

# **THE BATTLE OF BERLIN**

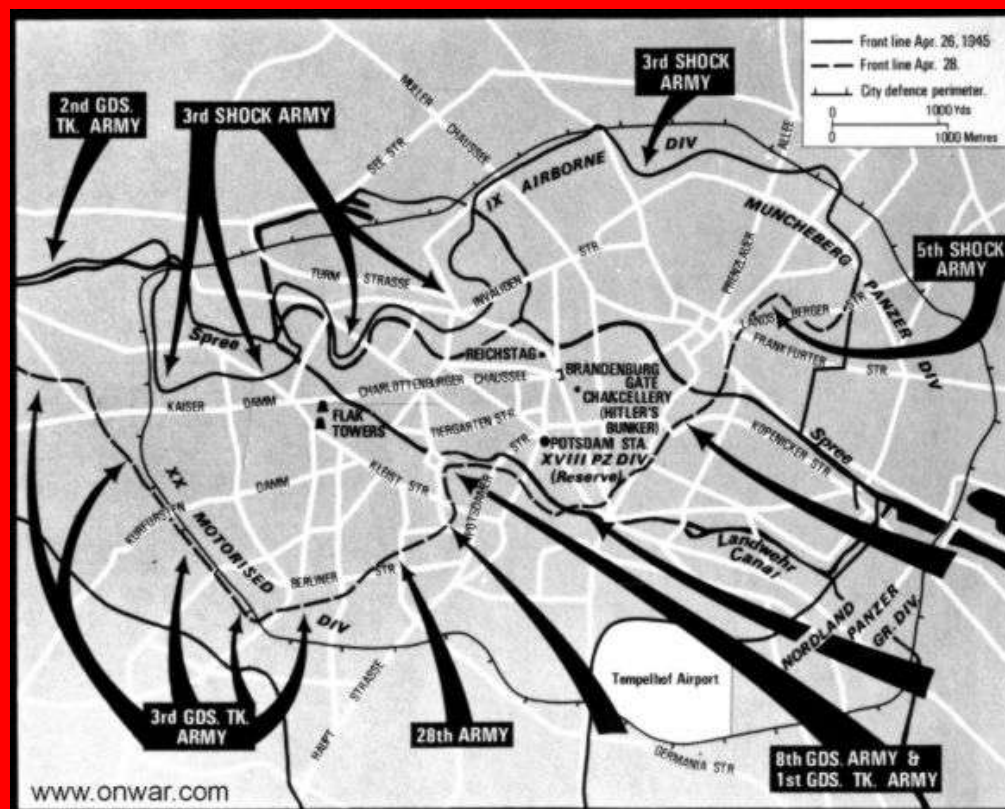
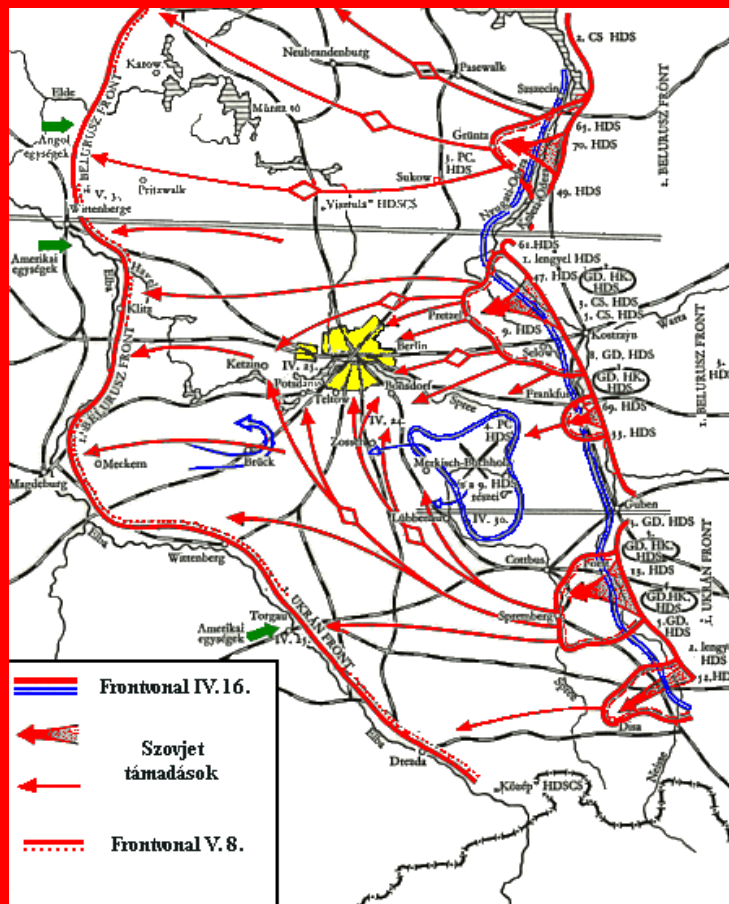
## **APRIL 16, 1945-MAY 8, 1945**



# **HOW THE BATTLE BEGAN**

- **BY 1944 THE GERMANS FOUND THEMSELVES ON THE DEFENSIVE DUE TO THE SUCCESS OF THE D-DAY LANDINGS AND REPEATED LOSSES IN OPERATION BARBAROSSA.**
- **BY 1945, THE BRITISH, AMERICANS, AND RUSSIANS WERE ALL CLOSING IN ON GERMANY.**
- **WITHIN THE FIRST MONTHS OF THE YEAR, THE RUSSIAN MILITARY WAS WITHIN 100 MILES OF BERLIN.**
- **IN APRIL, RUSSIAN FORCES WERE CLOSING IN ON THE GERMAN CAPITAL. WITH NO WHERE TO GO, HITLER DESIGNATED BERLIN AS A FORTRESS TO BE DEFENDED.**

# THE BATTLEFIELD



# CREATING A PATH TO BERLIN

## THE VISTULA OFFENSIVE

- **BEGAN WITH MARSHALL KONEV'S 1<sup>ST</sup> UKRAINIAN FRONT**
- **ATTACK DIRECTED PRIMARILY AT 10 MILE DEEP GERMAN DEFENSIVE ZONE**
- **2 PANZER AND 2 MOTORIZED DIVISIONS**
- **THE ARTILLERY BARRAGE BEGAN AT 0500, ON JANUARY 12, 1945**
- **ON JANUARY 25 KONEV REACHED THE RIVER ODER**
- **FURTHER NORTH, SOVIETS ATTACKED, BUT NOT AS SUCCESSFUL**
- **IN THE CENTER, GENERAL ZUKOV ATTACKED, WITHIN 3 DAYS WARSAW WAS TAKEN**
- **GERMAN FRONT ALMOST TAKEN ON THE EAST**
- **2<sup>ND</sup> BELLORUSSIAN FRONT ALREADY ON THE RIVER ODER, 40 MILES FROM BERLIN**

- **AS ALL OF THIS OCCURS, HITLER IS HIDDEN IN BUNKER UNDER BERLIN**
- **HE IS NOT WELL BRIEFED IN THE DIRENESS OF THE GERMAN SITUATION**
- **THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE SLOWS TO ALLOW FOR REPLENISHMENT**
- **FUEL SITUATION IS CRITICAL**
- **DISCIPLINE IN REAR ECHELON AREAS IS GONE, RAPE AND PLUNDER IN CONQUERED AREAS**



- **DESPITE LUFTWAFFE ATTACKS, THE RUSSIAN FORCES ADVANCE TO THE ODER**
- **GENERAL ZUKOV STRUCK TO THE NORTH ON MARCH 4**
- **HE WENT DEEP INTO POMERANIA, DANZIG WAS TAKEN, AND LAST GERMAN POCKETS OF RESISTANCE WERE TAKEN IN THE EAST**
- **IN THE SOUTH, MARSHALL KONEV'S 1<sup>ST</sup> UKRAINIAN FRONT LAUNCHED AN OFFENSIVE AND REACHED THE RIVER NEISSE ON FEBRUARY 8**
- **KONEV'S LINE IS VERY CLOSE TO ZUKOV'S LINE, CLOSING BERLIN IN**

# THE REICH DISMANTLES ITSELF

- **AROUND MARCH 19<sup>TH</sup>, HITLER ORDERS GERMANY BE DISMANTLED**
- **RETREATING GERMANS DESTROYED EVERYTHING THAT COULD BE OF USE TO THE SOVIETS**
- **BRIDGES, FACTORIES, RAILWAYS, AND FOOD STORAGES WERE ALL DESTROYED BY THE NAZIS**



On March 19, 1945, to punish defeatist Germans, Hitler ordered the total destruction of what was left of Germany, including anything that was edible, all factories, transportation, and utilities.

Reichminister and armaments chief Albert Speer flew to Berlin on April 23, and reported to Hitler that he and other Nazis had failed to carry out the order. Speer expected to be tried for treason, but Hitler, preoccupied with planning his own death, showed little interest.

German woman carrying a few possessions runs from burning building. Fire started by Nazi saboteur

Seigburg, Germany  
April 13, 1945

# BATTLE OF THE ODER-NEISSE

- EVERY RUSSIAN TANK, GUN, AND SOLDIER RUSHED TO THE ODER-NEISSE FRONT, A STRETCH OF ONLY 250 MILES
- 25 BRIDGES WERE BUILT OVER THE ODER FOR ZUKOV
- STALIN DECIDED TO LET ZUKOV'S FIRST BELORUSSIAN FRONT AND KONEV'S 1<sup>ST</sup> UKRAINIAN FRONT TO RACE FOR BERLIN
- IT WAS NOT ONLY A MATTER OF TERRITORY AND PRESTIGE, BUT EVIDENCE SHOWS STALIN WANTED TO REACH THE GERMAN NUCLEAR CENTER IN BERLIN BEFORE THE ALLIES.
- ZUKOV AND KONEV WERE READY TO DO WHATEVER IT TOOK TO BE FIRST



## **RESISTANCE BETWEEN THE ODER-NEISSE FRONT AND BERLIN**

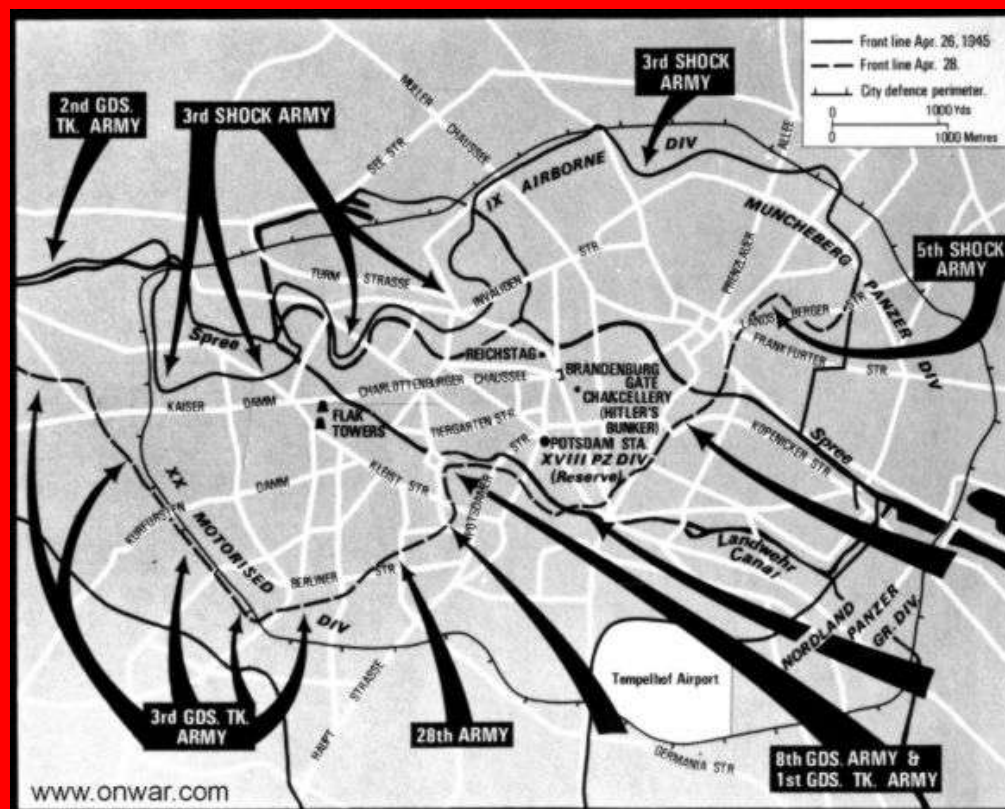
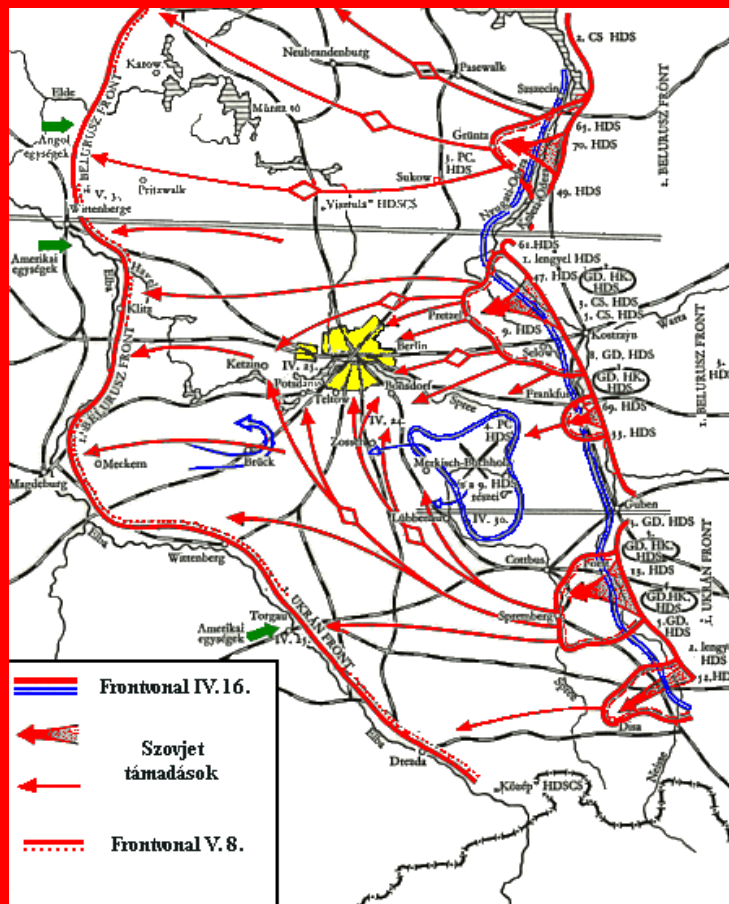
- **1,000,000 GERMAN SOLDIERS BETWEEN THE INVADERS AND BERLIN**
- **NONE OF THE DEFENDERS EXPECTED MERCY**
- **EXPECTING A MASSIVE ATTACK THROUGH CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HITLER SENT 4 PANZER DIVISIONS TO DEFEND**
- **THIS MOVE MEANT THE ODER FRONT WAS MISSING A POWERFUL WEAPON AGAINST THE SOVIETS**
- **FDR DIES AND HITLER IS EXCITED**
- **VIENNA FALLS TO THE SOVIETS AROUND THE SAME TIME, BUT HITLER IS CONFIDENT OF A TURNAROUND**
- **THE FUHRER DECLARED THE WAR WOULD BE WON IN THE GERMAN CAPITAL**

- **ZUKOV (THE 1<sup>ST</sup> BELORUSSIAN FRONT) SET TO FIGHT IN THE CENTRAL OF THE ODER-NEISSE FRONT**
- **KONEV (1<sup>ST</sup> UKRAINIAN) TO ATTACK FROM THE SOUTH**
- **2<sup>ND</sup> BELORUSSIAN FRONT SET TO FIGHT ON THE NORTHERN END**

### **BATTLE OF THE SEELOW HEIGHTS**

- **HEAVILY DEFENDED AREA IN THE PATH TO BERLIN**
- **SANDY RIDGE, MARSHY AT THE BOTTOM, NUMEROUS DITCHES**
- **BOTTOM OF RIDGE HAD TWO DEFENSE LINES**
- **HIGHEST CONCENTRATION OF GERMAN FIREPOWER AT THE TOP**
- **ATTACK OPENED UP AT 0300 ON APRIL 16, WITH HALF A MILLION SHELLS**
- **THE RUSSIANS USED 140 SPOTLIGHTS TO BLIND DEFENDERS**
- **EXTREMELY BRUTAL FIGHTING**
- **ZUKOV'S TANKS JAMMED IN AND DEVASTATED AT THE TOP**
- **30,000 RUSSIAN DEAD AFTER HEIGHTS TAKEN**

# THE BATTLEFIELD



## **GENERAL KONEV'S NEISSE FRONT**

- **PLANES BOMBED GERMAN REAR AREAS**
- **80 MILE SECTOR WAS SATURATED WITH EXPLOSIVES**
- **KONEV ATTACKED HERE AT 0415**
- **UNDER SMOKE COVER, HIS MEN CROSSED THE NEISSE**
- **AN HOUR AFTER THE FIRST TROOPS CROSSED, KONEV'S TANKS WERE ALREADY IN ACTION**
- **KONEV MET LESS RESISTANCE THAN ZUKOV, AND WAS TOLD BY STALIN TO TURN HIS TANKS TOWARD BERLIN AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE**



# HITLER'S FINAL APPEARANCE

- **APRIL 20<sup>TH</sup>, 1945, 56<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY OF HITLER**
- **ALSO LAST BOMBING RAID OVER BERLIN BY THE U.S.**
- **HITLER CAME OUT INTO THE CHANCELLORY GARDEN, AND GREETED S.S. AND HITLER YOUTH**
- **THIS WAS HIS FINAL PUBLIC APPEARANCE**
- **BARELY ANY HOPE, HE WAS PROBABLY ALREADY CONTEMPLATING HIS SUICIDE**



Hitler decorates Hitler Youth

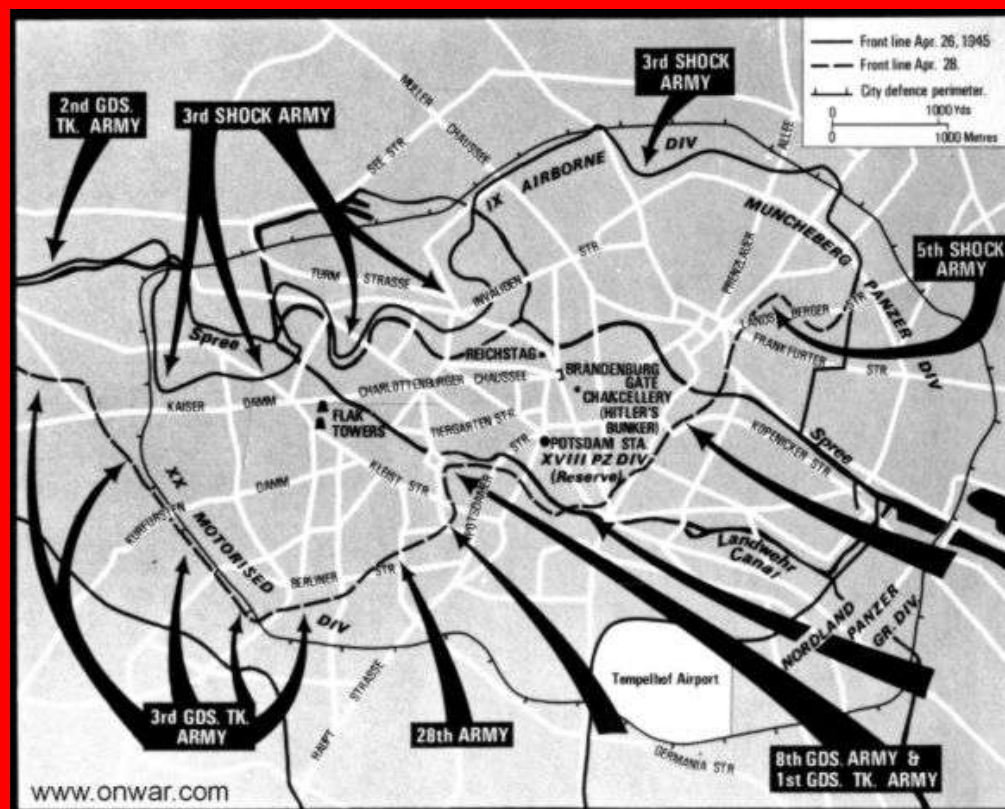
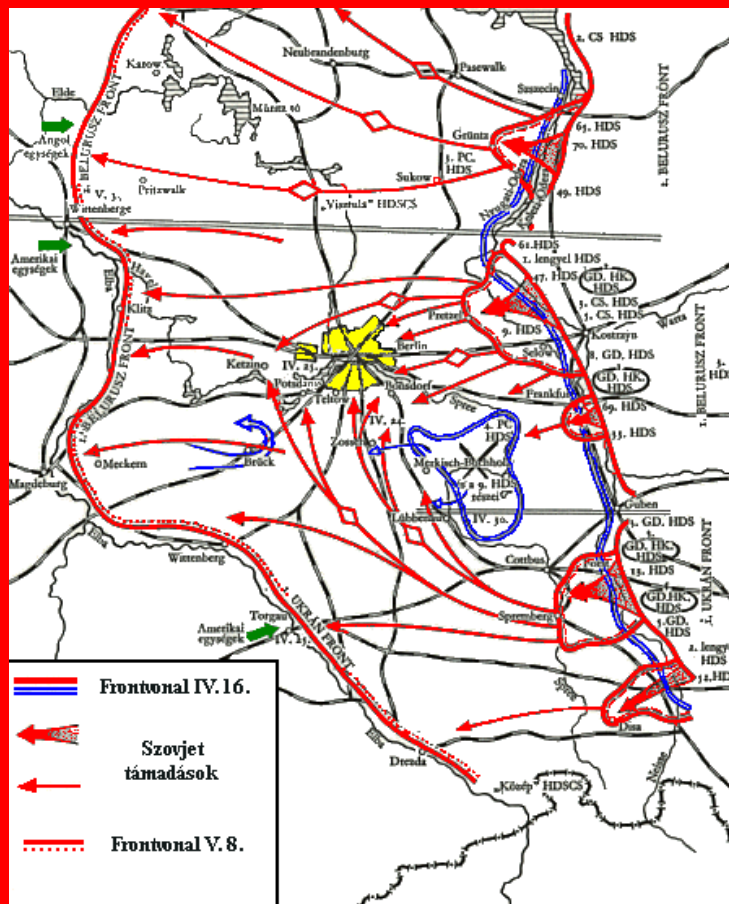
Berlin, Germany  
April 1945

- **BY APRIL 21<sup>st</sup> ZUKOV'S TANKS JUST NORTH OF BERLIN**
- **AS THE RUSSIANS ADVANCED, THE GERMAN 9<sup>th</sup> ARMY WAS CUT OFF**
- **SOME OF THE 9<sup>th</sup> ARMY LATER MADE IT OUT, BUT MOST OF THEM WERE CRUSHED BY THE SOVIETS**
- **KONEV MOVED IN FROM THE SOUTH**
- **ZUKOV BEGAN SHELLING BERLIN RELENTLESSLY**
- **ANY GERMAN WHO LEFT BERLIN AND WAS CAUGHT WOULD BE EXECUTED**
- **GREATEST HOPE WAS TO STAY AND FIGHT**





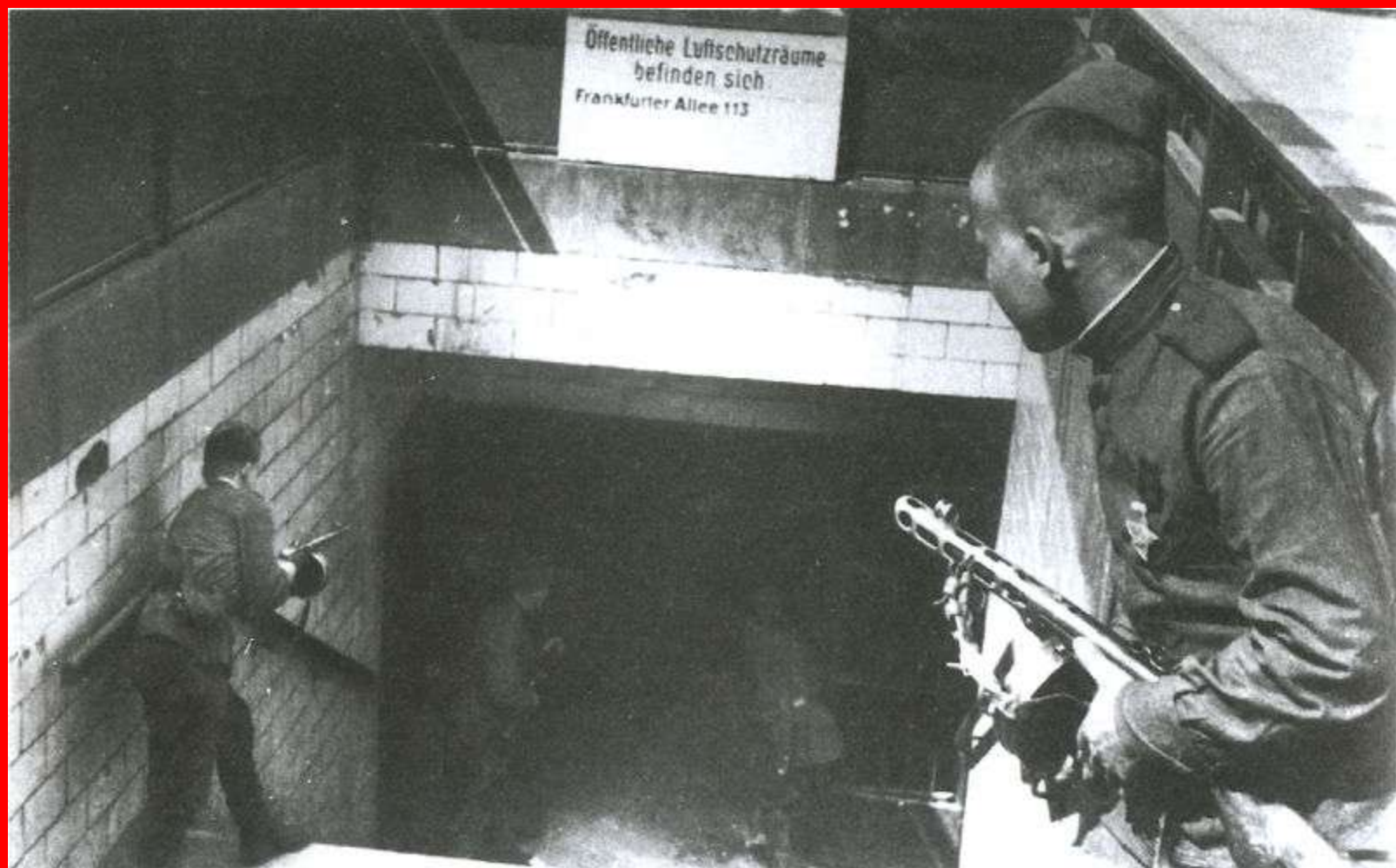
# THE BATTLEFIELD



# THE ATTACK ON BERLIN

- **BY APRIL 24<sup>TH</sup>, 1<sup>ST</sup> BELORUSSIAN AND 1<sup>ST</sup> UKRAINIAN FRONTS ENCIRCLED THE CITY**
- **THE NEXT DAY GENERAL ZUKOV AND GENERAL KONEV WERE READY TO TAKE THE CENTER OF BERLIN**
- **EACH BUILDING WAS CLEARED ROOM BY ROOM**
- **SOVIET BARRAGES CREATED EVEN MORE OBSTACLES FOR THE INVADING ARMIES**
- **S.S. AND HITLER YOUTH DEFENDERS FOUGHT BITTERLY**
- **PANZERFAUSTS USED TO DESTROY LARGE AMOUNTS OF SOVIET TANKS**
- **SOVIETS HAD TO DYNAMITE AND TUNNEL**





- **BY APRIL 27<sup>th</sup> THE GOVERNMENT SECTOR OF BERLIN WAS THE GREATEST EXTENT OF HITLER'S RULE**
- **HITLER, 55 FEET BELOW THE CITY, THOUGHT THERE WAS A POSSIBILITY OF BERLIN BEING SAVED BY THE 12<sup>th</sup> ARMY**
- **NO THOUGHT OF SURRENDER WHATSOEVER**
- **ON THE NIGHT OF THE 29<sup>th</sup> THE FIGHTING WAS LESS THAN ¼ MILE FROM HITLER'S BUNKER**
- **HITLER READY TO DIE, DETERMINED NOT TO BE TAKEN ALIVE**



# TAKING THE REICHSTAG

- **KONEV MADE IT INTO THE CENTRAL DISTRICT, AS ZUKOV'S MEN FOUGHT TO THE REICHSTAG**
- **EVERY MAN GIVEN THE RED BANNER**
- **WHOEVER TO RAISE THE FLAG WOULD BE MADE A HERO OF RUSSIA**
- **TOOK ALMOST 10 HOURS TO CLEAR THE UPPER PARTS OF THE REICHSTAG**
- **RED BANNER PLANTED BY MEN OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> BATTALION 756<sup>TH</sup> RIFLE REGIMENT ON APRIL 30<sup>TH</sup>**

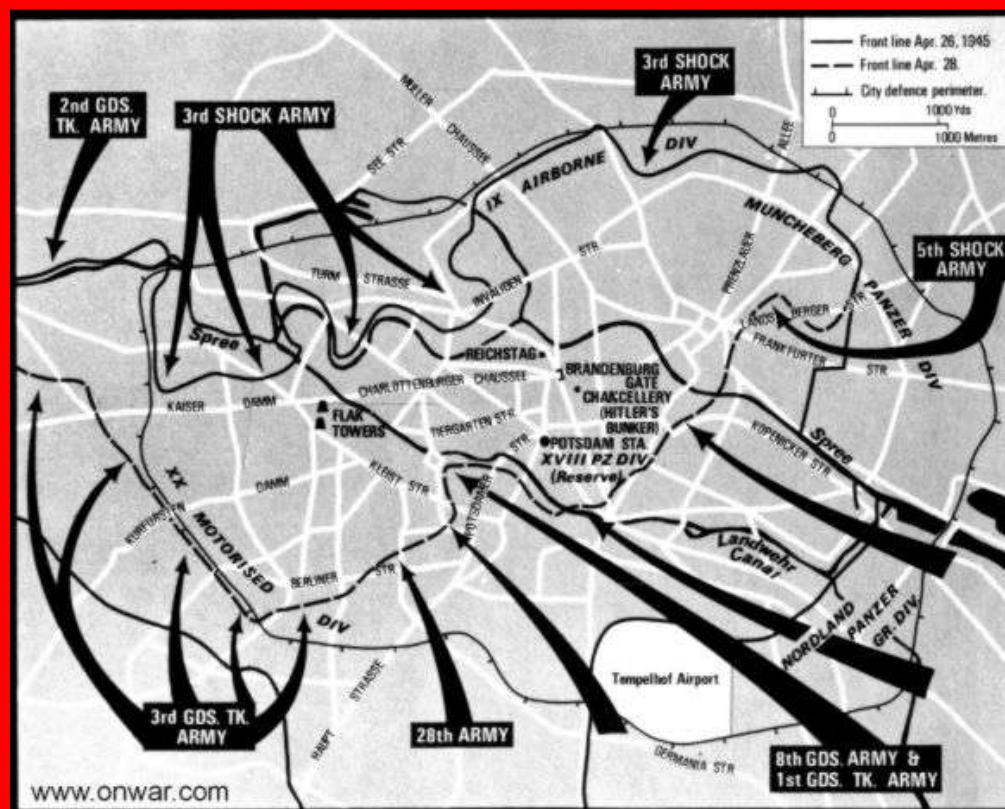
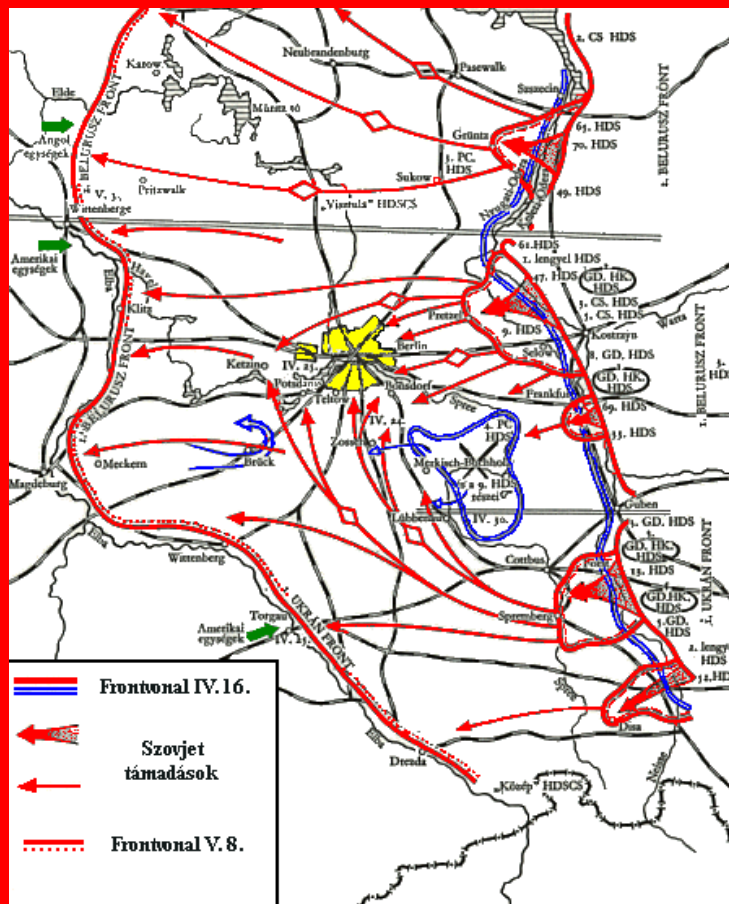


# NOT OVER YET

- **HITLER COMMITS SUICIDE**
- **GOEBBELS WANTED TO DISCUSS TERMS OF SURRENDER**
- **FIGHTING CONTINUED**
- **POCKETS OF RESISTANCE STILL IN THE CHANCELLORY AND SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE GOVERNMENT DISTRICT**
- **RUSSIAN GUNS FALL SILENT ON MAY 2, 1945**



# THE BATTLEFIELD





# AFTERMATH

- ENTIRE CITY OF BERLIN REDUCED TO RUBBLE
- STAGGERING LOSS OF LIFE
- MANY CIVILIANS WOUNDED, RAPED, AND WENT INSANE
- MAY 8, 1945 – GERMANY FORMALLY SURRENDERED, PUTTING AN END TO THE THIRD REICH
- GENERAL ZUKOV THE VICTOR OF THE BATTLE OF BERLIN
- STALIN'S PRIMARY MISSION OF SECURING NUCLEAR RESEARCH CENTER WAS ACCOMPLISHED

# WHY IT MATTERS

- **LAST MAJOR BATTLE ON THE EUROPEAN FRONT**
- **STALIN'S RUSH COST THOUSANDS MORE LIVES THAN NEEDED**
- **NUMEROUS GERMANS KILLED AND RAPED**
- **THE VICTORY OVER GERMANY BROUGHT PRESTIGE AND MARKED THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA**
- **BERLIN BECAME A CITY THAT REPRESENTED THE STRUGGLE OF EAST VERSUS WEST**

