

A Change in Theater: 1942-1943

After the United States joined the war following Pearl Harbor, World War II opened up a new theater in the Pacific. President Roosevelt first used the term United Nations to describe the Allied forces. In January, the major Allied nations signed the “Declaration by United Nations” in which the term was first officially used. 26 Allied nations signed the declaration that pledged to uphold the Atlantic Charter and fight against the Axis Powers. Also in January 1942, President Roosevelt issued an executive order requiring all aliens to register with the government. This became the first

1942



A Japanese-American shop owner showing their patriotism.

step in the Japanese-American internment camps. On the other side of the world, German officials met at the Wannsee Conference in an effort to coordinate the “Final Solution to the Jewish Question.” Here, Reinhard Heydrich outlined the plan to move all Jews in German-occupied Europe to Poland for extermination.

In February, President Roosevelt moved forward with Japanese-American interment. Executive Order 9066 was signed by FDR, authorizing the transfer of more than 100,000 Japanese-Americans living in coastal Pacific areas to concentration camps. Interned Japanese-Americans lost an

estimated 400 million dollars in property, as their homes and possessions were taken from them.



Manzanar, a Japanese-American internment camp.

As the war progressed, April saw continued German U-boat activity, hitting US vessels in the Atlantic. Later that month, US forces were hit hard in the Pacific. The Bataan Death March occurred after the surrender of the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines. Around 75,000 troops were captured and forced to travel 65 miles to prison camps. Thousands died after being exposed to intense heat or Japanese brutality. The Japanese beat and starved captive soldiers on the march. Later that month all of the Philippines fell to Japanese forces.

In May, Reinhard Heydrich, one of the main architects of the Holocaust, was attacked in Prague. He was described by Hitler as “the man with the iron heart.” Germany was hit with another blow that month, as British air raids began in Cologne, Germany.

Heydrich would die of his wounds in early June. As retribution, the city of Lidice was completely destroyed. All males over 16 were shot. Women and children were taken to concentration camps and killed. Nothing

remained of Lidice after the Nazis were finished. How was Lidice chosen? The Nazis, acting on bad intelligence, linked Heydrich's assassination to citizens within the city.

Meanwhile in the Pacific, the Battle of Midway took place in June. This was seen as a turning point in the war in the Pacific in favor of the Allied forces. Also in this month, mass murder of Jews began at Auschwitz.

The Warsaw Ghetto, in the capital of Poland, had been established in 1940 to contain Jews in Warsaw and neighboring villages. There was never enough food, and starvation was common. It was estimated that over 400,000 Jews lived within the 1.3 square miles of the ghetto. By July, the first deportations from Warsaw Ghetto to concentration camps took place. This coincided with the opening of a new extermination camp, Treblinka.



Jews of Warsaw Ghetto being rounded up by German SS troops for deportation.

Throughout 1942, the North African theater of war saw major action. In July, the First Battle of El Alamein took place. It lasted the entire month, By August, General Bernard Montgomery was given control of British forces in North Africa. He would remain in this command until the end of the North African campaign.

In Europe, the Battle of Stalingrad began. Air raids began the build up to the battle in July. The battle would last months. In the Pacific, the Battle for Guadalcanal began as well.



Battle of Stalingrad.

September saw the beginning of rationing in the United States. By the beginning of 1943, the United States was rationing many products including, gasoline, coffee, meat, canned goods, cheese, and shoes.

North Africa took center stage in November of 1942. The Allied forces broke through the Axis line at El Alamein, leading to a turning point in the North African campaign. This opened the door for a more aggressive plan. In the same month, Operation Torch, the United States invasion of North Africa, began in an effort to secure North Africa against Axis Powers. Also in November, German and Italian troops invaded Vichy France. This was supposed to be left unoccupied during the war, but was invaded after Operation

Torch began in North Africa (much of the fighting in North Africa took place in French held territory).

1943

In January 1943, the Casablanca Conference between Churchill and FDR took place. It was decided that the war could only end with “unconditional German surrender.” In the same month, more progress was made in North Africa as Montgomery and his forces took Tripoli. In the Pacific, the Allied forces captured part of New Guinea. Troops from New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the

United States participated in an effort to protect Australia from Japanese invasion. It worked.

During February the Allies saw two major victories, on two different fronts. On the Eastern Front, the Germans surrendered at Stalin grad. This was the first major defeat of the German army and major victory. In the Pacific theater, Guadalcanal was finally captured by Allied forces after sustain heavy losses.

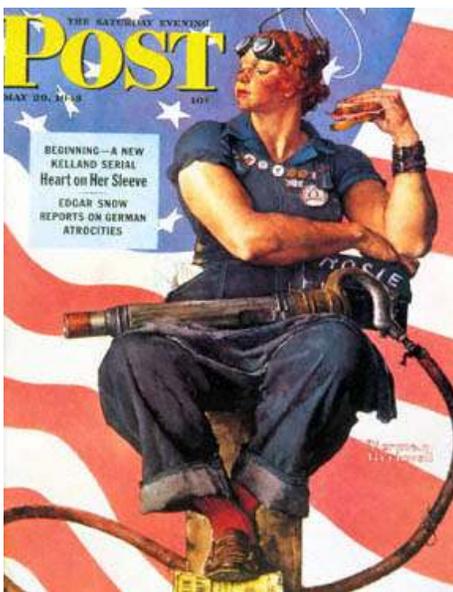
While the United States had been rationing food and supplies for some time, in April President Roosevelt now took this a step further. He froze all wages, salaries, and prices in an effort to stop inflation. Also during this month, the growing resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto was attacked by German SS troops.

May would see the end of fighting in North Africa. The Axis Powers withdrew troops from Tunisia, while Allied troops went on the attack. Later this month, German and Italian forces would surrender, leaving the area in Allied control. Controlling North Africa meant the Allies could now move forward with the invasion of Italy.

Also in May, resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto would end. At least 7,000 were killed in the resistance, and another 7,000 of the resistance fighters were transferred to Treblinka death camp. Still, another 42,000 were taken to concentration camps.



Tank in North Africa.



Rockwell's "Rosie"

During the month of May, America was introduced to a new icon, “Rosie the Riveter.” Norman Rockwell, a famous painter, published his version of her on the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post* on Memorial Day. She would become a symbol for American women who worked in factories and shipyards during the war. Many versions of “Rosie” exist. Rockwell’s version went on to be loaned to the US Treasury Department to be used in war bond drives for the duration of the war.

After issues in the Warsaw Ghetto, Germany was wary of continuing to allow Jews to live together, sectioned off from the rest of society. Heinrich Himmler, one of the most powerful Nazis and one of the most responsible for the Holocaust, ordered the liquidation of all Jewish ghettos in Poland. They would not return to the rest of society, instead these Jews ended up in concentration and extermination camps.

July saw the unraveling of Italy’s fascist regime. The Allied forces began their invasion of Italy this month as well as beginning bombings on Rome. Italy was close to revolt and Mussolini was forced to call together a council that had not met for the entirety of the war. The council gave a vote of no confidence in Mussolini’s

leadership and asked for the king to retake control. Mussolini did not believe this council had any real power and showed up the next day as if nothing had happened. He was arrested and Italy's fascist government fell. After Mussolini's arrest, the Allies would begin to negotiate possible surrender terms with Italy. Italians began to celebrate as it looked like the end of war. Surrender terms would not be announced until September. Meanwhile a new government took over in Italy. The Germans, however, had problems other than potential losing an ally. Germany was on the offensive again on the Eastern Front. The Battle of Kursk began in July 1943 between Germany and the Soviet Union. It lasted only a week before Soviet forces stopped the German offensive. The Germans were never able to reach their objective, a first. Was Germany beginning to lose their edge?

In September, the Italian surrender to Allied forces was announced. The announcement threw Italy into chaos. German troops (who saw Italy as an ally) rushed to take over Italy and occupied Rome. It took the Germans weeks but they will disarm any Italian who fought to end fascist rule in Italy. Germany also rescued Mussolini and will re-establish a fascist government. The Allies, however, will not recognize this new government.

As October began, the Allies continued their push into Italy in an attempt to take out the fascist government and remove Italy from the war. The anti-fascist government deposed when Mussolini regained power will declare war on Germany on October 13, 1943.

More victories on the Eastern Front occurred in November as Soviet troops took back Kiev in the Ukraine. Germany was losing ground on the Eastern Front, and quickly. Meanwhile, Churchill, FDR, and Stalin met at Teheran, Iran. This conference has a specific agenda. The main agreement reached during the meeting was to open up a new front in the war. This would become known as Operation Overlord, and would open back up the Western Front in Europe that had been closed since 1940.