

## STATION #1: LONDON BLITZ AND OPERATION BARBAROSSA

Following England's declaration of war on Germany, plans were made to evacuate the children of London to the countryside to villages and towns in rural England and Wales where they would be safe from the anticipated bombardment of London. All was quiet until the summer of 1940, then Germany began a staggering air attack on Britain and, in particular, the people of London. London was bombed 57 days straight. The attack on London became known as the "Blitz", from the German word "Blitzkrieg", meaning lightning war. Homes, neighborhoods and entire communities were devastated by the heavy bombardment.

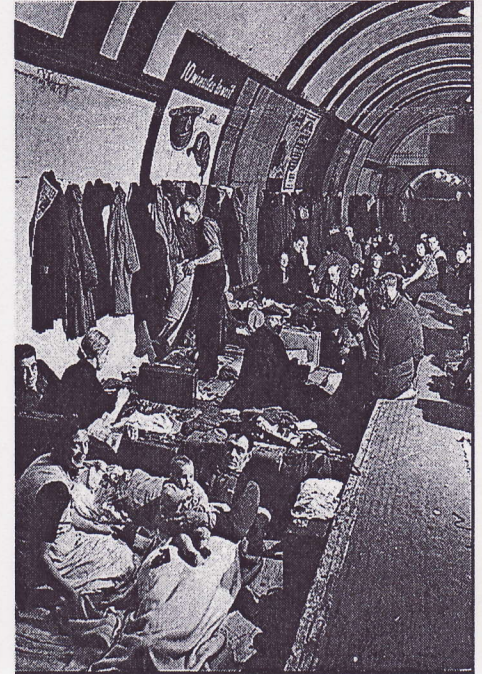
### Primary Source: Bombed out in the London Blitz

"My name is Kathleen Brockington. For the first few days a lot of people were very frightened. I can remember my Mother-in-Law bursting into tears and putting her gas mask on that first day; In 1940 the air raids started up proper. Like lots of others down our street we had an Anderson Shelter in our garden, but it was dreadfully damp so in the end we used to sleep under our big oak table. If the air raid sirens went off in the evening we would just ignore them and carry on eating our tea or playing cards until we heard bombs getting a bit close and then we would dive under the table for cover.

The night I was bombed out lots of people were sleeping in the tube (underground railway) after the last train had gone. When the bomb dropped I wasn't even under the table! There was a tremendous BANG! and I ducked. All the windows came in and the ceiling and a couple of walls came in and there was incredible smoke everywhere. I was shaking like a leaf but I wasn't hurt.

I ran to the Air Raid Post but the Warden said "look missus, we're gonna be busy digging bodies out, if you've got a roof you're better off where you are. There's lots worse off than you". Funnily enough he was wrong; about 50 houses were badly damaged and a couple of them just turned into heaps of rubble, but nobody was actually killed.

I went home and climbed back through the window. There was dust and glass and bricks everywhere but I slept on my bed in my clothes until 6am, then went to stay with my mother. I was very shocked of course, and worried that when my husband got back from working day and night putting out fires he would go home and assume the worst."



## OPERATION BARBAROSSA

On December 18, 1940, Hitler signed Directive Number 21, better known as Operation Barbarossa. The first sentence of the plan was explicit: **"The German armed forces must be ready before the end of the war against Great Britain to defeat the Soviet Union by means of Blitzkrieg."**

### Primary Source: Joseph Stalin, radio speech (June, 1941)

"The Red Army, the Red Navy, and all citizens of the Soviet Union must defend every inch of Soviet soil, must fight to the last drop of blood for our towns and villages, must display the daring, initiative and mental alertness characteristic of our people.

In case of forced retreat of Red Army units, all rolling stock must be evacuated, the enemy must not be left a single engine, a single railway truck, not a single pound of grain or gallon of fuel. Collective farmers must drive off all their cattle and turn over their grain to the safe keeping of the state authorities, for transportation to the rear. If valuable property that cannot be withdrawn, must be destroyed without fail.

In areas occupied by the enemy, partisan units, mounted and on foot, must be formed; sabotage groups must be organized to combat enemy units, to foment partisan warfare everywhere, blow up bridges and roads, damage telephone and telegraph lines, set fire to forests, stores and transport. In occupied regions conditions must be made unbearable for the enemy and all his accomplices. They must be hounded and annihilated at every step, and all their measures frustrated."

## STATION #2: BATTLE OF EL ALAMEIN AND THE INVASION OF ITALY

### **PRIMARY SOURCE:**

#### **1943: Italy's surrender announced**

*Italy has signed an unconditional armistice with the Allies, General Dwight D Eisenhower has announced.*

*General Eisenhower - the commander in chief of Allied forces in the Mediterranean - said the Italian Government had agreed to end all hostilities with the United Nations.*

*In a broadcast on Algiers radio at 1730 local time, he said: "All Italians who now act to help eject the German aggressor from Italian soil will have the assistance and support of the United Nations."*

*Afterwards, in a personal message to the Italian people, Marshal Badoglio confirmed the surrender and even hinted his people should turn against their former allies, the Germans.*

*"The Italian forces will cease all acts of hostilities against the Anglo-American forces, wherever they may be. They will, however, oppose attacks of any other forces." The surrender indicates the Axis and the Tripartite Pact is now in tatters.*

*But US President Franklin D Roosevelt has said it is too early to assume this is the end of war in the Mediterranean. In a broadcast from Washington he said: "The great news you have heard from General Eisenhower does not give you licence to settle back in your rocking chair and say 'Well, that does it. We've got 'em on the run. Now we start celebrating.' The time has not yet come for celebration."*

*-BBC News*

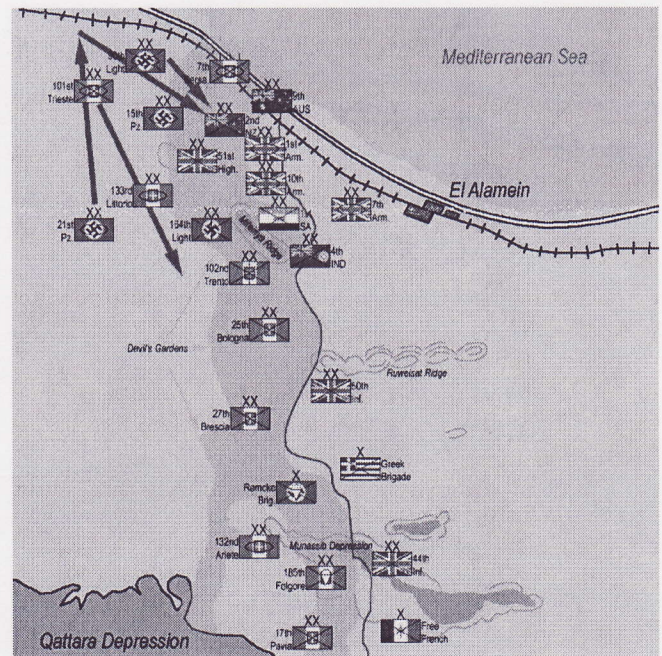
### The Battle of El Alamein

The Battle of El Alamein, fought in the deserts of North Africa, is seen as one of the decisive victories of World War Two. The Battle of El Alamein was primarily fought between two of the outstanding commanders of World War Two, Montgomery, who succeeded the dismissed Auchinleck, and Rommel. The Allied victory at El Alamein led to the retreat of the Afrika Korps and the German surrender in North Africa in May 1943. Hence the war in the desert of North Africa was pivotal. If the Afrika Korps (Germany) got to the Suez Canal, the ability of the Allies to supply themselves would be severely dented. El Alamein was a last stand for the Allies in North Africa.

By August 1942, only 33% of what Rommel needed was getting through to him. Rommel was also acutely aware that while he was being starved of supplies, the Allies were getting vast amounts through as they still controlled the Suez and were predominant in the Mediterranean.

To cope with Montgomery's attack, the Germans had 110,000 men and 500 tanks. A number of these tanks were poor Italian tanks and could not match the new Sherman's. The Germans were also short of fuel. The Allies had more than 200,000 men and more than 1000 tanks. They were also armed with a six-pound artillery gun which was highly effective up to 1500 meters.

By November 2nd 1942, Rommel knew that he was beaten. Hitler ordered the Afrika Korps to fight to the last but Rommel refused to carry out this order. On November 4th, Rommel started his retreat. 25,000 Germans and Italians had been killed or wounded in the battle and 13,000 Allied troops in the Eighth Army.



### STATION #3: BATTLE OF STALINGRAD

The Battle of Stalingrad is considered by many historians to have been the turning point in World War Two in Europe. The battle at Stalingrad bled the German army dry in Russia and after this defeat, the Germany Army was in full retreat.

In early September 1942, the German Army advanced to the city. The Russians, already devastated by the power of Blitzkrieg during Operation Barbarossa, had to make a stand especially as the city was named after the Russian leader, Joseph Stalin

The battle for the city descended into one of the most brutal in World War Two. Individual streets were fought over using hand-to-hand combat. The Germans took a great deal of the city but they failed to fully assert their authority. Areas captured by the Germans during the day, were re-taken by the Russians at night.

Unable to break out, the Germans also had to face the winter. Temperatures dropped to well below zero and food, ammunition and heat were in short supply.

*"My hands are done for, and have been ever since the beginning of December. The little finger of my left hand is missing and - what's even worse - the three middle fingers of my right one are frozen. I can only hold my mug with my thumb and little finger. I'm pretty helpless; only when a man has lost any fingers does he see how much he needs then for the smallest jobs. The best thing I can do with the little finger is to shoot with it. My hands are finished."*

*Anonymous German soldier*

Hitler ordered that Paulus should fight to the last bullet, and to encourage Paulus, he promoted him to field marshal. However, by the end of January 1943, the Germans could do nothing else but surrender. Paulus surrendered the army in the southern sector on January 31st while General Schreck surrendered the northern group on February 2nd, 1943.

*"I was horrified when I saw the map. We're quite alone, without any help from outside. Hitler has left us in the lurch. Whether this letter gets away depends on whether we still hold the airfield. We are lying in the north of the city. The men in my unit already suspect the truth, but they aren't so exactly informed as I am. No, we are not going to be captured. When Stalingrad falls you will hear and read about it. Then you will know that I shall not return."*

*Anonymous German soldier*



The failure of the German Army was nothing short of a disaster. A complete army group was lost at Stalingrad and 91,000 Germans were taken prisoner. With such a massive loss of manpower and equipment, the Germans simply did not have enough manpower to cope with the Russian advance to Germany when it came.

Despite resistance in parts – such as a Kursk – they were in retreat on the Eastern Front from February 1943 on. In his fury, Hitler ordered a day's national mourning in Germany, not for the men lost at the battle, but for the shame von Paulus had brought on the Wehrmacht and Germany. Paulus was also stripped of his rank to emphasise Hitler's anger with him. Hitler commented:

***"The God of War has gone over to the other side." -  
Hitler***

## STATION #4: D-DAY

### The Normandy Invasion

On June 6, 1944, D-Day, the day of invasion for Overlord, the U.S. First Army, under General Omar N. Bradley, and the British Second Army, under General Miles C. Dempsey, established beachheads in Normandy (Normandie), on the French channel coast. The German resistance was strong, and the footholds for Allied armies were not nearly as good as they had expected. Nevertheless, the powerful counterattack with which Hitler had proposed to throw the Allies off the beaches did not materialize, neither on D-Day nor later. Enormous Allied air superiority over northern France made it difficult for Rommel, who was in command on the scene, to move his limited reserves. By the end of June, Eisenhower had 850,000 men and 150,000 vehicles ashore in Normandy.

#### **Primary Source: General Eisenhower's D-Day Proclamation**

This address by General Dwight D. Eisenhower was delivered to troops participating in Operation Overlord, code-name for the Allied invasion of Normandy. Bad weather had almost foiled Eisenhower's plans for the attack, but the D-Day invasion, as it came to be called, succeeded in surprising the Germans and establishing a crucial allied beachhead in France.

*You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.*

*Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.*

*But this is the year 1944! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man. Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men. The tide has turned! The free men of the world are marching together to Victory!*

*I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full Victory!*

*Good Luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.*

Dwight Eisenhower

