

# OPERATION CITADEL AND THE RED ARMY'S ADVANCE WEST.

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# THESIS

In 1943, Germany's strategic defeat in Operation Citadel, the last major German offensive against the Soviets on the Eastern Front, was precipitated by Hitler's indecisiveness and a lack of reserves, ultimately ending German dominance on the Eastern Front.

# BACKGROUND INFO:

- Operation Citadel was a German offensive against Soviets in 1943.
- Took place in the Kursk Salient on the Eastern Front
- Initiated the Battle of Kursk
- Was the last German offensive against the Soviets on the Eastern Front.

# KEY INFORMATION

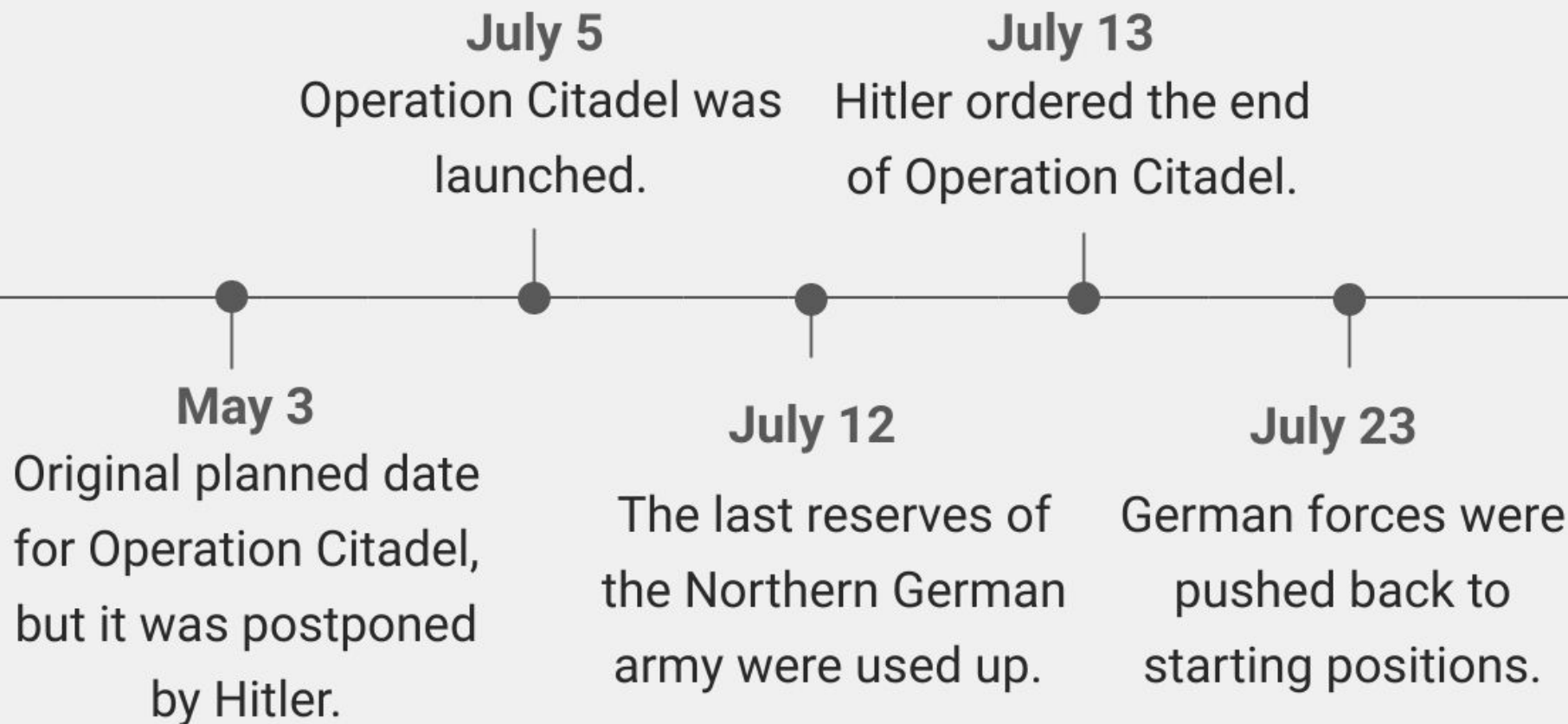
- Goal: recover German initiative, restore prestige, and reduce the Kursk Salient.
- Operation Barbarossa and Battle of Stalingrad had weakened Germany.
- The delay gave Soviets time to prepare.
- Known as the greatest tank battle of all time.



# German Military Strategy

- Two blitzkrieg armor-led pincer attacks at the north and south would converge and surround Soviet forces at Kursk.
- German 9th Panzer Army, aka Army Group Center, came from the north
- German 4th Panzer Army, aka Army Group South, came from the south.

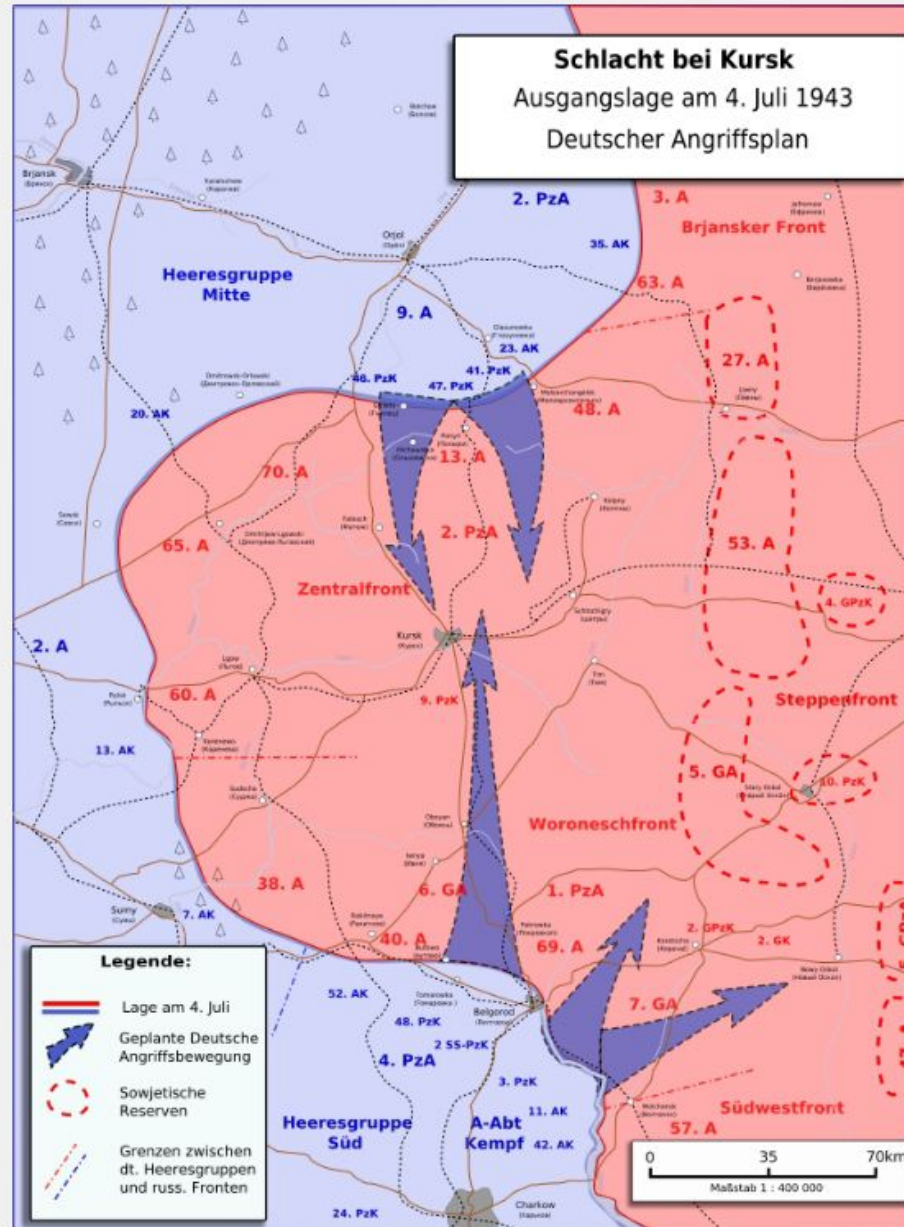
# TIMELINE - 1943



# Schlacht bei Kursk

## Ausgangslage am 4. Juli 1943

### Deutscher Angriffsplan





# Russian Military Strategy

- Soviets prepare 6 trench lines of 3 to 5 trenches each, and 6 Soviet armies were held in reserve
- Massive network of field shields, mines, and anti-tank guns.
- Russians significantly outnumbered Germans
- VERY PREPARED





# IMPORTANT PEOPLE:

## Erich Von Manstein:

Field Marshal, Commanding German Army Group South during Operation Citadel.



Georgy Zhukov: Red Army General and served as a cavalry commander. Controlled the Soviet Forces in Kursk.



# Soviet Advantage



## Mass

The German army did not have the mass it needed to defeat the Soviet defenses.



## Economy of Force

The Germans left the entire Eastern Front open to the subsequent Soviet counterattack.



## Unity of Command

It was not clear who was making decisions for the German army.



## Security

The British cracked the German enigma code, and passed the information on to the Soviets

# Red Army Advancement

-Over the next month, the Russians pushed Germans back on both fronts.

-Much of German army moved towards Southern Italy in order to block Western powers, this left room for the Soviets to advance west towards Germany



# Results

- The Soviets protected their ground and the Germans were unable to progress further into the East.
- Germany was defeated and lost all chances of recovering initiative on the Eastern Front.

# How was Germany defeated?

- Germany was tactically superior, but delay in launching gave Russia time to prepare
- Germany lacked reserves and was heavily outnumbered by Russia
- Momentum lost when Hitler heard Americans and British had invaded Sicily, and he wanted to stop the Allies from taking Italy.

# Final Analysis

Operation Citadel, the last of many German offensives in Russia, was critical to the outcome of World War II. It allowed the Soviets to make advancements into Germany that would eventually lead the war to a close.

# Crossword

At each table group, you have one crossword sheet.  
Work together to fill it out.

Raise your hand when finished.

First group finished with accurate answers will win a  
pack of seaweed to share!



# Works Cited

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