

The Stars and Stripes, forever. [Music] The Collapse of the Central Powers, namely Germany and Austria-Hungary brought about an end of World War I. It was marked by a series of assurances and promises and agreements made in the form of treaties. Signed and entered into by most of the countries involved in World War I. One treaty was called the Treaty of Versailles. This treaty required Germany to accept full responsibility for all losses and damage caused by the war, and required Germany to pay for all the damage. This amounted to billions and billions of dollars. They also were required to give up all of their weapons, to disarm and discontinue their military and give up all lands and territories they claimed during the war. Germany felt all these concessions were far too much to bear. Yet they had no choice but to sign the Treaty of Versailles. The end of World War I brought a period of prosperity to the United States. It was the time of the roaring twenties. It was a time of automobiles, the growth of industry, dancing and celebrating. Women won the right to vote. The world was working to recover from the devastation of World War I. But the recovery was not to last. Over the horizon, a great unforeseen evil was about to appear. And the horrible death and destruction of World War I, the war which was to end all wars, would be a distant memory. The boon of the 1920s did not last. In 1929 came the stock market crash and economies of nations around the world fell like dominoes. Jobs were scarce, money was scarce, food was scarce, hunger and the Great Depression covered the globe. The world was ripe again for discontent. And discontent brings War. In 1933, Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. But soon after, he usurped great power to become dictator. And through his Nazi party, ruled in bloody fear and terror throughout Europe. Hitler's position was that Germany should not, could not, and would not abide by the Treaty of Versailles. And Alliance was formed between Hitler of Nazi Germany, the fascist regime of Italy, with its Dictator Mussolini and Emperor Hirohito of the Empire of Japan. They were termed the Axis powers. Each regime had its individual goals to expand their power and control through out their region of the world. And though each member of the axis agreed not to interfere with each other, they however, do not combine their efforts. They are rarely assisted each other. They did not have a master plan. Tensions ran high throughout Europe. In 1935, Benito Mussolini, the fascist dictator of the Kingdom of Italy, sought to enlarge his power and influence by aggressively colonizing across the Mediterranean Sea, the country of Ethiopia and Northern Africa. The Empire of Japan continued its hostilities against China and throughout Asia and the islands of the Pacific Ocean. On September 1st, 1939, Hitler's Nazi Germany invaded Poland. This bold act of violence occurred unprovoked. Poland was no threat to Germany, but Hitler's plan was to dominate and rule all of Europe and beyond. The Nazis invaded Poland to the major countries nearby. This act of aggression could not continue on answered. Two days later, Great Britain and France declared war on Germany. World War II had just begun. And it was just revving up. The countries which formed an alliance to oppose the Axis nations and stop them in their pursuit of unwanted domination was called the Allied powers, or the Allies. Members of these allied countries were France, Great Britain, Belgium, Denmark, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Poland, China, Greece, the Netherlands, and the countries belonging to the United Kingdom and Yugoslavia. The Allied powers did not seek to rule the world nor to dominate other countries. Their purpose was to form a rebellion against the Axis and their wanton disregard for human rights. And their work of invasion and widespread murder and cruel torture. Canada, Australia, Brazil, and the Soviet Union joined with the allies. The United States of America did not join up with the Allied powers at this time. They were sympathetic with the European countries. And we're especially close with the United Kingdom. And though the US did provide money and war materials, the memory of the ultimate cost of war through loss of life was too much of a burden. So the United States avoided fully signing on as a member of the Allied powers. They avoided it as long as they could. Until an event so horrendous will cause the United States to change their position. In London. That Claxton sound of the air raid siren struck fear and terror to civilians. And it meant one thing, run to a bomb shelter, get cover and fast. The London Blitz during 1940 and 41 was a series of bombing raids by the Nazis. London was bombed 71 times, and other cities in

England were also bombed, which brought massive destruction and tens of thousands of deaths and casualties. England did not surrender. They did not give up. They continued their work of rebellion and resistance to Hitler and the evil of the Nazi attempt to overtake all in its path. Hitler's reign of terror and murder knew no bounds. He and his Nazi regime were responsible for carrying out one of the most despicable acts of genocide ever imagined, called the great holocaust. The Nazis gathered 11 million Jews and those whom the Nazis deemed undesirable and imprison them in concentration camps. There the captives, men, women, and children, faced torture, humiliation, starvation, and ultimately forced into gas chambers and murdered. The bodies were either buried in mass graves or incinerated, in large ovens. It seems as though the Axis powers could not be stopped. France surrendered to Germany's invasion, as well as the Netherlands and Belgium. Nazi Germany continued to march on, leaving destruction in its wake. Imperial Japan made a huge strategic error when without warning, the Japanese Navy attacked and bombed the US naval base of Pearl Harbor on the island of Oahu, territory of Hawaii. On December 7th, 1941, with 3500, 81 American deaths and casualties, the United States could no longer remain uncommitted to the conflict which plagued the rest of the world. The very next day, the United States of America, under President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared war on Japan. After which Admiral Yamamoto of Japan was quoted as saying, "I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve." The United States joined the allies to help prevent the spread of tyranny. The Battle of Midway was an important victory for the Americans against Japan in the Pacific. Many battles would be fought, some lost and some won by the Allied powers. But a series of important victories began to decisively change the tide. The invasion of Italy by the Allies resulted in the surrender of Mussolini's fascist regime. June 6th, 1944, D-Day, the Allies stormed the beaches of France at Normandy and gained an important victory. And later at the battle for Paris, Nazi Germany surrendered to the allies and France became free, once again. The final major European battle occurred at the invasion of Germany in Berlin by the western allies. With the Nazi resources diminished due to losses during the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium, Luxembourg, and France, which was the bloodiest battle of the war, and which gave the Allied Powers a surprising victory. Nazi Germany was unable to resist the Allied invasion of the capital city of Berlin. Again, the Allies were victorious. Imperial Japan continued their aggressions until August 6th, 1945, when President Harry S Truman, ordered the most devastating weapon ever conceived, the atomic bomb, be dropped on the city of Hiroshima, Japan. Three days later, another atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. This has been the only time a nuclear weapon had been used in warfare. The cities were laid to waste. The result of the massive and extensive heatwave caused by the blast from both bombs in both cities was in measurable. The toll in Hiroshima and Nagasaki was more than a 100 thousand dead or missing, and more than a 180 thousand severely injured. Hospitals destroyed. Most of the doctors and nurses killed. Radiation sickness and injuries would have a crippling effect for decades. Never had man unleashed a weapon of such brutal destruction. Within days, Imperial Japan offered total and unconditional surrender. World War II brought extensive carnage throughout Europe, the Soviet Union, Hawaii, Asia, Japan, and Africa. Tens of millions killed, mostly civilians, tens of millions injured, tortured, captured, and suffering disease and starvation. The close of World War II would bring judgment and justice to the leaders of the Axis powers. Mussolini would be executed. Hitler would be killed by a self-inflicted gunshot. For many years following. War, criminals would be hunted throughout the world and captured and tried in the international courts. The United States and the Soviet Union would rise as superpowers, dividing and controlling eastern and western Europe. And in 1961, the Berlin Wall separating Germany would be constructed. World War II would reveal some of the most despicable people who had ever rise to power. World War II would also show what has been termed America's greatest generation. Men, women, and children would sacrifice everything to assist in the war effort. Many would sacrifice their lives for the cause of freedom and liberty throughout the world.