The History of the Twentieth Century
Episode 429
"The Fall of Rome"
Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

The coming of spring in 1944 heralded a new Allied offensive in Italy. The goal was still to break the Gustav Line and liberate the country, yes, but now also to draw German resources and attention away from Normandy.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening War Theme]

Episode 429. The Fall of Rome.

Today I want to return to the Italian front. The last time we looked in on events there was in episode 416, when I told you about the amphibious landings near the Italian town of Anzio, and the Allied offensive of January through March of 1944.

This offensive failed in its goal, to break through the German defensive line, known as the Gustav Line, and is notable today mostly for the awful decision to bomb the historic monastery at Monte Cassino, because somebody thought the Germans might be there. They weren't, but it was full of civilians seeking refuge. The bombing destroyed the monastery and killed about 200 of those civilians. After the survivors fled the site, the German Army then moved into the ruins and used them as a defensive position.

The Italian front, including the beachhead at Anzio, remained relatively quiet for the following three months, as both sides rebuilt and resupplied their front-line units. Here the Allies had an advantage, because they now had air supremacy and used it to make it impossible for the Germans to move soldiers or supplies by day.

The Allies faced no such obstacle in building up their own forces, including strengthening the force on the Anzio beachhead. The original landing force was one American division and one British division. By May 1944, it had become five American divisions and three British divisions totaling 150,000 soldiers, with five German divisions opposing them.

But the Germans were defending the Gustav Line with skill and tenacity, and months of bloody, inconclusive fighting had sapped Allied morale. Both the British and American armies experienced high rates of desertions and self-inflicted wounds, signs of soldiers desperate to get away from the fighting, whatever the cost.

The overall commander of this front, British General Harold Alexander, began planning a new offensive to begin in May. The spring weather would be more favorable for an offensive, but more important, pressure on the Gustav Line would prevent the Germans from redeploying units in Italy to France when Operation Overlord began.

Not that Alexander knew exactly when Overlord would launch. No one knew that, not even Dwight Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force. Preparations were going according to plan. The British government set up a training area on the Channel coast of Devonshire, because the beach there was deemed similar to Utah Beach in Normandy, one of the American landing sites. American forces rehearsed their landings. In the early morning hours of April 28, as a convoy of American landing craft approached the beach for a training exercise, they came under attack from a squadron of six German fast torpedo boats based in Cherbourg that were patrolling the Channel when they spotted these unusual ships and correctly guessed they were watching an American landing exercise.

They attacked, sinking two of the American landing ships and damaging two more, in a battle that lasted two hours before the Germans withdrew. Over 700 American soldiers and sailors died. Many of the soldiers drowned under the weight of their heavy packs; others from hypothermia in the chill Channel waters.

Apart from the loss of lives, the Americans lost four valuable landing ships, the exercise had tipped off the Germans that the invasion would soon begin, and worst of all, ten officers reported missing had personal knowledge of details of the landings and were carrying sensitive documents. And the German boats had been seen probing the site of the attack with their searchlights. If the Germans had found any of these ten officers, dead or alive, the entire operation would have to be revised and rescheduled. Fortunately for the Allies, search teams found and recovered all ten of the bodies. This incident was kept secret until after the invasion began.

By this time, April 1944, the units that would participate in the initial landings had been notified and moved to secure barracks. British General Bernard Montgomery was exceptionally skilled at inspiring his soldiers, but when he appeared personally before the British Durham Light Infantry Regiment to tell them they would be in the vanguard of the invasion, the unit let out a collective groan. They had fought under Montgomery's command from El Alamein through Tunisia, Sicily, and Italy, before being withdrawn back to England to prepare for Overlord. The widely held view among these soldiers was that they had done their bit, and some of these other units in England, the ones that had yet to leave the country, should have the honor.

The US 1st Infantry Division, known as the Big Red One, reacted in a similar way when they heard the news. They'd been part of the Operation Torch landings, had fought across Africa to Tunisia, then Sicily and Italy, and felt they deserved a break. But they were at this moment the highest-rated division in the US Army. Montgomery was in command of all Allied ground forces landing in Normandy, and he wanted the first wave to consist of the best soldiers the Allies had to offer, and that meant units like the Durham Light Infantry and the Big Red One, no matter how unfair it seemed to the soldiers themselves.

Dwight Eisenhower, the man in charge of Overlord, remained cheerful and approachable, but behind the façade, he had to have been a nervous wreck, and he was smoking four packs of cigarettes every day. But he was the one in command, the one who had to take all the biggest decisions. All he could do was make them according to his best judgment, and if he judged wrongly, he would bear the responsibility for failure.

Eisenhower combined the skills of an accountant, a manager, and a diplomat, and he put them all to good use. Like any good commander, he prepared for every contingency, even drafting in secret a statement to be released if the invasion failed. It ended with these words: "The troops, the air, and navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt, it is mine alone."

One of the biggest decisions Eisenhower had to make was setting the date for the invasion. This decision depended on one crucial variable that was not amenable to any degree of organization, review, or planning: the weather.

In our day, weather forecasts are remarkably reliable, at least to this old guy. In my youth, weather forecasts were not nearly so accurate. In fact, making fun of the weather forecast was a well from which every comedian drew, from the most popular entertainers of the day, down to the wag at the water cooler. "Did you see yesterday we got an inch and a half of 'Sunny, becoming warmer?'" That kind of thing.

Modern computing power is what makes modern weather forecasting possible. More powerful computers allow for more complex models. When I was young, computers were much simpler, and so were the models. They were also far more prone to inaccuracy.

In 1944, no one had a digital electronic computer available to crunch the numbers and produce a forecast. They had their models, sure, but the best atmospheric models of the day, primitive though they were by our standards, were so complex that it took weeks to calculate by hand tomorrow's forecast, which is not terribly useful. The best forecasting of the time was a mix of modeling and guesswork.

Other timing considerations included the time of day, the tide, and the phase of the moon. The ideal set of conditions would include a landing shortly before dawn, between low tide and high

tide, with the tide coming in, and a full moon to improve visibility. This set of conditions only occurs a few days every month.

After several delays, Eisenhower set a tentative invasion date of June 5, but this was subject to the weather, which could only be known a few days in advance, if it could be known even then. The job of monitoring the weather and preparing forecasts for Operation Overlord was in the hands of three teams. The first was the Meteorological Office, which was the civilian government agency that produced weather forecasts in the United Kingdom. The other two teams consisted of military meteorologists from the Royal Navy and from the United States Army Air Forces.

These three teams all reported to the 39-year-old British meteorologist Dr. James Stagg, formerly of the Meteorological Office, now a group captain in the RAF. Stagg reported to Eisenhower.

Getting the forecast right was crucial, due in no small part to the notoriously fickle and sometimes treacherous weather conditions over the Channel. Rough seas could swamp landing craft or send ashore their soldiers in a dizzy and discombobulated state. Low clouds or poor visibility would not allow the Allies to make use of their massive advantage in air power to bomb and strafe German defenders.

One British general quipped to Stagg, "Good luck…but remember we'll string you up from the nearest lamp post if you don't read the omens right." I doubt Stagg found the joke very funny. He was well aware of how critical his forecasts would be to the success of Overlord and therefore, the liberation of Europe.

Beginning in April, Eisenhower had Stagg and his teams provide a three-day weather forecast for the Channel on Monday of every week, which would give Eisenhower the opportunity to gauge the accuracy of their forecasting himself. Stagg had to wrestle with the fact that although the three teams working under him all received the same weather data, they often came up with different, even contradictory, forecasts. In particular, the Americans seemed always to come up with a more optimistic forecast than their British colleagues. That's Americans for you.

Even so, the Allied meteorologists had one big advantage over their German counterparts. Allied planes and ships were prowling the North Atlantic and the U-boat threat had largely been eliminated. Weather patterns generally move west to east, which meant that the Allies had a bird's-eye view of the weather headed toward Europe, while the Germans had to operate in the dark.

At this same time in Italy, Allied forces under the command of British General Harold Alexander were preparing for their next offensive against the German Gustav Line, codenamed Operation Diadem. Alexander needed two months to make these preparations because they were conducted secretly, as large numbers of reinforcements took up positions on the Allied front line. To distract the Germans, the Allies employed deception tactics meant to create the impression that

the Americans were going to attempt another amphibious landing similar to the one at Anzio, only this one would hit the beaches north of Rome. Field Marshal Kesselring, the German commander, believed the deception and set units to garrison the coast north of Rome and oppose the invasion that never came.

Among the reinforcements deployed to the front was the Polish II Corps, known as Anders Army. Operation Diadem called for the Poles to undertake the most difficult part of the offensive: surround Monte Cassino and capture what remained of the abbey. This was the task the 4th Indian Division could not carry out during the February offensive. But the Polish corps was twice the size of that Indian unit, and the Poles were positively spoiling for a fight. They understood full well by May of 1944 that their government, the government in exile in London, was losing support and that Stalin was grooming his own Communist government, ready to install in Warsaw as soon as the Red Army took the Polish capital.

The Poles hoped that a strong showing by Anders Army would lend credibility to the government in exile and put it in a stronger position when the time came to organize postwar Europe. Apart from this more abstract incentive, they were eager for payback against the Germans. Polish commanders advised their British superiors that the Poles would not be taking prisoners.

When the offensive began, the Americans were to drive up the coast toward the Anzio beachhead. To their right was the French Expeditionary Corps, then the Polish II Corps, and on the eastern end of the line, the British XIII Corps, part of their Eighth Army. In reserve stood the Canadian I Corps, which included armored units ready to exploit an opening in the enemy line and engage the inevitable German panzer counterattack. This amounted to thirteen divisions in total, including soldiers from ten different nations, but the deception plan had worked so well that Kesselring believed the Allies had only half that force.

Once the offensive was in full swing, and after the Germans brought all their reserves to the front, then Allied units in the Anzio beachhead would go on attack and move inland with the goal of cutting off the German lines of supply and retreat. If everything went according to Alexander's plan, the offensive might succeed in surrounding and capturing the entire German Tenth Army, eliminating most of their front line and opening up Italy for a rapid Allied advance north, possibly as far as the Alps, while the Germans would need to bring in reinforcements to rebuild their front line. These reinforcements would likely need to be drawn from France, just before Eisenhower unleashed Operation Overlord.

The offensive did not go according to plan. US General Mark Clark, commander of the American Fifth Army, the man they called Marcus Aurelius Clarkus, still had his eyes on Rome. To him, Rome was the only objective that mattered, and he suspected that Alexander's battle plan was a sneaky attempt to draw the Americans away from Rome and grant the honor of capturing the ancient city to the British Army.

Never mind that Alexander had expressly assured Clark that he would be the general to take Rome. And never mind orders. Clark was insistent that Rome would be his, and it had to fall before Overlord began.

[music: Verdi, “Triumphal March” from Aïda.

Operation Diadem began just before midnight on May 11, when Allied artillery opened up on the Gustav Line. The eager Poles went on the attack immediately; unfortunately for them, the Germans were in the middle of a midnight shift change, which meant their front line had twice the usual number of soldiers on it. The Poles and an Indian division did manage to cross the River Rapido and establish a bridgehead on the northern bank, though their position was vulnerable to artillery fire from Monte Cassino.

The Americans ran into stiff resistance at the coast. To their right, the French suffered heavy casualties, but with the aid of artillery fire, were able to break through the Gustav Line.

I should pause for a moment to point out that when I speak of these “French” military units, they are French units from North Africa, and many of the soldiers serving in them were Moroccan auxiliaries, known to the French as Goumiers. The Goumiers went into battle dressed in the traditional djellaba, which is a loose-fitting wool robe with colorful vertical stripes, along with sandals and a French helmet.

The Goumiers knew how to use a rifle, but they also carried long knives in their belts, which they sometimes preferred. They were mountain fighters from the Rif, famed for their ferocity. They were known to charge into German positions wielding the knives and overwhelm the enemy in hand-to-hand combat. Afterward, many of the Goumiers used their knives to collect ears from dead German soldiers as trophies. Unfortunately, they were also known to rape and brutalize Italian civilians. War is hell.

The French units advanced faster than either the Americans to their left, or the Polish and British forces to their right, much to the irritation of Mark Clark, who wanted these other units to keep up.

The Poles were up against a German paratrooper division on Monte Cassino. The Germans didn’t do many parachute drops these days, but Luftwaffe paratroopers were still among the best fighters the Germans had. Even so, after a week of heavy fighting and heavy casualties, the Poles dislodged the Germans and on May 18, the Polish flag was raised over the ruins of the abbey.

Kesselring had already ordered the preparation of a fallback position some 20 kilometers northwest of the Gustav Line, but as the Germans fell back, the Goumiers pursued, harassing their retreat. The German commander had no choice but to call in two divisions from the force that was keeping the Allied soldiers at Anzio bottled up to cover their retreat.

This was the trap Alexander had laid for Kesselring. The secretly-reinforced Anzio beachhead now had substantially more soldiers than the German force holding it back. On May 23, General Lucian Truscott, commander of the Anzio force, began his own offensive. Allied forces broke through the German line. Now it was time to close the trap. Alexander ordered Truscott's force to advance northeast and cut off the German retreat and supply lines.

On the 24th, the advancing Americans from the south linked up with the Anzio beachhead. Mark Clark rushed a bevy of reporters and photographers to the front by jeep, so they would be present to record this momentous occasion.

With a little luck, Alexander's plan might have allowed the Allies to surround and trap the entire German Army in Italy. But luck was not with Alexander, or perhaps I should say, Mark Clark was not with Alexander. On the 25th, Truscott believed his forces would take Route 6, the remaining German line of retreat, the next day. With victory just 24 hours away, a dumbfounded Truscott received new orders from General Clark. He was to turn his units to the northwest, away from the Germans, and advance on Rome. Truscott at first refused to proceed with the new plan until he could discuss it with Clark personally by radio, but, unable to contact the general, he reluctantly followed the order, and proceeded northwest, now reinforced by Clark's units advancing up the coast. The Germans were able to hold Route 6 open long enough to escape the trap.

By May 29, the Americans had advanced to the final German defensive line before Rome. At first it looked as if the offensive was over and the Allies should prepare for a few more months of static positions. But the following day, an American unit found a gap in the German line and advanced through it, forcing a German withdrawal. The advance on Rome resumed.

At 10:00 Friday morning, June 2, Stagg presented to Eisenhower the latest weather reports. They were not promising. The first day's landings at Normandy were codenamed Operation Neptune, and the first phase of Neptune, Royal Navy warships leaving Scapa Flow for the Channel, had already begun.

At that same meeting, the commander of the Allied Expeditionary Air Force, Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, who was British, if you couldn't guess, described his plan to bomb French towns and villages in order to slow the approach of German reinforcements to Normandy. He asked for approval of this plan while also acknowledging it would lead to substantial numbers of French civilian casualties. Eisenhower approved the plan as an "operational necessity," civilian deaths notwithstanding. He did agree to a plan to drop leaflets ahead of time, warning French civilians to evacuate.

Leigh-Mallory also exhibited some last-minute anxiety about the airborne landings that would be part of the invasion. At the last minute, he went to Eisenhower and urged him to call off these landings, predicting the paratroopers would be massacred. Eisenhower was irritated by Leigh-

Mallory's sudden case of cold feet, but he listened to the Air Chief Marshal's concerns before rejecting them.

Another big concern was one of the landing sites for the Americans, the one designated Omaha Beach. At the request of American General Omar Bradley, whose troops would be the ones landing at Omaha, a British reconnaissance team of two men traveled to Normandy by submarine in January, then swam ashore late at night to take samples from the beach to determine if it was suitable for tanks. This was dangerous work, and the team was almost discovered, but they managed to make it back to England safely.

Upon their return, the team leader was whisked to London and made to appear before a board of six admirals and five generals, which must have been almost as scary as the reconnaissance mission. One of the generals was Omar Bradley, who peppered him with detailed questions about the properties of the beach. The team leader had something of his own to say to Bradley: "Sir, I hope you don't mind my saying it, but this beach is a very formidable proposition indeed and there are bound to be tremendous casualties."

Bradley put his hand on the man's shoulder and said, "I know, my boy. I know." Everyone knew that Omaha would be the deadliest landing, but it would also be the bridge between the American and British beaches. To avoid landing at Omaha might allow the Germans to drive a wedge between the two armies and potentially force a withdrawal, so Omaha it would be, regardless of the danger.

Allied soldiers began boarding the landing ships that would take them to France by Friday evening. The exact date of Overlord was a close secret, but the soldiers knew something was up when their officers began playing music over the PA systems and handing out 24-hour passes, and the mess began serving up extra dessert. One British soldier described it as being fattened up for the slaughter.

The soldiers had had to travel from their encampments in southern England to the ships, but it was impossible to keep the movement of so many soldiers and vehicles a secret. British civilians lined the roads to wave as soldiers of a dozen nations rode or marched past. Some wept, others handed out tea and cakes, quite contrary to military protocol. Relations between American soldiers and British civilians had not always been smooth, but when the Americans went off, the British cried for them, too. One American soldier wrote that the British "cried just as if they were our parents. It was quite a touching thing for us."

As the ships loaded Friday evening, Group Captain Stagg was speaking through one of the special land-line telephones fitted with green handsets to indicate they used scramblers. He was collecting information and conclusions from the three meteorological groups. Stagg would be meeting with Eisenhower at 9:30 that evening and Eisenhower would want to know the consensus forecast for the next few days. The problem was that, as usual, there was no consensus.

There was nothing for it but to go ahead and meet with the general with what he had. When Eisenhower asked, Stagg discounted American optimism and passed along the views of the more pessimistic Britons. The weather was becoming unsettled and changing for the worse all the way from the British Isles to Newfoundland. A puzzled Eisenhower looked out the window at a clear sky and a beautiful rose sunset. He asked Stagg how the weather would likely look on June 6 or 7. Stagg told him any answer he might offer would be only a guess, and a proper meteorological officer didn't give his superiors guesses.

In Italy, Kesselring ordered a German withdrawal from Rome, on instructions from the *Führer* himself, who told Kesselring he did not want another Stalingrad. The *Führer* neglected to order the destruction of the city. This may have been out of respect for Rome's historic buildings and exquisite art, or because it slipped his mind while his attention was focused on the Atlantic Wall. It's hard to say.

The following morning, Saturday June 3, Stagg received a grim report from the lighthouse at Blacksod Point, virtually the westernmost point in Ireland: force six winds, low clouds, and barometer falling, information that indicated a storm was brewing. Eisenhower ordered a 24-hour postponement of the invasion, even though outside his headquarters, the evening sky was clear and the air still.

That same night, the Associated Press erroneously reported that the Allied invasion force had landed in France. The AP pulled the story twenty minutes later, but by then it had already been broadcast by Radio Moscow and the CBS radio network in the United States.

As the morning sun rose over England on Sunday morning, June 4, the order went out to recall the convoys that were already at sea. Royal Navy destroyers sliced through the Channel waters at top speed to corral the boats that did not have radios and escort them back to port.

That same sun rose over Rome just as American soldiers entered the city, closely followed by General Mark Clark, whose dream was at last reality. Clark summoned all the war correspondents to a press conference at the Piazza del Campidoglio, the public square at the top of Rome's historic Capitoline Hill, designed by Michelangelo. Clark gave them a great photo-op, and the American capture of Rome, the first capital city in occupied Europe to be liberated, was headline news around the world.

On that Sunday in Britain, Group Captain Stagg felt physically ill. The weather over England remained stubbornly calm. He feared that Overlord had been postponed because he had made a mistake. It was almost a relief later in the day when the winds began to blow and dark clouds approached from the west.

The Luftwaffe had its own meteorological office in Paris, and on June 4, it forecast two weeks of bad weather in the Channel. German Army commanders in France noted the forecast and gave themselves and some of their soldiers leave time. Even Erwin Rommel, commander of the army

group stationed on the Channel coast of France, felt confident enough to return home to Germany on the fifth to celebrate his wife's birthday. Afterward, he intended to continue on to meet with Hitler to request more panzer units for his army group in France.

As fate would have it, that meeting never took place.

At Eisenhower's headquarters in England, by the time of that evening's 9:30 meeting, gusts of wind were slamming heavy drops of rain against the windows. Stagg had been thoroughly vindicated. The generals worried about the ships and the soldiers on them. What was it like to be aboard those ships in this weather? And the aborted beginning of the run to France meant all those vessels had to be refueled.

But just as he had last night, Stagg presented a forecast nothing like what could be seen out the window. The storm cell in the North Atlantic had slowed its march toward the British Isles. That meant it would be delayed and a break in the weather could be expected from Monday afternoon into Tuesday. Conditions would not be ideal, but they would be good enough.

This would be their only opportunity. If Overlord was to begin on Tuesday June 6th, the order would have to be issued this very night. If the weather did not break, and the ships had to be recalled again, it would not be possible to go on Wednesday the 7th. That would mean they would have to wait two weeks until the tides were right again. That would be June 18-20. But then there would be no full moon, meaning decreased visibility for the landings.

In the hallway outside the meeting, nervous staff officers awaited the decision, each bearing two stacks of orders to be signed: one if the invasion was to proceed, the other if it was not. Eisenhower turned to Montgomery and asked what he thought. Montgomery replied, "I would say…Go." Eisenhower gave the order.

The following day, Monday the 5th, the weather did indeed begin to improve. Stagg and the meteorological staff were again vindicated, and Eisenhower's famous grin, which had scarcely been seen the past few days, reappeared.

Early the next morning, June 6, a staff officer in Rome brought Mark Clark the momentous news. The frustrated conqueror of the Eternal City lamented, "How do you like that? They didn't even let us have the newspaper headlines for the fall of Rome for one day."

We'll have to stop there for today. I thank you for listening, and I'd like to thank Brendan and Emma for their kind donations, and thank you to Michelle for becoming a patron of the podcast. Donors and patrons like Brendan and Emma and Michelle help cover the costs of making this show, which in turn keeps the podcast available free for everyone always, so my thanks to them and to all of you who have pitched in and helped out. If you'd like to become a patron or make a donation, you are most welcome; just visit the website, historyofthetwentiethcentury.com and click on the PayPal or Patreon buttons.

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The end of the year holidays are upon us again; this is the time of year when I always remind you that donations and patronages to support *The History of the Twentieth Century* make the perfect holiday gift, for me. This year marked the tenth anniversary of the podcast, so if you'd like to help me celebrate, a donation to the podcast is an excellent way.

Next week is a bye week for the podcast, but I will be releasing a Christmas episode. I promised to do the question-and-answer episode before the end of the year, and so I will, just under the wire. And I hope you'll join me in two weeks' time, here on *The History of the Twentieth Century*, as we ring in the new year by preparing for D-Day. I'll be talking about the strange situation in which Britain and the United States were bombing their own ally. That's in two week's time, here, on *The History of the Twentieth Century.*

Oh, and one more thing. A number of Allied soldiers involved in the breakout from Anzio and the battles along the Gustav Line would go on to fame after the war. I thought I'd tell you about some of them.

A 22-year-old member of a British Army film unit named Alan Whicker would go on to present the documentary series *Whicker's World* on the BBC, which ran from 1965 to 1994.

A BBC reporter, 35-year-old Wynford Vaughan-Thomas, reported on the combat at Anzio. In 1961 he published a book on the subject, titled *Anzio,* which was made into a film with the same title in 1968. The film was an Italian-American co-production, distributed by Columbia Pictures and starring Robert Mitchum and Peter Falk.

I should also mention war correspondent Ernie Pyle, whom I've talked about before. He was present during the fighting.

A 22-year-old sergeant, and later lieutenant, in the US Army named John Vessey served at Anzio. From 1982-1985, General Vessey served as Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Sergeant Audie Murphy, just 18 years old, won two Bronze Stars during the fighting in Italy. He would go on to win a Medal of Honor in France and become the most decorated American soldier of the war.

Cartoonist Bill Mauldin, 23 years old, served at Anzio. His cartoons depicting the life of American soldiers in Italy, which were published in the US Army newspaper *Stars and Stripes*, would make him famous; after the war he became an editorial cartoonist, winning two Pulitzer Prizes for his work.

Christopher Lee, who has appeared in this podcast before, served as a 22-year-old RAF intelligence officer in Italy at the time. Lee went on to a storied career as a film actor that spanned 64years. He appeared in 266 feature films, including 1958's *Dracula*, the 1974 James Bond film *The Man with the Golden Gun*, the Star Wars prequel trilogy, the *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy and *The Hobbit* film trilogy.

Private James Aurness, 21 years old, was part of the original landing at Anzio. He was seriously wounded in the leg. The injury gave him a limp and leg pain that troubled him the rest of his life. After the war, Aurness changed his name to James Arness and became an actor in film and television, best remembered for portraying Matt Dillon on the American TV series *Gunsmoke*, which ran from 1955 to 1975.

In March 1943, the US Army had created a segregated combat unit for Japanese-Americans. Japanese-American soldiers were only permitted to fight in the European Theater, although there was no similar restriction limiting German-Americans or Italian-Americans to the Pacific Theater. This unit was deployed to Italy in May 1944 and participated in the liberation of Rome. One of the soldiers in that unit was an 18-year-old pre-med student from Hawaii, Private Daniel Inouye. He lost his right arm just before the war ended, which also ended his ambition to become a surgeon. In 1959, he became the first US Representative from Hawaii. In 1962, he became a US Senator and served in the Senate for 49 years, until his death in 2012.

I will certainly want to say more about Japanese-American soldiers in a future episode.

[music: Closing War Theme]