



Aerial view of one of the ports in southern Italy just before the landings on southern France shows a portion of the supplies lined up for loading into landing craft.

# THE WAR FRONTS

**NORTH FRANCE:** The recapture of Paris 25 August, with all the drama and sentiment that must rightly accompany the liberation of an historic and traditional world center, tended to minimize the important military action in northern France. The main objective was the destruction of the German Army and to that end, Allied forces proceeded rapidly eastward.

Southeast of the French capital, American Third Army Forces who had crossed the Seine River were expanding their hold in the area between that river and the Marne, and were making rapid gains along the good roads that led to the German frontier. With their left flank at Chateau-Thierry, and their right 60 miles to the southeast beyond Troyes, the Americans were fighting on a battlefield that had seen the defeat of famous would-be conquerors from Attila the Hun to Kaiser Wilhelm II. About midway between Chateau-Thierry and Paris, at Meaux, the Americans gained a bridgehead across the Marne. In its headlong advance from Brittany to its current positions, the Third Army took 65,000 prisoners and killed 16,000 Germans.

In the 100 miles along the curving Seine River between Paris and the Le Havre coast, British and Canadian Armies had crossed the river at four places, and according to front correspondents, were moving armor, infantry and heavy guns across swiftly. This was taken to indicate a new offensive was in the making northeast to the Somme River, which is the last water line along the coast left to the Germans south of the Albert Canal, in northeast Belgium.

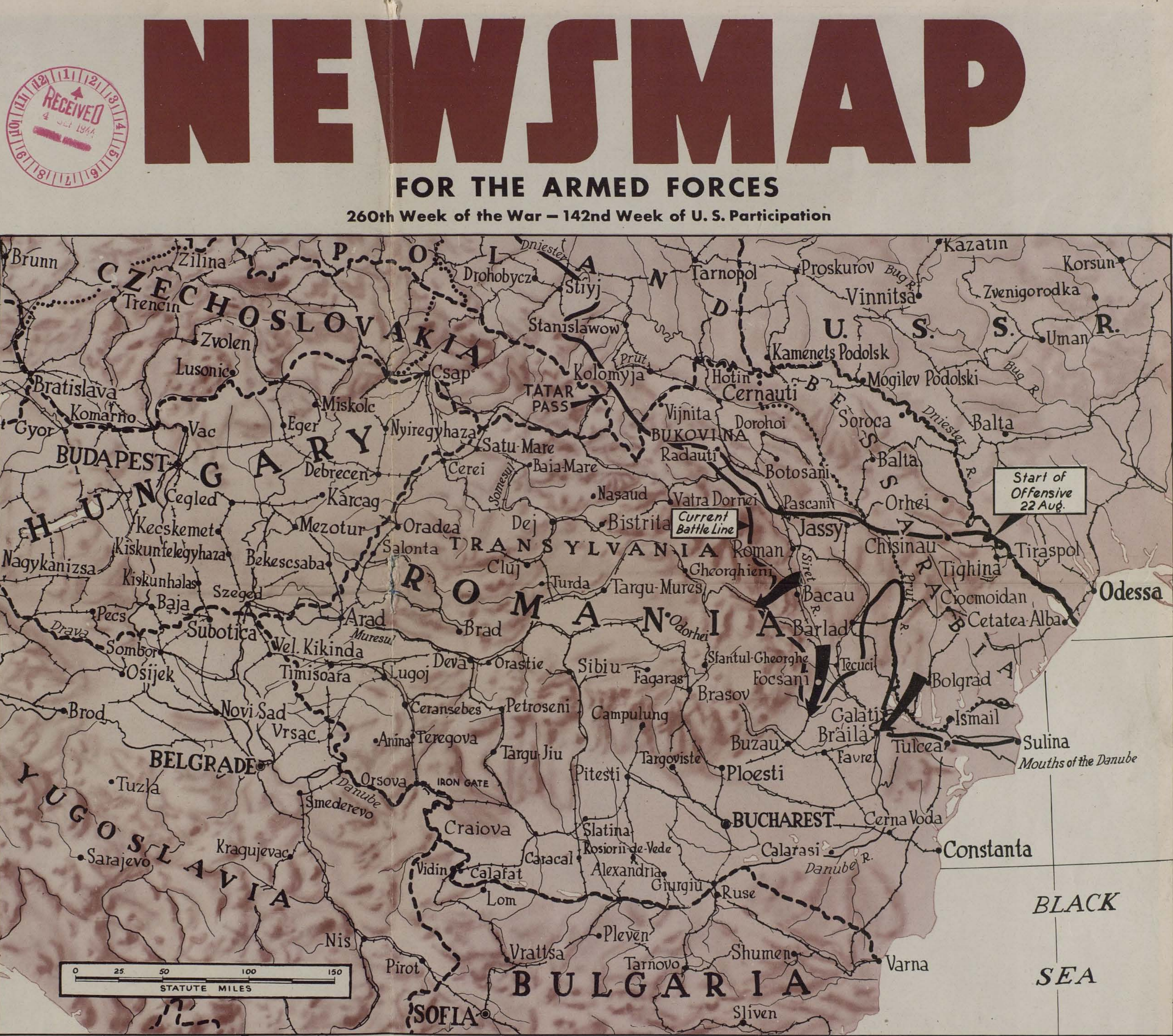
Thousands of Allied planes ranged over the battlefields and beyond to the German border, destroying quantities of German transport.

**SOUTH FRANCE:** American and French troops moved far inland from their landing points established 15 August, and last week, in a push that roughly paralleled the Rhone River, reached northward almost to the southwestern border of Switzerland, 200 miles from the Mediterranean coast. This advance which included the capture of the rail and road center of Grenoble was only part of the developing victory. After landing east of Toulon, troops swung north and west and then swung down again against the main objectives of Toulon and Marseille. With the exception of spotty resistance, these two major ports were in Allied hands last week. Other forces cut along the coast to the east toward Nice, but this appeared to be a minor action. The main drive was to the north. A portion of the Allied column that reached for the Swiss border swung over westward toward the Rhone valley and took Montelimar, a move which cut enemy elements to the south from the major communications hub at Lyon. At the southern end of the valley, the city of Avignon was already in Allied hands, and troops driving north from there were closing a pocket on an estimated 15,000 Germans.

**ITALY:** Allied headquarters reported increased evidence that the Germans were withdrawing to better positions covering the Gothic line. The withdrawal was most apparent in the area of the upper Tiber River and in the upper Arno area north of Pontassieve. There was little change on the Fifth Army's western coast, but on the Adriatic, Polish units of the Eighth Army made notable gains. They crossed the Metauro River which runs into the Adriatic from the southwest and were only about 20 miles from Rimini which is supposed to be the coastal anchor of the Gothic line.

**PACIFIC:** Aerial preparation for new amphibious operations went forward. Just off western New Guinea, a new Allied airfield was completed at Middelburg Island near Sansapor, thus providing a base 200 miles closer to the Philippines than our previous most advanced bases on Noemfoor. Planes from this new base struck the Palau Islands far to the north and then swung around to hit Davao, the principal port city on southern Mindanao in the Philippines. Heavy raids continued against Halmahera, Ceram and the Celebes.

From the Marianas, our Army and Navy planes continued the neutralizing campaign against the ladder of islands leading to Japan, 1500 miles away, and also extended



their operations to the southwest against Yap. The close coordination of this air neutralization was indicated by an announcement from the Seventh Air Force that revealed that Army and Navy land-based bombers pioneered the longest shuttle bombing route in any war theater, by making a 3500-mile triangle trip. Planes from the Central Pacific used Admiralty Islands bases in the shuttle.

**EASTERN FRONT:** Stimulated by the new Soviet offensive that was driving deep into the Balkans, the German satellite country of Romania surrendered to the Allies 23 August. Her neighbor to the south, Bulgaria, three days later promised to get out of the war, become a neutral state, and disarm any Germans who may remain or retreat into the country. Details of the Balkan explosion were still obscure, but the Red Army was gaining large chunks of what had previously been enemy-controlled territory. After taking Jassy and Kishinev, the Soviets advanced southward, rapidly skirting the Carpathian Mountains and heading for the Ploesti oil region north of Bucharest. They broke into the portion of Transylvania, transferred to Hungary from Romania in 1940, and gained the area of the Danube Delta. The cities of Galati, Ismail and Sulina were among the more important points gained, but the Soviets were taking over so rapidly there was little to represent a coherent battle line. Romanian troops were reported fighting beside the Russians.



Oblique view of southern France looking north up the Rhone River Valley. Model prepared by R & A Branch, O. S. S.

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