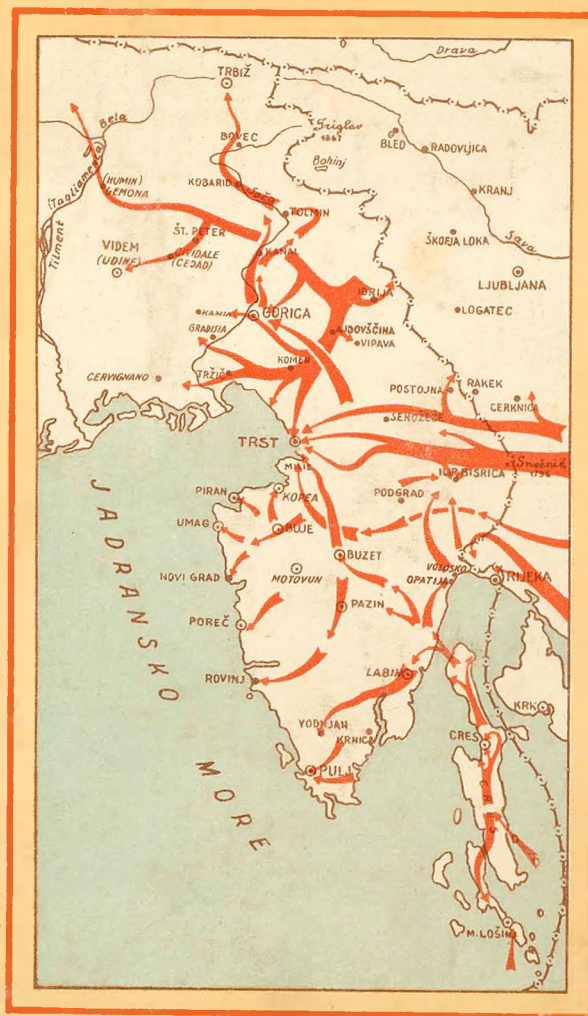


THE WAR EFFORT

OF THE PEOPLE OF THE JULIAN MARCH FOR
THEIR LIBERATION AND UNION TO YUGOSLAVIA



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THE WAR EFFORT OF THE PEOPLE OF THE JULIAN MARCH FOR THEIR LIBERATION AND UNION TO YUGOSLAVIA

By the Peace Treaty signed after the First World War a grievous injustice was done to the people of the Julian March, for it meant that a large part of the Slovene and Croat nations were forcibly torn away from their brothers in Yugoslavia. Italy never respected the rights of minorities in the Julian March, and, when Fascism assumed power in Italy, Fascist Italy endeavoured by all possible means to achieve the complete extinction of the Slovene and Croat minorities, depriving them of even the most elementary rights. These attempts met with the resolute resistance of the population of the Julian March, which had to wage a bitter struggle for its very national existence, and, through this struggle, strengthened and stealed its own ranks.

When war broke out in 1939, the people of the Julian March started an armed struggle for their rights. A powerful movement was organised in cooperation with the Italian antifascists.

The centre of the movement was Trieste. Its activity was first felt in Trieste and the Triestine Province and subsequently spread to the provinces of Gorizia, Fiume, Udine and Pola, and thus involved the entire territory of the Julian March.

Simultaneously with the setting up of a political resistance organisation a strong military organisation also developed, with centres throughout Julian March territory. These centres served as a meeting place for the adherents of the movement, where they improved their military knowledge. They also sheltered ammunition, explosives and other dumps.

The first actions on a larger scale started as far back as 1940. Thus on February the 25th 1940, the military stores in Klana were set on fire and destroyed, and a considerable quantity of guns, mortars, machine-guns and about a million rounds of ammunition were destroyed. On June the 25th, the first railway line demolition was carried out against the Villach—Udine line in the neighbourhood of Tarvisio.

A number of actions, both on a small and on a larger scale, were carried out in the factories, against larger industrial works, lines of communication etc.

After Italy's treacherous attack on Yugoslavia in April, 1941, a general uprising of the Julian March population for the liberation of their homeland and its union to Yugoslavia took place. Throughout the Julian March, committees of the Liberation Front were set up. When the Partisan Forces in Yugoslavia sent out their call for an armed uprising against the occupation forces, and when this call reached the Julian March through the Slovene Partisan leaders, armed resistance in the Julian March was already in full swing. In September 1941, several small Partisan groups were operating in the area, linking up the political organisations of the Liberation Front, at the same time as they were carrying on their sabotage activity. The most important actions were the demolitions carried out against the St. Peter—Fiume and Postumia—Triest lines, and the destruction of electric poles.

A great number of Italians took part in these actions, alongside the Slovenes and the Croats. The first Italian combattants came from Trieste.

The fact that the forming of armed Partisan units had started inside Italy's borders, constituted a very serious danger for Fascist Italy. In order to counteract this danger, the fascist leaders staged a »monster trial« before the Special Military Court in Rome. Seventy Slovenes, some of whom had belonged to the armed detachments, were brought before the court. They were accused of having taken an active part in a movement, the purpose of which was to unite all the minority elements in the Julian March and start a general armed uprising. They were further accused of having organised armed groups for the furtherance of the above purpose, groups which had undergone weapon training, training in the handling of ammunition and high explosives and carried out actions against communications, railways, military and industrial objectives etc. The prosecution also stated that five large arms, ammunition and high explosives dumps and a wireless transmitter had been discovered. The organisation, according to the prosecution, maintained connections with Yugoslavia and certain other foreign countries. The leaders of the organisation were Slovene intellectuals, students, workers and artisans from Triest, Gorizia, Fiume and Pola. The Center was in Triest and the organisation embraced the whole of the Julian March. Finally, the prosecution asserted that a series of sabotage actions against military objectives, demolitions and acts of arson had been committed. It was emphasised that the organisation had been active on a large scale ever since 1940 and that its origin was to be sought in the resistance of the population, which goes back to 1918.

The Fascist leaders hoped that by this trial, in the course of which the existence of a resistance movement and of armed actions was disclosed, they would deal the resistance movement a decisive blow. At the same time, further military forces were sent to the Julian March, and no effort was spared in order to quell the people's movement, and above all to annihilate the Partisan groups which were the kernel of the resistance movement.

The first Partisan groups were composed of volunteers drawn from among the native population, Slovenes and Croats. These small groups, the activity of which involved the whole of Julian March territory, were closely linked up among themselves, as well as being connected with the leaders of the Slovene Partisan units.

Despite the passing of mass sentences, of persecution and mass internment, despite the increasing scope of enemy military operations, armed resistance was constantly gaining in momentum. In the beginning of 1942, the Italians were obliged to start military operations on a more considerable scale, such as the »cleaning« operations on the Nanos, in which 5.000 Italian troops took part. This action was unsuccessful, armed resistance became even more powerful and spread to still further parts of the Julian March. It was then that the first major partisan actions were undertaken on the right bank of the Isonzo, in the Brda and in Venetian Slovenia. There was considerable activity in Istria too, where acts of sabotage and other similar actions, particularly in the factories, were becoming increasingly frequent.

In the spring of 1942, several Partisan groups were operating on Julian March territory and the first Partisan battalion, called after the poet Simon Gregorich, was formed on the Nanos. The battalion consisted of volunteers and of one company of Slovenes from the Coastal Region, who had crossed over from Slovenia. The company commander was Mile Spacapan and the commissar Joko Platisa, both from the Coastal Region. In Istria, the first Istrian company was formed in 1942 in a forest on the Planik, in addition to the existing numerous Partisan groups. By the end of the year, this company had carried out a series of actions. In order to put an end to the resistance movement, the Italian authorities embarked upon operations of the kind which they were already carrying out in other parts of Yugoslavia. They started to set villages on fire, to murder and deport the population in masses. In July 1942, the village of Ustje, near

Ajdovstina in the Vipava Valley, was burnt down. In the course of August 1942, six other villages were burnt down in the same valley, while the inhabitants were sent to concentration camps.

All these measures, far from subduing the wide masses of the people in the Julian March, only still further kindled the flames of their armed resistance. Growing numbers of people flowed into the Partisan units, while the soldiers, who were sent home on leave, practically all deserted. Even the soldiers of Julian March origin, who were serving in the Italian Army, joined in the resistance movement of their fellow-countrymen. On the Eastern and on the North African front, they began deserting in masses. Distrustful of these soldiers from the Julian March, the Italian Government deprived them of their weapons and sent them to concentration camps in Sardinia and Southern Italy, into the so-called »Special battalions«. Owing to the influx of fresh volunteers and to the arrival of a small group of Slovene Partisans from the Loshki detachment, the »Soshki detachment« was formed in October 1942, from these groups as well as from the »Simon Gregorchich« battalion.

Towards the end of 1942, the Italian units (allegedly the Giulia Division), which had been intentionally detained on their way to the Eastern Front, started a large-scale offensive against the Banjska Planota and the Vipava Valley. Three actions, in which 20.000 Italian troops were involved, were carried out. It was then that the Italians set up strong-points along the communications and endeavoured to make them as impregnable as possible. Outside these strong-points, Italian patrols only ventured in considerable strength.

At that time two Italian Army Corps were stationed on Julian March territory (the 23rd in Udine and the 24th in Triest), while the »Veneto« and »Novara« and, later, the »Torino« and »Giulia« divisions, were at the disposal of the Corps. There were also six Fascist Legions, the »Leggione Territoriale CC. RR«, with five groups of Carabinieri, frontier units, the railroad, harbour and forest militias, the total strength of which amounted to approximately 80.000 men. In addition to the above units, others were also used in the fighting against the Partisans.

The Italian authorities resorted to mass terrorism, to the burning of villages, to the interning of the population, they even mobilised boys of fifteen into the »Special Battalions« in their attempt to render all resistance impossible. The 1927, 1928 and 1929 classes were mobilised. Nobody obeyed the mobilisation order. The Fascists therefore carried out their mobilisation for the special battalions by surrounding the villages and leading all the male inhabitants away.

These measures only lead to a new flow of recruits into the Partisan ranks. Particularly large numbers arrived from Triest and Gorizia, as well as from the towns in Istria. The influx of new volunteers into the Partisan units was so great, that part of them had to be transferred across the frontier to Slovene and Croat brigades, owing to the shortage of weapons. In the winter of 1942-43, about 7.000 fighting men from the Julian March joined the brigades in Slovenia and Croatia.

The part played by the population of Triest and Monfalcone in this period, was particularly significant. The men and women of Triest not only joined the Partisan units in very large numbers, but also gathered considerable quantities of food, clothing, footwear and medical supplies, which they sent to the Partisans. Inside the city the number of acts of sabotage carried out in the factories and attacks on prominent fascist personalities, was constantly on the increase. Organised groups had remained in the city, and were intensely active both in the military and the political field. It was thanks to their activity, that it was possible, at the time of Italy's surrender, to form companies and battalions, which immediately entered the struggle in close coordination with our other forces outside the city.

The Partisan units had, until then, mainly confined themselves to ambushing small enemy columns, to railway demolitions and the wrecking of trains. In the beginning of 1943,

the Partisan forces started carrying out attacks on enemy garrisons and fortified positions. The fascist garrison in Trnovski Gozd was attacked, and so was the Zakri strong-point by the II Bn. of the »Soshki Detachment«. After that Dreznica was attacked and liquidated and an attack against military objectives on the Porezen was carried out. Small groups of Partisans used to break into the strong-points, kill the guards and destroy the pill-boxes. Several companies made their way across the Idria river, penetrated into Venetian Slovenia and fought on the Stol, the Drohla and the Mija. One Partisan company advanced over the Kanin into the Rabelj valley and, reinforced by volunteers from the mines, grew into a battalion. A Partisan hospital was set up on the Kanin.

In accordance with the decision of the HQ for Slovenia of February 1943, the »Coastal Area Operations Zone« was set up in the Julian March and placed under the command of the National Hero Mirko Brachich, who was born in Triest, with Dushan Pirjevec, from Gorizia, as commissar. It was composed of the »Northern Coastal Area Detachment« and the »Southern Coastal Area Detachment«.

Immediately afterwards, the 5th and 6th Coastal Brigades were formed. By the creation of brigades, both the striking force of our units and their capacity for manœuvring were increased. The brigades now started launching attacks on stronger enemy garrisons and scored great successes in manœuvre fighting. The emergence of these brigades led the Italians to bring further reinforcements to the Julian March. The operations against our 5th and 6th Brigades in the Brda and Venetian Slovenia area, in which considerable Italian forces took part, were directed by the HQ of the 24th Corps in Udine. The newly formed brigades were given the task to cross the Isonzo river, assist our units on the right bank of the Isonzo, to force their way through to the Udine—Tarvisio railway line, where they were to carry out demolitions and finally assist the population of Furlandy in their antifascist struggle. After heavy fighting on the Kolorat, where one of the most bitter engagements in the course of the uprising in the Julian March took place, on the Matajura, the Miji, the Spik, the Stol and in the vicinity of Stolbice in the Režija Valley. The brigades successfully accomplished their task. The fighting of these brigades on the right bank of the Isonzo was of direct assistance and moral support to the population of Furlandy and Northern Italy in their struggle against Fascism. Extremely important was the breakthrough carried out by one of our companies from April 29th to May 10th 1943, under the command of Major Martin Greif, which took it as far as Tarvisio. This same officer fought on the Pontebia railway on May 25th, 1943. The officer commanding one of our sapper companies, Vare, carried out demolitions on the railway across the Tagliamento, on June 16th 1943. In this same period, Istria witnessed the forming of Partisan battalions, which, at the time of Italy's surrender, grew into brigades.

No changes in the relationship of the Italian army to the National Liberation Army, were brought about by the fall of Mussolini. The Badoglio Government pursued the struggle with the same fascist and military units, and even increased the terrorism to which the civilian population had been subjected. Approximately five divisions were concentrated in the Julian March. Gas practice was started.

At the time of Italy's surrender, an agreement was reached between the Zone HQ and General Malagutti, who was in command of the »Torino« division, in view of a joint struggle against the Germans. The Division failed, however, to abide by the agreement, did not fight the Germans, but instead withdrew from the Julian March without a struggle.

When the news of Italy's surrender reached them, the people throughout the Julian March were fully united and stealed in the struggle they had waged. On the very first day, the population, both in the towns and in the villages, young people and women, took up arms and joined the newly formed brigades and detachments.

Our units, with the support of the entire population, set about disarming the Italian troops in the Julian March garrisons, with the exception of the garrisons where German forces were already stationed (Triest, Gorizia, Fiume, Pola). Up to 7.000 troops were disarmed. Numerous arms and ammunition dumps fell into our hands. The whole of the Julian March was liberated.

In spite of the fact that the larger cities were garrisoned in considerable strength by German and Italian Fascist troops, the antifascist population of the towns rose everywhere, particularly in Triest, Monfalcone and Pola. The people appeared in the streets, disarming the Fascists and fighting the enemy. Part of the population, now adequately armed, immediately joined the National Liberation Army. Some of the arms were left in the towns, to be at hand for the needs of the fight which had to be waged inside the towns. Approximately 10.000 combatants from these towns joined the ranks of the National Liberation Army, including 3.000 Italians.

On the right bank of the Isonzo, in Venetian Slovenia, all enemy strong-points were successfully liquidated. The whole of the territory was liberated. The national consciousness of the Venetian Slovenes, who had for centuries suffered under a foreign yoke, was awakened, they joined the National Liberation Army and thus, for the first time in their history, fought for their country, shoulder to shoulder with their brothers from the Brda district and from the left bank of the Isonzo.

The Italian forces thus suffered complete defeat in the Julian March area also. The Julian March was completely liberated, and on this liberated territory people's authorities were set up.

The liberation struggle of the people of the Julian March thus had a great significance for the fight waged by the Italian antifascists in Furlandy and Northern Italy against the Fascists and the German oppressors. This struggle was an example for the Italians, and example which both taught and encouraged them.

Our units operating in the Julian March and our authorities administering the area, now established the closest cooperation with the other Slovene and Croat units on Yugoslav territory.

For the purpose of defending the liberated territory before the German advance, a well planned and thoroughgoing demolition scheme of all lines of communication, railways and roads was carried out. All roads leading to the liberated territory were rendered completely unserviceable. So were the railways, some of which were completely demolished, such as the Gorizia—Stanjel—Opcine and the Gorizia—Ajdovscina—Rovino—Canfanaro lines, while the others were put out of working order for several months. These demolitions were of the utmost importance in the further course of the struggle, for it took the Germans several months to put the railways partly into use again, while traffic on the severely damaged roads had not been re-established by the time the War ended.

A Group of brigades was formed for the liberation of Gorizia and it established its front line to the north of the town. This Group achieved very successful results in the fight against the Germans. Elements of this Group succeeded in penetrating into Gorizia and onto the Miren airfield, where approximately 100 Italian aircraft were destroyed. German casualties in the course of this fighting were very high, and it was only towards the end of September that they succeeded in operating a break-through on this front, owing to strong air force and artillery support.

After the stabilising of the situation in Italy, the German Command decided, towards the middle of September 1943, to strike a strong and decisive blow in order to put an end to the uprising in the Julian March, which gravely imperilled general military developments

in Italy. Daily bombing operations were carried out against the liberated territory and an offensive prepared. The complete I SS Armoured Corps took part in this offensive.

It was composed of the following units:

The SS Tank Division »Adolf Hitler«

The 44th Infantry Division

The 71st Infantry Division.

The Corps was reinforced with elements of the 162nd Turkestan Division and the SS »Herman Goering« Division. The offensive was launched, with mass air support, on September 27th, 1943. It's starting-points were in Gorizia, Trieste, Monfalcone, Postumia and Ljubljana.

Our units suffered fairly heavy casualties and lost a lot of equipment, but none the less succeeded, by means of clever manoeuvres, in preserving the bulk of their forces and maintaining themselves within their operations area. In the course of this offensive, the Germans were guilty of unheard of terrorism against the civilian population, shooting people in masses, burning down villages, deporting and plundering without the faintest scruple.

In the course of time, the struggle assumed an increasingly developed military form. When the offensive was over, our units set about reorganising their ranks. The brigades were regrouped and formed into two divisions. The 9th Corps was formed within the general framework of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia, and placed under the Command of Major-General Lado Ambrojich with Major-General Dushan Kveder as political commissar. The Corps was composed of three divisions: the 30th, the 31st and the Italian »Garibaldi Natisone« Divisions and of six detachments. In Istria, the 43rd Division was formed. The uprising thus acquired a regular striking force, capable of withstanding even powerful enemy attacks.

No sooner had the enemy offensive spent itself, than our units launched a counter-offensive and very soon recaptured practically the whole of the formerly liberated territory, with the exception of the towns and the strong-points along the railway lines. The enemy was confined to narrow strips of territory along the communications and to the large towns, where he was compelled to dig in in order to resist the onslaughts of the National Liberation Army. Our units succeeded in maintaining this liberated territory, with small changes and short interruptions, until the end of the War. The liberated territory in the Julian March was of the utmost importance, both in a political and a military respect. Throughout the liberated territory peoples committees were set up, and thus a new government apparatus established. From a military point of view, the liberated territory constituted a secure base where supplies could be sent and distributed, hospitals and military schools organized. It was owing to this liberated territory, that the regular supplying of our troops was ensured and their military training improved. It served, besides, as the starting-point of our offensive operations and a haven where the population, fleeing before enemy persecutions, could seek refuge.

The defence of the liberated territory entailed a very considerable military effort. The enemy was able to set foot on it only in the course of major military operations. At such times, the civilian population either withdrew to places where it felt in security, or else joined the ranks of the fighting units.

From the very moment the liberated territory came into existence, a fierce, unceasing and relentless struggle started for every inch of the liberated soil, for every single line of communication. Our units were constantly on the alert, ambushing and attacking the enemy, particularly in the latter's strong-points along the lines of communication and above all along the main railways: the Trieste—Ljubljana, the Trieste—Pola and the Trieste—Gorizia—Jesenice line.

Of the utmost importance for the Germans, was the Vienna—Graz—Ljubljana—Triest—Venice line. This double track line was one of the three railway lines linking Germany to the

Italian Front. This line was no less vital to the Germans than the Verona—Brenner—Munich line. The importance of these railways was especially great after the North African Front had ceased to exist.

One of the most urgent tasks facing our forces was the cutting of the vital Triest—Ljubljana line. Ever since 1941, the actions of our units were directed against this railway line along the whole of its stretch from Triest to Maribor. The fighting for this line was particularly intense on the territory of the Julian March.

Our units carried on incessant, day and night actions against the lines of communication, destroying bridges and railroads and inflicting huge losses upon the enemy, both in men and equipment. Special sapper groups were created, the sole task of which consisted in railroad demolitions. It was only at the cost of tremendous efforts and by organising special working battalions and technical units, that the Germans succeeded in partly repairing the main railways. But even then, military transports were subject to considerable delay and were obliged to fight their way through. After a long and bitter struggle, in the final phase of which the allied air forces also cooperated, the Triest—Ljubljana—Graz and the Triest—Gorizia—Jesenice—Villach lines were rendered completely unserviceable. The German traffic system, connecting Germany and the Italian Front, thus suffered an extremely severe blow.

In order to give a picture of the condition of the railways in the Julian March, we shall give a few figures relating to the traffic situation in June 1944.

Line	Maximum capacity in 25 ton trucks	Traffic actually carried out in number of trucks	%
Ljubljana—Triest	205.000	26.600	12.43
Triest—St. Peter—Fiume	65.000	5.824	8.96
Triest—Pola	65.000	12.298	18.92
Triest—Gorizia—Jesenice	55.000	destroyed	

In the course of June 1944, our units carried out the following actions against communications:

Line	Number of demolitions	Number of trains wrecked
Ljubljana—Triest	30	19
Triest—Gorizia—Jesenice	31	2

As a consequence of the activity of our forces, all the railways in the Julian March could only be used for local traffic, while their maintenance involved the Germans in tremendous expenditure, and tied down very considerable military and technical forces. Towards the end of the War, the Germans were themselves obliged, on account of the shortage of technical equipment, to destroy one of the tracks so as to be able to continue the traffic at least on the remaining one.

In January 1945, the following percentage of traffic was carried on:

Line	%
Triest—Ljubljana	1.36
Triest—Pola	5.76%
Gorizia—Jesenice	1%
St. Peter—Fiume	19.07%

Actions carried out in the course of the War:

Railroad demolitions	960
Trains wrecked or damaged	125
Bridges (large and small) destroyed	88

Electric poles destroyed	540
Stations destroyed	9
Other actions against railways and transport	2570

Of the utmost importance too were the demolitions and sabotage carried on on the roads. Large scale actions against roads started as far back as 1941. After Italy's surrender, however, all the roads were very badly damaged. Among the highways, along which the Germans had set up strong-points and over which they exerted a continual control, all the roads leading on to the liberated territory had been so seriously damaged that, by the end of 1943, they could no longer be used by any kind of vehicle. The demolition of the road junctions at Tolmin and east of Gorizia, had a decisive significance both for our units and for our liberated territory.

The sabotage activity of our units was also directed against industrial plants. Special attention was given to the electrical works. In May 1944, the Gorizia power station was destroyed. Electric poles were brought down every day. Considerable damage was done to other works also. In February 1944, our units flooded the Idria quick-silver mines, which caused a diminution of the production by 25%. In March 1944, the Rajbl lead mines were so badly damaged, that they were put out of use for several months.

Our units also did considerable damage to the timber industry. The Postumia, Belsko and Brinj timber works were destroyed.

The enemy never, however, confined himself merely to the defensive. Between Italy's surrender and the end of the War, the enemy launched a series of large-scale offensive actions. When the National Liberation Army units grew into brigades, divisions and corps, and when the scope of their operational possibilities increased in consequence at the same time as their striking force augmented, then the enemy too was compelled to call upon powerful crack units for his actions, and these units were brought from other battle-fields. In the course of these actions-there were seven of them in all — the enemy used to concentrate large forces along the lines of communication, and then, with the aid of tanks and aircraft, break into the liberated territory, destroying and burning all that lay before him. Our units always managed to inflict very heavy losses upon the enemy, in the course of these actions, and to prevent his armoured columns from driving through the whole of the Liberated Territory.

Every one of these enemy offensives was followed by our counter-action, which invariably drove the enemy back into his strong-points.

The Germans had fairly considerable forces at their disposal on Julian March territory. After Italy's surrender, a special military unit, the »Operationszone Adriatisches Küstenland«, was set up on the territory of the former Italian provinces of Udine, Gorizia, Triest, Pola, Fiume and Ljubljana, under the command of General Kübler of the mountain troops, with headquarters in the Spesa castle near Cormona. Towards the end of 1944, the name of this Command was changed into HQ XCVII Z. B. V. Corps. This Corps was entrusted with the task of guarding the coast from the mouth of the Isonzo to Fiume. The action against our units was conducted by Höherer SS and Polizeiführer Globotschnigg. This »Polizeiführer« was entitled to apply to Kübler for military units for use in action against our forces. Army troops took part in all the major operations against our units.

Of the enemy units, which carried out the first offensive in September 1943, only the 71st Infantry Division and the 1st Regiment of the 162nd Division remained in the Julian March area. As the fighting increased in intensity, the Germans were continually obliged to bring further forces to the area. They made specially abundant use of the Italian fascist units, composed of the worst kind of fanatical fascists. These fascist units became notorious, among all the enemy forces, for their stubborn and cruel conduct. The X Mass Flotilla earned itself a particularly sad renown in this respect.

Towards the end of 1944, the following enemy forces were stationed in the Julian March area:

a) German Forces

Four divisions, several independent Regiments and battalions

approximate strength 55.000

b) Italian Forces

approximate strength 20.000

Elements of divisions, which had been temporarily stationed in the Udine area for purposes of reorganisation, also took part in the action.

The Elements of the following divisions were identified in the course of the fighting:

71th Infantry Division

150th Infantry Division

194th Infantry Division.

Our units carried out, particularly after Italy's surrender when the 9th Corps was formed, a series of large-scale actions against enemy strong-points and communications. In the course of the War, seventeen large-scale actions were carried out against enemy communications and strong-points. In each of these operations 4.000—10.000 of our troops were involved.

In accordance with an agreement concluded with AFHQ and in order to coordinate our actions with operations on the Italian Front, units of the 9th Corps undertook a number of actions against the Ljubljana—Triest, the Ljubljana—Jesenice and the Triest—Gorizia—Jesenice lines, which caused the total stoppage of the traffic on these lines (these actions began on June 10 th, 1944). Fieldmarshall Alexander expressed his special gratitude to our troops for these operations.

A very good job of work in the course of this fighting was done by the Italian Partisan units, which joined up with the Yugoslav National Liberation Army and placed themselves under the latter's command in the struggle for freedom, democracy and union to Yugoslavia.

The Italian »Divisione Natisone«, under the command of Major Rudi Kodrich, operated in the Julian March area as part of the 9th Corps. This Division was composed of the following brigades:

Brigata Triestina d'Assalto

Brigata Picelli d'Assalto

Brigata Boci d'Assalto

Brigata Gramsi d'Assalto.

An Italian battalion was also included in our 43rd Division, the »Pino Budicin« battalion, renowned for its fine fighting spirit. The Italian »Fontanot« Brigade formed part of our 7th Corps.

The national-liberation struggle of the town of Triest is closely linked to the struggle of our units in the Julian March. The part played by Triest in the struggle has already been mentioned several times. This part increased as the War was drawing towards its close. By a decision of the 9th Corps, a Triest city HQ was set up and placed under Major Martin Greif with Captain Vinko Shumrada as his deputy. On August 15th 1944, this HQ moved into the town itself. This HQ was under the command of the 9th Corps. It maintained a regular contact with the Corps HQ by means of messengers and was also provided with a wireless transmitter. The town of Triest was subdivided first into nine rayons, and later into four sectors. Each sector had its own Command Post and the units (battalions) were allotted definite tasks, both as regards actions to be carried out in the course of the war and the particular part they had to play in the liberation of the town. The town HQ had 5.000 combattants at its disposal. This long and persevering struggle waged by the people of Triest constitutes a very strong argument in favour of their plea to be united to Yugoslavia.

The liberation of the Julian March was accomplished by the 4th Yugoslav Army, the 9th Corps and the 7th Corps. The main forces of the 4th Army advanced, by means of a brilliant manoeuvre, over the Sneznik, through Ilirska Bistrica and St. Peter and reached Triest, where the fighting for the liberation of the town started on April 30th, 1945. After heavy street fighting, in the course of which the resistance groups within the city gave their full support, Triest was finally liberated on May the 1st. At the same time, the first operational group of the 4th Army surrounded and liberated Fiume, annihilating or taking prisoner the entire German group which was defending Istria. The 43rd Division liberated Istria, while certain of its elements took part in the fighting for Triest. The 9th Corps, which had been concentrated on the Trnavska Planota, advanced through heavy fighting across the Vipava Valley, and then entered Triest with part of its forces, while the other part freed Monfalcone, Gorizia and the whole Venetian Slovenia area. On the Isonzo, units of the Yugoslav Army joined up with the Allied Forces.

Thus, after long years of servitude and sufferings, after having sustained very heavy sacrifices, the oppressed and freedom-loving people of the Julian March were finally liberated, thanks to the efforts of the allied forces and of the Yugoslav peoples.

These figures concern the successful fighting waged in the course of the uprising in the Julian March

TABLE No 1

NUMBER OF ACTIONS

in the course of the Liberation War

No.	Year	Company actions	Battalion actions	Brigade and division actions	Attacks on strongpoints	Actions against traffic
1.	1941—1943	308	160	22	43	559
2.	1944	277	408	49	49	2781
3.	1945	142	134	26	22	1002
TOTAL		727	752	97	114	4229

NOTE: In the above table no mention is made of the thousands of patrol clashes, which took place throughout the country and in the course of which the enemy suffered very serious losses.

TABLE No 2

ENEMY CASUALTIES

No.	Year	Dead	Wounded	Prisoners	Guns	Mortars	M. G. s	Rifles	Tanks	Trucks	M. T. s	Air craft
1.	1941— 1943	6.222	4.787	9.174	26	71	1.632	59.410	10	114	104	105
2.	1944	15.956	9.495	2.490	14	45	453	2.727	11	31	9	15
3.	1945	12.571	7.365	10.875	51	126	989	4.316	6	163	299	4
TOTAL		34.749	21.647	22.539	92	245	3.074	66.45 ⁰	27	308	412	124

The number of POWs does not include the tens of thousands of Italians who were taken prisoner at the time of Italy's surrender.

In the course of the Liberation War 72.000 fighting men and officers fought in the ranks of the National Liberation Army in the Julian March. This number included a large number of young people under 17 and women.

Towards the end of 1944 there were 30.000 fighting men and officers in the ranks of the National Liberation Army in the Julian March, while 30.000 fighting men and officers were fighting in the ranks of the overseas brigade of the National Liberation Army.

RAILWAY DEMOLITIONS

Slovene territory, and especially the territory of the Julian March, constitutes one of the most important areas of Europe, as regards communications. The importance of this territory as regards communications, increased particularly in the summer of 1943, when the Southern Front was moved from North Africa to Sicily and then to Southern Italy.

This Southern German Front was linked to the supply bases in Germany by means of three main railways: the double track Munich—Brenner—Bolzano line, the single track Villach—Tarvisio—Udine line and the double track Graz—Ljubljana—Triest line. Both the double track lines, the maximum traffic capacity of which was approximately the same, had about the same strategic importance for the German High Command. The Brenner line was a shorter, and therefore closer link with Germany, but had the serious disadvantage of not possessing secondary lines, which are indispensable in the event of a traffic stoppage on the main line, and offered a great number of convenient objectives to enemy air force action. There were important objectives on the Graz—Ljubljana—Triest line too, but there were also secondary lines along which the entire traffic could be diverted, in case the traffic on the main line was interrupted.

The most important among the railroads, which run through Julian March territory, were, from a military point of view, the Villach—Tarvisio—Udine line and the Graz—Ljubljana—Triest line. One must not, however, underrate the importance of the other lines, which acquire a very considerable importance as reserve lines, in the event of a traffic stoppage on the main line. It has been ascertained, by means of a close observation of the traffic, that the enemy, whenever the traffic on the Ljubljana—Triest line was interrupted, invariably diverted his military transports along the Ljubljana—Jesenice—Tarvisio line, or else along the Jesenice—Podbrdo—Gorizia line, whilst the latter was still in working order. Among the other important reserve railroads, special mention must be made of the Jesenice—Podbrdo—Gorizia line and the Triest—Dornberk—Gorizia—Udine line.

One of the major tasks lying before our forces within the framework of our general military plan, was the large-scale endangering of enemy communications. The efforts of our forces were above all directed against the most important line running through our territory, i. e. the Graz—Ljubljana—Triest line, along the whole of its stretch through Slovenia, from the northern frontier near Maribor to Monfalcone, and further on towards Furlandy. These actions against the whole stretch of the line started when the first Partisan units made their appearance in the field, in the summer of 1941. Among the most important sabotage actions carried out at that time against the Ljubljana—Triest line, the destruction of the bridge on the Ljubljana at Preserja should be mentioned. Owing to this action, the traffic was completely stopped on this line for ten days.

Our units started carrying out actions against traffic on this line on a larger scale, in the second half of the summer of 1942. Towards the end of the summer of 1942, our constant night actions against enemy railway lines, compelled the latter to discontinue all night traffic, both as regards the transport of passengers and the transport of supplies. This was a very great success, for it meant that the entire traffic was, in relation to its maximum capacity, reduced by approximately 40—50%.

After Italy's surrender, our forces launched a series of large-scale sabotage actions, in which entire brigades and divisions took part. At that time, in the beginning of the summer of 1944, special sapper and sabotage detachments were formed, the task of which consisted solely in destroying railway communications. A struggle thus started for every single line of communication.

In June of 1944, the situation on the Julian March railways was the following:

a.) Postumia—Triest—Monfalcone. The maximum capacity of this double track railway line in both directions is 250.000 loaded trucks weighing 25 tons each.

In the course of the month referred to the traffic in both directions was 26.600 or 12.43%.

This considerable diminution of the traffic was brought about by the following causes: the destruction of the »Stampet« bridge between Borovnica and Rakek, owing to which the traffic was interrupted from June 12th to June 26th, 1944, the demolition of the Lipoglav tunnel between Poljaca and Grobelno, the fact that night traffic had been discontinued, and, above all, because of the increasingly powerful attacks carried out by our sapper and sabotage groups, as well as by our military units, against the Rakek—Triest line.

b.) Kozina—Pulj. The maximum capacity of the line was 65.000 loaded trucks each weighing 25 tons.

In the course of the month referred to the traffic in both directions was 12.298 or 18.92%.

c.) The Jesenice—Podbrdo—Gorizia line. Maximum capacity 55.000 loaded trucks each weighing 25 tons. Traffic on this line was practically stopped, owing to incessant small-scale actions and to two large-scale actions in which the entire 9th Corps took part.

d.) The Gorizia—Udine line, Maximum capacity in both directions 80.000 loaded trucks weighing 25 tons each. In June the traffic was completely interrupted, owing to the fact that the 62 metres long bridge over the Idrija at Krmina had been destroyed.

e.) The St. Peter—Fiume line. Maximum capacity 65.000 loaded trucks each weighing 25 tons.

In the period referred to the traffic was carried on by 5.824 loaded trucks or 8.96%.

Below are given some figures showing the number of sabotage actions undertaken by the sapper and sabotage units of the 9th Corps against two of the most important lines of communication on the territory of the Julian March, in June, 1944:

a.) The Postumia-Trieste line:

railroads destroyed	30
trains destroyed or damaged	19
electric poles destroyed	59

b.) The Jesenice—Podbrdo—Gorizia line:

railroads destroyed	31
bridges destroyed	13
stations destroyed	1
trains destroyed	2

These figures show that enemy traffic had in June, with the exception of the Tarvisio—Udine line, been almost completely paralysed, owing to the action of our forces, and had been reduced to such an extent that it only reached 8.68%.

In January 1945, the traffic on the Julian March railway lines was as follows:

a.) Postumia—Triest line	1.36%
b.) Kosina—Pola	5.76%
c.) Podbrdo—Gorizia local traffic	1%
d.) Gorizia—Udine, practically no traffic, the intensity of which has not been ascertained	
e.) Tarvisio—Udine	19.07%

Traffic on the following lines was rendered impossible: Rovin—Canfanaro, Opcine—Gorizia (via Stanjel) Gorizia—Ajdovstina, and, for most of the period since Italy's surrender, the Podbrdo—Gorizia and the Kozina—Trieste lines.

In the course of the whole period from 1941 up to the time of Italy's surrender, the following actions were carried out:

a.) The Rakek—Triest line:	
railroads destroyed	502
trains destroyed or damaged	88
bridges destroyed	16
electric poles destroyed	472
stations destroyed	9
b.) The Kozina—Pola line:	
railroads destroyed	57
trains destroyed or damaged	15
c.) Podbrdo—Gorizia line	
railroads destroyed	217
trains destroyed or damaged	10
bridges destroyed	44
electric poles destroyed	12
d.) The Gorizia—Udine line:	
railroads destroyed	27
electric poles destroyed	54
trains destroyed or damaged	7
bridges destroyed	7
e.) The Tarvisio—Udine line:	
railroads destroyed	157
trains destroyed or damaged	4
bridges destroyed	15
electric poles destroyed	2

f.) The St. Peter—Fiume line:

from September 8th to November 20th, 1943, the line
was completely destroyed

trains destroyed 1

bridges destroyed 6

In the course of the whole War, the following damage was inflicted on all the
railway lines in the Julian March.

railroads destroyed 960

trains destroyed or damaged 125

bridges destroyed 88

electric poles destroyed 540

railway stations burnt down 9

other attacks on railway lines and transport 2570

THE STRUGGLE OF THE PEOPLE OF TRIEST FOR THEIR LIBERATION AND UNION TO YUGOSLAVIA

In 1939 already, groups were formed in Triest, which set about gathering arms and carrying out different kinds of sabotage activities. In 1941, the Fascists arrested some of the members of these groups and brought them before the »Roman Court«. Some of them were sentenced to death and others to long terms of penal servitude. The Fascists failed, however, to destroy the work started by the men they had sentenced and their comrades. At the time when the first Partisan groups in Yugoslavia were being formed, a certain number of Triest inhabitants left the town and on the Brkine, in the neighbourhood of the town, formed the first Partisan groups. Some of these men were killed in the fighting on the Nanos in April 1942, while others were captured and brought before the Triest tribunal (the Triest Trial), which sentenced several of them to death. In the meantime, antifascist organisations in Triest were expanding and soon embraced wide sections of the Italian and Slovene population. At the time of Italy's surrender, masses of people descended into the streets of Triest and Monfalcone, disarming the Fascist Army and fighting the Germans. Well provided with weapons, they went in masses to join the ranks of the Slovene and Croat Partisan fighters. When the Germans occupied Triest, the activity of our organisations did not cease, but on the contrary reached a new level of intensity, which is illustrated by the fact that a still larger number of armed groups began making their appearance in Triest and Monfalcone, where acts of sabotage became a daily occurrence. Thus for instance in Triest the Officer's Club was blown up in March 1944 and a number of German officers killed.

In 1944, the strength and activity of the antifascist organisations increased still further, and it therefore became necessary to complete the military organisation, as well as to establish a close contact between the military formations in Triest and those operating in the field. The HQ of the 9th Corps accordingly appointed a Triest town HQ. Major Martin Greif was appointed O. C. in Triest with Captain Vinko Shumrada as his deputy. This HQ was appointed on August 3 1944 and arrived in Triest on August 15 of the same year. At the time when this HQ reached Triest, powerful Italian and Slovene antifascist organisations were already in existence there and they hailed the arrival of the HQ with great enthusiasm. Intense military activity immediately developed in Triest. Nine officers in charge of rayons were appointed. These officers and the O.C. of the town formed a Military Committee, which met every week. The officers in charge of the rayons were given the following tasks: 1. To widen the scope of and generally intensify military activities; 2. To concentrate all the already formed armed groups within the rayons, raise new members, and form them into companies and battalions; 3. To continue obtaining arms and improve upon the methods hitherto used in the connection; 4. Organise a runner service by means of which a contact could be maintained twice daily with the Town HQ.

Factories were not included within the rayons, but each factory was given an officer i/c, who was placed directly under the Town HQ. These officers were entrusted with the task of forming a military unit in each factory. These units, in addition to their general duties, were, given the special task of taking possession of the factory when the moment came and prevent the Germans or Italian Fascists from destroying it. The HQ was besides, required to maintain the closest possible contact with the HQ of the 9th Corps, to which it was directly subordinated. This contact was maintained by means of messengers twice a week. The HQ of the 9 Corps also supplied the Town HQ with a wireless transmitter, by means of which they communicated twice daily from October 5 1944 until the liberation of Trieste.

The activities of our military organisation were daily becoming more intense. The main job was the disarming of enemy patrols. Between August 15 1944 and April 27 1945, approximately 200 small arms were captured, as well as a considerable quantity of clothing, footwear, food etc. Units, formed in the factories of Trieste and Monfalcone, carried on different forms of sabotage activities, such as concealing spare parts, so that the machines were rendered unserviceable at the time of the German occupation, and the Germans therefore did not take them to Germany.

In January 1945, deputy O.C. Captain Shumrada was relieved of his duties and Franc Stoka appointed in his place.

In February 1945, we set about reorganising our units in Trieste. Instead of the former nine rayons and the factory commands, the Town HQ area was subdivided into four sectors. Each sector was provided with a HQ which was responsible for the factories in its area.

Each Sector HQ was given the task of forming the necessary number of battalions in its area, this number varying with the population of the different areas.

The number of units in the sectors after April 27 1945, was as follows:

1. Sector: two battalions of 200 men each and one independent company of 45 men.
2. Sector: four battalions of 150 men each, two battalions of 200 men each, six battalions in all.
3. Sector: three battalions of 200 men each, one battalion of 250 men. Four battalions in all.
4. Sector: four battalions of 150 men each.

In the period between April 27 1945 and May 1 1945 a further five thousand members joined the units in addition to the figures quoted above. The Town HQ was also reinforced and two deputies, Tine Lipovec and Mario, appointed.

After this reorganisation had been carried through, the activities of the military organisation in Trieste increased still further. The »Piccolo« printing-press was blown up and a garage set on fire, when ten German motorcars and approximately 10.000 litres of petrol were destroyed by the flames. When our units were not engaged in disarming the enemy or carrying out acts of sabotage, they were painting slogans on the walls, distributing leaflets, preparing hiding-places for arms and ammunition or obtaining medical supplies.

In March 1945, the Trieste Town HQ issued an appeal for voluntary mobilisation. A large number of the population then joined our battalions inside the town, while an equally large number went out to join units of the 9th Corps. In addition to the above tasks, an operations plan for the liberation of Trieste was being worked out. The Town HQ by that time had 500 small arms at its disposal. Divers enemy forces were garrisoning the town: German Army, Naval and Police Forces and Italian formations such as the Guardia Civica, X Mass, Repubblicani, Brigata Nera, Fascisti, Questura and Financa. We estimated the strength of these forces at approximately 20 to 25.000 men. On the eve of the liberation, Italian fascist reaction began

preparing their betrayal. They intended to form their own armed formations, but failed, because the people of Trieste refused to respond to their call or be taken in by their promises, for they saw only too well that they were the same people who had been carrying out the orders of the German Fascists. This treacherous organisation, which called itself the »Comitato di liberazione nazionale di Trieste«, and which included among its members the German appointed Mayor Pagnini, leaned on the support of those who, such as the Guardo Civico, Brigata Nera, Questura etc had been working for the Germans, and prepared them for the task of seizing power in Trieste when the time came.

The Town HQ was therefore compelled to strike both at the masters and at their servants. This was the firm demand put forward above all by the members of the antifascist organisations at their meetings.

Foreseeing the fateful events which were to take place, on April 26 1945, the Town HQ summoned all the Sector HQ to a conference, at which a comprehensive plan for the uprising was drawn up.

In the evening of April 27 1945, events of a decisive importance began taking place. The Germans started handing over to the C.L.N. The C.L.N, called upon the population to maintain order and peace, allowed the Germans to move about freely and keep their weapons, and its treacherous attitude thus became obvious to the people of Trieste. It was abundantly clear that the population could not possibly approve of such a policy, and it immediately responded to the call issued by the town HQ for a general uprising. The Town HQ moved to their Command Post, which was first, from April 27 to the evening of April 28 located in Kolonkovac and then, until May 1st, in Roccol. The Sector HQ also moved to their Command Posts, the battalions gathered at their assembly points. The forces inside the city grew rapidly from April 27 to the evening of April 28. All who were capable of bearing arms joined the armed units. The main task now was to arm these new troops. On the evening of April 28, our units started disarming the enemy and arming our own forces. By April 29, practically all the enemy garrisons in the suburbs had been disarmed and our own troops armed. The enthusiasm of the Trieste population was rising from hour to hour, Slovene, Italian and Yugoslav flags with a five pointed star began appearing on the buildings. At the same time as the enemy units in the suburbs were being disarmed, the suburbs themselves were being in the main liberated. After all our forces had been armed, they set about mopping up the remaining enemy groups in the suburbs. By April 30th, all the Italian armed fascist forces, and some of the German forces, had been liquidated. Thus, for instance, the Germans holding the St. Luigi University had been mopped up. The pitch the enthusiasm had reached is shown by the fact that, at St. Jacob, the workers, armed only with rifles, attacked and captured a German armoured car. Near St. Ana, our units captured enemy pill-boxes on the Trieste—Istra road and thus disarmed thousands of Germans who were fleeing before our forces in Istria. Two tanks and several guns were captured on this occasion. On April 30, units of the Yugoslav Army entered Trieste and, in cooperation with the forces raised inside the city and after heavy street fighting, broke the last enemy resistance and finally liberated the town on May 1, 1945.

The treacherous »Comitato di Liberazione nazionale di Trieste« escaped from the city with some of the Germans.

After the liberation of Trieste, the resistance forces were formed into the »Narodna zaštita« — »Difesa popolare« (Peoples Defence), which numbered about 2.500 members and was entrusted with the task of defending the achievements of the struggle, those achievements for which the people of Trieste had given their lives.

ENEMY FORCES ON JULIAN MARCH TERRITORY

1941—1945

After Italy's attack on Yugoslavia in April 1941, strong fascist, police and other garrison duty forces (Milizia Confinaria, Guardia alla Frontiera, Fascist Legions, Milizia Forestale etc) remained on the territory of the Julian March, which was not part of the 2nd Army operations area.

These units endeavoured to suppress the incipient people's revolt by terroristic means.

Larger forces, amounting to 5.000 men, were concentrated in April 1942 in the Vipava Valley for action against the Partisans, in August of the same year troops were concentrated on the Slovenska Bistrica sector against a Partisan battalion operating in the area.

II.

After Italy had mobilised in September 1942, the number of people who joined the Partisans increased tremendously and the Partisan units themselves started developing at an extremely rapid pace. Because of the offensive actions of the Sotcha detachment, an Alpine Division was brought to Gorizia and numerous garrisons and strong-points were established in the Gorizia and Vipava Valley area.

Offensive operations, launched by the HQ of the 23e Army Corps in Triest and the 24e Army Corps in Udine, started towards the end of April 1942.

It was in the course of these operations that Italian divisions, in transit through the Julian March, were first made use of.

The following units took part in the operations:

- elements of the Italian divisions in transit to the Eastern Front, the strength of which amounted to 20.000 men and which had stopped at Gorizia.

- elements of the Alpine Division from Gorizia.

- the fascist »Nera« brigade.

- the so-called »Arditi« units composed of criminals.

- the Squadristi from Triest and Gorizia.

Towards the end of November, the enemy carried out two attacks against Banjska Planota and Trnovski Gozd, in the course of each of which he used forces varying from fifteen to twenty thousand men, while in the middle of December he undertook an action in the Vipava Valley and the Kras, in which 15.000 men were involved. A number of new strong-points were set up, especially along the railway lines. The enemy was compelled, owing to the very powerful attacks the Partisan units were carrying out against the lines of communication, to build defence works along these lines and to bring further reinforcements.

There were, at that time, two Italian Army Corps in Julian March territory (the 23rd Army Corps in Udine and the 24th in Trieste), while the »Veneto« and »Novara«, and later the »Torino« and »Giulia« Divisions were at the disposal of the Corps. There were also six Fascist Legions (the 55th, the 58th, the 59th, the 60th, the 61st and the 62nd), the »Leggione Territoriale CC.RR.«, with five groups of carabinieri, railroad, harbour and forest militias, the total of which amounted to approximately 80.000 men. In addition to the above units, others too were used in the fighting against the Partisans.

In the beginning of 1943, the enemy intended to throw the Partisan units back into the northern areas of the Julian March and thus cut them off from their food supplies bases. In connection with this plan, a special Alpine Brigade was formed in the beginning of 1943 and placed under the command of General Mazzini, while a parachute unit (the so-called paracadutisti), specially trained for action against the Partisans, was brought to the Crni Vrh—Idria—Vipava sector.

The enemy countered the advance of the 4th and 5th Slovene brigades into Venetia, in May 1943, with the forces of two divisions under the command of the 24th Army Corps from Udine, operating from: Kobarid, Tolmin, St. Lucija, Gorizia, Cedad, Tarcent and Gemona.

After the fall of Mussolini, the greater part of the Italian forces left the Julian March, but the strong-points, manned by the strictly necessary number of troops, remained.

In August 1943, the number of the Italian troops in the Julian March again increased and attained the greatest strength they ever reached between 1941 and the time of Italy's surrender. Their total strength at that time was estimated at approximately 100—180.000 troops.

III

At the time of Italy's surrender, the struggle of the people of the Julian March for freedom reached its climax. The Partisan forces disarmed, with the assistance of the population, Italian troops in areas where their strength amounted to 60.000.

Part of the Italian forces, which had been disarmed by the Germans, continued the fight at the side of the latter, while the rest were disarmed and sent to POW camps.

IV

The constant menace, which the National Liberation Army units constituted for the railway lines and junctions, compelled the German Command to take vigorous action. This action was undertaken by the 1st SS Panzer Corps, which had been brought from Italy under the command of General Hausser, in the area between the Sotcha (Isonzo) river and the old Yugoslav—Italian frontier, while certain elements of the Corps were operating in Istria. The SS Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler, the 44th and 71st Infantry Divisions, joined in the offensive as part of the 1st SS Panzer Corps.

V

After this offensive, special military headquarters were set up for the provinces of Trieste, Fiume, Pola, Udine, Gorizia and Ljubljana, the »Operationszone Adriatisches Küstenland«, which was given the rank of an Army Corps and entrusted with the task of protecting the coast, from the Tagliamento to Fiume. Attached to this HQ was an SS police leader, who was put in charge of the struggle against the National Liberation Army and placed in command of police forces and forces for the protection of the lines of communication. When necessary, operational units stationed in the area were put at the disposal of the police leader for the fight against the liberation forces.

The following operational forces were placed under the command of the Operazionszone:

- 71th Infantry Division
- a regiment of 162nd Division
- two German coastal artillery regiments
- eleven Italian coastal batteries.

In February 1944, the 71st division was replaced by 188th Reserve Alpine Division.

The following units were at the disposal of the SS police leader:

- 15th SS police regiment
- 10th SS police regiment
- SS police regiment »Bozen«
- Italian »Tagliamento« regiment
- five Fascist Legions
- a number of smaller Italian and German units.

The total number of troops at the disposal of the HQ of the Operazionszone in the Julian March was between 42 and 43.000.

VI

In the latter half of 1944, the German Command began making use of the Furlandy and Julian March territory as a rest place and reorganisation area for badly shattered divisions. As a consequence of the transfer of divisions from the Italian to the Eastern front, the traffic through the Julian March increased considerably.

In the last days of 1944 and in the beginning of 1945, the following divisions were either resting in or on their way through the Julian March or Furlandy:

- 44th Infantry Division
- 94th " "
- 71st " "
- 159th " "
- 710 " "

On account of the strategic importance of Furlandy and the Julian March, on the one hand, and the growing pressure exerted by our units, on the other, the methods hitherto applied, and according to which the brunt of the struggle against the National Liberation Army was born by the police units, while operational units were merely attached to the latter, were no longer considered adequate.

In the autumn of 1944, the »Operazionszone Adriatische Kuestenland« was therefore formed into the HQ of the 97th Army Corps under the command of General Kuebler, who was put in charge not only of the operational units, but also of the forces entrusted with the protection of the lines of communication.

The following units were brought to the Julian March area:

- 237th Infantry Division
- 208 Panzerabteilung
- 7th »Ersatz« battalion of the »Prinz Eugen« division
- four security battalions
- some smaller German units

and the following new units were formed:

- 24th Karsjaeger Division
- the Italian »Guardia Civica«
- two police SS battalions (with Italian personnel).

Besides the police and operational units which were permanently stationed in the area, elements of operational units, which were either in transit through or resting in Furlandy and the Julian March, were also placed under the command of the 97th Army Corps for the purpose of fighting the National Liberation Army.

Thus, towards the end of 1944 and in the beginning of 1945, parts of the following divisions were taking part in the fighting against the Liberation Forces:

- 94th Division
- 194th and 211th Infantry Regiments of the 71st Infantry Division
- 74th Infantry Regiment of 159th Infantry Division
- 730 and 740th Regiments of the 710th Infantry Division.

In order to strengthen the struggle against the National Liberation Army, the fascist X. Mas Flotilla was brought to the Julian March area towards the end of 1944, and this Flotilla had eight battalions available towards the end of 1944 and in the beginning of 1945, for the struggle against the National Liberation Army.

Part of a group of 10.000 Kozaks (together with their families), who had arrived in the Gemonia—Tercento area towards the end of 1944, also took part in the operations.

In the course of the concentrated attacks carried out in the sector between the Socha (Isonzo) and the Yugoslav—Italian frontier, the following units from Gorenjska and the other Slovene provinces also took part in the fighting:

- 28th police regiment TODT
- the Training Regiment (Lehrregiment) of the Brandenburg Division
- 184 Landeschützen Regiment
- 319 Gebuergsjaegerersatz Battalion.

In January 1945, two regiments of the 14th SS Division, which had arrived in 1944 in the Maribor area, took part in the offensive from the Gorenjsko direction.

VII

Towards the end of 1944 and in the beginning of 1945, our units had tied down the following number of enemy units and parts of units, on the territory of the Julian March:

German forces:

- three infantry divisions
- sixteen full strength regiments (including four police regiments, eight regiments belonging to divers divisions, two independent regiments and two artillery regiments.)
- seven independent battalions and a number of smaller units.

Total strength

60.200

Italian forces:

- seven regiments (including one artillery regiment)
- eight battalions of the MAS flotilla
- smaller units

Total strength

20.000

Total strength

80.200

As regards technical equipment, the enemy had at his constant disposal the artillery of five regiments, the artillery and armour of four police regiments and 35—40 tanks of the 208 Panzerabteilung.



M A P S

JULIAN MARCH - ЮЛИСКАЯ ОБЛАСТЬ - LA MARCHE JULIENNE



JULIAN MARCH — ЮЛИСКАЯ ОБЛАСТЬ





THE FIGHTING FROM THE BEGINNING OF
THE UPRISING IN APRIL 1941 UNTIL ITALY'S
SURRENDER ON SEPTEMBER 8, 1943


The struggle for the liberation of the Julian March started as far back as 1941. At first, the fighting consisted mainly of minor engagements with enemy patrols, but, as the strength of the Partisan forces increased, the importance of the fighting grew in proportion. During the first months of 1943, there was a considerable amount of fighting, in which units of the Fifth and Sixth Coastal Brigades took part.


Most significant was a break-through carried out by one of our companies under Major Martin Greif, which took it as far as Tarvisio. This same officer fought, on May 25 1943, on the Pontebia railway line. On June 16, 1943, Varese, the Officer Commanding one of our Sapper Units, destroyed the railroad across the Tagliamento river. The Partisans fought grimly and relentlessly for every inch of our soil.

LEGENDA:

 Companies fighting
 Бой рот
 Les combats des compagnies

 Battalions fighting
 Бой батальонов
 Les combats des bataillons

 Brigades and bigger formations fighting
 Бой бригад и больших соединений
 Les combats des brigades et des formations plus grandes

 Attacks on garrisons
 Нападения на гарнизоны
 Les attaques sur garnisons

Privremeno izdanje sa granicama do 1941 g.

Razmer 1:400 000

Масштаб 1:400000

0 10 20 30 40 50 Km

Izrađena i umnožena u Geografskom institutu
Jugoslovenske armije 1945 g.

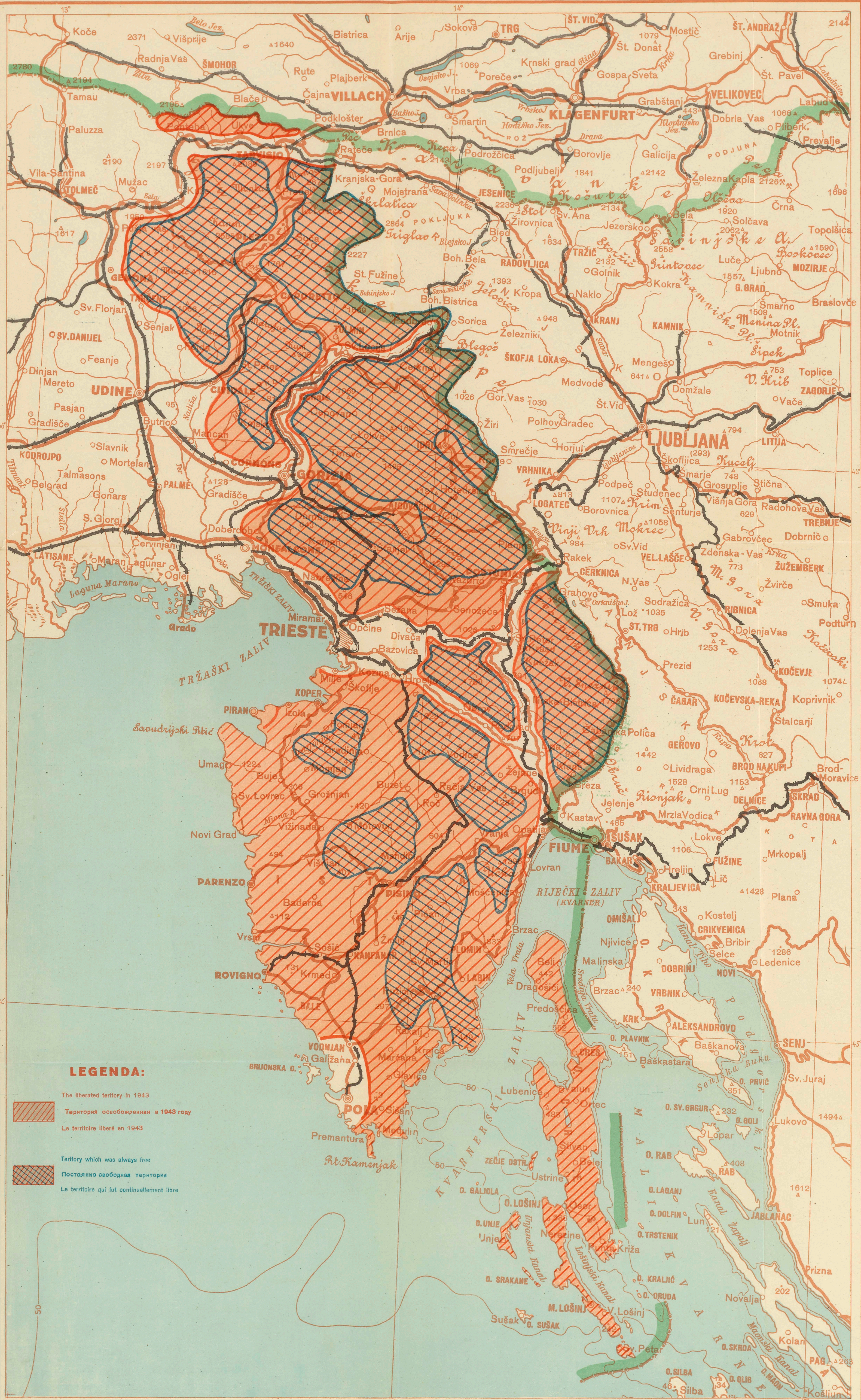
Reference	Условные знаки
Railway normal gauge—double track	Нормальный двухколейный железнодорожный путь
Railway normal gauge—single track	„ однокольный „ „

JULIAN MARCH — ЮЛИСКАЯ ОБЛАСТЬ

THE LIBERATED TERRITORY

Partisan units were, even at the time of the enemy occupation, liberating large areas of the Julian March by their tenacious struggle. The enemy was confined to narrow strips of territory along the lines of communication and around the big towns; all the rest of the territory was under the control of the Partisan units. The liberated areas were the bases from which the Partisans carried out their attacks against enemy garnisons along the lines of communication, as well as against railroads, highways, industrial plants and enemy columns. In these areas numerous military institutions, such as hospitals, dumps etc. were located. On the liberated territory of the Julian March, the democratic peoples authorities arose and developed. On this territory, too, the entire population was organised in the struggle for the liberation of the Julian March and its union with Yugoslavia.

The liberated territory was largest at the time of Italy's surrender, on September 8, 1943. The continual efforts subsequently made by the Germans, in order to re-establish their control over the whole of Julian March territory, failed.

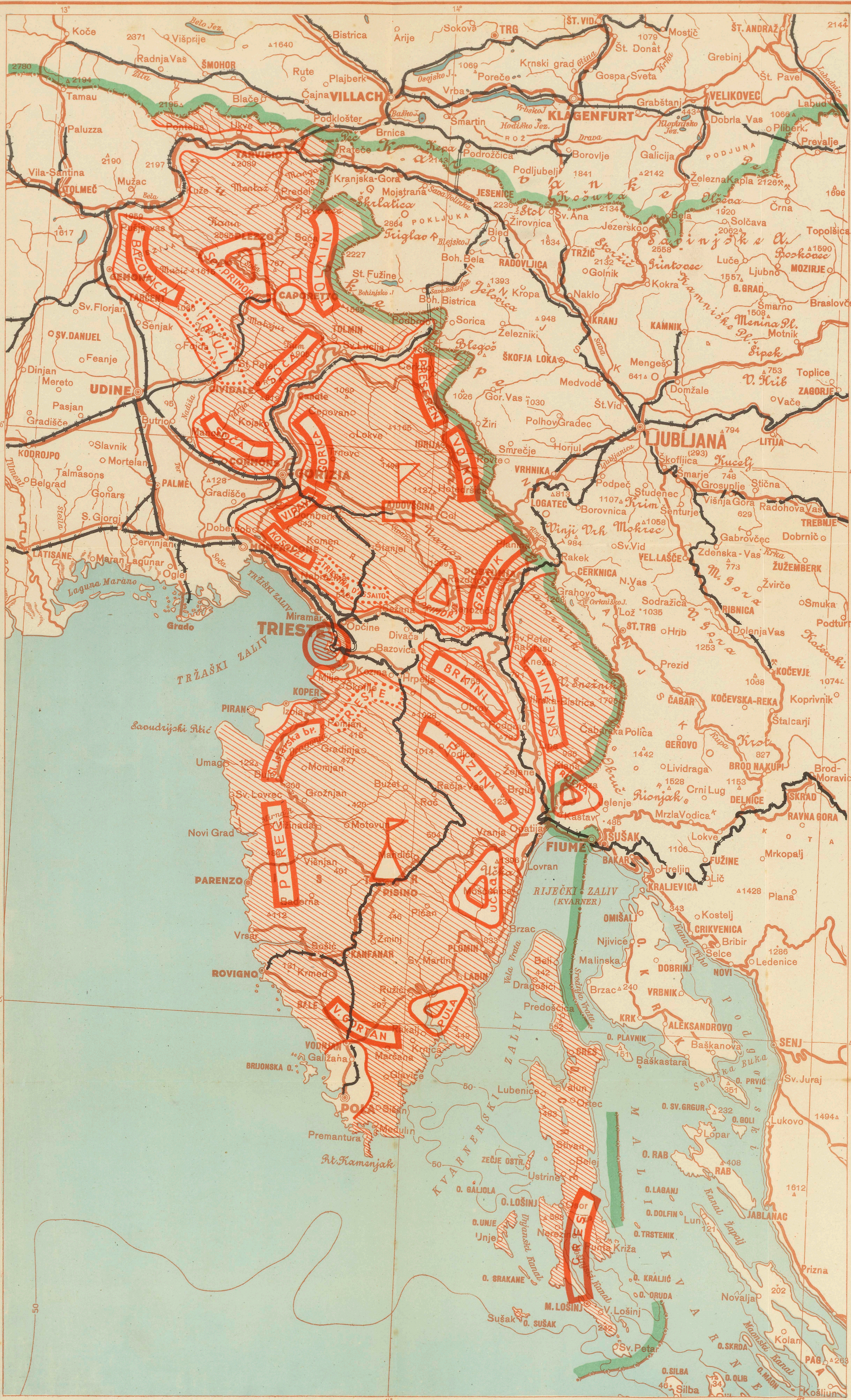


LEGENDA:

The liberated territory in 1943
Территория освобожденная в 1943 году
Le territoire libéré en 1943

Territory which was always free
Постоянно свободная территория
Le territoire qui fut continuellement libre

JULIAN MARCH — ЮЛИСКАЯ ОБЛАСТЬ



LEGENDA:

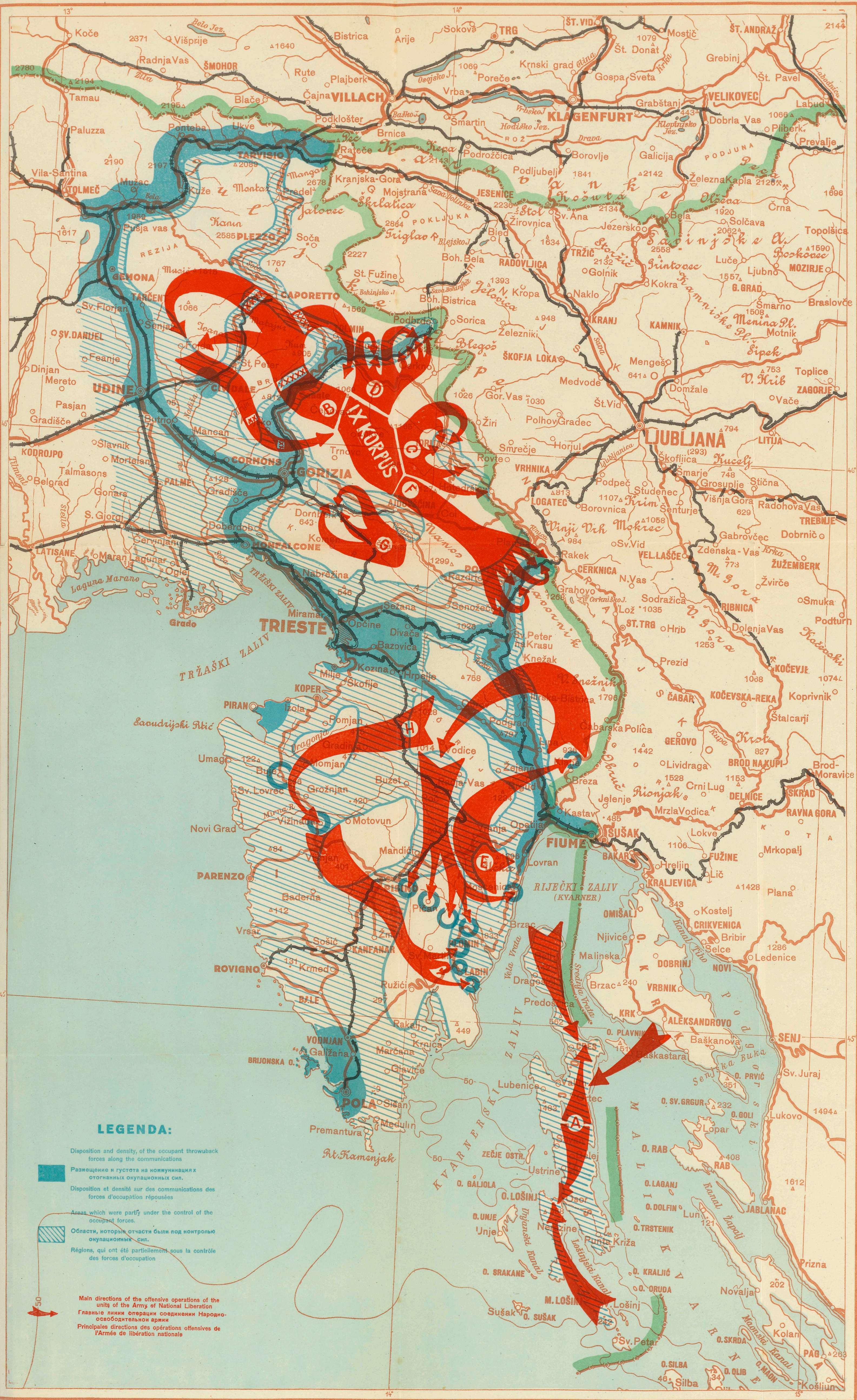
- A Brigade composed of Italian personnel
Бригада составлена из бойцов итальянского происхождения
Brigade composée de soldats de nationalité italienne
- A liberated area (territory) in 1943
Территория освобожденная 1943 года
Territoire libéré en 1943
- A Brigade composed of Slovenian and Croatian personnel
Бригада составлена из (солдат) бойцов Словенского и хорватского происхождения
Brigade composée de soldats de nationalités slovènes et croates
- Detachments
Отряды
Détachement
- Interior resistance forces
Внутренние силы сопротивления
Forces intérieures de résistance
- Third operational Zone
Третья оперативная зона
Troisième zone d'opérations
- Headquarters of operations for Venetian Slovenia
Оперативный штаб для Венецианской Словении
Centre d'opérations pour la Slovénie Vénitienne
- Headquarters of operations for Istria
Оперативный штаб для Истрии
Centre d'opérations pour l'Istrie

UNITS OF THE YUGOSLAV NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY FORMED IN THE JULIAN MARCH

In the course of the War, the small Partisan units grew into far larger military formations. In 1943, numerous detachments and brigades were formed in the Julian March, including three Italian brigades, consisting of Italian nationals from Trieste, Gorizia, Monfalcone, Pola and Fiume. This growth of the Partisan units gives us an idea of the way in which the entire population of the Julian March rose in revolt and formed a large number of military units. In the course of 1944, three divisions were formed in Julian March territory, in addition to the numerous detachments and special units (Town Commands, Rear Institutions, Special Sapper and Sabotage Detachments). They were the 30th, the 31st and the 43rd Divisions, the first two of which belonged to the 9th Corps, while the 43rd was part of the 11th Corps. In the larger towns, special sabotage detachments and combat groups were created.

A total of 72,000 fighting men took part in the struggle for the liberation of the Julian March and its union with Yugoslavia.

JULIAN MARCH — ЮЛИСКАЯ ОБЛАСТЬ



THE MOST SIGNIFICANT OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS CARRIED OUT BY THE YUGOSLAV NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY

In the course of the war for liberation, the YNLA carried out seventeen major operations against enemy communications and strong-points in Istria. From four to ten thousand men took part in each of these operations in the ranks of the YNLA units. The most important of these operations are shown on the map.

A. An action of the Istrian Division and the Island units for the liberation of the Islands of Cres and Losinj, on September 13, 1943.

B. The advance of the 30th Division on Brda and into Venetian Slovenia. Elements of the Division reached as far as Rezia. From January 30, 1944 to March 19, 1944.

C. An operation carried out by the 9th Corps against the Idria quick-silver mines and the strong-points defending them. From March 17, 1944 to March 25, 1944.

D. An attack on the Gorizia—Jesenice railway line on the St. Lucia—Podbrdo Sector. The line and numerous objectives, including eight bridges of a total length of 250 metres, were completely destroyed. June 29 to July 3, 1944.

E. Actions carried out by Istrian units and the 43rd Division against enemy garrisons. April 5 to July 13, 1944.

F. An attack on the Rakek—St. Peter sector of the railway line by the 9th Corps. The line was completely destroyed. April 18 to April 23, 1944.

G. Destruction of enemy strong-points at Dornberk and Prvacina. 30th Division. May 25 to May 26, 1944.

H. Operations carried out by the 43rd Division and some of our detachments against enemy strong-points. June 29 to July 28, 1944.

JULIAN MARCH — ЮЛИСКАЯ ОБЛАСТЬ

THE ENEMY OFFENSIVE OF SEPTEMBER 27, 1943

In order to suppress the people's uprising, which was assuming increasingly menacing proportions and to re-establish their control over the whole of Julian March territory, the enemy prepared and launched eleven large-scale "cleaning" operations in the course of the War. Five of these operations were undertaken by the Italians, while six were carried out by the Germans with the cooperation of Italian units. These operations proved unsuccessful. Our units were neither defeated nor disorganised, nor was the liberated territory retaken. When the Partisan units grew into brigades, divisions and corps, when the scope of their operational possibilities increased and the blows they were in a position to deal the enemy gained in strength, then the enemy, too, was compelled to call upon powerful crack fighting units for his operations, and these operations were nothing less than full-fledged offensives, carried out in accordance with a well thought-out and carefully prepared plan.

The following enemy forces took part in the offensive which started on September 27, 1943:

The SS Panzer Corps under General Hausser, composed of the following Divisions:
SS Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler
44th Infantry Division
71st Infantry Division
Total strength: 35-40,000 men.



LEGENDA:

Disposition and density of the occupant throwback forces along the communications

Размещение и густота на коммуникациях отогнанных оккупационных сил

Disposition et densité sur des communications des forces d'occupation repoussées

Areas which were partly under the control of the occupant forces

Области, которые отчасти были под контролем оккупационных сил

Régions, qui ont été partiellement sous la contrôle des forces d'occupation

Main enemy concentrations

Главные концентрации неприятельских сил

Principales concentrations des forces ennemies

Main directions of the offensive operations of the enemy

Главные направления операций неприятельских сил

Principales directions des opérations offensives de l'ennemi

Privremeno izdanje sa granicama do 1941 g.

Territory which was always free

Постоянно свободная территория

Le territoire qui fut continuellement libre

Razmer 1:400,000

Reference

Railway normal gauge — double track

Railway normal gauge — single track

Условные знаки

Нормальный двухпутный железнодорожный путь

Нормальный однопутный железнодорожный путь

Izrađena i umnožena u Geografskom Institutu Jugoslovenske armije 1945 g.

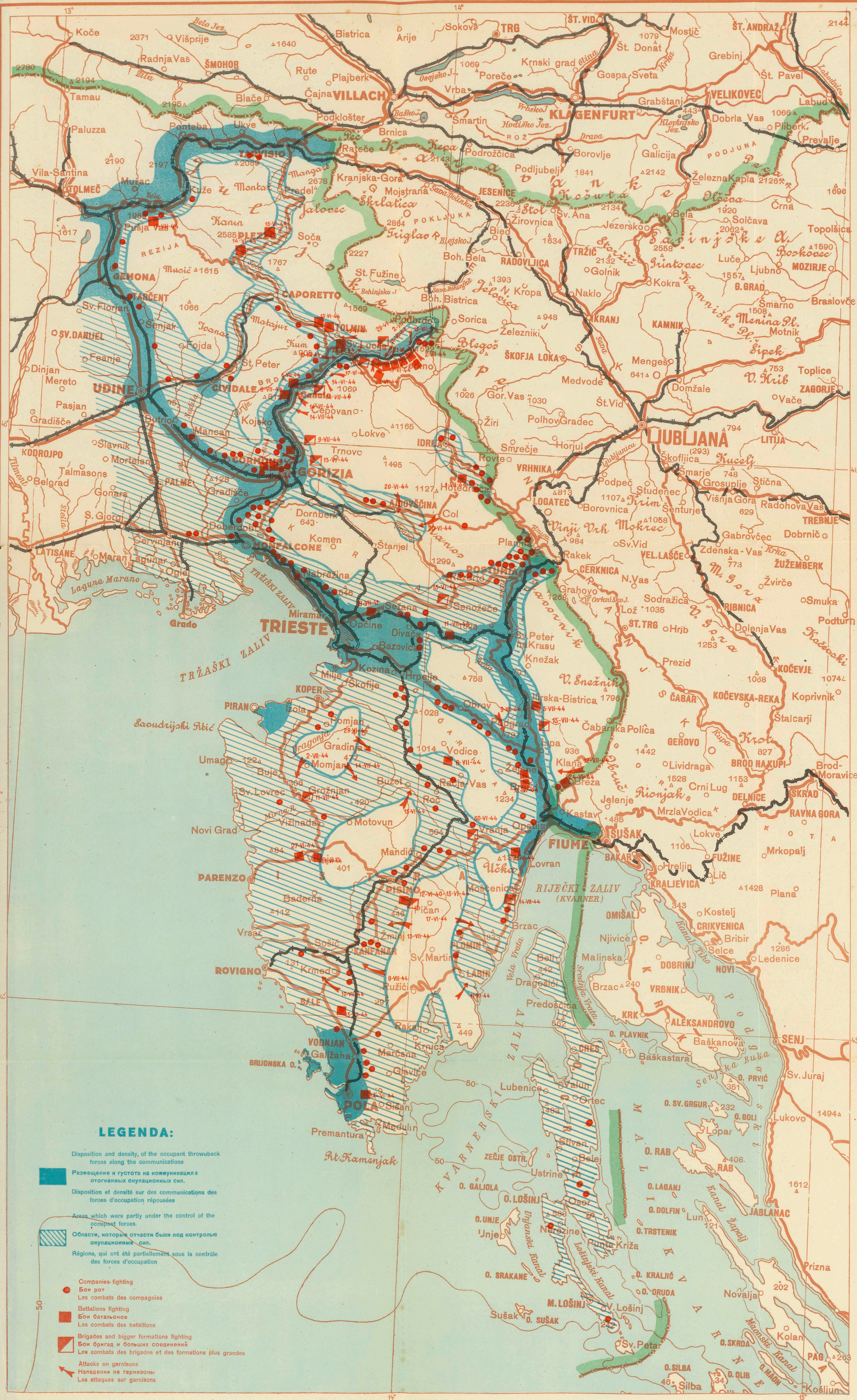
JULIAN MARCH — ЮЛИСКАЯ ОБЛАСТЬ

THE FIGHTING CARRIED ON BY UNITS OF THE YUGOSLAV NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY FROM JUNE 15 TO JULY 16, 1944

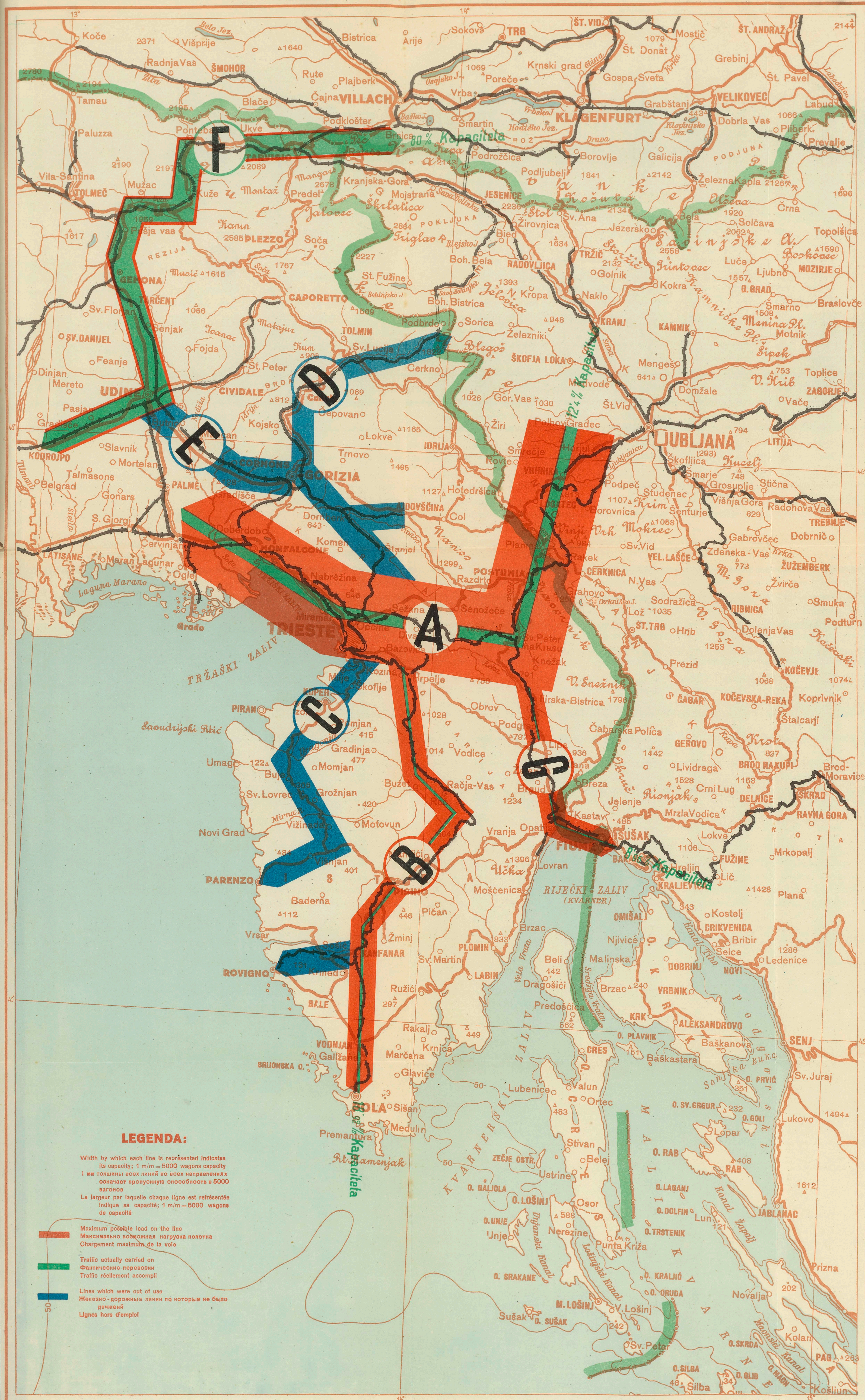
Units of the Yugoslav National Liberation Army were engaged in constant and incessant actions, so as not to give the enemy the chance of preparing and launching offensive operations. The map shows the intensity of the fighting which took place in the course of a single month — from June 15 to July 16, 1944. All these actions were of an offensive character, and were mainly carried out in the areas most densely held by the enemy, particularly along the lines of communication. Only actions, in which companies or higher formations were involved, are shown. Elements of these units also took part in thousands of minor engagements with enemy patrols, which could not, however, all be registered.

In the course of the liberation war, units of the National Liberation Army carried out the following actions in the Julian March:

727 company actions
752 battalion actions
97 in which brigades or higher formations took part
114 attacks on enemy strong-points
4292 attacks on enemy railroads and transport.



JULIAN MARCH — ЮЛИСКАЯ ОБЛАСТЬ



DIMINUTION OF TRAFFIC CAPACITY OWING TO THE ACTIVITY OF THE NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY

The railway lines passing through Julian March territory possess a very considerable international importance. Supplies from Germany reached the German front in Italy by means of three main railways: the Munich-Brenner-Verona line, the Villach-Travisio-Udine line and the Graz-Ljubljana-Triest line. The latter two run through Julian March territory. Owing to the continual actions carried out by units of the National Liberation Army, traffic was almost completely paralysed on all the Julian March railway lines.

The graphic on the map shows the traffic situation on all the railway lines in the Julian March:

railroads destroyed	960
trains wrecked or damaged . . .	125
railway bridges destroyed . . .	88
electric poles destroyed	540
railway stations destroyed . . .	9
other actions against railroads and railway transport	2570

LEGENDA:

Width by which each line is represented indicates its capacity; 1 mm = 5000 wagons capacity
1 мм толщины всех линий во всех направлениях означает пропускную способность в 5000 вагонов
La largeur par laquelle chaque ligne est représentée indique sa capacité; 1 mm = 5000 wagons de capacité

Maximum possible load on the line
Максимально возможная нагрузка полотна
Chargement maximum de la voie

Traffic actually carried on
Фактические перевозки
Traffic réellement accompli

Lines which were out of use
Железно-дорожные линии по которым не
движений



Reference

Railway normal gauge—
Railway normal gauge—

Условные знаки

дноколейный

Izrađena i umnožena u Geografskom institutu
Jugoslovenske armije 1945 g.

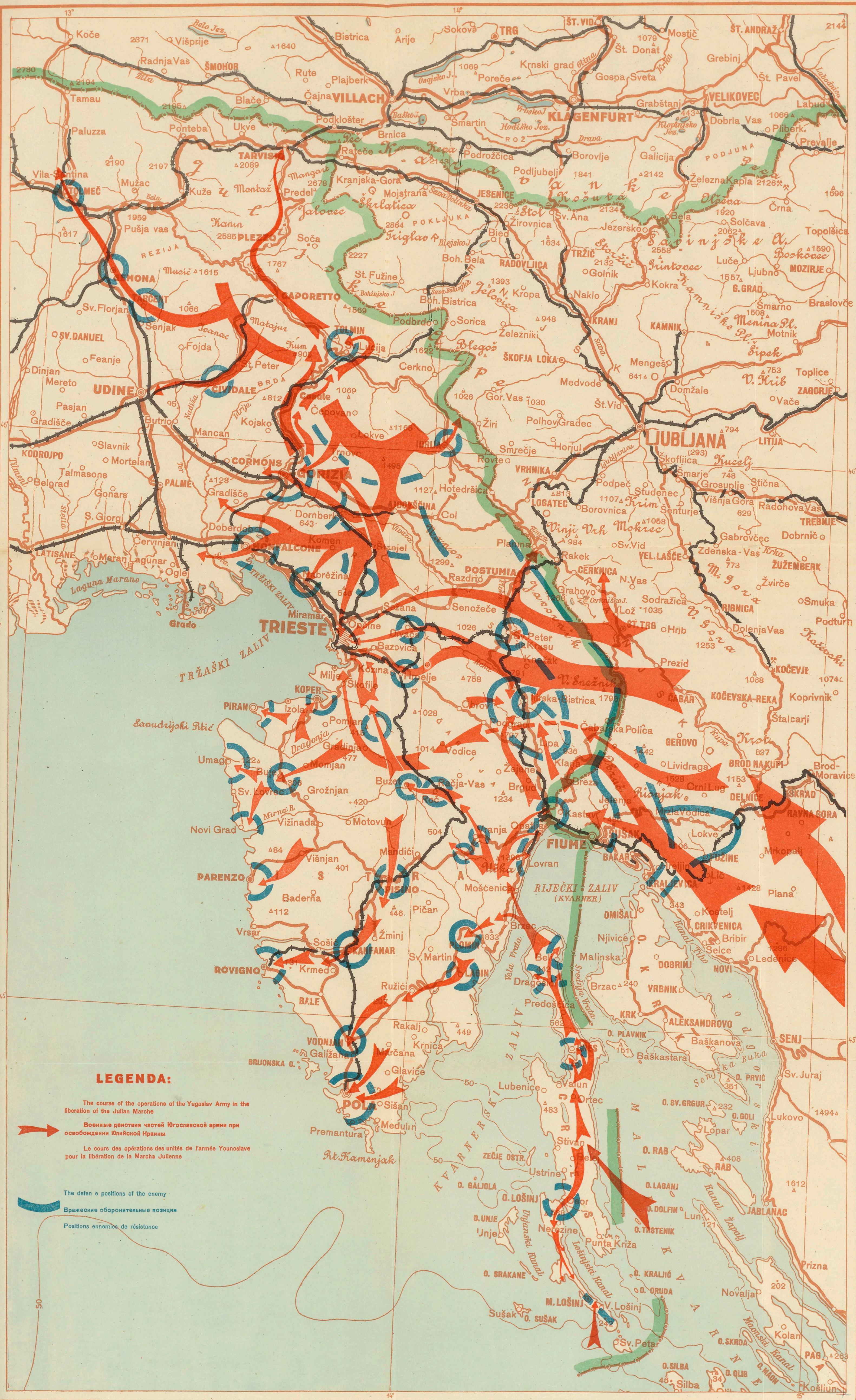
1945

JULIAN MARCH — ЮЛИСКАЯ ОБЛАСТЬ

THE JULIAN MARCH LIBERATED BY UNITS OF THE YUGOSLAV ARMY

The Julian March was liberated by the 4th Yugoslav Army, the 9th Corps and the 7th Corps. The main forces of the 4th Army carried out a brilliant maneuver, advanced over the Sneznik, through Ilirska Bistrica and St. Peter, and reached Trieste, where the fighting for the town began on April 30. After heavy street fighting, in the course of which the resistance forces operating inside the town gave their full support, Trieste was finally liberated on May 1, 1945. At the same time, an operational group of the 4th Army surrounded and captured the town of Fiume, annihilating or taking prisoner the entire German group which was defending Istria. The 43rd Division was, in the meanwhile, liberating Trieste, while certain of its elements took part in the fighting for Trieste. The 9th Corps, which had been concentrated on Trnava Planosti, advanced through heavy fighting across the Vipava Valley, and then divided its forces, part of which entered Trieste, while the others liberated Monfalcone, Gorizia and the whole of Venetian Slovenia. Units of the Yugoslav Army joined up on the Isonzo river with the Allied Forces.

Thus, after many sufferings and sacrifices, the people of the Julian March were finally liberated, owing to their own tireless efforts, as well as to those of the peoples of Yugoslavia.



Military action by the internal resistance forces
in Trieste between April 28 and May 1, 1945

Места боев сил внутреннего отпора
в Триесте 27—28. IV. 1945.

Combats des forces de l'intérieur à Trieste
pendant les journées du 27 et 28 avril 1945

LEGENDA:

Districts of the city liberated by the internal
resistance forces from April 27—28, 1945
Районы города, освобожденные силами внутре-
него отпора 27—28. IV. 1945.
Quartiers de la ville libérés par les forces de l'intérieur
le 27 et le 28 avril 1945

Districts under enemy control from April 27-28, 1945
Районы, контролируемые противником
27—28. IV. 1945.

Quartiers sous le contrôle de l'ennemi le 27 et le 28
avril 1945

German strong - points
Немецкие опорные пункты
Centres de résistance allemands

Italian strong - points
Итальянские опорные пункты
Centre de résistance italiens

Enemy strong - points reduced by the internal
resistance forces on April 28, 1945

Опорные пункты противника, ликвидированные
силами внутреннего отпора 28-IV-1945
Centres de résistance réduits par les forces de l'inté-
rieur le 28 avril 1945

Battalions of the internal resistance forces
Батальоны сил внутреннего отпора
Bataillons des forces de l'intérieur

Command Post of Sektor H. Q.
Номандный пункт штаба сектора
Poste de commandement de l'état-major du secteur

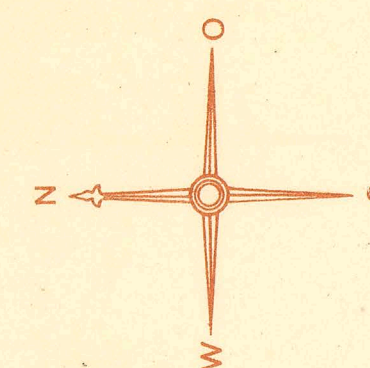
Command Post of the Town Command
Номандный пункт комендатуры города
Poste de commandement du Commandement de la
Place

Boundaries of the sector
Границы сектора
Limites du secteur

TRIESTE

Razmer 1:10 400

m 500 400 300 200 100 0 500 1000 m



Military action by the internal resistance forces
between April 28 and May 1, 1945

Места боев сил внутреннего отпора
в Триесте 28. IV. — 1. V. 1945.

Combats des forces de l'intérieur à Trieste
du 28 avril au 1 mai 1945

LEGENDA:

- Districts of the city liberated by the internal resistance forces
- Районы города, освобождённые силами внутреннего отпора
- Quartiers de la ville libérés par les forces de l'intérieur
- Enemy strongholds liquidated by the internal resistance forces
- Опорные пункты противника, ликвидированные силами внутреннего отпора
- Centres de résistance de l'ennemi liquidés par les forces de l'intérieur
- Areas under enemy control from April 29 to May 1, 1945
- Районы, контролируемые противником с 29. IV. по 1. V. 1945.
- Quartiers sous le contrôle de l'ennemi du 29 avril au 1 mai 1945
- Enemy strongholds
- Опорные пункты противника
- Centres de résistance ennemi
- Battle positions of the internal resistance forces
- Боевое распределение сил внутреннего отпора
- Position de combat des forces de l'intérieur
- Directions taken by the offensive of units of IX Corps
- Направления наступления частей IX корпуса
- Directions de l'offensive des unités du IX^e Corps
- Directions taken by the offensive of the units of IV Army
- Направления наступления частей IV государственной армии
- Directions de l'offensive des unités de la VI^e Armée Yougoslave
- Command Post of Sektor H. Q.
- Номандный пункт штаба сектора
- Poste de commandement de l'état-major du secteur
- Command Post of the Town Command
- Номандный пункт комендатуры города
- Poste de commandement du Commandement de la Place
- Boundaries of the sector
- Границы сектора
- Limites du secteur

TRIESTE

Razmer 1:10 400

m 500 400 300 200 100 0 500 1000 m

