

# WWII: European Theater



# Key Allied Powers and Axis Powers and Their Leaders

Allies	Leaders
Great Britain	Winston Churchill, prime minister
France	Charles de Gaulle, leader of French not under German control
Soviet Union	Joseph Stalin, communist dictator
United States	Franklin D. Roosevelt, President

Axis Powers	Leaders
Germany	Adolf Hitler, Nazi dictator
Italy	Benito Mussolini, fascist dictator
Japan	Hideki Tojo, army general and prime minister; Hirohito, emperor

# Invasion of Poland

- ◆ 1 September 1939: Hitler sends army into Poland
- ◆ German offensive tactic - Blitzkrieg (“lightning war”)
- ◆ Poland fell within a few short weeks and was split in half by Hitler and Stalin according to the Non-Aggression Pact



## BLITZKRIEG

When you only stop for kittens

EGGS FOR  
HITLER



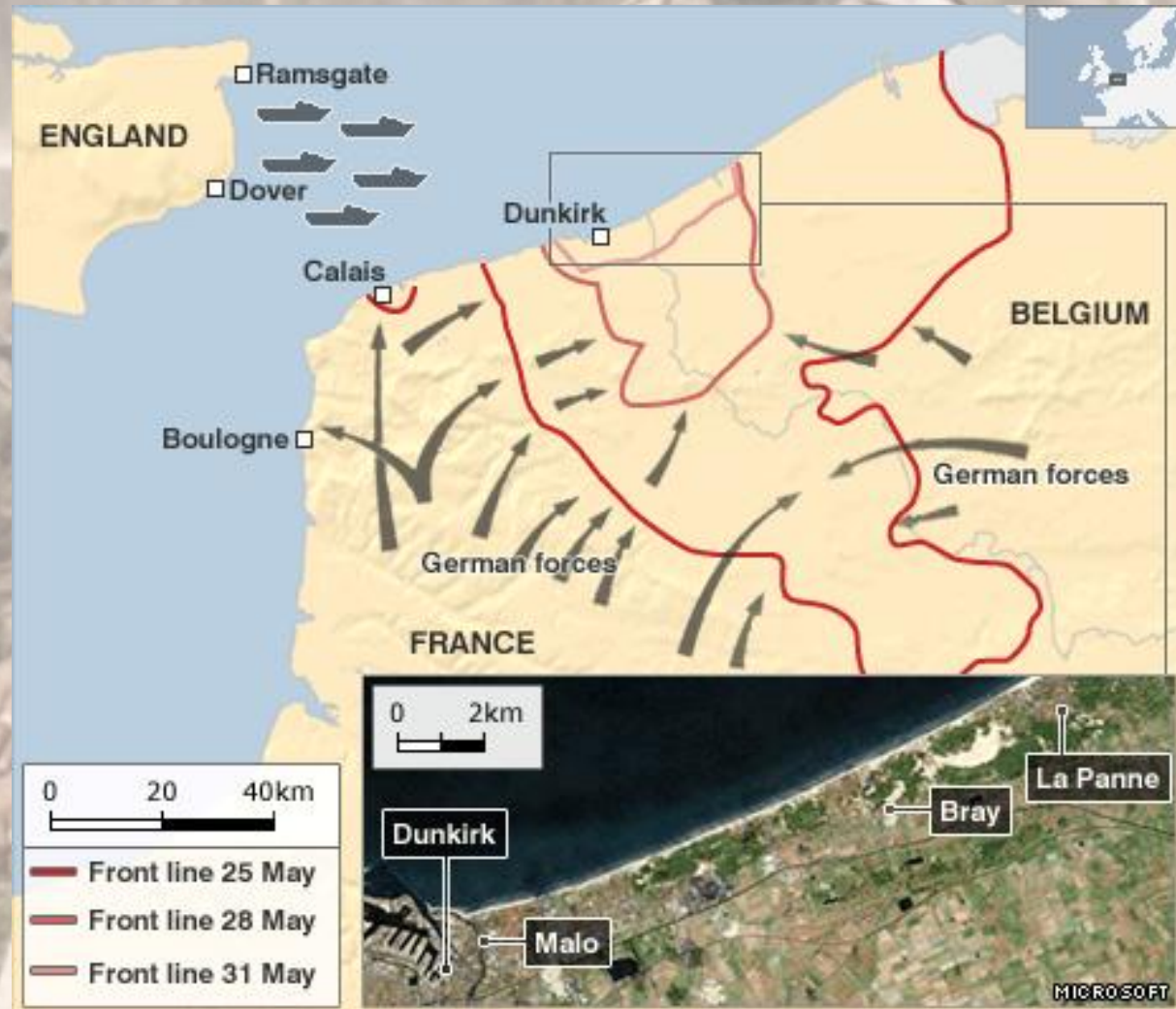
# What did the USSR do with Poland?

- ◆ Stalin forced Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia to accept Soviet military bases
- ◆ Finland refused and thus went to war with the Soviet Union
- ◆ March 1940: Finland surrendered to the Soviet Union



# Hitler waits to attack France

- ◆ April 1940: Hitler attacked Denmark and Norway
- ◆ May 1940: Hitler invades the Netherlands and Belgium
- ◆ Allied troops forced to retreat to Dunkirk where they are trapped
- ◆ 800 British ships rescued troops; evacuated more than 300,000 French and British troops





# Invasion of France

- ◆ June 1940: Germans invade France
- ◆ Italy attacked France from the southeast
- ◆ 14 June 1940: German troops marched into Paris
- ◆ 21 June 1940: France surrenders to Germany

## German invasion of France, May-June 1940



# Battle of Britain aka “The Blitz”

- ◆ September 1940 - May 1941:  
Germans bomb Great Britain
- ◆ Targets: air bases, shipyards, industries, cities
- ◆ Goal: break British morale before invading Britain
- ◆ Defense: British Royal Air Force (RAF)
- ◆ Hitler ends air attacks after 9 months to focus on Operation Barbarossa





# Winston Churchill – English Prime Minister

“We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.”





# Germany attacks the Soviet Union



- ◆ June 1941: German forces attack the Soviet Union
- ◆ WHY?
- ◆ Germany needed resources and wanted the vast land
- ◆ In retaliation, Stalin ordered a “Scorched-Earth” (destroy own cities, crops, etc.)
- ◆ WHY?
- ◆ Made it harder for Germans to resupply their troops and continue advancing



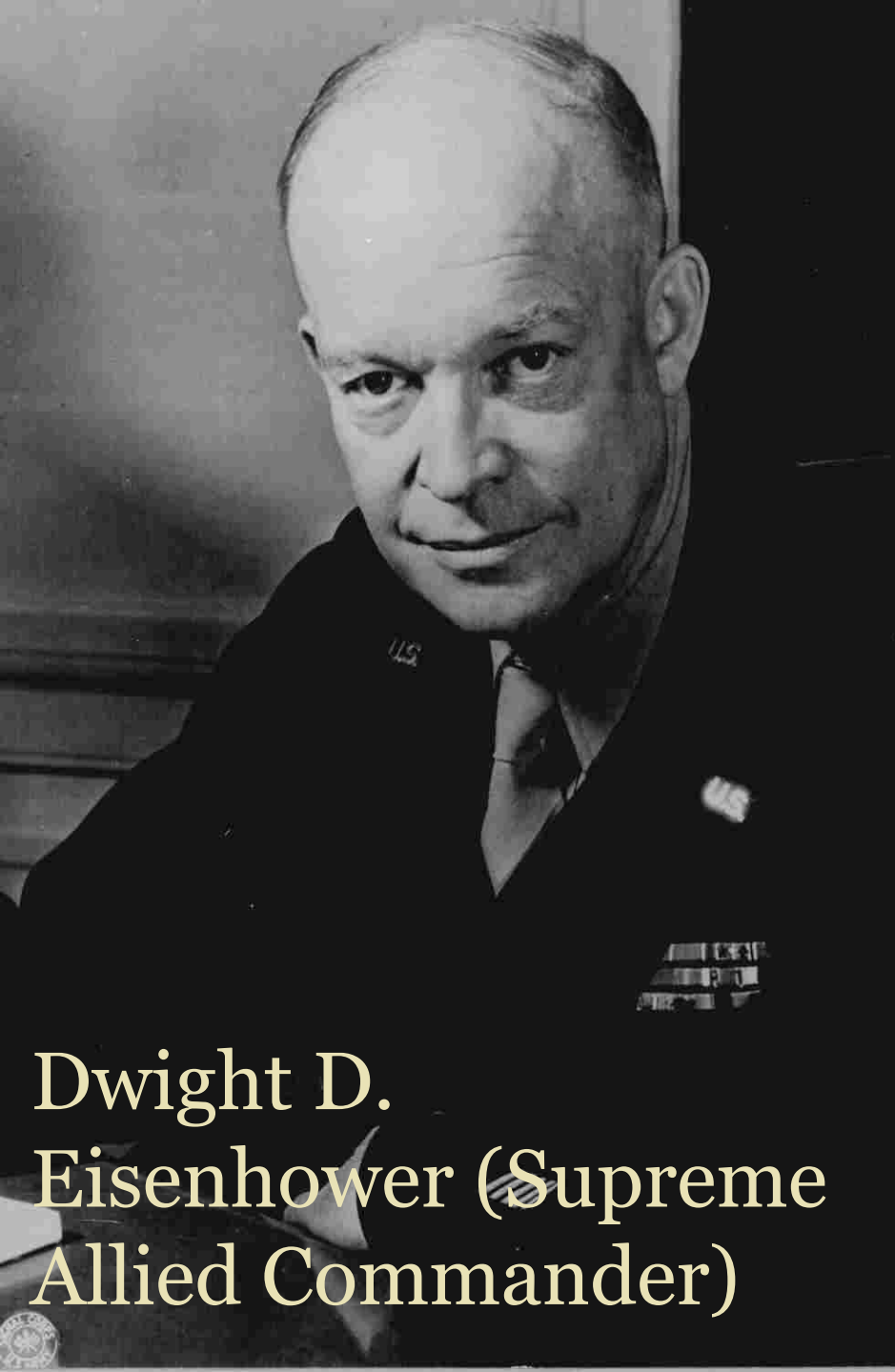
# “The Big Three”

- Great Britain (Winston Churchill)
- U.S. (FDR) after Pearl Harbor
- **USSR** (Joseph Stalin)

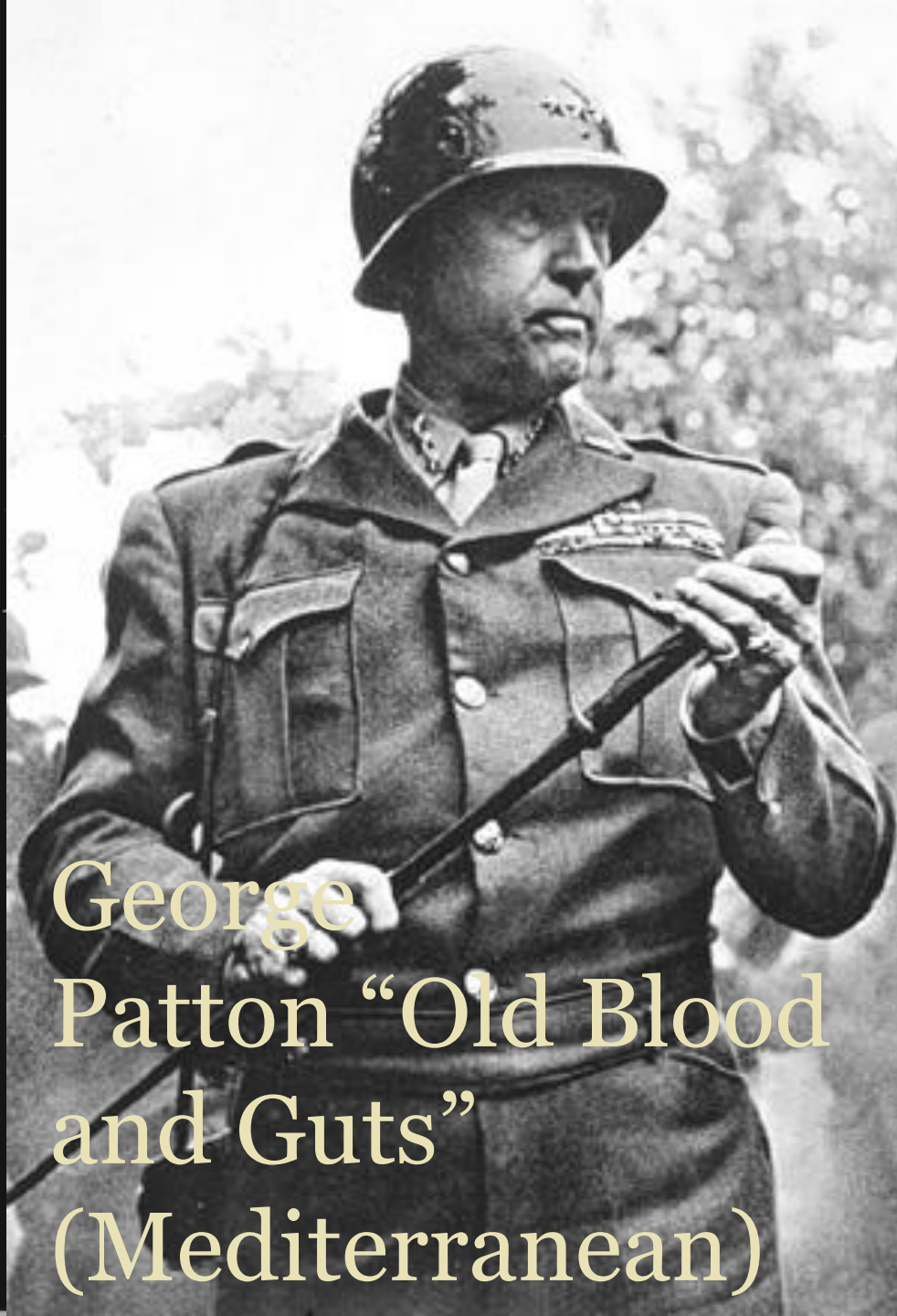
Why Stalin?







Dwight D.  
Eisenhower (Supreme  
Allied Commander)



George  
Patton “Old Blood  
and Guts”  
(Mediterranean)

# Two Theatres - Two Strategies

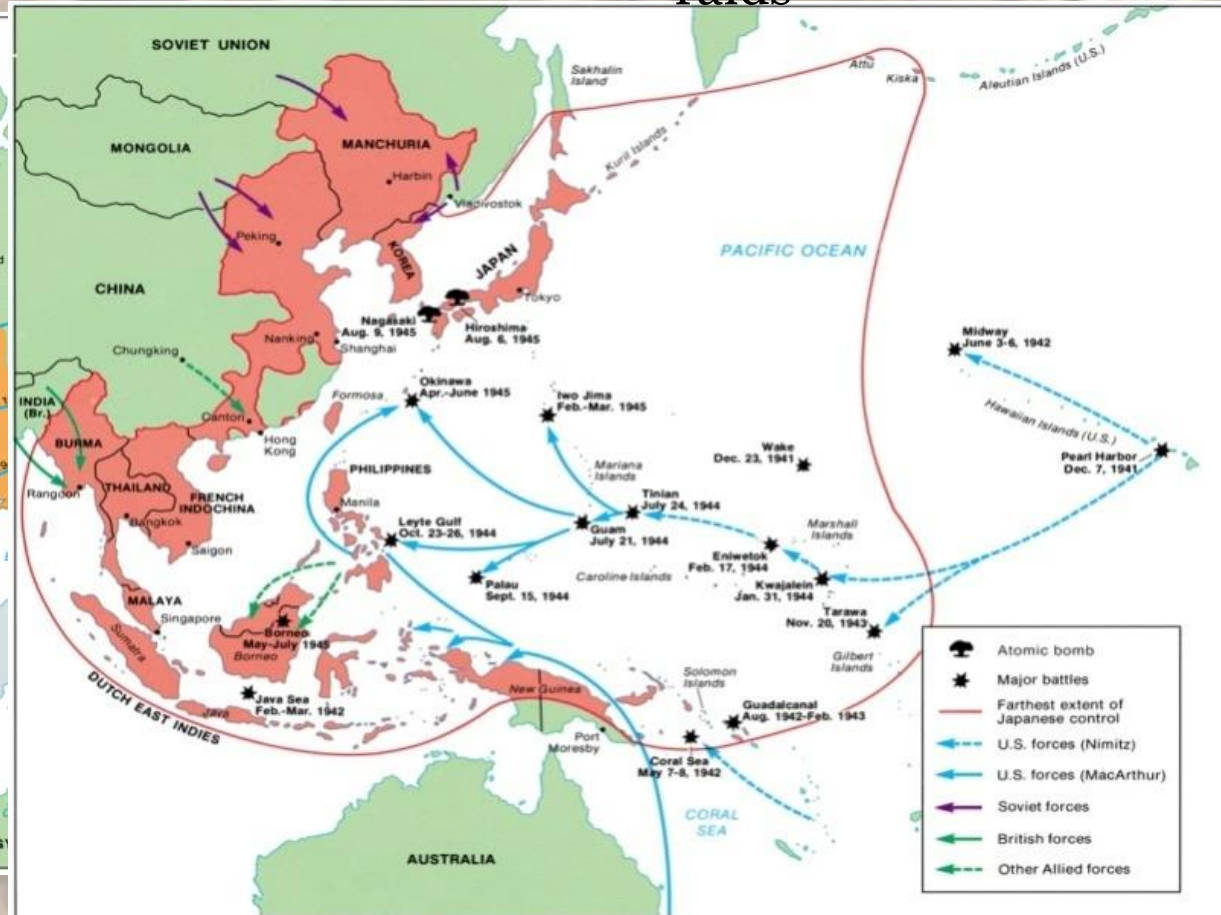
## European Theatre:

*Strategy:* move in from the south through Italy, while squeezing from east and west; push Hitler back to Berlin



## Pacific Theatre:

*Strategy:* “Island Hopping” to Japan: take strategic islands large enough for airfields to protect shipping lanes and stage bombing raids





## THE AXIS ATTACKS 1939-1942

- Axis power
- Axis-controlled area, 1942
- Allied power
- Neutral power
- Expansion of Axis control
- Axis victory
- Allied victory

0 250 500 miles  
0 250 500 kilometers

Jul. 1940-May 1941  
Britain withstands  
nationwide German  
air attacks.

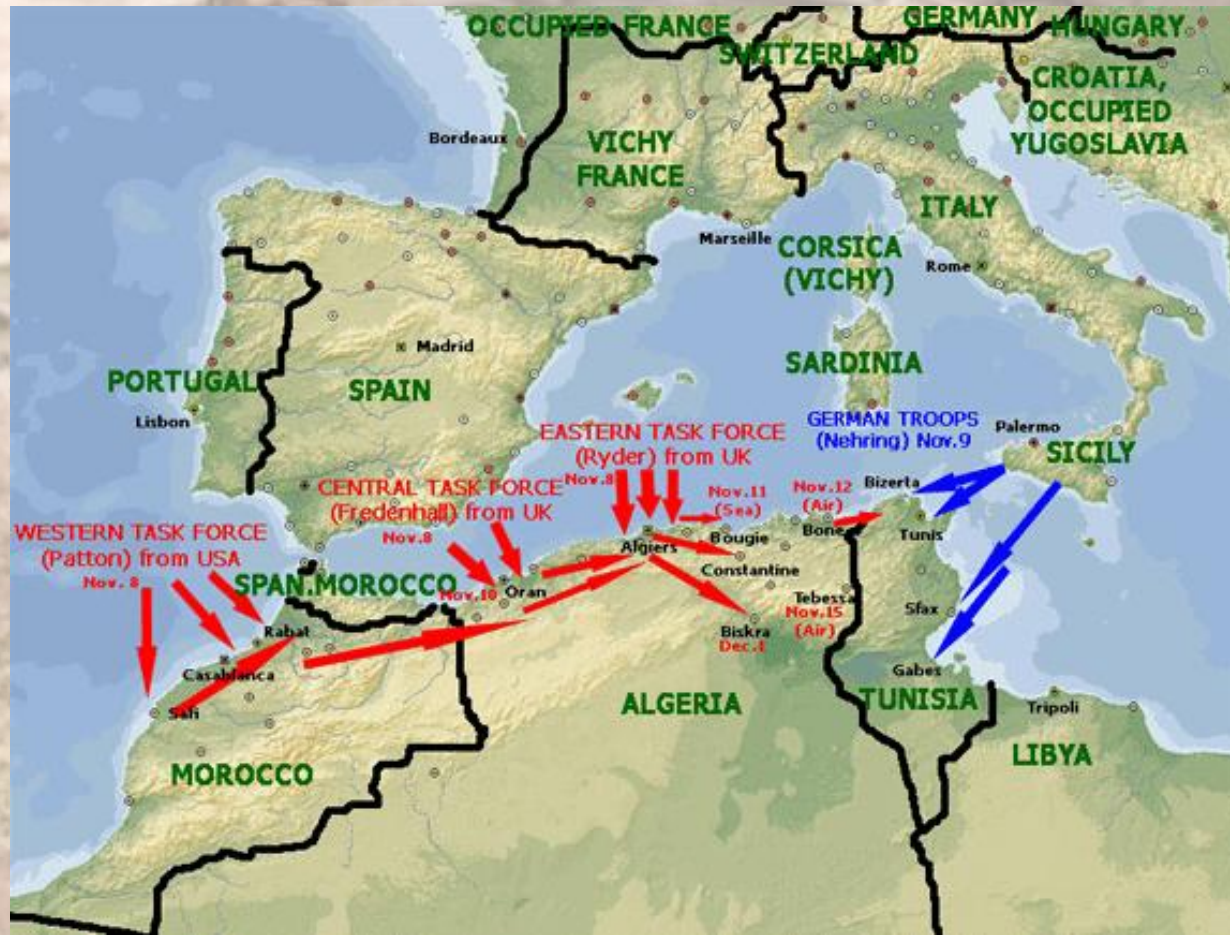
The German & Italian armies dominated Northern Africa, threatened the Suez Canal & the oil fields in the Middle East





# Europe: North Africa - Nov. 1942

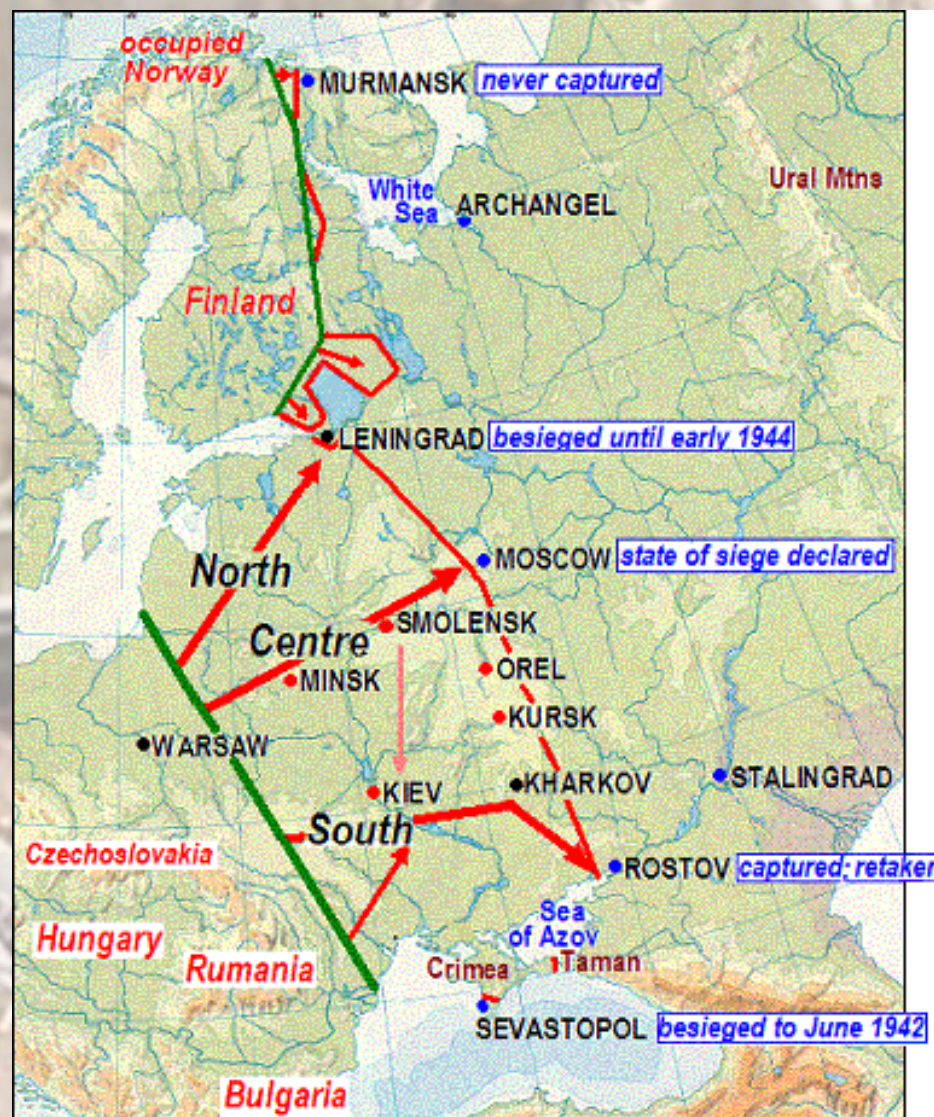
- ◆ Germans control much of North Africa, now pushing east, attempting to take the Suez Canal from British
- ◆ Defeated at El Alamein by Sir. Gen. Bernard Montgomery (British)
- ◆ **Significance:** maintained Allied control of Suez Canal, and prevented German access to oil in the Middle East





# Eastern Front

- ◆ June 1941: German forces sieged **Leningrad** (872 days); Germany ceases in early 1944
- ◆ December 1941: Germans capture Moscow with heavy losses, Soviets counterattack and force Germans to retreat
- ◆ Spring 1942: Battle at **Stalingrad** – German victory; but Soviets surround city, cutting off supply lines forcing German surrender by February 1943 – TURNING POINT OF EUROPEAN THEATRE





# Taking Italy

10 July 1943

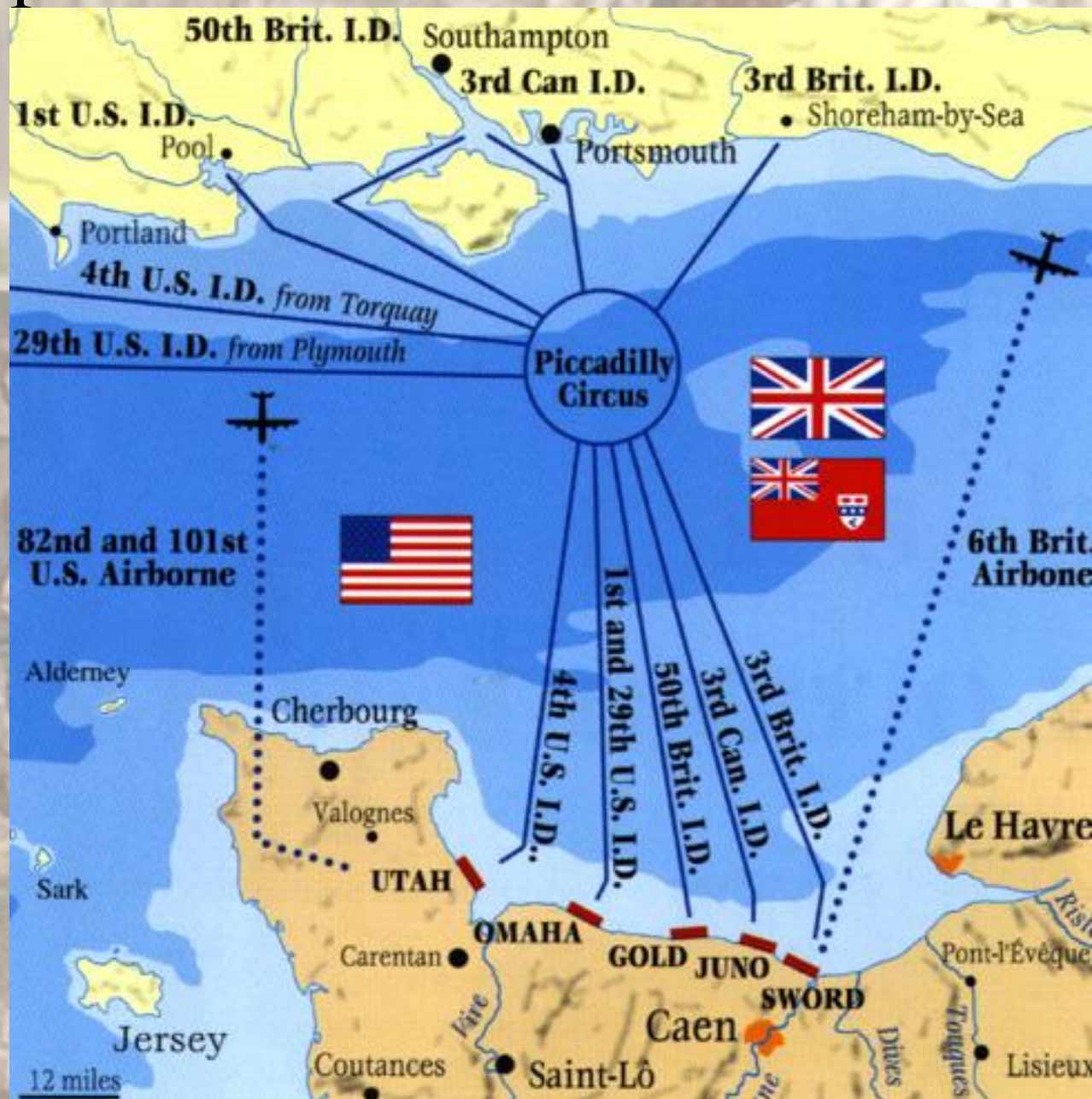
- Invasion of Italy begins by taking Sicily
  - Led by Eisenhower with assistance from Gen. Patton (U.S.) and Gen. Montgomery (Britain)
  - Germans pushed out of Sicily by August 18<sup>th</sup>
- King of Italy (Victor Emmanuel III) deposes Mussolini
  - Begins talks of an armistice with the Allies
- Germans hold Rome until May 1944, when they retreat





# “Operation Overlord”

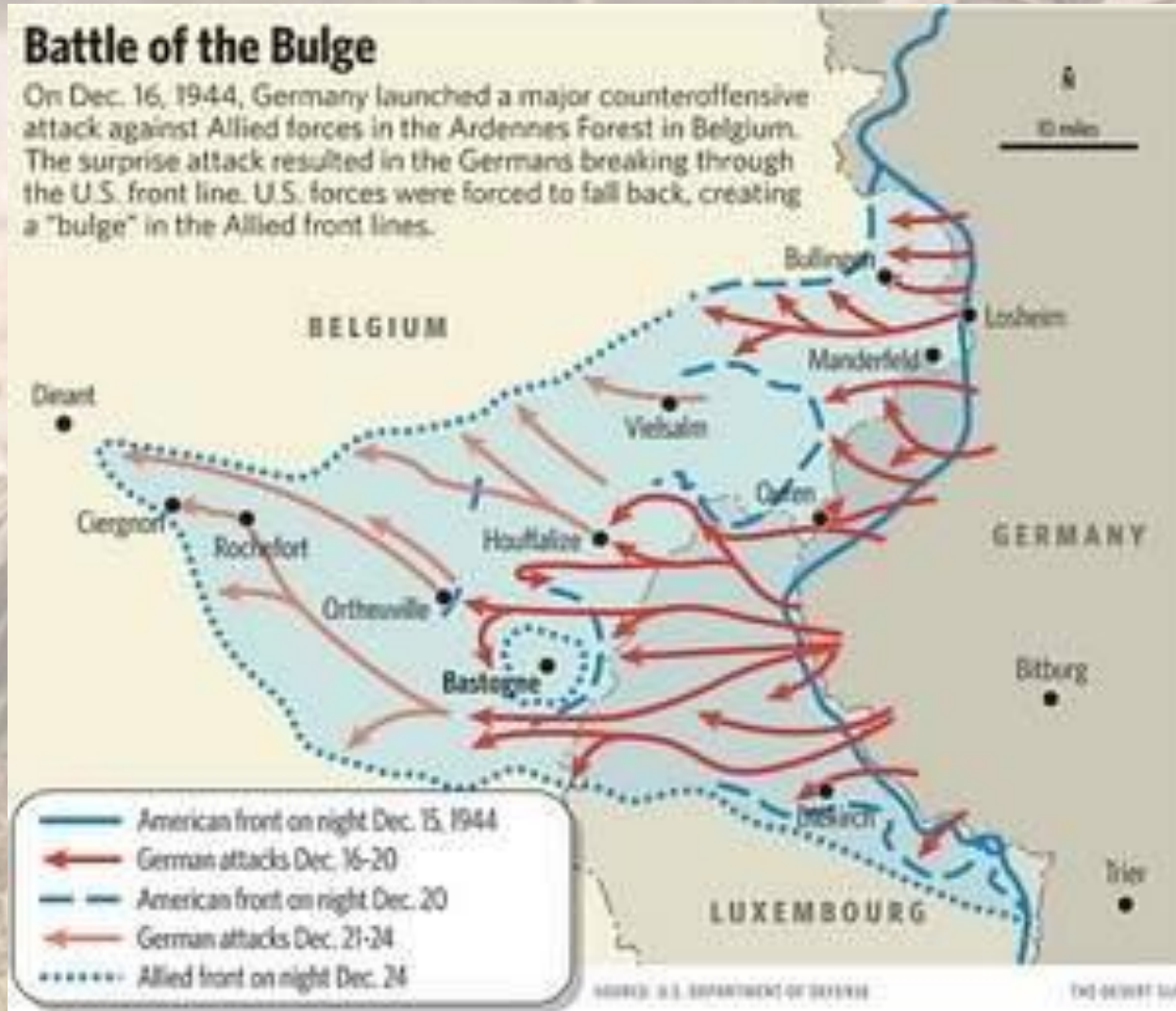
- ◆ Stalin demanded a 2<sup>nd</sup> front in Europe
- ◆ 6 June 1944: “D-Day” troops cross English Channel to invade at the beaches of Normandy while under heavy German fire
- ◆ 35,000 U.S. troops landed at “Omaha”
- ◆ 23,000 U.S. troops landed at “Utah”
- ◆ August 25, 1944: Paris liberated





# Battle of the Bulge

Germany was now in a two-front war, Soviets from the East and American/British forces from the West



After several weeks Americans win



- ◆ Late 1944: Germans driven out of Soviet Union into Poland
- ◆ February 1945: Soviets just outside Berlin
- ◆ 30 April 1945: Hitler commits suicide in Berlin
- ◆ 7 May 1945: Germany signed unconditional surrender
- ◆ 8 May 1945: “V-E Day” (Victory in Europe)
- ◆ 12 April 1945: Roosevelt dies & Harry S. Truman becomes President



# Diplomacy in WWII

- “The Big Three” FDR, Stalin, Churchill
- Truman replaces FDR





Conference/Treaty	Date	Participants	Decisions Made
Atlantic Conference	August 1941	Great Britain, U.S.	-Atlantic Charter approved
Casablanca Conference	January 1943	Great Britain, U.S.	-Step up war in the Pacific Theatre -Invade Sicily and increase pressure on Italy -Unconditional surrender of Germany
Teheran Conference	November 1943	Great Britain, U.S., Soviet Union	-Soviet Union attacks on the east at the same time as the U.S. and G.B. attack from west
Yalta Conference	February 1945	Great Britain, U.S., Soviet Union	Stalin agreed that Poland would have free elections after the war -Soviets would attack Japan within 3 months of the collapse of Germany -Soviets receive territory in Manchuria and several islands
San Francisco Conference	22 April 1945	50 nations	UN Charter approved establishing a Security Council with veto power for the Big Five nations (U.S., G.B., France, China, and the Soviet Union) and a General Assembly