**Chapter 11 Section 2 Notes**

**WWII: The War Begins**

1. War in Europe
   1. WWII began in September 1939, when Great Britain and France declared war on Germany.
      1. Germany’s invasion of Poland was the deciding final factor.
      2. Germany’s rapid and powerful invasion of Poland was called *blitzkrieg*, or “lightning war”.
         1. Thousands of German soldiers invaded Poland
         2. German planes and tanks attacked Poland with bombs and machine-gun fire.
         3. Poland was defeated before Britain and France could help.
   2. As part of the secret Nazi-Soviet agreement between Hitler and Stalin, the Soviet Union moved in and occupied eastern Poland after Germany had taken over western Poland.
      1. The Soviet Union also established military bases in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Finland
         1. Finland bravely fought back, but eventually surrendered in March of 1940
   3. In preparation for war with Germany, French and British soldiers built a string of steel-and-concrete bunkers along the German border from Belgium to Switzerland
      1. This bunker line was called the Maginot Line
2. Hitler on the attack
   1. Germany invades and takes over Denmark and Norway in April of 1940
   2. Germany invades and takes over Belgium and the Netherlands in May of 1940
      1. Belgium and the Netherlands surrender after terrible bombing raids
   3. The Axis invade France
      1. Germany chases overpowered, retreating allied troops west to the English Channel where they were trapped.
         1. More than 800 British ships crossed the channel and rescued more than 300,000 French and British troops.
      2. Italy invaded France from the southeast to help Germany.
      3. Japan also joined in to help Germany and Italy in France.
      4. Germany continued to move into France toward Paris.
         1. Germany used the blitzkrieg offensive to attack Paris in June of 1940.
         2. After 2 weeks of fighting, the French surrendered.
   4. Germany dominated all of western Europe, except for Great Britain
      1. The Germans bombed Great Britain in August of 1940.
         1. Many civilians were killed in the raid.
         2. Shipyards, industries, and cities were destroyed.
         3. The British Royal Air Force counter-attacked the German air force, causing heavy losses for the Germans.
            1. Hitler finally called off the Battle of Britain in October of 1940.
            2. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s plan to not surrender to Germany had worked.
   5. In June of 1941 Germany invaded the Soviet Union
      1. Hitler broke the Nazi-Soviet agreement with Stalin.
3. America and the War
   1. United States wanted to stay neutral
      1. A group supporting isolationism was formed called the America First Committee.
         1. Henry Ford and Charles Lindbergh were among the group’s leaders.
         2. They believed America should stay out of Europe’s problems.
   2. The United States became more and more concerned about what was happening in Europe
      1. FDR prepared for war even though he promised not to get involved.
      2. Congress approved a build up of the Navy in 1938
      3. In 1939 Congress passed a NEW Neutrality Act that permitted the U.S. to sell weapons to countries that had the money to pay for them.
      4. The first peace time draft in history was signed by FDR in 1940.
         1. Called the Selective Training and Service Act.
         2. American men, ages 21 – 35, were required to register for the draft.
      5. March 1941, Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act
         1. Allowed the U.S. to sell, lend, or lease weapons or supplies to any country that was important to the defense of the U.S.
         2. This law allowed the U.S. to help the British and French
            1. Isolationists were afraid the law would lead to further American involvement in the war.
      6. April 1941, American ships began escorting British cargo ships in the Atlantic.
         1. German submarines had been attacking British ships
         2. Now, the Germans began shooting at American ships
            1. FDR ordered American naval ships to shoot any German or Italian ships found in certain areas.
4. The Japanese Threat
   1. A new Japanese prime minister came to power in 1941 named General Hideki Tojo.
      1. Japan controlled much of China in the 1930’s, but Tojo felt it was important to acquire more territories.
         1. Took over Indochina in 1940
         2. Tojo wanted to control the Dutch Indies, British Malaya, and the Philippines.
            1. The Philippines were a United States territory.
      2. In response to Japan’s aggression, the U.S. put economic pressure on Japan.
         1. FDR froze all Japanese assets in American banks, so Japan could not get its money from the U.S.
         2. The U.S. stopped selling gasoline, oil, and other resources to Japan.
         3. The economic pressure angered Tojo and he planned an attack on the United States.
            1. Tojo felt Japan could win a war with the United States.
   2. December 7, 1941
      1. Japanese warplanes attacked an American military base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
         1. More than 2,300 people were killed, including many civilians.
         2. Eight battleships, three cruisers, four other ships, and hundreds of planes on the ground were destroyed.
         3. Pearl Harbor was the worst defeat in the history of the U.S. military.
      2. Americans quickly supported involvement in WWII after Pearl Harbor.
         1. Congress declared war on Japan on December 8, 1941.
            1. Japan’s allies—Germany and Italy – declared war on the United States 3 days later.

In response, Congress declared war on Germany and Italy.

1. Set Alliances
   1. The Allied nations – Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States.
   2. The Axis Powers – Germany, Italy, and Japan