

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No. 785015

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G-2 ESTIMATE OF EUROPEAN SITUATION  
SEPT. 1943

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9 Sep

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From: HQ 7 Army

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 : Auth: CG, Seventh Army :  
 : Init: :  
 : Date: 9 September 1943 :  
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Hq. Seventh Army  
 APO 758, US Army  
 9 September 1943

G-2 ESTIMATE OF EUROPEAN SITUATION  
 (At the Time of Italian Surrender)

No. 1

1. SUMMARY OF ENEMY SITUATION.a. Italian.

The collapse of the Italian forces in SICILY, from which but 30,000 of an original 216,000 succeeded in being evacuated, decreased considerably the combat effectiveness of the Italian Army. The military value of the evacuated troops is a negligible quantity pending re-formation, re-training, and re-equipment. With the return from Southern FRANCE to Northern ITALY of the 48 Taro Division, 58 Legnano Division, and the 132d Armored Division Ariete (now being re-formed); together with the recently revived divisions of the Italian Eighth Army, previously decimated in RUSSIA (Tridentina, Giulia, Sforzesca, Basiglio, Colero, Turino, Ravenna, Corsoria), the estimated strength of the Italian Army in Northern ITALY at the time of surrender was 12 divisions, plus an Alpino Group (see attach overprinted map). In Southern ITALY and the ROME area, the Italian forces are believed to have consisted of six field divisions, eight coastal divisions, and two coastal brigades. In CORSIKA and SARDINIA, there were an estimated five field divisions, one parachute division, and three coastal divisions. An estimated 33 divisions in the Balkans, the majority of which were concentrated in the North and West, complete the general picture of Italian strength at the time of surrender. This amounts to a total of 58 field divisions and 14 coastal divisions.

b. German.

The reputed strength of the German Army is 326 divisions, not including several now in process of being re-formed. The Russian front absorbs 197 divisions, of which 7 are in FINLAND. GERMANY and the Eastern Protectorate hold 42 divisions; FRANCE 27 divisions, the Balkans 15 divisions, POLAND 13 divisions, NORWAY 11 divisions, DENMARK 4 divisions, BELGIUM 4 divisions, HOLLAND 3 divisions, and ITALY 17 divisions. Of those in ITALY, 8 have been definitely identified.

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of which four are known to be understrength. The remaining 9 German divisions are believed to be in Northern ITALY, distributed as shown on the accompanying map. CORSICA and SARDINIA were under the "protection" of the 90 Light Division, the S.S. Brigade Reichsfuehrer, and one Sturm Brigade. The previously identified "Division Sardinia" is believed to have been re-named the 90 Light Division.

a. Terrain and Weather as They Affect the Army.

(1) Terrain.

On the Russian front, the Don River line, extended, has been breached throughout most of its length, and the German forces are grudgingly giving ground under continuous Russian pressure in the direction of the almost continuous river line formed by the Dniopor and Dvina Rivers. If this line is breached, no natural obstacles to further Russian advances exist short of the Oder - Vistula line or the line of the Dniester and Vistula Rivers. Behind this line, the Germans have a formidable natural line formed by the Oder River on the North and the Carpathian Mountains in the South. In SCANDINAVIA, the forbidding terrain strongly favors the German defender. In the Low Countries and FRANCE, elaborate and formidable defensive works compensate for the lack of terrain obstacles. The inner defense of South GERMANY is provided by the well nigh impassable Alps. The Italian boot itself is divided into two major compartments by the APPENINE MOUNTAINS. While the rugged contours of the Balkan Peninsula favor defensive operations, the avenues of approach formed by the Danube and its tributaries run generally Northwest and Southeast and lead straight into the heart of GERMANY.

(2) Weather.

At the time of the Italian surrender, the summer season, which normally favors offensive operations, was already on the wane. On the Russian front, signs of approaching winter appear in the North in late October, while in the South, winter rules supreme by mid-December. In the meantime, the mud resulting from autumn rains impedes tactical operations for both friend and foe. In SCANDINAVIA, FRANCE, and the Low Countries, the long nights and frequent fogs of winter hinder air activity and thereby favor defensive operations. In ITALY and the Balkans, fall and winter rains, and upland snows, combine with mountain roads to place a heavy handicap on attacking troops. While weather factors in prospect at this time generally present progressive advantages for European defensive operations, this advantage is counteracted in part by the aptitude of the Russians for winter fighting and the effect on internal GERMANY produced by the winter suffering which will come as a result of the devastating effects of the Allied bombing campaign.

2. CONCLUSIONS.

a. Potential Developments (G-2 leads with his chin).

(1) On the Russian front, the first successful Red summer offensive indicates an Allied solution to the formidable Russian supply problem to the extent:



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of insuring logistic support, not only for the offensive now in progress, but for the customary large-scale winter offensive as well. Conditions produced by the Italian surrender preclude any material reinforcement of GERMANY'S Eastern forces and make probable continued withdrawal to shorter and stronger lines.

(2) In SCANDINAVIA, there are growing signs of war-weariness in FINLAND, increasing resistance to the conqueror in NORWAY and DENMARK, and increasingly bold resistance to German pressure in SWEDEN. The 22 German divisions scattered throughout SCANDINAVIA are spread too thinly, in the face of these difficulties, to permit material withdrawals for reinforcement of either the Russian or Southern fronts. An Allied offensive in Northern SCANDINAVIA at this season would encounter disadvantages of weather, as well as terrain, within less than six weeks; but, if successful, might knock FINLAND out of the war and convert Swedish sympathy into material assistance to the Allied cause. Such a result would have a far-reaching effect on the German war effort through a severance of her munitions life-line to Swedish iron mines.

(3) The growing threat of an Allied Britain-based invasion in the North-west not only fixes coastal defense forces and tactical reserves but places potential obligations on the Central strategic reserve of some 55 divisions in GERMANY and POLAND. In the South of FRANCE, coastal defense units face not only the possibility of amphibious invasion but may be subject to levies for the reinforcement of Northern ITALY should the 12 Italian divisions in that area effectively resist German efforts to disarm them, or force a diversion of German strength into occupational, supply, and administrative activities formerly performed by Italian troops.

(4) At the time of the Italian collapse, it is reasonable to presume a withdrawal of German forces from Southern ITALY under the cover of rear guard action for the probable purpose of concentrating on a defensive line south of ROME would be undertaken considering logistics and Allied air interference. It is doubtful if the number, strength, or morale of Italian forces in Central and Southern ITALY at this time are such as to offer any material resistance to German efforts to disarm them, or to German troop movements. That German efforts at Italian disarmament are to be expected may be deduced not only from the necessity of eliminating potential armed resistance in the German rear, but also from the probable desire to recover such German materiel and supplies as may have been furnished to the Italian forces. This is especially significant in the light of German logistical dislocation produced by the Allied bombing of Italian communication facilities. It is probable that passive resistance or non-cooperation by Italian communication and transport workers may prove a more serious handicap to German operations than such resistance as may be offered by Italian military personnel in this region. In any case, it seems apparent that the German policy of fighting her defensive battles as far away as possible from her own borders will dictate a determined defense initially of the ROME area, and later in front of the heights protecting the Lombardy plain, including the valley of the Po.

(5) The number and distribution of Italian units in the Balkans presents the greatest promise of successful resistance to German disarmament of Italian

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forces in Axis controlled territory. The preponderance of Italian units in ALBANIA, YUGOSLAVIA, and SACROMIA; and the effective resistance which has been maintained by the Mihailovich irregulars, present an intriguing prospect of an Italian-Yugoslav bridgehead on the Adriatic, which might be held against the Germans pending the arrival of Allied reinforcements and supplies. This would be a menace to the Axis; even if carried out by nothing but passive action.

(6) In the Western Balkans, while TURKEY maintains a position of neutrality, the growing prestige of Allied arms and probable strong Russian influence in TURKEY present a number of hypothetical possibilities favorable to the Allies. Even without any positive assistance from TURKEY, the virtually complete domination of the Mediterranean, resulting from the elimination of the Italian Navy as an enemy factor, exposes the entire Aegean basin to amphibious Allied attack. Should such a development occur, and an Allied offensive from an Adriatic bridgehead develop, they might well converge in the lower Danube Valley and serve as the Southern jaw of huge pincers, with the Northern jaw supplied by the continued Russian advance along the Black Sea. Such a development would present a serious threat by powerful forces to GERMANY itself by way of the Danube and tributary valleys. Such a possibility would seem to presage increased German resistance on the South Russian front and an avoidance of further commitments of strategic reserves until the situation along the Adriatic, in the Aegean, and in FRANCE takes more definite form.

b. The foregoing picture of the European situation and potential developments deduced therefrom is too vast in scope and involves too many variable, intangible, and unknown factors to warrant any designation of either favored capabilities or likely probabilities. This estimate is presented for such value as it may have in tracing the bolder outlines of the "Big Picture" and as seen by this office considering limited information at hand.

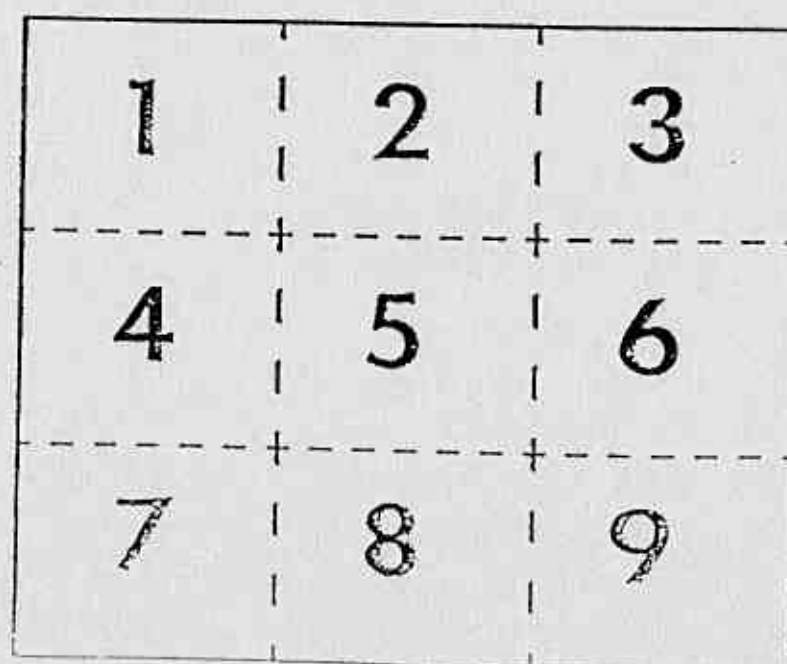
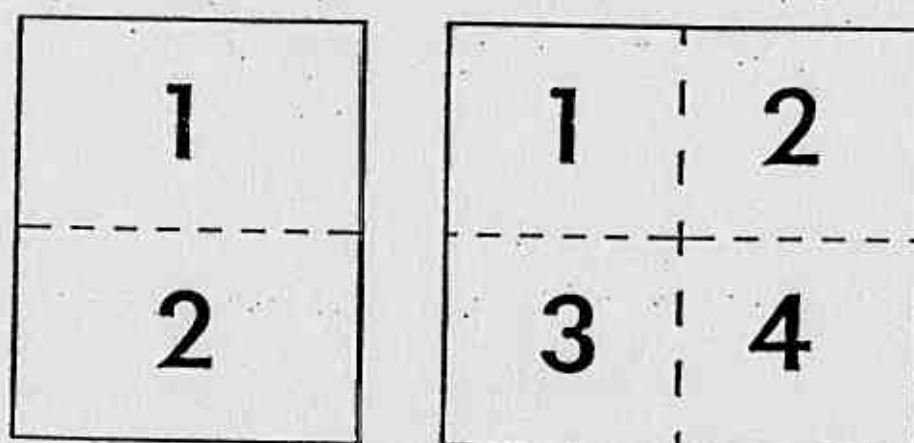
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MAPS AND CHARTS TOO LARGE TO FILM  
ON ONE EXPOSURE ARE FILMED CLOCKWISE  
BEGINNING IN THE UPPER LEFT CORNER,  
LEFT TO RIGHT, AND TOP TO BOTTOM.

SEE DIAGRAMS BELOW.



# HEADQUARTERS SEVENTH ARMY ESTIMATE EUROPEAN SITUATION AT TIME OF ITALIAN SURRENDER

9 SEPT. 1943

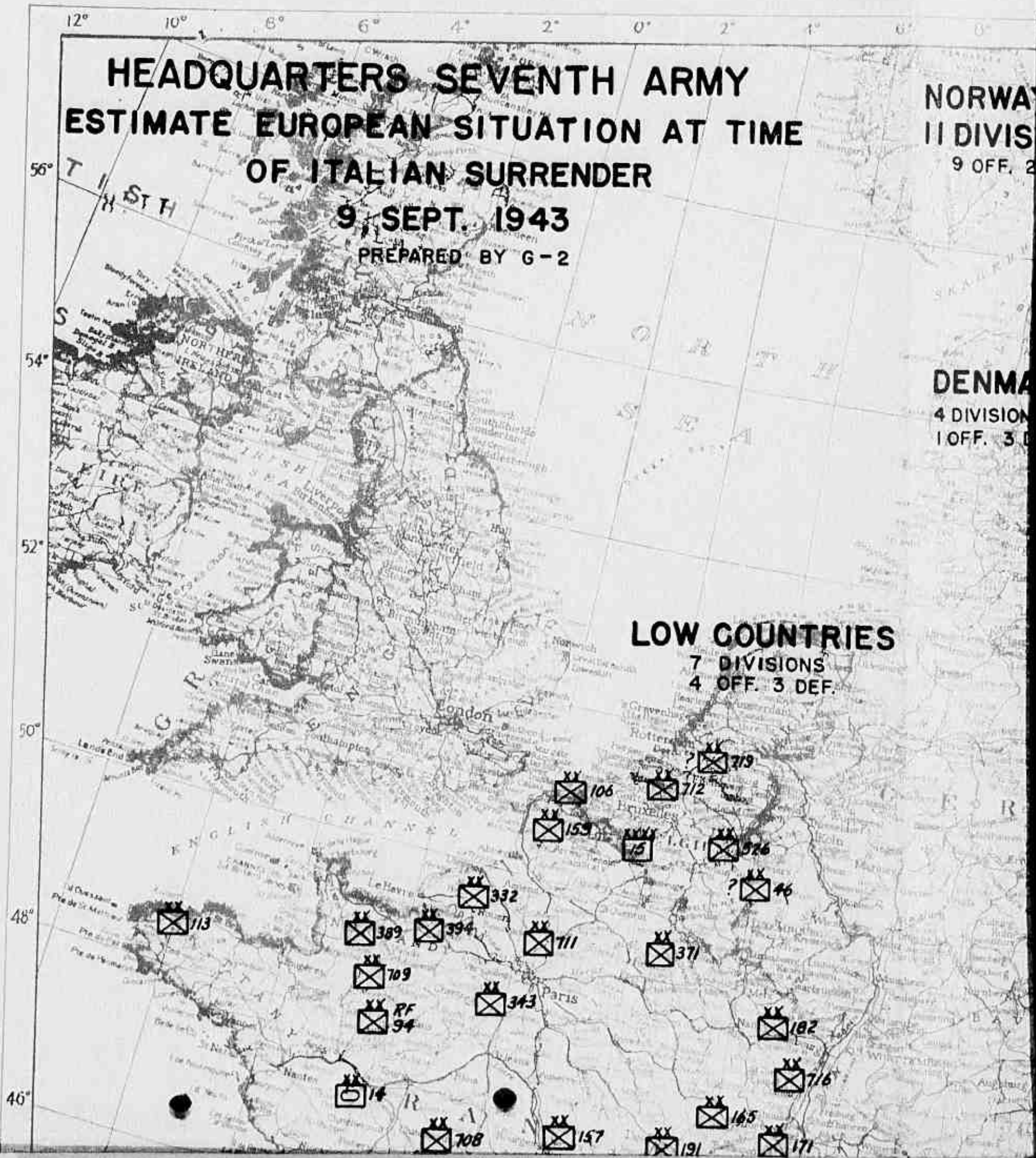
PREPARED BY G-2

NORWAY  
II DIVISION  
9 OFF. 2

DENMARK  
4 DIVISION  
1 OFF. 3

## LOW COUNTRIES

7 DIVISIONS  
4 OFF. 3 DEF.





**SECRET****NORWAY**  
**11 DIVISIONS**

9 OFF. 2 DEF.

**DIETL**  
**20 DIVISIONS****KÜCHLER**  
**29 DIVISIONS****DENMARK**

4 DIVISIONS

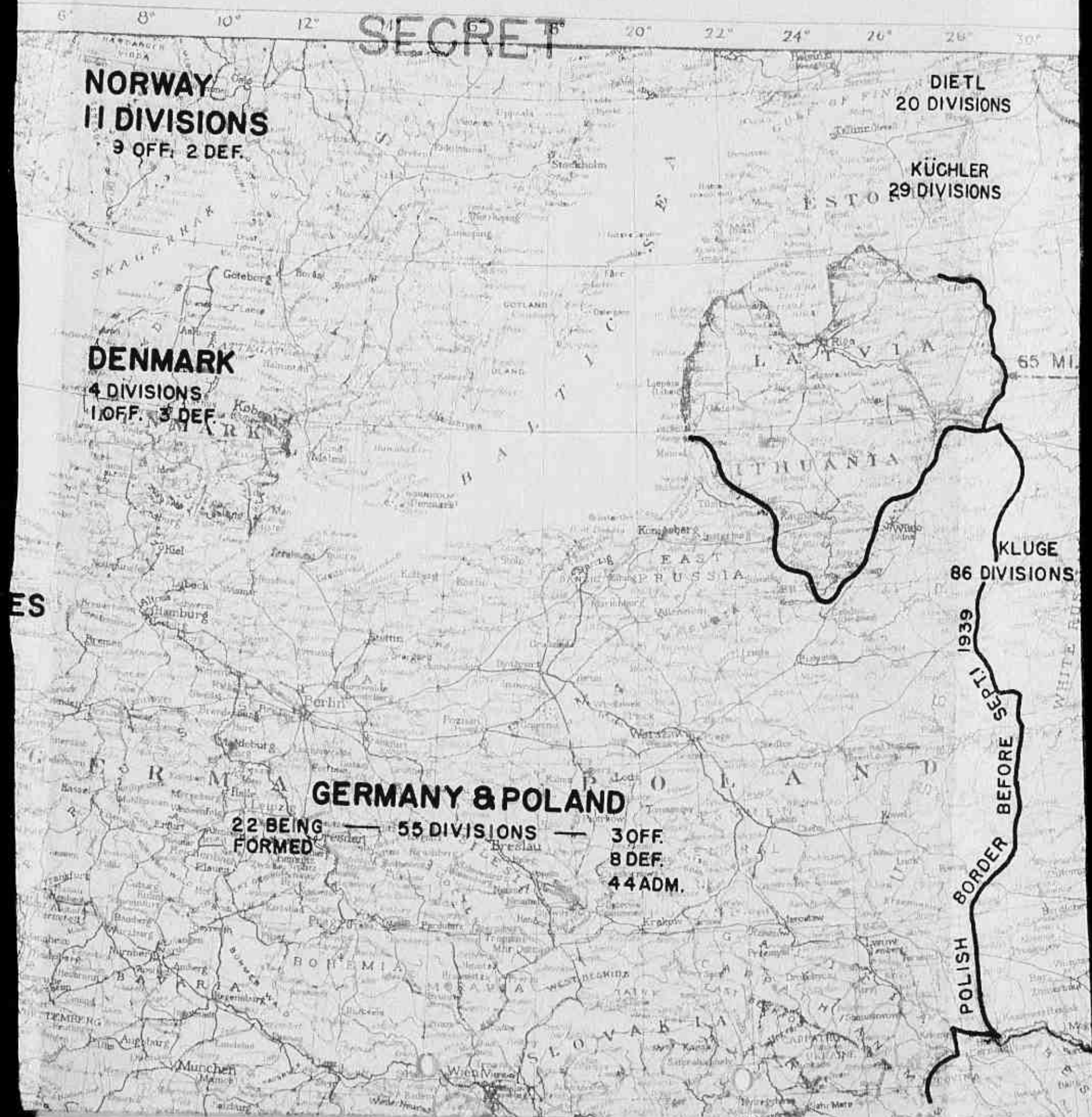
1 OFF. 3 DEF.

**GERMANY & POLAND**22 BEING  
FORMED

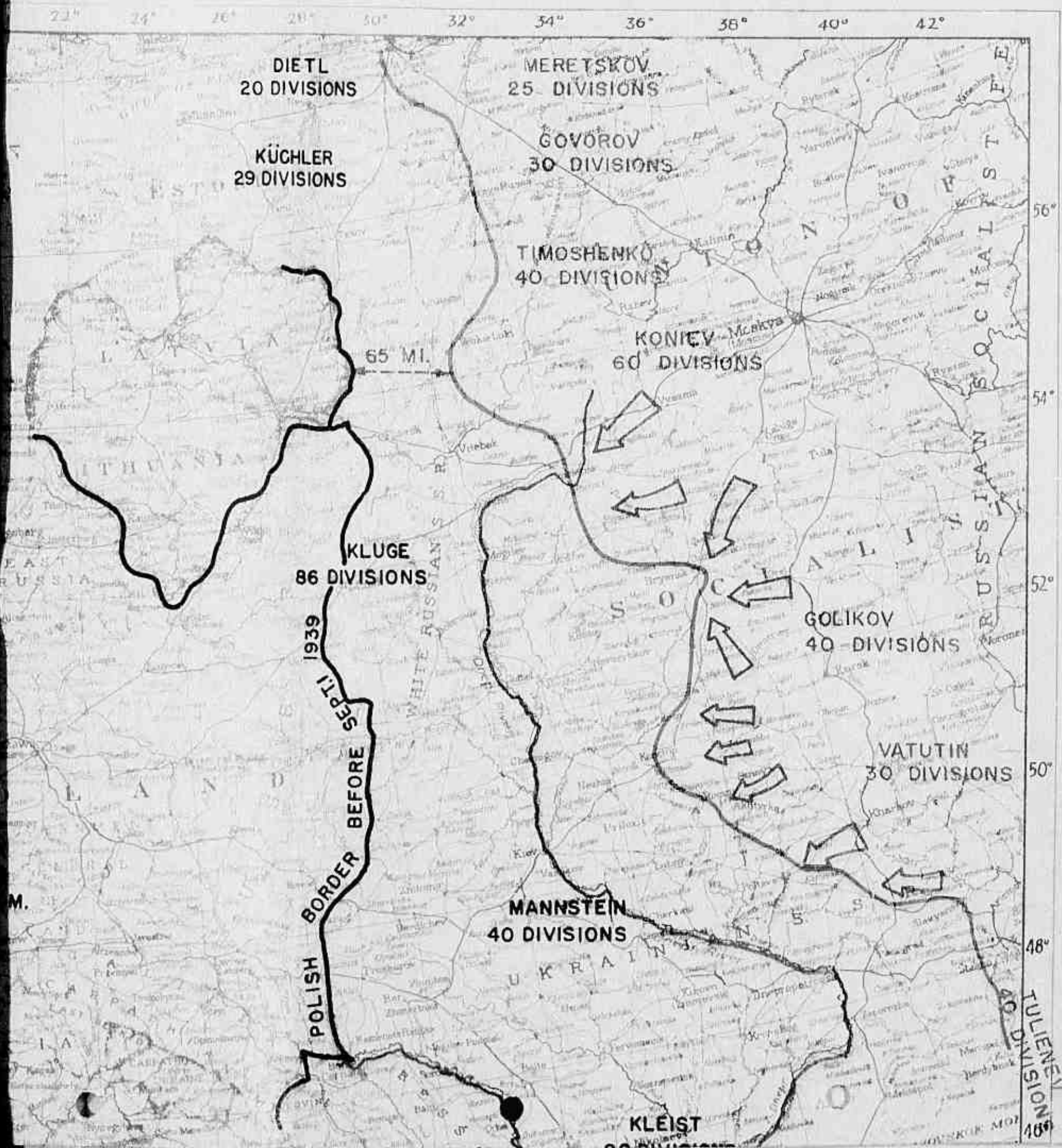
55 DIVISIONS

3 OFF.  
8 DEF.  
44 ADM.**KLUGE**  
**86 DIVISIONS**

POLISH BORDER BEFORE SEPT 1 1939



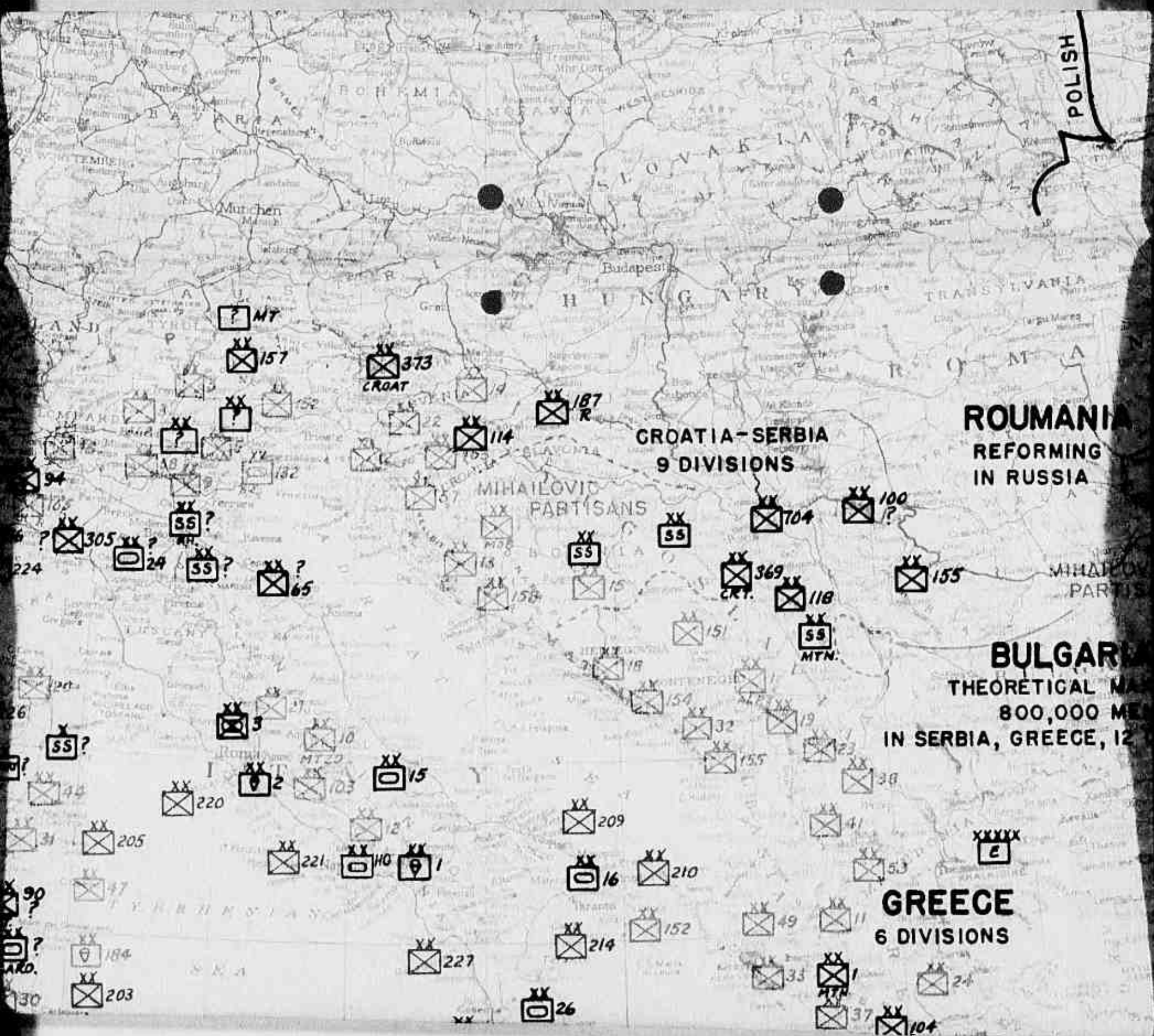






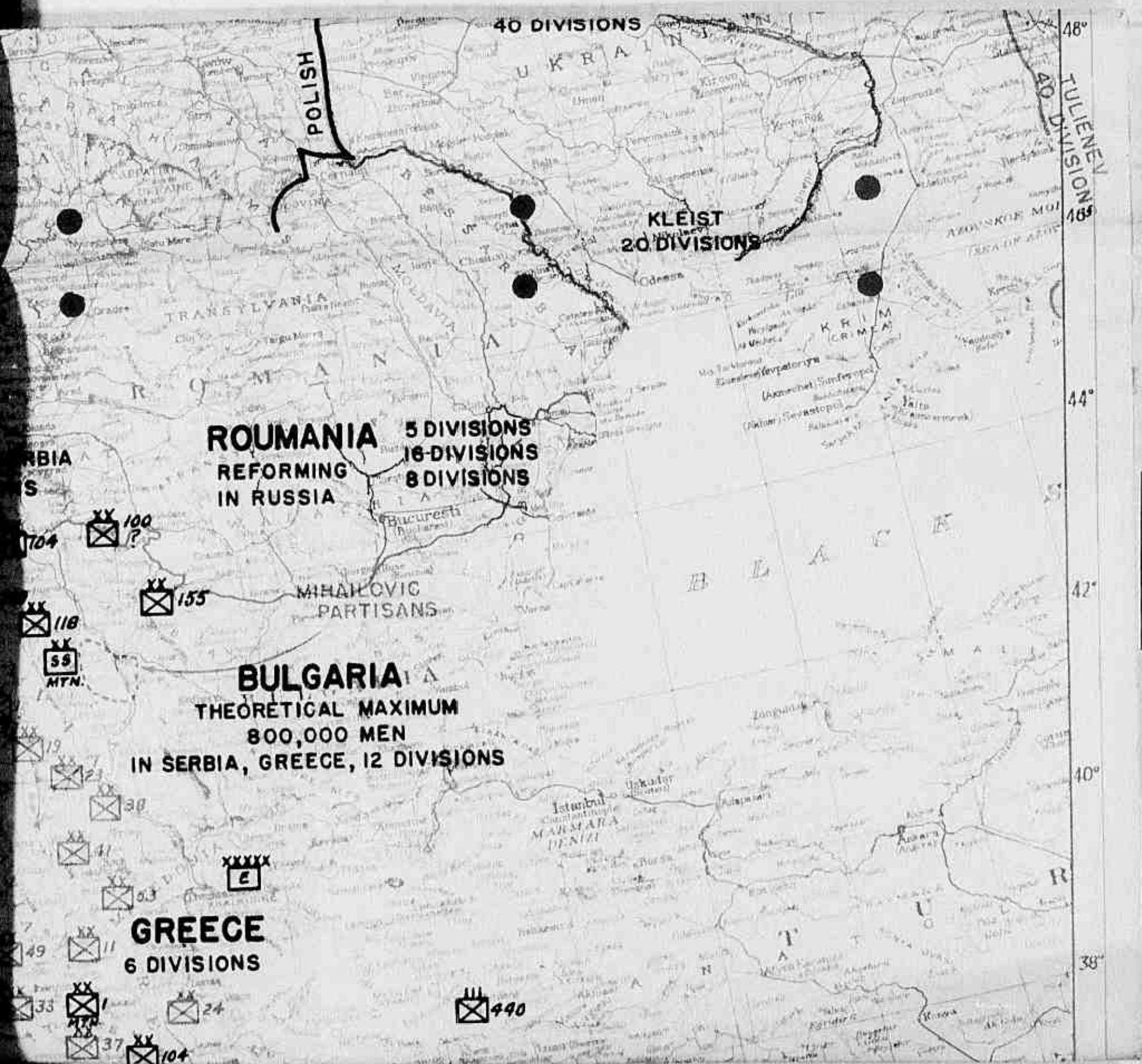


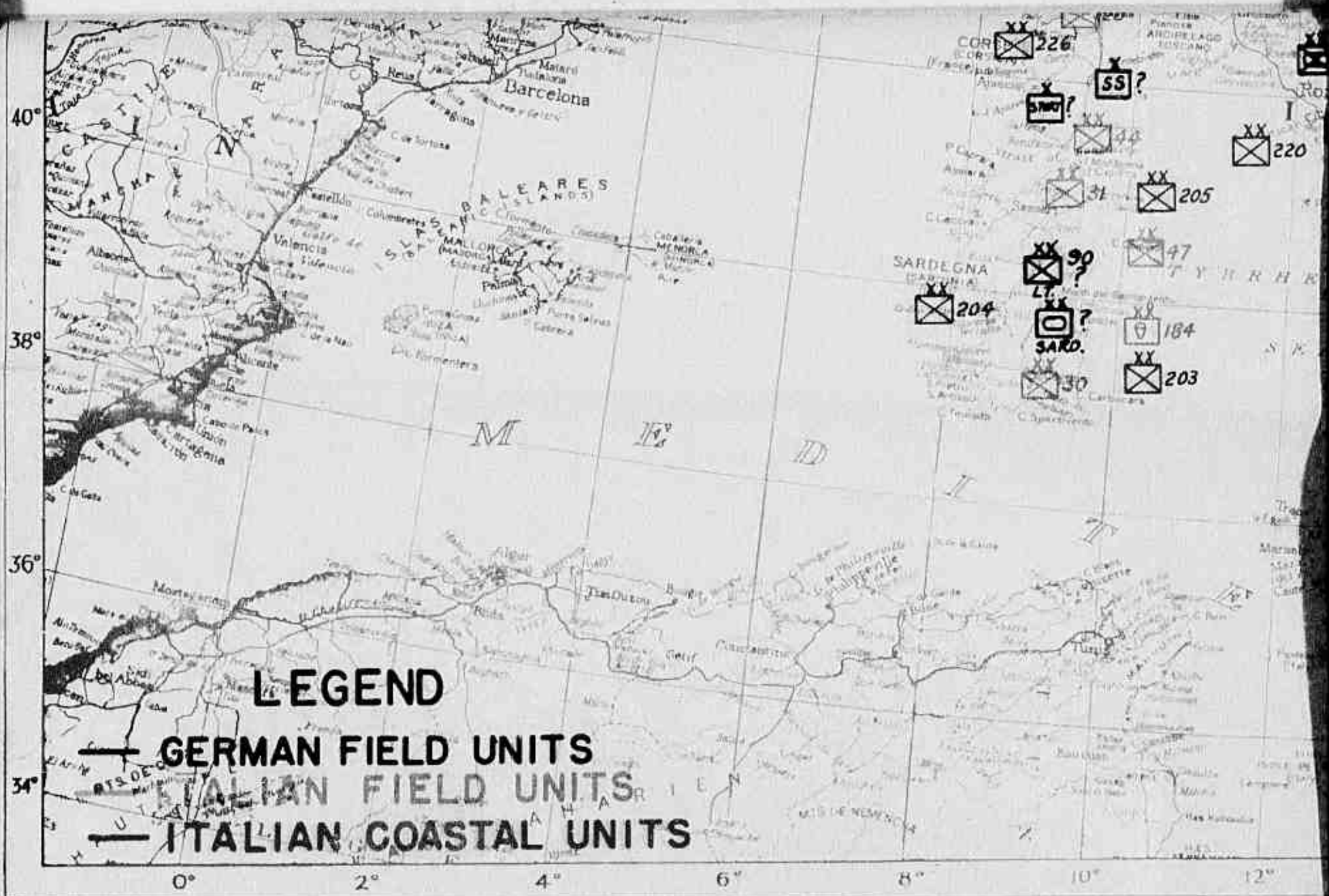
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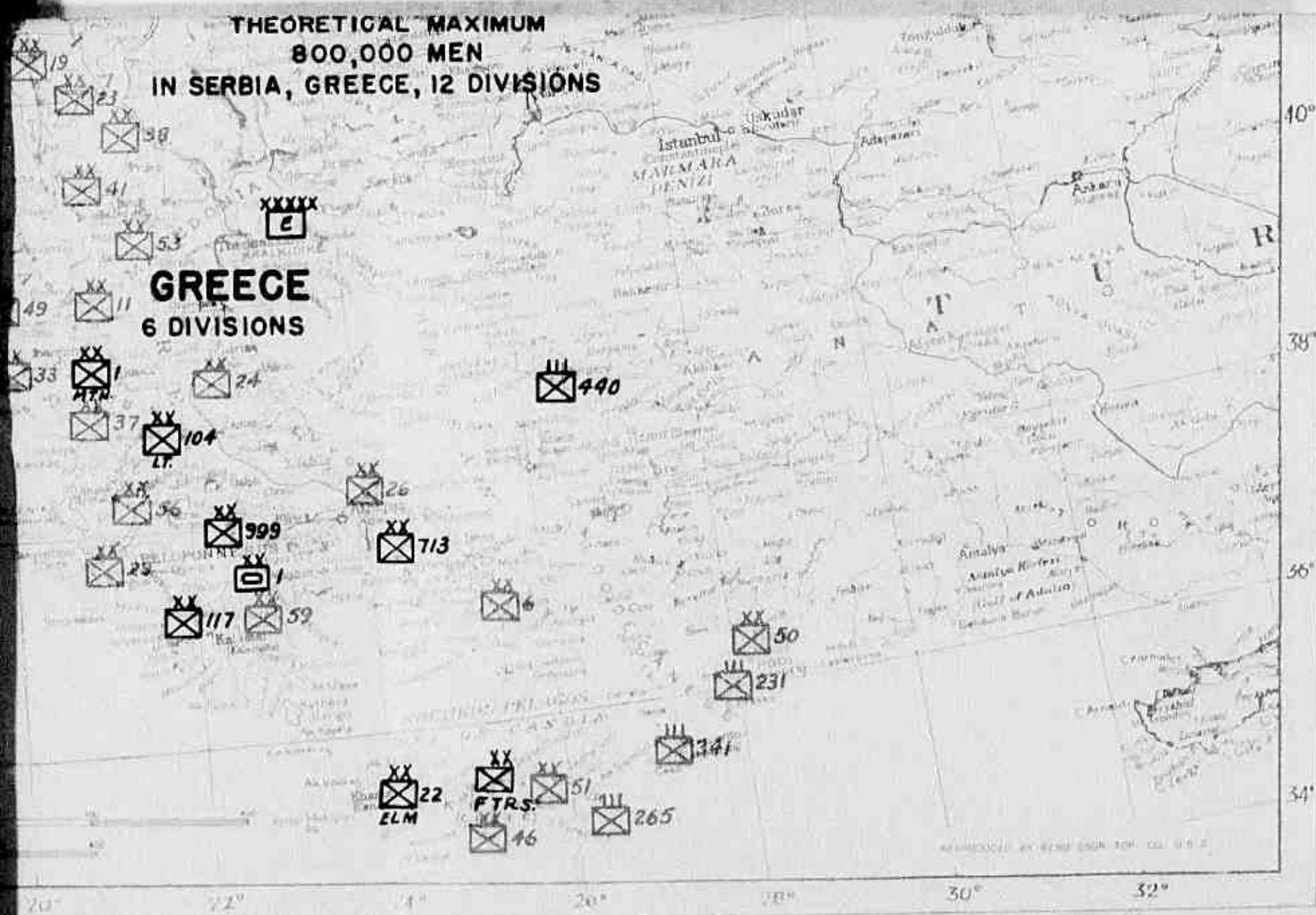




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