of two nuclear bombs, codenamed 'Little Boy' and 'Fat Man' because of their appearances, on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.



'Little Boy' and 'Fat Man' devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. By December 1945, up to 120,000 Japanese civilians had been killed in Hiroshima and a further 80,000 in Nagasaki. The intense heat generated by the explosions led to victims being vaporised. Eerie shadows can still be seen in places where this occurred in both cities [see opposite]. Almost 63% of the buildings in Hiroshima and 39% of the buildings in Nagasaki were destroyed too. This made it very difficult to treat survivors because much of the infrastructure, including hospitals, had been wiped out.



The impact of 'Little Boy' and 'Fat Man' was so great that the Japanese formally agreed to surrender on 2nd September 1945, thus ending the war in the Pacific.