

tj1

On September 16th, Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Commander of the South-East Asia Front, received a directive from the Combined Chiefs of Staff to run the Japanese out of Burma. The directive approved Mountbatten's earlier plan, Capital, which called for British troops to advance from India to the Mandalay-Pakokku line, and then further to Rangoon. Mountbatten's Dracula, which called for an amphibious landing in Rangoon, was also approved so long as it could be mounted before the next monsoon. Capital would only push on to Rangoon if Dracula had to be postponed.

-end-

tj2

US Commander in China, General Stilwell, was recalled by President Roosevelt on October 19th. Tensions between Stilwell and Chiang Kai-shek made the change in command necessary. Stilwell was unhappy with Chiang's lack of effort to drive the Japanese out of China and with the lack of support for US air bases in China. When Stilwell demanded command of the Chinese armies, Chiang threatened to remove his troops from Burma. Clearly, the two could not work together. Roosevelt was forced to replace Stilwell with General Albert Wedermeyer as Chiang's military advisor. General Raymond Wheeler was appointed Deputy to Admiral Mountbatten, the Supreme Allied Commander in South-East Asia.

-end-

tj3

On November 1st, Y Force, commanded by General Wai Li-huang, recaptured Lungling, China on the Burma Road as the Japanese retreated.

-end-

tj4

The Chinese Sixth Army advanced to Schwebo on November 7th.

-end-

tj5

On December 3rd, the 11th East African Division established a bridgehead on the Chindwin River near Kalewa, while the 20th and 19th Indian Divisions crossed further north near Mawlaik and Sittaung, respectively. There, plan Capital was launched, an advance to the Mandalay-Pakokku line.

-end-

tj6

Following the night retreat of the Japanese, the Chinese First Army occupied the town of Bhamo on the 15th.

-end-

tj7

On December 16th, units of the 19th Indian Division reached the railway town of Indaw, hooking up with the British 36th Division from the north.

-end-

tj8

Plan 'Capital,' the British advance toward the Mandalay-Pakokku line, was meeting such slight Japanese resistance that General Slim decided to feint towards Mandalay and then swing south to capture Meiktila, where the Japanese had a key communications facility. Slim called his new plan 'Extended Capital.'

-end-

tj9

On January 2nd, British troops advancing toward Mandalay entered Yeu.

-end-

tj10

On January 4th, British troops occupied Akyab, a Japanese air and naval base on the coast of the Arakan. General Slim's feint to Mandalay had worked; the Japanese had abandoned the Arakan to defend Mandalay.

-end-

tj11

On January 7th, British troops began clearing Schwegu of Japanese. They completed the task on

the 10th, when Katamura ordered his troops to withdraw.

-end-

tj12

On January 14th, the 19th Indian Division established a bridgehead over the Irrawaddy at Thabeikkyin. They met heavy resistance from the Japanese, who believed their objective was Mandalay. The next day the British bridged the Irrawaddy further south at Kyaukmyaung.

-end-

tj13

The 26th Indian Division landed on Ramree Island and took the town of Kyaukpyu on January 21st, after intense shelling by naval guns. The island was not completely secured until February 9th.

-end-

tj14

On January 26th, the 7th Indian Division of the British 4th Corps captured Pauk. With this objective gained, the advance to Meiktila could begin.

-end-

tj15

The Chinese 38th Division and the Y Force linked up on the Burma and Ledo Roads at Mongyu, breaking the Japanese blockade on China.

-end-

tj16

On February 12th, the 20th Indian Division crossed the Irrawaddy at Myinmu during the night.

-end-

tj17

The 7th Indian Division crossed the Irrawaddy at Nyaungu on February 14th. The Japanese were now being driven back all along the Irrawaddy River.

-end-

tj18

On January 20th, the provisional Hungarian government signed an armistice in Moscow with Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States.

-end-

tj19

US and British chiefs of staff met in Malta from January 30th to February 1st in the first stage of the Argonaut Conference, a preliminary to the Yalta Conference. Representatives agreed to continue a broad-front advance on the Rhine and discussed diplomatic issues to be presented to the Russians in the upcoming Yalta Conference.

-end-

tj20

On February 4th through 11th the leaders of the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union met to discuss a common strategy for the remainder of the war as well as the administration of the defeated nations. They stipulated the division and occupation of Germany, planned a conference of United Nations, pledged to help the liberated countries, and provided for a provisional government in Poland.

-end-

tj21

The Second British Army, commanded by General Dempsey, began an effort to clear an enemy salient in the area of the Roermond Triangle on January 16th. Bad weather slowed the Allies' progress, and the salient was not eliminated until the 26th.

-end-

tj22

On January 20th, the French 1st Army began operations against the Colmar pocket, attacking from the south with infantry and tanks. Bad weather prevented the closing of the pocket until February 5th, when the US Seventh arrived and joined the French troops.

-end-

tj23

The US 1st Army eliminated the Ardennes salient on January 28th, and then began an advance

on the West Wall (Siegfried Line). Their next objective was to take the Roer dams.

-end-

tj24

On January 31st, the US 1st Army began to advance toward the dams on the Roer River, hoping to take them intact from the Germans. The Germans, however, destroyed the dams before the Allies captured the area on February 9th. Destruction of the dams flooded the entire region and created swampy difficulties for General Simpson's 9th US Army which was trying to reach Dusseldorf.

-end-

tj25

The Canadian 1st Army began Operation Veritable, an offensive to secure the region between the Rhine and the Maas Rivers southeast of Nijmegen, on February 8th. The assault began with an intensive artillery bombardment. The German 1st Parachute Army put up heavy resistance near Reichswald, and fighting continued for a month.

-end-

tj26

On February 21st, the 51st Highland Division and Canadian 1st Army captured Goch, one of the objectives of Operation Veritable, the plan responsible for the securing of the lower Rhine.

-end-

tj27

On February 23rd, the US 9th Army launched Operation Grenade, an offensive to secure the area from the Roer to the Rhine in the direction of Dusseldorf. Here the Allies caught the Germans by surprise with a barrage of heavy artillery.

-end-

tj28

On February 26th, the Canadian 2nd Corps began Operation Blockbuster, a campaign to take the towns of Calcar, Udem, and Xanten and to secure the Rhine north of Wesel. On the first day of the offensive, the Allies attacked east of Nijmegen and advanced close to Calcar and Udem.

-end-

tj29

The US 9th Army, 35th Division and 8th Armored Division, crossed the Roer on February 27th, meeting little resistance from the Germans.

-end-

tj30

The US 3rd Armored Division established a bridgehead over the Erft River on February 27th, drawing closer to the Rhine.

-end-

tj31

On March 2nd, General Simpson's US 9th Army arrived on the banks of the Rhine opposite Dusseldorf, but the Germans had destroyed all the bridges as they retreated.

-end-

tj32

The US 104th Division penetrated the outer defenses of Cologne on March 4th.

-end-

tj33

By March 6th, Operation Grenade was successfully completed. The US 9th Army had made its way from the Roer to the Rhine.

-end-

tj34

The US 1st Army managed to seize the only remaining intact bridge over the Rhine near Remagen on March 7th. By the end of the day, the Allies had succeeded in establishing a bridgehead on the east side of the river. This event so aggravated Hitler he sacked von Rundstedt the next day, replacing him with Kesselring.

-end-

tj35

On March 9th, the Germans holding the bridgehead on the Rhine near Wesel withdrew,

destroying the area bridges as they retreated.

-end-

tj36

On March 10th, the Allies completed both Operations Veritable and Blockbuster, capturing the area between the Moselle and Rhine Rivers as well as the Calcar-Uden-Xanten sector. General Montgomery's troops were now poised to cross the Rhine at Wesel.

-end-

tj37

The US 7th Army launched Operation Undertone on March 15th, a plan to penetrate the West Wall and to secure the Saar-Palatinate triangle.

-end-

tj38

On March 16th, the US 1st Army extended the Remagen bridgehead over the Rhine, and the 78th Division cut the Cologne-Frankfurt autobahn. The next day the Remagen bridge, weakened by the Germans on the day of its capture, collapsed. Units of the 1st Army had already completed construction on two new bridges nearby.

-end-

tj39

To prevent the invaders from salvaging anything of value from the Reich, Hitler issued a scorched earth directive on March 19th, ordering that all industry, communications, power stations, transportation, dikes, food, and clothing be destroyed before an area was abandoned to the Allies. Hitler insisted that if the war was lost, the nation would perish along with it. The order was later sabotaged by Albert Speer, Hitler's man in charge of arms production, in cooperation with the Chief of Staff of the Wehrmacht.

-end-

tj40

On the night of March 23rd, the 3rd US Army 12th Corps, commanded by General Patton, crossed the Rhine at Oppenheim, taking the Germans there by surprise.

-end-

tj41

Following intense artillery bombardment, troops commanded by Field Marshal Montgomery crossed the Rhine near three towns north of the Ruhr on the night of March 23rd. The Canadian 1st Army crossed near Emmerich and the British 2nd Army crossed near Rees, while the US 9th attacked near Rheinberg. The following day the bridgehead was extended to Wesel.

-end-

tj42

On the night of March 24th, the US 3rd Army sent the 87th Division across the Rhine in an offensive near Boppard.

-end-

tj43

The 3rd Division of the US 7th Army crossed the Rhine near Worms on March 26th.

-end-

tj44

On March 28th, the US 3rd Army crossed the Rhine near Mainz and established a bridgehead.

-end-

tj45

During the night on March 31st, the French 1st Army opened an offensive across the Rhine near Gernersheim. At this point, the Allies had achieved several major crossings up and down the Rhine, putting the Germans on the run.

-end-

tj46

On February 8th, General Konev's 1st Ukrainian Front began a new thrust toward the Neisse River, taking Breslau and Glogau on the way.

-end-

tj47

Malinovsky and Tolbukhin received orders from the Russian High Command to clear German

Army Group South from Hungary, then advance to Brno, Graz, and Vienna, isolating Army Group E in Yugoslavia. In this way, the Russians hoped to discourage the Germans fighting in northern Italy.

Meanwhile, Hitler was planning an offensive of his own. His plan, called 'Spring Awakening', was to defeat Tolbukhin's troops (3rd Ukrainian Front) to make Hungary secure again and to defend the oil fields east of Lake Balaton in Hungary.

-end-

tj48

On February 23rd, Posen fell to the Russians after a long siege.

-end-

tj49

General Rokossovsky, commander of the 2nd Belorussian Front, launched an offensive in Pomerania on February 24th. His troops advanced thirty miles before slowing down in the marshes.

-end-

tj50

On March 1st, General Zhukov's 1st Belorussian Front advanced into Pomerania, where Rokossovsky's troops were already occupied. Zhukov took Kolberg on March 16th, and Rokossovsky arrived at Danzig on the 25th.

-end-

tj51

The Fourth Panzer Army counter-attacked at Glogau on March 3rd, attempting to relieve the city and reopen the Berlin-Silesia railway. General Konev's troops easily repelled them.

-end-

tj52

On March 5th, the German Army Group South launched Operation Spring Awakening, simultaneously attacking the 3rd Ukrainian Front north and south of Lake Balaton and over the Drava River to the southeast. The next day the German 6th Army and 6th SS Panzers joined the battle. Marshy terrain hindered the German offensive, bogging down the tanks and limiting the advance. By the 10th the Germans had penetrated along the Sarviz Canal, west of Lake Velencei, and Tolbukhin's request to Stavka for reinforcements was denied. However, the German thrust was all but exhausted two days later.

-end-

tj53

On March 11th, Hitler appointed Rendulic Commander-in-Chief of Army group Courland, which was engaged in East Prussia around Koenigsberg and the Samland peninsula.

-end-

tj54

Russian General Vasilievsky's troops began a fresh offensive to take Koenigsberg and clear the Samland peninsula on March 13th. These objectives were accomplished by the end of the month, with the German 4th Army retreating to Frischau Nehrung and Pillau.

-end-

tj55

On March 15th, the Russians, under new orders from the Stavka, began an offensive that forced the German 6th Army and 6th SS Panzers to withdraw. Hitler was so infuriated by the retreat he ordered the 6th Panzers to remove their distinctive SS cuff bands and revoked their special privileges.

-end-

tj56

Hitler appointed General Siegfried Heinrici to replace Himmler in command of the Army Group Vistula on March 20th.

-end-

tj57

On March 25th, General Woehler, commanding German Army Group South, was replaced by General Rendulic. His troops had retreated in front of the Russians advancing closer to Austria

and deeper into Czechoslovakia. Hungarian troops were beginning massive surrenders.

-end-

tj58

Unhappy with General Guderian, Hitler removed him as German Army Chief of Staff and replaced him with General Hans Krebs.

-end-

tj59

On March 29th, Russian troops destroyed the German bridgehead on the Oder at Kuestrin, less than one hundred miles from Berlin.

-end-

tj60

On March 30th, General Rokossovsky's 2nd Belorussian Front captured Danzig, two days after Gdynia had been taken. The Germans were now forced to withdraw to the mouth of the Vistula.

-end-

tj61

The 1st Ukrainian Front, commanded by General Konev, captured Ratibor on March 31st. This gave the Russians control of almost all of Silesia, with the exceptions of Breslau and Glogau.

-end-

tj62

On April 1st, the Stavka issued orders to the 2nd and 3rd Ukrainian Fronts to capture Vienna as soon as possible. Meanwhile, German General Dietrich had been directed to defend the city with the 6th SS Panzer Army.

-end-

tj63

The 2nd and 3rd Ukrainian Front Armies began to encircle the city of Vienna on April 6th. The Germans blew up all but one bridge on the Danube and attempted to drive the Russians back with their armored divisions. By the next day, Russians had penetrated the southern suburbs of Vienna and were engaged in fierce house-to-house fighting. Bitter fighting continued for days, with the Russians capturing City Hall and the Parliament building by the 11th. The Russians secured the city on the 13th, just one week after beginning the assault.

Now the 2nd and 3rd Ukrainian Front Armies were free to concentrate on the capture of Brno in Czechoslovakia. German forces, meanwhile, were retreating further into Austria.

-end-

tj64

On April 6th, the 2nd Belorussian Front Army began a major assault on Koenigsberg, penetrating the city on the first day of fighting. German resistance in Koenigsberg ended on the 10th. Pillau, to the northwest, fell on the 26th.

-end-

tj65

As the US and British forces sat poised up and down the Rhine, Eisenhower modified his plans. He told Stalin that, after securing the Ruhr region, the Allies would make for the Erfurt-Leipzig-Dresden line instead of advancing on Berlin. Stalin was quite pleased with this news since he had already decided Berlin was not his major objective. With Eisenhower's cooperation it would now be possible to split Germany's forces. Churchill and Montgomery were less than happy. Churchill wanted to link up with the Russians further east, beyond Berlin. Montgomery had expected to lead the thrust against Berlin; now his role would be reduced to guarding the flank of Bradley's forces advancing on Dresden.

-end-

tj66

On March 28th, the British 2nd Army broke out of its bridgehead on the Rhine at Wesel and began its western advance to the Elbe.

-end-

tj67

The US 1st and 3rd Armies linked up on the Cologne-Frankfurt autobahn near Giessen on March 28th.

-end-

tj68

On April 1st, the US 9th and 1st Armies joined up at Lippstadt, completing the encirclement of the industry-rich Ruhr and trapping Model's Army Group B in a pocket 70 miles long by 50 miles wide. Some US divisions were quickly sent through the resulting gap in the German defense, racing east as far as Paderborn.

-end-

tj69

The 1st Canadian Army, commanded by General Crerar, broke out of its Rhine bridgehead at Nijmegen on April 2nd, advancing toward Arnhem to liberate northern Holland.

-end-

tj70

On April 4th, British troops reached Osnabrueck.

-end-

tj71

General Patton's troops captured Kassel on April 4th. Patton's troops also liberated the Ohrdruf camp the same day, the first liberation of a German concentration camp.

-end-

tj72

On April 5th, the US 7th Army crossed the Main River at Wuerzburg.

-end-

tj73

On April 10th, US troops reached Hanover on their way to the Elbe.

-end-

tj74

On April 11th, advance elements of the US 2nd Armored Division reached the Elbe, south of Magdeburg, but not in time to prevent the Germans from blowing up the bridge. By the next day the US troops had crossed in two places, in spite of a vicious counter-attack. Having pushed so far eastward, General Simpson implored Eisenhower to let him advance to Berlin. Permission was denied.

-end-

tj75

On April 11th, the US 7th Army, commanded by General Patch, captured Schweinfurt.

-end-

tj76

President Roosevelt died at Warm Springs, Georgia, on April 12th, and was immediately succeeded by his Vice President, Harry S. Truman. Roosevelt was a victim of polio.

-end-

tj77

On April 13th, the US 3rd Army crossed the River Mulde northwest of Chemnitz.

-end-

tj78

Eisenhower issued new orders for the western front on April 15th. The bridgeheads on the Elbe were to be consolidated, but no troops were to advance any further east. The 12th Army Group was to move toward the Danube to link up with the Russian allies. This was part of Eisenhower's plan to prevent the National Redoubt, a German last-stand in the Alps; Eisenhower suspected this move from intelligence reports, but it was never actually implemented by the Germans. In the north, the British were to take Hamburg and Kiel and to capture German naval bases on the North Sea.

-end-

tj79

On April 15th, the British 11th Armored Division liberated the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen. The liberators were horrified by the terrible conditions they found there and in each of the remaining camps.

-end-

tj80

US troops liberated the concentration camp at Buchenwald on April 15th, the same day the British liberated Bergen-Belsen. US and British troops were appalled at what they found in the camps.

-end-

tj81

On April 15th, after three days of fighting, Canadian troops liberated Arnhem and then advanced toward Groningen. Ordered to clear the North Sea coast of Germans, the Canadians were hampered by numerous river crossings.

-end-

tj82

The British 2nd Army reached the suburbs of Bremen on April 17th. On the 24th, an offensive was launched against the city itself; it was secured two days later.

-end-

tj83

On April 17th, General Patton's US 3rd Army began moving southeast toward the Danube.

-end-

tj84

On April 18th, German resistance in the Ruhr pocket finally came to an end, with the Allies taking 325,000 prisoners. The German Commander, Model, committed suicide.

-end-

tj85

The British 8th Corps reached the Elbe near Lauenburg on April 19th.

-end-

tj86

On April 19th, the 5th Corps of the US 1st Army captured Leipzig.

-end-

tj87

Three divisions of the US 7th Army captured Nuremberg on April 20th.

-end-

tj88

Western Allies and Russian troops linked up for the first time at Torgau on the Elbe River on April 25th. Eisenhower and Stalin had succeeded in splitting Germany in two.

-end-

tj89

On April 1st, Russian plans for the capture of Berlin were finalized in Moscow. General Zhukov and the 1st Belorussian Army would advance on Berlin, capturing the city, then move on to the Elbe. Konev and the 1st Ukrainian Front would mount a simultaneous attack on German troops massed south of Berlin and then attack Leipzig and Dresden. The 2nd Belorussian Army, commanded by General Rokossovsky, would keep the Germans busy north of Berlin. Meanwhile, Hitler was preparing the defense of his capital and spending all his time at the command post in the Reich Chancellery. He had only 50 depleted divisions to deploy against the upcoming Russian onslaught of 200 divisions.

-end-

tj90

On April 12th, the 1st Belorussian Army began to make thrusts from its bridgehead at Kuestrin on the Oder. The Germans quickly withdrew to avoid excessive casualties and to conserve their strength.

-end-

tj91

On April 15th, Hitler issued a special Order of the Day, warning that anyone ordering a retreat would be shot on sight.

-end-

tj92

On April 16th, the 1st Belorussian Army broke out of the Kuestrin bridgehead and began its drive to Berlin.

-end-

tj93

General Konev and the 1st Ukrainian Front Army, having broken through the German 4th Panzers the day before, received permission from Stalin to proceed to Berlin. This move was a last-minute alteration in the offensive plan. General Zhukov, who was supposed to be leading the assault on the capital city, had only just reached Seelow, east of Berlin.

-end-

tj94

On April 18th, General Rokossovsky and the 2nd Belorussian Front Army attacked the German Vistula Army Group between Stettin and Schwedt, sweeping across the Oder north of Berlin. Despite a slow start in the marshy territory, they were able to keep the Germans from being deployed to Berlin. Both Zhukov and Konev were making progress toward the city.

-end-

tj95

Hitler celebrated his 56th birthday at his command post in the Reich Chancellery on April 20th. On the same day he put Doenitz in command of the northern German forces and ordered that the Vistula Army Group be tasked with the defense of Berlin.

-end-

tj96

Following air attacks by the RAF the night before, Russian artillery began bombarding the center of Berlin on April 21st. More air attacks were made by USAAF on the night of the 21st.

-end-

tj97

On April 23rd, Hitler took over the defense of Berlin, announcing that he would never leave the city and would commit suicide before falling into the hands of the Russians. At this time the garrison at Berlin was reinforced by police, old men, women, and Hitler Youth, a force of about 300,000. Hitler ordered General Wenck's 12th Army to drive north to the capital, since it had become clear that the Americans were going to stay put on the Elbe.

-end-

tj98

Zhukov's and Konev's forces completed the encirclement of Berlin on April 25th, with house-to-house fighting going on in the east, northeast, and southeast suburbs of the city. Hitler had Goering, who had flown south, placed under house arrest; Goering had suggested that he take over the administration of Germany since Hitler was trapped in Berlin.

-end-

tj99

On April 26th, General Wenck's 12th Army approached Berlin to relieve pressure on the city; but by this time the Russians had already penetrated to nearly the center of Berlin. Elsewhere, Brno, Czechoslovakia had just fallen to the Russians, and north of Berlin the 2nd Belorussian Front had taken Stettin.

-end-

tj100

On April 28th, an enraged Hitler denounced Himmler, who had been secretly negotiating a surrender to the Western Allies. He also replaced General Heinrici, who was determined to withdraw; Kurt Student was given command of Army Group Vistula.

-end-

tj101

As fierce fighting raged around the Chancellery in Berlin, Hitler declared that the war must be continued from the 'Alpine Fortress' in southern Germany. He named Admiral Karl Doenitz as the next head of state. In a macabre bunker ceremony, Hitler married his mistress, Eva Braun.

-end-

tj102

On April 30th, surrounded by Russians in the Chancellery, Adolph Hitler and his wife of less than 24 hours, Eva Braun, committed suicide. The Reichstag fell to the Russians later that day. The next day Krebs and Goebbels, along with his wife and six children, all died at their own hands.

-end-

tj103

General Weidling, the Berlin garrison commander, surrendered formally to the Russians on May

2nd. German casualties in the Battle of Berlin are unknown, but over 480,000 were taken prisoner. The Russians suffered 300,000 casualties. The larger consequence was the virtual end of the Second World War in Europe.

-end-

tj104

At the beginning of 1945 there was fear among the Allies that the Germans fighting in Italy might withdraw into the difficult terrain in the Alps, thus making it nearly impossible to rout them. The Germans in Italy had lost some troops to the Western Front, and at this time their lines of communication were in shambles from constant Allied air attacks. While the Allies made plans to encircle the entire German Army Group C, Heinrich Himmler, on his own initiative and certainly without the knowledge of the German high command, began trying to negotiate for a surrender to the Western Allies (excluding Russia). Knowing that victory for Germany was hopeless, he proposed to join with the Western Allies in defeating the Communist threat posed by the Soviet Union. These proposals were unacceptable to the Allies, but later proposals made by the Germans in Italy were more attractive. On March 3, 1945, an agent of the OSS (Office of Strategic Services--an American organization for supporting resistance movements in occupied nations) met with an SS general to discuss a unilateral armistice. The talks resulted in the release of two Italian partisans who were prisoners of the Germans and permission from the Supreme Allied Command to go ahead with secret negotiations.

-end-

tj105

On March 8th, Allen Dulles, the head of the American Office of Strategic Services in Switzerland, met secretly with General Karl Wolff, the German military governor of Italy, to discuss the possibility of a unilateral armistice. The result of the meeting was Wolff's promise to persuade Kesselring and the German Ambassador to Italy to accept an armistice. As negotiations, code-named 'Sunrise,' continued, American General Lyman Lemnitzer and British General Terence Airey flew to Switzerland to talk with Wolff themselves.

-end-

tj106

OSS agent Allen Dulles and Allied Generals Lemnitzer and Airey met German General Wolff in Italy to continue Sunrise negotiations on March 19th. Wolff had formerly proposed to convince General Kesselring to sign a unilateral armistice with the Allies; however, Kesselring had recently been replaced by von Vietinghoff, of whom Wolff was less certain. Consequently, he made plans to travel to the Western Front to speak to Kesselring.

-end-

tj107

On April 1st, Heinrich Himmler ordered General Wolff to remain in Italy, preventing him from making contact with Kesselring on the Western Front. This summarily ended the Sunrise negotiations which had been designed to achieve an armistice in Italy. Himmler had secretly been trying to arrange an agreement with the Allies himself and was likely envious of Wolff's progress. Thus ended an opportunity to avoid further bloodshed in Italy.

-end-

tj108

During the night of April 1st/2nd British Commandos of the 8th Army attacked between Lake Comacchio and the Adriatic Sea to liberate the Comacchio area and occupy the German flank.

-end-

tj109

After a few months of rest for the Allies at the beginning of 1945 and after the secret negotiations for an armistice in Italy failed, General Alexander planned an offensive in Italy to surround the German Army Group C with the US 5th and British 8th Armies. On April 9th, the British 8th Army, commanded by General McCreery, launched the offensive and quickly established a bridgehead over the Senio near Lugo and also near San Severo-Felisio. Next day amphibious landings on the western shore of Lake Comacchio hemmed in the German flank. By the 11th, the Polish 2nd Corps of the British 8th had advanced to the Santerno River, and the US 5th Army, 92nd Division captured Carrara in the coast of the Ligurian Sea.

-end-

tj110

On April 13th, the Polish 2nd Corps had extended its bridgehead across the Santerno River, while other divisions of the British 8th Army crossed the Reno River in a steady advance northwest.

-end-

tj111

On April 14th, after a two-day delay caused by bad weather, the US 5th Army, commanded by General Truscott, began its attacks in Italy. They struck German General Lemelsen's 14th Army on the Lombard plain.

-end-

tj112

On April 15th, the Polish 2nd Corps, British 8th Army, crossed the Sillaro River.

-end-

tj113

On April 18th, British troops captured Argenta with the help of the Italian Cremona Combat Group.

-end-

tj114

The Polish 2nd Corps captured Bologna on April 21st, a few hours before the US 2nd Corps entered the city from the south. At this point the Germans were on the run for the Po River.

-end-

tj115

On April 22nd, the 4th Corps of the US 5th Army reached Modena from the Lombard plain, while the British 5th Corps, 8th Army, reached Ferrara.

-end-

tj116

By April 23rd, the German army in Italy was broken and on the retreat. At General von Vietinghoff's request, General Wolff attempted to reopen negotiations begun in March to arrange for an armistice, without Hitler's approval. It would be another three days before the American OSS agent received permission to negotiate, and at this point events were progressing rapidly in the field of operations.

-end-

tj117

On April 25th, the US 3rd Division took Parma, the 4th Corps secured the Villafranca airport in Verona, and the 88th Division liberated Verona itself.

-end-

tj118

On April 26th, British troops crossed the Adige River west of Badia, and US troops crossed near Verona.

-end-

tj119

On April 27th, the 92nd Division, US 5th Army, reached Genoa.

-end-

tj120

On April 26th, Mussolini, on his way to Lake Como to meet his followers, was captured by partisans. He and his mistress, Clara Petacci, were taken to a farmhouse near Dongo on Lake Como and held there. On the 28th Mussolini and Petacci were executed by partisans, along with twelve other Fascist leaders. Their bodies were taken to Milan, mutilated, then displayed in the streets.

-end-

tj121

German Colonel Schweinitz, a representative of General von Vietinghoff, signed an unconditional surrender for all German troops in Italy on April 29th; the surrender would go into effect on May 2nd. British and American officers, as well as one Russian general, were present at the signing.

-end-

tj122

On May 2nd, the unconditional surrender signed a few days earlier by the Germans in Italy went into effect, and hostilities ceased on the Italian Front. Simultaneously, British troops met with

Yugoslavian prime minister Tito's partisans in the port at Trieste to try to determine the fate of that city.

-end-

tj123

By May 2nd, the day of the official surrender in Italy, General Montgomery's troops and Russian General Rokossovsky's troops were rushing simultaneously toward the port at Luebeck.

-end-

tj124

On May 3rd, Field Marshal Montgomery refused to accept the surrender of German forces in the North, insisting that they surrender to the Russians. In addition he demanded the surrender of all the German troops in northwest Germany, Denmark, and Holland. Meanwhile, the British 12th Corps accepted the surrender of Hamburg. From there, the British met Rokossovsky's troops near the port city of Luebeck.

-end-

tj125

German representatives signed a surrender document for the German forces in Denmark, Holland, and northwest Germany on May 4th, agreeing to cease hostilities on the following day. At this time Admiral Doenitz, now the German head-of-state, ordered all submarines to surrender to the Allies. Doenitz was anxious to avoid surrendering troops to the Russians on the remaining fronts and attempted to negotiate with the Americans for a separate peace with the Western Allies. Eisenhower turned down this proposal the next day. At Salzburg the Germans surrendered to US troops, and unofficial surrenders were completed all over southern Germany.

-end-

tj126

On May 5th, there was an uprising against the Germans in Prague and elsewhere in Czechoslovakia. Czech resistance forces gained control of much of the city by the end of the day. US General Patton was anxious to advance into Prague but was denied because of a previous agreement with the Russians. Accordingly, he halted at the Pisen-Karlsbad line.

-end-

tj127

German General Jodl arrived in Reims on May 6th to negotiate a surrender with Eisenhower. Doenitz authorized an unconditional surrender the next day, which was signed on behalf of the Germans by General Jodl, by Bedell Smith for General Eisenhower, and by General Ivan Suslaparov for the Soviet Union. The surrender was not to take place officially until the 9th; however, all fighting on the Western Front ceased immediately. Simultaneously, German forces in Norway surrendered via radio broadcast.

-end-

tj128

Churchill and Truman declared May 8th Victory in Europe (VE) Day, and both British and US citizens celebrated in the streets. On the same day, at the insistence of the Russians, the Germans signed another surrender at Karlshorst, near Berlin.

Meanwhile, Russian troops accepted the surrender of Breslau. Dresden and Goerland also surrendered to the Russians, and the Leningrad Front accepted the capitulation of Army Group Courland.

In Czechoslovakia Czech patriots attacked the remaining Germans. Russian General Konev demanded the surrender of Army Group Center. When he failed to receive it, he attacked in Prague early the next day.

-end-

tj129

Though surrenders had been signed to cease hostilities on all fronts, German troops continued to resist in Austria, Croatia, and Czechoslovakia. The 1st and 2nd Ukrainian Fronts liberated Prague on May 9th. In Austria, the 3rd Ukrainian Front advanced to Graz and to Amstetten where it met up with US forces. The Germans were anxious to surrender to the US troops, but in many cases were left in the hands of the Russians because of their reputation on that front for hideous war

crimes. German forces in East Prussia also surrendered to the Russians, as did those on Bornholm, Denmark and on the Channel Islands.

-end-

tj130

On May 11th, the fighting in Czechoslovakia ended when the remaining German forces surrendered to the 1st and 2nd Ukrainian Front Armies and US troops arrived. More Germans in Austria capitulated, but German Army Group South-East continued to resist Tito's forces in Croatia.

-end-

tj131

German Army Group South-East officially surrendered to Tito on May 14th.

-end-

tj132

On May 23rd, the British military arrested Admiral Doenitz, acting German head of state, as well as the rest of his government. He had remained free up to this point in order to facilitate the end of German resistance on all fronts.

-end-

tj133

On April 17th, the Japanese launched their final major offensive in China, Operation Ichi Go. The operation was planned to capture the area between the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers, then advance to the Hunan and Kwangsi provinces. The objectives of Ichi Go were twofold: to clear these areas of Nationalist Chinese resistance and to destroy US air bases in southern China. Japan, whose major weakness in the war was availability of raw materials, had been suffering shipping losses due to US submarine warfare since the end of 1942. In early 1944, losses to US aircraft were expected to rise sharply because of new bases in China and India, and the increase in production of US B-29 Superfortresses.

-end-

tj134

On June 5th, the US 20th Bomber Group mounted the first bombing mission using the B-29 Superfortress. The mission targeted Bangkok, Thailand. Subsequently the Superfortresses would be used to transport large quantities of fuel to air bases in India for missions against Japan.

-end-

tj135

The US 20th Bomber Command, operating from China, carried out its first raid against Japan on June 15th, dropping more than 200 tons of bombs on the steel works in Yawata on Kyushu Island. The effectiveness of the raids were disappointing, as were later raids on Yawata, Nagasaki, and Sasebo.

-end-

tj136

Japanese troops captured Chansha on June 18th.

-end-

tj137

On June 26th, Japanese forces attempted to take Hengyang, capturing a US air base there. However, within two weeks they were repelled by the Chinese troops and the US 14th Air Force.

-end-

tj138

Nearly a month after a first effort to capture Hengyang, the Japanese managed to capture the site of the major US airfield. Their efforts to advance further were delayed by US air attacks on Japanese supply routes.

-end-

tj139

On August 29th, the Japanese 11th Division renewed its offensive, advancing toward the US air bases at Kweilin and Liuchow.

-end-

tj140

On September 4th, the Japanese took the air base at Lingling, China.

-end-

tj141

Anxious to establish air bases within range of Japan, US military engineers had been busy building airstrips in the Mariana Islands on Guam, Saipan, and Tinian. On October 12th, the first B-29 arrived on Saipan. Within a short time all the US Superfortresses were transferred from Chinese air bases to the Marianas.

-end-

tj142

On November 10th, Japanese troops captured Kweilin and Liuchow, including two US air bases, then prepared to advance on Kweiyang. By this time the US was establishing major air bases in the Marianas Islands.

-end-

tj143

On November 24th, the Japanese captured Nanning, coming within easy reach of their forces occupying French Indo-China.

-end-

tj144

On November 24th, 111 B-29 Superfortresses took off from their bases in the Marianas Islands to raid Tokyo, the first in a long series of raids on Japan. An aircraft engine factory was the target of this raid, but results were disappointing because of bad weather.

-end-

tj145

General Curtis LeMay's 20th bomber command sent 77 B-29s and 200 other aircraft to drop incendiary bombs on Hankow, China, an industrial area and Japanese supply site. The use of incendiaries was so successful, LeMay decided to mount similar attacks on mainland Japan to destroy Japan's war industry.

-end-

tj146

Late in the night of March 9th, General LeMay's Twentieth Air Force, operating from Guam, Saipan, and Tinian, launched the first incendiary bomb raid on Tokyo. Three hundred thirty-four B-29s dropped bombs for a period of three hours, destroying one-fifth of the city and killing at least 130,000 people. Subsequent incendiary raids were mounted against Kobe, Nagoya, and Osaka through March 19th. The outlook for Japan was becoming exceedingly bleak with the onset of these major air attacks. War materials were scarce, industry was being destroyed, and food shortages were increasing. It was apparent that the Empire would not be able to hold out much longer.

-end-

tj147

On October 8th, Admiral Nimitz appointed General Holland Smith to command the upcoming capture of Iwo Jima, with General Harry Schmidt controlling the landing operations. Iwo Jima was an important objective for the US because it would put the US Air Force within fighter range of Okinawa and mainland Japan. In addition, Japanese air strikes taking off from Iwo Jima were damaging the US air bases in the Marianas Islands. The Japanese were expecting an attack on the island, and had begun reinforcing their garrison there.

-end-

tj148

The US conducted its first naval bombardment of Iwo Jima on the night of November 11th.

-end-

tj149

With the aid of B-24 and B-29 bombers, a squadron of US ships attacked airfields and coastal defenses on Iwo Jima on December 8th. Raids continued for over two months in an effort to wear down the Japanese defenses before the main offensive.

-end-

tj150

On January 20th, the Japanese Imperial Headquarters made plans for the defense of mainland Japan in a directive called Sho-Go. The plan called for a strong defense in the Ryukyu Islands to

annihilate the Allied fleet.

-end-

tj151

On February 17th, the Japanese defended the coast of Iwo Jima with a fierce barrage of artillery, inflicting heavy casualties on US frogmen. The battleship Tennessee, the cruiser Pensacola, and three US destroyers were badly damaged.

-end-

tj152

The US 5th Amphibious Corps landed the 4th and 5th Marine Divisions on the beaches of Iwo Jima on February 19th. Initially, Japanese resistance was negligible; it became fierce as the Marines moved inland, inflicting heavy casualties on the US forces. By day's end a beachhead was established and 30,000 men landed, with damage to one heavy cruiser and three destroyers. On the island the Marines encountered a warren of underground fortifications and tunnels, caves, and pillboxes manned by 21,500 Japanese troops. Little progress was made that day toward Mount Suribachi, the 12-square-mile island's most dominant feature.

-end-

tj153

On February 21st, Japanese Kamikaze aircraft attacked the US landing fleet off Iwo Jima, sinking the carrier Bismarck Sea and damaging the Saratoga.

-end-

tj154

On February 23rd, against firm Japanese resistance, US marines surrounded Mount Suribachi, the highest point on Iwo Jima. A small group of men managed to reach the top and hoist the American flag, a moment captured in the famous photograph by Leo Rosenthal called Raising Old Glory on Iwo Jima.

-end-

tj155

The first B-29 Superfortress landed on Iwo Jima on March 4th, while intense fighting continued all over the island.

-end-

tj156

By March 14th, US Marines considered Iwo Jima secured, though there was still much Japanese resistance in pockets over the island, particularly in the north.

-end-

tj157

Operation Iceberg, the offensive to capture Okinawa, was launched on March 24th with the capture of the Kerama Islands to the southwest and the bombardment of Okinawa by a squadron of US battleships. Though airfields on Japan's Kyushu Island had been attacked several days earlier to protect the fleet assaulting Okinawa, Japanese Kamikaze aircraft inflicted heavy damage to the carriers Franklin and Wasp.

-end-

tj158

At dawn on March 26th, the remaining Japanese of the Iwo Jima garrison launched a suicide Banzai attack, aiming to kill as many US troops as possible before the end. 196 of the 200 attackers were killed. The US declared the capture of the island complete at 8:00am, after suffering the heaviest US losses in the entire war: 20,000 dead, missing and wounded. Japanese Commanding General Kuribayashi committed suicide the next day. The Japanese garrison of 21,500 had been annihilated; only some 1,000 survived. Many of those remained hidden on the island for some time before being captured, the last two surrendering as late as 1951.

-end-

tj159

On April 1st, Operation Iceberg, the capture of Okinawa, began at 8:30 a.m. as the US 5th Fleet landed the US 10th Army on the southwest coast of the island. The amphibious operation, the largest to date in the Pacific, included over 1,000 ships, 180,000 combatant troops, plus another 368,000 men in the 20th Air Force and the Marines tactical air force. Against these forces, the Japanese commander had 130,000 in all the Ryukyu Islands, and only 85,000 of these on

Okinawa. The force included only one tank division. The kamikaze pilots, formerly so valuable, were by this time reduced to cadets with little training or active duty. Though this tactic had proven unfortunate for the Japanese before, General Ushijima chose not to oppose the first stage of the US landing on the beaches, but concentrated his forces behind the Shuri defensive line in the south part of the island. This meant that on the first day the invasion fleet was able to land 50,000 men and establish a beachhead nine miles wide and three miles deep, at the price of damage to only one battleship, two destroyers, and four landing craft.

-end-

tj160

On April 6th, aircraft from the US 5th Fleet off Okinawa attacked the Japanese air base on Kyushu Island to prevent Kamikaze aircraft from assaulting the invasion fleet. Some 400 Kamikazes managed to get through, and, over this day and the next, hit 28 and sank three ships. Kamikazes would continue to plague the 5th Fleet for the next few weeks.

-end-

tj161

In the East China Sea 376 US aircraft attacked the Japanese 2nd Fleet moving through the Bungo Strait between Kyushu and Shikoku on April 7th. The Japanese Fleet was on its way, without air cover, to attack the US invasion fleet at Okinawa. The battleship Yamato, Japan's greatest sea vessel, had only enough fuel to reach Okinawa. Once there the Japanese planned to run the Yamato aground and use it as an artillery platform. The Yamato and the cruiser Yahagi, along with three destroyers, were sunk before reaching their destination. This was a critical blow that virtually wiped out the Japanese Navy.

-end-

tj162

On April 7th, the US began using Iwo Jima as a base for bomber operations against Japan. Because of the short range from Iwo Jima, P-51 escorts were used for the first time, reducing the loss of bombers.

-end-

tj163

US troops began a concentrated assault on the Shuri defense line, Okinawa, on April 9th, but were driven back with heavy losses by Japanese artillery. The Japanese continued fierce resistance for many weeks, making the Okinawa campaign a tedious, costly one for the Americans.

-end-

tj164

On April 10th, the US 27th Division landed on Tsugen Island, east of Okinawa, and quickly cleared Japanese resistance.

-end-

tj165

The US 77th Division landed on Ie Shima, west of Okinawa, on April 16th. Their progress was hampered at first by mines, but by day's end they had taken two-thirds of the island, including its airfield.

-end-

tj166

On April 20th, the US 6th Marine Division finished mopping up the Motobu peninsula, securing the northern part of Okinawa.

-end-

tj167

US Marines completed the capture of Naha, the capital of Okinawa, on May 27th. The city was in shambles.

-end-

tj168

On May 29th, the 1st Marine Division took Shuri Ridge, occupying Shuri Castle, abandoned by the Japanese.

-end-

tj169

The 6th Marine Division landed on the north coast of the Oroku peninsula on June 4th, taking half of the airfield located there.

-end-

tj170

On June 18th, General Buckner, commander of the US 10th Army, was killed by an enemy shell while inspecting the lines of the 8th Marines. He was replaced by General Geiger, the commander of the 2nd Marine Division. Buckner was the highest ranking US officer killed in World War II.

-end-

tj171

Using propaganda pamphlets and loudspeakers, the US forces in Okinawa persuaded some 350 Japanese troops to surrender on June 19th. Some troops began disorderly retreats, but others continued fierce resistance.

-end-

tj172

On June 22nd, Japanese resistance on Okinawa ended, and General Ushijima committed suicide. The battle for Okinawa had cost the US about 50,000 dead, wounded, and missing army and navy personnel. The Japanese lost 110,000 military and civilian lives; another 7,500 were taken prisoner. From the air bases on Okinawa, the strikes on Japan itself could begin.

-end-

tj173

The 36th Division captured Myitson, Burma on February 21st.

-end-

tj174

On February 22nd, two mechanized brigades and one tank division of the 17th Indian Division advanced towards Meiktila from the Nyaungu bridgehead. In two days they captured Taungtha.

-end-

tj175

The British 2nd Division began to cross the Irrawaddy at Ngazun, west of Mandalay, on February 24th, meeting immediate strong resistance from Japanese. By this time 20th Indian Division's bridgehead at Myinmu was consolidated with that at Ngazun.

-end-

tj176

On February 26th, the 19th Indian Division began an advance southwards, towards Mandalay.

-end-

tj177

Units of the British 4th Corps reached the outskirts of Meiktila on February 27th. The next day the 17th Indian division began the assault, facing resistance from Japanese General Honda's 33rd Army.

-end-

tj178

By February 4th, the 17th Indian Division of the British 4th Corps occupied sections of Meiktila. The Japanese had been unprepared for a full-scale attack, believing that the main thrust would come at Mandalay. Now they scrambled to organize counter-attacks.

-end-

tj179

On March 4th, the Japanese retook the town of Taungtha, effectively cutting off the 17th Indian Division at Meiktila from its supplies. Over the next few weeks supplies had to be flown in to one of Meiktila's several airstrips. Meanwhile, the Japanese were trying desperately to retake Meiktila, focusing their attacks on the airfields.

-end-

tj180

In northern Burma, Y Force, a regiment of the Chinese 38th Division, occupied Lashio on the Burma Road.

-end-

tj181

On March 9th, the 19th Indian Division penetrated the outskirts of Mandalay, the scene of much bitter fighting. Several days later the Japanese garrison at Maymyo, northeast of Mandalay, was captured, providing cover for the 19th Indian Divisions right flank and cutting the Japanese off from their supplies.

-end-

tj182

The 19th Indian Division captured Mandalay Hill in the northeast part of the city on March 11th. Mandalay was being quickly cleared of Japanese, though not without powerful resistance.

-end-

tj183

On March 17th, the 2nd British Division took Fort Ava, on the Irrawaddy just south of Mandalay.

-end-

tj184

The 19th Indian Division succeeded in capturing Fort Dufferin on March 20th, thereby securing the last major Japanese stronghold in Mandalay.

-end-

tj185

On March 24th, Y Force and a division of the 6th Chinese Army connected on the Burma Road near Hsipaw. This ended Chinese action in Burma.

-end-

tj186

General Honda ordered his forces to withdraw from the Meiktila area and move south to prevent a British advance at Pyawbwe on March 28th.

-end-

tj187

On March 30th, in the British 4th Corps sector, the 17th Indian Division and the 225th Armored Brigade mopped up in Meiktila and began to advance south toward Pyawbwe down the Sittang River. The Allies hoped to push on to Rangoon before the monsoon if possible, avoiding the necessity for a major amphibious offensive to take Rangoon (Operation Dracula). Simultaneously, the 33rd Corps moved southwest toward the Irrawaddy to cut off Japanese retreat to the Arakan on the west coast.

-end-

tj188

The British 36th Division reached Kyaukme on the Burma Road on March 31st. From here it was deployed to Mandalay to relieve the 19th Indian Division.

-end-

tj189

In view of the slow progress of General Slim's and General Leese's forces south toward Rangoon, Admiral Mountbatten decided to mount an amphibious landing at Rangoon as soon as possible to secure the port before the monsoon. He chose May 2nd for the launch date. A division from the 15th Corps would be deployed from the Arakan to carry out the Operation Dracula landings.

-end-

tj190

On April 6th, the 17th Indian Division captured Yindaw, then skirted Pyawbwe on the west to prevent Honda's retreat. The Japanese suffered tremendous losses.

-end-

tj191

The 19th Indian Division reached Toungoo on April 23rd, with General Honda's army scattering in front of it.

-end-

tj192

On April 25th, the 33rd Corps seized the Yenanguang oil fields from the Japanese.

-end-

tj193

In the British 4th Corps sector, the 17th Indian Division reached the outskirts of Pegu on April

29th.

-end-

tj194

On May 1st, Operation Dracula (the offensive to take Rangoon) began. Two Gurkha parachute battalions landed at Elephant Point, at the mouth of the Irrawaddy River, south of Rangoon. They met no Japanese resistance.

-end-

tj195

Operation Dracula continued on May 2nd as the 26th Indian Division landed at the mouth of the Rangoon River and advanced into Rangoon on the following day. Later that day the monsoon, around which Dracula had been carefully planned, broke ten days earlier than looked for. It mattered little. Like the paratroops preceding them, the landing forces met no enemy resistance. Due to heavy Allied bombing of the city in April, the Japanese had already evacuated.

Further north the 20th Indian Division of the 33rd Corps reached Prome on the Irrawaddy, effectively trapping the Japanese 28th Army in the Arakan.

-end-

tj196

On May 6th, near Hlegu, the 26th Indian Division, advancing north from Rangoon, connected with the 17th Indian Division, moving south from Pegu. This resulted in the isolation of the Japanese 28th Army from the remainder of Japanese forces in Burma.

-end-

tj197

On May 28th, British planners began a reorganization of commands in Burma for the operations in Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. Command of the 14th Army had been taken from General Slim earlier in the month in favor of Christison, who had more experience in amphibious operations. Angered over the decision, Slim was eventually appeased with his appointment as commander-in-chief of the Allied Forces in South-East Asia. The newly formed 12th Army was given General Stopford, and Christison took temporary command of the 14th Army until Dempsey could relieve him.

-end-

tj198

On July 3rd, General Honda launched an offensive to capture Waw. His primary objective was to distract the Allies from his plan to take Toungoo and to assist the Japanese 28th Army breaking out from its position in the Pegu Yomas. The battle for Waw lasted through the 11th, when the Japanese were repelled.

-end-

tj199

General Honda began an assault on the 17th Indian Division south of Toungoo on July 19th, attempting to clear the area so the Japanese 28th Army could leave the Pegu Yomas, cross the Sittang and advance to Malaya. By August 4th, the Allies had squelched the attempt. Of the 18,000 men left in the 28th Army, only 6,000 managed to reach the Sittang, and these were left in bad shape. This ended major fighting in Burma. From here the Allies would give their attention to the invasion of Malaya.

-end-

tj200

On May 12th, Churchill voiced his fears to President Truman that an 'iron curtain' might divide post-war Europe if the Allies did not take preventative steps. He proposed maintaining British and US forces at full strength in Europe until Soviet plans became clearer. Churchill was particularly concerned about Eastern Europe and the Balkans, and there had already been some indications that the Russians were determined to bring the governments of Bulgaria and Romania under their control. Truman believed that maintaining troops in Europe would only worsen the already chilly relations with the Soviets. At any rate, it was necessary to deploy all available US troops to the Pacific where the war with Japan still waged.

-end-

tj201

With the war in Europe at an end, President Truman wished to end Lend-Lease to Britain and the Soviets as soon as possible. Protests from Churchill and Stalin persuaded him to wait until the war with Japan was at an end.

-end-

tj202

On May 9th, Tito voiced his desire to administer Venezia Giulia, the northeast region of Italy. Fearing that Tito might try to seize parts of Austria as well, the Allies told him that the Venezia Giulia question would be resolved during later peace negotiations. He was eventually persuaded to accept a temporary division of administration in the region between Yugoslavia and the Allies.

-end-

tj203

In May of 1945, de Gaulle expressed his desire to participate in future meetings of the Big Three powers. Churchill and Truman were wary because of de Gaulle's interest in northwestern Italy, as well as his interest in Syria and Lebanon. Fearing that de Gaulle would only complicate negotiations with Stalin, Churchill and Truman agreed to exclude him from future conferences.

-end-

tj204

On June 5th, Generals Eisenhower, Montgomery, Zhukov and le Lattre de Tassigny signed an Allied declaration on the defeat of Germany. During this conference zones of occupation were established, for Berlin and all of Germany. The Soviets refused to let the operations of the Allied Control Council proceed beyond this until British and US forces, left east of Berlin after VE day, were withdrawn from the Russian zone. This began on July 1st. Two days later the Western Allies began occupying their respective zones in Berlin.

-end-

tj205

The Potsdam Conference convened on July 17th, after much previous consultation between Churchill and Truman. The powers easily agreed to set up a Council of Foreign Ministers to draw up peace treaties with Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Italy, and Romania. Disagreements quickly arose over Poland's borders, Soviet influence in the Balkans, British influence in Greece, and over Western involvement in the elections of Eastern European nations.

The conference was interrupted for the British General Elections. The leader of the British Labor Party, Clement Attlee, who had been attending the conference with Churchill, won the election by a wide margin, putting Churchill out of office. Attlee returned to the Potsdam Conference alone on the 28th.

Though the powers agreed on the de-Nazification of Germany, no accord could be reached over reparations policy. Finally it was left to each occupying power to determine policy for its respective zone. So ended the last meeting of all the Allies; hopes for continuing accord between the east and west were not high.

-end-

tj206

Discoveries made in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had led many scientists to believe that the construction of a nuclear bomb was possible. Leo Szilard, a Hungarian scientist, feared that the Germans were working on such a bomb. After failing to convince the US Navy, he communicated his fears to Albert Einstein, and urged him to write to President Roosevelt. Roosevelt did little in response at the time, aside from setting up the Uranium Committee to begin preliminary studies. In Britain, at the urging of scientist Henry Tizard, the British were also beginning investigations into nuclear weapons. Eventually the Maud Committee was established in Britain to begin development of the bomb.

-end-

tj207

After receiving copies of the Maud Committee report on uranium bombs, President Roosevelt had proposed a joint effort between the US and the British on the current British project to build a bomb, code-named Tube Alloys. Churchill refused this proposition in October of 1941. In December, the US began its own project, and in just a few months made impressive progress. Sir

John Anderson, in charge of the British Tube Alloys now urged Churchill to approach Roosevelt about cooperation.

-end-

tj208

In September of 1942, the US Army, under the direction of General Leslie Groves, set up the Manhattan Project. The scientific team, headed by Robert Oppenheimer, was based in Los Alamos, New Mexico. Over the next three years, Roosevelt poured over two billion dollars into this top-secret project. On paper, the British and the US were cooperating in the effort to build the bomb, but in fact, few of the developments taking place at Los Alamos were shared with the British. It was not until May of 1943 that Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to full cooperation on a joint project. Because of the availability of resources and the removal from the war arena, the manufacture would take place solely in the US.

-end-

tj209

On December 2nd, Enrico Fermi succeeded in creating the first self-perpetuating nuclear chain reaction. The experiment was conducted on a squash court below the football stadium of the University of Chicago. Meanwhile, to augment the Manhattan operations in New Mexico, a uranium production plant was set up in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. A plutonium plant was established in Hanford, Washington. Research went forward for developing both uranium and plutonium bombs.

-end-

tj210

On the night of February 27th, the British Special Operations Executive (an organization to support resistance movements in Europe), Norwegian officers, and Company Linge, attacked and severely damaged the heavy water production plant in German-occupied Norway, a serious setback to the German effort to build a nuclear bomb.

-end-

tj211

US 8th Army bombers attacked the heavy water plant in German-occupied Norway on November 16th. The plant had been badly damaged by a British and Norwegian resistance raid in February, but the Germans had managed to get the plant back on line. The Allies were still fearful that Germany would develop a nuclear bomb first, and heavy water was a key component in production. The second attack did little damage but forced the Germans to relocate the plant to Germany. This proved disastrous when SOE agents managed to sink the transport vessel carrying the equipment.

-end-

tj212

After two attacks on the heavy water plant in Norway, Hitler was compelled to move the works to Germany to continue work on a nuclear bomb. On February 20th, he was foiled when Norwegian SOE agents sabotaged the vessel transporting the plant's equipment on Lake Tinnsjo. This put an end to Germany's efforts to build nuclear weapons.

-end-

tj213

On July 16th, the first plutonium bomb (Fat Man) was detonated in a test at Alamogordo, New Mexico. The test was considered a complete success; the power of the bomb had been grossly underestimated by the scientists on the project. The war with Germany had ended over two months before. A uranium bomb (Thin Man) was already on its way to the US base in the Marianas Islands. A second plutonium bomb was under construction. Now all that had to be decided was how to use the bomb to end the war with Japan.

-end-

tj214

The Joint Chiefs of Staff appointed General Douglas MacArthur Commander-in-Chief of American land forces, and Admiral Chester Nimitz Commander-in-Chief of naval forces in the Pacific on April 3rd. MacArthur and Nimitz were directed to submit plans for the invasion of Japan. The two planned a two-part operation. The first stage would be launched around December 1st, Operation Olympic, the invasion of Kyushu Island. Operation Coronet, the invasion of Honshu, would follow

by March 1, 1946.

-end-

tj215

On April 5th, the Russian government told the Japanese ambassador in Moscow that it would renounce a five-year non-aggression treaty signed with Japan in 1941.

-end-

tj216

After assessing their current desperate military situation, the Japanese Supreme Council for the Conduct of War met to discuss a possible peace agreement. The Council considered asking the Russians to mediate between Japan and the US, in return for the surrender of Dairen, Port Arthur, railways in south Manchuria, and the northern Kuriles.

-end-

tj217

On May 25th, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff authorized Operation Downfall, the invasion of Japan, in a directive which confirmed Operations Olympic and Coronet, drawn up the previous month by MacArthur and Nimitz. The new directive moved the Olympic date to November 1st, with General Krueger's 6th Army carrying out the invasion. Coronet was confirmed for March 1, 1946, using the forces of Hodges' 1st Army and Eichelberger's 8th Army.

-end-

tj218

On May 28th, Stalin assured the Western Allies that Russia would declare war on Japan by mid-August.

-end-

tj219

Secretary of War Henry Stimson and the US Interim Committee met with President Truman on June 1st to make recommendations on the use of the atomic bomb. The committee proposed the soonest possible use of the bomb on a military target, with no advance warning as to the nature of the new weapon. A number of scientists involved in the Manhattan Project objected to this plan and recommended a demonstration before the United Nations. Ultimately the decision would be left to President Truman.

-end-

tj220

On June 6th, the Japanese Supreme Council declared that they would fight until the end to preserve the Japanese: national essence. Their final defense plan, Ketsu-Go, was to defeat US forces as they landed on the beaches of Japan. The Council intended to raise a massive force of civilians for the last-ditch effort.

-end-

tj221

As the outlook for Japan became graver, and the Supreme Council planned total war involving millions of civilians, Emperor Hirohito directed the Council to engage in peace negotiations with the enemy.

-end-

tj222

On July 4th, in answer to an inquiry from President Truman, Churchill gave his approval of the decision to use the atomic bomb against Japan.

-end-

tj223

Japanese employees of an international bank in Switzerland approached the head of the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) Switzerland, Allen Dulles, to discuss possible peace negotiations. Dulles reported to Truman that the Japanese were primarily concerned with the safety and position of Emperor Hirohito, whom they revered. Any peace negotiations would have to ensure the safety of the Emperor and his authority.

-end-

tj224

On July 26th, the Allies at the Potsdam Conference issued a proclamation demanding unconditional surrender of the Japanese as an alternative to 'complete destruction'. The Allies did

not indicate that they had an atomic bomb ready with which to deliver that destruction. According to the demands of the surrender Japan would be occupied and would cede all territories outside of its main islands. Also Japanese currently in authority and responsible for encouraging war were to surrender their government and military positions. There was no specific mention of the Emperor, and this was the most objectionable part of the proclamation.

-end-

tj225

Upon hearing the demands of the Allies detailed in the Potsdam Declaration, Japanese Premier Suzuki told the Japanese that the surrender demands would be ignored. Suzuki and other Japanese officials were disturbed by the declaration's failure to mention the fate of the Emperor. At this point the Japanese were also hoping to convince Russia to act as a mediator between Japan and the US. The US interpreted Suzuki's response as a solid refusal and continued with preparations to drop the bomb.

-end-

tj226

On August 6th, the B-29 Enola Gay carried out Operation Centerboard, the dropping of a uranium bomb on Japan. The Superfortress took off from Tinian Island in the Marianas at 2:10am, piloted by US Colonel Paul Tibbets. At 9:30 a.m. the Enola Gay dropped Little Boy over Hiroshima, a city on the south coast of Honshu Island. 92,000 people were killed instantly and many others died later of radiation effects.

-end-

tj227

Dropping the uranium bomb on Hiroshima three days before had failed to bring about the surrender of the Japanese, largely because the horrendous effects of the bomb were not yet known. The Supreme Council remained firm in its resolve to fight to the end. Consequently the US Chiefs of Staff ordered a second bomb. On August 9th, the B-29 Bock's Car, piloted by Major Charles Sweeney, dropped the plutonium Fat Man bomb on the city of Nagasaki, killing another 45,000 instantly and exposing thousands more to radiation. Late that night Emperor Hirohito tried to persuade the Council to accept the terms of the treaty, but still they refused.

-end-

tj228

On August 8th, the USSR declared war on Japan, fulfilling its promise to the Western Allies.

-end-

tj229

The Russians began their operations against the Japanese on August 9th, invading Manchukuo (Manchuria) at dawn. The objectives of the Russians were the occupation of Manchukuo and North Korea, the Kurile Islands, as well as the southern Sakhalin. Russian forces outnumbered the Japanese Kwantung Army three to one, and the Russians also enjoyed superior material resources.

The Kwantung Army was directed to defend Korea, which necessitated a withdrawal from Manchukuo. The Japanese Supreme Council argued over whether or not to accept the surrender terms proposed by the Allies from Potsdam, but could reach no agreement.

-end-

tj230

On August 10th, after the horrors at Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the declaration of war on Japan by Russia, Emperor Hirohito decreed that the surrender terms of the Potsdam Declaration would be accepted, in spite of opposition from some members of the Supreme Council. Hirohito's acceptance was transmitted to Truman. The only condition demanded by the Japanese was that the surrender would 'not comprise any demand which prejudices the prerogatives of the Emperor as sovereign ruler'. US Secretary of War Stimson advised Truman to accept this condition, since Hirohito was probably the only person capable of persuading his people to lay down their arms. Truman drafted a reply which was approved by the other powers and sent to Hirohito on the 11th.

-end-

tj231

After receiving a reply from President Truman regarding Japan's agreement to unconditional

surrender, Japanese government officials were made uneasy by the Allied demand that Japan's future form of government would be determined by free elections. This stipulation did not secure the position of the emperor. Nevertheless, on August 14th, Hirohito insisted that the conditions be accepted.

Meanwhile, a group of military extremists planned a coup to sabotage the acceptance of the peace terms. The plotters attempted to destroy Hirohito's recorded message that was to be broadcast to the people of Japan the next day. They failed to find the recording and the coup was aborted.

-end-

tj232

On August 14th, the Sino-Russian Treaty of Friendship and Alliance was signed. The treaty established the Nationalist Chiang Kai-shek as the leader of China instead of the Communist Mao Tse-tung. Russia also agreed to withdraw its forces from Manchuria when the war with Japan concluded. Concessions to the Russians included Outer Mongolian independence, access to the Manchurian Railway, possession of Port Arthur and parts of Port Dairen.

-end-

tj233

In a radio broadcast on August 15th, Emperor Hirohito announced the acceptance of unconditional surrender to the people of Japan. This was the first time the revered emperor had ever addressed the public. In Manchuria General Yamada refused to lay down arms until he received a written command.

-end-

tj234

On August 17th, General Prince Toshihiko Higashikuni became the new Prime Minister of Japan and formed a new government.

-end-

tj235

General Yamada, commander of Japanese forces in Manchuria, finally agreed to negotiate a surrender on August 18th after receiving a written order from Hirohito to do so. The surrender was signed the next day. Though hostilities were supposed to end on the 20th, the Russian Army continued to advance, trying to take as much territory as possible before the signing of the formal surrender in September.

-end-

tj236

On September 2nd, in Tokyo Bay aboard the US battleship Missouri, the Japanese foreign minister Mamoru Shigemitsu and Chief of Staff General Yoshijiro Umezo signed Japan's formal capitulation to the Allies. General MacArthur signed as the representative and Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers. The other signatories were General Blamey for Australia, Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser for Britain, Colonel M. Moore-Cosgrave for Canada, General Hsu Yung-chang for China, General Leclerc for France, Admiral Helfrich for the Netherlands, Air-Marshal Leonard Isitt for New Zealand, General Kuzma N. Derebianko for the USSR, and Admiral Nimitz for the United States.

Thus ended the bloodiest, most costly war in the history of humanity. Over 55 million people died in World War II, and the toll on human comfort, materials, and industry was tremendous. Though the threat of Hitler's Fascism had been removed, there was still no guarantee of world peace. On the contrary, in the months and years ahead the split between Communism and capitalism created new tensions, new fears, and new challenges to those peoples and governments interested in preserving humanity from more, and perhaps total, destruction.

-end-

tj237

On January 13th, at a conference in London, Allies and the governments-in-exile of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, Holland, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, and Yugoslavia pledged to find and punish those people responsible for war crimes and atrocities: through the channel of organized justice.

-end-

tj238

President Roosevelt informed the Axis powers on August 21st that those guilty of committing war crimes would be brought to justice and would 'answer for their acts'. Later, in October, Russia, Britain, and the US issued a declaration warning Germany that there would be war crimes trials after the war. This was called the St. Jame's Declaration.

-end-

tj239

On October 7th, the Allied powers agreed to establish a United Nations commission to keep track of war crimes. Later that month the first meeting of the UNWCC (United Nations War Crimes Commission) was held. The members were Australia, Belgium, Britain, Canada, China, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, Holland, India, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Poland, South Africa, the US and Yugoslavia.

-end-

tj240

Beginning December 15th, Russian officials held a public trial in the Kharkov area of four German defendants accused of war crimes. The Germans were found guilty, after testifying about the methods used to kill Russian citizens: gas vans. They were executed on December 19th. Five other Germans were found guilty in absentia.

-end-

tj241

On June 16th, the British foreign secretary Anthony Eden made a list of the top German offenders in war crimes. By September, Churchill and Roosevelt had decided that Nazi leaders would be shot without a trial, but Stalin insisted that trials be held. Roosevelt agreed to international trials in January, 1945, a month after the SS had killed 80 US troops captured during the Ardennes counter-offensive. Britain modified its summary execution policy during a Tripartite foreign ministers conference at San Francisco in May. Meanwhile, Allied nations were filing reports of war crimes with the United Nations War Crimes Commission.

-end-

tj242

On August 8th, the London Charter established the International Military Tribunal which would try Nazi war criminals as indicted by the major powers. Defendants would be tried for crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. By the end of August, the list of German defendants (who were being brought to the prison at Nuremberg) was complete and indictments were issued on October 18th. The list comprised 24 names including Bormann, Doenitz, Goering, Hess, and Speer.

-end-

tj243

The Nuremberg trials began on November 20th, 1945, and lasted nearly a year. The defendants were tried for war crimes, crimes against peace, and crimes against humanity. Eleven were given the death sentence; all but Goering, who committed suicide, were hung on October 16, 1946. Of the remaining defendants, three were given life sentences, one a 15-year sentence, and one a 10-year sentence. Three were acquitted.

-end-

tj244

On January 29th, 1946, the Far East International War Tribunal was established to try major Japanese war criminals. By April 26th, indictments had been issued for murder, crimes against peace, and 'other conventional war crimes and crimes against humanity'. Much public opinion was for indicting Emperor Hirohito, but the US vetoed this for fear of destroying the Japanese nation.

-end-

tj245

The Tokyo International War Crimes trial convened on June 3, 1946. All the defendants were found guilty. Seven of them were given the death sentence and were executed on December 23, 1948. Sixteen were given life sentences, and the rest received shorter prison sentences.

-end-

tj246

Delegates from Britain, the USSR, the US, and China attended a conference in Washington, DC, to plan the organization of the United Nations. The delegates agreed that permanent membership to the Security Council would be given to Britain, China, France, the USSR, and the US. Other nations would be given temporary status.

-end-

tj247

From April 25th to June 25th, delegates from 50 nations met at a conference in San Francisco to create the United Nations charter. The charter went into effect in October, with 51 nations joining, all having previously declared war on the Axis.

-end-

tj248

On March 5, 1946, Winston Churchill delivered a speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, in which he stated that 'an iron curtain [had] descended across the [European] Continent'. Churchill's speech reflected growing tension between the Western Powers and the Soviet Union over the governments of eastern European nations and the administration of Germany.

-end-

tj249

On March 12th, in an address to Congress, President Truman said 'It must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressures'. This sentiment, which became known as the Truman Doctrine, soon dominated US foreign policy.

-end-

tj250

On June 5, 1947, General George Marshall gave a speech at Harvard University which laid the foundations for the Marshall Plan. Marshall proposed that the United States establish a program of aid to European nations devastated by war to prevent them from being overcome or influenced by Communism. Western European nations embraced the plan, but Stalin would not allow eastern European nations to participate. This served to widen an already large gap in the economies and governing policies of eastern and western Europe.

-end-

txtj1

GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918.

Tired of the Great War of 1914-1918 and anticipating defeat at the hands of the allies, the sailors of the German Grand Fleet at Kiel organized a peace demonstration on November 3, 1918. The idea gained popularity among all the German forces and a system of sailor's and worker's councils rapidly formed.

-end-

txtj2

GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918.

As the end of the Great War of 1914-1918 drew near and defeat at the hands of the allies seemed likely, Austria-Hungary agreed to an armistice. The armistice was signed on November 4, 1918.

-end-

txtj3

GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918.

Following attacks by the Allies on the Central Powers in August of 1918, the military forces and civilians of the Central Power countries grew more uneasy. On November 8th, just four days after Austria-Hungary signed an armistice, German Kaiser Wilhelm took the advice of Chancellor Prince Max of Baden and abdicated his office. After Wilhelm left for Holland, the Socialist Friedrich Ebert formed a new government in Berlin.

-end-

txtj4

GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918.

On November 9, 1918, in a railway coach in the Compiegne forest of France, the Great War drew

closer to a resolution. German and Allied delegates met to work out the details of an armistice. Allied demands were stiff. The terms of the armistice stipulated that Germany would agree to withdraw from all of its occupied territories, including Alsace-Lorraine, which had been held by Germans for 47 years. In addition, the agreement called for the demilitarization of the Rhineland and the annulment of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed with the Russians only eight months before.

On November 11, 1918, two days after German and Allied delegates first met, the armistice was signed. All firing on the Western Front ended a few hours later. The last German troops left Belgium and France on November 25, 1918, and by December 1, Allied troops moved to occupy the Rhineland and Saarland areas. The Great War of 1914-1918 was drawing to a close.

-end-

txtj5

GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918.

On January 6, 1919, two months after the German government signed an armistice with the Allies, Russian-backed communists in Berlin led the six day Spartacist Revolt. The government enlisted the Freikorps, a group of anti-Communist soldiers, to put down the revolt.

-end-

txtj6

GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918.

On January 18, 1919 a conference of the Allied Forces convened to establish peace terms to present to the defeated Central Powers. On May 7, 1919, the Allies gave Germany 15 days to reply to the terms of surrender proposed in the Treaty of Versailles. The Weimar Republic (established by the January 19th elections in Germany) objected to the terms which imposed heavy loss of territory and obliged Germany to pay enormous reparations. They replied with a list of counter-proposals. Finally, on June 16th, the Allies handed down a seven-day ultimatum for reaching a peace agreement.

At the same peace conference, the Allies also discussed the possibility of forming an association of nations to protect the independence and territory of existing states, an idea that flowered into the League of Nations. President Woodrow Wilson was a leading advocate for the League, and it was the United States-Great Britain version of the league that was adopted. It was decided that the new organization would be a voluntary association of countries which would strive to prevent another world war by encouraging disarmament and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The League of Nations would consist of Britain, Japan, Italy, the United States and France, with four smaller nations serving on a temporary basis. Unfortunately, the United States Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles because the country's citizens wanted to avoid the involvement in European conflicts that membership in the League guaranteed. The United States refusal to join weakened the League considerably.

The League covenant was included in each of the peace treaties, including the proposed Treaty of Versailles with Germany, but the defeated nations were not invited to join.

-end-

txtj7

GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918.

The January 19th elections in Germany resulted in a new government led by Socialist Friedrich Ebert's majority party. They chose Weimar, a city 150 miles southwest of Berlin as the seat of government. This was the beginning of the Weimar Republic. With the aid of the Freikorps, the new republic put down left wing insurgencies throughout Germany during the month of January. The Spartacists (German Communists) fled to Bavaria, which had already declared itself an independent socialist republic in December of the previous year.

-end-

txtj8

GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918

On March 4, 1919 the Communist International (Comintern) was formed in Moscow, Russia. This agency was established for the purpose of spreading Communist revolution abroad.

-end-

txtj9

GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918.

On March 4, 1919, Spartacists led a strike and fighting in Germany, centered in the city of Berlin. The Freikorps, the anti-Communist arm of the Weimar Republic, put down the revolt in less than two weeks.

-end-

txtj10

GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918.

On March 21, 1919, Communist Bela Kun declared an independent Hungarian Socialist Republic.

-end-

txtj11

GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918.

Between April 10, 1919 and May 3, 1919, Bavaria was torn by civil war. Bavaria had declared itself an independent socialist republic on December 8th of the previous year. During the upheaval, the forces of the left were put down by the Freikorps, a group of anti-Communist soldiers cooperating with the new Weimar Republic.

-end-

txtj12

GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918.

On June 28, 1919, Germany and the Allies signed the Treaty of Versailles. The signing of this treaty created problems for the new Weimar Republic, which had been forced by the Allies to accept the harsh terms of the treaty. The acceptance of the treaty boosted a growing resentment among the German people. Germany lost large amounts of territory and colonial possessions to Britain, France, South Africa, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, including the profitable coal-mining region of Saarland, which was given to France by the League of Nations. In addition, Germany was to pay war reparations totaling \$33 billion by May of 1921 -- an impossible task, particularly with the loss of the Saarland area. Further restrictions were put on the size of Germany's armed forces and supply of offensive weapons, and the country's war industry was to be entirely dismantled. The treaty also called for Allied occupation of the west bank of the Rhine for a period of fifteen years.

Over the fourteen months following the Treaty of Versailles, Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary and Turkey were all forced to sign similar treaties. Though the Great War came to an end when the last of these treaties was closed, the defeated nations remained discontent, angered primarily over their losses of territory, restrictions on their military, and large war reparations. Marxist-Leninism and Fascism were also beginning to take hold in Europe. All of these factors contributed to the origins of World War II.

To ensure lasting peace and to avoid a repeat of the destruction that was the Great War, the Allies had decided to form a League of Nations which would encourage peace and advocate disarmament. Provision for this league was written into each peace treaty, including the Treaty of Versailles; however, the defeated nations were not invited to participate.

-end-

txtj13

GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918.

On September 10, 1918, less than three months after Germany signed the Treaty of Versailles with the Allied Powers, Austria signed the Treaty of St. Germain. The terms of the treaty called for the creation of three new states, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia, out of the existing Austro-Hungarian Empire. The division resulted from the Allies' belief that unrest among ethnic groups of the old Empire had been a contributing cause to the Great War. Austria also had to give territory to Italy and Rumania, pay reparations, and limit the size of its army. In addition, the treaty forbade any future alliance between Austria and Germany.

-end-

txtj14

GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918.

On November 27, 1919, three months after signing an armistice with the Allies, Bulgaria signed the Treaty of Neuilly. The terms of the treaty required Bulgaria to cede territory to Greece and Romania, to limit the size of its army and to pay war reparations. The Treaty of Neuilly was signed five months after Germany and the Allies signed the Treaty of Versailles.

-end-

txtj15

GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918.

In March of 1920, one year after Bela Kun had declared a Hungarian Socialist Republic, Kun was overthrown by the right-wing dictator Miklos Horthy. On June 4, 1920, Horthy signed the Treaty of Trianon with the Allies. This occurred almost one year after the Germans and Allies signed the Treaty of Versailles.

-end-

txtj16

GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918.

On August 10, 1920, Turkey signed the Treaty of Sevres, the final treaty which ended the Great War of 1914-1918. Turkey signed almost 14 months after the Germans and Allies closed the Treaty of Versailles. Turkey (the Ottoman Empire) was forced to cede Syria, Britain Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq to France as League of Nations mandates. Turkey also ceded the Dodecanes Islands to Italy. Greece occupied areas of Turkey around the Bosphorus Strait, which was demilitarized.

-end-

txtj17

On December 8, 1918, Bavaria claimed itself a socialist republic, independent from Germany.

-end-

txtj18

On January 8th, 1918, before the Paris Peace Conference, President Woodrow Wilson announced the United States' war aims. The world was appalled by the devastation of World War I, and Wilson outlined a plan for an association of nations that would encourage disarmament and cooperation among the nations so future carnage could be avoided. His idea was adopted and expanded into the League of Nations at the Paris Peace Conference later that month.

-end-

txtj19

On November 19, 1919, the United States Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, largely because the nation's citizens did not want membership in the League of Nations. Americans were anxious to avoid involvement in another world war, and felt that their independence in foreign affairs would be challenged by the League's authority.

-end-

txtj20

On March 19, 1920, the United States Senate refused to approve membership in the League of Nations for the second time in four months. The absence of the United States weakened the influence of the League on the affairs of the world.

-end-

txtj21

In November of 1920 the League of Nations met for the first time. Forty-four countries attended the session in Geneva, Switzerland. The United States had refused to join; the Soviet Union had not been invited. Other absent nations were the recently defeated Central Powers: Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary and Turkey.

Though the League had grown out of President Woodrow Wilson's vision, the United States declined to join because American popular support for getting involved in European affairs was low. The absence of the United States hindered the League's influence in world affairs. But the League's inability to impose peaceful solutions to world problems was also a severe limitation.

The League was successful promoting naval disarmament and encouraging peace treaties. Between 1924 and 1932 it effectively prevented serious conflict between Britain and Turkey, Bulgaria and Greece, Poland and Lithuania, and Peru and Columbia. But Japanese aggression

in China, the rise of Fascism in Italy, and Hitler's popularity in Nazi Germany during the early 30s would eventually overcome the League's peace-keeping abilities.

-end-

txtj22

In April of 1920, Poland attacked Russia, trying to add territory to its eastern border. Russia, already troubled by civil war, counter-attacked, and Britain and France fearfully watched Russia push the Poles all the way back to Warsaw. The newly formed League of Nations had not yet held its first assembly, and was unable to intervene. By October, Poland drove the Russian army back onto its own land. On March 18, 1921, both nations signed the Treaty of Riga, which ended the fighting and allowed Poland to keep its territorial gains.

-end-

txtj23

In 1921 United States President Warren Harding hosted a Naval Conference in Washington, DC. The conference convened on November 11th, and resulted in the Washington Naval Treaty, which was signed by Britain, France, Japan and the United States on February 6th of the following year.

-end-

txtj24

On February 6, 1922 Britain, France, Japan, and the United States achieved a disarmament agreement to limit rivalry in the Pacific Ocean. The Washington Naval Treaty called for the participating nations to cease production of capital war ships for a period of ten years, and to limit existing capital warships to a ratio of 5 United States, 5 British, and 3 Japanese to 1.75 French. The Washington Naval Treaty was the result of a Naval Conference convened by President Warren Harding the preceding year.

-end-

txtj25

In April of 1922, Germany and Russia formed an alliance which allowed Germany to secretly build arms and train officers in Russia. The agreement, the Treaty of Rapallo, was an obvious violation of the Treaty of Versailles. A month later the Allies agreed to let Germany build civilian aircraft within its own borders.

-end-

txtj26

In 1920, the Sultan of Turkey had signed the Treaty of Sevres with the Allies, the last of the treaties ending the Great War. But in early 1921, the Sultan was ousted by Kemal Ataturk, who was determined to push the Allies out of Turkey. By 1922 he had created havoc among the Greeks at Smyrna and was threatening the British stationed within Turkish borders at Chanak. On July 24, 1923, the Allies signed the Treaty of Lausanne with Turkey, dropping all previous claims within that nation's borders.

-end-

txtj27

On December 1, 1925, Italy and Britain became guardians of the national borders of Western Europe when they signed the Locarno Treaties in Switzerland.

-end-

txtj28

On September 10, 1926, Germany became the newest member of the League of Nations.

-end-

txtj29

At the 1927 International Naval Conference at Geneva, United States delegates proposed an agreement to reduce the ratio of warships; however, Britain and Japan both refused the proposal.

-end-

txtj30

On August 27, 1928, over sixty of the world's nations vowed to ban war when they signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact.

-end-

txtj31

On April 22, 1930, at the urging of President Herbert Hoover, Britain, the United States and Japan

decided to limit cruisers, destroyers and submarines to the same ratios as those established for capital warships by the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922. Production of capital warships would be halted for an additional five years. Though France and Italy both attended the conference, neither signed the treaty because they failed to resolve their conflicting claims.

-end-

txtj32

On February 2, 1932, an International Disarmament Conference that lasted over two years convened in Geneva, Switzerland. The purpose of the conference was to persuade European nations to disarm to the same level forced upon Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. The effort failed when France refused to the agreement and Germany demanded the right to re-arm.

-end-

txtj39

Italy had been one of the victors in the Great War of 1914-1918; however, Italians were unhappy with the results of the war. The Treaty of Versailles had not ceded enough territory to Italy. Italians on the political right feared leftist revolution, particularly after a series of Socialist strikes. Soldiers and other patriots banded together to oppose Socialist strikes and possible revolution. The first such organization was the Fascio di Combattimento, founded on March 23, 1919, and led by Benito Mussolini, a former Socialist himself. The Fascists (also called Blackshirts because of their uniforms) were named for the fasces, a bundle of rods with an axe, the badge of authority of ancient Roman magistrates.

-end-

txtj40

In the 1919 Italian national elections, the Socialists had won the majority of votes, leaving the Fascist party with little power. On April 15, 1919, the Fascists used terror tactics to break up a Socialist demonstration. This was one of the few early Fascist successes. During the following year the Fascists began to gain more popular support, as land-owning, farming and professional Italians, particularly in the Po Valley, became unhappy with the way the Socialist-dominated government was acceding to the demands of the workers.

-end-

txtj41

In the Italian national elections in May of 1921, the increasingly popular Fascist party won 35 government seats. Benito Mussolini was elected as one of Italy's new deputies.

-end-

txtj42

In September of 1921 the Fascists began a practice of seizing a city from the government by taking control of the city's public utilities. Ravenna was the first such city taken.

-end-

txtj43

In May of 1922, Fascists moved in and took control of Ferrara from the government by seizing the public utilities of the city.

-end-

txtj44

In May of 1922, Fascists moved in and took control of Bologna from the government by seizing the public utilities of the city.

-end-

txtj45

In August of 1922 the Socialists in Italy declared a general strike. The government, largely in the hands of the Socialist party, was slow to break the strike. The Fascists stepped in and seized control of the public transportation systems.

-end-

txtj46

The government of Italy, controlled largely by the Socialist party, was weak and ineffectual in dealing with strikes. On October 28th, 1922, the Fascists, led by Benito Mussolini, began to seize control of Northern Italy. In Rome, King Victor Emmanuel feared civil war and refused to sign a proclamation of a state of emergency. Instead, he waited for Mussolini to arrive in Rome. Two days later the king invited Mussolini to join the government. The Fascists had succeeded in

taking control of Italy, with Mussolini as dictator.

-end-

txtj47

The German people were unhappy with the Weimar government's capitulation to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. A result of this dissatisfaction was the founding of the Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (German Workers' Party) in 1919 by Anton Drexler, Karl Harrer and Dietrich Eckart. The Weimar government sent Adolph Hitler to Munich to check up on the activities of the Worker's party, but instead of reporting back to the government, Hitler joined the subversives and became the Party's spokesperson. In a speech presented in the Hofbrauhaus in Munich, on February 20, 1920, Hitler stated the Party's policies of seeking a unified Germany which excluded the citizenship of Jews, and called for the breaking of the Treaties of Versailles and Saint-Germain.

-end-

txtj48

On March 13, 1920, Wolfgang Kapp and General von Luetwitz led the Freikorps in a putsch against the Weimar government in Berlin. Lacking army support, the Weimar government was forced to escape to Dresden. Following a strike by the workers, Kapp and von Luetwitz also fled. The Communists took advantage of the ensuing chaos by attempting uprisings of their own, which were contained by the army and the anti-Communist Freikorps. The Freikorps, once the Weimar government's arm, was now its enemy. The Weimar officials believed they had to eliminate the Freikorps; for the time being, they only succeeded in forcing them underground.

-end-

txtj49

On April 1, 1920, the German Workers' Party changed its name to the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei). Adolph Hitler officially left the German army and became the head of the Party.

-end-

txtj50

The Treaty of Versailles, which ended Germany's participation in the Great War of 1914-1918, called for heavy war reparations by Germany. Economist John Maynard Keynes had predicted that the \$33 billion demand would be impossible for Germany to meet. In April of 1921 the reparations agreement went into effect; as a result, the Deutschmark took an inevitable dive.

-end-

txtj51

The Treaty of Versailles had stipulated that the Upper Silesia region of Germany would be ceded to Poland, but later the Allies allowed a plebiscite, or popular vote by the people living in the region, giving them the choice of remaining a part of Germany. The majority vote was to remain with Germany. But on May 3, 1921, Polish irregulars, ignoring the outcome of the plebiscite, marched on Upper Silesia. France forbade the German army to turn the irregulars back, and the Weimar Government was forced to call in the troublesome Freikorps to fight them. After the Poles withdrew, the Weimar government forced the Freikorps back underground.

-end-

txtj52

The anti-Communist Freikorps were unhappy with the weakness of the Weimar government. In March of 1920 the Freikorps had led an unsuccessful putsch against the government, which resulted in the Freikorps being driven underground. The Weimar government only used the Freikorps in times of absolute necessity, as was the case when they turned Polish troops out of Upper Silesia in May of 1921. After this event, the Freikorps was once again forced underground. The Freikorps retaliated by murdering several Weimar officials, including Foreign Minister Walter Rathenau on June 24, 1922.

-end-

txtj53

Germany was unable to keep up with the reparations payments demanded in the Treaty of Versailles. In January of 1923, French troops moved in and took over the Ruhr Valley, a valuable industrial region in Germany. This action contributed to runaway inflation; the German mark went from 7,000 marks to the dollar in January, to one million marks to the dollar eight months later.

The Germans' loathing for the Allies and the Treaty of Versailles grew accordingly.

-end-

txtj54

The French were occupying the Ruhr, Germany's most valuable industrial region; inflation was rising. The Weimar government was plagued with problems. The new chancellor, Gustav Stresemann, realized that with its weak economy, Germany could not resist the demands of the Allies. In an action that angered Germans on the far political left and right, Stresemann declared a state of emergency, called for an end to resistance to French occupation, and resumed reparations payments. Stresemann's promises satisfied the Allies and the French troops withdrew in August.

-end-

txtj55

Resistance to Chancellor Stresemann and the Weimar government was strong in Bavaria. Resistance grew even stronger after the September 26th state of emergency declaration, in which Stresemann had capitulated to the Allies and resumed payment of war reparations. Adolph Hitler took advantage of the sentiments in Bavaria to foster the growth of right-wing groups interested in ousting the Weimar government and abrogating the Treaty of Versailles.

Rallying the rightist NSDAP, Hitler and Erich Ludendorff led a putsch, or coup d'etat, in the city of Munich on November 9, 1923. The attempt resulted in Hitler's arrest and imprisonment and the banning of the NSDAP. It was during his nine month sentence at Landsberg that Hitler wrote Mein Kampf. His prison term succeeded in raising Hitler to martyr status in Bavaria and for other rightists in Germany.

-end-

txtj56

Inflation, aggravated by payment of enormous war reparations, was a major headache for the Weimar government in 1923. Resentment over the government's capitulation to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, which called for the high payments, was expressed in increased popular support for right-wing groups determined to overthrow Chancellor Stresemann. In April of 1924, the Allies introduced a modified payment schedule, the Dawes Plan, named for the director of the United States Bureau of the Budget, Charles G. Dawes. The new payments, though difficult to meet, allowed some recovery of the German economy. As a result, popular support for the extreme right fell again.

-end-

txtj57

Adolph Hitler spent nine months imprisoned at Landsberg Fortress near Munich following his involvement in the attempted coup of November 9, 1923. While serving this sentence (shortened from five years) he penned Mein Kampf, a statement of his political philosophies. Hitler was released on probation on December 20, 1924.

-end-

txtj58

Shortly after Hitler's release from Landsberg Fortress, the Bavarian government lifted its ban of the NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers' Party). The organization was officially revived on February 27th, 1925 in a Munich rally. Hitler addressed the political gathering and was immediately prohibited by the government from speaking in public again. His prohibition lasted until May of 1927. Hitler's enforced silence and a lack of money curtailed the activities of the NSDAP.

-end-

txtj59

By January of 1927, the Allies were satisfied with Germany's maintenance of reparations payments and had admitted Germany to the League of Nations. The Inter-Allied Disarmament Commission was officially withdrawn from German soil.

-end-

txtj60

In the May, 1928 elections of the German parliament, the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) won 12 of 491 positions. Adolph Hitler did not run for office, since he was still a

citizen of Austria, but this election marked a turning point in Hitler's strategy of defeating the Weimar government. His earlier coup attempt had failed and slowed him down; now he would battle the Weimar Republic through legal elections.

-end-

txtj61

In August of 1929 the Allies tried to aid the recovery of Germany's economy by introducing the Young Plan, an alteration to the payment plan that would give Germany until 1988 to complete reparations payments. The Allies also agreed to evacuate the Rhineland over a three month period. The right in Germany criticized the Young Plan for extending Germany's supposed enslavement to the Allies. This attempt to aid the economy's recovery was completely countered by the Wall Street crash in October. Economic conditions worsened and the German populace became restive.

-end-

txtj62

The suffering economy was the major focus of political interest that led to the September, 1930 Reichstag elections. Campaigning between the Nazi party and the Communist party was frequently violent. Though the Nazis took 107 seats in the Reichstag, Chancellor Heinrich Brüning managed to keep their influence to a minimum. But Brüning's economic policies contributed to unemployment and led to increased support for both the Nazi and Communist parties.

-end-

txtj63

By the March 13, 1932 presidential election in Germany, the Nazis had grown to become the country's second largest party. Adolph Hitler had become a German citizen, and he ran against Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, taking 30 percent of the vote. Election rules required a majority victory, and a second election took place a month later. Von Hindenburg won with 53 percent of the final vote. Hitler finished with nearly 37 percent, and Ernst Thälmann, the Communist party leader, took the remainder.

-end-

txtj64

At a conference in Lausanne, Switzerland, the Allies agreed that the remainder of Germany's war reparations bill should be canceled.

-end-

txtj65

Fritz von Papen had succeeded Heinrich von Brüning as chancellor, but von Papen was an unpopular choice and an election was called for July 31st, 1932. The NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers' Party) won over a third of the seats. Adolph Hitler refused to join any of the coalitions, forcing yet another election. In the November 6th election, the NSDAP lost 34 seats because von Papen's actions at the Geneva Disarmament Conference, as well as improvements in the economy, earned him an increase in popular support. Still, President von Hindenburg, who feared that the army would refuse to support von Papen, appointed General Kurt von Schleicher as chancellor in his place on December 2, 1932.

-end-

txtj66

The results of two elections in July and November of 1932 were overturned when President Paul von Hindenburg appointed General Kurt von Schleicher as German Chancellor. Von Hindenburg and von Schleicher had hoped to split the Nazi party in half, weaning those further on the political left away from Hitler. The attempt failed, and furthermore, Hitler formed an alliance with Fritz von Papen, whose appointment as Chancellor had precipitated the round of elections in the first place. Von Schleicher was unable to rule against the Hitler-von Papen duo, and President von Hindenburg, desperate to see a workable government, relieved him of his duties and appointed Hitler in his place. Von Papen served as vice-chancellor in the new arrangement.

-end-

txtj67

As the new chancellor of Germany, Adolph Hitler scheduled another election for March 5th, hoping the Nazis would win more seats. On February 27th, Marinus van der Lubbe, a Dutch

man, is alleged to have set the Reichstag on fire. There is still some question about the origins of the fire. Some believe that the Nazis themselves set it so Hitler could persuade President von Hindenburg that a Communist uprising was in the works. Whatever the origins of the fire, von Hindenburg responded to Hitler's claims by restricting civil liberties.

-end-

txtj68

After becoming Chancellor, Hitler called for a new Reichstag election. The Nazis only won 44 percent of the seats, but by manipulating the Reichstag with the fear of a Communist uprising, Hitler managed to get the Enabling Act passed. The effect of the Enabling Act was to eliminate parties other than the NSDAP. Hitler now had complete control of the Reichstag.

-end-

txtj69

On August 2, 1934, German President Paul von Hindenburg died, leaving Chancellor Adolph Hitler in absolute power.

-end-

txtj70

The region of Manchuria in China was a valuable area of natural resources, coveted by Japan since its 1904-1905 war with Russia. Following this war, the Japanese Kwantung Army had settled in the southern part of the region. For years, anxious to appease the Allied powers and democratic nations of the West, Japan had been careful to keep a low profile in Manchuria, although she viewed the economic control of China as her ticket to becoming a world power.

Following World War I, the idealistic young Japanese pushed for and gained universal suffrage in Japan, a society that had long lived under a corrupt feudal system. The rapidly changing political climate in Japan, accompanied by corruption and intrigue, forced many Japanese to political extremes on both the right and left. A faltering economy and rapid population growth made Japanese nationalists look with more and more longing toward Manchuria.

Manchuria was controlled by the Chinese warlord, Marshal Chang. Two Japanese nationalists serving as colonels in the Kwantung Army decided to take Manchuria by assassinating Chang. They arranged to have Chang's train mined to get him out of the way. The plot was successful and Chang died on June 4, 1928.

-end-

txtj71

Two colonels in the Japanese Kwantung Army had acted independently when they arranged for the assassination of Chinese warlord Marshal Chang in Manchuria. Both extreme nationalists, Kanji Ishihari and Seishiro Itagaki wished to seize Manchuria as a means of economic gain for Japan. After killing Chang, they arranged to blow up a railway adjacent to a Chinese Army barracks in Mukden, the principle city of Manchuria. In the ensuing chaos, the Kwantung Army was able to move in on the pretext of setting the city to rights. The Japanese government tried to stop the unauthorized military action, but the general dispatched to Mukden from Tokyo ended up complying with the plotters and Manchuria was taken by the Kwantung Army.

-end-

txtj72

After the introduction of universal suffrage in Japan in 1924, secret societies of nationalists sprang up. The societies consisted mainly of young Japanese army officers interested in overthrowing the Tokyo government and pursuing the economic exploitation of China. On October 17, 1931, one such secret organization, the Cherry Society (Sakurakai) attempted a coup. The coup was detected early and prevented, but because of widespread public sympathy for the Cherry Society, the conspirators received only mild sentences.

-end-

txtj73

Because of public sympathy for the secret Cherry Society, its attempted October coup had gone barely punished. Following the coup attempt, there were several assassinations of politicians and financiers in Tokyo, including Japanese Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai on May 15, 1932. Though the assassins went to trial, they too received mild sentences.

-end-

txtj74

Though the League of Nations deplored Japanese actions in Manchuria, only the United States and Russia would have been able to suppress Japanese aggression, and neither nation was a member of the League. In 1933 the member nations finally issued a formal protest to Japan. Japan, more interested in control of the Manchukuo state it had established in Manchuria, chose to renounce her membership in the League.

-end-

txtj75

Anxious to assert control, Japan issued a statement on April 17, 1934 claiming sole responsibility for political authority and security in the Far East.

-end-

txtj76

On December 29, 1934, at a Naval Conference in London, Japan warned conference delegates that it would throw off all naval treaty restrictions in two years.

-end-

txtj77

On February 26th, 1935, officers of the Japanese army attempted another major coup, in which several government officials were killed. The navy helped subdue the attempt, and the leaders were all shot. The army's influence on the government increased since only the army could prevent future coup attempts. The young nationalists in the military were becoming stronger.

-end-

txtj78

War between Mao Tse-tung's Communists and Chiang Kai-shek's nationalists in China had been going on for almost a decade. Japan, having lost her democratic allies, and fearing spreading communism, looked to Germany for support. On November 25, 1936, Japan and Germany signed the Anti-Comintern Pact to form an alliance against Communism.

-end-

txtj79

On November 6, 1937, nearly one year after Japan and Germany formed an anti-Communist alliance, Italy joined them by entering the Anti-Comintern Pact.

-end-

txtj80

Since the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, Japan had troops permanently stationed in Peking, China. On July 7, 1937, there were shots fired at Marco Polo Bridge in Peking; to this day, no one knows for certain if the shots were intentional. Once the shooting began, it was impossible to stop it. The Japanese army stationed in Manchukuo (the Japanese puppet-state in Manchuria) quickly moved in to the area. Chiang Kai-shek refused to withdraw his own troops, and the war was on.

-end-

txtj81

Two weeks after the first shots were fired at Marco Polo Bridge, Peking, Japanese and Chinese engaged in their first major battle at Langfang, just south of Peking. On the following day, Japan demanded that Chiang Kai-shek withdraw his troops from the city, but he refused. Within days, the Kwantung Army (Japan) flooded into Northern China.

-end-

txtj82

Following the Anti-Comintern Pact among Japan, Germany, and Italy, and Japanese aggression in China, the Soviet Union sought reassurance from China that relations between the Soviet Union and China would remain peaceful. This resulted in the Sino-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, forged in August of 1937. In the face of the Japanese threat, Chinese Communist Mao Tse-tung agreed to suspend hostility against Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist government.

-end-

txtj83

On November 9, 1937, the Japanese captured Shanghai.

-end-

txtj84

On December 12, 1937, Japanese aircraft sunk the USS Panay near Nanking, China. British gunboats and merchant vessels were also attacked. President Roosevelt favored a naval blockade to retaliate, but the British, anxious to avoid full-scale war, declined. Both Britain and the United States accepted the formal apologies of Japan, but tension in the East China Sea was mounting.

-end-

txtj85

On December 14, 1937, two days after Japanese air attacks on American and British ships near Nanking, the Japanese took over the city of Nanking. The invasion began a six-week rampage of violence on civilians that horrified the rest of the world.

-end-

txtj86

In August of 1938, Chinese government officials moved to Chungking as the Japanese overran China.

-end-

txtj87

In October of 1938, the Japanese took the city of Canton, isolating the British colony of Hong Kong to the south. Both the British and French governments issued formal protests to Japan, to no avail.

-end-

txtj88

By December of 1938 the situation in China was so bleak that President Roosevelt loaned the Chinese government \$25 million to fight the Japanese.

-end-

txtj89

The Soviets and the Japanese had skirmished on the Amur River (northeast Manchuria) and at Lake Khasan in 1937 and 1938. In May of 1939 fighting between the Russians and the Japanese broke out on a more massive scale near Nomonhan, a city in northwest Manchuria near the Outer Mongolian border. On August 20, 1939, after nearly four months of battle, the scales tipped in the Soviets' favor when General Georgi Zhukov defeated the Japanese in an armored attack.

-end-

txtj90

Italy gained no new African territory from the Treaty of Versailles, a source of disappointment. Eritrea and Italian Somaliland were its only possessions on that large continent. But Mussolini made plans to expand his Italian Empire in Africa. He began with diplomatic means, supporting Abyssinia's application to the League of Nations in 1923, and signing a treaty with Abyssinia five years later. But it soon became clear to Mussolini that Haile Selassie, the emperor of Abyssinia, wanted to open his country up to other European nations besides Italy. Mussolini decided war was the only option. The first confrontation between Abyssinia and Italy was on December 5, 1934 at Wal Wal, Abyssinia.

-end-

txtj91

In December of 1934, Mussolini prepared to attack Abyssinia in an attempt to enlarge Italy's empire in Africa. Abyssinia appealed to the League of Nations and demanded arbitration, to which Italy agreed. Mussolini sent reinforcements to the Italian garrison in Eritrea and there were armed encounters between forces. Abyssinia appealed to the League of Nations again in March, but the League was preoccupied with rearmament in Germany.

-end-

txtj92

The purpose of the Stresa Conference was to form a league among Britain, France and Italy to protect against rearmament in Germany. Though there had been fighting between Italy and Abyssinia, and Abyssinia had appealed to the League of Nations for help, no mention was made to Mussolini about Italian aggression in Africa.

-end-

txtj93

In June of 1935, after Abyssinia had appealed to the League of Nations complaining about Italian

aggression in Africa, British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden met with Benito Mussolini. Italy was violating the League Covenant. Eden urged Mussolini to give the port of Zeila to Abyssinia in return for the Ogaden region. Mussolini refused to consider these terms.

-end-

txtj94

On September 11, 1935, in response to Italy's refusal to abide by the Covenant of the League of Nations and cease aggression in Abyssinia, British Foreign Secretary Sir Samuel Hoare declared to the League assembly that Britain would stand by the League's agreement to resist aggression.

-end-

txtj95

On October 3, 1935, in direct violation of the League of Nations Covenant, Italy invaded Abyssinia.

-end-

txtj96

Following Italy's invasion of Abyssinia, the League of Nations imposed economic sanctions against Italy. The sanctions did not include oil or coal, so their effect was limited. Also, the United States and Germany were not bound to the decision since neither were League members. The net effect of the sanctions was to increase cooperation between Germany and Italy.

-end-

txtj97

After seven months of warfare in Abyssinia, Emperor Haile Selassie and his family fled the country for England. Seven days later Mussolini announced Italy's annexation of Abyssinia.

-end-

txtj98

The February, 1936 elections in Spain were a battle between extreme left and extreme right. The parties on the left, Anarchists, Communists, Republicans, Socialists and Syndicalists, banded to form the Popular Front. The parties on the right, including the Catholic parties, Nationalists and the Falange, formed CEDA. The Popular Front achieved power in the elections and immediately banned the Falange. Street fighting between left and right broke out, and Nationalists in the army, who feared a Communist take-over, staged a rebellion at an Army garrison in Spanish Morocco. Following this first rebellion, Army garrisons in Seville, Galicia, Oviedo and Saragossa took control of those cities. The Army in Madrid and Barcelona and the Basque provinces in northern Spain remained loyal to the new government. A bloody civil war had begun.

-end-

txtj99

Less than two weeks after fighting broke out between left and right in Spain, Comintern agreed to supply the Spanish government with troops and money.

-end-

XXtxtj100

As fighting in the Spanish Civil War increased, Adolph Hitler sent aircraft to Spanish Morocco at General Francisco Franco's request. These aircraft transported Franco's Army to mainland Spain to support the Nationalist's cause. Two days later Benito Mussolini dispatched Italian aircraft to help with the transport.

-end-

txtj101

A few days after Hitler and Mussolini sent aircraft to transport General Franco's Army from Morocco to Spain, and after a split in the cabinet of the Popular Front in Spain, France announced a policy of non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War. This did not stop French volunteers from fighting for the Spanish Republic.

-end-

txtj102

Two weeks after France declared a policy of non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War, Britain declared an embargo on arms exports to Spain.

-end-

txtj103

On September 9, 1936, a committee for non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War met in London.

Germany, Italy and Portugal agreed to abide by the British and French policy of non-intervention. Germany and Italy both subsequently ignored the agreement and continued to supply men and arms to Franco.

-end-

txtj104

On September 19, 1936, General Francisco Franco was declared the Nationalist Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Nationalist Army, but the fighting wasn't over.

-end-

txtj105

In response to Germany and Italy's continued support of the Spanish Nationalists, the Soviet Union began shipping arms and military advisors to the Spanish Republicans.

-end-

txtj106

The Republican government in Madrid held out for most of the Spanish Civil War, with the help of volunteers from other countries. But on November 6, 1936, the government moved to Valencia.

-end-

txtj107

On November 18, 1936, two weeks after the Republican government of Spain relocated in Valencia, Germany and Italy formally recognized Francisco Franco as the head of the Nationalist government of Spain.

-end-

txtj108

On January 2nd, 1937, Britain and Italy established a gentleman's agreement not to interfere with the events unfolding in the Mediterranean. The presence of Italian volunteers in Spain was overlooked.

-end-

txtj109

On April 19, 1937, Britain, France, Germany and Italy agreed to new non-intervention measures in Spain; however, Germany and Italy refused to withdraw troops until Franco's victory was certain. The new measures called for foreign troop withdrawal, border and coastal patrols. The Mediterranean would be watched by Germany and Italy, the Atlantic by Britain and France. The agreement did not make provision for air attacks, and these continued with foreign support.

-end-

txtj110

On April 26, 1937 the Kondor Legion of German aircraft bombed the town of Guernica in northern Spain. Six thousand people died in the bombing. The Spanish painter Pablo Picasso memorialized the horrible event in one of his most famous paintings.

-end-

txtj111

On July 1, 1937, the Spanish bishops announced their endorsement of Franco's regime.

-end-

txtj112

The Vatican announced their endorsement of Franco's regime on August 28, 1937.

-end-

txtj113

On October 29, 1937 the Spanish Republican Government moved to Valencia. Franco had seized most of Spain.

-end-

txtj114

On November 28, 1937, the Nationalist army began a blockade of the Spanish coast.

-end-

txtj115

On January 30, 1938, Francisco Franco created a government ministry.

-end-

txtj116

On July 5, 1938, the Non-intervention Committee agreed to a plan to withdraw foreign volunteers

from Spain. The Spanish Republicans accepted the decision, but Franco did not.

-end-

txtj117

Following the proposals of the Non-intervention Committee, the Spanish Republicans withdrew all their foreign volunteers from the front lines on October 4, 1938.

-end-

txtj118

On February 5, 1939, the Spanish Republican government, which had moved to Valencia, left Spain for France. They were accompanied over the Pyrenees by a tide of refugees.

-end-

txtj119

British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain officially recognized Franco's government on February 27th, 1939, three weeks after the Spanish Republicans sought refuge in France.

-end-

txtj120

After months of resistance, Madrid fell to the Nationalist army on March 28, 1939.

-end-

txtj121

Republican resistance to Franco ended on March 31, 1939.

-end-

txtj122

After 33 months of fighting, Franco declared an end to the Spanish Civil War on April 1, 1939. His government was recognized by the United States.

-end-

txtj123

Hitler was unsatisfied when the International Disarmament Conference failed to turn out as he hoped. France refused to disarm to the same level as Germany, but no one would agree to allow Germany to rearm to France's level. Germany responded by leaving the League of Nations on October 14, 1933.

-end-

txtj124

On January 26, 1934, Germany and Poland signed a non-aggression pact good for a period of ten years. Hitler engineered this agreement to lure Poland away from its alliance with France.

-end-

txtj125

Adolph Hitler encouraged a Nazi coup in Austria to get rid of Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss and unite Austria and Germany. Dollfuss was killed, but the Austrian government forces, led by Kurt von Schuschnigg kept control of Austria's government. Italy made its disapproval of the coup clear by sending troops into Austria, forcing Hitler to give up the attempt.

-end-

txtj126

On January 13, 1935, a plebiscite was held in the Saarland, in which the people voted to return to Germany by a large majority. Hitler officially welcomed the Saarland back by sending his troops, the SS Leibstandarte, to them.

-end-

txtj127

Hitler had been secretly assembling an air force for over a year, in violation of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. On March 9, 1935, he announced the existence of the Luftwaffe to the Western Powers. Britain responded by increasing its own air force.

-end-

txtj128

On March 16, 1935, Hitler announced to the Western Powers that he would enlarge his army to 36 divisions, in violation of the Treaty of Versailles. France received the news with trepidation, but was powerless to do anything about it.

-end-

txtj129

On June 18, 1935, Britain and Germany signed a naval agreement that would allow Germany to increase its surface fleet to 35 percent of Britain's and to increase its number of submarines as well. France condemned the agreement as yet another violation of the Treaty of Versailles.

-end-

txtj130

While Britain and France concerned themselves with Italian aggression in Abyssinia, Hitler reoccupied the Rhineland, which was supposed to remain demilitarized according to the Treaty of Versailles. If the Western Powers had opposed this move, Hitler would probably have been forced to back down. As it was, he occupied the Rhineland without resistance.

-end-

txtj131

On November 1, 1936, Adolph Hitler and Benito Mussolini signed the Berlin-Rome Axis, an event the Western Powers had been trying to forestall. This marked the end of any pretext at upholding the stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles. A second world war seemed much more likely than ever before.

-end-

txtj132

In January of 1938, Austrian Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg uncovered a Nazi plot in Austria. A meeting with Hitler failed to convince von Schuschnigg that German Nazis would stay out of Austrian affairs; Hitler merely accused him of mistreating Austrian Nazis and sent him home. Tension between parties in Austria mounted and von Schuschnigg called a plebiscite, asking the Austrian people to choose independence or union with Germany. Hitler, fearful of the outcome, sent his troops in the day before the vote. His troops and the Austrian Nazis forced a union with Germany.

-end-

txtj133

The Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia had a large German population, though they were still the minority. Hitler urged the Sudetenland's German leader, Konrad Henlein, to demand independence for the Sudetenland. Hitler threatened to use military force, though at this point Germany did not have the strength to take on Czechoslovakia's large army. President Hacha of Czechoslovakia responded by mobilizing his army, and Hitler wisely backed down.

-end-

txtj134

On September 12, 1938, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain met with Hitler in an effort to prevent war. He got Hitler to agree to limit his territorial demands to the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain subsequently persuaded France and Italy to support this agreement, to the dismay of Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain returned to Britain confident that peace had been maintained. On October 1st, Hitler sent troops in to occupy the Sudetenland.

-end-

txtj135

On October 28, 1938, Hitler insisted that Poland return Danzig to Germany, and that Poland allow Germany to build a railroad through Poland to East Prussia. Poland refused the demands.

-end-

txtj136

Slovakia and Ruthenia, two Czechoslovakian provinces, began to cause trouble for President Hacha. Premier Monsignor Tiso of Slovakia sought Hitler's help, and Hitler demanded independence for the province. President Hacha went to Berlin to discuss the matter with Hitler and ended up putting his entire country under Germany's protection. Hitler made Slovakia a protectorate, gave Ruthenia to Hungary, and annexed Bohemia and Moravia to Germany. Though Hitler had clearly broken the Munich Pact made six months earlier, Britain and France barely protested.

-end-

txtj137

Once again, Hitler demanded that Danzig be restored to Germany. Poland refused to comply.

-end-

txtj138

On March 23, 1939 Hitler sent troops in to occupy Memel, a city on the East Prussian-Lithuanian border. Poland, Britain and France responded by warning Hitler that a similar attempt in Danzig would result in war.

-end-

txtj139

Since stepping in during the Albanian Civil War in 1925, Italy had exercised some influence over Albania. In 1939, Mussolini decided to make some territorial gains for Italy, probably jealous of Hitler's advances in Czechoslovakia and East Prussia. Mussolini sent Italian troops into Albania on April 7.

-end-

txtj140

On April 15, 1939, President Roosevelt looked for reassurance from Germany and Italy that they would not use military force to expand their territories. Neither Hitler nor Mussolini gave him any reassurance, knowing that the United States could not participate in any conflicts because of the 1935-1937 Neutrality Acts.

-end-

txtj141

On April 18, 1939, the Soviet Union sought an alliance with Britain and France in case of a world conflict. No agreement was reached because of Soviet-Polish mistrust.

-end-

txtj142

On April 28, 1939 Hitler made a third demand to Poland for the return of Danzig. He also renounced his 1934 Non-aggression Pact with Poland.

-end-

txtj143

On May 22, 1939, Germany and Italy agreed to support each other in the event of war. The agreement was called the Pact of Steel.

-end-

txtj144

On August 23, 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression agreement, to the dismay of both Britain and France. The pact included a plan to split Poland between the Soviet Union and Germany, and to allow the USSR dominion over the Baltic states. After concluding this pact, Hitler felt secure in ordering the invasion of Poland.

-end-

txtj145

On August 25, 1939, two days after Germany and the USSR signed a non-aggression pact and agreed to split Poland between them, Britain and Poland signed an alliance. This agreement, and Mussolini's protests that Italy was not yet ready to go to war, caused Hitler to delay the invasion of Poland.

-end-

txtj146

As Hitler prepared to invade Poland over the possession of Danzig, Britain and France tried to persuade Poland to negotiate with Germany in the interests of avoiding a major war. Poland refused to give in to Hitler's demands.

-end-

txtj147

On August 31, 1939, the Polish ambassador met with Hitler in a last effort to maintain peace, but Hitler was still determined to invade.

-end-

txtj148

August 26th was Hitler's original date to begin the invasion of Poland. But Mussolini's hesitation to begin, and the completion of an alliance between Britain and Poland on the 25th caused Hitler to postpone the invasion at the last possible moment. All of Hitler's units but one received orders in time to stop the invasion. A special unit sent to southwest Poland to capture a railway station and tunnel went ahead with its mission. Shots were fired and some men died in the action. On the 27th, a truce was drawn up and the German unit returned to Germany, but now it was clear to

Poland that Hitler was planning to invade. The Polish armies were dispatched in a linear defense along the nation's frontier, awaiting further action.

-end-

txtj149

On August 31, 1939, the SS (abbreviation for Schutzstaffel, a highly disciplined German political police and army corps), used concentration camp inmates disguised as Polish soldiers to stage an attack on German army installations near the German-Polish border. This event was engineered to give Hitler a pretext for invading Poland.

-end-

txtj150

On September 1, 1939, Hitler put his Fall Weiss (Plan White) into effect, concentrating his army's efforts in two major thrusts. Nearly a third of Hitler's forces were gathered in Pomerania and East Prussia to secure the Polish Corridor and then head southeast toward Warsaw. Another third set out from north of the Carpathian mountains to meet the northern forces in Warsaw. Hitler counted on a quick defeat, since this campaign only left one third of the German army to defend Germany's western borders. The Luftwaffe, Hitler's air force, quickly defeated the Polish air force by cutting off fuel and communications.

Britain and France stood by on the first day of the invasion, still hoping Mussolini's suggestion of revising the Treaty of Versailles would end the war with a minimum of carnage. In retrospect, it is clear that if the Western Powers had launched a full-scale attack on Germany's western border, Poland might have been saved, but neither Britain nor France was prepared to commit to full scale war at that time.

-end-

txtj151

On September 2, 1939, one day after Germany's invasion of Poland, Hitler contacted Britain and France and offered to withdraw from Poland if he could keep Danzig and the Polish Corridor to East Prussia. The Western Allies refused the offer and returned an ultimatum to Hitler; he must withdraw from Poland within twelve hours or go to war with both France and Britain.

-end-

txtj152

On September 3rd, when Hitler failed to withdraw troops from Poland, Britain and France both formally declared war on Germany. This also involved the entire British Empire, except for Canada and South Africa, whose participation would be decided in their respective parliaments.

On the same day, the British Royal Air Force (RAF) engaged in its first operational sortie of WWII. The RAF sent a Blenheim bomber of the 139th Squadron to check on shipping activity in Germany's Schillig Roads. The aircraft's radio malfunctioned and couldn't transmit to base. By the time the aircraft returned to base with the information, it was too late in the day to attack. That night, in another sortie, Whitley bombers flew over Germany dropping propaganda leaflets.

-end-

txtj153

On the evening of September 3, 1939, the same day Britain and France declared war on Germany, the German U-boat U-30 accidentally sunk a British liner, the SS Athenia. There were several US Citizens on board the ship. The event increased anti-German feeling in the United States, but not enough to send the US to war.

-end-

txtj154

On September 4, 1939, Japan declared neutrality in the war waging in Poland.

-end-

txtj155

In just three days, Germany had achieved its goal of cutting off the Polish Corridor to East Prussia in northern Poland. The southern forces were steadily working their way up from the Carpathian mountains. They had already crossed the Pilica River on their way to Warsaw. Because the Polish armies were so widely dispersed, they were cut off from each other and could not effectively coordinate counter attacks.

-end-

txtj156

Though anti-German sentiment was rising in the US, the nation's citizens still favored avoiding involvement in the European war. On September 5, 1939 the United States declared neutrality.

-end-

txtj157

On September 6th, after a parliamentary vote, South Africa declared war on Germany.

-end-

txtj158

As the German army advanced toward Warsaw from two directions, isolating the Polish armies, the Polish forces began to withdraw to the boundaries marked by the Nerew, Vistula, and San Rivers.

-end-

txtj159

On September 7, 1939, nine divisions of French troops penetrated German Saarland, cautiously approaching the West Wall, the German line of fortifications along the German-Franco border. But the French forces withdrew to their own line of fortifications, the Maginot Line, without attempting an attack. This began a period of the war known in the United States as the phony war, and called Sitzkrieg by the Germans.

In the bloody, busy opening months of the First World War, France had suffered heavy casualties during its first attack on the Germans. The Germans repulsed the French attack, then followed with an invasion of Anglo-French territory. Recalling the carnage of the First World War, the initial involvement of the English and French in WWII was comparatively cautious and uneventful.

France's losses in the First World War were so great, that its military policies in later years would stress defensive strategies and stifle progressive military planning. To thwart another German invasion, French Minister of War Andre Maginot constructed the long line of fortifications along the Franco-German border, all the way to Belgium (the Maginot Line). Defensively, the French were prepared for war, but offensively, both the French and the British were hesitant. This reluctance to engage in offensive combat doomed Poland to Stalinist and Nazi rule.

-end-

txtj160

After a parliamentary vote, Canada declared war on Germany on September 10th.

-end-

txtj161

On September 12th, fighting broke out between German forces and the Polish Poznan forces. The Poles had been surrounded and were trying to break out across the Bzura River. They battled for six days before surrendering.

-end-

txtj162

On September 15th, German armies converged on Warsaw. Hitler demanded that Warsaw surrender, but the city refused. The German army and Luftwaffe bombarded the city from land and air, killing many civilians.

-end-

txtj163

On September 17th, the Soviet Union announced that Poland no longer existed as an independent entity. The Polish government responded by leaving for Romania, where its officials were subsequently interned.

-end-

txtj164

On September 19, 1939, as Soviet and German troops gathered at Brest-Litovsk, Hitler took Danzig.

-end-

txtj165

On September 22nd, Soviet soldiers entered the city of Lvov. The Polish armies began a retreat

to Romania and Hungary in the southwest, both neutral countries.

-end-

txtj166

On September 27th, the city of Warsaw fell to Germany.

-end-

txtj167

The very day that Warsaw surrendered to Germany, Hitler gathered his generals in Berlin to plan an invasion of France.

-end-

txtj168

On September 28th, ten divisions of the Polish army, surrounded near the city of Modlin, surrendered to the German army.

-end-

txtj169

On September 29th, German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop and Russian Foreign Minister Molotov met in Moscow and agreed to split Poland. Germany would receive ethnic Poland, while Russia would have Ukrainian Poland, as well as Lithuania and Belorussia.

-end-

txtj170

General Wladyslaw Sikorski put together a Polish government-in-exile in Paris, France. The real Polish government had fled to Romania earlier in the month, only to be interned there. General Sikorski also put together an army of Polish expatriates who subsequently fought with the French army.

-end-

txtj171

On October 1st, the few remaining Polish destroyers and submarines fled to the North Sea. The Soviet Union and Estonia signed a treaty which allowed the Soviets to occupy Estonia's naval bases on the Baltic Sea. This marked the end of Estonia's independence.

-end-

txtj172

On October 5th, the Soviet Union signed a treaty with Latvia which allowed the establishment of Soviet military bases in Latvia. This marked the end of Latvia's independence.

-end-

txtj173

On October 10th, the Soviet Union signed a treaty with Lithuania which allowed the establishment of Soviet military bases in Lithuania. Lithuania was the last of the three Baltic states to lose her independence to the Soviet Union in this way.

-end-

txtj174

In just a little over one month, Hitler, with the help of the Soviet Union, had succeeded in conquering Poland. The German army captured 700,000 Poles, and an uncounted number of Polish troops and civilians died or were injured. The Soviet forces captured an additional 217,000 men. Ukrainian Poland fell under Stalinist rule, while ethnic Poland succumbed to Hitler and the Nazis. Both the Soviets and Germans began campaigns to purge Poland of its ruling class, and Hitler began his horrifying persecution of Polish Jews.

-end-

txtj175

The Soviet Union was anxious to negotiate with Finland for the northern shore of the Gulf of Finland, the sea-approach to Leningrad, and the Rybachiy Peninsula in the north. The Rybachiy Peninsula guarded the sea-approach to Murmansk, an important Russian port city. Stalin also feared the Finns' anti-Soviet sentiments, which could lead to a German threat against Leningrad and Murmansk.

Accordingly, the Soviets requested that Finland give up territory on Lake Ladoga and the Gulf of Finland and lease several ports to the Soviet Union, in return for a portion of the worthless Soviet Karelia. Finland refused to negotiate, having witnessed how Russia had already taken over the

neighboring Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.

-end-

txtj176

Negotiations begun in October between the Soviet Union and Finland continued without progress throughout November, and an impatient and disappointed Stalin finally invaded Finland on November 30, 1939. Confident that he could easily overcome Finland's small army, Stalin only sent troops from the Leningrad Military District up the Karelian Isthmus. Battle was engaged near Finland's strongest line of defense, called the Mannerheim Line after Field Marshal Baron Carl von Mannerheim, Finland's Commander-in-Chief.

Though the Soviets outnumbered the Finns, the Red Army was not at its strongest. Stalin had removed many of the army's most experienced officers earlier in the decade because he feared political rivalry from the military. This left less competent officers in charge. In addition, the Soviets expected a quick victory and did not prepare for a winter offensive. As a result, many Russians died from the cold before Finland was defeated.

-end-

txtj177

On December 1st, in Moscow, the Finnish Communist Otto Kuusinen established a Finnish puppet government under the control of the Soviets.

-end-

txtj178

On December 3, 1939, Finland's forces withdrew to the Mannerheim Line, to dig in at their strongest line of defense.

-end-

txtj179

On December 6th, the Red Army attacked the Finns at the Mannerheim Line, the first of several unsuccessful attacks on Finland's strongest line of defense.

-end-

txtj180

On December 7th, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden all declared neutrality in the conflict between Finland and the Soviet Union. Though Britain and France decided to help Finland, they could not transport arms or men across the neutral nations. This severely limited the aid the Western Powers could give.

-end-

txtj181

On the very same day that the rest of Scandinavia declared neutrality in the war between Finland and the Soviet Union, the Soviets sent the 9th Army to launch an attack on the Central Front.

On December 11th, Finland's 9th Division arrived at Suomussalmi and attacked the Soviet troops. They managed to surround the Soviets' 163rd Division. Meanwhile, the Soviet 44th Motorized Division set out for Suomussalmi to rescue the 163rd, but they were stopped by Finnish ski-troops. From December 24th through December 27th, the 163rd attempted to break out. The Finns counterattacked and had destroyed the Soviet division by December 30th. By January 8th, Finland had also successfully attacked the 44th Motorized Division. In all, the Soviets suffered heavy losses in troops, tanks and equipment on the Central Front.

-end-

txtj182

On December 14, 1939, while battle raged on the Central Front in Finland, the League of Nations booted the Soviet Union and encouraged League members to support Finland. In addition, the United States sent protests to Moscow over the invasion of Finland.

-end-

txtj183

On December 29th, Finnish forces successfully counter-attacked the Soviets' 8th Army just north of Lake Ladoga. This success was simultaneous with the beating Finland was giving the Soviets at Suomussalmi.

-end-

txtj184

On January 7th, 1940, General Semyon Timoshenko was put in charge of all the Soviet forces in Finland. He immediately began preparing for a major offensive.

-end-

txtj185

Using Sweden as an intermediary in new negotiations with Finland, the Soviet Union hinted that they might withdraw their support from the Communist Finnish puppet government.

-end-

txtj186

On February 1st, General Semyon Timoshenko sent troops across the frozen Viipuri Bay on the Gulf of Finland. Finnish aircraft successfully countered the attempted attack.

-end-

txtj187

Britain and France had been prevented from sending a force to Finland's aid because they could not transport troops across the neutral Scandinavian countries. On February 5th, however, they made plans to violate Norway's neutrality by landing a force in the northern part of that country.

-end-

txtj188

Finally, after over two months of offensives, the Soviets penetrated Finland's Mannerheim Line. The Finns were forced to retreat to a second line of defense.

-end-

txtj189

On February 23, 1940, Russia made its final offer of peace to Finland. Russia's terms called for Finland to give up the Karelian Isthmus and its territory on the shores of Lake Ladoga. The Finns would also be compelled to lease the Hango Peninsula to Russia for thirty years. Russia agreed to leave the Petsamo area and to protect the Gulf of Finland in return.

-end-

txtj190

On February 23rd, Sweden reasserted its neutrality, stating that it would not allow troops or arms to be transported across Swedish territory.

-end-

txtj191

On February 28th and 29th, Soviet forces penetrated Finland's second line of defense on the Karelian Isthmus, 17 days after breaching the Mannerheim Line.

-end-

txtj192

The deadline for accepting the Soviets' peace terms offered on February 23rd fell on the first day of March. Finland did not accept the terms.

-end-

txtj193

Two days after the Soviets' peace terms were rejected, the Soviets launched a huge offensive in Finland. Viipuri, on the Gulf of Finland, was attacked the next day. It was obvious to the Finns and everyone else that they would not be able to hold out much longer.

-end-

txtj194

On March 6th, Finland sent a delegation to Moscow to begin talks.

-end-

txtj195

On March 8th, Soviet forces took Viipuri on the Gulf of Finland. When the Finnish delegation in Moscow was refused an armistice, they asked for peace.

-end-

txtj196

On March 12, 1940, the Soviets and the Finns signed a peace treaty. Finland was forced to give up the entire Karelian Isthmus along with Viipuri (renamed Vyborg), and Lake Ladoga, as well as the Rybachiy Peninsula and Petsamo in the north. They were required to lease the Hango Peninsula to Russia for a period of 30 years. In return, the Soviets relinquished the Communist

puppet government of Finland under Otto Kuusinen.

Finland lost 25,000 men in the Russo-Finnish war, and another 45,000 were wounded. The Russians lost 200,000, many from the cold.

-end-

txtj197

On September 4, 1939 the British Royal Air Force mounted three attacks on shipping in the Schillig Roads and the Kiel Canal. The Germans shot down seven of the 30 RAF aircraft with anti-aircraft guns. Only one German ship was damaged.

-end-

txtj198

Early in 1939 Britain began assembling the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), a land force that would be sent to the continent in the event of a world war. The BEF consisted of four Regular Infantry divisions and four Territorial Army divisions. On September 9th, the four Regular Infantry divisions set out for France to take up a position opposite the Belgian border.

-end-

txtj199

As Polish resistance came to an end, and France and England geared up for war with Germany, Hitler proposed peace between Germany and the Western Powers. His conditions called for an acceptance of the new political divisions in Eastern Europe, which would allow Germany and Russia to keep the spoils of their war with Poland. Both Britain and France refused the proposal.

-end-

txtj200

On October 9th, Hitler shared written orders with his generals for an attack on the West. The plan included a wheel through the Low Countries of Europe, a repeat of the 1914 agenda, with the addition of taking Holland. Hitler disclosed no start date at this time.

-end-

txtj201

On October 16th, German bombers made the first air attack on British territory. The bombers targeted two cruisers, the Southampton and the Edinburgh, and a destroyer, all in the Firth of Forth, Scotland. All three vessels were damaged.

-end-

txtj202

On November 7th, the monarchs of Belgium and Holland declared their countries neutral in the European war, and offered to serve as mediators in peace negotiations. All parties turned down the offer.

-end-

txtj203

On November 8th, a bomb went off in a beer hall in Munich, where Hitler was supposed to be celebrating the anniversary of his 1923 Munich putsch. The assassination attempt failed because Hitler was not in the beer hall at the time.

-end-

txtj204

On November 17th, Britain and France decided that the best defense would be to meet Hitler's advances in Belgium, where there were superior natural obstacles in the Albert Canal and the Meuse and Dyle Rivers. The plan suffered a setback when neutral Belgium refused to allow so much as a reconnaissance party within its boundaries unless and until Hitler actually invaded.

-end-

txtj205

On December 7th, Benito Mussolini reaffirmed Italy's neutrality in the European war.

-end-

txtj206

On December 15th, Britain sent a fifth division to join the British Expeditionary Force, already stationed in France.

-end-

txtj207

The RAF had been engaging in daylight raids on German shipping lanes. However, on December 18th, they lost 12 out of 24 bombers in one mission. From this point on, the bombers engaged in night missions. The change saved bombers but sacrificed accuracy.

-end-

txtj208

On Christmas Eve, 1939, Pope Pius XII appealed to the combatants for peace.

-end-

txtj209

On January 10th, 1940 Hitler told his generals that they would mount an attack on the West on January 17. That same day, a German plane carrying the attack plans failed and made an emergency landing in Belgium. The plane was searched and the plans discovered by the neutral Belgians, alerting them to Hitler's intentions.

-end-

txtj210

Because his attack plans had been uncovered by the Belgians, Hitler postponed Fall Gelb (Plan Yellow). Commander Gerd von Rundstedt suggested a new plan which involved a surprise attack through the woods of the Ardennes region in southern Belgium.

-end-

txtj211

Throughout January and February of 1940, the British and the French prepared their defenses, expecting a full-scale invasion from Germany. The British regulars spent their time familiarizing themselves with the Maginot Line and engaging in patrol actions against the nearby Germans. France worked on adding to its armored divisions.

-end-

txtj212

On February 11th, the Soviet Union agreed to export raw materials, including grain and oil (important commodities in wartime), to Germany in return for manufactured goods.

-end-

txtj213

On March 1st, United States Secretary of State Sumner Wells began a tour of the nations at war, starting in Berlin, Germany, to promote peace.

-end-

txtj214

On March 6th, Hitler agreed to adopt Fall Sichelschnitt (Plan Sickle), suggested by Gerd von Manstein and Erich von Manstein. The plan called for a feint, with a convincing number of troops attacking the Low Countries to lure the Allies forward in battle. When the Allies were engaged, the main German forces would mount a surprise attack through the wooded Ardennes region in Belgium.

-end-

txtj215

On March 16th the Luftwaffe raided the British Grand Fleet anchored in the Orkney Islands of Scotland. The first British civilian died in the attack.

-end-

txtj216

Three days after a British civilian died in a Luftwaffe attack on the British Grand Fleet, the RAF sent 50 bombers to attack the German seaplane base at Hornum on the Island of Sylt. The attack did little damage.

-end-

txtj217

On March 18th, Adolph Hitler and Benito Mussolini met for a conference at the Brenner Pass on the borders of Austria and Italy. Mussolini assured Hitler that Italy would join Germany in the European war.

-end-

txtj218

On March 20th, a new French government was formed under Paul Reynaud. Reynaud immediately formed an agreement with Britain to the effect that neither nation would make a

separate peace with Hitler.

-end-

txtj219

In an April 5th address to the British people, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain asserted that Hitler had 'missed the bus'. In other words, he had waited so long to invade that any attempt was likely to be unsuccessful. Unfortunately, Chamberlain underestimated Hitler's abilities and intentions. Hitler was merely delaying an invasion of France and the Low Countries until he had the situation in Norway and Denmark under control.

-end-

txtj220

German submarine U-39 fired a torpedo at the British aircraft carrier Ark Royal. The torpedo missed its target, and Ark Royal's escorting destroyers immediately located and sunk U-39, the first U-boat to be destroyed in World War II.

-end-

txtj221

On September 17th, the British aircraft carrier Courageous, out cruising for U-boats, was sunk by U-29 off the southwest coast of Ireland. Britain had planned on using aircraft carriers escorted by destroyers to search out German U-boats, but after this incident, they decided that the risk to the aircraft carriers was too great.

-end-

txtj222

On September 27th, German naval Commander-in-Chief Erich Raeder ordered the pocket battleships Deutschland and Graf Spee to begin attacking British shipping in the Atlantic Ocean.

-end-

txtj223

On September 30th, the pocket battleship Graf Spee sank a British steamship called Clementine near the coast of Pernambuco, Brazil. Graf Spee became quite a terror over the next several weeks, sinking four more ships in the Atlantic and then moving to the Indian Ocean. The German battleship Deutschland also sank two ships in the Atlantic, but its mission ended with engine trouble that sent it home in November.

-end-

txtj224

On October 14th, the German U-boat U-47, under the command of Lt. Guenther Prien, sank the British battleship Royal Oak in the Home Fleet anchorage at Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands of Scotland. It was a demoralizing event for the British, while Prien was quickly elevated to a national hero in Germany.

-end-

txtj225

On November 15th, the Graf Spee struck again, this time sinking a British merchant vessel, Africa Shell, off the coast of Mozambique before returning to the Atlantic. By this time Graf Spee had inflicted so much damage that the Allies had formed several task forces to hunt it down.

-end-

txtj226

German battle cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau had been dispatched to the North Atlantic to disrupt British shipping. On November 21st, the two cruisers encountered a convoy of vessels guarded by a specially armed merchant cruiser, the Rawalpindi, near Iceland. The shipping convoy escaped while the Scharnhorst sunk the Rawalpindi. The Home Fleet received a radio call for help, but could not intercept the two German ships.

-end-

txtj227

On November 23rd, the Royal Navy successfully recovered an intact German magnetic mine. The British quickly adopted a program of degaussing its steel ships--that is, they strung electrical coils carrying current around each ship's hull to neutralize the magnetism of the ship, making it less vulnerable to mines.

-end-

txtj228

Several neutral shipping vessels had been accidentally sunk by German U-boats. On November 24th Germany warned neutral merchant ships away from the coasts of Britain and France, since U-boats would now attack any ship not showing lights.

-end-

txtj229

On December 3rd, the infamous Graf Spee sank yet another merchant ship off the west coast of South Africa. A few days later it sank another ship en route to South America.

-end-

txtj230

On December 12th, the British submarine Salmon fired torpedoes at two German cruisers which were on a mine laying mission near England. Both cruisers were damaged but did not sink.

-end-

txtj231

On December 13th, British Commodore Harwood, commander of Force G, a squadron of cruisers, left his base on the Falkland Islands off South America in response to distress calls from victims of the notorious Graf Spee. Force G positioned itself off the Plate River near Uruguay and Argentina. Seeing the cruisers' smoke and expecting to find a merchant convey, the Graf Spee approached the area. The Graf Spee damaged the British Ajax and Exeter, but sustained damages itself. German Captain Langsdorff took his ship to Port Montevideo for repairs. On December 17th, Commodore Harwood bluffed Langsdorff into believing himself trapped, and Langsdorff scuttled his ship, then killed himself. One of the biggest menaces to the Allies' shipping had been removed.

-end-

txtj232

Sweden had been supplying Germany with iron ore, a major wartime raw material. The ore was being shipped through the Norwegian port city of Narvik. On October 3, 1939, the commander-in-chief of the German Navy, Admiral Raeder, suggested to Hitler the importance of establishing bases in Norway to protect their trade with Sweden. At the same time, Britain and France had decided that Germany could only fight for about a year if this supply was cut off, so the two countries began making plans to stop shipments through Norway.

-end-

txtj233

Convinced of the importance of seizing military bases and the port city of Narvik in Norway, Hitler decided to personally oversee the formation of Plan Weser, the Norwegian operation.

-end-

txtj234

The German ship Altmark was anchored in the Jossing Fiord of Norway, carrying British prisoners from ships sunk by the German pocket battleship Graf Spee. On February 16th, the British destroyer Cossack entered the Fiord and rescued the prisoners. Norway blamed Britain for violating Norway's neutrality, but the British in turn accused Norway of having cooperated with Germany. The Germans interpreted the event as evidence that Norway would not tangle with the British. It became more imperative for the Germans to seize the Norwegian port city of Narvik.

-end-

txtj235

On February 20th, German General von Falkenhorst was appointed to command Plan Weser, the expedition to secure bases in Norway.

-end-

txtj236

On March 12th, the British completed plans to secure the Norwegian port cities of Narvik and Trondheim, as well as the railroad to Sweden, in order to stop shipments of iron ore to Germany. The British intended to explain their actions in terms of supporting Finland, which was at war with Russia; however, on the day their plans were finalized, Finland surrendered and signed a peace treaty with Russia.

-end-

txtj237

On March 28th, France and Britain planned to mine Norwegian waters beginning in April. They

would also dispatch troops to nearby Allied ports to prepare for a German attack on Norway.

-end-

txtj238

On April 2nd, Hitler dispatched orders to invade both Norway and Denmark on the 9th of the month.

-end-

txtj239

On April 5th, after informing both Norway and Sweden of their plans, the allies set out to mine the waters around Norway, anticipating a German invasion.

-end-

txtj240

On April 7th, the Royal Air Force sighted German warships on their way to the port cities of Narvik and Trondheim in Norway. Later that day, in the midst of a storm at sea, the British Home Fleet set out to intercept the German vessels.

-end-

txtj241

As German warships cruised north to take Norwegian ports, Allied ships set out to intercept them. A battle took place in the middle of a storm at sea, which created difficulties for both sides. The German cruiser Hipper sank the British destroyer Glowworm. The only other successful intercept was the sinking of a German transport vessel by a Polish submarine.

-end-

txtj242

On the same day as the German invasion of Norway, the Germans also invaded Denmark. The Danes were unprepared for the invasion, and the capital at Copenhagen was in the hands of the Germans within twelve hours. The Danes surrendered the next day.

-end-

txtj243

On April 9th, 1940, the Germans invaded Norway, landing in six different locations; Oslo, Kristiansand, Bergen, Narvik, Trondheim, and the airfield at Stavanger. The Norwegians sunk one German cruiser (the Bluecher) in Oslo Fiord, and British submarines damaged two German ships. On this same day, Germany also invaded Denmark.

-end-

txtj244

On April 10th, 1940, the British and Germans engaged in the first naval battle at Narvik Fiord. The British flotilla of six destroyers surprised six German destroyers, but the battle was a draw, with each side losing two vessels. British naval commander Captain Warburton-Lee died in the action, and was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross, Britain's medal of honor for deeds of remarkable valor.

-end-

txtj245

On April 11th, 1940, the first British military contingent set sail to defend Norway. The troops' orders came so quickly that much heavy equipment was left behind.

-end-

txtj246

On April 12th, British destroyers and the battleship Warsprite returned to Narvik Fiord and sank seven German destroyers.

-end-

txtj247

On April 15th, British troops arrived in Harstad in the Lofoten Islands of Norway, near Narvik. Hitler was concerned about his forces at Narvik, but his generals persuaded him not to withdraw from the area. Meanwhile, German forces at Oslo had begun to advance inland.

-end-

txtj248

British and French troops arrived at the port city of Namsos, Norway, north of Trondheim, on April 16, 1940. The troops planned to join other Allied forces landing in Aandalesnes, south of Trondheim, meeting at Trondheim to retake that port city from the Germans.

-end-

txtj249

On April 18th, British troops arrived at Aandalesnes. They had intended to march north to Trondheim, where they would meet Allied forces coming from Namsos in the north to retake the port at Trondheim from the Germans. Instead, they ended up moving southeast to the aid of Norwegian troops at Lillehammer. The Germans had the advantage of greater firepower in this engagement, and the Allies were quickly driven back. Additional French troops were unable to turn the tide. In the meantime, the Allies at Namsos set out for Trondheim, but again, the Germans were able to hold off the attack.

-end-

txtj250

On April 24th, Norwegian forces attempted to take Narvik back from the Germans, but were unsuccessful. In the meantime, Allied forces were gathering nearby in Harstad, including four Polish battalions. The Allies intended to gather strength and lay siege to the Germans occupying Narvik until they were forced to surrender.

-end-

txtj251

To the surprise of both the French and the Norwegians, the British decided to withdraw troops from southern Norway on April 26th.

-end-

txtj252

On April 29th, the British Royal Navy evacuated King Haakon and the Norwegian government from Molde to Tromsø.

-end-

txtj253

On April 30th, the last of the British forces left Aandalesnes.

-end-

txtj254

On May 2nd, the remaining Allied forces withdrew from Namsos. The Germans now held all of southern Norway and would begin advancing north.

-end-

txtj255

On May 28th, the Allies finally succeeded in taking back Narvik from the Germans, but the German forces managed to escape along the railway line to Sweden. The British had already withdrawn from southern Norway. After the taking of Narvik, and with the situation in neighboring France worsening, Prime Minister Churchill decided to withdraw his northern forces as well.

-end-

txtj256

Though the Allies' final assault on the Germans at Narvik resulted in the Germans leaving for Sweden, the Allies felt it necessary to leave the port and turn their attention to France. King Haakon and the Norwegian government left with the Allied forces, setting up a government-in-exile in London.

Material losses were heavy for both sides in the Norwegian campaign. The British lost one carrier, two cruisers, nine destroyers and four submarines. The Germans lost three cruisers, ten destroyers, six submarines and sixteen smaller vessels.

The Allies lost 7,000 men; 4,400 British, 1,330 Norwegians, and 530 French and Poles. The Germans lost 2,700 lives.

-end-

txtj257

On May 1, 1940, Hitler determined that he would begin his invasion of France and the Low Countries on May 5th.

-end-

txtj258

On May 3rd, Hitler postponed his invasion of France and the Low Countries from May 5th to May

6th, and eventually to May 10th. His decisions to delay were influenced somewhat by the weather, but he was also hoping for an excuse to cross neutral Belgium's borders. Around the 8th, the Belgians and the Dutch began to mobilize their armies, and that made Hitler settle on the 10th.

-end-

txtj259

Germany invaded Belgium and Holland, using the Blitzkrieg form of warfare. Blitzkrieg, or Lightning War, involved fighting a battle at such a swift pace that the enemy would have no time to recover and organize after being attacked. Panzer (tank) divisions rolled in quickly and devastated the foe, then the infantry followed up. The tank divisions and infantry were aided by the Luftwaffe.

The Germans attacked Holland in this manner. The Luftwaffe and paratroops captured bridges, and glider troops seized the Eben Emael fortress. Fedor von Bock's Army Group B infantry and Panzers crossed the German border into Holland and Belgium. Hitler's intention was to draw the Allied forces northward into Belgium and then attack with his main forces through the Ardennes Forest further south in Belgium. The main force was von Rundstedt's Army Group A. It included seven Panzer divisions, three motorized, and 34 infantry divisions. A third force led by Wilhelm von Leeb, Army Group C, would cover the French Maginot Line with seventeen infantry divisions. To assist the three army groups, Hitler had the 2,700 aircraft of Luftflotten 2 and 3.

On May 10th, shortly after Group B attacked in Holland, and Group A crossed the eastern Belgian border, the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) and three French armies entered Belgium and stationed themselves along the line of the Dyle and Meuse Rivers.

-end-

txtj260

On May 10th, after Hitler invaded Holland and Belgium, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain resigned his office. Winston Churchill stepped in and formed a national coalition government. His first act was to order the RAF to bomb targets west of the Rhine to hinder the Germans.

-end-

txtj261

On May 5th, President Franklin Roosevelt, on behalf of himself and the citizens of the United States, communicated with King Leopold of Belgium to express concern over the German invasion of Belgium.

-end-

txtj262

On May 12th, the Panzer forces (armored divisions) of German Army Group A entered France and established themselves on the northern bank of the Meuse River. The Allies were positioned on the Dyle-Meuse line further north in Belgium. After the Germans invaded France, the French 7th army left its position in Holland to fall back to the Scheldt River line. This left only a small force to defend Holland.

-end-

txtj263

On May 15th, German forces crossed the Meuse River on both sides of Sedan. The Allies were unable to stop the advance and lost several aircraft in the attempt.

-end-

txtj264

On May 15th, Dutch forces retreated to the Amsterdam-Rotterdam-Utrecht area to make a last stand as the German Army Group B advanced into Holland. Queen Wilhelmina and the Dutch government evacuated to London.

-end-

txtj265

On May 14th, a communications failure in the German Luftwaffe resulted in the bombing of the city of Rotterdam, Holland, right after it surrendered.

-end-

txtj266

On May 15th, Holland surrendered to Germany.

-end-

txtj267

On the same day that Holland surrendered to Germany, the German forces penetrated the Allies' positions in the Namur-Louvain line of Belgium. At the same time, they were making much headway at Sedan in France.

-end-

txtj268

German Panzers of Army Groups A and B were moving westward through Belgium in a 50-mile sweep, obliterating the French 9th Army as they went.

-end-

txtj269

As Hitler made alarming headway in Belgium, Winston Churchill implored Mussolini to stay out of the war.

-end-

txtj270

On May 16th, President Roosevelt asked the United States Congress to appropriate money for strengthening the US armed forces.

-end-

txtj271

On May 17th, German forces entered the city of Brussels, Belgium.

-end-

txtj272

On May 17th, the French 4th Armored Division, raised by Charles de Gaulle, attempted to turn back the German Panzers near Laon, but failed.

-end-

txtj273

The 7th Panzer Division, headed by Erwin Rommel, neared Cambrai, France and halted, fearful that it would be cut off from its infantry.

-end-

txtj274

On May 19th, General Gamelin, the French land force commander, was replaced by Maxime Weygand.

-end-

txtj275

On May 19th, Marshal Henri Petain, a hero of the First World War, was made the Deputy Prime Minister of France.

-end-

txtj276

By May 20th, the German Panzers had reached Noyelles in France, splitting the Allied forces in half.

-end-

txtj277

Two British armored battalions and French forces converged in a counter-attack of Erwin Rommel's 7th Panzer Division. Though the attack set Rommel back temporarily, poor coordination of the Allied effort prevented a serious setback for the Germans.

-end-

txtj278

On May 22nd, the German Panzers began moving north toward the French ports of Boulogne and Calais.

-end-

txtj279

The French port city of Boulogne fell to the Germans on May 25th.

-end-

txtj280

Two days after Boulogne fell to the Germans, British forces lost the battle to save the port city of Calais from the same fate. French Commander Weygand proposed a counter-attack that would call for the BEF and French 1st Army to attack the Germans from the north, as the French 7th and 10th Armies closed in from the south. But again, poor coordination, poor communications, and formidable German opposition made the plan an impractical one. It was never implemented.

-end-

txtj281

By May 23rd, the German Panzers had cut off the BEF, the Belgian and the French 1st Armies in northern France. At this stage, von Rundstedt ordered a halt of his armored divisions, which desperately needed repairs.

-end-

txtj282

On May 25th, while the Germans stopped their advance to make repairs, British Lord Gort decided to withdraw the BEF from Belgium and move it to Dunkirk, saving as much of his force as possible. This precluded any attempt to implement Commander Weygand's plan to surround the Germans from the north and south.

Lord Gort's decision surprised the Belgians, the French, and the British government. But Gort reasoned that it was better to save the BEF to fight elsewhere. He had not given up on France; indeed, it was generally believed that if France fell, England would have no choice but to come to terms with Hitler.

-end-

txtj283

On May 25th, Hitler approved von Rundstedt's order to halt the Panzer Divisions for repairs. The Panzer divisions were to hold the Gravelines-Lens line while Army Group B drove the Allies back. The intention was to induce the Allies to attack von Rundstedt's forces. Hermann Goering proposed that the Luftwaffe attack and destroy the Allied forces where they were hemmed in. Hitler approved this plan since he wanted to use his armored divisions to overrun the remainder of France.

-end-

txtj284

On May 23rd, the British 1st Armored Division began landing at Cherbourg, France, poorly equipped and minus its infantry, which was fighting at Calais.

-end-

txtj285

On May 26th, Admiral Bertram Ramsay began Operation Dynamo, a plan to save as much of the BEF as possible by transporting them from Dunkirk, across the English Channel to Dover by ship. No one expected to be able to save more than a small portion of the BEF. Early in the morning on the 27th, the packet Mona's Isle arrived to rescue the BEF. Over a two-day period, this vessel evacuated 25,000 troops.

On May 29th, Hitler ordered his main forces south. The Luftwaffe began targeting the evacuation proceedings at Dunkirk. On this day, 47,300 men were evacuated. The next day, an additional 54,000 troops left Dunkirk. Many ships were sunk as the Royal Air Force and the German Luftwaffe battled overhead. The Allies lost three destroyers and an additional six were badly damaged. Ferries and pleasure craft were also lost.

On May 31st, 68,000 men, including some French troops, were evacuated from Dunkirk. As the German attack on the area increased in intensity, the French 1st Army and Admiral Jean Abrial's French marines fought to protect the evacuation proceedings. The next day, another 65,000 men were taken to safety. Because of continued pressure from the Germans, the evacuation was restricted to the hours after sunset.

On June 2nd, another 24,000 men were transported from Dunkirk to Dover. Unexpectedly, almost the entire BEF had been saved, leaving the French to take over the defense of Dunkirk. By the evening of the next day, another 26,700 men, mostly French, were evacuated from the

beaches of Dunkirk.

Operation Dynamo rescued a total of 220,000 British and 120,000 French and Belgian troops. Most of the French, however, later returned to France to defend their country. Nearly 200 Allied ships and 177 airplanes were lost during the evacuation, as well as all of the BEF's heavy equipment, which was left behind. The completion of the evacuation at Dunkirk left only two British divisions in France, both engaged in action south of the Somme River. These were the 51st Highland and the 1st Armored. An additional 120,000 men were engaged on the lines of communication in France.

-end-

txtj286

On May 28th, King Leopold and the Belgian government, which had already escaped to England, surrendered to the Germans. This took the rest of the Allies unaware, and angered the British. However, the British had not warned Leopold of their intention to evacuate, leaving the Belgian forces stranded and surrounded by Germans.

-end-

txtj287

On May 31st, Winston Churchill went to Paris to assure the Allied War Council of Britain's commitment to fight until the end.

-end-

txtj288

The day after Operation Dynamo was completed, the Germans entered Dunkirk. On this day, Winston Churchill made his famous speech to the world: We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight in the fields... we shall never surrender.

-end-

txtj289

On June 5th, German forces began to move toward the French forces south of the Somme River.

-end-

txtj290

On June 5th, Charles de Gaulle was made the French Under-Secretary of State for War.

-end-

txtj291

German forces broke through on the lower Somme River and continued to the Aisne River on June 6th.

-end-

txtj292

On June 9th, the Germans routed French forces and the British 51st Highland Division on the Somme River. The Allied forces retreated to the coast near St. Valery, hoping for evacuation.

-end-

txtj293

On June 10th, Mussolini announced that Italy would be at war with Britain and France the next day.

-end-

txtj294

On June 10th, the French government left Paris and went southwest to Tours.

-end-

txtj295

President Roosevelt responded to Mussolini's declaration of war with a condemnation of both Germany and Italy and a pledge to send material aid to the Allies.

-end-

txtj296

The day after the government left Paris for Tours, Paris was declared an open city. The French asked Britain for help from the Royal Air Force, but Winston Churchill refused to grant it, expecting a battle in Britain at any time.

-end-

txtj297

On June 11th, Britain sent a second BEF of two divisions (one Canadian) to Cherbourg to help the French and form a temporary defense.

-end-

txtj298

On June 12th, the French 10th Army and the British 51st Highland Division at St. Valery were forced to surrender to the surrounding Germans.

-end-

txtj299

On June 12th, after the French forces at St. Valery surrendered to the Germans, General Maxime Weygand and Deputy Prime Minister Petain urged for an armistice, but Prime Minister Reynaud insisted continuing the battle.

-end-

txtj300

On June 13th, the first United States ship, the Eastern Prince, set sail for Britain with arms for the Allies.

-end-

txtj301

On June 14th, German troops entered the city of Paris.

-end-

txtj302

On the same day the Germans entered Paris, Hitler's forces broke through the Maginot Line near Saarbrücken. The Germans began plans to cut off the French who were retreating towards Bordeaux, and to move on towards Dijon and Lyons in southern France.

-end-

txtj303

On June 16th, Prime Minister Paul Reynaud resigned as other government officials pressured for an armistice. A new government was formed under Henri Petain.

-end-

txtj304

On June 16th, after it became clear that the French would seek an armistice, the remaining British troops were ordered to leave France. All were evacuated within two days.

-end-

txtj305

On June 18th, in a London radio broadcast, General de Gaulle asked for volunteers to continue the struggle against Germany.

-end-

txtj306

On June 19th, French ships looked for refuge in British and North African ports.

-end-

txtj307

On June 19th, the Germans invited the French to discuss terms for an armistice.

-end-

txtj308

On June 20th, Italian troops invaded France.

-end-

txtj309

On June 22nd, France and Germany signed an armistice near Compiègne. The armistice was signed in the same railway coach in which the 1918 armistice between Germany and the Allies was signed following the First World War.

-end-

txtj310

Just four days after Italy invaded France, France agreed to sign an armistice.

-end-

txtj311

After only six weeks of fighting, Hitler had won all but the southern part of France, which remained free from German occupation. The remains of the French government, under the

leadership of Marshal Henri Petain, was based in Vichy, and became known as Vichy France.

During the six week campaign in France, the Germans lost around 45,000 men. The Allies had over 100,000 casualties, and many more men were taken prisoner by the Germans. The campaign was an incredible blow for the west, and now Britain stood alone.

-end-

txtj312

On June 3rd, Winston Churchill authorized the formation of special British raiding forces whose purpose was to keep German troops busy in the occupied countries. These forces became known as Commandos.

-end-

txtj313

On the night of June 24th, the first British Commando unit assaulted the French coast. The raid was abortive; no casualties resulted and no damage was inflicted on the Germans.

-end-

txtj314

On the night of July 14th, the second Commando raid took place in German-occupied Guernsey in the Channel Islands. This second Commando operation was as unsuccessful as the first. From this point on, Commandos would be used only in large-scale raids, in which they became very effective.

-end-

txtj315

On June 26th, Turkey announced its neutrality in the European war.

-end-

txtj316

On June 27th, the Royal Navy seized all French ships in British ports.

-end-

txtj317

On June 28th, Britain recognized Charles de Gaulle as the leader of the Free French.

-end-

txtj318

On June 28th, the Pope contacted Churchill, Hitler, and Mussolini, offering to mediate in peace talks.

-end-

txtj319

On June 28th, Joseph Stalin took advantage of the Allies' preoccupation with German aggression and demanded from Romania the provinces of Bessarabia and northern Bucovina. Germany urged Romania to agree, and the very next day these territories were occupied by Soviet troops.

-end-

txtj320

On June 30th, Germany occupied the British Channel Islands. The British gave these up without a fight since their nearness to German-occupied France made them indefensible. Alderney, one of the islands, later became the site of a German concentration camp, the only one in British territory.

-end-

txtj321

On July 3rd, the Royal Navy attacked the French Fleet in the North African ports of Oran and Mers-el-Kebir, in Operation Catapult. The British were afraid that the fleet would fall into German hands and become a threat to the Royal Navy. This action angered both Vichy France and the French people living in England.

-end-

txtj322

After Operation Catapult, in which the Royal Navy attacked the French Fleet to keep it from falling into Germany's hands, an angry government in Vichy France broke off all diplomatic relations with Britain. Vichy aircraft later raided British Gibraltar in retaliation, but with little effect.

-end-

txtj323

On July 11th, Marshal Henri Petain was made the premier of Vichy France.

-end-

txtj324

On July 19th, in a speech in the Reichstag, Adolph Hitler asked Britain to negotiate for peace. His plans for the invasion of Britain were ready and waiting. Britain rejected his offer.

-end-

txtj325

On July 20th, President Roosevelt signed the Two-Ocean Navy Expansion Act, which allowed for expansion of the number of ships in the United States Navy. Though the American people were still against getting involved in the European war, this was a first step in war preparations.

-end-

txtj326

The United States Congress authorized President Roosevelt to call the National Guard to active duty in the western hemisphere and in US possessions for a period of one year.

-end-

txtj327

On September 16th, the United States Congress passed the Burke-Wadsworth Bill, which allowed limited conscription to the armed forces. The bill was limited to raising troops for employment in the western hemisphere and in US possessions.

-end-

txtj328

On July 21st, all three Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, became autonomous republics of the USSR.

-end-

txtj329

On July 22nd, the Special Operations Executive (SOE) was formed to promote resistance movements in German-occupied countries.

-end-

txtj330

Eduard Benes, the former Czechoslovakian President, established a government-in-exile in Britain.

-end-

txtj331

On August 1st, Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov reaffirmed the USSR's neutrality in the war.

-end-

txtj332

On August 13th, President Roosevelt and Winston Churchill made an agreement which allowed the United States to lease naval bases in the British Caribbean in return for the loan to Britain of fifty destroyers (from the First World War) and other war materials.

-end-

txtj333

On September 3rd, Hitler and Mussolini forced Romania to give up territory to Hungary in the Vienna Award. Hitler was uneasy after Moscow's seizure of Romanian territory because Germany was dependent on Romania for oil supplies. When both Hungary and Bulgaria made demands for Romanian land, Hitler and Mussolini granted Hungary Transylvania, with the understanding that the rest of Romanian territory would remain intact.

These events toppled the Romanian government and King Carol II abdicated his throne.

Romanian General Ion Antonescu, a friend of Adolph Hitler's, became dictator of Romania.

-end-

txtj334

On September 23rd, Charles de Gaulle led Free French and British forces in an effort to take French West Africa's Dakar garrison. Dakar was loyal to Vichy France, and refused to surrender to de Gaulle. After incurring damage to two British battleships, de Gaulle's forces withdrew, deciding that the effort would be too costly in terms of men and war materials.

-end-

txtj335

On September 27, 1940, Germany, Italy, and Japan signed a pact that pledged military assistance to each member in case of an attack by any country not already involved in the war. The pact also allowed Japan the right to establish a new order in Asia, and Germany and Italy the right to establish a new order in Europe.

Japan believed that the Tripartite Pact would discourage the US from intervening in Japan's attempts at expansion. But since the United States viewed Japan's action as going into league with the enemy, it immediately gave its support to the Dutch in refusing to make an oil agreement with Japan, and approved two large loans for China.

-end-

txtj336

On May 14, 1940, under the direction of British Secretary of State for War Anthony Eden, the Local Defense Volunteers, or LDV, was established. Within the first 24 hours, 250,000 men enrolled in the LDV.

-end-

txtj337

By the end of July, the Local Defense Volunteers had risen to a total of 1,250,000 men. At Winston Churchill's urging, the LDV was renamed the Home Guard on July 23rd. The Home Guard was a valuable addition to Britain's defenses.

-end-

txtj338

By June 12th, Britain had a defense plan ready to implement. The plan was master-minded by the commander-in-chief of the Home Forces, General Sir Edmund Ironside. Ironside's plan called for a line of defense, the GHQ line, running south from Edinburgh to the Medway on the east coast, and from south of London westward to south of Bristol on the south coast. Shorter lines were positioned in front of the GHQ. The defenses consisted of anti-tank ditches and pillboxes, small concrete sections for the placement of machine guns and anti-tank weapons. Once the plan was complete, the defenses were quickly constructed.

-end-

txtj339

On July 2nd, Hitler called for preparations for the invasion of Britain to begin. At this point, Hitler was unwilling to set a date. He had hoped that Britain would agree to peace terms rather than put up a fight, but it was clear that Churchill and the British were not going to give in. Hitler had to get the Luftwaffe in top condition before he would begin the invasion, since air superiority would be the key in winning the war.

-end-

txtj340

Admiral Raeder, the commander-in-chief of the German Navy, expressed his reservations to Hitler about invading Britain. He believed that a series of air attacks and a blockade of Britain's shipping was a more efficient approach to bring Britain to its knees.

-end-

txtj341

On July 13th, Hitler declined Mussolini's offer to make the invasion of Britain a joint effort.

-end-

txtj342

On July 16th, Hitler issued Directive 16, which outlined the tactics for invading Britain. The invasion was code-named Operation Sealion. Hitler planned for twenty divisions to be involved, after the Luftwaffe achieved total control of the air over the English Channel. Hitler also wanted to make sure England would not be able to wage war against Germany, and he would occupy Britain if necessary. But even at this point, Hitler hesitated.

-end-

txtj343

On July 17th, Hitler's generals disclosed their invasion plans. Six divisions of von Rundstedt's Army Group A would take Ramsgate-Bexhill in the southeast, four divisions would land between

Brighton and the Isle of Wight, and three divisions would land on the Dorset coast. These division would be followed by six armored divisions, three motorized divisions, and two airborne. Von Rundstedt planned to cut off Cornwall, Devon, and Wales, then take London before advancing north.

-end-

txtj344

On July 19th, General Sir Alan Brooke replaced General Sir Edmund Ironside as the Commander-in-chief of Britain's Home Forces. Ironside's defenses were already in place. But Brooke believed that the Germans had to be defeated before they moved far into British territory, preferably on the beaches. Brooke moved his mobile reserves as far forward as possible to prepare for this.

-end-

txtj345

On July 31st, Hitler met with his commanders to review the invasion plans. The navy and the army disagreed on the best strategy. Admiral Raeder felt the army's plan covered more territory than the navy could secure. The transport vessels for the troops could not be acquired until September. Raeder's advice was to postpone the invasion until May of 1941, and to narrow the front of attack.

Army commanders countered Raeder's criticisms with the argument that a narrow front would allow Britain to concentrate its men, and that a delay would give the British time to rebuild its forces and to replace the heavy equipment it had left behind in France. The army recommended going ahead with the invasion as soon as possible and on as large a front as possible.

-end-

txtj346

On August 1st, Hitler issued Directive 17, which set August 6th as the date that the Luftwaffe would begin operations to achieve air supremacy over the English Channel. Goering was confident that the Luftwaffe would clear the Royal Air Force from the skies in no time. Once control over air space was established, the Luftwaffe would attack shipping ports and Britain's food supply.

The Germans planned on attacking Britain with two air fleets, the Luftflotte 2 and Luftflotte 3. These combined fleets had around 2,500 combat aircraft. Goering was counting on the fact that the RAF was still suffering from losses incurred over France, and that aircraft production in Britain was slow. Goering believed the British were only producing between 180 to 300 fighters per month.

Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel signed another directive instructing the German forces to be prepared to invade by September 15th. Hitler would set a date within eight to fourteen days after the air offensive began. The final plans called for the broad front attack favored by the army. In the meantime, the navy began collecting the vessels necessary to transport men and materials, and the troops underwent amphibious warfare training.

-end-

txtj347

On July 10th, the Luftwaffe attacked shipping docks in South Wales with seventy aircraft. The Germans hoped to lure the RAF into battle by attacking shipping in the English Channel, before beginning the main air offensive in August. But Commander-in-chief of the RAF, Hugh Dowding, realized the importance of rebuilding his depleted supply of aircraft. He refused to take the bait.

-end-

txtj348

On May 11th, Winston Churchill appointed Lord Beaverbrook Minister of Aircraft Production. It was critical that aircraft lost in France be replaced before Germany invaded Britain. At the time that Germany began its air offensive on Britain in August, the Luftwaffe believed that the RAF had about 600 aircraft, and that British production of fighters was somewhere in the range of 180 to 300 per month. Though Commander-in-chief Hugh Dowding of the RAF had only 400 serviceable fighters at the end of July, Lord Beaverbrook's industry had fighter production up to

496 per month by the end of that July. This and Dowding's caution against engaging in unnecessary air battles put the RAF in much better shape than the Luftwaffe expected.

-end-

txtj349

Though Hitler's Directive 17 called for the main air offensive to begin on August 6, 1940, the Luftwaffe had been raiding the Channel ever since France's fall in June. July 30th marked the beginning of a relatively quiet period over the Channel as the Luftwaffe prepared for the full-scale air offensive.

-end-

txtj350

On August 6th, Goering chose the 10th for the day of the main offensive; however, bad weather caused a postponement to the 13th. The RAF was well-informed about Goering's decisions due to its ability to decipher the Luftwaffe's coded messages.

-end-

txtj351

Five days before the main air offensive, Luftwaffe aircraft began targeting shipping convoys and their escorts in the English Channel. On the 8th the Luftwaffe lost 31 aircraft to the RAF's loss of only 16. On the 11th, the Germans lost 35 to the RAF's 29.

-end-

txtj352

On August 12th, just one day before the scheduled main air offensive, the Luftwaffe attacked British airfields and radar stations. One of the six radar stations was rendered useless. The radar stations were the critical communications link for the RAF, allowing the aircraft to receive warnings of air raids. On this date, the Luftwaffe lost 26 aircraft, the RAF lost 22.

-end-

txtj353

August 13th was to be the official beginning of the main air offensive, or the Battle of Britain. This battle was supposed to establish air superiority for the Luftwaffe. The Luftwaffe flew 1,485 sorties against British airfields and other targets on the first day. Few fighter bases were damaged. The RAF lost only 15 aircraft in the battle. The Germans lost 39 aircraft, including a large number of Ju 87 Stukas, and suffered a blow to morale. So began an air battle that would last through the end of October.

-end-

txtj354

The air offensive of the 13th was a disappointment for the Germans. In an effort to minimize the significance of that day, Goering announced a new date for the major offensive. August 15th was set as Eagle Day (Adlertag).

On Eagle Day the Germans flew 1,786 sorties, targeting primarily the British air fields. In this battle the Luftwaffe lost 76 aircraft, while the British lost 35.

-end-

txtj355

On this day, the Germans also suffered heavier losses in aircraft than the British. The Luftwaffe lost 67, while the RAF lost only 33. But the Germans had severely damaged Fighter Command airfields. Even more serious was the loss of RAF pilots. Over the past two weeks, 106 British fighter pilots had died in action, and the remaining pilots were suffering from exhaustion.

Fortunately, the weather forced a four-day curtailment of air activity.

-end-

txtj356

On August 20, 1940, Winston Churchill thanked the RAF in his famous tribute to the RAF fighter pilots.

-end-

txtj357

On August 24th, the Luftwaffe began sending more fighters and fewer bombers over England, targeting British airfields. On this night, however, bombs were accidentally dropped on London itself.

-end-

txtj358

The evening after the Luftwaffe accidentally dropped bombs over central London, the RAF retaliated by raiding Berlin. Fifty bombers flew over the capital, but they did little damage.

-end-

txtj359

At this stage in the air offensive, the British and Germans were losing aircraft at a close to equal rate. The Luftwaffe had lost 308 aircraft, while British losses were up to 273. Britain's losses had also begun to exceed Britain's production rate. The Luftwaffe had begun concentrating its attacks on airfields and command headquarters, further disrupting the RAF.

Another disturbing development was in the bombing of Britain's cities at night. Both the RAF and the Luftwaffe had been bombing ports, factories and communications targets, killing many civilians in the surrounding towns and cities in the process. These unintentional civilian casualties were due to the inaccuracy of the technology used. But on the night of September 5th and early in the morning on the 6th, the Luftwaffe intentionally bombed London. The bombing was a retaliation for the bombing of Berlin less than a week before.

On the afternoon of the 7th, the bombing was renewed with increasing intensity. This began the London Blitz, which lasted through May 11, 1941. The Luftwaffe bombarded London and other British towns by day and night, hoping to destroy the morale of the British people. Though the London Blitz took a huge toll on the citizens of Britain, the change in Luftwaffe strategy allowed the RAF time to recover their damaged air bases and headquarters.

On the night of the 7th, after an intense assault on London, the word went out to British forces in southern England that the German invasion would probably begin within the next 24 hours.

-end-

txtj360

On August 4th, less than a week after the British bombed Berlin in retaliation for bombs accidentally dropped on London, Hitler swore vengeance in a public speech. The next day the London Blitz began.

-end-

txtj361

On September 10th, Hitler postponed the invasion of Britain (Operation Sealion) until the 24th. Four days later, it was postponed again until the 27th, the last day of the month that the tides in the English Channel would favor the Germans.

-end-

txtj362

September 15th, marked the climax of the Battle of Britain, and determined the extent to which Germany would force Britain's compliance in the future. The Germans believed that they had defeated the RAF and achieved air superiority, a prerequisite for a full-scale invasion of Britain. On the 15th, the Luftwaffe made a final offensive on London, thinking to bring the city to its knees.

The Germans flew 1,300 sorties in this offensive. The Luftwaffe lost 58 aircraft; the RAF flew 170 fighters and lost only 26. After this battle, the Germans were forced to admit that they had failed to achieve air superiority. An invasion of Britain was now unlikely.

-end-

txtj363

The Battle of Britain did not officially end until late October, but for all practical purposes it was over on the 15th of September. The outcome of the September 15th air offensive over London caused Hitler to postpone the full-scale invasion of Britain indefinitely. The invasion had been contingent on the establishment of German air dominance in the English Channel. The Luftwaffe had failed to achieve that goal, and without it, an invasion was unwise.

The Luftwaffe lost approximately 1,880 aircraft and 2,660 men in this phase of the war, as opposed to Britain's loss of 1,020 aircraft and 537 men. The German's Me 109 fighter and the

RAF's Spitfire and Hurricane were about equal in terms of quality. The British were able to maintain control of their airspace for other reasons.

British planes had less distance to cover. German planes were comparatively limited by distance and the amount of fuel they could carry. The British also concentrated on attacking the bombers themselves, rather than the bombers' fighter escorts. This resulted in fewer successful hits for the Germans.

The Germans made at least two major errors in strategy which also contributed to their ultimate failure. The first was in ignoring the importance of RAF communications links. Instead of bombing radar stations, the Germans targeted airstrips and headquarters. Knocking out British communications would have given them the advantage of surprise in their attacks. Second, the later decision to ignore airfields in favor of bombing London allowed the RAF time to recover--both manpower and materials.

By October 12th, Hitler had abandoned any idea of invading Britain. The air raids on Britain's cities continued throughout the winter of 1940-1941. But the danger of a full-scale assault was receding.

-end-
txtj364

On the night of September 23rd, 129 RAF bombers attacked industrial targets in Berlin.

The Luftwaffe and RAF had both discovered that night missions reduced loss of aircraft. But an unfortunate consequence of night-bombing was a decrease in accuracy and an increase in civilian casualties; targeting factories and communications often meant killing civilians.

-end-
txtj365

On September 27th, the Luftwaffe lost 52 aircraft in daytime raids, to the RAF's loss of 28.

-end-
txtj366

September 30th was the last instance of a daytime raid on London. Heavy losses in aircraft finally convinced the Luftwaffe to do all its attacking under cover of darkness. The Germans lost 43 aircraft in this raid on London and an aircraft factory in Yeovil. The British lost only 16.

-end-
txtj367

From September 7th to November 12th, the Luftwaffe raided London 58 times. 15,000 civilians died in this period; many more were injured and left homeless.

In the meanwhile, the RAF attacked targets in Germany--mostly oil sources and communications systems--trying to hamper Germany's capacity to make war.

-end-
txtj368

On the night of November 14th, the Luftwaffe began targeting other British cities and towns besides London. This night the Luftwaffe sent 449 bombers to hit Coventry, an industrial city in central England. Twenty-one factories were destroyed, and there were 1,100 casualties. One-third of the houses in the city were uninhabitable after the raid. Though the assault shocked the citizens of the community and did tremendous physical damage, Coventry was able to recover and continue its war industry.

-end-
txtj369

On November 19th, the Luftwaffe raided the city of Birmingham in central England.

-end-
txtj370

The Luftwaffe bombed the port city of Southampton on November 23rd.

-end-
txtj371

On November 24th, the Luftwaffe attacked the port city of Bristol in southwest England. In the month of November, 4,588 British civilians were killed in air raids, and another 6,202 were injured.

-end-

txtj372

On December 12th, the Luftwaffe attacked the city of Sheffield in northern England.

-end-

txtj373

On December 20th, the Luftwaffe attacked the port city of Liverpool in northwest England.

-end-

txtj374

On December 16th, the RAF sent a record 134 bombers to attack Mannheim, Germany. This mission was in retaliation for the recent string of air raids on British cities. For the first time in the war, the British pilots were instructed to attack the central part of a city rather than industrial targets. Civilian casualties were 115, and 1,266 people were left homeless.

-end-

txtj375

On December 29th, the Luftwaffe fire-bombed London, injuring civilians and destroying many historic buildings. British civilians killed in December totaled 3,793, and another 5,244 were injured.

-end-

txtj376

On January 13th, 1941, the Luftwaffe raided the port city of Plymouth in southwest England.

-end-

txtj377

On February 10th, the RAF used its new, heavy Stirling bomber for the first time. The mission attacked oil storage tanks in Rotterdam.

-end-

txtj378

The first operational flight of the RAF's new heavy Manchester bomber took place on February 24th. The target was German-occupied Brest, France, in Brittany. This mechanically-flawed, two-engine bomber was the predecessor of the successful Lancaster bomber.

-end-

txtj379

On March 10th, the RAF used the heavy bomber Halifax to raid the German-occupied port city of Le Havre, France. One of the six Halifax bombers on this mission was accidentally shot down by an RAF fighter.

-end-

txtj380

On March 13th and 14th, the Luftwaffe raided Clydebank, a town near Glasgow, Scotland. Seventy-five percent of Clydebank's inhabitants were homeless after the attack.

-end-

txtj381

The Luftwaffe continued to hit cities and towns throughout Britain, concentrating especially on port cities from which shipping convoys set out across the Atlantic. During the month of March, Cardiff, Wales, was attacked three times; Plymouth, two; and Portsmouth, five. London suffered less than before, but still endured three major raids.

-end-

txtj382

On April 8th, the industrial city of Coventry in central England suffered heavy air bombardment.

-end-

txtj383

On April 11th, the port city of Bristol was bombarded by the Luftwaffe.

-end-

txtj384

On April 15th, the port city of Belfast in Ireland was attacked by the Luftwaffe.

-end-

txtj385

The Luftwaffe struck London again on April 16th.

-end-

txtj386

On April 19th, the Luftwaffe bombarded the city of London. During the remainder of April, the Luftwaffe attacked and nearly destroyed the city of Plymouth. It also raided Belfast, Hull, and Nottingham. This string of attacks was a ploy to draw attention away from Hitler's preparations to invade Russia.

-end-

txtj387

The night of May 10th was the Luftwaffe's heaviest attack on London, and the last night of the London Blitz. There were 1,436 people killed and another 1,792 injured in the bombing. Fully one-third of London's streets were turned to rubble, and 150,000 families were without utilities.

At this point in the war, Hitler was concentrating on an invasion of Russia. Because of this, the Luftwaffe stopped its intense attacks on Britain's population. The British people had endured a severe test to their morale for the past winter. But air raids alone were not enough to break them, and the German invasion of Britain never came to pass.

As German activity in Russia increased, the RAF made more air raids on Germany. This was partially to weaken the morale of the German people, but it was also the only significant means by which the British could directly attack Germany. By distracting the Luftwaffe with air raids over Germany, the RAF could draw a little of the heat away from the Russian Allies.

-end-

txtj388

At this point in the war, Britain was suffering from severe restrictions on shipping. The conflict in Norway and the evacuation of the BEF from Dunkirk in June had left Britain short on escort vessels to send with shipping convoys.

On July 3rd, the last British convoy passed Dover. From this time on, Luftwaffe attacks over the Channel made the area too dangerous. And because Italy had recently joined the war, Britain feared sending merchant vessels through the Mediterranean. Convoys now had to circumnavigate Africa, a much longer route, and the Atlantic ocean was by no means safe.

Britain lacked enough warships to escort convoys of merchant vessels safely to their destinations. To maximize coverage, convoys were grouped according to speed of travel and inward or outward destination. Only one warship per convoy in the Atlantic was possible, with additional escorts joining convoys between the 17 degree west meridian and Britain.

-end-

txtj389

On July 6th, the Germans established their first U-boat base in occupied France at Lorient. Additional bases were located at Bordeaux, Brest, La Pallice and St. Nazaire, as more U-boats returned from Norway. Having bases in France was a tremendous benefit to the German Navy since it reduced the time necessary for U-boats to reach their areas of operations in the Atlantic. Additionally, the base at Bordeaux included a squadron of Focke-Wulf FW 200 Kondor maritime reconnaissance aircraft which made it easier to locate and waylay British convoys. Even though the Germans had only 30 operational submarines, they were able to sink 700,000 tons of shipping in the Atlantic Ocean during the months of July and August.

-end-

txtj390

On August 17th, Hitler declared a maritime blockade of Britain, attempting to curtail Britain's trade and choke it into submission. Hitler warned that all neutral ships would be sunk with no warning.

-end-

txtj391

On September 2nd, following President Roosevelt's and Winston Churchill's August 13th Lend-Lease Agreement, the United States Congress voted to give Britain 50 obsolete destroyers from

the First World War in return for a 99-year lease on Britain's naval bases in the Caribbean. Britain needed the destroyers to serve as escorts for its merchant convoys.

-end-

txtj392

On September 6th, the first eight of 50 destroyers promised to Britain in the Lend-Lease Agreement left the United States for Britain.

-end-

txtj393

Between October 17th and October 20th, eight German U-boats attacked one fast, inward-bound convoy and one slow inward-bound convoy, sinking 32 out of 91 vessels. Four other ships in the convoys were damaged. German U-boats were experiencing tremendous success in the Atlantic. They sunk 403,000 tons of shipping in September and 418,000 tons in October.

-end-

txtj394

On November 5th, the German pocket battleship, Admiral Scheer, encountered a British convoy escorted by the armed merchant cruiser, Jervis Bay, in the Atlantic ocean. While Admiral Scheer and Jervis Bay battled, all but five vessels in the convoy escaped. The Jervis Bay lost the battle and was sunk. Admiral Scheer continued south in the Atlantic and sunk eleven more ships before returning to Germany. Shipping losses for Britain in November totaled 294,000 tons.

-end-

txtj395

On December 7th, the German battleship, Admiral Hipper, left the port at Kiel to look for British convoys in the Atlantic. On the 25th the Hipper encountered a troop convoy in route to the Middle East, but the convoy's three escort cruisers chased it away. The Hipper went to Brest, France for repairs.

-end-

txtj396

In December, German warfare caused 322,000 tons of shipping losses for Britain.

-end-

txtj397

In January 1941, German warfare caused 310,000 tons of shipping losses for Britain.

-end-

txtj398

After leaving the port of Brest, France, the German battleship Admiral Hipper encountered an unescorted convoy of ships sailing from Freetown, West Africa to Britain. The Hipper sank seven of the nineteen ships in the convoy before returning to Brest.

-end-

txtj399

On February 4th, the German vessels Scharnhorst and Gneisenau managed to slip past the British Home Fleet and leave the Baltic Sea for the Atlantic Ocean. By March 22nd, these two ships managed to sink 115,000 tons of shipping in the Atlantic.

-end-

txtj400

Shipping losses for Britain in February due to German warfare were 370,000 tons.

-end-

txtj401

German submarine U-47 was famous for having sunk the British battleship Royal Oak at Scapa Flow in 1939. Its commander, Guenther Prien, was a national hero. On March 7th, 1940, U-47 attacked a convoy south of Iceland. U-47 and one other submarine were sunk by the convoy's escort, HMS Wolverine. The convoy lost only two ships.

-end-

txtj402

U-99's skipper, Otto Kretschmer, had sunk 263,682 tons before his submarine was taken out of action by the British convoy escorts Walker and Vanoc. U-100 was also commanded by an expert, Joachim Schepke. The Vanoc sunk this U-boat in the same encounter. The convey lost only five ships in the battle.

British escorts were becoming more effective because of better training, more ships, and type 286M radar, which allowed equipped ships to detect U-boats on the surface within a three-mile range.

-end-

txtj403

On March 19th, Winston Churchill formed the Battle of the Atlantic Committee to coordinate safer convoys in the Atlantic Ocean. Losses to German U-boats were incredible, in spite of the improved escorts. The Committee determined that escort groups and aircraft from the Royal Air Force Coastal Command would be based in Iceland to provide even better coverage. The Royal Canadian Navy would provide additional escorts from Canada's waters to the 35 degree west meridian. The Iceland escorts took over from there to the 18th meridian.

-end-

txtj404

On May 8th, while attacking a convoy south of Greenland, U-110 was forced to surrender by HMS Bulldog. The U-boat commander, Julius Lemp, ordered his crew to abandon ship and blow it up, but the explosives failed to go off and the British were able to recover the vessel's Enigma cipher machine and code books. This was a crucial victory for the British, since they could now decode German signals and avoid U-boats. When his U-boat did not blow up, Lemp committed suicide by drowning.

-end-

txtj405

On May 18th, the German battleship Bismarck and the heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen left Gdynia, Poland for the Atlantic. The two vessels were spotted by RAF reconnaissance aircraft at Bergen, Norway on the 21st, and again by the British cruiser Suffolk in the Denmark Strait.

On May 24th, in the Atlantic between Greenland and Iceland, the Bismarck encountered HMS Hood and the Prince of Wales. The Bismarck sunk the HMS Hood, and only three of 1,400 crew members survived. After the interception, the two German ships separated.

-end-

txtj406

Two days after the German battleship Bismarck sunk HMS Hood, the RAF Coastal Command sighted the Bismarck 700 miles west of Brest, France. Swordfish aircraft from the carrier Ark Royal torpedoed the Bismarck, damaging its steering mechanism. The next day the battleships King George V and Rodney finished off the Bismarck. Only 110 of its 2,300 crew members were rescued. The Bismarck's companion ship, the Prinz Eugen, made it to Brest on June 1st.

-end-

txtj407

On May 27th, the convoy HX129 sailed from Canada. This was the first shipping convoy to have a continuous escort across the Atlantic. From this point on, the increased coverage of convoys and Britain's ability to decode U-boat signals decreased shipping losses steadily. Losses for April, May and June were 381,000 tons, 436,500 tons, and 415,000 tons respectively. By the end of July, losses were only 113,000 tons.

-end-

txtj408

On June 11th, Italy carried out its threat of war, attacking the island of Malta in the Mediterranean nine times from the air, and bombing the port cities of Aden and Sudan. Italy's aggression in the Mediterranean and Palestine threatened Britain's position in those areas. Britain feared losing valuable oil supplies and the use of the Suez Canal. In terms of military strength in the Middle East, Italy far surpassed Britain, boasting superiority in the air and on the ground. The two sides were more nearly equal at sea. The battle would be a tough one for Britain.

-end-

txtj409

On June 11th, Britain responded to Italy's declaration of war and attacks on British territory by attacking Eritrea and Libya, both part of the Italian Empire in the Middle East.

-end-

txtj410

Britain attacked industrial targets in Turin and Genoa, Italy, on the day that Mussolini declared war on Britain and France.

-end-

txtj411

On June 11th, British forces sent armored cars from Egypt into Libya to ambush Italian vehicles near Fort Capuzzo. This began the three-year-long North African campaign.

-end-

txtj412

On June 14th, British forces captured two Italian forts in Libya, Capuzzo and Maddalena. Knowing that they were far outnumbered by Italian troops, the British destroyed the forts' defenses and then abandoned them.

Over the next several weeks, the British prepared a defensive line in Egypt 300 miles west of the Suez canal, and established border patrols between British Egypt and Italian Libya. The Royal Air Force attacked Libyan airstrips until British losses in these forays made them impractical.

-end-

txtj413

On June 28th, Libya's Governor-General Marshal Italo Balbo died when his aircraft was shot down by another Italian airman. He was replaced by General Rodolfo Graziani.

-end-

txtj414

On July 4th, Italian forces attacked British garrisons at Kassala, on the Eritrean border, and at Gallabat, on the Abyssinian border.

-end-

txtj415

On August 4th, 25,000 Italian troops crossed from Italian Abyssinia and invaded British Somaliland. Far outnumbered, the British could do little more but hold out until they were evacuated from Berbera by the Royal Navy. Italy was now in control of British Somaliland, which threatened the sea route between the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea.

-end-

txtj416

On August 17th, the British Middle Eastern Forces began moving the new 5th Indian Division to British Sudan.

-end-

txtj417

Abyssinia's Emperor Haile Selassie had been living in exile since Italy's annexation of Abyssinia in 1936. On August 17, 1940, a group of Abyssinians loyal to the former emperor began planning a revolt.

-end-

txtj418

On August 19th, Benito Mussolini instructed Libyan Governor-General Graziani to invade Egypt on whatever day Hitler mounted the invasion of Britain.

-end-

txtj419

On August 15th, Winston Churchill decided to send materials and men to the Commander of the Middle East Forces, General Sir Archibald Wavell, in spite of the looming German invasion. British forces in Egypt were so outnumbered by Italian forces in Libya to make reinforcement necessary.

One week later a well-guarded convoy set sail with 150 tanks and other materials. The convoy went all the way around Africa and the Cape of Good Hope to Port Said at the north entrance of the Suez Canal. The Convoy reached its destination safely on September 24th.

-end-

txtj420

Mussolini grew impatient waiting for Hitler to begin Operation Sealion (the invasion of Britain) and

ordered General Graziani to go ahead with the invasion of Egypt. On September 13th, five Italian divisions, including 200 tanks, crossed the Egyptian frontier and occupied Sollum. The British forces withdrew, planning to fall back as far as their defenses at Mersa Matruh where they would make a stand.

-end-

txtj421

Three days after crossing the Libyan border into Egypt, Italian forces reached and occupied Sidi Barrani. Here the Italians built fortified camps.

-end-

txtj422

Though the British had barely 50,000 men in Egypt to fight 200,000 Italians in Libya, General Wavell expected reinforcements any day, as well as the convoy from Britain bringing tanks and aircraft. On September 21st, Wavell ordered planning to begin to drive the Italians out of Libya and to take the port of Tobruk.

Italian General Graziani learned that British tanks would soon outnumber his own, and he refused to push further into Egypt.

-end-

txtj423

On October 28th, Mussolini sent the Greeks an ultimatum which accused Greece of adopting a non-neutral attitude towards Italy. If Greece would not allow Italy to occupy certain strategic points in Greek territory for the duration of the war, Italian troops would use force. It was, in truth, a declaration of war.

The Greeks refused to comply, and two days later Italian troops crossed the Albanian border and invaded Greece.

-end-

txtj424

On October 28th, Mussolini and Hitler met in the Brenner Pass between Italy and Austria. Hitler, who had just learned from the papers that Italy invaded Greece, hid his anger and offered the other dictator parachute troops for the capture of Crete. Mussolini declined the offer.

-end-

txtj425

Winston Churchill offered Premier Joannis Metaxas of Greece military support against the invasion by Italy. Metaxas declined this offer but agreed to assistance in garrisoning the island of Crete.

-end-

txtj426

On November 4th, the Greeks counter-attacked and within a few days drove the Italians back into Albania.

-end-

txtj427

On December 4th, the situation on the Greek-Albanian front was so bad for the Italians, Under Secretary of State for War General Ubaldo Soddu told Mussolini he recommended an armistice with Greece.

-end-

txtj428

On December 6th, Mussolini's Commander-in-Chief Marshal Pietro Badoglio resigned. He was replaced by General Ugo Cavallero.

-end-

txtj429

On November 26th, the Western Desert Force in Egypt began training exercises for Operation Compass, the plan to capture Italian camps in Egypt. General Richard O'Connor had noted that the ten Italian camps were too widely spaced to support each other; this flaw would help the British in their endeavor.

-end-

txtj430

From December 6th through December 8th, the Western Desert Force marched sixty miles to a point twenty miles south of Maktila, in preparation for an attack on Italian camps.

-end-

txtj431

On December 9th, the first Western Desert offensive began. The 4th Indian Division captured three Italian camps at Nibeiwa, Tummar East and Tummar West. The 7th Armored Division went south of these camps to Sofafi and Rabia, and then headed north. From the Mediterranean, British ships fired on Sidi Barrani and Maktila.

-end-

txtj432

The day after the Western Desert offensive began, the 7th Armored Division cut the camps at Sofafi and Rabia off from the rest of the Italians.

-end-

txtj433

On December 11th, Italian-occupied Sidi Barrani and Maktila fell to the British. Sidi Omar and Fort Capuzzo continued to hold out. At this point, two divisions of British forces had wiped out four divisions of Italian forces, taking 38,000 prisoners (more than the total number of men in the WDF), 237 guns, 73 tanks and nearly 1,000 trucks.

On the same day, the 6th Australian Division arrived, and Wavell ordered the 4th Indian Division to defend the Sudan.

-end-

txtj434

On September 17th, Sollum and Sidi Omar fell to the British. By the 20th, there were no Italian troops left on Egyptian soil, except for those who were prisoners. The Western Desert Force, newly reinforced by the 6th Australian Division, began to plan the capture of port Bardia in Libya.

-end-

txtj435

On January 1st, 1941, the Western Desert Force, recently so successful in the North African campaign against the Italians, was renamed the XIII Corps.

-end-

txtj436

On January 5th, the Libyan port at Bardia fell to the 6th Australian Division, newly arrived in the North African campaign. What had begun as an Italian offensive in Egypt had turned into a highly successful British offensive in Libya. The Australian forces took 38,000 prisoners and suffered only 500 casualties.

-end-

txtj437

On January 6th, Winston Churchill informed his Chiefs of Staff that reinforcements for the Greek-Albanian conflict were a top priority, and that further advances in North Africa were to take second place. The Greeks had driven the Italians back into Albania without help from the British Commonwealth, and General Metaxas was still refusing Britain's help. Churchill, anxious for the Greeks to continue fighting, wanted to be prepared to send aid if Metaxas changed his mind.

-end-

txtj438

On January 7th, British forces advanced to Tobruk in Libya. The Italians were firmly established at Tobruk, and the British XIII Corps would need ample supplies for taking the Italian camp.

-end-

txtj439

On January 22nd, the Italian garrison at Tobruk surrendered to the XIII Corps, who netted 25,000 prisoners, 208 guns and 87 tanks. The British forces suffered only 400 casualties. The port was quickly opened to shipping to relieve the supply problems facing the Commonwealth forces.

-end-

txtj440

General Wavell received dual orders on January 22nd. Lt. General O'Connor's XIII Corps was to

push further into Libya and capture Benghazi, and Wavell was to prepare support for the Greeks.

O'Connor dispatched his 4th Armored Brigade around the mountains of Jebel Akhdar toward Benghazi. The Australians advanced along the coast toward the same destination.

-end-

txtj441

On January 23rd, the British 4th Armored Brigade reached the Italian garrison at Mechili. Finding it strongly defended, they waited for the 7th Armored Division to arrive the next day before taking action.

-end-

txtj442

On the night of January 26th, the Italians evacuated Mechili and the British 4th Armored Brigade occupied the stronghold the next day. General O'Connor planned to send the newly arrived 7th Armored Division to Derna, where the Australian forces had encountered strong Italian resistance.

-end-

txtj443

On February 4th, Royal Air Force reconnaissance over North Africa reported that the Italians were beginning to evacuate Benghazi. General Graziani had ordered the evacuation to El Agheila, where he planned to set up defenses to block the British from advancing to Tripolitania. General O'Connor gave immediate orders to the 7th Armored Division to cut off Graziani's retreating forces.

-end-

txtj444

A portion of General O'Connor's 7th Armored Division arrived at a point 70 miles south of Benghazi, Libya, on February 5th. Armored cars blocked the coast road and cut off the retreat of Italians toward El Agheila. The 4th Armored Brigade arrived later that day. Part of this Brigade was dispatched to the Beda Fromm area where 5,000 Italian gunners and civilians surrendered to them.

-end-

txtj445

The 6th Australian Division entered Benghazi on February 6th, destroying 80 Italian tanks and taking thousands of prisoners.

-end-

txtj446

Only three thousand men of the British 4th Armored Brigade surrounded Italian forces of at least 20,000 men at Beda Fromm, Libya on February 6th. The Italians failed to break out and the British captured 200 guns and 120 tanks.

-end-

txtj447

On February 7th, the same day the British took Beda Fromm, the Italian garrison at Agedabia also fell. The remaining Italian forces were all concentrated near the coast between Agedabia and El Agheila. The entire area of Cyrenaica was in British hands. These events represented the first clear victories for the British on land.

-end-

txtj448

On February 8th, General Rodolfo Graziani, Italian Commander-in-Chief in North Africa and Governor of Libya, wrote to Mussolini and requested that he be replaced. The spectacular victories of the British in Libya had left him discouraged and disoriented.

-end-

txtj449

On July 3rd, Abyssinian Emperor Haile Selassie left England for Khartoum, Sudan to encourage Abyssinian chieftains to rebellion and to raise an army from among the Abyssinian refugees.

-end-

txtj450

Since the defeat Italy had suffered at the hands of the British in North Africa, Mussolini had given

up any idea of advancing further into the Sudan in east Africa. On January 17th, the Italians abandoned their outposts at Kassala and Gallalabat during the night, withdrawing across the Sudan border into Italian territory.

-end-

txtj451

On January 19th, British Commander-in-Chief Lieutenant-General Sir William Platt began an offensive against Italian forces in Eritrea. The first move was for the 4th and 5th Indian Divisions to occupy the former Italian outpost at Kassala, Sudan. From there, the British moved east into Eritrea.

-end-

txtj452

On January 20th, Abyssinian Emperor Haile Selassie and his troops crossed the Sudan border into Abyssinia at Um Idla, beginning a march toward the capital at Addis Ababa.

-end-

txtj453

On January 24th, General Alan Cunningham and a force of East, South and West Africans crossed the Kenya border and invaded Italian Somaliland.

-end-

txtj454

On January 30th, the 1st South African Division attacked the Mega region of southern Abyssinia. Their intent was to engage Italian forces and prevent them from sending reinforcements to Italian Somaliland where General Cunningham's troops had just invaded. They also hoped to encourage rebellion among Abyssinians.

-end-

txtj455

The Italians garrisoned at Metemma, Abyssinia withdrew from their post under pressure from the 9th Indian Brigade on January 31st. They headed east for Gondar.

-end-

txtj456

On February 1st, Agordat, Eritrea was taken by the British 5th Indian Division.

-end-

txtj457

The day after Agordat fell to the British 5th Indian Division, Barentu, Eritrea also fell. The Italian forces retreated to the mountain fortress at Keren, where they planned to make one last stand.

-end-

txtj458

General Platt's 4th and 5th Indian Divisions pursued the Italian forces to their fortress in the mountainous area of Keren. The roughness of the terrain gave the Italians the advantage, and Platt's men were unsuccessful.

-end-

txtj459

On February 25th, the 11th African Division, made up of East and West African troops, captured Mogadishu in Italian Somaliland. Meanwhile, the 12th African Division was heading northwest along the Juba River toward Soddu, Abyssinia.

-end-

txtj460

On March 1st, the 11th African Division began pursuing the Italians from Italian Somaliland, north through the Ogaden Plateau, to Abyssinia.

-end-

txtj461

On March 15th, General Cunningham's troops made another attempt at taking the mountain fortress at Keren, Eritrea from the Italians. At a cost of 4,000 British and 3,000 Italian casualties, the 4th and 5th Indian Divisions finally secured the fort on March 27th, when the Italians retreated towards Asmara.

-end-

txtj462

British forces from Aden landed at Berbera, British Somaliland on March 16th, and drove out the Italians.

-end-

txtj463

On March 17th, General Cunningham's troops crossed into Abyssinia from Italian Somaliland to occupy Jijiga, which had just been evacuated by the Italians.

-end-

txtj464

Troops from the British 11th African Division and the British Berbera force met at Hargeisa on March 20th. These two forces gained control of both Italian and British Somaliland.

-end-

txtj465

The 11th African Division occupied Harar, which had been declared an open town by the Italians on the 22nd.

-end-

txtj466

On April 1st, Italian troops at Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, surrendered to the British 4th and 5th Indian Divisions.

-end-

txtj467

On April 2nd, Italian Rear-Admiral Bonnetti ordered seven of his destroyers in the Red Sea to make for Port Sudan. The vessels were spotted by British reconnaissance aircraft. The Royal Navy sunk one near Massawa, and two more on the way to the Suez Canal. Two other destroyers were sunk by the British Fleet Air Arm. The remaining two ran aground and were seized by the British near Jedda, Saudi Arabia.

-end-

txtj468

Abyssinian Emperor Haile Selassie and his troops, traveling with camels through Abyssinia from Sudan, arrived at the forts of Debra Markos on April 6th.

-end-

txtj469

On April 8th, Italian forces at Addis Ababa, the capital of Abyssinia, surrendered to the British 11th African Division.

-end-

txtj470

On April 8th, Massawa, the last pocket of Italian resistance in Eritrea, surrendered to British forces. Over 3,000 of the 13,000 men defending Massawa were killed and another 5,000 were wounded.

With the fall of Massawa, General Platt's forces had captured a total of 40,000 prisoners and 300 guns. British shipping routes through the Red Sea were safe once again. Now reinforcements could be sent to North Africa where they were desperately needed; the 4th Indian Division was dispatched to the Western Desert.

-end-

txtj471

On May 5th, the fifth anniversary of the Italian occupation of Addis Ababa, Emperor Haile Selassie returned to his throne in the capital city.

There was still much Italian resistance to be dealt with in Abyssinia. The next step for the British would be the capture of Amba Alagi, held by the Italian Governor of Abyssinia, the Duke d'Aosta.

-end-

txtj472

On April 26th, the Italian fortress at Dessie fell to British South African forces.

-end-

txtj473

After 18 days of battle, the Italian Governor of Abyssinia, Duke d'Aosta, and 7,000 Italian troops

surrendered Amba Alagi to the British 5th Indian Division.

-end-

txtj474

The East Africans of the 11th African Division moved south from Addis Ababa as the West Africans of the 12th African Division moved north. They converged on Soddu, where the Italians had been holding out for seven weeks. Together they finally squelched Italian resistance on May 22nd.

-end-

txtj475

On September 28th, British forces succeeded in taking the Italian garrison of Wolkefit, the pass between Adowa and Gondar. The Italians had managed to hold out there for more than three months.

-end-

txtj476

On November 27th, British forces took the Italian garrison at Gondar, the last Italian stronghold in Abyssinia. General Guglielmo Nasi surrendered 23,500 men. British casualties numbered 500.

The battle at Gondar marked the end of the East African campaign, a highly successful one for the British, who were facing serious defeats in North Africa and the Mediterranean.

-end-

txtj477

Control of the Mediterranean Sea lanes was critical to both the Axis and the Allies; each needed to supply its land forces in North Africa. Britain was also anxious to keep shipping routes to and from the Middle East open.

British and Italian naval forces in the Mediterranean were fairly equal. Though the Italian fleet lacked aircraft carriers, Italian aircraft from Italy, Sicily, Libya, and the Dodecanese Islands were never far away.

On July 9th, the first major sea battle between British and Italian forces took place off the southeast coast of Calabria (Italy). British Vice-Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham's force consisted of one aircraft carrier, six destroyers, three battleships and five light cruisers. Italian Admiral Campioni's squadron was made up of several destroyers, two battleships, six heavy cruisers and twelve light cruisers. Action ended when Admiral Campioni's flagship Giulio Cesare was hit by the Warsprite. The Italians withdrew to Messina where their fleet stayed for several weeks.

-end-

txtj478

On September 29th, British Admiral Cunningham escorted a convoy from Alexandria, Egypt, to Malta. The Admiral hoped to draw the Italian fleet into battle. The Italians left port, but returned to it quickly without engaging.

-end-

txtj479

On October 8th, another British convoy set out from Alexandria for Malta. This time the Italian fleet was kept from attacking by bad weather, but Campioni did attack the convoy's escort on its return trip to Alexandria. The Italians lost two torpedo boats and two destroyers in the encounter.

-end-

txtj480

On November 11th, twelve British Swordfish aircraft from HMS Illustrious torpedoed the Italian fleet at Taranto harbor, damaging the battleship Conte di Cavour and the new Littorio. An hour later, a second attack sank the battleship Duilio. In one thrust, the Royal Navy had disabled half of Italy's Mediterranean battleships, at a cost of only two aircraft. The remainder of the Italian fleet retired to the western coast of Italy.

-end-

txtj481

On November 27th, the Italian fleet encountered the British battleship Ramillies, accompanied by two cruisers, ten destroyers, and the aircraft carrier, Ark Royal. Ramillies, on its way to join the

Atlantic fleet, was escorting a convoy as far as Malta. Italian Admiral Campioni withdrew from the engagement with two destroyers and a cruiser, damaged after the battle cruiser Renown joined the British.

-end-

txtj482

After wiping out three of Italy's battleships, the British Mediterranean fleet was able to send reinforcements to Force H in the Atlantic. Ramillies had already left the Mediterranean, and on December 21st, the battleship Malaya followed. On its journey, Malaya accompanied a convoy to Malta.

-end-

txtj483

On January 10th, the German Luftwaffe made its first attack on the British Mediterranean fleet. Early that morning, two Italian torpedo-boats off the island of Pantelleria attacked a British convoy on its way to Malta. Forty of the Luftwaffe's Stuka aircraft attacked, damaging the aircraft carrier Illustrious and the cruiser Southampton, which the British sank themselves the next day because it was too far gone to recover. The Warsprite was only slightly damaged.

The next day the Luftwaffe returned to damage the cruiser Gloucester. At the same time, British submarines began targeting German convoys heading for Libya.

-end-

txtj484

On February 8th, the British Force H (Royal Navy) attacked Genoa, Italy.

-end-

txtj485

On February 23rd, Luftwaffe Stukas sank the British monitor Terror off the shores of Tobruk, Libya.

-end-

txtj486

The British submarine HMS Upholder sank the Italian cruiser Armando Diaz off the coast of Tunisia on February 25th.

-end-

txtj487

On February 25th, the British Admiralty and War Office announced that Castelorizzo in the Dodecanese Islands had been successfully taken by British Commandos. But left without naval support, the Commandos had to give it up again and evacuate when Italians returned to the island.

-end-

txtj488

On March 5th, British and Commonwealth troops began to leave Egypt for the conflict in Greece.

-end-

txtj489

On March 6th, German aircraft planted magnetic and acoustic mines in the Suez Canal, blocking shipping for three weeks while the British cleared them out. During that period of time, no convoys went from Alexandria to Malta because the intended escort, the aircraft carrier Formidable, was stuck at the southern entrance to the canal.

-end-

txtj490

On March 19th, German Admiral Weichold urged the Italian navy to attack shipping convoys moving from Egypt to Greece.

-end-

txtj491

On March 26th, the Italians succeeded in damaging the British cruiser HMS York in Suda Bay with a new weapon, the Mezzi Navali d'Assalto (naval assault machine), a motor boat equipped with explosives.

-end-

txtj492

Germany had urged the Italian navy to do something about the British convoys carrying troops from Alexandria to Greece. Italian Naval Commander-in-Chief Admiral Iachino responded by planning sweeps north and south of Greece to attack these convoys. He put together a squadron of the battleship Vittorio Veneto, nine destroyers, and eight cruisers and sent them on their way. The Luftwaffe was supposed to provide air cover for the squadron, but failed to show up. Instead, it was spotted by RAF reconnaissance, and the British Mediterranean fleet immediately set sail from Alexandria in pursuit.

The battle took place the next day, on the 28th. The four British cruisers and four destroyers that were escorting the convoy drew the Italians on toward the main British fleet. Aircraft from the carrier Formidable torpedoed Vittorio Veneto, which limped back to Taranto. The Italian cruiser Pola was also hit. Later that night the British sank two cruisers and two destroyers that had been left behind by the Italian squadron to assist the damaged Pola.

-end-

txtj493

Though Hitler was not fully behind Mussolini's plan to win the Suez Canal, the German dictator was anxious to have Italy remain in the war. So when Italy continued to suffer defeat in the Balkans and North Africa, Hitler decided to send military support in the form of anti-tank units and aircraft to Libya, and two to three divisions to Albania. He announced his plans on January 8th, then finalized them on January 11th in Directive 22. The plan for sending reinforcements to Libya was named Operation Sunflower; the plan for Albania was named Operation Alpine Violets.

-end-

txtj494

Hitler believed that control of the Mediterranean depended on control of Gibraltar, which guarded the entrance to the Mediterranean from the Atlantic. His plans included Axis occupation of Spain's Canary Islands and Portugal's Cape Verde Islands as well. Hitler was anxious to recruit Spain for the Axis to help realize these plans, but Spain's dictator, Francisco Franco, was reluctant. On February 6th, Hitler tried once again to persuade Franco. Franco elected to remain neutral, but offered to send volunteers (Spanish Blue Division) to the Eastern Front. This ended Hitler's hopes of securing Gibraltar, and increased his interest in assisting Mussolini's efforts in the Mediterranean.

-end-

txtj495

On February 6th, Hitler appointed Erwin Rommel to command the Deutsche Afrika Korps (DAK), which consisted of one light and one Panzer Division for the new German contingent to Libya. Rommel had previously served as an infantry officer in the First World War and as a Panzer commander in May of 1940 during the invasion of France.

-end-

txtj496

On February 12th, six days after his appointment as commander of the German Afrika Korps, Erwin Rommel arrived in Tripoli to serve under Italian General Gariboldi. In addition to his Afrika Korps, Rommel was given one Italian motorized division, the Ariete.

-end-

txtj497

On February 14th, a portion of the German 5th Light Division, an anti-tank and light infantry contingent, arrived in Tripoli. By March 11th, the remainder of the 5th Light had arrived. Rommel was only waiting for the 15th Panzers to show up before attacking the British at Agadabia.

-end-

txtj498

On February 23rd, Greece finally accepted Churchill's offer of troops to fight the invading Italians. General Metaxas, who refused previous offers, had died; his successor, Alexandros Korizis, was more willing. The British troops were to be taken from the North African campaign, making it impossible for Commander Wavell to continue his offensive on Tripolitania in Libya.

-end-

txtj499

British and German reconnaissance forces fought for the first time on Libyan soil at Nofilia,

between Sirte and El Agheila, on February 24th.

-end-

txtj500

On March 4th, a convoy of British cargo and warships, escorted by four cruisers and four destroyers, left Alexandria for Greece. The four British divisions destined for Greece were commanded by General Maitland Wilson. The transfer of these troops seriously depleted Commander Wavell's forces in North Africa.

-end-

txtj501

On March 24th, in a lightning attack, Erwin Rommel and the Afrika Korps routed the British and reoccupied El Agheila.

-end-

txtj502

Erwin Rommel and the Afrika Korps attacked the British at Mersa Brega on March 31st, driving the 2nd Armored Division out of the area. The British left behind 50 armored cars and 30 light tanks.

-end-

txtj503

On April 2nd, the Afrika Korps retook Agedabia. Taken by surprise, the British quickly withdrew.

-end-

txtj504

On April 3rd, British troops evacuated Benghazi, and the Afrika Korps under the direction of General Rommel advanced toward the city, which they took unopposed the next day. Planning to take all of Cyrenaica, Rommel had also launched offensives northeast to Msus and Mechili and east to Ben Gama and Tengeder.

-end-

txtj505

On April 6th, Rommel's troops occupied Mechili and Msus, and British Generals Neame and O'Connor were captured.

-end-

txtj506

The day after Mechili fell to the Germans and Italians, Derna was also taken. This jeopardized the 9th Australian Division withdrawing from Derna, who were likely to be cut off from the rest of the British forces. British tanks and infantry were sent from Alexandria to reinforce the British stronghold at Tobruk.

-end-

txtj507

Rommel hoped to surprise the British at Tobruk when he attacked on April 11th, but instead found the garrison well-protected by the 9th Australian Division, an infantry brigade, an anti-aircraft regiment, and a tank regiment. Rommel's forces were successfully repulsed.

-end-

txtj508

On April 13th, Rommel received direct orders from Berlin to consolidate on the Libyan-Egyptian border and prepare to capture Tobruk from the British. Rommel reluctantly ditched his own plans to advance into Egypt to take the Suez Canal. He decided to delay the Tobruk offensive until the 15th Panzer Division joined him.

-end-

txtj509

On April 25th, the Germans drove the British out of Halfaya Pass, the key to the approach to Egypt. British forces fell back to the line Buq Buq-Sofafi, and began to think of positioning themselves at the defensive line at Mersa Matruh to protect the approach to the Suez Canal.

After a brilliant offensive in Libya, the British now found themselves pushed all the way back to their starting position of five months before. All General Wavell had to show for his efforts was the British possession of Tobruk in Libya. Rommel, on the other hand, had experienced an incredible debut in North Africa.

-end-

txtj510

Though the Germans and Russians had signed a non-aggression pact in 1939, Hitler planned all along to invade Russia. The conquering of Poland had been the first step in the plan, providing a base of operations for the Germans. The defeat of Russia would assure the eventual fall of Britain as well.

On July 31st, 1940, Hitler told his commanders his intentions. The plan called for two forces of 120 divisions. One force would take the Baltic states and then push towards Moscow, while the other made for Kiev and the Dnepr River.

-end-

txtj511

On August 26th, Hitler made preparations for the invasion of Russia by ordering two Panzer divisions and ten infantry divisions to Poland.

-end-

txtj512

Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov visited Hitler in Berlin, November 12th, 1940 to protest the presence of German forces in Finland. Hitler tried to persuade the Soviets to join the Tripartite Pact. Stalin insisted on the condition that German troops leave Finland and that Hitler agree to Russian supremacy in Bulgaria, the Persian Gulf, and the Dardanelles. Hitler would not agree.

-end-

txtj513

On November 20th, Hungarian Prime Minister Count Teleki and Foreign Minister Count Csaky signed the Tripartite Pact, binding Hungary to the Axis.

-end-

txtj514

On November 23rd, Romania signed the Tripartite Pact with Germany, Japan, Italy and Hungary. This made Romania's oil wealth available for Hitler's war efforts.

-end-

txtj515

Slovakia signed the Tripartite Pact with the Axis on November 24th.

-end-

txtj516

On December 5th, Hitler gathered his generals and presented his plans for the invasion of Russia, Operation Otto. (The plan was later renamed Operation Barbarossa). Hitler stressed that the taking of Moscow was not a main objective. He intended instead, to surround the Soviet army on the Pripet Marshes.

-end-

txtj517

On December 13th, Hitler presented to his staff his plans to occupy the Balkans. The plan, Operation Marita, called for sending 24 divisions to Romania.

-end-

txtj518

On December 18th, Hitler confirmed his plan to invade Russia. The German forces would approach Russia from positions in Finland and Romania, destroying the Russian army in western Russia. As soon as this was accomplished, Moscow would be taken.

-end-

txtj519

On January 1st, 1941, German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop met with the Bulgarian minister in Vienna to negotiate for the passage of German troops through Bulgaria. This would allow Hitler to attack Greece from Bulgaria.

-end-

txtj520

On January 10th, the Soviet Union and Germany signed a new treaty in Berlin. The pact delimited the frontiers between the two and reaffirmed trade agreements.

-end-

txtj521

On January 13th, Hitler invited King Boris of Bulgaria to Berlin to discuss the Tripartite Pact. Hitler demanded that Bulgaria sign the pact. He also demanded King Boris to allow German troops within Bulgaria's borders to attack Greece, and to take an active part in the military operations of the Axis. A reluctant King Boris tried to buy time.

-end-

txtj522

On January 19th, Hitler and Mussolini met to discuss the Italian situation in Albania and North Africa. Mussolini accepted German assistance in North Africa, but declined Hitler's offer of support in Albania, since he feared Hitler would try to take control there.

-end-

txtj523

On February 3rd, Hitler reviewed and reaffirmed his plans to invade Russia on May 15th. Hitler expected his 116 divisions to stand against some 155 Russian divisions, but counted on superior weaponry to make up for numerical inferiority.

-end-

txtj524

On February 9th, in a major radio broadcast, Winston Churchill warned Bulgaria not to join the Axis. He also encouraged America to send military aid to Britain.

-end-

txtj525

On February 12th, British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden and General Sir John Dill left Britain for a tour of the Balkans in which they would try to form a coalition against the Axis. The British were not received in Yugoslavia, and their suggestion was declined in Turkey. Greece was the only nation to show interest in the idea.

-end-

txtj526

On February 14th, Hitler urged Yugoslav Prime Minister Dragisa Cvetkovic to sign the Tripartite Pact with the Axis.

-end-

txtj527

On January 15th, Britain broke off diplomatic relations with Romania, which was now clearly an Axis satellite.

-end-

txtj528

On March 1st, Bulgaria signed the Tripartite Pact, which meant Yugoslavia was now surrounded by Axis powers.

-end-

txtj529

Four days after Bulgaria signed the Tripartite Pact with the Axis, Britain severed all diplomatic relations with Bulgaria.

-end-

txtj530

On March 4th, Hitler secretly received Prince Paul of Yugoslavia and offered the port of Salonika and part of Greek Macedonia in exchange for Yugoslavia signing the Tripartite Pact and allowing German troops to pass through Yugoslav territory to attack Greece.

-end-

txtj531

On March 7th, British and Commonwealth troops began to arrive in Greece as promised by Churchill. The force was smaller than planned, consisting of two infantry and two armored divisions, about 57,000 men total.

-end-

txtj532

On March 25th, Yugoslavia signed the Tripartite Pact with the Axis. Yugoslavia appeared to have little choice, surrounded as it was by Axis Powers; however, many citizens in Belgrade and other

areas protested the move.

-end-

txtj533

On March 27th, a bloodless coup d'etat took place in Yugoslavia. Yugoslav Air Force General Dusan Simovic dismissed King Paul and set up a government of national unity under 17-year-old Prince Peter. Simovic immediately signed a non-aggression pact with Russia and expressed interest in an anti-Axis coalition with the British.

-end-

txtj534

On March 27th, the coup in Yugoslavia, which dissolved the government of Prince Paul, infuriated Hitler, who had counted on Prince Paul's cooperation in allowing German troops to cross Yugoslavia's borders to invade Greece. Hitler issued Directive 25, reinstating Operation Marita, the plan to liquidate Yugoslavia. Hitler planned to invade Yugoslavia and Greece simultaneously. Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of Russia, had to be postponed.

-end-

txtj535

On April 6th, Germany and Italy invaded Yugoslavia. The Luftwaffe attacked Belgrade for two days in Operation Castigo, killing civilians even though it had been declared an open city. Most of Yugoslavia's air force was destroyed before it left the ground. The German 2nd Army advanced on Belgrade from Austria and Hungary, while the 1st Armored Group moved north from Bulgaria for Nis and south for Skopje and Monastir to cut the Yugoslavs off from Greek forces. Italian forces quickly occupied villages in Venezia Giulia. Germany and Italy attacked Greece the same day.

-end-

txtj536

On April 6th, the Axis invaded Greece. The German 12th Army attacked the Metaxas Line from Bulgaria, while the Luftwaffe nearly annihilated the port city of Piraeus. German and Italian troops invaded Yugoslavia on the same day.

-end-

txtj537

Skopje and Nis both fell to Axis forces on April 8th. The Yugoslav army, outnumbered by Germans, began disintegrating.

-end-

txtj538

On April 9th, German forces captured Salonika and the Greek 2nd Army of the Vardar River defending the Metaxas Line (70,000 men), was trapped and forced to surrender.

-end-

txtj539

On April 9th, German forces captured Monastir, threatening the Aliakmon Line further south.

-end-

txtj540

On April 10th, British General Maitland Wilson ordered the BEF to withdraw from the Aliakmon Line in Greece, intending to set up near Mount Olympus.

-end-

txtj541

On April 10th, Zagreb fell to the German and Italian 2nd Army.

-end-

txtj542

The Yugoslav state of Croatia declared itself independent on April 10th, demonstrating its sympathies with Italy.

-end-

txtj543

On April 11th, the Italian 2nd Army advanced from Giulia toward Split and Dubrovnik to clear the Yugoslav coast.

-end-

txtj544

On April 13th, German forces occupied Belgrade.

-end-

txtj545

On April 13th, a powerful Italian offensive in Albania began to push the Greeks back. Korce, Permet, Gjirokaster and Porte e Palermos were all recaptured.

-end-

txtj546

The Germans occupied Sarajevo on April 16th.

-end-

txtj547

By April 17th, the Yugoslav army had disintegrated. Bosnia, the last Yugoslav holdout, surrendered. In Belgrade, Yugoslav Foreign Minister A. Cinkar-Markovic, and General Jankovic met with German General von Weichs and Italian Colonel Bonfatti to sign a surrender. The Axis had taken 334,000 prisoners. The Royal Air Force took young King Peter to Athens and then to London, where he set up a government-in-exile.

-end-

txtj548

On April 18th, German mountain troops crossed the Aliakmon River, surrounding Mount Olympus and taking the town of Larissa. A German motor corps took Florina and Trikkala, creating a gap between the Greek 1st Army and the British under Maitland Wilson. German forces poured through the gap and the British had to withdraw.

-end-

txtj549

Greek Prime Minister Alexandros Korizis committed suicide on April 18th.

-end-

txtj550

On April 19th, as Italian and German forces made further advances into Greece, Greek King George II met with General Papagos, and British Generals Wavell and Maitland. They agreed that the British W Force should be evacuated from the Greek mainland. General Wilson planned a strong rearguard at Thermopylae to cover the re-embarkation of his troops to Peloponnesian ports.

-end-

txtj551

On April 21st, at Larissa, Greece, the Greeks signed a capitulation to Sepp Dietrich, the commander of the SS Adolph Hitler Division. The terms were mild, allowing the Greek soldiers to return to their homes and to keep their side arm. Mussolini was infuriated by the arrangements, and on Hitler's command, a new, harsher document was signed two days later in Salonika under the direction of an Italian representative.

-end-

txtj552

On April 22nd, the evacuation of the British W Force from Greece began. The evacuation was protected by a rearguard of the BEF at Thermopylae.

-end-

txtj553

The Royal Air Force flew Greek King George II and his government to Crete on April 23rd.

-end-

txtj554

On April 24th, the British rear guard, assigned to protect the evacuation of the British troops, finally withdrew from Thermopylae under German attack. The Greek detachments at Thermopylae refused to surrender, and were taken by the Germans.

-end-

txtj555

On April 24th, German paratroops occupied the Greek islands of Limnos, Samothrace, and Thasos in the northeastern Aegean Sea.

-end-

txtj556

German paratroops captured Corinth on April 25th. They also dropped behind the Corinth Canal into the Peloponnese. The SS Adolph Hitler Division successfully crossed the western end of the canal and the Peloponnese was overrun by Germans.

-end-

txtj557

On April 27th, German tanks entered Athens.

-end-

txtj558

On April 28th, the Royal Navy completed Operation Demon, the evacuation of the BEF from Greece. 43,000 British and Polish troops re-embarked from Kalamata, Monemvasia, and Kalamata to Crete. The Royal Navy had sent six cruisers, nineteen destroyers, and many small transports to carry out the evacuation. They lost two destroyers and four transports.

In the Balkan campaign, the British and Commonwealth forces suffered 12,712 casualties, 9,000 of which were taken prisoner by the Germans. They left behind all of their heavy equipment in the evacuation. 15,700 Greek troops were killed or missing. As many as 300,000 were taken prisoner, although all but the officers were soon released. The Italians in the Greek campaign had 13,755 dead and more than 50,000 wounded. Another 12,300 suffered severe frostbite. Over 25,000 troops were missing. German losses in Yugoslavia and Greece totaled 1,684 dead, 3,752 wounded, and 548 missing.

-end-

txtj559

On April 30th, Hitler announced his intention to delay the invasion of Russia until June 22nd, allowing his troops to recover from their ordeals in the Balkans. His generals had already estimated that the completion of Operation Barbarossa would take five months. This meant that the campaign would extend into the harsh Russian winter months, a fact that was to have disastrous consequences for the Axis.

-end-

txtj560

On April 1st, Raschid Ali, an ally of the Germans, seized power in Iraq. The British already had the right to pass troops through Iraq to Palestine, and had two air bases in Iraq: one at Shaibah near Basra and another at Habbaniyah. As soon as Ali took control, the British sent an Indian brigade toward Basra. Ali did not attempt to stop them since the Germans were not yet in a position to back him up.

-end-

txtj561

On April 18th, an Indian Brigade began to land at the British air base at Basra, Iraq to protect both British air bases from possible Iraq and German aggression.

-end-

txtj562

On April 25th, Hitler issued Directive 28, Operation Mercury, the capture of Crete. He planned to begin the assault on May 18th, sending in 22,750 paratroops and 650 combat aircraft. They would take airfields at Canea, Heraklion, Maleme, and Retimo.

-end-

txtj563

On April 29th, Raschid Ali's forces laid siege to the British air base at Habbaniyah. The Royal Air Force struck Ali's land forces from the air.

-end-

txtj564

A second Indian Brigade arrived at the British air base near Basra on April 29th. Its sister base, Habbaniyah, was under attack by Raschid Ali's forces.

-end-

txtj565

On April 29th, Ultra intercepts informed the British of Hitler's plans to attack Crete.

-end-

txtj566

On May 5th, General Wavell appointed Major-General Bernard Freyberg as Commander-in-Chief of the Allied forces in Crete. Crete was an important strategic location for both the Allies and the Axis. Its nearness to North Africa made it valuable in the Libyan-Egyptian struggle. The Germans were also anxious to prevent British aircraft based in Crete from threatening oil supplies in Romania.

Freyberg believed he could repulse the German invasion if he had adequate artillery, tanks, trucks, and aircraft. The majority of his 30,000 Australian, British, and New Zealand troops had just been evacuated from Greece and had only their small-arms. His supply of aircraft was small, and the RAF would not be setting up a permanent base on Crete, choosing instead to provide support from air bases in North Africa. Wavell sent sixteen light tanks and six armored cars to Crete, all battle-worn. Freyberg's task would not be an easy one.

-end-

txtj567

On May 6th, the 3rd Indian Brigade arrived at Basra, completing the 10th Indian Division. The responsibility of relieving the British air base at Habbaniyah was given to General Wavell, since only an approach from the west could help them.

-end-

txtj568

On May 9th, a British brigade-sized Habforce (flying-column) entered Iraq from Palestine.

-end-

txtj569

A convoy, authorized directly by Winston Churchill and bringing much needed tanks and aircraft, arrived in Alexandria on May 12th. The convoy, code-named Tiger, had been sent through the Mediterranean. With the additional equipment, Wavell was now able to prepare Operation Brevity, the plan to drive Rommel and the Afrika Korps out of Egypt.

-end-

txtj570

On May 14th, British aircraft attacked Axis air bases in Syria. These bases had been loaned to the Axis by Vichy France. Churchill urged General Wavell to eliminate the Vichy French in Syria, but Wavell's other commitments in Crete, Iraq, and North Africa prevented him from doing anything immediately.

-end-

txtj571

On May 15th, the British forces in Egypt began Operation Brevity, the plan to drive Rommel and his forces back into Libya. The British retook Halfaya Pass, Sollum, and Capuzzo across the Egypt-Libya border. The next day Rommel drove the British back, regaining all but Halfaya Pass.

-end-

txtj572

The Luftwaffe began preliminary attacks on the island of Crete on May 15th.

-end-

txtj573

On May 16th, Rommel received orders from Berlin to leave the capture of Tobruk in Libya to the Italians and to concentrate his forces on Sollum in Egypt.

-end-

txtj574

On May 18th, the British Habforce (flying column) arrived at the British Habbaniyah air base in Iraq.

-end-

txtj575

On May 19th, Commonwealth forces captured Fallujah. Iraqi forces were unable to regain it over the next few days.

-end-

txtj576

On May 19th, General Freyberg ordered the six remaining fighters to Egypt to save them from the Luftwaffe, which had overwhelming air superiority.

-end-

txtj577

The assault began with heavy air attacks followed by paratroop drops on the four air bases, Maleme, Heraklion, Canea, and Retimo. The paratroops were easy targets for the defenders on Crete, forces consisting of 32,000 British and Commonwealth soldiers, and 10,000 Greeks. By the next morning, the Germans had only managed to capture the air base at Maleme. Convoys of German mountain troops and reinforcements escorted by Italian destroyers were intercepted by the Royal Navy. The first convoy suffered heavy losses, and the second convoy had to turn back toward occupied Greece.

-end-

txtj578

On May 21st, German aircraft sank the British destroyer Juno and damaged the cruiser Ajax.

-end-

txtj579

On the third day of the battle for Crete, the Luftwaffe sank the British cruisers Fiji and Gloucester and four destroyers. They also damaged four other vessels. A British counter-attack on Maleme air base was unsuccessful.

That evening, General Freyberg planned to withdraw to Suda, which was an important supply port. From there, he thought to prepare another attack on German-held Maleme.

-end-

txtj580

On May 25th, the Germans stepped up their offensive, advancing towards Alikianou, Galatas and Carceri. They begin landing reinforcements at Maleme.

-end-

txtj581

King George of Greece left Crete for Egypt on May 25th.

-end-

txtj582

On May 27th, General Freyberg decided that the battle for Crete has been lost and that the British forces should be evacuated. The evacuation would be accomplished with ships provided by Admiral Cunningham, embarking troops from the southern ports of Ierapetra and Sphakia. British commando units and marines would provide the rearguard. Troops garrisoned at Retimo and Heraklion, still holding out, would be evacuated in a separate effort by the Royal Navy.

On the day Freyberg made this decision, the Germans took Suda Bay on the north shore of the island.

-end-

txtj583

On May 27th, the 10th Indian Division and the Habforce advanced from Basra toward Baghdad.

-end-

txtj584

Rommel and the 15th Panzer Division recaptured Halfaya Pass from the British on May 27th.

-end-

txtj585

The evacuation of British troops from Crete began on May 28th. Nearly 16,000 men were rescued, but the Royal Navy lost the cruiser Calcutta and the destroyers Greyhound, Hereward, and Imperial (in addition to the two cruisers and three destroyers already lost). Allied casualties were 16,500, while German casualties were 6,200. The Axis now had control of the eastern Mediterranean.

-end-

txtj586

Commonwealth forces finally put down the pro-Axis revolt in Iraq. The leader, Raschid Ali, fled into Persia. The next day, in Baghdad, an armistice was signed. Iraq agreed to support the Allies.

-end-

txtj587

On June 8th, British Commonwealth and the Free French forces invaded Syria and Lebanon, attacking Vichy French garrisons. The 45,000 Vichy French fought fiercely. The Vichy government sent a protest to the Allies stating that they were not collaborating with the Germans in Syria.

-end-

txtj588

On June 15th, General Wavell launched Operation Battleaxe to reduce the pressure on the besieged British forces at Tobruk, Libya. Wavell planned to attack Halfaya Pass, to occupy the Hafid Ridge near Capuzzo, and to surround Capuzzo and Sollum with the 7th Armored Brigade, the 4th Armored Brigade, and the 4th Indian Division. After that, the British forces would relieve Tobruk and move on to Derna and Mechili. Wavell managed to take Capuzzo and Hafid Ridge, but ultimately the mission was a dismal failure. By June 17th, Rommel managed to drive the British back to their starting point, destroying 91 British tanks on the way.

-end-

txtj589

On July 5th, General Sir Archibald Wavell was relieved of his duties as Commander of the Middle Eastern Forces. The failure of his Operation Battleaxe in North Africa precipitated the decision. Wavell was replaced by General Sir Claude Auchinleck.

-end-

txtj590

Free French forces occupied Damascus on June 21st. The Vichy French in Syria continued to resist the Free French, and Allied Forces from Iraq were deployed to help put the Vichy forces down.

-end-

txtj591

On July 15th, British troops entered Beirut. Syria and Lebanon were now under Allied control. The Convention of Acre ended fighting in Syria. The Vichy French relinquished their equipment to the British. Casualties in Syria were 2,400 for the Allies and 3,350 for the Vichy French.

-end-

txtj592

On April 13th, Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka and Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov signed a five-year neutrality pact between their two countries. For Japan, this removed a northern threat.

-end-

txtj593

Hitler had been deploying a heavy concentration of troops in the East for some time, and German reconnaissance flights over Soviet territory were common. Yet in spite of this, Stalin discounted Soviet, American, and British intelligence reports that Hitler was planning an invasion. He believed that Britain and the US were trying to provoke a war between Germany and the Soviet Union. But Hitler's recent actions in Yugoslavia and Greece gave Stalin pause. By April 23rd, Hitler had deployed 59 divisions in the East, and Stalin began to treat Hitler with as much diplomacy as possible. He also took the precaution of organizing some defense on Russia's western border.

-end-

txtj594

On May 6th, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet nominated Stalin to be President of the Council of People's Commissars. Instead of just party secretary, Stalin was now the openly declared leader of Russia.

-end-

txtj595

On May 10th, Hitler's Nazi party deputy leader, Rudolf Hess, flew to Scotland on his own initiative and parachuted from his Messerschmitt 110 into the village of Eaglesham. He was seized by the Home Guard and taken to the Duke of Hamilton on his own request. (The Duke was an acquaintance of Hess'.) Hess proposed a peace agreement between Germany and Britain, arguing that Britain would never be able to win the war. Hitler was infuriated by Hess' desertion and announced to the world that his former deputy was suffering from a mental disorder. Churchill had Hess imprisoned for the remainder of the war. Stalin viewed the incident as part of a British plot to start a war between the Soviets and Germany, but most of the world saw it as evidence of

internal strife within the Nazi superstructure.

-end-

txtj596

By June 5th, 100 German division had been deployed in the east, primarily on the frontier of Russian occupied Poland. The Soviets continued fortifying their western defense, particularly the Stalin Line. But Stalin was still not convinced that Hitler would invade, believing that Germany was too committed to its war against Britain. He expected that if Hitler did invade, there would be a formal declaration of war and that Hitler would only commit a small force initially. Stalin expected to be able to use a small number of troops on the frontier to hold off an attack while the rest of the Red Army mobilized. The lesson of Blitzkrieg warfare had apparently not been learned.

-end-

txtj597

On June 13th, the Soviet government began arresting anyone in the Baltic states suspected of supporting German occupation. Authorities interned 50,000 people.

-end-

txtj598

On June 13th, the Tass News Agency refuted rumors that trouble was growing between Germany and the Soviet Union. On the following day newspapers denied the rumor of imminent attack.

In actuality, the Soviet's Lucy spy ring in Switzerland had informed Stalin that the attack date was to be June 22nd. The spy, code-named Lucy, was highly placed in Berlin (this person's identity is still unknown), and the information turned out to be correct.

-end-

txtj599

On June 15th, Hitler's generals were given final instructions for the commencement of Operation Barbarossa, including date and time. Armored units mobilized under cover of night.

-end-

txtj600

Finland had already agreed to cooperate with Hitler in the invasion of Russia. They would use German arms to block off the Soviet port at Murmansk and to attack near Leningrad at Lake Ladoga. On June 17th, Finland began a secret mobilization.

-end-

txtj601

On June 19th, Stalin ordered a black-out of cities near the western border, but forbade troops to deploy to their assigned positions.

-end-

txtj602

At midnight on June 21st, Soviet forces received orders from Moscow to be ready for combat.

-end-

txtj603

June 22nd, at 4:15 am, the Germans launched Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of Russia. The final decision had been to concentrate on taking Leningrad, with a secondary thrust aimed at Smolensk and Moscow. Hitler set up headquarters in East Prussia, which he called the Wolf's Den. As German artillery began firing, the Luftwaffe left to destroy Soviet air bases. Russia was completely unprepared for the scale and scope of the assault. Most of its defenses, instead of being right on the border, were deep within Russian territory. The Germans were able to break through at almost every point along the line of defense, taking most of the bridges over the Bug River intact. Many had not even been guarded. The Soviet command was in confusion and German successes were overwhelming everywhere except in the south. Russian General Molotov spoke to the Soviet people over the radio later that morning, calling on citizens to do their duty and unite around the Bolshevik party. The Stavka, a defense council, was set up immediately and conscripted 15 million men.

-end-

txtj604

June 22nd, the same day Hitler invaded Russia without a formal declaration of war, Italy and Romania both declared war against the Soviets.

-end-

txtj605

By June 23rd, German troops had pushed their way 50 miles into Russian-occupied Poland. Soviet forces at Brest-Litovsk managed to hold out, though Germans had passed it by on both north and south. Soviet counter-attacks in East Prussia were unsuccessful.

-end-

txtj606

On June 24th, Slovakia declared war on the Soviet Union.

-end-

txtj607

On June 25th, Field Marshal von Rundstedt's Army Group South occupied Dubno, an important town northeast of Lvov.

-end-

txtj608

German Army Group Center reached Baranovichi, Lida and Borodechno, Poland on June 25th, penetrating beyond Bialystok, the Russian western front headquarters. A large Soviet force consisting of the Russian 3rd, 10th, and 4th Armies were in danger of being cut off.

-end-

txtj609

On June 25th, on the northern front, Russian forces attacked Finnish defense positions and counter-attacked near Murmansk.

-end-

txtj610

On June 26th, Finland declared war on the Soviet Union.

-end-

txtj611

On June 26th, the German Army Group North and Heppner's IV Panzers entered Lithuania and took Daugavpils.

-end-

txtj612

On June 26th, the Army Group Center closed the Bialystok pocket, surrounding Russian troops.

-end-

txtj613

Hungary declared war on the Soviet Union on June 27th. Hungary's troops fought under German Field Marshal von Rundstedt.

-end-

txtj614

On June 28th, Albania declared war on the Soviet Union.

-end-

txtj615

On June 28th, Army Group Center pushed on and threatened Minsk. Russian troops fell back to new positions.

-end-

txtj616

On June 29th, Finland attacked the Russians in Karelia. Further north, German and Finnish forces were battling for Murmansk and Petsamo. They wanted this area because of the port, which was the only one on the Barents Sea that never freezes, and for a rich nickel mine. After these objectives were gained, the Karelian offensive planned to join Army Group North.

-end-

txtj617

On June 29th, Brest-Litovsk fell to the Germans.

-end-

txtj618

On June 30th, the Germans reduced the pocket of resistance centered around Bialystok, utterly destroying the remainder of the 10th Russian Army. Three days later Bialystok surrendered. The Germans netted 280,000 prisoners, 2,500 tanks, and 1,500 guns. Securing this area also allowed

the Germans to establish bridgeheads across the Beresina River.

-end-

txtj619

On July 1st, Riga was captured by German troops.

-end-

txtj620

On July 2nd, German tanks of the 4th Panzers broke through the Stalin Line at Ostrov.

-end-

txtj621

On July 3rd, Stalin addressed the Soviet people by radio, his first communication with the public at large since the German invasion eleven days earlier. He told the Soviets, 'a grave threat hangs over our country'. In his speech, he informed the people that Lithuania, parts of Belorussia and the western Ukraine had been lost to the enemy. He appealed to Russian patriotism to rally the people against the Germans, urging them on to victory.

-end-

txtj622

On July 9th, German forces captured Vitebsk.

-end-

txtj623

Realizing that Russia would need material aid if it were to stay in the war with Germany, Churchill signed a pact of mutual assistance with Stalin on July 2nd. Both Britain and the Soviet Union agreed not to make a separate peace with the enemy. Britain immediately sent Hurricane aircraft and anti-aircraft equipment to Russia, as well as 10,000 tons of rubber.

-end-

txtj624

German troops encircled and closed off a large pocket of Russians in the Smolensk area on July 15th.

-end-

txtj625

On July 16th, German Army Group South encircled a pocket of Russian troops at Uman.

-end-

txtj626

On July 19th, Hitler muddled the waters for his generals by changing his objectives. Hitler decided that Moscow was no longer the primary objective. He decided that after defeating the Soviet pocket at Smolensk, Army Group Center (2nd Panzers and 2nd Army) would go south to surround Kiev and join up with the 1st Panzers. Some armor from the Army Group Center would be given to Army Group North. In this way, both Leningrad and the wealth of the Ukraine could be taken.

-end-

txtj627

Stalin was made People's Commissar for Defense on July 20th. This put him in command of the conduct of war operations.

-end-

txtj628

On July 27th, Tallinn, the capital of Estonia on the Gulf of Finland, was captured by German forces.

-end-

txtj629

On July 31st, the German 16th Army reached Lake Ilmen. The push to Leningrad had slowed somewhat because of wooded terrain and the exhaustion of the troops.

-end-

txtj630

On August 5th, Germans liquidated the Smolensk pocket. 310,000 Russians were taken prisoner. In this battle the Russians lost nine divisions, 3,000 tanks and armored cars and nearly 1,000 aircraft.

-end-

txtj631

On August 8th, the Uman pocket surrendered to the Germans. The Germans netted 100,000 prisoners. Von Rundstedt set out for Kiev next.

-end-

txtj632

Odessa was surrounded by Romanian troops on August 17th.

-end-

txtj633

On September 4th, the Germans shelled Leningrad, beginning a long siege of the city. Leningrad was totally cut off from the rest of the Soviet Union, except for boat access across the southern part of Lake Ladoga.

-end-

txtj634

On September 5th, Hitler changed his mind yet again about his primary objectives. Now that his forces and equipment were spread all along western Russia to take Leningrad and the Ukraine, he decided to concentrate on Moscow. This required the North and South Armies to return their borrowed equipment to the Army Group Center. This could not be done until the offensive at Kiev was complete, putting the Moscow offensive off uncomfortably close to the October rainy season.

-end-

txtj635

On July 22nd, 127 Luftwaffe aircraft bombarded Moscow. In general, air strikes to Moscow were not as severe as those on London; the ground troops in the vast Russian territory required air support, which took some pressure off Moscow. Most air attacks in the remainder of 1941 involved ten or fewer aircraft.

-end-

txtj636

On September 19th, Kiev fell to the Germans. The Germans took 600,000 prisoners and the Russians lost 2,500 guns and 1,000 tanks. Russian troops heavily mined the city, and many German soldiers died from the mines.

-end-

txtj637

On September 25th, the Army Group South headed for the Crimean peninsula.

-end-

txtj638

On September 27th, the Germans took Perekop at the entrance to the Crimean peninsula. On this same day, the heavy autumn rains began, turning the ground to mud all over the Russian front.

-end-

txtj639

Operation Typhoon, the offensive on Moscow, began on September 30th, just days after the heavy autumn rains started. South and west of Moscow, Army Group Center isolated large pockets around Vyazma and Bryansk.

-end-

txtj640

On October 3rd, Hitler announced to the German people that Russia 'has been broken and will never rise again'. He told them about the offensive on Moscow, which he predicted, without any doubt, would be a success.

-end-

txtj641

On October 10th, General Georgi Zhukov took command of a new western front for the defense of Moscow.

-end-

txtj642

Soviet troops at Bryansk, southwest of Moscow, surrendered to the Germans on October 14th.

-end-

txtj643

On October 16th, Russian civilians were gripped by panic because of the approach of the Germans. Reports of atrocities committed by German troops prompted a mass exodus from Moscow to the east. Most government offices were moved beyond the Volga River, though Stalin chose to stay in Moscow.

-end-

txtj644

After a two-month siege, Odessa finally fell to German and Romanian troops on October 16th.

-end-

txtj645

Taganrog, on the Sea of Azov near Rostov, fell to the German 11th Army on October 19th.

-end-

txtj646

On October 18th, Heppner's Panzers took the Mozhaisk defense line 80 miles west of Moscow.

-end-

txtj647

The Vyazma pocket, west of Moscow, was taken by Germans on October 19th. The Germans took 670,000 prisoners, 1,000 tanks and 4,000 guns.

-end-

txtj648

In the south, the Germans captured Kharkov on October 24th.

-end-

txtj649

On October 27th, the German 11th Army occupied all of the Crimea except Kerch and the fortress of Sevastopol. This meant that all of the industrial southern Soviet Union had been overrun by Germans.

-end-

txtj650

By October 30th, the weather conditions were beginning to have a serious effect on German operations. The 2nd Panzers failed to take Orel, south of Moscow, and were almost out of fuel. Supplies were running low all along the front, and the German soldiers had nothing but their summer uniforms, little protection against the wet and cold. Many units were only at half their strength. For a brief period of time, while the Germans recuperated, Soviet troops gathered their strength and reinforced the troops defending Moscow.

-end-

txtj651

On November 3rd, German forces captured Kursk, north of Kharkov.

-end-

txtj652

After hard freezes which made the ground firm enough to advance again, the Germans decided on November 7th to resume their offensive on Moscow as soon as possible. By this time the Soviets had assembled 80 divisions in front of the city.

-end-

txtj653

On November 15th, the German march toward Moscow resumed.

-end-

txtj654

On November 16th, the Germans of the XLII Corps took Kerch in the Crimea. The only remaining Soviet stronghold in the Crimea was Sevastopol, which was under siege.

-end-

txtj655

On November 17th, the Germans set up the Reichskommissariat Ostland to administer and exploit the Baltic states and Belorussia. Nazi party ideologist Alfred Rosenberg was made the head of the administrative body. A large number of citizens in the Baltic states had welcomed the Germans, hoping to be freed of Stalin's communist rule. They soon discovered that the Nazis regarded them as Untermenschen (sub-humans) and were treated brutally. In retaliation, many fled beyond German lines and became involved in disrupting Hitler's supply lines.

-end-

txtj656

In a frontal attack on November 20th, the Germans captured Rostov-on-Don, the gateway to the Caucasus.

-end-

txtj657

On November 23rd, German troops captured Istra, just 30 miles northwest of Moscow. From the south, the Germans were within 60 miles at Kashira on the Ugra River.

-end-

txtj658

On November 29th, Soviet forces retook Rostov in a fierce counter-offensive. Von Rundstedt ordered his exhausted forces to withdraw, against Hitler's specific instructions. He also evacuated Mariupol and Taganrog, falling back to the Mius River. Hitler was outraged and ended up relieving von Rundstedt.

-end-

txtj659

On December 5th, exhausted German troops halted 19 miles from Moscow, stopped by equipment malfunctions and temperatures below freezing. The Russians, who had built up their strength, began an offensive, particularly concentrated around Moscow. The first major Soviet counter-attack was by Konev's troops on the Kalinin Front across the frozen Volga River, northwest of Moscow.

The German offensive had come to a halt. Hitler's decision to postpone the invasion of Russia was having serious repercussions for the German army caught in the clutches of a Russian winter. Even though the Germans had thus far triumphed over the Red Army in the west, taking two million prisoners, they themselves had 250,000 men dead and many more injured or suffering from frostbite. Hitler's forces in the east were 340,000 men short of full strength, and divisions would have to be transferred from other theaters of operation to make up the difference. In addition, the Germans' lines of communication were stretched thin. And winter was a long way from over.

-end-

txtj660

On December 5th, Britain declared war on Finland, Hungary, and Romania.

-end-

txtj661

In a radio broadcast on December 29th, 1940, President Roosevelt urged the American people to become 'the arsenal of the democracies' to protect the four freedoms threatened in the European war: the freedom of speech and religion, and the freedom from fear and want. The American people were still unwilling to enter the war, though more and more of them believed it was inevitable.

-end-

txtj662

On January 10th, President Roosevelt introduced his Lend-Lease bill to congress. His proposal would allow Allied nations to pay back aid in kind after the conclusion of the war.

-end-

txtj663

The United States Navy was reorganized on February 1st. Forces were regrouped into three fleets: Atlantic, Asiatic, and Pacific.

-end-

txtj664

The US Senate passed the Lend-Lease Bill on March 8th, in a vote of 60 to 31. Britain and Greece were given supplies at once.

In April, the US decided to give 100 P-40 fighters to China, along with US pilots. The pilots were called the American Volunteer Group (AVG), and fought under the command of Colonel Claire Chennault, Chiang Kai-shek's air adviser.

-end-

txtj665

Urged by Churchill and Roosevelt, British and United States military staff began a series of fourteen meetings on January 29th to plan strategy in the event that the United States became involved in the war. The meetings concluded on March 29th, and resulted in the ABC-1 plan. The plan outlined that the United States would concentrate its efforts in the Atlantic and Europe in order to defeat Germany first. It also called for the defense of Allied positions in the Mediterranean, and for the defense of the Far East.

-end-

txtj666

On March 31st, a team of United States scientists and military strategists arrived in Greenland to consider the possibility of establishing military bases there. Greenland later became an important air base for the United States.

-end-

txtj667

On April 11th, President Roosevelt extended the zone within which US warships would escort merchant vessels in the Atlantic. The new zone increased coverage from the old limit of 60 degrees west to 26 degrees west (near the eastern coast of Greenland). Hitler ordered U-boats not to sink US vessels.

-end-

txtj668

US troops landed in Greenland, a Danish colony, on April 12th. Germany had invaded and taken Denmark almost exactly a year earlier.

-end-

txtj669

In June, diplomatic relations between the United States and the major powers of the Axis were severed. On the 14th, Roosevelt ordered the freezing of all German and Italian assets in the United States. Two days later he asked the German government to close its consulates in the US. On June 19th, Germany and Italy both asked the US to close its consulates in their countries.

-end-

txtj670

In an Independence Day radio broadcast, Roosevelt made a speech designed to prepare the citizens of the United States for war. In it he stated that the US 'will never survive as a happy and prosperous oasis in the middle of a desert of dictatorship'.

As recently as the previous May, 79 percent of the American people had expressed an unwillingness to go to war. But it was obvious to Roosevelt and to others that it would become necessary. By August, US troops were being trained in the Louisiana-Texas maneuvers to prepare them for Hitler's Blitzkrieg warfare. Throughout 1941 Roosevelt supported legislation that would assist the Allies and increased his nation's involvement by small increments.

-end-

txtj671

On July 7th, the United States 1st Marine Brigade, under Brigadier-General John Marston, began arriving in Iceland to relieve the British garrisoned there. This arrangement allowed Roosevelt to provide escorts for convoys to and from Iceland.

-end-

txtj672

On July 15th, the United States established an air base at Argentia, Newfoundland.

-end-

txtj673

In July, Roosevelt sent an emissary to Russia to determine what the chances of Soviet success were in its war with Germany. Stalin was anxious for the US to enter the war as soon as possible, but failing that, he requested as much material aid as the US could spare. Under the provisions of the Lend-Lease Law enacted earlier in the year, the United States began sending aid to the Soviets on August 2nd.

-end-

txtj674

The Atlantic Conference between Churchill and Roosevelt began on August 9th, in Argentina, Newfoundland. Churchill failed to persuade Roosevelt to join the war, but got Roosevelt's assurance that the United States would engage if Japan attacked Malaya, Singapore, or the Dutch East Indies (British possessions). They agreed to warn Japan against any further expansion, under threat of war with the United States. Another result of the Atlantic Conference was the formulation of the Atlantic Charter, which defined the war objectives of the democracies and established the foundations of the future United Nations.

-end-

txtj675

On September 4th, the US destroyer Greer reported an attack by a German submarine 175 miles southwest of Iceland. Roosevelt warned the Axis that, in the future, German or Italian war vessels would be at risk in the Pan-American Security Zone.

-end-

txtj676

On September 16th, the US Marine Department announced that its Atlantic fleet would escort convoys carrying Lend-Lease materials through the Pan-American Security Zone, up to the 26 west meridian.

-end-

txtj677

On September 24th, the first fifteen nations signed the Atlantic Charter, drawn up by Churchill and Roosevelt during their Atlantic Conference. The signatories, including several governments-in-exile, were Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, Great Britain, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, the United States, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia. Neutral nations signed later. The Atlantic Charter was the basis of the future United Nations.

-end-

txtj678

On September 27th, the Patrick Henry was launched from a Baltimore naval dockyard. This was the first of the Liberty ships, 10,000-ton, prefabricated merchant men vessels. The ships' parts were constructed according to a highly standardized design in factories far away from the coast, then quickly assembled in shipyards. This method of production allowed the United States to keep production of merchant vessels in pace with increased shipping losses due to the war.

-end-

txtj679

On September 29th, Lord Beaverbrook from Great Britain, Averell Harriman from the United States, and Vyacheslav Molotov from the Soviet Union met in Moscow to discuss aid to Russia. Britain and the United States agreed to supply 400 aircraft immediately and a similar quantity every month for the next eight months. The agreement would be renewed thereafter as necessary on a yearly basis. The two nations also promised Molotov aluminum, rubber, tin, food, and medical supplies. Materials would be shipped from Alaska to Siberia, through Iran to the Caspian Sea, and from Britain to the Russian ports of Murmansk and Archangel.

-end-

txtj680

The United States destroyer, Kearney, was torpedoed by a German submarine northwest of Iceland. The destroyer was badly damaged.

-end-

txtj681

On October 31st, the US destroyer Reuben James was sunk by a U-boat west of Iceland, killing over 100 crewmen. This was the first United States ship to be sunk in World War II.

-end-

txtj682

Disguised as a US merchant man, the German blockade-runner was captured by the US destroyer, Somers, and the US cruiser, Omatra, on November 6th.

-end-

txtj683

On November 13th, the United States Congress and Senate repealed the 1939 Neutrality Act by a very narrow margin.

-end-

txtj684

As soon as General Auchinleck arrived in the Middle East to take over Wavell's command, Churchill ordered him to plan an offensive and relieve the troops at Tobruk. Surveying his situation and the condition of the British troops in North Africa, Auchinleck replied that they would not be fit to launch an offensive for some time. Operations Brevity and Battleaxe had set the British back. Churchill promised 500 new tanks and urged him to action as soon as possible.

-end-

txtj685

On July 26th, Auchinleck went to London to consult with Churchill about the situation in North Africa. He expected to be able to attack Rommel's forces by mid-November. Later he concluded that with the reinforcements promised him, he would be able to launch a large-scale offensive, rather than a limited engagement to relieve the troops at Tobruk, Libya.

-end-

txtj686

On August 29th, Polish troops arrived to relieve a fatigued Australian Brigade at Tobruk.

-end-

txtj687

On August 25th, the Allies invaded Iran, anxious to control this strategic area of the Middle East, and to preclude an Axis advance through Egypt and Syria. Soviet troops approached the capital from the north, while the British moved in from the Persian Gulf and Iraq, against the protests of Shah Reza Pahlevi.

-end-

txtj688

British forces occupied the oil fields of Abadan, Iran, on August 26th.

-end-

txtj689

On August 27th, a new government was formed in Iran, which requested a cease-fire with the British and Soviet forces occupying the country. The treaty allowed the Allies to station troops throughout the country, except in the capital.

-end-

txtj690

On August 28th, Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies lost re-election to his deputy, F.W. Fadden. Fadden demanded that the remaining Australian forces holding out at Tobruk, Libya, be relieved. The British were finally persuaded and fresh British troops were sent to Tobruk in September and October.

-end-

txtj691

General Auchinleck issued a directive concerning the relief of Tobruk, Libya, on September 2nd. Operation Crusader would be under the command of General Alan Cunningham, now in command of the Western Desert Force. Cunningham's responsibility would be to rescue Tobruk and reclaim all of Cyrenaica.

-end-

txtj692

On September 17th, British and Soviet forces occupied Tehran. A week before, the Allies had demanded that the Shah expel all Axis nationals from the country within a two-day period--an impossible request. This promoted the occupation of the nation's capital. The Shah immediately stepped down and was replaced by his son, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi.

-end-

txtj693

From September 14th through September 25th, Rommel and the 21st Panzer Division made an exploratory advance on Sidi Barrani, Egypt, where he believed the British were defending a fuel dump. Unknown by Rommel, there was no fuel dump. So when the British withdrew, Rommel mistakenly concluded that the British intended to take a defensive posture in North Africa. Instead

Cunningham was planning a major offense against the Germans.

-end-

txtj694

On October 3rd, Cunningham scheduled Operation Crusader for November 11th. He planned for a special force to annihilate the Luftwaffe on the ground, while another commando team attacked Rommel's headquarters. The XXX Corps would engage Rommel's forces and destroy his tanks while XIII Corps relieved Tobruk. A group called the Oasis Force was to push into the Libyan desert, convincing the Germans that the main operation would take place there.

-end-

txtj695

On November 3rd, General Auchinleck delayed the launch of Operation Crusader so that newly arrived South African troops could train.

-end-

txtj696

On November 17th, two British commando teams headed for Libya to cripple the Germans on the evening before Operation Crusader. The efforts of the two special forces were somewhat wasted; commandos attacked Rommel's headquarters, but Rommel was not there, and the aircraft carrying the special team sent to destroy German aircraft on the ground was sent off course by a desert storm.

-end-

txtj697

On November 18th, General Cunningham launched Operation Crusader. The British 8th Army attacked the Italian and German forces around Tobruk. British forces captured the airfield southeast of the garrison.

-end-

txtj698

Two days after Operation Crusader was launched, General Cunningham ordered the British, garrisoned at Tobruk and surrounded by the enemy, to break out. Over the next two days, the Germans attacked Sidi Rezegh to the south. The British 8th was halted by the Axis, and the troops at Tobruk were forced back within the garrison. The British did capture Sidi Omar and Capuzzo.

-end-

txtj699

On November 24th, Rommel ordered his troops to head with their tanks for the Libyan-Egyptian frontier (the Wire) to cut off the British 8th Army from its supply lines. British General Cunningham wanted to withdraw, but Auchinleck refused and immediately replaced Cunningham with General Neil Ritchie. Two days later Rommel's fuel was almost exhausted and his tanks were being bombarded by British aircraft. By this time the British at Tobruk had succeeded in breaking out, and Rommel, turning in his tracks to intercept them, failed to stop their advance.

-end-

txtj700

On December 5th, the Germans retreated from their position east of Tobruk to attack Bir el Gobi to the south. The assault failed.

-end-

txtj701

Rommel's forces withdrew to Gazala on December 7th, and the siege at Tobruk was over.

-end-

txtj702

On December 15th, the British 8th Army attacked Rommel's forces at Gazala. Rommel withdrew further into Libya. By January 6th, the Germans had retreated all the way to Tripolitania.

-end-

txtj703

Bardia, Libya, was retaken by the British under General Ritchie on January 17th. With the remainder of Rommel's forces in Tripolitania, Operation Crusader was at an end. Rommel had suffered 30,000 casualties, while Auchinleck's were 18,000. Both sides lost many tanks in the campaign.

-end-

txtj704

On December 6th, Soviet General Zhukov's West Front Army attacked the German front lines southwest of Moscow, to prevent the enemy from outflanking the capital. Zhukov hoped to be able to capture the railroad town of Klin, northwest of Moscow, and in that way cut the 3rd Panzers off from von Bock's Army Group Center.

-end-

txtj705

General Zhukov's West Front Army attacked the 2nd Panzers south of Moscow.

-end-

txtj706

Recovering from a recent heart attack, General W. von Brauchitsch, Hitler's Commander-in-Chief, tendered his resignation on December 7th. Hitler did not accept it until nearly two weeks later.

-end-

txtj707

On December 13th, Soviet General Timoshenko's South-West Front Army advanced northwest between the towns of Yelets and Livny, striking the German 2nd Army and cutting off its right flank.

-end-

txtj708

On December 13th, faced with a fierce Soviet offensive, General von Brauchitsch met with Army Group Center's General von Bock in Russia. Von Brauchitsch ordered von Bock's troops to withdraw a full ninety miles.

-end-

txtj709

The day after General von Brauchitsch ordered the withdrawal of Army Group Center, a furious Hitler countermanded the order, convinced that his generals were behaving like sops. Over the next five days he relieved several of their commands. Von Bock was replaced by von Kluge, and both Guderian and Heppner were relieved. Hitler finally accepted the resignation von Brauchitsch had tendered on the 13th, and put himself in command of the German Army.

-end-

txtj710

On December 15th, a confident Stalin ordered the Soviet government to return to the capital city. He himself had never evacuated. Stalin further ordered a double-envelope maneuver to capture the German Army Group Center.

-end-

txtj711

The Russians recaptured the railroad town of Klin, north of Moscow, on December 15th.

-end-

txtj712

On December 18th, Stalin created a new front near Bryansk to help take the German Army Group Center.

-end-

txtj713

On December 20th, Hitler's Minister of Propaganda, Josef Goebbels, asked the people of Germany to donate winter clothing for the troops in Russia.

-end-

txtj714

Soviet troops landed at Feodosiya (south coast of the Crimea) on December 29th to take pressure off the Soviets holding out at Sebastopol. The German commander at Kerch withdrew, and was later dismissed for it. There were still Germans all over Crimea.

-end-

txtj715

The Soviet North-West Front Army attacked the Germans south of Lake Ilmen on January 7th.

-end-

txtj716

On January 12th, Field Marshal von Leeb, whose troops were in danger of being cut off south of Lake Ilmen by the Soviet North-West Front Army, requested permission to withdraw his men to behind the Lovat River. Hitler overruled him, and von Leeb resigned his post. He was replaced by Field Marshal von Kuechler.

-end-

txtj717

On January 18th, Field Marshal von Bock took command of German Army Group South, replacing von Reichenau, who had died of a heart attack. Von Bock had been relieved of his command in Army Group Center just one month before.

-end-

txtj718

On January 18th, the Soviet South-West Front Army crossed the Donets River, south of Kharkov.

-end-

txtj719

General Georgi Zhukov was promoted to command the West Theater on February 1st.

-end-

txtj720

On February 8th, the Soviet North-West Front Army surrounded 90,000 German troops near Demyansk, cutting them off from their supply lines. The Germans (of Army Group North) had to have supplies air-dropped.

-end-

txtj721

On March 19th, the Soviet 2nd Shock Army was cut off by Germans between Novgorod and Gruzino. There was no way to relieve the doomed Russian force.

-end-

txtj722

On July 16th, the Japanese army deposed the moderate Admiral Yonai and replaced him with Prince Konoye.

-end-

txtj723

Unable to risk war with Japan, Britain gave in to Japan's demands and closed the Burma Road into China for a period of three months. This was the only route by which the western democracies could send aid to Chang Kai-shek's army.

-end-

txtj724

On July 26th, President Roosevelt announced a limited embargo on raw materials to Japan, which was waging war against China.

-end-

txtj725

On July 27th, the Japanese Liaison Conference, a council of Japanese political officials, naval, and military officers, issued the Proclamation of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. This resulted from the council's recognition that Japan was unable to produce raw materials for itself. The council planned to acquire the resource-rich Dutch East Indies, Burma, Malaya, the Philippines, and Thailand by using peaceful means if possible, or if necessary, going to war with Britain and the US.

-end-

txtj726

On August 29th, the Vichy French agreed to allow Japan to send forces to French Indo-China. The French were anxious to avoid war with Japan.

-end-

txtj727

On September 25th, an American, Harry L. Clark, broke the Japanese top secret military code and made it possible for the United States military to decode Japanese communications for the duration of the war. This was known as Operation Magic.

-end-

txtj728

Britain reopened the Burma Road to China on October 18th. It had agreed to Japan's demand to close the supply road for a three-month period in the expectation of a peace agreement between Japan and China within that time period. The two nations were still at war.

-end-

txtj729

In retaliation to border raids, French forces in Indo-China attacked Thailand on January 16th.

-end-

txtj730

On January 31st, Japanese forces imposed an armistice between French Indo-China and Thailand.

-end-

txtj731

On May 9th, French Indo-China and Thailand signed a peace treaty. This treaty allowed Thailand to regain much of the territory it had lost to France 40 years before. Japan forced the signing of the treaty.

-end-

txtj732

On May 11th, Japan asked the US to stop sending aid to China and to end the Japanese trade embargo to try to improve relations between the two nations. Though Roosevelt was not prepared to grant these requests, he was anxious to drag out negotiations to avoid going to war. Japan was equally happy to delay hostilities.

-end-

txtj733

On July 18th, Japanese Prime Minister Prince Konoye replaced Foreign Minister Yosuke Matsuoka with the moderate T. Toyoda. Matsuoka had been very unpopular with US officials.

-end-

txtj734

On July 23rd, Japanese forces began to occupy French Indo-China. Vichy France had been forced to accept Japan's demand to allow this.

-end-

txtj735

On July 26th, President Roosevelt froze all Japanese assets in the United States since he viewed the Japanese occupation of Indo-China as an act of aggression. The same day, the US headquarters of the Hawaii sector was put on alert, and General Douglas MacArthur was given command of forces in the Far East and the Philippines. Britain and the Netherlands, Japan's major suppliers of oil, soon froze Japanese assets as well.

-end-

txtj736

On August 17th, the US Secretary of State told the Japanese ambassador that negotiations between Roosevelt and Konoye for a Pacific Conference would not be resumed until current differences between the two nations were resolved.

-end-

txtj737

The Japanese Navy engaged in war games at the Tokyo Naval War College to plan its Pacific strategy.

-end-

txtj738

On October 16th, Prime Minister Prince Konoye was forced by the military to resign. He was replaced by General Hideki Tojo, an extremist who had won the trust of the military as War Minister.

-end-

txtj739

On October 16th, the US Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Harold R. Stark, told fleet commanders in the Pacific and Asiatic that war between Japan and the USSR was likely, as well as war between Japan and the US.

-end-

txtj740

On November 3rd, Joseph C. Grew, the US Ambassador to Tokyo, informed US officials of Japanese troop movements which indicated a possible attack in Siberia or in the southwest Pacific.

-end-

txtj741

On January 27th, the US Ambassador in Tokyo, Joseph C. Grew, reported to the US government that the Japanese were planning surprise attacks on US air and naval bases. Pearl Harbor was specifically mentioned.

-end-

txtj742

Japanese attack orders for the bombing of Pearl Harbor were completed and issued on November 20th, but commanders were told to delay operations until the outcome of ongoing negotiations were known. At that time Kurusu and Ambassador Nomura were in Washington, DC, USA, presenting their final proposals.

-end-

txtj743

US Navy Admiral Harold R. Stark issued a warning of state of war to the United States' Asian and Pacific fleets. Garrisons at the Philippines, Guam, Panama, Hawaii, and San Francisco had been on alert for several days, but there was no mention of a possible attack on the main fleet at Pearl Harbor.

-end-

txtj744

Japan's war plan called for attacking the Dutch East Indies, Malaya, the Philippines, and Thailand. Japan assumed that the United States Pacific Fleet would rush in to defend the Philippines, and Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto worried that US superiority in natural resources would put Japan at a disadvantage from the outset. He believed that the only way to secure the Pacific was to put the US Fleet out of commission right away. This would give Japan time to establish itself in the resource-rich Pacific before the United States navy recovered. Yamamoto reasoned that by the time the US Fleet was a threat again, Japan would be so well-established and strategically superior in the Pacific that the Allies would not attempt to regain their lost territories.

Yamamoto's plan to wipe out the Pacific Fleet before it ever left port became known as 'Plan Z'. On November 26th, the United States demanded that Japan withdraw its forces from China. It was obvious, and had been for some days, that the two nations would not reach agreement. According to Plan Z, the Japanese strike force set out secretly from the Kurile Islands to position itself for an attack on Pearl Harbor. The Japanese Fleet, commanded by Admiral Chuichi Nagumo, consisted of six aircraft carriers carrying 392 aircraft, two battleships, two heavy cruisers, one light cruiser, three long-distance submarines, nine destroyers, and eight oil tankers. The fleet had to travel 3,400 miles in complete radio silence to be successful.

-end-

txtj745

On November 27th, Japanese officials rejected the United States demand that Japan withdraw from China.

-end-

txtj746

On December 1st, Japanese officials fixed the date for the attack on December 7th (December 8th by Japanese standard time).

-end-

txtj747

The Japanese emissaries in Washington began to leave on December 4th. Neither nation had been satisfied with negotiations and war was imminent. On this day the Japanese army began embarking for its points of attack.

-end-

txtj748

On December 6th, President Roosevelt appealed to the Emperor of Japan for peace.

-end-

txtj749

On December 6th, Japan began transmitting a long message to its ambassador in Washington to be presented to the US State Department thirty minutes before the attack on Pearl Harbor the next day. The transmission included a declaration of war. Most of the message was decoded by the United States in advance through Operation Magic. It was not clear from the transmission where or when to expect the attack, and warnings were sent to US installations all over the Pacific; however, due to a communications error, the warning did not reach Hawaii. The actual declaration of war was not delivered by the Japanese ambassador until thirty minutes after the attack on Pearl Harbor began because of a delay in the transcription.

-end-

txtj750

On the morning of December 7, 1941, 96 vessels of the United States Pacific Fleet were anchored at the naval base in Pearl Harbor, Oahu, Hawaii. Only the aircraft carriers Lexington and Enterprise were at sea. At 7:55 a.m. a wave of Japanese aircraft left their carriers in the Pacific: 51 dive-bombers, 50 bombers, 43 fighters, and 70 torpedo-bombers. They swooped in and attacked the airfields at Ewa, Hickman, Kaneohe, and Wheeler Airfields, destroying 188 United States aircraft on the ground. Almost the entire air fleet burned to cinders. At the same time torpedo-bombers struck the string of battleships on Battleship Row, capsizing the battleship Oklahoma, and sinking the target ship Utah and the mine layer Oglgla. The battleship Arizona blew up. The battleships California, West Virginia, and Nevada, all anchored in shallow water, were almost completely destroyed. Also damaged were the battleships Maryland, and Tennessee, the cruisers Helena, Honolulu, and Raleigh, and the naval auxiliaries Curtiss and Vestal. The US forces were taken completely by surprise by this first attack. Though warnings had gone out to other US installations all over the Pacific, a communications error had prevented the message from reaching Pearl Harbor.

At 8:54 a.m. a second wave of Japanese aircraft, 134 bombers and 36 Zero fighters attacked the naval base. US anti-aircraft forces were prepared this time, shooting down several Japanese aircraft. Nevertheless, ten minutes later the fleet flagship (the battleship Pennsylvania) was damaged, as well as the destroyers Cassin, Downes, and Shaw.

By 9:45 the battle was over and the Japanese returned to their carriers 200 miles away. Altogether the American casualties were 3,226 dead and 1,272 wounded. 65 USAAF and 196 USMC aircraft were destroyed, as well as four battleships, three light cruisers, and three destroyers. Most remaining craft were damaged. 110 Japanese died and one was taken prisoner. The Japanese lost 29 aircraft and five midget submarines, a small price to pay for wiping out the majority of the American Pacific Fleet. The only targets missed were the two carriers Lexington and Enterprise, and important oil stores on Hawaii. The attack on Pearl Harbor gave Japan a temporary supremacy at sea, which allowed Japan to make great gains in the Far East.

-end-

txtj751

The day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the United States and Great Britain both made formal declarations of war on Japan.

-end-

txtj752

Germany and Italy declared war on the United States on December 11th. Roosevelt responded by declaring war on both nations later that day.

-end-

txtj753

On December 12th, authorities in Washington, DC, requisitioned all Vichy French ships anchored in US ports.

-end-

txtj754

Winston Churchill boarded the battleship Duke of York on December 13th and set out for a

meeting with President Roosevelt to discuss war plans.

-end-

txtj755

On December 22nd, the Anglo-US Conference (code-named Arcadia) convened in Washington, DC, to discuss the cooperation of Allied forces in the war. Using the ABC-1 Plan of the year before to guide them, Churchill and Roosevelt agreed that invading Europe and surrounding Germany was the top priority before defeating Japan. They decided to set up a joint Anglo-American General Staff to coordinate higher strategy. One of the first duties of the staff was to plan a number of military objectives: Operation Sledgehammer, an operation to relieve pressure on the Russians to ensure that they stayed in the war; Operation Round Up, the invasion of Europe across the English Channel, slated for 1943; Operation Gymnast, the invasion of French North Africa; and Operation Bolero, the deployment of US forces in Britain for military operations in western Europe.

-end-

txtj756

Following US Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall's proposal that the Allied forces in the Far East should be under a single command, the delegates at the Anglo-US Conference agreed to establish a supreme command called the ABDA (American, British, Dutch, Australian). On January 3rd, British General Sir Archibald Wavell was appointed in overall command with US Major General Brett as his deputy.

-end-

txtj757

On January 6th, President Roosevelt requested huge appropriations from the US Congress for the production of 125,000 aircraft, 75,000 tanks, 35,000 guns and 8 million tons of shipping by the end of 1943.

-end-

txtj758

On January 26th, Operation Bolero, the build-up of US forces in Britain for the invasion of Western Europe, began when the first contingents of US troops arrived in Northern Ireland. Troops landed in spite of the protests of Premier Eamon De Valera, who was determined to remain neutral in the conflict. He feared that the Allies would invade Northern Ireland to set up military bases.

-end-

txtj759

On January 1st, 26 nations signed the Atlantic Charter, an open alliance of nations committed generally: to ensure life, liberty, independence and religious freedom and to preserve the rights of man and justice. More specifically, these nations agreed to use their full war resources against the Axis, and to refuse to make a separate peace with any Axis nation. This alliance was an expansion of an alliance first established on September 24, 1941, and which became the framework for the future United Nations. The 26 signatories were China, Great Britain, Russia, the United States, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Poland, Santo Domingo, South Africa, and Yugoslavia.

-end-

txtj760

On December 7th, Japanese aircraft attacked the island of Guam in the Pacific, a US possession.

-end-

txtj761

Japanese aircraft bombarded the island of Wake, a US possession in the Pacific Ocean, on December 7th. They destroyed eight out of twelve US aircraft on the island.

-end-

txtj762

On December 7th, the Japanese 2nd Fleet under the command of Vice-Admiral Nobutake Kondo escorted General Tomoyuko Yamashita's 25th Army to the coast of Malaya for an invasion. At the same time three divisions made preparation to invade Hong Kong (a British colony) the next

day.

-end-

txtj763

On December 7th, two Japanese destroyers shelled Midway Island to destroy the United States' airfield there.

-end-

txtj764

Seventeen Japanese aircraft bombed Singapore early in the morning on December 8th. The city had not been blacked-out, which made the mission much easier for the Japanese. That day the British capital ships Prince of Wales and Repulse set sail from Singapore under the command of Admiral Phillips to intercept the Japanese landing at Khota Bhau, Malaya, and Singora, Thailand.

-end-

txtj765

On December 8th, the Japanese, under the command of General Masaharu Homma, launched an air

attack on the Philippines from Formosa (Taiwan), bombing the airfields around Manila Bay on the island of Luzon, and the Mindanao Islands. In just a few hours the US Far East Air Force was out of commission, having lost 86 aircraft to Japan's seven. Over the next several days there were further attacks on airfields all over Luzon, and General MacArthur evacuated many ships and his remaining B-17s (which were useless for defense anyway).

-end-

txtj766

Japanese forces overran the US garrisons in Shanghai and Tientsin on December 8th.

-end-

txtj767

On December 8th, the Japanese launched further air attacks on the US possessions of Wake and Guam.

-end-

txtj768

On December 8th, the Japanese invaded the British colony at Hong Kong.

-end-

txtj769

Japanese forces landed at Tarawa and Makin in the Gilbert Islands on December 9th.

-end-

txtj770

On December 9th, the Japanese occupied Bangkok. Thai resistance to the Japanese ended.

-end-

txtj771

On December 10th, off the coast of Malaya, Japanese aircraft sank the British battleship Prince of Wales and the cruiser Repulse, who were in the Far East without the protection of an aircraft carrier. The popular commander of the British Strike Force Z, Admiral Tom Spencer Vaughan Phillips (Tom Thumb) went down with the Prince of Wales and 326 other men.

-end-

txtj772

The Japanese landed on Guam and seized it in just a few hours on December 10th.

-end-

txtj773

On December 10th, Japanese units landed on northern Luzon and on Camiguin in the Philippines. The American garrisons there were unable to protect the islands.

-end-

txtj774

Japanese forces overpowered the US garrison in Peking (Beijing) on December 11th, making prisoners of the troops there.

-end-

txtj775

On December 11th, the Japanese began an air and artillery offensive against the British colony of

Hong Kong. 11,300 Canadian, Indian, and Scottish troops withdrew from mainland Hong Kong to the island of the same name, leaving behind a large supply of arms and ammunition.

-end-

txtj776

On December 11th, the Japanese, commanded by Admiral Sadamichi Kajioka, attempted to land on

Wake Island. The US garrison repulsed the attack, sinking two Japanese destroyers.

-end-

txtj777

On December 13th, a Japanese spokesman landed on the island of Hong Kong and demanded surrender. Governor Sir Mark Young refused, hoping that Chiang Kai-shek's forces would soon arrive to relieve them.

-end-

txtj778

Japanese troops on the Thai border of the Kra Isthmus forced the British to evacuate Victoria Point, retreating to the north.

-end-

txtj779

On December 13th, a United States squadron, commanded by Rear-Admiral Frank J. Fletcher, left

Pearl Harbor to relieve the forces at Wake Island.

-end-

txtj780

On December 14th, Thailand and Japan signed an alliance.

-end-

txtj781

Japanese troops entered southern Burma on the Kra Isthmus on December 15th and seized Victoria Point.

-end-

txtj782

Japanese forces landed at Sarawak, Brunei, and Miri in Dutch Borneo on December 16th

-end-

txtj783

Japanese occupied over half of the island of Hong Kong on December 28th, threatening the British garrison there.

-end-

txtj784

On December 22nd, the Japanese 14th Army arrived in the Philippines, landing in Lingayen Gulf, forty miles north of where MacArthur had concentrated all his artillery. The 43,000 Japanese troops established a bridgehead and linked up with the troops that had landed previously on the 10th. More troops arriving on the 24th cut off the US and Filipino garrisons.

-end-

txtj785

On December 23rd, the Americans on Wake Island surrendered to Admiral Kajioka. The US task force sent from Pearl Harbor to relieve Wake was still over 400 miles away.

-end-

txtj786

On December 23rd, 10,000 Japanese landed at Lamon Bay, and the Allied forces on Luzon began a retreat to the Bataan peninsula. General MacArthur moved his headquarters to the island of Corregidor and set up a supply base there.

-end-

txtj787

British forces on Hong Kong Island surrendered to the Japanese after a seventeen-day siege. 1,000 Allies died, 1,000 were missing and another 2,300 were wounded. British troops and civilians on Hong Kong Island faced awful conditions as prisoners of war.

-end-

txtj788

On December 28th, General Archibald Wavell took command of the defense of Burma.

-end-

txtj789

On December 31st, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz was appointed to command the United States Asiatic Fleet.

-end-

txtj790

Lieutenant-General George H. Brett was given command of the US forces in Australia (USFIA) on December 31st.

-end-

txtj791

On January 4th, Chiang Kai-shek was appointed as the Supreme Commander of the Allied forces in China. Meanwhile, he was resisting an advance of Japanese forces in the Changsha area of the Hunan province.

-end-

txtj792

Japanese aircraft began an offensive on Rabaul, an island northeast of New Guinea in the Bismarck Archipelago. The British there defended two airfields for several weeks.

-end-

txtj793

On January 7th, the Japanese captured Sarawak, reaching the Sarawak-Dutch Borneo border.

-end-

txtj794

Japanese forces captured Jesselton in British North Borneo on January 8th.

-end-

txtj795

On January 11th, Japanese naval paratroops landed on the island of Celebes at Manado and Kema, forcing the Dutch garrisons to surrender. The Japanese established air bases on the island.

-end-

txtj796

On January 11th, the Japanese captured the island of Taraken, located off the east coast of Borneo. The island was valuable for its oil fields and its strategic location; thus the Japanese established an air base there.

-end-

txtj797

On January 12th, the Japanese declared war on the Dutch East Indies.

-end-

txtj798

General Wavell arrived at Batavia, Java on January 14th to assume command of the Allied forces in Asia and to set up the ABDA (American, British, Dutch, Australian) headquarters.

-end-

txtj799

On January 15th, the Japanese attacked the British forces in Burma, surrounding Myitta and moving up the Kra Isthmus to take the airfield at Tenasserim.

-end-

txtj800

British North Borneo surrendered to the Japanese on January 19th.

-end-

txtj801

On January 21st, US General Joseph W. Stilwell was made Chief of Staff of forces operating in China under Chiang Kai-shek.

-end-

txtj802

On January 21st, the Japanese sent 50 aircraft for the initial air attacks on New Guinea.

-end-

txtj803

Japanese troops landed at Rabaul, New Britain and Kavieng, New Ireland in the Bismarck Archipelago on January 23rd. Both were quickly overrun.

-end-

txtj804

On January 23rd, ships carrying Japanese troops landed at Bougainville in the Solomon Islands.

-end-

txtj805

On January 23rd, the Japanese took Kendari, south of Celebes. Dutch aircraft were unable to defend the island. More Japanese troops arrived on the 24th.

-end-

txtj806

On January 24th, United States and Japanese forces engaged in the first big naval battle in the Pacific theater. American submarines and the destroyers Parrot, Pope, John D. Ford, and Paul Jones attacked a convoy of Japanese naval transports in the Macassar Strait, off the east coast of Dutch Borneo. The Japanese lost four transports and one escort vessel in the battle, but nevertheless managed to occupy the oil port of Balikpapan.

-end-

txtj807

Following air attacks over New Guinea, the Japanese landed at Lae on January 25th.

-end-

txtj808

On January 25th, Thailand declared war on Great Britain and the United States.

-end-

txtj809

On January 30th, the Japanese captured Amboina, an important naval base between Celebes and New Guinea.

-end-

txtj810

On January 31st, British, Indian, Australian, Canadian, and Malayan forces evacuated Malaya and crossed the causeway to Singapore Island. The three-quarter-mile causeway was blown up and the Japanese began the siege of Singapore, shelling the island from nearby Bharu. The island had four divisions to defend it, but an insufficient supply of weapons, and the men were discouraged in the face of terrible odds.

-end-

txtj811

On December 6th, the RAF reported that Japanese troop transports were moving westward off Cape Cambodia toward Malaya. Malaya was important for its rubber and tin, resources that Japan desired. Realizing the importance of Malaya, Britain had built a large naval base on Singapore Island, just off the southern tip of the Malayan peninsula, right after World War I. This naval base served as the guardian of all Britain's valuable Far Eastern possessions.

By the autumn of 1941, Singapore was protected by coastal batteries and there were several British airfields in Malaya. But Britain could ill afford to divert any more military resources to the Far East while the situation in Europe was so grim. Consequently, Malaya was only defended by three divisions and four brigades. Force Z, the battleship Prince of Wales and the cruiser Repulse, were on their way to the Far East, but their intended aircraft carrier, the Indomitable, had run aground in the Caribbean. Lack of air support would prove to be disastrous for Force Z.

-end-

txtj812

On December 8th, General Yamashita's 25th Army began landing at Khota Bharu in northern Malaya. In spite of resistance by the 8th Indian Brigade, the Japanese were able to establish a beachhead. That day the RAF evacuated the airfield at Khota Bharu and the 8th Indian Brigade was forced to withdraw.

-end-

txtj813

On December 8th, the Commander-in-Chief in the Far East, Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham began Operation Matador, the plan to cross the Thai border to oppose the Japanese who had landed at Singora, Thailand, and Patani, Malaya. The British were forced to withdraw the next day.

-end-

txtj814

The RAF, after heavy losses in defending Malaya, withdrew its remaining aircraft to Singapore Island.

-end-

txtj815

Penang Island, off the west coast of Malaya, was evacuated on December 16th as Japanese forces penetrated further into Malaya.

-end-

txtj816

On December 17th, British, Indian and Australian forces began to withdraw southward to the Perak River.

-end-

txtj817

On December 26th, Japanese forces crossed the Perak River. The 11th Indian Division evacuated the town of Ipoh. Japanese General Yamashita planned to advance south until encountering the Allies in a defensive position; then he would move through the jungle to outflank them.

-end-

txtj818

As the Japanese continued to advance south, occupying Kampar, the Indian forces withdrew to the line of the Slim River.

-end-

txtj819

On January 7th, the Japanese attacked the 11th Indian Division at the Slim River, broke through and advanced to Kuala Lumpur. The Allies formed a defensive line further south.

-end-

txtj820

General Wavell arrived in Singapore on January 8th. Together, he and General Percival decided to mount the defense of Malaya at Johore, the southern-most part of the Malayan peninsula. The Indian III Corps was deployed for that defense.

-end-

txtj821

On January 11th, as Indian III Corps retreated south to Johore, the Japanese 5th Division entered the abandoned supply base for Indian III Corps.

-end-

txtj822

General Wavell communicated with Winston Churchill on January 19th, informing him that the island of Singapore could not be defended against the Japanese. Churchill insisted that: no question of surrender be entertained until after protracted fighting among the ruins of Singapore city. Singapore began preparing for a siege.

-end-

txtj823

On January 22nd, British, Indian, and Australian reinforcements began to arrive at Singapore island to strengthen the Allied defense.

-end-

txtj824

Units of the 5th and 18th Japanese divisions began the main offensive on Singapore on February 8th with heavy artillery bombardment. Japanese troops landed on the northwest coast and quickly established a bridgehead. Soon they were advancing toward Tengah, the largest

airfield on the island. The next day the Japanese turned toward the city of Singapore. On the 10th the British were forced to withdraw to the Kranji-Jurong defensive line. Counter-attacks failed to stop the Japanese.

-end-

txtj825

On February 14th, Japanese airborne troops landed at Palembang in Sumatra. The next day a Japanese fleet arrived at Muntok, despite British and Dutch air attacks. On the 16th British air crews retreated from Sumatra to nearby Java.

-end-

txtj826

On February 15th, Singapore fell to the Japanese. General Percival formally surrendered to General Yamashita, hoping to relieve the situation of the civilians on the island. 9,000 Allies were dead or wounded and another 130,000 British, Indian, and Australian soldiers were taken prisoner. Some were forced to work building the Burma-Thai Railway later in the war. The Japanese lost 9,000 men taking Singapore.

-end-

txtj827

British, Dutch, and American naval forces tried to prevent the Japanese from invading Bali on February 19th. Allied forces, under the command of Dutch Rear-Admiral Karel Doorman, engaged

the Japanese in the Lumbok Strait near Bali. One Dutch destroyer was sunk, and two Dutch cruisers and a US destroyer were damaged. Only one Japanese destroyer was damaged, and the Japanese troops successfully landed on Bali.

-end-

txtj828

On February 19th, Japanese aircraft, commanded by Admiral Noguma, targeted Darwin, Australia, destroying ports and sinking twelve warships, the US destroyer Peary among them.

-end-

txtj829

Japanese forces landed on the Portuguese island of Timor in the East Indies on February 20th. The island's position posed a threat to nearby Australia.

-end-

txtj830

On February 23rd, the ABDA (American, British, Dutch, Australian) Command staff began to leave Java for Australia. General Wavell followed two days later.

-end-

txtj831

As the Japanese moved in to invade Java, an Allied squadron under the command of Dutch Rear-Admiral Karel W. Doorman attacked in the Java Sea. Almost the entire Allied force was sunk or damaged, and the Japanese landed in Java successfully the next day. Four remaining US destroyers set out for the Sunda Strait.

-end-

txtj832

On March 1st, Allied ships near Java, trying to make for Australia, were intercepted by the Japanese. The Allies lost one US and one Australian cruiser, and one British, one Dutch and two US destroyers in the battle. The Japanese lost four transports.

-end-

txtj833

Java fell to the Japanese on March 7th. The Dutch government left for Australia on the same day. By this time all Allied aircraft in the Dutch East Indies had been destroyed, and two days later the last Dutch resistance ended.

-end-

txtj834

The Philippine archipelago was a strategic point for the petrol supply line the Japanese hoped to establish from the East Indies. US military planners realized that a Japanese attack on the

Philippines was inevitable. On July 26th, the USAFFE (US Army Forces in the Far East) was formed under the command of General Douglas C. MacArthur, the military advisor to the Filipino government. MacArthur hoped to defeat the Japanese on the beaches. He had ten divisions available to him, some poorly trained, an inadequate supply of aircraft and aging naval vessels. US military planners believed that with these forces the garrison at Manila Bay could hold out for six months if necessary, in case of a siege.

-end-

txtj835

On December 26th, Manila was declared an open city, and American and Filipino forces began a withdrawal to the Bataan peninsula. The Japanese continued to bomb the city despite its open status. Japanese forces entered Manila on January 2nd.

-end-

txtj836

US and Filipino divisions finished withdrawal to the Bataan peninsula on January 5th. 80,000 troops and 26,000 civilians now inhabited the area. The Japanese quickly pursued to the Santa Rosa-Natib defensive line.

-end-

txtj837

After two weeks of battle on the Bataan peninsula, Japanese troops had pushed the Americans and Filipinos deeper and deeper south. On January 22nd, MacArthur ordered his troops to withdraw to the defensive line at Bagac-Orion.

-end-

txtj838

On January 26th, US and Filipino troops completed their withdrawal to the last line of defense on the Bataan Peninsula. The Japanese were hard on their heels.

-end-

txtj839

On February 8th, Filipino President Quezon asked Roosevelt to grant independence to the Philippines. Quezon believed that the Philippines could declare neutrality and both US and Japanese forces would leave the country. At the same time, General MacArthur informed Roosevelt that his force on the Bataan peninsula was almost overcome. Roosevelt refused Quezon's request and sent MacArthur word that he was free to surrender Filipino troops, but that the US forces must fight until the end.

-end-

txtj840

Filipino President Quezon left the Philippines for Australia on a US submarine on February 20th.

-end-

txtj841

On March 11th, following orders from President Roosevelt to take command of the Southwest Pacific forces, an emotional General MacArthur left the Philippines for Australia. He parted with the words 'I shall return!' His command was taken over by General Jonathan Wainwright.

-end-

txtj842

On March 24th, the Japanese began a massive land and air bombardment of Bataan and Corregidor Island. The Allied troops on the Bataan Peninsula were suffering from food shortages and disease.

-end-

txtj843

The Japanese began their main offensive on the Bataan Peninsula on April 3rd, and continued heavy artillery and air bombardment through the 8th. General Wainwright's troops were being massacred. On the night of the 8th Wainwright made plans to surrender the next day, destroying military equipment during the night.

-end-

txtj844

On April 8th, in preparation for a surrender to the

Japanese, General Wainwright destroyed his remaining military equipment and evacuated 2,000 of his 78,000 men to the island of Corregidor. The unconditional surrender took place the next morning. The remaining Allied troops, 12,000 Americans among them, were forced to march 65 miles to San Fernando in what became known as the Bataan Death March. Marching under a scorching sun with almost no rations, thousands of these men died from exposure, dysentery, and starvation.

-end-

txtj845

Japanese troops landed on Cebu Island on April 10th, forcing the American and Filipino troops to move inland. The Japanese secured the island by the 19th.

-end-

txtj846

On April 16th, 4,000 Japanese landed on Panay Island. The US-Filipino garrison withdrew into the hills. From there, they engaged in guerrilla tactics against the Japanese.

-end-

txtj847

Japanese reinforcements from Cebu landed on Mindanao on April 29th, capturing Cotabato and Parang.

-end-

txtj848

On May 5th, the Japanese landed on Corregidor. The next day General Wainwright surrendered unconditionally to Japanese General Homma.

-end-

txtj849

On May 10th, General William Sharp, the commander of American and Filipino forces in the central Philippines, ordered his troops throughout the islands to surrender.

-end-

txtj850

Japanese aircraft bombarded the capital of Burma on December 23rd, damaging docks in the port city.

-end-

txtj851

Japanese took over Tavoy and its airport on January 19th.

-end-

txtj852

The Japanese 55th Division invaded Burma from Thailand on January 20th, threatening the 17th Indian Division at Moulmein.

-end-

txtj853

On January 30th, the Japanese took Moulmein and the 17th Indian Division withdrew across the Salween River to the northwest.

-end-

txtj854

A brigade of the 19th Indian Division arrived in Rangoon on January 31st, and was sent to join Lieutenant-General Smyth's 17th Division.

-end-

txtj855

On February 11th, Japanese forces crossed the Salween River, pursuing the 17th Indian Division. Lieutenant-General Smyth requested permission to withdraw further northwest across the Sittang, to avoid being outflanked, but Lieutenant-General Tom Hutton ordered him to hold the defense at the Bilin River.

Smyth's troops held until the 15th, when they crossed the Bilin. By the 19th, the Japanese had followed. Finally, Hutton gave the order to withdraw across the Sittang.

-end-

txtj856

On February 23rd, the Japanese attempted to seize the bridge across the Sittang River. Indian

troops blew up the bridge prematurely, leaving more than half their own men on the far side. Those who crossed withdrew to Pegu, where they met up with the 7th Armored Brigade. Meanwhile, the Japanese crossed the Sittang River and moved to cut off the 17th Division and the 1st Burma Division.

-end-

txtj857

On March 5th, General Sir Harold Alexander took over command of the Burma Army from Lieutenant-General Hutton. Alexander ordered a counter-offensive to prevent the Japanese from infiltrating between the 17th Indian and 1st Burma Divisions, and to defend Rangoon. The attempts failed and on the 7th, Alexander ordered the evacuation of Rangoon. The Allied forces withdrew to the north.

-end-

txtj858

Japanese forces entered Rangoon on March 8th.

-end-

txtj859

After the fall of Rangoon, Burma, the British garrison in the Andaman Islands was evacuated by seaplanes. It was not defensible with Rangoon in the hands of the Japanese.

-end-

txtj860

On March 19th, the British forces in Burma were regrouped to form the Burcorps. This included Burmese, British and Indian forces. General William Slim was put in command of Burcorps, while General Alexander was responsible for coordinating with the Chinese forces in Burma.

-end-

txtj861

On March 19th, the Japanese attacked the Chinese 200th Division in the Sittang Valley at Toungoo.

-end-

txtj862

To relieve pressure on the Chinese defending Toungoo, General Alexander ordered the Burcorps to attack the Japanese in the Irrawaddy valley at Paungde and Prome, west of Toungoo.

-end-

txtj863

On March 30th, unable to face pressure from the attacking Japanese, the Chinese 200th Division abandoned Toungoo. This meant that the Japanese had an open road into China. It also left the Burcorps at Prome to the east exposed. They were forced to withdraw to the Yenangyaung oil fields in the north.

-end-

txtj864

Japanese aircraft bombed the city of Mandalay on April 3rd, killing 2,000 people and reducing a large part of the area to cinders.

-end-

txtj865

On April 5th, 200 Japanese aircraft, under the command of Admiral Nobutake Kondo, took off from

aircraft carriers south of Ceylon to attack the British Indian Ocean Squadron. British Admiral Somerville had previously removed the fleet from the harbor at Colombo. The Japanese destroyed twelve British torpedo planes and sank the cruisers Dorsetshire and Cornwall southwest of Ceylon in the Indian Ocean.

-end-

txtj866

Japanese forces captured Migyaungye on April 12th, exposing the west flank of Burcorps and threatening nearby oil fields.

-end-

txtj867

The Burcorps began destroying the Yenangyaung oil wells on April 15th to prevent them from

falling into the hands of the Japanese, who were approaching from the south.

-end-

txtj868

On April 29th, the Japanese succeeded in capturing Lashio on the Burma Road to China. This meant that the Chinese were cut off from their only supply route, and supplies would have to be brought in by air.

-end-

txtj869

The Burcorps withdrew across the Ava bridge on the Irrawaddy River on April 30th, destroying the bridge behind them. Japanese forces now controlled all of central Burma.

-end-

txtj870

On May 1st, the Japanese captured Monywa and Mandalay, throwing the northward withdrawal of the Allied troops into disarray.

-end-

txtj871

British troops left Akyab on the Burmese coast on May 4th.

-end-

txtj872

On May 5th, a British naval squadron landed in Vichy French Madagascar and captured the ports at Diego Suarez and Antsirene, with little resistance made by the French garrison. The British wanted to prevent the Japanese from establishing air bases in Madagascar, and quickly established one of their own.

-end-

txtj873

On May 8th, the Japanese took Myitkyina in northern Burma.

-end-

txtj874

American General Joseph Stilwell and his Chinese Divisions entered Assam, India from Burma on May 15th.

-end-

txtj875

General Alexander and the Burcorps retreated from Burma into India on May 20th, leaving Burma in the hands of the Japanese. The Japanese had proven themselves superior to the Allies in jungle warfare during their Burma campaign, and it seemed highly likely that they would expand their drive into India.

-end-

txtj876

On December 9th, Hitler lifted his former ban forbidding U-boats to attack US vessels. This was two days before his formal declaration of war on the United States. Admiral Doenitz immediately dispatched five U-boats to the east coast of the US.

-end-

txtj877

On December 20th, Admiral Ernest J. King was appointed supreme commander of the US Navy. His former position of commander of the Atlantic fleet was taken by Admiral Royal E. Ingersoll.

There were few ships and planes available for protecting the busy shipping lanes off the east coast. Because there were no escort vessels available for forming convoys, merchant ships were ordered to stay within prescribed routes close to the coastline.

-end-

txtj878

On January 12th, U-123 sank the British steamer Cyclops near Cape Cod. This was the first ship sunk in what German Admiral Doenitz called Operation Drum Roll, the assault on shipping off the east coast of the United States. The Germans sank a total of 40 ships on the eastern seaboard in the month of January.

-end-

txtj879

On February 1st, German U-boats began using their new Triton communications cipher. This impaired US intelligence operations for the remainder of the year.

-end-

txtj880

To prepare for an expected Allied attack in Norway, Hitler ordered the three battle cruisers, Gneisenau, Prinz Eugen, and Scharnhorst to break out of their port in Brest, France, where the RAF had been holding them at bay since the early part of 1941. During the night of February 11th, the three cruisers, under the command of Admiral Otto Ciliax, slipped out of Brest and up the English Channel. British torpedo boats and aircraft were unable to stop the ships. The Scharnhorst and Gneisenau were both slightly damaged by mines that evening, but all three cruisers made it to German ports on the 13th.

-end-

txtj881

The British submarine HMS Trident hit and damaged the German battle cruiser Prinz Eugen as it headed north to Norway.

-end-

txtj882

On the night of February 26th, RAF bombers severely damaged the German battle cruiser, Gneisenau, docked at Kiel.

-end-

txtj883

On February 16th, German Admiral Doenitz ordered a major submarine offensive on the eastern seaboard of the United States. U-boats sank 65 US merchant ships that month.

-end-

txtj884

A US Hudson aircraft based in Newfoundland sank U-656 off Cape Race on March 1st. This was the first US sinking of a German submarine.

-end-

txtj885

In April, US merchant vessels on the east coast began sailing in convoys during daytime hours, staying as close to shore as possible. This makeshift arrangement was known as the Bucket Brigade.

-end-

txtj886

On April 13th, the US destroyer Roper sank U-85 in the waters off Norfolk, Virginia. This was the first instance of a US warship sinking a German submarine.

-end-

txtj887

On April 18th, the east coast seaboard began black-outs to help reduce losses to U-boats.

-end-

txtj888

On April 21st, the first U-boat tanker set sail to the Atlantic to carry supplies to U-boats operating on the US east coast and in the Caribbean. The tanker carried fuel, torpedoes and other supplies. Because the resupply problem had been solved, Admiral Doenitz was able to send more U-boats to these areas. Shipping losses for the United States nearly doubled.

-end-

txtj889

On August 1st, US authorities began an interlocking convoy system on the east coast, which helped reduce shipping losses to U-boats.

-end-

txtj890

In January 1942, after Italian and German forces had been pushed back into Tripolitania, Rommel was anxious to go on the offensive again immediately. He knew from German intelligence that the British forces were having tank problems, and he himself had just received

45 replacement tanks. Against the wishes of his superior officers in Rome, he decided to launch a counter-offensive when the British would least suspect it.

On January 21st, Rommel's forces began the thrust into Cyrenaica. The 21st Panzers captured Mersa Brega and the 15th Panzers headed for Agedabia.

-end-

txtj891

Rommel's forces retook Agedabia on January 22nd.

-end-

txtj892

On January 23rd, Rommel's superiors in Rome expressed their displeasure over his independent decision to counterattack in Cyrenaica. They wanted him to withdraw again, and refused to allow the Italian troops to advance any further. Rommel chose to continue his offensive with only the Afrika Korps.

-end-

txtj893

Rommel and the Afrika Korps occupied Msus on January 25th. Next, Rommel feinted northeast toward Mechili, while making the real offensive on the coast of Benghazi. The feint succeeded, drawing the British toward Mechili and leaving the Indian 4th Division unsupported at Benghazi.

-end-

txtj894

On January 29th, the 4th Indian Division barely escaped, sacrificing much of its supplies, as Rommel's forces captured Benghazi. Though the Italian high command had disapproved Rommel's decision to strike a counter-offensive in Cyrenaica, Hitler rewarded Rommel with a promise to make him a Colonel-General.

-end-

txtj895

On February 4th, Rommel's troops stopped their advance in front of the British 8th Army at the Gazala-Bir Hacheim Line. Rommel had exhausted his fuel supplies and could not continue. The British, likewise, were at a stand still, having lost over 100 tanks since mid-January.

-end-

txtj896

As both Axis and Allied forces in Libya cooled their heels, Winston Churchill urged General Auchinleck to go on the offensive immediately, before Rommel had time to rebuild the strength of his army. Churchill, anxious to insure the safety of Malta, wanted the airfields in Libya recaptured from the Axis as soon as possible. Auchinleck was convinced that he could not be ready to mount such a major offensive until June. The disagreement continued for several weeks.

Meanwhile, military planners in Germany and Italy favored an assault on Malta (Operation Herakles) as the highest priority, while Rommel pushed for permission to advance into Egypt.

-end-

txtj897

To defend Malta and attack Axis convoys to North Africa, the British Admiralty sent two destroyers from the Home Fleet and two destroyers from Force H to Malta, forming Force K. This force, with aircraft and submarines also based on the island, took a heavy toll on Axis supplies.

-end-

txtj898

On November 13th, U-81 torpedoed and sunk the British aircraft carrier Ark Royal off the coast of Gibraltar, depriving Force H of air coverage. This meant that Force H could not protect convoys to Malta.

-end-

txtj899

On December 2nd, Hitler issued a directive which ordered General Kesselring to achieve air and sea supremacy in the Mediterranean. Hitler granted Kesselring more air power to prevent supplies reaching the British at Malta and Libya.

-end-

txtj900

British destroyers engaged and sank two Italian light cruisers carrying tank fuel to Libya on December 13th.

-end-

txtj901

On December 14th, German U-557 sank the British cruiser Galatea off the coast of Egypt near Alexandria.

-end-

txtj902

Admiral Cunningham's Mediterranean Fleet was severely reduced when Italian frogmen damaged the battleships, Valiant and Queen Elizabeth, a tanker, and a destroyer in the harbor at Alexandria. Malta's supply lines now depended on the British airfields in Cyrenaica, which were being jeopardized by Rommel's forces.

-end-

txtj903

On March 7th, Force H left Gibraltar with replacement Spitfire aircraft for Malta. Forty-seven aircraft reached Malta safely between March 7th and March 29th.

-end-

txtj904

On March 22nd, an Italian force attacked a British supply convoy en route from Alexandria to Malta. One British cruiser was damaged, one freighter sunk and another one disabled. Two other freighters eventually made it to Malta, but were sunk in the port with the supplies still on board.

-end-

txtj905

On April 16th, King George VI awarded the people of Malta the George Cross in recognition of their heroism in facing up to continuous bombings and shortages of supplies for months on end.

-end-

txtj906

The US aircraft carrier Wasp brought 46 desperately needed Spitfire aircraft to Malta on April 20th. Within three days, Axis forces had destroyed almost all of them on the ground during raids on the island.

-end-

txtj907

On April 26th, Admiral Cunningham ordered the 10th Submarine Flotilla to leave Malta because of increased mine-laying and bombings by the Axis.

-end-

txtj908

Hitler and Mussolini set the date for the capture of Malta (Operation Herakles) for July 10th, as soon as possible after Rommel could recapture Tobruk in Libya.

-end-

txtj909

On May 9th, the US carrier Wasp and British carrier Eagle brought sixty more Spitfire aircraft to Malta. This time the aircraft were fueled and ready to take off within 35 minutes of their arrival. The Allies did not want a repeat of the previous month's disaster, when newly arrived Spitfires were destroyed on the ground by Axis air attacks.

-end-

txtj910

General Kesselring reported from Sicily to Hitler in Berlin that Malta had been successfully neutralized. But that very day Allied aircraft shot down twelve Axis planes, losing only three of their own. Allied air attacks decreased after this. Though shortages on the island were still severe and the threat of invasion still loomed, troops and civilians on the island began to take hope.

-end-

txtj911

On June 11th, two operations to get supplies to Malta were undertaken. Operation Harpoon, a convoy of five freighters and a tanker, left from Gibraltar escorted by a battleship, two carriers,

three cruisers and eight destroyers. Closer to Malta, the convoy would be joined by an anti-aircraft vessel and nine destroyers. Meanwhile, a convoy of eleven freighters (Operation Vigorous) escorted by seven light cruisers and twenty-six destroyers left from Alexandria.

On the 14th Axis aircraft sank one of Harpoon's freighters and damaged an escort cruiser. Vigorous lost two freighters to Axis aircraft as well.

The next day Harpoon and Vigorous were again targeted by Axis aircraft, as well as by Italian naval squadrons. Harpoon lost two freighters, the tanker, and one destroyer. Two other destroyers and the anti-aircraft cruiser were damaged. Vigorous fared no better. The convoy had changed course to avoid an Italian squadron, only to lose a destroyer to German E-boats. German aircraft sank another destroyer and damaged a cruiser. Low on ammunition, Vigorous turned back to Alexandria and lost another destroyer and cruiser on the return trip.

-end-

txtj912

On May 26th, Rommel began his third counter-offensive in the Western Desert, Operation Venezia. Its objective was to recapture Tobruk. If this were achieved quickly, Rommel would be allowed to advance into the Egyptian frontier, but there he would be expected to halt so his aircraft could be used in the invasion of Malta. The counter-offensive began when German General Cruwell attacked at the north end of the Gazala Line, near the coast. This was a feint; Rommel had actually decided to concentrate his tanks in the south, where they would move around the Gazala Line, and swing northward. British General Ritchie had already anticipated an attack in the north since that was the most direct route to Tobruk, so he was taken in by the feint.

-end-

txtj913

Rommel's tank divisions worked their way around the Gazala line and engaged British 7th and 1st Armored. Both the Allies and the Axis lost many tanks in this battle, and the British tanks became badly scattered. On the 28th Rommel was running extremely low on fuel, and decided he must penetrate the Gazala Line further north, rather than circumvent it.

-end-

txtj914

Rommel chose to penetrate the Gazala line at the area known as the Cauldron, which was defended by the British 50th Division. On May 31st, Italian divisions approached from the west as the Afrika Korps moved in from the east. Two days later the Cauldron was in Rommel's hands. This allowed him to get supplies through to his forces. He could now concentrate on overpowering the British at Bir Hacheim, on the southern extreme of the Gazala line.

-end-

txtj915

On June 5th, General Ritchie attempted to take back the Cauldron, overrun by Rommel three days before. But this attempt, code-named Aberdeen, went terribly awry. Ritchie lost two infantry brigades and four artillery regiments without gaining the cauldron. He and Auchlinleck decided to wait for the Germans to attack once more, and lined up along the Knightsbridge-El Adem line.

-end-

txtj916

Bir Hacheim, bravely defended by the Free French at the southern extremity of the Gazala Line, fell to Rommel on June 11th after more than two weeks of fighting.

-end-

txtj917

After Rommel's forces took Bir Hacheim, fighting continued in the areas of Knightsbridge and El Adem. With his reserve tanks, Rommel attacked the British defensive line and forced General Ritchie's troops to withdraw to Acroma. This threatened British supply lines. Ritchie also ordered 50th and 1st South African divisions east to the Egyptian border, which left Tobruk dangerously exposed.

-end-

txtj918

During the night of June 16th, General Norrie withdrew the 8th Army from El Adem to Mersa Matruh to re-equip. This left Tobruk even further exposed, with only General Gott and the XIII Corps to defend it; this in spite of Churchill's and Auchinleck's anxiety to hold the port at all costs.

-end-

txtj919

On June 18th, Rommel's forces occupied Gambut, controlling the coast road and the area of the landing strips used to supply Tobruk. The garrison was completely cut off.

-end-

txtj920

Rommel's aircraft and tanks began pummeling Tobruk on June 20th. Soon the British had no tanks or artillery left to lose, and nowhere to escape. Klopfer surrendered on the 21st leaving his 30,000 men to be taken prisoner.

-end-

txtj921

On June 23rd, after capturing Tobruk with its war materials, and the port virtually intact, Rommel began moving east toward the Egyptian frontier. He contacted his superiors and requested permission to make for Cairo. Rommel's successes in North Africa meant a reprieve for Malta; Hitler convinced Mussolini that the opportunity to take all of Egypt was too good to pass up, and the invasion of Malta was postponed.

-end-

txtj922

On June 25th, General Auchinleck assumed command of the 8th Army, relieving General Ritchie of the post. Auchinleck was anxious to keep the 8th Army viable, even if it meant falling back as far as the Suez Canal.

-end-

txtj923

Rommel's forces began an assault on the area around Mersa Matruh on June 26th. By the next day parts of the German 90th Light Division had outflanked the garrison, and the British began to withdraw. Two days later the garrison was taken.

-end-

txtj924

On June 28th, advance guards of the German 90th Light Division captured Fuqa, 45 miles east of the garrison at Mersa Matruh. Auchinleck's forces were becoming more scattered and confused.

-end-

txtj925

Having lost Mersa Matruh and Fuqa, the British 10th Corps took its position at the northern end and the 30th Corps at the southern end of the El Alamein line. The 10th Corps began to prepare the

defense of Alexandria. Auchinleck and the Allied forces waited for Rommel's attack, which they knew from Ultra intelligence would be the next day.

-end-

txtj926

On April 5th, Hitler laid out his objectives for the summer offensive in Russia. The main objective, and the responsibility of Field Marshal von Bock, was to seize the rich industrial regions of the Ukraine and the Caucasian oil fields. Hitler also planned to overrun the Crimea and take Stalingrad and Leningrad.

-end-

txtj927

On May 8th, Field Marshal von Manstein and the 11th Army advanced on the Kerch peninsula of the Crimea, the first step in meeting Hitler's order to take the Caucasian oil fields.

-end-

txtj928

The German 11th Army, under the command of Field Marshal von Manstein, seized the Kerch peninsula on the Crimea on May 16th.

-end-

txtj929

On May 12th, Russian Marshal Timoshenko commanded a pincer-movement on German-held Kharkov. The Russian Army Group South attacked northward from the Isyum salient, which they had held since January, and southwest across the Donetsk. The Germans had been planning an assault on the Isyum salient within the next few days, (Operation Fridericus I) and were surprised but not wholly unprepared.

-end-

txtj930

Six days after the Soviets tried to surround Kharkov, the Germans staged a counter-stroke (Fridericus I), capturing the towns of Isyum and Barvenkova near Kharkov on the 19th. General Kostenko's South-West Front had become separated from General Malinovsky's South Front. Nevertheless, Kostenko continued to attack the German forces.

-end-

txtj931

On May 29th, German General Paulus' 6th Army succeeded in taking the Isyum salient from the Soviets, completing Fridericus I.

-end-

txtj932

Hitler arrived at Army Group South's headquarters on June 1st to hear Field Marshal von Bock's plans for the main offensive in the Caucasus and Ukraine. Hitler approved the plans and Joseph Goebbels arranged for leaks to the foreign press indicating that Moscow was the main objective. This deception was reinforced with false preparations by Field Marshal von Kluge in Army Group Center. Hitler's generals agreed that they would be ready to begin as soon as the Russians could be cleared from the Volchansk area north of Kharkov and from the area around Kupyansk.

-end-

txtj933

On June 2nd, German Field Marshall von Manstein and the 11th Army began a tremendous artillery bombardment of Sevastopol in the Crimea. The barrage lasted until the 7th, when von Manstein's infantry moved in.

-end-

txtj934

After five days of artillery bombardment, Field Marshal von Manstein's German and Romanian troops closed in around Sevastopol, a heavily fortified port city in the Crimea. It took three weeks of vicious fighting with heavy mortar, projectile guns, and flame throwers against the Russian defenders before the city was nearly subdued. By the 27th most resistance had ended and Russian troops began evacuating by sea three days later. On July 3rd, all resistance had been wiped out, and von Manstein had captured 90,000 prisoners.

-end-

txtj935

On June 15th, General Paulus attacked the pocket of Russians in the Volchansk area, north of Kharkov. By the 15th the Germans had secured the area.

-end-

txtj936

On June 19th, a German plane was shot down, and Russians captured a German staff officer carrying plans for the Caucasus offensive. The Russians were so convinced that the main objective was Moscow that even with this evidence in front of them, they believed any attempt in the Caucasus would be only a secondary thrust. Hitler did not change his plans after this intelligence breach, and the preparations for the offensive continued.

-end-

txtj937

German troops attacked Kupyansk, southeast of Kharkov, on June 22nd. Fighting went on for several days, but the Russians withdrew on the 25th and Germans captured the town the next day.

-end-

txtj938

On March 20th, Hitler set up his first concentration camp at Dachau. This camp was originally

used to incarcerate Hitler's political opponents, but was quickly filled with Jews. Each year Hitler opened more work camps, and later, extermination camps.

-end-

txtj939

The Nuremberg Laws went into effect on September 15th. These laws took away the citizenship and civil rights of German Jews and laid the groundwork for what would turn into the full-scale persecution that was the Holocaust.

-end-

txtj940

In response to the murder of a German diplomat by a Polish Jew in France, the German government condoned the harassment of Jews all over Germany. On the night of November 9th, Jewish property was looted and burned and some Jews were even killed. After Crystal Night, Jews were forced to wear identifying yellow stars on their clothing. As Hitler overran other European nations, he spread his policy of persecution, pushing the Jewish population eastward into ghettos such as Warsaw in Poland. Eventually Jews were enslaved in labor camps where they were worked to death, or where health conditions were so bad they could not live.

-end-

txtj941

On July 17th, the head of the secret police, Reinhard Heydrich, signed the Einsatzgruppen order, which authorized the SS Einsatzgruppen to kill Jews, Communists, and agitators in Russia. The invasion of Russia was also a death sentence for Russia's 5 million Jews.

-end-

txtj942

The mission of the SS Einsatzgruppen was to destroy the Jewish population of eastern Europe. The Nazis soon realized that shooting was too time-consuming and they looked for other means of carrying out mass murders. On September 15th, in the concentration camp at Auschwitz, Poland, the Nazis began using Zyklon B, a hydrogen cyanide gas, to poison large numbers of prisoners at once.

-end-

txtj943

On January 20th, Reinhard Heydrich, head of Hitler's secret police, met with other Nazi officials and formalized the policy they called the 'Final Solution'. This referred to the mass extermination of Jews in eastern Europe. The policy organized the transportation of Jews to labor camps where they would be worked until they died. Those unfit for labor would be sent to the new extermination camps which used gas chambers to kill massive numbers of prisoners at once. Auschwitz was the first such camp to be set up. Millions of Jews, political prisoners, agitators, and gypsies were killed during the Holocaust, most in gas chambers, some in brutal medical experiments. During 1944, 6,000 Jews were being murdered every day at Auschwitz alone. Those that were sent to labor camps frequently died of disease and malnutrition.

Near the end of the war, Himmler began consolidating the camps, forcing thousands of prisoners to march westward during the winter without adequate clothing and food. Many died on the way to new camps. Those that survived the march often faced death in the over-crowded conditions. Those that did not die were mere shadows of themselves by the time they were liberated by Allied troops.

-end-

txtj944

On July 22nd, the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) was formed. This organization supported resistance movements and intelligence operations in the occupied nations of Europe.

-end-

txtj945

Two Czech patriots parachuted from a British plane in an operation to assassinate Reinhard Heydrich, the head of the Nazi secret police and the German Protector of Bohemia and Moravia. The patriots attacked Heydrich with a grenade and he died four days later from his injuries.

-end-

txtj946

On March 6th, Germans arrested a radio-operator working for the Special Operations Executive (SOE), a British organization which supported resistance and intelligence operations in occupied nations. The Germans used the operator and his radio to infiltrate (SOE) for the next year and a half, destroying much of the organized resistance in the Netherlands.

-end-

txtj947

RAF Bomber Command was convinced that large-scale attacks on German cities designed to destroy German morale and disrupt the nation's economy were the best means of checking Germany's successes and turning the war around. In an effort to convince Churchill of the efficacy of bombing, Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Portal arranged large raids on Berlin, Cologne, and Mannheim on the night of November 7th. The results were less than encouraging. Thirty-seven out of three hundred aircraft failed to return. Some losses could be blamed on bad weather conditions, but the German Kammhuber air defense line was also responsible. The Kammhuber Line, named for General Joseph Kammhuber, included searchlights, radar, anti-aircraft guns and coordinated communications among night fighters. Because of this superior warning and defense system, Churchill decided to limit air operations to targets with limited risks during optimal weather conditions until Britain could build a larger air fleet.

-end-

txtj948

On February 14th, RAF Bomber Command was handed a directive which ended Churchill's conservative policies on bombing. By this time Britain had bolstered its supply of aircraft, and a new heavy bomber, the Lancaster, had just been introduced. In addition, the RAF had a new navigation tool, the GEE, which would help locate targets.

-end-

txtj949

Air Marshal Arthur Harris was given the leadership of RAF Bomber Command on February 23rd. He was particularly known for his assertive character and conduct and for his support of a large-scale bombing policy in the war against Germany.

-end-

txtj950

The British House of Commons spent two days discussing the general conduct of operations in the war, particularly questioning the efficacy of large-scale bombing of German cities.

-end-

txtj951

On the night of March 3rd, the RAF raided the Renault factory on the outskirts of Paris. Only one of 235 aircraft was lost on the mission, and much damage was done to the target.

-end-

txtj952

The RAF's newest heavy bomber, the Lancaster, was first used on a mine laying mission near Brest, France.

-end-

txtj953

On the night of March 8th, the RAF raided the Krupp armament works in Essen, Germany, using the GEE navigation device for the first time in the shaker technique. (In the shaker technique, an aircraft equipped with

GEE located the targets and dropped marking flares. Follow-up aircraft dropped incendiary bombs to indicate the targets for the bombers.) The results of this raid were disappointing. Because of the smog in the area, targets were difficult to locate even with GEE. Essen was eventually destroyed in seven more night raids.

-end-

txtj954

On March 28th, the RAF sent 234 aircraft to bomb the historic German city of Luebeck. Many monuments and historic buildings were destroyed, and in reprisal, Hitler ordered the bombing of Britain's historic cities. The RAF lost 13 planes on this mission, and the Germans acquired a sample the GEE navigation equipment.

-end-

txtj955

Churchill's advisors still could not agree on the best bombing policy. One argument called for the continued bombing of Germany's industrial cities to ruin the economy and morale of Germany. The other argument called for more RAF support in the Battle of the Atlantic. To resolve this disagreement, Mr. Justice Singleton undertook an official inquiry into the matter.

-end-

txtj956

On April 17th, RAF Bomber Command sent 14 Lancaster bombers on a daytime air raid of Augsburg, Germany. Half of the bombers failed to return, and Air Marshal Harris decided that heavy bombers would only be used at night in the future.

-end-

txtj957

On April 24th, the Luftwaffe made the first of its Baedeker 3-star raids, named for the German's policy of selecting the targets according to ratings given in the famous Baedeker tour guide books. These raids were reprisals for the RAF bombing of historic Luebeck in March. Other historic British cities targeted were Bath, Norwich, York, and Canterbury.

-end-

txtj958

The Luftwaffe bombed historic Bath on the nights of April 25th and 26th.

-end-

txtj959

On April 27th, the Luftwaffe bombed historic Norwich as part of its retaliatory Baedeker raids.

-end-

txtj960

The Luftwaffe bombed historic York on April 28th.

-end-

txtj961

On May 20th, Churchill and his Chiefs of Staff approved Air Marshal Harris' Operation Millennium, a plan to destroy a major German industrial city overnight with a force of 1,000 bombers. Harris hoped, with the example of one success before them, to convince the high command of the necessity for a larger bomber force. Harris' plan would require the cooperation of the RAF Coastal Command as well as his own training operations to get together enough aircraft. His target would be either Cologne or Hamburg, and the attack would take place almost immediately.

-end-

txtj962

On May 20th, Mr. Justice Singleton published his conclusions about British bombing policies. The report was equivocal and did nothing to resolve the debate between those who wanted to concentrate RAF efforts in the Atlantic and those who wanted to send the RAF on large-scale bombing missions in German industrial cities. Singleton reported that the new navigation tool, GEE was a disappointment, but that it might be able to pinpoint targets more accurately with the development of a new tool, H2S. If more accuracy could be achieved, bombing cities could be a turning point with persistent efforts.

-end-

txtj963

Air Marshal Harris issued orders for Operation Millennium on May 23rd. The objective of this bombing mission would be Hamburg, with Cologne as an alternate site. The mission would take place on the 28th at the earliest. Harris hoped this mission, which would employ 1,000 bombers, would convince the British high command of the wisdom of increasing the RAF's bombing capacity. He believed that massive attacks on German cities would speed the war along to its end.

-end-

txtj964

On May 30th, after a two-day delay due to weather conditions, Operation Millennium was launched against Cologne, Germany. Over 1,000 RAF bombers attacked the city just after midnight in a 75-minute barrage that reduced a large part of the city to rubble. At least 13,000 homes were leveled, and another 6,000 were damaged, leaving 45,000 citizens homeless.

Almost 500 died and 4,500 were injured. Thirty-nine RAF bombers were shot down by German night-fighters and another nineteen crashed before they could return.

-end-

txtj965

On the night of June 1st, Air Marshal Harris sent 1,036 bombers to assault the industrial city of Essen and the nearby Ruhr. Harris was still trying to urge Churchill and the British High Command to support a stronger bombing force by demonstrating the effects of massive bombings. The industrial haze over Essen made targeting difficult and the results were not as impressive as in the recent assault on Cologne. Still, Churchill was beginning to be persuaded.

-end-

txtj966

Air Marshal Arthur Harris was knighted on June 14th in recognition of his role in the large-scale air raids on German industrial areas during 1942.

-end-

txtj967

On the night of June 25th, the RAF sent 1,006 bombers to attack Bremen, Germany. Forty-nine of the aircraft failed to return. Many of the lost crew members were trainees. It was apparent that the RAF training organization could not keep up with the demand for pilots in the 1,000 bomber raids. For this reason, large-scale raids were abandoned for two years.

-end-

txtj968

Six Boston aircraft of the US Army Air Force joined with six Bostons of the RAF to raid Dutch airfields on July 4th. This was the first mission of the Combined Bombing Offensive.

-end-

txtj969

On March 8th, the Japanese landed on Australian New Guinea at Lae and Salamaua, facing no opposition. Two days later more Japanese troops landed at Finschhafen in Dutch New Guinea. Meanwhile, US aircraft bombed Japanese shipping and airfields at Lae and Salamaua.

-end-

txtj970

17,500 US troops landed on New Caledonia on March 12th and began to build and equip military installations to use in the expected Japanese attack on Australia.

-end-

txtj971

On March 18th, US infantry arrived to build an airfield on Efate in the New Hebrides islands. This garrison would guard Australia's west coast in case of a Japanese attack.

-end-

txtj972

On March 22nd, Japanese planes bombed Darwin in northern Australia.

-end-

txtj973

US troops arrived in the Society Islands to garrison Bora-Bora on March 25th.

-end-

txtj974

On March 29th, the Australian War Cabinet announced a Total Denial policy in the event of an invasion of northern Australia. This meant that troops withdrawing inland would destroy anything of value to prevent it falling into the hands of the Japanese. Herdsmen were already busy taking sheep and cattle in a southward migration.

-end-

txtj975

On March 30th, a Pacific War Council was established in Washington, DC. Australia, Canada, China, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, the United Kingdom and the United States were all represented in the council.

-end-

txtj976

The Joint Chiefs of Staff divided the Pacific theater into two commands on March 30th. The

Southwest Pacific Zone, under General Douglas MacArthur, was based in Australia and included the Philippines, New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago, the Solomon Islands, and the Dutch East Indies. The rest of the Pacific fell into the Pacific Ocean Zone, commanded by Admiral C.W. Nimitz. His command was based at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

-end-

txtj977

On April 1st, Japanese units landed at many locations in Dutch New Guinea, and continued to do so through the 20th of the month. The landings were virtually unopposed.

-end-

txtj978

On April 6th, Japanese troops landed at Lorengau, Manus Island in the Admiralty Islands, north of New Guinea. As Japanese forces massed in the South Pacific, Australia was more and more threatened.

-end-

txtj979

On April 18th, sixteen B-25 bombers, commanded by US Lieutenant Colonel J.H. Doolittle, dropped bombs on Tokyo, Kobe, Yokohama, Nagoya, and Yokosuka. Due to bad weather, all sixteen aircraft crash-landed in China following the mission. Doolittle was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for the raid. The mission did little material damage to Japan, but had a psychological effect on both the Allies and the Japanese.

-end-

txtj980

On April 30th, under the command of Admiral William Bull Halsey, the US aircraft carriers Hornet and Enterprise left Pearl Harbor for the Coral Sea. Meanwhile, the Lexington and the Yorktown were ordered to operate from the Coral Sea beginning May 1st. These movements were in anticipation of the Japanese move to seize Port Moresby, New Guinea (code-named Mo), of which the Allies were aware through US intelligence operations. If the Japanese controlled Port Moresby they would be ideally positioned for an invasion of Australia.

-end-

txtj981

On May 2nd, the Australian garrison on Tulagi evacuated and embarked for the New Hebrides. The Japanese were expected to land at any moment to establish a base of operations for taking nearby Port Moresby, New Guinea (Operation Mo). The US aircraft carriers Yorktown and Lexington were already in the area making preparations for an engagement with the Japanese.

-end-

txtj982

A Japanese contingent arrived at Tulagi on May 3rd and immediately began establishing a seaplane base. The Japanese escort quickly left for Port Moresby, New Guinea, leaving only a few transport vessels for the US naval forces to sink.

-end-

txtj983

On May 4th, the Japanese invasion forces left Rabaul Island for Port Moresby, New Guinea. The US aircraft carrier Yorktown launched attacks against the Japanese vessels and sunk four landing barges and three mine sweepers, and badly damaged one destroyer.

-end-

txtj984

The Japanese strike force entered the Coral Sea on May 5th, on its way to Port Moresby. That day and the next, neither side succeeded in finding the other to attack, except for Australian bombers which located and missed the Japanese carrier Shoho.

-end-

txtj985

On May 7th, the Battle of the Coral Sea began. The Japanese 4th Fleet, commanded by Vice-Admiral Shigeyoshi Inouye, was on its way to Port Moresby, New Guinea, hoping to take the port and use it as a jumping off point to invade Australia. Inouye's fleet consisted of three aircraft carriers (Shokaku, Zuikaku, and Shoho), 125 aircraft, eight cruisers, 17 destroyers, seven

submarines, three gunboats, one mine layer, two tankers, and miscellaneous transports. There were two Allied task forces in the area to stop the Japanese: the 17th, commanded by US Rear-Admiral Frank J. Fletcher, and the 44th, commanded by British Rear-Admiral J.C. Grace. They had at their disposal two aircraft carriers (Lexington and Yorktown), 143 aircraft, seven heavy cruisers, one light cruiser, 13 destroyers, and two tankers.

Reconnaissance aircraft from each side searched for the enemy on the morning of the 7th. The Japanese located the tanker Neosho and badly damaged it and its destroyer escort. Meanwhile 93 aircraft had spotted the Japanese carrier Shoho, which they succeeded in sinking. In the afternoon the Japanese sent 27 aircraft after the US carriers, but only six returned after failing to locate the target; the others were either shot down or lost in bad weather. Admiral Inouye decided the invasion of Port Moresby must wait two days while he dealt with the Allied forces.

The next day the search began again on both sides. Aircraft from the Yorktown and Lexington damaged the Shokaku. Japanese aircraft slightly damaged the Yorktown. The Lexington was less fortunate; after sustaining a bad hit the Americans sank it themselves to prevent it from falling into enemy hands. The Japanese continued to launch air strikes on Fletcher's forces, but the Allies had withdrawn out of range by this time.

The Americans lost 66 planes during the battle of the Coral Sea, to Japan's loss of 70. This battle was the first air-naval battle; it was fought exclusively by aircraft with no contact between enemy sea vessels. The Japanese claimed victory because they inflicted heavier losses; however, the Allies had forced the postponement of the Port Moresby invasion and had changed from a purely defensive stance to one of mixed offensive-defensive strategy.

-end-

txtj986

On May 11th, the Japanese launched an offensive in the Chekiang province of China to prevent Allied use of airfields there. Allied attacks on mainland Japan the previous month prompted this action.

-end-

txtj987

Admiral Yamamoto, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet, had pushed for an offensive on Midway since March. Midway was strategically located near Pearl Harbor, the home of the US Pacific Fleet. Support for the plan was lukewarm and only resulted from Yamamoto's threat to resign. On April 16th, to prevent his resignation, the Imperial GHQ issued Naval Order No. 18 authorizing Operation Mi. No date was planned. Two days later US forces bombed mainland Japan, and the Imperial Command made Operation Mi a high priority. On May 20th, Admiral Yamamoto issued complicated orders for the mission; it was scheduled to set out in five days and strike Midway on June 4th.

Yamamoto planned on striking in the Aleutian Islands at the same time, forcing US Admiral Nimitz to split his fleet. On the way to the Aleutians, the Allied fleet would encounter a numerically superior Japanese Guard Force of four battleships, two cruisers, and twelve destroyers. While Nimitz was engaged in battle to defend the Aleutians, Yamamoto's troop transports would be heading for Midway Island further south.

Meanwhile, US cryptanalysts had broken the Japanese code and knew about the planned invasion of Midway, and the trap set for the Pacific Fleet near the Aleutians. The Pacific Fleet was without battleships since the bombing of Pearl Harbor, so on the 27th, Nimitz ordered Admiral Raymond Spruance's Task Force 16 and Admiral Fletcher's Task Force 17 to rendezvous near Midway. The Aleutians were of minor strategic significance, and Nimitz had no intention of splitting his limited resources to defend them.

-end-

txtj988

On May 27th, the Japanese Combined Fleet left for Midway. The 1st Naval Squadron Strike

Force under Vice-Admiral Nagumo consisted of four carriers, one battleship, four cruisers, and auxiliaries. Their object was to capture Midway. An invasion force of 5,000 troops, 12 transports, two battleships, and four heavy cruisers commanded by Vice-Admiral Kurita set out for Midway at the same time. Two other support squadrons were commanded by Vice-Admirals Tanaka and Kondo. The main fleet sailed under the command of Admiral Yamamoto himself. It included the largest battleship in the world, the Yamato, two other battleships, one cruiser, nine destroyers, and auxiliaries.

-end-

txtj989

Task Force 16, commanded by Admiral Spruance, and Task Force 17, commanded by Admiral Fletcher, rendezvoused 350 miles northeast of Midway on June 3rd. Fletcher assumed command of the combined forces. He had the carriers Enterprise, Hornet, and Yorktown, eight cruisers, 17 destroyers, two tankers, and 19 submarines for the defense of Midway.

-end-

txtj990

On June 4th, Japanese aircraft attacked the garrison on Midway, but the Americans were prepared for them and the Japanese were unable to neutralize US air power on the island. Back on the four Japanese carriers, crew members replaced torpedoes with bombs for an attack on the island. While this operation was in progress, US aircraft attacked the carriers with little success and heavy losses. But a second assault damaged three out of four carriers, causing fires and explosions among the planes and bombs on the flight decks. Later that day Japanese aircraft damaged the US carrier Yorktown.

On the 5th the Japanese lost all four of their aircraft carriers. Admiral Yamamoto ordered the sinking of the Akagi, still burning as a result of the previous day's attack. The Hiryu which had escaped damage so far, was attacked and sunk. The remaining two carriers, both damaged the day before, also went down, one with its entire crew and captain aboard.

The situation for the Japanese was just as grim the next day when two of their cruisers collided and sank. Soon after, Yamamoto ordered a withdrawal. Before they could get away US aircraft sank the cruiser Mikuma. A Japanese submarine managed to sink the US destroyer Hammam before leaving the area. The next day another Japanese submarine sank the Yorktown, which had been damaged on the first day of battle.

Thus ended the Battle of Midway, an important turning point for the war in the Pacific. The Americans preserved their Pacific outpost with a loss of 307 men, one carrier, one destroyer, and 150 aircraft. The Japanese failed to take Midway and in the attempt lost four aircraft carriers, a cruiser, 332 aircraft, and 3,500 men, including their best pilots. From this point on the Japanese could not afford to engage in fleet-to-fleet combat, and changed their strategy from an offensive to a defensive one.

-end-

txtj991

On April 8th, presidential adviser Harry L. Hopkins and General George C. Marshall arrived in London to discuss a second front in Europe with British military planners. Through his emissaries, President Roosevelt proposed a limited offensive on the French coast to relieve pressure on the Russians, with a major offensive centered around Antwerp in the summer of 1943. The US and Russia were both anxious to establish a second front as soon as possible. While the British agreed, they were equally concerned about the conduct of the war in both the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean.

-end-

txtj992

In a speech in Philadelphia, the Soviet ambassador to the United States demanded the establishment of a second front in Europe to take pressure off Soviet forces.

-end-

txtj993

On May 13th, the British Chiefs of Staff decided to launch a raid on Dieppe, a French coastal

town, as a study for future coastal raids. The plan was code-named Rutter.

-end-

txtj994

Molotov signed a twenty-year treaty of mutual assistance with Britain on May 26th. The signatories agreed to fight until victory and to refuse to make a separate peace with Germany. While in Britain, Molotov urged the British to establish a second European front to relieve pressure on the Russians.

-end-

txtj995

The 2nd Canadian Division, commanded by General Bernard Montgomery, made the first assault of Operation Rutter, dropping airborne troops on the town of Dieppe to neutralize enemy batteries. This first attempt was a disappointment, but a second trial ten days later was more successful.

-end-

txtj996

On June 18th, Churchill and Roosevelt conferred in Washington to determine which war objectives needed top priority. The heads of state agreed that Operation Bolero (the build-up of US forces in Britain), and landings in France were the most pressing needs.

-end-

txtj997

General Dwight D. Eisenhower assumed command of the US forces in Britain and the European theater on June 25th.

-end-

txtj998

General Montgomery had scheduled the main assault on Dieppe (Operation Rutter) for July 4th, but bad weather forced a delay. On July 7th, it was postponed until August.

-end-

txtj999

On July 2nd, a conservative member of the House of Commons moved a vote to censure Winston Churchill. Setbacks in Africa, particularly the fall of Tobruk, had caused some to question Churchill's ability to handle the conduct of war operations while tending the administration of government. After a debate and a speech by Churchill, the motion was defeated by 476 votes to 25.

-end-

XXtxtj1000

On July 24th, at the urging of Churchill, Roosevelt agreed to cancel Operation Sledgehammer (an attack of Cherbourg on the French coast) in favor of Operation Gymnist. Gymnist was a plan to land in French North Africa. Roosevelt agreed somewhat reluctantly; Stalin would be even less enthusiastic.

-end-

Atxtj1001B

On August 12th, Stalin, Churchill, Averell Harriman (representing President Roosevelt), and representatives of General de Gaulle met in Moscow to discuss opening a second front in Europe. This would ease pressure on the Russians considerably. However, Stalin was disappointed when his allies forced him to accept a delay; there would be no second front in the remainder of 1942.

-end-

Ctxtj1002D

Operation Rutter had been planned as an experiment in cross-channel raids--a preliminary to establishing a second front in Europe. In the works since May, Rutter was renamed Jubilee and launched on August 19th.

Six thousand Allied troops, British, Canadian, American, and Free French, set out from their ships off the coast of Dieppe in their landing crafts. One flotilla was spotted by German armed trawlers and became scattered in an exchange of fire. Another party went off course and missed its assigned landing spot. Those troops that did make it to the beach were mown down by

steady, unrelenting enemy fire. Twenty-seven British light tanks landed, but were blown to bits immediately. Over the beaches, the RAF lost 106 aircraft, shooting down 170 of the enemy's. Finally the Allies received the order to re-embark, but only half the men and none of the equipment made it off the coast; fully one half of the force was killed or captured, making it clear that the Allies had much to do before engaging in a major cross-channel offensive.

-end-

Etxtj1003F

On September 26th, the first Arctic convoy carrying British materials to Russia set out. The ten merchant men arrived safely at the port of Archangel.

-end-

Ktxtj1004K

On January 12th, the German battleship Tirpitz was ordered to Norway to prevent the passage of Allied shipments of materials to Murmansk, Russia.

-end-

Jtxtj1005K

The RAF attacked the German battleship, Tirpitz, on the night of January 29th near Trondheim, Norway. The battleship posed a threat to British convoys carrying war materials to Russia. This attack was unsuccessful. A month later Churchill stressed the necessity of destroying the battleship, and called for a concentrated effort to do so.

-end-

Ltxtj1006M

On March 6th, Hitler ordered the battleship Tirpitz to intercept a convoy headed for Russia. Tirpitz failed to find the convoy, but was damaged by British aircraft in the search. This resulted in increased surveillance of Norwegian water by the Luftwaffe. Thereafter the Luftwaffe, rather than the Tirpitz, accounted for the majority of losses in material shipments to Russia over the next several months.

-end-

Ntxtj1007O

The RAF attacked the German battleship Tirpitz on the night of March 30th, in a second attempt to make the waters of the North Atlantic safe for military aid convoys bound for Russia. This effort also failed.

-end-

Ptxtj1008Q

On the night of May 18th, a convoy carrying material aid from Britain to Russia set out for Murmansk. The convoy lost six vessels to the Luftwaffe before reaching its destination.

-end-

Rtxtj1009S

On June 27th, yet another convoy set sail for Archangel, Russia, carrying material aid from Britain. The convoy, PQ17, included 33 merchant ships and a tanker, escorted by six destroyers, three mine sweepers, two anti-aircraft ships, four corvettes, four trawlers, and two submarines. Four days later German aircraft spotted the large convoy. On July 4th, the Luftwaffe began its attacks which resulted in the sinking of two merchant men. Air attacks continued the next day, sinking an additional 12 ships. Only ten ships eventually reached Archangel, in spite of the fact that the Tirpitz had never come into contact with the convoy.

-end-

txtj1010

Convoy PQ18 left Lock Ewe, Scotland for Russia on September 2nd, carrying war materials. The convoy of 40 merchant ships was escorted by 16 destroyers, an aircraft carrier, and auxiliaries, a sign of Churchill's determination to get materials through to Britain's ally. This convoy had greater success than previous ones. The Luftwaffe was only able to sink one destroyer, one mine sweeper, and 13 merchant vessels.

-end-

txtj1011

The British Admiralty began splitting convoys carrying material aid to Russia into two groups in order to stretch German capital ships and aircraft as thin as possible. On December 15th,

JW51A set sail for Murmansk, where it arrived safely on the 25th.

JW51B sailed on the 20th. It encountered German battleships Hipper and Luetzow on the 31st in the Barents Sea. The convoy's escort engaged the German ships and damaged the Hipper, allowing the convoy to slip through to Murmansk unscathed. This created a stir in Berlin and led to

Admiral Raeder's resignation.

-end-

txtj1012

Though the Soviets had intelligence of Hitler's plans to assault the Caucasus, they were under the mistaken belief that this was only a minor thrust, and the main offensive would be against Moscow. Consequently the Russians at Kursk were ill-prepared when General von Weichs launched his attack on June 28th.

-end-

txtj1013

On June 30th, General Paulus' 6th Army attacked Marshal Timoshenko's South-West Front in the area southeast of Belgorod. Two days later Paulus' troops joined General von Weich's 2nd army near Staryy Oskol. Soviet troops retreated across the Don River.

-end-

txtj1014

The 4th Panzers of von Bock's Army Group B reached the Don near Voronezh on both the north and south on July 5th. The Russians evacuated the town after putting up strong resistance. Germans entered Voronezh two days later.

-end-

txtj1015

On July 7th, the 1st Panzer Division crossed the Donets River, destroying the Russian forces in its path. Further north near Voronezh, von Bock began slowing diverting Panzers to the south. Heavy rains and fuel shortages slowed the Germans and many Russian troops were able to withdraw ahead of them.

-end-

txtj1016

Believing that a large force of Soviet troops was concentrated west of the Don River near Rostov, Hitler issued orders to divert forces from Army Group B from the drive on Stalingrad to the Donets Basin. Five days later on the 18th, Hitler changed his mind and redirected Army Group B to resume the march on Stalingrad. Much armor remained with Army Group A for the southward thrust over the Don, leaving General Paulus with little armor for Stalingrad.

-end-

txtj1017

Unsatisfied with Field Marshal von Bock's performance in Russia, Hitler relieved him of his command on July 23rd. General von Weichs was given command of Army Group B.

-end-

txtj1018

On July 23rd, Hitler issued Directive 45 which outlined Operation Brunswick, the plan to overrun the Caucasus. Army Group A was charged with seizing the eastern coast of the Black Sea before advancing to Baku. Army Group B was to take Stalingrad and then progress to Astrakhan to the south. This would separate the armies by a large expanse of the Caucasus.

-end-

txtj1019

On July 24th, the Germans retook Rostov.

-end-

txtj1020

On the lower Don, Army Group A broke out of its bridgeheads on July 25th, advancing rapidly and scattering the Russians.

-end-

txtj1021

On August 5th, Voroshilovsk fell to the Germans.

-end-

txtj1022

German troops captured the Maikop oil fields on August 9th. The Soviets had destroyed many of the installations.

-end-

txtj1023

General Paulus' 6th Army crossed the Don and drew near Stalingrad on August 10th.

-end-

txtj1024

On August 15th, Army Group A took Georgievsk in the foothills of the Caucasus Mountains.

-end-

txtj1025

On August 23rd, German Alpine units hoisted the Swastika flag on Mount Elbrus in the Caucasus Mountains.

-end-

txtj1026

On August 26th, the Luftwaffe bombed Stalingrad, killing 40,000 people and leveling three-quarters of the city. Russian troops fighting north of Stalingrad fell back into the city to avoid being surrounded. The Soviets began a hasty evacuation of the civilian population. The next day Stalin ordered that the city be kept from the enemy.

-end-

txtj1027

On September 3rd, General Hoth's forces reached Pitomnik, southwest of Stalingrad, linking up with Paulus troops. The Germans tried to penetrate the western suburbs but were prevented by counter-attacks on their flanks.

-end-

txtj1028

On September 6th, the Germans overran the major Black Sea port of Novorossisk.

-end-

txtj1029

General Paulus' 6th Army penetrated the city of Stalingrad on September 13th. The Russian forces were dug in on the west bank of the Volga, but held only three bridgeheads. The next day Paulus' army reached the center of the city, but because of troop shortages, he could only summon narrow attacks on massed Russian troops.

-end-

txtj1030

On September 20th, after nearly a week of tremendous Russian resistance which saw both Soviet men and women defending Stalingrad, General Paulus informed Hitler that he must have reinforcements if he was to take the city. On the 28th the reinforcements arrived, but still the Germans made little progress at tremendous costs. Both sides were exhausted, and the battle continued with little gain for either through the end of October.

-end-

txtj1031

General von Kleist's 1st Panzer Division halted a few miles west of Ordhonikidze on November 2nd. This is as far as the Germans would penetrate into the Caucasus before the worst part of the Russian winter.

-end-

txtj1032

The Combined Chiefs of Staff issued instructions for the occupation of New Britain, New Guinea, and New Ireland on July 2nd. Admiral Chester Nimitz was given the task of taking the Santa Cruz Islands, and Tulagi and Guadalcanal in the eastern Solomons. General MacArthur was to recapture Lae and the remainder of the Solomons, as well as Rabaul, the Japanese base on New Britain. Originally scheduled to begin on August 1st, the start date for this operation was soon changed to August 7th and priority was given to the capture of Guadalcanal, where the Japanese were building an airstrip. This part of the plan was code-named Operation Watchtower. The US 1st Marine Division under the command of Major-General Alexander Vandergrift

comprised the landing force.

-end-

txtj1033

On July 26th, the Allies' Solomon Islands expeditionary force, including amphibious ships, escorts, three aircraft carriers, and Frank Fletcher's Task Force 61, all rendezvoused southeast of the Fiji Islands. Here they completed one practice landing before setting out for Guadalcanal on the 31st.

-end-

txtj1034

Major-General Vandergrift's 1st Marine Division landed near Lunga Point on Guadalcanal on August 7th. The island was occupied by some 2,000 Japanese construction workers who withdrew to the mountains with no resistance. The Marines quickly established a bridgehead at the Tenaru and Tenavatu Rivers and secured the airstrip (Henderson) the next day.

On the islands of Tulagi and Gavutu-Tanambogo the marines faced strong Japanese resistance, but captured the islands on the 8th. In the meantime Japanese aircraft had attacked and sunk the transport George F. Elliott and the destroyer Jarvis.

-end-

txtj1035

As soon as the Japanese learned of the US landings in the Solomons they sent a squadron of five heavy cruisers, two light cruisers and a destroyer under the command of Vice-Admiral Mikawa to destroy the Allied fleet and transports. The night-long battle took place around Savo Island, a small island north of Guadalcanal. Four US heavy cruisers were sunk, and another cruiser and two destroyers were badly damaged. The Allies' losses were 1,023 dead and 709 wounded, while the Japanese suffered only 58 dead and 53 wounded. Three of their cruisers were slightly damaged. Worse for the US Marines, Fletcher withdrew his transports and carriers, leaving the 1st on Guadalcanal without air cover or supplies. Conditions for these marines swiftly grew grim as they faced short rations and disease.

-end-

txtj1036

On August 21st, Colonel Ichiki's regiment of 900 men, newly arrived on Guadalcanal, attacked the US beachhead, losing 800 men in a bloody battle for the Tenaru River. The US suffered only 35 dead and 75 wounded.

-end-

txtj1037

On August 24th, near Santa Isabel, a large task force commanded by Admiral Frank J. Fletcher intercepted a group of Japanese squadrons attempting to resupply the Japanese force on Guadalcanal. In the ensuing battle, the Japanese lost 90 aircraft, the carrier *Ryujo*, a light cruiser, one destroyer, and one troop transport. The Americans suffered damage to the carrier *Enterprise* and lost 20 aircraft. The following day US army and navy bombers based at Henderson Field, Guadalcanal, assaulted the remaining Japanese transports. The US aircraft sank one transport and an escorting destroyer, and forced the rest of the Japanese squadron to turn back. From then on, the Japanese efforts to resupply Guadalcanal took place only under cover of night, from Bougainville through the channel between Guadalcanal and Florida Island, an operation that became known as the Tokyo Night Express.

-end-

txtj1038

US Marine units made an amphibious raid on Taivu Point, Guadalcanal, where the majority of Japanese reinforcements were concentrated. The marines destroyed equipment and supplies and discovered plans for an upcoming Japanese attack before re-embarking.

-end-

txtj1039

On September 12th, under cover of a barrage of artillery and rifle fire, the Japanese on Guadalcanal succeeded in penetrating the American defensive perimeter east of Lunga and Henderson Airfield. The next day, bolstered by the arrival of 18 additional aircraft, the US

forces counter-attacked along the axis of Bloody Ridge. Their offensive was short-lived, and the Japanese stopped them after a gain of only a few hundred yards. Heavy artillery engagement continued throughout the night as the Marines defended the air base. On the 14th the Japanese were finally driven back. They had lost 600 men while the Americans lost 150. US reinforcements arrived later that day.

-end-

txtj1040

General Vandergriff's forces attempted to widen their beachhead on Guadalcanal to the west on September 27th, but were unsuccessful. The Japanese Headquarters had declared that the recapture of Guadalcanal was a top priority, and soon General Hyakutake and his 17th Army would arrive from Rabaul. The fight for Guadalcanal was a long way from over.

-end-

txtj1041

The Allies, at General MacArthur's urging, had decided to establish an airfield on Papua to support operations in the Solomon Islands. The Buna Government Station was the chosen site. On July 7th, a force of two infantry battalions (Australian and Papuan) set out from Port Moresby to traverse a brutal track through the Owen Stanley Mountain range toward Kokoda, situated halfway between Port Moresby and Buna on the opposite side of the island. The Maroubra force, as it was called, was to secure the Kokoda Trail to prevent the Japanese from using it as an approach to Port Moresby. The force set out on July 7th, and reached Kokoda, exhausted, a week

later. On this day, MacArthur issued further orders to occupy Buna, code-named Providence, on July 31st.

-end-

txtj1042

On July 21st, 2,000 Japanese landed at Gona, just north of Buna, Papua. These troops were charged with the task of preparing the Kokoda trail through the Owen Stanley Mountains for motor traffic. Meanwhile, an Allied force was already in place at Kokoda, near the midpoint of the trail.

-end-

txtj1043

As the Japanese forces advanced along the Kokoda Trail, the Maroubra Force fell back, evacuating the village of Kokoda.

-end-

txtj1044

On August 8th, the Maroubra Force, comprised of Australian and Papuan battalions, recaptured Kokoda from the Japanese, but were once again forced to evacuate it because of a shortage of supplies. Meanwhile, Allied reinforcements were on their way to Papua. The 7th Australian Division arrived on the 16th and set out on the Kokoda trail from Port Moresby.

-end-

txtj1045

Three Japanese transports carrying a large contingent of troops landed on Papua on August 18th. By the 21st the Japanese had landed a total of 11,500 men.

-end-

txtj1046

On August 21st, the 7th Australian Division joined the original Maroubra Force near Myola, southwest of Kokoda on the trail through the Owen Stanley Mountains. Australian reinforcements reached Milne Bay on the southeastern part of the island on the same day.

-end-

txtj1047

On August 26th, just after Allied air attacks on Japanese supply and ammunition depots nearby, a Japanese convoy bearing reinforcements landed at Milne Bay. Two days later Australian troops faced frontal attacks by the Japanese. More Japanese reinforcements arrived on the 29th, but still they were outnumbered two to one by the Allied forces.

-end-

txtj1048

On August 6th, the Japanese forces at Milne Bay were forced to evacuate to Rabaul, after ten days of fierce fighting with the Australians.

-end-

txtj1049

The Maroubra Force began falling back along the Kokoda Trail in front of the advancing Japanese. They withdrew as far as Myola by September 3rd, and then as far as Efogi on the 4th.

-end-

txtj1050

On September 8th, the Japanese, commanded by General Horii, attacked the Australian 21st Brigade at the Efogi Spur on the Kokoda Trail, forcing another Allied withdrawal, this time to Imita Ridge.

-end-

txtj1051

From the Imita Ridge, the last peak on the mountain range only 32 miles from Port Moresby, the newly arrived Australian 25th Brigade launched a counter-attack to retake Kokoda. Neither side made any successful advance.

-end-

txtj1052

On September 15th, US troops arrived in Papua from Australia. MacArthur planned to send a US regiment through the mountains south of Kokoda Trail to outflank the Japanese.

-end-

txtj1053

On September 24th, the Japanese engaged on the Kokoda trail received orders to withdraw to Buna. The Imperial Japanese Headquarters had planned simultaneous thrusts by land and sea on

Port Moresby; since they had been forced to withdraw from Milne Bay, this would have to be delayed. Also the arrival of US troops on the island led the Japanese to believe that MacArthur intended an amphibious landing at Buna, which would cut off the Japanese supply route from Rabaul. Buna had to be defended to prevent this.

-end-

txtj1054

On October 1st, General MacArthur issued orders for the newly arrived US troops to advance along the Kapa Kapa Track, which ran through the Owen Stanley Mountain range south of the Kokoda Trail, to outflank the Japanese east of Kokoda. MacArthur further ordered the occupation of Buna and control of the eastern coastline.

-end-

txtj1055

On October 6th, US troops set out on the Kapa Kapa Track, a path through the Owen Stanley Mountains south

of the Kokoda Trail. Their plan was to outflank the Japanese forces on the Kokoda Trail. It took three weeks for the Americans to reach Jaure. Meanwhile, another regiment of US troops was flown to Pongani, some 30 miles south of Buna, from where they would begin operations against Buna as soon as the other Allied forces were in place.

-end-

txtj1056

Beginning October 21st, Allied troops were halted for a week by a Japanese rearguard at Eora Creek. Two days after clearing Eora Creek the Allies pushed on to Alola, arriving on the 30th. From here the force split, with one brigade going north to Kokoda and the other south to Oivi.

-end-

txtj1057

On November 2nd, the Australian 25th Brigade captured Kokoda and its nearby airport, which meant the Allied forces could be supplied by air for the remainder of their campaign to take Buna.

-end-

txtj1058

The Australian 16th Brigade engaged the Japanese at Oivi on November 5th. Japanese

resistance was strong, and it took five days of fighting before the Japanese were forced to retreat beyond the Kumusi River.

-end-

txtj1059

On November 14th, the Allies began converging around Buna. Two days later the Australian 7th Division advanced on Gona and Sanananda while the American 32nd Division advanced on Buna. The Japanese had an advantageous natural defense in the rugged terrain of their beachhead. On the 17th they received 1,000 reinforcements and were prepared to put up a strong resistance. For the rest of November the Allies made little progress toward securing Buna.

-end-

txtj1060

The Australian 21st Brigade captured Gona after twelve days of incredible resistance by the Japanese. Hundreds of Japanese were left dead on the field of battle.

-end-

txtj1061

On December 14th, the US 127th Infantry Regiment entered the village of Buna, which had been evacuated by the Japanese the night before, withdrawing to Buna Government Station and Sanananda.

-end-

txtj1062

The Allies began their final attacks along the Sanananda-Buna front on December 18th. Bitter fighting continued throughout the remainder of the month and into the new year until Australian and US troops captured Buna Station on January 2nd. The Japanese colonel at the Buna garrison and some of his officers committed hara-kiri when they were finally defeated.

-end-

txtj1063

On January 22nd, Australian and US troops mopped up the last resistance in Papua around Sanananda. Allied casualties in the Papua operations were 8,500. The Japanese lost 7,000 men, nearly three-quarters of the total number deployed. The Papua campaign marked the first land victory over the Japanese for the Allies.

-end-

txtj1064

Rommel hoped to capture the Suez Canal and to occupy Cairo. With these objectives in mind, he decided to allow the British no time to recover from their recent defeats in Egypt, and went on the offensive again on July 1st at the El Alamein line.

-end-

txtj1065

On July 2nd, German forces attacked the line between El Alamein and Ruweisat Ridge. Battle in the area of Ruweisat continued all the next day; Rommel advanced nine miles but his losses were heavy. He ordered a halt on the evening of the 3rd.

-end-

txtj1066

General Auchinleck ordered his forces to counter-attack on July 4th. The 13th Corps attacked the southern flank of the Axis troops. Rommel was able to repulse the attacks while continuing to withdraw his tanks from the front. Fighting continued around the area of Deir el Shein with neither side making significant gains for the next several days.

-end-

txtj1067

On July 9th, the Germans attacked a New Zealand force at Deir el Munassib, but Auchinleck, acting on Ultra intelligence, had already withdrawn these troops.

-end-

txtj1068

In accordance with Auchinleck's new plan to break through the Italian forces at the northern end of the El Alamein line, South African and Australian forces broke out of the El Alamein box. This took Rommel by surprise, but he repulsed the Allies successfully the next day.

On the 12th the Germans counter-attacked in the north, but were unable to make any progress. This was Rommel's last serious attempt at an offensive in the battle of El Alamein.

-end-

txtj1069

On July 14th, the Allies attacked along the Rusweisat Ridge. Because of poor coordination between infantry and armor, they gained little ground; but they inflicted heavy losses on the Axis using

artillery. The next day Rommel's forces counter-attacked with tanks and regained some of their lost ground, but again, their losses were heavy. Rommel's plan to capture the Suez Canal and Cairo looked more and more unlikely, especially since much of his supplies, particularly fuel, had been destroyed at Mersa Matruh by the Desert Air Force.

-end-

txtj1070

General Auchinleck ordered another attack on July 21st, planning to break through the central part of the Axis line. The next day the British 23rd Armored Brigade attempted to pass through a minefield, losing many tanks and making little progress.

-end-

txtj1071

On July 27th, Australian troops attacked Rommel's forces along Miteiry Ridge southwest of El Alamein, but the infantry and armor failed to support each other and no ground was gained. The battle had ended in a stalemate. Both sides were exhausted and in need of reinforcements. Rommel was suffering from fuel and armor shortages; at this point he was down to 27 tanks.

Auchinleck had kept the Germans from advancing to Cairo, but a lack of coordination and some uncertainty in the British subordinate commanders had plagued Auchinleck throughout the Battle of El Alamein. The 8th Army would need reinforcements and more training before going on the offensive. Accordingly, he informed Churchill that he would not be prepared to attack again until mid-September.

-end-

txtj1072

After receiving word from General Auchinleck that the 8th Army would not be ready to go on the offensive again until mid-September, Churchill flew to Cairo to assess the situation, arriving there on August 3rd. What he found caused him to lose faith in Auchinleck, and he determined to split the Middle Eastern command in two. Auchinleck would command in Persia and Iraq; Alexander in the Near East, Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. General W.H.E. Gott was given the 8th Army.

-end-

txtj1073

On August 7th, the plane carrying General Gott from the front to Cairo was shot down by two German aircraft. Everyone on board was killed. Disappointed in Auchinleck's performance, Churchill had appointed Gott to take over command of the 8th Army, reassigning Auchinleck to Persia and Iraq. Now Churchill decided to appoint General Bernard Montgomery in Gott's place. Instead of splitting the command in two as planned, General Alexander would command the entire Middle East, while Auchinleck would become Commander-in-Chief in India.

-end-

txtj1074

General Montgomery arrived in Egypt on August 13th to take command of the 8th Army. He immediately began reorganizing and strengthening his force, manning the Alam el Halfa Ridge behind the El Alamein line, and making it clear all the while that they would defend their position to keep the Germans from advancing to Alexandria and Cairo.

-end-

txtj1075

Rommel's supplies had not arrived during the August lull in the fighting, but he knew that further delay in launching an offensive would only give the British time to get stronger. He decided to rely on capturing enemy fuel for his tanks and resolved to attack again. On the night of August 30th, Rommel launched an assault along the El Alamein front, concentrating on the Alam el

Halfa Ridge southeast of El Alamein. The Germans failed to take the Ridge for three days in a row, and finally fell back to their original start line on September 2nd. This was the end of Rommel's last effort to take the Suez Canal. From this point Rommel pleaded for supplies to prepare his defenses for the assault he knew would soon come from the British.

Hereafter General Montgomery began preparing his troops for offensive operations to push the Germans back into Libya. Reinforcements strengthened the 8th Army, and all underwent training in standard drills, developing speed and flexibility.

-end-

txtj1076

On the night of September 13th, the British launched Operation Agreement, a raid on German-held Tobruk. Following aerial bombardment of the garrison, the British came by land and sea and attempted to destroy the port installations. It was disastrous for the attackers, who lost many men and three destroyers.

-end-

txtj1077

On September 14th, General Montgomery issued his plans for an offensive against the Germans at the El Alamein line. Montgomery planned to draw Rommel's tanks away to the south with a thrust by the 13th Corps, allowing the 30th Corps in the north to break through the German defenses. This would give the Allies an opportunity to sever German supply lines. Montgomery scheduled Lightfoot for late October. Churchill argued for an earlier launch, but was at last convinced by Alexander and Montgomery that the later date would ensure success.

-end-

txtj1078

Rommel left for Germany on September 23rd to receive treatment for a liver ailment. While there he urged Hitler and Mussolini to send supplies to North Africa.

-end-

txtj1079

On the night of October 23rd, the 8th Army launched Operation Lightfoot, the Second Battle of El Alamein, with a barrage of nearly 1,000 guns. The Germans were taken by surprise; Rommel was away in Germany and General Stumme was in temporary command. The British had the advantage in both manpower and equipment, particularly in armor. New Zealand forces swiftly took Miteiriya Ridge in the south. By dawn the 10th Corps was still struggling through German minefields. The 30th Corps had caught up with the German 15th Armored Division, and the British 13th Corps was battling the 21st Armored Division. On the afternoon of the 24th, General Stumme's jeep was struck by a shell and Stumme died of a heart attack.

On the 25th Rommel returned hastily to Egypt. The British had made little headway, bogged down in minefields, but the situation was grave for the Germans. The next day, Montgomery rerouted the 13th Corps northwest towards the coast.

On the 27th Rommel lost many tanks in a fruitless attempt to take Miteiriya and Kidney Ridges from the British. British momentum had slowed, and Churchill sent a message emphasizing the importance of breaking through the German defenses. Surveying the situation, Montgomery noted that while the Germans massed in the north near the coast put up heavy resistance, the exhausted Italian infantry further south could be penetrated. He issued new orders, Operation Supercharge, in which 13th Corps infantry would attack the Italians. The 10th Corps armor would move in to prevent Rommel's tanks from following.

Four days later (November 2nd), Supercharge was launched. Rommel's anti-tank batteries held the British off for two days, but finally lack of fuel forced Rommel to order a withdrawal against Hitler's specific orders. By the 4th the Axis forces had begun retreating west with Montgomery's tanks in pursuit, ending the fight for El Alamein.

-end-

txtj1080

Following the retreating Germans, the British 10th Corps recaptured Tobruk on November 13th.

-end-

txtj1081

In their pursuit of the Germans across the North African Desert, the British 10th Corps recaptured Derna on November 15th.

-end-

txtj1082

As Rommel continued his withdrawal west, the British reoccupied Benghazi.

-end-

txtj1083

On November 24th, Rommel reached El Agheila, and at Hitler's and Mussolini's insistence, held there with only 35 tanks and two divisions left. Montgomery, less than 65 miles away at Agedabia, paused long enough to open the port of Benghazi for shipping.

-end-

txtj1084

On December 13th, Montgomery's troops drew near El Agheila, where Rommel's forces had halted three weeks earlier. In a brilliant move, Rommel slipped away before the New Zealand 2nd Division arrived, leaving a rearguard and minefields to deal with the Allied forces. From there Rommel planned to join the other Axis forces in Tunisia.

-end-

txtj1085

On Mussolini's orders, Rommel halted his retreat across the desert at Buerat. Once again, the British paused to let their supplies catch up to them. By the time they reached Buerat on January 13th, Rommel had evacuated.

-end-

txtj1086

On January 23rd, Montgomery and the British 8th Army entered Tripoli, the farthest west the British had yet penetrated into Libya, while Rommel's forces retreated over the border into Tunisia.

-end-

txtj1087

There was some disagreement among the Allied heads of state and the Combined Chiefs of Staff over priorities for the conduct of war in the remainder of 1942. Churchill and Roosevelt both supported an invasion of French North Africa as soon as possible; other planners feared that such an operation would interfere with Operation Roundup, the invasion of Europe, in 1943. On July 24th, the US Chief of Staff General Marshall issued CCS 94, which stated that the French North African campaign (Operation Torch), would not be decided upon until it was known how the war on the Eastern Front would go. If the Russians were nearly defeated by September 15th, the invasion of Europe would be impractical since Hitler would be free to transfer large numbers of troops and resources to the new front. In that case a smaller operation in French North Africa was feasible. The very next day Roosevelt disregarded Marshall's statement, and proposed to General Eisenhower and the British Chiefs of Staff that Torch take place by October 30th.

-end-

txtj1088

On August 9th, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, commander of Operation Torch, submitted plans for the invasion of French North Africa. He proposed a deep thrust into the Mediterranean to take Tunisia, with a secondary thrust on the Moroccan coast. The operation was tentatively scheduled for October 7th.

-end-

txtj1089

General Eisenhower elaborated his plan for Operation Torch on August 21st. He favored landing at Oran in Algeria, with the troops moving from there into Tunisia. In early September, Roosevelt and Churchill further modified the plan to include a broader front. Troops would land at three locations: Casablanca in Morocco, and Oran and Algiers in Algeria. Because of anti-British sentiment among the Vichy French, the Allies agreed that the initial landings would be made by US troops only. British troops would comprise the follow-up landings. Later in September, a November 8th launch date was chosen.

-end-

txtj1090

Intelligence from the US Consul-General in Algiers, Robert C. Murphy, indicated that the Vichy French harbored resentment against the British over clashes in the early part of the war. For this reason, only US troops would make the initial landings in North Africa. But the cooperation of the French in North Africa would be critical for the success of Operation Torch. For this reason the Allies were anxious to find a French figure to support operation Torch around whom the French would rally. On October 22nd, General Mark Clark, Eisenhower's deputy commander, and Consul-General Murphy, secretly met with General Charles Mast, the commander of the French Algerian Division. Mast gave the Americans his assurance that General Henri Giraud was the man they were looking for. The French Army would follow Giraud's orders. Mast was uncertain about the French Navy's cooperation. Mast negotiated with the US representatives, promising his and Giraud's cooperation in return for assurances of restoring France's prewar boundaries, as well as aid in rearming the French.

-end-

txtj1091

On October 26th, a convoy of US troops, commanded by General George Patton, set sail for Morocco.

-end-

txtj1092

On October 26th, the first British convoy of troops left Clyde, Scotland for the invasion of French North Africa (Operation Torch). Those troops slated for the Oran, Algeria landing were the Center Task Force commanded by General Lloyd Fredendall. The Eastern Task Force, on its way to Algiers, was commanded by General Charles Ryder.

-end-

txtj1093

Operation Torch troop convoys reached the Mediterranean on November 5th. General Eisenhower, commander of the operation, flew to Gibraltar to establish his headquarters. British Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham would be in charge of naval operations. American General James Doolittle and British Air-Marshall Sir William Welsh were in command of their nations' respective air forces.

The Axis was aware of Allied troop movements, but mistakenly believed the Allies were about to launch an assault on the Atlantic coast. In any case, they were too preoccupied with Rommel's troubles in Egypt to give the situation their attention.

-end-

txtj1094

On the night of November 5th, the British submarine Seraph picked up General Henri Giraud on the coast of France to take him to French North Africa. The Allies were relying on Giraud to rally the French to the Allied cause.

-end-

txtj1095

On November 8th, US troops landed at Casablanca, Algiers, and Oran, launching Operation Torch, the invasion of French North Africa. The Allies met resistance at all three sites and there were casualties on both sides. Roosevelt dispatched a letter to Petain in France stating the Allies' intentions. Petain, anxious to persuade the Germans that he would not cooperate with the Allies, replied that his forces would resist the Americans. However, he sent a secret telegram to his High Commissioner in Algiers, Admiral Francois Darlan, giving him permission to negotiate with the Allies.

-end-

txtj1096

The day after Allied landings in Casablanca, Algiers, and Oran, the Germans demanded access to French airports in Tunisia. Permission was given by Pierre Laval, the Prime Minister of the Vichy French government. German paratroops arrived at El Aouina airport near Tunis from Sicily that same day. Meanwhile, on the Mediterranean near Algiers, Axis planes and submarines assaulted Allied ships. Fighting between the Americans and the French continued.

-end

txtj1097

On November 10th, French Admiral Francois Darlan issued orders via a radio broadcast for all French resistance to the Allied landings to cease. US troops had secured Oran, Algeria earlier that day.

-end-

txtj1098

French officials in Algeria and Morocco signed an armistice with the Allies on November 11th, after Admiral Darlan had ordered a cessation of resistance. That same day German troops arrived in Unoccupied France. French resistance in North Africa had proven stronger than expected, but there was also some popular support for the Allies, particularly in Casablanca. Altogether the campaign was highly successful, and marked a good beginning for Anglo-US military cooperation.

-end-

r1

General Anderson arrived in Algiers on plans to undertake several landings on the Tunisian coast. The force landing in Tunis would join with forces enroute from Algeria.

-end-

r2

Allied forces landed unopposed in Bougie on the 11th. The transports that carried them were attacked by the Luftwaffe that afternoon. Two of the ships were crippled.

This landing was accompanied by the 11 Brigade, Hart Force moving from Algiers to Tunisia. General Kesselring, with Axis leadership over Tunisia, had a command of 1,000 German troops having newly landed at Tunis.

-end-

r3

In a combined effort, the British No. 6 Commando and 3rd Parachute Battalion landed at Bone. An infantry division fortified the ranks the next day.

Luftwaffe airplanes sunk two transports at Bougie, forcing the remaining transports to return to Algiers not fully unloaded.

Axis forces unblocked Bizerte harbor and landed troops there, making it possible for Tunis to be taken on the 15th.

-end-

r4

In his first act as Axis Commander, General Nehring groups his ground forces into XC Corps and orders them to move westward to block the British advance.

-end-

r5

Tabarka was approached by the Hart Force with a complete column from 36th Brigade headed for Algiers by road.

The US 509th Para Battalion dropped on Youks les Bains took the airport there.

-end-

r6

The 1st Parachute Battalion dropped on Souk el Arba helping secure another airfield at Souk el Khemis, and thus opened a second route to Tunis. The battalion made its way to Sidi Nisr, contacting General Barre's troops. The French were maintaining roadblocks in an effort to hinder the German advance west.

-end-

r7

The British forces in northern Algeria were pushed back to Djebel Abiod by German forces, including 15 tanks, under the command of Major Witzig.

-end-

r8

Frustrated with the roadblocks maintained by General Barre's French troops, General Nehring ordered all obstacles removed, barring the roads to Algeria. Barre refused and found himself warring with the Axis.

-end-

r9

French troops fell back to Medjez el Bab, having met strong German opposition on their flanks. British forces, the 11th Brigade and 1st Parachute Battalion, joined together at Beja.

-end-

r10

Depending on one decrepit railway running from Algiers, short of supplies, and having had Allied-advanced landing grounds turned to mud by rain, General Anderson delayed the advance into Tunisia.

The Axis, however, operated from concrete runways, allowing them air superiority.

-end-

r11

In an effort to seize the territory from Bizerta to Tunis, the British forces, supported by American tanks, moved on Medjez el Bab and Mateur. The 11th Brigade was repulsed by German paratroops, and the 36th Brigade, on way to Mateur, was delayed. However, a combined British and US tank battalion made its way to Sidi Nisr.

Feeling the growing pressure, General Nehring ordered his troops to fall back to better protect Tunis from the Allies. The 11th Brigade, unopposed, took Medjez the 25th.

-end-

r12

Facing the new Axis defense line, British 11th Brigade and Blade Force made way to Tebourba.

-end-

r13

Two battleships, one battlecruiser, seven cruisers, 29 destroyers, two submarines and a number of other miscellaneous vessels were lost when the French Fleet CinC Jean de Laborde ordered the fleet scuttled. The Germans had attempted to seize the ships for their own use.

-end-

r14

Halted in their advance, the British 36th Brigade fell back to Bald and Green Hills. General Kesselring reinforced Nehring's forces with some of the 10th Panzer Division and ordered them to attack.

-end-

r15

In order to regain the offensive posture, the British No. 1 Commandos landed amphibiously at Sidi el Moudjad while the 1st Parachute Battalion dropped on Depienne. Each force encountered heavy fighting as they made their way back to their lines.

-end-

r16

The 10th Panzer Division attacked Chouigi Pass, threatening Tebourba. The Allied forces withdrew to Medjez el Bab in response. They would not relinquish this location, as it would prevent another attempt to take Tunis.

-end-

r17

A combined US and French force took Faid Pass.

-end-

r18

The Allies, having fallen back to Medjez, would not let German troops take the city or force them further back.

-end-

r19

In an effort to convince French North Africans to join the Allied effort, de Gaulle sent an emissary to Darlan urging him to fight. However, Darlan, as most French there, distrusted the general and refused.

-end-

r20

General Eisenhower urged General Anderson forward in his advance on Tunis. Thus, Anderson

ordered Longstop Hill to be taken by the newly arrived 1 Guards Brigade. A US infantry battalion relieved the guards but were forced from the hill by German troops. A recovery of the hill was undertaken, but again the Germans took the position from the 1 Guards Brigade.

-end-

r21

A French Royalist assassinated Darlan because of his neutral stance. Giraud assumed the high commissionership, and de Gaulle resumed his efforts to end French North Africa's neutrality.

-end-

r22

The Allies failed to take Bald and Green Hills in one last attempt. Allied troops had been too distant from each other and too few to be effective. It was decided to wait and consolidate troops before any further attempts.

German forces, however, found themselves defending against a surprise attack. Hitler now wanted Tunisia as a pushing off point to attack the British 1st Army and the 8th, in the east.

-end-

r23

General Hyakutake and his 17th Army HQ, with its 2nd Division, moved to Guadalcanal.

-end-

r24

A Japanese submarine damaged the aircraft carrier USS Saratoga.

-end-

r25

The aircraft carrier, USS Wasp, along with the battleship, USS North Carolina, and a destroyer were lost after an attack by Japanese submarines.

-end-

r26

With the intention of ambushing Japanese shipping in the area of water known as the Slot, a US cruiser squadron, along with a supply convoy, encountered a Japanese convoy being escorted by three heavy cruisers, two seaplane carriers and eight destroyers commanded by Admiral Goto. After daybreak, Japanese fighters from Rabaul airfield and US aircraft from Henderson Field joined the battle. Eventually the Japanese were repulsed, but had managed to land 800 troops on the beachhead. The Axis forces lost one cruiser and three destroyers. Admiral Goto was killed. The Allies lost a destroyer, while two cruisers and two destroyers were damaged.

Henderson Field, badly damaged by Japanese aircraft, was made nearly unusable by shelling from Japanese naval artillery.

-end-

r27

Japanese troops attempted to attack across the natural barrier of the Matanikau River. US forces repulsed the attack, but a second Japanese force tried to take the ridges to the south of Henderson Field. This attack too was repulsed.

-end-

r28

Having detected movement through Magic, US Forces, now under the command of Admiral Halsey, were ordered to protect Henderson Air Field from the Japanese Combined Fleet just off Guadalcanal. Halsey deployed two forces built around the aircraft carriers Hornet and Enterprise. Search planes sighted the Japanese fleet, but an air strike could not locate it on the 25th. The following day, however, both sides exchanged blows through air strikes. The Hornet was sunk, and the Japanese carriers Zuiho and Shokaku were damaged with both losing over a 100 airplanes. Henderson Field was not taken, and the Americans were not driven into the sea.

-end-

r29

Patrolling the Slot, a US cruiser group stumbled upon a Japanese squadron during the night. At dawn, both sides ordered their aircraft to join the battle. Two light cruisers and seven destroyers were lost by the US, with three other cruisers and four destroyers damaged. Even in victory, the Japanese lost the battleship Hiei, a heavy cruiser, two destroyers and seven transports.

-end-

r30

The battle started when the Japanese used their sea bound heavy artillery to bombard Henderson Field. When the attack was over and the Japanese moved away from the island, US aircraft managed to sink one of the cruisers. Later that day, another aircraft squadron sunk much of a Japanese convoy. Needing to resupply their starving men on Guadalcanal, the Japanese made another effort to take Henderson Field. However, they were intercepted by a US task force. Four US destroyers were sunk, and the battleship South Dakota, with a failed radar system, sustained heavy damage. Only the guns of the Washington sent back the Japanese. It sunk the Japanese battleship Kirishima and a destroyer.

The Japanese never tried to take the island again. Instead, they used high speed destroyer runs to supply their men on Guadalcanal. Few of the buoyant drums from the runs ever reached the starving soldiers.

-end-

r31

Coast watchers warned the American forces of a squadron of eight Japanese destroyers moving into the Slot. Their mission was to resupply the Japanese troops on Guadalcanal. An interception force was dispatched. In the subsequent battle, the US Navy lost the cruiser Northampton with three others damaged. One Japanese destroyer was sunk while another was damaged.

-end-

r32

For six weeks, US troops worked diligently to secure their perimeters and ferret out Japanese positions. Having grown weary from battles and disease, the 1st Marine Division were relieved by the XIV Corps, commanded by General Alexander Patch. The Corps was made up of the 23rd, 25th and 2nd Marine Divisions.

-end-

r33

General Patch, understanding that Mount Austen was key to taking the entire island, ordered the attack. The Japanese fought valiantly and would not surrender until January.

-end-

r34

The Japanese began planning their evacuation of forces from Guadalcanal. Due to American pressure, the Japanese could not turn their bases on the island into a stronghold. The forces were to be removed via the Tokyo Express and placed in New Guinea.

-end-

r35

Japanese forces continued to oppose the movements of US troops in order to take Mount Austen.

-end-

r36

Japanese forces fell back from the hill, and US troops directed their efforts towards Cape Esperance. The evacuation effort had not yet started for the Japanese.

-end-

r37

The USS Chicago and a destroyer were sunk by Japanese air attack. They were escorting a Guadalcanal bound convoy.

-end-

r38

With 20 destroyers amassed at Cape Esperance, the evacuation of Japanese troops began. One destroyer was sunk by a mine while Japanese dive bombers took one US destroyer.

-end-

r39

Nearing the fleeing Japanese, US patrols reached as far as Tassafaronga.

-end-

r40

The Tokyo Express had successfully removed 11,000 troops from Guadalcanal.

-end-

r41

General Patch radioed Admiral Halsey, 'Tokyo Express no longer has terminus on Guadalcanal.'

-end-

r42

General Chuikov's 62nd Army managed to maintain its positions despite heavy German attack.

-end-

r43

The South-Western and Don Soviet armies began movement against the Romanians to the south.

-end-

r44

General Vatutin's army had gained enough ground to link the South-West Front and that of Stalingrad.

-end-

r45

Under extreme threat from advancing Soviet forces, the German headquarters was moved to Nizhne-Chirskaye. Hitler, however, ordered Paulus to move to Gumrak, ever closer to Stalingrad.

-end-

r46

General Vatutin's forces captured the only intact bridge over the Don River.

-end-

r47

The Soviets, now strong enough, linked their South-West and Stalingrad Fronts which opposed the Germans across the Don River. This action trapped 330,000 German soldiers in the 6th and 4th Panzer Armies.

-end-

r48

Now trapped on the Don by the Soviets, General Paulus with his 4th and 6th Panzer Armies, lost his supply line. However, General Goering declared that his Luftwaffe could supply the needed 750 tons per day required by Paulus. With only seven airstrips in Stalingrad and one with night landing capability, Goering's boast was unrealistic, but did convince Hitler that Paulus should remain in Stalingrad.

-end-

r49

Hitler ordered the Panzer Armies to stand fast against the Soviets.

-end-

r50

Hitler placed Field Marshal von Manstein at the head of a new army, Army Group Don, which would replace General Paulus' forces at Stalingrad. The new army was composed of one Luftwaffe, four Panzer and six infantry divisions, along with the remains of several Romanian forces. Von Manstein decided that the best route to the front was through Kotelnikovo-Stalingrad railway rather than along the Don River. The Don would be difficult to cross and had Soviet troops lined against it. Winter Storm, as it was code named, would be launched on December 3rd.

-end-

r51

Soviet forces attacked the Germans along the Chir River with the hope of driving them off. However, Field Marshal von Manstein deployed some of his Winter Storm forces to stave off defeat. The German lines held, but Winter Storm's start date was pushed back.

-end-

r52

With the goal of joining at Gumrak, the Soviet forces on the Don and Stalingrad fronts began their attack on the Germans. After five days, no progress was made stopping the assault. Stalin ordered another operation be conducted called Ring. To be carried out December 16th, the Don and Stalingrad fronts would capture the south and west parts of the German lines and conduct a full attack on the remaining pocket lines.

-end-

r53

Group Hoth, commanded by General Hoth, began Field Marshal von Manstein's Winter Storm. Progress was made by the Germans, but Stalin's 5th Shock Army held fast, allowing for reinforcements to arrive from around Stalingrad. These troops were deployed along the Myshkova River.

-end-

r54

Components of the Voronezh and South-West fronts carried out the operation called 'Little Saturn' by attacking the Italians and splitting these forces to attack the Italians and split Field Marshal von Manstein's lines. The Soviets easily took the Italians, taking the German-held airfield, Tatsinskaya. It provided the German's with their main supply line.

-end-

r55

Now within 16 miles of Stalingrad, von Manstein's men tried to break through the Soviet defense line. After repeated tries, von Manstein requested that General Paulus break out of the Soviet lines and link up with his forces. Because he needed to hold Stalingrad, Paulus released only a few tanks without infantry support.

The Luftwaffe reached a milestone that would not be repeated. They flew in 250 tons of supplies to the Stalingrad troops. The maximum per day after that was 90 tons.

-end-

r56

After breaking through the lines of the 4th Romanian Army, the Stalingrad Front moved for the Don River. This now threatened Field Marshal von Manstein's Group Hoth from both the north and south. He had no alternative but to pull back his men.

-end-

r57

Hitler approved the movement of Army Group Don and A to the Konstantinovsk-Salsk-Armavir line. Now the armies were 125 miles from the Stalingrad Front, but Hitler remained undaunted and affirmed his wish to continue resupplying the 6th Army. The Russians, however, could now continue, unabated, their efforts to reduce the Stalingrad pocket.

-end-

r58

Because of his health, Roosevelt wished to have the Summit in a warmer climate than Iceland. Churchill then proposed North Africa and forwarded the plans to Stalin.

-end-

r59

Citing the events around Stalingrad, Stalin felt he could not leave Moscow to attend the December 6th Churchill Summit. As well, Stalin pressed Churchill about the possibility of opening a second front in 1943.

-end-

r60

Churchill and Roosevelt decided that Casablanca would be the site of their summit. The Allies' plans in Tunisia had not yet come to fruition. Indeed, Operation Round Up would not be carried out if North Africa was not secured. As well, the British Chiefs of Staff favored a Mediterranean push rather than Round Up.

-end-

r61

Churchill arrived in Casablanca first, waiting only one day for Roosevelt. Each was accompanied by their respective military staffs and had a code name. Roosevelt was Admiral Q while Churchill was Air Commodore Frankland.

-end-

r62

Roosevelt and Churchill concluded that the war would not be won until the unconditional surrenders of Germany, Italy and Japan had been obtained. Their ultimate aim for an Allied victory was the destruction of a philosophy based on the conquest and subjugation of other

peoples. The leaders maintained the proposition of Germany First; that country must be dealt with before the other Axis. After Germany fell, Great Britain would continue the fight against Japan in the Pacific.

The leaders decided that Operation Husky, the invasion of Sicily, would be mounted in July of 1943, and Bolero would continue until 938,000 US troops were stationed in the UK. These men would attempt a cross-Channel raid, designed to inflict heavy losses of men and supplies on the German occupation forces. As well, the Cotentin Peninsula in France would also be taken by a US troops operation.

With the clearance of New Guinea and the Solomon Islands of the Japanese, an invasion of Burma, Operation Anakim, would clear the Burma Road with China. British forces, using US landing craft, would be the main participants of this operation. Also, Operation Pointblank, the leaders felt, needed to continue to inflict German losses. USAAF bombers would carry out day air raids while the RAF would be the night forces.

-end-

r63

As Roosevelt made his way back to America from Casablanca, Churchill moved on to Cairo enroute to Turkey in order to persuade that country to enter the war. Churchill transmitted a telegram to Stalin detailing the results of the summit. Both Roosevelt and Churchill wished to make clear to Stalin their intention of keeping Germany occupied with both fronts while continuing to supply the Soviet Union with materiel. Pointblank was heavily stressed as a tactic to divert German forces from the Eastern front.

-end-

r64

In an effort to coax Turkey into the war, Churchill offered to supply arms, equipment, and the Allied plans for 1943. However, the Turks distrusted the Soviets and were not yet willing to enter into the conflict.

Subsequently, the British prime minister flew on to Cyprus, Cairo and made a stop at Tripoli to visit with the 8th Army.

His next stop was Algiers, where he faced the daunting challenge of the Allies in North Africa. De Gaulle wished that Giraud be replaced as military and civilian commander in French North Africa by a French War Committee and an Economic High Council composed of an equal number of members from de Gaulle's and Giraud's camps. Churchill agreed.

-end-

r65

Three armies from General Rokossovsky's Don Front were transferred to General Yeremenko's Stalingrad Front, now called the South Front. The new front was to continue the attacks against von Manstein's German forces in Stalingrad.

-end-

r66

The Stavka directive ordered an attack on Stalingrad on January 6th. But, by January 3rd, the Stavka attack on the German stronghold at Stalingrad could not take place. Troop deployment delays and supply shortages had made the impending attack impossible at that time. General Rokossovsky and Nikolai Voronov, Stavka representative to the Don and Voronezh fronts, asked for Stalin's approval of a delay in plans. Reluctantly, the Soviet leader agreed to an extra four days.

-end-

r67

General Paulus declined the surrender terms offered by General Rokossovsky at Stalingrad.

-end-

r68

The Soviets intended to destroy the German pocket in Stalingrad from west to east. On the opening day of the offensive, the 65th Army advanced five miles in spite of heavy German opposition. The fronts on the north and south, however, showed much slower progress.

-end-

r69

The Soviet Don Front spent 26,000 casualties and half its 257 tank force before taking the

western nose of the German pocket. Casualties on the German side were high as well.

-end-

r70

Karpovka airfield, the most westerly of the seven near Stalingrad, was captured by the Don Front.

-end-

r71

The Soviet Stavka offensive had widened the time for flights between the nearest German airfield and Stalingrad. Thus, the Germans could only supply 40 tons of equipment to their troops surrounded in Stalingrad. Hitler ordered Field Marshal Erhard Milch, Secretary of State for Air and Goering's deputy, to take charge of the resupply of Field Marshal von Manstein's forces. He was held in high regard as an excellent organizer, joining von Manstein two days later at the Taganrog HQ.

-end-

r72

Pitomnik, the only airfield with night landing capability, was captured by Soviet forces, leaving only Gumrak in German hands. From this point forward, air drops would have to suffice as the primary resupply system. However, Field Marshal Milch did increase the amount of supplies to 60 tons per day, and the Germans were able to construct one additional, makeshift airfield.

-end-

r73

General Rokossovsky felt that a two to three day pause in the fighting would help his men regroup. However, the men pressed on, increasing the already poor conditions of the German defenders. Food within the pocket was in short supply, and the cold was unbearable. Many of the German wounded were not removed from the battle fields because the conditions suffered caused extreme lethargy. The Germans fought on, though.

-end-

r74

Under heavy Soviet pressure, General Paulus signaled Hitler about his condition. Though lacking sufficient ammunition and supplies, Hitler would not entertain the idea of a German surrender and ordered him to fight on.

The last German held airfield, Gumrak, fell to the Soviets while the 21st Army and Chuikov's 62nd Army linked up. This split the German 6th Army into two factions in the north and south of the city.

-end-

r75

An He 111, the last German airplane, left Stalingrad with 19 wounded and seven bags of mail. Air drops would now be the sole source for supply.

-end-

r76

General Paulus was strictly forbidden by Hitler not to attempt a break-out of the Stalingrad pocket in an effort to retreat. Paulus moved his HQ to the Univermag department store basement in the south part of the city.

Lacking supplies, Paulus was forced to issue orders that forbade the feeding of the 30,000 sick and wounded German soldiers.

-end-

r77

Field Marshal Milch captained the effort to send 124 airplanes, with much needed supplies, to the German Stalingrad forces. This, the highest number of aircraft sorties flown, could not stave off the inevitable Soviet overrun of the Germans.

-end-

r78

To celebrate Hitler's accession to power, Goering gave a special radio address to the German people: 'A thousand years hence Germans will speak of this battle with reverence and awe.' Paulus sent a special transmission to Hitler: 'The swastika flag is still flying above Stalingrad. May our battle be an example to the present and coming generations that they must never capitulate, even in a hopeless situation, for them Germany will emerge victorious.'

Hoping that they would instead commit suicide rather than surrender, Hitler promoted the ranking officers at Stalingrad. Paulus became a Field Marshal.

-end-

r79

At 1945, local time, after Vasili Chuikov's 62nd Army had surrounded the Univermag building, Field Marshal Paulus tendered his surrender. The northern pocket of Germans continued to fight on.

-end-

r80

The remaining German troops had been forced into a small area around the Tractor Works. One final assault by no less than 300 guns per kilometer convinced the Germans to acquiesce. Stalingrad had fallen.

-end-

r81

Declaring four days of mourning and closure of all places of entertainment, Hitler announced the fall of the German forces in Stalingrad.

The siege of Stalingrad cost the Germans 110,000 lives and 91,000 prisoners of war. The Soviets suffered equally hard losses, but no figures were ever made public.

The German prisoners of war were placed in camps from the Arctic Circle to the border of Afghanistan. However, some were put to work rebuilding Stalingrad. Typhus, in the spring of 1943, exhaustion and the lack of food claimed thousands of the men, and eventually, only 5,000 German soldiers were returned home after the war.

Field Marshal Paulus, as well as other high-ranking officers, transmitted propaganda broadcasts encouraging German troops to surrender.

Now not needing to worry about Stalingrad, the Soviets turned their full attention towards the Germans at the Eastern Front in the Caucasus and Ukraine.

-end-

r82

Stavka ordered that the capture of German Army Group A was the highest priority. The Germans were to be denied the Rostov and an escape route through the Crimea. The Transcaucas Front, or Black Sea Group, and the Stalingrad Front, after January 1st known as the South Front, were to accomplish the objectives of the Stavka orders.

-end-

r83

Hitler's staff wished that Army Group A would withdraw to the Don north of Rostov, but Hitler agreed only to a retreat to the Manych Canal and the Kuban. His vision was to use that point as a base for a push toward the Caspian. The Soviet forces, the Transcaucas Front, were slow in pursuit of the Germans. Yeremenko's South Front tried to head for the Rostov but were held in check by the 4th Panzer Division.

-end-

r84

In order to break the Leningrad blockade, Operation Iskra was launched by Soviet troops on the Leningrad and Volkov fronts. On the 18th, the troops created a corridor by linking up and were able to clear the Germans from Lake Ladoga. Leningrad was no longer isolated from the rest of the Soviet Union.

-end-

r85

The supply lines to Leningrad were strengthened when the Soviets opened the railway between Schluselburg and Polyany.

-end-

r86

The Voronezh, Bryansk and the South-West Fronts attacked the 2nd Hungarian and 8th Italian Armies at their positions across the Don River.

-end-

r87

Although many escaped in the snowstorms of the season, 80,000 Italian and Hungarian prisoners

were taken by the Soviet forces, who attacked them from across the Don. Loss of these Axis buffer forces left a 200 mile gap along Army Group B's and the 2nd German Army's positions.

-end-

r88

The Bryansk and Voronezh Fronts attacked the remaining German forces of the 2nd German Army at Voronezh. The Germans had begun to evacuate the city, which was fully taken by the Soviets on the 25th.

-end-

r89

With Hitler's approval, Army Group Don withdrew behind the lower region of the Don River. Some 350,000 men from Army Group A were to join Von Manstein's forces while the remaining men held ranks at the Taman bridgehead. Originally, Field Marshal von Manstein wished to retreat to the Mius River but Hitler would not allow this.

-end-

r90

Soviet forces, the Bryansk and Voronezh Fronts, surrounded on the Germans, two corps of the 2nd German Army and Army Group B, at Kastornoe.

-end-

r91

General Rodion Malinovsky took command of the South Front from General Yeremenko. Rostov, Kiev and Kursk were the Soviets new objectives.

-end-

r92

Soviet forces, after landing amphibiously, established a small beach head near Novorossisk on the Black Sea. Their assignment was to stop the retreat of the German 17th Army to the Taman bridgehead.

-end-

r93

Hitler summoned Field Marshal von Manstein and General von Kluge to his HQ at Rastenburg, East Prussia, the Wolfschanze or Wolf's Lair. The discussions came to a close with Hitler agreeing that von Manstein's forces should withdraw to the Mius River and von Kluge's Army Group Center would be able to leave the Rzhev salient. As well, General von Weichs' Army Group B would be divided between von Kluge and von Manstein.

-end-

r94

Soviet forces liberated Kursk from German occupation.

-end-

r95

In their move towards Stalino, the Soviet South-West forces retook Rostov and Voroshilovgrad.

-end-

r96

In an effort to destroy the Demyansk Salient, the Soviets attacked the twelve German divisions in wait there. However, the Germans withdrew without losing very many men and were able to stop the Soviet flanking movement of the 18th Army at Leningrad.

-end-

r97

Hitler, so infuriated by the evacuation of German forces at Kharkov, went to Army Group South HQ at Zaporozhe with the intent to relieve Von Manstein of command. However, having a shortened front line and more troops at his disposal, Von Manstein argued for a counter-offensive on the approaching Soviets. The Soviets had nearly passed their air coverage and outpaced their supply lines, and thus, Von Manstein began to position the 1st and 4th Panzer Divisions for a strike. Hitler eventually agreed to the effort.

-end-

r98

The South-West Front, commanded by General Vatutin, liberated Pavlograd and Krasnograd from the Germans. In the process, his forces cleared a path towards Dnepropetrovsk on the

Dnepr.

-end-

r99

Field Marshal von Manstein's forces struck the Soviet positions and caught them off guard. General Vatutin's right flank at Krasnograd was attacked by the SS Panzer Corps. Attacking northward, the XL Panzer Corps fought hard against General Popov's mobile tank corps of 25 vehicles. Meanwhile, the 4th Panzer Army moved north to join forces with the SS Panzer Corps. General Vatutin, however, was unconvinced with the seriousness of the German offensive and felt that it was an attempt to mask further withdrawals. He continued his attacks against the Germans to the west.

Commander of the Voronezh Front, General Filipp Golikov, deciding to stop the Germans, turned southward from his trek towards the Dnepr. Within 48 hours, his men were turned back with heavy losses inflicted from the SS Panzer Corps.

-end-

r100

Realizing the seriousness of the renewed German threat, General Vatutin ordered his 6th Army to take defensive positions as they were now almost completely surrounded. He radioed Stavka for reinforcements.

-end-

r101

The XL Panzer Corps pushed to the Donets just west of Izyum, as General Vatutin's right flank was forced back to the northern Donets.

-end-

r102

General Vatutin's forces were now resting at the northern Donets.

-end-

r103

Launching the second stroke of the counter offensive, Field Marshal von Manstein drove his Panzer corps towards Kharkov. By the 12th, his forces had broken through the Voronezh Front and made its way to Kharkov.

-end-

r104

After terrible street fighting, the SS Panzer Corps reoccupied the city.

-end-

r105

German forces retook Belgorod, putting the Voronezh and Central Fronts in danger of losing contact with their supply lines. The Voronezh Front retreated to the Donets. Vatutin replaced the rash General Golikov.

-end-

r106

French forces found themselves retreating from superior numbers of Italian troops at Fondouk Pass. Commander-in-Chief Alphonse Juin, in retaliation, took Karachoum and Kairouan Passes from the Italian forces.

-end-

r107

Operation Eilbote I, Field Marshal Juergen von Arnim's attempt to regain control of Karachoum and Kairouan Passes, as well as the high ground at Pont du Fahs, was launched against the French on January 18th. The operation was a success, leaving all the passes in the Eastern Dorsal in German hands. However, the attack at Bou Arada on the Anglo-French corps line was defeated. As a result, the Germans were able to control all access to Bizerte and Tunis. General Eisenhower had wished that US forces would attack against Sfax, Operation Satin, but Von Arnim's preemptive strike made its possibility meaningless.

-end-

r108

In a reorganization of Axis command, General Vittorio Ambrosio was named Commando Supremo and given command of the 5th Panzer Army and Rommel's Panzerarmee Afrika, now

called the 1st Italian Army. General Giovanni Messe was to assume command from Rommel when he returned to Europe, but his departure did not occur for weeks after the reorganization.

-end-

r109

The US 1st Armored Division successfully raided Sened Station on the Gafsa-Maknassy road.

-end-

r110

Eisenhower ordered Anderson to take the line of the Fondouk--Karachoum Gap--Robaa--Bou Arada as well as the eastern section of the Eastern Dorsal.

-end-

r111

Axis forces repulsed the French at Faid despite a US counter offensive. As well, the German and Italian forces were able to deny US raids on Maknassy the 1st and 3rd of February.

Field Marshal Kesselring, aware of Axis command confusion, determined that the best course of action was to let Field Marshal Rommel and General von Arnim conduct their own operations.

Von Arnim assaulted the French and Americans at Sidi Bou Zid in Operation Spring Wind while Rommel attacked at Gafsa in Morning Wind.

-end-

r112

As the Tripoli port was cleared, Montgomery and his forces were able to move to Tunisia in spite of slowing heavy rains.

-end-

r113

Flanking US forces on both sides, General von Arnim was able to take Sidi Bou Zid thus cutting off the encircled US forces from their allies.

-end-

r114

Having taken Gafsa, Rommel had his sights set on Feriana and General von Arnim moved to Sbeitla.

Meanwhile, General Montgomery and his men now faced the Mareth Line.

-end-

r115

Feriana fell to Rommel, who moved on to the Kasserine Pass. This left US troops in disarray.

-end-

r116

After capturing Sbeitla, General von Arnim sent forces to Anderson's newly abandoned HQ at Fondouk.

-end-

r117

Composed of the 1st and 8th Armies, the newly created 18th Army Group was commanded by General Sir Harold Alexander. This venture was undertaken to lessen the confusion between the aforementioned armies. As well, Alexander ordered General Anderson to cut off all exits from the mountains to western Tunisia.

-end-

r118

Two days of heavy fighting precluded the taking of Kasserine Pass by Rommel. However, British reinforcing troops moved to the Thala-Kasserine road, strengthening the ever stronger Allied defensive lines.

-end-

r119

Rommel was pushed back from Sbiba during heavy fighting. Two days later, he tried to advance on Thala, but was again stopped. The Desert Fox was then ordered to deal with a more pressing concern in the 8th Army by Commando Supremo Ambrosio.

-end-

r120

Field Marshal Rommel assumed total command of Army Group Afrika as Commander in Chief,

CinC. He decided that Montgomery's forces at Medenine would be attacked in Operation Capri, and that General von Arnim, in Operation Ox Head, would keep the other Allied troops occupied in northern Tunisia.

-end-

r121

Allied forces recaptured Sbiba, followed the next day by the Kasserine Pass, Sbeitla and Sidi Bou Zid.

-end-

r122

From the coast to Bou Arada, German armored divisions carried out the attacks in Operation Ox Head. Sidi Nisr fell to Axis forces while Sedjenane would not fall until March 19th. However, no full Axis initiative was gained from the operation.

-end-

r123

Having been warned through Ultra, General Montgomery prepared for Rommel's eventual attack. When the strike did come, Monty's forces repelled the German tanks.

General Fredendall was replaced by General Patton in his duties as commander II US Corps.

-end-

r124

Never to return to North Africa, Field Marshal Rommel would be placed on sick leave, and Von Arnim would take his command. The command of the 5th Panzer Army was given to General Gustav van Vaerst.

-end-

r125

Starting his push from Tebessa to the Eastern Dorsal in an attempt to protect Montgomery's left flank, Patton captured Gafsa. Patton's troops were then launched against the Mareth Line. After the losses at Kasserine, Patton's heroics supplied a morale boost for US forces and those at home in the US.

-end-

r126

The Mareth Line failed to breach when Montgomery attacked from the front. Seeing an opportunity, Montgomery ordered the New Zealand Corps to outflank the line through the Tebaga Gap.

-end-

r127

The New Zealand Corps were successful in their attempt to break through the Mareth Line. Axis forces quickly withdrew from the line, setting up a new defensive line in the north at Wadi Akarit. Montgomery's men closed to the new line March 30th.

-end-

r128

Having secured the Maknassy Pass, Patton and his men were stopped near Fondouk and Faid.

-end-

r129

Montgomery's forces thrust through the German defensive lines at Wadi Akarit, but, they were unable to prevent General Messe and his men from setting up a new defensive line at Enfidaville.

-end-

r130

British IX Corps attacked and captured the Fondouk Pass. On the 10th, the corps moved on to Kairouan.

-end-

r131

The 1st Italian Army held fast at Enfidaville as Montgomery's forces attacked.

General von Arnim, hoping to spoil the British attack, launched an offensive between Medjez and Goubellat. They were pushed back with many losses.

General Alexander decided that 1st Army was to be the center of any offensive.

-end-

r132

In a strangling of Axis troops, the front along the British 1st Army line became center for Allied offensive movement. Allied air and sea strategy had cut the Axis from their supply lines, but they fought on vigorously.

-end-

r133

The Allies started their final push to capture the Axis forces. Montgomery transferred several formations to General Alexander's command.

-end-

r134

General Alexander reported to Churchill on the quieting of Axis guns: 'We are masters of the North African shore'. The Allies had won the battle for Tunisia at the price of 75,000 casualties. With numbers equaling the tragedy at Stalingrad, the Axis lost 300,000 with 240,000 prisoners taken.

Now, the Allied forces could prepare for their return to battle in Europe.

-end-

r135

Admiral Doenitz assumed the role of Commander in Chief of the German Navy after Admiral Raeder. However, Doenitz kept control of U-boat activity.

Before Doenitz's term, U-boats were attacking eastbound and westbound convoys equally. They intercepted radio signals from the convoys and were able to deduce the locations of the ships with ease.

The Allies, on the other hand, were able to track U-boat activity through deciphered Triton messages, the coded signals sent to U-boats. Doenitz failed to realize that Triton had been breached and instead believed that airborne radar was responsible for the accurate Allied tracking.

In response to this tracking, Doenitz ordered that eastbound, full convoys be attacked rather than the mostly empty westbound convoys. The north western Atlantic was to be saturated with U-boat wolf-packs. Convoys heading east, having already been attacked by Newfoundland based subs, would be attacked by westward sweeping U-boats. Others would fall prey to the subs only as targets of opportunity or when intelligence was good that they were full.

-end-

r136

A bolder and more ruthless strategy is now characteristic of the enemy. The tempo is quickening, and the critical phase of the U-boat war in the Atlantic cannot long be postponed--from the Allied Admiralty's Anti-Submarine Report for January.

-end-

r137

The main purpose of the conference was to divide the responsibilities of convoy escorting between the US Navy and the Royal and Royal Canadian Navies. Above 47 degrees west, the British Navies would do the escorting while the US Navy would supply protection for tankers to and from the Dutch West Indies. However, the US Navy allowed the carrier Bogue and her support ships to operate as escorts under British control. This had the effect of increasing greatly the number of aircraft based at Newfoundland.

-end-

r138

The British Chiefs of Staff felt that every convoy crossing the Atlantic was at extreme risk and should be regarded as threatened. Their report concluded that U-boat wolf-packs could not be evaded.

A further hindrance to Allied convoys was the addition of another rotor to the M4 Enigma machines that sent the coded Triton messages to the U-boats. Experts in Bletchley Park were unable to decipher the messages until the end of March.

The last ten days of February saw 28 Allied ships sunk while 41 were lost to U-boats during the first ten in March.

-end-

r139

The two eastbound convoys of HX229 and SC122 were attacked by 37 U-boats divided into three groups. Of the 98, 21 ships were lost while only one U-boat was sunk.

As a result of the losses, the British First Lord of the Admiralty stated: there is insufficient shipping to allow us to develop the offensives against the enemy which have been decided on. Every ship sunk makes the situation worse.

March saw 540,000 tons of Allied shipping lost in the Atlantic.

Rather than abandon the convoy system, as had been suggested, the Allies decided to convert to a more aggressive posture. Due to the cancellation of two Russian convoys, 27 more escort ships were made available in this new posture, adding five more support groups. This new plan was mainly the handiwork of Admiral Horton, WWI submarine ace and CinC of Western Approaches from the British side.

In the last days of March, strong spring gales helped the Allies escape more losses, but Admiral Doenitz wished to increase his already tremendous success in the Atlantic thus deploying more U-boats in the ocean than ever.

-end-

r140

Better weather allowed the Axis to increase the U-boat activity in the ocean.

-end-

r141

Convoys and U-boats, alike, were hampered in their efforts by renewed spring gales.

-end-

r142

During the first 36 hours of the attack, 12 ships in the convoy were destroyed by a total of 40 U-boats. The escort forces managed to sink one U-boat while a Canadian Catalina sunk another.

-end-

r143

A reinforcement group of escorts was able to join the ON55 convoy. Several successful night attacks were made on the U-boats, sinking four. None in the convoy were lost.

The experience of this convoy was to be bolstered by the performances of HX237, sinking three U-boats and losing three merchant stragglers, SC129, sinking two and losing two, ON57, sinking one and losing one, and SC130, sinking four and losing none. For the first three weeks of May, Allied convoys scored 31 U-boat sinkings.

-end-

r144

Admiral Doenitz viewed the new Allied convoy tactics through the spectacles of heavy U-boat losses. It was, as he said, a hard and unexpected blow. Therefore, he withdrew the U-boat forces from the North Atlantic and redeployed them southwest of the Azores. In his explanation to Hitler for the withdrawal, Doenitz called for greater air support for the submarines and greater manufacture.

May saw 41 U-boats sunk by Allied convoys. The U-boats were able to sink 300,000 tons of Allied shipping, however, of which 250,000 tons were in the Atlantic.

-end-

r145

The German U-boats were only able to sink 30,000 tons of Allied shipping during this month. The number of U-boats fell from 239 to 218 and would continue to fall until Germany's defeat.

More aggressive posturing by the Allies, better U-boat detection equipment, greater air cover, better anti-submarine weapons, indecipherable convoy messages and the ability of the Allies to read Triton sub messages all contributed to the increased success of the convoys.

-end-

r146

The first US Army Air Force raid on Germany was to be a submarine plant at Vegesack on Weser River. Cloud cover precluded the bombing and forced the B-24s to Wilhelmshaven. Only one bomber was lost.

-end-

r147

The Royal Air Force Bomber Command first used the downward looking radar, H2S, also known

as Home Sweet Home. The downward radar would produce echoes which were graphically reproduced on a cathode ray tube. In a raid against Hamburg, aircraft of the Pathfinder Force, originated by Donald Bennet on August 11, 1942, was used to mark targets.

-end-

r148

Air Operations Commander-in-Chief Marshal Arthur Harris, in accord with the agreements at Casablanca, received new orders. Pointblank would be postponed, as General Ira Eaker, commander of US 8th Army, was not confident he had sufficient numbers of bombers to carry out the operation. As it was, his aircraft were only now bombing the very edges of Germany.

-end-

r149

Because U-boats were imposing heavy losses on Allied shipping, bombing priority switched back to U-boat bases. Marshal Harris was unhappy with the orders because he felt the priority should be on the bombing of Germany. As well, the U-boat bases, shielded in heavily reinforced pens, were unable to be destroyed.

-end-

r150

General Harris launched his first of three major offensives of 1943 on Essen. The Allies sent aloft 442 bombers, 14 of which were lost.

Harris continued the attacks on U-boats and other targets in Germany during the offensive.

-end-

r151

Attacks on U-boat bases were removed from the priority lists of the Allied, and specifically the RAF, bombing targets. The command realized that too much effort was being lost on this effort and not on the main offensive against Germany. However, U-boat harassing attacks would continue by the RAF and USAAF.

-end-

r152

General Eaker felt that his daylight bombing of Germany was far more effective than those that Harris' RAF carried out at night. He also surmised that it was more effective to damage key industries than just any factory. Taking the six rubrics laid out in the Casablanca directive, Eakers picked 76 targets to be concentrated on. Night bombing by the RAF would need to be associated with those target's cities and not be arbitrary. Lastly, Eakers needed 800 bombers in Britain to carry out his plan. July 1st would provide him with those aircraft.

-end-

r153

RAF planners believed that the German war industry relied heavily upon the electricity produced by the Mohne, Sorpe and Eder Dams, and thus, if they could be destroyed, so would go the industry. The dams were attacked by 19 Lancaster bombers of the 617 Squadron under the command of Wing Commander Guy Gibson. Called Operation Chastise, the bombers dropped special bouncing bombs called Upkeeps. The Mohne and Eder Dams were opened, and Sorpe was damaged. In the flood that followed, 1,300 people were drowned. The RAF lost eight bombers.

The Victoria's Cross was awarded to Gibson, and 34 other air crew were decorated. The raid did not halt Germany's war machine, but did improve the Allied morale.

-end-

r154

Planners at the Trident Conference accepted General Eaker's proposal of targets, but also wished to continue round the clock air raids. As well, the German fighter threat was recognized as a dominant target. Thus, the USAAF was to concentrate its efforts on fighter factories in 1943.

-end-

r155

A total of 826 RAF bombers were launched against Duesseldorf in the largest raid since the 1,000 bomber raids of the last summer. April saw six large raids, and May seven, sent aloft.

-end-

r156

Generals Eaker and Harris formally received their directive to start Pointblank by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Eaker's forces were to target the six Eaker Plan industries and German fighters, while Harris' RAF would attempt to foil German industry in general.

-end-

r157

Allied forces received damaging blows as 26 of the 60 B-17s failed to return from the raid on Kiel. Fighter escorts were not capable of duplicating the range of the B-17s, and engineers were given the task of lengthening the range of the P-47 fighters using under belly fuel tanks. However, it would be a year before deep penetration bombings in Germany would be less vulnerable to German fighters with the addition of the P-51B Mustang into service.

-end-

r158

In its first bombing of Ruhr, USAAF bombers attacked a synthetic rubber plant. It took six months for the plant to resume full capacity again.

-end-

r159

To end the Battle of Ruhr, 422 RAF bombers raided Gelsenkirchen. This completed the last phase of the operation which had begun June 11th. Of a total of 6,037 sorties, 310 aircraft failed to return to base. Excellent German night fighter capability was to blame.

-end-

r160

In an effort to completely destroy Hamburg, General Harris launched Operation Gomorrah. Over four nights, the RAF Bomber Command put aloft 3,015 sorties with losses of 87 aircraft while the US 8th Army Air Force, in two daylight raids, launched 281 planes losing 21.

The city of Hamburg, having been engulfed in a firestorm created by the bombing, lost 40,000 people. The German Minister for Armaments Albert Speer told Hitler that more bombing such as this would bring a... rapid end to the war.

RAF bombers dropped strips of aluminum to confuse German radar in an effort called Window. It confused German defenses, but they were able to recover.

-end-

r161

Romanian oil fields were attacked by USAAF bombers at Ploesti. Based out of North Africa, the 9th Army Air Force lost 54 of their 163 B-24s during the raid. The oil fields retained only 60 percent of their refining ability and was able to recover. Because of the heavy losses of the US forces, no further raids were possible enabling the recovery.

-end-

r162

Believing that the German fighter threat had been sufficiently neutralized, the 8th Army Air Force carried out the first deep penetration bombing of Germany. Schweinfurt was targeted for its production of ball-bearings while Regensburg was on the list for Me 109 manufacture. Of the 376 bombers sent, 60 were shot down. This raid, along with the Ploesti operation, severely damaged US daylight bombing confidence.

-end-

r163

British intelligence had placed Peenemuende high on the list of bases for the German V-weaponry research, a free-flight rocket. Thus, in April of 1943, the British War Cabinet set up a special team to deal with the developments that this German effort posed. The team decided that an air raid was necessary for the destruction of this new offensive weapon. The RAF supplied 596 bombers for the raid that caused great damage and delayed the program for several months. The RAF lost 38 planes.

-end-

r164

According to this plan, Japanese forces would push into India in a three-front effort through the northern most reaches of Burma, the capital of Indian State of Manipur, and from the Bay of Bengal. This attack would have the effect of rendering Chiang Kai-shek supply-less.

-end-

r165

British Commander-in-Chief, General Wavell, ordered the Arakan offensive by General Irwin's Eastern Army. Two brigades were to land amphibiously at Akyab as the 14th Indian Division advanced on Arakan. However, the Akyab landing was postponed because of lack of landing craft which were used in Operation Torch and the Pacific. Irwin did push the 14th Indian Division on to Arakan to improve his supply line and prepare an all-weather road to Cox's Bazaar.

-end-

r166

Deemed as too ambitious and the terrain too dangerous, northern Burma, Japanese divisional commanders stopped the planning of the operation.

-end-

r167

General Wavell ordered Irwin to move his 14th Indian Division down the Mayu Peninsula and cross Foul Point over to Akyab. The Mayu Peninsula was held by only two Japanese battalions. Heavy rains, however, caused delays in the building of the road to Cox's Bazaar and the movement of the troops.

-end-

r168

The Indian troops began their movement down the Mayu Peninsula.

-end-

r169

Having fortified the Buthidaung-Maundaw Line since October 24th, the Japanese found themselves retreating from it in the face of superior numbers of Allied troops. With no opposition, the British forces moved further down to Foul Point while occupying the abandoned Japanese line. As well, a second brigade had moved down the peninsula along the east bank of the Mayu River.

-end-

r170

Japanese forces were able to stave off two attempts to take their fortifications at Rathedaung by British forces moving down the Mayu River's east bank.

-end-

r171

Having occupied Donbaik and reinforced Akyab, the Japanese felt confident that they could return to the Mayu River safely.

-end-

r172

In four days, four attempts at taking Japanese positions failed. The British were faced with artillery proof bunkers that they had no solution for.

-end-

r173

The Japanese managed to repulse further British attacks at Rathedaung. However, tanks were being ferried into the fray by the British to even things up.

-end-

r174

Tanks failed to help the British forces capture the Japanese-held cities of Rathedaung and Donbaik. The Axis troops held fast in the knowledge that the Japanese 55th Division would join them at the end of February.

-end-

r175

Bolstered by the arrival of the 55th Division, Japanese forces went on the offensive attacking the brigade that opposed them at Rathedaung. Its communications with India threatened, the British brigade was forced to retreat.

-end-

r176

The British were again repulsed by the Japanese at Donbaik.

-end-

r177

Continuing their advance against retreating and demoralized British troops, the Japanese were able to cross the Mayu River.

-end-

r178

The commander and staff of the British brigade at Indin were taken by the Japanese as their HQ was overrun.

-end-

r179

General Bill Slim took command of the badly beaten British troops in the Arakan. In a last ditch effort, he tried to trap the Japanese in their advance, but his men were too exhausted and sick with malaria to make much use of the plan.

-end-

r180

Setting up a defensive box, General Slim had hoped to lure the Japanese into it and into their doom. However, his men were too fatigued to hold the box together. He received orders to abandon Buthidaung, but to hold the Japanese off from Maungdaw.

The RAF attempted to slow the Japanese advance, but failed to hold them.

-end-

r181

As the Japanese regained control of the rest of the Buthidaung-Maungdaw Line, General Slim was forced to retreat from Maungdaw and to withdraw to positions further north before the monsoons began.

The Arakan campaign cost the British 5,000 casualties, with the Japanese losing only 1,775 men. The Japanese had forced the British back to their original starting point. This cost General Irwin his command, and furthered the belief that the Japanese Army was more capable in jungle fighting. However, the 14th Indian Division did gain valuable experience in the field that they would use to train other men.

-end-

r182

Recalling his efforts during the British incursion into Abyssinia in 1942, CinC South-West Pacific Command, General Wavell asked for the services of Major Orde Wingate of the Royal Artillery. Wingate believed that the Burmese jungle provided the best opportunity to penetrate deep behind the Japanese lines. Thus, he created several brigades with the express purpose of doing just that. However, these men were never used because the quick Japanese onslaught made their role obsolete. After the inception of the 77th Indian Infantry Brigade, composed of a British infantry battalion, a Gurkha battalion and men from the Special Service Detachments, Wingate was able to persuade Wavell to let his men perform an offensive move called Operation Longcloth. The operation would protect the last British outpost in Burma, Fort Herz, by cutting the Mandalay-Myitkyina and Mandalay-Lashio railways, as well as pushing the Japanese south of Mandalay.

Upon mistaking the pronunciation of the Burmese word for lion, chinthe, as chindit, Wingate so named his fighting force.

-end-

r183

In the dark of night, unopposed, the Chindits crossed the Chindwin River. Having crossed the river, they split into two columns, one of which would divert Japanese troops while the other cut the Mandalay-Myitkyina railway.

-end-

r184

The diversionary column, moving south, came in contact with a large Japanese force near Mainyaung. Instead of fully engaging them, the Chindit column went around the force causing them to lose time.

-end-

r185

The main Chindit force, sent to cut the railway, reached the Pinbon area. Several small columns

were divided into and ordered forward to the Mandalay-Myitkyina railway.

-end-

r186

The main Chindit forces moved to the Mandalay-Myitkyina railway line near Kyaitkin. One of the columns found itself battling a Japanese force, but could not overcome it and retreated.

However, the railway line was cut.

-end-

r187

One of the main Chindit columns dispersed under Japanese pressure. Their field commander ordered a retreat to the Chindwin River. The Japanese, now aware of the Chindit presence, fielded troops to stop them.

-end-

r188

In Bongaung area, three railroad bridges were destroyed by the main Chindit force.

-end-

r189

Having arrived at Tawshaw, Major Wingate altered his original plan of concentrating all his forces north of Wuntho. Instead, he and the forces accompanying him would cross the Irrawaddy River and join his southern forces. This complicated his retreat back into British territory since now he would have to cross two rivers on the way back, not just one.

-end-

r190

Joining his other forces, Major Wingate crossed the Irrawaddy River. Now, his main objective was to destroy the Gokteik Gorge viaduct that supported part of the Mandalay-Lashio road. The two southern columns were given this assignment, but, one was later ordered to act as his advance guard while the other carried out the demolition.

Bordered by the Irrawaddy and Scweli Rivers, the Chindits were now within the ever-tightening snare that the Japanese had lain. Suffering the hot and arid conditions, the British forces were fatigued.

-end-

r191

General Scoones, commander of IV Corps of northern Burma, gave the withdrawal order for the 77th Indian Infantry Brigade. Major Wingate, however, had planned to move his forces to the Kachin hills and strike at Lashio and Bhamo. Scoones warned him that he would not be able to adequately supply him by air. Instead, Scoones ordered Wingate to attack Schwebo during retreat. As well, intelligence learned that the Japanese were procuring all boat activity on the Irrawaddy.

-end-

r192

Major Wingate ordered the withdrawal of the Chindits to begin, even canceling the Gokteik Gorge viaduct operation. But, the Japanese had also begun to cut off the Chindits' escape routes.

-end-

r193

The main force of Chindits had planned on crossing at Inywa, on the Irrawaddy River. Major Wingate felt that the Japanese would not be there because that was the point he had originally crossed into the territory. As the force began its crossing, it encountered heavy fire from Japanese forces on the opposite bank. Wingate broke his forces up into smaller groups in order to cross the river.

-end-

r194

Avoiding major entanglements with the Japanese, Major Wingate and his remaining Chindits managed to cross the Chindwin River to safety.

Some 3,000 Chindits originally entered into Burma with 2,182 men returning from the Longcloth expedition. However, 600 of these returning men were badly fatigued to the point that they would never again be useful in service.

The Japanese had lost the use of the Mandalay-Myitkyina railway for four weeks and suffered

many casualties. But, their hold on Burma was not lessened by Longcloth. The Longcloth soldiers did gain useful intelligence of the terrain, and also managed to bolster the morale of the British after the Arakan campaign. At least now, the British felt confident that the Japanese held no significant jungle fighting capability over those so trained.

-end-

r195

Just as they had on Adak in August of 1942, US Forces landed at Amchitka and established a fighter airfield.

-end-

r196

Ships from the US Navy struck at Attu with heavy artillery.

-end-

r197

Having already been abandoned by Japanese forces, US troops moved onto Banika and Pavuvu. The entire Russell Islands would be secured for use in the attempt to take Rabaul, New Britain, the most important southwest Pacific Japanese base.

-end-

r198

Four out of eight Japanese destroyers and all eight transports were sunk by US planes and light naval craft that intercepted the convoy headed for Lae and Salamaua in New Guinea. The two garrisons on New Guinea were denied vital supplies, and were, from this point forward, reliant upon submarine resupply.

-end-

r199

Vila and Munda, of the Solomon Islands, were bombarded by a US Naval task force. As well, US aircraft attacked Munda. In the process, two Japanese destroyers were sunk.

-end-

r200

At the Pacific Military Conference, General MacArthur outlined his plan to take Rabaul. In it, his Southwest Pacific Command would cooperate with Admiral Halsey's South Pacific Command. MacArthur's forces would invade New Britain from New Guinea while Halsey's men cleared the Solomon Islands. However, planners at the US Navy were fearful that shipping resources would not sufficiently support the effort.

-end-

r201

While US forces were blockading Japanese-held Aleutian Islands, two US cruisers and four destroyers, south of Soviet Komandorski Islands, crossed paths with one Japanese heavy and two light cruisers, as well as eight destroyers escorting a supply convoy meant for the Aleutians. The Japanese ships were forced to turn back without accomplishing their mission. In the battle, the cruiser USS Salt Lake City was damaged as well as its counterpart Japanese heavy cruiser Nachi. From this point forward, the Japanese forces on the Aleutians were supplied by submarine only.

-end-

r202

The US Chiefs of Staff accepted MacArthur's plan for seizure of Rabaul. They placed Admiral Halsey under MacArthur's command for the duration of the operation.

At Lae and Salamaua, US and Australian forces continued their efforts to undermine the Japanese on the islands.

-end-

r203

Admiral Nimitz ordered that Attu, in the Aleutians, be recaptured. Thus, he gave Admiral Kinkaid, with the 7th Infantry Division, responsibility for this action.

-end-

r204

Realizing that his Rabaul base was in eminent danger of US attack, Admiral Yamamoto initiated air attacks against US bases on the Solomon Islands.

-end-

r205

Intelligence reports from Magic allowed for the interception of Admiral Yamamoto's inspection aircraft while in flight over Bougainville. Admiral Mineichi Koga ascended to Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet in what was a terrible blow to Japanese morale.

-end-

r206

Wet weather resulting in mist and mud delayed the progress of US troops as they invaded Attu.

-end-

r207

US forces suffered heavy losses due to weather and hardy resistance, but finally secured the island from the Japanese. Only the Japanese garrison on Kiska remained to be taken.

-end-

r208

Despite the Japanese persistence in bombing US bases in the Solomons even as they lost many aircraft, Admiral Halsey ordered that the 43rd Infantry Division and several Marine Raider battalions land on New Georgia.

-end-

r209

Under great threat from US Naval forces, the Japanese garrison at Kiska began their escape of the island.

-end-

r210

General Krueger established the HQ for the 6th Army at Milne Bay. From here, he would control the land operations for the Allies in the Southwest Pacific.

-end-

r211

US Marines, beginning the attack on New Georgia, landed at Segi Point on the southern tip of the island. No opposition from Japanese forces was encountered.

-end-

r212

Laying nearly 200 miles east of New Guinea, Woodlark Islands was taken by US forces.

-end-

r213

Mirroring other landings in the Trobriand Islands, US forces took Rendova Island, followed immediately by the building of airfields.

-end-

r214

On the southwest coast of New Georgia, US forces secured Viru.

-end-

r215

US forces built a beachhead near Munda on New Georgia.

-end-

r216

In the face of rising Japanese resistance at Munda, US troops landed at Rice Anchorage on the northern coast of the island.

-end-

r217

At Kolombangara, north of New Georgia, Japanese supply ships, as part of the Tokyo Express, had been landing supplies. However, US warships intercepted the convoy, resulting in the loss of one US cruiser and destroyer and two Japanese destroyers.

-end-

r218

While the Japanese were making their presence known on New Georgia, US planes struck out at Bougainville.

-end-

r219

US Naval forces intercepted the Tokyo Express at Kolombangara. One US destroyer and one Japanese cruiser, Jintu, were lost while three US cruisers and two destroyers were damaged. US forces on New Georgia, having resupply problems, were making no headway against the Japanese.

-end-

r220

Japanese forces on New Georgia experienced some success against US troops as they penetrated several lines.

-end-

r221

Even while US forces continued their preparations for invasion including air and naval bombardment, the last Japanese man left Kiska.

-end-

r222

After hard fighting, US forces finally secured Munda airfield. The Japanese then strengthened their resistance on Kolombangara Island.

-end-

r223

In another interception of the Tokyo Express landing troops on Kolombangara, the US Navy managed to sink three Japanese destroyers.

-end-

r224

With no more Japanese resistance, Munda airfield was able to be used.

-end-

r225

Kiska was invaded by 34,000 US and Canadian troops. Instead of a battle, the force was met by a deserted island, the Japanese having already left.

As well, an American force landed at Vella Lavella in Solomons to light Japanese resistance.

-end-

r226

US forces landed on Baanga Island to silence Japanese guns that had been shelling Munda airfield on New Georgia.

-end-

r227

American forces were able to purge New Georgia of the Japanese.

In response to increased Allied pressure, the Japanese concentrated their operations in Bougainville, and began to evacuate their southern island bases. However, the Japanese were able to hold onto the Salamaua and Lae Islands. These islands needed to be taken by the Allies if MacArthur was to move to New Britain from the west.

-end-

r228

Despite advice to the contrary, Stalin ordered Soviet forces to remain on the defensive in the Kursk Salient. Three rings of defenses were amassed around a center of armor. When the Germans attacked, they would be repulsed, then the Soviet force would move out into Ukraine and Belorussia and liberate them by destroying the German Army Group Center.

-end-

r229

Berlin Radio announced to the world the discovery of 4,500 Polish officers laid in a shallow grave near Smolensk. The Germans blamed the incident on the Russians, while they in turn blamed the Germans. The Polish government-in-exile in London sided with the Germans' plea that the Red Cross investigate the site. Subsequently, the Red Cross requested the Soviets to turn over all information they had about captured Polish officers. The Soviets ignored the request. As a matter of the investigation, eastern European pathologists supported the claim that the Soviets were responsible. This resulted in the Soviets setting up their own puppet Polish government-in-exile, ensuring that Poland would never be independent of their rule. Indeed, the Soviets,

although never admitting it, are believed to be the responsible party for the massacre.

-end-

r230

Increasingly hostile treatment and lack of resources sent the people in the Warsaw Ghetto into a frenzy. Their resistance was brave, but was eventually crushed by superior German numbers. In the end, the Germans destroyed the Ghetto and the occupants, 56,000 people, were killed or sent to concentration camps. The Polish government-in-exile, only after the incident, protested the action of the Germans.

-end-

r231

With his senior officers warning him that delay would cost heavily as the Soviets reinforced their defenses, Hitler decided that Citadel would wait until his new heavy tanks could be fielded. His pride and joy were the Panzerkampfwagen V, Panther, and VI, Tiger, as well as the Ferdinand tank destroyer.

-end-

r232

Starting with a huge air and artillery attack in the afternoon, the Germans, with 900,000 troops and 2,500 tanks and artillery, began their assault on the Soviets at Kursk. Opposing the Germans were 1,300,000 Soviet troops and 3,000 tanks at the Central, Voronezh and Steppe Fronts. By nightfall, German engineers were able to clear paths through the Russian minefields.

-end-

r233

Generals Model, with his 9th German Army, and Hoth, with his 4th Panzer Army, struck at dawn. Hoth's tanks were in the lead pushing back the Soviet 6th Guards Army. Model's troops were able to punch through up to six miles at the 20 mile long front. The first Soviet defense line had been compromised.

During that night, heavy rains soaked the battlefield leaving it completely muddy by morning.

-end-

r234

The German 4th Panzer Army, under General Hoth, was able to break through the Russian lines at three points. However, neither of the penetrations was more than seven miles deep. Slowing to a complete stop, General Model's 6th German Army faced hardier, much tougher Soviet defenses.

-end-

r235

The 4th Panzer Army continued its slow advance against the Soviet forces.

-end-

r236

With 1,300 tanks and assault guns blazing, the largest tank battle of the war was fought between the 5th and 6th Guard Tank Armies and the 4th Panzer Division. Lasting for several days, the Soviets were able to stop the progress of the Panzer Division.

General Model's forces were attacked, in the Orel area, by forces from the West and Bryansk Fronts. Model's rear was the target.

-end-

r237

On July 10th, in Sicily, the Allies began a massive series of landings making it necessary for the Germans to reinforce their positions there. As a result, Hitler canceled Citadel for this purpose despite excellent progress.

-end-

r238

The Soviet Central Front moved against General Model's forces to the north. The following day, Hoth and Model ordered their troops to withdraw from the battlefield in accordance with Hitler's orders. Vatutin, once hearing of the withdrawal, and his Voronezh Front joined the Central Front's attack of the retreating Germans.

-end-

r239

Pushing the Germans further, the South-West Front attacked in the Kharkov area.

-end-

r240

The German forces at Orel withdrew completely.

-end-

r241

Orel and Belgorod were liberated from German hands by victorious Soviet forces. However, in the north, the defensive Hagen Line was quickly being put to use by the retreating Germans.

-end-

r242

Pushing the Soviets back on the defensive, German forces counterattacked the Voronezh Front. Their comrades south of Kharkov were then temporarily safe from a renewed Soviet attack.

-end-

r243

Closing Citadel, the last offensive the Germans would carry out on the Eastern Front, the Soviets reached and, on August 23rd, liberated Kharkov. To ensure that they would not be trapped, the Germans quickly withdrew from the city and the Kursk salient was nothing.

-end-

r244

To deceive the Germans about their Operation Husky plans, the body of a British officer was set afloat off the Spanish coast. Eventually the body washed ashore, and was turned over to German forces. On the body were detailed plans about an Allied invasion of Sardinia and a decoy landing at Sicily. Upon receiving the news, Hitler ordered that Sardinia and northern Italy be placed on highest alert in wait for the Allies.

-end-

r245

Having been bombed heavily since May 8th, the island's 11,000 Italian troops surrendered to the landing British forces without raising their weapons for firing.

As well, Lampedusa Island was bombed that night, softening up the Italians there. They surrendered the next day, giving the Allies needed airfields to launch Husky.

-end-

r246

During the night, Allied paratroops landed on the island, preceding the full scale invasion force. However, they were too far scattered to be of major use to the amphibious landings that followed. The Italian 6th Army and two German divisions, 230,000 men under the command of General Guzzoni, were caught off guard allowing the Allies to establish beachheads. Axis counterattacks were easily repulsed by the US 1st and 45th Infantry Divisions at Gela and Piano Lupo. Now that the beachheads were in place, the plan was for Montgomery's forces, soon to arrive, to push northward and take Messina. This would cut off the Axis forces on Sicily from the Italian mainland. General Patton would protect Montgomery's left flank facing into the island.

-end-

r247

Securing his position and repulsing several counterattacks near Gela, General Patton pushed his forces inland while Montgomery moved further north. On the 10th, Monty's forces took Syracuse, and now was closing in on Augusta. The XXX Corps, under Montgomery, was ordered to capture Enna, the Axis communication center at the heart of Sicily.

-end-

r248

British forces in Sicily mounted an airborne and commando attack on the Primasole bridge. This bridge allowed passage over the Sirpito and Gornalunga Rivers just south of Catania, via the coastal road being used by Montgomery. In response to the Allied attack, the Germans deployed their 1st Parachute Division which retook the bridge from the British.

-end-

r249

As Patton and his force moved on Palermo, British troops, having landed further up stream from Primasole bridge, pushed the Germans from the crossing. However, German resolve remained

strong as well as resistance to the Allies.

-end-

r250

In northern Italy, Hitler met with Mussolini in order to shore up his fellow dictator's low spirits. Meanwhile, the Allied forces continued to press on bombing Rome and moving in Sicily. Montgomery was attempting to flank the Germans south of Catania, and Patton's drive from the west was unfailing. The Axis remained strong only in the east.

-end-

r251

The US II Corps held the communication center and the town of Enna.

-end-

r252

Palermo fell to Patton's forces. An occupation of the Trapani and Marsala ports was successfully undertaken. Now, Patton turned his attention eastward towards Messina. It was his desire to reach the city before Montgomery.

-end-

r253

Lack of confidence in his leadership, coupled with the fate of Italian fighting forces, brought Mussolini's dictatorship to a critical point. King Victor Emmanuel and the Fascist Grand Council ordered Mussolini be taken into custody and ordered Marshal Pietro Badoglio to establish a new government. Ponza Island was to become Il Duce's prison.

Afraid that Italy would seek peace with the Allies, Hitler sent several German divisions to northern Italy. Ultimately, Hitler made plans for Mussolini's rescue and installation back into power.

-end-

r254

Canadian troops took Agira.

-end-

r255

On the north coast of the island, the US 45th Division managed to take the city of San Stefano. However, they were stalled the next day at Troina, west of Mount Etna.

-end-

r256

The Italians were the first to cross the Strait of Messina to mainland Italy while the Germans protected the rear. As the retreat was being carried out, British troops captured Centuripe.

-end-

r257

British troops finally managed to take Catania from the Germans.

-end-

r258

Although Troina fell into American hands, the Allied advance up the northern coast slowed due to demolition clearing of mines.

-end-

r259

Delayed at San Fratello, US amphibious troops made a landing at Sant'Agata along the northern coast of the island.

-end-

r260

Northeast of Sardinia, Maddalena Island became the home of Mussolini during his imprisonment by the Fascist Grand Council.

-end-

r261

Another US amphibious landing placed more American troops in the northern coast of Sicily.

-end-

r262

Leaving Sicily to the Allies, the Germans began their retreat from the island to mainland Italy.

-end-

r263

In attempt to convince the Italians that they should seek peace with the Allies after the air raid on the 13th, the Italian Government made Rome an open city. The Chief of the General Staff General Ambrosio, taking the initiative for peace, sent General Guiseppe Castellano to meet with the British ambassador in Madrid.

With Germany growing increasingly uneasy at the changing Italian stance, Field Marshal Rommel called a conference with Italian Army Chief of Staff General Roatta.

-end-

r264

With no Axis troops to be found, American forces took Messina.

-end-

r265

After his unsuccessful Lisbon conference with Eisenhower's Chief of Staff General Bedell Smith and Chief of Allied Intelligence General Kenneth Strong, General Castellano knew that unconditional surrender was the price Italy would have to pay for peace.

With a hard won Sicily campaign over and a now-quavering Italy, Eisenhower's orders were given for the country's invasion.

-end-

r266

Churchill, fearful that the US would now turn its attention on its problems in the Pacific and neglect Europe, called for an Allied summit to be held in Washington, DC. His goal was to persuade the Americans that the setbacks of the Arakin campaign and the shortage of shipping only delayed Anakim, assault on Burma, not destroyed it.

Roosevelt immediately accepted the idea for conference, and Churchill, along with 5,000 German POWs, set sail for the US aboard the Queen Mary. He arrived May 11th.

-end-

r267

The Allied leaders decided several points at the Trident conference. Chief among them were: that Operation Round Up would be delayed until May 1, 1944; that Operation Point Blank joint bombing would commence as a precursor to Round Up; the Operation Husky would be used as a starting point to an invasion of Italy--the Americans believed Sardinia was the best starting point while the British wanted to mount a full scale invasion; that the atomic bomb would be jointly developed by the Allies under the name of Tube Alloys.

Several other topics were left for later consideration. American leadership wanted more support of Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek from the British. But, the Burma Road would not be reopened by Anakim forces. The cost in malarial casualties alone would be too great.

-end-

r268

A joint session of the US Congress hosted British Prime Minister Churchill.

By singleness of purpose, by steadfastness of conduct, by tenacity and endurance such as we have so far displayed--by these, and only these, can we discharge our duty to the future of the world and the destiny of man.

-end-

r269

Making his way to Algiers after his Washington conference by way of Newfoundland and Gibraltar, Churchill wanted to convey, in person, his wish that Eisenhower reconsider the Sardinia option of invasion. As well, Churchill managed to persuade Roosevelt that General Marshall's, who had agreed with Churchill on Operation Husky, move to North Africa was vital.

-end-

r270

To his surprise, Churchill did not have to convince Eisenhower of the necessity of invading Italy instead of Sardinia. The Allied Commander began preparations for such an action and the precise decision for movement was to be his.

Agreed to at this conference was that: de Gaulle and Giraud would set up a Committee for National Liberation of France; the USAAF stationed in North Africa would bomb the Ploesti oil

fields of Romania in Operation Soapsuds.

-end-

r271

Stalin, worried that the other Allies were changing emphasis, voiced his unhappiness to Churchill and Roosevelt that Operation Round Up was to be delayed.

-end-

r272

The leader of the Free Poles, General Sikorski, was killed when his plane crashed off the coast of Gibraltar. Later accusations that Stalin or Churchill had the man assassinated have never been proven.

-end-

r273

Bolstered by the success of Operation Husky and fearful that America would turn her sights to the Pacific, Churchill called another conference. The Prime Minister felt that Italy needed to be invaded quickly, and Rome captured. Eisenhower, however, wished to invade the toe of Italy first. As well, Churchill wanted a quick purge of the Axis from Greece and the Balkans.

-end-

r274

Having conducted meetings since February 10, 1942, the Pacific War Council convened with Churchill in attendance as well as representatives from the Dutch and Chinese. They were eager to hear news of British plans to reopen the Burma Road. Churchill explained to them that it would be some time before that could be accomplished.

-end-

r275

Onboard the Queen Mary, Churchill headed for Halifax, Canada from Great Britain.

-end-

r276

Churchill and Roosevelt did not join the discussions until after the Combined Chiefs of Staff had met for five days. Quadrant, as it was code named, concluded with the following decisions. General George C. Marshall would head the cross-Channel invasion of France called Overlord, formerly Trident. It would take place in May of 1944. If Overlord could not be mounted, Operation Jupiter, the invasion of Norway (at the behest of Churchill), would be the primary alternative. Even though Overlord would take precedence, German forces in northern Italy would continue to face Allied attack. Operation Anvil, an Allied landing in southern France, would be studied for its effectiveness in complementing Overlord. A South-East Asia Command, SEAC, would be formed to oversee Allied forces in southeast Asia including Burma. Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, British Director of Combined Operations, would become the supreme commander. Major Wingate, of the Chindits, would penetrate further into Burma. Lastly, de Gaulle's and Giraud's Committee for the National Liberation of France was formally recognized.

On August 22nd, Stalin sent word to Roosevelt and Churchill that he disapproved of the conferences, as he was sitting idly by and not within the decision making process. His ire was particularly focused on the Italian armistice that the Americans and British were conducting with Marshal Badoglio and his government. Even though they had maintained an effort to keep him informed of every progress, Roosevelt and Churchill acquiesced to Stalin's wish that the Soviets be represented in any negotiations held by countries in western Europe. As it was felt that Finland and Hungary wished to abandon the Axis, Stalin proposed a political commission to study any armistice undertones from the Axis. Finally, Stalin would receive his wish for a tripartite summit.

Also, the British and US worked out their differences on the Pacific Theater where, because of a shortage of shipping and troop strength, Rabaul would be neutralized instead of captured. The central Pacific would be home to a renewed drive, and General MacArthur would continue his efforts in the Bismarck Archipelago, driving up the New Guinea coast to Vogelkorp Peninsula. Finally, Eisenhower had almost completed his plans for an invasion of Italy on the heels of the armistice negotiations.

-end-

r277

In an effort to press the Italians into action as the deadline for decision had been reached, Allied negotiators called General Castellano back for further talks. Hitler's Chief of Staff, Field Marshal Keitel, gave orders that all Italian troops be disarmed if the armistice occurred.

-end-

r278

The Italian Government agreed to send General Castellano to Sicily to sign an armistice with the Allies. Preparations were eventually made with the Allies; however, the Allies had started their preparatory bombing of the Italian coast for the invasions.

-end-

r279

The Allied invasion of Italy began with Operation Baytown which ferried troops across the Strait of Messina onto the Italian mainland. General Eisenhower, wishing to lure away the German troops at Salerno, used Baytown as a distraction to mask the larger invasion at Salerno called Avalanche. However, the Germans had moved further inland from Calabria leaving a trail of mines and demolition. Thus, the British XIII Corps landed easily, encountering only a sparse counterattack.

At Cassibile, near Syracuse, Sicily, General Castellano, for the Italians, and General Bedell Smith, for the Allies, signed the armistice agreement with General Eisenhower looking on. The armistice's effective date was September 8th, and would be kept secret until the Allies had landed at Salerno the same day.

General Eisenhower wished to facilitate the liberation of Italy by having the US 82nd Airborne Division, formerly under command of General Mark Clark, airdrop on Rome. He thought this might cause the Italian Army to join the battle against the Germans; this operation was called Giant II. Marshal Badoglio received two Allied liaison officers who informed the Italian leader of Eisenhower's plan. Fearful of the outcome, Badoglio declined the plan. In its place, General Montgomery would gain control of the Italian Fleet at Taranto, Operation Slapstick.

-end-

r280

While General Montgomery's men dealt with German demolitions laid for them at Calabria, the Avalanche troops sailed from North Africa to Italy.

-end-

r281

In what was to become a major blunder, the Allied Supreme Commander Eisenhower announced, via Radio Algiers, to the whole of Europe the Italian surrender. Since the Avalanche landing force was still steaming for Salerno, this only alerted the Germans of the invasion. They immediately set about disarming the Italian Army after hearing--bring in the harvest--from their commanding officers. One Italian general attempted to stop the disarming, but was killed. For now, the Italian Navy was safe from the German troops.

-end-

r282

Caught unaware, as they expected an easy landing, two US and two British divisions, Commandos and Rangers, were met by heavy resistance from the 16th Panzer Division and the Luftwaffe, who attacked their ships. General Kesselring had deduced that Salerno would be the location of an Allied landing and had prepared for the event. Despite the odds, the Allies managed to forge a beachhead.

As well, British forces quickly conducted the naval round up at Taranto, Operation Slapstick. The Italian Navy provided no resistance to the Allies and set sail for Malta along with vessels from Genoa and La Spezia. On their way to Malta, the squadrons from Genoa and La Spezia were attacked by Luftwaffe forces. The Italian flagship, battleship Roma, was sunk by German rocket bombs. Regardless, the Italian fleet formally surrendered to the Allies at Malta September 10th. Germany could not claim any ships from the fleet of Italy.

Fearing German reprisal, the Italian government and royal family fled to Pescara and Brindisi. Meanwhile, the Germans seized control of Italian holdings in Croatia, Greece and the Yugoslav coast.

Seeing the tide turn against Germany, Iran declared war on the country and joined the Allies.

-end-

r283

As German forces took control of Rome, General von Vietinghoff pushed his 10th Army towards the Allies at Salerno.

-end-

r284

Believing that the Allied taking of the islands pressured the Germans in the Balkans, Churchill hoped to persuade Turkey to join the war. With trouble at the island of Rhodes, the Italian governor surrendered to the Germans; special forces units were able to take Castellorizzo, Cos, Leros and Simi islands. US involvement in the landings were limited to a brigade. For the Americans, the top priority was mainland Italy. The islands were secure by September's end.

-end-

r285

Moving to Corsica where the Italians had been disarmed, German forces left their positions in Sardinia.

-end-

r286

Held in arrest at Gran Sasso in the Abruzzi Mountains, Mussolini was freed by German special forces using gliders. Hitler had planned the operation and meant for Mussolini to form an Italian Socialist Republic in northern Italy. After being reunited with Hitler and with his wife in Bavaria, Mussolini declared the new puppet government on September 25th.

-end-

r287

In an attempt to save Italy, German forces staged a harsh counter on the Allied beachhead at Salerno. After almost being driven back into the sea, the Allies, with the help of air and naval support, were able to push back the Germans.

-end-

r288

Having secured Italy and thus taken the country out of battle, the Allies joined their US 5th and British 8th Armies at Vallo di Lucania. Now, the Allies needed to chase the retreating German forces, who were under General Kesselring. The Germans headed northward toward Germany.

-end-

r289

The Soviet Central Front attacked the southern flank of Army Group Center while comrades to the south, in Donets, continued their assault on German positions.

-end-

r290

Visiting the headquarters of Army Group South, but still focused on the Mediterranean, Hitler could not reach a decision concerning the movement of Army Group South behind the Dnepr. Field Marshal von Manstein, commander of the army, tried unsuccessfully to have Hitler transfer troops from Army Group Center to his command. General von Kluge, visiting Hitler at his Rastenburg headquarters, was able to dissuade the transfer of troops.

-end-

r291

General Tolbukhin's South Front Army drove German forces from Taganrog. Field Marshal von Manstein feared the renewed Soviet effort, realizing it threatened his forces as well as the 17th Army on the Taman Peninsula.

-end-

r292

The Central Front made its drive to the Bryansk-Konotop Railway despite heavy German resistance.

-end-

r293

With the taking of Merefa and, two days later, the railway intersection at Konotop, the Soviets had clearly weakened German strength in the Ukraine. As well, Russian troops were able to capture Stalino.

-end-

r294

Field Marshal von Manstein, meeting at Hitler's headquarters, tried desperately to be allowed to retreat from the Donets Basin to the lower Dnepr. However, Hitler wasn't prepared for such a move as he had just agreed to Army Group A's evacuation of the Taman Peninsula on the 4th, under Field Marshal von Kleist.

-end-

r295

At Novorossisk, the Soviets launched an amphibious and land assault against the German 16th Army. The retreating 17th Army quickly sped its movement out of the Taman Peninsula.

-end-

r296

Resting on the Sea of Azov, the town of Mariupol was cleared of German troops by the Soviets.

-end-

r297

With the Central and Voronezh Fronts moving towards Kiev, Field Marshal von Manstein pulled his troops back towards the Dnepr. He ordered them to ruin as much industrial equipment and plants as possible.

-end-

r298

German forces at Bryansk evacuated the city, fearing oncoming Russian troops.

-end-

r299

General Rokossovsky's Central Front, having moved to abut the Dnepr, were able to liberate the town of Chernigov.

-end-

r300

Bolstered by Stalin's Stavka order that gave a Hero of the Soviet Union award, its highest, to any who forced crossings over the Dnepr, the Voronezh Front, led by Vatutin, took possession of several Dnepr crossings. South of Dnepropetrovsk, General Malinovsky's forces, the South-West Front, gained control of several more crossings the 26th.

Field Marshal von Manstein, at the end of the month, found himself behind the East Wall. Major force losses due to casualties and ill-placed defenses made holding the wall difficult for the Germans.

-end-

r301

At the liberation of Smolensk and Roslavl, the Bryansk Front disbanded with troops joining the Central Front while others formed Popov's Baltic Front.

-end-

r302

Next for the Soviets was the recapturing of the Baltic States. With this new operation, Vitebsk would be surrounded and German Army Groups North and Center would be separated. General Popov's Baltic Front and General Yeremenko's Kalinin Front began the campaign.

-end-

r303

Crossing the Kerch Straits, the German 17th Army completed its move into Crimea.

-end-

r304

Resting on the Sea of Azov, Melitopol was liberated by Soviet forces after ten days of fighting.

-end-

r305

General Vatutin's forces, trying to enlarge the Dnepr bridgehead crossing at Bukrin, met heavy German resistance and were pushed back.

-end-

r306

Attempting to trap the German 1st Panzer Division and the 6th Army, Generals Malinovsky and

Konev ordered an attack at the Dnepr bend.

-end-

r307

New names for the fronts were as follows: Voronezh, Steppe, South-West and South Fronts became 1st through 4th Fronts; Central Front became Belorussian Front; Kalinin and Baltic Fronts became 1st and 2nd Baltic Fronts.

-end-

r308

General Malinovsky's 3rd Ukrainian Front liberated Dnepropetrovsk while the XL Panzer Corps thrust against General Konev's 2nd Ukrainian Front. The Panzer Corps attacked within the Krivoy Rog area forcing the 2nd Ukrainian Front to withdraw to Ingulets River.

-end-

r309

Having been badly hurt in an automobile accident, Field Marshal von Kluge turned over his command of Army Group Center to Field Marshal Ernst Busch. Von Kluge became quite pessimistic in regards to the chances of the German troops in Russia.

-end-

r310

Learning from their disaster at Bukrin, the Soviets engaged the Germans from the Lyutezh bridgehead over the Dnepr.

-end-

r311

Soviet forces were able to liberate the city of Kiev.

-end-

r312

With the liberation of Zhitomir, the Belorussian and 1st Ukrainian Fronts were able to establish a much larger bridgehead over the Dnepr. At 100 miles deep and 150 miles wide, the new bridgehead invalidated the German concept of an East Wall.

-end-

r313

Led by the XLVIII Panzer Corps, the Germans were able to retake the city of Zhitomir via the Russian Kiev bridgehead. For several days, the Germans had the initiative, but the rains quickly washed and muddled their resolve.

-end-

r314

A major thrust by the Belorussian Front managed to free the town of Gomel from the Germans.

-end-

r315

Although the Germans still held Vitebsk, General Popov was able to cut the westward running railroad line out of the city.

Even with the major offensives launched by the Soviets during the autumn, and despite huge territory losses, the German armies in the Soviet Union were still intact.

-end-

r316

In an effort to solidify Chiang Kai-shek's, and thus China's, participation as an Ally, Roosevelt put into motion the repealing of all unequal treaties with China as well as all concessions gained in the century. He also persuaded Britain to do the same. Treaties for this were signed January 11, 1943.

Chiang Kai-shek had made the Three Demands central to any Chinese involvement against Japan. They were: three US divisions in India to help restore Indian-Chinese communication by September of 1942; 500 aircraft to fly combat missions over China from August of 1942; and 5,000 tons of Lend-Lease materiel monthly. Roosevelt changed the unequal Chinese treaties, provided 5,000 tons of supplies and 265 aircraft to aid Kai-shek starting in 1943. However, as far as he was concerned the demand for US divisions was not acceptable.

Chiang Kai-shek acquiesced and planned for participation in the Burma offensive. He provided 15-20 divisions on the condition that British and US naval superiority provided air superiority in

the Bay of Bengal. As well the US and British forces needed to mount an amphibious assault on Rangoon.

-end-

r317

For the Burma offensive, Chiang Kai-shek needed Allied superiority in the Bay of Bengal. However, this had not been done, and Roosevelt asked Kai-shek to wait until he had discussed the situation with Churchill at Casablanca.

Stilwell, commanding the US engineers in Tibet, ordered the building of the Ledo Road which would run through Assam to China via northeast Burma.

-end-

r318

With Chiang Kai-shek confirming that he would not participate in the Burma offensive, Admiral King and General Marshall pushed strongly for the Anakim offensive when US and Anglo leaders met at Casablanca. The two military leaders felt that going after the Japanese through China would be less expensive and time consuming than the island hopping the Allies were now undertaking in the Pacific. However, the plan, to be mounted in November of 1943, was seriously opposed by the British, knowing the difficulty they faced as their Arakan offensive had been stopped to a crawl. After a British-US military mission visited China, it was decided in Calcutta on February 9th that a combined Burma offensive would go forward. However, Col. Claire Chennault, leader of the Flying Tigers, believed that air power was the key to victory in China, and he was backed by Kai-shek.

-end-

r319

The US engineers had reached the edge of the Burma frontier and were only 43 miles from Ledo, but rain hindered their advance from here as they completed only four more miles.

-end-

r320

The Japanese offensive was designed to capture food stocks in the form of rice. Their target was the Hupeh-Hunan rice growing area. Afraid that Chungking was the Japanese target, the Chinese ordered a portion of Y Force to protect the area. General Stilwell argued heavily against the move as Y Force was to be used in the November Burma offensive.

-end-

r321

Composed of Col. Chennault's old China Air Task Force, the US 14th Air Force was ordered to band by Roosevelt who feared that China might succumb to Japanese pressure. Chiang Kai-shek called for Chennault's 14th Air Force to attack the Japanese on their Yangtze offensive. Roosevelt agreed.

-end-

r322

At the Trident conference, the Allies decided to increase air support for China rather than undertake the Anakim offensive. As well, General Stilwell pushed for Chinese land operations in Burma. Chiang Kai-shek agreed to this in writing on July 12th. Stilwell, upset that the Chinese Y Force had been sent to the Yangtze, obtained a combat force of 3,000 US men, called Galahad, to be used for deep country operations along with Major Wingate's Chindits.

-end-

r323

US General Stilwell sent word to Chiang Kai-shek that it would be helpful if the Communists, under Mao Tse-tung, be freed from the Nationalist blockade. Stilwell felt that the Communist forces could yet be used against the Japanese. However, Kai-shek feared that, since the Soviet-Japanese Pact of 1941, the Communists were again more of an enemy than a friend and needed to be blockaded in the Yunnan Province. Still, John P. Davies, Stilwell's political adviser, assured the general that a mission to the Communists needed to be tried. Kai-shek resented this move and it added to the growing tensions between the Chinese leader and Stilwell. However, Kai-shek promised Stilwell that no force would be used against the Communists.

-end-

r324

Lord Mountbatten arrived at Delhi to become the commander of SEAC, South East Asia Command. General Stilwell met him in Delhi and assumed the deputyship. Nine days after his arrival, Mountbatten flew to Chungking and met with Chiang Kai-shek. The new SEAC commander impressed Kai-shek, and was also able to stop any calls for Stilwell's removal. Chiang Kai-shek's self-importance was boosted by Mountbatten's visit, and he soon began to feel that he had achieved equal status with the Big Three leaders of the main Allied countries.

-end-

r325

With Roosevelt and Churchill agreeing, Stalin's calls for a Big Three meeting in Tehran, Iran and a Moscow foreign minister's summit were set.

-end-

r326

With the signing of the Third London Protocol, the US agreed to provide the USSR 2.7 million tons via the Soviet Pacific ports and 2.4 million tons via Persia through June 30, 1944.

-end-

r327

At the ending of the foreign ministers conference at Moscow, the Allies reaffirmed their acceptance of the Overlord operation and the Arctic convoys, satisfying the Soviets. China was allowed to join the Big Three in reacceptance of the Unconditional Surrender terms for the Axis. Stalin, now wanting to provoke the Japanese, protested Chiang Kai-shek's contribution to the conference, but Roosevelt was determined to elevate Kai-shek's status.

Churchill, wanting to alleviate any further strategy problems, called for a senior military staff meeting in Cairo between US, British and Soviet officers. Roosevelt and Churchill would join the staffs, and then all the Big Three would hold summit in Tehran. The Soviets did not send a military delegation to the Cairo military meeting.

-end-

r328

While at sea on the battlecruiser, HMS Renown, Churchill learned that the Germans had mounted a series of landings at Leros in the Dodecanese Islands. The British garrison on the islands had no means of support and were quickly taken. Churchill's plans for any Baltic movement were now put to rest. His health was affected by the turn of events, and he had to rest at Malta for two days.

-end-

r329

With the recognition by the Allies that Italy was a co-belligerent, Italy's forces were now open for use by the Allied command. However, this diplomatic move only covered the Allied-controlled southern Italy and not the north. In the German-held north, though, resistance groups were forming.

-end-

r330

Churchill was joined in Cairo by Chiang Kai-shek and Roosevelt who arrived via air the 22nd.

-end-

r331

At the Cairo Conference, Lord Mountbatten outlined his plans for Burma's dry season in 1943 to 1944. He called for a renewed Arakan campaign, Chinese attacks in Burma and more Chindit operations. An amphibious campaign to recapture the Andaman Islands, Buccaneer, would be mounted except the Chinese vetoed this idea.

In Europe, the Allies would continue to push the Germans from Italy and supply the Balkan resistance with materiel. As well, the Balkans would be helped even if it meant delaying Operation Overlord until July of 1944.

Decisions made at this conference were not final and had to be confirmed by Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt in a personal meeting.

-end-

r332

Overlord took precedence at the Eureka Conference. Stalin pushed hard for the May 1944 target date for the Overlord landings. As well, an assault on German positions in the south of France

would be mounted. The Soviet leader would brook no talk of taking Rome by January 1944, or an amphibious landing on the Italian Adriatic coast, and was unhappy at talk of supporting the Balkan resistance. The Western Allies received concessions from Stalin also. In return, the Soviets would mount an offensive on the Eastern Front making it difficult for the Germans to move troops to reinforce France. The Soviets, and the other Allies, would supply the Yugoslav resistance. Diplomatic pressure would be maintained on Turkey to join the Allies. Stalin also agreed that the Soviets would join the fight against Japan after Germany had been defeated. Some talk had started at the conference about the shape of the post war world. Poland's borders were tentatively set westward, and Germany would be partitioned in some fashion not yet agreed to. Yet, the Western Allies still had no reckoning as to what a post war world would mean to their relationship with the Soviet dictatorship.

-end-

r333

The Prime Minister of Turkey, Ismet Inonu, met with Churchill and Roosevelt, but they were unable to persuade him to join their war effort. Weak and ill-equipped, the Turks feared a German attack if they declared war. However, Inonu slightly acquiesced in a probable allowance of British aircraft to fly from Turkish bases.

-end-

r334

When the conference reconvened, Operations Overlord and Anvil, landings in the south of France, were given top priority. Roosevelt had decided that General Marshall was too valuable an aid to command Overlord, and it was given to Eisenhower. As well, the British persuaded the Americans that Buccaneer, the recapture of the Andaman Islands, could not go forward because of lack of landing craft. Chiang Kai-shek would have to be placated by the Americans, and manufacture of such craft would have to increase. The Combined Bomber Offensive against Germany would continue and be escalated.

Roosevelt returned to the US the 7th, but Churchill stayed trying to assist the resistance fighters in the Balkans any way he could.

-end-

r335

Making landings east of Lae, US and Australian amphibious troops were precursors of a heavier attack the next day. The US 503rd Parachute Regiment, in its first Pacific operation, landed at Nadzab airfield to the northwest of Lae. They made short work of the Japanese stationed there, and a portion of the 7th Australian Division was able to be flown in at the airfield. The Lae landings were quickly masked by the resumption of attacks on Salamaua.

-end-

r336

Withdrawing from the heavy Allied pressure on Salamaua, the Japanese followed suit on the 15th by retreating northward from Lae.

-end-

r337

Facing extremely tough Japanese opposition, the Australians amphibiously landed successfully at Finschhafen.

-end-

r338

With the Americans landing to their west at Vella Lavella and clearing an airfield, the Japanese decided that their garrison on Kolombangara needed to be evacuated.

-end-

r339

As Finschhafen was taken by the Australians, the Allies made Madang port their next target. Under heavy Japanese pressure, two pushes were made to that end, one along the coast from Finschhafen and the other inland from Lae.

-end-

r340

As the US Navy bombed Wake Island, Admiral Nimitz ordered the Allied Central Pacific offensive to begin. Admiral Spruance would oversee the Gilbert Island landings and take out the Japanese

positions in the Marshall Islands and Nauru.

-end-

r341

Managing to rescue 600 men from the island, the Japanese lost one destroyer in their Tokyo Express convoy to Vella Lavella. The US Navy, in the ensuing battle, lost a destroyer and two damaged.

-end-

r342

To distract the Japanese from the events taking place near Bougainville, the 8th New Zealand Brigade, in Operation Goodtime, landed on the Treasury Islands facing resistance at Mono. During the night, the US 2nd Marine Parachute Battalion landed at Choiseul, in Operation Blissful. The marines were evacuated from the island November 3rd.

-end-

r343

General Vandergriff's US 1 Marine Corps (3rd Marine, 37th Infantry Divisions) landed in Cape Torokina, meeting only small resistance, despite General Hyakutake's 33,000-man 17th Army. His force was concentrated in the south of the island.

-end-

r344

Sailing to Bougainville from Rabaul to stop more US landings, the Japanese 8th Fleet, two heavy and two light cruisers, 11 destroyers, and five transports encountered a US Naval task force. Admiral Omori lost a light cruiser and a destroyer, and the Americans had damaged two cruisers and two destroyers. Several Japanese aircraft were shot down as well.

-end-

r345

In order to threaten the US contingent at Bougainville, the Japanese navy sent a task force to Rabaul Island. Admiral Halsey assigned the carriers USS Saratoga and USS Princeton to the job of taking care of the new Japanese threat. During the subsequent air battle, the Japanese had badly damaged seven cruisers and two destroyers. In the end, the Japanese withdrew to Truk Island with Rabaul under more and more Allied attack.

r346

With Tokyo Express landing troops in the north part of the island, the Americans had to hold onto their beachhead through heavy fighting.

-end-

r347

The main invasion force for the Gilbert Islands set sail from Pearl Harbor followed the 13th by men from the New Hebrides. As well, US naval planes began bombing the Gilberts to soften the Japanese starting the 13th.

-end-

r348

The Japanese had prepared for an invasion force, and thus Tarawa and Makin Islands were heavily defended. US Marines, facing this opposition on Tarawa, lost many men while securing their beachhead. On Makin, the marines fared much better.

-end-

r349

Having no hope of evacuation or supply, the Japanese troops on the islands fought to the last man. On Makin and Tarawa Islands, the Japanese lost 555 and 5,000 men, respectively, while the US lost 218 and 3,500.

-end-

r350

Near Cape St. George, New Ireland Island, five US Naval destroyers caught five Japanese destroyers ferrying reinforcements to Buka Island. Closing the naval fight for the Solomons, the Japanese lost three destroyers with the Allies losing none.

-end-

r351

US forces were allowed to take the Abemama Atoll without incident.

-end-

r352

Opening the way for an amphibious assault on the Marshalls during January 1944, Kwajalein and Wotje were attacked by a US carrier group. The carrier USS Lexington was damaged by a Japanese air-launched torpedo in the process.

-end-

r353

Despite heavy resistance from the Japanese, and failure to expand the beachhead further, the Bougainville airfield was opened for service.

-end-

r354

To provide a distraction for the main landing force at Cape Gloucester in the west, the US 112 Cavalry Regiment landed at Arawe Peninsula on the southern portion of New Britain.

-end-

r355

The US 1st Marine Division landed at Cape Gloucester only after heavy bombing of Japanese bases on New Britain had been undertaken by the US naval aircraft. Some of the islands' 10,000 Japanese troops had been diverted to the landing at Arawe. This made it possible for the marines to seize the island's airfield. However, after this event, the marines encountered heavy resistance from the Japanese.

-end-

r356

Hoping to quicken the movement toward Madang, the US 32nd Division landed at Saidor.

-end-

r357

Operation Flintlock started with US forces landing unopposed at the eastern Majuro Atoll. From here, the Allies would push off towards Kwajalein and Eniwetok.

-end-

r358

After the 4th Marine Division landed in the north and the 7th Infantry Division landed in the south, the Kwajalein Atoll was secured by February 4th. Some 8,000 Japanese and 1,800 US casualties enabled the Allies to look toward Eniwetok, Operation Catchpole, next.

-end-

r359

Fighting to the bitter end, some 3,500 Japanese soldiers lost their lives while only 1,200 US men died during the battle.

The tide of battle was now turning against the Japanese in the Pacific. The next Allied targets were Truk in the Caroline Islands and the Marianas Islands. Finally, Rabaul would be isolated.

-end-

r360

Despite heavy German land mines and demolitions, the US 5th Army and British 8th Army entered Naples and Foggia, respectively. Each would cross around the Appenine Mountains, the US forces to the west and British to the east.

-end-

r361

In an attempt to have German defenses targeting towards the Biferno River, British Commandos landed at Termoli and took positions. However, heavy rains, with ensuing mud, slowed the joining of the Commandos with the British 78th Division.

-end-

r362

As per decisions made at the Italian Axis conference on September 30th, Rommel, under Hitler's orders, reinforced Field Marshal Kesselring with two divisions. Kesselring was told to hold the Bernhard Line, from Gaeta and Ortona; Hitler had been persuaded by Rommel to delay the Allied advance as much as possible.

On October 7th, the Allied intelligence operation Ultra discovered the reinforcing movements. As the autumn rains began to fall, the Allies now were faced with a slowed advance on Rome, and

could not hope to reach it within a month.

-end-

r363

Although the 5th Army reached the Volturno River and made some crossings the 13th, the retreating German forces, with good rear movements and demolitions, kept the US troops from moving from the river until the 24th.

-end-

r364

The British 56th Division attacked Monte Camino, on the Garigliano River, but they were unable to dislodge the Germans. Further north, under heavy resistance, the US 3rd Infantry Division broke through the Bernhard Line.

-end-

r365

Hitler had been convinced that Field Marshal Kesselring's plan of defending Italy south of Rome was a solid one. He moved Field Marshal Rommel, with Army Group B, to France and appointed Kesselring supreme commander of Italy. Army Group C would now encompass the 10th Army and the new 14th Army under General Eberhard von Mackensen.

-end-

r366

As General Montgomery and his forces pushed toward the Sangro River, General Eisenhower urged General Alexander to keep fighting the German resistance and capture Rome. As well, the Allied Supreme Commander received permission from the Combined Chiefs of Staff to gather the landing fleet needed for Operation Overlord. Eisenhower would use some of these craft in Operation Shingle. Quickening the slow advance of the Allies, the operation was a landing at Anzio by the US 5th Army.

-end-

r367

While allowing General Clark to stop his drive toward Garigliano River and rest his exhausted men, General Alexander ordered Montgomery to push to Pescara, over the Sangro River, and then Rome from the east. Clark and his men would then move up the Liri and Sacco Valleys, and, once at Frosinone, he would carry out Operation Shingle.

-end-

r368

Taking advantage of much improved weather, Montgomery's forces made their way easily across the Sangro.

-end-

r369

Montgomery and his troops were able to break through the eastern edge of the Gustav Line, but heavy casualties caused them to slow their movement.

-end-

r370

According to the Allied agreements in Tehran, Operations Overlord and Anvil would take precedence over the Italian campaigns. However, Overlord would not commence until Operation Shingle, the landings at Anzio, Italy, was completed, and Anvil would wait for the Allies to reach the Pisa-Rimini line in Italy.

-end-

r371

General Mark Clark, after resting his men, again started his offensive over the Sangro River while the British 56th Division captured Monte Camino. Two days after, Monte la Difensa and Monte Maggiore were taken by the US II Corps. As a result, the German 10th Army retreated to the Gustav Line.

-end-

r372

Resting on the slopes of Monte Sammucro, San Pietro saw the loss of 1500 lives in its taking.

-end-

r373

Fearing that two divisions instead of one would be needed to undertake Operation Shingle, General Clark called for its cancellation. He felt that the German 10th Army would not budge from the Gustav Line unless threatened by a larger force. However, because Churchill wanted to force an Italian decision rather than a French one in Anvil, he pushed heavily for its continuation. Roosevelt concurred if Overlord and Anvil were not ultimately threatened by the decision to go forward. Thus, Shingle would be finished by January 22nd and its landing craft given up by February 6th, so as not to impose delays on Anvil and Overlord.

-end-

r374

With winter coming on and heavy losses, General Montgomery's 1st Canadian Division took Ortona. His depleted men would rest before any further offenses.

-end-

r375

The Allies were gearing up for Overlord, and General Eisenhower relinquished Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean to Field Marshal Maitland Wilson. Eisenhower, along with Montgomery who was operational commander, returned to Britain to ready the forces and plans. The British 8th Army was now commanded by General Sir Oliver Leese, and three of the army's crack divisions, who were taken by Montgomery, were replaced by Alphonse Juin's French Expeditionary Force and Wladislaw Anders' II Polish Corps. The French Expeditionary Force allowed General John P. Lucas' VI US Corps to undertake Operation Shingle.

-end-

r376

As the X British Corps under General McCreery established bridgeheads over the river, the US 5th Army crossed over the Garigliano and attacked the waiting Germans.

-end-

r377

The US II Corps joined the 5th Army at Garigliano River while the US 34th Infantry Division crossed the Rapido River, stopping short of Monte Cassino. However, the US 36th Division was repulsed from its attempts to cross the Rapido.

-end-

r378

Carried out by the British 1st and US 3rd Divisions, Operation Shingle was an early success, meeting only slight German resistance from the two area battalions. However, General Lucas was unable to take advantage of his quick beachhead because of poor communication. Field Marshal Kesselring, surprised by the attack, sent the German 14th Army to Anzio to contain the Allies, while Lucas continued to reinforce his beachhead.

-end-

r379

Having crossed the Rapido River north of Monte Cassino, the French Expeditionary Force was able to approach Monte Cassino, but German resistance did not allow them to take the mountain.

-end-

r380

Fearing a coming Soviet assault, General von Kuechler asked Hitler's permission to withdraw to the prepared defensive Panther Line. However, Hitler declined because General Lindemann and his 8th Army felt they could withstand an attack. As well, Der Fuhrer was well aware that leaving Finland isolated would allow the country to bow out of the war.

-end-

r381

The 2nd Ukrainian Front, under General Konev, attacked the German 8th Army's positions over the Dnepr River. Hitler had repeatedly denied Field Marshal von Manstein's requests to withdraw behind the Dnepr bend, and now Stalin, with Vatutin's December 24th attack on the Kiev salient, had opened a 40-mile hole between the 1st and 4th Panzer Armies.

-end-

r382

General Konev's troops managed to liberate Kirovograd from German hands.

-end-

r383

Under General Malinovsky, the 3rd Ukrainian Front engaged the German 6th Army, but was unable to make headway. The attack ended after five days.

-end-

r384

Having kept the Oranienbaum bridgehead since the siege of Leningrad in 1941, the Soviets sent the 2nd Shock Army from the bridge out towards the German perimeter. A successful initial drive was made by the Soviets.

-end-

r385

The Soviets released the 42nd Army up towards the south of Leningrad, and by the 19th it had joined the 2nd Shock Army in its fight. As well, the German 18th Army found its southern positions flanked by troops from the Volkhov Front. The Soviets also, having crossed the frozen Lake Ilmen, attacked Novgorod.

-end-

r386

Afraid that the 18th Army would be surrounded, General von Kuechler asked Hitler's permission to withdraw the army; he refused. Instead, Army Group Center would supply a Panzer division reinforcement. Von Kuechler also had to deal with 35,000 resistance fighters in the territory occupied by the 18th Army. They were able to disrupt von Kuechler's communication lines. Stavka ordered Luga taken by the 30th.

-end-

r387

By the 28th, the 1st and 2nd Ukrainian Fronts managed to encircle the 1st Panzer and 8th Armies. Field Marshal von Manstein, after Hitler ordered the men to hold their positions, tried to find reinforcement troops to send to the area.

-end-

r388

With the opening of the Moscow-Leningrad railway, the siege of Leningrad ended. It had lasted 900 days, with the people of the city suffering great losses and sacrifices. The day following the liberation, 324 guns fired 24 salvoes with subsequent fireworks. One year after the liberation, the Order of Lenin was given to the city by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet.

-end-

r389

When General Vatutin pushed toward the Styr River, his right flank troops had moved over the pre-war Polish border.

-end-

r390

Without prior consent of his superiors, General von Kuechler ordered the 18th Army to withdraw to the Luga River. However, he was replaced the next day by General Walter Model.

-end-

r391

Attempting to spur his forces on despite slow progress and marshy terrain, Stalin called for Luga's capture. In the meantime, the German troops in the area were, for the most part, able to retreat.

-end-

r392

Renewed Soviet pressure from the 3rd and 4th Ukrainian Fronts made imperative the German 6th Army's move from the Dnepr left bank as well as from the Dnepr bend.

-end-

r393

As the German forces retreated to Pskov via railway lines, Soviet troops liberated Luga. Seeing the Volkhov Front's mission completed, Stalin split the divisions between the 2nd Baltic, against the German 16th Army, and Leningrad Fronts.

-end-

r394

Army Group North, under extreme pressure from the Soviets, was given permission by Hitler to retreat to the Panther Line on the Estonian border. As the Soviets approached the Panther Line March 1st, they ended their attacks in the north.

-end-

r395

Hitler allowed the trapped German forces at Cherkassy to penetrate their Soviet encirclement. Leaving their machinery and badly wounded, 30,000 Germans fell back to their fellows lines.

-end-

r396

Troops from the 3rd Ukrainian Front liberated Krivoy Rog.

-end-

r397

Losing 57 out of 719 bombers, RAF air crews and Sir Arthur Harris needed to find a new method of bombing Berlin. Indeed, over the next two nights 127 out of 2,262 bombers failed to return. Harris called bombing raids against Berlin off until he could rectify his loss ratio.

-end-

r398

The first since Schweinfurt-Regensburg, the US 8th Army Air Force resumed its bombings of Germany with Stuttgart. Losses were heavy at 45 bombers, but the USAAF was receiving into its ranks the longer-range, 450-mile P-38 escort and the B-17G with its forward-pointing nose turret. These planes improved morale greatly.

-end-

r399

In order to keep German night fighters from coalescing in one area, the RAF Bomber Command started bombing two targets, one the main, the other a decoy. Hanover was the main target, while Oldenburg received less bombers and was the decoy. With this tactic, Allied losses were lessened. Out of 711 bombers only 26 did not return. The US 8th Army Air Force was considering switching to night attacks like the RAF, and it sent five B-17s on the mission.

-end-

r400

The Focke-Wulf plants at Anklam and Marianeburg were the targets of the US 8th Army Air Force. Each target was heavily damaged while only 20 bombers were lost. British Chief of the Air Staff, General Portal said the raid was 'the best high-altitude bombing we have seen this war'.

-end-

r401

General Hap Arnold, meeting with the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, argued that the USAAF in Europe needed restructuring. If Operation Pointblank was to continue, Italy needed to be the base for bombers that could reach targets well out of range of Britain based aircraft. As well, the 12th US Army Air Force needed to be split in two, with one half supporting ground troop movement and the other still strategic bombing. General Doolittle would receive command of the strategic bombing wing of the new air force while General Spaatz would become commander of Mediterranean operations. Hap's suggestions were enacted after all agreed at the Sextant Conference, but the British, especially Eaker, were worried that the 8th Air Force was now under-powered.

-end-

r402

The bombing raid on Schweinfurt, the second by US forces, was a disaster. Out of 291 total craft, 60 did not return. Stinging from this loss, the USAAF decided to concentrate on French airfields instead.

-end-

r403

In its first strike for Operation Pointblank, the 15th Army Air Force targeted the Me 109 plant at Wiener-Neustadt. The aircraft caused heavy damage, and only lost 11 of 110 bombers.

-end-

r404

Sir Arthur Harris, in an attempt to consolidate equipment and techniques used to confuse German

radar and the like, created No. 100 Special Duties Group to be used by the RAF Bomber Command. Its actual use would be some while after its inception.

As well, Harris had planned to use the US 8th Army Air Force for Berlin bombing raids, but the creation and subsequent loss of equipment and personnel to the 15th US Air Force made General Eaker unwilling to go along with the plan. However, Harris did decide that the RAF would commence its operations.

-end-

r405

The RAF lofted 444 bombers at Berlin and 395 at Mannheim and Ludwigshafen to start the Battle of Berlin. On the first night, most German night fighters attacked at Mannheim and Ludwigshafen causing 23 downings of British bombers, while only nine were lost at Berlin. Cloud cover made precision bombing impossible, and thus bombs fell on all parts of the city.

Berlin was again attacked four days later by 764 bombers, and twice more before the end of the month.

All totaled, the four bombings caused 4,500 dead, many homeless and vast destruction throughout the city. Only 80 bombers were lost out of 2,040 flown in the raids.

-end-

r406

Operation Crossbow, the RAF Bomber Command's attempt to strike V-weapons facilities, commenced with a strike on a French site. Several other locations were determined in November of 1943, and all were going to be difficult to bomb. The 617th Dambuster Squadron, armed with the new 12,000lb bomb--Tallboy, raided the site, but did not come away with a success. The second raid, two weeks later, was equally unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the RAF continued to bomb Berlin four more times, despite bad weather. Frankfurt-am-Main and Leipzig were also hit. The British lost 130 of 2,047 bombers in the attacks.

-end-

r407

General Spaatz was ordered to assume command of the US strategic air forces in Europe while General Eaker took command of the Allied Air Forces in the Mediterranean. The 8th Army Air Force would be controlled by General Doolittle.

-end-

r408

The US 8th Army Air Force targeted the German fighter production plants at Halberstadt, Oscherleben, and Brunswick. Out of 633, only 34 bombers were lost. Air support for one of the attacks was maintained by P-51B fighters, which managed to down 60 German fighters. For the rest of the month, the 8th Army's bombing was hampered because of bad weather.

-end-

r409

Though he was now ordered to maintain pressure on German ball-bearing and fighter factories, Sir Arthur Harris managed to strike Berlin five times during the month. Out of 3,314, 202 bombers were lost.

-end-

r410

Delayed because of bad weather, the first air raid on Berlin resulted in the loss of 42 of 891 bombers. Since the almost half-month layoff in bombing, the Germans, Harris realized, now had built Berlin's defenses up strongly. Thus, Sir Arthur Harris switched the RAF's main targets to the south of Germany.

-end-

r411

General Spaatz, using a combined RAF Bomber Command, US 8th Army Air Force and 15th US Air Force effort, dropped 15,200 tons of bombs on ball-bearing and fighter manufacturing plants throughout Germany. This pared the Luftwaffe force tremendously from which it never recovered.

-end-

r412

In its first attempt to bomb Berlin, the USAAF mounted a daylight raid in which 60 of 800 bombers did not return.

-end-

r413

Heavy winds scattered the last RAF bomber raid on Berlin. Some 72 of 811 aircraft failed to return.

-end-

r414

Good night fighter tactics and bad weather cost the RAF Bomber Command 96 of 795 bombers against Nuremberg; their worst loss.

Pointblank ended with the air raids on Nuremberg. Sir Arthur Harris had not achieved a victory over Berlin as he had done with Hamburg. Indeed, Germany did not fall to its knees at his onslaught mainly because of bad weather and effective night defenses.

The USAAF, due to the arrival of the P-51B fighter, recovered from the batterings it had taken during the autumn months of 1943.

Operation Overlord, though, would now change the role of the air forces; bombing raids would be replaced by troop support.

-end-

r415

British General Frederick Morgan became the designated Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander (COSSAC). Heading the Anglo-US tri-service staff, Morgan was assigned with the task of detailing plans for an invasion of northwest Europe, Overlord.

-end-

r416

The Chief of Staff of the Supreme Allied Commander formal directive, issued by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, called for a victory over all German troops in northwest Europe. A resultant build-up of men and materiel was needed for an invasion force for 1943 should the Germans weaken, as per Operation Rankin. The operation had three subqualifications: A--German lines along the North Sea, Channel and Atlantic coasts were thinned; B--the major German line was maintained but evacuated in parts; C--a sudden German collapse resulting in evacuation in the west. The Luftwaffe would be drawn into battle with the Allied air forces, as required by the plans for Operation Starkey. Then, an amphibious invasion of the European continent, termed Overlord, would be readied for early 1944.

-end-

r417

The Commando raids across the English Channel to the French side were conducted for two months. They tested and surveilled the coast defenses. Other intelligence data was gained from SOE and the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS). As well, intelligence work was done from pre-war picture postcards and photos of the coast of France.

-end-

r418

In order to undertake the Overlord operation, a site had to be chosen that was capable of supporting three divisions. Available landing craft limited the number of troops, and subsequent reinforcements as well as being within fighter range from Britain. Pas-de-Calais and Normandy, France were the only possible sites chosen by COSSAC General Morgan. Although Pas-de-Calais was closer to Britain, Normandy had to be the landing area as it was less heavily defended. So, the assault force would land north of Caen and create a beachhead. From here they would move northwest to take Cherbourg and its port, and then south into Brittany crossing the Seine River.

Portions of the assault landing force were designated for Operation Rankin A and B, while a tri-national force would occupy Berlin in case of Rankin C.

At the Quebec Conference, the Allied leadership agreed to the plan with Churchill's stipulations that the Germans had only 12 mobile divisions in France and their reinforcements could not exceed 15 in two months. Also, the British Prime Minister urged an increase in the Overlord assault force by one-quarter.

In order to confuse the Germans as to the possibility of a Normandy and of a French invasion, several false plans were put into effect, Operation Bodyguard. Fortitude North was designed to keep the Germans worried that Scandinavia would be the site of an invasion, and a false

amassing of troops was held in Scotland called Skye. To persuade the Germans that a landing would be made in Belgium or Northern France, Allied false preparations were made for a Pas-de-Calais assault; this was code named Quicksilver. Another false landing was prepared for in the Balkans, called Zeppelin. Finally, to induce the Germans in diverting troops from their eastern lines and Italy, an effort was put forward for an invasion of Norway, Tindall, and Brittany, Wadham.

-end-

r419

Along the Kent coast, British troops made their way as if they were an invasion force. This Operation Harlequin was meant to coax the Luftwaffe to attack, but they did not.

-end-

r420

Chief of Staff of the Supreme Allied Commander General Morgan took control of all special forces movement on the English Channel. These operations would cease until December when the resumption of beach surveillance continued. The surveillance was undertaken by the Combined Operations Pilotage Parties (COPPs) swimming from midget submarines.

-end-

r421

Artificial harbors, called Mullberries, were used to supply the effort of Operation Overlord and the build-up of the Normandy beachhead before the Cherbourg port was opened for Allied use. Engineers also designed PLUTO, a Pipeline Under the Ocean, that supplied the invasion troops with much-needed fuel.

-end-

r422

Up until Eisenhower's appointment as Supreme Allied Commander for Overlord, President Roosevelt had favored General Marshall as SAC. Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin and his own politicians argued against Marshall, and Eisenhower was named. Stalin was notified of Eisenhower's command after the final Cairo Conference disbanded.

As well, Deputy Supreme Commander for Overlord would be Sir Arthur Tedder; Chief of Staff would be Bedell Smith; Naval CinC would be Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay; Air Forces CinC would be Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory.

-end-

r423

German CinC West Field Marshal von Rundstedt charged Field Marshal Rommel, now CinC Army Group B, with the defense of the western front from the Bay of Biscay to Holland. Rommel's generals were Hans von Salmuth, commander of the 15th Army from Ostend to Le Havre, and Friedrich Dollman, commander of the 7th Army from Le Havre to the Loire River. After inspecting the fortifications made along the Atlantic Wall, Rommel immediately ordered its reinforcement.

-end-

r424

The Normandy assault force, Allied 21st Army Group, was composed of the 1st US Army, commanded by General Omar Bradley, and the 2nd British Army under General Miles Dempsey. The Army Group was headed by General Montgomery. However, the land CinC would be retained by General Eisenhower who would control the Continental operations personally.

-end-

r425

After being shown the plans for Overlord by Churchill, Montgomery strongly disagreed with the probable outcome of the invasion. He felt that the invasion force was too small as was the landing area. The Germans would be capable of containing the Allied beachhead. General Eisenhower agreed with Montgomery's assessment.

-end-

r426

General Montgomery convened the first of his Overlord planning conferences at Allied 21st Army Group HQ, St. Paul's School, Kensington. After discussing the original invasion plans, Monty produced a much improved version where five divisions land on a 50-mile stretch from the east side of Cherbourg Peninsula to the Orne River. All flanks would now be covered by airborne

landings. The 2nd British Army would attack the Germans near Caen, as the 1st US Army tackled them on both the Cherbourg and Brittany Peninsulas. After these actions were taken, the combined armies would penetrate the mainland of France.

General Eisenhower approved of the new arrangements, but would not, however, cancel Operation Anvil, the landings in the south of France, as Montgomery wanted. As well, since the size of the invasion force was increased, more shipping would be needed and could not be obtained by May 1st, the original deadline for preparations. Eisenhower, thus, delayed Overlord to early June.

-end-

r427

Unless undertaken by the Combined Operations Pilotage Parties (COPPS), all raids across the Channel were canceled. Allied commanders were afraid the Germans would be spurred to reinforce their defense of the coast by such actions.

-end-

r428

Speaking to his CinCs, Hitler boasted that the fearful Allies had yet to decide where to mount an invasion landing. However, Field Marshal Rommel tried in vain to gain control from Hitler of the armored divisions in the west. He would use the tanks to immediately counterattack any Allied invasion. Hitler would not relent.

-end-

r429

Although Sir Arthur Harris argued that the RAF Bomber Command should concentrate on morale targets, General Spaatz believed air power should target oil sources. However, General Eisenhower, along with the Overlord planners, decided that air support would best be used in destroying transportation targets to seal off Normandy as well as the ongoing campaign to weaken German air power.

Formal control of the Allied air forces was shifted to Eisenhower April 14th, with a reaffirmation of its role under Overlord coming three days later.

-end-

r430

The Allied commanders presented the final plans for Operation Overlord at St. Paul's School, Kensington.

-end-

r431

Weather permitting, the most ambitious amphibious landing ever would commence June 5th, as per General Eisenhower.

-end-

rx1

From the newly created beachhead at Anzio, the US VI Corps started their push outward towards central Italy fighting the ever stronger German 14th Army. As well, the 3rd US Divisions moved on Cisterna while the 1st British fought through the Alban Hills to Albano.

-end-

rx2

In a continuation of earlier attacks on Cassino, the US 34th Division took Hill 593 after fierce fighting with the German forces. However, February 9th saw the American troops pushed from the hill by renewed German attacks.

-end-

rx3

Strong German forces were able to repulse the British 1st Division back towards their original beachhead. The British were almost in the sea before casualty laden German troops stopped the attack.

-end-

rx4

In preparation for a land attack, the Allies bombed Monte Cassino Monastery. In addition, General Alexander replaced the 2nd New Zealand with the 78th Division in the 8th Army, and placed it with the 4th Indian Division in the New Zealand Corps, commanded by General

Freyberg. The 4th Indian Division performed the land attacks against Monte Cassino but was repulsed by the Germans on the 17th.

-end-

rx5

Having assembled 10 divisions to strike at the Allied 5, General von Mackensen maintained early success in attacking the British sector of the Anzio beachhead. Only massive air and artillery support on the 18th and 19th helped the Allies keep in place their combined beachhead, which at one point was almost split along British and American lines by the Germans.

-end-

rx6

Because of his failure to push out at Anzio, the Allied command for the operation fell from General Lucas to General Lucian Truscott.

-end-

rx7

General Alexander submitted his proposal for Operation Diadem to Supreme Allied Commander Mediterranean General Maitland Wilson knowing that the best scenario called for General Kesselring's forces to stay in their current locations. If the Germans did not withdraw, the 8th Army would move across the Apennines and hit Cassino with 12 divisions. At this point, the army would break through the Gustav Line moving towards Rome through the Liri Valley. Meanwhile, the US 5th Army would attack in the west, and General Truscott would move out of Anzio securing German communications running northward. Once these objectives were accomplished the Allies would start destroying Axis supply lines from the air in Operation Strangle.

Operation Diadem, needing troops, would not start until early May at the latest, and Operation Anvil would have to be halted for this plan.

-end-

rx8

The US 3rd Division was the target for renewed German aggression at Anzio. Like previous German attacks, Allied forces staved off defeat using massive air and artillery bombardment on the Germans. Finally, though, the Germans called off all further attacks at Anzio on March 3rd.

-end-

rx9

Allied air and artillery was used to soften up German forces at Monte Cassino before British troops, the 2nd New Zealand and 4th Indian Divisions, moved against their positions. However, the German 1st Parachute Division presented strong opposition, forcing Alexander to cancel the attacks on March 21st.

-end-

rx10

Allied leadership agreed to halt Anvil, now occurring July 10th, so Operation Diadem could be instigated. While troop stamina was strengthened, Operation Strangle started.

-end-

rx11

Diadem's opening was mixed with some success. The French Expeditionary Corps, accompanying the US 5th Army, managed to cross the Aurunci Mountains and establish an overlook on the Liri Valley. But, the Polish II Corps was repulsed by the Germans at Monte Cassino, and the British XIII Corps could not advance further from their Rapido River bridgehead.

-end-

rx12

The former Adolph Hitler Line, now Dora Line, became the withdrawal point for Kesselring's forces in Italy. The US 5th Army managed to do heavy damage to the German 71st and 94th Divisions which badly needed a respite.

-end-

rx13

For the second time, the Polish forces attacked the Monte Cassino Monastery, but German troops held their ground. However, in response to the withdrawal orders, the Germans retreated northward early next morning allowing the Polish flag to fly over the heavily damaged monastery.

-end-

rx14

The US II Corps was able to liberate the towns of Gaeta and Itri while the US 5th Army advanced against the German 10th Army in disarray. By the 22nd, American forces had reached French Pico and Terracina.

-end-

rx15

As the British 8th attacked, Canadian forces were able to breach the Dora Line defenses. Despite heavy casualties and strong German counterattacks, the Canadians moved through the Line on the 23rd.

-end-

rx16

Cutting through German resistance, the US VI Corps pushed out of the Anzio beachhead towards Cisterna. On the following day the Allies built Highway 7, dividing the German 10th from the 14th Army.

-end-

rx17

Field Marshal Kesselring was given permission by Hitler to withdraw German forces to the Caesar Line in Italy.

-end-

rx18

Having moved from the Anzio beachhead, the US II Corps was able to join with the US VI Corps at Highway 7. Meanwhile, the British 8th Army, in the Liri Valley, moved over the Melfa River obstacle.

-end-

rx19

General Mark Clark's US VI Corps was intended to fight eastward and stop the withdrawal of the German 10th Army. Instead, General Clark decided to push up Highway 7 to Rome. The VI Corps would have to face the Caesar Line at the Alban Hills. General Truscott's forces had already attacked at Albano with no success. As a matter of course, the Germans were enabled, by Clark's actions, to strengthen their defenses around Valmontone and repulse the US II Corps while the German 10th Army fled northward.

When US troops were able to defeat the Germans at the Alban Hills, the Canadian I Corps managed to slow the 10th Army's retreat from Valmontone along Highway 6. The 10th Army moved to Frosinone by May 31st.

-end-

rx20

Hitler allowed Field Marshal Kesselring to pull all of his troops from Rome. All German forces were evacuated by the afternoon of the 4th.

-end-

rx21

Operation Diadem ended as the US 5th Army moved into the German free city of Rome. Although, the Allied push did not end until Livorno was taken on July 19th. Field Marshal Kesselring, under pressure from the Allied advance to the Arno River, managed to keep his troops from being outflanked.

Casualties ranged from 25,000 German and 40,000 Allied lives. The Allied advance, however, did allow Operation Overlord to be undertaken without letting Kesselring to move troops to France.

-end-

rx22

In response to the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavian Communist resistance leader, Marshal Josip Broz Tito, called his countrymen to repel the invaders. Serbia was quickly controlled by the Slavs while 4,000 Italian soldiers were captured in Montenegro.

Tito, leader of the Communists, and Mihailovic, leader of the Cetniks and backed by the Allies, met under these circumstances, but the ideological differences between the two could not be bridged.

-end-

rx23

A British officer, who amphibiously landed on the Yugoslav coastline, was able to contact Mihailovic and have supplies air dropped to him. However, when he learned that these were being used against Tito's forces, they were canceled.

-end-

rx24

A large German force drove Tito back into Bosnia from Serbia. At the end of 1941, approximately 80,000 men and women were members of the Communist partisans.

-end-

rx25

Although the Cetniks, under Mihailovic, had joined the German invasion force, the resistance, mounted by the mostly Communist partisans, were able to check any Axis movement.

-end-

rx26

A third strong Axis push forced Tito and men into Bosnia.

-end-

rx27

To gain popular support for his movement and the material support of the Allies, Tito called the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia into action. The Soviet Union, despite promises, failed to deliver their aid to Tito, and the Western Allies still wished to support Mihailovic, now a minister in the exiled Yugoslav government. Regardless, Tito's forces numbered 150,000 strong and had a fierce military-like discipline.

-end-

rx28

German troops pushed Tito back from Bosnia to Montenegro. However, Tito was able to dispatch a 12,000 man Cetnik force. From this point forward, Mihailovic lost his ability to confront Tito enmasse.

-end-

rx29

In the mountains of Montenegro, a 150,000-man Axis force overwhelmed 20,000 Communists. They managed to escape into northeast Bosnia, but the move cost them 8,000 men.

-end-

rx30

Churchill sent Fitzroy Maclean to Yugoslavia to meet with Tito. Mihailovic had openly collaborated with the Axis and would not oppose them until the Allies invaded. On the other hand, Tito had managed to mount a powerful opposition against the Germans. Captain William Deakin, a former research assistant to Churchill, recommended a diplomatic meeting between Tito and the British. He had been the British liaison officer with Tito since the previous May. Mihailovic and the British remained cooperative until May 1944, fueling Tito's suspicions.

-end-

rx31

Italian troops in Yugoslavia had been defeated by Tito's forces and disarmed. Ten Italian divisions relinquished their weapons while the Germans were dumbfounded. As well, Tito liberated parts of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slovenia.

-end-

rx32

Attacking throughout Yugoslavia, in Macedonia, Croatia, Bosnia and Slovenia, the Germans were able to engage the Communist forces but could not capture or defeat them.

The British created Force 133, in Cairo, to help support the Communists in Yugoslavia.

-end-

rx33

Because the Germans were threatening to take several other islands in the Adriatic, the British, in agreement with Tito's forces, set up a communications headquarters on Vis Island. This ensured that Tito and the Allies had a line of communication. Indeed, the operation was conducted by Commandos and US OSS officers.

The Germans managed to invade several of the islands in the Adriatic.

-end-

rx34

Pushing through Istria, Macedonia, Slovenia and Serbia, the Germans mounted their seventh offensive against Tito.

-end-

rx35

During the night, the German 500th SS Parachute Battalion air dropped on Tito's headquarters in Drvar, completely surprising the Communists. With a stroke of luck, Tito escaped to an air field some 12 miles away and then to the Force 133 headquarters at Bari. The Germans were overwhelmed by the forces at the headquarters and suffered through many casualties before being relieved.

-end-

rx36

Both the British and Tito's forces mounted an offensive against a German garrison on Brac Island. Designed to relieve Tito's mainland forces, the garrison was not destroyed although the Germans did place more troops in the Dalmation coast.

-end-

rx37

While Tito built a new headquarters on Vis Island, more British-Communist raids continued against German positions.

-end-

rx38

At the meeting in Naples, Churchill voiced his irritation that British arms were being used by Tito's forces on fellow Yugoslavs. Tito assured Churchill that his intention was never to use arms against his brothers, and that Yugoslavia would not become a Communist nation after the war had ended. Tito had managed to garner from Churchill the fate of northern Italian and Austrian territories that Yugoslavia claimed, but Churchill was elusive.

-end-

rx39

With the Soviets now closing in on his border, Tito felt it was imperative for him to meet with Stalin. The British were not apprised of this eventuality.

Tito had the difficult task of placating both the US and Britain and the Soviets. The British and Americans did not wish Yugoslavia to fall into the Communist sphere, while the Soviets would certainly force the issue. Tito did agree to let King Peter II return to Yugoslavia after the war, but this promise was never kept.

-end-

rx40

General Renya Mutaguchi and his 15th Army would be responsible for the assault on Assam, Imphal in March. The attack, Operation C or U-Go, would destroy a British communications center and force the British into action.

Accompanying the Japanese was Subhas Chandra Bose, leader of the Free India campaign and founder of the Indian National Army. He encouraged General Mutaguchi's already grandiose invasion of India plans. Bose felt that the Indians would revolt against the British if the Japanese invaded.

-end-

rx41

The XV Indian Corps, commanded by General Philip Christison, held Maungdaw in hopes that a push could be made to the Akyab air fields. Any Rangoon operations would need air support from these fields. Christison managed to establish a Maungdaw-Buthidaung line by late January.

-end-

rx42

SEAC Commander Lord Mountbatten agreed to the plans for Operation Thursday where General Stilwell would move from Ledo to Shaduzup and then to Mogaung-Myitkina. From this point he would move into China, completing the road he had started. Major Wingate would destroy Japanese communications of the forces opposed to Stilwell. Finally, it was hoped that the Chinese would attack Burma from Yunnan.

-end-

rx43

The Chindits stationed at Ledo started their trek towards Pinbon-Pinlebu. Later, several other Chindit brigades would be flown into the Indaw area.

-end-

rx44

Operation Z, Ha-Go, was launched by the Japanese in the Arakan. By bypassing the 7th Indian Division's lines and those at Taung Bazaar, the Japanese forces were able to attack the XV Corps from the rear. At Sinzweya, the Japanese and British forces conducted most of their fighting.

-end-

rx45

British and Indian troops were able to hold off the Japanese for the first time, forcing the Japanese to withdraw.

-end-

rx46

At Walawbaum and Maingkwan, the Japanese 18th Division was defeated by General Stilwell's men. As well, Chinese and US troops, 5307 Composite Unit or Merrill's Marauders, attacked with the British.

-end-

rx47

The Chindits landed at Broadway, Chowringhee, and several other sites via glider and Dakota DC-3 airplane. At Aberdeen and White City, and all other sites as well, the Chindits were able to set up strong defensive lines. The Japanese 18th Division attacked at Aberdeen and White City, but were repulsed handily. The Chindits also began to cut the Mandalay-Myitkina railway.

-end-

rx48

The Japanese 33rd Division opened the offensive by attacking the 17th Indian Division at Tiddim from Fort White. General Slim, commander of the 14th Army, felt that a Japanese attack would not occur for weeks. Thus, the unprepared 17th Division retreated towards Imphal.

-end-

rx49

The British forces, pitted against the Japanese, were able to take both Buthidaung and the Razibil fortress, which the Axis had held since the beginning of the Burma invasion. Because of these two successes, the British now transferred two divisions to the Imphal-Kohima front.

-end-

rx50

A strong Japanese push by the 33rd Division forced the 20th Indian Division to retreat up the Imphal road. The British troops were ordered to hold the Tamu hills, which they did despite fierce Japanese attacks.

-end-

rx51

The Japanese 31st Division attacked Sangshak which was guarded by the 50th Indian Parachute Division. The British were able to stave off the offensive for a week, but eventually fell. However, this extra time allowed the British to strengthen Kohima, the railhead for Dimapur, which was the ultimate target for the Japanese. The Japanese did sever the road access between Imphal and Kohima.

-end-

rx52

After Major Wingate had inspected his troops in the Indaw area, his plane experienced a serious, fatal malfunction. Wingate's replacement to head the Chindits was Major-General W.D.A. Lentaigne. As well, the 14th Chindit brigade, newly flown into the Indaw area, along with the 16th, attempted to capture Indaw but failed. Meanwhile, the Japanese continued to attack White City.

-end-

rx53

As the Japanese 31st Division approached Kohima for a siege the 5th, a lone British infantry

battalion arrived to protect the town.

-end-

rx54

As the 16th Chindits were being rescued and White City came under increased Japanese attack, Lord Mountbatten and General Slim placed the Chindits under Stilwell's command, who was busy repulsing the Japanese 18th Division.

-end-

rx55

General Montague Stopford, having sent two brigades to clear a way from Dimapur to Kohima from his XXXIII Corps, was able to relieve the badly fatigued men at Kohima. They had been under heavy attack from the Japanese. However, the Japanese 15th Division turned from Kohima, south, to Imphal. They were stopped by the British at Sengmai. As well, the 33rd Division found itself digging in at Bishenpur well south of Imphal, their target.

By the 19th, the fighting had depleted the strength of the Japanese who, under the guidance of General Mutaguchi, stored only enough supplies for three weeks. Thus, Japanese troops were forced to go on the defensive.

-end-

rx56

General Stopford ordered his men to clear the Japanese from the Kohima area. However, Japanese resistance was strong, delaying their capture for two months.

-end-

rx57

The Chinese started their offensive movement against the Japanese on the Salween front.

-end-

rx58

As the Japanese 33rd tried to take Bishenpur and the 17th Indian Division attempted to destroy Japanese communications lines, each tangled with the other in an ongoing battle.

-end-

rx59

At Myitkina, Merrill's Marauders were able to take the airfields but not the town itself as the Japanese successfully reinforced their lines.

-end-

rx60

The Kohima-Imphal road was reopened by the British who had secured the area.

-end-

rx61

After five hard days of fighting, the Chindits managed to seize Mogaung, but this left them depleted and unable to continue.

-end-

rx62

Having seen no progress and with the Japanese 15th Army under heavy attack from General Slim's British forces, General Masakazu Kawabe called the Burma Area Army's offensive to a halt. General Slim, however, was able to follow the retreating 15th Army across the Chindwin. But, the July monsoons stopped any further offensives by either side.

-end-

rx63

With the Stilwell's capture of Myitkina from the Japanese, the Ledo Road was capable of reaching as far. The Chindits and Merrill's Marauders were dispatched back to India.

From this point forward in Burma, the Japanese would be on the defensive.

-end-

rx64

Taking the airfield at Momote, portions of the US 1st Cavalry Division landed on Los Negros. They had to fight off several Japanese counterattacks, but did so easily.

-end-

rx65

US forces on Los Negros opened the Momote airfield for Allied use. Supplies and men were

landed to prepare for the clearing of the Admiralties.

-end-

rx66

The US beachhead at Bougainville was attacked by Japanese forces.

-end-

rx67

The Combined Chiefs of Staff directed Nimitz and MacArthur to focus their sights on Luzon and Formosa for February 1945. But, in the meantime, Hollandia, New Guinea must be landed at; Saint Matthias Islands needed to be seized.

-end-

rx68

Manus was the site of US landings in the Admiralties.

-end-

rx69

The US Marines landed without incident on Emirau and completed the circle around the Japanese positions on Rabaul and Kavieng, New Ireland.

-end-

rx70

US forces at the Bougainville beachhead easily repulsed the last Japanese counterattack there. Light fighting continued, but the Japanese began retreating from Empress Augusta Bay after their defeat. General MacArthur, knowing they were ineffectual, let the Japanese forces escape and commanded his men to prepare for further offensives. US troops had taken the Admiralties.

-end-

rx71

The man who succeeded Yamamoto, Admiral Mineichi Koga, was killed when his plane crashed.

-end-

rx72

Japanese forces, having been bombarded by air and sea, withdrew inland in the face of US force landings at Hollandia.

-end-

rx73

Australian forces captured Madang from the Japanese.

-end-

rx74

Aircraft based on carriers decimated the Japanese Truk base.

-end-

rx75

Japanese troops, on New Britain, started to retreat to their Rabaul base.

-end-

rx76

After two days of fighting, US forces secured Wadke Island.

-end-

rx77

US troops landed on Biak Island to face an 11,000 man Japanese force and tough defenses. MacArthur had planned for a quick seizure of the island, but knew he would now have to wait and use an alternate air base against the Philippines.

-end-

rx78

In order to sever the direct route to Japan from the other islands, US naval forces, under Admiral Marc Mitscher, began bombardment of Saipan with aircraft from their carrier groups in the area. The Japanese had planned to make impossible this eventuality by destroying the American carrier fleet with Operation A-Go. Aircraft from the Kurita's main battle fleet (consisting of three light carriers and four battleships), Ozawa's carrier fleet (consisting of three carriers), and Joshima's reserve carrier fleet (consisting of two carriers and one battleship) would attack the Americans. What the Japanese did not realize is that the US had the largest fleet ever seen in the Pacific: 12 escort carriers, 11 cruisers and five battleships composed the invasion fleet with

one Army and three Marine divisions; 15 carriers composed Admiral Mitscher's main carrier fleet; and 21 cruisers and seven battleships composed Admiral Spruance's 5th Fleet.

-end-

rx79

As the 2nd and 4th Marine Divisions established a 20,000 man beachhead on Saipan against 32,000 Japanese, Admiral Toyoda ordered the destruction of Admiral Mitscher's fleet.

-end-

rx80

To support US forces' inland movement, the US 27th Division started landing on Saipan. The Japanese fought extremely hard to check the US drive, now lacking a substantial air support. Admiral Mitscher's aircraft were attacking the Japanese on Guam and preparing to meet the Japanese fleet steaming towards them which had been spotted by US submarines.

-end-

rx81

The Battle of the Philippine Sea began with the Japanese fleet attacking the American fleet with four different air strikes. Radar detected the aircraft, and the Americans intercepted with their own. Only 29 US aircraft were lost to the 219 Japanese. As well, US submarines sank two Japanese carriers.

Believing that his aircraft had landed on Guam, Admiral Ozawa did not attempt to recover them until the next day. However, Admiral Mitscher's fleet located the Japanese fleet and destroyed 65 aircraft, wounded several warships and sunk one carrier. All that was left for Ozawa to do was retreat towards Okinawa, his and the Japanese fleet crippled for the rest of the war. The Americans were so successful that they called the battle: the great Marianas turkey shoot. As well, the American struggle on Saipan had begun to turn in their favor.

-end-

rx82

American forces seized Mount Tapotchau, the highest point on Saipan, from the Japanese.

-end-

rx83

Some small pockets of Japanese resistance remained, but Biak was mostly cleared by the Americans.

-end-

rx84

Australian and US troops landed amphibiously on Numfoor Island.

-end-

rx85

General Saito and Admiral Nagumo, in the face of disaster, committed Japanese ritual suicide, seppuku; however, before the act, they ordered one last suicide resistance against the Americans. This was easily dispatched. American casualties numbered 16,500 while the Japanese lost 26,000 men.

-end-

rx86

Sentiment against General Tojo's running of the war had grown enough to force him to resign the prime ministership. His replacement was General Kuniaki Koiso.

-end-

rx87

In order to take Guam, held by 18,000 Japanese, the 1st Marine Division and 77th Infantry Division amphibiously landed on the island.

-end-

rx88

A garrison of 9,000 Japanese attempted to halt the 2nd and 4th Marine Divisions from landing on Tinian. Their night counterattack was repulsed by the Americans.

-end-

rx89

US forces were able to withstand heavy Japanese counterattacks on the island.

-end-

rx90

More Americans landed at the Vogelkop Peninsula, New Guinea.

-end-

rx91

The Japanese stopped resisting the overwhelming American forces on Tinian.

-end-

rx92

The end of Japanese struggling on Guam, in effect the capture of the Marianas, and the defeat of the Japanese fleet in the Philippine Sea, signaled the larger loss of the war for the Japanese as a whole.

-end-

rx93

General Vatutin, leader of the 1st Ukrainian Front, was ambushed and killed by nationalist Ukrainians who were once supported by the Germans, but now against them as well. The general died of his wounds on April 15th and was replaced by General Zhukov.

-end-

rx94

In Ukraine, the 1st Ukrainian Front was joined by the Konev's 2nd, on March 5th, and Malinovsky's 3rd Fronts, on the 6th, in attacking German Army Group South and A. The Soviets wished to divide the two armies and then conquer each individually. General Zhukov's army, in spite of the mud, was able to move its 100-mile long line 25 miles forward in the opening two days of the offensive.

-end-

rx95

General Konev's troops forced a German retreat from Uman. In the process, he had taken 600 guns, 200 tanks and 12,000 trucks.

-end-

rx96

General Malinovsky's forces liberated Kherson.

-end-

rx97

The Germans had been pushed back to the Dniester River by General Konev's forces. In his flanking maneuver of the 1st Panzer Army, General Zhukov did not reach the river for one week after. Protecting Zhukov's right flank that very day, the 2nd Belorussian Front, under Kurochkin, attacked Army Group Center.

-end-

rx98

If Hungary had succumbed to Allied pressure, access to her valuable oil fields would be lost by Germany. Therefore, Germany invaded Hungary to keep her loyal.

-end-

rx99

To secure his country's loyalty to the Axis cause, Romanian Dictator Antonescu traveled to Berlin to ask Hitler's permission to use Romanian troops to fight for Romania's borders. The Soviets had already made movements to make a separate peace with Romania, but Antonescu would have none of that. Hitler concurred.

-end-

rx100

As the Soviets sidled the Romanian border along the Prut River, Stalin urged Generals Konev and Malinovsky to capture the German 8th and 6th and the Romanian 3rd Armies.

-end-

rx101

Zhukov's and Konev's armies managed to surround the 1st Panzer Army.

-end-

rx102

Adolph Hitler, feeling that their armies had failed him and retreated with cowardice, replaced Field Marshals von Manstein and von Kleist with Ferdinand Schoerner and Walter Model, both devoted

Nazis, as commanders of Army Group South and A, respectively. Model would command the renamed Army Group North while Schoerner had the renamed South Ukraine Army.

-end-

rx103

With the help of two SS divisions, the 1st Panzer Army managed to break free of the Soviet stranglehold it was in. The SS attacked near Podgaitzy, which allowed Hans-Valentin Hube's force to move free.

-end-

rx104

A Finnish armistice delegation returned from a Moscow meeting with the Soviet demands. These demands included returning to the 1940 Finnish-Soviet borders, imprisoning or expelling all German troops, and paying 600 million dollars in war reparations over five years. On April 17th, a rejection of these terms by the Finnish parliament doomed the Finns to fight alongside the Germans.

-end-

rx105

General Konev's men moved into Romania as they crossed the Prut River.

-end-

rx106

Having pushed as far as Kovel, the 2nd Belorussian Front found itself faced with heavy German opposition. It could push no further, and, therefore, the Soviet command pieced its constituent troops out to various nearby fronts.

-end-

rx107

The German 17th Army, under General Erwin Jaenicke, had to defend the Crimea against the oncoming 4th Ukrainian Front commanded by General Fyodor Tolbukhin. The next day, when the Independent Coastal Army, lead by General Yeremenko, attacked his position as well, Jaenicke was forced to retreat towards Sevastopol.

-end-

rx108

Leaving the German 17th Army desperate and surrounded, General Malinovsky's men liberated Odessa.

-end-

rx109

The German garrison at Ternopol had fought to the last man for Adolph Hitler, who had declared the city a Fuehrer Festung, warranting death in its defense. General Zhukov's forces had now reached the Carpathians and halted their movement forward.

-end-

rx110

Keeping his summer plans close to his chest, Stalin let only five other senior officers of Stavka know of them. The Soviet leader wished to liberate his own and brother Slav nations, as well as Poland and Czechoslovakia, from German rule. To be conducted simultaneously with Overlord, the Russian fronts would make deceptive movements to the north and south with the real blow to be at center. Finland would be isolated and driven out of the fighting. This would also keep Army Group North from reinforcing Army Group Center. Belorussia and Lvov were to be the main targets of the offensive with movements, along with Operation Bodyguard, that would lead the Germans to believe that a combined Allied offensive would occur in Norway.

-end-

rx111

By the 9th, the Soviet attack on German positions in Sevastopol proved successful. The German 17th Army, in tatters, was forced back to Cape Khersonessky where, on May 12th, 25,000 men surrendered.

-end-

rx112

Stalin's Operation Bagration was explained to the commanders or representatives at a conference held in Moscow. The northern aspect of the plan would occur June 9th while the main

thrust at center would occur June 22nd.

As well, the Soviet fronts were rearranged. The 2nd Belorussian was reformed. The 3rd Belorussian Front, formerly the West Front, was now commanded by General Chernyakhovsky, and General Maslennikov created the 3rd Baltic Front. General Meretskov was transferred from the disbanded Volkhov Front to the Karelian Front.

Field Marshal Ernst Busch, commander of Army Group Center, smelled that the Soviets were going to attack him. However, Adolph Hitler thought Stalin was after the Romanian oil fields and the Balkans and refused Busch's request to retreat to the defensible Beresina River.

-end-

rx113

Group Captain J.M. Stagg, Allied meteorologist, reported to Eisenhower that the weather for early June would be favorable.

-end-

rx114

As the landing materiel was being loaded into the carrying craft, Eisenhower moved his operation to Portsmouth.

-end-

rx115

As the proposed D-Day came closer and closer, Group Captain Stagg warned Eisenhower that a storm front was coming.

-end-

rx116

After his meeting with Group Captain Stagg and Generals Tedder and Leigh-Mallory at 0430, General Eisenhower delayed the invasion for 24 hours as the day would be overcast and sea conditions rough. Stagg would later, at 2130 hours, make another forecast stating that rains would cease at midnight and an improvement in weather would occur by 36 hours. Thus, Eisenhower placed D-Day at June 6th, and the invasion fleet set sail.

-end-

rx117

As the German 7th Army practiced war games, Rommel pleaded with Hitler for reinforcements and the invasion fleet sailed for Normandy. Several ancillary Allied operations were conducted. In Glimmer and Tractable, the RAF dropped Window radar deception pieces near Bologne and Le Havre, with 35 vessels at sea helping give the appearance of invasion fleets heading in those directions. The BBC transmitted the second half of the first verse of Paul Verlaine's Chanson d'Automne, alerting the French resistance of the coming invasion. The British 6th Airborne Division landed, amidst high winds that caused the parachutists to disperse, near the Dives River, with many men drowning in it. They managed to destroy five bridges over the river and the coastal battery at Merville. The US 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions, under high winds as well, landed on the Cotentin Peninsula. The 82nd landed within the boundaries of the German 91st Division and could not carry out its bridge operations. Crossings over the Merderet River were taken by the 101st, but the Douve River crossings were not destroyed. The last preparatory missions were the bombings in which 1,760 tons were dropped on the German beach positions.

-end-

rx118

All the Allied activity caused Field Marshal von Rundstedt to request Hitler's permission to reinforce the Normandy beaches with the Panzer Lehr and 12th SS Panzer Division. Hitler thought it was best to wait until morning when the story would unfold better.

While the Germans worried, the beaches of Normandy were targeted by 700 warships, 2,700 support ships and 2,500 landing craft in the largest amphibious operation of its kind ever.

The first Allied landing, that of the US 4th Infantry Division, was a stroke of luck. The landing craft landed 2,000 yards from the intended spot on Utah Beach. Some 23,000 men were let ashore at a point that was weakly defended by the Germans, only 197 casualties were suffered.

At Omaha Beach, the US 1st and 29th Divisions, landing 55,000 men, were pinned down by the Germans under the cliffs of Normandy. Several brave efforts were conducted that allowed the troops to move out from the German pressure, but 4,649 men were lost.

Gold Beach was successfully landed at by the British 50th Division and the 8th Armored Brigade.

The improved tanks of the 79th Armored Division helped the forces take the beach, but the town of Le Hamel proved difficult.

The 3rd Canadian Division landed at Juno despite rough seas and underwater obstacles. As night fell, they were able to join the British 50th Division.

At 0730 hours, the beach at Sword was landed upon by troops of the British 3rd Division. Moving from the beaches easily, the Brits took Hermanville. However, problems with overcrowding delayed the depth brigades, allowing the Germans more time for reinforcement. The I Special Service Brigade of the Commandos landed at Ouistreham and joined the 6th Airborne Division from there.

Allied air superiority and naval artillery had damaged the German positions greatly during the invasion. Compounding their difficulties was the movement of the 21st Panzer Division, originally in the Orne area, to Caen. If not for the Allied overcrowding at Juno and Sword, the 21st Panzers would not have had time to reinforce Caen and deny the Allies there, as well as the link up of the Canadian and 3rd Divisions. Because of Hitler's original delay and his unacceptance of Normandy as the main Allied thrust, the 12th SS Panzers and the Panzer Lehr Division were not able to be deployed until after noon, and thus not useful for fighting that day.

The Allies had not achieved all their objectives but had succeeded in landing 155,000 troops.

-end-

rx119

German positions in Caen were defended fanatically by the 12th SS Panzer Division, Hitler Youth, against the 3rd Canadian Division. The 50th Division was able to capture Bayeux, however, and join it to the Omaha beachhead.

-end-

rx120

British forces, in the form of the 7th Armored Division, attempted to capture Caen from the west, but was stopped by the Tiger tanks of the 12th SS and 2nd Panzer Divisions which filled the weakest points of the German defense lines.

-end-

rx121

American forces took Carentan which allowed the link up of the Omaha and Utah beachheads. They were now free to clear the Cotentin Peninsula.

-end-

rx122

Field Marshals Rommel and von Rundstedt conferred with Hitler at Soissons. Rommel, arguing for evacuation of the Cotentin Peninsula, was refused by Hitler.

-end-

rx123

The US VII Corps pushed to Barneville on the west coast of the Cotentin Peninsula.

-end-

rx124

A storm in the Channel threatened to stop the Allies' flow of supplies to Normandy. The Mulberry harbors and supply lines had been damaged, and the Allies needed to support 20 divisions against the 16 divisions the Germans had in Normandy.

-end-

rx125

Defending the city to the last, the German commander destroyed the docks and rendered the port of Cherbourg unusable to the Allies. It would be weeks for its repair.

-end-

rx126

The British VIII Corps launched Operation Epsom to breach the German defenses at Caen. An initial push to Hill 112 was successful, but the arrival of the II SS Panzer Corps made Dempsey reconsider the advance and pull back to the Odon's west bank.

-end-

rx127

Field Marshals Rommel and von Rundstedt were summoned to the Alps, and more specifically Berchtesgaden, where Hitler awaited them. Both field marshals wished to retreat from

Normandy, but Hitler would have none of it. Instead, he demanded the destruction of the Allies at the beachheads, but von Rundstedt did not have the infantry to allow the concentration of his Panzer divisions for an assault of that kind. On July 2nd, von Rundstedt resigned. Hitler replaced him with von Kluge.

-end-

rx128

The Americans of the 1st US Army moved south towards St. Lo but experienced heavy German resistance and rough terrain.

-end-

rx129

The 12th SS Panzers protected Carpiquet and its airfields from capture by Canadian forces.

-end-

rx130

Operation Charnwood started with the RAF Bomber Command sending bombers over Caen during the night of the 7th. This softened up resistance enough to allow the I British and I Canadian Corps to retake Hill 112. Caen was attacked, but the 12th SS Panzer Division protected the southern section of the city.

-end-

rx131

General Montgomery would relieve pressure on General Bradley's men by having General Dempsey undertake Operation Goodwood, an armor attack on Caen's east. Bradley would then move on to St. Lo and then to the Alencon-Le Mans line where he would take Brittany.

-end-

rx132

After inspecting the I SS Corps, under Sepp Dietrich, Field Marshal Rommel's car was struck by RAF fighters, seriously wounding him. Army Group B was placed under Field Marshal von Kluge.

-end-

rx133

British and US bombers, starting Operation Goodwood, dropped 6,800 bombs on German defenses by daylight on Caen. This allowed the British Guards, 7th and 11th Armored Tank Divisions to roll forward against the Germans, but the I SS Panzer Corps reinforced from the Bourgebus Ridge. Simultaneously, the Canadians liberated the remainder of Caen.

The British were stopped at the foot of the ridge and did not recover the offensive for the next two days, losing 400 tanks. However, this effort managed to relieve Bradley's forces from German pressure, making them move to the east.

-end-

rx134

American forces take St. Lo.

-end-

rx135

At the Wolf's Lair in Rastenburg, Prussia, an assassination attempt, called the Bomb Plot, failed to take Hitler's life. As well, high-ranking officers tried to take Berlin but were foiled by Goebbels. Paris' Military Governor General Karl von Stuepnagel arrested SS, Nazi and Gestapo members in collusion with the plot, but von Kluge would not support him. All the conspirators were found out, arrested, shot dead where they stood or hanged after mock trials. Even Rommel, a member of the plot, was forced to commit suicide on October 14th. Hitler's notorious distrust of his officers became even worse.

-end-

rx136

Operation Cobra began badly, with some of the 4,000 bombs dropped on the Germans actually killing 600 US troops. Among those killed was the training commander of the US Army, General Lesley McNair, who was to attend the operation's start. Enduring 36 hours of rough fighting, General Lawton Collins' VII Corps broke through the German lines and was able to take the Avranches by the 31st.

-end-

rx137

In a further attempt to divert the Germans from the American effort, the British 2nd Army undertook Operation Bluecoat, an offensive from Vire south to Caumont. The Germans were severely weakened at this point in the battle for Normandy.

-end-

rx138

With two American armies in the theater of Normandy as the 3rd Army was activated, the Allied forces were reorganized. General Eisenhower created the 12th Army Group under General Bradley. This placed Bradley on par with Montgomery, but Eisenhower made it clear that Monty controlled operational activities of the ground forces. General Courtney Hodges would now command the 1st US Army.

-end-

rx139

The 3rd US Army attacked Rennes, causing the Germans to retreat that night. Mortain was taken that day.

-end-

rx140

As General Patton found, when his troops closed in on its position, Lorient was well-fortified by the Germans. It would not fall until the end of the war.

-end-

rx141

The Germans attempted to counterattack with Operation Lutich at Mortain. Three Panzer divisions, all of suspect strength, thrust against the US VII Corps, of the 1st Army. But, Ultra warned the Allies of this possibility. Therefore, with strong Allied air power, the Germans were turned back by the 15th.

At Brest, the US VIII Corps began a siege of the 36,000 Germans there. As well, Patton had crossed the Mayenne River.

-end-

rx142

Near Granville, Eisenhower set up his headquarters for Normandy. While Eisenhower still traveled back and forth across the Channel, Montgomery would remain operational commander.

-end-

rx143

Targeting Falaise, the Canadian 1st Army struck out to the south of Caen in Operation Totalize. They were going to stop the retreat of the Germans facing the British 2nd Army. However, despite massive air attacks, the 12th SS Panzers kept up heavy resistance until Falaise fell on the 16th.

-end-

rx144

General Patton's troops easily liberated Le Mans and quickly moved to their next objective.

-end-

rx145

When the US XV Corps, under General Haislip, pushed to Alencon, General Patton directed it towards Argentan in an attempt to surround the German 5th Panzer and 7th Armies. Patton's other two corps continued to push east to Paris.

-end-

rx146

To prevent Allied forces from firing on each other--the 12th and 21st Army Groups, General Bradley stopped Patton's XV Corps just south of Argentan. Field Marshal von Kluge, realizing his forces were going to be trapped, withdrew his men from Falaise.

-end-

rx147

Despite Churchill's insistence that it be canceled, Operation Dragoon, formerly Anvil, was carried out in the south of France. General Eisenhower, along with Roosevelt and the Combined Chiefs of Staff, felt that a quick capture of Marseilles would allow the Allies to concentrate on the north west European theater.

The French Commandos, a paratroop landing by the 1st Airborne Task Force and three divisions

of the US VI Corps, under General Lucian Truscott, attacked between Cannes and Hyeres northwest of Frejus. Only Friedrich Wiese's 19th Army remained in the south of France to combat an Allied landing. Army Group G, under General Blaskowitz, was almost devoid of the 1st Army, most of it redeployed north, the rest fighting the French Maquis.

After the first three days of the operation, the US 7th Army, under General Alexander Patch, and French Army B, under General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, landed and headed toward Cannes and Nice and Marseilles and Toulon, respectively.

-end-

rx148

Field Marshal von Kluge was thought to have been a conspirator in the Bomb Plot on Hitler's life, and he had been held out of communication with his headquarters on the 15th by heavy air attacks from the Allies. This made Hitler even more suspicious, so the Fuhrer relieved von Kluge of duty replacing him with Walter Model. On his way back to Berlin to explain himself to Hitler, von Kluge committed suicide on the 19th.

When the Canadians captured Falaise, the German escape route became ever smaller, and the Germans were bombarded heavily by Allied bombers.

General Patton was able to capture Chateaudun, Dreux, Chartres and Orleans this day.

-end-

rx149

The Paris French began their uprising at the prompting of General Marie-Pierre Koenig's French Forces of the Interior, a combination of the former resistance.

The US 79th Division captured a crossing over the Seine at Mantes.

-end-

rx150

The US 1st Army, having relieved the XV Corps, took Argentan. This, along with the Canadians and Poles moving south from Falaise, completely surrounded the Germans in the area. Some 50,000 prisoners were taken along with tons of materiel. The Germans suffered 10,000 dead, but 30,000 troops managed to escape across the Seine. Hitler finally allowed the retreat. However, the Allies were close behind already crossing the Seine, too.

-end-

rx151

Hitler wanted Paris burned to the ground, but the Governor of Paris General Dietrich von Choltitz had agreed to a truce with the French Forces of the Interior. Swedish Consul-General Raoul Nordling had initiated the truce.

The 2nd French Army, commanded by General Philippe Leclerc, and the US 4th Infantry Division, commanded by General Raymond Barton, were enroute for Paris' liberation.

-end-

rx152

American and French forces entered Paris to some German resistance, but General von Choltitz surrendered to the Allies in the afternoon despite Hitler's commandment. General de Gaulle made way into Paris, but did not formally enter on foot until the next day. Subsequently, he managed to foil an attempt by the French Communists to take control.

-end-

rx153

As Toulon and Marseilles were taken, the US 7th Army pushed up the east bank of the Rhone while the west bank was covered by the advancing French. The Seine was being crossed, now, at its broad front.

-end-

rx154

Patton's forces captured Reims.

-end-

rx155

Allied forces continued their push, with the Brits taking Amiens and easily crossing the Somme and the Americans making a bridgehead over the Meuse at Verdun. The Allies were not as yet experiencing supply problems that were sure to come as they stretched their supply lines. As well, they were still reliant on the Mulberry harbors.

-end-

rx156

Deciding that his men needed more gunnery practice on way back to Altenfiord, the captain of the Scharnhorst, along with the Tirpitz, bombarded the Spitzbergen's weather station.

-end-

rx157

Six British X-Craft, midget submarines, were towed to Altenfiord to attack the Scharnhorst, Luetzow and Tirpitz battleships, but only the Tirpitz was at port. With two X-Craft lost at sea, and another with a serious malfunction, only three could attack the German battleship. Two did manage to set charges to the Tirpitz's hull. The crews surfaced and surrendered after the fact. The last X-Craft arrived after the explosives damaged the engines, rudder and two turrets and was sunk. The Luetzow managed to sail for Germany to be repaired with only its brother Scharnhorst and five destroyers to wreak havoc on Allied shipping.

-end-

rx158

Churchill tried to use renewed convoys as leverage to make Stalin improve conditions for British forces at Russian northern ports. As well, Churchill pointed out in his telegraph that the new German acoustic torpedo made shipping even more dangerous. Regardless, Churchill made it clear that there was no contract or bargain with the resumption of shipments. Stalin was unmoved and replied that Britain was obliged to send the convoys. Churchill returned the reply without reading it, but decided to send one convoy every four weeks anyway.

-end-

rx159

After a convoy of 13, summer waylaid, merchant ships returned from Russia unmolested, Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser, CinC British Home Fleet, let convoy JW54A sail for Russian ports. As the convoy left Scotland, the admiral tried to tempt the German battleship Scharnhorst into action by sailing the Duke of York to the Barents Sea. No reaction was forthcoming.

Admiral Doenitz, CinC of the Kriegsmarine, decided that he must do something even if his new submarines with their schnorkel devices, to make them faster and deeper divers, were not ready. He must attack the British convoys with the Scharnhorst; otherwise, he would fall out of favor with Hitler.

-end-

rx160

The convoy JW55B set sail for Russia from Loch Ewe, Scotland. The Scharnhorst set sail once Luftwaffe aircraft spotted the movement of the convoy. Undetected, convoy RA55A passed Bear Island from Kola, bound for Britain.

-end-

rx161

As the Scharnhorst and its accompanying destroyers steamed towards convoy JW55B, Admiral Fraser ordered the four destroyer escorts of RA55A to strengthen the former convoys task force. To the convoy's west was the Duke of York, four destroyers and a cruiser; on its east were three cruisers. Both of the ancillary forces remained unseen by the German aircraft tracking the convoy.

-end-

rx162

Rear-Admiral Bey, at 0700 hours, ordered his destroyers to locate the British convoy with a fanning maneuver. But, the British cruiser squadron, two hours later, spotted the Scharnhorst on radar. They swarmed on her and managed to hit her twice before the German ship fled. The cruisers then formed a protective formation around the convoy. However, the Scharnhorst was detected again at 1205 hours and fired upon. Again, the Germans fled. Admiral Fraser, on the Duke of York, was determined to cut the Scharnhorst's retreat to Altenfiord. His crew detected the Scharnhorst at 1617 hours, and they fired volleys. The Scharnhorst sank at 1945 hours leaving only 36 survivors. The main German threat to shipping was gone, and JW55B reached Murmansk unscathed.

-end-

rx163

Carrier based aircraft attacked the Tirpitz at Altenfiord. Barracuda dive-bombers escorted by fighters managed to score several direct hits, but the ship was out of commission for only three months.

-end-

rx164

Newly based at the Russian Yagodnik air base, the 9th and 617th RAF Squadrons tried to sink the Tirpitz at Altenfiord with 12,000lb bombs. Now damaged severely with a top speed of eight knots, the battleship could only be used as a gun platform. So, Admiral Doenitz ordered it to protect Norway at Haakoy Island.

-end-

rx165

The RAF 9th and 617th Squadrons tried again, unsuccessfully, to knock out the Tirpitz, but bad weather spoiled the effort. The Germans, determined to protect the battleship, placed a number of fighters at a nearby airfield.

-end-

rx166

Now in range of British-based bombers at Haakoy Island, the Tirpitz was attacked for the third time by the 9th and 617th Squadrons. Aloft from Lossiemouth, Scotland, the squadrons scored two hits on the battleship. An internal explosion rendered the Tirpitz dead in the water. Some 1,000 crewmen were killed, with only one of the 29 Lancaster bombers damaged.

The German dominance of the North Atlantic was over. From August of 1944 to April of 1945, 250 Allied merchant vessels shipped over one million tons of materiel to Russia. Air and submarine threats still continued, but were less and less effective.

-end-

rx167

Hitler announced publicly that the Germans had developed super weapons that the world has never before seen. The V-1 flying bomb and V-2 rocket were being developed at Peenemuende along with new U-boats and jet fighters.

-end-

rx168

An RAF reconnaissance mission uncovered a V-1 launch facility at Abbeville. A French intelligence agent identified six, and from the photograph, the other five were located. In all, 72 launch sites were determined to be fixed on London.

-end-

rx169

Under the auspices of Operation Crossbow, the Allied air forces, the RAF Bomber Command, and US 8th and 9th Army Air Forces destroyed all 96 determined V-1 launch sites up until the Normandy invasion.

-end-

rx170

Further reconnaissance photographs revealed that the Germans were installing a newer version of V-1 near French villages. Allied bomb raids were therefore conducted on the V-1 supply systems.

-end-

rx171

The German 155th Flak Regiment, operators of the V-1 bombs, managed to fire 10 devices toward London, despite the lack of necessary training, safety equipment, or launch rails for 25 out of 70 launch sites. Two bombs fell into the sea while four others exploded at the launch site. The remaining four landed at Cuckfield, Sussex, Sevenoaks, Kent, Bethnal Green and the first at Swanscombe. Only six people were killed at Bethnal Green.

-end-

rx172

In 24 hours, 244 V-1 missiles were launched on Great Britain from 55 launch sites. London was hit by 73 while the coast was pelted by 144 missiles. An average of 100 missiles hit London in the following weeks causing many casualties and forcing 1.5 million people to evacuate London. The air defenses could not shoot the missiles down, as it would cause more damage than letting

it fall.

-end-

rx173

When the British moved their anti-aircraft guns to the coast, the air defense forces were able to shoot the V-1's down over the sea. The Gloster Meteor, the first British jet fighter with the 616th RAF Squadron, joined in the battle against the V-1's as it managed to tip the missile over in flight. Consequently the Me 262, the German's first jet fighter, entered service only 12 days before the Meteor. Another Meteor managed to shoot a V-1 down on the same day.

-end-

rx174

Of 94 V-1's launched towards London, only four got through the extensive defensive lines of anti-aircraft guns (downing 65), fighters (downing 23) and barrage balloons. As well, Allied air raids were continued against the V-1 launch sites and supply lines.

-end-

rx175

With the Battle of London declared over, a total of 6,752 V-1's reached the coast of Britain while 2,340 reached London. The bombs had killed 5,475 people in London and injured 16,000. The Germans had devised a new way of launching the V-1 from airplanes and 750 were so conducted. Of all, only ten percent reached London. Another longer-range version was launched from Holland March 29, 1945 but was shot down near Suffolk.

-end-

rx176

The first V-2 rocket launched at Britain landed at Chiswick while its companion landed near Paris. They were fired from the Hague in the Netherlands. The Polish Underground recovered a V-2 rocket on May 20, 1944. As well, the Swedes, in return for radar equipment, allowed the British to inspect the wreckage of a V-2. It became clear that the V-2 had the same range as a V-1 at 185 miles.

-end-

rx177

In response to Operation Market Garden, the Germans withdrew the V-2 rocket batteries eastward, with the majority still at Holland. Only 35 of the rockets had been launched at England.

-end-

rx178

During the relocation of the French V-2 sites, 44 rockets were fired at East Anglia from Friesland, Denmark. This caused the resumption of air attacks on the V-2 supply lines.

On March 27, 1945, a V-2 was launched from the Netherlands. It landed at Orpington, killing 134 people.

Hitler's Vergeltungswaffen, revenge weapons, had caused a total of 33,000 casualties and much collateral damage. England saw 10,500 V-1's and 1,115 V-2's launched, but none had affected the resolve of the British.

-end-

rx179

The Soviet 21st Army attacked the west side of Lake Ladoga after severe bombing and heavy artillery attacks. The Finns were pushed back 10 miles.

-end-

rx180

Even though Viipuri was captured by the Russians, the Finns were able to hold them off north of the city with the aid of German material and reinforcements in the form of a division. President Ryti, for the assistance, was forced to promise not to make a separate peace with the Soviets.

-end-

rx181

Despite valiant fighting, the Finns were pushed back from their position between Lake Ladoga and Lake Onega by General Meretskov's Karelian Front.

-end-

rx182

Operation Bagration started with the liberation of Vitebsk and the capture of a German corps from

the 3rd Panzer Army. The 1st Baltic Front carried out the offensive.

-end-

rx183

The Minsk highway became crowded as the 3rd Belorussian Front, under Chernyakhovsky, and 1st Belorussian Front, under Rokossovsky, began their movement down it.

-end-

rx184

As the Soviets moved across the Beresina, Army Group Center appeared to be in an indefensible position. The 3rd Panzer Army was nearly gone, and the 9th Army was surrounded at Bobruisk with the 4th Army nearly isolated. Field Marshal Busch tried to persuade Hitler of the seriousness of the situation. Instead, Hitler replaced Busch with Field Marshal Walter Model who was commanding Army Group North, too.

-end-

rx185

Requesting to retreat from the pressure of the 1st Baltic Front, Field Marshal Georg Lindemann, commander of Army Group North, was replaced by Hitler when he refused to attack to the southeast, relieving Army Group Center. Johannes Friessner replaced Lindemann.

-end-

rx186

With the liberation of Minsk, the Red Army had a clear path to Lithuania and Poland. Army Group Center, losing 57,000 men at Minsk, now only had two wings.

-end-

rx187

The Wolf's Lair at Rastenburg provided Hitler with his headquarters despite the situation in the west. On the Eastern Front, the 2nd Baltic Front, commanded by General Yeremenko, attacked General Hansen's 16th German Army.

-end-

rx188

General Konev's 1st Ukrainian Front, along with the 1st Belorussian Front's left wing, managed to force Army Group North Ukraine into a small pocket near Brody. By the 22nd, 17,000 Germans surrendered and 25,000 were dead.

-end-

rx189

Just west of Kovel, the 1st Belorussian Front pushed to the Bug River.

-end-

rx190

The announcement by Moscow Radio only confirmed the fears of the Polish government-in-exile that the Soviets were setting up a Communist Polish infrastructure. Indeed, the Polish Committee for the National Liberation in Chelm, also known as the Lublin Committee and the Lublin Poles, were subordinated under Stalin and the Red Army. The Soviets explained that the committee was created to allow for self-rule in Poland once the war was over. The Polish government in exile, at the urging of Churchill, sent a delegation to discuss this matter to Moscow the 26th. As the Russians moved ever closer to the Vistula, General Tadeusz Bor-Komorowski's Polish Home Army, under orders from the London Poles, prepared for an uprising against the Germans.

-end-

rx191

Lublin was liberated by the 1st Belorussian Front. As well, the Maidanek extermination camp was liberated.

-end-

rx192

Hitler ordered Army Groups Center and North to stand fast. In the meantime, he switched Friessner with Ferdinand Schoerner, a fervent Nazi, from Army Group South Ukraine.

-end-

rx193

When the Leningrad Front took Narva in Estonia, the 1st Belorussian Front pushed to the Vistula just east of Radom.

-end-

rx194

The 1st Ukrainian Front captured Lvov while Dvinsk was taken by the 2nd Baltic Front. The following day, the 1st Ukrainian Front reached the San River taking Brest-Litovsk.

-end-

rx195

Kaunas, the Lithuanian capital, fell to the 3rd Belorussian Front. The next day it was cleared. With the 1st Baltic Front moving towards the Gulf of Riga, Army Group North was nearly cut off from its fellows. The actions by several Panzer divisions were able to reestablish communications with the Army Group only temporarily.

-end-

rx196

General Kazimierz Sosnkowski, Polish CinC, recommended against the Warsaw Poles uprising because direct British support was unavailable. The British could not provide the Polish Parachute Brigade or Polish aircraft flying with the RAF. But, General Sosnkowski's warning was late as he was in Italy, not Britain. Also, the Germans had moved armored elements to the city. Radio Kosciuszko announced a call to arms for Warsaw once sounds of battle could be heard from the east.

-end-

rx197

Stalin finally met with the London Poles' delegation, having left them waiting for days. The Soviet leader stressed that there could only be one set of Poles, Lublin or London. Stalin had been annoyed that the Warsaw uprising hadn't sought his previous approval, and denied the British permission to supply the desperate Home Army with supplies. As well, despite the bridge across the Vistula near Magnuszew, the 1st Ukrainian Front was in defensive position for the remainder of the month.

-end-

rx198

Finnish President Ryti resigned, and Mannerheim replaced him. He immediately made peace overtures to the Soviets on August 25th. The Soviets requested a break of ties with Germany and expulsion of Germans from their country.

-end-

rx199

Forcing the Romanians to surrender and trapping 20 German divisions between the Prut and Dniester, the 2nd and 3rd Ukrainian Fronts moved into Romania.

-end-

rx200

Having Antonescu arrested, King Carol announced that the fighting had ceased in Romania. German troops had two days to leave the country. Hitler ordered Friessner to arrest the King, but he concentrated on evacuating his troops. The 6th and 8th Armies were trapped, however, east of the Prut.

-end-

rx201

Already occupying the Ploesti oil fields, the Soviets entered Bucharest.

-end-

rx202

The US 1st Army crossed the border into Aachen, Belgium from France.

-end-

rx203

A Moscow delegation of Romania signed the armistice agreement on Moscow.

-end-

rx204

Bulgaria assures the Soviet Union of its neutrality.

-end-

rx205

After the USSR declared war on her, Bulgaria surrendered to the Soviets. Shortly thereafter, the

Communist Fatherland Front created a new Bulgarian government.

-end-

rx206

In accordance with the Russian armistice, the Finns break off diplomatic ties with Germany.

-end-

rx207

The Finns formally sign the armistice with the USSR.

-end-

rx208

The final effort to relieve Army Group North from the Baltic states began.

-end-

rx209

Soviets finally allow the Western Allies to supply the Polish Home Army which was badly in need. Indeed, the Soviets allowed the Western powers use of their air bases.

-end-

rx210

The Polish Home Army was supplied by 110 bombers of the US 8th Army Air Force which landed at Soviet airfields after the drop.

-end-

rx211

Late supplies and heavy German opposition had forced General Bor-Komrowski to surrender the Home Army to the Germans.

-end-

rx212

Churchill and Roosevelt agree to another Big Three conference at Invergordon, Scotland. Stalin, citing the activity on the Eastern Front, declined the meeting.

-end-

rx213

Since Stalin would not be at Invergordon and the US elections coming up, Roosevelt requested that Invergordon be changed to Quebec. Wishing to solidify the British Empire's post war position, Churchill agreed.

-end-

rx214

At the Second Quebec Conference, or Octagon, Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to several points. Vienna was to be the main target for the Allies in Italy, and no weakening of troops strength would occur until the Germans were defeated. The Operation Dragoon forces be kept in ready until further operation in north Adriatic were ruled out. In Greece, the British would send troops to fill the power vacuum left by retreating Germans, called Manna. No other Western Allied forces would be deployed in the Balkans, though. Churchill called for Operation Dracula, an amphibious operation against Rangoon instead of a jungle campaign attacking the Japanese. The British made their main fleet available for use in the Pacific. German occupational zones were finalized with the Americans taking the south, the British the north and the Russians the east. Roosevelt did not wish the French to be allowed an occupational zone. US Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau announced his plan to eliminate Germany's war-making capability forever by forcing the Germans to buy steel from the Allies. Eventually this provision was dropped as it would damage the total European economy. Finally, Lend-Lease would continue until war's end, and would not be used by the US to jeopardize Britain's post war economy.

-end-

rx215

At the Moscow Tolstoy talks between Stalin and Churchill, it was agreed that the Soviets would declare war on Japan once Germany was defeated. The Balkans, Romania and Bulgaria were agreed to be in the Soviet sphere while Hungary was jointly influenced and Greece was entirely British. Poland would also be an equal problem with a combined London-Lublin Pole government to be formed. However, the London Poles did not wish to cede Lvov to the Soviets with the acceptance of the Curzon line as their new border.

-end-

rx216

Although very sick, President Roosevelt won his fourth election as president of the United States.

-end-

rx217

Stavka ordered Malinovsky's 2nd Ukrainian Front to take Bucharest then the Transylvanian Alps, and Tolbukhin's 3rd Ukrainian Front to press on.

-end-

rx218

Operation Rat Week was undertaken by the Western Allies' Balkan Air Force to stop the Germans from reinforcing in Yugoslavia and northern Greece. This allowed Tito to push on to Belgrade and join with the Soviets.

-end-

rx219

The 4th Romanian Army, now fighting with the Soviets, was attacked by heavy German and Hungarian resistance. Malinovsky, on the 11th, pushed his tanks into the Axis lines forcing them back to Targu-Mures.

-end-

rx220

Before it could be surrounded, German Army Group E retreated from the Greek islands into Yugoslavia and linked with Army Group F.

-end-

rx221

With Bulgaria declaring war on Germany, Field Marshal von Weich's Army Group F's battle area widened vastly.

-end-

rx222

The Soviet offensive against Army Group North began anew with the surprised 16th Army being attacked by the 1st Baltic Front. However, the 16th Army was able to stop the advance on the 16th near the Riga River. As well, the 2nd and 3rd Baltic Fronts were practically checked in front of the Dvina River.

-end-

rx223

Hitler allowed the Narva Group to retreat from Estonia. Tallinn was captured by the advancing Leningrad Front from Lake Peipus.

-end-

rx224

The Soviets now formally commanded the Bulgarian Army.

-end-

rx225

Stavka changed the focus of the fighting against Army Group North. Riga was no longer to be pressed, but the Germans near Memel were to be targeted.

-end-

rx226

With the securing of the Transylvanian Alps, General Malinovsky had bridged the gap along the Hungarian border. Mirroring this difficult struggle was the battle that the 4th Ukrainian Front, commanded by General Petrov, underwent trying to breach the Carpathian Mountains and pass into Poland. Aiding the Soviets was the Polish resistance in the area.

The Germans renamed Army Group South Ukraine to South and Army Group North Ukraine, newly generated by Harpe from the beginning of the month, to A.

-end-

rx227

Belgrade was the target of Tolbukhin's Soviet and Tito's Bulgarian armies working in conjunction with one another.

-end-

rx228

Horthy lead the Hungarian armistice delegation to Moscow, realizing that the only peace to made

was with the Soviets. The Western powers were well-behind the Soviets on the Eastern Front. Compounding Horthy's problems were the pushes to the Tisza Rivers of both Malinovsky's army and the 4th Ukrainian Army, under General Petrov. On October 4th, the Soviets held key points in Hungary to force the issue with the delegation.

-end-

rx229

When the 1st Baltic Front renewed its drive, the army had easily reached Palanga and Memel on the Baltic. Palanga was taken, but Memel, heavily defended by the Germans, could not be and was surrounded. This action also trapped Army Group North in the Courland Peninsula; it would not move from there until the end of the war.

In an effort to keep the Soviets from East Prussia, the Germans quickly reinforced their positions at Niemen.

-end-

rx230

The Karelian Front, lead by General Meretskov, managed to force the German 20th Mountain Army, Rendulic, from Petsamo, Finland by the 15th. The Soviets forced a component of the army, as it had split in two, deep into the Kirkenes and held it there. The other portion was to be taken by the Finns near Nautsi.

-end-

rx231

Horthy formalized the Hungarian Armistice with Moscow by signing it. However, not having prepared his people for the arrangements, the Germans were able to kidnap the leader and imprison him at a concentration camp; they quickly formed a faux government under their control which nullified the agreement. The Hungarians were to declare war on Germany and recall its troops from its neighbors; in reality, some Hungarian troops joined the Soviets while the majority remained fighting alongside the Germans.

-end-

rx232

Chasing the German army which was retreating from his advance on the Morava River to Belgrade, General Tolbukhin planned to crush the army just south of the city.

-end-

rx233

Heavy German resistance was encountered, but General Tolbukhin's army and Tito's Bulgarian forces overcame them. The Germans were assured of a retreat as they held Kraljevo against the Soviets. Army Groups E and F were able to retreat on the road running north to Skopje and then west from Kraljevo to Sarajevo. The Soviets, resting their men, did not pursue the Germans, which enabled them to link with Field Marshal Friessner's men in Hungary.

-end-

rx234

Riga was liberated by the 3rd and 2nd Baltic Fronts.

-end-

rx235

General Malinovsky took Debrecen, with Nyiregyhaza falling to him two days later. Unfortunately for General Woehler and his 8th Army, this severed his communication lines as he retreated in the face of Petrov's stronger force. Field Marshal Friessner quickly reestablished the communications by counterattacking at Nyiregyhaza and capturing the city. Woehler was given enough time push his entire force over the Tisza River by this action.

-end-

rx236

Budapest became a surprise for General Malinovsky's men. They had advanced easily upon it, but the Germans had fortified their positions well. By November 4th, the Soviets, having been denied a breach, tried to attack from the north, then south and east. Each effort failed, and the Germans remained at Budapest at the end of the month.

-end-

rx237

One Hungarian and four German divisions defended Budapest from General Malinovsky's third

try at taking the city. Hitler ordered the city to be defended to the last.

Field Marshal Friessner, out of favor with Hitler, was sacked as Army Group South CinC, and replaced by Field Marshal Woehler.

On the Soviet side, Stavka was preparing for an offensive to begin at Vistula and end at Berlin.

-end-

rx238

Originally to land at Mindanao November 15th, followed by a landing at Leyte by December 20th, General MacArthur thought better of his plan. In a meeting with the Joint Chiefs, MacArthur proposed landing on Luzon by December 20th then Formosa by February 20th, leaving Mindanao from the objectives. If a landing was to take place at Formosa, Luzon needed to be taken first.

Admiral Nimitz's rival plan was to start with offensives mounted near Amoy, China and Formosa, but most heavily in Amoy. However, with the loss of the southern Chinese bases previously held by the US 14th Air Force, the Nimitz plan could not suppress Japanese air power. Troops would be needed to be restationed from the European theater, and that would not happen unless Hitler fell before 1944's end.

An offensive did go forward while the plans were discussed. Morotai, in the Moluccas, was easily taken by MacArthur's men; on Peleliu, in the Palau Islands, though, the 1st Marines faced stiff Japanese resistance. General Sadao Inouye had stationed 30,000 Japanese infantry men in the Palau Islands. The islands were never secured, with resistance occurring till the end of the war, even though Peleliu was taken November 27th.

-end-

rx239

The Joint Chiefs, having decided between MacArthur's and Nimitz's options, agreed to the Luzon offensive beginning December 20th. Nimitz, after providing naval support, was to take Iwo Jima, at the end of January, then Okinawa. The Chiefs left the Formosa option open.

-end-

rx240

Admiral Halsey's 3rd Fleet, who had undertaken air raids on Formosa and Luzon to soften the Japanese up for the Leyte landings, inadvertently warned the Japanese CinC Combined Fleet, Admiral Soemu Toyoda, of the coming landings. Responsible for Operation Sho, the defense of the Philippines and the Kuriles, Admiral Toyoda started his counter-air assault. His forces experienced heavy losses against the Allies, costing some 500 aircraft against 89, and minor damage to ships.

-end-

rx241

The Leyte invasion troops, the US 6th Army under General Walter Krueger, was ferried from Hollandia and Manus Island by the US 7th, Admiral Thomas Kinkaid, and 3rd, Admiral Halsey, Fleets.

The Japanese Southern Area Army defended the Philippines and was commanded by Field Marshal Hisaichi Terauchi. His subordinates were General Sosaku Suzuki, the 35th Army holding Visayans and Mindanao, and--conqueror of Singapore and Malaya--General Tomoyuki Yamashita, 14th Army holding Luzon and Leyte. Leyte, though, was covered by the green Japanese soldiers of the 16th Division under Captain Shiro Makino.

-end-

rx242

US Rangers, surprising the small Japanese force on Suluan Island, preceded the main invasion force. However, the Japanese on Suluan were able to alert Admiral Toyoda's headquarters, enabling him to amass his navy for an assault on the US force headed for the Leyte Gulf. On the following day, the entrance to the gulf was secured as more Rangers took Dinagat and Homonhon.

-end-

rx243

Facing sometimes sparse Japanese attacks, the 16 mile long invasion front was able to establish a beachhead. General MacArthur was provided enough safety to fulfill his promise to return to the Philippines, made March 11, 1942, by coming ashore. His men were able to capture Tacloban the next day, but continued Japanese resistance slowed the effort henceforth.

-end-

rx244

Admiral Toyoda had planned that the Battle of Leyte Gulf would begin by tricking the US 3rd and 7th Fleets to leave the Leyte Gulf in pursuit of the only remaining Japanese aircraft carriers. However, the Fleets were destroyed by Admiral Takeo Kurita's 1st Striking Force, from the Dutch East Indies, and Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa's Mobile Fleet, which contained one converted, one heavy and three light battleship carriers.

With US subs engaging Kurita's fleet on the 23rd, damaging a cruiser and sinking two, Toyoda's plan was foiled. Indeed, Admiral Halsey, commanding the 3rd Fleet, disregarded the carrier bait and intercepted Kurita's battleship group. Japanese air support from Luzon managed to sink the carrier Princeton, but Halsey's force fought on and sunk battleship Musasha and a heavy cruiser. In an effort to escape the attacks, Admiral Kurita, with nightfall, headed west then north. He divided his fleet with one to head south of Leyte while the other, including himself, to head for the San Bernardino Strait. Admiral Kinkaid's 7th attacked the former fleet, sinking two battleships. However, Admiral Kinkaid had left the amphibious landing craft and six escort carriers for the Leyte landings completely undefended. Kurita attacked, destroying one escort and three destroyers. Meanwhile, Admiral Halsey had turned north to take on the Japanese carriers. But, when notified of the invasion force's predicament, Halsey left his carriers to take on their Japanese counterparts while he left to defend the invasion fleet. After sinking the entire Japanese carrier group, Halsey's fleet turned south following their commander. Unfortunately for the Allies, Kurita had managed to sail back to the San Bernardino Strait before being trapped by Halsey.

The Allies had scored an unmitigated victory over the Japanese which hobbled the Japanese Navy and left it without carriers. In their desperation, though, the Japanese had devised the Kamikaze attack, Divine Wind, which called for pilots to drive explosive-laden Zeroes into Allied ships. The Allied fleet would have to contend with this new weapon for the remainder of the war. General MacArthur would continue to push his invasion force further, landing more men at Ormoc on December 7th, then securing Leyte by the 25th. Pockets of Japanese resistance would continue to take time to clear, though.

-end-

rx245

The Mindoro landings began with the US 24th Division securing a beachhead on the island's southwest coast. Facing little or no Japanese resistance, the Allied troops were able to drive eight miles inland and begin construction of an airfield.

Kamikaze's were able to damage the force's escort carrier and two destroyers.

-end-

rx246

The US 7th Fleet, attacking the Japanese defenses, moved into Lingayen Bay while the 3rd Fleet assaulted Formosa's and Luzon's airfields. Starting the 4th, Admiral Kinkaid's fleet was attacked by Kamikazes. Ultimately, this cost one escort carrier and damaged the battleships New Mexico and California. However, the 7th continued its attacks unabated on the Japanese coast defenses.

The Japanese, fearing the loss of 35 valuable aircraft, removed them from Luzon on the 7th, but they continued to attack the 7th Fleet with Kamikaze missions for another week.

-end-

rx247

US troops landed at the Lingayen Gulf at Luzon without Japanese resistance. The troops then drove on to Manila, but were met there with Kamikaze missions. These missions damaged one light cruiser, the battleship Mississippi, and other miscellaneous craft.

-end-

rx248

The US XIV Corps crossed the Agno River with little bloodshed, but the I Corps taking of Rosario was stopped by strong Japanese opposition.

-end-

rx249

As the I Corps continued against rough fighting, the XIV Corps took San Miguel.

-end-

rx250

Clark Field was approached by the XIV Corps.

-end-

rx251

According to General Krueger's plan, the US XI Corps were to land north of the Bataan Peninsula and link up with the XIV Corps; they would move on Manila together. San Jose would be taken by I Corps.

-end-

rx252

To move north on Manila, the US 11th Airborne Division dropped on Nasugbu where Manila Bay begins.

-end-

rx253

Manila was now within the grasp of the XIV Corps.

-end-

rx254

The I Corps captured San Jose.

-end-

rx255

As I Corps pushed past San Jose to the east coast of Luzon, they had effectively divided General Yamashita's defending forces in half.

General MacArthur further delineated the areas of operation for the 6th Army, under Krueger, and 8th Army, under Eichelberger. Luzon would be the responsibility of the 6th while southern islands were to be handled by the 8th.

-end-

rx256

Landing at Mariveles on the Bataan's southern tip, the US 38th Division helped secure the peninsula by the 21st. General Yamashita's forces in the hills in northern Bataan were flanked.

-end-

rx257

Overcoming their surprise at a combined amphibious, air landing at Corregidor, the Japanese rallied to defend the island against the landing US troops.

-end-

rx258

A portion of the 8th Army, the X Corps, landed on northern Samar in the San Bernardino Strait.

-end-

rx259

The landings of the US 41st Division at Puerto Princesa, Palawan, were followed by a quick securing of the island. Resistance was small.

-end-

rx260

Allied troops were able to clear Corregidor.

-end-

rx261

During the fighting to secure Manila, 100,000 Filipinos were killed, along with 6,500 US soldiers. But, Yamashita's forces were driven from the city. Of the Filipinos killed, many were casualties of Japanese atrocities which would eventually lead to Yamashita's trials as a war criminal.

Moving from Manila proper to Manila Bay, General Krueger's forces were able to attack the strong Japanese hill positions. Several weeks were spent clearing the bay and the hills, but this left the Japanese forces in northern Luzon and Bataan. Four US divisions and many men from the Filipino guerrillas would spend the remainder of the war eliminating these Japanese troops from their strongholds. General Eichelberger's men had it no less difficult securing the other Philippine islands. The 8th Army would be engaged with General Suzuki's 35th Army till war's end.

However, the 6th Army would be freed up to prepare for the invasion of Kyushu by the 8th Army taking over responsibility for Luzon.

As in the Dutch New Guinea operations, General MacArthur had managed to defeat the Japanese, but also leave a large number still holed up on the islands. The 6th Australian Division had to clean up this mess on New Guinea.

Taking center stage, though, Admiral Nimitz's forces had secured the last islands guarding the gates to Japan.

-end-

rx262

When General Eisenhower took over ground control of the Allies in northwest Europe, he had General Montgomery promoted to field marshal. The tide was now fully with the Allies, and the troops senses this.

-end-

rx263

Lyons was taken by de Lattre de Tassigny's resistance amalgam forces while the British Guard Armored Division captured Brussels.

-end-

rx264

Despite the capture of Antwerp by the British 11th Armored Division, the Allies began to experience growing supply problems. Relying solely on the supplies coming into Cherbourg, as Brest, Lorient and the Channel ports were still German-occupied, a rough conveyor belt system, the Red Ball Express, was created to ferry supplies to the rapidly moving Allied armies. With no fully operational railroad system in France, it being destroyed in Allied air attacks, trucks had to ferry the supplies. As a result of this confusion, Field Marshal Montgomery and General Bradley had to make judgments as to which divisions should push on and which would halt.

A rift was created between Montgomery and General Eisenhower regarding the proper way to proceed while still under the supply shortage. This became known as the Broad versus Narrow Front argument. Montgomery wished to pursue only Ruhr leaving Saar for another day.

Eisenhower, though, felt that the Allies needed to continue with one massive front. In the end, Eisenhower allowed Montgomery to maintain a reserve force in General Lewis Brereton's 1st Allied Airborne Army, two US and two British airborne divisions and the Polish Parachute Brigade, which had seen no action since D-Day's beginning.

-end-

rx265

Field Marshal Model had tried to command two army groups, West and B, but could not effectively. To rectify this, Hitler reactivated Field Marshal von Rundstedt to be CinC West.

-end-

rx266

Like other Channel ports, Boulogne was left in ruins by the Germans. Canadian forces managed to liberate the city on the 22nd.

-end-

rx267

As the US 1st Army crossed Hasselt, with it and the British 2nd Army advancing to the Albert Canal, German forces began to fight with more resolve.

Field Marshal Montgomery, lacking the supplies to build bridges over the many rivers to be crossed enroute to the Ruhr, decided to use the 1st Allied Airborne Division to capture intact bridges; this was the genesis of Operation Market-Garden.

-end-

rx268

Despite fierce Canadian determination to take the city, and a renewed attack, Dunkirk would not fall until Germany surrendered. Brest was attacked by the Americans in their final attempt to take the city.

Experiencing less opposition, the US 1st Army was able to take Liege and cross the Albert Canal at Maastricht and Geel.

-end-

rx269

As the Canadian troops took Ostend, General Eisenhower was approving the plans for Operation Market-Garden. The British 1st was to take the Arnhem bridge, the US 101st was to take the

Eindhoven canal bridges, the US 82nd was to take the Grave and Nijmegen bridges, and the Polish Parachute Brigade would undertake the assaults. In the effort to reverse the German Rhine flank, the UK XXX Corps, under General Brian Horrocks would travel north to combine forces with the airborne troops. The airborne troops fell under the command of General Frederick Browning's headquarters.

-end-

rx270

Members of the US 5th Armored Division, 85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, 2nd Platoon, Troop B, on patrol, crossed the Our River over the Luxembourg border and into Germany becoming the first Allied troops to do so. The larger army could not cross the border for lack of supplies, but other Allied troops were able to make similar journeys this day.

-end-

rx271

Lack of supplies, most notably ammunition, as well as German reinforcements, stopped General Hodge's 1st Army from breaching the West Wall at Aachen further. The 3rd Army, commanded by General Patton, disregarding fuel shortages, was able to cross the Moselle River near Nancy. However, Field Marshal von Rundstedt had managed to strengthen German defenses.

-end-

rx272

Canadian troops liberated Le Havre.

-end-

rx273

Already successful as the US 7th Army and French Army A, from this point forward the 1st French Army, they became the US 6th Army Group, commanded by General Jacob Deever. Together, they had forced the tattered Army Group G back into Germany. Waiting them now was the Belfort Gap and the Vosges Mountains.

-end-

rx274

Operation Market-Garden began with the 101st Airborne Division taking its targets while the 82nd managed to take the Meuse bridge but the Waal River bridge because of fierce German resistance. At Arnhem, the British 1st Airborne were successful.

In an attempt to link with the 1st Allied Airborne Army, the XXX Corps, covered in its advance by the XII and VIII Corps, was slow at taking Eindhoven and moving up to join them. They had to one road in wet country.

-end-

rx275

The 101st Airborne Division welcomed the British XXX Corps into its ranks.

-end-

rx276

Waiting a day after their link up, the 82nd Airborne Division and XXX Corps mounted an excursion capturing the Nijmegen bridge over the Waal.

The 9th and 10th Panzer SS Divisions, rested after the Normandy fighting, began a counterattack against the Brits holding the Arnhem bridge.

The US VIII Corps liberated Brest.

-end-

rx277

The Arnhem bridge was retaken by the Germans despite the reinforcing Polish Parachute Brigade coming to the aid of the British 1st Airborne Division. The Poles had landed south of the Rhine and were prevented from moving into Arnhem by the Germans.

-end-

rx278

As Boulogne finally fell to the Canadians, German forces were able to sever the XXX Corps trail towards southern Uden, thus slowing their advance. The 24th saw this same activity occur. At Arnhem, the Allies were being surrounded, slowly, by German troops.

-end-

rx279

Market-Garden ended poorly, though the XXX Corps were able to join with the Polish forces on the Lower Rhine near Arnhem. But, the combined force was unable to help. The remaining 2,000 men, out of an original 10,000, retreated from the Germans across the Rhine. The operation had been a disappointment and had mostly failed because of supply problems. As well, the Germans proved to be remarkably resilient. In order to rectify their supply situation, the Allies realized that they must open Antwerp.

-end-

rx280

When Patton began his assault on Metz, Field Marshal Montgomery gave orders for the Canadian troops to take the Scheldt estuary.

-end-

rx281

The 3rd Canadian Division captured Calais.

-end-

rx282

Moving to Beveland in order to take the Scheldt's north bank, the Canadian 2nd Division began its push. On the south side of estuary, the Canadian 1st Army advanced against the Breskens pocket of the German 64th Division.

-end-

rx283

The West Wall, in between Geilenkirchen and Aachen, became the thrust point of the US 1st Army.

-end-

rx284

General Hodge's 1st Army would meet with fierce German resistance at Huertgen Forest just southwest of the Belgian, Dutch and German borders, at a point on the West Wall.

-end-

rx285

Having just captured Overloon, the British 2nd Army moved southeast of the town toward the Peel marshes, which Montgomery wanted secured. After much fighting on the 17th, as well as Venraji's seizure, Montgomery scrapped this effort.

General Patton, similarly, called off his attack on Metz, as it had not advanced. Instead, he began drawing up plans to encircle the town.

-end-

rx286

With the liberation of Woensdrecht by the Canadian 2nd Division, the German 15th Army became trapped on the Beveland Peninsula. Also, Aachen was encircled by American forces, and German defenses in the Vosges were attacked by the French 1st Army.

-end-

rx287

General Eisenhower ordered Field Marshal Montgomery to remain, rounding up the Germans on the Scheldt. He ordered General Patton on to Cologne to carry out Operation Queen, capturing a bridgehead over the Rhine. Patton's 3rd Army, on the right flank, would work in conjunction with the 1st, under General Hodge, and 9th Armies, under General William Simpson, on the left flank. However, General Patton would have to delay his forward advance since his supplies were sorely lacking. General Devers, according to Eisenhower, would move to the Belfort Gap while Montgomery would wait for the Antwerp port to be opened before securing the area between the Maas and Rhine.

-end-

rx288

As the Breskens were taken by Canadian forces, the US 1st and 30th Divisions, despite heavy German resistance, captured Aachen. The men were desperately tired.

-end-

rx289

Targeting Tilburg and s'Hertogenbosch, the British XII Corps forced their way past Maas to the east.

-end-

rx290

Goes, on South Beveland, was taken by the Canadian 2nd Division.

-end-

rx291

The RAF Bomber Command bombed the defenses of the German coastal emplacement at Walcheren for several weeks before Operation Infatuate began. The Allied amphibious landings began at Flushing, by British infantry, and at Westkapelle, by a Commando unit. The land assault started with the Canadian troops, having taken the Breskens, crossing South Beveland on the 3rd. Mine clearing of the estuary began on the 4th, and the city proper of Walcheren was overrun by the Allies on the 8th.

-end-

rx292

Operation Queen, the assault on the Saar and Cologne, was delayed because of rain, but General Patton pressed his men onward. Thus, by the next day, the 1st Army crossed the Moselle River at Uckange and Malling, and the Seille River at Metz.

-end-

rx293

As the French 1st Army started their effort to take the Belfort Gap, Operation Independence, the British XII Corps started their actions against the German bridgehead over the Maas River between Roermond and Venlo.

-end-

rx294

Operation Queen was officially undertaken by the US 1st and 9th Armies.

-end-

rx295

The Geilenkirchen salient was attacked by the British XXX Corps, Operation Clipper, and the Huertgen Forest fighting began anew. Metz was entered by Patton's troops, and the French 1st Army was close to securing the Belfort Gap.

-end-

rx296

Mulhouse was penetrated by the French 1st Army.

-end-

rx297

Strasbourg was penetrated by portions of the US 7th Army.

-end-

rx298

The Maginot Line was broken through by the US 3rd Army.

-end-

rx299

Antwerp was opened, and by December 1st, 10,000 tons per day of materiel were being shipped through this port. Two weeks later, 19,000 tons were being unloaded there.

-end-

rx300

Nearly exhausting the 4th and 8th Divisions, the US 1st Army had almost secured the entirety of the Huertgen Forest up to the Roer Valley. As well, the Roer Valley was being slowly approached by the 9th Army, under General Simpson.

-end-

rx301

General Patton's forces were able to penetrate the West Wall and build bridgeheads over the Saar River. The German troops had fought valiantly against the encroaching Americans.

-end-

rx302

At the Maastricht Conference, held by Generals Eisenhower, Tedder and Bradley and Field Marshal Montgomery, Monty again insisted on one final advance to the Ruhr. Eisenhower dismissed this in favor of the broad front approach to the Rhine. As well, the 9th Army was

placed under command of the 21st Army Group for the push to the Ruhr.

-end-

rx303

From Altdorf to Brachelen, the US 9th Army secured the Roer's west bank. Now, General Leonard Gerow's US V Corps pushed through the Monschau corridor on a seizure mission of the northern dams. The Germans were capable of flooding the Roer valleys using dams on the Roer. However, the Germans staved off the US troops by the 15th. In southern France, the German 19th Army held fast to a losing battle against the Allied 6th Army Group which was securing the Colmar pocket.

Despite heavy Allied attacks, the German forces had fought fiercely, keeping the Allies' success at a minimum. As well, Fall had come and brought rains and snow, slowing the Allied advance further. But, the Allies had succeeded in liberating Belgium, most of France and parts of Holland.

-end-

rx304

Hitler made it known to his generals that his forces would attack from the Ardennes, targeting Antwerp. He wished to separate the Allied 12th Army Group from the 21st.

-end-

rx305

General Alfred Jodl, from Hitler's originals, designed the Antwerp offensive.

-end-

rx306

Hitler calls for Germany to make total war. He then called for more than one million more troops for the Wehrmacht, and created the Volksgrenadier to participate in the defense of Germany. The men for these forces were taken from already destroyed divisions and what men could be called from industry. In October, Hitler created another new force, the Volksturm, made of men from local districts aged 16-60. This was to be the last defense for the Third Reich.

-end-

rx307

General Jodl's first plan for Operation Wacht am Rhein needed approximately 31 divisions for five targets. From the Belfort Gap to Duesseldorf along five points, the Germans would attempt to surround the Allies. Hitler was not impressed with this plan. He wanted another.

After two more days, Jodl presented Hitler with a new plan. In it, three of Army Group B's armies, under Field Marshal Model, would attack American forces at Ardennes and Eifel, take bridge crossings over the Meuse and force them back to Antwerp. The 6th Panzer Army, under Sepp Dietrich and composed of four SS Panzer divisions and five infantry, would carry the brunt of the attack in the north. In the south, the 5th Panzer Army, under General Hasso von Manteuffel and composed of three Panzer divisions and four infantry, and the 7th Army, under General Erich Brandenberger and composed of four infantry divisions, would attack in the south. Three infantry and one Panzer division would comprise the reserve force Model would rely on. As well, the 15th Army, under General Gustav-Adolph von Zangen, could be called into battle. As CinC West, Field Marshal von Rundstedt would supervise the action.

-end-

rx308

When Hitler discussed Operation Wacht am Rhein with Field Marshals Model and von Rundstedt, Hitler was surprised to learn of their contempt of the plan. According to Hitler's timetable, the operation would begin November 25th, but both Model and von Rundstedt found the plan much too difficult. The generals, as an alternative, suggested that the Americans at Aachen could be surrounded. This plan was the Small Solution, but Hitler would have none of it. However, he did acquiesce and allow more time for preparation by postponing the event until December 10th. The army commanders were apprised of the plan five days after this initial meeting. Men of lesser rank waited till mid-November or early December before being briefed on the situation.

-end-

rx309

Using the cover of night fall, the troops involved in Operation Wacht am Rhein began their deployment. Hitler had allowed the plan to slip to the 15th.

-end-

rx310

One final conference was held by Hitler at his Eagle's Nest, north of Frankfurt am Main, in the Taunus hills. In order to give his forces more time to prepare adequately, Hitler allowed one more 24-hour delay.

Meanwhile, Allied intelligence, convinced that the Germans could not afford a major offensive since the beatings they had been receiving from June forward, did not know what to make of the conflicting reports of German movement. The area of Ardennes and Eifel was understood to be free of German movement.

-end-

rx311

Beginning in fog, Operation Wacht am Rhein started with the bombing of Allied positions. The Allies were unable to strike back with air power, as it was grounded due to the fog. General Joachim Pieper's I SS Panzer Corps was the first group to experience success. They managed to break through US lines and begin fighting for bridgeheads over the Meuse. Fighting against the inexperienced 106th Division, the 5th Army now found itself engaged with the US 28th Division, which was already tested in battle. General Otto Skorzeny's 150 Panzer Brigade, under Operation Greif, had some of its men dress in Allied uniforms and move into the Allied lines. Because of this, General Eisenhower was forced to remain in his Versailles headquarters under special guard. However, the Allied generals were able to mobilize reinforcements by the end of the day, realizing that the German attack was a feint.

-end-

rx312

As the 6th Panzer Army crossed the Ambleve River, it became apparent that the only force making progress in General Dietrich's army were General Pieper's men. But, the Allies destruction of bridges coupled with the oncoming winter made further advance to the Meuse difficult. As well, the 5th Panzer Army was slowly making way towards its target of Bastogne. For the Allies, General Eisenhower called Generals Bradley, Devers and Patton together at Verdun. No further advance to the Rhine was to be attempted until the Germans were stopped. General Patton's men would mount a counteroffensive from the south against the main German positions. Patton, anticipating this, had already begun to move his troops.

-end-

rx313

The Germans were beginning to be bogged down in their offensive effort with their supply lines running short of fuel. Having been reinforced that day by the US 101st Airborne Division, Bastogne was not taken by General von Manteuffel according to Wacht am Rhein. General Pieper was experiencing similar troubles in his effort to cross the Meuse.

Field Marshal Montgomery, under orders from General Eisenhower, took command of the northern Allied armies, including the US 1st and 9th Armies. As well, Monty started to reinforce the Meuse bridges with elements of his XXX Corps.

-end-

rx314

With the loss of contact with General Pieper's battle group, the 6th Panzer Army now found itself mired to a halt. Now almost entirely on the defensive, General Dietrich was forced to relinquish command of several formations transferred to General von Manteuffel. His fight was faring better with his army surrounding Bastogne and reaching as far as Dinant on the Meuse by the 24th. However, Bastogne would not surrender, and Patton's attack had just begun. In addition, because the weather had cleared enough, the Allies would be able to use their formidable air power.

-end-

rx315

The US 4th Armored Division was able to relieve Bastogne. General von Manteuffel's Germans attempted to clear the US forces, but Patton's drive was not to be deterred.

-end-

rx316

Operation Nordwind, the plan to destroy the Allies at Alsace, was begun by German Army Group G under General Hermann Balck. More specifically, the 1st Army, commanded by General Hans

von Obstfelder, attacked the Allied 6th Army Group. With the Germans making some progress, General Eisenhower ordered the US 7th Army to retreat and shorten its line, but General de Gaulle would have none of it. He did not wish to release Strasbourg, and Eisenhower, because of politics, was forced to amend his order.

-end-

rx317

The Luftwaffe flew 900 aircraft against the Allies in the Ardennes for Operation Bodenplatte. It was designed to destroy airfields and succeeded in destroying some 300 planes. However, the Luftwaffe lost just as many.

The Allied forces in the ground were now regaining their lost momentum. On each side, 80,000 men were killed in the last German offensive in the Ardennes. Hitler had not succeeded in any objective, but managed to slow the Allies advance on the Rhine by six weeks.

-end-

rx318

As the Allies lost French mountain fighting capabilities, General Alexander's original plans for advance in Italy were tedious at best. General Leese, the commander of the British 8th Army, proposed that his army move, in secret, east of the Appenines to then attack Rimini. He figured Field Marshal Kesselring would move troops to the Adriatic leaving the US 5th Army to attack Bologna. After this was done, the 8th Army would advance again towards Lombardy. The plan was called Operation Olive and was approved by Alexander.

-end-

rx319

Operation Olive started with General Leese's force, the II Polish on the right, the British V on the left and the Canadian I at center, pushing to the Foglia River and the Gothic Line by the 29th.

-end-

rx320

The Gothic Line was attacked by the Canadian I and British V Corps. With the British force halted at Clemente, the Canadians were able to break through the line to the Conca River where they created a bridgehead on the 2nd. Field Marshal Kesselring, at first surprised by the plan, now understood it and began reinforcing his men from the west. The reinforcements and start of the rainy season ground the Allied advance to a halt.

General Mark Clark's 5th Army, on the other hand, had managed to force a retreat by the Germans from the Arno to the Gothic Line.

-end-

rx321

With Ultra finding the separation between the German 14th and 10th Armies at the II Giorgio Pass, General Clark started his thrust at this point. The US II, in the west, and the British XIII Corps, in the east, attacked the II Giorgio Pas at Clark's orders. While this was transpiring, the US IV Corps kept their German IV Corps counterparts from reinforcing the pass. Very early, the British corps penetrated the Gothic Line, but the Americans, trying to capture the Monte Altuzzo and Montecelli peaks over the II Giorgio Pass, could not until the 17th.

-end-

rx323

Field Marshal Kesselring, increasingly under pressure, found himself facing another problem as Clark's army took Fiorenzuola. This cleared the way for the Americans to fight to Bologna and cut Kesselring's Route 9. As well, the Greek Brigade captured Rimini, and the Canadian forces established a bridgehead over the Marecchia River. The British 8th Army had moved to the Po River, but still had to cross nine more.

-end-

rx322

The 8th Army started its offensive again with the Canadian forces taking Cariano. But, heavy rains had flooded the streams and the Canadian tanks had trouble crossing them until the 14th. This gave the Germans ample time to strengthen their forces. However, the Germans were pushed to the Rimini Line by the quickly recovering Canadians.

-end-

rx324

Rain slowed General Mark Clark's drive to Bologna, allowing Field Marshal Kesselring to regroup.

-end-

rx325

The British 8th Army changed command, with General Sir Richard McCreery taking General Leese's post. Leese moved on to Burma. Nine miles from Bologna with two very mountainous, General Clark started towards Bologna again.

-end-

rx326

After four days of fighting, the British 8th Army faced the Rubicon River.

-end-

rx327

As the American 5th Army still fought its way through its mountainous territory, the British 8th Army crossed and began advancing north of the Rubicon River.

-end-

rx328

The British 8th Army crossed the Savio, then the following day, the Cesano River.

-end-

rx329

Still stuck in the mountains just south of Bologna, and suffering 15,700 casualties, General Mark Clark was forced to halt his 5th Army while reinforcements could be made. The British 8th Army would have to keep the Germans on their toes.

-end-

rx330

Ronco River taken by 8th Army.

-end-

rx331

The Rabbi River was taken by 8th Army on November 1st.

-end-

rx332

Forli was liberated by the British 4th Division.

-end-

rx333

The 8th Army moved over the Lamone River.

-end-

rx334

The 8th Army liberated Castiglione.

-end-

rx335

With the death of Field Marshal Sir John Dill, General Maitland Wilson was chosen to succeed him as the representative to the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington, DC. Mediterranean Supreme Allied Commander was passed on to General Alexander. In his place, the 15th Army Group was given to General Mark Clark, while the 5th Army went to General Lucian Truscott who was fresh from France.

-end-

rx336

Canadian forces siezed Ravenna.

-end-

rx337

The British V Corps took Faenza, while the New Zealand forces pushed to Senio.

-end-

rx338

The Germans counterattacked in the Serchio Valley against the US 92nd Division. This created a hole in the US IV Corps's line which was held by the UK 8th Indian Division, on loan from the 8th Army. The line was recovered by the 28th.

-end-

rx339

With winter now fully realized, General Alexander stopped the 8th Army's push to Bologna. They had stopped at the Senio River with several more rivers to be crossed. The Allies had not succeeded in breaking the German forces in Italy, but had provided enough pressure so as to not let them reinforce their troops in France.

-end-

rx340

Several Greek politicians agreed to keep the exiled King George from returning to his native Greece until a plebiscite would decide whether he could.

-end-

rx341

Winston Churchill drew up plans for a small force of British soldiers to be moved to Athens in the event of a German withdrawal.

-end-

rx342

The British had forced an agreement between the rival Communists, ELAS, and republicans, EDES, previously. However, the Communists, realizing that the Germans were to withdraw, established the Committee of Liberation in the north. They were determined to take control once the Germans had gone.

-end-

rx343

Because of his support for the Archbishop Damaskinos as regent, the exiled Greek officers, Communist-leaning, asked for Prime Minister Emmanuel Tsouderos' dismissal. King George refused, and the officers mutinied. However, the British were able to quell this bloodlessly.

-end-

rx344

In order to placate any critics, King George called for a new Greek government to be convened. It would be composed of a majority of Greeks who stayed in Greece during the occupation, and encompass all viewpoints. Prime Minister Tsouderos resigned and was replaced by General Venizelos, a veteran of World War I. But, the parties involved disapproved of him, and he was replaced by the Social Democrat George Papandreou who was rescued from Greece.

-end-

rx345

At the Lebanon Conference, Papandreou succeeded in getting an agreement for a multi-party parliament. As well, the ELAS would continue to resist the Germans.

-end-

rx346

Churchill, fearful of a Communist Greece, remained supportive of sending British troops to Greece. As well, Churchill was aware that the Communists would not support a Papandreou lead government. Further worries were compounded when Ultra revealed German preparations for withdrawal. Churchill wanted the British force to install a government and set up aid facilities. General Maitlan Wilson, Supreme Allied Commander Mediterranean, began planning this under the name Manna.

-end-

rx347

When Churchill met with Papandreou in Rome, the British Prime Minister could not fully pledge to send troops to Greece. Papandreou reminded Churchill, that if the Greeks were to continue fighting the Germans, they would need arms, and, the Communists had all the arms as it was. In northern Greece, Bulgarian forces had crossed the border which worried the Greek government. Churchill advised Papandreou to move his government to Italy and allow the Greek people to decide their form of government. But, the Brit knew he would send troops to curtail a Communist takeover.

-end-

rx348

General Maitland Wilson obtained the Casserta Agreement, securing the forces for Operation Manna. The agreement was made by Stephanos Saraphis, of ELAS, and Napoleon Zervas, of EDES, to place their forces under Papandreou's government which would be then be controlled

by General Ronald Scobie in command of the British troops in Greece. However, the Germans were stalling in their withdrawal from Athens, and Manna would not begin until this was done.

-end-

rx349

Preceding Manna on September 17th, the British Foxforce, a group of Commandos, Special Boat Servicemen and portions of the Long Range Desert Group, had secured the Peloponnese. When Manna was undertaken, a British force landed at Patras, on Peloponnese.

-end-

rx350

The Germans withdraw from Corinth.

-end-

rx351

In order to alleviate a potential problem of Russian support of the Greek Communists, Churchill agreed to allow Stalin virtual control over the rest of the Balkans. Fearful of British imperialism, Roosevelt reluctantly agreed to the British operation.

-end-

rx352

A day after the Germans left Athens, a British airborne force took Magara airfield, while the Piraeus port was taken by the Royal Navy.

-end-

rx353

When Athens was restored to Greek control under Papandreou, he was advised by British Minister Harold Macmillan, Supreme Allied HQ Mediterranean, to force the resistance troops to hand over their arms, create a Greek National Army, form a new monetary system and establish relief aid facilities for aid provided by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency. The British warned Papandreou that if these actions were not taken, his government would collapse. On November 9th, a new unit of money was introduced, and a new army was called for on the 28th. The new army would be composed of the troops serving under British command; however, the Communists rejected this, undertook a general strike and resigned from the government. By mid-November, the Germans were almost completely withdrawn from the north of Greece, and Bulgarian troops had left as well.

-end-

rx354

Starting the Greek Civil War, 12 people were killed in fighting between police and Communist demonstrators in Athens. ELAS began to move towards Athens with the intent of siezing the government. General Scobie was ordered by Churchill to crush the rebellion. Despite some opposition by liberal Britons, troops were being readied to be sent in case reinforcements were necessary. The Civil War erupted in Piraeus and Salonica, but there was no Soviet involvement as per Stalin's agreement. As well, the Soviet press was unusually silent on the event.

-end-

rx355

In order to initiate further progress towards peace, Churchill landed in Greece. He called a conference for the next day to be controlled by Archbishop Damaskinos. The Archbishop was concerned about the atrocities ELAS had committed, and warned Macmillan of their having taken place. Despite this, ELAS delegates attended the conference. Churchill reinforced to the Greeks that Britain was interested in an independent Greece, but that in order to defeat Germany, Greece must not be divided as it was.

-end-

rx356

Before leaving Greece for Britain, Churchill managed to gain King George's acceptance of Archbishop Damaskinos regency.

-end-

rx357

As General Scobie's men took control of Athens and Piraeus, a new government for Greece, headed by General Nikolaos Plastiras, was created.

-end-

rx358

The Greek warring ended with the signing of a truce.

-end-

rx359

To maintain the Peace of Varkiza, ELAS now agreed to release civilian prisoners and disband their troops in an effort to build a national army.

On the 14th, traveling from Yalta back to Britain, Churchill stopped in Athens and was lauded with warm wishes from the Greeks.

Greece's problems had only begun. Whether or not to be monarchy, republic or communist nation was never solved. And, the Communists fled into the mountains again determined to fight another day for their country. As well, the British force in Greece had to be maintained just for this eventuality.

-end-

rx360

Surprising the Soviets, General Gille's men started a counterattack driving to Budapest. He managed to reach within 15 miles of the city, but General Malinovsky had prepared a plan to outflank and surround his forces.

-end-

rx361

Trying to relieve the pressure on the Western Allied forces, Churchill coaxingly questioned Stalin's intention to attack over the Vistula. Stalin's reply was that the offensive would begin during the latter half of the month in order to avoid the early snows and fog. But, finally he relented and agreed to attack with General Konev the 12th and General Zhukov on the 14th.

-end-

rx362

Attempting to reinforce General Gille's forces, the III Panzer Corps, under General Breith, pushed to Budapest. However, Gille's and Breith's men would, after five heavy days of fighting, retreat back to their starting lines.

-end-

rx363

Despite General Guderian's pleas for more reinforcements along the Vistula, Hitler would not allow it to happen.

-end-

rx364

Starting his drive with heavy artillery gunning, General Konev was able to breach 12 miles into the 25-mile 4th Panzer Army line.

-end-

rx365

The 3rd Panzer Army tried desperately to stave off the 3rd Belorussian Front, lead by General Chernyakhovsky, but it was forced to withdraw back further into East Prussia. This left the German 4th Army in danger with its back to the Masurian Lakes.

-end-

rx366

General Zhukov began his attack on Warsaw with a movement up from the south. On the following day, Zhukov tried to surround the city by attacking from the north.

Simultaneously, General Rokossovsky's 2nd Belorussian Front moved from the Narew River to attack Army Group Center, under General Georg-Hans Reinhardt. Hitler interfered with Army Group Center's successful repulsion by transferring a Panzer corps to Army Group A. With this, the 2nd Belorussian Front was able to reach Neidenburg near the 1938 border.

-end-

rx367

Fearing entrapment at Warsaw, General Harpe ordered the German garrison to evacuate Warsaw, but not before leveling the city and looting it. The following day, the Polish 1st Army liberated the city.

General Harpe was replaced by General Schoerner Lothar Rendulic in command of Army Group

A, and he was sent to Army Group North. Hitler was livid that Warsaw had been abandoned.

-end-

rx368

Having moved his troops in secrecy to Balaton Lake, General Gille was determined to take Budapest. Gille's thrust, by the 19th, had penetrated the 3rd Ukrainian Front, under General Tolbuhin. He managed to move on Dunapentele on the Danub, and by the 27th, was 12 miles from Budapest.

-end-

rx369

General Zhukov liberated Lodz while General Konev liberated Krakow, and the Germans tried desperately to maintain their lines along the Bzura and Rawka Rivers.

-end-

rx370

The German frontier was crossed by General Konev's forces at Namslau. The 3rd and 52nd Guards Tank Armies penetrated at Namslau, and then moved south targeting Katowice. By the 22nd, the 5th and 4th Tank Guards Tank Armies pushed to the Oder River.

-end-

rx371

In response to Field Marshal Reinhardt's preparation to retreat from Loetzen Line, along the Masurian Lakes, Hitler removed him from command. Der Fuhrer agreed to withdraw from Memel, which was taken by the 1st Baltic Front under Bagramyan, but never from the Loetzen Line which Reinhardt had intended to do to save the 4th Army.

Unhappy with the war's progress, Hitler decided to rename his forces: Army Group North became Courland, commanded by the Italian-experienced Heinrich von Vietinghoff; Army Group Center became North, commanded by Rendulic instead of Reinhardt; Army Group A became Center, commanded by Schoerner. Army Group Vistula was formed under Heinrich Himmler and was composed of the 2nd and 9th Armies. The task of this new group was to protect Berlin at all costs.

In Courland and East Prussia, the Soviets surrounded 26 and 27 German divisions, respectively. In response, Hitler called for fortresses to be made out of the cities and towns in these areas, especially Koenigsberg.

Now with the Soviets closing on Germany, eastern refugees began their drive towards Germany. Many told tales of Russian atrocities, with the Soviets taking to heart Ehrenburg's 'eye for an eye' policy. One concrete Soviet atrocity was the sinking of the SS Wilhelm Gustloff by a Soviet submarine as it fled from Danzig with 8,000 passengers. It remains the worst maritime disaster in history.

-end-

rx372

General Zhukov's men had moved over the German frontier enmass and within two days had created bridgeheads over the Oder at Kuestrin and Kienitz.

With Konev having secured the Silesian industrial district, he and Zhukov entered a race of sorts as to who would reach Berlin first. Stavka had not been prepared for their rapid advance to keep them supplied. Thus, they had to stop their advance at the Oder, in the face of increased German resistance and the German fortress cities they had yet to deal with. As well, the Soviets were concerned with the strength and threat of Army Group Vistula on General Zhukov's forces.

-end-

rx373

According to Stavka redirections, Pomerania would be dealt with by the 2nd Belorussian Front while East Prussia would be the job of the 3rd Belorussian and 1st Baltic Fronts.

-end-

rx374

Generals Bagramyan, Chernyakhovsky and Rokossovsky started their attacks on German positions. Their efforts met with no success. General Chernyakhovsky, the youngest Soviet front commander, was killed. The Deputy Defense Commissar was rushed to the front to replace him.

-end-

rx375

General Gille's attempt to reinforce Budapest had halted and was then forced to withdraw, clearing the way for the liberation of Budapest. The garrison inside the city resisted fiercely but was eventually destroyed, building by building.

The oilfields at Balaton Lake, though, remained central to Hitler's thinking. Thus, he diverted the 6th Panzer Army to the fields, despite the judgments of Generals Guderian and Dietrich that the army should be sent to the Oder River.

-end-

rx376

In accordance with Stalin's wishes at the Yalta Conference, the RAF Bomber Command began its attacks on eastern German cities with the fire-bombing of Dresden. The city was mostly historic in nature, but harbored many refugees. As many as 50,000 people lost their lives when the 800 RAF bombers struck. This was an attempt to promote the idea in German minds that the Allies were united, despite being on two different fronts. The American Operation Thunderclap bombed Magdeburg and Berlin. The following day American raids in Dresden began, then again on March 2nd. Attacks on Chemnitz occurred as well.

This type of bombing, city busting, was felt to be immoral by many Allied leaders, but continued in a limited fashion.

-end-

rx377

Continuing with much success until General Walther Wenck was injured in an automobile accident, the German counteroffensive against General Zhukov's forces in Pomerania ground to a halt on the 17th. Zhukov would have to secure Pomerania before driving on Berlin.

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