

WORLD WAR TWO

1939

Following the German invasion of Poland, New Zealand declares war on Germany on 3 September. New Zealanders enlist (volunteer) and begin training in Burnham, Trentham, Palmerston North, and Papakura. The formation of a Māori battalion for 2 NZEF (2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force) is announced.

1942

NZEF battles the Afrika Korps (German) and Regio Esercito (Italian) armies in North Africa. A third division of the NZEF is formed (conscripted) in NZ to fight in the Pacific, firstly in support of the Australian army and then the US (United States) forces.

1943

The 3rd Division is wound down, some return to NZ to work in essential industries and some join the 2 NZEF in North Africa. NZ forces begin fighting in Italy.

1944

New Zealanders fight at Monte Cassino and then move north through Italy, fighting as they go.

1940

The first echelon (group) of the 2 NZEF sails to Egypt to continue training and equipping. The second echelon goes to the United Kingdom (UK) to repel invasion by Germany. A small unit goes to Fiji.

1941

Units in the UK join the 2 NZEF in Egypt. The LRDG (Long Range Desert Group) is formed and is heavily engaged in Libya. The rest of the NZ division join the British and Australian armies going to Greece, eventually withdrawing to Crete. They are defeated in Crete and evacuate to Egypt.

1945

NZ Forces continue to advance north, eventually arriving in Trieste. WWII Europe ends in May. Japan surrenders in August.