

# Pushing the Axis Back



# Battle of Stalingrad

August 23, 1942

- Soviet leaders are told to defend the city to the death.
  - Symbolic since named after Stalin.
- November 1942 → Nazis controlled 90% of city
- Soviet troops outside the city launch a counterattack
  - Surround the city and cut off the German troops supplies

# Battle of Stalingrad

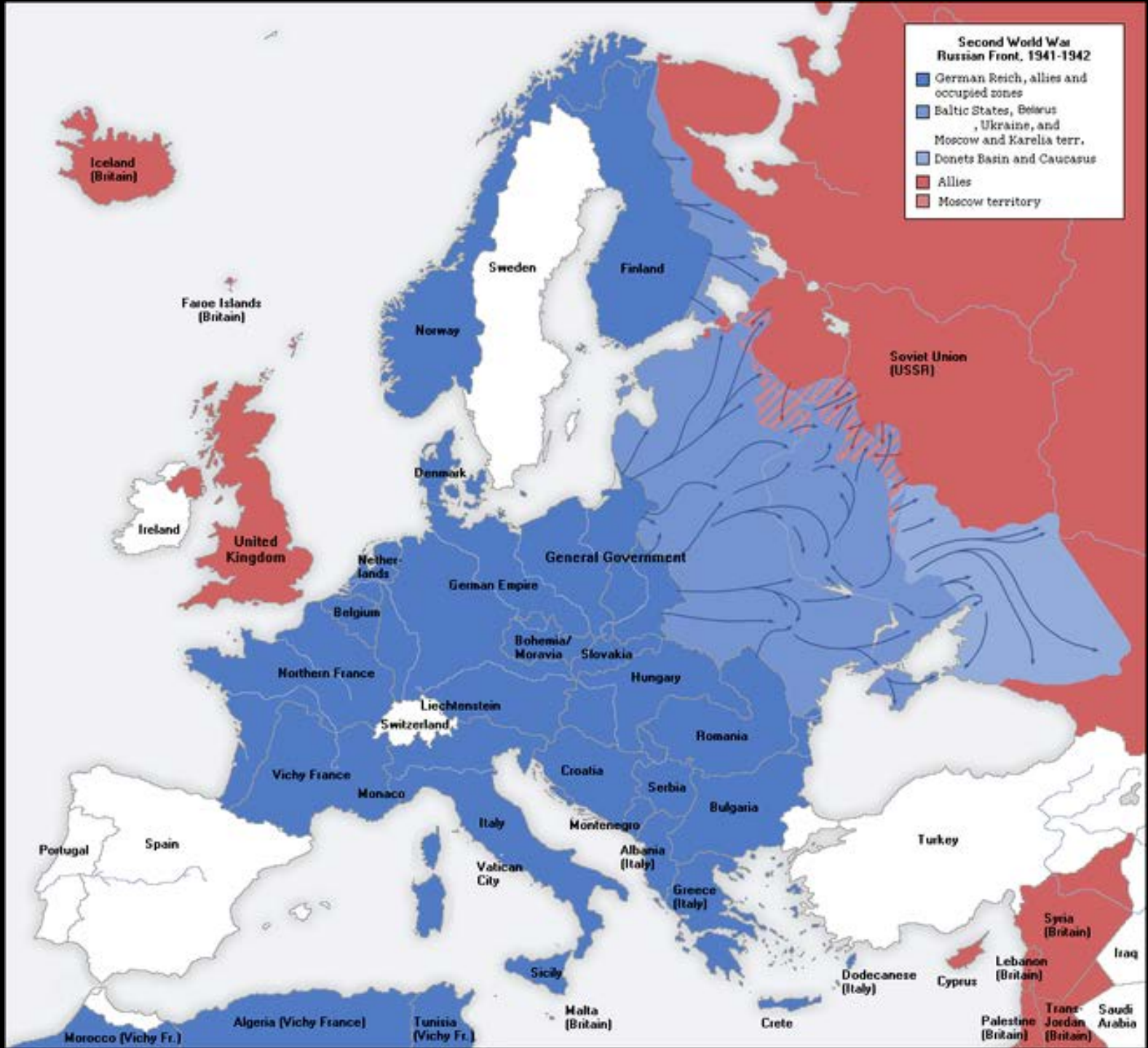
February 2<sup>nd</sup> , 1943

- Hitler refuses to allow his troops to retreat
  - Over 200,000 Axis soldiers are killed and 235,000 were taken prisoner, only 6,000 of whom returned to Germany after the war.
- Soviet's lose over 1,000,000 soldiers in defense of the city
- City 99% destroyed



**Second World War  
Russian Front, 1941-1942**

- German Reich, allies and occupied zones
- Baltic States, Belarus, Ukraine, and Moscow and Karelia terr.
- Allies
- Moscow territory



# Fall of Benito Mussolini

- Removed from power by King after Invasion of Italy
- Tried to escape to Switzerland with mistress Clara Petacci
- Was found when the Italian resistance ambushed German troops near Milan.
  - Was disguised as a German soldier
  - Caught and executed along with Petacci
- Bodies then hung from a gas station in Milan

**Benito Mussolini**

**Clara Petucci**



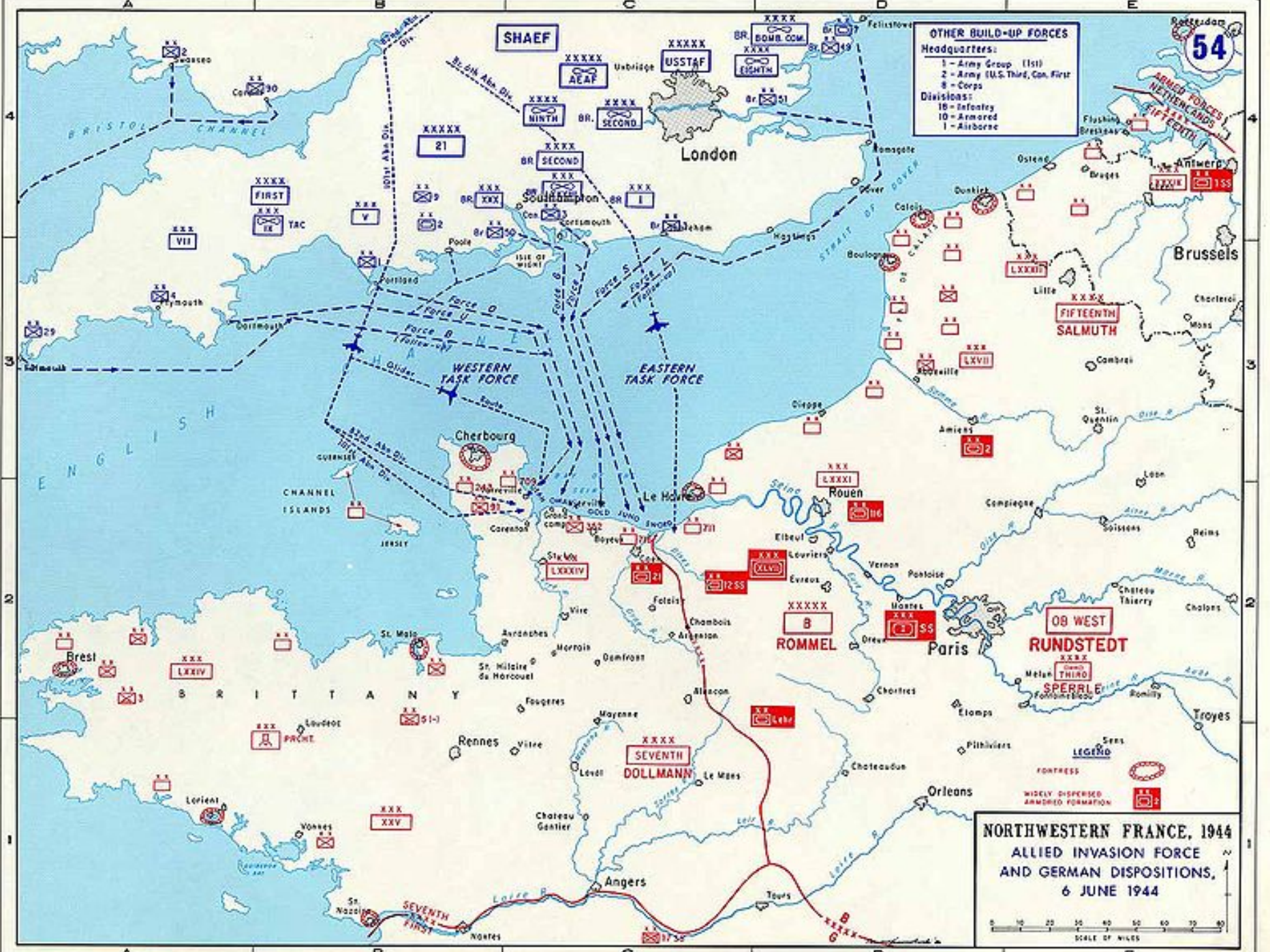
# Tehran

- Roosevelt meets Stalin in Tehran before invasion of France
- Agreed that:
  - Stalin would launch an offensive at the same time as the Invasion
  - FDR and Stalin agreed to break up Germany so it couldn't threaten peace anymore
  - Stalin promised war with Japan when Germany defeated
  - All agree to create world organization to help keep peace after war



# Operation Overlord

- General Eisenhower
- Atlantic Seawall
- Allied Advantage: Surprise



**OTHER BUILD-UP FORCES**

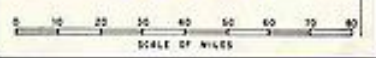
**Headquarters:**

- 1 - Army Group (1st)
- 2 - Army (U.S. Third, Can. First)
- 8 - Corps

**Divisions:**

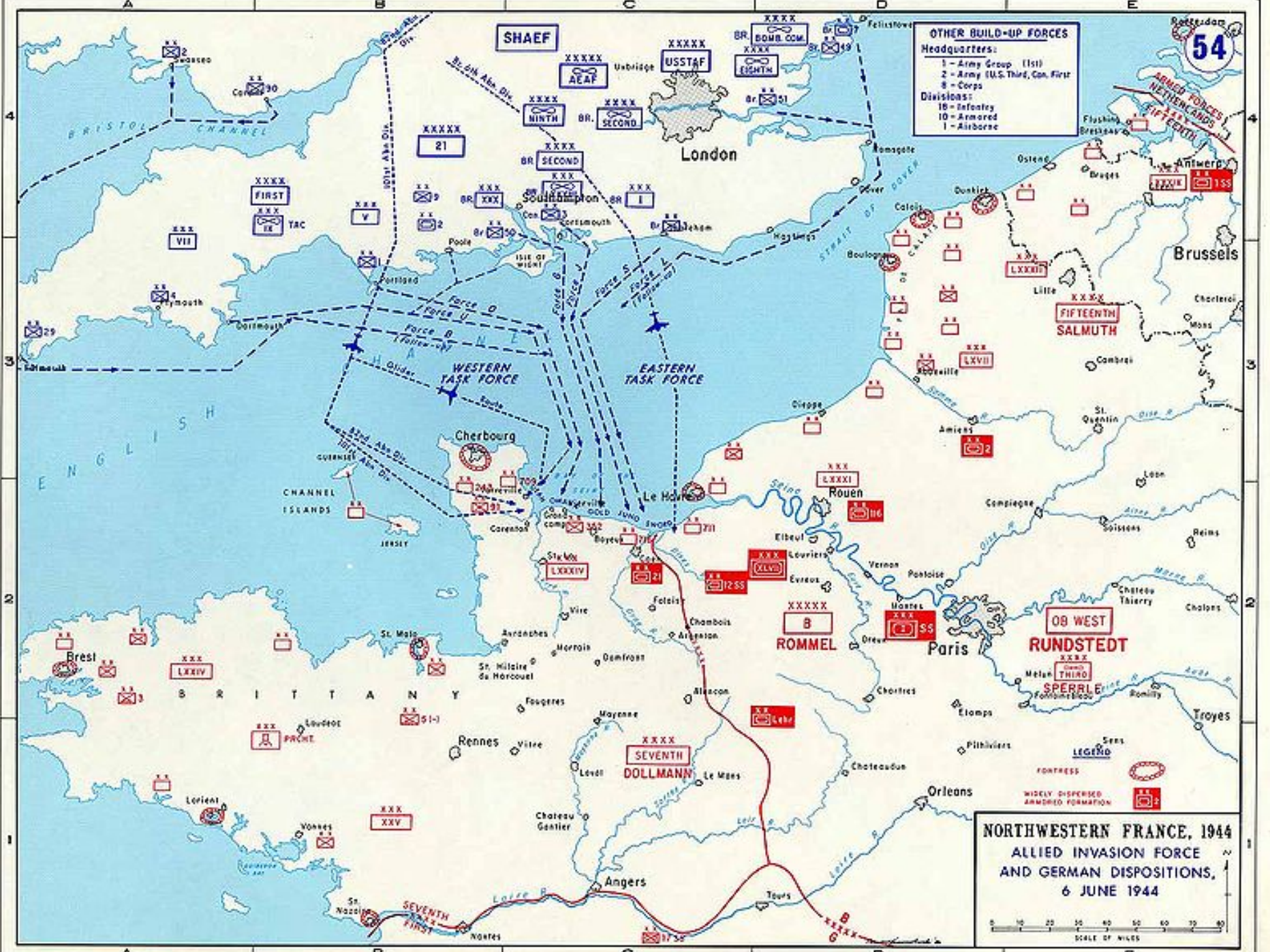
- 16 - Infantry
- 10 - Armored
- 1 - Airborne

**NORTHWESTERN FRANCE, 1944**  
**ALLIED INVASION FORCE**  
**AND GERMAN DISPOSITIONS,**  
**6 JUNE 1944**



# Operation Fortitude

- Used an army of inflatable lookalikes to fool Germans that the allies would land in Pas- de-Calais.



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**NORTHWESTERN FRANCE, 1944**  
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0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80  
 SCALE OF MILES





# Who?

- 1.5 million American Soldiers
- 12,000 airplanes
- 7,000 ships
- 5 million tons of equipment

All ready to fight in England

# When?

- Had to be at night to hide ships
- Low tide so soldiers could see underwater obstacles
- Low tide had to be at dawn so gunners could see targets on coast
- Moonlit night beforehand to see where to land for paratroopers
- Weather permitting, storm grounds airplanes, high waves swamp landing craft
- Days left?: June 5th-7<sup>th</sup>, 1944.

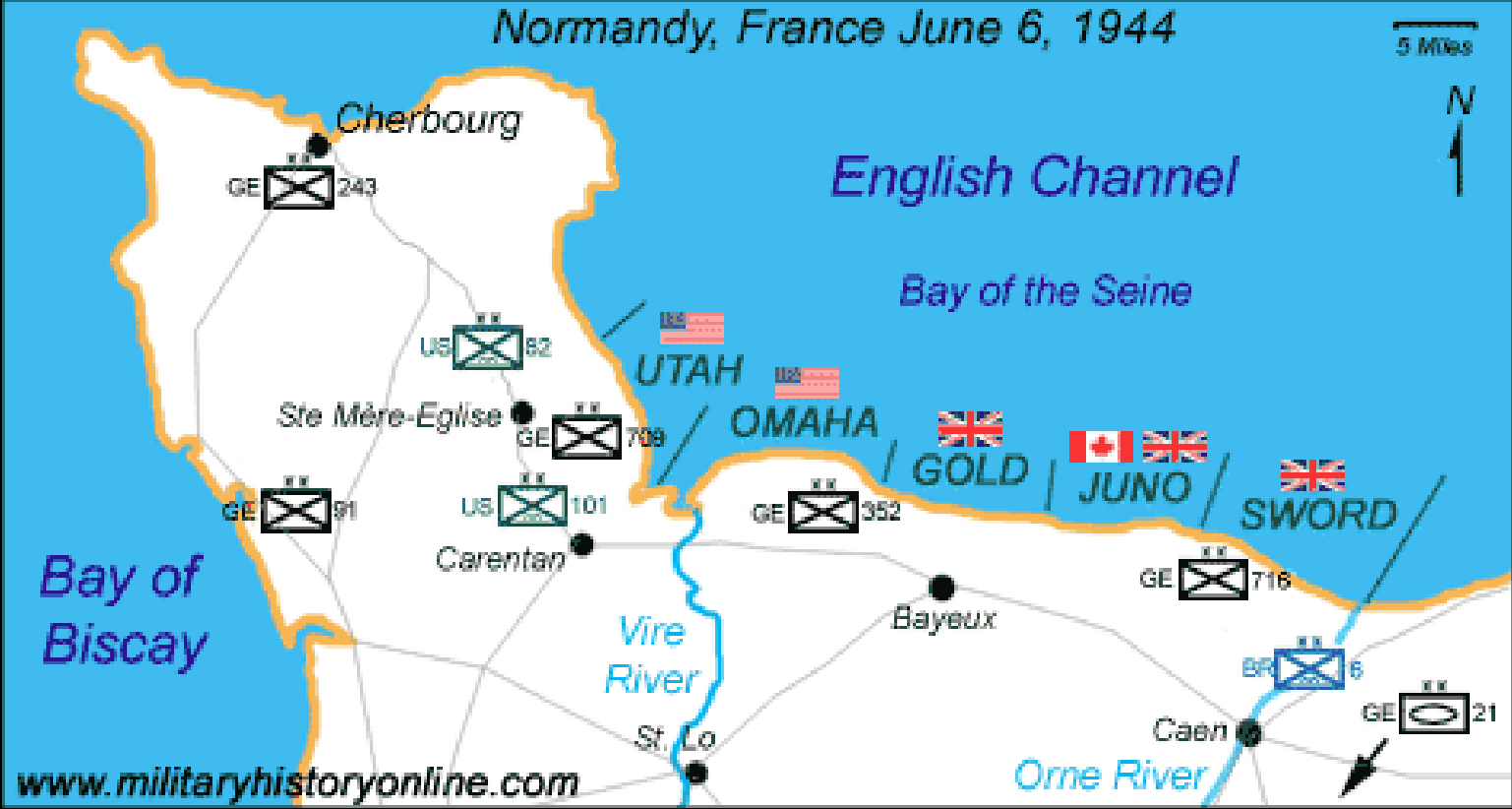


# The Longest Day

- 5,000 ships with 100,000 soldiers
- 24,000 paratroopers drop into France
  
- Landing beach zones:
  - Utah- American
  - Omaha- American
  - Gold- British
  - Sword- British
  - Juno- Canadian

Normandy, France June 6, 1944

5 Miles



# Overlord Timeline → Pathfinders

0015 Hour

- Special Forces Paratroopers
  - Extremely dangerous
- Go in one hour before the airborne
- Set up landing zones and beacons to guide the pilots of the C-47s.



# **Overlord Timeline → Airborne**

**0100 Hours**

- 24,000 British, US and Canadian paratroopers





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# Overlord Timeline → Marines

0630 Hours

- The operation, planned by a team under Lieutenant-General Frederick Morgan
  - The largest amphibious invasion in world history and was executed by land, sea and air elements under direct Anglo-American command
  - 160,000 soldiers landing on 6 June 1944
    - 73,000 Americans
    - 61,715 British
    - 21,400 Canadians.





# Operation Market Garden

- September 1944 → Largest airborne assault in history
- Allied troops met much stronger resistance in the Netherlands than they previously thought.
- Highway 69 → Main road along attack route, nicknamed by soldiers, “Highway to Hell”
- Why was it unsuccessful?
  - Germans were able to quickly and effectively respond
  - The Germans found the Market Garden battle plans on the corpse of an American officer who should not have had them on the battlefield.
- Allies now realized the war would not be over by Christmas 1944

# Battle of the Bulge

- December 16, 1944- January 25, 1945
- Snow and Cold
- American troops incorrectly equipped for winter
- Name:
  - Comes from the German offensive surprising American forces and creating a bulge in the Allied line.

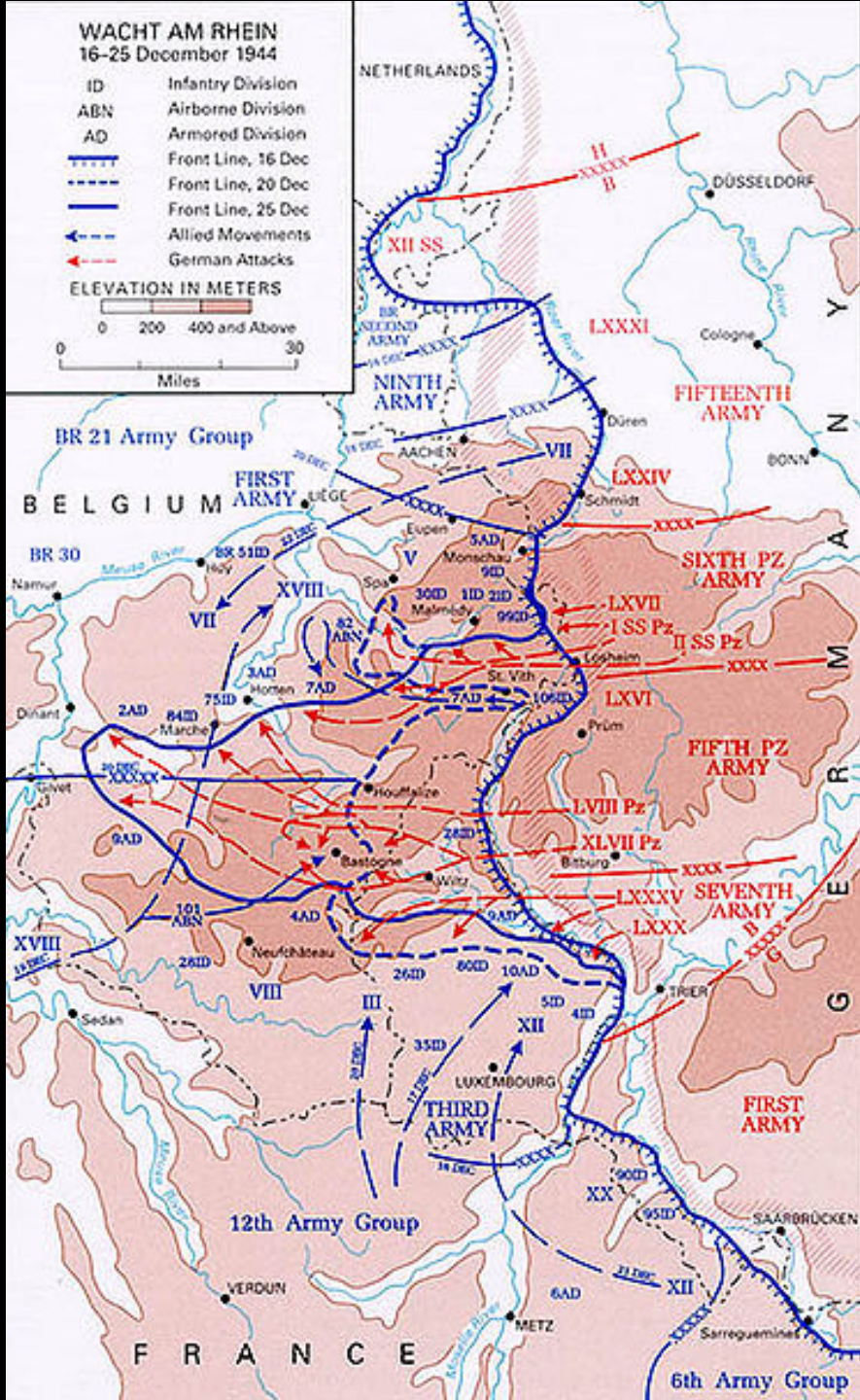
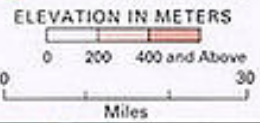


# Battle of the Bulge

- Americans trapped in Bastogne
- Eisenhower orders Patton's troops to rescue them
- German's suffer 100,000 casualties and running out of fuel.

**WACHT AM RHEIN**  
16-25 December 1944

- ID Infantry Division
- ABN Airborne Division
- AD Armored Division
- Front Line, 16 Dec
- Front Line, 20 Dec
- Front Line, 25 Dec
- Allied Movements
- German Attacks







# Firebombing of Dresden

- Four raids between 13 and 15 February 1945
  - 722 heavy bombers of the British Royal Air Force (RAF)
  - 527 of the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF)
  - Dropped more than 3,900 tons of high-explosive bombs and incendiary devices on the city.
  - The bombing and the resulting firestorm destroyed over 1,600 acres of the city center.
  - Between 22,700 and 25,000 people were killed.

Before



After



## What is a *firestorm*?

- A fire which attains such intensity that it creates and sustains its own wind system.
  - It is most commonly a natural phenomenon, created during some of the worst of forest fires.
  - The phenomenon's determining characteristic is a fire with its own hurricane force winds from every point of the compass.







Photo - John McColgan BLM Alaska Fire Service



## *Dresden Firestorm (cont.)*

- The center of the city, was engulfed in a firestorm, with temperatures peaking at over 1500 °C (2700 °F)
- People who hid in air raid shelters or bunkers were literally cooked to death as the bunkers turned into ovens.
- Number of exact dead impossible and many people were reduced to ash.





Quelle: Deutsche Fotothek



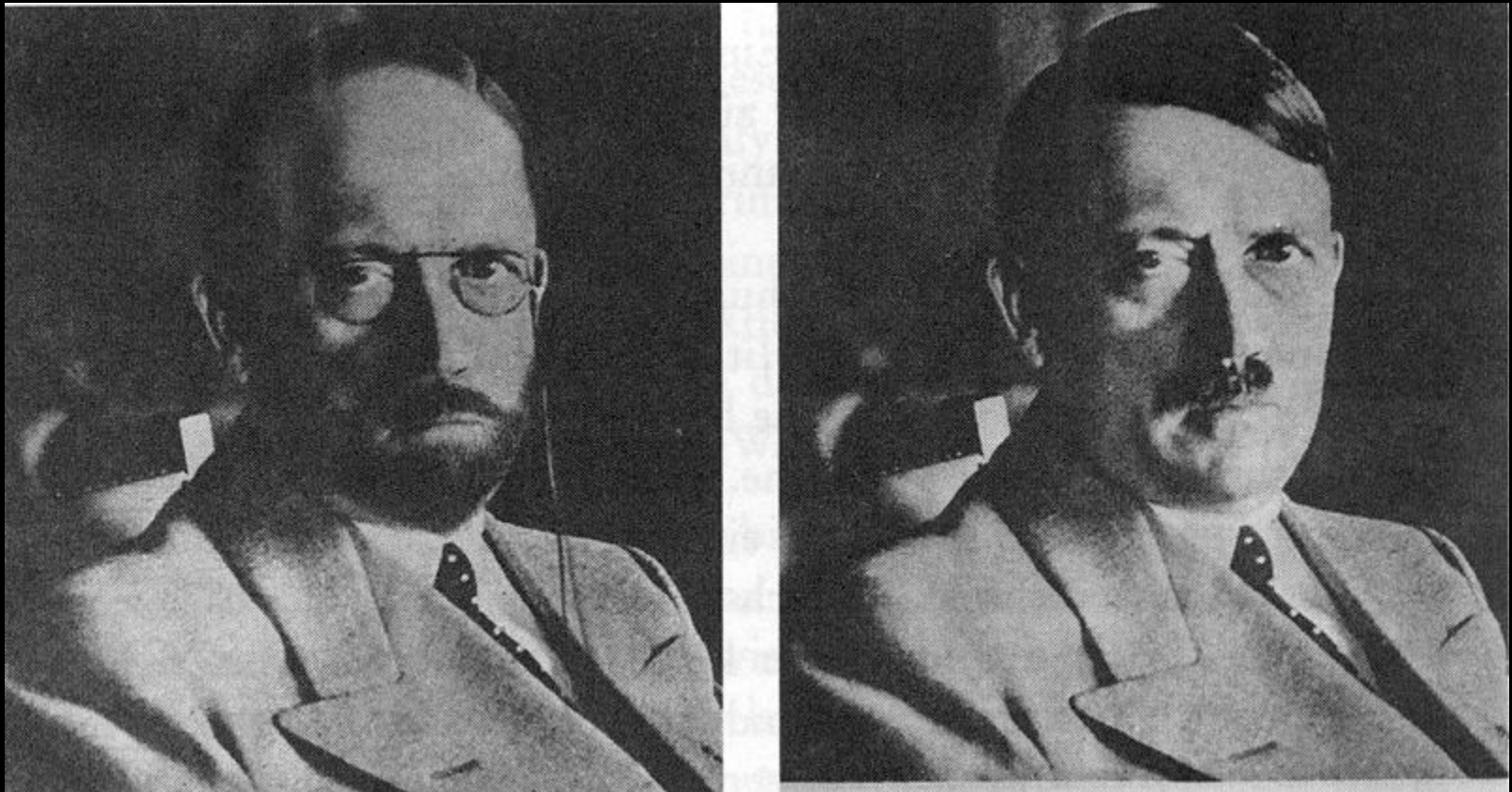
# Trapped in Berlin

- Berlin is surrounded by Soviet troops
  - Hitler warned that they had about a day, maybe two, before the Soviets overtook the *Führerbunker*.
- Hitler had retreated to his bunker on January 16, after deciding to remain in Berlin for the last great siege of the war.
  - Fifty-five feet under the chancellery (Hitler's headquarters as chancellor), the shelter contained 18 small rooms and was fully self-sufficient, with its own water and electrical supply.
  - He left rarely
    - Once to decorate a squadron of Hitler Youth
- At his side were Eva Braun, whom he married only two days before their double suicide, and his dog, an Alsatian named Blondi.

## Trapped in Berlin (cont.)

- Hitler urged to escape to Berchtesgarden, a small town in the Bavarian Alps where Hitler owned a home, the dictator instead chose suicide.
  - It is believed that both he and his wife swallowed cyanide capsules (which had been tested for their efficiency on his "beloved" dog and her pups).
  - For good measure, he shot himself with his service pistol on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1945.
- The bodies of Hitler and Eva were cremated in the chancellery garden by the bunker survivors (as per Der Fuhrer's orders) and reportedly later recovered in part by Russian troops. A German court finally officially declared Hitler dead, but not until 1956.

Hitler's Death was not a sure thing in 1945. So the Allies posted this poster all over Germany in the possibility he might have not committed suicide and evaded capture.



# V-E Day

May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945  
*VICTORY IN  
EUROPE DAY*





# World War II Deaths

