

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

THE EUROPEAN THEATER,

1942 - 1945



0 100 200 300
SCALE OF MILES

TIMELINE

Sept.
1939

Germany invades Poland, 1 Sept.
Great Britain & France declare war on Germany, 3 Sept.

1940

Germany invades Denmark & Norway, 9 Apr.
Germany invades Low Countries, 10 May
Italy declares war on Great Britain & France, 10 June
France signs armistice with Germany, 22 June
Battle of Britain, July-10 Oct.
1st peacetime draft law in U.S. history, Sept.
Wavell's 1st Libyan offensive, 9 Dec.-7 Feb., 1941

1941

Rommel's 1st offensive, 31 March
Germany invades Greece & Yugoslavia, 6 Apr.
German airborne assault on Crete, 20 May
Germany invades U.S.S.R., 22 June
U.S.S.R. & Great Britain sign mutual aid pact, 13 July
Siege of Leningrad, 8 Sept.-Jan. 1944 700,000 deaths estimated
U.S. declares war on Japan after attack on Pearl Harbor, 8 Dec.
Germany & Italy declare war on U.S., 11 Dec.

1942

Battle of Stalingrad, 23 Aug.-2 Feb., 1943
Battle of El Alamein, 23 Oct.
Allied troops land at Morocco & Algeria, 8 Nov.

1943

Battle of Tunis, 7 May
Axis forces in N. Africa surrender, 13 May
Battle of Kursk, 4 July-1 Aug.
Allies land at Sicily, 10 July
Italians secretly surrender, 3 Sept.
Allies land at Salerno, 10 July
Allies land at Anzio, 22 Jan.

1944

Allies invade Normandy, 6 June (D-Day)
Soviets push Germans into Poland, mid-July
Paris liberated, 25 Aug.
Polish Resistance revolts against Germans in Warsaw, Aug.-Oct.

June
1945

Battle of the Bulge, 16 Dec.-7 Feb. Last significant German offensive
Yalta Conference, 4-11 Feb.
Soviets launch attack on Berlin, 16 April
Hitler commits suicide 30 Apr.
Germany surrenders, WWII in Europe ends, 7 May

THE BREAKOUT

The breakout from the Normandy beach head took place in July 1944, and the offensive continued using General Eisenhower's "broad front" strategy. Attempts to breach the German Siegfried Line blunted the Allied offensive. The Germans then launched an offensive - the ensuing fight being the "Battle of the Bulge" - through the thinly held Ardennes Forest in December 1944. The Allies halted the German offensive in January 1945 and continued the attack, crossing the Rhine River in March 1945 and encircling the Ruhr area in April 1945. This resulted, along with the Soviet pressure from the east, in the German collapse and surrender on 8 May 1945.

NORMANDY LANDING

Roosevelt and Churchill decided at the Trident Conference (May 1943) to conduct a major cross-Channel invasion of Europe in June 1944. General Eisenhower was designated to command Operation OVERLORD. The greatest amphibious assault yet known to history began on the Normandy coast in complete tactical surprise on D-Day, 6 June 1944. To protect Eisenhower's flank, the U.S. Seventh Army landed in southern France (Operation DRAGOON) on 15 August 1944.

NORTH AFRICA

The Americans wanted to invade continental Europe in 1943, but this idea was deemed premature and was cancelled in favor of an Allied invasion of French North Africa. Operation TORCH consisted of three task forces which landed on 8 November 1942. Moving east, these forces linked up with General Montgomery's Eighth Army in Apr. 1943, becoming 18th Army Group under the overall command of General Alexander. By 12 May 1943 this unit had forced the surrender of all Axis forces in North Africa.



TABLE OF SYMBOLS

BASIC SYMBOLS

Battalion	II	Air Force unit	
Regiment	III	Armor	
Brigade	X	Artillery	
Division, air division	XX	Cavalry	
Corps	XXX	Infantry	
Army, air force, fleet	XXXX	Mechanized	
Army group	XXXXX	Naval troops, ground employment	
Airborne		Special naval landing force	

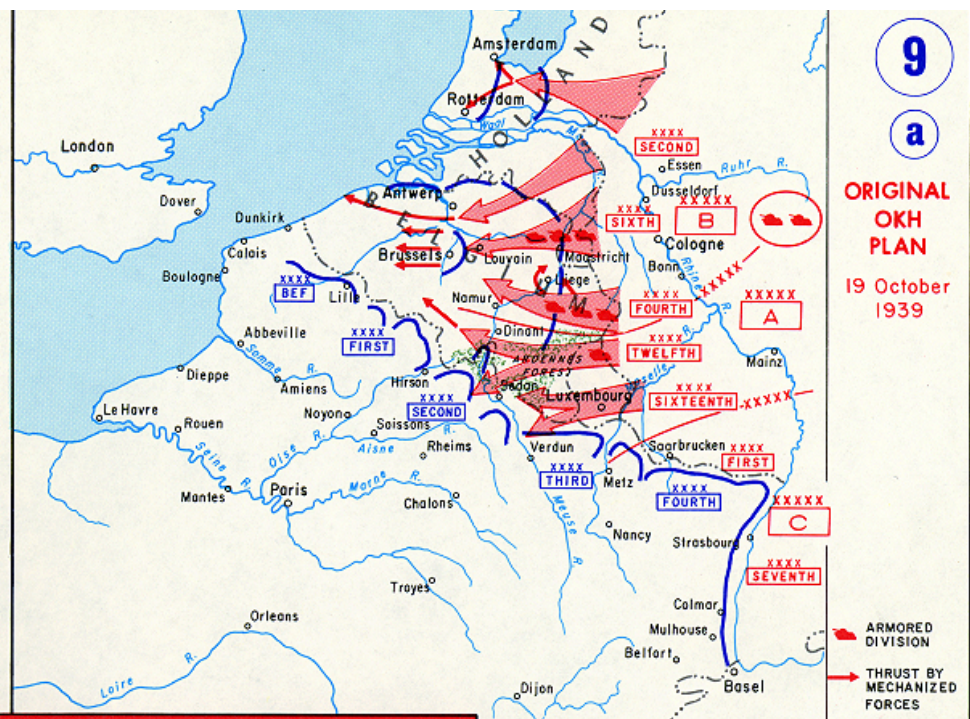
EXAMPLES OF COMBINATIONS OF BASIC SYMBOLS

Small British infantry detachment	Br
34th Regimental Combat Team	III 34 RCT
Combat Command C of 1st Armored Division	C X 1
82d Airborne Division	XX 82
1st Motorized Division	XX 1 Mtz

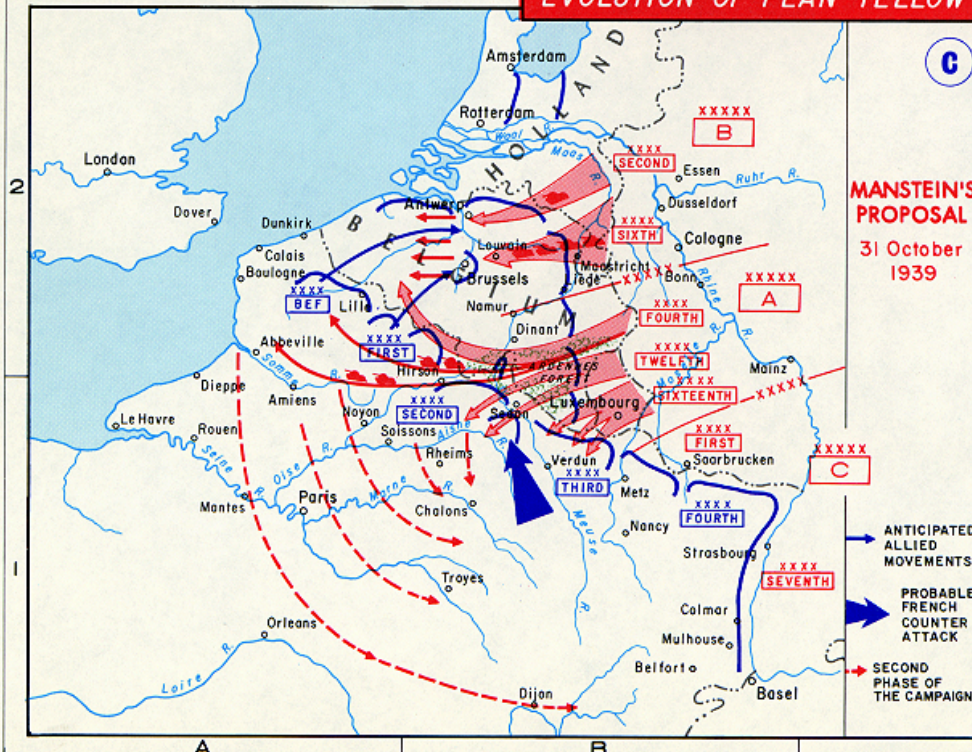
2d Marine Division	XX 2 Mar.
French Second Corps less detachments	FR III (-)
Third Army	XXXX THIRD
First Air Force	XX XX FIRST
Bradley's 12th Army Group	XXXXX 12 BRADLEY

OTHER SYMBOLS

Troops on the march	Actual location Prior location	Troops in position under attack	
Troops in position		Route of march or flight	
Troops in bivouac or reserve		Boundary between units	
Field works	Occupied Unoccupied	Fort	
Strong prepared positions		Fortified area	
Airfield		Fuel pipeline	
Covering force, armor or foot		Minefield	
		Airborne landing	



EVOLUTION OF PLAN YELLOW OCTOBER 1939 - JANUARY 1940



NORTHWESTERN EUROPE, 1940

CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST, 1940
Disposition of Opposing Forces and German and Allied Plans for the Battle of Flanders

ELEVATIONS IN METERS
0 200 400 800 OVER
SCALE OF MILES
0 25 50 75 100

LEGEND

FORTIFIED LINES

LESSER FORTIFICATIONS

