

US History World War II - Europe

Learning Target:

I can examine why the allies decided to open a second front in the Mediterranean before invading France, and the effectiveness of the allied fighting in the Atlantic and over Germany to prepare for D-Day.

4. Europe – Allied Attacks in the Mediterranean & the Atlantic

Opening the Second Front –

- After Pearl Harbor the Allies agreed to open a second front to relieve the pressure on the Soviet front
- Allies not prepared to attack Nazi controlled France
- Decided to open the second front in the Mediterranean Region

The Allied Victory in North Africa –

Operation Torch –

- Allied plan to take French colonies held by the Germans in North Africa
- Allied invasion force commanded by Dwight Eisenhower
- Allied forces unsure if the French troops commanded by Germans would resist
- Nov. 1943 – May 1943 – French forces resisted the Allies
- Allied forces cut off the French forces from their supply lines from Italy
- May 1943 – 250,000 Axis soldiers surrendered

The Allied Invasion of Italy –

Sicily –

- North Africa offered an entrance to the Italian island of Sicily
- Wanted to use Sicily to launch an invasion of mainland Italy
- Allied forces that took Sicily commanded by George Patton
- Landed in July 1943 and took Sicily in about a month

Mussolini Loses Power –

- Encouraged by the Allies victory, in Sicily the Italian King named a new prime minister and ordered Mussolini arrested
- Germans took Mussolini to Germany and let him rule Northern Italy from there

Mainland Italy –

- September 1943 the Italian government signed an armistice with the allies
- The Germans refused to surrender Italy however
- Allies took Naples, Italy on October 1, 1943
- Fighting began to bog down but finally captured Rome in June of 1944
- After several months of bitter mountain warfare the Germans in Italy were defeated in 1945 and Mussolini was captured & killed by Italian rebels

Sea & Air Warfare –

Battle of the Atlantic –

- German U-boats continued to take a toll on Allied ships and supplies
- Better sonar, faster escort ships, and the bombing of U-boat yards helped turn the tide of the Battle of the Atlantic
- By 1944 the Allies won the Battle of the Atlantic

The Allied Air Campaign –

- 1943 the Allies intensified their air campaign on mainland Germany
- Targeted German military production and tried to decrease German morale
- British Royal Air Force conducted nighttime bombings in general areas
- US Air Force did daytime precision bombings which were more effective but much more dangerous
- Both air forces destroyed many German factories, supply lines, and military centers