

## **The Allied Invasion of Syria-Lebanon (Operation Exporter)**

Between June and July of 1941, Allied forces invaded Vichy France-controlled Syria and Lebanon. The purpose of the invasion was to deny Germany a Middle Eastern staging area for attacks on Egypt, a crucial Allied stronghold, especially after the fall of Iraq to forces under the command of a pro-German rebel named Rashid Ali. After some initial air skirmishes in May, the ground offensive began on June 8 with an advance on Beirut from Palestine. Vichy French air forces were decimated during the campaign, despite a comparative superiority at the outset of fighting. On July 10, just before Beirut collapsed, the Vichy commander (Henri Dentz, Commander in Chief of the Army of the Levant) negotiated a ceasefire, effective midnight July 12. Two days later, the Armistice of Saint Jean D'Acre effectively ended Operation Exporter.

