

Chronology of Events – Italy

1943

- 3rd September Operation 'Baytown' launched. XIII Corps launch assault across the Straits of Messina. Troops from 3 (Army) Commando and 40 (Royal Marine) Commando lead troops from the 5th Infantry Division, 1st Canadian Infantry Division and 231st Infantry Brigade.
- 3rd September
17.30 hours Italian Government signs an armistice with Allies to take effect from 8th September. German forces seize control in Italy.
- 8th September Operation 'Slapstick' launched with V Corps landing unopposed at Taranto. Units from 1st Airborne Division land and gain control of the town. H.M.S. Abdiel strikes a mine in Taranto harbor and sinks. Fifty-eight men from 6th Bn. The Parachute Regiment are killed and one-hundred and fifty-four injured.
- 9th September Operation 'Avalanche' launched with landings by U.S. 5th Army at Salerno. X Corps with 7th Armoured Division, 46th Infantry Division, 56th Infantry Division and 23rd Armoured Brigade land on left side of bay. 36th U.S. Infantry Division under command of VI U.S. Corps lands on right.
- 10th September 45th U.S. Infantry Division lands at Salerno.
- 10th September 167th Infantry Brigade captures Battipaglia, the 169th Infantry Brigade captures Montecorino Airfield, the 46th Infantry Division reaches Vietri and 36th U.S. Infantry Division secure Altavilla.
- 13th September German forces from 16th Panzer Division and 29th Panzer Grenadier Division commence a counter attack between the 36th U.S. Infantry Division and 45th U.S. Infantry Division. German units reach the confluence of the Sele and Calore rivers, but find there is no bridge by which to cross.
- 14th September The 26th Panzer Division commences a counter attack against X Corps with 16th Panzer Division and 29th Panzer Division attacking along the River Sele. The 56th Infantry Division holds Battipaglia. Scale of battle increases and naval bombardment stepped up. Consideration given to withdrawal of Allied forces, but discounted.

14 th September	Units from 82 nd U.S. Airborne Division dropped on the beachhead at Salerno to reinforce the defenders.
15 th September	Units from the 7 th Armoured Division begin landing at Salerno.
16 th September	H.M.S. Warspite hit by radio controlled glider bomb and forced to withdraw from Salerno Bay.
17 th September	Units from XIII Corps (8 th Army) and U.S. 5 th Army meet at Agropoli. German forces start to withdraw from the Salerno area. Allied air supremacy over southern Italy gained.
18 th September	3 rd U.S. Infantry Division lands at Salerno to join U.S. IV Corps.
30 th September	Naples captured by Allied troops.
3 rd October	No. 3 (Army) Commando and 40 Royal Marines Commando land at Termoli on the Adriatic coast and seize the town. The 36 th Infantry Brigade is also landed at Termoli.
4 th October	German forces launch a violent counter attack to regain Termoli, fierce fighting ensues.
5 th October	A Bailey Bridge is erected across the River Biferno allowing armoured units to cross and support the beleaguered defenders of Termoli.
11 th October	Units from the 7 th Armoured Division manage to establish a bridgehead across the River Volturno.
13 th October	The Kingdom of Italy declares war on Germany.
14 th October	Canadian units enter Campobasso.
19 th October	The 46 th Infantry Division and 56 th Infantry Division both cross the River Volturno and advance up the west coast.
9 th November	Units of the 8 th Army reach the River Sangro. The 78 th Infantry Division and 8 th Indian Infantry Division both gain bridgeheads across the river.
11 th November	The 56 th Infantry Division launch their first assault on Monte Camino, which was repulsed. The position is taken only after severe fighting.

- 30th November After meeting severe opposition, the 78th Infantry Division and 8th Indian Infantry Division finally breach the German line at the Sangro, and continue their advance to Chieti.
- December The 1st Canadian Infantry Division and 2nd New Zealand Division relieve the 78th Infantry Division and attack Orsogna. Nine days of bitter fighting results, but the Canadians and New Zealanders eventually force the German parachute units to withdraw from the town.
- December U.S. II Corps becomes operational and a reorganization of Allied forces on the western side of the Italy takes place as units close up to the Gustav Line.
- 1944**
- 4th January 1944 First Cassino offensive commenced. The French Expeditionary Corps launched an attack through the hills to the north west of Filignano. They gained significant ground, capturing the town of Aquafondata, and threatened Atina. This placed French forces about four miles from Cassino.
- The U.S. II Corp's advance was headed by 'Task Force Allen' from the 1st U.S. Armored Division. They captured Mount Porchia, but then lost it in a counter attack.
- 9th January 'Task Force Allen' eventually secure Mount Porchia.
- 15th January Regiments from the 34th U.S. Division and 36th U.S. Division attack Mount Trocchio and reach the Rapido River.
- 17th January X Corps cross the River Garigliano and manage to make steady progress to Minturno and Castelforte.
- 20th – 21st January Two regiments from 36th U.S. Division attempt to cross the Rapido River, but fail to establish a strong foothold. On the evening of 21st January 1944, another attempt is made, but meets fierce resistance causing severe casualties.
- 22nd January U.S. VI Corps – 1st (British) Infantry Division, 3rd U.S. Infantry Division, 1st Special Service Force (U.S.) and The Rangers (U.S.) land at Anzio.
- The 34th U.S. Infantry Division and 36th U.S. Infantry Division both force a crossing of the Rapido River and advance towards Monte Cassino. The 34th U.S. Infantry Division make significant progress, and with great bravery, reach the upper slopes around the back of the Monastery.

Determined German resistance, bad weather and sheer exhaustion meant the advance ground to a halt. The 36th U.S. Infantry Division secure the outskirts of Cassino town.

24 th January	Elements of 1 st U.S. Armored Division (Combat Command A) land at Anzio to join U.S. VI Corps.
29 th January	British and American forces make steady progress inland from the Anzio beachhead.
3 rd February	The German forces launch a major counter-attack against the Anzio beachhead. The British units are forced from the village of Aprilia and Carroceto, but, the Germans are held short of the beach.
4 th February	168 th Infantry Brigade (from 56 th (London) Infantry Division) lands at Anzio and immediately goes into action in support of 1 st Infantry Division to counter offensive by German XIV Army.
15 th February	The New Zealand Corps, comprising the 2 nd New Zealand Division, 4 th Indian Infantry Division and 78 th Infantry Division, having assumed responsibility for the Cassino sector, orders the Monastery to be destroyed by bombing. The Indians assault Monte Cassino, and the New Zealanders attempt to clear the town. Again, the walls of the Monastery are reached through brave determination by small groups and individuals, but they fail to hold onto the ground gained.
16 th February	The German 14 th Army makes a determined assault on the positions held by the 45 th U.S. Infantry Division at Anzio. Four days of fierce fighting resulted before the Germans pulled back having again failed to get through to the beach.
15 th March	The third battle of Cassino commences, with another aerial bombardment followed by another assault on the hills around Cassino and in the town. Again, little ground was gained against stubborn German resistance.
26 th March	The 4 th Indian Infantry Division, having sustained a large number of casualties, is withdrawn from the front line. The 78 th Infantry Division replaces the 4 th Indian Division.
April – May	Allied forces at Anzio and in the Cassino sectors reorganize, with new divisions deployed in Italy. The II Polish Corps takes over at Cassino, and a strong XIII Corps in the Liri Valley.

11 th May	The fourth offensive to break the ‘Gustav Line’ commenced. The French Corps made significant progress, that began to outflank the German defences in the Cassino area. American troops make progress along the coast, and the 8 th Indian Infantry Division makes progress up the Liri Valley.
16 th May	II Polish Corps begin assaulting Monte Cassino.
18 th May	II Polish Corps capture Monte Cassino, and raise the Polish flag over the Monastery. This allows XIII Corps to advance further up the Liri Valley.
20 th May	American troops capture Gaeta, Itri and Fondi.
22 nd /23 rd May	Units within the Anzio beachhead begin to breakout towards advancing Allied troops.
25 th May	Troops from VI U.S. Corps and II U.S. Corps meet up near Borgo Grappa. Cisterna falls to Allied troops, and German troops commence falling back.
28 th May	Canadian troops capture Pontecorvo.
4 th June	American units enter Rome.
10 th June	Italian Liberation Corps becomes operational under Allied command, and captures L’Aquila on 13 th June.
18 th June	Assisi captured.
24 th June	XIII Corps attack the west shore of Lake Trasimeno, whilst X Corps attack along the eastern shore of the lake, both moving towards Florence. The Americans take Follonica.
1 st July	Florence declared an ‘Open City’.
8 th July	8 th Army commences battle to secure the port of Ancona.
18 th July	Ancona captured by the II Polish Corps and Italian Liberation Corps.
5 th August	The southern bank of the River Arno is now in Allied control.
11 th August	8 th Army crosses the River Cesano, while the U.S. 5 th Army takes Florence.
25 th /26 th August	8 th Army launches Operation ‘Olive’, crossing the Metauro River with the I Canadian Corps and 46 th Infantry Division in the lead for Allied forces.

31 st August	The Foglia River is crossed.
3 rd September	The Canadians cross the Conca River. The 1 st Armoured Division assaults the Coriano Ridge.
12 th September	U.S. II Corps launch their attack on the 'Gothic Line', with the 34 th U.S. Infantry Division forcing the Futa Pass.
18 th September	85 th U.S. Infantry Division and 91 st U.S. Infantry Division force the Giogo Pass, and Futa Pass also falls to American troops.
21 st September	The Canadians and 3 rd Greek Mountain Brigade capture Rimini after prolonged, determined fighting.
1 st October	U.S. 5 th Army launches another attack on the 'Gothic Line', with the whole of the U.S. II Corps, reinforced by the 78 th Infantry Division and 6 th South African Armoured Division.
19 th October	Mount Grande captured by the 88 th U.S. Infantry Division, but the nearby village of Vedriano held out against determined American assaults.
26 th October	Bogged down in deteriorating weather, and slowed down by strong continuing German resistance, U.S. 5 th Army ends the offensive only some 4 miles from Highway 9 and the north Italian plain.
27 th October	II Polish Corps continues the advance of 8 th Army on the Adriatic coast, capturing the town of Castrocaro.
9 th November	V Corps takes Forli.
4 th December	Ravenna captured by 8 th Army, after II Polish Corps crosses the Lamone and Senio Rivers.
16 th December	Faenza captured by 8 th Army, but, the advance of 8 th Army is now reaching its limit with troops exhausted and supply lines stretched in poor weather.
End of December	Allied Armies in Italy cease offensive operations.
25 th December	German and Axis Italian forces counter-attack the Allies in the vicinity of the Serchio River. The U.S. IV Corps bears the brunt of the Axis attacks, with the 92 nd U.S. Infantry Division falling back under the sustained assaults.

End of December	8 th Indian Infantry Division is directed to stem the German advance, which soon peters out.
1945	
9 th April	8 th Army commences the final offensive, crossing the Senio River and reaching Highway 16. The 56 th Infantry Division crosses Lake Comacchio, supported by the 2 nd Commando Brigade to force the Argenta Gap.
14 th April	U.S. 5 th Army launches their offensive, delayed due to poor weather, towards Modena and Bologna. U.S. IV Corps makes good progress, supported by U.S. II Corps on its right.
Mid-April	German forces begin to collapse, the American forces driving towards Highway 9 and 8 th Army up the Adriatic coast. They meet at the Panaro River, trapping most of the German LXXVI Panzer Corps.
21 st April	Bologna captured by II Polish Corps.
25 th April	88 th U.S. Infantry Division takes Verona.
29 th April	German Forces in Italy surrender unconditionally at Caserta.
2 nd May	Hostilities cease in Italy. The end of the Italian campaign.
4 th May	Troops from U.S. 5 th Army and from U.S. 7 th Army meet up at the Brenner Pass joining the European and Mediterranean Theatres of Operations.
May – June	British forces secure Trieste, but a dispute arises with Yugoslavia over the sovereignty of Trieste. American and British forces advance into Austria to establish Allied control of the country.