THE NORTH AFRICAN FRONT  While the Battle of Stalingrad raged, Stalin pressured Britain and America to open a “second front” in Western Europe. He argued that an invasion across the English Channel would force Hitler to divert troops from the Soviet front. Churchill and Roosevelt didn’t think the Allies had enough troops to attempt an invasion on European soil. Instead, they launched Operation Torch, an invasion of Axis-controlled North Africa, commanded by American General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

In November 1942, some 107,000 Allied troops, the great majority of them Americans, landed in Casablanca, Oran, and Algiers in North Africa. From there they sped eastward, chasing the Afrika Korps led by General Erwin Rommel, the legendary Desert Fox. After months of heavy fighting, the last of the Afrika Korps surrendered in May 1943. British general Harold Alexander sent a message to Churchill, reporting that “All enemy resistance has ceased. We are masters of the North African shores.” American war correspondent Ernie Pyle caught the mood of the victorious troops.

A PERSONAL VOICE  ERNIE PYLE

“This colossal German surrender has done more for American morale here than anything that could possibly have happened. Winning in battle is like winning at poker or catching lots of fish. . . . As a result, the hundreds of thousands of Americans in North Africa now are happy men.”

—Ernie’s War: The Best of Ernie Pyle’s World War II Dispatches

American journalist Ernie Pyle, shown here in 1944, was one of the most famous war correspondents of World War II.