

# Chapter 16-1

- Hitler's Lightning War
  - I) Germany Sparks a New War in Europe
  - II) The Battle for France and Great Britain
  - III) The Eastern front and the Mediterranean
  - IV) The United States Aids Its Allies

# I) Germany Sparks a New War in Europe

- World War II started when Germany launched its blitzkrieg (lightening war) against Poland on September 1, 1939.
- France and Britain declared war on Germany, but Poland fell in only 3 weeks before those nations could help.
- For almost 7 months after the fall of Poland, there was a strange calm in the land fighting in Europe. French and British troops waited on the Maginot line for the German attack, but it didn't come.

# I) Germany Sparks a New War in Europe

- After signing a nonaggression pact with Hitler on August 23, 1939, Stalin made his move on September 17.
- The Soviets sent troops to occupy eastern Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.
- Finland resisted Stalin's 1 million troops in November 1939, added by the winter weather.
- After fierce resistance , the Finns finally were forced to surrender

## II) The Battle for France and Britain

- In May of 1940, Hitler swept around the Maginot Line through Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg to strike into France. In only ten days they reached the French coast and had the allies trapped.
- In one of the heroic acts of the war the British sent 850 ships to rescue 338,000 allied troops at Dunkirk.
- Italy enters the war on the German side as France collapses and surrenders on June 22.
- A French general named Charles de Gaulle fled to England to lead the French resistance.

## II) The Battle for France and Britain

- After the fall of France, Great Britain stood alone against the Nazi's
- Winston Churchill, the new British Prime Minister had declared his nation would never give in.
- Hitler's plan to invade Britain (Operation Sea Lion) first called for the German Air Force (Luftwaffe) to knock off the Royal Air Force. At first Hitler targeted airfields and factories, but later he turned to cities, bombing day and night.
- With the help of radar, and smuggling a code breaking machine, the British were able to hold on and win the Battle of Britain.
- Hitler finally called off his attacks in May 1941, showing Hitler's advances could be blocked.

# III) The Eastern Front and the Mediterranean

- Hitler turned his attention east to the Balkans and the Mediterranean area, and ultimately the Soviet Union.
- German forces, under General Erwin Rommel (Desert Fox) stepped in to save their Italian partners in North Africa and threatened the Suez Canal.
- IN preparation for his attack on the Soviet Union, Hitler invades and secures the Balkans in early 1941.

# III) The Eastern Front and the Mediterranean

- On June 22, 1941 Hitler launched his surprise attack on the Soviet Union.
- The 5 million men Red Army was unprepared, and the Germans pushed 500 miles into the Soviet Union. As they retreated, the Russians used the same strategy they had used against Napoleon by burning and destroying everything in the enemies path (scorched earth policy)
- German forces became bogged down near Moscow, with the help of the Russian winter.

## IV) The United States Aids Its Allies

- The United States gives aid to Britain through the Lend-Lease Act of 1941
- Roosevelt and Churchill issue the Atlantic Charter declaring free trade among nations and the right of the people to choose their own government
- The United States drew closer to war when a German submarine attacks a US destroyer.