End of War Notes

Operation Overlord

* General Eisenhower chosen over Chief of Staff George Marshall to command the invasion of France
* Germans have control of France-anticipate an Allied invasion at Pas-de-Calais and fortify the country
* Allies have element of surprise-plant decoy supplies to fool the Germans and prepare to invade Normandy
* Invasion begins at night June 5th
* Omar Bradley in charge of the American troops that land at Omaha and Utah beaches
* Successful invasion
* Eventually liberate Paris in August and members of the French resistance help
* Troops headed towards German border

Battle of the Bulge

* Hitler attempts an offensive move in Belgium
* Long story short, it doesn’t work
* Eisenhower and Patton work together, so that the Germans do not gain any ground
* Little to prevent Allies from entering Germany

VE Day

* Soviets begin massive attack on German troops
* Stalin’s forces drive Germans out of Russia and Poland and back into Germany
* April 30, 1945: Hitler knows that he has lost and kills himself
* Hitler names Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz to be his successor and Eisenhower demands full surrender
* May 7, 1945 Germany surrenders
* May 8, 1945-VE Day

Island Hopping in the Pacific

* Two prong strategy to defeat the Japanese
  + Nimitz leads fleet that engages in island hopping to get closer to Japan
  + MacArthur’s troops will advance through the Soloman islands, capture New Guinea, and reclaim the Philippines
* Use amphtracs to help island-hop
* Use of B-29 Superfortress bombers to attack Japan from the Mariana Islands
* MacArthur takes Guadalcanal, Rabaul, New Guinea, Morotai, and lands at Leyte

Battle of Leyte Gulf

* Largest naval battle in history
* Japanese use kamikaze, eventually retreat
* Enough to recapture the Philippines
* Capture Manila in March 1945

Battle of Iwo Jima

* November 24, 1944, Superfortress bombers bomb Toyko (Mariana Islands)
* Keep missing their targets—need place to stop and refuel (Iwo Jima)
* February-Marines land at Iwo Jima, but very deadly and difficult to invade
* Curtis LeMay: B-29s should use napalm
* March 1945 napalm bombs dropped on Japan

Invasion of Okinawa

* Believe Japan won’t surrender without an invasion of the mainland
* Choose Okinawa to plan invasion—captured by June
* Eventually Japanese are ready to surrender with condition that emperor stays in power, but Truman doesn’t want this
* Decision to drop atomic bombs
* Manhattan project
  + Leo Szilard learns that Germans might be able to split uranium atoms; gets Einstein to write a letter to FDR
  + FDR created Manhattan Project
  + General Leslie R. Groves
  + August 6, 1945: Little Boy dropped on Hiroshima
  + Three days later, Fat Man dropped on Nagasaki
  + August 15, 1945: VJ Day

Building a New World

* United Nations-international peacekeeping organization
  + General Assembly and Securities Council
* International Military Tribunal and Nuremberg Trials