

OPERATION DRAGOON-THE SECOND D DAY

1942

8 November

Operation Torch, the Allied Invasion of French North Africa: Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia all territories controlled by the Vichy Government in France. The objective was to link up with the Eighth Army advancing into Tunisia from the East.

11-12 November

The Germans launch operation Anton and occupy Vichy France. The Italian Fourth Army occupies Provence. The island of Corsica is also occupied. The Vichy French Army and Airforce did not resist and were disbanded. Initially there was no German attempt to seize the French Fleet at Toulon. The French negotiators prevaricated and managed to string the Germans along.

27 November

With negotiations stalled and concerned that the Fleet would sail to North Africa the Germans launched Operation Lila to seize the Fleet. It was a failure and the French scuttled seventy seven vessels including three Battleships. Seven submarines ignored the order and sailed for North Africa.

1943

May –August

The idea of landing in the south of France, code named Operation Anvil, is debated over a number of months and finally approved by Stalin at the Tehran Conference in November.

8 September

Italy signs an Armistice with the Allies, and the Germans disarms the Italian Fourth Army and occupies Provence.

1944

6 June

Allied invasion of Normandy.

14 July

Anvil is reactivated as Dragoon. A preliminary air campaign starts to target communication centres and transport hubs. Supplies are also dropped to the French resistance.

4- 10 August

The air campaign intensifies.

15 August

Operation Dragoon begins with American and French troops landing near Cannes, German resistance is spasmodic and uncoordinated.

17 August

The Allied breakout from Normandy is underway with the American advance threatening the German withdrawal from south western France. With the exception of the garrisons of several fortified ports Hitler agreed to withdraw his forces from Southern France. It was a momentous decision which, essentially, allowed the Allies to liberate two thirds of France without a fight.

19 August

US Troops advance towards Aix-Le Provence whilst French troops surround Toulon.

21 August

Grenoble is taken by US forces and the French Resistance and advance and reach the Route Nationale 7 near Montelimar.

25 August

German counterattack along the River Roubinon fails.

26 August

French troops stage a Victory Parade in Toulon although not all of the city is in Allied hands.

27 August

Germans surrender Marseille.

28 August

The last German troops in Toulon surrender.

29 August

German rear guard at Montelimar is destroyed.

3 September

Lyon is liberated.

3-10 September

Forward elements of Patton's Third Army meet patrols from the 7th Army moving north from Lyon.

14 September

Operation Dragoon is halted.

15 September

The last remnants of the German forces, some 20,000 men, on the Loire sector surrenders.