

Chapter 1 : Events of - WW2 Timeline (January 1st - December 31st,)

Together we stand: America, Britain and the forging of an alliance / by James Holland. Surrender and retreat: 19 June-1 July July, , part I And.

The defenders failed to hold the beaches. By the end of the day, the Japanese had secured most of their objectives and were in position to emerge onto the central plain. At this point the action of the American artillery stalled the Japanese attack. However, Japanese planes and tanks entering the action routed the Filipino infantry, leaving the artillery uncovered. Having made his decision to withdraw to Bataan, MacArthur notified all force commanders on the night of 23 December that "WPO-3 is in effect. The Japanese were not notified officially of the proclamation but learned of it through radio broadcasts. The next day, and thereafter, they bombed the port area, from which supplies were being shipped to Bataan and Corregidor. The Americans attempted to slow the Japanese entry into Bataan by fighting a delaying action at Layac, thus gaining time and deceiving the enemy as to the location of the main defensive positions. The fiercest fighting occurred at the hastily emplaced Porac-Guagua Line, where the 11th and 21st divisions, respectively led by Brigadier Generals William E. Pierce in reserve, held the line, mostly on open and unprepared ground, against massive aerial and artillery bombardment, strong tank assaults, and infantry banzai attacks by the Takahashi and Tanaka detachments. Both sides suffered heavy casualties. The 23rd Regiment established the defensive line at Porac-Pampanga on or around 2 January. Colonel Mead was later awarded the Silver Star for his actions there. War Plan Orange 3 called for two defensive lines across Bataan. The first extended across the peninsula from Mauban in the west to Mabatang, Abucay in the east. General Wainwright, commanding the newly organised I Philippine Corps of 22, troops, held the western sector. All of the divisions, already under strength at the onset of war, had suffered serious combat losses, particularly to desertions. The commanders anchored their lines on the mountain, but, since they considered the rugged terrain impassable, they did not extend their forces far up its slopes. The two corps were therefore not in direct contact with each other, leaving a serious gap in the defense line. On 12 January, amid fierce fighting, 2nd Lieutenant Alexander R. Nininger, a platoon leader in the 57th Infantry, sacrificed his life when, armed with only a rifle and hand grenades, he forced his way into enemy foxholes during hand-to-hand combat, permitting his unit to retake Abucay Hacienda; for his actions, he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. Another extreme act of bravery was put forth by a Filipino named Narcisco Ortilano. He shot dozens of the Japanese with his machine gun, then pulled out his Colt. Then, when one Japanese soldier stabbed at him with a bayonet, he desperately tried to grab the gun, got his thumb cut off, but still held on, and then with a sudden burst of adrenaline he turned the gun on the enemy soldier and stabbed him in the chest. When another Japanese soldier swung a bayonet at him, he turned his rifle on the soldier and shot him dead. Narcisco received the Distinguished Service Cross. But a patrol discovered the infiltration, and units of the 21st Division rushed to the valley and repulsed the attackers after a savage encounter. At another engagement farther to the west, a Japanese force surprised and routed the 53rd Infantry of Colonel John R. Doyle, partially restored the abandoned line of the 51st Division. On 15 January, the reinforced 1st Regular Division of Brigadier General Fidel Segundo, defending the Morong sector, came under heavy bombardment, but held the line. Repeated attacks by the 91st Division and 71st Division, and 92nd Infantry failed to dislodge the Japanese. But the defenders had yet to complete their withdrawal to the reserve battle position when the Japanese struck again, through a gap held by I Corps. General Bluemel hastily organized a defense along Trail Two, consisting of 32nd Infantry, 41st Infantry and 51st Division reinforcements, in time to stop a major offensive and plug the gap. From 23 January to 17 February, coordinated action by the defenders to eliminate these salients of resistance became known as the "Battle of the pockets". Fierce fighting marked the action. Santos, of the 1st Regular Division, outmaneuvered the enemy during their attempt to pocket the area. In both attempts, his unit successfully broke through the Gogo-Cotar and Tuol pockets, thus earning for himself the moniker "hero of the pockets". For his successes, he was promoted to major in the field. Major Santos was then given the hazardous mission of closing the gaps and annihilating the enemy troops who had infiltrated the lines, as the gap posed a serious threat to the

positions and the security of the division. The fighting began at dawn on 29 January, and the Americans restored the defensive sector assigned to the 1st Regular Division. On 3 February, 1st Lieutenant Willibald C. Bianchi of the 45th Infantry, Philippine scouts, led a reinforced platoon forward against two enemy machine-gun nests, silenced them with grenades, and then manned an anti-aircraft machine gun until dying of his wounds. His Medal of Honor was awarded posthumously. Of the 2, Japanese soldiers engaged, were reported to have escaped. Battle of the Pockets on the Orion-Bagac Line General Homma, on 8 February, ordered the suspension of offensive operations in order to reorganize his forces. This could not be carried out immediately, because the 16th Division remained engaged trying to extricate the pocketed 3rd Battalion, 20th Infantry. With further casualties, the remnants of the 3rd Battalion, officers and men, were extricated on 15 February. McBride, Japanese troops of the 2nd Battalion, 20th Infantry, 16th Division, were landed on the west coast of southern Bataan on the night of 22 January. PT, two barges were sunk and the rest scattered in two groups, neither of which landed on the objective beach. The Japanese forces were contained on their beachheads by members of Philippine constabulary units, a hastily organized naval infantry battalion, and by personnel of several U.S. Marines were distributed through the ranks, and the sailors were told to "watch them and do as they do. The result was closer to yellow than khaki, and the diary of a dead Japanese officer described them as a suicide squad dressed in brightly colored uniforms and talking loudly in an attempt to draw fire and reveal the enemy positions. Battles were fought ferociously against a company-sized group at the Lapay-Longoskawayan points from 23 to 29 January, at the Quinawan-Aglaloma points from 22 January to 8 February, and at the Silalim-Anyasan points from 27 January to 13 February. Out of the 2, Japanese troops committed to these battles, only 43 wounded returned to their lines. These engagements were collectively termed the "Battle of the Points". For this, and a number of other feats over the course of four months and eight days, Bulkeley was awarded the Medal of Honor, the Navy Cross, the Distinguished Service Cross and other citations. MacArthur was eventually flown to Australia where he broadcast to the Filipino people his famous "I Shall Return" promise. After the failure of their first attack against Bataan, the Japanese general headquarters sent strong artillery forces to the Philippines in order to smash the American fortifications. The 1st Artillery headquarters, under Major General Kineo Kitajima, who was a known authority on IJA artillery, also moved to the Philippines along with the main forces to command and control these artillery units. On 3 April, the entire Orion-Bagac Line was subjected to incessant bombings by aircraft and artillery bombardment by artillery pieces from 9:00: Everywhere along the line, the American and Filipino defenders were driven back by Japanese tanks and infantry. Based on his two prior attempts, General Homma had estimated that the final offensive would require a week to breach the Orion-Bagac Line and a month to liquidate two final defense lines he believed had been prepared on Bataan. When the opening attack required just three days, he pushed his forces on 6 April to meet expected counterattacks head-on. The Japanese launched a drive into the center, penetrated into flanks held by the 22nd and 23rd Regiments of the 21st Division, captured Mount Samat and outflanked all of II Corps. Counterattacks by the U.S. Army and Philippine Scout regulars held in reserve were futile; only the 57th Infantry gained any ground, soon lost. MG Edward King discusses terms of surrender with Japanese officers. All along the battle front, units of I Corps, together with the devastated remnants of II Corps, crumbled and straggled to the rear. The commanders on Bataan lost all contact with their units, except by runner in a few instances. In the last two days of the defense of Bataan, the entire Allied defense progressively disintegrated and collapsed, clogging all roads with refugees and fleeing troops. By 8 April, the senior U.S. King, saw the futility of further resistance, and put forth proposals for capitulation. The next morning, 9 April, General King met with Major General Kameichiro Nagano and, after several hours of negotiations, the remaining weary, starving and emaciated American and Filipino defenders on the battle-swept Bataan Peninsula surrendered. The Philippine-American troops on this war-ravaged and bloodstained peninsula have laid down their arms. With heads bloody but unbowed, they have yielded to the superior force and numbers of the enemy. The world will long remember the epic struggle that Filipino and American soldiers put up in the jungle fastness and along the rugged coast of Bataan. They have stood up uncomplaining under the constant and grueling fire of the enemy for more than three months. Besieged on land and blockaded by sea, cut off from all sources of help in the Philippines and in America, the intrepid

fighters have done all that human endurance could bear. For what sustained them through all these months of incessant battle was a force that was more than merely physical. It was the force of an unconquerable faith—something in the heart and soul that physical hardship and adversity could not destroy. It was the thought of native land and all that it holds most dear, the thought of freedom and dignity and pride in these most priceless of all our human prerogatives. The adversary, in the pride of his power and triumph, will credit our troops with nothing less than the courage and fortitude that his own troops have shown in battle. Our men have fought a brave and bitterly contested struggle. All the world will testify to the most superhuman endurance with which they stood up until the last in the face of overwhelming odds. But the decision had to come. Men fighting under the banner of unshakable faith are made of something more than flesh, but they are not made of impervious steel. The flesh must yield at last, endurance melts away, and the end of the battle must come. Bataan has fallen, but the spirit that made it stand—a beacon to all the liberty-loving peoples of the world—cannot fall! It cost a far stronger Japanese army as many days of actual combat to take Malaya and Singapore Island as it cost Homma to take Bataan and Corregidor. There is a suggestion that without this stand, the Japanese might have quickly overrun all of the U. This assertion is contradicted by simple facts of history, geography and arithmetic. Rather than allowing the operations on Luzon to upset their general timetable, the Japanese took steps that resulted in prolonging the resistance of Luzon in order to speed up their conquest of the Indies. And between the time of their advance into the Solomons and the American counter-landing on Guadalcanal in August, three months after the fall of Corregidor, they had ample troops available to build up their strength in the South Seas [16] However, historians such as Teodoro Agoncillo argue that the battle was "unnecessary in so far as the throwing away of precious lives was concerned, for it served no strategic purpose. POWs of whom died and 82 survived. After more than two years of fighting in the Pacific, General Douglas MacArthur initiated the Campaign for the Liberation of the Philippines, fulfilling his promise to return to the country he had left in Legacy[edit] Araw ng Kagitingan Day of Valour, 9 April, the day Bataan fell into Japanese hands, was declared a national holiday in the Philippines. Mariveles, Bataan Memorial Shrine Km. Zero, starting point of Death March, 9â€”17 April The war memorial grounds feature a colonnade that houses an altar, esplanade, and a museum. Dozens of documentaries have also featured stories from the Battle of Bataan including A Legacy of Heroes:

Chapter 2 : Allies surrender at Tobruk, Libya - HISTORY

Together we stand by Holland, James, , Hyperion edition, in English - 1st ed.

See more pictures of World War II. On February 15, 1942, the British Empire suffered one of its most humiliating defeats. The Japanese armed forces aimed to capture a broad area in the south. They would defend the perimeter while the rich resources of the region were incorporated into the Japanese war effort. In the Dutch East Indies, the 17,000-man colonial army was overwhelmed. The Japanese captured the peninsula in April. The American headquarters in the fortress of Corregidor, in Manila Bay, fell on May 6, 1942, after a fierce defense. By early June, nearly all American forces in the Philippines had surrendered. A Japanese aircraft carrier raided the northern Australian port of Darwin on February 19, 1942, and in April Japanese aircraft sank British shipping on the Indian coast. This was the limit of Japanese expansion, though the assault had been so successful and rapid that senior commanders sought to capitalize on their advantage with further advances. In early May, a naval force sailed south to seize the southern peninsula of New Guinea while Admiral Yamamoto planned a mid-Pacific offensive. This was designed to destroy what was left of U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet. The task force that was dispatched south in early May was attacked by a small Allied force in the Coral Sea. The battle was a strategic setback for Yamamoto, who was obliged to abandon his plan to seize Port Moresby and isolate Australia. This was the first hint that Japanese expansion was nearing its limit. Pacific Fleet to battle and then annihilate it. With a small force of carriers and sufficient secret intelligence on Japanese intentions, the Pacific Fleet commander, Admiral Chester Nimitz, planned a daring interception. As the Japanese carrier fleet neared Midway, it was attacked by American dive-bombers. Only a few of their bombs struck, but they sank all four fleet carriers. Yamamoto ordered a return to Japan. Elsewhere, the global war remained balanced on a knife edge. Although the Japanese army controlled much of eastern and northern China, Chinese hit-and-run tactics made it difficult for Japan to pacify and control even those areas under occupation. In May 1942, Japanese commanders embarked on a ruthless policy of pacification -- "kill all, steal all, burn all" -- to try to deter further Chinese resistance. Roughly 300,000 Chinese were killed in 1942. The British position at sea -- in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic -- remained precarious. In 1942 they lost 7. Britain was able to import only one-third of what it took in before the war. The most dangerous situation lay in the Soviet theater. With the successful defense of Moscow in December 1941, the Soviets launched further offensives, trying to find weak spots in the Nazi German line. But when Joseph Stalin ordered the Red Army to capture the city in May 1942, the Nazi German front absorbed the attack and then encircled and annihilated the attackers. Adolf Hitler planned to attack the less well-defended southern front toward the Volga River and the Caucasus oil fields. Their capture would give his forces huge new oil supplies and deny them to the enemy. The Soviet southern front retreated. So successful was the assault that Adolf Hitler divided the force in two. By August, Nazi German forces had reached the oil city of Maikop and were advancing toward the rich oil fields around Grozny. A Nazi German infantryman gives food to a malnourished Soviet child. In midsummer 1942, the war was poised in the balance. The strategic dream of the Axis powers was to link up in the Middle East. They would seize the Suez Canal and the oil that lay beyond it from one side, and they would sweep down from the Caucasus on the other side. With Japan threatening India and the United States not yet fully armed, the ambition seemed less fantastic at the time than it now appears. Yet the summer of 1942 saw the high watermark of Axis aggrandizement. Over the next year, the Allies would find not just greater resources but also more effective ways of fighting. They were poised to reverse the long series of defeats that had until then littered their war effort. Learn more about the significant events and players of World War II in these informative articles:

Chapter 3 : Timeline of World War II () - Wikipedia

World War II - Stalingrad and the German retreat, summer February - The German 4th Panzer Army, after being diverted to the south to help Kleist's attack on Rostov late in July (see above The Germans' summer offensive in southern Russia,), was redirected toward Stalingrad a fortnight later.

Truman received a long report from Secretary of War Henry L. Roosevelt, the expectations of the American public, an assessment of the possibilities of achieving a quick victory by other means, and the complex American relationship with the Soviet Union. After returning home, he became convinced that he probably would have been killed if the war had lasted a few months longer. His first-hand experience with warfare clearly influenced his thinking about whether to use the atomic bomb. It was also an expression of the American temperament; the United States was accustomed to winning wars and dictating the peace. On May 8, Germany surrendered unconditionally to great rejoicing in the Allied countries. The hostility of the American public toward Japan was even more intense and demanded an unambiguous total victory in the Pacific. Truman was acutely aware that the country—in its fourth year of total war—also wanted victory as quickly as possible. A skilled politician who knew when to compromise, Truman respected decisiveness. Meeting with Anthony Eden, the British foreign secretary, in early May, he declared: Headed by Stimson and James Byrnes, whom Truman would soon name secretary of state, the Interim Committee was a group of respected statesmen and scientists closely linked to the war effort. After five meetings between May 9 and June 1, it recommended use of the bomb against Japan as soon as possible and rejected arguments for advance warning. Scientists and the atomic bomb Among those who had full knowledge of the Manhattan Project to build an atomic bomb, most agreed that the weapon should be used. As he listened to them argue that the United States should refrain from using the bomb and that it should share its atomic secrets with the rest of the world after the war, Byrnes felt that he was dealing with unworldly intellectuals who had no grasp of political and diplomatic realities. He neither took their suggestions seriously nor discussed them with Truman, who most likely would have shared his attitude anyway. Szilard and his associates seem to have represented only a small minority of the many hundreds of scientists who worked on the bomb project. In July project administrators polled the scientists working at the Chicago site and could find only 19 who rejected any military use of the bomb and another 39 who supported an experimental demonstration with representatives of Japan present, followed by an opportunity for surrender. Most of the scientists, however, supported some use of the bomb: McCloy, claimed to have opposed using the bomb, but there is no firm evidence of any substantial contemporary opposition. Most of the scientists, civilian leaders, and military officials responsible for the development of the bomb clearly assumed that its military use, however unpleasant, was the inevitable outcome of the project. Truman faced almost no pressure whatever to reexamine his own inclinations. The military situation in the Pacific When Truman became president, a long and bitter military campaign in the Pacific, marked by fanatical Japanese resistance and strongly held racial and cultural hostilities on both sides, was nearing its conclusion. In February, about a month after he was sworn in as vice president, American troops invaded the small island of Iwo Jima, located miles 1, km from Tokyo. The Americans took four weeks to defeat the Japanese forces and suffered nearly 30, casualties. On April 1, 12 days before he became president, the United States invaded Okinawa, located just miles km south of the Japanese home island of Kyushu. The battle of Okinawa was one of the fiercest of the Pacific war. Offshore, Japanese kamikaze planes inflicted severe losses on the American fleet. After nearly 12 weeks of fighting, the United States secured the island on June 21 at a cost of nearly 50, American casualties. Japanese casualties were staggering, with approximately 90, defending troops and at least, civilians killed. The Americans considered Okinawa a dress rehearsal for the invasion of the Japanese home islands, for which the United States was finalizing a two-stage plan. The first phase, code-named Olympic, was scheduled for late October, with a landing on Kyushu, defended by an estimated, Japanese troops backed by at least 1, kamikaze planes. Olympic entailed the use of nearly, American assault troops and an enormous naval fleet. The scale of the operation was to be similar to that of the Normandy invasion in France in June, which involved, Allied troops in the first 24 hours and

approximately , others by the end of the first week of July. Estimates of casualties from an invasion of Japan varied, but nearly everyone involved in the planning assumed that they would be substantial; mid-range estimates projected , American casualties, with 40, deaths. The same mid-range estimate that predicted , casualties for Olympic projected 90, for Coronet. If both invasions were necessary, by the most conservative estimates the United States would suffer , killed, wounded, or missing, as compared to a Pacific War total that by mid-June was approaching , Thus, the best estimates available to Truman predicted that the war would continue for a year or longer and that casualties would increase by 60 to percent or more. But would Japan have surrendered without either invasion? By mid, an American naval blockade had effectively cut off the home islands from the rest of the world. Moreover, regular incendiary bombing raids were destroying huge portions of one city after another, food and fuel were in short supply, and millions of civilians were homeless. General Curtis LeMay , the commander of American air forces in the Pacific, estimated that by the end of September he would have destroyed every target in Japan worth hitting. The argument that Japan would have collapsed by early fall is speculative but powerful. Nevertheless, all the evidence available to Washington indicated that Japan planned to fight to the end. Throughout July, intelligence reports claimed that troop strength on Kyushu was steadily escalating. Moreover, American leaders learned that Japan was seeking to open talks with the Soviet Union in the hopes of making a deal that would forestall Soviet entry into the Pacific war. The future of the emperor In the absence of formal negotiations for a Japanese surrender, the two sides communicated with each other tentatively and indirectly, and both were constrained by internal sentiment that discouraged compromise. In Japan no military official counseled surrender, and civilian leaders who knew that the war was lost dared not speak their thoughts openly. Vague contacts initiated by junior-level Japanese diplomats in Sweden and Switzerland quickly turned to nothing for lack of high-level guidance. The Japanese initiative to the Soviet Union also produced no results because Tokyo advanced no firm concessions. Japan faced inevitable defeat, but the concept of surrender carried a stigma of dishonour too great to contemplate. In the United States, conversely, the sure prospect of total victory made it close to impossible for Truman to abandon the goal of unconditional surrender. The most tangled problem in this conflict of national perspectives was the future of the Japanese emperor, Hirohito. Americans viewed Hirohito as the symbol of the forces that had driven Japan to launch an aggressive, imperialistic war. Most Americans wanted him removed; many assumed he would be hanged. Few imagined that the institution he embodied would be allowed to continue after the war. Although some thought it necessary to keep Hirohito on the throne in order to prevent mass popular resistance against the American occupation, others wanted him arrested and tried as a necessary first step in the eradication of Japanese militarism. American propaganda broadcasts beamed at Japan hinted that he might be kept on the throne, but Truman was unwilling to give an open guarantee. The Japanese saw the emperor as embodying in a near-mystical way the divine spirit of the Japanese race. Although not exactly an object of religious worship, he was venerated as an all-important symbol of national identity. Moreover, the entire Japanese civilian and military leadership had a special interest in his survival. In the absence of something approaching formal negotiations, American and Japanese diplomats could not even meet to discuss a compromise formula for postwar Japan. The problem of the Soviet Union Although the atomic bomb was never conceived as a tool to be employed in U. Truman regarded the Soviet Union as a valued ally in the just-concluded fight against Nazi Germany, but he distrusted it as a totalitarian state and was wary of its postwar plans. His personal diaries and letters reveal hope for a satisfactory postwar relationship but determination not to embark on a policy of unilateral concessions. Truman and Byrnes also certainly assumed that the atomic bomb would greatly increase the power and leverage of the United States in world politics and would win the grudging respect of the Soviets. On July 16, the day before the conference opened, Truman received word that the first atomic bomb had been successfully tested in the New Mexico desert. He shared the information fully with Churchill Britain was a partner in the development of the bomb but simply told Stalin that the United States had created a powerful new weapon. Stalinâ€”who had detailed knowledge of the project through espionageâ€”feigned indifference. He also reaffirmed an earlier pledge to attack Japanese positions in Manchuria no later than mid-August. Truman, apparently uncertain that the bomb alone could compel surrender, was elated. Thereafter events moved quickly and inexorably. On August 6 an American B

dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima , instantly killing some 70,000 people and effectively destroying a 4. Two days later a powerful Soviet army attacked Manchuria, overwhelming Japanese defenders. On August 9 the United States dropped another atomic bomb on Nagasaki , instantly killing approximately 40,000 people. After that, Japanese supporters of peace were able to enlist Hirohito to order a surrender. In addition to those killed instantly, many died over the next year of severe burns and radiation sickness. Significant numbers of people also died later from cancer and related diseases, and fatal birth defects may have been caused by the radiation. The Japanese surrender offer that reached Washington on August 10 requested the retention of the emperor. Having received detailed reports and photographs from Hiroshima, Truman did not want to use a third atomic bomb solely for the purpose of deposing Hirohito. He told his cabinet that the thought of killing another , peopleâ€”many of them childrenâ€”was too horrible. Truman always felt that he had done the right thing. But never againâ€”not even in the worst days of the Korean War â€”would he authorize the use of atomic weapons. There were no significant international protests over the use of the atomic bomb in . The vanquished were in no position to make them, and the world had little sympathy for an aggressive Japanese nation that had been responsible for the deaths of millions of people in Asia and the Pacific. From the beginning, however, many Americans thought that the atomic bombs had changed the world in a profound way, one that left them with a feeling of foreboding. The influential radio commentator H. In an article for the New Yorker later published separately as Hiroshima [] , the writer John Hersey put a human face on the casualty figures by detailing the horrible effects of the bomb on six Japanese civilians. Doubts about the wisdom of using the atomic bomb grew in subsequent generations of Americans but were never accepted by a majority. Hersey and writers who followed him left the American public conversant with the awful facts of nuclear warfare. In the minds of many Americansâ€”and the citizens of other western nationsâ€”these two streams merged to create a powerful argument for banning atomic weapons. It is possible to construct scenarios in which the use of the atomic bomb might have been avoided, but to most of the actors the events of had a grim logic that yielded no easy alternatives. No one will ever know whether the war would have ended quickly without the atomic bomb or whether its use really saved more lives than it destroyed. In the decades following the end of the war there was increasing debate about the morality of using the atomic bomb, with opponents arguing that even if it did hasten the end of the war, its use was unjustified because of its horrific human consequences. Hamby The decision-making process that led to the use of the atomic bomb is discussed in Leon V. Sigal, *Fighting to a Finish* . A classic study is Robert J. Sherwin, *A World Destroyed: Hiroshima and Its Legacies*, 3rd ed. A balanced analysis is provided by J.

Chapter 4 : Battle of Stalingrad - WW2 Timeline (August - February 2nd,)

January 1: Twenty-six Allied countries signed the Declaration by United Nations during the Arcadia Conference. 2: Manila is captured by Japanese forces. They also take Cavite naval base, and the American and Filipino troops continue the retreat into Bataan.

Manila is captured by Japanese forces. They also take Cavite naval base , and the American and Filipino troops continue the retreat into Bataan. The beginning of a major Red Army offensive under General Zhukov. The British advance continues to El Agheila , on the western edge of Libya. In his State of the Union speech, President Roosevelt promises more aid to Britain, including planes and troops. The Soviet Winter counter-offensive comes to a halt, after having pushed the exhausted and freezing German Army back 62â€”mi from Moscow. Siege of the Bataan Peninsula begins. Heavy air attacks on Malta; it is estimated that the bomb tonnage dropped on the island is twice that dropped on London. Japanese troops penetrated the outer lines of defense at Kuala Lumpur , Malaya. Japanese advances in Borneo met with little opposition. Japan declares war on the Netherlands. Japanese troops capture Kuala Lumpur, Malaya. Japan invades the Dutch East Indies. The Red Army takes Kirov and Medya, as its counter-offensive continues. Japanese forces take large numbers of British troops prisoner, north of Singapore. Nazis at the Wannsee conference in Berlin decide that the " final solution to the Jewish problem " is relocation, and later extermination. Japanese bomb Singapore as their troops approach the city. The Battle of Rabaul , on New Britain begins. American troops land in Samoa, as part of a strategy to stop the Japanese advance in the Pacific. Thailand declares war on the United States and United Kingdom. Japanese troops invade the Solomon Islands. The first American forces arrive in Europe landing in Northern Ireland. The British withdraw all troops back into Singapore. Brazil breaks off relations with the Axis powers. For the next few months, the two sides will rest and rearm. Hitler speaks at the Berlin Sportpalast and threatens the Jews of the world with annihilation; he also blames the failure of the offensive in Soviet Union on the weather. On the Eastern front, the Germans are in retreat at several points. The last organised Allied forces leave Malaya, ending the day battle. February [edit] 1: Japanese air power conducts airstrikes against Java , especially the naval base at Surabaya. British troops are now in full retreat into Singapore for a final defence. Top United States military leaders hold their first formal meeting to discuss American military strategy in the war. The " Channel Dash " - The German battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau , with the heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen , rush out of Brest through the English Channel to northern ports, including Wilhelmshaven, Germany; the British naval units fail to sink any of them. The battle for Bataan continues. Singapore surrenders to Japanese forces; this is arguably the most devastating loss in British military history. Being discussed in high American government circles are plans for the internment of Japanese-Americans living generally in the western US. The Japanese commit the Banka Island Massacre in which they open fire on Australian military nurses, killing Orders are given for Rangoon to be evacuated as Japanese forces approach. Roosevelt signs Executive Order allowing the United States military to define areas as exclusionary zones. A military conscription law is passed in Canada. Japanese troops cross the important Salween River in Burma. Japanese invade Bali and Timor by a combined use of paratroops and amphibious troops. The internment of Japanese-American citizens in the Western United States begins as fears of invasion increase. Princess Elizabeth registers for war service. Vivian Bullwinkel , the only survivor of the Banka Island Massacre , is captured and imprisoned by the Japanese. Japanese land forces invade Java. March [edit] 1: A Red Army offensive in the Crimea begins; in the north, the siege of Leningrad continues. Japanese aircraft make a surprising raid on the airfield and harbour at Broome , Western Australia. Malta receives more fighters for its on-going defence. Japanese troops entered Rangoon , Burma, which was abandoned by the British two days earlier. The Japanese land on Mindanao, the southernmost island in the Philippines. RAF launches an air raid against Essen, Germany. The Japanese are now threatening American forces around Manila Bay ; the retreat to Corregidor begins. The United Kingdom institutes rationing of electricity, coal, and gas; the clothing ration is decreased as well. Operation Outward begins, a program to attack Germany by means of free-flying balloons. A fractured convoy reaches Malta, after heavy losses to the

Luftwaffe and an Italian sea force. Continued heavy bombing attacks on the island with slight opposition from overtaxed RAF air forces. RAF sends bomber raids against targets in France and Germany. Jews in Berlin must now clearly identify their houses. The port is completely destroyed and does not resume service till ; however, around two-thirds of the raiding forces are lost. April [edit] 1: The Eastern Sea Frontier , desperately short on suitable escort vessels after the Destroyers for Bases Agreement , institutes an interim arrangement known as the "Bucket Brigaid," wherein vessels outside of protected harbors are placed in anchorages protected by netting after dark, and move only under whatever escort is available during the day. As a result, in May more ships will be sunk in the Gulf, many of them off the Passes of the Mississippi, than off of the entire Eastern Seaboard. The Pacific War Council meets for the first time in Washington. Intended to allow the smaller powers involved in fighting the Japanese to have some input into US decisions, its purpose is soon outstripped by events, notably the collapse of the ABDA Command. Over 24, sick and starving troops American and Filipino are now trapped on the Bataan Peninsula. Japanese make landings on New Guinea, most importantly at Hollandia. Japanese forces begin an all-out assault on United States and Filipino troops in Bataan. Sustained Japanese air attacks on Mandalay in Burma. On Bataan, the Japanese overwhelm Mt. Samat, a strong point on Allied defensive line. The Japanese Navy attacks Colombo in Ceylon. Adolf Hitler issues Directive No. The main offensive is directed to seize the Russian oil fields in the Caucasus ; a secondary thrust is to capture Stalingrad and protect the flank of the main advance. Japanese naval forces put troops ashore on Manus Island in the Bismarck Archipelago some sources give a date of 8 April for these landings. Heavy RAF bombing of Hamburg. American forces are strained for one last offensive on Bataan. Bataan falls to the Japanese. The " Bataan Death March " begins, as the captives are taken off to detention camps in the north. Corregidor, in the middle of Manila Bay, remains a final point of resistance. Japanese land on Cebu Island , a large middle island of the Philippines. Japanese forces capture Migyaungye in Burma. Anton Schmid an Austrian soldier of the Wehrmacht is put to death, after witnessing the Ponary Massacre and saving Jews. Winston Churchill , concerned that the situation in Malta will cause the Axis forces in North Africa to be better supplied than British forces, sends a telegram to Sir Stafford Cripps in Cairo, asking him to pressure General Auchinleck to take offensive action before this can occur. Soldiers of the I Burma Corps begin to destroy the infrastructure of the Yenangyaung oil fields to prevent the advancing Japanese from capturing them intact. Doolittle Raid on Nagoya , Tokyo and Yokohama. The raids are a great boost of morale for Americans whose diet has been mostly bad news. This deprives U-boat commanders of background illumination, but provides only a very little relief from U-boat attack; as the nights grow shorter more U-boat attacks are occurring in daylight hours. General Dobbie , Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of Malta , sends a message to Winston Churchill saying "it is obvious that the very worst may happen if we cannot replenish our vital needs, especially flour and ammunition, and that very soon V fighters of No. Hitler assumes a kind of supreme authority over Germany. Rostock is bombed for fourth night in a row. A national plebiscite is held in Canada on the issue of conscription. It passes in favor of conscription; French Canadians are the main, though not the only, objectors. The finalized thirty-three page draft for the German Amerika Bomber trans-Atlantic range strategic bomber design competition is submitted to the RLM. The bulk of the British assault troops depart Durban in South Africa for Madagascar ; the slower ships, carrying transport and heavy weapons, have departed in great secrecy some days earlier. The " Baedeker raids " continue, focused on Norwich and York. Japanese cut Burma Road with the capture of Lashio in Burma.

Chapter 5 : World War II Timeline: June 15, June 19, | HowStuffWorks

Forbidden by Hitler to retreat or try to break out of the Soviet ring, the survivors of the Sixth Army surrender on January 30 and February 2, May 13, Axis forces in Tunisia surrender to the Allies, ending the North African campaign.

World War II Timeline: June June 19 June Despite pleas from both France and Britain, the U. Congress continues to refuse to intervene in Europe, with some legislators going so far as to suggest that England and France surrender to Hitler. In an 11th hour rescue attempt, Britain offers to unite its empire with that of France. The following day, France will ask Germany for an armistice, requesting "peace with honor. About 2, British troops perish when five Luftwaffe bombers attack the Lancastria, a Cunard luxury liner being used to transport troops. With most naval forces focused on the Pacific Fleet, the U. French general Charles de Gaulle, speaking from London, pleads with his countrymen to continue to resist Germany, claiming "France has lost a battle, but France has not lost the war. Hitler hopes that by offering France easy surrender terms, the French will be less likely to continue fighting from North Africa. With the German conquest of France complete, the exiled governments of Poland and Belgium move to London. Hundreds killed, wounded in Paris by German attacks: A Parisian victim of German bombing raids lies in a hospital bed. The German bombardment of Paris inflicted some casualties, including dead. Most of the victims were civilians and many were schoolchildren. Designed to produce terror, the air attack had the desired effect. Fleeing civilians clogged all roads around Paris, where some were strafed by German planes. Luftwaffe attacks leave Dunkirk in flames: French civilians flee danger and destruction during the aerial bombardment of Dunkirk, France. Heavy Luftwaffe attacks left the dead and wounded scattered among the burning wreckage of homes, vehicles, and military equipment. Allies evacuate , from Cherbourg, France: After the successful evacuation at Dunkirk, the British rescued an additional , Allied troops that had been stranded in France. When the evacuations were complete on June 25, a total of , Allied troops had escaped the German invasion. In that burdensome role, he juggled Japanese demands for freedom of movement in northern Indochina against strong U. Then as Vichy delegate to the French North African colonies, Weygand alternately protested and collaborated with Nazi policies. Under Nazi pressure, Weygand was recalled in November , arrested in , and held by Germany for the duration of the war. By June 25, France had fallen. To follow more major events of World War II, see:

Chapter 6 : History of the U.S. Marine Corps Chronology-Part 2

Under Nazi pressure, Weygand was recalled in November , arrested in , and held by Germany for the duration of the war. View Enlarged Image The Nazi invasion of France: On May 10, , German General Fedor von Bock's Army Group B struck into Belgium and the Low Countries.

It seemed that the Soviet Army, as desperate as they were, came up with victories when and where they needed them most. Stalingrad proved no exception to unfolding events along the East Front. Besieged by the German 6th Army and backed by elements of the Italian, Hungarian and Romanian armies , the strategic Soviet city held out with minimal supplies and a dwindling band of defenders of the 62nd Army. German propaganda, based on the grand thrusts into and around Stalingrad, were already proclaiming victory for the German Army. By now, Hitler was all but committed to taking the city - at whatever cost necessary to ensure the German Army did not fail in a big way. German General Paulus was the man in charge. On the other side, Soviet Marshal Zhukov was planning his counteroffensive to help alleviate his beleaguered Stalingrad defenders. While a minimal number of supplies and replacements were sent into Stalingrad, Zhukov prepared his massive ground force a short distance away, committing whatever important elements came his way to the assault to come. Defense of Stalingrad now fell to a smallish pocket numbering some 5 miles across and contained in an industrial sector of the city, their backs against the Volga River. The Soviet winter nights set in and the environment now played against bodies and spirits of the 62nd Army. Despite all this, the defenders had repulsed a half-dozen or so offensives launched by the German 6th already. In the early morning hours of November 19th, , Zhukov ordered his cannons and rocket systems to light up the sky. Thousands of artillery guns and Katyusha rocket projector vehicles brought down lethal rain onto the Romanians guarding the flanks. Later, another Soviet action opened up against the German 6th to the south of the city. Soviet ground forces, led by infantry and tanks, poured in. In only three days, the German 6th Army was cut off and surrounded from rescue or retreat. In effect, the besiegers were now the besieged. General Paulus made repeated overtures to Adolf Hitler for a retreat and was denied. Instead, Hitler ordered elements from elsewhere to reposition and come to the aid of the 6th Army. The German 11th Army under von Manstein got the call and moved in. Air drops were an option but weather generally curtailed any support for the 6th. The besieged Germans erected hasty defenses for the time being and regrouped. In one final attempt to end the battle, Soviet General Rokossovsky delivered a formal request for surrender of the German Army on January 8th. This was hastily rejected and the final phase of the Battle of Stalingrad was put into effect by the Soviet Army. Artillery, ground and air elements of the Red Army pummeled the German 6th into oblivion. Deadly house-to-house fighting ensued.. General Paulus officially surrendered to the Soviet Army on February 2nd, , formally ending the siege of Stalingrad and the battle as well. Of the , German souls caught up in the Battle of Stalingrad, , died with some 80, lost to conditions brought about by weather and a lack of food. Only 35, German Army soldiers were successfully rescued by the Luftwaffe before the city fell back to Soviet control, leaving a further 90, to deal with the Soviet brand of justice. Only 5, of these men were ever seen again in the post-war years - the rest dying on the long march, executed in typical Soviet fashion or dying from exhaustion in the Siberian labor camps they were confined to. Entries are listed below by date-of-occurrence ascending first-to-last. Other leading and trailing events may also be included for perspective. Tuesday, July 28th, The macabre resolution of "not one step backwards" is issued by Stalin to his generals and troops. Friday, August 14th, German forces cross the Kuban river near Krasnador. Saturday, August 22nd, German land forces advancing into the Caucasus are stopped. Tuesday, August 25th, Stalingard is officially under siege by the Germans Army. Thursday, September 3rd, The Germans enact an offensive aimed at the heart of Stalingrad. Tuesday, October 6th, Malgobek falls to the German Army. Wednesday, October 14th, Adolf Hitler stops all further offensives against Soviet targets in the region for the year and orders his commanders to hold their positions until Sunday, October 25th, The Germans enact a new offensive in the Caucasus. Thursday, November 19th, The Soviets push forward a new two-part offensive - Operation Uranus - north of Stalingrad and break through the Romanian-held defenses. Wednesday, November 25th, In an effort to resupply their

troops, the German Luftwaffe is called upon to exercise airdrops of vital supplies to the German 6th Army. Saturday, December 12th, While Hitler rejects any plea from the German 6th Army to retreat from their position, the 4th Panzer Army is used through Operation Winter Storm in an attempt to relieve the beleaguered German troops at Stalingrad. Wednesday, December 16th, German Army forces are called off from further offensives at Tuapse. Monday, December 21st, Soviet relief forces and supplies headed for Stalingrad are stopped at Myshkova. Wednesday, December 23rd, All further attempts to relieve Stalingrad are put on hold, indefinitely. Thursday, December 24th, The Soviet Army launches a fresh attack at Kotelnikovo, routing its Romanian defenders and putting them into full retreat. Friday, January 1st, German forces at Terek retreat. Friday, January 8th, Soviet generals send in the formal request for surrender of the German 6th Army at Stalingrad, a request which is formally rejected. Sunday, January 10th, Soviet General Rokossovsky unleashes hell on the German 6th Army through thousands of artillery cannons and Katyusha rockets. Tuesday, January 12th, Soviet troops make headway against the defensive lines at the Don River held by Hungarian and Italian troops. Tuesday, January 12th, German Caucasus elements make it to their bridgehead over the Kuban River. Thursday, January 14th, In an effort to replenish and build up their army ranks along the East Front, German Generals proposed conscription service of the Baltic people for service. Monday, January 25th, German forces at Armavir retreat. Monday, January 25th, German forces at Voronezh retreat. Tuesday, February 2nd, The liberation of Stalingrad is officially over. World War 2 Events Chronological Order.

Chapter 7 : The Axis Conquers the Philippines: January July | HowStuffWorks

The evidence below concerns two important areas of disagreement between the Soviet union and the Western Allies, especially the United States, during the Second World War: 1) the opening of a second front against Germany in Western Europe and 2) the policy of unconditional surrender.

On April 9, Maj. Edward King surrendered the worn-out Allied forces on the peninsula without alerting Wainwright. Units of the Japanese Fourteenth Army had landed on the northern tip of Corregidor and were approaching Malinta Tunnel, the headquarters for the United States command in the Philippines that doubled as a hospital for more than 1,000 American and Filipino wounded. Having concluded that there was no alternative to surrender, Lt. Wainwright, the American commander, had repeatedly radioed the Japanese that he was prepared to capitulate, but until midday on May 6, he had received no acknowledgment. Marines who approached the Japanese lines under a flag of truce were told that Wainwright must come to Gen. Wainwright and three aides drove to the Japanese line in a battered Chevrolet staff car. From there they were taken to a dock where disdainful Japanese officers saw them aboard a launch that would take them across the strait to Bataan. When Wainwright asked one officer why the Japanese were still firing at his positions, he was told that the American offer to surrender had not yet been accepted. On the mainland, Wainwright and his aides were taken to a small frame house almost obscured by jungle. There they waited, in stifling heat, until a photographer appeared, followed by three Japanese staff cars in a cloud of dust. When General Homma emerged, the contrast between victor and vanquished was striking. The contrast seemed an omen of the new order in Asia. The Americans followed the Japanese to a table on the veranda, and the two parties took seats on opposite sides. There were no preliminaries. Homma nodded to Wainwright, expecting him to begin. Wainwright had hoped, optimistically, to limit the surrender to the troops he commanded on Corregidor. But Homma knew that there were still 20,000 U.S. troops in the Philippines. When the interpreter indicated that Wainwright intended his surrender to apply only to Corregidor, Homma interrupted. He would accept no surrender that did not apply to all forces in the Philippines. When the American general protested that forces in the south constituted an independent command, Homma brushed the statement aside. If he was not negotiating with the commander of all U.S. forces, he rose, called for his car, and drove away. Wainwright was at the end of his tether. There was no hope of relief from America, and an attack on Malinta Tunnel could only result in a bloodbath. Back on Corregidor, at a Japanese command post, Wainwright signed a document that ended the first phase of the war in the Philippines. Some 70,000 American and Filipino troops had capitulated on Bataan a month earlier, and the surrender now of the remaining 13,000 on Corregidor made the Philippines campaign the worst debacle in American military history. Back in the new U.S. Army chief of staff, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, not only was his army small but it also included a fair amount of deadwood in its top ranks. MacArthur was determined that no one over age 50 should be promoted to general, and that superannuated generals on the active list should be encouraged to retire. Wainwright, a tough, wiry cavalryman who had been first captain in his class at the United States Military Academy at West Point. After graduating in 1917, he had served at a number of posts along the United States-Mexican border before serving two years in the Philippines, fighting dissident Moro tribesmen. There, Wainwright won praise for his courage, tactical skill, and initiative. If Wainwright ever considered leaving the service in the dull postwar decades, the record does not show it. He was very much at home in the peacetime army, and once turned down a teaching assignment at West Point because he preferred life in a cavalry regiment. The cavalry had long been known as a hard-drinking outfit, but at Fort Myer, Wainwright gained a reputation as a notably heavy drinker, a distinction that did not sit well with General Marshall. Just months after he became chief of staff, Marshall posted Wainwright to command a cavalry brigade at Fort Clark, Texas, one of the most remote posts in the country. His successor at Fort Myer would be an officer more interested in tanks than horses, Colonel George S. Patton. Wainwright thought that Fort Clark might be his last posting, but in September he was ordered to Luzon to command the Philippine Division there. With this command came the second star of a major general. In attacking the Dutch East Indies and Malaya, Japan sought to secure the oil and rubber required for its war machine. Singapore and the Philippines, in contrast,

had to be captured in order to prevent their use as bases by the enemy. The task of capturing the Philippines was assigned to the Fourteenth Army, commanded by the Western-educated Homma. Under him were 43, veterans of the war in China. The Japanese invaders would have to cross miles of ocean from bases on Taiwan, but they would be supported by a massive naval flotilla, including two battleships and eight cruisers. Despite the complexity of the amphibious operation, Japanese plans called for the occupation of the Philippines within a month of landing. Having promised independence to the islands, the United States had begun training 10 Philippine divisions, but the pace was slow. Part of the problem, predictably, was budgetary, but communicating was also a challenge. Few Filipinos were proficient in English, and still fewer Americans spoke any of the local dialects. There was also a problem of attitude, for in the tropical torpor of the Philippines the Japanese threat seemed somehow remote. So it was that on December 8, "about eight hours after the U. MacArthur, who assumed that the Philippine army would be fully trained before Japan attacked, viewed Plan Orange as defeatist. The Japanese were outnumbered, but most of the Filipino soldiers had been in training for less than a month, and some had never fired their rifles. A few units, notably the American-trained Philippine Scouts, resisted valiantly, but elsewhere untrained recruits flung away their weapons and fled into the jungle. By the afternoon of December 23, Wainwright realized that the Japanese could not be stopped unless he formed a new defensive line. The first natural barrier was the Agno River, which ran east to west some 20 miles south of the Lingayen beaches. Richard Sutherland, to withdraw to the river, but was denied permission to bring his one regular unit, the Philippine Division, to the Agno River line. Defending forces both north and south of Manila would withdraw to Bataan. As part of this movement, the Southern Luzon Force, commanded by Maj. In theory, Bataan and the offshore bastion of Corregidor were to be defended until reinforcements arrived from the United States. Any assumption of reinforcements was ridiculous, however, because planners in Washington had long since decided on a Europe-first policy in the event of war. And even if the Philippines had enjoyed the highest strategic priority, destruction of the U. Pacific Fleet had made supply by sea virtually impossible. Besides stipulating an orderly withdrawal to defensive positions on Bataan, it required the stockpiling of supplies and the preparation of new defenses. Each was to be held long enough to force the Japanese to halt and deploy; when the enemy attacked in force, the defenders were to withdraw to the next line. The entire operation required close timing, and MacArthur wanted it completed in two weeks, by January 8. Clayton James, would call the entire operation a bold gamble: Somehow the troops on two fronts, originally over miles apart, would have to be supplied, while the undermanned service units would try simultaneously to get provisions into Bataan depots. Somehow divisions with only a third of their authorized strength would have to hold critical positions for long hours. Somehow commercial buses and trucks, along with private vehicles, would have to be found, commandeered, and promptly gotten to the numerous units that lacked military transportation. Somehow, despite enemy air supremacy, vital bridges would have to be protected until the [defending] troops were across, and then be demolished before the arrival of enemy forces who often were close behind. Traveling with one or two aides in a battered staff car, he made his rounds of the lines, offering advice and encouragement. He was a quick study in tactical matters, and could immediately recognize any weakness in frontline dispositions. Wainwright often carried a rifle, and on one occasion shot a Japanese sniper out of a tree. The troops became so accustomed to seeing Wainwright that on days when he did not appear it was simply assumed that he was visiting another portion of the line. All were becoming battle hardened, and those untrained Filipinos who had been disposed to run away were long gone. Nevertheless, had the Japanese stepped up the pace there might have been no four-month defense of Bataan. Homma was briefly undecided whether to attack Bataan or press on to Manila, and his indecision gave Parker time to move north. The key to the movement proved to be the Calumpit Bridge, some 20 miles north of Manila. The Bataan Peninsula "30 miles long, 15 miles wide, and heavily forested" pointed like a swollen thumb toward the island-fort of Corregidor to the south. Instead, starvation became the most persistent enemy. The great number of soldiers and refugees on Bataan constituted a weakness because the supplies on hand could not support such numbers. After MacArthur took stock of the food supplies available, he placed his entire command on half rations. On January 7, the U. On January 10, the troops on Bataan had an experience that would not be repeated: The commanding general praised Wainwright

for his holding actions to the north, but warned him and Parker to close the gap between their corps. In part out of faith and in part as a result of some optimistic cables from President Roosevelt and Marshall, MacArthur believed that it was just a matter of time before reinforcements arrived. Skilled in infiltration, the Japanese forced the defenders to withdraw, occasionally in some disorder. When things went badly, MacArthur was not disposed to accept excuses. They would not cease, however, in part because of a perverse reality of the campaign: The island fortress of Corregidor represented the best hope for holding out until help arrived, and for that reason MacArthur had already begun withdrawing food stocks from Bataan to the island. The growing gap between the rations available on Corregidor and those that reached the trenches on Bataan had a corrosive effect on morale. Here, however, the Japanese overreached. In a series of sharp engagements, the Americans and Filipinos eliminated the pockets, with heavy losses to the Japanese. For most of February and much of March, Japanese pressure eased, as Homma had supply problems of his own. The Americans, for their part, had time to prepare an intricate system of tunnels and defensive entrenchments for the attacks they knew would come. For the most part, however, the only contact between Corregidor and the outside world was via the occasional U. When the Japanese renewed their offensive, it was against a weakened enemy, because the supply situation that had been serious in January was critical at the end of February.

Chapter 8 : German Defeat at Stalingrad – United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

June British and US navies halt the Japanese naval advance in the central Pacific at Midway. Poland by August 1. July 25, By January 1, , the Germans are in retreat. January.

Facebook Twitter The largest and bloodiest battle in the history of warfare, the Siege of Stalingrad lasted over five months and resulted in somewhere between 1. From 23 August until 2 February , Axis forces besieged one of the greatest cities in Soviet Russia. Brutal close quarters fighting was accompanied by bombardments that saw swathes of the city reduced to rubble. It was the most important turning point of the fighting on the Eastern Front, and arguably of the whole Second World War. Strategic Significance The assault on Stalingrad had several objectives. Cutting off the Volga River was also important, as it would sever a major trade and transport artery into the heart of Russia. As part of a wider strategy, it would secure the north-west flank of armies advancing on the petrol sources at Baku. There was a propaganda element that added to the significance of the battle for both sides. Capturing the city named after the Soviet leader would be a symbolic coup for the Germans and a psychological setback for their opponents. On 23 July , Hitler re-wrote the objectives of the eastern campaign to include the capture of Stalingrad. But in changing the objectives, he made them too wide. This would stretch his forces and be the downfall of his plans. Soviet soldiers running through trenches in the ruins of Stalingrad By August, the Germans and their allies had been pushing the Russians back for months. Stalingrad was almost in sight. As Soviet generals rushed to throw up defences around the city, their 62nd and 64th armies fell back there. On 23 August the pursuing German 6th army reached the edge of the city. The Siege of Stalingrad had begun. In 48 hours alone, 1, tonnes of bombs were dropped on the city, and massive strategic bombing created a firestorm that turned many buildings into charred ruins. The defence of Stalingrad was a desperate one. Every able-bodied man was sent into the fighting. Civilians were used to hastily build defences. Militias of civilians were thrown together and flung into battle, often without rifles. Parts of incomplete tanks were brought from the factories to the front lines, where the guns were sighted by hand. Germans in Stalingrad Brutal close quarters fighting took place all over the ruined city. Fearful of a retreat, Soviet Commissars executed thousands of shirkers and deserters as examples to their comrades. The German doctrine of swift, powerful offensives could not dominate in such circumstances, and the fighting went back and forth several times in some areas. Still, Axis troops maintained a slow, steady advance. After three gruelling months, the Germans reached the banks of the Volga. Stress, as well as combat, was taking its toll – German General Paulus developed an uncontrollable tic in one eye while the Soviet Chuikov suffered such severe eczema that his hands were constantly swathed in bandages. Soviet Counterattacks The Soviets launched several counter-attacks during the German advance, with little success. On November 19 they launched Operation Uranus, the attack that would turn the battle around. The city had almost entirely fallen to the Germans and the smaller groups of Hungarian and Romanian troops accompanying them, but they had been so focused on the advance that they had not taken the opportunity to ensure a strong defensive position against counterattacks. The need for troops elsewhere had weakened their flanks, and the Soviets still had footholds to the north and south of the city. On 19 and 20 November, massive Soviet attacks hit Romanian forces on the German flanks to the north and south of the city. The thinly spread Romanians were completely overrun. The Germans were poorly prepared either for such an offensive or for fighting in the terrible weather of a Russian winter. A swift advance saw both Soviet attacks tear through the German rear. On 23 November they met at Kalach, west of the city. The invaders in Stalingrad were completely surrounded. Encirclement and Ending Soviet forces during Operation Little Saturn in December Believing that an advance from the east could break through to the city and that in the meantime the Luftwaffe could keep the encircled troops supplied, Hitler ordered that there would not be an attempt to break out of the city. Despite the best efforts of the Luftwaffe, adequate supplies could not be provided. Those pilots who survived the supply runs – many died as they flew in and out above the Soviet army – reported that the soldiers were increasingly weak with hunger. The most successful attempt to break through and relieve the trapped troops came from the south under General von Manstein. On 19 December it came within 30 miles of

the encircled forces, but never broke through. The relief attempt was abandoned on 23 December. Running out of food and ammunition, and with the Soviets pressing in upon them, the Germans looked increasingly doomed. Split in two, the southern group of Germans under Paulus surrendered on 31 January, though Paulus himself refused to negotiate the surrender. At 4 am on 2 February, General Strecker, commanding the remaining northern group, was told that his own officers had gone to negotiate terms with the Russians. He sent out a radio message saying that his men had done their duty and surrendering. The Siege of Stalingrad was at an end.

Chapter 9 : What was the weather during Stalingrad

On this day in , General Erwin Rommel turns his assault on the British-Allied garrison at Tobruk, Libya, into victory, as his panzer division occupies the North African port.

One of these victories was in the Atlantic Ocean , which finally forced the German submarines, in May , to abandon their attempt to prevent North American supply ships from reaching Britain. The Battle of the Atlantic is described in Chapter 3. The other victories occurred on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea and at the eastern end of Europe, in Russia. At the beginning of this period, the possibility of a German victory was still very real. By the end, however, most people knew that Germany, although far from being defeated, could not win the war. The Axis forces the name used for Germany and its allies it opposed were mostly Italian, but they were reinforced by the Afrika Korps, German armored and mechanized troops. These events are described in Chapter 3. Within two weeks, Rommel attacked the British, but this time the Eighth Army held its position, and Rommel broke off the attack. The British now had far more troops and planes than the Axis. The Axis troops were dangerously short of fuel and shells. He was not aiming to chase the Axis army from Egypt into Libya. That had already happened twice in the war, and each time the British had eventually been chased back. This time, Montgomery wanted to destroy the Axis forces. Rommel had been home in Germany, recovering from an illness, and rushed back to Africa by plane. But he could not change the outcome of the Battle of El Alamein. The fighting continued for ten days. After suffering heavy losses, Rommel began a long retreat westward along the single coast road. By the end of the year, he had retreated 1, miles, deep into Libya. The retreat had cost him 40, prisoners; he had only 60, troops and fewer than tanks left. On November 8, , while Rommel was retreating, American and British forces landed in three locations much farther west. Under the overall command of American General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Operation Torch began with one landing near Casablanca, on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, and two on the Mediterranean Sea , near Algiers and Oran, the two largest cities of Algeria. Morocco and Algeria, as well as neighboring Tunisia, were French colonies. After France surrendered to Germany in June , the Germans allowed a French government to remain in power in the southern part of the country. This government, known as Vichy the town where the government was based , still controlled most French colonies overseas. The Vichy government was officially neutral in the war, although it was influenced by and cooperated with Germany, since the German army controlled most of France. In November , about , French troops were stationed in North Africa. The Allies hoped that these troops would not oppose their landings. In fact, they wanted the French to join them. American representatives had secretly contacted some Vichy military and civilian officials, as well as opponents of the Vichy government, both in France and in North Africa. See box on p. Many Vichy supporters were beginning to believe that Germany would lose the war, and they wanted to get on the right side. There was a great deal of confusion among French officials when the Allies landed. Some pro-Allied French officers arrested those who wanted to resist the Alliesâ€™but then they were arrested themselves. In Casablanca and Oran, the landings were resisted. In Algiers, there was little fighting, partly because pro-Allied residents had taken over the city before the landings. The end of the Axis in Africa Although they no longer faced any resistance, the Allied troops moved slowly. But their hesitation gave Germany and Italy time to rush troops into Tunisia, first by air and then by ship. As it turned out, Germany and Italy made the mistake by sending those troops. When they reached Tunisia, the Allied forces faced determined German resistance in the mountainous countryside. At the same time, Rommel launched several counterattacks against the Allied forces to his west, some quite successful. At the Kasserine Pass , a narrow pass through the mountains, Rommel took an American force by surprise, inflicting serious casualties on them, capturing some American prisoners, and forcing them to abandon a great deal of equipment. Like almost all American troops, these soldiers had never been in serious combat before. Their generals were also inexperienced, and Rommel took advantage of both of these facts. But the Axis forces did not have the men or equipment to turn these small victories into bigger successes. Their supplies, coming across the Mediterranean by ship and plane, were not reaching them in sufficient quantities. As the fighting continued through the winter months, the Allied forces, which now included French

troops, grew stronger. The Americans, now led by General George S. Patton, became more experienced in fighting the Germans. Believing the situation was hopeless, German leader Adolf Hitler ordered Rommel to return to Germany on March 6, leaving his army behind. The Germans and Italians retreated and continued to fight defensive battles for more than a month. Early in May, the Axis troops, low on supplies and ammunition, began to surrender in large numbers. The last holdouts gave up on May 13. Although estimates of the exact number vary, the Axis probably lost more than 1,000,000 men. The war in Africa was over. The invasion of Sicily

On July 9, 1943, less than two months after the end of the fighting in Africa, the Allies invaded Sicily, the large island at the toe of the boot-shaped Italian peninsula. Ten divisions about 150,000 men, including two parachute divisions, were involved. Twelve Axis divisions were defending the island, but only two were German. Some of the Italian troops treated the Allies as liberators rather than invaders—in some cases helping them unload their landing boats. Large numbers of Italian troops surrendered as soon as the Allied troops reached them. The American forces, commanded by General Patton, raced up the western side of the island, while the British, led by General Montgomery, went up the east side. The British met strong resistance from first-rate German units, including two more German divisions sent as reinforcements. Even so, the Italians began evacuating their troops to the Italian mainland on August 3, and the Germans began to do the same a week later. Most of the Germans successfully evaded capture. By the middle of August, however, the Allied troops controlled all of Sicily. It had lost the empire that the Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini, had dreamed would bring back the glory of ancient Rome. Now Sicily, part of Italy itself, had been invaded. More than 1,000,000 Italian soldiers were prisoners of war in Africa. Another Italian army, with more than 1,000,000 men, had been wiped out in Russia. In both Russia and Africa, the Allies had captured vast quantities of arms and equipment. This was a much greater loss for Italy than for the other major powers, whose economies were far stronger. Most Italians were much poorer than they had been before the war, and there were increasing shortages of almost everything. Allied planes constantly bombed Italian cities, and the Italian and German air forces seemed unable to protect them. Few Italians had ever been enthusiastic about the war, especially after Italy declared war on the United States. Many Italians had relatives in America, and most admired the country. The king and the army had supported Mussolini for more than twenty years, but now they plotted to get rid of him. On July 25, 1943, while the fighting in Sicily was still going on, the king and his men removed Mussolini from his position as prime minister and placed him under arrest. The new leader of the government was Marshal Pietro Badoglio, the senior general of the Italian army, while the king took over direct command of the armed forces. The new government promised the Germans that Italy would continue to fight alongside them. In fact, it immediately entered secret negotiations with the Allies for Italy to surrender. Surrender and invasion The Italians signed the surrender on September 3, 1943, but kept it secret. On the same day, a British force commanded by General Montgomery crossed the narrow strait from Sicily and landed at the toe of Italy. This was not the main invasion; it was only a diversion to draw German troops into the area. These could be defended by relatively few German troops. On September 8, 1943, British radio announced the Italian surrender, and the next morning the main Allied invasion force landed near Salerno, south of Naples, the largest city of southern Italy. The Allies had hoped that the announcement would mean that they could land without facing any serious opposition. German troops moved quickly to take over all important cities, roads, and bridges. They disarmed the Italian soldiers, who usually did not resist. Some became prisoners and were sent to Germany to work in arms factories. Others were allowed to go home. The fact that the new Italian government soon declared war on Germany had little practical effect. The Germans rushed their own troops to Salerno and nearly forced the American and British invasion force to return to its ships. But the Allied planes, artillery, and especially the big guns of their nearby warships prevented this evacuation. By September 18, the Germans began to withdraw from the invasion area. But this retreat was planned. The Germans were preparing a defensive position that stretched all the way across Italy, called the Gustav Line. Most of the Gustav Line was in rugged terrain in the mountains. It would be almost impossible to attack the dug-in Germans directly. The Allies would have to advance along the two narrow plains between the mountains and each coast.