

Lesson #87 U.S. History
September 1, 1939 to December 7, 1941

Timeline:

- 1939 Nazi-Soviet Pact
 U.S. begins work on Manhattan Project
 German invasion of Poland
- 1940 Roosevelt Elected: Third Term
 Selective Service Act
 Fall of France
 Battle of Britain
- 1941 Four Freedoms speech FDR
 Lend-lease Act
 Germany Attacks Russia
 Battle of Atlantic
 Atlantic Charter
 U.S. Freezes Japanese Assets
 March on Washington
 Attack Pearl Harbor

American Neutrality:

Isolationism

1. Nye Committee "merchants of death" pushed America into war
2. Historians argued whether the U.S. could or should have stayed out WWI
3. Neutrality Acts 1935
4. Rise of Naziism [Koppel Prison]
5. Spanish Civil War
6. Neutrality Acts of 1937
7. Roosevelt's "Quarantine Speech"

Neutrality weakened:

1. Panay Incident during the Rape of Nanjing
2. Commercial treaty with Japan

The Storm in The Pacific:

- Movement into Indochina
- Tripartite Pact with Italy, Japan and Germany
- Nonaggression pact with Germany and Russia

America's reaction

- Restriction of oil and scrap metal
- U.S. forces in Philippines
- Japan- American negotiations

The Storm In Europe:

- 1939 German Blitzkrieg In Poland
- 1940 Fall of France
 American defense: \$4 billion for navy
 Aid for Britain
 Election of 1940
 Lend-Lease Act: Provisions

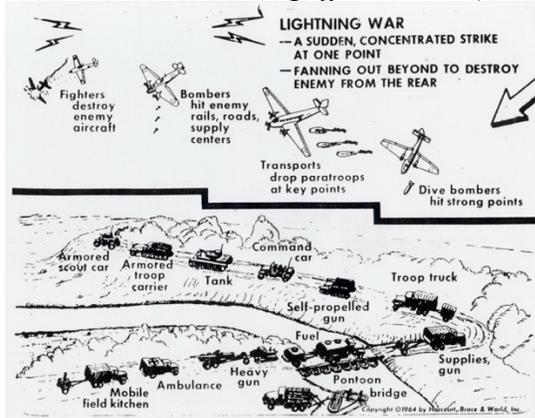
Poland

September 1, 1939 - Poland with 5th largest army in Europe

Germans plan to make Poles guilty of first attack

“Operation Himmler” 150 prisoners at radio station Warsaw

Germans’ used *Angriffsschlacht* (Offensive Battle)



Blitzkrieg (lighting War)- American word

Air power concentration followed by armored then by motorized troops

September 17, 1939 Russians enter War in Poland

Polish troops pour into Russian lines and Russians gather up officers and other leaders marched them into the Katyn Forest and Massacre them on May 1940. Then blamed the Germans.

Allies missed a chance to hit Germans while tied up in Poland.

1939- May 1940 “Phony War” (Sitzkrieg)

The French were sitting behind Maginot Line and waiting for Germans to enter Belgium.

Germany turned on Denmark and Norway. Quisling in Norway and the “Fifth Column”

In Norway the Germans lost – 1,317 dead

1,604 wounded

2,275 at sea and 10 destroyers

June 1939 Soviet troops enter the Baltic States

Winter War “Russo-Finish War” 30 November 1939 – Stalin worried about border protection.

Russians lost - 126,000 killed

300,000 injured

Fins lost - 48,243 killed

43,000 injured

War was over by March and was seen as a failure of Red Army by Western Powers and Germany. The Soviet’s shifted from the idea of “Offensive War” to that of “Defense in Depth”. Russian troops give uniform and their underwear was collected and cleaned to be re-issued – no socks issued and used strips of cloth called footcloths provided to wrap around feet.

Soviet officers saw camouflage as a sign of cowardice. The troops were watched by political propagandist “politruks” whose job was to foster mutual trust and to inform on troops. The political repression (purging and denunciation) was always a factor in the Soviet Union and undermined leadership in every part of Soviet Life. Leaders dodged the limelight and passed responsibility to others - “Pass the Buck”.

Battle of France in April 1940

French Government Cabinet in March 1940 had: Left Communist) and Right (Fascist)

6 Socialist

5 Radical Socialist

6 Democratic Right

3 Union Socialist & Republicans

5 Democratic Alliance

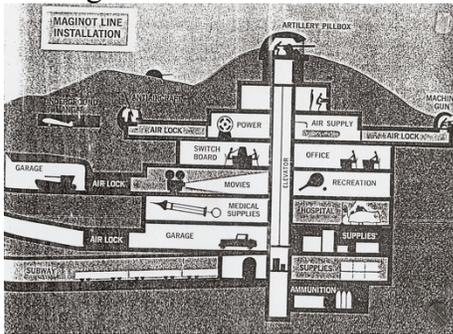
5 Independents

2 Democratic Union

1 deputy that was not attached to a party

The French army followed orders to the end and lack unitive of action. High Command did not use the phone system relied on messengers.

1. Charles de Gaulle – mass tank tactics refused by French High Command
2. Tank only good for roadblocks and support for infantry
3. Transported tanks on railcars so their tanks had small gas tanks
4. French had more tanks than Germans
5. French haphazardly used command split with military and civilians
6. French want more British planes for air cover
7. French air power at 4,360 planes against Germans at 3,270
8. French fearful of German bombing and would not bomb German cities out of this fear
9. France had more planes at end of battle than at start
10. Maginot Line best defense was a small city and worthless



Great Britain in April 1940

1. Chamberlain still in power – Churchill on the side line
2. Small force to support French (BEF)
3. Blockade continent to deny Germans resources
4. Missed chance to help Norway and poorly organized
5. Held planes at home - 1,200 with 200 to France
6. BEF moved towards coast without telling French
7. BEF told not to take any prisoners
8. The British Army was fully motorized

German Military 1940

The German army “Marched to the sound of the guns” freedom of action.

German war machine was Bold, aggressive and pioneering in operational planning with flexible system of command and control with meticulous planning. They were however weak in detailed counterintelligence, transportation, supply and logistic in all battle plans that did not fit into their idea of the “short and lively” encirclement and destroy “cauldron” battle plans. The German Army was far from being modern a mobilized army with 2/3 of German army still on foot or horseback.

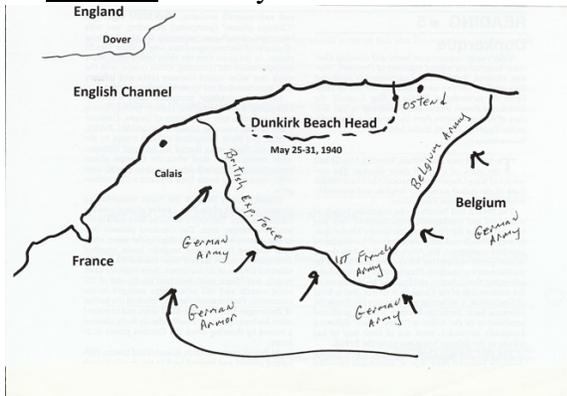
Modified Schlieffen Plan (Hannibal’s victory at Cannae) German main thrust by Low Countries and then cut through the Ardennes Forest with *panzers*. The French believed it was impenetrable use young and old troops guard the forest.

Allied troops out number Germans in 1940 May

Allied advantage – aircraft 3.6 to 1
ships 6 to 1
tanks 3.2 to 1

The Germans used the “Shape Charge” to breach the Maginot Line. C.E. Munroe’s developed this explosive in 1888.

Dunkirk – victory inside defeat



Hitler halted army out of fear of trap and wanted to save the armor for the battle of France. He remembered WWI and hope that the British might compromise. Hermann Goring told Hitler to let the *Luftwaffe* wins the glory at Dunkirk. German air force did not live up to expectations and had a poor show at Dunkirk.

British were able to rescue 340,000 troops of the beach. Of 139,911 French troops only 40,000 French soldiers came out of cellars in Dunkirk to take places on ships. The First French Army held rear guard action that allow evacuation to take place. They were real heroes of the battle and their effort allowed British to stay in war to fight another day.

German army looked good because of poor quality of French command

May 9, 1940 Churchill became P.M.

June 10, 1940 Mussolini enter war

June 11, 1940 France falls Vichy France is formed under Marshall Petain who was called back from Spain. Charles de Gaulle went to England to lead Free French. French Resistance was silent until Invasion of Russia.

The Vichy Government worked with the Germans. Then set about securing power by killed 12,000 French and confiscated property of 100,000 others.