World War II

Part 1: Introduction

World War II [22] was fought on three continents, with North Carolinians serving in every major theater. Hostilities began in earnest on 1 Sept. 1939, when Nazi Germany invaded Poland, prompting Great Britain and France to declare war in defense of Poland. America joined the Allies [23] (Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union) against the Axis Powers [24] (Germany, Italy, and Japan) in December 1941, after the Japanese bombing of the Pearl Harbor [25] naval base in Hawaii.

More than 362,500 North Carolinians (including 69,000 African Americans and 7,000 women) served in the armed forces during the war. Casualties included 6,458 battle deaths and more than 3,000 deaths from other causes. World War II in Europe ended when Germany surrendered on 8 May 1945. The war in the Pacific lasted several months longer, officially concluding on 2 September, when the Japanese signed a treaty of surrender aboard the USS Missouri.

Keep reading >> Part 2: North Carolina Contributions in Battle and on the Home Front [19]

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