



WORLD WAR II – THE NORTH AFRICAN CAMPAIGN

POSSIBLE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How did the North African Theater of World War II impact the relationship between Europeans and North Africans?
- How did a western presence in North Africa impact the cultural and political landscape in the region?

BACKGROUND

While World War II raged in Europe and the Pacific, tensions heightened in the Mediterranean region where Italian leader Benito Mussolini began flexing his military power.

Between June 1940 and May 1943, Allied and Axis powers expanded their military campaigns to North Africa. The fighting began on June 10, 1940, when British forces crossed into Libya from Egypt and seized the Italian Fort Capuzzo. In a series of battles, Italian and German forces battled the British and American back and forth across Libya, Egypt, and Tunisia in what became known as the Western Desert Campaign. After the United States joined the Allied powers in 1941, they began immediately contributing to the war in North Africa.

The Second Battle of El Alamein delivered a final blow to the Axis powers. Lieutenant-General Bernard Montgomery led British forces against the Italian 10th Army, under the command of German field marshal Erwin Rommel.

Following the victory in North Africa, Allied troops were then able to focus their attention on Sicily, leaving North Africa in their wake. After recruiting, training, and fighting alongside North Africans, the relationship between Europeans and Africans was never the same.

RESOURCES

Personal Stories

- [Democracy at War \(Canadian War Museum\)](#)
- [When Europeans Were Refugees in Africa \(New African\)](#)
- [Stories from the Veterans History Project \(Experiencing War\)](#)
- [North Africa \(Drop Zone Virtual Museum\)](#)
- [The Forgotten Heroes of WWII \(CNN\)](#)

Articles

- [The War \(PBS\)](#)

Audio

- [Primary History KS2: WW2 Clips. 'Monty' rallies the troops \(BBC\)](#)

Video

- [World War II: Crash Course World History #38](#)
- [Frontline: The North African Campaign \(Terrance Burris\)](#)
- [Discovery History: The Battle of North Africa \(Louella Guerra\)](#)
- [Bomber's Over North Africa \(United States Army Air Force\)](#)

Websites

- [North Africa Campaigns \(Encyclopedia Britannica\)](#)
- [North Africa American Cemetery \(American Battle Monuments Commission\)](#)
- [The Africans who fought in WWII \(BBC\)](#)
- [Africa's forgotten wartime heroes \(BBC\)](#)

Images

- [WWII in Photos \(The Atlantic\)](#)
- [Rare and classic photos from North Africa, 1943 \(Time\)](#)
- [Animated Map: The North African Campaign \(BBC\)](#)
- [Map of the Mediterranean and North Africa \(National Archives\)](#)
- [Melvin C. Shaffer - World War II Photographs: North Africa](#)
- [WWII Photos \(WWII Archives\)](#)
- [In pictures: Africa's World War II Veterans \(BBC\)](#)

