ULTRA AND THE MYTH OF THE
GERMAN "NATIONAL REDOUBT"

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by

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This study investigates the creation of a mythical fortifications system called the German "National Redoubt" and the use of ULTRA to confirm its existence. The work includes a brief background of the Redoubt and examines how the state of intelligence at Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force helped turn enemy propaganda into "reality." The study addresses the influence of ULTRA intelligence at Supreme Headquarters during the final phase of the war in Europe. This study investigates whether SHAEF used ULTRA to confirm or deny intelligence gathered through conventional means.

This thesis concludes that General Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters selectively used ULTRA during March and April 1945 to support strong preconceptions that an Alpine stronghold existed. SHAEF's failure to integrate ULTRA with other forms of intelligence was instrumental in building the myth of the Redoubt, rather than to show that no such defensive fortifications system existed. With a better understanding of how Supreme Headquarters built this myth, perhaps future commanders will understand the importance of integrating intelligence obtained from all sources.

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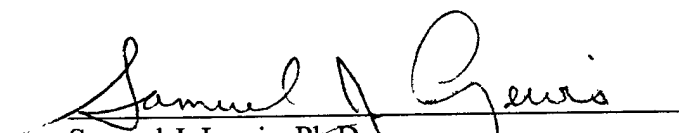| 17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL

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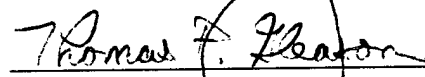
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ABSTRACT

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Marvin L. Meek, USA, 114 pages.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

CoS	Chief of Staff
ETOUSA	European Theater of Operations, US Army
G-2	Intelligence Section
GAF	German Air Force (*Luftwaffe*)
GC & CS	Government Code and Cipher School (Bletchley Park)
JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee
OKH	*Oberkommando des Herres* (High Command of the Army)
OKL	*Oberkommando der Luftwaffe* (High Command of the Air Force)
OKM	*Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine* (High Command of the Navy)
OKW	*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (Armed Forces High Command)
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
SD	*Sicherheitsdienst*
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
SLU	Special Liaison Units
SS	*Schutzstaffel*

ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The end of the war in Europe appeared imminent on 1 May 1945 as the Allied armies of General Dwight D. Eisenhower advanced farther into Germany. To soldiers of the Seventh US Army pushing towards Innsbruck or soldiers of the Third US Army driving towards Linz, their assessment was much different. Presumably, most of the difficult fighting against the Germans was about to begin. According to intelligence summaries and briefings, the media, and prevailing rumors among soldiers, these two armies were attacking through the center of what was, allegedly, a strongly defended fortress system. These fortifications were known as the "National Redoubt."[1] Most intelligence sources agreed that the Germans would fight a last-ditch stand in this region: an area extending 240 miles in length and 80 miles in depth.[2] American forces, however, did not find any fanatically defended strong points or underground factories, nor did they find many guerrillas. Instead, German soldiers waiting to surrender overwhelmed the US soldiers, entire towns displayed white flags, and there were few soldiers from the elite military and police unit of the Nazi party, the infamous *Schutzstaffel* (SS). As the Seventh US Army discovered, thousands of German troops were disappearing, "redeploying themselves as self-discharged veterans."[3] Once American forces captured key Alpine territory during the first week of May 1945, the Redoubt ceased to be a mystery; it became a legend.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the influence of ULTRA on General Eisenhower and his staff at Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) concerning the existence of a National Redoubt. ULTRA is the Allied code name for intelligence derived from intercepting and deciphering high-level German wireless radio communications.[4] The story of the Redoubt is unusual in that the Allies became victims of their own preconception of a strongly defended fortress. General Eisenhower wrote about the National Redoubt after the war:

> For many weeks we had been receiving reports that the Nazi intention, in extremity, was to withdraw the cream of the SS, Gestapo, and other organizations fanatically devoted to Hitler, into the mountains of southern Bavaria, western Austria, and northern Italy. There they expected to block the tortuous mountain passes and to hold out indefinitely against the Allies. . . . The evidence was clear that the Nazi[s] intended to make the attempt and I decided to give him no opportunity to carry it out."[5]

Intelligence derived from ULTRA, complementing information received from other sources, did influence General Eisenhower and his belief in the National Redoubt.

In contrast to the views of Eisenhower's staff at Supreme Headquarters, the *Alpenfestung* (Alpine fortress) was seen differently by the Germans. Lieutenant General of Mountain Troops Georg Ritter von Hengl assumed command of the northern Alpine front on 20 April 1945. Upon interrogation after the war he stated: "The legendary 'Alpine Redoubt' . . . existed merely on paper. It was a slogan and a last act of desperation."[6] Of interest was the difference in opinion between General von Hengl and the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, General Eisenhower, concerning the National Redoubt. The *Alpenfestung* was a triumph of German propaganda. Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters, despite access to a considerable

amount of intelligence that included ULTRA, nevertheless maintained its strong

preconception that a stronghold in the mountains of Bavaria existed (fig. 1).

LOCATION OF THE NATIONAL REDOUBT

ELEVATION OVER 2000 FEET

DENMARK

Hamburg

Bremen

HOLLAND

R. Weser

R. Aller

R. Oder

Berlin

Magdeburg

R. Rhine

R. Ems

R. Lippe

RUHR

Cologne

Kassel

Erfurt

R. Mulde

Torgau

R. Elbe

R. Neisse

Dresden

Aachen

GERMANY

BELGIUM

Remagen

Fulda

Luxembourg

Frankfurt

R. Main

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Prague

R. Moselle

Mannheim

Wurzburg

R. Moldau

Numberg

Strasbourg

Stuttgart

Regensburg

R. Isar

FRANCE

R. Neckar

R. Danube

Linz

Munich

R. Inn

AUSTRIA

Basel

L. Constance

Salzburg

Berchtesgaden

Bregenz

Innsbruck

NATIONAL REDOUBT

SWITZERLAND

Feldkirch

Graz

Bern

L. Geneva

Bolzano

YUGOSLAVIA

L. Como

ITALY

R. Adige

Adriatic Sea

L. Garda

Fig. 1. Map of central Europe showing location of the National Redoubt. Source: SHAEF, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 54 (1 April 1945).

General Eisenhower's April 1945 decision to reorient his main effort from Berlin towards southern Germany remains one of the most misunderstood decisions made by the Allies during the war in Europe. Eisenhower's staff at SHAEF convinced him that Hitler was fortifying his remaining forces into an Alpine stronghold. An examination of evidence shows that not only the Americans, but the British, Russians, and even the Germans were confused about its very existence. Only the end of the war in Europe brought a complete understanding of Hitler's plans. The National Redoubt was simply a desparate, fanciful delusion of a crumbling regime.

Towards the end of April 1945, Allied advances forced many of the remaining German units into the mountains of southern Germany. This region was one of the last areas still controlled by the Third Reich and included portions of Czechoslovakia, Austria, Italy, Yugoslavia, and part of southern Germany. There were many reasons this terrain was ideally suited for a final battleground. First, the natural defenses that the mountains offered were excellent. Within this area was terrain of extreme relief with narrow valleys and winding roads. The Alps were an ideal location for a determined defense using only minimum forces that were well supplied and armed with modern mountain equipment.[7] Secondly, Allied air power at this point of the war was numerically superior to that of the Germans and was able to maintain air supremacy. However, British and American aircraft were severely limited by their capabilities in this part of Germany due to the persistently bad weather, the altitude, and the mountainous terrain of the region. Most German jet aircraft, a recently revealed secret weapon, were operating out of airfields in the southern part of Germany. Thirdly, the Germans had

proven in Italy how well they could fight in mountainous terrain. Experience in Italy had demonstrated that a force defending in higher elevations could delay the advance of a superior Allied force for months. Finally, the most potent advantage of Allied ground forces, their mobility, would have been of little use in this environment. In recognition of these factors, SHAEF's Intelligence Division better known as G-2, took the threat of a last-ditch stand seriously.

An understanding of the final days of World War II in Europe is still incomplete. Because ULTRA did not provide indications of the massive German attack in the Ardennes, the initial perception is that reliance on this form of intelligence diminished. From a historical perspective, little is known about ULTRA and its influence on the belief of a German last-stand in the Alps. Much of what has been written was based on Eisenhower's concern of a German Alpine stronghold.

During the last weeks of the war, intelligence provided by ULTRA ranged from insignificant to that of tremendous value. Occasionally there was an ULTRA message originating from Hitler, such as message KO 1444 from 25 April 1945, that provided Eisenhower with a rare look at the status of the German armed forces.[8] More often, ULTRA provided Supreme Headquarters with German directives to theater commanders, orders of battle, and locations of headquarters elements. One example of intelligence derived from ULTRA that was clearly valuable to Eisenhower was the 3 May 1945 decrypt KO 1914.[9] This message was sent by Lieutenant General August Winter, Deputy Chief of the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (Armed Forces High Command or OKW) Operations Staff to General Alfred Jodl, Chief of Operations Staff the the previous day.

5

Of particular interest to Supreme Headquarters was the use of "Alpine Fortress" in the text of the message (fig. 2). Winter was seeking urgent guidance from Jodl because General Heinrich von Vietinghoff, Commander in Chief Southwest, was negotiating an armistice in Italy.

```
                                        KO  1914

                        ZZ

    KO  1914  £  1914

    SB  43  £  43  PK  5Ø1  £  51

    TG  2  £  2  WM  98  £  98  NX  86  £  86  LF  58  £  58  SH  47  £  47

    WA  840  £  840  %


    WINTER £ WINTER INFORMED JODL £ JODL EARLY ON SECOND

    (COMMENT VERY SMALL DETAIL MISSING) THAT CHARLIE IN

    CHARLIE SOUTHWEST £ SOUTHWEST HAD ENTERED INTO

    NEGOTIATIONS WITH ALLIES AND THAT THE SOUTHERN FRONT

    OF ALPINE FORTRESS WAS OPEN, ALL MEASURES TO CLARIFY

    SITUATION HAD BEEN TAKEN, URGENTLY REQUESTED STATEMENT

    ON QUOTE OWN UNQUOTE POLITICAL POSITION



    JB / RFB / RH                        031309Z / 5 / 45
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Fig. 2. KO 1914, DTG: 031309Z May 1945. The Commander in Chief, Southwest was negotiating the surrender of German forces in Italy. Consequently, "the southern front of the Alpine fortress was open" and Winter needed immediate guidance from Jodl. Source: British Public Records Office, *ULTRA Documents* (New York: Clearwater Publishing Company, Inc., 1978).

Not much information has been published on the use of ULTRA after the December 1944 German Ardennes offensive. Due to disintegration of the German armed forces and subsequent rapid Allied advance, it is easy to believe that intelligence assumed a lesser role. Previous research has failed to analyze in detail information received through ULTRA and its integration with intelligence provided by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), by photoreconnaissance, and through conventional methods of gathering intelligence. Integration of all sources of intelligence was critical to understanding what actually occurred during March and April 1945. Until now, ULTRA's influence on Eisenhower's headquarters during the final weeks of the war has not been understood. ULTRA provided SHAEF with crucial intelligence at the strategic and operational levels that made for a quick defeat of Germany during the spring of 1945. ULTRA allowed Eisenhower and his staff to take a look inside the disintegrating German armed forces and their leadership at the national level. This thesis does not alter previously written material concerning the collapse of Germany in March or April 1945. ULTRA does, however, provide significant understanding to the decisions made by General Eisenhower and his staff at SHAEF. The idea of a German National Redoubt had a strange hold on various Allied intelligence services during the final days of World War II in Europe.

This research used primary source documents such as ULTRA messages, SHAEF weekly intelligence summaries, books, unit after-action summaries that provided a historical perspective of the Redoubt. Of particular note are the numerous translated monographs produced by German officers immediately following the war. For this study, the author used more than seventeen reports from the interrogation of important

7

German officers concerning the National Redoubt. This series of Foreign Military Studies focused on the Redoubt and provided the German perspective.

Examining the use of ULTRA at Supreme Headquarters is important because it provides valuable insight into circumstances that confronted Eisenhower and high level planning during the Second World War. There are also lessons for the use of intelligence in the next war, such as the dangers of exaggerating the enemy's capabilities so that he appears mythical and perhaps unbeatable. This thesis demonstrates the dangers of having preconceived ideas about the enemy, thus building him into a "giant." Much can be learned from the past that is relevant and applicable today. The creation of the German National Redoubt during World War II is one such example. It is important to understand the influence of the Redoubt not only in a historical context, but because intelligence collection and integration continues to play a crucial role on the present battlefield. The lessons General Eisenhower learned from uncovering the myth of the National Redoubt during May 1945 can apply to the United States Army today.

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[1] The author will use the terms National Redoubt, *Alpenfestung*, Alpine Redoubt, Alpine stronghold, and Redoubt interchangeably throughout this thesis. They refer to a portion of the Alpine region of Europe that reportedly included a significant defensive fortifications system (fig. 1).

[2] SHAEF, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 56 (15 April 1945): 19.

[3] Of all the euphemisms throughout history for deserter, "self-discharged veteran" is one of the most odd. Seventh US Army, *The Seventh United States Army in France and Germany, 1944-1945*, vol. 2 (Headquarters, Seventh US Army, 1946), 808.

[4] Intelligence in the category ULTRA SECRET was shortened to simply ULTRA. There were several different levels of intelligence including SECRET, MOST SECRET, TOP SECRET, and ULTRA SECRET. Ronald Lewin, *Ultra Goes to War* (London: Hutchinson and Company, Ltd., 1978), 64.

[5]Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1948), 397.

[6]Georg Ritter von Hengl, Military Study No. B-461, *The Alpine Redoubt* (US Army European Command, Historical Division, 1946), 13.

[7]Reuben E. Jenkins, "The Battle of the German National Redoubt--Planning Phase," *Military Review* 26 (December 1946): 3.

[8]ULTRA message KO 1444, Date/Time Group (DTG) 261452Z April 1945, (New York: Clearwater Publishing Company, Inc., 1978). The British Public Records Office released many formerly classified ULTRA messages in 1978. The Clearwater Publishing Company published these messages on microfilm between 1978 and 1979. Each series of ULTRA signals was distinguished by a two letter prefix and most were numbered from 1 to 9999. All ULTRA messages cited hereafter will include the two letter and numerical designator along with the DTG.

[9]KO 1914, DTG: 031309Z May 1945.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND OF THE "NATIONAL REDOUBT"

The belief that an Alpine defensive system existed had a significant influence on

Allied strategic planning in 1945. To the Allies, these fortifications ultimately became

known as the National Redoubt, a term originally coined in September 1944 by an

American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) agent in Switzerland.[1] The origin and

evolution of the term National Redoubt were a part of its strange hold on various Allied

intelligence services and it became increasingly ominous with repeated use. The creation

and evolution of the myth of the Redoubt before February 1945 is essential to

understanding the legend that it became.

The concept of a National Redoubt began in neutral Switzerland, surrounded by

Axis territory. To preserve their neutrality the Swiss began building large defensive

fortifications in 1940. After two years three major forts provided the basis of their

defense system. The Swiss government and military referred to their fortifications

system as a *national reduit*.[2]

The experience of fighting in the Apennines Mountains of Italy forced the Allies

to be wary of fighting in difficult terrain. Since the US War Department and the British

War Office expected costly fighting the entire length of the Italian peninsula, a better

approach to mountain warfare was needed. Beginning in 1943 the United States War

Department conducted an extensive study of German mountain fighting techniques. By

understanding their enemy the Allies felt they could defeat German forces in Italy

quickly, thereby preventing a feared stalemate. Captured German mountain warfare manuals were translated in early 1944 and issued to the Italy-based US Fifth Army.[3] The Americans understood that a tenacious German defense, similar to that encountered in the Apennines, could occur in the German and Austrian Alps as well.

Leaders within the German military were interested in the defense of the Alps as early as July 1944. The *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (OKW) directed a team of military engineers to conduct a survey that would "examine the southern positions in the Alps."[4] Some of these positions along the southern Alpine range were the original Austrian World War I positions built between 1915 and 1918. They would be vital if the Allies broke through the German Gothic Line defenses in Italy.

In September 1944 the OKW established an engineering staff in Innsbruck under the command of Brigadier General August Marcinkiewicz. This thirty-nine man staff conducted the OKW-directed ground survey near the Liechtenstein-Switzerland border and farther to the south.[5] Along the Austria-Italy border, the surveyed positions would eventually be linked to others that already existed. Marcinkiewicz's mission was to simply submit a list of proposed defensive positions and sectors. Once approved and mapped, he stated that the positions would be "explored in greater detail and then the sectors were to be pegged out as they would be later when occupied."[6]

It is important to note that through September 1944, OKW issued no orders for construction or improvement of defensive positions, only orders for surveys and mapping. Marcinkiewicz's staff continued to survey and collect information throughout the remainder of 1944. Work halted in January 1945 due to avalanches and snowstorms

typical at higher Alpine elevations. The survey teams resumed their work in March 1945.[7]

In September 1944 it appeared that both the Russians and the Western Allies were capable of overrunning Germany, ending the war by Christmas. Meanwhile, the OSS team in Bern, Switzerland presented an entirely different picture. This team produced a study in September 1944 that indicated there was another center of Nazi authority besides Berlin. The report, produced under the direction of Allen Dulles in his Bern office, was written for the US Department of State.[8] By looking across the border into southern Germany and Austria, one listening post reported evidence that the Germans were building a defensive fortifications system (fig. 3).

The OSS team in Switzerland had witnessed first-hand the construction of fortifications in their vicinity between 1940 and 1942. Having observed the Swiss construction, the American agents believed that the Nazi regime, in desperation, might do the same thing. The American report translated the Swiss term *reduit* as redoubt, referring to the German fortifications as the National Redoubt.[9] This September 1944 report speculated on various matters. One thing was clear, however; the Germans were planning for military operations in the Alps.

Most German surveying and construction was in the south, especially in the Dolomite and Carnic ranges of northern Italy. If the Germans were able to strengthen the existing First World War positions while fortifying the northern approaches into the Alps, the report speculated that fighting in Alpine terrain could prolong the war for at least an additional six months. The OSS, and subsequently the US War Department, believed that

the only way to destroy a prepared mountain defense was through siege operations,

resulting in very high Allied casualties.
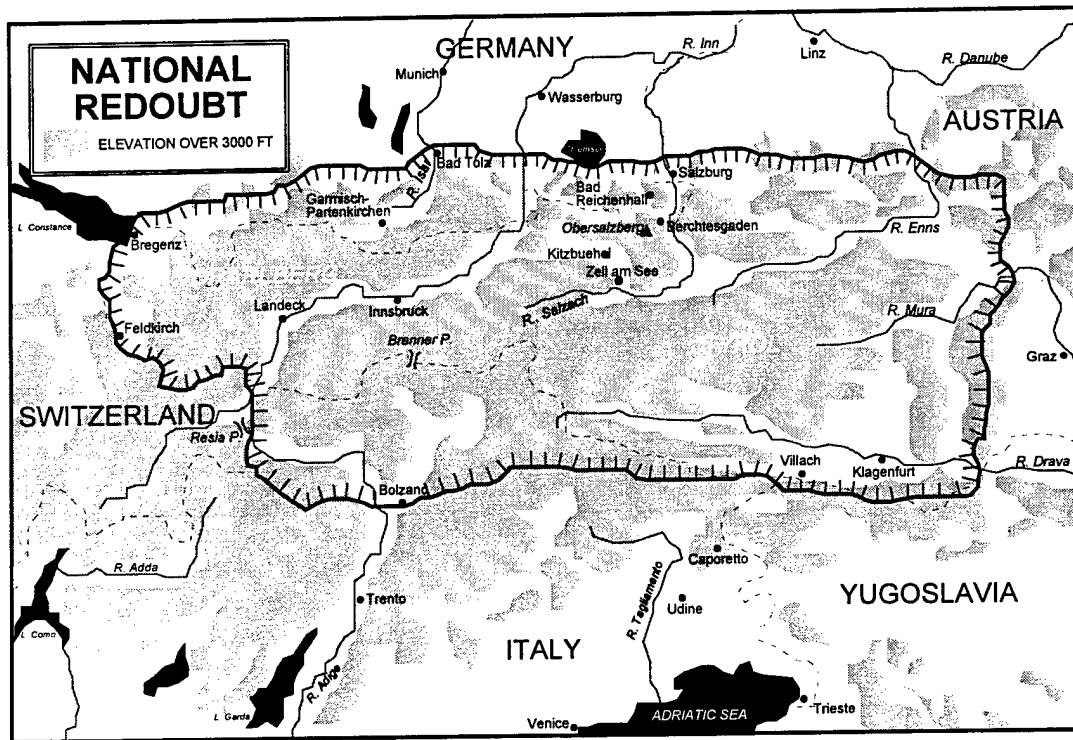
Fig. 3. Map of the National Redoubt. Source: Ralph Bennett, *Ultra in the West*
(New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1979), 259.

Late that September, in a seemingly unrelated event, OSS headquarters in

Washington released a regional study of southern Germany. This 22 September 1944

scholarly report was classified as top secret. It claimed that several Nazi government

agencies were displacing from Berlin to locations in the Alps near Berchtesgaden. The

report also stated that the intense bombing of Berlin was adversely affecting operations so

that these agencies, and probably others, would continue to relocate from Berlin to the south.[10]

Like the Allies, the Germans were also interested in activities in neighboring countries. The German *Schutzstaffel* (SS) maintained a branch office of their Security Service, *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) in Bregenz along the Swiss-Austrian border.[11] As a courier center its mission was to relay information and documents received from neutral Switzerland. The intercepted information would then be passed to the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (Reich Security Main Office or RSHA) in Berlin.[12] One of the key documents intercepted was the September 1944 OSS report from Allen Dulles about the National Redoubt.[13]

Franz Hofer was the *Gauleiter* (the Nazi political and administrative leader) for the Tyrol-Vorarlberg region of Austria. In September 1944 *Gauleiter* Hofer received a copy of the intercepted American OSS document from his Bregenz SD office. In the document it appeared the Americans were extremely concerned about an "*Alpen-Reduit.*"[14] The report predicted that a German Alpine defense could hold out for up to two years if the region were: (1) properly supported with food; (2) equipped with enough factories, preferably underground for armament production; (3) provided with enough reserves of raw materials; and (4) the region was not flooded with refugees and other unnecessary civilian officials creating a logistical burden.[15] The report speculated that the Germans would move their most important prisoners to the region, "especially insofar as they are American or British prisoners of war . . . [so that] every offensive activity from the air [would] be a two-edged sword."[16]

14

Two additional explanations of the fortress system were enumerated in the Bern OSS report. There was the possibility that continued resistance from the Alps would serve as a "beacon" to inspire further guerrilla activities across occupied sections of Germany. Secondly, by prolonging hostilities, the Germans believed that tensions would arise between Western Allies and the Russians. This conflict between the Allies would thereby assist die-hard Nazis in maintaining a basis of power.

After reading the intercepted American report, Hofer was so impressed by the idea of a defensive fortress system that he decided to bring it to the attention of Hitler. As the highest ranking Nazi in the region, *Gauleiter* Hofer dealt directly with either the *Führer*'s deputy, Martin Bormann, or Hitler himself. Hofer's interest continued to build during October, as intercepted OSS reports continued to show American concern over an Alpine Redoubt. Finally, in early November 1944 Hofer submitted a copy of the translated American report through Bormann. His submission included a cover letter urging Hitler to order immediate construction of an *Alpenfestung*, or Alpine fortress. Franz Hofer wrote after Germany's surrender: "I felt myself duty-bound to draw the personal attention of [the] *Führer* to the possibilities and potentialities of a prompt and proper exploitation of the anxiety obviously existing on the other side with regard to an *Alpen-Reduit* . . . . My urgent recommendation is that . . . an *Alpen-Festung* be constructed and properly provisioned with the greatest possible speed, and with all means at our disposal."[17] *Gauleiter* Franz Hofer, therefore, changed the term *Alpen-Reduit* to *Alpenfestung*, the term used by the Germans from that point forward.[18] Hofer felt so strongly about his recommendation that he offered to appear in person before the German

15

leader. A timely decision by Hitler was essential; construction needed to commence immediately.

About the same time Hofer's report went to Berlin, newspapers in Switzerland and the United States began publishing articles about a massive German fortifications system in the Alps. A short article published in the *New York Times Magazine* on 12 November 1944 focused on one of the "Reich's most heavily fortified and closely guarded areas."[19] The article, "Hitler's Hideaway," described German efforts to clear the region of civilian inhabitants around Berchtesgaden. This impregnable fortress, consisting of elaborate tunnels and caves blasted out of sheer rock by the *Organisation Todt*,[20] was filled with food and military supplies. The article concluded with a fabulous tale, but one that could not be discounted. A button, if pushed, would blow up the entire district, an area fifteen miles wide and twenty-one miles in length.[21] Tidbits of propaganda from the *Reichminister für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*, Paul Josef Goebbels, appeared to be getting through and were working. In reality, Berchtesgaden and the Obersalzburg Mountain were heavily guarded and included numerous tunnels, but the ability to instantly destroy a large region simply did not exist. Nevertheless, tales about the area continued to circulate in the American media, creating fictitious spin-off stories that were difficult to ignore. By December 1944 the US War Department, Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), and the media began referring to the German defensive fortifications system as the National Redoubt. It is interesting to note that this is the same name bestowed on it in the September 1944 OSS report.

Meanwhile, when Hofer sent Berlin his *Führer-Vorlage* (proposal submitted to the *Führer* for decision), Hitler and the OKW were completing final preparations for the Ardennes Offensive. The OKW staff knew that Adolf Hitler detested anything that hinted of Germany's military defeat or collapse.[22] Since no one at OKW was concerned about a Alpine fortress at this particular time, Hitler did not see Hofer's proposal.[23]

German propaganda continued to build on the Allies' fear of a Redoubt. Goebbels called a meeting of all German newspaper editors and journalists in early December 1944. At this secret meeting, Goebbels ensured the German media understood it was forbidden to mention anything about a Redoubt, even if the media in neutral countries mentioned it. This meeting had the effect that was intended. Journalists departed the meeting believing that an *Alpenfestung* really existed. Moreover, in January 1945 Goebbels organized a special propaganda section to fabricate stories about Alpine defensive positions. The stories always included the same theme: impregnable positions, massive supplies hidden in bomb-proof caves, underground factories, and elite SS troops to man the positions. At the same time the German propaganda section released their fabricated stories, the SD in Bregenz leaked bogus intelligence and phony blueprints of fortifications to American agents in Switzerland. The results were predictable: the faulty information captivated Allied intelligence services and the propaganda fed the media's appetite for spectacular stories.[24]

Late in January 1945, Hofer presented his *Führer-Vorlage* to Hitler in person. Hofer reminded the German leader that the Allies dreaded the thought of continued fighting from an *Alpenfestung*. Considering the fact that the Ardennes Offensive had

failed, Hitler was receptive to such an idea. The German leader authorized preparations to fortify the Alps. *Gauleiter* Hofer, who had recommended the fortifications, was made responsible for the project. Working for him was August Marcinkiewicz, Fortress Engineer Commander XIV, whose staff of thirty-nine had surveyed the defensive positions. By late January 1945 Marcinkiewicz received orders to improve defensive positions along the Liechtenstein-Austria-Switzerland border, primarily between Bregenz and Feldkirch (fig. 3). Actual construction along the Swiss border began in the middle of February using 2,000 civilian workmen from the *Todt* organization.[25]

Surprisingly, in all directives to Marcinkiewicz, *Gauleiter* Hofer never used the term *Alpenfestung* when he referred to the construction project. Marcinkiewicz heard the term first used by the Nazi district leader of Kitzbühel, Austria on 10 April 1945.[26] The engineering staff members were not the only ones left in the dark. Until the end of the war most generals of the *Wehrmacht*, the German Armed Forces, were not aware of an *Alpenfestung* or any organized mountain defensive system. However, once captured and interrogated, most German Army generals agreed that an Alpine Redoubt was consistent with Nazi strategy. Some of the captured generals suggested the *Wehrmacht* would be sacrificed in delaying actions outside the region, allowing SS units to occupy and defend an *Alpenfestung*.[27]

Immediately after the failed German Ardennes Offensive, American media attention again reverted to stories about guerrilla warfare preparations within an Alpine stronghold. Not knowing they were using information provided by Goebbel's propaganda and the SD, the American magazine *Collier's* published a detailed article

about the region on 27 January 1945. It placed the Nazi headquarters for guerrilla warfare at Bad Aussee, in the Austrian Alps, sixty miles from Berchtesgaden (fig. 3). The article, "Hitler's Final V Weapon," addressed the probability of propaganda. "These stories are undoubtedly intended to intimidate the Allies . . . [however] they cannot be lightly dismissed as just another of Goebbels' inventions . . . all signs indicate that the Germans are preparing for intensive guerrilla warfare."[28] Because the headquarters of guerrilla training was in the Alps, the American media continued to embellish the existence of the Redoubt.

The *Collier's* article captured the attention of not only the American public, but officers at SHAEF as well. According to the author, Major Erwin Lessner,[29] only those men of outstanding ability, experience, and courage were allowed to become guerrillas. The members of this military organization used the name *Die Werwölfe*, the Werewolves. These guerrillas were expected to operate behind Allied lines in German uniforms while the *Wehrmacht* continued to fight. As a guerrilla organization, they would conduct terrorism against occupying forces using weapons that would be the most ingenious weapons yet devised by German technicians.[30] The officers in the Intelligence Division at SHAEF read these reports and took them seriously.

The spokesman for the German Foreign Office, Dr. Paul Schmidt, gave a radio address on 13 February 1945 about future guerrilla activities to foreign correspondents. The speech was monitored in London, immediately wired to America, then published in the *New York Times*. Schmidt stated: "Millions of us will wage guerrilla warfare; every German before he dies will try to take five or ten enemies with him to the grave. . . .

Millions of Germans will pay back murder with murder."[31] Heading the guerrilla

organization, *Die Werwölfe*, would be the RSHA chief, Ernst Kaltenbrunner.[32] He was

described by Lessner as being "six feet two inches tall, heavily built, apelike, hairy, with

over-long arms and clumsy hands."[33] Goebbels' propaganda was believable; the Allies

understood that the headquarters of the guerrilla organization was located within the

Alpenfestung.

In retrospect, tales of Werewolves and a button that could destroy an entire region

appear farfetched. But in early 1945, other American newspapers and periodicals spread

these ideas, contributing to the myth of a mountain fortress. Ultimately the National

Redoubt and Werewolves proved to be a delusion, but by late February 1945 Allied

intelligence services were concerned about their possibilities. Beginning that month and

continuing until the German surrender, SHAEF directed its attention to the Alps and the

possibility of a German Alpine stronghold. To grasp the significance that the National

Redoubt myth had on Allied strategy, it is first necessary to understand the state of

intelligence at Eisenhower's staff at Supreme Headquarters.

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[1]Rodney Minott, *The Fortress that Never Was: The Myth of Hitler's Bavarian Stronghold* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964), 18.

[2]Minott, 11.

[3]This field manual was entitled *German Mountain Warfare*, Special Series, No. 21 published by the Military Intelligence Division, US War Department (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1944).

[4]Minott, 13.

[5]Hans Wolfgang Schoch, Military Study B-212, *National Redoubt* (US Army European Command, Historical Division, 1946), 7.

[6]August Marcinkiewicz, Military Study B-187, *Alpenfestung* (US Army European Command, Historical Division, June 1946), 2.

[7]Schoch, 18.

[8]Minott, 18. The only copy of this report known to exist is in Hofer's interrogation file. However, the report is referenced throughout Franz Hofer, Military Study No. B-457, *The Alpine Defense-Line and Alpine-Fortification* (US Army European Command, Historical Division, August 1946).

[9]Ibid., 11.

[10]US Office of Strategic Services, Research and Analysis Branch, Report No. 232, *South Germany: An Analysis of the Political and Social Organization, the Communications, Economic Controls, Agriculture and Food Supply, Mineral Resources, Manufacturing and Transportation Facilities of South Germany* (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1944).

[11]The *Sicherheitsdienst* or SD was the intelligence and surveillance organization of the National Socialist Party. The agency's mission was to conduct counterespionage in occupied territories and keep watch on the enemies of National Socialism. *The Encyclopedia of the Third Reich*, vol. 2, s.v. "Security Service," ed. Christian Zentner and Friedeman Bedürftig, trans. Amy Hackett (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991), 865.

[12]The RSHA was an administrative body established to integrate government agencies with other offices of the National Socialist movement. Initially headed by Reinhard Heydrich until his death in 1942, Ernst Kaltenbrunner headed the organization through the end of the war. *The Encyclopedia of the Third Reich*, vol. 2, s.v. "Reich Security Main Office," 782.

[13]Minott, 16.

[14]Hofer, Annex 1, 2.

[15]Ibid., Annex 1, 4.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid., Annex 3, 2, 5.

[18]Ibid., Annex 3, 5.

[19]Harry Vosser, "Hitler's Hideaway," *New York Times Magazine*, 12 November 1944, 36.

[20]The *Organisation Todt*, O.T., named after its director, Fritz Todt, was a construction organization for the state. After 1940, when Todt was appointed as Reich Minister for Armaments and Munitions, the organization was increasingly used for military-related projects. In occupied areas the organization employed hundreds of thousands of foreign civilian workers and prisoners of war. *The Encyclopedia of the Third Reich*, s.v. "Todt Organization," 959.

[21]Vosser, 36.

[22]Minott, 26.

[23]Hofer, Annex 3, 2.

[24]Minott, 25.

[25]Marcinkiewicz, 5.

[26]Ibid., 11.

[27]Wilhelm Hoettl, *The Secret Front: The Story of Nazi Political Espionage* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1954), 293.

[28]Erwin Lessner, "Hitler's Final V Weapon," *Collier's*, 27 January 1945, 14.

[29]Erwin Lessner was born in Austria, then he became a major in the Finnish Army. He was hunted down by the Nazis but was able to escape to America in 1941. He preceded his name with the title "major" in both books written during the war and in much of his correspondence. *The Book Review Digest*, 40th Annual, ed. Mertice James and Dorthy Brown (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1945), 453.

[30]The author describes members of the organization as follows: "The German guerrillas will be tough, well-trained and well-equipped youngsters. Each man will carry a light automatic weapon, and each platoon will be supplied with heavy machine guns, small mine throwers and a light antiaircraft cannon. They will ride light motorcycles with a 15-cubic-inch two-cycle engine, while the larger weapons will be carried on heavier motorcycles of the well-known BMW model." Lessner, 14.

[31]"Nazis See Project For 'Mass Murder'," *The New York Times*, 14 February 1945, sec. 9E, 9.

[32]An example of a Werewolf flyer posted on 25 April 1945 is shown in *The Encyclopedia of the Third Reich*, s.v. "Werewolf," 1041.

[33]Lessner, 14.

CHAPTER 3

STATE OF INTELLIGENCE AT SHAEF

Failing to forecast the German Ardennes Offensive in December 1944, US and British intelligence officers wanted to avoid another such mistake at all costs. The result was an overreaction to reports from the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and to intelligence obtained from interrogating German prisoners of war. By understanding the organization and state of intelligence at SHAEF in early 1945, one can see that this was an expected reaction. Allied intelligence was extremely concerned about any German defensive activities in the Alps.

Through 1945 American intelligence during World War II had a mixed record of success. According to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, as the United States entered the war, "the US Army's intelligence service was in a deplorable state . . . G-2 was the Army's stepchild, starved for funds, and staffed too often by amateurs and incompetents if fully staffed at all."[1] Beginning with his campaign in North Africa, Eisenhower felt he did not receive accurate information about the enemy, commenting, "Allied intelligence was poor."[2] The unexpected German attack at Kasserine Pass was a costly lesson about the importance of intelligence.

During the campaign in North Africa, Eisenhower and his planning staff began receiving intercepted German radio messages from ULTRA. After the success of the initial TORCH landings, Eisenhower's G-2, Brigadier General Eric F. Mockler-Ferryman began relying almost exclusively on ULTRA intelligence. Consequently, the G-2

Division tended to downplay conventional intelligence which sometimes caused a significant misinterpretation of German strengths and intentions.[3] In order to eliminate future intelligence failures, Eisenhower removed Mockler-Ferryman and replaced him with another British officer, Brigadier Kenneth Strong on 25 March 1943.

Kenneth Strong had been an assistant military attaché in Berlin prior to the start of the war. He subsequently assumed responsibilities for the German section of the War Office in London. Strong brought detailed knowledge and experience of the Germans to Supreme Headquarters. He was well received and highly qualified for the position as Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2. Most importantly, he had the confidence and respect of the Supreme Commander, General Eisenhower, and subsequently was promoted to two-star rank.

Major General Strong headed the Intelligence Division which handled conventional intelligence gathering. His first success at Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) was the establishment of a Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC/SHAEF). This committee was composed of one US and one British officer from each service, a British or US civilian to focus on economic issues, and several political advisors. Modeled on the successful British JIC in London, this committee was the sole producer of intelligence estimates and the final authority to the Supreme Commander for all SHAEF intelligence matters.[4] The members of this committee worked directly for and provided briefings to General Strong as well as to the Supreme Commander.

SHAEF G-2 received information and reports from many organizations. The OSS, resistance groups, Army Group headquarters, the British Joint Intelligence

Committee (JIC) in London, and the War and Navy Departments in Washington all provided input to the Intelligence Division.[5] At both SHAEF and Army Group level, the G-2 sections did not directly collect information. They depended primarily on subordinate units, Army-level and lower, to collect and process intelligence. This information was then forwarded to the higher level headquarters. Once collected and analyzed at Supreme Headquarters, it was disseminated back to all subordinate headquarters in the form of weekly intelligence summaries and periodic estimates.

The most critical section of Kenneth Strong's Intelligence Division was also its most secret. The ULTRA detachment, under direction of Colonel Edward Foord of the British Army, received continuous decryptions from the British intelligence complex at Bletchley Park.[6] Until April 1944, the exploitation of high-level German communications was entirely a British affair.[7] In 1944, the Signal Intelligence Division to the European Theater of Operations, United States Army (ETOUSA), the precursor of SHAEF, assigned three American detachments to support Bletchley Park. Thus began the sharing of high-level decrypted German communications traffic between England and the United States.[8]

The information SHAEF G-2 issued in its weekly intelligence summaries generally mirrored reports received from the Intelligence Divisions at both Army and Army Group-levels. The summaries included additional information received from the British JIC and other sources. However, not all intelligence could be reported for fear of endangering or revealing their sources.[9] For example, specific information provided by ULTRA and OSS agents would rarely, if ever, be included in SHAEF weekly summaries.

Even after the Kasserine Pass debacle, the consistency and accuracy of Allied intelligence was poor. In 1944, intelligence failed to point out the defensive potential of the Normandy hedgerow country--the *bocage*. The commander of the US First Army during the Normandy landings, General Omar Bradley, as early as 8 June 1944 called the *bocage* the "damndest country I've seen."[10] It was only after American soldiers entered the hedgerows that they began to understand how effectively the terrain could be used for defense. This shortcoming was primarily a failure of SHAEF and First Army to ensure commanders understood the implications of the *bocage*. The French had supplied the Americans about information on the Normandy hedgerows and British generals had used such terrain to their advantage as they retreated from France in 1940. There was an abundance of information about the *bocage*; the Americans failed to consider it. Consequently, Allied units were unprepared for combat in this unique terrain.

Six months after encountering the Normandy hedgerows, another significant intelligence failure occurred. Allied intelligence failed to identify the massing of German forces prior to the Ardennes counteroffensive. Once again, SHAEF did not enjoy the luxury of advance warning through ULTRA. Despite Strong's evidence from reports hinting the Germans were preparing for a counteroffensive in the Ardennes, ULTRA offered little help.[11] The Intelligence Division thought there might be a small spoiling attack, but nothing like a full-scale offensive. Eisenhower and his Army Group commanders simply did not believe the Germans could conduct anything of this scale at that stage of the war. Therefore, ULTRA was unable to produce warning signals that up until this point had so often averted disaster or pointed the way to victory.[12]

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Fear gripped SHAEF after the Ardennes Offensive. The Intelligence Division began to be overwhelmed by fears of the unknown and used all means at their disposal to confirm intelligence, including ULTRA. Three of the distinct fears that plagued Kenneth Strong and his Intelligence Division at SHAEF in early 1945 were secret weapons, guerrilla activity, and a prolonged garrison defense--the National Redoubt.

Germany continued to make rapid technological progress during the war, especially in the areas of jet aircraft, rockets, and submarines. After Allied bombers seriously damaged Germany's rocket facility at Peenemünde, most experimental laboratories and production facilities were moved underground. Moreover, German propaganda continued to urge its people to resist a little longer, until their newest and best secret weapons were ready.[13] Because innovative weapons had periodically appeared throughout the war, the dangers of powerful new weapons were real. The thought of these weapons so impressed Allied intelligence officers that they had difficulty seeing the true picture. As a result, Kenneth Strong used information from Foord's ULTRA detachment to clarify the intelligence picture. ULTRA provided a steady flow of intelligence and technical specifications about the Messerschmitt and Arado jet aircraft. Since the Allies were several months behind the Germans in development of jet aircraft, every fragment of intelligence about German progress was valuable.

Goebbels sanctioned guerrilla warfare in his propaganda in late 1944 and early 1945. Supreme Headquarters understood clearly the implications of guerrilla warfare. Eisenhower knew that the SS were providing German youngsters with leadership, organization, and fanaticism--the Werewolves. In this case ULTRA was not able to

provide any specific information about the Werewolf organization until the final days of the war. Nevertheless, fear of increased guerilla activity caused Eisenhower to believe it important to "overrun the entire national territory before [organization of the Werewolves] could be effected."[14]

Of the three fears facing Strong and his G-2 Division, the one that gripped the Supreme Commander the most was the thought of prolonged German resistance in the mountains. SHAEF's Intelligence Division had been receiving frightening reports about such plans. An OSS report sent to Washington on 16 February included information obtained from a neutral military attaché in Berlin. The report stated that the "Nazis are undoubtedly preparing for a bitter fight from the mountain Redoubt. . . . Strongpoints are connected by underground railroads . . . several months' output of the best munitions have been reserved and almost all of Germany's poison gas supplies."[15] The report concluded on an even more bizarre note: "Everybody who participated in the construction of the secret installations will be killed off--including the civilians who happened to remain behind . . . when the real fighting starts."[16]

To limit the alarm that was generated, the JIC in London and the OSS in Washington issued cautious statements about previous reports. Many personnel in command and intelligence circles, particularly the British, discounted the rumors of a last-ditch stand in the Alps. They believed that due to limited agriculture and industrial resources in the region, a self-contained fortress was not supportable. However, they did see the possibility of German Army remnants withdrawing or being forced into the Alps where they could prolong their defense.[17] By March 1945 Major General Strong stated

that they "were now receiving a continuous flow of reports that the Nazis intended to stage a final prolonged resistance [in an area known as] the National Redoubt . . . reports of deep dugouts, secret hiding-places, underground factories and bombproof headquarters were confusing and unconvincing. No single piece of information could be confirmed."[18]

Initially, even Churchill believed that the Germans would conduct a last-ditch stand in the Alps. The British JIC in London issued a report on 18 February concluding that there might be a fortress defense in southern Germany and western Austria, especially if Hitler and Himmler remained alive. After "strange resistance" in defending Budapest and Lake Balaton in Hungary, Churchill believed that these were indications the Nazis were planning to fight a last-ditch stand somewhere in an attempt to prolong fighting.[19] However, the report concluded that there was no firm evidence that Nazi leaders planned to establish a headquarters there.[20]

All of Eisenhower's senior intelligence officers, led by Major General Strong, assured the Supreme Commander that the Redoubt was not a myth; it was a reality.[21] The Intelligence Division continued to forecast a steadily increasing German force, primarily elite SS units, pulling north from Italy and west from Austria into the mountains, and presumably, into the *Alpenfestung*. Kenneth Strong's own view about a Alpine stronghold was "that it might not be there, but that we nevertheless had to take steps to prevent it being established. After the Ardennes, I was taking no more chances with the Germans."[22] General Eisenhower, showing skepticism as well, agreed that stories about a Redoubt could not be ignored.[23]

Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters staff found evidence to support its fears of

the unknown. Hitler was known for issuing unreasonable orders to stand and die, even if

militarily unwise. Examples included Stalingrad and the inland defense of the Normandy

beachhead. The possibility of Hitler ordering a last-ditch stand in the Alps not only was

realistic, but probable as well. Hitler's "no surrender, no retreat" policy and the

anticipated final stand in the Alps complemented one another. The final battle of the

Third Reich was to be a Wagnerian cataclysm, the *Götterdämmerung.*[24] The idea

continued to build into such an exaggeration that it was impossible to ignore. Omar

Bradley, Commander of the United States Twelfth Army Group, in his memoirs wrote,

"the legend of the Redoubt was too ominous a threat to be ignored."[25]

SHAEF intelligence took the threat of a last-ditch stand seriously. Reports about

the Redoubt continued to flood the Intelligence Division at SHAEF daily. Strong's Joint

Intelligence Committee/SHAEF attempted to make a balanced assessment of German

intentions in its 10 March report. Despite the fact that the German Army on the western

front would not remain a cohesive fighting force much longer, the Allies still planned on

serious resistance in the south. The Joint Intelligence Committee at SHAEF wrote on 10

March 1945: "We should therefore be prepared to undertake operations in southern

Germany in order to overcome rapidly any organized resistance by the German armed

forces or by guerrilla movements which may have retreated to the inner zone and to this

Redoubt."[26]

By early March 1945, SHAEF G-2 had summed up all accumulated evidence and

rumors about the Redoubt when it issued *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, Number 51, for

the week ending 11 March 1945. This intelligence summary contains a large section on the National Redoubt (appendix C). This summary noted that ground reports and limited photographic evidence all pointed to German plans for a final stronghold in the Alps. The area mentioned included territory south of Munich to northern Italy, covering most of western Austria. Within this area "defended both by nature and by the most efficient secret weapons yet invented, the powers that have hitherto guided Germany will survive to organise her resurrection."[27] Supreme Headquarters stated that it was here in the mountains where guerrilla warfare would survive. "Specially selected corps of young men will be trained in guerrilla warfare, so that a whole underground army can be fitted and directed to liberate Germany from the occupying forces."[28] Photoreconnaissance had disclosed activity at about twenty sites where OSS agents had reported, via Switzerland, underground factories and provisions for soldiers. "It thus appears that ground reports of extensive preparations for the accomidation of the German Maquis-to-be are not unfounded."[29] The report noted "that considerable numbers of SS and specially chosen units are being systematically withdrawn to Austria"[30] and that some of the most important ministries and Nazi personalities were already established in the area, including Göring, Himmler, and possibly even Hitler.

In light of this intelligence report it is easy to understand why General Eisenhower took the threat of a National Redoubt seriously. Roughly the same time the 11 March 1945 intelligence summary was released, SHAEF ordered photoreconnaissance missions of the Alps in an attempt to verify reports. The results were confusing because they confirmed construction activity in the area, but there did not appear to be a pattern to the

construction. There was evidence that the Germans were building extensive bunkers. There was also evidence that activity was occurring in underground locations, and there was a definite increase in the number of antiaircraft sites. Photoreconnaissance missions coupled with ground reports caused the Intelligence Division to believe that preparations in the region were creating stronger defenses than existed in Berlin.

Officers from the Intelligence Division continually posted results from photoreconnaissance missions. An intelligence overlay entitled "*Unconfirmed Installations in Reported Redoubt Area*" covered a large part of one wall in Eisenhower's map room at Supreme Headquarters. After the 11 March 1945 summary, more and more military symbols began to appear on the map, most of them labeled as unconfirmed. Each symbol represented reported locations for dumps of food, ammunition, petrol, and chemical weapons as well as barracks, bombproof underground factories, headquarters, and radio installations.[31] The National Redoubt, a term originating in Switzerland, now had a life of its own at Supreme Headquarters.

The mistakes of SHAEF's Intelligence Division are understandable considering the sequence of events. The Intelligence Division had been deceived several times, and it was understandable for them to overreact. Nearly every intelligence report about the Redoubt ended on the same note: there was no hard information available. It was clear to everyone at Supreme Headquarters that fighting in the Alps would be difficult for the Allies, even if there were no fortifications. Natural defense in this terrain was excellent, the weather was persistently bad, and the altitude would limit the use of Allied aircraft.[32]

Realizing these facts, G-2 continually attempted to confirm reports through agents in the area and by photoreconnaissance missions. Furthermore, intelligence had been collected at army and army group level and forwarded to Supreme Headquarters. Based on these reports, Eisenhower believed it likely that the Germans would make a fanatical last-ditch stand somewhere, and the Alps were the most logical place. Eisenhower later recalled: "The evidence was clear that the Nazis intended to [conduct a final defense from a Redoubt] and I decided to give him no opportunity to carry it out."[33]

The Allied reaction to the reported German National Redoubt was mainly the result of another intelligence failure. The overestimation of the defensive capabilities of the Redoubt was the result of attempts to rectify previous intelligence shortcomings. General Eisenhower and Kenneth Strong wanted to take no more chances with the Germans. Anything was possible, including a last-ditch stand in the Alps. Knowing the state of intelligence at SHAEF, the actions of the Supreme Commander and his primary intelligence officers in his headquarters are understandable. The Intelligence Division's concerted effort to collect evidence to support their hypothesis is obvious. Additional information provided by Foord's ULTRA detachment would provide confirmation of German intentions.

ULTRA would provide critical intelligence to the Redoubt puzzle. After almost two years as Supreme Commander, Eisenhower could use his experiences, both good and bad, with decrypted German intelligence traffic. Despite the recent failure of ULTRA in the Ardennes, ULTRA had been largely successful. Prior to the D-Day landings, ULTRA provided Supreme Headquarters with important information on the German order of

battle in France. ULTRA had also provided the Allies with confirmation that their

elaborate D-Day deception plan, Operation FORTITUDE, was a resounding success.

Two months after the Normandy landings, ULTRA provided General Bradley with

advanced information on the strength and direction of the German counterattack toward

Mortain.

Eisenhower and his staff at Supreme Headquarters would depend on ULTRA

once again. Beginning in March 1945 and continuing until unconditional surrender,

German intercepts would be used to confirm what the Intelligence Division had already

suspected about the National Redoubt. Conventional intelligence, by itself, did not

clearly support the existence of a Redoubt. By using ULTRA decrypts, the Intelligence

Division at Supreme Headquarters would be able to confirm or deny German preparations

for an Alpine stronghold. Surprisingly, during March and April 1945 ULTRA

contributed to the mistaken belief that the Germans were preparing a mountain defense

and would fight a last-ditch stand in the Alps.

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[1]Rodney Minott, *The Fortress that Never Was: The Myth of Hitler's Bavarian Stronghold* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964), 144-145.

[2]Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1948), 36.

[3]Daniel Crosswell, *The Chief of Staff: The Military Career of General Walter Bedell Smith* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 162.

[4]Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1954), 72.

[5]Ibid., 71.

[6]Bletchley Park was the location of the British Government Code and Cypher School (GC & CS). This organization was responsible for the actual codebreaking of the

high-level German message traffic. The agency is better known by names taken from its building numbers, such as Hut 6 or Hut 3.

[7]John P. Finnegan, *Military Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1998), 69.

[8]Ibid., 86.

[9]Pogue, 72.

[10]Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1951), 342.

[11]Crosswell, 281.

[12]Ronald Lewin, *Ultra Goes to War* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1978), 355.

[13]Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower and Berlin, 1945* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1967), 71.

[14]Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 397.

[15]Ambrose, *Eisenhower and Berlin, 1945*, 74.

[16]Ibid., 75.

[17]Charles B. MacDonald, *The Last Offensive* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1973), 407.

[18]Kenneth Strong, *Intelligence at the Top: The Recollections of an Intelligence Officer* (London: Cassell, 1968), 187.

[19]F. Harry Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 716.

[20]Hinsley, 713.

[21]James Lucas, *Last Days of the Third Reich: The Collapse of Nazi Germany, May 1945* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1986), 176.

[22]Strong, 188.

[23]Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 397.

[24]Minott, 38.

[25]Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 536.

[26]Russell F. Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany, 1944-1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 1020.

[27]SHAEF, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 51 (11 March 1945): 9.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Cornelius Ryan, *The Last Battle* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966), 211.

[32]Ambrose, *Eisenhower and Berlin, 1945*, 76.

[33]Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 397.

CHAPTER 4

MARCH 1945: BUILDING THE MYTH

March 1945 was a turning point in strategy for both the Western Allies and Germany. General Eisenhower received key information that turned rumors and speculation about an Alpine stronghold into certainty. At Supreme Headquarters, Major General Kenneth Strong's Intelligence Division gathered information from its army groups, the OSS, and from ULTRA that supported the existence of a National Redoubt. This intelligence, along with guidance from General Marshall and the British War Office, confirmed Eisenhower's belief that Germany would conduct a last-ditch defense, for which preparations had already begun. By the end of March 1945, the Intelligence Division at SHAEF was overwhelmed by information about Germany's mountain fortifications. Several key ULTRA messages decrypted during March reinforced SHAEF's belief in an Alpine stronghold. The messages provided substance to the idea.

Eisenhower's Intelligence Division was chiefly to blame for SHAEF's overestimation of Nazi intentions. As highlighted in the previous chapter, the state of intelligence at Supreme Headquarters was less than perfect. Kenneth Strong commented about his overestimation after the war: "The situation was further confused by the Allied propaganda machine, which added fuel to the rumours by telling the German people that the Nazi[s] were preparing a safe retreat for themselves while leaving the ordinary soldiers to die at the front."[1]

Decrypted ULTRA messages played a significant role in misleading Supreme Headquarters, suggesting the existence of a final defense in the mountains. ULTRA indicated that the Germans were separating their main headquarters into northern and southern staffs. One message in February and seven messages in March provided clear evidence showing OKW and other governmental departments were being evacuated to alternate southern locations. However, these ULTRA messages and those decrypted during the first three weeks in April did not reflect a conscious decision by the Germans to establish an *Alpenfestung*. Rather, the messages simply suggested a break-up and subsequent displacement of headquarters elements and civilian ministries into separate northern and southern echelons.

The first evidence that portions of the German headquarters were moving to the south appeared on 28 February 1945. An ULTRA decrypt on this date reported that the *Oberkommando der Luftwaffe* (High Command of the Air Force or OKL) in Berlin was informed on 26 February of the "progress of emergency work" in constructing an alternate signals headquarters at Wasserburg.[2] This particular message included a comment that this headquarters had remained "consistently in Berlin [up until this point in] the war."[3] There were several towns by this name in Germany, but most likely the town in question was the one fifty kilometers to the east of Munich. This message was the first to mention any element of the German headquarters moving into the fortress region.

Three days later another message indicated movement towards the south. A two part message on 3 March reported that the Directorate of Signals, OKW was authorized to

survey the Weimar area for a location that could accommodate 250 civilians.[4] Analysis

of this message, further confirmed by later messages, showed that Thuringia was a

staging area for movement to the south. Weimar is approximately 220 kilometers

southwest of Berlin and slightly more than 400 kilometers north of Berchtesgaden.

Bletchley Park's staff added a comment to this message indicating that German "civilians

run OKW cryptography."[5] Elements from OKW headquarters, SS Operations

headquarters, and some OKL staffs were also located in the same region by 5 March.[6]

On 7 March 1945, Germany's strategy for defense of the western front was

compromised by the sudden crossing of the Rhine. The unexpected seizure of the

damaged Ludendorff railroad bridge at Remagen changed the entire outlook of the Allied

offensive in the west. General Eisenhower's original plan to defeat Germany consisted of

attacking across northern Germany towards Berlin. His main effort was going to be led

by Montgomery's 21st Army Group which would cross the Rhine north of the Ruhr

industrial region. Because Bradley's 12th Army Group was able to establish a sizable

bridgehead east of the Rhine at Remagen, this force was suddenly in a position to play a

major role in the sweep through Germany. As a result, Eisenhower shifted the major

effort from General Montgomery in the north to Bradley and his 12th Army Group in the

center (appendix B).

The rapid crossing of the Rhine River produced a positive outlook to most

departments of Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters. However, SHAEF's Intelligence

Division continued to be preoccupied by the prospect of future fighting in the reported

National Redoubt. The same week that the Ludendorff bridge was captured, Supreme

Headquarters released its 11 March 1945 *Weekly Intelligence Summary*. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this summary suggested that the Germans were planning to withdraw to a mountain stronghold: "The main trend of German defence policy does seem directed primarily to the safeguarding of the Alpine Zone."[7] The paragraph concerning the National Redoubt concluded by identifying those ministries that were already established in the southern region:

> It seems reasonably certain that some of the most important ministries and personalities of the Nazi regime are already established in the Redoubt area. The Party organisation are reported to be in the Vorarlberg region, the Ministry for Propaganda and the Diplomatic Corps in the Garmisch-Partenkirchen area, and the Reichs Chancellery at Berchtesgaden, while Göring, Himmler, and Hitler and other notables are said to be in the process of withdrawing to their respective personal mountain strongholds.[8]

Furthermore, Eisenhower's Intelligence Division reported that the Russians had made a significant advance in the east. Strong's division reported that "Russian radio has hinted, and German sources have placed [Marshal] Zhukov's spearheads over the [Oder] River as far as Seelow, 28 miles from Berlin."[9] On the western front, Eisenhower's closest elements were still more than 200 miles away. This report was proven to be incorrect after the war; the Russians did not reach Seelow until more than a month later.[10] This summary by the Intelligence Division painted a gloomy picture for the remainder of the campaign should Hitler and his followers entrench themselves in the Alps.

Supreme Headquarters began requesting photoreconnaissance missions over the region immediately after the release of SHAEF's 11 March intelligence summary. Photographs showed a definite increase in the number of antiaircraft sites and weapons around Berchtesgaden.[11] Eisenhower stated after the war, "Although there was no

evidence of any completed system of defenses . . . . Air reconnaissance . . . revealed underground constructional activity. . . . It was believed that some subterranean factories had been established in the area."[12] Eisenhower's Chief of Staff, General Walter Bedell Smith, held the same view as his boss concerning the results of SHAEF's photoreconnaissance missions. He concluded that aerial reconnaissance had revealed that many villages and towns in southern Germany were being fortified. Even Munich, "shrine of the Nazi party, was being converted into one of Hitler's fortresses . . . and preparations there were said to exceed any defense set up in Berlin."[13]

By the middle of March 1945, Eisenhower was concerned primarily about three key strategic issues as he looked to end the war in Europe. First, coherent resistance in the north and center of the western front would be minimized by the encirclement of Army Group B in the Ruhr. Actions by both Montgomery's and Bradley's forces were eliminating this concern as an issue. Second, the Russians had over a million soldiers on the Oder River within forty miles of the German capital, while the western Allies were still over 200 miles away (fig. 4). Berlin, about to be taken by the Russians, was no longer a military objective for Eisenhower. Finally, the Supreme Commander had evidence showing that Hitler intended to withdraw forces into the National Redoubt, where their destruction would be difficult and cost many Allied lives.[14] In light of the 11 March summary and Russian proximity to Berlin, the Supreme Commander shifted his forces south for military, rather than political reasons. By the middle of March 1945, Eisenhower concluded that the Redoubt was of greater significance than the capture of Berlin.
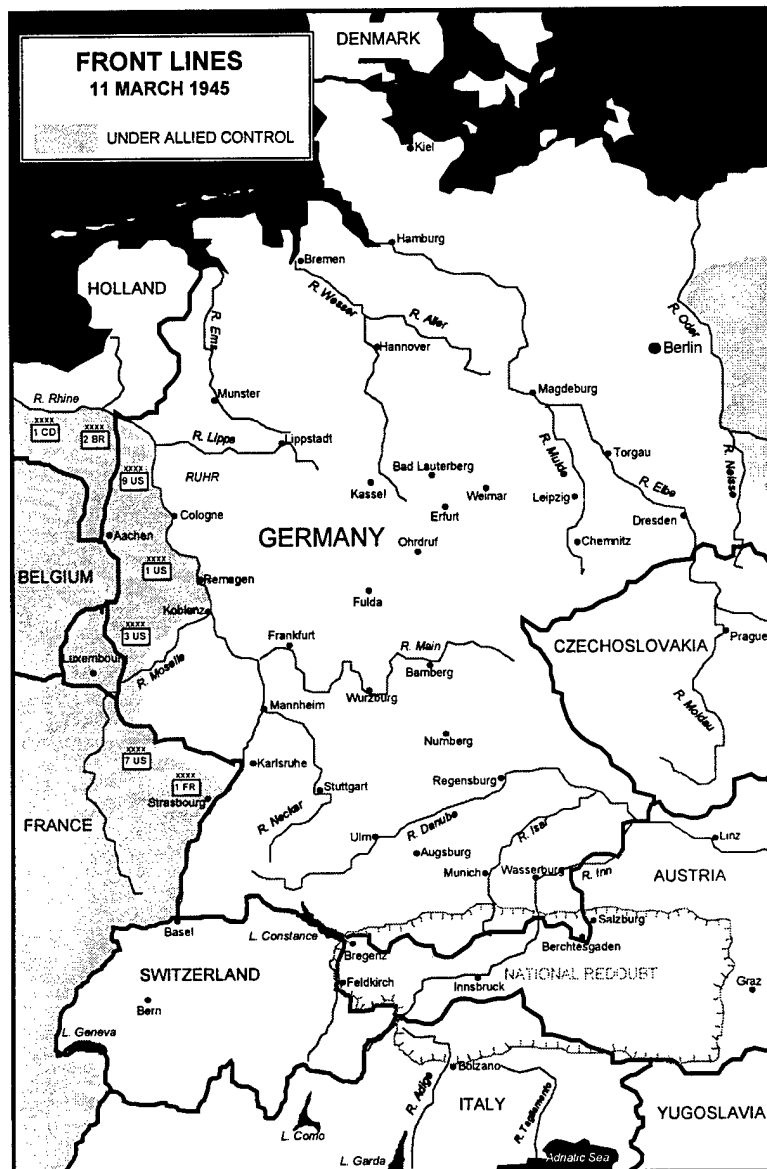
Fig. 4. Army group locations and area under Allied control on the western front.
Source: SHAEF, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 51 (11 March 1945).

Supreme Headquarters was not the only organization affected by rumors of a

National Redoubt. The myth was preying on the minds of all the Allies; Moscow, for a

time, was equally affected. On the eastern front the Germans had concentrated ten

armored divisions from the elite Sixth SS Panzer Army northeast of Lake Balaton in Hungary.[15] The transfer of this much German force at a time when it was critically needed elsewhere was unusual, since the Russians had already arrived at the outskirts of Berlin. The remarkable amount of German armor transferred to Hungary, as well as the fierce fighting near Lake Balaton, was proof enough to the Russians that the Germans had plans for a final stand in the Alps.[16] Despite the eventual defeat of this German front, Moscow continued to warn the Allies several times in March about a possible military buildup in southern Germany.[17]

In Britain, Winston Churchill believed, for a time, that the Redoubt was a possibility as well. Similar to the views of the Russians, Churchill remarked that Germany's operations in Hungary made no sense to him, unless they planned to retire into southern Germany in an attempt to prolong the fighting there.[18] The Directorate of Intelligence of the British War Office decrypted an important Japanese diplomatic message from Bern on 16 March. The message reported that "considerable stocks of war material were being accumulated in 'two last battlegrounds,' or 'Redoubts,' one comprising Wilhelmshafen, Hamburg and Kiel, and the other Munich, Salzberg, Vienna and the north of Italy."[19] Churchill, on his personal copy of the decrypt, had underlined the reference to the southern Redoubt.[20] The Prime Minister directed his Joint Intelligence Committee on 17 March 1945 to "consider the possibility that Hitler, after losing Berlin and northern Germany, will retire to the mountainous and wooded parts of southern Germany and endeavour to prolong the fight there."[21] The Prime Minister added his own comments on this message to his chief of staff, General Hastings L. Ismay:

Hitler "is so foolishly obstinate about everything that there may be no meaning behind these moves. Nevertheless the possibilities should be examined."[22] To confuse Churchill's understanding of the Redoubt even more, the Prime Minister received another warning near the end of March: a letter from Archduke Otto von Hapsburg stating that the Germans were preparing a final stand in the Alps.[23]

On 20 March 1945 another valuable ULTRA decrypt revealed the displacement of headquarters and staffs from Berlin. In this message, the OKH Director of Signals reported that their entire planning staff had moved to a location with the cover-name "Olga."[24] Within a week Olga was confirmed by two following messages as the town of Ohrdruf, southwest of Weimar.[25] Supreme Headquarters thus had information clearly showing a large-scale, albeit piecemeal, movement of German Army and Air Force staffs to the south, staging in Thuringia on their way to Bavaria.[26]

Meanwhile, General Strong's Intelligence Division continued to collect and analyze reports from the army groups. These intelligence reports, gathered by conventional methods, were submitted to SHAEF G-2. Towards the end of March the reports became increasingly concerned about a defense of a final mountain stronghold. Throughout March 1945, there was no agreement at any level in SHAEF as to the purpose of the Redoubt. Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters held one view but Bradley's Twelfth Army Group, although maintaining a slightly similar perspective, saw the dangers as being considerably greater in consequence.

General Omar Bradley's Twelfth Army Group issued a memorandum entitled "Re-Orientation of Strategy" on 21 March 1945. Brigadier General Edwin Sibert was the

44

Twelfth Army's intelligence officer whose section had obtained information from the ever-increasing number of German prisoners of war.[27] Coupled with information from the OSS, Bradley believed he had a correct assessment of German intentions for a Redoubt. The memorandum stated, "all indications suggest that the enemy's political and military directorate is already in the process of displacing to the 'Redoubt' in lower Bavaria."[28] Sibert included an appendix to the report, *Intelligence Evaluation of the National Redoubt*, which stated that German defensive tactics had changed:

> Obstacles came first, then concealment and cover, followed in sequence by considerations of communications, observation and fields of fire. This trend is toward guerilla warfare, using ambush, defilade and traps. These tactics are supplemented by the use of time-bombs, delayed-action explosives, booby-traps, mines, alarms and all kinds of devilish devices.[29]

As mentioned in chapters 2 and 3, these reports clearly confirmed Goebbels' use of prisoners of war and the SD to transmit false information to the Allies. Guerrilla warfare directed from Berchtesgaden, elite SS units, massive stockpiling of ammunition, and exaggerated claims of extensive fortifications were all mentioned in Sibert's appendix.[30]

The *Intelligence Evaluation of the National Redoubt* was a restatement by Bradley's Intelligence Division of SHAEF's *Weekly Intelligence Summary* from 11 March 1945. Brigadier General Sibert concluded his appendix by noting that evidence was inconclusive until photoreconnaissance and OSS agents in the area could verify the reports. Although both SHAEF and 12th Army Group's analysis of the National Redoubt were essentially similar, farther to the south the Sixth Army Group and its subordinate element, the Seventh US Army maintained views that were more alarming than the others.

The Seventh US Army, commanded by Lieutenant General Alexander Patch, anchored the southern front of the Allied advance in the west. It and the First French Army were expected to do most of the fighting in the National Redoubt. Patch's intelligence officer believed that the Alpine high ground did in fact "loom as the last battlefield for the war in Europe."[31]

The G-2 of the Seventh US Army was Colonel William Quinn who analyzed German defensive preparations in the Alps and issued a 25 March 1945 report entitled: *Study, German National Redoubt and Related Documents*. In his analysis Quinn estimated the region would be defended by "an elite force, predominantly SS and mountain troops, of between 200,000 and 300,000 men."[32] Moreover, Himmler had ordered provisions for 100,000 men and by the last week of March, supplies were already arriving in the area at the rate of "three to five very long trains each week . . . . A new type of gun has been reported observed on many of those trains."[33] Finally, the Seventh Army *Study* reported that hydroelectric plants in the mountains were generating power for underground ordnance shops. One of these underground facilities was already in operation and could produce "a complete Messerschmitt."[34] Clearly, the G-2 of the Seventh US Army believed that evidence proved Hitler was consciously planning a final defense in the Alps.

Confusing the intelligence picture even more, Supreme Headquarters received additional ULTRA messages that were increasingly responsible for providing life to the Redoubt. Immediately following General Bradley's 21 March memorandum, Supreme Headquarters received an important ULTRA decrypt from 23 March that included

information from a *Führer* directive of 20 March. In this six part message Hitler had

ordered that all other training units of the *Ersatz* (Home) army, except those that were

"pure German," were to be put into "rearward positions in order to support the front

[thereby creating a] strategic zone in depth on the eastern and western fronts."[35] On 25

March, the MI 14 section[36] of the British War Office issued their analysis of this ULTRA

decrypt. The agency speculated that the "pure German" units mentioned might be used to

defend the National Redoubt.[37] F. Harry Hinsley, author of *British Intelligence in the*

Second World War, stated that by 25 March, MI 14 had decrypted this *Führer* directive

and had gathered other evidence to support its claim. The British MI 14 branch had

selected a specific ground report "more reliable than most . . . which claimed that 16

divisions were to garrison the Redoubt, that food and ammunition for two years were to

be stocked and that food supplies were planned for 600,000 people including hostages."[38]

Most intelligence agencies agreed that SS units would garrison the Redoubt. A

brief ULTRA decrypt on 25 March identified two SS units that were ordered from Berlin

to Thuringia. One of the units that was clearly identified was an SS unit that conducted

geological estimates and would be needed for the Alpine fortress. This ULTRA message

noted the unit had moved to Lauterberg am Harz. A comment included in the message

stated that this town was presumably Bad Lauterberg, approximately forty kilometers east

of Göttingen in Thuringia (fig. 4).[39]

Bletchley Park decrypted another ULTRA message on 26 March that clearly

showed the transfer of high-level staffs. This report stated that "only matters of

fundamental importance [should] be sent to [Berlin]."[40] This statement implied that

47

regular message traffic should be directed to rear echelons of OKH. This decrypt used the cover-name Olga in all three parts of the message, the same term used in the 20 March decrypt. Bletchley Park attached a comment that stated, "Olga now believed to be 'fair indications' at Ohrdruf."[41] Additionally, this message identified new locations for the OKL Directorate of Signals and other OKL staff sections at Weimar-Nohra, also in Thuringia.[42]

On 27 March, SHAEF received a crucial ULTRA message that better explained the breakup of the Armed Forces High Command. In this three part message, Berlin provided information about the dispersal policy for their civilian ministries and military command structure.[43] Forward elements of OKW known as "A" echelon would remain at Zossen, thirty-five kilometers south of Berlin, while forward elements of civilian ministries would remain in Berlin. The "B" echelon would be located in the Salzburg area, primarily around Berchtesgaden. As a result of the Russian threat to Berlin from the east, a "C" echelon was to be established in Thuringia, centered around Ohrdruf and Weimar. Not only would this area be an intermediate staging area for movement south of "B" echelon, but Ohrdruf would provide a location for the displaced military and civilian elements of "A" echelon (fig. 5).[44]

The other critical piece of information provided in this 27 March message was a reference to a location with the cover-name "Alpen." Many of the messages for "B" echelon were required to go through the signals exchange Alpen. This decrypt included the comment, "Trunk exchange Alpen is in . . . Salzburg area."[45]
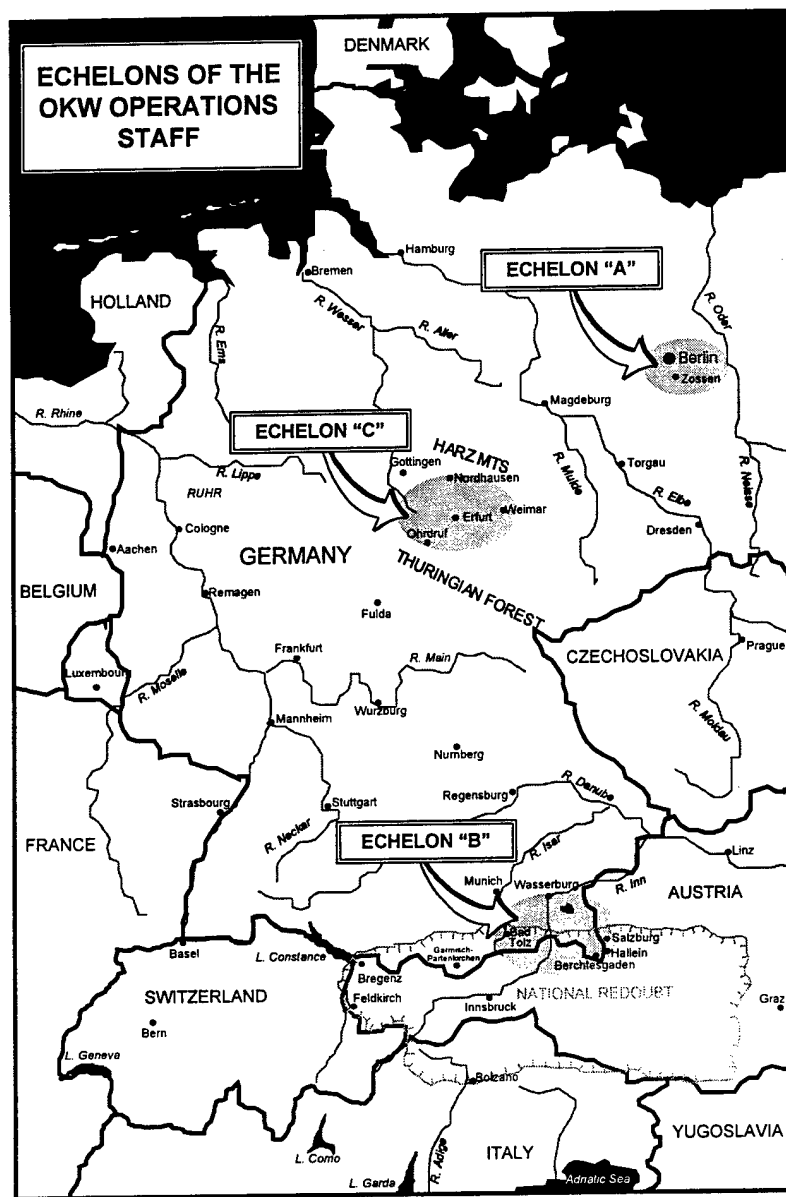
Fig. 5. Three echelons of the OKW Operations Staff. The Redoubt region included a portion of echelon "B." Source: SHAEF, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 57 (22 April 1945).

It was becoming obvious to Supreme Headquarters that Germany would be cut in two by the rapid Allied advances from both east and west. Command and control of both

the northern and southern sectors from Berlin would be impossible. The German forces in Denmark, Norway, and northern Germany could continue to be controlled from Berlin or an alternate northern site. The forces in the south, however, would require their own headquarters. Hitler's favorite hideaway was near Berchtesgaden in the Alps and SHAEF believed this was a possible headquarters location for the southern forces. The German armed forces would be dividing their headquarters between both locations to provide better command and control. Because the southern headquarters was located in highly defensible Alpine terrain, SHAEF began to believe that a Nazi last-ditch stand was becoming more of a possibility.

Supreme Headquarters received another ULTRA message referring to the displacement of staff elements on 29 March. This very brief message stated that OKL Operations staff was located and operating at "Flak Barracks Weimar."[46] Although only two lines in length, this message again confirmed that the High Command of the Air Force was establishing alternate locations, besides Berlin, to continue directing the war.

By the end of March 1945, elements from the First and Ninth US Armies made contact at the town of Lippstadt, completing the encirclement of the Ruhr (fig. 6). This operation surrounded the largest pocket of German forces on the western front during the war, removing over 317,000 soldiers from Army Group B of the German Army.[47] The encirclement of the Ruhr eliminated a significant portion of the German Army on the western front. As a result, Eisenhower became less concerned with the German threat to his north and more concerned with his southern front.

Fig. 6. Army group axes of attack and area under Allied control on the western front. Source: SHAEF, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 54 (1 April 1945).

The G-2 for Eisenhower's Southern Group of Armies, the 6th Army Group, was

Brigadier General Eugene Harrison. One of his subordinate elements, the Seventh US

Army, had just crossed the Rhine near Worms, established a significant bridgehead for future operations, and witnessed a virtual collapse of Germany's Army Group G to their front.[48] General Harrison issued his *Weekly Intelligence Summary* of 31 March 1945 and noted the significance of the enemy collapse. Harrison's report speculated that because the Germans could not contain the Allies west of the southern Rhine, the situation was such that Germany "must already be too shattered to form a Redoubt."[49] General Harrison concluded the following: "The turn of military events is effectively destroying the National Redoubt for want of both territory and personnel. Any retreat into the mountains of southeastern Germany will hardly be voluntary on the part of the German leaders."[50]

While Allied columns exploited deep into central Germany and overran isolated pockets of resistance, the Intelligence Division at Supreme Headquarters knew that many headquarters and government departments were evacuating Berlin and moving to the south. Eisenhower claimed in his memoirs, "Even before the Allied advance across central Germany began, we knew that the German Government was preparing to evacuate Berlin. The administrative offices seemed to be moving to the southward, possibly, we thought, to Berchtesgaden in the National Redoubt."[51] Because his book *Crusade in Europe* was published before ULTRA was released to the public, Eisenhower was not able to reveal that ULTRA provided some of his evidence.

By late March 1945, British Intelligence, specifically their Joint Intelligence Committee in London, disagreed with Eisenhower's assessment of German intentions concerning a mountain stronghold. British Intelligence agreed that evidence showed

OKW and governmental departments were moving south. They also agreed that photoreconnaissance of underground activity at 20 sites, mentioned in the 11 March summary, "constituted sufficient evidence to support the assumption that the Germans at least had theoretical or notional plans for a National Redoubt."[52] However, the JIC clearly stated that it disagreed with certain OSS reports. They did not believe OSS agents who reported that the construction of underground factories and the replenishment of underground dumps were connected to preparations for a final stand. Instead, British Intelligence believed that some of this excavation work was part of a wider program for the dispersal of German industry.[53]

Eisenhower's superior, General George Marshall, the United States Army Chief of Staff in Washington, was equally affected by SHAEF's 11 March *Weekly Intelligence Summary*. On 27 March, Marshall was sufficiently impressed by current information about German intentions that he provided suggestions to Eisenhower concerning future operations. Marshall asked the Supreme Commander, "What are your views on the possibility and soundness of pushing United States forces rapidly forward on, say, the Nürnberg-Linz or Karlsruhe-Munich axes? The idea behind this is that a situation where Germany is breaking up, rapid action might prevent the formation of any organized resistance areas. The mountainous country in the south is considered a possibility for one of these."[54] Thus, General Marshall supported Eisenhower's desire for a southern strategy. Both Eisenhower and his boss believed that shifting the main effort to southern Germany was justified due to the threat of an Alpine stronghold. In Eisenhower's 31 March reply to General Marshall, he planned to make "a drive by the Southern Group of

Armies [Sixth Army Group] . . . as soon as situation permits, to prevent Nazi occupation of a mountain citadel."[55]

Throughout March 1945, General Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters suspected the worst and found evidence to support its fear of an Alpine stronghold. For General Strong and his Intelligence Division, it was easy to connect the break-up and movement of headquarters elements with the establishment of an *Alpenfestung*. Moreover, since these two issues could be easily linked, it was harder to separate the two events from one another. Supporting this belief, General Eisenhower received key intelligence from ULTRA that turned mere speculation and rumors into fact. The ULTRA messages decrypted during March 1945 concerning the displacement of the Armed Forces High Command were the start of many messages that would follow in April.

Kenneth Strong's Intelligence Division at SHAEF was successful in gathering information during March that supported the existence of a National Redoubt. The possibility of a last-ditch stand in a mountain stronghold appeared to be more believable than the evidence warranted. General Eisenhower now had proof that Germany was planning to conduct a last-ditch defense and that preparations were already underway. To Eisenhower and those at Supreme Headquarters it did seem likely that the Germans might make a final stand somewhere, and there was no better terrain in Europe to do this than in the mountains of Bavaria.

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[1]Kenneth Strong, *Intelligence at the Top: The Recollections of an Intelligence Officer* (London: Cassell, 1968), 187-188.

[2]BT 5959, DTG: 282110Z February 1945.

[3]Ibid.

[4]BT 6180, DTG: 031833Z March 1945.

[5]Ibid.

[6]F. Harry Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 714.

[7]SHAEF, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 51 (11 March 1945): 9.

[8]Ibid., 10.

[9]Ibid., 3.

[10]Cornelius Ryan, *The Last Battle* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966), 208.

[11]Walter B. Smith, *Eisenhower's Six Great Decisions: Europe, 1944-1945* (New York: Longmans, 1956), 189.

[12]United States Army, *Report by the Supreme Commander to the Combined Chiefs-of-Staff on the Operations in Europe of the Allied Expeditionary Force, 6 June 1944 to 8 May 1945* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1945; reprint, Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1994), 112-113.

[13]Smith, 189.

[14]Alfred Chandler, *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower: The War Years*, vol. 4 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 2559.

[15]Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957), 561.

[16]Ibid., 561.

[17]Rodney G. Minott, *The Fortress That Never Was: The Myth of Hitler's Bavarian Stronghold* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964), 38.

[18]Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War: Triumph and Tragedy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953), 457.

[19]Hinsley, 713.

[20]Hinsley, 716.

[21]Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill: Road to Victory*, vol. 7, 1941-1945 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986), 1255.

[22]Churchill, *The Second World War: Triumph and Tragedy*, 457.

[23]Hinsley, 716.

[24]BT 7796, DTG: 201817Z March 1945.

[25]BT 8465, DTG: 262124Z March 1945; BT 8569, Part 3, DTG: 271531Z March 1945; BT 9458, DTG: 042221Z April 1945.

[26]Ralph Bennett, *Ultra in the West* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1979), 260.

[27]Headquarters, Twelfth Army Group, "Report of Operations, Final After Action Report," vol. 3 (Headquarters, 12th Army Group, July 1945): 61, (hereafter cited as Twelfth Army Group, "Report of Operations").

[28]Ryan, *The Last Battle*, 213.

[29]Twelfth Army Group, "Report of Operations", 62.

[30]Minott, 53.

[31]Seventh United States Army, "Seventh Army History," Phase 4, Part 2, Chapters 27 through 31 (Headquarters, Seventh US Army, July 1945), 1105.

[32]Ryan, *The Last Battle*, 213.

[33]Stephen Ambrose, *Ike's Spies: Eisenhower and the Espionage Establishment* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1981), 150.

[34]Minott, 54.

[35]BT 8059, DTG: 230638Z March 1945.

[36]This military intelligence section of the British War Office was concerned with German military organizations and intentions. During 1940, Department MI 14 was headed by Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Strong, Eisenhower's future Chief of Intelligence.

[37]Hinsley, 717.

[38]Ibid.

[39]BT 8308, DTG: 251937Z March 1945.

[40]BT 8465, DTG: 262124Z March 1945.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid.

[43]BT 8569, Part 3, DTG: 271531Z March 1945.

[44]SHAEF, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 57 (22 April 1945): 18.

[45]BT 8569, Part 2, DTG: 271531Z March 1945.

[46]BT 8788, DTG: 291530Z March 1945.

[47]Charles MacDonald, *The Last Offensive* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1973), 372.

[48]Ibid., 409.

[49]Russell Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany, 1944-1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 1020.

[50]Headquarters, Sixth United States Army Group, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 28 (31 March 1945): 4.

[51]Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 415.

[52]Hinsley, 716.

[53]Ibid., 716.

[54]Chandler, 2571.

[55]Ibid., 2570.

CHAPTER 5

APRIL 1945: ULTRA CONFIRMATION

Throughout April, General Eisenhower and his staff at Supreme Headquarters were perfectly willing to admit that they did not exactly know what was going on in the Redoubt area. Each of the weekly intelligence summaries issued by General Kenneth Strong and SHAEF's Intelligence Division stated this fact. Although ULTRA was able to provide some explanation of German movements during the month of April, it did not reveal the extent of preparations that were taking place in the National Redoubt.

Evidence provided by ULTRA continued to accumulate in great quantities during April 1945. Throughout most of this month decrypts focused on the break-up and displacement of the German headquarters elements from Berlin to northern and southern sectors. ULTRA was not able to confirm nor provide additional information about the numerous defensive fortifications in the Alps depicted in aerial photographs. Moreover, until the last two days of the month, ULTRA was neither able to confirm nor deny information received from OSS agents about these fortifications. During April, ULTRA was able to provide a fairly objective picture of German plans for an Alpine stronghold: there was no coordinated plan. Eisenhower and his staff at Supreme Headquarters would not understand this reality until the end of the war. The truth about the National Redoubt was finally revealed after American soldiers had captured most of the key terrain in the region.

As the First and Ninth US Armies completed the encirclement of the Ruhr industrial region on 1 April, the atmosphere at Supreme Headquarters resounded with victory. Strong's intelligence summary of 1 April noted with a hint of humor, that German commanders "will continue to conduct their tactical exercises without troops, or at any rate without reserves, until complete disintegration sets in. . . . Hitler is defeated. However, he is not going down like all other Napoleons, without fighting to the last gasp."[1] Evidence continued to accumulate that the main German defensive effort on both the eastern and western fronts would be concentrated in the south. German ground forces in the southern region totaled almost 100 nominal divisions, including the bulk of the remaining armored and SS formations and up to thirty mechanized divisions.[2]

Included with the 1 April intelligence summary was an attached map overleaf marked with the words "Redoubt Area" and depicted both confirmed and unconfirmed defensive lines. Most of the unconfirmed defenses were located around the outline of the Redoubt. These positions, as stated by General Strong in his summary, clearly supported "the theory that the German High Command planned to fight delaying actions [along avenues of approach into the] so-called 'National Redoubt.'"[3] However, Kenneth Strong concluded the summary by noting that there was "no firm evidence to prove that these defences exist other than in plan."[4] What was clear at Supreme Headquarters during the first week of April was that high-level German headquarters elements were continuing their movement to the south.

The first ULTRA message that reflected this migration was decrypted on 4 April. This message stated that as of 1 April, the OKH staff located at Wildflicken was ordered

to immediately evacuate to the south along a specified route. The message noted that the commander, Brigadier General Menneking, would meet the headquarters once it arrived at Traunstein, thirty kilometers west of Salzburg.[5] The displacement from Wildflicken was due to the rapid advance of the US Third and Seventh Armies; their lead elements were within twenty-five kilometers of the German OKH headquarters.

By the end of the first week of April 1945, Allied forces were making rapid strides all along the western front. In Bradley's Twelfth Army Group sector, American forces were approaching the Harz Mountains, an obstacle with elevations more than 3,000 feet. To the south, Patton's Third US Army was driving along a wide frontage south of Erfurt into the heavily forested area of Thuringia. By this time, there were no longer any ULTRA messages originating from the "C" echelon in Thuringia, it had already displaced to the south.

Kenneth Strong's intelligence summary of 8 April 1945 reiterated that reports continued to arrive in considerable volume about defensive preparations throughout the Redoubt area. After preliminary examination of aerial photographs from the Bregenz-Feldkirch area, SHAEF G-2 concluded that defensive construction included "sections of anti-tank ditch, fire trenches, log pillboxes and dugouts, and small strongpoints."[6] However, the atmosphere at Eisenhower's headquarters remained positive despite the lack of solid information on the Alpine defenses. Strong's intelligence summary of 8 April noted that Germany did not have a strategy for the western front: "Only the German High Command knows what it is doing. No one else does. Presumably, a

miracle is expected. But what: a secret weapon more potent than Kesselring. That is the only conclusion one can draw."[7]

Meanwhile, the translators and analysts at Bletchley Park decrypted two important messages on 8 April and forwarded them to Strong's Intelligence Division. The first message identified Himmler's personal staff at Steinhöring, forty kilometers east of Munich. Additionally, this decrypt stated that Himmler's personal signals regiment, SS Headquarters Signals Regiment 500, would transfer to Salzburg on Himmler's orders.[8] The second message on this date "ordered [the] transfer of . . . a radar train to Golling, south of Salzburg, taking with it OKL secret documents office"[9] and other equipment required by the wireless headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief, *Luftwaffe*. These two messages show that Supreme Headquarters was aware on 8 April that both Himmler's and Göring's personal staffs were located near Salzburg and these high-level German leaders were planning to move to the Alps.

During the second week of April, lead elements of Bradley's force were making rapid advances into the German defense on the western front. For example, on 11 April the 2nd Armored Division drove over seventy-three miles to reach the Elbe at Magdeburg.[10] Farther to the south, General Dever's Sixth Army Group had captured Würzburg and were entering the Black Forest south of Karlsruhe (fig. 7).

The intelligence summary from SHAEF on 15 April stated that it would only be a matter of time before organized resistance in Germany collapsed completely. The remainder of this intelligence summary presented a much darker outlook; many of the pages of this particular summary were focused entirely on the National Redoubt.

Fig. 7. Army group axes of attack and area under Allied control on the western front as of 15 April 1945. Source: SHAEF, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 56 (15 April 1945).

General Strong again noted: "We shall, perhaps, be faced with a campaign in the National Redoubt and Norway."[11] Finally, a detailed topographical study and map

overlay analyzing the Redoubt area was included as part of this intelligence summary. The Intelligence Division at SHAEF was certain about the following: "All sources [of intelligence] agree that since mid-March widespread constructional activity has been taking place. More workers are being called up, more defence materials are being shipped into the area, and in the most vital places the planned defence works are now beginning to take shape."[12] Because Germany was about to be split into two defense areas, SHAEF believed each region would be supported by its own air force. The vulnerability of airfields in the northern region caused Strong to conclude that most of the *Luftwaffe*, especially the jet aircraft, would be concentrated in the south. This 15 April intelligence summary stated that runways for jet aircraft were being constructed at numerous locations, all within supporting distance of the National Redoubt.[13]

By the middle of April 1945, Supreme Headquarters had definite proof that many elements of the Armed Forces High Command had moved to the Berchtesgaden region. Eisenhower's Chief of Staff, General Walter Bedell Smith, later recalled evidence from photoreconnaissance missions over the area. He wrote in his memoirs, "The bunkers we heard of, and saw, in photographs were elaborate concrete command posts to house their administrative set-up. One plan that fell into our hands called for a heavily reinforced concrete bunker with three stories above ground and four below."[14]

Between 10 and 19 April Eisenhower's Intelligence Division had received two critical ULTRA decrypts in which Bletchley Park had identified certain cover-names. The first message on 10 April stated that "the rear detachment of Olga . . . is called Roon."[15] Olga was previously identified as the OKL's "C" echelon near Orhdruf in

Thuringia. A four part message that followed nine days later identified the "second echelon," the "B" echelon, at Bad Reichenhall, fifteen kilometers from both Salzburg and Berchtesgaden. Additionally, the message stated that various OKH administrative departments were in the same area and used a communications center called Susanne, thought to be in the Salzburg area. Finally, this 19 April message stated that Hitler's headquarters in Berchtesgaden used a signals exchange called Hagen. Analysts at both Bletchley Park and at the MI 14 section were in agreement and noted: "Hagen may be cover-name through Hagen Mountains just south of Hallein."[16] The Austrian town of Hallein is fifteen kilometers south of Salzburg towards Berchtesgaden (fig. 8).

By the end of the third week of April, most of Montgomery's forces in the north had reached the Elbe River. Because Eisenhower had already decided to leave the capture of Berlin for the Russians, he focused his main effort to the south. There, the Third and Seventh US Armies continued to push into Bavaria. Nürnberg, the shrine of national socialism, was captured on 20 April, ironically, on Hitler's fifty-sixth birthday.

On 20 April, ULTRA provided positive evidence that German headquarters elements were being divided into northern and southern sections. On this date an important order from *Generalfeldmarschall* Kesselring, Commander-in-Chief West, was decrypted and received at Supreme Headquarters. This message ordered the German Eleventh Army, a recently reconstituted unit near Kassel, to send quartermaster officers to both "Potsdam and to Roon at Traunstein [in] upper Bavaria."[17] Eisenhower's Intelligence Division now had proof, provided by ULTRA, concerning the establishment of a southern headquarters.

64
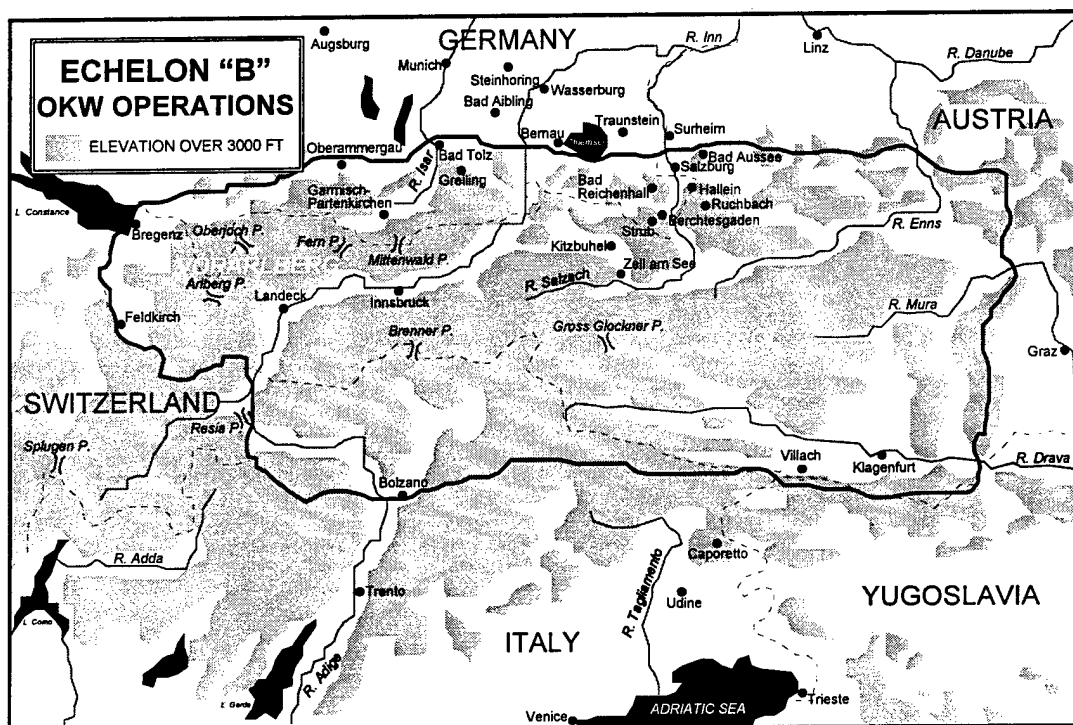
Fig. 8. Echelon "B" sites of the OKW Operations Staff and their location in relationship to the National Redoubt. Source: Ralph Bennett, *Ultra in the West* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1979), 259.

The extent to which the idea of an Alpine stronghold influenced Eisenhower and his headquarters became obvious on 21 April 1945. At SHAEF's main headquarters in the Palace of Versailles, Eisenhower's Chief of Staff, General Walter Bedell Smith, conducted an off-the-record press conference. Smith began with a review of the campaign and then focused on future activities: "This so-called 'National Redoubt' is something we don't know an awful lot about."[18] Bedell Smith briefed the reporters that the only remaining German strength was in the south, near the Redoubt. Additionally, he reminded them of the recently uncovered underground facilities around Schweinfurt,

"where we have been just bombing the hell out of the ball bearing plants . . . and finding eighty-five percent [of the tools and machinery] were underground, beautifully underground."[19]

General Smith briefed that beginning the following morning, the Third and Seventh US Armies would begin to "drive a deep wedge into [the Redoubt] to prevent any further organization [of an Alpine stronghold]."[20] At the conclusion of his briefing Eisenhower's Chief of Staff answered questions from the reporters. In his answer to one of the questions about the difficulty of reducing the Redoubt, Smith stated that this reduction should take about "a month's fighting and then guerilla warfare for an indeterminate time. . . . I don't know. That is only a guess."[21] In response to the next question, Bedell Smith said that he believed Hitler was probably at Berchtesgaden, but that there was nothing definite to indicate the location of the German leader. General Smith had suddenly acknowledged that the Redoubt was now a target; its capture would bring about the end of the war. The same negative outlook from the press conference was obvious the next day as well when Supreme Headquarters issued its *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 57 on 22 April 1945.

At this stage of the war, Supreme Headquarters became focused on conducting a campaign in the mountains of southern Germany. SHAEF's 22 April intelligence summary noted that the German defenses and "indeed the whole plan of the Alpine Redoubt . . . still remain to a considerable extent an unknown quantity. . . . Ground sources have ranged in quality from plausible to wildly fantastic."[22] The interrogation of many *Wehrmacht* generals after their capture in the Ruhr pocket revealed that many

believed a Redoubt was most likely a part of National Socialist strategy for the war. Strong's Intelligence Division noted in this 22 April summary that debriefings showed that the supply situation in the Alpine region was such that, in most opinions, the area could be maintained as an independent fortress for any period up to one year.[23] This intelligence summary was longer than any previous one, mostly due to the large quantity of information about the Redoubt. Concluding on a positive note, Strong again restated the fact that: "On present evidence, therefore, we do not want to overemphasize the importance of the 'Redoubt.'"[24]

On the same date as the intelligence summary was released, 22 April, an ULTRA message identified OKL's main body as having been transferred "to the south German area."[25] The High Command of the German Air Force was divided into three separate departments; one located in Berchtesgaden, the other two at Wasserburg. This ULTRA message further specified that these three departments, under control of the chief of staff, were responsible for the employment of *Luftwaffe* signals unit and communications.[26]

A five part message decrypted late on 22 April listed the locations of numerous artillery, infantry, engineer, antitank, and mountain *ersatz* units. All locations given for these units put them along the northern rim of the Alps, including the towns of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Bad Reichenhall, and Berchtesgaden. For defense of this region, the message designated two units that would provide cadre for "setting up of a *gebirgsjäger* brigade."[27] Several units located in the Bad Reichenhall area were "reserved for *Reichsführer* Himmler for the Salzburg defense area."[28] Specifically mentioned for

67

Salzburg were antitank, engineer, and reconnaissance units. This 22 April message indicated Himmler's intentions to personally direct this defense.

General Patch's Seventh US Army made rapid progress toward the National Redoubt during the last week of April. Both Regensburg and Augsburg were captured on 24 April and Munich fell on 30 April after protracted fighting. Beginning on 24 April and continuing throughout the last week of the month, a continuous flow of ULTRA messages clarified locations of headquarters and plans for the southern area.

The OKH communications headquarters for the western region was operational at Ruchbach by 22 April.[29] Following this discovery, Bletchley Park found that the cover-names Susanne and Alpen were the same location. A message from 25 April not only described this compromise of operations security, but stated the rank and name of the officer involved: "One lieutenant Kradel . . . on seventeenth gave his location as Surheim . . . and on eighteenth signed as telecommunications controller . . . Alpen."[30] The second part of this message stated that OKH battle headquarters were established at Bad Reichenhall on 22 April.

Late on 25 April an ULTRA message was intercepted from Hitler's *Luftwaffe* liaison officer General von Below in Berlin to Admiral von Puttkammer at the *Berghof* on the *Obersalzburg*. The message was dated 22 April and ordered Hitler's communications *staffel* not to be sent to Berlin.[31] This piece of evidence supported another recently revealed fact: the location of the *Führer*. Major General Kurt Dittmar, considered to be the most accurate of all German military broadcasters, surrendered to the Americans at Magdeburg on the Elbe.[32] During questioning Dittmar revealed that Hitler

was still in Berlin and was prepared to die defending the capital. Dittmar's statement, supported by the 25 April ULTRA decrypt, revealed to Supreme Headquarters that Hitler was still in Berlin.

Another message processed on 25 April stated that the displacement route for other elements from Berlin to the south was interdicted. Additional follow-on elements of the OKW were to continue displacing from Thuringia to Berchtesgaden, but the "route via Cham [was] threatened by American tanks."[33] Additionally, this message stated that General Winter, Deputy Chief OKW Armed Forces Operations Staff, departed Berlin on 22 April and would be traveling to the south along this route.

The very next ULTRA message, decrypted just sixteen minutes later by Bletchley Park, stated that the National Socialist directing staff of the OKH was splitting into several echelons for displacement from Berlin. The director of this organization, General of Mountain Troops Ritter von Hengl, would travel with the south-bound convoy and could be reached on the following day "via trunk signals exchange Alpen."[34]

An ULTRA message identifying Hitler as the sender was immediately decoded by Bletchley Park on 26 April. In the early hours of 25 April, Hitler issued instructions reorganizing the Armed Forces High Command. Grand Admiral Dönitz was responsible for OKW Operations Staff A in the north while Winter was in charge of the southern echelon of the OKW Operations Staff B and parts of OKH.[35] Hitler directed that "the principle task of OKW . . . remained the re-establishment of contact on broad front with Berlin . . . by attacking with all forces and means and greatest possible speed [from the northwest, southwest, and south thereby bringing] the Battle of Berlin to a victorious

decision."[36] This message was important since it showed that Hitler, isolated in his bunker, was out of touch with activities on the fronts.

Many significant events occurred during the last week of April 1945. The American and Russian forces linked up at Torgau on the Elbe on 25 April, while Patton's Third US Army drove into both Czechoslovakia and part of Austria. Farther to the south, the Seventh US Army fought for Munich, described by Eisenhower as "the cradle of the Nazi beast,"[37] finally capturing it on 30 April. On the same day in Berlin, Hitler, having already appointed his successor, committed suicide. It was on this date as well that the first Allied forces entered the "inner fortress" of the Alpine stronghold after capturing Garmisch-Partenkirchen. The truth about the National Redoubt was about to be exposed.

The next ULTRA messages concerning the National Redoubt followed during the last week of April. The first decrypt appointed Kesselring as Commander in Chief, South with headquarters at Strub, just outside of Berchtesgaden (fig. 8).[38] The second message, issued on 25 April, was sent from Jodl to Kesselring and Winter after the announcement of Soviet and American contact at Torgau. Jodl made a strong appeal to his subordinate commanders: "At present stage of the war, fight is to be conducted with final determination using every available force against Bolshevist arch-enemy. In contrast to this the loss of large areas to Anglo-American forces insignificant."[39] Additionally, Jodl stated that any transfer of forces from the west to east required the permission of OKW (fig. 9).

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Ref:  659
       GX / MSS / T531 / 24                                    KO  1558

                                     Z


KO  1558  £  1558

SB  80  £  80  PK  37  £  37

TG  57  £  57  WM  10  £  10  NX  8  £  8  LF  21  £  21  STR  81  £  81

STA  11  £  11  ST  7  £  7  SH  23  £  23

WA  560  £  560  %


JODL  £  JODL  ORDER  TO  KESSELRING  £  KESSELRING,  VIETINGHOFF

£  VIETINGHOFF,  SCHOERNER  £  SCHOERNER,  RENDULIC  £  RENDULIC,

LOEHR  £  LOEHR  AND  WINTER  £  WINTER  DATED  TWENTYFIFTH  COLON

AT  PRESENT  STAGE  OF  WAR  FIGHT  IS  TO  BE  CONDUCTED  WITH

FINAL  DETERMINATION  USING  EVERY  AVAILABLE  FORCE  AGAINST

BOLSHEVIST  ARCH  ENEMY.    IN  CONTRAST  TO  THIS  THE  LOSS  OF

LARGE  AREAS  TO  ANGLO-AMERICAN  FORCES  INSIGNIFICANT.

HOWEVER  ANY  TRANSFER  OF  FORCES  FROM  WEST  £  WEST  TO  EAST  £

EAST  REQUIRES  PERMISSION  OF  OKW  £  OKW


MEBL / RFB / LBS                                          272309Z / 4 / 45
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Fig. 9. KO 1558, DTG 272309Z April 1945. General Jodl issued guidance to his
commanders to continue fighting against the Russian forces--any loss of terrain to
the British and American forces was insignificant. Source: British Public
Records Office, *ULTRA Documents* (New York: Clearwater Publishing
Company, Inc., 1978).

As General Dever's Sixth Army Group thrust into the Redoubt, the prospect of

German resistance finally receded (fig. 10). In his *Weekly Intelligence Summary* from 29

April, Kenneth Strong stated: "It is apparent that the active defences of the Redoubt are relatively undeveloped."[40] The summary did confirm that high level headquarters and government departments were in the area, "settling in snugly among the Eidelweiss [sic] of the Austrian Alps."[41] Aerial reconnaissance photographs, supported by ground reports, had revealed widespread tunneling in the area around Berchtesgaden, an area "bristling with bunkers and underground passages."[42] Kenneth Strong concluded this summary on a positive note: "The Germans have had it--and know it."[43]

There were four key ULTRA messages concerning the displacement of OKW during the final two days of April. Attributed to "signals difficulties," the first of these messages stated that it was no longer possible for Hitler to approve all orders concerning command in the southern area. This 29 April decrypt stated that independent decisions by commanders in chief might be necessary if circumstances warranted them. However, "Army Group intentions of a basic nature were to be submitted to [the] Führer for decision."[44] Major General Winter was to be informed thirty six hours prior to issuing these instructions so that he could obtain Hitler's approval.

Bletchley Park identified Himmler as the sender of the next two decrypts. The *Reichsführer* was attempting, at nearly the last moment, to organize a defensive force in the Alps. On 29 April, Himmler ordered his deputy in Bavaria, *Obergruppenführer* Berger, to gather all SS forces in the southern region under his control.[45] Another ULTRA message provided an order of battle from 26 April and locations for most SS units in southern Germany.[46] Although Himmler's current location was not known, these messages revealed his intention of linking up with Berger in Bavaria.

72

Fig. 10. Army group axes of attack and area under Allied control on the western front as of 29 April 1945. Source: SHAEF, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 58 (29 April 1945).

Himmler again issued instructions on 29 April, this time to *Obergruppenführer*

Kaltenbrunner at Bad Tölz. The latter was instructed to transfer the nearby Greiling

wireless transmitting station south to Tyrol if the situation demanded.[47] Himmler's

orders were stern; the wireless station was to be defended "by force of arms [if necessary

because it had] a vital part to play in [the] conduct of the war."[48] A wireless station, most

likely the one in question, was identified at Bad Reichenhall the following day.[49]

Supreme Headquarters maintained, essentially, the same belief in a Redoubt at the

end of the month as they did at the beginning of April 1945. Even on the last day of the

month, both Eisenhower and Strong admitted that they were not sure about German plans

for an Alpine Redoubt.[50] Surprisingly, ULTRA was not able to provide insight into

German defensive preparations for an Alpine stronghold.

However, evidence from ULTRA decrypts throughout April revealed that portions

of OKW, OKH, and OKL were preparing communications centers in Bavaria and

Austria. The belief of a final stand in the mountains would have probably died in April

had it not been for information concerning the breakup of German headquarters provided

by ULTRA. During April 1945, ULTRA was able to provide an objective view that

Germany had *no* coordinated plans for an Alpine stronghold. However, the Supreme

Commander and his staff did not take ULTRA at face value. The truth about the National

Redoubt would not be known until the first week of May once soldiers from the Seventh

US Army had captured the cities of Innsbruck, Berchtesgaden, and Salzburg.

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[1]SHAEF, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 54 (1 April 1945): 8 (hereafter cited as SHAEF, no. 54).

[2]United States Army, *Report by the Supreme Commander to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the Operations in Europe of the Allied Expeditionary Force: 6 June 1944 to 8 May 1945* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1945; reprinted, Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1994), 112.

[3]SHAEF, no. 54, 7.

[4]Ibid.

[5]BT 9458, DTG: 042122Z April 1945.

[6]SHAEF, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 55 (8 April 1945): 9.

[7]Ibid., 10.

[8]BT 9843, DTG: 081513Z April 1945.

[9]BT 9871, DTG: 081932Z April 1945.

[10]Charles MacDonald, *The Last Offensive* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1973), 387.

[11]SHAEF, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 56 (15 April 1945): 12.

[12]Ibid., 11.

[13]Ibid., 24.

[14]Walter B. Smith, *Eisenhower's Six Great Decisions: Europe, 1944-1945* (New York: Longmans, 1956), 190.

[15]KO 69, DTG: 101627Z April 1945

[16]KO 796, DTG: 101002Z April 1945.

[17]KO 887, DTG: 201311Z April 1945.

[18]Harry C. Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), 809.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., 810.

[22]SHAEF, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 57 (22 April 1945): 11.

[23]Ibid., 11.

[24]Ibid., 12.

[25]KO 1078, DTG: 221605Z April 1945.

[26]Ibid.

[27]KO 1106, DTG: 222222Z April 1945.

[28]Ibid.

[29]KO 1246, DTG: 241113Z April 1945.

[30]KO 1361, DTG: 251637Z April 1945.

[31]KO 1373, DTG: 251856Z April 1945.

[32]Cornelius Ryan, *The Last Battle* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966), 446.

[33]KO 1380, DTG: 251949Z April 1945.

[34]KO 1381, DTG: 252010Z April 1945.

[35]Walter Warlimont, *Inside Hitler's Headquarters: 1939-45*, trans. R. H. Barry (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1962), 515.

[36]KO 1444, DTG: 261452Z April 1945.

[37]Rodney G. Minott, *The Fortress that Never Was: The Myth of Hitler's Bavarian Stronghold* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964), 116.

[38]KO 1509, DTG: 270756Z April 1945.

[39]KO 1558, DTG: 272309Z April 1945.

[40]SHAEF, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 58 (29 April 1945): 9 (hereafter cited as SHAEF, no. 58).

[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid., 10.

[44]KO 1695, DTG: 292309Z April 1945.

[45]F. Harry Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 736.

[46]KO 1698, DTG: 292332Z April 1945.

[47]KO 1750, DTG: 301539Z April 1945.

[48]Ibid.

[49]KO 1776, DTG: 302329Z April 1945.

[50]SHAEF, no. 58, 9.

CHAPTER 6

FINAL CONFIRMATION AND CONCLUSIONS

> At one camouflaged airfield in southern Germany, tanks from
> the Seventh Army conducted target practice on Messerschmitt
> Me-262s as they tried to get airborne.[1]
>
> *Seventh US Army History*

From 1 May 1945 onward, the Allied advance on the western front was slowed less by enemy action than by traffic jams. The final offensive towards the National Redoubt was a three-pronged operation conducted at a rapid pace. The First French Army cut off German forces defending the Austrian province of Vorarlberg by driving along the northern edge of Lake Constance. The Seventh US Army attacked towards Innsbruck, Berchtesgaden, and Salzburg, while part of the Third US Army attacked towards Linz. These armies met little enemy resistance as they attacked into southern Germany and penetrated the *Alpenfestung* (fig. 11). As the remains of the Third Reich collapsed, so did the illusion of the National Redoubt.

The Supreme Commander's Chief of Staff, Bedell Smith, noted: "Whatever the Nazi plans had been for fanatical, last-ditch resistance in this area, they were frustrated by our swift advance."[2] So rapid was the advance that tanks and artillery were left behind, since they could not keep up with the wheeled reconnaissance vehicles and jeeps. The attack on the National Redoubt was more of a giant motorcade than an assault using fire and maneuver. The US Army's official history noted that the rapid movement "was not even pursuit warfare any more; it was more a motor march under tactical conditions."[3] A

typical daily advance covered distances from twenty to thirty miles, easily outrunning the

units' logistical support.
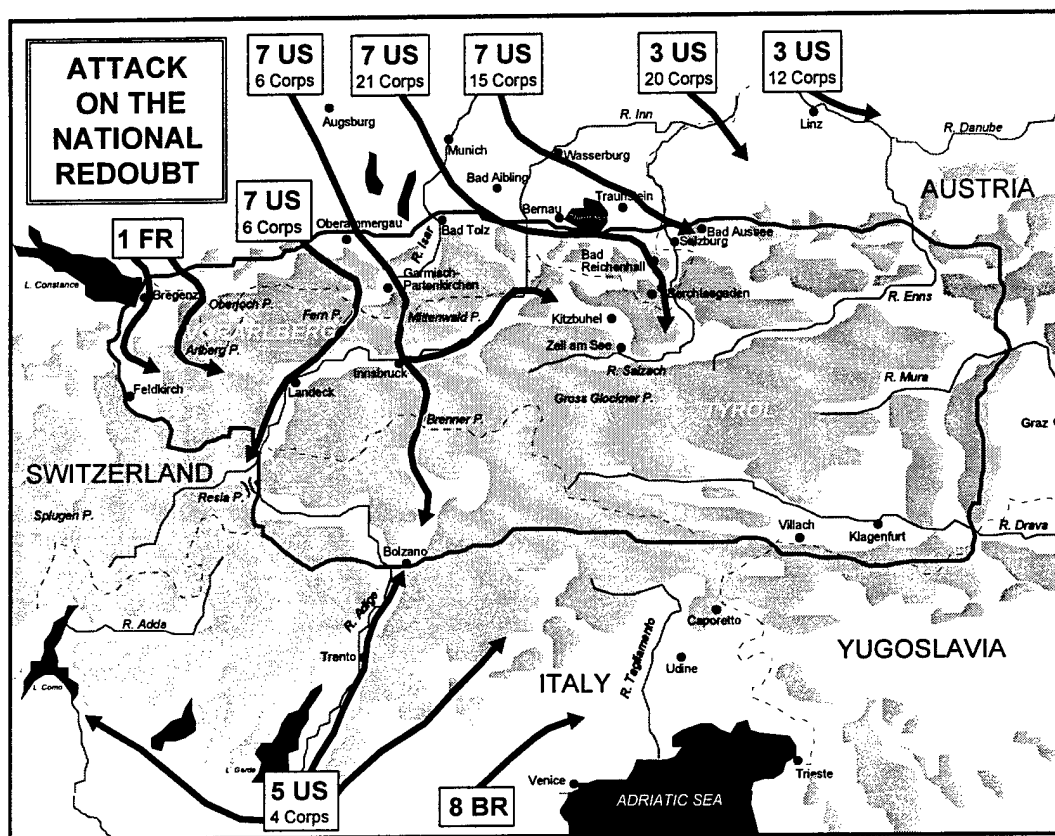
Fig. 11. Map of attack on the National Redoubt. Source: Charles MacDonald,
The Last Offensive (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History,
1973), Map XVIII.

By this stage of the war, the German armed forces were already in an advanced

state of collapse. German resistance was almost nonexistent. Events unfolded during the

first week of May that accelerated Germany's path towards collapse and forced her to

surrender unconditionally. Hitler died in Berlin prior to the Red Army capturing the city

on 2 May 1945. All across Germany, the enemy's will to fight disappeared once news spread of Hitler's death.[4] Most importantly, Allied armies were making rapid progress into German-held territory.

The 103rd Infantry Division captured Innsbruck on 3 May as it raced towards the Brenner Pass to link up with General Mark W. Clark's Fifth US Army from Italy. That night trucks hauling the 411th Infantry Regiment kept their headlights blazing all the way to the Italian border to lessen the hazards of the treacherous, winding Alpine roads.[5] Moreover, Allied forces sealed the last passages for German forces into the Austrian Alps with the capture of the Brenner Pass, Salzburg, and Berchtesgaden, all occurring on 4 May 1945.

Once forces of the Sixth Army Group captured the entrances to the National Redoubt, any plans that the Germans had to defend the region were now impossible. Along the northern portion of the Alps, especially in the easily defensible Arlberg, Fern, and Mittenwald passes, German preparations were found to be weak. Of the many underground factories supposedly in the region, only one or two could be found, neither of which were producing aircraft.[6] Soldiers from the Sixth Army Group also found that very few German combat troops had been able to make it to the mountains. The commander of the northern Alpine area, General Georg Ritter von Hengl, reported that because of the large numbers of evacuees from the north, over ninety percent of the 250,000 men were noncombatants.[7] In Eisenhower's summary of the campaign he stated: "The National Redoubt had been penetrated while its intended garrison lay dispersed and broken outside its walls."[8]

In the area around Berchtesgaden that was overrun by the Seventh Army, there were many unexpected prizes. American soldiers discovered much of the loot the Germans had collected from many of the occupied countries of Europe. The Seventh US Army stumbled onto a staggering fortune in rugs, art treasures, jewelry, and cases of gold and diamonds that were loaded in twenty-five Hungarian freight cars.[9] Besides the valuables that were found, many important personalities from the Third Reich surrendered here.

The Armed Forces High Command had been arriving in the region since the middle of March. Operational for only a short period, the "B" echelon of OKW had to again displace when threatened by the American advance. Most of the headquarters personnel surrendered on 4 May 1945 as they were in the process of departing Berchtesgaden for an area farther to the south.[10] SHAEF's *Weekly Intelligence Summary* of 6 May 1945 noted: "The northern slopes of the Alps yielded a rich harvest of Very Senior Officers."[11] The list included Reich Marshal Göring, seven high-ranking field marshals including von Rundstedt, and approximately 460 other generals.[12] The capture of this many general officers in one area gave credence to SHAEF's opinion that the enemy did, in fact, have plans to defend the Alps.

Supreme Headquarters continued to receive intelligence from ULTRA through the last days of the war. There were more than twelve ULTRA messages that SHAEF tied to the Redoubt during the first three days of May 1945. On 1 May, Strong's Intelligence Division received its first ULTRA message that used the term *Alpenfestung*.[13] Many of the messages following this one also referred to the fortress by that name. In an ULTRA

message to Hitler dated 28 April 1945 that Bletchley Park decrypted on 2 May, the sender reported that Americans were approaching Munich and that any attempt to make a fighting withdrawal would involve the loss of troops intended for the front line defenses of the *Alpenfestung*.[14] Another ULTRA message on 2 May 1945 clearly showed Himmler's interest in defending the Alps. Himmler issued specific instructions to his deputy, *Obergruppenführer* Berger, to "collect the SS units militarily under your command and head them yourself. Defend the entrance to the Alps for me."[15] The other revealing message during this period was KO 1914 of 3 May (see page 6 of this thesis) which stated that with the surrender of German forces in Italy, the southern front of the Alpine fortress was open.

Because Eisenhower's book, *Crusade in Europe*, was published in 1948 and ULTRA was not released to the public until 1974, there was no mention that ULTRA had influenced his decision to capture the Redoubt. Because Eisenhower died in 1969, it is only possible to speculate how significant the ULTRA intelligence was to him during the spring of 1945. Ralph Bennett in *Ultra in the West* concluded that no World War II general officer has left an account of how much he relied on ULTRA or when and why he might have disregarded it.[16] It is important to recognize the appeal of hindsight, but this fact can be dangerous in reconstructing events that might have influenced key decisions. The Germans faced an impossible situation during April 1945, at the time of these ULTRA messages. Eisenhower's armies were making rapid advances along the entire western front. By this point of the war, ULTRA messages were showing what the Germans would have liked to do, rather than accurately describe reality.

Ralph Bennett in *Behind the Battle* described the utility of ULTRA to Supreme Headquarters: "Though voluminous and immensely valuable, ULTRA could consequently never give a complete picture of German military power and potential. It was only a random selection of the enemy's private correspondence; it told a lot, but it did not, and could not, tell everything."[17] Nevertheless, ULTRA decrypted messages, once integrated with other forms of intelligence, helped to guide Eisenhower's decisions at the operational and strategic levels of war.

The Redoubt did not exist. There never were any significant, prepared positions to be occupied by defending forces, nor were there any preparations to move troops into the region. The whole myth of a Redoubt seemed to be a terrible mistake. *Gauletier* Franz Hofer, who held the title Chief Commissioner, Lower Alpine Zone, stated in an interrogation after the war: "The *Führer*'s order regarding construction of an Alpine Fortress, 20 April 1945, came too late. . . . The Alpine fortress never existed except on paper."[18] A fortress could have been built if construction had begun earlier when time, material, and manpower were available. But Hitler never believed in a defensive fortress until his very last days when he was surrounded in Berlin.

The mistakes of SHAEF G-2 are understandable. The Intelligence Division at Supreme Headquarters allowed itself to be misled by fears of a mountain stronghold. In retrospect, we know that the Germans never attempted to hold on after the surrender and no serious guerrilla activities occurred behind the Allied lines. Most every intelligence report issued by SHAEF from March 1945 until the end of the war emphasized that there was no "hard information" available concerning the Redoubt. Generals Eisenhower,

83

Bradley, and Bedell Smith were always willing to admit that they did not know what was going on in the Redoubt area. Nevertheless, from Eisenhower's point of view, it did not matter whether defenses in the mountains were prepared or not. Stephen Ambrose concluded in *Eisenhower and Berlin, 1945*: "In a very real sense [defensive fortifications] had been prepared centuries ago when the mountains were formed. They were just waiting for their garrison."[19]

It is difficult to assess ULTRA's role in Eisenhower's campaign against the National Redoubt. Throughout the last year of the war, ULTRA played a major role in confirming intelligence that had been gathered by more conventional means. ULTRA was one of the many factors that ensured an Allied victory. All-source intelligence has a cumulative effect that is greater than the some of its parts. When used effectively, ULTRA provided background to the intelligence picture that was developed through other sources. As part of an integrated, all-source intelligence collection system, ULTRA could work wonders. However, the integration of ULTRA with other sources of intelligence was, in reality, a function of the personalities at the SHAEF headquarters and the command climate. Generally, ULTRA eliminated erroneous information because it clearly exposed the enemy's deception operations.

ULTRA presented General Strong at SHAEF with an inside view of Germany's capabilities during the final two months of the war. Looking back to 1945, ULTRA accurately revealed that the German armed forces were in an advanced state of collapse. Moreover, ULTRA was also valuable for what was *not* revealed by the message traffic. During these months ULTRA was not providing information that would have been

typical for the establishment of a fortress region. There were no decrypts ordering the movement of units to the region, none that clarified the status of food, weapons, or materials, nor were there any instructions to those responsible for establishing the defense. In retrospect, ULTRA presented a solid "ground truth" picture of Germany and the intentions of her national leaders by what was *not* communicated.

General Eisenhower's reaction to the many reports about the Redoubt was an error in the evaluation of military intelligence. There are several reasons why an Alpine stronghold caused "Redoubt psychosis," a term used by General Ritter von Hengl during interrogation.[20] Due to previous problems with military intelligence, such as with the *bocage* terrain in Normandy and the German build up of forces prior to the Ardennes Offensive, it was easy to be preoccupied with the dangers of an *Alpenfestung*. Therefore, as the different intelligence divisions received the numerous intelligence reports, there was a conscious effort to not repeat previous errors. This time Eisenhower would take no chances with the reports; he would attack to seize the National Redoubt.

One of the most interesting aspects about the Redoubt is the difference in opinion at the various levels of organization. Between SHAEF, Bradley's 12th Army Group, the Sixth Army Group, and Seventh Army, there were many differing opinions as to what the Alpine stronghold represented. The problem was partly due to time lags in disseminating the intelligence summaries between the different levels of command. Moreover, because the Special Liaison Unit representatives presented message traffic to their respective commanders on an individual basis, the various commanders made their own assumptions as to what the decrypts meant.

The myth of the National Redoubt provides a unique look at typical problems facing those who worked directly with intelligence. This example demonstrates that an accumulation of large quantities of information, improperly analyzed, does not add up to much real knowledge. Often, too much information can cause the truly valuable pieces of intelligence to be lost. Because of their different degrees of expertise, the intelligence officers wanted to believe that they were onto something. Therefore, their intelligence divisions were able to collect the evidence needed to support their claim. The displacement of OKW, OKH, and OKL from Berlin, the movement of remaining forces towards the mountains, and information provided through ULTRA all supported the existence of an *Alpenfestung*. This proves the adage: once you know what you want to find, you can find evidence to support what you believe.

The problem faced by Generals Eisenhower, Strong, Bradley, and intelligence officers was that they took too much of their information at face value. Because of previous experiences with the Germans, they had preconceived notions of what they thought should happen. Until the Allied crossings of the Rhine, the German Army fought ferociously for every piece of terrain, especially when defending their homeland. The *Waffen SS* had fought hard throughout the winter and spring of 1945 and the leaders maintained their reputation for fanaticism. To Eisenhower's headquarters it seemed logical that the elite SS would conduct a final fanatical defense in the Alps (fig. 12).

FRONT LINES
7 MAY 1945

UNDER ALLIED CONTROL
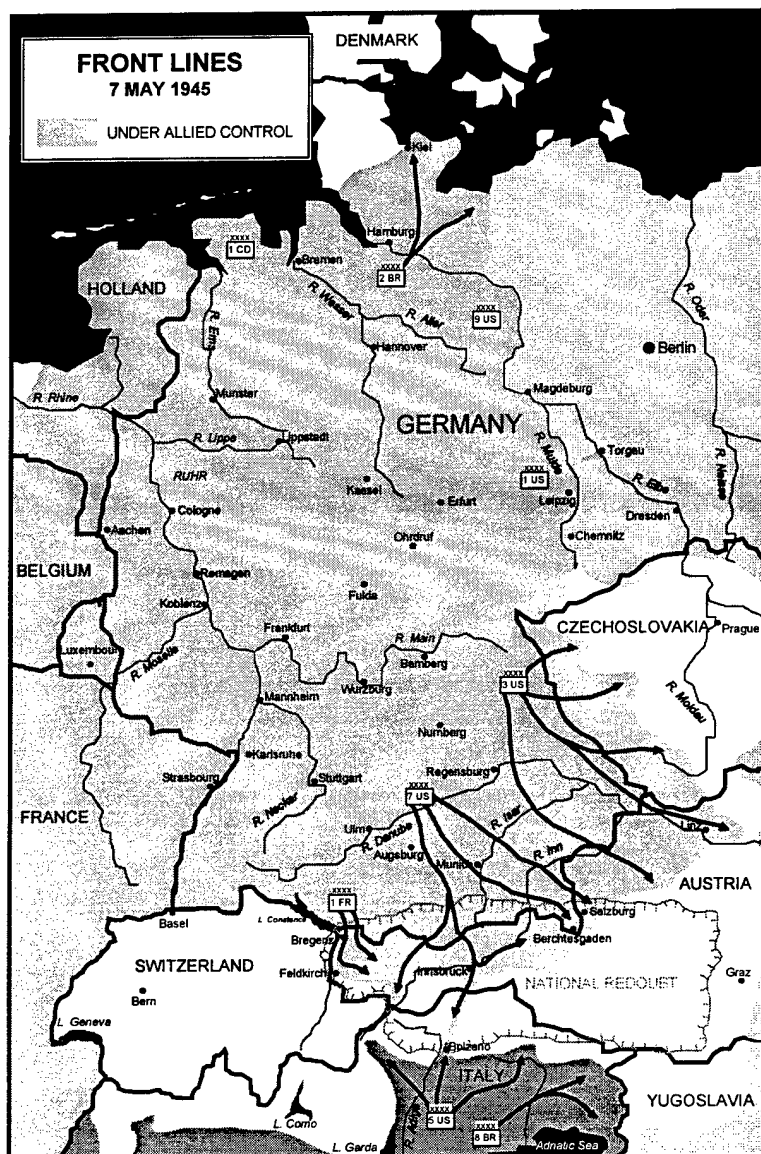
Fig. 12. Map of front lines at the time of surrender, 7 May 1945. Source: Charles MacDonald, *The Last Offensive* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1973), Map XVIII.

Germany surrendered unconditionally on 8 May 1945. SHAEF's final *Weekly*

Intelligence Summary stated: "For the first time in eleven months there is no contact with

the enemy. The victory which was won on Omaha and Utah Beaches reached its climax.

Today belongs to the men of this Army who fought and conquered the enemy from Normandy to the Elbe. There is no enemy situation to report for there is no longer an enemy to defeat."[21]

In the Supreme Commander's cable to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, dated 7 May 1945, was the news: "The mission of this Allied force was fulfilled at 0241, local time, May 7th, 1945."[22] The myth of the National Redoubt would have probably vanished with the March 1945 crossings of the Rhine River had it not been for ULTRA. A series of decrypts, beginning in March and continuing throughout April 1945, threatened to resurrect Germany from its death throes. Intelligence from ULTRA could not be denied. Elements from the Armed Forces High Command, the High Command of the Army, and the High Command of the Air Force were, in fact, moving into the area around Berchtesgaden. General Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force had no choice but to assume that the National Redoubt did exist.

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[1] Rodney Minott, *The Fortress that Never Was: The Myth of Hitler's Bavarian Stronghold* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964), 112.

[2] Walter B. Smith, *Eisenhower's Six Great Decisions: Europe, 1944-1945* (New York: Longmans, 1956), 201.

[3] Charles MacDonald, *The Last Offensive* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1973), 441.

[4] Albert Kesselring, *Kesselring: A Soldier's Record* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1954), 335.

[5] Ibid., 469.

[6] Minott, 138.

[7]Georg Ritter von Hengl, Military Study B-459, *Report on the Alpine Fortress* (US Army European Command, Historical Division, 25 April 1946), 3.

[8]United States Army, *Report by the Supreme Commander to the Combined Chiefs-of-Staff on the Operations in Europe of the Allied Expeditionary Force, 6 June 1944 to 8 May 1945* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1945; reprint, Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1994), 117.

[9]John Turner and Robert Jackson, *Destination Berchtesgaden: The Story of the United States Seventh Army in World War II* (New York: Scribner, 1975), 188.

[10]Ralph Bennett, *Ultra in the West* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1979), 263.

[11]SHAEF, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 59 (6 May 1945): 2.

[12]Reuben Jenkins, "The Battle of the German National Redoubt--Planning Phase," *Military Review* 26 (January 1947): 27.

[13]KO 1814, DTG: 011936Z May 1945.

[14]F. Harry Hinsley, *British Intelligence in the Second World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 735.

[15]KO 1852, DTG: 020329Z May 1945.

[16]Bennett, *Ultra in the West*, xi.

[17]Ralph Bennett, *Behind the Battle* (New York: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1994), 279.

[18]Franz Hofer, Military Study B-458, *National Redoubt* (US Army European Command, Historical Division, 1946), 11.

[19]Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower and Berlin, 1945: The Decision to Halt at the Elbe* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1967), 77.

[20]Georg Ritter von Hengl, Military Study B-461, *The Alpine Redoubt* (US Army European Command, Historical Division, August 1946), 3.

[21]SHAEF, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 60 (13 May 1945): 6.

[22]Alfred Chandler, *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower: The War Years*, vol. 4 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 2696.

APPENDIX A

BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS

1944

June   D-Day. Allies land in Normandy.

July   OKW directed survey of southern positions in the Alps.

August   German attack at Mortain.

September   OSS report from Dulles to Washington, DC intercepted by the SD.

October   Breakthrough by the Red Army into East Prussia.

November   Americans attack in the Huertgen Forest.

December   German offensive in the Ardennes.

1945

January   Hofer presents proposal to Hitler in person requesting approval to begin
            construction of defensive fortifications.

February   Construction begins on defensive positions near Bregenz and Feldkirch.

March
6   Start of German offensive at Lake Balaton in Hungary.

7   First US Army crosses Rhine at Remagen.

11   SHAEF issues *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, Number 51.

22   Third US Army crosses Rhine at Oppenheim.

23   Remainder of Allied forces cross the Rhine River.

26   Total of seven Allied armies advance east against diminishing German
            resistance.

28	Eisenhower advises Stalin that the objectives of the Allied armies are to reach the Elbe River and prevent a German Redoubt.
31	Eisenhower issues orders to 21st Army Group that they will not take Berlin.

April

1	Ruhr encircled at Lippstadt with link-up of First and Ninth US Armies.
11	Ninth US Army establishes bridgehead on Elbe, south of Magdeburg.
12	Death of Franklin D. Roosevelt.
14	Vienna falls to the Red Army.
16	Soviet forces launch assault on Berlin.
17	Remainder of German forces in the Ruhr surrender: a total of 317,000 prisoners including 30 general officers.
18	Magdeburg on the Elbe captured by Ninth US Army.
19	Leipzig captured by First US Army.
20	Hitler divides Reich into a northern area under Dönitz and a southern area under Kesselring.
21	SHAEF press conference conducted by Bedell Smith focusing on the Redoubt.
22	Hitler decides to remain in Berlin.
25	First contact between US and Russian forces at Torgau on the Elbe River. Berlin encircled by Russian forces and cut off. Hitler's *Berghof* on the *Obersalzburg* destroyed by Allied air raid.
28	Seventh US Army captures Augsburg.
29	German Army in Italy under von Vietinghoff surrenders to Allied forces.
30	Russians enter Berlin and display Soviet banner on Reichstag. Hitler commits suicide in the bunker of the Reich Chancellery. Seventh US Army captures Munich.

May
1   News of Hitler's death broadcast to the German people.
    Grand Admiral Dönitz takes over as Head of State.

2   Remnants of the German garrison in Berlin surrender.

3   Seventh US Army captures Innsbruck and continues to Brenner Pass.

4   Link up of Seventh US Army with Fifth US Army from Italy.
    US forces capture Berchtesgaden and Salzburg.
    German forces in Holland, northwest Germany, and Denmark surrender
     to Field Marshal Montgomery.

6   Third US Army captures Pilsen and halts advance into Czechoslavakia.

7   General surrender of German forces signed in Reims, France.
    Americans evacuate bridgeheads over the Elbe River.

APPENDIX B

ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE TASK ORGANIZATION
1 MAY 1945

XXXXX

ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
General Eisenhower

XXXXX

21st ARMY GROUP
Field Marshal Montgomery

XXXXX

12th ARMY GROUP
General Bradley

XXXXX

6th ARMY GROUP
General Devers

XXXX

FIRST CANADIAN
GEN Crerar

XXXX

SECOND BRITISH
LTG Dempsey

XXXX

NINTH US ARMY
LTG Simpson

XXXX

FIRST US ARMY
GEN Hodges

XXXX

THIRD US ARMY
GEN Patton

XXXX

FIFTEENTH US ARMY
LTG Gerow

XXXX

FIRST FRENCH
GEN de Tassigny

XXXX

SEVENTH US ARMY
LTG Patch

XXX

1 CDN CORPS
LTG Foulkes

XXX

8 BR CORPS
LTG Barker

XXX

XIII CORPS
MG Gillem

XXX

V CORPS
MG Huebner

XXX

III CORPS
MG Van Fleet

XXX

XXII CORPS
MG Harmon

XXX

1 FR CORPS
LTG Bethouart

XXX

VI CORPS
MG Brooks

XXX

2 CDN CORPS
LTG Simonds

XXX

12 BR CORPS
LTG Ritchie

XXX

XVI CORPS
MG Anderson

XXX

VII CORPS
LTG Collins

XXX

XII CORPS
MG Irwin

XXX

XXIII CORPS
MG Gaffey

XXX

2 FR CORPS
LTG Monsabert

XXX

XV CORPS
LTG Haislip

XXX

1 BR CORPS
LTG Crocker

XXX

XIX CORPS
MG McLain

XXX

VIII CORPS
MG Middleton

XXX

XX CORPS
LTG Walker

XXX

XXI CORPS
MG Milburn

XXX

30 BR CORPS
LTG Horrocks

XXX

XVIII A/B CORPS
MG Ridgeway

Source: Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1954), 455.

93

EXCERPT: SHAEF *WEEKLY INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY*, NUMBER 51,
11 MARCH 1945

3. The National Redoubt

Accumulated ground information and a limited amount of photographic evidence now make it possible to give a rather more definite estimate of the progress of plans for the "Last Ditch Stand" of the Nazi Party.

(a) Theoretically, the last stronghold of GERMANY consists of the ALPINE block covering the Western part of AUSTRIA and extending as far NORTH as the lakes below MUNICH and SOUTH to the Italian lakes. Within this natural fortress area are inner zones of defence centered on BERCHTESGADEN and possibly also on some alternative GHQ further SOUTH in the neighborhood of the Italian frontier. Here, defended both by nature and by the most efficient secret weapons yet invented, the powers that have hitherto guided GERMANY will survive to organise her resurrection; here armaments will be manufactured in bombproof factories, food and equipment will be stored in vast underground caverns and specially selected corps of young men will be trained in guerilla warfare, so that a whole underground army can be fitted and directed to liberate GERMANY from the occupying forces.

(b) In fact, the main trend of German defence policy does seem directed primarily to the safeguarding of the ALPINE Zone. Although, both in the EAST and the WEST, Allied attacks are thrusting towards the heart of NORTH GERMANY, defences continue to be constructed in depth in the SOUTH, through the BLACK FOREST to LAKE CONSTANCE, and from the Hungarian frontier to WEST of GRAZ, while in ITALY, KESSELRING continues to hold his ground desperately as the defence lines in the foothills of the Italian ALPS are built up in his rear.

This area is, by the very nature of the terrain, practically impenetrable; the few passes into it could be blocked by a minimum of normal defence measures, and even without any additional construction, underground shelter for both man and material is plentiful.

Air cover shows at least twenty sites of recent underground activity (as well as numerous caves) mainly in the regions of FELDKIRCH, KUFSTEIN, BERCHTESGADEN and GOLLING, where ground sources have reported underground accommodations for stores and personnel. The existence of several reported underground factories has also been confirmed. In addition, several new barracks and hutted camps have been seen on air photographs, particularly around INNSBRUCK, LANDECK and

the BERGHOF. It thus appears that ground reports of extensive preparations for the accommodation of the German Maquis-to-be are not unfounded.

As regards the actual amount of troops, stores and weapons already within the Redoubt area, only ground information is available. The evidence indicates that considerable numbers of SS and specially chosen units are being systematically withdrawn to AUSTRIA; that a definite allocation of each day's production of food, equipment and armaments is sent there; and that engineer units are engaged on some type of defence activity at the most vital strategic points, i.e. the Swiss frontier, the BRENNER PASS, the INN TAL and the PUSTER and GAIL TAL.

It seems reasonably certain that some of the most important ministries and personalities of the Nazi regime are already established in the Redoubt area. The Party organisation are reported to be in the VORARLBERG region, the Ministry for Propaganda and the Diplomatic Corps in the GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN area, and the Reichs Chancellery at BERCHTESGADEN, while Göring, Himmler, Hitler and other notables are said to be in the process of withdrawing to their respective personal mountain strongholds.

Source: SHAEF, *Weekly Intelligence Summary*, no. 51 (11 March 1945): 9-10.

APPENDIX D

TABLE OF EQUIVALENT OFFICER RANKS

US Army	German Army and Air Force	German Waffen-SS
None	Reichsmarschall	None
General of the Army	Generalfeldmarschall	Reichsführer-SS
General	Generaloberst	Oberstgruppenführer
Lieutenant General	General der Infantrie	Obergruppenführer
	Artillerie	
	Gebirgstruppen	
	Kavallerie	
	Nachrichtentruppen	
	Panzertruppen	
	Pioniere	
	Luftwaffe	
	Flieger	
	Fallschirmtruppen	
	Flakartillerie	
Major General	Generalleutnant	Gruppenführer
Brigadier General	Generalmajor	Brigadeführer
None	None	Oberführer
Colonel	Oberst	Standartenführer
Lieutenant Colonel	Oberstleutnant	Obersturmbannführer
Major	Major	Sturmbannführer
Captain	Hauptmann	Hauptsturmführer
First Lieutenant	Oberleutnant	Obersturmführer
Second Lieutenant	Leutnant	Untersturmführer

Source: Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1954), 550.

APPENDIX E

EXAMPLES OF ULTRA MESSAGES

This appendix is provided for better understanding ULTRA messages, a list of those messages used for this research, and include several example decrypts. All messages in this thesis are typed exactly as they appear on microfilm.

A. There are several features on each message that should be understood:

1. CX / MSS, for example, was a general reference number in the upper left corner of each message issued by Bletchley Park.

2. KO 1444, for example, was the prefix followed by a number listing the sequence of the message. The two series of signals applicable for this study were: BT 1 to BT 9999 issued from 21 December 1944 until 9 April 1945; and KO 1 to KO 2089 issued from 9 April until 15 May 1945.

3. ZZ, for example, represented the priority marking for the message. Priorities ranged from Z, the lowest to ZZZZZ, the highest. A message that used ZZZZZ would not necessarily be the most crucial piece of intelligence, rather, it might have been the most perishable, such as weather data.

4. Below the message number and priority were the addresses for that particular message, for example, SH. Several addresses important for this research are: SH was Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force; SHA was Major General Strong at SHAEF G-2; AG was Headquarters, 21st Army Group; WM was Headquarters, 12th Army Group; and LF was Headquarters, 6th Army Group.

5. JB / RFB / RH, for example, in the bottom left corner were the initials of those individuals who processed the message.

6. 031309Z/5/45, for example, was the Date/Time Group (DTG) of origin from Bletchley Park and was shown in the bottom right corner of the message. A multiple part message had different origins times reflected on each of its message parts.

7. The body of the message sometimes included '£' which indicated the repetition of a word. This technique was adopted to ensure proper identification of names, locations, and important words.

8. After listing a location in the text of the message an alphanumeric symbol was used that corresponded to the location on an overleaf map. For example, the location for Strub was listed as 'EASY SIX SEVEN NINE EIGHT'.

9. Single letters and numbers used in the body of the message were always spelled out. For instance: A, B, C, D, F, J, K, L, N, S, T, and X appear as Able, Baker, Charlie, Dog, Fox, Jig, King, Love, Nan, Sugar, Tare, and X-ray.

10. Phrases in single parenthesis in the text, for example, '(FAIR INDICATIONS OKH £ OKH)' reproduced agreed conventions that attempted to clarify uncertainty in the text. The word 'COMMENT' such as, '(COMMENT VERY SMALL DETAIL MISSING)' was used to separate a summarized translation of the original German message from notes provided by Bletchley Park. It was sometimes necessary for the translators and analysts at Bletchley Park to use German words for the sake of clarity, for example, *abteilung* meaning section or detachment.

B. The list of ULTRA messages pertaining to the National Redoubt is including to assist future researchers in their study. The date, ULTRA message number, and remarks about that particular message are provided:

Date	Message	Remarks
11 February 1945	BT 5959	OKL-Signals site construction in Wasserburg
3 March 1945	BT 6180	Recon Thuringen; accomodation for 250 persons
20 March 1945	BT 7796	Thuringen is staging area; use of cover-name Olga
23 March 1945	BT 8059	Transfer of Ersatz units (pure German units)
25 March 1945	BT 8308	SS Bn transferred to Lauterberg am Harz (Weimar)
26 March 1945	BT 8465	Olga is Ohrdruf
27 March 1945	BT 8569	Locations of OKW staff echelons A, B, and C; OKL in place and reached via Alpen exchange
29 March 1945	BT 8788	OKL operations staff at Flak Barracks at Weimar
4 April 1945	BT 9458	Immediately evacuate Wildflicken to Traunstein
8 April 1945	BT 9843	Himmler's personal staff transferred to Salzburg
8 April 1945	BT 9871	OKL secret documents office to Salzburg
10 April 1945	KO 69	Olga rear detach is Roon
15 April 1945	KO 495	SS Signal regiment moving; currently at Rosenheim
19 April 1945	KO 796	Roon is Reichenhall; Hagen is Hallein; Susanne is Salzburg
20 April 1945	KO 887	Kesselring orders QM officers to Traunstein
22 April 1945	KO 1078	OKL main body department 1 at Berchtesgaden departments 2 and 3 at Wasserburg
22 April 1945	KO 1106	Mountain Ersatz units located at Berchtesgaden Himmler reserves units for Salzburg defense area
24 April 1945	KO 1246	OKH-West communications center at Ruchbach
25 April 1945	KO 1361	Susanne is same location as Alpen OKH battle headquarters at Bad Reichenhall

25 April 1945	KO 1373	Do not send Hitler's aircraft to Berlin
25 April 1945	KO 1380	American tanks threaten displacement route - Cham
25 April 1945	KO 1381	Von Hengl can be reached through Alpen exchange
26 April 1945	KO 1444	Hitler's 25 April directive reorganizing OKW; Winter named commander, OKW Opns South
27 April 1945	KO 1509	Kesselring's headquarters at Strub
27 April 1945	KO 1558	Fight Russians first but no transfer from west to east
29 April 1945	KO 1695	CINCs can make independent decisions as required
29 April 1945	KO 1698	Locations of many SS units
30 April 1945	KO 1750	Himmler orders Kaltenbrunner to transfer wireless transmitter south from Bad Tölz
30 April 1945	KO 1776	OKH Directorate of Signals near Bad Reichenhall
1 May 1945	KO 1814	Food being moved into Alpenfestung
1 May 1945	KO 1829	Austrian towns made available for Headquarters
2 May 1945	KO 1852	Himmler orders Berger to collect SS units "Defend entrance to the Alps for me"
2 May 1945	KO 1856	Fighting near Munich will cause a loss of troops intended for the front line of the Alpine fortress
2 May 1945	KO 1858	Winter appoints Jaschke defend north of Salzburg
2 May 1945	KO 1866	Kesselring message concerning state of forces
2 May 1945	KO 1879	SS in mountains of Tyrol
3 May 1945	KO 1886	Army had rations & ammunition for only 10 days
3 May 1945	KO 1914	Southern front of Alpine Fortress was open
3 May 1945	KO 1932	Use charges from bridges for developing defenses of the inner Alpine Fortress
3 May 1945	KO 1944	Ammunition situation: duration of 4-5 days
3 May 1945	KO 1951	Jaschke's defensive measures vic Reutte
4 May 1945	KO 1971	Jaschke's defensive measures vic Bregenz
5 May 1945	KO 2030	OKW staff planning to move to Zell am See
6 May 1945	KO 2059	Battle Headquarters CINC West to Alm
6 May 1945	KO 2070	Jaschke relieved on 2 May, von Hengl in charge

C. Several example ULTRA messages are provided that concern the displacement of German headquarters elements, thus, the preconception of a National Redoubt.

REF. CX / MSS / T.532 / 1   KO 1509

ZZ

KO 1509 £ *189* 1509

RJ 39 £ 39 CO 22 £ 22 PK 19 £ 19

CR ONA ON QXA QX YKA YK UC AEA ZE FZ GU 88 £ 88 TGA TG 19

£ 19 WM 78 £ 78 NX 79 £ 79 LF 82 £ 82 DL 94 £ 94 STR 60 £

60 STA 89 £ 89 ST 84 £ 84 XF 3 £ 3 SHR 61 £ 61 FOR WILD,

SH 79 £ 79

WA 523 £523   %

WINTER £ WINTER RECOMMENDED TO JODL £ JODL ON TWENTYFOURTH

THAT KESSELRING £ KESSELRING BE APPOINTED CHARLIE IN

CHARLIE SOUTH IMMEDIATELY WITH HEADQUARTERS AT STRUB £

STRUB EASY SIX SEVEN NINE EIGHT, SINGLE CURRENT DECISIONS

WERE NECESSARY WHICH EXCEEDED WINTER'S £ WINTER'S

COMPETENCE AS COMMANDER, AFTER GENERAL SURVEY OF

SITUATION IN SOUTH WINTER £ WINTER HAD FORMED UNIFIED

OPERATIONS ABTEILUNG UNDER OBERST IGEM GEORGE THILO £

THILO. COMMENT, THILO £ THILO SIGNED FOR OPERATIONS

ABTEILUNG BAKER AT STRUB £ STRUB ON TWENTYTHIRD, KO £ KO

ONE THREE EIGHT NOUGHT, ONLY TO PK £ PK, TG £ TG, WM £ WM,

NX £ NX, LF £ LF, STR £ STR, STA £ STA, ST £ ST, SN £ SN

GDAB / GAZ / JEM   270756Z / 4 / 45

Fig. 13. KO 1509, DTG: 270756Z April 1945. The OKW Operations Staff Echelon B was located at Strub, near Berchtesgaden, and had been operational since 23 April. Additionally, Winter recommended that Kesselring be appointed as *Oberbefehlshaber Süd*, Commander in Chief, South. Source: British Public Records Office, *ULTRA Documents* (New York: Clearwater Publishing Company, Inc., 1978).

Fig. 14. KO 1695, DTG: 292309Z April 1945. OKW Operations Staff "B" under General Winter would be notified of any Army Group movements so that he could obtain Hitler's approval. Independent decisions by commanders in chief might be required but would be followed by detailed reasons to Winter for the decisions. Source: British Public Records Office, *ULTRA Documents* (New York: Clearwater Publishing Company, Inc., 1978).

```
REF:  CX / MSS / T535 /                         KO  1750
T. 534 / 29



KO  1750  £  1750

SB  60  £  60  PK  44  £  44

ZE  FZ  WM  20  £  20  NX  95  £  59  LF  65  £  65  SH  93  £  93

WA  713  £  713  %


SNIPPETS COLON ABLE.  AT NOUGHT ONE HOURS TWENTYEIGHTH

WIRELESS TRANSMITTING CENTRE SOUTH AT GREILING £ GREILING

YOKE NINE ONE.  BAKER.  HIMMLER £ HIMMLER INSTRUCTED

OBERGRUPPENFUEHRER KALTENBRUNNER £ KALTENBRUNNER ON

TWENTYNINTH TO ORDER TRANSFER OF WIRELESS TRANSMITTING

CENTRE SOUTH TO TIROL £ TIROL IF SITUATION DEMANDED.

CHARLIE. SUGAR SUGAR AUTHORITY MUNICH £ MUNICH ON TWENTYNINTH

ORDERED TO DEFEND UNSPECIFIED WIRELESS STATION AGAINST ALL

ATTEMPTS TO SEIZE IT, QUOTE IF NECESSARY BY FORCE OF ARMS

UNQUOTE.  STATION HAD, BY ORDER CHALIE IN CHARLIE  HOME ARMY

A VITAL PART TO PLAY IN CONDUCT OF WAR


JB / RFB / RH                              301539Z / 4 / 45
```

Fig. 15. KO 1750, DTG: 301539Z April 1945. Himmler ordered Kaltenbrunner to transfer a wireless transmitting station from Greiling, near Bad Tölz, to the south so as not to lose the asset. This message noted that this particular wireless station would play a vital role in the conduct of the war. Source: British Public Records Office, *ULTRA Documents* (New York: Clearwater Publishing Company, Inc., 1978).

Ref: GX / MSS / T533 / 61   KO 1776

ZZ

KO 1776 £ 1776

SB 77 £ 77 PK 63 £ 63

SG 13 £ 13 WM 28 £ 28 NK 7 £ 7 LF 76 £ 76 SH 14 £ 14

WA 732 £ 732 %

ACCORDING (FAIR INDICATIONS OKH £ OKH) ONE SIX HOURS

TWENTYNINTH, WIRELESS CENTRE SOUTH AT BAD REICHENHALL £

BAD REICHENHALL ZEBRA EIGHT ONE, DITTO NORTH AT PLOEN £

PLOEN NAN SEVEN TWO

NB / NYD / LBS   302329Z / 4 / 45

Fig. 16. KO 1776, DTG: 302329Z April 1945. By 1600 hours on 29 April, two wireless stations were reported as operational: one at Bad Reichenhall near Berchtesgaden, and the other at Plön near Kiel. Source: British Public Records Office, *ULTRA Documents* (New York: Clearwater Publishing Company, Inc., 1978).

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    Group, 28 April 1945. CARL, N-14822.

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    Army Group, 6 March 1945.

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