

Anticipating Overlord

ANTICIPATING OVERLORD

INTELLIGENCE AND DECEPTION:
GERMAN ESTIMATES OF ALLIED INTENTIONS
TO LAND INVASION FORCES IN
NORTHWEST EUROPE

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I. INTRODUCTION

Twas in a summer day – the sixth of June –
I like to be particular in dates,
Not only of the age, and year, but moon;
They are the sort of posthouse where the Fates
Change horses, making History change its tune,
Then spur away o'er Empires and o'er States|

Byron – *Don Juan*

D-Day, Tuesday, June 6, 1944 The Normandy Coast of France

Operation Overlord, the Allied Invasion of Europe, began at precisely fifteen minutes after midnight on June 6, 1944—the first hour of a day that be forever known as D Day. At that moment a few specially chosen men of the American 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions stepped out of their planes into the moonlit night over Normandy. Five minutes later and fifty miles away a small group of men from the British 6th Airborne Division plunged out of their planes. These were the pathfinders, the men who were to light the dropping zones for the paratroopers and glider-borne infantry that were soon to follow.

The Allied airborne armies clearly marked the extreme limits of the Normandy battlefield. Between them, and along the French coastline lay five invasion beaches: Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword. Through the predawn hours as paratroopers fought in the dark hedgerows of Normandy, the greatest armada the world had ever known began to assemble off those beaches—almost five thousand ships carrying more than two hundred thousand soldiers, sailors and coastguardsmen. Beginning at 6:30 A.M., and preceded by a massive naval and air bombardment, a few thousands of these men waded ashore in the first wave of the invasion.

Cornelius Ryan – *The Longest Day*

What follows is not a complete history of the Normandy invasion, but it is an examination of the intelligence aspects of the Allied plans to mount and the German plans to destroy the invasion. The invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944, came as a tactical surprise to the Germans. In the months that followed the

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initial assault, the German attempted without success, to destroy the forces on the beachhead. Some historians have labeled the German failure at Normandy as one of history's most extraordinary military blunders, but that is too strong a charge. This study will show that there was nothing "extraordinary" about the German unreadiness for the main Allied assault, the *Schwerpunkt* as they called it. Rather, the German blunders—and there were many—resulted from an extremely complicated series of very ordinary mistakes. Tactical surprise resulted from the failure of a reasonably well informed military establishment, in the midst of wartime crisis, to anticipate correctly the next move of the Allied planners.

If the entire Government of Nazi Germany, with its numerous military and Nazi Party establishment, is considered as a whole, then it is not true that they were caught totally unprepared for D-Day. Rarely has a nation at war been more expectant. The details of the expectations were simply wrong. Their failure cannot be wholly attributed to a failure of the German intelligence collection machinery. The German strategic and tactical analysis machinery must share the blame. The Germans prepared for what they reasoned was the "obvious" enemy move and neglected to adequately hedge against the "possible" moves that the Allied planners elected to make.

The Allied planner's choice of the Normandy sector for the *Schwerpunkt* was, in the German analysis, a strategic "improbable." But in the minds of the British and American planners the Normandy sector was not at all "improbable." Having decided to invade the hostile shores of northern France. The Allied decision to force their way ashore at a place less well defended than the closer but heavily defended shores of the Pas-de-Calais region cannot be said to have been a reckless choice.

Some popular historians have labeled the failure of German "intelligence" regarding the Normandy landings as one of modern history's most extraordinary military blunders. In point of fact, there was nothing "extraordinary" about the Wehrmacht's apparent unreadiness for the main Allied assault, the *Schwerpunkt*

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as the Germans called it. Rarely has a nation at war been more expectant of invasion.

By late April 1944, Radio Berlin had broadcast to the German people that an enemy invasion in France would come at "any minute, anywhere."¹ On 18 May Radio Berlin announced that "the ports [of England] are bristling—crammed to the bursting point—with ... invasion equipment."² The Germans certainly were anticipating the *Grosslandung*; and yet, the critical details of their expectations about the Second Front invasion simply were wrong.

The Germans were expecting diversionary attacks to be made in Normandy, but they were absolutely convinced that the Allied Schwerpunkt would come in the Pas-de-Calais sector. Everything was set to await the arrival of the Allied forces on the shores of France north of the River Seine—where, in due time, Adolf Hitler and the *Wehrmacht* expected to destroy them. But, in their effort to build and man the *Atlantikwall*, the Germans made one critical mistake—one the French had made earlier. They too forgot that a concrete and steel barrier with an exploitable weakness is no shield at all. They also forgot a basic maim of war: namely, if an enemy can discover the weakest sector in a defensive line, then it is surly there that the focus of the main assault will come.

Because of their failure to anticipate properly the Allied invasion strategy, the Germans were subject to the embarrassment of tactical surprise. Thomas C. Schelling, in the "Forward" to Roberta Wholstetter's *Pearl Harbor—Warning and Decision*, said the following about surprise:

Surprise, when it happens to a government, is likely to be a complicated, diffuse, bureaucratic thing. It includes neglect of responsibility, but also responsibility so poorly defined or ambiguously delegated but action gets lost. It includes gaps in intelligence, but also the intelligence that, like a string of pearls too precious to wear, is too sensitive to give to those who

¹ "World Battlefields," *Time*, 1 May 1944, 23.

² Army Times Editors, *The Tangled Web*, (Washington: Robert B. Luce, Inc., 1963), 144.

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need it. It includes the alarm that fails to work, but also the alarm that has gone off so often that it has been disconnected. It includes the unalert, but also the one that knows he'll be chewed out by his superior if he gets higher authority out of bed. It includes the contingencies that occur to no one, but also those that everyone assumes somebody else is taking care of. It includes straightforward procrastination, but also decisions protracted by internal disagreement. It includes, in addition, the inability of the human being to rise to the occasion until they are sure it is the occasion—which is normally too late. (Unlike movies, real life provides no musical background to tip us off to the climax). Finally, ... surprise may include some measure of genuine novelty introduced by the enemy, and possibly some sheer bad luck. (*Italics in original.*)³

The failure of the Germans to anticipate and react to the landing at Normandy, though serious in its consequences, was by no means unique in the annals of military history. What made the German blunder in Normandy so very ordinary was the commonality between the errors leading to the surprise that startled the Americans at Pearl Harbor and the surprise that startled the Germans at Normandy. The fact that armies have continued to achieve strategic and tactical surprise when conducting major operations indicates that "surprise" and the causes of it are worthy of close study by the military, and intelligence communities in particular.

The D-Day Invasion of Normandy provides a dramatic and well documented⁴ example of an attack which though presaged by a variety of indicators, nevertheless, achieve partial strategic and complete tactical surprise. Many histories have been written concerning the Normandy invasion. Most have included part of the intelligence and deception story, but none has addressed the complete collection and estimative process of the German military establishment and the Nazi party. This study, by contract, is concerned with the process by

³ Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962) Forward.

⁴ [Editorial note] Unknown to this author, and to countless others, as of 1969, the documentation related to Allied deception operations, and codebreaking, would only come later, in the 1980's

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which the Germans developed their pre- and post-invasion estimates of the Allied intentions. It is also concerned with isolating the causes that led them to err in that development.

To understand what the Germans were doing on their side of the English Channel, it is necessary to study certain of the Allied plans. The Allies also were conducting deception operations to confuse the Germans. Understanding the nature of these plans and deceptions will serve to explain how the German estimative process “rationally erred” in certain matters.

This study is not exhaustive. Some of the official German war diaries that would have contained additional information on the subject of Normandy related intelligence and actions were destroyed during the war. Some of the Allied papers relating to the invasion are, as of the time of this writing, not available for public study. Other materials are simply not available in the Washington D.C. area where this study was prepared. In the interest of time, some materials, particularly divisional level war diaries, records of Allied and German radio broadcasts were not. However, and the monographs prepared in the years 1945–48 by the captured German Generals and Admirals as part of the Foreign Military Studies were used. Accordingly, there is sufficient material in this study to develop an understanding of the “spirit of the times” to show the “thread of development” existing in the German pre-and post-invasion estimates.

This examination will unfold in chronological order beginning with events that first occurred in 1939. To better understand the relevance of the material, the reader should keep in mind the following questions:

1. What was the state of Allied planning and preparations at a given point in time? What information was actually knowable if the German collection and evaluation process was perfect?

2. How much information about the Allied plans and preparations was actually possessed by the Germans prior to July 25th 1944? Who had collected the information? Who had access to the information?

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3. How good was secret information compared to that available in public papers, magazines, and radio broadcasts? Was the material from both sources compatible?

4. To what extent did the Germans use logic or intuition to fill known gaps in the intelligence information available to them? How accurate was their logical process in terms of their intuitive hunches?

5. What information reached the German military and government officials who had authority to take action? Was the information timely when received? Were their actions based on the information timely?

6. How was the information interpreted and used by the Germans? What effect did an individual's military experience, personality, or Nazi party affiliation have on the interpretation of the information?

7. To what extent did military action in places other than northern France influence German interpretation of information?

8. Was there treachery on the part of individual German? If so, who were the people involved, and what role did they play?

9. What was the effect of weather conditions on German estimates?

10. To what extent did the Germans draw correct conclusions from the information that they improperly understood?

11. What deception operations were implemented by the Allies? How effective was the Allied attempt to deceive, mislead, or confuse the German?

II. GERMAN PLANS 1939-40

History and past experience have often been described as being the prologue to future action. The German experience factor concerning the problems of Continental invasion was shaped by the British Dieppe Raid and the Allied invasions of Africa, Sicily, and Italy. Aside from those actions initiated by the Allies, the German ability to perceive correctly the Allied invasion intentions and capabilities was also—and earlier—affected by their own invasion plan—the one they never executed. Ideas and plans associated with the 1940 German plan to invade England led to later confusion in their planning for the defense of Europe in 1944.

Some of the events that influenced the capability of the Germans to perceive the Allied intention in 1944 occurred prior to 1940. During 1939, for example, the police organizations of the Nazi party and the German government were merged into the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (the *RSHA*). Not made a part of the *RSHA* at that time was the *Wehrmacht* counterintelligence organization, *Amtsgruppe Abwehr* (the *Abwehr*).⁵ Later, friction between the German Central Security Office and the Army counterintelligence service reduced the effectiveness of the German foreign intelligence collection operations.

⁵ David Kahn, *The Codebreakers* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 449,453, 1052; The *Geheime Staats Polizei* (*GeStaPo*) became *Amt IV* of the *RSHA*, the *Kriminal Polizei* (*KriPo*) became *Amt V*. The *Sicherhetdienst* (*SD*) was divided into several departments: domestic intelligence was handled by *Amt III* and foreign intelligence by *Amt VI*. *Amt I* handled personnel matters within the organization, and *Amt II* dealt with organization, administration, and law. In February 1944, when the *RSHA* absorbed the *Abwehr*, the latter became *Amt VI/Mil*, and was under the control of Walter Schellenberg. The entire *RSHA* organization was under the control of *Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei* Heinrich Himmler. In addition to the *RSHA* and the *Abwehr*, the Foreign Ministry conducted intelligence activity; Göbbels had an intelligence section in the Propaganda Ministry; Rosenberg's *Ostministerium* had an intelligence division, and there was an intelligence function being performed by Bohle's *Auslandsorganization der Partei*.

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On 15 November 1939 *Großadmiral* Erich Raeder, *Chef der Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine* (the *OKM*), acting on his own initiative, instructed the *OKM Operationsabteilung AI* (*OKM/OA-AI*, the Naval Operations Division) to examine the possibility of mounting a seaborne invasion of England.⁶ On 21 May 1940, one day after the German units invading France had broken through to the Channel coast at Abbeville, Raeder discussed with Hitler the matter of invading England.⁷ On 16 July 1940 Hitler issued Directive Number 16/40, entitled *SEELÖWE* (*SEA LION*). Paragraph I of that Cross-Channel invasion directive called for “surprise crossing on a broad front extending from approximately from Ramsgate to a point west of the Isle of Wight.”⁸

The details of the German *SEA LION* invasion plan called for an initial landing of thirteen infantry and several airborne divisions. The first wave was to be followed by the landing of six armored (*Panzer*) divisions. Multiple landings were planned in three major areas along a hundred mile coastal front.⁹ In support of *SEELÖWE* the Germans were planning Operation *HERBSTREISE*. The latter operation was to be launched from Norway. It was to be a deception operation to present an apparent threat against northern England.¹⁰ This, hopefully, would prevent the British Battle Fleet, based at Scapa Flow, in the Orkney Islands, off north Scotland, from being moved to the Channel to attack the German invasion armada. Both were initially scheduled to begin on 15 September 1940.¹¹

⁶ William L. Schirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1960), 758.

⁷ *Ibid*, 759.

⁸ Ladislav Farago, *Burn After Reading* (New York: Walker & Co., 1961), 91; Peter Fleming, *Operation Sea Lion* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1957), 45.

⁹ Schirer, *op. cit.*, 762. The German plan called for a six division attack in the sector Ramsgate–Bexhill. The divisions were to embark at Calais. Four divisions from Le Harve had targets in the Brighton–Isle of Sight sector, and three divisions sailing from Cherbourg were to attack in the area between Weymouth and Lyme Regis.

¹⁰ Kahn, *op. cit.*, 502.

¹¹ Farago, *op. cit.*, 93-94.

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To gather intelligence in support of the German invasion, the *Beobachtung-Dienst* (the *B-Dienst*), an element of the *OKM* was intercepting, deciphering, and reading British Admiralty radio messages. On 20 August the British Admiralty changed their codes and ciphers. The *B-Dienst* was unable to unravel the new code and cipher system and became, near on the eve of their invasion, deaf to information concerning the powerful and dangerous English Battle Fleet.¹²

The loss of accurate intelligence concerning the British Fleet was not the only problem that faced the German invasion planners. Some unknown planner allegedly told another of his colleagues that a cross-Channel attack was only an assault river crossing mounted on a larger scale.¹³ The German eventually discovered that a seaborne attack on England was a more complicated operation than first imagined. At that stage of World War II only the Japanese were knowledgeable of the specialized techniques required to insure successful amphibious landings. The Germans did not consult the Japanese who might have given them answers to many of the problems. The German found that the sealift capacity problems to be nearly insurmountable; as a result, the invasion date was continually postponed. After Hitler embarked on his Russian adventure, the idea of invading England became less important to him. In early 1941, *SEELÖWE* was cancelled.¹⁴

The German invasion plan was officially cancelled, but the effects of the weak ideas developed during its planning lived on:

Three legacies of that abortive invasion lasted into 1944, to mislead the Germans fatally. Firstly, their own landings had been times for near high water on a falling tide, to reduce the open space between the assault infantry and the defenders and also to enable the landing barges to “dry out.” The only effective way that most of them could be unloaded.

12 Kahn, op. cit., pp. 465, 484: *B Dienst* was the *OKM* radio intercept and cryptanalysis service.

13 Alexander McKee, *Last Round Against Rommel* (New York: The New American Library, 1964), 15.

14 Farago, op. cit., 93, 101.

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Assuming that the Allies would do the same the Germans therefore sited their defense obstacles accordingly, high on the beaches. But the Allied forces planned to land near the low water mark on a rising tide, both to allow time for the demolition of the German beach obstacles and also to enable their landing craft to back off and return for the next load within minutes of the disembarkation, instead of lying helplessly aground for hours under the muzzles of the enemy guns. Secondly, the German continued to underestimate the amount of shipping required, failing to realize the need for a stream of transport ships moving to-and-fro across the Channel continuously, like some vast conveyor belt, bringing in reinforcements and supplies for the crucial battle of the build-up; and therefore they believed that it was logistically impossible for the Allies to mount more than one cross-Channel invasion. Thirdly, because of the deficiencies of their own landing craft, the German planned to make the most use of the shortest sea crossing, that between Kent and the Pas de Calais. Therefore, they assumed the Allies must do the same, and that any landing elsewhere would probably be a diversion....¹⁵

Another action taken by Hitler in 1940 also inhibited the German defenders of France in 1944. Because the untimely compromise of certain of the German Battle Orders relating to the invasion of France, the Fuhrer issued "Order of Principle No. 1," the Order was a strict security directive. It directed that no German was to have knowledge of, or access to, any information not directly pertaining to his area of operations.¹⁶ Consequently, the commanders in France were not given "official" access to information concerning activity on the Italian or Russian Fronts, or concerning political matters. Rommel and others would later get around the Order by reading the reports of such matters carried in the newspapers printed in Switzerland and elsewhere.¹⁷

15 McKee, op. cit., 16.

16 Gilles Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1965), 181.

17 Ibid.

III. ENGLISH INVASION PLANS 1940-41

The British began to think about the business of invading the Continent of Europe immediately after they were forced to withdraw their forces from Dunkerque. That withdrawal had occurred during the first week of June in 1940. On the night of 2/24 June the British staged a small commando raid on the French coast between Cap d'Alpreceh and Pointe du Hautbanc. The only significance of that small operation was the fact that it marked the first in a long series of hit-and-run commando attacks.¹⁸

Commando raids gave the British experience in amphibious operations, built morale in England, supplied intelligence, and kept the Germans nervous, but the British knew that more would be required of Europe was to be recaptured and the German defeated. At the time the English were faced with a campaign in North Africa and the task of rebuilding and enlarging their army in England. They foresaw that the accomplishment of those immediate tasks and a simultaneous preparation for an invasion of Europe would require resolute long-range planning. They turned to the task of planning for that eventuality in the spring of 1940.

During the summer of 1940 the British Army completed their analysis of the causes of the Allied defeat in France. By studying the results of that analysis, they became convinced that armored and mechanized warfare, similar to that conducted by the German Panzer and Panzer Grenadier units, was the key that would open the door to an English victory in Europe. But, before they could turn that key, they had to create the new army and land it on the hostile shores of Hitler's Europe. The earliest studies of the Joint Planning Staff of the British Chiefs of Staff Committee assumed that the envisaged mobile army could be considered and started to consider the possibility of landing area in Norway, Belgium, France, and even Spain.¹⁹

18 John Dalglish, *We Planned t Second Front* (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1945), 9.

19 Albert Norman, *Operation Overlord, Design and Reality* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1952), 28-30.

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In January 1941, the British completed an analysis of the by then defunct German invasion of England Plan, Operation *SEELÖWE*. They noted that it was impossible to conceal or effectively camouflage a naval force of the size needed to mount a cross-Channel invasion. They also noted that they had achieved some measure of success in confusing the Germans by the use of a counter-invasion deception operation. They integrated these lessons learned into their fledgling invasion planning efforts.²⁰

In their determination to avenge the disgrace of the Dunkerque withdrawal, the British wanted to invade the Continent during 1941. But, the aerial Battle of Britain, and the task of rebuilding the home army made 1941 a time for defensive action. In fact, it was not until 24 December 1941 that a formal invasion draft was completed. Operation *ROUNDUP*, as it was called, was actually a contingency plan, based solely on the hopeful assumption, that the Germans might suffer some type of major reversal in Russia that would cause them to either lose their war resolve or withdraw all of their forces in France to German to defend the *Reich*. *ROUNDUP* was designed to prevent the Germans from making an orderly and unopposed withdrawal of their troops from France. It called for an invasion in the Pas-de-Calais, on the beaches between Deauville and Dieppe, and the quick capture of the port of Le Harve on the north shore of the Seine Estuary.²¹

The year 1941 marked the formal entrance of the Americans into the war against Germany. After the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, and the Congress declared war on Japan, Hitler declared war on the United States. The game was afoot, so to speak. On 31 December 1941 the American political and military personnel had their first meeting with the British. During the *ARCADIA* Conference held in Washington, D.C., the Allies made a joint declaration that

20 Farago, *Burn after Reading*, 93, 107.

21 Gordon A. Harrison, *U.S Army in WWII – Cross Channel Attack* (Washington: Department of the Army, 1951), 6-8, citing JP(41) 1028, 24 Dec 41.

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they would take the offensive in Europe, The Conference press release read it part:

It does not seem likely that in 1942 any large-scale land offensive against Germany, except on the Russian front will be possible ... [but] in 1943 the way may be clear for a return to the continent ... by landings in Western Europe.²²

²² Harrison, *Cross Channel Attack*, 9, citing U.S. ABC-4CS-1, 31 Dec 41, ARCADIA Conf.

IV. GERMAN PLANS & ESTIMATES 1941

Generalfeldmarschall Gerd von Rundstedt was the commander of the German *Heeresgruppenkommando A* (the *HGK A*) in occupied France until, April 1941, when he was replaced by *Generalfeldmarschall* Erwin von Witzleben.²³ At that time the threat of an invasion, or even damaging raids, by the British was considered by the German to be so slight as to be negligible. Nevertheless, von Witzleben began to take certain steps to put his Western defenses in order. Before a significant effort could be made, the German invasion of Russia on 22 June 1941, altered the logistical priority for France. In the wake of the Russian Offensive, work on what was to one day be called the “Western Wall” was not impressive. By the end of 1941 the whole of the defensive network in France comprised only the fortifications on the Channel Isles, a few *Kriegsmarine* coastal artillery batteries, some concrete and steel *Unterseeboot* pens at Atlantic coast ports in France, and seven heavy coastal batteries that had been built between Boulogne and Calais a year earlier to support *SEA LION*.²⁴

On 2 September 1941, the *Deutschen Reichspost Forschungsanstalt* devised a machine that made intelligible the telephone calls made with the U.S. Army’s A-3 Voice Scrambler which was in use on the A.T.&T. transatlantic radiotelephone circuit. Intercepts of telephone conversations between England and America was not immediately productive of any vital intelligence, but it gave the German Postal Intelligence Research Bureau a collection source that it hoped would one day pay a dividend.²⁵

23 An *HGK* was roughly equivalent to an Allied Army Group and has subordinate to it two or more large elements, *Armeeoberkommandos* (the *AOKs*), that equated to Allied Field Armies.

24 Harrison, *Cross Channel Attack*, 130.

25 Kahn, *The Codebreakers*, 555. While the ability to exploit this source was not of immediate value, several items of interest were picked up in 1943 and 1944 during conversations between Roosevelt and Churchill.

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In late 1941 Hitler became concerned about the military situation in Norway. It was in that period that the Germans, in support of their Russian campaign, began large-scale military operations in eastern Scandinavia. During 1940 the British and Germans had fought a short action in the area around Narvik, Norway. Hitler, concerned about the northern flank of Europe, became convinced that the English and their newly acquired American ally, would again contest German control of the Norwegian coast in an attempt to relieve German pressure on Russia. On 25 December 1941 the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* received information that it believed indicated a major Anglo-American operation was planned in the Scandinavian area.²⁶

On 27 December 1941, the British Navy unwittingly had a hand in influencing Hitler and the *OKW* in their consideration of Allied intentions. On that day, as it earlier in the year, a British Task force of cruisers and destroyers shelled the Norwegian coast while British commandos made harassment landings. While the shelling appeared to be merely disruptive in their purpose, the *OKW* feared that the action might be designed to feel out weak spots for a larger operation.²⁷

With Western Europe no longer in Hitler's mind as a spring board for an attack on England, and with the imagined danger to the northern flank, the Führer began to talk about turning Europe into an "Impregnable Fortress." Hitler told his staff that he visualized the fortress as "a belt of strongpoints and gigantic fortifications that runs from the Kirkenes [on the Norwegian-Finnish frontier] ... to the Pyrenes." Hitler told the *OKW* officers *Generalfeldmarschall* Keitel, and *General der Artillerie* Jodl, that it was his "unshakable decision to make ... [the Western] Front impregnable against every enemy."²⁸

26 Karl F. Ziemke, *The German Northern Theater of Operations 1940-1945* (Washington: Department of the Army, 1959), 213.

27 Ibid, 213-24.

28 Cornelius Ryan, *The Longest Day June 6, 1944* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1959), 24.

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On 29 December 1941, Hitler told *Generalfeldmarschall* Wilhelm Keitel, Chief of the *OKW*, and *Großadmiral* Erich Raeder, Chief of the *OKM*, the following:

If the British go about things properly they will attack northern Norway at several points. In an all-out attack by their fleet and ground forces they will try to displace us there.... The German navy must therefore use all of its forces for the defense of Norway.²⁹

To meet the threat Hitler believed was aimed at his arctic frontier, he ordered that all of the German capital ships must be stationed in Norwegian waters. At that time the battleships *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisnau* and the heavy cruiser *Prinz Eugen* were bottled up in the French port of Brest. Hitler ordered that they must break out of the harbor and move to reinforce the other ships being sent to Norway. He said that the transfer of capital ships from Brest “could best be accomplished if the vessels were to break through the Channel taking the enemy completely by surprise, *i.e.*, previous training movements and during bad weather which makes [enemy] air operations impossible.”³⁰

In addition to the naval reinforcements, and at the further expense of preparations in France, large quantities of coastal defense material were moved to Norway. By June 1944, the German had constructed three hundred and fifty coastal batteries in Norway mounting guns ranging in size from 88mm to 406mm.³¹

29 Ziemke, *The German Northern Theater*, 214; Chester Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), p. 93, citing Führer Naval Conferences, 29 December 1941.

30 Ziemke, *Ibid*; Wilmot, *Ibid*. The ships actually made the breakout from Brest on 11 February 1942, and safely made the Channel passage enroute to Norway.

31 Friedrich Ruge, “The Invasion of Normandy,” *Decisive Battles of World War II, The German View*, H.A. Jacobsen and J. Rohwer, eds. (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1965), 318, citing Bertil Stjerfelt, *Alarm I Atlantvallen* (Stockholm, Forestal au Helge Jung, Horsta förlag, 1953), 33.

V. ALLIED INVASION PLANNING 1942

On 5 March 1942, and notwithstanding the declaration made at the December 1941 ARCADIA Conference, U.S. War Department planners outlined a plan for an attack to be made against Northern France between 15 July and 1 August of that year. The plan outlined a two-phase attack. Phase One was to entail a massive air offensive coupled with regimental-size commando raids along the coasts of Holland, Belgium, and Normandy in France. Phase Two, to begin at D+30 days was to be the main invasion delivered against the high ground north of the Seine Estuary, on the beaches between Le Havre and Dieppe. The name of this highly imaginative plan was SLEDGEHAMMER.³² A projection of the landing craft production schedule for that year quickly made it obvious that the envisaged operation could not be implemented during 1942. However, the effort served as a useful exercise to train the U.S. Staffs in the art of joint amphibious operations planning.

On 2 April 1942 the Operations Division in the U.S. War Department presented a memorandum entitled “Operations in Western Europe” to the Chief of Staff. It was a complete revamp of the SLEDGEHAMMER concept and called for an attack to be made on 1 April 1943 to seize the beaches on both sides of the Somme River between the posts of Le Havre and Boulogne.³³ During its review the new “April Proposal” was expanded to include additional landings between Calais and Dunkerque, and also in the vicinity of Oostende, Belgium. The plan, like SLEDGEHAMMER before, died for want of the sufficient number of landing craft based on the existing production schedules and theater allocations.

At the same time as the April Proposal was under study, there also existed a separate plan concerned with the logistical buildup that would have to precede the initiation of any large scale invasion. Operation BOLERO, as the logistical plan was called, was not cancelled. It was the blueprint for the needed buildup.

³² Harrison, *Cross Channel Attack*, 12.

³³ *Ibid*, 15.

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While the Allies were in no way to cross the Channel to invade Europe in force, they were ready to begin the massing of men and material that would one day be needed.³⁴ In contrast to the earlier German misunderstanding concerning the number and types of specialized landing craft needed for a cross Channel invasion, the Allied planner knew full well that a successful invasion could not be realistically planned without giving special consideration to the date when all the specialized vessels would be on hand in the European theater.³⁵

As noted, the Germans had been worrying about the possibility of a British attack against Norway since the autumn of 1941. However, it was not until 8 July 1942 that the British actually began to examine the possibility of conducting a major operation in that sector. They called their invasion outline JUPITER. The British, like the Americans, encountered problems with their plans to even attack Norway. The problem that the British could not overcome was the inability of their existing fighter aircraft to provide adequate air cover from their bases in England. In mid-1942 the only area of Europe over which the Britain-based fighters could support a naval assault with any hope of gaining air superiority was between Oostende in the Belgian coast, and St. Malo on the Brittany coast of France.³⁶

Apart from the time it takes to prepare proper plans and to amass the men and material necessary for a massive seaborne assault, it is critical to gain actual experience in such matters. The lessons learned by the Americans during the August 1942 landings at Guadalcanal, in the Pacific were not sufficient. The necessary experience for European operations was gained, in part, during the 19 August Dieppe Raid in France and the 8 November invasion of North Africa. Those actions pointed out certain errors in planned that were corrected in later plans. Those actions, therefor, marked the real beginning of the Allied capability to plan properly with the hope of being able to mount a large-scale invasion of

34 Norman, *Operation Overlord*, 12.

35 It must be remembered that U.S. operations in The Pacific Theater also would require landing craft of many specialized type.

36 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 27.

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France. From this time forward the real invasion plan would begin to take shape. It would be a plan based on a careful balance between the armed forces that the Allied hoped to land, and the invasion and support craft that would be available on any proposed invasion date.

VI. GERMAN PLANS & ESTIMATES 1942

In his memoirs, *Großadmiral* Erich Raeder, *Chef der Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine* (the OKM), commented on the magnitude of the dilemma facing the Germans in 1942:

A maritime power which intends to undertake an invasion always retains the strategic and tactical advantage since the choice of landing points remains in his hands. For a continental power which is called upon to defend its coastline it is therefore always difficult to decide which are the right places upon which to concentrate the main weight of the defense; for to be equally strong along as coast line of any great length, as Europe, is impossible. The continental power, too, has to wait, before it can take its operational decisions, until the maritime power has made its choice of landing points.³⁷

When the year 1942 began, the Allied planners had not made their choice of landing beaches, but the Germans could not afford to sit idly by. Defenses on the order and magnitude contemplated by Hitler could not be constructed overnight, or over just a month or two. The Germans, therefore, had to make decisions about the Allied intentions even before the Allies had prepared their invasion. The Germans could not be sure that any sector of their European coastline was completely safe, but they could, and did, roughly categorize the degrees of danger in various areas. On the basis of their estimates, the Germans began to concentrate their forces and allocate the necessary construction materials.³⁸

In January Hitler's attention was still focused on the situation that he believed was developing in Norway. During the third week of that month Hitler met with *Großadmiral* Raeder and told him that he was convinced that the Anglo-Americans were intent on attacking in northern Norway. Notwithstanding that the season was winter and the conditions in that arctic region were particularly harsh,

37 Karl Dönitz, *Memoirs, Ten Years and Twenty Days* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1959), 392.

38 Harrison, *Cross Channel Attack*, 138.

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Hitler told Raeder that he expected landing attempts to be made during the months of February or March. Hitler believed that the enemy would attempt to seize numerous lodgments along the coast and would followup the small actions with a offensive in the spring. Hitler claimed to have positive proof that Sweden had been promised the Norwegian port of Narvik and valuable Norwegian ore deposits in exchange for its entry into the war on the side of Germany's enemies. Hitler told the *Großadmiral* that Norway as to be "the zone of destiny" in the war.³⁹

On 12 February 1942 the *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisnau*, and *Prince Eugen* broke out of the blockade at Brest. Under the cover of fog, and while the British radars along the south coast of England were being jammed, the three capital ships made a daring daylight run up the Channel. They passed the coastal guns at Dover unscathed. Thus the ships that might have defended the coast of France were detailed to protect unthreatened Norway.⁴⁰

While Hitler was concerned about Norway, there were others in the German military establishment that sensed a danger in France. It was the common consensus of the commanders in the *West* that the *Armeeoberkommando 15* sector in France, the *Kanalküste* between the Seine River and the Belgium-Netherlands frontier, was the most gravely threatened area in France.⁴¹ That estimate was not based on any definite collected intelligence information, but was the product of logical German military reasoning.

The Germans had four major arguments to support the theory that the Allies would attack in the Pas-de-Calais region. Firstly, the Straits of Dover is the shortest cross-water route and was the route the Germans had earlier chosen for

39 *Führer Conferences*, 1942, 6.

40 John M. Carroll, *Secrets of Electronic Espionage* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1966), 71-72.

41 MS#ETHINT-1, *From Invasion to the Siegfried Line* (Warlimont), 2; An *Armeeoberkommando* (AOK) was the equivalent to an Allied Field Army and had subordinate to it two or more *Armeekorps* (AKs) that equated to an Allied Corps.

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the cross-Channel invasion of Britain. Secondly, a lodgment in the region would place the Allies close to the border of Germany and to the vital Ruhr industrial region. Thirdly, the Calais area was within the operational range of Britain-based fighter aircraft (the fighters would be needed to cover the invasion activity and conduct aerial attacks on the German defenders and rear areas). Fourthly, at *OB West*, Generalfeldmarschall von Witzleben feared that the loss of the railroad network in the Pas-de-Calais region would lead to the collapse of all the German defenses in France.

The Germans believed that with the benefits to be gained from a landing in the *AOK 15* area of Operations, the Allies would surely make their main assault in that region. So strong was the German faith in the seemingly obvious logic concerning the strategic aspects of the Pas-de-Calais option that subsequent reports of actual landings elsewhere were considered as indicating either an enemy diversion or deception.⁴² The longer the Germans looked at their invasion estimate, the more reasons they were able to discover to support it. In addition to the major reasons noted above, the *OKW* later added two more that seemed to make the logic of their appreciation irrefutable. In 1943 they began to construct launching sites for the V-1 “wonder weapon” in the Pas-de-Calais area and concluded that once the bombardment began their enemy would be forced to try to capture the launch site. Finally, they noted that an Allied attack east of Le Harve would bypass the one great obstacle in France, the Seine River.⁴³

In spite of all the reasons advanced by the *OKW* and the commanders in France, the *OKM* staff believed that a landing along the coast of the Pas-de-Calais was unlikely. They noted that the high bluffs along the coast and the

42 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 18; MS#ETHINT-1; The naval armada that would be used on D-Day was actually so large that all the ports from the Thames River to the Bristol Channel would be needed for embarkation purposes. So no matter where the main landing occurred, it would be a long crossing for the majority of the vessels. David Howarth, *D Day the Sixth of June, 1944* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1959), 4.

43 Dönitz, *Memoirs*, 392.

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scarcity of exits from the beaches presented physical difficulties that would hinder the rapid development of a Pas-de-Calais beachhead. Further, with a sailor's eye, they pointed out that the coast north of The Seine River was fully exposed to the unpredictable and often damaging west winds of the Channel. The *OKM* staff also negated the possibility of a landing along the Brittany coast because of offshore rocks and adverse winds. The *OKM* staff believed that the broad sand beaches of the Seine Bight offered the best site for the landing of a major force. That area was sheltered from winds by the Contentin Peninsula and offered the Port of Le Harve. In the *OKM* estimate it was considered essential for the Allies to capture a harbor as soon as possible after their initial landing.⁴⁴

In Early March 1942 Hitler appointed *Generalfeldmarschall* Gerd von Rundstedt to replace *Generalfeldmarschall* von Witzleben as the commander of *Oberbefehlshaber West (OB West)*.⁴⁵ Now *OB West* replaced *Heeresgruppenkommando A (HGK A)* as the senior *Wehrmacht* Headquarters for France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. It was located at Château de Saint-Germain-en-Laye in a western suburb of Paris. To further emphasize the importance that Hitler was giving to the general defense of the West, he issued Directive Number 40. The 23 March 1942 directive read, in part:

In the days to come the coast of Europe will be seriously exposed to the danger of enemy attack.... Special preparations must be paid to the British preparations for landings on the open coast.... Large-scale parachute and glider operations are likewise to be expected.... Timely recognition of the preparation, assembly, and approach of the enemy for a landing must be

44 Dönitz, *Memoirs*, 393; The German pre-occupation with the capture of a port stemmed in part from the previous *SEELÖWE* planning. They considered that dockside unloading was essential to the delivery of certain items of heavy equipment, especially tanks, armored fighting vehicles, and artillery, etc. The *OKM* considered Normandy unsuited for a landing there because of the *calvados* situated there, *i.e.*, the reefs. MS#B-284, *OB West (6 Jun-24 Jul 1944)* (Blumentritt), 28.

45 Harrison, *Cross Channel Attack*, 132, citing Officers Personnel File, *Generalfeldmarschall* von Rundstedt, *OKH/Heeres Personalamt Personalakten*; (*OB West*) was the senior German Military Headquarters in in Western Europe. It was the rough equivalent to the Allied Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) but did not have full operational control over all units within it area of responsibility.

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the goal of the intelligence services as well as that of the continual reconnaissance by the *Kriegsmarine* and *Luftwaffe*.⁴⁶

Hitler's directive also ordered that the Western defense should be organized so that the enemy could be destroyed before their landing craft reached the beaches, or, at the latest, immediately after the Allied troops reached the European shore.

If there was still any doubt that the gravity of the threat to France, it ended on 28 March 1942. On that date British commandos supported by naval forces made a raid against the Atlantic port of St. Nazaire, The action caused the German, particularly the *OKM*, considerable embarrassment. A thorough report of the raid was prepared and forwarded to Hitler. The Führer decided that the commander in France were ill equipped to repulse determined enemy forays. The only immediate outcome, however, was the relief of *Generalmajor* Kurt Zeidler who was then high in Hitler's favor.⁴⁷

The concern of *OKM* about the danger of attacks against the ports of France continued. On 20 July 1921 they prepared an estimate that stated that additional attacks against the *Unterseeboot* bases at Brest, St. Nazaire, and Lorient were probable. They also believed that that such raids might be preceded by large diversionary attacks in the Seine Bight.⁴⁸

During the second week of August 1942, Hitler took additional steps to meet what he perceived to be an immediate growing threat in the West. He supplemented Directive Number 40 by ordering the fortification of all Western

46 Harrison, *Cross Channel Attack*, 459, citing *OKW/SFSt/Op. Nr. 001031/42g Kdos.*, 23 Mar 42.

47 Ibid, 132, citing Officers Personnel File, Generaloberst Kurt Zeidler, OKH/Heeres Personalamt Personalakten; Other Allied raids had occurred at Etretat, Sark Island, Pont Bessins, Casquet, and in the Gironde Estuary. By 1943 the *Abwehr* pointed to a pattern of attacks in the sectors: (1) Pas-de-Calais, (2) Seine Estuary, (3) either side of Bordeaux, (4) Brittany's west coast, and (5) Sète to Marseille. Paul Leverkuekn, *German Military Intelligence* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1954), 117-19.

48 Ruge, "The Invasion of Normandy," *Decisive Battles*, 320.

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coastal beaches and ports. Hitler told *Generalfeldmarschall* Wilhelm Keitel, the head of *OKW*, that the proposed fortress construction in France should proceed with “*Fanatismus*.”⁴⁹

By September 1942 Hitler had no idea where or when an invasion was coming in Western Europe, but he was equally confident that an enemy invasion force could be defeated. His belief in the capability of the *Wehrmacht* was based on the success of the *Africa Korps* led by *Generalfeldmarschall* Erwin Rommel, and the *OKW* belief that the attack by Canadian forces on the port of Dieppe was an invasion prelude that had failed.⁵⁰

Dr. Joseph Göbbels and his Propaganda Ministry had quite naturally portrayed the 19 August 1942 as a “vain attempt at invasion.” This meme made excellent headlines. But there was no real military justification for labeling the raid as an invasion. Documents captured at Dieppe, statements made by captured Canadian soldiers, and other evidence clearly indicated that the attack was only a reconnaissance in force. In spite of the evidence at hand, von Rundstedt’s Chief of Staff (and Hitler appointee) *Generalleutnant* Zeitler, produced a report for Hitler in which the action was described as an actual attempt at invasion that had been destroyed a tenacious German defense effort.⁵¹

The “Dieppe Fiction” became the accepted opinion, and Zeitler’s diligence in confirming what he knew was Hitler’s wishful thinking, was soon rewarded. In late September Zeitler was promoted to the rank of *Generaloberst* and appointed Chief of *Oberkommando des Heeres* (the *OKH*). In his new command Zeitler became responsible for the conduct of operations on the Russian Front.⁵²

49 Harrison, *Cross Channel Attack*, 136; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 186.

50 Wilmot, *Ibid*, 187.

51 Harrison, *Cross Channel Attack*, 136-37; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 187. The Germans captured the Canadian Field Order which stated plainly that the attackers were to break off the action and withdraw after nine hours.

52 The *Oberkommando des Heeres* (Army General Staff) was responsible for operations on the Russian Front. The *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (Allied Forces

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Knowing that promotion was in the works gave him a special interest in maintaining his interpretation of the Dieppe Action. Belittling the significance of any invasion in France would mean that there would be no diminishment of the continued high priority flow of supplies to the Eastern Front.⁵³

Despite his self-serving best efforts, Zeitler was not able to allay totally Hitler's concern about an invasion in France. On 29 September 1942 Hitler convened a conference of top *Reich* military leaders. He analyzed for them the defeat of the Canadian 2nd Division at Dieppe. Hitler compared the introduction of large-scale amphibious at Dieppe to the introduction of the tank at Cambrai in World War I. In both cases, he pointed out, the British had failed by planning only for the meeting engagement, leaving the follow-up to the initiative of field commanders who had proven too timid to exploit the initial advantage. He told his audience that after Cambrai both the British and Germans had drawn the false conclusion that the tank was a technical failure. He warned the assembled *Reich* commanders against drawing a false deduction that amphibious operations were proven impossible by the enemy's setback at Dieppe. Hitler told them that the British could not afford to arrive at a similar conclusion, simply because they had no alternative but to try again in greater force. He told his commanders that their must construct their defenses with concrete and steel on the assumption that the enemy would initially achieve local air and naval superiority, and that the decisive action would be on the land and must be at the beachhead. Hitler closed the conference with the declaration that the Western defenses must be complete by 1 May 1943.⁵⁴

During the autumn of 1942, when everyone at OKW and OB West was concerned about Northern France, *Generalfeldmarschall* Albert Kesserling, the commander of *Luftflottenkommando II*, in Italy, became convinced that the

Supreme Command) was responsible for the conduct of Operations in Western Europe, Norway, Italy, the Balkans, and North Africa.

53 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 188.

54 Harrison, *Cross Channel Attack*, 136-37

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enemy would conduct a major operation somewhere in the Mediterranean area, probably against North Africa. He consulted the *Abwehr*. The chief of the *Abwehr*, *Admiral* Wilhelm Canaris, reported that there signs of an enemy foray in the Mediterranean, but his agency's view was that it probably would be directed against either Corsica, Southern France, or the Balkans. Canaris rated the chances of an attack against North Africa as possible but not likely. The *Abwehr* believed that the most likely target would be in the Balkans.⁵⁵

On 7 November 1942 *Reichsmarschall* Hermann Göring, the Chief of the *Oberkommando der Luftwaffe*, called Kesserling and told him that his estimate concerning a landing in North Africa was wrong. Göring reported that "the Führer is convinced that the attack will take place in Southern France" and that he would be personally responsible for sending all of the *Luftflottenkommando II* aircraft into action against the landing as soon as it came.⁵⁶

On 8 November 1942 the Americans landed at Algiers, Oran, and Casablanca. Hitler viewed the presence of the Americans in North Africa as presenting a grave threat to the southern coast of France which was under the control of the Vichy government. Not trusting Vichy, Hitler order that all of France be occupied by German forces to assure that the south coast would be properly defended. On 11 November ten divisions began deploying along the south and the west coast of France. The result weakened the German defenses along the Channel coast.⁵⁷

55 Karl Bartz, *The Downfall of the German Secret Service* (London: William Kimber & Co., Ltd., 1956), 130-31.

56 Ibid.

57 Harrison, *Cross Channel Attack*, 143; B.H. Liddell-Hart, *The German Generals Talk* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1948), 229-30; B. H. Liddell-Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill* (London: Cassel & Company, 1951), 384. During his post-war interrogation, *General der Artillerie* Walter Warlimont, Dep. CO, *OKW/WFSt*) stated that the effect of the surprise associated with the invasion of North Africa in 1942, and Hitler's reaction to it by occupying all of France (adding 400 miles to the defense line) was decisive in terms of the course of the war in Western Europe. MS#T-121, *OB West*, Part One, (Zimmerman, et al.).

VII. ALLIED PLANS & DECEPTION OPS 1943

Early in 1942 a British group called the Combined Commanders had relieved the Joint Planning Staff of the responsibility for planning the invasion of Europe.⁵⁸ On 5 February 1943, after a year of research, the Combined Commanders promulgated a plan called “The Selection of Assault Areas in a Major Operation in Northwestern Europe.” Among the several areas considered for suitability as an invasion site, that portion of the Pas-de-Calais coast north of the Somme River to Gavelines was thought to be the best suited for landing purposes. That segment of the Normandy coast between the Vire and Orne Rivers was considered to be the second best suited site.⁵⁹

At the SYMBOL Conference held at Casablanca in January 1943, Churchill and Roosevelt decided that the Combined Commander Planning staff should be increased in size by the addition of American personnel, and that the entire staff should operate under the direction of a Supreme Commander, or a deputy until the Supreme Commander was appointed.⁶⁰ The enlarged staff as established in April 1943. Lieutenant General Frederick E. Morgan (British Army) took charge of the staff as senior planner with the title of Chief of Staff to the Supreme Commander (designate). He named the staff COSSAC, after the initials of his title, and on 17 April the first COSSAC meeting was held. Their task, as outlined in the directive that created the staff, was to plan and execute “a full scale assault against the Continent in 1944, as early as possible.”⁶¹

58 The Combined Commanders consisted of the C-in-C Portsmouth; the C-in-C Fighter Command, the C-in-C Home Forces; the Director, Combined Operations Command, and the Commanding General, European Theater of Operations, U.S Army.

59 Norman, *Operation Overlord*, 32; Bernard L. Montgomery, *Normandy to the Baltic* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1948), 8-18.

60 Harrison, *Cross Channel Attack*, 47, citing CSC 169 Organization of Command, Control Planning and Training for Cross-Channel Operations, 22 Jan 43.

61 Ibid, 49-51, citing Memorandum, Morgan for Br. COS, Cross-Channel Operations, 21 Mar 43, Annex to COS(43)148(O), 23 Mar 43.

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The COSSAC staff had before it on the agenda of its first meeting the last plan of the Combined Commanders; this plan had been promulgated on 1 March. Called Operation SKYSCRAPER, it provided for the simultaneous landing of four assault divisions, two each on the Normandy coast near Caen, and the Contentin Peninsula coast near Varreville. Four airborne divisions were to be dropped inland from the beached to interfere with the employment of German reserves. In addition, eighteen commando battalions would land along the French coast to tie down other German units that might be moved to the invasion areas. After the port of Cherbourg was captured, the plan called for a land advance against Le Harve. The latter attack would be supported by a second amphibious assault north of the port city. The plan was bold, but the COSSAC staff discovered that the number of landing craft needed to support the operation would not be available in the spring of 1944.⁶²

The COSSAC planner realized that logistics would present the major problem in the execution of any cross-Channel attack, and to solve some of the problems in that resolve, the TRIDENT conference was held. Top Americana and British leaders in the COSSAC staff assembled in Quebec in May 1943. The conferees studied the lessons learned from the Dieppe Raid. It became apparent to all that no matter which of the Channel ports they eventually captured, the dockside facilities would likely be severely damaged and that it would take months to repair them. Therefore, to deal with the resupply problem, it was decided that provision had to be made for an extended period of over-the-beach supply. It was also decided that a buildup of materials would be made that would allow for an assault by five infantry divisions, with two more ready for immediate deployment. Two airborne divisions and twenty infantry divisions would also be available for later movement to the beachhead. It was also decided that the buildup would be programmed to allow for an invasion by 1 May 1944.⁶³

62 Ibid, 57.

63 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 56, 59, citing Draft Supplementary Directive to COSSAC, Amphibious Operations from the UK, incl B to CCS 250/1, 25 May 43; Norman, *Operation Overlord*, 34.

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In the month of May 1943 the British Broadcasting Corporation (the BBC) began to wage a war of nerves against the Germans. The BBC's French language broadcast contained warnings directed to French civilians which stated that an invasion was to be made in France and that those in the coastal area should move away in order to avoid injury when the invasion began. No time was given as to when the invasion would begin. And as part of the Allied deception plan, the broadcasts continued until mid-July 1944.⁶⁴

In June 1943 the COSSAC staff took a last look at the tentative decision to land in Normandy and on the Contentin Peninsula. The suitability of that area was compared with the Pas-de-Calais sector. The general suitability of both areas as far as suitable landing beaches was comparable. However, in the Pas-de-Calais, only four beaches were suitable for an assault, and they could only accommodate two divisions in the initial assault. The absence of a port in the Pas-de-Calais and the strong German defenses would surely prevent the desire for a rapid buildup of forces. That meant that the Germans might be able to effectively seal off the invasion lodgment and pound it to pieces. COSSAC concluded that the Pas-de-Calais was really not the best suited for a massive assault and buildup. At the end of their study the COSSAC planners decided that three divisions would land in the vicinity of Caen on the beaches between the Orne River and Port en Bessin. Left open was the option to land on the Contentin Peninsula, contingent on the availability of a fourth assault divisions and the vessels to move and support it.⁶⁵

64 Howarth, *D Day the Sixth of June*, 80.

65 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 72, citing COSSAC(43) 11th Mtg, 19 Jun 43, and COSSAC(43) 13th Mtg, 2 July 43; The Pas-de-Calais had the good advantages of a quick turn-around time for ships and air cover potential. But it also contained the main concentration of *Luftwaffe* fighter airfields. It also was the most strongly defended Channel sector. The Pas-de-Calais simply did not offer a particularly good potential for expansion of the beachhead. Additional landings also would have been necessary to capture the ports of Le Harve, Rouen, and Antwerp. The Normandy had fewer drawback and became the final, and best choice.

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On 31 July 1943 COSSAC completed its studies and issued "Operation OVERLORD, Report and Appreciation." It was designed to serve as the outline around which the detailed planning of the invasion would be shaped.⁶⁶ During the QUADRANT Conference held in Quebec in mid-August 1943, the COSSAC report was reviewed by Churchill and Roosevelt. The Prime Minister proposed that a simultaneous diversionary operation might aid in the successful development for surprise attack. It was decided that a deception operation would be initiated designed to make the German believe that the main invasion would come in the Pas-de-Calais, which is what Hitler and the Germans already thought. Churchill also proposed that a diversionary invasion should actually be made. The COSSAC planners decided that a seaborne assault in Southern France would serve to pin down all of the German units located south of the Loire River, and thus was born Operation ANVIL. Lastly, as a hedge against the possibility that the Germans might discover the secrets of the invasion plan and reinforce Normandy, the conferees decided that an alternative plan would be prepared for an invasion of Norway.⁶⁷

The British Special Operations, Executive, (the SOE) and the Special Operations Branch of the American Office of Strategic Services (the OSS) were both conducting intelligence and sabotage operations in France. The possibility of using these operations in support of OVERLORD had been considered by COSSAC. In their judgment the French underground would not be called upon to offer any major support to the operation, but would constitute a bonus that could lend general support to the overall operation. On 30 August 1943 COSSAC decided to include the sabotage capability of the French Resistance within the OVERLORD plan.⁶⁸

66 Norman, *Operation Overlord*, 33-34.

67 Ibid, 39; The plan to invade Norway involved an update of the older JUPITER plan.

68 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 202-05; M. R. D. Foot, *S.O.E. in France* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1966), p. 350.

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By September 1943 the Allies had worked out most of the details regarding the movement of men and supplies to the embarkation ports. To test their plan, they decided to stage Operation HARLEQUIN as a movement exercise. At the same time the Allies were planning to launch the invasion of Italy. The Allies planned to support the Italian invasion by deception operations. They decided that Operation HARLEQUIN could be integrated into the deception operation. And so it was that Operation COCKADE, as the deception plan was called, had the objective of pinning down the German units in France during the 7 September 1943 invasion of Italy. The British fighter command also hoped that an English feint would provoke fighter air battles that would result in a crippling of the *Luftwaffe*.⁶⁹

Operation COCKADE was a three-part deception plan designed to present simultaneous threats against Norway (Operation TINDALL), the Brittany Peninsula (Operation WADHAM) and the Pas-de-Calais (Operation STARKEY). The implementation of the latter portion of the feints included the HARLEQUIN movement exercise. Troops were moved to the ports of Deal, Dover, and Folkestone where a few LST-type landing ships were actually loaded. In the Straits of Dover, a destroyer flotilla joined the landing ships and all steamed southwestward toward Dungeness. The *Luftwaffe* made a strong reconnaissance effort over the English coast during the exercise, but the big fighterplane air battle the British Fighter Command hoped for did not develop. The only hostile response initiated by the Germans was a brief artillery duel between the destroyers and the German coastal batteries at Cap Gris Nez.⁷⁰

The Germans were not fooled by the deception operations, but Operation HARLEQUIN did prove to be of value to the invasion planners. The COSSAC staff discovered that it would be impossible to camouflage the massing of men,

69 Harrison, 70, citing *V Corps History* (Paris: V Corps, 1945), 20; Dalgleish, *We Planned t Second Front*, 73; Liddell-Hart, *The German Generals Talk*, 231; Liddell-Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 385-86.

70 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 73.

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material, and shipping on the eve of the invasion. They decided that their planning would have to account for the fact that the Germans would know that an invasion was about to begin. The two facts that the COSSAC staff decided could—and must—be kept secret were the date and place of the invasion. On 17 September 1943 COSSAC initiated a special security procedure, known as BIGOT, by which all of the papers relating to Operation OVERLORD which disclosed the target area and the precise date of the invasion were limited in circulation to a small group of select individuals. The code word NEPTUNE was applied to all such area/date-documents to distinguish them from other OVERLORD associated papers that did not have to be handled with the same degree of extreme caution.⁷¹

At the end of September 1943, the Supreme Commander had not been appointed, and Lieutenant General Morgan continued as the chief of the invasion planning staff. At the SYMBOL Conference Churchill and Roosevelt agreed that the Supreme Commander would be an American. The American president had implied that he would appoint General George C. Marshall. Because Marshall was serving as the Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, and could in that role assist the COSSAC staff, Roosevelt's delay in making the formal appointment had been accepted by Churchill. In Washington, the possible reassignment of Marshall became a matter of public knowledge and a political issue. Many people were violently opposed to his appointment as the Supreme Commander. For some people the position of Supreme Commander would represent a step down for Marshall. For others the question was one of finding someone else who could do the vital and excellent job that Marshall was doing—he was, after all managing a war in two distinct theaters. The pros and cons of the reassignment issue were aired in American newspapers, magazines, and radio broadcasts during the last quarter of 1943.⁷²

71 Forrest C. Pogue, *U.S. Army in WW – The Supreme Command in the European Theater of Operation* (Washington: Department of the ARMY, 1954), 162.

72 Winston C. Churchill, *The Second World War, V: Closing the Ring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1951), 301.

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In October 1943, Cordell Hull and Anthony Eden journeyed to Moscow to discuss the key issues of war strategy with Molotov and to prepare for a later meeting of their respective heads of state.⁷³ During the meeting, Molotov insisted on an early invasion of France.⁷⁴ On December 1, 1943, Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt met at Tehran, Iran. During this meeting, known as the EUREKA Conference, the Russians again insisted on an early invasion of France. In that proposal the Americans joined and thus overruled Churchill's desire to first make a landing in the Balkans. Stalin was promised that the landing on the Anglo-American front would be initiated by the end of May 1944.⁷⁵

In December 1943 Allied air reconnaissance located ninety-five "ski sites" in the Pas-de-Calais and around Cherbourg. By then the connection between agent reports of "strange construction" in the Abbeville area, other reports of pilotless bombs, and the presence of "ski sites" in the German's Peenemünde weapons development center, had been established. After a conference was held to assess the threat posed by the flying weapon launching sites, it was decided that they could be destroyed by aerial attacks before the construction in France was finished, and so they were.⁷⁶

On Christmas Eve 1944, Roosevelt announced to the people of America and to servicemen abroad that General Dwight David Eisenhower had been selected to be the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force that

73 Walter Schellenberg, *The Labyrinth* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), 337.

74 Elyesa Bazna and Hans Nogly, *I Was Cicero* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 4.

75 Hans Speidel, *Invasion 1944, Rommel and the Normandy Campaign* (Chicago: Regnery Company, 1950), 4.

76 Constance Babington-Smith, *Air Spy* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 215-6, 220, 230. By February 1944, 73 of the 96 sites in the West were destroyed beyond all hope of repair. The Germans decided to abandon the existing launch site construction program and began to build a simpler and more easily camouflaged type of launcher. Wilmot. *The Struggle for Europe*, 153-54.

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was massing to march on German.⁷⁷ Some hours earlier General Eisenhower and his staff had actually arrived in England.⁷⁸

Eisenhower's first task was to review the existing COSSAC plan. The plan that Morgan and his staff had devised called for an initial landing of three infantry and two airborne divisions in the triangle Caen-Port en Bessin-Orne River. Eisenhower and Field Marshall Bernard Law Montgomery, the British Ground Forces Commander, both considered that the number of divisions in the initial assault was insufficient to insure success in establishing a beachhead, and that the invasion frontage was too compressed to allow for free maneuvering during the breakout phase of the post-invasion battle. Accordingly, they decided that the initial assault should be made by five infantry and three airborne divisions. That decision immediately put a severe strain on the logistical buildup, particularly that portions involving the acquisition of appropriate landing craft. Because the COSSAC plan had anticipated additional airborne assaults in Brittany, the airlift of an additional airborne division did not present a special logistical problem for the Air Force. In order to allow for the assembly of additional landing craft, Eisenhower decided to postpone the invasion until the first week of June.⁷⁹

To accommodate the two additional infantry divisions, Eisenhower and Montgomery lengthened the invasion frontage to include the entire Normandy coast between the Orne and Vire Rivers, and added a small area beyond the Vire on the southeast coast of the Contentin Peninsula. In all, the new invasion frontage was about 75 miles in width, stretching in a quarter circle from Quinéville on the Peninsula to the mouth of the Orne River in eastern Normandy. In all, it was an area that offered several important advantages to the invader. The Contentin Peninsula protected the invasion sector from the prevailing Channel

77 Pogue, *U.S. Army in WW – The Supreme Command in the European Theater of Operation*, 23.

78 J.F.C. Fuller, *The Second World War 1939-45* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1948), 289.

79 Ibid.

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winds. The sector could be strategically isolated from the rest of France by bombing the bridges spanning the Seine and Loire Rivers. The two large ports of Cherbourg and Le Havre lay at either flank of the landing area; and after their capture and repair, both could serve as entry ways for the massive buildup of Allied forces on the continent. An assault on the Contentin Peninsula would put one infantry and two airborne divisions beyond the Vire River and thereby preempt the German options of trying to establish a defensive line along that natural water barrier. Finally, the whole area was within the effective operating range of the Britain-based fighter aircraft. This latter factor was important because the fighters would serve in two roles: establishing air superiority above the invasion force, and conducting rocket and gunfire attacks on the Germans behind the invasion area.⁸⁰

In order to keep the intelligence information concerning the German defensive preparations in the landing areas current, reconnaissance teams made frequent visits along the entire French coast. This served both to conceal the true invasion area and to reinforce the German view that the Pas-de-Calais was where a main landing would come, with diversions being tried elsewhere. A few of the “visitors” were caught and executed in accordance with Hitler’s Secret Order No. 00/3820/42. The majority of the Allied teams did not get caught, but at the same time they were careful to make sure their visits did not escape the detection of the Germans. As, noted, to conceal the special interest in the Normandy area, COSSAC directed that visits should be made all along the French coast. To make sure the Germans knew that the reconnaissance was being made, the teams were instructed to be careful to leave behind discoverable signs of the nocturnal visit. Because all the teams played this little game, none ever knew where the real invasion would come.⁸¹

80 Fuller, *The Second World War 1939-45*, 289.

81 Norman, *Operation Overlord*, 50; Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 14-15; Sir Frederick Morgan, *Overture to Overlord* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1950), 175-76.

VIII. GERMAN PLANS & ESTIMATES 1943

During the first quarter of 1943 the watching Germans did not detect any sign that might have indicated to them that an invasion of Europe was imminent. In mid-May 1943, however, after the fall of Tunis and Bizerte, Hitler became increasingly anxious about the possibility of an enemy assault against Southern and Western France. He feared that the enemy might attempt a giant pincer attack with landings in both the Golfe du Lion and the Bay of Biscay. At the same time he feared that the Anglo-Americans might invade Mallorca in Spain's Balearic Islands, and use it as a stepping stone to conduct a followup landing in the vicinity of Barcelona, Spain, and from there march across the Pyrenees Mountains into Southern France. Elements of the German Divisions in Southern France were ordered to shift their defensive flank westward to cover the Spanish border. This redeployment of the *Wehrmacht* forces was done by Hitler over the objections of *OB West* which considered the mountain barrier a sufficient deterrent to an attack from that quarter. *OB West* also pointed out to Hitler that because the southern sector was beyond the effective operating range of the enemy fighter aircraft, an invasion in either the South or West of France was extremely unlikely.⁸²

The concern of *OB West* remained focused on the northern coast of France. On 6 June 1943, *Generalfeldmarschall* von Rundstedt, with the permission of *OKW*, ordered his subordinate divisional commanders to reconnoiter and prepare plans for the construction of a *Zweite Stellung* twenty kilometers to the rear of the *Kampfgebiet* that lay along and immediately behind the Channel Coast beaches.⁸³ There was not sufficient construction material available in France actually to prepare the second defensive network, but von

82 Liddell-Hart, *The German Generals Talk*, 230; Liddell-Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 384-85.

83 The *Kampfgebiet*, according to the *Wehrmacht* doctrine, was the main Battle Area, a zone some 20 kilometers in depth along the *Kanalküste*. The *Zweite Stellung* was a second defensive line behind the main battle area.

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Rundstedt had become extremely anxious about the shallow depth of the man battle area behind the Channel coast. It was his hope that after the surveys were completed, material might actually be found to construct a second line of defense—especially in the Pas-de-Calais sector guarded by *AOK 15*.⁸⁴

Hitler worried about the possibility of an attack in the south of France until June 1943. At that time the decision was made to install the *Vergeltung 1* (*Vengeance 1*, buzz bomb) launching sites on the Contentin Peninsula and in the Pas-de-Calais sector. The *OKW* advised Hitler that it believed the deployment of the majority of the weapons in the latter area would surely the enemy to attack in that area in order to save London from the devastation that a daily *V-1* bombardment would cause. To make capture of the Pas-de-Calais region impossible, Hitler ordered that a first priority be given to the construction of additional defensive positions in that area and the reinforcement of the existing ones. A second priority was assigned to the protection of sites in the vicinity of Cherbourg.⁸⁵

On 10 July 1943, and to the complete surprise of the Germans who were on guard against a possible enemy assault in the Greek Peloponnese, or on the island of Sardinia, the Allies landed in Sicily.⁸⁶ That action presaged an enemy intent to invade Italy. The Germans recognized that they could not afford another intelligence failure involving the lack of an accurate and timely pre-invasion warning. But, as their need for accurate and timely information increased, the chances of their obtaining it were decreasing.

84 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 155-56, citing (1) Ltrs *OB WEST* to *OKW/WFSt*, 2 Apr 43 and 27 Jun 43, (2) *OKH/Op. A.*, *Küstenschutz Kanalküste 20.VI.42-18.V.44*, and *OKW/SFSt*, *KTB 1.VII.-31.VIII.43*; Friedrich Ruge, "The Invasion of Normandy," *Decisive Battles of World War II*, 328.

85 Harrison, 138, citing *OKW/WFSt*, *KTB 1.VII-31.VIII.43*, 14 July 1943.

86 The British had utilized a daring deception plan that succeeded in passing into German hands documents that convinced the *OKW* and Hitler that a two prong invasion was going to take place in Sardinia and the Peloponnese. The details of that deception are contained in Ewen Montagu's *The Man Who Never Was* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1954)

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Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler, and his *RSHA/SD* were attempting to discredit *Amtsgruppe Abwehr* by challenging the accuracy of its reports.⁸⁷ The task was made easier by the direct access that Himmler had with Hitler. Hitler was presented with information from *RSHA/SD* that conflicted with reports from the *Abwehr* agents. The obvious comments made by Himmler to Hitler was that the reports from the agents run by his organization were true and that the others were false, or at least misleading. The *RSHA/SD* attack also operated on the assumption that Hitler wanted reassurance more than truth, and Himmler did what he could to present an optimistic picture of the situation in the West. To bolster their “bright” reports, they scaled down all reports pertaining to the number, strength, and combat readiness of the Allied divisions believed to be in England.⁸⁸

To counter the false picture being created by the *RSHA/SD*, the *Abwehr*'s branch concerned with the analysis of the Allied order of battle also falsified their reports. The “Foreign Armies West” Branch “created” thirty fictitious British and American divisions and placed them in the order of battle concerning the assembly of enemy forces in England. The Chief of the Branch, *Oberst* von Roenne, justifies the falsification to his staff on the grounds that by the time the *RSHA/SD* has gone through its regular process of scaling down the *Abwehr*

87 . The *Abwehr* handled military intelligence and counterintelligence. The word “*Abwehr*” means “defense” and the original function of six-officer *Abwehr* unit permitted under the Treaty of Versailles was counterintelligence. As the German army grew, so did the *Abwehr*, and its functions. In 1934 the German Army (the *Wehrmacht*) was reorganized and the *Abwehr* was placed under the control of the OKW. By then the *Abwehr* had three sections: *Amt I*, for secret intelligence collection; *Amt II*, for sabotage and special duties; and *Amt III*, for counterintelligence. Kahn, *The Codebreakers*, 453. The dispute that gave rise to the *RSHA-Abwehr* dispute began in 1941. Reinhard Heydrick, Kaltenbrunner's predecessor, was jealous of the overlap of *Abwehr Amt III* and the *RSHA* counterintelligence functions. Karl Bartz, *The Downfall of the German Secret Service*, 70.

88 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 188. The object of Hitler's closest staff was to maintain his *Nachtwandlerische Sicherheit* (Sleepwalker's sense of security) and from this the *RSHA* took its clue. Wilmot, 161.

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reports, a “truer” picture of the actual enemy threat would result. The subterfuge had the desired short-range effect of stimulating a more realistic appraisal of the actual enemy threat, but in June, 1944, the project boomeranged with tragic consequences.⁸⁹

It would be incorrect to believe that *RSHA/SD* was totally inept and incapable of accurate reporting. In the first part of August 1943 they captured Gilbert Norman. Norman was a major in the British Army and acting as a radio agent for one of the S.O.E. networks in France. On his person at the time of his capture were several decoded messages from London. There is some evidence to suggest that one of the messages contained the key to the system which S.O.E. Headquarters planned to use to alert its networks in France that the invasion of France was imminent and their prearranged sabotage plans should be initiated. The *RSHA/SD* discovered that sequential receipt of the first, and then the second line of Paul Verlaine’s poem “Song of Autumn” would mean that an invasion would occur within the next 48-hours. They also discovered that Norman’s network had been instructed to listen to B.B.C, nightly broadcasts on the 1st, 2nd, 15th, and 16th. of each month which would be read during the “personal messages” portion of the French language broadcasts. The second line would come in the same manner sometime during the two weeks that followed the receipt of the first line. The S.O.E. did not discover that the alert code for Norman’s net had been compromised, and it remained in effect.⁹⁰

The *RSHA/SD* did not inform the *Amtsgruppe Abwehr* of the discovery of the sabotage and invasion alert code. Keeping the secret to themselves, the *RSHA/SD* alerted all of its radio monitoring units to be on guard for the signal to

89 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 188; The originator of the idea of adding fictional units to the Order of Battle reports was von Roenne’s deputy Michael. See “File on Colonel M”, *British Army on the Rhine Review*, March 4, 1946.

90 Foot, *S.O.E. in France*, 304; The “Song of Autumn” code will be discussed later; there is some confusion as to just when and how the Germans found out about the Paul Verlaine poem code phrase. An unofficial history of S.O.E. activity says that Gilbert Norman was captured in Paris on 24 June 1943. See E. H. Cookridge, *Inside S.O.E.* (London: Arthur Barker, Ltd. 1966), 253-57.

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the French resistance. While the radio units were listening nightly to the B.B.C broadcasts, the *Luftwaffe* was active over England. At the beginning of September 1943 their reconnaissance aircraft detected a buildup of landing craft in the English ports opposite Cap Gris Nes. The cape is on the Côte d'Opale in the Pas-de-Calais sector of France. The pilots also detected the movement of troops and equipment into the English coastal area just opposite. The *RSHA/SD* radio intercept were particularly alert, but the first two days of September came and went without the first line of the Verlaine poem having been broadcast. Meanwhile, on 2 September 1943 the Allies made a seaborne assault on the beaches at Salerno in Italy. Von Rundstedt studied the situation and decided that the apparent appearances of a threat was a little "too obvious," and was probably a deception connected with the Italian landing. The *OKW* and Hitler agreed with this *OB West* estimate, and seven German divisions were moved from France to Italy. The only significant action *OB West* ordered taken along the Channel coast was the flooding of the field behind the beaches at Caen, and in the southern portion of the Contentin Peninsula.⁹¹

The weakening of the Wehrmacht strength in France led *OKW* to review its plans for strategic defense in northwest Europe. They decided that if France was invaded they would withdraw all the *Infanteriedivision* forces from Norway and Denmark and send them to the threatened areas. On 4 October, the *OKW* also suggested that if the Italian Fascist government fell, all Wehrmacht should be withdrawn to the Alps and the divisions not needed to man that defensive line

91 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 70-71; Dalglish, *We Planned the Second Front*, 73; Mussolini was overthrown on 25 July 1943. On 8 September the Italian Badoglio regime announced that it had concluded, five days earlier, an Armistice with the Allied Forces. This news came as a complete surprise to Hitler. Canaris, at *Abwehr*, had passed reports to Keitel saying that such a thing would happen, but Canaris annotated his report saying that they were of a doubtful validity. The annotation misled Keitel who did not tell Hitler. Bartz, *The Downfall of the German Secret Service*, 133.

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should be sent to France and to the Russian Front. The latter suggestion was not accepted by Hitler.⁹²

The concern of *OKW* about the possible fall of the Italian Fascist government resulted from the intercept of a transatlantic radiotelephone call. Using their “Scrambled-Voice Breaker” device, the Germans had listened in on a call between Churchill and Roosevelt. During the conversation there was a guarded reference to “arming our prisoners.” The *RSHA* and *Abwehr* both interpreted the statement to mean that the Allies expected the Italians to surrender.⁹³ The intercept efforts of the German Postal Intelligence Research Bureau had, finally, paid one important dividend.

On 28 October 1943, Walter Schellenberg, Chief of *RSHA/SD*, received a call from German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop at *Auswärtige Amt* which held out the promise of a major intelligence coup. The Foreign Minister said that on 26 October an individual had contacted *Obersturmbannführer SS L. C. Moyzisch*, a *RSHA* representative at the German Embassy in Ankara, Turkey. The individual had offered to sell secret intelligence information from the safe of the British Ambassador to Turkey, Sir Hugh Knatchbull-Hughessen. Schellenberg said that the offer was suspicious, but certainly worth a look, and that the *RSHA/SD* would supply the money needed to pay the individual. On 29 August von Ribbentrop cabled Ankara the authorization to proceed with the buy.⁹⁴

The individual in Ankara who had stolen the papers was recruited by the Germans and was given the covername of *CICERO*. The first two rolls of film supplied by *CICERO* contained a report of the Moscow meeting between Hull, Eden, and Molotov, including the latter’s demand for an early invasion of

92 Harrison, 151-52, citing *OKW/WFSt, KTB 1.IX.-31.XII.43*, 4 October 1943.

93 Ian Goodhope Colvin, *Master Spy* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1952), 228.

94 Schellenberg, *The Labyrinth*, 335; Bazna & Nogly, *I was Cicero*, 50; L.C. Moyzisch, *Operation Cicero* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1950) 23-38.

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France.⁹⁵ The news of the Moscow conference convinced Hitler and the *OKW* that an invasion was imminent. Unfortunately for them, they were uncertain where it would come.⁹⁶

The material supplied by *CICERO* included copies of cables that bore date-time notations. The Germans hoped that if they used the cables as “cribs” they might be able to unravel the secret system of the British diplomatic code. The codebreakers at *RSHA* and *Auswärtige Amt (Per Z)* began to go over the diplomatic messages they had previously intercepted. They were able to discover the cipher key to the messages photographed by *CICERO* but nothing more. At that time the British were using a system of double-encipherment using one time pads. It was a disappointment to the German code experts who had hoped for a major intelligence collection breakthrough.⁹⁷

On 30 October 1943, *General der Artillerie* Alfred Jodl, chief of the operations staff at *OKW/WFSt*, told *Großadmiral* Karl Dönitz, chief of the *OKM*, that, in agreement with von Rundstedt, he believed that by the spring of 1944 the final decision of the war would be fought out in the Western Theater. Jodl said that apart from possible landings in the Balkans or along the coast from Norway to Denmark, the enemy would eventually make a Western landing designed to secure a lodgment from which to launch large-scale ground operations aimed at the indispensable Ruhr Valley region of Germany.⁹⁸ Jodl’s implicit message was that if that lodgment was not destroyed, Germany would lose the war.

While the Germans were trying to discover where in the Western theater the *Schwerpunkt* was coming, they managed, in late October 1943 to capture a British agent. He told them that the Allies were planning to invade in the Netherlands. It was the only positive clue that they had, but when Hitler was told,

95 Schellenberg, *The Labyrinth*, 337; Bazna & Nogly, *I was Cicero*, 58.

96 Harrison, 128, citing *OKW/WFSt*, *KTB 1.IX.-31.XII.43*, 11 December 1943.

97 Kahn, *The Codebreakers*, 451-52.

98 *Seekriegsleitung*, *1 Abteilung*, *KTB 1.XI.-30.XI.43*, 1 November 1943.

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he refused to believe it. As a result, the Netherlands sector remained one of the few areas in the West exempt from special anti-invasion attention in 1943.⁹⁹

Unable to rely on the captured agent report to make their estimates concerning the probable place of the anticipated Allied invasion, the Germans turned again to reason and logic. Von Rundstedt, assuming that the enemy would try to capture a port, told his staff that “Normandy with Cherbourg, and Brittany with Brest are important areas if the Channel front.”¹⁰⁰ In the belief that the invasion was imminent von Rundstedt ordered that preparation of a secondary defensive line should commence in accordance with the earlier plans for its construction.¹⁰¹

Hitler also reacted to his growing worry about the invasion threat to the West, and on 3 November 1943 he issued Directive Number 51. It read in part:

The Threat from the East remains, but an even greater danger looms in the West: the Anglo-American landings! ... All signs point to an offensive against the Western Front of Europe no later than the spring, and perhaps earlier. For that reason, I can no longer justifying weakening of the West in favor of other theaters of war. I have therefore decided to strengthen the defenses in the West, particularly at places from which we shall launch our long-rang war against England. For those are the very points at which the enemy must and will attack; there—unless all indications are misleading—will be fought the decisive invasion battle. Holding attacks and diversions on other fronts are to be expected. Not even the possibility of a large-scale offensive against Denmark may be excluded.¹⁰²

99 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 138, citing *OKW/WFSt, KTB 1.IX.-31.XII.43*, 31 October 1943.

100 Lionel Frederic Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy* (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1962), 128.

101 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 156.

102 Harrison, 464-65, citing *OKW/WFSt/Op. No. 66256/42g.K.Chefs*, 3 November 1943.

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A few days later, while addressing a meeting of *Gauleiters*, General Jodl spoke with unusual frankness about the Allied threat in the West. “On the Eastern Front,” he said, “things are getting warm, but no success gained by the enemy there can directly disastrous unless we should lose the Rumanian oilfields. On the other hand, the High Command cannot close its eyes to the fact that in the West the brand is now held in readiness to start a conflagration which, if not extinguished then and there, will get out of control.” Warning the *Gauleiters* of the difficulty of defending the entire Mediterranean, Atlantic, and Channel Coasts, Jodl said, “Along a front of 3,600 kilometers it is impossible to reinforce the coastal front with a system of fortifications in depth at all points.... Hence it is essential to have strong, mobile and specially equipped reserves in the West for the purpose of forming *Schwerpunkte*. Any weakening of these tactical reserves will involve a risk acutely endangering the overall situation.”¹⁰³

In response to Hitler’s directive the *OKW* drew up a plan, consistent with Jodl’s speech remarks, to reinforce the Western Front in order to meet any attack that might occur in that area. If the invasion came in France, the *OKW* planned to move three divisions from Norway and Denmark (something less than their September plan), one division from Italy. And four light infantry divisions from the Balkans. Those units would provide the tactical reserve thought needed to insure that the invasion area could be sealed off.¹⁰⁴

At the end of 1943, the general fortification construction on the Channel coast was approaching completion, according to the then current plan, but only in the Le Havre to Antwerpen sector guarded by *AOK 15*. The progress might have been greater, but von Rundstedt lacked faith in a static defense approach. It was he who had outflanked the concrete shell of the Maginot Line in 1940, and he well knew the danger of failing to maintain a strong mobile reserve—on ready for immediate action. As Commander-in-Chief *OB WEST* the task of Western Defense was his responsibility and he was determined to overcome the “Maginot

103 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 144, citing *Nuremberg Document L172*.

104 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 231, citing *Die OKW Kriegsschauplaetz*.

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Spirit.”¹⁰⁵ One of the plans to overcome the danger of an enemy penetration of the relative thin coastal defense battle area was to have a strong second line constructed twenty kilometers to the rear of the beaches and beyond the range of the enemy’s naval artillery.¹⁰⁶

Having a strong “second line of defense” was not von Rundstedt’s only idea concerned with finding a better strategy for the defense of the Western Front. On 26 November 1943, he told *OKW* that a successful employment of the *OKW* reserves in the coastal areas would be impossible unless the *Luftwaffe* could successfully silence the long-range heavy guns of the enemy’s battleships and cruisers. Realizing that the entire German army and *Luftwaffe* were already over-extended and that the *Luftwaffe* would have great difficulty in preventing the enemy from developing naval and air superiority in the invasion area, and over northern France, von Rundstedt boldly proposed that all garrisons of non-coastal defense troops in France should be evacuated to Germany. He advanced many argument that favored such a strategy and in hindsight it might have been a much better strategy. Nevertheless, to no one’s surprise Hitler refused to listen to any plan that advocated retreat and the surrender of France. Still, Hitler had faith in the *Generalfeldmarschall’s* command ability and kept von Rundstedt in overall command in the West.¹⁰⁷

In order to assure himself that the defense of the Channel coast outside the Pas-de-Calais area would be properly attended to, Hitler appointed *Generalfeldmarschall* Erwin Rommel to the position of the newly created *Armeegruppe zur Besonderen Verwendung (AzBV)*. This unit was created as a special purpose reserve headquarters directly subordinate to the *OKW*. Rommel had no troops subordinate to his command, however, on the day the invasion came, the entire area under attack would be placed under his command and

105 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 186.

106 Ibid.

107 Fuller, *The Second World War 1939-45*, 291; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 153-54.

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control.¹⁰⁸ To give Rommel a strong voice in the councils of *OB WEST*, Hitler also gave him a *Gummibefehl*, literally an “elastic directive,” which made Rommel the Führer’s personal representative and inspector in all matters pertaining to the construction of the physical defenses which now formed Hitler’s “Atlantic Wall.”¹⁰⁹

The November 1943 worries about an imminent invasion had come from interpreting the information supplied by agent *CICERO* concerning the Moscow meeting of Hull, Eden, and Molotov. In mid-December *CICERO* supplied additional film that contained extracts from the minutes of the EUREKA Conference held in Tehran. In one of the documents photographed by the agent there was a comment by Churchill indicating that his worry about “OVERLORD” was not so much concerning the invasion itself but a German counterstroke a month later. To counter such a German counterattack, the text made it clear that the Russian Army must do all it could to tie down German forces in the East.¹¹⁰

Comparing the new information from agent *CICERO* with newspaper stories and estimates concerning future Russian offensive actions, *OKW* concluded that the Allied invasion had been postponed for two or three months. The best guess that the *OKW* could make was that the expected invasion could come as early as February 1944, but would probably come in the spring.¹¹¹ The spring thaws on the Eastern Front would temporarily halt offensive action on the part of the Russians. Therefore, if the plan was for the Russians to tie down the Germans in the East in support of the Allied invasion, then the invasion would have to come near the end of the thaw.

Believing that fate had granted them additional time to prepare their defenses, the Germans again made an assessment of the invasion situation in

108 Pogue, *U.S. Army in WW – The Supreme Command in the European Theater of Operation*, 177.

109 Ryan, *The Longest Day June 6, 1944*, 22-23.

110 Bazna and Nogly, *I Was Cicero*, 75-76.

111 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 128, citing *OKW/WFSt, KTB 1.IX.-31.XII.43*, 11 December 1943; Speidel, *Invasion 1944, Rommel and the Normandy Campaign*, 4.

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the West. Still basing their estimates on reason and logic, von Rundstedt and his staff changed their earlier prognostications. They had predicted an attack between Oostende and Le Havre, but changed their estimate to predict an attack somewhere in Normandy, Brittany, or the Contentin Peninsula. *OB WEST* now predicted that the invasion fleet would probably assemble in the area around the Isle of Wight. They did not know that their enemy was then constructing artificial harbor devices and assumed that the invasion would come along the open coast in the vicinity of one of the strategic harbors: Brest, Cherbourg, or Le Havre. *MARINEGRUPPENKOMMANDO WEST* did not concur with von Rundstedt's new estimate. *MGK WEST* said it its considered Brest to be too exposed to the Atlantic winds, and that the rocky shallows between the Seine River and Cherbourg would prevent landings in that coastal sector.¹¹²

On 20 December 1943 Hitler discussed the problems of invasion defense with his staff. He also talked about the problems attendant to invasion planning. He told the assembled staff that he was "firmly convinced that they were incapable of solving this problem." Hitler said he was convinced that the Allied landings in Vichy North Africa and in Italy has succeeded "only with the help of [local] traitors." The Führer declared that there would be no traitors in the West, and that no sector of the coast would be left unguarded. The Anglo-Americans, he told them, would be employing "entirely inexperienced units" against *Wehrmacht* divisions which had been tested in battle, and against massive fortifications that had been made almost impregnable. The new defenses at Dieppe, he told the staff, were a "thousand times stronger" than they had been in 1942, and that he himself was constantly "thinking of new ways to improve the defenses" and was devising "the most diverse devilries." He told him that he had

112 Speidel, *Invasion 1944, Rommel and the Normandy Campaign*, 23; Guenther Blumentritt, *Von Rundstedt, The Soldier and the Man* (London, Odhams Press, Ltd., 1952), 187.

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no doubt that the invasion, when it came, would be destroyed at his “Atlantic Wall.”¹¹³

On 22 December 1943, the *OKM/OA-AI* noted the receipt of a strictly confidential Portuguese Consulate report in their *KTB*. It read, in part, as follows:

It would be a mistake to believe that troops are no longer being concentrated in Scotland.... They are, on the contrary, kept in constant readiness in connection with an attack on the continent, though it is believed that this will not begin until the first month of 1944, and only after a single supreme commander for all European operations against Germany ... has been set up.¹¹⁴

Three days later they noted that “in his Christmas Eve message Roosevelt stated, among other things, that General Eisenhower had been appointed Supreme Commander in the European Theater.”¹¹⁵

During the last week of December 1943, *Generalfeldmarschall* Rommel made his first inspection tour of the *Kanalküste* segment of the “Atlantic Wall” defenses. Upon seeing the sad state of the physical defensive preparations and the poor readiness of the troops manning the area, he denounced the concept of *Festung Europa* as “a figment of Hitler’s *Wolkenkuckucksheim*.”¹¹⁶ Unfortunately for Rommel, it was his task to give substance to the Führer’s “cloud cuckoo land” illusion that anything resembling a “Fortress Europe” existed.

When Rommel completed his inspection tour, he prepared an estimate of the situation which he sent to Hitler on 31 December 1943. It read, in part:

113 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 143-44, citing Führer Conferences, Fragment 35, 20 December 1943. The conference transcript was badly damaged when it was found, but the general trend of Hitler’s thinking about the strength of the so-called “Atlantic Wall” can be deduced.

114 *Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.XII-31.XII.43*, 22 December 1943.

115 *Ibid*, 25 December 1943.

116 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 22-23.

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The focus of the enemy landing operations will probably be directed against the Fifteenth Army [AOK 15] sector (the Pas-de-Calais), largely because it is from this sector that much of our long range attack on England will be launched. With difficult sea conditions, it is likely that the enemy's main concern will be to get the quickest possible possession of a port or ports capable of handling large ships. Furthermore, he will probably endeavor to capture the area from which our long-range attack is coming as quickly as possible.

... It is most likely that the enemy will make his main effort against the sector between Boulogne and the Somme estuary, and on either side of Calais, where he would have the best support from his long-range artillery, the shortest sea route for the assault and for bringing up supplies, and for the most favorable conditions for the use of his air arm. As for his airborne forces, we can expect him to use the bulk of them to open up our coastal front from the rear and take quick possession of the area from which our long-range missiles will be coming.

... The timing of the enemy attack is uncertain, but he will make every effort to launch the operation before the start of our long-range attacks on England. If, due to bad weather or unfavorable sea conditions, he fails in this, he will launch his attack at the beginning or shortly after the beginning of our long-range campaign....¹¹⁷

A 31 December 1943 entry in the *KTB* of *OKM/OA-AI* indicated that the invasion might occur earlier and in a sector different from that predicted by Rommel. The entry illustrates the continued viability of the double-pincer invasion theory, stating:

According to an intelligence report which came from Vichy foreign ministry sources via Nice, Ambassador Pietri from Madrid on 25 Dec. said that a landing was planned simultaneously in the area Sète [(Gulf of Lion)] and Bordeaux [(Bay of Biscay)] for the beginning of the New Year. At the same time a landing was to take place on the Riviera di Ponente [(Coast between Nice and Genoa)].¹¹⁸

117 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 190; Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 178; B.H. Liddell-Hart, *The Rommel Papers* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1953), 453-54.

118 *Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.XII-31.XII.43*, 31 December 1943.

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Thus ended 1943 which Schellenberg, *The Labyrinth*, 335; Bazna & Nogly, *I was Cicero*, 50 Guenther Blumentritt. The Chief of Staff *OB West*, described as the “year of uncertainty and insecurity.”¹¹⁹

119 Liddell-Hart, *The German Generals Talk*, 231; Liddell-Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 386.

IX. “FORTITUDE”

THE ALLIED DECEPTION PLAN

At Quebec in late 1953 the Operation OVERLORD invasion planners had been directed to prepare a deception plan for use in support of the invasion. That plan, in addition to supporting OVERLORD, had to be in agreement with the Europe-wide British strategic deception plan, Operation BODYGUARD, in which the Americans and Russians participated.¹²⁰ All the guile and ingenuity of the British intelligence operations planners was turned to the task of devising a plan of action that would mislead the Germans and, most of all, Hitler himself. Their product, Operation FORTITUDE, was promulgated on 13 February 1944. It was a comprehensive plan covering all aspects of the massive deception program.¹²¹

In the broadest sense FORTITUDE was designed to support OVERLORD by pinning down key German divisions in the West. To accomplish that objective, the plan called for the creation of an apparent threat against Norway and one area of France, namely, the Pas-de-Calais sector guarded by AOK 15.¹²² The plan was designed to continue in operation until well after the actual invasion date. In its post-invasion phase the plan was designed to produce and reinforce the idea that the Normandy and Contentin Peninsula assaults were only diversions designed to draw German reserves away from the Pas-de-Calais sector where, per the ruse, an actual strong main-landing would take place in mid-July.¹²³

Operation FORTITUDE NORTH was that portion of the overall plan designed to create the fictitious threat against Norway. Specifically, it called for

120 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 199; Winston Churchill had said “Truth deserves a bodyguard of Lies.” Army Times Editors, *The Tangled Web*, 132.

121 Wilmot, 199

122 Norman, *Operation Overlord, Design and Reality*, 124.

123 Norman, *loc. cit.*

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the creation of plausible outward sign that would convince the Germans that eight divisions were being assembled in Scotland and Northern England for use in an invasion of Norway at several places.¹²⁴

The responsibility for the simulation of the northern threat was given to the Commander-in-Chief, Northern Command. The fictional assembly of the equally fictitious Fourth Army in Scotland was “revealed” to the Germans by the use of an increased volume of very real but contrived radio messages. The skeletal headquarters of the Fourth Army, three subordinate Corps, and their attached divisions was manned by a small signals unit whose sole task was to transmit messages to each other—something real units would do. The Allies well knew that the Germans would monitor the transmissions and in time discover the relationship and subordination of the various transmitters. Moreover, several real divisions, actually stationed in Scotland, also communicated with the fictional forces. In addition, the real divisions conducted training exercises designed to give the appearance of preparations for amphibious operations in an arctic region.¹²⁵

Operation FORTITUDE NORTH called for the setting out of dummy gliders on Scottish and North England airdromes a month prior to the Normandy invasion date. At the same time shipping was to be assembled in northern ports.¹²⁶ Simultaneously, the British Navy and Bomber Command were to institute a program of accelerated attacks on enemy submarine and surface shipping in the area contiguous to the Norwegian coast.¹²⁷ All of the FORTITUDE NORTH deception activity was to continue until mid-July in order to prevent the transfer of German units from Norway to the actual invasion areas in France.¹²⁸

124 Norman, *Operation Overlord, Design and Reality*, 124.

125 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 201.

126 Norman, 125-26.

127 Ibid.

128 Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 128.

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The Germans had for some time, by their preparations for defense, given evidence that they believed that the Pas-de-Calais region was the Allies real invasion target. Operation FORTITUDE SOUTH was designed to continue to focus the attention of the Germans on that sector of the French coast, and by doing so, reinforce the German belief.¹²⁹

After the war Lieutenant General Morgan commented on COSSAC's estimate of the probable chance of successfully implementing FORTITUDE SOUTH. He said in part:

How likely was it that the enemy would accept the theory of an invasion through the Pas-de-Calais? He himself had prepared to invade Britain in 1940 by this route. Was this, or was it not a good reason ... [the Allies] should decide on the same route? The Germans were not highly imaginative. The British have a reputation for being even less so. Any nationality where faced with a water jump will naturally make for the narrowest part of it. The British had made a halfhearted attempt across the wider Channel to Dieppe and had failed disastrously, or so the enemy deduced. As we know it now, the Pas-de-Calais must have loomed even larger than we then suspected in the German consciousness by reason of all the Nazis planned for that area as their secret [long-range] weapons base. But without even that there seemed plausibility in our possible choice of the Pas-de-Calais as the point of our assault.¹³⁰

Clearly then, the odds for success of the deception plan lay with the Allies, assuming, of course, that the Germans did not discover that such a plan was being implemented.

As far as *Generalfeldmarschall* Rommel was concerned, the allies did not expect any problem with implementing their deception. Rommel was an advocate of the theory that the Allies would land in the Pas-de-Calais region. There were others who believed as Rommel did. In working to strengthen the German preconceptions, the Allied intelligence officers planned to play on what they perceived to be the prime weakness of German intelligence. The Germans, as

129 Norman, *Operation Overlord, Design and Reality*, 124.

130 Morgan, *Overture to Overlord*, 176.

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the Allies viewed them, approached the problem of intelligence analysis with a “card-index mind,” one indefatigable in collecting information and¹³¹ at the same time totally incompetent in how to properly assess it. The Allied deception was designed to insure a high volume production of “false clues” until the Germans, overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the information pointing to the Pas-de-Calais, would irrevocably conclude that it must be the main invasion target. By the same logic the Germans would conclude that information pointing elsewhere was either false or evidence of a deception designed to hide the threat to the Pas-de-Calais.

The primary device for providing a large volume of “false clues” in support of FORTITUDE SOUTH was air power. There is nothing hidden in the actual use of aircraft, and the Allied aerial offensive plans were shaped accordingly. For every reconnaissance flown over the actual invasion area, one was flown over Brittany, and two were made over the Pas-de-Calais. For every ton of bombs dropped west of Le Havre, two tons were rained down in the Pas-de-Calais where there were lots of critical targets that needed to be destroyed. In the bombing of railroads all but about five percent of the efforts was directed against targets to the north and east of the Seine River.¹³² To the German, who did not have sufficient aircraft in France to divert attacks from any but what they considered the most sensitive areas, the pattern of Allied bombing had a predictable effect. Everything being done was plausibly explained in terms as the Pas-de-Calais being the chosen man invasion threat area.

The impression being created by Allied air operations over the European Continent was to be confirmed in part by false information being collected by other German intelligence sources. German spies, whose identities were known to the Allied counterintelligence services, were surreptitiously supplied with false information. The Allies also took steps to deceive the observers aboard *Luftwaffe* aircraft and also the German aerial photography interpreters. The deception

131 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 200.

132 Ibid.

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operations targeted against German agents, the *Luftwaffe* observers, and the photo-interpreters were carryovers from operations that had begun as part of Operation COCKADE in September 1943. Thus, there was a large degree of continuity in the Allied deception campaign.¹³³

To give a real outward reality to the deception operations centered in Southeastern England, an elaborate combined operations headquarters was constructed at Dover. On the cliffs facing Boulogne in France, the pumping head for a cross-Channel pipeline, PLUTO as it was called, was set up. New staging camps, supply depots, roads and rail siding, port facilities, and beach loading ramps were also constructed in the southeastern counties of England. The American Third and the Canadian First Armies, both scheduled for movement to France as part of the post invasion buildup, were stationed in the area opposite the Pas-de-Calais. The rumor was spread about to the effect that these two Armies were both part of an invasion force under the command of a fictional Army Group commanded by Lieutenant General George C. Patton. Patton's reputation made him the ideal invasion force "bogey man" that would focus the attention of the Germans.¹³⁴

Full-scale dummy landing craft, called "HIGHBOBS" and "WETBOBS", were assembled in the Thames River and in the southeastern ports of England. The majority of the devices designed for actual utilization as part of the artificial harbors were parked at Selsey and Dungeness. Dummy gliders of each type were set up on the airdromes of Kent and East Anglia.¹³⁵

The real and the false preparations along the southeast coast of England were discreetly revealed, but the real installations in the southwest counties were hidden as carefully as possible. In that effort the *Luftwaffe* unwittingly provided gratuitous assistance. British anti-aircraft artillery fire was purposely inaccurate

133 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 200.

134 Ibid, 201.

135 Wilmot, 201; Norman, *Operation Overlord, Design and Reality*, 126; Morgan, *Overture to Overlord*, 92.

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and fighter intercepts were not overly aggressive in those sectors where the Allies wanted the Germans to conduct their air reconnaissance. In those sectors where actual preparations were being made, and prying eyes were not welcome the opposite was true. Because it was easier and safer for the *Luftwaffe* to make “snap and run” sorties over Kent and Sussex than over Devon and Cornwall, the pilots provided their photo-interpreters with a high volume of coverage of the area where the Allies wanted the enemy to focus its information gathering attention.¹³⁶

The German photo-interpreters duly reported large masses for Allied troops opposite the Pas-de-Calais. Because it would be reasonable to expect that those units would communicate with each other, the Allies reinforced their deception with false radio transmissions.¹³⁷ Although Field Marshall Montgomery’s headquarters was located at Plymouth, all of its radio messages were sent over landlines to a transmitter located in Kent.¹³⁸ Additional radio transmissions were designed to create the impression that the U.S. First Army Group was being formed in East Anglia. It was represented as consisting of the fictitious U.S. 14th Field Army and the real British 4th Field Army in a fictitious location.¹³⁹

To play further upon the suspicions of the Germans, the Canadian 2nd Division set up its headquarters at Dover. Members of the unit prominently displayed their Maple Leaf patches. The Canadian units were normally stationed in Sussex and Surrey; thus the abnormal deployment of the Canadian division associated with the ill-fated Dieppe Raid naturally would and did have a special significance to the “vengeance conscious” Germans.¹⁴⁰

136 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 201.

137 Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 128.

138 Wilmot, 201.

139 Norman, *Operation Overlord, Design and Reality*, 127; Army Times Editors, *The Tangled Web*, 134; the original real U.S. First Army was designated the Third Army. The now fictional First Army began to use the same call signs and radio frequencies used by its real predecessor.

140 Army Times Editors, 131-32, and 134.

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Deception was practiced in the Channel itself. Mines were laid on both sides of the Straights of Dover to suggest that the Allies had a desire to seal the area off from German naval craft that might interfere with an invasion armada. At the same time, British minesweepers labored constantly to keep the area between the Allied mine belt swept clear of German mines.¹⁴¹

An additional feint involved a British Major's association with a Dutch woman suspected of furnishing information to the Germans. The British created a special planning group with the "seemingly real" mission of preparing for the invasion of the Netherlands. The major was posted to the unit, and he managed to have his female acquaintance employed as a secretary. The work done by this unit was thorough and even included preparation of troop information training films dealing with the supposed target area. The activities of the woman were carefully monitored by British counterintelligence officers who were able to confirm that the desired false information was being passed to the Germans.¹⁴²

The patriotic fervor of the British carrier pigeon owners was also put to good use as part of FORTITUDE SOUTH. The pigeon owners had offered the use of their well-trained birds to the War Ministry, suggesting that they could serve as a means between agents in France and London. From a purely operational standpoint the use of birds did not offer any special communications advantage. However, it was decided that the birds could serve as part of the FORTITUDE deception. Hundreds of crates of the pigeons were parachuted to agents in specifically chosen areas of France. Of all the birds sent to the Continent, only six ever returned to England with messages. Some of the crates were recovered by the Germans before the agents could recover them. The Germans realized what the homing pigeons were to be used for. As a result, hundreds of the pigeons, with messages attached, were shot down by shotgun armed Germans. As the Allies hoped they would, the Germans plotted the location of each "pigeon incident" on their staff maps. They soon discovered that

141 Norman, *Operation Overlord, Design and Reality*, 126

142 Army Times Editors, *The Tangled Web*, 140.

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the majority of the plotted locations were north of the Somme River in the Pas-de-Calais sector.¹⁴³

German agents located in neutral countries, and certain members of the Diplomatic Corps suspected of being sympathetic to the German cause also were used as channel for the passing of false information. In Switzerland, Spain, and Sweden, officials of the British embassies put out discreet inquiries to bookstore owners asking for copies of *Michelin Map No. 51*, which included the Pas-de-Calais. Other inspired suggestions were imparted through diplomatic channels. Put together, the clues all gave the impression that a force of some twelve divisions would attack in the Pas-de-Calais in the third week of July and that the assault lodgement would be increased to a force of fifty divisions.¹⁴⁴

To further confuse the Germans and clog the intelligence collection process, the British decided to flood the Germans with a mass of true, false, half-true, and unfalteringly conflicting printed material. Several copies of books were printed that contained “information” that one would think should have been eliminated during the prepublication censorship process. Magazines and technical journals were issued with “special articles” describing hundreds of new and future developments in the Allied war machine. Other “articles” discussed in detail invasion training, plans, and equipment. Altogether they suggested the search for solutions to problems that would be involved in planning a large-scale invasion along a windswept and bluff-backed beaches, like those in the Pas-de-Calais.¹⁴⁵

143 Army Times Editors, *The Tangled Web*, 140; “We attached great importance to the Resistance Movement in the interior [of France] and tried to determine the place of landing by noting where the parachute baskets [of pigeons] were dropped. As time went on, however, this became so widespread that it no longer gave us any help.” MS#ETHINT-1, *From Invasion to the Siegfried Line* (Warlimont), 3; While the pigeon plots did not point to any specific invasion beaches, they did keep the German’s attention focused on the Pas-de-Calais.

144 Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 128.

145 Army Times Editors, *The Tangled Web*, 143

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The plans for the deception operations discussed above all concerned themselves with causing *strategic* mistakes in the German plans for the deployment of their divisions, and for the establishment of construction priorities.¹⁴⁶

The Allies assumed that no matter what they did prior to the actual invasion, there was a high probability that by the evening prior to the assault the Germans would discover that the invasion fleet was at sea. The problem on the eve of the invasion would be one of convincing the Germans that the ships were not bound for the beaches of Normandy. During the early part of the evening, while a few of the ships belonging to the armada would be sailing toward the Seine Bight, the main portion of the fleet would be moving up the Channel in an eastwardly direction. The Allies hoped that the *Luftwaffe* would report that the enemy fleet was north of the German minefields and sailing toward the Pas-de-Calais. The bulk of the Allied fleet was not scheduled to reach “PICADILLY CIRCUS” until after nightfall. The “CIRCUS” was the area designated as the starting point for the southern run through the cleared lanes in the German minefields. The Allies were determined to hide the change of directions from the Germans. Making the turn after dark was one means to mask the change, but the Allies were determined to do even more.¹⁴⁷

To make Germans believe that the invasion fleet, if seen once at sea, was still sailing in the direction observed before darkness, the Allies relied on scientific deception. On the day prior to the invasion the deception call on the airforce to attack the majority of the German radar stations between Cherbourg and Le Havre. On the eve of the invasion they planned to start jamming all the stations still operational. By the use of additional feints they planned to convince

146 It should be understood that every ton of concrete poured and every meter of steel reinforcing bars, and every hours of construction labor, used at the wrong place is, in and of itself, a means to undermine an enemy’s military capability in every theater of operation. The same can be said of every soldier, gun, tank, and ammunition or fuel depot, in place at the “wrong place.”

147 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 228.

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the personnel manning the radar sites along the Pas-de-Calais that two large invasion fleets were approaching their sector. ¹⁴⁸

148 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 228.

X. ALLIED PLANNING: JANUARY THRU APRIL 1944

Time magazine's "Man of the Year" for 1944 was General George C. Marshall. The 3 January 1944 issue of the magazine had his picture on the cover. The cover story described Marshall as the "indispensable man," and said that in order to make the invasion of Europe possible "the U.S. needed George C. Marshall at home." Marshall was given the credit for sparking the massive logistical support needed for a multi-front global war. The story summarized the reason why Marshall had not been chosen to be the Supreme Commander in the European Theater.¹⁴⁹

The same issue of *Time* magazine commented on President Roosevelt's Christmas Eve broadcast, saying in part:

The President broadcast to the U.S. Armed Services around the world ... [and] prosily summarized and confirmed the headline news and dope stories of the past several weeks. General Eisenhower was to command the U.S. [and] British invasion of Europe.¹⁵⁰

It continued:

... By all indications, the main blow ... [, the invasion by the forces under Eisenhower's command.] will fall in the West. But ... Roosevelt spoke [on Christmas Eve] of combined attacks "from other points of the compass." That could mean anything from Norway to Southern France....¹⁵¹

A popular pastime of the newsmen and magazine editors in 1944 was to speculate about the possible date for the invasion of Europe. The *Time* magazine issue of 3 January noted that "London Censors allowed correspondents to

149 "Man of the Year," *Time*, XLIII, No 1, 3 January 1944, Cover and 15-18.

150 Ibid, 13.

151 Ibid, 22.

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suggest that D-Day is not at hand.”¹⁵² Two pages before, the following item appeared in the magazine:

... The time of the attack was still the war's tightest secret ... but this much is certain: it will be the earliest day on which 1) the problems of logistics and planning have been licked; 2) all important weather is friendly. Quite possibly it may be a day among the next 120....¹⁵³

On 6 January 1944 Churchill cabled Roosevelt and, agreeing with the recommendations of Eisenhower, proposed that the tentative 5 May 1944 invasion date be changed to 3 June. He pointed out that the later date would allow for the assembly of additional landing craft needed to support the large invasion force.¹⁵⁴

Although Eisenhower was Roosevelt's appointee for the post of Supreme Commander, and had been in London for several weeks, it was not until mid-January that the official appointment was signed and the COSSAC planning staff became the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF). The actual directive was not sent to Eisenhower until 12 February 1944. The Supreme Commander was given the following task:

You will enter the Continent of Europe and ... undertake operations aimed at the heart of German and the destruction of her armed forces. The date for entering the Continent is May 1944. After adequate Channel ports have been secured, exploitation will be directed toward securing an area that will facilitate both ground and air operations against the enemy....¹⁵⁵

152 "Man of the Year," *Time*, XLIII, No 1, 3 January 1944, 25.

153 Ibid, 22-23.

154 Churchill, *The Second World War, V: Closing the Ring*, 448. On 23 January 1944 Churchill remarked. "The destinies of two great empires ... seem to be tied up in some God-damned things called LST's." Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II, XI: The Invasion of France and Germany* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1957), 28.

155 Norman, *Operation Overlord, Design and Reality*, 70; Mary H. Williams, *U.S. Army in WWII – Special Studies, Chronology 1941-1945* (Washington: Department of the Army, 1960), 163.

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Eisenhower was informed of the directive two days later, and on 15 February 1944 issued his first official order as Supreme Commander. That order created his staff and signified Eisenhower's assumption of the command of SHAEF.¹⁵⁶

The Allies were certainly not secretive about the fact that an invasion would take place in Europe. The 18 January 1944 issue of the London Daily Express stated: "General Eisenhower has announced that ... Lieutenant General Omar Nelson Bradley ... is to be the American Army's 'General Montgomery' in the western invasion of Europe."¹⁵⁷

As soon as Eisenhower became the official spokesman for SHAEF the U.S. War Department asked him for his views concerning postponement of the invasion—once set for May—until June. On 24 January 1944 Eisenhower replied that "the May date would be preferable," but that he would rather wait for the required strengthening of forces to be completed rather than accept the risk of failure with reduced forces.¹⁵⁸ He had discussed the problems with Admiral Ramsey, Field Marshall Montgomery, and Air Marshall-Leigh-Mallory three days earlier and all had concurred with the proposal to postpone the invasion for a month.¹⁵⁹ The delay would enable the Allies to assault with five ground divisions instead of the three called for in the old COSSAC plan.¹⁶⁰ On 27 January the British Chiefs of Staff reaffirmed their desire for a delay in the invasion date.¹⁶¹

By the end of January 1944 public speculation in Britain concerning the timing and target of the invasion had become rampant. The Prime Minister and War Cabinet became quite concerned with the possibility that a press leak might tip off the Germans to the date or place of the invasion. On 6 February 1944 the

156 Harry C. Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1946), 491.

157 Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1951), 211.

158 Ibid.

159 Butcher, 480.

160 Fuller, *The Second World War 1939-45*, 289.

161 Burcher, 480.

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press representatives of the U.S. and England were reminded of the Official Secrets Act and politely asked not to speculate, orally or in writing, about the place, date, or size of any future attacks by Allied forces.¹⁶²

Additional measures were taken to tighten the security screen surrounding the invasion preparations. On 9 February 1944 the British Government banned all civilian travel between England and Ireland. The measure was designed to reduce, or at least make more difficult, the leakage of information to Berlin vis Dublin. The Irish policy toward the Axis and Allied conflict was one of unbalanced neutrality; Germans in Ireland were able to engage in espionage activity, virtually unhindered by the Irish police.¹⁶³

On 13 February 1944 SHAEF finalized Operation FORTITUDE, the invasion deception plan. As the invasion drew nearer, more and more of the “Big Lie” was unfolded. On 3 March, the German agent *ND-98*, who was also loyally serving the American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), transmitted a message in support of FORTITUDE NORTH. His broadcast to Germany reported that Allied troops were massing in Iceland for an invasion of Norway.¹⁶⁴ In the same month the Americans sent one of their new heavy bombers, the B-29 “Superfortress,” to the Bovingdon Airdrome in England. Its arrival was “leaked” to the Spanish Military Attaché in London: the Spaniard was suspected of passing information to the German via Madrid. The Allies hoped that news of a new long-

162 Harry C. Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, 480.

163 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 199; Dwight D. Eisenhower, *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* (Paris: SHAEF, 1945), 13.

164 J. Edgar Hoover, “The Spy Who Double Crossed Hitler,” *Secrets and Spies* (Pleasantville, New York: Readers Digest Association, 1964), 283-86. In April 1942, a Dutchman, Albert Van Loop, walked into the American Consulate in Madrid and said that he was a German agent, but that he had agreed to be a spy to escape the Germans. He offered to work for the Americans. The FBI took him to New York and, after establishing his bona fides, used him (agent Schellenberg, *The Labyrinth*, 335; Bazna & Nogly, *I was Cicero*, 50) to pass false information to German.

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range bomber in England would cause the *Luftwaffe* to keep fighter aircraft in German to protect the *Reich* against the “new threat.”¹⁶⁵

In mid-March 1944, British Captain Liddell-Hart was summoned to a meeting of the British War Cabinet which was discussing possible flaws in the Allied deception plan. In Liddell-Hart’s view the troop disposition in the southwest of England might easily lead the Germans to the conclusion that the invasion would come in the coastal sector west of the Seine River.¹⁶⁶ As will be noted later, Hitler did draw that conclusion. Nevertheless, the Allied planners had to accept that apparent weakness because there was no practical means to hide fully the divisions scheduled to go over in the initial assault waves.¹⁶⁷

On 23 March 1944, the Allies were presented with an even greater problem of security. On that day a complete copy of the invasion plan was discovered in a Chicago, Illinois, Post Office. A bulky, improperly wrapped envelope had burst on a mail sorting table, revealing a number of official classified military document. At least a dozen of the postal employees saw the subject line on the document; it read OVERLORD/NEPTUNE. The postal officials sent the papers to the nearby 6th Service Command where four more people saw the contents of the parcel before Army counterintelligence personnel arrived to collect the material. All the people working at both places who had seen the papers were told to forget everything that had happened, and to discuss the incident with no one.¹⁶⁸

The addressee of the “bulky package” was a young civilian woman who lived in Chicago. She was questioned and said she had no idea why the

165 Farago, *Burn After Reading*, 244; The B-29 never used in the European Theater; rather, it was used to bomb the Japanese mainland.

166 Liddell-Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 396.

167 Ibid.

168 Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, 505; Farago, 246; Pogue, *U.S. Army in WW – The Supreme Command in the European Theater of Operation*, 16; Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 48.

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envelope had been sent to her. She did, however, recognize the handwriting on the envelope as belonging to her brother, an Army sergeant serving at ETOUSA in London. The brother was immediately interrogated. His explanation was that his sister had been very ill and that his worries about her must have distracted him when he was addressing the envelope. The sergeant seemed very sincere in his replies during interrogation, and it was confirmed that his sister was very ill. What was suspicious was that the section of Chicago in which the sister lived was densely populated with people of German origin or descent. In the end the incident was officially listed as a security violation caused by negligence, and not involving an actual compromise of secret invasion details.¹⁶⁹ This was but the first of many potentially serious security problems that were to plague the Allied invasion planners.

Toward the end of March 1944, sixty-eight large landing craft were sent from the Mediterranean theater to England.¹⁷⁰ The time for the invasion was drawing near and on 23 March American and British units were alerted to be ready for a movement, on short notice, to the marshalling areas.¹⁷¹ To insure the security of the movements, when they occurred, the British Government imposed a visitor's ban on the coastal area from Wash to Land's End and on either side of the Firth of Forth, where the assault would eventually assemble. The immediately prohibited zone extended inland for a distance of ten miles.¹⁷²

At the Tehran Conference both Churchill and Roosevelt had told Stalin that they would open their Second Front in May 1944. Strict adherence to that

169 Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, 505; Farago, 246; Pogue, *U.S. Army in WW – The Supreme Command in the European Theater of Operation*, 16; Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 48.

170 Fuller, *The Second World War 1939-45*, 292; Speidel, *Invasion 1944, Rommel and the Normandy Campaign*, 20.

171 War Department, Historical Service (eds.). *Omaha Beachhead* (Washington: Department of the Army, 1945), 35.

172 Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1948), 14; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 246; Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 125.

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promise was responsible for the American President's concern about postponement of the invasion until June. Roosevelt finally concurred with the recommendations of Eisenhower, and on 8 April 1944 the British informed Stalin that the invasion would come two or three days before or after 1 June 1944. The exact location of the invasion beaches was not disclosed to the Russians.¹⁷³

On 13 April 1944 the U.S. Ninth and British 2nd Tactical Air Forces began their offensive against the French coastal areas. The carefully staged air attacks were designed to destroy German positions along and behind the invasion beaches, and to create, by diversionary bombing, the impressions that the invasion was to come in the Pas-de-Calais sector.¹⁷⁴ Twenty-three of the largest bridges across the Seine were destroyed in thirty-five days. The Tactical Air Plan called for the air offensive to shift to attacks on bridges and choke points between Paris and Orléans in the days immediate preceding the invasion. During the actual invasion and buildup phases, the aircraft would bomb and strafe along a seventy-mile-wide corridor between the Seine and the Loire Rivers to isolate the Normandy battlefield.¹⁷⁵

On 17 April 1944, in an effort to further tighten security, the British imposed unprecedented restrictions on the diplomatic community. The receipt or transmission of coded telegrams by the diplomatic missions in England was prohibited. Diplomatic pouches were censored and the departure of members or families of the missions was banned. An exception to the new restrictions was extended to the Russians and to the Americans.¹⁷⁶

173 Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, 514-15.

174 Williams, *U.S. Army in WWII – Special Studies, Chronology 1941-1945*, 186.

175 Roger W. Shugg and H.A. DeWeerd, *World War II, A Concise History* (Washington: The Infantry Journal Press, 1956), 269.

176 Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1948), 14; Pogue, *U.S. Army in WW – The Supreme Command in the European Theater of Operation*, 16; Gilles Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 99; *Chronology of the Second World War* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1947), 255.

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Even with all their strong security precautions, the Allies feared that the Germans might have actually discovered the invasion secret. About 20 April 1944 an R.A.F reconnaissance aircraft returned to England with photos that showed new anti-airborne obstacles in the flat areas behind the Normandy and Contentin beaches. Fortunately for those SHAEF officers about to have nervous breakdowns caused by the anxiety, photos taken later over Brittany and the Pas-de-Calais areas showed that similar defensive measures had been taken along the entire coast. Later it was learned that all the added obstacles were based on Rommel's recommendations as the inspector of defenses in France.¹⁷⁷

By 26 April 1944, all of the naval vessels needed for the invasion, except for a few specialized types of landing craft, had completed their assembly in the English ports.¹⁷⁸ On that day the Allies began Operation FABIUS. It consisted of six large-scale practice invasion exercises.¹⁷⁹ Such practice exercises were obviously needed to prepare the troops and naval personnel. At the same time, the Allies hoped that the Germans, to the extent they observed the six large exercises, would become less sensitive to other large movements of men and ships. They hoped that the Germans might later mistake the actual invasion embarkations for another harmless practice exercise.¹⁸⁰

The first exercise in the series, Operation TIGER, was held at Slapton Sands between Plymouth and Dartmouth on 27 and 28 April 1944.¹⁸¹ On 27 April, at 0200 hours, a flotilla of *Kriegsmarine S-Bootes* operating in the Channel attacked several of the large Landing Ship, Tanks (LST) that were sailing toward the exercise area. Two of the LST's were sunk and a third was badly

177 John Baker White, *The Big Lie* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1955), 223-24.

178 Williams, *U.S. Army in WWII – Special Studies, Chronology 1941-1945*, 186.

179 Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 133.

180 Ralph Ingersoll, *Top Secret* (New York: Harcourt and Company, 1946), 101.

181 Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 101; *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, 12.

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damaged.¹⁸² Among the men missing in action after the attack were ten officers who had BIGOT clearances. The men on the crippled LST told their rescuers that the *S-Bootes* had moved among the survivors in the water and may have taken some of those people captive. The report of the incident caused a crisis at SHAEF Headquarters. If the German had rescued any one of the BIGOT cleared officers and he talked, that would expose the two key invasion secrets—the date and place. In order to settle the uncertainty, Eisenhower ordered a massive rescue and recovery operation. Within the span of several days the searchers managed to recover and positively identify the lifeless bodies of all ten of the missing BIGOT cleared officers.¹⁸³

The Loss of three LST's caused a crisis of a different order. The entire reserve of LSTs consisted of only three vessels, and those had to be committed to the main echelon in the wake of the 27 April attack. If the *S-Bootes* or *Luftwaffe* managed to make another similar attacks, and destroyed or crippled any more of the needed LST's, a major modification of the invasion plan would be necessary. The SHAEF planners were particularly worried about the consequences that might result from a *Luftwaffe* attack on one or more of the crowded invasion ports.¹⁸⁴

On 27 April 1944, two weeks after the tactical air-strikes began, the U.S. Eighth Air Force and the British Bomber Command joined in the air offensive, attacking rail and road networks in France.¹⁸⁵ The British Home Guard were

182 Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 133; Ingersoll, *Top Secret*, 104; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 270, citing *Marine Gruppenkommando West, KTB 16.-30.VI.44*, 27 April 1944; Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II, XI: The Invasion of France and Germany*, 65-66; Großadmiral Dönitz said that the encounter was made during a routine patrol and the Germans did not believe that the Allied naval activity was part of an invasion. MS#ETHINT-28, *Invasion and the German Navy* (Dönitz), 2.

183 Ellis, 270; Ingersoll, 101-04; Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 101; *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, 100-01.

184 Ellis, 270; Ingersoll, 103.

185 Williams, *U.S. Army in WWII – Special Studies, Chronology 1941-1945*, 186.

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mobilized in April 1944; that caused a flurry of publicized protests from the managers of British industries.¹⁸⁶ Those two overt actions were signs that might indicate to the Germans that the invasion was near at hand. An even greater danger, however, was the possibility that indiscreet talk might give the invasion secret away.¹⁸⁷

In April 1944 there were two instances of dangerously loose talk. During a cocktail party at the Claridge Hotel in London an American Brigadier General, the Commander of the IXth Air Force Service Command, told several of his fellow officers that the invasion would occur prior to 15 June. A British Colonel attending another party told some civilian friends that his men were training to capture a specific target, and he hinted it was located in Normandy. Both of these verbal indiscretions were reported to counterintelligence officials and the two offending officer were relieved from the commands and demoted.¹⁸⁸

There is a narrow gap between careless talk and an official leak. On 30 April 1944, the American Broadcasting Station in England went on the air for the first time with a message from Robert Sherwood, Director of Overseas Services of the Office of War Information. He said this to the radio listeners in England and in Occupied Europe:

In the historic year of 1944 the Allied radio will bring you tremendous news, and the day is not far distant when your own radio stations will be free to tell you the truth instead of the tremendous lies of the Nazis.... Do not reveal yourselves before the proper time. We shall give you the signal when the hour is come for you to rise up and strike.... Listen to the Allied radio for

186 Speidel, *Invasion 1944, Rommel and the Normandy Campaign*, 22.

187 By starting the air offensive well in advance of the invasion, to the extent the Germans might go to an immediate high alert status, the fact that nothing else did happen, had the effect of creating "alert fatigue" while at the same time putting the forward area Germans under constant air attack.

188 Pogue, *U.S. Army in WW – The Supreme Command in the European Theater of Operation*, 16; Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 49.

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the word that will come from the Supreme Commander, General Eisenhower in the West, and General Wilson in the South....¹⁸⁹

Certain things have to be done clearly, and in the open. In this case the Allies set the stage for providing the civilian population in France with accurate information which they would need, for their own safety, on the day of the invasion.

The time for the invasion was very near, but not everyone was entirely satisfied with the Allied plan. In April Churchill told two highly placed American officials that if he were planning OVERLORD he would wait to attack France until the Allies could recover Norway, take some Aegean Islands, and get Turkey into the war on the side of the Allies.¹⁹⁰

189 White, *The Big Lie*, 216-17.

190 Samuel Eliot Morison, *Strategy and Compromise* (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1956), 51-52. Churchill's statement was made on 20 April 1944 to Assistant Secretary of War J. J. McCloy and General McNarney. Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II, XI: The Invasion of France and Germany*, 21, citing Matloff II chap. Xv, 58-59 of a mimeographed draft; the fact that Churchill was interested in the other attacks prior to invading France did not mean that he did not intend to invade in the planned sector. Bur, responding to English history that favored the peripheral strategy of "indirect approach," so as to set the enemy in a position to deliver the killing blow, Churchill had long expounded the theory of multiple attacks. He first told the Americans of his strategic aims at the ARCADIA Conference in December of 1941. Therefore, there is much to be said for German worries about English attacks in every quarter. Indeed, the deception plans were designed to give the impressions had more than enough men and boats to attack Norway. Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II*, 4-5.

XI. GERMAN PLANS & ESTIMATES: JANUARY THRU APRIL 1944

AS the year 1944 began it became clear to the Germans that the main Allied invasion would be launched from England, and that the target had to be France. That fact was obvious from the large number of troops and the vast tonnage of shipping and materials being assembled there. On 2 January the *Munchener Neuste Nachrichten* newspaper contained the follow in an article:

We have no reason to conceal the fact that we are calmly awaiting the invasion attempt.... The enemy's gigantic concentrations between Iceland and the Azores will not bring him success.¹⁹¹

Early in the year, a high-rank German officer, speculating on the date when the invasion might come, opined in his diary:

We had a rough guide from a notice in the *London Times* which appeared to have escaped the censor. The item stated that the United States would compensate farmers for damages by tank exercises. It was evident that the invasion could not take place before mid-April.¹⁹²

One must assume the German read the notice to mean that the damage to be compensated for was planted crops, but tanks can do great damage to a field without regard to the existence of any planted crops. Still, he drew a correct conclusion as to timing.

The Germans may have had "rough guides" but concerning the particulars available to the Germans, *Generalleutnant* Blumentritt, Chief of Staff *OB WEST*, said:

Very little reliable news came out of England, concerning where the landings would be in France. The reports told were, broadly, Allied forces

191 Alfred Vagts, *Landing Operations* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Services Publishing Company, 1946), 755

192 Army Times Editors, *The Tangled Web*, 131; this is an interesting observation

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were located in England. But, nothing gave us a definitive clue were the invasion was actually coming. We had to depend on our own judgment in that vital respect.¹⁹³

Blumentritt's frustration at the paucity of good intelligence is evidenced in the following:

Every kind of reconnaissance by agents, aircraft, and naval forces was missing. The southern coast of England was an impenetrable enigma for us. Rumors and snippets of news did not give us a specific picture of the place and time of the landing. *Permanent* alertness of the troops [everywhere in France] was practically impossible, as training and rest were equally important.¹⁹⁴

As noted earlier, in Ankara the German agent *CICERO* had discovered and reported the existing of the code word OVERLORD. Some of the German staff officers believed that OVERLORD was probably an operation associated with some phase of the main Allied Invasion. *CICERO*, however, was unable to discover a time or place to associate with whatever it was that was called OVERLORD.¹⁹⁵

Early in the year the *RSHA/SD* received a report from the Postal Research Bureau. The *Deutschen Reichpost Forschungsanstalt's* solution to the secret of the enemy's scrambler telephone code had paid another dividend. The report dealt with a conversation between Churchill and Roosevelt. One of the individuals, presumably Churchill, made reference to a "crescendo of military activity in England." To the Germans, and particularly Schellenberg at *RSHA/SD*, that was collaborations of the many reports being received that told of an imminent invasion.¹⁹⁶

193 Liddell-Hart, *The German Generals Talk*, 234-35; Liddell-Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 391-92.

194 MS#B-284, *OB West* (6 Jun - 24 Jul 1944), (Blumentritt), 10.

195 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 49; The agent *CICERO* had originally reported the codeword as OVERLOCK, but corrected that mistake and noted it was OVERLORD.

196 Schellenberg, *The Labyrinth*, 366.

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Because they believed that the invasion was near, the *RSHA/SD* informed the *Abwehr* that it possessed the key to the exact timing of the invasion—the Paul Verlaine poem code. Canaris, the *Abwehr* head, alerted all of his agency's *Fermeldeaufklärung* units in France to monitor B.B.C. broadcasts with special care to the days designated in the message captured from the S.O.E. agent.¹⁹⁷ What the *RSHA/SD* discovered was that sequential receipt of the first, and then the second line of Paul Verlaine's poem "Song of Autumn" meant that an invasion would occur within the next 48-hours. They also discovered that Norman's network had been instructed to listen to B.B.C, nightly broadcasts on the 1st, 2nd, 15th, and 16th. of each month which would be read during the "personal messages" portion of the French language broadcasts. The second line would come in the same manner sometime during the two weeks that followed the receipt of the first line.¹⁹⁸

Being unable to discover anything positive about the enemy's plans in a timely manner, *Generalleutnant* Blumentritt, at *OB WEST* decided to prepare a German deception plan. He hoped to create in the minds of the Anglo-Americans the impression that the "Atlantic Wall" and the *Wehrmacht* units in France were much stronger than they actually were. The propaganda officials in German took over part of the task of supporting the deception by giving continued publicity to the story that *Generalfeldmarschall* Rommel was extremely pleased with what he observed on his inspection tours. Pictures of Rommel inspecting the strongest and most elaborate of the coastal defense bunker complexes were wide seen in German newspapers and given to members of the foreign press corps in Berlin. Some of the pictures even appeared in *Time* magazine. Along and behind the beaches of France numerous dummy minefields were laid out: the dummy fields look the same as real ones in aerial photos. Maps that purported to show

197 Khan, *The Codebreakers*, 542.

198 Foot, *S.O.E. in France*, 304.

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formidable concrete defenses were prepared and passed to the enemy via German double agents operating in France and Switzerland.¹⁹⁹

Concerning the overt deception practiced in France, *Generalleutnant* Speidel, Chief of Staff of *Herresgruppenkommandos B (HGK B)* noted:

... Gossip was spread about movement of troops and reinforcements. Mock-up headquarters and "advance personnel" were moved about. Movements by rail were worked out for reinforcements that were not there, and passed on to French railway officials.... Dummy gun sites and dummy railheads were constructed, motor transport were moved hither and thither by day and night.... Rommel had no illusions about the usefulness of the stratagems, but he was ready to try anything to gain time....²⁰⁰

The German effort to mount their deception operation never reached the magnitude of the Allied deception operation. But, the Germans did what they could with the meager resources and intelligence available to guide and support them in their attempt to deceive.²⁰¹

On 4 January 1944, the *OKW* began to have doubts about the correctness of the assumptions that they had made concerning the enemy's invasion intentions. The slowness of the enemy's Italian campaign, Jodl told his staff, might lead the Anglo-Americans to decide that another seaborne assault in the south might be in order. The *OKW* did not, however, anticipate that a second landing would be made in Italy. Rather, Jodl's staff assumed that the new danger zones were Portugal and the Balkans. Their greatest concern was centered on the latter area.²⁰²

199 Milton Shulman, *Defeat in the West* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1948), 95.

200 Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 70.

201 As it happened, some of these false targets were treated as real by the Allies and were bombed in the air offensive. In at least one case, during the first hours of the assault landings, Army rangers attacked a gun emplacements only to discover the guns were not in the casements.

202 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 232, citing *Seekriegsleitung 1 Abt., KTB 1.-31.1.55*, 5 January 1944, and *Die OKW Kriegstagschaupaetz*.

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An entry on 5 January 1944 in the KTB of the *OKM/OA-AI* points out the reason from *OKW*'s concern about the Balkans sector. It noted that:

The German Foreign Office has learnt from a highly confidential source that the British have approached the Turks with a proposal for joint military action against German.... On 15 February Turkey is to state whether she will permit entry of twenty wings of R.A.F planes.²⁰³

The entry continued:

At present it is most important for us to have a clear picture of what the enemy is planning. We have to allow for skillful propaganda and other deception measures by the enemy. We can still expect an enemy landing operation in the west area, *i.e.*, the Channel, although the enemy may deceive us here to. Forcing a way through Italy is considered unlikely, as an operation [there] would be costly. The Balkans are a great uncertainty.²⁰⁴

On 8 January 1944, however, the German Foreign Office issued a report that specifically disagreed with the *OKW* estimate, and saying they found no uncertainty in regards to a suggested Balkan sector threat. *Auswärtige Amt* stated that they had “conclusive evidence that the Anglo-Americans are determined to force a showdown by opening a second front in 1944. However, this second front will not be in the Balkans.”²⁰⁵

The Allies had decided at the EUREKA Conference held in Tehran that they would not invade the Balkans. The fact that the German estimate saying that the second front would not be opened in that sector came from the Foreign Office is strong evidence that the “highly confidential source” and the “conclusive evidence” mentioned in the *Auswärtige Amt* report refers to their agent *CICERO* and to information supplied by him.

203 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-31.1.55*, 5 January 1944.

204 *Ibid.*

205 Pogue, *U.S. Army in WW – The Supreme Command in the European Theater of Operation*, 164.

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The *Kriegstagebuch* of the *OKM/OA-AI* contains the following 9 January 1944 entry:

... Chief of Staff advised that the Führer is deeply concerned about the possible enemy landing in the Gironde [River] area, where noticeable heavy air raids have been observed during the past few days....²⁰⁶

And,

Naval Attaché Madrid reported: On the evening of 8 January the Minister for the [Spanish] Navy told me that, “according to his reports, the British are very serious about the prospects of German reprisal [by vengeance weapons] and intends at all events to forestall them by invasion. Enormous preparations are underway. According to his sources, first there will be a heavy feint attack for purposes of diversion; the actual landing will follow elsewhere.” So far he has not learnt anything about whether these operations are planned to take place. In view of the rumors being circulated here, I asked the Minister for his opinion on the possibility of an enemy landing in Portugal. He thought this unlikely....²⁰⁷

On 10 January 1944, Blumentritt, at *OB WEST*, who believed that the decisive Second Front battle would come in northern France, wrote to the Chiefs of Staff of the units subordinate to *OB WEST* and outlined his concept of the nature of the counter-invasion campaign they would wage. He envisaged that the battle would proceed in four parts. He told the other, in part:

First, the firefight while the enemy was still on the water [approaching the beaches]; second, the struggle on the beaches; third, the battle in the coastal zone between the local reserves and the enemy units that had penetrated the main line of resistance; and finally, the decisive beachhead battle in which *OB West* would commit large motorized [including panzer] units to throw the enemy back into the sea.²⁰⁸

206 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-31.I.55*, 9 January 1944.

207 *Ibid.* It is unlikely that the *Abwehr* gave any credence to the Portugal rumors. To land there would mean a post-invasion cross Pyrenees movement and that could be both time consuming and costly. That is why early rumors of a landing in Spain were discounted.

208 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 156, citing Ltr. C of S, *OB West*, *AOK 7, KTB, Anlagen, Chafsachen, 2.III.43-1.VIII.44*.

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In order to conduct the counter-invasion battle, with *OB WEST* in control of the panzer reserves, the complicated chain of command that existed in the West had to be simplified. On 30 December 1943 von Rundstedt had suggested to Rommel that it would be easier for Rommel to carry out his mission of conducting the counter-invasion battle along the *Kanalküste* if he took command of AOK 7 (Normandy-Contentin sector) and AOK 15 (Pas-de-Calais sector) prior to the start of the actual battle. Rommel agreed, and on 15 February 1944, Rommel's special command, *Heeresgruppenkommando sur Besonderen Verwendung* was disbanded. In its place *Heeresgruppenkommando B (HGK B)* was formed, and placed in the chain of command directly subordinate to *OB WEST*. The change ended Rommel's subordination to *OKW*, but it did not change Rommel's mandate to act as Hitler's personal representative for inspection of the coastal defenses; if anything it made is defense preparation job easier, for he now commanded the two *AOKs* guarding the northern French coast.²⁰⁹

The shuffling of the command structure was acceptable to Rommel because he was certain that the invasion would come in the Pas-de-Calais sector. Now he was in command of the divisions of *AOK 15* manning the defenses in that area. He was certain that with the forces at his disposal he could destroy the any enemy landing in that sector. On 19 January 1944 Rommel wrote to his wife and told her that "In the West: I believe that we'll be able to beat off the assault."²¹⁰ A week earlier the newspaper *Essener Zeitung* had expressed similar optimism, saying that the "Germans yearn for a western invasion as soon as possible, because when they hurl it back into the sea, the war will turn in Germany's favor."²¹¹

209 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 246; Pogue, *U.S. Army in WW – The Supreme Command in the European Theater of Operation*, 177. Before the change, whenever a conflict would develop, Rommel would tell Blumentritt, "The Führer gave quite explicit orders to me," Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 27.

210 Liddell-Hart, *The Rommel Papers*, 462.

211 "World Battlefields," *Time*, XLIII, No 3. (17 January 1944), citing *Essener Zeitung*.

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Not every intelligence document received by the Germans pointed to the Pas-de-Calais as the invasion target. The *Kriegstagebuch* of the *OKM/OA-AI* contains the following 11 January 1944 entry:

... A credible report mentioning an imminent decrease in U.S. forces in Iceland in favor of the British and American theaters, seems to indicate that forces are being concentrated for an attack on the continent and that operations against Norway will be postponed or at any rate reduced to a smaller scale....

... According to an intelligence report, the Chief of the Spanish Intelligence, General Martines Campos, has declared that a Frenchman calling on him claimed that after a landing on the French Mediterranean coast in mid-February, he would take up a command in the civil administration in Toulouse. Martines Campo was not sure about whether there was some ulterior purpose behind this report. However, he stated that a pincer offensive in the Mediterranean area could be expected in February.

Another intelligence report from Barcelona, dated 9 January, also mentioned that an attack on the French Mediterranean coast near the Spanish Frontier may be expected about the middle of February.²¹²

But, in an 18 January 1944 entry in the same *KTB*, the following did appear:

According to an intelligence report from Lisbon, troops assembled in the West Channel are first to occupy the islands of Alderney, Guernsey, and Jersey, at the same time forming a bridgehead north of Granville, between Cherbourg and Cape Barfleur and near Brest. Troops from the area, Portsmouth, Brighton, Shoreham, Hastings, and New Haven are to attack between Boulogne and Dieppe. Troops from the area between Dover and Lowestoft are to land [in Belgium] near Nieuwpoort and De Panne.²¹³

Meanwhile, on 22 January 1944, the Allies landed on the beaches in Italy south of Rome near Anzio. The *OKW* had earlier predicted another landing in the Mediterranean, but not in Italy. Jodl, at *OKW*, viewed the Anzio landing as an operation totally unconnected with the enemy's tactical plan for the development of the Italian campaign. The amount of time that the Allies spent in the immediate

212 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-31.I.55*, 11 January 1944.

213 *Ibid*, 18 January 1944.

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beachhead area gave a certain credibility to Jodl's view that the sole aim of the new beachhead was designed to draw additional German units to the Anzio area either at the expense of the German line to the south, or the defense of France. Jodl told Hitler that it might be merely the first in a long series of spoiling attacks, all designed to dilute the German defenses as a prelude to the main invasion. He told Hitler that additional attacks of this type would probably be made in Portugal, the west and south of France, or in the Aegean before the *Schwerpunkt* was delivered on the *Kanalküste*.²¹⁴

During January 1944, *Generalmajor* Horst Freiherr von Buttlar-Bradenfels, a member of the *OKW/WFSt* staff visited the "Atlantic Wall" to see personally whether it could stop a determined invasion force. He noted that if the enemy broke through one of the strong points in the defense line, there would be a gap of three or four kilometers in which they could advance unhindered.²¹⁵ Von Rundstedt hoped that ongoing work of his *Zweite Stellung* could overcome the observed shortcoming in his existing defense plan.²¹⁶

On 8 February 1944, the *OKH* intelligence staff, *OKH/Fremde Heere West*, supplied *OKW* with an intelligence that focused on the anticipated main threat:

For 1944 an operation is planned *outside the Mediterranean* that will seek to force a decision and, therefore will be carried out with all available forces. This operation is probably being prepared under the codename of OVERLORD. (Italics in Original.)²¹⁷

214 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 232, citing *Die OKW Kriegstagsschaupaetz*. Little did Jodl know that the slowness of the breakout at Anzio was due to poor American generalship in the part of Major General John P. Lucas, commanding the U.S. VI Corps, who elected to dig in rather than move aggressively to effect a rapid breakout.

215 Harrison, 232, citing MS#B-672, *OB West: Command Relationships, Commentary on MS#B-308* (Hurst Buttlar-Bradenfels).

216 Ibid.

217 Pogue, *U.S. Army in WW – The Supreme Command in the European Theater of Operation*, 164. The *OKW* did not have an intelligence staff per se and depended on

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The *OKH/FHW* estimate created a clear divergence of opinion as to the true nature of the enemy's intentions in the West. The *OKH/FHW* said that the enemy would attack in one place "with all available forces," while Jodl said that there would be a multitude of small diversions preceding the dread *Schwerpunkt*. To secure a resolution of the difference in opinion, Hitler called for an improvement in the German collection effort. By that time the *Abwehr* was considered by the Führer to be an inefficient millstone in the collection process, and he was convinced that the enemy intent could only be discovered after the *Abwehr* was dissolved. On 18 February 1944 Hitler removed Canaris and placed the bulk of the *Abwehr* organization within the *RSHA* under the control of *Oberstgruppenführer* SS Ernst Kaltenbrunner.²¹⁸

Inefficient as the *Abwehr* was, it did exist; and the *RSHA/SD* did not have a military intelligence collection program that could adequately substitute for the *Abwehr* effort if the latter was disbanded. At the same time, the *RSHA* did not have a good plan for integrating the *Abwehr* agents into *RSHA* programs. Most of the *RSHA/SD* agents outside German were not seasoned operators, and in the months that preceded the invasion they dutifully reported most of the false information that the Allies were spreading for their benefit in neutral capitals. Thus, the *RSHA* analysis organization was swamped with reports from its own

OKH for estimates and studies about the enemy's capabilities and intentions. Shulman, *Defeat in the West*, 18.

218 Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 65; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 188. Prior to the Anzio landings Canaris had reported to the *OKW* that a second Allied landing in Italy was out of the question. Bartz, *The Downfall of the German Secret Service*, 135. The *Abwehr* was inefficient, or gave that impression, and was repeatedly tricked by Allied intelligence. Admiral Canaris, the *Abwehr* Chief, had on occasion passed secret information regarding German intentions to the Allies. Pierre Accoce and Pierre Quet, *A Man Called Lucy* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1967), 64. Schellenberg wanted to incorporate the *Abwehr* into the *SD Amt*, but that *Amt* was also inefficient, and both Kaltenbrunner and *Gauleiter* Mueller opposed the idea. The compromise solution was to put the *Abwehr* headquarters within the *RSHA* under the control of Schellenberg. Bartz, 141. For a good study of the conflict between the *Abwehr* and *RSHA*, see Henry G. Sheen, "The Disintegration of the German Intelligence Services," *Military Review*, XXIX, No. 3 (Fort Leavenworth: Command and General Staff College, June 1949), 38-41.

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agents, and the new information that continued to come in from old *Abwehr* operation. Accordingly, the merger of the two services on added to the general confusion about what the enemy intended, and when they might do it.²¹⁹

When the *Abwehr* was absorbed into the *RSHA*, the process of integration was not complete. The *Abwehr* units located in occupied countries were transformed into *Frontaufklärung-Kommandos (FKs)*. In Western Europe five such Frontline Intelligence Units were formed: *FK 306* in Paris, *FK 307* in Brussels, and *FKs 313, 314, and 350* elsewhere. The FK units were nominally under the control of *OB WEST*, and fed information to it, but each took orders from the local *RSHA/SD* command.²²⁰

In March 1944, *Generalleutnant* Blumentritt, at *OB WEST*, talked for several minutes with Canaris who was in Germany. The *Admiral* told him that when the shakeup in the *Abwehr* organization occurred, they had only six radio-equipped agents in England. *Admiral* Canaris also told Blumentritt that all six had good networks and were consistently reporting that the main invasion would be launched from Southern England.²²¹

On 19 February 1944, *Großadmiral* Dönitz sent an estimate of the situation to all the naval commanders subordinate to *OKM*, saying in part:

The enemy is making extensive plans for the opening of a second front.... Using bluff and propaganda, he is endeavoring to conceal his main object and to make full use of the element of surprise.... The enemy will attempt to break up German resistance by means of small operations preceding or simultaneously with the large scale landing.²²²

219 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 217.

220 Cookridge, *Inside S.O.E.*, 298-99.

221 Shulman, *Defeat in the West*, 90; After *Canaris* was removed from his position of *Chef Abwehr*, he was appointed Chief of the Economic Warfare Office in Potsdam. Bartz, *The Downfall of the German Secret Service*, 141.

222 Anthony Martienssen, *Hitler and His Admirals* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1949), 202-03.

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In this estimate we see a clear indication that the Germans that at the highest levels the Germans were anticipating a diversion attack in addition to the main seaborne assault.

On 21 February 1944, the *OKH/FHW* forwarded the following to *OKM*:

The frequently expressed determination *to bring the war to an end in 1944* is considered *the Keyhole of the enemy's operational planning*. It is also repeatedly mentioned as a definite fact that the decision will be sought by a *large-scale attack in Western Europe*.... It must be concluded that a showdown is to be attempted during the first—or at least during the second—third of 1944.²²³

During February 1944, Hitler began to grow sensitive about the danger of an enemy landing in Brittany, the Contentin Peninsula, and Normandy—all areas west of the Seine River, and outside the *AOK 15 Pas-de-Calais* sector where the main enemy assault was anticipated. Yet, aside from mentioning the possibility of such attacks to his staff, he took no action that would increase the pace of defense construction in the *AOK 7* coastal region.²²⁴

On 3 March 1944 The German Intelligence radio station at Hamburg received a message from Albert Wan Loop, their trusted agent *ND 98* operating in the United States. The messages, transmitted from Long Island, New York, stated that the enemy was engaged in a buildup on Iceland as part of a plan to use it as a jumping off place for an invasion of Norway. The Germans had trust in *ND 98* reports, but to be sure of what he said, an aerial reconnaissance of Iceland was requested. A few days later the *Luftwaffe* reported that new facilities were indeed being constructed. That collaboration convinced the Germans that

223 Pogue, *U.S. Army in WW – The Supreme Command in the European Theater of Operation*, 164.

224 Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 128; As will be noted later, it is fair to assume that Hitler's fears concerning the *AOK 7* area was that it might be the region where the Allies would mount a diversionary attack aimed at drawing forces away from the *AOK 15* sector. In the event, that is exactly what he thought.

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the information from their agent regarding a threat to Norway had to be taken seriously.²²⁵ They had no idea that he was a double agent under FBI control.

On 4 March 1944 Hitler again told his staff— as he had in February— that he believed that the coasts of Brittany, the Contentin Peninsula, and Normandy were particularly threatened.²²⁶ He also said that he was concerned about the possibility of a double diversionary assault on both the Mediterranean and Bay of Biscay coasts of France.²²⁷ Again, the *Führer* did not order any special action with regard to his fears of diversionary attacks away from the Pas-de-Calais sector.

Faced with the assumed possibility that the enemy might conduct multiple diversionary attacks at far distant places, the *OKW* canceled its comprehensive plans to create a large tactical reserve establishment which could be quickly shift all or part of its forces from one area to another. The *OKW* decided that until they could discover the actual point of the main enemy assault, it would be imprudent to move any reserve divisions from one area to another.²²⁸ Thus was borne the “wait and see, and be sure” approach that was baked into the German’s counter invasion strategy.

About a month after *OKH/FHW* reported—on 8 February—that the code word OVERLORD was probably connected with a large-scale invasion to be launched from England, the German Foreign Office still had its doubts. All embassies and legations received messages directing that they should, “as soon as possible, and at any price,” discover the true meaning of the term

225 Hoover, “The Spy Who Double Crossed Hitler,” *Secrets and Spies*, 283-86; As noted earlier, Van Loop (*ND 98*) was a double agent working under the control of the F.B.I. During his period of operation Albert seen 2,829 carefully constructed messages to Germany via radio, and received 824 messages from his German agent handlers. Fargo, *Burn After Reading*, 201.

226 Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 128.

227 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 204.

228 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 233.

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OVERLORD. *Obersturmbannführer* SS Moyzisch in Ankara reviewed his *CICERO* dossier and replied that “OVERLORD appears to be large-scale invasion plan, possibly enemy’s second front.” Berlin replied that his conclusion was “possible, but not likely” true.²²⁹ Moyzisch had reached his conclusion based on the following data available to him: messages from London to Ankara insisting on completion of negotiations to involve Turkey in the War by May 1944; Churchill statement at Tehran that the Allies would open as second front in Europe during 1944; the fact that the Prime Minister had used the term in one reference that indicated a landing operation; and, because he intuitively felt that the very word OVERLORD sounded important.²³⁰ No information is available to justify the Foreign Office’s reply of “not likely.”

On 20 March 1944 Hitler held a conference with the *Wehrmacht*, *Kriegsmarine*, and *Luftwaffe* commanders of their respective forces guarding France. He told *Generalfeldmarschall* von Rundstedt, *Großadmiral* Krancke, and *Generalfeldmarschall* Sperrle, that “fifty divisions now stationed in Europe are badly needed in Russia. They must be transferred there as soon as victory has been won in the West.”²³¹ Hitler continued with this:

It is evident that an Anglo-American landing in the West will and must come. How and where it will come no one knows. Equally, no kind of speculation on the subject is possible. Whatever concentrations of shipping may exist, they cannot and must not be taken as evidence, or any indication, that the choice has fallen on any one sector of the long Western Wall from Norway to the Bay of Biscay, or in the Mediterranean—either the south coast of France, the Italian coast, or the Balkans. Such

229 Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 172.

230 Norman, *Operation Overlord, Design and Reality*, 164.

231 Perrault, 3; Commenting on the German idea that it would find salvation in the West, the 21st Army Group said: “For the moment it would seem that the enemy is courting further and deepening disaster in the East to retain a good chance in the West; a strange gamble militarily, made intelligent politically by a compromise peace if the Western decision bore fruit: in short, more and more Stalingrads in the hope of one [more] Dunkirk.” Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 196, citing 21st Army Group Intelligence Review, April 2, 1944.

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concentrations can be moved or transferred, at any time, under cover of bad visibility, and will obviously serve as feints. At no place along our long front is a landing impossible, except, perhaps, where the coast is broken by cliffs. The area most suitable to the enemy, and consequently the most threatened area, are the two west coast peninsulas, Contentin and Brittany, which are very tempting and offer the best possibilities for a bridgehead, which could then be enlarged systematically by the mass means of air forces and heavy weapons of all kinds.

... By far the most important thing for the enemy will be to gain a port for landings on the largest possible scale. This alone gives a wholly special importance to the west coast ports [of Brest and Cherbourg]....²³²

After the above noted meeting ended, von Rundstedt was informed that the *OKW* had decided to make a change in the subordination of the reserve forces in France. The *Wehrmacht Panzerdivisions* (*PzD 2*, *PzD 21*, and *PzD 116*) were made part of Rommel's *HGK B* reserve, and the remaining three *Panzerdivisions* and one *Panzergranadierdivision* (*SS PzD 1*, *SS PzD12*, *Wehrmacht PzD Lehr*, and *SS PzGD 17*) were subordinated to the *OKW*. This reshuffling left *OB West* without the strong mobile reserve needed for the four-stage battle Blumentritt had predicted needed to be fought to defeat a main force invasion.²³³

On 21 March 1944 the British publically announced that they would ban travel within a specified coastal zone. The *KTB* of the *OKM/OA-AI* contains the reaction of the German naval staff to this news:

After having announced the striking special precaution for traffic restrictions in Southern England, the question arises whether the loud publication of these measures do not serve for deceiving purposes and represent a typical British bluff.²³⁴

During the last week of March, *HGK B* received a report that the enemy had withdrawn three infantry, two armored, and one parachute division from the Mediterranean arena, In addition to the troop units the enemy was also reported

232 Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 173; Liddell-Hart, *The Rommel Papers*, 465.

233 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 247-48.

234 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-31.I.55*, 21 March 1944.

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to have moved a large number of big landing craft from the Mediterranean and moved them to England.²³⁵ The movement of such combat experienced combat to England—obviously for refitting—took the hint of bluff out of other Allied actions.

At the same time that Rommel learned about the movement of men and ships to England, the *Luftwaffe* learned of the arrival there of the new U.S. B-29 heavy bomber. Göring believed that the new bomber soon would be brought to England in large number for use in more intensive bombing raids over Germany. To meet the anticipated new threat to the cities and industries of the Reich, the *Luftwaffe* command decided it was necessary to cancel plans to strengthen the fighter squadrons in France.²³⁶

On 31 March 1944 The *OKW* issued a special strategic appreciation. The *OKW* admitted that decisive offensive operations could no longer be mounted by the *Wehrmacht* forces in the East, and that the enemy buildup in England meant an almost certain invasion in the West before the end of 1944. The possibility of the invasion was viewed as both the greatest danger and the greatest hope for Germany. The Germans were aware that if the enemy invasion forces were not destroyed then the Allies would eventually capture the industrial heart of German, the Ruhr Valley. As grave as the danger was, the *OKW* pointed out that the invasion might be turned into a victory for the *Reich*. The *OKW* predicted that if the beachhead could be destroyed, the enemy would not be able to attack again for a long time. That meant most of the divisions in the West would be freed for a decisive struggle with the Russians.²³⁷ On the last day of March

235 John F. Turner, *Invasion '44* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1959), 20. The Allied units involved in the move were the British 1st and 7th Armored Divisions, the 1st Airborne Division, and the 51st (Highland) Infantry Division. The U.S 1st and 9th Infantry Divisions were also in the move.

236 Farago, *Burn After Reading*, 237. Deceptions should always get the enemy to do what you want, and this one surely did, with serious consequences as will be seen later.

237 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 247-48, citing *OKW/WFSt, KTB Ausarbeitung Die OKW Kriegsschauplaetz im Rahmen der Gesamtkriegsführung 1.I.-31.III.44*.

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Rommel wrote to his wife and said, "I say plenty to cheer me here today. Although we've still a lot of weaknesses, we're looking forward full of confidence to what's coming."²³⁸

On 1 April 1944, *Generalleutnant* Dr. Hans Speidel, Chief of Staff at *HGK B*, went to Berchtesgaden, Bavaria, to report on his understanding of the strength of the Anglo-American invasion force. Speidel told Hitler that according to the intelligence reports given credence by *HGK B*, there were seventy-five divisions in England, and all but ten of them were considered to be combat ready.²³⁹ The actual number of Allied divisions ready for commitment to battle in Europe was only about forty-five.

Several days after Speidel's visit to the Führer's Berghof headquarters, Jodl, Chief of Staff at *OKW/WFSt* called Blumentritt at *OB WEST* and told him that "the Führer has definite evidence to the effect that a landing in Normandy [including the adjacent Contentin Peninsula] is not unlikely."²⁴⁰ As noted above, Hitler was concerned about diversions outside the Pas-de-Calais area, and about an effort to capture the port of Cherbourg. Von Rundstedt accepted Jodl's news as corroborative of *OB WEST*'s estimate that a diversionary assault would precede simultaneously with the main enemy invasion. *OB WEST* decided that the level of the enemy's commitment in Italy and the withdrawal of the units from that theater precluded a diversion in the Mediterranean. Prior to Jodl's call they

238 Liddell-Hart, *The Rommel Papers*, 463.

239 Speidel, *Invasion 1944, Rommel and the Normandy Campaign*, 19-20; It must have been very difficult for *HGK B* to assess the enemy potential because it received almost all of its intelligence material in predigested form from other agencies and headquarters. *OB WEST* was forbidden any direct contact with the *Abwehr* and as a result the *HGK B* staff did not have any information concerning the French resistance or their assumed role in case of an attack. Speidel said that there was not a single trained intelligence officer on the Staff at *HGK B*. *Ibid*, 21.

240 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 258; In the German documents dated prior to 6 June, the term "Normandy" indicated not only the coastal area from the Orne River to the Vire River, but also included the coast of the Contentin Peninsula between the Vire River and St. Malo. Per conversation with Richard Bauer, *Wehrmacht* documents Archivist (in the Stacks), National Archives and Record Services, Washington, D.C.

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had considered the possibility of a diversion in Brittany. *OB WEST* continued to accept that as possible. In order to meet the possibility of an attack along the French coast at any point west of Le Havre, *OB WEST* advocated the withdrawal of *AOK 7* to a line south of the Loire River. This option would entail a thin line of resistance along the coast to prevent an unopposed landing enemy forces.²⁴¹ *OKW* rejected this suggestion because it was not consistent with Hitler's order to destroy the enemy at the water's edge.

Rommel, at *HGK B*, was also informed of Hitler's concerns about the area west of the Orne River. At that time his headquarters' estimate listed the mouths of the Somme, Bresle, Arques, and Seine Rivers, with the ports of Le Harve and Abbeville as possible targets. An amended estimate prepared after Jodl's telephone call to *OB WEST* included the Normandy coast (Orne to Vire Rivers) and the Contentin Peninsula, with the latter's port of Cherbourg as possible additional target areas. Regardless of where the enemy landed, Rommel was convinced that the first object of the enemy would be to capture one of the large French ports.²⁴²

The Germans had no trouble discovering the openly publicized new security measures the British were taking. Hitler commented on them during a 6 April 1944 staff conference, and indirectly expressed his displeasure with the German intelligence collection:

Frankly, this English performance seems to me farcical: the latest reports of these prohibitive regulations, these restrictive measures and so on. Normally that sort of thing isn't done when one plans an operation like this.... I can't help feeling that after all this may be nothing but insolent posturing.... It's all so unnecessary. They can assemble their forces there, embark them, and ship them across to here, and we can't find out what they are up to. I'm inclined to think that this is sheer imprudent bluff.²⁴³

241 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 204.

242 Speidel, *Invasion 1944, Rommel and the Normandy Campaign*, 23.

243 Wilmot, 199, citing *Führer Conferences*, Fragment 40, 6 April 1944.

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However, at about the same time, Ernst Hepp, the Nazi press attaché in Stockholm, told several Western correspondents that “if [the invasion] does not come in April, it will be a terrible blow to Hitler’s prestige, because he has withdrawn reserves from the Eastern Front ... in order to prepare for the invasion.”²⁴⁴ Hepp’s statement may have been part of a German bluff or deception, because *OB WEST* had not received any reinforcements from the East.

On 6 April 1944 Rommel was expecting the invasion to be launched. He wrote to his wife saying: “Here the tension is growing from day to day.... It will probably be only weeks that separate us from the decisive event.”²⁴⁵ He told members of the German press corps that the tides and weather would be favorable for a landing through the month of April.²⁴⁶ One of the reasons the Germans expected an early landing was the fact that a spring invasion would give the Allies a longer fighting season if they hoped to break through to the Ruhr Valley before the winter.

On 13 April 1944, firmly convinced that a seaborne attack was imminent, Rommel ordered all work on von Rundstedt’s *Zweite Stellung* should cease except where the second line defenses were close enough to the main battle area to be considered a part of it. That order stopped work on everything except artillery positions in the rear areas.²⁴⁷ As noted in the previous chapter, on this day the Allies launched the tactical fighter aircraft offensive in France.

On 15 April 1944 Rommel and Speidel were studying Swiss newspapers and transcripts of foreign broadcasts in an effort to keep themselves informed concerning developments on the Russian and Italian Fronts. They were also

244 “World Battlefields,” *Time*, XLIII, No 15. (15 April 1944), 23.

245 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 17.

246 *Time*, 25.

247 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 263, citing AOK 7, *KTB*, 1.I.-30.VI.44, 15 and 22 May 1944.

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studying the public statements of the enemy political leaders.²⁴⁸ After finishing their studies, they concluded that the situations on the Russian and Italian Fronts were very serious and that their Western Front would be in similar trouble in the very near future. Both officers knew that the Western defenses were not perfect and that *HGK B* was badly in need of reinforcements. Rommel called *OKW* and suggested to Jodl that if the German divisions in Italy withdrew to a line Pisa-Florence-Ravenna they could both shorten and strengthen the Southern Front and still have units left over for reinforcing the West. Jodl told Rommel to concern himself with France.²⁴⁹

On 22 April 1944 Rommel updated his *February Letter of Instructions* to the commanders of *AOK 7* and *AOK 15*. The new letter read in part:

In the short time left before the great offensive starts, we must succeed in bringing all our defenses to such a standard that they will hold up against the strongest attacks. Never in history was there a defense of such extent with such an obstacle as the sea. The enemy must be annihilated before he reaches our main battlefield.... We must stop him at the water, not only delaying him, but destroying all of his equipment while it is still afloat.... The high-water line must be the main fighting line.²⁵⁰

On the same day Rommel told his aide, *Hauptmann* Hellmuth Lang, about the importance of the meeting engagement. "Believe me, Lang," he said, "the first twenty-four hours of the invasion will be decisive.... The fate of Germany depends on the outcome.... For the Allies, as well as Germany, it will be the longest day."²⁵¹

248 Hitler's 1940 "Order of Principle No. 1" forbade dissemination of reports to officers not directly involved in an operation. Because of this continuing order, it was necessary to use indirect methods to keep informed and that was the reason for the study of foreign news material.

249 Speidel, *Invasion 1944, Rommel and the Normandy Campaign*, 59.

250 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 191, citing *Letter of Instruction*, 22 April 1944.

251 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 9.

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On 24 April 1944 the tempo of the Anglo American air offensive against targets in France which had been going on for two weeks picked up noticeably as bomber aircraft joined the attacking fighter planes. The targets of the air attacks convinced von Rundstedt that the focal point of enemy interest was still the coastal front from Brest on the Atlantic to the Scheldt in Holland.²⁵² *Admiral* Kranke at *OKM* shared the same thoughts. Two days later the *Admiral* received a *Luftwaffe* report which noted that there was no increase in enemy shipping in either the Thames River or the southeast coast port. To Kranke that meant that the air attacks did not indicate an immediate threat to the Pas-de-Calais.²⁵³

On 26 April, Rommel wrote to his wife and told her that “in England the morale is bad... There is one strike after another and cries of ‘Down with Churchill and the Jews and for peace are getting louder.... These are bad omens for such a risky offensive.’”²⁵⁴

In late April the Germans learned that the enemy had carried out a large amphibious exercise landing at Slapton Sands on the 27-28th, where the troops were disembarked on a flat and open coastline. The information was studied at *OB WEST* where the staff deduced “that the Anglo-Americans would not try to attack a port at the onset” of the invasion. The consensus of both *OB WEST* and *HGK B* was that the most probable target of the invasion, in the absence of an assault on a port, was on the beaches of the Pas-de-Calais.²⁵⁵

Realizing that the amphibious exercise would mean that the invasion was not immediately imminent, Rommel wrote to his wife on the evening of 27 April, saying: “It looks like the British and the Americans are going to do us the favor of

252 Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 128-29.

253 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 259, citing *MGK WEST KTB*, 16.-30.IV.44, 26 April 1944.

254 Ryan, 17. Those quotes suggest Rommel was reading a German newspaper.

255 Liddell-Hart, *The German Generals Talk*, 235-36; Liddell-Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 392.

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keeping away for a bit. This will be of immense value for our coastal defense, for we are growing stronger every day.”²⁵⁶

At the end of April 1944 the *Luftwaffe* made a thorough study of the majority of the enemy’s Channel and Thames River ports. There was no marked increase in the shipping in the Dover to Thames sector, but in the ports west of the Isle of Wight they noted a heavy increase in the concentration of every kind of craft. At the same time the Germans received reports of complaints made by the British Industries concerning the mobilization of the Home Guard.²⁵⁷ The *Luftwaffe* report agreed with other reports which indicated that the invasion was coming soon, and that the *Schwerpunkt* would be preceded by a diversionary assault somewhere west of the Seine River.

256 Liddell-Hart, *The Rommel Papers*, 463.

257 Speidel, *Invasion 1944, Rommel and the Normandy Campaign*, 22.

XII. ALLIED INVASION PLANNING: MAY 1944

In its May 1st issue, *Time* magazine reported that “never had the invasion of Europe from the West seemed so clearly imminent.” Simultaneously, Radio Berlin was broadcasting that the attack could come at “any minute” and that the German troops were at “highest alert.” *Time*’s story reported that “there was also silence, behind a wave of new security regulations.... Some movement [of troops] might be in progress, or the enemy might be getting more of the maddening false alarms, ... feints ... [and] dress rehearsals which Winston Churchill had promised.”²⁵⁸

On 4 May 1944 the Allies held another practice exercise in the FABIUS series. The disembarkation areas for the dress rehearsal were Slapton Sands, Hayling Island, Brackesham Bay, and Littlehampton. This time there were no enemy *S-Boote* attacks, and no ships were lost by accident.²⁵⁹

During the first week of May 1944, SHAEF intelligence received reports from aerial reconnaissance indicating heavy rail traffic in the area between the Seine and Loire Rivers. At the same time, they received agent reports telling of drastic realignments in the disposition of German units in the Contentin and Normandy sectors. The Allies decided that the rail traffic and troop movements might mean that the Germans had discovered the invasion secrets and were reinforcing the two sectors. However, there was no clear certainty that the Germans were aware of the Allied plans and the invasion preparations

258 “World Battlefields,” *Time*, XLIII, No 18. (1 May 1944), 23.

259 Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 134; *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, 12.

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continued.²⁶⁰ On 7 and 8 May the Allied units in England began to move to their designated marshalling areas.²⁶¹

The 8 May 1944 issue of *Time* magazine reported that “the invasion of Europe is coming — and soon. But when? Over Europe uncertainty hung sharp as a dangling sword.” *Time* reprinted a Swiss newspaper report telling that the foreign press corps in Germany were betting that the invasion would fall between 6 May and 7 June.²⁶²

On 8 May 1944 the SHAEF planners met to set the exact day and hour for the invasion. Field Marshall Montgomery noted that the German defenses were set up to ward off a landing made at high tide. In the past the Allies had made their seaborne assaults at that time. Montgomery suggested that the first wave of the upcoming assault should begin near the mid-tide on a rising tide. He noted that such a move would confuse the German attempts to anticipate the date of the landing. It would also give the Allied combat engineer (sappers) an attempt to destroy the beach obstacles that would impede the follow waves of landing craft. The other officers agreed with Montgomery’s strategy. Based on that decision, a study of tide and moon phase tables was made. Correlating the two tables showed that during the period 4 to 7 June the moon phase would be full and the mid-tide on a rising tide would occur just after dawn.²⁶³ The combination of moon and tide conditions would provide some moon light for airborne operations, would allow for a short period of daylight naval and air bombardment, and allow the sappers time to blow lanes through the beach obstacles. One of the officers suggested that the invasion beaches should be continually strafed by fighter aircraft to slow down further construction of beach obstacles. Eisenhower vetoed

260 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 201-02.

261 *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, 12; *Omaha Beachhead*, 35; Norman, *Operation Overlord, Design and Reality*, 96.

262 “World Battlefields,” *Time*, XLIII, No 19. (8 May 1944), 19.

263 Wilmot, 270, Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, 534; Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II*, 33.

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that idea for fear that the Germans might discover the significance of the point specific air action.²⁶⁴ At the end of the meeting Eisenhower set the date for the primary and alternate assault periods. The primary assault period would begin at dawn on 5 June.²⁶⁵ If, for any reason, the assault could not be made on the 5th, the two days following were established as the alternative dates.²⁶⁶

On 9 May 1944 the U.S Eighth Air Force began heavy bomber attacks on the German airfields in France and Belgium, striking at Laon, Thionville, St. Dizier, Juvincourt, Orléans, Bourges, Avord, and Florennes.²⁶⁷ On 9 May, the U.S. Ninth Air Force began its mission of destroying all of the German airfields located within range of Caen, hitting the airbases at Beaumont-le-Roger and Cormeilles-en-Vexin.²⁶⁸

By 11 May all of the Allied units in England designated to take part in the assault phase of the invasion operations had completed their moves to the marshalling areas.²⁶⁹ A force of 2,000 counterintelligence personnel was assembled to guard the security of the marshalling areas, while another 4,500 cooks and bakers were there to keep the troops fed as they waited for orders to move out, go to, and board the ships.²⁷⁰

On 12 May 1944, in a powerful test of enemy reaction, more than 800 heavy bombers of the U.S. Eighth Air Force, escorted by U.S and R.A.F. fighters, attacked the oil refineries in central Germany. The raid was a moderate success but it cost the allies forty-six bombers and ten fighter aircraft. The returning

264 Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, 534.

265 Williams, *U.S. Army in WWII – Special Studies, Chronology 1941-1945*, 191.

266 Norman, *Operation Overlord, Design and Reality*, 96.

267 Williams, 191.

268 Ibid.

269 *Omaha Beachhead*, 35.

270 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 270.

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aircrews claimed about 200 Luftwaffe fighters destroyed.²⁷¹ The raid did remind Göring of the danger of attacks on critical facilities in Germany. Accordingly, fearing similar raids he delayed his plans and pledge to reinforce *Luftflottenkommando III (LFK III)* in France.

On 16 May 1966 there was a final review of the OVERLORD plan. At the London meeting were the King, the Prime minister, the Combined Chiefs of Staff, and Eisenhower, with the latter's SHAEF staff and ground force commanders. The SHAEF plan was reviewed and confirmed.²⁷² A day later, after a special study of last-minute aerial photography coverage of the five designated invasion beaches was concluded, Eisenhower reconfirmed that, weather permitting, 5 June would be the invasion date.²⁷³

On 18 May 1944, in London, Eisenhower's Naval Aide lunch with several members of the SHAEF-accredited press corps. One of the correspondents told him that some of the reporters believed that there would not be an invasion of France. The skeptics, it would seem, believed that all the rumors of an invasion were part of a giant hoax.²⁷⁴ Perhaps they thought it was a scheme to cause Hitler to keep troops in France that might otherwise be sent east to fight the Russians.

If it was all a giant hoax, the men in charge of OVERLORD's security might have had fewer worries during the month of May. On one of those wet and windy London mornings a window at the British War Office blew open and suddenly twelve copies of a short report summarizing OVERLORD were sucked out and fluttered down to the street. A quick, panicked search, recovered eleven copies: the twelfth could not be found. Two hours later, and on the other side of

271 Williams, 191.

272 Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, 539.

273 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 220-21; Meteorology records of the past century showed that the chances of the Normandy sector having weather in June that would meet the minimum standards were 13 to 1 against.

274 Butcher, 539.

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Whitehall, a man walked up to a guard, handed him the last lost copy, and said that “the print on the copy is hard to read.” By the time the security officers were informed of the documents recovery, it was too late to find the man who had read its contents.²⁷⁵

In another security incident, a railway employee in Exeter found a brief case in an empty compartment of a train. He noted that its contained military papers and gave it to the Station Manager. The latter then called the local authorities and had several of the Home Guard troops secure the material until SHAEF personnel recovered it. Some of the contents of the briefcase dealt with aspects of OVERLORD.²⁷⁶

The strangest of all the counterintelligence investigations involved a series of crossword puzzles that appeared in the London Daily Telegraph starting on 2 May 1944. On 4 June the SHAEF officers finally talked to the puzzle creator, Leonard Sidney Dawes. They asked him how it came to be that he had used the words Overlord, Omaha, Utah, Mulberry, and Neptune—all invasion related code words—in six of his puzzles. Dawes told his interrogators that some of the puzzles were prepared as much as six months in advance of publication, and he could not remember why the particular words were chosen, or even understand why they had any special significance. All he could say was that, if they were important, his use, and SHAEF’s use of the same words, was merely a coincidence. The SHAEF counterintelligence security people had suspected a more sinister plot—one designed to convey information to the German—but could prove nothing.²⁷⁷

On 21 May 1944, the U.S. Ninth Air Force fighter aircraft began Operation CHATTANOOGA CHO-CHOO. Not too surprisingly, the object of the aerial plan

275 Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 148.

276 Ibid.

277 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 45-48.

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as the destruction of the enemy railroad and rolling stock in France and Belgium. The following is descriptive of what the plan was designed to achieve:

Although the primary purpose of the raid offensive was to reduce the enemy's capacity for moving reserves [by rail], it was important that it could contribute to the deception plan. By fortunate accident of geography, a single bombardment program could achieve both objects. The chief German supply routes to Western Normandy were either extensions of, or offshoots from, lines which served the Pas-de-Calais or the Le Havre-Amiens area. They ran either through Paris or across the Seine west of the capital. Thus, bombing the repair-shops and junctions between the Seine and the Meuse [Rivers] could disrupt German communications with Normandy almost as effectively as attacks between the Seine and the Loire [Rivers]. Moreover, the general paralysis of the railway system could best be achieved by attacks on targets in the *Région Nord*, for it was there that the principal maintenance facilities were located. Nor would the bombing of the Seine bridges betray the Allied intention since this would appear as the last act of an attempt to isolate the Pas-de-Calais.²⁷⁸

This makes it clear how integrated the deception planning was in the actual pre-invasion kinetic military activity.

On 25 May, 1944, SHAEF took steps to further tighten security. They imposed an artificial delay of ten days on the forwarding of all soldier's mail destined for the United States and denied to American personnel the privilege of using transatlantic telephone, cable and radio facilities. The measure was designed to prevent any of the troops in the marshalling areas from revealing the special preparations being made just prior to the embarkation.²⁷⁹

278 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 209-11. To the Germans, the enemy would want to isolate the Pas-de-Calais from Normandy so that it would be difficult to move reserve troops from there and Brittany to the reinforce Pas-de-Calais when the expected main attack came in the latter sector.

279 Eisenhower, *Report by the Supreme Commander etc.*, 14; Churchill, *The Second World War*, V, 595.

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On 25 May 1944 the Allied units moving up the Italian Peninsula from the Salerno beachhead made contact with units that had landed at Anzio.²⁸⁰ On the same day the U.S. Eighth Air Force joined in the air offensive against French coastal heavy gun batteries, attacking Fécamp and St. Valéry en Caux. The latter activity was noted by the Germans, but it was the Italian action that caused the greatest concern.²⁸¹

On 26 May 1944 the OVERLORD plan was modified. The U.S. 82nd Airborne Division had been scheduled to jump over the western part of the Cotentin Peninsula near the town of La-Haye-du-Puits. A few days before, Allied Intelligence officers learned from a member of the French Railways that Rommel had moved a division of fresh troops, actually *Luftlande-Infanterie-Division 91* into the area designated as the drop zones for the American paratroopers.²⁸² To prevent a sure slaughter of the paratroopers, they were assigned a new set of drop zones just west of Ste.-Mère-Église. That put the 82nd closer to UTAH Beach and to the drop zones of the U.S. 101st Airborne Division.²⁸³

On 27 May 1944 the first elements of the invasion assault force left their marshalling areas and began to move to the embarkation ports.²⁸⁴ One day later a British actor who closely resembled Field Marshall Montgomery was disguised

280 Williams, *U.S. Army in WWII – Special Studies, Chronology 1941-1945*, 191; *Chronology of the Second World War*, 263.

281 Williams, *U.S. Army in WWII – Special Studies, Chronology 1941-1945*, 191.

282 While nominally a *Wehrmacht* Air Landing Division, *Luftlande-Infanterie-Division 91* was formed in the Baumholder area of Germany from replacement center personnel in January 1944. The division was transferred to Generalleutnant Wilhelm Falley and moved to the Cotentin peninsula with the von der Heydte 6th Parachute Regiment and 100th Panzer Replacement and Training Battalion, armed with captured French light tanks, and attached as part of AOK 7. "91st Infantry Division (Wehrmacht)." Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 10 July 2015 19:42 UTC. Web. 12 November 2015 22:09 UTC.

283 Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*), 233-34; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 243.

284 *Omaha Beachhead*, 35.

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in Monty's uniform and flown to Gibraltar in Montgomery's aircraft. At Gibraltar the imposter was officially received by the British Governor and his staff and entertained by them. The Allies were certain the Germans would hear of the visit from their Spanish friends. SHAEF officers hoped that if the Germans did not discover that the visit was a deception, they might conclude that the absence of Montgomery from England meant that an invasion was not imminent, or that the Field Marshall would be part of a southern operation. Either misconception on the part of either OKW or Hitler would have suited the Allied purpose.²⁸⁵

On 29 May 1944 the SHAEF senior meteorologist, Group-Captain J. M. Stagg, gave Eisenhower and his staff an optimistic long-range weather forecast for the week of 1 to 7 June.²⁸⁶ With the weather outlook good, the loading of men and material at the embarkation posts began on 30 May.²⁸⁷

On 31 May 1944 the SHAEF intelligence officers informed Eisenhower and his staff that the Germans believed that the Allies planned several assaults, the first of which was to be a diversion. The briefers told Eisenhower that there was no information available to indicate that the Germans were aware of the use to be made of the artificial harbor structures. To protect the secret of the artificial harbor strategy, Eisenhower ordered that all references to MULBERRIES, GOOSEBERRIES, and CORNCOBS and related code words should be deleted from press reports.²⁸⁸

285 Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, 549.

286 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 272.

287 Williams, *U.S. Army in WWII – Special Studies, Chronology 1941-1945*, 199.

288 Butcher, 554.

XIII. GERMAN PLANS & ESTIMATES: MAY 1944

When May came, Radio Berlin broadcast that the enemy invasion would come at “any moment, anywhere.” The newscaster said that the “Atlantic Wall” troops were at the “highest state of alert.”²⁸⁹

Actually, there was no “special alertness” in the West. At the beginning of May the *HGK B* staff was absorbed with the task of trying to calculate the exact time and place of the expected imminent enemy assault. *Generalleutnant* Speidel told his staff that there were clear indications that the invasion was near at hand.

There were restrictions upon travel in the United Kingdom, the Home Guard was called up, and the British industry complained of the dislocation that this produced. The sign that was most ominous was the intensifying of the air strikes against [the French] mainland, which indicated an attack to be imminent, though the exact time would depend upon weather conditions.... [The *OKW*] was advised by [*OKM*] ... that indications pointed to 18 May and named this day as “the day certain” for the beginning of the invasion.²⁹⁰

Accepting the *OKM* determination as to the probable time for the attack, *HGK B* began to review information that might indicate where the *Schwerpunkt* of the invasion would come. All aspects of enemy activity were plotted on situation maps and reviewed by Speidel who said:

Intruders, bomber sorties, Channel reconnaissance by Allied naval craft, minelaying, minesweeping, acts of sabotage of the resistance, all seemed to point to an intention to land in the area between the Somme [River] and a St. Malo-Orléans line.²⁹¹

289 “World Battlefields,” *Time*, XLIII, No 13. (1 May 1944), 23.

290 Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 45-46.

291 *Ibid*, 44, Speidel, *Invasion 1944, Rommel and the Normandy Campaign*, 24.

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All that assessment accomplished was to confirm that it was going to be in the *HGK B* area of responsibility, without suggesting any likely point for the main and one or two diversions.

After the initial staff studies were completed, Rommel met with Speidel and the other staff officers in his *HGK B* headquarters. Together they reviewed the possible enemy options for action. Rommel ruled out Hitler's theory that the invasion would come in the Cap Gris Nez. He stated that the advantage of the shortest sea crossing and short supply lines did not justify attacking the strongest point on the entire defensive line. Rommel pointed out that the enemy's pattern of air operations, and the assemblage of shipping in Wales and the South of England ruled out the *OKW* speculation that the assault might come along the Belgian coast or in the Scheldt in Holland.²⁹²

HGK B had also received reports that the invasion might come in the south of France on both sides of the mouth of the Rhone River, or even in the vicinity of Bordeaux in the Bay of Biscay. Rommel rated the chance of attacks in those sectors as certainly possible, but pointed out that if they did come they probably would be only of secondary importance to the total enemy plan. The only area left, and the one indicated by the plotting of the enemy activity, was the coast of northern France between the mouth of the Somme River and the Golfe du St. Malo. The *Generalfeldmarschall* was not able to pinpoint the most threatened area along the 350 miles of vulnerable Channel coast. He did say that there might be several landings along the coast in rapid succession, or that a major feint might precede the main assault—the all-important *Schwerpunkt*.²⁹³

Rommel looked at the Channel coast as he imagined the Allies would view it. He told his staff that from an operational and a Ruhr Valley objective, the best place for the *Schwerpunkt* was in the mouth of the Somme River. He also noted that any diversionary attacks would probably come west of the Seine River with

292 Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 47-48; Speidel, *Invasion 1944, Rommel and the Normandy Campaign*, 24.

293 Speidel, *Normandy*, 47-48; Speidel, *Invasion 1944*, 24.

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landings in either Normandy or the Contentin Peninsula. He then outlined the probable enemy strategy and plan of maneuver. He said the enemy would first secure a lodgment and then attempt to cut off the Brittany Peninsula and capture Cherbourg. The next major objective, as Rommel viewed a continuing operation, would be to move to capture Paris. He told his staff that the liberation of the Île-de-France would give the enemy the operational, political, and psychological stimulant needed for the drive east and into Germany.²⁹⁴

To meet the threat of a diversion in the area west of the Seine River, Rommel ordered the strengthening of the fortifications between Je Havre and Cherbourg. He also requested that *Luftflottenkommando III* concentrate *FLAK-Korps III*, then scattered all over central and northern France, in the area between the Orne and Vire Rivers. *Generalfeldmarschall* Hugo Sperrle, at *LFK III* referred the request to *Reichsmarschall* Göring at *OKL* in Berlin, Göring turned down Rommel's request.²⁹⁵

Rommel also ordered staff studies on possible enemy options and the best German reaction to each. According to *Generalleutnant* Speidel, the following contingency plans were prepared by the *HGK B* staff:

If the enemy lands between the Seine and Loire: Counter-operations, with withdrawal on the line of the Seine which will be held, Attacks south of the Seine from the east and south to destroy the forces landed.

If the enemy lands between the Somme and Seine: Counter-operation, hold strong points on a line Amiens-Vernon, and on the Oise.

If the enemy lands north of the Somme: (unlikely by reason of terrain and strategic considerations) counter-operations, an attack from the south northward.

294 Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 47-48; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 205.

295 Speidel, *Normandy*, 46-47, and 64; During the battle for the Normandy coast the commander of *FLAK-Korps III* was called to Germany to discuss air defense problems with Göring. As a result of its absence from the battle area, the powerful 8.8 cm *FLAK* artillery of *FK III* did not play a significant anti-ship or anti-tank role in the defense of the French coastal areas.

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If the lands south of the Loire or on the Mediterranean coast: Abandon southern France and defend the Loire line. Gather a strategic reserve of two or three armies and as many panzer divisions between Loire and Jura.

The enemy lands south of the Seine and on the Mediterranean coast simultaneously: Abandon southern France, defend the line Seine-Yonne-Canal de Bourgogne. Collect a strategic reserve in the Troyes-Dijon-Langres-St. Dizier area²⁹⁶.

While *HGK B* personnel were attempting to solve logically the riddle of the Allied invasion plan—searching for the school solution, the following information, noted in the *KTB* of *OKM/OA-AI* on 1 May 1944, was being analyzed by the *OKW*:

Vichy French General Staff Officers determined through a neutral diplomat that a large landing may be expected about 10 May between the Seine and Somme Rivers. A smaller landing will occur on the Biscay coast. The neutral diplomat is of the private opinion that a landing in France will take place in France only in the event of a Russian defeat.

Another agent reports that according to his information out of Paris the invasion will occur in the middle of May. Here landings will be made:

- 1) In the Western Mediterranean with De Gaulle's French troops.
- 2) Along the southern [Bay of] Biscay coast.
- 3) Between Le Have and Abbeville.

In addition, landings will occur at Genoa, Italy, and in the Balkans.

An agent of the *KO Spanien* reported that on 30 April military preparations appropriate for an imminent invasion were occurring in Southern England. Definite troop embarkations were evident.

It has become known from French Officer circles in North Africa that the Allied Supreme Command is preparing for a landing north of Rome. The landing will be made by four divisions from the Italian Front.

Based on observations of troop movement on the Italian Front, the last report is rated as highly probable.²⁹⁷

296 Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 72-73 (Italics in original.).

297 Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, *KTB* 1.-31.V.44, 1 May 1944.

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On 2 May 1944 Hitler called in his staff and told them that he was utterly convinced that the enemy main blow—the *Schwerpunkt*—would come in the Cap Gris Nez sector of the Pas-de-Calais.²⁹⁸ The Führer also believed that the enemy’s plan, like his own 1940 Operation *SEELÖWE*, would include diversionary attacks. He predicted that one or more subsidiary attacks would be made prior to the main assault to draw the strategic reserve into action away from what would later be the principal attack.²⁹⁹ Hitler said that he was convinced that the enemy would make one diversionary attack in the Normandy sector between the Orne and Vire Rivers, and that a second diversionary landing might be made in Brittany.³⁰⁰ Hitler based his assessment of the danger to Normandy and possibly Brittany on the suspicious enemy concentrations in Western England. In late April, *Luftwaffe* aerial reconnaissance had reported large buildups of shipping in the western ports.³⁰¹ Agent reports were also received concerning troop movements in Britain. Two main troop concentrations had been observed there—one in the southeast consisting mainly of British units, and the other in the southwest consisting of American forces. The disposition of the American units west of Portsmouth led Hitler to conclude that the enemy, from the onset of the

298 Liddell-Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 395-96; After the war, Liddell-Hart interviewed von Rundstedt and asked him why the Germans believed that the Allied invasion would come in the Pas-de-Calais sector which was the most heavily defended. Von Rundstedt replied: “The strength of the defenses were absurdly overrated. The ‘Atlantic Wall’ was an illusion, conjured up by the propaganda—to deceive the German people as well as the Allies. Ibid, 393.

299 Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 128.

300 Liddell-Hart, *loc. cit.*; Patrice Boussel, *D-Day Beaches Revisited* (Garden City, New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1951), 21; After the war, *General der Artillerie* Walter Warlimont was asked where the invasion was inspected in the Normandy sector. He replied: “I cannot say that we expected the landing at any particular point in Normandy. We expected it along the coast with special reference to the small ports (which are mainly in the Bayeux area)...” MS#ETHINT 1, *From Invasion to the Siegfried Line* (Warlimont), 1-3.

301 Ellis, 205; After the war, *General der Artillerie* Walter Warlimont was asked if he expected the invasion would take place where it actually did. He replied: “Hitler was the first one who decided for himself that this was the most probable spot for landing.” MS#ETHINT 1, (Warlimont), 1-3.

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invasion, would need a big port which had to be situated in such a way as to be quickly protected by a rather short sea line. Cherbourg in the north of the Contentin Peninsula met the requirement and with a landing in Normandy and Brittany the peninsula could be isolated and the port could be invested from rear.³⁰²

On 2 May 1944, following the meeting with Hitler, *OKW* ordered *OB West* to strengthen the Contentin Peninsula and Normandy sectors with additional anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons.³⁰³ Hitler had stated that adding more of both types of weapons would better enable the local forces to deal with any diversionary landing in the *AOK 7* area. The message from Berlin informed von Rundstedt that Hitler strongly believed that *OB West* would have to deal with a diversionary attack in Normandy and a possible one in Brittany.³⁰⁴

A 3 May 1944 entry in the *KTB* of the *OKM/OA-AI* confirms that there was a general circulation of Hitler's beliefs expressed in the meeting a day earlier:

The Naval representative at *OKW/WFSt* reports that the Führer is of the opinion that the Empire Conference served for a last minute check of the situation and that an invasion is to be expected shortly. The Führer is concerned, above all, with separate bridgeheads, especially strong assaults in Brittany and on the Contentin Peninsula. Concern also exists about the insufficiency of our coastal artillery batteries on the Channel Isles.³⁰⁵

On 5 May 1944, *Colonelgeneral* Friedrich Dollmann, the commander of *AOK 7*, proposed immediately moving *General der Artillerie* Erich Marck's

302 Liddell-Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 395-96; MS#ETHINT 1, *From Invasion to the Siegfried Line* (Warlimont), 1-3.

303 Liddell-Hart, loc. cit.

304 Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 174.

305 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-31.V.44*, 3 May 1944; The *OKM's* understanding of the term "Contentin Peninsula" was that it referred to a sector that included the Peninsula and adjacent Normandy coast, both of which were *AOK 7* area of operations. *AOK 75* to the west guarded the Brittany sector.

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Generalkommando LXXXIV Armeekorps from far Western Brittany to Normandy if a landing occurred there. Rommel vetoed the idea of having the entire *Armeekorps*—guarding the area flanking the port of Brest—move without the express permission of *HGK B*.³⁰⁶

On 6 May 1944, Jodl at *OKW* talked with von Rundstedt at *OB WEST* and informed him that the Führer attached particular importance to the Normandy sector, especially the Cherbourg port sector of the Contentin Peninsula. Hitler, said Jodl, wanted all possible measures be taken, short of committing the *OKW* reserves, to reinforcing the supposed threatened area. In accordance with Hitler's orders von Rundstedt sent *Luftlandedivision 91*, reinforced by attaching *Fallschirmeregiment 6* into the peninsula to establish defenses on a line Cherbourg to Carentan. *Infanteriedivision 352* was moved from St. Lô to cover the coastal sector from the Vire River to Arromanches. The latter move enabled *ID 716* to shorten its lines to cover the sector east of Arromanches to the Orne River. *ID 77* was moved from Caen to the Bay of St. Malo, and the Russian units in that sector, *Ostbataillons 642* and *Georgian*, moved eastward to take up positions between Avranches and Coutances on the west coast of the Contentin Peninsula. The latter move allowed *ID 243* to shorten its defenses to cover the sector Coutances to Cap de la Hague. *Mobilebrigade 30* was positioned on a line Coutances to St. Lô. The now vacant area around the Caen roadhub was filled by *Panzerdivision 21* which moved from Rennes. *Fallschirmdivision 5* took over the positions in the area around Rennes. The *Lehr Panzerdivision* which was returning from Hungary to its station at Verdun, was diverted to Chartes. One regiment from *ID 346*, which was located north of the Seine River, was moved across the river to reinforce *ID 711* in the sector Orne River-Seine River. *SS Panzergrenadierdivision 17* at Poitiers was ordered to move to positions north of the Loire River. Lastly, *Panzerdivision 116*, in position astride the Seine River

306 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 270, citing AOK 7, KTB 1.I.-30.VI.44, 2 and 5 May 1944.

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west of Paris, was alerted to prepare for a move to an area around Caen on short notice.³⁰⁷

Thus, the defensive posture of the German forces in both Normandy and the Contentin Peninsula was significantly strengthened as a result of Hitler's personnel estimates and the implementation of Jodl's order by von Rundstedt and Rommel. On 6 May 1944 Rommel wrote to his wife and expressed his new confidence:

Still no sign of the British and Americans.... Every day, every week ... we get stronger.... I am looking forward to the battle with confidence.... Perhaps it will be May 15, perhaps at the end of the month.³⁰⁸

Although von Rundstedt issued the orders for the reinforcement of the Normandy and Contentin sectors, and thus gave Rommel increased confidence, von Rundstedt did it reluctantly. *Admiral* Theodor Krancke, Commander of *Marinegruppenkommando West*, had assured von Rundstedt that it was almost impossible to make a large-scale landing between the Orne River and Cherbourg. Krancke said the offshore rock outcrops would destroy the enemy boats. In addition, *OB WEST's* Chief Engineer insisted that the flooding of the fields around Carentan would discourage any major assault on the Contentin Peninsula. Accordingly, the von Rundstedt remained true to his original conviction that the initial diversionary assault would come around Dieppe, between Fécamp and Le Tréport, and that the *Schwerpunkt* would be north of the Somme River. Von Rundstedt and his staff concluded that the shipping concentration around Devon and Cornwall must be part of an enemy deception plan designed to distract attention away from the Pas-de-Calais area. When a reconnaissance plane, flying at night, reported that road convoys were driving to the southwestern ports using their unmasked headlights, von Rundstedt

307 Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 128; *Fallschirmeregiment 6* was moved to France from the Eastern Front, and *Luftlandedivision 91* came from Germany. MS#ETHINT-1 *From Invasion to the Siegfried Line (Warlimont)*, 5.

308 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 17.

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concluded that the supposed breach in blackout security must be a deliberate trick to deceive them.³⁰⁹

On 9 May, 1944 Rommel made an entry in his diary which indicated that he did not agree with the *OB WEST* estimate: "Tomorrow: tour of inspection of the Contentin Peninsula, which would seem to be the main objective of an enemy invasion."³¹⁰ A Day later he wrote: "From the enemy point of view the number one objective is to get firmly ashore.... This is improbable on the Pas-de-Calais coast, which is strongly defended, but possible on the Normandy coast, which is barely fortified."³¹¹

On 10 May *OB WEST* and *HGK B* received the following estimate of the situation from *OKW*:

OKW foresees the start of the enemy attack in the middle of May. The 18th seems a probable date. But there is of course no certainty. Principal effort in Normandy, then in Brittany. It is thought the enemy will bomb the ground positions with large caliber bombs, concentrating in small areas, and will try to eliminate the coastal armament in the same manner as well by violent naval bombardment.... Important parachute landing will perhaps take place at nightfall.... In Contentin, a particular alertness is demanded against airborne troops.³¹²

On 10 May entry in the *KTB* of *OKM/OA-AI* contains the following analysis:

Naval Representative at *OKW/WFSt* provided summary of briefing with Hitler:

1) The Führer is positively convinced that the enemy will commence the invasion by the end of May. Delay of the invasion is not anticipated unless a strong internal crisis develops in England. The establishment of a bridge-head appears possible without too great a risk, and is expected to

309 Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 46; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 205.

310 Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 179; Bousset, *D-Day Beaches Revisited*, 12.

311 Perrault, 179.

312 Bousset, 12.

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be the first object of the invasion. The especially threatened areas, such as the Contentin Peninsula, will be reinforced.

2) In England 76 major formations are now ready. Landing transport in the Channel which until now were located in the vicinity of the Isle of Wight are now—Portsmouth for six or seven divisions; vicinity Yarmouth-Plymouth for eight and one-half divisions; vicinity Falmouth for three-quarters of a division. Total transport capacity presently in England is estimated to be sufficient for twenty-seven divisions.

3) Based on his latest inspection *Generalfeldmarschall* Rommel is very confident of the strength of the army in the Western Sector.³¹³

On 15 May 1944, *Admiral* Krancke at *MGK WEST* echoed warnings about the danger of parachute landings in the Contentin Peninsula. All *Kriegsmarine* units in France were ordered to prepare for such a contingency.³¹⁴ Von Rundstedt's 15 May situation report stressed the enemy's need to capture a large and spacious harbor. He considered Le Harve and Cherbourg to be especially suited, with Boulogne and Brest listed as acceptable prizes. He stated that the suitability of Cherbourg gave credence to warnings that the enemy might try to establish a bridgehead in the Contentin Peninsula during the early phases of the invasion operations.³¹⁵

On the same day, the 15th, Rommel and his Chief of Staff met near St. Germain with *General der Infanterie* Karl Henrich von Stülpnagel, the Military Governor of France, and the latter's Chief of Staff. The discussion at their meeting included a review of measures necessary to end the war in the West and to overthrow of the Nazi regime. No definite plans were made at that time.³¹⁶

313 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-31.V.44*, 10 May 1944.

314 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 259, citing *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-31.V.44*, 15 May 1944.

315 Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 129.

316 Speidel, *Invasion 1944*, 65; Perhaps Rommel remembered the injunction contained in Adolph Hitler's *Mein Kampf*: *Wenn Durch die Hilfsmittel der Regierungsgewalt ein Volkstrum dem Untergang entengeführt wird, dann ist die Rebellion eines jeden Angehörigen eines solchen Volkes nich nur Recht, sondern Pflicht.* ("If a

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Although the Commander of *HGK B* was plotting treason against Hitler and searching for an honorable peace in the West, he desired to continue the war in the East against the Russians.

After returning to his *HGK B Hq* at Château La Roche-Guyon, in Val d'Oise, 75 km northwest of Paris, on the Seine. Rommel wrote to his wife:

[It is] the middle of May already and still nothing doing, although a pincer attack seems to have started in Italy, which may well be the prelude for the great events of the spring and summer.... I'm convinced that the enemy will have a rough time of it when he attacks, and ultimately achieve no success.... I can't take any more big [inspection] trips ... because one never knows when the invasion will begin. I believe only a few more weeks remain until things will begin here in the West.³¹⁷

An entry in the *KTB* of *OKM/OA-AI* on 15 May 1944 shows the diversity of the reports concerning the anticipated invasion that were being received by the Germans:

The Army has furnished a French report from Lisbon (to be verified) that several bridgeheads will be established in May. Stalin is against an Anglo-American landing in the Balkans.

The *RSHA/SD* in France reports that the Army will be on highest alert starting 20 May. The invasion should occur between 20 May and 10 June.

According to Army, reports from Portuguese circles, landings in the Balkans will follow a successful Italian campaign. Landings in the West, in Norway and Denmark will follow based on Russian desires.³¹⁸

One day later the following entry was made in the *Kriegstagebuch*:

An Army report discloses that the English Fleet, the R.A.F., and the U.S. Air Forces, including airborne troops have completed invasion preparation. The army units stand ready at deployment points. The source maintains that in addition to the impending operations to be launched in

government is using its apparatus of power to lead a nation to destruction, rebellion is not merely the right, but the duty of each and every citizen.") Vol. 2, ch 10.

317 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 17; Liddell-Hart, *The Rommel Papers*, 464.

318 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-31.V.44*, 15 May 1944.

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Northern Europe, additional operations from North Africa and Corsica are to be expected.³¹⁹

On 17 May 1944, in response to what he considered logical warnings of possible enemy airborne attacks, Rommel ordered that anti-airborne and anti-gliders should be constructed in Brittany, Normandy, on the Contentin Peninsula, and in the Pas-de-Calais.³²⁰ The principal obstacles, called *Rommelspargel*—Rommel's asparagus—were 13-to-16-foot (4 to 5 m) logs that were placed upright in the fields and meadows with crisscrossing wires attached to the tops of each pole.³²¹ The execution of Rommel's "obstacles" order initially caused considerable concern at SHAEF as photo reconnaissance sorties discovered them going up all over Normandy and the Contentin Peninsula. Though Rommel's forces placed more than a million wooden poles in fields, their effect on the invasion of Normandy was relatively inconsequential.³²² As more and more photo data came in SHAEF intelligence noticed that German obstacle builders appeared to expect airborne landings to be carried out relatively far from the beaches. In response, final invasion plans concentrated most landings near the beaches where fewer fields were planted with *Rommelspargel*.³²³

On 18 May 1944, the German homeland radio stations began to announce that the invasion of France could come at any time. Doctor Harold Jansen, in an

319 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-31.V.44*, 16 May 1944; The French island of Corsica had been liberated in September 1943 when the SOE trained Free French *Battalion de Choc* landed at Ajaccio, Napoleon's home town. The Italian troops stationed there quickly surrendered. The island then became a massive U.S. airbase, dubbed the USS Corsica, the unsinkable aircraft carrier of the Mediterranean. Chapman Kelly, *Corsica in WW II*, Wikipedia. Josephs Heller's *Catch 22*, is based on action by B-25 bomber squadrons operating from Corsica.

320 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 259, citing *Bericht ueber die Reise des Heere Oberbefehlshabers am 17. Und 18 Mai 44*, and AOK 7, *KTB Anlagen 1.I.-30.VI.44*.

321 Rommel himself called the defensive concept *Luftlandehindernis* ("Air-landing obstacle"), and simply described by others as *Holzpfähle* ("wooden poles").

322 Stephen E. Ambrose, *D-Day, June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994) 221-22.

323 Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II*, 89.

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English Language broadcast over Radio Berlin, announced: “The ports [of England] are bristling—crammed to the busting point—with all the invasion equipment which will have to be ferried to the continent overnight.” He said that at least sixty divisions were poised in Southern England.³²⁴ Radio Berlin also announced that in the West, von Rundstedt commanded the anti-invasion forces, with *Generalfeldmarschalls* Rommel and Blaskowitz under him. A French station broadcast that Rommel and other general were having hurried conferences, The French station also said that hospitals were being emptied to make room for Second Front casualties, and that hospital linen would have first priority in all laundries when the invasion occurred.³²⁵

The *OKW*, acting on the naval advice of *OKM*, had set the day of 18 May as “the day certain” for the start of the expected invasion. When the day came and nothing resembling an invasion or diversion happened, the *OKM* made another estimate. They determined that the next most probable—one with a high tide at dawn, and a full moon—would come in August, at the earliest. The *OKW* accepted the new estimate, but at the same time they were more concerned about the fact that Monte Casino had just been captured by Allied units. The capture of the lynchpin mountain stronghold meant that their main defensive battier in their eponymously named *CASSINO* Line had been broken.³²⁶

On 19 May 1944, with the pressure of pre-invasion tensions temporarily abated by *OKM*'s new expected invasion date, Rommel wrote to his wife:

The weather is still cold and it is raining a little. The British will have to be patient a bit. I'm waiting to see whether I shall be able to get away for a couple of days in June. It's out of the question at the moment....³²⁷

324 *Army Times* Editors, *The Tangled Web*, 144.

325 Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, 542; *Chronology of the Second World War*, 262.

326 *Chronology*, *Ibid*.

327 Liddell-Hart, *The Rommel Papers*, 464.

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On 21 May 1944 Rommel reported to *OB WEST* that “the formation of the Anglo-American *Schwerpunkt* in southern and southeastern England is again confirmed by the location of Montgomery’s Headquarters south of London.” Rommel’s information had come from radio direction finder stations located in the *HGK B* area.³²⁸ Convinced that Montgomery’s headquarters was in Kent, and lacking any aerial reconnaissance to refute that belief, Rommel concluded that it was highly improbable that Normandy and the Contentin Peninsula would be a major enemy objective. He told his staff that the Pas-de-Calais sector was a more probable objective area.³²⁹

On 22 May 1944 Rommel wrote to his subordinate Corps commanders and told them that “the enemy will most likely try to land at night and by fog after a tremendous shelling by [naval] artillery and [aerial] bombs.”³³⁰ On the same day *Admiral* Kranke told his staff at *MGK WEST* that unless the invasion was preceded by a massive and devastating attack on coastal defenses, it could not succeed.³³¹ His optimism was based in part of some of the real strength of the “Atlantic Wall” in the Pas-de-Calais region: *Lindermann Batterie*, three guns of 406mm; *Todt Batterie*, four guns of 380mm; *Frederich August Batterie*, three guns of 303mm; an *GrosserKururst Batterie*, four guns of 280mm. All of these heavy guns were protected by strongly reinforced concrete bunkers.³³² A hit by a

328 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 201; As noted earlier, Field Marshall Montgomery’s actual headquarters was located at Plymouth, but all of its radio messages were sent over landlines to a transmitter located in Kent to give a false indication of its whereabouts. This deception fooled Rommel. Ibid.

329 Ibid, 217.

330 Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 191.

331 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 259, citing *Marinegruppenkommando West*, *KTB 16.-31.V.44*, 22 May 1944. In the Pacific, the usual practice was for a naval heavy bombardment by sea and air to last for multiple days, but in that theater, the imminent landing was never a surprise to the Japanese island defenders who could see the massing of ships offshore.

332 Friedrich Ruge, “The Invasion of Normandy,” *Decisive Battles of World War II*, 318.

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single shell from any one of these heavy guns could easily destroy, or critically damage, the largest of any of the enemy invasion vessels.

On 24 May 1944 the *Luftwaffe* managed to conduct aerial reconnaissance missions over Dover, Folkestone, and the Thames River. It was the first photo coverage since 21 May and it was the last time that the *Luftwaffe* would be able to overfly southern England prior to 7 June. The photos of the Dover-Folkestone-Thames ports and anchorages did not show any buildup in the number of landing craft assembled in the area. The overflights of the Thames River did produce good pictures of the artificial harbor sections moored there, but the Germans could not decide what they were used for. Some photo interpreters guessed floating grain elevators, large landing barges, or substitute piers for use in damaged captured ports. No one guessed the Allies were planning to bring to artificial harbors with them to use in Normandy.³³³

Both Rommel and von Rundstedt considered that the meager results of the May 24 aerial reconnaissance flights were very important. They both believed that the main invasion danger was north of the Seine River and felt that the final warning of attack would come in the report of increased activity in the southeastern ports of Kent. To them, the small number of craft reported in the ports, compared to the number they imagined would be needed for the seaborne assault, clearly indicated that the invasion was not imminent.³³⁴

Rommel's opinion was strengthened when word was received from *OKW* that Field Marshall Montgomery was in Gibraltar. Rommel firmly believed that his old adversary from North Africa would have a major role in the invasion, and he

333 Ruge, "The Invasion of Normandy," *Decisive Battles of World War II*, 329, citing W. Gaul, "Die deutsche Luftwaffe während der Invasion 1944," *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* (March 1953), and Karl Gundelach, "Drohende Gefahr West." *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* (June 1959); MS#ETHINT-49 *Normandy Invasion*, Keital).

334 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 217.

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considered that the British Field Marshall from England meant that the invasion was not imminent.³³⁵

Von Rundstedt, on the other hand, suspected that the visit of Montgomery to Gibraltar was some sort of a British trick. However, he did not for one moment suspect that the man seen in Gibraltar was not actually the British Field Marshall. The OKW was unable to decide the significance to attach to Montgomery's visit. However, just to be err on the side of caution, and to guard against the possibility of an attack in the Mediterranean Theater under the command of Montgomery, the OKW decided it must hold seven divisions in the South of France.³³⁶

On 28 May 1944, the Germans opened a new round in their propaganda war. There existed among the Allied post-war plans a draft project to reduce the population in Germany by dismantling the industries and by crippling the agriculture. It was known as the "Morgenthau Plan," so named after Roosevelt's Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., who initiated it and first proposed it at the September 1944 Second Quebec Conference. The British Opposed it as being too harsh. The plan was codified in an Operations Plan, codenamed: ECLIPSE. It was understood that if the Germans became aware of the plan it would likely stiffen the resolve of even the most anti-Nazi Germans. Despite the fact that knowledge of the plan might have an adverse effect on the execution of the war effort, and Operation OVERLORD in particular, its existence was "leaked" to the British press, possibly by an English source, and an article was published. Joseph Göbbels, the German Propaganda Minister was soon aware of the ECLIPSE secret and passed the news to all of the German propaganda outlets. In its issue of 28 May, quite unintentionally timed to perfection, the newspaper serving the *Wehrmacht* units along the French Channel coast, *Wacht am Kanal*, reprinted an article by William Barkley that had appeared in the London *Daily Express*. The story was titled "*Totale Zerstörung*

335 Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, 549.

336 *Army Times* Editors, *The Tangled Web*, 130. The disguised-man deception ploy achieved the result the FORTITUDE planners wanted.

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Deutschlands—“Total Destruction for Germany.” The *Wacht am Kanal* article was a fair summary of the ECLIPSE plan. The paper’s editorial commentary stated:

This plan would teach us again to eat our bread with tears.... A German without industry, and with an exhausted soil, would inevitably decline to the level of India ... where millions die each year. This will wake up those sleepy-headed softies who are crazy enough to believe that a compromise [with the Anglo-Americans and their Russian ally] can be reached.³³⁷

A 28 May entry in the *KTB* of the *OKM/OA-AI* showed that “sleepy-heads” on more than one front would have to be awakened to be sure that the enemy invasion force could be defeated:

According to remarks of a well-informed American source in Switzerland ... the Americans want the shortest sea route for the invasion [while] the English want the route of least resistance.... An invasion in the Balkans or Italy may [therefore] come first....³³⁸

On 29 May 1944 von Rundstedt receive a report summarizing the effects of the enemy’s air offensive against the rail and road traffic networks in France. The report stated that the destruction of the Seine River bridges was isolating each from the other the *AOK 7* and *AOK 15* sectors. Von Rundstedt duly noted that the enemy’s plan might be designed to prevent reinforcement west of the Seine in the event of a major diversionary attack, as Hitler was predicting. At the same time the enemy plan might be designed to trap the forces of *AOK 7* west of the Seine in the event all attacks occurred in the *AOK 15* sector, which is what both he and Rommel were predicting would happen. It was impossible for anyone at *OB WEST* to know for certain what the enemy’s actual intent was. All

337 Alexander McKee, *Last Round Against Rommel* (New York: The New American Library, 1964), 15. To learn more about the Morgenthau Plan, see: Morgenthau Plan. (2015, November 1). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 23:01, November 16, 2015, from https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Morgenthau_Plan&oldid=688454964.

338 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-31.V.44*, 28 May 1944.

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they knew for certain was that it was going to come from England and occur along the Channel Coast.³³⁹

On 30 May von Rundstedt at *OB WEST* sent the following estimate of the situation to *OKW*:

Systematic attacks, especially on all communications installations in the area, carried out by the enemy air forces reveal the enemy's intention to throw into confusion the networks of communications and thereby paralyze troop movements and supply systems far into the rear of the [logistics] zone. The recent successful attacks on the Seine bridges resulted in considerable paralyzing of the traffic across the river between Paris and Rouen. Direct connection between the Channel-front north of the Seine [River] and the Seine Bay, and Normandy, was thus interrupted. This might indicate the enemy's intentions against Normandy (establishing of bridgeheads). Enemy activities against our main defense lines are still comparatively small in spite of an increased number of attacks. The danger of invasion has come nearer but is not yet immediately immanent judging from the intensity of the air attacks.³⁴⁰

On the next day, the 31st, *Admiral Kranke* at *MGK WEST* reported to *OKM* that the enemy attacks on the heavy artillery batteries between Dunkerque Cherbourg had increased but had not seriously damaged any of the hardened bunker complexes. Kranke believed that the enemy intended to destroy the coastal guns before an invasion. The fact that the batteries were still intact gave him assurance that an assault on the Channel coast was not imminent.³⁴¹

In late May 1944 *OKH/Fremde Heeres West* conducted an assessment of all the information supplied to it. *OKH/FHW* concluded that except for the code word *OVERLORD*, which had come from the Foreign Ministry source, everything

339 Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 129.

340 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 217, citing *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-31.V.44*, 1 June 1944

341 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 261, citing *Marinegruppenkommando West, KTB 16.-31.V.44*, 31 May 1944; As of the date of the invasion only eight heavy guns had been put out of action by aerial bombardment. Five were guns in the Seine-Somme sector, and the others were in the Normandy sector.

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in the intelligence reports they had received concerning the enemy “intentions” could have been gathered from an astute reading of the articles appearing in the Allied press. What they did conclude was that the enemy was purposely feeding false information to them and was using the public press to deliver it.³⁴²

All along the Channel coast the weather during the month of May had been excellent. Even so the invasion had not come. That fact led the *OKW* to conclude that the next crucial period might be in mid-June. They reasoned that the invasion might be timed to coincide with an expected Russian summer offensive. There had been a late thaw in 1944 and *OKW* knew that the plains of Poland would not be firm enough to support large-scale armored offensives action until mid-June. *OKW*'s estimate concerning the anticipated Russian offensive was accurate: the Russians began their attacks on 20 June.³⁴³

342 Pogue, *U.S. Army in WW – The Supreme Command in the European Theater of Operation*, 164.

343 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 217; Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 21.

XIV. THE FIRST FOUR DAYS OF JUNE 1944

Early on 1 June 1944 the intelligence-radio center at Hamburg received a message from one of men the Germans considered to be their best overseas agent.³⁴⁴ The message was from agent *ND 98* in Long Island, New York, stated that the invasion had been “delayed by breakdown in the production of invasion barges. Some units in England to transfer to the Mediterranean.”³⁴⁵ The agent was Albert Van Loo who had been working under control of the American F.B.I. and passing false information to the unsuspecting Germans. There were to be actual transfers of troops to the Mediterranean. Because the *Luftwaffe* long-range patrols operating over the Atlantic west of the French mainland would probably detect the convoy movement, the message would gain credibility by reason of the mixing of fact and fiction.³⁴⁶

The same morning, Allied aircraft operating in support of FORTITUDE SOUTH, began a vigorous attack on the coastal gun and beach fortifications between Calais and Le Havre. The aerial operations plan called for the attacks on such targets in the Pas-de-Calais sector to continue until D Day minus one day. At that time, if there was no indication that the Germans suspected that the *Schwerpunkt* was to be in Normandy, the bombardment of such targets would continue to maintain the illusion that the actual invasion in Normandy was just a diversion and that an attack in the Pas-de-Calais was still coming.³⁴⁷

344 The Germans maintained two radio stations for sending and receiving messages from their overseas agents. At Hamburg there were twenty transmitters installed in separate hardened shelters where they were remotely controlled from the receiver site a few kilometers away. At Ulm were nineteen transmitters. Kahn, *The Codebreakers*, 374.

345 Kahn, 531; Farago, *Burn After Reading*, 201.

346 The mixing of fact and fiction was common during the F.B.I.'s utilization of Van Loop. The factual part always referred to information that the Germans would probably discover by other means. Thus, the Germans would corroborate a portion of the message and assume that the credibility factor applicable to a part extended to the whole.

347 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 228.

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At mid-morning on 1 June the *Luftwaffe* released a report to *OB WEST* that was consistent with von Rundstedt's theory that the invasion would come in mid-June, at the earliest.³⁴⁸ The report read in part:

... Considerable increase in parachuting of weapons since the full moon on 28 May. Officers in uniforms have been dropped in small groups. Since they can hardly stay underground for long, there is reason to regard the period beginning 12 June (moon's last quarter) as dangerous....³⁴⁹

On 1 June *Oberstleutnant* Hellmuth Meyer was at the headquarters of *AOK 15* located near the French-Belgium border. Besides serving as the intelligence officer for *AOK 15*, Meyer was the commander of the only German counterintelligence unit in the *Kanalküste* sector. The nucleus of his unit was a thirty-man *Fernmeldeaufklärung*. The men of this radio monitoring unit were experienced, and their equipment was sensitive enough to enable them to monitor the calls from radio transmitters mounted on Military Police vehicles in England at a range of up to 160 kilometers. The police radios and the chatter of the soldiers who were responsible for directing military road traffic in England had provided Meyer's unit with much useful order of battle information concerning the disposition of the enemy forces in Southeastern England. Suddenly the German receivers were not able to monitor any of the Military Police radio nets. The nets had all gone dark. To Meyer that meant one thing. Radio silence had been imposed and that the new security measures meant that the invasion was near at hand.³⁵⁰

348 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 217; Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 21.

349 Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 214; The teams mentioned were British S.O.E. and United States O.S.S. "Jedburgh" and "Sussex" teams. The "Jedburgh" teams contained three officers, one each English, American, and French. Their mission was to contact the French Resistance and organize sabotage teams. The "Sussex" teams were composed of either British or American personnel. Their mission was to collect tactical intelligence for use by the Allied units after the invasion. The "Sussex" teams were directed to avoid any contact with either the Germans or the French people.

350 Ryan, 30-31.

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Since January 1944, *Oberstleutnant* Meyer's radio monitoring unit had also been listening to the B.B.C. broadcasts. After the regular 2000 BDST (8 P.M., British Double Summer Time) French news broadcast an anonymous voice would read a series of one sentence "personnel messages."³⁵¹ The Germans knew that the "personnel messages" were "jargon codes" bearing messages to the French Resistance. Among the message monitored on the evening of 1 June was: "*Les sanglot longs des violins de l'Autume* (The long sobs of the violins of Autumn)." When radioman *Feldwebel* Walter Reichling heard that sentence—the one that *Abwehr* Chief Canaris had ordered them to listen for—he immediately informed Meyer. Meyer knew that it was probable that the intercepted sentence, together with the second line from the same poem by Paul Verlaine, would signal the French Resistance that the invasion would come within forty-eight hours. Meyer notified *Generalleutnant* Rudolf Hofman, Chief of Staff at *AOK 15*, who in turn ordered that all of the *AOK 15* divisions should be put on immediate alert.³⁵²

Oberstleutnant Meyer also notified *OKW* by teletype, and called *OB WEST* and *HGK B* on the telephone. At *OKW* the message was delivered to *Generaloberst* Alfred Jodl, Chief of the *OKW/WFSt*. Jodl understood the real significance of the message but took no action. Jodl assumed that von Rundstedt at *OB WEST* would take the necessary action to alert all of the forces under his

351 BDST means British Double Summer Time. 2000 hours (8 P.M.) in England was 1900 hours (7 P.M.) in France and Germany. In order to allow for the proper integration of Allied and German sources, all German times have been converted to BDST. Some of the histories written about action in Normandy do not make this change, or even note the difference. It is important to determine what time standard is used, or whether both are used. If a history says, for example, that "dawn on D-Day occurred at 0530 hours, or that "sunrise" occurred at 0558 hours, the time is BDST. Otherwise the time is GST (German Standard Time).

352 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 32; Hanson Baldwin, *Battles Won and Lost, Great Campaigns of WWII* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966) 258-59; Allan A. Michie, "Fakery in the Air," *Secrets and Spies* (Pleasantville, New York: Readers Digest Association, 1964), 409; The personnel messages were codes used to alert the French Resistance to initiate separate phases of four basic sabotage plans: Plan GREEN dealing with the sabotage of railroads; Plan TORTOISE designed to disrupt road travel; Plan VIOLET designed to disrupt telephone communications; and Plan BLUE dealing with destruction of power lines.

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command. Instead, von Rundstedt did nothing, assuming that Rommel would alert AOK 7, and confirm that AOK 15 was already on alert. While there is clear evidence that *HGK B* was notified of the message intercept, no one at that headquarters saw fit to put AOK 7 on alert. Neither did *HGK B* order AOK 7 to cancel any leaves or passes. So it was that the command responsible for the defense of Normandy, the Contentin Peninsula, and Brittany was oblivious of the fact that an invasion might come within the next seventy-two hours.³⁵³

Meanwhile, in England during the night of 1/2 June, more of the Allied invasion units began their movement from the marshalling areas to the embarkation ports.³⁵⁴

On the morning of 2 June 1944 the U.S. Fifteenth Air Force began Operation FRANTIC. It consisted of shuttle bombing between bases in Italy and the Soviet Union allowing attacks on new target area in Germany. To meet the threat posed by this new operations technique, the *Luftwaffe* began to reshuffle the fighter aircraft defenses. One again, Göring found a reason to delay plans to reinforce *Luftflottenkommando III* in France.

On 2 June 1944 the *OKH/FHW* sent a message to *OB WEST* in France concerning the information received from *RSHA* concerning the “personal messages broadcast by the B.B.C. Von Rundstedt’s headquarters was told that within three days after hearing an expected second message—“*Messieurs, Faite vos jeus* (Gentlemen, place your bets),” or any of fourteen other “personal jargon code phrases, it meant that “*die invasion rollen*.”³⁵⁵

On the evening of 2 June, at the expected time Oberstleutnant Meyer’s *Fernmeldeaufklärung* unit again intercepted the first line from Paul Verlaine’s

353 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 32; Michie, “Fakery in the Air,” *Secrets and Spies*, 409; The *HGK B* weekly situation estimate dated 5 June contains a reference to the “warning messages” to the French Resistance.

354 *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, 12.

355 Kahn, *The Codebreakers*, 543.

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poem "*Chanson l'Autume*." The original instructions from the Abwehr had said that the first line of the poem would be broadcast by the B.B.C. on both the first and second evening of the month, and so it had. Confident that they might be able to unlock the secret of the time of the invasion, Meyer's radio monitors were prepared to listen nightly for the follow-on portion of the jargon code. The *Abwehr* had said it should be broadcast before the 15th of the month.³⁵⁶

At 0200 BDST on 3 June 1944 a young British officer on liaison duty between Portsmouth and London made a short detour to call his parents. He said he had exciting news, and indeed he did, and told his parents that a great invasion would take place in Normandy on 5 June. His astonished parents informed the British authorities, and their son was arrested.³⁵⁷ The danger of a security leak on the eve of the invasion continued to haunt the SHAEF staff.

At 0300 BDST on 3 June 1944 Allied warships began leaving their home ports in Scotland and Northern Ireland. After initial deceptive maneuvers the ships steamed south toward assembly zones in the English Channel near the Isle of Wight. There were the ships of all classes that would provide the naval artillery support for the invasion forces.³⁵⁸

At 0900 BDST on 3 June 1944 Walter Schellenberg informed the *OKW* that *RSHA/SD* had intercepted twenty-eight messages directed to the French Resistance sabotaged and warned that the invasion probably would come within the fortnight. When the information was relayed to *Großadmiral* Dönitz at *OKM*, he told his staff he considered the messages to be merely another episode in the long war of nerves.³⁵⁹

356 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 32; Michie, "Fakery in the Air," *Secrets and Spies*, 409.

357 Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 218.

358 Ibid.

359 Ibid; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 275, citing *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-31.V.44*, 3 June 1944.

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Walter Schellenberg, at *RSHA/SD*, was convinced that the broadcast of the first line of the “Song of Autumn” and the other messages intercepted by his units on 1 and 2 June meant that the invasion would come prior to 15 June. The *RSHA/SD* had managed to penetrate a large number of the cells in the French Resistance and had learned the jargon code specific to the individual sabotage groups. Schellenberg hoped that his people would be able to plot the location of the alerted units, and thereby pinpoint the specific location along the Channel coast where the invasion would come. The Allied invasion planners at SHAEF had also considered this security weakness. Accordingly, to prevent the Germans from discovering the invasion area in the manner contemplated by *RSHA*, SHAEF decided to alert all of the sabotage units in Northern France prior to D-Day. It was hoped, of course, that the Germans did not discover only the code for French units in the Normandy sector. Actually the German counter-intelligence people cast an effective net over a broad front. As a result, when the *RSHA* teams map plotted the alert locations the result was twenty-eight scattered locations from the Pas-de-Calais to Brittany and elsewhere in France.³⁶⁰

A 3 June 1944 entry in their *KTB* contains the comments of the *OKM/OA-AI* concerning the B.B.C. radio intercepts and the possibility of a Mediterranean operation by the enemy:

Military Attaché in Ankara disbelieved in offensive intentions of the enemy in the area of the eastern part of the Mediterranean.

The order of the British Command to the French terrorist organizations to watch British Broadcasting continuously in order to be able to catch the key words, indicating possibility of an immediately imminent invasion. Department for Foreign Armies West [(*OKH/FHW*)] regarded as favorable landing time the period from 5 June to 13 June.

According to reports from Reich Security Central Office, 28 preliminary alarm messages were intercepted which were sent out by Radio London on 1 June destined for agent groups and which apparently represented orders for immediate readiness. For the time being the orders were

360 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 275.

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stipulated until 15 June. This way of communicating orders, which has been arranged for some time, has now been used for the first time. The beginning of the invasion until 15 June has therefore to be reckoned with. Nevertheless, it is not impossible that it was only for training purposes. Receivers [of agent groups to whom messages sent] are mostly located in the Bretagne, Normandy [(including the Contentin Peninsula)], at Lille/Amiens [and elsewhere in the Pas-de-Calais]....³⁶¹

In this entry one can see Dönitz's suspicion that this message business is all just a bit of English trickery.

On 3 June 1944 General Eisenhower was not yet aware of the fact that the weather situation in the invasion area was worsening, and he cabled the following to General Marshall in Washington: "We have almost an even chance of having pretty fair conditions [on the 5th].... Only marked deterioration ... would discourage our plans."³⁶² Later in the evening on the same day the SHAEF meteorologist gave the General the somber news that conditions were actually worsening. Eisenhower scheduled a follow-up briefing for 0430 BDST on 4 June at which time a decision would be made concerning postponement of the invasion if the weather condition required such an action.³⁶³

It was crucial for Eisenhower to make a decision with regard to either postponing the invasion or continuing it on schedule. By the evening of 3 June all of the allied troops, except for the airborne divisions had been loaded on their invasion craft and were ready for the journey to France.³⁶⁴ The ships that comprised Assault Force "U" were actually ordered to put to sea on the hope that

361 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-31.V.44*, 3 June 1944.

362 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 272, citing a cable in Eisenhower's personal files.

363 Ibid.

364 Williams, *U.S. Army in WWII – Special Studies, Chronology*, 201; *Omaha Beach*, 35.

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the weather conditions would permit a continuation of the invasion plan. They sailed from Salcombe, Dartmouth, and Brixham at 2030 BDST on 3 June.³⁶⁵

At the same time the Force “U” ships were putting to sea, Rommel was with a high-ranking German officers that the British had recently released in an exchange of prisoners. The officer assured Rommel that the activity he had observed while a prisoner in England convinced him that the enemy would invade along the Pas-de-Calais coast.³⁶⁶

At 2215 BDST on 3 June the Germans again monitored the first sentence of the Paul Verlaine poem. One of the stations that had been listening to the B.B.C. broadcasts was located at *RSHA* headquarters in Berlin. The *RSHA* liaison officer called Dönitz at *OKM* and told him that the *RSHA* believed that the invasion might be imminent. Ever the weather conscious sailor, the *Großadmiral* told his caller that it was the *OKM*'s belief that the enemy might be holding and exercise, but they were certainly not about to begin an invasion.³⁶⁷

At the *AOK 15* radio intercept site the B.B.C. broadcast of the first line of the Paul Verlaine poem was also intercepted. That confused *Oberstleutnant* Meyer. He had been told that the first line would only be broadcast twice, on the 1st and 2nd day of the month. He was puzzled by its broadcast for a third time, but decided that the enemy wanted to make certain that the jargon code was received by the French Resistance, and took no further action.³⁶⁸

365 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 275; Utah Beach to Cherbourg, 13; The first ships actually sailed on 31 May. They were the fifty-four “CORNCOBS” (blockships) destined to be sunk to create breakwaters for the two artificial harbors. They sailed from Oban.

366 Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 219.

367 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 275, citing *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-30.VI.44*, 3 June 1944; Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 32; Michie, “Fakery in the Air,” *Secrets and Spies*, 409.

368 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 32; Michie, “Fakery in the Air,” *Secrets and Spies*, 409.

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Sometime just prior to 2200 BDST on 3 June a female employee of the Associated Press in London was practicing on one of the News Bureau's teletype machines in order to improve her speed. Mirroring the hopes of many people in England, she types this practice message: "URGENT. PRESS ASSOCIATED NYK. EISENHOWER'S HQ ANNOUNCES ALLIED LANDINGS IN FRANCE." When she finished her exercise, she forgot to remove the tape carrying her practice message from the machine. A few minutes later the usual nightly Russian communique was put on tape, using the same machine. The tape was placed in the transmitter keyer and it, with the practice "FLASH" message, were sent out. The Russians repeated it, the Columbia Broadcasting System had it, and in France the *Fernmeldeaufklärung* at AOK 15 intercepted it. Within thirty minutes the error was discovered and the A.P. office sent out a correction. The incident caused a great deal of concern at SHAEF headquarters.³⁶⁹

When *Oberstleutnant* Meyer's *Fernmeldeaufklärung* intercepted the A.P. "FLASH" message, it dumbfounded Meyers. He started to notify the AOK 15 Chief of Staff, but after a few minutes of reflection he decided it had to be some kind of a mistake, or an enemy trick designed to provoke a premature German reaction. He had not received any news of unusual enemy activity, and his unit had not intercepted the second line of jargon code poem. Meyer decided to say nothing about it until the regular AOK 15 morning staff conference. A few minutes after he made his decision, his monitoring unit's receivers intercepted the A.P. correction message.³⁷⁰

In a summary of activity for 3 June, Rommel's aide-de-camp Lang wrote in the *Generalfeldmarschall's* diary:

5th–8th June 1944. Fears of an invasion during this period were rendered less by the fact that tides were very unfavorable for the days

369 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 49-50; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 225; Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, 559.

370 Ryan, 32; Michie, "Fakery in the Air," *Secrets and Spies*, 409.

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following, and the fact that no amount of air reconnaissance had given the slightest indication that a landing was imminent....³⁷¹

Earlier in the evening on 3 June, when *Großadmiral* Dönitz told the *RSHA* liaison officer that he believed the invasion was not imminent, he based his comment on a sailor's view of the weather in the Channel. The weather situation along the *Kanalküste* had begun to worsen at the beginning of June, but did not significantly deteriorate until early afternoon on 3 June. Predictions by *OKM* forecasters indicated that the weather picture would continue to be bad for several days. At 0430 BDST on 4 June General Eisenhower and his staff were told a similar story by the SHAEF meteorologist.³⁷² Group-Captain Stagg said that the seas were not rough enough to prevent the landing of troops, but the cloud bases of 500 to zero feet would prevent proper air support, and make the visual adjustment of naval artillery fire support exceedingly difficult. Eisenhower was convinced that the success of the assault operation could not be guaranteed without both accurate air and naval fire support. With the hope, but no certain assurances that the weather conditions soon might improve, Eisenhower order a postponement of the invasion for twenty-four hours.³⁷³

Orders of recall were sent by SHAEF to the ships of Assault Force "U" which as sailed about six hours earlier. All of the ships returned to nearby ports fighting rough sea and carrying cargoes of seasick soldiers.³⁷⁴ During the night *Leutnant* Wesemann, a radar operator at Cherbourg Naval Command, reported to *Admiral Kanalküste* that he had seen on his scopes "a striking amount of contact which might be a major concentration of ships." Before he could make up

371 Liddell-Hart, *The Rommel Papers*, 470; The entries made in Rommel's diary during the period of the first half of June were not made by Rommel, but were written by his ADC, *Hauptman* Lang. There is some question whether Lang made the entries noted, or at some later date.

372 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 272; Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 220; Fuller, *The Second World War 1939-45*, 294.

373 Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, 559; Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 219; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 223.

374 *Ibid* (all three sources).

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his mind whether the activity was caused by weather conditions or actual ships, the contact returns faded and was lost.³⁷⁵

On the morning of 4 June 1944 *Major* Lettau, meteorologist for *FLAK-Regiment 155*, at Amiens on the Somme River, analyzed the weather conditions for flight operations over France and England. He determined that the low cloud conditions would inhibit enemy air sorties over France. With minimum air activity expected the regiment commander order only a partial alert for his anti-aircraft gun batteries. Lettau also made some predictions to the regiment's staff. He said there would be no enemy invasion during the two weeks following., and explained his views as follows:

The enemy has not already made use of three periods of fine weather for his invasion and further periods of fine weather in the coming weeks cannot be reckoned with more accuracy.³⁷⁶

In this statement one can see the great importance that bad weather would play in the enemy estimates over the next few days.

Indeed, reports similar to that of *Major* Lettau were reassuring German commander in headquarters all over France and Germany. Bad weather conditions, common along the Channel coast in early June, supported von Rundstedt's estimate that the most probable time for the invasion was mid-June or later. At 0600 BDST on 4 June Rommel received a similar weather briefing. He also received a *Luftwaffe* report that was not in total agreement with weather-based estimates of the invasion timing:

The enemy is becoming increasingly successful in protecting the approaches to the south coast of England against air and sea reconnaissance. This probably means that he is concentrating transport [craft] in readiness for the invasion.³⁷⁷

375 Paul Carell, *Invasion – They're Coming* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1966), 12.

376 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 229.

377 Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 221.

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After receiving the weather briefing, and reading the *Luftwaffe* report, Rommel considered that the invasion would not come until mid-July. To him, the fact that the enemy was protecting its ships and landing craft well before the invasion was not out of the ordinary. Rommel also believed that that the assembly of invasion vessels in the Southeastern ports would take about a month and that the Allies had planned all along to accomplish the final assemble under cover of the usually inclement weather in June. Hitler had also indicated that such an action might occur. So confident was Rommel of the July date that he prepared a message to subordinate commanders ordering that the beach obstacle construction must be completed by 20 June. He also ordered that the line of beach obstacles should be extended to seaward as a guard against an enemy an out-of-character landing at low tide.³⁷⁸

At 0800 BDST on 4 June Rommel left his headquarters at Château La Roche Guyon and began what he expected to be an uneventful and short trip away from his command. His first destination was his home at Herrlingen, near Ulm in Germany (790km distant). There he planned to attend a birthday party for his wife, and then go to see Hitler at Berchtesgaden (315km distant). Rommel's intent was to plead with the *Führer* for permission to redeploy certain of the *OKW* reserves and the *Luftflottenkommando III FLAK* units. Specifically, he wanted to move *SS Panzerdivision 12* to the St. Lô-Carentan area, and *Lehr PzD*, reinforced by *FLAK-Korps III* to the sector between the Vire and Orne Rivers along the Normandy coast. If an attack—even a diversionary one as Hitler predicted—was to come west of the Seine, Rommel wanted to have two *Panzerdivisions* in position to immediately counterattack, and to support *Panzerdivision 21* which was in positions close around Caen.³⁷⁹

378 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 20; After the war ended, von Rundstedt told Liddell-Hart this: "The one real surprise was the time of day at which the landings were made—because our Naval Staff had told us that the Allies would land [as dawn] at high-water ... and we expected large landing forces ... [at every dawn high tide] from March onward." Liddell-Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 404.

379 Ryan 36; Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 222; Carell, *Invasion – They're Coming*, 14; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 229; Ruge, "The Invasion of Normandy,"

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Just before Rommel got into his car to leave on 4 June, he said to his Naval Aide, *Vizeadmiral* Ruge, “it eases my mind to know that while I am away the tides will be unfavorable for a landing. Besides, air reconnaissance gives no reason to think it’s imminent.”³⁸⁰

Rommel was not the only officer to leave the Channel Front on 4 June 1944. Von Tempelhof, his operations officers accompanied him on the trip to Germany. The commander of *Marinegruppenkommando West*, *Admiral* Krancke, was also away. He left to Bordeaux to make an inspection tour of the naval defenses along the Bay of Biscay coast, an area often mentioned in terms of a sector where diversionary attacks might come.³⁸¹

Several days before *Admiral* Krancke left for Bordeaux, he had reviewed the situation along the *Kanalküste*, and he too had decided that an invasion was not imminent. Bad weather and rough seas were keeping his patrol boats in their Channel coast ports, and he decided that the enemy would not dare to risk their landing armada to the perils of the rough Channel waters. In addition, all the large guns in the coastal batteries were still operational; to the Admiral that fact alone indicated that the enemy’s pre-invasion coastal bombardment had not been completed. He decided that the reported radio messages to the French terrorists likely was a hoax designed to harass the German troops by keeping them constantly on alert. In a report he sent to *OKM* he regretted the meagerness of the *Luftwaffe*’s aerial reconnaissance but concluded he doubted that the enemy had assembled his fleet in the strength required to mount an immediate invasion.³⁸²

Decisive Battles of World War II, 330. Some historians have suggested that Rommel left his headquarters on the morning of the 5th, but the *HGK B Kriegstagebuch* contains the notation that he left on the 4th at 0800 BDST.

380 Ibid (all four sources).

381 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 81.

382 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 260-63, citing *Lageuebersicht des Marinegruppenkommando West Führungsstab, Rueckblick Monat Mai*, in *Marinegruppenkommando West, KTB, 16.-31.V.44*; Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 129.

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On the morning of 4 June the area of immediate danger and concern was the German defensive line in Italy. At 0730 BDST Allied troops had entered Rome—an open uncontested city—and a crumbling German army withdrew northward to form a new defensive line.³⁸³ The abrupt fall of Rome, and Hitler's concern about restabilization of the Italian Front distracted the *OKW's* attention from the situation in storm shrouded France.

In France the dark clouds and bad weather became a powerful tranquilizer. *Oberst Professor Walter Stöbe*. The *Luftflottenkommando III* meteorologist, and *Herr Doctor Karl Sonntag* at *OKL* had carefully assessed the weather conditions that existed during previous enemy landings in Africa, Sicily, and Italy. In each case the weather had been varied, but they noted that the enemy never attempted a landing unless the prospects for favorable weather was almost certain. The enemy, they noted, particularly favored weather conditions that would allow maximum utilization of his air forces. To the methodical and logical minds of these weather experts the results of their study meant one thing: bad weather for air operations—at both English airbases and over the French target areas—would surely mean that no invasion was imminent in northern France if the weather requirements were not optimal.³⁸⁴

On 4 June 1944 the *OKM/OA-AI* made the following entry in their *KTB*:

Hints in the foreign press, indicating that the invasion of Western Europe is imminent in the near future, appeared in ever increasing numbers: proclamations to the populations of the occupied territory, especially to the French, discussions about the intensified air warfare as a preparation for the invasion, etc., [all tend to support those hints].... *OB West* [after study of local weather conditions] regarding landing possibilities during the night of 4 June, as improbable in the areas of the Netherlands and of the Channel coast [,] but thought them possible on the Atlantic coast.³⁸⁵

383 *Chronology of the Second World War*, 266.

384 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 79.

385 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-30.VI.44*, 4 June 1944.

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Well, if anything happened on the Atlantic coast front, *Admiral* Krancke would be there to deal with it in terms of anti-invasion naval operations.

At 2130 BDST on 4 June the SHAEF meteorologist met with General Eisenhower and his staff. Group-Captain Stagg reported that a front from one of the weather depressions out over the Atlantic had swept farther south than he had anticipated. He said that he expected that it would pass over Portsmouth at 2230 on the same night. Stagg told his audience that the frontal passage would produce fair weather conditions in the Channel and along the Normandy coast for most of Tuesday, 6 June. He also said that there would be a minor deterioration in conditions over Tuesday night, but that the conditions would quickly improve and hold good from Wednesday to Friday. Stagg told Eisenhower he could not then predict beyond Friday with any certainty.³⁸⁶ There was a ray of hope that the invasion would be a go. Eisenhower scheduled another briefing for 0415 BDST on Monday, 5 June. At the following early morning meeting, and further input from Stagg to the same effect as before, General Eisenhower made his great decision that the invasion would be made in the morning of Tuesday, 6 June.³⁸⁷ When the new date was confirmed, Admiral Ramsey reminded Eisenhower that it would not be possible to make a second postponement, because by 7 June, many of the ships would have to be refueled.³⁸⁸

The Germans might also might have detected the same weather change, but the “*Schatzgräber*” meteorological station that the Germans had been operating in Greenland for a short time earlier in the year was not operational in the spring of 1944. The *Luftwaffe* had weather aircraft based in Norway but none could fly far enough to gather data that would have revealed the change in the front Stagg saw. At the same time the *OKM* did not have any weather-reporting submarine in position to detect the passage of the relative small high pressure area that Stagg discovered. As concerned as the Germans were about the

386 *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, 14. Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 224.

387 Harrison, 274; Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, 561.

388 Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II*, 81.

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weather conditions that they believed must exist for an enemy invasion, they took no steps to insure that there was no lacunae in their weather forecast data collection. They had such cover for a while in the spring of 1943.³⁸⁹

At this point a digression is in order to understand why there was a gap on the German weather data collection. Early in the spring of 1943, three members of the Allied Greenland Sledge Patrol discovered that a German weather base had been established at Sabine Island, Greenland, and had probably been operating since the summer of 1942. On 25 May 1943 a flight of Allied bombers operating from Iceland attacked the huts and an ice-bound German supply trawler. On 21 July two Coast Guard Cutters landed a detachment of Army soldier on Sabine Island and captured the one surviving German they found there. During the summer of 1943 the Germans returned to the Greenland coast and set up two weather stations. They too were attacked and destroyed. There is some evidence that in early 1944 the German again tried to set a weather station they called “*Schatzgräber*” but it had been evacuated before the beginning of June 1944.³⁹⁰ Was this a case for which the “for want of a nail the shoe was lost” applies? Perhaps, but we shall never know.

Meanwhile, after the war, the consequences attendant to a delay in launching the magnitude of the risk taken by General Eisenhower, were commented on by the Supreme Commander:

If none of the three days [(5 to 7 June)] should prove satisfactory from the standpoint of weather, consequences would ensue that were almost terrifying to contemplate. Secrecy would be lost. Assault troops would have to be unloaded and crowded back into areas enclosed in barbed wire, where their original placed would already have been taken by those to follow in subsequent waves. Complicated movement tables would be scrapped. Morale would drop. A wait of at least fourteen days, possibly twenty-eight, would be necessary—a sort of suspended animation

389 Morison, 49.

390 Stetson Conn, Rose C. Englemann, and Byron Fairchild, *U.S. Army in WWII – Guarding the United States and Its Outposts* (Washington: Department of the Army 1964), 552-53.

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involving more than 2,000,000 men! The whole of the United Kingdom would be quickly aware that had gone wrong and National disappointment there and in America could result in unforeseen results. Finally, always lurking in the background was the knowledge that the enemy was developing new, and presumably effective, secret weapons on the French coast. What the effect of these would be on our crowded harbors, especially at Plymouth and Portsmouth, we could not even guess.³⁹¹

And further:

... The venture the United States and Great Britain were now about to undertake could not be classed as an ordinary tactical movement in which the consequences would be no greater than those ordinarily experienced through success or failure in battle. The two countries were definitely placing all their hopes, expectations, and assets in one great effort to establish a theater of operations in Western Europe. Failure would carry with it the consequences that would be almost fatal. Such a catastrophe would mean the complete redeployment to other theaters all of the United States forces accumulated in the United Kingdom, while the setback to Allied morale and determination would be so profound that it was beyond calculation. Finally, such a failure would certainly react violently upon the Russian situation and it was not unreasonable to assume that, if that country should consider her Allies completely futile and helpless in doing anything of a major character in Europe, she might consider a separate peace.³⁹²

On the other side of the hill, the importance of what happened on D-Day was seen as equally apocalyptic:

After the war, when interviewed by the Allies, *General der Artillerie* Walter Warlimont, the Deputy Commander at *OKW/SFSt*, said that just before the invasion Hitler's line was that the Invasion of France would be the decisive event of 1944. According to Warlimont, Hitler said this:

It, [the Invasion of France,] will decide the issue, not only of the year, but of the whole war. If we succeed in throwing back the Invasion, then such an attempt cannot and will not be repeated within a short time. It will

391 Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 255.

392 Eisenhower, *ibid.*

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then mean that our reserves will be set free for use in Italy and the East. Then we can stabilize the front in the East and perhaps return to the offensive in that section. If we don't throw the enemy back, we can't win a static war in the long run because the materials our enemies can bring in will exceed that we can send to the front. With no strategic reserve of any importance, it will be impossible to build up sufficient strength along such a line. Therefore, the invader must be thrown back on his first attempt.³⁹³

Interestingly, Hitler was able to cobble together a powerful force of *panzer* units in December 1944. These he used in an attempt to smash through the allied forces in the weakly held Ardennes Forest area. In the event, his armored thrust was stopped during the hard fighting that came to be called the Battle of the Bulge.

393 MS#ETHINT-1, *From Invasion to the Siegfried Line* (Warlimont), 9.

XV. THE LAST DAY BEFORE THE INVASION

It was now 5 June 1944: the decision to precede with the invasion was made by General Eisenhower at 0415 BDST that morning. In the English side of the Channel the weather seemed to be improving.³⁹⁴ The opposite appeared to be the case in France. During the first week of June 1944, to the Germans, the weather picture was the be-all and end-all of probable invasion timing. In their minds the bad weather situation had decided the quest that was worrying them all. Whenever a general asked, “any chance of an enemy landing tomorrow morning?” his staff officers would look first to the weather charts. On the morning of 5 June the weather picture looked reassuringly good to the Germans because the weather condition appeared so very bad.³⁹⁵

On the morning of 5 June, *Konteradmiral* Walther Hennecke, Naval Commander Normandy, from his headquarters in Cherbourg, sent an urgent inquiry about the weather situation to the chief of his meteorological staff located at Cap de la Hague. Hennecke was uneasy because, in his opinion, the tide and the moon conditions in the first week of June favored a landing. He was also concerned about radar contacts picked up on the night of 3/4 June. The weather staff, located on the northwester tip of the Contentin Peninsula, reported that there was “rough seas, poor visibility, force 5-6 winds, and rain likely to get heavier. Most probably we shan’t get our usual air raids. And there is little prospect of change during the next few days.” The report calmed Hennecke.³⁹⁶

At Paris, in his 0600 BDST weather forecaster *Oberst* Professor Walter Stöbe, the Chief Meteorological Forecaster for *Luftflottenkommando III*, predicted increasing cloudiness, high winds, and rain. He reported that at that hour there was a 20-30 mph wind blowing in the Channel. Stöbe told the *Luftflotte* staff that they could relax for the day as the weather made it unlikely that the enemy’s air

394 Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, 561.

395 Carell, *Invasion – They’re Coming*, 11.

396 *Ibid*, 12.

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forces would be active over northern France. Anti-aircraft and fighter interceptor crews were promptly ordered to stand down from alert.³⁹⁷

After the *LFK III* briefing was over, Stöbe called *Major* Herman Müller, the *OB WEST* weather officer, and gave him the day's forecast. It was relayed to the Chief of Staff, Blumentritt, who needed it to put the finishing touches to an inspection itinerary he was preparing for Von Rundstedt. The *OB WEST* commander and his son, a young officer, planned to make an inspection tour of the coastal defenses in Normandy on Tuesday, 6 June.³⁹⁸

At Le Mans on the morning of 5 June, *Generaloberst* Dollmann, the commander of *AOK 7*, asked Pemsel, his Chief of Staff, "Is anything likely to happen today?" *Generalleutnant* Max Pemsel had already checked with the weathermen in Paris and reported to his commander that an attack was unlikely. Pemsel added to his report, "... if only we could rely on these weathermen." Dollmann was particularly concerned because he was planning to hold a map exercise at Rennes on 6 June. The purpose of the 1100 BDST exercise was to war-game a hypothetical airborne and amphibious invasion in the Normandy and Contentin Peninsula sectors. The weather report that Pemsel provided assured him that it would be possible to hold the exercise as scheduled, and informed all his division commander who were expected to be in Rennes for the event. He also told each of them to bring two of their regimental commander with them, but cautioned them not to depart their commands enroute to the *Kriegsspiel* until after daylight on the 6th. Interestingly, the latter restriction would have made it difficult for some of the participants to arrive at Rennes on time.³⁹⁹

On the morning of 5 June, *Generalleutnant* Dr. Hans Speidel, the Chief of Staff at *HGK B*, forwarded Rommel's headquarters' weekly situation report to *OB WEST*. It read in part:

397 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 21; Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 225.

398 Ryan, 21.

399 Carell, *Invasion – They're Coming*, 13.

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Estimate of Overall Situation: Systematic continuation and intensification of enemy air raids and more intensive mine laying in our harbors ... indicates an advance in enemy's preparation for invasion. Concentration of air attacks on coastal defenses between Dunkirk and Dieppe, and on Seine [River] bridges confirms presumption as to *Schwehrpunkt* of large scale landing [in the Pas-de-Calais area].... Since 1 June increased transmissions on enemy [B.B.C.] radio of warnings messages to French Resistance organizations [but] judging from experience to date, [this is] not explicable as an indication of [the] invasion being imminent.... Air reconnaissance showed no great increase in landing craft in the Dover area [as of 24 May]. Other harbors of England's southeast coast *not* visited by reconnaissance aircraft.... Survey urgently need of harbor moorings on entire English south coast by air reconnaissance.⁴⁰⁰

On the day that the weekly *HGK B* estimate reached Paris, the adverse flying weather kept the *Luftwaffe* reconnaissance aircraft on the ground. The *Kriegsmarine* craft in the French Channel ports were also prevented from engaging in routine patrol activity because of the high wind and waves in the Channel.⁴⁰¹

In London, commuters had already begun to live with an obvious reminder that the invasion was near. The military authorities had recently cancelled fifty of the British Railway Company's regular train runs: that seriously disrupted the commuter schedules, making all civilian travel difficult.⁴⁰² That had happened when the first troop movement to the marshalling areas had begun, so there was nothing unusual to be gleaned from the now normally slow travel on 5 June.

After the war, *Generalleutnant* Speidel commented on the German view of the degree of threat of invasion that existed on 5 June:

It was a quiet day. There seemed no reason why Rommel should not make his somewhat leisurely trip back to Germany. There were the usual reports from German agents about the possibility of Allied landings—this

400 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 18; Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 129; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 229; (Italics in original.)

401 Wilmot, 229.

402 "World Battlefields," *Time*, XLIII, No 23. (5 June 1944), 23.

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time between 6 and 16 June—but there had been hundreds of these since April and they were not taken seriously.⁴⁰³

The proof of what Speidel said about agent reports was discovered in May 1945 when the advancing Allies captured an *OKM KTB* containing notations about 250 reports from German agents dealing with the time and place of the anticipated invasion. Most of the reports mentioned the Pas-de-Calais and July as the probable place and time of the invasion. Only one of the reports named Normandy and 6 June as the anticipated place and time. That one report was from a French Colonel in Algiers. For a time that officer worked for the German, but Allied counterintelligence had unmasked his treachery and doubled him back on his German agent handler. The French officer began to pass false information to the Germans, and they were so often misled by his false information that they discovered his duplicity. Rather than kill him, the Germans decided to maintain contact with him to find out what sort of information the Allies wanted them to believe. As part of the deception Plan FORTITUDE SOUTH, and with true audacity and admirable perversity, the British intelligence, being certain that the Germans knew of the doubling of their agent, had the French Colonel report that the invasion would probably take place along the coast of Normandy between 5 and 7 June. To the Germans dealing with the Colonel, that report—which they deemed false—constituted absolute proof that the invasion would not come in Normandy during the period report, and probably would not come in Normandy at all. When the agent's report was passed up the line, the fact that the Colonel was a known duplicitous double agent was duly noted.⁴⁰⁴

On 5 June 1944 *Generalfeldmarschall* Sperrle at *Luftflottenkommando III* decided to transfer his *Luftwaffe* fighter squadrons stationed in Northern France to airfields located farther south and east. The Allied air attacks against German

403 Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 208-09; Shulman, *Defeat in the West*, 97; William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (New York: Simon & Schuster: 1960), 1037.

404 Perrault, 208-09; The report from the French Colonel was found in a dossier captured at *OKM* Headquarters in May 1945.

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airfields in France had been increasing and *LFK III* wanted to save its aircraft from further damage. In early June there were less than 200 fighter aircraft in France of which only about 160 were serviceable. Because the invasion was not considered imminent, Sperrle's decision to avoid the destruction of aircraft on the ground was logical. And, as the other airfields were not closed due to weather, an immediate dispersal was ordered. *Oberst* Josef Priller, Commander of *Jagdgeschwader 26 "Schlageter"* based at Lille, objected to the deployment of his 124 fighter aircraft but was overruled by his superiors. Thus, all but two of his Fighter Wing's aircraft were dispersed to Metz, Reims, and other airfields along the Franco-German border. Priller and his wingman remained at the Wing's Lille Headquarters with their two fighter aircraft.⁴⁰⁵

On 5 June von Rundstedt slept late, as was his usual custom, and went to his desk at 1300 BDST. Before him on his desk was the situation report from *HGK B*. At the time of the enemy's deceptive maneuvering in September 1943, von Rundstedt had seen reports of London passing messages to the French Resistance. Nothing had come of that. On the basis of his past experience he agreed with the assessment by Rommel's headquarters that the radio messages received since 1 June were not an absolute indication that the invasion was imminent.⁴⁰⁶

After von Rundstedt had finished reading the *HGK B* report, he turned his attention to the weekly *OB WEST* situation reports that his staff had prepared. He approved it for dispatch to *OKW*. It read in part:

The systematic and noticeable intensification of enemy air attacks indicates a more advanced state of readiness. The probable invasion front remains the sector from the [Holland] Scheldt to Normandy [(including the Contentin Peninsula)] ... and it is not impossible that Brittany might be included.... It is still not clear where the enemy might land within this total area. Concentrated air attacks on the coast defenses between Dunkirk and Dieppe, and on the Seine-Oise [Rivers] bridges, in conjunction with

405 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 82.

406 Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 224.

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the paralyzing of supply services, and the southern flank between Rouen and Paris (inclusive) might be indicative of a main front of a major landing intended by the enemy. However, the cessation of traffic across the Seine would equally effect troops movements required in case of an enemy attack on the western part of the Bay of the Seine, Normandy [(including the Contentin Peninsula)], and the Northern coast of Brittany.... [But, an] imminence of invasion is not recognizable.⁴⁰⁷

For the division and regimental commanders in the Contentin Peninsula scheduled to attend the *Kriegsspiel* at Rennes, Dollmann's order to "delay departure until dawn" mean that they would not be able to travel the 120 miles in time for the start of the mock invasion war-game. *Generalleutnant* von Schlieben, the commander of *Infanteriedivision 709*, and *Generalleutnant* Fally, the commander of *Luftlandgedivision 91*, requested and received permission from *Armeekorps 84* to leave for Rennes before dawn. One left his headquarters early in the afternoon on 5 June and the other departed for Rennes during the early evening. The commander of *Infanteriedivision 243* which was defending the west coast of the Contentin Peninsula decided not to leave until after dawn on 6 June.⁴⁰⁸

All the morning weather reports on 5 June 1944 had predicted bad weather conditions along the Channel coast. However, the *KTB* of the *OKM/OA-AI* contains the following entry:

The enemy intention systematically to annihilate the radar sets in the area Dunkerque to Cherbourg is clearly evident.

[After assessing weather conditions] *OB West* declared landing possibilities in the night of 5 June as possible on the Dutch coast and along the channel coast.⁴⁰⁹

407 Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 129; Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 79.

408 Carell, *Invasion – They're Coming*, 13-14.

409 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-30.VI.44*, 5 June 1944.

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The naval weather station on the Contentin Peninsula saw the weather break. However, no special significance was attached to it.

Early in the evening of 5 June *General der Panzertruppen*, Fitz Bayerlein, the commander of *Lehr Panzerdivision*, which was stationed between Tours and Le Mans, was attending a birthday party with the officers of *Panzerregiment 902*. One of the men at the party had tuned a radio *Soldatensender Calais*, a British psychological warfare transmitter targeted against the German forces in Northern France. There was none of the usual music on that frequency, so he tried the B.B.C. wavelength. To his surprise, and the others present, they heard the British radios broadcasting in French: "Leave your towns, especially those where enemy headquarters are located. Take shelter in the country." The broadcast message caused some uneasiness on the part of the party goers. Bayerlein called his division headquarters. He was told that no alert had been ordered by higher headquarters.⁴¹⁰ In view of the intensified aerial bombardment it was logical to assume that the message was meant to warn the local population that German's headquarters would soon be at the top of the enemy's target list.

In Berlin *RSHA/SD* Chief, Kaltenbrunner, believing that he now had sure indications that the expected invasion was imminent, briefed Jodl at OKW/WFSt. He probably told Jodl about the same information that Schellenberg had tried to convince Jodl of during a 3 June briefing. The *RSHA* headquarters was certain that the alert messages to the French Resistance were genuine indications of an imminent invasion. Jodl listened but was not convinced. After the briefing, Jodl did not pass on any of the details of Kaltenbrunner's briefing to either his *WFSt* staff or to Hitler.⁴¹¹

410 Carell, *Invasion – They're Coming*, 23-24.

411 Liddell-Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, 395; After the War, Warlimont said that Hitler and Jodl were both aware of the radio intercept reports concerning the messages to the French Resistance. MS#ETHINT-1, *From Invasion to the Siegfried Line* (Warlimont), 8.

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Meanwhile, in England, at all of the airfields of the American and British Air Forces, ground crews took 20,000 paint brushes and 100,000 gallons and painted three recognition strips around the wings and fuselages of the nearly 10,000 aircraft (including gliders) that were scheduled to participate in air operations in support of the invasion. The work began in the afternoon and was completed before dark. That evening the word was passed to all Allied land, sea, and air units that any aircraft not so painted was to be considered hostile and fired upon.⁴¹²

At 1830 BDST, the B.B.C. broadcast the following in the French language:

Today, Monday, June 5th, The Supreme Commander directs me to say this: There now exists in these broadcasts a direct channel of communications between the Supreme Commander and yourselves in the occupied Countries.... In due course instructions of great importance will be given, but it will not be possible to give them at a previously announced time; therefore, you must get into the habit either personally, or by arrangement with your friends, of listening at all hours. This is not as difficult as it sounds....⁴¹³

The Allies already had the French Resistance standing by for order to initiate their pre-planned sabotage attacks. Now all of France was cautioned to stand by. What the birthday party people at *Panzerregiment 902* heard later that night was part of the general instructions being given to the French people. Had he heard the statement broadcast at 1830 hours, *General der Panzertruppen Bayerlein* might have acted on his own and put his division on immediate alert.

Immediately following the 1830 BDST special announcement to all the French people, B.B.C. began to broadcast "personnel messages" to the French Resistance. The messages contained coded orders to begin the sabotage of rail road, and telephone systems as soon as possible after the invasion began.⁴¹⁴ To hinder the movement of German reserves, and to create the maximum confusion

412 Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 227; Michie, "Fakery in the Air," 198.

413 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 74.

414 Ryan, *Ibid*; Michie, 417.

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in Northern France, SHAEF had decided that all sabotage operations should be instituted simultaneously all over northern France at the start of the invasion.⁴¹⁵

Around 2000 BDST on 5 June, *Armeekorps 84* called *Infanteriedivision 716* which was located between Arromanches and the Orne River. *General-leutnant* Richter, the division commander took the call. Afterwards he held his weekly staff meeting. After discussing division training and beach obstacle construction plans for the next week, Richter told his staff that he had just received an invasion warning from *AK 84*. He said that commander *AK 84* told him that an invasion would come between 6 and 10 June. Richter then commented that he had received a similar warning “every full moon and every no moon period” since 1 April. Richter told his staff he saw no reason to order the division to full alert. With the weather bad, he reckoned that nothing about the night was special, and there was much work ahead in the coming week as they prepared for the invasion.⁴¹⁶ Richter believed that there would be an attack in his division area later, during the summer.⁴¹⁷

On that same 5 June evening, two British minesweeper flotillas, 14 and 16, were making faster progress clearing lanes through the German Channel minefields than had been anticipated. According to the orders they were not expected to be able to clear the lanes before dark. However, three hours before dark Flotilla 14 finished its lane and was within 11 miles of the French coast. A little later, Flotilla 16 finished its work and also came within sight of the coast. While both groups of ships should have been visible from the shore, neither group of ships drew fire from any of the German shore batteries. If they were sighted by observers on the shore, no alarm was passed to any local division command headquarters.⁴¹⁸

415 Richard Collier, *Ten Thousand Eyes* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1958), 228.

416 Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 228; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 229.

417 MS#B-621, *716th Infantry Division (1943-28 June 1944)*, (Richter), 1.

418 Wilmot, 227; Ruge, “The Invasion of Normandy,” 330.

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At 2100 BDST the Allied invasion fleet, then proceeding as several independent Assault Forces, was converging on PICADILLY CIRCUS, that point in the Channel where the ships of the invasion armada would begin their southward journey through the minefields to the invasion beaches. To make the German believe that the fleet was actually sailing toward the Pas-de-Calais, the Allies implemented that portion of deception Plan FORTITUDE SOUTH designed to deceive any enemy radar operators at stations that had not been destroyed. Twenty-four U.S. and R.A.F. began to orbit the Channel in the vicinity of the Contentin Peninsula and started jamming the undamaged German radars there.⁴¹⁹

At PICADILLY CIRCUS two small deception flotillas left the mail assault armada and began sailing toward Boulogne (Operation GLIMMER) and Cap d'Antifer (Operation TAXABLE). Each of the deception flotilla was made up of eighteen small ships of the British Navy, each towing a large barrage balloon. The balloons were all specially modified to produce a "big ship echo" on the German radars. Above each of the flotillas were one hundred heavy R.A.F. bombers, flying continuous orbits over the ships. As the planes orbited and came to the front part of the advancing orbits over the ships they dropped bundles of "windows." The "windows" were metalized paper strips designed to produce false radar echoes. The combination of ships, planes, balloons, and special paper appeared on the German radar scopes as two large convoys steaming at seven knots toward the Pas-de-Calais. In the area between the two deception flotillas, twenty-nine R.A.F. bombers flew continuous circles, simulating the air cover for the Boulogne and Cap d'Antifer bound invasion fleets. At the same time these two phantom invasion fleets were headed toward the Pas-de-Calais, another

419 Michie, "Fakery in the Air," *Secrets and Spies*, 395; On D-Day Eve, there were 2,727 Allied vessels in the Channel. Including the landing craft that were being carried on larger ships, there were 5,333 ships and boats in the invasion armada. Howarth, *D Day the Sixth of June*, 12.

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British deception flotilla, with a similar missions, sailed toward Barfleur on the Contentin Peninsula's northeastern tip (Operation BIG DRUM).⁴²⁰

In England at 2145 BDST on 5 June, twenty of the Allied Pathfinder aircraft took off from their airfields.⁴²¹ Thirty minutes later, 432 C-47 transport aircraft carrying the men of the U.S. 101st Airborne Division took off from seven English airfields and headed circuitously toward the division's drop zones. Their line of flight took them out over the Channel Isles and then eastward across the west coast of the Contentin Peninsula. Their indirect flight path was designed to make the location of the division's drop zones more difficult to anticipate in the event the Germans managed to track the planes by radar or by sound during all but the last part of their flight. The overflight of the Channel Isles would also make it appear that the planes were headed toward Brittany.⁴²²

At 2215 BDST on 5 June, the B.B.C. began its usual program directed to the French people. The earlier message from the Supreme Commander that cautioned the people to keep listening for "instructions of great importance" was repeated. Following the news broadcast, the "personnel messages" were read. The latter segment of the B.B.C. broadcast usually lasted for ten minutes, but on that night it lasted for nearly twenty minutes.⁴²³

Near the beginning of the "personnel messages" portion of the London Radio's broadcast the *AOK 15 Fernmeldeaufklärung* copied the sentence: "*Blessant mon coeur d'une languer monotone* [Wound my heart with a monotonous languor]." It was the second sentence in the Paul Verlaine poem

420 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 227; Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 231-32; Michie, "Fakery in the Air," *Secrets and Spies*, 395; *Army Times* Editors, *The Tangled Web*, 144; Fuller, *The Second World War 1939-45*, 294.

421 *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, 14.

422 *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, 14; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 274; All totaled, the airborne assault by three parachute divisions required the services of 925 C-47's which flew from twenty-five different airfields in England. Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II*, 89.

423 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 230.

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that *Oberstleutnant* Meyers' radio monitoring units had been listening for. It meant that an invasion was expected with the next forty-eight hours. Meyer alerted the commander of *AOK 15*. In turn, at 2300 BDST *Generaloberst* Hans von Salmuth sent out a message to his subordinate *AOK 15* divisions ordering them to "stand by" in the area between the Orne River and the Scheldt.⁴²⁴

Oberstleutnant Meyer also notified *OB WEST* by telephone that the second part of the sabotage alert message had been sent to the French Resistance. By 2315 BDST he also had sent the following message:

Teletype No 2117/26 – Urgent to 67th, 81st, 82nd and 89th Corps; Military Governor Belgium and Northern France; Army Group "B"; 16th Flak Division: Msg of BBC [broadcast 2215 BDST] ... 5 June has been processed. According to our available record it means "EXPECT INVASION WITHIN 48 HOURS, STARTING 0000 [HOURS]. 6 June."⁴²⁵

AOK 15 did not alert *Armeekorps 88* in Holland or *AOK 7* west of the Orne River because the channels for communication with them was through *HGK B* and *OB WEST*, respectively. As noted in Meyers' message *HGK B* was notified.

Part two of the "Song of Autumn" alert code was also heard by the staff at *OB WEST*. The telephone call from *Oberstleutnant* Meyer, therefore, merely confirms what they also knew and understood regarding the "personnel messages" significance. The unusual length of the "personal messages" segment of the B.B.C. broadcast, the earlier "Instructions from the Supreme Commander, and now the broadcast of the second part of the Paul Verlaine poem, and other second parts also heard, cause great concern in the minds of the staff officers at *OB West*. Von Rundstedt was notified, but he did not share his staff's concerns. He told them that it was absurd to think that the enemy would actually announce in advance, over the B.B.C, their intention to invade.⁴²⁶ The only responsive

424 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 96-97.

425 Ibid.

426 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 276, citing *Marinegruppenkommando West*, *KTB*, 1.-7. VI.44, 6 June 1944.

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action taken by *OB WEST* was in the form of a telephone call to *OKW* informing them that *AOK 15* was on full alert in case an invasion was launched.⁴²⁷

Meanwhile at *HGK B*, Rommel's headquarters took no action upon receipt of the teletype message from Meyer in the *AOK 15* sector. On ten occasions in the past two months they had received similar announcements of an imminent invasion, and on one those occasions the weather had actually been favorable for a landing. On the basis of his prior experience *Generalleutnant* Speidel, Chief of Staff and Acting Commander of *HGK B* in Rommel's absence, considered it highly unlikely that an invasion would occur while the weather conditions were so bad. Because *AOK 15* was guarding the sector in which Rommel believed the invasion would come, Speidel did order *AOK 15* to stand down its forces from the "full" alert that von Salmuth had ordered. Keeping them on the next lower "general" alert status was, to mind Speidel, adequate insurance against the improbable ever happening before the weather cleared. Though it would have been easy to do so, Speidel did not advise *AOK 7* of the "personal messages" matter. If an invasion happened in Normandy, their being on general alert was again thought adequate. Neither did Speidel notify Rommel who was at his home in Germany.⁴²⁸

Marinegruppenkommando West was informed of the receipt of the second part of the Paul Verlaine poem by *OB WEST*. *Vizeadmiral* Hoffman, Chief of Staff and Acting Commander of *MGK WEST* during Kranke's absence, believed that the message to the French Resistance, like earlier ones of the same type, referred to a sabotage operation but was not connected to an imminent invasion. Consequently, he neither notified *Admiral* Krancke, nor put the coastal heavy-gun

427 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 97.

428 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 275; Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 231; It must be remembered that Speidel knew that Rommel planned to see Hitler on 6 June and to ask him for the immediate release of some of the *OKW* reserves to *HGK B*. He saw no sense in taking any action that might result in Rommel going on to see the Führer.

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batteries and *Kriegsmarine* coastal patrol flotillas on alert.⁴²⁹ It was not necessary for Hoffman to notify the *Kriegsmarine* units in the AOK sector because they were alerted with the rest of the miscellaneous *Wehrmacht* forces by their liaison officers. An entry in the *KTB* of *MGK WEST* noted receipt of the call from *OB WEST*, and the remark: "Of course, nothing will happen."⁴³⁰

No word of a possible imminent landing, or of the full alert status of the *AOK 15* units was passed to *AOK 7*. What is ironic is that *AOK 7* had earlier scheduled for a full alert rehearsal on the night of 5/6 June as part of a sector-wide training exercise. However, when Dollmann decided to hold a *Kriegsspiel* that same night, the rehearsal was cancelled. Postponing the rehearsal meant that most of the division commanders and other scheduled to attend the map exercise at Rennes would have an opportunity to get a good night's sleep.⁴³¹

The B.B.C. broadcasts during the evening on 5 June also were monitored by the *RSHA Funkhorchdienst* unit located in Paris. The listeners there heard the second part of the "Song of Autumn" code, and in addition copied fifteen other jargon code imminent-action-alerts. The information concerning the messages was passed to *OKW* in Berlin, but there was some confusion about the call's message. The *OKW* received the impression that *RSHA* was telling it that only wide-scale railroad, road, and telephone communication sabotage was about to occur.⁴³² *SS Oberstführer* Walter Schellenberg, Chief of *RSHA/Amt VI, Ausland-SD*, was also notified, and in call he made to *OKW*, he discovered the confusion and corrected the *OKW*'s false impression, Schellenberg made it clear to the *OKW* that there would be wide-spread sabotage very soon, and that it would be associated with an invasion that surely would happen before 0100 BDST on 8

429 Foot, *S.O.E. in France*, 304 and 338.

430 Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 231.

431 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 275, citing *Rad. 5 Jun 44, Seventh Army to XXV, LXXIV, and LXXXIV Corps, AOK7, KTB, Anlagen 1.V-5.VI,44*; Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 198.

432 Foot, *S.O.E. in France*, 338.

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June. He reported that he had hoped also to be able to tell exactly where the enemy *Schwerpunkt* would come, but was unable to do so. He noted that the attempts to pinpoint the location by building a map plot of the locations of the alerted Resistance Forces had failed: the plots were all over the Channel front sector to widely dispersed sabotage units. The Allies had anticipated that the Germans would try to use map plot analysis, and for that very reason gave simultaneous notices to every sabotage team from Holland to Brittany at the same time.⁴³³

The Staff at *OB WEST* did not share von Rundstedt's lack of concern about the broadcast of the personnel messages and the other unusual B.B.C. broadcast activity. Their sense of uneasiness was sharpened when a few of the radar stations still operational in the sector between Cherbourg and Le Havre all reported that they had been receiving jamming signals since 2100 BDST. A short time after the first "jamming" reports came in, the radar stations located farther east, along the coast from Le Havre and Calais reported "contacts" indicating abnormally heavy ship movement in the Channel. At 2300 BDST the *Luftwaffe* notified *OB WEST* that they were monitoring broadcasts from enemy metrological aircraft flying over France. The *Luftwaffe* reported such weather data aircraft routinely supported daylight strikes by U.S. medium and heavy bomber, but that they had never been heard such planes broadcasting during hours of darkness. The *Luftwaffe* told *OB WEST* that it had alerted all of its night-fighter aircraft to patrol the skies about the Pas-de-Calais area, and hunt for the aircraft reportedly observed on radar over the Channel. In spite all of the reports being received by *OB WEST* neither von Rundstedt nor Blumentritt concurred with their staff suggestion that the unusual; activity signaled the start of an invasion.⁴³⁴

433 Perrault, *The Secret of D-Day*, 232. The simultaneous alert of so many sabotage units at the same time also caused some concern to the members of the French Resistance who felt that the people of France who were not close to the invasion were being put at unnecessary risk. In fact, the wide-spread sabotage was designed to create the widest confusion over the whole of the Channel front.

434 Perrault, 231-32; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 227; *Luftnachrichten Regiment 351* monitored and evaluated Allied aircraft radio traffic. The unit was part of

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And so it was that on the night before the invasion of Northwest France was to but minutes away from beginning in earnest, the German forces in the AOK 7 guarding the Normandy coastline and the Contentin peninsula, were in place and unaware that the longest day was about to come knocking at their door.

These units, to be sure, were ready in the sense that they were in place, and at a general alert status, but the division commanders and two-thirds of the regimental commanders were away from their headquarters in anticipating in taking part in a Kriegsspiel—a map table exercise to play at defeating the landing they knew would one day come. Higher German headquarters were aware that the intelligence services had warned that an attack was imminent with 48 hours, but the key commanders did not believe an attack would come with the weather being so bad.

It is now time to discover how they would respond to surprise that would greet them on the 8th of June.

Funkaufklärungsdienst, the communications-intelligence division of the OKL's Communications & Signals Division, the *Nachrichten-Verbindunge-wesen*. Kahn, *The Codebreakers*, 461.

XVI. D-DAY, THE SIXTH OF JUNE 1944 (0000 to 0530 Hours)

At 0015 BDST on 6 June 1944 the first Allied Pathfinders jumped from their aircraft. Some landed west of Sainte-Mère-Église, some north of Carentan, and other, the British, northeast of Caen.⁴³⁵ One minute later six Horsa gliders, carrying specially trained British Commandos, cast off from their tow planes and began to glide toward their targets.⁴³⁶ After a four-minute glide the gliders landed in the vicinity of Bénouville to the northeast of Caen. The Commandos from the gliders quickly attacked and captured the bridges over the Orne River and Caen Canal.⁴³⁷ The invasion of France had begun, not from the sea, but from the sky.

At 0040 BDST the commander of *Grenadierregiment 736* passed word of the Commando attacks to *Infanteriedivision 716*, which was defending the extreme right flank of the *AOK 7* sector. Ten minutes later *GR 736* called again and reported the attack was too large to be just an enemy raid. By 0100 BDST all of the regiments of *ID 716* were at *ALARM II* status, awaiting further attacks.⁴³⁸

At 0030 BDST *Admiral Kanalküste* was notified that heavy air raids against the towns and roads in the Channel coast area were in progress and that strong enemy bomber formations were being reported over the Normandy coast.⁴³⁹ Some of the aircraft motor noises that the Germans were hearing and reporting belonged not to bomber formations but to the C-47 transport planes carrying the Allied paratroopers. At 0050 BDST the main British element,

435 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 245.

436 Howarth, *D Day the Sixth of June*, 31 and 35.

437 Ibid, 30.

438 *MS#B-621, 716th Infantry Divisions (1943-28 Jun 1944)* (Richter), 9.

439 Carell, *Invasion – They're Coming*, 21-22.

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consisting of the British 6th Airborne Division jumped northeast of Caen, destroying the Dives River bridges. Securing a perimeter, they began clearing the Rommel Asparagus anti-gliders obstacles; that was a task required so that the divisions supply gliders could follow with their antitank weapons.⁴⁴⁰

At 0100 BDST the commander of *Armeekorps 84*, into whose area of responsibility the Allied parachutists were jumping, was at St. Lô. He was attending a birthday party being given in his honor. The party would have been scheduled for later in the day but for the fact that *General der Artillerie* Erich Marcks was due to leave for Rennes at dawn. Marcks had been chosen by Dollmann to play the role of the “enemy” commander during the map exercise planned for the 6th at 1100 hours. It was to be a *Kriegsspiel* that would simulate a combined Allied airborne and amphibious invasion of both Normandy and the adjacent Contentin Peninsula.⁴⁴¹ At 0130 BDST the American airborne invasion of the Contentin Peninsula began as men of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions jumped from their aircraft.⁴⁴² The war-game would be the real thing.

At 0200 BDST the air operations officer at *Luftkampkorps II*, who had become nervous about reports of lots of aircraft over the Channel coast called fighter wing *Jagd-geschwader 26 “Schlageter”* commander *Oberst* Josef Priller based at Lille. The caller began the conversation: “Priller, it seems that some sort of an invasion is taking place. I suggest you put your wing on alert.” Priller, who had earlier argued against the plans ordered on the 5th to disperse his aircraft, was angered by the early morning call. He replied: “Who in hell am I supposed to alert? I’m alert! Wodarczyk [, my wingman,] is alert! But you fatheads know I only have two damned planes!” Priller hung up the telephone before the officers at the other end of the line could reply. A few minutes later an apologetic *LKK II* officer

440 Howarth, *D Day the Sixth of June*, 31 and 35.

441 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 80-81.

442 *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, 14.

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called back, saying: “My dear Priller. I’m very sorry. It was all a mistake. We somehow got a wrong report. Everything is fine—there’s no invasion.”⁴⁴³

On D-Day, *Generalfeldmarschall Sperrle at Luftflottenkommando III*, and its subordinate command, *Luftkampfkorps II*, had about 400 fighter aircraft under their command in France, and of that only about 200 were theoretically available to oppose the Allied air forces that likely would be supporting the long anticipated invasion. The planes were grouped under *LKK II* and divided between two further subordinate commands, the 4th Fighter Division headquartered at Metz, and the 5th Fighter Division headquartered near Paris. The mission of the 4th Division was to intercept Allied heavy bombers entering or leaving Germany. Thus, tactically, its planes belonged to the *Reich* Defense System. In case of an invasion they were supposed to be made available for attacking Allied planes over the scene of an invasion. However, because they were at bases far distant from Normandy they would not likely be of any use in an invasion that far west, and so they were not available use on D-Day. And so it was, that at the crucial moment, the planes of the 5th Division—Priller’s fighter wing— were also located at distant air fields.⁴⁴⁴

At 0200 BDST *Oberstleutnant* Hoffman, Commander of *Bataillon 3, Regiment 9, Infanteriedivision 709*, was standing outside his command bunker located at St. Floxel, to the east of Montebourg in the northern part of the Contentin Peninsula. For thirty minutes the sound of large numbers of aircraft had been heard, but no planes had been seen. Then Hoffman saw six aircraft approaching his battalion area at a low altitude—maybe at just 500 feet. As the planes passed over his bunker he saw what looked like puffs of smoke string out behind the planes. He ducked into his bunker and yelled: “They’re bailing out! Alarm! Enemy parachutists! Alarm! Alarm!” The news of the invasion was passed

443 Ryan, 152; Ruge, “The Invasion of Normandy,” *Decisive Battles*, 324-25, citing Karl Gundelach, “*Drohende Gefahr West.*” *Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau* (June 1959).

444 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 266, citing MS#B-013, *5th Fighter Division (1 March-28 August 1944)* (Hentschel).

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to his regimental headquarters, and Hoffman's battalion began to exchange fire with members of the 101st Airborne Division.⁴⁴⁵

At 0211 BDST *Infanteriedivision 716*, which was defending the extreme right flank of the AOK 7 sector passed the following report up to AK 84:

Enemy paratroopers have landed east of the Orne estuary. Main area is Breville-Ranville and the northern area of the forest of Bavent. Main objective [is] the Diver [River] bridges and the crossing of the Orne [River]. Countermeasures are in progress.⁴⁴⁶

A few minutes later AK 84 received from ID 709 the first report of contact with enemy parachutists in the Contentin Peninsula. AK 84 called AOK 7 and reported that since 0250 BDST enemy airborne forces had been landing in the areas northeast of Caen, on both sides of the Vire River, and in the Contentin Peninsula. *Generalmajor* Max Pemsel, Chief of Staff at AOK 7 ordered that all units in the AK84 Sector (all of Normandy and the Contentin Peninsula) should be put on full alert, *ALARM II*. That was accomplished by 0215 BDST.⁴⁴⁷

At about the same time, *MGK WEST* ordered all *Kriegsmarine* units to go on full alert, but a concurrent entry in its *KTB* indicates that *MGK WEST* had reservations about the gravity of the situation:

It is not considered that this is a large-scale invasion: C-in-C West, and Air Fleet III are of the same opinion. Increased defensive patrols in the Bay of the Seine have not been ordered on account of the unfavorable tide conditions and the weather. No sign of an enemy [amphibious] invasion.⁴⁴⁸

A few minutes after *Generalmajor* Pemsel, at AOK 7, finished his conversation with AK 84, he called and briefed the Chiefs of Staff of both *HGK B*

445 Harrison, 278; Carell, *Invasion – They're Coming*, 27-28.

446 Carell, 30

447 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 89, citing AOK 7, *KTB Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 6 June 1944.

448 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 246.

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and *OB WEST*. When he finished those briefings at 0240 BDST, he called the Chiefs of Staffs of *Armeekorps 25* and *75*, and *Fallschirmarmeeekorps II*, all located in the Brittany sector, and briefed them on the situation as he then knew it.⁴⁴⁹

While Pemsel was conducting his telephone briefings, more action reports were being received from *AK 84*. At 0220 BDST *Konteradmiral* Walter Hennecke, Naval Commander Normandy, reported that enemy paratroopers were being engaged near the *Kriegsmarine* heavy-gun battery at Fort St. Marcoup on the eastern coast of the Contentin Peninsula. Five minutes later, *ID 711* and *ID 716* reported additional parachute landings in their areas of operation on both sides of the Orne River in Eastern Normandy.⁴⁵⁰

All the German units in the two east and west areas locally affected by the Allied parachute assaults responded reasonably well to the enemy attacks. One of the problems that faced the Germans as they attempted to mobilize and marshal all of their units into a coordinated fighting force was the absence of key commanders. Two of the engaged divisions in the Contentin Peninsula could not immediately locate their commanders and several regimental commanders. The ones who were absent were those who had left early for the scheduled *Kriegsspiel* in Rennes. *Generalleutnant* von Schlieben was already in Rennes. *Generalleutnant* Falley was enroute in his car. Falley was killed later in the day when American paratroopers ambushed his returning automobile. Von Schlieben managed to rejoin his division, but it took him until 1300 BDST to get to his headquarters at Valognes.⁴⁵¹

449 AOK 7, *KTB Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 6 June 1944.

450 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 89; Hennecke was Naval Commander Normandy District, under the control of *Admiral Kanalküste* who had command of all the Channel coast *Kriegsmarine* defenses.

451 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 297; Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 150; Falley's death was a bit of good luck for the Americans because it produced some confusions at his division's headquarters. Still, the men of *Luftlandengedivision 91*, which were fresh and specially trained for anti-airborne operations, fought well. Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 244.

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At 0245 BDST, from his headquarters at Valognes in the Contentin Peninsula, *Oberst* Hamman, Acting Commander of *ID 709*, in the absence of von Schlieben, called *AK 84* and reported:

Enemy parachutists south of St. Germain de Varreville and Ste. Marie du Mont. A second group west of Carentan-Valognes main road on both sides of the Meredet River and on the road at Ste. Mère Église. Headquarters 3rd Battalion, 919 Regiment [at St. Floxel], holding prisoners from the 101st U.S. Airborne Division.⁴⁵²

In the Contentin Peninsula sector the American airborne assault became a tremendously confused operation. As the American's C-47 transport aircraft had passed over the Channel Isles and the west coast of the Contentin Peninsula, they were fired upon by German *FLAK* units. The anti-aircraft fire broke up the tight aircraft formations and the result was a wide dispersal of the airborne forces of the two U.S. divisions. The men of the 101st Airborne Division captured at St. Floxel were six miles north of the closest designated drop zone assigned to their division. Some of the transport dropped their paratroopers as much as twenty-five miles from the nearest drop zones. Fortunately, the majority of the forces belonging to the two divisions did manage to land in approximately the right areas. The 82nd Airborne Division was west of Ste. Mère Église; the 101st Airborne Division concentration area was near the eastern coast of the Contentin Peninsula.⁴⁵³

At 0250 BDST Leutnant von Willisen, a *Kriegsmarine* radar officer, called *MGK WEST* and reported that he had a "large number of blips on the screens." He added that his technicians were sure that the activity was caused by echo returns from ships. *Vizeadmiral* Hoffmann, Chief of Staff of *OKM WEST* decided that the activity indicated the actual presence of an enemy amphibious invasion

452 Carell, *Invasion – They're Coming*, 30.

453 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, Maps X and XI; Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II*, 88-89; Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 158.

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fleet. He immediately informed *OB WEST* and *OKM* that he believed that an invasion had begun.⁴⁵⁴

A little later von Rundstedt called *MGK WEST* and told Hoffmann: "Surely your technicians are mistaken? Maybe a flock of seagulls."⁴⁵⁵ Seagull indeed, for at the same time the marking vessels for UTAH Beach were taking up their stations some 22,000 yards off the southeastern coast of the Contentin Peninsula.⁴⁵⁶

At 0300 BDST, *AOK 7* received the following situation report from *AK 84*:

Further airborne landings in the *716 Division* sector. Area to the east coast [of the] Contentin [Peninsula] seems to be expanding.... Very large [enemy naval] forces are approaching in the area east of Cherbourg and further west in the area of the Channel Isle Jersey. No knowledge of airborne landings on the north and west coasts of the Contentin [Peninsula]. Two centers of gravity are recognizable: the *716th Infantry Division* [sector in the eastern Normandy coast sector], and the east coast [of the Contentin Peninsula] ... diagonally through the *91st Air Landing Division* [sector].⁴⁵⁷

The report reflected the two centers of gravity accurately, in so far as they existed at that hour. However, the portion of the report relating to naval activity in the Channel Isles region was misleading. The Allied naval vessel in that area consisted of ships detailed to picket duty. There were ships east of Cherbourg but it is impossible to tell whether the Germans had detected the main invasion fleet moving south from the PICADILLY CIRCUS area, the Operation BIG DRUM deception flotilla, or both. In terms of the two separated airborne areas one might conclude at that time that they were two separate diversionary attacks of the kind Hitler had predicted might happen.

454 Carell, *Invasion – They're Coming*, 31; Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II*, 87.

455 Carell, *Ibid.*

456 *Utah Beach to Cherbourg*, 13.

457 *AOK 7, KTB Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 6 June 1944.

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At 0311 BDST *Generalleutnant* Wilhelm Richter, Commander of *ID 716* in the eastern Normandy area, gave a full report of the situation on the right flank of *AK 84*, and it was duly passed up to *AOK 7*. Now having a fair picture of the situation in the *AOK 7* sector, *Generalmajor* Pemsel called the Chief of Staff at *HGK B*. Pemsel reported the location of the two enemy airborne concentrations and said that naval motor noises could be heard from seaward along the east coast of the Contentin Peninsula. He told Speidel that *Admiral Kanalküste* was reporting radar sightings of ships in the sea around Cherbourg. Pemsel said he was going to attach *Luftlande-Infanterie-Division 91* to *AK 84*. While still a part of the *AOK 7* reserves, the *91st* was already actively engaged in counter-airborne battles. Pemsel told Speidel that he thought that the ongoing action was part of a major enemy operation. Speidel replied that he did not consider the action would have more than a local significance in the two separated areas.⁴⁵⁸ In other words Speidel negated the ideal that the airborne assault was the prelude to a *Schwerpunkt* in the sector west of the Seine River, but he did not foreclose the possibility that the two actions were diversionary attacks. After the call to *HGK B* ended, Pemsel went to his commanding officers and told him that he believed the enemy air assault was probably a part of the expected invasion, and *Generaloberst* Dollmann agreed. It is highly probable that the two of them could not imagine the enemy sending three airborne divisions into battle in France unless they planned to land additional infantry forces by sea to support the paratroops and to create strong lodgments.⁴⁵⁹

Speidel, after talking to Pemsel, called *Generalleutnant* Bodo Zimmermann, the Operations Officer at *OB WEST*. Zimmerman told Speidel:

Operations *OB West* hold that this is not a large-scale airborne invasion, all the more because the *Admiral Kanalküste* has reported that the enemy has dropped straw dummies.⁴⁶⁰

458 *AOK 7, KTB Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 6 June 1944.

459 *AOK 7, KTB Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 6 June 1944; Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 146.

460 Ryan, *Ibid.*

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Notwithstanding what Zimmermann said about *OB WEST*'s view, as of 0300 BDST there were 18,000 Allied airborne, commando, and glider infantry in France.⁴⁶¹ The German headquarters were map plotting the reports of contact with the enemy and attempting to determine which of those sectors were most seriously involved. They were not particularly successful in developing an accurate estimate of the situation in either the east or west. The bulk of the contact reports showed that the enemy forces were thickest on the area north-east of Caen in the east, and between Carentan and Ste. Mère Église in the west. But there were also reports of parachutists east of the Dives River and some even beyond the Seine River. In addition, there were reports of air assault activity along the north and western coast of the Contentin Peninsula. A small percentage of the reports of contacts outside the two main assault areas were the result of C-47 transport pilots getting lost and dropping their paratrooper in the wrong areas. The greatest portion of the outlier reports, however, were caused by dummies dropped by the Allies as part of their deception plan.⁴⁶²

As part of Operation FORTITUDE SOUTH the Allies dropped hundreds of life-sized rubber and straw dummies dressed in parachutist's uniforms. Fire cracker were attached to some of the dummies and fused to explode on contact with the ground.⁴⁶³ Along with the dummy figures the Allies dropped "window"—tin-foil coated paper strips—design to deceive German radar operators by creating the echo-return illusion of a large airborne assault.⁴⁶⁴ Simulated airborne assaults occurred north of Le Havre at Fécamp, inland between Le Havre and Dieppe at Yvelot, southwest of Caen at Maltot, southeast of Carentan at Isigny, west of St. Lô at Mágina, in the Contentin Peninsula at Folligny, and on both side of the Port of Cherbourg.⁴⁶⁵

461 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 146.

462 Ryan, 148; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 248.

463 Ryan, *Ibid*; Wilmot, *Ibid*.

464 Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 157; Michie, "Fakery in the Air," *Secrets and Spies*, 395.

465 Ellis, 157 and 159-60; Michie, *Ibid*.

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At 0340 BDST the acting operations officer at *HGK B* called Pemsel at AOK 7. He said that *OB WEST* did not consider the airborne assaults to represent major actions. Pemsel countered with the argument that the inland depth of the drop zones, coupled with the large numbers of both British and Americans prisoners taken up to that time were very much indicative of a major action.⁴⁶⁶ Five minutes later the officer at *HGK B* again called Pemsel. This time he reported that *Infanterie Division 711*, subordinate to AOK 15—defending the area just east of the Orne River—also was in contact with the enemy and had sighted gliders passing over their area.⁴⁶⁷ Ten minutes prior seventy-two British gliders had landed northeast of Caen in field previous cleared of the “Rommel’s Asparagus” obstacles.⁴⁶⁸

At 0345 BDST *Leutnant* Arthur Janke, commander of Strongpoint No. 5 which was located on the eastern coast of the Contentin Peninsula at La Grande Dune, was told by one of his men that the several wounded American prisoners being kept outside behind the strongpoint were becoming very nervous. Two of the American officer, he was told, kept demanding that they should be moved to the rear and away from the coast. One of the Germans in the bunker remarked: “Maybe something is [about] to happen here?”⁴⁶⁹ As it happened, Jenke’s bunker complex was located in the middle of an Area known to the Allied as the UTAH Beach seaborne assault zone.

At 0345 BDST the staff at *HGK B* begin to hedge on their estimate that the airborne action does not represent part of a major engagement. Speidel called *General der Panzertruppen* Leo Freiherr Geyr von Schweppenburg and ordered him to move the alert elements of his *Panzergruppe WEST* to the vicinity of Lisieux. *PzG WEST*, along with its subordinate *Lehr Panzerdivision* and *SS PzD 12*, was actually part of the *OKW*’s reserve, but they were closer to the

466 AOK 7, *KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 6 June 1944.

467 Ibid.

468 Howarth, *D Day the Sixth of June*, 31.

469 Carell, *Invasion – They’re Coming*, 37.

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Normandy sector than two of *HGK B*'s reserve *Panzerdivisions* which were in the Pas-de-Calais sector.⁴⁷⁰ Each of the two *PzG WEST Panzerdivisions* sent one regiment—their respective “alert” regiments—forward pursuant to prearranged contingency plans.⁴⁷¹

At 0350 BDST, *AK 84* passed the following situation report to *AOK 7*:

Admiral Kanalküste reports sea targets 35 km north of Joborg [on the north coast of the Contentin Peninsula]. Same also in the sector of 716th Division [in Normandy]. Details are unknown due to [jamming] disturbances in radar reception. Dummies used in only one instance... [and we have taken plenty of prisoners].⁴⁷²

At 0400 BDST *Major Doertenbach*, the acting intelligence officer at *OB WEST*, called *HGK B* and asked for an update on their estimate of the current situation. He was told that Speidel, “the Chief of Staff, views the situation with equanimity. There is a possibility that parachutists who have been reported are merely bailed-out bomber crews.”⁴⁷³ While Rommel’s Chief of Staff was busy trying to rationalize away the significance of the many reports of enemy, the Chief of Staff at *AOK 7* was not. Pemsel called his staff together and told them: “Gentlemen. I am convinced the [amphibious] invasion will be upon us by dawn. Our future will depend upon how we fight this day.... The airborne assaults near Caen and in the Contentin Peninsula are but a prelude to the seaborne assault that will come in the area between—Normandy.”⁴⁷⁴ In the case of Speidel it is fair to assume that all that was happening made no sense at all, for the timing—a high tide at dawn, and terrible weather were all wrong. A major invasion landing on that day was just all wrong. In Speidel way of thinking at that hour we see a seasoned soldier unwilling to think this could be what it was about to become.

470 Ruge, “The Invasion of Normandy,” *Decisive Battles*, 334.

471 *MS#B-284, OB WEST (6Jun - 24 Jul 1944)*, 12-13.

472 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 6 June 1944; Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 199.

473 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 148.

474 Ryan, 147-48.

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At 0405 BDST, still at some distance from the Normandy beaches, the larger Allied troop transport ships began to disembark the assault troop into the smaller landing craft that would take them into the shore⁴⁷⁵.

At the same time Hoffman, the Chief of Staff of *MGK WEST* was talking to his commander, *Admiral* Krancke, who was still in Bordeaux where he had gone with a premonition that a diversionary landing might come in the Bay of Biscay sector. Hoffman told Krancke that while *OB WEST* did not consider the enemy parachute landings to be part of a major operation, the *Kriegsmarine* radar units along the coast had reported large numbers of ships definitely approaching the *Kanalküste*.⁴⁷⁶ Admiral Krancke ordered that patrol should be initiated in the Bay of the Seine between Le Tréport and Dieppe.⁴⁷⁷ At 0425 BDST *S-Boote Flotilla No. 5* and another small craft unit stationed at Le Havre were ordered to conduct patrols in the Bay of the Seine west of the Seine Estuary. The patrol craft making the patrol sweep west along the Normandy coast made an almost immediate contact with the left flank of the Allied invasion fleet. A brief naval engagement ensued in which four of the swift moving *S-Bootes*—the *T-28*, *Jaguar*, *Falke*, and *Möew*—fired their torpedoes at two of the British battleships. The torpedoes passed between the *H.M.S Warspite* and the *H.M.S. Ramilies*, but hit and sank the Norwegian destroyer *HNoMS Svenner*.⁴⁷⁸

At 0430 BDST *AK 84* notified *AOK 7* that landing craft had been sighted in the mouth of the Orne River, and possible sightings had been made at Gran-camps les Bains near the mouth of the Vire River.⁴⁷⁹ In point of time the report is

475 Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II*, 94.

476 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 150.

477 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 247.

478 Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 199; Ruge, "The Invasion of Normandy," *Decisive Battles*, 336; Morison, 183. The *Svenner* was a 1943 British. Built vessel loaned to the Norwegian Navy.

479 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 6 June 1944.

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too early to represent a sighting of the main invasion assault waves. It may have been sightings of the German small patrol boats from Le Havre.

At 0500 BDST, *AK 84* ordered *Verstärkegrenadierreregiment 915* to move from its reserve position north of the town of Bayeux to the town of Isigny and to attack the enemy airborne troops reported to be there. Actually, the “airborne assault” on Isigny was one of the simulated parachute drop areas.⁴⁸⁰ The rationale behind the weakening of the reserve force behind the Normandy beaches is contained in a situation report that *AK 84* made to *AOK 7* a few minutes after *VGR 915* was ordered to move west:

[Enemy airborne assaults consists of] two main efforts: Mouth of Orne (Caen) and Ste. Mère Église consisting of parachute and cargo glider landings. New airborne landings ... near Barfleur [on the northeast coast of the Contentin [Peninsula].... The general plan seems to be to tie off the Contentin [Peninsula] at its narrowest point [(a line Isigny-Carentan-La Have du Puits-St. Lô d’Ourville)].⁴⁸¹

The airborne landings near Barfleur mentioned in the *AK 84* report consisted of eleven plane loads of paratroopers from both of the two American divisions that had missed their dropped zones by a wide margin.⁴⁸² Their own confusion about where they were when they landed also caused the Germans to be confused. This complicated the German’s efforts to understand and evaluate the pattern of the airborne assaults and gave an unintended to the significance to the reports of enemy ships approaching Pointe de Barfleur—a flotilla that was part of the deception flotilla.

Like *HGK B* earlier, *OB WEST* was not ready to admit that what they saw as widely separated two airborne attacks were major actions, or even a prelude to a larger enemy assault. Nevertheless, it was decided to raise the alert levels of the *Panzerdivision* reserves. Unlike taking bold action like *HGK B* had done, the

480 Ruge, “The Invasion of Normandy,” *Decisive Battles*, 335.

481 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 247.

482 Ibid.

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Chief of Staff at *OB WEST* decided to ask permission of *OKW* prior to committing the *OKW* reserve. At 0500 BDST *Generalleutnant* Blumentritt in France tried to call *Generaloberst* Alfred Jodl, the Chief of *OKW/WFSt*. Jodl was asleep when the call came through. Jodl's deputy, *General der Artillerie* Walter Warlimont, refused to wake his chief. When Blumentritt asked Warlimont for permission to commit *Lehr PzD* and *SS PzD 12*, the latter officer refused to approve the request. Warlimont said that the *OKW*'s "strategic reserve" would not be released until after a daylight reconnaissance could give a clear picture of the enemy's intention. Warlimont said that the enemy's *Schwehrpunkt* in the Pas-de-Calais might be imminent. He noted that it would be foolish to send the *OKW Panzerdivisions* far to the west of the Seine River only to have the remaining bridges destroyed to prevent their redeployment in the Pas-de-Calais sector.⁴⁸³ *OKW* was aware that German radar had earlier reported two groups of enemy ships approaching Le Tréport and the Cap d'Antifer, and that *AOK 15* believed that the invasion of their Pas-de-Calais sector would begin in the morning. Seemingly, Warlimont was being prudent in his decision.

The only *Panzerdivision* located west of the Seine River and under the operational control of *HGK B* was *PzD 21*. *Panzerdivision 116*, also part of the *HGK B* reserve, was located northeast of the Seine, and it had already been ordered to a position just south of the Somme River. There it was in a position to meet the *Schwerpunkt* that Rommel expected in the Pas-de-Calais sector.⁴⁸⁴ The disposition of those two divisions did not prevent *OB WEST* from making plans for larger *Panzer* operations, if and when the *OKW* released its reserves. Von Rundstedt ordered that *Oberstgruppenführer* SS Joseph "Sepp" Dietrich, who was in Brussels, should move his *SS Panzerkorps I* headquarters to France. Dietrich was told that he should plan for a counterattack in the vicinity of Caen with units later to be assigned.⁴⁸⁵

483 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 248; Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 185 and 225; Shulman, *Defeat in the West*, 101.

484 MS#ETHINT-17, *116 Panzer Division in Normandy* (von Schwerin), 2.

485 Shulman, 104.

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At 0520 BDST Pemsel at AOK 7 called Speidel at *HGK B* and gave him the following situation update:

At the moment there is nothing operational to fear, as the enemy has not sufficient troops on the east [coast] of the Contentin [Peninsula] to cut it off from Normandy. It will be possible to clear out the Contentin [Peninsula] with our own forces. It will be noted that [the] parachute troops have landed without support from the sea.⁴⁸⁶

The situation by Pemsel was a fair appraisal of the capability of the forces under the command of AOK 7. Unfortunately for Pemsel, the enemy were soon to make seaborne landing to support the parachutist, and do a good deal more. It was a contingency that AOK 7 did not then anticipate and had yet to face.

To deal with the British parachutists in the area around Caen, and to deal with an anticipated seaborne diversion in that sector, *OB WEST* intended to use the *OKW* and *HGK B Panzerdivisions*. After Warlimont refused to release the *OKW* reserves, von Rundstedt decided to force the issue and sent the following message to *OKW*:

OB, West is fully aware that this [action west of the Seine] is actually a large-scale enemy operation.... It can only be met successfully of this day the available strategic reserves are assembled and moved into the battle area.... Under these circumstances *OB, West* therefore requests *OKW* to release the reserves.⁴⁸⁷

As can be noted, to justify why it wanted the *OKW* reserves, *OB WEST* was necessarily required to view the enemy situation, as they then understood it to be as a “major engagement.”

Dawn, or more precisely the Beginning of Morning Nautical Twilight, came at 0530 BDST on 6 June 1944. In Germany at *OKW/WFSt*, Warlimont had been

486 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 298. The message marks a clear differentiation between “Normandy” and the “Contentin” that previous had not been made by AOK 7 command. It was now fighting both on the later, and on the far right flank of its Normandy sector.

487 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 183.

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following the battle situation reports and now he had the message from *OB WEST* requesting the immediate release of the two reserve Panzerdivisions.

It was time to awaken Jodl, and he did. Jodl was briefed on the unfolding situation in France, about *OB WEST*'s request, and Warlimont's earlier decision not to release the *OKW* reserves. The Chief of the *OKW/WFSt* approved the decision not to release the reserves.⁴⁸⁸ Thirty minutes before briefing Jodl, Warlimont had called Hitler's staff at Obersalzberg. Warlimont told Jodl that Hitler's Naval Aide, *Admiral* Karl Jesko von Puttkamer, described the *OKW* reports concerning the battles in France as "vague" and that he did not dare to awaken the Führer because, as he said later: "There wasn't too much to tell him, and if I woke him at that time he might start one of his endless nervous scenes which often led to the wildest decisions."⁴⁸⁹

OB WEST was provoking action in German with the request message to *OKW*, but the request for the *Panzerdivisions* was actually a hedging action. Neither *OB WEST* nor *HGK B* had a well-reasoned plan for a counterattack prepared. The two headquarters did not even have an agreed estimate of the threat. At 0600 BDST *MGK WEST* talked to *OB WEST*. After the telephone conversation ended, *MGK WEST* made the following notation in its *KTB*:

Supreme Command West (*OB WEST*) — and apparently Army Group B (*HGK B*) — are uncertain what countermeasures to order as they do not know whether the enemy [parachute] landing up to this point is a dummy landing, a diversionary maneuver, or the main invasion.⁴⁹⁰

488 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 184 and 225.

489 Ryan, 184; Walter Gorlitz, *The German General Staff* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1953), 459; Obersalzberg is a mountainside retreat situated above the market town of Berchtesgaden in Bavaria, Germany, located about 120 kilometers (75 mi) southeast of Munich, close to the border with Austria. The retreat is best known as the location of Adolf Hitler's mountain residence, the *Berghof*, the nearby *Mooslahnerkopf* Teahouse, and the mountaintop *Kehlsteinhaus*, popularly known as the "Eagle's Nest'."

490 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 248.

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There may have been confusion at that moment in the higher German headquarters, but in a few minutes the situation would start to be very clear.

With coming of the dawn the situation should have become much clearer, but as we shall see, it did not become clear at all.

XVII. D-DAY, THE SIXTH OF JUNE 1944 (0530 to 2400 Hours)

In an order issued at about 0300 BDST, *Admiral* Kranke directed the *Kriegsmarine* forces to take action to repel the enemy ship detected on radar, but the shore batteries did not begin to fire until first light. Shortly after 0500 BDST the German guns located north of UTAH opened fire on the Allied destroyers *USS Corry* and *USS Fitch* which were operating off the Contentin coast. At about 0525 the heavy battery at Saint Vaast-la-Hougue began to fire at the Allied minesweepers operating north of Îles Saint-Marcouf. The *Heavy* cruiser *HMS Black Prince* promptly replied and the German guns shifted their fire to target the heavier ship. At 0536 BDST Rear Admiral Morton Deyo, commanding the western Operation Neptune Force “U”, ordered that the general naval bombardment of the UTAH beach sector should commence. At 0530 DBST a German battery at Port en Bessin began to fire at the American Battleship *USS Arkansas*.⁴⁹¹

When the naval bombardment began, the units responsible for coastal defense—both infantry and naval troops—put their prearranged defense plans into action. The tailored positional defenses had been prepared well in advance and for the most part readied for action with a minimum of confusion.⁴⁹²

491 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 248; Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II*, 87-88, 96, 100, 121, and 183-44. It is interesting to note the effect of the Allied naval fire against the shore batteries. Just north of the village of St. Marcouf was a three-gun 260mm battery. The first gun was silenced at 0630, the second at 1557, and the last at 1830 BDST. The battery, like others, was very formidable in its ability to withstand a bombardment from seaward, but the gunners there were not very accurate in their fire at the offshore ships. However, the inland Saint Marcouf (Crisbecq) battery, with its three 210mm guns scored a direct hit on the *USS Corry* and sank it. Survivors were rescued by the *USS Fitch*. Morrison, *Ibid.*

492 Shulman, *Defeat in the West*, 93.

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While the German coastal defense battalions and the *Kriegsmarine* gun batteries were implementing their prearranged plans to destroy the enemy of the beaches, a problem became evident; it was the slowness of the German communications system. 0615 BDST, forty-five minutes after activity at UTAH beach had begun, the AOK 7 staff were still unaware that the enemy's naval bombardment of the shore defenses had begun. Still in the dark about the commencement of naval gunfire along the eastern Contentin coast, confused about the actual disposition of the radar reported ships in the Channel, but certain that the enemy action in his sector represented a major engagement, Pemsel at AOK 7 called Speidel at *HGK B* and gave the following estimate of the situation:

A major enemy invasion is indicated by the following:

- a.) Depth of enemy airborne landings on the Orne [River], [and landings up to 20 kilometers [in depth] in the southeastern part of the Contentin Peninsula;
- b.) Occupation of the [three bridges] crossing [the Douve River between] ... Carentan-Pont L'Abbé;
- c.) [Presence of] seaborne invasion [fleet] near the mouth of the Orne [River, and] between Port en Bessin and the mouth of the Vire [River], also north of Cherbourg, and north of the Jobourg Peninsula.⁴⁹³

On 5 June B.C.C., broadcasting from England, had cautioned the French people to listen to their radios for "instructions of great importance." Now, at 0630 BDST on 6 June, the B.B.C. broadcast the following in the French language:

This is London Calling: I bring you urgent instructions from the Supreme Commander. The lives of many of you depend on the speed and thoroughness with which you obey it. It is particularly addressed to all who live within 35 kilometers of any part of the coast. Leave your towns at once, informing as you go, any neighbor who may not be aware of the warning.... Stay off frequented roads.... Go on foot and take nothing with you that you cannot easily carry.... Get as quickly as possible into the

493 AOK 7, *KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 6 June 1944.

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open country.... Do not gather in large groups which could be mistaken for troop concentrations....⁴⁹⁴

The warning was clear, but gave no hint as to the *Schwerpunkt* location.

At 0630 BDST the first waves of infantry from the U.S 4th Division landed at UTAH Beach. As it happened they landed 2,000 yards south of the predesignated area, but it turned out to be a less well defended area.⁴⁹⁵

At 0630 BDST, *AK 84* reported the following somewhat confused information to *AOK 7*:

Ships moving southeast have been seen from the heights of [Fort St. Marcouf and St. Vaast la Hougue].... Heavy bombing attacks [now in progress all along coast].... Seaborne landing [have been made] in the area of Pont-L'Évêque and south of Le Havre.⁴⁹⁶

The portion of the report dealing with ship sightings and air raids were accurate, but the latter part dealing with seaborne landing in the latter half of the report is in conflict with known facts. There were no Allied landings in the areas mentioned. Both are located in the *AOK 15* sector and were probably reported laterally by *ID 711*. It is interesting to note that Pont-L'Évêque is located about 15 kilometers upstream from the mouth of the Touques River. That was not the only confusing report transmitted in the early morning hours on 6 June. The *KTB* of the *OKM/OA-AI* contains the following in an 0700 BDST entry: "*OB West* transmitted by telephone a report of 3rd Air Fleet which observed landing vessels near Dieppe.⁴⁹⁷ Since the Luftwaffe had no planes in the air, this report was probably based on air-defense radar contacts with the diversionary vessels that were approaching the Pas-de-Calais coast.

494 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 201.

495 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 248.

496 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 6 June 1944.

497 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-30.VI.44*, 6 June 1944.

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At 0700 BDST, one and one-half hour after the fact, *AOK 7* was informed of the naval bombardment. *AK 84* made the following report to them:

Along the [Normandy and southeastern Contentin Peninsula coasts] ... heavy naval units have opened fire on the coast. Landing craft are approaching Bernières Sur Mer [on the Normandy coast]. Situation in the narrows [of the Contentin Peninsula] still unknown. The foe has been eliminated at ... Barfleur [in the northeastern Contentin Peninsula]....⁴⁹⁸

At 0645 BDST the Operations Division at *OKM* received a call from the Operations Officer at *MGK WEST*. The latter reported that the *OB WEST* estimate of the situation did not agree with the view held by *Admiral Krancke*. *MGK WEST* reported that von Rundstedt, who had apparently received fewer reports concerning seaborne landings and other naval actions, was not convinced that the anticipated large-scale enemy action had begun. A few minutes after the conversation with *MGK WEST* had ended, *Admiral Voss*, the senior naval representative at *OKW/WFSt* called *Großadmiral Dönitz*. Voss reported that *OKW/WFSt* would not send the *Panzerdivision* reserves into the Normandy sector, apparently on the assumption that it was only a diversionary attack.⁴⁹⁹ Dönitz then called Jodl and told him that the *OKM* staff believed that the main invasion was, in fact, in progress. Jodl replied that *OB WEST* still had doubts concerning the situation and that *OKW/WFSt* would not release the *Panzer* reserves until *OB WEST* was certain about the nature of the attack.⁵⁰⁰

498 *AOK 7*, *KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 6 June 1944. The “foes” at Barfleur were a small group of U.S paratroopers that were accidentally dropped far north of their designated drop zones.

499 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-30.VI.44*, 6 June 1944.

500 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 149; After the war, Blumentritt was asked about the “confusion” at *OB WEST*. He said that between 0600 and 0900 BDST it was clear that a landing would take place between the Vire and Orne Rivers, but “not decided was the question whether it was the Invasion itself, or a secondary operation with the purpose of diversion, or a local operation in order to gain a footing in France, taking in the first instance the Normandy Peninsula with Cherbourg.” MS#B-284, *OB WEST* (6 Jun - 24 Jul 1944) (Blumentritt), 11.

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There may have been doubts at *OB WEST* and *OKW/WFSt*, but the conviction of the *OKM* staff, the belief that the *Schwerpunkt* had been set in motion, is reflected in the *KTB* of its Operations Division:

Special Item: **The Invasion has begun.** Following an almost uninterrupted attack against our defense positions along the Channel coast between Ostend and Cherbourg carried out during the last days and nights by strongest air forces, the time has come—from the military point of view—for a large scale landing attempt as soon as weather conditions were favorable. Although during the night of 5 June the weather conditions were not regarded as favorable—northwest winds with a velocity of 5 to 6 and even more, a strongly clouded sky and low cloud cover—the enemy decided to venture on the undertaking, apparently hoping for an improvement of weather conditions which have been forecast for the next days. Thus all considerations and abstract speculations have been silenced. The strain that prevailed in all quarters was solved. The war entered into its decisive stage as far as German is concerned. Once again there is an opportunity to bring about a quick decision of the war [in Germany's favor] by a short but energetic fight. There is no doubt that this actually is the big operations against Western Europe to decide the war, as the enemy supreme commanders, heads of state and ministers in their proclamations and radio speeches to the world had made solemn statements to this effect with larger and smaller display of good taste. Furthermore, there is no more any doubt possible as already in the early morning hours the considerable size of the military display of the enemy can be realized.⁵⁰¹

Around 0730 BDST the Chief of Staff at *AOK 15* called Pemsel at *AOK 7* and bet him the cost of a dinner that the *Schwerpunkt* would come in the sector defended by *AOK 15*. Pemsel, sharing *OKM*'s convictions that the Normandy and

501 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-30.VI.44*, 6 June 1944 (emphasis added); At 0800 BDST on 6 June *Admiral Kranke* to his staff: "the enemy has certainly succeeded in surprising to a certain extent the whole machinery of the German defense organization; and not the least by the clever choice of a period when the weather appeared to be unfavorable, but kept improving." Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II*, 107, citing Weichold "German Defense," 13, citing *MGK WEST, KTB*, 6 June 1944.

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Contentin landings were the *Schwerpunkt*, told his caller: “This is one bet you are going to lose.”⁵⁰²

At 0745 BDST Speidel at *HGK B* was finally able to talk to Rommel who was in Germany at his home. And briefed him on the developing situation. On the basis of Speidel’s assessment of the situation as known at that hour, Rommel did not believe that the action was of such importance as to require him to cancel his plans to go to see Hitler later that day. Rommel told Speidel that he would remain at his home until it was time for him to drive on to Obersalzberg where the Führer was in residence. Rommel did tell Pemsel that it probably be necessary to commit *PzD 21* to defeat the enemy around Caen.⁵⁰³

When the Allies landed in France, the Germans had adequate plans in place for local positional defense. What von Rundstedt and Rommel lacked was a firmly enunciated policy regarding the strategic defense of the French coast. *OB WEST* and *HGK B* were in vague but basic disagreement how best to counter a massive enemy assault from the sea. Von Rundstedt favored the maintaining of a strong, centrally located, strategic *Panzer* reserve. Faced with the possibility of several landings, von Rundstedt planned to hold his *Panzer* reserve back until he determined the main objective of the enemy attacks. Then, he planned to mass the *Panzer* reserve and use it to destroy the beachhead most essential to the accomplishment of the enemy’s main objective before the lodgment could be reinforced. Any other beachheads, the diversionary or the secondary ones, would be destroyed last. That kind of plan was consistent with normal German military doctrine and operational techniques. In addition, Speidel said “that [von Rundstedt] was [also] pondering certain political problems that made him anxious to have reliable [(i.e., non-SS)] *Panzer* units in hand for whatever event might occur.”⁵⁰⁴

502 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 149.

503 Shulman, *Defeat in the West*, 76; Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 282

504 Shulman, 76; Martin Blumenson, *U.S. Army in WW II – Breakout and Pursuit* (Washington, Department of the Army, 1961), 20 and 22.

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On the other hand, *Generalfeldmarschall* Rommel assumed that the enemy would have air superiority in any invasion assault area. He argued that the Germans would be unable to move a centrally located reserve to the main battle area as long as the enemy maintained control of the sky. Therefore, he believed all *Panzer* units should be placed well forward so that the enemy forces could be destroyed immediately without the necessity of moving any reserves. Drawing on lessons learned at Nettuno and Salerno in Italy, Rommel considered that at least five *Panzer* divisions would be needed to meet all the demands for immediate counterattacks. One or two *Panzer* divisions, in a reserve somewhere, he told his staff would be “about as much good as a fire brigades.” He said:

If we are not at the throats of the enemy immediately he lands there will be no restoring the situation, in view of his vastly superior air forces. If we are not able to repulse the Allies at sea or throw them off the mainland in the first forty-eight hours, then the invasion will have succeeded, and the war will be lost for the lack of a strategic reserve [in Germany] and naval and *Luftwaffe* support [in the invasion battle area].⁵⁰⁵

Hitler was aware of the conflict in views concerning the conduct of a strategic defense of France when the invasion came. In most matters concerning “the Atlantic Wall” he gave quick and full support to Rommel’s views. But, in regard to the two conflicting approaches of his commanders in France, the Führer never made a final decision about the method he preferred.⁵⁰⁶ With no specific guidance from Hitler the argument about the best defense strategy continued on the morning of the invasion. Both Rommel and von Rundstedt had read the *OB SÜD* Italian reports. Those reports stated that the enemy’s naval and air power, when used together, would foredoom any attempt to assemble forces for a counterattack unless the assembly areas were well beyond the range

505 Shulman, *Defeat in the West*, 75-76; Blumenson, *U.S. Army in WW II – Breakout and Pursuit*, 20 and 22.

506 Blumenson, *Ibid.*

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of the naval heavy artillery.⁵⁰⁷ The report supported Rommel's argument for having all available forces forward and available for action.⁵⁰⁸

Von Rundstedt, on the other hand, believed that the *Luftwaffe* could and would suppress the naval gunfire that was in support of the onshore enemy. Implicit in that assumption was that enough *Luftwaffe Stuka* dive-bombers would be available and the flying weather would be good enough to see targets.⁵⁰⁹

Von Rundstedt was supported in his contention by *General der Panzertruppen* Geyr von Schweppenburg, the commander of *Panzer Gruppe WEST*, and the officers who had to conduct the *Panzer* counterattacks. The latter also made the same assumptions about the *Luftwaffe* as *OB WEST*, but added three further assumptions of his own. Von Schweppenburg assumed that the *Luftwaffe* fighter aircraft would also be readily available, that they would be able to prevent air superiority in the battle area, and that the strafing and aerial-rocket attacks of the Allied fighter bombers would not be a problem for his tanks moving in daylight hours.⁵¹⁰ How very wrong his assumptions turned out to be.

If Rommel had been able to visit with Hitler before the invasion, his strategic defense strategy might have prevailed. By default, the defense strategy would have to depend on the ability of the *Luftwaffe* to suppress the naval gunfire and obtain air superiority over the battle area. But as the event unfolded, the *Luftwaffe* would have to find the dispersed and meagre few fighter planes that belonging to *Jagdgeschwader 26 "Schlageter"*—the ones that had been moved east the day before to keep them out of range of enemy attack

507 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 152, citing *Rpt, Auszug aus Bericht Generalmajor v. Marnitz*, appended to *Grundlegende Bemerkungen des Oberbefehlshabers West*, No. 28.

508 Harrison, 152-53.

509 Harrison, *ibid.*

510 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 153.

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Implementation of von Rundstedt's defensive strategy also depended on *OB WEST*'s ability to satisfy itself as to what was the enemy's major objective. The 0745 BDST report from *AOK 7* to *HGK B* indicated the difficulty in that regard:

Depth of enemy dropping zones on the Orne [River] region and the southern part of the Contentin [Peninsula] indicate a strong attack. Purpose of the [naval and air] bombardment of the coast is not yet clear. In general, we seem to be receiving diversionary attacks, which are to be followed later by assaults at other points. Since daybreak, no new information has come from air or sea reconnaissance.⁵¹¹

The fact that these and other reports were describing the enemy actions as *diversionary attacks* was to later become a point of great significance.

At 0800 BDST *Radio Berlin* announced to the world that the Anglo-Americans had made a landing in France.⁵¹² The Germans made the announcement one hour and thirty minutes before Eisenhower's press aide announced the following over the B.B.C.: "Under the command of General Eisenhower, Allied naval forces, supported by strong air forces, began landing Allied armies this morning on the northern coast of France."⁵¹³ This carefully crafted announcement did not give the location of the invasion along the coast or suggest its size except in vague terms.

At 0830 BDST *Admiral Voss* at *OKW/WFSt* called *OKM* and told them that because of the size of the enemy naval armada in the Bay of the Seine it was no longer possible to logically believe that the action in France was not a major engagement. Nevertheless, Voss reported, Jodl continued to refuse to release control of *Panzer* reserve that von Rundstedt had requested.⁵¹⁴

511 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 6 June 1944.

512 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 149; Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, 567.

513 Ryan, *Ibid'* Butcher, *Ibid*.

514 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-30.VI.44*, 6 June 1944.

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Panzerdivision 21, as previously stated, was under the control of *HGK B* which had attached it to *AOK 7* per Rommel's telephone instructions. At 1000 BDST *AOK 7* contacted the commander of *PzD 21* and told him that his division was further attached to *AK 84*.⁵¹⁵ That resubordinating took place two hours after *HGK B* had relinquished operational control. The *Panzerdivision*, acting on the initiative of its commander, *Generalleutnant* Edgar Feuchtinger, continued to move toward Caen.⁵¹⁶

At 1000 BDST *Luftwaffe Oberst* Priller also took action on his own initiative. He and his wingman took off from the airdrome at Lille. They flew low over the five invasion beaches and strafed the invaders with the eight 20mm cannons of their two *FW-190* fighters. They carried no bombs. And so it was that the *Luftwaffe* attacked the invasion forces as *Reichsmarschall* Herman Göring had promised von Rundstedt they would. Unfortunately for the Germans, the attack by the two *FW-190s* was not as strong as Göring had planned or von Rundstedt had wanted. A few hours before the two planes made their epic appearance, Priller had received an excited and confused call from *Luftkampfkorps 2*. They had told him the following: "The invasion has started.... We don't know where your squadrons have landed, but we're going to divert them to the field a Poix [in Belgium].... The invasion is in Normandy, somewhere around Caen."⁵¹⁷

515 Shulman, *Defeat in the West*, 102-03; Feuchtinger had commanded *PzD 21* from 15 May 44 to 15 Jan 44, resumed command on 8 May 1944. 21st Panzer comprised the following tanks and tracked artillery vehicles when committed to action: 117 *PzKpfw IVs*, 12 *Flakpanzer 38(t)*, 2 *Panzerbefehlswagen* and 10 *Sturmgeschütz*.

516 Shulman, *Ibid.*

517 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 271; Martin C. Windrow, editor, *Aircraft in Profile, I: Nos. 1-24* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1965), ch. 3, p. 10; Priller's attack was the only morning attack by *Luftwaffe* fighter aircraft, but at 0930 BDST, British SWORD beach was bombed by a flight of eight *JU-88* bombers which inflicted minor damage. Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II*, 186.

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Göring had intended to transfer strong fighter forces from Germany to France as soon as it was apparent that the invasion was about to begin. During May, when the *OKW* was predicting an imminent invasion, no transfer of aircraft was deemed possible because of the commencement of the Allied air offensive against the synthetic oil plants. Intensified enemy air operations and the use of the shuttle bombing technique had made it imperative that the *Luftwaffe* should concentrate its greatest fighter interceptor strength in Germany for the defense of the *Reich*.⁵¹⁸ Even when June began and the weather forecasts made it appear that the invasion would be delayed, Göring continued to hold the *Luftwaffe* reinforcements in Germany, and, as noted, on 5 June, he had ordered the planes in France moved closer to the Franco-German border.

At 1040 BDST, *OB WEST* canceled Speidel's earlier order that had von Schweppenburg moving his *Panzergruppe WEST* elements to Lisieux. Von Rundstedt told the *HGK B* Chief of Staff that *OKW* had not technically released the *OKW* reserves.⁵¹⁹ At 1100 BDST *Panzerdivision 21*, which was under control of *AK 84*, was contacted by them and ordered to move west to the Orne River. Three and a half hours earlier *Generalleutnant* Feuchtinger had acted on his own initiative and begun moving *PzD 21* forward to the battle area. Having no specific orders, he moved in accordance with a prearranged plan for attacking to the east of the Orne River. The change in orders—actually his first real order on that day—required the division to cross the Orne River in the city of Caen. *PzD 21* was delayed in passing through the city because only one bridge over the river was usable. Consequently, the one *Panzer* division in the immediate battle area was not committed to battle until late afternoon.⁵²⁰

518 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 289.

519 Ruge, "The Invasion of Normandy," *Decisive Battles*, 334.

520 Shulman, *Defeat in the West*, 102-03; *PzD 21* was trained to launch prearranged counterattacks in the area between Caen and the sea. *Generalleutnant* Feuchtinger put one of those plans into effect. Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 94; At 0120 BDST *ID 716* had alerted *PzD 21* and requested it engage paratroopers thought to be at Herouvillette, 11 kilometers northeast of Caen. Then at 0200 BDST *ID 716*

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At 1100 BDST Hitler's Naval Aide called Jodl to get a report of the situation in France. Jodl told him that there were indications that an important landing had taken place. Hitler's staff put together a situation map and awakened the Führer. After Hitler had read the report and looked at the maps, he informed his staff that he was not convinced that the activity in France and west of the Orne River was the enemy's main invasion. He reminded them that he had been predicting a diversion in the Normandy sector, and he believed that his warning in that regard were being proved to be well founded. He told his staff that the situation in France would be reviewed again later in the day during his regular afternoon conference.⁵²¹ The Führer saw what he wanted to see.

At 1115 BDST, Speidel out a second call trough to Rommel at his home in Herrlingen. The *HGKB* Chief of Staff briefed his commander on the further developments in a worsening situation all along the now wide invasion front. Rommel approved all of the actions taken by Speidel and told him that he was going to cancel his trip to the Führer's headquarters and leave for France at 1300 BDST.⁵²²

Although the *Lehr Panzerdivision*, commanded by *Generalleutnant* Fritz Bayerlein, was part of the *OKW* reserve and technically not released for action in the Normandy area, it nevertheless was moving from Le Mans to Caen, 140 kilometers to the north. The order to move were apparently given by Geyr von Schweppenburg in response to Speidel's earlier order to move to Lisieux. The move was being made under very hazardous conditions. The men of the division were calling the main road from Le Mans to Beny-Bocage "a fighter-bomber racecourse."⁵²³

requested that *PzD* attack enemy parachute units located east of the Orne River. *MS#B-621, 716 Infantry Division (1943 – 28 Jun 1944)*, (Richter), 10-11.

521 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 283.

522 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 284.

523 Shulman, *Defeat in the West*, 106-07; on 6 June the division's *panzer* regiment had a total complement of 202 operating tanks (10 *Panzer III*, 97 *Panzer IV*, 89 *Panthers* and 6 *Tigers*).

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Großadmiral Dönitz flew to Berchtesgaden to attend the 1500 BDST Führer Conference. During the meeting there was considerable discussion about the probability of a second seaborne assault. Dönitz argued that if there was to be a second enemy amphibious assault it was not likely to come in Brittany, and that the forces stationed there should be immediately used to reinforce the Normandy sector.⁵²⁴ Hitler did not agree with him. The Führer was convinced that the Normandy landings were a diversion, and that a second diversion would soon come in Brittany. The majority of the officers present agreed with Hitler. The conferees also made a thorough examination of the enemy order of battle maps. The charts showed more than sixty Anglo-American divisions in England, so deployed that the main threat from them appeared to be the probability of a main blow—the *Schwerpunkt*—in the Pas-de-Calais sector. And yes, there were a few divisions that could be used to attack Brittany with the object of capturing the port of Brest. The impression that the Pas-de-Calais was immediately threatened was reinforced by radar reports of sea activity near Le Tréport and Boulogne that had come earlier that morning. Actually, the Allied units still in England at that time numbered less than fifty divisions, of which only thirty-seven were available for a cross-Channel deployment.⁵²⁵ The thirty or so “ghost” divisions created by the *Abwehr*, and whose presence was “corroborated” by false information from Operation FORTITUDE were beginning to haunt the halls of the German headquarters.

While Hitler would not allow units to be withdrawn from the Brittany sector, the Führer did agree to the release of the *OKW* reserves. The two *Panzerdivisions* located west of the Seine, *Lehr PzD* and *SS PzD 12*, were attached to *AOK 7*. The two divisions located south of the Loire River, *SS PzD 2* and *SS PzGD 17*, were attached to *OB WEST*. *Generalleutnant* Pemsel, at *AOK*

524 . Dönitz, *Memoirs, Ten Years and Twenty Days*, 396.

525 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 248; MS#ETHINT-1, *From Invasion to the Siegfried Line*, (Warlimont), 11; German agents in England, believed to be reliable, had reported that the enemy had between 55 and 60 divisions in England at the end of May 1944. Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 94.

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7, was informed of the decision to give him operational control of two additional *Panzerdivisions* at 1620 BDST.⁵²⁶

At 1600 BDST Rommel was on the road between Freunstadt and his Headquarters at Château La Roche Guyon. He had been silent since the automobile trip back to the front began. Then he turned to *Hauptman* Lang, his aide, and without further elaboration said: "I was right all along, all along."⁵²⁷ Although I have no proof of this, it is possible that he was referring to the argument about how best to deploy the *panzer* forces close to the beaches.

At 1651 BDST *Admiral* Krancke reported to *OKM* that everything was quiet in the area north of the Seine River. *Admiral Kanalküste* had reported that there were no confirmed landings in the *AOK 15* sector, and that no invasion fleet was standing off the Pas-de-Calais shores.⁵²⁸

In a conference call made at 1755 BDST Pemsel talked with Bodo Zimmerman, the *OB WEST* Operations Officer, and with Speidel, the Chief of Staff at *HGK B*. Zimmerman told Pemsel that *OKW* wanted all the Normandy beachheads to be destroyed by the evening of 6 June because there was a danger of a second air and sea assault. Pemsel was directed to send all of *AOK 7*'s available troops to the penetration areas. Pemsel replied that it would be impossible to destroy all the enemy forces during the night. Speidel then told Pemsel that he must immediately commit *PzD 21* to the fight without regard to obtaining additional reinforcement from outside the *AOK 7* sector.⁵²⁹ The *KTB* of the *OKM/OA-AI* contains a 1600 BDST summary of the situation that was facing Pemsel:

... It was clear that no landings were carried out in the area of the Channel Islands and [none were made] on the western side of the

526 Wilmot, 287; *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 6 June 1944.

527 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 294.

528 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-30.VI.44*, 6 June 1944.

529 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 6 June 1944.

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Contentin Peninsula. But on the eastern side of the Peninsula as well as on the coast up to the Orne [River] mouth the enemy as gained a foothold and encircled our coastal batteries and [beachfront] resistance positions of the Army [along an 80-kilometer-wide seaborne assault area]⁵³⁰

At 1900 BDST Rommel arrived at Reims and stopped to call his headquarters, Speidel gave him a fifteen-minute briefing on the situation. When he returned to the car, he told Lang: "I hope there isn't a second landing right now in the Mediterranean."⁵³¹ Such a development would mean that the two *Panzerdivisions* located south of the Loire River would not be available in the northern sector. As it happened, the Allies had originally planned to make a second landing on the south coast of France at the same day the invasion of Normandy began. That landing had to be postponed because the landing craft allocated to it were needed for the Operation OVERLORD Normandy assaults. The invasion of the south of France, Operation ANVIL, did not come until mid-August 1944.

At 1900 BDST *Großadmiral* Dönitz called a conference of his staff at OKM. The *KTB* of the *OKM/OA-AI* contains several entries concerning the subjects discussed and the orders issued"

... It can be concluded from [news] broadcasts of [enemy] reporters that the invasion was [originally] planned to take place 24 hours earlier but that it had been postponed because of [bad] weather conditions.

For the following night [(6/7 June)] new enemy landings have to be expected [on both flanks of the Normandy invasion sector] in the areas of Cherbourg and Le Havre respectively.

Upon order of the Commander in Chief Navy, the following information was issued to the front-line stations: "Enemy landings between Le Havre and Barfleur on the morning of 6 June can be regarded as a large-scale operation. The proclamations of the Allied leaders and the distribution of

530 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-30.VI.44*, 6 June 1944.

531 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 294.

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the enemy forces indicated that other big operations might be expected subsequently, the direction of which cannot yet be concluded from the information at hand. Because sufficient reconnaissance is impossible, surprise attacks have to be reckoned with also in other areas.”⁵³²

At 1920 BDST the commander of *AOK 7* called the commander of *AOK 15* and asked for support in clearing out the enemy units located on the east bank of the Orne River. *Generaloberst* von Salmuth promised Pemsel that he would launch counterattack into that area on the morning of 7 June if the enemy did not make an assault into his sector during the night.⁵³³ Von Salmuth’s concern was in line with the consensus of *OKW* and *OB WEST*, both of which expected that there would be a second big attack in the *AOK 15* sector. They both viewed the assault west of the Seine River as a diversion to draw the German reserves west of the river as a prelude to the main assault. *OB WEST* further believed that the attack in the Contentin Peninsula was a diversion within a diversion. Von Rundstedt’s staff reasoned that the Contentin action was an attempt to create the impression of a threat to the port of Cherbourg and in doing so distract the German’s attention away from the area between Caen and the Seine River. They believed that the enemy would make a main landing in the Pas-de-Calais and would attempt to link the two invasion fronts in the vicinity of the Seine River and envelop the port of Le Havre from both sides.⁵³⁴

At 2100 BDST one regiment of *PzD 21* broke through the British line northwest of Caen and reached the sea at Lion sur Mer. They held the position for several hours but were forced to withdraw after being subjected to a violent naval gunfire bombardment.⁵³⁵ It would not be the last counterattack that failed for lack of the *Luftwaffe*’s ability to offset the enemy’s naval and air superiority.

532 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-30.VI.44*, 6 June 1944.

533 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 6 June 1944.

534 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 294.

535 Shulman, *Defeat in the West*, 103.

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At 2340 BDST—after a ten hour road trip—Rommel arrived back at his headquarters and received a report of the situation from the commander of AOK 7. *Generaloberst* Dollmann told him that strong enemy action had stopped the counterattack by *PzD 21*. Rommel told Dollmann that the *Luftwaffe* was moving its aircraft to new airfields and would be able to provide AOK 7 with strong air cover beginning on 7 June.⁵³⁶ Implementation of von Rundstedt's plan of defense depended on the ability of the *Luftwaffe* to support the movement of the *Panzerdivisions* who were exposed to attack by enemy fighter bombers. The *Luftwaffe's* performance on 6 June was not impressive. In addition to the sortie for Priller and his wingman, the *Luftwaffe* managed to fly 319 daylight sorties on 6 June. Twelve separate waves of aircraft were sent out, but each time one of the formations approached the invasion areas they were attacked by strong Allied interceptor formations and the Germans were forced to jettison their bombs before attacking the ships and beaches. During the night of 6/7 June the *Luftwaffe* flew twenty-two additional sorties against the invasion fleet but inflicted no damage on any of the enemy capital ships. On the Allied side, during the twenty-six-hour period ending at 2300 BDST on 6 June, a total of 9,210 aircraft had supported the invasion. Including the heavy bombers and other aircraft that flew in indirect support of the invasion, there were 23,275 sorties flown by the Allies over the Continent.⁵³⁷

And so it was that the “Longest Day” foretold by Rommel ended.

536 AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44, 6 June 1944.

537 Howarth, *D Day the Sixth of June*, 12-13; Ruge, “The Invasion of Normandy,” *Decisive Battles*, 335; AOK 7, *Durchschlag KTB Entwurf OB-Chef Ia-Gesprache*, 6.VI.-16.VIII.44, 6 June 1944; During the week of 6-13 June, the *Luftwaffe* flew 1,683 bomber and torpedo-plane sorties against Allied shipping in the Channel. They destroyed one destroyer and one Liberty ship. Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II*, 170-71; After the war, Warlimont was asked about the weak showing of the *Luftwaffe* as a counter-invasion force. He replied: “If you ask why the air force did not bomb more effectively the places where you landed, the answer is that our air forces were unable to break through your defenses in order to find and hit the targets at all.” MS#ETHINT-1, *From Invasion to the Siegfried Line* (Warlimont), 7.

XVIII. AFTERMATH

7 JUNE THRU 25 JULY 1944

At 0045 BDST on 7 June, *AK 84* reported to *AOK 7* that *PzD 21* would recross the Orne River and conduct counterattacks east of Caen, and that *SS PzD 12* and *Lehr PzD* would operate west of Caen. The reports noted that the counterattacks made during the previous day had met with initial success, but were later stopped. *AK 84* also reported that the defensive units had suffered heavy casualties as a result of the naval and air support given to the enemy ground forces on the five established beachheads. At 0100 BDST Pemsel relayed the report to *HGK B*.⁵³⁸

Early on the morning of 7 June, *SS Panzerkorps I*, commanded by *SS-Oberstgruppenführer* Josef "Sepp" Dietrich took over from *AK 84* the responsibility for the conduct of operations in the Caen sector of the invasion Front. Subordinate to it were three *Panzerdivisions* and *Infanteriedivision 716*. *AK 84* remained responsible of the remainder of the seaborne invasion front and the action in the Contentin Peninsula.⁵³⁹

At 0850 BDST on 7 June *AK 84* called *AOK 7* and reported that 300 enemy aircraft had dropped additional parachutists in the western portion of the Contentin Peninsula between Lessay and Coutances.⁵⁴⁰ At 0950 BDST Rommel called *AOK 7* and told Generaloberst Dollmann that *PzGD 17* was being moved north to counter the new airborne assault, but that it could not complete the redeployment from south of the Loire River until sometime on 8 June. To provide Dollmann with a more immediate response capability, Rommel authorized the movement of *ID 77* from St. Malo to the new airborne assault area. Rommel pointed out that the new airborne landing made it obvious that the enemy

538 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 6 June 1944.

539 Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 96.

540 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 7 June 1944.

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intended to cut off the Contentin at its narrowest point. Dollmann agreed but pointed out to Rommel that if he moved *ID 77* out of the St Malo area it would increase the likelihood of an enemy landing in Brittany. Rommel said that he did not consider additional landings to the west in Brittany because of the very heavy commitment of the enemy forces in Normandy and the Contentin.⁵⁴¹ The above noted report of a large airborne landing on June 7 prompted *HGK B* to move two divisions and marked the process of reinforcing the Normandy-Contentin sector with forces originally dedicated to the defense of Brittany. As the Germans would later learn, much to their consternation, the allies did not make any airborne assault in the area of Lessay-Coutances.

At 1300 BDST on 7 June, *Generalleutnant* Pemsel reported to Rommel that all of the counterattacks launched in the area around Caen that morning had stalled. He also reported that aerial reconnaissance had found no sign of gliders in the Lessay-Coutances area. Pemsel said that the absence of gliders indicated that the enemy had landed without heavy weapons—particularly anti-tank guns.⁵⁴²

At 1700 BDST on 7 June the forces of *SS Panzerkorps I* attempted another counterattack in the area north of Caen. All of the counterattacks were disrupted when the several divisional areas were hit by strong Allied air raids.⁵⁴³

During the evening of 7 June, *AOK 7* was finalizing a plan for the destruction of the new enemy airborne concentration at Lessay-Coutances. At 2200 BDST *AOK 7* received a report from *AK 84* which revealed that the presence of enemy airborne forces in that area could not be positively confirmed.⁵⁴⁴ *AOK 7* had received reports of gliders being towed over the Brittany Peninsula, and the dropping of straw and rubber had been confirmed by *AK 25*

541 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 7 June 1944.

542 *Ibid.*

543 *Ibid.*

544 *Ibid.*

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and *AK 74* in several instances. Pemsel concluded that the same kind of deception had probably occurred in the Lessay-Coutances area. *OB WEST* called *HGK B* and proposed that until positive confirmation of an airdrop could be obtained, *SS PzGD 17* should be diverted to St Lô. Rommel, however, did not concur.⁵⁴⁵

Part of the reason for von Rundstedt's desire to hold back units can be found in an army estimate of the situation recorded in the *KTB* of *OKM's* Operations Division. The 7 June estimate reads in part:

Other large scale landing operations had to be expected almost certainly. Enemy landings in the eastern part of the Channel carried out by about 25 formations kept in readiness in the Thames [River] are of [England] were expected to take place after the consolidation of the enemy bridgehead which had so far been established.⁵⁴⁶

During the night of 7/8 June the Germans captured a copy of the U.S. VIIst Corps Operations Plan. It was found floating at the edge of the sea east of the Vire River by a patrol from *Infanteriedivision 352* who were doing a beachcomber reconnaissance. At 0740 BDST on 8 June *HGK B* was contacted by phone and told a translation of the plan was being teletyped to *HGK B*. At 0940 BDST *AOK 7* received a call from *HGK B*. Speidel said the teletype message had not been received and he asked Pemsel to give him a verbal summary.

Plan of the United States 7th Corps shows [the] following commitments: [Western Normandy] American 7th Corps with 4 divisions. [The] missions [are] to attack northward from the Carentan-Quinéville beachhead and [to] capture Cherbourg from the rear; [Eastern Normandy:] British 5th Corps with 4 British Infantry and two American Divisions in the Calvados [sector]. The missions is to take Bayeux and attempt to make contact with the American 7th Corps near Carentan.⁵⁴⁷

545 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44, 7 June 1944; AOK 7, Durchschlag KTB Entwurf OB-Chef Ia-Gesprache, 6.VI.-16.VIII.44, 7 June 1944.*

546 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-30.VI.44, 7 June 1944.*

547 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen, 8 June 1944.*

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The essential information from the captured operations plan was relayed to *OB West* and to *OKW*. After studying the plan, von Rundstedt concluded that the Normandy invasion was to be the only enemy assault. A few of the *OKW* staff, but not Jodl, also accepted *OB WEST*'s interpretation of the enemy's intent.⁵⁴⁸

The document which the Germans found floating in the sea was a legitimate and true copy of the U.S. VIIth Corps Plan of Attack. It was one instance where Operation FORTITUDE had no part in conveying false information. That being said, the Germans had trouble with it. In their haste to translate it, they misinterpreted portions of it. The details concerning VIIth Corps were correctly understood. However, the Vth Corps that was mentioned in the Pemsel-Speidel conversation was actually American, and not British. In actuality Vth Corps had only two divisions under it and had the mission of linking with VIIth Corps on its west flank and the British 2nd Army on the other flank. The British were not then aware that the British forces involved in the invasion consisted of the 1st and 30th Corps, each with two divisions. The lack of the correct information about the British 2nd Army created the false impression that the main enemy objective was the capture of the port of Cherbourg. *OB WEST* revised an earlier estimate and concluded that the assault force in the Caen sector had the mission of creating a strong diversion that would mask the real main intention which was to quickly capture Cherbourg. Here we see the effect of the German belief that it was essential to the success of the enemy operations that they capture a large port, and how that lead to a false conclusion.

On 8 June *Panzergruppe WEST* took over command of the invasion sector between the Orne River and Tilly-sue-Seulles with *SS Panzergruppe I*

548 Blumentritt, *Von Rundstedt, The Soldier and the Man*, 230; After the war Blumentritt said. "The capturing of this plan did practically no harm to the Allied interests militarily, as despite the knowledge of what the intentions of the Allies were, we were not in a position to do anything more than what we had done already." MS#B-284 OB West (6 Jun - 24 Jul 1944), (Blumentritt), 11-12.

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subordinate to it. *PzG WEST* was subordinated to *HGK B*, which meant that Rommel was commanding all the German forces in the invasion battle area.⁵⁴⁹

At 0930 BDST on 8 June *Generalleutnant* Pemsel reported to Rommel that the western coast of the Contentin Peninsula was free of enemy airborne troops. Pemsel asked him if *Fallschirmarmee* *II*, which was moving out of Brittany to support *ID 77* in an attack on what was now known to be “phantom airborne troops,” should be diverted to Cherbourg or to Bayeux in the Normandy sector. Rommel decided that, at least initially, the two advance divisions of *FAK II* should be deployed at St Lô.⁵⁵⁰

At 1130 BDST on 8 June the high intensity of the Allied air activity over the Brittany Peninsula led the Germans to call alert status *ALARM II* in that region.⁵⁵¹ On the same day von Rundstedt received an urgent message from Hitler which demanded an immediate explanation as to why a full alert had not been ordered in the *AOK 7* sector during the night of 5/6 June as it had been in the neighboring *AOK 15* (Pas-de-Calais) sector.⁵⁵²

During the night of 8/0 June the area of responsibility of *PzG WEST* was extended to cover all of the invasion coast east of Bayeux.⁵⁵³ On 9 June the three *Panzerdivisions* in the area around Caen attempted another counterattack. They achieved minor initial successes but were later forced to withdraw.⁵⁵⁴ Opposing *ID 716* and the three *Panzerdivisions* in the *PzD WEST* sector were ten motorized infantry and one armored division under British 2nd Army. By that

549 Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 100.

550 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 8 June 1944.

551 *Ibid.*

552 Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 171.

553 *AOK 7, Durchschlag KTB Entwurf OB-Chef Ia-Gesprache, 6.VI.-16.VIII.44*, 9 June 1944

554 Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 82.

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time the Commonwealth forces holding the British flank at Bayeux had linked up with one of the eight U.S. divisions then ashore.⁵⁵⁵

At 1850 on 9 June *Generaloberst* Pemsel called Rommel and told him that the stiff German resistance in the Contentin Peninsula south of Montebourg might prompt the enemy to deploy more airborne troops in that sector in order to hasten the capture of Cherbourg. Rommel told him that *OKW* expected another large assault of the *Kanalküste* by 15 June and a Pas-de-Calais sector landing would prevent the deployment of additional airborne units in the area south of Cherbourg.⁵⁵⁶

At 2214 BDST on 9 June *MGK WEST* called *OKM* and told them that certain information indicated that the enemy was planning a landing on the Belgian coast during the night of 10/11 June.⁵⁵⁷ No landing was made. During all the time the battles were raging in Normandy and the Contentin, *AOK 15* forces stayed in place and on full alert in the Pas-de-Calais.

At 1000 BDST on 19 June *HGK B* received a call from *AOK 7* pleading for more gasoline, especially more gasoline in the Contentin Peninsula. Pemsel told Speidel: "The outcome of the battle along the coast is dependent on the immediate availability of gasoline to move the armored units."⁵⁵⁸ There was bad weather in France on 9 and 10 June, but the lack of petrol prevented the Germans from taking advantage of that short period of reduced Allied air operations.⁵⁵⁹

The lack of availability of petrol was not the only thing that affected the panzer units. On 19 June a fighter-bomber attack resulted in a direct hit on the headquarters of *Panzergruppe WEST*. *General der Panzertruppen* Geyr von

555 Speidel, *Ibid.*

556 Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 82.

557 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 9 June 1944.

558 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-30.VI.44*, 9 June 1944.

559 Speidel, 102.

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Schweppenburg was wounded. His Chief of Staff and Operations Chief, along with a majority of his staff were killed instantly. The attack rendered the headquarters totally inoperative, and left the *Panzer* units without a major control headquarters.⁵⁶⁰

Ever since the invasion began, *AOK 7* had been calling for support from the *Luftwaffe*. At 1210 BDST on 10 June the *Luftkampkorps 2* liaison officers reported to Pemsel that the fighters could not take off because the two airfields at which they were concentrated had been seeded with delayed action bombs.⁵⁶¹

The Germans were beginning to face grave problems in the invasion area. The seriousness was apparent in the *HGK B* defense plan prepared at 1800 on 10 June. The plan contained the dread sentence that was all too familiar to all who had served and seen desperate times in Africa, Italy, or on the Russian Front. It read: “[in accordance with the proposal of Hitler] ... there will be no more rear guard actions or retreating to prepared lines, but instead, every man will fight and die where he stands.”⁵⁶² One day later Rommel informed *Generalfeldmarschall* Wilhelm Keitel, the Head of the *OKW*, that the enemy had gained a firm foothold in France and could not be dislodged with the forces on hand.⁵⁶³

The Germans had additional divisions in the *AOK 15* sector that could have been deployed in the Normandy sector, but Hitler’s fear of a second landing in the Pas-de-Calais region prevented their movement. And so it was that twenty divisions that might have turned the tide of the battle were not committed to the fight during the critical first few days. Interestingly enough, the Germans were not the only people anticipating additional Allied assaults. In an 11 June letter to his

560 Blumenson, *U.S. Army in WW II – Breakout and Pursuit*, 22.

561 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 10 June 1944.

562 *Ibid.*

563 Blumenson, *U.S. Army in WW II – Breakout and Pursuit*, 23.

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wife, Harold Nicolson, a members of the House of Commons, and a Governor of the B.B.C., expressed a belief held by many high British officials, saying:

I have the impression that both we and the Germans are waiting to see what the other does next. They hesitate to move their main armies until they see where we are going to land next; we hesitate to make further disembarkations until we see how they are going to move their main armies.⁵⁶⁴

The entries in the *KTB* of the *OKM/OA-AI* for 10 and 11 June reflect some of the information being received which pointed to an additional landing in Northern France:

According to a reliable source of our agents on 9 June, many landing devices are kept in readiness perfectly camouflaged in the Thames [River] mouth and [in rivers] further north.

The Army Group in Southeast England and the close combat formations belonging to it did not take part in the operations [west of the Orne River]. Armed Forces, High Command, Foreign Armies West, expects that their forces will be directed against Belgium.

[The] Reich Security Service transmitted an agent report from the same source that provided correct information about the landing at Cherbourg, that a landing operation will be staged in the area Dieppe, Abbeville, [and] Le Touquet on 14 or 15 June.⁵⁶⁵

On 11 June Speidel at *HGK B* informed Pemsel at *AOK 7* that *AK 84*, commanded by *General der Artillerie* Erich Marcks, would be upgraded and would take over the functions of the destroyed *PzG WEST* headquarters. The

564 Nigel Nicolson, ed., *Harold Nicolson, The War Years, II: 1939-1945* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), 378.

565 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-30.VI.44*, 10 and 11 June 1944.

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new command element would be designated *Armeegruppe "Marcks"* and would report directly to *HGK B*.⁵⁶⁶

On 12 June Keitel, who was with Hitler in Bavaria, briefed Hitler concerning Rommel's gloomy appraisal of the situation in France. Hitler agreed that additional divisions were needed to destroy the strong enemy lodgment. To supply the additional divisions, *SS Panzerarmeekorps II* was ordered transferred from Hungary to the battle area in France.⁵⁶⁷ The Führer was robbing Peter to Paul by using troops that would have to come a long way.

On 12 June, in an 1140 BDST report, Pemsel informed *HGK B* that he suspected that the enemy was relieving the two American parachute divisions in the Contentin Peninsula and that he feared that they would be committed to a new operation.⁵⁶⁸ On the same day *Großadmiral* Dönitz went to Hitler's headquarters to discuss future plans. Afterwards he wrote:

Keitel and Jodl consider the [Normandy-Contentin] situation very serious, although they still see a hope of an unsuccessful enemy landing attempt at another point [along the coast].... The most likely point would be the coast between Dieppe and Boulogne, or between Calais and the Scheldt. It is hoped that the long-range bombardment [with V-1 pilotless flying bombs] of London which will begin during the night of 12/13 June will on [the] one hand divert enemy aircraft and [on the other] induce the enemy to attempt a second landing in Northern France [with the aim of capturing the V-1 launch sites].⁵⁶⁹

The KTB of the *OKM/OA-AI* records additional information concerning Dönitz's visit with Hitler:

566 AOK 7, *KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 11 June 1944.

567 Blumenson, *U.S. Army in WW II – Breakout and Pursuit*, 23.

568 AOK 7, *KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 12 June 1944. The 82nd and 101st Airborne were not used again until Operation Market Garden in Holland in the fall of 1944.

569 Anthony Martienssen, *Hitler and His Admirals* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1949), 204-05.

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The Chief Naval Staff draws attention to extraordinary measures of the enemy which may indicate operations in the Jutland area.... Although Armed Forces High Command, Foreign Armes West, does not expect that the enemy will dissipate his forces to a great extent and regards the Boulogne-Dieppe as further targets of landing operations, one nevertheless has to reckon with offensive activities with limited objectives in other areas.⁵⁷⁰

During the night of 12/13 June the Germans launched twenty-five of their new *V-1* flying-bomb devices. Nineteen of the new “buzz bombs”—as the English called them—exploded in England, with four of them landing in London.⁵⁷¹ The Germans were of the opinion that the start of their long-range bombardment offensive would precipitate the second amphibious assault that they expected, and the *AOK 15* forces remained in their alert positions.

On the morning of 13 June Pemsel asked the *Luftwaffe* liaison officer why there had been no response to his requests for action against the enemy’s capital ships. The round-the-clock shelling by the Allied battleships and cruisers was cause great damage well inland. He was told that all the *Luftwaffe*’s aircraft were being employed in night attacks against the enemy’s ships and that none were available for daylight raids on the ships.⁵⁷² He could easily have added that the Allied air superiority in the air was so overwhelming that any daylight raids would mean the certain loss of both planes and pilots.

An entry made in the *KTB* of the *OKM/OA-AI* on 14 June contains additional information concerning the threat of a second invasion assault:

Naval Staff, Naval Intelligence Division, received a report of a reliable agent in London [dated as] of the evening of 11 June. According to the report it was the general impression [in England] that considerably more [ground] forces were engaged than had originally been provided for in the invasion plan. The operation against the Seine mouth (Le Havre) was openly admitted by military circles in London to have been a failure....

570 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-30.VI.44*, 12 June 1944.

571 Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, 578.

572 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 13 June 1944.

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Neutral observers in London expected a new operation against the Channel coast, possibly in the direction of the Belgian coast.⁵⁷³

In fact the Allied invasion planners had never intended to attempt to capture Le Havre. Still, this false report does state that such an intent existed and that a future seaborne attack might try to land troops to encircle the port.

While Le Have was not attacked from the sea, it was successfully attacked from the air. On 14 June the Allies destroyed thirty-eight German surface vessels, including ten *S-Bootes*. Part of the success achieved in that air raid can be attributed to the strict adherence of German *FLAK* batteries to prior orders. The *Luftwaffe* was planning an early evening attack against Allied ships in the Bay of the Seine. Le Havre was designated as the *Luftwaffe* rallying point for the attack. To avoid the accidental loss of any of their planes, the *Luftwaffe* ordered the *FLAK* batteries not to fire on approaching aircraft. The Allied aircraft arrived over Le Havre before the *Luftwaffe*, and finished their destructive work before the “no fire order” could be rescinded.⁵⁷⁴

On the morning of 15 June three separate platoon-sized commando units were secretly landed in Brittany. They reported the area was almost devoid of Germany.⁵⁷⁵ By then all the divisions which had been guarding against a second diversion had been withdrawn from the region and committed in piecemeal fashion to the defense of Normandy and the Contentin Peninsula. The only significant units left behind were garrisons guarding the bigger ports.

At 1150 BDST on 15 June AOK 7 was informed of the Führer’s order that the port of Cherbourg, by then designated “*Fortress Cherbourg*,” was to be held “at all costs.” The message was duly passed on to *General der Artillerie* Wilhelm Fahrmbacher, who replaced Marcks as commander *AK 84*. He replied that in

573 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-30.VI.44*, 14 June 1944.

574 Speidel, *Invasion 1944, Rommel and the Normandy Campaign*, 38; Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II, XI: The Invasion of France and Germany*, 191.

575 Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, 581.

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spite of the Führer's order, the "dissolution of the northern front [in the Contentin] can no longer be prevented."⁵⁷⁶ At 1845 BDST *AK 84* called *AOK 7* and stated that it was imperative that the units in the Northern Contentin should begin their pull-back into prepared defensive positions around Cherbourg. Fahrmbacher believed that if they failed to do so it would be impossible to successfully defend the port from a landward attack. At 2015 BDST, *HGK B*, who had been consulted about the withdrawal request, informed *AOK 7* that, because of the Führer's "hold fast" order, none of the *AK 84* units would be permitted to withdraw or retreat.⁵⁷⁷

During the night of 15/16 June the Germans resumed, after a night's delay, the long range *V-1* bombardment of England. A barrage of 300 *V-1* bombs were launched from the Pas-de-Calais region. The bombardment—the Second Blitz—continued nightly thereafter until the sector was finally overrun by the advancing Allied ground forces in the fall of 1944.⁵⁷⁸ In the German estimates it was assumed that the flying bomb attacks would surely trigger a seaborne Allied attacks against the landing sites, and so the forces in the *AOK 15* sector stayed there and remained on full alert for a new attack that never came. That was what Eisenhower and the Operation FORTITUDE planners wanted to happen.

The entries in the *KTB* of the *OKM/OA-AI* for 16 June contain additional information concerning the second seaborne assault that the *V-1* attacks were supposed to precipitate:

Opinion of OKH: ... The American Army Group which is still in England without having taken part in the fighting up to now consists of [two Field Armies with their attendant close combat formations].... As reliable information [concerning these formations] is lacking, the only thing that can be said on the plans of this Group is that [because] nothing definite is known [it] indicates that the group will not operate in the near future.

576 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 15 June 1944.

577 *Ibid.*

578 Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, 583.

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RSHA transmitted a report of a French Staff Officer from North Africa of 24 May which was obtained by counterespionage. According to his report, the Allied Supreme Command provided [for] the carrying out of one or several of five invasion plans of which Plan No. 1 was now under [full] execution. Plan No. 2, which is to follow in the second half of June in case Plan No. 1 is carried out successfully, covers the tactical air [cover] of [a] landing [to be made] between the Somme and the Scheldt Rivers.... Simultaneously, several secondary diversions are said to be planned.... [Another] one of the plans provides for an attack against the Mediterranean coast of Southern France.

The Führer gave a directive to commander *OB West* in which he said that the enemy[,] while he is not yet able to start for bigger operations from the landing beachhead, is trying to prevent us from using strong forces in Normandy by issuing many false reports.... [Von Rundstedt was told that the Normandy sector would be reinforced with all available forces] with the exclusion of [using units belonging to 15th Army].⁵⁷⁹

At 1000 BDST on 17 June, Rommel and von Rundstedt met with Hitler at Margival near Soissons in the Pas-de-Calais area. The meeting was held at the Führer "*Command Post W,II*" called *Wolfsschlucht II* which had been constructed in 1940 to support Operation *SEELÖWE*. Rommel told Hitler that the *OKW* strategy of attempting to hold fortified positions in the enemy's rear was "a strategy of the green table," pursued without knowledge of the actual conditions along the invasion front. *General-feldmarschall* Rommel said that the enemy had between twenty-two and twenty-five divisions and was reinforcing the bridgehead at a rate of three divisions per week. Because of the size of the enemy's ground forces in Normandy, Rommel said there was longer any possibility of a second landing in the Pas-de-Calais. He told Hitler that the enemy might soon break out of the beachhead and drive toward Paris. Rommel requested that he be given the freedom to maneuver and asked for Hitler's permission to draw his forces back to the Orne River. Hitler refused both requests. Rommel then asked Hitler

579 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-30.VI.44*, 16 June 1944.

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how he thought the war would end. The Führer's reply was curt: "Don't bother yourself with the course of the war. Attend to your invasion front."⁵⁸⁰

Unable to get permission to freely maneuver, Rommel and von Rundstedt asked for permission to use the *V-1* weapons against Normandy. Heinemann, the officer in charge of the *V-1* bombardment operations, said that it would be impossible to use the flying bongs as tactical weapons. The circle of dispersion, Heinemann noted, was no less than eighteen kilometers in diameter. That was acceptable when the target was the large urban area of London and the objective was random terror, but it would be a waste of resources to aim at Normandy. Hitler refused use of the *V-1*, but would later allow its use against Antwerpen.⁵⁸¹

When Rommel had finished with his proposals, von Rundstedt asked Hitler for permission to move the *AOK 19* divisions which were guarding southern and western France so that he could establish a defensive line south of the Loire River. Hitler refused to grant that request.⁵⁸²

After the Führer had listened to von Rundstedt and Rommel, and turned down their every request, he gave them new instructions. He gave von Rundstedt the responsibility for launching a new *Panzer* counter-offensive using the remnants of *SS Panzerarmee Korps I*, and the new elements of *SS Panzerarmee Korps II*, which was moving to France from Hungary.⁵⁸³ At 1500 BDST the meeting ended, and the commander of *OB WEST* and *HGK B*⁵⁸⁴ prepared to return to their headquarters. But, before they left "*Command Post V.II*", the Führer promised that he would visit the invasion front and see for himself the conditions of the troops and equipment. That promise was broken on 18 June. During the night of 17/18 June one of the *V-1* bombs being launched from the

580 Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 107; Gorlitz, *The German General Staff*, 459-60.

581 Speidel, *Ibid*; Gorlitz, *Ibid*.

582 Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 107; Gorlitz, *The German General Staff*, 459-60.

583 Speidel, 111; Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 114.

584 Speidel, 107; Gorlitz, 460.

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Margival area flew off course and crashed close to the bunker where Hitler was sleeping. The unexpected detonation of so large a warhead frightened Hitler, and the following morning he returned to Germany.⁵⁸⁵

At 1130 on 17 June, *HGK B*, contrary to Hitler's strict orders to "hold fast," gave *AOK 7* permission to conduct retrograde operations in the northern portion of the Contentin. *AOK 7* was given the power to allow a slow fighting withdrawal into the landward ring of defenses around the port city of Cherbourg.⁵⁸⁶ The news was passed down to *AK 84* where Fahrmbacher gave the "slow withdrawal" a much faster pace than Speidel at *HGK B* had intended. There was a growing friction between the commander of *AK 84* and the officers at *HGK B*. At 2315 BDST on 17 June, *HGK B* relieved *General der Artillerie* Fahrmbacher of his command. *Generalleutnant* Dietrich von Choltitz, recently arrived from Italy, was appointed in his stead.⁵⁸⁷

At 2400 BDST on 17 June, Pemsel notified Speidel that *Generalleutnant* Heinz Hellmich, commanding *ID 243*, one of the two commanders trying to hold the German line south of Cherbourg, had been killed during a fighter-bomber attack.⁵⁸⁸ On 18 June, *Generalmajor* Rudolf Stegmann, the commander of *ID 77* was killed with 300 of his men after getting caught in an intense Allied shelling. Losing Fahrmbacher, and these two division commander, severely hampered the German's efforts to hold the defense line south of Cherbourg.⁵⁸⁹

An entry on 19 June in the *KTB* of the *OKM/OA-AI* is indicative of the vague type of reports that began to appear more and more frequently in late

585 Speidel, 111; Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 114.

586 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 17 June 1944.

587 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 17 June 1944. On 1 August 1944, von Choltitz was promoted to *General der Infanterie*, and on 7 August was appointed military governor of Paris.

588 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen*, *ibid.*

589 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 416.

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June—all hinting that there would not be any more enemy amphibious assaults in Northern France:

RSHA transmitted [the]report of a reliable agent according to which the British Military Attaché, Lisbon, told Portuguese officers on 9 Jun. that the landing in Normandy would be the final Anglo-American operation ... [as] it would be possible to enlarge the bridgehead [there] and land in that area all of the forces provided for the invasion. In case larger setbacks were imminent, attempts would be taken into considerations along the Mediterranean coast at Mentone [on the Franco-Italian border] or in the Gulf of Rosa [south of] ... the Spanish frontier.⁵⁹⁰

On 19 June a violent storm struck the Normandy coast. Allied resupply operations were interrupted for four days. The artificial harbor at OMAHA Beach was damaged beyond repair. The British harbor device was damaged, but repaired by cannibalizing the one at OMAHA beach. It was the worse setback that the Allied forces had suffered up to that point, and presented a far greater operational problem than any of the damage the Germans had been able to inflict on the resupply operations that were so vital to the beachhead activity.⁵⁹¹

On 20 June the Soviet Army began their summer offensive. The main line of the German defenses was smashed on both side of the Smolensk-Minsk road.⁵⁹² The expected resumption of activity on the Russian Front served to distract some of the attention that Hitler had been giving to operations in France. Unfortunately for von Rundstedt at *OB WEST*, the gaping hole that had opened up in the Eastern Front meant that no additional reinforcement would be sent to France.

Around 20 June, von Rundstedt and Blumentritt decided that the main enemy effort would be restricted to the Normandy. They viewed the enemy's

590 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-30.VI.44*, 19 June 1944.

591 Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 277; The storm of 18/19 June 1944 was the worse June storm in forty years. Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II, XI: The Invasion of France and Germany*, 176.

592 Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 111.

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success in that sector as being too great to necessitate the risk of an amphibious failure elsewhere. On the basis of their evaluation of the situation, they asked *OKW* for permission to commit the bulk of *AOK 15*'s divisions against the Normandy beachhead. *OKW* replied by saying that they were receiving reports of an assembly of ships in the Dover-Folkestone area where American and Canadian troops were believed to be located. They also said that they were intercepting radio messages which convinced the, and Hitler too, that there would be a second large assault. In order to meet the attacks, *OKW* stated that it was necessary that *AOK 15*'s forces should be kept in the Pas-de-Calais sector.⁵⁹³

At 1330 BDST on 21 June, Pemsel called Speidel and reported: "The [Seventh] Army considers it meaningful that the enemy has not employed any airborne troops at Cherbourg [to hasten its capture].... [We] surmise that the airborne troops are needed for another large scale-action."⁵⁹⁴ At the start of the war the Germans had dropped their own airborne troops right on top their targets, and to great success. They were always suspicious the Allies might do the same. Cherbourg seemed to be a perfect target for that kind of action. Other than the British glider-borne *coup de main* in the early hours of the invasion to capture the Orne River and Caen Canal bridges, that was never part of Allied airborne final action planning—it was just too risky.

On 2020 BDST on 25 June the Chief of Staff at *AK 84* called the Operations Officer at *AOK 7* and told him that the interrogation of P.O.W.s indicated that the enemy intended to conduct seaborne landing on the western coast of the Contentin Peninsula. Just twenty minutes earlier the staff at *AOK 7* had been discussing the reports of French Resistance terrorist activities in Northern France, which they viewed as being in "a state of ominous inactivity."⁵⁹⁵ How does the old saw go, "Things are really quiet; too quiet"?

593 Shulman, *Defeat in the West*, 113.

594 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44*, 21 June 1944.

595 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen*, 25 June 1944.

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At 2300 BDST on 25 June, *HGK B* received word that *Kampfgruppe "Schlieben"* was under violent attack. According to the defenders of the port of Cherbourg, the final enemy drive to capture the city had begun.⁵⁹⁶ This force, under the command of *Generalleutnant* Karl-Wilhelm von Schlieben, formally commander of *ID 709*, was comprised of remnants of the decimated *ID 709* and *ID 234* that since 17 June were trapped in the northern Contentin.

At 1330 BDST on 26 June the commander of *AK 84* told Pemsel at *AOK 7* that he was very concerned about the possibility that the enemy might land on the western coast of the Contentin Peninsula between Coutances and Granville. Speidel at *HGK B* was consulted. The latter considered that since the enemy had not taken advantage of the chance to use airborne forces to hasten the capture of Cherbourg, it was unlikely that they would use seaborne forces in the western Contentin coastal region. Speidel added, however, that he did not completely exclude the possibility of such an operation.⁵⁹⁷

On the same day the Allies captured the port of Cherbourg. The fall of the fortress city also included the destruction of four German *Infanteriedivisions*. Only 1,400 men, remnants from *ID 77* and *Luftlandengedivision 91*, operating as *Kampfgruppe Hellmich*, were able to break out of the northern Contentin trap. *Generalleutnant* Karl-Wilhelm von Schlieben for the *Wehrmacht*, and *Konteradmiral* Walter Hennecke for the *Kriegsmarine* signed the surrender agreement.⁵⁹⁸ When news of the fall of the port reached Rommel and von Rundstedt both on their own concluded that the situation in Normandy was irreversible. Each assumed that the state was now set for Phase 2 of the enemy's plan—a landing in the Pas-de-Calais, assuming that there was to be a

596 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen, Ibid; Morison, History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II, XI: The Invasion of France and Germany, 215-17.*

597 *AOK 7, KTB Westen Anlagen 6.VI.-31.VII.44, 26 June 1944.*

598 Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 102; Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II, XI: The Invasion of France and Germany, 215-17.*

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second large seaborne assault.⁵⁹⁹ When Hitler learned of the fall of the port, and the loss of almost all of the Contentin Peninsula he looked at the situation map and proclaimed: “Look at the space they occupy now. What does it mean in comparison with the whole of France?”⁶⁰⁰ Despite the formal surrender, the last German element in the city did not surrender until 1101 BDST on 29 June. After damage to the harbor was repaired, the first Allied ships unloaded in the harbor on 16 July.⁶⁰¹

Prior to D-Day, the staff at *OKM*, drawing on their limited experience in planning Operation *SEELÖWE* in 1940, and ignorant of the real problems involved in large-scale amphibious operations, warned Hitler that the enemy had sufficient shipping available in England to launch a simultaneous twenty-five division amphibious assault. The *OKW* was skeptical about the *OKM* figures, but they were willing to accept an enemy capability to invade on a fifteen to twenty division front. When the invasion in Normandy began on only a five division front, the *OKW* staff quickly concluded it was only a small diversionary attack, and that the remainder of the assault armada and close combat forces were being held back for a second and larger main blow—the *Schwerpunkt*. This estimate agreed with the gross German overestimation of the size of the enemy’s forces, with the belief that a diversion would precede the main blow, with the reports of landing craft camouflaged in the Thames River, and with radio intercepts which indicate that an American Army Group was located in Southeastern England.⁶⁰²

By 26 June the Allied forces in France numbered twenty-five divisions, plus a few independent armored brigades that the German may have mistaken for divisions. In England there were fifteen divisions awaiting shipment to France. On the same day the HGK B weekly estimate stated:

599 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 330 and 332.

600 MS#ETHINH-1, *From Invasion to the Siegfried Line (Warlimont)*, 15.

601 Morison, *History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II, XI: The Invasion of France and Germany*, 215 and 217.

602 Wilmot, 332.

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The enemy has employed 27 to 31 divisions in the bridgehead and a large number of G.H.Q. troops.... In England another 67 major formations are standing to, of which 57 at the very least can be employed for large scale operations.⁶⁰³

It is easy to see why, even at this date, there was still a big worry in the German Western Front headquarters.

You may remember that on 17 June, the Führer had specifically ordered von Rundstedt to prepare for a major *Panzer* counteroffensive. The action was finally scheduled to begin at 0800 on 29 June. The elements of *Obergruppenführer* Bittrich's *SS Panzerarmeekorps II*, however, were attacked in their assembly area by Allied fighter-bombers. As a result of the air attacks and resultant confusion, the attacks did not begin until 1530 BDST. Meanwhile, *SS Panzerarmeekorps I* and *SS Panzerarmeekorps XLVII* were supposed to join in the counter attacks, but at the appointed hour for joint action they were engaged in supporting *Infanteriedivisions* and could not be withdrawn from the line. When the reduced-size counteroffensive action was launched, the two division of *PzAK II* were decimated by the Allied naval gunfire, air-support, and anti-tank weapons. Thus ended the second, and the last, of the large-scale *Panzer* counterattacks in the Caen region.⁶⁰⁴ The last attack had been delayed by von Rundstedt in order to give *General der Panzertruppen* Geyr von Schweppenburg time to reposition the *Panzergruppe WEST* Headquarters.⁶⁰⁵

Late on 29 June, when it was obvious that the Panzer counteroffensive had utterly failed, *Generalfeldmarschall* Keitel, in southern Germany with Hitler, called von Rundstedt and asked: "What shall we do? What shall we do? Von Rundstedt answered: "*What shall you do? Make peace you idiots! What else can you do?*"⁶⁰⁶

603 Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, 332.

604 Shulman, *Defeat in the West*, 114; Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 111.

605 Speidel, 100.

606 Shulman, 120-21 (emphasis added).

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On 29 June *Generaloberst* Friedrich Dollmann, the commander of AOK 7, died of a heart attack. Several days earlier the Führer, dissatisfied with the course of the battle in the AOK 7 sector, had demanded his removal. Rommel had refused to dismiss Dollmann. As it turned out, fate as well as Hitler and the Allied fighter-bombers, was taking its toll on key German commanders.⁶⁰⁷

On 29 June the *OKM/OA-AI* received another report concerning a second invasion. Their *KTB* entry reads as follows:

*Armed Forces, High Command, Foreign Armies West ... if of the opinion that the [American] 2nd Army Group concentrated in southeast England will start a new offensive aimed at Paris-Reims in the middle of July.... [They do] not see any indication of any offensive plans against Bretagne.*⁶⁰⁸

And so it was that at the beginning of July 1944 the Germans were still waiting for the dread *Schwerpunkt* blow to come in the Pas-de-Calais.

In his book *Crusade in Europe* Eisenhower outlined the Allied view of the July situation:

... We were confident ... that in the build-up race we were sure to win. Beyond this, a possible countermeasure was the launching of a secondary amphibious and possibly airborne effort against the Brittany Peninsula.

Early planning placed a very great importance on the ports in that area, and we believed that, if the enemy should denude his defenses therein an effort to present an impregnable line in front of our Normandy landings, we could accomplish a surprise move into the Brittany region which would threaten to take him in the flank and rear. In this connection we had already learned that the Germans never deliberately evacuated a port without leaving behind them a desolation and destruction that rendered rapid repair extremely difficult; therefore, the particular spot we had decided upon as most useful for supply and maintenance purposes in Brittany was Quiberon Bay, a large, well sheltered, but undeveloped harbor on the southern flank of the Peninsula's base.

607 Speidel, 57.

608 *Kriegstagebuch, Seekriegsleitung, 1 Abteilung, KTB 1.-30.VI.44*, 29 June 1944.

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As June faded into July we closely watched the situation to determine whether or not a second landing would prove profitable to us. More and more I turned against it. One reason was that our air forces and our deception threat [(Operation FORTITUDE)] were preventing the Germans from building up an impregnable line in front of our Normandy forces. I knew that any attempt to stage a secondary landing would occasion delay in the direct build-up of our forces and supplies on the main front. I still believed we would have to make major use of the Brittany ports, but I believed that by continuing our attacks we would get them sooner than by lessening the weight of our blows on the main front to all the mounting of the secondary attack.⁶⁰⁹

On 29 June Geyr von Schweppenburg, the commander of *PzG WEST*, and *Oberstgruppenführer SS* Paul Hausser, the new commander of *AOK 7*, prepared a joint estimate of the situation they believed was facing them. They decided that the tactics pursued up to that time were only wearing down the German forces and were not destroying the enemy forces at a commensurate rate. To counter the situation, they proposed the evacuation of the Caen pocket and the establishment of a shorter defensive line beyond the range of the Allied forces naval guns. The proposal reached *HGK B* headquarters about midnight on 30 June. Although the idea proposed by the two commanders was contrary to Hitler's order to stand and fight and die, Rommel endorsed the proposal favorably and forward it to *OB WEST*. The paper arrived on von Rundstedt's headquarters at 0200 BDST on 1 July. It was favorably endorsed by *OB WEST* and forwarded to *OKW* by 0330 BDST the same day. The document, with the favorable endorsement of all of the commanders in France, was at *OKW* Headquarters by 0700 BDST. Keitel and Jodl were at Hitler southern Bavaria command center. They took the proposal to him and recommended that the proposal be rejected and the Führer agreed. At 1740 BDST on 1 July *OB WEST* received orders from the Führer that every position the occupied by German be held at all cost and that every enemy attempt to force a way out of the bridge-head be broken up.⁶¹⁰ Although he did not realize it at the time, Hitler was setting

609 Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 280-81.

610 Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 446-47; Gorlitz, *Hitler and His Admirals*, 461.

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the stage for the encirclement of most of his forces fighting in the Normandy battle area.

The document delivered to *OKW* by the senior commanders in the West had the effect of marking a tidal swing in the thinking between *OB WEST* and *OKW*. It was a direct affront to the *OKW* and to Hitler. The latter's reaction was swift and certain. He presented von Rundstedt with the Oak Leaf to his Knight Cross and a note Hitler stating that because of the *Generalfeldmarschall's* advanced age and poor health he was being relieved of his command in the West. Von Rundstedt turned over the command of *OB WEST* to *Generalfeldmarschall* Guenther von Kluge on 3 July. At the same time the messenger from Hitler was delivering Hitler's note at *OB WEST*, another delivered a note of dismissal to von Schweppenburg at *PzG WEST*. On 4 July *General der Panzertruppen* Heinrich Eberbach assumed command of *PzG WEST*. Rommel and Hausser were not relieved, but to make sure that everyone understood what Hitler wanted done in France, he issued the following order on 2 July: "Every enemy thrust is to be prevented by grimly holding your own. It is forbidden to shorten the front. There is no freedom of maneuver."⁶¹¹

While the Germans were shuffling their commanders, the Allied Combined Chiefs were meeting in London. On 4 July they approved the request of the Supreme Commander for permission to launch Operation ANVIL on 15 August. There really would be an attack in southern France after all, as the Germans had feared.⁶¹²

In the *OKW/WFSt* situation report for the period 1–7 July, Jodl's staff said that "Army Group Patton" was located in southeastern England and that it had the mission of invading France in the Pas-de-Calais region. That report was made in spite of the fact that an increased number of German intelligence

611 Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 73-74.

612 Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, 603.

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estimated were rating the Allied forces in England as having only the capability to mount a diversionary or secondary effort.⁶¹³

On 8 July Hitler published a new directive for the conduct of operations in the West. He told his commanders the following:

... The enemy has succeeded in landing in Normandy and in seizing with astounding speed the Contentin Peninsula....

... In spite of all the attendant risks, the enemy will probably attempt a second landing in the 15th Army's sector, all the more so, as public opinion will press for the elimination of the sites of the long-range [V-1] weapons firing on London. The disposition of the forces still available in England suggests attacks primarily against the sector between the Somme and the Seine [Rivers] by divisions assembled north of the Thames, but also against Belgium and southern Holland. At the same time, however, surprise attacks designed to effect the capture of one of the large ports in Brittany cannot be ruled out.

Similarly, an attack against the French Mediterranean coast may also be expected. The time chosen for it will depend upon the enemy's intentions and progress in his operations in general. It is unlikely that he will conduct two large scale operations in the Mediterranean theater simultaneously.⁶¹⁴

On 12 July, during a conference with Hitler and *Großadmiral* Dönitz discussed the possibility of another invasion assault. Hitler noted that there were reports of a transfer, several days earlier, of a large number of American troops from south of the Thames to north of the river, suggested to him that a possible surprise attack might be launched in the direction of the Pas-de-Calais, Holland-Belgium, the German Bight, or even Jutland-Skagerrak. Some of the *OKW* staff had pointed out that the move might have been made to get the units out of the line of flight of the *V-1* weapons, but the more pessimistic view was definitely fixed in the Führer's mind. Appreciating Hitler's preoccupation with that threat,

613 Blumenson, *U.S. Army in WW II – Breakout and Pursuit*, 32.

614 Ellis, *Victory in the West, I: The Battle of Normandy*, 322.

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Dönitz pointed out the necessity for continued aerial reconnaissance over the Thames River so that enemy action starting from that area could be detected.⁶¹⁵

On 13 July the possibility of an attack from the Thames River area was again discussed by Hitler and Dönitz. The *Großadmiral* pointed out the danger to the Skagerrak, stating that the enemy, experienced in amphibious attack, favored coast which were well protected from prevailing winds. The Skagerrak is a strait running between the southeast coast of Norway, the southwest coast of Sweden, and the Jutland peninsula of Denmark, connecting the North Sea and the Kattegat Sea area, which leads to the Baltic Sea. An attack in that area could be directed in part against the southern Norway coast and against Denmark. The Führer was not convinced that would be a target—too far north. Hitler told Dönitz he was still more inclined to believe a second attack would come in the Pas-de-Calais, or possibly along the Holland-Belgium coast. Hitler was still thinking in terms of a short sea crossing to a place which would put the enemy closest to the German Ruhr industrial heartland.⁶¹⁶

On 17 July *Generalfeldmarschall* Rommel fell victim to an Allied fighter-bomber attack. He had been on an inspection trip in the vicinity of Caen; when his car was returning to his headquarters at Château La Roche Guyon, it was strafed. The commander of *HGK B* was not killed, but he was severely wounded and had to be evacuated to Germany.⁶¹⁷ To prevent an SS officer from taking command of *HGK B*, *Generalfeldmarschall* von Kluge assumed the vacancy command. At the same time, he retained command of *OB WEST*. To solve the problems of managing two separate commands, von Kluge moved to Château La Roche Guyon to deal with the problems of the invasion front. He left his Chief of Staff, *Generalleutnant* Blumentritt, at Headquarters *OB WEST*, in Chateau de

615 Martienssen, *Hitler and His Admirals*, 207.

616 Ibid.

617 Gorlitz, *The German General Staff*, 461; Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, 446-47.

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Saint-Germain-en-Laye, a western suburb of Paris, to deal with all other matter related to the Western Front.⁶¹⁸

On 20 July 1944 a group of German officers made an attempt to kill Hitler. The plot failed. Hitler was injured, but he survived. The incident marked a change in the Führer's attitude about the action in France. Thereafter his attention was more focused on the situation on the Russian Front. At the same time German spies were beginning to report with greater frequency that the invasion in the Normandy area was to be the only amphibious landing conducted by the Allies in the Channel sector. SHAEF would continue to implement Operation FORTITUDE until 2 August, but the impact of further deception activity was minimal at best.⁶¹⁹

On 25 July the Allied armies broke the weakened German defensive line that had been holding them in a slowly expanding lodgement area. After that day a new phase of the battle in Europe—the pursuit to the Rhine—continued to weaken the German forces. The period from D-Day to the decisive breakout was a definite phase of the Allied operations in Europe and has been named the “Battle of the Beachhead.”⁶²⁰

In a broader sense, the fifty days of fighting in Normandy and the Contentin Peninsula between D-Day and the breakout at St Lô was only the culmination of an intelligence, planning, and logistics operation that had been in the making since 1940. Much of the success in the final days of ground combat can be traced to right and wrong decisions made long before a single Allied soldier set foot on the soil of France. The accomplishment of the Allied ground forces that are now recorded in the pages of military history might not have met with the Free World's acclaim without the less publicized and long kept secret intelligence and deceptions of the Allied armies. And, if the Germans had not erred in their pre- and post-invasion estimates of the Allied intentions and

618 Speidel, *We Defended Normandy*, 120.

619 Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, 616 and 631.

620 Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 271.

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capabilities, a different story might have been written about the Allied invasion on Tuesday, 6 June 1944. The Germans came very close to anticipating the Allied intentions about the place, the time, and the nature of the Normandy landings. The Germans came close, but even with all of their tenacious defensive action, they did not come close enough to change the course of history in their favor.

With the foregoing pages of history in mind, the next chapters will look at the lessons that can be teased out of these facts in terms of what factors most heavily weight on the analysis of events by intelligence officers and the people who rely on their intelligence estimates. The key question going forwards is this: ***can the truth about what will happen in the future ever be timely told?***

XIX. REVIEW OF GERMAN COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND ESTIMATES CAPABILITY

Broadly speaking, the Germans defending Western Europe needed answers to four basic intelligence questions. Proper defensive preparations required knowledge of:

Whether the enemy would invade in one place, or in several;

Where the enemy would make the attack or attacks;

When the enemy would make the attack or attacks; and

What would be the size of the enemy attack or attacks?

As has been shown, the Germans failed to answer properly any of the basic questions. While the interface of the collection and analysis functions within the German intelligence failed, the failure was not entirely for want of an information collection capability, or for the lack of relevant indicators, or for the want of an analysis capability.

The Germans understood the value of intelligence. They had a broad and very sophisticated information collection capability. Some of the German collection systems performed better than others, but each did provide an input that significantly contributed to the development of pre- and post-invasion intelligence estimates. The manner in which those contributions were made has been pointed out through this study. Accordingly, the individual instances of significant input will not be repeated. However, the various collection systems are outlined below,

The German had numerous overt sources and methods of collection. The Allied news and propaganda broadcasts were monitored on a regular basis and the content of the programs were gathered and digested. The Germans also made an effort to collect, read, and digest articles from Allied newspapers and magazines. Information gathered from chatter at embassies around the world

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was also examined. The open source intelligence collection efforts were supported by *Luftwaffe* aerial reconnaissance (by eyeballs and photography), the *Kriegsmarine* sea and channel patrols, and *Heeresmacht* foot patrols along the Channel coast beaches. The *Kriegsmarine* and *Luftwaffe* radar installations monitored enemy naval and air activity. The German naval and air metrological services provided weather data. The *OKM* Hydrographic Survey Office provided data to assist local commander to determine the suitability of beaches for enemy landing operations. The military radio direction location units determined where enemy radio transmitter were located and determined how they were networked with other locations. In conjunction with all this open source collection activity, the various German command centers plotted enemy activity on map overlays to determine patterns of interrelationships.

Additional information was supplied by German secret sources and methods. Prisoners of war and captured members of the National Resistance groups supplied information during interrogations. The *RSHA*, *Abwehr*, and *Auswärtige Amt* all conducted foreign espionage operations. In addition, the *RSHA*, while performing its counterintelligence mission, maintained contact with informants within the National Resistance groups. The Germans maintained discreet contact with diplomats of neutral nations that were accredited to the United Kingdom and the United States. They also maintained contact with Spanish and Portuguese officers that were on good terms with Allied officer representatives in their countries. As noted the Germans were also adept at the science of radio and cryptographic intelligence that provided valuable data concerning troop dispositions in England and the intentions of high ranking Allied leaders.

The German open and secret sources provided large volumes of military intelligence information in unanalyzed form. Evidence of this is found in the *KTB* of the *OKM/OA-AI*, and elsewhere in *Wehrmacht KTBs* that point to the fact that raw intelligence reports were widely disseminated both in Germany and to the commands in France. There is some indication that the *RSHA* did withhold certain information from the *Abwehr*, but that was not the general practice,

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especially with regard to information that purported to reveal the enemy military activity or intent in local battle areas.

What is certain is that the Germans did not have any one agency or command that was designated as a center for the integration, analysis, and dissemination of all military intelligence. While the Germans took certain steps to bring collection activity under the control of one agency—as where *Abwehr* was subordinated to *RSHA*—there was no attempt to centralize the analysis side of intelligence activity. The result was a completely decentralized analysis process. There were no fewer than fifteen major headquarters and agencies performing analysis functions and preparing estimates concerning the expected enemy invasion plans for Western Europe. At every one of these many locations, the personal bias and assumptions of the commanding officers has been shown to have weighed heavily on the estimates. Even after the invasion occurred, the Germans made no attempt to consolidate the analysis function.

An elaboration of the various commands and agencies that were involved in the pre-and post-invasion analysis will show their interrelationships and make it easier to understand the influence of one commander, or analysis center on the other in the development of a long string of conflicting estimates.

The highest level German analysis center was a Hitler's Headquarters—wherever it was that he was at any moment—and the Führer was the chief analyst. The fact that he was also the Commander-in-Chief of the *Wehrmacht*, the leader of the Nazi Party, and the head of the German civil government lent undeniable “credibility” to his interpretation of information given to him and pontificated upon by him in his trinitarian persona.

Outside the *Wehrmacht*, reporting directly to Hitler, and conducting their own independent analysis were *Auswärtige Amt* (the German Foreign Ministry) and *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, or *RSHA* (the German Central Security Office). Both agencies disseminated copies of their reports to the major General Staffs of the *Wehrmacht*.

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In Germany there were four military staffs performing analysis functions. Each had direct access to Hitler and could influence or be influenced by the Führer. The four staffs were:

Oberkommando der Wehrmacht/Wehrmacht Führungsstab, or OKW/WFSt
(the Armed Forces High Command Operations Division);

Oberkommando des Heeres/Fremde Heeres West, OKH/FHW (the Army
General Staff;

Oberkommando der Luftwaffe, or OKL (the Air Forces General Staff; and

Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine, or OKM (the Naval General Staff.

In addition to maintaining contact with Hitler's Headquarters, the *RSHA* and *Auswärtige Amt*, these four military staffs disseminated information and estimates laterally among themselves, and they maintained contact with the subordinate service elements on the Western Front.

Each of the three arm of the *Wehrmacht* maintained a separate overall-command headquarters for the Western Front. The senior army (*Heeres*) headquarters was *Oberbefehlshaber, West* (OB WEST). The naval command was *Marinegruppenkommando, West* (MGK WEST). The *Luftwaffe* senior headquarters was *Luftflottenkommando III* (LFK III). Like their senior headquarters in Germany, the three senior commands in the West conducted their own analyses and prepared intelligence estimates. They maintained contact with each other for lateral dissemination of intelligence information, and they each dealt with their subordinate elements.

In specific regard to the threat of attack in Northern France, there were several army command that played important roles in the preparation of the pre- and post-invasion estimates. Directly subordinate to Gerd von Rundstedt's *OB WEST* were Erwin Rommel's *Heeresgruppenkommando B* (HGK B), and Leo Freiherr Geyr von Schweppenburg's *Panzergruppe West* (PzG WEST). Subordinate to *HGK B* and in command of the corps defending the Channel and Atlantic coast from Oostende to Brest were *Armeeoberkommandos* (AOKs) 7

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and 15. Erwin Rommel, a *Generalfeldmarschall* who, by reason of his own *Gummibefehl*, had a direct access to Hitler even while being formally subordinate to *OB WEST*. This unique direct access channel allowed for yet another means of cross-fertilization of ideas in regard to the invasion threat.

Until the spring of 1944 the *Abwehr* also performed an analysis function. Up to then the *Abwehr* had access to Hitler through the *OKW*. Until it was disbanded, the *Abwehr* disseminated its reports to the major commands in Germany and France.

After 6 June 1944—D-Day—the surviving fourteen major analysis centers noted above were influenced by reports and estimates received from the locally engaged commands, particularly *Armeekorps 84 (AK 84)*, *Admiral Kanalküste*, and *Seekommandanten der Normandie (SK, Normandie)*.

Despite the fact that the Germans had a broad collection capability and a diverse analysis system which had access to all the most significant information being collected, the Germans were never able to learn the key elements of the OVERLORD/NEPTUNE Plan. Neither were they able to deduce the correct time and place of the Normandy landings, or to recognize that the landings there was the one and only *main assault*—the *Schwerpunkt* as they called it. At various times between 1940 and the invasion the Germans saw indications of danger in Italy, Southern France, in Northeast Spain, Northwest Portugal, along the Bay of Biscay coast, in Northern Brittany, on three sides of the Contentin Peninsula, in Normandy (the Calvados), in the Pas-de-Calais, in Belgium, in Holland, and in Norway. They saw danger everywhere.

The fifteen major German command and agency analysis centers had at their disposal between 1941 and July 1944, an impressive volume of information relating to the Western Front threat. From that body of information, the analysis centers put together numerous pre- and post-invasion threat estimates. A brief review of how the Germans answered the four basic questions that faced them in their desire to defend Western Europe will aid in the development of an understanding of the roots of their inability to anticipate correctly the Allied plan.

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The pre- and post-invasion estimates formulated by the fifteen German analysis center must not be thought of as a single evolving document which was prepared and coordinated on some particular date. On the contrary, each was a separate “living estimate” that grew and developed over a very long period of time. In December 1941 Hitler announced his determination to make Europe an “*Uneinnehmbare Festung*”—an impregnable fortress. To turn the Führers desire into a strategic plan required specific intelligence concerning the threat that first England, and beginning in January 1942, England and the United States, posed to Western Europe. Therefore, it is fair to say that the roots of all the many different estimates were planted in late 1941. It is also fair to note that the Germans, at that time, had to begin by anticipating what the enemy had not even begun to plan.

By early June 1944 the Germans, in their collective wisdom, had decided that the Allied plan of invasion called for several seaborne attacks each with a different weight and purpose. They also anticipated that large parachute troop formations also would be used by the enemy. Hitler was firmly convinced that the enemy would stage at least one, and possibly two, minor attacks or diversions in addition to conducting what was called the *Schwehrpunkt*—the “Main Emphasis” seaborne assault. Hitler believed that the first enemy diversion would come in the Normandy sector. That sector included the Calvados Coast, a 100 kilometers of beach stretching eastward from Honfleur in the east to Isigny-sur Mer in the west. Normandy also included the adjacent entire east, north, and south coast of the Contentin Peninsula to St. Malo, another 250 kilometers of coast. Hitler was also of the opinion that second diversion would come in Brittany, along the between St. Malo and Brest. In his mind these two diversions would threaten the two ports of Cherbourg and Brest, and have as their objective the drawing of German units out of the Pas-de-Calais sector. It was there, just across the Channel opposite Dover that Hitler was convinced that the enemy *Schwehrpunkt* would come.

The first attack was expected on 18 May 1944. When one did not come, estimates varied as to when the next most probably time would be. At the beginning of June there were indications that it would come before mid-June.

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Bad weather conditions developing in the Channel and over France made it appear that a mid-June date was a possibility. Then, on the evening of 5 June, additional indicators pointed to an attack before 8 June. However, only the coastal defense divisions in the Pas-de-Calais sector were put on full alert.

The very bad weather on 5 June made it seem that an invasion was improbable, and both *HGK B* and *OB WEST* believed that the landing would be in either mid-June (*OB WEST*'s view) or mid-July (*HGK B*'s view).

Estimates of the size of the enemy forces in England and the number of divisions that would participate in the initial seaborne attacks varied. *HGK B* believed that the Allies had sixty-five combat ready divisions in England. *OKM* estimated that the enemy was capable of simultaneous landings—diversions and main attack—on a twenty-five division front. The *OKW* accepted a capability to land on a fifteen to twenty division front.

The operating assumption, based on the past practice of Allied landing was that the assault landings would come around a full moon, where dawn coincided with high tide on the beaches. The full moon would favor a night parachute drop—probably inland on the flanks of the beachheads. Unloading the first wave of troop at the high water line would mean they would have only a short distance to cross to get to the rising ground at the back of the beach.

When the invasion did come at Normandy, the weather was not good, and the landing took place when the full moon coincided with dawn at a low but rising tide. That made no sense to the Germans. Moreover, there was confusion about the nature of the attack. Was it a raid, like at Dieppe in August 1942, or merely a diversion, or the main effort. By noon on 6 June Hitler was convinced that the Normandy action was the diversion that he had predicted. He immediately warned of a second diversion in Brittany followed by the *Schwehrpunkt* in the Pas-de-Calais. Although the front-line commanders in France soon became convinced that the invasion they faced was the main Allied effort, Hitler would not accept that view. As late as 8 July Hitler was warning of the dangers of a seaborne assault in Brittany and of the imminent danger of a large seaborne

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assault in the Pas-de-Calais north of the Seine River. The fear of a second, and bigger attack in the Pas-de-Calais caused Hitler to hold back numerous divisions that might have played a decisive part in the “Battle for the Beachhead”, if only they had been immediately committed to the counterattack battle that Rommel believed was the key to destroying an invasion lodgement. In hindsight some would have the world believe that the success of the June 6 landing was a foregone conclusion: wiser minds knew that the success of the invasion was a near run thing.

XX. ROOTS OF THE GERMAN INTELLIGENCE FAILURE RE UNDERSTANDING D-DAY

In the context of the times, and from the German perspective, there was no irrationality in the developing process that produced the German pre- and post-invasion estimates. But, if they were not the product of irrational or illogical thinking, why then did the Germans reach the incorrect conclusions. Were there dark forces at work, or did the fog of war cloud mens' minds?

First, it must be accepted as axiomatic that it is always much easier to sort out the relevant and irrelevant indicators surrounding an important event after it has happened. A hasty review of some of the popular, or even some of the *official* histories of the Normandy invasion may lead to the false conclusion that the relevant indicators surrounding that event were plainly obvious, and virtually impossible to miss. Acceptance of that simplistic view ignores the fact that the Allied invasion planners went to great length to camouflage their true intentions. Therefore, it is fair to say that before the Normandy invasion, and for some weeks afterward, the indicators that might have pointed to a *Schwerpunkt*—a main blow—in Normandy in the first week of June 1944 were obscure and possibly contradictory. It is also fair to assume that the Germans did not detect every indicator with might have assisted them in their analysis, or give proper weight to those indicators they did collect and evaluate.

One should also assume that those relevant indicators which the Germans did pick up entered their analysis system embedded in what Roberta Wohlstetter, in her *Pearl Harbor – Warning and Decision*, called “an atmosphere of ‘noise,’” *i.e.*, in the company of all sorts of information that is useless and irrelevant for foretelling the particular disaster.” So it was that the Normandy indicators were competing for recognitions with a vast number of indicators, some true, and some false, pointing to grave dangers elsewhere in Western Europe. When only the indicators concerning activity of the Channel coast were considered, all the

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relevant indicators were interspersed among a multitude of false indicators being generated by the Allies as part of the FORTITUDE deception operations.

Then there is the fact that in any intelligence system irrelevant indicators arise through the incomplete reports of poorly trained agents, gaps in aerial photo coverage of ports and staging areas, and for a thousand accidental reasons. To further complicate matters, all of the relevant, irrelevant, and false information arrived at analysis centers where they were interpreted by men who had very strong preconceptions about the significance to be accorded certain types of information. If all of this is assumed to have been the case in France and German in 1944, then the obvious conclusion is that intelligence analysis is not a simple task.

There have been several histories written about the Normandy invasion that disregard the impact of what has been said above. They point to certain specific indicators, the Paul Verlaine poem being the most popular choice, and characterize them as being so absolutely unequivocal that they should have overridden the assumed level of wartime confusion in the analysis. But on close analysis each of the so-called obvious warnings becomes, in the context of early 1944, not only ambiguous but occasionally inconsistent with other unequivocal information. Consider, if you will, the impact that the inclement weather had on all such unequivocal warnings of an impending attack.

Much of the incompetence or wanton neglect that has been imputed to the Germans and their intelligence services has resulted from suppression or ignorance of the many indicators that logically pointed to dangers in every quarter except Normandy as the place for the Allied main-blow *Schwerpunkt*. Even today, *in June 1969*,⁶²¹ it is not possible to understand the true magnitude of the German problem because of the loss of key documents during the war and

621 The month in which this thesis paper was submitted to the faculty of the Defense Intelligence School (now the Defense Intelligence College) where this author was a student at that time.

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because the whole story of the FORTITUDE deception has not yet ever been declassified and made public.⁶²²

To attempt to explain the German failure by merely saying that it was hard to know what was truly relevant before the invasion, or immediately after the initial landings, would not really explain why they failed. It must be understood that there are certain circumstances that arise in the context of preparing military estimates which tend to form blocks to proper perception, and by doing so can make an already difficult task virtually impossible. If the roots of the blocks to the German perception capability can be isolated, it then will be possible to understand fully why the Germans failed properly to anticipate the Allied intentions. The roots isolated in this study are eleven in number and are expressed in terms of factors—***perception blocking factors***.

One of the most basic roots of the German inability to perceive the relevant indicators is ***The Human Factor***. If men are to perform the task, then it must be accepted as inevitable that men will make all the mistakes they are so oft liable to fall victim to. The propensity to err may be reduced by training and experience, but that process may also produce undesirable side effects.

Canaris, the *Abwehr* chief, was a trained intelligence officer, yet he committed treason, and for a while contaminated part of the analysis system. Rommel, on the other hand, while sympathetic with the conspiracy to get rid of Hitler, was at the same time fiercely loyal to Germany. However, even Rommel, though not an intelligence officer, was not without fault in the German intelligence failure. Because his training and experience were those of an operations officer, his analysis was in terms of that training and experience. The same was true of the other key officers that served in the dual role of commander and analyst.

A man's background gives him certain preferences and prejudices, and these have an effect on that individual's capabilities as an analyst. This makes

622 Roger Hesketh's *FORTITUDE: The D-Day Deception Campaign*, was finally published in 2000, but was known to this author in its original form in 1987.

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the human factor important. *Admiral* Krancke, a naval officer, viewed the German batteries on the Channel coast as formidable invasion obstacles. Because of his belief, he concluded that the Allies would not invade until the coastal batteries were destroyed. Von Rundstedt had seen the Allied deceptions of September 1943; remembrance of them in June 1944, made his discount certain key preinvasion indicators. Rommel's ideas about how he would conduct the land battle in France strongly influenced his views about where the enemy would attack the coast. When the diverse types of individual preferences and prejudices are multiplied by the number of key decision makers involved in the German intelligence system, the sum total of the human factor's importance become apparent.

If all of the Germans who played a part in the development of the pre- and post-invasion estimates had been trained intelligence officers, then better estimates *might* have been produced. But they also might have produced a *worse set* of estimates. They could easily have been traitors like Canaris. And even if they were not, it must be remembered that even highly trained intelligence offices have their own personal preferences and prejudices. What I believe this study has shown is that notwithstanding their preferences and prejudices, the German analysts and decision makers did what they could to make sense of the intelligence information they had. Therefore, the facts that the Germans erred in the preparation of their estimates cannot be persuasively explained by accusing the officers (with the exception of Canaris), individually, or as a group, or conspiracy, neglect, or stupidity. Their lack of intelligence training may have derogated their intelligence analysis acumen, but it was not the whole cause of their failures. Consequently, there must be other factors which also influenced the Germans ability to perceive the relevant indicators surrounding the Normandy invasion on D-Day.

One of the major causes of the German inability to perceive the relevant time, place and strength clues related to the anticipated invasion of France was ***The Time Factor***. If the operational plans for a future event have not already been formulated, then it follows that the indicators that might flow from an event

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do not exist and cannot be perceived. This study shows that the Germans search for relevant indicators preceded by as much as eighteen months the Allied decisions that shaped the final course of their invasion planning and preparation. In fact, the German concern about an enemy invasion in Western Europe began in 1941 when Hitler announced the “*Festung Europa*” doctrine. In order to prepare the massive defensive structure that Hitler’s doctrine envisaged, the Germans could not afford to wait until their enemy had finalized an invasion plan. This problem was called by Dönitz “*Die Verteidigung Dilemma*”—the “Defender’s Dilemma.” In order to know where to build strong defenses, the Germans had to know the unknowable. If the Germans waited until the Allies made their invasion plans it probably would be too late to prepare the defenses. And, to make matters worse, if the Germans began to prepare their defenses, then the enemy probably would make or readjust his plans to avoid the most fortified areas. In the event, the latter is exactly what happened.

In their attempt to know the unknowable, the Germans recognized that their estimates would be anticipating the actual Allied decision making process. To overcome that problem, the Germans cast themselves in the role of the invasion planner and attempted to see the Western Europe as the enemy might. They set about logically to develop the plan of attack that they believed the enemy probably would develop. The problem was a straightforward one: how best to move an army from England to Northwest Europe. After the advantages and disadvantages of many coastal areas were catalogued and analyzed, the German decided that the best sector to invade was the Pas-de-Calais. This sector offered numerous strategic advantages, and interestingly enough, the Allied plans up to mid-1943 all focused on that sector. After the Germans had logically concluded that the enemy’s Schwerpunkt—their main blow—would come in the Pas-de-Calais, they began to prepare the defenses accordingly.

It was at this point that the **Persuasiveness of Current Expectations Factor** began to interfere with the German perception capability. Because the Germans had concluded that the enemy was going to land in the Pas-de-Calais, there was a natural tendency on their part to ignore or misinterpret the indicators

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relating to other sectors. Once the new-poured concrete began to harden at the fortified sites in the Pas-de-Calais, the idea that the invasion would come there, was, so-to-speak, set in stone.

In their attempt to cast themselves in the role of their adversary, first England, and then England and the United States, the Germans had to make certain assumptions about the nature of an enemy amphibious operation. In the absence of any reliable intelligence in the period before mid-1943 about their enemy's amphibious doctrine, techniques, and capabilities, the Germans made the simplest possible assumptions. They assumed that the enemy would solve all the problems inherent in an amphibious assault in the same way that they had. Now the only German experience in such matters was their never executed Operation *SEELÖWE*. Prior to the British raid at Dieppe, in August 1942, there was some similarity in the English and German amphibious assault theories. Subsequent to that raid, however the Allied concepts became much more sophisticated. The Dieppe raid, and the North Africa TORCH landings (in November 1942), pointed out a number of problems in the existing theories. Those weaknesses were corrected by the Allied planners. The German, having never staged a large amphibious assault, continued to have a primitive understanding of the Channel invasion difficulty.

The Imputed Universality of Options Factor also interfered with a proper development of the German estimates. The Germans computed the Allied sealift capacity on the basis of their own *SEELÖWE* estimates. As a result, the OKM overestimated the Allied capability by twenty divisions. They assumed that the Allied plan, like *SEELÖWE* would involve one or more diversions before or in conjunction with the *Schwerpunkt*. They assumed that the landing would have to land at high tide to unload his vessels. They assumed that the landing would be made at a time when the sea was calm. They assumed that the enemy would want good flying weather so its fighter aircraft could protect the ships and troops on the beaches. They assumed that the Allies would want a full moon and clear skies at night to enable the use of parachutists and gliders. Most of the major assumptions proved wrong and to the extent that some were correct they did not

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mesh in terms of timing. The Germans failed to give the Allies credit for finding solutions to problems the Germans thought were insurmountable. Not the least of these was the assumed need of the Allies to capture a big port within a few days of the initial landings. The Germans did not credit the Allies with knowing the Germans would plan to blow up port facilities before they could be captured.

It is not an uncommon phenomenon in intelligence work to have many bits and pieces of information which are subject to several equally plausible interpretations, and which may support several different theories. Not all information is necessarily mutually exclusive. **The Several Plausible Interpretations Factor** facilitated great confusion in the German estimates. The Germans overestimated the size of the Allied forces available for Cross-Channel deployment. They also had overestimated the Allied sealift capability. To make matters still worse, the Germans assumed that the Allies would stage several multi-division diversions in addition to launching the main blow in the Pas-de-Calais. Because of that the Germans easily could accept reports of attacks at many far distant points as indicative of diversionary targets. If the Germans had only known how critical was the supply of larger landing craft, they could have developed mutually exclusive criteria for analysis. They could have simply counted the number of divisions in the Normandy assault and know immediately that another major landing was not immediately possible. But even a good count would have proved useless because the Germans were sure that enemy had the ability to land at least ten more assault divisions after D-Day. If the Germans had known that the Allies had only so many assault divisions available, they could have known by late June that the deployable divisions were nearly all committed. As it happened, even in late June, they could still accept as possible almost any piece of information they obtained.

It might be assumed that in the absence of any indicators pointing to a landing in the Pas-de-Calais the German would have eventually abandoned the theory that a landing would be made there. If the Germans had been able to obtain a copy of the Allied plans, they might have pre-empted a landing in

Normandy. **The Security, Cover, and Deception Factor** prevented both of those eventualities from occurring.

As of the date of this study—6 June 1969—the whole story of Operation FORTITUDE has never been told, and may never be.⁶²³ However, the decisive value of the operation was summarized by Twelfth Army Group in a letter sent to SHAEF on 20 November 1944. The report read in part:

Operation FORTITUDE, which had as its mission support of Operation OVERLORD, was responsible for containing a minimum of twenty [enemy] divisions in the Pas-de-Calais area during the crucial first months of the invasion. The enemy was lead to believe—and reacted to—a long inventory of opportune untruths, the largest, most effective and decisive of which was that OVERLORD itself was only the prelude to a major invasion in the Pas-de-Calais area. The enemy's acceptance of this story is witnessed ... by his estimate on 15 May 1944 of troops in the United Kingdom.... The force which was shown as threatening the Pas-de-Calais was the exclusive creation of the deception FORTITUDE. Best testimony to the effectiveness is the historical record of the enemy's committing his forces piecemeal—paralyzed into indecision in Normandy by the conviction that he had more to fear from Calais....⁶²⁴

One of the major problems associated with the implementation of an elaborate cover and deception plan is the possibility that, under the scrutiny of the enemy, it may be discovered to be a hoax. Working in the Allied planners' favor in 1944 was **The Distraction Factor**. The indicators that might falsify the deception and cover plan tend to get just as imbedded in the piles of other irrelevant indicators as did the real indicators. There they competed for attention with the distraction arising from fears about the dangers of landings along the Mediterranean coast of France, along the Biscay coast, in Spain, Portugal, Belgium, and Holland. There were even worries about landing in Norway and in Denmark. Worries about the course of events in Italy, the

623 Roger Hesketh's *FORTITUDE: The D-Day Deception Campaign*, was finally published in 2000, but was known to this author in its original form in 1987.

624 Letter, Twelfth Army Group to SHAEF, subject: FORTITUDE, dated, 20 November 1944.

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Balkans, and Russia also distracted some of the men responsible for preparing the estimates concerning Northern France. The various German commanders were also distracted by the more immediate command functions that each had to perform in his sector of responsibility.

Also working in favor of the Allied planners was what may be called **The Distraction of Hope Factor**. The Germans were extremely concerned about the consequences of the anticipated Russian Offensive. They hoped that the enemy main blow would be in the Pas-de-Calais where they believed they were best prepared to destroy the Allies' *Schwerpunkt*. They hoped that the forces outside the Pas-de-Calais would be adequate to deal with any diversionary lodgement. They hoped that a quick annihilation of all the Allied forces would free German divisions for service on the Eastern Front. The Germans believed that a transfer of some fifty divisions to the Russian Front could lead to the total destruction of Stalin's army. Holding such beliefs, and the hope they held for the salvation of Germany, made it difficult for the Germans to give credence to any theory that did not predict the *Schwehrpunkt* somewhere in the Pas-de-Calais sector.

Also ever-present was **The Fear of Unpleasant Conclusions Factor**. By the spring of 1944 the Germans were overextended on every active front. They were without a strategic reserve. Reaction to threats on every quarter had thinned the defensive line in France to the point where it was strong only in the Pas-de-Calais. The other sectors could deal with raids and small diversions, but none could deal with the Allied forces main blow. That over commitment of forces and the resultant overall weakened defensive capability lead to a special kind of fear. If the Germans accepted as possible any new theory that predicted a large Allied diversion or *Schwerpunkt* outside the Pas-de-Calais, then that danger would have to be addressed. But, because there was no strategic reserve available, such a reinforcement could only be at the expense of weakening another sector. To accept the fact that the existing deployments could not cope with a new contingency would have been to accept a very, very unpleasant conclusion. Consequently, no such conclusions were accepted. The Germans initially opted to guard against every possible threat, and having reached the limit

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of their capability, opted to accept as real only those threat they believed they could cope with in terms of the existing force structure and deployments.

One of the major deterrents to a correct German analysis of the situation existed in the form of **The Intelligence Gap Factor**. The Germans failed to collect much of the information that might have proved to be a relevant indication of the grave danger in Normandy. Worse than their failure to collect the critical information was their ignorance of the fact that major gaps existed in their own collection. There were several reasons for that ignorance. First, large volumes of false information were being fed into the system by double agents working as part of Operation FORTITUDE. The very volume of this information made it seem as if the collection activity was producing well enough. Second, the Germans were looking for information to confirm their theories, and not looking for evidence of new worrisome threats. Third, the information that was being collected, considered reliable, confirmed what they already believed was true. It was only with regard to *Luftwaffe* aerial reconnaissance that criticism over adequacy of collection was continually raised.

The Dulled Sense of Danger Factor is yet another reason why the Germans were unable to perceive the relevant indicators pointing to the great danger facing them in the Normandy and Contentin sectors. That phenomenon is common in any combat situation. No army can maintain a state of maximum alert for an extended period of time. Consequently, armies have multiple alert levels. For the *Wehrmacht*, *ALARM II* was the highest alert status. Between the beginning of April 1944 and the invasion on 6 June, there were no less than ten maximum alerts along the *Kanalküste*, and that number does not count local practice alerts drills. As a result, the divisional commanders became less sensitive to each new alert. They also paid less attention to new intelligence. They stopped trying to figure out what might make their area of operation most tempting to an enemy incursion. That insensitivity was reinforced by the bad weather conditions along the Channel coast in early June. Then when the invasion did come in Normandy, it was immediately labeled as a diversion because a diversion in that area was what Hitler had predicted earlier in the year.

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The Normandy defenders soon realized that the attack at five beachheads was no diversion, but Hitler would not believe that the *Schwerpunkt* would come outside the Pas-de-Calais. Since 1943 the Führer had believed that the enemy main blow would come in the Pas-de-Calais, and numerous, carefully timed, false messages from FORTITUDE agents reinforced that belief, and Hitler's old and established certainty was not so easily changed.

The final factor that interfered with the German analysis capability was **The Bureaucratic Organization Factor**. Until early in 1944, the two major overseas intelligence collectors, *RSHA* and the *Abwehr*, were locked in an untimely fratricidal competition. The conflict led to the eventual takeover of the *Abwehr* by the *RSHA*. However, the absorption process brought with it all of the problems that usually occur during any major bureaucratic reorganization. At a time when a smooth and efficient collection effort was needed, the confusion of reorganizing hindered such action.

The *Abwehr-RSHA* conflict was not the only major bureaucratic organization problem. Under the German's decentralized analysis procedure there could be, and usually were, as many as fourteen different estimates in being at any one time regarding the situation regarding France. The same raw information was being viewed by each according to its own parochial interests. More often than not, the resultant estimated reflected the specific reactions of the individual commanders to the raw information as it tended better to support their personal theories. Hitler, von Rundstedt, and Rommel all believed that the enemy *Schwerpunkt* would come along the 205-miles of beachfront in the Pas-de-Calais sector, but the three of them never agreed where within that sector it would come. No one agency was ever responsible for preparing a final agreed and coordinated estimate of the Allied invasion intentions. Hitler's Headquarters came closest to assuming that function. In his numbered and special directives Hitler would list the threat to which the order was directed. Unfortunately for the Germans, such directives were issued only on an *ad hoc* basis. Even then, they reflected only what Hitler thought at the moment, and were never the result of a studied analysis of all available information. In a way the coordination was being

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done in London: there the FORTITUDE people, knowing what Hitler wanted to believe, made sure he never had reason to doubt that what he thought was true.

Because of the eleven factors noted above, their interaction, and their reinforcing effect, the German ability to perceive and properly to analyze the relevant Normandy invasion indicators was dulled. Rendered inefficient, the analysis pre-and post-invasion estimates which—while seeming rational and logical in their development—were wrong. As a result, the Germans suffered from a tactical surprise on 6 June 1944, and thereafter were the victims of strategic surprise—unable to appreciate the nature of the Normandy landings until it was too late to prevent the establishment of a secure lodgment from which a breakout would come. The surprise and resultant confusion of the battles caused them to make very serious mistakes in their counter invasion actions. In the end they were unable to destroy the Allied beachhead. There was nothing extraordinary in that failure. It all came to pass through a series of complicated but extremely ordinary mistakes.⁶²⁵

625 If one has to guess, which this author did not do in explicit terms when this paper was written in mid-1969, it probably would be safe to predict that in war, or at the start of a war, “surprise” in some greater or lesser degree is inevitable. That subject, with a greater exploration of the many “roots of failure” in the analysis process was addressed by this author in 1987. See “The German Misapprehensions Regarding Overlord: Understanding Failure in the Estimative Process,” by: T. L. Cabbage II Major, MI, USAR (ret.) A paper presented at the Intelligence and Military Operations Conference U.S. Army War College, May 1987.
URL: <http://www.tomcabbage.com/history/German-Normandy.pdf>

XXI. IMPLICATIONS OF THE GERMAN INTELLIGENCE FAILURE

Now that the reasons for the German Intelligence failure in regards to the time, place and nature of the Normandy invasion have been isolated, there remains the task of determining whether knowledge of such a failing has any relevance a quarter of a century later to intelligence officers and analysts, and to the command-level decisionmakers they serve.

The intelligence failure at Normandy and the confused estimates that continued to confound the Germans for some time thereafter are by no means unique occurrences. The German catastrophe can be matched by many other examples of nations and armies failing to perceive properly a strategic or tactical military threat. The German attacks on Poland, France, and Russia, and the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor and Singapore were all preceded by indicators that were not recognized as signs of an imminent attack. The Allied landings in North Africa, Sicily and Italy add to the list of examples from World War II. More recently the twin surprises of Korea—the North Korean invasion of the South, and the Communist Chinese intervention—both startled the world. The United States and South Vietnamese forces were not expecting the massive Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army offensive at Têt at the end of January 1968. Few individual predicted that the Soviet Union would invade Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Surely all of these instances must indicate that surprises similar to the one that occurred at Normandy on 6 June 1944 are neither unique phenomena nor related solely to World War II.

The failure of the Germans at Normandy, and the other similar failures underscore, the danger that a nation at war, on the brink of war, or existing in a cold war situation cannot count on strategic warning and may not even receive a tactical warning in time to react properly to a threat. In order to increase the likelihood that a nation, or its armed forces, will receive an adequate and timely warning, *an increased attention must be paid to the reasons for past failures.* If

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the factors that caused other analysts to go astray are known and understood, then, hopefully, those individuals charged with the responsibility of preparing future estimates may be able to take the steps to avoid the possible pitfalls.

The Germans failed to perceive properly the true nature of the Allied threat because of a combination of one or more of eleven factors which formed blocks to proper perception. The eleven factors are not necessarily so rare as to be possible blocks to perception only in the Normandy context. The eleven factors are all interrelated and their interrelationships reinforce the perception inhibiting process. Stated in their simplest form the eleven factors are:

1. The human factor;
2. The time factor;
3. The persuasiveness of current expectations factor;
4. The imputed universality of options factor;
5. The several plausible interpretations factor;
6. The security, cover, and deception factor;
7. The distraction factor;
8. The fear of unpleasant conclusions factor;
9. The intelligence gap factor;
10. The dulled sense of danger factor; and,
11. The bureaucratic organization factor.

Each played a part in causing the Germans to misappreciate the dangers they faced in Northern France. Each has continuing relevance in Threat Analysis.



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This is the captured war diary of AOK 7.

Armeeoberkommando 7, Kriegstagebuch, Westen – Anlagen, 6, VI.–31. VII. 1944. Referred to herein as AOK 7 Telephone Log. This is a National Archives and Record Services Document, RG 1030, Item #75106/12

This telephone log is a shorter version of the above AOK 7 war diary. It gives the exact hours when events occurred.

Kriegstagebuch: Seekriegsleitung: 1 Abteilung, Tiele A, Hefts 49-58, 1. V. 1943 – 31. VI. 1944. Referred to herein as OKM KTB. This is a Chief of Staff of Naval History Repository Document series

The Operations Division of the Naval General Staff was not overly burdened with operational matters in WW II and as a consequence kept a beautiful log which is a catchall for reports from every front and from every service. Of particular importance is their detailed listing of intelligence reports.

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Time, July 1, 1943 through July 31, 1944

Almost every edition of the weekly news magazine contained some article about the war in Europe and preparations for an invasion. It is of interest to see what information the Germans might have gleaned, and did obtain from open sources.

APPENDIX A

TABLE OF EQUIVALENT RANKS

U.S./U.K. Army	German Wehrmacht	German Waffen-SS
None	Reichsmarschall	None
General of the Army Field Marshall	Generalfeldmarschall	Reichsführer SS
General	Generaloberst	Oberstgruppenführer
Lieutenant General	General der Infanterie General der Artillerie G. der Panzertruppen General der Flieger	Obergruppenführer
Major General	Generalleutnant	Gruppenführer
Brigadier General	Generalmajor	Oberführer
Colonel	Oberst	Standartenführer
Lieutenant Colonel	Oberstleutnant	Obersturmbannführer
Major	Major	Sturmbannführer
Captain	Hauptmann	Hauptsturmführer
First Lieutenant	Oberleutnant	Obersturmführer
Second Lieutenant	Leutnant	Untersturmführer

APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY OF GERMAN INDIVIDUALS APPEARING IN THIS PAPER

NAME	RANK:	POSITION:
Bayerlein, Fitz	General der Panzertruppen	CO, Lehr PzD
Blaskowitz, Johannes	Generaloberst	CO, HGK G
Blumentritt, Guenther	Generalleutnant	CoS, OB West
Bülowius, Alfred	General der Flieger	CO, LKK 2
Buttlar-Bradenfel, Horst Freiherr Treusch von	Generalmajor	CoS OKW/WFSt
Canaris, Wilhelm	Admiral	CO, Abwehr
Choltitz, Dietrich	Generalleutnant	CO, AK 84, Governor of Paris
Dönitz, Karl	Großadmiral	CO, OKM
Dollmann, Friedrich	Generaloberst	CO, AOK 7
Dietrich, Josef "Sepp"	Oberstgruppenführer	CO, PzAK I
Fahrmbacher, Wilhelm	General der Artillerie	CO, PzD 21
Falley, Wilhelm	Generalleutnant	CO, LID 91
Feuchtinger, Edgar	Generalmajor	CO, PzD 21
Göbbels, Josef Paul	Reichminister	Propaganda
Göring, Herman	Reichsmarschall	CO, OKL
Hausser, Paul	Oberstgruppenführer	CO, AOK 7
Hellmich, Heinz	Generalleutnant	CO, ID 243

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Hennecke, Walther	Konteradmiral	CO, SK Normandy
Hilpert, Karl	Generalleutnant	CoS, OB West
Himmler, Heinrich	Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei	CO, RSHA
Hitler, Adolph	Der Führer	Supreme Leader
Hoffmann, Karl	Konteradmiral	CoS MGK West
Hofmann, Rudolf	Generalleutnant	CoS AOK 15
Jodl, Alfred	General der Artillerie	CO, OKW/WFSt
Kaltenbrunner, Ernst	Obergruppenführer	CO, RSHA/SD
Keitel, Wilhelm	Generalfeldmarschall	CO, OKW
Kesselring, Albert	Generalfeldmarschall	CO, LfK II
Kluge, Guenther von	Generalfeldmarschall	CO, OB West
Konig, Richard	Fregattenkapitan	OB West, Liaison
Krancke, Theodor	Admiral	CO, MGK West
Lang, Hellmuth	Hauptmann	Rommel's ADC
Lettau, Erich	Major	FR155, Meteorologist
Marcks Erich	General der Artillerie	CO, AK 84
Meyer, Hellmuth	Oberstleutnant	CO, AOK 15/FMDK
Moyzisch, L. C.	Obersturmbannführer	RSHA/Amt VI, Ankara
Pemsel, Max	Generalleutnant	CoS, AOK 7
Priller, Josef	Oberst	CO, JGW 26
Raeder, Erich	Großadmiral	CO, OKM
Richter, Wilhelm	Generalleutnant	CO, ID 716
Roenne, Alexis von	Oberst	CO, OKW/FHW

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Rommel, Erwin	Generalfeldmarschall	CO, HGK B
Ruge, Friederich	Vizeadmiral	HGK B, Liaison
Rundstedt, Gerd von	Generalfeldmarschall	CO, OB West
Schellenberg, Walter	Oberführer SS	CO, RSHA/Amt VI
Schlieben, Karl Wilhelm von	Generalleutnant	CO, ID 709
Schweppenburg Leo Freiherr Geyr von	General der Panzertruppen	CO, PzG West
Salmuth, Hans von	Generaloberst	CO, AOK 15
Sontag, Dr. Hans	Rank unknown	OKL, Meteorologist
Speidel, Dr. Hans	Generalleutnant	CoS, HGK B
Sperrle, Hugo	Generalfeldmarschall	CO, LfK III
Stöbe, Walter	Oberst	LfK III, Meteorologist
Stülpnagel, Carl Heinrich von	General der Infanterie	Mil. Gov. France
Warlimont, Walter	General der Artillerie	Dep. CO, OKW/WFSt
Witzleben, Erwin von	Generalfeldmarschall	CO, HGK D
Zeitler, Kurt	Generaloberst	CoS OB West
Zimmermann, Bodo	Generalleutnant	CO, OB West/Abt 1

CO = Commanding Officer

CoS = Chief of Staff

/ = Sub Staff Of

APPENDIX C

GLOSSARY

CODE NAMES AND SHORT TITLES

<i>ALARICH</i>	German plan for the occupation of northern Italy by Army Group B (Rommel) if Italy collapsed politically.
<i>ANTON</i>	German plan for occupation of southern France (areas previously unoccupied and under the jurisdiction of the Vichy government). Carried out on 10–11 November 1942.
<i>ANVIL</i>	Early codename for The 19 August 1944 invasion of Southern France; see DRAGOON.
<i>ARCADIA</i>	The first Roosevelt-Churchill was conference after the entry of the U.S. into the war. Held in Washington, December 1941–January 1942.
<i>AVALANCHE</i>	The 9 September 1943 landing at Salerno, Italy.
<i>BENEFICIARY</i>	Plan for breaking out of the Normandy lodgement by means of a combined airborne-amphibious attack at St. Malo. Considered, but not executed.
<i>BIG BOB</i>	Dummy landing craft, used for deception.
<i>BIG DRUM</i>	Allied deception operation on night of 5/6 June 1944 aimed at Cap d'Antifer, France.
<i>BIGOT</i>	Special security procedures used to guard the secrets of Operation OVERLORD.
<i>BOLERO</i>	Plan in 1942 for future offensive operations against Germany on the European mainland and for the build-up of US forces and supplies in the United Kingdom for a cross-Channel attack.
<i>BRIMSTONE</i>	Plan (canceled) for the capture of Sardinia
<i>CHATANOOGA</i> <i>CHOO-CHOO</i>	U.S Ninth Air Force operation against railway systems begun on 21 May 1944.
<i>COBRA</i>	plan for the U.S. First Army's operation designed to penetrate the German defenses west of St. Lô and secure Coutances, France.

Anticipating Overlord

COCKADE	Diversionsary operations in September 1943 in support of AVALANCHE.
CORNCOB	Blockships in the artificial harbor at Normandy.
COSSAC	Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander.
DRAGON	Final code name of plan for the invasion of southern France (15 August 1944); code name was changed from ANVIL on 27 July 1944)
DUCK	On of six pre-D-Day amphibious exercises in 1944 as part of FABIUS.
ENIGMA	German machine cipher devices and the coded messages sent by the machines.
EUREKA	The Tehran Conference, November–December 1943.
FABIUS	Overall name for six pre-D-Day amphibious exercises conducted in April-May 1944.
FIREBRAND	The invasion of Corsica in 1943.
FORTITUDE	Overall name for the deception operation in support of OVERLORD.
FORTITUDE NORTH	Deception operations aimed at Norway in support of OVERLORD.
FORTITUDE SOUTH	Deception operations aimed at Pas-de-Calais in support of OVERLORD.
FRANTIC	Shuttle-bombing by planes flying missions back and forth from bases in England, Italy and Russia.
GLIMMER	Allied deception operation on night of 5/6 June aimed at Boulogne.
GOLD	Code name for the assault beach at Normandy assigned to British 30 Corps
GOOSEBERRY	Artificial harbor devices.
GYMNAST	Plan for an Allied 1941 invasion of French northwest Africa.
HANDS UP	Plan to breakout of Normandy lodgement by means of a combined airborne-amphibious attack in the Quiberon Bay between Lorient and Nantes. It was not carried out.

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HARLEQUIN	A pre-invasion exercise held in September 1943 as a part of the COCKADE deception.
HUSKY	The plan for the invasion of Sicily in July 1943.
HERBSTREISE	<i>"Autumn Pleasure Voyage"</i> was a German deception feint designed to support SEELÖWE. The purpose was to simulate a plan to attack Northern England from Norway.
JUBILEE	The amphibious raid at Dieppe in August 1942.
JUNIPER	A British plan to invade Norway, and an alternate invasion plan in case the OVERLORD secret was compromised.
JUNO	Code name for the Normandy assault beach assigned to the Canadian 3rd Division
MAGIC	Code word security classification for signals intelligence derived from interception of Japanese encoded message traffic
MINCEMEAT	A deception cover plan to divert attention from Operation HUSKY to induce the Axis to believe that Allied objectives were Sardinia and the Peloponnesus instead of Sicily.
MULBERRIES	Artificial harbor devices.
NEPTUNE	Code name for the invasion phase of OVERLORD, used for security reasons after September 1943 on all OVERLORD planning papers that referred to the target area and date.
OCTAGON	Code name for the Quebec Conference, September 1944
OMAHA	Code name for the assault beach at Normandy assigned to U.S. Vth Corps
OVERLORD	The overall strategic plan for the invasion of Europe and for ground operations up to D plus 90 days.
PICADILLY CIRCUS	Predesignated place in the English Channel where the invasion fleet would begin its southward turn to the five invasion beaches.
PLUTO	The undersea gasoline pipeline from England to the Normandy terminus.

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POINTBLANK	The combined bomber offensive against Germany from bases in the United Kingdom.
QUADRANT	The meeting of Roosevelt and Churchill at Quebec in August 1943.
ROUNDUP	Various 1941-43 plans to conduct a snap invasion of Europe in case the German withdrew from France.
SEELÖWE	“Sea Lion” the German plan to invade England in late 1940 and early 1941 that was cancelled when the German air forces failed to gain air superiority over southern England.
SEXTANT	Code name for the Cairo Conferences on 22-26 November and on 3-7 December 1943)
SHINGLE	The 22 January 1944 amphibious operation at Anzio.
SLEDGEHAMMER	A plan for a limited objective attacks across the Channel in 1942, It became the JUBILEE raid on Dieppe.
SKYSCRAPER	Plan of 1 March 1943 to land in Europe between Caen and the Vire River.
SPARTAN	One of six pre-D-Day amphibious exercises in 1944 as part of FABIUS.
STARKEY	Presentation of a deception threat against the Pas-de-Calais in September 1943 as part of COCKADE.
SUPER GYMNAST	Plan for Anglo-American invasion of French North Africa, combining US and British plans [often used interchangeably with GYMNAST].
SWORD	Code name for the assault beach at Normandy assigned to British 3d Division
SWORDHILT	Plan for a combined airborne-amphibious attack to seize area in Brittany east of the port of Brest in August 1944. It was not executed.
SYMBOL	The Roosevelt Churchill conference in Casablanca on 14–23 January 1943.
TAXABLE	A deception on the night of 5/6 June 1944 directed at Pointe Barfleur on the northeastern tip of the Cotentin Peninsula.

Anticipating Overlord

TIGER	On of six pre-D-Day amphibious exercises in 1944 as part of FABIUS.
TINDALL	Presentation of a deception threat against Norway in September 1943 as part of COCKADE.
TORCH	The American invasion of Northwest Africa in November 1942.
TRANSFIGURE	Plan (cancelled) for airborne operations on the west side of the Seine River to block German escape routes.
TRIDENT	The Roosevelt-Churchill conference held in Washington on 22–25 May 1943.
ULTRA	Code word classification for signals intelligence derived from interception and decoding of German ENIGMA machine ciphers
UTAH	Code name for the assault beach at Normandy assigned to U.S. VII Corps
WADHAM	Presentation of a deception threat against the Pas-de-Calais in September 1943 as part of COCKADE.
WETBOB	Dummy landing craft used for deception.

APPENDIX D

GLOSSARY

GERMAN TERMS AND WORDS

Abwehr: The German Military Department of the *OKW*.

Admiral Kanalküste: The German naval command sector stretching from St. Malo eastward to the Scheldt.

Amt: Department.

Amtsgruppe Abwehr: See *Abwehr*.

Amtsgruppe Wehrmachtnachrichtenverbindungen (Amt. WNV): The German army's central radio intercept and cryptologic service, primarily concerned with foreign international radio broadcasts.

Angriffsführer England: A *Luftwaffe* command center controlling attacks against England.

Armeegruppe zur Besonderen Verwendung (ABV): Army Group for Special Employment. Rommel's reserve command until 1944.

Armeekorps (AK): Army Corps.

Armeeoberkommando (AOK): Field Army with several Army Corps under it.

Atlantikwall: Atlantic Wall; a term describing the German Channel Defenses.

Auswärtige Amt: The German Foreign Ministry.

Batterie: Battery (usually referring here to fortified heavy gun emplacement).

Beobachtung-Dienst (B-Dienst): The Navy's (*OKM*'s) radio intercept and cryptographic service

Chef: Chief, as in Commanding Officer.

Decknamen: Code word; cover name.

Deutschen Reichspost Forschungsanstalt (DRF or DRFA): The Research institute of the German Postal Service. It monitored international radio cable and radiotelephone calls.

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Die Verteidigung Dilemma: the Defender's Dilemma.

Fanatismus: Fantastic energy.

Fermeldeaufklärung (FMDK): The part of the German Army's signal service for communications intercept intelligence and signal security.

Festung Europa: Fortress Europe.

Flufabwehrkanone (FLAK): anti-aircraft artillery, such as the German 88mm.

Forschungsanstalt der Deutschen Reichspost (FAdDR): The Research institute of the German Postal Service. It monitored international radio cable and radiotelephone calls.

Fremde Heeres West (FHW): Foreign Armies, West.

Frontaufklärungskommandos (FAK): Front Reconnaissance Commands; the name given to the *Abwehr* units in occupied countries after the *Abwehr* was abolished.

Führer: Leader, the Title of Hitler.

Frontaufklärungsdienst (FKD): Front Intelligence Service; the radio intercept of the *Luftwaffe*.

Funkhorchdienst (FHD): Radio Monitoring Service; the radio intercept service of the *Abwehr* and *RSHA*.

Funkspeil: Radio Game; Radio Direction Finding

Geheime Staats Polizei (GeStaPo): Secret State Police; *Amt. IV* of *RSHA*.

Große Landung: The Big Landing.

Gruppe: a military unit.

Gruppen: a group of units formed for a special purpose

Gummibefehl: A rubber order, an elastic order; a flexible order.

Hauptkampflinie (HKF): Main Battle Line.

Heeresgruppenkommando: (HGK): Army Group; subordinate to it are Corps.

Heeresmacht: Army

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Heeresnachrichtenwesen (HNW): Army Intelligence; the communications intelligence service of the *Heeresmacht*.

Herbstreise: Fall Travel, or “Autumn Pleasure Voyage.” The German deception feint designed to support *SEELÖWE*. The purpose was to simulate a plan to attack Northern England from Norway.

Infanteriedivision (ID): Infantry division.

Jagdgeschwade (JG): “Hunt Squadron; Fighter-Aircraft Wing.

Jagdgeschwader (JG) 26 "Schlageter": The Luftwaffe fighter Wing based at Lille, France, commanded by *Oberst* Josef Priller,

Kampfgebiet: “Combat Area”; The Battle area: a zone about 20 kilometers deep stretching inland from the *Kanalküste*.

Kampfgruppe (KG): Battle Group

Kampfgruppen (KG): Designation for a special combat task force.

Kanalküste: Channel Coast, The English Channel Coast from Brittany, in France, to the Scheldt in Holland.

Kriegsspiel: War Game; a military map exercise.

Kriegstagebuch (KTB): War Diary.

Kriminal Polizei (KriPo): German State Criminal Police; *Amt. V* of *RSHA*.

Langstrecken-Waffenbeschuss: Long-range bombardment weapon; a term used to describe the V-1 before its use when its exact nature was still a secret.

Langstreckenbeschuss Waffen: Long-range bombardment weapons; a term used to describe the V-1 and V-2.

Luftflottenkommando (LFK or LfK): Air Force Command.

Luftkampfkorps (LKK or LkK): “Dogfight Corps”; Luftwaffe fighter-aircraft corps.

Luftlandengedivision (LLD): Air-Landing Division; an airmobile rather than a parachute division.

Luftnachrichten: “Air News”; A regimental level air intelligence units subordinate to the Luftwaffe’s *FKD*.

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Luftwaffe: Air Force.

Luftwaffenfelddivision (LFD): a *Luftwaffe* infantry division.

Marinegruppenkommando West (MGK West): Naval Group Command West; it was in charge of naval operations in the Helgoland Bight, the North Sea The Channel Coast, and the Atlantic; its headquarters was in Paris (Place de la Concorde, in the former French Navy Ministry)

Nachrichten-Vernichtungswesen (NV): The Signal Intelligence Command of the *Luftwaffe*.

Nachtwandlerische Sicherheit: "Sleepwalker's sense of security."

Oberbefehlshaber West (OB West): Supreme Commander on the West, with headquarters at Saint-Germain en Laye, a western suburb of Paris.

Oberbefehlshaber Süd (OB Süd): Supreme Commander on the South, commanded all *Luftwaffe* units based in the Mediterranean and North African theatre. The command was subordinate to the Italian High Command (*Comando Supremo*). *OB Süd* was also the commander of *Luftflotte 2*.

Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW): "Supreme Command of the Armed Forces"; part of the command structure of the Wehrmacht (armed forces) of Nazi Germany during World War II; the *OKW* had nominal oversight over the *Heer*, the *Kriegsmarine* and the *Luftwaffe*, in all theaters except the Russian Front.

Oberkommando der Heeres (OKH): Army General Staff.

Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine (OKM): Navy General Staff.

Oberkommando der Kriegsmarine-Operationsabteilung AI (OKM/OA-AI):
Navy General Staff, Operations Division

Oberkommando der Luftwaffe (OKL): Air Force General Staff.

Operationsabteilung (OA): Operations Division.

Panzerdivision (PzD): Armored Division.

Panzergranadierdivision (PzGD): Armored Grenadier Division.

Panzergruppenkommando West (PzGK West): Armored Group Western Front.

Anticipating Overlord

Pers-Z: Radio intercept division of the Foreign Ministry.

Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA): Reich Security Headquarters.

Seekommandanten der Normandie (SK, Normandie) Sea Commander, Normandy.

Seekriegsleitung: Naval Operations, Department 1 A (**OKM/OA-AI**)

Seelöwe: "Sea Lion"; the code word for the plan to Invade England.

Schnellboot (S-Boot): Fast Patrol Torpedo Boats.

Schutzstaffel (SS), "Protective Squadron"; the Armed forces of the Nazi Party; Prior to the war, it was under the control of the *SS Führungshauptamt* (SS operational command office) beneath *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler. Upon mobilization its tactical control was given to the High Command of the Armed Forces (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*).

Schwerpunkt: "Main Emphasis," a main point of attacks as opposed to a raid or a diversion.

Sicherhetdienst (SD): Security Service of the *RSHA*; *Amt. III* (domestic intelligence) and *Amt. VI* (foreign intelligence).

Soldatensender Calais: Call sign of the British propaganda radio station beamed at the German units based in Northern France.

SS-Panzerdivision (SS-PzD): *Waffen* SS Armored Division.

SS-Panzerkorps (SS-PzK): *Waffen* SS Armored Corps.

Uneinnehmbare Festung: an impregnable fortress.

Unterseeboot (U-Boot): Submarine.

Vergeltungswaffe: Retribution, or Vengeance weapon, as in V-1 and V-2.

Vergeltung-1 (V-1): Pilotless flying bomb, called "Buzz-Bomb" by the Allies.

Vergeltung-2 (V-2): Ballistic Missile Bomb.

Verstarkegrenadierregiment (VGK): Reinforced Grenadier Regiment.

Waffen-SS (W-SS): Armed wing of the Nazi Party's *Schutzstaffel* (SS, "Protective Squadron").

Anticipating Overlord

Wehrmachtführungsstab (WFSt or WFst): Armed Forces Joint Staff; the Operations Staff of the OKW.

Wolkenkuckucksheim: cloud cuckoo land; dream world.

Wunderwaffen: Wonder weapons, used to describe the V-1 and V-2.

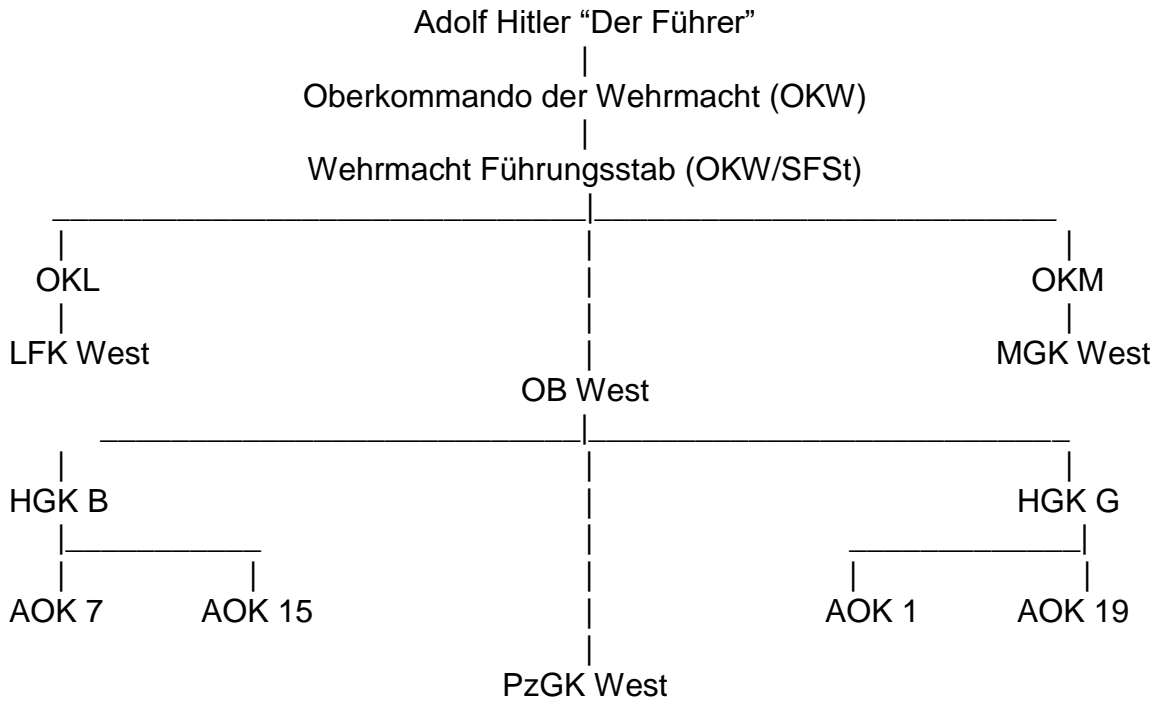
Zweite Stellung (ZS): “Second Position”; a second defense zone behind the main line of battle.

APPENDIX E

HIERARCHY

GERMAN COMMAND IN THE WEST

Midnight 5th/6th June 1944

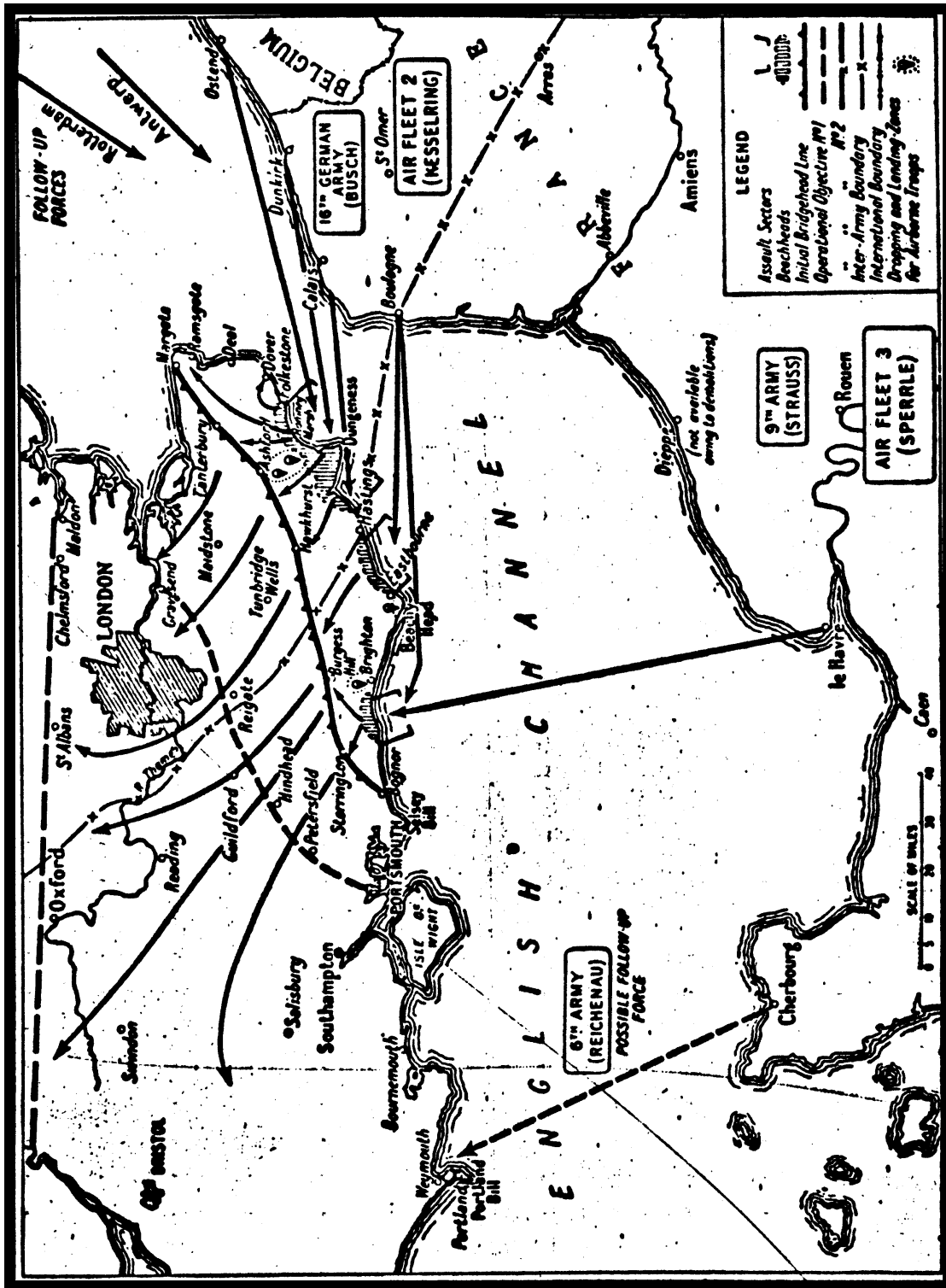


APPENDIX F

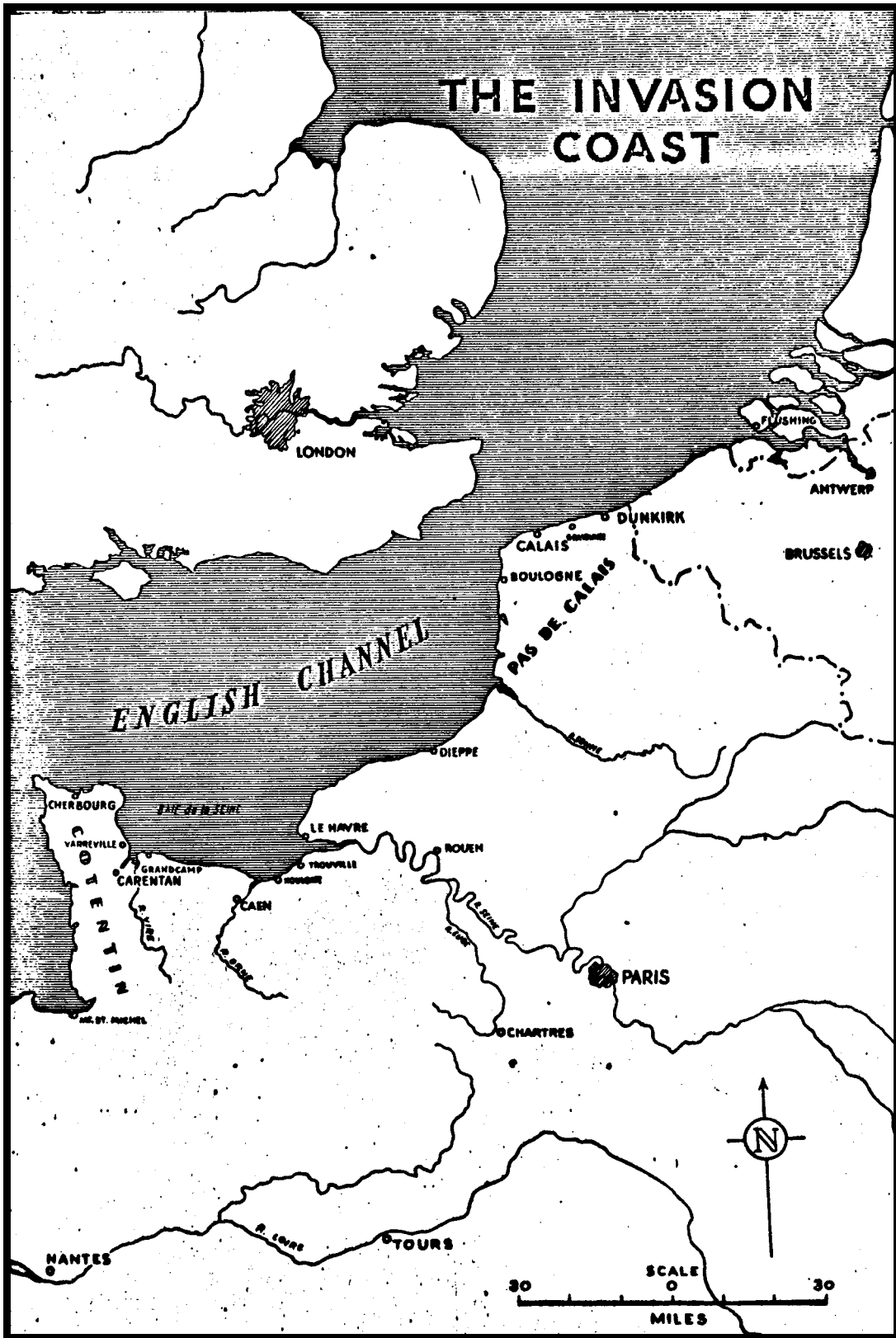
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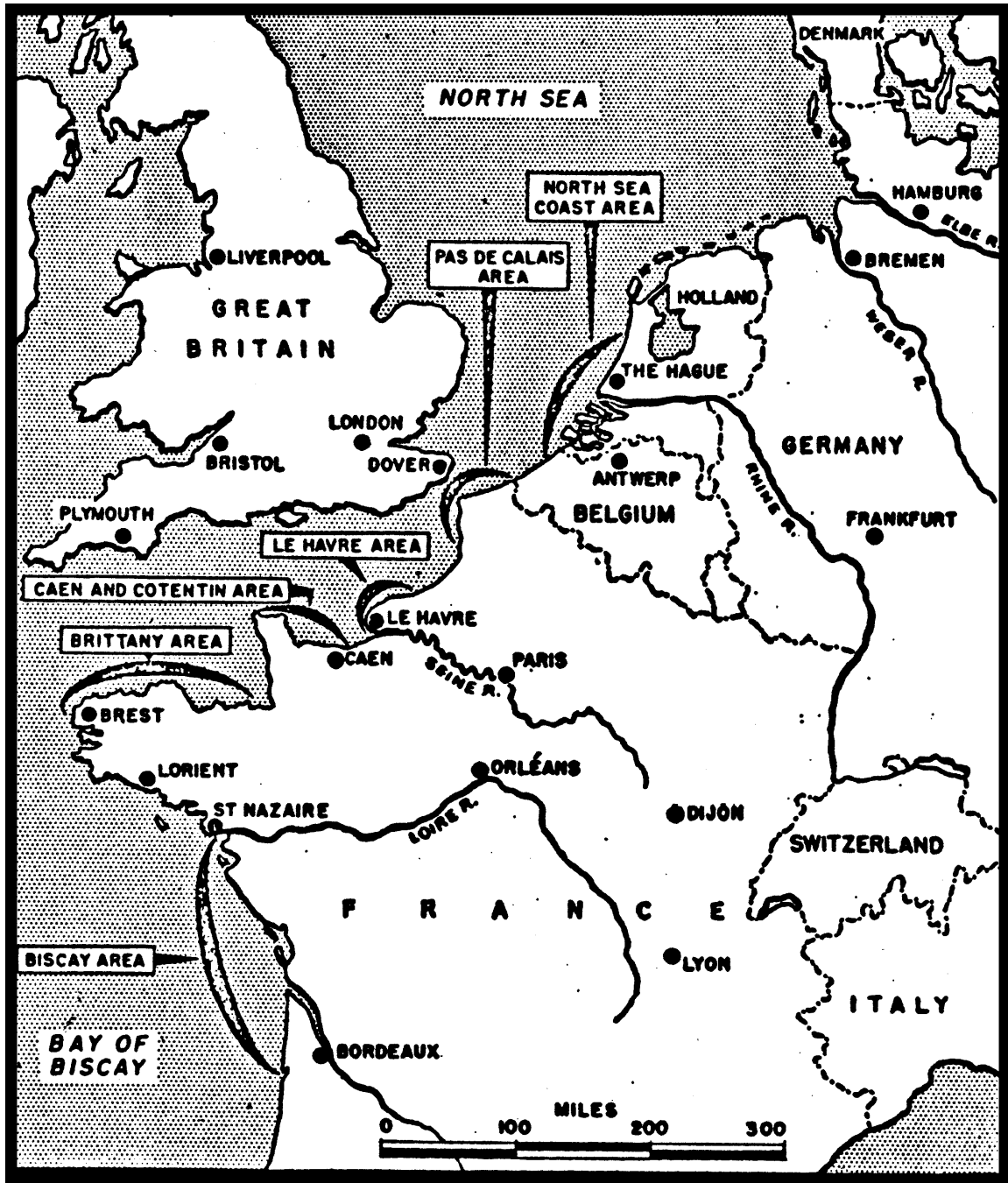
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Map A — German Operation SEELÖWE (SEE LION)

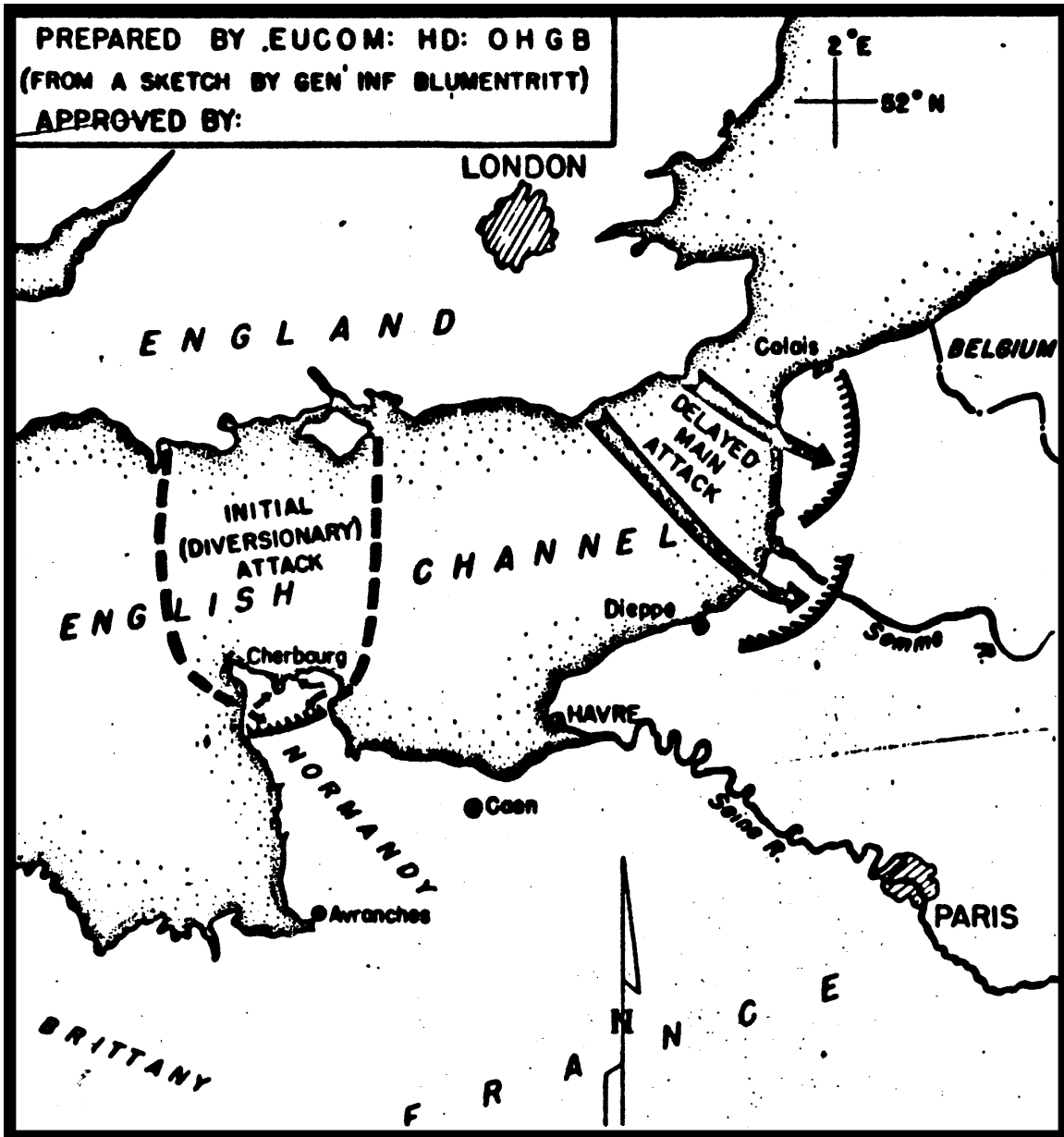


MAP B — The Channel Invasion Coast

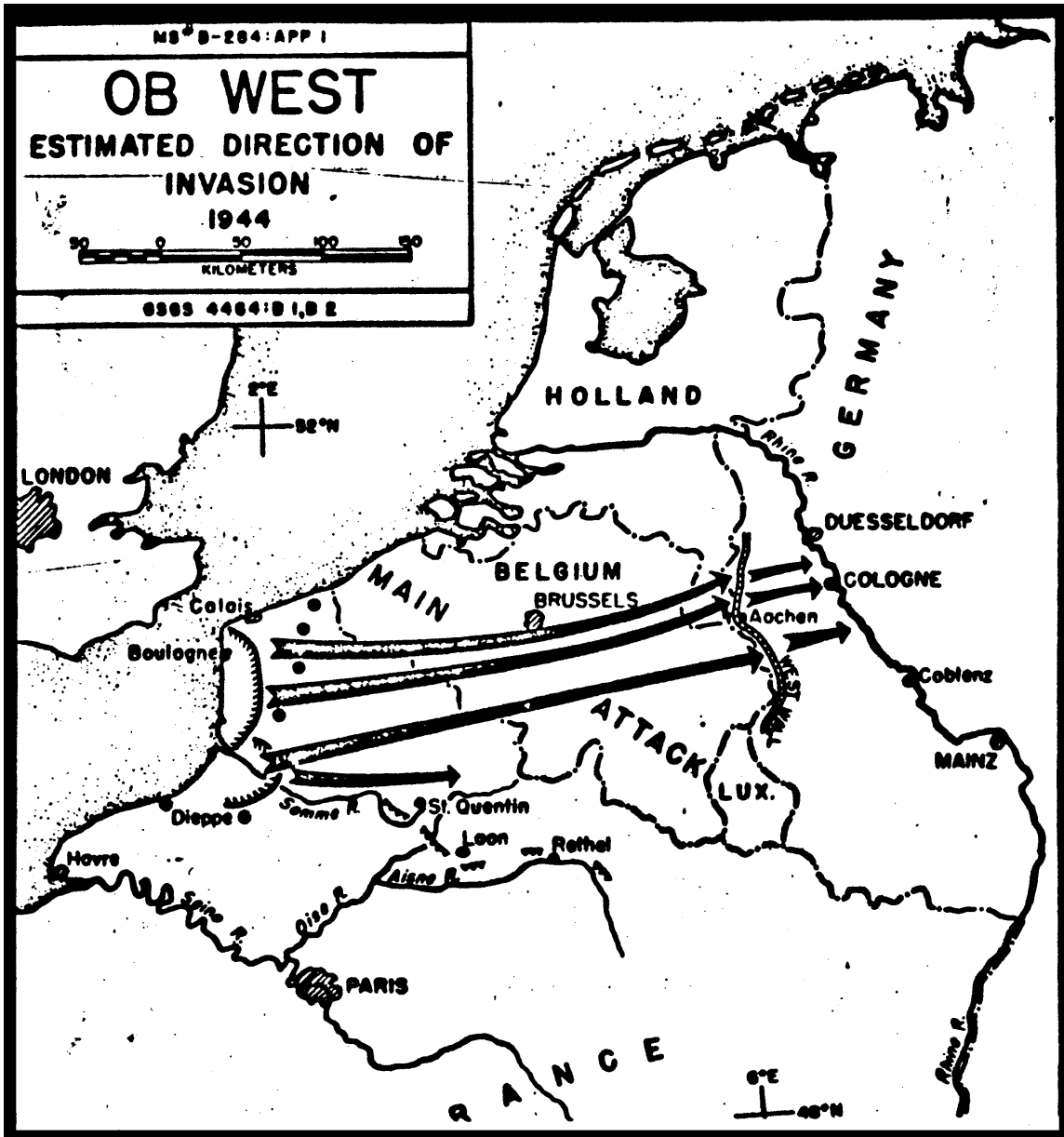


MAP C. — Six Surveyed Assault Areas

Anticipating Overlord

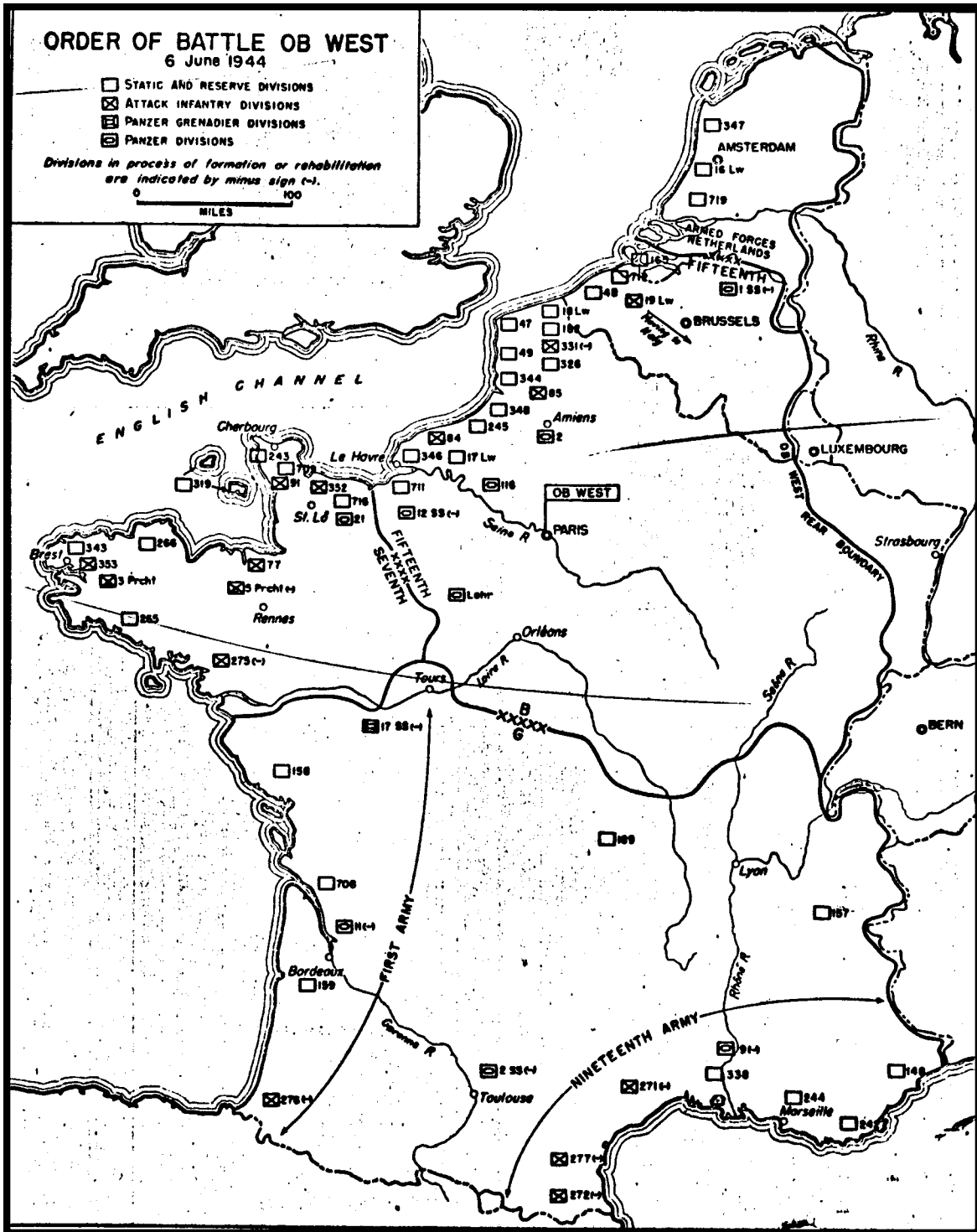


MAP D. — German Concept of Invasion Strategy



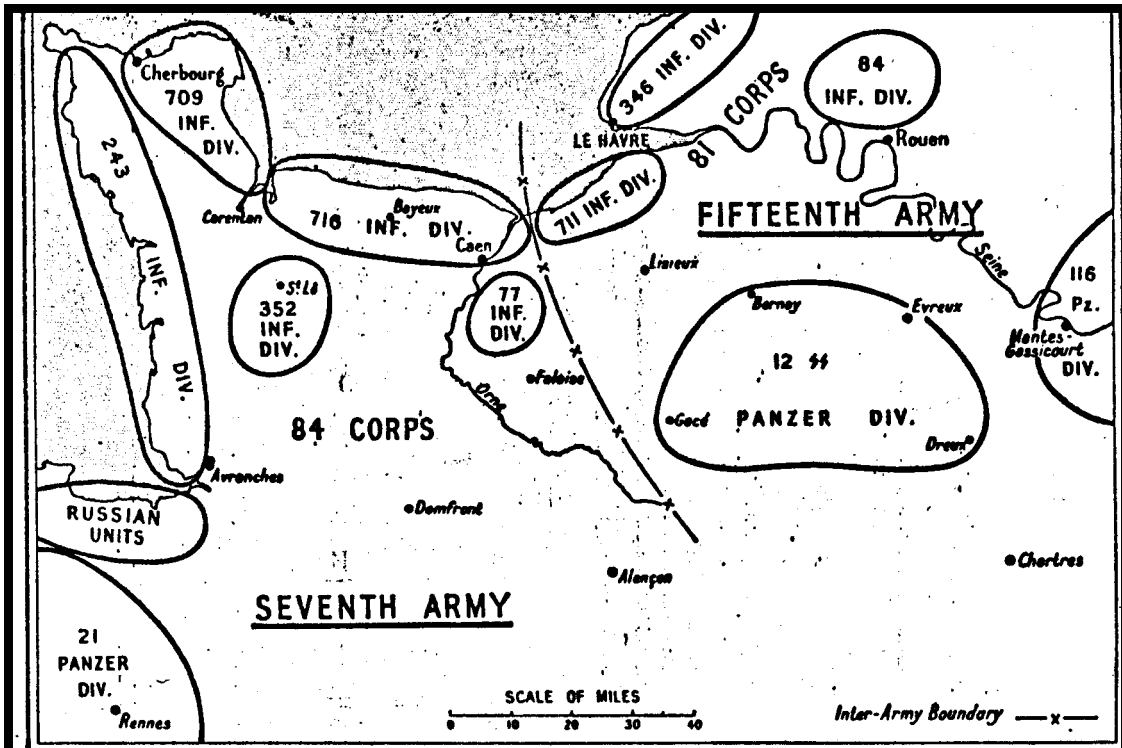
MAP E. — German Concept of Post Invasion Strategy

Anticipating Overlord

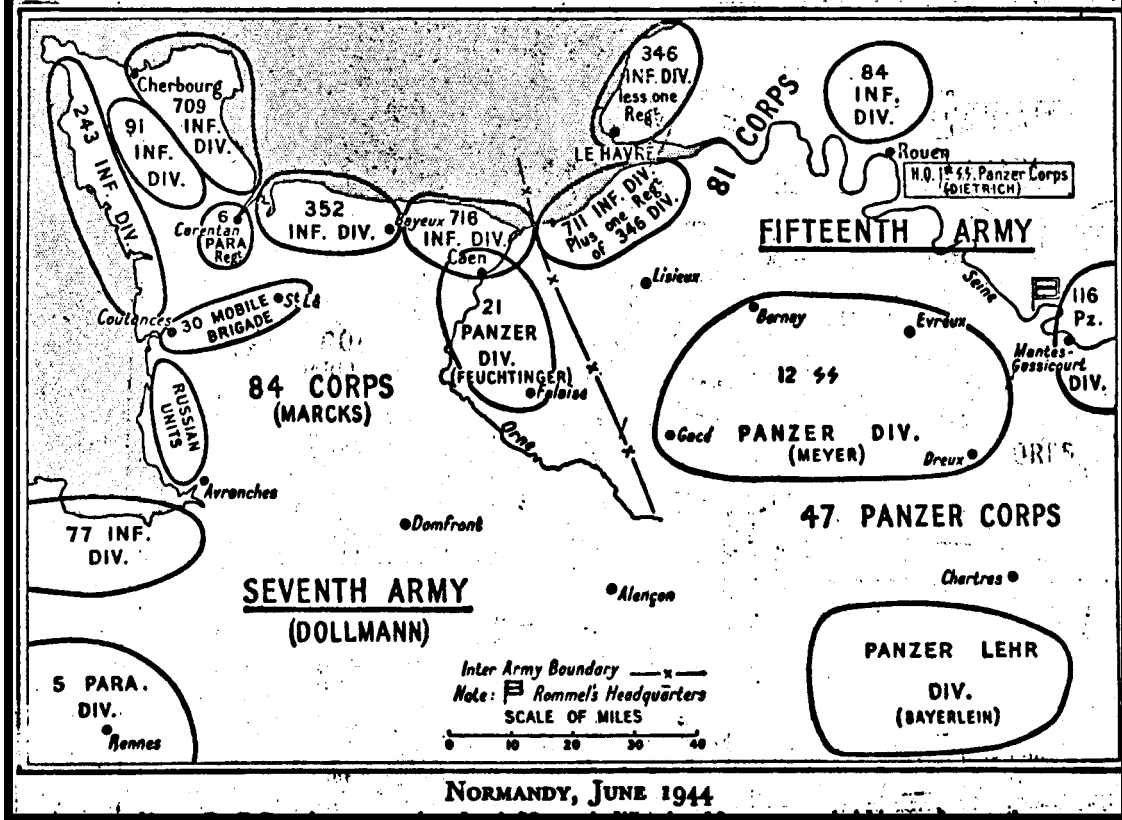


MAP F. — German Order of Battle, OB West, 6 June 1944

Anticipating Overlord

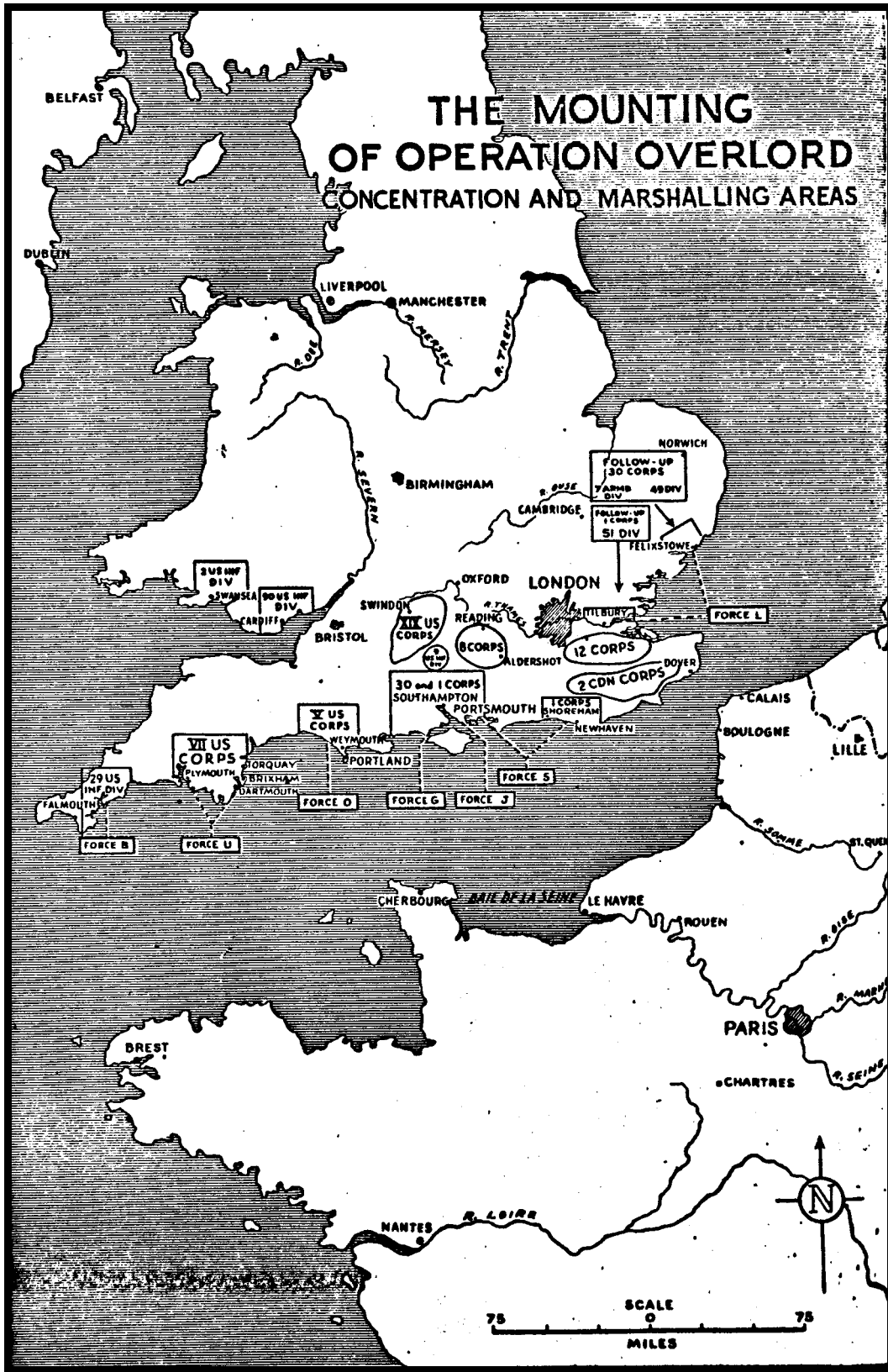


NORMANDY, APRIL 1944

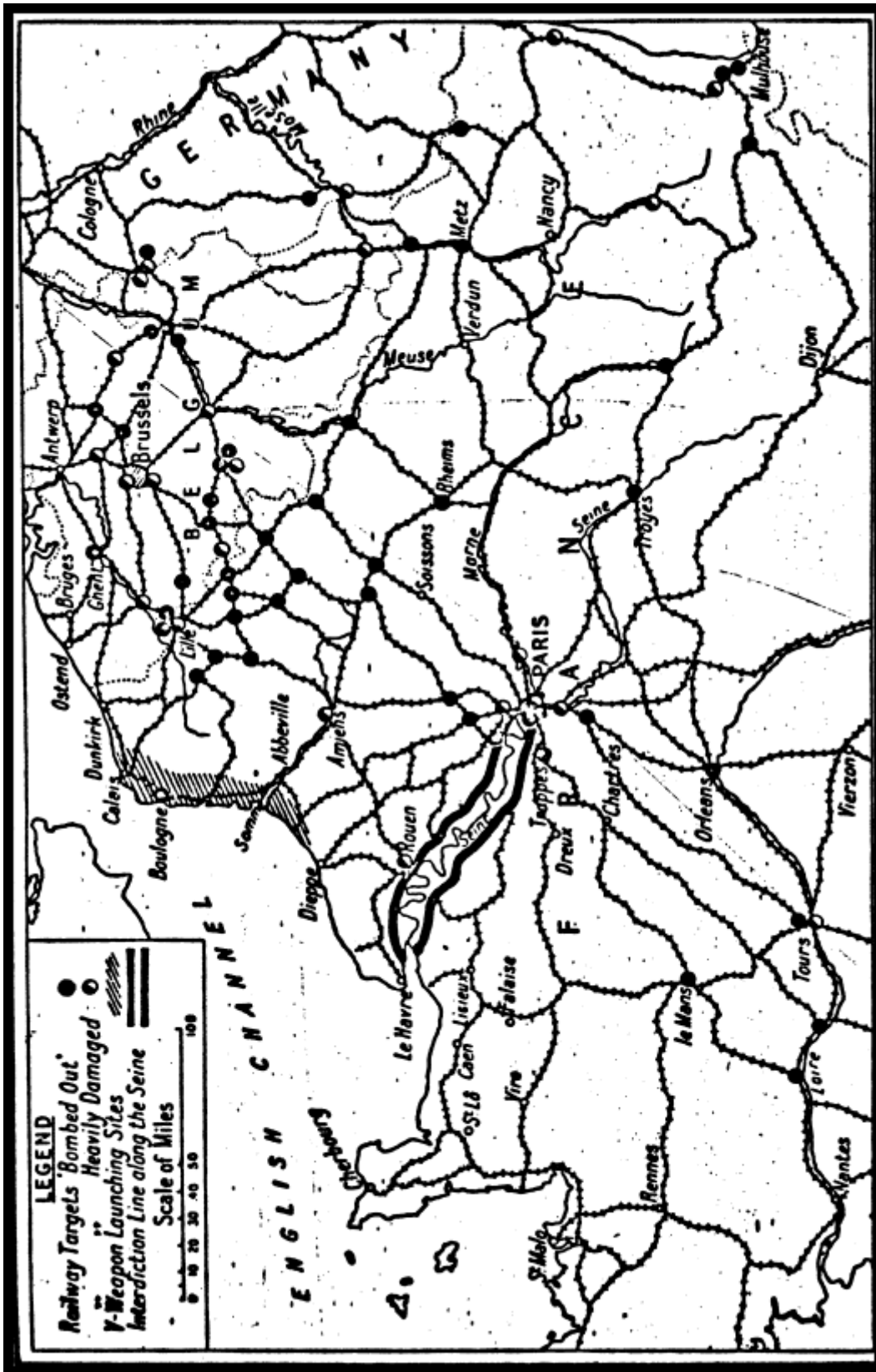


NORMANDY, JUNE 1944

MAP G. — Comparison of German OB for April and June 1944

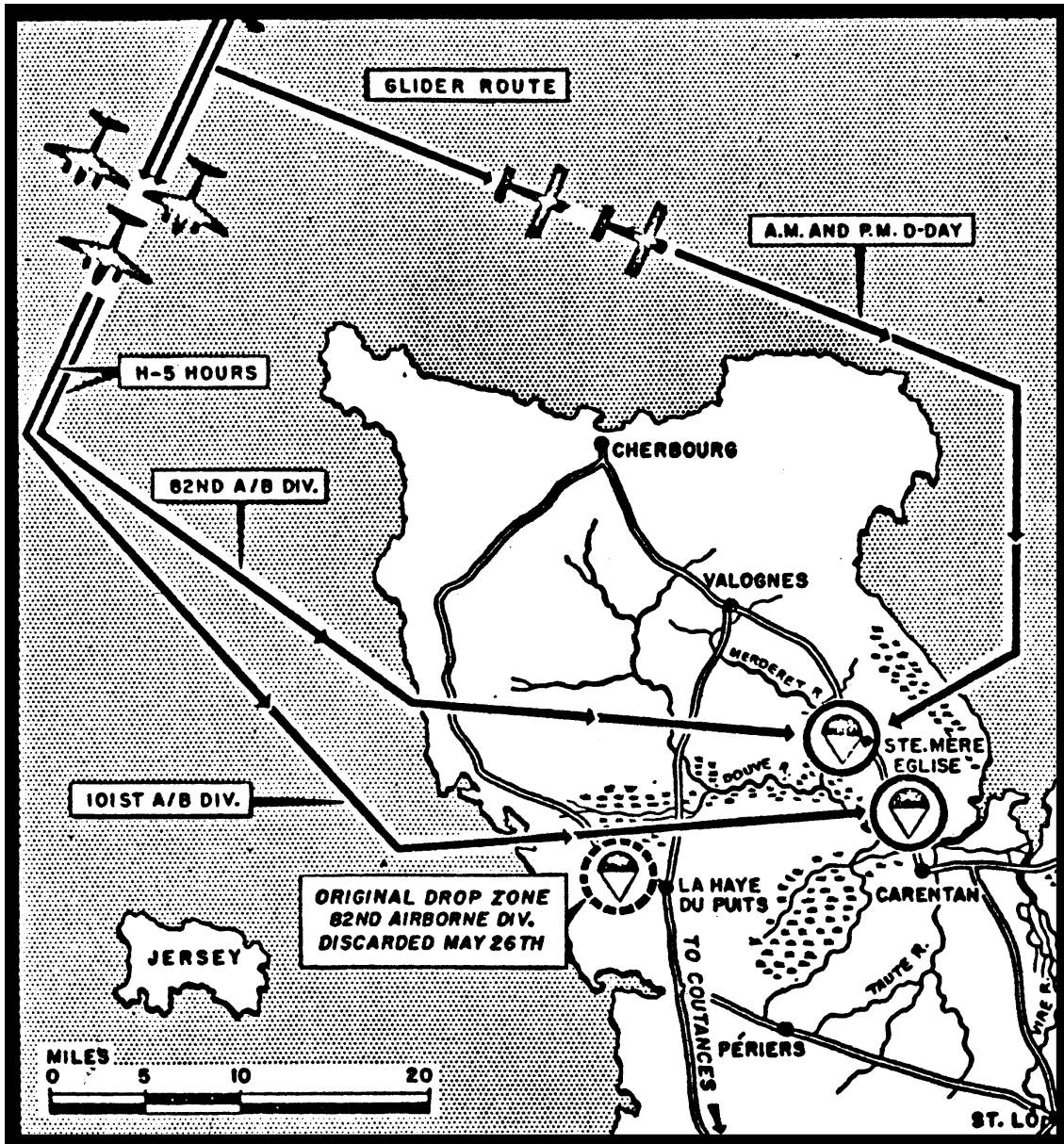


MAP H. — Concentration and Marshalling Areas in England



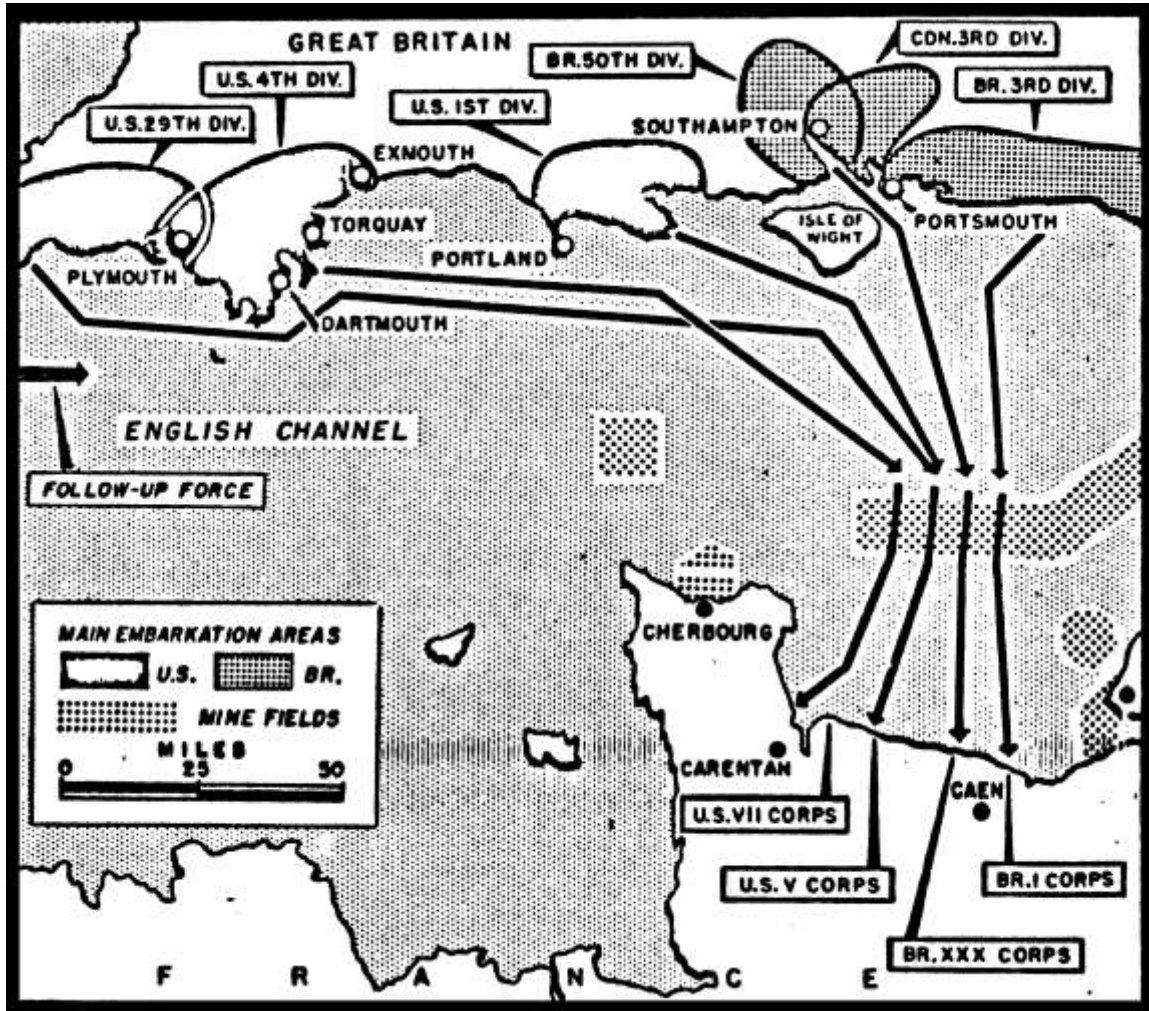
MAP I. — Allied Pre-Invasion Bombing

Anticipating Overlord

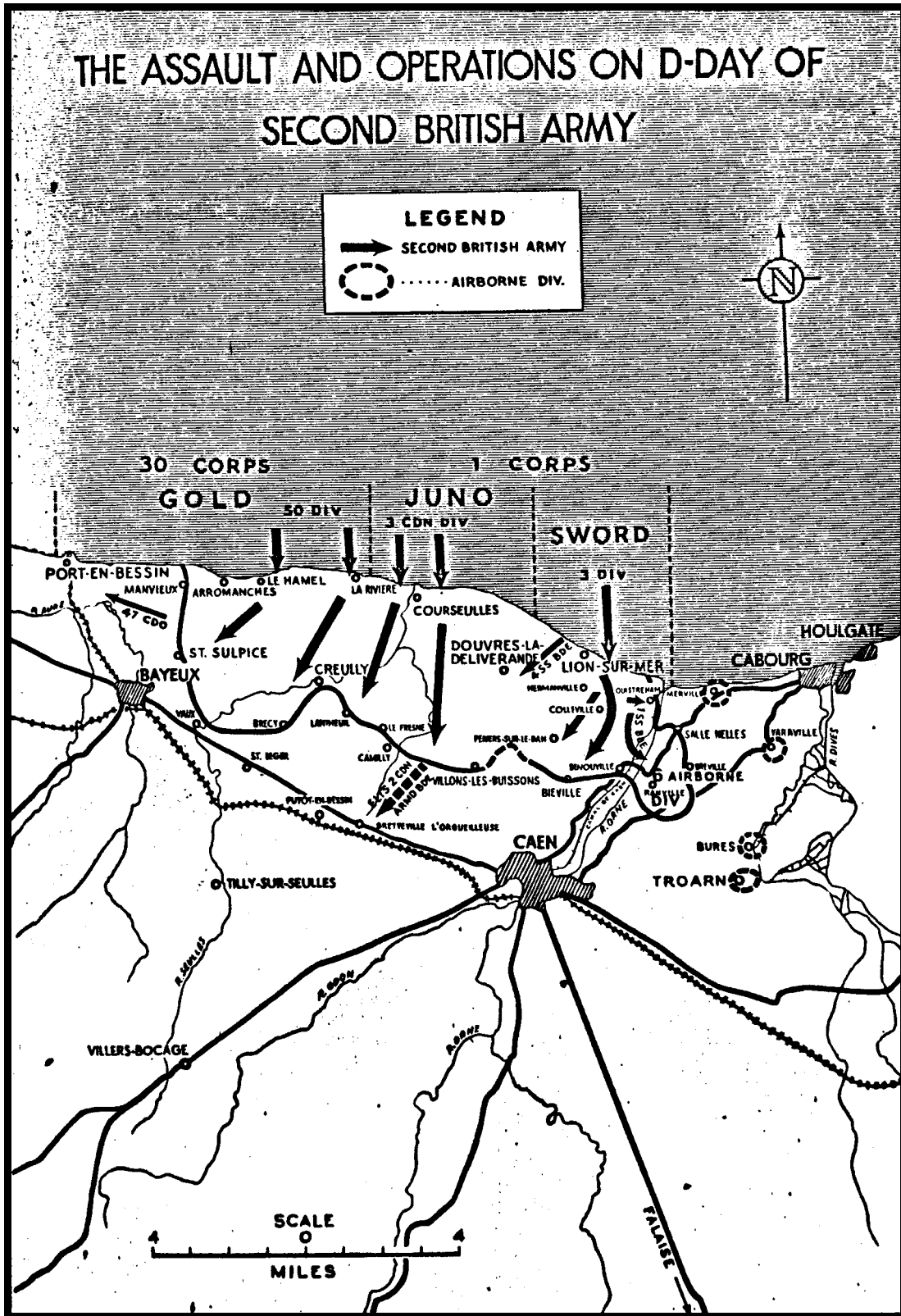


MAP J. — Transport and Glider Routes for Allied Airborne Assault

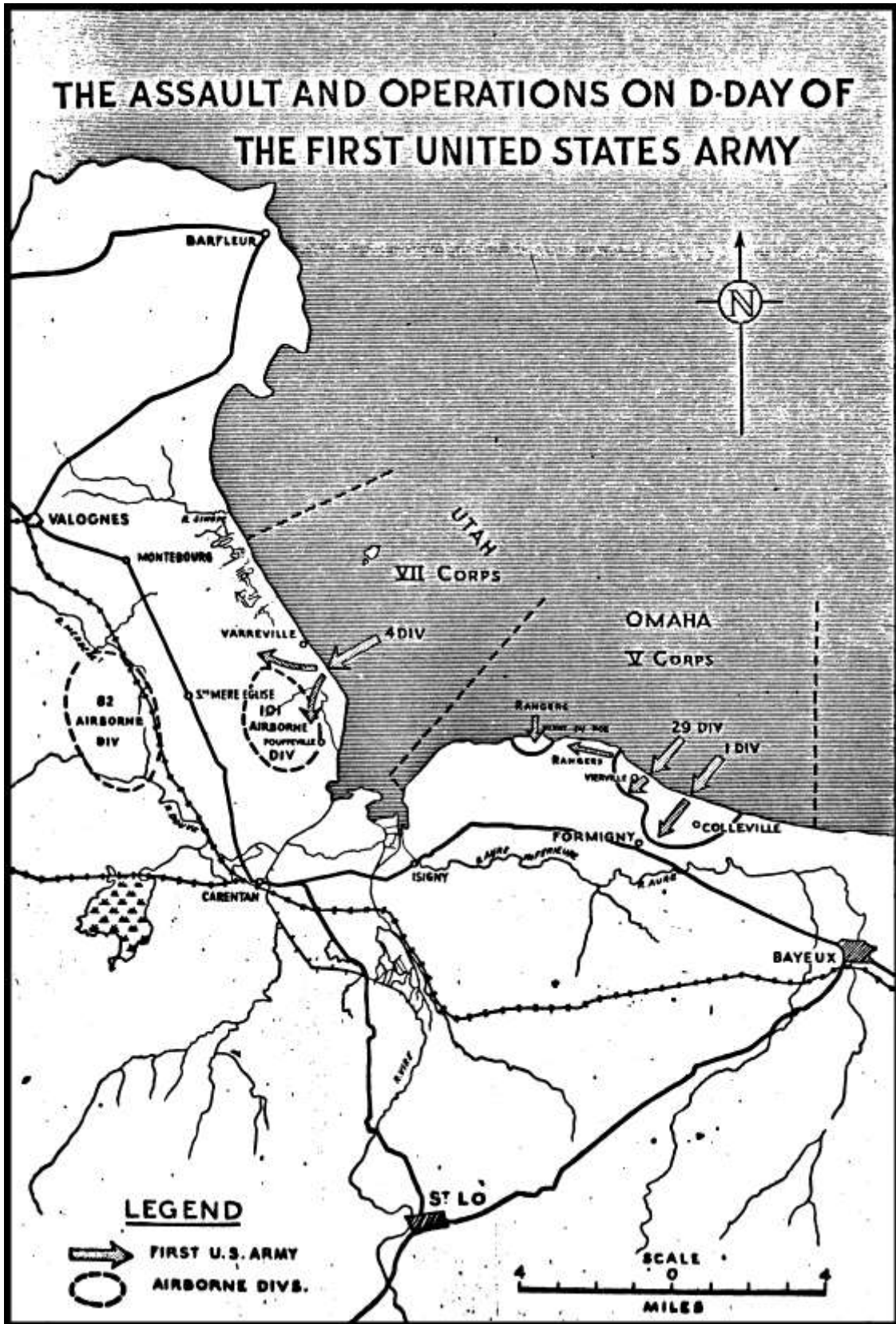
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MAP K. — Invasion Fleet Channel-Crossing Routes

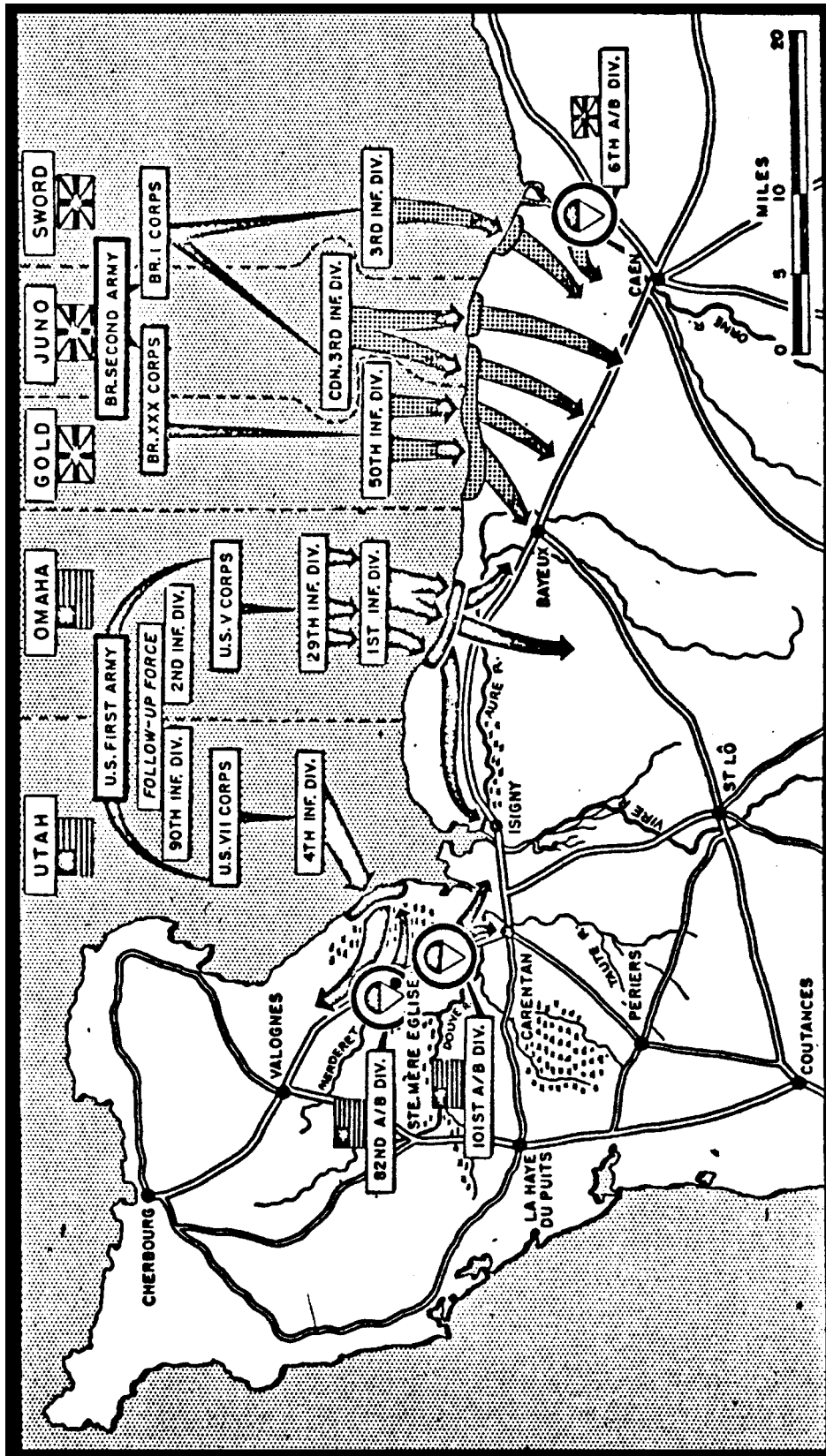


MAP L. — D-Day, British Second Army Sector



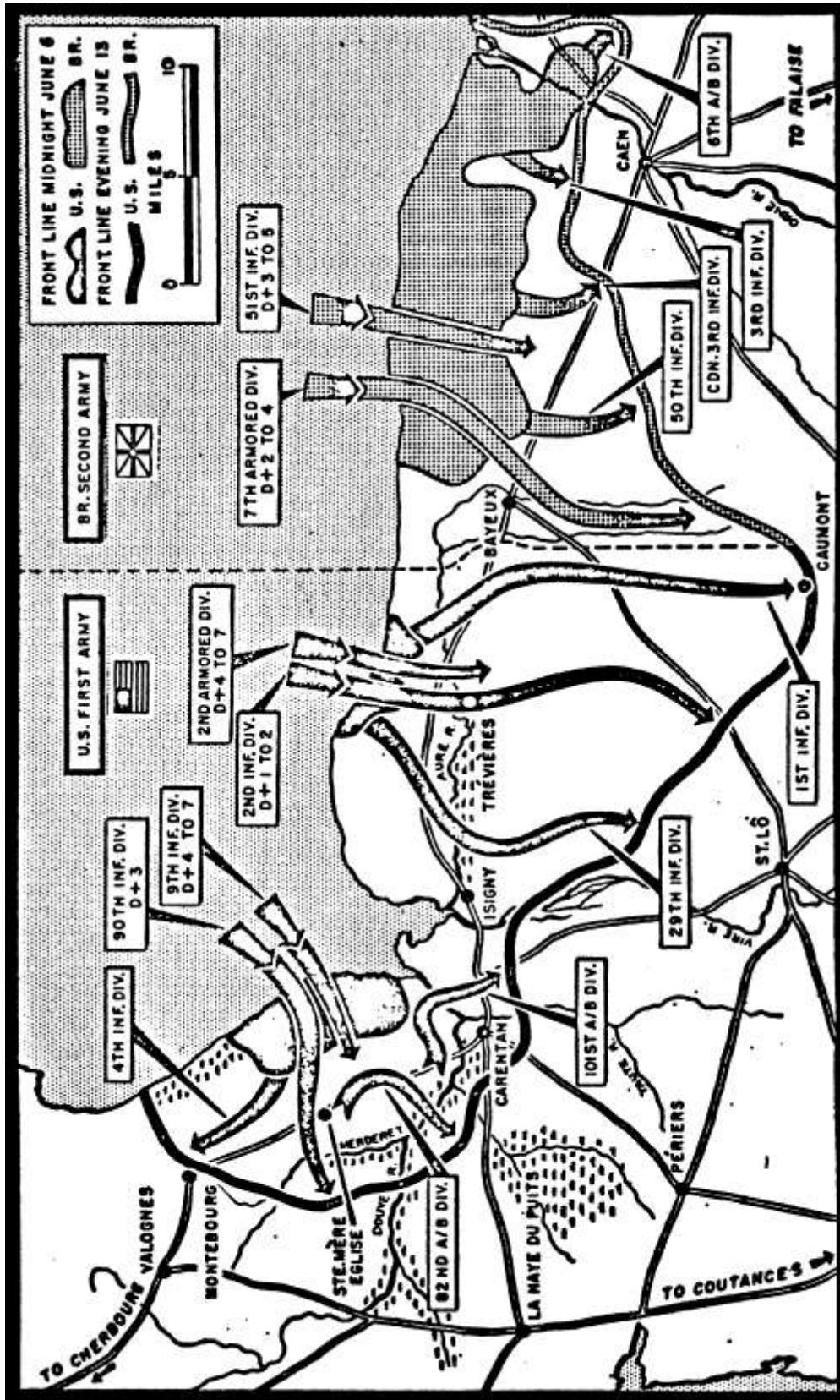
MAP M. — D-Day, First United States Army Sector

Anticipating Overlord



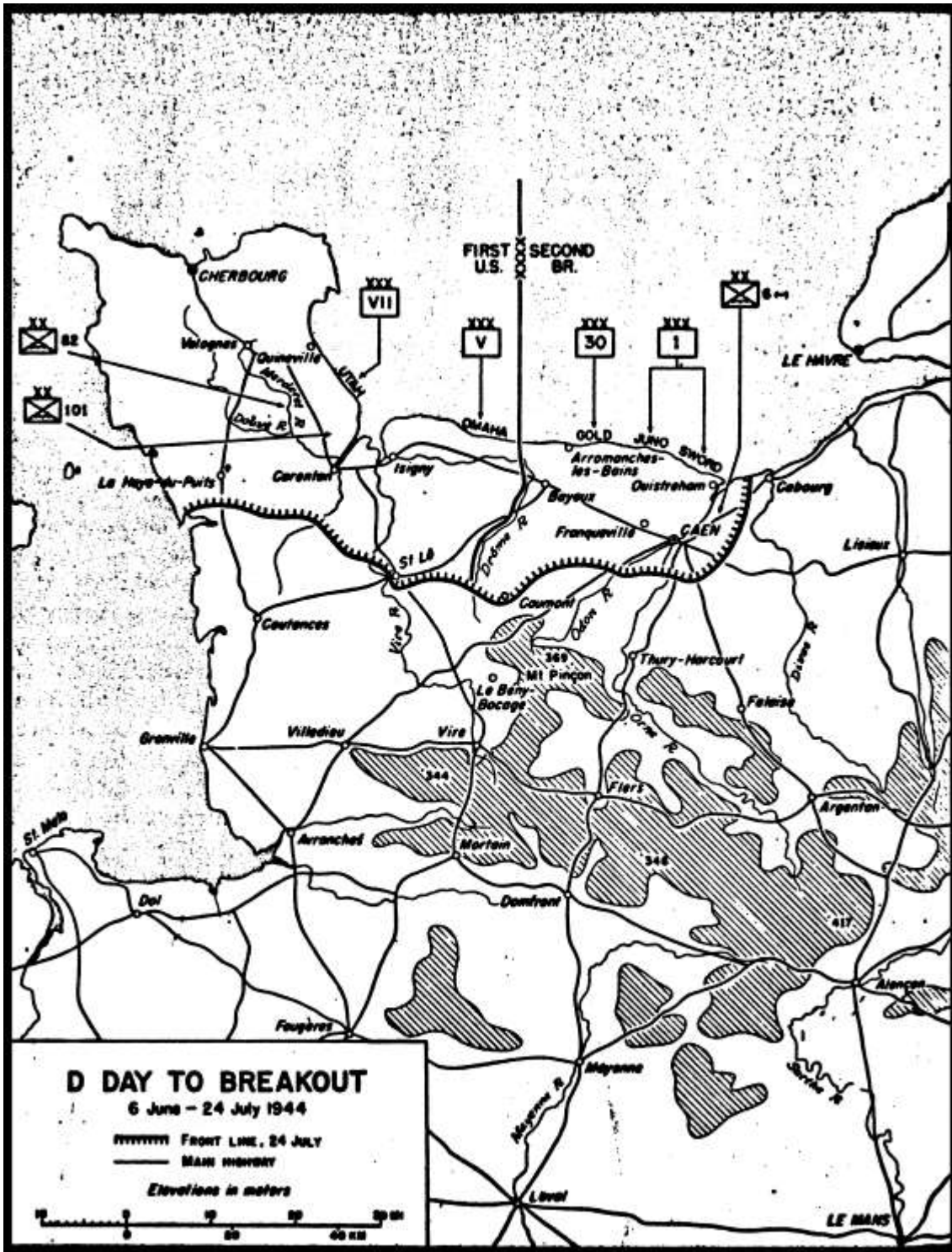
MAP N. — D-Day Deployment at Normandy

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MAP O. — D-Day to 13 June Deployment

Anticipating Overlord



MAP P. — Allied Deployment as of 24 July 1944

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