



4 June 1944

Ike's longest day



WEBSITE

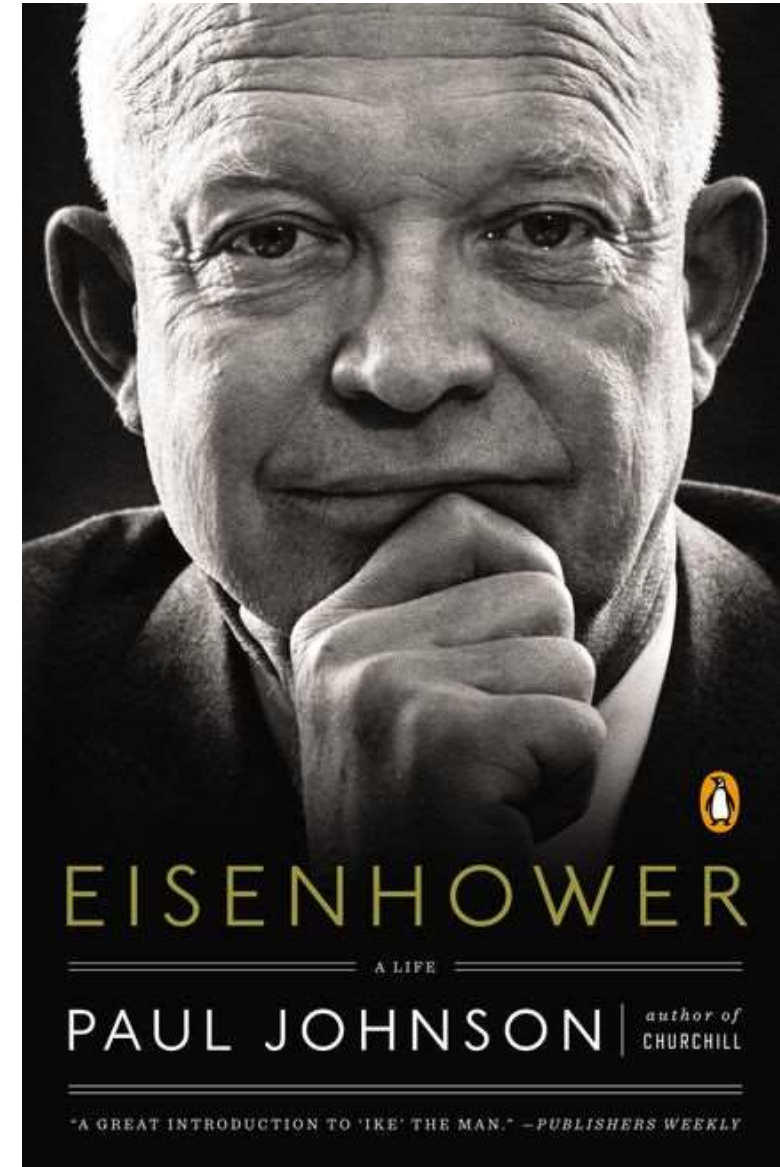
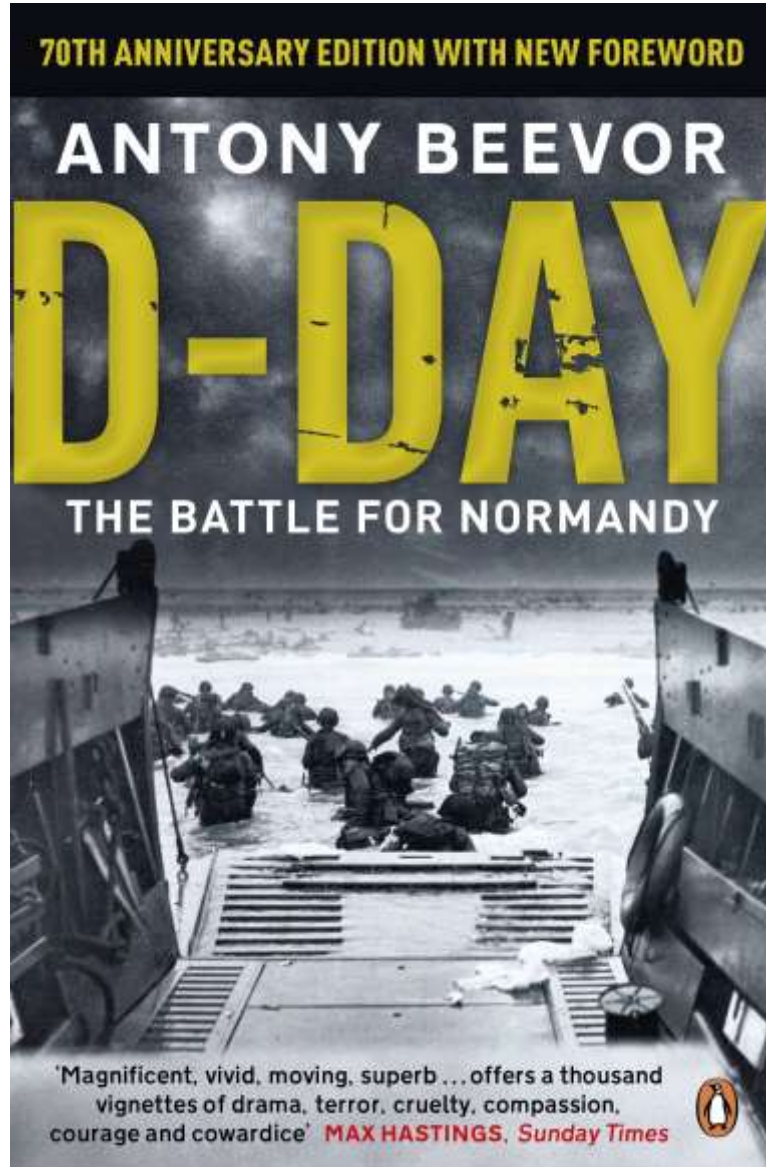
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Sunday, 4 June 1944

**Southwick House (Hampshire): Supreme
Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
(SHAEF)**

**Commander of Allied forces in north west
Europe: U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower**

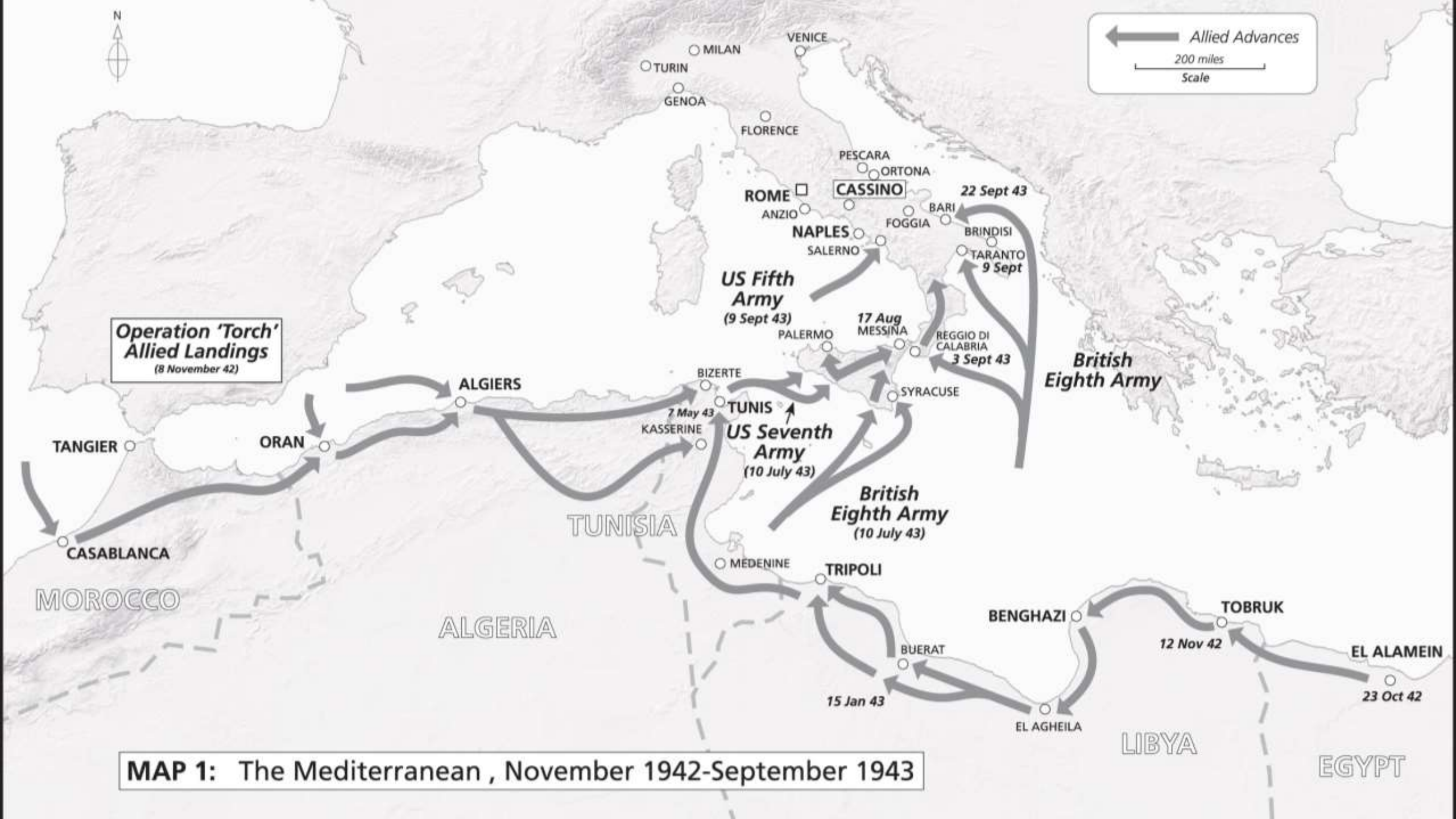






The planning of **Operation Torch**: the Allied invasion of French North Africa (**8 November 1942**)





MAP 1: The Mediterranean , November 1942-September 1943

Invasion fleet off the coast of Tunisia: too massive not to be noticed
Operation Mincemeat: Hitler must be convinced the next landing will take place in **Greece** or **Sardinia**



Operation Husky: a success

Hitler orders the transfer of a
Panzerdivision from France to Greece







General Omar Bradley

Admiral Bertram Ramsay

Air Chief Marshal Arthur Tedder

General Montgomery

Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory

General Bedell-Smith



D-Day scheduled for
June 5

Landing of troops in
Normandy

Atlantic Wall 1942-1944



The **Atlantic Wall**: German system of coastal defenses and fortifications built along the coast of Western Europe





General **Hiroshi Oshima** (Japan's ambassador to Germany): an **involuntary spy**



Oshima's coded reports to Tokyo **intercepted** and **decrypted**: German defensive plan outlined

The Pas-de-Calais better fortified than Normandy



Bundesarchiv, Bild 101I-262-1544-13
Foto: Werner | September 1943

The choice of a date

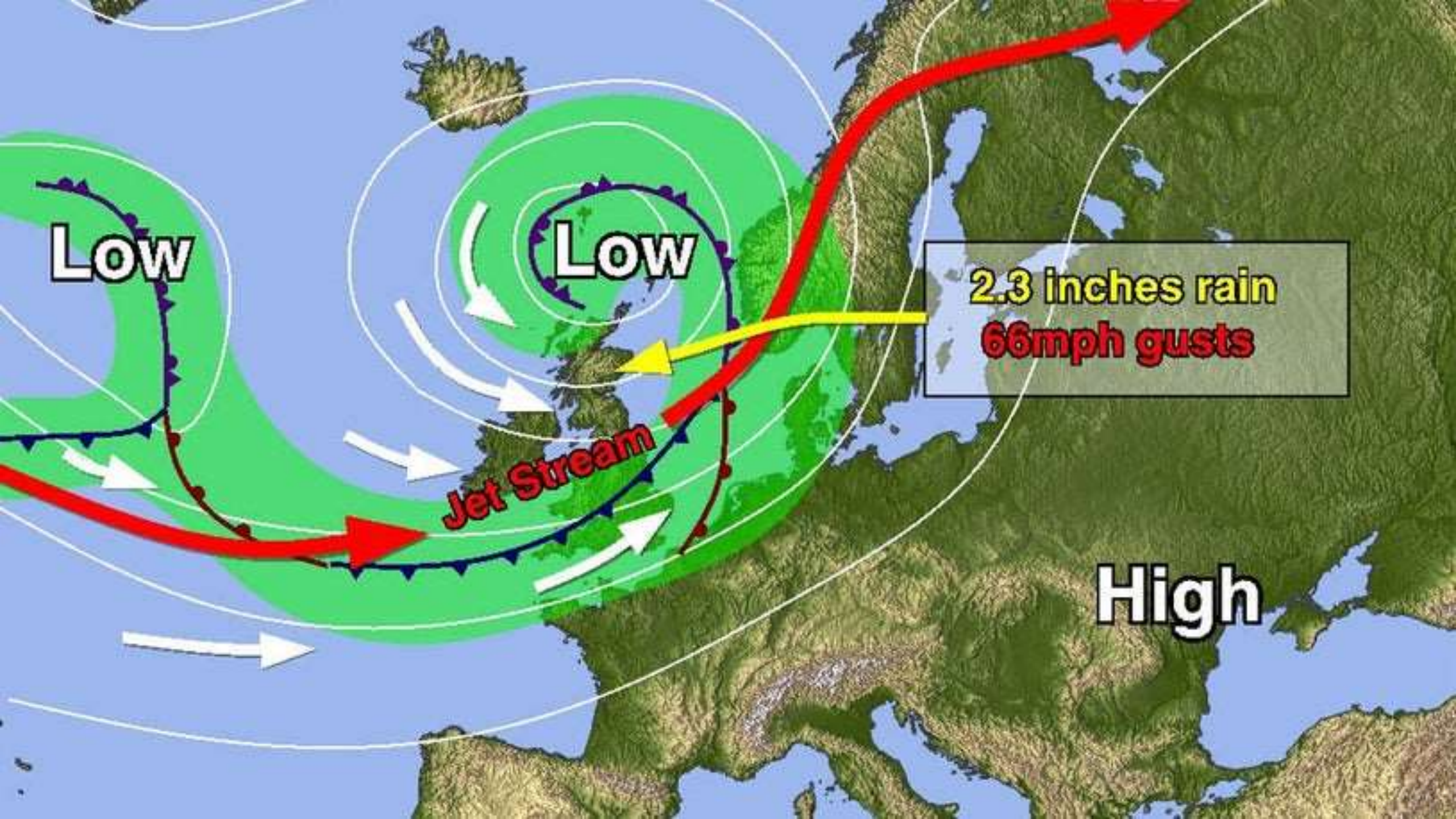
Airborne operations to precede the landing of troops to take place at night (full moon)

Low tide to locate the beach obstacles

A landing between June 4 & 7







Low

Low

2.3 inches rain
66mph gusts

Jet Stream

High

Weather forecast

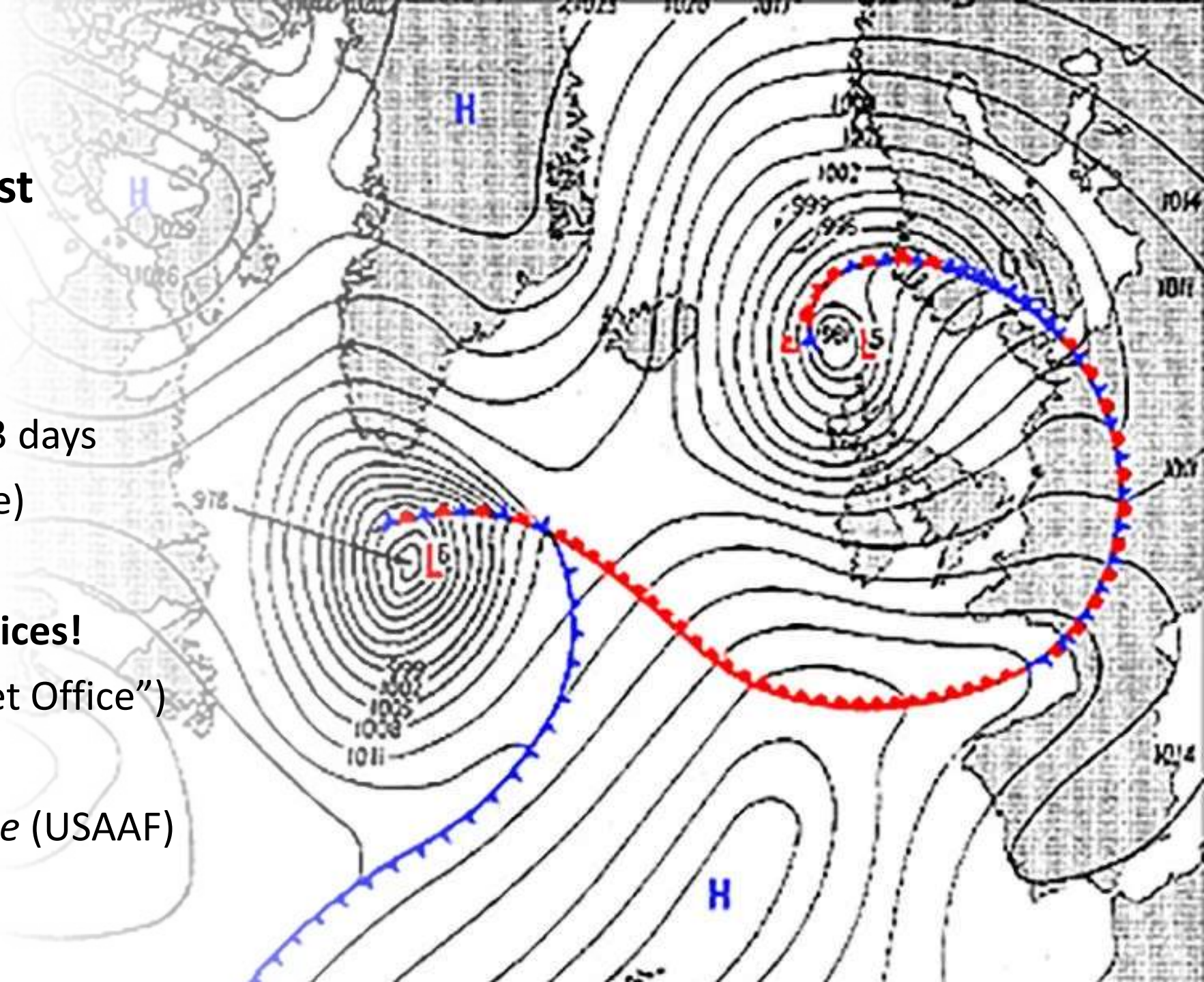
Reliable only within 2-3 days
(North west Europe)

3 Meteorological services!

Meteorological Office ("Met Office")

Royal Navy

United States Army Air Force (USAAF)



Dealing with Winston...



Constant meddling

The odd decision to join the landing
fleet





Stormy weather ahead...

Group Captain **James Stagg**: the
"weatherman"

Alarming weather forecasts since
June 1

A cold front associated with rain
and wind moving in...

Should D-Day be delayed?



Operation Neptune
already on the way...

Cross-Channel invasion

5 000 landing crafts

1 200 warships

Ike's decision: D-Day to be
delayed 24 hours



A visit from **General de Gaulle**

De Gaulle: Chairman of the
**Provisional Government of the
French Republic** since 18 May

De Gaulle kept in the dark about
the D-Day plans (Roosevelt)

Arrived in London on June 4

10 May 1940



The German invasion of France





Act I: 16 June 1940

Paul Reynaud (President of the Council of Ministers) resigned

Replaced by Marshal **Philippe Petain**

Armistice with the Germans



LE TEXTE DU PREAMBULE

Occupied zone to include the entire Atlantic coast

Italian occupation zone
(control of the Mediterranean)

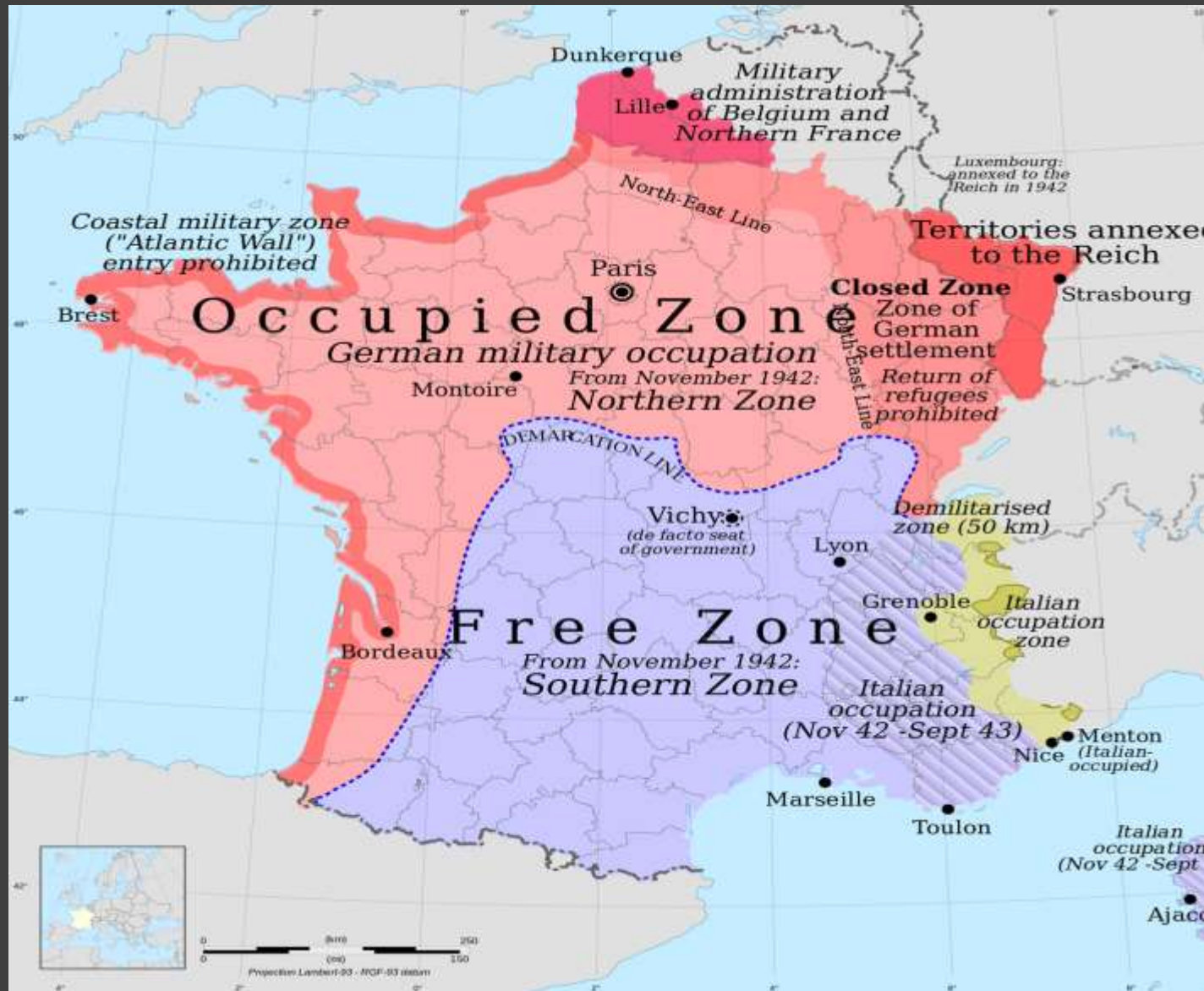
A “Free Zone”
A new capital: Vichy





Act II: 10 July 1940, Vichy

National Assembly voted the full powers to Petain (569 vs. 80)





A tense meeting with
Churchill

French Provisional
Government denied any
political legitimacy

An Allied Military
Government of Occupied
Territories (AMGOT)

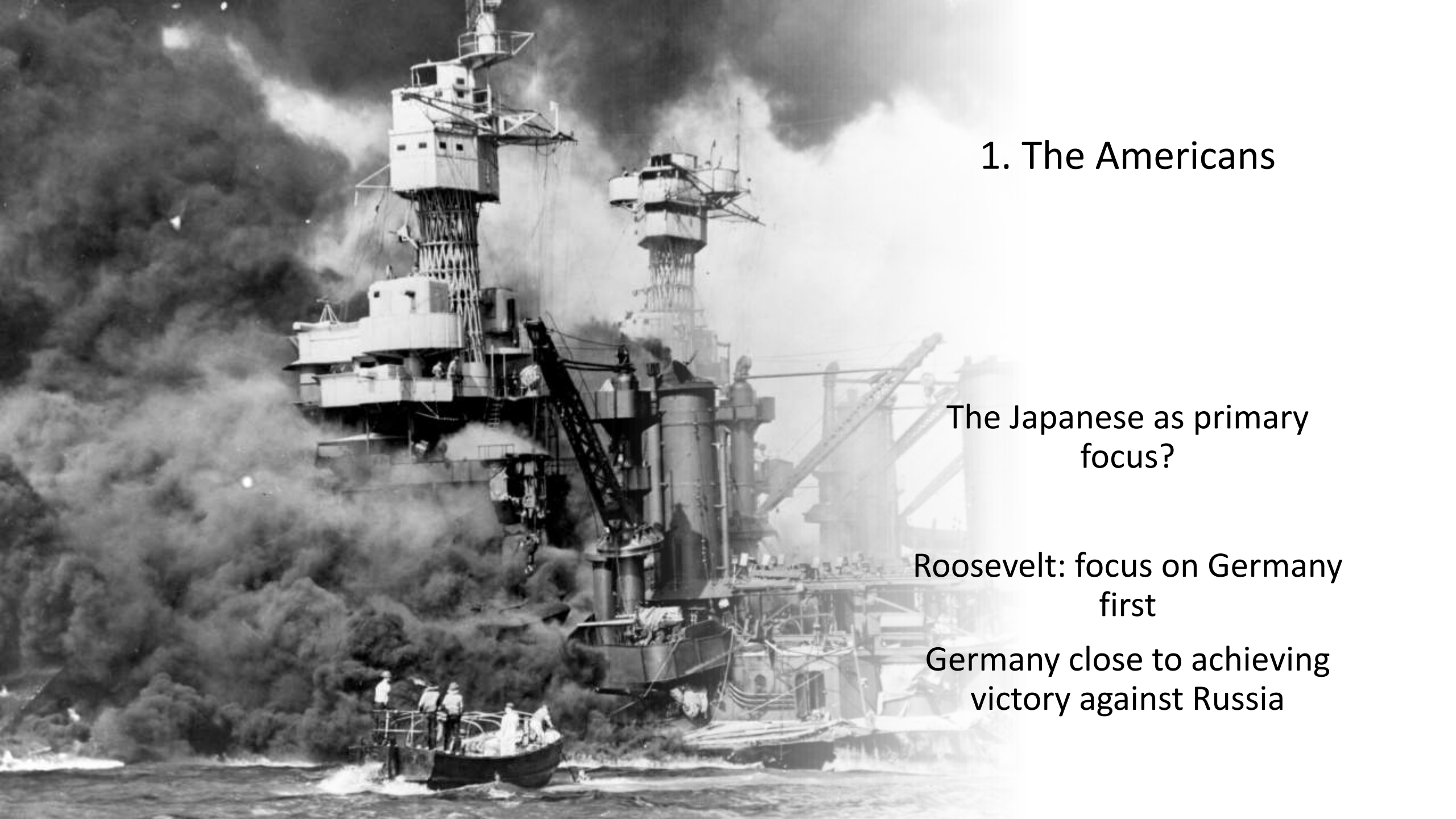
De Gaulle furious





The opening of a second front in Western Europe

A late decision



1. The Americans

The Japanese as primary focus?

Roosevelt: focus on Germany first

Germany close to achieving victory against Russia



2. The British

Focus on the Mediterranean
Traditional British interests
To avoid a frontal attack



The Soviets

The opening of a second front as quickly as possible

To force Germany to fight a war on 2 fronts

Tensions amongst allies

The Tehran Conference

(28 November – 1 December 1943)



Stalin & Roosevelt: the **opening of a front in Normandy** to divert German troops from Russia:
Operation Overlord

*“In wartime, truth is so precious
that she should always be attended
by a bodyguard of lies” (Churchill)*

Military deception: to mislead the
enemy so that he makes preparations
which are going to be a **waste of his**
resources



How to **minimize** the number of
casualties and **maximize** the
chances of **success**

Operation Bodyguard: the greatest
deception in history





Lieutenant General Frederik Morgan:
**chief of staff of the Supreme Allied
Commander**

The initial planner of D-Day



Where? Pas-de-Calais or Normandy?





Aerial reconnaissance



Special forces sent to sample the sand (landing crafts)

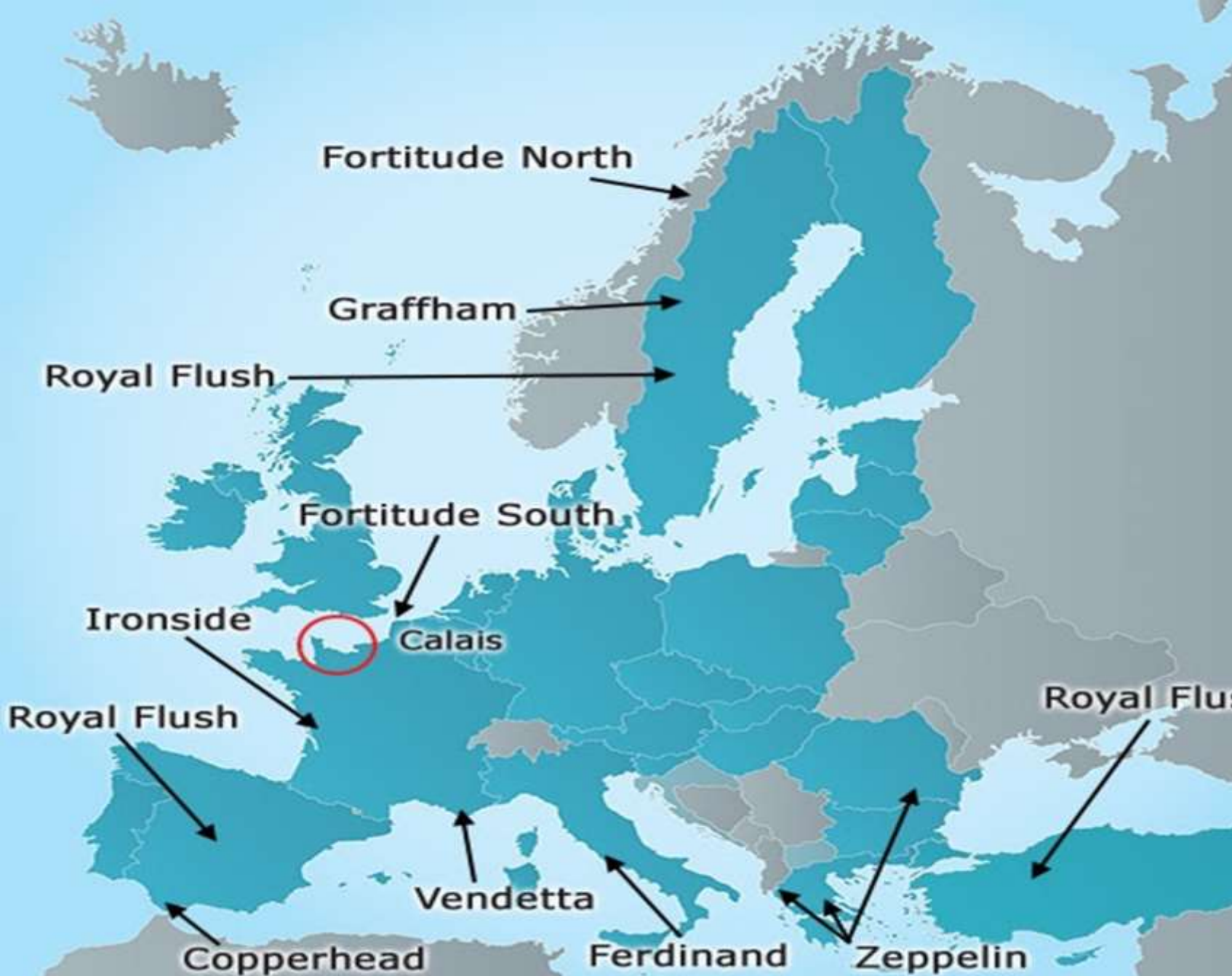


Appeal to *the British public* for *holiday* photographs taken on Continental beaches before the war (10 million received)

Operation Fortitude

The objectives:

1. To **divert** German attention away from Normandy prior to D-Day
2. To **delay** reinforcement after D-Day (Normandy as a diversion)



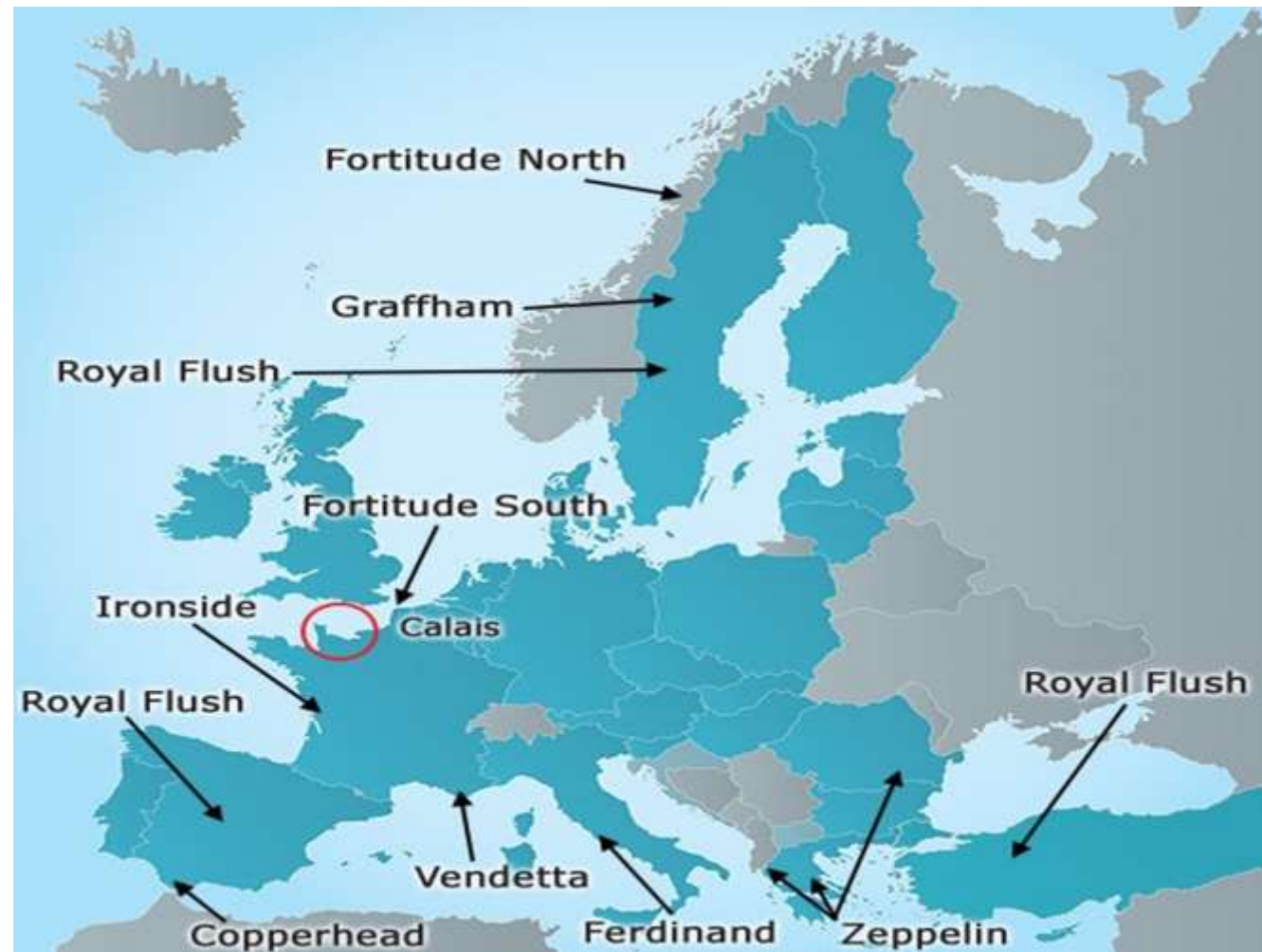


U.S. troops in England: the **largest build-up** to an amphibious operation in military history

2 million American, British & Canadian soldiers stationed in Southern England



Operation Fortitude North



To make the Germans believe an attack on France would be a diversion

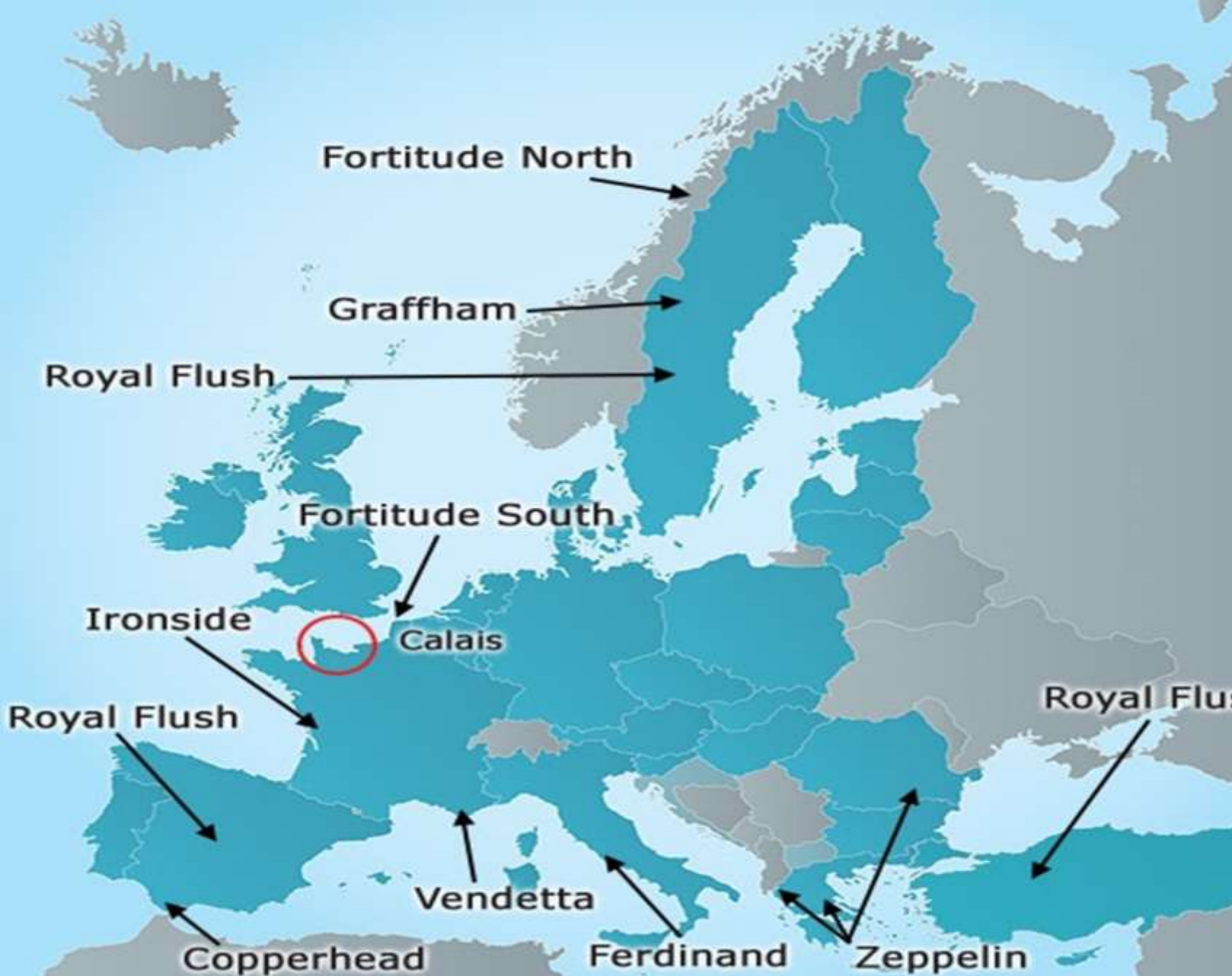
Phantom British 4th Army in Scotland

Fake radio traffic after D-Day:
fictitious 4th Army to join equally
fictitious First United States
Army Group (FUSAG) pending
attack on Pas-de-Calais



13 German divisions
(200 000 men) kept in alert in
Norway

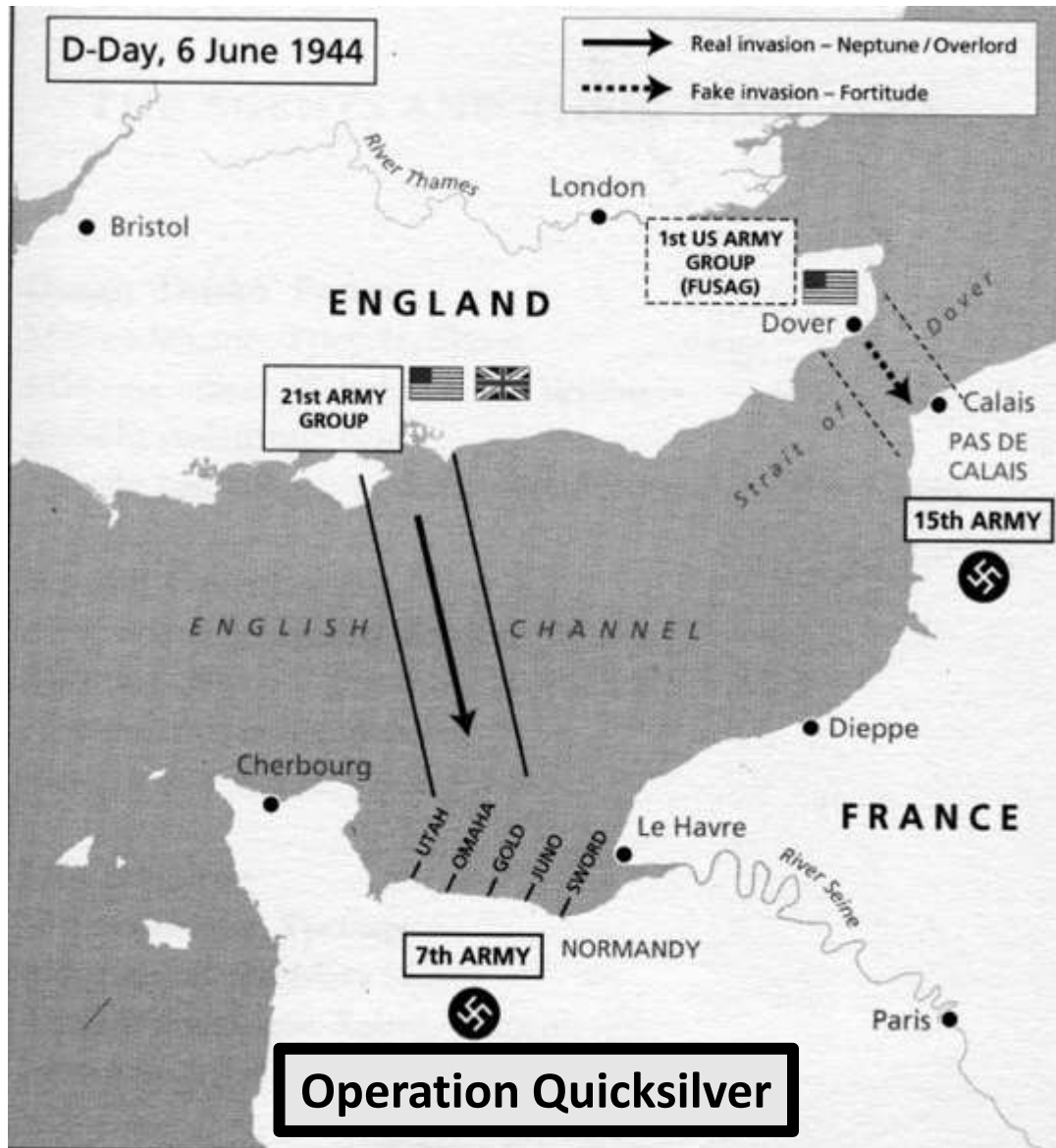




Operation Fortitude South

To convince Hitler and his generals that the **Pas-de-Calais** was the intended primary landing objective





Quicksilver I & II: the increase of
radio traffic

(movement of radio trucks to
simulate broadcasts of a large army)



USAF Photo

Quicksilver III: dummy landing crafts and rubber Sherman tanks







Quicksilver IV & V: bombing patterns

Attacks on coastal defenses and railways twice as heavy in the Pas-de-Calais



The use of POWs

General Hanz Kramer released
(Red Cross)

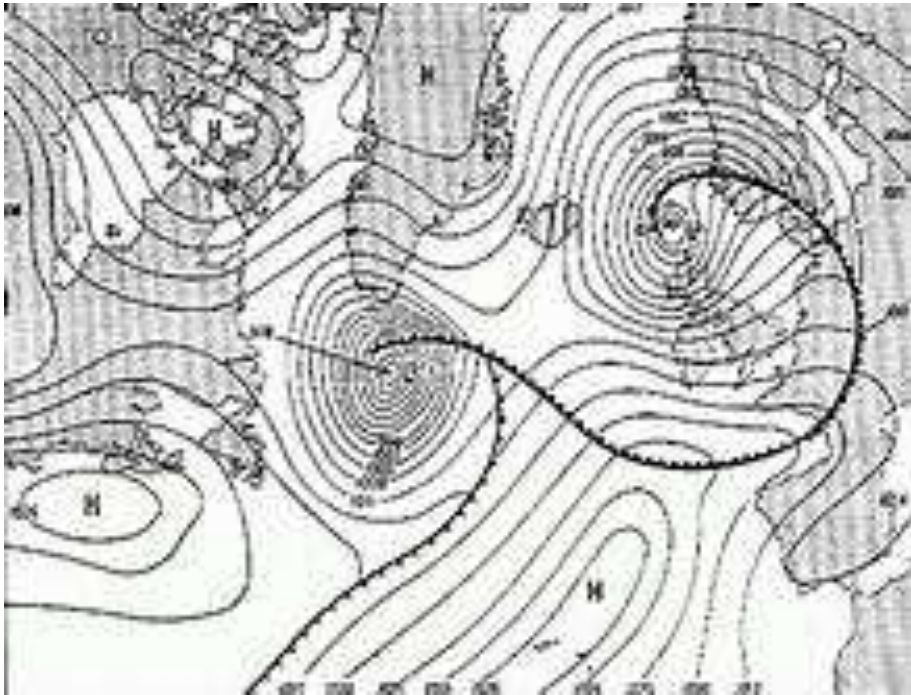
Dinner with Patton/Signs of
military buildup (FUSAG)



How to keep the deception going should D-Day
be delayed?

5 June, 4.30pm

Bad weather confirmed





9.15pm

Decision time

Ongoing stormy weather: a landing in Normandy would have been a disaster

Forecast morning of June 6: a 36-hour period of calmer weather

No possible forecast beyond June 7



General Omar Bradley

Admiral Bertram Ramsay

Air Chief Marshal Arthur Tedder

General Montgomery

Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory

General Bedell-Smith

D-Day to take place on
June 6

*“Well, it’s on. No one can
stop it now.”*





What about the
Germans?

German high command
convinced a landing in France
impossible (bad weather)







A good weather forecast
service

BUT

No weather stations in the
Atlantic (Greenland)

Germans unable to forecast
calmer weather



German 7th Army: state of alert
abandoned

Rommel on his way to Germany

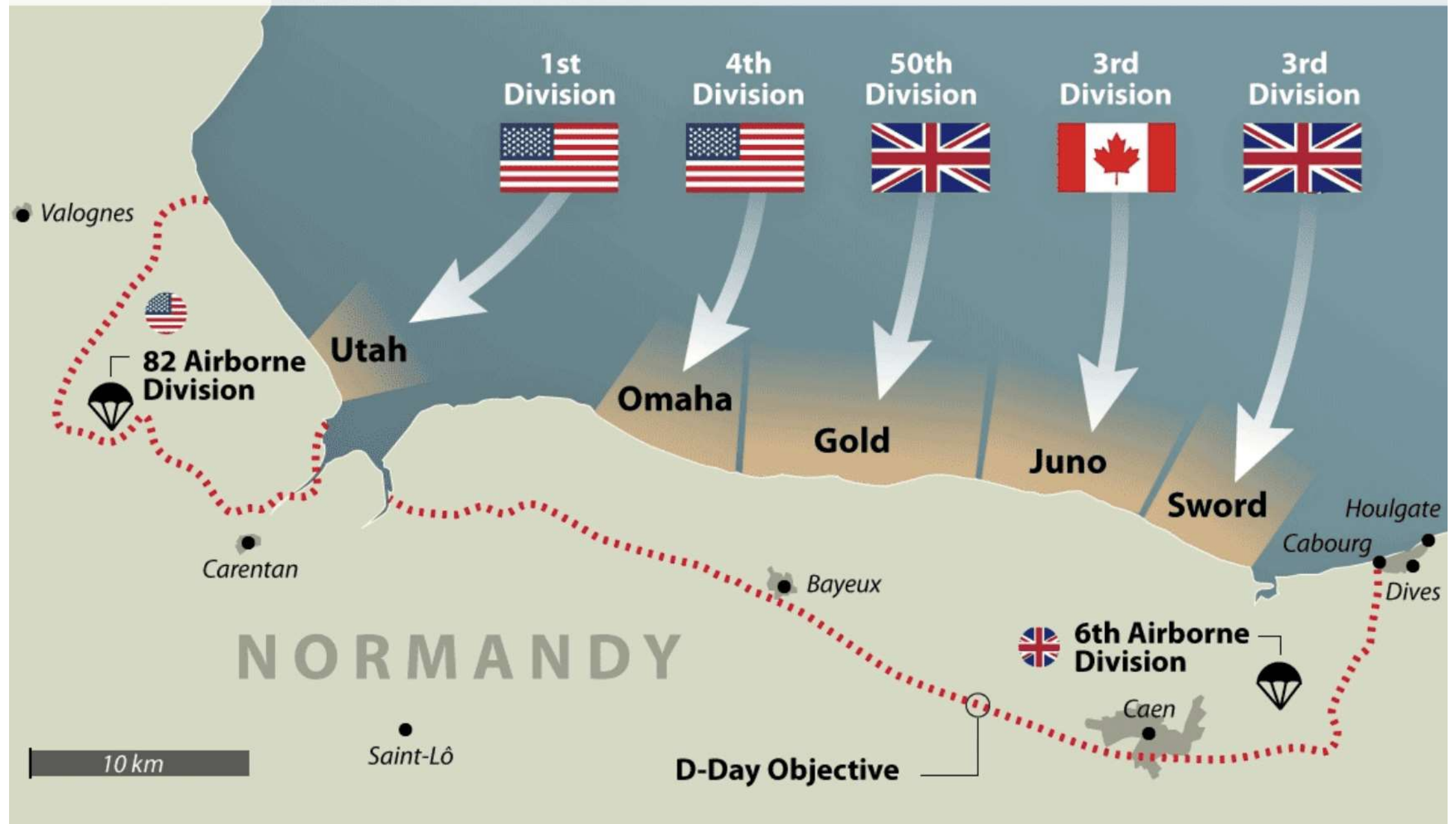




General Feuchtinger

Commander of the sole
Panzer division in the sector
away in Paris (incognito) to
visit... his mistress!

Normandy Landings June 6, 1944





June 6

150 000 British, Canadian
and American soldiers on
French soil by the end of day





Confusion and
miscommunication on
the German side

Lack of unity at the top
Von Rundstedt vs. Rommel
(competition)

No authority over the air
force, the Navy or the
Waffen SS (Nazi Party's
military branch)

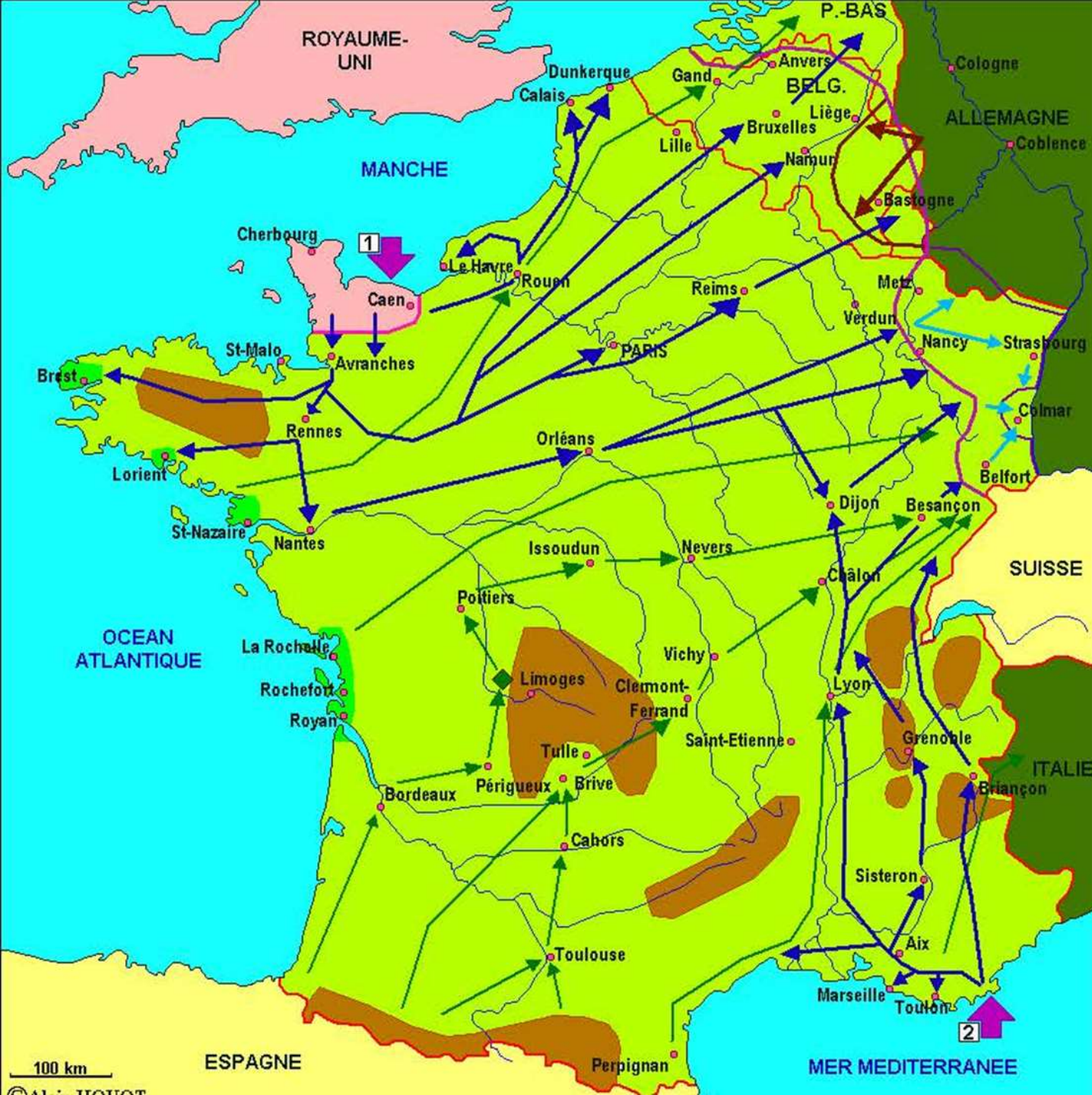


CURT JURGENS
(THE LONGEST DAY)



Hitler convinced Overlord was a **diversion**: the real landing to take place at the Pas-de-Calais (FUSAG still a threat)
Decision to move reinforcements to Normandy in mid-July!





The liberation of France

The Battle of Normandy: the loss of 250 000 men for the Germans + panzer divisions

A turning point

Soviet offensive in the east
(22 June)

Endgame

The Germans forced to
withdraw from the Balkans &
Eastern Europe
(Loss of key economic
resources)



D-Day accelerated Germany's
defeat

A balance of power in Europe to
last decades



A note

“Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based upon the best information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all the bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine alone.”

