Force H sorties against Lütjens' *Carrier Group III*, 12 September 1939. Note the antiquated Swordfish torpedo bomber circling over the fleet – Lütjens called them 'deathtraps'. *Author's collection*

Scapa Flow, 18.30 hours, 31 August 1939: Little did the crews of these British warships suspect that within 12 hours thick smoke would hide the horror of dying ships and dead men from watching eyes – the first of many harsh blows for the British Home Fleet. *Author's collection*

Kriegsmarine torpedo-boats, such as these of the *7th Flotilla*, escorted the *SS* invasion forces across the Channel in 1940. *US Army Art Collection*

(*Below left*) General Erich von Manstein, whose plans led to the defeat of both France and Britain. *Author's collection*

(*Below right*) Major General Bernard Montgomery, wearing his famous black beret with the two cap-badges. *Author's collection*

German troops and captured British equipment at Dunkirk. *Author's collection*

British garrison troops captured at Dover by the first wave of invading German troops. *Author's collection*

Adolf Hitler's victory in the east made him Germany's greatest warlord. *US Army Center for Military History*

(*Above left*) A photo of an RAF aircrew on the eve of the Battle of Britain. Their confidence was quickly shattered by the Luftwaffe onslaught. *Author's collection*

(*Left*) The results of the Luftwaffe's devastating attack on London on 5 July 1940. *Author's collection*

A sketch of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel made shortly after he received his baton.
US Army Center for Military History

Troops of the (technically independent) Egyptian Army bring up a howitzer to help prop up Eighth Army HQ's position for the Alamein battle, around El Imayid.

Part of Brigadier Godfrey's 'motley force' hastily deployed to cover the sprawling camps around Amiriya on 6 July.

Benito Mussolini driving triumphantly eastwards down the Halfaya Pass in early July, on his way to yet another blazing row with his German allies.

A horse-drawn wagon delivering supplies to the *101st Jäger Division* in the Caucasus. Difficult terrain and weak logistical services limited operations by all the combatants in the Caucasus campaign. *US National Archives*

Machine-gunners of the Soviet 47th Mountain Division who died defending Batumi against the Turkish *8th Division* on 5 September 1942. *US Army Art Collection*

The commander of the Soviet 53rd Army visiting the 8th Indian Division during Operation Pluto. Co-operation between the Russians and their allies was hampered by language difficulties and pervasive mistrust. *US National Archives*

(*Left*) An Axis air attack on Allied ships off Gela, Sicily, July 1943. *Author's collection*

(*Right*) German night fighters catch and destroy a British bomber in a raid over Berlin. *US Army Art Collection*

(*Below*) Thousands of 88mm anti-aircraft guns played a vital role in the defence of the skies over the Reich. *US Army Art Collection*

(*Below left*) Right to left, Lieutenant-General George S. Patton (Seventh Army), Major-General Omar Bradley (II Corps), and Major-General Troy Middleton (45th Infantry Division), confer during the fighting in Sicily. *Author's collection*

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Professor Werner Heisenberg, Germany's top atom-bomb physicist. *Author's collection*

Niels Bohr – world-renowned Danish physicist and early mentor for Heisenberg. *Author's collection*

(*Above*) Burning buildings in London, believed to be located 1.5 miles from the hypocentre of the atom bomb blast. *Author's collection*

(*Top left*) A B-17 being attacked by a Luftwaffe Fw 190 fighter. Even in the best of conditions in 1943, it required 10 sorties by German piston-engined fighters such as this to defeat a single B-17. *Author's collection*

(*Left*) An Me 262. Turbojet technology gave Germany an opportunity to achieve a qualitative lead over the Allies' quantitative superiority. *Author's collection*

Heinkel 177 bomber of the type used for the German atomic attacks on London and Moscow. *Author's collection*

Marshal G.K. Zhukov at the time of his assumption of duties as the Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. *Author's collection*

German infantry on the defensive – one of the most formidable obstacles in the world. Rebuilt and equipped with large numbers of antitank guns under Rommel's guidance, the German infantry divisions in their in-depth defences bled the Red Army to death in that awful winter of 1945. *US Army Art Collection*

German 88mm gun in action in central Poland. The suspension of the bomber campaign against Germany by the armistice in Normandy allowed thousands of guns to be moved from the Reich to the Eastern Front. *US Army Art Collection*

Burnt out Soviet T-34 tanks littered the flat farmlands of Central Poland after the destruction of four tank armies in Field Marshal von Manstein's classic replay of the Battle of Tannenberg on a vast scale in February 1945. *US Army Art Collection*