NEVER SURRENDER - WWII

Shockwaves reverberate throughout the U.S. after the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The U.S. officially enters the war. The Allies must stop both Japan and Germany. Mussolini is overthrown and the Allies win a few key victories including the Battle of Midway. Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin meet in Tehran late in 1943 to strategize. The Allies wrest control of Western Europe back from Hitler in June 1944 through one of the largest amphibious military assaults in history: D-Day. Patton drives his army toward Berlin. His troops make a gruesome discovery, locating concentration camps and revealing the horrific crimes of the Nazis. Tragically, FDR dies as the nation’s future hangs in the balance. Harry S. Truman becomes president. After the Allies resist his final onslaught, Hitler commits suicide and Germany exits the war. In August 1945 Truman does the unthinkable in an effort to end the conflict—he orders atomic bombs to be dropped on Japan. The war has finally ended. But how will the world rebuild, and will a lasting peace be possible.

1. When and why did the United States enter World War II?

2. How would you describe the relationship between FDR and Churchill?

   a. What were some of the important decisions they made together during World War II?

3. Why do you think Mussolini failed to maintain power in Italy?

4. What do you think were Stalin’s major goals during World War II?

   a. How did he work with Roosevelt and Churchill to achieve these goals?

5. Why was the D-Day plan so risky?

   a. Why do you think the Allies were able to achieve success?
6. Patton is remembered as one of the greatest generals in U.S. history. Based on what you learned in this episode, do you agree with this assessment of Patton? Discuss.

7. What was Hitler’s “Final Solution”?
   a. What role did the Germany military and citizenry play in helping achieve this plan?
   b. When and how was it thwarted?

8. What was the state of the world at the end of World War II?
   a. What plans were put in place to help rebuild?

9. At the end of this episode, the war has ended but peace is not a given. Imagine you do not know what happened after 1945. Would you predict that peace was possible? Discuss.
In this speech to Congress, delivered the day after the Pearl Harbor bombing, President Roosevelt describes the attack and asks for a declaration of war against Japan.

Mr. Vice President, and Mr. Speaker, and Members of the Senate and House of Representatives:

Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that Nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in the American Island of Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to our Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. And while this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or of armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time the Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.

The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. I regret to tell you that very many American lives have been lost. In addition, American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu. Yesterday the Japanese Government also launched an attack against Malaya.

Last night Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong.

Last night Japanese forces attacked Guam.

Last night Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands.

Last night the Japanese attacked Wake Island. And this morning the Japanese attacked Midway Island.

Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our Nation.

As Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense. But always will our whole Nation remember the character of the onslaught against us.

No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory. I believe that I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us. Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger.

With confidence in our armed forces—with the unbounding determination of our people—we will gain the inevitable triumph—so help us God.

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.

1. In this address President Roosevelt describes the Pearl Harbor bombing as a “date which will live in infamy.” What do you think he means by this phrase? Do you agree with his assessment?

2. What does Roosevelt say about the status of diplomatic negotiations with Japan at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack? Do you think diplomatic solutions might have still been possible if the attack had not taken place?

3. What does Roosevelt say about the possibility of American victory in World War II? Why do you think he included these words of encouragement in his speech?