

US History

WWII – The Pacific

Learning Target:

I can explain why the US decided to use atomic weapons to end WWII and identify the impact this had on Japan.

5. The Defeat of Japan

Roosevelt To Truman –

- April 12, 1944 – Franklin D. Roosevelt suddenly and unexpectedly dies
- Vice president Truman is sworn into office
- Faced with the difficult decision on whether or not to use the atomic bomb

The Potsdam Declaration (July 26, 1945) -

- Issued by the United States, Great Britain, and China
- Outlined the terms of surrender for Japan
- Stated that if Japan refused to surrender it would face "prompt & utter destruction"
- Japan's refusal to surrender directly influenced Truman's decision to use nuclear force

Dropping The Bomb –

- Atomic bomb developed by the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos in NM
- Estimates said the US could lose over 1 million soldiers by invading Japan and Japanese losses would be greater
- Truman believed the bomb would actually save more life if it were used

Hiroshima & Nagasaki –

- August 6, 1945 at 8:15 AM the Enola Gay dropped Little Boy on Hiroshima
- Three days later Fat Man was dropped on Nagasaki
- September 2, 1945 the Japanese surrendered

Death Toll (2-4 months after bombing) -

- Hiroshima - 90,000 - 166,000
- Nagasaki - 60,000 - 80,000

Debate Over Bombings -

- Supporters
 - Argue that the bomb ended the war and prevented an invasion
 - Argue no other weapon could have done this as quickly
- Opposition
 - Argue that traditional bombing campaigns and embargos could have prevented an invasion and cost less civilian life