

# world war two africa

## World War Two Africa: A Comprehensive Overview of the African Theater

### Introduction

*World War Two Africa* represents a significant chapter in the broader narrative of the Second World War. While much of the global focus often centers on Europe, the Pacific, and the Pacific Theater, Africa played a crucial role in shaping the conflict's outcome. The African continent, with its strategic importance, colonial tensions, and diverse nations, became a battleground for various military campaigns, political struggles, and economic interests. Understanding Africa's involvement in World War II offers a more complete picture of the war's global impact and highlights the continent's enduring influence on world history.

In this article, we delve into the key events, strategic significance, major campaigns, and lasting consequences of **World War Two Africa**. From the North African desert campaigns to the influence of colonial powers, explore how Africa contributed to and was affected by one of the most devastating conflicts in human history.

## Background and Context of Africa During World War II

### The Colonial Powers and African Territories

During the early 20th century, Africa was largely divided among European colonial powers. The major colonial powers involved in World War II included:

- The United Kingdom
- France
- Italy
- Germany (briefly, through colonial interests)
- Portugal
- Belgium

These colonial powers controlled vast territories that became crucial strategic and resource bases during the war. Africa's resources, such as minerals, oil, and agricultural products, were vital to the war effort.

### Strategic Importance of Africa

Africa's geographical position made it a key strategic region:

- The Mediterranean Sea and Suez Canal linked Africa to Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

- Control over North Africa impacted access to the Middle East and the Suez Canal, a vital route for Allied supply lines.
- West Africa's resources and manpower contributed significantly to the Allied war effort.
- The continent's location made it a potential battleground for controlling access to the Mediterranean and the Atlantic.

## **Major Campaigns and Battles in Africa**

### **The North African Campaign**

The North African campaign was the most prominent military theater in Africa during World War II, involving fierce battles between the Axis and Allied forces. Key aspects include:

#### **1. The Western Desert Campaign**

- Fought primarily in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia.
- Major battles included the Battle of El Alamein (October-November 1942), a turning point that halted Axis advances into Egypt and safeguarded the Suez Canal.
- The campaign involved extensive tank battles, desert warfare tactics, and logistical challenges.

#### **2. The Battle of El Alamein**

- Led by British General Bernard Montgomery against Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps.
- Marked a decisive Allied victory that shifted the momentum in North Africa.

#### **3. The Tunisia Campaign**

- Final phase of the North African theater (November 1942 – May 1943).
- Allied forces, including Americans and British, fought to expel Axis forces from Tunisia.
- The surrender of Axis troops in Tunisia effectively ended Axis presence in Africa.

### **The East African Campaign**

While less prominent, the East African campaign involved:

- British and Commonwealth forces fighting against Italian colonial forces in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somaliland.
- The defeat of Italian forces in East Africa in 1941, leading to the collapse of Italian East Africa.

### **The Role of Colonial Troops and Local Forces**

- African soldiers, known as the "Askari," served in various capacities for

colonial powers.

- Countries like Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, and South Africa contributed troops.
- Local populations often faced hardships, displacement, and violence due to military operations.

## **Impact of World War II on Africa**

### **Political and Social Changes**

- The war exposed the vulnerabilities of colonial administrations and fostered nationalist movements.
- Africans' participation in the war effort heightened demands for independence.
- Post-war, many African nations accelerated their struggles for independence from colonial rule.

### **Economic Consequences**

- War disrupted traditional economies but also led to increased demand for African resources.
- Infrastructure projects and military logistics improved transportation and communication networks.
- Many African economies became more intertwined with global markets.

### **Military and Strategic Legacy**

- The North African campaigns demonstrated the importance of desert warfare and armored tactics.
- The conflict introduced new military technologies and strategies to Africa.
- The war's end marked a shift in colonial powers' attitudes toward maintaining control, eventually leading to decolonization.

## **Key Figures and Leaders in Africa During World War II**

- General Bernard Montgomery – Led Allied forces in North Africa.
- Erwin Rommel – The "Desert Fox," German commander in North Africa.
- Haile Selassie – Ethiopian emperor who sought international support against Italian invasion.
- Fumimaro Konoe – Japanese Prime Minister, whose Asia-Pacific strategies indirectly influenced African colonies.

# Post-War Consequences and Decolonization

The conclusion of World War II set the stage for decolonization across Africa:

- The weakening of European colonial powers.
- Increased political activism and independence movements.
- The establishment of new nations in the subsequent decades (1950s-1970s).

Some notable outcomes include:

- The independence of Ghana (1957), often considered the first African nation to gain independence.
- The liberation of Kenya, Algeria, and other nations from colonial rule.
- The rise of Pan-Africanism and African unity movements.

## Conclusion

*World War Two Africa* was a complex and multi-layered theater that significantly influenced the continent's political, social, and economic landscape. The strategic campaigns in North and East Africa demonstrated the importance of the region in the broader conflict. The war also accelerated the decline of colonial empires and the rise of African independence movements. Today, understanding Africa's role in World War II provides valuable insights into the continent's modern history and its enduring legacy in global affairs.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### What was the role of African soldiers in World War II?

African soldiers played significant roles in World War II, serving in various capacities such as combatants, laborers, and support staff for both Allied and Axis forces. They fought in campaigns across North Africa, East Africa, and other regions, contributing to key battles like El Alamein and the East African Campaign.

### How did World War II impact African colonies and

## **independence movements?**

The war strained colonial administrations and highlighted the contradictions of colonial rule, inspiring independence movements across Africa. Many Africans participated in the war effort, which fostered a sense of political awareness and desire for self-governance, accelerating decolonization after the war.

## **What was the significance of the North African Campaign during World War II?**

The North African Campaign was crucial as it was a strategic battleground for control of the Suez Canal and access to Middle Eastern oil supplies. It involved major battles between Allied forces, led by Britain and Commonwealth troops, and Axis forces, primarily Germany and Italy, shaping the course of the war in Africa.

## **Did Africa experience any major battles during World War II?**

Yes, Africa saw several major battles, including the Battle of El Alamein, the East African Campaign, and the Battle of Keren. These battles were pivotal in determining control over North and East Africa and influenced the broader outcome of the war.

## **How did World War II affect civilian populations in Africa?**

Civilian populations in Africa faced hardships such as resource shortages, displacement, and increased military activity. Many Africans were conscripted or volunteered to support the war effort, and colonial economies were mobilized, which had lasting social and economic impacts.

## **What were the long-term effects of World War II on Africa's political landscape?**

The war accelerated political change in Africa by weakening European colonial powers and inspiring independence movements. It laid the groundwork for decolonization, leading to the eventual independence of many African nations in the subsequent decades.

## **Additional Resources**

World War Two Africa: A Strategic Frontier and a Theater of Global Conflict

While the vast majority of World War Two history centers around Europe, the Pacific, and the Atlantic, the continent of Africa played a crucial yet often

overlooked role in shaping the outcome of the war. The term World War Two Africa encapsulates the complex military campaigns, strategic alliances, and geopolitical shifts that occurred across the African continent from 1939 to 1945. This theater was characterized by desert warfare, colonial rivalries, and the involvement of both Axis and Allied powers seeking control over vital resources and strategic routes. Understanding Africa's role in WWII provides a more comprehensive picture of the global conflict and highlights the continent's enduring legacy in post-war geopolitics.

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## The Strategic Significance of Africa in WWII

Africa's geographic location made it a critical battleground for control of Mediterranean access, Suez Canal traffic, and resource supplies. The continent's proximity to Europe, the Middle East, and Asia meant that military campaigns here had direct implications for the broader global conflict.

### Key Strategic Objectives in Africa

- Control of the Suez Canal: The lifeline connecting the Mediterranean to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, vital for British imperial communications and transportation.
- Access to Middle Eastern Resources: Oil fields in Iraq, Iran, and the Middle East were crucial for fueling military operations.
- Securing Colonial Resources: Africa's raw materials such as gold, diamonds, and minerals were exploited by both sides.
- Preventing Axis Expansion: Allies aimed to contain Axis influence and prevent the spread of Axis-occupied territories.

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## Major Campaigns in Africa During WWII

The African theater can be broadly divided into two primary campaigns: North Africa and East Africa. Each had its own strategic importance, military challenges, and outcomes.

### North Africa Campaign

The North African campaign was the most prominent and widely studied aspect of WWII in Africa, involving the fierce struggle between Axis powers—primarily Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy—and the Allied forces, mainly Britain and later the United States.

### Key Battles and Campaigns:

- The Western Desert Campaign: Focused on control of Libya, Egypt, and the Suez Canal.
- The Battle of El Alamein (1942): A turning point where Allied forces under

British command halted the Axis advance into Egypt, marking a decisive victory.

- Operation Torch (1942): The Allied invasion of French North Africa (Morocco and Algeria), opening a second front and leading to the collapse of Vichy French resistance in Africa.

- The Tunisian Campaign (1942-1943): The final phase where Axis forces surrendered in North Africa, leading to the removal of Axis presence from the continent.

#### Key Players:

- Axis Powers: Germany (Afrika Korps under Erwin Rommel), Italy.

- Allied Powers: Britain, United States, Free French Forces, Commonwealth nations.

#### Impact:

- Secured the Suez Canal, ensuring British dominance of Middle Eastern and Indian Ocean routes.

- Provided crucial combat experience for Allied forces.

- Enabled the subsequent invasion of Italy and the Mediterranean campaign.

#### East Africa Campaign

The East African campaign was less well-known but equally significant, involving battles across Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, and Italian East Africa (modern-day Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia).

#### Major Highlights:

- Italian Colonial Forces: Italy's attempt to expand its East African empire in the early years of the war.

- British and Commonwealth Counteroffensive: Led by General William Platt and later General Archibald Wavell, the Allies launched offensives to reclaim territory.

- Fall of Italian East Africa (1941): The British and Commonwealth forces defeated Italian troops, capturing Addis Ababa and effectively ending Italian ambitions in the region.

- Guerrilla Warfare and Resistance: Some Italian forces and local populations engaged in prolonged resistance, complicating Allied efforts.

#### Strategic Significance:

- Secured the eastern flank of the British Empire.

- Allowed for the use of East Africa as a base for operations into the Middle East and North Africa.

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#### African Soldiers and Colonial Contributions

One of the defining aspects of WWII in Africa was the significant contribution of colonial troops from across the continent. These soldiers fought alongside European allies and played vital roles in various campaigns.

#### Notable Contributions:

- African Soldiers in the British Army: Troops from Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, and other colonies participated in combat operations, often fighting in North Africa, East Africa, and later in Europe.
- French Colonial Troops: Soldiers from French West Africa, Madagascar, and other colonies.
- Italian Colonials: Local forces in Italian East Africa and Libya.
- Impact on Post-War Independence Movements: Many African soldiers gained new perspectives on global politics, fueling anti-colonial aspirations.

#### Challenges Faced by African Soldiers:

- Discrimination and unequal treatment.
- Limited access to resources and proper equipment.
- Political tensions arising from colonial rule.

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#### The Role of Key Figures and Nations

Several prominent figures and nations shaped the course of WWII in Africa.

- Erwin Rommel: The German Afrika Korps commander, known as the "Desert Fox," renowned for his tactical brilliance in North Africa.
- Winston Churchill: British Prime Minister, whose policies prioritized securing the Suez Canal and Middle Eastern oil.
- Franklin D. Roosevelt: U.S. President, whose leadership was instrumental in the North African and Mediterranean campaigns.
- Italian Fascist Regime: Led by Benito Mussolini, Italy's military ambitions in Africa were a major factor in the early years of the war.

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#### The Aftermath and Legacy of WWII in Africa

The conclusion of WWII had profound impacts on the continent, laying the groundwork for decolonization and independence movements.

#### Post-War Changes:

- Decolonization: Many African nations began to push for independence, inspired by their involvement in WWII and the weakening of European colonial powers.
- Military and Political Reforms: The war exposed vulnerabilities in colonial administrations, prompting reforms.
- Economic Shifts: War-time resource extraction and infrastructure



development altered local economies.

- Emergence of New Leaders: Military veterans and political activists gained prominence, shaping post-war politics.

Legacy:

- The war fostered a sense of political consciousness and national identity.
- It contributed indirectly to the end of colonial rule in Africa, which accelerated after WWII in the 1950s and 1960s.
- The conflict influenced popular memory and history, often emphasizing the sacrifices of African soldiers.

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Conclusion: Africa's Pivotal Role in World War Two

Though often overshadowed by other theaters, World War Two Africa was a vital component of the global conflict, characterized by strategic battles, colonial participation, and geopolitical shifts. The campaigns fought across the deserts and jungles of Africa not only contributed to the defeat of Axis powers but also reshaped the political landscape of the continent itself. Recognizing Africa's role in WWII enriches our understanding of the war's complexity and reminds us of the continent's enduring significance in world history.

## World War Two Africa

**world war two africa: Africa and World War II** Judith A. Byfield, Carolyn A. Brown, Timothy Parsons, Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, 2015-04-16 This volume considers the military, economic, and political significance of Africa during World War II. The essays feature new research and innovative approaches to the historiography of Africa and bring to the fore issues of race, gender, and labor during the war, topics that have not yet received much critical attention. It explores the experiences of male and female combatants, peasant producers, women traders, missionaries, and sex workers. The first section offers three introductory essays that give a continent-wide overview of how Africa sustained the Allied effort through labor and resources. The six sections that follow offer individual case studies from different parts of the continent. Contributors offer a macro and micro view of the multiple levels on which Africa's contributions shaped the war as well as the ways in which the war affected individuals and communities and transformed Africa's political, economic, and social landscape.

**world war two africa: Africa and the Second World War** David Killingray, Richard Rathbone, 1986-07-02

**world war two africa: The Battle for North Africa** John Strawson, 2023-03-16

**world war two africa: *The Second World War in East Africa, 1940-1941***, 2024-12-16 As a first of its kind, this edited collection brings together a variety of chapters dealing with different topics that address, where possible, most of the participants involved in or affected by the conflict as well as different, often neglected aspects of the East Africa campaign of the Second World War. In doing so, this volume not only makes a definite contribution to the broader historiography and to our understanding of a diverse, complex Second World War, but will also serve as an impetus for further

topical research on an important, yet neglected, campaign of the war.

**world war two africa:** *The British Empire and the Second World War* Ashley Jackson, 2006-03-09 In 1939 Hitler went to war not just with Great Britain; he also went to war with the whole of the British Empire, the greatest empire that there had ever been. In the years since 1945 that empire has disappeared, and the crucial fact that the British Empire fought together as a whole during the war has been forgotten. All the parts of the empire joined the struggle and were involved in it from the beginning, undergoing huge changes and sometimes suffering great losses as a result. The war in the desert, the defence of Malta and the Malayan campaign, and the contribution of the empire as a whole in terms of supplies, communications and troops, all reflect the strategic importance of Britain's imperial status. Men and women not only from Australia, New Zealand and India but from many parts of Africa and the Middle East all played their part. Winston Churchill saw the war throughout in imperial terms. *The British Empire and the Second World War* emphasises a central fact about the Second World War that is often forgotten.

**world war two africa:** *Africa in Global History* Toyin Falola, Mohammed Bashir Salau, 2021-12-06 This handbook places emphasis on modern/contemporary times, and offers relevant sophisticated and comprehensive overviews. It aims to emphasize the religious, economic, political, cultural and social connections between Africa and the rest of the world and features comparisons as well as an interdisciplinary approach in order to examine the place of Africa in global history. This book makes an important contribution to the discussion on the place of Africa in the world and of the world in Africa. An outstanding work of scholarship, it powerfully demonstrates that Africa is not marginal to global concerns. Its labor and resources have made our world, and the continent deserves our respect. – Mukhtar Umar Bunza, Professor of Social History, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, and Commissioner for Higher Education, Kebbi State, Nigeria This is a deep plunge into the critical place of Africa in global history. The handbook blends a rich set of important tapestries and analysis of the conceptual framework of African diaspora histories, imperialism and globalization. By foregrounding the authentic voices of African interpreters of transnational interactions and exchanges, the Handbook demonstrates a genuine commitment to the promotion of decolonized and indigenous knowledge on African continent and its peoples. – Samuel Oloruntoba, Visiting Research Professor, Institute of African Studies, Carleton University

**world war two africa: A Pattern for Joint Operations** Daniel R. Mortensen, 2015-09-16 This study in the Historical Analysis Series examines a subject of importance not only to the Army but also to the Air Force: the origin and development of American close air support doctrine and practice in World War II. The idea for the study resulted from a review of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Army and Air Force chiefs of staff, concluded on 22 May 1984, and of the initiatives that emerged from that historic document, particularly Initiative 24, which reaffirmed the Air Force's mission to provide close air support to the Army. The project has been a cooperative effort between the U.S. Army Center of Military History and the U.S.A.F. Office of Air Force History; an Air Force historian was assigned to write the study under the supervision of the Center of Military History. The resulting work, ultimately the best judgment of the author based on historical evidence, is titled *A Pattern for Joint Operations: World War II Close Air Support, North Africa*. The concentration is on the North African campaign because that was the first major large-unit test of American ground armies in World War II, and in that campaign the basic system of close air support for American ground and air forces in World War II was first worked out. Close air support doctrine both then and now is critical to the services. As this study demonstrates, the doctrine that had been conceived and practiced prior to the first American battles of World War II fell apart in the mud and fog of Tunisia. Both air and ground commanders in 1941 recognized the necessity of close cooperation between the staffs and forces in joint and combined forces. What they had to learn in 1942 was the degree to which close air support doctrine tested that cooperation and required alteration. The struggle of ground and air leaders to define and construct a command and control system, and ultimately to allocate and commit precious air resources to requisite ground missions, has as many lessons today as it did more than forty years ago.

**world war two africa: Rommel's North Africa Campaign** Jack Greene, Alessandro Massignani, 1994-05-21 In the deserts of North Africa and the Middle East some of World War II's greatest legends were born as Erwin Rommel the Desert Fox led his Afrika Korps against the Desert Rats of the British 8th Army led by Bernard Montgomery. Both sides recruited local people to their cause, winning stunning victories but planting the seeds of conflicts to come.

**world war two africa: Colonial Soldiers in Europe, 1914-1945** Eric Storm, Ali Al Tuma, 2015-12-22 During the first half of the twentieth century, European countries witnessed the arrival of hundreds of thousands of colonial soldiers fighting in European territory (First and Second World War and Spanish Civil War) and coming into contact with European society and culture. For many Europeans, these were the first instances in which they met Asians or Africans, and the presence of Indian, Indo-Chinese, Moluccan, Senegalese, Moroccan or Algerian soldiers in Europe did not go unnoticed. This book explores this experience as it relates to the returning soldiers - who often had difficulties re-adapting to their subordinate status at home - and on European authorities who for the first time had to accommodate large numbers of foreigners in their own territories, which in some ways would help shape later immigration policies.

**world war two africa: *An Army at Dawn*** Rick Atkinson, 2007-05-15 WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE AND NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER In the first volume of his monumental trilogy about the liberation of Europe in World War II, Pulitzer Prize winner Rick Atkinson tells the riveting story of the war in North Africa. The liberation of Europe and the destruction of the Third Reich is a story of courage and enduring triumph, of calamity and miscalculation. In this first volume of the Liberation Trilogy, Rick Atkinson shows why no modern reader can understand the ultimate victory of the Allied powers without a grasp of the great drama that unfolded in North Africa in 1942 and 1943. That first year of the Allied war was a pivotal point in American history, the moment when the United States began to act like a great power. Beginning with the daring amphibious invasion in November 1942, *An Army at Dawn* follows the American and British armies as they fight the French in Morocco and Algeria, and then take on the Germans and Italians in Tunisia. Battle by battle, an inexperienced and sometimes poorly led army gradually becomes a superb fighting force. Central to the tale are the extraordinary but fallible commanders who come to dominate the battlefield: Eisenhower, Patton, Bradley, Montgomery, and Rommel. Brilliantly researched, rich with new material and vivid insights, Atkinson's narrative provides the definitive history of the war in North Africa.

**world war two africa: *Story of the World, Vol. 4: History for the Classical Child: The Modern Age (Vol. 4) (Story of the World)*** Susan Wise Bauer, 2005-06-17 This fourth book in the four-volume narrative history series for elementary students will transform your study of history. The *Story of the World* has won awards from numerous homeschooling magazines and readers' polls—over 150,000 copies of the series in print! Where was the Crystal Palace? Who was the Sick Man of Europe? And how did cow fat start a revolution? Now more than ever, other countries and customs affect our everyday lives—and our children need to learn about the people who live all around the world. Susan Wise Bauer has provided a captivating guide to the history of modern nations all around the world. Written in an engaging, straightforward manner, the final volume of the popular *Story of the World* series weaves world history into a storybook format, covering major historical events in the years 1850-2000. From the Middle East and China to Africa and the Americas—find out what happened all around the world in the last century and a half. Designed as a read-aloud project for parents and children to share together, *The Story of the World* includes the stories of each continent and people group. Each *Story of the World* volume provides a full year of history study when combined with the Activity Book, Audiobook, and Tests—each available separately to accompany each volume of *The Story of the World* Text Book. Volume 4 Grade Recommendation: Grades 3-8.

**world war two africa: *African Islands*** Toyin Falola, R. Joseph Parrott, Danielle Porter Sanchez, 2019 Explores the culturally complex and cosmopolitan histories of islands off the African coast

**world war two africa: *The History Highway*** Dennis A. Trinkle, Scott A. Merriman, 2006 Guide

to history sites on the web for students, teachers and researchers. Offers the most current coverage of historical information available on the Internet. All sites have been thoroughly checked by specialists in the relevant field of history. Covers U.S. and World history.

**world war two africa:** *A Military History of South Africa* Timothy J. Stapleton, 2010-04-09 This work offers the first one-volume comprehensive military history of modern South Africa. *A Military History of South Africa: From the Dutch-Khoi Wars to the End of Apartheid* represents the first comprehensive military history of South Africa from the beginning of European colonization in the Cape during the 1650s to the current postapartheid republic. With particular emphasis on the last 200 years, this balanced analysis stresses the historical importance of warfare and military structures in the shaping of modern South African society. Important themes include military adaptation during the process of colonial conquest and African resistance, the growth of South Africa as a regional military power from the early 20th century, and South African involvement in conflicts of the decolonization era. Organized chronologically, each chapter reviews the major conflicts, policies, and military issues of a specific period in South African history. Coverage includes the wars of colonial conquest (1830-69), the diamond wars (1869-81), the gold wars (1886-1910), World Wars I and II (1910-45), and the apartheid wars (1948-94).

**world war two africa:** *Copper King in Central Africa* Hyden Munene, 2022-01-31 *Copper King in Central Africa* offers a detailed account of the corporate history of the Rhokana/Rokana Corporation and its Nkana mine. Thematically and chronologically organised, it explores the discovery of viable ores on the Northern Rhodesian/Zambian Copperbelt in the late 1920s, which attracted foreign capital from South Africa, Britain and the USA, prompting the development of the Nkana mine and the formation of the Rhokana Corporation in the early 1930s. It follows through the evolution of the copper mining industry up to the re-privatisation of the Zambian mining sector in 1991. The book ties into a single narrative the disparate themes of corporate organisation, labour relations, and profitability of Rhokana, demonstrating how the firm was, for a time, the most important mining entity in the Northern Rhodesian/Zambian mining industry. Rhokana was both an investment firm on the Copperbelt and a mining company through Nkana mine. Thus, the Corporation was central to the development and profitability of the copper industry in Zambia. Its corporate and labour policies influenced the Copperbelt as a whole. Employing the largest labour force in the mining sector, Rhokana spearheaded the labour movement on the Copperbelt. Its Nkana mine was also the largest producer of copper in the Northern Rhodesian mining industry between 1940 and 1953, and contributed hugely to the war economies of Britain and the USA. Throughout its history, Nkana was also a major source of cobalt. After nationalisation of the mining sector in 1970, Rhokana surrendered its investments in the wider copper industry, but remained central to the Copperbelt's smelting and refining operations, owning the biggest metallurgical facilities in the industry.

**world war two africa:** *The North African Campaign of World War II* Charles River Editors, 2017-09-12 \*Includes pictures \*Includes contemporary accounts of the fighting \*Includes online resources and a bibliography for further reading It may almost be said, 'Before Alamein we never had a victory. After Alamein we never had a defeat.' - Winston Churchill The fighting in North Africa during World War II is commonly overlooked, aside from the famous battle at El Alamein that pitted the British under General Bernard Montgomery against the legendary Desert Fox, Erwin Rommel. But while the Second Battle of El Alamein would be the pivotal action in North Africa, the conflict in North Africa began all the way back in the summer of 1940 when Italian dictator Benito Mussolini declared Italy's entrance into the war. From his perspective, the fact that the British and French had their hands full with the Germans created an opportunity for Italy to enlarge its colonial holdings in Africa by seizing portions of the British Empire. However, British troops in the colony of Egypt responded to Italy's declaration of war by driving through the Egyptian-Ethiopian border and attacking Italian troops stationed in the Italian colony of Ethiopia. By September 13, 1940, Italian commanders in Ethiopia were finally ready to put Mussolini's plan into action and attack British colonial holdings, but British troops had already attacked a series of Italian frontier posts and had

inflicted 3,500 casualties among Italy's North African troops. Although British maneuvering in North Africa began successfully against the Italians, the British forces suffered a series of defeats over the next two years, due to several problems the British army faced as a result of inadequate preparation and weaponry. For example, when the war began, junior officers were unprepared for the kind of cooperation between units that was necessary in the battles of North Africa. At the same time, while British tanks were capable of opposing Italian tanks, they were vastly inferior to German models. Dealing with the Italians was one thing, but the British faced an entirely different monster in North Africa when Erwin Rommel, a German general who had gained much fame for his role in the invasions of Poland and France, was sent to North Africa in February 1941. Rommel's directives from the German headquarters were to maneuver in a way that would allow him to hide the fact that his ultimate goal was the capture of Cairo and the Suez Canal. The ultimate plan was that Rommel would not reveal the Germans' true intentions in North Africa until after the Germans had made headway in their invasion of the Soviet Union. The Second Battle of El Alamein was a turning point in the campaign. While the scale of the battle paled in comparison to the battles of the Eastern Front, where the majority of German troops were concentrated, it still marked an important victory in World War II, especially from the British perspective. The British, who had suffered through three years of war in which they seemed to teeter on the brink of defeat, were able to hang their hats on the victory, reviving the nation's morale and reaffirming its military might. Over the next few weeks, the Allies made steady progress and forced Rommel to conduct a fighting retreat to safety until his army linked up with another Axis army in Tunisia, but the fighting at the end of 1942 inevitably compelled all Axis forces to quit the theater, the first time since the beginning of the war that Africa was safe for the Allies. *The North African Campaign of World War II: The History and Legacy of the Decisive Allied Victory in North Africa* examines one of the most important campaigns of the war. Along with pictures depicting important people, places, and events, you will learn about the North African campaign like never before.

**world war two africa: African Military Geosciences** Jacques Bezuidenhout, 2018-12-19 This eight-chapter volume, *African Military Geosciences: Military History and the Physical Environment*, is a tour-de-force covering nearly 500 years of African military geosciences. It is a truly global book that reveals keen insights into regional, national and international military-forces activities centered in Africa and how the understanding of geosciences plays important roles. It is written for the specialist, but also attractive to the general military buff - well referenced and illustrated with figures from primary sources, historical catalogues and compendia. The publication explores the e;age of saile;, harbour defenses, the trafficability of desert environments and marshes, as well as climate controls on sailing or land battles. There is even insight into an elite artillery unit staffed by women during Second World War - essentially covering the whole gamut. Ultimately, the reader explores a nearly 500-year journey around the African continent and beyond.

**world war two africa: The Oxford Handbook of Nigerian History** Toyin Falola, Matthew M. Heaton, 2022 Thirty-six chapters covering the history of Nigeria, from prehistoric times to the twenty-first century. Accessible overviews of both the political narrative as well as the deeper histories of social organization, identity formation, and inter-group relationships, cutting-edge analysis of key themes from highly respected scholars in a single, forward-facing volume. Book jacket.

**world war two africa: *Papwa: in the Grip of a Champion*** Derrick Hubbard, 2021-01-26 In 1963 Sewsunker "Papwa" Sewgolum, a former caddie, became the first golfer of colour to win a provincial open in South Africa. Self-taught, his game honed on the hills and dunes surrounding his Riverside home, Papwa beat 103 white golfers in the Natal Open at the Durban Country Club and instantly became a symbol of the sports boycott movement. Two years later Papwa beat Gary Player to win the Natal Open for the second time. He also won the Dutch Open in 1959, 1960 and 1964. However, at the peak of his career Papwa was banned by the government from participating in or attending any PGA tournaments in South Africa. They also withdrew his passport, denying him the right to play internationally. These measures slowly broke Papwa's spirit, leaving him with nothing but the

dreams of what might have been. Written as fiction, Papwa: In the Grip of a Champion is a uniquely South African story told by a master storyteller. "The record books don't lie. Three Dutch Opens, I repeat, three Dutch Opens in six years . . ."

**world war two africa: United States Relations with South Africa** Y. G.-M. Lulat, 2008  
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