

# AN INTRODUCTION TO WW2 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY FOR CONFLICT ARCHAEOLOGY IN

## BELGIUM AND THE POTENTIAL FOR A JOINT EUROPEAN APPROACH

Dr. Birger Stichelbaut, Dr. Wouter Gheyle



# AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY



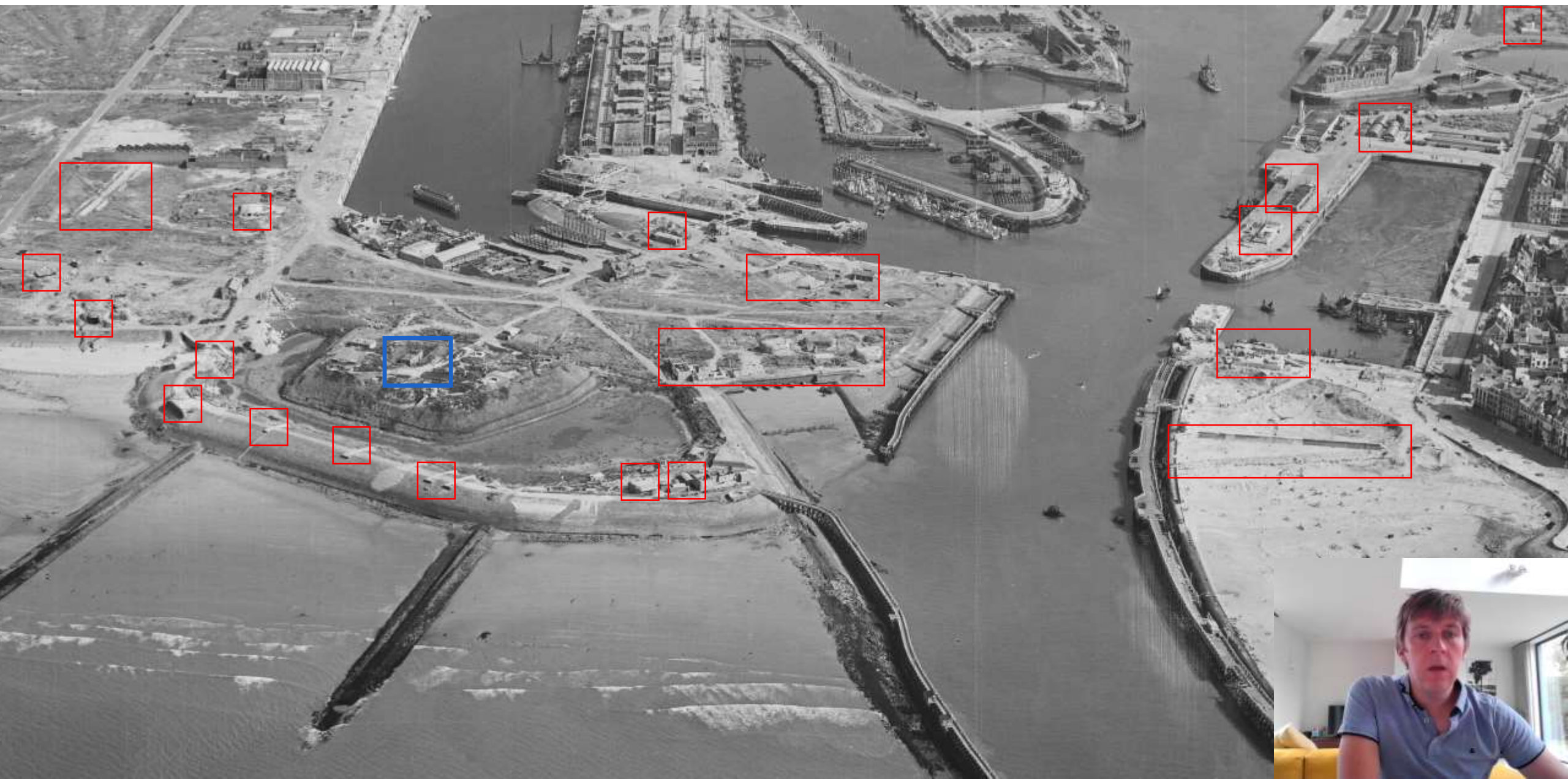


# BIRD'S-EYE VIEW ATLANTIKWALL



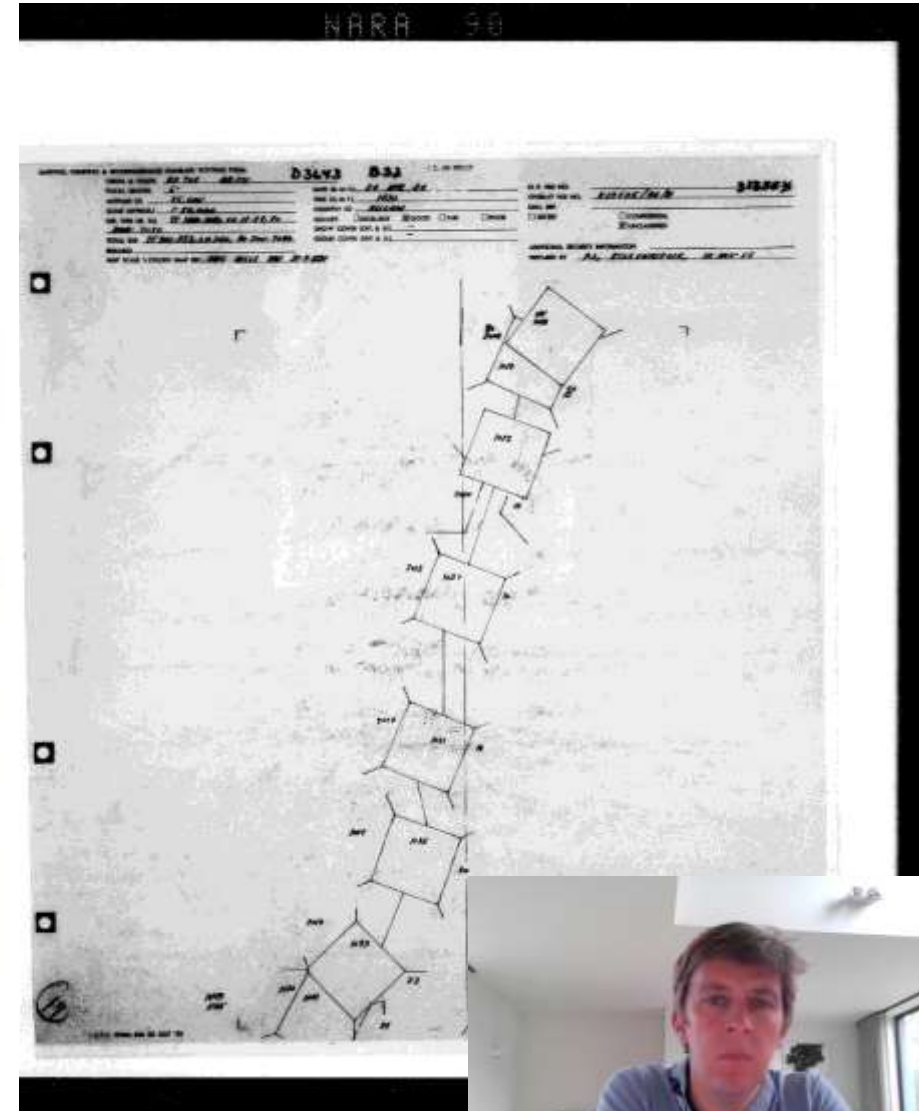
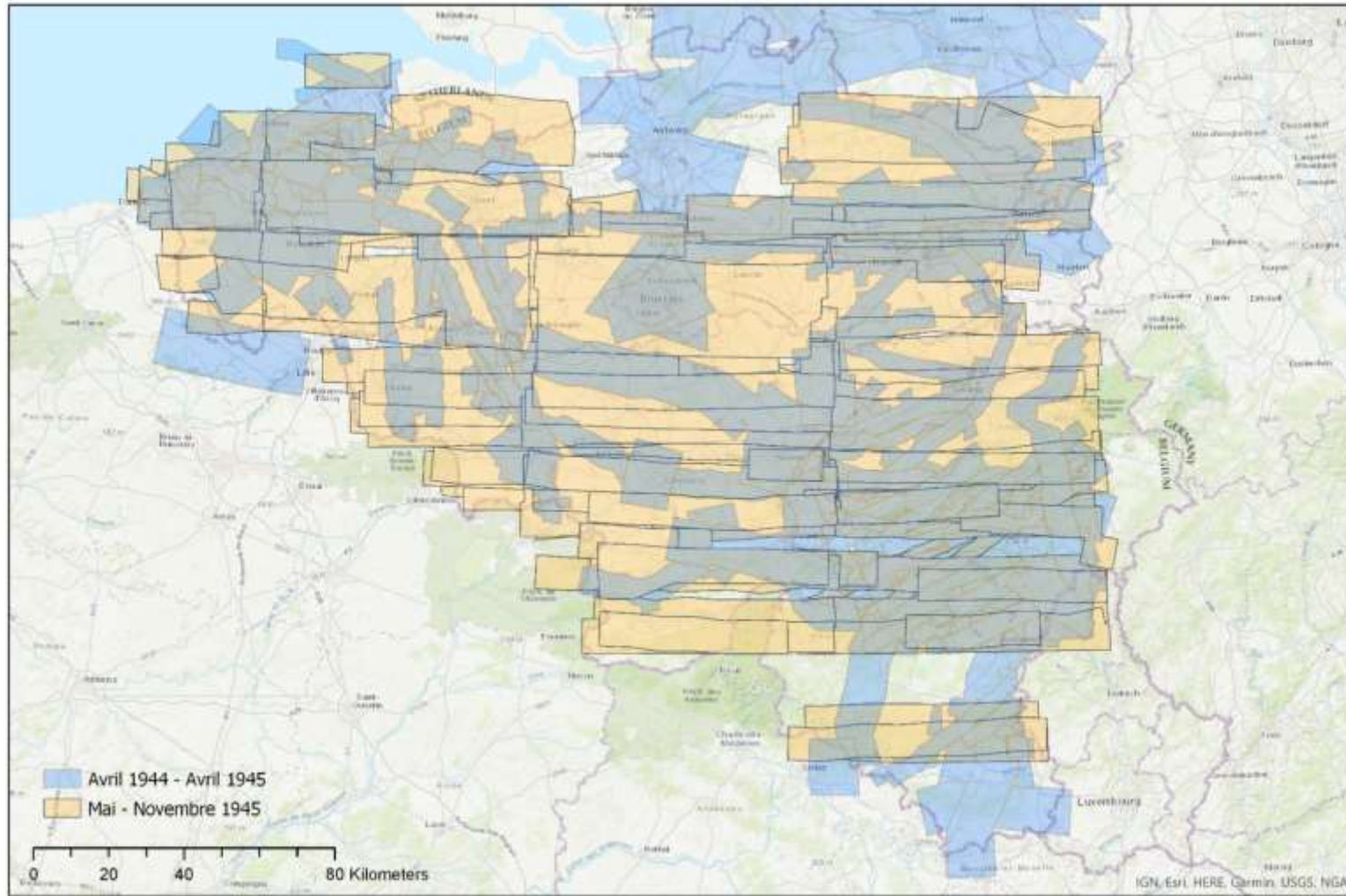


# BIRD'S-EYE VIEW





# WORKFLOW: ARCHIVES



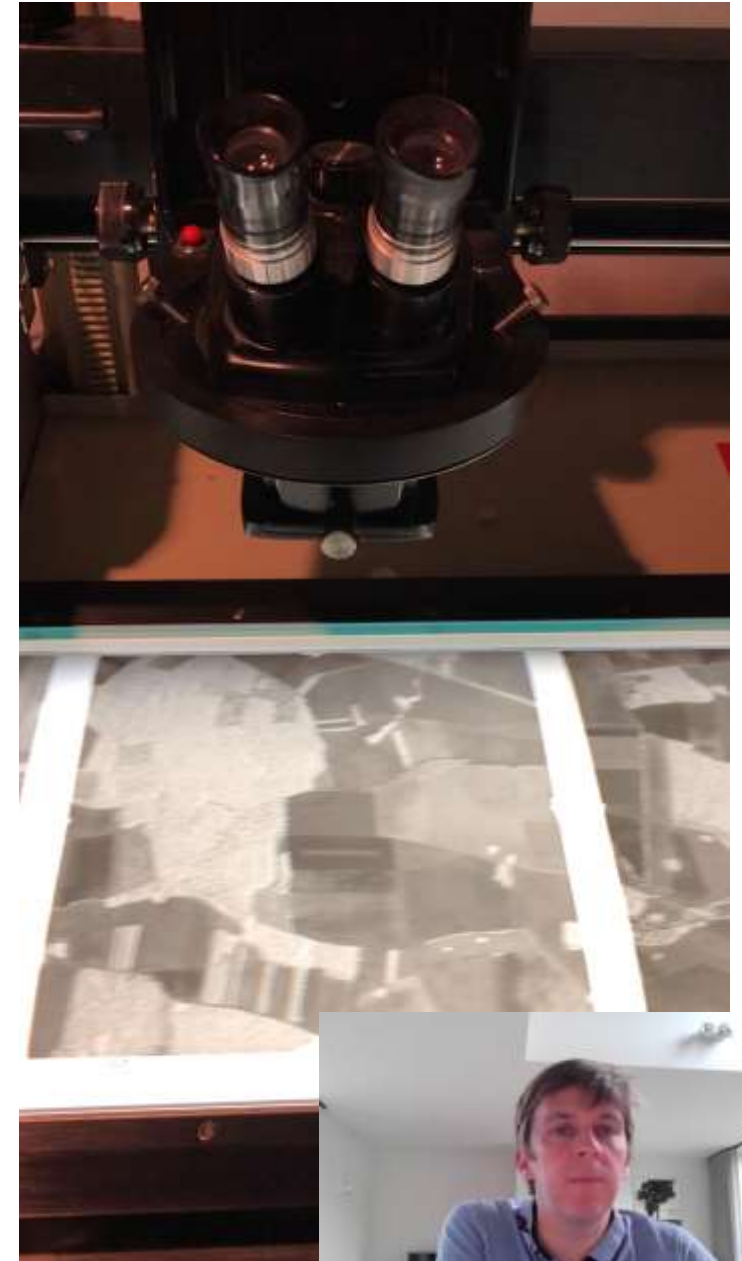
# WORKFLOW: DIGITALISATION

US National Archives (Washington DC)

→ digitalisation (light table – high res camera – tripod)

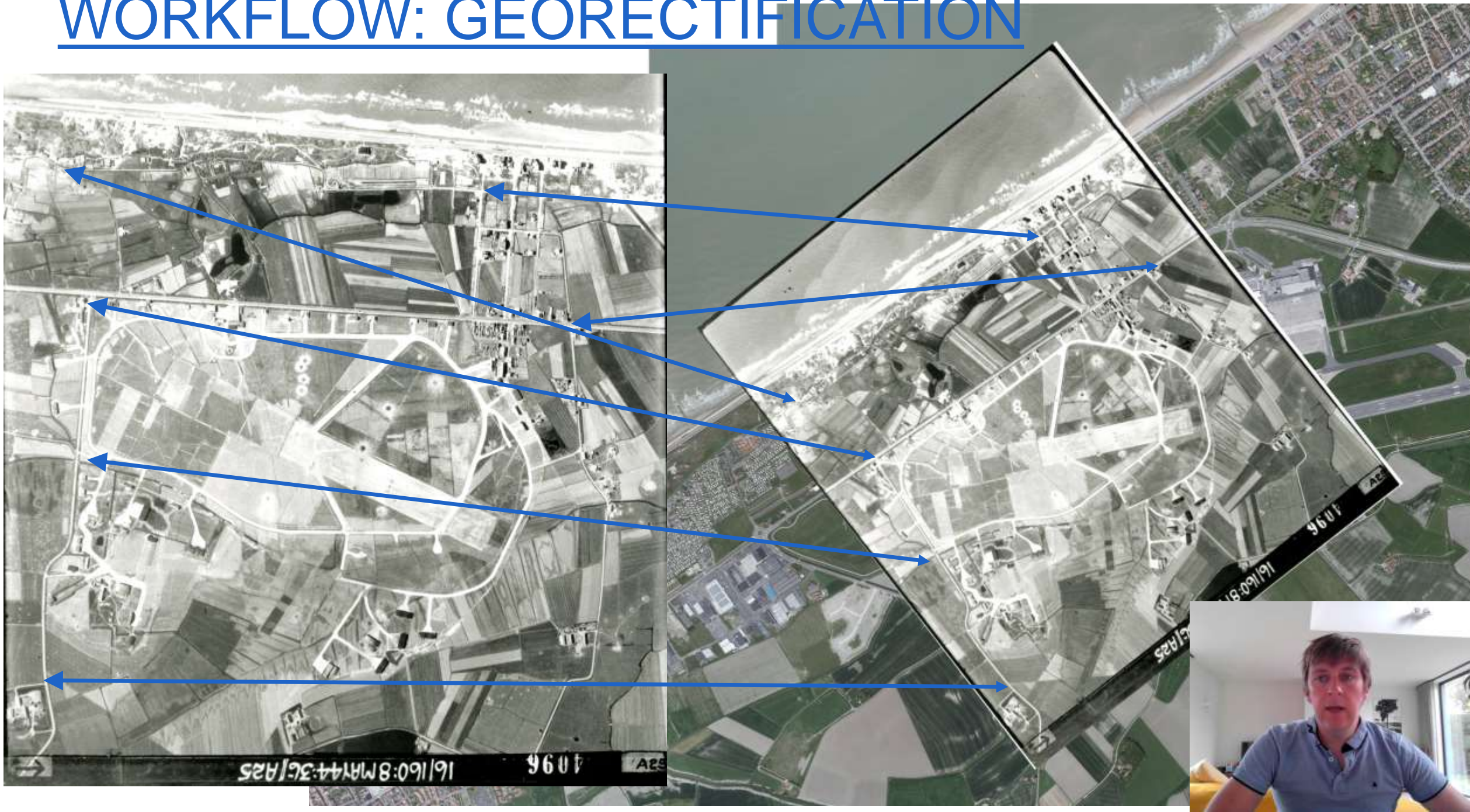
→ Database (metadata)

→ 10.000 photos (1939-1945)



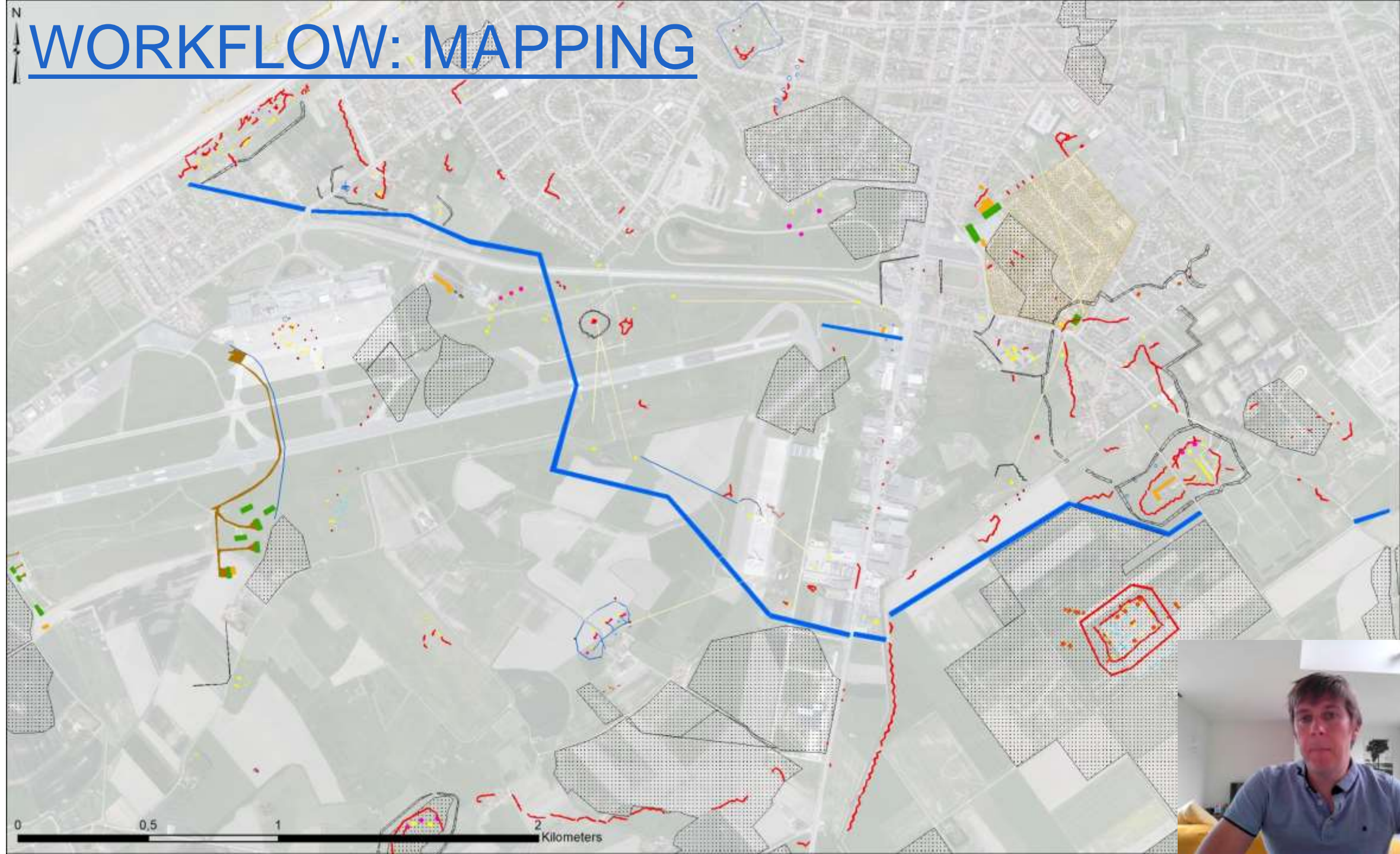


# WORKFLOW: GEORECTIFICATION





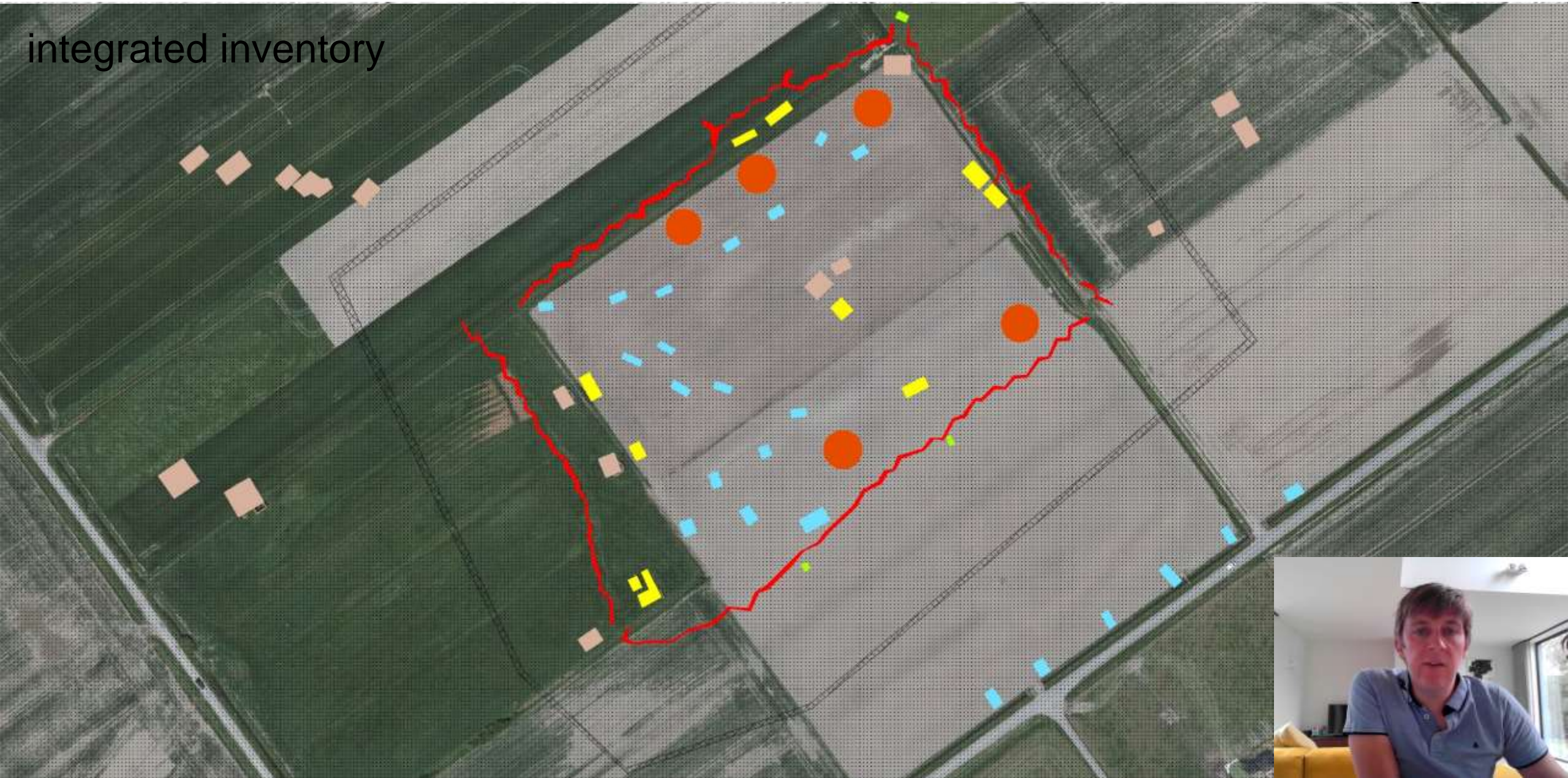
# WORKFLOW: MAPPING





# WORKFLOW: DETAILS

integrated inventory





# PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS & CONCLUSION

- Redirection of focus from sites to landscapes
- More than 'just' bunkers – also 'soft' structures
- Why inventorise? Ideal source for (archaeological) heritage management and preliminary desktop research
- Further reading:
  - Stichelbaut, B., et al. (2021). Operation Northern Light : a remote sensing Approach to Second World War conflict archaeology in Northern Finland (Kilpisjärvi, Enontekiö). Conflict landscapes : materiality and meaning in contested places. N. Saunders and P. Cornish, Routledge.
  - Reeves, K., Plets, G. Stichelbaut, B. (2016). Remembering Uncertainty: The World War II Warscape of the Australian Northern Territory. Conflict landscapes and archaeology from above. B. Stichelbaut and D. Cowley. Farnham, Burlington, Ashgate Publishing: 167-184.
  - Van Hollebeeke, Y. and B. Stichelbaut (2016). A bird's-eye perspective on Gold Beach. An integrated aerial photographic study of a dynamic war landscape. Managing and interpreting D-Day's Sites of Memory. Guardians of Remembrance. G. Bird, S. Claxton and K. Reeves, Taylor & Francis: 281-295.
  - Stichelbaut, B., et al. (2017). "The Ypres Salient 1914–1918 : historical aerial photography and the landscape of war." Antiquity **91**(355): 235-249.

