

Battle of Stalingrad 75th anniversary

Seventy-five years ago Soviet troops defeated Nazi leader Adolf Hitler's invasion force at Stalingrad on the Volga River after some of the bloodiest and most momentous fighting of World War II

*Stalingrad was major industrial city and key target for Hitler's forces – not least because it was named after Soviet leader **Josef Stalin***

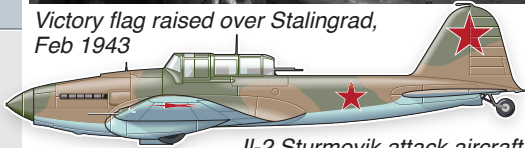


■ **Jul 17, 1942:** Soviets reinforce Stalingrad front as Hitler sends 330,000 troops to take city – part of his campaign to conquer southern Russia

■ **Aug 23:** German 6th Army begins assault, supported by intense **Luftwaffe** air raids that leave much of city in ruins



Victory flag raised over Stalingrad, Feb 1943



Il-2 Sturmovik attack aircraft

Front lines

- Nov 18
- - Dec 12
- Dec 24

Stalingrad



■ **Nov 19-23:** Soviet counterattack hits weakly-defended German flanks, encircling entire 6th Army

■ **Nov 24:** Hitler forbids his troops from attempting to break out of city, instead ordering supplies to be flown in by air – effort ultimately fails to deliver quantity of material needed

■ **Dec 12-23:** German 4th Panzer Army makes unsuccessful bid to break Soviet encirclement

■ **Feb 2, 1943:** Facing starvation and with Soviets gaining ground, remnants of 6th Army – 91,000 men – finally surrender. **Soviet victory was turning point of World War II in Europe**

■ **Sep 12-Nov 18:** Fierce battle for city, with Soviets holding narrow strip of land, kept alive by constant ferrying of supplies across Volga. Germans worn down by losses, relentless close combat and approach of winter

Casualties: 850,000 Axis troops (German and allied) and 1.1 million Soviets were killed, wounded, missing or captured