

The Darkest Days

The Allies knew that Germany would depend heavily on its submarines to try to gain supremacy in the Atlantic. Britain used the convoy system as a means of protecting her merchant ships sailing from Halifax, Canada, to the British Isles. Air patrols were also organized to help protect the convoys by providing air cover for this vital lifeline between America and Britain.

The U.S. Navy was ordered (on September 4th) to shoot on sight any vessel that threatened Allied ships.

A Nazi U-boat torpedoed the destroyer *Reuben James* on October 31, 1941 — the first U.S. vessel lost in action during World War II.

The Allied High Command (in March 1943) assigned to Britain and Canada the primary job of protecting the North Atlantic convoys, while the chief responsibility for the central Atlantic convoys fell on American shoulders. And the U.S. also had the responsibility of protecting Allied vessels in the Caribbean Sea. Before the Normandy invasion the Canadian fleet took over the task of escorting the North Atlantic convoys, thus relieving U.S. naval power so they could take part in Operation Overlord.

Hitler's U-boats

Even before the Second World War began, Hitler planned to build a massive fleet of U-boats so he could blast the Allied navies out of the Atlantic.

The Führer gave the command of the entire Nazi U-boat offensive to the brilliant, tough Admiral Karl Doenitz. (Hitler also turned the leadership of the Third Reich over to Admiral Doenitz — just before he and Eva Braun committed suicide, in April 1945.)

During the early years of World War II, German U-boats constantly menaced Allied shipping. Germany's rather small surface fleet also caused considerable trouble. The German pocket battleships were smaller but also faster than the much larger Allied battleships.

Sinking the Mighty Bismarck

Furthermore, the Germans also had the biggest, most powerful battleships in the Atlantic (the *Bismarck* and the *Tirpitz*). The mighty

Bismarck's 16,000 tons of thick armor outweighed an entire pocket battleship. This behemoth of the Atlantic had such heavy armor that the Germans boasted she was "unsinkable."

The account of the sinking of the powerful *Bismarck* is one of the most interesting naval stories of World War II.

The *Bismarck* slipped into the North Atlantic in May 1941, and menaced Allied vessels between Iceland and Greenland. The Royal Navy finally succeeded in hunting down the *Bismarck*, but within two minutes of the fierce engagement between the British and German battleships, the British battlecruiser *Hood* was hit by the powerful guns of the *Bismarck* and was blown apart! Within minutes she was sent toward the bottom of the Atlantic. Also, the British battleship *Prince of Wales* was damaged in that brief battle.

But the British were determined to get revenge. They planned to go all out to sink this mighty German dreadnought of the seas. British carrier planes, battleships, destroyers and cruisers all set out to find and sink the *Bismarck*! They finally succeeded in locating her again and began giving chase. A lucky torpedo severely damaged the steering gear of the *Bismarck*, and she was under the sentence of doom from that moment forward.

Before long a mighty British attack force of ships and planes closed in on the *Bismarck* for the final kill. They succeeded in sending her to the bottom as she floundered in the Atlantic about 400 miles off the coast of France. The pride of the German navy had been sunk, and the Nazis then abandoned the idea of using giant ships against Allied convoys in the Atlantic.

Was the lucky hit on the *Bismarck* by a torpedo from a British plane a mere coincidence? Was it just by *chance* that this torpedo smashed, beyond repair, the steering gear of the "unsinkable" *Bismarck*?

The British Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, Admiral Sir John Tovey (K.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O.) believed this "lucky hit" and the subsequent sinking of the *Bismarck* was more than the result of "chance." Admiral Tovey believed there had been "Divine Guidance and Intervention" in the final fate of the *Bismarck*:

One is very diffident about these things, but for a long time I have been a great believer in *prayer*. In the last few weeks I have *prayed* as I have never prayed before in my life. If anyone had said that we could meet the *Bismarck*, that great ship with her main armament of 9 in. and 15 in. guns unimpaired, and come out of the action without loss of a single British life, no one would have believed him. It is incredible. It can only be attributed to one thing. I firmly believe that the result of this action was due to *Divine Guidance and Intervention*.

Nazi "Wolf Packs"

The German submarine fleet commander, Rear Admiral Karl Doenitz, began forming the U-boats into "wolf packs" of 8 or 9 — and sometimes as many as 20 or more — for the purpose of savagely attacking Allied convoys in the Atlantic.

The Nazis had about 234 U-boats in action by the spring of 1943. They continued wreaking a frightful toll on Allied shipping.

The Allies lost a record 807,754 tons of shipping in November 1942. These terrible losses couldn't continue! And during all of World War II the Allies lost 23,351,000 tons of shipping.

The Allies decided to smash the U-boat factories and bases by heavy bombings. They also developed new technologies (using *radar* and *sonar* devices) with which they could more readily spot enemy subs. Constantly Hitler's "wolf-packs" were attacked with destroyer escorts and escort carrier planes. Much of the vital convoy route could be protected with land-based aircraft. The Allies finally began getting the upperhand in the Atlantic, and during the last two years of World War II, the Allies sank German subs faster than they could be built.

British and American navies were also kept busy seeking out and destroying enemy vessels in the Mediterranean, the Pacific and other areas of the world. In the main, however, the Allies held the upper hand on the high seas, and this gave them a tremendous strategic advantage that proved vital in the undoing of the Axis powers.

Mighty "Arsenal of Democracy"

Hitler and his Nazi henchmen badly underrated the potential industrial and military power of America. Even though both Germany and Japan had a headstart in the mass production of weapons of war (planes, tanks, guns, etc.), yet America soon geared up her mighty industry and quickly outproduced the Axis powers.

Hitler had hoped to knock Russia out of the war before America joined her European Allies. But Japan spoiled that when she attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Now, mighty Uncle Sam would immediately gear up for all-out war production, and would begin girding for the titanic struggle which would soon humble both Germany and Japan.

Nazi Ignorance of U.S.A.

During the North African campaign, Field Marshal Rommel flew to Germany to report to the Führer, who was then at his East Prussian

headquarters. Rommel complained that R.A.F. bombers were blasting his panzers — with *American* 40-mm shells!

At that point, Hitler's Air Marshall, Hermann Goering, protested: "Nothing but latrine rumors. All the Americans can make are razor blades and refrigerators." Rommel flashed back — "I only wish Herr Reichmarschall, that we were issued similar razor blades!"

It was Franklin D. Roosevelt who called America "the arsenal of democracy." And that is what America *was* during World War II. America and her Allies simply would not have been victorious in the various theaters of war if they had not been backed by America's mighty industrial production. The servicemen would have been helpless without the man behind the man behind the gun.

America began producing an avalanche of war materials after Pearl Harbor. The historian, Louis L. Snyder gives us a clear picture of what happened in America after that "day of infamy" on December 7, 1941:

The days of business as usual were past. Within a year after Pearl Harbor, the U.S. was equaling the entire Axis war production, though they had a ten-year headstart.

By the end of World War II, America had produced 296,601 *aircraft*, 71,060 *ships*, 86,388 *tanks*, 2,400,000 *trucks*, 17,900,000 *firearms*, 61,000 pieces of *heavy artillery*, plus millions of tons of bombs, shells and other explosives.

From tens of thousands of factories came finished tools of war, *more war matériel than produced by the rest of the world combined*. It was an awesome example of audacious planning, mass activity, prodigious energy.

"Give Us the Tools"

When Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill appealed to America for help (before the U.S. entered the war), he told the Americans: "Give us the tools and we will finish the job." He knew that America could far outproduce Britain.

America's World War II shipbuilding program will serve to illustrate her capacity to quickly gear up for war production.

With the Axis powers sinking more and more Allied ships, the demand for new ships soon became insistent. The U.S. badly needed naval craft and cargo vessels to replace the many hundreds sunk by Nazi subs. Otherwise, a serious interruption of the flow of vital supplies to Britain and Russia could have spelled disaster for America's Allies.

Never before dreamed-of shipbuilding techniques were developed by Americans — especially by a shipbuilding genius, Henry J. Kaiser. By 1944 Henry J. Kaiser had the Bremerton shipbuilding yard launching an *escort aircraft carrier each week!*

U.S. Liberty Ships were made in sections and then were brought

together and assembled on an assembly-line fashion. The actual construction time for one of the Liberty Ships was reduced to only six weeks. From the beginning of January 1941, to the end of the war in 1945, American shipyards produced 6,500 naval vessels; 54,000 cargo ships; 64,500 landing craft — a grand total of 28,000,000 gross tons — compared to 21,000,000 tons lost in all of America's World War II naval engagements. By the end of the war, there was no doubt about it — *America was by far the world's leading shipbuilder!*

The Four Freedoms

Roosevelt and Churchill hadn't yet had an opportunity to meet face to face, so they could work out a strategy for working together during World War II.

The time was 1941. At that moment the fate of the Free World, the fate of Britain, and the fate of democracy were hanging in the balance.

At that perilous time, the two great wartime leaders of Britain and America arranged a meeting in Newfoundland in late summer. At that historic meeting, they were destined to hammer out a document, the "Atlantic Charter," which would enunciate the *four important freedoms* which the world was fighting for — freedom of speech and freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear.

A vivid description of that historic meeting between Roosevelt and Churchill is given by Alden Hatch in his straightforward biography of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Joining Hands Across the Atlantic

The Prime Minister was square and bluff and powerful, the spirit of England incarnate. He halted and ceremoniously saluted the quarter deck. Then beaming like a cherub he came forward with outstretched hand.

"At long last, Mr. President!"

"Glad to see you aboard, Mr. Churchill," Roosevelt replied.

Their hands met in a strong clasp that transmitted a high voltage current of emotion. To both of them the meeting was symbolic of the thing that they had hoped for, striven for, and carried through. In their persons England and America joined hands.

The conferences began at once

The next day, Sunday, there was another great symbolic ceremony. The chaplain prayed:

"Stablish our hearts, O God, in the day of battle," . . . "and strengthen our resolve, that we fight not in enmity against men, but against the powers of darkness enslaving the souls of men, til all the enmity and oppression be done away and the peoples of the world be set *free from fear* to serve one another as the children of our Father."

"Amen," said President Roosevelt, and beside him a deeper voice echoed, "Amen."

Then the mingled voices of thousands of young men rose in the sailors' hymn, that Franklin himself had chosen for this day:

Eternal Father, strong to save, Whose arm hath bound the restless wave, Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep Its own appointed limits keep Oh hear us when we cry to Thee For those in peril on the sea.

The President's heart was full as he fought to hold back the tears that stung his eyes. Instinctively he shot an embarrassed glance at his companion. The Defender of Britain was furtively wiping his eyes.

Good news had just arrived from Russia. Joe Stalin had at last opened his books of mystery and revealed the secret figures of tanks, guns, planes and men. Churchill and Roosevelt were surprised to see that the numbers were far more than anyone had guessed. Stalin had confidently declared: "The Germans won't get Moscow this year."

During their meetings in Newfoundland in August, 1941, Roosevelt and Churchill had many discussions. One of those discussions centered around a most important scientific project. Roosevelt asked Churchill:

"Have you people done anything about *nuclear fission*?"

"Quite a lot," said Churchill. "Send for Cherwell."

Lord Cherwell described the research that British scientists were conducting. The results coincided closely with those obtained by American scientists. In some ways the British were ahead of the U.S.

"This can be terrific," Roosevelt declared. "We'd better get together and beat the Nazis to it."

"Most certainly," Churchill agreed, and an agreement was immediately reached for pooling all information.

Roosevelt and Churchill got on famously from the very first handshake unto the very end of their association — when Roosevelt died.

When the conferences ended, the two great wartime leaders took their leave of each other. Alden Hatch describes the scene:

On the deck of the *Augusta*, Winston Churchill warmly shook his new friend's hand, and hurried down the ladder to his barge. Mixed with his elation was a pang that he was always afterward to feel when they parted. For beyond admiration, a deep, spontaneous affection had sprung up between the two great leaders

Churchill felt immense relief, a sense of burdens shared. That gay and gallant figure, diminishing in the distance, was a sign that the free world would survive. The Englishman recalled the jokes and nonsense they had talked in moments of relaxation; the quick comprehension, the earnest thought, the warm compassion, and the wide range of vision that the President had shown at the council table. He strained his eyes for one last glimpse of that calm, classic face, which, for all its gaiety, was being etched by acid care with the deep lines of greatness. What incredible good fortune — no, not fortune but the evidence of God's abiding care, that at this perilous moment such a man is President of the United States.

From that first meeting onward, Churchill and Roosevelt were to be the best of friends. They kept in constant communication with each other during the remainder of the war as they strove to inspire and goad their peoples into the kind of positive action which would result in decisive victory for the Allies.

Italy Invades Egypt

At approximately the same time when the Battle of Britain raged, Benito Mussolini pushed eastward from Ethiopia and overran British Somaliland. Then, Italian forces under command of Marshal Rodolfo Graziani advanced from Libya eastward into Egypt — threatening to grab the Suez Canal.

But by February 1941, an Allied army under General Sir Archibald P. Wavell drove the Italian forces back into Libya, as far west as Bengasi, and at the same time captured over 130,000 Italian prisoners.

Mussolini urgently appealed to Hitler to send him relief. A somewhat disgusted Hitler decided to send the now-famous *Afrika Korps* (a highly motorized and armored German army) under the able command of the brilliant General Erwin Rommel.

The British forces in Africa had been used to fighting the Italians, and found they were not good fighters. But when Rommel and his *Afrika Korps* arrived in North Africa and struck — the British hardly knew what hit them!

Before the arrival of Rommel in North Africa, the British fought a seesaw campaign against the Germans and Italians — taking and losing ground over and over again. But when Rommel arrived in May 1942, his *Afrika Korps*, aided by Italian troops, soon began a powerful offensive which sent the British forces reeling back toward the Suez Canal.

El Alamein — A Turning Point

Before long, Rommel had captured Tobruk in Libya. Then he quickly moved into Egypt. By July 1942, British resistance, and Rommel's overextended supply line, had halted the "Desert Fox" at *El Alamein* — just 60 miles west of Alexandria, Egypt.

Rommel, one of the most brilliant of the German officers, was perhaps *the* most brilliant of all World War II generals. He was called "Desert Fox" because of his cunning, his speed and his power of improvisation. Rommel came to be respected and feared by his enemies; one British commander felt constrained to warn his troops that Rommel was neither a magician nor a superman.

A jubilant and grateful Hitler made Rommel a Field Marshal on

June 21, 1942 — after his *Afrika Korps* neared the frontiers of Egypt. He was then the youngest Field Marshal in the German Army.

But Rommel was soon to reach the *zenith* of his brilliant North African military successes. By the end of June 1942, he and his *Afrika Korps* were deep inside of Egypt. He had battered his way to the *El Alamein* line, and readied himself for the final push to Alexandria — only sixty miles away. After reaching Alexandria, he intended to push eastward to the Suez (capturing that vital sea link), then swing north through Palestine and take over the Mideast oil fields! Ultimately he planned to link up with the German forces from the Russian Caucasus.

The British Commander-in-Chief of the entire Mideast, General Sir Claude Auchinleck, assumed personal command of the British Eighth Army. After Rommel's drive into Egypt, Auchinleck finally succeeded in stopping him at the first *Battle of Alamein* on July 1st to 17th.

First Battle of El Alamein

Among the most crucial battles of World War II were two decisive battles fought at *El Alamein*. The First Battle of Alamein was commanded by General Auchinleck; the Second Battle of El Alamein was under the command of Field Marshal Montgomery.

Here is an interesting account of that first battle, as written by Major Peter W. Rainier, a member of the British General Staff, in charge of the construction of a pipeline from the Nile Delta. This pipeline was for the purpose of conveying precious water to the British forces.

Major Rainier gives the following account of this well-known incident in his book, *Pipeline to Battle*:

July 4th was the critical day. To counter the German thrust Auchinleck had massed the battle-scarred remnant of his tank forces, together with what he had been able to collect from repair shops back at base. The two armoured forces met, supported by infantry. . . . Both sides were deadly tired. There was nothing brilliant about the fight. The side that could longest sustain an uninspired pounding would win.

The *Afrika Korps* gave first. After a couple of hours of fumbling, Rommel's forces began to *withdraw*. The high tide of invasion had been stemmed. Never again would the invaders reach so near their goal of the Egyptian Delta. The Panzer divisions with their enlorried infantry rolled sullenly back westward, but our men were too weary to drive their advantage home.

Then, as the battle broke off, an astonishing thing happened. More than 1,100 Germans walked across to our line with their hands in the air. *Thirst* had done it. Their tongues were literally hanging out of their mouths. For thirty-six hours they had had no fresh water to drink. That pipeline, full of salt water, was the cause. They had found and gleefully tapped it. The sea water in it had increased their thirst almost to the point of delirium.

Major Rainier then referred to this incident as being most miraculous. In an article by him entitled "A Drink That Made History" (which was published in *Reader's Digest*) Major Rainier said: "For 1,100 of them to surrender when *escape* lay open — that was nothing short of a *miracle!*"

But why was *salt* in that particular pipeline? Major Rainier explained it this way:

Why was that pipeline full of salt water? As the officer responsible for supplying the Eighth Army with water through all its desert campaigns, I can give you the answer. The pipeline was a new one, and I never wasted precious fresh water in testing a line; I always used salt water. If the Panzers had punched through *Alamein* the day before, that pipeline would have been empty. Two days later it would have been full of fresh water. As it happened, the Nazis got salt water, and they didn't detect the salt at once because their sense of taste had already been anaesthetized by the brackish water they had been used to and by thirst.

The balance of the crucial desert battle was so even that I believe the enemy — without that salted torture — might have outlasted us. And then defenseless Alexandria would have fallen into their hands. *On so small a turn of fate is history written!*

An Empty Boast

It is well to remember that the retreating Eighth Army had reached the *El Alamein* line of defense on Monday, June 29th. On Wednesday, the German radio boasted (in the English language) that the *Afrika Korps* would sleep in Alexandria on the following Saturday night.

Following Rommel's brilliant North African victories — as he swept toward the Suez Canal — a jubilant Hitler ordered medals struck to honor the expected triumph of the "Desert Fox" and his *Afrika Korps*.

But fate had decreed that Rommel would be stopped. He and his *Afrika Korps* would never reach that city. And they would not be permitted to take over the vital Mideast oil fields, and link up with Germany's forces in South Russia.

Also, according to a personal aide of Rommel's, the Italians who were supplying Rommel's forces with gasoline had (due to graft) mixed large amounts of water with the gasoline, and this mixture of water and gas caused Rommel no end of trouble during one of his most important battles.

In mid-August 1942, Lt. Gen. Bernard L. Montgomery was put in command of the Eighth Army and painstakingly began preparations to deal a final *coup de grace* to Rommel and his dreaded *Afrika Korps*.

One of Hitler's fatal blunders was his refusal to send Rommel more

men and weapons at the critical time when the "Desert Fox" had Egypt and the Mideast within his grasp!

The British Brigadier, Desmond Young, described Rommel as "the perfect fighting animal, cold, cunning, ruthless, untiring, quick of decision, incredibly brave." This was the man who was pitted against Montgomery and his Eighth Army.

"Monty" in Command

What kind of a man was Montgomery? How did he succeed in defeating Germany's most cunning Field Marshal?

Prime Minister Churchill was impatient for victories in North Africa. "Rommel, Rommel, Rommel!" cried an impatient Churchill as he paced back and forth in the Cairo Embassy. "What else matters but beating him!" Later, Churchill said: "His ardor and daring inflicted grievous disasters upon us. . . . (He was) a great general."

The somewhat impatient Churchill decided to replace Auchinleck, head of all Middle Eastern forces, with General Sir Harold Alexander. Then, Churchill planned that the command of the British Eighth Army would go to W.H.E. ("Strafer") Gott. When Gott was killed in a plane crash, Churchill hand-picked Lieutenant General Bernard Law Montgomery to replace him as commander of the Eighth Army. This choice later proved to be the right one. For Montgomery proved to be more than a match for the cunning "Desert Fox."

Montgomery ("Monty") soon became known as the "Spartan General." He neither smoked nor drank, and he didn't swear. He rose at 6 a.m. and went to bed early — at 9 p.m.

He had a fanatical belief in physical fitness.

Exercise and Bible Study

Monty's recipe for physical fitness was that each man should run a long course before breakfast (regardless of the weather) and *read the Bible daily!* "Monty" was devout (the son of an Anglican vicar of North Ireland origin), austere, but he had a rather flamboyant side to his character. He was self-assured even to the point of being vain.

News of this "Spartan General" — this scrawny, ascetic disciplinarian — had arrived at the Eighth Army in Egypt even before "Monty" arrived. Before long, however, the men took "Monty" to their hearts. He was liked by his men, and was soon able to inspire deep confidence in them.

"Monty" later described how the morale and discipline in the Eighth Army had deteriorated before he took command:



Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery, Britain's hero of El Alamein represented playing second fiddle to Eisenhower. — *Wide World Photo*

In the Eighth Army, orders had generally been queried by subordinates right down the line; each thought he knew better than his superiors and often it needed firm action to get things done. I was determined to stop this state of affairs at once. Orders no longer formed 'the base for discussion,' but for action.

Then "Monty" set about to put an immediate end to the "bellyaching" and "loss of confidence" which he found extant in the Eighth Army. It was not long before this "Spartan General" had instilled a deep sense of discipline and devotion into his Eighth Army. Now they were ready for action. They could act as one man — and they would win victories.

Second Battle of El Alamein

After "Monty" arrived in Africa, he waited patiently, augmenting his forces with new weapons (which were being sent to him by America), until he felt he was fully prepared to knock Rommel back on his heels.

Just before the second battle of *El Alamein* took place, "Monty" issued this personal message to his troops:

When I assumed command of the Eighth Army I said that the mandate was to destroy Rommel and his Army, and that it would be done as soon as we were ready.

We are ready now.

The battle which is now about to begin will be one of the decisive battles of history. It will be the turning point of the war. The eyes of the whole world will be on us, watching anxiously which way the battle will swing.

We can give them their answer at once. It will swing our way. . . .

The sooner we win this battle, which will be the turning point of this war, the sooner we shall all get back home to our families.

Therefore let every officer and man enter the battle with a stout heart, and with the determination to do his duty so long as he has breath in his body.

And let no man surrender so long as he is unwounded and can fight.

Let us all *pray* that the Lord mighty in battle will give us the *victory*.

— B. L. Montgomery

And the Allied Eighth Army was given the victory at *El Alamein*. The Germans were beaten, and Rommel and his *Afrika Korps* was sent hastily retreating westward.

Rommel never forgave Hitler for his "Victory or Death" order at El Alamein. Said Rommel:

The fact is, that there were men in high places who, though not without the capacity to grasp the facts of the situation, simply did not have the courage to look them in the face and draw the proper conclusions. They preferred to put their heads in the sand, live in a sort of

military pipedream and look for scapegoats whom they usually found in the troops or field commanders. Looking back, I am conscious of only one mistake — that I did not circumvent the “Victory or Death” order twenty-four hours earlier.

After the El Alamein victory the British Eighth Army under Montgomery took the offensive in October, and rolled on to Tripoli and southern Tunisia. The Allied victory at El Alamein proved to be one of the major turning points of World War II.

“Operation Torch”

The Allies planned and executed Operation Torch in 1942. Under the command of Lt. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, an Allied force landed on the coasts of Algeria and Morocco on November 8, 1942. That invasion (consisting of about 400 troop and supply ships, and 350 or so escort warships) caught the German High Command completely by surprise. Operation Torch was a complete success. Soon afterward, American forces in the west would link up with Monty’s Eighth Army in the east, and together they would squeeze the *Afrika Korps* until it was forced out of Africa.

When Hitler learned of the Allied landings in North Africa, he immediately ordered German troops to occupy all of France. Pro-Allied French patriots managed to sink about 50 ships before the Germans captured the main French fleet at Toulon.

The Western Allied leaders, Roosevelt and Churchill, conferred at Casablanca, Morocco, in early 1943, and agreed that, to use Roosevelt’s words, nothing short of “unconditional surrender” would be accepted from the Axis powers.

Now U.S. troops pushed relentlessly eastward across Algeria, as the British Eighth Army advanced steadily into southern Tunisia.

The last organized Axis army in Africa surrendered to the Allies on May 12, 1943. By that time, the Allies had killed, wounded or captured nearly 350,000 Axis soldiers, and had suffered only about 70,000 casualties in the entire North Africa campaign.

Before long Allied forces invaded Sicily (called Operation Husky), and then shortly afterward invaded the boot of Italy, beginning their long, slow conquest of that country. Mussolini fell from power in Italy on July 25, 1943 and was imprisoned by the Italian government. Marshal Pietro Badoglio became Premier of Italy on July 25, 1943. The new government then declared war on Germany.

But Mussolini was rescued from prison by a daring band of German paratroopers, operating directly under Hitler’s orders, and was taken to meet a gleeful Führer. Il Duce was then installed as head of a puppet government set up in Vienna.

Hitler's Next Move

Hitler resented having to give half of Poland over to Russian control — when it was the Germans who did nearly all of the fighting and dying in September 1939 — when Hitler's screaming stukas and his fearsome panzers crushed that helpless nation.

Herr Hitler knew his time for revenge would come — the time when he would not only take over the rest of Poland, but would also seize all of Russia! Germany needed the vital raw materials from Russia's vastness — her foodstuffs, oil fields and her industrial output. This would make Germany self-sufficient.

By the end of June 1940, the powerful German war machine had rolled across all of western Europe from Norway to Bordeaux, France. The mighty Third Reich seemed destined to thrive for a thousand years. Hitler had firmly planted the Nazi boot on the necks of fifteen helpless European countries. But who would be Hitler's next victim?

The German navy had been badly mauled by the British when Hitler invaded Norway, and was, therefore, in no condition to contend with Britain for control of the Atlantic.

Goering's boast that his *Luftwaffe* would soon break the back of the Royal Air Force soon proved to be so many hollow words. The Germans had been *defeated* in the Battle of Britain, and now there was no hope that Hitler could launch his long-planned attack against Britain. He felt frustrated, thwarted, and humiliated! His powerful panzer's sat perched menacingly across the Channel — with no place to go.

So his mighty army, the terror of all Europe, sat on its haunches from the fall of France in June 1940, until Hitler decided it was time to give the command for the German Army to begin its next major offensive — the invasion of Russia — in June 1941.

"Operation Barbarossa"

Hitler had long cast greedy eyes on Russia's vast store of natural resources. He merely bided his time until he felt the time was ripe to strike! Then the world would learn what a mighty war-making machine the German *Wehrmacht* really was.

Russia would have to pay for her greed in taking so large a portion of the Polish spoils when she did so little of the fighting. "Wiping out the very power to exist of Russia!" declared a vengeful Hitler, "That is our goal!"

But when should Germany invade Russia? When was the best time for the lethal Nazi cobra to strike?

Allied intelligence had repeatedly warned Stalin and the Russians that a German invasion of the Soviet Union was imminent! But Stalin

gullibly, steadfastly refused to believe those warnings. He and his country would soon pay dearly for this blind-eyed approach to Hitler's maniacal designs on their country.

The Führer and his colleagues carefully plotted the invasion of Russia. Hitler's generals wanted to invade Russia in May, but the Führer became distracted with his military campaigns in Greece, and in Yugoslavia, and had to postpone his invasion of Russia by three or four weeks. This delay may have later proved decisive in Germany's defeat by the hands of the Russians.

Operation Barbarossa (named in honor of a medieval German emperor who won great victories in the East) was ordered to go into effect in the early hours of the morning on June 22, 1941. "When Barbarossa commences," said the Führer, "the world will hold its breath and make no comment."

Never before in the history of the world, had any nation assembled such a terrifying array of military hardware, so formidable a group of tough, disciplined soldiers, such a galaxy of proven generals.

In the early hours of June 22nd, *two hundred and fifty German divisions* rumbled across the long Soviet frontier heading for their pre-assigned targets.

The German military machine planned to attack the Russians on *three* main fronts. In the *north*, General von Leeb headed for *Leningrad*. In the *central* sector, von Bock headed straight for the heart of Russia — *Moscow*. Initially, the Russian capital was the prize target. In the *south*, General von Rundstedt headed for the *Ukraine* — Kiev and Stalingrad.

Hitler and his generals believed their *blitzkrieg* against Russia would roll along so quickly and so smoothly, that they fully expected to capture all the key Russian cities before winter set in. The over-confident Germans, therefore, didn't even bother to issue winter uniforms, shoes and boots to their troops. This cockiness later proved to be a fatal blunder. Hitler's Army had thought of everything but the most important item — warm clothes — to get through the cruel Russian winter.

The Führer fully expected that within eight weeks the Germans would capture Leningrad, Moscow and the Ukraine, putting an end to any effective organized Russian resistance.

Again, as when Hitler invaded Poland, his orders were to show no mercy toward the Russians: "Close your hearts to pity. Act brutally," once again became German policy.

This war was not to be "conducted in a knightly fashion." The Führer's dreaded Gestapo chief, Heinrich Himmler, was ordered to use his secret police independently of the Army in the conquered Russian territories. And on March 21, 1941, Himmler drafted his infamous Commissar Order: All Soviet commissars who were captured would be shot!

A Three-Million-Man Blitzkrieg

Hitler's *blitzkrieg* against Russia caught the Russian Army napping. The lightning advance of the three-million man Nazi onslaught was impressive on all the Russian fronts. Soviet forces reeled back as hundreds of thousands were killed and other hundreds of thousands were captured. Many hundreds of Soviet aircraft were destroyed on the ground. Germany had achieved a complete surprise and had sent the Russians reeling back along the entire 2000-mile front.

Hitler and the German General Staff were jubilant. They had visions of having Russia completely in the bag well before the bitter Russian winter set in. But then things began to go contrary to plan.

Hitler's plan to encircle and destroy the Red Army (which the Germans didn't rate very highly) was achieving great success. At Kiev, the Nazi forces claimed to have captured 600,000 Russians. (The Russians claimed the Germans captured only 200,000.)

The Germans also claimed to have captured 348,000 prisoners at Smolensk. By the end of the bitter fighting at the close of September the Russians had suffered heavy losses. They had lost 2,500,000 men, 18,000 tanks, 22,000 guns, and 14,000 planes. These were staggering losses. The Germans believed Russia's collapse was imminent.

One thing which worked against the Russians was a lack of effective leadership in the Red Army. Stalin's 1937 army officer purges had so decimated the Red Army that it was seriously lacking in competent officers. It would take many months for this lack to be offset by Stalin and the Russian political leaders.

When Hitler's three-million-man invasion force swept into Russia, they were opposed by a Russian force of about two million. The battle raged across a 2000-mile front — stretching from the Arctic to the Black Sea. The Führer announced to the world that he had ordered the attack "to save the entire world from the dangers of *Bolshevism*."

Nazi Over-confidence

But German *overconfidence* helped bring about their undoing in the Russian conflict. They confidently expected another *blitzkrieg*, and they therefore made no preparations for a prolonged struggle. The Germans were so convinced that the war against Russia was as good as won, that Hitler issued a directive on July 14th (three weeks after invading Russia) in which the Führer ordered the German High Command to prepare to reduce the size of the army in the near future!

The Germans might have captured Moscow in 1941 — if the Führer hadn't decided to play the military genius. Hitler often ignored his generals' advice, and he often blundered. This time was no exception. All three prongs of the German army made unbelievably rapid progress. It

HITLER'S EMPIRE NOVEMBER 1942

Germany and Occupied Areas



began to look like von Bock would be able to take Moscow with ease before the bitter Russian winter set in.

Then, Hitler decided to rely on his own supposed military genius. Completely ignoring his generals' advice, he transferred forces from the Moscow front to the northern and southern fronts so they could be used against Leningrad and the Ukraine.

By the time the German Army Group Center resumed its drive toward Moscow in October, much of the valuable fall weather had been lost. The renewed German offensive (named Typhoon) took a terrible toll on the Russian Army. Two entire Soviet armies were encircled at Vyazma and Bryansk — with a loss of 65,000 prisoners, according to Nazi claims. (Soviet claims are considerably lower.)

Panic in Moscow

On October 12th, as the Nazi columns swept nearer Moscow, Stalin decided to move most government offices east to Kuibyshev on the Volga. But Joseph Stalin determined that he would personally remain in Moscow to help direct the Russian war effort.

It was also decided that the most important armament plants were to be moved to safety east of the Ural Mountains. Rumors of Nazi advances (along with reports of atrocities) caused wild panic to break out in Moscow. Rumor spread that the Germans were already in the suburbs of their capital. Many rushed to leave the city; and many officials dropped their duties (even without official permission) and fled the city in terror.

But most staunch Russians stayed. Factory workers, mostly women, went out after working a full shift to spend hours in the mud — digging trenches for the last-ditch stand against the enemy.

Why did Hitler order the German advance, which was making such rapid progress toward Moscow, to halt on August 22, 1941? Why did he then transfer some of his best troops to Leningrad and the Ukraine? Hitler's answer: "My generals know nothing of the economic aspects of war." He believed Germany needed vital *food* from the Ukraine, and he also thirsted after Russian oil.

Another unexpected development was the early Russian rains. They usually came in mid-November, but in 1941, they came one month early — in mid-October! And with them came the mud.

This miry Russian quagmire (called *Rasputitza*) was far more of a hindrance than the Germans had anticipated. German mechanized units mired down in deep seas of mud. Tanks, heavy artillery, and other armored vehicles were constantly stalling, and had to be pulled out with teams of horses. Even the dispirited infantry sloshed through the mud with the greatest of difficulty.

Before October was over, the Nazi spearhead aimed at the Russian capital had almost ground to a mud-mired halt! Even though the danger was far from over, Moscow had won a brief, but badly needed, respite in which to get its breath — and prepare for the final expected German onslaught.

“General Winter”

Then, even worse, shortly after being slowed down by mud, the *bitterest Russian winter in a hundred years* settled down over Russia — freezing the Nazi war machine in its tracks. This total immobilization of the Nazi armored divisions brought their advance to a halt. General Winter had come to Russia with a vengeance. Before long, Nazi troops were fighting in sub-zero weather — sometimes 30 or 40 below zero! And Hitler had refused to send his troops winter clothing, thinking the war would be over before the icy Russian winter set in.

More German soldiers died or were disabled as a direct result of the bitterly cold weather — resulting in frostbite — than were killed or wounded by the Russian Army!

German boots were too tight to permit multiple pairs of socks. In some cases German troops put paper in their boots and shoes in order to make up for their shortage of socks.

The tanks, heavy artillery and motor units became hopelessly stuck in the frozen mud. It was though they were welded into the frigid earth. Much damage was sustained as these heavy machines were torn apart by the Germans vainly trying to free them from the frozen Russian mud.

The Russian Counter-attack

The Russians, from time immemorial, have used the battle tactic of destroying everything before an invading enemy and retreating into the hinterland to let the enemy become entrapped in the immense frozen stretches of Russia — only to perish in the bitterly cold winter!

Undoubtedly, the Russians from the very beginning of the struggle in 1941, realized their weak position. Even though they possessed some 21,000 tanks — over four times the number of Nazi tanks — many of them were antiquated. Their new medium model, the T-34, did not make its appearance against the Germans until the fierce battles at Smolensk.

The Russians grudgingly gave Hitler as much rope as possible before halting him. They traded plentiful space for badly-needed time! They let the Germans reach the outskirts of Moscow and Leningrad — before they put up their bitterest resistance. And this meant that the Nazi supply lines were greatly lengthened. The Russians, fighting on their own territory, on familiar ground, could then press their advantage.

Hitler had declared, on October 3rd, "I declare without any reservation that the enemy in the East has been struck down and will never rise again!"

Germany's all-out thrust at Russia's heart — Moscow — was set for December 1, 1941. The führer believed victory was within easy grasp: "One final heave," said Hitler, "and we shall triumph." Little did he and all Germany realize the death, destruction, and humiliation that lurked just over the horizon!

The battered and bleeding Russians, under the able leadership of Marshal Georgi K. Zhukov, waited patiently until the opportune moment before hurling their pent-up might against the freezing German troops — before hitting them with everything at their disposal.

Grande Armée Ghosts

Now as the cold Russian winter set in, the Old Nazi arrogance began to vanish. Many Germans began to remember Napoleon's grand march to Moscow, and his ignominious retreat. The Grande Armée ghosts haunted Hitler's generals. They begged Hitler to let them retreat to defensible positions before it was too late. Hitler arrogantly refused, and accused his generals of cowardice and incompetence. The Army Commander-in-Chief, von Brauchitsch, was fired. Hitler took over personal command of the German armies. He ordered the German divisions before Moscow to press forward — and under no circumstances were they to retreat!

Hitler's Chief of the General Staff, General Halder, once remarked that when a report was read to the Führer concerning Stalin's reserve strength, "Hitler flew at the man who was reading with clenched fists and foam in the corners of his mouth and forbade him to read any more of such idiotic twaddle."

Just as the rains had come one month early — miring down the German army — now the winter snows began falling early. General Guderian noted the first snow on October 6th — just as the drive on Moscow was being resumed. By the 12th, snow was still falling. Severe cases of frostbite were being reported by Guderian by November 7th; and the temperature had fallen to 8° below by the 13th. The bitter cold began to affect the performance of guns and machines — as well as the ill-clothed German soldiers.

In spite of many obstacles and the bitter cold, the Germans advanced relentlessly toward Moscow. By the second of December, a reconnaissance battalion of the 258th Infantry Division had penetrated to the very suburbs of Moscow. The spires of the Kremlin were in their view. Also Moscow's Khimke water tower could be seen, but that was as

far as the Nazis were ever to get. The Nazi penetration to the very outskirts of Moscow was the low point of the war for the Russians — the high point for the Germans.

Guderian reported that the temperature had fallen to 31° below zero by December 4th. It dipped to 36° below on the 5th. His tanks, said Guderian, were almost totally immobilized. Hitler had not reckoned on General Winter — the chief ally of the Russians. He did not consider the terrible toll which the crippling arctic winds would take on his army.

Even Churchill commented on Hitler's elementary blunder in overlooking the severity of the Russian winter. Speaking of the German offensive in Russia in the winter of 1941-1942 Churchill said:

There is a *winter*, you know, in Russia. Hitler forgot about this. He must have been very loosely educated. We all heard about it at school, but he forgot it. I have never made such a bad mistake as that.

Congeaed Oil

It was the icy Russian winter which beat the Germans — not a superior Russian army. Automatic weapons froze. Oil in the mechanized units (including the tanks) congealed, and the artillery refused to function. And, most tragic of all, Nazi soldiers, still clad in their light summer uniforms, were badly maimed, and were frequently frozen to death by the bitter arctic chill which settled down over Mother Russia.

Now was the time for the Russians to hit the Germans with all they had. On December 6th, Marshal Georgi K. Zhukov struck savagely at the German army along a 200-mile front before Moscow. He suddenly unleashed 100 new divisions (which the German High Command didn't even know existed) against the Nazis. They were equipped and trained to fight in the deep snow and the bitter cold. This sudden, shattering blow sent the Germans reeling back. An alarmed Hitler ordered his generals to hold, but it was useless. Even so, it was probably Hitler's granite will and fanatical determination which saved the Nazis from a complete rout. Even though the Nazi front before Moscow buckled, then crumbled, Hitler refused to authorize the slightest retreat. He even took over personal command of the army by naming himself their Commander-in-Chief.

It would take the Russians four years to drive the Germans back onto their own soil, but from December 6th onward, the Germans were in deep trouble in their Russian campaign. Furthermore they had similar reverses at other sectors of their offensive.

Russia's 600,000 cavalry were decisive in helping turn the tide against the Germans. Anachronistic as a cavalry in World War II seemed, they kept mobile in bitter sub-zero weather. While the German

panzers were frozen in their tracks, Russian cavalry, comprised of hardy Siberian horses, were able to move in for the kill.

On the very day following Marshal Zhukov's fierce attack against the Germans before Moscow, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor — thus drawing America into the war against the Axis powers. When this "arsenal of democracy" really got going, she would send a never-ending stream of supplies and weapons to help a faltering Russia stem the tide of the Nazi advance.

Hitler Blunders On

Hitler made many blunders during World War II. When he attacked Poland on September 1, 1939, he didn't think Britain and France would declare war.

Then he blundered when he ordered his generals, poised for the kill at Dunkirk, to stop their operations in order to let the German Air Force get the credit for annihilating the Allied Army. Nearly all of the Allied troops escaped right under the noses of the Nazis — right under the silent muzzles of the powerful German guns.

Then after over a third of a million Allied troops had been evacuated from Dunkirk, and had escaped back to England, Hitler blundered again. He failed to follow up with an immediate attack on defenseless England!

At that moment, the British were helpless against the might of the German *Wehrmacht* — had they hurled their panzers against Britain.

When Hitler's generals proposed that Germany seize the Rock of Gibraltar and secure absolute domination of the Mediterranean — thereby cutting Britain's vital lifeline — Hitler again blundered by overruling them. Yet, at that early stage in the war, the Germans could undoubtedly have overwhelmed all the Allied forces in that area with relative ease.

Furthermore, when Rommel was sent to North Africa to assist the weak and faltering forces of Mussolini, Hitler failed to give him sufficient support to enable him to deal the final *coup de grace* to the Allies in North Africa. Rommel quickly raced to within 60 miles of Alexandria, and had Hitler given him a little more support, he could undoubtedly have taken Egypt and the Suez Canal, and could then have seized the rich Mideast oil fields.

Furthermore, Hitler's generals wanted to invade Russia in May instead of waiting nearly a whole month and attacking Russia on June 22nd. This would have enabled them to have achieved their main military objectives before the bitter Russian winter set in. But Hitler dallyed, delayed and finally gave the order to march *too late*!

Even so, after the Germans attacked, they could have captured the Russian capital — their vital communication-transportation-munitions

center — had Hitler not halted von Bock's rapid march toward Moscow in order to divert part of his forces to Leningrad and the Ukraine. When von Bock resumed his drive toward Moscow in October, it was too late for his army to achieve their objective before the arctic chill froze their mechanized units in their tracks.

• Then, on numerous occasions, when Hitler's generals wanted to make strategic retreats, during their Russian offensives, Hitler thwarted them, and ordered them to fight on — sometimes taking a toll of hundreds of thousands of sacrificed German troops in an insane attempt to reach an objective which Hitler, far from the battlefield, fancied must be taken at all costs.

Had Hitler and his Nazis not been so haughty — had they not arrogantly assumed they would have their major Russian military objectives in the bag before winter set in, and had they issued the German soldiers warm winter clothing — the war might have gone differently.

Nazi Brutality

But perhaps an even worse blunder by the Führer was his cold, heartless attitude toward the peoples of the nations which he conquered. By his heartless attitude, he turned many pro-German sympathizers against the Germans.

When Hitler launched his murderous *blitzkrieg*, the "subhuman" Russians were to be treated without mercy.

When Hitler attacked Russia, he put the head of his Gestapo, Heinrich Himmler, in charge of killing all of the Russian commissars.

The Führer ordered that Russia's greatest cities were to have no mercy extended to them. On September 18th, he issued strict orders: "A capitulation of Leningrad or Moscow is not to be accepted, even if offered."

What did Hitler intend to do to the peoples of those cities?

A further directive to his commanders, issued on September 29th stated:

"The Führer has decided to have St. Petersburg (Leningrad) wiped off the face of the earth. . . . Requests that the city be taken over will be turned down, for the problem of the survival of the population and of supplying it with food is one which cannot and should not be solved by us. In this war for existence, we have no interest in keeping even part of this great city's population."

Is there any wonder that the Russians fought so long, so bravely and so bitterly to defend their cities? They knew the fate which awaited them if Hitler ever won. Leningrad was besieged in 1941, and its siege was not lifted until 1944. Approximately one million Russians had died

from starvation, disease, deprivation and war-related causes during the siege. The Russians deserve full credit for the heroic resistance which they put up, and for their final victory over their Nazi tormentors.

During the siege of Leningrad, its heroic Russian defenders ate cats and dogs, vaseline and hair oil, made "soup" of dried glue from wallpaper and furniture joints. Many dropped in their tracks (of sheer hunger) and thousands succumbed to ever-present famine — while they worked, or while they walked along the streets.

Tens of Millions Slaughtered

At first when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union millions of Russians greeted them with open arms. Whole divisions of Russians gave themselves up to the Nazis, and many Russian soldiers even offered to join the Nazis in helping to defeat the Communists.

Why did they do this? The answer is simple. Some estimates indicate that as many as 25 millions had previously died in Russia during the Communist takeover (1917-1930), and in its aftermath. The Russians so stoutly resisted Communism, that many millions were liquidated, or, at best, were sent off to slave labor camps for the rest of their lives.

With possibly 25 to 35 million dead as a result of the wars, pogroms and purges by the Communists in Russia, and with burning memories lodged in the minds of millions of the relatives of the dead — is it any wonder that the Nazi armies — terrifying as they were — were often greeted as liberators by the Russians?

Had Hitler treated those peoples half-way decently — had he given them any *hope* whatsoever — had he lightened their burden just a little — they would have joined his ranks by the tens of millions. And Communism would have died almost overnight in Russia!

But Hitler, foolishly, arrogantly, thought he had Russia in the bag anyway, and decided to show the Russians *no mercy*! Many millions would simply be liquidated! Others, the more able and the more pliable ones, would be granted the great privilege of spending the rest of their miserable lives slaving in one of Hitler's slave labor camps. Millions would suffer the torments of multiple hells, as they slowly died in Hitler's infamous concentration camps.

According to perverted Nazi philosophy, the Germans were the *herrenvolk* — the master race! But the Russians were looked upon as being *untermenschen* — subhumans — suitable only for slave labor. Hitler had ordered his lieutenants to carry out a ruthless campaign of oppression and liquidation toward the Russians, and none dared to disobey the Führer.

Shortly after the German invasion of Russia, the word quickly spread that the Germans were *heartless* and cruel. Therefore, any initial

Russian goodwill toward the German “liberators” soon turned to *cold hatred*.

Winston Churchill described Hitler’s brutal attack on Russia in the summer of 1941 in the following words:

I see advancing in hideous onslaught the Nazi war-machine, with its clanking, heel-clicking, dandified Prussian officers, its crafty expert agents fresh from the cowing and tying down of a dozen countries. I see also the dull, drilled, docile, brutish masses of the Hun soldiery plodding on like a swarm of crawling locusts . . . they have, of course, the consolation of knowing that they are being led not by the German General Staff but by Corporal Hitler himself.

Russian patriots quickly retaliated against German barbarism by wrecking troop trains, murdering soldiers, poisoning wells, sabotaging everything they could in order to hinder the German war machine.

As the Russian peoples increased their acts of resistance toward the Germans, the Nazis reacted with even more savage treatment of these Soviet “subhumans”; and as the German oppression and beastly treatment increased, this stiffened the Russian resolve to fight to the bitter end. Before the war was over, Russian partisans behind the German lines were playing a vitally important part in hindering the German war effort.

Omnipresent Russian sabotage was Hitler’s reward for his arrogance and cruelty. And this may have cost him the war. Turning the Russian people totally against the Nazis may have been even more decisive than the bitter Russian winter in helping defeat Hitler and his Nazi hordes.

Stalin’s Plea

When Hitler turned on Stalin and invaded Russia, the Communist leader sent out urgent pleas for all available Anglo-American aid!

Britain and the U.S. decided that Russia must be kept in the war at all costs. (Russia was knocked out of World War I by Germany.) They organized a massive convoy to ferry an endless supply of vital foodstuffs, raw materials and weapons (including countless planes, tanks, and guns) to Russia. Without American and British help Russia would have undoubtedly buckled under the murderous might of the Nazis.

Some objected to the Allies aiding Stalin and the Russians. But Churchill told them “If Hitler invaded Hell I would make at least a favourable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons.”

He and Stalin sometimes violently disagreed. But even so, Churchill once said: “There is only one thing worse than fighting *with* allies, and that is fighting *without* them.”

Joseph Stalin had expected Hitler to make war on the nations of the West, and he would let them wear each other out. Then when they had

bludgeoned each other into an enfeebled position, he and his Russian forces would move in and dictate the peace.

Stalin proclaimed that Russia would not be drawn into "conflicts by the warmongers who are accustomed to have other countries pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them."

As World War appeared imminent, Stalin (speaking before the Eighteenth Party Congress, on March 10, 1939) told his comrades that he intended "to allow the belligerents to sink deeply into the mire of war...to allow them to exhaust and weaken one another; and then, when they have become weak enough, to appear on the scene with fresh strength, to appear, of course, in the interest of peace and to dictate conditions to the enfeebled belligerents."

But when Hitler unleashed the world's mightiest army on Russia on June 22, 1942, Stalin began to realize that it would be he and Hitler who would wear each other down — and he feared that the Western Allies would come in and pick up the pieces when it was all over. Stalin's dream had turned into a *nightmare*! Hitler's three-million army, aggressively attacking the Russians on a 2000-mile front would certainly bleed the Russians to death — unless they got badly-needed help from Britain and America!

It was with considerable risk from German planes and U-boats, that Anglo-American convoys of materials were sent to Russia. America and Britain didn't want Hitler to knock Russia out of the war as Germany had done in 1917.

It was neither out of excess love for Stalin, nor admiration for the Communists, that America and Britain gave massive aid to Russia during the dark days of the war.

Stalin Chides Churchill

But Stalin didn't believe moral support and massive material aid was enough. He wanted the Western Allies to open a second front in the West, as soon as possible in order to take Nazi pressure off of Russia's bleeding and battered army. He continued to chide Roosevelt and Churchill — asking them when they were going to get into the battle. In August 1942, Stalin gave Churchill quite a dressing down when he arrived in Moscow: "When are you going to start fighting?" asked Joe Stalin. "Are you going to let us do all the work?" He accused the British of cowardice!

Nonetheless, the first Allied Victory — the Battle of Britain — had been won by the British. At that time Britain stood all alone trying her best to ward off the murderous might of the *Luftwaffe*.

Furthermore, Britain did more to keep the Nazis from gaining

control of the seven seas than did either Russia or the U.S. in the early years of World War II.

Additionally, the British had bled considerably in their bloody battles with German and Italian forces in North Africa. Their success (aided by American support near the end of the campaign) had cost the British dearly in lives and war materials.

Certainly no one — not even Stalin — could say that the British were doing nothing.

