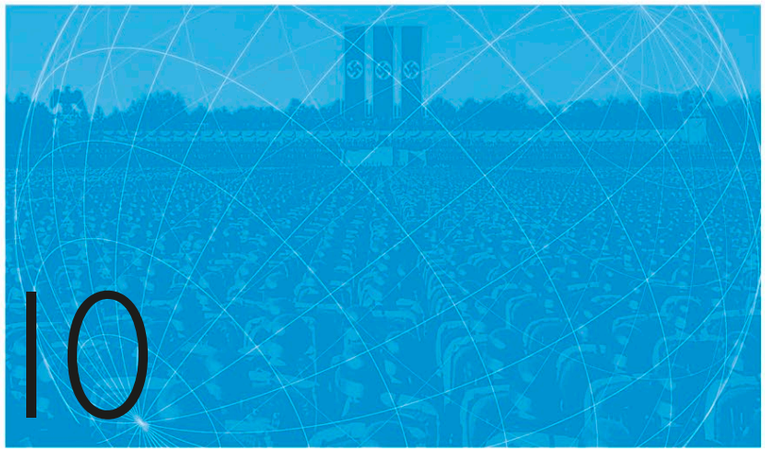
FOREWORD BY **PETER SNOW**

WORLD WAR II
MAP BY MAP

WORLD WAR II
MAP BY MAP

FOREWORD BY
PETER SNOW



THE SLIDE TO WAR 1918–1939

12 The seeds of war
14 The legacy of World War I
16 The League of Nations
18 Europe of the dictators
20 Hitler and Nazi Germany
22 China in turmoil
24 The Spanish Civil War
26 The Sino-Japanese War
28 Germany and Italy expand
30 Kristallnacht
32 Countdown in Europe

GERMANY TRIUMPHANT 1939–1941

36 War in Europe
38 Poland destroyed
40 The phoney war
42 Battle of the River Plate
44 The Winter War in Finland
46 The battle for Norway
48 The German offensive in the west
50 Blitzkrieg
52 Evacuating Dunkirk
54 The fall of France
56 Power struggles in Africa
58 The Battle of Britain
60 The Blitz
62 Britain at bay
64 The U-boat war begins
66 Sinking of the *Bismarck*
68 The end of US neutrality
70 Lend-Lease
72 The Mediterranean and Middle East
74 Italy's campaigns in Africa

CONTENTS

Penguin Random House

DK LONDON

Senior Editor Hugo Wilkinson
Project Editors Shashwati Tia Sarkar, Miezan van Zyl
Editor Polly Boyd
Editorial Assistant Michael Clark
Project Assistant Briony Corbett
Managing Editor Angeles Gavira Guerrero
Associate Publisher Liz Wheeler
Publishing Director Jonathan Metcalf
Lead Senior Art Editor Duncan Turner
Senior Art Editor Sharon Spencer
Project Art Editor Steve Woosnam-Savage
Cartographer Ed Merritt
Jacket Design Development Manager Sophia MTT
Jacket Designer Surabhi Wadhwa
Jacket Editor Emma Dawson
Producer (Pre-production) Rob Dunn
Senior Producer Meskerem Berhane
Managing Art Editor Michael Duffy
Art Director Karen Self
Design Director Phil Ormerod

THE WIDENING WAR 1942

76 Rommel enters the desert war

78 The Greco-Italian War

80 Germany pushes south

82 The Middle East and eastern Mediterranean

84 War in the Mediterranean

86 The Siege of Malta

88 Germany's war with the USSR

90 Operation Barbarossa

92 Germany and USSR at home

94 The Siege of Leningrad

96 German advance on Moscow

98 Massacres in the east

100 The relief of Moscow

104 America and Japan go to war

106 Japanese ambitions

108 Japan goes to war

110 Pearl Harbor

112 Japanese advances

114 America at war

116 Japan invades the Philippines

118 Surrender at Singapore

120 Japan takes Burma

122 India in World War II

124 Japanese setbacks

126 The Battle of Midway

128 Guadalcanal

130 War in Europe and Africa

132 The new order in Europe

134 The Holocaust

136 The Warsaw ghetto

138 Raids and subversions

140 Arctic convoys

142 Rommel's final advance

144 Second Battle of El Alamein

146 Operation Torch

148 German advance to Stalingrad

150 Stalingrad under siege

152 Soviet victory at Stalingrad

154 Prisoners of war

DK INDIA

Senior Editor Rupa Rao
Assistant Editors Aashirwad Jain, Sonali Jindal
Picture Researchers Akash Jain, Surya Sankash Sarangi
Picture Research Manager Taiyaba Khatoon
Jackets Editorial Coordinator Priyanka Sharma
Managing Editor Rohan Sinha
Managing Jackets Editor Saloni Singh
Pre-production Manager Balwant Singh
Cartographers Ashutosh Ranjan Bharti, Swati Handoo, Animesh Kumar Pathak
Cartography Manager Suresh Kumar
Lead Senior Art Editor Vaibhav Rastogi
Senior Art Editor Mahua Mandal
Project Art Editors Sanjay Chauhan, Anjali Sachar
Art Editors Rabia Ahmad, Mridushmita Bose, Debjyoti Mukherjee, Sonali Rawat Sharma
Managing Art Editor Sudakshina Basu
Senior Jackets Designer Suhita Dharamjit
Senior DTP Designers Harish Aggarwal, Vishal Bhatia, Jagtar Singh
Production Manager Pankaj Sharma

COBALT ID

Designer Darren Bland
Art Director Paul Reid
Editorial Director Marek Walisiewicz

CONTRIBUTORS

FOREWORD
Peter Snow CBE

CONSULTANT
Richard Overy, Professor of History, Exeter University

WRITERS
Simon Adams, Tony Allan, Kay Celtel, R.G. Grant, Jeremy Harwood, Philip Parker, Christopher Westhorp

TURNING THE TIDE 1943–1944

158 German defiance

160 Victory in the desert

162 Summit conferences

164 Sicily and Italy invaded

166 From Anzio to the Gothic Line

168 Defeat of the U-boats

170 Code-breaking

172 Bombing by day and night

174 Speer and the war industry

176 Resistance in Europe

178 The Battle of Kursk

180 The Soviets sweep forwards

182 Operation Bagration

184 The Warsaw uprising

186 The D-Day landings

188 Omaha Beach

190 The Battle of Normandy

192 V-weapons

194 The breakout

196 The plot to kill Hitler

198 Operation Market Garden

200 Battles at Germany's gate

202 Greece and Yugoslavia

204 War against Japan

206 Operation Cartwheel

208 US amphibious warfare

210 Island-hopping in the Pacific

212 Battle for the Marianas

214 The Battle of Leyte Gulf

216 Kamikaze tactics

218 The fightback in Burma

220 China and Japan at war

222 Japanese rule in east Asia

First published in Great Britain in 2019 by
Dorling Kindersley Limited, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL

Copyright © 2019 Dorling Kindersley Limited

A Penguin Random House Company

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

001-311581-Sep/2019

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 978-0-2413-5871-9

Printed and bound in Malaysia

A WORLD OF IDEAS:
SEE ALL THERE IS TO KNOW
www.dk.com

ENDGAME AND AFTERMATH 1944–1955

226 Allied victory in Europe

228 Battle of the Bulge

230 Yalta and Potsdam

232 Crossing the Rhine

234 Germany loses the air war

236 The bombing of Dresden

238 The final Soviet attack

240 Final struggles in Italy

242 The fall of Berlin

244 VE Day

246 Defeat of Japan

248 Retaking the Philippines

250 Iwo Jima

252 The bombing of Japan

254 The Battle of Okinawa

256 Manhattan Project

258 Hiroshima and Nagasaki

260 Peace in the Pacific

262 The aftermath of war

264 The Iron Curtain

266 The Chinese Civil War

268 Decolonization of Asia

270 The creation of Israel

272 The price of war

274 Remembrance

276 Glossary

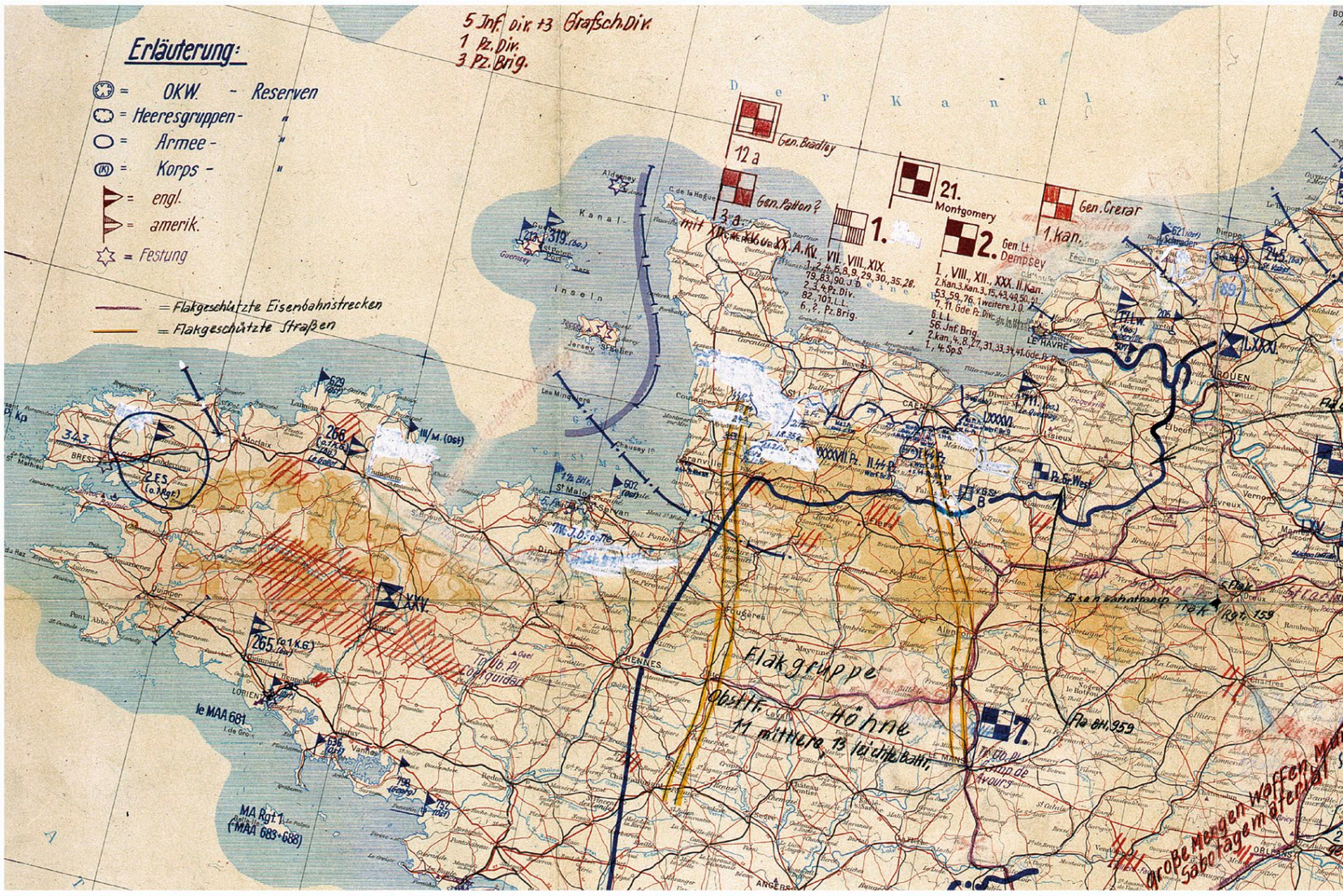
278 Index

286 Acknowledgments

FOREWORD

This is the most compelling work of military geography I've ever seen. It's a testament to the titanic scale of the conflict of 1939–45, which dwarfs all others in world history. The ferocity of World War II – the level of its violence and the cost in human life – almost defies description: up to 80 million deaths; some 20 million on the battlefield; and around three times more than that among civilians caught up in the firestorm of bombing and all-embracing warfare on land, sea, and air. What these maps explain in intricate detail is the mobility and speed with which mechanized armies could sweep across vast areas, and with which warships and aircraft could inflict destruction at ranges never before dreamed of.

No earlier conflict has demanded such comprehensive mapping. No other conflict has been as challenging to the cartographer. Each of the pivotal moments of the war is marked by more movement and the exercise of more industrial might than in any previous war. It is maps such as these that can help us to envisage the scope, the size, and the sheer pace of Hitler's blitzkrieg, which crushed the Low Countries and France in the spring of 1940. Other instances of mass mobility are illuminated for us – the see-sawing of the rival armies in North Africa in 1940–43, the great leap across the Mediterranean by Montgomery's and Patton's armies from North Africa to Sicily and Italy, the lightning Nazi assault on Stalin's Soviet Union, and



▽ **Contemporary map of action in Normandy**
This German situation map shows Axis and Allied troop movements in 1944. Following the Allied counter-invasion of France on D-Day, the two sides battled fiercely for control of territory in northern France, Belgium, and the Netherlands in what was to be one of the pivotal episodes of the war in Europe (see pp.190–91).

the astonishing turnaround after Stalingrad in 1942–43. Perhaps most dramatically of all, we can see the greatest seaborne invasion of all time on D-Day in June 1944.

This book also reminds us that the war enveloped Asia. It describes the great naval battles of the Pacific that followed Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. This was, in President Roosevelt's words, the "date which will live in infamy", propelling the US into the war. More than anything, it was the commitment of America's industrial might on the side of the Allies that spelled the end for Germany, Italy, and Japan. The set of maps describing the desperately hard-fought and costly series of battles that finally consumed Japan's short-lived Pacific empire is an essential guide to the understanding of the massive task that confronted the US forces. This comprehensive picture of World War II is enhanced by further maps and features that illustrate the state of the world before and after the fighting, and the wider social, political, and economic aspects of the conflict. We also get a glimpse of the kind of mapping that was available to military commanders at the time. I've long been fascinated by the way good maps have helped me and other commentators explain the ups and downs of warfare. This book is right at the forefront of that great enterprise.

PETER SNOW, 2019

Belg./Nordfr.
Frankreich
Mil. Bef.
zahlreiche Eisenbahnsabotagen
14 Terroristen erschossen
LILLE
ROUBAIX
TOURNAI
MONS
CHARLEROI
NAMUR
LIÈGE
AACHEN
KÖLN
BONN
COBLENZ
WIESBADEN
MAINZ
TRIER
LUXEMBURG
METZ
SAARBRÜCKEN
NANCY
STRASSBURG
REIMS
CHÂLONS-S.-M.
ST QUENTIN
AMIENS
ROUEN
CAEN
LISIEUX
BAYEUX
CHERBOURG
ST LÔ
VIRE
FALAISE
ARGENTAN
ALENÇON
DREUX
CHARTRES
ÉVREUX
LE HAVRE
DIEPPE
ABBEVILLE
BOULOGNE
CALAIS
ARRAS
CAMBRAI
LAON
SOISSONS
COMPIÈGNE
MELUN
FONTAINEBLEAU
MONTARGIS
TROYES
CHAUMONT
BAR-LE-DUC
VERDUN
EPINAL
MULHOUSE
BASEL
SCHLETTSTADT
ZWEIBRÜCKEN
KAISERSLAUTERN
LUDWIGSHAFEN
MANNHEIM
HEIDELBERG
DARMSTADT
WORMS
KARLSRUHE
PFORZHEIM
LUNÉVILLE
MASMÉS
Pont-à-Mousson
Mouzon
Mézières
Charleville
Sedan
Laon
Soissons
Compiègne
Beauvais
Cambrai
Douai
Lens
Bethune
Calais
Boulogne
Dieppe
Le Havre
Caen
Lisieux
Bayeux
Cherbourg
St Lô
Vire
Falaise
Argentan
Alençon
Dreux
Chartres
Évreux
Rouen
Amiens
Abbeville
Arras
Lille
Roubaix
Tournai
Mons
Charleroi
Namur
Liège
Aachen
Hasselt
Maastricht
Eupen
Verviers
Malmedy
Bonn
Koblenz
Andernach
Mayen
Wiesbaden
Mainz
Trier
Luxembourg
Metz
Saarbrücken
Nancy
Strassburg
Karlsruhe
Pforzheim
Mannheim
Heidelberg
Darmstadt
Worms
Ludwigshafen
Kaiserslautern
Zweibrücken
Masmés

THE SLIDE TO WAR 1918–1939

MOUNTING TENSIONS AFTER WORLD WAR I LED TO INSTABILITY AND THE RISE OF EXTREMIST NATIONALISM IN EUROPE, WHILE CLASHES IN ASIA GATHERED MOMENTUM. A NEW GLOBAL WAR DREW NEAR.

△ **Nationalist propaganda**
This Spanish Civil War poster promotes the Nationalist cause. Fought between Republicans and Nationalists, the war epitomized the right–left divide that polarized Europe in the 1930s.

THE SEEDS OF WAR

The world of the 1920s and 1930s was scarred by ideological divisions, social conflicts, and economic collapse. Aggressive militarists intent on conquest rose to power in major states, notably Germany and Japan, and the clumsy efforts of liberal democracies to preserve the peace only precipitated a headlong rush to war.

It is a sad irony that the origins of World War II can be directly traced back to World War I, which was known as "the war to end war". This immensely destructive conflict bred a widespread popular longing for peace, but also left a heritage of grievance, insecurity, and instability. Germany in particular found it hard to come to terms with defeat, and the Versailles peace treaty, devised by the victorious powers in 1919, was bitterly resented by most Germans, who felt it was too punitive. The German Weimar Republic, the government founded in 1919, was weak, facing hyperinflation and armed revolts from both the right and the left.

From peace to rearmament

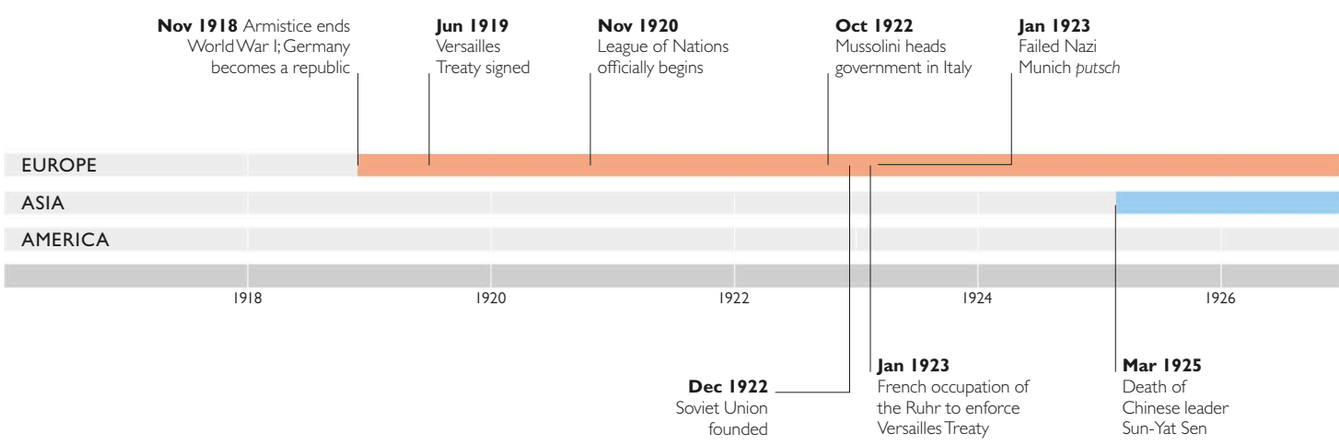
During the 1920s, there was encouraging evidence of recovery, with a marked improvement in international affairs. The League of Nations, set up in 1920 under the terms of the peace treaty, pursued ambitious plans for collective security and disarmament, although its authority was lessened by the refusal of the US to take part. After a crisis over enforcement of the Treaty of Versailles in 1923, Germany and France started making moves towards normalizing relations, but true stability proved elusive. The transformation of the former Russian Empire into the Soviet Union – a Communist state theoretically committed to world revolution – constituted a new unsettling factor in international politics. In Italy, also fatally destabilized by World War I, Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini took power. In China, Nationalists struggled to uphold a central government against Communists and warlords.

Hopes for a return to "normalcy" disappeared definitively with the onset of the Great Depression in 1929, after the Wall Street Crash. This crushing blow to the global economy had a devastating impact on a world riven by domestic and international tensions. As trade collapsed, major powers were tempted to seek economic security through political control of territory and resources. Faced with mass unemployment and falling living standards, many countries abandoned liberalism for authoritarian government. In Germany, the impact of the Depression turned Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party from a marginal extremist movement into a major

▷ **Japanese firepower**
The Type 92 heavy machine gun was one of the weapons adopted by Japan as it pursued military expansion in the 1930s.

BETWEEN THE WARS

In Europe, a period of turmoil after the end of World War I was followed by relative stability in the mid-1920s. Then the onset of the Great Depression in 1929 propelled Hitler's rise to power in Germany. After that, German aggression led to crisis after crisis, until the fateful invasion of Poland that started World War II in Europe in September 1939. The Japanese invasion of China in 1937 had already led to war in Asia.



◁ **Unopposed conquest**
Occupying Czechoslovakia without a fight, the German army parades through the streets of Prague before a sullen crowd in spring 1939.

political force. Marshalling German resentment against the Treaty of Versailles, Hitler linked solving Germany's economic problems to a reassertion of German military power. Within two years of Hitler becoming Chancellor of Germany in 1933, the country had embarked on open, full-scale rearmament. Meanwhile, in East Asia, an increasingly militarist Japan was tempted by Chinese weakness into encroachments that culminated in a full-scale invasion in 1937. Mussolini's Italy committed its own smaller-scale act of aggression with an invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. Revealed as impotent to prevent such breaches of world peace, the League of Nations faded into insignificance.

The lead-up to war

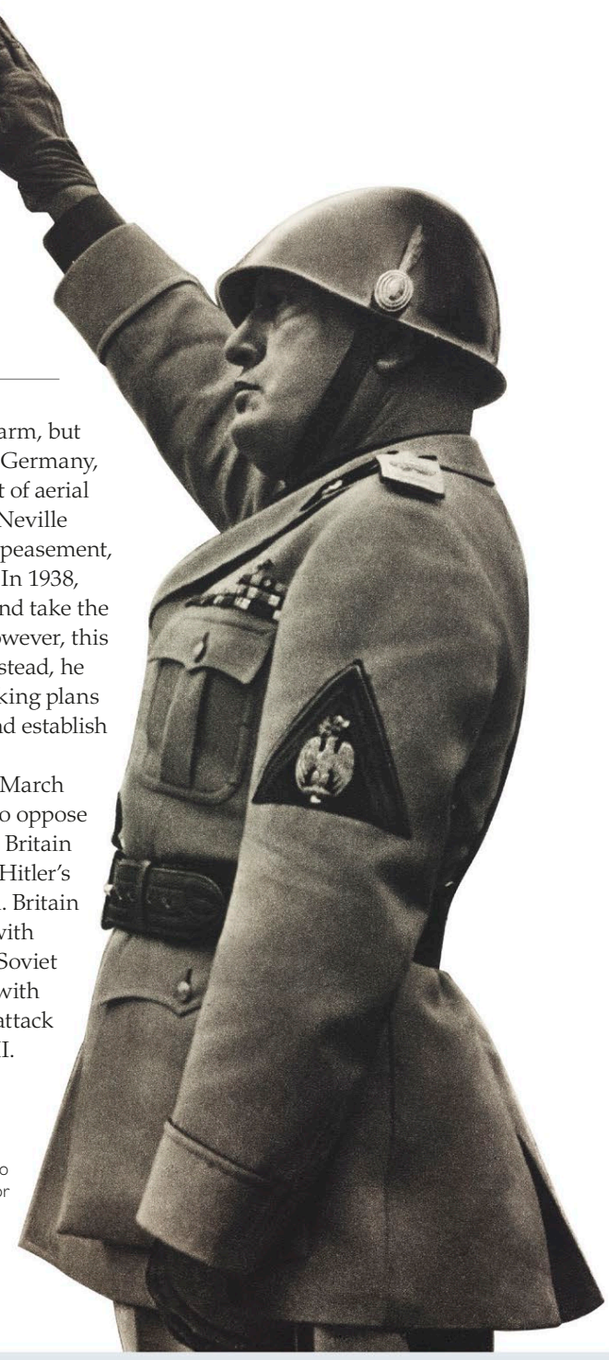
Britain and France, both liberal democracies, struggled to find an adequate response to the rise of naked aggression. They failed to take action when Hitler rearmed in defiance of the Treaty of Versailles. When civil war broke out in Spain in 1936, and Germany and Italy intervened on the side of right-wing rebels, the British and French stayed neutral, refusing to align with the ideologically opposed Soviet Union, which supported the Spanish government.

Belatedly, the democracies began to rearm, but they were desperate to avoid war with Germany, fearful of the possibly immediate effect of aerial bombardment. British prime minister Neville Chamberlain decided on a policy of appeasement, seeking to satisfy German grievances. In 1938, Hitler was allowed to absorb Austria and take the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia. However, this was not enough for the Nazi leader. Instead, he actively desired war and conquest, making plans to reverse the verdict of World War I and establish German domination in Europe.

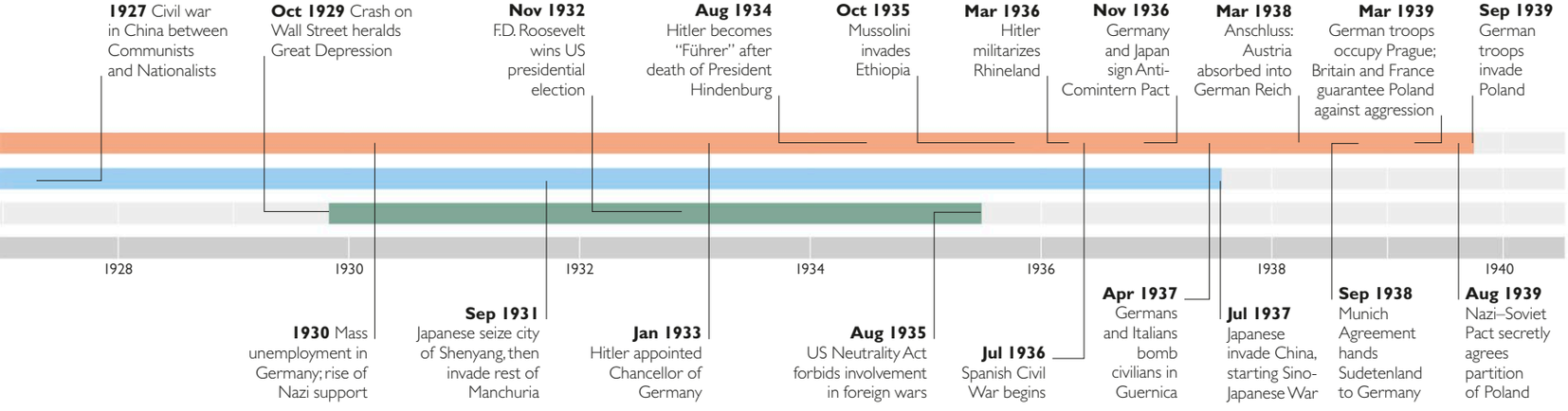
After Germany occupied Prague in March 1939, the British government decided to oppose any further Nazi expansionism. When Britain and France promised to assist Poland, Hitler's next target, a countdown to war began. Britain and France were still reluctant to ally with the Soviet Union. As they dallied, the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin opted for a deal with Hitler, clearing the way for a German attack on Poland and the start of World War II.

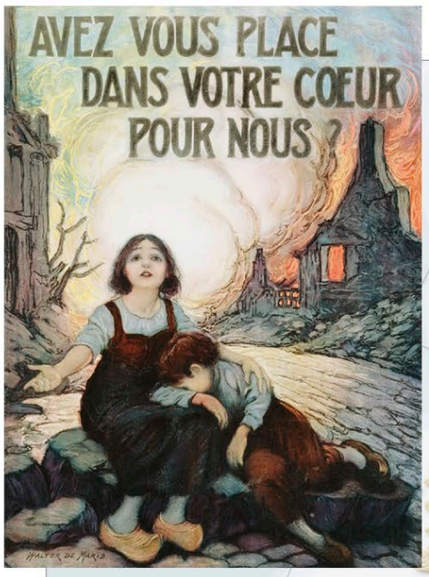
"War is to man what motherhood is to woman… I do not believe in perpetual peace."

BENITO MUSSOLINI, ITALIAN DICTATOR, 1939

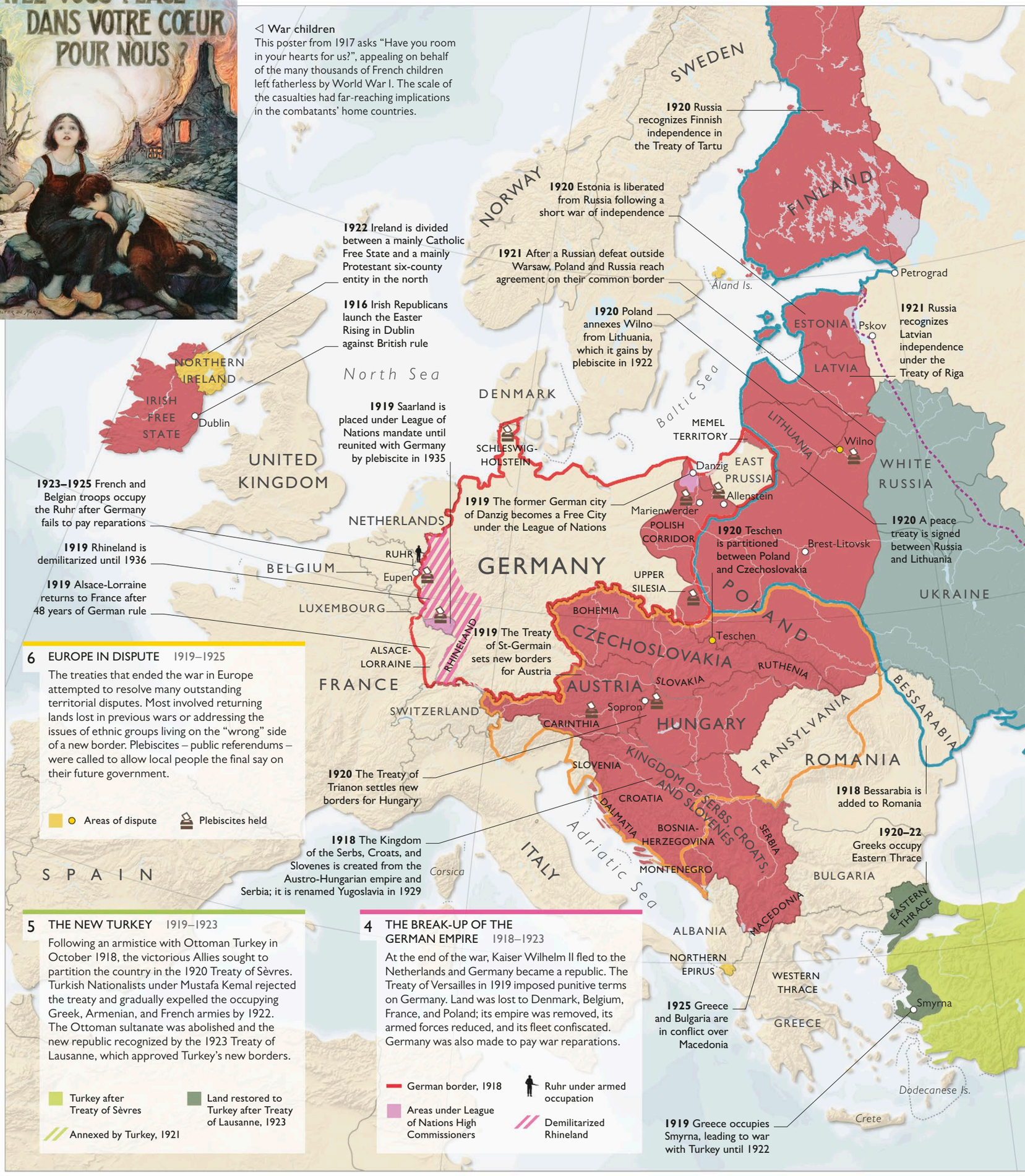


▷ **The face of Fascism**
Italian Fascist leader Benito Mussolini set the model for the uniformed dictators who dominated Europe between the wars.





◁ **War children**
This poster from 1917 asks "Have you room in your hearts for us?", appealing on behalf of the many thousands of French children left fatherless by World War I. The scale of the casualties had far-reaching implications in the combatants' home countries.



6 EUROPE IN DISPUTE 1919–1925

The treaties that ended the war in Europe attempted to resolve many outstanding territorial disputes. Most involved returning lands lost in previous wars or addressing the issues of ethnic groups living on the "wrong" side of a new border. Plebiscites – public referendums – were called to allow local people the final say on their future government.

Areas of dispute
Plebiscites held

5 THE NEW TURKEY 1919–1923

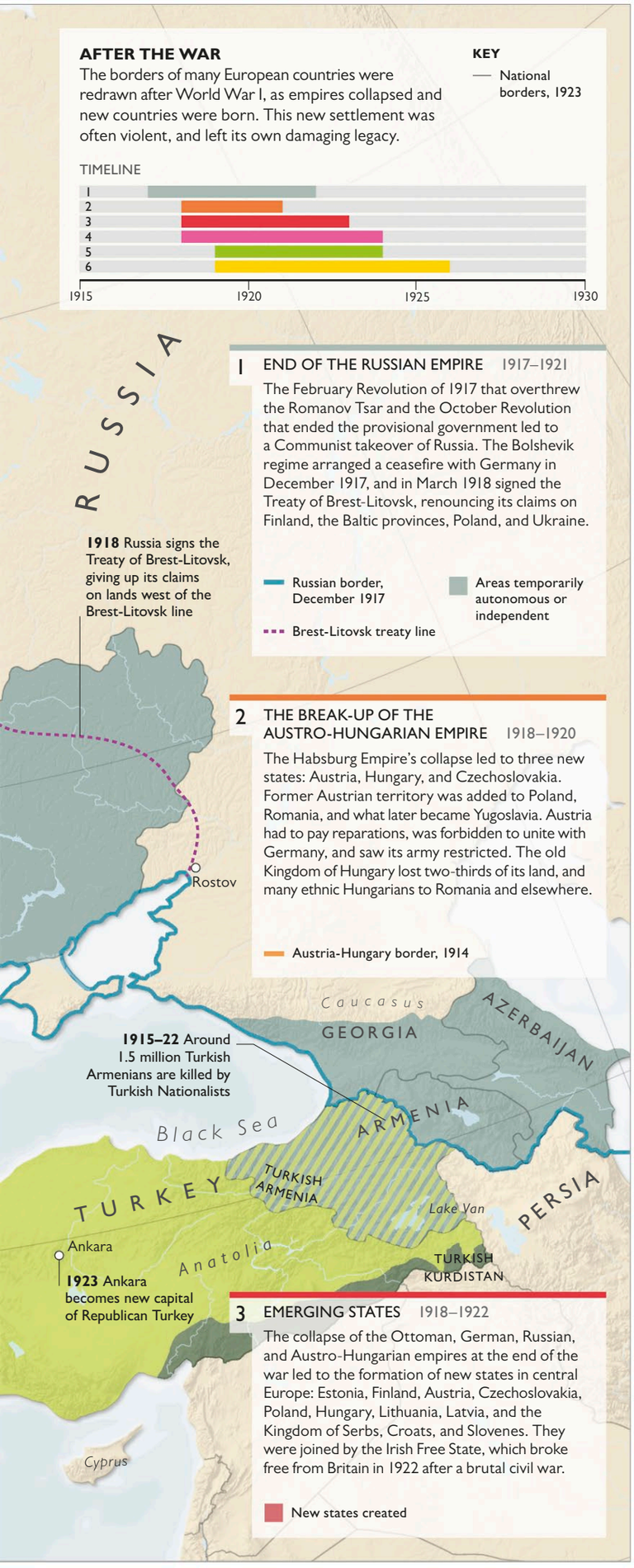
Following an armistice with Ottoman Turkey in October 1918, the victorious Allies sought to partition the country in the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres. Turkish Nationalists under Mustafa Kemal rejected the treaty and gradually expelled the occupying Greek, Armenian, and French armies by 1922. The Ottoman sultanate was abolished and the new republic recognized by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, which approved Turkey's new borders.

Turkey after Treaty of Sèvres
Land restored to Turkey after Treaty of Lausanne, 1923
Annexed by Turkey, 1921

4 THE BREAK-UP OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE 1918–1923

At the end of the war, Kaiser Wilhelm II fled to the Netherlands and Germany became a republic. The Treaty of Versailles in 1919 imposed punitive terms on Germany. Land was lost to Denmark, Belgium, France, and Poland; its empire was removed, its armed forces reduced, and its fleet confiscated. Germany was also made to pay war reparations.

German border, 1918
Ruhr under armed occupation
Areas under League of Nations High Commissioners
Demilitarized Rhineland



THE LEGACY OF WORLD WAR I

The end of war in Europe in 1918 saw the collapse of four major empires. The map of the continent needed to be redrawn, and the future home of millions of people decided. As new states emerged and old conflicts were slowly resolved, the legacy of the war continued to be felt across Europe for many years.

The peace treaties that settled the future of Europe after 1919 were the result of numerous compromises between the "Big Four": the victorious Allied powers of the US, UK, France, and Italy. American president Woodrow Wilson wanted to forge a liberal peace settlement based on national self-determination, while French prime minister Georges Clemenceau wanted above all to ensure the future security of his country and make Germany pay for the war – a view that was shared by David Lloyd George, prime minister of Britain. The resulting treaties had the overall effect of pleasing no one, and left the people and governments of many countries profoundly dissatisfied with the outcome.

Territorial disputes continued to divide nations, notably in Eastern Europe, while actual fighting continued in Turkey until 1922. Many of the new states were crudely carved out of Austro-Hungary and the other old empires, while defeated Germany emerged as a shrunken republic and imperial Russia, excluded from the peace talks, became the world's first Communist state.

While some problems were addressed by the peace treaties, the legacy of the war had profound social, economic, and political consequences across Europe and Asia, and would become one of the defining causes of a new world war within 20 years.

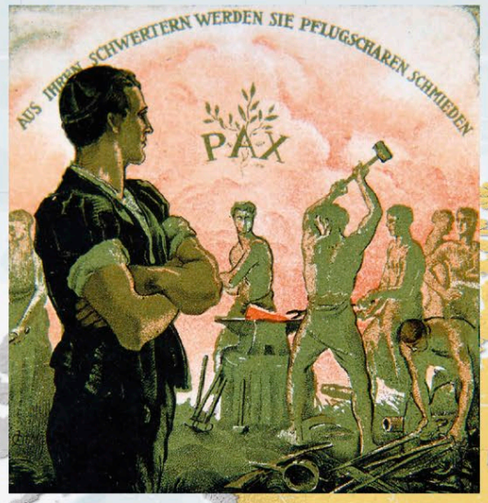
"My home policy: I wage war. My foreign policy: I wage war. All the time I wage war."

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU, 1918

WRITING THE PEACE

The victorious Allied politicians and diplomats met in Paris in 1919 to draw up a series of treaties with the defeated Central Powers, each one named after the palaces, chateaux, and towns to the west of Paris where they were signed. The main treaty was signed with Germany at Versailles in June 1919, followed by St-Germain-en-Laye with Austria in September 1919, Neuilly-sur-Seine with Bulgaria in November 1919, Trianon with Hungary in June 1920, and finally the abortive Sèvres treaty with Turkey in August 1920.

Signing the Treaty of Versailles



△ **Giving peace a chance**
This postcard in favour of Switzerland's membership of the League of Nations in 1920 reveals a mood of optimism.

2 MEMBERSHIP OF THE LEAGUE 1920–1939

The League had 42 founding members, and by 1934 its membership stood at 58. The US, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Mongolia, Bhutan, and Nepal never joined. The USSR belonged only in 1934–39, while Japan and Germany left in 1933, Italy in 1937, and Spain in 1939. As colonies and mandates were excluded from membership, most of Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific went unrepresented in the League.

1932 Former Ottoman Iraq becomes the first (British) mandate to achieve independence

1923 France acquires a mandate over former Ottoman Syria, including the future Lebanon

1933 The New German chancellor Adolf Hitler quickly pulls Germany out of the League

1932–34 The World Disarmament Conference meets in Geneva with representatives from 60 states but fails to make any progress

1936 The League refuses to intervene in the Spanish Civil War despite pleas from the Republican government

1919 The US Senate refuses to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, thereby excluding the US from the League

1923 Britain acquires a mandate over former Ottoman Palestine, and creates Transjordan (later Jordan) as an autonomous area

1930 A League report leads to the Liberian government outlawing slavery

1926 Brazil becomes the first founding member of the League to leave

1935 The League imposes weak sanctions on Italy after its invasion of Ethiopia but fails to prevent Italian seizure of the country

GREENLAND
ICELAND
CANADA
USA
PACIFIC OCEAN
MEXICO **1931**
GUATEMALA **1920–36**
EL SALVADOR **1924–37**
HONDURAS **1920–36**
NICARAGUA **1920–36**
PANAMA
COSTA RICA **1920–25**
CUBA
HAITI
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC **1924**
VENEZUELA **1920–38**
COLOMBIA
ECUADOR **1934**
PERU **1920–39**
BOLIVIA
BRAZIL **1920–26**
PARAGUAY **1920–35**
CHILE **1920–38**
ARGENTINA
URUGUAY
MOROCCO
ALGERIA
LIBYA
EGYPT **1937**
PALESTINE
SYRIA
IRAQ
TRANSJORDAN
PERSIA
FRENCH WEST AFRICA
BRITISH TOGO
LIBERIA
NIGERIA
FRENCH TOGO
BRITISH CAMEROONS
FRENCH CAMEROONS
FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA
ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SUDAN
UGANDA
ETHIOPIA **1923–1937**
RUANDA-URUNDI
BELGIAN CONGO
KENYA
TANGANYIKA
NYASALAND
ANGOLA
NORTHERN RHODESIA
SOUTHERN RHODESIA
MOZAMBIQUE
MADAGASCAR
BECHUANALAND
SOUTH-WEST AFRICA
SOUTH AFRICA
See panel

1 FOUNDING OF THE LEAGUE 1919

Established under the Treaty of Versailles of 1919 that ended World War I, the League of Nations met for the first time in Paris on 10 January 1920. It consisted of a General Assembly of all member states; an Executive Council limited to the major powers; and a permanent secretariat. All were based in Geneva, Switzerland. A Permanent Court of International Justice, sitting in The Hague in the Netherlands, judged disputes referred to it.

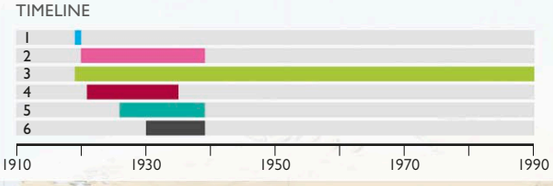
THE LEAGUE IN ACTION

Active from 1920 until its eventual replacement by the United Nations in 1946, the League became largely irrelevant at the outbreak of World War II.

KEY

- Founder members and states
- Subsequent members, with dates of membership
- Possessions of member states
- Mandated territories
- Non-member states
- States and their possessions that withdrew or were expelled
- Borders, 1930

TIMELINE



6 THE FAILURE OF THE LEAGUE 1930–1939

The League settled a number of disputes around the world, but it did not reduce the world's stock of armaments. Moreover, it significantly failed to halt the military expansions in Germany, Italy, and Japan that eventually led to World War II; the hostile actions of these nations went unpunished throughout the 1930s. Ultimately, the League's belief in collective security proved no match for states acting in their own national interests.

5 DRIVING DISARMAMENT 1926–1939

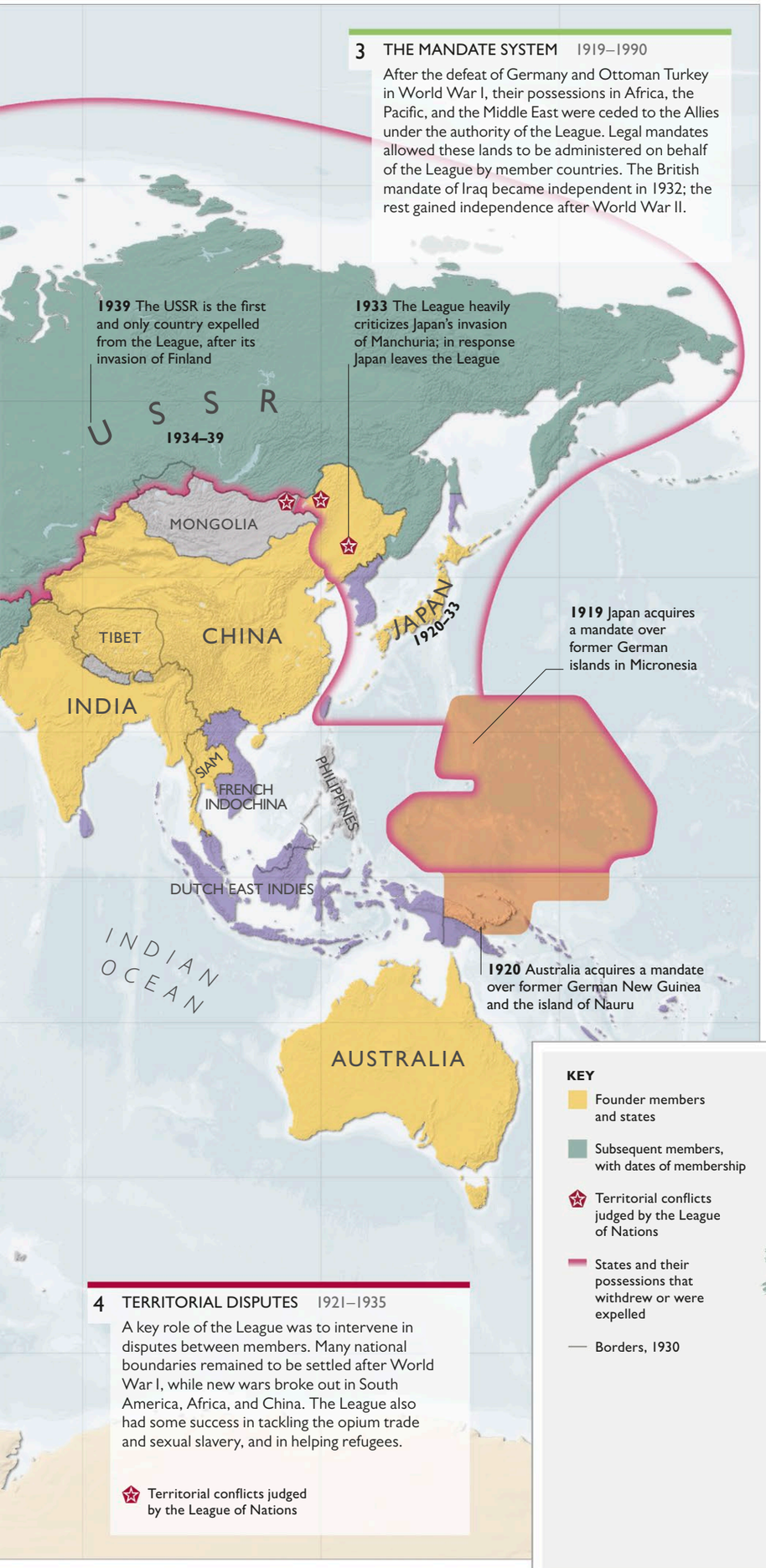
Under Article 8 of its founding covenant, the League aimed to reduce world armaments. In 1926 it set up a commission to prepare for a world conference on disarmament, which eventually met in Geneva in 1932 but effectively collapsed in 1933 when Hitler withdrew. Meanwhile the Kellogg–Briand Pact, an international treaty forged outside the League in 1928, sought but failed to outlaw conflict as an instrument of national policy.

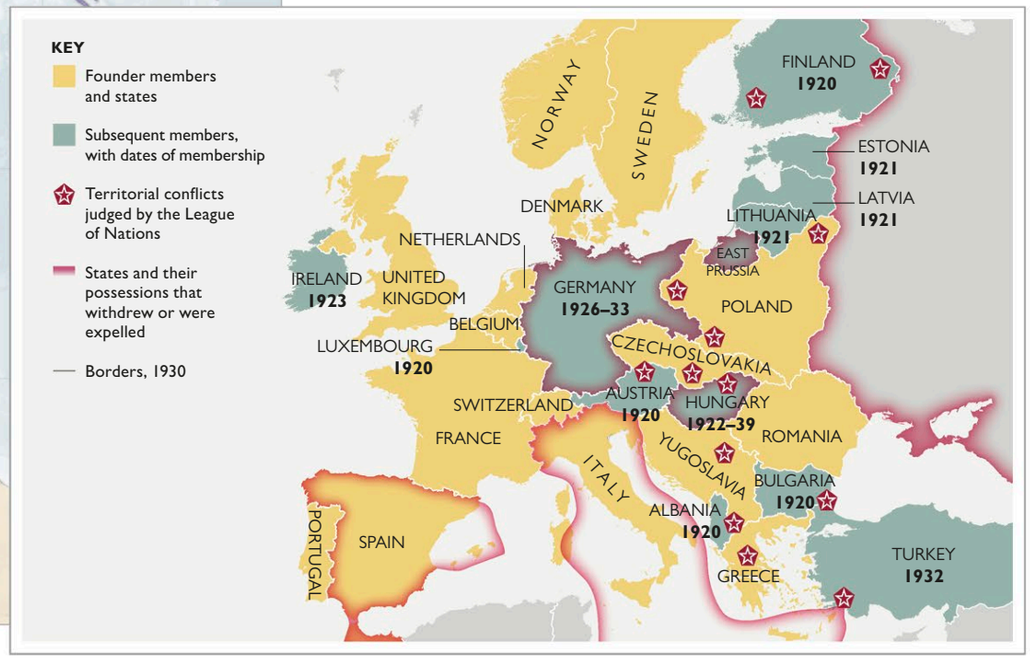
THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

After the horrors of World War I, a group of countries conceived the idea of a League of Nations, the world's first-ever international organization whose primary mission would be to maintain world peace and avoid another catastrophic global war.

The name "League of Nations" was coined in 1914 by the British political scientist and pacifist Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, who drew up a draft scheme for its organization. As World War I progressed, leaders of the eventually victorious Allies began to clarify their war aims, agreeing that there should be some form of international organization created to prevent future wars. This idea was made explicit by American president Woodrow Wilson who, in January 1918, included in his Fourteen Points that were used to negotiate the end of the war a "league of nations to insure peace and justice".

The founding covenant of the League was written by the British diplomat Lord Robert Cecil and the South African statesman Jan Smuts, and was agreed during the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. To achieve world peace, the covenant pledged the League's support for disarmament, and it stated that its aim was to prevent wars through collective security, in which member states would respond collectively to any threats to world peace. The League would also extend international relations in the fields of finance, trade, and transport, and help promote health and the struggle against drugs, prostitution, and slavery. Many of its lofty ambitions were thwarted, however, by member states acting in their own interests.





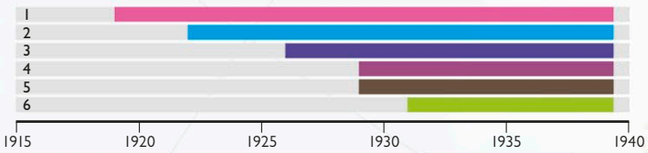
DIVIDED EUROPE

The interwar years saw the failure of democracy in most European nations as both Fascism and Communism gained ground. Strong, often dictatorial leaders took control of their countries.

KEY

- Fascist regime
- Communist regime
- Other dictatorship
- Right-wing activity
- Strikes and riots during the 1930s
- Over 20 per cent unemployment by 1932
- Percentage decrease in industrial output from 1929 to 1932

TIMELINE



5 ECONOMIC DOWNTURN 1929–1939

The New York Stock Exchange crash (see box, right) led to an international financial crisis that crippled the economies of Europe. International economic collaboration broke down and was replaced by insular economic nationalism. This weakened some already fragile democratic governments, with many countries establishing Fascist or other dictatorial governments. Nationalist groups also gained popularity in democracies such as the Netherlands and France.

4 GERMANY AND AUSTRIA 1929–1939

Germany emerged from World War I defeated, divided, and demoralized. Its democratic Weimar government lacked popular support, and was debilitated by the financial crisis after 1929. The far-right Nazi party under Adolf Hitler pledged national renewal, taking power in January 1933 and establishing a one-party totalitarian state. The newly formed Austria was similarly weak, becoming an authoritarian state in 1933 before Nazi Germany annexed it in March 1938.

6 SPAIN AND PORTUGAL 1931–1939

In Spain, the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, which had begun in 1923, was replaced in 1931 by a republic that failed to gain widespread support. A brutal civil war in 1936–39 led to the victory of the proto-Fascist Nationalists under General Franco. Portugal emerged from its limited role in World War I with a weak republican government, but by 1932 it had embraced the conservative and authoritarian ideologies of Antonio de Salazar, who became prime minister with almost dictatorial powers.

▽ **The March on Rome**
With the threat of civil war looming in Italy, Benito Mussolini and his Fascist Blackshirts marched on Rome in 28–29 October 1922, leading to Mussolini's appointment as prime minister.

NORWAY
Oslo
North Sea
DENMARK
Copenhagen
IRELAND
Belfast
Dublin
Edinburgh
UNITED KINGDOM
89%
Liverpool
Manchester
Birmingham
Cambridge
Oxford
London
1932 Oswald Mosley sets up the Fascist Blackshirt movement
1933 The Nazis come to power and crush all opposition
NETHERLANDS
Hamburg
Bremen
Elbe
Rhine
GERMANY
60%
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Lille
Brussels
BELGIUM
LUXEMBOURG
Frankfurt
SAAR
Le Havre
Paris
1934 Riots and a general strike break out after accusations of government corruption
Angers
Orléans
FRANCE
73%
1933 Engelbert Dollfuss establishes an authoritarian government
SWITZERLAND
Geneva
AUSTRIA
Milan
Venice
Genoa
Pisa
ITALY
Adriatic Sea
61%
Rome
Naples
1922 Mussolini leads the March on Rome
Corsica
Sardinia
Bilbao
1931 A republic is set up in Spain, but is beset by strikes, demonstrations, and uprisings
Pamplona
Toulouse
Montpellier
Avignon
ANDORRA
Tarazona
Lérida
Barcelona
Marseille
Madrid
Toledo
Lisbon
PORTUGAL
SPAIN
Mediterranean Sea
1934 King Alexander of Yugoslavia is assassinated in Marseille by a Croat Nationalist

3 POLAND AND THE BALTICS 1926–1939

Caught between the new Communist state of the USSR and, after 1933, the rising power of Hitler's Germany, Poland and the Baltic states struggled to assert their independence and keep their democracies alive. With no democratic heritage, all eventually became dictatorships. To the north in Finland, a Nationalist movement, Lapua, attempted a coup d'état in 1932.

Poland and Baltic states

2 ITALY AND THE RISE OF FASCISM 1922–1939

Although Italy had been on the winning side of World War I, it emerged from the war dissatisfied with its meagre territorial gains at Austria's expense in the north. This dissatisfaction, along with a fear of the revolutionary left, encouraged the growth of Fascism in the country. In October 1922 Benito Mussolini was made prime minister, establishing one-party rule and an authoritarian state that pursued an aggressive foreign policy designed to increase Italy's power.

EUROPE OF THE DICTATORS

The victors of World War I had been a coalition of democracies, but in the uncertain decades that followed, many European countries underwent major political upheaval. Economic problems only served to add to the instability of inter-war Europe.

After the end of the war in 1918 and the subsequent signing of various peace treaties, most European states – excepting the newly formed Communist state in Russia – were democracies. However, one by one these democratic regimes gave way to dictatorships. Italy was the first of these, when Mussolini took power in 1922, followed by Spain in 1923 and Poland in 1926. Democracy collapsed in the Baltic states between 1926 and 1934, while the Balkan states become dictatorships after 1929. The rise of Nazi rule after 1933 in Germany, and later in Austria, completed the picture.

"The Spanish national will was never freely expressed through the ballot box."

FRANCISCO FRANCO, 1938

This transformation was exacerbated by the economic crisis that swept across Europe after 1929. Rising unemployment and economic collapse undermined democratic governments and gave rise to right-wing and Fascist groups. These were often militaristic in structure and populist in appeal, providing their members with power that had not been available to them under democracy. By 1939, democratic rule existed only in Scandinavia, Britain and Ireland, France, the Benelux nations, and Switzerland. The rest of Europe was under dictatorial rule.

1 HUNGARY AND THE BALKANS 1919–1939

Following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires at the end of World War I, new states emerged in the Balkans. Their governments were typically weak and were replaced by royal or military dictatorships; the growing influence of Nazi Germany led to the formation of far-right groups in the region. In Hungary, resentment over the loss of territory under the 1920 Treaty of Trianon led to closer ties with Nazi Germany.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

In October 1929, the long boom on the New York Stock Exchange came to a sudden end. American creditors began to call in foreign loans and the supply of international credit dried up. In response, the US government introduced tariffs in 1930 that restricted imports. Competitive protection by other countries followed, causing world trade to fall by almost two-thirds between 1929 and 1932. Prices and profits collapsed, output plummeted, and millions were left unemployed (right) and impoverished.

HITLER AND NAZI GERMANY

Although Hitler's attempted *putsch* (or coup) in 1923 failed, by 1930 the Nazi party had become a force to be reckoned with in Germany. The economic depression that followed the Wall Street Crash of 1929 was crucial in winning them nationwide support.

△ **The *Führer***
Adolf Hitler, in his uniform, poses for the camera. A picture of the *Führer* (leader) was a must in every German home.

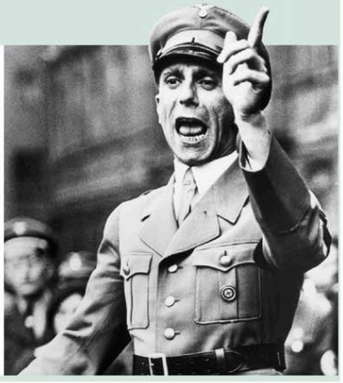
Defeat in World War I had left Germany poor, resentful, and polarized between the political extremes of left and right. Many Germans were looking for strong, decisive leadership, which mainstream parties had failed to provide. Adolf Hitler emerged as leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP, known as the Nazi party) in the early 1920s, with great determination. As one commentator said, Hitler was "the living incarnation of the nation's yearning".

The Nazi programme

Hitler's oratory was direct, aggressive, and uncompromising, as was his programme. He pledged a national revolution that would restore German strength and dignity. His promises included an end to mass unemployment, abrogating the Treaty of Versailles, stopping the crippling war reparations Germany was forced to pay, and rebuilding the armed forces. Germany was listening. In the 1932 federal elections, the Nazis won 230 seats in the German *Reichstag* (parliament), making them the most powerful party in the country. After months of backstairs negotiations, in January 1933 a reluctant President Hindenburg was finally cajoled into appointing Hitler Chancellor. In March, the so-called Enabling Act gave Hitler emergency dictatorial powers. Its passage effectively marked the end of German democracy. The Nazis dubbed their new regime the Third Reich, or Third Empire, reflecting their ambitions.

JOSEPH GOEBBELS
1897–1945

Joseph Goebbels, a masterful orator, was one of Hitler's closest colleagues. In 1926, Hitler appointed Goebbels *Gauleiter* (district leader) of Berlin, and in 1933 promoted him to Propaganda Minister, with control over German radio, press, and cultural institutions. His propaganda sold the Nazi vision of German superiority and territorial expansion to the public.



Addressing the rally
The rally at Nuremberg, which was held annually from 1933 to 1938 and masterminded by the Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, was a highlight of the Nazi year. Here, at the 1936 rally, massed troops at the Zeppelinfeld stadium listen attentively to Hitler's keynote speech.

CHINA IN TURMOIL

China between the two world wars was a country embroiled in internal conflict: its disunited provinces were ruled over by rival warlords and threatened by a growing Communist insurgency, while its national territory later came under attack from imperialist army forces from Japan.

The Chinese Revolution of 1911 began with a mutiny among troops in Wuchang in Hubei province, in central China. It rapidly led to the overthrow of the Manchu or Qing dynasty, whose autocratic rulers had controlled the country since 1644, and the formation of a republic in 1912. The first president of the republic, Yuan Shih-k'ai, tried to turn his office into a virtual dictatorship based on military force. However, on his death in 1916 China fragmented into a number of provincial military dictatorships run by local warlords who fought among themselves. Civil war raged throughout China until, under Chiang Kai-shek, China's Nationalist Party, the Guomindang (GMD), was able to unite the east of the country by 1928. The GMD then slowly extended their control over the rest of the country by 1937.

Two forces emerged to oppose the Nationalists: the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), fighting for a social and economic revolution, and the Japanese army, intent on establishing an empire in China. The Communists were largely crushed in the cities in 1927, but the Japanese were a more formidable foe, absorbing the region of Manchuria in 1931 and the northern province of Jehol in 1932, and setting up a puppet state across northern China in 1935.

"We shall not lightly talk about sacrifice until we are driven to the last extreme which makes sacrifice inevitable."

CHIANG KAI-SHEK, 1935

CHIANG KAI-SHEK 1887–1975

Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek was born in Fenghua, a district of the city of Ningbo, in Zhejiang province. The son of a merchant, and a supporter of the new Chinese republic, he built up the Republican army and became commandant of the military school at Whampoa in 1924. His connections enabled him to take over the leadership of the Nationalist Guomindang (GMD) party and become commander-in-chief of the army in 1926. Despite successes against the warlords, Chiang's rule over China was never secure, as it was threatened by Communist insurgents and Japanese invasions. In 1949 he was defeated in the Chinese Civil War by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) under Mao Zedong and retreated to Taiwan.

△ **Director of the masses**
Mao Zedong, leader of China's Communists, addresses followers during the Sino-Japanese war. In 1945, at the conflict's end, Mao commanded an army of over 1.2 million Chinese Communists.

1 THE NATIONALIST REVIVAL 1919–1937

Student demonstrations in Beijing in May 1919 initiated a wave of nationalist feeling across the country, which gave birth to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1921 and a revived Guomindang (GMD) in 1924. The GMD cooperated with the CCP and began a campaign of unification against warlord forces that culminated in the Northern Expedition of 1926–28, which was led by Chiang Kai-shek. After its successful conclusion, the Communists were purged from power.

- Under direct control of the Nationalist government, 1928
- Nationalist territory, 1929–34
- Nationalist territory, 1935–37
- Route of Northern Expedition
- Pro-Nationalist forces

2 JAPANESE INVASION OF MANCHURIA 1931

Responding to an act of provocation (which was staged by the Japanese army), Japanese forces invaded Manchuria on 19 September 1931, seizing the key city of Shenyang. They went on to take the whole of Manchuria, establishing the state of Manchukuo in 1932 with the former Chinese boy emperor Pu Yi Hsuan-t'ung as puppet emperor. The invasion and occupation of Manchuria marked the start of Japanese imperial expansion into northern and eastern China.

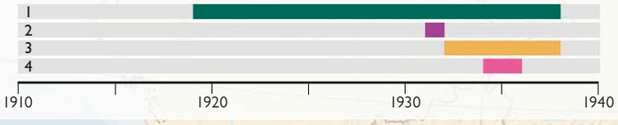
- Invaded by Japan, 1931
- Japanese invasion

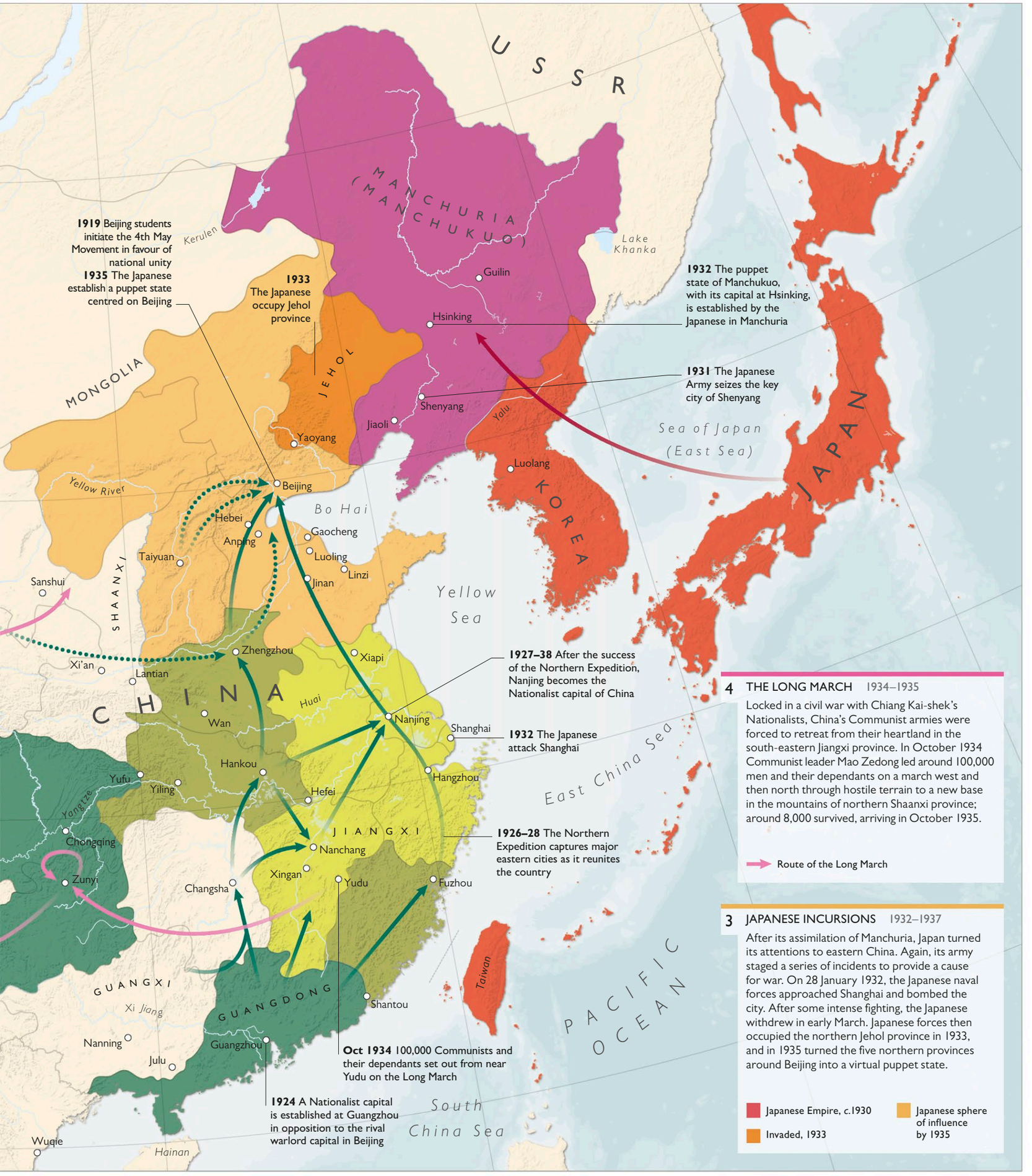
Juyan
Wuwei
Qinghai
Lanzhou
Luding

DISUNITED CHINA

Republican China was initially ruled by a number of local warlords and was only united under Nationalist control in 1937. By then China faced Japanese armed incursions in the north and east of the country.

TIMELINE




USSR
MANCHURIA (MANCHUKUO)
Lake Khanka
Kerulen
Guilin
Hsinking
JEHOL
MONGOLIA
Shenyang
Jiaoli
Yaoyang
Yalu
Sea of Japan (East Sea)
JAPAN
Luolang
KOREA
Yellow River
Beijing
Bo Hai
Hebei
Anping
Gaocheng
Luoling
Linzi
Jinan
Taiyuan
SHAANXI
Sanshui
Yellow Sea
Zhengzhou
Xiapi
Xi'an
Lantian
CHINA
Huai
Wan
Nanjing
Shanghai
Hankou
Yufu
Yiling
Hangzhou
East China Sea
Hefei
Yangtze
Chongqing
JIANGXI
Nanchang
Zunyi
Xingan
Changsha
Yudu
Fuzhou
Taiwan
GUANGXI
Xi Jiang
GUANGDONG
Shantou
PACIFIC OCEAN
Nanning
Guangzhou
Julu
South China Sea
Wuqie
Hainan
1919 Beijing students initiate the 4th May Movement in favour of national unity
1935 The Japanese establish a puppet state centred on Beijing
1933 The Japanese occupy Jehol province
1932 The puppet state of Manchukuo, with its capital at Hsinking, is established by the Japanese in Manchuria
1931 The Japanese Army seizes the key city of Shenyang
1927–38 After the success of the Northern Expedition, Nanjing becomes the Nationalist capital of China
1932 The Japanese attack Shanghai
1926–28 The Northern Expedition captures major eastern cities as it reunites the country
Oct 1934 100,000 Communists and their dependants set out from near Yudu on the Long March
1924 A Nationalist capital is established at Guangzhou in opposition to the rival warlord capital in Beijing
4 THE LONG MARCH 1934–1935
Locked in a civil war with Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists, China's Communist armies were forced to retreat from their heartland in the south-eastern Jiangxi province. In October 1934 Communist leader Mao Zedong led around 100,000 men and their dependants on a march west and then north through hostile terrain to a new base in the mountains of northern Shaanxi province; around 8,000 survived, arriving in October 1935.
Route of the Long March
3 JAPANESE INCURSIONS 1932–1937
After its assimilation of Manchuria, Japan turned its attentions to eastern China. Again, its army staged a series of incidents to provide a cause for war. On 28 January 1932, the Japanese naval forces approached Shanghai and bombed the city. After some intense fighting, the Japanese withdrew in early March. Japanese forces then occupied the northern Jehol province in 1933, and in 1935 turned the five northern provinces around Beijing into a virtual puppet state.
Japanese Empire, c.1930
Invaded, 1933
Japanese sphere of influence by 1935

THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

A prelude to World War II, the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) was a bitter struggle between supporters of the democratically elected government and an emerging military dictatorship. Several other countries lent their support to each side.

During the 1930s, Spain was highly polarized, with major divisions between the church and state, urban and rural communities, liberal and conservative values, and the rich and poor. At one end of the political spectrum was the right-wing National Front (Nationalists), supported by the Falange (a Spanish Fascist party), monarchists, and some Catholics. At the other end was the left-wing Popular Front (Republicans), consisting of Communists, socialists, liberals, and anarchists.

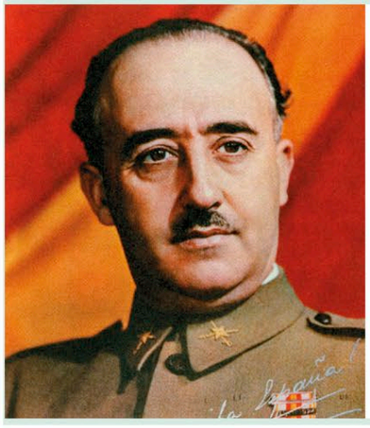
The Republicans won the general election on 16 February 1936. Fearing a Communist revolution, the army officer and Nationalist leader General Francisco Franco launched a military uprising in Spanish Morocco and across south-western Spain. Pro-government groups fought against the Nationalist rebels, but Franco received significant help from Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, both of which wanted to stop the spread of Communism in Europe. By November 1936, Franco's troops had reached the outskirts of Madrid – a Republican stronghold. Unable to capture the capital, the Nationalists besieged the city for over two years.

Although the Republicans continued to control eastern Spain and much of the south-east, Franco's forces were more organized and gradually took over areas previously under Republican control. The Nationalist victory at the Battle of Teruel (December 1937–February 1938) was a turning point in the war, and at the Battle of the Ebro (July–November 1938) the Republican troops were almost entirely eliminated. By spring 1939, the conflict was over, and Franco's government was accepted by most of Europe.

"… wherever I am there will be no Communism."

FRANCISCO FRANCO, QUOTED IN 1938

SPAIN IN WORLD WAR II



While Spain was a non-belligerent in World War II, it was not entirely neutral. Although Franco did not officially join the Axis alliance, he did support Germany by providing essential supplies and allowing thousands of Spaniards to volunteer in the Axis forces, albeit on condition that they did not fight the Western Allies. Spain and Germany came close to an alliance after the fall of France in June 1940, but Hitler considered Franco's demands too high and the two could not broker a deal. As the war progressed, Hitler considered an invasion of Spain, prompting Franco to move his forces to the border with France.

General Francisco Franco

1 THE WAR BEGINS JULY 1936

On 17 July 1936, Nationalist forces based in Spanish Morocco launched a coup against the newly elected Republican government. Franco took command of the Army of Africa – a Moroccan-based group of professional soldiers – on 19 July. From 27 July, Franco's army was flown from Morocco to Spain by German and Italian forces, and fighting soon spread through south-western Spain.

ATLANTIC OCEAN

2 INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION 1936

Although 27 countries signed a non-intervention pact in September 1936, the ideological nature of the war gave it an international dimension. The Nationalists were aided by soldiers and equipment supplied by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. The Republicans were supported by the Communist government of Russia, and the government of Mexico, as well as by volunteers from International Brigades – left-wing fighters who came from all over the world to fight Fascism.

German support
Soviet support
Italian support

Porto

22 Aug 1936 Portugal allows German ships to dock at Lisbon and from there dispatch war supplies into Nationalist territory

Lisbon

PORTUGAL

3 ATROCITIES AGAINST CIVILIANS 1936–1939

Both sides committed atrocities against civilians during the war. The Republicans targeted anyone believed to be right wing, including teachers, lawyers, mayors, and landowners, and they ransacked many churches. Meanwhile, the Nationalists persuaded the Nazis and Italians to carry out attacks from the air, including raids on Guernica and Barcelona, which was bombed by Italian aircraft that flew from the Balearic Islands.

Republican violence
Nationalist violence

▽ Resisting the Nationalists
The women's militia of the left-wing Popular Front march in Madrid in July 1936. A number of women fought in the Republican forces.

26 Apr 1937 Guernica is bombed by Italian and German aircraft. The aftermath is captured by photojournalists, and images of the devastation spread abroad

Mar 1937 Franco switches his focus to attacking the industrial areas of northern Spain, such as the Basque region, a Republican stronghold

Summer 1936 The Spanish–Portuguese border is the point of entry for many supplies

1–6 Nov 1936 Republican leader General José Valeria reaches Madrid on 1 November. He is followed by the German Luftwaffe 5 days later, and the Siege of Madrid begins

25 Jul–16 Nov 1938 At the Battle of Ebro, the Republicans are all but wiped out as a fighting force

6–27 Feb 1937 Jarama

6–25 Jul 1937 Brunete

8 Mar 1937 Guadalajara

27 Mar 1939 The Nationalists enter Madrid. On 1 April, Franco announces the end of hostilities

14 Aug 1936 German planes bring Franco's troops into southern Spain. They advance to Badajoz, where thousands of civilians are machine-gunned inside a bullring

27 Sep 1936 Nationalists take the Republican stronghold of Toledo, 65 km (40 miles) from Madrid, boosting morale

5 Jan–4 Feb 1939 Valsequillo

6 May 1937 Infighting among Republicans leads to prominent anarchists being murdered. Rioting breaks out

15 Apr 1939 Vinaròs

22 Feb 1938 Nationalists retake the town of Teruel – a bitter blow for the Republicans

Many men joining the International Brigade go to the main training base at Albacete

6 Aug 1936 Franco arrives in Seville

Oct 1936–Apr 1939 The USSR sends support to the Republicans, including tanks and weapons, to the port of Cartagena

3–8 Feb 1937 Málaga

Dec 1936 Fascist Italy sends supplies to Nationalist rebels, which reach Spain through Cádiz

18 Jul 1936 By the evening, the Nationalist army controls all of Spanish Morocco, and then invades Spain. Fighting soon spreads to Cádiz, Seville, and Málaga

Oct 1936–Apr 1939 Huelva and Cádiz are the main ports for German supplies to the Nationalists

FRANCE
ANDORRA
CATALONIA
BASQUE COUNTRY
SPAIN
SPANISH MOROCCO
Mediterranean Sea
Menorca
Majorca
Ibiza
Gijón
Oviedo
Santander
Bilbao
Guernica
San Sebastián
León
Burgos
Valladolid
Duero
Ebro
Saragossa
Belchite
Barcelona
Tarragona
Salamanca
Madrid
Tagus
Toledo
Teruel
Castellón de la Plana
Valencia
Palma
Cáceres
Mérida
Badajoz
Albacete
Alicante
Córdoba
Lopera
Seville
Huelva
Cartagena
Granada
Almería
Cádiz
Málaga
Tangier

4 NATIONALISTS TRIUMPH MAY 1937–APRIL 1939

In May 1937, infighting divided the Republican forces based in Barcelona. The Republican army was weakened by Nationalist wins at the battles of Teruel and Ebro, and Franco's army seized Barcelona on 26 January 1939. Further Nationalist victories in Catalonia and Vinaròs all but destroyed the Republican forces. The Nationalists marched into Madrid on 27 March 1939, and Franco declared an end to the war on 1 April.

Nationalist victory

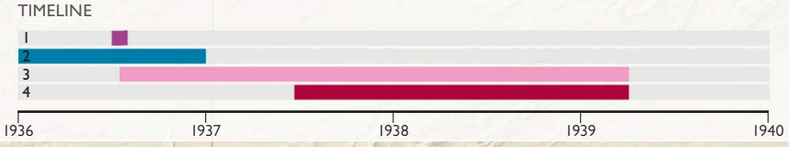
A NATION AT WAR

Franco's Nationalist forces initially gained territory in Spanish Morocco and south-western Spain, and gradually captured predominantly conservative farming areas of the north by 1937. They seized Republican Catalonia by 1939, cutting off Barcelona from Madrid, and ensuring their victory.

KEY

- Nationalist land, Jul 1936
- Nationalist gains, Oct 1937
- Nationalist gains, Jul 1938
- Nationalist gains, Feb 1939
- Republican land, Feb 1939
- Temporary independence border
- Nationalist forces
- Republican forces
- Major battles

TIMELINE



THE SINO-JAPANESE WAR

The Japanese attacked China in July 1937, marking the start of an eight-year war. The fighting was brutal; there were more than seven million military casualties on both sides and 17–22 million Chinese civilians lost their lives.

The hostilities that broke out in July 1937 were the culmination of a long-term Japanese aspiration to dominate China in order to gain access to raw materials, food, and labour. Having already captured Taiwan in 1895 (seen here in dark red), Manchuria in 1931, and Jehol province in 1933 (both seen in the right-hand pink area), Japan turned its attention to the rest of China. On 7–9 July 1937, the Japanese and Chinese exchanged fire over an incident involving a missing Japanese soldier at Wanping, 16 km (10 miles) south-west of Beijing. The Japanese opened fire on Marco Polo (Lugou) Bridge, a key access route to Beijing, and attacked Wanping. This skirmish developed into a major battle. Although a ceasefire was soon agreed, Japanese and Chinese forces continued to clash, leading to full-scale hostilities as the Japanese began to conquer northern China. Neither side officially declared war.

Invasion and expansion

Some Japanese forces then headed south; others landed on the east coast. In November they captured Shanghai after a three-month battle, and in December took Nanjing (both in the pink-tinted area on this map), where they perpetrated a major massacre. In 1938, they won a victory at Hankou against Chinese forces and Soviet volunteers led by Chiang Kai-shek. The four-month battle claimed around 1.2 million lives. These offensives were accompanied by the bombing of civilian targets, intended to destroy morale; Chongqing, for example, was bombed more than 200 times and had its centre burnt out. By 1941, Japan controlled much of eastern China and almost the entire coastline.

Chinese resistance

Despite these victories, the war turned into a stalemate. Chinese lines of communication stretched far into local territory, and Japan lacked the manpower to dominate the countryside. It was unable to defeat a major Communist guerrilla campaign in Shaanxi, nor could it repel two massive Nationalist and Communist counter-offensives, losing two major battles at Hankou and South Guangxi.

◁ **Massacre at Nanjing**
The Imperial Japanese Army entered Nanjing in January 1938. Up to 300,000 civilians are estimated to have been killed.

Japanese empire map, c.1939
The red areas of this map show Japan's empire in 1930 including Korea and Taiwan; the right-hand pink area shows conquests of 1931–33, including Manchuria. The pink tint shows gains in China by 1937, and the orange tint shows gains made in 1938–39.

GERMANY AND ITALY EXPAND

In the years following World War I, the governments of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany both pursued expansionist policies aimed at enlarging their territories and overcoming the terms of the 1919 Versailles Treaty. At the time, they met with little opposition from other European nations.

Although Italy was on the winning Allied side in World War I, it emerged from the conflict with high casualties, a crippled, indebted economy, and few territorial gains. This fuelled great resentment at home, which was among the many factors that propelled Benito Mussolini's National Fascist Party to power in 1922.

Mussolini sought to bolster the nation's standing by expanding Italy's territories in the Mediterranean and in Africa in an attempt to build a second Roman Empire. The conquests of Ethiopia (1935) and Albania (1939) were successful parts of this process.

Hitler also had imperial ambitions, believing that Germany required *Lebensraum* (living space) to survive. When he came to power in 1933, he intended to avenge the Treaty of Versailles and create a remilitarized, pan-German state in central Europe. As Germany began to rearm in defiance of Versailles the Saarland and Rhineland returned to full German control in 1935–36, Austria was united with Germany in 1938, and Czechoslovakia was occupied and divided in 1938–39.

In response to these expansionist policies, the European powers of Britain and France did little to defend Versailles, instead choosing to appease the dictators in the hope that this would keep the peace. However, the failure of appeasement by the spring of 1939 forced both countries to prepare for the inevitability of renewed war in Europe.

"It is not programs that are wanting for the salvation of Italy but men and will power."

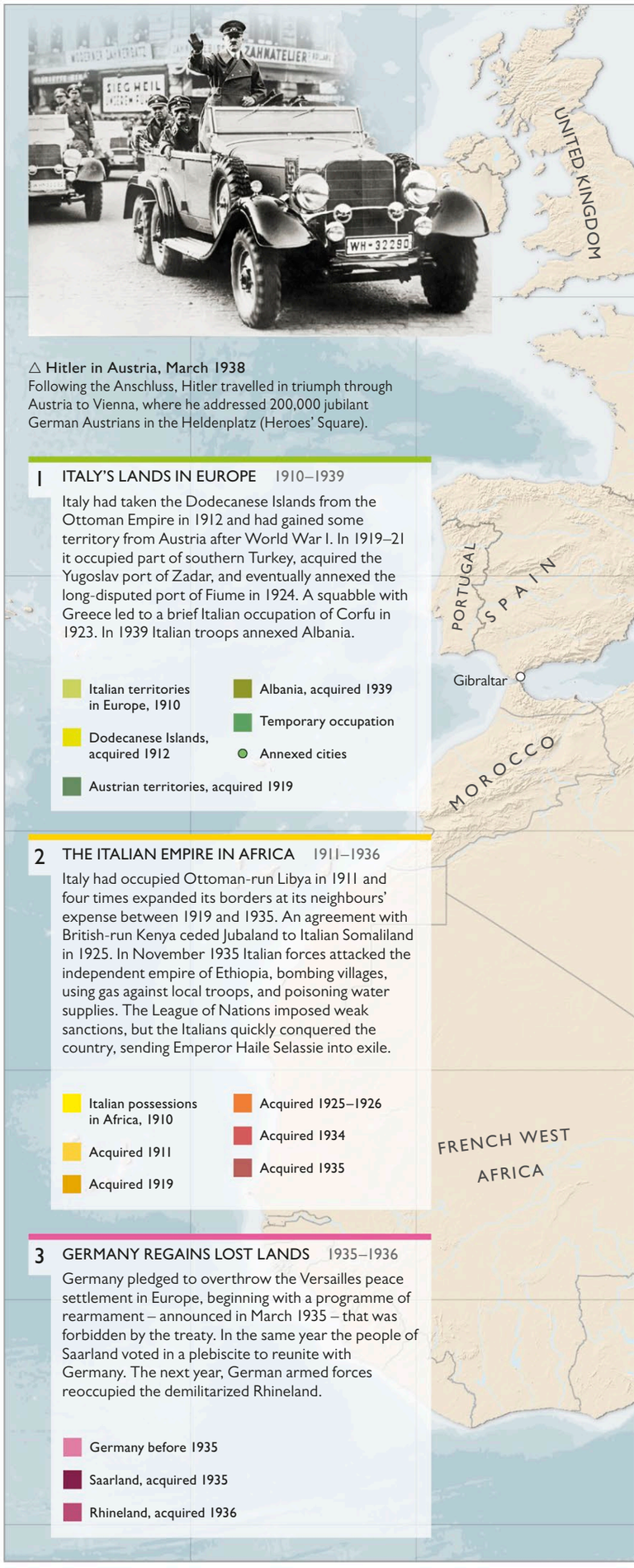
BENITO MUSSOLINI, SPEECH MADE IN UDINE, 1920

ALLIED REARMAMENT

After World War I, Britain and France reduced their military capacities, but the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany in 1933 forced a rethink. After 1936 Britain began to produce a new generation of tanks and artillery pieces, new aircraft carriers and battleships, and to develop the Spitfire and Hawker Hurricane fighter aircraft. France built the defensive Maginot Line along its eastern border with Germany and modernized its air force, the biggest in the world at the time.

A British Spitfire production line

△ Hitler in Austria, March 1938
Following the Anschluss, Hitler travelled in triumph through Austria to Vienna, where he addressed 200,000 jubilant German Austrians in the Heldenplatz (Heroes' Square).



1 ITALY'S LANDS IN EUROPE 1910–1939

Italy had taken the Dodecanese Islands from the Ottoman Empire in 1912 and had gained some territory from Austria after World War I. In 1919–21 it occupied part of southern Turkey, acquired the Yugoslav port of Zadar, and eventually annexed the long-disputed port of Fiume in 1924. A squabble with Greece led to a brief Italian occupation of Corfu in 1923. In 1939 Italian troops annexed Albania.

- Italian territories in Europe, 1910
- Dodecanese Islands, acquired 1912
- Austrian territories, acquired 1919
- Albania, acquired 1939
- Temporary occupation
- Annexed cities

2 THE ITALIAN EMPIRE IN AFRICA 1911–1936

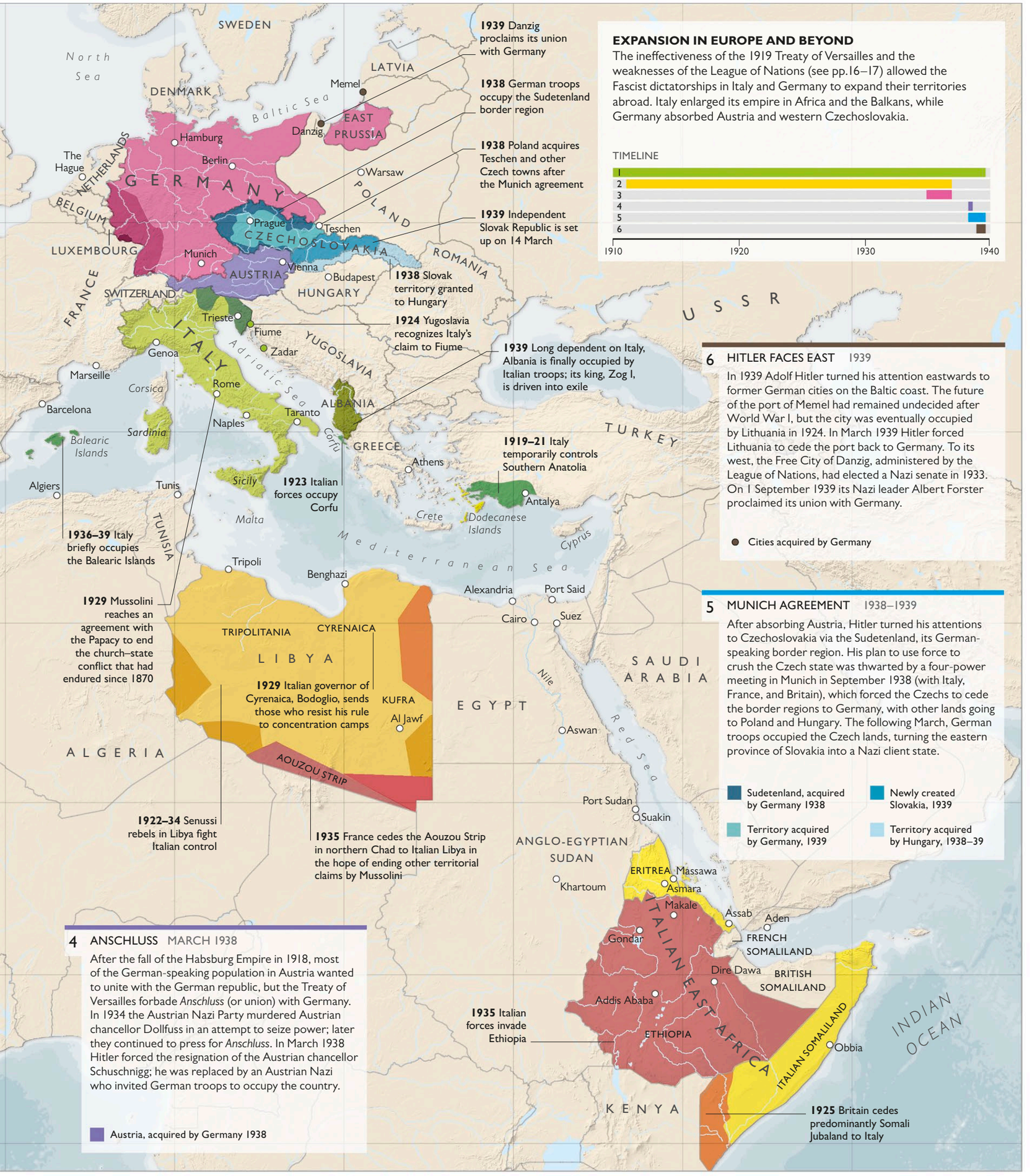
Italy had occupied Ottoman-run Libya in 1911 and four times expanded its borders at its neighbours' expense between 1919 and 1935. An agreement with British-run Kenya ceded Jubaland to Italian Somaliland in 1925. In November 1935 Italian forces attacked the independent empire of Ethiopia, bombing villages, using gas against local troops, and poisoning water supplies. The League of Nations imposed weak sanctions, but the Italians quickly conquered the country, sending Emperor Haile Selassie into exile.

- Italian possessions in Africa, 1910
- Acquired 1911
- Acquired 1919
- Acquired 1925–1926
- Acquired 1934
- Acquired 1935

3 GERMANY REGAINS LOST LANDS 1935–1936

Germany pledged to overthrow the Versailles peace settlement in Europe, beginning with a programme of rearmament – announced in March 1935 – that was forbidden by the treaty. In the same year the people of Saarland voted in a plebiscite to reunite with Germany. The next year, German armed forces reoccupied the demilitarized Rhineland.

- Germany before 1935
- Saarland, acquired 1935
- Rhineland, acquired 1936



EXPANSION IN EUROPE AND BEYOND

The ineffectiveness of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles and the weaknesses of the League of Nations (see pp.16–17) allowed the Fascist dictatorships in Italy and Germany to expand their territories abroad. Italy enlarged its empire in Africa and the Balkans, while Germany absorbed Austria and western Czechoslovakia.

TIMELINE

1 2 3 4 5 6

1910 1920 1930 1940

6 HITLER FACES EAST 1939

In 1939 Adolf Hitler turned his attention eastwards to former German cities on the Baltic coast. The future of the port of Memel had remained undecided after World War I, but the city was eventually occupied by Lithuania in 1924. In March 1939 Hitler forced Lithuania to cede the port back to Germany. To its west, the Free City of Danzig, administered by the League of Nations, had elected a Nazi senate in 1933. On 1 September 1939 its Nazi leader Albert Forster proclaimed its union with Germany.

● Cities acquired by Germany

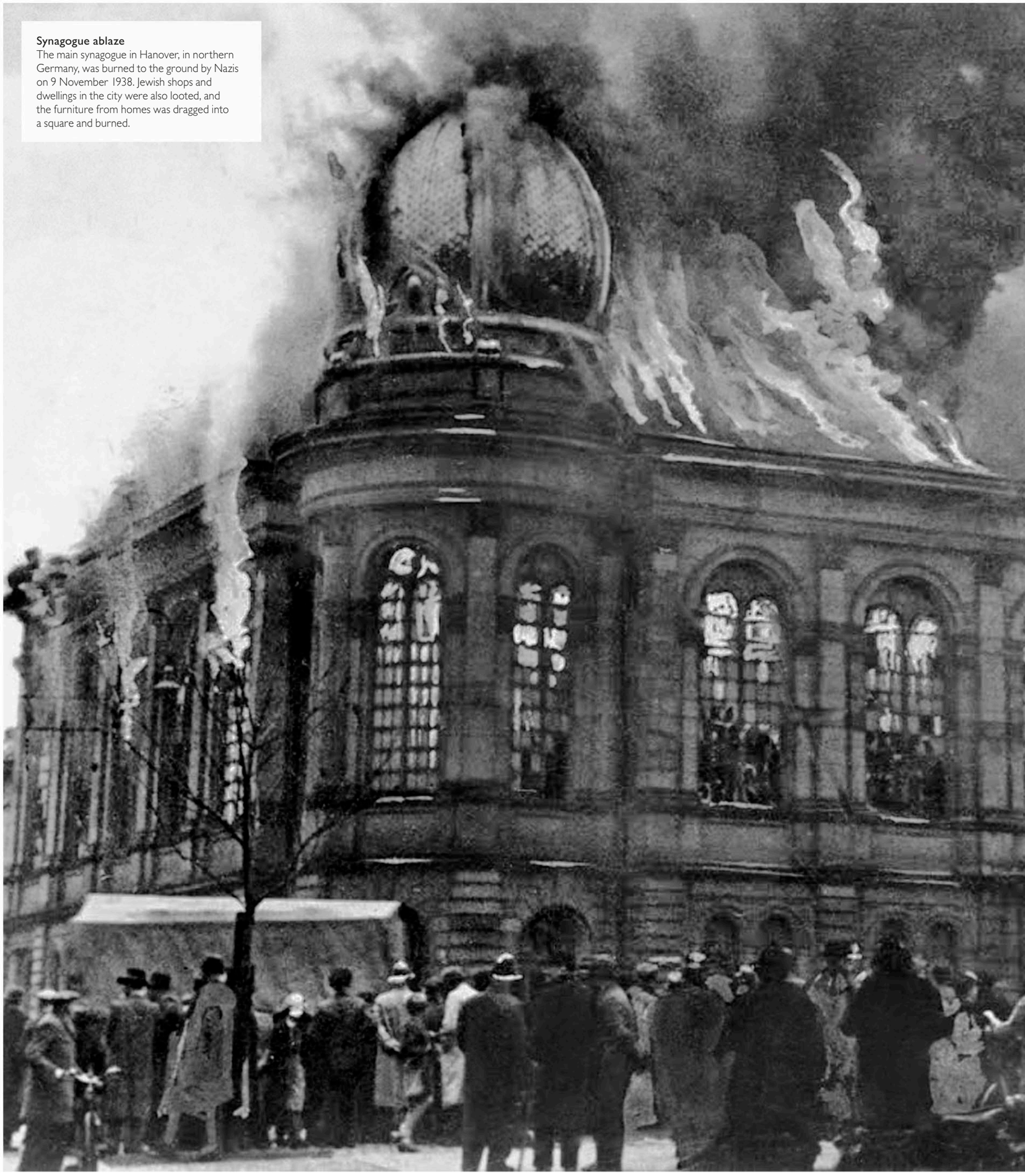
5 MUNICH AGREEMENT 1938–1939

After absorbing Austria, Hitler turned his attentions to Czechoslovakia via the Sudetenland, its German-speaking border region. His plan to use force to crush the Czech state was thwarted by a four-power meeting in Munich in September 1938 (with Italy, France, and Britain), which forced the Czechs to cede the border regions to Germany, with other lands going to Poland and Hungary. The following March, German troops occupied the Czech lands, turning the eastern province of Slovakia into a Nazi client state.

- Sudetenland, acquired by Germany 1938
- Newly created Slovakia, 1939
- Territory acquired by Germany, 1939
- Territory acquired by Hungary, 1938–39

4 ANSCHLUSS MARCH 1938

After the fall of the Habsburg Empire in 1918, most of the German-speaking population in Austria wanted to unite with the German republic, but the Treaty of Versailles forbade *Anschluss* (or union) with Germany. In 1934 the Austrian Nazi Party murdered Austrian chancellor Dollfuss in an attempt to seize power; later they continued to press for *Anschluss*. In March 1938 Hitler forced the resignation of the Austrian chancellor Schuschnigg; he was replaced by an Austrian Nazi who invited German troops to occupy the country.



Synagogue ablaze
The main synagogue in Hanover, in northern Germany, was burned to the ground by Nazis on 9 November 1938. Jewish shops and dwellings in the city were also looted, and the furniture from homes was dragged into a square and burned.

KRISTALLNACHT

In November 1938, a 17-year-old Polish Jew, Herschel Grynszpan, assassinated Ernst vom Rath, a diplomat working at the German Embassy in Paris. This triggered a Nazi pogrom that would have disastrous consequences for Jews throughout the Third Reich.

In a matter of hours after vom Rath's death on 9 November, Nazis throughout Germany went on a violent rampage, attacking synagogues and Jewish businesses and homes. The event came to be called *Kristallnacht* ("Crystal Night") for the shattered window glass that littered the streets. By the time the pogrom came to an end a day later, around 100 synagogues had been demolished and several hundred more severely damaged by fire. Many Jewish cemeteries had been desecrated, and at least 7,500 Jewish-owned shops had been sacked and looted.

△ **Mark of a Jew**
The pogrom had a lasting impact. By 1941, all Jews in Germany had to wear a yellow Star of David with the word *Jude* (Jew).

Cause and aftermath

Whether Hitler ever gave a specific order to launch the pogrom is uncertain. Goebbels, the Propaganda Minister, was quick to claim that the pogrom was an outburst of national anger in response to a cowardly attack. As well as inciting racial hatred through propaganda, the Nazis had institutionalized anti-semitism by teaching it in schools and introducing the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, which stripped Jews of German citizenship. Following the death of vom Rath, the Jews were fined one billion Reichsmarks and told to repair all the damage the pogrom had caused. About 30,000 Jewish men were arrested, most of whom were transported to concentration camps.

△ **Anti-Jewish boycott**
A Berlin shop window is vandalized during *Kristallnacht* with a poster warning shoppers not to buy from Jews. A correspondent in Berlin for the *Daily Telegraph* reported, "racial hatred and hysteria seemed to have taken complete hold of otherwise decent people".

COUNTDOWN IN EUROPE

In a frenzy of diplomatic activity before the war, nations formed alliances, offered guarantees, and – if not wishing to fight – proclaimed neutrality. The final piece of the jigsaw – the Nazi–Soviet Non-Aggression Pact – was the most surprising diplomatic coup of the century.

The threat to world peace intensified through the 1930s as Germany and Italy expanded their imperial possessions in Europe, while to the east Japan entered into conflict with China (see pp.26–27). In response, the two major democracies in Europe – Britain and France – abandoned their policy of appeasing Hitler and Mussolini and moved to deterrence instead. On 31 March 1939, they made a guarantee to Poland that the western powers would come to its aid if the country was attacked, and extended similar assurances to Romania, Greece, and Turkey after the Italian annexation of Albania.

With the emergence of the two rival power blocs, several European nations grouped together to proclaim their neutrality, but such diplomatic alliances were as nothing to the announcement in August 1939 that the two ideological foes of Europe – Nazi Germany and the Communist USSR – had agreed a mutual non-aggression pact. Its secret clauses redrew the map of central and Eastern Europe and absorbed previously independent states into their two spheres of influence. With the safeguard of non-aggression, Hitler's Germany had now cleared the way for a successful invasion of Poland.

"In war, whichever side may call itself the victor, there are no winners, but all are losers."

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, BRITISH PRIME MINISTER, 1938

JOSEPH STALIN 1879–1953

Born in Gori, Georgia, Josef Djugashvili was educated in a seminary but expelled for holding revolutionary views. Twice exiled by the Tsarist government to Siberia, and from 1912 known as Stalin, or "Man of Steel", he helped Lenin during the October Revolution of 1917, becoming Commissar for Nationalities in the Bolshevik government. In 1922 he became General Secretary of the Party and used this to build his own power base. By the late 1920s he had established a dictatorship that lasted until his death in 1953.

Norwegian Sea
FINLAND
SWEDEN
NORWAY
Oslo
Stockholm
Helsinki
Leningrad
Tallinn
ESTONIA
U S S R
LATVIA
Riga
North Sea
DENMARK
Copenhagen
LITHUANIA
Memel
Wilno
Baltic Sea
Danzig
EAST PRUSSIA
NETHERLANDS
Amsterdam
Berlin
Warsaw
POLAND
GERMANY
BELGIUM
LUXEMBOURG
BOHEMIA & MORAVIA
Krakow
Nuremberg
SLOVAKIA
Bratislava
Munich
Vienna
Budapest
HUNGARY
Zurich
SWITZERLAND
AUSTRIA
ROMANIA
BESSARABIA
Milan
Bucharest
Belgrade
YUGOSLAVIA
BULGARIA
Sofia
Marseille
ITALY
TURKEY
Rome
ALBANIA
GREECE
Athens
Palermo
Mediterranean Sea

1939 Denmark signs a ten-year non-aggression pact with Germany

Jul 1938 A declaration of neutrality is signed by nine states in Copenhagen

22 Mar 1939 Germany annexes the Baltic port of Memel from Lithuania

1939 Originally assigned to Germany in the Nazi–Soviet Pact, Lithuania is later transferred to the Soviet sphere of influence

Aug 1939 Hitler issues ultimatum claiming sovereignty over Free City of Danzig

22 May 1939 The Pact of Steel is signed in Berlin

1939 Under the Nazi–Soviet Pact, Poland is to be split between Germany and the USSR and wiped off the map

Mar 1938 *Anschluss*: Hitler annexes Austria

1 Nov 1936 In a speech in Milan, Mussolini uses the term "Axis" to denote his alliance with Nazi Germany

7 Apr 1939 Italian forces invade Albania

△ **Hitler and the bear**
In a critique of the pact between the USSR and Germany, this French satirical cartoon from 1939 depicts Hitler and the USSR – the "bear" – wrestling over a map of Europe. The pact was negotiated in secret and was met with shock across Europe when it was announced.

5 THE EFFECTS OF THE PACT 1939–1940

Secret clauses in the pact were to affect the fate of neighbouring countries. Germany gained a free hand in western Poland and Lithuania, while the influence of the USSR was to prevail over eastern Poland, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and the Romanian province of Bessarabia. A later secret agreement on 28 September 1939 extended German control further into eastern Poland while giving the USSR a free hand in Lithuania. All the secret clauses were implemented by summer 1940.

Victims of the Pact

4 THE NAZI–SOVIET NON-AGGRESSION PACT 23 AUGUST 1939

On 23 August 1939 the German and Russian foreign secretaries Joachim von Ribbentrop and Vyacheslav Molotov signed a non-aggression pact. The published terms included pledges to maintain neutrality if either country was at war. This marked a major change in policy: the USSR, let down by the Munich Agreement, was now willing to precipitate war between "the two imperialist camps"; and Germany wanted to avoid possible Soviet interference in its invasion of Poland.

Signatories to the Non-Aggression Pact

GERMANY TRIUMPHANT 1939–1941

AS THE AXIS ARMIES SWEPT ACROSS EUROPE AND PUSHED INTO THE USSR, THE BALKANS, AND AFRICA, THE ALLIES FOUND THEMSELVES BATTLING FOR SURVIVAL ON ALL FRONTS.

△ **Fleeing civilians**
A Parisian family sets out in search of a safe haven as German forces approach the French capital in 1940. Two-thirds of the city's population fled in panic to the countryside.

WAR IN EUROPE

The triumph of German armies in the first phase of World War II made Adolf Hitler the master of continental Europe. Under the leadership of Winston Churchill, Britain successfully resisted a German aerial onslaught, but with no immediate prospect of more than mere survival.

When World War II broke out in September 1939, there were no cheering crowds as there had been in World War I. The British and French governments reluctantly entered a conflict that they had not wanted, and took no action to aid the Poles, on whose behalf they had declared war on Germany. Quickly defeated and divided between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, Poland was subjected to the mass killing of its educated elite, and its Jews were driven into ghettoes. Britain and France rejected a peace offer from Hitler after his victory in Poland, but had no desire for military action. The French army based itself on the Maginot Line, the fortifications that were supposed to block a German invasion, while a British Expeditionary Force headed to northern France. However, little actually happened, except at sea. The lack of military action led to this period being dubbed the "phony war".

In Britain, preparations for conflict had been under way long before war was officially declared. Civil defence programmes set up to cope with air raids were implemented immediately, and blackouts were introduced in cities, although expectations that Germany would undertake a swift aerial attack proved mistaken. In British cities, children were evacuated days before the declaration of war, likewise the residents in France's frontier zone. By the time war broke out, Germany's economy had already been geared to war for over a year, and Britain and France had begun to rearm. Indeed, armaments programmes and military conscription ended the mass unemployment of the interwar period.

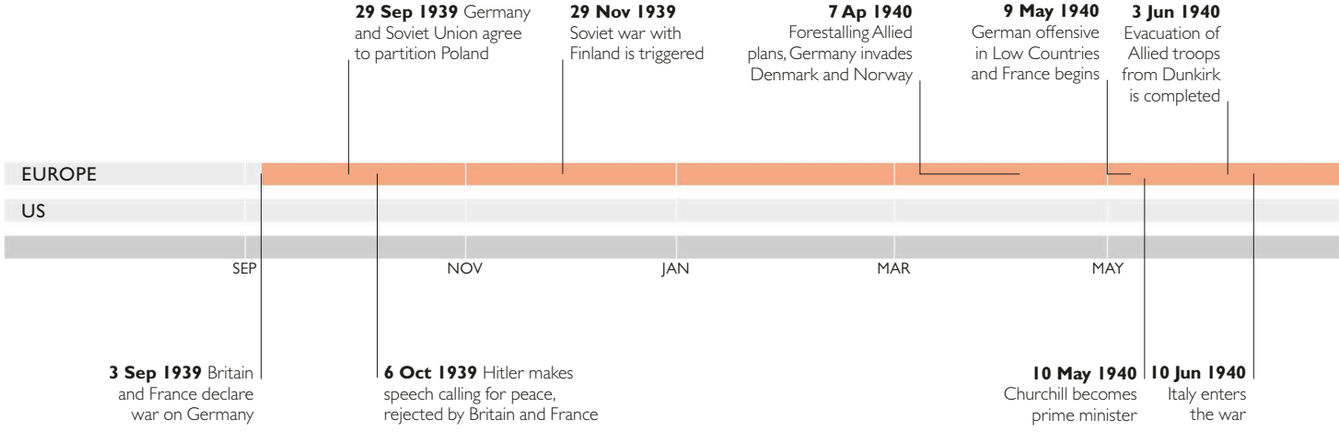
△ **Third Reich medal**
The Knight's Cross, introduced by Hitler in 1939, was awarded to German soldiers for acts of exceptional valour or skill in command.

Germany storms Europe

Some politicians, especially in France, would have preferred to fight the Soviet Union rather than Nazi Germany. They toyed with plans for intervention in support of Finland after it was attacked by the Soviets in the winter of 1939–40. However, in spring 1940 this idea was abandoned as Germany took decisive and widespread military action. First, Hitler sent his armies northwards into Denmark and Norway. He then followed this by launching a lightning offensive in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. Combining tanks and aircraft in fast-moving "Blitzkrieg" tactics, the Germans scored a series of astonishing victories. On the Western front, the French and British armies were routed in six weeks, although many soldiers escaped capture through the evacuation of Dunkirk in May–June 1940.

HITLER TRIUMPHANT

Nazi Germany conquered most of northern Europe in three short campaigns: the first against Poland in September 1939, the second in Scandinavia beginning in April 1940, and the third in Western Europe in May–June 1940. However, after France surrendered, Hitler failed to pursue an invasion of Britain with equal energy and willpower. The Luftwaffe's air attacks caused extensive damage but were inconclusive. Meanwhile the US was increasingly drawn into supporting the British war effort.



◁ **Rallying support**
Issued soon after Winston Churchill became prime minister in May 1940, this British poster was intended to encourage national unity.

France's surrender a few weeks later was followed by the creation of the Vichy French government – a regime dedicated to collaboration with the Nazis. Hitler and his allies had control of almost all continental Europe.

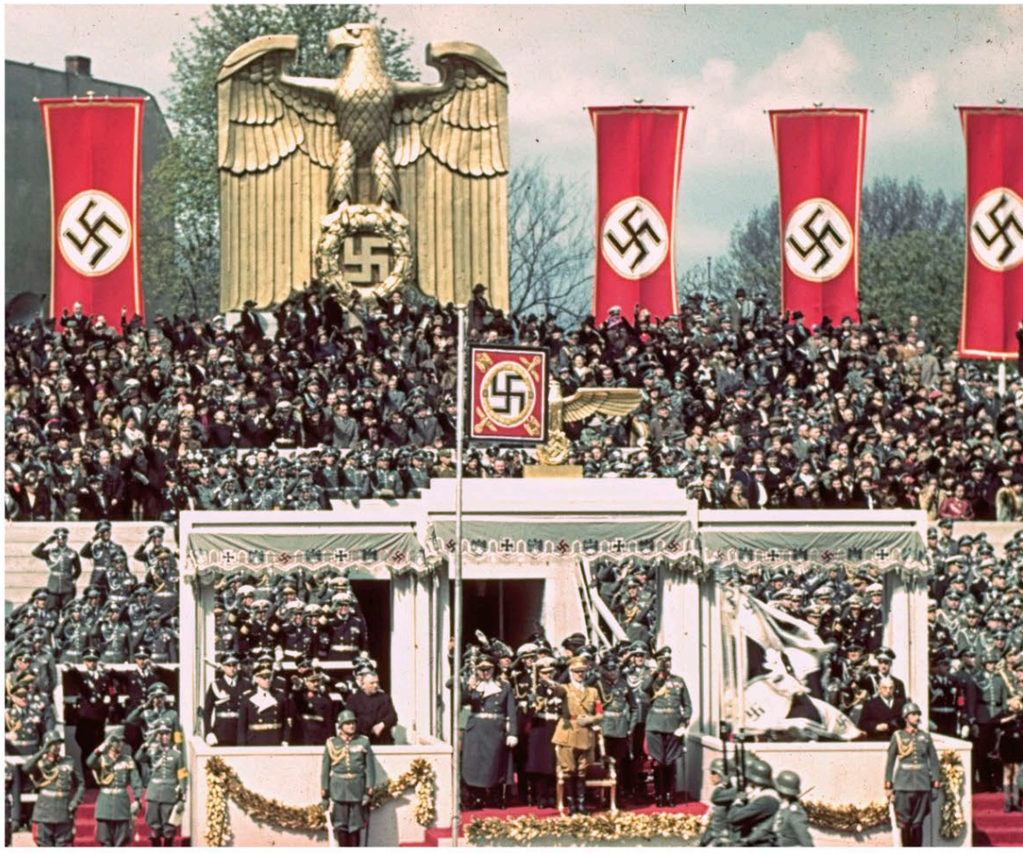
In Britain, the recently appointed prime minister, Winston Churchill, resolved to fight on. In summer 1940, Germany fought for control of the air over southern England while preparing for a seaborne invasion. Known as the Battle of Britain, the aerial conflict ended in stalemate, and Hitler's invasion plans were abandoned. However, throughout the following autumn and winter, Britain's cities were battered by German bombers attacking at night in the "Blitz". At sea, German U-boats took a heavy toll on merchant shipping.

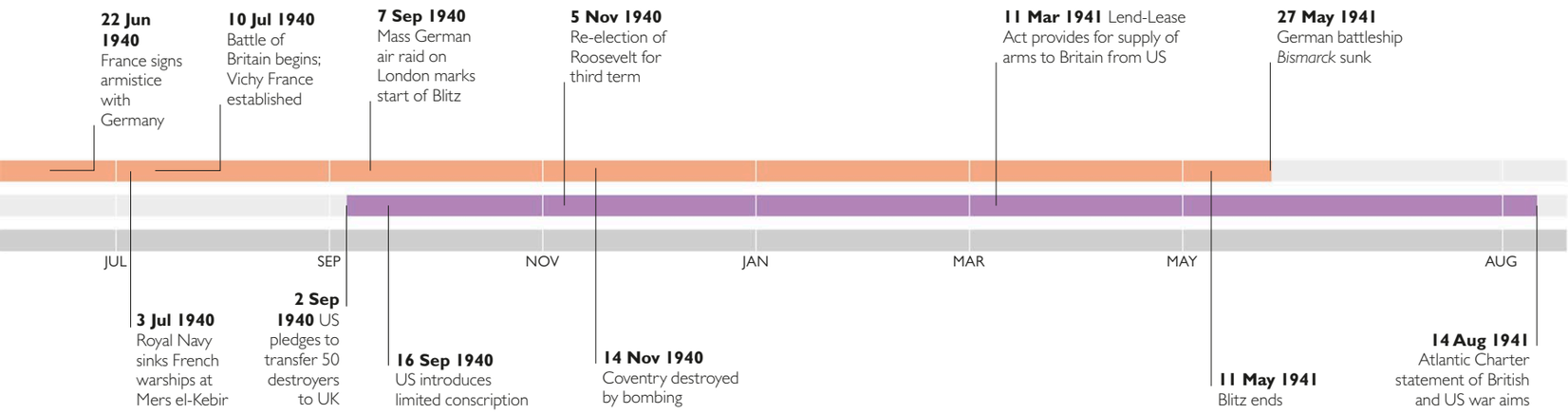
There was little that Britain could do at this stage to take the war to its enemy. Instead, Churchill opted for "economic warfare", consisting of ineffectual attempts to bomb German cities from the air and stir up resistance in occupied Europe.

"What the world did not deem possible, the German people have achieved…"

ADOLF HITLER, SPEECH, 6 APRIL 1941

▽ **Victory in Europe**
Seen here at a parade on his 50th birthday a few months before the war, Hitler seemed to be fulfilling his promises in the war's early stages, as Poland and then France fell to the Nazis.





1 GERMANY INVADES
31 AUGUST–15 SEPTEMBER 1939

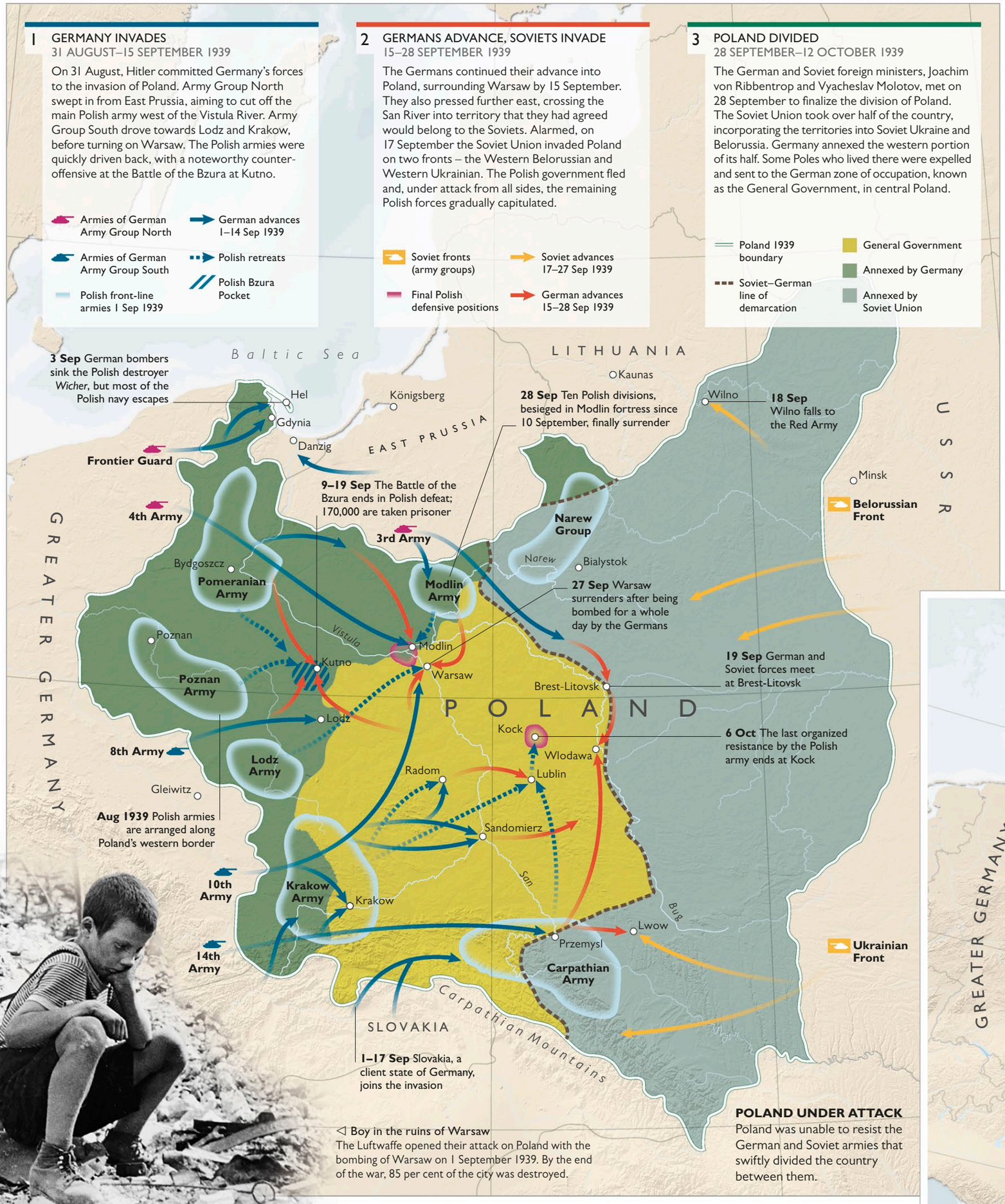
On 31 August, Hitler committed Germany's forces to the invasion of Poland. Army Group North swept in from East Prussia, aiming to cut off the main Polish army west of the Vistula River. Army Group South drove towards Lodz and Krakow, before turning on Warsaw. The Polish armies were quickly driven back, with a noteworthy counter-offensive at the Battle of the Bzura at Kutno.

2 GERMANS ADVANCE, SOVIETS INVADE
15–28 SEPTEMBER 1939

The Germans continued their advance into Poland, surrounding Warsaw by 15 September. They also pressed further east, crossing the San River into territory that they had agreed would belong to the Soviets. Alarmed, on 17 September the Soviet Union invaded Poland on two fronts – the Western Belorussian and Western Ukrainian. The Polish government fled and, under attack from all sides, the remaining Polish forces gradually capitulated.

3 POLAND DIVIDED
28 SEPTEMBER–12 OCTOBER 1939

The German and Soviet foreign ministers, Joachim von Ribbentrop and Vyacheslav Molotov, met on 28 September to finalize the division of Poland. The Soviet Union took over half of the country, incorporating the territories into Soviet Ukraine and Belorussia. Germany annexed the western portion of its half. Some Poles who lived there were expelled and sent to the German zone of occupation, known as the General Government, in central Poland.



◁ Boy in the ruins of Warsaw
The Luftwaffe opened their attack on Poland with the bombing of Warsaw on 1 September 1939. By the end of the war, 85 per cent of the city was destroyed.

POLAND UNDER ATTACK
Poland was unable to resist the German and Soviet armies that swiftly divided the country between them.

POLAND DESTROYED

Poland emerged from World War I as an independent state after more than 200 years of subjugation. However, it took just a few weeks in 1939 for Germany and the Soviet Union to crush Polish resistance, divide the country, and begin brutalizing its population.

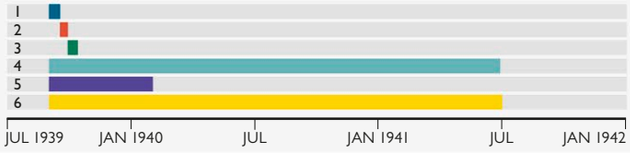
After Germany's expansion into Austria and Czechoslovakia, Hitler determined to attack Poland to regain lost territory and create *Lebensraum* ("living space") for his people, turning Poland into a German satellite state. Under the terms of the cynical pact that he had negotiated with the Soviet Union in 1939 (see pp.32–33) Poland was to be partitioned between the two powers; this enabled Germany to attack Poland without the fear of Soviet intervention.

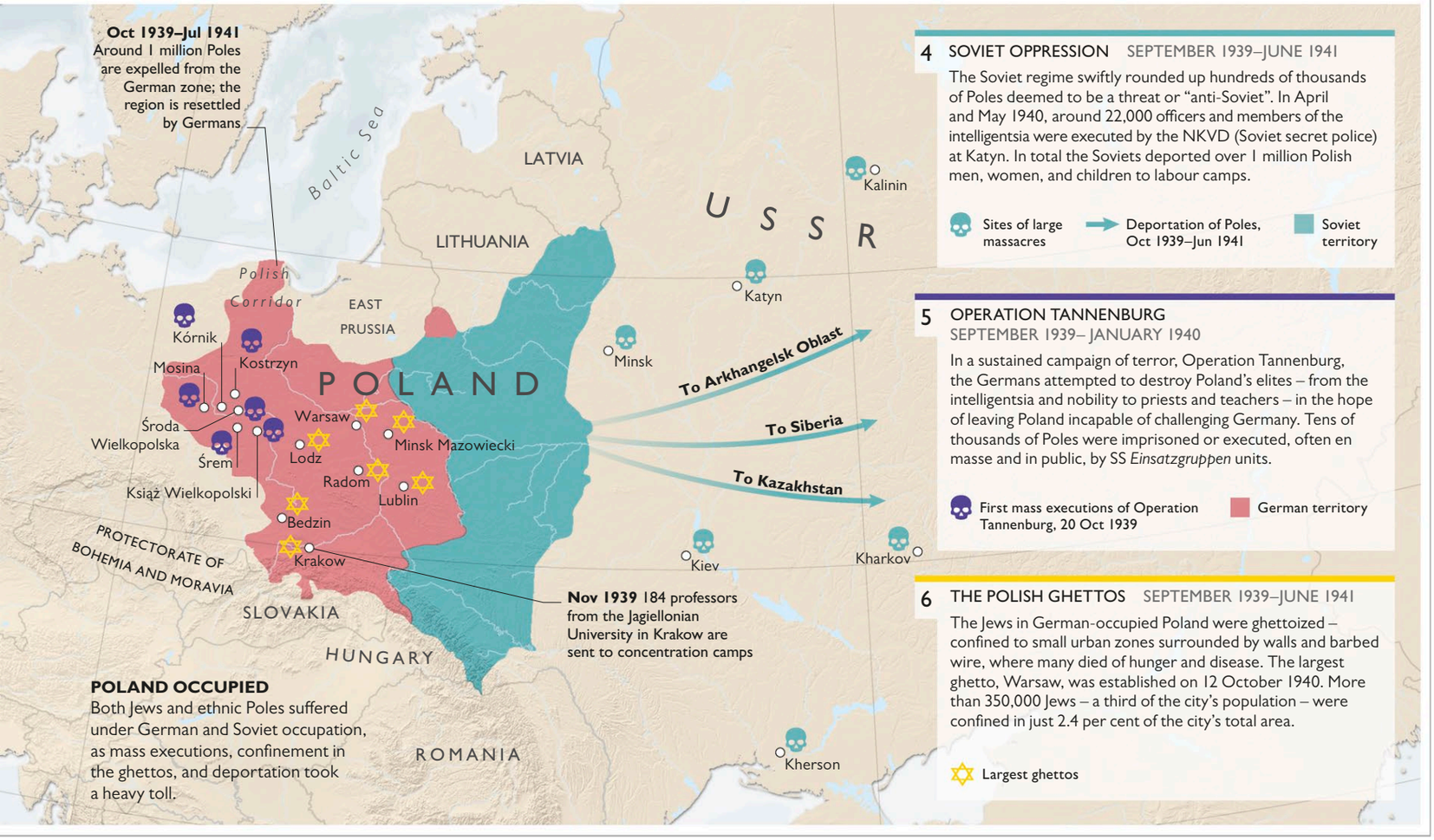
On 1 September, German troops moved into the country. Although France and Britain declared war on Germany on 3 September, they reneged on their promise to provide military aid to Poland, giving Hitler a free hand.

Within a week, German "Blitzkrieg" tactics had squeezed Polish forces into the heart of Poland. When the Soviet army invaded from the east on 17 September, Poland's fate was sealed. With its forces trapped between two enemies, Poland capitulated on 28 September. The country was split into three: one zone was annexed by Germany, one by Soviet Russia, and the third – the General Government – was occupied by the Germans.

INVASION AND OPPRESSION
Poland was destroyed in a matter of weeks from 31 August to 12 October 1939. The Poles were seen by their occupiers as an inferior people and suffered deeply under the oppressive regimes imposed upon them.

TIMELINE





Emergency measures
Fearing mass air attacks, including the use of poison gas, once war had been declared governments took measures to ensure that civil defence could be carried out in major cities. Here fire-fighters in gas masks carry out an exercise in Paris in 1939.

THE PHONEY WAR

Although the Allies declared war against Germany on 3 September 1939, there was little fighting on land until spring 1940. This lull in hostilities became known as the "phoney war".

△ **Safety precautions**
In this British government propaganda poster, an air raid warden warns a schoolboy that he should leave London. In total, 1.5 million schoolchildren and mothers with babies were evacuated from the city.

The lack of fighting in western Europe during this time suited both sides: the Germans feared an Allied attack while they were engaged against Poland, and the French and British needed time to build up their forces. While preparations were under way and wartime emergency powers were imposed at home, military action was very limited. The British Expeditionary Force (BEF) was deployed to France on 4 September 1939, but took up defensive positions, and a French offensive against the Germans in the Saar on 7 September lasted only five days. British bombers flew over Germany, but merely dropped propaganda leaflets aimed at undermining German morale.

Hitler made a peace offer to Britain on 6 October 1939, but after Britain rejected it he ordered his generals to prepare for an invasion of France and Belgium. Initial plans were unsatisfactory, and a harsh winter meant that the attack was postponed 29 times. Instead, in April 1940, the Germans invaded Denmark and Norway, ending the phoney war.

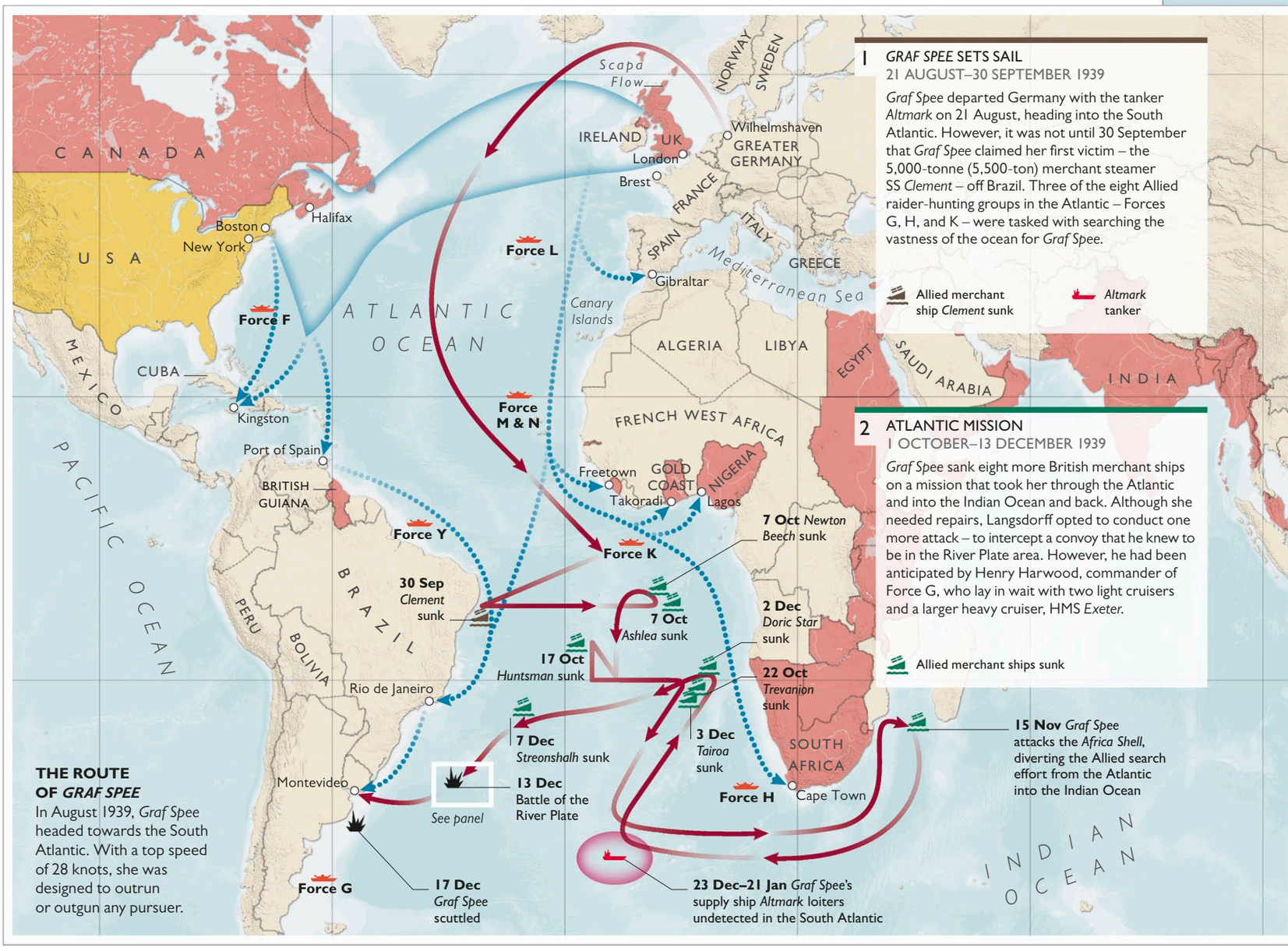
△ **Army in waiting**
The British Expeditionary Force was ordered into France on 4 September, and within three weeks there were around 150,000 troops stationed there. Sent to the Franco-Belgian border, they had little to do for eight months but dig trenches and wait.

BATTLE OF THE RIVER PLATE

On the night of 13–14 October 1939, a German U-boat sank HMS *Royal Oak* at her berth in Scapa Flow, Britain's main naval base. The audacious attack was a blow to British morale, but just two months later the Royal Navy had claimed a victory against the odds in the first major naval battle of the war.

At the outbreak of war, Germany's naval strategy was to avoid direct combat between fleet units and instead use surface raiders and U-boats to sink Allied shipping wherever possible, severing Britain's maritime lifelines. Weeks before hostilities began, German warships and supply vessels went into the North and South Atlantic, and most of the U-boat fleet took up station in the North Sea and Atlantic approaches. There they awaited authorization to attack.

The flagship of the German navy (Kriegsmarine) was the *Admiral Graf Spee*, a fast, modern, heavily armed pocket battleship commanded by Hans Langsdorff. From late September to early December *Graf Spee* eluded detection and raided successfully, sinking nine Allied merchantmen totalling 50,000 tonnes (55,000 tons). The British and French navies organized hunting groups in areas throughout the North and South Atlantic, and in the early hours of 13 December, *Graf Spee* was spotted. In the ensuing Battle of the River Plate, the smaller Royal Navy cruisers were able to harry *Graf Spee* and inflict damage that forced her to take refuge in a neutral port for repairs. The subsequent scuttling of *Graf Spee* was a major setback for the German navy, greatly undermining the original strategy of using its surface fleet to blockade British trade.



6 *GRAF SPEE* SCUTTLED
13/14–19 DECEMBER 1939

Graf Spee sheltered in the neutral port Montevideo and was permitted to stay until 17 December to make repairs and offload her wounded. On 15 December a German officer thought he spotted British ships approaching, and Langsdorff became convinced that superior forces lay in wait. Unwilling to lose *Graf Spee*, he took her into the estuary, and at around 8pm on 17 December she was scuttled. On 19 December Captain Langsdorff shot himself dead in a hotel room.

5 *GRAF SPEE* WITHDRAWS
6:30AM–7:30AM 13 DECEMBER 1939

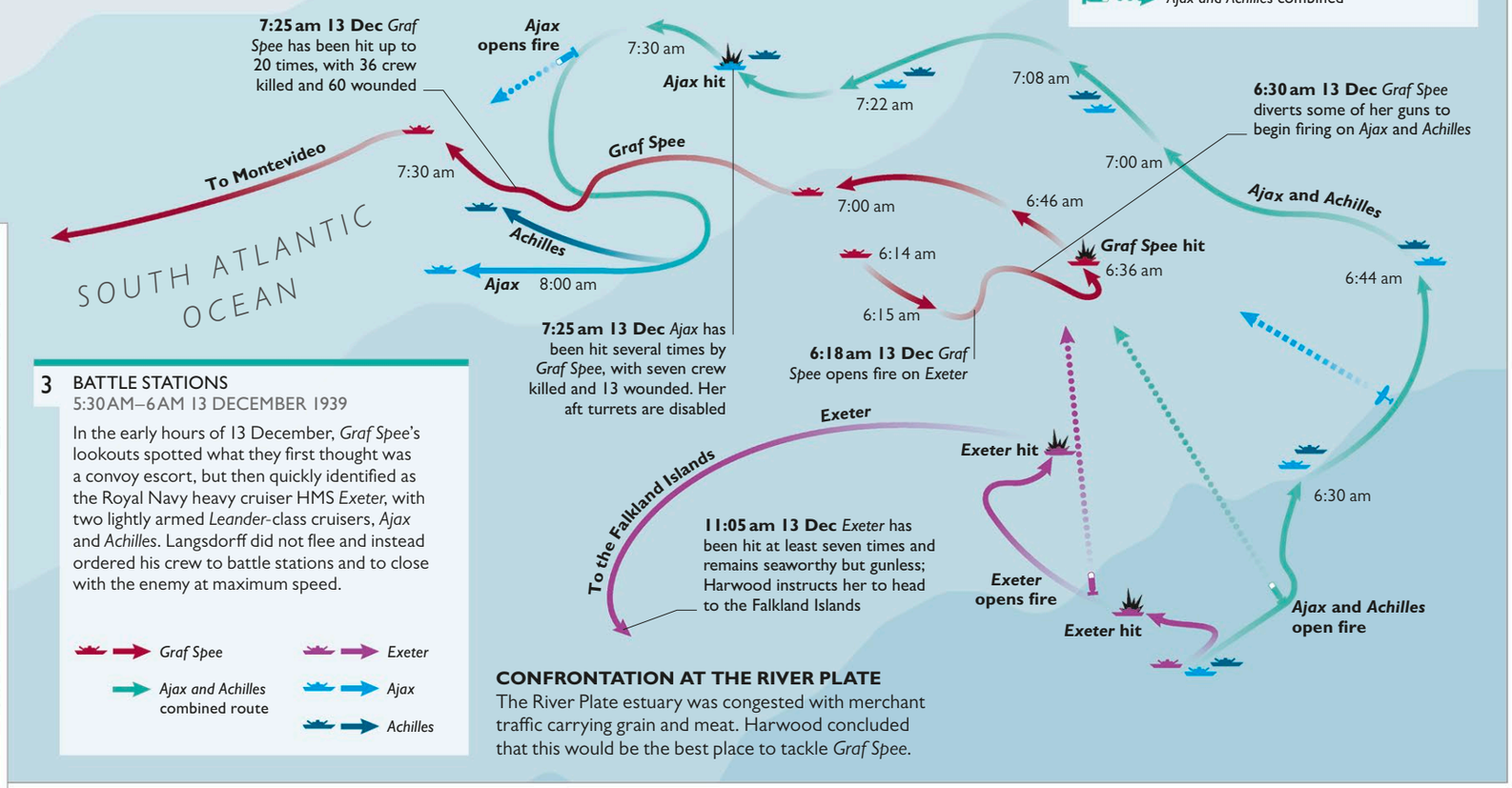
Torpedoes fired by the British forced *Graf Spee* to lay down a smokescreen and turn away. *Ajax* launched her spotter plane at 6:37am. She and *Achilles* were closing range, firing heavily, drawing *Graf Spee*'s main guns away from *Exeter*. *Ajax* was hit at 7:25am and had to turn east. *Graf Spee* was hit several dozen times and withdrew west into the River Plate Estuary.

Ajax reconnaissance aircraft

4 *EXETER* DAMAGED
6AM–6:30AM 13 DECEMBER 1939

The British force spotted *Graf Spee* shortly after 6am. The British doctrine on the engagement of a superior ship had been developed by Harwood himself a few years earlier: he duly divided his force into two – *Exeter* turning north-west and *Ajax* and *Achilles* north-east – to split the fire from the heavily armed ship. *Graf Spee* opened fire and concentrated her 11-in guns on *Exeter*, which, by 6:30am, had been hit three times, losing a turret and her Walrus spotter aircraft.

TORPEDO FIRE
Exeter *Ajax*
Ajax and Achilles combined



3 BATTLE STATIONS
5:30AM–6AM 13 DECEMBER 1939

In the early hours of 13 December, *Graf Spee*'s lookouts spotted what they first thought was a convoy escort, but then quickly identified as the Royal Navy heavy cruiser HMS *Exeter*, with two lightly armed *Leander*-class cruisers, *Ajax* and *Achilles*. Langsdorff did not flee and instead ordered his crew to battle stations and to close with the enemy at maximum speed.

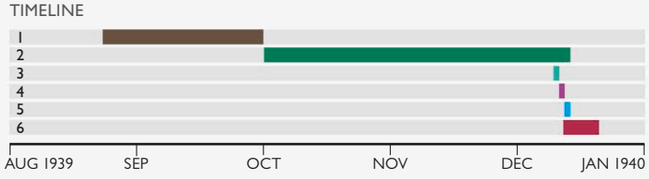
Graf Spee *Exeter*
Ajax and Achilles combined route *Ajax*
Achilles

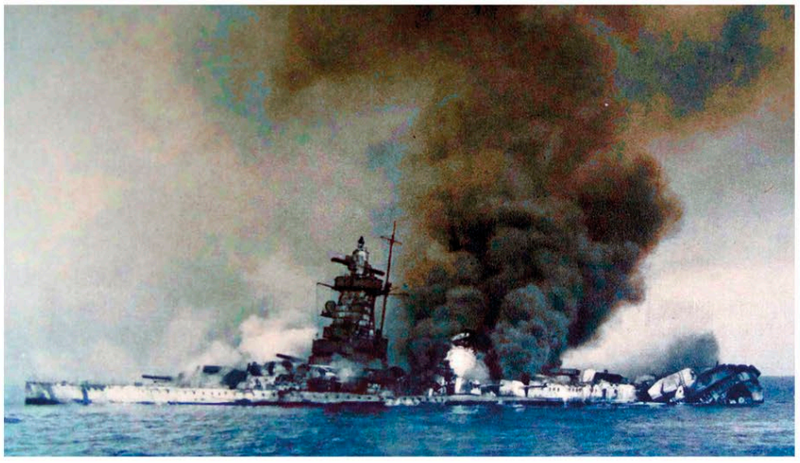
CONFRONTATION AT THE RIVER PLATE
The River Plate estuary was congested with merchant traffic carrying grain and meat. Harwood concluded that this would be the best place to tackle *Graf Spee*.

ATLANTIC HUNTING GROUNDS
Atlantic shipping routes were vital to Britain's global war effort. The German raiding campaign against this shipping required supply vessels and good luck to remain undetected for extended periods.

KEY
- Under British control
- United States
- Allied raider-hunting groups
- Principal shipping area
- Principal shipping routes
- Route of *Graf Spee*
- Major ship damage
- *Altmark* supply ship waiting area

TIMELINE





△ Scuttling of *Admiral Graf Spee*
Charges set on the pocket battleship *Graf Spee* were detonated on the evening of 17 December 1939 to scuttle the ship. Her sinking was witnessed by a crowd of more than 20,000 onlookers.

THE WINTER WAR IN FINLAND

The Soviet invasion of Finland in winter 1939 was met with ferocious resistance from a largely reservist Finnish army that was familiar with – and well trained for – the severe weather conditions. The damage inflicted by the Finns on their numerically superior enemy helped them to negotiate a settlement that avoided their complete subjugation.

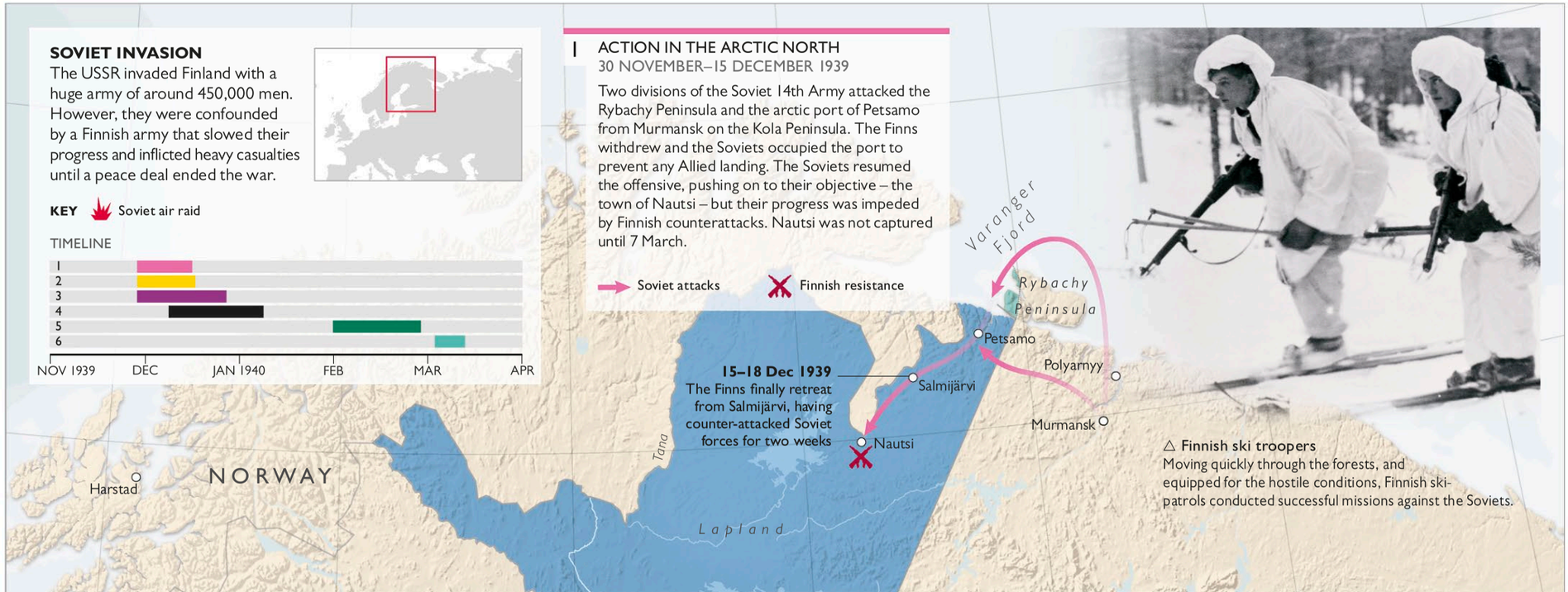
In the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact of 23 August 1939, the Soviet Union and Germany secretly agreed to divide much of Europe between themselves in a way that anticipated the "territorial and political rearrangements" to come. According to this pact, the Baltic States and Finland fell into the Soviet sphere of influence, and it was not long before the Soviets demanded that Finland cede to them a number of strategically important territories on their shared border. Finland refused, and Stalin ordered an invasion, intending to install a compliant regime in Finland.

The Soviet attack began on 30 November 1939 and was undertaken initially by four armies of about 450,000 men. The plan was to reach Helsinki within three weeks. The main focus of the Soviet offensive was the Karelian Isthmus, where most of the Finnish Army was deployed along the Mannerheim Line – a series of fortifications, anti-tank ditches, and obstacles built over two decades to deter Soviet aggression. The Soviet build-up gave the Finns time to assemble around 250,000 men, who had been trained in the use of *motti* tactics – encircling and breaking up enemy formations into isolated pockets, then destroying them.

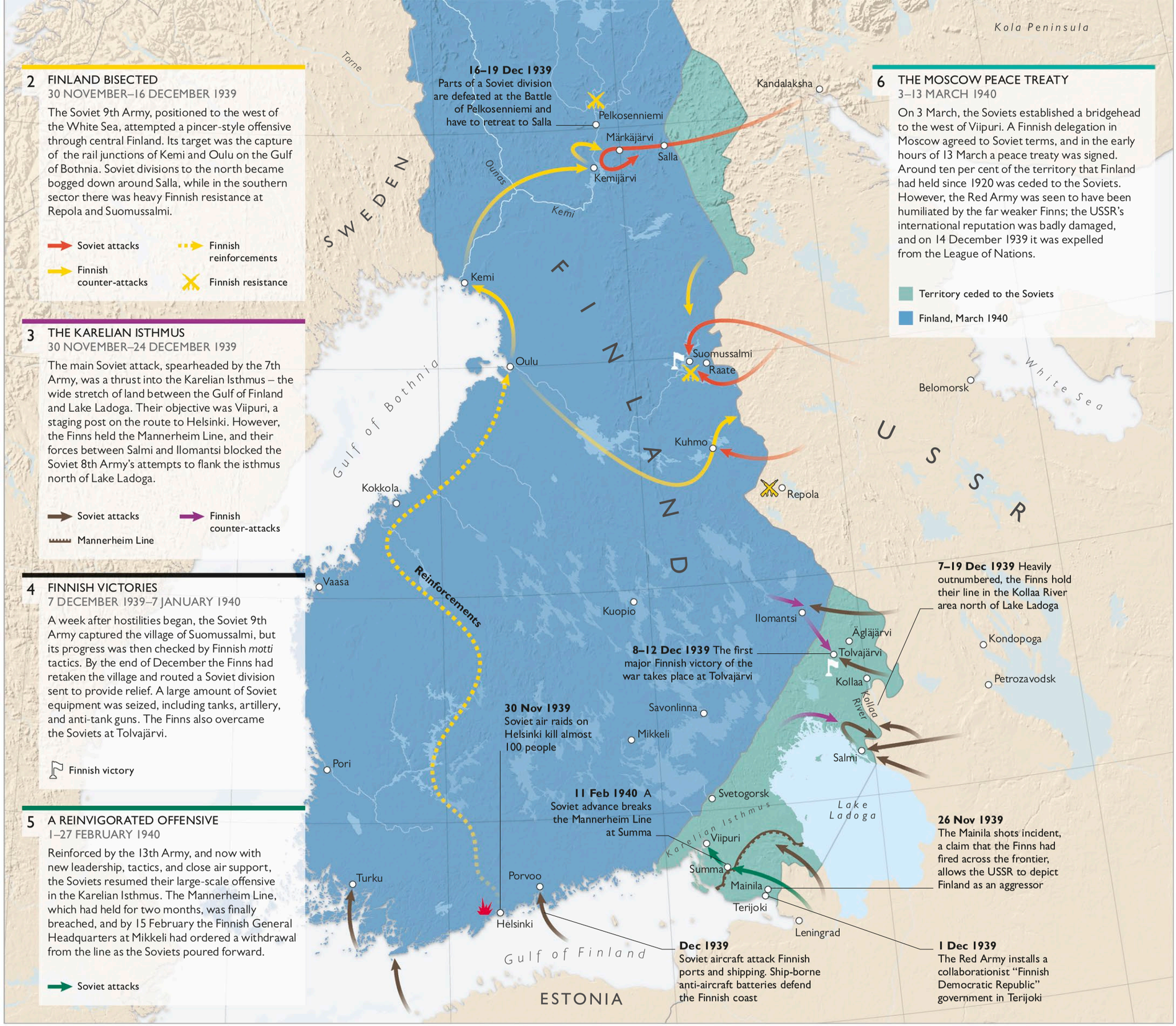
Stout resistance and damaging counter-attacks from the Finns stalemated the Soviets in most of Finland by the end of December. The highly mobile Finnish ski patrol units wreaked havoc behind Soviet formations. However, by early February, a reorganized Red Army converted its superiority in manpower and equipment into success on the battlefield. Hostilities ended on 13 March 1940 with Finland ceding around ten per cent of its territory to the USSR.

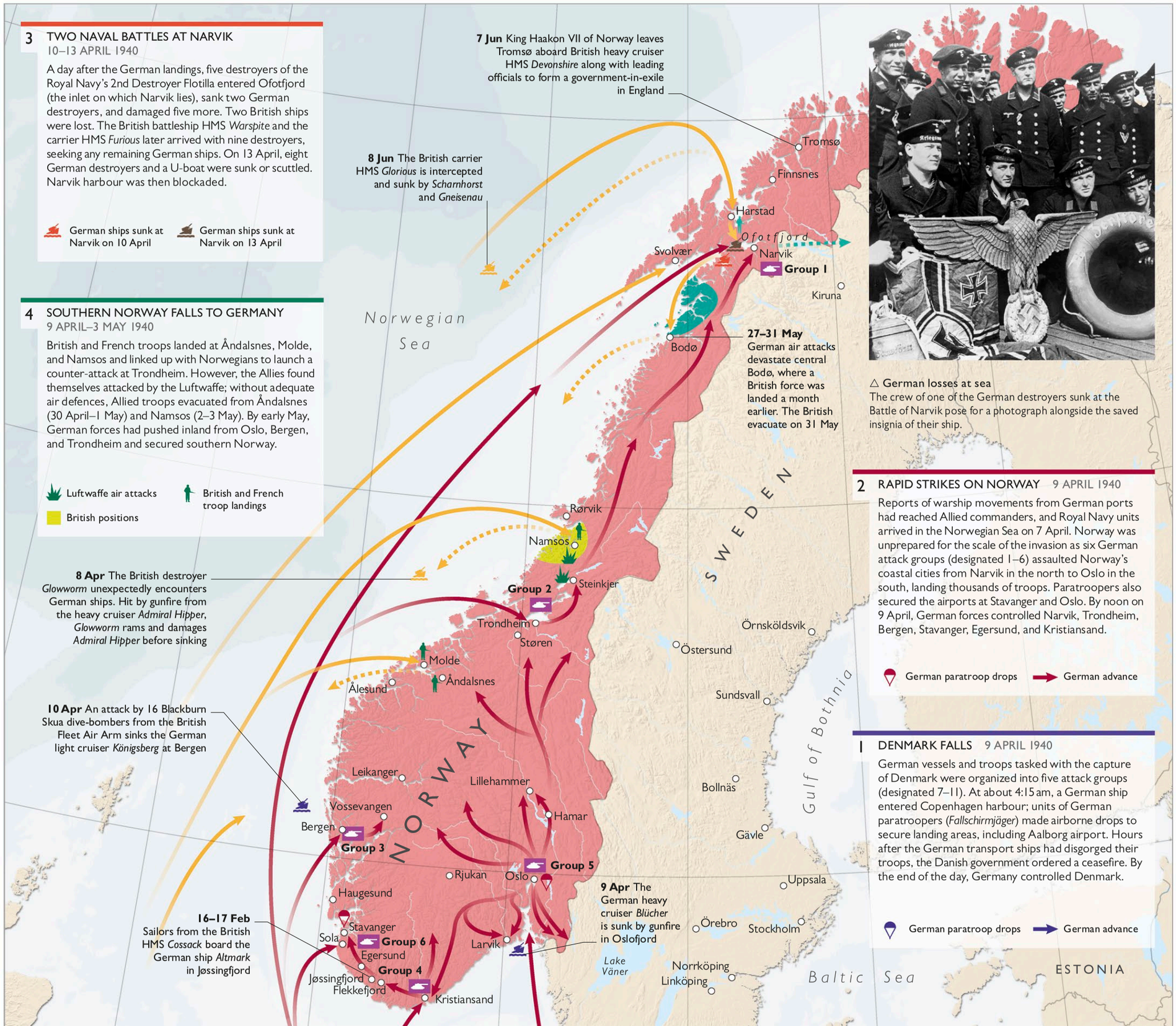
SOVIET ABSORPTION OF THE BALTIC AND BLACK SEA STATES
Following the Winter War, the Soviets annexed Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and parts of Romania – all areas recognized in the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact as lying within the Soviet sphere of influence. These territories were incorporated into the Soviet Union as constituent republics in August 1940, and many of their residents, deemed "enemies of the people", were deported to Siberia or Kazakhstan.

KEY
- Annexed from the Baltic States
- Annexed from Romania



△ **Finnish ski troopers**
Moving quickly through the forests, and equipped for the hostile conditions, Finnish ski-patrols conducted successful missions against the Soviets.


2 FINLAND BISECTED
30 NOVEMBER–16 DECEMBER 1939
The Soviet 9th Army, positioned to the west of the White Sea, attempted a pincer-style offensive through central Finland. Its target was the capture of the rail junctions of Kemi and Oulu on the Gulf of Bothnia. Soviet divisions to the north became bogged down around Salla, while in the southern sector there was heavy Finnish resistance at Repola and Suomussalmi.
Soviet attacks
Finnish reinforcements
Finnish counter-attacks
Finnish resistance
3 THE KARELIAN ISTHMUS
30 NOVEMBER–24 DECEMBER 1939
The main Soviet attack, spearheaded by the 7th Army, was a thrust into the Karelian Isthmus – the wide stretch of land between the Gulf of Finland and Lake Ladoga. Their objective was Viipuri, a staging post on the route to Helsinki. However, the Finns held the Mannerheim Line, and their forces between Salmi and Ilomantsi blocked the Soviet 8th Army's attempts to flank the isthmus north of Lake Ladoga.
Soviet attacks
Finnish counter-attacks
Mannerheim Line
4 FINNISH VICTORIES
7 DECEMBER 1939–7 JANUARY 1940
A week after hostilities began, the Soviet 9th Army captured the village of Suomussalmi, but its progress was then checked by Finnish *motti* tactics. By the end of December the Finns had retaken the village and routed a Soviet division sent to provide relief. A large amount of Soviet equipment was seized, including tanks, artillery, and anti-tank guns. The Finns also overcame the Soviets at Tolvajärvi.
Finnish victory
5 A REINVIGORATED OFFENSIVE
1–27 FEBRUARY 1940
Reinforced by the 13th Army, and now with new leadership, tactics, and close air support, the Soviets resumed their large-scale offensive in the Karelian Isthmus. The Mannerheim Line, which had held for two months, was finally breached, and by 15 February the Finnish General Headquarters at Mikkeli had ordered a withdrawal from the line as the Soviets poured forward.
Soviet attacks
6 THE MOSCOW PEACE TREATY
3–13 MARCH 1940
On 3 March, the Soviets established a bridgehead to the west of Viipuri. A Finnish delegation in Moscow agreed to Soviet terms, and in the early hours of 13 March a peace treaty was signed. Around ten per cent of the territory that Finland had held since 1920 was ceded to the Soviets. However, the Red Army was seen to have been humiliated by the far weaker Finns; the USSR's international reputation was badly damaged, and on 14 December 1939 it was expelled from the League of Nations.
Territory ceded to the Soviets
Finland, March 1940
Kola Peninsula
Torne
SWEDEN
FINLAND
USSR
Gulf of Bothnia
White Sea
Gulf of Finland
ESTONIA
Lake Ladoga
Karelian Isthmus
Kollaa River
Ounas
Kemi
Reinforcements
16–19 Dec 1939 Parts of a Soviet division are defeated at the Battle of Pelkosenniemi and have to retreat to Salla
Pelkosenniemi
Märkäjärvi
Salla
Kemijärvi
Kandalaksha
Kemi
Oulu
Suomussalmi
Raate
Belomorsk
Kuhmo
Repola
Kokkola
Vaasa
Kuopio
Ilomantsi
Ägläjärvi
Tolvajärvi
Kollaa
Kondopoga
Petrozavodsk
8–12 Dec 1939 The first major Finnish victory of the war takes place at Tolvajärvi
7–19 Dec 1939 Heavily outnumbered, the Finns hold their line in the Kollaa River area north of Lake Ladoga
30 Nov 1939 Soviet air raids on Helsinki kill almost 100 people
Savonlinna
Mikkeli
Salmi
Pori
11 Feb 1940 A Soviet advance breaks the Mannerheim Line at Summa
Svetogorsk
Viipuri
Summa
Mainila
Terijoki
Leningrad
26 Nov 1939 The Mainila shots incident, a claim that the Finns had fired across the frontier, allows the USSR to depict Finland as an aggressor
Turku
Porvoo
Helsinki
Dec 1939 Soviet aircraft attack Finnish ports and shipping. Ship-borne anti-aircraft batteries defend the Finnish coast
1 Dec 1939 The Red Army installs a collaborationist "Finnish Democratic Republic" government in Terijoki



3 TWO NAVAL BATTLES AT NARVIK
10–13 APRIL 1940

A day after the German landings, five destroyers of the Royal Navy's 2nd Destroyer Flotilla entered Ofotfjord (the inlet on which Narvik lies), sank two German destroyers, and damaged five more. Two British ships were lost. The British battleship HMS *Warspite* and the carrier HMS *Furious* later arrived with nine destroyers, seeking any remaining German ships. On 13 April, eight German destroyers and a U-boat were sunk or scuttled. Narvik harbour was then blockaded.

German ships sunk at Narvik on 10 April

German ships sunk at Narvik on 13 April

4 SOUTHERN NORWAY FALLS TO GERMANY
9 APRIL–3 MAY 1940

British and French troops landed at Åndalsnes, Molde, and Namsos and linked up with Norwegians to launch a counter-attack at Trondheim. However, the Allies found themselves attacked by the Luftwaffe; without adequate air defences, Allied troops evacuated from Åndalsnes (30 April–1 May) and Namsos (2–3 May). By early May, German forces had pushed inland from Oslo, Bergen, and Trondheim and secured southern Norway.

Luftwaffe air attacks

British and French troop landings

British positions

△ **German losses at sea**
The crew of one of the German destroyers sunk at the Battle of Narvik pose for a photograph alongside the saved insignia of their ship.

2 RAPID STRIKES ON NORWAY 9 APRIL 1940

Reports of warship movements from German ports had reached Allied commanders, and Royal Navy units arrived in the Norwegian Sea on 7 April. Norway was unprepared for the scale of the invasion as six German attack groups (designated 1–6) assaulted Norway's coastal cities from Narvik in the north to Oslo in the south, landing thousands of troops. Paratroopers also secured the airports at Stavanger and Oslo. By noon on 9 April, German forces controlled Narvik, Trondheim, Bergen, Stavanger, Egersund, and Kristiansand.

German paratroop drops

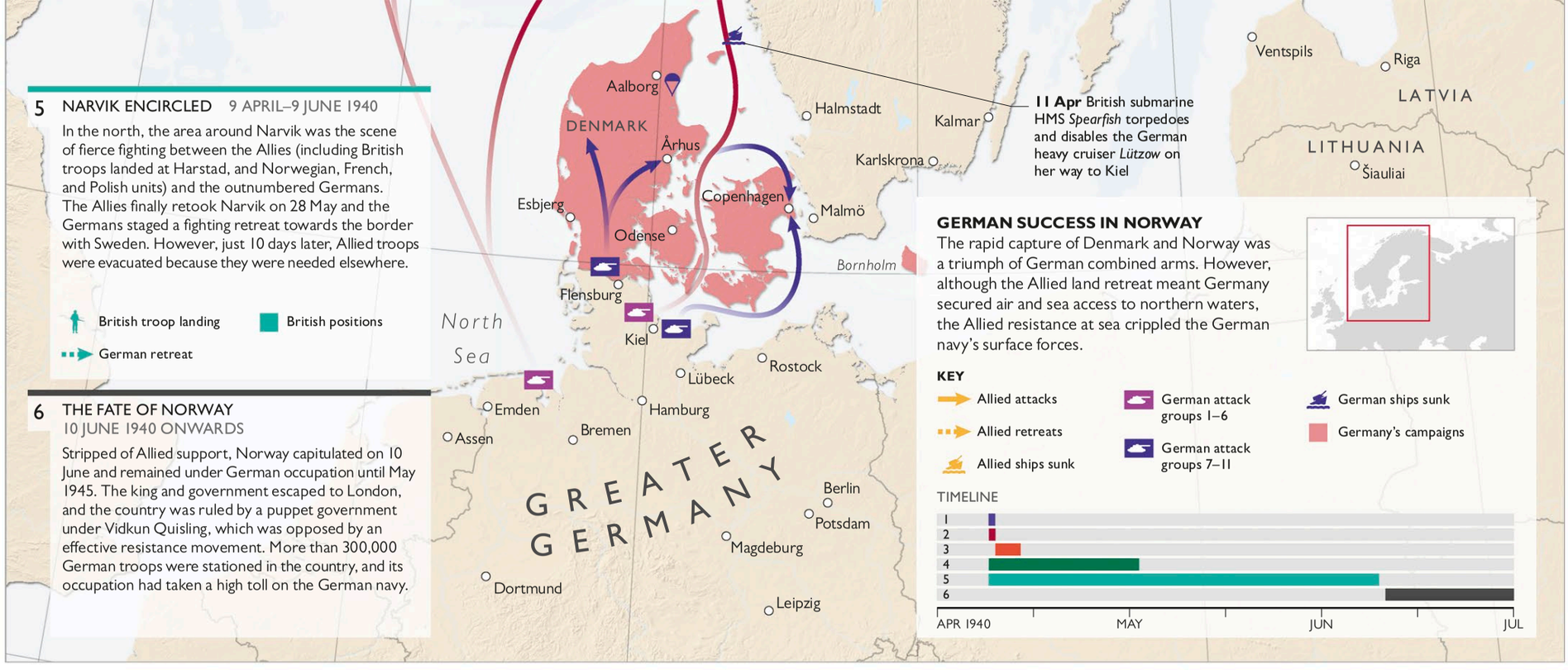
German advance

1 DENMARK FALLS 9 APRIL 1940

German vessels and troops tasked with the capture of Denmark were organized into five attack groups (designated 7–11). At about 4:15 am, a German ship entered Copenhagen harbour; units of German paratroopers (*Fallschirmjäger*) made airborne drops to secure landing areas, including Aalborg airport. Hours after the German transport ships had disgorged their troops, the Danish government ordered a ceasefire. By the end of the day, Germany controlled Denmark.

German paratroop drops

German advance



THE BATTLE FOR NORWAY

On 1 March 1940, Adolf Hitler signed the order for Operation Weserübung. The principal aim of this daring operation was to take control of Norway – a goal that also necessitated the occupation of Denmark. The invasion advanced Germany's aim of gaining greater access to the North Sea and provided a gateway to the Atlantic for its warships and submarines.

In July 1938, Norway and eight other countries declared their neutrality in any possible European conflict. Germany, in turn, agreed to respect Norway's integrity so long as its neutrality was not infringed by any other power. The peace was not to last.

Norway was of significant importance to Germany, not least because large quantities of iron ore from Sweden were shipped annually to Germany via the ice-free Norwegian port of Narvik. In addition, the German navy saw strategic advantages in establishing bases in Norway, because it would be far more difficult for an enemy to deny access to its long coastline than to blockade German ports.

The *Altmark* incident of February 1940 (see box, right) convinced Hitler that the British would not respect Norwegian neutrality. Fearing that the British would soon move to disrupt the vital trade in iron ore, the German high command planned an invasion of Norway, which began on 9 April 1940.

The focal point of the naval and land battles in Norway was the town of Narvik, which the Allies needed to occupy in order to retain a strategic foothold in Norway. The Allies decisively won the sea battles, with the German navy sustaining heavy losses. On land, however, the poorly equipped Allied troops were outnumbered and outgunned, and many were evacuated by the beginning of May. The Germans dominated the air through the Luftwaffe's 10th Air Corps (Fliegerkorps X), demonstrating the tactical importance of air superiority to achieving military aims on the modern battlefield.

The Allies abandoned their action in southern Norway after just three weeks, but fighting continued in the north, where the Norwegian and Allied forces eventually retook Narvik. However, German invasions in France and the Low Countries in May 1940 (see pp.48–49) dictated a withdrawal and evacuation because the remaining Allied soldiers were urgently needed elsewhere.

THE ALTMARK INCIDENT

From August to December 1939, the German supply ship *Altmark* (pictured below) refuelled the warship *Admiral Graf Spee* during her raiding mission against Allied shipping in the South Atlantic (see pp.42–43). In January 1940, *Altmark* headed home, carrying prisoners from merchant ships sunk by *Admiral Graf Spee*. After neutral Norwegian destroyers prevented a Royal Navy interception, the British instructed the destroyer HMS *Cossack* to pursue *Altmark* into Jøssingfjord. On 16 February, a boarding party armed with bayonets leaped onto *Altmark*, killing several guards but rescuing around 300 Allied POWs.

Verbände der 1., 7., 9. u. engl. Armee
2., 7., 18., 22., 23., 32., 43., 61., 1.na., 2.na., 4.na. (vernichtet?)
5.na., 82.na., 1.mar., 1.tmot., 5.tmot., 9.tmot. (vernichtet?)
12.tmot., 15.tmot., 1.mech., 2.mech., 3.mech., 1.Pz., 2.Pz.,
1.Kav., 4.Kav., 4.Kol., 101.Fest., 102.Fest.,
engl. 1.tmot., 2.tmot., 3.tmot., 4.tmot., 12.tmot.
42.tmot., 48.tmot., 1.Pz.
viell. 4., 13., 16., 19., 52., 57., 62., 66., 68., 25.tmot., 5.mar.
engl. 5.tmot., 23.tmot., 44.tmot., 50.tmot., 51.tmot.
1.London-Div.mot.
Belg. Armee
Mehrzahl der belg. Div.
frz. 2., 4., 5., 60. u. 72. (?)
3.tmot., 10.tmot., 36.
6.Kol., Tle.14, 24.(?) 53
63.(?)
28.Geb., 42., 87.na.
4.Pz.
1.Kol.
1.Fest.-Div.
3.Pz., 5.Kav.
2.Kav., 3.Kav.
Rst.55., viell. 51.
1.Kav.Br.
3.Kol.
2. Armee
(Gen. Huntziger)
6. Armee
(Gen. Touchon)
Ramsgate
Deal
C. Gris Nez
BOULOGNE
Berck
Etaples
Montreuil
Abbeville
Doullens
ARRAS
LENS
DOUAI
VALENCIENNES
CAMBRAI
Le Cateau
Cambrai
Bapaume
Peronne
Amiens
Beauvais
Compiègne
Laon
Chauny
Soissons
Reims
Chalons
Meaux
Pontoise
Mantes
PARIS
Versailles
Corbeil
Melun
Fontainebleau
Etampes
Chartres
Provins
Romilly-s.S.
Troyes
Bar-le-Duc
St. Dizier
Verdun
Sedan
Charleroi
Namur
Mons
Tournai
Lille
Roubaix
Tourcoing
Ypern
Dunkirchen
Calais
Boulogne
Gent
Brügge
Ostende
Antwerpen
Brüssel
Mecheln
Löwen
Tirlemont
Hasselt
Maastricht
Lüttich
Tongres
Turnhout
Valkenswaard
Eindhoven
Venlo
Roermond
Maas
Schelde
Leie
Lys
Somme
Aisne
Marne
Oise
Seine
Meuse
Sambre
Dyle
Nete
Scheldt
Pas de Calais
Mer du Nord
Belgique
Pays-Bas
Deutschland
Luxembourg
XXXVI.
IX.
XI.
IV.
XXVII.
T.A.K.
XXXXI.
XXXIX.
XVI.
VIII.
XIX.
XIV.
II.
V.
XXXVIII.
XXXXII.
XXXX.
XVIII.
III.
XVII.
VI.
VII.
B
A
18.
6.
4.
2.
12.
Masse 29.(m.)
Masse 251.
Tle.29.(m.)
1.Geb.
2.(m.)
13.(m.)
20.(m.)
28.(m.)
8.Pz.
6.Pz.
7.Pz.
11.Sch.Br.
5.Pz.
4.Pz.
3.Pz.
9.Pz.
10.Pz.
1.Pz.
2.Pz.
Tle.

Wehrmacht map, 21 May 1940
With German (black) and Allied (red) units, this map shows the German advance at 21 May. Both sides' headquarters are marked with flags. The French 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Armies are ranged along the French border east to west, while the British counter-attack can be seen west of Lens.

THE GERMAN OFFENSIVE IN THE WEST

The Germans began their campaign in the west in May 1940. Within one day they had invaded the Low Countries, and within weeks they had swept across northern France to reach the Channel coast, trapping thousands of French and British soldiers around Dunkirk.

On 10 May, Germany attacked the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. Paratroopers were dropped in the Netherlands, taking key bridges and opening the way for ground forces. By 12 May, German tanks had reached Rotterdam, which was heavily bombed by the Luftwaffe. The Dutch surrendered on 14 May. In Belgium, German gliders dropped paratroopers onto the roof of Fort Eben-Emael, between Liège and Maastricht. They were joined by ground forces, which moved towards the British and French forces at the River Dyle in Belgium (see flag marked in Brussels). After 18 days of fighting, Belgium surrendered on 28 May. Luxembourg surrendered in a matter of hours.

Breaching Allied defences

British and French generals were sure that Germany could not penetrate France's fortified eastern border – the Maginot Line – or the densely forested Ardennes region. They were wrong. On 12 May, panzer corps moved into the Ardennes and crossed the River Meuse at Sedan. This meant the Germans could advance to the Channel via the undefended countryside. To the south, the French fought to stop the Germans moving on Paris. However, Paris was not the goal, and on 20 May the Germans reached the Channel coast at Abbeville (centre left) and trapped the Allies. The sole British tank division counter-attacked Arras on 21 May (upper left), but to no avail. German forces pushed through Belgium, and panzers drew closer from the south and east. On 20 May Britain opted to evacuate its troops via Dunkirk.

▷ **German advance**
German infantry accompanied by a tank manoeuvre in the Ardennes in May 1940 during the Battle of France.

On land and in the air
Early in the Soviet invasion of the USSR in June 1941, Heinkel 111 bombers fly over German motorized and infantry forces advancing in a column. It is likely this photo was manipulated for dramatic effect, possibly for propaganda.

BLITZKRIEG

The incredible speed at which Germany overran Poland, France, and other countries in the opening stages of the war exposed the inadequacy of the Allies' preparations. These campaigns became known as Blitzkrieg ("lightning war"), as they were sudden, intense, and devastating.

During World War I, the German high command developed a tactic of using *Sturmtruppen* ("stormtroopers") to punch through gaps in the enemy's line, followed by heavier infantry. By World War II, advances in technology – including superior tanks, aircraft capable of ground support roles, and enhanced radio communications – meant the German Wehrmacht could develop this tactic further, unleashing combined arms offensives to penetrate enemy lines, then fan out to their rear and envelop them in a *Kessel* ("cauldron").

The effects of Blitzkrieg were striking. Poland was overwhelmed in September 1939, as was France in May 1940. The panzer corps sliced through the French army, reaching the Channel coast and cutting off much of the Allied army. Variants of Blitzkrieg, including employing airborne troops to disorient the enemy by seizing objectives in the rear, also helped Germany win rapid victories in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Norway from April to June 1940.

△ **German *Stahlhelm***
This steel helmet is typical of the protective gear issued to German infantry, who followed up the advances made by panzers.

Lessons learnt

Blitzkrieg tactics became less effective as Germany's opponents learnt counter-measures, such as attacking the flanks of an advance, and sacrificing territory to avoid becoming trapped. This was one of several reasons why Germany's attack on the USSR in 1941 (see pp.90–91) failed disastrously.

△ **Operation Barbarossa**
When they invaded the USSR in June 1941, Germany made rapid advances against the Red Army, trapping huge pockets of troops. However, over-extended supply lines and bad weather meant the advance stalled around Moscow in December.

27 May Route Y becomes the quickest route after the fall of Calais

Route Y: 87 nautical miles

Route X: 55 nautical miles

Route Z: 39 nautical miles

29 May Dunkirk harbour is heavily bombed by the Luftwaffe; the town is destroyed by the end of the campaign

26 May–4 Jun More than 200,000 men are picked up from the Dunkirk East Mole

29 May Route X opens after Route Y is targeted by German E-boats. Shallow areas mean it can only be used in daylight

20 May Preparations for the evacuation begin in Dover

27 May The shortest evacuation route (Z) closes after the fall of Calais

27 May The port town of Calais falls to German forces

22 May German 10th Panzer Division moves towards Calais, starting their attack on 24 May

26 May–4 Jun The RAF flies over 3,500 sorties over Dunkirk, losing 145 aircraft

25 May German 2nd Panzer Division takes Boulogne

Panzer Group Kleist turns towards Dunkirk

28 May Battle of the Ypres–Comines Canal; British forces help to maintain the Dunkirk corridor for retreating soldiers

German 4th Army pushes the Allied forces towards Dunkirk

UNITED KINGDOM

Margate

Ramsgate

Dover

Goodwin Sands

Dover Strait

Calais

Gravelines

Boulogne

Saint Omer

FRANCE

Panzer Group Kleist

Panzer Group Kleist

4th Army

4th Army

4th Army

Dunkirk

Malo-les-Bains (Dunkirk harbour)

Furnes

Bergues

Rexpoëde

Soex

West-Cappel

Wormhoudt

Ledringhem

Cassel

Hazebrouck

Caëstre

Strazeele

Merville

Nieuport

Stroom Bank

Ostend

Dixmude

Yser

Noordschote

Ypres

Poperinghe

Wytschaete

▽ **Spreading division**
German propaganda about the Dunkirk evacuation showed British soldiers preventing French troops from boarding the last boats during Operation Dynamo.

4 THE FINAL RETREAT
28 MAY–4 JUNE 1940

Tens of thousands of soldiers were captured or killed fighting a rearguard action, and by 1 June, the Allies had withdrawn to an inner perimeter. The last troops were evacuated on 3 June, and all resistance in Dunkirk ceased at 9:30 am on 4 June. In total, 338,000 men (including several French divisions) were carried to safety by a fleet of around 800 boats. However, the more than 70,000 men left behind were captured by the Germans.

□□□ Rearguard fighting 28 May

●●●● Rearguard fighting 29 May

Inner perimeter

EVACUATING DUNKIRK

In just ten days from 26 May to 4 June 1940, 338,000 British and Allied troops were carried aboard a flotilla of boats and ships from Dunkirk to safety in Britain. Known as Operation Dynamo, it was the biggest military evacuation in history.

Barely one week after Hitler had ordered the invasion of France and the Low Countries, the German army had pushed the Allied forces into a corner of north-east France near the port of Dunkirk. Under attack from the Luftwaffe, the retreating soldiers of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), together with their French, Canadian, and Belgian allies, faced roads blocked with vehicles and a flood of refugees. However, in one of the most pivotal decisions of the war, Hitler called a halt to the advance of his panzer divisions, giving the Allies sufficient breathing space to evacuate more than 330,000 men from the beaches of Dunkirk.

The evacuation was ordered by Winston Churchill and planned by logistics expert Vice-Admiral Bertram Ramsay from a room of the naval headquarters in Dover that once housed a dynamo (which gave the operation its name). It began on 26 May. Even though the Germans did not launch a full-scale attack on the retreating Allies, the evacuation was accompanied by fierce fighting. Once on the beaches, soldiers often stood shoulder-deep in water, waiting for rescue, while the Germans bombed the sands from above.

Although the BEF left behind nearly all their equipment, the "miracle" of Dunkirk saved what Churchill called "the whole root and core and brain of the British Army" from a disastrous campaign. Without it, the Allied war effort would probably have collapsed.

THE ALLIED RETREAT

As the Germans closed in on the port of Dunkirk from all directions, thousands of Allied troops retreated through a corridor maintained by fierce fighting, to be evacuated across the Channel to Britain.

KEY

British sea routes · Shallow areas · German advances · Major Battle

TIMELINE

18th Army

BELGIUM

27 May The Belgian Army is defeated; King Leopold surrenders

18th Army

German 6th Army advances on Dunkirk

6th Army

Lys

Comines

Lille

28–31 May Siege of Lille; the French 1st Army hold off the Germans for three days, before surrendering

1 PLANS AND PREPARATIONS
20–26 MAY 1940

Preparations for the evacuation began around 20 May when it became clear that the Allies were trapped. Vice-Admiral Ramsay's plan envisaged the rescue of 30,000 to 45,000 troops in just two days using a fleet of destroyers and transport ships. At Dunkirk itself, canals and waterways were pressed into service as defences were built to protect the town from the German infantry and artillery.

Allied positions 26 May

2 THE FIRST DAYS OF EVACUATION
26–29 MAY 1940

Dunkirk's shelving beaches meant that larger ships could collect soldiers only from Dunkirk Mole – a long stone jetty in the harbour – and there were not enough small boats to ferry soldiers to ships in deeper water. On 27 May, only about 8,000 men were rescued. By 29 May, the British public was asked to help, and hundreds of private boats arrived in Dunkirk, vastly increasing the numbers evacuated.

Dunkirk beaches · Allied positions 28 May

3 THE BATTLE IN THE AIR
26 MAY–1 JUNE 1940

The evacuation was under near constant attack from the Luftwaffe. On 29 May the harbour at Dunkirk was destroyed and the channel to the open sea was almost blocked with damaged ships. Despite being overstretched and inexperienced, the pilots of the RAF kept up patrols over Dunkirk and ran bombing raids on the German positions. By 1 June, Luftwaffe attacks were so intense that evacuations ceased during daylight hours.

Air attacks and battles

Dunkirk harbour destroyed

THOSE LEFT BEHIND

Substantial Allied forces remained in France after the evacuation from Dunkirk; 35,000 French and as many British soldiers were forced to surrender. The majority were taken as POWs and forced to march for days before being transported to camps in Germany, where they remained for rest of the war. Several thousand French, British, and Canadian troops eluded capture and by 5 June were ranged along the Somme, hoping to halt the German advance. Many were rescued in later evacuations.

Allied captives at Dunkirk

THE FALL OF FRANCE

After the evacuations at Dunkirk, the vastly outnumbered Allies fought fiercely but unsuccessfully to hold back Germany's advance into France. By 22 June 1940 France had signed an armistice and the country was split between the German-occupied north and Marshal Pétain's Vichy France.

On 5 June 1940, following the withdrawal of the British Expeditionary Forces, the Germans began the second stage of their invasion of France. Lacking significant British support (only one division, the 51st Highland, stayed in France), Maxime Weygand, chief of the Allied armies in France, was outgunned. With a depleted French army, he faced a near-impossible task – to defend a 900-km (560-mile) front from a German force of 10 panzer divisions and 130 infantry divisions.

Although their army fought fiercely, the French government was unwilling to commit to a long battle, abandoning Paris on 10 June and seeking an armistice on 17 June. With the Allied forces in the west evacuating, the armies in the east surrounded, and forces in the centre fragmenting as the Germans swept on, France capitulated on 22 June.

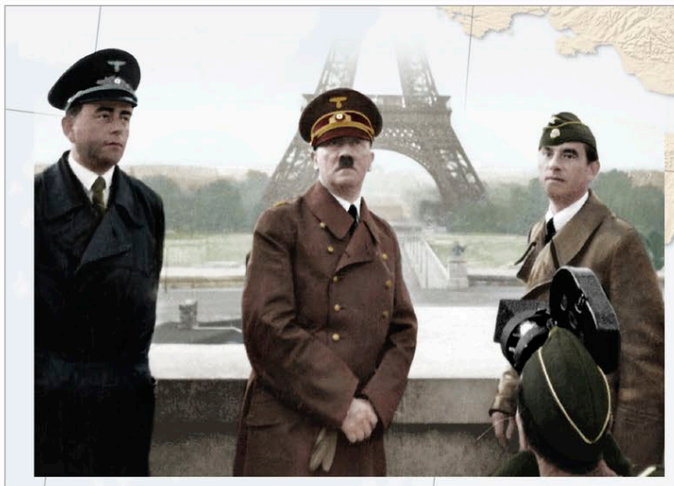
In the Franco–German Armistice, France was divided, with the north and west under German occupation, and the south (nominally) under French sovereignty. Charles de Gaulle, then the French under-secretary of national defence and war, refused to accept the surrender and led the Free French from London. By the end of June 1940, France had lost half her huge army as prisoners of war or casualties. The Western Front remained closed for four years until the D-Day landings of June 1944.

"Difficulty attracts the characterful man, for it is by grasping it that he fulfils himself."

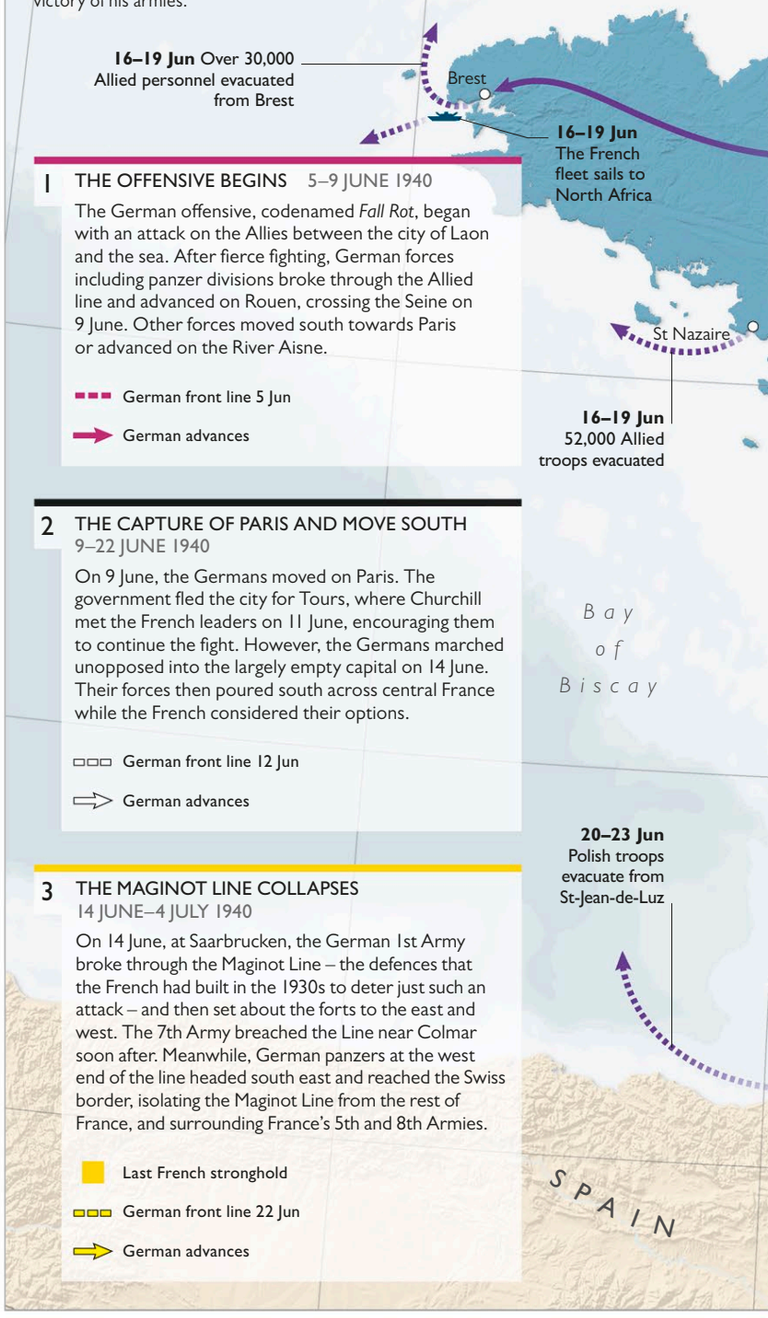
CHARLES DE GAULLE, *MEMOIRES DE GUERRE VOL I*, 1954

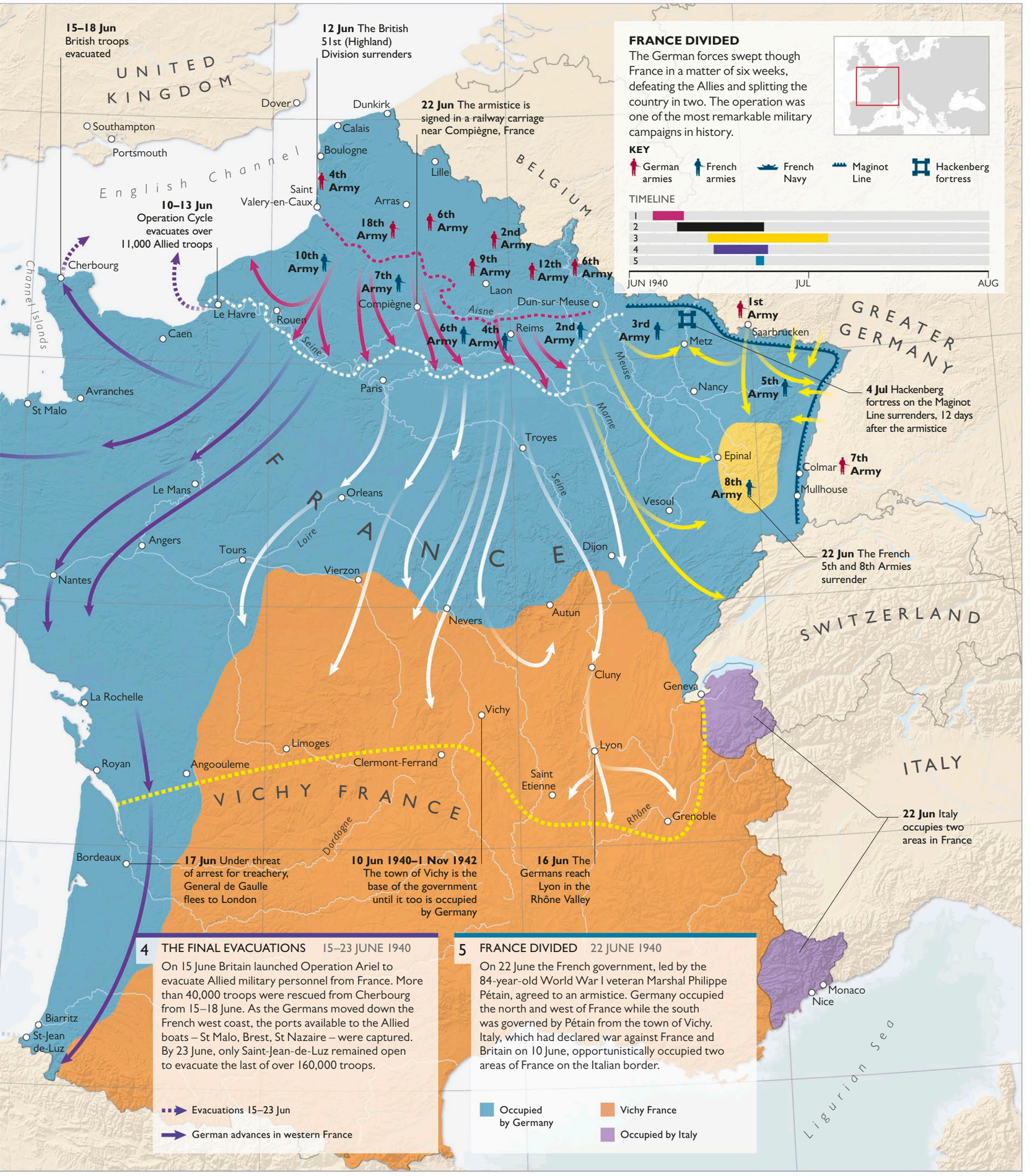
DE GAULLE AND THE LONDON BROADCASTS

From a BBC studio in London, Charles de Gaulle broadcast a series of powerful speeches to the people of France in June 1940. He urged them to stand firm against the Germans: "Whatever happens, the flame of French resistance must not and shall not die". His words fanned the flames of resistance, but many of the French soldiers who had been evacuated from Dunkirk remained loyal to Vichy France and were unconvinced by De Gaulle's promises.



△ Hitler in Paris
One day after the armistice with France, Adolf Hitler visited Paris for the first and last time to celebrate the victory of his armies.




15–18 Jun British troops evacuated
12 Jun The British 51st (Highland) Division surrenders
22 Jun The armistice is signed in a railway carriage near Compiègne, France
10–13 Jun Operation Cycle evacuates over 11,000 Allied troops
UNITED KINGDOM
English Channel
Channel Islands
BELGIUM
GREATER GERMANY
SWITZERLAND
ITALY
Ligurian Sea
FRANCE
VICHY FRANCE
Dover
Southampton
Portsmouth
Dunkirk
Calais
Boulogne
Saint Valery-en-Caux
Lille
Arras
Cherbourg
Le Havre
Rouen
Caen
Compiègne
Laon
Dun-sur-Meuse
Reims
Paris
Avranches
St Malo
Le Mans
Orleans
Angers
Tours
Nantes
Vierzon
Troyes
Dijon
Nevers
Autun
Cluny
Vichy
Lyon
Saint Etienne
Grenoble
Geneva
Limoges
Clermont-Ferrand
Angoouleme
Royan
La Rochelle
Bordeaux
Biarritz
St-Jean de-Luz
Monaco
Nice
Metz
Saarbrücken
Nancy
Epinal
Colmar
Mullhouse
Vesoul
Seine
Aisne
Meuse
Marne
Loire
Dordogne
Rhône
1st Army
2nd Army
3rd Army
4th Army
5th Army
6th Army
7th Army
8th Army
9th Army
10th Army
12th Army
18th Army
4 Jul Hackenberg fortress on the Maginot Line surrenders, 12 days after the armistice
22 Jun The French 5th and 8th Armies surrender
22 Jun Italy occupies two areas in France
17 Jun Under threat of arrest for treachery, General de Gaulle flees to London
10 Jun 1940–1 Nov 1942 The town of Vichy is the base of the government until it too is occupied by Germany
16 Jun The Germans reach Lyon in the Rhône Valley
FRANCE DIVIDED
The German forces swept though France in a matter of six weeks, defeating the Allies and splitting the country in two. The operation was one of the most remarkable military campaigns in history.
KEY
German armies
French armies
French Navy
Maginot Line
Hackenberg fortress
TIMELINE
1
2
3
4
5
JUN 1940
JUL
AUG
4 THE FINAL EVACUATIONS 15–23 JUNE 1940
On 15 June Britain launched Operation Ariel to evacuate Allied military personnel from France. More than 40,000 troops were rescued from Cherbourg from 15–18 June. As the Germans moved down the French west coast, the ports available to the Allied boats – St Malo, Brest, St Nazaire – were captured. By 23 June, only Saint-Jean-de-Luz remained open to evacuate the last of over 160,000 troops.
Evacuations 15–23 Jun
German advances in western France
5 FRANCE DIVIDED 22 JUNE 1940
On 22 June the French government, led by the 84-year-old World War I veteran Marshal Philippe Pétain, agreed to an armistice. Germany occupied the north and west of France while the south was governed by Pétain from the town of Vichy. Italy, which had declared war against France and Britain on 10 June, opportunistically occupied two areas of France on the Italian border.
Occupied by Germany
Vichy France
Occupied by Italy

ATLANTIC OCEAN
From Liverpool
From Toulon
Canary Islands
Cape Verde Islands
PORTUGAL
SPAIN
Toulon
Gibraltar
Algiers
SPANISH MOROCCO
Tangier
Oran
Mers-el-Kébir
Casablanca
MOROCCO
Agadir
Ifni
TUNISIA
GREECE
TURKEY
SYRIA
Mediterranean Sea
TRANSJORDAN
Red Sea
ALGERIA
FRENCH NORTH AFRICA
RIO DE ORO
MAURITANIA
Sahara
LIBYA
EGYPT
3 July 1940 French battleship *Strasbourg* and a squadron of cruisers escape from Oran to the base at Toulon in France
8–16 Nov 1942 The Anglo-American invasion of French North Africa prompts the German invasion of Vichy France
FRENCH SUDAN
FRENCH NIGER
FRENCH WEST AFRICA
St Louis
SENEGAL
Dakar
THE GAMBIA
PORTUGUESE GUINEA
17–21 Sep 1940 Anglo–Free-French Force arrives at Freetown
FRENCH GUINEA
UPPER VOLTA
SIERRA LEONE
Freetown
LIBERIA
IVORY COAST
DAHOMEY
NIGERIA
Lagos
GOLD COAST
CHAD
FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA
ERITREA
ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SUDAN
ETHIOPIA
OUBANGI-CHARI
CAMEROONS
RIO MUNI
GABON
MOYEN CONGO
12 Nov 1940 Gabon surrenders after the Free French invade; it joins the rest of French Equatorial Africa in supporting the Free French
UGANDA
KENYA
BELGIAN CONGO
TANGANYIKA TERRITORY
ANGOLA
NYASALAND
NORTHERN RHODESIA
SOUTHERN RHODESIA
MOZAMBIQUE
SOUTH-WEST AFRICA
BECHUANALAND
SWAZILAND
BASUTOLAND
UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

◁ **N'oubliez pas Oran! (Don't forget Oran!)**
A French soldier struggles to stay afloat ahead of burning warships. This German poster printed during the French occupation depicts the destruction of the French fleet by the British navy at Oran, which aimed to prevent the fleet from falling into German hands.

5 DE GAULLE ESTABLISHES A BASE IN AFRICA
25 SEPTEMBER 1940–MAY 1943

After the Dakar raid, French West Africa declared its loyalty to Vichy France. De Gaulle instead established a base in the Cameroons from which he began rallying support for the Free French. By November 1940, all of French Equatorial Africa was under the control of the Free French, and they gained all but one of France's African colonies within two years.

- Vichy French territory from 22 Jun 1940
- Free French territory from 12 Nov 1940
- Under Free French control, Dec 1942
- Under Axis control, Nov 1942–May 1943

4 THE RAID ON DAKAR
21–25 SEPTEMBER 1940

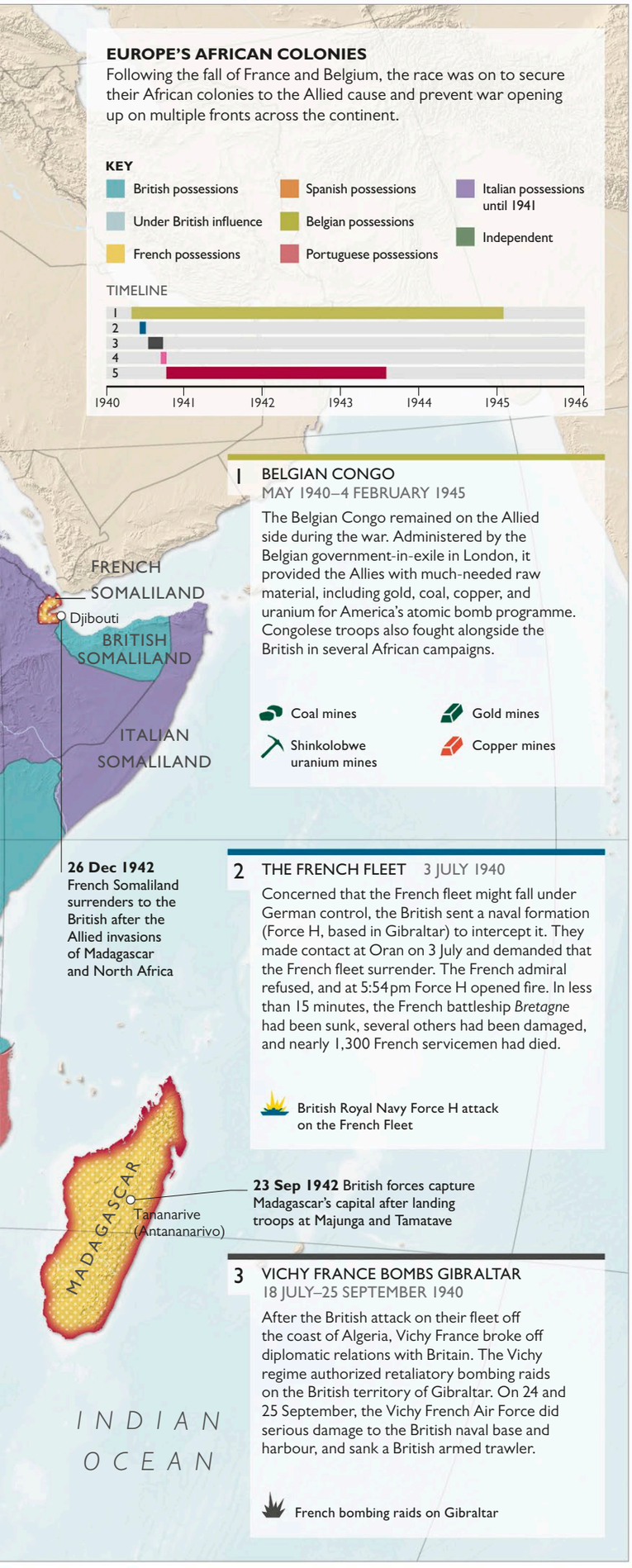
De Gaulle conceived a plan to establish a base for the French resistance in West Africa by occupying Dakar in Senegal; this plan gained British support. The British and Free French sailed to British-controlled Sierra Leone on 17 September, and on 23 September attempted to land at Dakar. By then, however, a French naval force had arrived from Toulon; it opened fire on the Allies, forcing them to abandon the raid on 25 September.

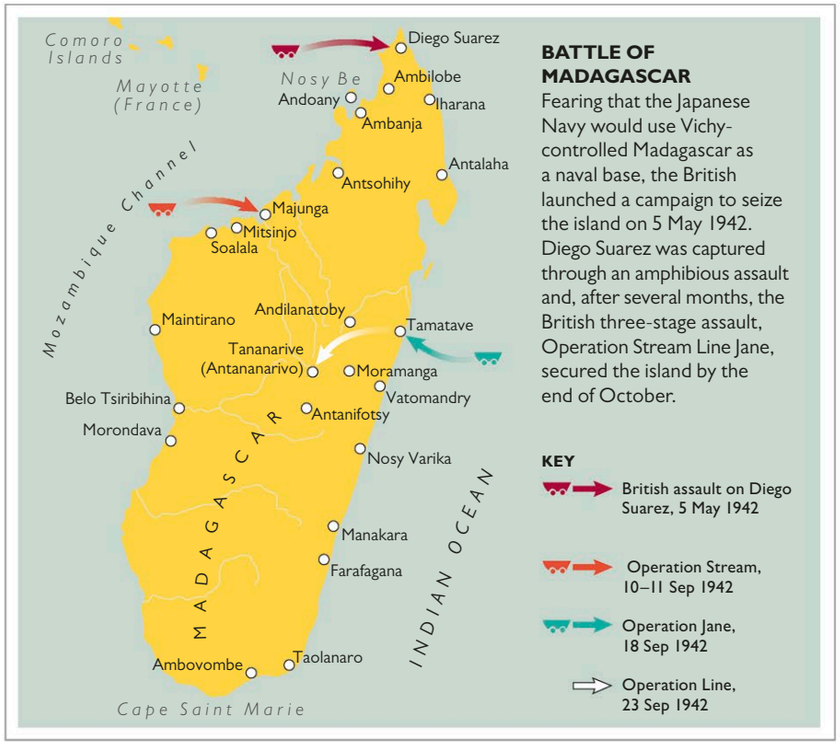
- Route of Anglo–Free-French Force
- Route of French Navy
- Raid on Dakar, 23–25 Sep 1940

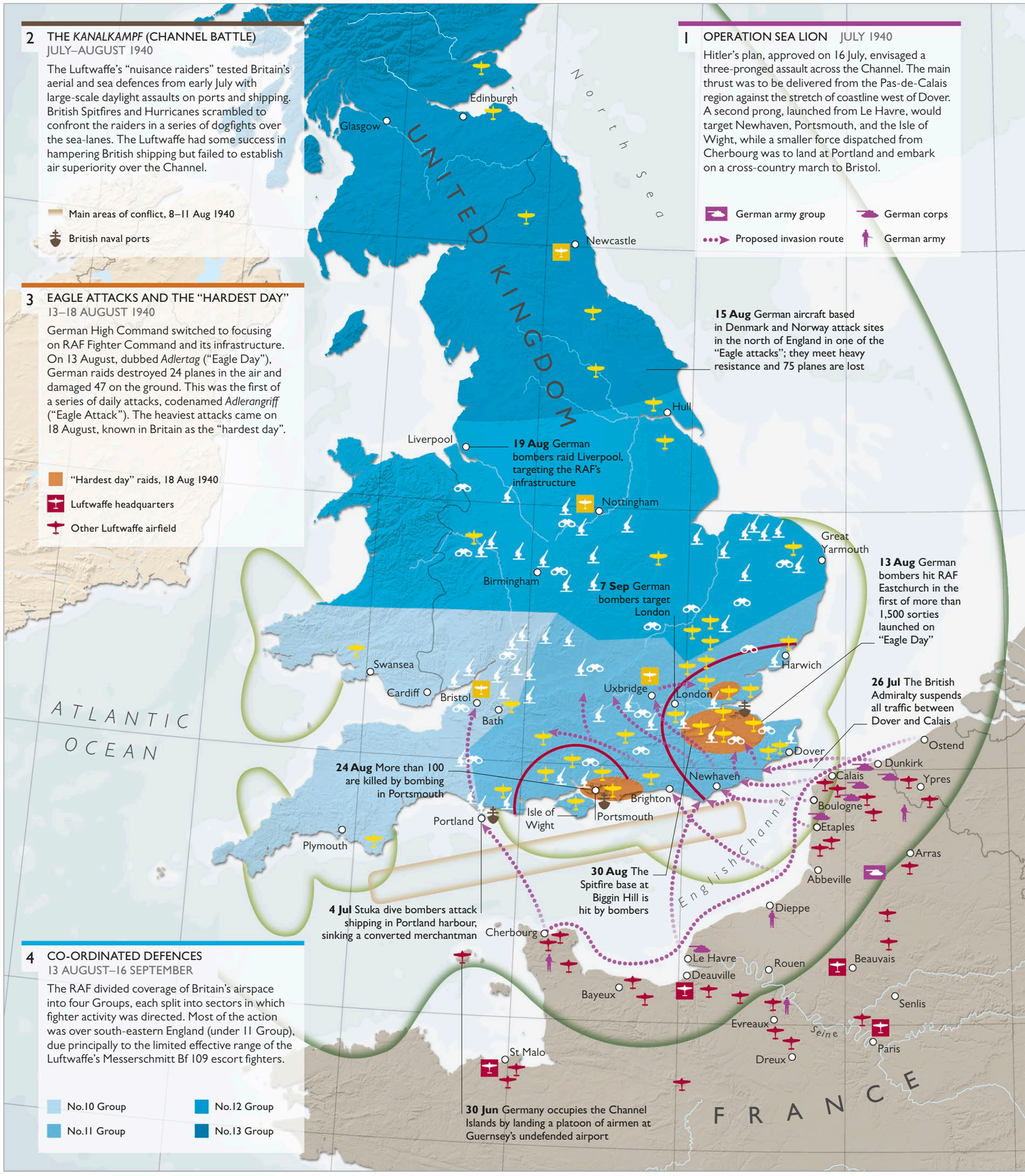
POWER STRUGGLES IN AFRICA

The French and Belgian colonial possessions in Africa represented both a threat and an opportunity to the Allies in 1940. If they could be kept out of Axis control, these territories promised vast resources of material and people for the Allied struggle.

After the fall of Belgium and France in June 1940 (see pp.54–55), Belgium's African possessions joined the Allied war effort. However, the position of France's colonies in Africa was more complex. Just as France itself was divided – into occupied France and Vichy France – so were the loyalties of her colonial possessions. The French colonists in Algeria stuck firmly by the Vichy regime, but others – such as Feliz Éboué, the governor of Chad – were disgusted by the Vichy capitulation and supported Charles de Gaulle's Free French. For de Gaulle, the colonies offered a huge reserve of troops with which he could build an army to regain France; however, they would also pose a threat to the Allies if they fell into Axis hands. These concerns prompted Allied attacks on the French Fleet in Algeria, and later on Madagascar (as well as Syria in the Middle East), and generated Allied support for de Gaulle's attempt to land at Dakar in French West Africa. Yet suspicion abounded: the French were wary of British ambition in Africa and the Middle East, and the Allies – along with many of the French who supported them – were unsure of de Gaulle's capabilities. Still, by November 1942, all but one of France's colonies in Africa and the Middle East had been successfully tied to the Allied cause.






2 THE *KANALKAMPF* (CHANNEL BATTLE)
JULY–AUGUST 1940
The Luftwaffe's "nuisance raiders" tested Britain's aerial and sea defences from early July with large-scale daylight assaults on ports and shipping. British Spitfires and Hurricanes scrambled to confront the raiders in a series of dogfights over the sea-lanes. The Luftwaffe had some success in hampering British shipping but failed to establish air superiority over the Channel.
Main areas of conflict, 8–11 Aug 1940
British naval ports
1 OPERATION SEA LION JULY 1940
Hitler's plan, approved on 16 July, envisaged a three-pronged assault across the Channel. The main thrust was to be delivered from the Pas-de-Calais region against the stretch of coastline west of Dover. A second prong, launched from Le Havre, would target Newhaven, Portsmouth, and the Isle of Wight, while a smaller force dispatched from Cherbourg was to land at Portland and embark on a cross-country march to Bristol.
German army group
German corps
Proposed invasion route
German army
3 EAGLE ATTACKS AND THE "HARDEST DAY"
13–18 AUGUST 1940
German High Command switched to focusing on RAF Fighter Command and its infrastructure. On 13 August, dubbed *Adlertag* ("Eagle Day"), German raids destroyed 24 planes in the air and damaged 47 on the ground. This was the first of a series of daily attacks, codenamed *Adlerangriff* ("Eagle Attack"). The heaviest attacks came on 18 August, known in Britain as the "hardest day".
"Hardest day" raids, 18 Aug 1940
Luftwaffe headquarters
Other Luftwaffe airfield
4 CO-ORDINATED DEFENCES
13 AUGUST–16 SEPTEMBER
The RAF divided coverage of Britain's airspace into four Groups, each split into sectors in which fighter activity was directed. Most of the action was over south-eastern England (under 11 Group), due principally to the limited effective range of the Luftwaffe's Messerschmitt Bf 109 escort fighters.
No.10 Group
No.11 Group
No.12 Group
No.13 Group
UNITED KINGDOM
North Sea
ATLANTIC OCEAN
English Channel
FRANCE
Edinburgh
Glasgow
Newcastle
Hull
Liverpool
Nottingham
Birmingham
Great Yarmouth
Harwich
Swansea
Cardiff
Bristol
Bath
Uxbridge
London
Dover
Ostend
Dunkirk
Calais
Ypres
Newhaven
Brighton
Portsmouth
Isle of Wight
Portland
Plymouth
Boulogne
Etaples
Arras
Abbeville
Dieppe
Cherbourg
Le Havre
Deauville
Rouen
Beauvais
Bayeux
Senlis
Evreux
Seine
Paris
Dreux
St Malo
15 Aug German aircraft based in Denmark and Norway attack sites in the north of England in one of the "Eagle attacks"; they meet heavy resistance and 75 planes are lost
19 Aug German bombers raid Liverpool, targeting the RAF's infrastructure
7 Sep German bombers target London
13 Aug German bombers hit RAF Eastchurch in the first of more than 1,500 sorties launched on "Eagle Day"
26 Jul The British Admiralty suspends all traffic between Dover and Calais
24 Aug More than 100 are killed by bombing in Portsmouth
30 Aug The Spitfire base at Biggin Hill is hit by bombers
4 Jul Stuka dive bombers attack shipping in Portland harbour, sinking a converted merchantman
30 Jun Germany occupies the Channel Islands by landing a platoon of airmen at Guernsey's undefended airport

THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

After the fall of France, the British Empire stood alone against Nazi Germany. With his offer of peace rejected, Hitler planned an invasion of England. For this, he needed first to control the sea lanes in the English Channel – and that meant commanding the skies above.

With Britain reeling after the fall of France (see pp.54–55), Hitler expected to impose a negotiated peace on his own terms. However, when Churchill made it clear that this was not an option, Hitler determined to force the nation to capitulate. Plans were drawn up for Operation Sea Lion – a coordinated shipborne assault on England's south coast. To make this happen, Hermann Göring, chief of the Luftwaffe, promised to eliminate Britain's Royal Air Force (RAF) within four weeks. The plan failed. In the years leading up to war, Britain had enhanced its air defences with innovations such as radar and better co-ordination of aircraft from the ground. Meanwhile, signals intelligence including the top-secret Ultra decryptions (see pp.170–71) gave the RAF some advance knowledge of German plans – and, ultimately, Britain's Spitfire and Hurricane aircraft proved more than a match for German Messerschmitts in the dogfights over the Channel.

Thwarted in his attempt to subdue Britain's air defences, Hitler turned instead to a strategy of bombing raids on British port cities, launching the night-time Blitz on London and other industrial centres (see pp.60–61) as part of his air-sea blockade. However, Hitler's failure to defeat the RAF was perhaps his first major setback of the war, dealing a blow to his reputation for invincibility.

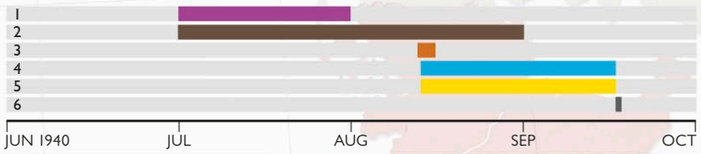
THE WAR IN THE SKIES

For a month in the summer of 1940, Britain withstood an onslaught from the Luftwaffe, seeking to take out the nation's air defences in preparation for a seaborne invasion. The outcome of the battle put a halt to Hitler's plans for expansion in the west.

KEY

- High-level radar range
- Low-level radar range
- Royal Observer Corps
- Anti-aircraft battery
- Germany
- Axis allies/occupation
- German fighter range

TIMELINE



6 A SWITCH OF TACTICS 17 SEPTEMBER 1940

Hitler set a deadline of 17 September to determine whether to put his planned sea invasion of England into effect. As that date approached, it became clear that Göring's promised aerial supremacy had not been achieved, so Operation Sea Lion was indefinitely postponed. Instead the focus of the air war was switched to Britain's port cities as part of a strategy of air-sea blockade. The Blitz had begun.

5 RAF OPERATIONS 13 AUGUST–16 SEPTEMBER 1940

More than 2,900 RAF pilots based at airfields around the UK served in the Battle of Britain: many were from Commonwealth countries or expatriates from territories occupied by the Nazis. Over four weeks of intensive activity, the RAF lost 915 aircraft, but more than 1,700 Luftwaffe planes were destroyed.

- RAF Fighter Command group headquarters
- Other RAF airfield

Amsterdam
NETHERLANDS
GREATER GERMANY
BELGIUM
LUXEMBOURG
Ems

▷ **The scramble**
RAF Spitfire pilots rush to their aircraft in 1940. As well as British servicemen, many of the RAF's pilots were from a range of countries including South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.

THE HAWKER HURRICANE

The Hurricane entered service in December 1937, and by August 1940 more than 2,300 had been delivered to the RAF. In the Battle of Britain they outnumbered Spitfires by almost two to one. Highly manoeuvrable, they brought down more enemy aircraft than any other British planes in the course of 1940. Over the following two years they were gradually replaced as dog-fighters by the more modern Spitfires.

Damage survey
A map of London shows the bomb damage caused to buildings in Bermondsey and Wapping. Black and purple indicate complete destruction or irreparable damage. Pink sites indicate severe damage that could be repaired, although repairs would be expensive.

THE BLITZ

In September 1940, Hitler made the fateful decision to switch the focus of Luftwaffe air attacks from RAF airfields to Britain's cities. His aim was to damage manufacturing centres and ports and to break civilian morale, forcing Churchill to sue for peace.

The Blitz (German for "lightning") was the word coined by the British press for the intense bombing campaign conducted by the Luftwaffe. The first attack over London on 7 September 1940 was followed by 57 consecutive nights of bombing raids on the capital, as well as raids on other major cities. The Blitz continued until May 1941.

Hitler still hoped to invade Britain and bombing London was part of that plan, with the aim of softening up the British population. The fighting reached a climax on 15 September, when waves of German planes launched an all-out attack on London but failed to achieve a decisive breakthrough. The devastating raid on Coventry on 14–15 November signalled that other industrial centres were also at risk. This single attack claimed the lives of 568 people and left around one-third of the city's houses uninhabitable. Over the next six months, the Luftwaffe carried out heavy raids on Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Clydebank, Hull, Manchester, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Sheffield, Southampton, and Swansea. Liverpool and Merseyside suffered the worst destruction of any area outside London, with 1,900 killed and 70,000 made homeless.

By May 1941, Hitler had turned his attention to the Soviet Union. The last major raid on London took place on 10 May, when 2.8 sq km (1 sq mile) of the city centre was set on fire and the Houses of Parliament took a dozen hits. Bombing continued to the end of the war, but not on the same scale.

The effects of the Blitz

During the campaign, there were 127 large-scale night raids (71 in London), during which some 46,000 tonnes (50,700 tons) of high explosives were dropped on Britain's cities, in addition to 110,000 incendiary bombs. The raids killed more than 43,000 civilians and destroyed or damaged two million homes. By February 1941, 1.37 million civilians had been evacuated from areas affected by the bombing.

Although the effects of the Blitz were devastating, Hitler's plan failed. British war production was reduced by no more than five per cent during the Blitz, while popular morale, dented at times by the destruction, never collapsed.

▷ **Image of resistance**
This famous image shows St Paul's Cathedral in London, lit up by fire and surrounded by smoke, during a night raid on 29 December 1940.

BRITAIN AT BAY

After France capitulated to Hitler in June 1940, the British Empire was the only major power fighting the Germans and Italians. While the Royal Air Force readied itself to battle the Luftwaffe for control of the skies, the British people prepared themselves for a German invasion.

△ **Digging for victory**
This poster was part of a campaign to encourage the British to grow their own food. Allotments sprang up in open spaces everywhere.

Even before France's surrender, the British government was making plans for the possibility of an invasion by Germany. On 14 May 1940, Anthony Eden, Prime Minister Winston Churchill's new Secretary of State for War, broadcast an appeal for part-time volunteers to fight alongside the army in the event of such an incursion. The response was immediate. Within 24 hours, some 250,000 men had enlisted in the Local Defence Volunteers; by the end of June, numbers had increased to nearly 1,500,000. In July, on the orders of Churchill, they were given the more martial-sounding title of the Home Guard.

An all-out effort

The country was preparing itself for total war. British factories and shipyards churned day and night manufacturing guns, tanks, aircraft, and warships. Petrol had been rationed since the beginning of the war, and food rationing, which had begun in January 1940, was tightened. Butter, sugar, bacon, and ham were the first foods to be rationed, followed by preserves, syrup, treacle, cheese, tea, margarine, and cooking fats. Clothes were also rationed, and the government issued a pamphlet popularizing the slogan "Make Do and Mend".

The most significant shortage was that of manpower. In December 1941, the call-up age limits for men were reduced to 18 and raised to 51. Most revolutionary of all, women were conscripted. By the end of 1942, 10 million British women aged between 19 and 50 were registered for war work, many taking the place of men in the armed forces.

THE HOME GUARD AT WAR

The Home Guard were trained in small arms and anti-tank weapons to be used against an invading force; German orders were to shoot them out of hand. Some saw action in the Battle of Britain (see pp.58–59) manning anti-aircraft guns. Secret "Auxiliary Units" were trained in guerrilla warfare and sabotage.

Entertainment in wartime, 1940
During the Blitz, thousands sought refuge from the bombing in London's underground stations. Aldwych station was the first to develop into an air-raid shelter, with sleeping bunks and occasional concerts, as seen here, to boost morale.

THE U-BOAT WAR BEGINS

The German high command used every means at its disposal to cut Britain's vital maritime supply routes. Its most effective weapon was the German submarine fleet, the U-boats, which was increasingly successful in attacking Atlantic shipping lanes from 1939 to 1941.

Germany's U-boats had played a major role in World War I, sinking almost 5,000 ships. From the start of the hostilities in 1939, Hitler looked again to the submarine fleet, commanded by Admiral Karl Dönitz (see p.168), to starve Britain into submission.

For a time the campaign came close to success, particularly after the fall of France and Norway opened up new ports from which the U-boats could operate. Germany's early successes persuaded Hitler to divert resources to submarine production. At first Britain was desperately short of warships to escort merchant shipping and of planes to provide air cover, and the Royal Canadian Navy played a vital role in protecting Atlantic shipping. However, the tide began to turn against the U-boats as the Allies improved their protective measures, developed technology to detect the raiders, and gained better intelligence about U-boat deployment. In 1939, the US established the Pan-American Security Zone, an area extending 300–1,000 nautical miles from the coast of the Americas in which the US Navy escorted merchant ships. After the US formally entered the war in 1941, the US Navy actively engaged German naval vessels in the Atlantic.

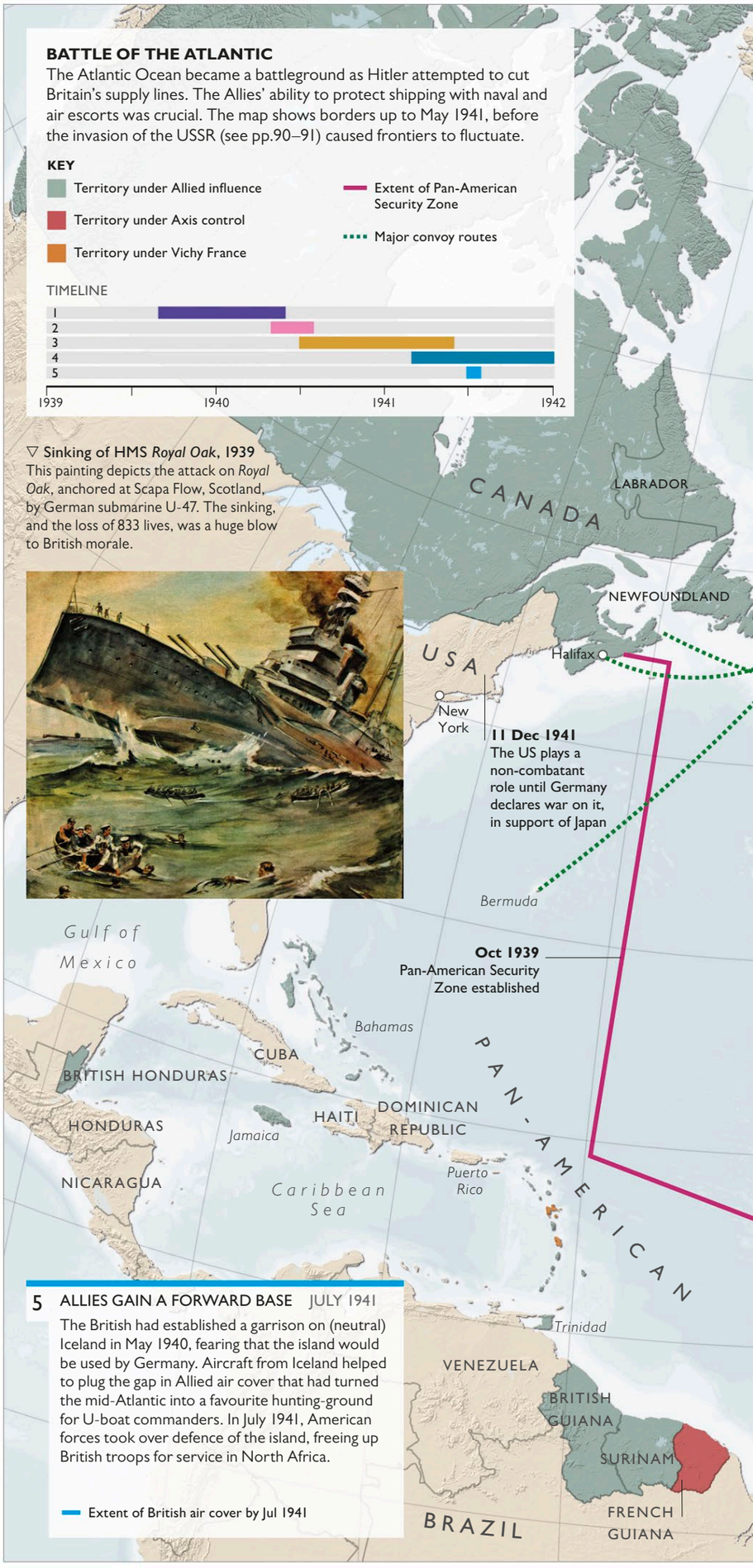
"The only thing that really frightened me during the war was the U-boat peril."

WINSTON CHURCHILL, *THE SECOND WORLD WAR*, 1949

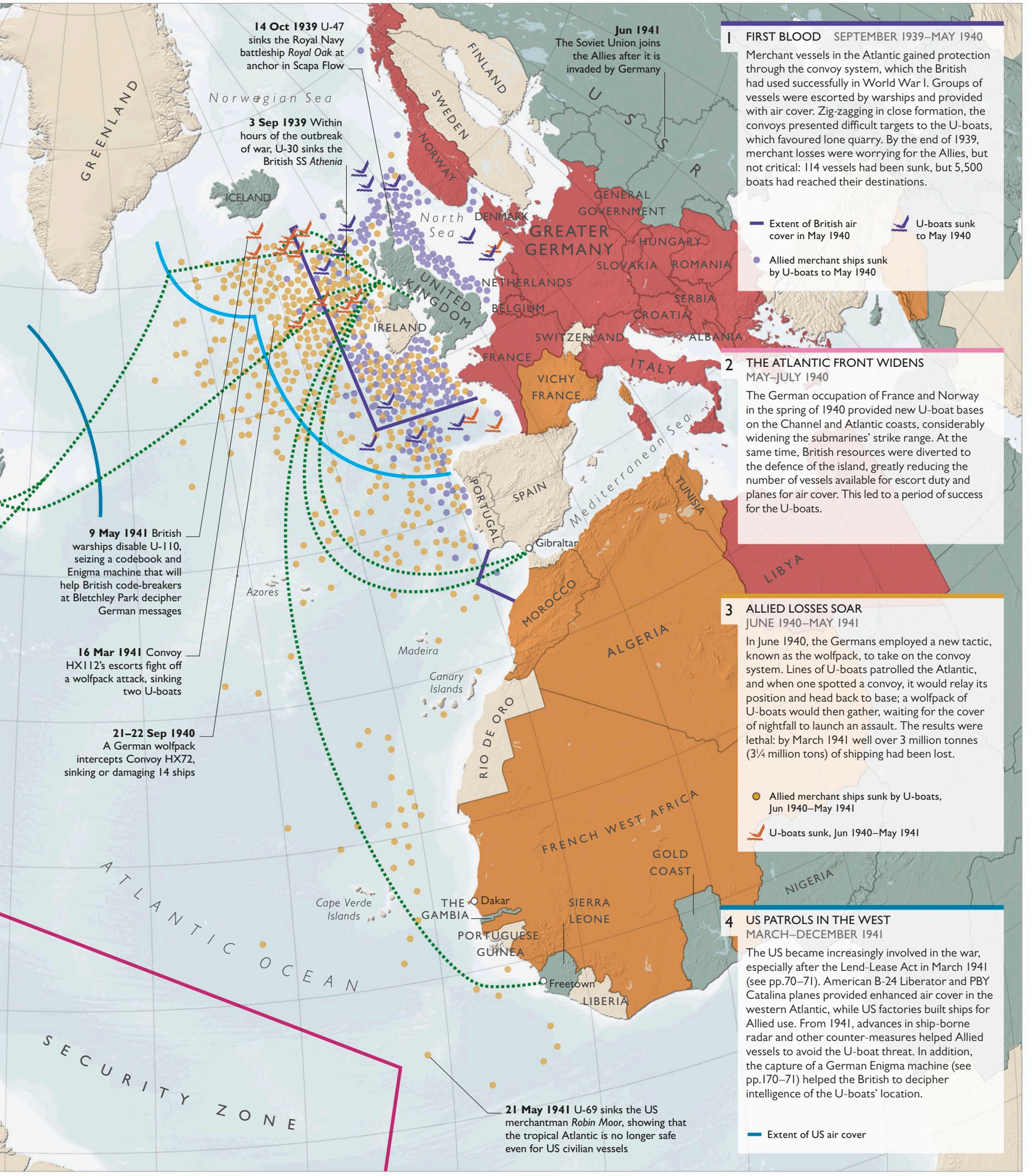
THE *UNTERSEEBOOT* (U-BOAT)

Prohibited after World War I, German submarine construction recommenced in the mid 1930s. By 1939, 57 boats were in service under the skilful command of Admiral Karl Dönitz. Most were small, 750-tonne (825-ton) Type VII (Sea Wolf) vessels, featuring a new diesel-electric propulsion system. The Type VIIC model had a top speed of 17 knots on the surface and 7.5 knots submerged, and carried 14 torpedoes or tube-launched mines.

U-boats at the port of Kiel



▽ Sinking of HMS *Royal Oak*, 1939
This painting depicts the attack on *Royal Oak*, anchored at Scapa Flow, Scotland, by German submarine U-47. The sinking, and the loss of 833 lives, was a huge blow to British morale.



1 FIRST BLOOD SEPTEMBER 1939–MAY 1940

Merchant vessels in the Atlantic gained protection through the convoy system, which the British had used successfully in World War I. Groups of vessels were escorted by warships and provided with air cover. Zig-zagging in close formation, the convoys presented difficult targets to the U-boats, which favoured lone quarry. By the end of 1939, merchant losses were worrying for the Allies, but not critical: 114 vessels had been sunk, but 5,500 boats had reached their destinations.

- Extent of British air cover in May 1940
- U-boats sunk to May 1940
- Allied merchant ships sunk by U-boats to May 1940

2 THE ATLANTIC FRONT WIDENS MAY–JULY 1940

The German occupation of France and Norway in the spring of 1940 provided new U-boat bases on the Channel and Atlantic coasts, considerably widening the submarines' strike range. At the same time, British resources were diverted to the defence of the island, greatly reducing the number of vessels available for escort duty and planes for air cover. This led to a period of success for the U-boats.

3 ALLIED LOSSES SOAR JUNE 1940–MAY 1941

In June 1940, the Germans employed a new tactic, known as the wolfpack, to take on the convoy system. Lines of U-boats patrolled the Atlantic, and when one spotted a convoy, it would relay its position and head back to base; a wolfpack of U-boats would then gather, waiting for the cover of nightfall to launch an assault. The results were lethal: by March 1941 well over 3 million tonnes (3¼ million tons) of shipping had been lost.

- Allied merchant ships sunk by U-boats, Jun 1940–May 1941
- U-boats sunk, Jun 1940–May 1941

4 US PATROLS IN THE WEST MARCH–DECEMBER 1941

The US became increasingly involved in the war, especially after the Lend-Lease Act in March 1941 (see pp.70–71). American B-24 Liberator and PBY Catalina planes provided enhanced air cover in the western Atlantic, while US factories built ships for Allied use. From 1941, advances in ship-borne radar and other counter-measures helped Allied vessels to avoid the U-boat threat. In addition, the capture of a German Enigma machine (see pp.170–71) helped the British to decipher intelligence of the U-boats' location.

- Extent of US air cover

3 IN SEARCH OF THE ENEMY
7:22 PM 23 MAY–5:50 AM 24 MAY 1941

At 7:22 pm on 23 May, a lookout on the *Suffolk* spotted *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen*. Signals were sent to the *Hood* and *Prince of Wales* while *Suffolk* and *Norfolk* shadowed the German vessels at high speed through banks of fog and snow. *Hood* and *Prince of Wales* intercepted them at 5:30 am. At 5:50 am Commander Vice Admiral Holland, aboard *Hood*, closed range and directed *Hood* and *Prince of Wales* to open fire.

German ships spotted

4 THE BATTLE OF THE DENMARK STRAIT
5:56–6:09 AM 24 MAY 1941

The German ships returned fire, and a 15-in shell hit *Hood* near the main mast; she was struck by another shell before her aft magazines exploded. The ship sank with the loss of all but three of her crew. Following a brief lull, firing resumed; the *Prince of Wales* was hit, but she had also struck *Bismarck* and caused a fuel leak. At 6:03 am, a damaged *Prince of Wales* disengaged and by 6:09 am firing had ceased.

Battle of Denmark Strait — HMS *Hood* sunk

5 A NAVAL HUNT ON THE HIGH SEAS
24–25 MAY 1941

Prinz Eugen slipped away to continue raiding while the *Bismarck*, in need of repair, continued south-west, shadowed by *Norfolk*, *Suffolk*, and *Prince of Wales*. Meanwhile, other British ships had joined the hunt. Near midnight, torpedo-armed Swordfish aircraft from *Victorious* attacked *Bismarck*, but caused little damage. Amid a long radio silence Lütjens gave the British the slip – until a message the next morning betrayed *Bismarck*'s bearings and reignited the chase.

Torpedo — Fairey Swordfish biplanes

6 CLOSING IN FOR THE KILL 26 MAY

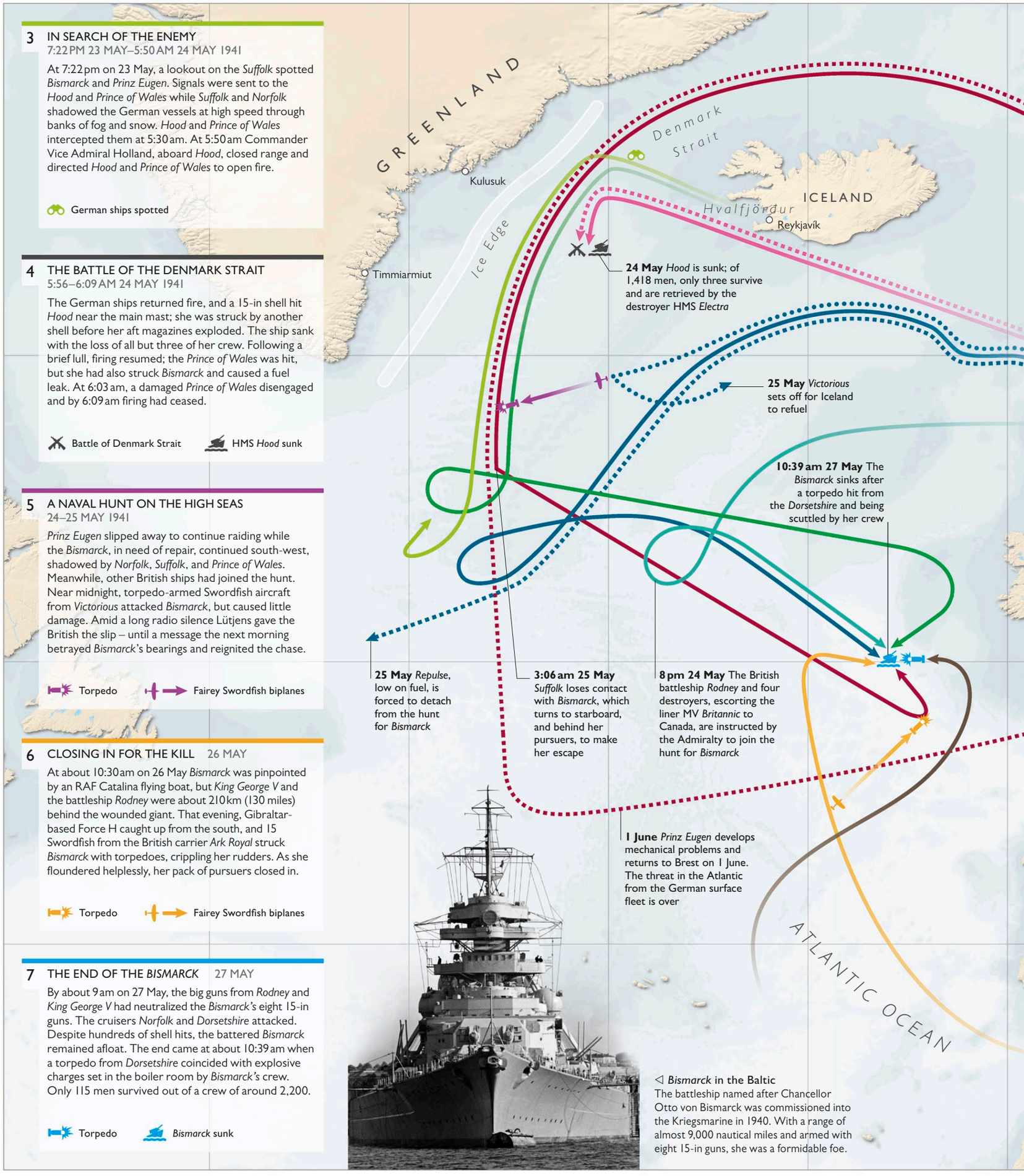
At about 10:30 am on 26 May *Bismarck* was pinpointed by an RAF Catalina flying boat, but *King George V* and the battleship *Rodney* were about 210 km (130 miles) behind the wounded giant. That evening, Gibraltar-based Force H caught up from the south, and 15 Swordfish from the British carrier *Ark Royal* struck *Bismarck* with torpedoes, crippling her rudders. As she floundered helplessly, her pack of pursuers closed in.

Torpedo — Fairey Swordfish biplanes

7 THE END OF THE *BISMARCK* 27 MAY

By about 9 am on 27 May, the big guns from *Rodney* and *King George V* had neutralized the *Bismarck's* eight 15-in guns. The cruisers *Norfolk* and *Dorsetshire* attacked. Despite hundreds of shell hits, the battered *Bismarck* remained afloat. The end came at about 10:39 am when a torpedo from *Dorsetshire* coincided with explosive charges set in the boiler room by *Bismarck's* crew. Only 115 men survived out of a crew of around 2,200.

Torpedo — *Bismarck* sunk



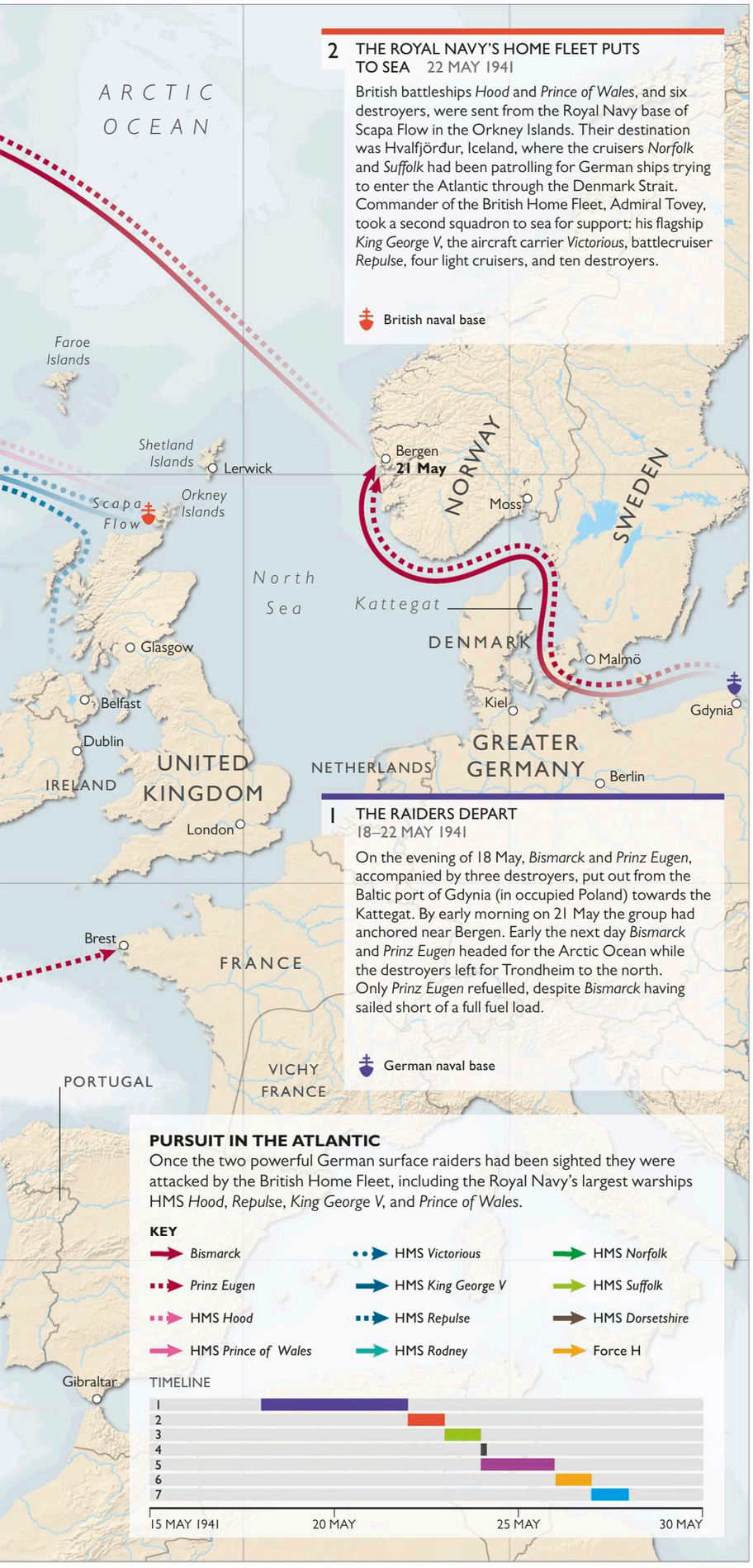
◁ *Bismarck* in the Baltic
The battleship named after Chancellor Otto von Bismarck was commissioned into the Kriegsmarine in 1940. With a range of almost 9,000 nautical miles and armed with eight 15-in guns, she was a formidable foe.

SINKING OF THE *BISMARCK*

On 18 May 1941 the German navy began Operation Rheinübung, part of the effort to isolate Britain by targeting merchant ships in the Atlantic. The vessels used in this operation were the heavy cruiser *Prinz Eugen* and the largest warship in the German fleet, *Bismarck*.

From January to March 1941, the German navy had deployed two battleships – *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* – in the Atlantic under the command of Admiral Günther Lütjens. Maintained by supplies from support vessels and tankers, they destroyed or captured 22 Allied merchant ships. After the pair had to return to port for repairs, two new warships – *Prinz Eugen* and the formidable battleship *Bismarck* – were sent into the Atlantic under the same command with orders to continue the task.

On 20 May, Allied intelligence sources in Scandinavia spotted the German ships as they made their way from the Baltic port of Gdynia. Four days later they were intercepted in the Denmark Strait, between Iceland and Greenland, by the British battlecruiser HMS *Hood* and the battleship HMS *Prince of Wales*. The ensuing battle was followed by an epic, three-day chase on the high seas, during which dozens of Allied warships converged on the *Bismarck*. Eventually, the *Bismarck* was sunk with the loss of around 2,100 men, including Günther Lütjens. In the aftermath, between 3 June and 15 June the Royal Navy sank or seized seven of the nine tankers and supply ships that had made raiding ventures into the Atlantic possible. Germany's hopes of conducting any similar operations in future had been gravely damaged.



AIRCRAFT CARRIERS IN WORLD WAR II

By the 1930s air power was eclipsing the battleship as the dominant weapon of naval warfare. At the time war broke out, aircraft carriers were a vital maritime offensive weapon, as combat aircraft could attack enemy ships at greater range than gun batteries and with a higher level of accuracy. However, once within range of the enemy, carriers were vulnerable to attacks themselves. Here a squadron of torpedo-armed Fairey Swordfish – also used in the attack on the *Bismarck* – prepares to launch from the British carrier HMS *Ark Royal* during the war.

THE END OF US NEUTRALITY

At the start of World War II, the US took a neutral position. However, President Franklin Roosevelt reversed this stance, rearming the US and increasing aid to Britain. By December 1941, the US was fully involved in the war.

△ **Anti-war lobby**
Formed in 1940, the America First Committee lobbied against US intervention in Europe. It attracted 800,000 members.

The US's involvement in World War I had not been universally popular, and after the war ended, the US reduced its navy and army to fewer than 135,000 men. In 1937, it passed a Neutrality Act, forbidding the sale of arms to countries at war. However, as Germany and Japan became more aggressive, President Roosevelt sought to counter the powerful political voices that counselled keeping out of foreign conflicts.

The US takes up arms

After war broke out in September 1939, Roosevelt persuaded Congress to repeal the arms embargo, but recipients could only acquire arms with cash payments. He also ordered a major rearmament, buying 270 warships and increasing the army to over 1.6 million by December 1941. Roosevelt increased aid to Britain by the Lend-Lease Act (see pp.70–71), which allowed raw materials and military aid to go to the Allies on credit. After the Japanese attacked the US naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in December 1941 (see pp.110–11), the neutralist sentiment vanished and the US joined the war.

△ **The Atlantic Charter meeting**
British prime minister Winston Churchill heads to Newfoundland, Canada, in August 1941, for a meeting with Roosevelt. The two leaders drew up a joint declaration known as the Atlantic Charter, which set out their goals for the war and its aftermath.

Marines prepare for war
New recruits undergo basic training at the Parris Island Recruit Depot, South Carolina, US. As part of Roosevelt's rearmament effort, between 1939 and 1941 the Marines expanded nearly four-fold.

LEND-LEASE

The Lend-Lease Act, passed by the US Congress in March 1941, provided assistance to Britain's war effort while allowing the US to maintain its neutrality. The policy ensured a flow of food, fuel, and materiel to Allied forces that the Axis powers could not match.

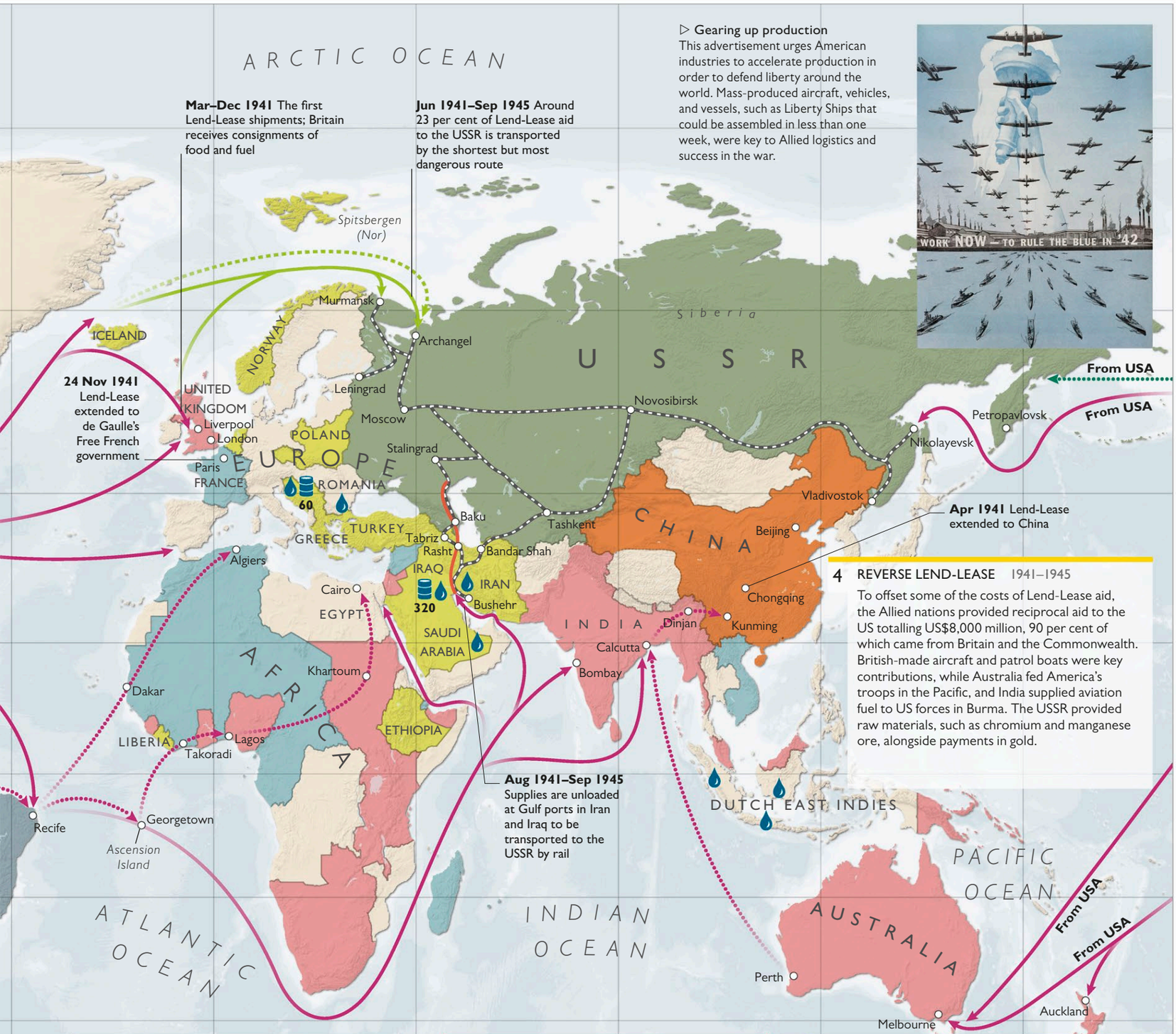
Following neutrality legislation in 1937, US companies could not export military goods to warring nations. However, President Roosevelt was committed to helping the fight against Fascism by all means short of war, and this sentiment underpinned policies such as the 1940 Destroyers for Bases Agreement, in which the US transferred destroyers to the British in exchange for land for US military bases. Lend-Lease was another such policy, under which the US could loan war materiel to the Allies. Roosevelt justified its implementation with a simple analogy – if a neighbour's house was on fire it was simply common sense to lend him a hosepipe. Lend-Lease unlocked a wealth of supplies for the Allies, ranging from ordnance, oil, aircraft, tanks, and ships to tooth powder and salt cellars. The policy helped to save Britain, which was running desperately short of food and fuel in 1941. At first, the recipients were Britain and the Commonwealth countries, but within a year, Lend-Lease was providing aid to the Soviet Union and China. From 1942, it became increasingly significant as the war extended to the Pacific following the events of Pearl Harbor (see pp.110–11). By the end of the war, over US$49,000 million of American aid had been transported around the world to 40 countries.

> *"We defend and we build a way of life, not for America alone, but for all mankind."*
>
> FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, MAY 1940

US ISOLATIONISM IN WORLD WAR II

The US was determined to stay neutral in 1939. The country had suffered significant casualties in World War I, and debts owed by the Allies had caused resentment. There was little desire to become embroiled in another "foreign affair". However, knowing that the war threatened America's security, President Roosevelt worked to weaken the Neutrality Acts of the 1930s. With Lend-Lease, he hoped America could arm the fight for democracy while avoiding direct conflict.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt signing the Lend-Lease Act



▷ **Gearing up production**
This advertisement urges American industries to accelerate production in order to defend liberty around the world. Mass-produced aircraft, vehicles, and vessels, such as Liberty Ships that could be assembled in less than one week, were key to Allied logistics and success in the war.

1 THE MOVE TO LEND-LEASE
SEPTEMBER 1940–11 MARCH 1941

In September 1940, President Roosevelt moved closer towards actively supporting the war effort with the Destroyers for Bases Agreement. The US gave Britain 50 destroyers in return for 99-year leases on six bases in British territory in the western Atlantic. As British losses at sea became critical and the country ran out of money, Roosevelt introduced Lend-Lease on 11 March 1941, allowing Britain to order war materiel from the American government with the promise of payment after the war.

British bases leased to the US

2 THE FLOW OF GOODS
MARCH 1941–SEPTEMBER 1945

When Lend-Lease was introduced in March 1941, the US was on a peacetime footing and production was modest. From September, some simple, cheaply built Liberty Ships were being produced, but when the US entered the war after the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 the US raised production for Lend-Lease dramatically. Soon a vast network of shipping, rail, and air routes was distributing US aid around the world.

Major sea supply routes
Major aircraft supply routes
Liberty Ship shipyards
Railways

3 KEEPING THE SOVIET UNION SUPPLIED
JUNE 1941–SEPTEMBER 1945

When Germany invaded the USSR in June 1941, Britain began at once to supply the Soviets with tanks and aircraft. Despite opposition from anti-Communist factions, Roosevelt extended Lend-Lease to the USSR in September. In total, the USSR received nearly US$11,000 million in aid, including 500,000 trucks, 2,000 locomotives, and 14 million pairs of shoes.

Summer convoy route to USSR
Winter convoy route to USSR
Alaskan highway
Alaskan aircraft supply route to USSR
Persian corridor

4 REVERSE LEND-LEASE 1941–1945

To offset some of the costs of Lend-Lease aid, the Allied nations provided reciprocal aid to the US totalling US$8,000 million, 90 per cent of which came from Britain and the Commonwealth. British-made aircraft and patrol boats were key contributions, while Australia fed America's troops in the Pacific, and India supplied aviation fuel to US forces in Burma. The USSR provided raw materials, such as chromium and manganese ore, alongside payments in gold.

△ **Operation Compass**
In December 1940, British forces advanced to attack the Italians in the Western Desert, Egypt. Around 133,000 Italians were taken prisoner by British troops.

THE MEDITERRANEAN AND MIDDLE EAST

Italy's entry into World War II extended the conflict south into the Mediterranean region. After multiple failures by the Italian forces, Germany went to the rescue, and the Axis powers fought major tank battles against the British in the North African desert.

When war broke out in September 1939, Italy remained neutral, despite its alliance with Nazi Germany – a union grandiosely dubbed the "Pact of Steel". Knowing his country's military weakness, the Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini waited until the French were clearly beaten before declaring war on the Allies in June 1940. With France out of the picture, and Britain focused on its life-or-death struggle against Germany, it seemed an ideal opportunity for Italy to pursue its imperial ambitions around the Mediterranean.

In autumn 1940, Italy launched offensives from its North African colony, Libya, into Egypt, and from Albania (which they had occupied since spring 1939) into Greece. Despite Britain's desperate circumstances at that time, Winston Churchill was prepared to devote valuable resources to defend Egypt. Technically an independent, neutral country, it was in reality under British influence, and the Suez Canal was seen as a vital link to the British Empire in Asia; maintaining a supply of oil from the Middle East was also a priority.

Poorly equipped and badly led, the Italian forces suffered disastrous defeats on all fronts. Italy quickly lost its East African colonies and most of Libya to the British, and was equally defeated by the Greeks. Although Hitler saw the Mediterranean and North Africa as distractions from more important matters, he sent German forces into the region to save Italy from disaster.

The Germans head southwards

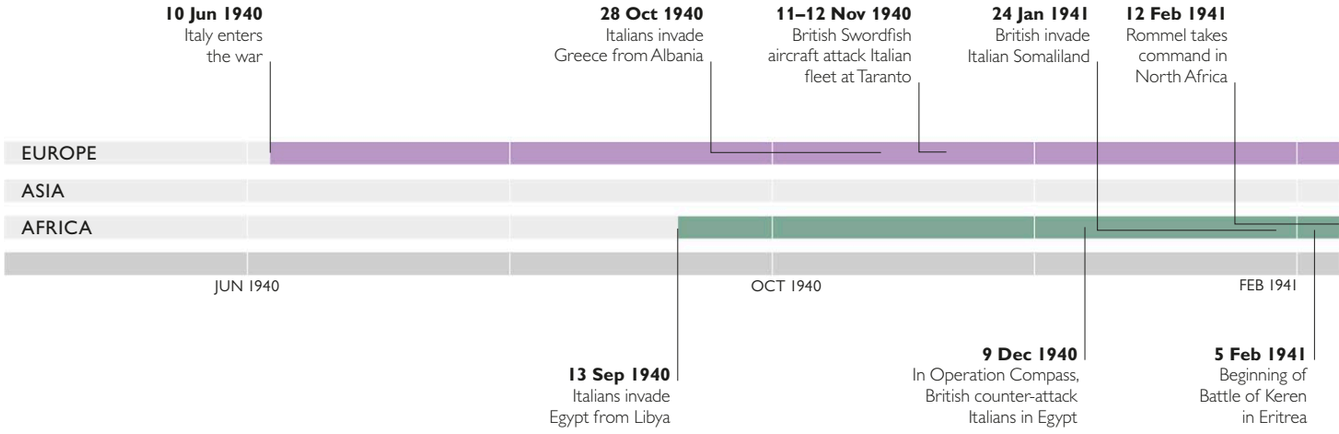
In spring 1941, having conquered Yugoslavia, German troops continued south into Greece and Crete in the last of their Blitzkrieg offensives; Britain sent forces to intervene. In North Africa, the arrival of the tanks of the Afrika Korps, led by the German general Erwin Rommel, placed Egypt under threat. There was heavy fighting between Britain and the Axis powers in the Western Desert. Meanwhile, the naval war in the Mediterranean centred on British efforts to block supplies to Rommel and keep a convoy route open between their bases at Gibraltar and Alexandria via Malta. Although the Royal Navy's warships were relatively well equipped, land-based Luftwaffe aircraft caused the British a lot of damage.

Britain's position was rendered more vulnerable by the hostile attitude of Francoist Spain and Vichy France, both

◁ **Parachutist's badge**
German airborne troops, marked out by their distinctive badge, played a significant role in the Blitzkrieg offensives early in the war.

CHANGES IN FORTUNE

The war in the Mediterranean region had two distinct phases. From June 1940 to spring 1941, Italy suffered defeats on all fronts. Then the arrival of German air and land forces shifted the balance in favour of the Axis, although not decisively. Battered by British victories at Taranto, Italy, and Cape Matapan, Greece, the Italian navy could never control the Mediterranean. The British were frequently outfought by Rommel in North Africa, but mounted repeated counter-offensives.



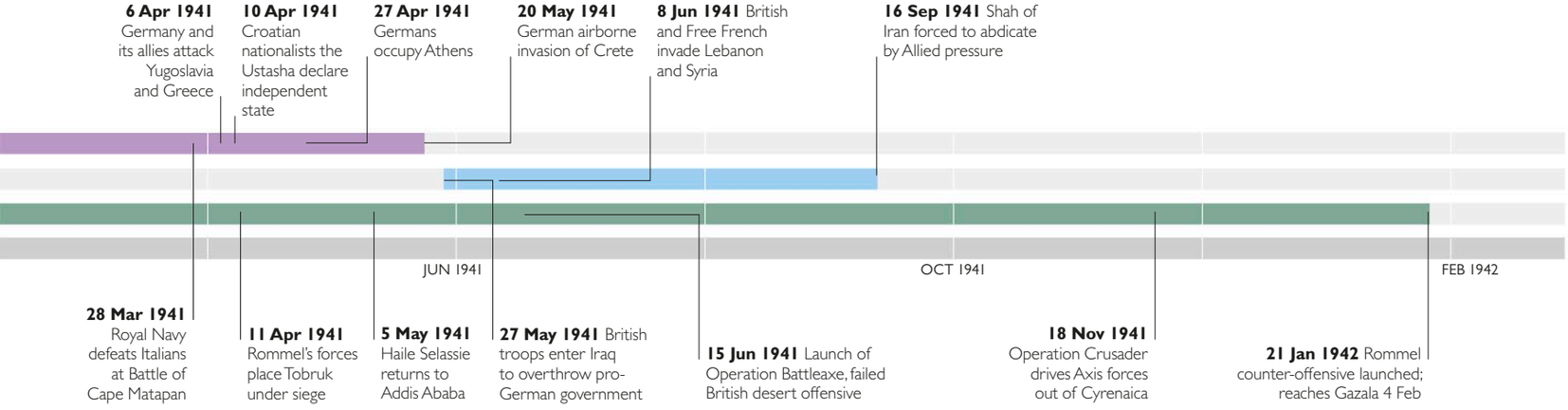
◁ **Greece conquered**
German troops raise the swastika on the Acropolis in Athens, having captured the Greek capital after a three-week campaign in April 1941.

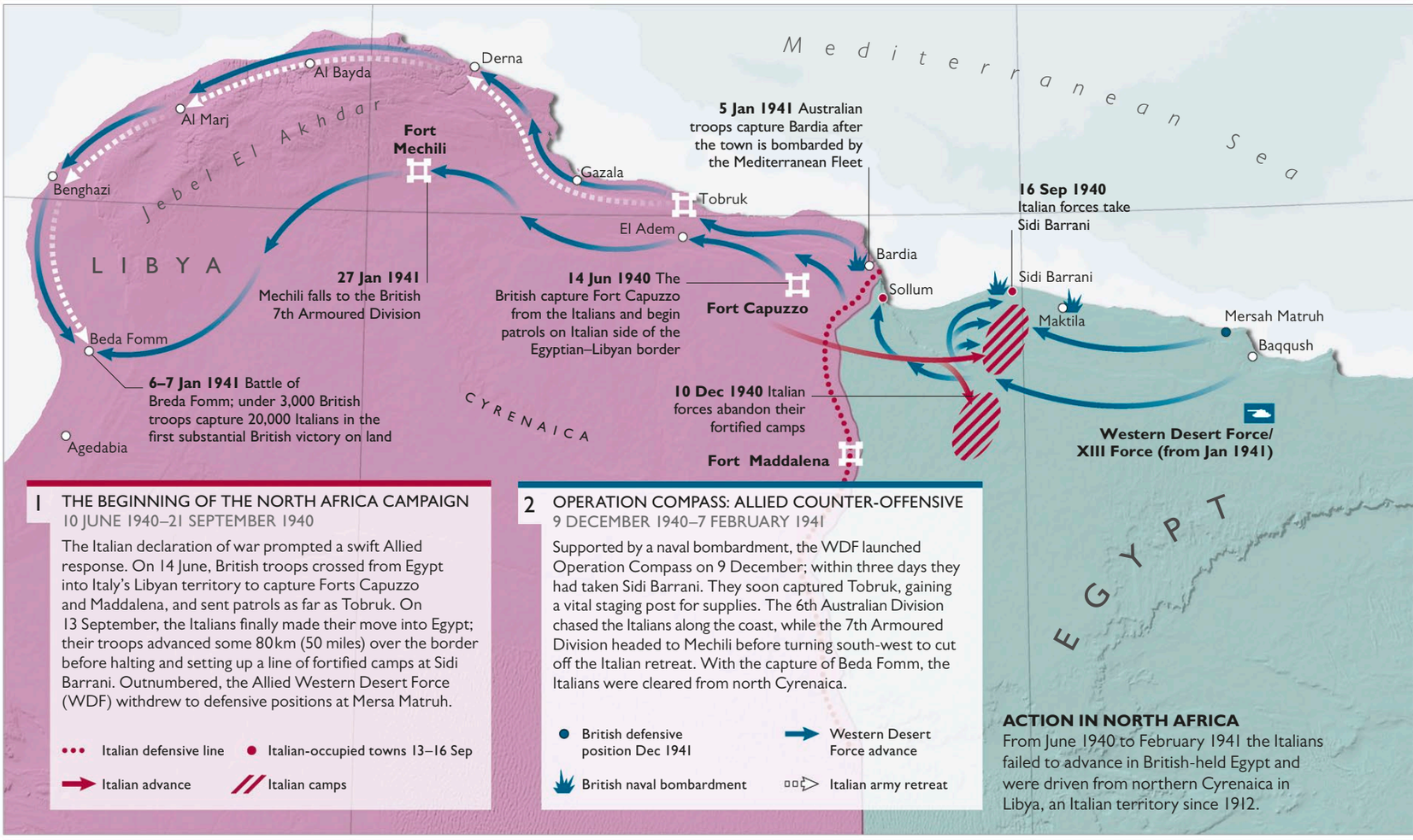
officially neutral states, but leaning heavily towards collaboration with Nazi Germany. Colonies loyal to Vichy France controlled the western half of North Africa, but Britain succeeded in gaining Syria for the Free French (General De Gaulle's forces, which continued to fight with the Allies against the Axis powers after the fall of France). Generally, the British were successful in shoring up their position in the Middle East, securing the support of most Jewish settlers in Palestine, and bringing Iraq and Iran into line when their rulers leaned towards the Axis.

The Allies hold their own

Hitler never devoted sufficient resources to the Western Desert Campaign, or to the Mediterranean generally, to achieve decisive results. Malta was heavily bombed by German and Italian aircraft but was never invaded, despite being only 80 km (50 miles) from Italy. This failure to seize an obvious prize was typical of an Axis policy that lacked resolute focus. For Britain, on the other hand, North Africa became very important strategically, because it was the only place where the enemy could be engaged on land. By 1942–43, operations in the Mediterranean and North Africa were central to Allied strategy.

▷ **The Battle of Crete**
German paratroopers land in a mass assault on Crete in May 1941. Despite fierce local and Allied defence, the German forces captured the Greek island after 13 days of fighting.





ITALY'S CAMPAIGNS IN AFRICA

Italian dictator Benito Mussolini saw the outbreak of war as an opportunity to pursue his imperial ambitions in Africa. He embarked on two disastrous campaigns against the British in Egypt, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and British Somaliland, which backfired and resulted in Italy's expulsion from northern Libya and Ethiopia.

Italy did not follow its Axis partner Germany into war in September 1939, but entered the conflict later, in June 1940, when Mussolini judged that the Allies would soon be defeated. His initial aim was to expand Italy's colonies in Libya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Italian Somaliland by taking territory from the British. With superior numbers in the air and on the ground, Italy posed a threat to Britain's positions in Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Kenya, and the Horn of Africa, as well as British bases in Egypt and the vital supply route of the Suez Canal.

Italian forces invaded Sudan in early July 1940, but did not push deep into British territory, switching to assault British Somaliland in August, and then the Egyptian border in September. By the end of October, however, Italy had opened up a new front in Greece (pp.78–79) and did not appear to be planning new moves in Africa.

In December, the British launched Operation Compass against the Italian invaders in Egypt and then swept on through northern Libya, clearing the Italians out of the region in early February 1941. By then, British forces – supported by Ethiopian chieftains rallied by Emperor Haile Selassie – had launched counter-attacks in East Africa. By May, only few pockets of Italian resistance remained.

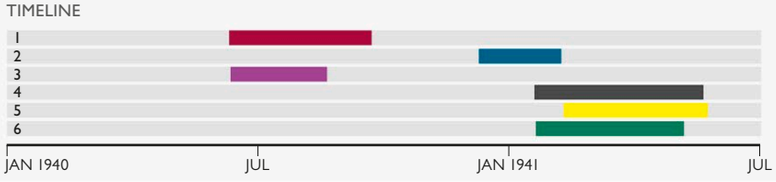
ITALY'S EMPIRE

Italy's imperial ambitions were dealt a blow when its soldiers failed to make inroads in Egypt against the British, instead losing control of vital territory in Libya. The Italians were also driven from their East African colonies of Italian Somaliland, Eritrea, and the Ethiopian Empire, held since 1936.

KEY

- Under British influence by Jun 1940
- French and French mandated territories Jun 1940
- Allied army units
- Italian Empire Jun 1940
- Italian forts
- Major battles

TIMELINE



ACTION IN EAST AFRICA

The British drove Italy out of East Africa, returning Ethiopia (which included modern-day Eritrea) to its exiled ruler, Haile Selassie, after five years of Italian occupation.

Port Sudan
Red Sea
SAUDI ARABIA
YEMEN
ADEN PROTECTORATE
Gulf of Aden
ERITREA
Keren
Massawa
Agordat
Kassala
Barentu
Asmara
Tessenei
Adowa
Amba Alagi
Metemma
Gallabat
Gondar
Khartoum
White Nile
Blue Nile
ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SUDAN
FRENCH SOMALILAND
Djibouti
Zeila
Aden
Berbera
BRITISH SOMALILAND
Hargeisa
Dessie
Debre Markos
Dire Dawa
Jijiga
Addis Ababa
Awash
Harar
Dagabur
ETHIOPIA
Segag
Welwel
Soddu
Shashamanna
Danan
Neghelli
Mega
Moyale
Dolo
Lake Turkana
ITALIAN SOMALILAND
Mogadishu
UGANDA
KENYA
Mt Kenya
Lake Victoria
Nairobi
Garissa
Bura
INDIAN OCEAN

Nothern Force

19 Jan 1941 British forces re-take Kassala

4th Indian Div

5th Indian Div

4 Jul 1940 Italian forces take Gallabat and Kassala

Haile Selassie and Gideon Force

27 Nov 1941 Italian forces in Gondar finally surrender

22 May 1941 The remnants of the Italian forces in southern Ethiopia surrender

1st South African Div

Southern Force

12th African Div

11th African Div

2 Apr 1941 The British Royal Navy and Fleet Air Arm sink or capture all seven of the Italian Red Sea Squadron's destroyers

19 Aug 1940 The British garrison evacuates from Berbera after four days of fighting

16–20 Mar 1941 British troops land at Berbera and retake British Somaliland

19 May1941 The Italians are defeated at Amba Alagi; their commander surrenders

3 ITALIAN INVASION OF SUDAN AND BRITISH SOMALILAND 11 JUNE 1940–19 AUGUST 1940

The Italians began their East African campaign cautiously with the strategic aerial bombardment of British targets. On 4 July, their ground forces crossed into British-held territory, taking Kassala and Gallabat just inside Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and Moyale in Kenya. A more sustained offensive began on 4 August, when the Italians invaded British Somaliland, eventually forcing the British garrison to evacuate.

Italian bombardment Jun 1940

Evacuation of British from Somaliland

Italian attacks Jun–Aug 1940

4 THE CAPTURE OF ERITREA 19 JANUARY 1941–19 MAY 1941

On 19 January, the Allied Northern Force crossed from Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and re-took Kassala. Advancing over Eritrea's mountainous terrain, it took the garrison town of Agordat nine days later and the stronghold of Keren in March. The capital, Asmara, surrendered on 1 April. Italian commander Prince Amadeo withdrew south to the fortress of Amba Alagi, pursued by the Allied forces, who defeated him there on 19 May.

Northern Force advance 19 Jan–19 May 1941

5 THE SOUTHERN COUNTER-OFFENSIVE 10 FEBRUARY 1941–22 MAY 1941

The Allied Southern Force consisted mainly of African troops under British officers in Kenya. On 10 February, two divisions marched into Italian Somaliland and one into Ethiopia. The Allies took Mogadishu on 26 February and converged with a further Allied force, which had landed at Berbera and retaken British Somaliland, to capture Addis Ababa on 6 April.

Southern Force advance 10 Jan–22 May 1941

Pockets of Italian resistance

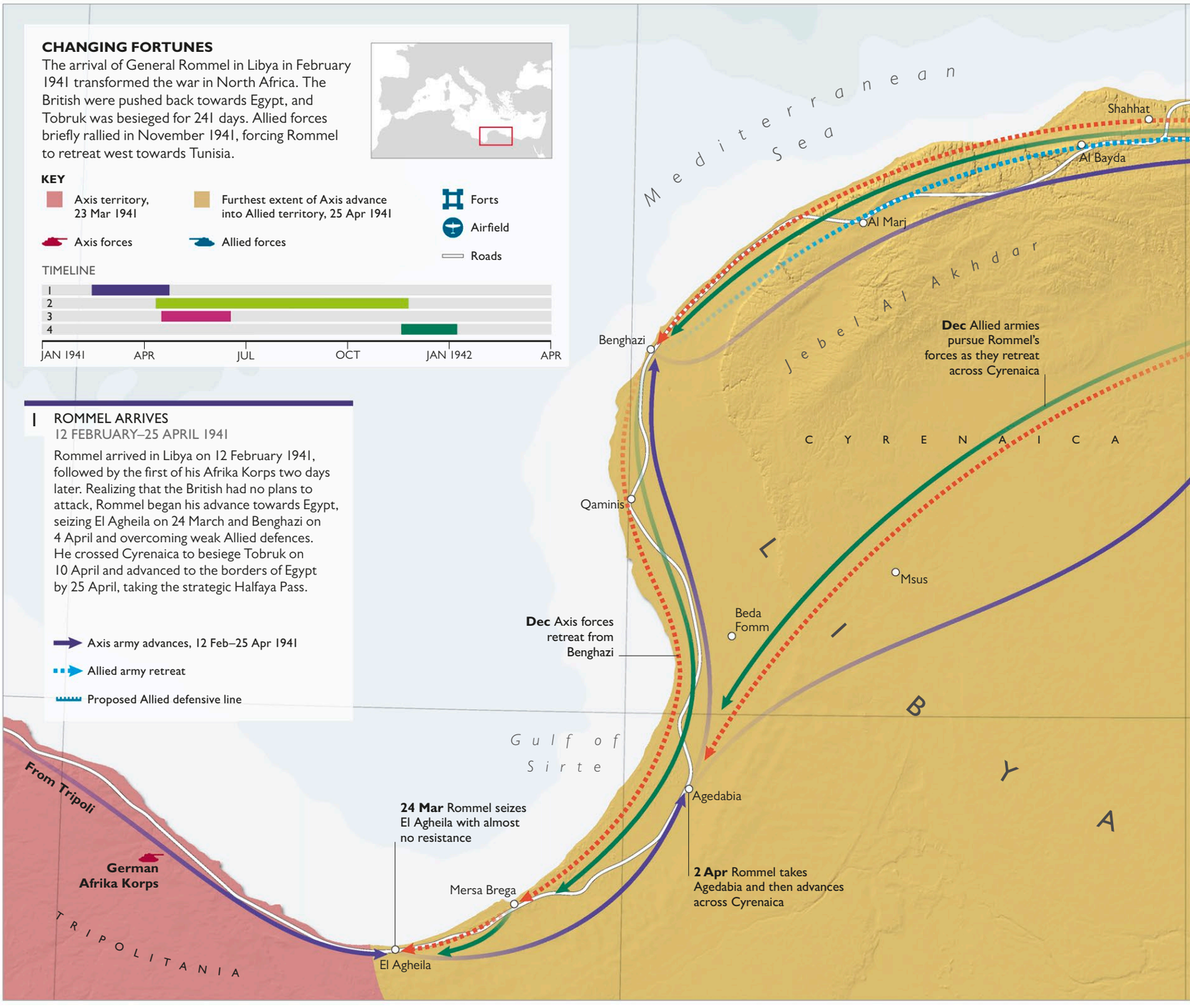
Berbera Force advance 16 Mar–20 Mar 1941

6 EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE AND GIDEON FORCE 20 JANUARY 1941–5 MAY 1941

While the British were advancing through Ethiopia from the north, south, and east, Emperor Haile Selassie and the Gideon Force – made up of British and Ethiopian regulars and Ethiopian Patriots – were marching towards Addis Ababa from the west. They arrived in triumph in the capital on 5 May, one month after the city had fallen to Allied forces.

Gideon Force advance 20 Jan–5 May 1941

▷ **Addis Ababa liberated**
British and Commonwealth infantry pose for a photo after entering the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa in May 1941. The Italian forces in Ethiopia finally surrendered on 27 November 1941.



ROMMEL ENTERS THE DESERT WAR

By February 1941, the Italians were struggling in their war against the Allies in North Africa. Their incursions into Egypt had failed, and they had been chased out of Cyrenaica in northern Libya. Hitler was anxious to save Italy from defeat and sent his favourite general, Erwin Rommel, with a German armoured expeditionary force – the Afrika Korps – to rescue the situation.

Rommel's orders on arriving in Libya were to stand on the defensive and prevent any further Italian retreats, but the German general – who had proved his flair for tank warfare in France – had an instinct for attack. Knowing that the British forces facing him had been weakened by the diversion of troops to Greece (see pp.80–81), he launched a probing offensive in late March and found that his tanks could outmanoeuvre the British with ease.

Rommel soon began an eastward advance, forcing the Allies to retreat in disarray from Libya into Egypt. In early April, the 9th Australian Division found itself marooned in the port of Tobruk, surrounded by the enemy, and far behind the new front line. Rommel had orders to take Tobruk, but the Australian forces there, resupplied by sea, held a defensive perimeter against attack by superior German forces throughout the next six months. British counter-attacks from Egypt in May and June failed to break the

6 Apr The British abandon a planned defensive line

7 Apr Senior British generals Neame and O'Connor are captured by an Axis patrol

10 Apr The 241-day Axis siege of Tobruk begins

20 Nov The British 7th Armoured Brigade captures Rommel's HQ at Gambut Airfield

8 Apr Major-General Gambier-Parry and 2,000 British troops are captured at Fort Mechili

22 Nov–7 Dec A confused tank battle rages around Sidi Rezegh

May–Jun 1941 The British launch offensives to recapture the Halfaya Pass

Derna
Tmimi
Fort Mechili
Gazala
9th Australian Division
Tobruk
From Alexandria
Gambut
El Adem
Sidi Rezegh
15th Panzer Army
Bardia
Sidi Barrani
Sollum
Halfaya Pass
Fort Capuzzo
Buqbuq
Italian Ariete Division
Bir Hacheim
Sidi Omar
Bir el Gubi
Gabr Saleh
British 8th Army
EGYPT

▷ **German mobility**
Soldiers from the German 21st Panzer Division are seen riding a BMW R75 motorcycle. The motorcycle and sidecar combination was often used by reconnaissance troops during the war.

2 SIEGE OF TOBRUK
10 APRIL–27 NOVEMBER 1941

Axis troops reached Tobruk on 10 April, but their initial attacks were repulsed. Rommel decided to bypass Tobruk and head towards Egypt, leaving the port surrounded by other Axis forces, which attacked the largely Australian-manned defensive lines. German artillery and aircraft bombarded the town but the British Mediterranean Fleet ran the blockade, delivering supplies. The siege was eventually lifted by the British 8th Army on 27 November 1941.

Siege of Tobruk
British Mediterranean Fleet supply route
Allied defensive line

3 TESTING THE LINE 14 APRIL–17 JUNE 1941

After the seizure of the Halfaya Pass by Axis forces, the front line stabilized just inside the Egyptian border. The British, under the command of General Archibald Wavell, launched Operation Brevity (15–25 May), designed to improve Allied positions on the border in order to allow a move towards Tobruk. It failed. In a much larger offensive, Operation Battleaxe (15–17 June), British armour was destroyed by German anti-tank fire at Halfaya; it too was a costly failure.

Front line 25 Apr–15 Jun 1941
Battle of Halfaya Pass, May–Jun 1941

4 OPERATION CRUSADER
18 NOVEMBER 1941–6 JANUARY 1942

Eager for a victory, the British, now under General Auchinleck, launched Operation Crusader on 18 November. They immediately took Gabr Saleh and fought a major tank battle around Sidi Rezegh from 22 November–7 December 1941. While this raged on, New Zealand forces headed west towards Tobruk. Fearful of being surrounded near Tobruk, and with deteriorating supplies, Rommel retreated west, reaching El Agheila by 6 January 1942.

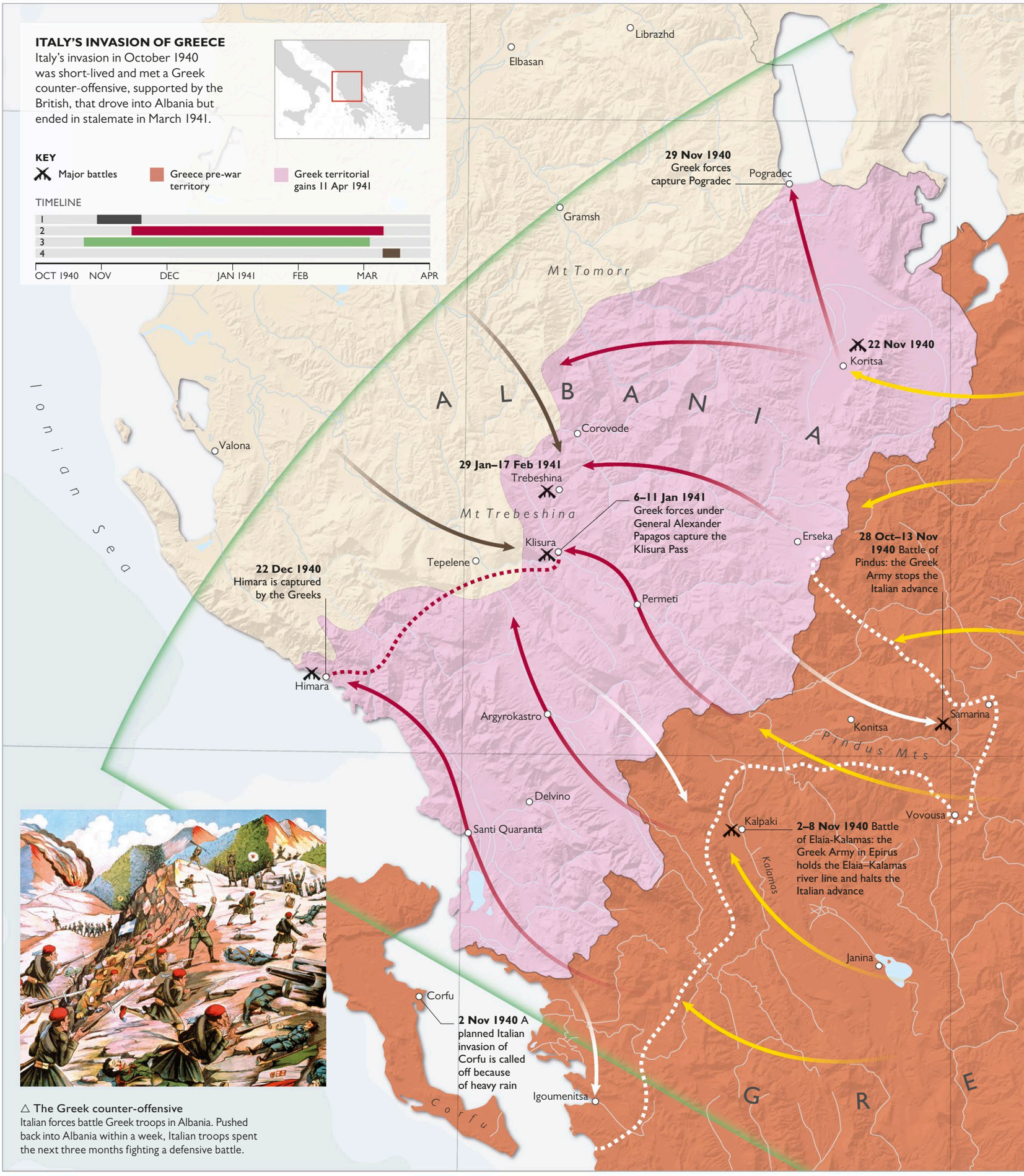
Allied advances
Axis response
Battle of Sidi Rezegh, 22 Nov–7 Dec 1941
Axis retreat

siege of Tobruk, and in July, a frustrated Churchill dismissed the area commander, General Archibald Wavell, replacing him with General Claude Auchinleck. The new commander was given substantial reinforcements, especially tanks, and the British desert forces – which included Australians, New Zealanders, Poles, South Africans, Indians, and Free French troops – were reorganized as the British 8th Army.

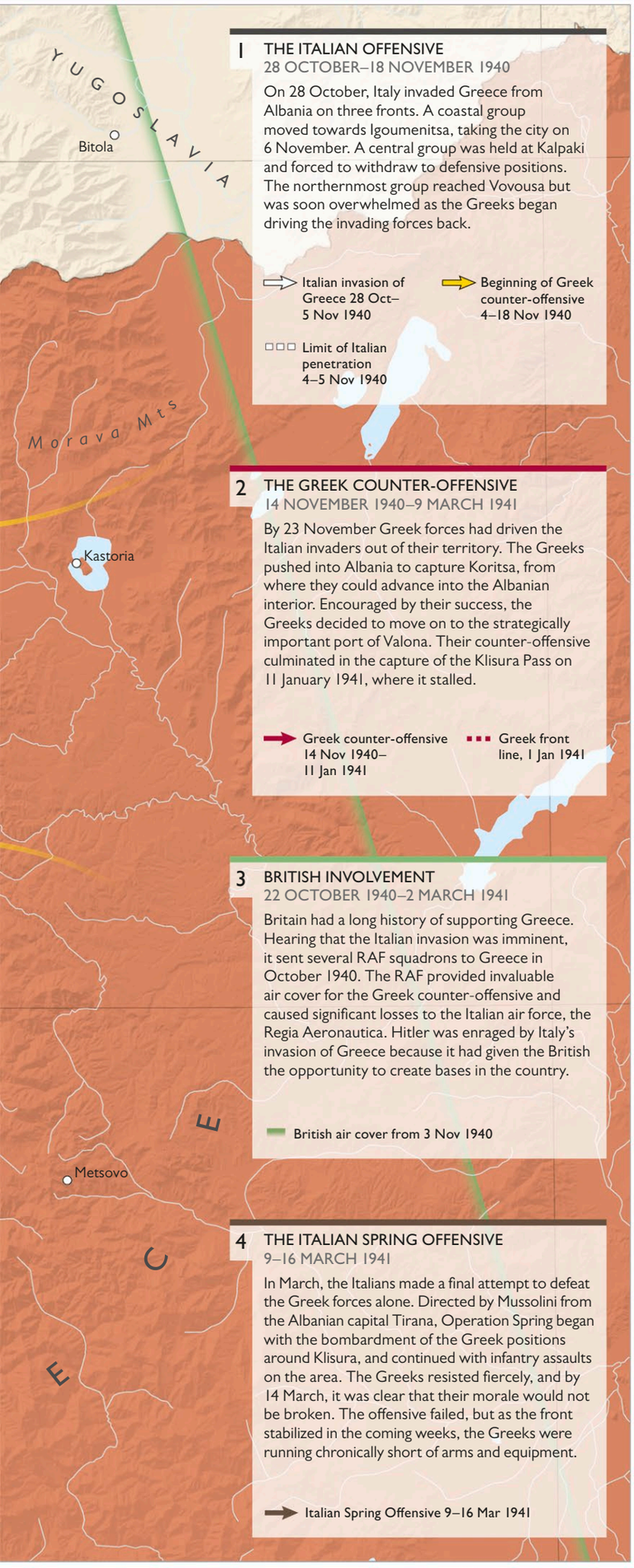
On 18 November Auchinleck took the offensive in Operation Crusader. Again the British armour was outfought by Rommel's more experienced tank commanders, but at a crucial moment Rommel lost contact with his enemy, advancing into empty desert while, further north, 8th Army infantry pressed towards Tobruk. The siege was lifted on 27 November and Rommel soon conducted a full-scale retreat, falling back as far as El Agheila – the first position he had captured from the British, the previous March.

FIELD MARSHAL ERWIN ROMMEL

Field Marshal Erwin Rommel (1891–1944) was one of the leading tank commanders of World War II, earning himself the nickname *der Wüstenfuchs*, "the Desert Fox", for his wily strategic command. His British adversaries admired his chivalry, and the war in North Africa has been called the "war without hate". Although a supporter of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, Rommel was a reluctant Nazi. In 1944 he was implicated in the 20 July plot to assassinate Hitler (see pp.196–97); he was allowed to take his own life rather than face trial.



△ **The Greek counter-offensive**
Italian forces battle Greek troops in Albania. Pushed back into Albania within a week, Italian troops spent the next three months fighting a defensive battle.



THE GRECO-ITALIAN WAR

At war with the Allies since 10 June 1940, Italy had begun to fulfil its imperial ambitions with invasions of France, British Somaliland, and Egypt. In October 1940, it launched the invasion of Greece – a disastrous offensive that achieved nothing other than to test the relationship between Italy and Germany.

In October 1940 the Balkans were broadly pro-German, and Greece's own right-wing dictator – General Metaxas – had confirmed Greece's neutrality; this suited Hitler, because it allowed him to pursue his plans for the invasion of the Soviet Union without distraction. However, Mussolini had designs on Greece and was impatient for conquests to match those of his German allies.

Mussolini accused the Greeks of aiding the British in the Mediterranean and on 28 October issued an ultimatum demanding free passage for his troops to occupy strategic points in Greek territory. When Metaxas rejected the ultimatum, Italy invaded from Albania. The Italian forces crossed the border at three points, but were soon caught in bitter fighting with a fiercely patriotic and tenacious Greek army in the unforgiving terrain of the mountains along the Albanian–Greek border.

By early November, a Greek counter-offensive had pushed the Italians back into Albania, and the Greek army was soon advancing through the country. The counter-offensive halted by early January 1941, leaving the Italians to attempt one last offensive in March. It achieved little, but it did highlight the vulnerability of the Greek army, influencing Hitler's later decision to send his own armies into the region.

"We do not argue with those who disagree with us, we destroy them."

BENITO MUSSOLINI, 1936

ITALY'S IMPERIAL AMBITIONS

After its unification in the mid-19th century, Italy built a small empire that included the Dodecanese Islands and territories in East and North Africa. From the 1920s, Mussolini – whose Fascist Party was named after the bundle of wooden rods (or *fasces*) that was a symbol of Roman authority – sought to reclaim the glory of Ancient Rome. He gradually strengthened Italy's power in Libya, and conquered Ethiopia in 1935. Four years later, Albania was incorporated into Italy, and the invasion of Greece in 1940 was the next logical step in his plan to dominate the Mediterranean.

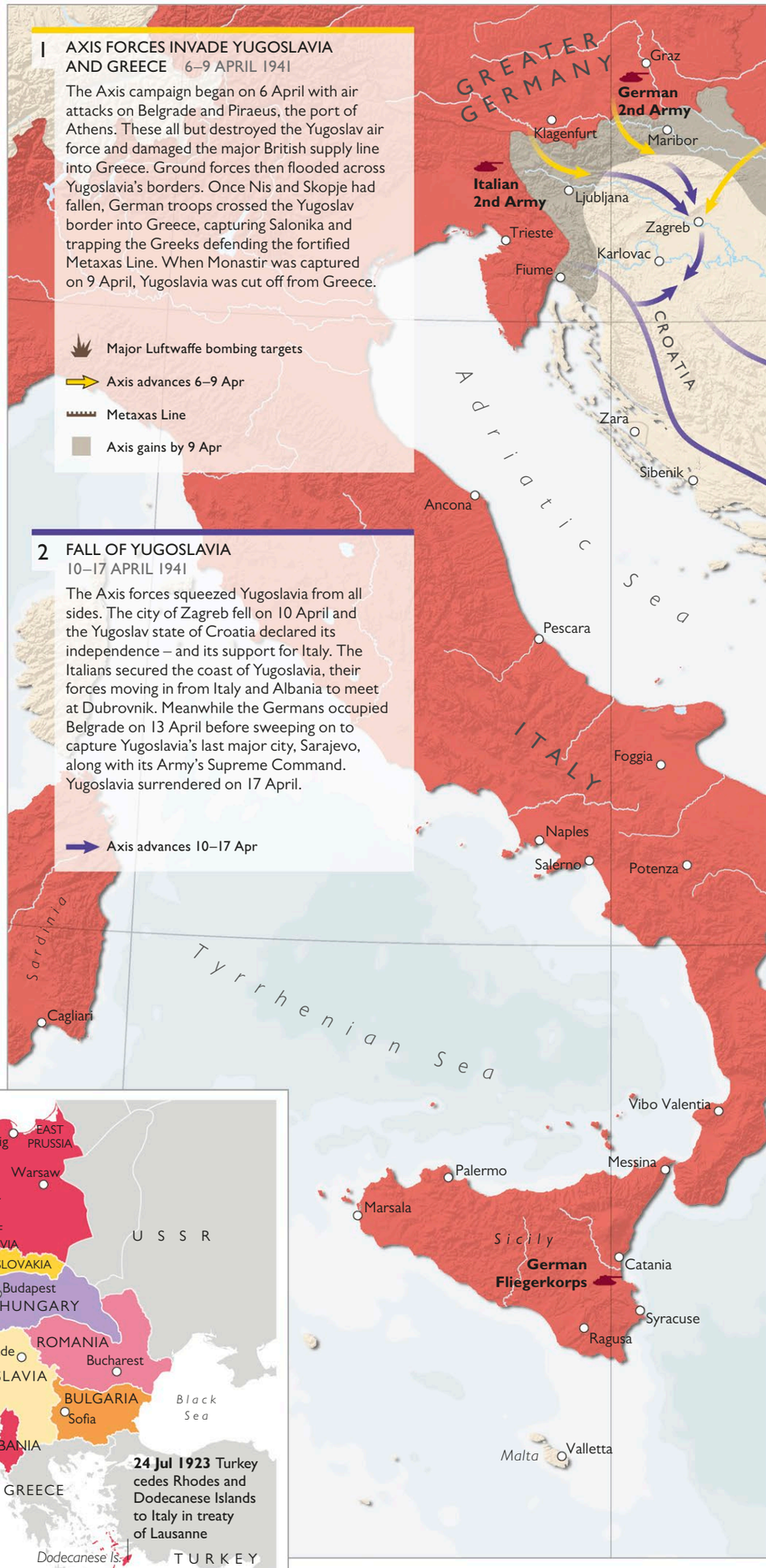
Italian imperial propaganda shows Mussolini and Vittorio Emanuele III superimposed on a graphic of Italy's planned African empire.

GERMANY PUSHES SOUTH

Italy's unsuccessful invasion of Greece forced Hitler to postpone his planned invasion of the USSR and concentrate on securing the Balkans. With the support of its regional allies, Germany invaded Yugoslavia and Greece in April 1941, taking both in under a month.

While Italy was fighting its ineffectual war with Greece (see pp.78–79), Hitler had been persuading and pressurizing the states in the Balkan region to join the defensive alliance known as the Tripartite Pact. By 1 March 1941 all the states except Yugoslavia and Greece had joined. German troops had begun to arrive in Romania and Hungary in November 1940, and – as the Italians prepared their counter-offensive against Greece in Albania – the German 12th Army moved into Bulgaria on 2 March 1941.

Alarmed by the arrival of German forces on Greece's borders, the British responded by sending an expeditionary force (W Force, named after its commander, Lieutenant-General Henry Maitland Wilson) from Egypt to Greece. On 25 March, Yugoslavia yielded to pressure to join the Tripartite Pact, but a coup on 27 March gave power to a group of anti-Pact air force officers. When they signed a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union and began talks with Britain about a Balkan coalition, Hitler immediately began planning the simultaneous invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece. The Yugoslav people were forced to defend a 1,600-km (1,000-mile) frontier with ill-equipped divisions numbering barely half the 50 fielded by Germany. Most of the Greek forces were in Albania, leaving only the Greek 2nd Army and W Force to defend the eastern route into Greece. On 6 April, the Germans unleashed their blitzkrieg. By 28 April Yugoslavia had surrendered, and the Allies been driven out of Greece.



THE EXPANSION OF THE TRIPARTITE PACT

On 27 September 1940, Germany, Italy (including Albania), and Japan had signed a defence alliance known as the Tripartite Pact. Unwilling to become embroiled in a war in the notoriously complex Balkan region, Hitler sought the support of the Balkan countries through diplomacy, and by the end of November 1940, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia had all joined the Pact. Bulgaria joined on 1 March 1941. Threatened by the German, Hungarian, and Italian troops building up along its borders, Yugoslavia joined the pact on 25 March. But on 27 March, Yugoslavia revoked, forcing Germany to expand its invasion plans.

KEY

- Initial signatories
- Joined 20 Nov 1940
- Joined 23 Nov 1940
- Joined 24 Nov 1940
- Joined 1 Mar 1941
- Joined 25 Mar 1941

△ **Athens falls**
German soldiers ride a Stug III assault gun in Athens, with the ruins of the Acropolis visible in the background. The first German forces – motorcycle troops – entered the city on 27 April 1941, and were followed by armour and infantry.

1 CRISIS IN IRAQ 1 APRIL–6 MAY 1941

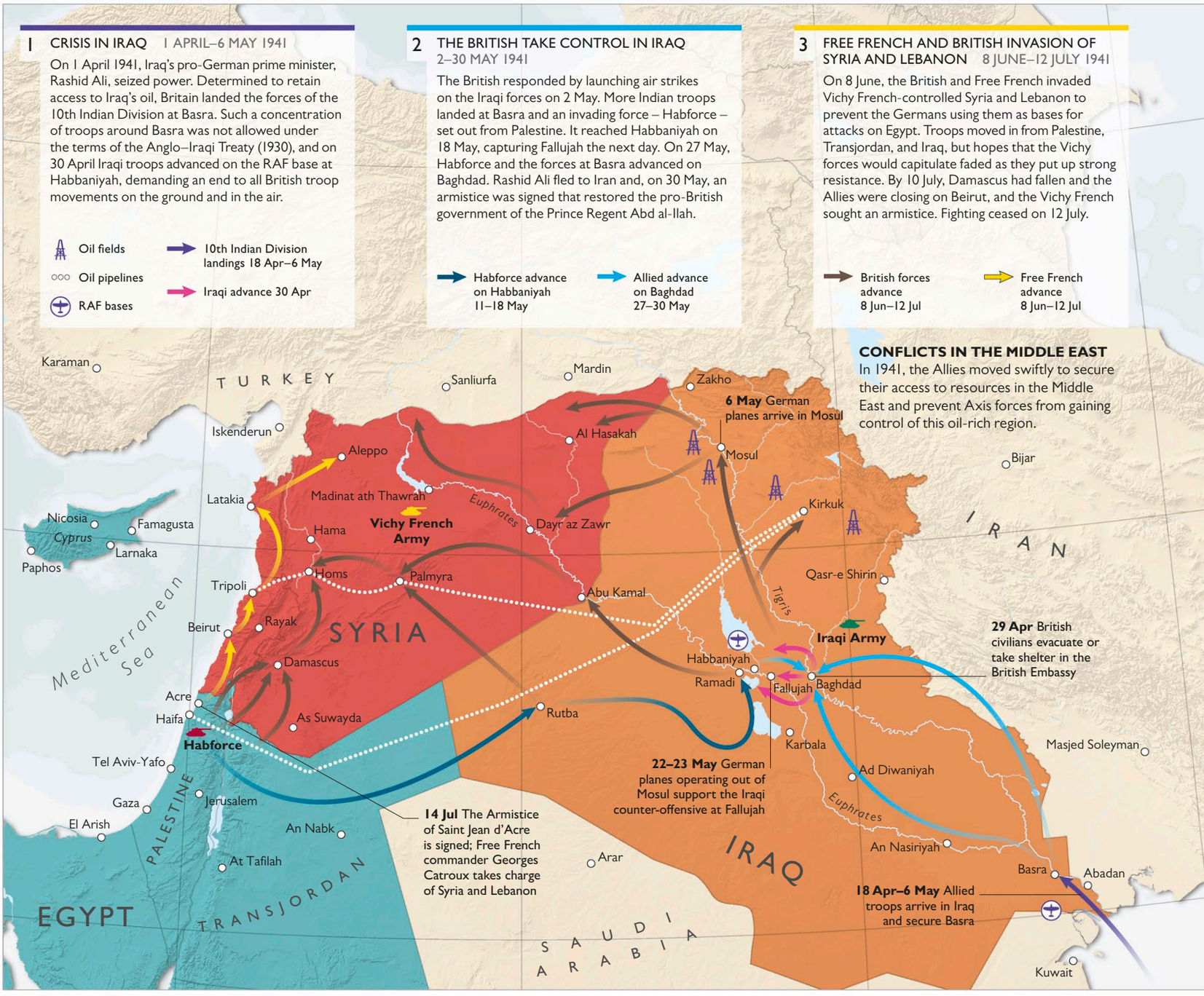
On 1 April 1941, Iraq's pro-German prime minister, Rashid Ali, seized power. Determined to retain access to Iraq's oil, Britain landed the forces of the 10th Indian Division at Basra. Such a concentration of troops around Basra was not allowed under the terms of the Anglo–Iraqi Treaty (1930), and on 30 April Iraqi troops advanced on the RAF base at Habbaniyah, demanding an end to all British troop movements on the ground and in the air.

2 THE BRITISH TAKE CONTROL IN IRAQ 2–30 MAY 1941

The British responded by launching air strikes on the Iraqi forces on 2 May. More Indian troops landed at Basra and an invading force – Habforce – set out from Palestine. It reached Habbaniyah on 18 May, capturing Fallujah the next day. On 27 May, Habforce and the forces at Basra advanced on Baghdad. Rashid Ali fled to Iran and, on 30 May, an armistice was signed that restored the pro-British government of the Prince Regent Abd al-Ilah.

3 FREE FRENCH AND BRITISH INVASION OF SYRIA AND LEBANON 8 JUNE–12 JULY 1941

On 8 June, the British and Free French invaded Vichy French-controlled Syria and Lebanon to prevent the Germans using them as bases for attacks on Egypt. Troops moved in from Palestine, Transjordan, and Iraq, but hopes that the Vichy forces would capitulate faded as they put up strong resistance. By 10 July, Damascus had fallen and the Allies were closing on Beirut, and the Vichy French sought an armistice. Fighting ceased on 12 July.



CONFLICTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

In 1941, the Allies moved swiftly to secure their access to resources in the Middle East and prevent Axis forces from gaining control of this oil-rich region.

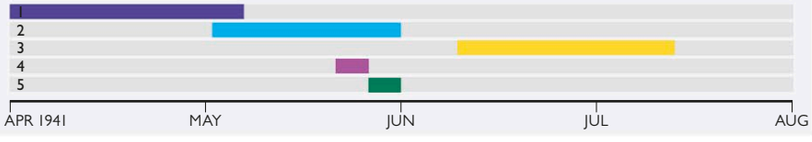
THE ALLIES SECURE THE MIDDLE EAST

Between April and July 1941, Allied ground forces – supported by squadrons from the Royal Air Force and the Royal Australian Air Force – took control of Vichy Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, creating a bloc that offered access to oil and protection for their other territories in the region.

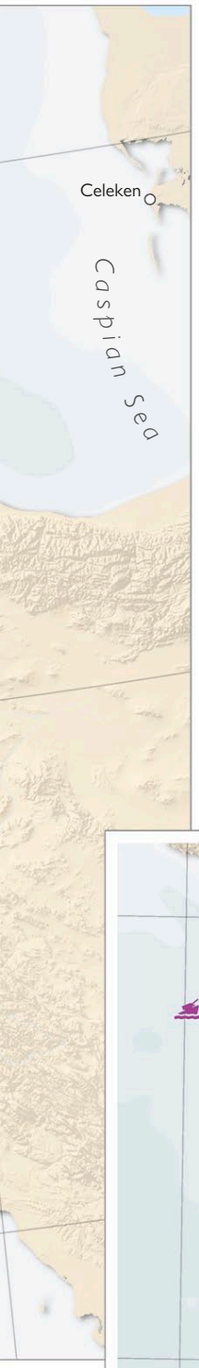
KEY

- British-controlled territory
- Pro-Axis territory
- British and Commonwealth forces
- Axis-controlled territory
- Vichy French Army
- Iraqi Army

TIMELINE



△ **British troops captured**
British troops surrender during the German invasion of Crete in May 1941. Codenamed Operation Mercury, the invasion involved the mass deployment of *Fallschirmjäger* (paratroopers).

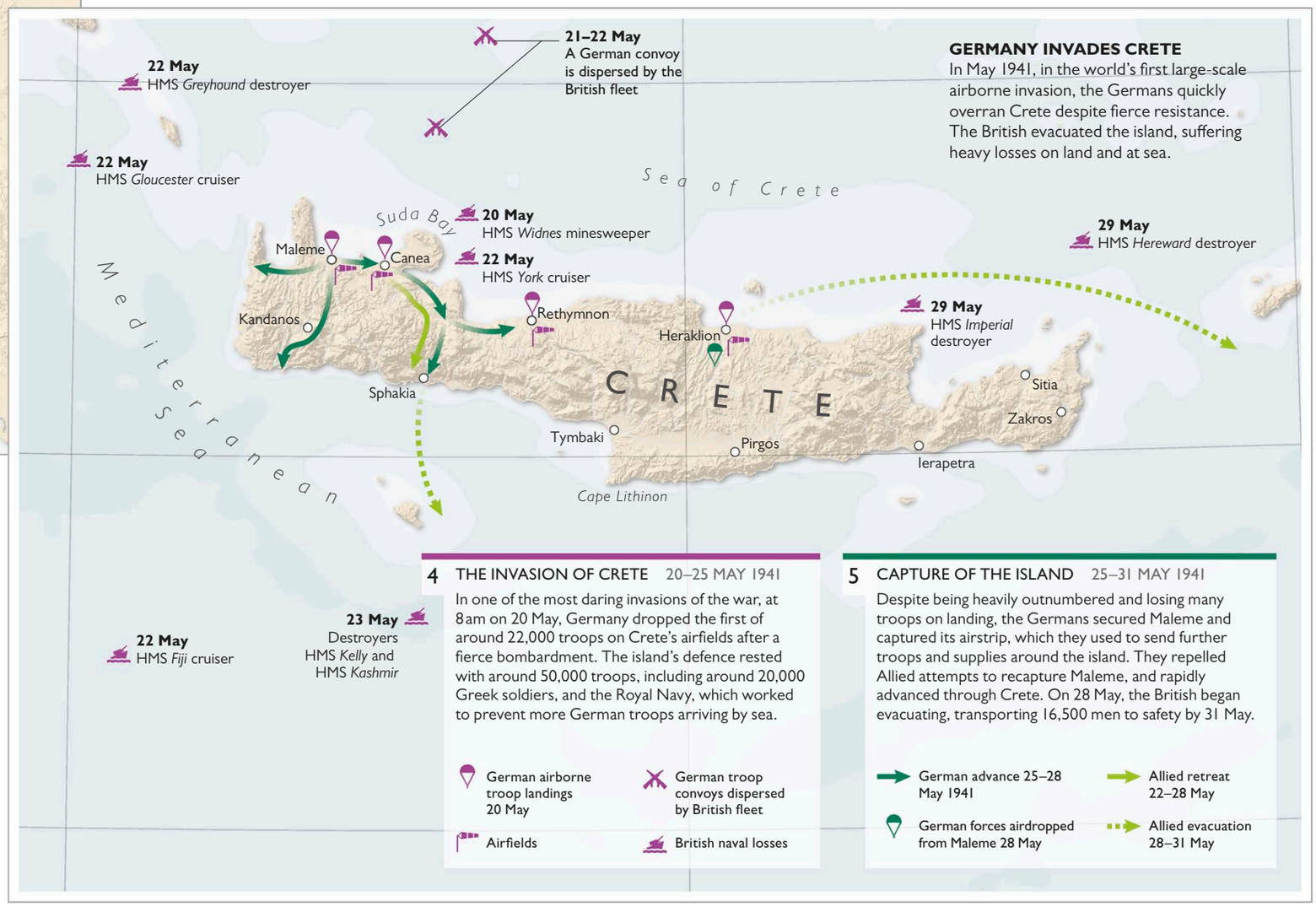


THE MIDDLE EAST AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

In 1941 the Allies faced a series of challenges that ended with Axis powers dominating the eastern Mediterranean. However, the Allies strengthened their position in the Middle East, securing oil and supply routes from Iraq to the USSR that would prove invaluable in the months to come.

The Allies experienced mixed fortunes in the Middle East and east Mediterranean in the first half of 1941. They were chased out of Greece by the German advance in April (see pp.80–81) and suffered a further humiliation in Crete in May. There, they were ousted by a surprise airborne assault, despite having known that the Germans had planned to invade since April. The loss of Crete deprived the Allied forces of around 16,000 men – either dead or captured – and cost the Royal Navy nine ships, with another 13 damaged. It was followed by more failure, when a British attempt to relieve Tobruk in North Africa in June ended in disaster. Yet Hitler failed to capitalize on the dominance of the Mediterranean that the Axis powers had won through the conquest of the Balkans and Crete, and their success in North Africa. Instead, the Germans turned their attention to the Soviet Union.

The Allies were left to consolidate the gains they had begun to make in the Middle East. By mid-June, they had wrested control of Iraq from its pro-German leader, Rashid Ali, and had launched a successful invasion of Vichy-held Syria.



WAR IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

From Italy's entry into World War II until 1943, Allied and Axis forces were engaged in a naval battle for control of the Mediterranean. Each strove to destroy the other's supply lines while keeping their own open, and to inflict as much damage as possible on their enemy's ability to wage war at sea.

The Italians entered the war on 10 June 1940 with a totally modernized fleet, replete with fast new battleships, cruisers, and destroyers, which outmatched the British Royal Navy's capabilities in the Mediterranean. They harboured high ambitions in the region, wishing to oust Britain from Egypt – where British troops were stationed to protect the nation's financial and strategic interests – and extend Mussolini's "New Roman Empire" into Nice, Corsica, Tunisia, and the Balkans.

The British, meanwhile, sought to hold the three key points in the Mediterranean – Gibraltar, Malta, and the Suez Canal – that would allow them to keep open supply routes across the Mediterranean and support Greece and Turkey should they enter the war. Malta, in particular, was crucial (see pp.86–87). Sitting at the gateway to the eastern Mediterranean, it provided a stopping point for Allied convoys and a base from which to attack the Axis supply routes to North Africa.

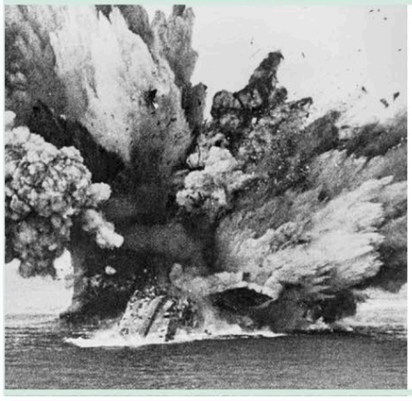
Air power was vital in keeping the convoys moving, and both sides were able to take advantage of the short distances from their bases in Europe and North Africa, and of the good visibility in the Mediterranean skies. The Italians, however, lacked a fleet air arm, while the British had several aircraft carriers operating in the area.

For much of the first year, the Allies had the upper hand in the Mediterranean, but in December 1941, they lost the advantage when the Italians destroyed several of their battleships.

"This tiny island [Malta] is a vital feature in the defence of our Middle East position."

HASTINGS ISMAY, BRITISH GENERAL, 1942

THE SUBMARINE WAR



British submarines played a vital role in disrupting the Axis supply lines across the Mediterranean, sinking over 400,000 tonnes (440,000 tons) of Axis shipping between January 1941 and December 1942. German U-boats joined Italian submarines in September 1941 and destroyed 12 merchant vessels, HMS *Ark Royal*, and HMS *Barham* before the end of the year. However, the U-boats were themselves in danger from the Allies' radar-equipped aircraft; none survived the war in the Mediterranean.

Destruction of HMS *Barham*

◁ **Air support**
A Fairey Swordfish biplane banks as it prepares to land on the British aircraft carrier HMS *Ark Royal*.

GREATER GERMANY
Munich
SWITZERLAND
Milan
Venice
Genoa
La Spezia
Nice
Toulon
ITALY
Corsica
Sardinia
Rome
Naples
Bari
Taranto
Italian fleet
Cagliari
Cape Spartivento
Palermo
Messina
SICILY
Cape Bon
Tunis
Malta
Tripoli
TUNISIA
Benghazi
El Agheila
LIBYA
Adriatic Sea
YUGOSLAVIA
Tirana
ALBANIA
Sofia
BULGARIA
Istanbul
Ankara
GREECE
Athens
Aegean Sea
TURKEY
Dodecanese Islands
Rhodes
Kastellorizo
Crete
Cyprus
SYRIA
Beirut
Damascus
Mediterranean Sea
Amman
TRANSJORDAN
PALESTINE
SAUDI ARABIA
Mediterranean Fleet
Alexandria
Suez Canal
Cairo
EGYPT
Tobruk
Sidi Barrani
Duisberg Convoy
9 Jul 1940
Calabria
28–29 Mar 1941
Cape Matapan
27 Nov 1941
Battle of Cape Spartivento; the Italians attack a convoy en route to Malta
8–9 Nov 1941 Battle of Duisburg Convoy; the Royal Navy sinks all seven merchant ships and a destroyer in a German convoy
13 Dec 1941 Battle of Cape Bon; two Italian cruisers carrying supplies to the Luftwaffe in North Africa are sunk
25 Nov 1941
HMS Barham is hit and sunk by three torpedoes; 862 die and 449 survive
1 THE BATTLE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN BEGINS
11 JUNE–11 NOVEMBER 1940
The Italians began the Battle of the Mediterranean with a bombing raid on Malta on 11 June, and the British scored their first hit when they sank the Italian destroyer Espero, which was escorting a convoy to Benghazi on 28 June. The first major clash between the Italian and British fleets occurred on 9 July at the Battle of Calabria. Neither side scored a decisive victory, and both avoided further large-scale action until November.
Italian bombing raid on Malta, 11 Jun 1940
British attack on Italian convoy
NAVAL BATTLES
The Mediterranean was the site of the largest conventional sea battles of the war outside the Pacific theatre, as the British Royal Navy fought the Italian and German fleets for control of the convoy routes taking vital supplies and reinforcements to North Africa.
KEY
Areas controlled by Vichy France, 1940
Areas controlled by Germany, 1940
Major battles
Areas controlled by Italy, 1940
Neutral / not yet involved in the war
British fleets
Areas under British influence, 1940
Borders, Dec 1940
Italian fleet
TIMELINE
1
2
3
4
5
6
JAN 1940
JUL
JAN 1941
JUL
JAN 1942
4 BATTLE OF CAPE MATAPAN
28–29 MARCH 1941
On 28 March, the Italians sent a small fleet to Crete to intercept British convoys that were carrying troops to Greece. However, the RAF spotted the Italian ships, and the British Mediterranean Fleet moved in from Alexandria and opened fire on their enemy. The battle lasted into the night, and the British sank three Italian cruisers, two destroyers, and damaged the battleship Vittorio Veneto in a significant victory, after which the Italian fleet avoided major battles.
Allied troop convoys to Greece
5 STRIKING THE AXIS CONVOYS
APRIL–DECEMBER 1941
The nine warships lost to the Luftwaffe during the defence and evacuation of Crete (see pp.82–83) in May 1941 highlighted just how vulnerable the British navy was in the eastern Mediterranean. However, the Allies continued to strengthen their position in the central Mediterranean, making several successful attacks on Axis convoys – particularly in the Battles of the Duisburg Convoy and Cape Bon – that left the Axis powers in North Africa short of fuel.
Axis convoy routes
6 THE AXIS POWERS IN THE ASCENDANT
19–31 DECEMBER 1941
The Allies suffered a setback when ships returning to Alexandria ran into a minefield off the coast of Tripoli on 19 December. Two ships were sunk and two were badly damaged, reducing the Allies' ability to threaten the Axis convoys. Later that day, the Italians disabled two battleships and damaged a destroyer in Alexandria harbour. While the Royal Navy recovered, the Italian fleet dominated the central and eastern Mediterranean.
Italian minefield
Raid on Alexandria 19 Dec 1941

THE SIEGE OF MALTA

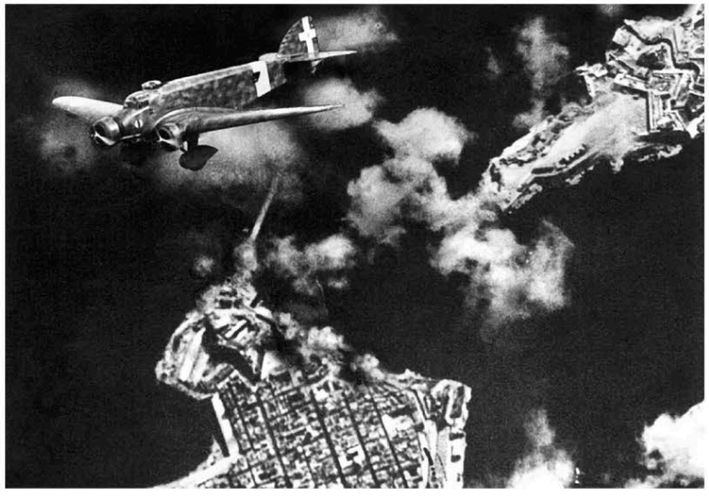
The British colony of Malta was strategically important to the Allies, who used the island as a base to attack the Axis forces' supply lines in the central Mediterranean. As a result, neutralizing the island became an Axis priority.

△ **Courage recognized**
Britain's King George VI awarded the George Cross to Malta in April 1942, in recognition of the population's remarkable bravery.

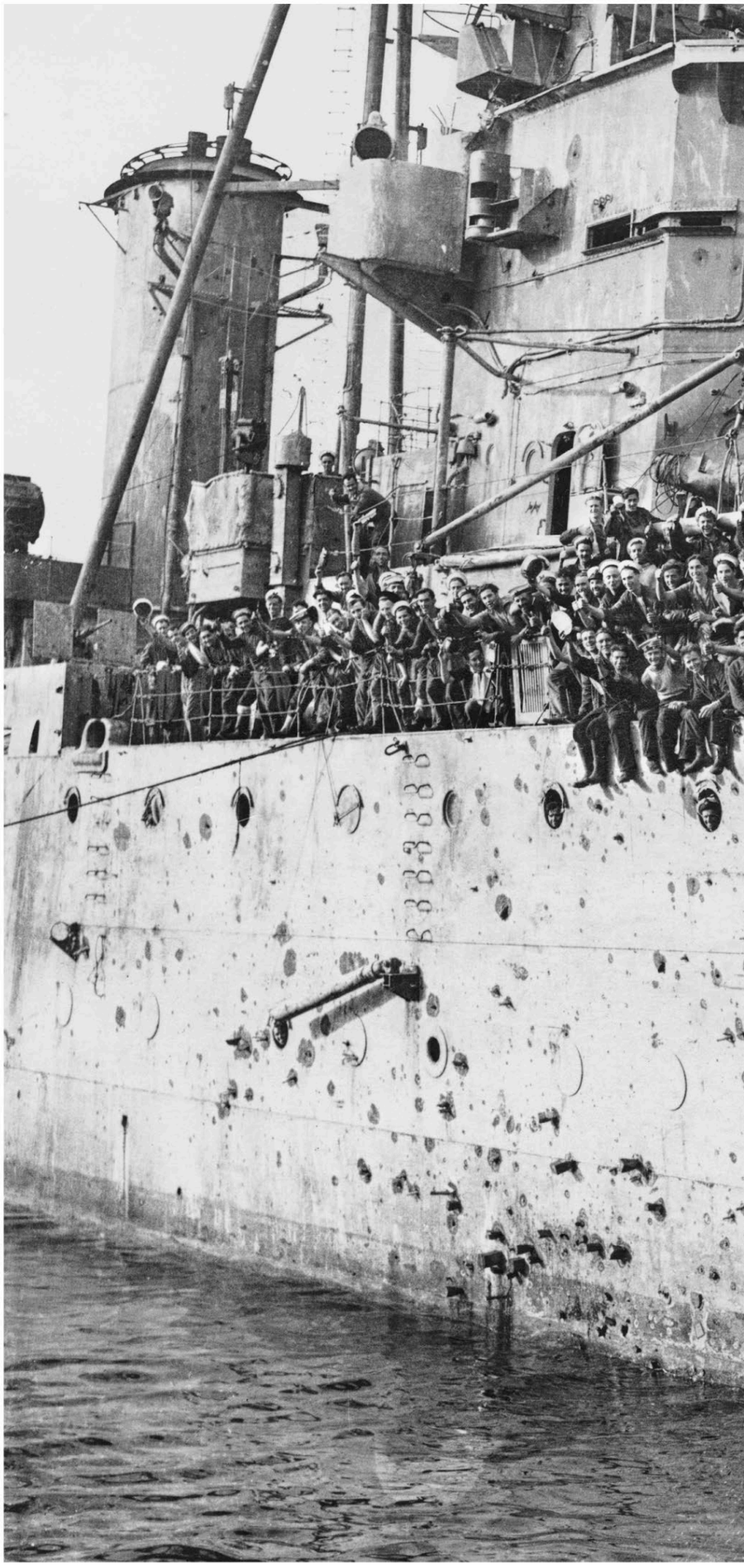
Following Mussolini's declaration of war on Britain on 10 June 1940, the Italian air force launched their first attacks on Malta. The capital city of Valletta, including its port (known as the Grand Harbour), and Hal Far (one of Malta's three airfields) were blitzed. The Luftwaffe soon joined the assault with further aerial bombing.

Starvation threat

The siege reached its climax in spring 1942, when the Germans decided to bomb and starve the island into submission. Food, fuel, and other essentials ran short as convoys trying to reach Valletta were decimated. Facing almost continual air raids, the islanders were housed in caves and tunnels that could withstand bombs, which helped them to survive the repeated attacks. Eventually the Allies broke through Axis lines in August 1942 and delivered supplies to the besieged island. Operation Pedestal, as this convoy was known, suffered heavy casualties, but Malta was saved. By the time the siege ended in November 1942, the Axis air forces had attacked the island 3,343 times, winning Malta the unwanted distinction of being the most bombed place on Earth.



△ **Italian air attack on Malta**
An Italian Savoia-Marchetti SM.81 tri-motor bomber makes its bomb run over Malta's Grand Harbour naval base, in Valletta. The *Regia Aeronautica* (Italian air force) had 350 bombers ready for action only 20 minutes' flying time away from the island.



Under fire
Naval officers and ratings line the deck of the light cruiser HMS *Penelope*, moored in the Grand Harbour, Valletta. The ship's starboard side was so severely cratered by bomb splinters that the crew nicknamed the cruiser HMS *Pepperpot*.

GERMANY'S WAR WITH THE USSR

Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 transformed the scale of the war in Europe. Despite putting almost four million soldiers into battle, the Germans failed to achieve the rapid victory they had hoped for.

△ **Soviet armour**
First deployed in 1941, the Soviet T-34 tank proved possibly the most effective armoured vehicle of World War II. Over 60,000 were manufactured during the war.

◁ **Ruthless warfare**
German infantry employ a flamethrower to clear a bunker during the invasion of the USSR in 1941. German soldiers had orders to fight especially fiercely against the Red Army.

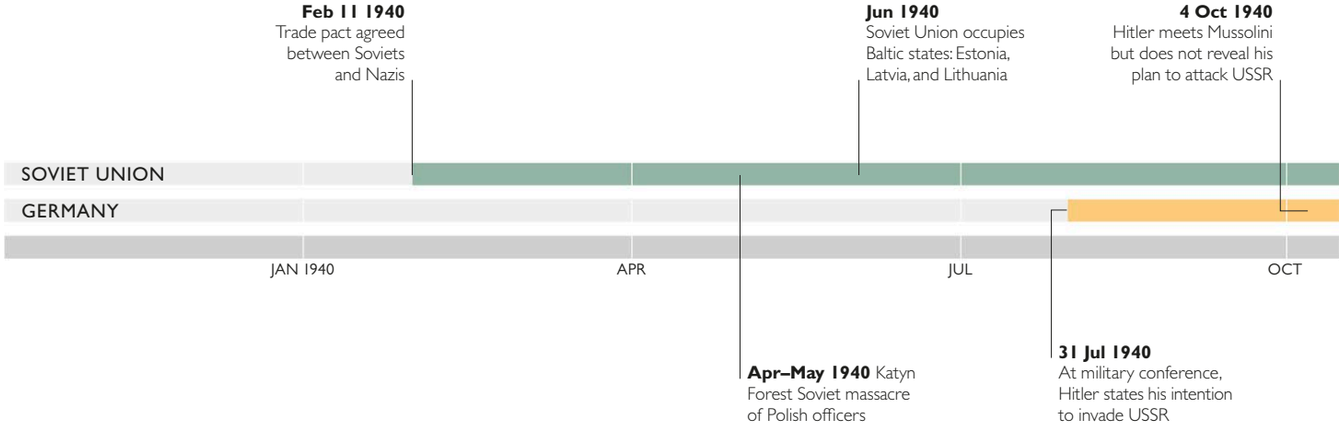
In August 1939, Stalin made a non-aggression pact with Hitler. This allowed the Soviets to extend their territory westwards – through the partition of Poland with Nazi Germany, and the occupation of Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Bukovina, taken from Germany's ally Romania. Although Stalin behaved as a friendly neutral to Germany, providing vital supplies that sustained the German war effort, the Soviet economy and the Red Army were meanwhile being mobilized for war.

Planning Operation Barbarossa

For Hitler, no agreement with the Soviet Union could ever be other than temporary. His enduring hostility to Marxism, his belief in the racial inferiority of Slavs, and his aspiration to find *Lebensraum* ("room to live") for German settlers in the East made the Soviet Union a target for aggression. In December 1940, despite still being at war with Britain, Hitler decided to invade the Soviet Union, in a campaign known as Operation Barbarossa. The planning made plain the Nazis' intention to carry out mass murder of civilians, through killing squads and deliberate starvation. Joining the German forces were the armies of its allies, such as Romania, Hungary, and Italy, as well as ideologically motivated anti-Communist volunteers from other countries, including France, Spain, and Portugal.

GERMANY INVADES THE EAST

Invading the Soviet Union, Hitler's armies sought to destroy Stalin's Red Army in a series of massive encirclements. But German victories at Smolensk and Kiev, in which hundreds of thousands of Soviet soldiers were taken prisoner, failed to end Soviet resistance. Stopped outside Moscow in December, the Germans were driven back by a Soviet counter-offensive, but they were still in control of a vast area of Soviet territory, from the gates of Leningrad to the Crimea.



◁ **Russian winter**
The Wehrmacht experienced great difficulty in coping with the extreme winter conditions encountered in the Soviet Union. In December 1941, a German officer recorded temperatures of –38°C (–36.5°F) outside Moscow.

Early successes for Germany

In 1941, the Soviet Union was not in a very strong military position. The world's first Communist state had achieved rapid industrialization under its dictator Joseph Stalin, but in 1937–38, during Stalin's "Great Purge" campaign, a substantial percentage of senior Soviet army officers had been denounced as traitors and were shot, imprisoned, or dismissed. The Red Army's mediocre performance in the Winter War against Finland in 1939–40 had confirmed suspicions that, despite its large size, the army might suffer from poor morale and leadership. Stalin's brutal rule had certainly alienated many of the Soviet people, especially in Ukraine, where a famine killed millions in the 1930s.

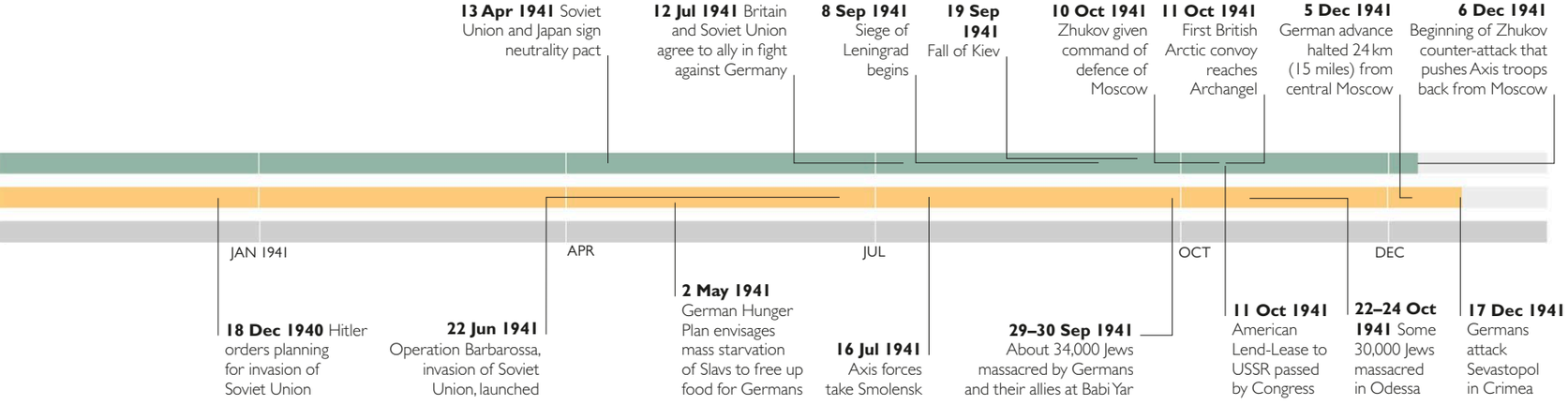
Despite ample warnings of an imminent invasion, Stalin's forces were not well deployed when the blow struck in June 1941. The first few months after the launch of Operation Barbarossa brought a series of catastrophic defeats for the Red Army, and Leningrad was placed under siege. The Germans were initially welcomed as liberators in many areas, such as Lithuania and western Ukraine, but brutal mistreatment soon alienated local populations.

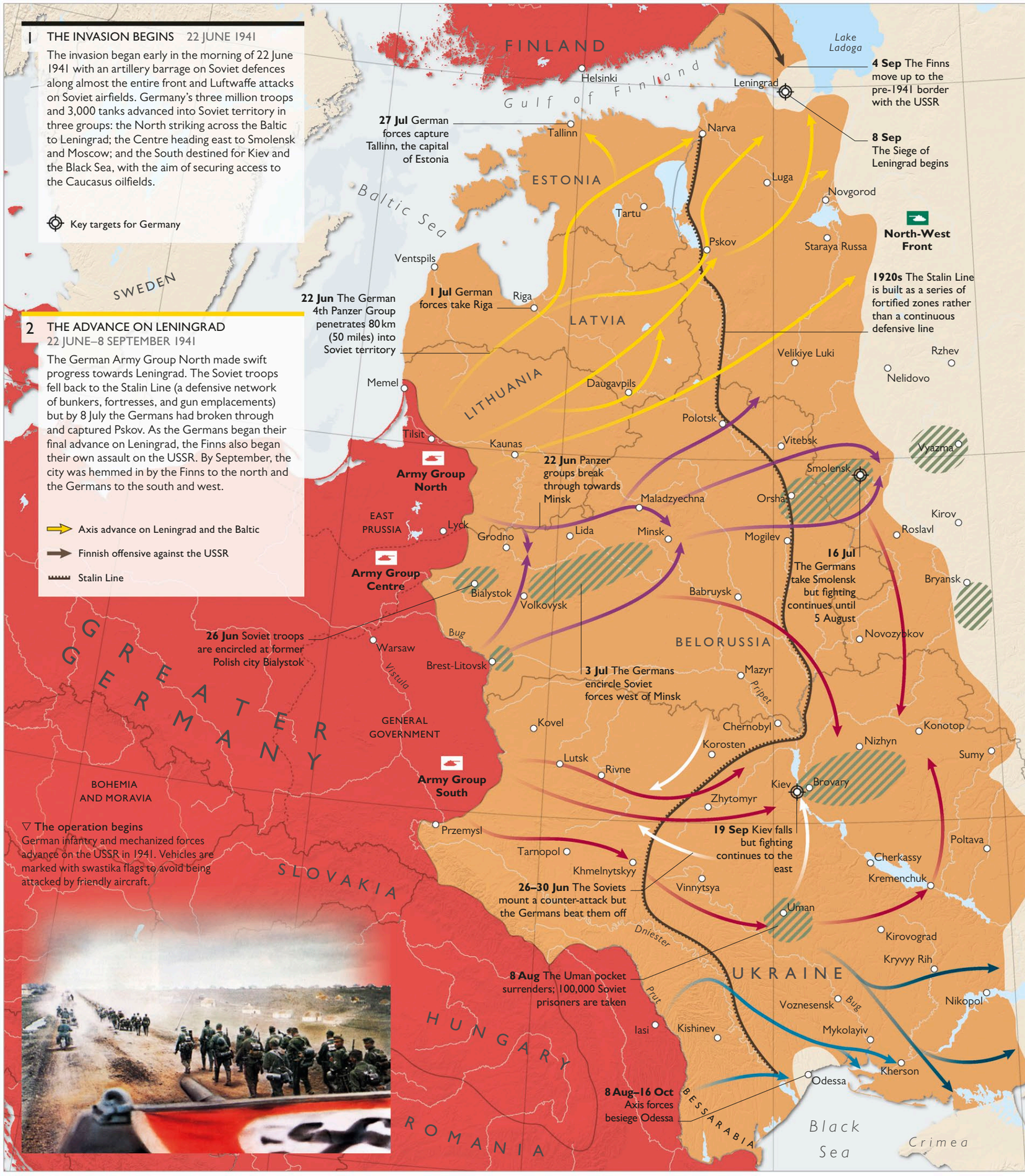
The tide turns

After its initial panic, the Soviet regime held together, shifting its heavy industry eastwards out of the invaders' reach, and using ruthless measures to compel its soldiers to fight in desperate counter-attacks. They also received military supplies from the Allied forces. The Red Army held out against Germany in Moscow, thwarting Hitler's plans to take the capital within four months. By the time winter had set in, the German army had been significantly weakened and were ill-equipped to stand the perishingly cold weather conditions. A spirit of determination set in among the Soviet people. Meanwhile, in Germany, as the army's casualty list lengthened, civilian morale for the first time showed signs of wavering.

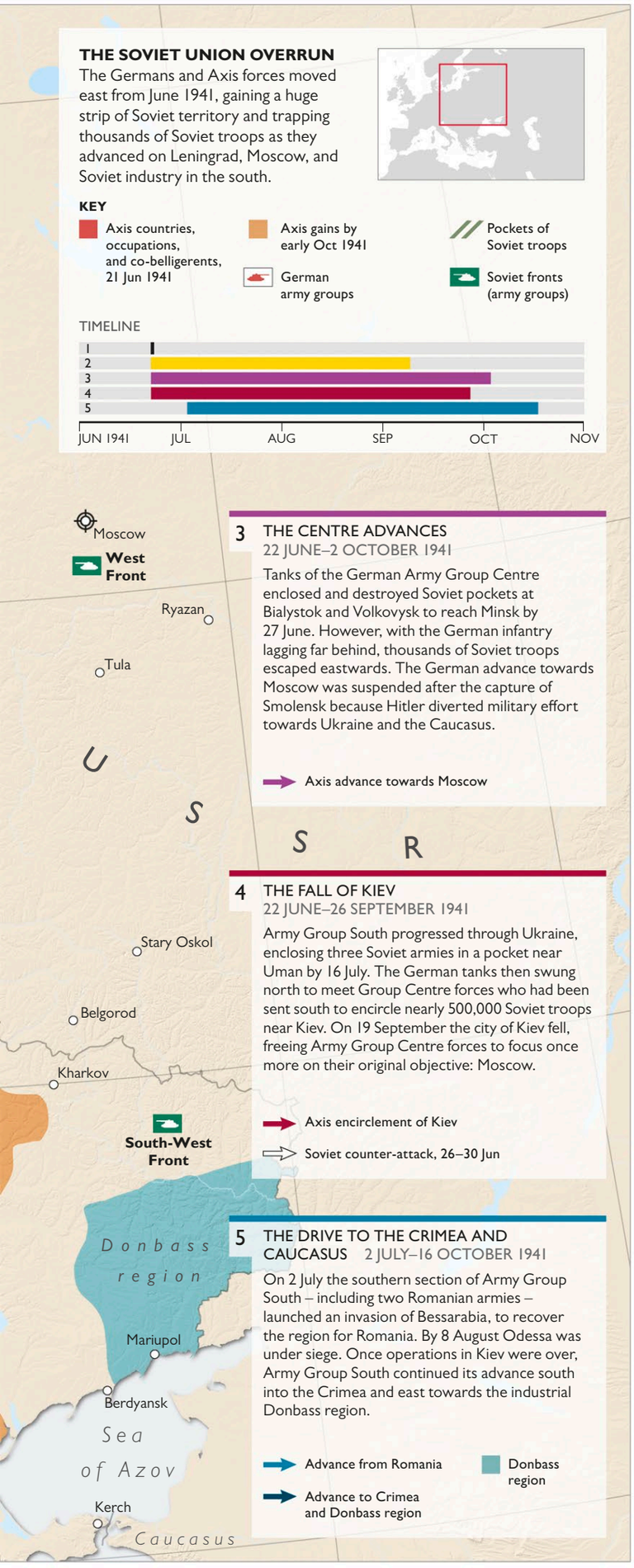
> *"Communism is a colossal danger for our future… This is a war of annihilation."*
>
> ADOLF HITLER, SPEECH TO HIS SENIOR OFFICERS, 30 MARCH 1941

▽ **Prisoners of war**
During Operation Barbarossa over two million Soviet soldiers were taken prisoner. Few survived captivity, most dying of starvation, maltreatment, exposure, and disease.





▽ The operation begins
German infantry and mechanized forces advance on the USSR in 1941. Vehicles are marked with swastika flags to avoid being attacked by friendly aircraft.



OPERATION BARBAROSSA

In June 1941, Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of Soviet territories. Ranged across a vast front that stretched 1,600 km (1,000 miles) from the Baltic to the Black Sea, Germany and its Axis allies advanced at an extraordinary pace, besieging Leningrad and reaching within striking distance of Moscow by early October.

The peace between Germany and the USSR that had been agreed in the Nazi–Soviet non-aggression pact of August 1939 (see pp.32–33) proved to be short-lived. Hitler believed the Slav people to be *Untermenschen* ("sub-humans") and wanted to take the USSR's vast territories for *Lebensraum* ("living space") for Germans. Operation Barbarossa, named after the Holy Roman Emperor who pursued German dominance in Europe, was Hitler's plan to invade the USSR with three million Germans and one million men from Axis Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Italy; Finland joined as a co-belligerent.

The German commanders were confident that Operation Barbarossa would be over quickly; they thought the Red Army was weak, and that German air power would provide a superior edge. The campaign did indeed start well: by July, the Germans had advanced 640 km (400 miles) and defeated large groups of Soviet forces around Minsk and Smolensk. The Red Army suffered enormous losses as Stalin refused to acknowledge the extent of the danger and willingly sacrificed men in defence of the cities.

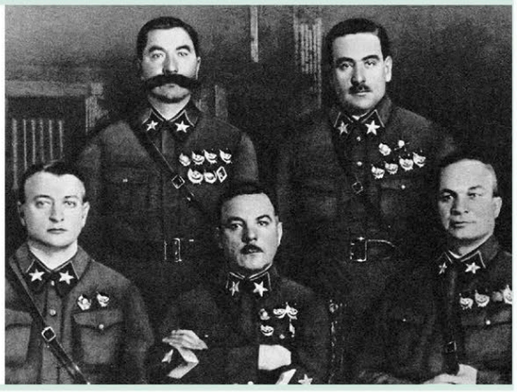
By October, Kiev had fallen, Leningrad was surrounded with the help of the Finns (see pp.94–95), and Axis forces had reached the Crimea. However, the German troops were exhausted, their supply lines were stretched and, as they prepared to advance on Moscow, they were about to face the deadly cold of a Russian winter.

"The ideology that dominates us is in diametrical contradiction to that of Soviet Russia."

ADOLF HITLER, MAY 1935

STALIN'S PARANOIA AND PURGE OF THE ARMY

By the time of the German invasion in 1941, the Red Army was fatally short of experienced personnel; only a quarter of its officers had been in post for over a year. Paranoid about political opponents, Stalin had embarked on a Great Purge of the Communist party in 1936. By 1939, three of the five Marshals of the Soviet Union (right) were dead, along with hundreds of army officers.



GERMANY AND USSR AT HOME

Germany and the USSR both geared their economies to meet the demands of total war. The Soviets were more effective, manufacturing weapons that were cheaper and easier to make than those produced by the Germans.

△ **Fighting for the fatherland**
Armbands such as this were issued to members of the *Volkssturm* ("People's Militia"), a German militia formed of civilians conscripted into service.

The Soviet people suffered extreme deprivation as they fought what was christened the "Great Patriotic War". A ruthless focus on arms production meant that most civilians lived in near-starvation, working a 66-hour week while receiving half the rations of their German counterparts. At least 18 million civilians died, but a mixture of coercion, hatred for the "Fascist enemy", and Russian nationalism kept the people working.

In Germany, despite superior resources, production did not match the pace of the Soviets until the war industry was reorganized in 1942 (see pp.174–75). After this, German output rose steeply, with women playing an increasingly important role. Rationing was introduced from 1939, but privations increased from 1943 as Allied bombing raids intensified and disrupted food supplies. The civilian death toll rose, and millions were evacuated from German cities.

Dictatorships at war

The two totalitarian regimes both conducted forced population transfers. Germany imported more than 7 million civilians and prisoners of war from the occupied countries for forced labour, while the USSR transported hundreds of factories and their workers east beyond the Ural mountains to protect their war industry from the German advance in the west. Both regimes also exploited slave labour from concentration camps and gulags (Soviet prison camps).

▷ **Life goes on**
Young girls play with their dolls in a Munich street, undeterred by the shells stacked in front of their homes. As the Allied bombing raids increased in number and intensity, thousands of children were evacuated from German cities to keep them safe.

Komsomol workers' brigade
A forewoman of a Komsomol (All-Union Leninist Young Communist League) workers' brigade supervises rifle assembly at a Soviet military plant. Arms production in both the Soviet Union and Germany reached its peak in 1944.

THE SIEGE OF LENINGRAD

One of the most gruelling blockades in history, the siege of Leningrad saw hundreds of thousands of civilians perish as the Germans and their Finnish allies encircled the city, bombarding and starving its people for 872 days.

The German army advanced on Leningrad in August 1941, two months after their invasion of the USSR. By 8 September, the Germans in the south and the Finns in the north began closing in on the city. They severed all rail routes and land routes, cutting the city's supply lines.

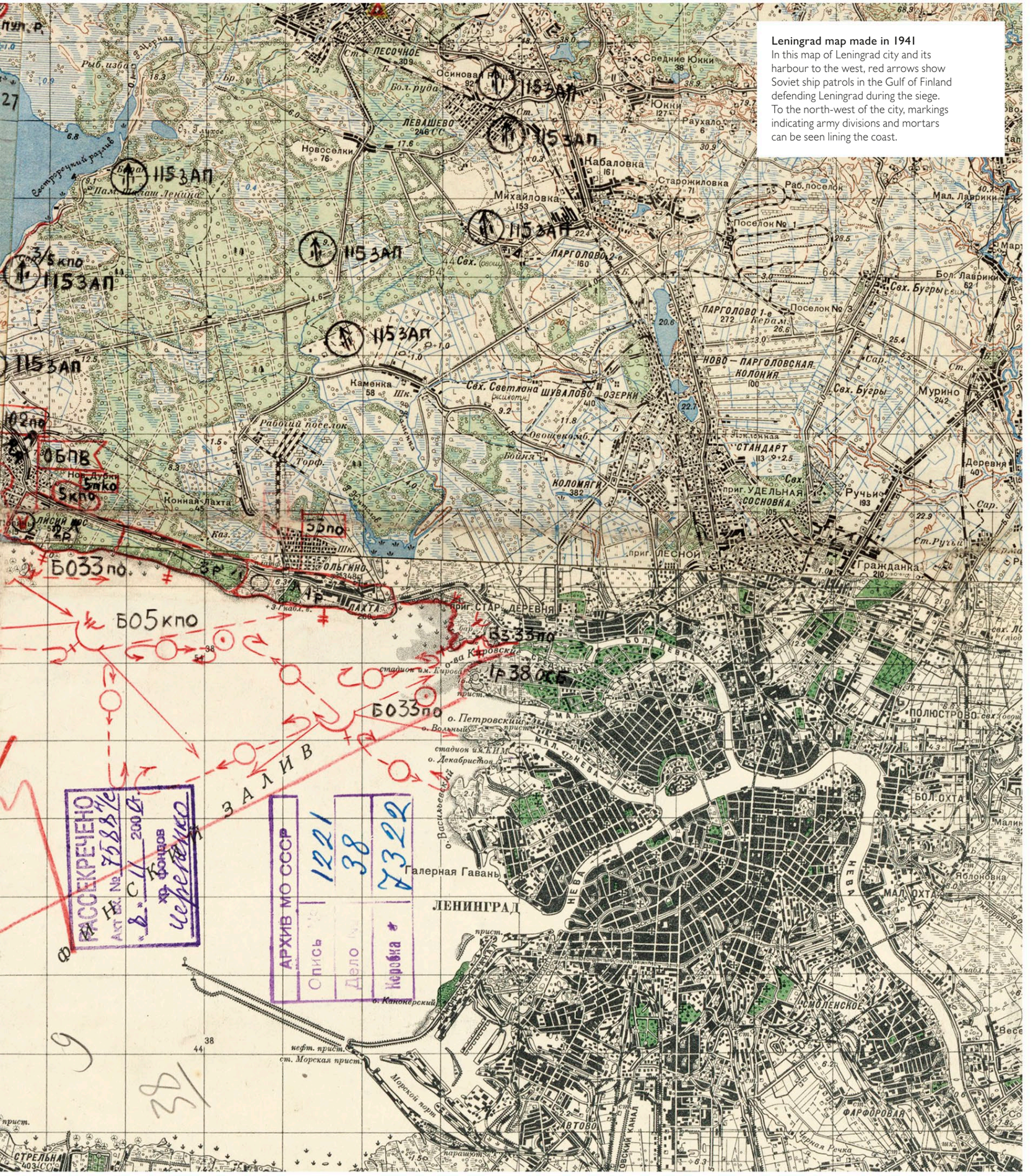
In late September, Hitler changed tactics and issued orders to besiege Leningrad, to bombard and starve the people rather than accept surrender, and to raze the city to the ground. For over two years, heavy artillery fire and aerial bombing destroyed Leningrad's infrastructure, and an estimated 650,000 people died from artillery attacks, air raids, starvation, disease, and hypothermia.

Survival against the odds

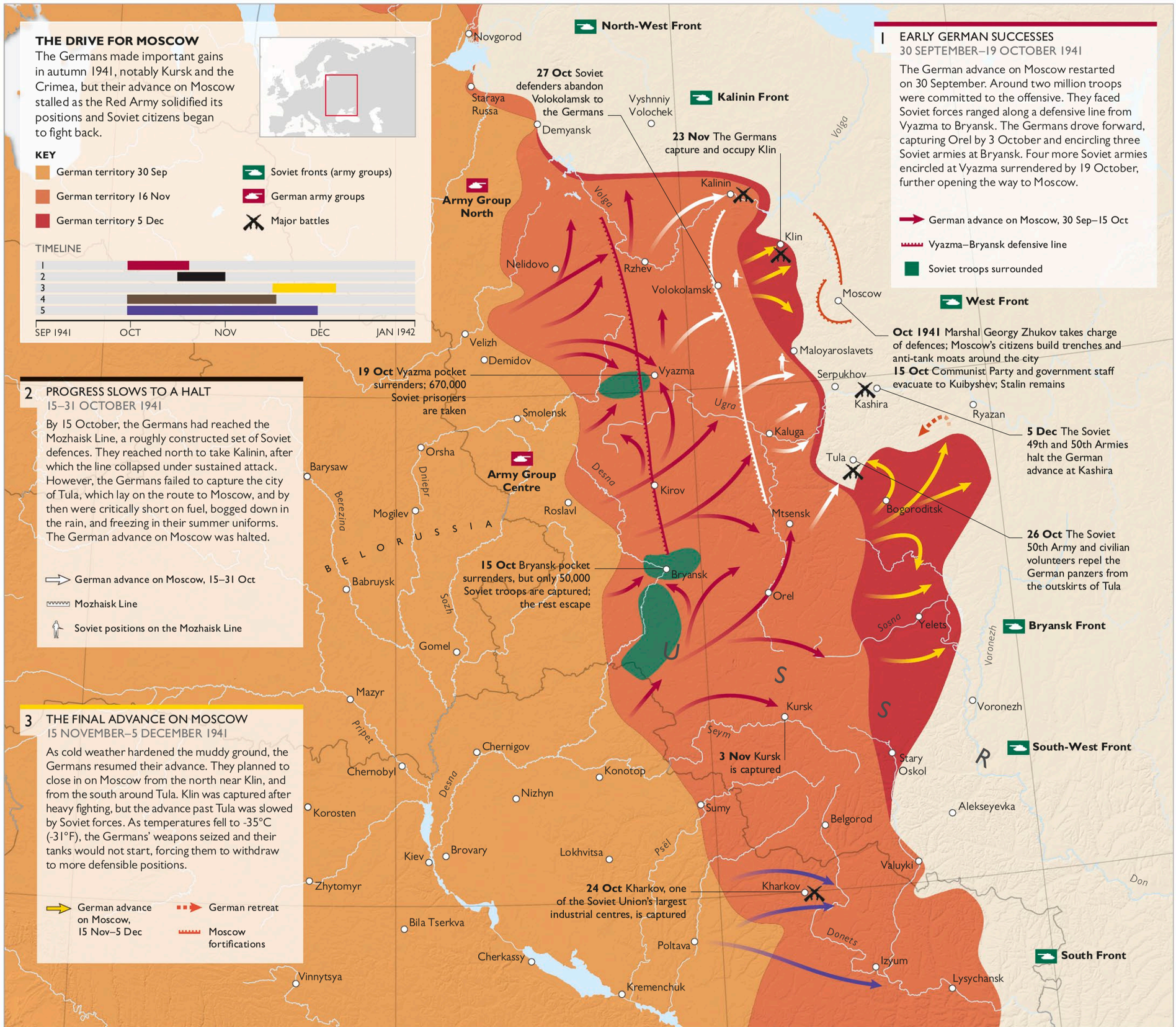
Cut off from its major supply routes, Leningrad's survival depended entirely on Lake Ladoga to the northeast, the only means by which supplies could reach the city from elsewhere in the Soviet Union. Each summer, barges carried food, fuel, and munitions across the lake to the city. Each winter, when the lake froze over, provisions were driven across it on narrow and dangerous ice roads. Known as the "Road of Life", the route was also the main evacuation route for over one million civilians escaping the starving city. Soviet anti-aircraft artillery and fighter planes protected the road against attack, but as the Germans regularly attacked convoys, travel was still dangerous.

Soviet forces made several attempts to break the blockade. An advance by the Leningrad and Volkhov Fronts in August–October 1942 ended in stalemate, but in Operation Iskra ("Spark") in January 1943, the Soviets broke through German lines to create a corridor to the city on the southern shore of Lake Ladoga. A railway was built in the corridor, providing faster transport than the Lake Lagoda routes. In January 1944, the Soviets finally broke the blockade. They drove out the Germans and recaptured the Moscow–Leningrad railway on 27 January, ending the 872-day siege. In 1945, the city was awarded the Order of Lenin and in 1965 it was given the title the Hero City of the Soviet Union.

◁ **Attacking the city**
Soldiers of the Wehrmacht observe German attacks on Leningrad's defensive line in late 1941.



Leningrad map made in 1941
In this map of Leningrad city and its harbour to the west, red arrows show Soviet ship patrols in the Gulf of Finland defending Leningrad during the siege. To the north-west of the city, markings indicating army divisions and mortars can be seen lining the coast.


THE DRIVE FOR MOSCOW
The Germans made important gains in autumn 1941, notably Kursk and the Crimea, but their advance on Moscow stalled as the Red Army solidified its positions and Soviet citizens began to fight back.
KEY
German territory 30 Sep
German territory 16 Nov
German territory 5 Dec
Soviet fronts (army groups)
German army groups
Major battles
TIMELINE
1
2
3
4
5
SEP 1941
OCT
NOV
DEC
JAN 1942
1 EARLY GERMAN SUCCESSES
30 SEPTEMBER–19 OCTOBER 1941
The German advance on Moscow restarted on 30 September. Around two million troops were committed to the offensive. They faced Soviet forces ranged along a defensive line from Vyazma to Bryansk. The German forces drove forward, capturing Orel by 3 October and encircling three Soviet armies at Bryansk. Four more Soviet armies encircled at Vyazma surrendered by 19 October, further opening the way to Moscow.
German advance on Moscow, 30 Sep–15 Oct
Vyazma–Bryansk defensive line
Soviet troops surrounded
2 PROGRESS SLOWS TO A HALT
15–31 OCTOBER 1941
By 15 October, the Germans had reached the Mozhaisk Line, a roughly constructed set of Soviet defences. They reached north to take Kalinin, after which the line collapsed under sustained attack. However, the Germans failed to capture the city of Tula, which lay on the route to Moscow, and by then were critically short on fuel, bogged down in the rain, and freezing in their summer uniforms. The German advance on Moscow was halted.
German advance on Moscow, 15–31 Oct
Mozhaisk Line
Soviet positions on the Mozhaisk Line
3 THE FINAL ADVANCE ON MOSCOW
15 NOVEMBER–5 DECEMBER 1941
As cold weather hardened the muddy ground, the Germans resumed their advance. They planned to close in on Moscow from the north near Klin, and from the south around Tula. Klin was captured after heavy fighting, but the advance past Tula was slowed by Soviet forces. As temperatures fell to -35°C (-31°F), the Germans' weapons seized and their tanks would not start, forcing them to withdraw to more defensible positions.
German advance on Moscow, 15 Nov–5 Dec
German retreat
Moscow fortifications
North-West Front
Kalinin Front
West Front
Bryansk Front
South-West Front
South Front
Army Group North
Army Group Centre
27 Oct Soviet defenders abandon Volokolamsk to the Germans
23 Nov The Germans capture and occupy Klin
Oct 1941 Marshal Georgy Zhukov takes charge of defences; Moscow's citizens build trenches and anti-tank moats around the city
15 Oct Communist Party and government staff evacuate to Kuibyshev; Stalin remains
5 Dec The Soviet 49th and 50th Armies halt the German advance at Kashira
26 Oct The Soviet 50th Army and civilian volunteers repel the German panzers from the outskirts of Tula
19 Oct Vyazma pocket surrenders; 670,000 Soviet prisoners are taken
15 Oct Bryansk pocket surrenders, but only 50,000 Soviet troops are captured; the rest escape
3 Nov Kursk is captured
24 Oct Kharkov, one of the Soviet Union's largest industrial centres, is captured
Novgorod
Staraya Russa
Demyansk
Vyshnniy Volochek
Kalinin
Klin
Nelidovo
Rzhev
Volokolamsk
Moscow
Velizh
Demidov
Vyazma
Maloyaroslavets
Serpukhov
Kashira
Ryazan
Smolensk
Kaluga
Tula
Orsha
Barysaw
Mogilev
Roslavl
Kirov
Mtsensk
Bogoroditsk
Babruysk
Bryansk
Orel
Yelets
Gomel
Mazyr
Kursk
Voronezh
Chernigov
Chernobyl
Konotop
Stary Oskol
Nizhyn
Sumy
Belgorod
Alekseyevka
Korosten
Kiev
Brovary
Lokhvitsa
Valuyki
Zhytomyr
Kharkov
Bila Tserkva
Poltava
Izyum
Lysychansk
Cherkassy
Vinnytsya
Kremenchuk
Volga
Ugra
Desna
Dniepr
Berezina
Sozh
Pripet
Seym
Sosna
Voronezh
Psël
Donets
Don
B E L O R U S S I A
U S S R

◁ **Winter battle**
Soviet infantry launch an attack in December 1941. The German drive on Moscow became a retreat when it met with fierce Soviet resistance.

THE GERMAN ADVANCE ON MOSCOW

After the success of Operation Barbarossa, Germany's invasion of the USSR, Hitler launched Operation Typhoon, a renewed push on Moscow. He believed it would be "the last, great, decisive battle of the war". The campaign, however, ended in a retreat that dealt a serious blow to Hitler's plan to destroy the Soviet Union.

During Operation Barbarossa (see pp.90–91), the Germans considered Moscow less important than other strategic targets. The push on the capital was delayed by the advance into the Ukraine for resources – a source of dispute between Hitler and his generals – and recommenced only in late September 1941, by which time the heavy rains were turning the roads into quagmires. This, along with fuel shortages and a failure to replace damaged tanks, slowed German progress and sapped morale. Moreover, it seemed that despite the capture of millions of Red Army troops, the USSR had millions more in reserve. The Red Army was regularly replenished, and even joined by civilian volunteers. By 5 December 1941, the Germans had failed to capture Moscow, and winter was upon them. Unprepared for the bitter cold and fatally overstretched against a determined Red Army, their casualties mounted. By Christmas that year, over 100,000 German soldiers had frostbite and over 250,000 had died.

In the south, meanwhile, the Germans had succeeded in taking the Crimea, but their advance on the Caucasus was hampered, as in the north, by overstretched supply lines and exhausted troops. When Red Army soldiers recaptured Rostov at the end of November, they highlighted just how vulnerable the Germans really were.

EVACUATION OF SOVIET INDUSTRIAL AREAS

The German advance threatened Soviet industries producing vital ammunition (pictured above) and other war materiel. In 1941, the Soviets began to evacuate factories and their workforces to safety in Siberia and beyond the Ural mountains. Over 1,500 large plants were relocated.

MASSACRES IN THE EAST

The German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 brought millions more Jews under Hitler's control. Within weeks, special German units had begun to massacre the Russian Jews, killing up to one million in only five months.

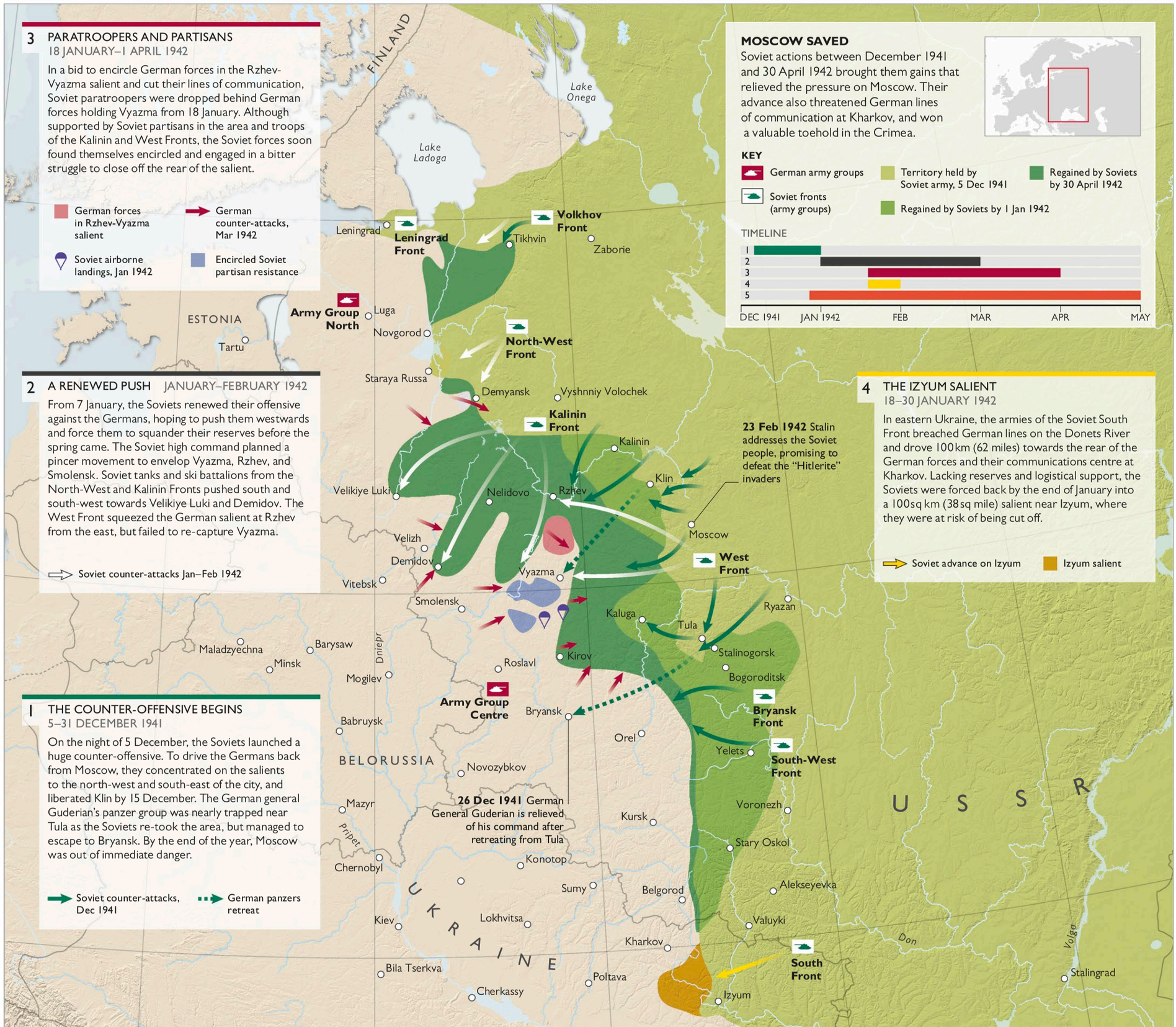
△ **Head of the SS**
Heinrich Himmler was in charge of the *Einsatzgruppen*, and in 1941 he was tasked with implementing Hitler's "Final Solution" to exterminate all European Jews.

The German forces that invaded the USSR as part of Operation Barbarossa (see pp.90–91) were accompanied by *Einsatzgruppen* – special units of the SS tasked with exterminating the Jews who now lived in German-occupied territory. Four groups consisting of around 4,000 men fanned out across the Baltic States, Belorussia, and Ukraine. The killings began at Minsk on 13 July 1941, when over 1,000 Jews were shot, and accelerated as summer progressed. The death squads often used ravines on the edge of large towns, where Jews were shot and the bodies pushed over the edge and buried.

On 26 September, the German military command in Kiev ordered the liquidation of the Jewish population. Over 33,000 Jews, believing they were being relocated out of the Kiev ghetto, were taken to the nearby Babi Yar ravine. There, an *Einsatzgruppe*, aided by Ukrainian collaborators, machine-gunned them down. It was the worst single massacre of a campaign that killed between 800,000 and one million Jews by the end of the year, when shootings were replaced by mobile gas vans and extermination camps using either carbon monoxide or hydrogen cyanide (Zyklon B).

△ **Operation Barbarossa**
A German armoured unit moves forward during the early stages of Operation Barbarossa – the military invasion of the Soviet Union. The rapid advance of the German army trapped hundreds of thousands of Jews in Nazi-controlled territory.

Post-massacre search
Relatives of massacre victims search for the corpses of their loved ones at Kerch, in the Crimea. In autumn and winter 1941, the *Einsatzgruppen* brutally murdered an estimated 7,000 Jews from Kerch and its surroundings.


3 PARATROOPERS AND PARTISANS
18 JANUARY–1 APRIL 1942
In a bid to encircle German forces in the Rzhev-Vyazma salient and cut their lines of communication, Soviet paratroopers were dropped behind German forces holding Vyazma from 18 January. Although supported by Soviet partisans in the area and troops of the Kalinin and West Fronts, the Soviet forces soon found themselves encircled and engaged in a bitter struggle to close off the rear of the salient.
German forces in Rzhev-Vyazma salient
German counter-attacks, Mar 1942
Soviet airborne landings, Jan 1942
Encircled Soviet partisan resistance
2 A RENEWED PUSH JANUARY–FEBRUARY 1942
From 7 January, the Soviets renewed their offensive against the Germans, hoping to push them westwards and force them to squander their reserves before the spring came. The Soviet high command planned a pincer movement to envelop Vyazma, Rzhev, and Smolensk. Soviet tanks and ski battalions from the North-West and Kalinin Fronts pushed south and south-west towards Velikiye Luki and Demidov. The West Front squeezed the German salient at Rzhev from the east, but failed to re-capture Vyazma.
Soviet counter-attacks Jan–Feb 1942
1 THE COUNTER-OFFENSIVE BEGINS
5–31 DECEMBER 1941
On the night of 5 December, the Soviets launched a huge counter-offensive. To drive the Germans back from Moscow, they concentrated on the salients to the north-west and south-east of the city, and liberated Klin by 15 December. The German general Guderian's panzer group was nearly trapped near Tula as the Soviets re-took the area, but managed to escape to Bryansk. By the end of the year, Moscow was out of immediate danger.
Soviet counter-attacks, Dec 1941
German panzers retreat
MOSCOW SAVED
Soviet actions between December 1941 and 30 April 1942 brought them gains that relieved the pressure on Moscow. Their advance also threatened German lines of communication at Kharkov, and won a valuable toehold in the Crimea.
KEY
German army groups
Soviet fronts (army groups)
Territory held by Soviet army, 5 Dec 1941
Regained by Soviets by 1 Jan 1942
Regained by Soviets by 30 April 1942
TIMELINE
1
2
3
4
5
DEC 1941
JAN 1942
FEB
MAR
APR
MAY
4 THE IZYUM SALIENT
18–30 JANUARY 1942
In eastern Ukraine, the armies of the Soviet South Front breached German lines on the Donets River and drove 100 km (62 miles) towards the rear of the German forces and their communications centre at Kharkov. Lacking reserves and logistical support, the Soviets were forced back by the end of January into a 100 sq km (38 sq mile) salient near Izyum, where they were at risk of being cut off.
Soviet advance on Izyum
Izyum salient
23 Feb 1942 Stalin addresses the Soviet people, promising to defeat the "Hitlerite" invaders
26 Dec 1941 German General Guderian is relieved of his command after retreating from Tula
FINLAND
Lake Onega
Lake Ladoga
Leningrad
Leningrad Front
Volkhov Front
Tikhvin
Zaborie
ESTONIA
Tartu
Army Group North
Luga
Novgorod
North-West Front
Staraya Russa
Demyansk
Vyshnniy Volochek
Kalinin Front
Kalinin
Klin
Velikiye Luki
Nelidovo
Rzhev
Moscow
Velizh
Demidov
Vyazma
West Front
Vitebsk
Smolensk
Kaluga
Ryazan
Tula
Maladzyechna
Barysaw
Minsk
Dniepr
Kirov
Stalinogorsk
Roslavl
Bogoroditsk
Mogilev
Army Group Centre
Bryansk
Bryansk Front
Babruysk
Orel
Yelets
South-West Front
BELORUSSIA
Novozybkov
Mazyr
Voronezh
Kursk
Pripet
Stary Oskol
Konotop
Chernobyl
Sumy
Belgorod
Alekseyevka
Kiev
Lokhvitsa
Valuyki
UKRAINE
Kharkov
Don
Volga
Bila Tserkva
Poltava
South Front
Stalingrad
Cherkassy
Izyum
USSR

◁ **A call to arms**
Thousands of Soviet resistance fighters – or partisans – fought a guerrilla war in the German-occupied areas of the USSR, encouraged by propaganda posters such as this.

THE RELIEF OF MOSCOW

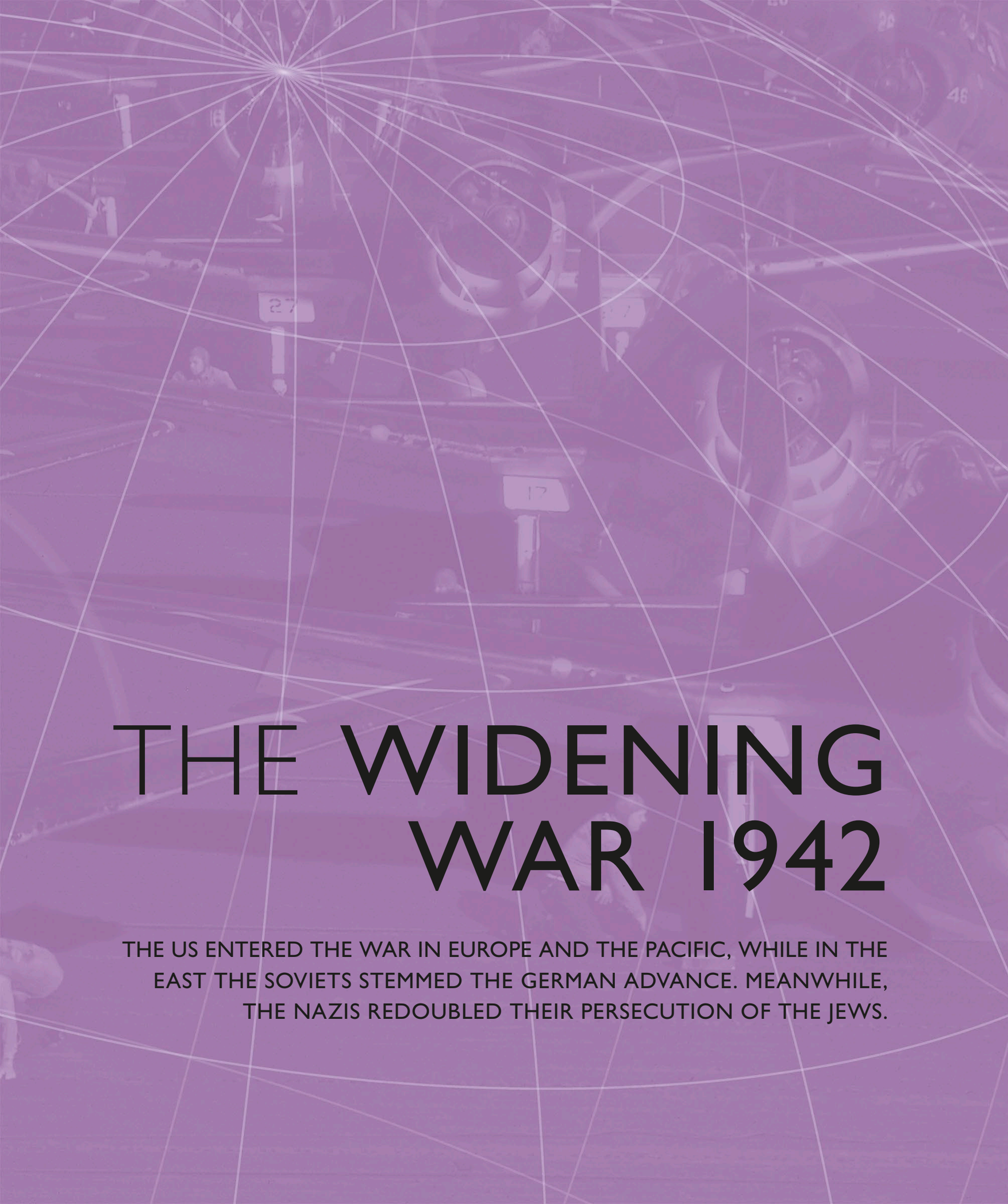
The Soviets launched a counter-offensive against the German invaders in December 1941, making early gains at several points along the vast Eastern Front and freeing Moscow from immediate danger. However, they could not force a full retreat, and the front remained largely static from February 1942 until a new German offensive began in June.

In late September 1941, Hitler had aimed to take Moscow before the start of the bitter Russian winter (see pp.96–97). Despite German successes at Vyazma and Bryansk on the way to the capital, Soviet opposition forced the German armies to stall and dig in for the winter around Moscow. The German commanders assumed that the Red Army was as depleted as their own. Stalin, however, had armies in reserve in Siberia, most of which he brought forward to bolster the Soviet forces on the Eastern Front.

From 5 December, the Soviet commanders launched a huge counter-offensive against the Germans, with operations running along the whole front. To the north, the Volkhov Front managed to regain the strategically important town of Tikhvin, which eased the supply routes to besieged Leningrad (see pp.94–95). Near Moscow, the German salients around Klin and Tula were quickly pushed back, but it took longer to shift the Germans away from the centre of the front. To the south, the Red Army re-took Kerch in the Crimea and created a substantial salient at Izyum. The Germans, under orders to defend their positions, continued to fight and made several assaults in March; by April the Soviet counter-offensive had all but ground to a halt. Both sides had suffered huge casualties. The Soviet forces had advanced more than 100km (62 miles) in some places, but they had not been able to force the Germans into a general retreat or re-take the German communications centres at Vyazma and Kharkov. The Soviet failure to follow through their counter-offensive ultimately led to a successful German offensive in the south, and to the Battle of Stalingrad (see pp.148–53).

MARSHAL GEORGY ZHUKOV
1896–1974

One of Stalin's most capable commanders, Zhukov organized the defence of Leningrad and Moscow, and led the counter-attack at Moscow in December 1941. At Stalingrad, his counter-offensive destroyed the German 6th Army in the city. It was Zhukov who accepted the German surrender in Berlin in 1945. He was made a Marshal of the Soviet Union in 1943, but was sidelined after the war because Stalin saw him as a threat.



THE WIDENING WAR 1942

THE US ENTERED THE WAR IN EUROPE AND THE PACIFIC, WHILE IN THE EAST THE SOVIETS STEMMED THE GERMAN ADVANCE. MEANWHILE, THE NAZIS REDOUBLED THEIR PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS.

△ **Man of influence**
Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto masterminded the surprise Japanese aircraft carrier attack on Pearl Harbor. However, he personally doubted that Japan could win a war against the US.

AMERICA AND JAPAN GO TO WAR

In December 1941, Japan embarked on war with the US, which was blocking its imperial ambitions in Asia. Initial military victories left the Japanese in control of a wide area of Asia and the Pacific, but it faced a fierce US fightback.

Throughout the 1930s, the US did not openly confront Japan about its increasing militarism in Asia, such as its invasion of China in 1937. However, following the rapid victory of Hitler's forces in Europe in 1940, Japan stepped up its aggression, recognizing the opportunity to seize Southeast Asia from the European colonial powers – the defeated French and Dutch, and the weakened British.

Hostilities on the rise

Increasingly committed to backing Britain against Nazi Germany, US President Roosevelt accepted responsibility for resisting Japan's expansion in Southeast Asia – a task the British could no longer perform. Japanese encroachment on French Indochina in 1940–41 met an aggressive response from the US, which placed Japan under economic blockade and demanded that it abandon its ambitions to establish an empire in Asia.

Japan's response was to push ahead with a plan for the conquest of Southeast Asia. They believed a surprise attack on the US fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, would remove the US temporarily from the equation, allowing Japan sufficient time to establish a far-flung defensive perimeter in the Pacific. The Japanese hoped their position would then be strong enough to deter the US from retaliation, leaving Japan securely in control of an Asian empire. However, this was a disastrous miscalculation. In reality, their surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 so outraged American popular opinion that the US was implacably committed to go to war against Japan and fight to the bitter end, regardless of cost or casualties. The following day, the US declared war against Japan.

Racial hatred of the Japanese was a feature of American attitudes to the Pacific War from the outset, and the mistreatment of Allied prisoners of war by the Japanese provided further fuel for anti-Japanese sentiment.

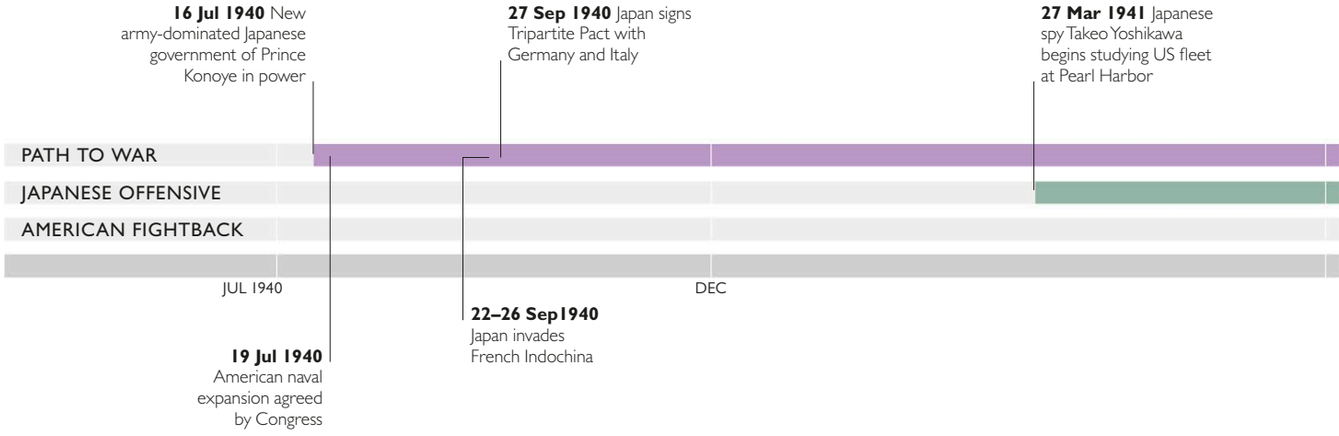
Germany declares war

Four days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hitler declared war on the US, bringing the US into the European conflict. Since Roosevelt saw US interests as more vitally threatened by the power of Nazi Germany than

◁ **Promoting war production**
A US propaganda poster links the Nazi swastika to the Japanese national flag, showing Germany and Japan as a common enemy.

JAPAN'S WAVE OF CONQUEST

For six months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese forces advanced victoriously through Southeast Asia and across the Pacific. Malaysia and Singapore, the Philippines, the Dutch East Indies, and Burma all fell to Japan, while landings in New Guinea threatened Australia. However, by the end of 1942 the battle of Midway and the extensive fighting at Guadalcanal, both in the Pacific, showed that the Americans were capable of defeating the Japanese both on land and at sea.



▷ **Zero fighter plane**
In 1941, the Japanese A6M Zero was probably the world's finest carrier-borne fighter, outclassing any aircraft operated by the US Navy.

▽ **Disaster at Pearl Harbor**
Fire spreads through the battleship USS *West Virginia* during the Japanese air strike at Pearl Harbor. Four American battleships were sunk in the attack.

"We will gain the inevitable triumph – so help us God."

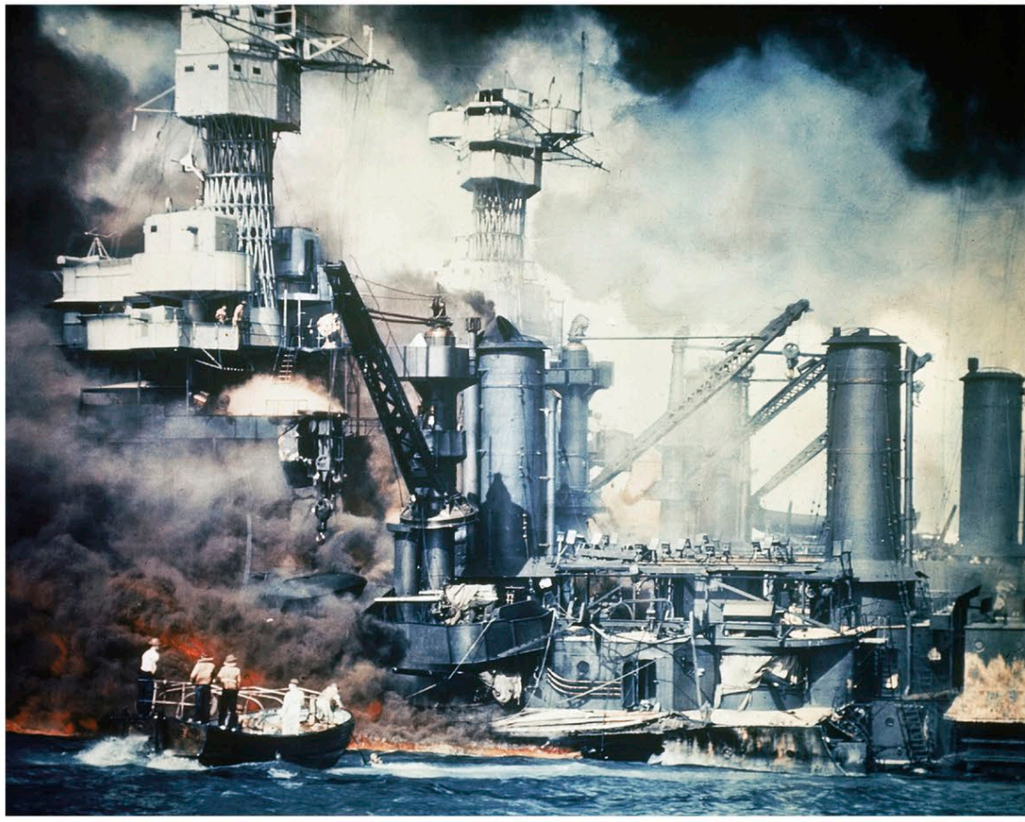
PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, 8 DECEMBER 1941

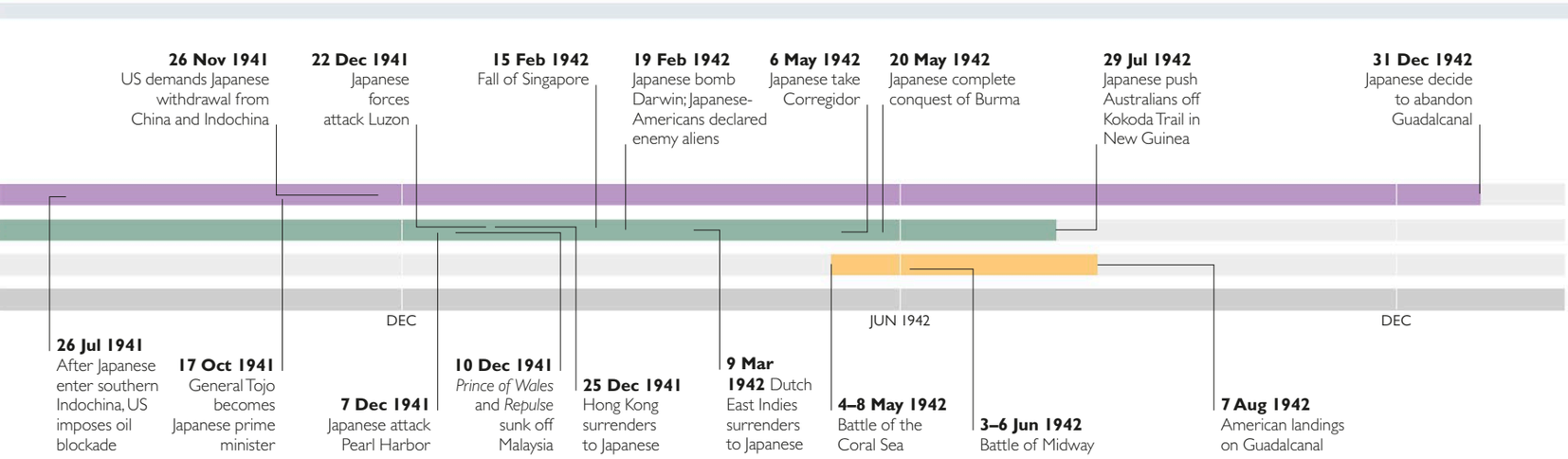
by Japanese aggression, he decided to prioritize the struggle against Germany in Europe, which slowed the American fightback in the Pacific.

In contrast to the Western Allies, who established joint commands and strategies, Japan and Germany fought two totally separate wars. Japan remained at peace with the Soviet Union, Germany's bitterest enemy, until August 1945, when the Soviet Union declared war on Japan after Japan refused to capitulate.

Successes and failures

The initial Japanese offensives in Southeast Asia were very successful against the colonial empires, which lacked both morale and military strength. The spectacle of the British surrender at Singapore, in particular, delivered a fatal blow to European racial prestige. However, in British India only a minority of activists in the nationalist independence movement sided with Nazi Germany and Japan. Overall, the Japanese failed to capitalize on potential support from their fellow Asians, proving at least as exploitative and oppressive as the European colonialists they supplanted.





6 PREPARATIONS FOR WAR 1941

After Japan occupied northern Indochina, then later southern Indochina, the US and other nations – notably the oil-rich Dutch East Indies – imposed sanctions on Japan. Deprived of 80 per cent of its oil supplies, in September 1941 the Japanese government devised a plan to secure a defensive perimeter to protect the oil and other raw materials Japanese conquests would soon supply. This would extend from Burma through the East Indies to the southern Pacific.

Planned Japanese defensive perimeter

1940 Mengjiang, the Japanese puppet state in Inner Mongolia, joins the Co-Prosperity Sphere

1940 The collaborationist government in Japanese-occupied China joins the Co-Prosperity Sphere

1940 The Japanese station troops in Hanoi and Haiphong and take over air bases and railway marshalling yards in northern Indochina

1941 The Flying Tigers are based in Rangoon, from where they attack Japanese targets in China

Mar–Aug 1945 Japan takes control in Indochina after the Axis defeat in France. Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia are declared "independent states" in the Co-Prosperity Sphere

1939 Japan takes Hainan and uses the island as a forward base for operations

1941 The Japanese invade southern Indochina

Late 1930s Japan heavily fortifies Saipan and other islands, breaking the League of Nations mandate

Sea of Okhotsk
USSR
TANNU-TUVA
MONGOLIA
MANCHUKUO (MANCHURIA)
Harbin
Khabarovsk
Vladivostok
Fushun
Beijing
CHINA
Sea of Japan (East Sea)
KOREA
Seoul
Pusan
Kyoto
Tokyo
JAPAN
Nagasaki
Nanjing
Shanghai
East China Sea
Chongqing
AFGHANISTAN
IRAN
Delhi
INDIA
NEPAL
Lhasa
BHUTAN
Kunming
Taihoku
Taiwan
Guangzhou
Calcutta
Mandalay
BURMA
Hanoi
Haiphong
FRENCH INDOCHINA
Hainan
Toungoo
Rangoon
THAILAND
Bangkok
Saigon
Manila
PHILIPPINES
Mariana Islands
Saipan
Guam (to US)
Yap
Palau Islands
Truk Lagoon
Caroline Islands
CEYLON
INDIAN OCEAN
BRITISH NORTH BORNEO
SARAWAK
MALAYA
Kuala Lumpur
Singapore
Sumatra
Borneo
Palembang
Celebes
Batavia
Java
DUTCH EAST INDIES
New Guinea
Bismarck Archipelago
Timor
Arafura Sea
Port Moresby
Coral Sea
AUSTRALIA

△ Imperial forces on the move
Japan's foreign policy was reported positively at home. This cover of *Asahi Graph*, a Japanese news magazine, shows Japanese troops in north China.

5 US AID TO CHINA 1941

As Japanese power in eastern Asia grew, the US became increasingly concerned. The US supported the Nationalist Chinese with arms, supplies, and finance. They also funded the establishment of the Flying Tigers – a squadron of 100 fighter planes flown by American pilots and led by US aviator Colonel Claire Lee Chennault. The Tigers began to engage the Japanese over China in December 1941.

Chinese Nationalist control 1937

Chinese warlord control 1937

Flying Tiger airfields in Burma

JAPANESE AMBITIONS

After the invasion of China, Japan looked elsewhere to expand its empire. By 1941, it became clear that Japan had substantial imperial and economic ambitions in Southeast Asia, particularly regarding the American and European colonies in the region.

Despite its size and its extensive empire, Japan had only limited access to vital raw materials. The oil, coal, steel, iron, and minerals it needed to drive its economy all had to be imported. Japan's conquest of Manchuria in 1931 (see pp.22–23) provided much-needed coal, but demand for oil, tin, and rubber had yet to be met. Japan's incursions into eastern Siberia in the 1930s were defeated by the USSR. The Japanese government thereafter looked towards the resource-rich European colonial territories in Southeast Asia.

Japan used discontent against the colonial powers to propose the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in 1940, promising "Asia for the Asiatics" and independence from oppression (see pp.222–23). Japan also allied with independent Thailand in June 1940, and began to plan for war in April–May 1941. It prepared for an invasion of Southeast Asia by occupying French Indochina in July 1941 – an act that prompted an economic embargo of Japan by the Western powers. Faced with impending oil shortages and potential economic collapse, Japan prepared for a larger war, planning its conquests and its defence of a greatly enlarged empire.

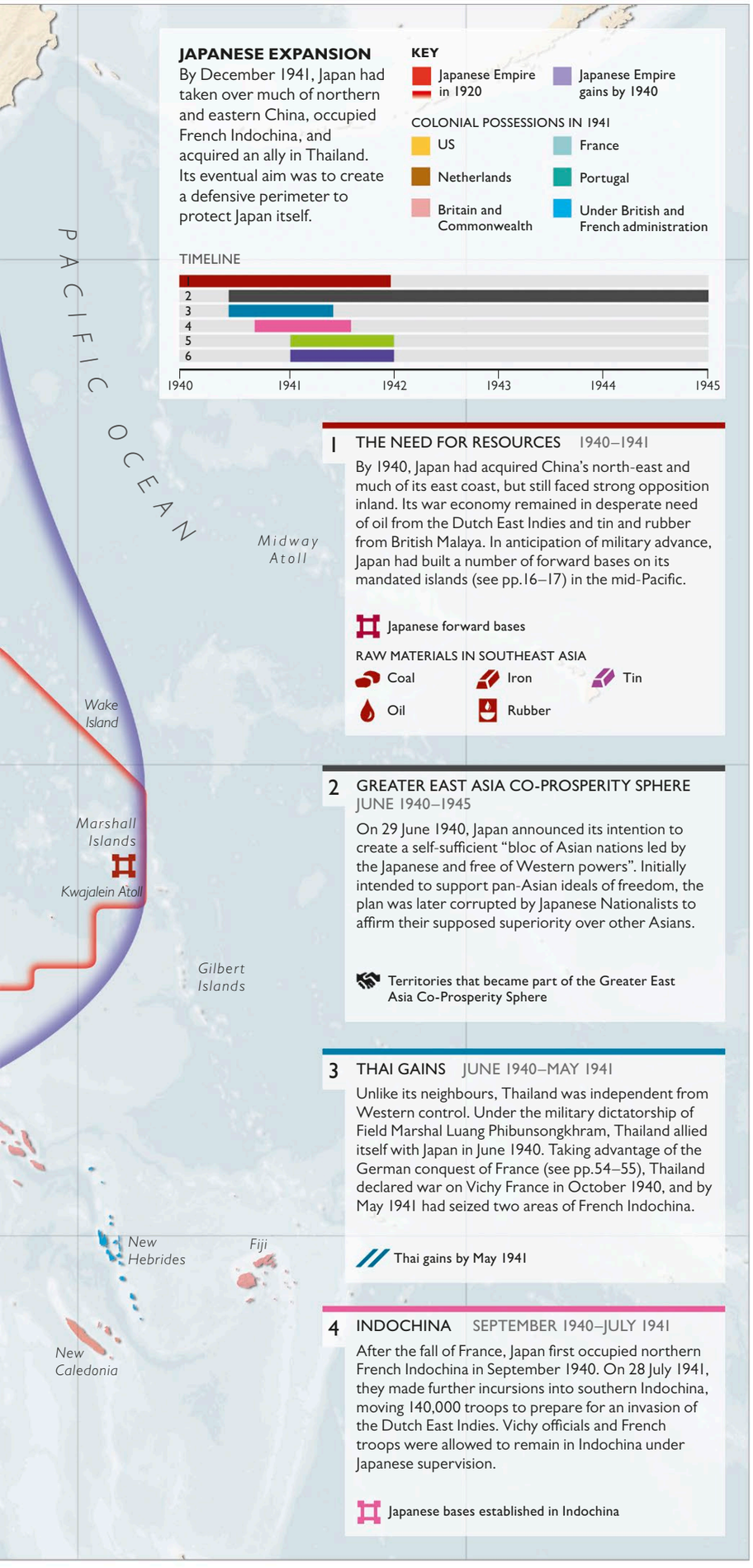
"I fear we would become a third-class nation after two or three years if we just sat tight."

PRIME MINISTER HIDEKI TOJO, 5 NOVEMBER 1941

THE ECONOMIC EMBARGO AGAINST JAPAN

In order to deter Japanese military expansion in China and Southeast Asia, the US, Britain, and the Dutch East Indies restricted and then ended sales of oil, iron ore, and steel to Japan. Without oil, the Japanese military would have quickly ground to a halt. The Japanese referred to these embargoes as the ABCD (American-British-Chinese-Dutch) encirclement. In April 1941 they began to draw up plans to seize resource-rich Malaya and the Dutch East Indies.

Dutch soldiers destroy oil reserves in Java



Ready for battle
Cadets from the Imperial Naval Academy, Etajima, near Hiroshima, undergo training in September 1941. They were probably prospective members of the *Kaigun Tokubetsu Rikusentai* – the Japanese equivalent of the Marines.

JAPAN GOES TO WAR

In July 1941, the US imposed sanctions on Japan in retaliation for their occupation of French Indochina, and Britain and the Dutch East Indies followed suit. For Japan, making concessions was not an option.

△ **Type 14 Nambu pistol**
This model was designed in 1925 and was used by officers of the Japanese army during World War II. It fired an 8mm round.

Faced with a trade embargo that threatened to strangle their economy, Japan's leaders came to the conclusion that war was the only option remaining open to them. As Admiral Osami Nagano, Chief of Staff of the Imperial Japanese Navy, declared in September 1941, "Since Japan is unavoidably facing national ruin whether it decides to fight the United States or submit to its demands, it must by all means choose to fight". The Japanese leadership also believed that time was against them, and that the longer they delayed in mobilizing for war, the smaller their prospects of success would be.

The Japanese war plan

Japan's leaders planned to strike in Southeast Asia in order to win control of the US-held Philippines, the oil-rich Dutch East Indies, and the British colonies of Malaya and Singapore. The Japanese recognized that such a move would almost certainly provoke an armed response by American forces, and so decided to take preventative action by planning a surprise attack on the US Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on 7 December 1941 (see pp.110–11). The Japanese intention was that, by turning the central and southwestern Pacific into an impregnable military bastion, they would force the US into fighting an island-by-island war of attrition, the cost of which would break the Americans' will to fight. However, the reality of the situation proved to be very different.

HIDEKI TOJO
1884–1948

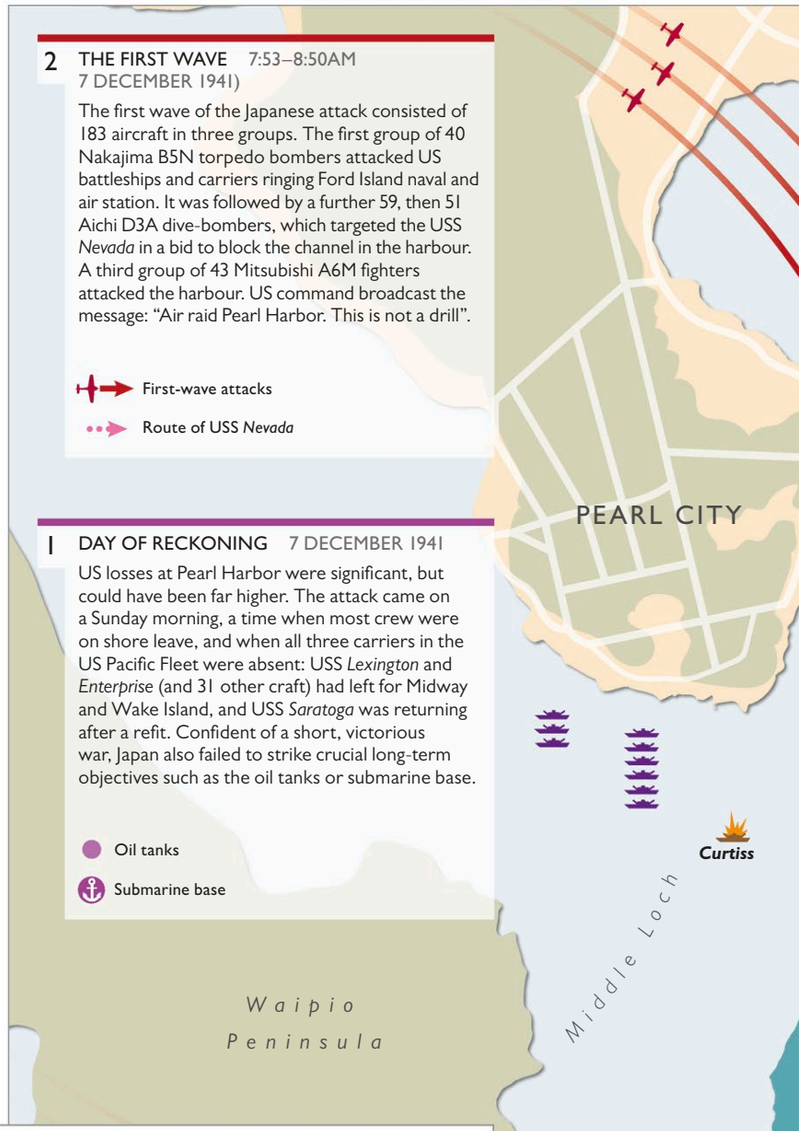
Born in Tokyo to a family of the former samurai caste, Hideki Tojo enlisted as a cadet in the Imperial Japanese Army in 1899 and rose to the rank of general. He went on to serve as prime minister of Japan from 1941 to 1944, and during this time he ordered the infamous attack on US forces at Pearl Harbor. At the end of the war he was arrested shortly after a botched suicide attempt and was tried for war crimes. He was executed in 1948.

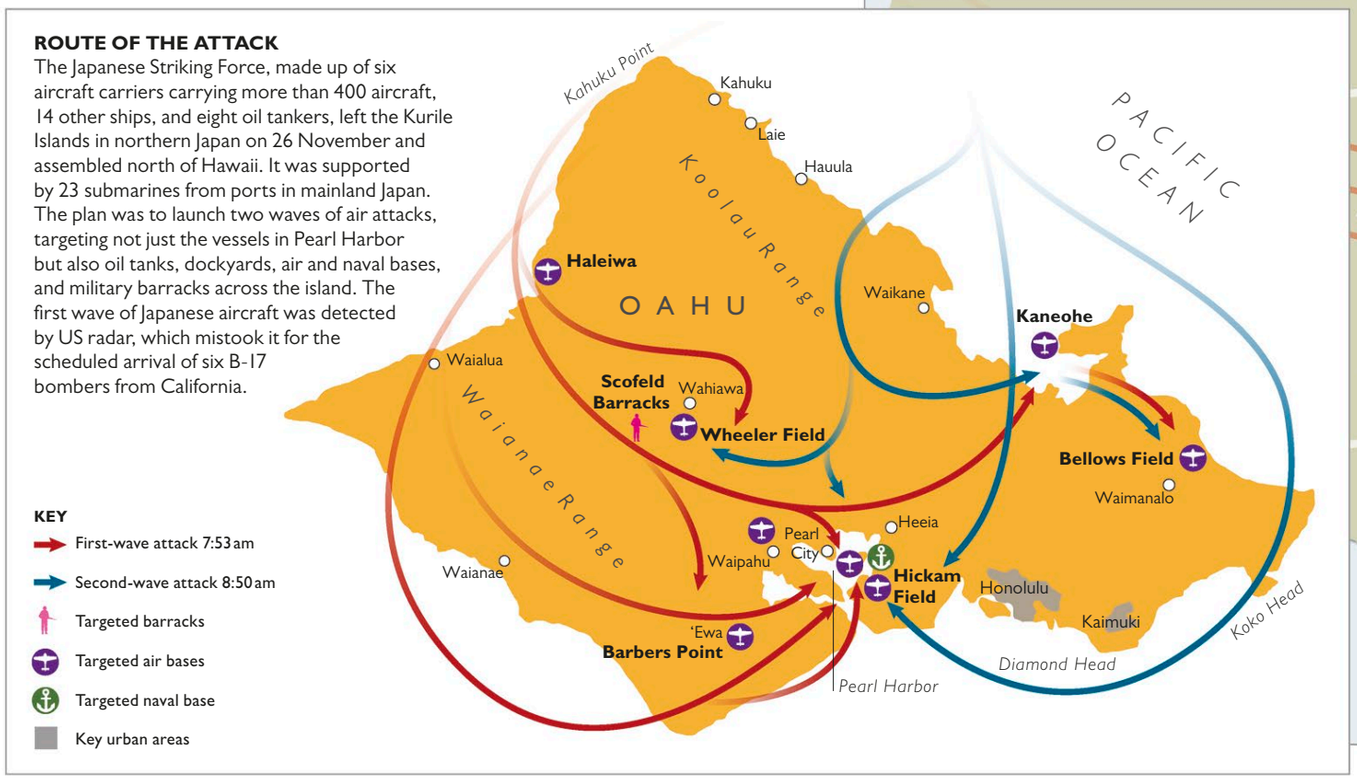
PEARL HARBOR

US president F.D. Roosevelt called 7 December 1941, the day Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, "a date which will live in infamy". At the time, US negotiations with Japan were still in progress and no declaration of war had been made. The attack transformed the war from a European battle into a worldwide conflict.

Tensions between the US and Japan had been rising since the invasion of Manchuria in 1931 (see pp.22–23). The subsequent expansion of Japanese influence in the region put the US on alert and prompted it to move its Pacific Fleet to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in 1940, as a deterrent. When Japan took control of Indochina in mid-1941 the US ceased all exports to the country, so Japan set its sights on the oil-rich Dutch East Indies. The US opened negotiations with Japan that summer in an attempt to improve relations, but no agreement was reached. The Japanese Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoe resigned on 16 October, to be replaced by a more hawkish military government under General Hideki Tojo. Final exchanges between the two sides proved fruitless, and on 1 December, Japanese Emperor Hirohito approved a "war against United States, Great Britain, and Holland".

Japanese strategists knew that the US base in Pearl Harbor was vulnerable and had made plans earlier in the year for a strike. Success would prevent the Pacific Fleet from interfering in the Japanese conquest of the Dutch East Indies and Malaya and buy time for Japan to increase its strength in the region. Japan hoped an attack would undermine American morale, forcing the US to seek a compromise peace. When the attack came, the Americans were unprepared, but the effect was the opposite of Japan's hopes. The US public became united behind a total war to the finish.





3 THE SECOND WAVE 8:50–9:30AM 7 DECEMBER 1941

The second wave consisted of 171 aircraft in three groups. The USS *Pennsylvania* was damaged and the USS *Nevada* forced to beach herself, but this time the US offered up far more effective resistance. A third attack wave was called off as the Japanese fleet was now in reach of US land-based bombers. The Japanese did not complete their objectives, and the US Navy recovered from the attack sooner than their opponents had hoped.

Second-wave attacks

USS *Pennsylvania* damaged

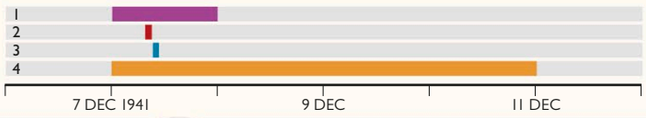
DANGER FROM THE AIR

The Japanese Striking Force left Japan on 26 November and assembled north of Hawaii. The first attacks came at 7:53 am on 7 December, and the second wave at 8:50 am. The US declared war on Japan the next day.

US ships at anchor or moored

Ford Island naval and air station

TIMELINE



4 THE AFTERMATH 7–11 DECEMBER 1941

The US Navy lost five battleships and one harbour tug; 13 other craft were damaged; 188 US aircraft were destroyed and 159 damaged; 2,335 personnel were killed and 1,143 injured. The Japanese suffered the loss of four midget submarines and 29 aircraft, with 64 people killed. The next day, 8 December, President Roosevelt declared war on Japan. In turn, Germany and Italy declared war on the US on 11 December.

Destroyed or sunk ships

Damaged ships

East Loch

7:53 am The first group of 40 torpedo bombers attacks from the north

'Aiea Bay

Hull

Dobbin

Detroit

Raleigh

Utah

Tangier

9:10 am USS *Nevada*, damaged in the first wave, gets under way before it beaches itself

PEARL HARBOR

Ford Island

US NAVAL AIR STATION

Nevada

Arizona

Vestal

Tennessee

West Virginia

Maryland

Oklahoma

California

Signal tower

Helena

Oglala

8 am 49 high-level bombers target battleships moored off Ford Island, sinking the USS *Arizona*, *California*, *Oklahoma*, and *West Virginia*, and hitting the *Nevada*

Southern Loch

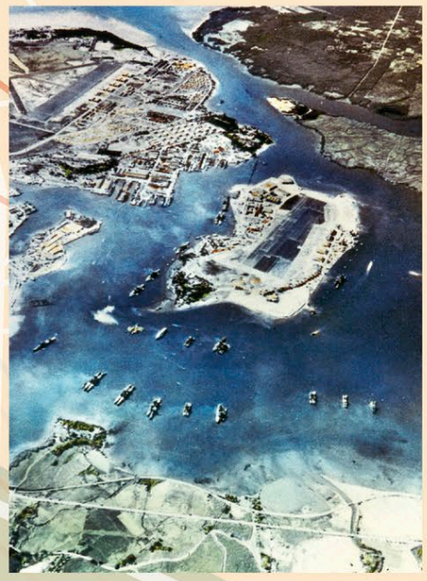
Shaw

Pennsylvania

9 am USS *Pennsylvania* is bombed; nine servicemen die

8:50 am A second wave of torpedo bombers attacks from the south

US NAVY YARD



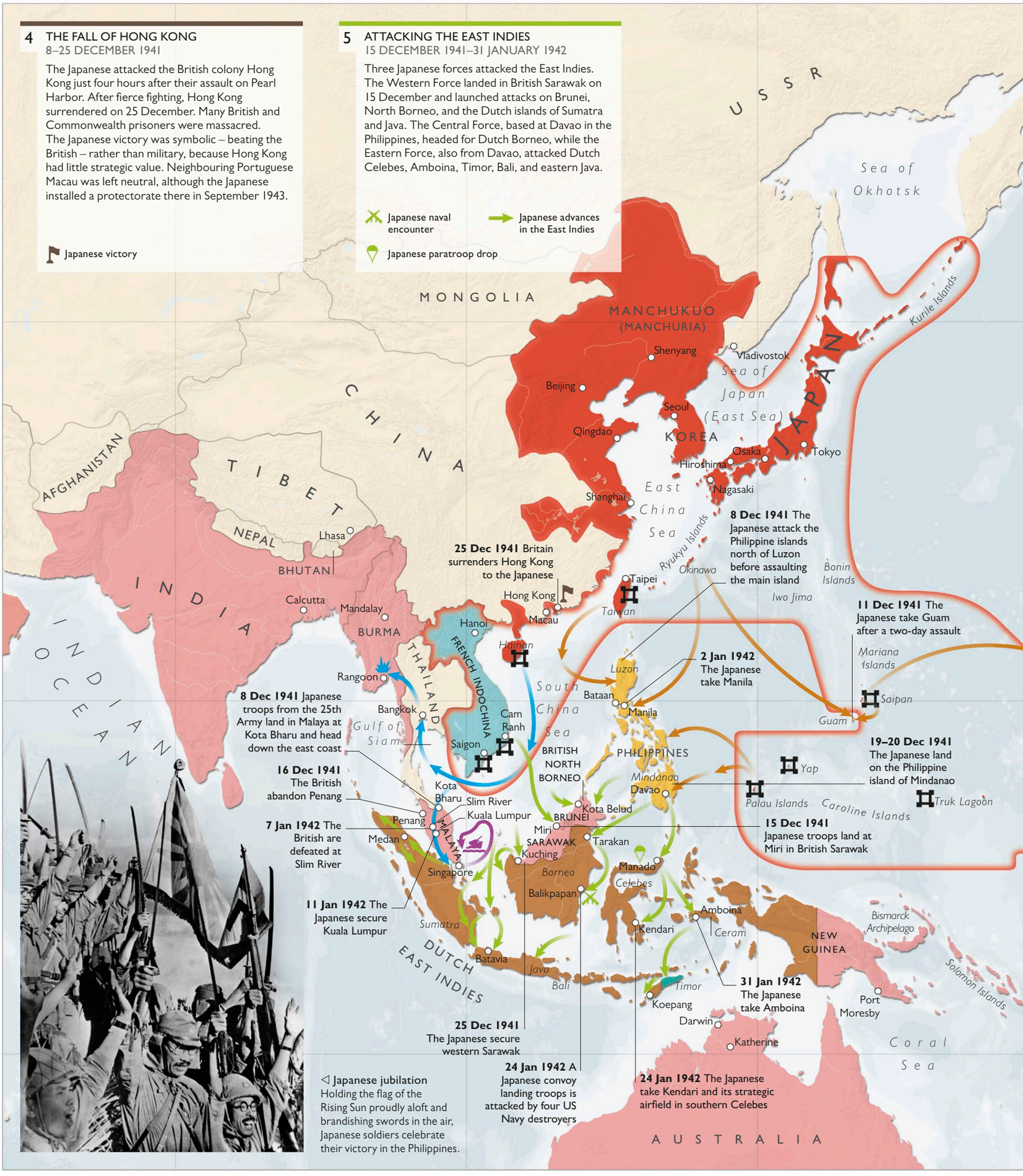
▷ **Raider's eye view**
This aerial photograph shows the US naval base and ships at Pearl Harbor on the morning of 7 December 1941, shortly before the attack began.

4 THE FALL OF HONG KONG
8–25 DECEMBER 1941

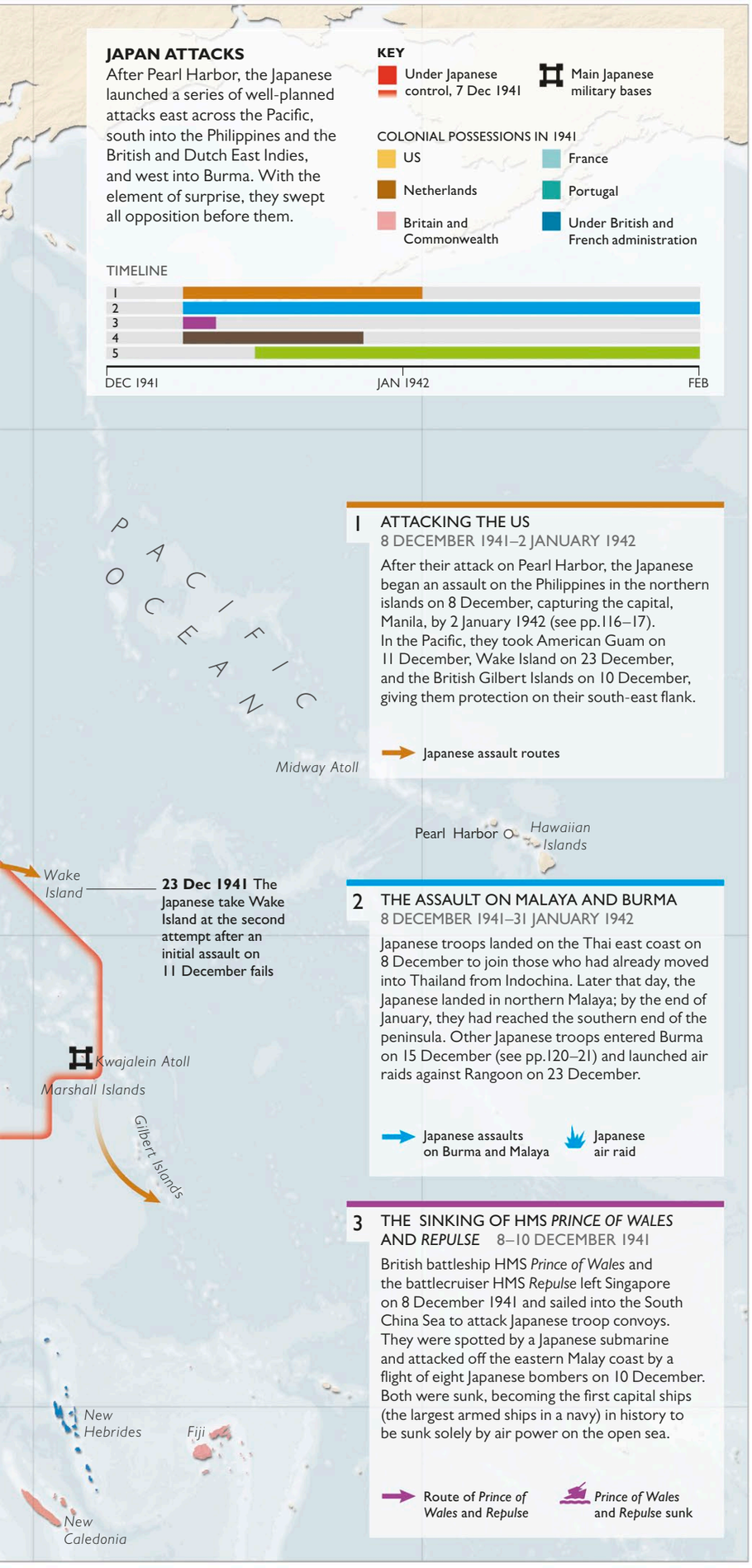
The Japanese attacked the British colony Hong Kong just four hours after their assault on Pearl Harbor. After fierce fighting, Hong Kong surrendered on 25 December. Many British and Commonwealth prisoners were massacred. The Japanese victory was symbolic – beating the British – rather than military, because Hong Kong had little strategic value. Neighbouring Portuguese Macau was left neutral, although the Japanese installed a protectorate there in September 1943.

5 ATTACKING THE EAST INDIES
15 DECEMBER 1941–31 JANUARY 1942

Three Japanese forces attacked the East Indies. The Western Force landed in British Sarawak on 15 December and launched attacks on Brunei, North Borneo, and the Dutch islands of Sumatra and Java. The Central Force, based at Davao in the Philippines, headed for Dutch Borneo, while the Eastern Force, also from Davao, attacked Dutch Celebes, Amboina, Timor, Bali, and eastern Java.



◁ **Japanese jubilation**
Holding the flag of the Rising Sun proudly aloft and brandishing swords in the air, Japanese soldiers celebrate their victory in the Philippines.



JAPANESE ADVANCES

The attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 marked the start of a campaign by the Japanese to extend their control throughout Southeast Asia and the western Pacific. Within days, they had launched a series of daring amphibious and airborne assaults.

A few days before the events of Pearl Harbor (see pp.110–11), Japanese troops had moved through Thailand, positioning themselves for planned actions. On 7 December, troop transports gathered in the Gulf of Siam ready for an assault on Malaya, which took place the next morning. The first attack on the Philippines occurred on the same day, with the British East Indies coming under attack a week later. By then, two British capital ships had been sunk in the South China Sea and Hong Kong was under assault. US-controlled Guam and Wake Island were quickly lost, the Dutch East Indies came under sustained attack in early January 1942, and by the end of January mainland Malaya was in Japanese hands.

American, British, and Dutch forces suffered heavy defeats, with many men taken prisoner or massacred by the Japanese. The Japanese attack was geographically wide, with air raids on Rangoon in Burma to the west and the capture of the Gilbert Islands in the Pacific to the east. It was also impeccably planned, with surprise and military experience giving the Japanese some easy victories.

"Japan was supreme, and we everywhere were weak and naked."

WINSTON CHURCHILL, *THE SECOND WORLD WAR*, 1950

THAILAND IN THE WAR

Thailand became increasingly authoritarian with the accession in 1938 of the pro-Fascist Luang Phibunsongkhram (right) as prime minister. A former field marshal who was pro-Japanese, Phibunsongkhram was pressured into allowing Japanese troops to pass through Thailand in late November 1941; however, on 8 December Japan issued an ultimatum and invaded anyway. Phibunsongkhram ordered an armistice and signed an alliance with Japan, undertaking to assist its war; he gained two states in Burma as a reward.

AMERICA AT WAR

With the onset of war, life in the US changed dramatically. Millions of men were conscripted, while at home industry geared up to provide necessities for the war effort, turning the country into what President Franklin D. Roosevelt christened "the arsenal of democracy".

△ **Patriotic duty**
A recruiting poster urges women to enrol as volunteer nurses. Around 74,000 served in the US Army and Navy in World War II.

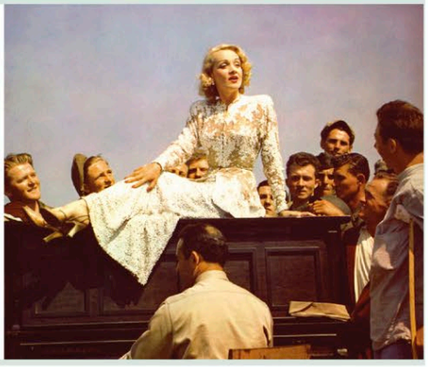
Following the US's entry into the war in December 1941 (see pp.110–11), Roosevelt used a series of War Power Acts to reorganize the economy and industry for total war. Everyday life across the US changed. Meat, sugar, butter, canned goods, petrol, fuel oil, clothes, and other commodities were all rationed, and civilians planted "victory gardens" to grow their own food. Americans were encouraged to save scrap metal for the war industries, and armament production soared. To fund the expense of waging a global war, US propaganda urged the public to buy war bonds and victory stamps. Meanwhile, anti-Japanese feeling led to the confinement of nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans in west-coast internment camps.

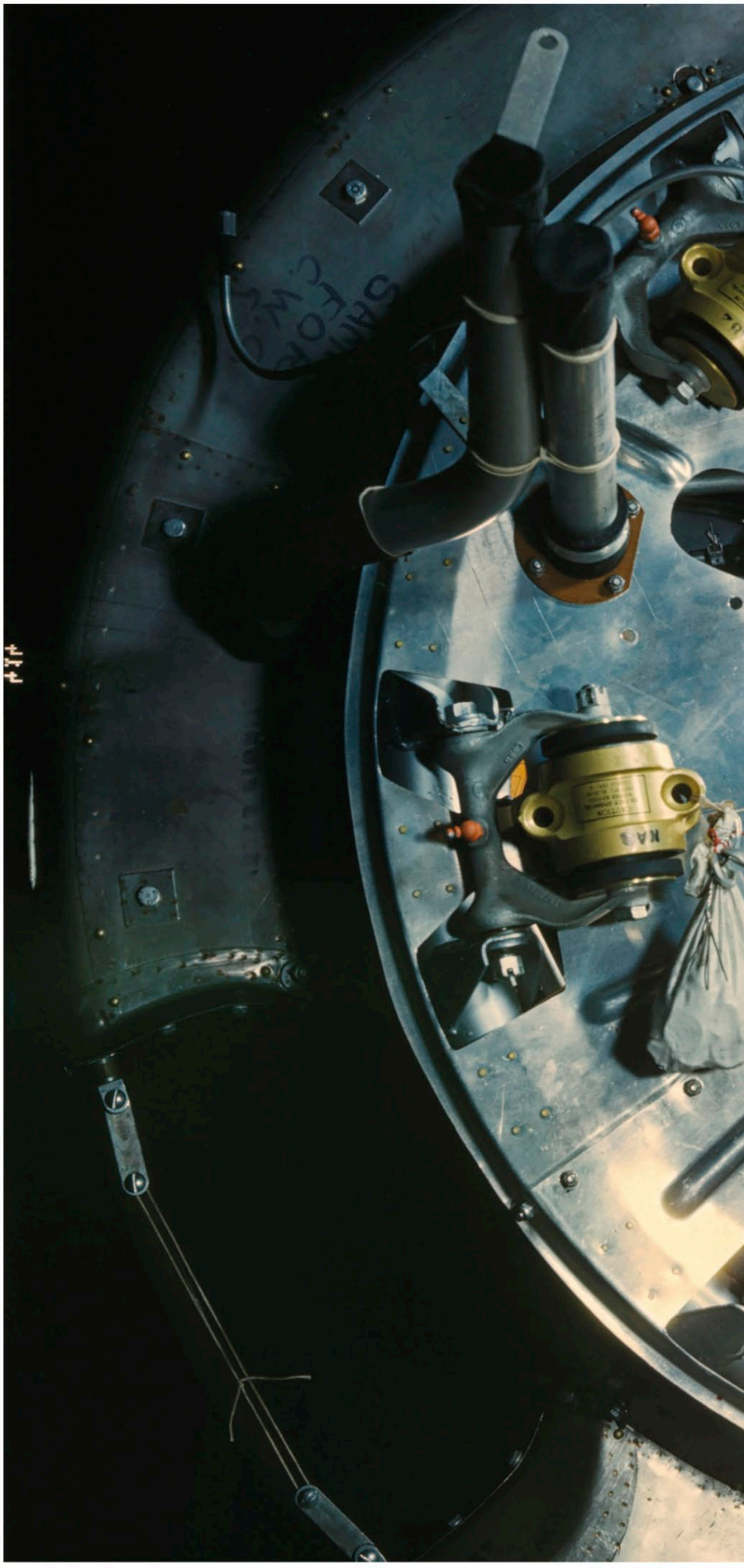
Changes in the workplace

To replace the men drafted into the armed forces, women joined the workplace in ever-increasing numbers. Many were enthusiastic about their new opportunities, some inspired by an advertisement that told them working in a war plant was "a lot more exciting than polishing the family furniture". The war also offered better jobs to thousands of African Americans, who moved from the south to work in the industrial cities of the north, midwest, and west. It was the start of the largest internal migration in US history. However, racial segregation was still in place, and race riots broke out in some urban centres.

HOLLYWOOD AT WAR

Hollywood played an important role in boosting national morale during the war. Film star and singer Marlene Dietrich (right), who in 1939 renounced her German citizenship and became a US citizen, often entertained the Allied troops. At home, Hollywood star power was used in the drive to raise funds for the war.





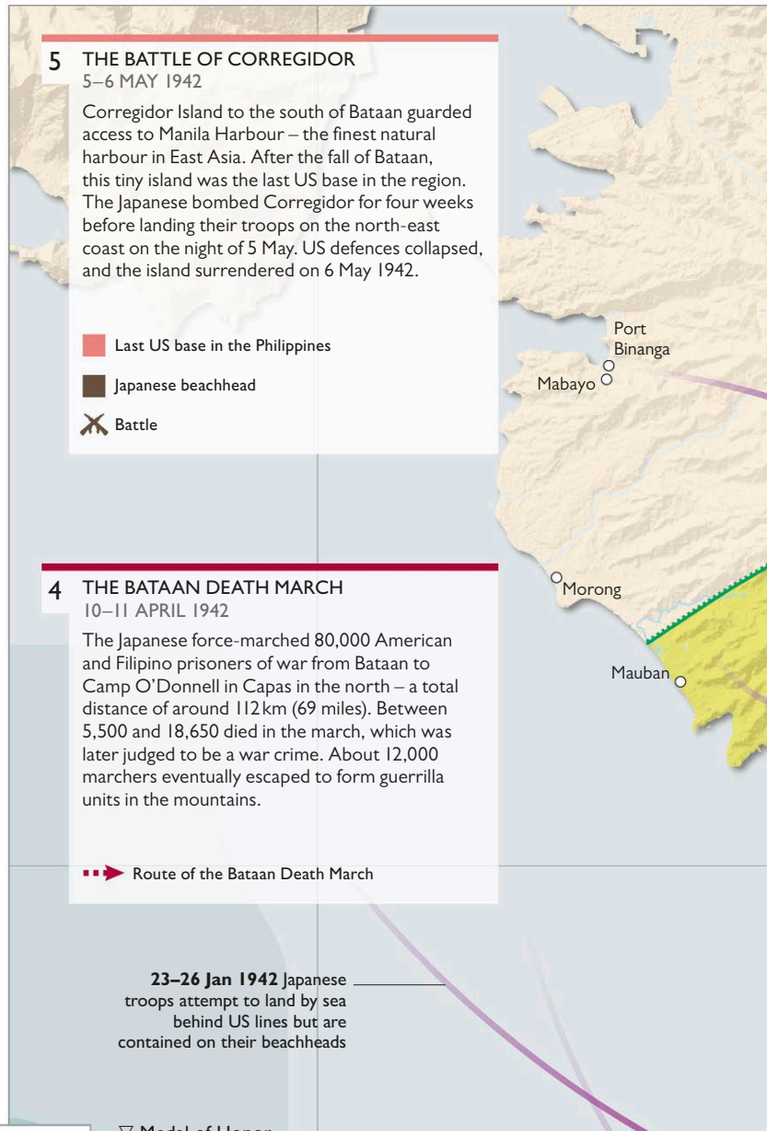
Replacing the men
A woman assembles the cowling for an engine of a B-25 bomber. By 1943, around 65 per cent of workers in the aircraft industry were women. Their efforts helped the US produce more than 300,000 planes in the course of the war.

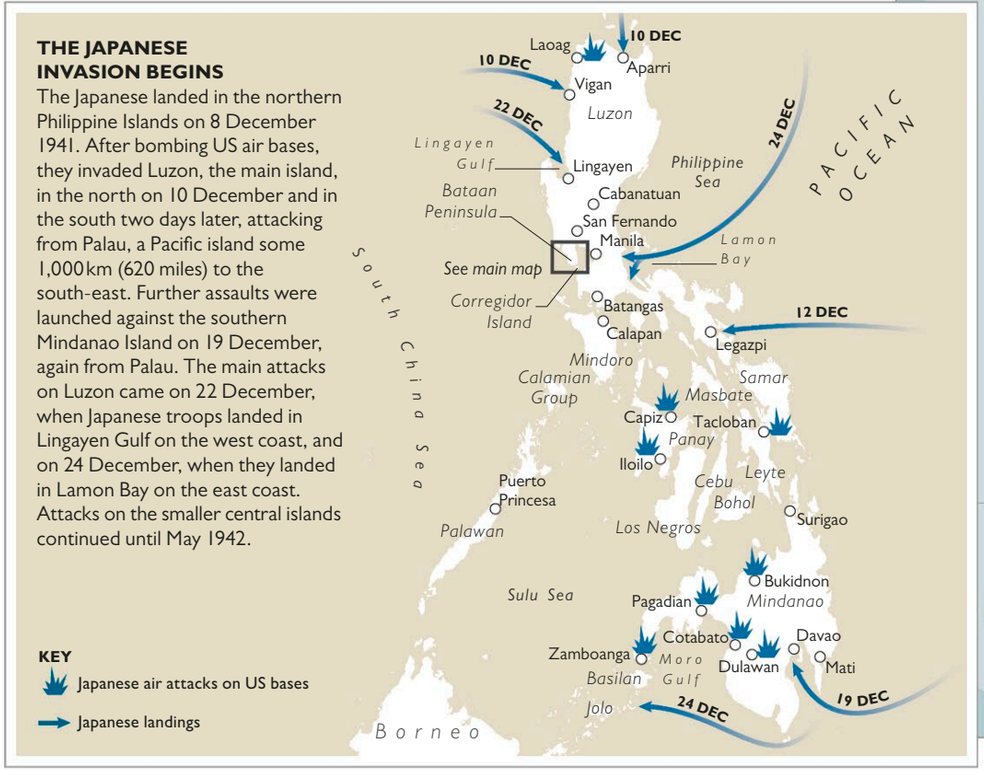
JAPAN INVADES THE PHILIPPINES

Following their attack on the US naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Japanese troops began to land in the north of the US-held Philippine Islands on 8 December 1941. The US was now under attack across the Pacific Ocean and faced the most serious military challenge that it had known in a generation.

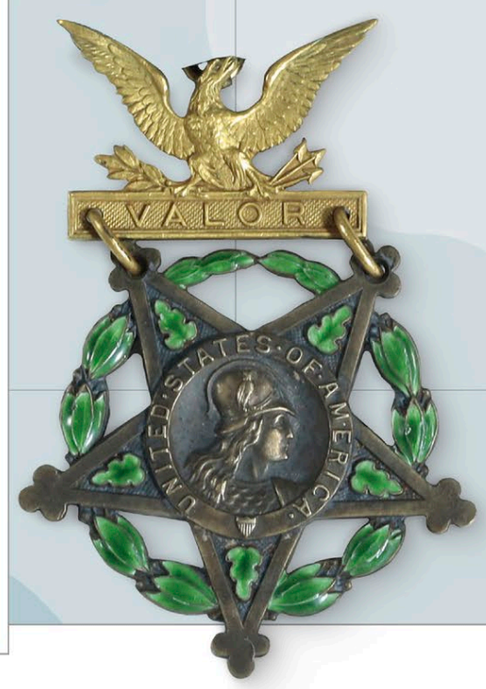
The Japanese began their campaign for the Philippines with heavy air attacks that neutralized US air power in the archipelago. Their first landings were met with little effective resistance, forcing the Commander of US Forces in the East, General Douglas MacArthur, to abandon the capital, Manila, and retreat west to fortify the Bataan Peninsula. Here the American and Filipino troops held out for four more months until forced to surrender on 9 April 1942. The final US redoubt on Corregidor Island fell the next month. The defeat was a blow to American morale, and the Philippine Islands would remain in Japanese hands until their gradual but bloody recovery after October 1944 (see pp.248–49).

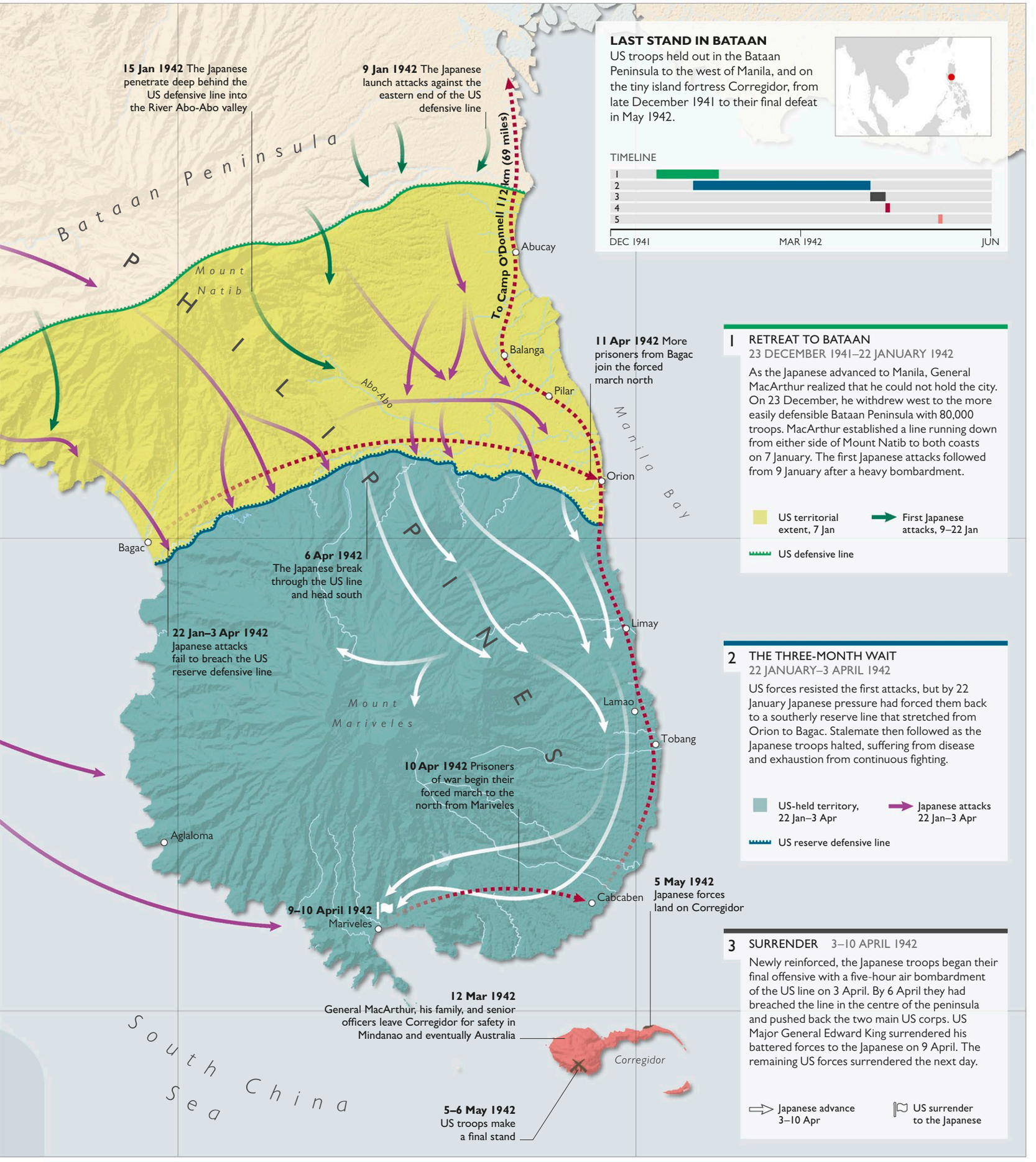
The Japanese set up a Council of State to rule the islands until they declared them an independent republic, led by José Laurel, in October 1943. Most of the Filipino elite served the Japanese, but a successful resistance quickly arose, notably on Mindanao, the island furthest from Manila. By the end of the war, some 277 guerrilla units and about 260,000 people were in action. They were so effective that by the end of the war, the Japanese controlled only 12 of the 48 Philippine provinces.





▽ Medal of Honor
This medal was awarded to US General Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright IV, the Commander of the Allied forces in the Philippines, who led his men in the final stand on Corregidor.




LAST STAND IN BATAAN
US troops held out in the Bataan Peninsula to the west of Manila, and on the tiny island fortress Corregidor, from late December 1941 to their final defeat in May 1942.
TIMELINE
1
2
3
4
5
DEC 1941
MAR 1942
JUN
15 Jan 1942 The Japanese penetrate deep behind the US defensive line into the River Abo-Abo valley
9 Jan 1942 The Japanese launch attacks against the eastern end of the US defensive line
Bataan Peninsula
Mount Natib
PHILIPPINES
Abo-Abo
To Camp O'Donnell 112 km (69 miles)
Abucay
Balanga
Pilar
11 Apr 1942 More prisoners from Bagac join the forced march north
Manila Bay
Orion
Bagac
6 Apr 1942 The Japanese break through the US line and head south
22 Jan–3 Apr 1942 Japanese attacks fail to breach the US reserve defensive line
Limay
Mount Mariveles
Lamao
Tobang
10 Apr 1942 Prisoners of war begin their forced march to the north from Mariveles
Aglaloma
5 May 1942 Japanese forces land on Corregidor
Cabcaben
9–10 April 1942
Mariveles
12 Mar 1942 General MacArthur, his family, and senior officers leave Corregidor for safety in Mindanao and eventually Australia
Corregidor
South China Sea
5–6 May 1942 US troops make a final stand
1 RETREAT TO BATAAN
23 DECEMBER 1941–22 JANUARY 1942
As the Japanese advanced to Manila, General MacArthur realized that he could not hold the city. On 23 December, he withdrew west to the more easily defensible Bataan Peninsula with 80,000 troops. MacArthur established a line running down from either side of Mount Natib to both coasts on 7 January. The first Japanese attacks followed from 9 January after a heavy bombardment.
US territorial extent, 7 Jan
First Japanese attacks, 9–22 Jan
US defensive line
2 THE THREE-MONTH WAIT
22 JANUARY–3 APRIL 1942
US forces resisted the first attacks, but by 22 January Japanese pressure had forced them back to a southerly reserve line that stretched from Orion to Bagac. Stalemate then followed as the Japanese troops halted, suffering from disease and exhaustion from continuous fighting.
US-held territory, 22 Jan–3 Apr
Japanese attacks 22 Jan–3 Apr
US reserve defensive line
3 SURRENDER 3–10 APRIL 1942
Newly reinforced, the Japanese troops began their final offensive with a five-hour air bombardment of the US line on 3 April. By 6 April they had breached the line in the centre of the peninsula and pushed back the two main US corps. US Major General Edward King surrendered his battered forces to the Japanese on 9 April. The remaining US forces surrendered the next day.
Japanese advance 3–10 Apr
US surrender to the Japanese

SURRENDER AT SINGAPORE

The fall of the British colony of Singapore to the Japanese in February 1942 led to the largest surrender of British-led personnel in military history. It was described by prime minister Winston Churchill as the worst disaster ever to befall the British in wartime.

Japanese forces commanded by General Tomoyuki Yamashita had invaded British Malaya on 8 December 1941 (see pp.112–13). Through superior tactics and mobility they defeated the British and Commonwealth forces, and by 30 January 1942 had reached the Johore Strait at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula. The exhausted Allied troops crossed to Singapore Island via a causeway, which they then partially destroyed in the hope of delaying Japanese progress. By this time though, the Japanese had reliable intelligence on the weak state of "Fortress Singapore", and invaded on 9 February.

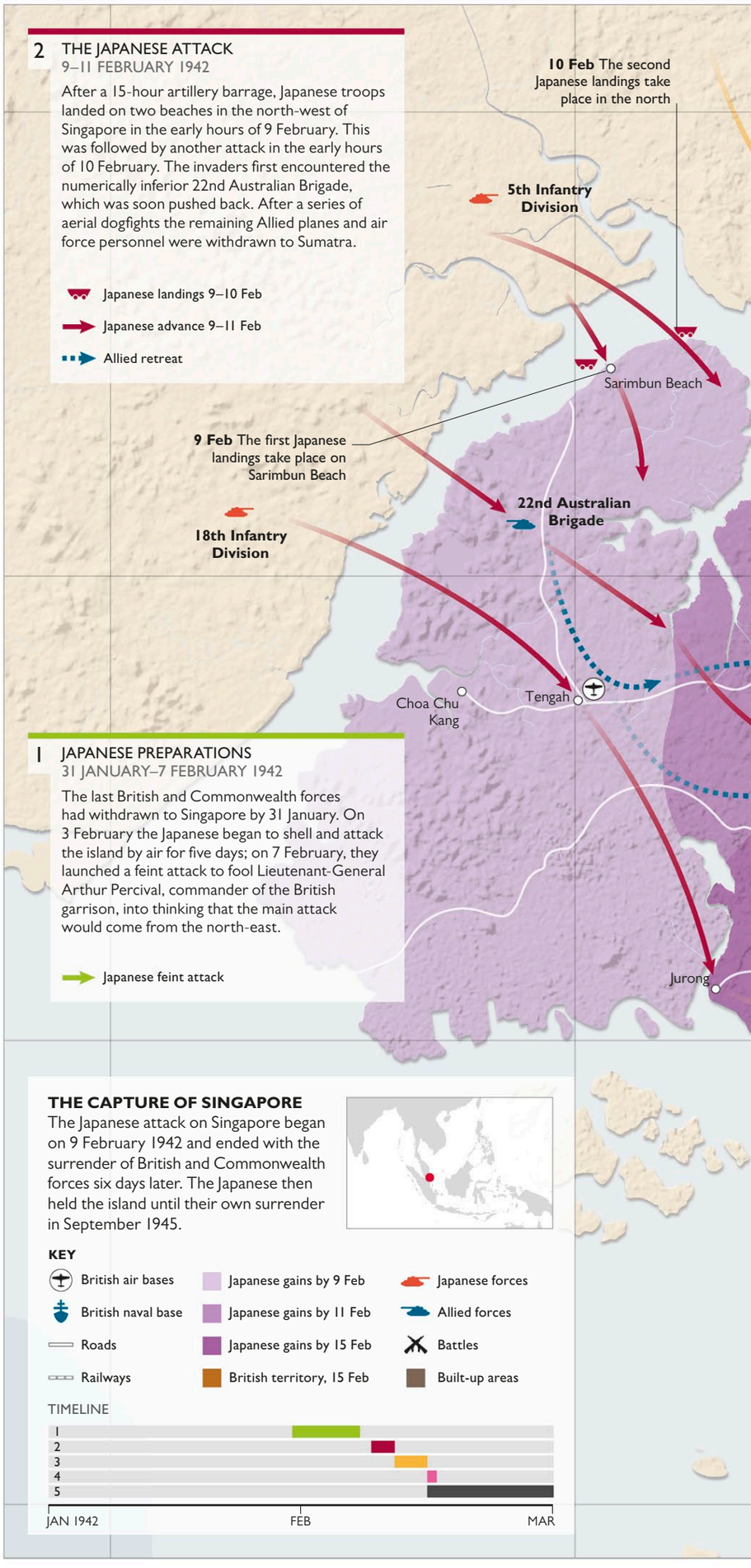
"My attack on Singapore was a bluff – a bluff that worked."

GENERAL TOMOYUKI YAMASHITA

Outgunned, outmanoeuvred, and with inadequate air support – yet with more than twice the number of troops that the Japanese had – the British and Commonwealth forces were soon pushed back into Singapore city itself. They were forced into a humiliating surrender on 15 February. It later became clear that while the British were running out of supplies in the last days of the battle, so too were the Japanese, who were low on ammunition for their artillery. However, had the British commander Lieutenant-General Arthur Percival decided to fight on, victory would have been unlikely.

THE BRITISH NAVAL BASE IN SINGAPORE

Completed in 1939 at a staggering cost of US$500 million, Singapore's naval base boasted what was then the largest dry dock in the world, the third-largest floating dock (below), and enough fuel tanks to support the entire British navy for six months. It was defended by heavy 15-in naval guns and also by airforce squadrons stationed at Tengah Air Base. Winston Churchill touted it as an impregnable fortress, the "Gibraltar of the East".



3 TAKING THE ISLAND 11–15 FEBRUARY 1942

The Japanese swept south-east towards Singapore city, taking Bukit Timah and its Allied food and fuel supply depots on 11 February and then capturing the water reservoirs that supplied the city. By 13 February Japanese engineers had re-built the causeway over the Johore Strait, allowing them to drive their tanks across to the island. On 12–13 February, the British established a 45-km (28-mile) defensive perimeter around the city, behind which they retreated.

4 THE BRITISH SURRENDER 15 FEBRUARY 1942

Within the British perimeter, supplies of water, petrol, and ammunition were running low. The Japanese pressed hard against the perimeter, and on the morning of 15 February, Percival, faced with the impossibility of launching a counter-attack, opted to surrender. The formal surrender occurred at 5:15 pm, with hostilities ending at 8:30 pm. Around 110,000 British, Indian, and Australian troops were captured and a further 5,000 killed or wounded. The Japanese suffered 1,714 deaths and 3,378 wounded.

Japanese advance 11–15 Feb
British defensive perimeter, 13 Feb
Johor-Singapore causeway
Massacre
Allied defensive positions
Allied prisoners

MALAYA
Johor Strait
Japanese Imperial Guards
Johor Bahru
28th Indian Brigade
31 Jan The British blow holes in the causeway linking the mainland to Singapore
53rd British Brigade
Woodlands
Kranji
Kranji
27th Australian Brigade
Sembawang
Seletar
Pulau Ubin
7 Feb The Japanese launch a feint attack on the north-east of Singapore
Mandai
10 Feb The Japanese suffer heavy losses in a battle around the mouth of the River Kranji
Nee Soon
54th British Brigade
Sa Ranggong
Changi
15 Feb After the Allied surrender, many prisoners are held at Changi Prison
11 Feb The Japanese take Bukit Timah
Peirce reservoir
SINGAPORE ISLAND
Paya Lebar
MacRitchie reservoir
Bukit Timah
Bedok
Kallang
Singapore Strait
Pasir Panjang
Singapore
1st Malaya Brigade
12–15 Feb A Malayan infantry battalion, two British infantry battalions, and a force of Royal Engineers fight a bitter defensive action
14 Feb The Japanese occupy Alexandra Hospital in the west of Singapore city, where they kill up to 50 soldiers and around 200 patients

5 THE AFTERMATH 15 FEBRUARY 1942 ONWARDS

Most of the captured Allied soldiers were interned in Changi Prison, where many died. Others were deported to be used as forced labour. Singapore's Chinese, Malay, and Indian citizens all suffered at Japanese hands. During the Sook Ching massacre from 18 February to 4 March, the Japanese targeted Chinese civilians, killing up to 70,000. Singapore would later be recovered by the British after Japan's defeat in September 1945.

Sook Ching massacre sites

△ **Hands up in surrender**
Faced with almost certain defeat, British and Commonwealth soldiers in Singapore give themselves up to invading Japanese troops on 15 February, 1942.

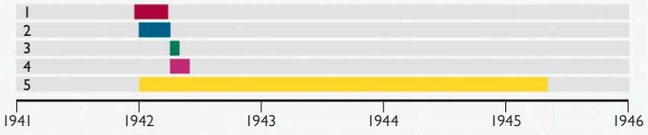
THE OCCUPATION OF BURMA

The Japanese took six months to occupy Burma, entering the country in the far south in December 1941 and clearing British Empire and Chinese forces out of the country by May 1942.

KEY

- British Burma, 1941
- British India
- Territories with Japanese military presence
- British base
- Japanese bases
- Chinese army
- Japanese army
- Japanese amphibious landings

TIMELINE



1 THE JAPANESE INVASION
15 DECEMBER 1941–23 MARCH 1942

Japanese forces landed in southern Thailand and crossed to Victoria Point in the south of Burma on 15 December, then moved north up the peninsula. On 20 January, more troops invaded from Raheng. British Empire troops from India tried but failed to hold Moulmein; they then fought delaying actions at the Salween and Bilin rivers and at Sittang Bridge. By 8 March the Japanese had occupied Rangoon.

- Japanese advances
- British reinforcements
- Major battles

2 CHINESE INTERVENTION
JANUARY–MARCH 1942

The Chinese 5th and 6th Armies entered eastern Burma along the Burma Road and advanced south to Toungoo, where they engaged the Japanese from 19 March. Japanese victory at Toungoo on 30 March opened the way for their advance north to Mandalay; they also lunged towards Lashio, cutting off the Chinese army, which was retreating back through the jungles into China.

- Chinese advance
- Japanese advances
- Burma Road
- Major battle

Sadiya
Brahmaputra
INDIA
Kohima
Assam
Imphal
Chindwin
Myitkyina
CHINA
Burma Road
19 May 1942 Japanese close in on Indian border at Sittaung
Sittaung
Chinese 5th and 6th Army
Irrawaddy
Lashio
29 Apr 1942 Japanese forces take Lashio
Calcutta
Chittagong
Monywa
Mandalay
Salween
SHAN
1 May 1942 Japanese take major central city of Mandalay
4 May 1942 British Empire forces leave Burma via Akyab
BURMA
Yenangyaung
Akyab
Migyaungye
11–19 Apr 1942 The British suffer a major defeat near Yenangyaung
19–30 Mar 1942 The Chinese fight a 12-day battle against strong Japanese opposition at Toungoo
2 Apr 1942 The British evacuate Prome and head west
Toungoo
Prome
Paungde
Sittang
Bilin
19–23 Feb 1942 The British lose a key battle at Sittang Bridge
Sittang
Raheng
Pegu
8 Mar 1942 The Japanese occupy Rangoon
Rangoon
Moulmein
Japanese 15th Army
Jan 1942 British Empire reinforcements arrive in Rangoon from India
Japanese 15th Army
20 Jan 1942 The Japanese launch their main attack against Moulmein from Raheng
Bay of Bengal
Tavoy
Bangkok
23 Mar 1942 The Japanese take the British Andaman Islands
Andaman Islands
Tenasserim
Mergui
15 Dec 1941 Japanese forces cross from Thailand to Victoria Point in Burma and move north to attack Mergui and Tavoy
Japanese 15th Army
Chumphon
Victoria Point
Isthmus of Kra

◁ **Invading forces, 1942**
Japanese soldiers drive their tanks over a makeshift bridge in the early stages of their invasion of Burma.

JAPAN TAKES BURMA

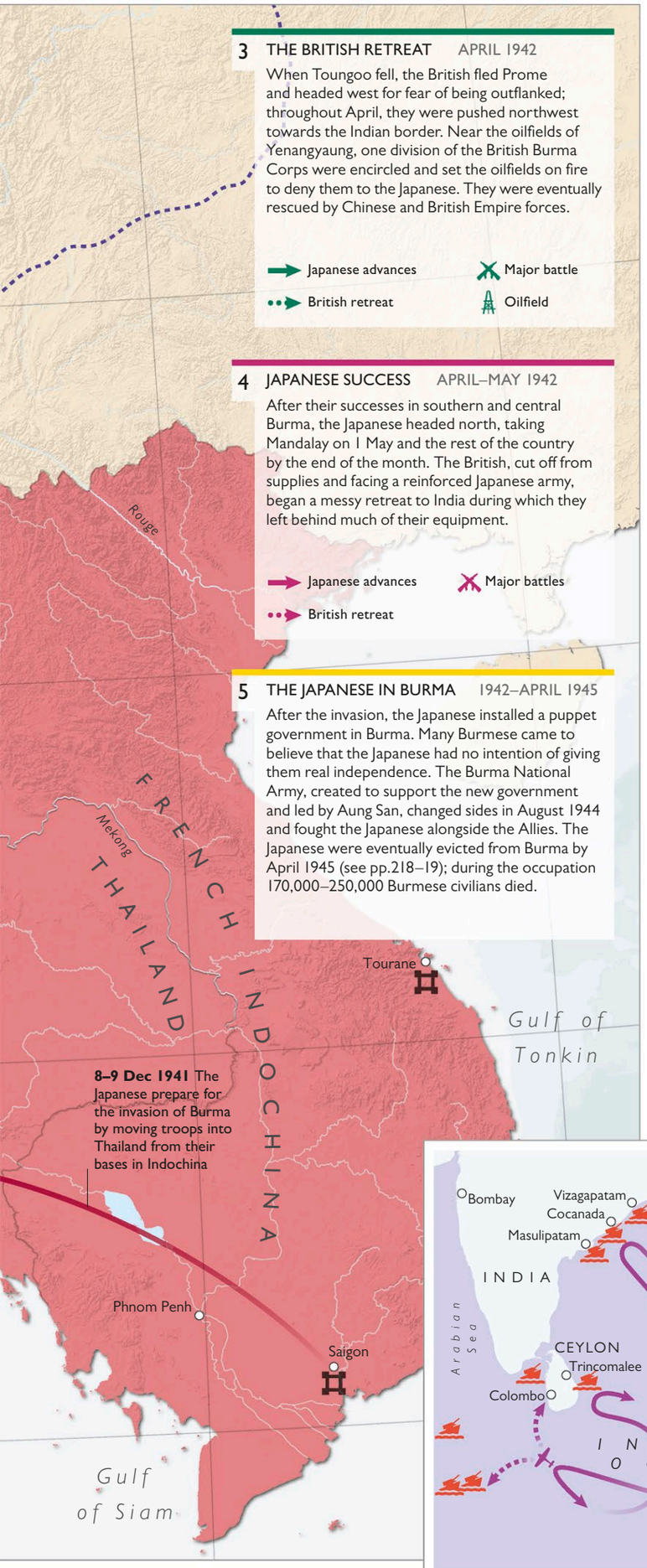
The conquest of the British colony of Burma extended the Japanese defensive perimeter to its westernmost point, and cut off Allied supply routes to China. The fighting was fierce and costly, and the result was a decisive Japanese victory in May 1942 that dealt yet another blow to the British after the fall of Singapore.

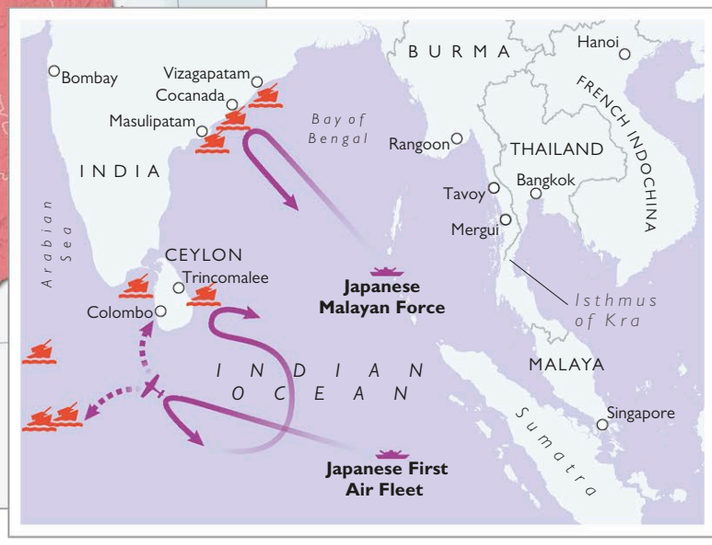
Japan wished to conquer Burma to gain access to its natural resources of oil, cobalt, and rice, and to gain a buffer zone to protect its planned conquests in Malaya and Singapore. It also wanted to close the Burma Road – a conduit for supplies for the Nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-shek, whom the Japanese had been fighting in China since 1937 (see pp.26–27). Many Burmese, who wished to see the end of British rule in their country, supported the invasion. Among them was Aung San, a Burmese activist, and the Thirty Comrades, who received military training from the Japanese and returned to form the Burma Independence Army.

The Japanese invasion began on 15 December 1941. The British Empire troops were no match for the battle-trained Japanese infantry, who exploited effective tactics and made good use of limited air resources. Delaying actions by the British and a major battle fought at Toungoo by a Chinese Nationalist army in March failed to stop the invaders; the British were forced out of the country by the end of May. Fearful that the Japanese would attack Ceylon, and so take control over the Indian Ocean, the British occupied Vichy-held Madagascar in May 1942 to prevent the Japanese establishing a submarine base there.

"Two brigades still east of the river fought to break through the great Sittang railway bridge. Then came tragedy."

WILLIAM SLIM, COMMANDER OF THE BRITISH BURMA CORPS, 1956





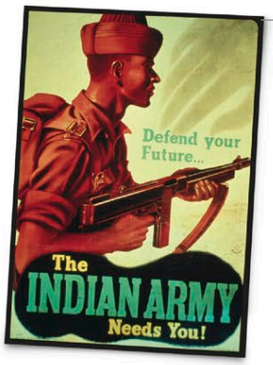
INDIAN OCEAN ATTACKS
On 5 April 1942, the Japanese launched an aircraft carrier attack against Colombo, Ceylon; this was followed by an assault on Trincomalee on 9 April. Eight British naval ships and five merchantmen were sunk and more than 40 aircraft were lost; hundreds of servicemen and civilians were killed on the ground. Five more merchantmen were sunk by submarines off the west coast of India. Attacks were also launched against three east coast Indian ports, with the loss of a further 23 merchantmen.

KEY
Japanese fleet movements
Sites of British ship and merchantmen losses
Japanese air attack from aircraft carrier

War in Iraq
Sherman tank crews of the Indian 31st Armoured Division receive instruction on the use of Browning machine guns in Iraq. They had been sent to Iraq as part of operations against the pro-Axis regime of Rashid Ali in 1941 (see pp.82–83).

INDIA IN WORLD WAR II

Although India fought in the war to defend the British Empire, a Nationalist movement at home gained support, with the aim of shaking off British rule. The nation aided production of arms and raised 2.5 million volunteers, who fought in Europe, North Africa, and Asia.



△ **Recruitment campaign**
The British government ran a highly successful campaign to encourage Indians to join the army, raising the largest volunteer force in history.

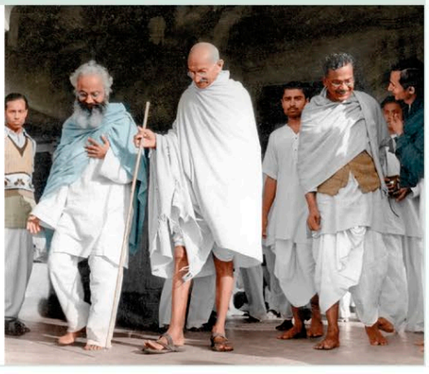
As part of the British Empire, India had little choice but to join the war. However, this was opposed by many Indian Nationalists, who withdrew their support from provincial governments that the British had established in 1935. There was also opposition from the "Quit India" movement, which was launched by Mahatma Gandhi in 1942 and called for the British to leave at once. The loss of rice imports from Burma after the Japanese invaded the former British colony, as well as the government's failure to improve food distribution, led in 1943 to a famine in Bengal in which three million died. Some Indians were so opposed to British rule that they fought for the Axis powers – mainly 13,000 troops of Subhash Chandra Bose's Indian National Army raised from prisoners of war.

Fighting for the British

Despite the opposition, the impact of Indians fighting for the Axis was slight compared to the loyalist Indian army, which expanded greatly, reaching 2.6 million members in 1945. Indian units were deployed widely – in Iraq, Ethiopia, North Africa, and Italy – but their main goals were to prevent the Japanese from crossing into India (1942–44) and to defend Burma against the Japanese – an attempt that failed in spring 1942, but succeeded in 1944–45, when they drove out the Japanese together with other Allied forces (see pp.218–19).

THE VOICE OF OPPOSITION

Gandhi (centre) professed a non-violence philosophy that led him to oppose India's involvement in the war, while other Nationalist leaders thought helping the British would achieve Indian independence more quickly. In 1942, his "Quit India" movement organized protests to encourage the British to leave. He was jailed for nearly two years.



JAPANESE SETBACKS

In early 1942, Japan sought to extend its defensive perimeter south and east across the Pacific. However, its plans were frustrated in an inconclusive naval battle in the Coral Sea, and its forces went on to suffer defeats in New Guinea.

Japan began its assaults on New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Australia from January 1942, and its determination to expand its defensive perimeter was heightened by the Doolittle Raid, a US bombing raid on Tokyo and other Japanese cities on 18 April 1942. While this attack did little damage, it made the Japanese realize the potential threat to their homeland.

To achieve their goals, the Japanese planned to capture Midway Atoll to the east (see pp.126–27) to deny its use to American bombers, to take the Australian base at Port Moresby in New Guinea to the south, and to extend their control over the Solomon Islands. This would isolate Australia from its ally, the US, and leave Allied nations and colonies in the region vulnerable.

The initial invasion of New Guinea and the Solomon Islands began favourably, but the assault against Port Moresby was stalled first by stalemate in the two-day Battle of the Coral Sea in May and then by the Japanese failure to seize the port via the overland Kokoda Trail in July. The Japanese had outrun their supply lines and were forced to retreat. The defeats suffered in and around New Guinea were the first major setbacks to Japanese expansion.

"Without a doubt… the Coral Sea was the most confused battle area in world history."

US VICE ADMIRAL H.S. DUCKWORTH, 1972

ADMIRAL ISOROKU YAMAMOTO 1884–1943

Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto played a major role in Japan's naval battles in the Pacific Ocean. A student of Harvard University and twice naval attaché in Washington, he opposed war with the US and disagreed with the invasion of China in 1937. Nevertheless, he became an admiral in 1940 and planned the attacks on Pearl Harbor and Midway. He was heavily involved in the Battle of the Coral Sea.

1 INITIAL JAPANESE ATTACKS
JANUARY–JUNE 1942

In January 1942, Japanese forces overran the Australian garrison at Rabaul, where they set up a major base. From here, they advanced through the Solomon Islands, reaching Guadalcanal by May. Japanese units also assaulted New Guinea, landing on the eastern side in March and the western side in April. In Australia, Darwin was bombed in February; more than 100 air raids against northern and western Australia followed. Japanese submarines also attacked Sydney Harbour in May and June 1942, and disrupted merchant shipping in the Tasman Sea.

Japanese advances

Japanese bases established

2 TARGETING PORT MORESBY
APRIL–MAY 1942

Japan's leaders planned to capture Port Moresby, New Guinea, in order to gain control over Allied supply lines and a base for further assaults on Australia. They devised a multi-pronged attack: two task forces were sent to establish forward bases on Tulagi Island in the Solomons and on the Louisiade Archipelago; an invasion fleet, protected by a light aircraft carrier, was to land troops near Port Moresby; and a Striking Force, centred on the two large carriers *Shōkaku* and *Zuikaku,* was deployed to intercept any Allied attacks on the invasion fleet.

Japanese forward bases

Preparatory raids on Port Moresby

3 BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA, DAY 1 7 MAY 1942

The main Japanese invasion fleet set off from Rabaul on 4 May, bound for Port Moresby. The Allies had intelligence about the mission; US and Australian carriers and cruisers (Task Force 17) were sent to seek out the invasion fleet and Striking Force. The fleets clashed on 7 May; the Japanese lost one carrier and the US lost one ship, with another damaged.

JAPAN	US
Invasion fleet	Task Force 17
Striking Force	Air attack
Air attack	Ship sunk
Carrier sunk	

4 BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA, DAY 2 8 MAY 1942

The two naval forces clashed again on 8 May in what was the first true carrier battle in history: the entire battle was fought by aircraft against ships – no surface ship ever caught sight of an opposing vessel. The battle was a draw – the Japanese lost more aircraft, the US more ships – but the Japanese called off their naval assault on Port Moresby and were now on the defensive for the first time in the war.

JAPAN	US
Invasion fleet	Task Force 17
Striking Force	Air attack
Air attack	Carrier crippled
Carrier crippled	

PACIFIC OCEAN

From Palau

From Truk Lagoon

23 Jan The Japanese attack Rabaul and establish their main regional base

Admiralty Islands

Lorengau

Bismarck Sea

8 Mar Japanese troops land at Lae

9 Dec Australian troops recapture Gona

New Ireland

Rabaul

NORTH-EAST NEW GUINEA

Talasea

New Britain

Invasion fleet

Bougainville Island

Kieta

Striking Force

Solomon Islands

Choiseul

Santa Isabel

Malaita

PAPUA

Lae

Wau

Morobe

21 Jul The Japanese land at Buna and head inland towards Port Moresby

Solomon Sea

Kerema

Gona

Yodda

Kokoda

Buna

Tufi

Trobriand Islands

Gulf of Papua

Port Moresby

Pongani

Kalo

Fasari

7 May The Japanese aircraft carrier *Shōhō* is bombed and sunk

Woodlark Island

New Georgia

Tulagi

3 May The Japanese capture Tulagi where, they build a seaplane base

3 May The Japanese reach Guadalcanal and begin to construct a large airfield

Guadalcanal

San Cristobal

Rennell

Horn Island

6 May The Japanese bomb Port Moresby in preparation for its assault

Milne Bay

Louisiade Archipelago

Coral Sea

8 May The Japanese aircraft carrier *Shōkaku* is attacked and disabled

8 Nov US troops are airlifted into Fasari to join the battle

Task Force 17

25 Aug–7 Sep The Allies establish an air base at Milne Bay and defeat an attacking Japanese force

7 May The destroyer USS *Sims* is sunk, and the oil tanker USS *Neosho* damaged

Mossman

Cairns

8 May The carrier USS *Lexington* is crippled and then scuttled

Townsville

▽ **Invasion of Rabaul, January 1942**
Japanese forces enter Rabaul carrying the flag of the Imperial Japanese Army. Rabaul would become the most important base in Japan's southern perimeter.

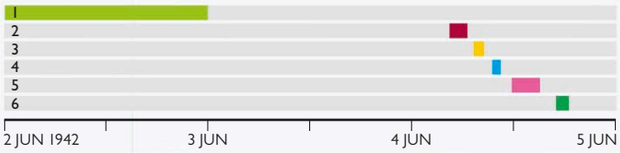
PIVOTAL PACIFIC BATTLE

The Battle of Midway was Japan's first naval defeat for centuries. It marked the ascendancy of carriers and their aircraft as the modern weapons with which to dominate the seas.

KEY

- Air raids
- Torpedo strikes
- Route of Japanese 1st Carrier Striking Force
- Japanese aircraft carriers sunk
- US aircraft carrier sunk

TIMELINE



1 THE US NAVY LAYS AN AMBUSH

2 JUNE 1942

By 2 June the US Navy's Task Forces 16 and 17 lay in an area of operations about 560 km (350 miles) north-east of Midway, from where their search planes scoured the ocean for the Japanese. The task forces were formed around three aircraft carriers: USS *Enterprise* and *Hornet*, which Yamamoto thought were in the Solomons; and USS *Yorktown*, which he believed sunk in the Coral Sea.

- US Task Force area of operations
- US Task Force 16: carriers *Enterprise* and *Hornet*, 152 aircraft, 6 cruisers, 9 destroyers
- US Task Force 17: carrier *Yorktown*, 73 aircraft, 2 cruisers, 5 destroyers

2 THE JAPANESE STRIKE MIDWAY

4:30–6:40 AM 4 JUNE 1942

The 1st Carrier Striking Force launched an air attack on Midway with 108 aircraft, holding back around half of its planes to deal with possible attacks by US naval forces. At 5:45 am the raiders were spotted and US interceptors scrambled. The Japanese failed to disable Midway's defences in this attack, and around one-third of the Japanese aircraft were destroyed or damaged by US fighters and anti-aircraft fire from the island.

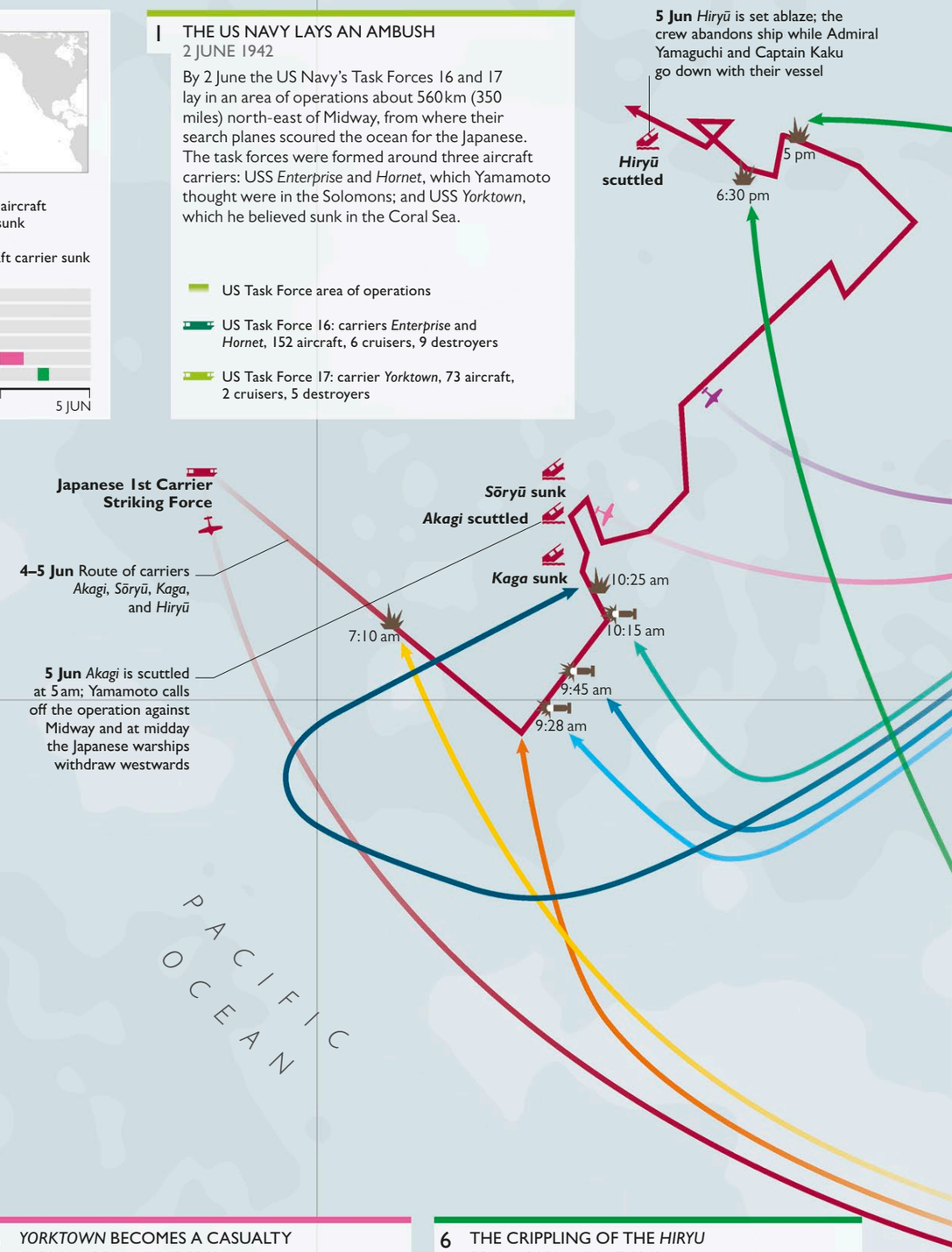
- First air attack on Midway

3 CONFUSION IN THE JAPANESE FORCE

7:10–8:30 AM 4 JUNE 1942

US bombers from Midway attacked the Japanese 1st Carrier Striking Force with little effect. As the Japanese force changed course following reports of an approaching US naval force, planes began to return from Midway to land and refuel. Deck operations became confused, and planners were unsure whether to rearm aircraft with high-explosive bombs for a second sortie against Midway, or with torpedoes to repel a threat from the US Navy.

- US aircraft from Midway
- Japanese aircraft returning from Midway



4 A MOMENTOUS MORNING

9:20–10:30 AM 4 JUNE 1942

The 1st Carrier Striking Force was now targeted by torpedo planes from *Enterprise*, *Hornet*, and *Yorktown*, which were tackled by the faster Japanese Zero fighters. However, the Zeros, now out of position and low on ammunition, could not contain a later wave of attacks by dive-bombers. These hit the carriers *Kaga* and *Sōryū* (both sank later that day), the flagship *Akagi* (scuttled the next morning), two battleships, and a destroyer.

- *Yorktown* dive-bomber and torpedo aircraft
- *Enterprise* torpedo aircraft
- *Enterprise* dive-bomber aircraft
- *Hornet* torpedo aircraft

5 *YORKTOWN* BECOMES A CASUALTY

11:50 AM–3 PM 4 JUNE 1942

US radar detected planes from the carrier *Hiryū* approaching *Yorktown* from the west. The raiders were intercepted by US fighters, but several broke through and hit *Yorktown* at around noon with three bombs. By 2:30 pm the fires aboard *Yorktown* had been extinguished, but torpedo planes hit her again. By 3 pm *Yorktown* was listing and the order was issued to abandon ship. *Yorktown* finally sank on 7 June.

- *Hiryū* dive-bomber aircraft
- *Hiryū* torpedo aircraft

6 THE CRIPPLING OF THE *HIRYU*

5 PM–6:30 PM 4 JUNE 1942

Hiryū had been located at 2:30 pm by a scout plane from *Yorktown*. Shortly after 5 pm 40 US dive-bombers attacked the Japanese carrier, which was defended by just a dozen fighters. *Hiryū* was hit many times and set ablaze (she was scuttled the next day). B-17s from Midway followed up the attack on the remains of the Japanese fleet, which was in retreat by 5 June.

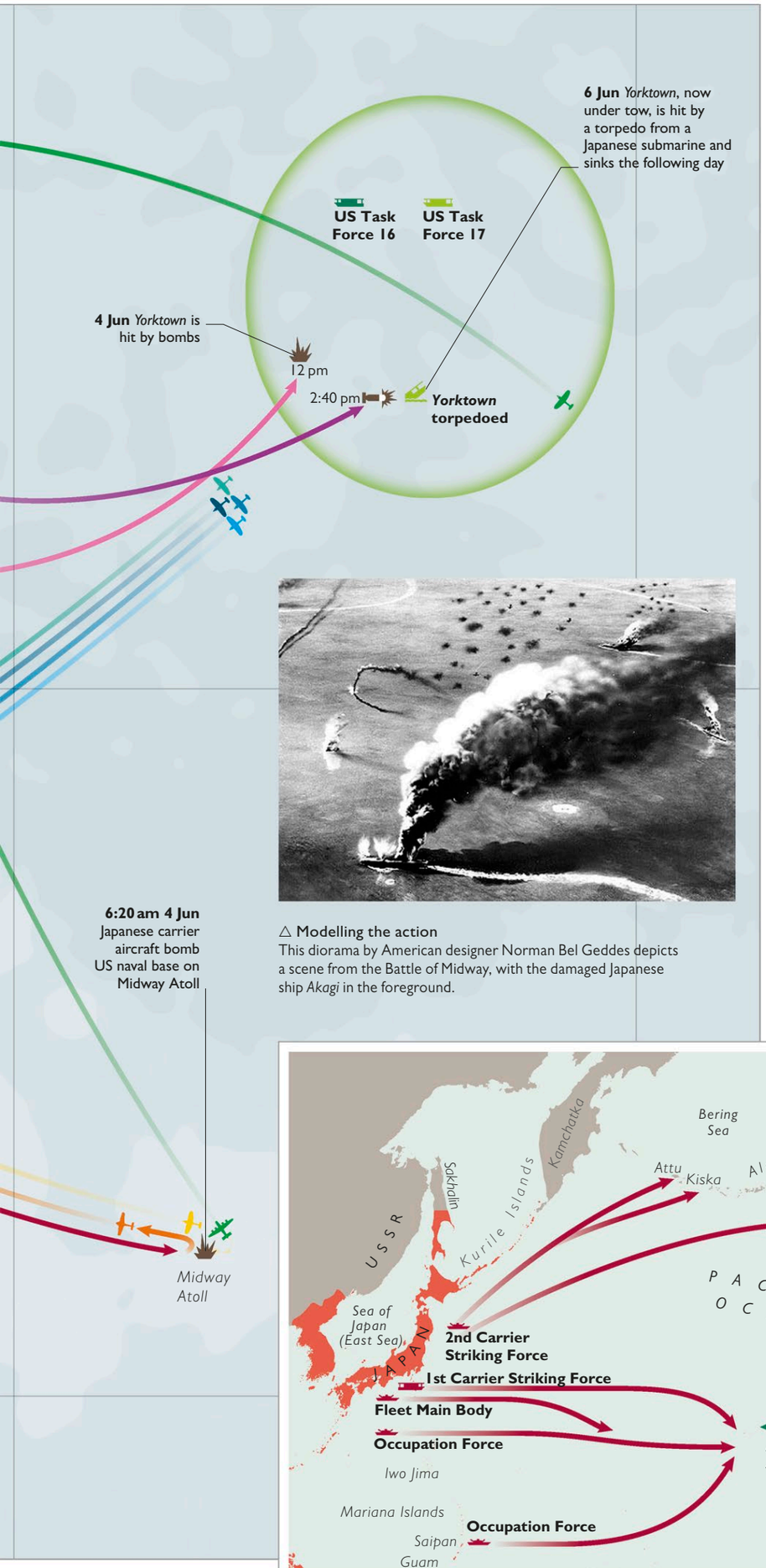
- US dive-bomber aircraft
- B-17 aircraft strike from Midway

THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY

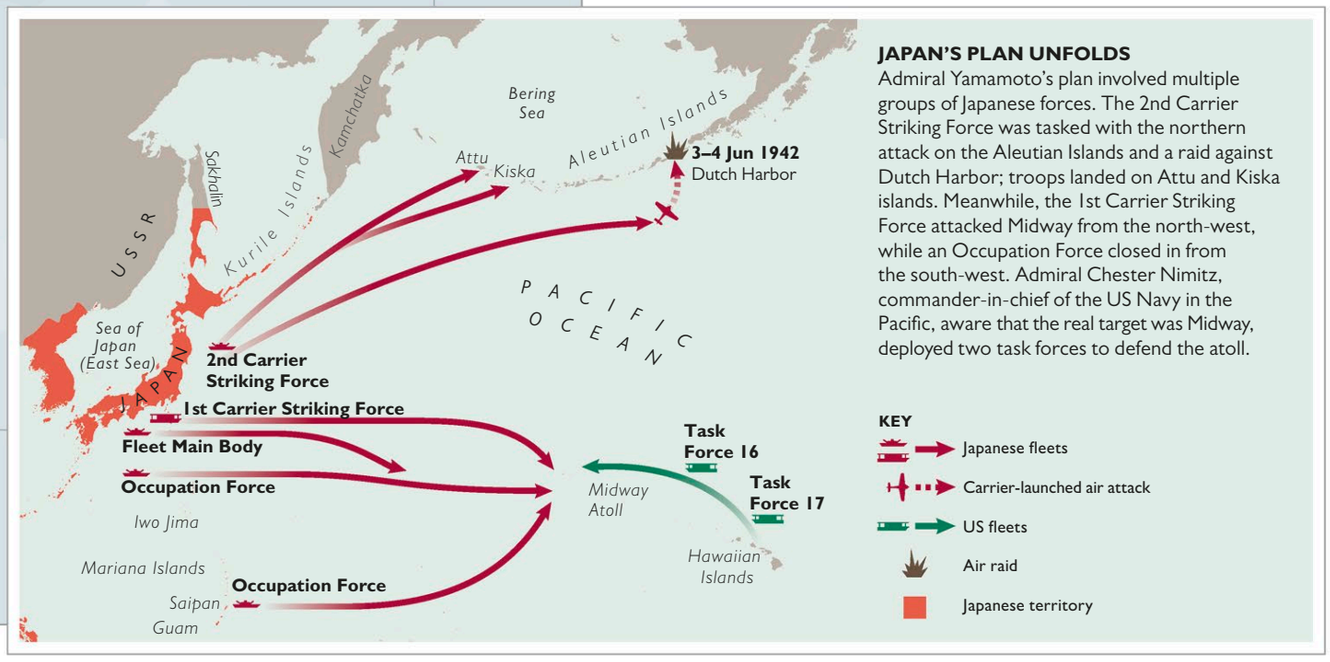
In June 1942, the Japanese sought to neutralize US power in the Pacific by challenging the US in what they hoped would be a decisive naval engagement at Midway Atoll in the westernmost part of the Hawaiian archipelago.

After their attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese waged war for months in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Their advance was only stemmed in May 1942 at the Battle of the Coral Sea (see pp.124–25), when they failed to seize Port Moresby. Alarmed by an American bombing raid on their cities, the Japanese decided to launch an attack on Midway – an island halfway across the Pacific. By mid-1942 the atoll was the most westerly US base in the central Pacific, and Japanese planners recognized its value as a fuelling station for US vessels and aircraft.

Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, commander-in-chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet, argued that Japan's defensive perimeter should be pushed eastwards by capturing Midway and US islands in the western Aleutians. His plan involved luring part of the US fleet northwards with an attack in the Aleutians, then attacking Midway from the north-west and south-west with three groups. He reasoned that this would draw out the US carrier fleet to be destroyed, but the US fleet knew of this plan, as codebreaker Joseph Rochefort had cracked the Japanese cipher, JN-25. As Yamamoto had predicted, the encounter at Midway was decisive, but not in the way he had hoped: the battle marked the end of Japanese dominance in the Pacific.

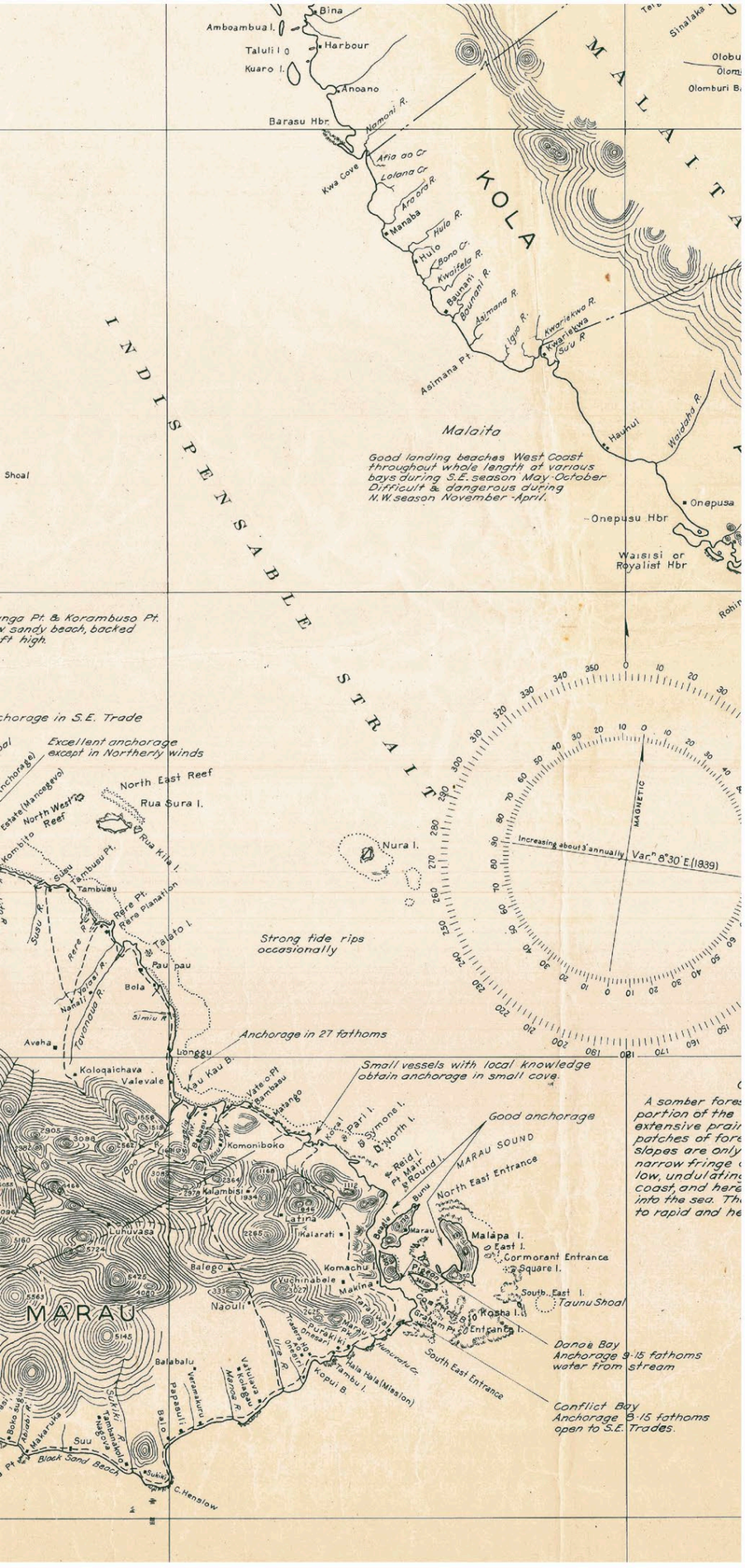


△ **Modelling the action**
This diorama by American designer Norman Bel Geddes depicts a scene from the Battle of Midway, with the damaged Japanese ship *Akagi* in the foreground.



JAPAN'S PLAN UNFOLDS
Admiral Yamamoto's plan involved multiple groups of Japanese forces. The 2nd Carrier Striking Force was tasked with the northern attack on the Aleutian Islands and a raid against Dutch Harbor; troops landed on Attu and Kiska islands. Meanwhile, the 1st Carrier Striking Force attacked Midway from the north-west, while an Occupation Force closed in from the south-west. Admiral Chester Nimitz, commander-in-chief of the US Navy in the Pacific, aware that the real target was Midway, deployed two task forces to defend the atoll.

SKETCHES AND DESCRIPTIONS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES INCLUDING
H O 2916 (USED AS BASE MAP)
O 165 PACIFIC ISLANDS SAILING DIRECTIONS
ZEALAND ARMY HQTRS. MAP 1.16 AUG. 1942
UNCONTROLLED MOSAIC OF GUADALCANCAL JULY 1942
CAPTURED JAPANESE MAPS
LOCAL INFORMATION
TURAL SCALE 1:217,500 (AT LATITUDE 9° 25')
SUB-SECTION C-2 1ST MARINE AMPHIBIOUS CORPS
DEC. 1942
CONFIDENTIAL
SOLOMON ISLANDS
GUADALCANAL
VATURANGA
TASIMBOKO
KOLINA
GALAGA
ISLAND
VEURU
KALO RANGE
SAVO I.
Pago Pago
Koita
Monago
Birasu
Nagotano I.
Koronakarili I.
Dalakalonga I.
Dalakalau I.
Mangalau I.
Sagonara I.
Tumbila
OLEVUGA
Olevuga
Biki I.
Vatukulita Rks.
Sandfly Pass
SANDFLY PASSAGE
Tanavula Pt
Mt Barnett
Mt Harold
Cliff Pt
Undeka I.
Vutururu Pt.
Tulagi
Borahinaba
Polomuku
Mbolli Hbr.
Mt Perry
Belago
Lagale I
Selisapa
Dome Mt
East Pt
Tanalau Pt
Vuturua
Ridge Bank
Eastern Fields
Mandoliana I.
Norfolk Sh
Western Fields
NGGELA CHANNEL
Hitchcock
Nugu I.
Knowles Patches
Sealark Reef
SEALARK CHANNEL
Tanapari I.
Maxwell Sh
Low Sand Cay
Ringdove Sh.
LENGO CHANNEL
Good Anchorage
Small Boats can land at high water only
Anchorage ½ Mile off coast
Good to 2000 ton
No safe anchorage in either monsoon from Cape Esperance to Kukum
Good shelter S.& S.W. Trades partially protected from West winds
Landing possible, with good anchorage S.E. Trade.
Aruligo
Ruaruu (Traders HQ)
Doma
Choiloi
Mt. Galloga
Varahue
C. Nagle
Nugu Pt
Talevo Pt
Gavanga
Nulavu
Kobiloko
Lambi
Tuvu
Noilava
Tiaro B
Vatubora
Tambugu
Leleona
Lapo
Tabuhu
Hat Hill
West Cape
Kopau
Gilung
Goveriax
Tangarere Mission
Takojoraga
Manganakau
Kosiranga
Goingoi
C. Beaufort
Koseranga
Pyramid Rk
Fox B
Serapina Pt
Wanderer Bay
Masaubaga Pt.
Kuekue
Lumabomboho
Marumbo
Marasa
Malaisu Pt
C. Hunter or Vagato
Veuru
Vatudo
Tatamoli
Densely wooded
Chorgi Verasagi
Mambulo
Tanatete
Sunamavu
Nala
Chupuniki
Kolito
Kukum
Lungga Roads
Lungga Pt
Masaravau
Mamara
Tasasaronga
Bunina Pt
Kokumbona
Pt Cruz
Fighter Field
F.I. Fighters Field
Henderson Field
Tenaru R.
Ilu R.
Lengo R.
Tindhulu
Tasimboko
Telere
Binu
Teatupa
Teandopia
Khulthu
Mt. Supui
Parina
GOLD RIDGE
Matanga
Vungana
Belaha
Bambadeha
Yellow Scar
Nuhu
Volelo
Turi
Lions Head
Natali
Makaruka
Mt. Bulamarau
Mt. Popomanasui
Mt. Kuruvemba
Mt. Tasambara
Rambubu
Mt. Vatuvisa
Mt. Legombi
Mt. Lammas
Mt. Talisi
Bolonda
Itana (Ithina R)
Teremolanga R.
Fresh water Lagoon
Kolomola
Kolotumarau
Gura Pt
Korombua
Tambunimane Ruavatu Estate
Reko
Tuavapaula
Gegende
Gombua
Seheni
Paripoo
Bumbugoro
Kolokarako
Bum Bulala
Simuu
Mt. Vatupusau
Lea
Simiu
Aola R.
Gurabuou R.
Weldon Reef
Morsebly Sh
Neal I.
Aola Bay (Popes)
Kombita
Anchorage 20 fathoms sand unsafe onshore winds
Some prominent points and corresponding indentations which afford anchorage in this stretch of coast.
Anchorage 12 fathoms fine sand unsafe in onshore winds
Landing in calm weather only
Landing in fair weather only
South Coast nearly always rough during S.E. trades, but quiet during N.W. Monsoon except when wind backs to S.W.
Vale a'u Reef
Poole Reef or Korasagalu
Black Sand Beach
Lauwi Pt
Belatania
Bad Shoals
Beaufort Bay
Kopau Hr
Kokumarukii
Ovi Hr
Kaku
Komachu
Sugu
Kosiranga
Kolotumarau
Gura Pt
Korombua
Lagu
Tuvu
Aola Bay (Popes)
Baru I.
Manasiqeva
Kombita
Gegende
Gombua
Seheni
Paripoo
Bumbugoro
Gurabuou R.
Aola R.
Kolokarako
Bum Bulala
Simuu
Mt. Vatupusau
Lea
Simiu
Natali
Makaruka
Mt. Talisi
Mt. Legombi
Mt. Lammas
Mt. Vatuvisa
Mt. Popomanasui
Mt. Kuruvemba
Mt. Bulamarau
Mt. Tasambara
Rambubu
Bolonda
Itana (Ithina R)
Teremolanga R.
Fresh water Lagoon
Kolomola
Kolotumarau
Gura Pt
Korombua
Tambunimane Ruavatu Estate
Reko
Tuavapaula
Gegende
Gombua
Seheni
Paripoo
Bumbugoro



GUADALCANAL

In August 1942 the Allies went on the offensive in the Pacific War, landing on Japanese-held Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. Fierce battles raged on land and sea for six months until the Japanese withdrew.

The Japanese established a naval base in the southern Solomon Islands in May 1942 and in July began building an airfield on Guadalcanal. Seeing this as a threat to lines of communication between the US and Australia, the Allies assembled a force of US Marines and US and Australian warships to attack Guadalcanal and the nearby island of Tulagi to the north on 7 August. The Japanese were caught by surprise, and 11,000 US Marines were put ashore on Guadalcanal almost unopposed. On the night of 8–9 August, however, the Japanese navy counter-attacked. Striking at the Allied naval force, they sank four cruisers in the battle of Savo Island, killing more than 1,000 seamen. The rattled Allied fleet withdrew, leaving the Marines ashore to fend for themselves without heavy equipment, which had not yet been landed.

The defence of Henderson Field

While the Japanese strove to organize troop landings to retake Guadalcanal, the US Marines completed construction of the airstrip on the north coast, named Henderson Field. Once US aircraft arrived two weeks after the initial landings, they could stop the Japanese navy operating around the island in daytime. The Japanese resorted to using fast destroyers to ferry troops from their base at Rabaul by night. Through this "Tokyo Express" they built up sufficient forces on Guadalcanal to launch serious attacks on the Marines' defensive perimeter around the airfield from mid-September. The Marines fought off a series of near-suicidal assaults through October, while mounting their own aggressive patrols into the hostile jungle terrain.

The final battles

The climax of the campaign came in mid-November. Japanese warships planned to sail in by night to bombard Henderson Field while transports landed fresh troops. The US Navy responded in force. In two nights of brutal, confused, close-range fighting in darkness, the Japanese lost two battleships and four other warships. The US Navy also suffered substantial losses, but the Japanese troop landings stopped. From here the Americans were able to reinforce their troops on Guadalcanal to 50,000 men. With no prospect of victory, Japan decided their resources would be better employed elsewhere. Troop withdrawals began, and the last Japanese forces left in early February 1943.

▷ **US landings**
Thousands of US Marines landed on the north coast between Koli Point and Lunga Point on 7 August 1942.

WAR IN EUROPE AND AFRICA

Throughout most of 1942, the outcome of the war against Hitler hung in the balance. However, by the year's end, Allied victories on the Eastern front and in the North African desert had decisively turned the tide, and Nazi Germany's era of conquests had ended.

After the US, Soviet Union, and Britain had united against Germany in 1941, the increase in economic resources and population were weighted heavily in favour of the Allies. However, bringing these resources to bear on the battlefield was no easy matter.

◁ **Call for collaboration**
A poster calls for Dutch volunteers to join the Nazis' elite force, the Waffen-SS. Recruits were sought from conquered countries with racially "Aryan" populations, including the Netherlands, Denmark, and Norway. Every nation in occupied Europe produced enthusiastic collaborators, who identified ideologically with the Nazis' racist and anti-communist beliefs.

German successes

Militarily, the Germans were still capable of inflicting heavy defeats on their enemies. In the Soviet Union, Axis forces repulsed Soviet offensives and resumed their advance eastwards, reaching the Volga and the Caucasus. By late summer 1942, Hitler's aim of crippling the Soviets' war effort by capturing their sources of oil supplies and arms production looked within sight.

Meanwhile, in Egypt's Western Desert, the German field marshal Erwin Rommel outfought the British, and by July had advanced to El Alamein, less than 100 km (70 miles) from Britain's major naval base at Alexandria. In the Atlantic, German U-boats attacked American coastal shipping and transoceanic convoys, threatening to block the movement of US arms and troops to the European theatre, which depended entirely upon sea transport. Merchant convoys taking military aid to the Soviet Union through its Arctic ports also suffered heavy losses.

▽ **The Americans arrive**
A British policeman gives directions to a newly arrived American soldier. Over 200,000 US personnel were based in Britain by the end of 1942.

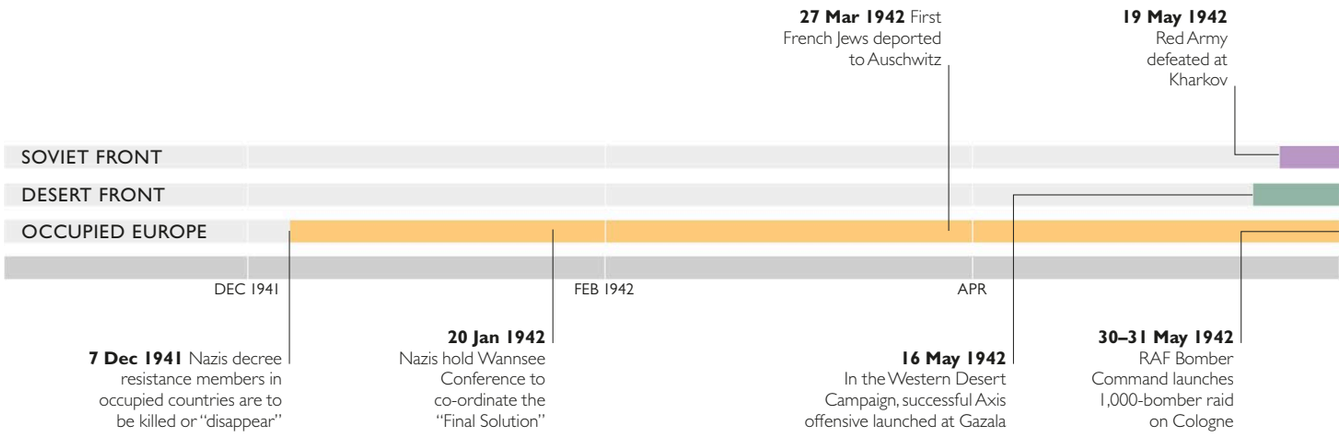
Domination over co-operation

Throughout this period, the German hold on occupied Europe remained secure. Coastal raids and RAF bombing of cities were too ineffectual to have significant impact. In occupied countries, the Nazis crushed all opposition by force and exploited the resources to the maximum. The scale of resistance activity remained quite limited, despite the efforts of the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) and the growth of Communist-led partisan guerrilla groups after the Soviet Union's entry into the war.

Hitler also had plans for construction of a racially stratified New Order in Europe. In 1942, his policy to massacre all Jews (codenamed "the Final Solution") became organized into a coherent project to annihilate Europe's Jewish population. Extermination camps industrialized killing, the scale of which was limited only by the need to use Jews as slave labour. The same camps killed off Soviet prisoners of war, political opponents of Nazism, the Romany people, and homosexuals.

THE TURNING POINT

Throughout the first half of 1942, the Axis powers' victories continued. When German troops reached Stalingrad in August, it appeared another major success was in prospect, but instead the battle was a disaster for Hitler's forces. In North Africa, Field Marshal Rommel's Panzer Army was trapped between the British, who had recently been victorious at the Second Battle of El Alamein, and US troops, which landed in Operation Torch. Meanwhile, the sufferings of the people of Nazi-occupied Europe mounted.



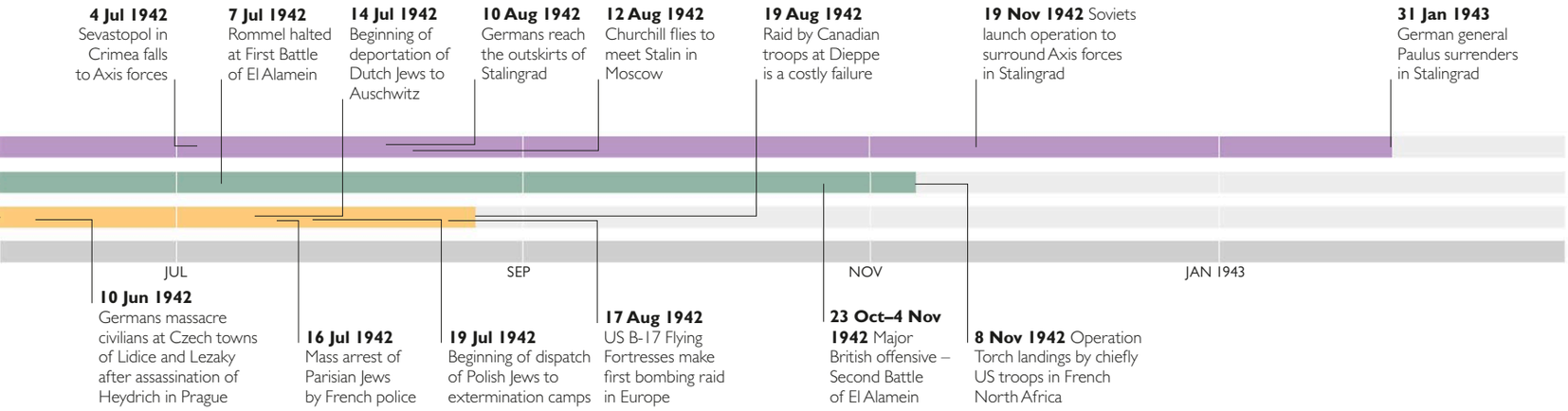
◁ **Decisive battle**
Red Army soldiers advance through the ruins of Stalingrad in 1943. The battle for the Soviet city – the largest conflict in World War II – ended in a crushing victory for Stalin's forces, transforming the war on the Eastern front.

Allied successes

Hitler's military strategy was based on the calculation that he could defeat the Soviet Union and so place Germany in an impregnable position in Europe before American strength was brought to bear. However, Soviet forces exhibited formidable resilience, despite suffering great losses of men, equipment, and territory. The encirclement and destruction of a German army at Stalingrad in the winter of 1942–43 demonstrated that, at the very least, the Soviet Union was not going to be defeated soon.

While battle raged in Stalingrad, the British scored a decisive victory over Axis forces at El Alamein, in the North African desert. Largely responsible for Britain's success was General Bernard Montgomery – a commander who knew how to triumph over a more skilful opponent through patiently deployed material superiority. Meanwhile, landings in French North Africa gave US troops their first experience of fighting the Axis forces. By the end of 1942, US bomber aircraft had begun arriving at bases in Britain, and Allied leaders were discussing a future full-scale invasion of occupied Europe. For Germany, the years of victory were over and a long, tenacious struggle for survival against the odds lay ahead.

▷ **British on the offensive**
At the battle of El Alamein in October 1942, the infantry of Britain's 8th Army advanced to attack well-prepared Axis defensive positions. After lengthy fighting, General Rommel's army was driven into headlong retreat.



4 PAYING FOR THE WAR EFFORT
1942–1945

Occupied countries were forced to make direct financial contributions to support the German war effort. Worst affected was France, which had to pay all the costs of the occupying forces, amounting to about 80 million Reichmarks per day. In addition, the Nazi authorities seized a significant proportion of French food production, leading to severe rationing and widespread hunger, especially in the cities.

5 THE FALL OF VICHY FRANCE
NOVEMBER 1942

After the German invasion of northern France in 1940, Hitler allowed the southern half of the country to remain in collaborationist French hands under the Vichy regime. The situation changed with the Allied landings in North Africa in November 1942, when French commanders struck deals with the Allies. Losing faith in the Vichy regime, Hitler extended direct German control over the whole country.

▽ **Enforcing Nazi rule**
As Germany's territories grew, it relied on the troops of the Waffen SS to control local populations. In doing so, they committed a number of atrocities, notably in Poland.

NEW ORDER IN EUROPE

At its peak, Greater Germany – Germany and the territories it had annexed – covered much of central Europe, and most other countries on the continent were either occupied by Germany or under its influence. Hitler had begun to fulfil his dream of creating *Lebensraum* ("living space") for the German "master race".

Countries occupied by Germany were treated with degrees of severity that reflected how closely their populations matched the Nazis' Aryan ideal. Norway and Denmark received relatively lenient treatment; Denmark kept its king and its government until mid-1943, when it was placed under military occupation.

The situation in Eastern Europe, however, was very different: the Nazis regarded the people there as inferior, or subject, races and treated them with brutality. The worst regimes were imposed on Poland, occupied USSR, and the Baltic states, where communities were evicted to create living space for ethnic German settlement.

Occupied territories were placed under the control of civilian administrations, headed by Nazi Party officials, or under military administrations. In either case, the countries were exploited financially, economically, and militarily in order to advance the German war effort. Occupied nations were forced to transfer large capital sums to Germany and to provide workers for German factories; when the number of volunteers was considered insufficient, forced labour was introduced on a huge scale. Such measures provoked active resistance movements (see pp.176–77), which the occupation authorities sought to suppress with extreme brutality.

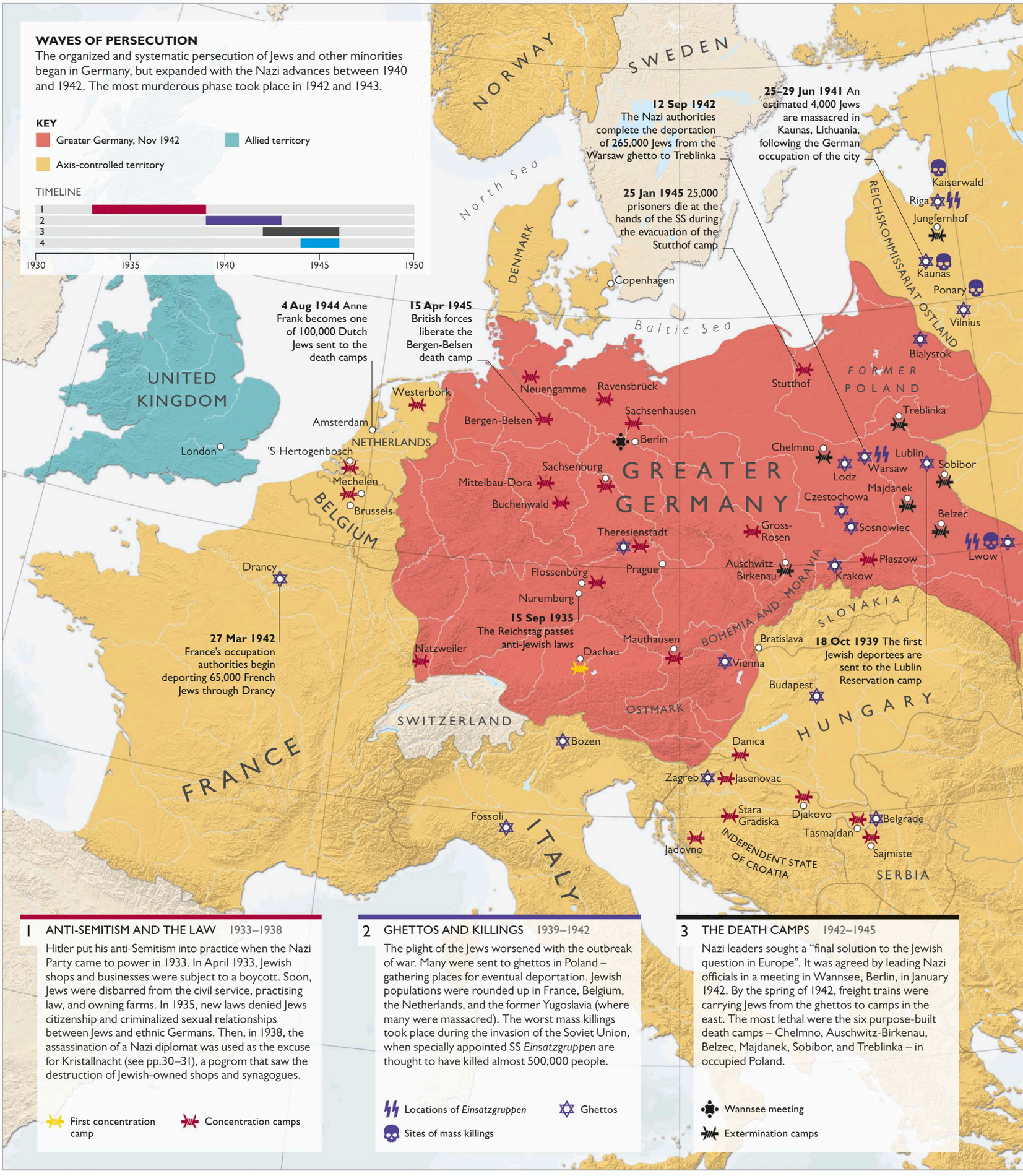
"The year 1941 will be, I am convinced, the historical year of a great European New Order."

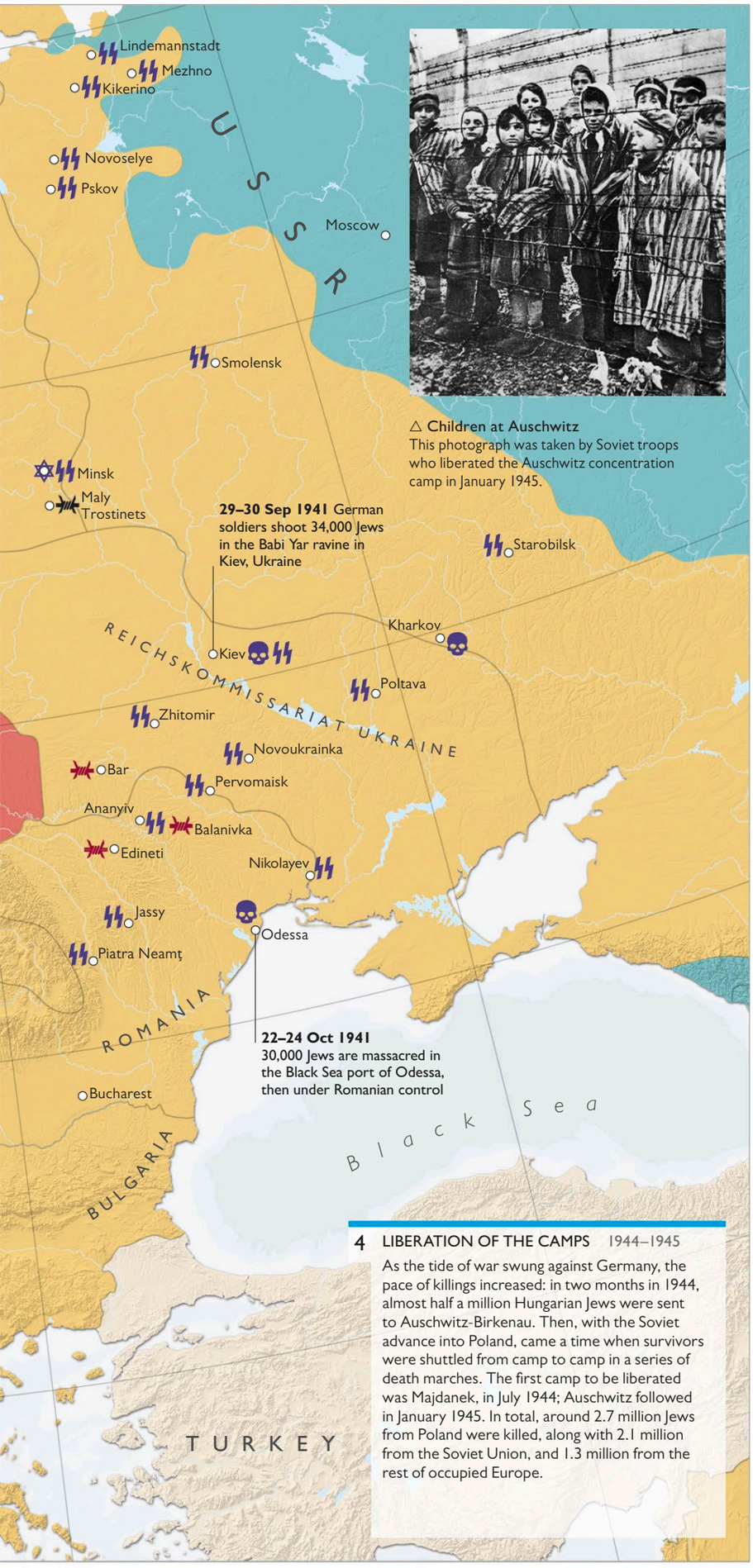
ADOLF HITLER, SPEECH AT THE BERLIN *SPORTPALAST*, 1941

ITALY AND *LO SPAZIO VITALE*

Just as *Lebensraum* was a key goal for Germany's Nazis, Italy's Fascists also sought their own living space (*Lo Spazio Vitale*), by expanding their national boundaries across the Mediterranean and into North Africa (see pp.74–75). Fuelled by the racist ideologies of figures such as Giuseppe Bottai – who served as Italy's Minister of Education – they argued that Italy was the heir to ancient Rome. Their goal was to create "a new Empire in which Italians would illuminate the world with their art, educate it with their knowledge, and … their administrative technique and ability".

Giuseppe Bottai, Fascist politician during the early years of the war.


WAVES OF PERSECUTION
The organized and systematic persecution of Jews and other minorities began in Germany, but expanded with the Nazi advances between 1940 and 1942. The most murderous phase took place in 1942 and 1943.
KEY
Greater Germany, Nov 1942
Allied territory
Axis-controlled territory
TIMELINE
1
2
3
4
1930
1935
1940
1945
1950
NORWAY
SWEDEN
North Sea
DENMARK
Copenhagen
Baltic Sea
UNITED KINGDOM
London
NETHERLANDS
Amsterdam
'S-Hertogenbosch
Westerbork
BELGIUM
Mechelen
Brussels
Drancy
FRANCE
SWITZERLAND
Fossoli
ITALY
Bozen
GREATER GERMANY
Neuengamme
Ravensbrück
Bergen-Belsen
Sachsenhausen
Berlin
Sachsenburg
Mittelbau-Dora
Buchenwald
Theresienstadt
Prague
Flossenbürg
Nuremberg
Natzweiler
Dachau
Mauthausen
Vienna
OSTMARK
BOHEMIA AND MORAVIA
SLOVAKIA
Bratislava
Budapest
HUNGARY
Danica
Zagreb
Jasenovac
Djakovo
Stara Gradiska
Jadovno
INDEPENDENT STATE OF CROATIA
Belgrade
Tasmajdan
Sajmiste
SERBIA
Stutthof
FORMER POLAND
Treblinka
Chelmno
Lodz
Warsaw
Lublin
Sobibor
Majdanek
Czestochowa
Sosnowiec
Gross-Rosen
Auschwitz-Birkenau
Krakow
Plaszow
Belzec
Lwow
REICHSKOMMISSARIAT OSTLAND
Kaiserwald
Riga
Jungfernhof
Kaunas
Ponary
Vilnius
Bialystok
4 Aug 1944 Anne Frank becomes one of 100,000 Dutch Jews sent to the death camps
15 Apr 1945 British forces liberate the Bergen-Belsen death camp
12 Sep 1942 The Nazi authorities complete the deportation of 265,000 Jews from the Warsaw ghetto to Treblinka
25–29 Jun 1941 An estimated 4,000 Jews are massacred in Kaunas, Lithuania, following the German occupation of the city
25 Jan 1945 25,000 prisoners die at the hands of the SS during the evacuation of the Stutthof camp
15 Sep 1935 The Reichstag passes anti-Jewish laws
27 Mar 1942 France's occupation authorities begin deporting 65,000 French Jews through Drancy
18 Oct 1939 The first Jewish deportees are sent to the Lublin Reservation camp
1 ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE LAW 1933–1938
Hitler put his anti-Semitism into practice when the Nazi Party came to power in 1933. In April 1933, Jewish shops and businesses were subject to a boycott. Soon, Jews were disbarred from the civil service, practising law, and owning farms. In 1935, new laws denied Jews citizenship and criminalized sexual relationships between Jews and ethnic Germans. Then, in 1938, the assassination of a Nazi diplomat was used as the excuse for Kristallnacht (see pp.30–31), a pogrom that saw the destruction of Jewish-owned shops and synagogues.
First concentration camp
Concentration camps
2 GHETTOS AND KILLINGS 1939–1942
The plight of the Jews worsened with the outbreak of war. Many were sent to ghettos in Poland – gathering places for eventual deportation. Jewish populations were rounded up in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and the former Yugoslavia (where many were massacred). The worst mass killings took place during the invasion of the Soviet Union, when specially appointed SS *Einsatzgruppen* are thought to have killed almost 500,000 people.
Locations of *Einsatzgruppen*
Ghettos
Sites of mass killings
3 THE DEATH CAMPS 1942–1945
Nazi leaders sought a "final solution to the Jewish question in Europe". It was agreed by leading Nazi officials in a meeting in Wannsee, Berlin, in January 1942. By the spring of 1942, freight trains were carrying Jews from the ghettos to camps in the east. The most lethal were the six purpose-built death camps – Chelmno, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Majdanek, Sobibor, and Treblinka – in occupied Poland.
Wannsee meeting
Extermination camps



△ **Children at Auschwitz**
This photograph was taken by Soviet troops who liberated the Auschwitz concentration camp in January 1945.

4 LIBERATION OF THE CAMPS 1944–1945

As the tide of war swung against Germany, the pace of killings increased: in two months in 1944, almost half a million Hungarian Jews were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Then, with the Soviet advance into Poland, came a time when survivors were shuttled from camp to camp in a series of death marches. The first camp to be liberated was Majdanek, in July 1944; Auschwitz followed in January 1945. In total, around 2.7 million Jews from Poland were killed, along with 2.1 million from the Soviet Union, and 1.3 million from the rest of occupied Europe.

THE HOLOCAUST

Hitler and his supporters saw the Jews as a worldwide enemy conspiring to undermine the German nation. The Nazi regime embarked on what became known as the Holocaust – the systematic persecution and murder of around six million European Jews.

The Nazi rise to power had immediate consequences for Germany's Jews, who were treated from the start as racial outcasts. From 1935 onwards they were denied citizenship and forbidden to marry or have sexual relations with people of "German blood". The policy was deliberately aimed at encouraging Jews to flee the country, and by 1938 about half the Jewish population had done just that.

With the outbreak of war, the situation deteriorated further. Ghettos were created in the occupied eastern lands where deportees could be resettled and controlled. During the drive eastwards many Jewish populations were massacred, often in retaliation for isolated acts of resistance. From late 1941, new extermination centres were constructed – known as Operation Reinhard camps – where Jews were sent to the gas chambers or selected for gruelling slave labour, through which thousands more were worked to death. The results were horrifying: when liberation finally came, an estimated two-thirds of Europe's pre-war Jewish population had been wiped out.

"The Holocaust was not only a Jewish tragedy, but also a human tragedy."

SIMON WIESENTHAL, HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

OTHER PERSECUTED MINORITIES

Jews were not the only minority group persecuted by the Nazis. Their victims stretched from homosexual men and people with disabilities to Jehovah's Witnesses, Freemasons, and Catholic and Protestant dissidents. In terms of numbers, ethnic groups suffered the worst losses. Romani people faced the same genocidal threat as the Jews, while the Nazi assault on the Slavic peoples ended in the deaths of some 15 million Soviets and 3 million Poles.

Roma and Sinti women at Bergen-Belsen

THE WARSAW GHETTO

In the 1930s, Warsaw was home to 375,000 Jews – the second largest single Jewish population in the world after New York. Following Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939, the Nazis imposed a multitude of restrictions on Jews, including their enforced relocation to a ghetto.

△ **Identification mark**
Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto were forced to wear a white armband featuring a blue Star of David on their right arm so they could be identified easily.

On 12 October 1940, all Jewish residents of Warsaw and others from outlying districts were forced to move to an area of just 3.4 sq km (1.3 sq miles) in the north of the city. High walls made of stone and barbed wire enclosed the ghetto, and armed guards kept watch; any Jew found outside the walls could be shot. In such a confined space, chronic overcrowding and malnutrition were rife. An estimated 400,000 Jews struggled daily for survival, with, on average, eight to ten people sharing a single room. The threat of starvation was constant, since the food rations were not sufficient to sustain life. Typhus and other deadly illnesses became endemic.

The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

Mass deportations of Polish Jews to concentration camps and extermination camps began in July 1942. They resumed in January 1943 and again in early April. This time, the Jews fought back against the Germans, with Jewish resistance fighters giving battle for four weeks. However, they were vastly outnumbered, and the ghetto was incinerated and reduced to rubble. By the time the fighting ended on 16 May, 7,000 Jews had been slaughtered on the streets and another 42,000 had been taken captive and deported. The Warsaw concentration camp complex was built on the site of the old ghetto.

THE NAZI CAMPS

Shown here on a contemporary map, concentration and extermination camps were spread throughout the territory of the Third Reich during World War II. Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland became the most notorious: between 1.1 and 1.3 million Jews were sent there, and at least 960,000 were executed in the gas chambers. An estimated 750,000 perished at Treblinka, also in Poland.

Nazi round-up
Terrified Jewish families are rounded up by Nazi troops in the Warsaw Ghetto prior to their forced deportation to concentration and extermination camps. Attempts by Jewish guerrillas to resist the Nazis ultimately ended in failure.

THE UNDERGROUND WAR

While Hitler's armies rolled across Europe, another, more clandestine war was going on within the occupied lands. Allied operatives carried out surprise raids, while local resistance groups, supported from London, rose up against their oppressors in a variety of ways, such as producing propaganda, sabotage, and direct armed conflict.

KEY

- Allied territory, 1942
- Axis territory, occupations, and co-belligerents, 1942
- Neutral territory, 1942
- Main SOE operations area
- SOE main bases
- SOE secondary bases
- Raids and attacks by SOE
- Sabotage
- Resistance
- Partisan support
- Communications
- Supplies delivered by air

TIMELINE

1 2 3 4 5

JAN 1941 JUL JAN 1942 JUL JAN 1943 JUL

20–22 Sep 1943 Six midget submarines damage the German battleship *Tirpitz* in a fjord

4 Mar 1941 Allied commandos disrupt industrial production on the Lofoten Islands

23–25 Jan 1941 Operation Rubble sees five Norwegian merchant ships run a German blockade from neutral Sweden to Britain

22 Jul 1940 The SOE is formed under the leadership of the British Labour Party politician Hugh Dalton

3 Sep 1942 Allied commandos raid the Casquets lighthouse in the occupied Channel Islands

3 Oct 1942 A raid on Sark leaves three Germans dead, leading to German reprisals

12–13 Sep 1942 A commando raid in Normandy fails, with all the commandos captured or killed

15–16 Mar 1941 Operation Savanna, the first to employ SOE-trained Free French forces, fails in an attack on Vannes airfield

7–8 Jun 1941 Free French saboteurs parachuted from England destroy an electrical installation

14–15 Aug 1942 British commandos cross the Channel to attack coastal defences in Normandy

27–28 Feb 1942 Raiders capture a German radar site

△ **Aftermath of a failed raid**
German troops inspect a knocked-out Canadian Churchill infantry tank after the Dieppe Raid of August 1942. The Allies did not succeed in their objective of taking the port.

1 OPERATION COLOSSUS 10 FEBRUARY 1941

In the first British airborne sabotage operation, commandos were sent from Malta to southern Italy to blow up an aqueduct near Calitri. As a diversion, bombers concurrently attacked railway yards at Foggia to the north. The raiders succeeded in damaging their target, but all were captured as prisoners of war; their anti-Fascist Italian translator was tortured and executed.

- Assault route
- Diversionary raid
- Attack on aqueduct

ARCTIC OCEAN
Altafjord
Alta
Lofoten Islands
NORWAY
SWEDEN
FINLAND
Rjukan
Stockholm
Baltic Sea
Skagerrak
North Sea
Holy Loch
DENMARK
IRELAND
UNITED KINGDOM
Tempsford
London
Southampton
Newhaven
Falmouth
Pointe de Saire
Dieppe
NETHERLANDS
BELGIUM
Berlin
POLAND
GREATER GERMANY
Saint-Jouin-Bruneval
Sainte-Honorine-des-Pertes
Vannes
St Nazaire
OCCUPIED FRANCE
SLOVAKIA
OSTMARK (AUSTRIA)
HUNGARY
Bern
SWITZERLAND
Bordeaux
Pessac
VICHY FRANCE
Gironde
YUGOSLAVIA
CROATIA
SERBIA
ITALY
Corsica
Rome
ALBANIA
Foggia
Bari
Calitri
Monopoli
Sardinia
Mediterranean Sea
PORTUGAL
Lisbon
Madrid
SPAIN
Gibraltar
FRENCH NORTH AFRICA
Malta

RAIDS AND SUBVERSIONS

With much of Europe under Nazi control by mid-1940, Britain resorted to unconventional means of attacking the enemy. A secret body – the Special Operations Executive (SOE) – trained commandos in guerrilla tactics and employed special forces to conduct clandestine operations in occupied territory.

At a time when Hitler's plans for Europe seemed close to success, Britain's War Cabinet considered it important to take the offensive by staging surprise attacks on occupied territory. Sometimes these took the form of combined operations, with air, land, and naval forces working together. The first such raid, on the Lofoten Islands in Norway, was conducted successfully in March 1941. Other attacks followed, aimed at spreading fear along the coasts. The most ambitious was the assault on St Nazaire in March 1942, the success of which encouraged Allied commanders to launch the disastrous Dieppe Raid five months later.

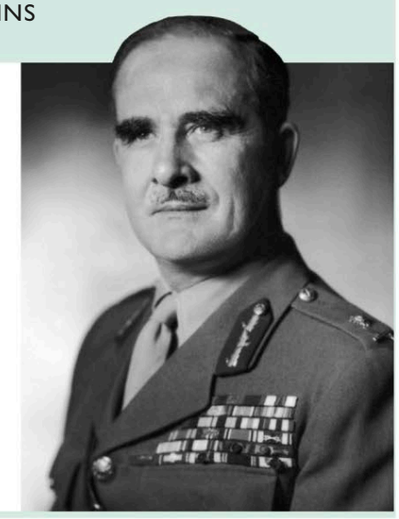
Meanwhile, from early 1941 onwards the SOE had been coordinating espionage and sabotage activities in the occupied lands, as well as liaising with resistance movements across the continent (see pp.176–77). Some incursions were conducted by its own operatives, while others employed SOE-trained resistance fighters inserted back into their own homelands to carry out missions. The SOE's activities were sometimes controversial, as they risked triggering Nazi reprisals on local civilians. Yet by striking into the heart of occupied Europe, they kept the spirit of resistance alive and helped prepare the path for D-Day (see pp.186–87).

"In no previous war… have resistance forces been so closely harnessed to the main military effort."

US GENERAL DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, 1945

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR COLIN GUBBINS
1896–1976

The SOE – also known as "Churchill's secret army" – was officially formed in 1940. The organization was shaped and then led by Colin Gubbins, the son of a British diplomat. Gubbins served with distinction in World War I, winning the Military Cross for rescuing wounded men under fire. He developed an interest in irregular warfare while serving in Russia and then Ireland in the immediate post-war years. In 1940, after service in the brief Norwegian campaign, he was seconded to the newly formed SOE, taking over as its head in 1943. There he coordinated the work of resistance groups in the occupied lands, playing a significant, if little-acknowledged, part in the victorious Allied war effort.



ARCTIC CONVOYS

Allied civilian sailors endured the dangers of extreme Arctic conditions and German air, surface, and U-boat fleets to bring more than 4 million tonnes (4½ million tons) of supplies to Soviet ports between 1941 and 1945. Around 3,000 men died and more than 100 ships were lost in the effort to keep the USSR in the war.

The German invasion of the USSR in June 1941 prompted Stalin to ask Britain and its allies for assistance in supplying the Soviet war effort. From August 1941, convoys undertook what Churchill called the "worst journey in the world", ferrying materiel needed in the war against Germany.

The most direct route took convoys through the Arctic Circle to the Soviet ports of Murmansk and Archangel. Passing close to German-held territory, they were within easy reach of the Luftwaffe and U-boats waiting in ambush, while in the Norwegian fjords, German warships – including the pride of the fleet, the *Tirpitz* – lay in wait.

The convoys faced gales, blizzards, and dense fog in the Arctic Ocean. In summer they could follow a route that lay further from the Norwegian coast, but this took them nearer to icebergs drifting into the sea lanes. In winter, the darkness offered cover but the sea ice forced the ships nearer their enemies. Thick ice formed over the vessels and had to be chipped away so that they did not capsize.

The first convoys suffered few losses, but Germany intensified its operations in 1942. The calamitous attack on convoy PQ-17 in July 1942 forced the Allies to improve the security of the convoys. The Allied decision to suspend the convoys while they prepared for Operation Torch (see pp.146–47) in September–December 1942 increased tension with the Soviets, who were desperately fighting for Stalingrad (see pp.150–51). Convoys resumed and ran until the end of the war, but bad feeling between the Eastern and Western Allies remained.

ROUTES TO THE USSR
The Arctic route to the USSR was the shortest, and accounted for almost 25 per cent of Allied aid sent to the Soviet Union. However, Soviet ships voyaging from the west coast of the US carried 50 per cent. The Soviets also ran a convoy route through the Bering Strait, supplying fuel for Lend-Lease aircraft being transferred from Alaska to Siberia.

PERIL ALL AROUND
Squeezed between the ice and the German navy, U-boats, and air bases along the coast of Norway, the Arctic route was the most dangerous supply route to the Soviet Union.

KEY
- Axis territories, occupations, and co-belligerents by end of 1942
- Allied territories by end of 1942
- Extent of winter sea ice
- German air bases
- German naval and U-boat bases
- Allied naval bases

TIMELINE
1 2 3 4 5
1941 1942 1943 1944 1945 1946

Jan Mayen Island
Norwegian Sea
Reykjavík
ICELAND
Hvalfjörður
Aug 1941–Jun 1942 Convoys congregate at the Icelandic harbours of Reykjavík and Hvalfjördur before sailing to the USSR
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Aug 1941–May 1945 Convoys set off from numerous naval bases across the British Isles
Loch Ewe
Scapa Flow
Bergen
Oban
Glasgow
Firth of Clyde
IRELAND
UNITED KINGDOM
Liverpool
12 Aug 1941 The first convoy "Dervish" sets sail for Archangel via Iceland

1 THE FIRST ARCTIC CONVOYS
12 AUGUST–31 DECEMBER 1941

The first convoy, codenamed "Dervish", sailed from Liverpool on 12 August 1941, reaching Archangel on 31 August. By the end of the year, six convoys (designated PQ for outbound and QP for homebound) had delivered 750 tanks, 800 fighter aircraft, 1,400 vehicles, and more than 100,000 tonnes (110,000 tons) of supplies to the USSR. No ships had yet been lost.

Summer route
Winter route

2 THE THREAT INCREASES
JANUARY– JUNE 1942

America's entry into the war resulted in an increase in supplies to the Soviets. Germany responded by sending more resources to the Arctic: the battleships *Tirpitz* and *Admiral Scheer* moved to Norway and the number of submarines was increased. The British Merchant and Royal Navies lost their first ships in January 1942, and in March the *Tirpitz* headed out to make the first direct assault on PQ-12. Although the attack failed, overall losses began to increase.

Sinking of British freighter *Waziristan*, 2 Jan 1942
Sinking of British destroyer *Matabele*, 17 Jan 1942
Failed assault on PQ-12, 6–9 Mar 1942

3 THE CONVOY SCATTERS
27 JUNE–4 JULY 1942

When PQ-17 left Iceland for Archangel on 27 June, the Allies became aware that Germany was planning Operation *Rösselsprung* – an attack by their surface and U-boat fleets, and the Luftwaffe. PQ-17 was well protected, but the loss of two of its ships to the Luftwaffe and the news that the *Tirpitz* and the cruiser *Hipper* had moved to Altafjord on 4 July prompted the Admiralty to order the convoy to scatter. The convoy's escort vessels raced west, thinking they would intercept the Tirpitz, but failed to sight the enemy.

Route of PQ-17, 27 Jun–4 Jul 1942
First attacks on PQ-17, 4 Jul 1942
Cruiser escorts leave convoy

4 THE CONVOY IS DECIMATED
5–24 JULY 1942

By 5 July, the ships of PQ-17 were scattered over 64 sq km (25 sq miles), all trying to reach safety. While some headed north into the ice before making their way into the Matochkin Strait, others sought cover in the fog or headed for Novaya Zemlya, only to be picked off by U-boats. The first survivors reached Archangel on 9 July; by 24 July only 11 of the 35 ships of PQ-17 had made it to safety. After this episode, the Royal Navy improved its cover for the Arctic convoys, adding fighters and reconnaissance planes to their escorts.

Merchant ships of PQ-17 sunk

5 A REDUCED THREAT
DECEMBER 1942–MAY 1945

In late 1942, increased conflict on the Eastern Front forced Germany to scale back their air operations in the Arctic. The loss of the *Admiral Hipper* at the Battle of the Barents Sea, the *Scharnhorst* (December 1943), and the *Tirpitz* (December 1944) further reduced the threat the German fleet posed to convoys. Out of 550 ships that sailed to Russia in 22 convoys between December 1942 and May 1945, only nine were lost.

Scharnhorst sunk
Tirpitz sunk
Battle of the Barents Sea, 31 Dec 1942

ARCTIC OCEAN
Novaya Zemlya
Matochkin Strait
Washington
Bolton Castle
Paulus Potter
Pankroft
River Afton
Earlston
Carlton
Aldersdale
Daniel Morgan
Hopen
Empire Byron
Zaafaran
Honomu
Fairfield City
Peter Kerr
Hartlebury
Winston Salem (run aground)
Olopana
John Witherspoon
Alcoa Ranger
Pan Atlantic
Scharnhorst
Bear Island
Waziristan
Kolguyev Island
Bugrino
Hoosier
El Capitan
Barents Sea
North Cape
Tirpitz
Altafjord
Hammerfest
Alta
Vadsø
Matabele
Tromsø
Nikkeli
Murmansk
Shoyna
Kola Peninsula
Svolvær
Narvik
Mezen
Bodø
Mo i Rana
Rørvik
Kem
Onega
Archangel
Skellefteå
Segezha
Kokkola
Trondheim
Joensuu
NORWAY
SWEDEN
FINLAND
USSR
Gulf of Bothnia
Lake Ladoga
Leningrad
Luga
Pskov

26 Dec 1943 The German battleship *Scharnhorst* is sunk in the Battle of the Northern Cape

6 Jul 1942 The Master of the *Winston Salem* runs his ship aground on Novaya Zemlya

2 Jan 1942 Britain loses its first merchant ship, the *Waziristan*, in the Arctic

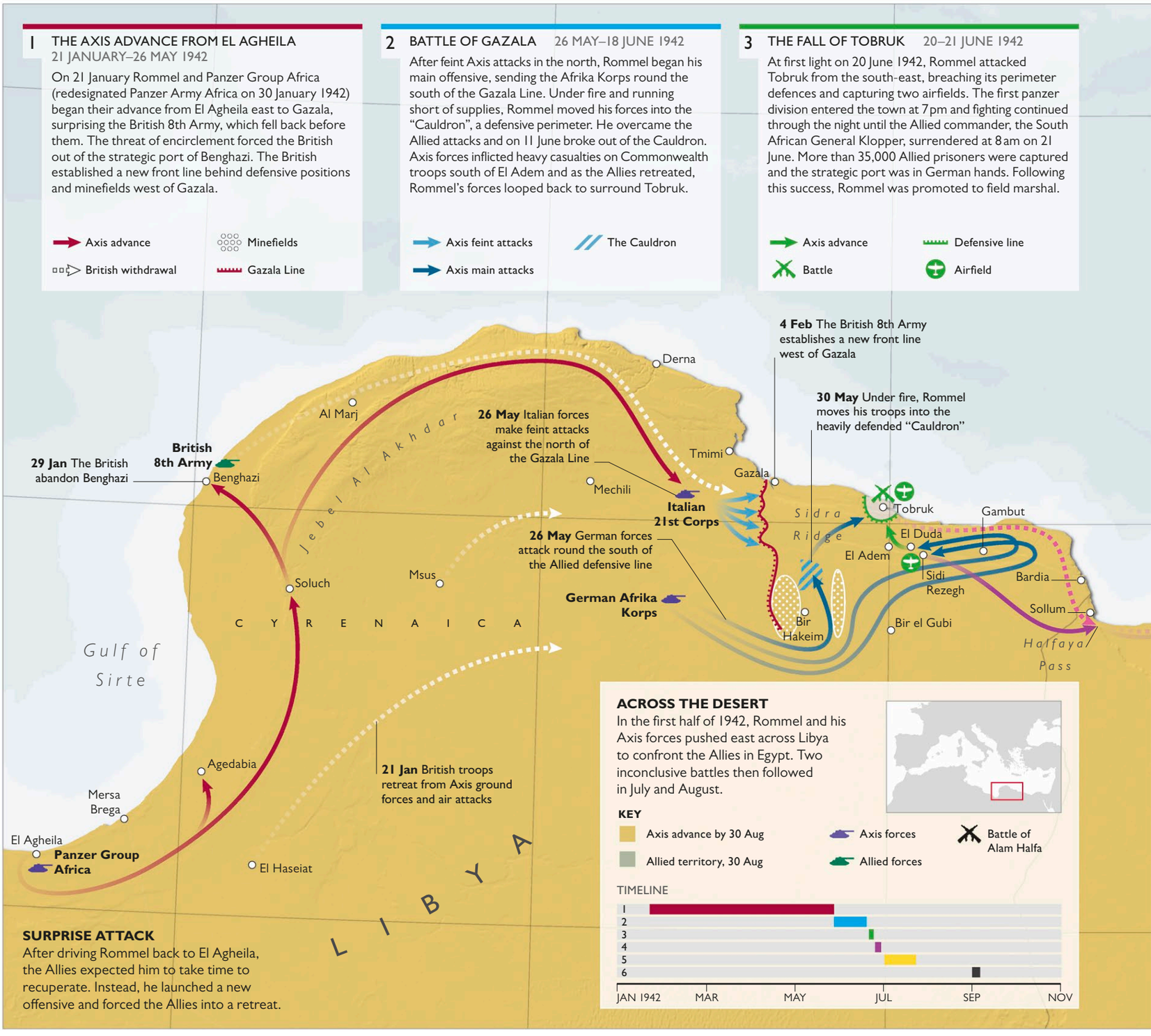
31 Dec 1942 Hitler threatens to scrap the German surface fleet after its heavy cruisers are crushed by the Allied light destroyers

Aug 1941–May 1945 Murmansk provides the only year-round ice-free anchorage on Russia's northern coast

31 Aug 1941 "Dervish", the first Arctic convoy, arrives

6–9 Mar 1942 *Tirpitz* fails to engage with convoy PQ-12

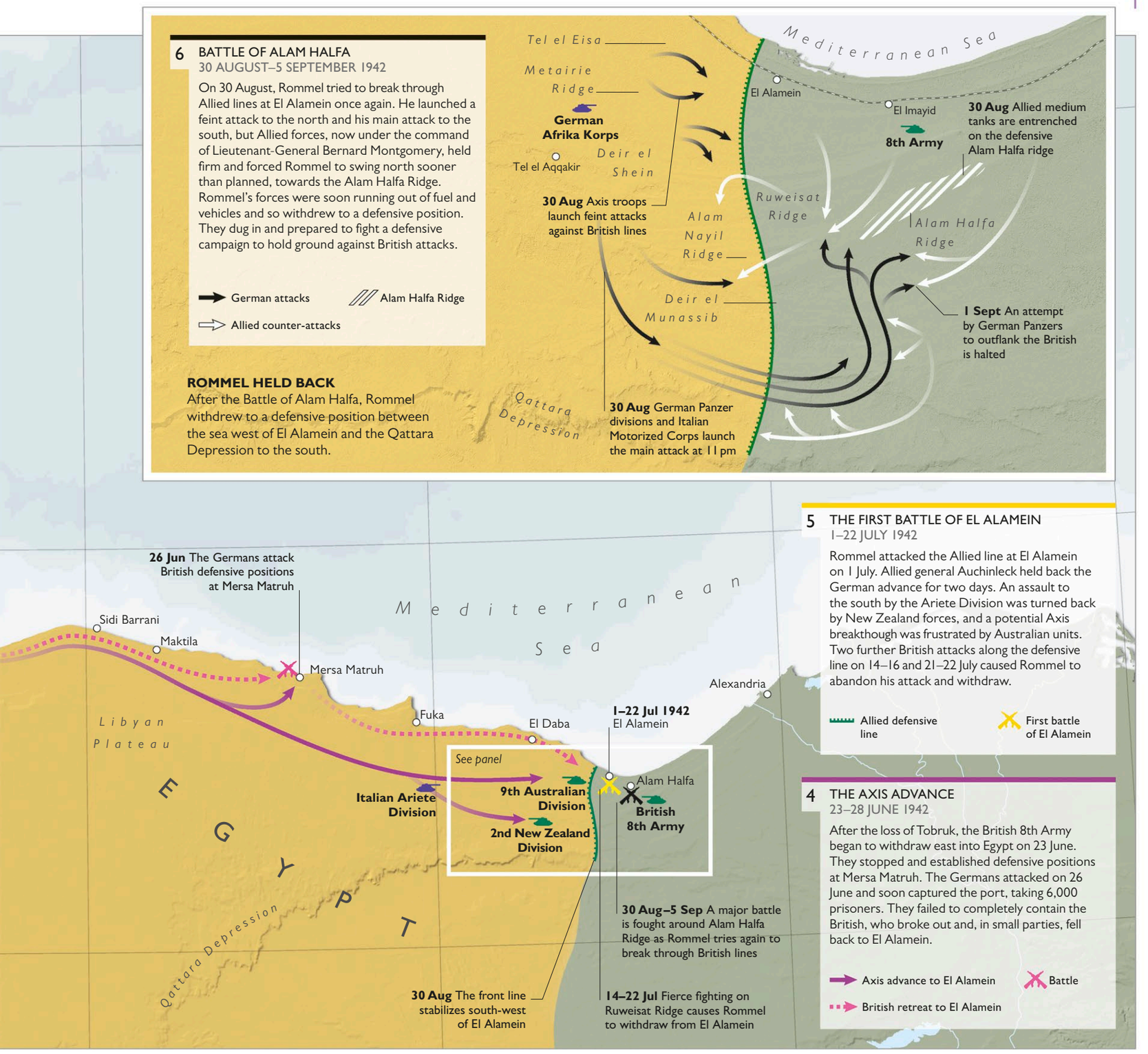
▷ **Battling the ice**
The crew of HMS *Scylla* – a Royal Navy cruiser that served as an escort to Arctic convoys – are seen using steam hoses to clear the decks of accumulated ice. Temperatures on patrol in the Arctic could drop as low as -50°C (-58°F).



ROMMEL'S FINAL ADVANCE

By the start of 1942, the war in North Africa had seemingly turned against Rommel, but the man known as the "desert fox" countered with a new attack. He pushed the Allies into a retreat deep into Egypt, leading to confrontation at El Alamein.

By early January 1942, the Allied Operation Crusader (see pp.76–77) had forced Rommel all the way back from the Egyptian border to El Agheila, on Libya's Gulf of Sirte. This major retreat left the Axis forces (consisting of Italian and German corps) exhausted and their supply lines disrupted. The British assumed that Rommel would be unable to regain the initiative for some time, and so took the opportunity to refit their equipment and allow their troops time to relax. However, Rommel acted swiftly to restore his troops to fighting order and began to advance eastwards on 21 January, overrunning Benghazi on 28 January and Tmini by early February. The Allies regrouped behind the Gazala Line – a defensive barrier of minefields interspersed with small, fortified keeps – which ran from



the coast at Gazala to Bir Hakeim about 95 km (60 miles) to the south. Despite fierce resistance – particularly from the Free French forces at Bir Hakeim – and heavy losses on both sides, Rommel prevailed at the Battle of Gazala and forced the Allies to abandon their defensive line and retreat towards the Egyptian border.

By the middle of June, Axis forces had captured Tobruk and the Allies had fallen back to Mersa Matruh, which was itself overcome by the end of the month. The two sides confronted one another in Egypt in two inconclusive battles – El Alamein in July and Alam Halfa in August. Although Rommel had achieved his most impressive victories to date in North Africa, he had ultimately failed to break through Allied lines. His advance had been checked.

◁ **Battle instructions**
Erwin Rommel (on the right), the commander of the German and Italian forces in North Africa, gives directions to his officers.

1 AXIS AND ALLIED PLANS OCTOBER 1942

Rommel's forces were expecting a significant British attack, so dug in to the Egyptian desert behind deep minefields nicknamed the "Devil's Gardens", backed by anti-tank weapons. The weaker Italian troops were arranged between the stronger German formations. Montgomery ran a number of operations designed to confuse and mislead his enemy, giving him more time to resupply and to meticulously plan the two phases of his attack, which were codenamed Lightfoot and Supercharge.

Allied objective

Axis "Devil's Gardens" minefields

2 OPERATION LIGHTFOOT 23 OCTOBER–1 NOVEMBER 1942

On 23 October, the British 30th Corps launched an artillery offensive on the north of the front line, followed by an infantry advance through northern minefields. Further south, the British 13th Corps conducted a diversionary assault. After some delays, the armoured divisions broke through the minefields, concentrating their attacks in the north. The German defences proved robust, and the fighting was fierce. On 1 November, a diversionary amphibious assault took place on the north coast near Sidi Abd Rahman.

Front line, 23 Oct 1942

Allied amphibious feint attack

Main Allied attacks

Axis movement

Diversionary Allied attacks

1 Nov The Allies simulate a coastal landing to suggest a seaborne attack

Mediterranean Sea

4 Nov Rommel's forces retreat to the west

Sidi Abd Rahman

German Afrika Korps

26–27 Oct The misnamed Kidney Ridge, actually a depression, sees the worst of the fighting

24 Oct The 30th Corps moves through the Axis minefields

Tel el Aqqaqir

Kidney Ridge

El Alamein

British 30th Corps

2 Nov Allied armour breaks through Axis lines

Miteiriya Ridge

25 Oct Allied infantry reach Miteiriya Ridge

26 Oct The German 21st Panzer Division and the Italian Ariete Division move north

Ruweisat Ridge

EGYPT

Sep–Oct More than 500,000 German mines are laid along the 60-km- (40-mile-) long front line

El Taka Plateau

Qattara Depression

23 Oct The front line extends from the sea, south-east into the desert

△ **Advancing infantry**
Allied soldiers from the British 8th Army charge across desert terrain during the second Battle of El Alamein in November 1942.

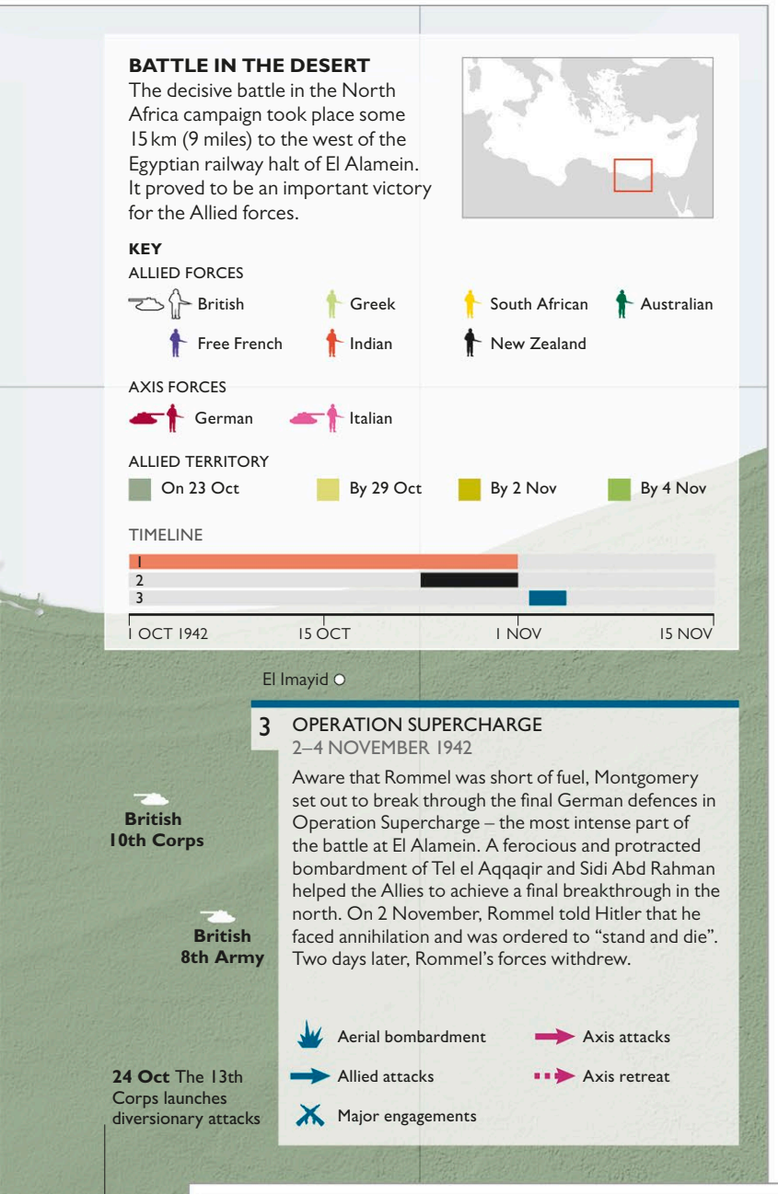
SECOND BATTLE OF EL ALAMEIN

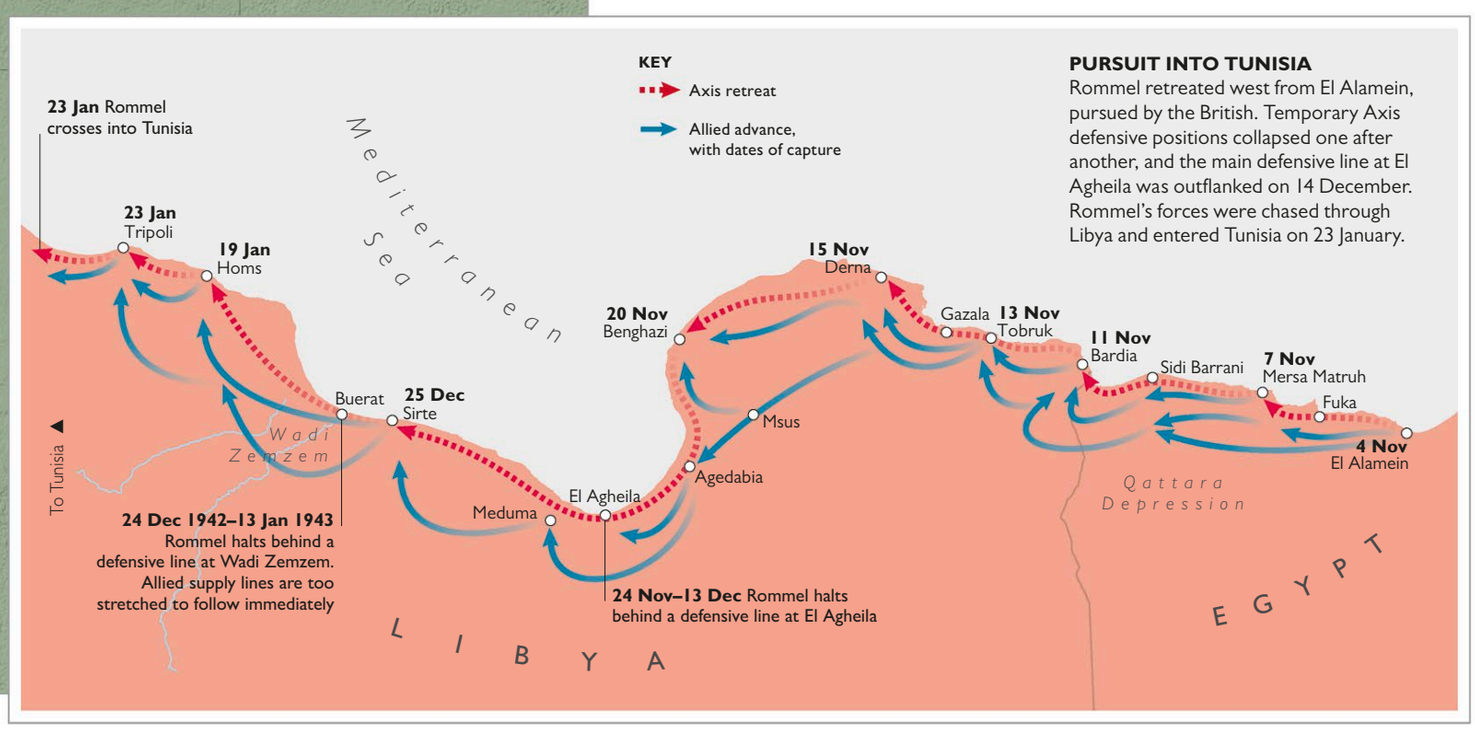
The key battle of the Western Desert Campaign took place around the Egyptian town of El Alamein from October to November 1942. It proved to be a watershed, stopping the Axis advance into Egypt, ending the threat to the Suez Canal, and forcing Rommel's troops, including the formidable Afrika Korps, to retreat into Tunisia.

After their failure to break through British lines at Alam Halfa in August 1942 (see pp.142–43), the Axis forces were on the defensive, and their supply lines were badly overstretched. However, General Montgomery did not immediately counter-attack, choosing instead to build up his forces, gather intelligence, and further choke Axis supplies before launching an attack that he hoped would be decisive.

By October, the Axis forces were outnumbered and outgunned. The Allies fielded 195,000 men, 1,029 tanks, 435 armoured cars, 900 artillery pieces, 1,451 anti-tank guns, and 750 aircraft. In response, the combined German and Italian forces numbered 116,000 men, and were equipped with 547 tanks, 192 armoured cars, 552 artillery pieces, and up to 1,060 anti-tank guns, as well as around 900 aircraft. The inevitable Allied attack finally came on 23 October 1942, with Rommel away in Germany for medical treatment; he returned to Africa on 25 October. The Axis forces put up fierce resistance, but by 4 November, Rommel was in retreat towards Tunisia. The Allies had won, and plans were under way to clear the Axis forces from Africa (see pp.146–47).

The second Battle of El Alamein was a turning point for the Western Allies and also boost to flagging morale, as Britain celebrated a major success, the first for its land forces since 1939.

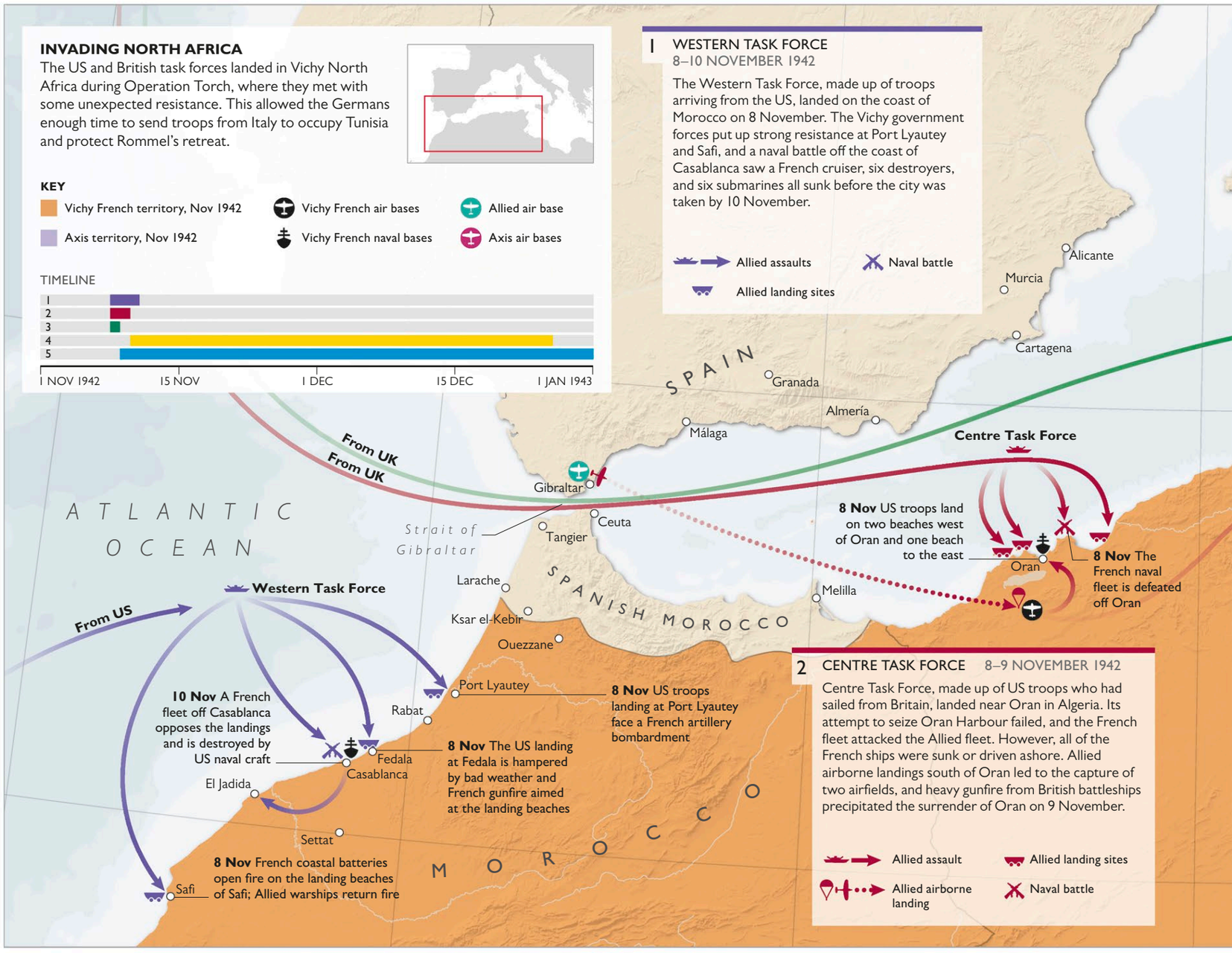




OPERATION TORCH

Four days after German field marshal Rommel began his retreat from El Alamein in Egypt, US and British troops began to land in Morocco and Algeria. Known as Operation Torch, this campaign was intended to evict Axis forces from Africa and clear the way for the invasion of Italy.

The Soviet Union wanted its Western allies to open up a second front in Europe to relieve the pressure on the Red Army. The US backed a direct assault on occupied France, but Churchill argued for landings in Africa that would both reduce pressure on British and Commonwealth forces in Egypt and enable the Allies to clear North Africa of Axis troops. The Allies could then use Tunisia as a starting point from which to attack the Axis through its most vulnerable member – Italy. Such a landing would also help safeguard passage for Allied vessels through the Mediterranean to the Suez Canal. US commanders opposed the British plan, and wanted a three-pronged attack across the English Channel. Roosevelt, however, saw the need for the campaign and ordered that Torch go ahead at the earliest possible date, much to the fury of US planners and the Soviets.



The planned landing areas on the North African coast were under the rule of Vichy France, which controlled tens of thousands of troops. The Allies were uncertain of what the Vichy leaders' response would be to an invasion and sent US Major General Mark Clark on a secret mission to Algiers to gauge their possible reaction. Despite the support of some individual generals, the Vichy governments in Morocco and Algeria opposed the landings, which consequently met with stiff resistance. A further drawback of landing in Morocco was that it was a considerable distance to Tunisia – the ultimate Allied target. As a result, German reinforcements were able to pour into Tunisia from Italy to protect Rommel's rear as he retreated following defeat at El Alamein (see pp.144–45).

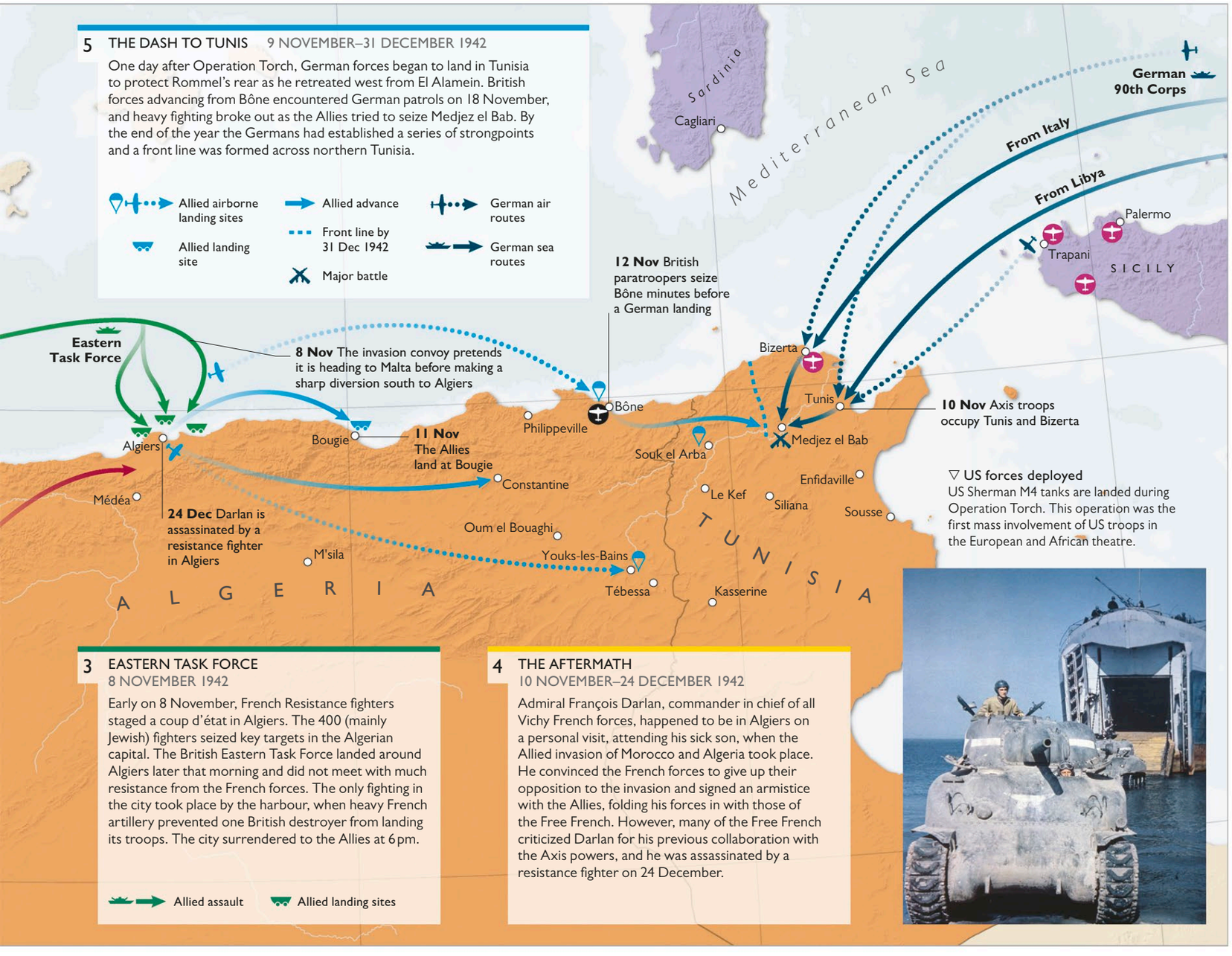
"The only tough nut left is in your hands. Crack it open quickly."

EISENHOWER TO PATTON, CASABLANCA, 1943

THE END OF VICHY FRANCE

The failure of Vichy France to resist the Allied landings in North Africa convinced the Germans that it could no longer be trusted. On 11 November, German and Italian troops occupied Vichy France and ended its independence. The Germans also launched Operation Lila to capture the units of the French fleet at Toulon and prevent them from sailing to join the Allies. However, the French navy scuttled almost their entire fleet at Toulon on 27 November, before the Germans arrived in the port.

The French fleet is scuttled



2 THE SECOND BATTLE OF KHARKOV
12–28 MAY 1942

In May 1942, the Soviets attempted to retake Kharkov, a city captured by the Germans in October 1941. They advanced into German defences around Kharkov, but the German 6th Army counter-attacked and, working with the 1st Panzer Army, swiftly enclosed the Soviet forces. By the end of May more than 240,000 Soviet soldiers had been captured or killed, leaving the Red Army temporarily short of reserves.

Soviet offensive 12–17 May
German counter-offensive 17–28 May

1 CLEARING THE CRIMEA
8 MAY–3 JULY 1942

On 8 May, the German 11th Army began an assault on the Kerch Peninsula – a landing stage for operations in the Caucasus. After Kerch fell, the Luftwaffe attacked the besieged city of Sevastopol with a ferocious bombing campaign from 2 June. The German infantry moved in on 7 June but met such strong Soviet resistance that reinforcements had to be called in from the 17th Army. The Soviets finally surrendered on 3 July.

German 11th Army advance, 8 May–30 Jun
German aerial bombardment

3 OPERATION BLUE BEGINS
28 JUNE–22 JULY 1942

With the Crimea all but secured, Operation Blue was launched on 28 June. The 4th Panzer Army dashed across 160 km (100 miles) to take Voronezh, where the 2nd Army later took up defensive positions to protect the German advance. The 4th Panzer Army then moved south while the 6th Army began advancing east towards Stalingrad.

4th Panzer Army advance
6th Army advance
Battle of Voronezh

28 Jun–24 Jul The German 2nd Army takes over at the Battle of Voronezh when the 4th Panzer Army moves south

Jan–May 1942 A Soviet offensive to take Kharkov does not succeed, but creates a huge salient around Izyum containing around 340,000 Soviet troops

23 Aug The German 6th Army penetrates Stalingrad's outer suburbs

23 Jul The Germans capture Rostov

23 Jul Hitler changes his mind and orders the 4th Panzer Army, originally bound for the Caucasus, to Stalingrad

30 Jun The Soviet garrison at Sevastopol begins evacuating; the remaining troops surrender on 3 July

15 May Kerch falls to the Germans after eight days

6 Sep The German 17th Army reaches Novorossiysk

1 Sep–2 Nov The German advance is disrupted by fires set by the Soviets and by cavalry attacks

2 Nov The German Panzer advance is halted to the west of Ordzhonikidze

May–Nov Batumi is designated the southernmost objective of the Caucasus invasion

Orel, Livny, Kursk, Voronezh, Gubkin, Belgorod, Volchansk, Kharkov, Valuyki, Rossosh, Novaya Kalitva, Poltava, Kupiansk, Krasnograd, Izyum, Chertkovo, Lysychansk, Millerovo, Slavyansk, Stalingrad, Kalach, Horlivka, Kamensk, Makiivka, Novoshakhtinsk, Volgodonsk, Kotelnikovo, Taganrog, Rostov, Mariupol, Berdyansk, Yeysk, Proletarskaya, Elista, Tikhoretsk, Timashevsk, Kropotkin, Armavir, Stavropol, Budyonnsk, Krasnodar, Novorossiysk, Gelendzhik, Maikop, Labinsk, Apsheronsk, Cherkessk, Pyatigorsk, Mozdok, Tuapse, Nalchik, Grozny, Sochi, Alagir, Ordzhonikidze, Sukhumi, Batumi

Orel, German 2nd Army, Kursk, German 4th Panzer Army, Voronezh, Gubkin, Army Group B, Belgorod, Volchansk, Kharkov, German 6th Army, Valuyki, Rossosh, Novaya Kalitva, Poltava, Kupiansk, Krasnograd, Izyum, Chertkovo, Lysychansk, Millerovo, Slavyansk, Stalingrad, Kalach, Soviet 62nd Army, Soviet 64th Army, German 1st Panzer Army, Horlivka, Kamensk, Army Group A, Makiivka, Novoshakhtinsk, Volgodonsk, Kotelnikovo, German 17th Army, Taganrog, Rostov, Mariupol, Berdyansk, Yeysk, Proletarskaya, Elista, Tikhoretsk, Timashevsk, Kropotkin, Armavir, Stavropol, Budyonnsk, Krasnodar, Novorossiysk, Gelendzhik, Maikop, Labinsk, Apsheronsk, Cherkessk, Pyatigorsk, Mozdok, Tuapse, Nalchik, Grozny, Sochi, Alagir, Ordzhonikidze, Sukhumi, Batumi, Eupatoria, Kerch, Sevastopol, German 11th Army, Transcaucasus Front

U K R A I N E
U S S R
C R I M E A
Kerch Peninsula
Kalmuk Steppe
Black Sea
Caucasus Mountains
Dnieper
Donets
Don
Volga
Kuban
Manych
Laba

◁ **German troops at Kharkov**
The Soviet offensive against the 6th Army began well, but was reversed by German airstrikes after which three Soviet field armies were hemmed in and destroyed.

GERMAN ADVANCE TO STALINGRAD

The Germans launched a huge offensive in the southern USSR in the summer of 1942. Their target was the oil-rich Caucasus region, which they planned to seize after taking the cities in the Don River basin, the USSR's industrial heartland. They advanced rapidly and by September had closed in on the city of Stalingrad.

Having failed to take Moscow (see pp.100–101), the Germans planned a new offensive that would bypass the capital. Operation Blue (*Fall Blau*) aimed to strike south-east to take the oilfields of the Caucasus, seizing the Red Army's vital fuel supplies for Germany, and also to capture Stalingrad, which would secure transport links into the Caucasus and protect the Germans' flank. Hitler also believed that the Soviets were near breaking point, and that one more major offensive would drive them to defeat.

First, the Germans needed to clear the Crimea and the Kharkov area of Soviet forces, a task they achieved by early July. Once *Fall Blau* began, however, Hitler ordered simultaneous attacks on Stalingrad and the Caucasus. To achieve this, Army Group South (including Italian, Hungarian, and Romanian divisions) was split in two on 7 July 1942. Army Group A was to advance through the Caucasus and secure the Black Sea coast as far south as Batumi, while Army Group B was to move on Stalingrad.

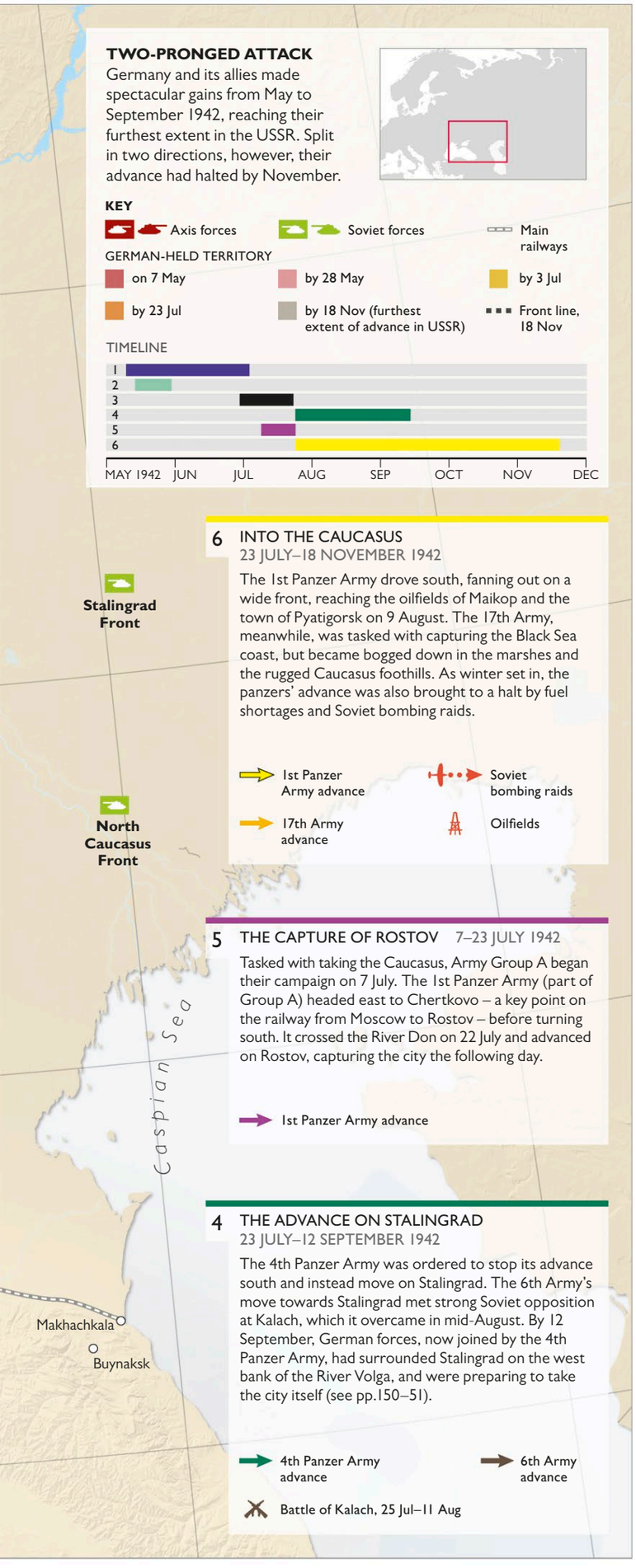
Over the next months, resources were switched between the two offensives; by mid-September the Germans were spread across a vast area and neither army group had achieved its objective. Meanwhile, Stalin ordered the Red Army to defend Stalingrad at all costs (see pp.150–51).

> *"If we don't take Maikop and Grozny [oilfields in the Caucasus] then I must put an end to the war."*
>
> ADOLF HITLER, TO HIS GENERALS, 23 JULY 1942

OIL IN THE CAUCASUS

The Caucasus had been an important oil-producing region since the start of the 20th century, and by 1940 the region was producing the majority of the Soviet Union's oil. In 1939–40, the Soviets supplied oil to Nazi Germany, but the supply was cut off when the two countries went to war. In Operation Blue, Hitler was determined to capture the oilfields to fuel his war machine.

Oil derricks in the Caucasus



STALINGRAD UNDER SIEGE

One of the most colossal conflicts of the war, the Battle of Stalingrad became a symbol of Soviet patriotism as civilians fought alongside soldiers to defend the city street by street. The battle halted Germany's advance in the east, marking a turning point in the war.

In late August 1942, German Army Group B approached the industrial city of Stalingrad. The Luftwaffe rained bombs on the city before German ground forces entered in September. They met a fight that raged from street to street and house to house, and even descended into the sewers; the Germans dubbed it *Rattenkrieg* (Rat War). General Vasily Chuikov, commander of the Soviet 62nd Army, had his men "hug the enemy", fighting in such close proximity that the Germans could not exploit their superior air power and artillery.

The Soviet forces were steadily pressed back to the banks of the River Volga, but Stalin was willing to sacrifice huge numbers of people to serve his purposes and kept up reinforcements. The average life expectancy of a Soviet soldier in the battle was 24 hours; overall, there were around 1.1 million dead, wounded, and missing. Both sides were exhausted by mid-November, but the battle – which would continue until February 1943 – had reached a turning point. The Red Army was about to launch a counter-offensive that would begin to turn the tide of the war (see pp.152–53).

"It is time to finish retreating. Not one step back!"

JOSEPH STALIN, ORDER NO. 227, 28 JULY 1942

"PAVLOV'S HOUSE" – A SYMBOL OF RESISTANCE

The Soviets turned ordinary buildings into "fortresses" in their defence of Stalingrad. A platoon of Soviet soldiers, led by Sergeant Yakov Pavlov, held this apartment building for two months against daily German assaults. They fortified it with minefields and barbed wire, dug trenches for supply lines, and placed machine guns at windows and an anti-tank gun on the roof to pick off approaching German forces.

Soviet soldiers take aim from the windows of "Pavlov's House"

◁ **Soviet hero**
Red Army sniper Vasily Zaytsev (left) killed 225 Axis soldiers and officers, including 11 enemy snipers, between 10 November and 17 December 1942 during the Battle of Stalingrad.

1 THE BOMBING OF STALINGRAD
23 AUGUST–22 NOVEMBER 1942

To prepare the way for their assault, the Luftwaffe began heavily firebombing Stalingrad. The city was bombed block by block, setting it ablaze and reducing the buildings to burnt-out rubble. Thousands of civilians and soldiers were killed as air strikes continued until late November 1942.

2 SURROUNDING THE CITY
23 AUGUST–13 SEPTEMBER 1942

On 23 August, the German 6th Army reached the outer suburbs of Stalingrad. Fighting through Soviet "workers' militias", including young female volunteers manning anti-aircraft guns, they reached the River Volga north of the city by month's end. When the German 4th Panzer Army arrived from the south on 2 September, the Soviet 62nd and 64th Armies in Stalingrad were surrounded, with their backs to the river. The Soviets used any buildings still standing to anchor their defence lines.

German advance 23 Aug–13 Sep
German-held territory by 13 Sep 1942
Soviet front line 13 Sep

3 SOVIET DEFENCES
23 AUGUST–18 NOVEMBER 1942

With the west bank enclosed, the Soviet army built up an artillery belt on the east bank of the Volga, from which they bombarded the German positions. They also commandeered the Volga fishing fleet and constructed several temporary bridges to carry supplies and men across the river, providing a steady stream of reinforcements. The Soviet air force provided air cover and dropped supplies to the west bank, despite the constant threat from the Luftwaffe.

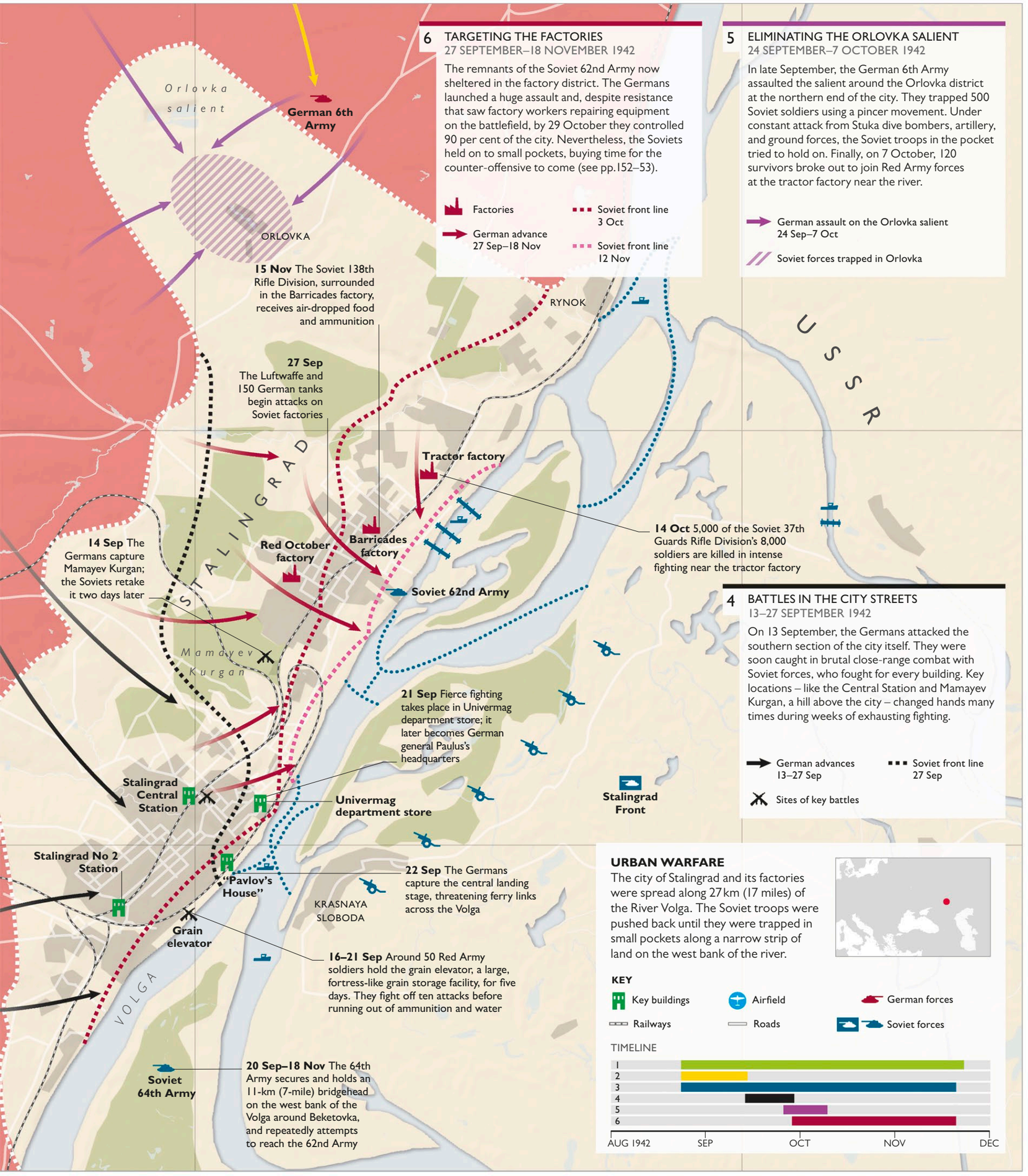
Artillery belt
Temporary bridge
Supply lines
Ferry crossing

German 6th Army

Gumrak airfield

7 Sep The Germans capture an airfield just outside Stalingrad, which the Luftwaffe use in their firebombing campaign

German 4th Panzer Army


Orlovka salient
German 6th Army
ORLOVKA
15 Nov The Soviet 138th Rifle Division, surrounded in the Barricades factory, receives air-dropped food and ammunition
RYNOK
USSR
27 Sep The Luftwaffe and 150 German tanks begin attacks on Soviet factories
STALINGRAD
Tractor factory
14 Oct 5,000 of the Soviet 37th Guards Rifle Division's 8,000 soldiers are killed in intense fighting near the tractor factory
14 Sep The Germans capture Mamayev Kurgan; the Soviets retake it two days later
Red October factory
Barricades factory
Soviet 62nd Army
Mamayev Kurgan
21 Sep Fierce fighting takes place in Univermag department store; it later becomes German general Paulus's headquarters
Stalingrad Central Station
Univermag department store
Stalingrad Front
Stalingrad No 2 Station
"Pavlov's House"
22 Sep The Germans capture the central landing stage, threatening ferry links across the Volga
KRASNAYA SLOBODA
Grain elevator
16–21 Sep Around 50 Red Army soldiers hold the grain elevator, a large, fortress-like grain storage facility, for five days. They fight off ten attacks before running out of ammunition and water
VOLGA
Soviet 64th Army
20 Sep–18 Nov The 64th Army secures and holds an 11-km (7-mile) bridgehead on the west bank of the Volga around Beketovka, and repeatedly attempts to reach the 62nd Army
6 TARGETING THE FACTORIES
27 SEPTEMBER–18 NOVEMBER 1942
The remnants of the Soviet 62nd Army now sheltered in the factory district. The Germans launched a huge assault and, despite resistance that saw factory workers repairing equipment on the battlefield, by 29 October they controlled 90 per cent of the city. Nevertheless, the Soviets held on to small pockets, buying time for the counter-offensive to come (see pp.152–53).
Factories
German advance 27 Sep–18 Nov
Soviet front line 3 Oct
Soviet front line 12 Nov
5 ELIMINATING THE ORLOVKA SALIENT
24 SEPTEMBER–7 OCTOBER 1942
In late September, the German 6th Army assaulted the salient around the Orlovka district at the northern end of the city. They trapped 500 Soviet soldiers using a pincer movement. Under constant attack from Stuka dive bombers, artillery, and ground forces, the Soviet troops in the pocket tried to hold on. Finally, on 7 October, 120 survivors broke out to join Red Army forces at the tractor factory near the river.
German assault on the Orlovka salient 24 Sep–7 Oct
Soviet forces trapped in Orlovka
4 BATTLES IN THE CITY STREETS
13–27 SEPTEMBER 1942
On 13 September, the Germans attacked the southern section of the city itself. They were soon caught in brutal close-range combat with Soviet forces, who fought for every building. Key locations – like the Central Station and Mamayev Kurgan, a hill above the city – changed hands many times during weeks of exhausting fighting.
German advances 13–27 Sep
Soviet front line 27 Sep
Sites of key battles
URBAN WARFARE
The city of Stalingrad and its factories were spread along 27 km (17 miles) of the River Volga. The Soviet troops were pushed back until they were trapped in small pockets along a narrow strip of land on the west bank of the river.
KEY
Key buildings
Airfield
German forces
Railways
Roads
Soviet forces
TIMELINE
1
2
3
4
5
6
AUG 1942
SEP
OCT
NOV
DEC

SOVIET VICTORY AT STALINGRAD

In November 1942, the Soviets launched an unexpected counter-offensive at Stalingrad – not pushing through the front line in the city itself, but encircling the city to cut off, then annihilate, the German army within. Following this victory, the Soviets went on to push the Germans out of the Caucasus and the Don River basin.

The Germans disregarded what limited intelligence they had about a major Soviet counter-offensive, believing that the Soviets could not have the men or equipment to mount such an attack. As a result, the speed and success of the Red Army assault in November 1942 came as a shock to them. The Soviets' plan was ingenious: they targeted Germany's allies, the weaker Romanian, Italian, and Hungarian armies that flanked the German 6th Army in Stalingrad and held the front line along the River Don. By 23 November, the 6th Army was isolated from the stronger German forces to the west and south.

The Soviets then launched a series of operations to clear the Don basin and Caucasus. By the time the Red Army launched its final assault on Stalingrad in mid-January 1943, it had decimated the Germans' allies and retaken much of the territory lost to the German advance of 1942 (see pp.148–49). Hitler only averted further disaster by allowing Army Group A to retreat from the Caucasus. It had seemed as if the German retreat might turn into a rout, but by February the Soviet army was overstretched. A successful counter-attack at Kharkov boosted German morale as they planned their next offensive (see pp.178–79).

"18,000 wounded without any supplies or dressings or drugs. Further defence senseless. Collapse inevitable."

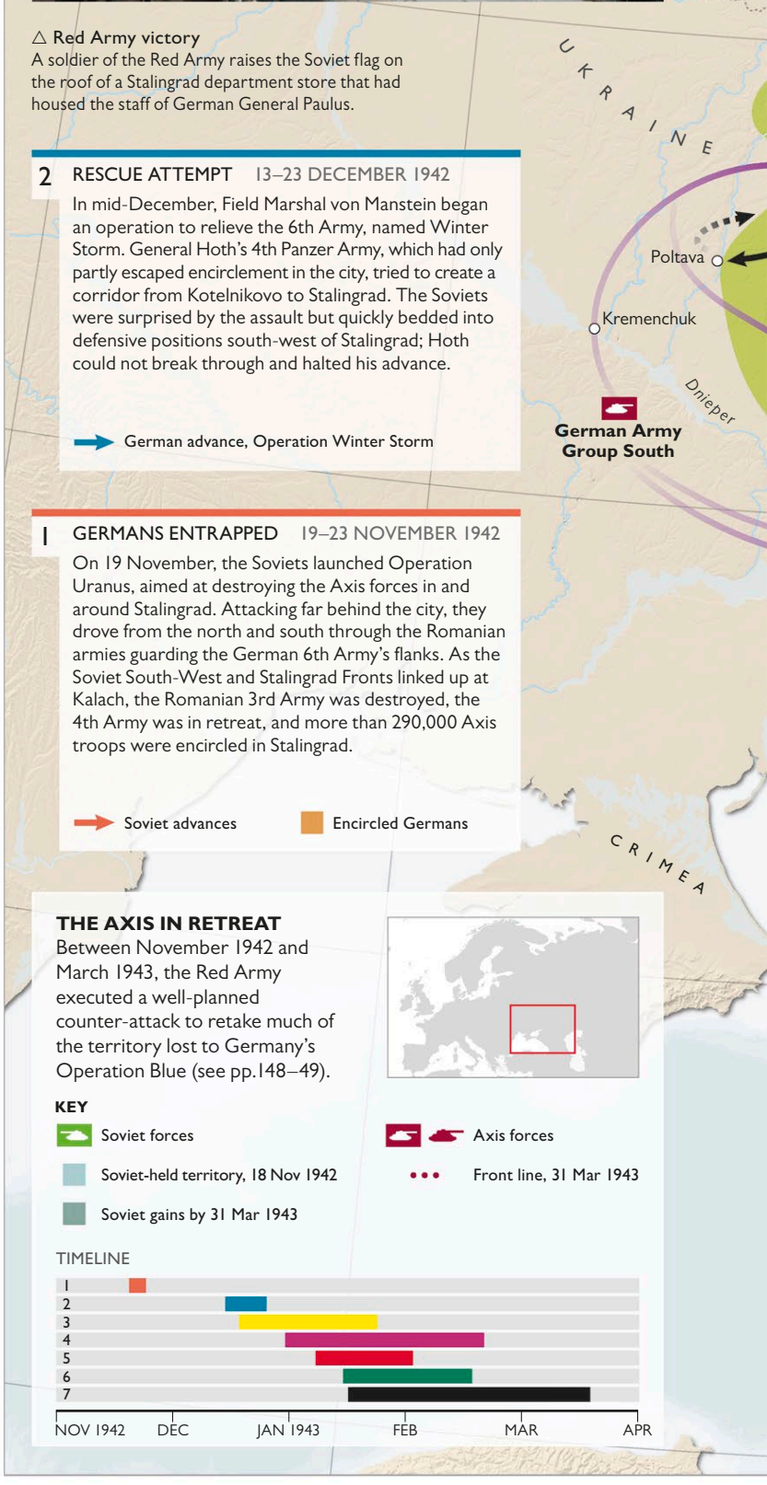
GENERAL PAULUS, MESSAGE TO ADOLF HITLER, 24 JANUARY 1943

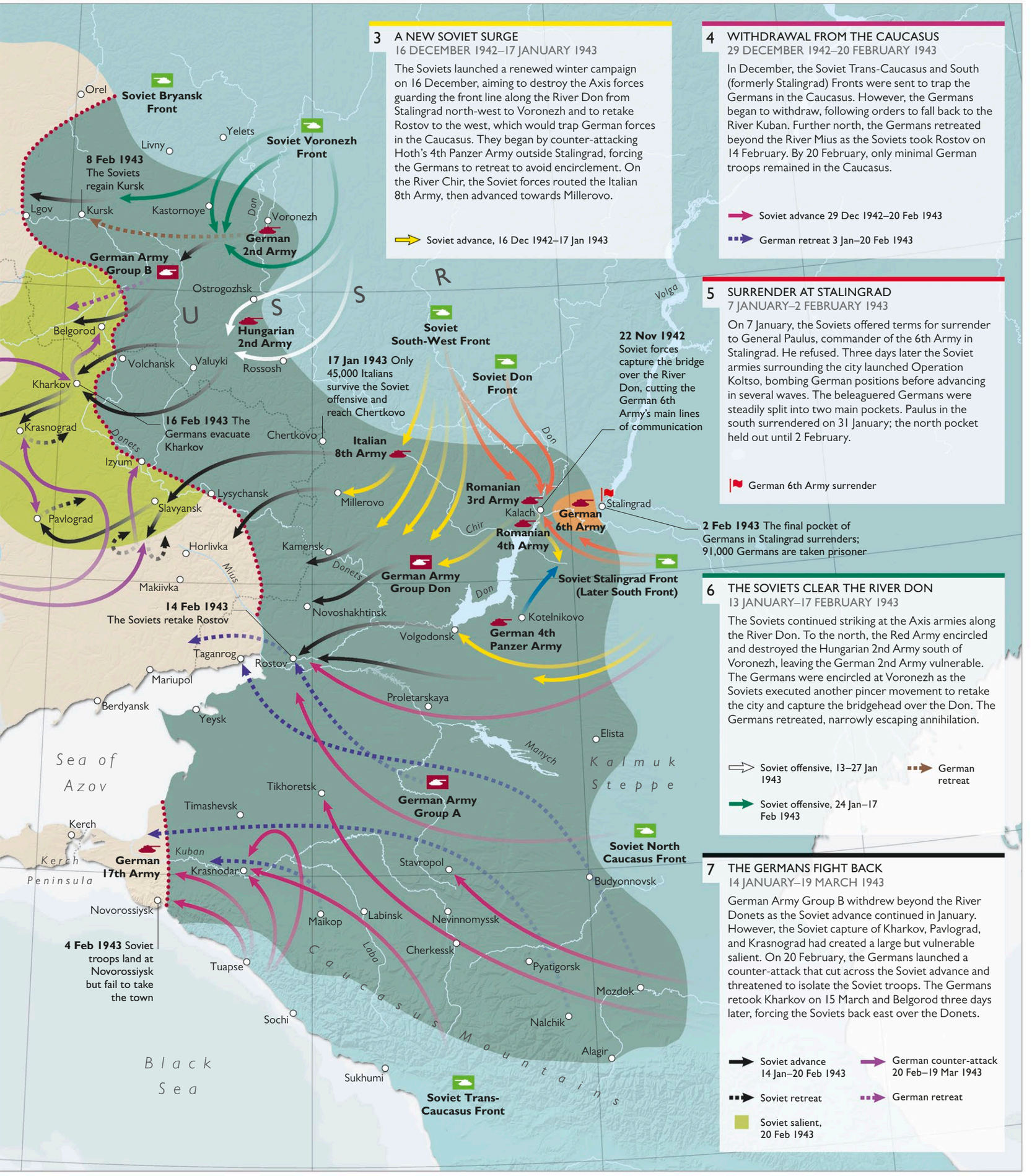
GERMAN ALLIES AT STALINGRAD

The Italian, Hungarian, and Romanian armies at Stalingrad were expected to protect the Germans' flanks and stabilize the front, but they were fatally overstretched and – as the Soviet marshal Zhukov noted – less well armed, less experienced, and less efficient at defence than the Germans. Having neglected to reinforce their positions along the Don River, Germany's allies provided an easy target for the Soviet counter-attack.

Romanian POWs at Stalingrad

△ Red Army victory
A soldier of the Red Army raises the Soviet flag on the roof of a Stalingrad department store that had housed the staff of German General Paulus.





3 A NEW SOVIET SURGE
16 DECEMBER 1942–17 JANUARY 1943

The Soviets launched a renewed winter campaign on 16 December, aiming to destroy the Axis forces guarding the front line along the River Don from Stalingrad north-west to Voronezh and to retake Rostov to the west, which would trap German forces in the Caucasus. They began by counter-attacking Hoth's 4th Panzer Army outside Stalingrad, forcing the Germans to retreat to avoid encirclement. On the River Chir, the Soviet forces routed the Italian 8th Army, then advanced towards Millerovo.

Soviet advance, 16 Dec 1942–17 Jan 1943

4 WITHDRAWAL FROM THE CAUCASUS
29 DECEMBER 1942–20 FEBRUARY 1943

In December, the Soviet Trans-Caucasus and South (formerly Stalingrad) Fronts were sent to trap the Germans in the Caucasus. However, the Germans began to withdraw, following orders to fall back to the River Kuban. Further north, the Germans retreated beyond the River Mius as the Soviets took Rostov on 14 February. By 20 February, only minimal German troops remained in the Caucasus.

Soviet advance 29 Dec 1942–20 Feb 1943

German retreat 3 Jan–20 Feb 1943

5 SURRENDER AT STALINGRAD
7 JANUARY–2 FEBRUARY 1943

On 7 January, the Soviets offered terms for surrender to General Paulus, commander of the 6th Army in Stalingrad. He refused. Three days later the Soviet armies surrounding the city launched Operation Koltso, bombing German positions before advancing in several waves. The beleaguered Germans were steadily split into two main pockets. Paulus in the south surrendered on 31 January; the north pocket held out until 2 February.

German 6th Army surrender

6 THE SOVIETS CLEAR THE RIVER DON
13 JANUARY–17 FEBRUARY 1943

The Soviets continued striking at the Axis armies along the River Don. To the north, the Red Army encircled and destroyed the Hungarian 2nd Army south of Voronezh, leaving the German 2nd Army vulnerable. The Germans were encircled at Voronezh as the Soviets executed another pincer movement to retake the city and capture the bridgehead over the Don. The Germans retreated, narrowly escaping annihilation.

Soviet offensive, 13–27 Jan 1943

German retreat

Soviet offensive, 24 Jan–17 Feb 1943

7 THE GERMANS FIGHT BACK
14 JANUARY–19 MARCH 1943

German Army Group B withdrew beyond the River Donets as the Soviet advance continued in January. However, the Soviet capture of Kharkov, Pavlograd, and Krasnograd had created a large but vulnerable salient. On 20 February, the Germans launched a counter-attack that cut across the Soviet advance and threatened to isolate the Soviet troops. The Germans retook Kharkov on 15 March and Belgorod three days later, forcing the Soviets back east over the Donets.

Soviet advance 14 Jan–20 Feb 1943

German counter-attack 20 Feb–19 Mar 1943

Soviet retreat

German retreat

Soviet salient, 20 Feb 1943

PRISONERS OF WAR

Millions of Allied and Axis solders were captured during World War II and sent to prisoner-of-war (POW) camps. Despite international agreements that were supposed to protect such prisoners, conditions in the camps could be dire.

Rapid advances made by the German army in the opening stages of the war meant that the Germans soon held several million French and Polish prisoners, and opened a network of camps to hold them. The invading Germans also encircled vast numbers of Soviet soldiers, and by December 1941 they had captured 3.2 million of them. However, the tables turned in Stalingrad in 1942, when the Germans experienced their first major defeat, and ultimately around 1.5 million German troops fell into Soviet hands.

△ **Bare necessities**
Prisoners had few possessions and so were forced to improvise, creating their own utensils such as this hand-carved spoon in a box with the prisoner's inmate number.

Variable conditions

The Geneva Convention of 1929 had laid down standards for captured POWs, but the Soviet Union had not signed it and Japan had not ratified it, so conditions in Soviet and Japanese camps during World War II were often appalling. The Germans generally treated prisoners from Britain, France, the US, and other western Allies according to the Geneva Convention, but not so the Soviets. As a result, almost 60 per cent of Soviet POWs held by the Germans died, many of typhus, dysentery, exposure, or starvation.

Prisoners taken on the Western Front usually fared better: officers did not have to work, while rank-and-file soldiers were supposed to do work without military value, and the Red Cross dispatched 36 million food parcels to supplement their diet. Most were released soon after the war, although the last German POW held by the Soviet Union was not repatriated until 1956.

COLDITZ CASTLE

The Renaissance castle at Colditz in Saxony, Germany, was used by the German army from 1940 to detain POWs who had tried to escape from other camps. Security was tight, but escape attempts were rife, and a total of 30 prisoners managed to break out to freedom. One notable attempt involved a home-made glider.

Caught out in the cold
Prisoners were often at their most vulnerable immediately after capture, when they were transported to camps. Here, German soldiers taken in Alsace in January 1945 endure freezing conditions as they are moved from the frontline.

TURNING THE TIDE 1943–1944

WITH THE ALLIED INVASION OF NORMANDY, THE SOVIETS PRESSING FROM THE EAST, AND THE US CAMPAIGNING ACROSS THE PACIFIC, THE AXIS POWERS FACED THEIR HARDEST FIGHT YET.

△ **Sicily landings**
British troops wade ashore during Operation Husky, the Allied invasion of Sicily, in July 1943. The invasion led to the overthrow of the Italian fascist dictator Benito Mussolini.

GERMAN DEFIANCE

As 1943 progressed, it became increasingly evident that Nazi Germany would eventually be defeated. However, Hitler remained defiant, and the war continued in 1944 with unabated ferocity as the Allies pressed on towards the German homeland.

By 1943, superior manpower and industrial strength gave the Allies a huge advantage over Germany. Yet at crucial points in the war, the Germans came very close to major successes. In the battle of the Atlantic, the German submarine campaign inflicted almost unsustainable losses on Allied shipping before the Allies finally defeated the U-boat menace. On the Eastern front, Soviet forces won the battle of Kursk, but at huge cost. Germany suffered under the impact of British and US bombing, but losses on the Allied side were heavy as well. Even when Italy was invaded and sued for peace, the Germans were able to block the Allied advance northwards.

Yet the most determined efforts of German fighting forces were eventually in vain. The Allies made sensible decisions to produce relatively simple equipment on a vast scale, and they had the manpower and organizational skills to put the arms into action effectively. The Germans had the best tanks and a great deal of other superior technology, but despite this and their extensive use of slave labour, Germany could not match Allied industrial output.

Germany struggles to keep control

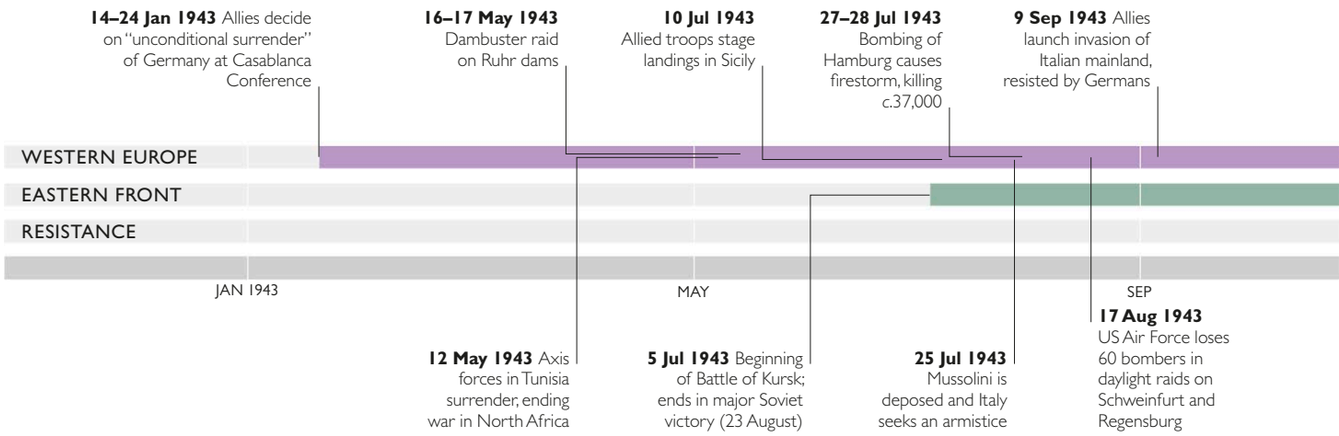
As conditions in Nazi-occupied Europe worsened, with food shortages and the mass conscription of men to work in German factories, armed resistance spread. This meant large numbers of German troops were needed to suppress subversive activities. Also, the Allied bombings forced Germany to devote substantial resources to home defence, as well as hampering arms production and fuel supplies.

As shown by their bombing of German cities, the Western Allies had learned the ruthlessness of total war. Their undertaking to pursue "unconditional surrender" committed them to the complete military defeat of Germany without negotiation or compromise. Hitler hoped the Allied countries would have a major disagreement, but despite ideological differences, the Soviet Union, Britain, and the US held together. Hitler also dreamed of a technological miracle – wonder weapons that would

◁ **King Tiger**
Introduced in 1944, the German Tiger II was the heaviest tank used in the war. Its thick armour gave good protection, giving it a considerable advantage over Allied tanks in head-on confrontations.

NAZI GERMANY'S CHANGING FORTUNES

In early 1943, the Germans remained in control of continental Europe, despite their surrender at Stalingrad. However, that summer the Allied invasion of Italy and the Soviet victory at Kursk placed German forces under mounting pressure. After Allied troops landed at Normandy in June 1944, while Soviet forces were advancing rapidly from the east, it appeared that Nazi resistance might collapse, even though Allied military progress faltered at the German frontiers.



◁ **Ruins of Warsaw**
After suppressing an uprising by Polish resistance fighters in the summer of 1944, German troops systematically destroyed Warsaw, leaving four-fifths of the city in ruins.

"The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!"

GENERAL DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, "ORDER OF THE DAY" STATEMENT, 5 JUNE 1944

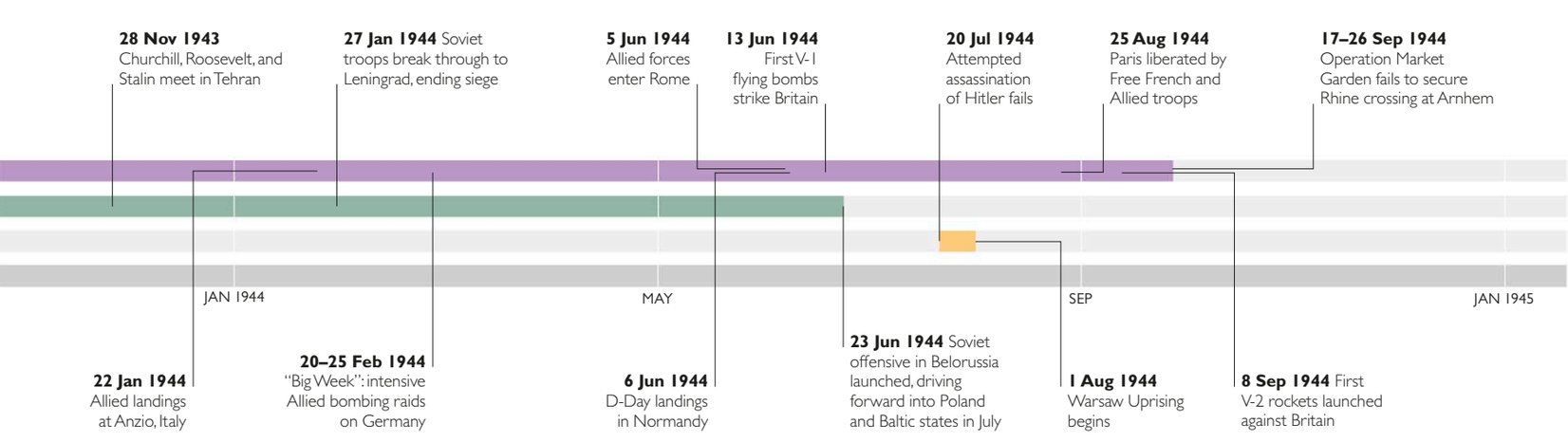
transform the war. But although the Germans introduced flying bombs, rockets, and jet aircraft, the weapons were too little, too late to have any decisive impact.

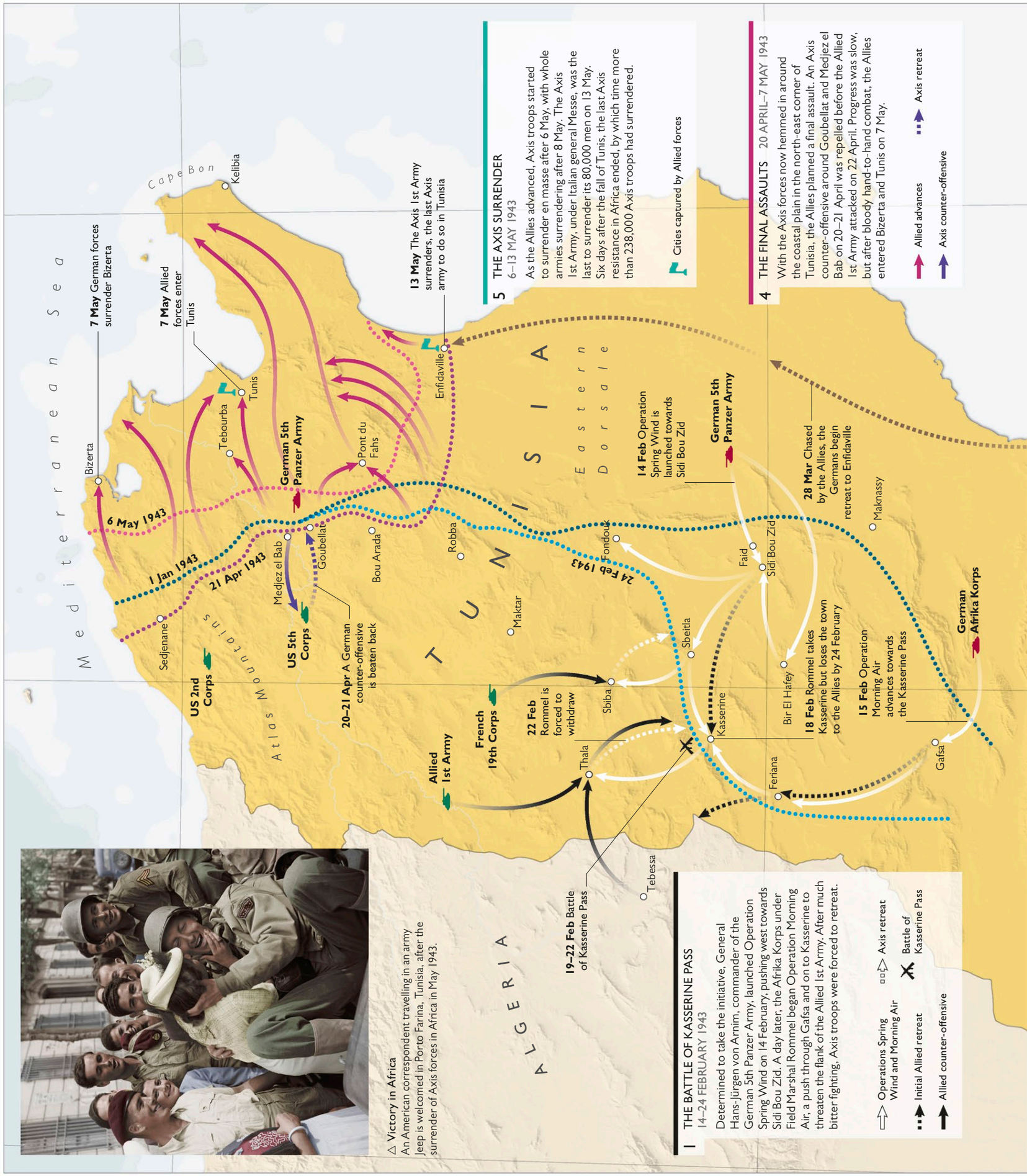
The final stages

By summer 1944, the Soviets were advancing towards Germany from the east, while the Western Allies had invaded Normandy. However, the euphoria of liberation as Allied forces raced across France and Belgium that August was followed by frustration when they ground to a halt in autumn. The failure of a coup against Hitler left him securely in control and determined to fight to the end. Political conflicts came to the fore, with Communist-led partisan movements clashing with Nationalists and Fascists in Yugoslavia, Greece, and Italy.

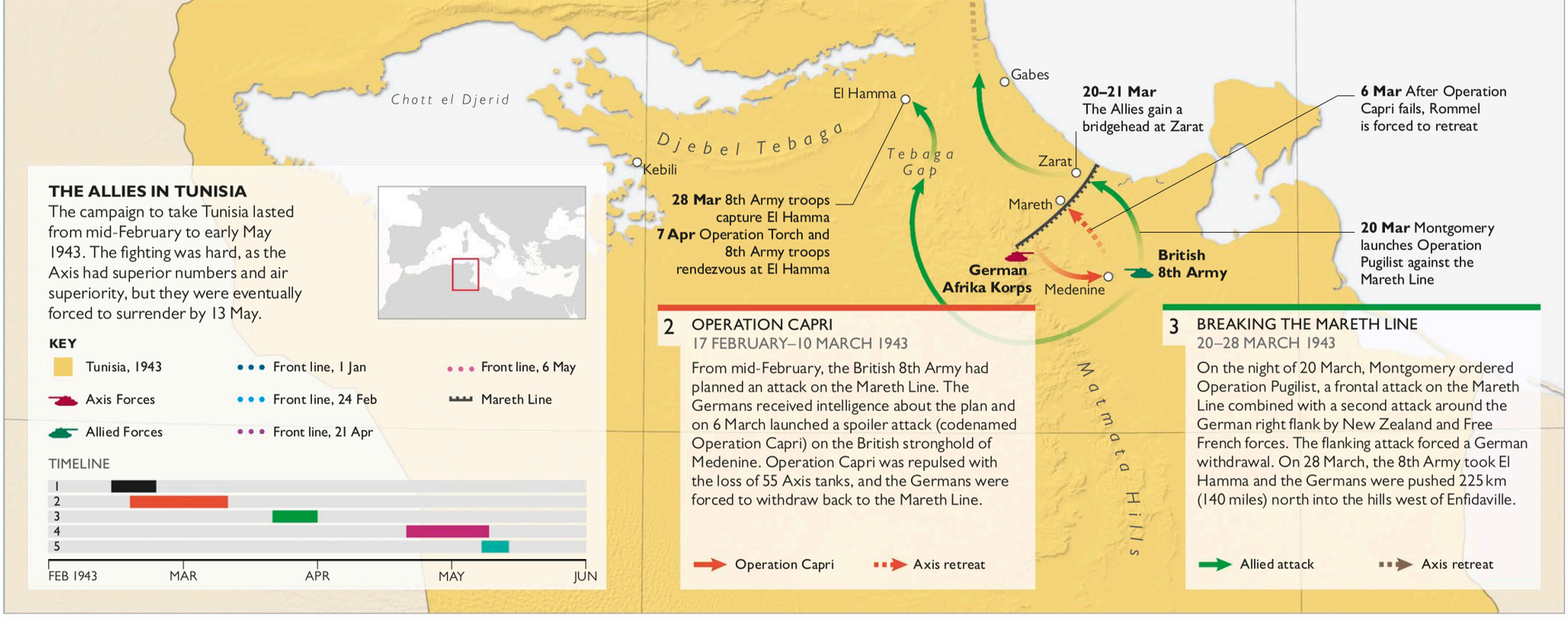
The suffering across Europe in the latter stages of the war was tremendous. The extermination of Jews continued, and the Allied aerial bombing campaign took a heavy toll on civilians in German cities and elsewhere. Liberation from Nazi rule brought joy to many, but death or humiliation to those judged as traitors – from collaborators in France to Crimean Tatars subject to mass deportation in the USSR. Millions of ethnic German civilians from the Baltic and central Europe fled west in the face of the advancing Soviet armies. A post-war Europe scarred by ideological division, ruins, and refugees was already taking shape while the fighting approached its climax.

▽ **Liberation of Paris**
US soldiers and Parisian women celebrate in front of the Eiffel Tower after the liberation of Paris in August 1944. The city had been under German occupation for four years.





△ Victory in Africa
An American correspondent travelling in an army jeep is welcomed in Porto Farina, Tunisia, after the surrender of Axis forces in Africa in May 1943.



VICTORY IN THE DESERT

Following the British victory at El Alamein to their east and the successful Allied landings of Operation Torch in Algeria and Morocco to their west, the Axis armies were forced to fight a defensive campaign in Tunisia. Resupplied and reinforced by air and by convoys arriving in Tunis, they dug in and prepared for a long battle.

A key goal of Operation Torch (see pp.146–47) had been to provide a route through Tunisia by which the Allies could attack Italy – the "soft underbelly" of the Axis, according to Churchill. In order to avoid Axis air attacks, Operation Torch had landed its forces some 800 km (500 miles) west of Tunis, and although they raced east across Algeria as soon as they landed, the Germans acted swiftly to reinforce their positions in Tunisia. The Vichy French governor of Tunisia, Admiral Jean-Pierre Esteva, allowed German aircraft to fly in additional troops, tanks (including the new Tiger tanks), artillery pieces, and other supplies. By the beginning of 1943, around 250,000 Axis troops had arrived in Tunisia, forming a substantial force. The Germans also benefited from the close proximity of their airfields in Sicily. Rommel's army, consisting of German and Italian corps, in retreat after the second Battle of El Alamein (see pp.144–45), was also in Tunisia, having taken up positions on the defensive Mareth Line – a former French colonial defensive line running 35 km (22 miles) from the coast to the mountains. The advances that Allied forces had made from Algeria since the Torch landings came to an end as they reached the Eastern Dorsale (the eastern extension of the Atlas Mountains), which effectively became the front line of the conflict in Tunisia.

January 1943 saw sporadic fighting on the long front as both sides struggled to resupply their forces. The Allies repulsed a significant Axis advance towards Kasserine in February 1943, and their attacks on the Mareth Line in March overwhelmed the Axis defenders. The Axis armies retreated towards north-east Tunisia, finally surrendering by 13 May. The war in Africa was over.

> *"'I want to impose on everyone that the bad times are over, they are finished!'"*
>
> GENERAL BERNARD MONTGOMERY, 1942

THE 8TH ARMY

The British 8th Army was a multinational force. In addition to the UK, units came from Australia, New Zealand, India, South Africa, Rhodesia, Canada, Greece, and Poland, as well as a sizeable Free French contingent – a total of more than 220,000 men. For much of its operational life in North Africa and Italy, it was led by General Bernard Montgomery.

SUMMIT CONFERENCES

The global alliance that emerged in 1941 to oppose the Axis powers needed to make difficult strategic decisions. As a result, a series of summit meetings were arranged in 1943 to co-ordinate a joint Allied approach.

The Allies faced conflicting priorities. At a summit in Moscow in September 1941, they discussed the distribution of Lend-Lease Aid, the US scheme to help their allies by giving military supplies and raw materials on credit (see pp.70–71). This was followed in January 1943 by a conference in Morocco, attended by British prime minister Winston Churchill and US president Franklin D. Roosevelt. The two leaders decided on a combined bomber offensive against Germany, and on the policy of Germany's unconditional surrender. They also agreed a "Mediterranean First" strategy, prioritizing the defeat of Axis forces in North Africa and Italy over opening a new front in France.

△ **Soviet anti-German poster**
The shared goal of beating Germany encouraged Soviet collaboration with other powers.

Cairo and Tehran

In November 1943, the Allies met in Cairo and Tehran. In Cairo, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek discussed strategies for the defeat of Japan, agreeing that an offensive against the Japanese in China took priority over recapturing Malaysia. In Tehran, Stalin joined the Allied leaders to discuss Poland, Japan, and more.

△ **Tehran conference**
Allied leaders Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill were all present at a conference in November 1943, held in the USSR's legation in Tehran. The leaders reached agreement over the invasion of occupied France and discussed the division of Germany.

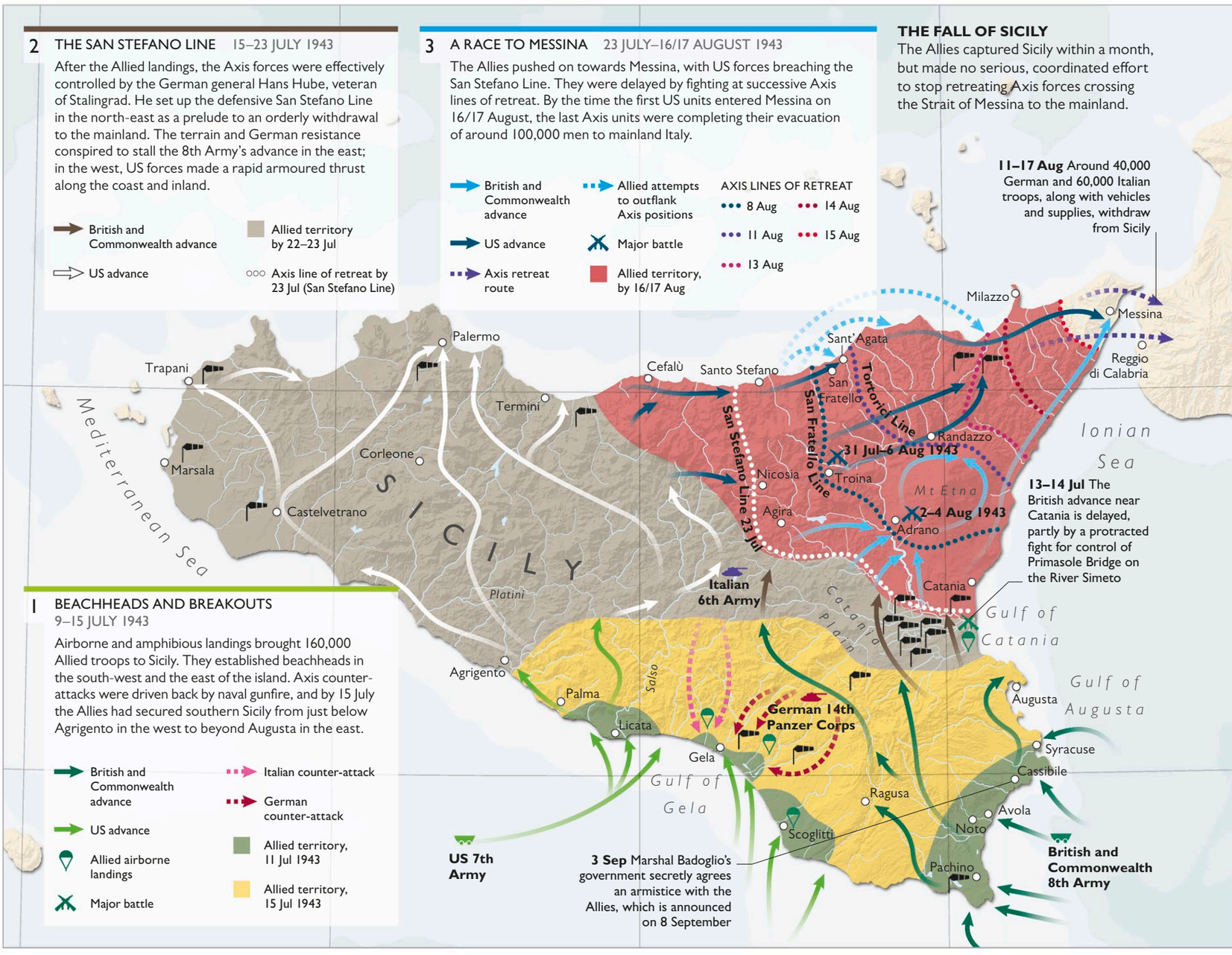
Moroccan conference
President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill speak to the press during the Casablanca Conference (code-named "Symbol") in 1943. Germany's attack on Stalingrad prevented Joseph Stalin from attending the meeting.

SICILY AND ITALY INVADED

After the defeat of Axis forces in Tunisia, Axis-controlled southern Europe appeared vulnerable. Germany was led to believe that Allied interests lay in Sardinia or Corsica, but in January 1943 the Allies decided to invade Sicily. Six months later the invasion (Operation Husky) began.

In 1943, Axis forces on Sicily were under the command of General Alfredo Guzzoni. However, the only reliable troops in his 6th Army were two German divisions in Hans Hube's 14th Panzer Corps; Italy's own soldiers were poorly motivated.

The Allied forces for the invasion were Patton's US 7th Army and Montgomery's British and Commonwealth 8th Army, both under the overall command of Britain's General Harold Alexander. The initial plan was for the British to attack up the east coast, taking Catania and then Messina, with their flank and rear protected by the Americans. On 5 August the British took Catania, and by 17 August the Allies controlled Sicily. In late July, Mussolini was deposed and replaced as prime minister by Marshal Pietro Badoglio. When news broke on 8 September that Badoglio had agreed an armistice, the Germans seized Rome and effectively occupied Italy.



GERMAN DEFENCE
The Germans used Italy's mountainous terrain to their advantage to delay the Allied advance in Italy.

3 Nov–28 Dec The 8th Army captures Vasto and San Salvo, and crosses the Sangro. After a fierce, week-long battle the Canadian 1st Infantry Division captures Ortona

3–6 Oct The 8th Army captures Termoli and begins advancing towards the River Trigno

8–17 Dec The US 5th Army captures San Pietro Infine, but their advance is held at the Gustav Line

8 Oct–2 Nov Blown bridges at the Volturno delay the northward advance of the US 5th Army

27–30 Sep German occupation troops in Naples face a four-day uprising before British forces enter on 1 October

3–16 Sep Several days of intense fighting at the "tobacco factory", a warehouse complex near the River Sele, help to turn the battle for the Allies near Salerno

3 Sep The 8th Army crosses into the "toe" of Italy and moves north to link with the Salerno landing

5 ADVANCE TO THE GUSTAV LINE
OCTOBER–DECEMBER 1943

The German military commander in Italy, Albert Kesselring, led a brilliant defensive campaign on the mainland, using the mountainous terrain and steel-and-concrete fortified lines to create a series of barriers between the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian seas. The strongest was the Gustav Line, but first the Allies had to overcome the Victor and Barbara Lines.

4 THE ALLIES IN ITALY 3–25 SEPTEMBER 1943

On 3 September the British and Commonwealth 8th Army landed on the mainland, and six days later the US 5th Army landed in the Gulf of Salerno, expecting little resistance; however, the Germans counter-attacked along the line of the River Sele and almost repelled the Allies. By 25 September, Allied forces had secured the southern third of Italy; they were cheered by local crowds when they entered Naples on 1 October.

Victor Line
Barbara Line
Gustav Line
8th Army advance
US advance
Major battle
8th Army advance
US advance
German retreat
Major battle
Allied territory by 25 Sep 1943

Pescara, Ortona, L'Aquila, German 10th Army, Sulmona, Vasto, San Salvo, Termoli, Guglionesi, Sangro, Trigno, Sora, San Pietro Infine, Cassino, Garigliano, Gaeta, Volturno, Caserta, Aversa, Naples, Ischia, Sorrento, Capri, Amato, Salerno, Sele, Auletta, Potenza, Avigliano, Agropoli, Castellabate, Pisciotta, Manfredonia, Gulf of Manfredonia, Foggia, Barletta, Trani, Bari, Brindisi, Taranto, Lecce, Metaponto, Adriatic Sea, Gulf of Salerno, US 5th Army, ITALY, Gulf of Taranto, Belvedere Marittimo, Cetraro, Rossano, Cosenza, Strongoli, Tyrrhenian Sea, Ionian Sea, Stromboli, Filicudi, Salina, Panarea, Lipari, Vulcano, Messina, Villa San Giovani, Reggio di Calabria, Palermo, British and Commonwealth 8th Army, SICILY, Catania, Gulf of Catania

BREAKING THE AXIS
By transferring the campaign in the Mediterranean from North Africa to Italy, the Allies believed that General Harold Alexander's 15th Army Group could end the war by 1944.

KEY
British and Commonwealth forces
US forces
Italian forces
German forces
Airfields constructed by the Allies

TIMELINE
1
2
3
4
5
JUL 1943 AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC JAN 1944

◁ **A warm welcome** Sicilian children join British soldiers on an M4 Sherman tank as the Allied forces are welcomed into Milo, in north-eastern Sicily, on 15 August 1943.

FROM ANZIO TO THE GOTHIC LINE

The Allies' campaign in Italy resumed in January 1944 with a long-held objective: to liberate Rome. They landed at Anzio, south of Rome, but their advance north was slowed by a series of defensive lines masterminded by German field marshal Albert Kesselring. The battles in Italy's mountainous terrain produced some of the toughest fighting of the war.

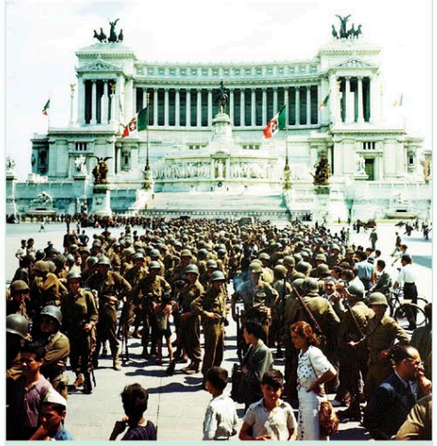
By the end of 1943, German forces in Italy had retreated to the fortified Gustav Line, also called the Winter Line. On this line lay Monte Cassino, a strategic location at the base of the Liri and Rapido river valleys that guarded Route 6 – the road north to Rome.

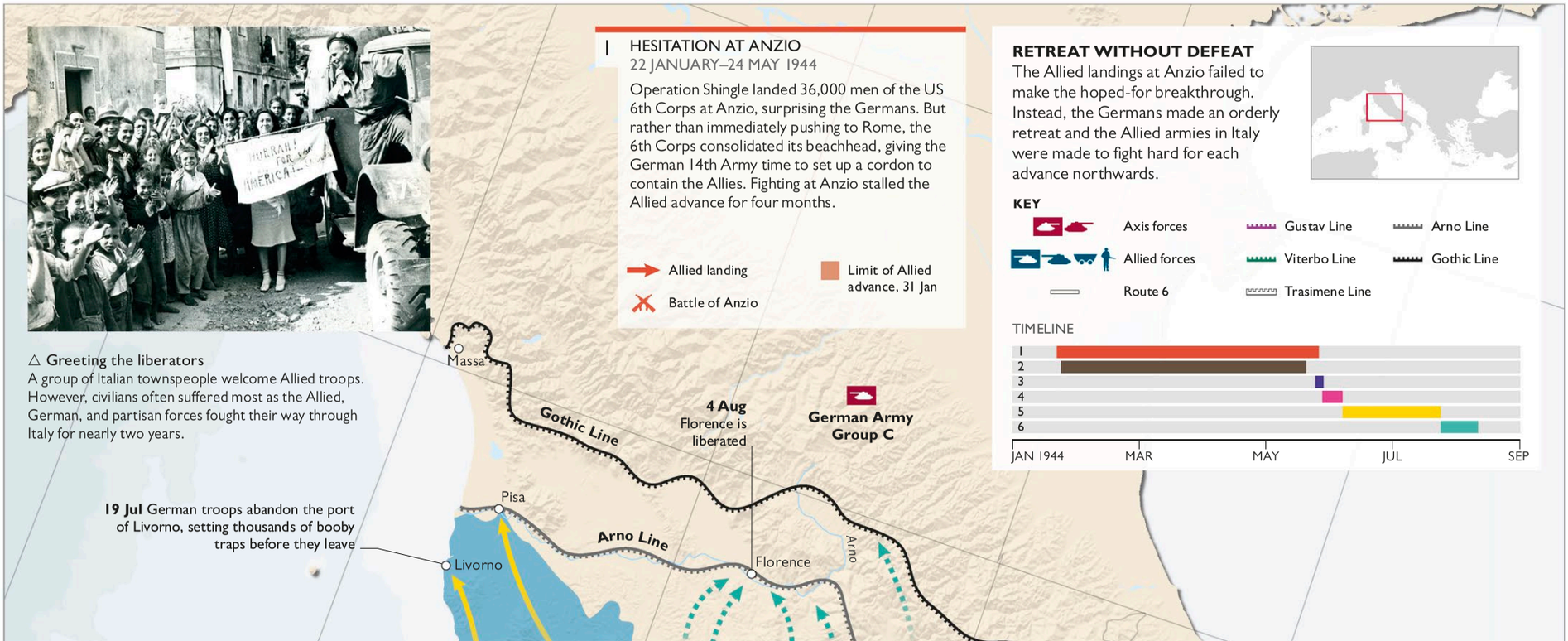
Days before their first attack on Cassino, the Allies landed at Anzio, well behind the Gustav Line, in an attempt to outflank the Germans and cut their lines of communication. The US 6th Corps made an amphibious landing north of the Pontine Marshes, 56 km (35 miles) from Rome. However, hesitation by the US commander at Anzio led to his units being hemmed in at the beachhead. At Cassino, a series of bloody and very costly Allied assaults began on 24 January. Despite air support from Allied bombers flying from bases in North Africa, and later southern Italy, it took until May for the Allies to break through at Cassino.

The US 5th Army then pushed up the coast towards Anzio while the British 8th Army advanced up the River Liri – a combined attack that the Germans could not withstand. After five months of attrition, progress towards – and then beyond – Rome was achieved swiftly. However, the Germans withdrew skilfully, falling back behind the Trasimene and Arno Lines, which gave them time to create another well-fortified line, the Gothic Line, to the north. It was here, in August 1944, that the Allies paused again.

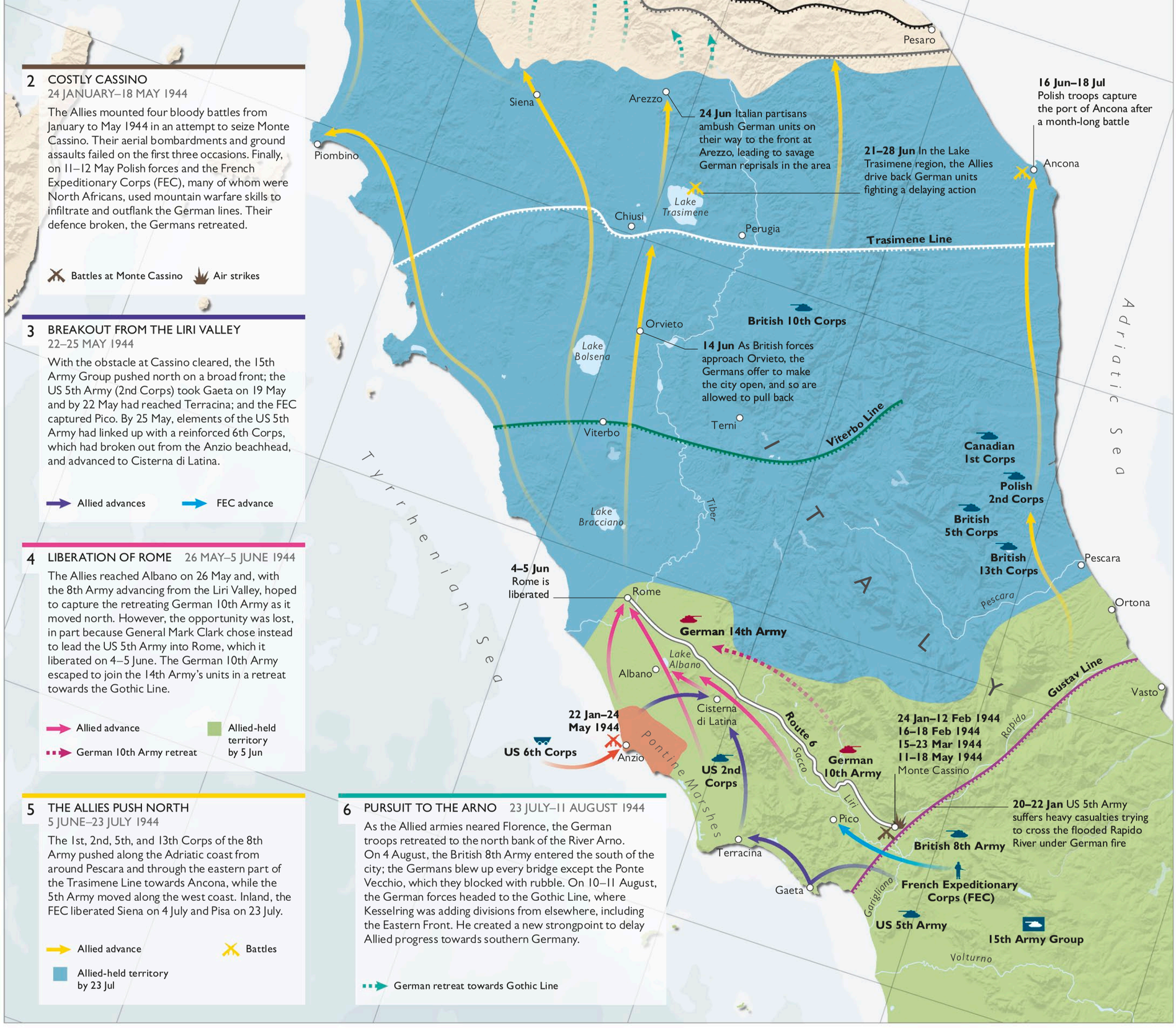
LIBERATION AND DIVISION

Rome was the first capital city to be liberated when the US 5th Army entered on 4 June 1944 (pictured). However, just two days later the Allies made the D-Day landings in Normandy (see pp.186–87), and within two months Allied troops in Italy had been redeployed. The US 6th Corps and the French Expeditionary Corps were transferred from the US 5th Army to the French Riviera for Operation Dragoon (see pp.194–95). These changes allowed German forces more time to make their retreat.





△ **Greeting the liberators**
A group of Italian townspeople welcome Allied troops. However, civilians often suffered most as the Allied, German, and partisan forces fought their way through Italy for nearly two years.


2 COSTLY CASSINO
24 JANUARY–18 MAY 1944
The Allies mounted four bloody battles from January to May 1944 in an attempt to seize Monte Cassino. Their aerial bombardments and ground assaults failed on the first three occasions. Finally, on 11–12 May Polish forces and the French Expeditionary Corps (FEC), many of whom were North Africans, used mountain warfare skills to infiltrate and outflank the German lines. Their defence broken, the Germans retreated.
Battles at Monte Cassino
Air strikes
3 BREAKOUT FROM THE LIRI VALLEY
22–25 MAY 1944
With the obstacle at Cassino cleared, the 15th Army Group pushed north on a broad front; the US 5th Army (2nd Corps) took Gaeta on 19 May and by 22 May had reached Terracina; and the FEC captured Pico. By 25 May, elements of the US 5th Army had linked up with a reinforced 6th Corps, which had broken out from the Anzio beachhead, and advanced to Cisterna di Latina.
Allied advances
FEC advance
4 LIBERATION OF ROME 26 MAY–5 JUNE 1944
The Allies reached Albano on 26 May and, with the 8th Army advancing from the Liri Valley, hoped to capture the retreating German 10th Army as it moved north. However, the opportunity was lost, in part because General Mark Clark chose instead to lead the US 5th Army into Rome, which it liberated on 4–5 June. The German 10th Army escaped to join the 14th Army's units in a retreat towards the Gothic Line.
Allied advance
German 10th Army retreat
Allied-held territory by 5 Jun
5 THE ALLIES PUSH NORTH
5 JUNE–23 JULY 1944
The 1st, 2nd, 5th, and 13th Corps of the 8th Army pushed along the Adriatic coast from around Pescara and through the eastern part of the Trasimene Line towards Ancona, while the 5th Army moved along the west coast. Inland, the FEC liberated Siena on 4 July and Pisa on 23 July.
Allied advance
Battles
Allied-held territory by 23 Jul
6 PURSUIT TO THE ARNO 23 JULY–11 AUGUST 1944
As the Allied armies neared Florence, the German troops retreated to the north bank of the River Arno. On 4 August, the British 8th Army entered the south of the city; the Germans blew up every bridge except the Ponte Vecchio, which they blocked with rubble. On 10–11 August, the German forces headed to the Gothic Line, where Kesselring was adding divisions from elsewhere, including the Eastern Front. He created a new strongpoint to delay Allied progress towards southern Germany.
German retreat towards Gothic Line
Pesaro
Siena
Arezzo
Piombino
24 Jun Italian partisans ambush German units on their way to the front at Arezzo, leading to savage German reprisals in the area
21–28 Jun In the Lake Trasimene region, the Allies drive back German units fighting a delaying action
16 Jun–18 Jul Polish troops capture the port of Ancona after a month-long battle
Ancona
Lake Trasimene
Chiusi
Perugia
Trasimene Line
Orvieto
British 10th Corps
Lake Bolsena
14 Jun As British forces approach Orvieto, the Germans offer to make the city open, and so are allowed to pull back
Terni
Viterbo
Viterbo Line
Canadian 1st Corps
Polish 2nd Corps
British 5th Corps
British 13th Corps
Tiber
Lake Bracciano
Pescara
Ortona
Adriatic Sea
Tyrrhenian Sea
4–5 Jun Rome is liberated
Rome
German 14th Army
Lake Albano
Albano
Cisterna di Latina
Gustav Line
Vasto
22 Jan–24 May 1944
US 6th Corps
Anzio
Pontine Marshes
US 2nd Corps
Route 6
Sacco
Liri
German 10th Army
24 Jan–12 Feb 1944
16–18 Feb 1944
15–23 Mar 1944
11–18 May 1944
Monte Cassino
Rapido
20–22 Jan US 5th Army suffers heavy casualties trying to cross the flooded Rapido River under German fire
Pico
British 8th Army
Terracina
Gaeta
Garigliano
French Expeditionary Corps (FEC)
US 5th Army
15th Army Group
Volturno

DEFEAT OF THE U-BOATS

America's entry into the war began a new wave of U-boat activity in 1942 as the submarines hunted ships off the US east coast. Improved defences soon drove the U-boats out into the mid-Atlantic, where they faced increasingly effective countermeasures by 1943.

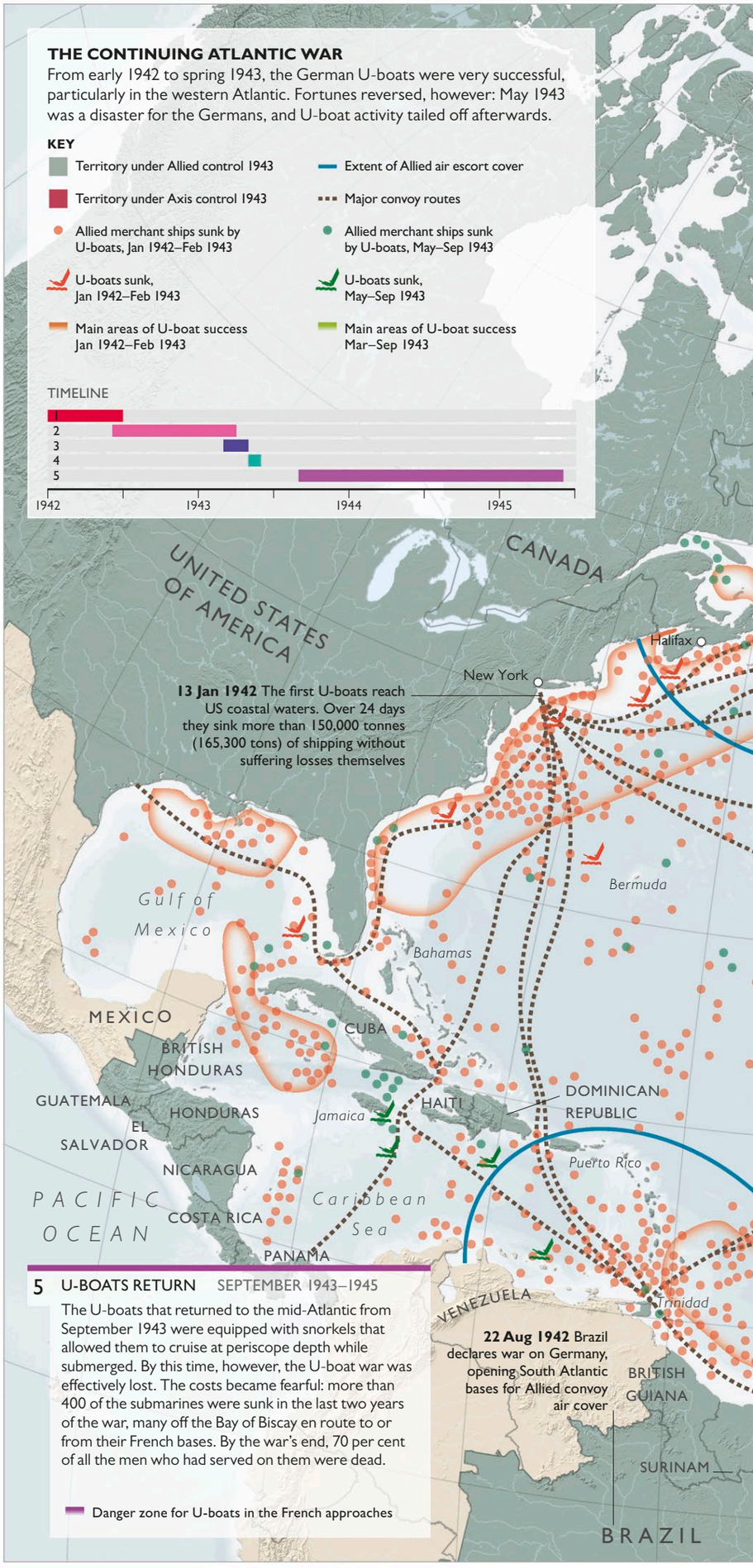
After Germany declared war on the US in December 1941, the Atlantic Ocean became the theatre for the early conflict between the nations. Admiral Karl Dönitz, commander of the German U-boat fleet, launched Operation Drumbeat to harass merchant ships moving along the US east coast. The first casualty was a British tanker, sunk on 14 January 1942, and by June of that year a total of 492 Allied ships had been lost, even though there were never more than a dozen German submarines operating in the area.

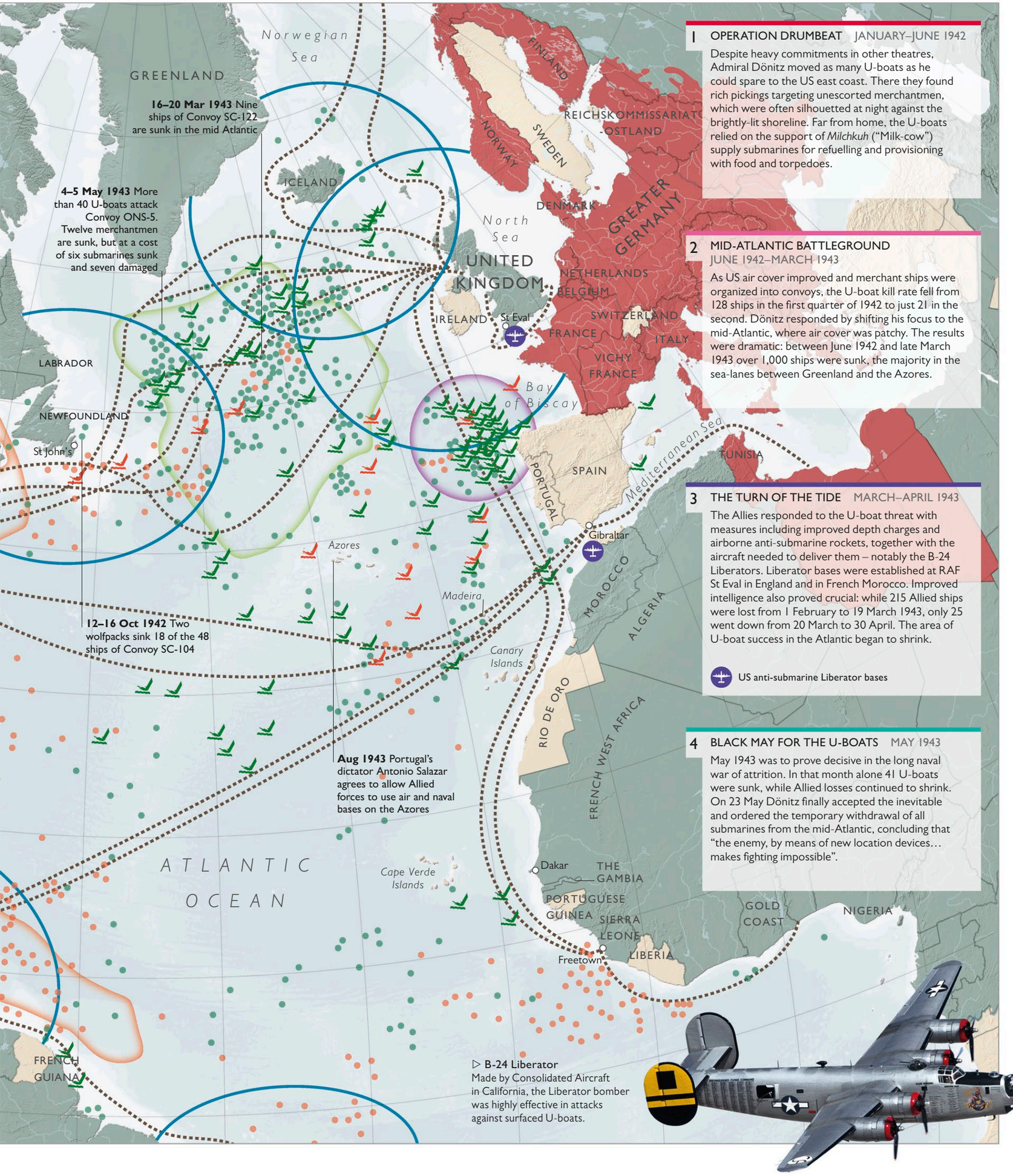
As the US improved its coastal defences, the focus of the sea battle shifted to the mid-Atlantic, with additional attacks continuing in the Caribbean Sea. Germany poured ever-increasing resources into its submarine fleet and by November 1942, more than 80 U-boats were active in the Atlantic theatre. That month was to prove the deadliest of all for the Allies, who lost over 80,000 tonnes (88,000 tons) of merchant shipping; the tally for the year 1942 amounted to over 5.4 million tonnes (6 million tons).

The tide of the war in the Atlantic turned in favour of the Allies in the spring of 1943. Faced by a real threat to Britain's oil supplies, the Allies deployed long-range aircraft equipped with improved radar, as well as hunting packs of anti-submarine vessels, typically escorted by small escort aircraft carriers. The tactic worked. In May 1943, when 41 U-boats were sunk, Admiral Dönitz unwillingly recalled all his vessels from the North Atlantic. Although they would return later, the U-boats never again presented the grave threat that they had in the early years of the war.

ADMIRAL KARL DÖNITZ 1891–1980

Karl Dönitz served as a submarine officer in World War I. In the mid-1930s he took charge of the clandestine programme to rebuild Germany's U-boat fleet, which had been banned in 1919. Promoted to Rear-Admiral in 1939, he proved a skilful strategist – so much so that he was made Commander-in-Chief of the German navy in January 1943. For his loyalty, Hitler chose him as his successor, and he briefly served as Germany's head of state following the Führer's suicide in 1945.





1 OPERATION DRUMBEAT JANUARY–JUNE 1942

Despite heavy commitments in other theatres, Admiral Dönitz moved as many U-boats as he could spare to the US east coast. There they found rich pickings targeting unescorted merchantmen, which were often silhouetted at night against the brightly-lit shoreline. Far from home, the U-boats relied on the support of *Milchkuh* ("Milk-cow") supply submarines for refuelling and provisioning with food and torpedoes.

2 MID-ATLANTIC BATTLEGROUND JUNE 1942–MARCH 1943

As US air cover improved and merchant ships were organized into convoys, the U-boat kill rate fell from 128 ships in the first quarter of 1942 to just 21 in the second. Dönitz responded by shifting his focus to the mid-Atlantic, where air cover was patchy. The results were dramatic: between June 1942 and late March 1943 over 1,000 ships were sunk, the majority in the sea-lanes between Greenland and the Azores.

3 THE TURN OF THE TIDE MARCH–APRIL 1943

The Allies responded to the U-boat threat with measures including improved depth charges and airborne anti-submarine rockets, together with the aircraft needed to deliver them – notably the B-24 Liberators. Liberator bases were established at RAF St Eval in England and in French Morocco. Improved intelligence also proved crucial: while 215 Allied ships were lost from 1 February to 19 March 1943, only 25 went down from 20 March to 30 April. The area of U-boat success in the Atlantic began to shrink.

US anti-submarine Liberator bases

4 BLACK MAY FOR THE U-BOATS MAY 1943

May 1943 was to prove decisive in the long naval war of attrition. In that month alone 41 U-boats were sunk, while Allied losses continued to shrink. On 23 May Dönitz finally accepted the inevitable and ordered the temporary withdrawal of all submarines from the mid-Atlantic, concluding that "the enemy, by means of new location devices… makes fighting impossible".

▷ **B-24 Liberator**
Made by Consolidated Aircraft in California, the Liberator bomber was highly effective in attacks against surfaced U-boats.

CODE-BREAKING

Both the Axis powers and the Allies devoted significant resources to breaking the ciphers used by governments and armed forces to conceal their communications. The Allies, in particular, achieved great success in this field.

Both sides stood to gain a huge advantage if they could intercept and decrypt enemy radio transmissions. However, gathering signals intelligence (SIGINT) was a complex and laborious process, made harder by machine-encoding devices such as Enigma (Germany), Typex (Britain), and Purple (Japan).

△ **Converting into code**
German soldiers encipher a message using an Enigma machine. Errors and shortcuts made by operators in a hurry often provided a way into the code.

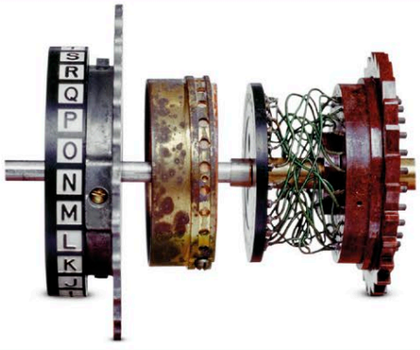
The code war

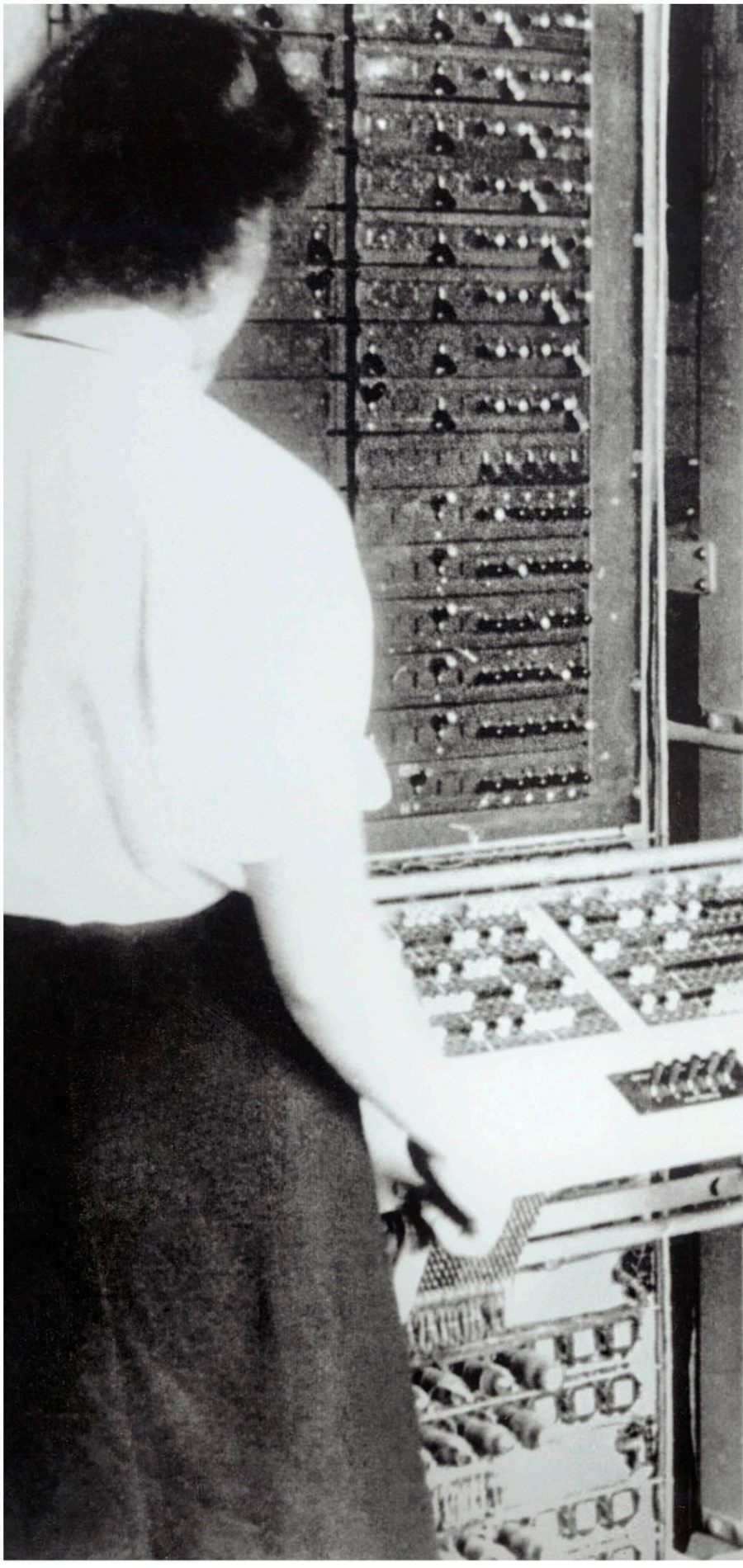
In autumn 1939, the British set up a specialist cryptography department, Ultra, at Bletchley Park, Buckinghamshire, staffed by civilian and military experts. By April 1941, these cryptographers, using electro-mechanic decoding devices called "bombes", could read transmissions from the German Luftwaffe, followed by variants of the code used by other German services.

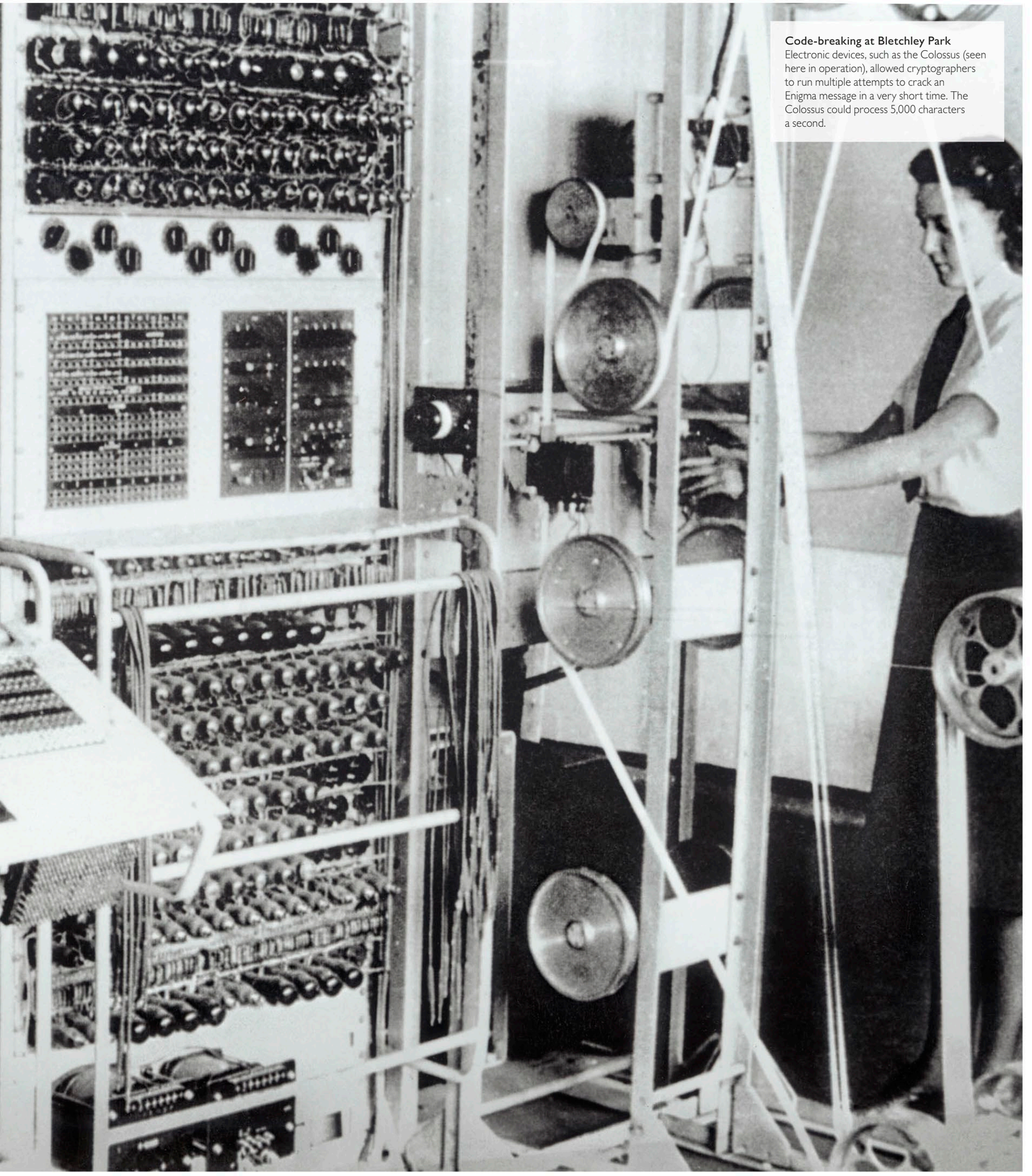
This information was strategically vital, and included Rommel's intentions before El Alamein (see pp.76–77), German U-boat locations in the North Atlantic (see pp.64–65), and German deployments in Normandy before D-Day (see pp.186–89). However, the intelligence had to be used sparingly to prevent the Axis powers realizing the Enigma code had been broken. Elsewhere, the work of US code-breakers (MAGIC) on Japanese diplomatic codes and the JN-25 naval code yielded valuable intelligence in the Pacific theatre, while German SIGINT on the Soviets was poor due to effective Soviet coding.

ENIGMA MACHINE

The German Enigma machine used a typewriter key attached to a series of rotating wheels (rotors), internal wiring, and a plugboard, which produced billions of variants for each letter depressed. In 1938, the Polish intelligence service provided information on the Enigma's construction, which proved key to cracking the code.







Code-breaking at Bletchley Park
Electronic devices, such as the Colossus (seen here in operation), allowed cryptographers to run multiple attempts to crack an Enigma message in a very short time. The Colossus could process 5,000 characters a second.

BOMBING BY DAY AND NIGHT

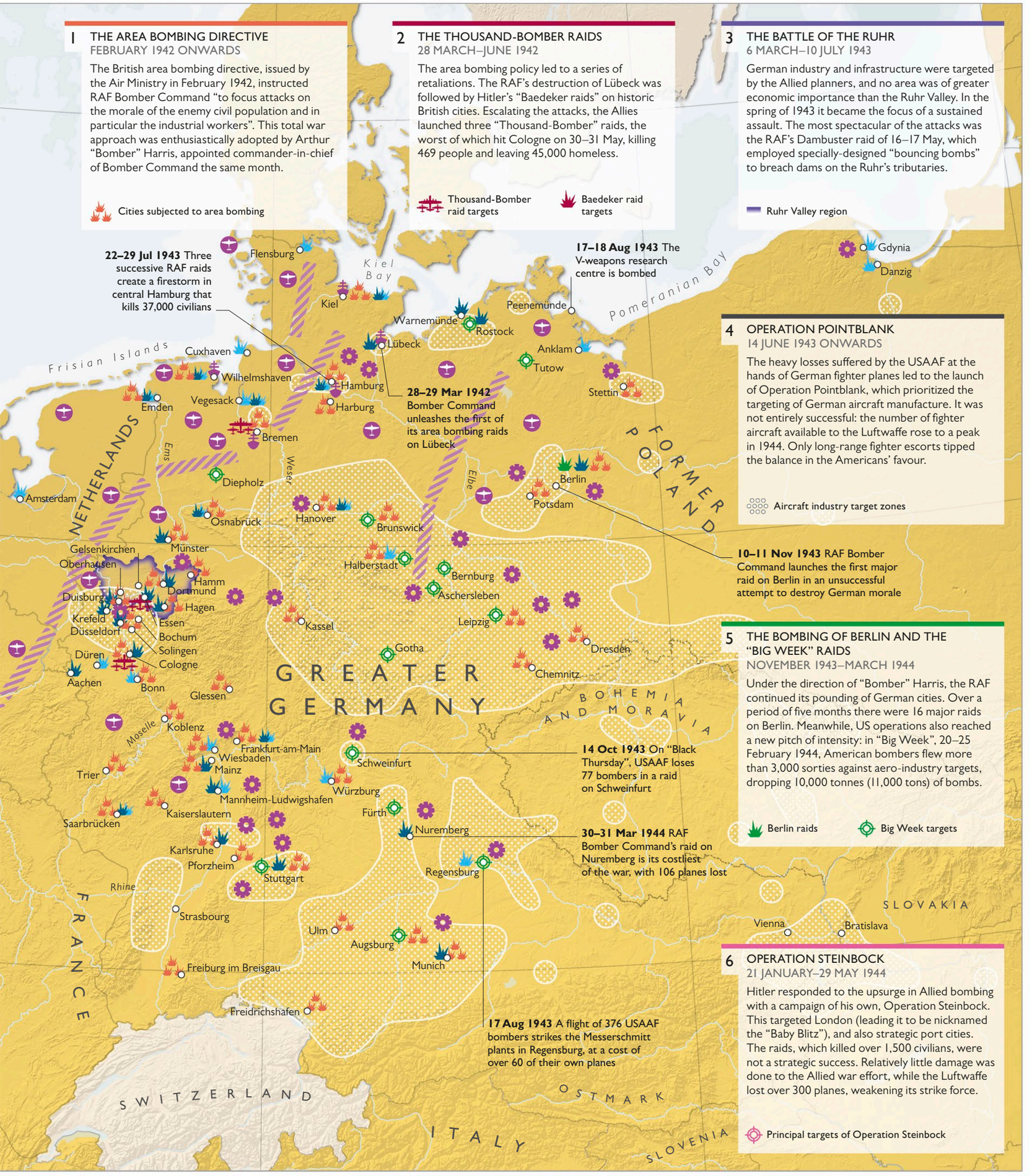
From 1942 onwards, the RAF sought to stage a Blitz in reverse by pursuing the Strategic Bombing Offensive – an aerial campaign designed to shatter enemy morale. The arrival of the US 8th Air Force in England later that year further increased the pressure on Germany.

"The bomber will always get through", British politician Stanley Baldwin had opined in 1932, and this view was still widely held at the start of the war. Even though the Blitz's failure to destroy British morale contradicted this theory, the RAF looked to Bomber Command to take the fight to German soil. The British initially targeted military and industrial installations in night-time raids, but these suffered from a lack of accuracy, so in 1942 they turned to the less discriminate "area bombing" that targeted industrial cities and their populations.

The US 8th Air Force units, which arrived in England in late 1942, favoured a different strategy – precision bombing in daylight. However, this approach proved costly, with many aircraft lost to German fighters. In January 1943, the Allies agreed a joint policy in Casablanca (see pp.162–63), which prioritized attacks on enemy infrastructure. In the months that followed, the effectiveness of their raids improved with the introduction of new aircraft (notably the Avro Lancaster), better navigational aids, and the use of Pathfinder units to help locate targets. By the turn of the year, the Allies had the upper hand and the Luftwaffe had been forced onto the defensive.

△ **Bomb damage in Nuremberg**
This German map from 1945 shows the new damage (dark red and black) to Nuremberg's old town after a huge Allied air raid on 2 January 1945. Bright red and blue areas show older damage from previous raids.

◁ **Attacks on infrastructure**
Allied bombers attack the German city of Ludwigshafen on the Rhine. The city was the site of important petrochemical plants during World War II.



1 THE AREA BOMBING DIRECTIVE
FEBRUARY 1942 ONWARDS

The British area bombing directive, issued by the Air Ministry in February 1942, instructed RAF Bomber Command "to focus attacks on the morale of the enemy civil population and in particular the industrial workers". This total war approach was enthusiastically adopted by Arthur "Bomber" Harris, appointed commander-in-chief of Bomber Command the same month.

Cities subjected to area bombing

2 THE THOUSAND-BOMBER RAIDS
28 MARCH–JUNE 1942

The area bombing policy led to a series of retaliations. The RAF's destruction of Lübeck was followed by Hitler's "Baedeker raids" on historic British cities. Escalating the attacks, the Allies launched three "Thousand-Bomber" raids, the worst of which hit Cologne on 30–31 May, killing 469 people and leaving 45,000 homeless.

Thousand-Bomber raid targets

Baedeker raid targets

3 THE BATTLE OF THE RUHR
6 MARCH–10 JULY 1943

German industry and infrastructure were targeted by the Allied planners, and no area was of greater economic importance than the Ruhr Valley. In the spring of 1943 it became the focus of a sustained assault. The most spectacular of the attacks was the RAF's Dambuster raid of 16–17 May, which employed specially-designed "bouncing bombs" to breach dams on the Ruhr's tributaries.

Ruhr Valley region

4 OPERATION POINTBLANK
14 JUNE 1943 ONWARDS

The heavy losses suffered by the USAAF at the hands of German fighter planes led to the launch of Operation Pointblank, which prioritized the targeting of German aircraft manufacture. It was not entirely successful: the number of fighter aircraft available to the Luftwaffe rose to a peak in 1944. Only long-range fighter escorts tipped the balance in the Americans' favour.

Aircraft industry target zones

5 THE BOMBING OF BERLIN AND THE "BIG WEEK" RAIDS
NOVEMBER 1943–MARCH 1944

Under the direction of "Bomber" Harris, the RAF continued its pounding of German cities. Over a period of five months there were 16 major raids on Berlin. Meanwhile, US operations also reached a new pitch of intensity: in "Big Week", 20–25 February 1944, American bombers flew more than 3,000 sorties against aero-industry targets, dropping 10,000 tonnes (11,000 tons) of bombs.

Berlin raids

Big Week targets

6 OPERATION STEINBOCK
21 JANUARY–29 MAY 1944

Hitler responded to the upsurge in Allied bombing with a campaign of his own, Operation Steinbock. This targeted London (leading it to be nicknamed the "Baby Blitz"), and also strategic port cities. The raids, which killed over 1,500 civilians, were not a strategic success. Relatively little damage was done to the Allied war effort, while the Luftwaffe lost over 300 planes, weakening its strike force.

Principal targets of Operation Steinbock

SPEER AND THE WAR INDUSTRY

From 1942, Germany's war production effort became much more efficient under the direction of Albert Speer. As Minister of Armaments and Munitions, he increased output at a challenging time in the final years of the war.

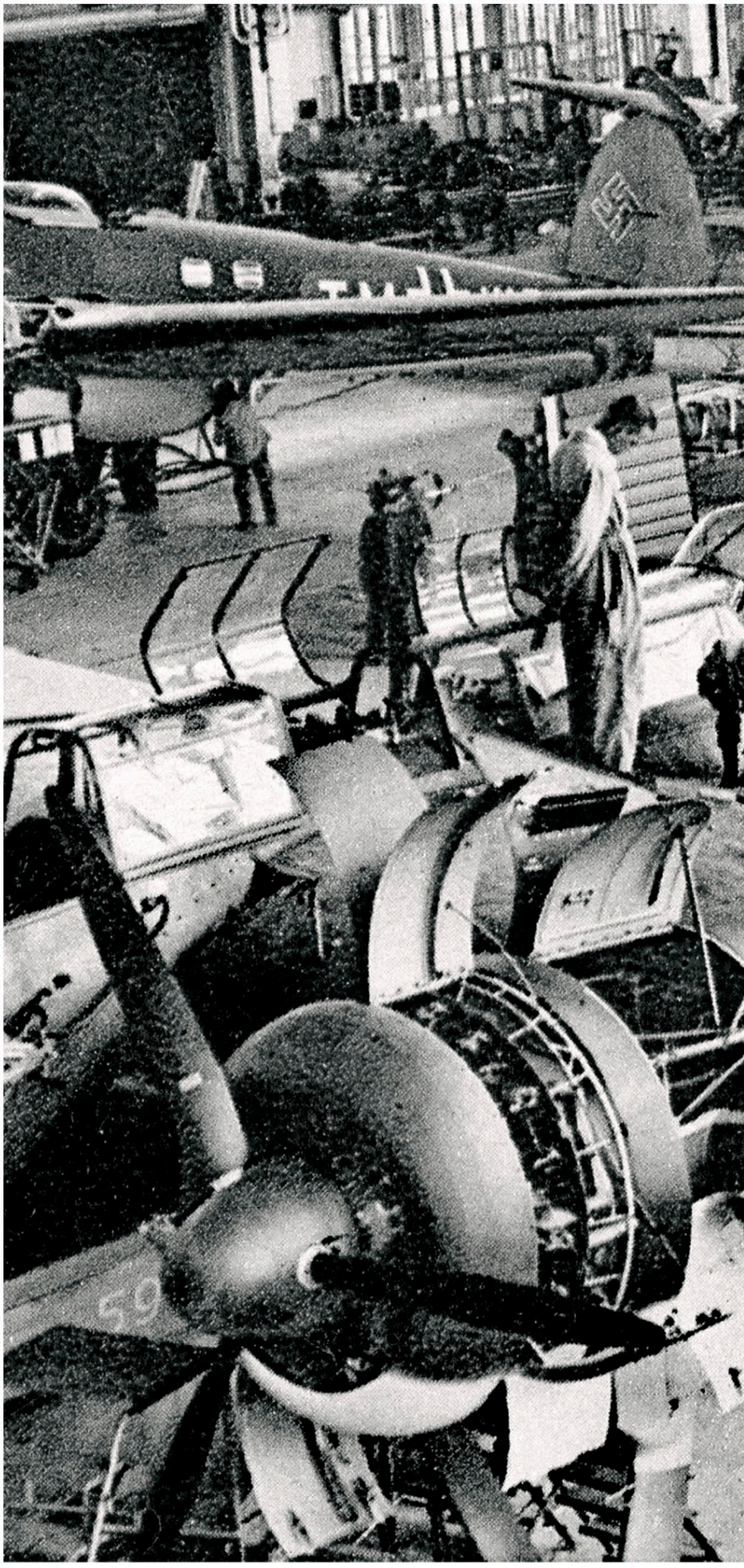
△ **New plan for Berlin**
Speer surveys his plans for a redevelopment of Berlin, which Hitler commissioned in 1937. Most plans were abandoned due to the war.

In the early stages of the war, the German economy was not well mobilized for the needs of the armed forces; resources were not allocated efficiently, and the military interfered in production. Fritz Todt, a civil engineer who had supervised the construction of the Westwall fortifications along the Franco–German border, became Minister of Armaments and Munitions in 1940. He set in motion the reforms that would improve German industry, before dying in a plane crash in 1942.

Streamlining operations

Todt's replacement was architect and urban planner Albert Speer, who had designed the parade grounds for the Nuremberg rallies. Speer amalgamated military agencies to establish a central planning board, set up production committees for major weapons types, and excluded the armed forces from decisions about war production. He also used forced labour to boost production. As a result, despite Allied bombing offensives from 1943 onwards, Speer tripled Germany's armaments production, enabling it to sustain the war into 1945. He was the only Nazi at the Nuremberg trials to admit guilt.

△ **Close associates**
Speer (far left) developed a close working relationship with Hitler, enabling Speer to secure necessary resources and overcome military objections to his industrial reorganizations. Here, he inspects a new weapons system with the Führer.



Heinkel aircraft factory
Speer took control of aircraft production in 1944. Prior to this, his close cooperation with Luftwaffe technical director Erhard Milch meant that German annual production of aircraft nearly quadrupled to 39,000 by 1944.

△ **Fighting in the streets**
In August 1944, resistance members on the streets of Paris take aim from their makeshift barracks. At this time there were an estimated 100,000 members of the resistance across France.

5 POLISH RESISTANCE
NOVEMBER 1939–MAY 1945

Poland suffered more under Nazi occupation than any other country (see pp.38–39). Resistance centred on the Polish Home Army, loyal to the government in exile in London, and the pro-Communist People's Army. In August 1944 the Home Army launched an uprising in Warsaw (see pp.184–85) that was brutally crushed by Waffen-SS units, while the approaching Red Army was unable to assist. When it was over, the city was in ruins, and over 150,000 people were dead.

- Pre-war Poland
- Principal Polish Partisan areas
- Armed uprisings in Jewish ghettos
- Clashes between Partisans and German forces 1941–42

6 THE ITALIAN PARTISAN WAR
SEPTEMBER 1943–MAY 1945

The Italian resistance had its roots in anti-Fascist groups opposed to Mussolini before the war, but its activities expanded hugely after the Allied invasion in 1943 and the German occupation of the country. Nationalist, Communist, and Catholic groups combined to resist the invaders, often under the leadership of Italian former officers. In September 1943, the National Liberation Committee was founded to coordinate opposition to the Nazi forces.

- Clashes between Germans and Partisan forces

7 THE DUTCH HUNGER WINTER
SEPTEMBER 1944–MAY 1945

In the Netherlands, underground fighters helped the Allies with intelligence and acts of sabotage. In 1944, with the southern half of the country already liberated, railway workers went on strike, leading the Nazi authorities to retaliate by cutting off supply lines. The result was the Hunger Winter of 1944–45, during which up to 20,000 people starved to death.

- Pre-war Netherlands
- Main escape routes
- Major reprisal

4 NATIONAL LIBERATION FOR GREECE
MAY 1941–OCTOBER 1944

The Greek resistance movement was fractured between many different groups, who often fought among themselves and resisted attempts by the Allies to bring them together (see pp.202–203). The most successful was the Communist-inspired National Liberation Front (EAM), whose guerrilla forces won control of much of the mountainous interior of Greece. In March 1944, EAM set up the Political Committee of National Liberation, which became the de facto government of the liberated areas.

- Pre-war Greece
- Initial centres of resistance

9 May 1944 Norwegian saboteurs blow up a train carrying mineral supplies for export to Germany

27 May 1942 SOE-trained Czech resistance fighters assassinate Nazi *Reichsprotektor* Reinhard Heydrich, triggering reprisals

26 Mar 1943 Polish resistance fighters free 25 captives from a Nazi prison van

20 Jul 1944 An attempt by Claus von Stauffenberg and other German officers to assassinate Hitler fails

10 Jun 1944 In retaliation for resistance activity in central France, Waffen-SS troops wipe out the entire population of the village of Oradour-sur-Glane

18 Feb 1943 Nazi authorities break up the White Rose group

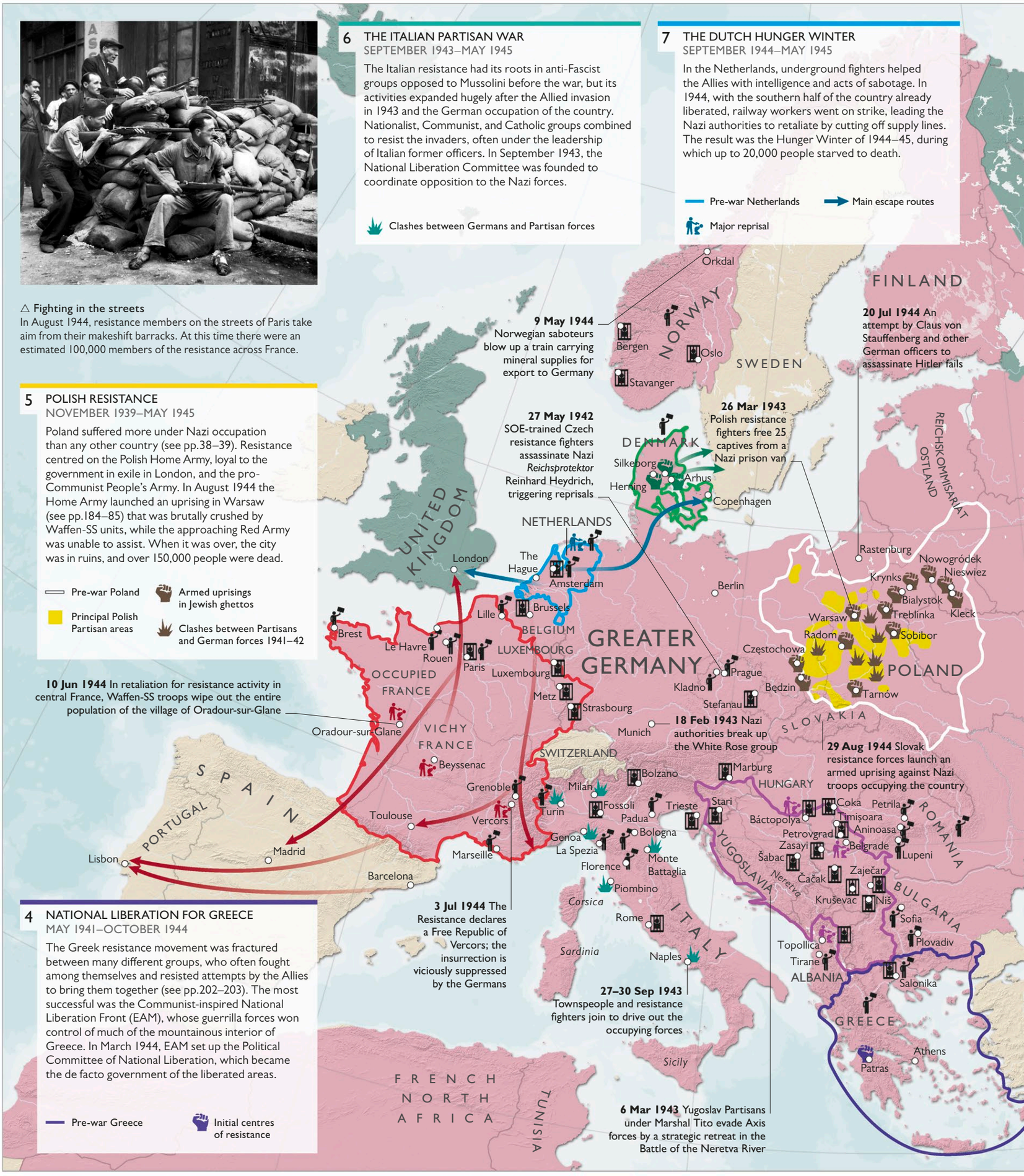
29 Aug 1944 Slovak resistance forces launch an armed uprising against Nazi troops occupying the country

3 Jul 1944 The Resistance declares a Free Republic of Vercors; the insurrection is viciously suppressed by the Germans

27–30 Sep 1943 Townspeople and resistance fighters join to drive out the occupying forces

6 Mar 1943 Yugoslav Partisans under Marshal Tito evade Axis forces by a strategic retreat in the Battle of the Neretva River

FINLAND
NORWAY
SWEDEN
DENMARK
UNITED KINGDOM
NETHERLANDS
BELGIUM
LUXEMBOURG
GREATER GERMANY
OCCUPIED FRANCE
VICHY FRANCE
SWITZERLAND
SPAIN
PORTUGAL
ITALY
Corsica
Sardinia
Sicily
FRENCH NORTH AFRICA
TUNISIA
POLAND
REICHSKOMMISSARIAT OSTLAND
SLOVAKIA
HUNGARY
ROMANIA
BULGARIA
YUGOSLAVIA
ALBANIA
GREECE
Orkdal
Bergen
Oslo
Stavanger
Silkeborg
Arhus
Herning
Copenhagen
London
The Hague
Amsterdam
Brussels
Lille
Brest
Le Havre
Rouen
Paris
Luxembourg
Metz
Strasbourg
Oradour-sur-Glane
Beyssenac
Grenoble
Toulouse
Vercors
Marseille
Lisbon
Madrid
Barcelona
Turin
Milan
Fossoli
Padua
Bologna
Genoa
La Spezia
Florence
Monte Battaglia
Piombino
Rome
Naples
Bolzano
Munich
Trieste
Berlin
Prague
Kladno
Stefanau
Częstochowa
Będzin
Tarnów
Radom
Warsaw
Sobibor
Treblinka
Bialystok
Krynks
Nieswiez
Nowogródek
Kleck
Rastenburg
Marburg
Stari
Báctopolya
Coka
Timişoara
Petrila
Petrovgrad
Aninoasa
Zasayi
Belgrade
Lupeni
Šabac
Čačak
Zaječar
Kruševac
Niš
Sofia
Plovadiv
Topollica
Tirane
Salonika
Athens
Patras
Neretva



RESISTANCE IN EUROPE

The brutality of Nazi rule led to the rise of resistance movements in every occupied country. These local groups received assistance, wherever possible, from Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE), while the Soviet Union helped pro-Communist guerrillas in Eastern Europe.

Resistance groups often emerged spontaneously. Their operations took various forms, from passive opposition, such as that practised in Germany by White Rose activists who distributed anti-Nazi pamphlets, to large-scale military activity. The mountainous terrain of the Balkans lent itself particularly well to the latter, and Yugoslavia and Greece experienced years of guerrilla warfare.

Elsewhere, opposition activities ranged from sabotage missions against military and industrial facilities to espionage and intelligence gathering. Sometimes local operatives carried out the actions, but the SOE (see pp.138–39) also inserted agents secretly by boat or parachute. Capture by the German authorities or collaborators usually meant torture and death, and successful ventures risked violent reprisals against the local population. However, such acts of resistance helped to divert valuable Axis resources from the two war fronts, as well as depleting the occupiers' morale. Equally important, resistance to the Nazi regime asserted human dignity in the face of oppression.

"France has lost a battle, but she has not lost the war."

GENERAL CHARLES DE GAULLE, 1940

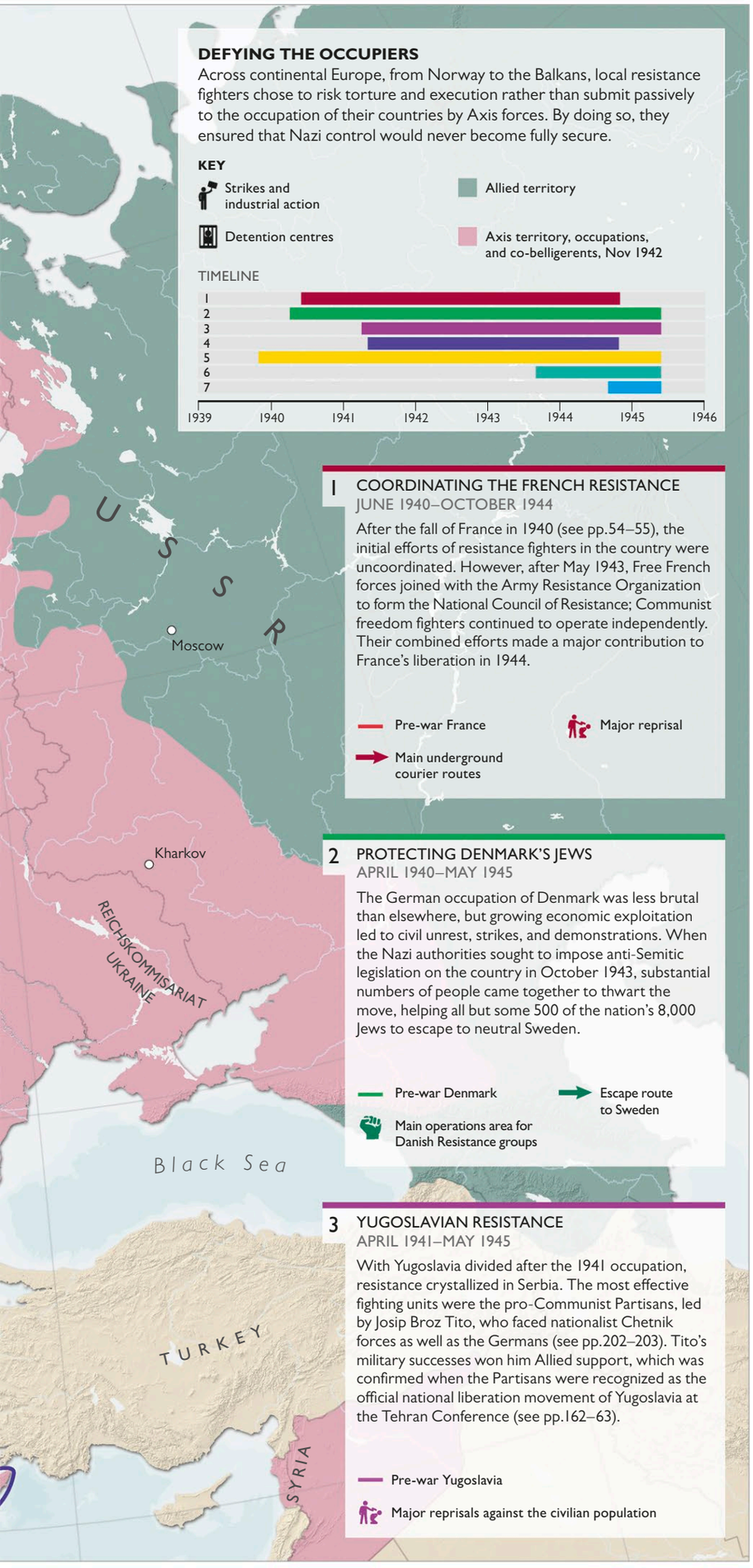
DEFYING THE OCCUPIERS

Across continental Europe, from Norway to the Balkans, local resistance fighters chose to risk torture and execution rather than submit passively to the occupation of their countries by Axis forces. By doing so, they ensured that Nazi control would never become fully secure.

KEY

- Strikes and industrial action
- Detention centres
- Allied territory
- Axis territory, occupations, and co-belligerents, Nov 1942

TIMELINE



1 COORDINATING THE FRENCH RESISTANCE
JUNE 1940–OCTOBER 1944

After the fall of France in 1940 (see pp.54–55), the initial efforts of resistance fighters in the country were uncoordinated. However, after May 1943, Free French forces joined with the Army Resistance Organization to form the National Council of Resistance; Communist freedom fighters continued to operate independently. Their combined efforts made a major contribution to France's liberation in 1944.

- Pre-war France
- Major reprisal
- Main underground courier routes

2 PROTECTING DENMARK'S JEWS
APRIL 1940–MAY 1945

The German occupation of Denmark was less brutal than elsewhere, but growing economic exploitation led to civil unrest, strikes, and demonstrations. When the Nazi authorities sought to impose anti-Semitic legislation on the country in October 1943, substantial numbers of people came together to thwart the move, helping all but some 500 of the nation's 8,000 Jews to escape to neutral Sweden.

- Pre-war Denmark
- Escape route to Sweden
- Main operations area for Danish Resistance groups

3 YUGOSLAVIAN RESISTANCE
APRIL 1941–MAY 1945

With Yugoslavia divided after the 1941 occupation, resistance crystallized in Serbia. The most effective fighting units were the pro-Communist Partisans, led by Josip Broz Tito, who faced nationalist Chetnik forces as well as the Germans (see pp.202–203). Tito's military successes won him Allied support, which was confirmed when the Partisans were recognized as the official national liberation movement of Yugoslavia at the Tehran Conference (see pp.162–63).

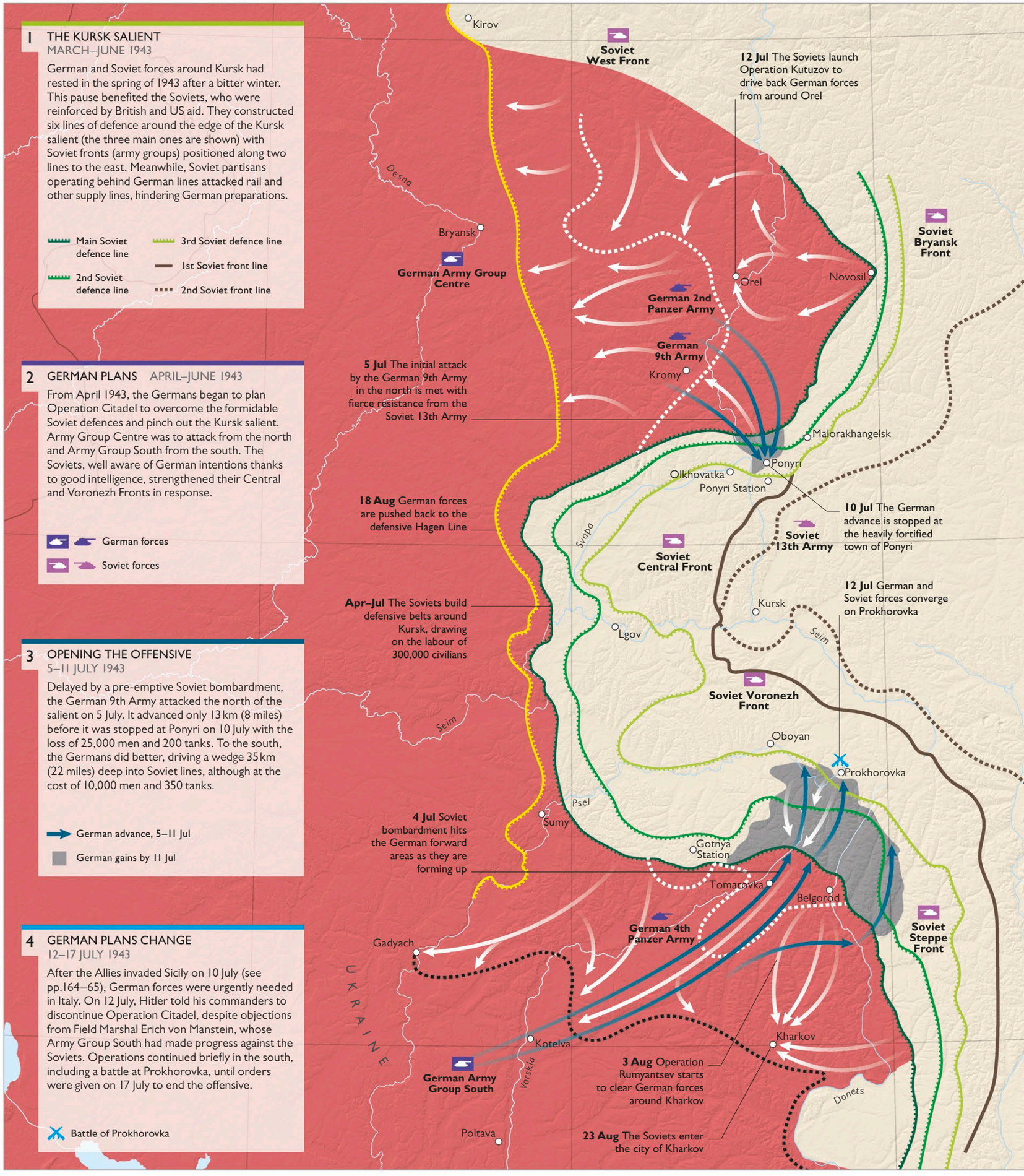
- Pre-war Yugoslavia
- Major reprisals against the civilian population

RESISTANCE WRITING

Swaying public opinion was a vital part of the war effort: Vichy French authorities used propaganda to mobilize hostility to the resistance and the reprisals that they provoked. In response, resistance fighters set up underground newspapers that helped to keep protest alive. In France there was *Libération* and *Combat* (edited by philosopher Albert Camus) and in Belgium *La Libre Belgique*, while in the Netherlands there were more than 1,000 publications.

COMBAT
Numéro spécial
VIVE LA FRANCE
Charles de Gaulle
A TOUS LES FRANÇAIS
VIVE LA FRANCE !
SOMMAIRE

Combat, 29 May 1944


1 THE KURSK SALIENT
MARCH–JUNE 1943
German and Soviet forces around Kursk had rested in the spring of 1943 after a bitter winter. This pause benefited the Soviets, who were reinforced by British and US aid. They constructed six lines of defence around the edge of the Kursk salient (the three main ones are shown) with Soviet fronts (army groups) positioned along two lines to the east. Meanwhile, Soviet partisans operating behind German lines attacked rail and other supply lines, hindering German preparations.
Main Soviet defence line
2nd Soviet defence line
3rd Soviet defence line
1st Soviet front line
2nd Soviet front line
2 GERMAN PLANS APRIL–JUNE 1943
From April 1943, the Germans began to plan Operation Citadel to overcome the formidable Soviet defences and pinch out the Kursk salient. Army Group Centre was to attack from the north and Army Group South from the south. The Soviets, well aware of German intentions thanks to good intelligence, strengthened their Central and Voronezh Fronts in response.
German forces
Soviet forces
3 OPENING THE OFFENSIVE
5–11 JULY 1943
Delayed by a pre-emptive Soviet bombardment, the German 9th Army attacked the north of the salient on 5 July. It advanced only 13 km (8 miles) before it was stopped at Ponyri on 10 July with the loss of 25,000 men and 200 tanks. To the south, the Germans did better, driving a wedge 35 km (22 miles) deep into Soviet lines, although at the cost of 10,000 men and 350 tanks.
German advance, 5–11 Jul
German gains by 11 Jul
4 GERMAN PLANS CHANGE
12–17 JULY 1943
After the Allies invaded Sicily on 10 July (see pp.164–65), German forces were urgently needed in Italy. On 12 July, Hitler told his commanders to discontinue Operation Citadel, despite objections from Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, whose Army Group South had made progress against the Soviets. Operations continued briefly in the south, including a battle at Prokhorovka, until orders were given on 17 July to end the offensive.
Battle of Prokhorovka
Kirov
Soviet West Front
12 Jul The Soviets launch Operation Kutuzov to drive back German forces from around Orel
Desna
Bryansk
German Army Group Centre
Soviet Bryansk Front
Orel
Novosil
German 2nd Panzer Army
German 9th Army
Kromy
5 Jul The initial attack by the German 9th Army in the north is met with fierce resistance from the Soviet 13th Army
Malorakhangelsk
Ponyri
Olkhovatka
Ponyri Station
10 Jul The German advance is stopped at the heavily fortified town of Ponyri
18 Aug German forces are pushed back to the defensive Hagen Line
Svapa
Soviet 13th Army
Soviet Central Front
12 Jul German and Soviet forces converge on Prokhorovka
Apr–Jul The Soviets build defensive belts around Kursk, drawing on the labour of 300,000 civilians
Kursk
Lgov
Seim
Soviet Voronezh Front
Oboyan
Prokhorovka
Psel
Sumy
4 Jul Soviet bombardment hits the German forward areas as they are forming up
Gotnya Station
Tomarovka
Belgorod
German 4th Panzer Army
Soviet Steppe Front
Gadyach
UKRAINE
Kotelva
Kharkov
Vorskla
German Army Group South
3 Aug Operation Rumyantsev starts to clear German forces around Kharkov
Donets
Poltava
23 Aug The Soviets enter the city of Kharkov

THE BATTLE OF KURSK

In the summer of 1943, German forces in the USSR found themselves facing a huge, well-fortified Soviet salient around the city of Kursk, some 450 km (280 miles) south of Moscow. The resulting battle to remove the salient became a monumental clash of armour and was one of the largest tank battles of the war.

In early 1943, Soviet advances, combined with German retreats and counter-attacks (see pp.152–53), resulted in a huge salient around Kursk. A vast, pivotal battle for the salient – an area of land 180 km (112 miles) wide and 100 km (62 miles) deep – followed in the summer, involving more than 8,000 tanks and 1.7 million men on both sides. Some 4,000 aircraft also played a vital role, both sides having recognized the effectiveness of air power – such as the lethal German Stuka dive-bomber – against tank armour.

The eventual Soviet victory at Kursk was a turning point in the war: it was the first time that a German strategic offensive had been halted before it could break through enemy lines; and it was Germany's final strategic offensive on the Eastern Front, where until now it had been dominant. From this point onwards, Germany was on the defensive: the Wehrmacht had lost its armoured supremacy, and the Luftwaffe had surrendered its dominance in the sky.

The Soviets' victory cost them three times more casualties than the Germans, but the losses were huge on both sides. Overall, more than 230,000 men were killed, missing, or wounded in battle, and more than 2,000 tanks and 600 aircraft were destroyed.

"The battle of Kursk… and the liberation of Kiev, left Hitlerite Germany facing catastrophe."

VASILY IVANOVICH CHUIKOV, SOVIET GENERAL, 1968

△ **Soviet counter-attack**
Soviet troops follow their T-34 tanks during a counter-attack near Kursk. The Soviets defended the salient with great bravery, often running close to German tanks to throw grenades under their tracks.

RIVAL GERMAN AND SOVIET TANKS

The main Soviet tank at Kursk was the T-34 medium tank, supported by T-70 light tanks and Lend-Lease tanks supplied by the US and Britain. The Germans deployed mainly Panzer IV tanks, along with limited numbers of powerful Tiger heavy tanks and the new Panther medium tanks. The Panther suffered numerous technical problems during the battle and did not have enough firepower against enemy infantry; by contrast, the Soviets' highly mobile and rugged T-34 could be repaired quickly on the front line.

The powerful Tiger tank was heavily featured in propaganda as a symbol of German might

△ **Soviet momentum**
The Red Army launched new offensives in the wake of the Battle of Kursk. This propaganda poster, distributed in July 1943, reads "Over enemy land, forward to victory!"

1 Mar 1944 Soviets reach the Estonian border

10 Jun 1944 The Soviets breach Finnish defensive lines

27 Jan 1944 The lengthy siege of Leningrad is ended when the railway line to Moscow is cleared

19 Jan 1944 Novgorod is recaptured by the Soviets

25 Sep 1943 The Soviets take Smolensk

19 Jan 1944 Fearing encirclement, the German Army Group North is forced to retreat into Latvia

6 Nov 1943 Kiev falls to the Soviets

25 Sep 1943 The Germans withdraw behind the Panther–Wotan Line

17 Apr 1944 The Soviets occupy Tarnopol

30 Sep 1943 The Soviets begin to cross the River Dnieper along an 800-km (500-mile) front

8 Apr 1944 The Soviets cross into northern Crimea

15 Mar 1944 Soviets reach the River Bug in southern Ukraine

9 May 1944 Sevastopol falls to the Soviets as the German garrison surrenders

Apr–May 1944 Romanian and German warships evacuate 113,000 Axis troops from Sevastopol in Crimea

Leningrad Front
Volkhov Front
North-West Front
Kalinin Front
West Front
Bryansk Front
Centre Front
Voronezh Front
Steppes Front
Army Group North
Army Group Centre
Army Group North Ukraine
Army Group South Ukraine
Army Group A
German 17th Army

FINLAND
Helsinki
Gulf of Finland
Lake Ladoga
Leningrad
Volkhov
Narva
ESTONIA
Lake Peipus
Tartu
Luga
Novgorod
Lake Ilmen
Staraya Russa
Pskov
Valdai Hills
Kalinin
Velikiye Luki
Rzhev
Moscow
Vyazma
Smolensk
Orsha
Maladzyechna
Kirov
Tula
Bryansk
Orel
Babruysk
Novozybkov
Kursk
Konotop
Sumy
Belgorod
Kharkov
Lubny
Poltava
Cherkassy
Lyutezh
Fastov
Kiev
Zhytomyr
Korosten
Chernobyl
Mazyr
Pripet
Kovel
Lutsk
Tarnopol
Chernivtsi
Mykolaiv
Odessa
Perekop
Kerch
Novorossiysk
Sevastopol
Mariupol
Sea of Azov
CRIMEA
UKRAINE
BESSARABIA
ROMANIA
HUNGARY
GENERAL GOVERNMENT
Dnieper
Dniester
Prut
Bug
Donets
Baltic Sea
LATVIA
Riga
LITHUANIA
Memel
Dvina
EAST PRUSSIA
GREATER GERMANY
Grodno
Białystok
BELORUSSIA
Warsaw
Brest-Litovsk
Vistula

5 LIBERATION OF CRIMEA
APRIL–MAY 1944

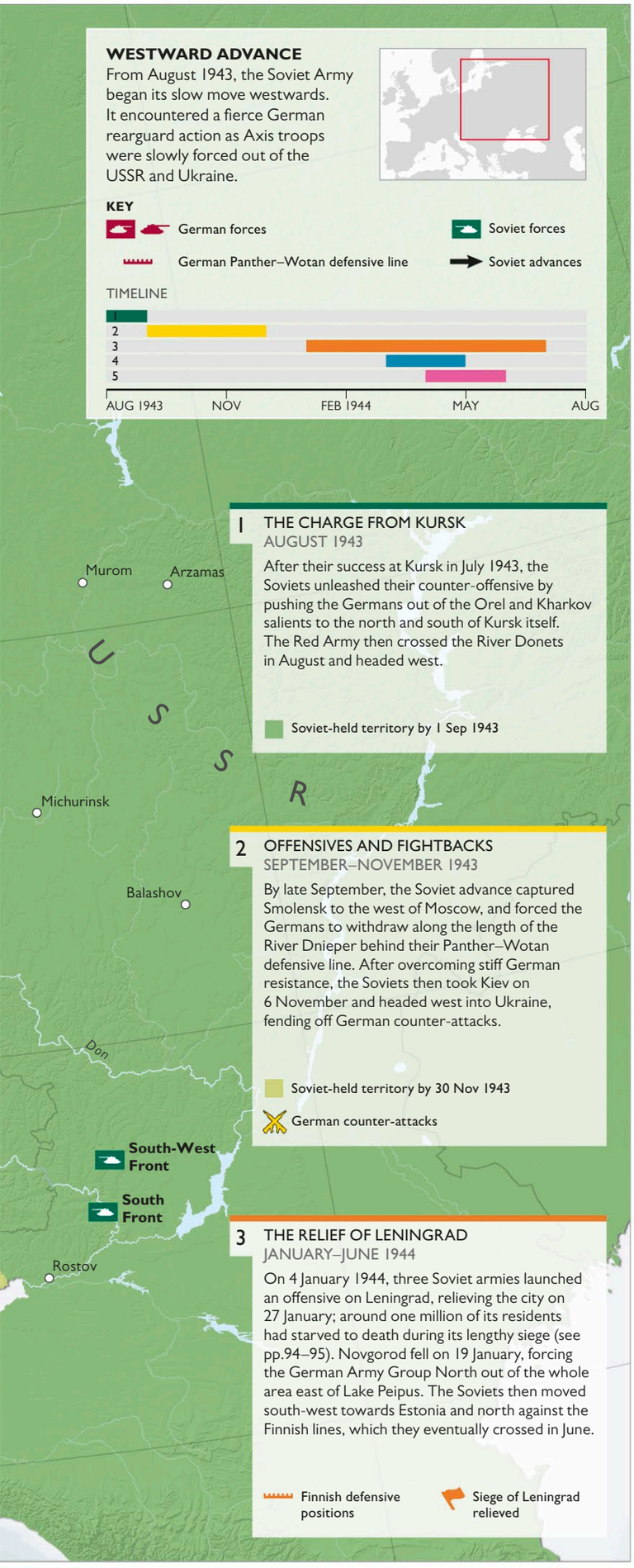
As the Soviets advanced through southern Ukraine, the German 17th Army became trapped in the Crimea. The Soviets attacked the Crimea on 8 April, both from the north and from the east across the Sea of Azov. By 9 May, Sevastopol's German garrison had surrendered, and the surviving Axis troops fled to Romania under heavy Soviet bomber and submarine attack.

Soviet attacks
Soviet bomber attacks
German evacuation route

4 PUSHING AGAINST AXIS BORDERS
MARCH–APRIL 1944

By March 1944, Soviet forces had reached the border with Estonia. In the far south, they reached the River Bug in March and approached the border with Romania in April. The port of Odessa, Ukraine, was taken on 10 April.

Encircled German forces
Soviet-held territory by 2 Mar 1944
Soviet-held territory by 17 Apr 1944



THE SOVIETS SWEEP FORWARDS

The Soviet victory at the Battle of Kursk handed the initiative to the Red Army. It was now ready to attack the Germans on a wider front in order to push them out of the western USSR and Ukraine. The Germans never regained momentum in the east, and Hitler's ambitions for the USSR were crushed.

Following the huge Battle of Kursk (see pp.178–79), the Germans believed, despite their losses, that they had crippled the USSR, rendering it incapable of launching a counter-attack. However, the Soviets regrouped quickly, and from summer 1943 German troops found themselves facing Soviet offensives on a front that stretched from Leningrad in the north to the Crimea in the south.

In a series of major battles, with only a few setbacks, the Soviets fought their way to the western frontiers of the USSR by May 1944. The German forces on the Eastern Front were depleted due to the diversion of troops to Italy following the Allied landings there (see pp.164–65), but they nevertheless fought fiercely, giving ground grudgingly and at great cost to the enemy. They made tactical retreats behind new defensive lines built after the defeat at Kursk, particularly the Panther–Wotan Line.

Both sides suffered huge casualties, but the Soviets gained the upper hand: they lifted the 872-day siege of Leningrad, liberated Kiev, Smolensk, and Odessa, and cleared Crimea and its naval port Sevastopol of German forces. The way was now open for the Red Army to launch Operation Bagration (see pp.182–83) to clear the rest of the USSR of German troops and allow the Soviets to head into Eastern Europe.

"An extraordinary day. The entire city is waiting… any moment now!"

VERA INBER, LENINGRAD CITIZEN, 16 JANUARY 1944

KONSTANTIN ROKOSSOVSKY, 1896–1968

After serving in World War I, Soviet and Polish officer Rokossovsky fought for the Bolsheviks in the Russian Civil War and soon climbed the ranks of the Red Army. He was imprisoned during Stalin's purges in the late 1930s, but was released in 1941 so that the USSR could make use of his military skills. He gained fame for his defence of Moscow in 1941–42 and his success at Stalingrad, where he led the Don Front in trapping the German 6th Army (see pp.152–53). He also played central roles at the Battle of Kursk and in Operation Bagration. It was Rokossovsky's army group that ended the war in north Germany (see pp.242–43). After the war, he became a member of the Communist Polish government.

OPERATION BAGRATION

Operation Bagration was the codename of the massive Soviet assault against German-occupied Belorussia that took place from 22 June to 14 August 1944. The assault, launched exactly three years after Germany invaded the USSR, involved millions of Soviet troops and was instrumental in bringing the war in Europe to an end.

Operation Bagration was named after Pyotr Ivanovich, Prince Bagration (1765–1812), a Russian general who had distinguished himself in the Napoleonic Wars by his use of innovative military tactics. The new campaign in his name was to be equally daring: it was intended to wipe out the German Army Group Centre and clear German troops out of the western USSR.

In a series of brilliant but brutal assaults, striking where the Germans least expected, the Red Army swept all before it and advanced hundreds of kilometres in a couple of months. Soviet troops poured into the German-occupied areas of Belorussia, heading north into Latvia and Lithuania, and west into Poland. A later operation in the south overran Romania and took Bulgaria out of the war. By the end of Bagration, Soviet troops were on the River Vistula in central Poland, facing Warsaw on the opposite bank; they were close to the shores of the Baltic Sea in the north; and they stood on the borders with Slovakia and Hungary in the south-west. Most threateningly for Germany, the Red Army was close to the eastern border of German East Prussia and the Third Reich itself.

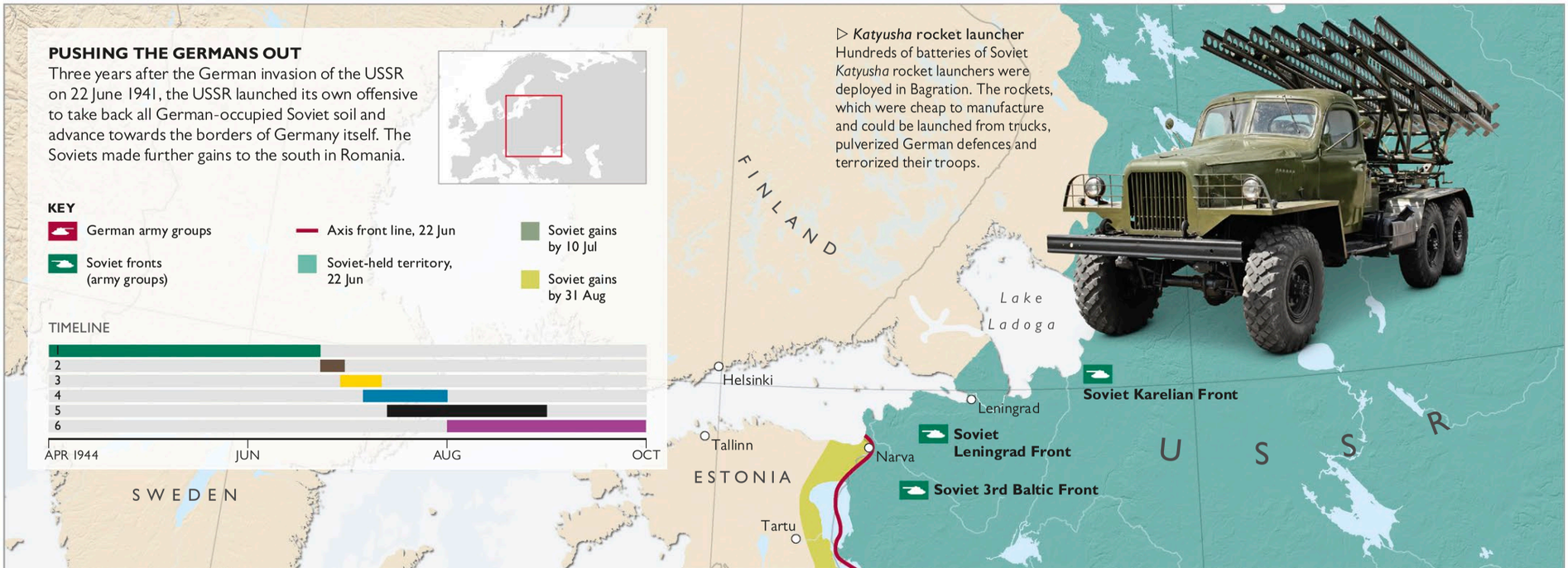
"The German troops now resemble a wounded beast which is compelled to crawl back to the frontiers of its lair…"

JOSEPH STALIN, 1 MAY 1944

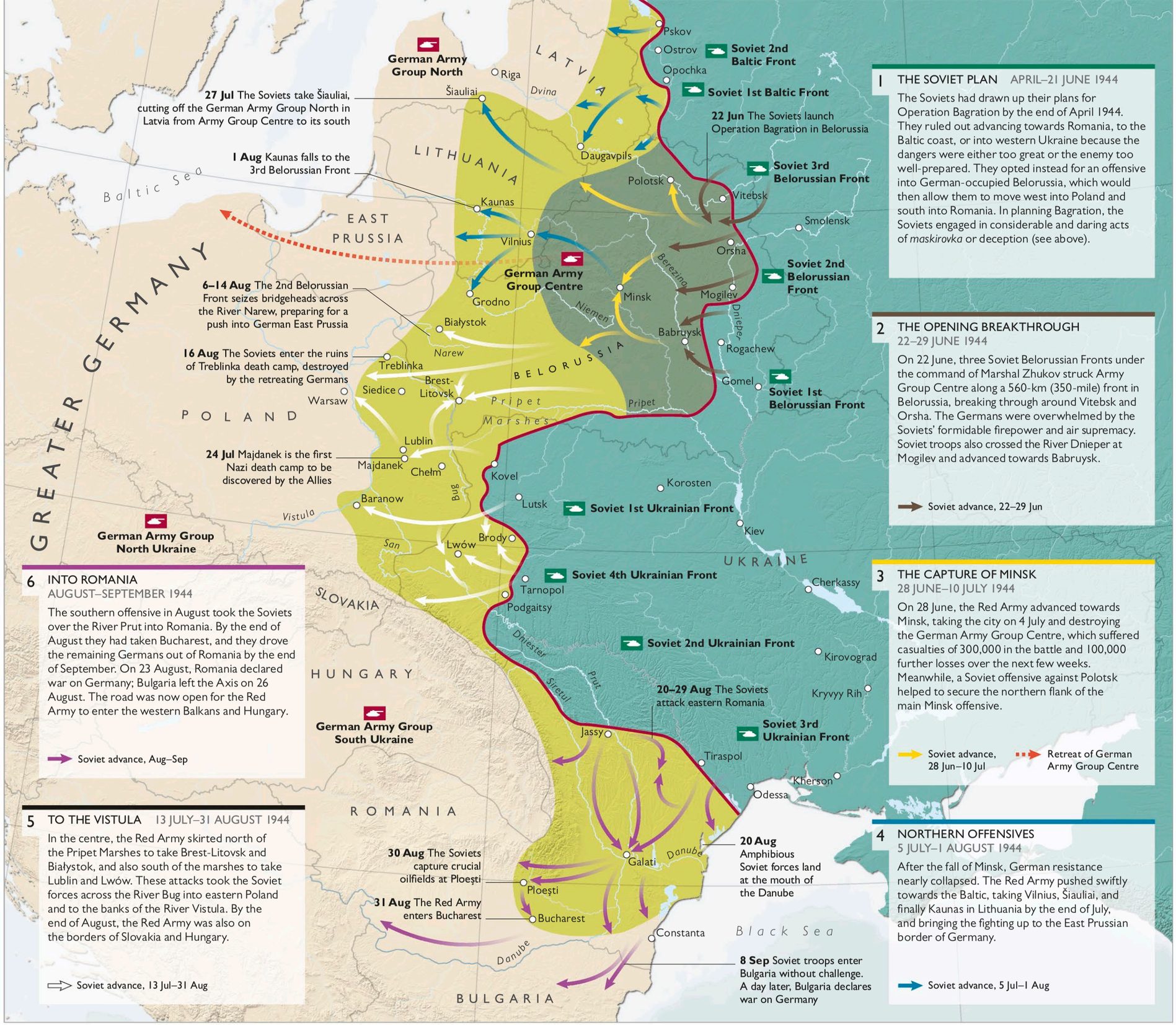
The Soviet campaign was one of the largest Allied operations of the entire war, engaging more than 2.3 million Soviet troops and resulting in the destruction of the German Army Group Centre. Losses on both sides were immense, with 180,000 Soviets killed or missing, and the Germans losing around 400,000 men, including nine generals killed and 22 captured. Up to 260,000 German troops were taken prisoner. Coming after German losses at Stalingrad (see pp.148–53) and then Kursk (see pp.178–79), Operation Bagration was another huge defeat for the German forces.

SOVIET *MASKIROVKA*

Maskirovka, meaning "camouflage" or "deception" in Russian, was a technique that the Soviets used with great success in Operation Bagration. They consistently misled the Germans about where they would attack along the broad front, positioning dummy armies, camouflaging trenches (see above), and sending false communications to suggest that the attack would come in the Ukraine; in reality, Soviet troops were moving secretly and gradually by night to Belorussia. The Germans were deceived into moving their troops to the wrong locations on the Eastern Front.



▷ ***Katyusha* rocket launcher**
Hundreds of batteries of Soviet *Katyusha* rocket launchers were deployed in Bagration. The rockets, which were cheap to manufacture and could be launched from trucks, pulverized German defences and terrorized their troops.


GREATER GERMANY
EAST PRUSSIA
POLAND
LITHUANIA
LATVIA
BELORUSSIA
UKRAINE
SLOVAKIA
HUNGARY
ROMANIA
BULGARIA
Baltic Sea
Black Sea
Pripet Marshes
Pskov
Ostrov
Opochka
Riga
Šiauliai
Daugavpils
Polotsk
Vitebsk
Smolensk
Orsha
Kaunas
Vilnius
Grodno
Minsk
Mogilev
Białystok
Babruysk
Rogachev
Gomel
Treblinka
Brest-Litovsk
Siedice
Warsaw
Lublin
Majdanek
Chełm
Kovel
Korosten
Lutsk
Baranow
Kiev
Lwów
Brody
Tarnopol
Podgaitsy
Cherkassy
Kirovograd
Kryvyy Rih
Jassy
Tiraspol
Kherson
Odessa
Galati
Ploeşti
Bucharest
Constanta
Dvina
Niemen
Berezina
Dniepr
Narew
Bug
Vistula
San
Pripet
Dniester
Siretul
Prut
Danube
German Army Group North
German Army Group Centre
German Army Group North Ukraine
German Army Group South Ukraine
Soviet 2nd Baltic Front
Soviet 1st Baltic Front
Soviet 3rd Belorussian Front
Soviet 2nd Belorussian Front
Soviet 1st Belorussian Front
Soviet 1st Ukrainian Front
Soviet 4th Ukrainian Front
Soviet 2nd Ukrainian Front
Soviet 3rd Ukrainian Front
27 Jul The Soviets take Šiauliai, cutting off the German Army Group North in Latvia from Army Group Centre to its south
1 Aug Kaunas falls to the 3rd Belorussian Front
6–14 Aug The 2nd Belorussian Front seizes bridgeheads across the River Narew, preparing for a push into German East Prussia
16 Aug The Soviets enter the ruins of Treblinka death camp, destroyed by the retreating Germans
24 Jul Majdanek is the first Nazi death camp to be discovered by the Allies
22 Jun The Soviets launch Operation Bagration in Belorussia
20–29 Aug The Soviets attack eastern Romania
30 Aug The Soviets capture crucial oilfields at Ploeşti
31 Aug The Red Army enters Bucharest
20 Aug Amphibious Soviet forces land at the mouth of the Danube
8 Sep Soviet troops enter Bulgaria without challenge. A day later, Bulgaria declares war on Germany
1 THE SOVIET PLAN APRIL–21 JUNE 1944
The Soviets had drawn up their plans for Operation Bagration by the end of April 1944. They ruled out advancing towards Romania, to the Baltic coast, or into western Ukraine because the dangers were either too great or the enemy too well-prepared. They opted instead for an offensive into German-occupied Belorussia, which would then allow them to move west into Poland and south into Romania. In planning Bagration, the Soviets engaged in considerable and daring acts of maskirovka or deception (see above).
2 THE OPENING BREAKTHROUGH 22–29 JUNE 1944
On 22 June, three Soviet Belorussian Fronts under the command of Marshal Zhukov struck Army Group Centre along a 560-km (350-mile) front in Belorussia, breaking through around Vitebsk and Orsha. The Germans were overwhelmed by the Soviets' formidable firepower and air supremacy. Soviet troops also crossed the River Dnieper at Mogilev and advanced towards Babruysk.
Soviet advance, 22–29 Jun
3 THE CAPTURE OF MINSK 28 JUNE–10 JULY 1944
On 28 June, the Red Army advanced towards Minsk, taking the city on 4 July and destroying the German Army Group Centre, which suffered casualties of 300,000 in the battle and 100,000 further losses over the next few weeks. Meanwhile, a Soviet offensive against Polotsk helped to secure the northern flank of the main Minsk offensive.
Soviet advance, 28 Jun–10 Jul
Retreat of German Army Group Centre
4 NORTHERN OFFENSIVES 5 JULY–1 AUGUST 1944
After the fall of Minsk, German resistance nearly collapsed. The Red Army pushed swiftly towards the Baltic, taking Vilnius, Šiauliai, and finally Kaunas in Lithuania by the end of July, and bringing the fighting up to the East Prussian border of Germany.
Soviet advance, 5 Jul–1 Aug
5 TO THE VISTULA 13 JULY–31 AUGUST 1944
In the centre, the Red Army skirted north of the Pripet Marshes to take Brest-Litovsk and Białystok, and also south of the marshes to take Lublin and Lwów. These attacks took the Soviet forces across the River Bug into eastern Poland and to the banks of the River Vistula. By the end of August, the Red Army was also on the borders of Slovakia and Hungary.
Soviet advance, 13 Jul–31 Aug
6 INTO ROMANIA AUGUST–SEPTEMBER 1944
The southern offensive in August took the Soviets over the River Prut into Romania. By the end of August they had taken Bucharest, and they drove the remaining Germans out of Romania by the end of September. On 23 August, Romania declared war on Germany; Bulgaria left the Axis on 26 August. The road was now open for the Red Army to enter the western Balkans and Hungary.
Soviet advance, Aug–Sep

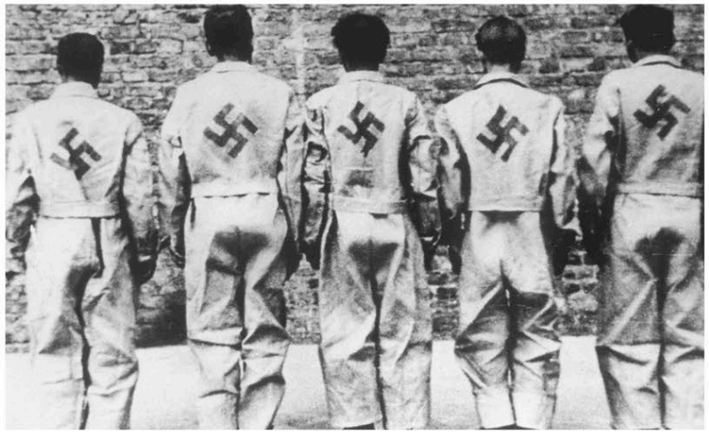
THE WARSAW UPRISING

In 1944, the main Polish resistance movement, the Home Army, embarked on an uprising to liberate their cities before the Soviets arrived. For nine weeks, resistance fighters battled the superior German forces.

△ **Insurgent's weapon**
Polish insurgents made thousands of weapons in secret factories, including copies of the British Sten Mark II submachine gun.

When the Soviets pushed the Germans back into Poland in July 1944, General Bor-Koromowski, commander of the Polish Home Army, decided to launch an operation to liberate Warsaw. With the Red Army approaching the Vistula river on 1 August 1944, about 37,000 Polish insurgents fell on the German garrison, which was caught off balance. Although lacking armaments – only one in seven had weapons – the resistance fighters rapidly took key parts of the city.

The Germans held key strategic positions such as railway stations, and on 25 August launched a counter-offensive. Some 20,000 heavily armed German troops, supported by aircraft, fought street battles with the Home Army. In the rubble of destroyed houses, and moving through makeshift tunnels, the Poles resisted for five weeks before surrendering on 1 October. All this time, the Soviet army paused its offensive and offered no help, even denying the Western Allies access to airfields to resupply the insurgents. The Home Army lost 17,000 fighters and effectively disbanded, and Warsaw was destroyed on Hitler's orders. When the Soviets finally captured the city in January 1945, former resistance members were arrested, deported, or killed.



△ **Prisoners of war**
The suppression of the Warsaw Uprising was brutal; in the first few days, 40,000 civilians were massacred. The Home Army fought back fiercely, despite being outnumbered; here, German prisoners captured by the Polish resistance are forced to wear swastika-emblazoned shirts.

Fighting for liberty
Home Army fighters take shelter behind a makeshift barricade. Around 50 percent of Warsaw's buildings were destroyed during the German recapture of the city, and around 300,000 inhabitants became refugees.

THE D-DAY LANDINGS

On 6 June 1944 the largest seaborne invasion in history took place on the beaches of Normandy. Codenamed Operation Neptune, and usually referred to as D-Day, it began the liberation of France and the opening of another front in Europe.

At the Washington Conference of May 1943, the Allied leaders met to discuss their future strategy in Europe, and set a date of May 1944 for the invasion of France. Numerous sites for the offensive were considered. The obvious choice, an invasion across the narrowest part of the Channel to France's northernmost point, the Pas-de-Calais, was ruled out because it was the most heavily defended. Normandy was favoured for the broad front it offered into central France.

The naval operations, led by British admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, were described by historian Correlli Barnett as a "never surpassed masterpiece of planning" and involved a 6,939-strong invasion fleet. This consisted of 1,213 warships, 4,126 landing craft, 736 ancillary craft (including minesweepers), and 864 merchant vessels from eight different Allied navies, carrying 176,000 troops in all. German defences consisted of around 50,000 troops and 170 artillery guns.

Allied planners identified the ideal conditions for the landings – low tide, clear skies, and a full moon – and suggested a window of 5–7 June. Poor weather on 5 June delayed the landings by a day, but even so the seas remained rough when the invasion began in the early hours of 6 June 1944. A naval and aerial bombardment was followed by an airborne and amphibious assault by troops from the US, Britain, and Canada under the supreme command of US general Dwight D. Eisenhower.

THE DECEPTION PLAN

The Allies convinced Hitler that their attack would be centred on the Pas-de-Calais using a variety of methods. A bogus US 1st Army with fake tanks was created in south-east England. As the real invasion fleet headed for Normandy, naval launches headed to Calais and Boulogne towing barrage balloons to create radar echoes similar to those of troop ships. Dummy parachutists were also dropped in the area.

Allied troops lift an inflatable decoy tank

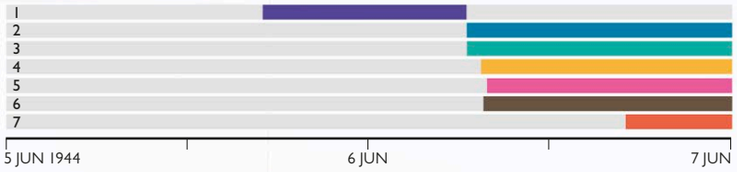
OPERATION NEPTUNE

All five landing beaches were given codenames – from west to east: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword. The Allied goal was to link up the four easterly beaches and establish a front line 16 km (10 miles) inland from the coast no later than midnight on 6 June.

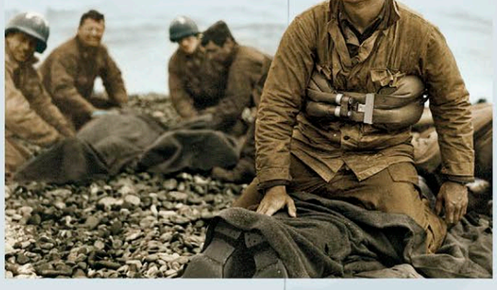
KEY

- Allied territory, 6 Jun
- Axis territory, 6 Jun
- Normandy beaches
- Allied gains, 6 Jun
- Allied objective at 12:00 midnight 6 Jun
- German mine barrier
- German gun batteries
- German infantry divisions
- German panzer division

TIMELINE



▽ **After the fighting**
US soldiers at Omaha Beach cover their dead and dying. Their landing craft sunk by German artillery, these troops could only reach Omaha by using a life raft.



FORCE U
From Dartmouth

1 ASSEMBLY 5 PM 5 JUNE–6:30 AM 6 JUNE 1944

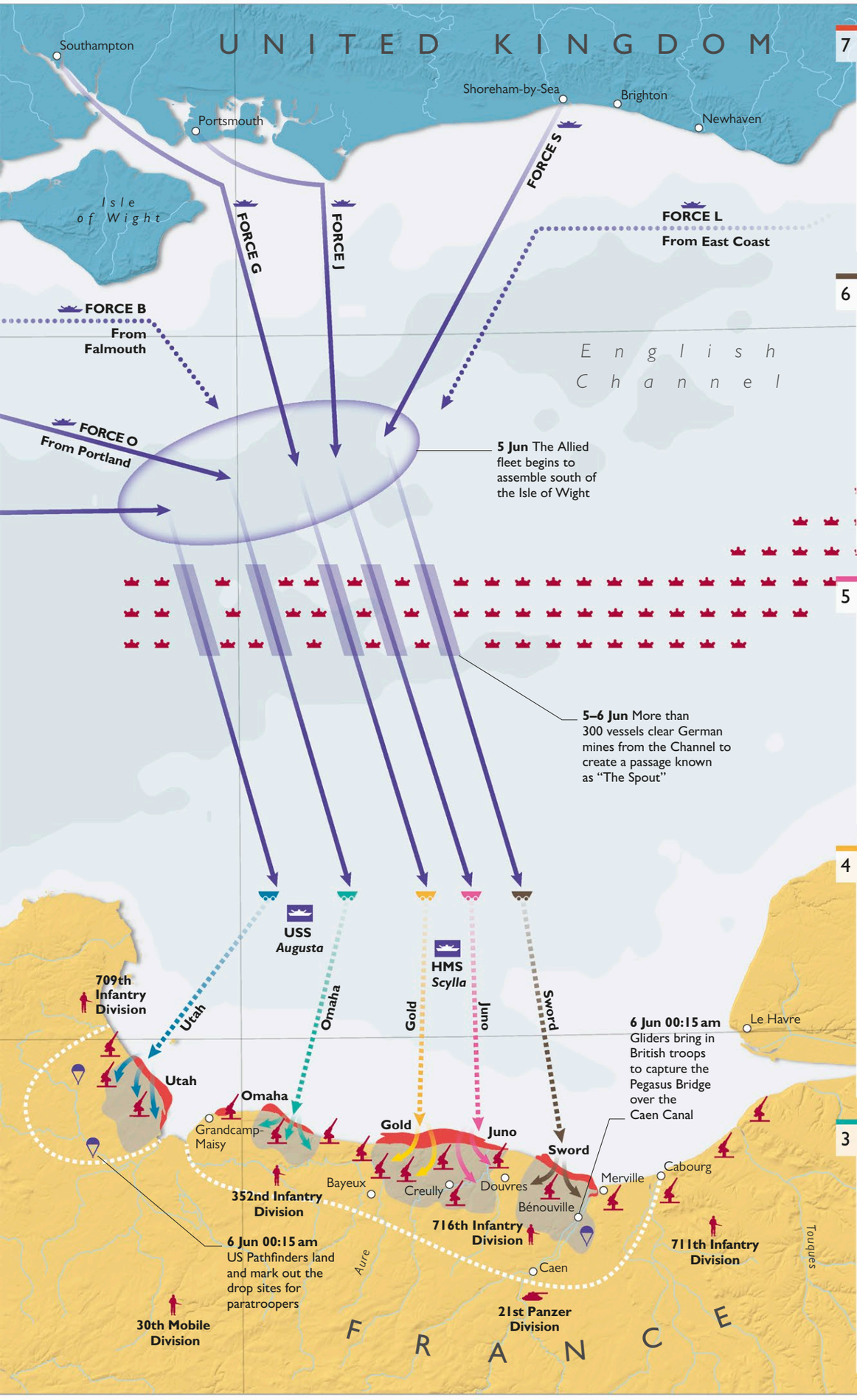
The invasion fleet assembled in the English Channel and passed through gaps in the German minefields in the Channel known as "The Spout" early on 6 June. Thousands of Allied planes attacked targets on the French coast and combed the skies for enemy aircraft, unleashing a naval bombardment at 5:45 am as ships neared the shore. US airborne pathfinders and paratroopers landed to the west, and British airborne troops to the east of the invasion force, to guard the flanks of the landing beaches.

- Invasion fleets
- Follow-up fleets
- Assembly area
- "The Spout"
- Flagships
- Airborne troops

2 US LANDINGS ON UTAH BEACH
6:30 AM–END OF DAY 6 JUNE 1944

The first US troops landed on Utah beach at 6:30 am. Strong currents pushed their landing craft 1.8 km (1 mile) to the south, but their new landing site turned out to be more favourable than the intended one. There US troops set up a beachhead and made contact with airborne troops. By the end of the day, 21,000 troops had landed with just 197 casualties.

- US landing craft
- US troop movements



7 THE AFTERMATH
5 PM–END OF DAY 6 JUNE 1944

By the end of the first day, the Allies had secured their beachheads and were moving inland. However, they had failed to connect the beachheads, a feat that was not achieved until 12 June. Artificial Mulberry harbours were deployed to ensure the constant flow of supplies and reinforcements to the force. Total Allied casualties on the first day were around 10,000 men, with 4,414 dead; the Germans lost around 1,000 men.

6 SWORD BEACH
7:30 AM–END OF DAY 6 JUNE 1944

At Sword Beach, 21 amphibious tanks provided covering fire for the British troops, who began to come ashore at 7:30 am. They made slow progress as the beach was heavily mined and covered with obstacles. Some of the German gun emplacements were seized or destroyed, but a German counter-attack late in the day nearly pushed back to the Channel before it was withdrawn to protect Caen. The British lost around 1,000 men.

British landing craft — British troop movements

5 JUNO BEACH
7:45 AM–END OF DAY 6 JUNE 1944

The Canadian landings at Juno were delayed because of rough seas, and because the offshore bombardment had failed to disable the German defences. Exits from the beach were created, but not without difficulty. By nightfall, the combined Juno and Gold beachhead was 19 km (12 miles) wide and 10 km (7 miles) deep, but the Canadians had suffered 961 casualties.

Canadian landing craft — Canadian troop movements

4 GOLD BEACH
7:25 AM–END OF DAY 6 JUNE 1944

The British landings on Gold Beach began at 7:25 am with a naval bombardment that disabled the German gun emplacements. The British soon linked up with the Canadian invaders of Juno and pressed inland, fighting off a counter-attack from the 21st Panzer Division and seizing the Bayeux–Creully road. Some 1,000 Allied troops died in the fighting.

British landing craft — British troop movements

3 OMAHA BEACH
6:30 AM–END OF DAY 6 JUNE 1944

Allied bombers had delayed their attack on Omaha Beach for fear of hitting US landing craft, which strong currents had pushed off course. As a result, German defensive obstacles remained on the beach, and US troops, expecting to face a single regiment, were pinned down by the fire of an entire German division. US troops suffered more than 2,000 casualties but fought their way to the coast road by midnight (see pp.188–89).

US landing craft — US troop movements

OMAHA BEACH

Of the five D-Day landings in Normandy on 6 June 1944, Omaha was the costliest for the Allies. Hampered by deep, rising water, and assaulted by heavy German fire from well-defended cliffs, around 2,400 US soldiers were killed or injured in the landing.

△ **Anti-tank mine**
The Normandy beaches were defended by mines such as this German T-42, devised to explode when a tank drove over it.

The US 1st and 29th Infantry Divisions were tasked with securing a beachhead 10 km (6 miles) long at Omaha beach, then linking up with other Allies landing at Utah beach to the west and Gold beach to the east.

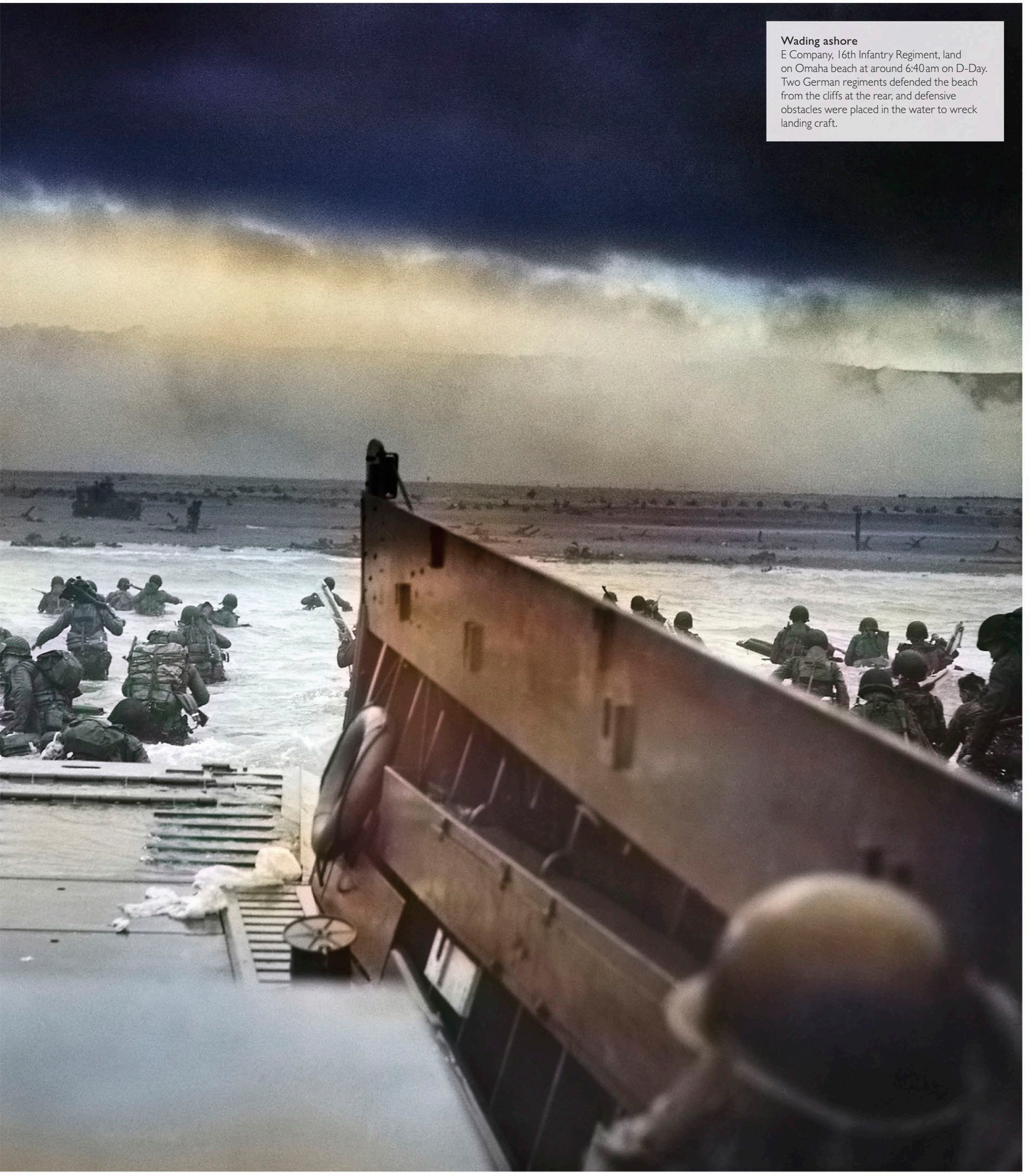
The assault started at 6:35 am with a first wave of troops from the US 1st Infantry Division, but the operation did not go according to plan. The Allied bombers providing air cover missed their targets, and the naval gunfire was poorly directed. As soon as the landing craft hit the beach, the Germans defending the cliffs rained shell, mortar, and machine-gun fire on the US troops as they tried to disembark. Most of the amphibious tanks were swamped and sank in the heavy swell, as did the supporting artillery. Within minutes of the initial landing, one-third of the assault troops had become casualties. Lieutenant-General Omar N. Bradley had to make a snap decision on whether to continue the landings, or pull out and switch reinforcements to Utah beach. He chose to continue.

Gaining a foothold

The landing started to improve as the Americans, reinforced by a second wave from the 29th Infantry Division, slowly managed to move up the beach and towards the surrounding bluffs. A flotilla of Allied destroyers steamed close inshore to provide much-needed artillery support. By late afternoon, tanks and other vehicles were moving off the beach. Despite determined resistance by the German defenders, by the end of the day some 34,000 US troops had landed at Omaha beach and secured a beachhead.

COMMAND DIFFERENCES

The German response to the invasion was slowed by power struggles. Rommel (centre) argued for a fight on the beaches, whereas Gerd von Rundstedt, his superior, planned for a counter-attack when the Allies were ashore. However, the need for Hitler's permission delayed von Rundstedt's plan until the afternoon of D-Day.



Wading ashore
E Company, 16th Infantry Regiment, land on Omaha beach at around 6:40am on D-Day. Two German regiments defended the beach from the cliffs at the rear, and defensive obstacles were placed in the water to wreck landing craft.

Normandy bridgehead
This German situation map from 1 August 1944 shows the progress made by Allied forces (represented by red flags along the coast) by 31 July 1944. They have broken out of the bridgehead, but the advance is slowed by German defences (shown as blue flags). Areas shaded in red show French resistance activities.

THE BATTLE OF NORMANDY

Some of the hardest fighting of the war took place in the two months after the D-Day landings. The Allies suffered around 100,000 casualties in a gruelling struggle to break out of their bridgehead in Normandy.

The D-Day landings (see pp.186–87) put Allied troops ashore on the Normandy coast, but their progress inland stalled as elite panzer divisions rushed to Normandy, blocking their movement out of the bridgehead. The terrain favoured the defenders, and bad weather reduced the effectiveness of Allied air power. According to Allied plans, the city of Caen, which is about 14 km (9 miles) from the coast, should have been swiftly captured by British and Canadian troops of the 2nd Army while the US 1st Army advanced west up the Cotentin Peninsula to seize the port of Cherbourg. In the event, the Americans did not take Cherbourg until three weeks after the landings and Caen was still firmly in German hands at the end of June. British general Bernard Montgomery, in command of Allied ground forces, was criticized by some US generals for the failure to make progress. A sense of crisis was also mounting on the German side; Hitler sacked Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt as Commander-in-Chief West (headquartered with Army Group D in Paris) on 1 July after he called for a withdrawal from Normandy and an end to the war.

The Allied breakout

On 18 July, after carpet-bombing by Allied air forces destroyed Caen and flattened much of its surrounding area, Montgomery launched Operation Goodwood, an offensive by three armoured divisions east of the city. The British lost 300 tanks in the fighting and failed to break through the German lines. However, it drew the best German divisions away from the sector facing the US 1st Army. On 25 July, the Americans launched Operation Cobra, overcoming much-weakened German resistance to break out toward Avranches. The US 3rd Army under General George Patton joined in the offensive, pouring through the gap opened in the enemy line. German tanks counter-attacking on 7 August were destroyed by Allied ground-attack aircraft and US artillery. Much of the German army fleeing from Normandy escaped encirclement in the Falaise Pocket (see p.194–95), but the Allied path into France was now open.

▷ **Heavy artillery**
US soldiers fire howitzer shells at German soldiers near the town of Carentan, on the Cotentin Peninsula.

5 V-2 ATTACKS
8 SEPTEMBER 1944–30 MARCH 1945

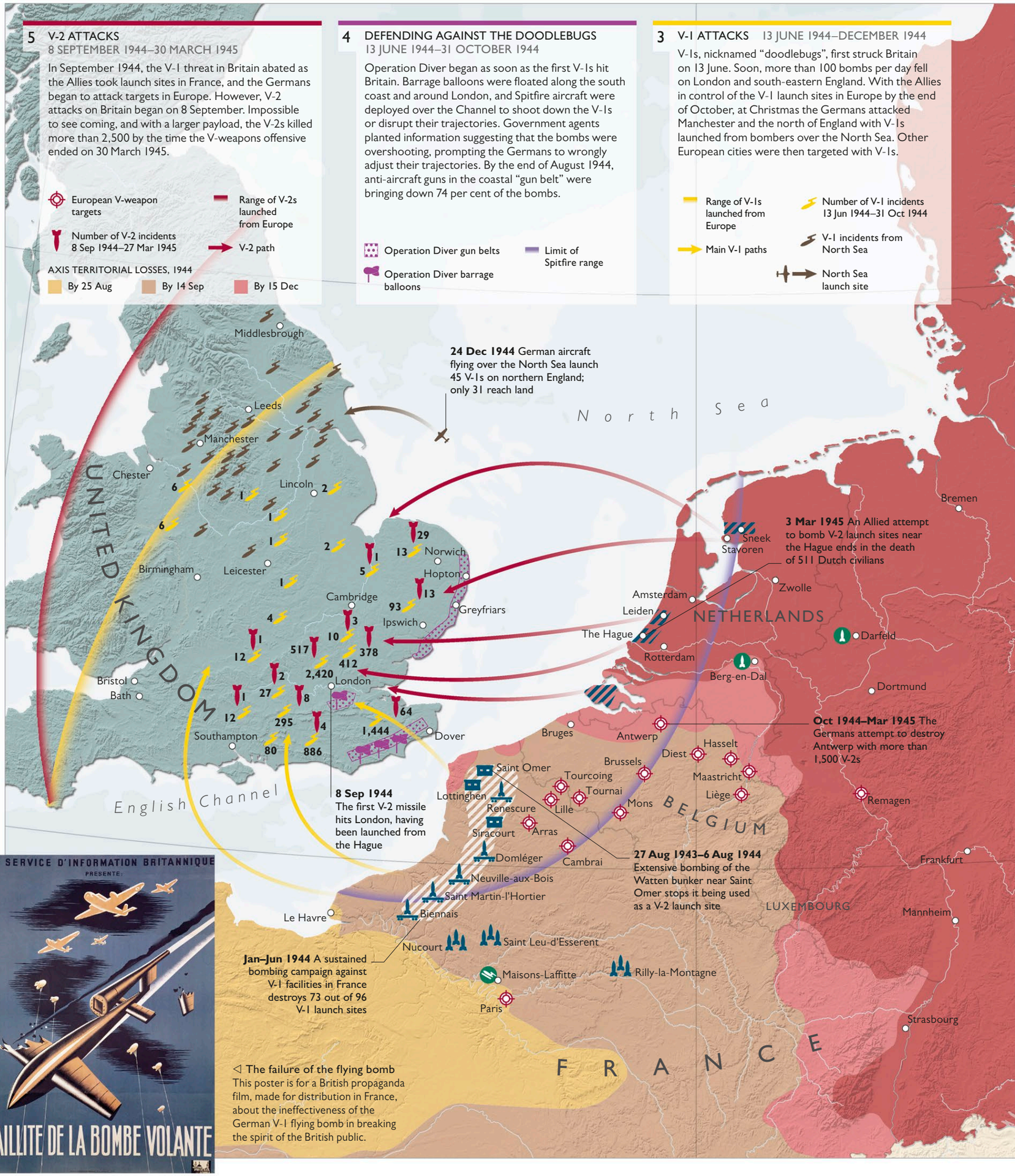
In September 1944, the V-1 threat in Britain abated as the Allies took launch sites in France, and the Germans began to attack targets in Europe. However, V-2 attacks on Britain began on 8 September. Impossible to see coming, and with a larger payload, the V-2s killed more than 2,500 by the time the V-weapons offensive ended on 30 March 1945.

4 DEFENDING AGAINST THE DOODLEBUGS
13 JUNE 1944–31 OCTOBER 1944

Operation Diver began as soon as the first V-1s hit Britain. Barrage balloons were floated along the south coast and around London, and Spitfire aircraft were deployed over the Channel to shoot down the V-1s or disrupt their trajectories. Government agents planted information suggesting that the bombs were overshooting, prompting the Germans to wrongly adjust their trajectories. By the end of August 1944, anti-aircraft guns in the coastal "gun belt" were bringing down 74 per cent of the bombs.

3 V-1 ATTACKS 13 JUNE 1944–DECEMBER 1944

V-1s, nicknamed "doodlebugs", first struck Britain on 13 June. Soon, more than 100 bombs per day fell on London and south-eastern England. With the Allies in control of the V-1 launch sites in Europe by the end of October, at Christmas the Germans attacked Manchester and the north of England with V-1s launched from bombers over the North Sea. Other European cities were then targeted with V-1s.



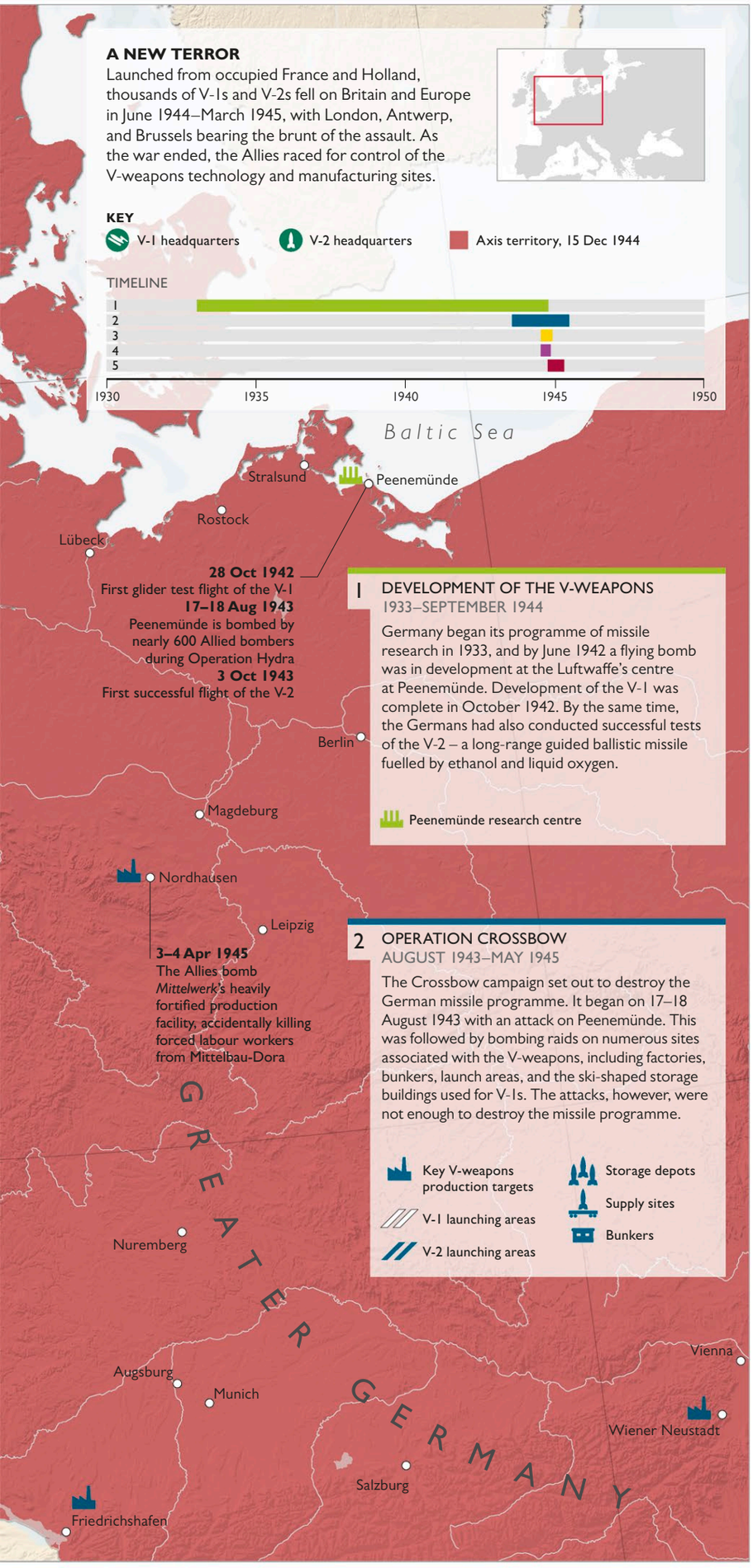
◁ **The failure of the flying bomb**
This poster is for a British propaganda film, made for distribution in France, about the ineffectiveness of the German V-1 flying bomb in breaking the spirit of the British public.

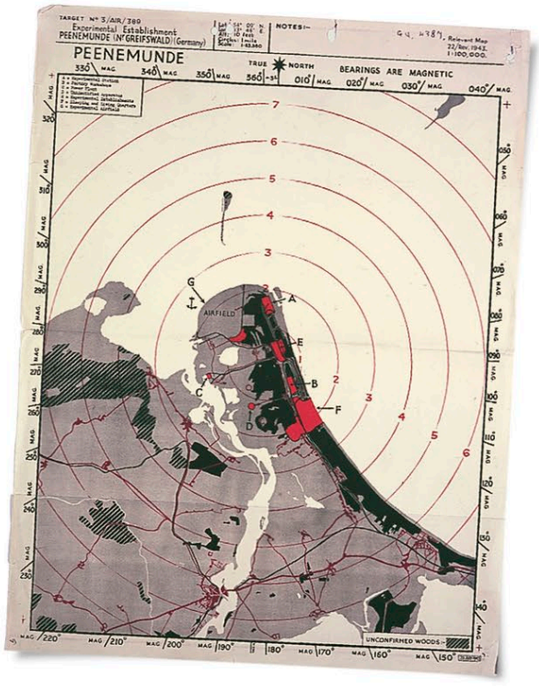
V-WEAPONS

In June 1944, the Germans began targeting Britain with new V-weapons (from *Vergeltungswaffen*, meaning "reprisal weapons" in response to Allied bombing). They succeeded – at first – in their goal of inflicting terror on the population and destroying infrastructure.

Rumours that Germany was developing long-range missiles were confirmed in 1943 when Polish intelligence agents smuggled details of the *Vergeltungswaffen* to the British. As well as terrorizing Allied civilians, these "wonder weapons" were intended to boost morale in Germany. The Allies responded with Operation Crossbow, intended to disrupt the production, transport, and launch of the weapons. Nevertheless, the first V-1 flying bombs fell on London in June 1944 and continued to affect a swathe of England throughout the summer. These simple steel and plywood missiles were powered by a pulsejet that made a buzzing sound, which cut out when the bomb was about to fall. Thousands of Londoners fled the city, but they began to return when defensive countermeasures introduced in Operation Diver took effect, disabling or destroying nearly half of the 12,000 missiles fired. Those that did reach Britain caused 45,000 casualties.

The unleashing of the V-2 – a large, fast, rocket-powered missile – in September 1944 added to the toll, both in Britain and in the cities targeted in Europe. As the Allies advanced through France to the Netherlands in March 1945, they knocked out German launch sites, and Europe was finally freed from the terror of the V-weapons.





△ **The raid on Peenemünde**
This British map from 1943 shows the targets of Operation Hydra – the bombing raid on Peenemünde on the night of 17–18 August 1943. It forced the Germans to move V-2 production to the *Mittelwerk* factory.

5 SECURING THE CHANNEL PORTS
26 AUGUST–29 SEPTEMBER 1944

The Canadian 1st Army was tasked with taking the Channel ports, which were vital to Allied supply lines. The Germans determined to hold the ports for as long as possible, designating them "fortresses". Le Havre fell first, on 12 September, and by 29 September the Canadians had taken Boulogne and Calais. Dunkirk proved tougher, and the major Canadian units moved on to Belgium, leaving a smaller force to continue the siege.

Canadian 1st Army advance, 26 Aug–14 Sep

German fortress ports

UNITED KINGDOM

29 Sep The Canadians capture the German long-range heavy artillery at Cap Gris-Nez

8 Sep Ostend is liberated by Canadian forces

31 Aug The British capture Amiens and cross the River Somme

13–21 Aug The Allies destroy most of German Army Group B in the Battle of the Falaise Pocket

24–25 Aug Paris is liberated by Free French and US forces

29 Aug General Patton's troops enter Reims

8 Sep Liège is liberated by the US 1st Army

11 Sep Northern and southern Allied forces meet at Sombernon

12 Sep 1944–7 May 1945 German submarine harbours along the Atlantic coast hold out against Allied forces. Royan and La Rochelle surrender, on 17 April and 7 May respectively, after heavy bombing

21–29 Aug Battle of Montélimar: the Allies attempt to block the German retreat but the German forces escape

28 Aug The Free French liberate Marseille and Toulon

NETHERLANDS · BELGIUM · LUXEMBOURG · RUHR · SAARLAND · ALSACE-LORRAINE · NORMANDY · BRITTANY · PROVENCE · FRANCE

English Channel · Bay of Biscay · Mediterranean Sea

Rotterdam, Arnhem, Eindhoven, Antwerp, Roermond, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Maastricht, Aachen, Liège, Ostend, Calais, Dunkirk, Cap Gris-Nez, Boulogne, Ghent, Brussels, Tournai, Mons, Namur, Dieppe, Amiens, Le Havre, Rouen, Cherbourg, Carentan, Bayeux, St-Lô, Caen, Falaise, Vire, Argentan, Évreux, Mortain, St Malo, Brest, Loudéac, Rennes, Lorient, Le Mans, Chartres, Paris, Laon, Reims, Verdun, Châlons, Saarbrücken, Metz, Strasbourg, Épinal, Colmar, Troyes, Chaumont, Orléans, Angers, St Nazaire, Nantes, Vesoul, Belfort, Basel, Sombernon, Dijon, Besançon, Berne, La Rochelle, Royan, Bordeaux, Geneva, Vichy, Lyon, Grenoble, Valence, Montélimar, Avignon, Nice, Cannes, St-Maxime, Marseille, Toulon, Cavalaire-Sur-Mer

Ruhr, Rhine, Ardennes, Somme, Oise, Seine, Loire, Moselle, Vosges, Saône, Rhône

▽ **France liberated**
The Statue of Liberty is shown in front of the French flag in this 1944 poster. It celebrates the Allied troops who helped to free France from German occupation.

4 INTO BELGIUM
3–16 SEPTEMBER 1944

On 3 September, the British 2nd Army swept into Belgium to capture Brussels. The following day, they surprised the Germans in Antwerp, preventing them from destroying the docks. They were now just 160 km (100 miles) from the Rhine and the entry point to the industrial Ruhr region. Further east, the US 1st Army had captured Liège, and had begun to patrol within Germany itself.

Allied advance into Belgium, 3–16 Sep

Liberation of Brussels

Ruhr region

THE BREAKOUT

Within three months of the D-Day landings, the Allies had broken out of Normandy, liberating France and most of Belgium. They swept eastwards to reach the German border by the middle of September. However, a hard fight lay ahead.

In August, the Allied breakout from Normandy developed into a rout as their forces spread east, chasing the Germans from northern France. By the end of the month, they had cleared Brittany, reached the Loire, and moved as far as Troyes to the east. Paris was liberated, having been under Nazi control since June 1940, and General de Gaulle was installed in the city. Meanwhile, a French and US force had landed in Provence and begun to drive the Germans from the south.

The Allies disagreed on how best to proceed. British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery wished to advance on a narrow front and push north-east through Belgium to reach the Ruhr Valley. However, US General Dwight Eisenhower – Supreme Commander of the Allied forces in Europe – rejected Montgomery's plan, favouring a "broad front" strategy in which troops would be deployed along the entire Western Front before driving into Germany. By mid-September, the Allies were stretched across a front from Antwerp in the north to the Swiss border near Belfort in the south. The British were poised to make a dramatic attempt to invade Germany through the Netherlands (see pp.198–99), while the US forces were within touching distance of the economically vital Saarland and Ruhr regions. However, both faced increasing German resistance.

"Steady, Monty. You can't speak to me like that. I'm your boss."

EISENHOWER TO MONTGOMERY, 10 SEPTEMBER 1944

THE RED BALL EXPRESS

For 83 days, from 25 August to 16 November 1944, convoys of trucks emblazoned with red balls and driven predominantly by African Americans carried food, fuel, and munitions along the road from Cherbourg to the Allied logistics base at Chartres. At its peak, the Red Ball Express operated nearly 6,000 vehicles, carrying 11,300 tonnes (12,500 tons) of supplies each day. The convoy system was abandoned once the port of Antwerp and the French railway lines were re-opened and fuel pipes installed.

A US soldier on the Red Ball Highway

After the blast
Leading Nazi officials Martin Bormann (second from left) and Hermann Göring (fourth from left) inspect the wrecked conference room where the bomb was detonated. A stout table leg had helped shield Hitler from the explosion.

THE PLOT TO KILL HITLER

As the Allies drew closer on two fronts, within Germany a hostile faction plotted to overthrow Hitler and make peace. On 20 July 1944, there was an assassination attempt that came close to success.

Planned by a group of senior German military officers, the July Plot was set in motion when Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg planted a briefcase-bomb in a meeting at the "Wolf's Lair", Hitler's field headquarters in East Prussia. After the bomb went off, Stauffenberg flew to Berlin to claim that the SS had assassinated Hitler and order the German Replacement Army to overthrow the Nazi regime. However, Hitler was not dead. Although three other Nazis were killed, Hitler suffered only minor injuries.

△ **Key plotter**
After being severely injured in Tunisia in 1943, Stauffenberg joined other conspirators to save Germany from destruction.

The conspiracy fails

Not realizing that Hitler was still alive, the conspirators instructed the Replacement Army to arrest various officials; meanwhile, counter-orders were given by Hitler. When Major Otto Remer, acting on the conspirators' orders, arrived to arrest the Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, he was informed by Goebbels that the Führer was still alive. To prove his point, Goebbels phoned Hitler, who spoke to Remer and ordered that he crush the rebellion immediately. Remer's troops moved on the War Ministry, where, after a brief gun battle, the conspirators surrendered. The leading figures were sentenced to death, with Stauffenberg shot that same evening.

▷ **Living to tell the tale**
Hitler greets Joseph Goebbels only hours after surviving the bomb blast that was intended to assassinate him. Following the attempted coup, more than 7,000 alleged conspirators were arrested; up to 5,000 ended up dead, either executed or forced to commit suicide.

▽ **Preparing for the drop**
Operation Market Garden was the largest parachute drop of the war. Here US paratroopers receive a final briefing before dropping over the Netherlands.

18 Sep A second wave of Polish airborne troops arrives, but is unable to break through to join the 2nd Parachute Battalion in Arnhem (see panel map)

20 Sep A temporary truce allows the British to evacuate the wounded from Arnhem

17–21 Sep German artillery attacks on the road between Eindhoven and Nijmegen, known as "Hell's Highway", hamper the Allies

18 Sep The Germans counter-attack around Groesbeek, temporarily holding one of the Allied landing zones

17 Sep The bridge at Son is blown up by the Germans

20 Sep Allied forces battle the Germans at Nuenen

17 Sep 30th Corps' slow advance from Valkenswaard to Eindhoven puts Operation Market Garden behind schedule

German 2nd SS Panzer Corps

German 2nd Parachute Corps

German 84th Corps

See panel

Oosterbeek
Arnhem
Renkum
Driel
Opheusden
Huissen
IJssel
Elst
Lower Rhine
Ressen
Bemmel
Waal
Waal
Nijmegen
Beek
Wyler
Maas-Waal Canal
Hatert
Groesbeek
Grave
Heumen
Maas
Oss
NETHERLANDS
Uden
Dinther
Schijndel
Boxtel
Veghel
Erp
Koevering
Wilhelmina Canal
Gemert
Son en Breugel
Wilhelmina Canal
Best
Nuenen
Helmond
Eindhoven
Valkenswaard

1 THE OPERATION BEGINS
17 SEPTEMBER 1944

Speed and timing were essential to the success of Market Garden because the British 30th Corps needed to coordinate with the airborne troops. On 17 September, airborne troops from the US 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions were dropped near Eindhoven and Nijmegen, while the British 1st Airborne Division landed just east of Arnhem. Meanwhile, the 30th Corps began its advance along the road to Eindhoven, but its progress was soon slowed by German attacks.

Allied parachute and glider landing zones

2 EINDHOVEN LIBERATED
17–18 SEPTEMBER 1944

The 101st Airborne Division made good progress around Eindhoven, moving from their landing zones to capture four of their target bridges. However, they failed to prevent the Germans from destroying a crucial bridge across the Wilhelmina Canal at Son en Breugel. An attempt to reach another crossing at Best was blocked by the Germans. However, on 18 September the Americans managed to enter and liberate Eindhoven, where they were joined by 30th Corps.

101st Airborne Division movements

AMBITIOUS PLANS

After swift Allied progress through France and Belgium, General Montgomery believed that a powerful, narrow thrust would reach Germany faster than fighting on a broader front.

3 HOLD-UP AT NIJMEGEN
17–20 SEPTEMBER 1944

The US 82nd Airborne Division captured the bridges at Grave and Heumen and secured the Groesbeek Heights near Nijmegen, but struggled to take the vital road bridge over the River Waal. By 19 September, they had been joined by 30th Corps, and in a pincer movement that struck from north and south, the Allies secured the bridge the next evening. Exhausted by the heavy fighting and slowed by the narrow road and boggy conditions, the Allies were delayed in their progress towards Arnhem.

82nd Airborne Division movements

OPERATION MARKET GARDEN

In one of the boldest plans of the war, the Allies dropped thousands of troops behind enemy lines in the Netherlands, near the German border. This operation – designated Market Garden – aimed to clear a path for the Allies into Germany, but it turned out to be a costly failure.

By mid-September 1944, the Allies – sensing stiffening resistance – were desperate to break through into Germany. In a hastily conceived plan, Field Marshal Montgomery believed that he could push through the Netherlands and into Germany, bypassing the heavily defended Westwall, or Siegfried Line (see pp.200–201). On 17–18 September, 35,000 airborne troops were delivered by glider and parachute to around Nijmegen, Eindhoven, and Arnhem. Their task was to secure bridges along the road between these cities; the British 30th Corps would then advance over this route and cross the Lower Rhine at Arnhem, after which the Allies would have easy access into Germany's industrial heartland in the Ruhr.

However, the Allies never managed to take the bridge over the Rhine at Arnhem, and after a week of bitter fighting, in which over 1,000 Allied troops died, they were forced to evacuate. Market Garden failed, wasting resources that would have been invaluable over the coming months, when the Allies tackled German defences over a broader front.

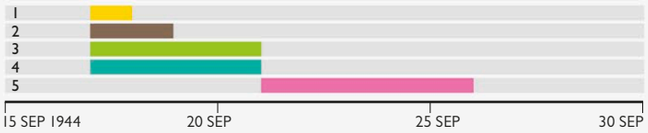
A FLAWED PLAN

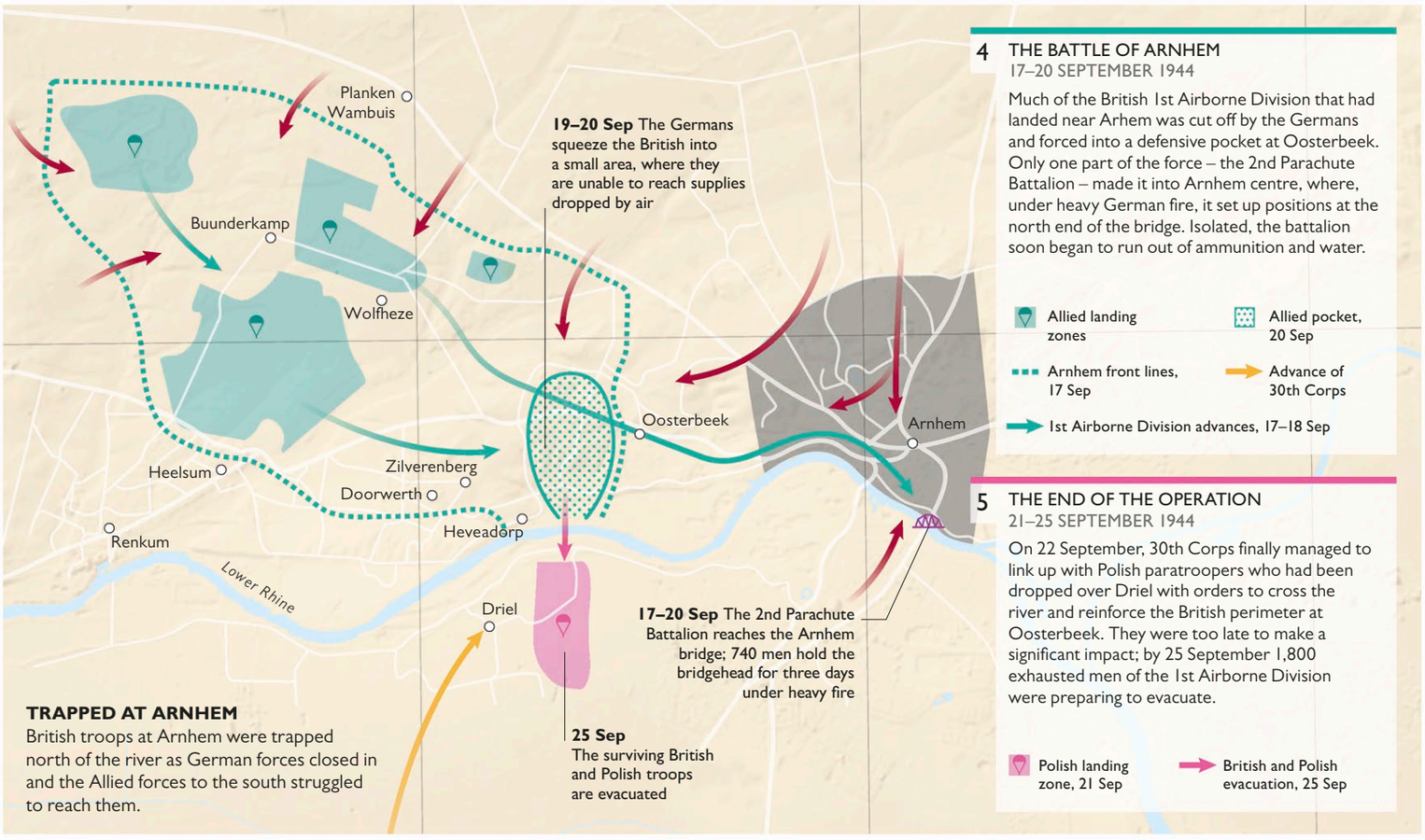
Montgomery planned to secure the bridges along the road from Eindhoven to Arnhem with airborne troops, creating a safe corridor for his ground forces. He anticipated little resistance.

KEY

- Main German attacks
- Advance of 30th Corps ground forces
- Key bridges
- German forces
- Road from Eindhoven to Arnhem
- Major battles
- Key urban areas

TIMELINE





TRAPPED AT ARNHEM

British troops at Arnhem were trapped north of the river as German forces closed in and the Allied forces to the south struggled to reach them.

BATTLES AT GERMANY'S GATE

Weary from the Battle of Normandy and their advance across France, the Allies faced organized German resistance as they tried to cross the German border in late 1944. Although they made gains in Alsace–Lorraine and in Germany itself, exhausting campaigns in the Scheldt and Hürtgen Forest depleted their forces.

In Operation Market Garden (see pp.198–99) the Allies had failed to cross the Rhine and to establish an invasion route into Germany. This, together with their severely overstretched supply lines, lost the Allies the initiative they had won after their breakout from Normandy (see pp.194–95) and so their chances of bringing the war to an end in 1944. Instead, they spent the autumn and early winter trying to breach German defences along the borders in Belgium, the Netherlands, and France.

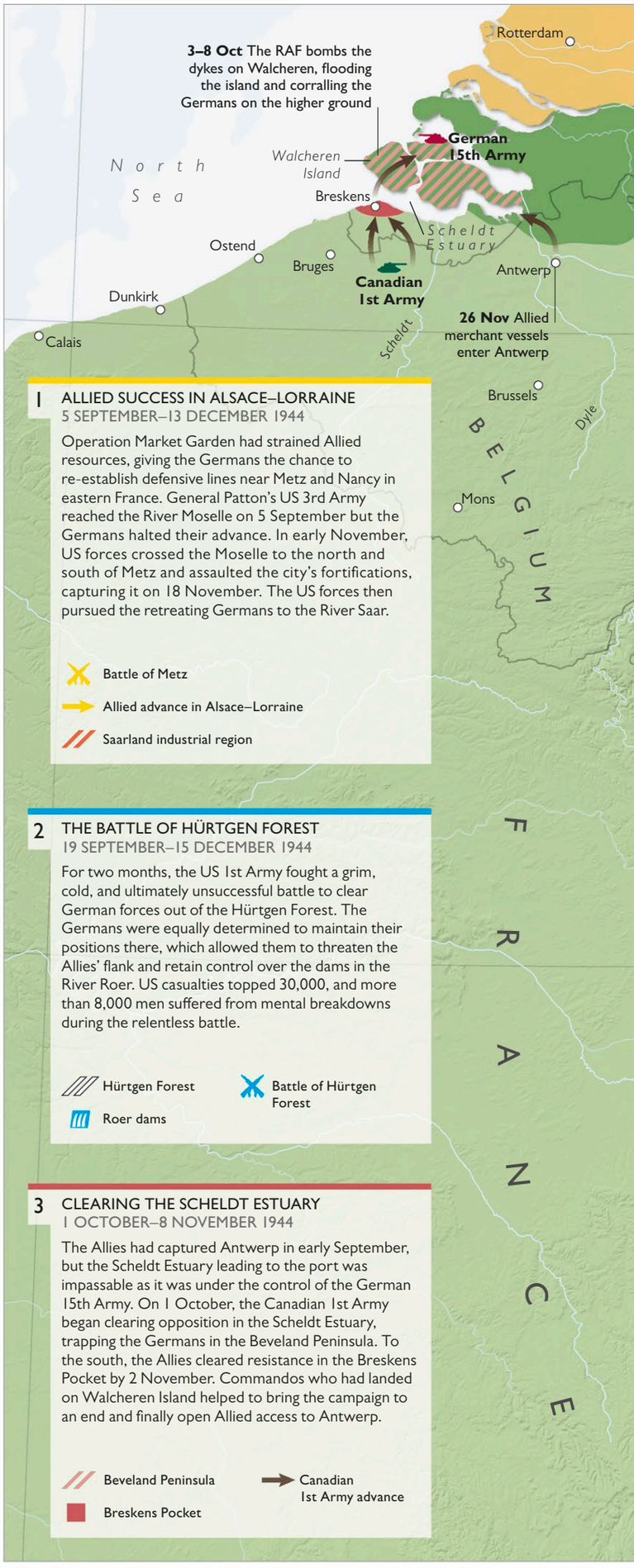
After a gruelling battle, the Allies cleared the German defences on the Scheldt Estuary in the Netherlands, opening up the port of Antwerp in Belgium as a supply route for their forces. However, to reach the River Rhine, the Allies now had to contend with two formidable deterrents: the Westwall (or Siegfried Line), a 600-km (373-mile) German defensive line of bunkers, tank traps, and tunnels; and the increasingly cold, wet weather.

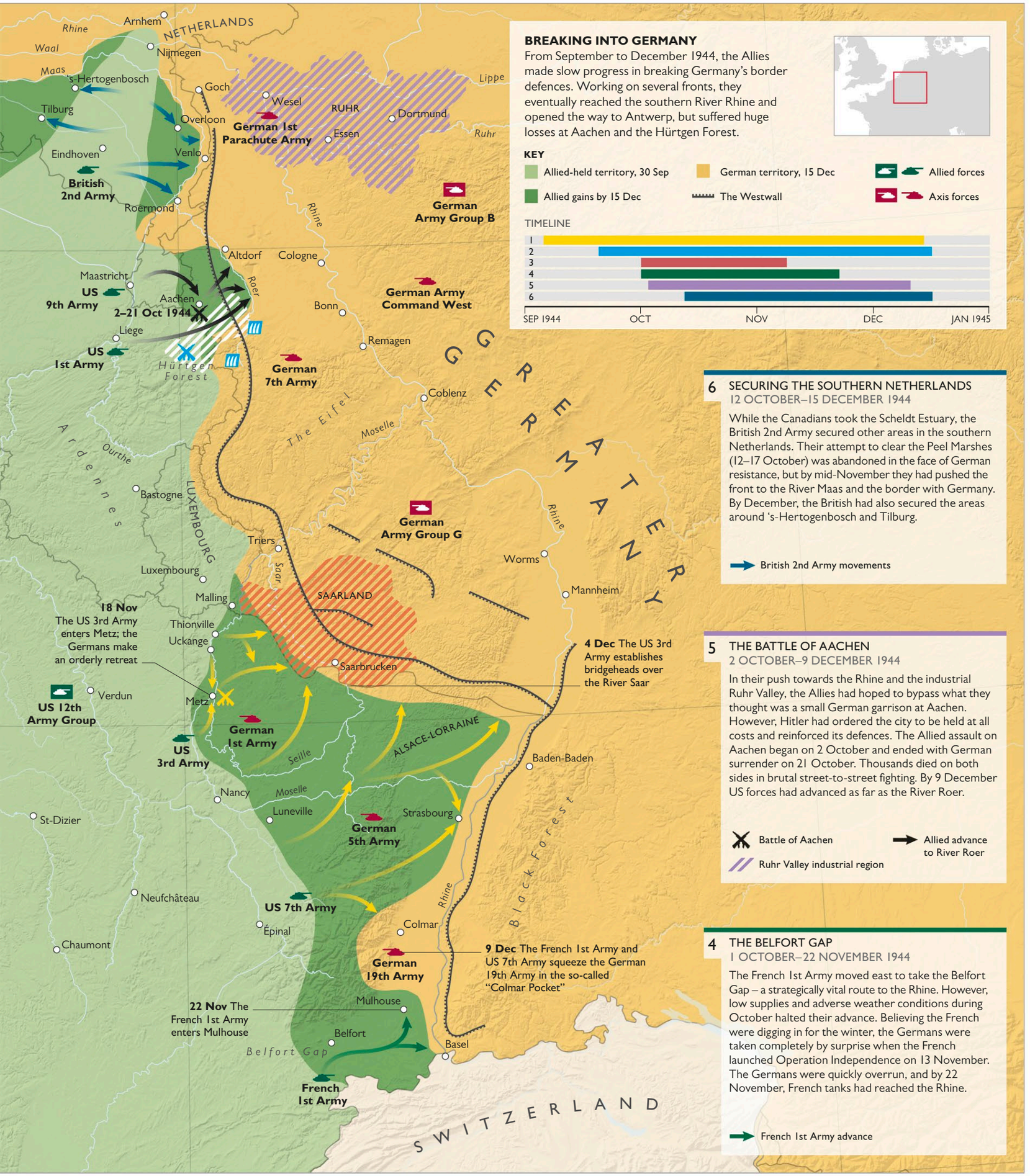
The US 7th Army and French 1st Army met with success on the southern end of the front, advancing towards the German industrial region of the Saarland and reducing the Germans in eastern France to a small pocket around Colmar; and the Canadians and British succeeded in bringing Antwerp back into operation. However, the Allies' aim to reach the Ruhr Valley, Germany's most economically important region, was hampered when the US 1st Army was defeated and suffered more than 33,000 casualties in a long battle in the Hürtgen Forest.

"In Hürtgen they just froze up hard; and it was so cold they froze up with ruddy faces."

ERNEST HEMINGWAY, *ACROSS THE RIVER AND INTO THE TREES*, 1950

▷ **Fallen bunker**
This bunker on Germany's Westwall defensive line has been destroyed by Allied armour-piercing weapons. In 1944, Hitler ordered a large-scale reinforcement of the line, but the bunkers became vulnerable to newly-developed Allied weaponry.




BREAKING INTO GERMANY
From September to December 1944, the Allies made slow progress in breaking Germany's border defences. Working on several fronts, they eventually reached the southern River Rhine and opened the way to Antwerp, but suffered huge losses at Aachen and the Hürtgen Forest.
KEY
Allied-held territory, 30 Sep
Allied gains by 15 Dec
German territory, 15 Dec
The Westwall
Allied forces
Axis forces
TIMELINE
1
2
3
4
5
6
SEP 1944
OCT
NOV
DEC
JAN 1945
6 SECURING THE SOUTHERN NETHERLANDS
12 OCTOBER–15 DECEMBER 1944
While the Canadians took the Scheldt Estuary, the British 2nd Army secured other areas in the southern Netherlands. Their attempt to clear the Peel Marshes (12–17 October) was abandoned in the face of German resistance, but by mid-November they had pushed the front to the River Maas and the border with Germany. By December, the British had also secured the areas around 's-Hertogenbosch and Tilburg.
British 2nd Army movements
5 THE BATTLE OF AACHEN
2 OCTOBER–9 DECEMBER 1944
In their push towards the Rhine and the industrial Ruhr Valley, the Allies had hoped to bypass what they thought was a small German garrison at Aachen. However, Hitler had ordered the city to be held at all costs and reinforced its defences. The Allied assault on Aachen began on 2 October and ended with German surrender on 21 October. Thousands died on both sides in brutal street-to-street fighting. By 9 December US forces had advanced as far as the River Roer.
Battle of Aachen
Allied advance to River Roer
Ruhr Valley industrial region
4 THE BELFORT GAP
1 OCTOBER–22 NOVEMBER 1944
The French 1st Army moved east to take the Belfort Gap – a strategically vital route to the Rhine. However, low supplies and adverse weather conditions during October halted their advance. Believing the French were digging in for the winter, the Germans were taken completely by surprise when the French launched Operation Independence on 13 November. The Germans were quickly overrun, and by 22 November, French tanks had reached the Rhine.
French 1st Army advance
NETHERLANDS
Arnhem
Nijmegen
Rhine
Waal
Maas
's-Hertogenbosch
Tilburg
Eindhoven
Goch
Overloon
Venlo
Roermond
Wesel
RUHR
Dortmund
Essen
Lippe
Ruhr
German 1st Parachute Army
British 2nd Army
German Army Group B
Altdorf
Cologne
Maastricht
US 9th Army
Aachen
2–21 Oct 1944
Roer
Bonn
German Army Command West
Liege
US 1st Army
Hürtgen Forest
Remagen
German 7th Army
GERMANY
Coblenz
The Eifel
Moselle
Ardennes
Ourthe
Bastogne
LUXEMBOURG
German Army Group G
Triers
Saar
Worms
Luxembourg
Malling
SAARLAND
Mannheim
18 Nov The US 3rd Army enters Metz; the Germans make an orderly retreat
Thionville
Uckange
Saarbrucken
4 Dec The US 3rd Army establishes bridgeheads over the River Saar
Verdun
Metz
US 12th Army Group
German 1st Army
US 3rd Army
Seille
ALSACE-LORRAINE
Baden-Baden
Nancy
Moselle
Luneville
Strasbourg
St-Dizier
German 5th Army
Black Forest
Neufchâteau
US 7th Army
Épinal
Colmar
Chaumont
9 Dec The French 1st Army and US 7th Army squeeze the German 19th Army in the so-called "Colmar Pocket"
German 19th Army
Mulhouse
22 Nov The French 1st Army enters Mulhouse
Belfort
Basel
Belfort Gap
French 1st Army
SWITZERLAND

1 THE BRITISH ARRIVE IN YUGOSLAVIA
JANUARY–JUNE 1944

After initially supporting the Chetniks, the British decided to back Tito in July 1943. In January 1944, they landed troops on the Yugoslav island of Vis, previously held by Italy, to prevent it falling into German hands. They set up a joint base with the Yugoslav Partisans and raided other German-held islands. They also attacked from southern Italy, but a controversial carpet-bombing campaign at Easter 1944 killed more than 1,000 civilians and left most German military targets intact.

- Allied/Partisan joint base
- Allied/Partisan raids on Adriatic islands
- Allied air bases in southern Italy
- Allied Easter bombing raids 16–17 Apr 1944

2 GERMANY STRIKES AT TITO
APRIL–JUNE 1944

In April 1944, the Germans launched Operation Rösselsprung, their sixth major offensive against partisans since 1941. German airborne and ground troops attacked the town of Drvar, headquarters of the Yugoslav Partisans; they took the town after door-to-door fighting, but suffered heavy losses in a Partisan counter-attack. Tito escaped unharmed, and later re-established headquarters on Vis.

- German attack on Drvar

THE BALKANS LIBERATED

The Allies' arrival in the Balkans in 1944 helped partisan groups to liberate Yugoslavia and Greece, but enmity between Communists, Republicans, and Royalists threatened Greece's peace.

KEY

- Greece
- Yugoslavia
- Croatia (German puppet state)
- Serbia (under German occupation)
- Montenegro (Italian protectorate)

TIMELINE

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

JAN 1944 APR JUL OCT JAN 1945 APR JUL

3 THE BELGRADE OFFENSIVE
1 SEPTEMBER–20 OCTOBER 1944

In a bid to liberate the Yugoslav capital Belgrade, Tito and the Western Allies cut German lines of communication by bombing roads and railways in Operation Ratweek. However, suspicious of British intentions and needing to reach an understanding with the fast-approaching Soviets, Tito met with Stalin. Alongside the Soviet Army and the Bulgarian People's Army, the Yugoslav Partisans finally freed Belgrade on 20 October.

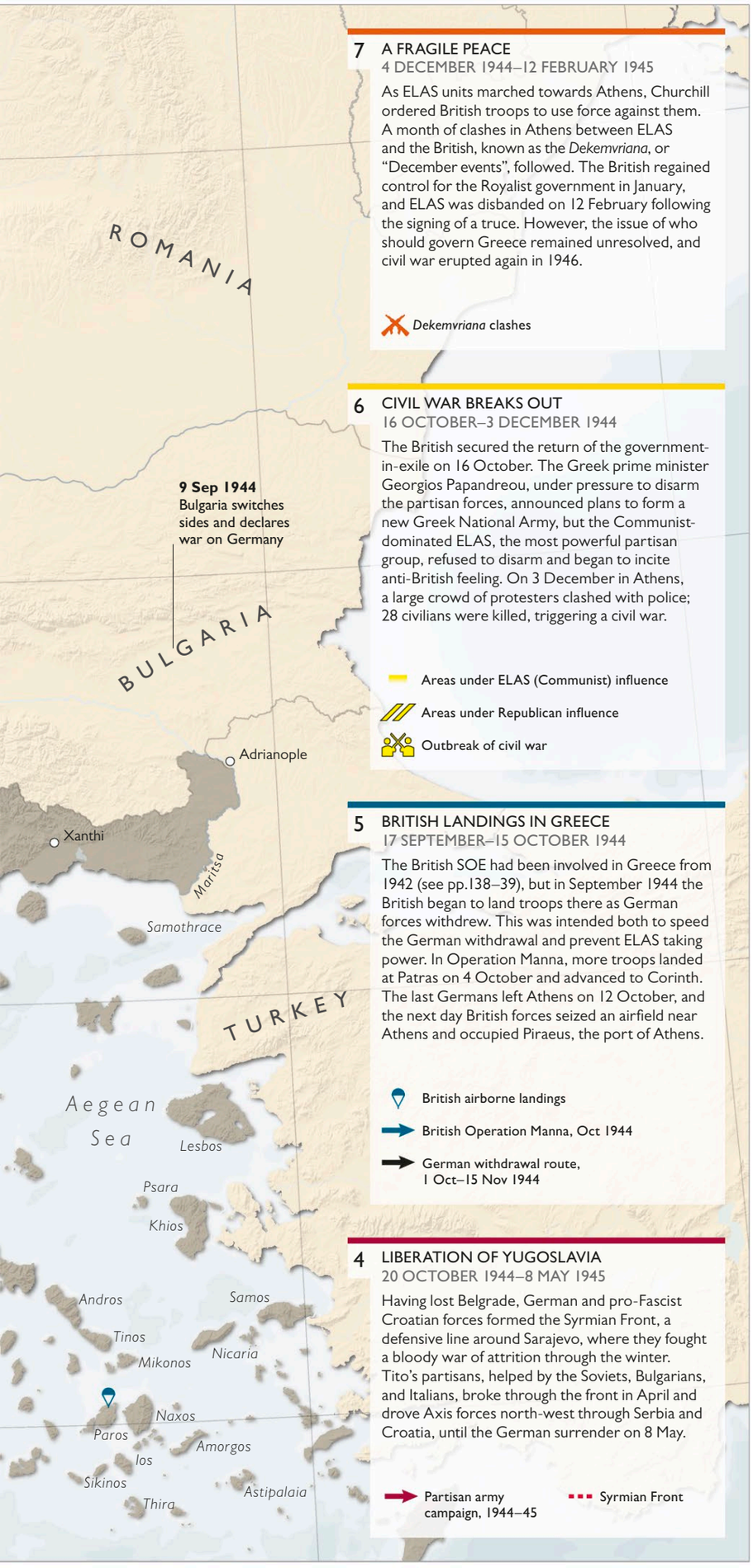
- Soviet army movements
- Bulgarian army movements
- Partisan army movements
- Major Operation Ratweek bombing

GREECE AND YUGOSLAVIA

After Axis armies occupied Greece and Yugoslavia in 1941, partisan factions fought fiercely against them, but also against each other. As Axis control over the Balkans crumbled from 1943 onwards, the Allies became embroiled in the complex politics of the region.

Following the invasion of the Balkans (see pp.80–81), Italy occupied most of Greece, while Yugoslavia – now divided into three states and with its remaining land annexed by its neighbours – was dominated by Germany. After Italy surrendered in September 1943 (see pp.164–65), the Germans occupied the whole region, but the approach of the Soviet Army in September 1944 (see pp.182–83) threatened to encircle them and they withdrew. At the same time, Churchill and Stalin agreed that Britain would have a free hand in Greece, while the USSR would have influence over the other Balkan nations.

In both countries, resistance to the occupying forces formed under competing groups. In Yugoslavia, Colonel Draža Mihailović led the Royalist Chetniks, and Josip Broz, known as Tito, led the Communist Yugoslav Partisans. By 1943, it was clear that Tito was more effective against the Germans, and when the Chetniks began collaborating with the Nazis against the Communists, Tito won Allied support. In Greece, Communist and Republican partisan groups shared mutual dislike of the British-supported Royalist government-in-exile. As liberation drew nearer, the British were alarmed by the increasing power of the Communist-dominated partisan group EAM and its armed wing, ELAS. Their attempts to broker a Greek government that would bring all factions together tipped into a civil war.



△ **Greek partisans on the move**
A line of partisans marches to join Allied forces in Greece in October 1944. Partisan forces in Greece and Yugoslavia offered a serious challenge to German troops, keeping them from joining Axis campaigns elsewhere.

△ **Rosie the Riveter**
The name "Rosie the Riveter" was coined for American women working in heavy industry during World War II. This US propaganda poster exploits the stereotype to encourage the national effort for victory.

WAR AGAINST JAPAN

In 1943–44, the Japanese ground forces suffered a succession of defeats against the US, which had the advantages of a larger population and greater industrial capacity. The once-proud Imperial Japanese Navy was almost totally destroyed.

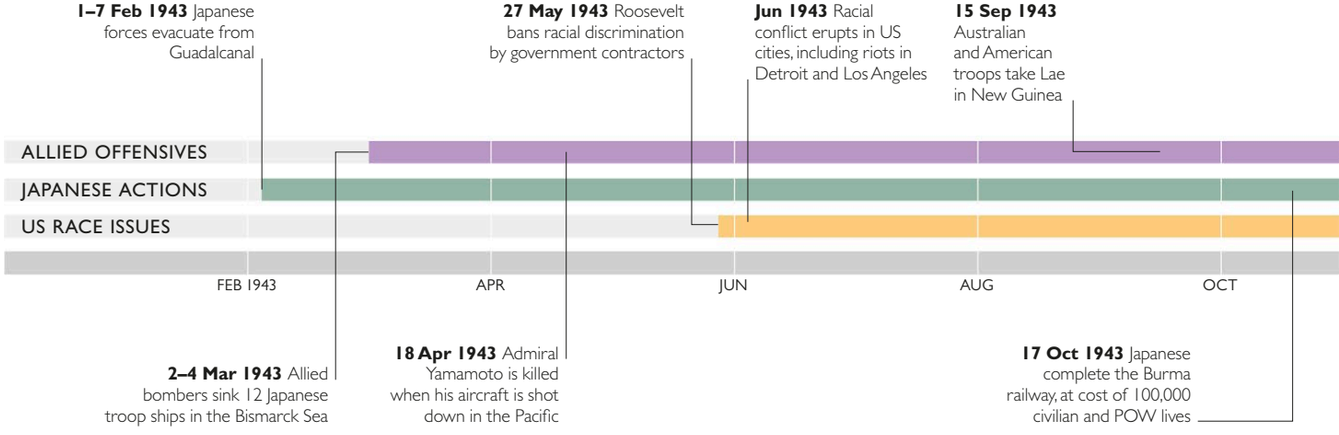
The feat of organization involved in the US's massive expansion in the production of arms, ships, and aircraft from 1942 onwards was extraordinary. Business, the armed forces, and federal bureaucracy cooperated effectively to develop and manufacture the hardware needed to win the war. With US government spending quadrupling between 1941 and 1944, the unemployment of the Depression years was replaced by labour shortages. This had notable effects on American society. Women took jobs in heavy industry, and African Americans from the rural Deep South migrated to work in California and in northern cities – a population shift that provoked race riots in Detroit in summer 1943. The Roosevelt administration made tentative progress with desegregation of employment, but the US armed forces remained racially segregated.

Japan could not match the US's industrial output, nor the quality of its weapons. Despite the forced labour of Javanese, Korean, Chinese, and Allied prisoners of war, Japan was unable to fulfil its military and civilian manpower needs.

▷ **Amphibious landing**
US Marines go ashore on New Britain island, New Guinea, in December 1943. The use of landing craft and amphibious vehicles was a Marine speciality.

THE FIGHT FOR SUPREMACY

American "island-hopping" across the Pacific began in November 1943 at the Gilbert Islands and reached the Marianas in July 1944. The US offensive in the south-west Pacific led up to landings in the Philippines in October 1944, while the defeat of Japan's naval force left the Japanese exposed to potential invasion of their mainland. Meanwhile, fighting between Japan and China reached a new intensity, and the British advanced into Japanese-occupied Burma after repelling an attack on India.



◁ **Operations in China**
Japanese soldiers pose on their Type 97 medium tank during the 1944 Ichi-go offensive in China. The operation showed the unbroken fighting strength of the Japanese army.

US strategy

US command in the Pacific War was divided between General Douglas MacArthur in the south-west Pacific sector, where the US Army predominated, and Admiral Chester Nimitz in the central and South Pacific, where the US Marines and the US Navy led the charge. Nimitz's island-hopping strategy across the central Pacific towards Japan proved most decisive. The Marines employed a range of new amphibious equipment in a series of landings on Japanese-held islands, which fell one by one, despite a defence-to-the-death mounted by their outnumbered garrisons. When the Japanese navy tried to intervene against the US landings on the Pacific island of Saipan in June 1944, it found that its carrier aircraft and pilots had ceased to be any match for their American opponents.

The Philippines campaign

Meanwhile, MacArthur's forces sidestepped Japanese strongpoints, such as Rabaul in New Guinea, to begin the reconquest of the Philippines. The naval battle of Leyte Gulf, fought during the Philippine landings in October 1944, destroyed the Japanese Imperial Navy as an effective fighting force.

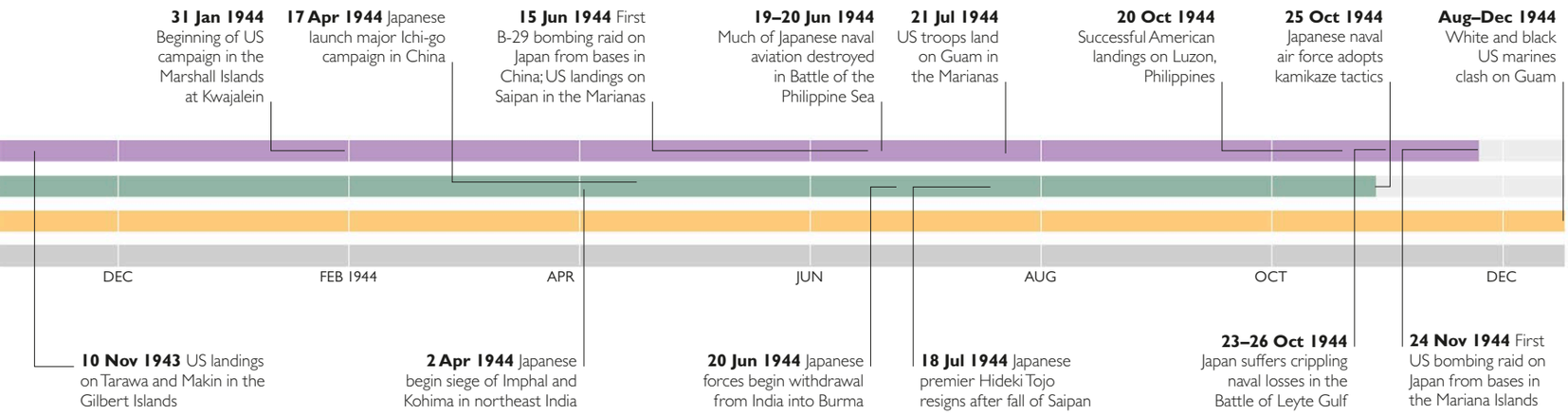
Fighting spirit

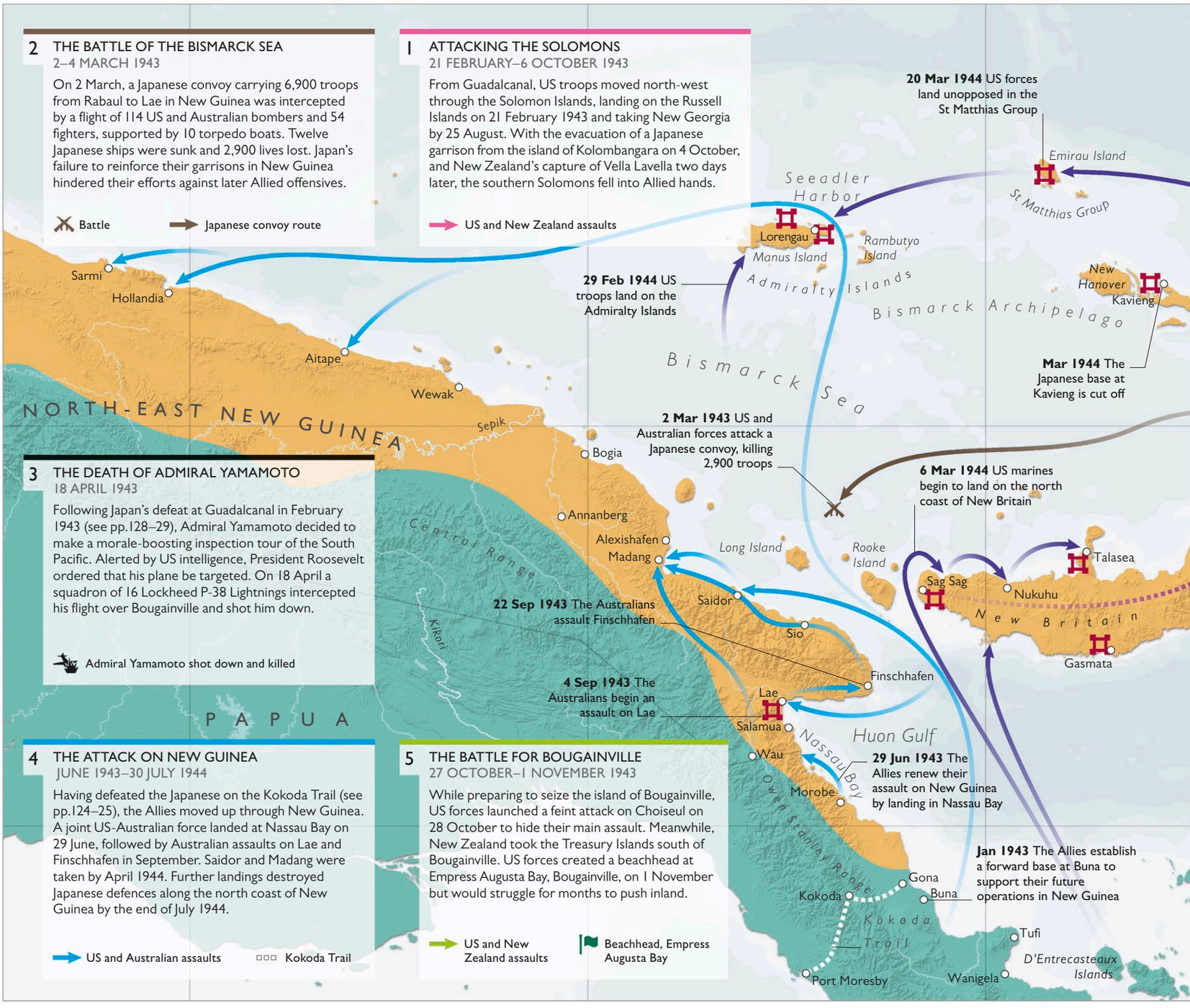
Despite Japan's inferior military resources, there was no decline in its martial spirit. In spring 1944, Japanese troops from Burma invaded British India, and they mustered half a million men for one of the largest offensives of its long war in China. On the Pacific islands, US casualties mounted, and on Saipan the Americans were shocked by the mass suicide of Japanese civilians and soldiers, who chose death over surrender. By autumn 1944, the US conquest of the Mariana Islands provided a Pacific base for America's new B-29 bombers to attack the Japanese mainland, and the balance of forces in favour of the US and its allies had become overwhelming.

▽ **Battle of Leyte Gulf**
Ships of the US Navy's Fast Carrier Task Force 38 sail in line astern at the battle of Leyte Gulf in October 1944. Deploying 36 carriers of all types, the US managed to regain the Philippines.

"I have returned. By the grace of Almighty God our forces stand again on Philippine soil…"

GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR, SPEECH AT LEYTE, PHILIPPINES, 17 OCTOBER 1944





OPERATION CARTWHEEL

In early 1943 the Americans drew up a series of plans to challenge the Japanese in the south-west Pacific, known collectively as Operation Cartwheel. The objective was audacious: to advance through the Solomon Islands in the east and along New Guinea in the west in order to encircle and neutralize the major Japanese base at Rabaul in New Britain.

Operation Cartwheel was approved by US president Franklin D. Roosevelt and British prime minister Winston Churchill at the Casablanca Conference in January 1943 (see pp.162–63). Under the overall command of US general Douglas MacArthur, it consisted of 13 separate planned operations, of which 10 were undertaken and three were dropped because they were considered too costly. Cartwheel saw the movement of Allied forces in two large wings – one up the coast of New Guinea, the other up along the Solomon chain. The aim of this pincer action was to encircle Rabaul, a base that supported a large fleet of aircraft and gave the Japanese control of shipping in the south-west Pacific – a major obstacle to the eventual Allied goal of capturing the Philippines.

The Allied campaign aimed to avoid major concentrations of Japanese forces and focused instead on severing their lines of supply and communication, and on establishing airfields and bases to

▷ **Attack on Bougainville**
US troops on Bougainville on the perimeter of the 129th Infantry, 37th Division, advance in the cover of a tank in March 1944.

PRESSURIZING JAPAN
In a series of operations in the south-west Pacific that lasted for two years, US, Australian, and New Zealand forces slowly pushed the Japanese out of the Solomon Islands and New Guinea.

KEY
Japanese bases
Japanese-held territory, 20 Feb 1943
Allied territory, 20 Feb 1943

TIMELINE

7 ENCIRCLING RABAUL
15 DECEMBER 1943–31 MARCH 1944
With the Solomons mostly cleared of Japanese forces, US troops landed on the west of New Britain on 15 December, and took the Admiralty Islands and St Matthias Group by the end of March. The Japanese were now isolated in their bases at Rabaul and at Kavieng on New Ireland as the war moved on around them.

Allied advances
Japanese retreat

6 THE BATTLE OF EMPRESS AUGUSTA BAY
1–2 NOVEMBER 1943
Japanese Cruiser Division 5, which had been sent from Rabaul to stop the US landing at Empress Augusta Bay, was intercepted by American Task Force 39 sailing north from Vella Lavella. Two Japanese ships were sunk and four damaged in the ensuing naval battle; the US Navy had two destroyers and a cruiser damaged.

Battle

New Ireland
Rabaul
Mar 1944 The base at Rabaul is isolated and remains so for the rest of the war
Green Island
Buka Island
Sohano
Bougainville Island
Tenekau
Kieta
Buin
Kara
Empress Augusta Bay
1–2 Nov 1943 The Battle of Empress Augusta Bay sees US ships defeating Japan's Cruiser Division 5 in the last major sea battle of the Solomons campaign
18 Apr 1943 Admiral Yamamoto is shot down and killed in a dogfight over south Bougainville
28 Oct 1943 The Americans launch Operation Blissful, a feint attack against Choiseul
2 Aug 1943 A torpedo boat commanded by Lieutenant John F. Kennedy, future US president, collides with the Japanese destroyer *Amagiri*
Voza
Choiseul
Shortland Island
Treasury Islands
Vella Lavella
27 Oct 1943 New Zealanders take the Treasury Islands in Operation Goodtime
Solomon Islands
Kolombangara
Ghizo
Vila Point
Munda
New Georgia
Vangunu
Rendova
Russell Islands
Santa Isabel
Tulagi
Malaita
Guadalcanal
Woodlark Island
Solomon Sea
PACIFIC OCEAN
23 Sep–4 Oct 1943 The Japanese evacuate their base at Kolombangara
30 Jun 1943 Operation Toenails begins against the New Georgia Islands
21 Feb 1943 Operation Cleanslate begins against the Russell Islands

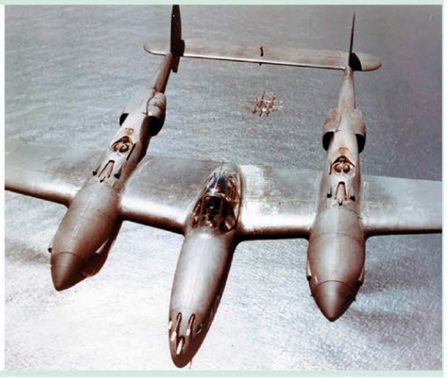
support Allied logistics. Nevertheless, fighting throughout the campaign was intense, with the Japanese resisting all naval landings and fighting rearguard actions on many of the islands.

The Allies disrupted Japanese troop movements during the Battle of the Bismarck Sea in March 1943, and the shooting down of Admiral Yamamoto (see p.124), commander-in-chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet, severely dented Japanese morale. On reaching Rabaul, the Allies – much to General MacArthur's disapproval – opted not to attack in order to avoid unnecessary casualties, and instead surrounded and isolated the base, which remained in Japanese hands until the end of the war.

Cartwheel took more than a year to achieve, but its eventual success removed the Japanese from the south-west Pacific and allowed the Allies to start new campaigns against them in the Pacific islands to the north (see pp.210–11).

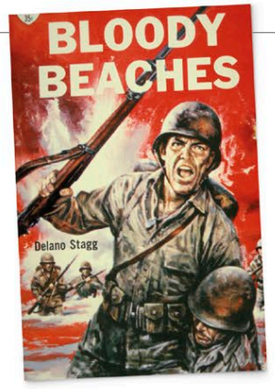
LOCKHEED P-38 LIGHTNING

The Lockheed P-38 Lightning – the aircraft that shot down Japan's Admiral Yamamoto – was a key American fighter aircraft produced in large numbers throughout the war. Used for bombing raids, night fighting, interception, escort, and reconnaissance work, it shot down more Japanese planes than any other aircraft during World War II. Its twin engines mounted on pods allowed it to carry heavier armaments than its competitors.



US AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE

In the Pacific, the campaigns were often fought over far-flung archipelagos. As a result, the US Marine Corps developed particular expertise in amphibious landings, which drove the Japanese from their island strongholds.



△ **War tales**
The Marine campaigns in the Pacific sparked a lively industry in books relating their exploits, such as this 1961 publication.

Following the Japanese attack on the US naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, in December 1941, the US joined World War II. It was clear from the start that the US Marine Corps – established during the American Revolutionary War as the navy's land-fighting force – would be necessary to defend and recapture a series of island groups in the Pacific from the Japanese.

Marines on board

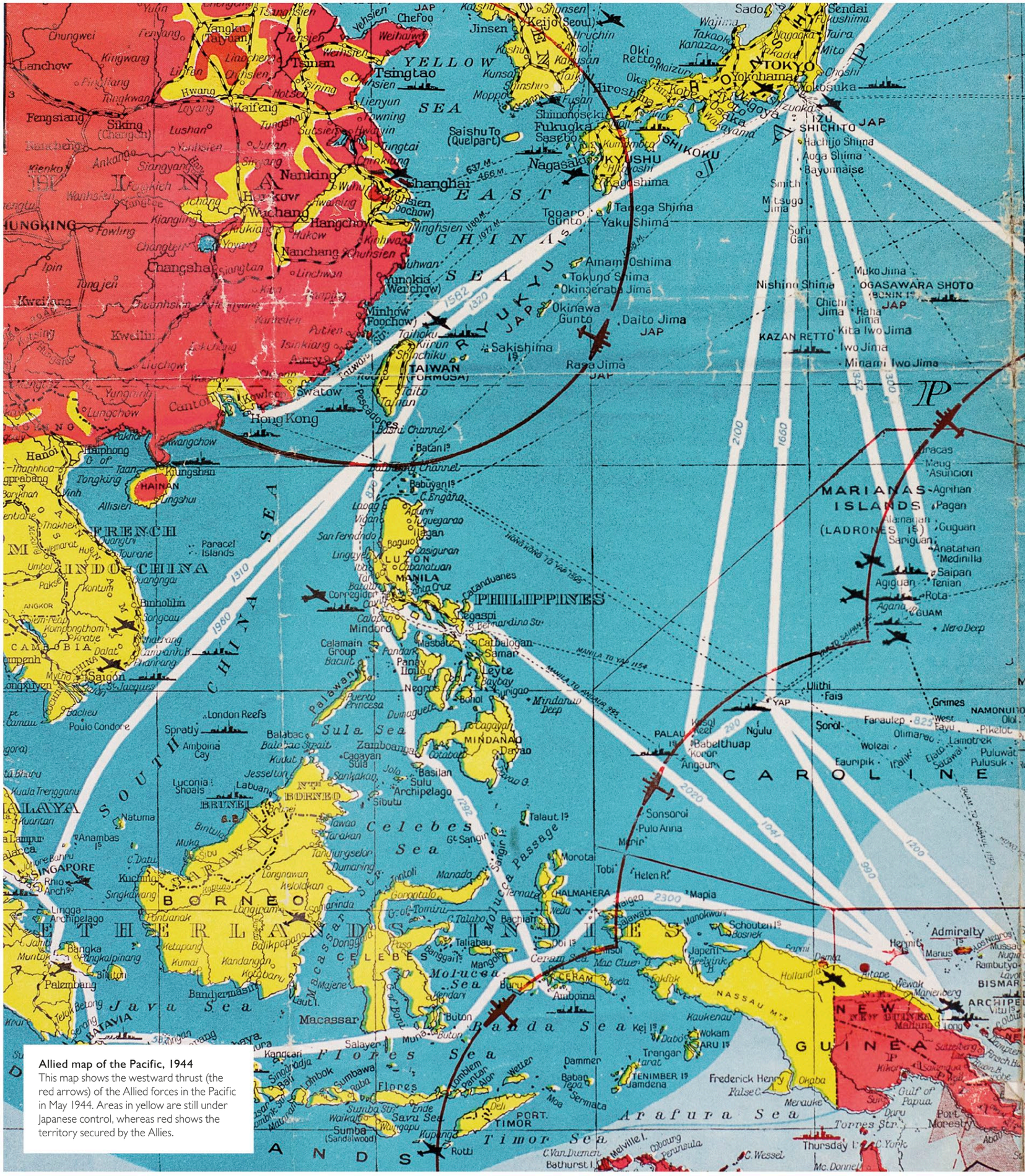
Although the Marines were involved in defensive campaigns early in the war, they came into their own in August 1942, when their special forces Raider battalions mounted highly effective raids during the invasion of Guadalcanal (see pp.128–29). In the island-hopping campaigns through the Marshall and Gilbert islands in 1943 (see pp.210–11), the Marines developed true amphibious assault capability, landing tanks and other assault vehicles. By 1945, the Marine Corps had expanded to six divisions, including parachute battalions and defence garrison battalions. They took part in most major operations, including the hard-fought battles for the Japanese islands of Iwo Jima (see pp.250–51) and Okinawa (see pp.254–55), where fierce Japanese resistance cost the Marines 3,440 dead and 15,487 wounded.

SPECIALIZED LANDING CRAFT

From mid-1943, the Marines used tank landing ships, with lowerable bow doors, to deliver tanks and other vehicles directly to beaches. Among the vehicles they carried was the Weasel – an armoured troop carrier, which sometimes carried weapons and had tracks to prevent it becoming bogged down in wet sand.

An M29C Weasel

Beach landing
Marines wade ashore, their rifles held high above the water, at Cape Gloucester, on the island of New Britain, Papua New Guinea, in December 1943. The aim of the operation was to capture a Japanese airfield that dominated the island.


YELLOW SEA
EAST CHINA SEA
SOUTH CHINA SEA
Celebes Sea
Java Sea
Banda Sea
Flores Sea
Timor Sea
Arafura Sea
Moluccas Sea
Sula Sea
Molucca Passage
Torres Str.
Gulf of Papua
Tokyo
Yokohama
Kobe
Osaka
Nagoya
Hiroshima
Fukuoka
Nagasaki
Shanghai
Nanking
Tsingtao
Hong Kong
Manila
Saigon
Singapore
Batavia
Palembang
Bandjermasin
Macassar
Rabaul
Port Moresby
Darwin
Thursday I.
Rotti
Sumba
Flores
Timor
Ceram
Amboina
Halmahera
Mindanao
Luzon
Leyte
Palau
Yap
Saipan
Guam
Iwo Jima
Chichi Jima
Minami Iwo Jima
Okinawa
Formosa
Hainan
Paracel Islands
Spratly
London Reefs
Bataan I.
Corregidor
Mindoro
Negros
Cebu
Bohol
Mindanao Deep
Nero Deep
Marianas Islands
Ulithi
Fais
Ngulu
Sonsorol
Pulo Anna
Morotai
Tobi
Helen R.
Mapia
Schouten Is.
Admiralty
Hermit Is.
Manus
Bismarck Archipelago
New Guinea
Frederick Henry
Merauke
Port Moresby
Thursday I.
C. York
C. Wessel
Melville I.
Bathurst I.
C. Van Diemen
Timor Sea
Sumba
Savu Sea
Ende
Waikabubak
Waingapu
Kupang
Dili
Tanimbar Is.
Aru Is.
Kei Is.
Tanimbar Is.
Jamdena
Wokam
Dobo
Kaukenau
Babar
Sermata
Moa
Wetar
Alor
Lombok
Sumbawa
Bali
Singaraja
Kandari
Buton
Muna
Salayer
Kendari
Manado
Gorontalo
Tolitoli
Balikpapan
Tarakan
Tawao
Sibu
Kuching
Pontianak
Bangka
Pangkalpinang
Billiton
Riau Is.
Anambas Is.
Natuna
Kuantan
Kuala Trengganu
Kuala Lumpur
Malacca
Penang
Rangoon
Mandalay
Lashio
Kunming
Chungking
Chengtu
Sian
Lanchow
Hankow
Changsha
Kweiyang
Kweilin
Nanchang
Hangchow
Foochow
Swatow
Canton
Kowloon
Hanoi
Haiphong
Vinh
Tonkin
Hue
Saigon
Phnom Penh
Angkor
Bangkok

ISLAND-HOPPING IN THE PACIFIC

In autumn 1943, the US Navy and Marines initiated a drive across the central Pacific towards the Marianas. Advancing island by island, they took the war ever closer to the Japanese home islands, but at a heavy cost in lives.

Nearly two years after entering the war, the Japanese still held most of the far-flung defensive perimeter they had established in the Pacific (see pp.106–107), which stretched as far as the remote Gilbert and Marshall Islands (right-hand edge of the map). An American fightback in these islands was initially delayed by a lack of naval resources, but by November 1943, US Admiral Chester Nimitz was ready to take the offensive. Operation Cartwheel (see pp.206–207) was already under way in the Solomon Islands and New Guinea (bottom right on the map). Nimitz's first targets were Tarawa and Makin, tiny coral atolls in the Gilbert Islands. He was able to deploy a fleet of 17 aircraft carriers and 12 battleships – enough to prevent any major intervention by the Imperial Japanese Navy. The assault force possessed an array of landing craft and amphibious vehicles developed for Pacific operations.

Fierce defence

Tarawa was defended by fewer than 3,000 Japanese soldiers, but their commander, Rear Admiral Keiji Shibazaki, had strengthened the atoll's defences. It took 18,000 US Marines four days to seize Tarawa, at a cost of over 1,000 dead and 2,000 wounded. The Japanese fought suicidally to the end; only 17 of the island's defenders survived. Another 66 US Army soldiers were killed in the simultaneous assault on Makin Atoll, while the navy lost 644 men when an escort carrier was sunk by a Japanese submarine. The scale of the casualties in taking such relatively minor objectives was a shock to the Americans.

The next targets were the Marshall Islands, which had been a Japanese mandate since 1920. The main fighting occurred at Eniwetok Atoll and Kwajalein Atoll. The Americans had learned lessons from Tarawa, but still suffered over 1,000 casualties. Further west, the major Japanese naval base at Truk Lagoon in the Caroline Islands was devastated by US aircraft. Japan's defensive perimeter was disintegrating and the path to the Mariana Islands (see pp.212–13) was opening up – with the eventual US aim of closing in on Japan itself.

▷ **Japanese prayer flag**
Japanese soldiers in World War II sometimes wore or carried flags inscribed with prayers from their loved ones to bring them luck.

1 ACTION ON SAIPAN
15 JUNE–9 JULY 1944

After landing on the west coast of Saipan on 15 June, US forces quickly took over the rest of the island, pinning the Japanese in the far south by 27 June. A Japanese counter-attack on 7 July failed to dislodge the US forces, and the Japanese surrendered on 9 July. One group of Japanese soldiers, however, continued to fight on until 1 December 1945. The US lost 3,426 men, and the Japanese around 29,000; 22,000 Saipan civilians were killed along with around 7,000 Japanese civilians resident on the island.

Battle of Saipan

2 PREPARING FOR BATTLE
15–19 JUNE 1944

As soon as the US marines landed on Saipan on 15 June, the Japanese Mobile Fleet under the command of Admiral Jisaburō Ozawa sailed east to give battle. The Japanese fleet was outnumbered: it consisted of 27 main ships, including five aircraft carriers, and 28 destroyers, against the US's seven aircraft carriers, 43 main ships, and 69 destroyers. The Japanese ships carried a total of 473 aircraft against the US's 956.

3 BATTLE OF THE PHILIPPINE SEA COMMENCES
19 JUNE 1944

On the opening day of the sea battle, four major Japanese air raids against US Task Force 58 off the Marianas were intercepted, with the loss of 200 Japanese aircraft. Two Japanese carriers were sunk by submarines, and by the end of the day more than 300 Japanese aircraft were lost in what one US pilot called "an old-time turkey shoot". US losses amounted to 30 aircraft and slight damage to one battleship.

Japanese air attacks
US air attacks
Aerial battles
Japanese ships sunk

To Okinawa

20 Jun The Japanese carrier *Hiyō* and two oil tankers are sunk

21 Jun Task Force 58 abandons its chase of the Japanese and returns to Saipan

20 Jun Task Force 58 pursues the retreating Japanese fleet

4:25 pm 20 Jun US carriers launch an air strike on the Japanese fleet

Japanese Mobile Fleet

Philippine Sea

8:30 am 19 Jun The Japanese launch the first of four major air raids

9:10 am 19 Jun The Japanese flagship carrier *Taihō* is torpedoed by a US submarine

Raid 1
Raid 2
Raid 3a
Raid 4
Raid 3b
Japanese Mobile Fleet

19 Jun The Japanese carrier *Shōkaku* is attacked and later sinks

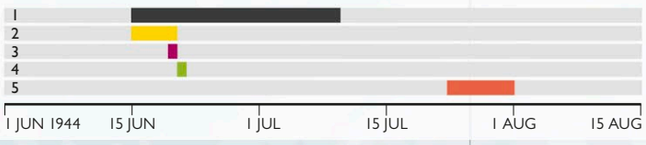
CRUCIAL PACIFIC BATTLES

In the summer of 1944, the Americans fought a series of major battles in the central Pacific, gaining the Mariana Islands, regaining their own colony of Guam, and heavily defeating the Japanese carrier fleet in the Philippine Sea.

KEY

Japanese airfields
Japanese fleet
Japanese territory
US invasion of Marianas, 15 Jun–10 Aug
US fleet

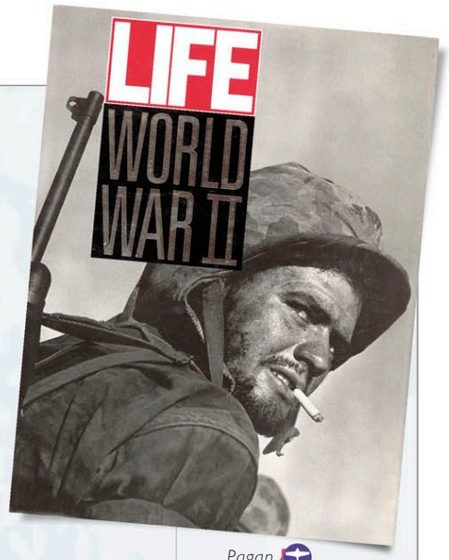
TIMELINE



5 THE BATTLE FOR TINIAN
24 JULY–1 AUGUST 1944

The US naval bombardment of Tinian started on 16 July, and US forces landed on the island on 24 July in the north-west, a feint attack in the south having diverted the Japanese. The island was taken by 1 August, although Japanese resistance continued until September 1945. Japanese losses were high, with 5,542 soldiers killed and up to 4,000 Japanese civilian deaths, including many by suicide.

Battle of Tinian



▷ **Alert soldier**
Life magazine photographer W. Eugene Smith's iconic photo of US Army Sergeant Angelo Klonis was taken on Saipan during the fight to take the island from the Japanese.

BATTLE FOR THE MARIANAS

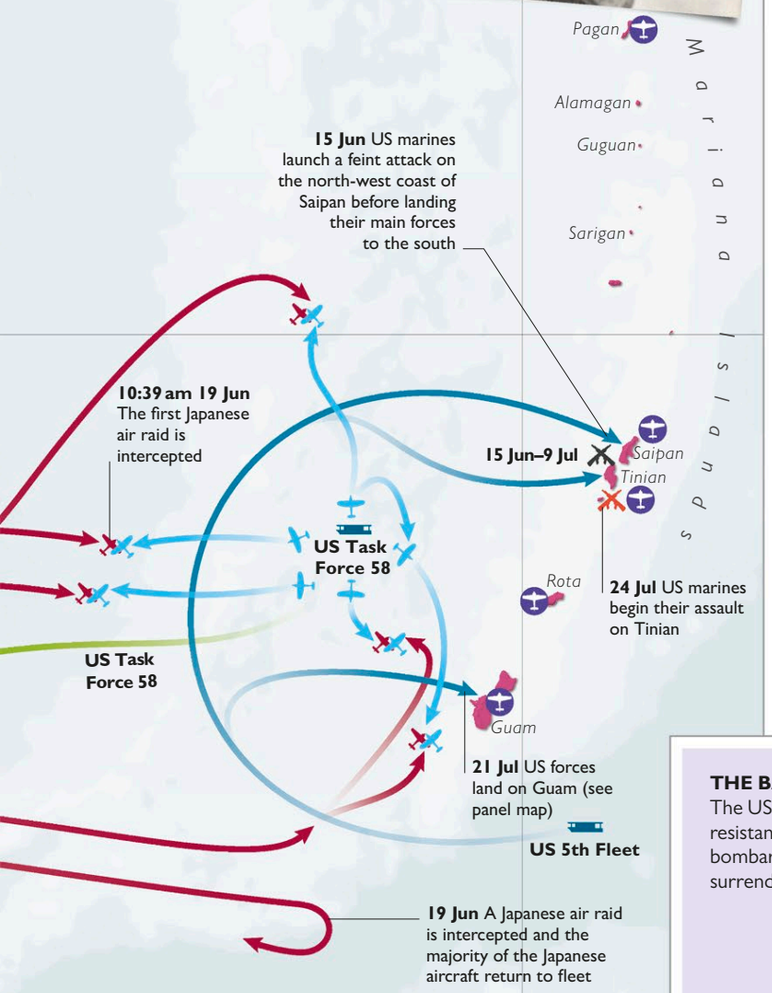
In June 1944, the greatest carrier battle of the war took place in the central Pacific in the Battle of the Philippine Sea. The Japanese were roundly defeated by the US Navy, losing the bulk of their carrier fleet and control of the strategically important Marianas. The US moved within striking distance of the Japanese home islands.

By February 1944, the Americans had secured the Gilbert and the Marshall Islands (see pp.210–11), and destroyed the Japanese base on Truk Lagoon in the Caroline Islands. The next US objective was to capture the Mariana Islands, notably the main Japanese bases on Saipan, Tinian, and Guam. Possession of these islands would provide the US with bases for a bombing campaign against the Japanese mainland and enable them to cut Japan off from the Philippines and its other gains in Southeast Asia – a loss that the Japanese could not allow to go unchallenged.

The US began its offensive in June 1944, with the landing of Marines on Saipan, supported by the 5th Fleet. The Japanese Mobile Fleet under Admiral Jisaburō Ozawa responded by attacking the US Navy, but was defeated by superior US tactics, intelligence, and technology in the two-day Battle of the Philippine Sea.

The Japanese suffered a crippling blow, losing three of their carriers along with 445 carrier-based aircraft and over 200 aircraft from the Marianas. They were left with a vastly reduced number of planes and aircrew with which to equip their remaining carriers.

The two-day naval battle that took place in the Philippine Sea was the last of the five major carrier-versus-carrier battles of the Pacific War, and the largest carrier battle in history.



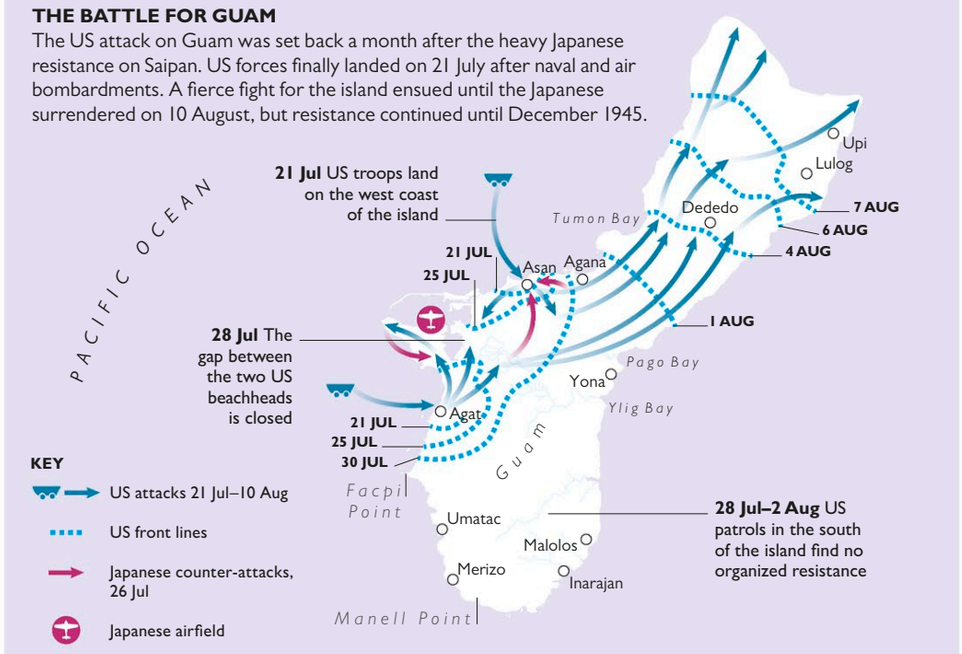
4 THE BATTLE CONCLUDES 20 JUNE 1944

On the second day, the battle moved away from the Marianas west across the Pacific Ocean as the US fleet chased the Japanese. In the afternoon, US aircraft attacked and sank the Japanese carrier *Hiyō* and two oil tankers. Realizing that he had lost the battle, Admiral Ozawa retired his fleet to Okinawa.

KEY
- US search plane range
- US fleet movements
- US air attack
- Japanese fleet movements
- Japanese ships sunk

THE BATTLE FOR GUAM

The US attack on Guam was set back a month after the heavy Japanese resistance on Saipan. US forces finally landed on 21 July after naval and air bombardments. A fierce fight for the island ensued until the Japanese surrendered on 10 August, but resistance continued until December 1945.



THE BATTLE OF LEYTE GULF

On 11 March 1942, US General Douglas MacArthur and his family left the Philippines after his forces were surrounded by Japanese troops. He famously stated that: "I came through and I shall return". On 20 October 1944, he fulfilled that vow when US troops landed on Leyte Island in the eastern Philippines.

After capturing most of the Mariana Islands (see pp.212–13), the US Joint Chiefs of Staff debated what move to make next. Some favoured an attack on Taiwan – part of the Japanese Empire – or putting additional resources into the war in China, but General MacArthur successfully championed an attack on the Philippines. His personal affront was to be avenged.

US forces landed at Leyte Gulf in the Philippines on 20 October, a move that caused the Japanese to summon much of their remaining navy to fend off the invasion. Allied fleets met the Japanese fleet in a series of engagements around the Philippines over the next three days. Cumulatively, these engagements constituted the largest naval battle of the war. They involved 70 Japanese warships and 210 American and Australian vessels, and resulted in the shattering of Japanese sea power. The Japanese lost 28 ships and more than 300 aircraft; moreover, their ability to move oil and other key resources from Southeast Asia to their home islands was destroyed. In comparison, the US suffered far lighter losses of six ships and around 200 aircraft.

The US secured beachheads on Leyte and opened the road for their forces to recover the entire Philippine archipelago (see pp.248–49).

"Leyte was tantamount to the loss of the Philippines… I felt that it was the end."

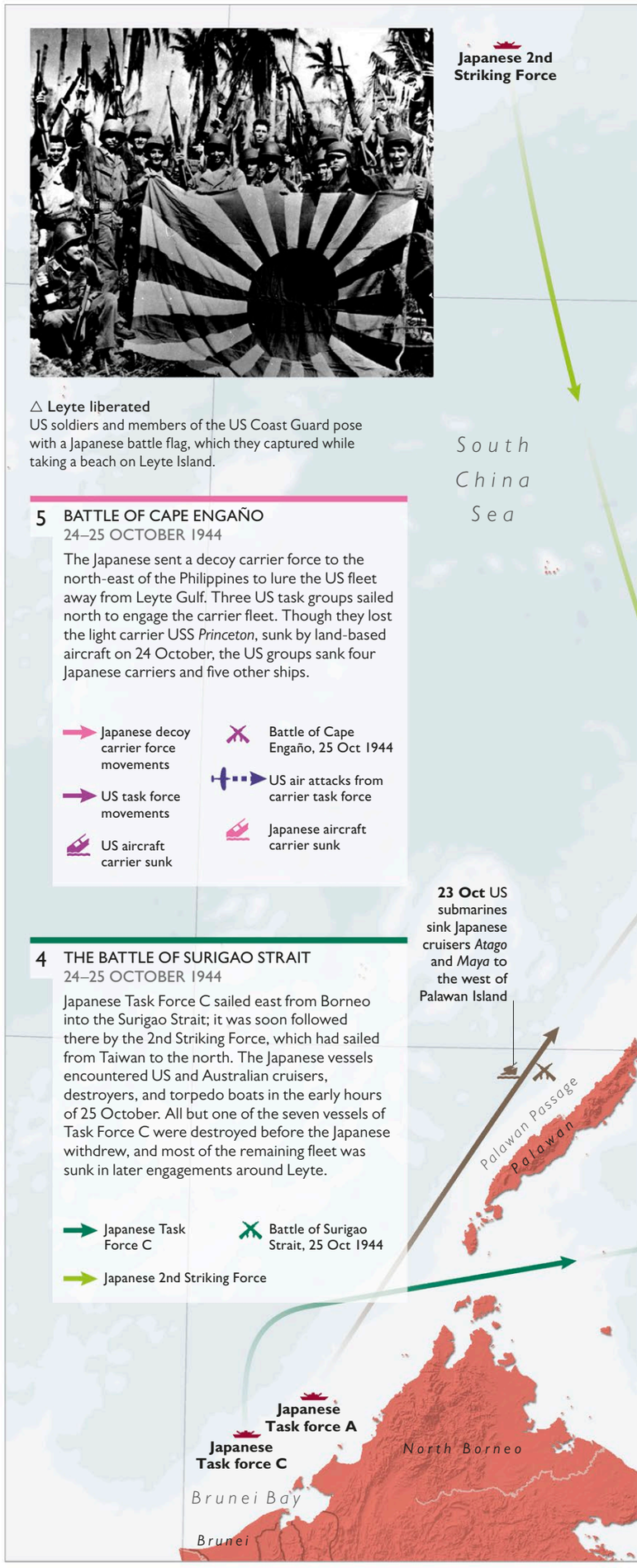
ADMIRAL MITSUMASA YONAI, JAPANESE NAVY MINISTER, 1946

GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR

Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964) was Chief of Staff of the US Army from 1930 to 1935, before retiring from active service in 1937 to become military advisor to the Philippine government. Recalled to active duty in 1941 as commander of the US Army Forces in the Far East, he was forced out of the Philippines by the Japanese in 1942, returning in 1944 and officially accepting Japan's surrender in September 1945. His successes in World War II made him a hugely popular public figure in the US.

General Douglas MacArthur with his famous corn cob pipe

△ **Leyte liberated**
US soldiers and members of the US Coast Guard pose with a Japanese battle flag, which they captured while taking a beach on Leyte Island.



5 BATTLE OF CAPE ENGAÑO
24–25 OCTOBER 1944

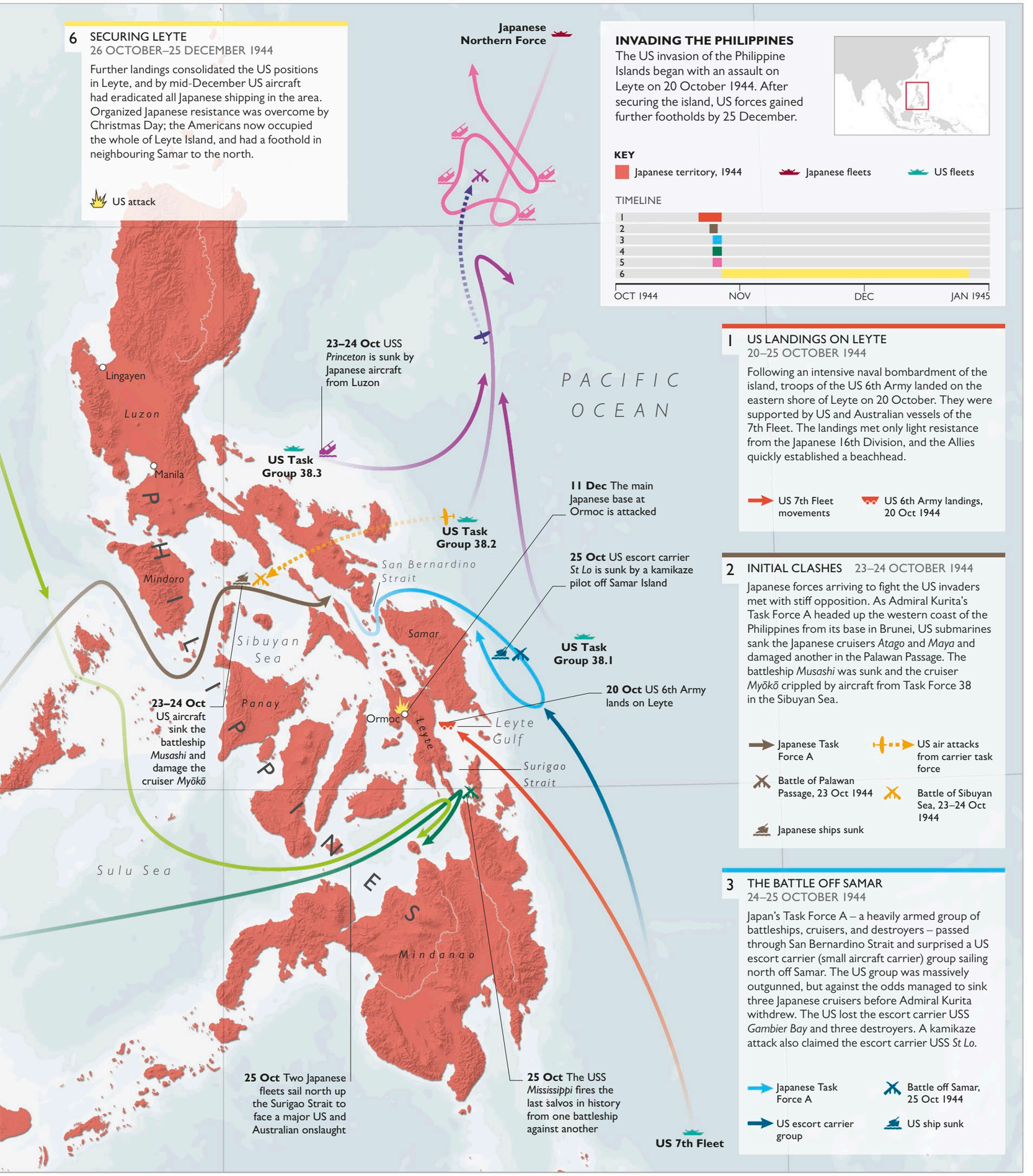
The Japanese sent a decoy carrier force to the north-east of the Philippines to lure the US fleet away from Leyte Gulf. Three US task groups sailed north to engage the carrier fleet. Though they lost the light carrier USS *Princeton*, sunk by land-based aircraft on 24 October, the US groups sank four Japanese carriers and five other ships.

- Japanese decoy carrier force movements
- US task force movements
- US aircraft carrier sunk
- Battle of Cape Engaño, 25 Oct 1944
- US air attacks from carrier task force
- Japanese aircraft carrier sunk

4 THE BATTLE OF SURIGAO STRAIT
24–25 OCTOBER 1944

Japanese Task Force C sailed east from Borneo into the Surigao Strait; it was soon followed there by the 2nd Striking Force, which had sailed from Taiwan to the north. The Japanese vessels encountered US and Australian cruisers, destroyers, and torpedo boats in the early hours of 25 October. All but one of the seven vessels of Task Force C were destroyed before the Japanese withdrew, and most of the remaining fleet was sunk in later engagements around Leyte.

- Japanese Task Force C
- Battle of Surigao Strait, 25 Oct 1944
- Japanese 2nd Striking Force


6 SECURING LEYTE
26 OCTOBER–25 DECEMBER 1944
Further landings consolidated the US positions in Leyte, and by mid-December US aircraft had eradicated all Japanese shipping in the area. Organized Japanese resistance was overcome by Christmas Day; the Americans now occupied the whole of Leyte Island, and had a foothold in neighbouring Samar to the north.
US attack
Japanese Northern Force
INVADING THE PHILIPPINES
The US invasion of the Philippine Islands began with an assault on Leyte on 20 October 1944. After securing the island, US forces gained further footholds by 25 December.
KEY
Japanese territory, 1944
Japanese fleets
US fleets
TIMELINE
1
2
3
4
5
6
OCT 1944
NOV
DEC
JAN 1945
1 US LANDINGS ON LEYTE
20–25 OCTOBER 1944
Following an intensive naval bombardment of the island, troops of the US 6th Army landed on the eastern shore of Leyte on 20 October. They were supported by US and Australian vessels of the 7th Fleet. The landings met only light resistance from the Japanese 16th Division, and the Allies quickly established a beachhead.
US 7th Fleet movements
US 6th Army landings, 20 Oct 1944
2 INITIAL CLASHES 23–24 OCTOBER 1944
Japanese forces arriving to fight the US invaders met with stiff opposition. As Admiral Kurita's Task Force A headed up the western coast of the Philippines from its base in Brunei, US submarines sank the Japanese cruisers Atago and Maya and damaged another in the Palawan Passage. The battleship Musashi was sunk and the cruiser Myōkō crippled by aircraft from Task Force 38 in the Sibuyan Sea.
Japanese Task Force A
US air attacks from carrier task force
Battle of Palawan Passage, 23 Oct 1944
Battle of Sibuyan Sea, 23–24 Oct 1944
Japanese ships sunk
3 THE BATTLE OFF SAMAR
24–25 OCTOBER 1944
Japan's Task Force A – a heavily armed group of battleships, cruisers, and destroyers – passed through San Bernardino Strait and surprised a US escort carrier (small aircraft carrier) group sailing north off Samar. The US group was massively outgunned, but against the odds managed to sink three Japanese cruisers before Admiral Kurita withdrew. The US lost the escort carrier USS Gambier Bay and three destroyers. A kamikaze attack also claimed the escort carrier USS St Lo.
Japanese Task Force A
Battle off Samar, 25 Oct 1944
US escort carrier group
US ship sunk
PACIFIC OCEAN
Lingayen
Luzon
Manila
PHILIPPINES
Mindoro
Sibuyan Sea
Panay
San Bernardino Strait
Samar
Ormoc
Leyte
Leyte Gulf
Surigao Strait
Sulu Sea
Mindanao
US Task Group 38.3
US Task Group 38.2
US Task Group 38.1
US 7th Fleet
23–24 Oct USS Princeton is sunk by Japanese aircraft from Luzon
11 Dec The main Japanese base at Ormoc is attacked
25 Oct US escort carrier St Lo is sunk by a kamikaze pilot off Samar Island
20 Oct US 6th Army lands on Leyte
23–24 Oct US aircraft sink the battleship Musashi and damage the cruiser Myōkō
25 Oct Two Japanese fleets sail north up the Surigao Strait to face a major US and Australian onslaught
25 Oct The USS Mississippi fires the last salvos in history from one battleship against another

KAMIKAZE TACTICS

In 1944, the Japanese military ordered suicide pilots known as kamikaze into action, in a desperate attempt to stem the tide of defeat. Thousands of volunteers enlisted to undertake crash-dive attacks with their planes, prepared to sacrifice their lives for Japan.

△ **Propaganda poster**
Japanese posters such as this one glorified kamikaze missions. Many young Japanese, often students, came forward to volunteer.

Towards the end of 1944, Japan was in a critical situation. The country had suffered catastrophic military defeats, both the navy and air force had lost their offensive capability, and a diminished economy meant resources were limited. The civilian population of Japan was mobilized for defence, but due to lack of funds some were armed only with bamboo spears.

Realizing that conventional bombing methods would not halt the advancing American forces, the Japanese high command attempted to decimate the US fleet by initiating mass suicide attacks. Named after the "divine wind" that, according to Japanese legend, had scattered an invading Mongol fleet in 1274, the kamikaze suicide bombers were the brainchild of Vice-Admiral Onishi Takijuro. Volunteer pilots were instructed to crash-dive planes laden with explosives, torpedoes, and full fuel tanks into Allied warships. The operation, codenamed Floating Chrysanthemum, drew upon the Japanese military tradition of death being more honourable and less shameful than defeat, capture, and surrender.

The first kamikaze attacks were launched against the American fleet on 25 October 1944 at the Battle of Leyte Gulf (see pp.214–15), and the attacks continued until the end of the war. In total, the use of kamikaze strikes resulted in the loss of 34 US ships, and a further 368 US vessels were badly damaged.

THE PILOTS

The average age of kamikazes was between 17 and 20 years old, and some of them had as few as 40 hours of flying experience before they were sent on their final mission. More than 2,500 kamikazes had sacrificed their lives by the end of World War II, and their success rate is estimated at around 19 per cent.

Attack on USS *Bunker Hill*
US aircraft carrier *Bunker Hill* blazes after being attacked by two kamikazes off Okinawa on 11 May 1945. The two planes plunged into the carrier's flight deck, heavily damaging the ship and forcing it to retire for repair.

THE FIGHTBACK IN BURMA

Occupied by Japan in spring 1942, Burma was recaptured by British Empire troops towards the end of the war. The campaign was characterized by tactical innovation and fierce jungle fighting.

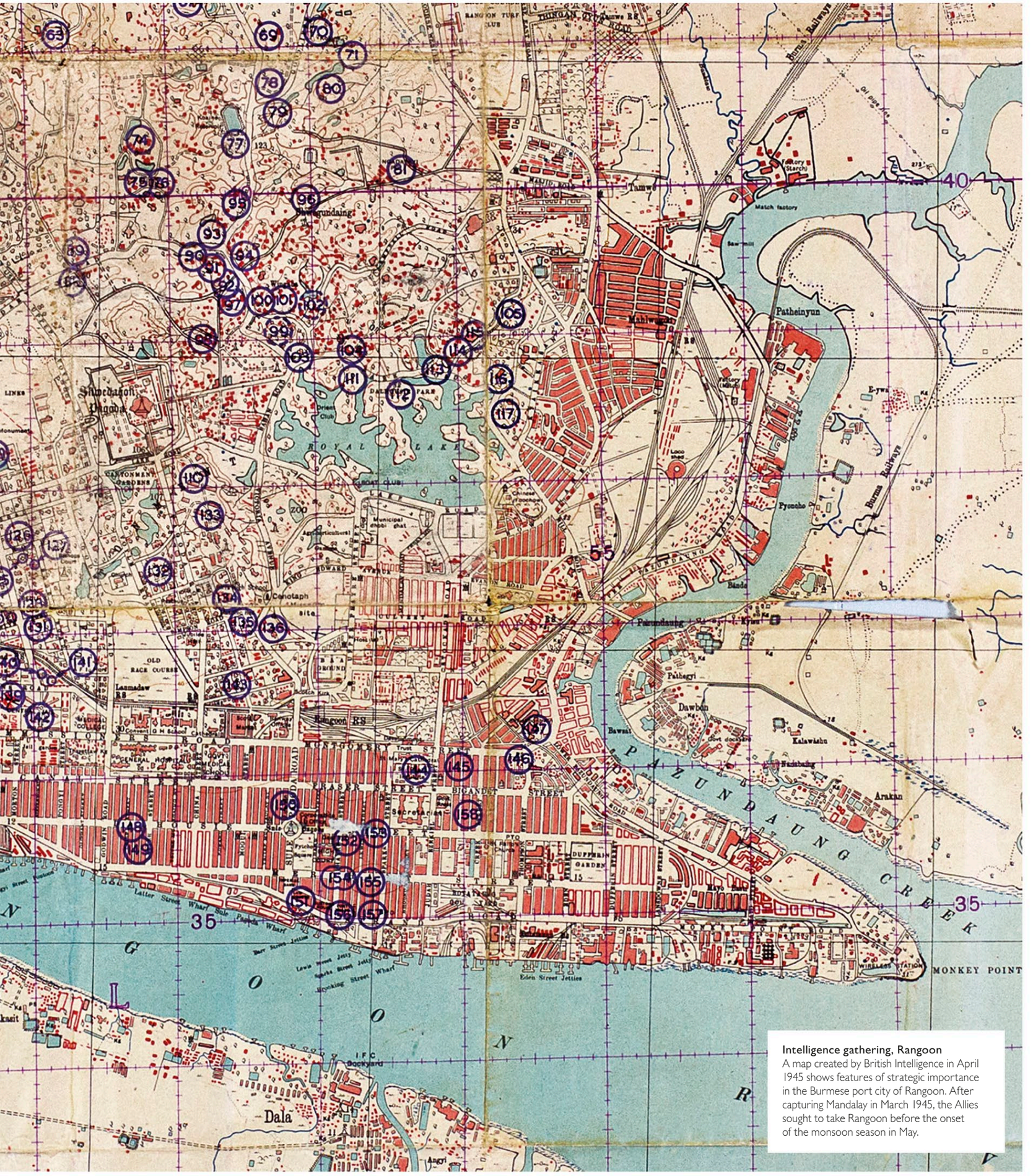
When the Japanese invaded Burma in 1942, they stopped at the border with British India, having achieved their goal to cut the Allied supply route from the port of Rangoon (shown here, right) to Nationalist China. Any attempt to recapture Burma by an advance from north-east India would involve fighting across formidable terrain of mountain and jungle. The difficulty of conducting such an offensive led the Allies to develop Long Range Penetration groups – specially trained infantry dropped into the jungle by parachute or glider. These groups – the British Chindits led by General Orde Wingate, and their American equivalents, Merrill's Marauders, under General Frank Merrill – operated for months behind Japanese lines in 1943–44, carrying out guerrilla attacks on troops and communications.

In response, the Japanese mounted an offensive across the Indian border into Assam. Their 15th Army under General Renya Mutaguchi advanced swiftly northwards in March 1944, surrounding more than 100,000 troops of the British Indian Army at Imphal. They also attacked Kohima on the road north of Imphal, where a garrison of 1,500 men came under siege on 4 April. By the time the undernourished and disease-ridden Japanese troops were forced to withdraw into Burma in July, they had suffered more than 50,000 casualties.

The drive to Rangoon

The failed Assam invasion left the Japanese vulnerable to an Allied counter-offensive. British and Indian forces under General William Slim pressed southwards from Imphal, crossing the Irrawaddy River south of Mandalay in February 1945. Meanwhile, Chinese Nationalist troops cleared the Japanese from north-eastern Burma. After Slim's forces captured Mandalay and the important road junction at Meiktila, they met determined counter-attacks, but the balance of forces had swung against the Japanese. Burmese anti-colonialists, who had welcomed the Japanese in 1942, switched sides, and the Burma National Army joined in the British advance to Rangoon. The British secured the port city in May after amphibious landings.

◁ **Burma patrol**
Allied soldiers search for Japanese soldiers. After May 1945, Japanese troops remained in Burma but their operations were of little significance.



Intelligence gathering, Rangoon
A map created by British Intelligence in April 1945 shows features of strategic importance in the Burmese port city of Rangoon. After capturing Mandalay in March 1945, the Allies sought to take Rangoon before the onset of the monsoon season in May.

◁ **Defending the Great Wall**
China's 8th Route Army fight Japanese invaders on a section of the Great Wall south of Futuyu. During the war, the 8th Route Army, operating largely in northern China, fought to establish guerrilla bases behind Japanese lines.

1 NATIONALIST CHINA 1940–1944

The Nationalists governed China from their capital at Chongqing (they had moved the capital inland from Nanjing in 1937). Corrupt, and losing support to the Communists, they fought an occasionally effective campaign against the Japanese, both with regular armies and by supporting guerrilla and bandit forces. They attempted to neutralize growing Communist strength by blockading Communist-held areas.

Nationalist guerrilla and bandit forces

Nationalist capital

2 COMMUNIST CHINA 1940–1944

By 1940 relations between the Nationalists and Communists had broken down into conflict. In autumn 1940, the Communist New 4th Army, surrounded by Nationalist forces in south Anhui, attacked, fighting a bitter battle in January 1941 known as the New 4th Army incident. It was not until early 1944 that a delicate truce was re-established.

Communist zone

New 4th Army incident

3 US SUPPORT 1941–1944

The US supported Chinese action against Japan by providing training to the Nationalist army. In addition, the USAAF 14th Air Force maintained a number of air bases in the south from which they inflicted damage on Japanese positions in China and Taiwan, as well as on its shipping. Allied aircraft also brought supplies for the Nationalists via an air route from India known as "The Hump" (see panel, right).

USAAF 14th Air Force bases

The Hump air route

U S S R

HEILONGJIANG

Blagoveshchensk

MANCHUKUO (MANCHURIA)

Yichun

Nomonhan

Harbin

Songhua

Jixi

Jilin

Changchun

Shenyang

MONGOLIA

Gobi

Jinzhou

Yingkou

Zhangjiakou

Beijing

Yellow River

Tianjin

Lüshunkou

Seoul

KOREA

CHINA

Yellow Sea

Taiyuan

Zhengding

Weifang

Qingdao

Jinan

Yan'an

May 1944 The Japanese seize Henan province during the Ichi-Go offensive

Luoyang

Zhengzhou

Xuzhou

30 Mar 1940 Anti-Communist defector Wang Ching-wei, backed by Japan, forms a puppet regime

Xi'an

7–13 Jan 1941 The New 4th Army incident brings the truce between Nationalists and Communists to an end

HENAN

Huai

Laohekou

Nanjing

Shanghai

2 Nov–20 Dec 1943 Nationalist forces survive a major Japanese assault

Hankou

ANHUI

Hangzhou

Anqing

ZHEJIANG

Chengdu

TIBET

Brahmaputra

Chongqing

1937–1945 Chongqing serves as the Chinese Nationalist capital

Changde

Lake Dongting

Lake Poyang

Nanchang

15 May–Sep 1942 The Japanese wage war in Zhejiang and Jiangxi provinces

NEPAL

BHUTAN

Dinjan

Changsha

JIANGXI

Huaihua

Suichuan

Fuzhou

INDIA

Yangtze

Hengyang

Taipei

BURMA

Guiyang

May 1944 Supplies from Dinjan in Assam, India, are carried to Kunming in Yunnan province via The Hump air route

Kunming

Lingling

Xiamen

Taiwan

Guilin

Shantou

Liuzhou

Guangzhou

Macau

Hong Kong

Nanning

24 Dec 1941–15 Jan 1942 The Japanese are defeated in their offensive against Changsha

Hanoi

Haikou

FRENCH INDOCHINA

Hainan

Aug–Nov 1944 The Japanese seize Guilin and Liuzhou, creating a land bridge from China south to Indochina

Vinh

PHILIPPINES

THAILAND

South China Sea

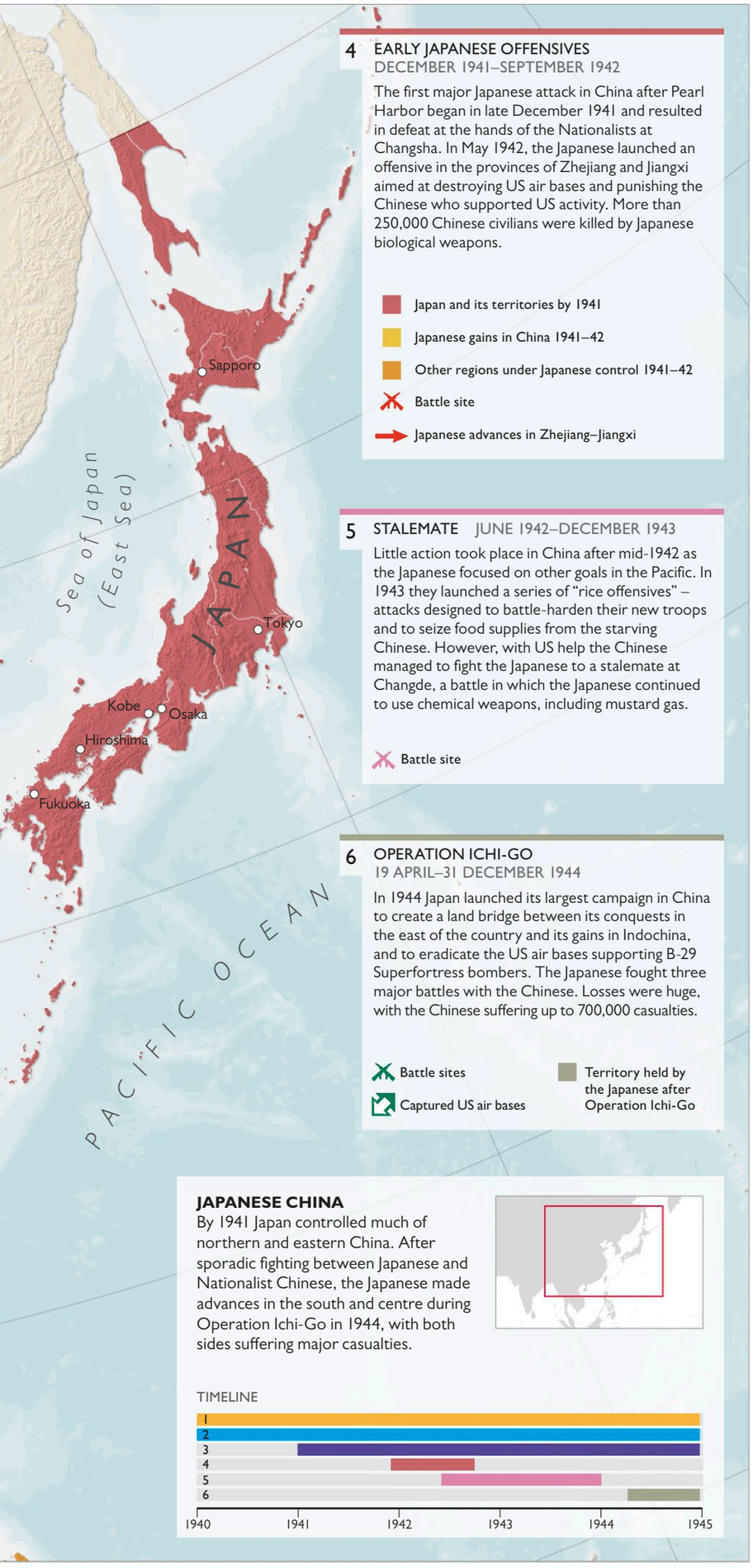
CHINA AND JAPAN AT WAR

Despite a truce between China's Nationalist and Communist factions following the Japanese invasion in 1937, wartime China remained bitterly divided. Japan sought to capitalize on this, stretching its resources across China to wage an eight-year expansionist war.

While bitter fighting had raged between Chinese and Japanese forces since 1937, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 the conflict became incorporated into the larger war that erupted in the Pacific. The US provided air and military support from India for the Nationalists, who managed to inflict several defeats on the Japanese, but the aid was never enough to turn the tide of the war in favour of the Chinese. Japan's offensives in the months following Pearl Harbor were sporadic, with attacks on US air bases in the south of China as well as the massacre of 250,000 civilians using biological agents such as cholera and typhoid. Further offensives in 1943 were also accompanied by chemical weapons. It was not until 1944 that Japan launched a huge offensive, Operation Ichi-Go, in which 500,000 troops attempted to carve out a path to Japanese-occupied Indochina and remove the threat from the US air bases used to bomb Japanese cities. The campaign was a success, and the Japanese largely kept the gains from Operation Ichi-Go until the end of the war.

"The Greater East Asian War was justified and righteous."

HIDEKI TOJO, FORMER JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER, 1946



FLYING THE HUMP

In 1942, the US set up an air route from Assam in India to supply Nationalist Chinese forces across the country. Nicknamed "The Hump" by pilots, it passed over the eastern end of the Himalayas, and was extremely dangerous due to consistently poor weather and a lack of charts and radio navigation aids. By August 1945, more than 660,000 tonnes (728,000 tons) of materiel had been flown in to China, with a great loss of Allied aircraft.

A US Army transport flies over the Himalayas

The bridge to Saigon
Japanese troops head into Saigon, in French Indochina, in 1940 as part of an invasion that secured the French colonies by 1941. The French administered Indochina until March 1945, when the Japanese took control until the war's end.

JAPANESE RULE IN EAST ASIA

Japan acquired an extensive colonial empire before and during World War II, in part to secure raw material supplies for its economy. Little political freedom was permitted in its colonies, and conditions were harsh.

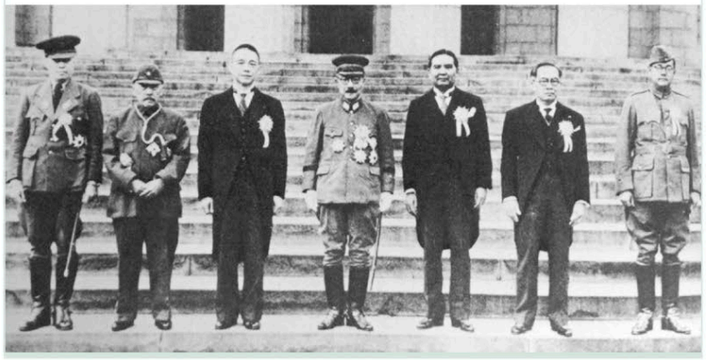
△ **Pan-Asian solidarity**
Japanese propaganda extolled the virtues of pan-Asian solidarity, such as this poster, which promotes cooperation between Manchuria, Japan, and China.

Before World War I, Japan had annexed Taiwan and Korea, and it acquired former German Pacific islands as mandates after the war. In the 1930s it invaded Manchuria, large parts of eastern China, and Southeast Asia from 1940 (see pp.106–107). Where possible, the economies of these territories were shaped to supply Japan's war effort; steel production in Manchuria increased, agricultural output rose in Taiwan, and electricity production soared in Korea.

Little consideration was given to local needs, and there were widespread food shortages. Many thousands of women were forced into sexual slavery as "comfort women" for the army. Japan also clamped down harshly on dissent. Allied prisoners of war (POWs) suffered greatly, including the 80,000 taken when Singapore fell in February 1942. The Japanese military code looked down on surrender, and Allied POWs routinely received minimal rations, were beaten, and were put to hard labour, including the construction of the Burma railway, through 420 km (260 miles) of mountainous jungle. The death toll was high – of the 36,000 US troops taken prisoner by the Japanese, almost 40 per cent died.

GREATER EAST ASIA CONFERENCE

In 1940, the Japanese government announced a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Ostensibly a bloc of Asian powers to promote prosperity and political freedom, it was in reality completely directed by Japan. At its 1943 Conference in Tokyo, pro-Japanese leaders attended, such as Ba Maw of Burma (far left) and José P. Laurel of the Philippines (second from right).



ENDGAME AND AFTERMATH 1944–1955

AS THE WAR REACHED ITS FINALE IN EUROPE, THE US AND JAPAN INTENSIFIED THEIR BITTER STRUGGLE IN THE PACIFIC. THE DROPPING OF THE ATOMIC BOMB USHERED IN A NEW AND UNCERTAIN ERA.

△ **The face of war**
A soldier from an SS panzer division shows signs of combat exhaustion during the Battle of the Bulge in the winter of 1944–45.

ALLIED VICTORY IN EUROPE

Hitler's determination to fight to the finish condemned Germany to massive destruction in the final phase of the war in Europe. However, victory for the Allies was not achieved until Soviet troops raised the hammer and sickle flag over the ruins of Berlin.

In December 1944, with the Allies closing in on Germany, Hitler made a last attempt to turn the tide of the war, launching a surprise offensive in the Ardennes, in Belgium, Luxembourg, and northeastern France. The initial success of this operation – named the Battle of the Bulge because of the bulging shape created when the Germans pushed through the Allied front line – was testimony to the remarkable tenacity of the German army, but Hitler's plan for a decisive breakthrough failed. The US troops held key positions and once poor weather had cleared, the Allies could resume their air attacks, which were having a decisive effect. Meanwhile, the Germans were running out of fuel.

▷ **Meeting at Torgau**
US and Soviet troops meet in friendly fashion at Torgau, on the Elbe, as the Allies overrun Germany from east and west in April 1945.

False hopes

By January 1945, with the Ardennes offensive failing and Soviet troops ready to invade Germany from the east, the German position seemed hopeless. However, the Nazi regime retained the will to fight and many of its people remained loyal. While the Führer dreamed of miracles, young and old were marshalled for a final, desperate homeland defence. Hitler's remaining hope was for the Western Allies and the Soviet Union to have a major disagreement, but this did not happen. The Yalta conference of Allied leaders in February confirmed broad agreement on the immediate practical concerns of the wartime alliance, such as the military occupation of Germany, while skirting around more intractable future political issues. There was no "race for Berlin"; instead, the Western Allies were content to let the Soviets enjoy the honour – and suffer the casualties – involved in taking the city.

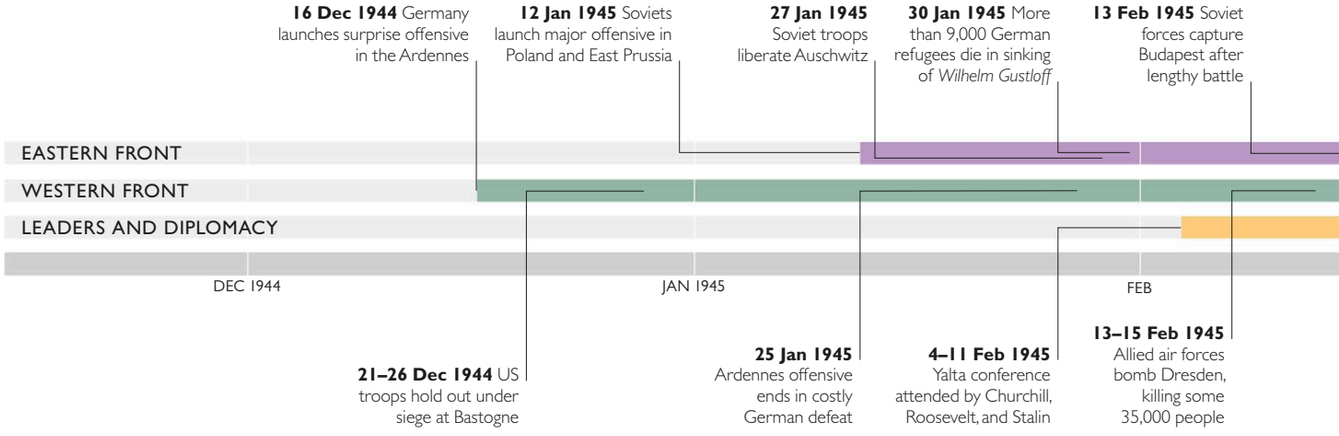
Carnage on an epic scale

The scale of the destruction and disruption in the last months of the war was staggering. The resumption of the Soviet advance in January 1945 triggered the mass evacuation of German civilians from East Prussia and the Baltic. Having won control of the air over Germany at great cost, the Allied air forces proceeded to destroy German towns and cities in attacks that no longer served any clear military purpose.

As Soviet forces fought their way into Berlin in late April, US and Soviet troops met at the Elbe River. The discovery of the Nazi death

THE THIRD REICH'S LAST STAND

The Ardennes operation, launched on 16 December 1944, was the German army's last offensive. The Soviet advance on Germany, which began in January 1945, carried the fighting deep into the country, and the Western Allies crossed the Rhine in March. The death of Roosevelt on 12 April gave Hitler a glimmer of hope, but it made no difference to the conduct of the war. Hostilities continued for a week after Hitler's suicide as surrenders were arranged on different fronts.



◁ **Mustang fighter**
The North American Mustang P-51 was a key aircraft in the war's final stages, acting as a long-range fighter escort for bombers and as a ground-attack aircraft armed with rockets and bombs.

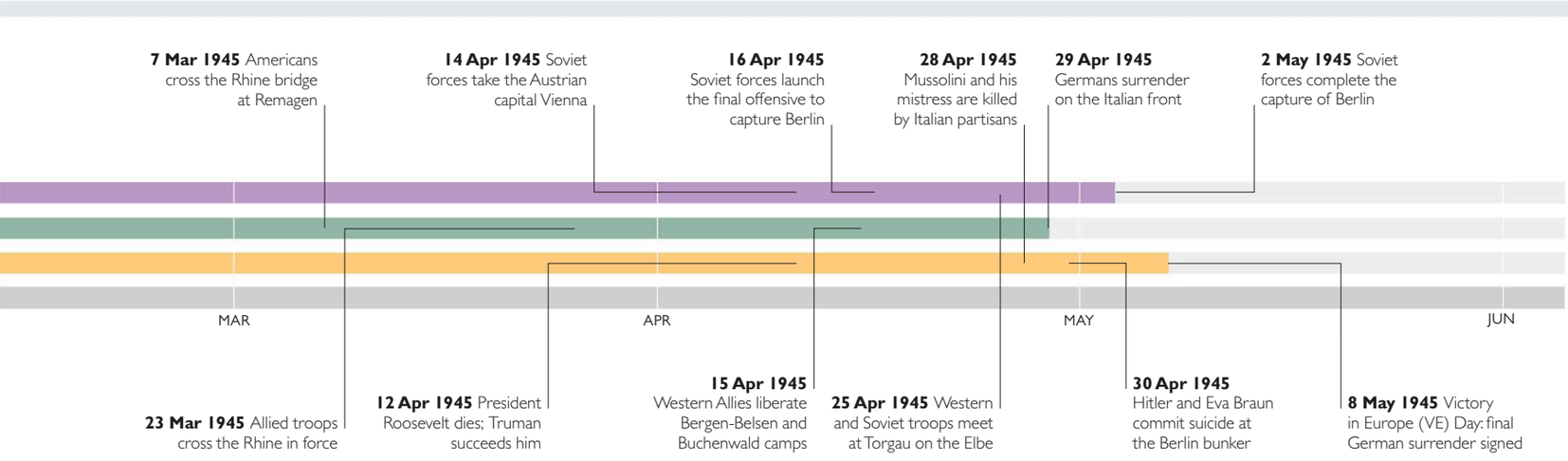
▽ **Raising the flag**
As a symbol of Soviet victory, soldiers raise a flag over the Reichstag building amid the ruins of Berlin on 2 May 1945.

camps shocked the advancing Allied forces. A series of German surrenders began in Italy, where Mussolini met a grim end at the hands of Italian partisans on 28 April. Two days later, Hitler committed suicide at his Berlin bunker, denouncing the German army and people as unworthy of his leadership. On 8 May, the war in Europe was declared over.

Allied-occupied Germany

The victors of World War II reigned over a continent in ruins. Political conflicts between Communists and their enemies were already surfacing before the war ended: for example in Greece, where British intervention prevented Communist-led partisans from taking power. But in Germany itself, where prolonged Nazi resistance had been expected and feared, there was instead only the struggle to survive or, in the case of prominent Nazis, to escape retribution. The Allies carried out their plan for the four-way division of Germany, including Berlin, into military occupation zones, France having won the right to be included in the share-out. Occupation by the Soviet Union was, to say the least, an ambiguous "liberation" for many of the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe. However, despite the suffering that followed, Europe could at least now hope to move towards a brighter future.

> *"This is your victory! It is the victory of freedom in every land."*
>
> WINSTON CHURCHILL, SPEECH 8 MAY 1945



2 GERMAN ADVANCE 17–20 DECEMBER 1944

The Germans pushed west for the next four days, and attempted to deploy paratroopers behind American lines. They had planned to take control of Antwerp by 20 December but were held up by American resistance, notably at St Vith in the central sector and Bastogne in the south, both key road junctions.

German advance 17–20 Dec 1944

German paratroop drop zone

Front lines 20 Dec 1944

3 THE FURTHEST POINT 21–24 DECEMBER 1944

The Germans reached the peak of their advance when they took Celles on 24 December. Still 100 km (62 miles) short of Antwerp, the attacking units had failed to cross the Meuse River, held back by the Allied defensive force. The German vanguard was left occupying a narrow neck of land increasingly under threat from Allied pressure to the north and south.

German advance 21–24 Dec 1944

US counter-attacks from 24 Dec 1944

EARLY ADVANCES

The most rapid German advance was in the central sector of the bulge, where Clervaux fell in three days.

17 Dec 1944 German plans to land 1,300 paratroopers behind Allied lines fail

24 Dec 1944 The German advance stalls when troops have to retreat from La Gleize

17 Dec 1944 More than 80 surrendered US servicemen are killed by the Waffen-SS

16–26 Dec 1944

23 Dec 1944 US forces finally evacuate St Vith, having held up the German advance for four days

16–18 Dec 1944

20 Dec 1944 Bastogne is encircled. Brigadier-General Anthony McAuliffe famously replies "Nuts!" to a German demand to surrender

1 BLITZKRIEG 16 DECEMBER 1944

German artillery barraged a 130-km (80-mile) front from Monschau to Echternach. Between the two lay the Ardennes, lightly defended by Allied forces. The 6th Panzer and 7th Armies attacked in the north and south, but were met with strong resistance. In the centre, the 5th Panzer Army fared better, punching a hole in the stretched Allied defences.

German armies

German advance 16 Dec 1944

△ **German advance halted**
Captured German soldiers put their hands above their heads as they surrender to a US soldier, January 1945. Poor weather conditions coupled with Allied resistance at key junctions prevented the Germans reaching their goal.

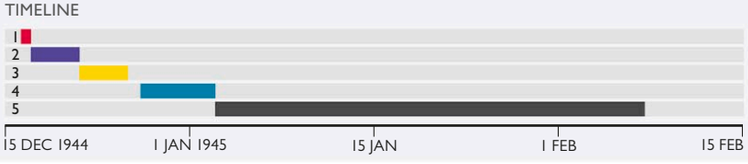
WESTWARDS PUSH

The Battle of the Bulge was fought out in the Ardennes region on the borders of Germany, Luxembourg, and Belgium. The German attack began on 16 December 1944 but their push westward was halted by the Allies, who eliminated the German gains in early 1945.

KEY

- German gains by 16 Dec 1944
- German gains by 24 Dec 1944
- German territory by 7 Feb 1945
- Allied gains by 2 Jan 1945
- Allied gains by 7 Feb 1945
- Major battles

TIMELINE

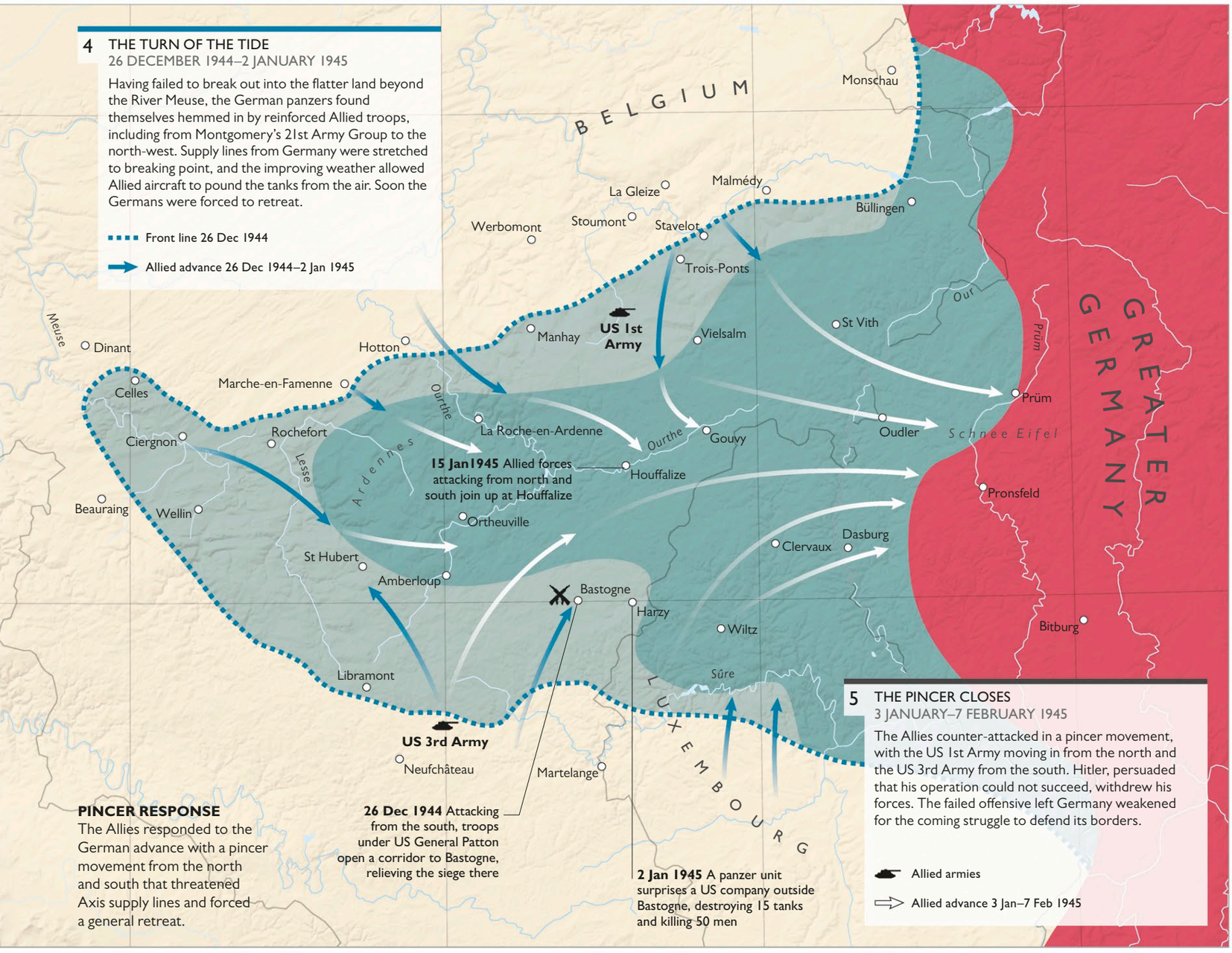


BATTLE OF THE BULGE

Shaken by the Allies' advance on Germany, Hitler decided on a final gamble in winter 1944. His counter-offensive punched a deep wedge in Allied lines, leading Western newspapers to call it the Battle of the Bulge. It was the last major German offensive of the war, and the largest fought on the Western Front.

Desperate to regain the initiative in Europe, Hitler chose a move that startled even his own generals: an attack through the hilly, wooded Ardennes region bordering Germany to the port of Antwerp in Belgium, covering 180 km (112 miles). This action was intended to cut the Allied forces in two and disrupt their supplies. Allied commanders had discounted the possibility of such an attack, so the assault achieved almost total surprise. However, the German forces soon encountered exactly those problems the military planners had foreseen. Poor roads led to transport bottlenecks and the winter weather made conditions difficult. Hitler's plan depended on an almost impossibly tight schedule, but his forces soon found themselves bogged down by the difficult terrain and held back by determined US resistance.

After three weeks, when it had become apparent that the planned breakthrough had not happened, Hitler ordered his troops back to Germany. The operation had been a huge failure. The killed and wounded on both sides numbered close to 100,000, and crucially Germany had also lost over 500 tanks and 1,000 aircraft.



YALTA AND POTSDAM

In February 1945, the three Allied leaders – Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin – met at Yalta in the Crimea to decide the fate of the post-war world. Five months later, the nations' leaders met again at Potsdam, near Berlin.

△ **Memorial for a leader**
The 1945 Yalta conference was a historical landmark, as this postage stamp from the former French colony of Togo, issued to mark Churchill's death in 1965, confirms.

One of the main aims of Yalta was to decide what should happen to Germany after the war. The Big Three, as Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin were known, agreed to divide the country into four occupation zones administered by the US, Britain, the USSR, and France, with control of Berlin split between the four powers. They agreed to establish a provisional government in Poland as a preliminary to holding elections. Similarly, the other freed peoples of Eastern Europe would be helped in setting up democratic regimes. Stalin agreed to join the war against Japan once Germany surrendered, and to join the UN.

Broken pledges

The Yalta agreements were initially heralded as a success, but the mood did not last. By the time they met again at Potsdam between 7 July and 2 August, with Harry S Truman and Clement Attlee replacing Roosevelt and Churchill respectively, the tensions between the West and the USSR were obvious. Although the divided and disarmed state of Germany was confirmed, there was disagreement about the amount of reparations the Germans should pay. Refugees from the east were flooding westwards, displaced by the adjustment of the Polish–German frontier in Poland's favour. Additionally, it was clear that Stalin, despite his promises, would not allow free elections to take place in the territories his armies had liberated.

THE POTSDAM DECLARATION

Following Potsdam, the US, UK, and China called for Japan's unconditional surrender, threatening "prompt and utter destruction" if it did not comply. Although Stalin was also present at the conference, the USSR and Japan had a treaty of non-aggression at the time, so he did not sign the declaration.

The Big Three
Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Joseph Stalin at the Yalta conference in February 1945. Roosevelt was suffering health problems at the time of the conference, and he died that year on 12 April in the US state of Georgia.

CROSSING THE RHINE

After driving back the German counter-offensive in the Ardennes, Allied forces met their next major challenge – fighting their way over the Rhine. They then spent a month advancing across Germany towards the Elbe to meet Soviet troops advancing from the east.

More than 400 m (1,310 ft) wide in places and fiercely defended on its eastern bank, the Rhine was a formidable barrier to Allied progress into Germany. The Supreme Commander of the Allied forces, General Eisenhower, made careful plans for a co-ordinated assault to storm across the river. In the event, the initial crossing took place almost by chance over a bridge at Remagen that German defenders had failed to blow up. The campaign then proceeded according to Eisenhower's plan, and by 24 March the Allies had established three substantial bridgeheads on the waterway's far bank.

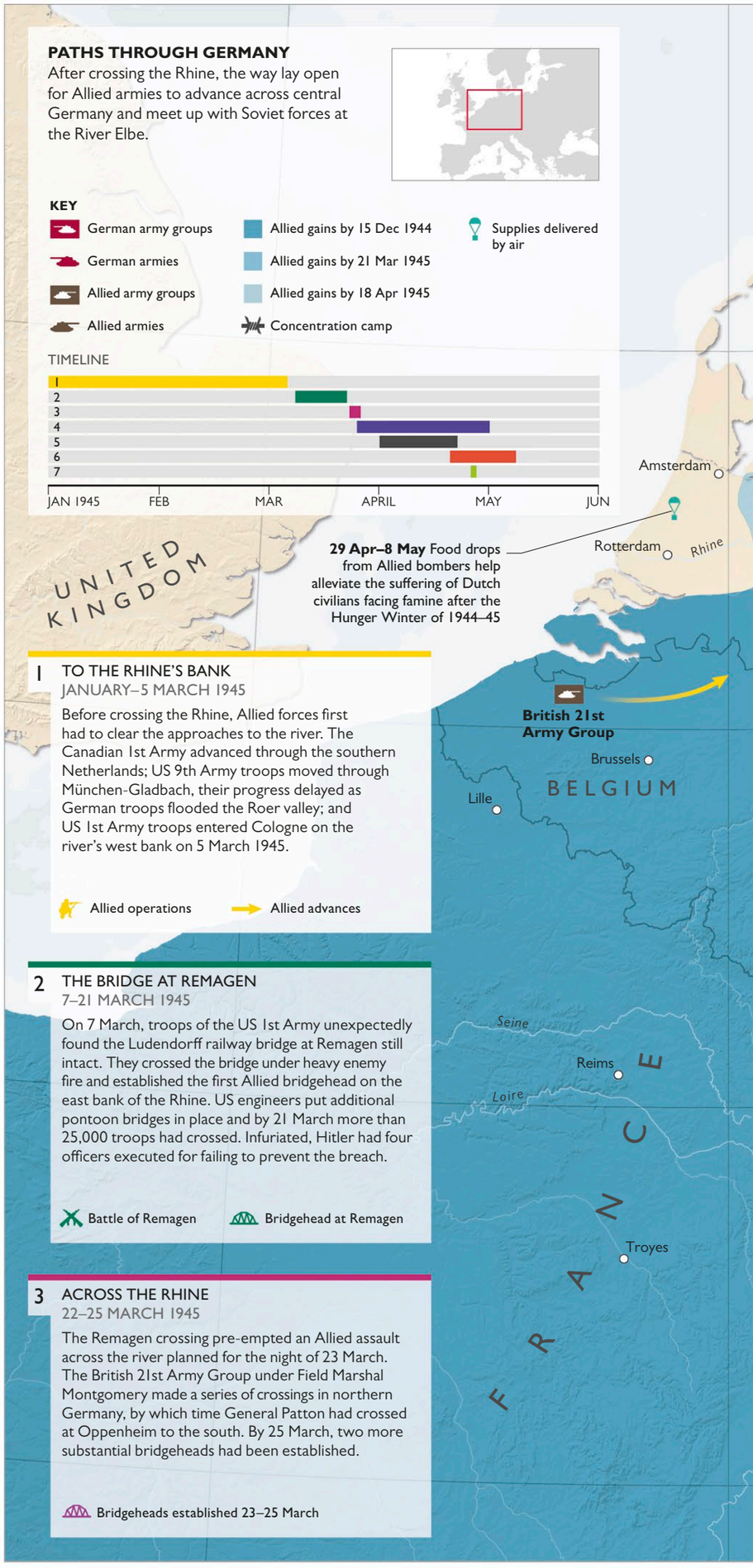
"One of those rare and fleeting opportunities which occasionally arise in war."

GENERAL EISENHOWER ON THE CAPTURE OF REMAGEN

Germany now lay open before the Allies, but political considerations imposed a degree of caution. It had been agreed at Yalta (see pp.230–31) that the eastern approaches to Berlin were to remain in the Soviet zone, so instead of hastening towards the German capital, the Western Allied advance proceeded more haltingly. British troops uncovered horrors when they liberated the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in mid-April, and US forces reached the Dachau camp two weeks later.

GENERAL GEORGE PATTON 1885–1945

Born into a prosperous family in California, George Patton graduated from the US Military Academy at West Point in 1909. He represented his country in the modern pentathlon at the Stockholm Olympics in 1912 and pioneered the use of tanks by the US in World War I. He had already established a formidable fighting reputation in North Africa and Sicily before taking charge of the US 3rd Army early in 1944. Under his command the forces won a reputation for highly aggressive action.



7 LINKING UP WITH THE SOVIETS 25 APRIL 1945

The Soviets had made their own advance into Germany from the east and met US forces outside the village of Strehla, near Torgau on the river Elbe. The two sides quickly fraternized, with the Soviets providing a banquet for their guests. Germany was finally split in two, and lay almost defenceless before the invading forces.

Soviet advance to 25 Apr

US and Soviet forces meet

Baltic Sea

German Army Group Vistula

Hamburg

15 Apr British forces liberate the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen, finding 60,000 starving prisoners and 13,000 unburied corpses

Bremen

Elbe

Bergen-Belsen

Berlin

16 Apr Soviet forces begin the final assault on Berlin (see pp.242–43)

NETHERLANDS

4 Apr British troops take the city of Osnabrück

German 1st Para Army

Osnabrück

11 Apr US troops capture the underground factory where V-1 and V-2 rockets are made

Elbe

17–26 Apr After heavy fighting, British forces take the northern port city of Bremen

Arnhem

Nijmegen

Wesel

Canadian 1st Army

Roer

23 Feb The US 9th Army crosses the deliberately flooded river Roer in Operation Grenade

Düsseldorf

Roermond

British 2nd Army

München-Gladbach

German Army Group B

Cologne

US 9th Army

Aachen

Bonn

Remagen

7–21 Mar 1945

German 5th Army

14–24 Jan The British 2nd Army clears the area around the river Roer in Operation Blackcock

US 1st Army

Kassel

German 15th Army

Nordhausen

Torgau

Strehla

Leipzig

German Army Group A (Centre)

GERMANY

Frankfurt

Rhine

LUXEMBOURG

Oppenheim

US 3rd Army

US 7th Army

Mannheim

Germersheim

Nuremberg

Pilsen

29 Apr US forces liberate the concentration camp at Dachau

30 Apr US forces take the city of Munich before pressing on into Austria and over the Brenner Pass to Italy

German 1st Army

Stuttgart

Strasbourg

French 1st Army

Rhine

German 19th Army

Ulm

Dachau

Munich

Rhône

△ **Floating bridge**
Two American soldiers guard the Rozisch-Blackburn-Thompkins bridge across the Rhine near Remagen in March 1945. Pontoon bridges were built in the effort to get Allied troops quickly across the river and into Germany.

4 FROM THE RHINE TO THE ELBE
24 MARCH–1 MAY 1945

After crossing the Rhine, Allied forces continued their drive east. The 21st Army Group took Osnabrück and Bremen before entering Hamburg without a fight on 1 May. Patton's men took Frankfurt before fighting the Germans – now on the brink of collapse – at Kassel. US forces drove through Nuremberg towards Munich, intent on preventing a German stand on the Austrian Alps.

Allied advances

Major objectives captured by the Allies

5 THE BATTLE FOR THE RUHR
1–21 APRIL 1945

On crossing the Rhine, the Allies targeted Germany's industrial heartland of the Ruhr Valley. By 1 April the region was encircled by US forces. Hitler commanded German Army Group B to defend the Ruhr to the last man, but resistance proved futile, and their commander committed suicide. Within three weeks the area had fallen and the Allies had taken 325,000 prisoners.

Germans encircled in Ruhr Pocket

6 ADVANCE TO THE ALPS 19 APRIL–7 MAY 1945

Concerned that German forces might attempt a last stand in a feared "Alpine Redoubt", General Eisenhower ordered forces of the US 3rd and 7th Armies to divert south towards Austria rather than north to Berlin. The first units crossed the Austrian border on 26 April. They met relatively little resistance on the way, and the rumoured redoubt was eventually revealed as nothing more than German propaganda.

US advance through Bavaria

GERMANY LOSES THE AIR WAR

The nature of the air war over Europe changed with the Allied landings in Normandy. The Luftwaffe was forced increasingly onto the defensive, and by late 1944, fuel shortages and loss of men and materiel had made it largely a spent force.

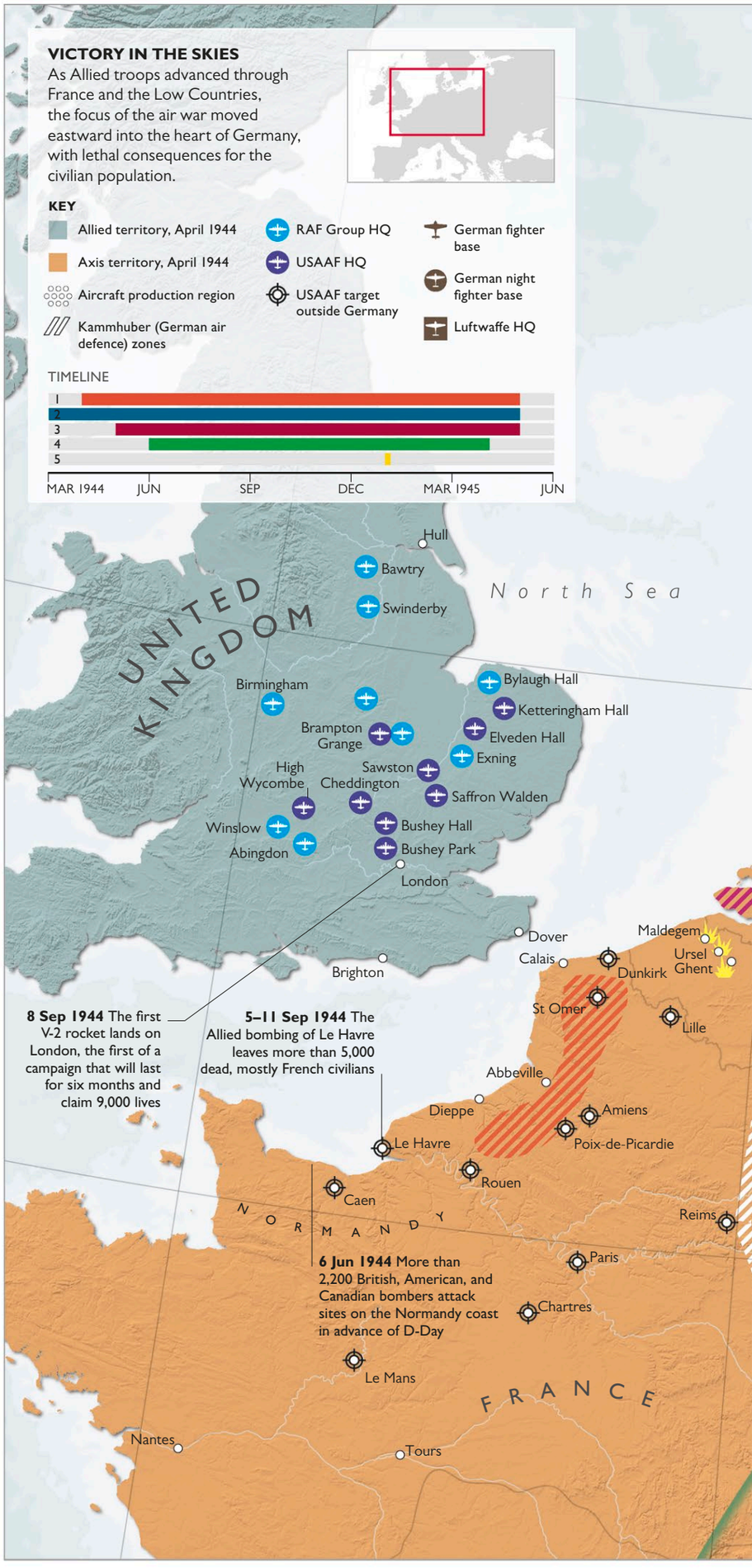
From mid-1944, the balance in the air war over Europe tipped decisively in the Allies' favour. This was in no small part due to the arrival in Europe of the P-51B Mustang – a fast fighter with enough range to provide effective cover for B-17 and B-24 bombers. Among the best fighters of the war, the P-51B could outperform the heavy fighters used by the Luftwaffe against the USAAF raiders, so Allied bombing raids became increasingly effective in disrupting German aircraft production and interrupting the development of new designs.

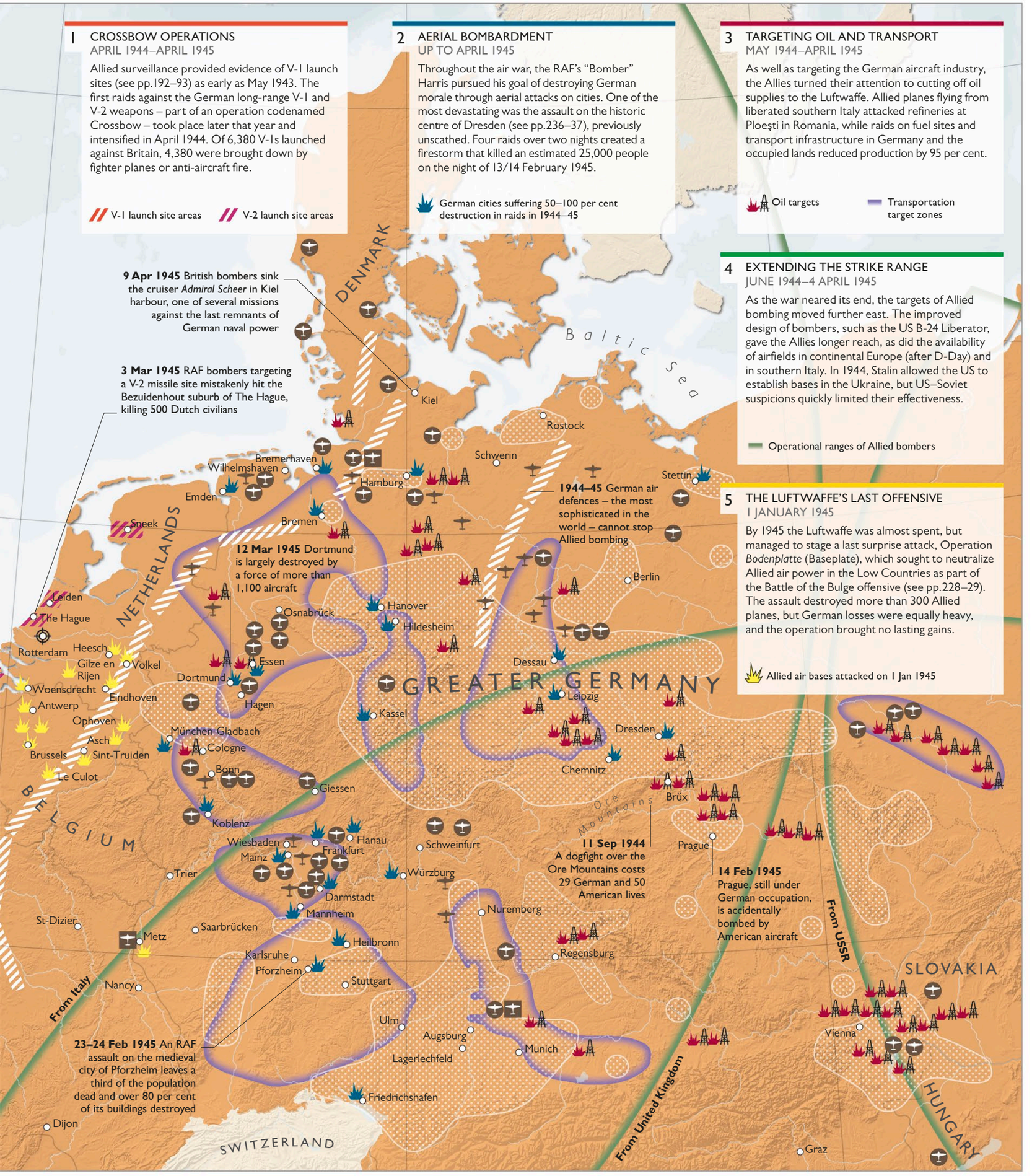
The Luftwaffe's activities were also curtailed by a chronic shortage of fuel caused by the Allied bombers' selective targeting of Germany's oil resources. By September 1944, the Luftwaffe had access to only 10,000 tonnes (11,000 tons) of octane each month instead of the 160,000 tonnes (176,400 tons) that it needed to fuel its operations. The USAAF mainly undertook the precision bombing of oil facilities, while the RAF under "Bomber" Harris turned their attention to the area bombing of cities.

Running out of legitimate strategic and industrial targets, the Allies dropped their bombs wherever they would cause maximum confusion to their enemy. In total, more than 350,000 German civilians were killed in Allied attacks; the rate of fatalities grew to 13,000 people a month from July 1944 to January 1945. The mass casualties of civilians that resulted in Hamburg, Dresden, Leipzig, Chemnitz, and other centres were controversial at the time, and have attracted growing criticism ever since.

THE P-51 MUSTANG

Originally designed by North American Aviation in 1940, the single-seater, long-range Mustang fighter took a major step forwards in performance with the introduction of the B model, powered by a Rolls-Royce engine. From late 1943 onwards, P-51Bs, along with the later C and D (shown here) models, were used as escorts on long-distance bombing raids, targeting German fighters and helping to secure Allied victory in the skies.




1 CROSSBOW OPERATIONS
APRIL 1944–APRIL 1945
Allied surveillance provided evidence of V-1 launch sites (see pp.192–93) as early as May 1943. The first raids against the German long-range V-1 and V-2 weapons – part of an operation codenamed Crossbow – took place later that year and intensified in April 1944. Of 6,380 V-1s launched against Britain, 4,380 were brought down by fighter planes or anti-aircraft fire.
V-1 launch site areas
V-2 launch site areas
2 AERIAL BOMBARDMENT
UP TO APRIL 1945
Throughout the air war, the RAF's "Bomber" Harris pursued his goal of destroying German morale through aerial attacks on cities. One of the most devastating was the assault on the historic centre of Dresden (see pp.236–37), previously unscathed. Four raids over two nights created a firestorm that killed an estimated 25,000 people on the night of 13/14 February 1945.
German cities suffering 50–100 per cent destruction in raids in 1944–45
3 TARGETING OIL AND TRANSPORT
MAY 1944–APRIL 1945
As well as targeting the German aircraft industry, the Allies turned their attention to cutting off oil supplies to the Luftwaffe. Allied planes flying from liberated southern Italy attacked refineries at Ploeşti in Romania, while raids on fuel sites and transport infrastructure in Germany and the occupied lands reduced production by 95 per cent.
Oil targets
Transportation target zones
4 EXTENDING THE STRIKE RANGE
JUNE 1944–4 APRIL 1945
As the war neared its end, the targets of Allied bombing moved further east. The improved design of bombers, such as the US B-24 Liberator, gave the Allies longer reach, as did the availability of airfields in continental Europe (after D-Day) and in southern Italy. In 1944, Stalin allowed the US to establish bases in the Ukraine, but US–Soviet suspicions quickly limited their effectiveness.
Operational ranges of Allied bombers
5 THE LUFTWAFFE'S LAST OFFENSIVE
1 JANUARY 1945
By 1945 the Luftwaffe was almost spent, but managed to stage a last surprise attack, Operation Bodenplatte (Baseplate), which sought to neutralize Allied air power in the Low Countries as part of the Battle of the Bulge offensive (see pp.228–29). The assault destroyed more than 300 Allied planes, but German losses were equally heavy, and the operation brought no lasting gains.
Allied air bases attacked on 1 Jan 1945
9 Apr 1945 British bombers sink the cruiser Admiral Scheer in Kiel harbour, one of several missions against the last remnants of German naval power
3 Mar 1945 RAF bombers targeting a V-2 missile site mistakenly hit the Bezuidenhout suburb of The Hague, killing 500 Dutch civilians
12 Mar 1945 Dortmund is largely destroyed by a force of more than 1,100 aircraft
1944–45 German air defences – the most sophisticated in the world – cannot stop Allied bombing
11 Sep 1944 A dogfight over the Ore Mountains costs 29 German and 50 American lives
14 Feb 1945 Prague, still under German occupation, is accidentally bombed by American aircraft
23–24 Feb 1945 An RAF assault on the medieval city of Pforzheim leaves a third of the population dead and over 80 per cent of its buildings destroyed
DENMARK
Baltic Sea
NETHERLANDS
BELGIUM
GREATER GERMANY
SLOVAKIA
HUNGARY
SWITZERLAND
Ore Mountains
From Italy
From United Kingdom
From USSR
Kiel
Rostock
Schwerin
Stettin
Bremerhaven
Wilhelmshaven
Hamburg
Emden
Bremen
Sneek
Leiden
The Hague
Rotterdam
Heesch
Gilze en Rijen
Volkel
Woensdrecht
Eindhoven
Antwerp
Ophoven
Asch
Brussels
Sint-Truiden
Le Culot
Osnabrück
Hanover
Hildesheim
Essen
Dortmund
Hagen
Berlin
Dessau
Leipzig
Kassel
Dresden
Chemnitz
Brüx
Prague
München-Gladbach
Cologne
Bonn
Giessen
Koblenz
Wiesbaden
Hanau
Frankfurt
Mainz
Schweinfurt
Würzburg
Trier
Darmstadt
Mannheim
Nuremberg
St-Dizier
Metz
Saarbrücken
Heilbronn
Karlsruhe
Pforzheim
Regensburg
Nancy
Stuttgart
Ulm
Augsburg
Munich
Lagerlechfeld
Friedrichshafen
Vienna
Graz
Dijon

THE BOMBING OF DRESDEN

From around 10 pm on 13 February 1945 until noon the following day, the historic city of Dresden in eastern Germany was subjected to one of the most intensive bombing raids of the war. The savage attack was sudden and unexpected, and the results were devastating.

Known as Operation Thunderclap, the attack began with 244 RAF Lancasters dropping more than 810 tonnes (890 tons) of high explosive and incendiary bombs on the centre and inner suburbs of the city. After a 25-minute pause, a further 529 bombers arrived, dropping over 1,800 tonnes (2,000 tons) of bombs to fuel the firestorm the initial attack had kindled. The second attack lasted 40 minutes. By the time it ended, Dresden had been utterly devastated. The following morning, as the surviving residents stumbled into the streets to survey the damage, the air-raid sirens wailed again. Some 311 USAAF Flying Fortresses dropped a further 780 tonnes (860 tons) of bombs on the stricken city. Around 25,000 Dresdeners were killed.

△ **Air-raid warning**
A hand-held air-raid siren of the type used in Dresden. The city's citizens had little warning of the initial attack.

A display of might

Whether such a destructive attack on Dresden was justified has provoked debate ever since. The Allies bombed eastern German cities in order to aid the Soviet advance and prevent a German retreat to an Alpine redoubt (or fortress). However, RAF Bomber Command's Arthur Harris briefed his aircrews to bomb densely packed residential zones, causing huge numbers of civilian deaths.

△ **The second attack**
Two months after the initial attack on Dresden by the RAF Lancasters, B-17 Flying Fortresses of the US 8th Air Force bombed Dresden by daylight on 17 April 1945. The aim of the mission was to sever the city's southeastern rail links. It was the final attack on Dresden, an ancient cathedral city that Germans referred to as "Florence on the Elbe".

Dresden in ruins
This view from the tower of Dresden's *Rathaus* (city hall) southwards over the city reveals the extent of the destruction caused by Allied area bombing. Much of the city centre remained rubble into the 1950s.

THE FINAL SOVIET ATTACK

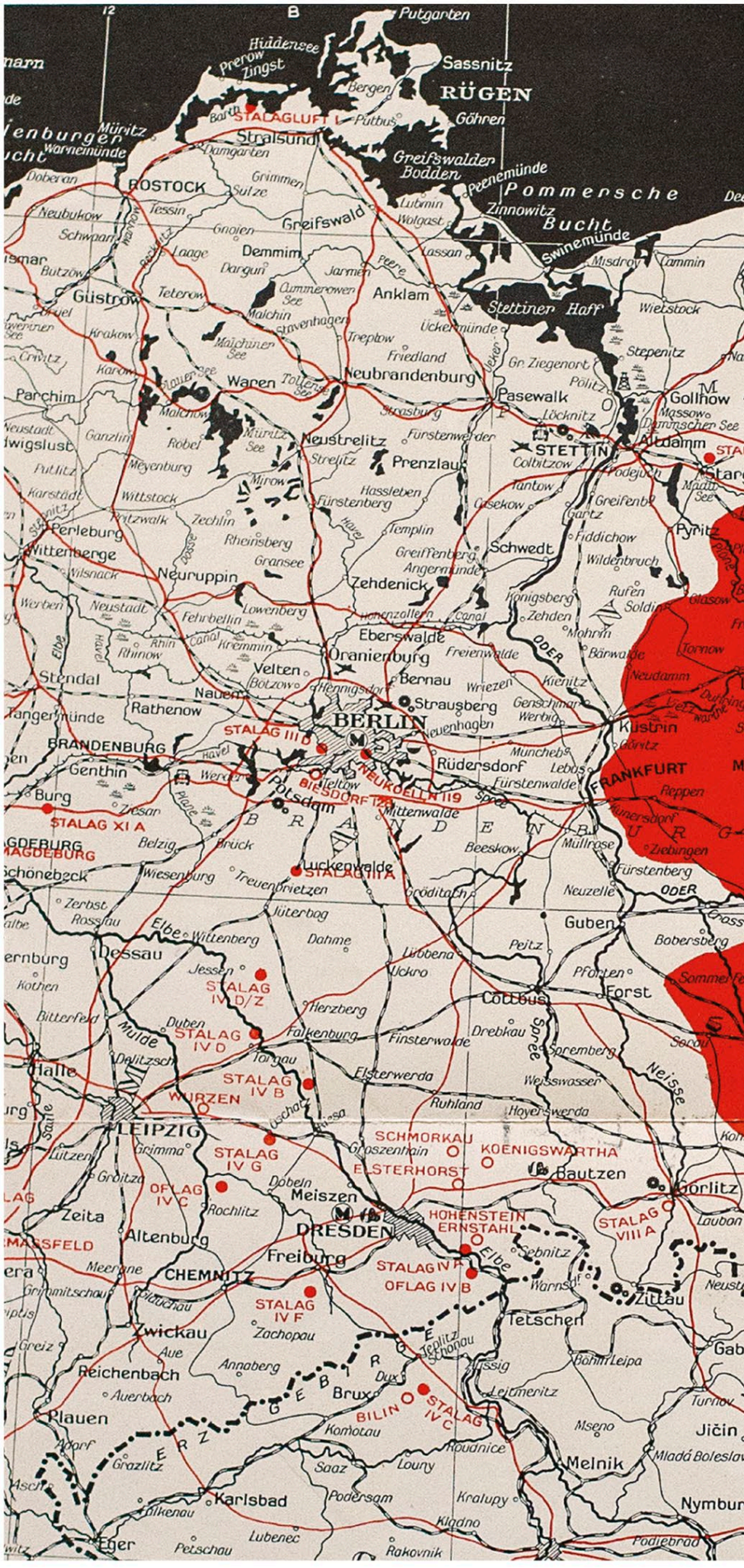
In the final stage of the war in Europe, a series of hard-fought victories brought Soviet armies into the heart of central Europe and the Balkans, with major consequences for both the war and the continent itself.

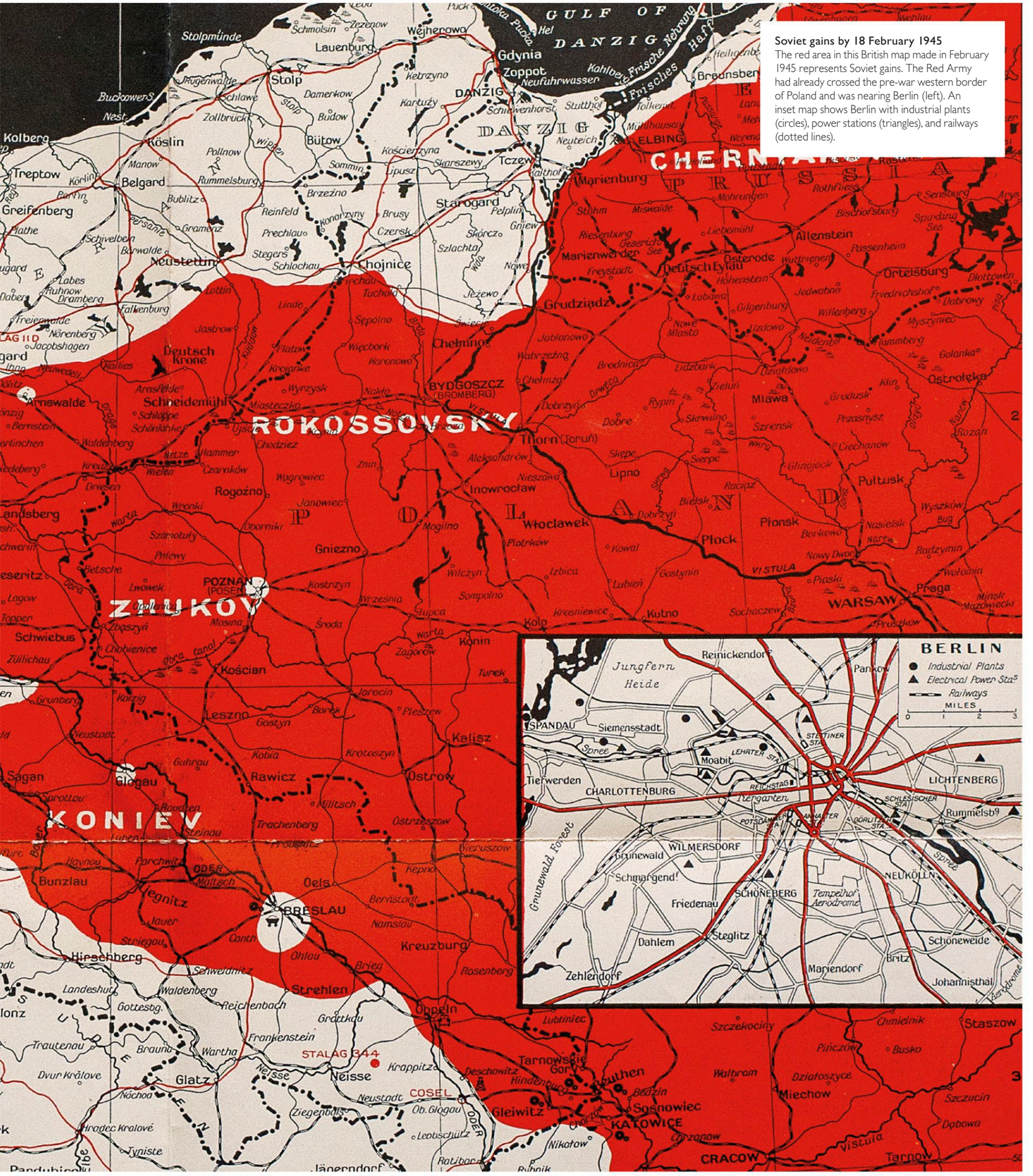
The Red Army's advance of summer 1944 had cleared the Germans from Soviet soil and penetrated Poland, Romania, and the Baltic states. However, it stalled outside Warsaw while the Germans crushed an uprising by the Polish Home Army (see pp.184–85). To the south, Soviet forces invaded Bulgaria before taking the Yugoslav capital Belgrade with Josip Broz Tito's partisans. In Hungary, the Red Army beat a path to Budapest in December, but took almost two months to capture the city, which was defended by German and Hungarian forces.

Overwhelming forces

The final push into Germany began on 12 January 1945 with an offensive by Marshal Zhukov's 1st Ukrainian Front, joined two days later by Marshal Konev's 1st Belorussian Front (see right). With more than two million men and 700 tanks, the armies advanced almost 500 km (300 miles) by early February, with Zhukov penetrating the industrial area of Silesia, and Konev reaching the River Oder, less than 70 km (45 miles) east of Berlin. The Soviet advance liberated Auschwitz on 27 January, and droves of German civilian refugees fled west, panicked by reports of Soviet atrocities. Zhukov halted at the Oder to resupply his army, while in the north the Soviets took control of East Prussia and the Baltic states. The Soviets began their final assault on 16 April (see pp.242–43). After four days Zhukov broke the defences; by 20 April Berlin was encircled. On 25 April, US and Soviet troops met triumphantly at Torgau on the Elbe.

△ **The Allies meet**
A lieutenant from the US 69th Infantry Division (in helmet) poses with soldiers from the Soviet 58th Guards Division in Torgau, Germany, in April 1945. The site would become the border of their future military occupation zones.




GULF OF DANZIG
Gdynia
Zoppot
DANZIG
Stolp
Stolpmünde
Lauenburg
Köslin
Kolberg
Treptow
Belgard
Greifenberg
Neustettin
Chojnice
Starogard
Tczew
Marienburg
Marienwerder
Deutsch Eylau
Allenstein
Ortelsburg
Grudziądz
Chełmno
BYDGOSZCZ (BROMBERG)
Thorn (Toruń)
Deutsch Krone
Schneidemühl
Arnswalde
ROKOSSOVSKY
Inowrocław
Włocławek
Płock
Mława
Ostrołęka
Pułtusk
Płonsk
Rogoźno
Gniezno
POZNAN (POSEN)
ZHUKOV
Kutno
Konin
Kościan
Leszno
Kalisz
Rawicz
Ostrów
Glogau
Sagan
KONIEV
Bunzlau
Liegnitz
BRESLAU
Oels
Hirschberg
Kreuzburg
Strehlen
Oppeln
Gleiwitz
Sosnowiec
KATOWICE
CRACOW
Tarnowskie Gory
Beuthen
Neisse
Glatz
COSEL
STALAG 344
Tarnow
Staszow
Miechow
Pinczow
Busko
Vistula
WARSAW
Praga
Radzymin
Wołomin
Pruszkow
Mlawa
Ciechanow
Przasnysz
Szrensk
Lipno
Rypin
Lidzbark
Bielsk
Nowy Dwor
Piaski
Kowal
Lubień
Gostynin
Sochaczew
Krosniewice
Kolo
Ostrzeszow
Wieruszow
Militsch
Trachenberg
Namslau
Brieg
Rosenberg
Ohlau
Schweidnitz
Waldenberg
Reichenbach
Frankenstein
Gottesbg.
Landeshut
Trautenau
Braunau
Wartha
Dvur Králové
Hradec Kralové
Tyniste
Nachod
Ziegenhals
Leobschütz
Ratibor
Nikolow
Deschowitz
Krappitz
Hindenburg
Beazin
Waltbrom
Dziatoszyce
Szczekociny
Chmielnik
Szczucin
Dąbowa
Tarnow
Vistula
Lubtiniec
Grottkau
Oder
Elbe
Saale
Weser
Rhine
Danube
Frische Nehrung
Frisches Haff
Kahlberg
Pillau
Hel
Pucker Bucht
Elbing
Braunsberg
Heiligenbeil
Mohrungen
Rastenburg
Sensburg
Spirding See
Bischofsburg
Passenheim
Osterode
Hohenstein
Gilgenburg
Willenberg
Friedrichshof
Dabrowy
Myszyniec
Nerdenbg
Hammerg
Golanka
Klin
Grudusk
Przasnysz
Ciechanow
Ghinojck
Racjaz
Nasielsk
Wyszków
Bug
Narew
Radzymin
Wołomin
Minsk Mazowiecki
Pruszkow
Sochaczew
Kutno
Kolo
Konin
Turek
Pleszew
Kalisz
Ostrow
Krotoszyn
Kobia
Guhrau
Glogau
Sagan
Sprottau
Bunzlau
Liegnitz
Jauer
Striegau
Hirschberg
Schweidnitz
Waldenberg
Reichenbach
Gottesbg.
Landeshut
Trautenau
Braunau
Wartha
Glatz
Neisse
Krappitz
Neustadt
COSEL
Ob. Glogau
Leobschütz
Ratibor
Nikolow
Gleiwitz
Sosnowiec
KATOWICE
Chorzow
Orzenow
CRACOW
Tarnow
Staszow
Miechow
Pinczow
Busko
Szczucin
Dąbowa
Dziatoszyce
Waltbrom
Beazin
Deschowitz
Hindenburg
Tarnowskie Gory
Beuthen
Oppeln
Grottkau
Frankenstein
Neisse
Ziegenhals
Nachod
Hradec Kralové
Tyniste
Dvur Králové
Glatz
Braunau
Trautenau
Landeshut
Gottesbg.
Waldenberg
Reichenbach
Schweidnitz
Hirschberg
Liegnitz
Jauer
Striegau
Bunzlau
Sagan
Sprottau
Glogau
Guhrau
Kobia
Krotoszyn
Ostrow
Kalisz
Pleszew
Turek
Konin
Kolo
Kutno
Sochaczew
Krosniewice
Gostynin
Lubień
Izbica
Kowal
Piaski
Nowy Dwor
Radzymin
Wołomin
Minsk Mazowiecki
Pruszkow
Praga
WARSAW
VISTULA
Płock
Płonsk
Pułtusk
Mława
Ciechanow
Przasnysz
Szrensk
Lipno
Rypin
Lidzbark
Bielsk
Nowy Dwor
Piaski
Kowal
Lubień
Gostynin
Sochaczew
Krosniewice

FINAL STRUGGLES IN ITALY

In 1944, the Allies pushed northwards through Italy, eventually forcing the Germans behind the Gothic Line – a formidable defensive line that ran the width of the country. Following a winter of military stalemate, the Allies achieved a decisive breakthrough in spring 1945 that finally brought the war in Italy to an end.

German field marshal Albert Kesselring continued to frustrate the pursuing Allies by conducting a skilful defensive retreat. Under his orders, 15,000 slave labourers built the Gothic Line (also known as the Green Line) – a series of bunkers, anti-tank ditches, machine-gun posts, minefields, and other defences. The location of the Gothic Line in the Apennine Mountains meant that the most viable places for the Allies to attack were along both coasts and at a few mountain passes – points that the Germans heavily defended. In September 1944, some Allied divisions broke through at the eastern end of the line, but otherwise the barrier held out until the following spring, when the Allies launched a decisive offensive. The battle for the Gothic Line was one of the largest fought in the war, involving more than 1.2 million men.

As the Allies turned their focus to the Western Front after D-Day (see pp.186–87), the Italian campaign came to be seen as something of a sideshow. But for those involved, it was a long, punishing struggle that claimed the lives of around 250,000 soldiers and 150,000 non-combatants. Under Kesselring's orders, German troops responded brutally to any opposition, killing thousands of civilians in reprisal for partisan attacks or disobedience.

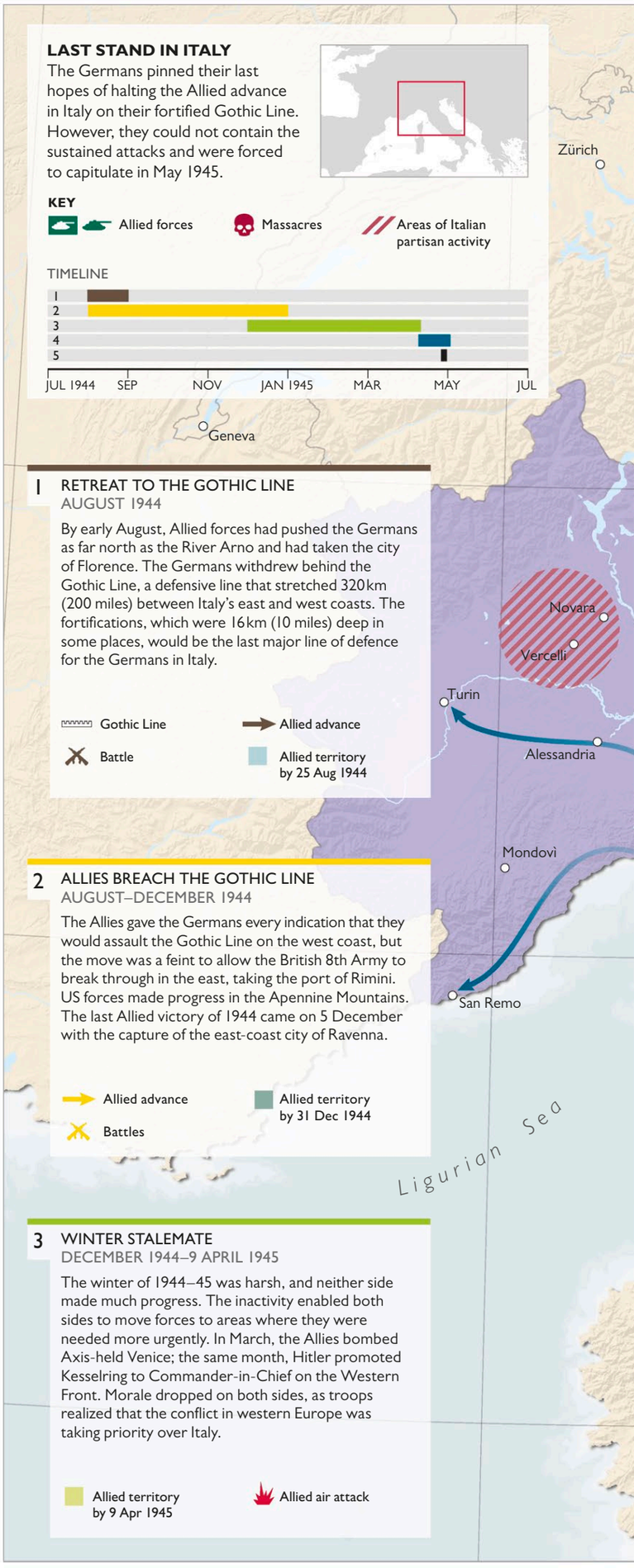
"A soldier's first duty is to obey, otherwise you might as well do away with soldiering."

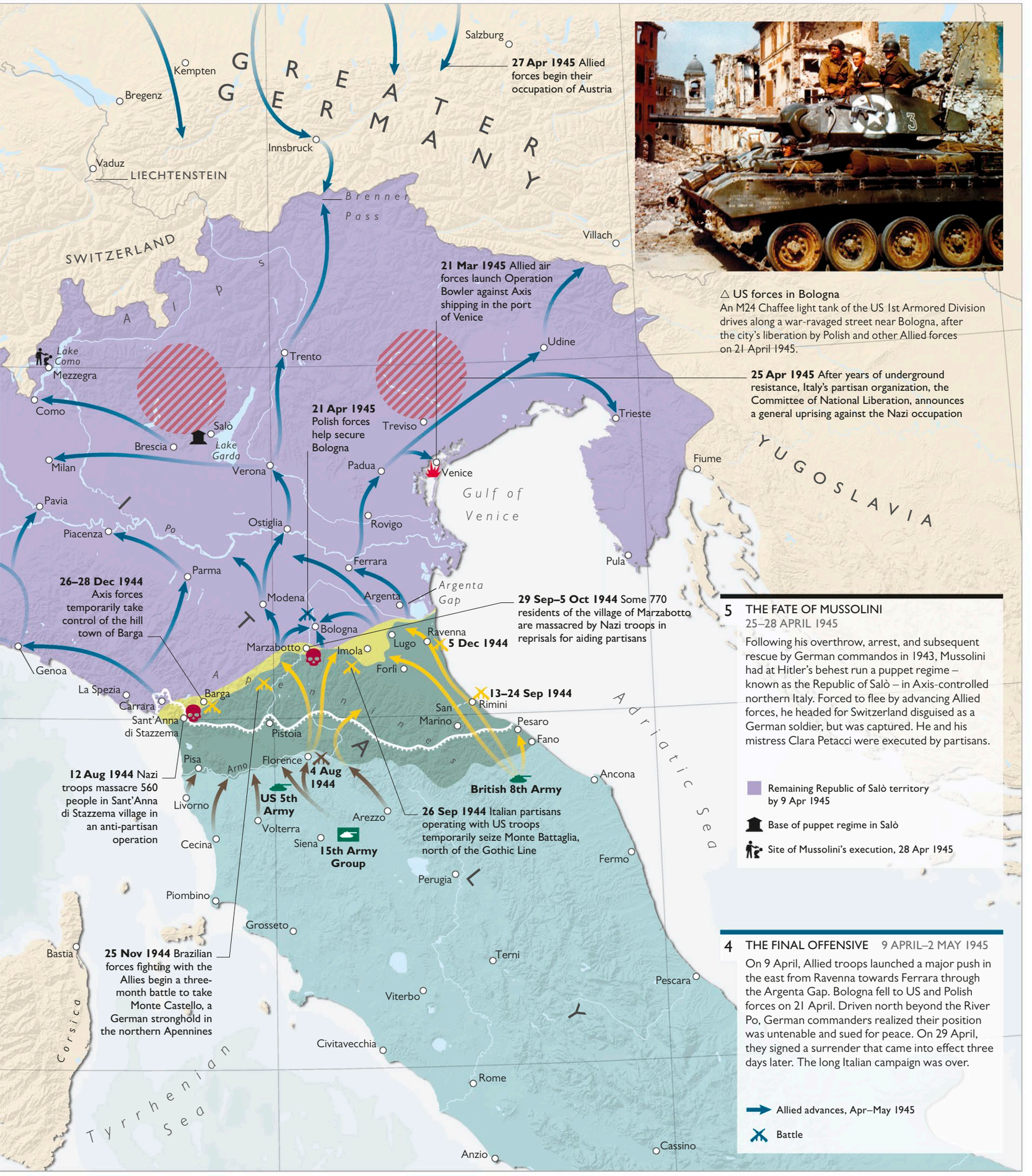
FIELD MARSHAL ALBERT KESSELRING, 1946

ITALIAN PARTISANS

After the fall of Rome in June 1944 (see pp.166–67), some pro-Fascist Italian forces continued to fight alongside German troops. However, they were matched by the number of partisans fighting against the occupiers and against Mussolini's Italian Social Republic (the Republic of Salò: see Box 5). Italian partisans liberated many cities before the arrival of the Allies, including Milan, Genoa, and Turin. After the German forces were expelled, partisan groups executed thousands of collaborators.

Partisans enter the freed city of Milan on 25 April 1945




GERMANY
Salzburg
Kempten
Bregenz
Innsbruck
Vaduz
LIECHTENSTEIN
Brenner Pass
SWITZERLAND
Villach
Alps
Lake Como
Mezzegra
Como
Trento
Udine
Salò
Lake Garda
Brescia
Milan
Verona
Treviso
Padua
Venice
Trieste
Fiume
YUGOSLAVIA
Gulf of Venice
Pavia
Piacenza
Po
Ostiglia
Rovigo
Ferrara
Pula
Parma
Modena
Argenta
Argenta Gap
Bologna
Marzabotto
Imola
Lugo
Ravenna
Forlì
Genoa
La Spezia
Carrara
Barga
Sant'Anna di Stazzema
Pistoia
San Marino
Rimini
Pesaro
Fano
Pisa
Arno
Florence
Ancona
Livorno
Volterra
Arezzo
Siena
Cecina
Perugia
Fermo
Piombino
Grosseto
Bastia
Corsica
Terni
Pescara
Viterbo
Civitavecchia
Rome
Anzio
Cassino
Tyrrhenian Sea
Adriatic Sea
Apennines
27 Apr 1945 Allied forces begin their occupation of Austria
21 Mar 1945 Allied air forces launch Operation Bowler against Axis shipping in the port of Venice
25 Apr 1945 After years of underground resistance, Italy's partisan organization, the Committee of National Liberation, announces a general uprising against the Nazi occupation
21 Apr 1945 Polish forces help secure Bologna
26–28 Dec 1944 Axis forces temporarily take control of the hill town of Barga
29 Sep–5 Oct 1944 Some 770 residents of the village of Marzabotto are massacred by Nazi troops in reprisals for aiding partisans
5 Dec 1944
13–24 Sep 1944
12 Aug 1944 Nazi troops massacre 560 people in Sant'Anna di Stazzema village in an anti-partisan operation
4 Aug 1944
US 5th Army
British 8th Army
15th Army Group
26 Sep 1944 Italian partisans operating with US troops temporarily seize Monte Battaglia, north of the Gothic Line
25 Nov 1944 Brazilian forces fighting with the Allies begin a three-month battle to take Monte Castello, a German stronghold in the northern Apennines
△ US forces in Bologna
An M24 Chaffee light tank of the US 1st Armored Division drives along a war-ravaged street near Bologna, after the city's liberation by Polish and other Allied forces on 21 April 1945.
5 THE FATE OF MUSSOLINI
25–28 APRIL 1945
Following his overthrow, arrest, and subsequent rescue by German commandos in 1943, Mussolini had at Hitler's behest run a puppet regime – known as the Republic of Salò – in Axis-controlled northern Italy. Forced to flee by advancing Allied forces, he headed for Switzerland disguised as a German soldier, but was captured. He and his mistress Clara Petacci were executed by partisans.
Remaining Republic of Salò territory by 9 Apr 1945
Base of puppet regime in Salò
Site of Mussolini's execution, 28 Apr 1945
4 THE FINAL OFFENSIVE 9 APRIL–2 MAY 1945
On 9 April, Allied troops launched a major push in the east from Ravenna towards Ferrara through the Argenta Gap. Bologna fell to US and Polish forces on 21 April. Driven north beyond the River Po, German commanders realized their position was untenable and sued for peace. On 29 April, they signed a surrender that came into effect three days later. The long Italian campaign was over.
Allied advances, Apr–May 1945
Battle

3 NORTHERN ATTACKS
18 APRIL–7 MAY 1945

To the north of Berlin, the 2nd Belorussian Front under General Konstantin Rokossovsky conducted a third offensive. After crossing the marshy ground around the River Oder, the army fanned out north-west towards Germany's Baltic coast. Caught by the Soviet advance, the German 3rd Panzer Army was successfully tied down in Mecklenburg and prevented from going to Berlin's aid for the remainder of the campaign.

2nd Belorussian Front advance, 18 Apr–7 May

2 PROGRESS TO THE SOUTH
16–19 APRIL 1945

While Zhukov was engaged at Seelow, where he lost some 30,000 troops and hundreds of tanks, the 1st Ukrainian Front under Konev was making progress south-east of Berlin. By 18 April Konev had crossed the River Spree and elements of his force were moving north-west towards Berlin, hoping to capture the city before Zhukov's forces could reach it.

1st Ukrainian Front advance, 16–19 Apr

1 THE BATTLE OF SEELOW HEIGHTS
16–19 APRIL 1945

The final drive on Berlin began on 16 April with a huge artillery and aerial bombardment of German positions to the east of the capital. Zhukov's 1st Belorussian Front attacked from the east but became entangled in the defences around the Seelow Heights, suffering heavy losses. They broke through the last line of the Seelow defences on 19 April, leaving nothing between them and Berlin.

Battle of Seelow Heights

1st Belorussian Front advance, 16–19 Apr

BERLIN SURROUNDED
Three Soviet armies punched through German defences and swept across Germany, rapidly encircling Berlin and cutting the city off.

4 BERLIN ENCIRCLED 20–28 APRIL 1945
Zhukov's forces swept west around the north of Berlin, while Konev advanced from the south, nearly trapping the German 9th Army; Konev sent a spearhead to join the 1st US Army at Torgau. When the two Soviet armies met at Ketzin on 25 April, Berlin was encircled. Hitler ordered the 12th Army to advance to Potsdam, join the retreating 9th Army, and counter-attack the Soviets. The plan was a disaster. The 9th Army was cut off and massacred in the forests near Halbe, and their remnants joined the 12th Army only to retreat towards the Elbe.

German pockets
German 12th Army advance
German 9th Army break out
German 12th Army retreat
Combined Soviet advance 20–25 Apr
Battle of Halbe
US advance to Torgau

2 May The British capture Wismar; Rokossovsky reaches the city five days later

2nd British Army

Stralsund, Ribnitz, Rostock, Greifswald, Demmin, Swinemünde, Wismar, Güstrow, Friedland, Waren, Mecklenburg, Neubrandenburg, Stettin, Oder, Prenzlau, Pritzwalk, Wittenberge, Schwedt, Oranienburg, Küstrin, Ketzin, Berlin, Potsdam, Brandenburg, Frankfurt-an-der-Oder, Beelitz, Dessau, Wittenberg, Luckau, Spree, Neisse, Herzberg, Torgau, Elsterwerda, Halle, Elbe, Kamenz, Dresden

26 Apr The 3rd Panzer Army is pinned down at Mecklenburg

German 3rd Panzer Army

26 Apr Rokossovsky captures Stettin

2nd Belorussian Front

GREATER GERMANY

16–19 Apr Battle of Seelow Heights; around 1 million Soviet soldiers attack the defences known as the "Gates of Berlin"

9th US Army

25 Apr Soviet armies meet at Ketzin

1st Belorussian Front

24 Apr–1 May The Battle of Halbe claims the lives of 60,000 soldiers on each side, as well as up to 10,000 civilians

German 12th Army

German 9th Army

1st US Army

1st Ukrainian Front

25 Apr Soviet and US armies meet at Torgau (see p.238)

◁ **Berlin taken**
The Soviet flag is raised over the Reichstag. This photo, taken by Yevgeny Khaldei on 2 May, became an iconic image of the war.

THE FALL OF BERLIN

In April 1945, the city of Berlin – already devastated by two years of Allied bombing – faced an overwhelming Red Army advance that drove the war in Europe to its bloody finale. The human cost was vast on both sides as vengeful Soviet troops attacked the German capital.

By mid-April 1945, the Red Army had amassed 2.5 million troops, 6,000 tanks, and more than 40,000 artillery pieces along the Rivers Oder and Neisse in preparation for their final assault on Berlin. Caught between the advancing British and American armies to the west and the Red Army's 200 divisions to the east were around 1 million German soldiers and 1,500 tanks. Many of the German soldiers were sick, wounded, or starving, but found themselves motivated to fight by their fear of what the Red Army might do in retribution for the millions of Soviet soldiers killed in the war.

Wishing to avoid a clash between the US and the Soviets, Eisenhower told Stalin that the US would not advance on Berlin. Stalin did not believe this and sped up his plans, pitting two generals – Konev and Zhukov – against each other in a race for the capital. Following a massive artillery bombardment of the city, the Red Army surrounded Berlin by 25 April. Hitler, hiding in his bunker, pinned his hopes on a planned counter-attack by his 9th and 12th Armies. It never came. Instead, the Red Army closed in and, as it tightened its grip on the city centre, Hitler and Goebbels committed suicide. Berlin surrendered to the Soviets on 2 May, and five days later the war in Europe was over.

GERMANY OVERRUN

Prevented from escaping westwards by the advancing British and American armies, Germany's remaining armies were overwhelmed by the Red Army in just a few weeks from April to May 1945. By the time Berlin surrendered on 2 May, Hitler had already been dead for two days.

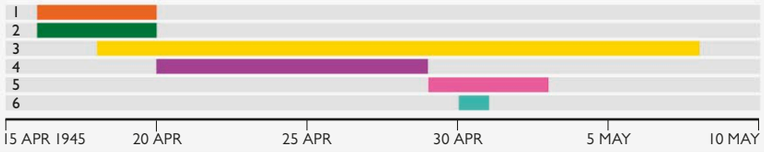
KEY

- British and US forces
- Soviet forces
- German forces
- German defensive lines
- Front lines of German counter-attacks
- German territory, 28 Apr

ALLIED TERRITORIAL GAINS

- 15 Apr
- 18 Apr
- 25 Apr
- 28 Apr
- Urban areas

TIMELINE



FINAL DAYS IN BERLIN

In the last days of the Battle of Berlin, the Soviets stormed the heart of the Nazi government while, beneath the city streets, the drama of Hitler's final days played out.

5 BATTLE IN THE CITY 29 APRIL–2 MAY 1945

Berlin's defence was left to a muddled group of 100,000 men and boys commanded by General Helmuth Weidling. They could not prevent the Soviet soldiers from crossing the River Spree on 29 April and taking the Ministry of the Interior and Gestapo headquarters. By 30 April, the Soviets controlled the Reichstag, and Weidling was running short of ammunition. The remnants of the Berlin garrison tried to escape the city and surrender to the Americans, but only a handful made it. On 2 May, Soviet troops captured the Reichs Chancellery and the city surrendered.

Soviet attacks

6 HITLER'S FATE 30 APRIL 1945

As the Soviets closed in on his bunker beneath the Reichs Chancellery, Hitler raged, blaming his generals for the encroaching defeat. Just after midnight on 29 April, he married his mistress, Eva Braun, and finalized his will. The next day, Hitler shot himself and Braun took cyanide. Goebbels became the Chancellor of Germany, but on 1 May, he too committed suicide. With the high command fleeing, dead, or captured, Weidling was left to negotiate with the Soviets.

Site of Hitler's suicide in underground bunker

VE DAY

Germany's surrender on 7 May 1945 was celebrated across the Western world the following day. Hitler had killed himself in his bunker eight days previously, and war in Europe had finally ended.

△ **Special edition**
A commemorative edition of the UK magazine *Picture Post* celebrates VE Day. The magazine had previously campaigned against the Nazi regime.

On 7 May 1945, the Supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, accepted the unconditional surrender of all German land, sea, and air forces at his headquarters in Reims, in northeastern France. In Britain, the news that the surrender document had been signed was broadcast that evening on the BBC. The following day, which was named Victory in Europe Day (usually abbreviated to VE Day), was declared a national holiday.

Celebrating victory

Even before the start of the official celebrations, the festivities began. In London, more than a million people took to the streets, while celebratory bonfires blazed the length and breadth of the country. Effigies of Hitler were burned on many of them. In America, the celebrations were slightly more subdued, primarily because the US was still mourning the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had died less than a month earlier. However, 15,000 policemen were still mobilized to control the huge crowds that had massed in Times Square, New York. There were also huge celebrations in Paris, with parades on the Champs-Élysées, and in France 8 May (*La féte de la Victoire*) continues to be a public holiday. In the USSR, however, because Stalin refused to recognize the signature at Reims and insisted on a formal surrender ceremony in Berlin on 8 May, celebrations did not take place until 9 May.

△ **Nazi downfall**
Soldiers from the US 7th Army fly the Stars and Stripes flag to celebrate victory, perched on what had been Hitler's viewing podium in the Luitpold Arena, Nuremberg, where the Nazi Party's infamous rallies had been held.

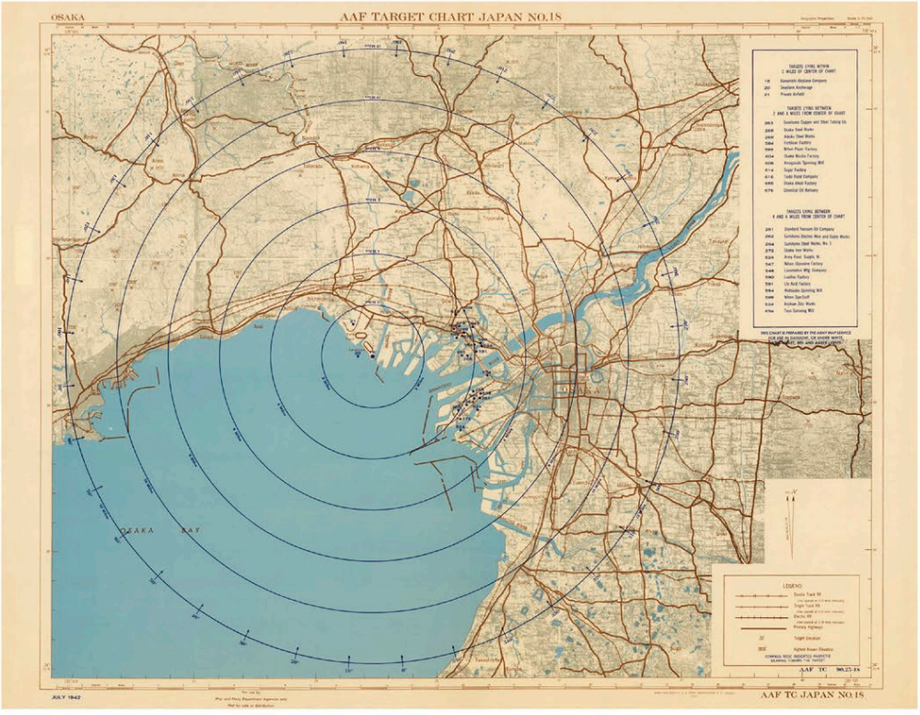
Dancing for joy
British girls dance with US GIs in London during the celebrations to mark the end of war in Europe. Thousands headed to Buckingham Palace, where Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the Royal Family greeted the ecstatic crowd.

DEFEAT OF JAPAN

By 1945, the eventual outcome of the war with Japan seemed inevitable. However, it was unclear how Japan's leaders could be brought to acknowledge defeat. In the end, the planned invasion of the Japanese mainland proved unnecessary, since the Allies' nuclear destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was followed by Japan's surrender a few days later.

△ **Display of might**
A propaganda poster boasts of Japanese air power. In reality, by 1945 Japan's aircraft were outnumbered and outclassed by those of their opponents.

▽ **Targeting cities**
A US Army Air Forces map designates a key industrial target in Osaka, Japan. Over 200,000 Japanese were killed in non-nuclear strategic bombing.



By any objective measure, Japan had already lost the war by spring 1945. US aircraft based on Pacific islands were carrying out mass raids against Japanese cities, and a naval blockade both starved the civilian population and crippled the nation's war machine through a lack of fuel and other supplies. Japan's overseas armies were giving up territory that they had conquered in Burma, the Philippines, and New Guinea.

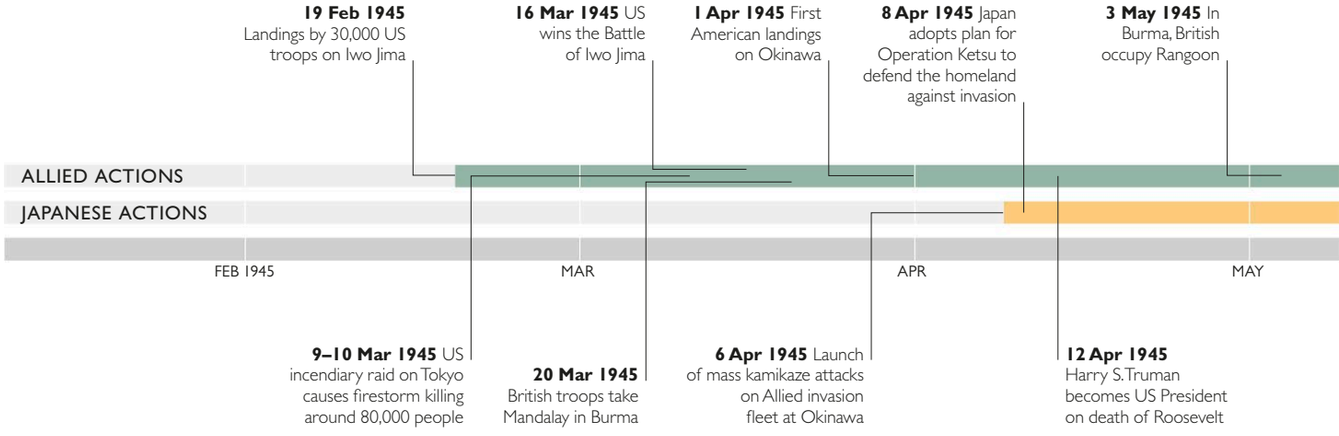
When Germany surrendered in May 1945, it meant that the military resources of the Allies could now be transferred to the Pacific theatre. However, the Japanese continued to show every sign of determination to fight to the last man, as exhibited in the fierce battles for Iwo Jima and Okinawa; indeed, America believed that the war against Japan could continue well into 1946. In June 1945, the US Army planned to land in Japan the following November, with follow-up landings in March 1946. The expectation was of heavy losses in prolonged campaigns.

Japan faces up to defeat

The Japanese leadership finally faced up to the certainty of defeat after the fall of Okinawa in June. Knowing the war was lost, the Japanese war council split into two factions known as the "peace" and "war" parties. The peace party sought some way to end the conflict that would leave Japan independent and unoccupied – a prospect that the Allies would probably never have accepted. The war party favoured a fight to the death, devising a plan for

ENDGAME IN THE PACIFIC WAR

In the first half of 1945, the US suffered mounting casualties in fighting against resolute Japanese troops. Some 26,000 Americans were killed or wounded in the battle for the small island of Iwo Jima, and the subsequent capture of Okinawa cost the US over 50,000 casualties. In August, however, the dropping of atomic bombs on two Japanese cities, and a Soviet invasion of Manchuria, propelled the Japanese government into surrendering at last.



◁ **Soviet offensive**
Motorized Soviet infantry advance into Japanese-occupied Manchuria in August 1945. The invasion of Manchuria by the Soviet Union was a major factor in persuading Japan to recognize the need for surrender.

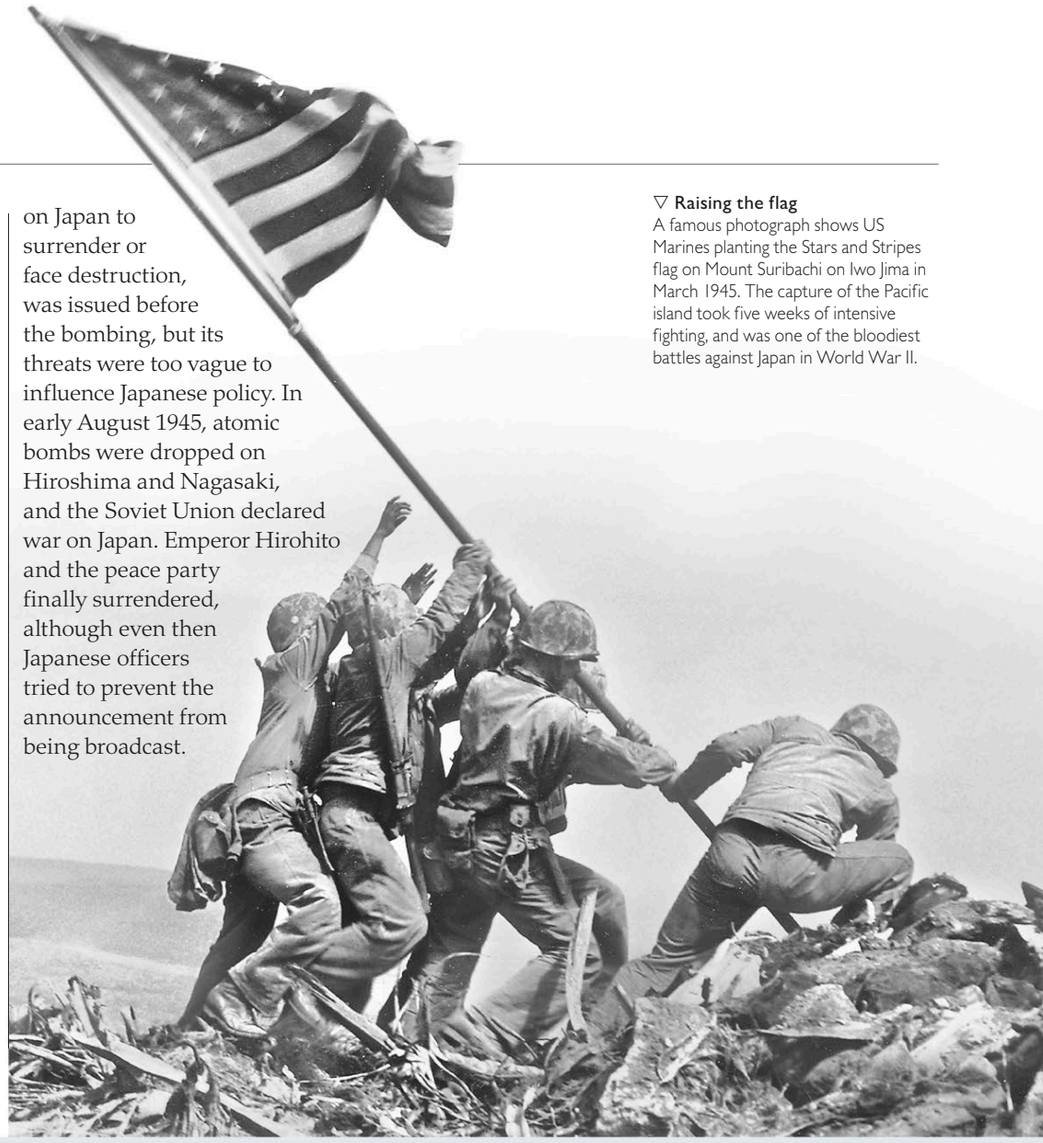
the defence of the homeland involving the entire population in suicidal resistance, under the slogan "The Glorious Death of One Hundred Million". Emperor Hirohito leaned towards support of the peace party, but at this point no decisions were taken. The peace party's hopes for a compromise deal with the Allies was unrealistic, and the war party remained adamant.

The dropping of the bomb

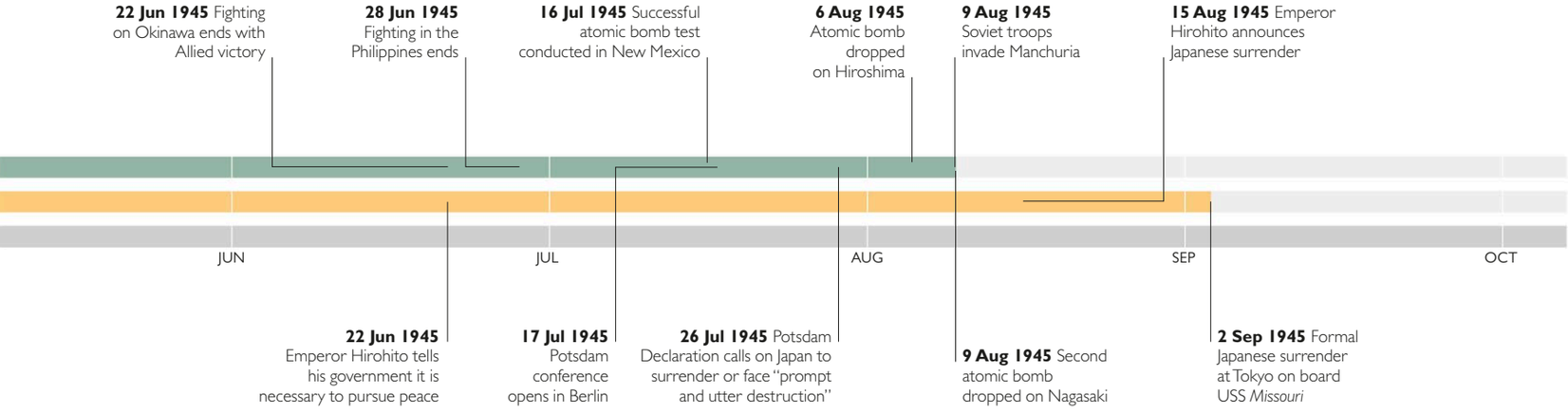
Unknown to all but a few, even in the Allied political and military leadership, the Manhattan Project had been pursuing development of the atomic bomb, initially intended for use against Germany. The new weapon was successfully tested the day before the opening of an Allied conference at Potsdam, Germany, one of the aims of which was to encourage the Soviet Union to join the war against Japan. Although some doubts were raised behind the scenes, vetoing the dropping of atomic bombs on Japanese cities was never seriously considered. The Potsdam Declaration, calling on Japan to surrender or face destruction, was issued before the bombing, but its threats were too vague to influence Japanese policy. In early August 1945, atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the Soviet Union declared war on Japan. Emperor Hirohito and the peace party finally surrendered, although even then Japanese officers tried to prevent the announcement from being broadcast.

"Despite the best that has been done by everyone… the war situation has developed not necessarily to Japan's advantage."

EMPEROR HIROHITO, SURRENDER BROADCAST, 15 AUGUST 1945



▽ **Raising the flag**
A famous photograph shows US Marines planting the Stars and Stripes flag on Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima in March 1945. The capture of the Pacific island took five weeks of intensive fighting, and was one of the bloodiest battles against Japan in World War II.



1 THE BATTLE OF MINDORO
13 DECEMBER 1944–1 JANUARY 1945

As a prelude to the invasion of Luzon, troops from the US 6th Army landed on Mindoro on 13 December. The 1,000 or so Japanese troops on the island were quickly overcome with the help of Filipino guerrillas. The Americans immediately began to build airfields for fighter planes supporting the planned invasion of north Luzon, and for bombers operating over the South China Sea.

US attacks on Mindoro, 13 Dec 1944

Area under US occupation, 1 Jan 1945

2 INVASION OF NORTH LUZON
9 JANUARY–11 FEBRUARY 1945

Following a naval bombardment of Japanese positions onshore, the US 6th Army landed on Luzon at Lingayen on 9 January. While part of the 175,000-strong force moved on San Jose, the rest headed for Manila. Fierce fighting at the Clark Air Base held them up, but by 31 January they could move on Manila. US forces entered Manila from the north on 3 February and the south on 11 February.

US amphibious landings, 9–31 Jan 1945

US advance to 11 Feb 1945

Concentrations of Japanese forces, Feb 1945

Clark Air Base

9 Jan

29 Jan

31 Jan

3rd Fleet

7th Fleet

2–9 Jan 1945
The US 7th Fleet and 3rd Fleet strike Japanese defences to prepare the way for an invasion of Luzon

15 Dec 1944
Work begins on air bases for the invasion of Luzon

4 Feb 1945
San Jose falls to US forces

3 Feb–3 Mar 1945
More than 100,000 Filipino civilians are massacred by the Japanese during the Battle of Manila

20 Oct–25 Dec 1944
The last Japanese are cleared from Leyte two months after the initial US landings

Oct 1944–Sep 1945
General MacArthur's command group controls operations

South-West Pacific Army Group

Cape Engaño
Aparri
Laoag
Vigan
Tuguegarao
Luzon
San Fernando
Bagabag
14th Area Army
Baler Bay
Lingayen Gulf
Lingayen
San Jose
San Miguel
Cabanatuan
Dingalan Bay
San Fernando
Calumpit
San Antonio
Olongapo
Bataan Peninsula
Mariveles
Corregidor
Manila
Lamon Bay
Daet
Nasugbu
San Pablo
Calauag
Lubang
Batangas
Lucena
Naga
Mindoro
PHILIPPINES
Legazpi
San Bernardino Strait
Sibuyan Sea
Calbayog
Samar
Roxas
35th Army
8th Army
Tacloban
Panay
Ormoc
Leyte
Leyte Gulf
Cadiz
Iloilo
Bacolod
San Carlos
6th Army
Cebu
Surigao Strait
Negros
Cebu
Bohol
Surigao
Palawan
Puerto Princesa

MACARTHUR'S RETURN

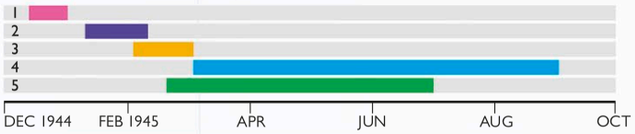
General MacArthur's promised return to the Philippines plunged thousands of US troops, supported by Filipino guerrillas, into a protracted battle with the Japanese soldiers occupying the islands, which lasted over six months.

KEY

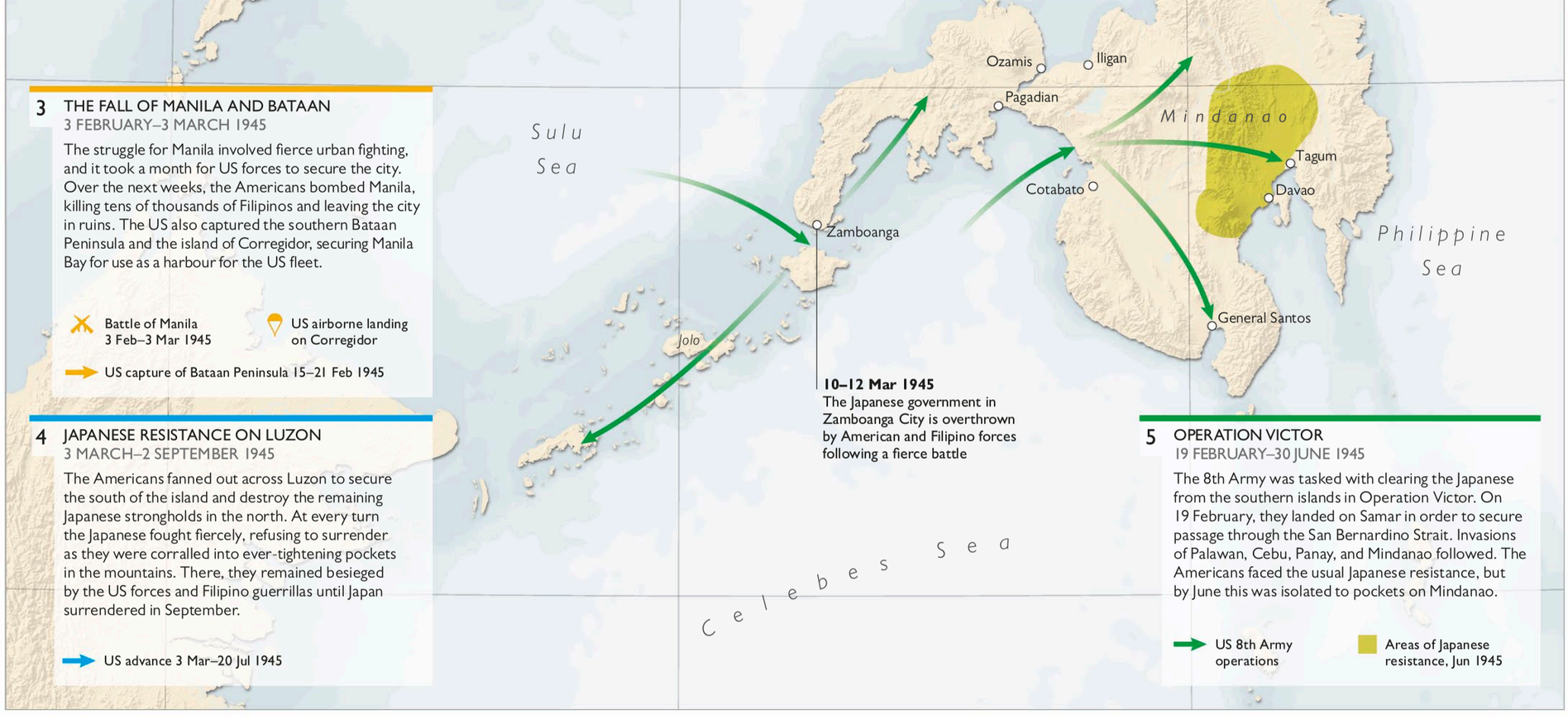
US forces

Japanese forces

TIMELINE



△ MacArthur on Luzon
General Douglas MacArthur lands at Lingayen Gulf just five hours after the first-wave assault on the beach.



RETAKING THE PHILIPPINES

The US Navy's success in the Battle of Leyte Gulf in October 1944 was followed by a painful advance through the Philippine islands from January 1945 that cost the lives of more than 10,000 US soldiers, 200,000 Japanese soldiers, and 120,000 civilians. The campaign tied up US troops for longer than the US's General Douglas MacArthur expected, and with little strategic need.

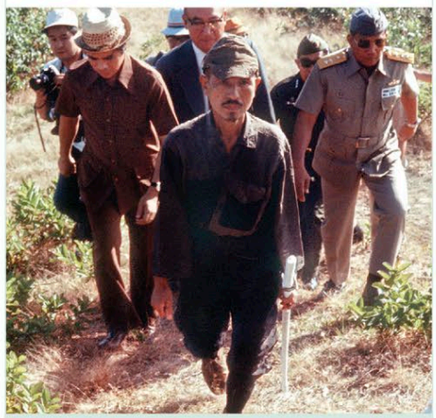
Having broken the Imperial Japanese Navy's power in the Battle of Leyte Gulf (see pp.214–15), the US Navy saw little to gain in clearing the Japanese from the Philippine islands, with some strategists favouring a direct assault on Japan. General MacArthur, however, having promised to return after defeat in 1942, was set on retaking the Philippines. In January 1945, he began an invasion of the main island, Luzon, where around 250,000 soldiers of the Japanese 14th Area Army under the command of General Tomoyuki Yamashita were concentrated in the north around Manila, and on the high ground leading into the Bataan Peninsula.

The main invasion of Luzon began with landings by forces from the US 6th Army at Lingayen Gulf. The Filipino guerrillas were eager to take back control after the brutality of the Japanese regime and supported the Americans by striking the Japanese forces and carrying out reconnaissance activities. Still, progress was slow and brutal in the face of the Japanese refusal to surrender. Manila finally fell on 3 March 1945, by which time the US 8th Army had begun to move through the southern islands. In both north and south, the Americans were kept occupied until the end of the war.

> *"Have your troops hoist the colors to its peak, and let no enemy ever haul them down."*
>
> GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR, PHILIPPINES, 1945

NO SURRENDER

Hiroo Onoda (1922–2014) was one of several Japanese soldiers who remained hidden in the Philippines' jungles, unaware or not believing that the war had ended. Cut off from his unit on Lubang Island in 1945, Onoda refused to surrender until his former commanding officer travelled to the Philippines in 1974 and relieved him of duty (below).



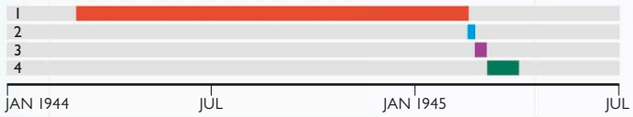
IWO JIMA OVERRUN

Over five bloody weeks in February and March 1945, US Marines spread across Iwo Jima, moving out from their beachheads to capture the island in four stages.

KEY

- Airstrip
- US TERRITORIAL GAINS, 1945
  - Beachhead on 19 Feb
  - by 24 Feb
  - by 1 Mar
  - by 9 Mar
  - by 14 Mar

TIMELINE



1 OPENING MOVES

MARCH 1944–18 FEBRUARY 1945

In 1944, General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, in charge of the 21,000 Japanese soldiers on Iwo Jima, began transforming the island into a fortress. He created a massive network of bunkers and hidden gun emplacements, digging 1,500 rooms in the island's rock and linking them with 18km (11 miles) of tunnels. Sheltering underground, the Japanese garrison was largely unaffected by the intense bombing of the island by US naval and air forces that had been launched to soften up the defences.

- Main lines of defence
- Secondary line of defence
- Artillery positions

2 THE INITIAL LANDINGS 19 FEBRUARY 1945

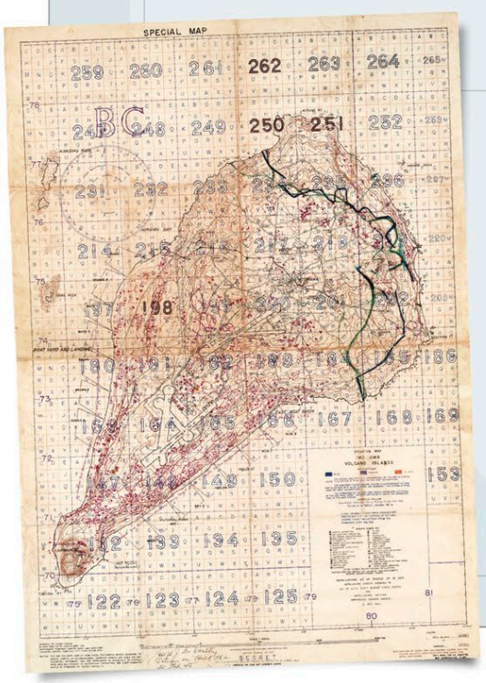
On 19 February, 30,000 men from the 3rd, 4th, and 5th US Marine Divisions landed on the beaches of south-east Iwo Jima. The Japanese opened fire on the Americans, who were exposed because they could not dig foxholes in the soft volcanic ash of the beach. By the time the Marines reached the west coast of the island, almost 2,000 of their men had been killed or wounded.

- US Marine divisions
- US landings

3 CAPTURE OF MOUNT SURIBACHI AND THE AIRFIELDS 20–24 FEBRUARY 1945

The Marines edged forward, capturing the first of Iwo Jima's two functioning airfields on 20 February and the second three days later. That same day a small group of Marines reached the summit of Mount Suribachi, the 169-m (554-ft) peak in the south of the island – an event recorded in what was one of the most iconic photographs to emerge from World War II (see p.247).

- Airfield
- Airfield (under construction)
- US advance 20–24 Feb 1945



◁ **Density of defences**
A US map from early 1945 plots all the observed Japanese gun emplacements and defensive installations (red) on Iwo Jima.

7 Mar 1945 The 3rd Marine Division captures Hill 362

Hill 362

23 Feb 1945 US Marines capture Airfield 2; a force of 300 Japanese soldiers launches a failed counter-attack two days later

Airfield 2

23 Feb 1945 US Marines capture Airfield 1; **4 Mar 1945** The first US B-29s land on the island

Airfield 1

19 Feb–14 Mar 1945 Sherman tanks equipped with flamethrowers, known as "Ronsons" or "Zippos", help to clear Japanese positions

7–18 Feb 1945 Japanese soldiers fire on US divers surveying the beach

4th Marine Division

3rd Marine Division

5th Marine Division

Jun 1944 Mount Suribachi is protected by more than 200 gun emplacements and 21 blockhouses
23 Feb 1945 The US flag is raised on Mount Suribachi, the highest point on Iwo Jima

PACIFIC OCEAN

IWO JIMA

4 NORTH TO THE "MEATGRINDER"
25 FEBRUARY–26 MARCH 1945

The Marines moved slowly northwards to attack the fortified ridges of Hill 362 and the area near Hill 382 known as the "Meatgrinder". Clearing the defenders, who were often hidden underground, was punishing work for the advancing US troops as there was little cover. By 7 March the Americans had taken both hills. On 14 March Iwo Jima was declared secure, although a few Japanese soldiers remained in isolated strongholds until the end of March.

- US advance 24 Feb–1 Mar 1945
- US advance 14 Mar 1945
- Last Japanese stronghold until 26 Mar 1945
- Heavy fortified terrain/high ground

IWO JIMA

The Japanese island of Iwo Jima, which lies some 1,300 km (800 miles) from mainland Japan, was a strategic target for the US. The Marines who took the island from the small number of Japanese forces based there in early 1945 encountered some of the bloodiest fighting of the Pacific War.

By the start of 1945, US forces had moved far west across the Pacific, reaching Leyte and Luzon in the Philippines and inflicting terrible damage on the Imperial Japanese Navy and its air force in the process. In February 1945, US Marines invaded the tiny Pacific island of Iwo Jima, a Japanese military base. Their aim was strategic: they wanted to secure the island's airfields, which would provide a base for Allied fighter planes needed to escort the bombers raiding Japan from the Marianas (see pp.252–53) – and for the B-29 bombers themselves.

The Japanese were aware of the impending threat and as a result had made their preparations: sending reinforcements to Iwo Jima, ordering the evacuation of its civilian population, and placing the island's defence into the hands of one of their most brilliant and experienced generals, Tadamichi Kuribayashi.

Lacking naval or air support and commanding a relatively small force, Kuribayashi knew that an American victory was near inevitable, but he was determined to make it as costly as possible, and to delay his enemy's advance. Instead of defending the island's landing beaches, he ordered the construction of a huge network of caves, tunnels, and pillboxes inland. The invading US troops on the surface – often without cover – were at the mercy of the defenders, who would suddenly emerge from their underground bunkers to launch attacks. Casualties were huge on both sides.

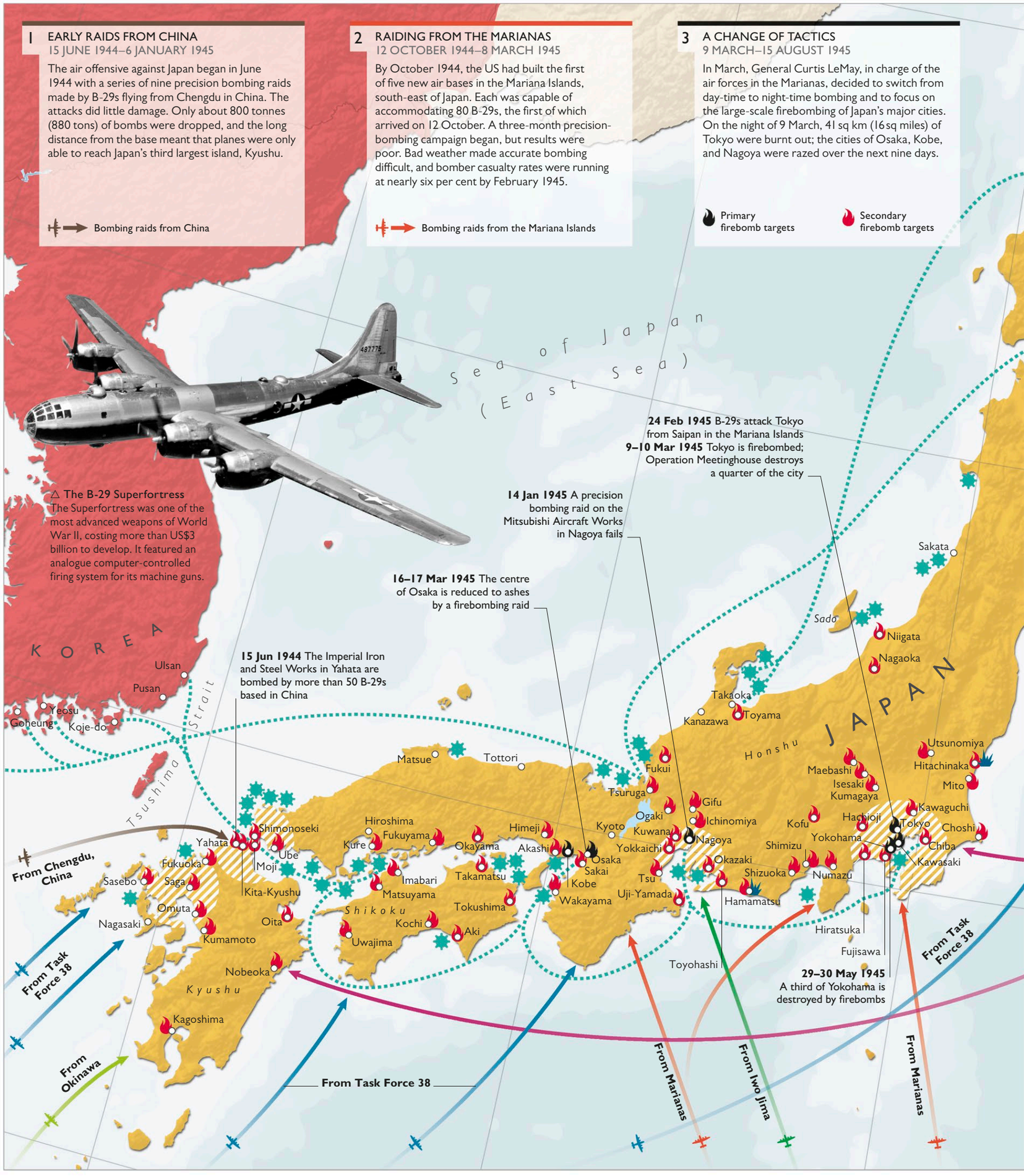
"Japan has started a war with a formidable enemy and we must brace ourselves accordingly."

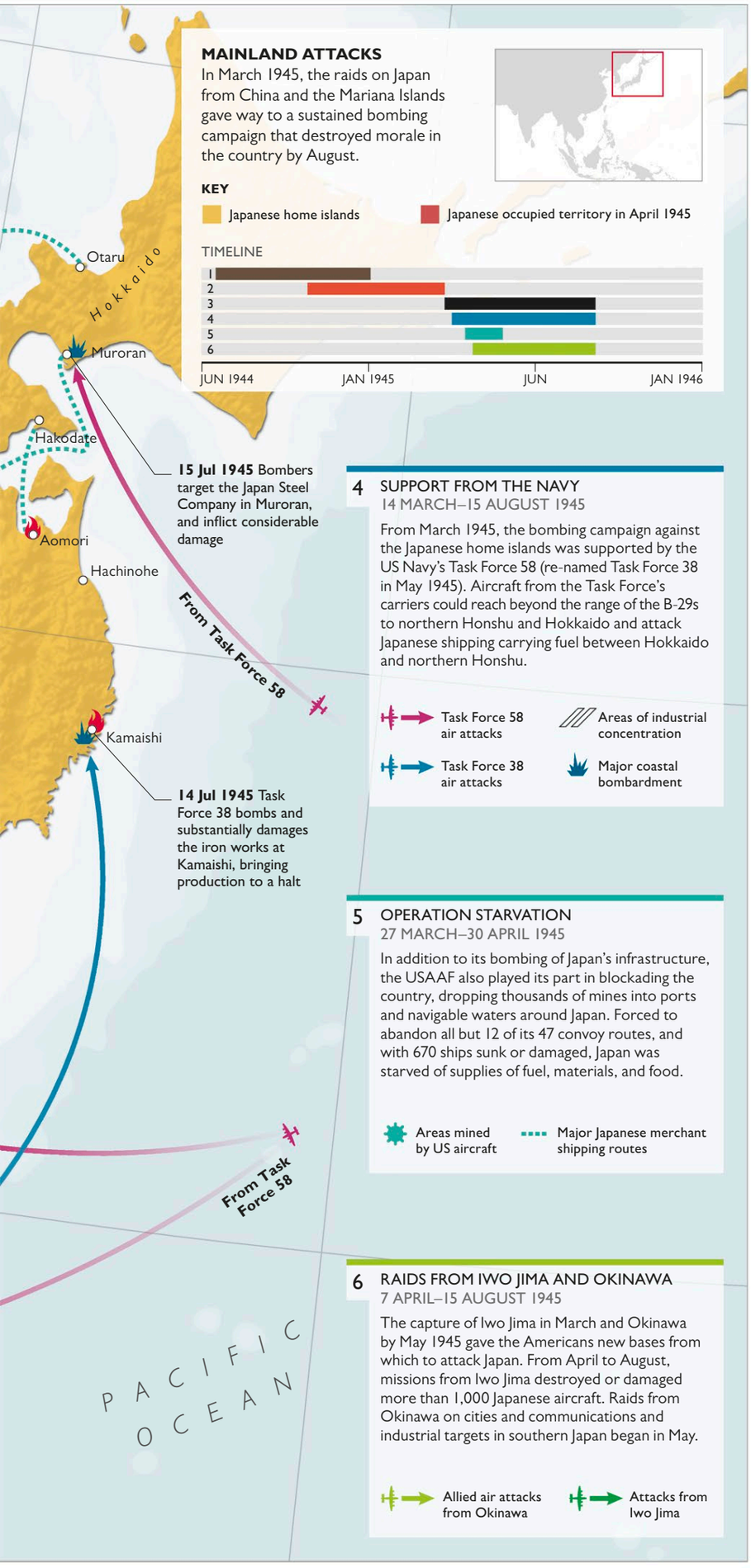
GENERAL TADAMICHI KURIBAYASHI, 1944

FIGHT TO THE DEATH

Over 20,000 of the 21,000 Japanese soldiers on Iwo Jima died in the fighting while following the instructions set out in General Kuribayashi's six "Courageous Battle Vows". The vows pledged soldiers to defend the island with all their strength, to attack the enemy with suicidal bravery, to not die until they had killed at least ten enemy soldiers, and to continue fighting to the last man.

US Marines destroy a Japanese bunker on Iwo Jima


1 EARLY RAIDS FROM CHINA
15 JUNE 1944–6 JANUARY 1945
The air offensive against Japan began in June 1944 with a series of nine precision bombing raids made by B-29s flying from Chengdu in China. The attacks did little damage. Only about 800 tonnes (880 tons) of bombs were dropped, and the long distance from the base meant that planes were only able to reach Japan's third largest island, Kyushu.
Bombing raids from China
2 RAIDING FROM THE MARIANAS
12 OCTOBER 1944–8 MARCH 1945
By October 1944, the US had built the first of five new air bases in the Mariana Islands, south-east of Japan. Each was capable of accommodating 80 B-29s, the first of which arrived on 12 October. A three-month precision-bombing campaign began, but results were poor. Bad weather made accurate bombing difficult, and bomber casualty rates were running at nearly six per cent by February 1945.
Bombing raids from the Mariana Islands
3 A CHANGE OF TACTICS
9 MARCH–15 AUGUST 1945
In March, General Curtis LeMay, in charge of the air forces in the Marianas, decided to switch from day-time to night-time bombing and to focus on the large-scale firebombing of Japan's major cities. On the night of 9 March, 41 sq km (16 sq miles) of Tokyo were burnt out; the cities of Osaka, Kobe, and Nagoya were razed over the next nine days.
Primary firebomb targets
Secondary firebomb targets
Sea of Japan (East Sea)
△ The B-29 Superfortress
The Superfortress was one of the most advanced weapons of World War II, costing more than US$3 billion to develop. It featured an analogue computer-controlled firing system for its machine guns.
24 Feb 1945 B-29s attack Tokyo from Saipan in the Mariana Islands
9–10 Mar 1945 Tokyo is firebombed; Operation Meetinghouse destroys a quarter of the city
14 Jan 1945 A precision bombing raid on the Mitsubishi Aircraft Works in Nagoya fails
16–17 Mar 1945 The centre of Osaka is reduced to ashes by a firebombing raid
15 Jun 1944 The Imperial Iron and Steel Works in Yahata are bombed by more than 50 B-29s based in China
29–30 May 1945 A third of Yokohama is destroyed by firebombs
KOREA
Ulsan
Pusan
Yeosu
Goheung
Koje-do
Tsushima Strait
JAPAN
Honshu
Shikoku
Kyushu
Sado
Sakata
Niigata
Nagaoka
Takaoka
Toyama
Kanazawa
Matsue
Tottori
Fukui
Tsuruga
Gifu
Ichinomiya
Ogaki
Kyoto
Kuwana
Nagoya
Yokkaichi
Tsu
Uji-Yamada
Toyohashi
Hamamatsu
Okazaki
Shizuoka
Shimizu
Numazu
Hiratsuka
Fujisawa
Yokohama
Tokyo
Hachioji
Kofu
Maebashi
Isesaki
Kumagaya
Utsunomiya
Hitachinaka
Mito
Kawaguchi
Choshi
Chiba
Kawasaki
Hiroshima
Fukuyama
Kure
Himeji
Okayama
Akashi
Osaka
Sakai
Kobe
Wakayama
Takamatsu
Tokushima
Imabari
Matsuyama
Kochi
Aki
Uwajima
Shimonoseki
Yahata
Ube
Moji
Kita-Kyushu
Fukuoka
Sasebo
Saga
Omuta
Nagasaki
Oita
Kumamoto
Nobeoka
Kagoshima
From Chengdu, China
From Task Force 38
From Okinawa
From Task Force 38
From Marianas
From Iwo Jima
From Marianas
From Task Force 38



THE BOMBING OF JAPAN

In June 1944, the Allies began the aerial bombardment of Japan. Aimed initially at shutting down Japanese industrial production for its war machine and cutting off the country's supplies, the campaign turned into a devastating assault on Japan's cities.

The Allies had long realized that the aerial bombardment of Japan would be an essential element in bringing the Japanese Empire to its knees. Early in the Pacific War, the US had launched a mostly unsuccessful air raid on Japan from an aircraft carrier – the Doolittle Raid of 18 April 1942 – but had not targeted the country since.

In early 1944, the US deployed the advanced B-29 Superfortress in the Pacific theatre. The aircraft was capable of carrying 9 tonnes (10 tons) of bombs over long distances and was used from June 1944 until the end of the war in the sustained bombing of the Japanese home islands. The campaign began poorly; raids from China proved problematic, and precision bombing did little to disrupt Japanese industry. However, as the campaign progressed and the USAAF changed tactics, carpet-bombing Japan's cities with napalm and incendiary bombs, the results were dramatic. By August, a third of Japan's buildings and more than 600 factories had been destroyed, tens of thousands of its citizens had been killed, millions were homeless, and Japanese morale was decimated.

"This fire left nothing but twisted, tumbled-down rubble in its path."

GENERAL CURTIS LEMAY ON THE BOMBING OF TOKYO

THE TOKYO FIRESTORM

On the night of 9–10 March 1945, the USAAF unleashed Operation Meetinghouse on Tokyo. In a devastating raid, 279 B-29s dropped 1,510 tonnes (1,665 tons) of bombs on the capital city. These napalm or gasoline and white phosphorus incendiary bombs ignited on impact, setting fire to huge swathes of the city, including the densely populated dock districts. A quarter of Tokyo's buildings were destroyed, leaving one million people homeless, and at least 80,000 people were killed.

Tokyo ablaze

THE BATTLE OF OKINAWA

As the conflict in Europe was nearing its end, the US was still fighting a brutal war in the Pacific. Its planned conquest of the isolated island of Okinawa resulted in one of the bloodiest battles of the entire conflict, which earned the nickname "Typhoon of Steel".

With their assault on Iwo Jima still under way (see pp.250–51), US commanders began preparing for Operation Iceberg – the invasion of Okinawa, the largest island in the Ryukyu Archipelago. Just 96 km (60 miles) long and 32 km (20 miles) wide at its widest, Okinawa is equidistant from Taiwan, Japan, and China, and US strategists saw it as the ideal base for the final assaults on the main Japanese islands. Like Iwo Jima, Okinawa was heavily fortified, with artillery hidden in caves, and garrisoned by 100,000 men under Lieutenant General Ushijima Mitsuru.

Familiar with the fierce determination of the Japanese army and aware that losses in the battle would probably overtake those on Iwo Jima, the US began the campaign with a massive bombardment to soften up the island's defences. This was followed by the US military's biggest amphibious landing of the Pacific War. Nonetheless, it took the US forces more than two months to capture the entire island. In the end 12,000 US soldiers, 100,000 Japanese soldiers, and 100,000 civilians died in a campaign that was made obsolete by the events at Hiroshima and Nagasaki (see pp.258–59).

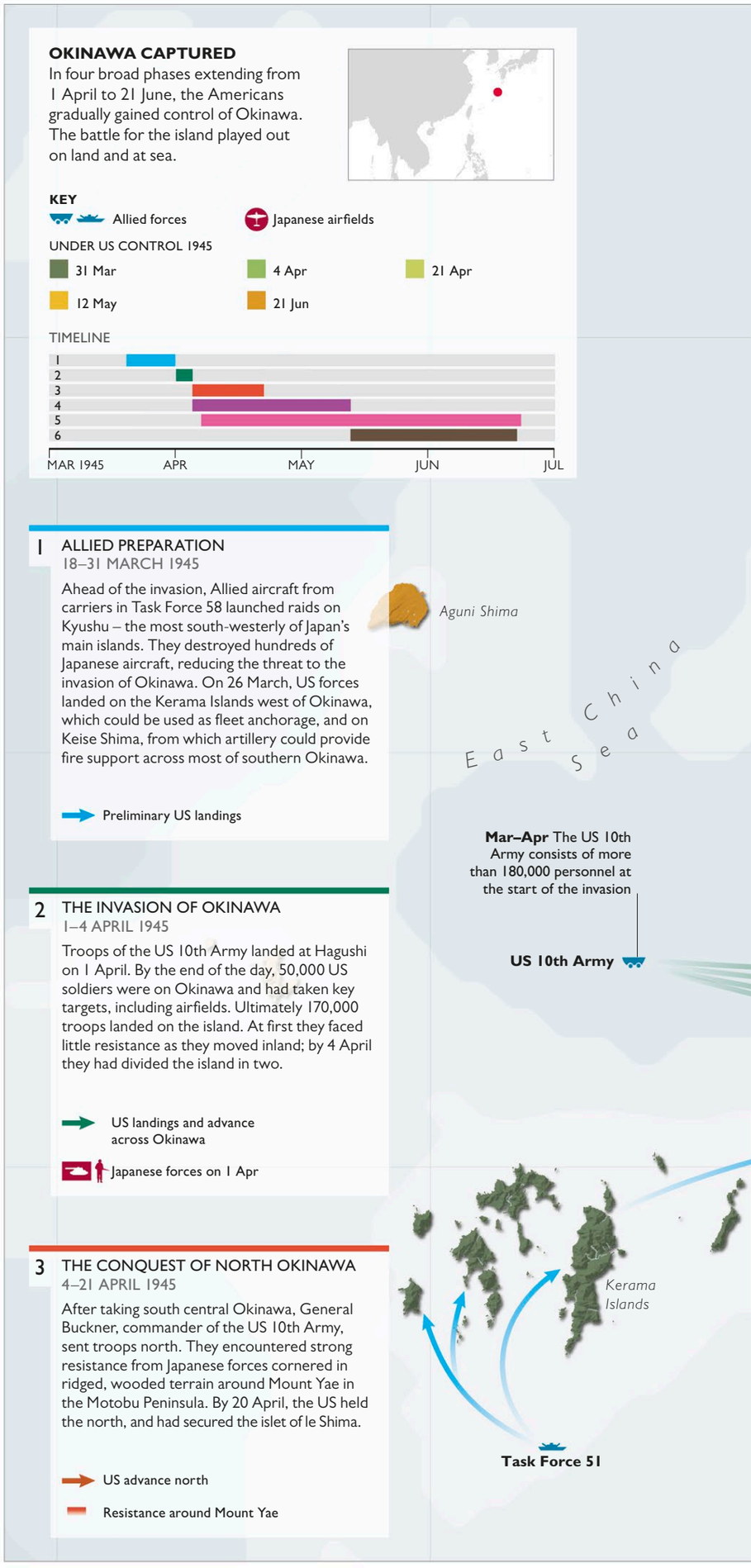
"The Japanese bayonets were fixed; ours weren't. We used the knives…"

FORMER US MARINE WILLIAM MANCHESTER, 1987

CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

Both Japanese and American soldiers committed atrocities against civilians during the battle. The Japanese also confiscated the Okinawans' food, causing mass starvation. When an American victory seemed certain, thousands of Okinawans committed suicide under pressure from the government. Among the civilians killed on Okinawa were also many who had been forced to serve in the Japanese army.

A US Marine shares his rations with children on Okinawa



6 COLLAPSE OF THE SOUTHERN DEFENCE
12 MAY–21 JUNE 1945

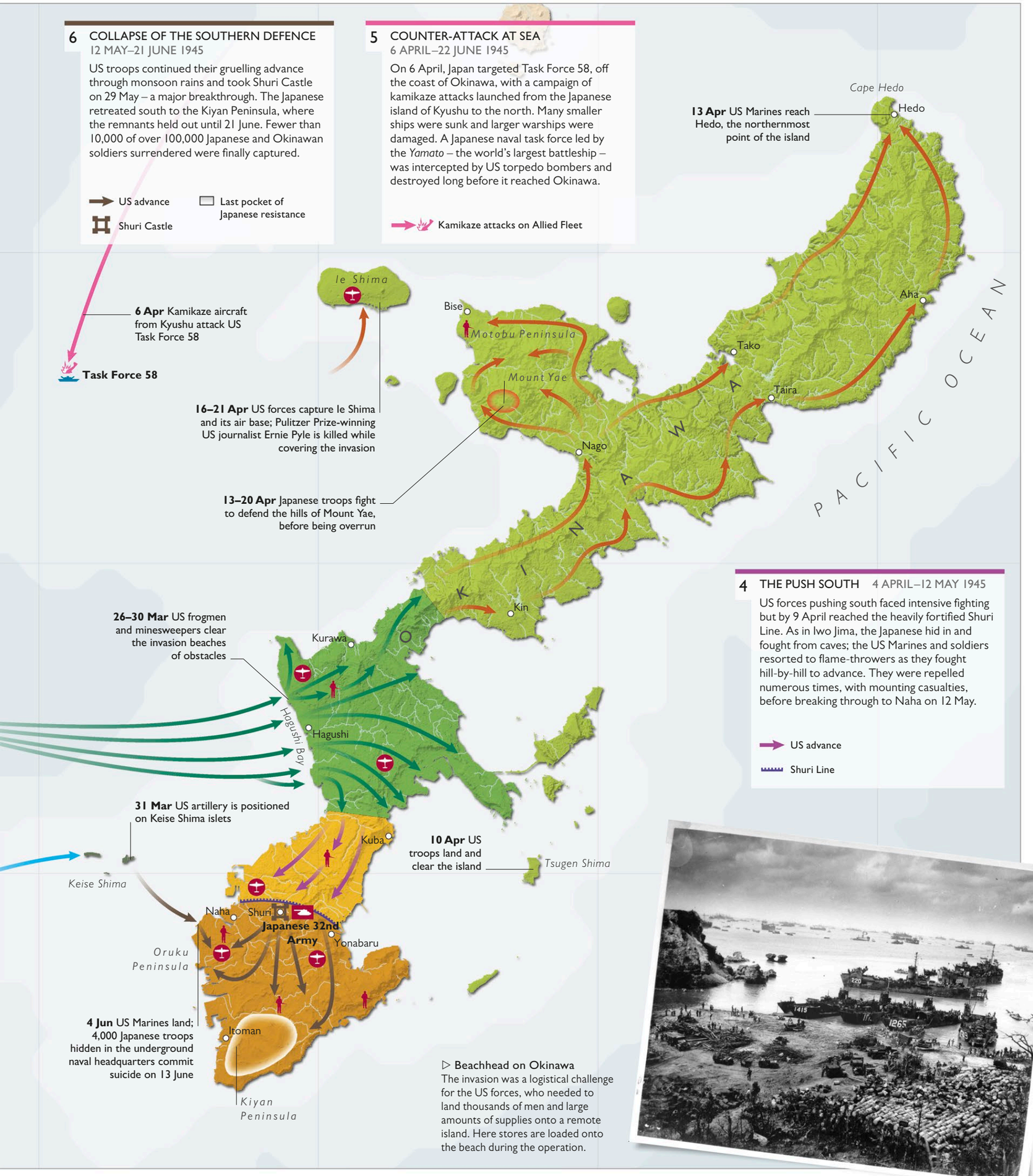
US troops continued their gruelling advance through monsoon rains and took Shuri Castle on 29 May – a major breakthrough. The Japanese retreated south to the Kiyan Peninsula, where the remnants held out until 21 June. Fewer than 10,000 of over 100,000 Japanese and Okinawan soldiers surrendered were finally captured.

US advance
Last pocket of Japanese resistance
Shuri Castle

5 COUNTER-ATTACK AT SEA
6 APRIL–22 JUNE 1945

On 6 April, Japan targeted Task Force 58, off the coast of Okinawa, with a campaign of kamikaze attacks launched from the Japanese island of Kyushu to the north. Many smaller ships were sunk and larger warships were damaged. A Japanese naval task force led by the *Yamato* – the world's largest battleship – was intercepted by US torpedo bombers and destroyed long before it reached Okinawa.

Kamikaze attacks on Allied Fleet



4 THE PUSH SOUTH
4 APRIL–12 MAY 1945

US forces pushing south faced intensive fighting but by 9 April reached the heavily fortified Shuri Line. As in Iwo Jima, the Japanese hid in and fought from caves; the US Marines and soldiers resorted to flame-throwers as they fought hill-by-hill to advance. They were repelled numerous times, with mounting casualties, before breaking through to Naha on 12 May.

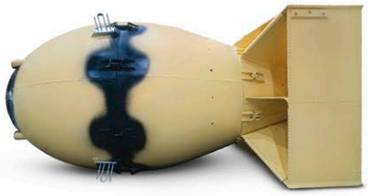
US advance
Shuri Line

▷ **Beachhead on Okinawa**
The invasion was a logistical challenge for the US forces, who needed to land thousands of men and large amounts of supplies onto a remote island. Here stores are loaded onto the beach during the operation.

MANHATTAN PROJECT

The Manhattan Project was one of several programmes working on developing nuclear weapons in the 1940s, and it was the most successful. In July 1945, the project team detonated the world's first atomic bomb.

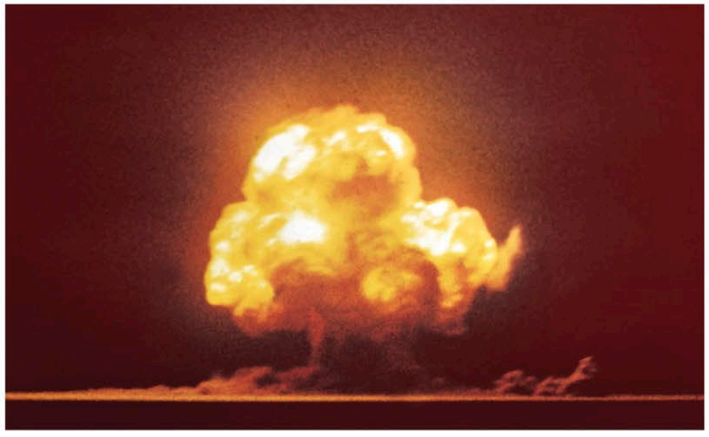
Knowledge about atomic physics developed very quickly. In 1896, French physicist Henri Becquerel discovered radioactivity, and by 1920, New Zealand-born physicist Ernest Rutherford had split the atom, and Danish physicist Niels Bohr had completed his atomic theory. With the discovery of nuclear fission by German scientists Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassman in 1938, the race to develop an atomic weapon had begun. The US-based Manhattan Project, set up in 1941, quickly outpaced the British programme. In 1943, Britain's Tube Alloys programme and the Manhattan Project merged, while the Allies successfully sabotaged Germany's atomic programme with an attack on the Vemork heavy water plant (see pp.138–39).



△ **"Fat Man" replica**
Codenamed "Fat Man", the atomic bomb that was dropped on the Japanese city of Nagasaki in August 1945 was even more powerful than the one used at Hiroshima.

The bomb as a reality

On 16 July 1945, the US army successfully detonated an atomic bomb at Almagordo, New Mexico. Churchill heard of the test through a note handed to him at the Potsdam Conference that said, "Babies satisfactorily born". The atomic bomb was now a reality, and was dropped to devastating effect on Japan in August of the same year, at Hiroshima and Nagasaki (see pp.258–59).



△ **The beginning of the end**
The world's first atomic bomb exploded at 5:29 am on 16 July 1945, in New Mexico, in an operation codenamed "Trinity".

▷ **Team photo display**
The Manhattan Project's team consisted of many scientists who had left Britain or fled Europe before or during the war.

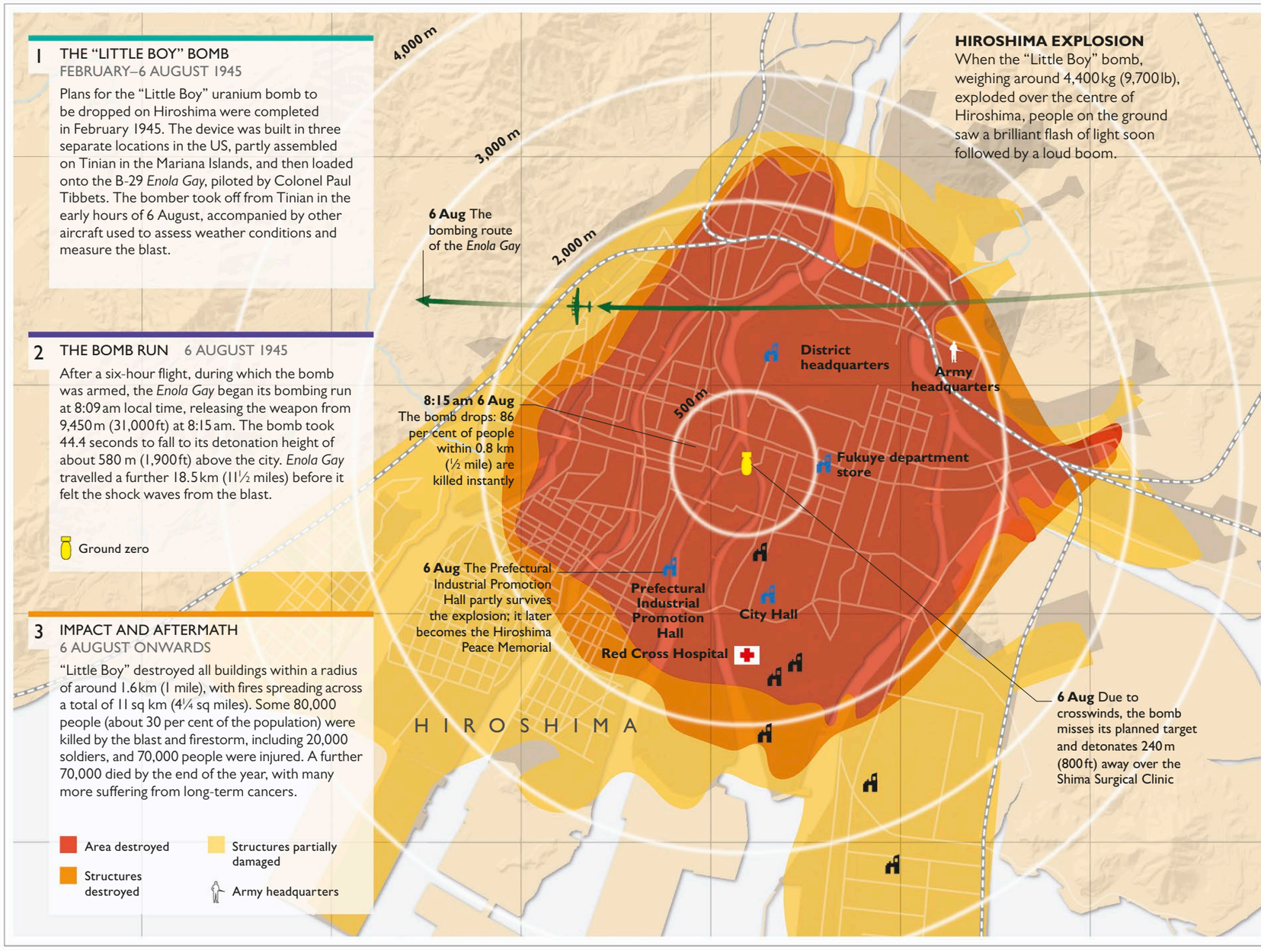
Harold M. Agnew
Luis Alvarez
Athena V. Berry
Richard P. Feynman
Al Clark
J. R. Oppenheimer
Katherine Oppenheimer
Elinor Hempelmann
Marion L. Arnold
Leandro S. Ortiz
Viola M. Vigil
Elmer L. Hilton
John R. Von Neumann
Gladys Grinsel
Seth H. Neddermeyer
Hazel R. Greenbacker
Amadon Garcia
Sara Lea Peddicord
Gilbert J. Gutierrez

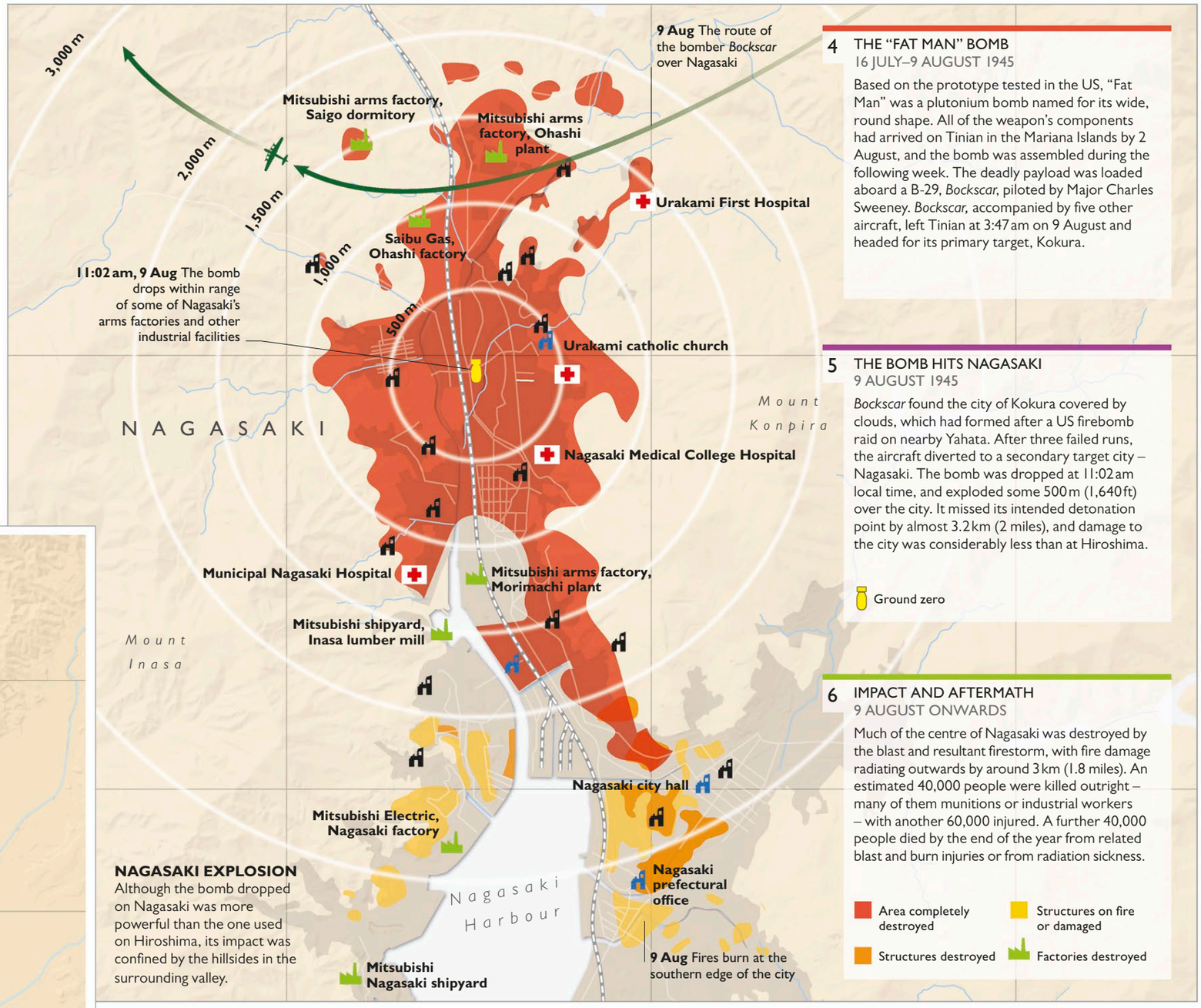
HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

On 6 August 1945, a B-29 bomber dropped a nuclear weapon on Hiroshima that killed around 80,000 people instantly and left 70 per cent of the city's buildings in ruins. A second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki three days later, claiming another 40,000 lives. The bombs helped to bring the Pacific war to an end, but at an appalling cost.

As the war in the west came to an end in May 1945, the Allied forces began drawing up plans to invade Japan. However, the Japanese had a large number of troops, along with a vast civilian militia, and US military planners feared that an invasion could result in a long-running conflict with extensive casualties on both sides. They considered using chemical and biological weapons, but, despite some opposition, President Truman made the decision to use nuclear weapons (see pp.256–57) against Japan.

Three nuclear bombs were built. The first prototype was tested over the New Mexico desert in the US on 16 July 1945. The other two bombs were to be dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Kokura, chosen for their industrial and military significance; however, poor weather conditions on the day of the attack resulted in one of the bombers diverting from Kokura to Nagasaki. The two explosions caused casualties on a vast scale, and their impact started a debate about the morality of nuclear weapons that still rages today.





4 THE "FAT MAN" BOMB
16 JULY–9 AUGUST 1945

Based on the prototype tested in the US, "Fat Man" was a plutonium bomb named for its wide, round shape. All of the weapon's components had arrived on Tinian in the Mariana Islands by 2 August, and the bomb was assembled during the following week. The deadly payload was loaded aboard a B-29, *Bockscar*, piloted by Major Charles Sweeney. *Bockscar*, accompanied by five other aircraft, left Tinian at 3:47 am on 9 August and headed for its primary target, Kokura.

5 THE BOMB HITS NAGASAKI
9 AUGUST 1945

Bockscar found the city of Kokura covered by clouds, which had formed after a US firebomb raid on nearby Yahata. After three failed runs, the aircraft diverted to a secondary target city – Nagasaki. The bomb was dropped at 11:02 am local time, and exploded some 500 m (1,640 ft) over the city. It missed its intended detonation point by almost 3.2 km (2 miles), and damage to the city was considerably less than at Hiroshima.

6 IMPACT AND AFTERMATH
9 AUGUST ONWARDS

Much of the centre of Nagasaki was destroyed by the blast and resultant firestorm, with fire damage radiating outwards by around 3 km (1.8 miles). An estimated 40,000 people were killed outright – many of them munitions or industrial workers – with another 60,000 injured. A further 40,000 people died by the end of the year from related blast and burn injuries or from radiation sickness.

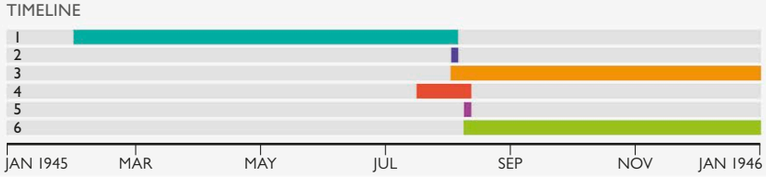
NAGASAKI EXPLOSION
Although the bomb dropped on Nagasaki was more powerful than the one used on Hiroshima, its impact was confined by the hillsides in the surrounding valley.

DESTRUCTION OF TWO CITIES
The bombs that flattened Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the first and last atomic weapons to be employed in war. Their impact killed thousands of people instantly, with many more dying by the end of the year, and their use ushered in the nuclear age.

KEY

- Road
- Railway
- Schools destroyed
- Radius of damage
- Hospitals destroyed
- Buildings destroyed
- Bombing routes
- Built-up areas

TIMELINE



△ **Hiroshima after the blast**
A man stands in Hiroshima's ruins in the aftermath of the bombing. Unaware that there had been an attack, the Japanese military were puzzled by the ensuing radio silence from the city.

PEACE IN THE PACIFIC

Japan surrendered to the Allies on 15 August 1945, around three months after the capitulation of Axis forces in Europe. It brought World War II to an end, and prevented a US invasion of Japan's home islands that would almost certainly have cost many more lives.

THE STARS AND STRIPES
MEDITERRANEAN
PEACE AT LAST

△ **Hot news**
The *Stars and Stripes*, the US military newspaper, splashes news of Japan's unconditional surrender and the end of the war.

While Japan's surrender is often attributed to the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (see pp.258–59), there were other elements involved. The Potsdam Declaration (see pp.230–31) had demanded unconditional Japanese surrender, and Japan's Supreme Council for the Direction of the War, or "Big Six", appealed to the USSR – secretly and unsuccessfully – to negotiate a surrender on more favourable terms. On 6 August, the US dropped an atom bomb on Hiroshima, and a few days later they dropped another on Nagasaki. On 8 August the USSR declared war on Japan; the following day, Soviet forces began their invasion of Manchuria.

As the odds stacked up against Japan, Emperor Hirohito ordered the "Big Six" to accept the Allies' terms of surrender. A failed coup d'etat by pro-war factions ensued, and on 15 August Hirohito issued a radio broadcast declaring surrender. It was a crushing blow to the nation, and a few military personnel refused to accept it, fighting on for months and even years. US forces began occupying Japan on 28 August, and the surrender ceremony took place on 2 September.

△ **Laying down of arms**
Japanese officers surrender their ceremonial samurai swords to soldiers of the 25th Indian Division at Kuala Lumpur, Malaya. In his capitulation speech, Emperor Hirohito had declared that if the Japanese continued to fight "it would not only result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation, but would lead to the total extinction of human civilization".

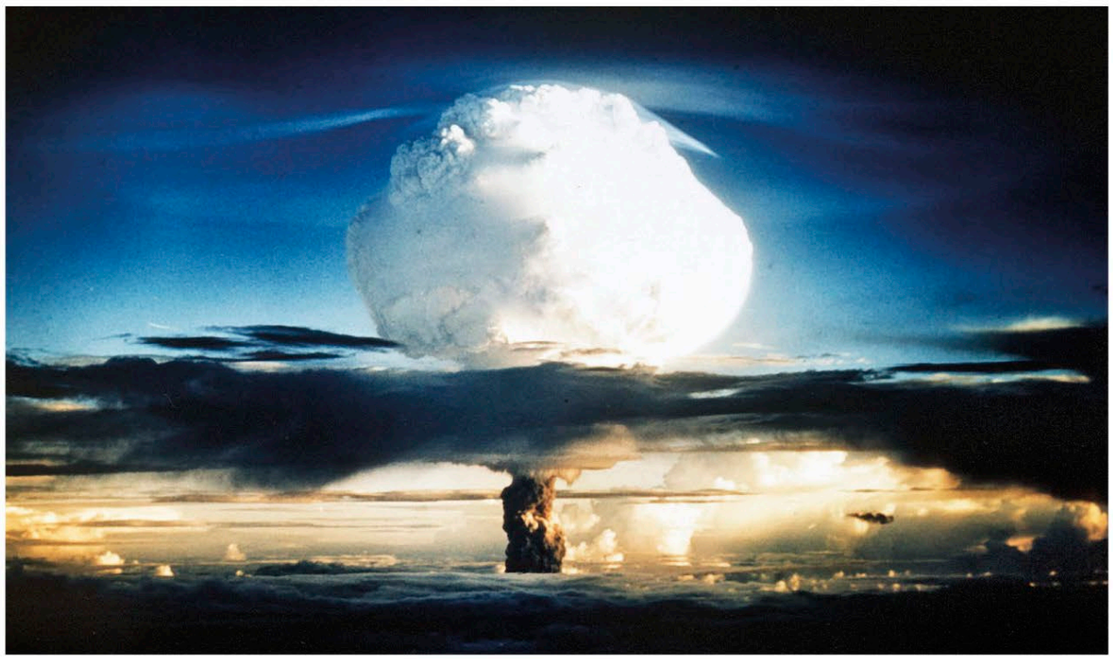
Ceremony in Tokyo Bay
Sailors and soldiers crowd the decks of the USS *Missouri* to witness the Japanese Foreign Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu and Army Chief of Staff General Umezu Yoshijiro sign the Instrument of Surrender. General Douglas MacArthur accepted the surrender on behalf of the Allies.

△ **People on the move**
In the wake of World War II, there were at least 11 million civilian refugees throughout Europe who needed to find new homes.

THE AFTERMATH OF WAR

The most destructive war in history, World War II was followed by a nuclear arms race between the US and the Soviet Union that created the potential for mass destruction on an unprecedented and almost unimaginable scale. Recovery from the material damage of the war was relatively swift, but achieving genuine peace proved an elusive goal.

Across most of Europe and Asia, World War II left a legacy of ruined cities and displaced lives. In contrast, the US was strengthened by the war, both economically and militarily, and became globally dominant. The Soviet Union had greatly extended its territory and possessed a formidable army, but it had suffered some of the worst damage of any country in the war, and could not compete with the US in economic strength. For Britain and France, although they had been on the winning side, the war had been humbling, and their imperial prestige would never be restored. By 1955, most countries in South and Southeast Asia had gained independence from colonial rule.



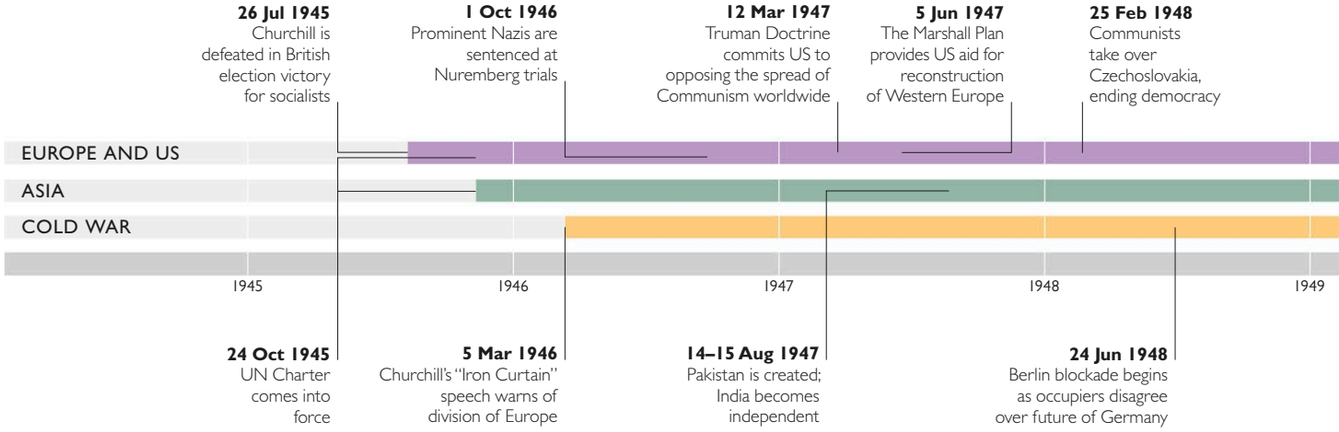
The Cold War sets in

The high ideals professed by the victors during World War II found embodiment in the United Nations and provided the basis for war crime trials of Nazi and Japanese leaders. However, the alliance between the Soviet Union and the Western powers soon fell apart, and Europe became divided by the "Iron Curtain", which separated the Soviet-dominated Communist East from the US-dominated capitalist West. By 1950, after the triumph of Mao Zedong in the Chinese Civil War, Communist societies stretched from Central Europe to the Pacific, while the US adopted the role of leader of the "Free World". As the US

◁ **Nuclear arms race**
The 1952 explosion of the first hydrogen bomb at Eniwetok Atoll, in the Pacific, further expanded the destructive power of nuclear arsenals.

EUROPE AND ASIA

Unable to agree on Germany's future, the Allies turned their temporary military occupation zones into separate states. The Soviet Union's zone became East Germany, and the Western powers' zones formed West Germany. Berlin remained divided between the four powers, but within East German territory. Later, West Germany integrated into NATO, and East Germany into the Warsaw Pact. Japan was only occupied by the Americans, and was reconstructed as a constitutional monarchy.



◁ **Back on track**
The mass production of the Volkswagen (meaning "people's car") became a symbol of West Germany's economic and political recovery in the 1950s.

"Shall we put an end to the human race; or shall mankind renounce war?"

BERTRAND RUSSELL, THE RUSSELL–EINSTEIN MANIFESTO, 1955

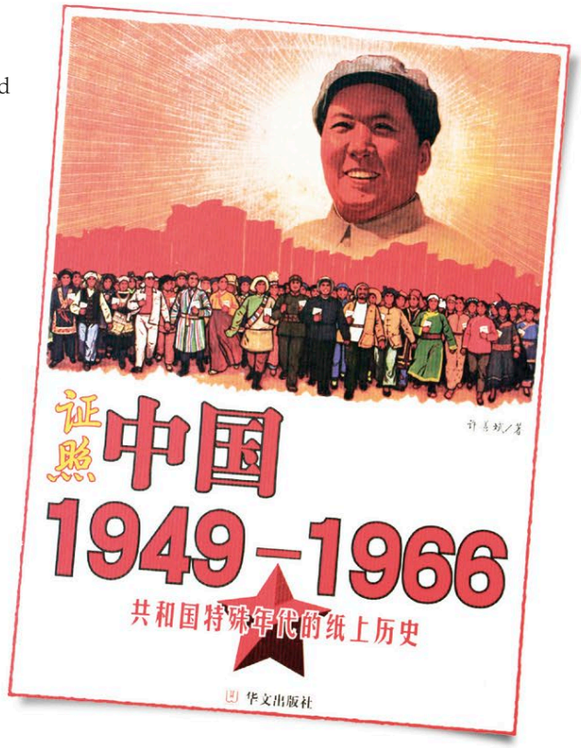
and USSR (the "superpowers") engaged in a nuclear arms race, and the US fought the Chinese Communist troops in Korea, fears of an even more destructive World War III were only too real.

Economic recovery

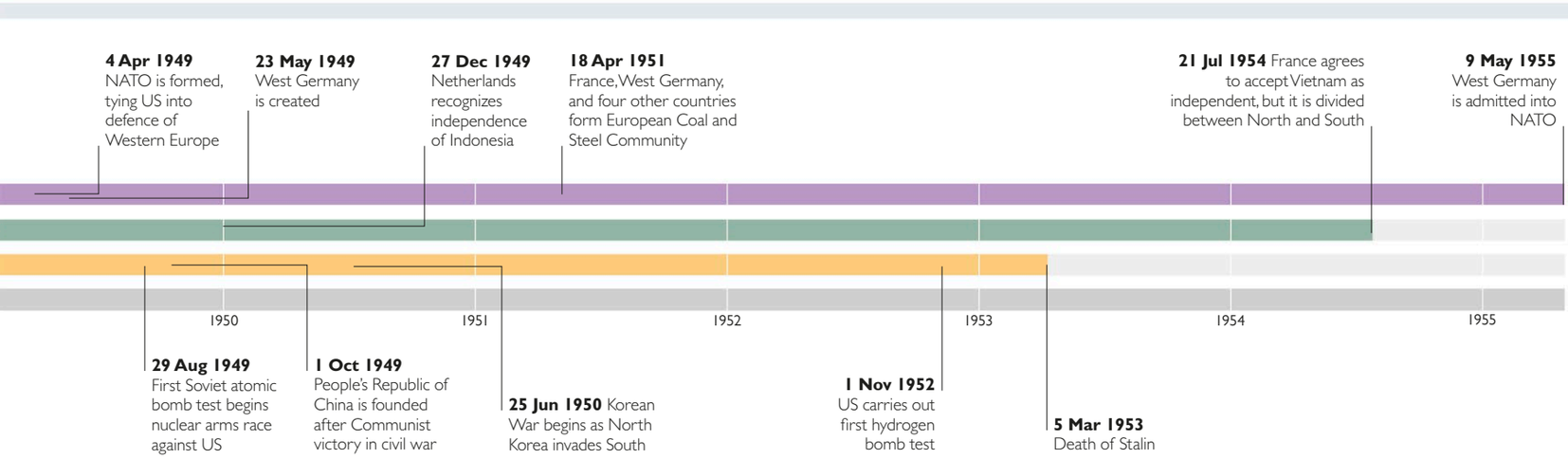
Across the world, political recovery and economic reconstruction were surprisingly successful. As a global economy was restored (excluding the Communist states), there was no return to the mass unemployment of the Depression years, and in many countries, consumer demand was soon driving high growth rates. Japan and Germany had seen enough of the horrors of war and, unlike after World War I, there were no calls to avenge defeat. Japan was re-established as a constitutional monarchy, and Hiroshima and Nagasaki were restored as flourishing cities. In West Germany, democracy took root, and industrial growth was rapid. Across much of Western Europe, forms of social democracy with mixed economies became standard. Progressive innovations included votes for women in France and the National Health Service in Britain.

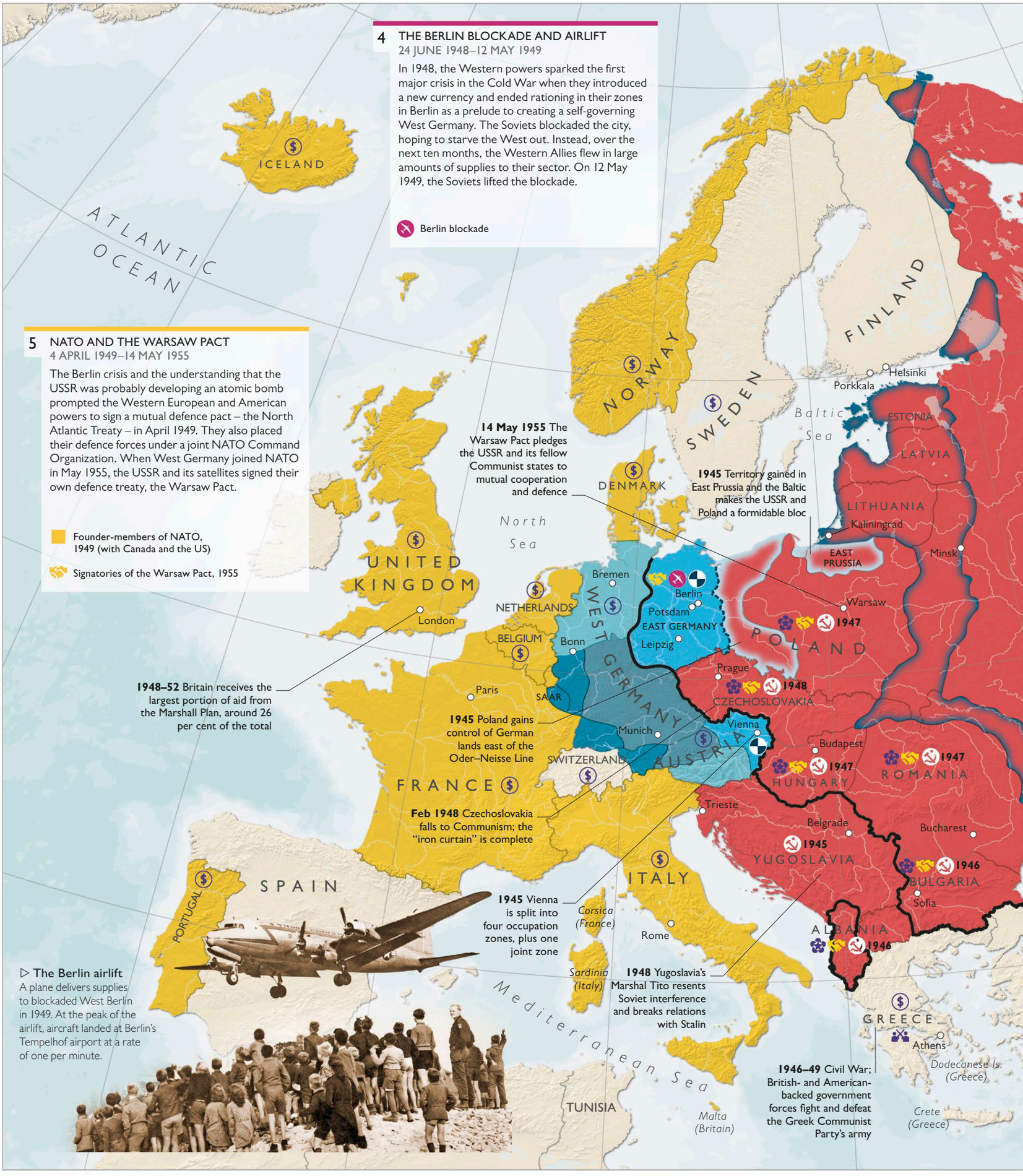
The post-war world

The victorious powers fell far short of fulfilling the ideals they had expressed during the conflict. In the Soviet-controlled sphere – which included Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, East Germany, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia – prison camps and the denial of individual freedom negated the promise of liberation. Meanwhile, the US was prepared to support right-wing dictators serving the anti-Communist cause, as in Francoist Spain and much of Latin America. For decades, the colonial powers still fought local wars against subject populations, while in the Middle East, the founding of Israel confirmed a chronic instability in the region. Instead of disarmament, there was a headlong race to expand both nuclear and conventional military arsenals. However, amid these conflicts and uncertainties, many individuals found a chance to build new lives in rapidly changing societies. The post-war world did not necessarily offer justice, peace, or security, but it did offer hope.



△ **Mao's China**
A poster celebrates the anniversary of the founding of Communist China, led by Chairman Mao Zedong. In the 1960s, about one third of the world's population lived under Communist rule.





▷ **The Berlin airlift**
A plane delivers supplies to blockaded West Berlin in 1949. At the peak of the airlift, aircraft landed at Berlin's Tempelhof airport at a rate of one per minute.

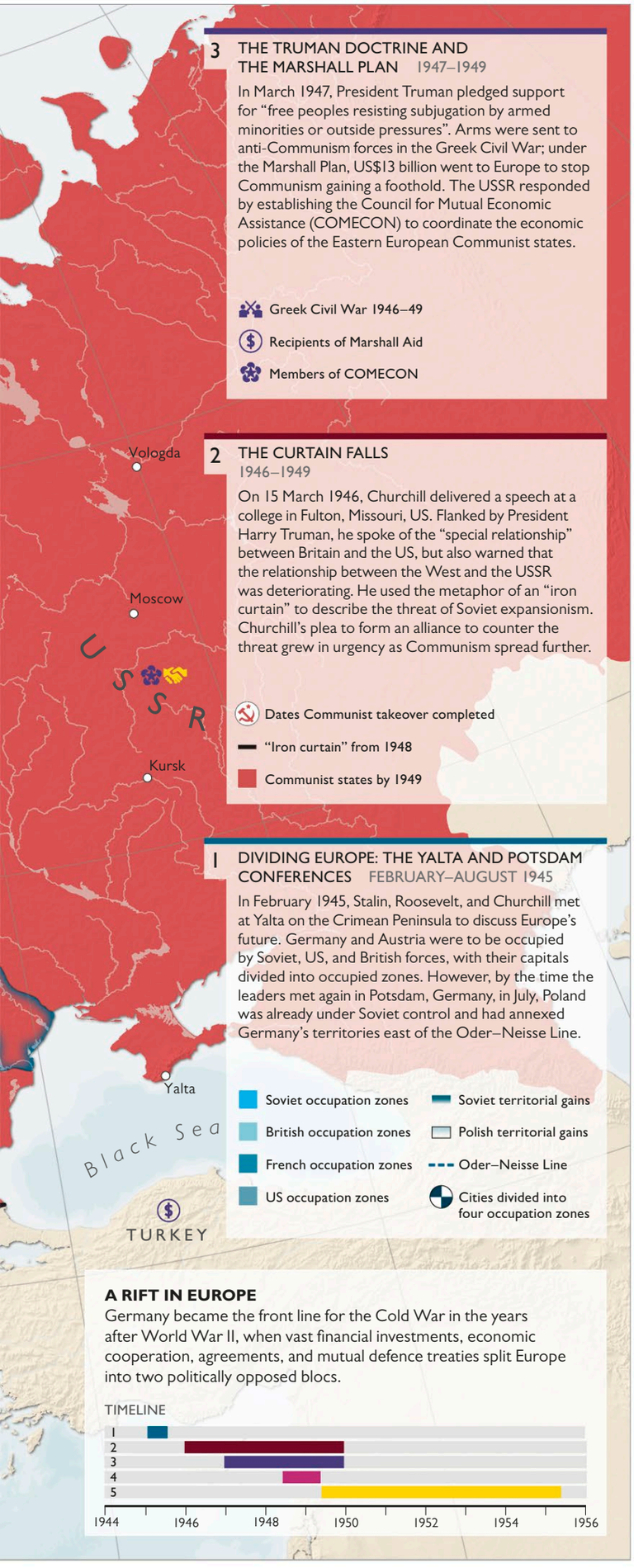
THE IRON CURTAIN

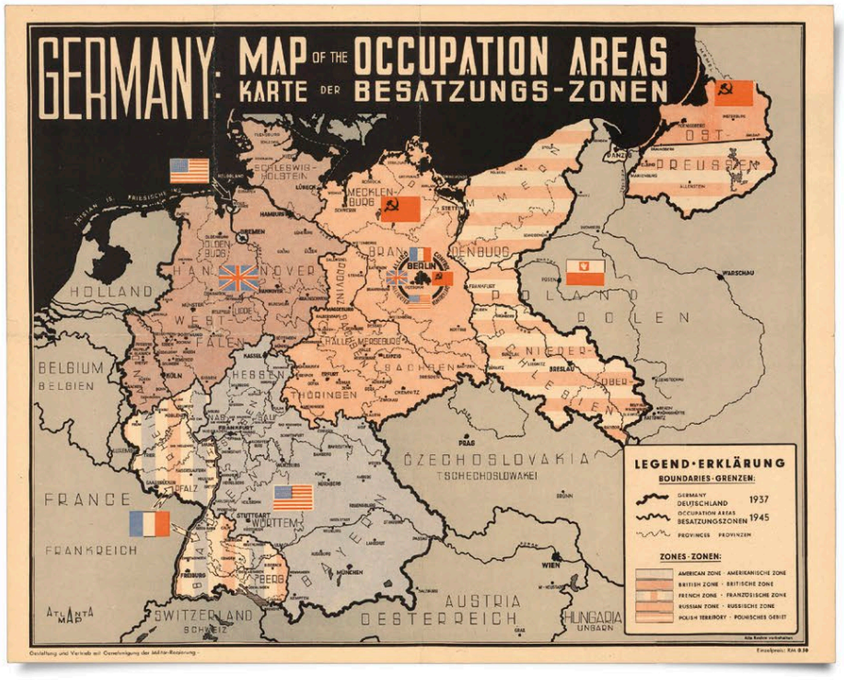
After the end of World War II, Europe was divided by an ideological "iron curtain" that separated the Communist states of the East from the democracies of the West. The division deepened to create two economic and military blocs that existed at a tense stand-off for the next 40 years.

The goodwill between the USSR and its Western allies drained away towards the end of the war, and historic tensions between the powers began to resurface by the time the Allied leaders met to discuss the reorganization of Europe at Yalta in February 1945 (see pp.230–31).

As much of Eastern Europe fell into Communist hands over the next few years, the US gradually came to heed Churchill's warning – originally dismissed as warmongering – that an "iron curtain" was descending on Europe and that the West needed protection from the spread of Communism. Rivalry and antagonism between the former allies grew rapidly into the Cold War, a term originally coined by the English writer George Orwell. This war was expressed not through direct military conflict, but rather through general non-cooperation, propaganda, and economic measures, which created two opposed economic blocs – Western Europe and North America on one side, and the USSR and its satellite Communist states on the other.

The Cold War nearly tipped into armed conflict during the Berlin blockade in 1948. After this, both sides created mutual defence treaties – the North Atlantic Treaty and the Warsaw Pact – that successfully prevented war, despite later moments of crisis, such as the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Relations between the two blocs would eventually thaw in the 1980s with the liberalization of the USSR under Mikhail Gorbachev.





△ **Germany divided**
This map, produced in Frankfurt, Germany in 1945, shows the division of the country into Occupation Zones. The symbol over Berlin shows the split of the city into four sectors.

THE CHINESE CIVIL WAR

After Japan's defeat in 1945, the uneasy wartime alliance between Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese Nationalist Party and Mao Zedong's Chinese Communist Party fell apart. The long battle for control of a unified China entered its final phase.

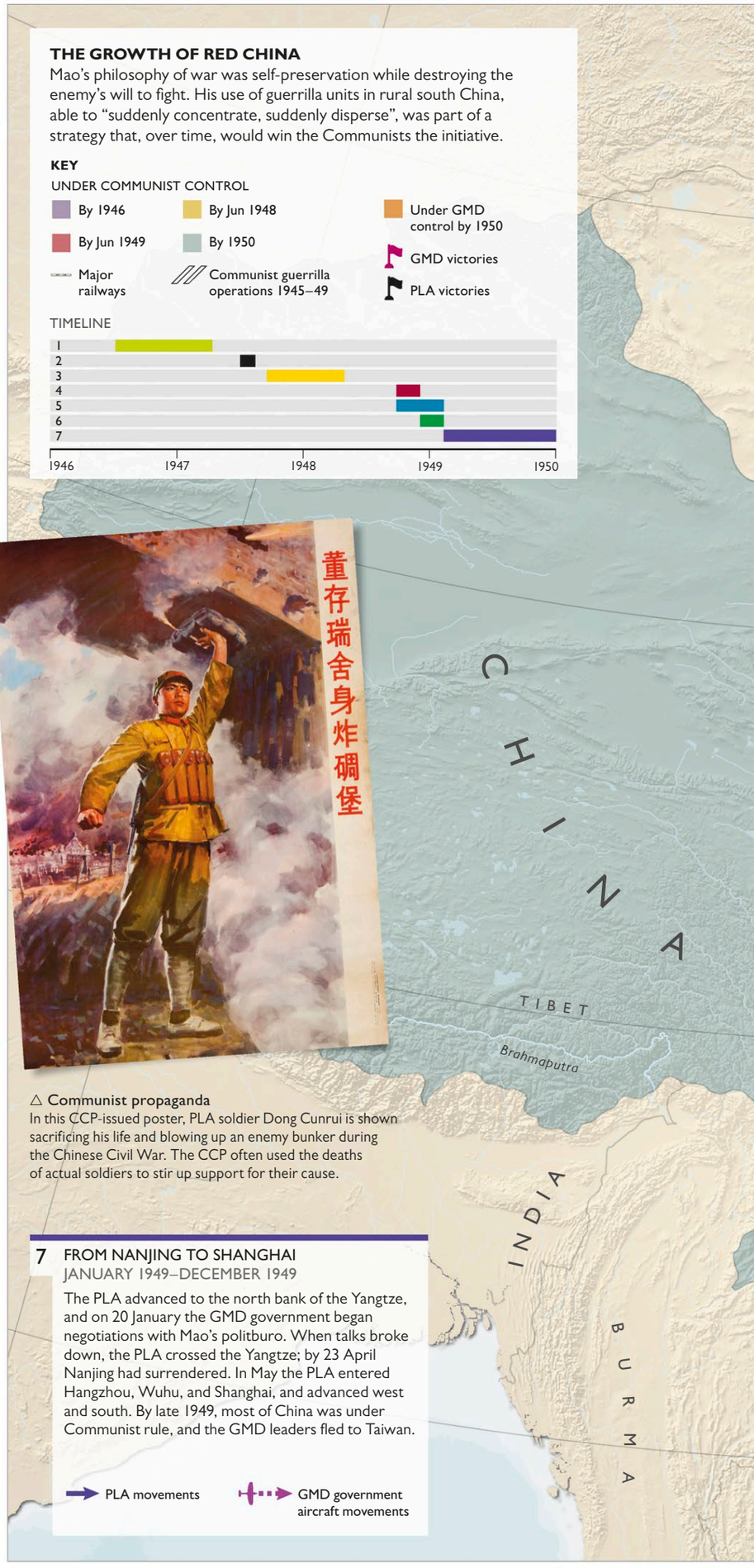
On 9 September 1945, a week after Japan's surrender ended World War II, Japanese forces in China (excluding those in Manchuria) surrendered to the Chinese Nationalist Party, or Guomindang (GMD), ending a merciless conflict that had lasted eight years (see pp.220–21). However, lingering political rivalries left China divided and would soon plunge the country into a bitter civil war.

The GMD government returned to power at its pre-war capital, Nanjing, but its perceived weakness and corruption caused its popularity to drop. Meanwhile, promises of land reform made by Mao's Chinese Communist Party (CCP) greatly appealed to the Chinese peasantry. Mao and Chiang Kai-shek met in Chongqing in an attempt to negotiate a peaceful way towards a united China, but despite the intervention of the US, war broke out. The GMD forces were numerically superior but had been weakened by years of war; they faced the Communists, who, during the wartime occupation, had supplemented their conventional army, which was renamed the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

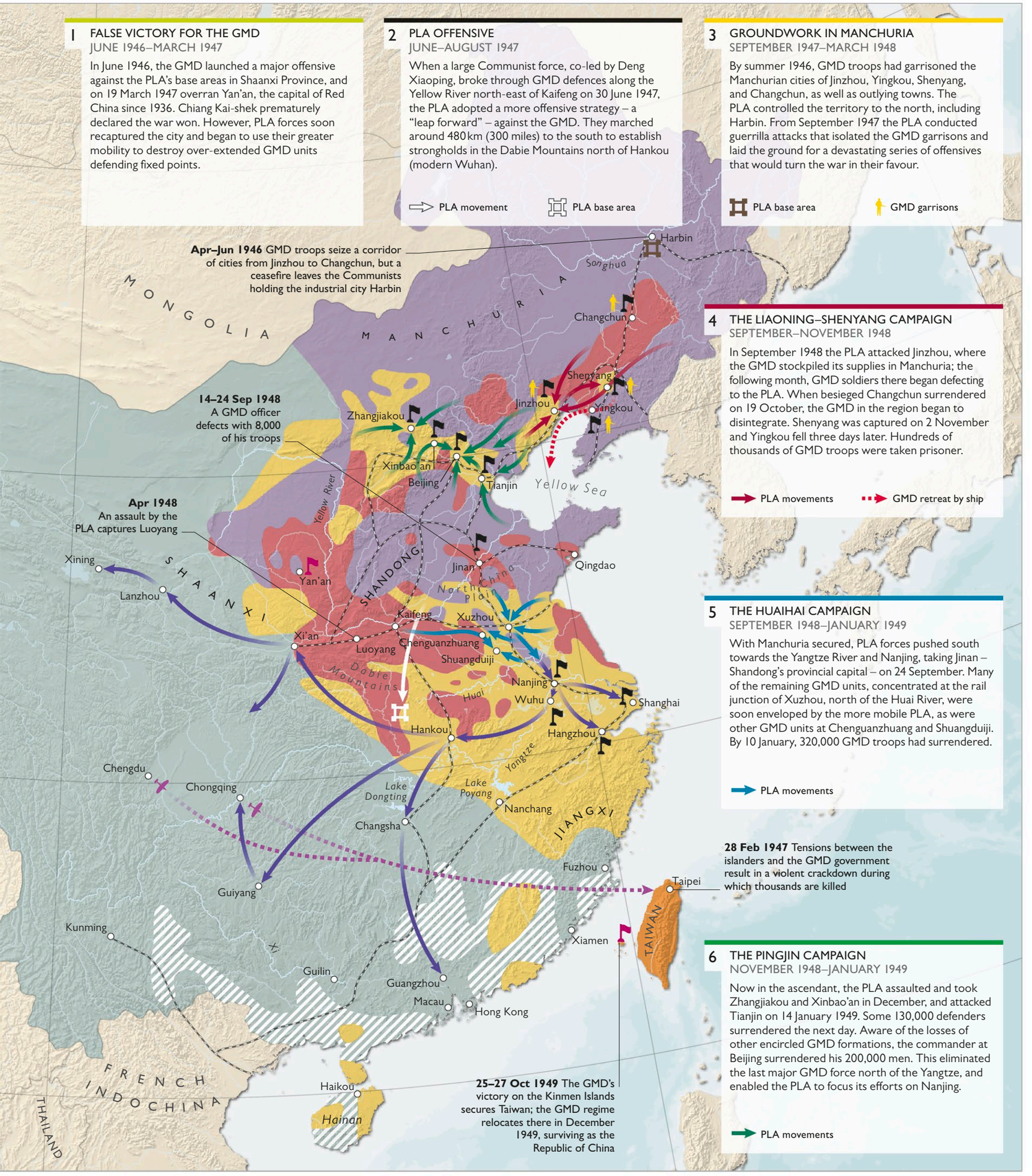
Three campaigns were crucial to the PLA's victory: Liaoning-Shenyang, which drove the GMD from Manchuria; Huaihai, which destroyed the GMD stronghold of Xuzhou; and Pingjin, which led to Mao entering Beijing (then Beiping) on 21 January 1949. The GMD's then-capital Nanjing fell in April, and in December the GMD fled to Taiwan. One of the far-reaching effects of the war was the emergence of Communist China as a great power in the modern world.

MAO ZEDONG

Mao Zedong (1893–1976) was born into a well-off peasant family in Hunan, south-west China. He fought in the 1911 revolution, worked at the university in Beijing as a librarian, and became a founder member of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921. Later he returned to Hunan as a trade union organizer. He believed that the revolutionary movement could win mass support in China by radicalizing the peasantry rather than the urban industrial working class.



△ **Communist propaganda**
In this CCP-issued poster, PLA soldier Dong Cunrui is shown sacrificing his life and blowing up an enemy bunker during the Chinese Civil War. The CCP often used the deaths of actual soldiers to stir up support for their cause.


1 FALSE VICTORY FOR THE GMD
JUNE 1946–MARCH 1947
In June 1946, the GMD launched a major offensive against the PLA's base areas in Shaanxi Province, and on 19 March 1947 overran Yan'an, the capital of Red China since 1936. Chiang Kai-shek prematurely declared the war won. However, PLA forces soon recaptured the city and began to use their greater mobility to destroy over-extended GMD units defending fixed points.
2 PLA OFFENSIVE
JUNE–AUGUST 1947
When a large Communist force, co-led by Deng Xiaoping, broke through GMD defences along the Yellow River north-east of Kaifeng on 30 June 1947, the PLA adopted a more offensive strategy – a "leap forward" – against the GMD. They marched around 480 km (300 miles) to the south to establish strongholds in the Dabie Mountains north of Hankou (modern Wuhan).
PLA movement
PLA base area
3 GROUNDWORK IN MANCHURIA
SEPTEMBER 1947–MARCH 1948
By summer 1946, GMD troops had garrisoned the Manchurian cities of Jinzhou, Yingkou, Shenyang, and Changchun, as well as outlying towns. The PLA controlled the territory to the north, including Harbin. From September 1947 the PLA conducted guerrilla attacks that isolated the GMD garrisons and laid the ground for a devastating series of offensives that would turn the war in their favour.
PLA base area
GMD garrisons
Apr–Jun 1946 GMD troops seize a corridor of cities from Jinzhou to Changchun, but a ceasefire leaves the Communists holding the industrial city Harbin
14–24 Sep 1948 A GMD officer defects with 8,000 of his troops
Apr 1948 An assault by the PLA captures Luoyang
4 THE LIAONING–SHENYANG CAMPAIGN
SEPTEMBER–NOVEMBER 1948
In September 1948 the PLA attacked Jinzhou, where the GMD stockpiled its supplies in Manchuria; the following month, GMD soldiers there began defecting to the PLA. When besieged Changchun surrendered on 19 October, the GMD in the region began to disintegrate. Shenyang was captured on 2 November and Yingkou fell three days later. Hundreds of thousands of GMD troops were taken prisoner.
PLA movements
GMD retreat by ship
5 THE HUAIHAI CAMPAIGN
SEPTEMBER 1948–JANUARY 1949
With Manchuria secured, PLA forces pushed south towards the Yangtze River and Nanjing, taking Jinan – Shandong's provincial capital – on 24 September. Many of the remaining GMD units, concentrated at the rail junction of Xuzhou, north of the Huai River, were soon enveloped by the more mobile PLA, as were other GMD units at Chenguanzhuang and Shuangduiji. By 10 January, 320,000 GMD troops had surrendered.
PLA movements
28 Feb 1947 Tensions between the islanders and the GMD government result in a violent crackdown during which thousands are killed
6 THE PINGJIN CAMPAIGN
NOVEMBER 1948–JANUARY 1949
Now in the ascendant, the PLA assaulted and took Zhangjiakou and Xinbao'an in December, and attacked Tianjin on 14 January 1949. Some 130,000 defenders surrendered the next day. Aware of the losses of other encircled GMD formations, the commander at Beijing surrendered his 200,000 men. This eliminated the last major GMD force north of the Yangtze, and enabled the PLA to focus its efforts on Nanjing.
PLA movements
25–27 Oct 1949 The GMD's victory on the Kinmen Islands secures Taiwan; the GMD regime relocates there in December 1949, surviving as the Republic of China
MONGOLIA
MANCHURIA
Harbin
Songhua
Changchun
Shenyang
Jinzhou
Yingkou
Zhangjiakou
Xinbao'an
Beijing
Tianjin
Yellow Sea
Yellow River
SHANDONG
Jinan
Qingdao
Yan'an
SHAANXI
Xining
Lanzhou
North China Plain
Kaifeng
Xuzhou
Xi'an
Luoyang
Chenguanzhuang
Shuangduiji
Dabie Mountains
Huai
Nanjing
Wuhu
Shanghai
Hangzhou
Hankou
Yangtze
Chengdu
Chongqing
Lake Dongting
Lake Poyang
Nanchang
JIANGXI
Changsha
Fuzhou
Taipei
TAIWAN
Guiyang
Kunming
Xiamen
Guilin
Guangzhou
Macau
Hong Kong
FRENCH INDOCHINA
THAILAND
Haikou
Hainan

ASIAN EMANCIPATION

The Atlantic Charter of August 1941 outlined a post-war world of freedom and sovereign rights (see p.68). However, the decolonization of Asia continued until well into the 20th century.

KEY

— Post-war borders

Independence from colonial rule

FORMER COLONIAL POWERS

UK · US · Japan · France · Portugal · Netherlands · Australia

TIMELINE

1 2 3 4 5 6

1945 1950 1955 1960

1 THE END OF THE DUTCH EAST INDIES

17 AUGUST 1945–27 DECEMBER 1949

The declaration of independence by the Indonesian nationalist leaders Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta on 17 August 1945 sparked four years of diplomatic struggle and bloodshed. Two major Dutch policing actions failed to stem increased guerrilla warfare. Responding to international pressure, the Dutch eventually conceded and recognized Indonesia as independent in December 1949.

19 Oct 1950 Pyongyang is captured by UN forces, which then advance towards the border with China

15–25 Sep 1950 UN and South Korean forces launch an amphibious assault at Inchon and recapture Seoul before heading north

Jul 1949 A UN ceasefire line is agreed to contain the dispute between India and Pakistan over territories in Jammu and Kashmir

30 Jan 1948 Mahatma Gandhi is assassinated in New Delhi by a Hindu Nationalist

7 May 1954 Besieged French forces at Dien Bien Phu surrender to General Vo Nguyen Giap; nearly 10,000 French troops are captured

21 Jul 1954 A demilitarized zone is established in Vietnam

8 Sep 1954 The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) is formed in Manila to protect against Communist expansionism

4 Jan 1948 Burma gains independence from Britain and becomes the Union of Burma

4 Jul 1946 The Philippines archipelago becomes an independent republic

4 Feb 1948 Ceylon, formerly ruled as a colony by the British, gains independence

18–24 Apr 1955 Newly independent Asian and African states meeting at Bandung, Indonesia, form the non-aligned movement of countries avoiding pacts with the main world powers

CHINA · NORTH KOREA · Pyongyang · Panmunjom · Inchon · Seoul · SOUTH KOREA · East China Sea · TAIWAN · Hong Kong 1997 · Macau 1998 · Hanoi · Haiphong · Dien Bien Phu 1948 · 1954 · LAOS · VIETNAM 1954 · CAMBODIA 1953 · Saigon · THAILAND · BURMA 1948 · Rangoon · Andaman Sea · Qamdo · TIBET · NEPAL · BHUTAN · INDIA 1947 · WEST PAKISTAN 1947 · Srinagar · New Delhi · Karachi · Dhaka 1947 · EAST PAKISTAN · Chandernagore 1961 · Diu 1961 · Daman 1961 · Goa 1961 · Yanam 1954 · Mahé 1954 · Pondicherry 1954 · Karaikal 1954 · CEYLON 1948 · Colombo · Maldives 1965 · Arabian Sea · Manila · PHILIPPINES 1946 · Sulu Sea · NORTH BORNEO (SABAH) 1963 · BRUNEI 1984 · SARAWAK 1963 · Borneo · Celebes Sea · Moluccas · Celebes · MALAYSIA · MALAYA 1957 · SINGAPORE 1963 · Sumatra · Bandung · Java · INDONESIA 1949 · EAST TIMOR 2002 · Timor · AUSTRALIA

▽ **Defending South Korea**
On 9 October 1950, less than four months after the invasion of South Korea by North Korea, civilians north of Seoul gather to cheer passing US troops as they race to the border.

6 KOREA – A PENINSULA ENGULFED BY WAR

25 JUNE 1950–27 JULY 1953

After the defeat of Japan in 1945, Korea was split into the Soviet-backed north and the US-backed south, both of which failed to agree a unification settlement. In 1950, the North Koreans, led by Kim Il-Sung, invaded the south, sparking the Korean War, which drew in US, UN, and Chinese interests. The war ended in an armistice in 1953, which created a demilitarized zone between north and south.

Extent of North Korean advance, 15 Sept 1950

Demilitarized zone, 27 July 1953

DECOLONIZATION OF ASIA

After the liberation of Japan's Asian colonies, many more Asian nations fought for independence. Anti-imperialist movements began to gain widespread popular legitimacy, and as a result many of the occupying powers were forced to reassess their old colonial outposts.

Japan's advance through Southeast Asia during World War II exposed the fragile hold that the Western powers had on their colonies. Even though the Allied powers emerged as victors in 1945, most were unwilling or unable to restore their colonial regimes.

A greatly weakened Britain was disinclined to defend its empire. Indian pressure for self-governance had grown since the foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885, and for many it seemed inevitable that Britain would leave the subcontinent. Britain aimed to avert conflict by granting self-government, whereas the Netherlands and France tried to revive their empires in the East Indies and Indochina. This approach plunged both countries into wars that would prove to be unwinnable, and served as a warning to any outside power tempted to try to impose its will on the region.

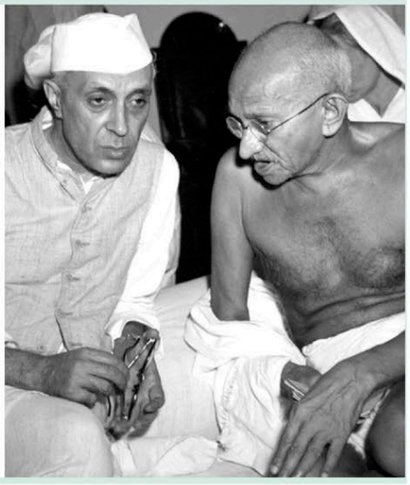
The pattern of decolonization in Asia was affected not only by the countries involved, but also by shifting ideologies. Competing capitalist and Communist visions of society in a post-war world fuelled the Cold War, which lasted for most of the 20th century (see pp.264–65). Fears surrounding Communist expansionism ignited war in the Korean peninsula in 1950, and would become a defining feature of Asia in this era.

"At the stroke of the midnight hour, while the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom."

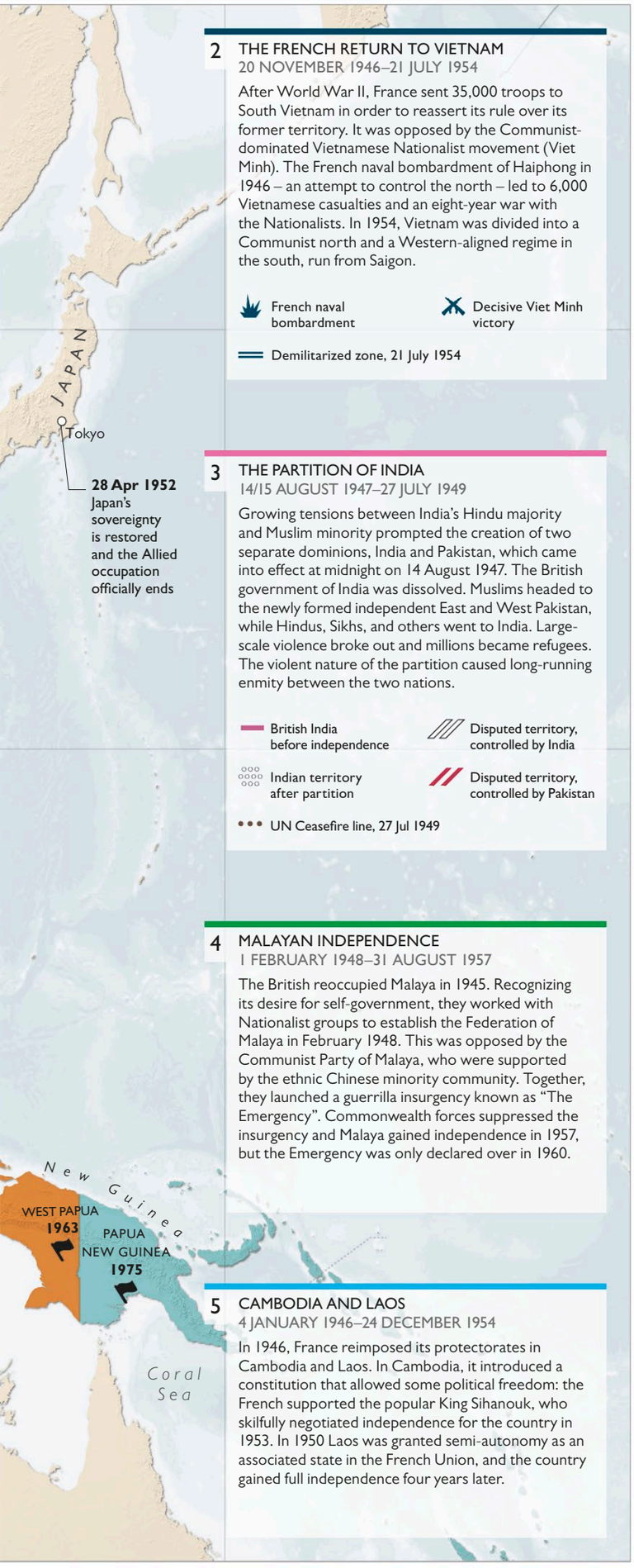
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, 1947

INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

The Indian National Congress (INC), the most influential group in the campaign for independence in India, was led by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, both of whom had studied law in London. Under the leadership of Gandhi from 1921 to the mid-1930s the INC changed from an elite project to a mass movement of non-violent civil disobedience. Nehru, who succeeded Gandhi as head of the party in 1929, rejected Dominion status, instead demanding full independence. He became India's first prime minister in 1947.



Nehru (left) and Gandhi meet in Bombay, India



New arrivals
Refugees from Eastern Europe, Turkey, and Tunisia prepare to go ashore at Haifa in early summer of 1949. In 1950 the Israeli Law of Return was passed, giving any Jew the legal right to settle in Israel.

THE CREATION OF ISRAEL

In 1917, Britain had pledged its support for "a national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine, in a statement now known as the Balfour Declaration. However, it was not until after World War II that Israel became a state.

After World War I, Britain controlled Palestine under the terms of the League of Nations mandate and aimed to create a home there for Jews. Since Arabs formed 90 per cent of the population, many were opposed to the idea. Tensions escalated in the 1930s and 1940s when many Jews fleeing from the Nazis travelled to Palestine to seek a safe refuge.

△ **Commemorative stamp**
A 1949 stamp depicts the foundation of modern Tel Aviv. The city was established in 1909 by 60 Jewish families, 24 km (15 miles) north-west of Jerusalem.

Caught in the dispute between the Arabs and the Jews, Britain imposed strict quotas on Jewish immigration. Thousands of Jewish immigrants were imprisoned in British camps, and violence escalated. In 1947, the British government handed over control to the United Nations, which planned to partition Palestine and create one state for Arabs and another for Jews. However, the Arabs rejected the idea.

The first Arab–Israeli war

On 14 May 1948, the British mandate terminated and a Zionist organization proclaimed the establishment of the independent State of Israel. A military coalition of Arab states fought to gain control, but by the time a ceasefire was agreed in 1949, the Israelis had taken control of all the territories the UN had allocated to them, and made further gains at the expense of their Arab neighbours. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs fled their homelands to become stateless refugees, while Israel held its first elections later that year.

VOYAGE OF THE EXODUS

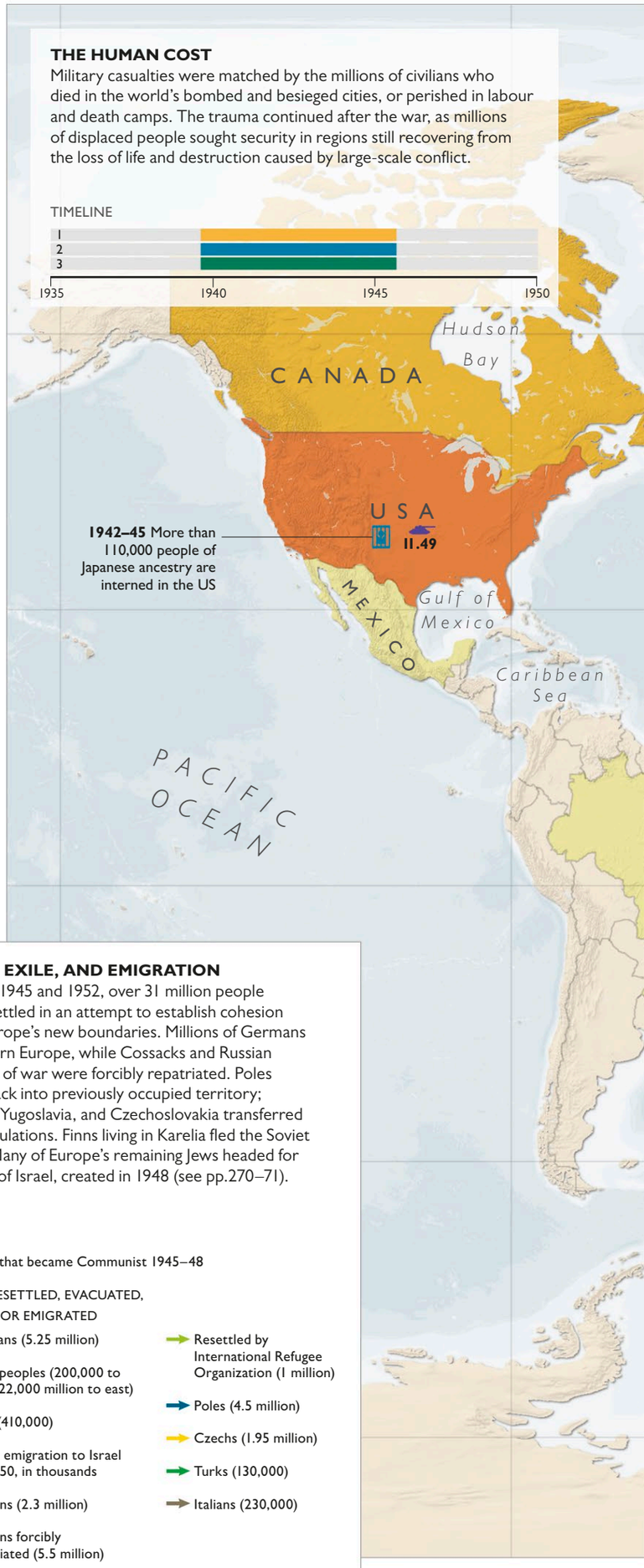
Hundreds of would-be Jewish immigrants crowded the decks of the refugee ship SS *Exodus* in the port of Haifa, then part of Palestine, in July 1947. The British intercepted the ship as it tried to make an illicit landfall. The passengers were forcibly disembarked and then shipped back across the Mediterranean to France.

THE PRICE OF WAR

World War II affected most of the globe, and cost more than 50 million lives. The Eastern Front accounted for many of the military deaths, while the Holocaust, bombings, and land war left millions of civilians dead. In Europe, many survivors faced a desperate scramble to find homes in new places.

The human cost of World War II exceeded anything that came before it. Military casualty rates in north-west Europe in 1944–45 matched – and sometimes exceeded – those of World War I, while the bitter war of attrition at the Eastern Front claimed further millions of lives. An unprecedented proportion of those who died in the war were civilians. Six million Jews, 130,000–200,000 Roma, and 250,000 disabled people died in the Nazi Holocaust, while the brutality of the Soviet, Nazi, and Japanese regimes added to the vast toll, as did the Allied bombing of cities in Germany and, most destructively, in Japan. By the end of the war, Poland had lost 16 per cent of its 1939 population, and the Soviet Union around 15 per cent.

The human suffering did not end as the war came to a close. Millions of Germans who were living in Eastern Europe were forced to flee the advancing Red Army in 1944 and hundreds of thousands of them died from violence, malnutrition, or disease. And as Europe's boundaries were redrawn, the war's survivors faced the task of rebuilding their countries, their cities, and their lives in the midst of terrible devastation.



THE HUMAN COST
Military casualties were matched by the millions of civilians who died in the world's bombed and besieged cities, or perished in labour and death camps. The trauma continued after the war, as millions of displaced people sought security in regions still recovering from the loss of life and destruction caused by large-scale conflict.

FLIGHT, EXILE, AND EMIGRATION
Between 1945 and 1952, over 31 million people were resettled in an attempt to establish cohesion within Europe's new boundaries. Millions of Germans fled Eastern Europe, while Cossacks and Russian prisoners of war were forcibly repatriated. Poles moved back into previously occupied territory; Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia transferred small populations. Finns living in Karelia fled the Soviet regime. Many of Europe's remaining Jews headed for the state of Israel, created in 1948 (see pp.270–71).

KEY

States that became Communist 1945–48

PEOPLES RESETTLED, EVACUATED, EXPELLED, OR EMIGRATED

- Germans (5.25 million)
- Baltic peoples (200,000 to west, 22,000 million to east)
- Finns (410,000)
- Jewish emigration to Israel 1945–50, in thousands
- Russians (2.3 million)
- Russians forcibly repatriated (5.5 million)
- Resettled by International Refugee Organization (1 million)
- Poles (4.5 million)
- Czechs (1.95 million)
- Turks (130,000)
- Italians (230,000)

3 THE BOMBING OF CITIES 1939–1945

Mass population centres were targeted directly for the first time in history in World War II. Beginning with the London Blitz in 1940, thousands of civilians died in such attacks. In Germany, up to 350,000 people were killed during the Allied bombing campaigns in 1940–45. These statistics are similar to the estimated 300,000 killed when atomic bombs were dropped on two Japanese cities.

Heavily bombed cities

2 CIVILIAN CASUALTIES 1939–1945

Many civilians were accidental victims of the war, but many more died in deliberate acts. In the USSR, around 1 million died in Stalin's own labour camps, and millions more died when they were prevented from evacuating besieged cities. Six million Jews and other minority groups were killed in the Nazi Holocaust. In Korea, China, the Philippines, and the East Indies, thousands died working as slave labourers for Japan's army.

Civilian dead

Large groups of civilian internees

Sep 1941–Jan 1944 Around 1 million civilians die in the Siege of Leningrad

1939–45 The Nazis kill 3 million Jewish Poles and 2 million non-Jewish Poles in occupied Poland

See panel

Leningrad

Stalingrad

U S S R
Over 7,000,000
33

MONGOLIA

C H I N A
Up to 10,000,000
5

JAPAN
300,000
7.4

500,000
KOREA

Hiroshima
Tokyo
Osaka
Nagasaki

1939–45 Around 200,000 Korean women are forced into prostitution as "comfort women" for the Japanese military; many thousands die

Nov 1944–Aug 1945 Around 300,000 Japanese civilians die after Tokyo, Osaka, Nagasaki, and Hiroshima are bombed

IRAQ
IRAN

Aug 1942– Feb 1943 Around 1.5 million total casualties occur in the bloodiest battle of the war at Stalingrad

NEPAL

I N D I A
2.4

250,000
BURMA

THAILAND

Caroline Sea

164,000
PHILIPPINES

Sep 1940–May 1941 20,000 Londoners die in the "Blitz"; Coventry, Birmingham, Southampton, Bristol and Plymouth are also bombed

ETHIOPIA

MALAYA
100,000

I N D I A N
O C E A N

DUTCH EAST INDIES
300,000

BRAZIL

1943–45 Around 25,000 Brazilians join the Allied forces in the Mediterranean

1939–45 One million Australians serve among Britain's imperial forces

Coral Sea

AUSTRALIA

SOUTH AFRICA

1939–45 Around 10,000 South Africans die in campaigns in East and North Africa and Italy

A T L A N T I C
O C E A N

Auckland
NEW ZEALAND

1 MILITARY CASUALTIES 1939–1945

Germany and the USSR were the most deeply affected by military losses: nearly a quarter of Germany's mobilized troops were killed, with slightly more for the Soviets. Many were killed on the Eastern Front, where around 9.5 million Soviet soldiers, including 3 million prisoners of war, perished. Japan lost a fifth of her troops, some fighting to the death because they believed surrender was dishonourable.

MILITARY DEAD

- <1,000
- 1,000–10,000
- 10,000–50,000
- 50,000–100,000
- 100,000–500,000
- 500,000–1 million
- 1–2 million
- <14 million
- Largest armies mobilized (in millions)

KEY

- Civilian dead
- Large groups of civilian internees
- Heavily bombed cities

LARGEST ARMIES MOBILIZED (MILLIONS)

France **5.6**
Italy **4.5**
Germany **10.6**
UK **4.6**
Yugoslavia **3.7**

DENMARK

236,300
NETHERLANDS

60,595
UNITED KINGDOM

London

75,000
BELGIUM

LUXEMBOURG

Hamburg
Berlin
Dresden

2,300,000
GERMANY

5,778,200
POLAND

310,000
CZECHOSLOVAKIA

AUSTRIA
145,000

HUNGARY
260,000

ROMANIA
465,000

FRANCE
173,260

ITALY
17,400
as Allies

YUGOSLAVIA
1,000,000

BULGARIA
15,000

ALBANIA

SPAIN
10,000

GREECE
155,300

REMEMBRANCE

The memory of World War II is kept alive by most of the participating countries, not only in ceremonies and monuments but also in each nation's particular view of the war and of the sacrifices made by both combatants and civilians.

△ **Makeshift memorial**
A hastily erected marker on a Normandy beach marks the grave of a US soldier killed during the D-Day landings in 1944.

Most Allied nations have an annual day of remembrance, including Veterans Day in the US, Anzac day in Australia and New Zealand, Victory Day in France and the Czech Republic, and Liberation Day in the Netherlands and Norway.

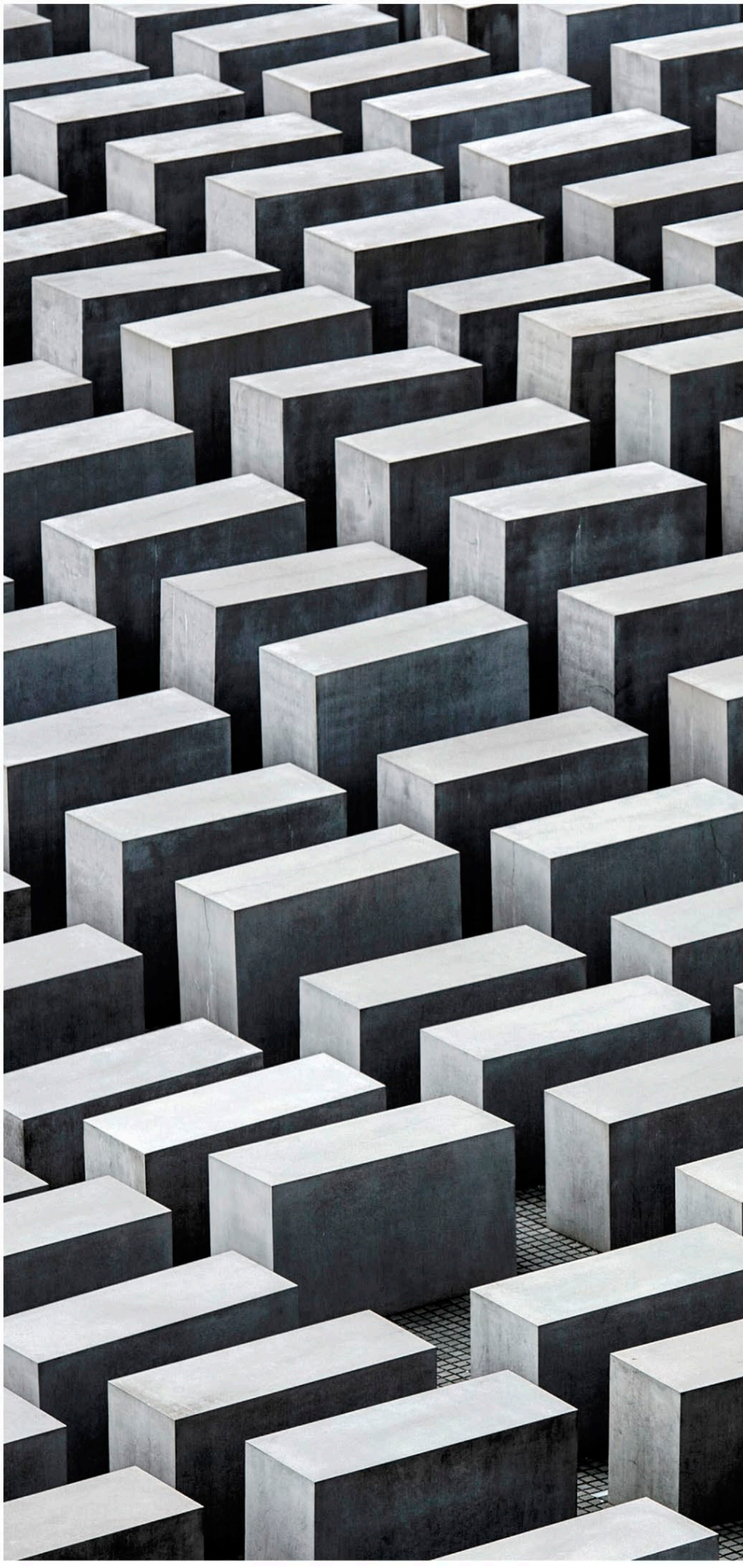
Russia commemorates victory on 9 May with parades and ceremonies. The war, specifically the period 1941–45, is known as the Great Patriotic War, and its remembrance acknowledges the nation's huge sacrifice in lives. Among the events is the March of the Immortal Regiment, in which millions of citizens assemble carrying portraits and photographs of World War II veterans, victims, and survivors. Many countries also commemorate individual events. In the US, Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day takes place annually on the anniversary of the attack (see pp.110–11), while in Britain, Battle of Britain Day commemorates Fighter Command's victory over the Luftwaffe in 1940 (see pp.58–59).

Axis nations remember

In Japan, the war remains a controversial subject; nevertheless, the site of the Hiroshima bombing (see pp.258–59) is now the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. In Germany, remembrance of the war is characterized by sombre reflection. Some former concentration camps are preserved as museums, and the Berlin monument to the Holocaust (right) serves as a stark reminder. In recent years, more open discussion of the war has been encouraged.

MUSIC FOR LENINGRAD

A native of Leningrad, the composer Dmitri Shostakovich wrote the first two movements of his monumental Symphony No. 7 in 1941, while the city was under siege by the Germans. Eventually safely evacuated, he christened the work the Leningrad Symphony to honour the city's heroic resistance. It premiered in 1942.



Holocaust memorial in Berlin
Designed by US architect Peter Eisenman and consisting of 2,711 concrete blocks, Berlin's "Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe" is often interpreted as representing an ordered system that has lost touch with reason.

GLOSSARY

Afrika Korps German expeditionary force, commanded by Erwin Rommel and sent to North Africa in spring 1941 to support the Italians following a string of defeats by the British. Later it was substantially reinforced to become Panzerarmee Afrika (Panzer Army Africa).

aircraft carrier Large naval vessel capable of launching and recovering aircraft, such as torpedo bombers, dive-bombers, and protective fighters.

Anschluss The absorption of Austria into Germany on 13 March 1938, the day after Hitler's troops marched into the country on the pretext of restoring order.

area bombing Blanket aerial bombardment of large urban areas.

armistice The temporary suspension of hostilities between warring countries so that negotiations for a formal peace agreement can take place.

army group The largest military land formation used in World War II, consisting of two or more armies serving under a single commander.

Atlantic Wall The massive coastal defences the Germans built to repulse an Allied invasion of Western Europe.

Axis, Rome–Berlin The friendship pact agreed between Germany and Italy in November 1936, followed by the Pact of Steel, a formal military alliance in May 1939, and the Tripartite Pact, signed by Germany, Italy, and Japan in September 1940. Other Axis powers included Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Croatia.

battalion Military unit typically consisting of between 300 and 800 soldiers, subdivided into companies and platoons. Battalions are commanded by lieutenant-colonels with a major as second-in-command. Generally, three or more battalions grouped together make up a regiment.

battleship An extremely large, heavily-armoured warship, principally armed with large-calibre guns mounted in rotating turrets. Although vitally important to both the Allied and Axis powers, battleships proved highly vulnerable to air attack by carrier-borne aircraft.

beachhead An area close to the sea or a river that, when captured by attacking troops, is the foundation for a subsequent advance deeper into enemy-held territory.

"Big Six" The six members of the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters-Government Liaison Conference (later the Supreme Council for the Direction of the War): the Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister of War, Minister of the Navy, the Chief of the Army General Staff, and the Chief of the Naval General Staff.

Bletchley Park Headquarters of Britain's Government Code & Cypher School, tasked with decoding enemy military communications.

Blitz The Luftwaffe's mass bombing campaign against British cities, ports, and towns from September 1940 to May 1941.

Blitzkrieg As employed by the Germans, blitzkrieg ("lightning war") involved mass tank formations, supported by dive-bombers and motorized artillery, making a thrust forwards on a narrow front.

Bomber Command The branch of the RAF specializing in bomber operations from 1936 to 1968.

bouncing bomb A spinning cylindrical bomb, invented by British engineer Barnes Wallis to destroy the Ruhr hydroelectric dams.

bridgehead *see* beachhead

brigade Military formation, typically consisting of three to six battalions plus supporting reconnaissance, artillery, engineers, supply, and transport elements.

BEF British Expeditionary Force. British troops sent to France in 1939.

capital ship One of a navy's most important warships. Traditionally a battleship or battlecruiser and, from 1942 onwards, an aircraft carrier.

carpet bombing *see* area bombing.

corps A military formation, consisting of two or more divisions and typically commanded by a lieutenant-general.

Desert Rats The nickname of the soldiers of the British 7th Armoured Division during the fighting in the 1940–43 North African campaign. It later was applied to the entire 8th Army.

division Military formation consisting of a team of all arms and services required to sustain independent operations. An army can have anything from four to ten divisions.

Eastern Front In World War II, the theatre of war between the Axis powers and Finland – a co-belligerent – against the USSR. It took place in central and Eastern Europe, the Baltics, and the Balkans. In the former USSR it is known as the Great Patriotic War.

Einsatzgruppen Four battalion-sized mobile killing squads that targeted Jews and political enemies in territories occupied by Germany.

enfiladed Gunfire directed from a flanking point along the length of an enemy battle line.

escort carrier Smaller and slower than aircraft carriers, escort carriers were largely converted merchant ships carrying aircraft. They were principally tasked with escorting convoys carrying materiel and supplies.

Fighter Command Branch of the RAF specializing in fighter operations, founded in 1936. Integral in defeating the Luftwaffe during the Battle of Britain in 1940.

Free French French citizens who rallied to General Charles de Gaulle following his call for a continuation of the war after France's capitulation in June 1940.

front (Soviet) The Soviet equivalent of a Western army group. A front was generally made up of three to five armies, plus an army-size air wing to provide ground forces with aerial support.

Führer German word meaning leader. Hitler took it as a title in 1921 to signify his position as leader of the Nazi party.

Geneva Conventions Four political conventions, plus additional protocols, regulating the laws of war and allowing for the protection of POWs and civilians during war. First ratified in 1864, the Geneva Conventions were amended and extended in 1906, 1929, and 1949.

German high command Germany's military leadership, the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, was set up by Hitler in 1938 to help him establish undisputed control of the armed forces.

gulag Network of forced labour camps that operated in the USSR from the 1920s onwards. Although the government agency administrating the gulags closed in 1960, forced labour in the USSR persisted for decades.

Habforce A British military force raised in Palestine in April 1941 and sent to relieve the RAF base at Habbaniyah in Iraq, before being besieged by rebel Iraqi forces.

howitzer A large artillery piece, generally with a comparatively short barrel, capable of firing shells at a high angle of elevation with a steep descent. Depending on the type of howitzer, range varied from around 8 km (5 miles) to 30 km (20 miles).

Imperial Japanese Navy Navy of the Empire of Japan from 1868 until 1945.

kamikaze Japanese pilots of World War II who, from October 1944, launched mass suicide attacks against Allied shipping.

Karelian Isthmus The stretch of land between the Gulf of Finland and Lake Lagoda where the Finns built the fortified Mannerheim Line.

Kriegsmarine The name by which the German navy was known from 1935 until the end of the war.

League of Nations Organization created after World War I to provide a forum for the resolution of international disputes.

Lebensraum A German word meaning "living space", the demand for which formed the basis for Nazi Germany's commitment to territorial expansion.

Lend-Lease US aid programme initiated in March 1941 to guarantee the free supply of arms, ammunition, food, and other essential material, notably fuel, to Britain and subsequently to other allies.

legation Group of diplomats and other officials representing their government in a foreign country, but with less status than that of an embassy. A legation is headed by a minister as opposed to an ambassador.

Liberty ships Cargo ships, mass-produced in the US during World War II. Such ships were cheap and easy to build. In all, 2,711 were built, 200 being sunk by enemy action.

Lo Spazio Vitale The Italian equivalent of *Lebensraum*. Fascist Italy's aim was to establish dominance over North Africa and in the Mediterranean area.

Low Countries A collective term for Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. Also known as the Benelux countries after the initial letters of their names.

Luftwaffe Officially created in 1935, Germany's Luftwaffe was the most modern air force in the world when war broke out in 1939.

materiel Collective word describing arms, ammunition, and military equipment and supplies in general.

Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact Non-aggression pact concluded by Soviet and German foreign ministers before the start of World War II that partitioned Poland between the two powers.

nautical mile Unit of measurement slightly greater than a land mile and equal to one minute of a degree of latitude.

Nazi party Abbreviated title of the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Workers' Party).

partisans Members of the armed resistance groups that sprung up in Nazi-occupied territory during the war.

plebiscite A vote by which the people of a country expresses their approval or disapproval of a specific proposal. After World War I and in the run-up to World War II, they were used in Europe to address the issues created by displaced populations.

pocket battleship A type of powerful heavy cruiser built by Germany in the 1930s. The Nazis built three in total: *Deutschland* (later renamed *Lutzow*), *Admiral Scheer*, and *Admiral Graf Spee*. Their main armament consisted of six 11-in guns.

POW Prisoner of war. A person, usually a combatant, held prisoner during an armed conflict.

putsch An illegal attempt to overthrow a government by force of arms. Hitler's so-called Beer Hall Putsch, which he launched against the Bavarian government in Munich in November 1923, though a failure, was a notable footstep along his road to power.

RAF Royal Air Force. Britain's air force, established in April 1918, and the world's oldest independent air force.

Red Army The Soviet government's army following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. The name was dropped in 1946.

Regia Aeronautica The Italian Royal Air Force, founded in 1923. Though on the surface numerically impressive, many of its aircraft were obsolete, and the ill-organized Italian aircraft industry failed to keep pace with its military losses.

regiment *see* battalion.

Reichskommissariat Administrative unit led by a Reichskommissar and tasked with governing regions of German-occupied Europe including the Netherlands, Norway, Belgium, and northern France. Five others were established in the east in a bid to break up the Soviet Union.

Reichstag The parliament of the Third Reich. Its role was largely ceremonial, unanimously approving Hitler's decisions.

Rhineland Area of western Germany along the River Rhine. Following World War I it was demilitarized by the terms of the 1925 Locarno Treaty.

Royal Navy The British navy, the strongest in the world at the start of World War II, fielding 15 battleships and battlecruisers, seven aircraft carriers, 66 cruisers, 184 destroyers, and 60 submarines.

ROC Royal Observer Corps. Civil defence organization tasked with plotting enemy aircraft movements over Britain during World War II.

Saarland Province of south-western Germany, administered by the League of Nations from 1920 to 1935.

salient A battlefield projection, also known as a bulge, surrounded by the enemy on multiple sides, making the troops holding it vulnerable to attack.

SOE Special Operations Executive. British secret intelligence organization tasked with aiding resistance movements in enemy-occupied territories and carrying out spying and sabotage activities.

SS *Schutzstaffel*. The elite paramilitary corps of the Nazi party. Led by Heinrich Himmler from 1929 onwards.

SA *Sturmabteilung*. Otherwise known as the Brownshirts, the SA was the original paramilitary force of the Nazis that became gradually overshadowed by the SS.

sue for peace The initiation of negotiations for peace, usually a step taken by the losing party in an attempt to avoid an unconditional surrender.

task force A term coined by the US Navy in 1941 to describe naval units combined to undertake a specific military mission.

Third Reich The official name the Nazis gave Germany after coming to power in 1933. In their version of history the Holy Roman Empire, which lasted from 800 to 1806, constituted the First Reich, and the German Empire (1871–1918) constituted the Second Reich.

Treaty of Versailles The peace treaty that formally concluded World War I following the 1918 armistice between the Allies and Germany. Its contentious clauses on war guilt and its demand for the payment of reparations caused lasting German resentment that helped fuel the rise of the Nazi party.

U-boats German submarines. While used to attack enemy warships, U-boats were primarily used to create a naval blockade of Allied shipping routes and to allow for commerce raiding.

United Nations International organization established in October 1945 with the aim of preventing future wars.

USAAF United States Army Air Forces. Formed in 1941 as the successor to the Army Air Corps. After the US entered World War II, its strength rose dramatically from just 4,000 aircraft to 75,000 by the end of the war.

Vichy France The name of the state set up under the leadership of Marshal Philippe Pétain to rule unoccupied France following the French surrender in June 1940. Its capital was the spa town of Vichy.

V-weapons The name coined by the Germans for the so-called "vengeance weapons" they deployed in 1944. They consisted of the V-1 pilotless flying bomb and the V-2 long-range rocket.

Waffen-SS The armed branch of the SS and the Wehrmacht's elite fighting formations. It was judged at the post-war Nuremberg trials to be a criminal organisation due to its involvement in war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Wehrmacht The generic name for Germany's armed forces from 1935 to the end of the war. It consisted of the Herr (army), the Kriegsmarine (navy) and Luftwaffe (air force) with Hitler as the supreme commander.

Western Front In World War II, the theatre of conflict taking place in Belgium, Denmark, Norway, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.

INDEX

Page numbers in **bold** indicate main treatments of a topic

A

Aachen, Battle of 201
Abbeville 49
Abd al-liah 82
Abyssinia *see* Ethiopia
HMS *Achilles* 43
Addis Ababa 75
Admiralty Islands 207
Africa
  power struggles in **56–57**
  see also East Africa; North Africa
African Americans 114, 195
Afrika Korps 72, 76–77, 144–45, 160
aircraft carriers **67**, 212–13
aircraft manufacture 114–15, 133, 173, 174–75
HMS *Ajax* 43
Alam Halfa, Battle of 143, 145
Alaska 140
Albania 72, 78, 79, 263
  Italian invasion of 28, 79, 80, 81
Aleutian Islands 127
Alexander, General Harold 164, 165
Alexandria 72, 85, 130
Algeria 57
  Operation Torch 146–47, 161
Algiers 147
Alps 233
Alsace-Lorraine 195, 200
Altmark Incident **47**
Amadeo, Prince 75
Amboina 112
amphibious warfare 166, 186–87, 205, **208–09**, 250
Ancona 167
Anglo-Iraqi Treaty (1930) 82
Anschluss 13, 18, 28, **29**
Anti-Comintern Pact (1936) 32
anti-Semitism 134–35
Antwerp 194, 195, 200, 201, 228, 229
Anzio 166, 167
Apennine Mountains 240
appeasement 13, 28, 32
Arabs, Palestinian 271
Arab–Israeli War, first 271
Archangel 140, 141
Arctic convoys **140–41**
Ardennes 49, 226, 228, 229, 232
Area Bombing Directive 173, 234
HMS *Ark Royal* 66, 67
armament production 62, 92–93, 114, 158, 174
arms race, nuclear 262–63
Arnhem, Battle of 199
Arnim, General Hans-Juergen von 160
Arno, river 167, 240
Aryanism 133
Asia, decolonization of **268–69**
Asmara 75
Assam 218, 221
Athens 81, 203
Atlantic
  Battle of the River Plate **42–43**
  Battle of the **64–67**, 130, 158, **168–69**
  see also convoys; U-boats
Atlantic Charter 68, 268
atomic bomb 246, 247, **256–59**, 260, 263
Attlee, Clement 230
Auchinleck, General Claude 77, 143
Aung San 121
Auschwitz-Birkenau 131, 135, 136, 226, 238
Australia
  forces from 74, 76, 77, 118, 119, 129, 161, 206, 207, 214, 215, 273
  Japanese assaults on 124, 125
Austria 233
  Anschluss 13, 18, 28, **29**
  legacy of World War I 14, 15
Austro-Hungarian Empire 15, 19, 29
Avranches 191
Axis Powers 32
Azov, Sea of 180

B

B-17 bombers 234
B-24 Liberators 169, 235
B-29 Superfortress 252, 253
Ba Maw 223
Babi Yar ravine 98
Badoglio, Marshal Pietro 132, 164
Baedeker Raids 173
Balfour Declaration 271
Bali 112
Balkans
  Axis campaign in 80–81, 203–04
  liberation of 202
  resistance movements 176, 177
Baltic Sea 182, 183
Baltic States 18, 133, 238
  massacre of Jews 98
  Soviet absorption of **44**
Bardia 74
Barents Sea, Battle of the 141
Barnett, Correlli 186
Bastogne 226, 228, 229
Bataan Death March 116
Bataan Peninsula 116, 117, 249
Batumi 148, 149
Becquerel, Henri 256
Beda Fomm, Battle of 74
Beijing 23, 266
Belfort Gap 195, 201
Belgian Congo 57
Belgium
  African colonies **56–57**
  Ardennes offensive 226
  Battle of the Bulge 228–29
  German invasion 36, 41, 49, 51, 53
  inter-war 14
  liberation of 194, 195, 200
Belgorod 153
Belgrade 80, 202, 203, 238
Belorussia 98, 159, 182–83, 238, 242
Benghazi 142
Berbera 75
Bergen-Belsen 134, 135, 227, 232, 233
Bering Strait 140
Berlin
  Allied advance on 232, 238–9
  Allied bombing of 173
  blockade and airlift 262, 264, 265
  fall of **242–43**
  Holocaust memorial 274–75
  Soviets arrive in 226
  Speer's redevelopment plans 174
  surrender ceremony in 244
Bessarabia 33, 91
Beveland Peninsula 200
"Big Week" raids 173
biological weapons 221
Bir Hakeim 143
Bismarck, sinking of the **66–67**
Bismarck Sea, Battle of the 206, 207
Bizerta 160
Black Sea 149
Bletchley Park **170–71**
the Blitz 37, 59, **60–61**, 63, 172, 273
Blitzkrieg 36, 39, **50–51**, 72, 228
Bockscar 259
Bohr, Niels 256
Bologna 241
bombing campaigns
  against Japanese mainland 205, **252–53**, 272, 273
  Allied in Germany 158, 159, **172–73**, 226, **234–35**, 272, 273
  the Blitz 37, 59, **60–61**, 63, 273
  Dresden **236–37**
  of Stalingrad 150, 151
  V-weapons **192–93**
Bor-Komorowski, General Tadeusz 184
Bordeaux 139
Bormann, Martin 196
Borneo 112, 214
Bose, Chandra 123
Bottai, Giuseppe 133
Bougainville 125, 206, 207
Boulogne 186, 194
bouncing bombs 173
Bradley, Lieutenant-General Omar N. 188
Bremen 233
Breskens Pocket 200
Brest-Litovsk, Treaty of 15
Britain
  African colonies 56–57
  Allied advance on Germany 200, 201, 243
  Arctic convoys 140, 141
  Atlantic supply chain 42–43, 64–65
  Battle of Britain 37, **58–59**, 62, 274
  Battle for Normandy 191
  the Blitz 60–61, 273
  bombing of Germany 172–73, 234–35
  casualties 119, 187, 273
  civilian casualties 61, 173, 193

colonial rule 121, 262, 268, 269
D-Day Landings **186–87**
evacuation of Dunkirk **52–53**
and Greece 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 203
home front **62–63**
Lend-Lease 70, 71
in the Mediterranean 72, 80–81, 164–65
in the Middle East 72, 82
Normandy breakout 194–95
in North Africa 72, 73, 74–77, 130, 142–47, 160–61
Operation Market Garden 198–99
outbreak of war 36
phoney war 41
post-war 263
SOE **138–39**
in Southeast Asia 104, 105, 112, 113, 118–19, 121, 218–19
surrender at Singapore **118–19**
V-weapons **192–93**
war in the Atlantic 42–43, 66–67
World War I peace treaties 15
and Yugoslavia 202
British 8th Army 77, 142, **161**, 166, 167, 240
British East Indies 112, 113
British Empire 59, 62, 72, 120, 121, 123, 218, 269
British Expeditionary Force 36, 41, 53, 54
Brunei 112
Bryansk 96, 100, 101
Bucharest 183
Buckner, General Simon 254
Budapest 226, 238
Bukit Timah 119
Bulgaria 15, 80, 202, 238, 263
Bulge, Battle of the 226, **228–29**, 235
Burma
civilian casualties 121, 204
fightback in 204, **218–19**, 246
independence 268
Japanese invasion and occupation 105, 113, **120–1**, 123
Burma National Army 121, 218
Burma railroad 204, 223
Burma Road 121
Bzura, Battle of the 38

C

Caen 187, 191
Cairo Conference 162
Calais 186, 194
Cambodia 106, 269
camouflage 182
Camp O'Donnell (Capas) 116
Camus, Albert 177
Canada
casualties 187
D-Day Landings 186–87
forces from 161, 194, 200, 201, 232
Cape Bon, Battle of 85
Cape Engaño, Battle of 214
Cape Matapan, Battle of 72, 85
Caribbean 168
Caroline Islands 211, 213
Casablanca 146, 147
Casablanca Conference 158, 162, 172, 206
casualties 272–73
Catania 164
Caucasus 90, 91, 97, 130, 148, 149, 152, 153
Cecil, Lord Robert 17
Celebes 112
Celles 228
Ceylon 121, 268
Chad 57
Chamberlain, Neville 13, 32
Changde, Battle of 221
Changi Prison (Singapore) 119
Changsha, Battle of 221
Channel ports 194
chemical weapons 221
Chemnitz 234
Chengdu 252
Chennault, Colonel Claire Lee 106
Cherbourg 191
Chetniks 177, 203
Chiang Kai-shek **22**, 23, 26, 121, 162, 266–67
China
and Burma 120, 121, 218
casualties 221, 273
Civil War 22, 262, 263, **266–67**
Communism in 262–63
inter-war turmoil **22–23**
Japanese invasion 12, 22, 23, 104, 121
Nationalist government 12
Sino-Japanese War **26–27**
US aid 106
US bombing raids on Japan from 252, 253
war with Japan 204, 205, **220–21**
Chindits 218
Chinese Communist Party (CCP) 22
Chinese Revolution (1911) 22
Choltitz, Dietrich von 195
Chongqing 220, 226
Chuikov, General Vasily Ivanovich 150, 179
Churchill, Winston
and Iron Curtain 265
Battle of Britain 59
the Blitz 61
and Dunkirk 53
economic warfare 37
electoral defeat 262
and Fall of France 54
and Greece 203
and North Africa 72, 146, 161
quoted 64, 113, 140, 227
summit conferences 68, 162–63, 206, 230–31, 256, 265
surrender of Singapore 118
VE Day 245
Cisterna di Latina 167
civil defence 36, 40, 61, 216
civilian casualties 272, 273
Clark, Major General Mark 147, 167
Clemenceau, Georges 15
code-breaking 127, **170–71**
Cold War 262–63, **264–65**, 269
Colditz Castle **154**
collaborators 130, 159
collective security 16, 17
Colmar 200
Cologne 173, 232
COMECON 265
Communism
in China 22, 220–21, 266–67
Hitler's attitude towards 88, 89
and partisans 227
in Soviet Union 15, 92
spread of 262–63, 264–65, 269
concentration camps 31, 39, 92, 131, 134, 135, **136**, 183, 226–27, 232, 233, 274
conscripted labour 133
conscription 62, 114, 158
convoys
Arctic **140–41**
Atlantic 42–43, 64–65, 67, 130, 168–69
Axis 84, 85
Copenhagen Declaration 32
Coral Sea, Battle of the 105, 124, 125, 126, 127
Corinth 203
Corregidor, Battle of 116, 117
Corsica 132, 164
Cossacks 272
Coventry 61
Crete 72, 81, 85
Battle of 73, **82–83**
Crimea 88, 91, 96, 97, 99, 101, 148, 149, 159, 180, 181
Croatia 203
cryptography **170–71**
Cuban Missile Crisis 265
Cyrenaica 74, 76
Czechoslovakia
creation of 15
falls to communism 262, 263, 264
occupation of 13, 28, 29, 32
resistance 176

D

D-Day landings (1944) 54, 139, 158, 159, 166, 170, **186–87**, 191, 195, 234, 240
Omaha Beach **188–89**
Dachau 232, 233
Dakar 57
Dambuster raid 173
Danzig 14, 29
Darlan, Admiral François 147
Darwin 125
Davao 112
de Gaulle, Charles
and Free French Forces 73
and French African colonies 56–57
London broadcasts **54**
quoted 177
returns to Paris 195
decolonization of Asia **268–69**
democracy 19, 263
Deng Xiaoping 267
Denmark
after World War I 14
assistance to Jews 177
German invasion/occupation 36, 41, **46**, 47, 132, 133
Denmark Strait, Battle of the 66, 67
deportations 159
Dickinson, Goldsworthy Lowes 17
dictatorships **18–19**, 92
Diego Suarez 57
Dien Bien Phu, Battle of 268
Dieppe Raid 138, 139
Dietrich, Marlene 114
disarmament 16, 17
displaced persons 159, 262, 272
Dnieper, river 183
Dollfuss, Engelbert 19, 29
Don, river 149, 152, 153
Donets, river 153
Dönitz, Admiral Karl 64, **168**, 169
Doodlebugs *see* V-weapons
Doolittle Raid 253
Dresden, bombing of 226, 234, 235, **236–37**
Dubrovnik 80
Duckworth, Vice Admiral H.S. 124
Duisburg Convoy, Battle of 85
Dunkirk
evacuation of 36, 49, **52–53**, 54

siege of 194
Dutch East Indies 105, 106, 107, 109, 110, 112, 113, 268, 269

E

Eagle Attacks 58
EAM 176, 203
East Africa 28, 72, **75**
East Germany 262, 263
East Prussia 182, 183
Eastern Dorsale 161
Eastern Front 90–91, 94–101, 130, 131, 148–53, 158, 159, 178–83, 238–39, 272, 273
see also Soviet Union
Éboué, Feliz 57
Ebro, Battle of the 24, 25
economic recovery, post-war 263
Eden, Anthony 62
Egypt
Italian offensives 72, 74, 79, 84, 85
Western Desert 76–77, 130, 142–45, 146
Eindhoven 198, 199
Einsatzgruppen 98–99
Eisenhower, General Dwight D. 139, 147, 159, 186, 195, 232, 233, 243, 244
El Adem 142
El Agheila 76, 77, 142, 145
El Alamein
First Battle of 143
Second Battle of 130, 131, **144–45**, 146, 147, 161, 170
El Hamma 161
ELAS 203
Elbe, river 226, 232, 233, 238, 242
Emergency, Malayan 269
emigration 272
Empress Augusta Bay, Battle of 207
English Channel 49, 186–87
Enigma machines 65, 170
Enola Gay 258
Eritrea 74, 75
espionage 139
Esteva, Admiral Jean 161
Estonia 14, 19, 44, 88
Ethiopia 57, 123
Italian invasion of 13, 28
Italians expelled from 74, 75
Europe
1939–41 **36–41**, **44–55**, **58–63**, **78–87**
1942 **130–31**, **130–39**
1943-44 **158–59**, **164–67**, **172–77**, **182–203**
1944-45 **226–45**
countdown to war **32–33**
dictatorships **18–21**
expansionism in **28–29**
inter-war 12–13
Iron Curtain **264–65**
legacy of World War I **14–15**
new order in **132–33**
post-war **160–61**
price of war 272, 273
VE Day **244–45**
European Coal and Steel Community 263
evacuations
of civilians 36, 41, 92
of Soviet industrial areas **97**
HMS *Exeter* 42, 43
SS *Exodus* **271**
extermination camps 130, 131, 134, 135, 136, 183, 226–27

F

Falaise Pocket 191, 194
Falange 24
Fascism 12, 18–19, 24, 28, 29, 79
"Fat Man" bomb 259
Feodosiya 101
Ferrara 241
Final Solution 130, 134
Finland
nationalism 18
Operation Barbarossa 90, 91, 94
post World War I 14, 15
Soviet invasion 17, 36, **44–45**, 89
Finschhafen 206
Florence 167, 240
Flying Tigers 106
forced labour 39, 92, 133, 135, 204, 223
Fort Capuzzo 74
Fort Eben Emael 49
France
African colonies **56–57**
Allied advance on Germany 200, 201
Allied Breakout from Normandy **194–95**
Battle of Normandy **190–91**
Battle of 49
colonial rule 262, 263, 268, 269
D-Day Landings **186–87**
division of 55
fall of France 37, **54–55**
German invasion/occupation 36, 41, 51, 53, 54, 132
legacy of World War I 14, 15
liberation of 195, 200
outbreak of war 36
see also Free French; Vichy France
Franco, General Francisco 18, 19, 24–25, 263
Franco-German Armistice (1940) 54
Free French 56, 57, 73, 77, 82, 147, 161, 177
French Army 200
French Equatorial Africa 56
French Expeditionary Corps 166, 167
French Indochina 104, 106, 107, 109, 222
French Navy 56, 57, 147
French Resistance 54, 177, 195
French Somaliland 57
fuel shortages, German 234, 235

G

Gabon 56
Gaeta 167
Gallabat 75
Gandhi, Mahatma **123**, 269
Gazala, Battle of 142, 143
Gazala Line 142–43
Geneva Convention 154
Genoa 240
George Cross 86
German Navy *see* Kriegsmarine
Germany
advance to Stalingrad **148–49**
Allied advance on **194–95**, **198–99**, **200–01**, **242–43**
Allied bombing 158, 159, **172–73**, 226, 272, 273
Allied occupation 227
Allies cross Rhine **232–33**
Arctic convoys 140–41
in the Atlantic 42–43, 66–67
Battle of the Bulge **228–29**
Battle of Normandy 190–91
casualties 179, 182, 229, 272, 273
civilian casualties 92, 159, 173, 234, 235, 236
D-Day 188–89
declares war on US 104–05, 111
defeat **226–27**
defiance 1943–44 **158–59**
expansionism **28–29**, 32, 91
Fall of Berlin **242–43**
first phase 1939–41 **36–37**
and Greece 79, 203
Holocaust 130, 134–35
home front **92**, 226
invasion of Poland **38–39**
invasion of the Soviet Union **88–91**, **94–99**, **100–01**, 130, 131, **148–53**, **178–83**
Italian **164–67**, **240–41**
Kristallnacht **30–31**, 134
legacy of World War I 14–15
loses air war **234–35**
in the Mediterranean 72–73, 80–87, 164–67
in the Middle East 82–83
in North Africa 72–77, 130–31, 142–47, 160–61
occupied territories **132–33**
offensive in the West **48–49**
phoney war 41
plot to kill Hitler **196–97**
post-war 263
post-war occupation zones 230, 262, 264, 265
POWs 154
resistance movements 176–77
rise of Nazi Party 12–13, 18, 19, 20–21
Soviet advance on 238
Stalingrad **150–53**
unconditional surrender 227, 244, 246
V-weapons **192–93**
war industry **174–75**
Warsaw Uprising **184–85**
and Yugoslavia 202, 203
Giap, General Vi Nguyen 268
Gibraltar 57, 72, 84
Gideon Force 75
Gilbert Islands 113, 204, 208, 211, 213
Goebbels, Joseph **20**, 21, 177, 197, 243
Gold Beach 186, 187
Gorbachev, Michail 265
Göring, Hermann 59, 196
Gothic Line 166, 167, 240
Goubellat 160
Graf Spee 42, 43
Great Depression 12, **19**
Great Wall of China 220
Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere 106, 107, **223**
Greece 84, 161, **202–03**, 227
Civil War 203, 264, 265
diversion of Allied troops from Africa to 76
Greco-Italian War **78–79**
Italian and German invasions/occupation 72, 73, 80–81, 132, 203
Metaxas dictatorship 19, 79
partisans 159, 176, 177
Grynszpan, Herschel 31
Guadalcanal 105, 125, **128–29**, 204, 206, 208
Guam 112, 113, 205
Battle for 212, 213
Gubbins, Sir Colin **139**
Guderian, General Heinz 100
Guernica 24, 25
guerrilla warfare 116, 139, 177, 220

gulags 92
Gulf of Siam 113
Guomindang (GMD) 22, 266–67
Gustav Line 165, 166
Guzzoni, General Alfredo 164

H

Haakon VII of Norway 46, 47
Hagen Line 179
Hagushi 254
Hahn, Otto 256
Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia 28, 74, 75
Halbe 242
Halfaya Pass 76, 77
Hamburg 233, 234
Hangzhou 266
Hanover 30–31
Harris, Arthur "Bomber" 173, 235, 236
Hawaii *see* Pearl Harbor
Hawker Hurricanes **59**
Heinkel aircraft 174–75
Hemingway, Ernest 200
Henderson Field 129
Hertogenbosch 201
Heuaktion programme 133
Heydrich, Rheinhard 131
Himmler, Heinrich 98
Hindenburg, Paul von 20
Hirohito, Emperor 110, 247, 260
Hiroshima 246, 247, 254, 256, **258–59**, 260, 263, 273, 274
Hiryū 126
Hitler, Adolf
  1939–41 36–37
  1942 130–31
  1943–44 158
  and Allied bombing 173
  and Allied crossing of Rhine 232, 233
  appeasement 32
  and Britain 41, 59, 61, 173
  and communism 88, 89
  D-Day landings 186, 188
  defeat of Germany 226–27
  expansionism 29
  fall of Berlin 242–43
  and France 54, 132, 195
  and Greece 79
  Italian campaign 240
  and the Jews 31, 130, 134, 135
  last major offensive 229
  Lebensraum 88, 133
  and Mediterranean 80, 83
  and North Africa 73, 76, 145
  plot to kill 159, 176, **196–97**
  and Poland 38, 39
  rise to power 12–13, **20–21**
  and Soviet Union 88, 89, 91, 94, 97, 98, 100–01, 148, 149, 152, 178, 181
  and Spanish Civil War 24
  and Speer 174
  suicide 226, 227, 243, 244
  support for Italy 72
Hokkaido 253
Hollywood 114
Holocaust **134–35**, 136, 159, 272, 273
Holocaust memorial (Berlin) 274–75
Home Army (Poland) 184–85, 238
Home Guard **62**
Hong Kong 105, **112**, 113
Honshu 253
HMS *Hood* 66, 67
Hoth, General Hermann 152
Huai Hai campaign 266, 267
Hube, Hans 164
Huertgen Forest, Battle of 200, 201
the Hump 220, **221**
Hungary
  Horthy regency 19
  legacy of World War I 14, 15
  and Soviet Union 182, 183, 238, 263
  Tripartite Pact 80
  troops from 88, 91, 152
hydrogen bomb 262, 263

I

ice roads 94
Iceland 64, 140
Ichi-go campaign 205
Ie Shima 254
Imperial Navy, Japanese 204, 205, 211
Imphal, Battle of 205, 218
India
  and Burma 218
  independence 262, **269**
  Japanese attacks on 204, 205, 218
  nationalist movement 105
  partition 268, 269
  US support for China from 220, 221
  in World War II 77, 119, 121, **122–23**
Indian National Army 123
Indian National Congress 269
Indian Ocean 121
Indochina 106, 107, 110, 113, 221, 262, 268, 269
Indonesia 263, 268
intelligentsia 39
International Brigades 24
internment, Japanese Americans 114, 272
interwar years **12–13**
Iran 70, 73
Iraq 73, 82, 83, 122–23
Ireland 14, 15
Iron Curtain 262, 263, **264–65**
island-hopping, Pacific 204, 205, **210–11**
Ismay, General Hastings 84
Israel
  creation of 263, **270–71**
  Jewish emigration to 262
Italian East Africa 28, 72, 75
Italy
  Allied invasion 146, 158, 159, **164–67**, 181
  campaigns in North Africa 72, **74–75**, 76, 160
  declares war on US 111
  final struggles in **240–41**
  from Anzio to the Gothic Line **166–67**
  German surrender in 227
  Greco-Italian War **78–79**
  imperial ambitions **28–29**, 32, 72, **79**, **133**
  joins war 72, 84
  in Mediterranean 73, 79, 80, 84–86, 145
  occupation of Greece 203
  partisans 159, 176, 227, **240**, 241
  rise of Fascism 12, 18, 19, 28, 79
  sabotage operations in 138
  and Soviet Union 91, 152
Iwo Jima, Battle of 208, 246, 247, **250–51**, 253, 254, 255
Izyum 100, 101

J

Japan
  advances **112–13**
  Allied bombing 246, **252–53**, **258–59**, 272, 273
  at war with China 204, 205, **220–21**
  at war with US **104–05**
  attack on Pearl Harbor 68, 109, 208
  and Axis Powers 32
  Battle of Iwo Jima **250–51**
  Battle of Leyte Gulf **214–15**
  Battle for the Marianas **212–13**
  Battle of Midway **126–27**
  Battle of Okinawa **254–55**
  and Burma **120–21**, 123, 218
  casualties 119, 212, 253, 254, 258, 259, 273
  civil defence 216
  defeat **246–47**, 266
  economic embargo against **107**
  goes to war **108–09**
  Guadalcanal **128–09**
  Hiroshima and Nagasaki 246, 247, 254, 256, **258–59**, 260
  invades China 12, 22, 23, 104, 107
  invades Manchuria 17, 22, 23, 26, 107, 110, 223
  kamikaze tactics **216–17**
  militarism and imperialism 13, 104, **106–07**, 109
  Operation Cartwheel **206–07**
  Pearl Harbor **110–11**
  and the Philippines **116–17**, **248–49**
  post-war 262, 263
  Potsdam Declaration 230
  rule in East Asia **222–23**
  sanctions imposed on 109
  setbacks (1942) **124–25**
  Sino-Japanese War **26–27**
  takes Singapore **118–19**
  Tripartite Pact 80
  unconditional surrender 246, 247, 260–61, 266
  US war against **204–05**
  use of chemical and biological weapons 221
  see also Pacific War
Java 112
Jews
  creation of Israel **270–71**
  in Denmark 177
  ghettoes 36, 39, 134, 135, 136–37
  Holocaust 130, 131, **134–35**, 136, 159, 272, 273
  Kristallnacht **30–31**
  massacre of Russian **98–99**, 134
  in Palestine 73
  Warsaw Ghetto 39, **136–37**
Johore Strait 118, 119
July Plot **196–97**
Juno Beach 186, 187

K

Kalach 149, 152
Kalinin 96, 100
kamikaze tactics 205, 215, **216–17**, 246, 255
Kammhuber Line 172
Kanalkampf (Channel Battle) 58
Karelian Isthmus 44, 45, 272
Kassala 75
Kassel 233
Kasserine Pass, Battle of 160, 161
Kaunas 183
Kavieng 206, 207

Keise Shima 254
Kellogg-Briand Pact 16
Kennedy, John F. 207
Kenya 74, 75
Kerama Islands 254
Kerch 97, 98–99, 101, 148
Keren 75
Kesselring, Field Marshal Albert 165, 166, 167, 240
Ketzin 242
Kharkov 100, 101, 148, 149, 152, 153
Kiev 88, 90, 91, 98, 179, 181
Kim Il-sung 268
King, Major General Edward 117
Kiyan Peninsula 255
Klin 101
Klopper, General 142
Kohima, Battle of 205, 218
Kokoda Trail 105, 124, 206
Kokura 258, 259
Kolombangara 206
Kone 252
Konev, Marshal Ivan 238, 242, 243
Konoe, Fumimaro 110
Korea 223, 273
Korean War 263, 268, 269
Krasnograd 153
Kriegsmarine
  and Arctic convoys 140–41
  Battle of the River Plate **42–43**
  last remnants of 235
  sinking of the *Bismarck* **66–67**
Kristallnacht **30–31**, 134
Kuribayashi, Tadamichi 250, 251
Kursk 96, 158
  Battle of **178–79**, 181, 182
Kwajalein Atoll 205, 211
Kyushu 252, 254, 255

L

La Rochelle 194
Lae 206
Lagoda, Lake 94
landing craft **208**
Langsdorff, Captain Hans 42, 43
Laos 106, 269
Latvia 14, 15, 19, 44, 88, 182
Laurel, José P. 116, 223
Lausanne, Treaty of 14, 80
Laval, Pierre 132
League of Nations 12, 13, **16–17**, 28, 29, 271
Lebanon 82
Lebensraum 88, 91, 133
Leipzig 234
LeMay, General Curtis 252
Lend-Lease 68, **70–71**, 162
Leningrad 88, 90
  Siege of 89, 91, **94–95**, 101, 181
Leningrad Symphony (Shostakovich) 274
Leyte Gulf, Battle of 205, **214–15**, 216, 249, 251
Liaoning-Shenyang campaign 266, 267
Libya 28, 72, 74, 76, 79, 145
Liège 194
Lingayen Gulf 116, 248, 249
Liri Valley 167
Lithuania 14, 15, 19, 29, 33, 44, 88, 89, 182
"Little Boy" bomb 258
Liverpool 61
Lloyd-George, David 15
Lockheed P-38 Lightning 206, **207**
Lofoten Islands 139
London
  Baby Blitz 173
  the Blitz 59, 60–61, 63, 273
  V-weapons 192
  VE Day 244–45
Long March 23
Long Range Penetration groups 218
Louisiade Archipelago 125
Ludwigshafen 172
Luftwaffe
  Allied bombing of Germany 172, 173
  Arctic convoys 140, 141
  Battle of Britain **58–59**
  the Blitz 61
  Dunkirk 53
  Eastern Front 150, 151, 179
  loses air war **234–35**
Lütjens, Admiral Günther 67
Luxembourg 132, 226, 228
  German invasion 36, 49
Luzon 112, 116, 205, 248, 249, 251

M

Maas, river 201
Macau 112
MacArthur, General Douglas 116, 117, 205, 206, 207, **214,** 248, 249, 261
McAuliffe, General Anthony 228
Madagascar 121
Madagascar, Battle of **57**
Madang 206
Maginot Line 36, 49, 54
Maikop 149
Majdanek 183
Makin Atoll 204, 211
Malaya 107, 109, 110, 112, **113**, 118, 121, 269
Malta 72, 73, 84, 138
  convoys 84
  Siege of **86–87**
Manchester, William 254
Manchu (Qing) dynasty 22
Manchuria
  Chinese Civil War 266, 267
  Japanese invasion of 17, 22, 23, 26, 107, 110, 223
  Soviet invasion of 246, 247, 260
Mandalay 120, 121, 218, 246
mandate system 17, 223
Manhattan Project 247, **256–57**
Manila 112, 113, 116, 117, 248, 249
Mannerheim Line 44, 45
Manstein, Field Marshal Erich von 152, 178
Mao Zedong 22, 23, 262, 263, **266**, 267
March on Rome 18
Mareth Line 161
Mariana Islands 204, 205, 211, 251, 252, 253
  Battle for the Marianas **212–13**, 214
Marines 68–69, 128–29, 205, 208–09, 211, 250, 251
Marseilles 1 95
Marshall Islands 205, 208, 211, 213
Marshall Plan 262, 264, 265
maskirovka **182**
Meatgrinder (Hill 382) 251
Mecklenburg 242
Medenine 161
Mediterranean region **72–73**
  Eastern Mediterranean **82–83**
  Germany pushes south **80–81**
  Italian Campaign **164–67**
  Operation Torch **146–47**
  war in the Mediterranean **84–85**
  see also Greece; Italy; North Africa
Medjez el Bab 147, 160
Memel 29
Merrill, General Frank 218
Mersa Matruh 143
Messe, General Giovanni 160
Messina 164
Metaxas, General Ioannis 19, 79
Metaxas Line 80
Metz 195, 200
Meuse, river 228, 229
Middle East 57, 72, 73, **82**, 263
Midway Atoll 110, 124
Midway, Battle of **126–27**
Mihailović, Colonel Draža 203
Milan 240
military casualties 272, 273
Milne Bay 124, 125
Mindanao 116, 117
Mindoro, Battle of 248
Minsk 91, 98, 183
Mitsuri, Lieutenant General Ushijima 254
Mogadishu 75
Molotov, Vyacheslav 33, 38
Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact *see* Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact
Monastir 80, 81
Mongolia 106
Monte Cassino 166, 167
Montevideo 43
Montgomery, Field Marshal Bernard 131, 143, 164, 191, 195, 198, 199, 232
  Second Battle of El Alamein 144–45
  victory in the desert 161
Morocco
  Operation Torch 146–47, 161
  Spanish Civil War 24, 25
Moscow
  German advance on 88, 89, 91, **96–97**
  relief of **100–01**
Moscow Peace Treaty (1940) 45
Moscow Summit (1941) 162
Moselle, river 195, 200
Motobu Peninsula 254
Mount Suribachi 250
Moyale 74
Mulberry harbours 187
Munich 233
Munich Agreement 29, 32, 33
Murmansk 140, 141
Mussolini, Benito
  declares war 72, 86
  deposed 158, 164
  execution of 227, 241
  and Greece 79
  imperial ambitions 13, 74, 84
  and propaganda 177
  Republic of Salò 240
  rise to power 12, 18, 19, 28
  Rome-Berlin Axis 32
Mutual Aid programme 70

N

Nagano, Admiral Osami 109
Nagasaki 246, 247, 254, 256, **258–59**, 260, 263, 273
Nagoya 252
Naha 255
Nancy 200
Nanjing 23, 26, 266, 267
  massacre at 26
Naples 165
Narvik 46, 47
Nassau Bay 206
National Front (Nationalists) (Spain) 24–25
Nationalism 12, 18
Nationalists (China) 220–21, 266–67
NATO 262, 263, 264, 265
Nazi party
  and the Jews 134, 135, 272, 273
  Nazi camps **136**
  rise of 12–13, 18, 19, **20–21**
  and Spanish Civil War 24
  treatment of occupied territories 133
Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact 13, **32–33**, 38, 39, 44, 91
Nehru, Jawaharlal 269
Neisse, river 243
Neretva River, Battle of the 176
Netherlands
  Allied invasion of Germany through 195
  colonial rule 263, 268, 269
  German invasion/occupation 36, 49, 51
  Hunger Winter 176, 232
  liberation of 200, 201
  Operation Market Garden **186–87**
  see also Dutch East Indies
Neuilly-sur-Seine, Treaty of 15
neutrality 32, 47, 68
New Britain 206, 207
New Georgia 206
New Guinea 105, 124–25, 205, 206–07, 208–09, 246
New Ireland 207
New Zealand, forces from 77, 143, 161, 206, 207
Nijmegen 198, 199
Nimitz, Admiral Chester 127, 205, 211
NKVD 39
Normandy
  Allied breakout from **194–95**, 200
  Battle of 158, 159, 162, **190–91**
  D-Day Landings **186–87**
North Africa 72–3, 123, 165
  1942 **130–31**
  Italy's campaigns in **74–75**
  Operation Torch **146–47**
  Rommel enters the Desert War **76–77**
  Rommel's final advance **142–43**
  Second Battle of El Alamein **144–45**
  victory in the Desert **160–61**
North Korea 268
North Vietnam 269
Northern Cape, Battle of the 141
Northern Expedition 22
Norway
  Arctic convoys 140
  German invasion/occupation 36, 41, **46–47**, 51, 132, 133
  resistance 176
  SOE activities 139
Novaya Zemlya 141
nuclear weapons 246, 247, **256–59**, 262–63
Nuremberg 172, 233
  rallies 20–21, 174
  trials 174, 262

O

Oder, river 238, 242, 243
Odessa 180, 181
oil 70, 72, 83, 90, 109, 149
Okinawa, Battle of 208, 246, 247, 253, **254–55**
Omaha Beach 186, 187, **188–89**
Oosterbeek 199
Operation Ariel 55
Operation Bagration 181, **182–83**
Operation Barbarossa 51, 88, 89, **90–91**, 97, 98
Operation Battleaxe 77
Operation Blissful 207
Operation Blue 148, 149, 152
Operation Bodenplatte 235
Operation Brevity 77
Operation Capri 161
Operation Cartwheel **206–07**, 211
Operation Chariot 139
Operation Citadel 178
Operation Cleanslate 207
Operation Cobra 191
Operation Colossus 138
Operation Compass 74
Operation Crossbow 193, 235
Operation Crusader 77
Operation Diver 193
Operation Dragoon 166, 195
Operation Drumbeat 168, 169
Operation Dynamo 52, 53
Operation Floating Chrysanthemum 216
Operation Frankton 139
Operation Goodtime 207
Operation Goodwood 191
Operation Gunnerside 139
Operation Hydra 193
Operation Iceberg 254
Operation Ichi-Go 221
Operation Independence 201
Operation Iskra 94
Operation Ketsu 246
Operation Koltso 153
Operation Lightfoot 144
Operation Lila 147
Operation Manna 203
Operation Market Garden 159, **198–99**, 200
Operation Meetinghouse 252, 253
Operation Neptune *see* D-Day Landings
Operation Pedestal 86
Operation Pointblank 173
Operation Pugilist 161
Operation Ratweek 202
Operation Rheinübung 67
Operation Rösselsprung 141, 202
Operation Sea Lion 58, 59
Operation Shingle 166
Operation Spring Wind 160
Operation Starvation 253
Operation Steinbock 173
Operation Stream Line Jane 57
Operation Supercharge 144, 145
Operation Tannenburg 39
Operation Thunderclap 236
Operation Toenails 207
Operation Torch 130, 131, 140, **146–47**, 161
Operation Typhoon 97
Operation Uranus 152
Operation Victor 249
Operation Weserübung 47
Operation Winter Storm 152
Oppenheim 232
Oran 146
Oran, Battle of 56, 57
Orlovka Salient 151
Orsha 183
Orwell, George 265
Osaka 246, 252
Osnabrück 233
Ostend 194
Ostland 133
Ottoman Empire 14, 15, 17, 19
Ozawa, Admiral Jisaburo 212, 213

P

P-51 Mustang **234**
Pacific War 104–05, 204–05
  Battle of Okinawa **254–55**
  Battle of Leyte Gulf **214–15**
  Battle for the Marianas **212–13**
  Battle of Okinawa **254–55**
  bombing of Japan **252–53**
  Guadalcanal **128–29**
  Hiroshima and Nagasaki **258–59**
  island-hopping **210–11**
  Iwo Jima **250–51**
  Japan invades the Philippines **116–17**
  Japanese advances **112–13**
  Japanese setbacks **124–25**
  kamikaze tactics **216–17**
  Midway **126–27**
  Operation Cartwheel **206–07**
  peace in the Pacific 246, **260–01**
  Pearl Harbor **110–11**
  retaking the Philippines **248–49**
  surrender of Singapore **118–19**
  US amphibious warfare **208–09**
Pact of Steel (1939) 32, 72
Pakistan 262, 268, 269
Palau 116
Palawan Passage, Battle of 215
Palestine
  creation of Israel 271
  Jewish settlers in 73
Pan-American Security Zone 64
Panther–Wotan Line 181
Papandreou, Georges 203
Papua 124
  see also New Guinea
Paris
  capture of 54
  liberation of 159, 195
Paris Peace Conference (1919) 15, 17
partisan movements
  Communist-led 130, 159, 177, 203
  Greek 176, 177, 203
  Italian 159, 176, 227, **240**, 241
  Soviet 100, 101
  Yugoslav 176, 177, 202, 203, 238
Pas-de-Calais 186
Pathfinder units 172

Patton, General George S. 164, 191, 195, 200, 229, **232**, 233
Paulus, General Friedrich 131, 152, 153
Pavlograd 153
Pavlov, Sergeant Yakov **150**
Pearl Harbor 68, 70, 104, 105, 109, **110–11**, 113, 116, 221, 274
Peenemünde 193
People's Liberation Army (PLA) 266–67
Percival, Lieutenant-General Arthur 118, 119
Pescara 167
Pétain, Marshal Philippe 54, 55
Phibusongkhram, Field Marshal Luang 107, 113
Philippine Sea, Battle of the 205, 212–13
Philippines 109, 205, 212–15
  civilian casualties 273
  Japan invades 112, 113, **116–17**
  retaking of 246, 247, **248–49**
phoney war 36, **40–41**
Pico 167
pilots, kamikaze **216**
Ping Jin campaign 266, 267
Piraeus 203
Pisa 167
plebiscites 14
Ploeşti 235
Po, river 241
Poland
  in British 8th Army 77, 161
  casualties 272, 273
  death camps 134, 135
  German invasion/occupation 12, 13, 32, 33, 36, **38–39**, 51, 133
  inter-war 14, 15, 18, 19, 39
  paratroopers 198, 199
  partition of **38–39**, 88
  post-war 230, 263, 265
  resistance movement 176, 184
  Soviet advance into 182, 238–39
  Soviet invasion **38–39**
  troops in Italy 166, 241
  Warsaw Ghetto **136–37**
  Warsaw Uprising 176, **184–85**
Polotsk 183
Pontine Marshes 166
pontoon bridges 233
Popular Front (Republicans) (Spain) 24–25
Port Lyautey 146
Port Moresby 124, 125
Portugal, Salazar era 19
post-war world **262–63**
Potsdam 242
Potsdam Conference **230**, 247, 256, 265
Potsdam Declaration **230**, 247, 260
POW camps 104, **154–55**
Primo de Rivera, Miguel 19
HMS *Prince of Wales* 66, 67, 113
Prinz Eugen 66, 67
prisoners-of-war (POWs) **154–55**
  Allied German 233
  German 92
  Japanese treatment of 104, 116, 119, 204, 223, 273
  treatment of Soviet 130, 273
Prokhorovka, Battle of 178
propaganda
  Allied 41
  Cold War 265
  German 20, 31, 52, 56, 130, 132, 233
  Italian 79
  Japanese 216, 223, 246
  resistance groups 139, **177**
  Soviet 101, 162, 180
  Spanish 12
  US 114, 204
Prut, river 183
Pyatigorsk 149

Q

Quisling, Vidkun 47, 132
Quit India movement 123

R

Rabaul 123, 124, 125, 205, 206, 207
racial segregation 114
Ramsay, Admiral Bertram 53, 186
Rangoon 113, 120, 218, 219
Rashid Ali al-Gaylani 82, 83, 122
Rath, Ernst vom 31
rationing 62, 92, 114
Rattenkrieg 150
Ravenna 240, 241
rearmament
  allied **28,** 36
  German 13, 28
  US 68
Red Army 88, 89, 101, 146, 149, 150–53, 181, 182–83, 242–43, 272
Red Ball Express **195**
Red Cross 154
refugees 159, 185, 226, 230, 238, 262
  Jewish 270, 271
Regensburg 173
Reichswerke 133
Reims 244
Remagen 232
remembrance **274–75**
Remer, Major Otto 197
Replacement Army, German 197
HMS *Repulse* 113
resistance movements 54, 138, 139, **176–77**, 195
  brutal repression of 133
  see also partisans
reverse Lend-Lease 71
Rhine, river 172, 194, 199, 200, 201, 226, 227
  Allies cross **232–33**
Rhineland 28
Rhodesia 161
Rhône Valley 195
Ribbentrop, Joachim von 33, 38
River Plate, Battle of the **42–43**
Rjuku Archipelago 254
Rochefort, Joseph 127
rockets
  Soviet 182
  see also V-weapons
Roer, river 200, 201, 232, 233
Rokossovsky, General Konstantin **181**, 242
Roma 135, 272
Romania
  declares war on Germany 183
  dictatorship 19
  legacy of World War I 15
  oil refineries 235
  and Soviet Union 180, 182, 183, 238, 263
  Tripartite Pact 80
  troops from 88, 91, 152
Rome
  Germans seize 164
  liberation of **166**, 167
Rome–Berlin Axis 32
Rommel, Field Marshal Erwin 72, **77**, 130, 131, 146–47, 170, 188
  enters Desert War **76–77**
  final advance **142–43**
  Second Battle of El Alamein **144–45**
Roosevelt, Franklin D.
  death of 226, 227, 244, 246
  Lend-Lease 70, 71
  and North Africa 146
  Pearl Harbor 110, 111
  summit conferences 162–63, 206, 260–61, 265
  and US entry of war 68, 104–05, 114
  and War in the Pacific 206
Rosenberg, Alfred 133
Rostov 97, 149, 153
Rotterdam 49
Royal Air Force (RAF)
  Battle of Britain **58–59**
  the Blitz 61
  Strategic Bombing Offensive **172–73**, 234–35
Royal Canadian Navy 64
Royal Navy
  Battle of the River Plate **42–43**
  Mediterranean 56, 57, 72, 77, 83, 84–85
  naval base in Singapore **118**
  sinking of the *Bismarck* 66–67
  War in the Pacific 113
HMS *Royal Oak* 42, 64, 65
Royan 194
Rozisch-Blackburn-Thompkins bridge 233
Ruhr, Battle of the 173, 233
Ruhr Valley 194, 195, 199, 200, 201
Rundstedt, Field Marshal Gerd von 97, 188, 191
Russell, Bertrand 263
Russell Islands 207
Russia
  end of Empire 15
  legacy of World War I 14, 15
  see also Soviet Union
Russian Revolution 15
Rutherford, Ernest 256
Rzhev 100

S

Saarland 14, 28, 41, 195, 200
sabotage 138–39
Safi 146
Saidor 206
Saigon 222–23
St Matthias Group 20–26, 207
St Nazaire 139
St Vith 228
Saipan 106, 205, 212, 213
Salazar, Antonio de 19
Salerno 165
Salò, Republic of 240, 241
Salonika 80
Samar, Battle of 215
San Stefano Line 164
Sarajevo 80

Sarawak 112
Sardinia 164
Savo Island 123
Scapa Flow 42, 64, 65, 67
Scheldt Estuary 200, 201
Schweinfurt 173
Seelow Heights, Battle of 242
Senegal 56
Serbia 132, 177, 203
Sevastopol 180, 181
  Siege of 97, 131, 148
Sèvres, Treaty of 14, 15
sexual slavery 223
Shanghai 23, 26, 266
Shibazaki, Rear Admiral Keiji 211
Shigemitsu, Mamoru 261
Shostakovich, Dmitri **274**
Shuri Castle 255
Šiauliai 183
Siberia 101, 107
Sibuyan Sea, Battle of 215
Sicily
  Allied landings 158, **164–65**, 178
  German airfields in 161
Sidi Abd Rahmen 144, 145
Sidi Barrani 74
Sidi Bou Zid 160
Siegfried Line *see* Westwall
Siena 167
Sierra Leone 56
signals intelligence (SIGNIT) 170
Silesia 238
Singapore 105, 109, 121
  surrender of **118–19**
Sino-Japanese War **26–27**
slave labour 92, 130, 158
Slavs 135
Slim, General William 121, 218
Slovakia 91, 182
Smolensk 88, 90, 91, 100, 181
Smuts, Jan 17
Solomon Islands 124, 125, 129, 206–07, 211
Somaliland 74, 75, 79
Sook Ching massacre 119
South Africa 77, 161
South China Sea 113
South Korea 268
South Vietnam 269
Southeast Asia
  Japan takes Burma **120–21**
  Japanese ambitions in 104, 105, 107
  Japanese rule **222–23**
Soviet Union
  advances on Germany 159, 184, 226, 232, 233, 242–3
  Arctic convoys **140–41**
  and Balkans 202, 203
  Battle of Kursk **178–79**
  birth of 12, 19
  casualties 150, 179, 182, 272, 273
  civilian deaths 92
  Cold War 262–63
  declares war on Japan 105, 247, 260
  final attack **238–39**
  German advance on Moscow **96–97**
  German advance to Stalingrad **148–49**
  German invasion/occupied territories 50–51, 71, **88–91**, **94–99**, 130, 131, 133
  home front **92–93**
  invasion of Poland **38–39**
  Iron Curtain 262, 263, **264–65**
  and Japanese ambitions 107
  Lend-Lease 71
  liberalization of 265
  massacres of Jews **98–99**, 134, 135
  nuclear weapons 264
  Operation Bagration **182–83**
  pact with Nazis 13, 32–33
  post-war 230
  POWs 154
  and pro-Communist guerrillas 177
  relief of Moscow **100–01**
  Siege of Leningrad **94–95**
  Stalingrad **150–53**
  sweeps forward **180–81**
  takes Berlin 226, 227
  Winter War in Finland **44–45**, 89
  see also Russia
Spain
  Spanish Civil War 12, 13, 16, **24–25**
  under Franco 263
  in World War II **24**, 72
Spazio Vitale, Lo 133
Special Operations Executive (SOE) 130, **138–39**, 177
Speer, Albert **174**
Spitfires 59
Spree, river 242, 243
St-Germain-en-Laye, Treaty of 14, 15
Stalin, Joseph **32**
  Arctic convoys 140
  and Balkans 202, 203
  death of 263
  Nazi-Soviet Pact 13
  paranoia and purge of the army **91**
  purges 181
  and Stalingrad 150
  Tehran Conference 162
  war with Germany 88, 89, 100, 149, 235, 243, 244
  Yalta and Potsdam 230–31, 265
Stalingrad
  German advance to 130, **148–49**
  Soviet victory at 131, **152–53**, 154, 158, 182
  under siege 101, 140, **150–51**
Stauffenberg, Colonel Claus von 176, 197
stormtroopers 51
Strassman, Fritz 256
Strategic Bombing Offensive **172–73**
Strehla 233
submarine war **84**
  see also U-boats
Sudan 74, 75
Sudetenland 13, 29
Suez Canal 72, 84, 145, 146
suicide attacks 216, 251
suicides 205, 254, 255
Sumatra 112, 118
summit conferences **162–63**
Surigao Strait, Battle of 214
Sweeney, Major Charles 259
Sword Beach 186, 187
Sydney 125
Syria 73, 82, 83

T

Taiwan 22, 214, 220, 223, 266, 267
Takijuro, Vice-Admiral Onishi 216
tank warfare 51, 88, 158
  German and Soviet **179**
Taranto, Battle of 72, 84
Tarawa Atoll 204, 211
Tasman Sea 125
Tatars 159
technology 158–59, 256–7
Tehran Conference 159, 162, 177
Telemark 139
Terracina 167
Teruel, Battle of 24, 25
Thailand 107, **113**
Third Reich 20
Tianjin 267
Tibbets, Colonel Paul 258
Tikhvin 101
Tilburg 201
Timor 112
Tinian 212, 213, 258, 259
Tirana 79
Tito (Josip Broz) 176, 202, 203, 238, 264
Tmini 142
Tobruk 74, 142, 143
  siege of 76–77, 83
Todt, Fritz 174
Tojo, Hideki 105, 107, **109**, 110, 205, 221
Tokyo
  firebombing of 246, 252, **253**
  Japanese surrender in 247
Torgau 226, 227, 233, 238
Toulon 147, 195
Toungoo, Battle of 120, 121
Treasury Island 206
Treblinka 134, 136, 183
Trianon, Treaty of 14, 15, 19
Tripartite Pact (1940) 32, 80
Truk Lagoon 213
Truman, Harry S. 227, 230, 246, 265
Truman Doctrine 262, 265
Tula 101
Tulagi Island 123, 125
Tunisia 84, 85, 145, 146, 147, 158, 161, 164
Turin 240
Turkey 14, 15, 80, 84
Typhoon of Steel 254

U

U-boats 37, 42, **64**, 130, 170
  Arctic convoys 140, 141
  defeat of 158, **168–69**, 194
  in Mediterranean 84
  start of the U-boat war **64–65**
Ukraine 15, 89, 91, 97, 100, 133, 180, 181, 183, 235, 242
Ultra decryptions 59, 170
underground war 138–39
unemployment 19, 263
United Nations 262
United States
  aid to China 106
  Allied advance on Germany 198, 200, 201, 243
  amphibious warfare **208–09**
  anti-Communism 263
  at war with Japan **104–05**, 204–05
  Atlantic War 168–69
  attack on Pearl Harbor 104, 109, 113
  Battle of the Bulge 191, 228, 229
  Battle of Leyte Gulf **214–15**
  Battle for the Marianas **212–13**

Battle of Normandy 191
bombing of Germany 172–73, 234–25
bombing of Japan 252–53
casualties 186, 187, 200, 208, 211, 212, 246, 249, 254
Cold War 262–63
D-Day Landings **186–87**
Hiroshima and Nagasaki **258–59**
home front 114–15
joins war **68–69**, 104, 110, 111, 168
Lend-Lease **70–71**
in the Mediterranean 164–67, 241
neutrality 68, **70**
Normandy breakout 194–95
in North Africa 146, 147
Omaha Beach 188–89
Operation Cartwheel 206–07
Pearl Harbor **110–11**
in Southeast Asia 218
support for China via The Hump 220, **221**
War in the Pacific 104–05, 113, 116–17, 124–29, 205, 206–13, 248–55
western Atlantic patrols 65
Untermenschen 91
US Air Force (USAAF) 172–73, 234–35, 252–53
US Navy 110–11, 211, 212–15, 249, 253
Utah Beach 186, 188

V

V-weapons **192–93**, 234, 235
Valletta 86–87
VE Day 227, **244–45**
Vella Lavella 206
Vemork heavy water plant 256
Versailles, Treaty of 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 28, 29
Vichy France 37, 54, 55, 57, 72–73, 82, 83, 107, 132, 146, 161
end of 132, **147**
Vienna 227
Vietnam 106, 262, 263, 269
Vistula, river 182
Vitebsk 183
Vittorio Emanuele III of Italy 79
Volga, river 130, 150, 151
Volkhov Front 94, 101
Voronezh 153, 178, 179
Vosges mountains 195
Vyazma 96, 100, 101

W

Waal, river 198
Waffen-SS 132
Wainwright, General Jonathan Mayhew IV 116
Wake Island 110, 113
Walcheren Island 200
Wall Street Crash 12, 18, 19, 20
war crimes trials 262
Warsaw 38, 159, 182
Warsaw Ghetto 39, 134, **136–37**
Warsaw Pact 262, 264, 265
Warsaw Uprising 176, **184–85**
Washington Conference 186
Wavell, General Archibald 77
Weidling, General Helmuth 243
Weimar Republic 12
West Germany 262, 263, 264
Western Desert Campaign 73
Western Front *see* Europe
Westwall (Siegfried Line) 199, 200
White Rose group 176, 177
Wilhelm II, Kaiser 14
Wilson, Lieutenant-General Henry Maitland 80, 81
Wilson, Woodrow 15, 17
Wingate, General Orde 218
Winter War (Finland) **44–45**, 89
Wissenthak, Simon 135
Wolf's Lair 197
women
conscription 62
in industry 92–93, 114–15, 204
votes for 263
World War I, legacy of 12, 13, **14–15**, 17

X

Xuzhou 266, 267

Y

Yalta Conference 226, **230–31**, 232, 265
Yamamoto, Admiral Isoroku 104, **124**, 126, 127, 204, 206, 207
Yamashita, General Tomoyuki 118, 249
Yan'an 267
Yangtze, river 266, 267
Yellow River 267
Yonai, Admiral 214
USS Yorktown 126, 127
Yoshijiro, General Umezu 261
Yuan Shih-k'ai 22
Yugoslavia **202–03**
German invasion of 72, 80
legacy of World War I 14, 15
liberation of 203
Partisans 159, 176, 177, 238
and Soviet Union 238, 263, 264

Z

Zagreb 80
Zhukov, General Georgy 24, 96, **101**, 152, 183, 238, 2423
Zionism 271

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dorling Kindersley would like to thank the following people for their help in the preparation of this book: Phil Gamble for additional map design; Steve Crozier for image retouching; Garima Agarwal, Simar Dhamija, and Bianca Zambrea for design assistance; Jaypal Singh Chauhan for DTP assistance; Martyn Page and Kate Taylor for editorial assistance; Katie John for proofreading; and Helen Peters for indexing. Additional map references: maps courtesy of the USMA, Department of History; contains map data © OpenStreetMap contributors.

Editors' note: place names are mostly given in their contemporary forms, except China, where Pinyin Romanization is used. Tonnage is given in metric tonnes and US tons.

The publisher would like to thank the following for their kind permission to reproduce their photographs:

(Key: a-above; b-below/bottom; c-centre; f-far; l-left; r-right; t-top)

2 Dorling Kindersley: Wardrobe Museum, Salisbury. **4 Getty Images:** Bettmann (tl); Henry Guttmann Collection / Hulton Archive (tr). **4-5 Getty Images:** Ullstein bild Dtl.. **5 Getty Images:** Henry Guttmann Collection / Hulton Archive (tl); J. R. Eyerman / The LIFE Picture Collection (tr). **6 Getty Images:** Sgt Robert Howard / Hulton Archive (tl, tr). **6-7 Getty Images:** Ullstein bild Dtl.. **7 The US National Archives and Records Administration:** Photographer: Joe Rosenthal (tl). **8-9 John Calvin / www.wwii-photos-maps.com**. **10-11 Getty Images:** Bettmann. **12 Getty Images:** Photo 12 / UIG (tl). **13 Getty Images:** De Agostini / Biblioteca Ambrosiana (cr); Popperfoto (tl). **14 Getty Images:** Swim ink 2 llc / Corbis Historical (tl). **15 Getty Images:** Universal History Archive / Universal Images Group (br). **16 Alamy Stock Photo:** Photo 12 (tl). **18 Getty Images:** Stefano Bianchetti / Corbis Historical (bl). **19 Alamy Stock Photo:** IanDagnall Computing (br). **20-21 Getty Images:** Bettmann. **20 Getty Images:** Bettmann (bc); Adoc-photos / Corbis Historical (cl). **22 Alamy Stock Photo:** Granger Historical Picture Archive (bc). **Getty Images:** Universal History Archive / Universal Images Group (tr). **24 Alamy Stock Photo:** Pictorial Press Ltd (bl). **Getty Images:** Ullstein bild Dtl. (br). **26 akg-images:** Pictures From History (bl). **26-27 Imperial War Museum**. **28 akg-images:** (tr). **Getty Images:** Keystone / Hulton Archive (bc). **30-31 Bridgeman Images:** Pictures from History. **31 Bridgeman Images:** Pictures from History (br). **Dorling Kindersley:** By kind permission of The Trustees of the Imperial War Museum, London (cr). **32 Getty Images:** Print Collector / Hulton Archive (bc). **33 Getty Images:** Michael Nicholson / Corbis Historical

(tr). **34-35 Getty Images:** Henry Guttmann Collection / Hulton Archive. **36 Alamy Stock Photo:** Chronicle (tl); Heritage Image Partnership Ltd (c). **37 Getty Images:** Hugo Jaeger / Timepix / The Life Picture Collection (cr); IWM / Imperial War Museums (tl). **38 Wikipedia:** Julien Bryan (bl). **40-41 Getty Images:** Gaston Paris / Roger Viollet. **41 Alamy Stock Photo:** Hi-Story (c). **Getty Images:** Lt. L A Puttnam / IWM (br). **43 Alamy Stock Photo:** World History Archive (br). **44 Getty Images:** Bettmann (tr). **46 Getty Images:** Ullstein bild Dtl. (tl). **47 akg-images:** TT News Agency / SVT (tr). **48-49 Advanced Archival Associates Research**. **49 Getty Images:** Ullstein bild Dtl. (br). **50-51 Alamy Stock Photo:** Everett Collection Historica. **51 Bridgeman Images:** Tallandier (br). **Dorling Kindersley:** Wardrobe Museum, Salisbury (cr). **52 Getty Images:** Culture Club / Hulton Archive (bl). **53 Getty Images:** Hulton-Deutsch / Corbis Historical (br). **54 Getty Images:** Adoc-photos / Corbis Historical (bc, tr). **56 Getty Images:** Photo Josse / Leemage / Corbis Historical (clb). **58 Rex by Shutterstock:** Associated Newspapers / Associated Newspapers (bc). **59 Getty Images:** IWM / Imperial War Museums (br). **60-61 London Metropolitan Archives**. **61 Alamy Stock Photo:** Shawshots (br). **62 Alamy Stock Photo:** Pictorial Press Ltd (cla); Trinity Mirror / Mirrorpix (bc). **62-63 Getty Images:** Hulton-Deutsch Collection / Corbis. **64 Alamy Stock Photo:** Interfoto (bc); John Frost Newspapers (cr). **66 Getty Images:** Ullstein bild Dtl. (bc). **67 Alamy Stock Photo:** Trinity Mirror / Mirrorpix (crb). **68-69 Getty Images:** Bettmann. **68 Getty Images:** Capt. Horton / IWM (bl); Photo 12 / UIG (cl). **70 Alamy Stock Photo:** Everett Collection Inc (bc). **71 Getty Images:** Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago / Archive Photos (tr). **72 Getty Images:** Keystone-France / Gamma-Rapho (tl). **73 akg-images:** (r). **Getty Images:** Universal History Archive / UIG (tl). **75 Getty Images:** Haynes Archive / Popperfoto (br). **77 Getty Images:** Galerie Bilderwelt / Hulton Archive (tr); Michael Nicholson / Corbis Historical (br). **79 Getty Images:** Photo 12 / Universal Images Group (clb); Fototeca Storica Nazionale. / Hulton Archive (br). **81 akg-images:** (cr). **82 Bridgeman Images:** © SZ Photo / Scherl (br). **84 Getty Images:** Haynes Archive / Popperfoto (br); Bettmann (bl). **86-87 Getty Images:** Hulton Archive. **86 Alamy Stock Photo:** The Picture Art Collection (bl). **Getty Images:** Dan Burn-Forti / The Image Bank (cl). **88 Dorling Kindersley:** Musée des blindés, Saumur, France (tr). **Getty Images:** Galerie Bilderwelt (cl). **89 Getty Images:** Mondadori Portfolio (cr); Print Collector (t). **90 Alamy Stock Photo:** Pictorial Press Ltd (bl). **91 Getty Images:** Heritage Images / Hulton Archive (br). **92 Dorling Kindersley:** Wardrobe Museum, Salisbury (cl). **Getty Images:** Horace Abrahams / Hulton Archive (bc). **92-93 Getty Images:** TASS. **94 Getty Images:** Ullstein bild Dtl. (bl). **94-95 John Calvin / www.wwii-photos-maps.com**. **97 Getty Images:** Ullstein bild Dtl. (bc); Alexander Ustinov / Hulton Archive (tc). **98-99 Getty Images:** TASS. **98 akg-images:** Ullstein bild (cla). **Getty Images:** ullstein bild Dtl. (bl). **101 akg-images:** Pictures From History (tc). **Getty Images:** Time & Life Pictures / The LIFE Picture Collection (bl). **102-103 Getty Images:** J. R. Eyerman / The LIFE Picture Collection. **104 akg-images:** (cb). **Alamy Stock Photo:** World History Archive (tl). **105 Dorling Kindersley:** Planes of Fame Air Museum, Chino, California (ca). **Getty Images:** Universal History Archive / UIG (cr). **106 Alamy Stock Photo:** Shawshots (bl). **107 Alamy Stock Photo:** Everett Collection Inc (br). **108-109 Getty Images:** The Asahi Shimbun. **109 Bridgeman Images:** Universal History Archive / UIG (br). **Dorling Kindersley:** Imperial War Museum, Duxford (cr). **111 Alamy Stock Photo:** Granger Historical Picture Archive (br). **112 Getty Images:** Keystone / Hulton Archive (bl). **113 Getty Images:** Dmitri Kessel / The LIFE Picture Collection (br). **114-115 Getty Images:** Alfred T. Palmer / Buyenlarge. **114 akg-images:** akg / John Parrot / Stocktrek Images (cl). **Getty Images:** PhotoQuest / Archive Photos (bc). **116 Bridgeman Images:** West Point Museum, New York, USA / Photo © Don Troiani (br). **118 Getty Images:** Carl Mydans / The LIFE Picture Collection (bl). **119 Getty Images:** Mondadori Portfolio (br). **120 Getty Images:** Bettmann (bl). **122-123 Getty Images:** IWM. **123 akg-images:** GandhiServe India (br). **Getty Images:** Bettmann (c). **124 Alamy Stock Photo:** The Picture Art Collection (bc). **125 Alamy Stock Photo:** Historic Images (br). **127 Alamy Stock Photo:** Archivah (cl). **128-129 Alamy Stock Photo:** Hum Historical. **129 Getty Images:** Keystone / Hulton Archive (br). **130 Getty Images:** Photo 12 / UIG (ca); David E. Scherman / Time Life Pictures (clb). **131 akg-images:** (t). **Getty Images:** Sgt. Chetwyn / IWM (cr). **132 Bridgeman Images:** Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin, Germany / © DHM (bl). **133 Getty Images:** Ullstein bild Dtl. (br). **135 Alamy Stock Photo:** Pictorial Press Ltd (tc). **Bridgeman Images:** © Galerie Bilderwelt (br). **136-137 Alamy Stock Photo:** Pictorial Press Ltd. **136 akg-images:** Fototeca Gilardi (bc). **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:** (cla). **138 Getty Images:** Keystone / Hulton Archive (cl). **139 Getty Images:** Evening Standard / Hulton Archive (br). **141 Alamy Stock Photo:** Pictorial Press Ltd (br). **143 Getty Images:** Jean Desmarteau / Gamma-Rapho (br). **144 Getty Images:** Universal History Archive / Universal Images Group (bl). **147 Bridgeman Images:** American Photographer, (20th century) / Private Collection / Peter Newark American Pictures (br). **Getty Images:** British Official Photo / The LIFE Picture Collection (tr). **148 akg-images:** (bl). **149 Getty Images:** Windmill Books / Universal Images Group (br). **150 Getty Images:** TASS (bc). **www.mediadrumworld.com:** (tc). **152 Getty Images:** Serge Plantureux / Corbis Historical (bc). **www.mediadrumworld.com:** (tr). **154-155 Getty Images:** AFP Contributor. **154 Alamy Stock Photo:** Trinity Mirror / Mirrorpix (bc). **Dorling Kindersley:** Imperial War Museum, Duxford (c). **156-157 Getty Images:** Sgt Robert Howard / Hulton Archive. **158 Dorling Kindersley:** Musée des blindés, Saumur, France (cb). **Getty Images:** Popperfoto (tl). **159 Bridgeman Images:** Photo © AGIP (cr). **Getty Images:** Sovfoto / UIG (tl). **160 akg-images:** Stocktrek Images (bl). **161 akg-images:** Heritage-Images / The Print Collector (tr). **162-163 Alamy Stock Photo:** Granger Historical Picture Archive. **162 Alamy Stock Photo:** Peter Horree (ca). **Getty Images:** Lt. D C Oulds / IWM (bl). **165 Getty Images:** Lt. L Chetwyn / Imperial War Museums (bc). **166 akg-images:** (bc). **Bridgeman Images:** © Galerie Bilderwelt (tc). **168 akg-images:** (bl). **169 Getty Images:** aviation-images.com / Universal Images Group (br). **170-171 Getty Images:** Bletchley Park Trust / Sspl. **170 Alamy Stock Photo:** James King-Holmes (bc). **Getty Images:** Time Life Pictures / National Archives / The Life Picture Collection (ca). **172 Getty Images:** Hulton Deutsch / Corbis Historical (tr). **Wikipedia:** Stadt Nürnberg (bl). **174 Bridgeman Images:** SZ Photo / Sammlung Megele (cla). **Getty Images:** Ullstein bild Dtl. (bl). **174-175 Getty Images:** Roger Viollet. **176 Getty Images:** Robert Doisneau / Masters (tl). **177 Alamy Stock Photo:** John Frost Newspapers (br). **179 akg-images:** (br); Sputnik (cl). **180 Bridgeman Images:** Peter Newark Military Pictures (tl). **181 Alamy Stock Photo:** ITAR-TASS News Agency (br). **182 akg-images:** Sputnik (tl). **Dreamstime.com:** Yuri4u80 (tr). **184 Dorling Kindersley:** The Combined Military Services Museum (CMSM) (cla). **Getty Images:** Keystone Features / Hulton Archive (bl). **184-185 Getty Images:** Universal History Archive. **186 Bridgeman Images:** Colorized reproduction of original photograph by Walter Rosenblum, Omaha Beach Rescue, D-Day +1 / © Galerie Bilderwelt (cr). **Getty Images:** Roger Viollet (bl). **188-189 Getty Images:** Smith Collection / Gado. **188 akg-images:** (bc). **Dorling Kindersley:** By kind permission of The Trustees of the Imperial War Museum, London (cla). **190-191 John Calvin / www.wwii-photos-maps.com**. **191 Getty Images:** Franklin / Hulton Archive (br). **192 Bridgeman Images:** French School, (20th century) / Private Collection / Archives Charmet (bl). **193 The National Archives:** (br). **194 akg-images:** Interfoto (bl). **196-197 TopFoto.co.uk:** Ullstein Bild. **196 Getty Images:** Interim Archives / Archive Photos (br). **197 Alamy Stock Photo:** History and Art Collection (cra). **Getty Images:** Heinrich Hoffmann / The Life Picture Collection (br). **198 Alamy Stock Photo:** Granger Historical Picture Archive (tl). **200 Getty Images:** Galerie Bilderwelt / Hulton Archive (bc). **203 Getty Images:** Mondadori Portfolio (br). **204 Bridgeman Images:** Private Collection / Peter Newark Pictures (cr).

Getty Images: Historical / Corbis Historical (tl). **205 Alamy Stock Photo:** American Photo Archive (crb). **Bridgeman Images:** Pictures from History (t). **207 Alamy Stock Photo:** Aviation history now (br). **Getty Images:** Time Life Pictures / The LIFE Picture Collection (tl). **208-209 Getty Images:** Sgt Robert Howard / Hulton Archive. **208 Bridgeman Images:** Private Collection / Peter Newark Pictures (cla). **Dorling Kindersley:** Musée des blindés, Saumur, France (bl). **210-211 Imperial War Museum**. **213 Getty Images:** W. Eugene Smith / The LIFE Picture Collection (tc). **214 Getty Images:** Bettmann (bc); Keystone / Hulton Archive (tr). **216 Alamy Stock Photo:** Hi-Story (cl). **Getty Images:** Hulton-Deutsch Collection / Corbis (bc). **216-217 Naval History and Heritage Command**. **218-219 Imperial War Museum**. **218 Getty Images:** Keystone / Hulton Archive (bl). **220 Getty Images:** Sovfoto / Universal Images Group (tl). **221 Getty Images:** PhotoQuest / Archive Photos (br). **222-223 Getty Images:** Roger Viollet. **223 Getty Images:** Universal History Archive (br). **Wikipedia:** Manchukuo State Council of Emperor Kang-de Puyi (cra). **224-225 The US National Archives and Records Administration:** Photographer: Joe Rosenthal. **226 Getty Images:** Bettmann (c); Time Life Pictures (tl). **227 Bridgeman Images:** Pictures from History (cr). **Dorling Kindersley:** Royal Airforce Museum, London (tl). **228 Getty Images:** Time Life Pictures / The LIFE Picture Collection (bl). **230-231 akg-images:** Heritage-Images / Keystone Archives. **230 Alamy Stock Photo:** DBI Studio (cla). **Getty Images:** Hulton-Deutsch Collection / Corbis (bc). **232 Getty Images:** PhotoQuest / Archive Photos (bc). **233 Getty Images:** Galerie Bilderwelt / Hulton Archive (tr). **234 Getty Images:** PhotoQuest / Archive Photos (bl). **236-237 akg-images:** Picture-Alliance / ZB / Richard Peter sen.. **236 Alamy Stock Photo:** Everett Collection Inc (bl). **Imperial War Museum:** (ca). **238-239 Imperial War Museum**. **238 Getty Images:** PhotoQuest / Archive Photos (bl). **240 akg-images:** Fototeca Gilardi (bc). **241 Getty Images:** Galerie Bilderwelt / Hulton Archive (tr). **242 akg-images:** (c) Khaldei / Voller Ernst (bl). **244-245 Getty Images:** Photo12 / UIG. **244 Getty Images:** Hulton-Deutsch Collection / Corbis (bl); Picture Post / Hulton Archive (cla). **246 Getty Images:** De Agostini Picture Library (tr). **Stanford Libraries:** (c). **247 Getty Images:** Sovfoto / UIG (tl). **The US National Archives and Records Administration:** Photographer: Joe Rosenthal (c). **248 Getty Images:** Carl Mydans / The LIFE Picture Collection (tc). **249 Getty Images:** Jiji Press / AFP (tr). **250 Bridgeman Images:** Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas, USA / gift of Will Michels in honor of Jim and Erika Liu (bl). **251 Getty Images:** W. Eugene Smith / The LIFE Picture Collection (br). **252 akg-images:** (cla). **253 Getty Images:** Time Life Pictures / The LIFE Picture Collection (br). **254 Getty Images:** US Signal Corps / The LIFE Picture Collection (bc). **255 Getty Images:** Time Life Pictures / The LIFE Picture Collection (br). **256-257 Alamy Stock Photo:** Everett Collection Inc. **256 Alamy Stock Photo:** DOD Photo (bl). **Dorling Kindersley:** Bradbury Science Museum, Los Alamos (ca). **259 Getty Images:** The Asahi Shimbun (br). **260-261 Getty Images:** MPI / Archive Photos. **260 Alamy Stock Photo:** John Frost Newspapers (cl); Military Images (bl). **262 akg-images:** (tl). **Getty Images:** Roger Viollet (cl). **263 Bridgeman Images:** Universal History Archive / UIG (cr). **Getty Images:** Keystone-France / Gamma-Keystone (tl). **264 Alamy Stock Photo:** Everett Collection Historical (bc). **265 David Rumsey Map Collection www.davidrumsey.com:** (br). **266 Bridgeman Images:** Pictures from History (bc). **Getty Images:** David Pollack / Corbis Historical (cr). **268 Alamy Stock Photo:** Everett Collection Historical (bl). **269 Getty Images:** Universal History Archive / Universal Images Group (br). **270-271 Magnum Photos:** Robert Capa. **271 Alamy Stock Photo:** Eddie Gerald (cr). **Getty Images:** Frank Shershel / GPO (br). **274-275 Alamy Stock Photo:** DPA Picture Alliance. **274 akg-images:** (bl). **Getty Images:** Popperfoto (cla)

Endpaper images: Front: **akg-images:** Back: **akg-images:** Ullstein bild.

All other images © Dorling Kindersley
For further information see: www.dkimages.com